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EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

We are enormously pleased to present the seventh volume of the CERES Graduate Journal for Classics & Archaeology. We have continued the journal's tradition, started in the fifth volume, of publishing papers from graduate students across the country. This year, we reached out to international universities, and are pleased to present articles from graduate students attending universities from the west coast of Canada all the way to England. These authors come from a range of departments, though all share a passion for the ancient past.

This year's volume of CERES includes eight articles which cover diverse themes from folk art to medicine while ranging geographically from India to England. This year's articles also share a lot in common. The state of women in the ancient world is a recurring topic, as is the reception and interpretation of religion by cultures both contemporary and remote. Articles range from a discussion of Queer history to close reading of Augustan texts, and draw from primary sources in Greek, Latin, Old English and Tamil.

Continuing on another CERES tradition, each article is accompanied by a unique piece of artwork created especially for the article. These beautiful illustrations by our artistic developers Emily and Pungavi each capture the essence of their respective article.

This year, we have been thrilled to host the third annual CERES Conference, at which our authors had the opportunity to present their research to an audience of their professors and peers. We are so pleased to be able to offer this opportunity, because an important part of CERES has always been providing graduate students with a place not only to share their work, but to improve their skills as they progress in their academic careers.

This has been a difficult year for graduate studies at Queen's, but we are so proud of the intense dedication, and the hard work that our team has put into making this year's volume something we can all be proud of. It has been an honour to serve as Chief Editors for the seventh volume of CERES, and we cannot wait to see what the next volume will look like. Happy reading!

Anton Kaduck

Tess Moffat

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Before delving into the content of this volume, we would like to express our gratitude for the efforts and assistance of many individuals that made the journal possible.

First and foremost, it goes without saying that the journal would not have nearly been the same without the enthusiasm of its publication team, who assisted with our fundraising efforts as well as every step of the publication process. Thank you to our peer reviewers, Xavier Cain Bissonnette, Christian van Campen, Emily Cline, Joshua Holmes A. Court, Megan Gorsalitz, Anna Smythe, and Julianna Taylor, for their hard work and long hours working one-on-one with the authors to refine and perfect their already wonderful papers. Thank you to our copy editors, Christian van Campen and Jago Garrett, who transformed these articles into the final edited appearances you will see soon enough. Thank you to our art directs, Emily Biehl and Pungavi Linghan, who not only designed the cover and art within this volume but also created our merchandise. Thank you to our social media team, Paige Kelly and Pungavi Linghan, who helped come up with brilliant ideas and advertised and reached out to several organizations and universities. Of course, the journal would also not be the same without the wonderful submissions we received this year; finally, thank you to our authors.

We would also like to express our gratitude for the Classics and Archaeology Graduate Council (CAGC) and their support, especially regarding their assistance with organizing our events, including the conference, as well as funding and merchandise. Several members of the CAGC always made themselves available to provide assistance whenever we needed it, even if they were not a part of the publication team. We would also be remiss to not acknowledge the support we received from the Classics Department; while several members of the Classics Department assisted with the publication process, we would like to express our eternal gratitude for the efforts of Shannon Day, our Program Administrator, who helped us every step of the way.

For their support in funding, we would also like to express our gratitude towards the Classics Department, SGS Student Initiatives Fund, and the FAS Student Initiatives Fund; in a similar vein, we would also like to express our gratitude for those who participated in our various fundraisers this academic year.

We would also like to acknowledge the work of the previous publishing teams over the years from 1989 to last year, as they laid the groundwork for the success of the seventh volume of CERES.

Of course, we would also like to express our gratitude for the readers of this volume. Without further ado, we hope you enjoy the seventh volume of CERES.

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THE *HOMERIC HYMN TO GAIA*: MOTHER EARTH'S EXCLUSION FROM THE MOTHER GODDESS DEBATE

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Preface

The writing below is a segment taken from my undergraduate honours thesis. I translate the *Homeric Hymn to Gaia* and compare my interpretation with 11 others. I then discuss the history of the Mother Goddess debate which considers prehistoric Mediterranean matriarchal societies with matrilineal practices that worshipped a universal, maternal fertility deity and gave ancient Mediterranean women elevated cultural authority.[1] Having shown where and how the *Homeric Hymn* aligns with the arguments made both for and against the theory of the Mother Goddess, I comment on the unique and surprising absence of this hymn from the debate. Overall, I address the implications of the *Homeric Hymn to Gaia* in reference to ancient perceptions of femininity and authority as it indicates that the ancient Greeks not only accepted, but exalted in, a powerful maternal divinity. I have not included this latter conversation on the Mother Goddess as it exceeds the page limit. I have also removed the appendices, which contain full versions of the other translations of the hymn. I would like readers to be aware that this writing was originally created within a larger piece of work and still reflects this broader context.

Introduction

Of Gaia mother of all, I will write.

In ancient Greece, divinities were regularly celebrated in hymns and songs. One such song, now known as the *Homeric Hymn to Gaia*, venerates Gaia and her relationship to all people, plants, and animals. Though only nineteen lines long, the hymn reveals ancient perceptions of Gaia as both a nature deity as well as a female authority with considerable power and influence. She governs life and death and affects the prosperity and wealth of all living beings.

When I first read the *Hymn to Gaia*, I was fascinated by its larger implications about Gaia's expansive domain. After translating the original Greek and forming my own interpretation, I compared the differences between the versions of the hymn. I found that subtle, though important, discrepancies lay in the translations of prepositions and syntax. My paper details these variations and their implications, revealing that scholars have interpreted the hymn according to their contemporary cultural biases to the detriment of the ancient meaning. Much of Gaia's influence is expressed through minute details, and these intricacies have been lost in translation. I attempt to restore them to their original significance, thus reinstating Gaia's power as both a prime entity and female being.

Close Study of the *Homeric Hymn To Gaia* In Translation

As one of the oldest deities, Gaia is often neglected by scholars delving into the 'lives' and myths of the well-known Greek gods. The lack of extant stories about this goddess, however, does not mean that she

[1] Within this paper, I would like to explain why I use "women" and "female" somewhat interchangeably. I understand, especially as a gender-fluid scholar myself, that not all women are female and vice versa. In ancient Greece and the larger Mediterranean region, however, there was less distinction between cultural gender and biological sex than there is today. Therefore, the women and female-bodied people to whom I refer in this paper were understood to be synonymous in antiquity, and I name them as such here, not to be repetitive.

was less respected or revered in antiquity. As Gaia is literally the Earth, from which every living being comes and to which all return, her role in the daily life of ancient people was likely more tangible than extant evidence suggests. This position of power is expressed in the *Homeric Hymn to Gaia*, first recorded approximately between the 7th and 5th centuries BCE.[2] In my translation of this hymn, I underscore Gaia's importance to humanity through my interpretation of prepositions. Furthermore, I explore other translations of the hymn and the liberties they take while attempting to illuminate the poetic undertones of the original Greek. Gaia was an influential goddess in antiquity, despite her separation from the other gods, her conflicting dominions, and her gender; the *Homeric Hymn to Gaia* expresses this power.

First, I would like to address the relationship between translation and interpretation. Scholarly translation is, basically, the rendering of an original text into another language for a wider audience to view, appreciate, and analyze. When a piece of literature is changed from its initial form, the new version is inherently interpretive, as is my English reading of the *Homeric Hymn to Gaia*. Interpretation itself is a form of analysis since the implications and significance of the work are consciously or unconsciously imposed upon the text by the translator. This translation is my understanding of the Greek, not an exact recreation of the text; like most translators however, I stay as true to the original words' meanings and connotations as English language and grammar allow.

Below, I give both the ancient Greek text and my translation and interpretation thereof:

ΕΙΣ ΓΗΝ ΜΗΤΕΡΑ ΠΑΝΤΩΝ	TO EARTH MOTHER OF ALL
Γαῖαν παμμήτειραν ἀείσομαι, ἠϋθέμεθλον, πρεσβίστην, ἣ φέρβει ἐπὶ χθονὶ πάνθ᾽ ὁπόσ᾽ ἐστίν, ἠμὲν ὅσα χθόνα δῖαν ἐπέρχεται ἠδ᾽ ὅσα πόντον ἠδ᾽ ὅσα πωτῶνται · τὰ δὲ φέρβεται ἐκ σέθεν ὄλβου. ἐκ σέο δ᾽ εὔπαιδές τε καὶ εὔκαρποι τελέθουσιν, πότνια, σεῦ δ᾽ ἔχεται δοῦναι βίον ἠδ᾽ ἀφελέσθαι θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποισιν · ὃ δ᾽ ὄλβιος, ὅν κε σὺ θυμῶι πρόφρων τιμήσῃς, τῶι τ᾽ ἄφθονα πάντα πάρεστιν · βρίθει μέν σφιν ἄρουρα φερέσβιος, ἠδὲ κατ᾽ ἀγρούς κτήνεσιν εὐθηνεῖ, οἶκος δ᾽ ἐμπίμπλαται ἐσθλῶν · αὐτοὶ δ᾽ εὐνομίῃσι πόλιν κάτα καλλιγύναικα κοιρανέουσ᾽, ὄλβος δὲ πολὺς καὶ πλοῦτος ὀπηδεῖ · παῖδες δ᾽ εὐφροσύνῃ νεοθηλέϊ κυδιόωσιν, παρθενικαί τε χοροῖς φερεσανθέσιν εὔφρονι θυμῶι παίζουσ(α)ι χαίρουσι κατ᾽ ἄνθεα μαλ(θ)ακὰ ποίης, οὕς κε σὺ τιμήσῃς, σεμνὴ θεά, ἄφθονε δαῖμον. χαῖρε, θεῶν μήτηρ, ἄλοχ᾽ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος, πρόφρων δ᾽ ἀντ᾽ ᾠδῆς βίοτον θυμήρε᾽ ὄπαζε · αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ καὶ σεῖο καὶ ἄλλης μνήσομ᾽ ἀοιδῆς.	Of Gaia, mother of all, I will sing, well-founded, / most revered, who nourishes as many as there are dependent upon earth, / both as many as traverse the divine land and are in the sea / and as many as fly about; and they are nourished by the hand of your prosperity. / And from you, they all become both blessed with children and fruitful, / mistress, and you hold the power to give life and livelihood and to take it away / from mortal humans; and he who is happy, you graciously honor him / with spirit, and everything is present in bounty for him; / and life-giving earth is laden for them, and by your favour, / fields thrive with flocks and herds, and a home is filled with fine goods; / and these men rule a law-abiding city with beautiful women, / and much prosperity and wealth accompanies them; / and youth exult in her sprouting mirth, / and maidens in flower-bringing dances with cheerful spirit / play like children, rejoicing through soft flowers of grass, / and you honour them, revered goddess, bounteous deity. Rejoice, mother of the gods, bed partner of star-sparkling Ouranos, / and with earnestness, in return for this song, bid a delightful life; / moreover, I will also remember yet another song about you.

[2] Charles Boer and Homer, *The Homeric Hymns* (Irving: Spring Publishers, 1979), iii.

In this section, I provide my reasoning for making the translation choices that I did and the ways in which my understanding reflects ancient perceptions of Gaia. Additionally, I compare it to other translations of the *Homeric Hymn to Gaia*, especially the lines which differ greatly from my own. Each translation is an individual's interpretation, yet Gaia's true power is continually overlooked in past readings of the hymn. I not only compare these variations and reveal their implications, but also argue that the most accurate translations of the hymn are those which properly venerate the Earth.

The first line of all the *Homeric Hymns* contains the name of the god, immediately followed by the reporting verb of the speaker, and a trait of the deity.[1] In the case of the *Hymn to Gaia*, more characteristics describing the goddess follow this introduction, which moves into a detailed account of her abilities and influences on human life. The hymn does not include a specific myth about Gaia, though her mythological identity is intimately connected to the Titans' birth and Ouranos' fall from power. The exclusion of these stories implies that Gaia's role in antiquity was more nuanced than just as the mother of the gods. Certainly, this was her most prevalent epithet, but the hymn emphasizes Gaia by herself, naming others only at the start and end of the poem. This separation of the goddess from her most famous role places higher importance on her vegetative fertility. Gaia is more than the first mother. She influences and affects all creation. She birthed the gods, but she also births all life on earth. She *is* the earth, and the hymn focuses almost exclusively on this aspect of her identity.

As mentioned above, the initial line of the hymn first introduces Gaia by name, then continues with various epithets describing her primary role as a deity. The ways that translators have rendered this Greek formation varies because the ancient syntax cannot be recreated in English with the same impact. The first line reads: "Γαῖαν παμμήτειραν ἀείσομαι, ἠϋθέμεθλον, / πρεσβίστην," which I have translated as literally as possible as: "Of Gaia, mother of all, I will sing, well-founded, / most revered." Gaia is named first, in the accusative, and is followed by a title, again in the accusative. The third word, "ἀείσομαι," provides both the subject and verb of the sentence as the future, first person, singular form of ἀείδω, "to sing." The exclusion of an individual nominative, especially when the subject is "I," is common in ancient Greek as it can be assumed from the verb. In this case, the lack of a separate nominative places focus on the accusative first word, emphasizing Gaia from the very start.[2]

However, the various translations of the hymn are split, beginning either with Gaia herself or with the verb's implied subject. Those that position Gaia as the first word display the true Greek syntax. Many do not initially state her name, though, and begin with the original text's epithets instead. One brings "ἠϋθέμεθλον" forward which is immediately followed by her name: "Deep-rooted Earth."[3] This version changes the order of her descriptors randomly; there is no reason to alter the language structure in this way. Furthermore, other translations push Gaia's name even farther from the start: "O Universal mother, who dost keep / From everlasting thy foundations deep, / Eldest of things, Great Earth, I sing of thee."[4] Here, the translator builds literary suspense until finally naming the goddess, but the effect is diluted by the subject and verb ending the line. Focus is placed on the speaker rather than Gaia, herself. The final translation that does not immediately name the goddess *never* actually names her: "The mother of us all, / the oldest of all, hard, / splendid as rock."[5] This translation displaces Gaia from the center of the hymn. The translator recognizes her importance through the many epithets connected to her, but the exclusion of her name diminishes the power and authority she is granted through the hymn's invocation. Thus, this version does not convey the implications of the Greek.

Unlike the above interpretations, three translations invoke Gaia by naming her first. As she is the object of the sentence and not the subject though, a direct translation is unwieldy: "Concerning Earth, the mother of all, / I shall sing"[6] and "Of Earth the universal

[1] Richard Janko, "The Structure of the *Homeric Hymns*: A Study in Genre," *Hermes* 109, no.1 (1981): 9.

[2] This practice of privileging the text's main focus by making it the first word, no matter its function in the sentence, is common in ancient Greek. A well-known example of this appears in the *Iliad*, with the beginning word "μῆνιν" or "wrath" in the accusative (Homer, *Iliad* 1.1).

[3] Susan Chadwick Shelmerdine, *The Homeric Hymns* (Newburyport: Focus Information Group, 1995), 162.

[4] Percy Bysshe Shelley, "LIBRARY SHELF: Homeric Hymn to the Earth: Mother of All," *The Chautauquan; A Weekly Newsmagazin*e 1913, 20.

[5] Boer, The Homeric Hymns, 1.

[6] Andrew Lang and Homer, The Homeric Hymns, a New Prose Translation and Essays (London: C. Allen, 1899), 246.

mother I will sing."[7] Both of these versions translate the exact word order of the hymn, as I myself have. This precision allows modern readers to conceptualize the way in which ancient Greek minds thought about Gaia; she is the entire purpose of the poem, and thus, her characteristics must be at the forefront. The speaker is a mere afterthought, an inferior mortal being, only noticeable because they are singing about her. The sentiment is better understood in English by moving Gaia from the object to the subject, as one translation does: "Earth who is mother of all shall I sing on her noble foundation."[8] Gaia is named first as the subject, yet the nominative quality of the singer is also maintained by the use of "I" rather than the accusative "me." This translation's 'doubled subject' can be confusing for English readers as the grammar is unclear. Thus, the best English interpretation of the line maintains Gaia as the first noun and the object of the verb. This understanding more accurately captures the original text's implications and includes modern poetic techniques by playing with English syntax.

Due to this very syntax, however, many translations refuse to name Gaia initially, since she is the object of the clause, not the subject. These versions place the verb and its implied subject at the beginning of the hymn in an entirely English rendition of the Greek. Two such interpretations then include the original word order: "I will sing of Earth, the mother of All, whose foundations are strong,"[9] and "I'll sing of Earth, life's mother, the rock-founded."[10] Within this structure, the focus placed on Gaia by the word's original location is lost; there is no difference in emphasis between the goddess and the speaker. Two more translations begin with the implied subject and push Gaia further from her initial placement: "I shall sing of well-formed Earth, mother of all,"[11] and "I will sing to the mother of all, firmly rooted Gaia, / the oldest deity."[12] Both of these interpretations name Gaia directly in the middle of her epithets. She is surrounded by them, a good introduction of her influence, but the power that her name carries in the Greek text is diminished. Her authority is almost buried by her characteristics and the immediate focus on the subject. The latter of the two versions does have a line break directly after her name, which returns some of the original prominence to Gaia once more, but it is not directly comparable to the way she is highlighted in the original Greek of the hymn.

A final interpretation of the first line adds emphasis to the verb rather than the goddess. The translation reads: "I will extol with laudatory song the mother of all: Earth. / Firmly established in antiquity: Earth."[13] This version is unique for a few reasons. First, the emphasized focus on the verb promotes the speaker rather than Gaia herself. She is praised through the "laudatory" quality of the song, but the speaker is stressing their own role within the hymn. There is less advancement of Gaia's prestige and honour, as the translation subtly hints that she needs the speaker in order to be appreciated. According to the theme of the hymn, however, it is the other way around: the speaker needs Gaia in order to live.

Second, the interpreter attempts to balance the odd juxtaposition between subject and object through modern syntax. Gaia is named twice, though only with her alternative title, "Earth," at the end of the first line and in the middle of the second.[14] This initial location in the translation is not as direct as when she is named at the very beginning, but it does grant Gaia a certain gravity that the other interpretations, which also misplace her, do not; she is even singled out by the use of two colons immediately preceding her titles. The translator returns focus to her by sculpting English grammar to better represent the precedence given her by the original ancient Greek. However, this interpretation does not showcase the true significance the hymn offers Gaia as she remains unnamed. This version refuses to call her anything but "Earth" throughout the poem, isolating Gaia from her power. There is no precedent for refusing to name a deity as a way of showing them respect in ancient Greek; all the *Homeric Hymns* immediately and directly name the god to which they pay homage.[15] By excluding a prominent component of the original hymn, this

[7] West, Martin L. Homeric Hymns. Homeric Apocrypha. Lives of Homer. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

[8] Daryl Hine and Homer, The Homeric Hymns and The Battle of the Frogs and Mice: Translated from the Greek (New York: Atheneum, 1972), 81.

[9] Michael Crudden, The Homeric Hymns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 89.

[10] Sarah Ruden & Sheila Murnaghan, Homeric Hymns (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2005), 93.

[11] Apostolos N. Athanassakis, The Homeric Hymns (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 69.

[12] Diane J. Rayor, The Homeric Hymns (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 100.

[13] Alexander. D. Rossi, "Homeric Hymn, Number 30," The Classical Bulletin 56, no. 1 (1979): 45.

[14] Rossi, "Homeric Hymn, Number 30," 45.

[15] Janko, "The Structure of the *Homeric Hymns*," 9.

version of the *Homeric Hymn to Gaia* removes her from the very authority implied in the text.

The second line of the hymn contains a preposition that I believe holds more significance than previous translations have indicated. This line introduces Gaia's role: "ἣ φέρβει ἐπὶ χθονὶ πάνθ' ὁπόσ' ἐστίν," which means "she who nourishes everything there is on earth." However, the preposition ἐπὶ does not always mean "on;" there are many possible translations, and while "on" fits, it is lackluster. This line has much more depth than is truly translatable in English. The two words "πάν" and "ὁπός" mean "all" and "as many as," respectively, yet they are both used, giving the clause an explicit focus on Gaia's nourishment of *everything*. Furthermore, the verb at the end, εἰμί, meaning "to be," is unnecessary, though it completes the meter. Many inflected languages, and most ancient ones, exclude this word if it is obvious from context.[16] This sentence has multiple layers that are difficult to translate into English. Therefore, the ἐπὶ seems likely to mean more than merely "on." The noun that completes this prepositional phrase is a dative, and I suggest that the ἐπὶ is one of power, of dependence. Thus, everything's nourishment is dependent upon earth, Gaia.

Furthermore, in line 4, the hymn reads, "ἐκ σέθεν ὄλβου" which directly translates to, "out of your happiness." Though, ὁ ὄλβιος, "happiness," can also mean "prosperity."[17] With this entire sentence in mind, especially the verb, "φέρβεται" from φέρβω, meaning "to nourish," my interpretation of the phrase changes two components of the literal translation. I choose the second definition of ὁ ὄλβιος, and I apply a more nuanced meaning to ἐκ: "by the hand of your prosperity." Other translations of this phrase obscure the hymn's poetic undertones whereas my rendition maintains the meaning and continues the flow of the piece. This understanding of the preposition accentuates the quality of Gaia's power and her appreciable influence, which is expressed throughout the hymn.

Regarding lines 6-7, I have again focused on the integrity of the original text and translated as directly as possible: "σεῦ δ' ἔχεται δοῦναι βίον ἠδ' ἀφελέσθαι / θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποισιν," into "you hold the power to give life and livelihood and to take it away / from mortal humans." First, I translate "βίον" as two words, "life and livelihood," unlike any interpretation before me. The accusative in the hymn is derived from the nominative ὁ βίος, the ancient Greek word for "life" as well as "livelihood."[18] In Greek, these two words are expressed in the same way, so the appearance of ὁ βίος in the hymn implies both the idea of "life" and "livelihood;" Gaia has domain over both. Though this is not explicit within the text, the overall laudation of her and her abilities heavily indicates her complete control. My choice to include both considers the connotations of the English terms and Gaia's own abilities. "Life" most simply is the act of living: breathing, growing, and reproducing. It is also an abstract concept that introduces broad ideas about purpose and reason, but these implications overlap the current English understanding of "livelihood." As opposed to "life," "livelihood" is the way in which one lives, a manner of survival and achieving goals. Ultimately, Gaia controls not only humans' physical ability to live, but also *how* people live before their death. This authority is apparent in the hymn through her nourishment of every living being, though it is not implicitly stated, and thus, I translate "βίον" as both "life" and "livelihood."

Before discussing the variations in interpretation of these lines, it is important to note that the most literal translation into English is: "it holds for you to give life and to take it away from mortal people." The verb "ἔχεται," from ἔχω, means "to have/hold," but in Homeric Greek, it often means "to be so," which applies to Gaia's influence and authority.[19] This usage is stronger than εἰμί as it conveys possession as well as existence, through the word's other definitions. In line 6, "ἔχεται" thus means complete domination over life and death; Gaia controls all aspects of existence, as stated in the previous paragraph. Since the verb is in the third person and the personal pronoun "σεῦ" is in the genitive case, the pronoun governs the verb. This impersonal form is frequently used in ancient Greek, so most translators limit their own use of it to ensure the fluidity of their interpretations. Thus, Gaia governs this impersonal verb as a genitive, despite the

[16] Henry George Liddell & Robert Scott. *Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon, Abridged: The Little Liddell.* (Oxford: Simon Wallenberg Press, 2007), 197-98.

[17] S.C. Woodhouse, *Woodhouse English-Greek Dictionary, The University of Chicago Library Woodhouse's English-Greek Dictionary.* (London: Routledge, 1932), 652.

[18] Woodhouse, Woodhouse English-Greek Dictionary, 496.

[19] Liddell & Scott. Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon, 295-96.

convoluted structure, making her the best subject when translating.

However, some scholars have chosen to make "βίον" the subject, rather than the goddess, rewriting the line as, "The giving of life itself, / the taking of it back / to or from / any man / are yours."[20] This translation takes poetic liberty by adding flair in the many line breaks. Though the general meaning is preserved, the line diminishes Gaia's powers by focusing on life and death rather than her own authority over them. Two more such examples appear in both earlier and later translations of the hymn. The former interprets the line to mean, "the life of mortal men beneath thy sway / is held; thy power both gives and takes away!"[21] This translation differs in implication compared to the one above. Both remove Gaia from her role as a life-giver, yet the older version includes an exclamation point. This punctuation expresses the importance and the majesty of Gaia's abilities from a purely English perspective, as ancient Greek has no equivalent mark. This detail provides a more faithful translation of the original text but is still wanting. Both of these understandings lack the same implications for modern readers that ancient listeners would have recognized. They claim that "life" is the subject when it is not, and thus, they are imprecise translations of the hymn.

In a more recent translation of the *Homeric Hymn to Gaia*, lines 6-7 are again interpreted with life as the subject instead of Gaia: "by you / Life's nurture is granted to mortals, and from them is taken away."[22] Here, the genitive personal pronoun discussed earlier is translated first and literally, but it is separated from the rest of the clause by a line break. This split visually isolates Gaia from her role as life-giver and impairs modern perceptions. The focus of the clause centers around mortals' lives rather than Gaia's authority over them and thus displaces the goddess from her abilities, unlike the original text.

Despite those translations of lines 6-7, most interpretations place Gaia in the midst of the action, though not at the forefront as I have, and they largely retain the impersonal factor provided by the verb while including Gaia in the genitive. These versions emphasize her position of power in other ways, however. Two translations use the phrase "it depends on you," though dependence is only implied through the verb ἔχω and not explicitly stated.[23] Others express the Earth Mother's role in life and death by describing her as holding "the power,"[24] and making "the decision."[25] Another claims that Gaia holds mortal life and death "in [her] hands,"[26] and one translation from 1899 reads, "thine it is to give or take life from mortal men."[27] These versions of the hymn maintain Gaia's authority indicated in the original Greek which was excluded in the translations discussed in the previous paragraphs.

Additionally, translators make use of two different versions of "βίον," "life" and "livelihood" as I noted previously, in their own interpretations. Each term carries connotations that affect Gaia's authority and sphere of influence. Most translators use "life" for "βίον" but a few do not: "it depends on you to give livelihood;"[28] "you alone give mortal folk a livelihood;"[29] and "you give and take the livelihood of humans."[30] Both choices affect the audience's understanding of Gaia's abilities. On the one hand, "life" implies that she only has power over birth, the state of being alive, and reproduction. The second verb that governs "βίον," "ἀφελέσθαι," in the aorist, infinitive, middle form of ἀφαιρέω, means "to take away from," but it does not imply any specific method of taking, only the action itself.[31] Therefore, Gaia only has power over the timing of individuals' deaths. There is no indication in the hymn that the goddess has the ability to decide *how* living beings die; she only determines *when*. This translation of "βίον," as "life," thus parallels the original Greek implication of the verb, ἀφαιρέω.

On the other hand, "livelihood" implies that Gaia controls the way in which people live, their experiences, and their very fates. Within the hymn, she repeatedly "nourishes," from the present, indicative, active, third person, singular form of φέρβω, all living things, especially blessing humans and providing for them. The use of "livelihood" to explain "βίον" therefore conveys the larger themes of Gaia's hymn rather than a close reading of line 6. As

[20] Boer, The Homeric Hymns, 1.
[21] Shelley, "LIBRARY SHELF," 20.
[22] Crudden, The Homeric Hymns, 89.
[23] Athanassakis, The Homeric Hymns, 69; West, Homeric Hymns.
[24] Shelmerdine, The Homeric Hymns, 162.
[25] Rossi, "Homeric Hymn, Number 30," 45.
[26] Hine, The Homeric Hymns, 81.
[27] Lang, The Homeric Hymns, 246.
[28] West, Homeric Hymns.
[29] Rayor, The Homeric Hymns, 100.
[30] Ruden & Murnaghan, Homeric Hymns, 93.
[31] Liddell & Scott. Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon, 118.

aforementioned, the ancient Greeks did not distinguish "life" from "livelihood" and seemingly understood them as one concept. They interpreted the act of living as parallel to the way people chose to live. In summation, the original Greek implies both terms due to the broad comprehension of ὁ βίος. Thus, translations of the hymn can use either, despite their varied connotations, though I suggest that both words are necessary to represent Gaia's entire dominion.

The next and last preposition that invites investigation is used twice: "κατά." It first appears in line 9, within a clause about thriving fields: "ἠδὲ κατ' ἀγρούς / κτήνεσιν εὐθηνεῖ." Normally, κατά is defined as "down," but it has a range of other translations. One of these meanings relates specifically to deities, and though Gaia is not directly mentioned in this clause, her spirit is felt as she causes all fields to thrive.[32] Therefore, in this instance, "κατά," with the accusative, signifies Gaia's authority and influence, making the translation "by your favour" most fitting, though the second person possessive pronoun is only implied. Since the hymn is dedicated to and about Gaia, my translation is more applicable than the overly literal and unpoetic interpretation: "individually, fields thrive." This translation of κατά is the only other one that fits grammatically, but it does not connect to the rest of the hymn, thematically.

The second use of "κατά," in line 11, concerns men ruling cities with women. The word is most easily rendered as "with," though this translation is not generally associated with κατά.[33] The most obvious interpretation, without taking cultural beliefs into account, is that this "κατά" is one of conformity or accordance.[34] If so, the full clause translates as "these men rule a law-abiding city in conformity with/according to/answering to beautiful women."[35] However, ancient Greek society is not known for progressive feminist practices. Women were not openly directing men on ways to govern a body of people. It is possible that the speaker was implying some balance between the men who ruled and their wives beside them, but it seems more likely that an accurate translation of the preposition is a simple "with" or "along with" rather than those above. The versions that employ this translation do not limit the women's roles in government in compliance with the implication of the "κατά," nor do they emphasize women's influence over others, thus acknowledging ancient cultural norms. In other translations, lines 11-12 are interpreted differently, though they retain the essence of Gaia's power in both city and nature.

First, the most common translation of this clause is one that grants men rule over the city and implies their indirect governing of the women inside. This understanding is again expressed through the translation of κατά. According to this perception, the preposition separates the women from the city by locating them within it, making the city its own entity. The men rule the city where the women reside: "such men rule righteously *in* cities *of* fair women;"[36] "Earth's favorites rule by good laws *over* cities / *of* lovely women;"[37] and "such men in person preside / in lawful rule *over* towns *where* beautiful women dwell."[38] The translators understand the cultural context of ancient Greece and the likelihood that these women represent the ones controlled by their male counterparts. Though the true meaning of the preposition here is unknown and thus debatable, it still implies accordance between the ruling men and the fair women. Thus, these translators do not directly place the women under the men's command. They keep a balance between the societal and the literary implications of the text, as I also attempted.

Despite these careful considerations and the indistinct quality of the preposition, other interpretations do not separate the women from the city, implying that the women, like the city, are under the men's power. These versions are similar to those above, differing only in their exclusion of an English preposition: "such men with just laws / rule a city of beautiful women,"[39] and "these very ones rule well their cities, cities of fair-looking women."[40] These English translations imply that the city in the hymn is followed by a genitive possessor, the beautiful women,

[32] Liddell & Scott. Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon, 350-51.
[33] Meagan Ayer, "A Grammar of the Homeric Dialect: Κατά." Dickinson College Commentaries, Dickinson College Commentaries, 2014: http://dcc.dickinson.edu/grammar/monro/κατά.
[34] Meagan Ayer, "Homeric and Attic Uses of Prepositions." Dickinson College Commentaries, Dickinson College Commentaries, 2014:
[35] The Greek line reading: "αὐτοὶ δ᾽ εὐνομίῃσι πόλιν κάτα καλλιγύναικα / κοιρανέουσ᾽."
[36] Lang, The Homeric Hymns, 246.
[37] Ruden & Murnaghan, Homeric Hymns, 93.
[38] Crudden, The Homeric Hymns, 89.
[39] Athanassakis, *The Homeric Hymns*, 69.
[40] Rossi, "Homeric Hymn, Number 30," 45.

but this is not accurate. These women are represented as an accusative, like the city, yet the use of "κατά" dictates that the women are, in some way, removed from the city.

Though the preposition does not demand the women's separation from the men's governance, some have interpreted the words in this way by severing the beautiful women from the city in two independent clauses: "these are the men who govern a city with good laws / and the women of their city, / the women are beautiful,"[41] and, "[s]uch / men are lords in communities where law and order prevail and the women / are fair."[42] In these versions, the preposition is ignored and replaced by a conjunction, which misrepresents the original text and the role of "κάτα." One interpreter made the same decision as myself and translated the preposition as "with," but this version of the hymn retains the original word order, leaving the English in disarray: "men such as this, by good order in cities with beautiful women / dominate."[43] While this syntax displays the poetic nature of ancient Greek and captures it faithfully, the English structure is disoriented and confuses modern understanding.

Another translation eschews grammatical sense in order to maintain the essence of poetry. The interpretation reads, "such honoured dwell in cities fair and free, / the homes of lovely women prosperously."[44] The main purpose for changing the syntax of the Greek lies in a coupled rhyme scheme. However, much of the original meaning is lost; these men do not rule a city, they merely live there, and the women appear not only to control their homes, but also to allow the men to live in them. This translation was originally published in 1913, so there are likely linguistic and cultural nuances in the text that are missed in recent analyses of it. This possibility does not excuse the curious changes in the men's command, though. In all, lines 11-12 are impossible to understand fully, outside of their ancient context, but the original words connect Gaia to humans more completely. These lines reveal her influence in urban communities as well as rural, agricultural life, an interesting component of her character that is often under-represented in modern scholarship.

Upon closer inspection, the *Homeric Hymn to Gaia* has been translated loosely in the past in order to express the poetic nature of the original Greek. These translations remove thematic aspects of the hymn from modern understandings and distort the true power and might that the ancient Greeks bestowed on Gaia. The implications of past translations reveal more about the scholars writing them than the Greeks actually worshipping the goddess. Clearly, ancient Greek culture rejected the idea that women were equal to men yet fully recognized their own dependence on the female fertility of humans, animals, and plants. The *Homeric Hymn to Gaia* subversively exposes the cognitive dissonance between female duty and female power upon which ancient Greece was built. Gaia is a singular deity in her encompassing influence over everything living, all as a feminine figure.

Conclusion

In my paper, I have translated the *Homeric Hymn to Gaia*. I have explained certain choices that I made by discussing the implications expressed in the original text. My reading of the hymn unveils Gaia as an influential and powerful female figure. The hymn highlights her ultimate power over life and death, yet this authority is diminished and her influence restricted in many translations. I described these inaccurate reflections of the poem, particularly concentrating on prepositions and syntax.

The ancient Greeks worshipped Gaia as a female authority with significant influence and command, yet the hymn gives no indication that women were treated with respect due to the goddess' celebration. The *Homeric Hymn to Gaia* thus does not reveal dramatic new information about the Mother Goddess character, but it shows that the ancient Greeks feminized a force they felt everywhere and on which they believed they were wholly dependent, despite a patriarchal society and a male-dominated view of the world. Gaia represents the very idea of *Life*; she is the earth itself, mother to all, yet she has inexplicably been isolated from the Mother Goddess debate.

Rejoice, Gaia, of you, I have written.

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[41] Boer, The Homeric Hymns, 1.

[42] West, Homeric Hymns.

[43] Hine, The Homeric Hymns, 81.

[44] Shelley, "LIBRARY SHELF," 20.

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ANTINOUS, THE VICTORIAN: THE BRIDGING OF QUEER HISTORY AND POETICS IN THE WORK OF J.A. SYMONDS

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It is no secret that Victorian Britons held a profound admiration for the Classical world. The Victorians engaged with the ancients as one would engage with a mirror: when they looked into the Greco-Roman past, what the British saw was really themselves. Through their knowledge of ancient history, *mythos*, philosophy, politics, and aesthetics, they gained the vocabulary to articulate their identities on multiple levels. One of these levels was, of course, sexuality. Victorian Britain was the site of vibrant, growing queer sub-cultures that sought, in the ancient world, a sense of continuity and ancestry. The ancient past became a source of strength and resistance against contemporary homophobia. From this context, a number of "queer icons" would emerge. It was in this queer pantheon of the ancient world that the Victorians enshrined Antinous, the eternally youthful lover of the Roman emperor Hadrian. This paper focuses on the reception of Antinous, evaluating his portrayal in the writings of J.A. Symonds (1840-1893). Symonds was a historian, literary critic, and poet. Even though he was married to a woman and had several daughters, he was a profoundly conflicted queer man.[1] He wrote about Antinous in two capacities: historical and poetic. With this Janus-faced approach, Symonds grappled with the methodological challenges of writing queer history and, at the same time, breathed life into a historical character whose (queer) perspective does not survive in his own terms. In juggling between the capacities of a historian and a poet, Symonds was able to transcend the limits of the historical record to humanize Antinous.

Antinous, the Ancient: The Man and the Myth

Before delving into Symonds, it is necessary to explore the life and legend of Antinous. Antinous is certainly not as elusive as Sappho, but there are some significant limits to what can be known about him. According to ancient historian Cassius Dio, Antinous was born in Bithynium a city in the Greek province of Bithynia, located in modern-day Turkey.[2] His date of birth is imprecise, but scholars estimate that he might have been born around 110 CE.[3] Although some scholars assume that Antinous was of a very low station, it is much more likely that he had a respectable (although not aristocratic) standing in society.[4] Antinous eventually attracted the attention of Roman emperor Hadrian, who took him as a lover (or, as Pausanias calls him, a "favourite").[5] The relationship between Hadrian and Antinous was relatively short-lived: Antinous had been installed in the imperial court by 128 CE and died ca. 130 CE. The circumstances of Antinous' death are nebulous. Cassius Dio writes: "[Antinous] had died in Egypt, either by falling into the Nile, as Hadrian writes, or, as the truth is, by being offered in sacrifice."[6] The aftermath of Antinous' death was marked by Hadrian's "excessive" grief, which brought him to be ridiculed among the Romans.[7] He erected a city, Antinoöpolis, where

[1] Thomas L. Heacox, ""Idealized Through Greece": Hellenism and Homoeroticism in Works by Wilde, Symonds, Mann, and Forster," *Sexuality & Culture* 8, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 60-61.
[2] Sarah Waters, ""The Most Famous Fairy in History": Antinous and Homosexual Fantasy," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 6, no. 2 (Oct. 1995): 197.
[3] Waters, "Antinous and Homosexual Fantasy," 197.
[4] Waters, "Antinous and Homosexual Fantasy," 197.
[5] Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 8.9.7.
[6] Cassius Dio, "Epithome of Book LXIX," in *Roman History*, 11.
[7] Cassius Dio, "Epithome of Book LXIX," 11.

Antinous had died.[8] Following the rites of the Egyptians for those who perished in the Nile, Hadrian deified Antinous.[9] Additionally, Hadrian ordered the creation of sculptures and images in Antinous's likeness. Many of these sculptures survive to this day, serving as an invaluable resource for historians and classicists.[10]

Even though much is known about Antinous, nothing is known from him. Ancient historians such as Cassius Dio and Pausanias refer to him only inasmuch as he relates to Hadrian; he does not seem to exist as an entity in his own right, but always as an appendix to the Roman emperor. Nowhere does Antinous speak, but everywhere he is spoken for. That is where we lose the grasp of Antinous as a man of flesh and bone. Because he was deified and memorialized by a man of immense power, the cultural reception of Antinous began much earlier than in the Victorian era: it started right after his death on the Nile. Hadrian took the role of a creator, shaping Antinous' image to be preserved in posterity. However, authors and artists have long contributed a great deal in shaping Antinous in the cultural imagination.[11] In writing about Antinous, Symonds struggled with recovering him as a real man. He struggled with the task of breathing life- queer life, at that-into someone that survives only as a sculpted vessel of marble. This challenge resonates through Symonds's scholarship and literary production.

Symonds, the Historian: Antinous in Sketches and Studies in Italy and Greece

John Addington Symonds Jr. was born in October of 1840, in Bristol, England. Symonds hailed from a family that was well-off, though not aristocratic. His father, with whom he shares his name, was a prominent physician. As many young gentlemen of good means, Symonds was educated at some of Britain's most prestigious institutions, attending Harrow and the University of Oxford.[12] Thus, Symonds was very much a product of an education that was both strictly homosocial and that prized classical education; at the same time that he was beginning to discover (and act upon) his feelings for other men, he was learning about texts such as the *Iliad* and the *Symposium*.[13] It was through this intertwining of real-life experience and classical scholarship that Symonds began to understand and articulate his own identity. At a time of criminalization and relentless vitriol against queer men, Symonds was a staunch advocate of homosexuality. His understanding of history was embedded in his advocacy. In texts such as *A Problem in Greek Ethics* or *A Problem in Modern Ethics*, he sought to historicize male queerness and point out the hypocrisy he encountered in Victorian Britain.[14] At the center of his scholarly advocacy was a sense that male queerness could not be erased from Greek history. He writes: "To ignore pederastia is to neglect one of the features by which Greek civilisation was most sharply distinguished. Yet this has been done by nearly all writers in Greek history and literature."[15] Standing against this erasure of history, Symonds established that shining a light on the historical nature of love between men was at the heart of his scholarship, advocacy, and literary *corpus*.

Even though Antinous is not given anything more than a footnote in Symond's *A Problem in Greek* Ethics, he is given far more extensive treatment in a different text. Antinous was the subject of an essay found in the last of three volumes of Symonds' *Sketches and Studies in Italy and Greece*, which was first published in 1879.[16] At this point in time, Symonds had moved to Davos, Switzerland- enjoying a certain distance from British academia- he relied on a robust network of friends (many of whom were queer) to help him obtain "the books, illustrations, and information necessary for his study."[17] Thus, as Waters defines, his Antinous was the product of a specific late-19th century collaborative homosexual project that moved between Britain and the continent.[18] Symonds' Antinous spoke to an idyllic ideal of pederastic love, which Symonds implicitly

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[8] Waters, "Antinous and Homosexual Fantasy," 197.

[9] Waters, "Antinous and Homosexual Fantasy," 198.

[10] Waters, "Antinous and Homosexual Fantasy," 198.

[11] Bryan E. Burns, "Sculpting Antinous," *Helios* 35, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 136-137.

[12] Emily Rutherford, "Impossible Love and Victorian Values: J.A. Symonds and the Intellectual History of Homosexuality," Journal of the History of Ideas 75, no. 4 (Oct. 2014): 605-607.

[13] Rutherford, "Impossible Love," 606-607.

[14] Rutherford, "Impossible Love," 612. Although Victorian British academics looked up to Ancient philosophy and history, they brushed the queerness embedded in texts such as the *Symposium* to the side. Extreme reverence to the Ancient past co-existed, too, with an increasing criminalization of male homosexuality.

[15] Sean Brady (ed.), *John Addington Symonds (1840-1893) and Homosexuality: A Critical Edition of Sources*. (Palgrave MacMillan, 2012): 43.

[16] J.A. Symonds, "Antinous," in *Sketches and Studies in Italy and Greece* (Venice, 1898: Project Gutenberg, July 22, 2006).

[17] Waters, "Antinous and Homosexual Fantasy," 204-205.

[18] Waters, "Antinous and Homosexual Fantasy," 204-206.

praised in his *A Problem in Greek Ethics*.[19] Most notable in the larger scheme of things is the fact that Symonds's essay on Antinous was the first to be written on the English language, establishing itself as tremendously significant for many historians, poets, and *aesthetes* that followed.[20]

Symonds's essay on Antinous is a testament to his remarkable versatility as a scholar. He moves swiftly between history, art history, theology, philosophy and more to weave a complex picture of Antinous that takes into consideration his existence as an image sculpted out of marble and as a man of flesh and bone. "In spite of the perplexity and mystery that involve the death of Antinous in impenetrable gloom," he writes, "he is a true historic personage, no phantom of myth, but a man as real as Hadrian, his master."[21] In this way, Symonds tries to re-construct Antinous' life, his relationship with Hadrian, and, most importantly, the reason behind his death. He brings forth the possibility that Antinous may have sacrificed himself for the emperor, but dismisses it as uncertain later in the text:

> All that we have any right to take for uncontested is that Antinous passed from this life near the city of Besa, called thereafter Antinoopolis or Antinöe. Whether he was drowned by accident, whether he drowned himself in order to save Hadrian by vicarious suffering, or whether Hadrian sacrificed himself in order to extort the secrets of date from blood-propitiated deities, remains a question buried in the deepest gloom.[22]

In the last part of this essay, Symonds sets out to explore the possible circumstances of Antinous' death. Upon reviewing and interpreting a host of ancient sources, including Cassius Dio and Sextus Aurelius Victor, he dismisses the possibility that Hadrian might have sacrificed Antinous. For him, it is much more likely that Antinous "drowned either by accident or by voluntary suicide to save his master's life."[23] In the end, the specifics between these two options do not matter for what Symonds is trying to convey. Symonds argues that, through his excessive grief and displays of mourning, Hadrian was engaging in a make-believe to "realize… a portion of his Greek ideal."[24] Hadrian seized the opportunity to place Antinous in the pantheon of Ganymede, Patroclus, and Hephaestion; figures that, for the Victorians, embodied the ideal of "Greek love." Hadrian's pursuit of Hellenism is a mirror of the Victorians', and it might be that through this identification Symonds is really reflecting his own relationship with "Greek love."[25]

When he is brought to consider the personal character of Antinous, Symonds presents a litany of "what ifs." Did Antinous have something special in himself, something that was divine or particularly inspired? "May it not have been that he was a youth of more than ordinary promise, gifted with intellectual enthusiasms proportioned to his beauty and endowed with something of Phoeban inspiration,"[26] he muses. He asks: "Was the link between him and Hadrian formed less by the boy's beauty than by his marvellous capacity for apprehending and his fitness for realizing the Emperor's Greek dreams?"[27] His questions remain unanswered, because "antiquity is altogether silent about [Antinous]."[28] Symonds struggles with the limits imposed upon his study of Antinous by the lack of sources that come *from* him. It is impossible to re-construct his personality, or even the particulars of his relationship with Hadrian. The In the end of the essay, Symonds accepts the unfeasibility of attaining his answers: "Over all these questions, over all that concerns Antinous, there rests a cloud of darkness and impenetrable doubt. To pierce that cloud is now impossible. The utmost we can do is to indulge our fancy dreams of greater or less probability, and to mark out the clearly the limitations of the subject."[29] These obstacles are hard for a historian to overcome but might be easier for a poet.

Symonds, the Poet: The Dying Antinous in the "Lotos-Garland"

Symonds' poem "The Lotos-Garland of Antinous" was published in his *Many Moods* in 1878. In many ways, the contents of this collection encapsulate Symonds's varied historical interests: Ancient Greece and Rome, Renaissance Italy, the Bible, and queer figures from myth and history. As Waters explains, the

[19] Waters, "Antinous and Homosexual Fantasy," 204.
[20] Waters, "Antinous and Homosexual Fantasy," 206.
[21] Symonds, "Antinous."
[22] Symonds, "Antinous."
[23] Symonds, "Antinous."
[24] Symonds, "Antinous."
[25] Linda C. Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Cornell University Press, 2014): 79.
[26] Symonds, "Antinous."
[27] Symonds, "Antinous."
[28] Symonds, "Antinous."
[29] Symonds, "Antinous."

act of placing the "Lotos-Garland" in *Many Moods* was a "gesture of bravado on Symonds's part" to test out the tolerance that English society would have for a poem centered on Antinous. The "Lotos-Garland" follows Antinous through his last moments in the Nile. In the beginning of the poem, Antinous is only presented through the perspective of Hadrian. The language he uses is very erotically charged, describing Antinous's "orbed breasts, smooth as dawn-smitten snow," and "his cheeks… wan with passion; and the soul upon his lips, / smouldering like some fierce planet in eclipse."[30] Here, Antinous does not have any voice. It is only towards the middle of the poem that the reader gets in contact with Antinous' perspective. It is revealed that the youth will sacrifice himself to save his emperor's life, a decision of his own.

Symonds works to flesh out Antinous's inner world. Antinous is conflicted about his station and the nature of his relationship with Hadrian. He refers to himself as "a slave—the toy and bauble of a king, / Picked from the dust to play with—a cheap thing, / Irksome as soon as used—a cup to sip, / Then fling with loathing from the sated lip!— / Therefore I die more nobly."[31] Symonds' Antinous also displays tensions with gender. He compares himself to a "…. bride, / Sumptuous in sacrifice and pomp and choir."[32] His sacrifice, as well as the rituals that surrounded it, are akin to a marriage that can only be consecrated in death. In fleshing out Antinous's inner world and the conflicts that the youth might have faced, Symonds is reflecting on his own anxieties as a queer man living in Victorian Britain. Although Symonds was painfully aware of his feelings for other men, as demonstrated in his personal writings, he still put on a façade that gave into the heteronormativity that was required at the time. It is reasonable to infer that, for Symonds, queer love and martyrdom were inextricably linked; if enacting one's desires is not possible in life, it might be possible in death.

Conclusion

To conclude, Antinous was a significant figure in Victorian Britain. He emerged as a queer icon, haunting the works of many authors – including the historian, poet, and literary critic John Addington Symonds. Symonds wrote about Antinous in two capacities: historical and literary. In his historical writing, even though Symonds tries to re-construct the real Antinous, he struggles with the lack of sources coming from him. Because it is impossible to touch the real Antinous through historical scholarship, Symonds engages in a "dream," a literary confabulation: his poem *The Lotos-Garland of Antinous* which approaches the last days of the youth as he voyaged with his master through the Nile. This poem is remarkable because it gives Antinous a voice that he lacks in most of the historical record. It paints a much more vivid picture of his feelings, conflicts, and so forth. In doing so, Symonds brings Antinous closer to humanity and to queer men with real struggles, such as himself. In filling the gaps and fleshing out the inner world of Antinous, it is likely that Symonds was speaking of his own anxieties as a queer man living in a repressive and homophobic Victorian society. Symonds was, too, speaking back to those who would rather erase or obscure Antinous from history for his "infamy."[33]

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THE RUTHWELL MONUMENT AND THE CASE FOR ANGLO-SAXON FOLK ART

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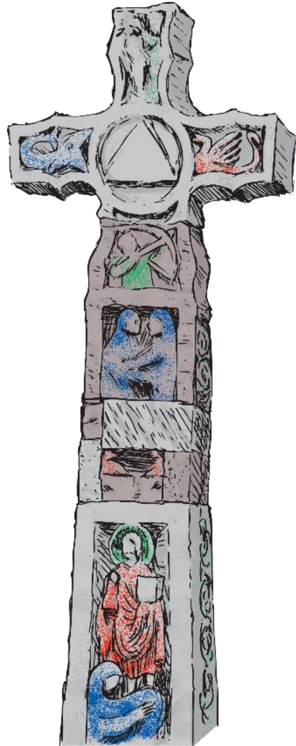

The concept of folklore[1] and its constituents—folk art, folk music, and folk culture in general—are infamously difficult to define. In his seminal book, Alan Dundes simply provides a list of things that folklore[2] can be, rather than providing a succinct definition; his list includes charms, riddles, rhymes, mnemonic devices, and even various architectural designs.[3] Later, scholars such as Elliot Oring attempted to further define folklore by giving it a temporal and social dimension. For Oring, folklore is distinctly lower-class: it "must be touched and transformed by common experience" and "emphasize the human and personal as opposed to the formal and institutional."[4] This connection with the lower class apparently ties folklore to the past; it is the last vestige of a previous culture that has been officially replaced but is still unofficially alive in the traditions and art of the common people. More recently, William Pooley has argued against the "retrospective"[5] understanding of folklore and instead sees folklore as a kind of active, current, and ongoing performance. Pooley also places less emphasis on class and more on officiousness, succinctly defining folklore as anything "transmitted informally."[6] However, the succinctness of this definition causes any clear meaning to disintegrate fairly quickly. Pooley's initial examples of things that can be transmitted informally—and therefore fall into the category of folklore—are skills like basket weaving and cooking, which can be taught through observation and verbal explanation. However, Pooley goes on to clarify that "folklorists today are not absolutely committed to the primacy of 'orality.'"[7] The formal and the informal, or the official and the unofficial, are the operative concepts in distinguishing between what is and is not folk. What is considered formal or informal, of course, largely depends on geographical and historical context. Any definition of folk, then, must depend on the contexts of time and place.

The Ruthwell Monument, as one of the most famous and complicated works of Anglo-Saxon[8] art, is

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[1] Contrary to popular understandings of the term 'lore,' the modifier 'lore' simply means any materials that can be considered 'folk' in the context of academic folklore studies. This paper is mainly concerned with the 'folk' as opposed to the 'lore.' See Alan Dundes, *The Study of Folklore* (Prentice-Hall, 1965), 1.

[2] Scholars tend to make very little distinction between folklore and folk art, with folk art being generally treated as a sub-category of folklore. For clarity, because the Ruthwell Monument is primarily decorative, visual, and ceremonial, I refer to it as a work of art and discuss the merits of classifying it as folk *art* specifically. However, when referring to other scholars I must use their words, and many of them tend to opt for 'folklore' as their central term.

[3] Alan Dundes, *The Study of Folklore*. (Hoboken: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 3.

[4] Elliot Oring, *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: An Introduction* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1986), 16.

[5] William Pooley, "Folklore," in *Bloomsbury History: Theory and Method* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), 8.

[6] Ibid., 2.

[7] Ibid., 3.

[8] Some concern has been raised in recent years over the continued use of this term in Medieval Studies due to its appropriation in contemporary American culture. Here, the term is used to refer to the diverse mix of Germanic cultural groups occupying the British Isles from roughly the sixth to eleventh centuries. For more on the debate surrounding this term, see David Wilton, "What Do We Mean by Anglo-Saxon?" *JEGP* 119, no. 4, (2020): 425–56.

an interesting exemplar through which to approach a definition of folk art in Early Medieval England (ca. 500–1000 AD)—something which no study has yet attempted. A lack of extant records due to the passage of time and the destructive plundering of the Viking raids make contemporary understandings of Anglo-Saxon culture murky, unstable, and subject to constant debate. This obfuscates distinctions between the culturally official and unofficial in Early Medieval England. Some scholars skirt the edge of discussing Anglo-Saxon folk culture, but few name it explicitly and none provide clarification on what they consider to be 'folk' in this culture and why.[9] The common thread connecting these scholars' work is the idea that Anglo-Saxons created a corpus of visual art and literature that looked back in time to search for an "overriding sense of belonging to a common race . . . derived from a common past allegiance to pagan Germanic Gods."[10] While Pooley's definition of folklore puts the past and present in conflict, this need not be the case. The Anglo-Saxons attempted to locate their Germanic ancestry in order to teach themselves how to live in their current moment. A focus on the past, then, becomes the cornerstone upon which to build an understanding of Anglo-Saxon folk art and its functions. The other apparent pillars of the definition of folk—a focus on the human and a connection to a so-called unofficial culture—also complicate attempts to define and measure Anglo-Saxon folk art. In the case of Early Medieval England, the Church and the aristocracy are undoubtedly the official institutions. However, all literature and art of the Anglo-Saxon period is famously touched by Christianity. As such an essential part of life in Early Medieval England, the presence of Christian themes or motifs in a work of art is not enough to dismiss the possibility of it being folk.[11] At the very least, any art written or spoken in Latin—the language of learned members of the Church—could certainly be considered non-folk. Christian themes expressed in the vernacular or in images in a context where the artwork could plausibly be intended for the average layperson, on the other hand, could be considered folk. Locating artwork or literature that is non-aristocratic is also a fraught endeavour; books were expensive to produce and inaccessible to laypeople, and more ephemeral works of art (or works of art made with lower-quality materials) are far less likely to survive. In summary, the preliminary requirements for any Anglo-Saxon work to be considered *folk* are the use of the vernacular language, a concern with the human rather than the institutional, and/or a connection (real or perceived) with the Germanic past. Reading the Ruthwell Monument through this preliminary definition both illustrates the difficulty of drawing the boundaries of folk art in Early Medieval England and reveals that folk elements in works of Anglo-Saxon art are vital tools for identity-making.

The Ruthwell Monument is a work of Northumbrian sculpture, located in the area now known Dumfriesshire, Scotland. It is generally dated to the eighth century.[12] The monument is a free-standing cross, approximately five meters tall, with carved images and text covering nearly all of its visible surface area.[13] The original cross-head is lost and was replaced with a speculative reproduction designed by Henry Duncan in 1823.[14] The broad sides[15] feature images, carved in relief, of biblical scenes spanning the life of Christ from the Annunciation up until the Crucifixion. These images are bordered with Latin inscriptions that act as captions. The inclusion of Latin text would seem to preclude the possibility of the Monument being a work of folk art. However, Latin is not the only language inscribed onto the surface of the Ruthwell Monument: its narrow sides include relief carvings of interlacing vine scroll and animals,

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[9] See J. D. Niles, *Old English Enigmatic Poems and the Play of the Texts* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 23-26; Nicholas Brooks "The Church in Northumbria," in *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture, AD 600–900*, ed. Leslie Webster and Janet Blackhouse (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 108–110.

[10] Nicholas Brooks, "Historical Introduction," in *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture, AD 600–900*, ed. Leslie Webster and Janet Blackhouse (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 9.

[11] Niles even goes as far as to say that the clergy and the laity cannot be separated because clergy members come from lay families, and laypeople are familiar with the teachings and rituals of Christianity. See Niles, *Old English Enigmatic Poems*, 2-3.

[12] Richard Bailey, *England's Earliest Sculptors* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1996), 42.

[13] For images of the cross and transcriptions of its texts, see Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of the Dream of the Rood Tradition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), xxi–xxix.

[14] Brendan Cassidy, "The Later Life of the Ruthwell Cross: From the Seventeenth Century to the Present," in *The Ruthwell Cross* ed. Brendan Cassidy, (Princeton: Index of Christian Art, 1989), 16.

[15] I avoid listing the cardinal directions of each side because the current orientation of the cross is likely not its intended orientation. For more, see Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, 23–24.

bordered with lines of Old English verse carved in runes. R. I. Page, the foremost expert on Anglo-Saxon runology, translates the verse as follows:

> Almighty God stripped himself as he prepared to climb the gallows, valiant in men's sight . . . I raised up a great king, lord of heaven. I dared not bow down. Men reviled us both together. I was drenched with blood . . . Christ was on the cross. Yet to him in his solitude came noble men, eager, from afar. I beheld it all. I was bitterly troubled with griefs. I bowed . . . wounded with arrows. Down they laid that limb-weary one. They stood at the corpse's head. There they beheld . . .[16]

The monument is a multimedia, multilingual work of art. The actual purpose of the Ruthwell Monument, particularly the purpose of the runic verse, remains elusive. Weathering evidence indicates the Monument stood outside for about thirty to sixty years before it was moved inside the parish church at Ruthwell, where Éamonn Ó Carragáin posits that it was displayed behind the altar.[17] The Monument's public location, the presence of vernacular language, and the use of an alternate writing system undercut its more official traits and open it to the possibility of being considered folk art.

First and foremost, the runic verse on the Ruthwell Monument is remarkable for the very fact that it is carved in runes. While runes have a genealogical connection to the Roman alphabet,[18] they are distinctly Germanic and came to the British Isles from Scandinavia. The tradition of runic writing is distinct from the tradition of Latin writing, and runic literacy in the vernacular does not necessarily equate to high-status, Latin literacy. However, this is not to suggest that runic was a commonly known writing system in Early Medieval England. Literacy, whether in runic or Roman, was a specialized skill. The most crucial difference between the runic and Roman writing systems, then, is cultural. Even to those illiterate in runes, runic is visually recognizable as a form of writing that is distinct from the official writing of the Church and that has connections to the Germanic past. Runes can thus be seen as folk because of their association with the Anglo-Saxons' pre-Christian ancestry. The pre-Christian is thus brought into accord with the Christian as runic writing comes to express Christian ideas and is presented alongside Latin. The monument continually undercuts its associations with the official institution of the Church and its Latin language, fusing the Germanic past with the Christian present.

The earliest extant runes in England are found on the Caistor-By-Norwich astragalus: the ankle bone of a deer, likely used as a game piece, carved with runes that simply read "raihan" (roe deer). Other early runes exist in similar contexts, carved on small, portable items.[19] Large stone monuments with runic inscriptions are a distinctly Northumbrian trend that arrives later, presumably derived from the earlier portable runes. Page even goes as far as to call the Northumbrian sculpture tradition "secondary"[20] to portable runic inscriptions, asserting that the convention of runic inscriptions on portable objects continues during the Northumbrian sculpture movement. While some other Northumbrian sculptures, like the Bewcastle Cross, also feature runic inscriptions, in comparison to the Ruthwell Monument, "no European monument of the early Middle Ages gives vernacular poetry such a prominent part in its design."[21] On one hand the five-meter stone cross is both impressive and imposing, aggrandizing and monumentalizing its subject matter. The inclusion of vernacular runes previously found on smaller objects, however, shrinks the monument's scale by aligning it with more personal objects and with a convention of inscription that may have been already familiar to the cross's audience. Whether this convention can be considered folk is difficult to say for certain. Some portable objects, like jewellery, were certainly not low status or non-aristocratic in the Early Middle Ages.[22] At the very least, the possibility exists that the runes may have undercut some of the Monument's more official, institutional characteristics via their association with a localized trend.

Small, portable runic inscriptions are also often linked by self-referentiality: via the runic inscription,

[16] R. I. Page, *Runes: Reading the Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 39. Ellipses indicate where the text is too damaged to read.

[17] Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and Rood*, 23.

[18] R. I. Page, *An Introduction to English Runes*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), 16.

[19] For a survey of examples, see "Runes Elsewhere" in Page, *An Introduction to English Runes*, 157–185.

[20] Ibid., 106.

[21] Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and Rood*, 48.

[22] However, Page posits that the runic inscriber may not have necessarily been a highly educated person. See *An Introduction to English Runes*, 35.

the object tells the reader about itself. The Caistor-by-Norwich astragalus tells the reader what the object is made of; the Wheatley-Hill ring is inscribed with runes that read "hring ic hattæ" (I am called ring);[23] the Derby plaque is a piece of carved bone that reads "God gecaþ aræ Hadda þi þis wrat" (God saves by his mercy Hadda who wrote this).[24] Many such examples exist, with some incorporating Latin but the vast majority employing the vernacular.[25] These inscriptions have folk characteristics due to their focus on the human. Their messages are small and intimate, directed at the people in close proximity with the object and, as in the case of the Derby Plaque, with the people who made the object. These inscriptions personify the objects themselves by giving them a voice, therefore connecting them with the animate individuals who made them, owned them, and used them. The runic verse on the Ruthwell Monument is likewise self-referential: the cross speaks about itself and narrates its own role in the crucifixion of Christ. It thus achieves a similar effect as the Wheatley-Hill ring and the Derby plaque; the monument becomes humanized and, therefore, triggers an affective connection in its viewers. For the Anglo-Saxon audience that laid eyes on the monument and read its verse (or had it read aloud to them), the monument makes Christ's sacrifice immediate. In reading the vivid, violent description of the crucifixion, the Anglo-Saxon audience members—be they clergy, aristocracy, or laity—become passive spectators in the death of Christ. Just as the cross identifies itself as culpable in the death of Christ, all audience members—according to Christian tradition—are sinners and therefore also culpable. The monument forges a bond between itself and all members of the community. While the Monument was likely sometimes viewed and used by the clergy, its vernacular verse functions as an especially useful didactic tool for those unlettered individuals who may not have been able to access Christian doctrine through Latin scripture and liturgy. The runic verse of the Ruthwell Monument, therefore, acts as a vernacular entry point of exegesis for a lay audience. However, the experience of seeing and hearing the verse would have been incorporated into an institutional religious context. The result is the construction, or perhaps strengthening, of a connection between community members and the traditions of the Church.

The self-referential runic inscription of the Ruthwell Monument, in causing the cross to speak, is evocative of the oral tradition. The monument's connection to orality is evident not only in voice of the personified cross itself, but also in the multiple extant analogues of the Ruthwell runic verse. The Brussels Cross, an eleventh-century metalwork reliquary, is also inscribed with two lines of verse featuring the speaking cross: "cross is my name; long ago I bore trembling a mighty king."[26] Additionally, *The Dream of the Rood*, a tenth-century literary poem in the Vercelli Book, is sometimes considered an extended version of the Ruthwell runic verse: it repeats several key phrases from the inscribed poem, and scholars often fill in the blanks of the Ruthwell runic verse using lines from *Dream*. Scholarly debate rages on about whether the Ruthwell verse or *Dream* came first; the Monument undoubtedly predates the Vercelli Book, but some suggest the runic verse was added to the monument at a later date.[27] While this debate is interesting, the date of the Ruthwell runic verse is not particularly important for my purposes. What matters most is that three exceedingly similar poems have survived the centuries, pointing to the possibility that even more of such poetry existed in Early Medieval England. Some of this poetry may have been oral. Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* famously recounts a story about a poet named Caedmon, an illiterate layperson who was divinely inspired to compose oral vernacular verse based on scripture. Though many elements of the story have obviously been embellished, it is generally accepted that Caedmon was a real, renowned English poet, and that other elements of the story—such as the workings of the oral tradition—have roots in reality. The story begins with Caedmon failing to partake in a social ritual involving the communal composition of

[23] "Finger Ring," 8th C, glass and silver, 18 mm x 9 mm, The British Museum, London,

[24] "Mount; plaque," 8th–10th C, bone, 8.0 cm x 2.20 cm, The British Museum, London, 8.

[25] Catherine Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011), 137.

[26] Translation by Seeta Chaganti, "Vestigial Signs: Inscription, Perfomance, and 'The Dream of the Rood,'" *PMLA* 125, no. 1 (2010): 55.

[27] Patrick W. Conner argues for a later inscription date in "The Ruthwell Monument Runic Poem in a Tenth-Century Context," *The Review of English Studies* 59, no. 1 (2008): 25–51; Ó Carragáin argues for the inscription being an intended part of the monument in *Ritual and Rood*.

vernacular oral poetry, performed casually by illiterate layfolk and therefore never written down. The story thus points to the folk—lower-class, illiterate, vernacular, and informal—composition and transmission of poetry. The existence of analogues to the Ruthwell runic verse and the extant records of folk poetic composition suggest that the poem on the Ruthwell Monument may have come from a commonly known oral folk tradition of vernacular verse depicting a speaking cross. This, alongside the Monument's public location, also points to the potential of the runic verse itself being involved in ritual[28] oral performances. The vernacularity and familiarity of the conventions of the speaking cross poem make the otherwise official, Latinate monument accessible, via oral performance, to the wider public in Early Medieval England.

Oral poetry can also be considered folk for reasons beyond its accessibility to the illiterate. J. D. Niles posits that the image of the Anglo-Saxon oral poet, like Caedmon, was a cultural myth by the eighth century.[29] Niles's mythic oral poet is a person who was specially trained and tasked with the preservation of the community's history, literature, and culture via the oral composition and recitation of vernacular poetry. Increasingly, scholars posit that extant written English poetry was composed on and for the page.[30] This is not to claim that by the eighth century England had become a completely literary society; orality remains as a method of textual circulation, and there still exists the possibility of casual, oral vernacular verse that was never written down. According to Niles, the myth of the oral poet was part of a search for a distinctly English cultural identity that "complemented, without ever contradicting, the alternative Rome-centered image of the past that many of the more learned members of society had cultivated ever since the time of the Conversion."[31] The oral vernacular verse composed and recited by the mythic oral poet is supplementary to the literary Latin of the Church, fleshing out the Anglo-Saxon cultural identity. Additionally, all evidence that remains of the socially significant oral poets and their function come from texts, like Bede's, that are referencing back to an embellished past. While Bede's text is directly related to the Church, other examples of the mythic oral poet can be found in Old English poetry that leans more secular and attempts to reconstruct the specifically pre-Christian, Germanic ancestry of the Anglo-Saxons. Most notably, Æschere in *Beowulf* fills the role by being a trusted advisor, knowledge-keeper, and interpreter in Hrothgar's court. While orality can be considered folk because it can stem from and engender the traditions of laypeople, in the context of Early Medieval England orality is also folk because it evokes the Germanic past. As a cross that proverbially speaks in the vernacular, the Ruthwell Monument itself is the mythologized oral poet. The cross preserves the memory of the most significant event in the history of the Church, but does so in a way that also preserves the vernacular language and its alternative cultural tradition. The cross paradoxically monumentalizes the pre-Christian, pre-literate traditions of oral poetry and Christian literate tradition all at once.

Like the oral poetic tradition, the heroic poetic tradition is perceived as tied to the Germanic past. Niles refers heroic poetry like *Beowulf* as a form of nationalistic identity-making that was "a projection of a desire. . .for a distinguished non-Roman racial past."[32] While the Anglo-Saxons would have perceived this genre as distinctly Germanic and thus separated from the Church, the question of whether heroic poetry can be classified as folk is a difficult question. The genre was concerned with—and, as Pooley points out, funded by—the aristocracy.[33] However, the runic verse of the Ruthwell Monument is an appropriation of the heroic genre wherein Christ, rather than a Germanic aristocrat, occupies the role of hero. The crucifixion is portrayed as a battle, Christ as a valiant warrior, and the cross as his thane. A few of the genre's major traditional images are subverted:

[28] For more on the possibility of rituals involving the Ruthwell Monument see Seeta Chaganti, "Vestigial Signs"; Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and Rood*; Heather Maring, "Toward a Ritual Poetics: Dream of the Rood as a Case Study," *Oral Tradition* 26, no. 2 (2011), 391–410.

[29] J. D. Niles, "The Myth of the Anglo-Saxon Oral Poet," *Western Folklore* 62, no. 1 (2003), 70-61; see also Roberta Frank, "The Search for the Anglo-Saxon Oral Poet," in *Textual and Material Culture in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Donald Scragg (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003).

[30] See Mark Amodio, *Writing the Oral Tradition: Oral Poetics and Literate Culture in Medieval England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 39; Seth Lerer, *Literacy and Power in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 4.

[31] Niles, "The Myth of the Anglo-Saxon Oral Poet," 35.

[32] J. D. Niles, *Old English Heroic Poems and the Social Life of Texts* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 17.

[33] Pooley, "Folklore," 6.

Christ strips rather than arms himself and submits to execution rather than dying gloriously during combat. The runic poem of the Ruthwell Monument cherry-picks the folk aspects of each genre it emulates, simultaneously emphasizing the heroic violence of the crucifixion and the humility of Christ's sacrifice. The Germanic warrior poetry tradition is intertwined with Christian doctrine as the monument finds the middle ground between the two in order to construct a version of the crucifixion story that is custom fitted to the Anglo-Saxon cultural identity as both Germanic and Christian.

The final notable folk-like element of the Ruthwell Monument is the aesthetic of the vine scroll carvings framed by the runic verse. Scholars generally agree that the Northumbrian standing cross monuments were inspired by sculpture on the continent, particularly in the Mediterranean or France, that Anglo-Saxons may have encountered on pilgrimages.[34] However, Bailey admits that the vine-scroll carvings on the Ruthwell Monument, in their non-geometric interlace and inclusion of animal figures, are unlike any sculptural art on the continent.[35] Instead, he locates Byzantine metalwork as the inspiration for this trend in Northumbrian sculpture. Yet earlier in the same book Bailey states: "pre-Christian Anglo-Saxon art is not expressed through stone carving; it is an art of *metalwork*, of wood, of textiles, and of pottery."[36] Why, then, can't the vine-scroll on the Ruthwell Monument be considered an heir to the pre-Christian tradition of metalwork? Indeed, the interlacing vines and animals on the narrow sides of the Ruthwell Monument are not unlike the animal interlace motifs found on the jewellery unearthed at the Sutton Hoo ship burial site. Rather than mimicking eastern trends, the vine scroll could be a recall to the Anglo-Saxons' ancestral Germanic, pre-Christian traditions of metalwork. The wild, unpredictable vine scroll subverts the stony rigidity of the rest of the monument and undercuts associations with continental Christian art through aesthetic associations with the pre-Christian past. The medium of stone as a medium of the Church is re-appropriated for a new type of iconography that is both Christian and Germanic and therefore particularly suited to Anglo-Saxon communities.

Integration shows itself to be key in any interpretation of the Ruthwell Monument. On the Monument's narrow sides, Germanic metalwork motifs are combined with continental, religious stone sculptural traditions, bordered with an oral-inspired, partially heroic, vernacular, runic inscription of the crucifixion, and this all shares the same space as the more official biblical, Latinate art of the Monument's broad sides. The vernacular is integrated with Latin, the oral is integrated with the literary, insularity is integrated with the continental, the heroic is integrated with the religious, and overall the past is integrated with the present. The Ruthwell Monument emerges as a series of contradictions, bringing the Church in harmony with the pre-Christian ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons and forging a hybrid cultural identity that is attached to, but not wholly subsumed by, Christianity. However, since the Church is an essential aspect of the Ruthwell Monument's identity-making project, can the monument be considered a work of folk art? Even analogous works, such as other inscribed objects or *Dream*, are difficult to divorce entirely from any official, non-folk institutions or traditions. The attempt to define clear folk and non-folk boundaries in Anglo-Saxon art is of course frustrated by the fact that much art has been lost to time, especially art made with more ephemeral materials that are more likely to be used in a folk context. Thus, it is more productive to talk about the inclusion of folk *elements* or *characteristics* in Anglo-Saxon art. Folk elements appear as mythologized recreations of the perceived or real Germanic past: vernacular language, runic writing, heroic modes, and orality. These do not appear independently, but are combined with phenomena associated with the present or with official institutions: writing, especially in Latin, Christianity, and the aristocracy. The Ruthwell Monument takes multiple folk traditions of poetry and expresses them in a folk writing system, but combines these with more official Latin writing and religious and aristocratic motifs in order to absorb the Anglo-Saxon identity into the Church while also keeping it distinct from other Christianized cultural identities. In current scholarship dealing with extant Anglo-Saxon art, straightforward divisions of folk and non-folk are evidently unproductive. Instead, folk elements appear

[34] See Bailey, *England's Earliest Sculptors*, 25–27; Jane Hawkes, "A Sculptural Legacy: Stones of the North from the Age of Wilfred," in *Wilfred: Abbot, Bishop, Saint*, ed. N. J. Higham (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2013), 125.

[35] Bailey, *England's Earliest Sculptors*, 53.

[36] Ibid., 23; emphasis mine.

to connect seemingly disparate ideas and promote a cultural cohesion that strict folk and non-folk delineations would prohibit.

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THE INFLUENCE OF DIONYSUS IN INDIAN RELIGIONS: CORRELATION, CAUSATION, OR COINCIDENCE?

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Introduction

Throughout time, cultures and populations have been intermixing and mingling resulting in some interesting similarities between stories and gods. This paper will focus on the argument that Dionysus inspired the characteristics of the Indian gods Shiva and Krishna. The similarities between these gods are said to have derived originally from the Greeks and Dionysus. However, whether this is correlation, causation, or coincidence, is debatable. By examining the similar themes, the historical and cultural context, and the field of comparative mythology and religion, this paper will aim to argue that the similarities are merely coincidental. It will be argued the themes shared between these religions and gods are simply a result of parallel development as cultures evolve and attempt to explain life through archetypal figures and motifs.

Comparative Mythology

Comparative mythology is the study of comparing religions to identify universal and shared themes, patterns, and possible exchanges. While comparing different mythologies or religions, the field requires having a perspective that combines the "etic" with the "emic" perspective.[1] When a scholar only interacts with the internal perspective, they risk overexaggerating the importance and significance of that culture.[2] To argue from a single perspective or religion limits scholars from encountering new knowledge that could change their understanding.

With colonialism, there has been a predominant idea of Western superiority over the East. If there are similarities, many are quick to assume the East copied the West due to biases of Western moral, cultural, and general supremacy over the East. However, pre-colonialism, the East was flourishing with vast kingdoms, wealth, and connections. One cannot assume the West had more influence and power over the East when they were equally powerful. As scholars such as Timothy Desmond have discussed, there is a habit of the West following the ancient Greeks in equating the gods of various religions with their own.[3]

Many of the themes explored in this paper are universal, found in many other cultures and populations. These themes include good over evil, duality of humanity, and the cosmic order. There may be "fundamental verity in the universal phenomenon of religion"—elements that are common to all populations.[4] For example, humanity's earliest deities tend to be related to fertility, agriculture, or chieftains.[5] The first 'god' typically derives from the first human to be great enough to become a tradition, whose deeds and powers made them memorialized within the people. These shared themes indicate general human behaviour as societies develop.

Background Information

Greeks in India

Historically, the biggest impact of Hellenistic ideals on India come from Alexander the Great's

[1] Carmine Pisano, "India and Greece: Methods and Models of Comparison in 'The Mahābhārata and Greek Mythology' by Fernando Wulff Alonso," *Rivista Degli Studi Orientali* 88, no. 1/4 (2015): 215.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Timothy Desmond, "A Key to Nietzsche's Riddles in *The Birth of Tragedy:* Heracles = Krishna, Dionysus = Shiva," College of Southern Maryland, 1.
[4] Eric J. Sharpe, *Comparative Religion: A History* (Duckworth, 1975), 11.
[5] Ibid.

conquest of parts of India around 330 BCE.[6] Alexander conquered areas of north-western ancient India, around present-day Afghanistan and Pakistan.[7] An author who also made a large impact on how the Greeks viewed Indians was Megasthenes, who was sent to India under the Mauryan Dynasty as an ambassador.[8] He wrote a book on India from his experiences and included direct comparisons of Indian gods to Greek gods rather than translating the names.[9]

Dionysus

Dionysus is a Greek god associated with nature, fertility, wine, music, theatre, and bacchanalias. His worship relates to the transgressing of boundaries—including of socially accepted behaviours, the abandonment of 'self' with a connection to intoxication, music-making, dance, and liberation.[10]

There are many sources that describe stories of Dionysus visiting India. Philostratus in *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 2.6–10 states that the Theban Dionysus went to India, based on the offering at Delphoi, which was an Indian silver disc inscribed with "Dionysus the son of Semele and Zeus, from the men of India to the Apollon of Delphoi."[11] However, other authors such as Strabo, in *Geography*, mention that it seems Dionysus' expedition to India is a mythical story created later.[12]

Megasthenes writes that when Dionysus came to India, he conquered the Indians, founded cities, gave them laws, introduced wine, and taught them to sow the land.[13] Megasthenes states that perhaps Triptolemos missed India when he was sent by Demeter to spread agriculture to the world, or that Dionysus was "the same Dionys[u]s" who came to India before Triptolemos.[14] This is an interesting idea that provides one reason why modern scholars should read Megasthenes' work with some caution. He believes that Demeter, Dionysus, and/or Triptolemos are the reason for agriculture spreading outside of Attica, thus civilizing the 'barbarians.' However, the Greeks were not the ones who introduced agriculture to the Indian subcontinent. The Indus Valley Civilization flourished in a similar area of later Indo-Greek kingdoms, around the Afghanistan-Pakistan-India area.[15] These Indus towns were founded before 3800 BCE and lasted until their destruction around 1800 BCE.[16] The Indus Valley was known for its agricultural techniques; they were cattle-keepers, demonstrating a well understood and advanced agricultural society.[17] Hence, the idea that the Greeks brought agriculture over to the Indians is unfounded, as there is evidence of successful agriculture in India before the Greeks became a civilization.

Shiva & Dionysus

Shiva

Shiva is the one of the three main gods of Hinduism, representing various aspects of life. He can be known as the god of dance or destruction, associated with ecstasy, feminine energy, fertility, agriculture, and yoga. He has one of the oldest surviving cults in India, with the earliest forms of his image appearing in the Indus Valley Civilization as the Pasupati seal.[18] Shiva is depicted in a few different forms: the three main ones are the destroyer, the yogi,[19] and the dancer.

As a dancer, Shiva is called Nataraja and is depicted as dancing with the purpose of releasing humans from the idea of 'self' and the physical world.[20] He is surrounded by a ring of fire with snakes coming out behind him, his hands holding the *damaru/udukkai* (உடுக்கை), a form of drum.[21] His dance, the *thandavam* (தாண்டவம்), is so strong and powerful that it causes rotation of the world.[22] As

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[6] Ildiko Puskas, "Magasthenes and the 'Indian Gods' Herakles and Dionysos," *Mediterranean Studies* 2 (1990): 39–40.
[7] Pia Brancaccio and Xinru Liu, "Dionysus and Drama in the Buddhist Art of Gandhara," *Journal of Global History* 4, no. 2 (2009): 220/
[8] Puskas, "Magasthenes," 39.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana,* trans. F.C. Conybeare (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1912; Perseus Digital Library), 2.6–10.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Puskas, "Magasthenes," 42.
[14] Ibid.
[15] *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Archaeology*, "Indus Valley civilization," 2021.
[16] Alain Daniélou, *Gods of Love and Ecstasy: The Traditions of Shiva and Dionysus* (Inner Traditions International, 1979), 23.
[17] Ibid., 23.
[18] Ibid., 23–24.
[19] Yogi = Proficient in the art of yoga.
[20] Lalli, "Shiva Nataraja: The Spiritual Matrix of Bharata Natyam," *The Journal for the Anthropological Study of Human Movement* 19, no. 1 (2012): 1.
[21] Ibid.; the drum can be known as either a *damaru* or an *udukkai* depending on the language.
[22] S. Subbulakshmi, "Cosmic Dance and The Universe," *The International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities* 10, no. 4 (2023): 12.

a yogi, Shiva is shown to be in a meditative stance, with his features calm and serene.[23] In this form, he renounces worldly attachments and pleasures to attain liberation. Shiva is also associated with femininity and feminine energy through Shakti, his wife with whom he shares half of his body.

General Similarities

There are some similarities that come to mind when one considers Shiva and Dionysus on a surface level. Both are associated with dance, music, agriculture, and fertility. However, these are more general similarities in their representation, mythical origins, and associations. Nataraja is the patron of dance and is invoked at the beginning of certain dance performances.[24] During Bharatanatyam performances, there is a statue of Nataraja on the side of the stage that dancers pray to before beginning and after finishing their performance.[25] Similarly, Dionysus is associated with dance and music, with performers invoking him before beginning dance or theatrical productions.[26] Shiva, as Pasupati, is associated with agriculture, including bulls.[27] Dionysus is considered a god of agriculture as well, having associations with various plants and bulls. of Shiva's motifs is the phallus, consequently, portraying him as a god of fertility.[28] Shiva is portrayed in human form and as a Shiva Lingam, a phallus-like structure.[29] Dionysus is also commonly associated with the phallus and fertility, as evidenced and its use of the phallus in statues.[30]

While these similarities are interesting, it is important to consider they are very vague, general, and do not evidence one deriving from the other. Rather, the idea of worshipping the phallus and fertility is found throughout the world, without any clear indication of an originating place.[31] Furthermore, the association of early gods with agriculture is also a universal theme.[32] In the early days of humanity, nature-related worship was common.[33] Whether it be related to fertility or agriculture, these were resources that kept humans alive. Similarly, many religions and civilizations have evidence of people invoking the gods to ask for blessings or their approval before beginning a task.[34] The similarity in invoking Shiva and Dionysus before performances for blessings and luck, then, does not seem to prove that one god was derived from or influenced the worship of the other.

Intoxication & Liberation

Both Shiva and Dionysus are frequently associated with the idea of intoxication, ecstasy and liberation, and the abandonment of 'self.' For Dionysus, followers achieve ecstasy through wine, dance, and music.[35] For Shiva, followers feel ecstasy through dance (Bharatanatyam), which causes the abandonment of self, allowing followers to connect to the divine world through various movements and stories.[36] Interestingly, Dionysus is associated with dance and drama, and Shiva's dance of *Bharatanatyam* involves aspects of acting or *bhavam*.[37] Devotees may associate Shiva with psychedelic plants or intoxication, however this seems to be unfounded. The most commonly associated plant with Shiva is the *kondrai* (கொன்றை), the cassia fistula, or the nagalingapoo (நாகலிங்கப்பூ), the couroupita guianensis, which are not psychedelic but herbal.[38] Hence, there is no direct connection between Shiva and psychedelics whether through wine or other substances, weakening the correlation with Dionysus.

The idea of attaining liberation through ecstasy is again not a rare idea and is found in other religions. The idea of connecting with the divine is one that can be found in all religions. In an era where the performing arts were the primary source of entertainment, it is not unusual that both Shiva and Dionysus followers would utilize dance and music for this purpose.

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[23] Daniélou, *Gods of Love and Ecstasy,* 144–145.
[24] Lalli, "Shiva Nataraja," 63–64.
[25] Ibid.; Bharatanatyam is an ancient Indian classical dance form with Shiva as its patron.
[26] Sara Peterson, "An Account of the Dionysiac Presence in Indian Art and Culture," University of London, 2012.
[27] Puskas, "Magasthenes," 47.
[28] Daniélou, *Gods of Love and Ecstasy,* 63–64.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Wohlberg, "Haoma-Soma in the World of Ancient Greece." *The Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 22, no. 3 (1990): 335.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Sharpe, *Comparative Religion*, 33.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Jacelyn Bronte and Jenny Wade, "The Experience of Grace: Divine Assistance in Making a Change," *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 44, no. 2 (2012): 182.
[35] Brancaccio and Liu, "Dionysus and Drama," 227.
[36] Lalli, "Shiva Nataraja," 7–8.
[37] Ibid., 48–53.
[38] D. A. Patil, "Role of Exotic Plants in Worship of Lord Siva," *The Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research (JETIR)* 11, no. 4 (2014): 271–278.

Duality Between Chaos & Order

Both Dionysus and Shiva represent the duality of humanity through the balancing of chaos and order. While both have their chaotic and sometimes destructive sides, they can also be represented as youthful, calm, and innocent. Dionysus is frequently shown as an in-between to various ideas, man and woman, god and man, life and death, chaos and order, native and foreigner, etc.[39] He can appear as both a destructive force and as an innocent child.[40] Similarly, Shiva has the duality of humanity within him. As mentioned earlier, he is known both for being the destroyer and for his associations with yoga and meditation. With his *thandavam*, he has the power to destroy the world but it is also the strong force that keeps the world spinning. As the destroyer, Shiva is known for his anger and ruthless nature. Meanwhile, Shiva is also the god of yoga and meditation, with many tales surrounding his deep meditative state where he renounces all worldly attachments and pleasures.[41] Shiva has both these extremes within him, showing the duality of humanity.

These similarities depict an image that is almost human-like. Rather than the divine being associated with one archetype, both Shiva and Dionysus are similar to humans, having different personalities depending on the time and place. This idea of good and evil, chaos and order, yin and yang, can be found throughout multiple gods across multiple civilizations. The idea of balance in the world, balance in the cosmos, is another universal theme that exists in many cultures. It is also important to note that Shiva is a result of the fusion of Indo-European Rudra, Dravidian Shiva, and Indus Pasupati.[42] Shiva's characteristics tied to destruction and chaos seem to originate more from the Vedas, while the meditative, fertile dancer Shiva comes more so from the South and the Indus Valley.[43]

Femininity & Feminine Qualities

Similar to the duality of chaos and order, both Dionysus and Shiva possess another duality—the balance of masculine and feminine energies. Dionysus is seen as effeminate in the Bacchae, representing femininity due to his upbringing as a girl to protect him from Hera's wrath.[44] He is teased by Pentheus for his effeminate traits and actions, such as his long locks, smooth skin and more graceful body language.[45] Meanwhile, Shiva himself has masculine qualities but possesses a balance of feminine energy by sharing his body with his wife Shakti.[46]

Yet again, these similarities are still too general to be considered evidence of Dionysus and Shiva being one-to-one. Similar to what was discussed earlier, the idea of yin and yang, a balance of two extremes, is not something isolated to just Greek and Hindu cultures. It is something found in many other gods and many other religions. It is also significant to note that past ideas of gender, masculinity, and femininity, from both ancient Greece and ancient India differ from our modern (North American) ideas. While the *Bacchae* does tease Dionysus for having feminine qualities, there are other Greek gods that break the modern idea of feminine versus masculine traits.[47] The idea of femininity in a masculine body is also something that is represented in other Hindu gods, especially since the idea of homosexuality, including the mixing of male and female traits, was normalized in ancient Hindu texts.[48]

Krishna & Dionysus

Krishna

Krishna is an avatar of Vishnu, another one of the main three gods in Hinduism. He is also known for a couple different personalities, for being both the protector and slayer of evil and for his mischievous nature.[49] In his childhood, Krishna is known for causing mischief within his town, stealing butter, and teasing the cowgirls/*gopis*.[50] In his youth, he becomes an attractive lover, having the attention of all the *gopis,*

[39] Dorian Hansen, "An Androgynous God: Beardless Dionysus in Ancient Greek and Roman Art," *Mid-Atlantic Humanities Review* 1 (2023): 146.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Daniélou, *Gods of Love and Ecstasy,* 144–145.
[42] Ibid., 28; Dravidian is the language family primarily found in South India.
[43] Ibid., 40.
[44] Apollodorus, *The Library,* trans. Sir James George Frazer, 2 vols. (Harvard University Press, 1921), 77.
[45] Euripides, *The Tragedies of Euripides*, trans. T. A. Buckley (Perseus, 1850), 445–450.
[46] Daniélou, *Gods of Love and Ecstasy,* 144–145.
[47] Euripides, *Tragedies,* 445–450.
[48] Keya Das and T. S. Sathyanarayana Rao, "A Chronicle of Sexuality in the Indian Subcontinent," *Journal of Psychosexual Health* 1, no. 1 (2019): 20–25.
[49] John Stratton Hawley, "Krishna's Cosmic Victories," *Journal of the America Academy of Religion* 47, no. 2 (1979): 202–203.
[50] John Stratton Hawley, "Thief of Butter, Thief of Love," *History of Religions* 18, no. 3 (1979): 203.

many of whom dedicated their lives to him.[51] As an adult, he is one of the primary figures in the *Mahabharatha,* a Hindu Epic about war.[52] A common motif associated with Krishna is the flute, which captivates the *gopis*, townspeople and animals.[53] Unlike Shiva, Krishna is a character that comes from northern India, and can thus have a stronger case for being influenced by Indo-European cultural exchanges. However, as this section will delve into, the similarities are general enough that they cannot confirm that Krisha derives from Dionysus.

Intoxication & Liberation

Both Krishna and Dionysus are known for their intoxication and liberating acts and personalities. Krishna plays captivating music on the flute, a sound described as alluring, pulling all people and animals towards him.[54] One story has all the *gopis*, who were already in love with youthful Krishna, abruptly leave their tasks to come dance with him in a moonlit forest.[55] This dance is called the *Rasa Lila,* demonstrating supreme love and fulfilment, with a connection to the divine through the dance of love. The *Rasa Lila* frees souls from lust, being an example of pure and divine love that is an escape from worldly passion.[56] Meanwhile, Krishna's playful personality, demonstrates liberation through the destruction of ego through the breaking of societal norms. As one of the divine, avatars typically do not have trickster personalities, making Krishna unique.[57]

Dionysus provides ecstasy and liberation through dance and music as well.[58] The stories are similar, with women and frenzied dancing, many times taking place at night.[59] The dance provides women with a moment to forget about themselves enter an almost trance-like state through the music.[60] This 'manic' state is often referred to as a mania or insanity through ancient works such as the *Iliad*.[61] Hence, his epithet *gynaimanes,* "he who drives women insane."[62]

The dancing rituals of both Dionysus and Krishna seem similar on the surface; however, there are some key differences which reveal aspects of both Greek and Indian society. For Dionysus, frenzied dancing is typically associated more with insanity and mania, despite also representing the abandonment of 'self' and a connection to the divine.[63] Dionysiac dancing and rituals also connect more to the classical *orgia*, having more of a cult connection.[64] Meanwhile, Krishna is more associated with immense bliss through the sole act of dancing with the divine.[65] The dancing and abandonment of self that comes from Krishna's song and music is more tied to peace, whereas Dionysiac dancing can lead to violent activities if one does not give in to him.[66] While both Krishna and Dionysus are also associated with the flute, the instrument's origin is unknown, such that neither can be credited with influencing the other's use of the flute.[67]

Duality Between Chaos & Order

Similar to Dionysus and Shiva, Krishna also possesses a duality of characteristics. As discussed earlier, Krishna goes from a trickster child and youth, teasing and playing with the *gopis,* to being a key figure in the Mahabharata war In the *Mahabharata*, Krishna is a character full of wisdom. He advises the Pandavas to victory consequently leading to the creation of the *Bhagavad Gita*, a philosophical text of Krishna's counsel.[68] Krishna's duality is unique as he goes from a playful youth to a philosophical adviser, similar to the growth of humans from child to maturity.[69]

Dionysus also fills many different roles, like all Greek gods.[70] In some myths, he is an innocent child taken and dismembered by Titans, while in others he

[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Graham M. Schweig, *Dance of Divine Love: India's Classic Sacred Love Story: The Rasa Lila of Krishna*, (Princeton University Press, 2005), 2.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Hawley, "Thief of Butter," 203.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ross S. Kraemer, "Ecstasy and Possession: The Attraction of Women to the Cult of Dionysus," *The Harvard Theological Review* 72, no. 1–2 (1979): 64.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Hawley, "Thief of Butter, Thief of Love," 203.
[66] Ibid.; Kraemer, "Ecstasy and Possession," 64.
[67] Dionysus utilizes the lute, commonly known as the 'double-flute'; Gareth Morris, "History of the Flute," in *Flute Technique* (Oxford University Press, 1991), 1.
[68] Hawley, "Thief of Butter, Thief of Love," 203.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Hansen, "An Androgynous God," 146.

is an adult causing destruction and mischief with the Maenads.[71] These varied portrayals lead to varied iconographical representations of Dionysus. He can either be a bearded and fully clothed adult man, or a beardless, naked youth with long hair.[72]

While this is a similarity between Dionysus and Krishna, it is not something unique to Dionysus. In Hinduism, Krishna's avatar having a focus on both his youth and his adulthood is unique, not found in many other avatars. But in Greek religion, many gods are depicted in both their youth and their adulthood.[73] Furthermore, when analyzing the history of Krishna's worship, it is most likely that modern-day Krishna is an amalgamation of two different gods.[74] This is a common thread in Hinduism, with many gods being an amalgamation of various gods due to the merging of Vedic (Indo-European), Dravidian, and other regional cults.[75] This provides a more founded reason behind Krishna's duality in personality, as it could simply be a merging of the fun trickster god with a philosophical, mature one.

Femininity & Feminine Qualities

Another duality within both Krishna and Dionysus is one regarding their gender and character. Krishna is frequently depicted as having more effeminate qualities when compared to Vishnu or other Vishnu avatars. One popular myth has a youthful Krishna and one of his main *gopis*, Radha, switch clothes and characters.[76] Instead of Krishna playing the flute and captivating Radha from her home at night, Krishna would wear Radha's clothes and be entranced with Radha's playing of the flute.[77] Another myth of Krishna is during his adulthood during the Mahabharata War. In this war, the Pandavas needed to sacrifice someone to ensure victory, and Iravan volunteers, requesting three wishes before giving up his life.[78] The third of these wishes is to be married before the sacrifice.[79] Since no one was willing to marry Iravan, as they would become a widow in a day, Krishna transformed himself into Mohini and wed Iravan.[80] They wed and spent the night together, before Iravan sacrificed himself the next morning.[81] As a dutiful wife, Krishna/Mohini went through the motions of a grieving widow, before turning back into Krishna to lead the Pandavas to victory.[82]

As discussed earlier, in the *Bacchae*, Dionysus is teased for his effeminate traits.[83] Dionysus is meant to represent wilderness and femininity while Pentheus represents civilization and masculinity.[84] While this is an interesting similarity between the two gods, there is one aspect that makes the idea of femininity within masculine gods less likely to have come from Dionysus. The Iravan cult is specifically from Tamil Nadu in southern India.[85] While the *Mahabharata* is a Sanskrit Epic from northern India, the tales of Iravan marrying Krishna/Mohini can only be found in folk songs in Tamil Nadu.[86] While it is possible for a Dionysiac influence to have trickled down to southern India, it is unlikely. Most Tamil kingdoms traded and interacted with the Greeks through sea, not through northern India.[87] Hence while the *Mahabharata* myth trickled down into south India through Brahminism, it is unlikely that a Greek idea skipped northern India and came to Tamil communities. While it can be theorized that northern India bypassed myths that support homosexuality, it is important to note that both northern and southern India have many other myths with Vishnu becoming Mohini and engaging with Shiva, or other gods interacting with others from the LGBTQIA+ community.[88] Hence, it is less likely that this idea of androgynous or transgendered gods comes from Dionysus.

Correlation, Causation or Coincidence?

Correlation

As discussed earlier, there is proof of Indo-Greek connections both in northern and southern India. Northern India had interactions through land, and

[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Dinesh Chandra Varshney, "Krishna Legend and Mathura," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 54 (1993): 80, JSTOR.
[75] Daniélou, *Gods of Love and Ecstasy,* 13–46.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.
[78] K. P. Anupama, "Hearing Attuned: An Exploration of the Sonority of the Aravan Festival in India," *Asian Anthropology* 23, no. 3 (2024): 161.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Euripides, *Tragedies,* 445–450.
[84] Hansen, "An Androgynous God," 153.
[85] Anupama, "Hearing Attuned," 161.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Vikas K. Verma, "Trade Routes of Early Tamilakam—A Study of the Archaeological Sources," *The Journal of History, Art and Archaeology* 2, no. 1 (2022): 91.
[88] Hansen, "An Androgynous God," 146.

eventually had Indo-Greek kingdoms and populations. Meanwhile, southern India interacted with the Greeks through sea trade, and while there were Greeks hired for various jobs within the mainland, they were not intertwined enough to form an Indo-Greek population. While the conquests of Alexander the Great did leave a lasting impact on north-western India, the similarities between Dionysus and Shiva/Krishna are not evidence of direct influence. It is possible that, rather than both communities having a mutual cultural exchange, they both received these elements from shared Indo-European roots or from a third-party culture within that area. It could be that these similar character traits come from the Middle East or other surrounding civilizations. Regardless of the interactions between the Mediterranean and India and the correlation between Greeks and Indians, the similarities in theme or art style cannot prove the introduction of Dionysus into Indian religions.

Causation

Many scholars believe in an 'Hellenized' India after Alexander the Great due to the existence of Greek works translated into local languages, and Indo-Greek kingdoms around Pakistan and Afghanistan. However, this is the most unlikely option. It is important to remember earlier how comparative mythology/ religion requires or recommends a certain degree of separation from the cultures being analyzed. The ancient scholars utilized in this paper were not separated, and they were writing for their own perspective and their own audience. For Megasthenes, what was his goal in discussing Dionysus and his expedition to India? What was the purpose of connecting the growth of agriculture to Dionysus rather than accepting Indians were advanced? Greek authors were writing with aims to find evidence that supports their pre-existing perspective. When the Greeks visited India and they already had advanced agricultural techniques, going against their pre-existing notion that the Indians were 'barbarians' in need of 'civilizing.' Hence, by connecting the growth and civilizing of Indians back to the Greeks, it was these authors' way of promoting themselves as the catalyst for growth and development in other regions. They were also writing not for fact, but to satisfy their Greek audiences, many of whom would rather read a book that puts them at a position of significance rather than equal or inferior to other kingdoms.

Furthermore, as discussed earlier, many modern scholars inadvertently have a Eurocentric or western perspective when looking into the past. They perpetuate western hegemony and superiority, believing that even pre-colonization the West had more influence and power than the East. Since Hinduism is also an amalgamation of many local cults and characters, that explains the oddity of certain gods and features rather than those character traits coming from Dionysus.

Coincidence

The themes discussed in this paper are not unique to Greeks or Indians, rather, are themes found universally from culture to culture. The human desire for liberation is a desire that can be seen through time and place. Music and dance are another aspect that provided relief and an escape from the day-to-day stresses from then to even now. Characters possessing multiple opposing personalities is similar to humans and can also be a result of natural evolution of gods and religions. Humans like to explain the world through archetypes as they discover new aspects of nature, life and societies.[89] Despite the differences in appearance or belief, at their core, humans are psychologically similar and thus could develop similar characters and stories that reflected their understanding of life at that time. While there are similarities between Dionysus and Indian gods, the core of each of these gods and their presentation differs greatly. Furthermore, their interactions before the Hellenic period were common but not as influential to cause Greek gods entering Indian religions.

Final Thoughts

Many researchers believe that Dionysus was imparted into Hinduism and Buddhism via Alexander the Great 'Hellenizing' the Indian subcontinent through his conquering of northwestern India.[90] This belief stems back from Alexander's campaign as he regarded Dionysus as his divine ancestor and thus wanted to follow in Dionysus' footsteps.[91] Since they

[89] Sharpe, *Comparative Religion,* 2.

[90] It is ironic that in modern terms, Alexander the Great barely reached India, and instead most of his conquests was around the border with Pakistan and Afghanistan.

[91] Hartman, "Dionysos and Heracles," 55–64.

believed the words of Euripides before them, they came into India searching for any signs and traces left behind by Dionysus, an example of finding evidence to fit their theory rather than the opposite.[92] The extensive stories of Dionysus in India and his consequent impact on Indian gods, is from informants 'magnifying' Alexander and his exploits, wanting to connect a person to the divine.[93] As Strabo states in *Geography*, "εστί πλάσματα ταντα των κολακενόντων Αλέξανδρον," meaning "these are inventions of those who flatter Alexander."[94] While the myths of Dionysus entering India existed previously, authors such as Strabo demonstrate how these myths and the impact of Dionysus was exaggerated after Alexander's campaign to further glorify the conquests.[95]

Another interesting aspect of this debate is the fact that Dionysus himself is considered a foreigner.[96] As discussed, Dionysus is frequently shown to be in between two opposites, one of which is he is considered both a foreigner and a Greek.[97] Hence, some scholars say that Dionysus himself may have originated from the East.[98] The theory is that *Bakchos* comes from *Bakuy* meaning lamented god.[99] *Bakuy* in Indo-European languages (such as Sanskrit) is *Diounsis*, with *div* meaning lament in passive particle and *dyuna* meaning lamented.[100] Diounsis is found in gravestones of the 3rd century CE written partly in Greek and partly in Phyrgian, supporting the theory that Dionysus may have been a non-Greek, eastern god from an original Indo-European cult for the god Soma/Haoma from the Rig Veda.[101] Furthermore, *Euripides* in the *Bacchae* also states that Dionysus came to Greece from Anatolia-Lydia or from Thrace, hence indirectly from Asia Minor.[102] The history of Dionysus coming from the East reflects the possibility that these characteristics that are universal amongst these gods could have come from a shared cultural pool or have originated from the East and then transported to the West.

It makes one wonder why scholars are insistent on arguing the influence went from West to East rather than vice-versa or from a mutual exchange. Rather than understanding the East was not inferior to the West, they perpetuate western hegemony and superiority to fit the preconceived ideal that began and was perpetuated with colonialism and imperialism. It is interesting as, through this research, there is a major discrepancy between the number of papers discussing Dionysiac elements in India and the papers discussing Hindu elements in Dionysus. Even on a broader scale, there are more papers discussing Greek influence in Hinduism than Hindu influences in Greek religion. It seems that many scholars have yet to recognize their Eurocentric biases and do not take the time or effort to engage with post-colonial anthropology to better understand history through an unbiased perspective. To go back to Sharpe's *Comparative Religion,* this field requires a certain degree of detachment from the religions, and a certain degree of recognizing one's own modern-day biases.[103] To better develop the field of comparative mythology/religion, anthropology, and classics, scholars must begin adopting a post-colonial mindset to ensure that their own hegemonic biases do not play into their arguments.

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[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Wohlberg, "Haoma-Soma," 333.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Sharpe, *Comparative Religion,* 2.

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THE EPIC PAST IN VENUS' TALE OF DIDO: ANCIENT PHOENICIAN IDENTITY IN VERGIL'S *AENEID*

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The intention of this paper is to examine and explain how ancestral ties to an ancient Phoenician identity can be observed in Venus' tale of Dido's flight from Tyre from Book 1 (lines 335-371) of Vergil's *Aeneid.* More specifically, this paper seeks to explain how Phoenician identity (i.e. the Carthaginian's shared ancestral identity and cultural connections to their ancient homeland) is invoked by Vergil in his use of the 'epic past' in this speech. At the most apparent level, Vergil employs the concept of the epic past for the Carthaginians to establish them [1] This topic is not the central concern of this paper, but rather a topic that is less covered in scholarship; that is, how Vergil's use of the epic past invokes an even more distant past for the Carthaginians, enriching their portrayal and providing a deeper context for their role in the epic. In particular, I focus on examples from Venus' speech that place emphasis on the ancestral connections of the Carthaginians to their Phoenician heritage and situate them within the broader historical and mythological context of the ancient Mediterranean world. I argue that this passage enriches the identity of both Dido and the Carthaginians, serving to legitimize them by adding the respected qualities of their ancestors to their own, bolstering their status in the narrative.

Problems with Establishing a Phoenician Identity

The first questions that naturally arise when discussing Phoenician identity in the *Aeneid* are quite complex, and they are further complicated by the loose chronology of the poem. Writing at the end of the 1st century BCE, Vergil's Carthaginians are an anachronism, and his Carthage is fabricated to include cultural elements that did not exist historically. One such element is temples to Greek deities, which were not worshipped by Punic peoples.[2] Even the Carthaginian identity most familiar to the Romans (that having existed during the Punic Wars of the 4th to 2nd centuries BCE) differed from that of before the founding of Rome (the era in which the poem officially is set). What were the differences between the shared ethnic and cultural identities of the Phoenician founders of Carthage and the Carthaginians of the Punic Wars? How were those respective identities understood by the Romans of Vergil's time, and how did Vergil differentiate between them? When discussing the stereotyping of Phoenician identity in Vergil's *Aeneid*, Elena Guisti provides a helpful introduction:

> The *Punica fides* attributed to the Carthaginians at A.1.661 is explicitly connected to their Phoenician identity, and it marks the longevity of a stereotype which springs from the Homeric poems but acquires different connotations when it is transferred to the city of Thebes and finally reaches the Carthaginians of the Punic Wars. The Phoenicians, though on some grounds the pre- Persian Greek barbarians, played a role in

[1] See Reed, J.D. 2009. Chapter 3 for the Carthaginian opposition to Rome, and the subtext for the Punic Wars in the *Aeneid*. Reed also argues the boundaries of ethnic identity between Carthage and Rome start out weak, but grow stronger as the poem progresses.

[2] Although the Carthaginians briefly adopted the Greek cults of Persephone and Demeter in 396 BCE as a result of a plague that was seen as divine retribution for the Carthaginian desecration of these goddesses' shrines at Syracuse, their religion did not undergo any further Hellenization. See Hoyos, Dexter (2021). *Carthage: A Biography*. Routledge:16, and Warmington, B. H. 1995. "The Carthaginian Period". In Mokhtar, G. (ed.). *General history of Africa. Vol. 2, Ancient civilizations of Africa*. London: Heinemann:454.

relation to the Greeks that was similar to that which the Greeks would later play in relation to the Romans: a highly developed, cultured and civilised society of the Near East whose influence in Greece brought about not only extremely refined luxury items and artwork, but, more importantly, 'among many other kinds of learning' (Hdt. 5.58 ἄλλα τε πολλὰ … διδασκάλια), 'the alphabet, which had hitherto been unknown to the Greeks' (Hdt. 5.58 γράμματα, οὐκ ἐόντα πρὶν Ἕλλησι). The ambiguous Greek view of Phoenicians foreshadows the same reservations held by Romans towards Greece and may have sprung, in very simplistic terms, from a sort of extended national complex towards a more ancient and developed neighbouring civilisation.[3]

Thus, there are many ethnographical issues on how we define Phoenician identity in Roman terms. Due to these issues, establishing a common identity, one shared by Carthage's ancestral Phoenicians of the bronze to early iron ages, becomes challenging. In modern terms, an ethnic group may be defined as a social group or category of the population that, in a larger society, is set apart and bound together by common ties of race, language, nationality, or culture.[4] It is important to remember here that individuals might belong to one group and call themselves a certain name, while other groups might disregard these designations in favour of their own. In this case, the Phoenicians (the Greek term) are thought to have referred to themselves as 'Kena-ani,' (i.e. Canaanites)- being referenced in ancient texts as early as the third millennium B.C.E. The archives from Palace G at Ebla provide the oldest reference to Canaan (ga-na-na).[5] It is also mentioned in later sources such as the Hebrew Bible and the fourteenth-century Amarna Letters, with campaigns in "ka-na-na" mentioned in other Egyptian New Kingdom sources as well.[6]

Jonathan Tubb's work has demonstrated that the Canaanites that are being referred to in these texts are the indigenous peoples of the Levant, who originally settled in the eighth millennium B.C.E.[7] The search for the origins of a Canaanite identity, however, is a more complicated issue. The Canaanite culture was heavily influenced by external forces, due to the role of the Levant as a buffer zone and cultural crossroads during the Bronze Age.[8] This had a great importance on the social and political constructs of this period. Thus, due to cross-cultural ties and influences, the Canaanites in the aforementioned sources may refer to diverse ethnic groups, and identifying this particular group (the Phoenicians) based on their reputation from the literature of external cultures, like the Greeks and Romans, removes us even further from their true ethnic identity. This is especially complicated by the inclusion of the Phoenicians into the Greek religion. That is, Phoenician characters became hallmarks of Greek myth (as shown below), even though the Phoenicians had their own unique religion and pantheon. This Phoenician pantheon is understood by Vergil and referenced in the poem in numerous ways.[9] For example, Dido is given the name 'Elissa' from the Phoenician god, El.[10]

Using Phoenician material culture to define identity presents its own challenges as well. Our knowledge of the shared cultural elements that the Phoenicians possessed internally is interpreted from archaeological evidence, and inferences we've made may not have been observed and passed down accurately in the Greek, and then Roman worlds (evidently, Greeks and Romans interacted with the Phoenicians through trade hundreds of years before

[3] Giusti E. 2018. Polarity and Analogy in Virgil's Carthage. In: *Carthage in Virgil's Aeneid*. Cambridge University Press:140-141. *Punica fides* is a derogatory term which Giusti believes is being alluded to in A.1.661: "quippe domum timet ambiguam Tyriosque bilinguis;"; see Boyd, B. 2023. Negative Ethnic Stereotyping and *Punica Fides. Discentes* (UPenn).

[4] Rathore, S. S., & Krumholz, H. M. 2003. Race, ethnic group, and clinical research. *BMJ (Clinical research ed.)*, *327*(7418), 763–764.

[5] Tubb, Jonathan. 1998. *Canaanites*. Great Britain: British Museum Press:15. And also concluded by Ahlström, Gösta Werner (1993). *The History of Ancient Palestine*. Fortress Press. p. 141.

[6] Such as Amarna Letter EA 144, also see Redford, Donald. 1992. *Egypt, Canaan and Israel in Ancient Times*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press for further reading.

[7] Tubb, Jonathan. 1998. *Canaanites*. Great Britain: British Museum Press:13-26.

[8] See Dever, William. 1987. "Archaeological Sources for the History of Palestine: The Middle Bronze Age: The Zenith of the Urban Canaanite Era." *The Biblical Archaeologist* 50 (3): 148-177.

[9] Summed up by Reed, J.D. 2009. In chapter 3.

[10] Reed, J.D. 2009. cites Theiosso (with Gk. theio-, "divine"), the name under which Timaeus writes of her is presumably calqued on the Phoenician name. See Reed Ch 3 for a full description of Phoenician and Near Eastern deities in the *Aeneid.*

Carthage was a thriving military power).[11] In the case of the ancient Phoenicians, there is extensive archaeological evidence for the understanding of a shared identity amongst their own culture, to which we are privy today, and to which the Romans were not.[12] Although this discussion should be had, and is important for the study of the Phoenicians at large, it need not go any further here, as the accuracy of Vergil's interpretation and portrayal of Phoenician identity does not need to be scrutinized to understand his intention. This intention, I argue, is to use the epic past, with respect to Dido and the Carthaginian's, to invoke an even more distant past and tie them to their Phoenician heritage and ancestry. I have found that Vergil does this through Venus' speech in three ways: 1. Mythological References. 2. Detailing their Historical Lineage through Dido, the Founder, and 3. Detailing their Cultural Achievements. I will now explain these three categories in more detail and use specific examples from Venus' speech to demonstrate their usages.

Mythological References

In Venus' tale, Vergil uses the epic past to connect Dido to mythological stories associated with the Phoenicians; particularly the tale of Europa, and the story of Cadmus. These links reinforce the importance of the Phoenicians in the mythic landscape and thus tie Carthage to the broader mythological past of the Mediterranean. These myths are referenced in Venus' speech in line 1.338 (*Punica regna vides, Tyrios et Agenoris urbem*). This line calls Carthage 'a city of Agenor.' Although only a brief mention, the invocation of Agenor's name does many things here. Agenor (an Egyptian) was the father of Europa, and the founder of the Phoenician kingdom.[13] He was also the father of Europa's brother, Cadmus, and the great-grandfather of Dido.[14] By tying Dido into the mythological character of Agenor, here, Vergil invokes both the myths of Europa and Cadmus (cf. Agenor's similarly brief mention and connection to the myth of Europa in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (2.855): "Miratur Agenore nata *[Europa]*, quod tam formosus, quod proelia nulla minetur."). Also in the myth, Agenor sends Cadmus to find Europa after her abduction from Tyre, as told by Herodotus in book 4 of his *Histories: "*Κάδμος γὰρ ὁ Ἀγήνορος Εὐρώπην διζήμενος προσέσχε ἐς τὴν νῦν Θήρην *καλεομένην*."[15]

The reference to a myth first portrayed by Herodotus is significant here when considering the usage of the epic past in speech. Traditionally, there was a close correlation between the orator and the historian, although they were clearly seen as distinct genres.[16] This is important to consider, as the rhetorical use of the past was originally inherited by Herodotus from poetry and oratory.[17] Deliberative and epideictic types of speeches were also used in the historiographical tradition to display exemplary uses of the epic past, often as *exempla* serving to demonstrate the value and legitimacy of the past.[18] Venus' use of the epic past here follows this tradition, serving to legitimize Dido as a powerful, worthy, and strong ruler and partner for Aeneas by linking her to the respected, ancient qualities of Agenor. This serves to correlate her character closely with Aeneas' own by showcasing her connection to an established Mediterranean power, as Troy was.

In the mythological tradition, Cadmus then goes on to become the founder of Thebes and became a common character in many different Greek genres. His founding of Thebes is relevantly portrayed in Euripides' *Phoenissae* (The Phoenician Women), lines 639-642: "Κάδμος ἔμολε τάνδε γᾶν Τύριος, ᾧ τετρασκελὴς 640μόσχος ἀδάματον πέσημα δίκε τελεσφόρον διδοῦσα χρησμόν...". So, by calling Carthage an *Agenoris urbem*, Vergil acknowledges that Carthage is intrinsically tied to the Phoenicians, central figures in ancient Mediterranean lore, further enriching the narrative surrounding Carthage and its people.

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[11] The trading port of Al-Mina, located in Northern Syria, demonstrates archaeological evidence for Phoenician trade with Greece during the 8th c. BCE in the form of ceramics (such as Euboean wares). It is well-attested that the Phoenicians were trading with Attica and Euboea during this period. See: Kearsely, R. 1999. Greeks Overseas in the 8th Century B.C.: Euboeans, Al Mina and Assyrian Imperialism." In Ancient Greeks: West and East, edited by G. Tsetskhladze, 109-34. *Mnemosyne Suppl.* 196. Leiden: Brill, 120, and the 'Trade' section from Mifsud, J. 2024. *Fama* of the Neo-Assyrian Palatial Gardens. *CERES Vol 4.*:9-10.

[12] See Quinn, J. C. 2018. *In Search of the Phoenicians*. Princeton University Press.

[13] Christopher Francese and Meghan Reedy, 2016. *Vergil: Aeneid Selections*. Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Dickinson College Commentaries:335-371. "He founded the kingdom of Sidon (Robertson)."

[14] Ibid.

[15] Hdt. 4.147

[16] Grethlein, 2010:14.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Grethlein, 2010:178.

The Lineage of Dido the Founder

In Venus' tale, Vergil also directly references the historical Phoenician heritage and lineage of Dido and the Carthaginians, highlighting the origins of their culture. This heritage is made explicit with the use of two words: *Tyria* (and its variations) and *Phoenicum*.[19] Venus' story of Dido fleeing Tyre and establishing Carthage showcases her as a pivotal figure in Punic history, and explains that the Carthaginians were colonists from Tyre, set up as follows: "Imperium Dido Tyria regit urbe profecta, germanum fugiens."[20] The adjective *Tyria* (used here) and its variants are also used throughout the poem to refer to Dido and the Carthaginians, even as early as the opening lines of the poem: "Urbs antiqua fuit, Tyrii tenuere coloni, *Karthago...*"[21]

This word is so frequent that it functions synonymously with 'Carthaginian,' but invokes a more distant past with its usage. It reminds the reader of Dido's strength and determination in her flight from Phoenician Tyre, as detailed in Venus' story, each time it is used. The noun *Tyros,* the Greek derivative for the city of Tyre, is perhaps most significantly used just after Dido's death: "*...non aliter quam si imissis ruat hostibus omnis Karthago aut antiqua Tyros*."[22]

For the first time in the poem, we also get the direct term *Phoenicum*, when referring to Dido's Phoenician husband, Sychaeus: "Huic coniunx Sychaeus erat, ditissimus agri Phoenicum, et magno miserae dilectus amore, cui pater intactam dederat, primisque iugarat ominibus."[23] Dido's father, King of Tyre, is also mentioned here (name given as 'Belus' in 1.729), tying Dido to the royal Phoenician line.[24] This mention of Dido's father also provides a connection to the Phoenician pantheon, as the name 'Belus' is, "an old adaptation into 'Greek mythology of the Phoenician divine title Ba'al, which was applied to city gods of the lamented type."[25] The addition of a Levantine god to the formation of Dido's identity raises the conflict between Rome and Carthage to a divine level (i.e. Western versus Eastern pantheons). Belus' mention also ties in both the aforementioned mythological lineage, and the historical lineage of Dido, summed up beautifully by Reed:

> A representative ancestor of the Oriental races in Greek mythology since the ethnographical genealogies of the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, Belus seems to have this role at Aeneid 2.82, where Sinon refers to *Belidae Palamedis*, a learned allusion to Palamedes' descent from Belus through his son Danaus, who settled in Greece. At 1.729-30 *Belus et omnes a Belo* seems to make him a remote ancestor or dynastic founder of Dido's Tyrian line. Venus' designation of Carthage at 1.338 as "the city of Agenor" engages with the same genealogy, which makes Dido a distant relative of Turnus (and Adonis) and sets up within the poem a mythological system for understanding national identity and destiny.[26]

Reed also makes a convincing case that Vergil purposely reassigns the original Phoenician name of Dido's husband to her father, in order to "reassign Dido and Pygmalion from a specific, "historical" genealogy to a symbolically Phoenician one."[27]

Vergil's decision to use the term *Phoenicum* directly is also significant for other reasons. In doing so, he invokes the Phoenician epic past of an era so distant from Rome's history that it predates the Punic Wars by many centuries (i.e. the era of Phoenicians such as that described by Homer and/or Herodotus). This suggests that, in examining *Phoenicum* and the Roman familiarity with these ancient peoples, Vergil is guiding his audience to consider the Phoenicians of Homer. However, Giusti believes that the associations and ideas which *Phoenicum* may have stirred up for the Roman audience harkens back to the *Punica fides* of 1.661;

> The ambiguous Greek view of Phoenicians foreshadows the same reservations held by Romans towards Greece and may have sprung, in very simplistic terms, from a sort of extended

[19] Though not used in Venus' tale of Dido, *Sidonius* is also used throughout the poem in the same way as *Tyria*, though not as frequent e.g. "*...Sidonios urbemque tuam"* (A.4.683).

[20] A.1.340-341.

[21] A.1.12-13.

[22] A.4.669-670.

[23] A.1.343-346.

[24] In my opinion, his name is not mentioned due to the historic enmity between Aeneas' mother and Dido's father, Venus and Belus (1.621). Gibson 1999 cites 4 See J. Foster, PVS 13 (1973-4) 29-30.

[25] Reed, J.D. pg 78 cites Sec Smith 1994:69-73 on the Bronze-Age Ba'al of Ugarit.

[26] Reed, J.D. pg 78 citing 23 [Hesiod] fr. 137.2 Merkelbach/West; see West 1985:77-78. Belus is the great-uncle of Adonis in Pseudo-Hesiod's scheme. See Mackie 1993, Hannah 2004:144-48.

[27] See Reed 78-79.

national complex towards a more ancient and developed neighbouring civilisation. The Homeric poems already engage with this double attitude: on the one hand, Phoenicians/Sidonians are an extremely developed merchant civilisation, particularly skilled in highly sophisticated handiwork (Il. 23.743 Σιδόνες πολυδαίδαλοι), but this technical development quickly leads to their portrayal as 'greedy', 'tricky', 'crafty', and 'wily' (Od. 15.419 Φοίνικες πολυπαίπαλοι, 'likely a conscious wordplay on πολυδαίδαλοι'). In the Odyssey, Phoenicians' 'commercial activities … are either corrupting or corrupt' and they 'are described as willing to break codes of honour for profit' and 'set up as the antithesis of the heroic values of the Greeks'.[28]

In contrast to *Punica fides*, Dido's portrayal here as a Phoenician princess, who made her decision to flee Tyre after her brother Pygmalion's betrayal, and the subsequent founder of Carthage showcases a resilience and resourcefulness associated with her ancestry, not a negative stereotype.[29] Dido's portrayal in her backstory is heroic, and in my view is representative of Vergil's attempt to portray the Carthaginians and their Phoenician identity as something much more than a *Punica fides*.

Detailing Cultural Achievements

Throughout Greek and Roman history, the Phoenicians were depicted as a powerful seafaring people known for their trade, exploration, and establishment of colonies throughout the Mediterranean. Their most famous cities, such as Tyre and Sidon, were significant centers of commerce and culture. Vergil's reference to these cultural achievements in Venus' tale of Dido highlights the Carthaginians' sophisticated background, suggesting that they are inheritors of a rich tradition. The Phoenicians are credited with significant achievements, especially those related to their rich material culture, their seafaring, and with it, their trade. By emphasizing these achievements, Vergil positions the Carthaginians as a culturally rich civilization. This not only elevates their status but also contrasts sharply with the later Roman perception of them as mere enemies. Amidst their luxurious material culture, Carthage is portrayed as a thriving, sophisticated city, with a strong identity rooted in its historical past. Venus' speech makes reference to these cultural achievements in the use of *purpureo:* *"virginibus Tyriis mos est gestare pharetram, purpureoque alte suras vincire cothurno*."

Tyre, and Phoenicia at large, were famous for their purple dye, a dye coveted in Rome for its association with royalty. The Phoenician accomplishment of producing purple dye is also carried over to the Carthaginians later in the poem, by referencing the specific source from which they produced the dye; the murex shell: "Tyrioque ardebat murice laena demissa ex umeris..."[30]

The wealth of the Phoenicians is also clearly referenced in Venus' speech, referring to an abundance of silver, gold, ships, land, and other treasures. This is first displayed when the ghost of Sichaeus, Dido's husband who was slain by her brother/king Pygmalion, appears to her to let her know where his wealth is located: *"auxiliumque viae veteres tellure recludit thesauros, ignotum argenti pondus et auri."*[31] Although the *thesauros argenti et auri* is only that of one man, the overall wealth of the Phoenician royalty is referenced again just before her flight from Tyre: "*navis, quae forte paratae, corripiunt, onerantque auro: portantur avari Pygmalionis opes pelago; dux femina facti.*"[32] In this case, Vergil tells us not only of more *aurum,* but also the *navis* and *opes* of Pygmalion. Dido's ability to flee Tyre with these goods, successfully navigate to North Africa, and

[28] Guisti, E. 2018:141-142, citing Gruen (2011) 116– 22; and Winter (1995) 249.

[29] Pygmalion of Tyre is not to be confused with the Pygmalion of Greek myth; i.e. the sculptor who falls in love with his statue. He was king of Tyre from 831 to 785 BCE and the son of Belus (King Mattan I) (840–832 BC). The traditional king-list of Tyre is derived from Josephus, *Against Apion* i. 18, 21, and *Jewish Antiquities* viii. 5.3; 13.2. Reed, J.G. 2018: "His list was based on Menander of Ephesus, who drew his information from the chronicles of Tyre.
om the historian Timaeus, who told of Pygmalion's murder of Dido's husband Sychaeus and Dido's flight and founding of Carthage; Menander of Ephesus finds the story in the city archives of Tyre. Sychaeus himself also recalls Adonis, if a version of the late-attested myth that has him killed by Pygmalion while hunting boar was current in Virgil's time." Pg. 78 citing: Timaeus FGrH 566 F 82, Menander of Ephesus FGrH 783 F 1 ~ Josephus Ap. 1.125. Preserved in John Malalas Chron. 6.19 (p. 126.66 Thurn); Malalas here may be following an account preserved in a lost section of Servius (whom he cites).

[30] A.4.262-263.

[31] A.1.359.

[32] A.1.363-365.

establish a new colony are the ultimate successes of the tale, showcasing the succession of her culture unto Carthage.

It is worth noting that one of the most famous cultural achievements of the Phoenicians, the alphabet, is not mentioned by Venus directly. However, Herodotus credits Cadmus, who is mentioned indirectly, with bringing the alphabet to the Greeks.[33]

I believe that Vergil's intention in using the epic past in all the aforementioned ways is mostly twofold; to enrich their identity and situate them within a broader historical and mythological context in the ancient Mediterranean world, and to add depth to Dido and the Carthaginians, making them more than just enemies of Rome, allowing them to become tragic figures caught in the web of fate and history. This makes the fate of her city even more poignant, as it highlights the loss of such a vibrant culture in the face of inevitable conflict with Rome. In her tragic farewell in Book 4, Dido invokes her past with references to her initial hope and the nobility of her actions. Her self-pity and lamentation evoke a sense of lost glory, linking her personal tragedy to the broader historical narrative of her people. This complexity enriches the narrative and invites the audience to consider the broader implications of war and cultural loss.

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[33] Hdt.5.58

MIDWIVES, MAGIC AND MENSTRUAL BLOOD: EXPLORING WOMEN AS SOURCES OF AUTHORITY IN BOOK 28 OF PLINY'S *NATURAL HISTORY*

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When attached to medical recipes/remedies in Greco-Roman literature, women's names often lend authority to them. The names of midwives and prostitutes/courtesans vouch for the effectiveness of recipes/remedies utilizing gynecological materials like menstrual blood. These names also promote the effectiveness of recipes/remedies addressing topics like fertility or sexuality. However, male authors' treatment of these recipes and their attitudes towards the women who wrote them can vary based on the nature of the ingredients in each recipe/remedy, the social status of the woman author, and the ethnicity of the woman author of the recipe. Book 28 of Pliny's *Natural History* is a collection of apotropaic rituals and quasi-magical medical remedies involving ingredients including menstrual blood, saliva and urine. Although books 20 and 32 also contain women's names associated with recipes, Book 28 has the highest concentration of women's names associated with medical or semi-magical cures.[1]The names Elephantis, Lais, Olympias of Thebes, Salpe and Sotira appear in this book, with Olympias and Salpe also appearing in Books 20 and 32.[2] Many recipes and remedies in Pliny are anonymous as he prefers to remove the names of his medical authors from the text. Instead, he includes comprehensive lists of medicinal authors in Book 1 of his work.[3] Elephantis, Lais, Salpe, Sotira and Olympias of Thebes appear in these comprehensive lists as foreign *(externi)* authorities for Book 28.[4]

Although Salpe and Sotira are the only women whom Pliny gives the title of *obstetrix* within the text,[5] he refers to midwives and prostitutes collectively as the authorities for menstrual-blood-based recipes[6] and associates the top midwives with urine-based remedies.[7] Pliny the Elder uses some of these women's names and titles as sources of authority for their recipes in his work. Furthermore, his attitudes towards these female-associated recipes reflect more his disgust towards body-based recipes than they reflect any prejudices towards the gender of recipes' authors. This is evident through a close examination of the language of recipes associated with women's names, a comparison between Pliny's authorial attitude towards body-based recipes associated with women's names and those associated with men's names, and a comparison between his authorial attitude towards male authored animal-based recipe and women authored body-based recipes.

In Books 20, 28 and 32 of his *Natural History,* Pliny's authorial attitude towards the recipes of Elephantis, Lais, Salpe, Sotira, Olympias of Thebes and the top midwives is either neutral or negative. This negative attitude is due more to the nature of the recipe (especially if the recipe is body-based) or the status or ethnicity of the individual associated with a recipe rather than the feminine gender of the author. Nevertheless, Pliny used women's names and titles as sources of authority for their recipes. Pliny begins Book 28 by expressing his disgust at the concept of using materials from the human body as cures and pronouncing them to be practices of foreigners, adopted by the Greeks.[8] Pliny believes some human-

[1] Flemming, "Women, Writing and Medicine in the Classical World", *The Classical Quarterly* 57, no.1 (May, 2007), 271.
[2] Flemming, 271-272.
[3] Flemming, 271.
[4] Pliny, *Natural History*, 1.28 Auct.
[5] Pliny, *NH,* 32.135 & 28.83.
[6] Pliny, *NH*, 28.70-71.
[7] Pliny, *NH,* 28.67.
[8] Pliny, *NH*, 28.4-9.

based ingredients to be so disgusting that he does not believe life ought to be prolonged by them and he describes people who use some human-sourced remedies as *obscaenus* and *nefandus*.[9] Elephantis and Lais are mentioned in connection with a gynecological recipe involving menstrual blood.[10] The two apparently had conflicting ideas about what the recipe treated (used either as an abortive or a cure for barrenness), and Pliny's reference to this recipe is negative. He states that it is better not to believe them (*melius est non credere*) and thus does not give any authority to their recipe.[11] These two women are never overtly described by Pliny as *obstetrices* and their professions remain unclear, although the recipes they are associated with are gynecological and use gynecological materials. Salpe's recipes are quasi-magical in nature and involve a variety of bodily fluids including saliva, urine, and period blood. According to Pliny, she recommended using saliva on the eyelids and on body parts to treat numbness and would apply urine to the eyes (to make them stronger) and sunburns.[12] Along with Lais, she is associated with recipes for quartan and tertian fevers, rabid dog bites involving menstrual blood,[13] an aphrodisiac, and materials for hair removal.[14] The last reference that Pliny makes to Salpe in Book 32 is her recommendation to place live frogs in dog food to keep dogs quiet.[15] Despite referring to her as an *obstetrix*, Pliny does not associate Salpe's name with any gynecological recipes. Pliny's authorial treatment of Salpe's recommendation of treating numbness with saliva is negative because he appears doubtful of the effectiveness of the treatment.[16] After describing Salpe's treatment, Pliny states:

> *Salpe torporem sedari quocumque membro stupente, si quis in sinum expuat aut si superiores palpebrae saliva tangantur. nos si haec et illa credamus rite fieri, extranei interventu aut, si dormiens spectetur infans, a nutrice terna adspui.*
>
> Salpe (says) that numbness in whatever/whichever stupefied member/limb is checked, if one spits in his breast or if the upper eyelids are touched by saliva. If we, ourselves, should believe that these (things) and those (things) are done duly, then also on the arrival of a stranger, if a sleeping baby should be looked at, it is spit at three times by its nurse.

The adverb *rite* can be translated as "properly/duly" or "with reason".[17] Along with the use of the subjunctive in the protasis of the conditional (*credamus*), *rite* indicates that Pliny doubts the efficacy of this remedy for numbness. As a mood, the subjunctive is used to describe hypothetical situations and, in this case, signals whether Pliny believes that this remedy works.[18]Pliny also views Salpe's sunburn recipe as not entirely effective because he adds his own emendation to it, stating that the use of an ostrich egg would make the treatment *efficacius* (more effective), but he does vouch for the efficacy of urine for the treatment of bites.[19] Pliny does not mention the effectiveness of the menstrual-blood remedy for treating dog bites, quartan and tertian fevers associated with Lais and Salpe or the effectiveness of Salpe's aphrodisiac.[20] When referring to depilatory materials that Salpe uses on her slaves (*pueros*), Pliny attaches the title of *obstetrix* (midwife) to her.[21] Pliny could be associating the *obstetrix* title with Salpe's name simply to differentiate her from the fish of the same name or, as Davidson postulates, it could be a mistake.[22] If intentional, it may indicate that her depilatory materials were effective and that she had authority over a part of specialized feminine knowledge or was a well attested authority on sexual matters.[23] Due to Pliny's comment about midwives and prostitutes as the authors of menstrual-blood-based recipes, Flemming suggests that the women mentioned might have been a part of either of those professions or that there was not much difference

[9] Pliny, *NH*, 28.9.
[10] Pliny, *NH,* 28.81-82.
[11] Pliny, *NH*, 28.82.
[12] Pliny, *NH,* 28.38 & *NH,* 28.66.
[13] Pliny, *NH,* 28.82.
[14] Pliny, *NH,* 28.626 & 32.135.
[15] Pliny, *NH*, 32.140.
[16] Pliny, *NH*, 32.135 & *NH,* 28.38-39
[17] *Oxford Latin Dictionary,* eds. P.G.W. Glare, (Oxford, Clarendon Press: 1985), s.v *rite*.
[18] Frederic M. Wheelock and Richard A. LaFleur, "Chapter Twenty-Eight: Subjunctive Mood; Present Subjunctive; Jussive and Purpose Clauses," in *Wheelock's Latin*, 7th ed. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011), 227.
[19] Pliny, *NH,* 28.66 & *NH*, 28.67.
[20] Pliny, *NH,* 28.82 & *NH,* 28.626.
[21] Pliny, *NH,* 32.135.
[22] Pliny, *NH,* 32.151 & James N. Davidson, "Don't Try This at Home: Pliny's Salpe, Salpe's *Paignia* and Magic," *The Classical Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (1995), 592.
[23] Flemming, "Women, Writing and Medicine," 274-276.

between the two in Pliny's mind.[24] She notes that in the *Natural* History both *obstetrices* and *meretrices* are utilized as authorities on intrinsic female knowledge. Their authority does not come from training or theoretical understanding but from their experiences and understanding feminine bodies (including their own). Although depilation was practiced by both men and women in the Greco-Roman world, corporeal hairlessness was considered an effeminate trait and indicative of sexual passivity and availability.[25] The Salpe of Pliny's work might be the same Salpe who is noted as an author of *Paignia* in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*.[26] The contents of Salpe's *Paignia* were likely erotic, as Athenaeus connects her work to Botrys of Messana, whom Timaeus of Tauromenium classifies as a shameful writer.[27] Thus, Salpe might be considered a noted sexual authority and might be connected to knowledge about materials to make individuals appear sexually available. Flemming also suggests that by using this title in association with her name, Pliny is connecting to an older Hellenistic convention of exoticizing folkloric remedies.[28] The midwife represents the village wise women – her expertise lies in the natural world, fertility, and the body. Furthermore, King suggests that midwifery was not simply limited to the treatment of diseases pertaining to the female reproductive organs and childbirth since the health of the womb and the menses were thought to influence a women's whole body:[29]

> γυναικείους τινὰς λέγομεν ἰατρούς, ὅτι τὰ γυναικῶν θεραπεύουσι πάθη, καὶ μαίας ἐν ταῖς νόσοις ὁ βίος εἴωθεν παρακαλεῖν, ὅταν αἱ γυναῖκες ἴδιόν τι πάσχωσιν καὶ ὃ μὴ κοινόν ἐστιν πρὸς τοὺς ἄνδρας.
> We call some doctors women's (doctors), since they treat the conditions of women, and the public is accustomed to call in midwives in the case of sicknesses when women suffer something of their own and (something) which is not in common with men.[30]

Nevertheless, Pliny's treatment of the *obstetrices* and their recipes is negative as he lumps them in with a less credible group of *meretrices* (prostitutes/courtesans) because of the materials they make use of (products from women's bodies).[31] *Meretrices* were women of low stature, they were either slaves sold to brothels or women from low socio-economic backgrounds whose families needed them to earn income.[32]

Besides the treatment for dog bites associated with Salpe and Lais, Pliny mentions another recipe used to cure rabid dog bites (involving a drink containing the root of a wild rose) invented by a soldier's mother.[33] His treatment of her remedy is very positive. The remedy does not only save her son (*servatusque est*) but also saves the lives of anyone else who tried a similar cure. Thus, not only gender but status plays a very important role in Pliny's treatment of the women he cites.[34]

The title *obstetrix* is also listed alongside the name of Sotira when she is associated with a remedy for quartans, tertians, and epilepsy involving the topical application of menstrual blood to soles of the feet.[35] Although Pliny notes that Sotira said it was *efficacissimum* (very effective) made even more *efficax* (effective) when smeared by the *femina ipsa* (the producer of the menstrual blood), he does not state his own opinion of the recipe.

Olympias of Thebes is the only woman of those named in Book 28 who appears under the *medici* for Books 20 – 27 in Pliny's lists. Pliny cites her as an authority for the use of mallow with goose grease as an abortifacient, her addendum for a recipe to aid menstruation involving suint and soda and a topical remedy to treat infertility involving a bull's gall, serpent's fat, copper rust and honey.[36] He does not directly state his opinion on the efficacy of the first recipe or the addendum but agrees with Olympias'

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[24] Flemming, 273-274.
[25] Kelly Olsen, "Masculinity, Appearance and Sexuality: Dandies in Roman Antiquity," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 23, no. 2 (2014),189.
[26] Athenaeus, Deipnosophistae, 7.322a.
[27] James N. Davidson, "Don't Try This at Home: Pliny's Salpe, Salpe's *Paignia* and Magic," *The Classical Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (1995), 590; 592.
[28] Flemming, "Women, Writing and Medicine,"274-275.
[29] King, "Imaginary Midwives,"179.
[30] Soranus, *Gynecology*, 3.36-10.
[31] Pliny, *Natural History*, 28.70.
[32] Rebecca Flemming, "*Quae Corpore Quaestum Facit:* The Sexual Economy of Female Prostitution in the Roman Empire," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 89, (1999): 40-42.
[33] Pliny, *Natural History*, 28.82-83 & 25.17-18.
[34] Rebecca Flemming, "Chapter Three: The Medical Women Between Folk Tradition and Philosophy," in *Medicine and the Making of Roman Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 134.
[35] Pliny, *Natural History*, 28.83.
[36] Pliny, *NH*, 20.226, 28.246 & 28.253.

understanding of purgative nature of mallow leaves in relation to the first recipe.[37] He notes that women give birth more readily when they are standing over mallow leaves. For the third recipe, he again never explicitly states whether the remedy is effective but states that calf's gall (not far from the bull's gall of Olympias' remedy) is beneficial to the whole of the uterus (*in totum vulvae prodest*).[38]

Unlike the previous recipes of Salpe and Sotira where Pliny uses the verb *dicit* and *iubet*, Pliny uses the verb *adfirmo* when referring to Olympias of Thebes and her third recipe (utilizing bull's gall to restore fertility).[39] Since *adfirmo* can be translated as either "asserts" or "proves", this verb gives more validity to the effectiveness of Olympias' recipe than those of the other women.[40]She "proves" that infertility is corrected by this remedy. Pliny associates a group of top midwives with various urine-based remedies for treating skin maladies.[41] Pliny's treatment of the remedies associated with these women is fairly positive. His use of the adjective *nobilitas* lends further authority to their cures. Although he does not comment on the effectiveness of the remedies associated with the top midwives, Pliny agrees that urine can be very useful, especially in treating various bites.

None of the cures attributed to the top midwives involve menstrual blood and only one cure (a treatment for genital sores) is somewhat gynecological in nature. Like Salpe's title of *obstetrix* in connection with depilatory materials, Pliny could be exoticizing folkloric remedies and characterizing these midwives as the village "wise women" or conflating them with prostitutes (which would explain their recommended use of urine to treat genital sores).[42] Both Galen and the writer of the Hippocratic text *Diseases of Women* 1, mention black bile in connection to menstruation and the uterus. In *Diseases of Women* 1.8, the author discusses a bilious mensis that is black in colour and causes fever, heartburn, lack of appetite and eventually death. Galen notes that an excess of black bile in the breasts causes the development of breast carcinoma/hard tumors and that these tumors accumulated in the breasts of post-menopausal women.[43] In *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, Galen also mentions that skin diseases like scabies and leprosy are related to the melancholic humours.[44] Thus, the urine-based skin remedies of Pliny's *nobilitas obstetricum* help to prove that gynecology and midwifery were not just limited to the breasts and uterus but extended to the entire body.

Besides the women's names and the unnamed group of top midwives, Pliny also mentioned men's names in his *Natural History* in association with medicinal remedies and as authorities on the potency of bodily fluids. I have chosen to compare two different types of remedies associated with men to the remedies associated with Elephantis, Lais, Olympias of Thebes, Salpe and Sotira: (1) remedies which contain the same bodily fluids (such as blood or urine, found in Book 28 [Table 1]), and (2) remedies that do not contain the same ingredients but treat the same condition [Table 2].

In Book 28, Pliny associates some blood-based remedies with Orpheus and Archelaus and Diotimus of Thebes. Marcion of Smyrna and Ofilius are used by Pliny as authorities on the potency of saliva. Orpheus and Archelaus are mentioned in association with a blood-based recipe to treat quinsy and the sacred disease.[45] Pliny states that they say the recipe is very effective (*efficacissime*) which is very different from his attitude towards Elephantis and Lais' menstrual-blood recipe (which he says not to trust).[46] The language of this recipe is very similar to the menstrual-blood recipe associated with Sotira for quartans, tertians, and epilepsy.[47] For both recipes, Pliny notes that the authors say these remedies are effective (with the use of either the adjective *efficacius* or the adverb derived from it) but never comments on the efficacy in his own words. Diotimus of Thebes is associated with a recipe that is a slight variation of Salpe and Lais' menstrual-blood-based recipe for dog bites, quartan, and tertian fevers.[48] Instead of ram's wool stained with menstrual blood, Diotimus suggests clothing or thread

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[37] Pliny, *NH*, 20.226-227.
[38] Pliny, *NH*, 28.254.
[39] Pliny, *NH*, 28.253.
[40] *Oxford Latin Dictionary,* eds. Glare, s.v. *affirmare.*
[41] Pliny, *NH*
[42] Flemming, "Women, Writing and Medicine," 273-275
[43] Daniel De Moulin, "Chapter One: Antiquity," in *A Short History of Breast Cancer* (Dordrecht, NL: Springer-Science+Business Media, 1983), 7-8.
[44] Keith Andrew Stewart, "Chapter Seven: The Diseases Caused by Black Bile," in *Galen's Theory of Black Bile: Hippocratic Tradition, Manipulation, Innovation* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 138.
[45] Pliny, *NH*, 28.43-44.
[46] Pliny, *NH*, 28.82.
[47] Pliny, *NH*, 28.83.
[48] Pliny, *NH*, 28.82-83.

stained with blood.[49] Like with Salpe and Lais' recipe, Pliny does not comment on the efficacy of Diotimus' slight variation of it. Pliny cites Marcion of Smyrna and Ofilius as stating that saliva causes sea scolopendra, bramble toads, and serpents to burst.[50] His treatment of their claims is no different from his treatment of Salpe's cure for numbness.[51] The statement *nos si haec et illa credamus rite fieri* ("if we, ourselves, should believe that these [things] and those [things] are done duly") refers to both Marcion and Ofilius' claims as well as Salpe's.[52] He holds the same amount of doubt for Marcion and Ofilius' claims as he does Salpe's which, again, is clear from his use of the subjunctive *credamus* and the adverb *rite*.

Pliny cites Xenocrates, Hippocrates and Aesculapius as male authorities for remedies treating tertian fevers, infertility, rhagades/warts, and for an aphrodisiac involving mallow. Pliny does not comment on the efficacy of Xenocrates' remedy for tertian fevers. Xenocrates' recipe involves placing a twig of pennyroyal (wrapped up in wool) in a patient's bedspread.[53] Likewise, Pliny makes no comment about his opinion of the efficacy of Lais, Salpe and Sotira's menstrual blood-based recipes for quartans and tertian fevers. However, he does state that Sotira says this remedy is *efficacissimum* (very effective).[54] Xenocrates is also cited by Pliny for an aphrodisiac (the seeds of the single-stemmed mallow being its only ingredient), but again Pliny makes no comment about his thoughts on this aphrodisiac's effectiveness.[55] This is no different from his silence about Salpe's ass-based genital aphrodisiac.[56] Hippocrates is associated with another fertility recipe involving headed leek.[57] Pliny's treatment of this recipe is not markedly different from his treatment of Salpe's ass-based aphrodisiac – he does not comment on the efficacy of or dismiss either recipe. However, Pliny's treatment of Elephantis and Lais' menstrual blood recipe (which was either for fertility or an abortifacient) is clearly more negative than Hippocrates' recipe.[58] Pliny's treatment of Aesculapius' remedy for rhagades/warts (involving various animal-based products) differs slightly from his treatment of the midwives urine-based remedies for skin conditions.[59] Pliny makes no comment on the efficacy of Aesculapius' remedy for rhagades but says that his remedy is very effective for removing warts *(eodemque et verrucas efficacissime tolli)* which is different from his treatment of the midwives' urine-based remedies for skin conditions. He makes no comment on the efficacy of the midwives' remedies but acknowledges their authority by titling them *nobilitas*.[60]

In conclusion, for remedies involving bodily fluids like blood and urine, Pliny's treatment does not differ much based on the gender of the name associated with the remedy (with the language of only Elephantis and Lais' recipe being overtly negative). Although Pliny is disgusted by recipes/remedies involving human-based ingredients, there does not seem to be much difference in his attitude towards body-based recipes associated with women's names compared to non-human-based recipes associated with men's names. Pliny is, however, more straightforward in his endorsement of Aesculapius' recipe (involving dog's dung) than he is in his endorsement of the top midwives' urine recipe, only commenting on the general usefulness of urine. This hesitancy to directly endorse human-based remedies may be because of his overall negative view of them which he presents in the beginning of Book 28.[61]

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[49] Pliny, *NH*, 28.83.
[50] Pliny, *NH*, 28.82 & 28.38.
[51] Pliny, *NH*, 28.38-39.
[52] Pliny, *NH*, 28.39.
[53] Pliny, *NH*, 20.155.
[54] Pliny, *NH*, 28.83.
[55] Pliny, *NH,* 20.227.
[56] Pliny, *NH*, 28.626.
[57] Pliny, *NH*, 20.48-49.
[58] Pliny, *NH*, 28.82.
[59] Pliny, *NH*, 30.69.
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[61] Pliny, *NH*, 30.69 & 28.4-9.

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Bodily Fluid	Associated with men's names	Associated with women's names
Human Blood	**Orpheus & Archelaus** **Remedy:** Bloodletting to treat quinsy & sacred disease (*NH* 28.43-44). **Effectiveness:** They say that it's "very effective" (*efficacissime)* **Diotimus of Thebes** **Recipe:** Slight variation of Salpe and Lais' menstrual blood recipe for tertian, quartan fevers and rabid dog bites (*NH* 28.83) **Effectiveness:** Pliny makes no comment	**Elephantis & Lais** **Recipe:** Burning root of cabbage, tamarisk or myrtle extinguished by menstrual blood to treat infertility or used as abortifacient (*NH* 28.82) **Effectiveness:** Disagreement between Elephantis and Lais about what recipe treats. Pliny does not recommend this recipe since he says, "it is better not to believe them." (*melius est non credere)* **Sotira** **Remedy:** Treats quartans, tertians and epilepsy involving the topical application of menstrual blood to soles of the feet (*NH* 28.83) **Effectiveness:** Sotira said it was a very effective remedy (*efficacissimum*), more effective (*efficacius*) when smeared by the producer **Lais & Salpe** **Recipe:** Menstrual blood on ram's wool enclosed in silver bracelet, treats tertian, quartan fevers and rabid dog bites (*NH* 28.82) **Effectiveness:** Pliny makes no comment
Human Saliva	**Marcion of Smyrna** **Claim:** Human saliva makes the sea scolopendra and bramble toads burst (*NH* 28.38) **Ofilius** **Claim:** Human saliva spit into the mouths of serpents makes them burst (*NH* 28.38) **Effectiveness:** Pliny finds these claims doubtful as he states *nos si haec et illa credamus rite fieri* ("if we, ourselves should believe that these (things) and those things are done duly"). Note the subjunctive *credamus* and the various meanings of *rite* ("properly/duly" or "with reason") (*NH* 28.39)	**Salpe** **Remedy:** Spitting in the breast or touching the upper eyelid with saliva is a cure for numbness (*NH* 28.38-39) **Effectiveness:** Pliny's statement "if we, ourselves should believe that these (things) and those things are done duly" also applies to this claim.

Table 1. Comparison of use of body fluid in men and women's recipes/remedies.

Plant or animal-based recipes/recipes associated with men's names	**Body-based recipes/recipes associated with women's names**
Xenocrates **Remedy:** A twig of pennyroyal wrapped up in wool and placed in the patient's bedspread for treating tertian fevers (*NH* 20.155) **Effectiveness:** Pliny makes no comment	**Lais & Salpe** **Remedy:** Menstrual blood on a black ram's wool enclosed in a silver bracelet to treat tertian, quartan fevers and rabid dog bites (*NH* 28.83) **Effectiveness:** Pliny makes no comment **Sotira** **Remedy:** Smearing the patient's feet with menstrual blood to treat tertian, quartan fevers and to revive epileptics (*NH* 28.83) **Effectiveness:** Pliny does not deem the recipe "effective" in his own words but says that Sotira claims it to be very effective (*efficacissimum*) and more effective *(efficacius)* if the woman who produced it spreads it on an unaware patient
Xenocrates **Remedy:** Seeds of the single stemmed mallow to increase sexual desire in women (*NH* 20.227) **Effectiveness:** Pliny makes no comment	**Salpe** **Remedy:** An ass' genital organ dipped into hot oil seven times and applied to the relevant parts to encourage sexual intercourse (*NH* 28.626) **Effectiveness:** Pliny makes no comment
Hippocrates **Remedy:** Headed leek to open contracted wombs, increase women's fertility (*NH* 20.48-49) **Effectiveness:** Pliny makes no comment, although the association of Hippocrates' name adds considerable authority to the remedy	**Elephantis & Lais** **Recipe:** Burning root of cabbage, tamarisk or myrtle extinguished by menstrual blood to treat infertility or used as abortifacient (*NH* 28.82) **Effectiveness:** Due to a disagreement about the nature of what the recipe does (whether it is an abortifacient or increases fertility) Pliny says, "It is better not to believe them." (*melius est non credere*)
Aesculapius **Recipe:** Ashes of a white dog's dung mixed with rose oil to treat rhagades and warts (*NH* 30.69) **Effectiveness:** Pliny makes no comment about the efficacy of this recipe for rhagades but states that this recipe is "very effective" *(eodemque et verrucas efficacissime tolli)* for removing warts	**Nobilitas Obstetricum** **Remedy:** The use of urine for treating a variety of skin conditions (itchy skin, dandruff, sores on the head) (*NH* 30.69) **Effectiveness:** Does not mention the effectiveness of urine for these specific conditions in his own words but states that each person's own urine is "especially" useful for treating bites (*sua cuique autem, quod fas sit dixisse, maxime prodest*)

Table 2. Comparison of male authored animal-based recipes/remedies to body-based recipes/remedies associated with women's names.

PARMENIDES' RADICAL MONISM: ORACLE AS PHILOSOPHY

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The historical record has left us with two Parmenides. One is a spinner of word games, a dialectic gymnast who contorts his inquiry into strange and paradoxical forms and whose arguments are, in Aristotle's estimation, "merely contentious."[1] This Parmenides, along with his disciple Zeno, challenges the young Socrates with a dizzying, ultimately paradoxical, display of virtuoso logic in the Platonic dialogue which bears his name. Yet in his own work, Parmenides appears not as an aged logician, but as *κοῦρος*, a youthful hero whose chariot is guided by daughters of the sun towards a nameless goddess who instructs him in the nature of *ἀλήθεια*, "reality", or "truth". The visionary of *On Nature* receives his doctrines as a revelation, and both the form and the content of his poem suggest that human intellect, unaided, is bound to go astray.

Which, then, is the real Parmenides? Part of the problem lies, we believe, in assuming that there is an inevitable conflict between logic and mysticism. Even in Plato, myths, visions and revelations play an epistemic role, and Plato's critique of myth and poetry isn't grounded in the kinds of epistemic concerns that motivate modern suspicions: he is less worried about our ability to verify the source or content of a divine inspiration, and more worried that the poets misrepresent the gods, presenting unvirtuous behaviour as divine,[2] stirring up irrational passions,[3] and producing ontologically degraded copies of things they don't understand.[4] He is happy to credit and include mystical or mythological material provided it seems to reveal truth and is conducive to the development of a virtuous moral character. If we take Parmenides' poem at face value, it seems that for him, rationally compelling truth could not only be discovered through oracular revelations, but perhaps that it could not be arrived at in any other way. We will argue, therefore, that if we consider Parmenides only within the philosophical tradition, our ability to understand his thought is significantly hampered. This can be corrected by placing his work within the context of the religious and mystical traditions of his contemporary milieu to understand how the unification of mysticism and logic resolve apparent contradictions in the Parmenidean quest for truth.

Plato's Parmenides

Before we turn to the religious sources of the Parmenidean vision, it is helpful to see how the contemplative and oracular elements of the text guide the philosophical inquiry that arises from it. Unfortunately, what we have of Parmenides is limited: we know that the goddess of *On Nature* instructs him in a form of inquiry, but we don't see him undertaking this inquiry within the fragments that we have of his writings. We do, however, have Plato's portrayal of Parmenides. Bearing in mind Plato's own reservations about the reliability of imitations, we can nonetheless, at a minimum, use Plato's text as an opportunity to see Parmenidean inquiry being practiced – albeit not by Parmenides, but by Plato.

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[1]. Aristotle, Physics, I.II.185a5-10.
[2]. Plato, *Republic,* II 377e-383c.
[3]. Plato, *Republic*, III 386a-389a.
[4]. Plato, *Republic*, X 598a-602b.

At first glance, the highly rational and abstract discussion of ideas that Plato presents in *Parmenides* seems difficult to reconcile with Parmenides' own poem, which takes the form of a vision or oracle. If we look a little closer at the two texts, however, we find a significant line of continuity. Within the mythological framework of *On Nature*, the goddess teaches Parmenides the routes of inquiry, instructing him that there are two possible paths: one that concerns *that which is, and which cannot not-be*, and another that concerns *that which is not and must not be*.[5] The goddess stresses that the path of the "is not" is "wholly unlearnable," explaining that "what is there for speaking and thinking of *is;* for it is there / Whereas nothing is not,"[6] Later, she establishes a dichotomy between the truth that she expounds and the opinions of humanity.[7] She establishes that Parmenides is to become familiar with the way that things seem to human beings,[8] suggesting that the knowledge of seeming/opinion is also a method of inquiry, presumably distinct from the forbidden path of "what is not."

It is important to recognize the limits of what the goddess suggests. She does not, as Tor observes, "prohibit all use of the expression τὸ μὴ ἐόν. Rather, she suggests that it would be a non-starter to attempt an inquiry into what-is-not or strive to grasp it or exhibit it through an account."[9] Nor is there any evidence in the text that either the goddess or Parmenides understands the prohibition in this way: even in the goddess' own account, the nature of '[it] is" is described using both positive and negative descriptors.[10]

Plato's Parmenides represents his logical investigation into "the one" (τὸ ἕν) as a form of dialectic exercise,[11] advising the young Socrates that, "you must examine what the consequences will be on each hypothesis, both for the things hypothesized themselves and for the others, both in relation to themselves [*pros heauton*] and in relation to each other [*pros ta alla*]."[12] In the dialogue, this takes the form of interrogating the effects of positing the One's nature first for itself,[13] then as an entity with existence in relation to the multitude,[14] and then inquiring into what follows if we assert it's not-being in relation to the multitudes,[15] and finally its not-being in itself.[16]

This four-fold analysis could be seen to have its roots in Parmenides poem itself: the goddess draws a distinction between what is and what is not, and what is true and what merely seems true (i.e. the opinions of mortals which "go astray.")[17] This "seeming" appears to depend on some *pros ta alla* relationship, since the mode of existence implies in seeming or appearing cannot be assigned to formal ideas *pros heauton.*[18] Whether this was an Eleatic insight, or it is particular to Plato, we can understand Plato's dialogue as an attempt to examine the claims made by Parmenides' goddess using the methodology proposed by the goddess – or, at least, the methodology which Plato understood the goddess to be proposing.

We must also, however, be cautious: Plato demonstrates respect for Parmenides, but he has reservations about Eleatic monism. It is possible to read Plato's Parmenides as a concerted take-down of the Eleatic doctrine – not so much a virtuosic display of Parmenidean logic as a virtuosic display of Platonic wit.[19] The conclusion of Parmenides' analysis is, "Let us then say this – and also that, as it seems, whether one is or is not, it and the others both are and are not, and both appear and do not appear all things in all ways, both in relation to themselves and in relation to each other."[20] There seems to be a parallel here to the way that the goddess in *On Nature* describes the opinions of those uncritical people "By whom being and not-being have been thought both the same / And not the same."[21]

This approach, however, would suggest that Plato is engaging in a sort of vain, competitive process –

[5]. Parmenides, 2.4-5.
[6]. Parmenides, 6.1-2.
[7]. Parmenides, 8.50-55
[8]. Parmenides, 8.60-61
[9]. Shaul Tor, "Language and Doctrine in Parmenides' *Way of Reality*," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 143 (2023): 256.
[10]. Cf. Parmenides, 8.20-37.
[11]. Plato, *Parmenides*, 135d.
[12]. Plato, *Parmenides*, 136b.
[13]. Plato, *Parmenides,* 137c-142a.
[14]. Plato, *Parmenides,* 142b-160b.
[15]. Plato, *Parmenides,* 160b-163b.
[16]. Plato, *Parmenides,* 163c-166c.
[17]. Parmenides, 8.54.
[18]. Bryan Frances, "Plato's Response to the Third Man Argument in the Paradoxical Exercise of the Parmenides," *Ancient Philosophy* 16, no. 1 (1996): 7-8.
[19]. Plato employs a similar type of irony in the Symposium, putting a ridiculous speech into the mouth of Aristophanes and leaving the reader to understand that the playwright, who had lampooned Socrates in The Clouds, is a fool.
[20]. Plato, *Parmenides,* 166c.
[21]. Parmenides, 6.8-9.

similar to the description that Zeno gives of his own work earlier in Plato's text.[22] A more satisfying explanation is to posit that Plato is attempting to fix what he sees as a flaw in the Parmenidean method without rejecting the method entirely. He establishes in *Sophist* that if we are going to distinguish between truth and falsity at all, we need to be able to speak about "what is not" in the sense of "what is false."[23] Thus, Plato is asking what happens if we do inquire into what is not – if we use the Eleatic methods, but take the forbidden path. (As noted above, and convincingly argued by Tor, there is good reason to believe that Plato's Eleatic Stranger over-interprets the goddess's prohibition on inquiring about "what is not" in a relative or contingent sense, however, Plato seems to have believed that Parmenides forbade such investigations, even if Parmenides own text shows that he did not.)

Plato is thus able to show that there is a kind of non-being that partakes of being in the sense that it is sayable and thinkable even though it is not realized.[24] The conclusion of *Parmenides* should not, therefore, be seen as a mass of contradiction but rather a revelation of the multifaceted complexity of being and unity, an example of that "weaving together of the forms" that "makes speech possible for us."[25]

The engagement with Parmenides does not, then, emerge as an exercise in vain contention, but rather as a fruitful, logical work of refinement. Plato draws on Eleatic methods to build on the Parmenidean revelation, using logic to uncover the paradoxical richness of what is. Just as the original poem of Parmenides provides a mystical encounter with a goddess who reveals a truth that is counter-intuitive and inaccessible to ordinary mortal experience, Plato's Parmenides brings us full circle to a vision of cosmic unity-duality that dances without motion, evading our attempts to pin it down with logical divisions and human speech. At the point of logical exhaustion, we are brought to a position of perplexity – or to a position of cosmic wonder. As purely rational philosophy, the conclusion of Plato's dialogue appears as a mess of contradictions, but it opens onto a horizon that exceeds the apparent paradox. This is, in part, because "the one" in Parmenides cannot be thought of, or understood, as a Platonic Form of oneness, and in part because Parmenides' project is the rational disclosure of what exceeds dialectic reason. This is a point we will be better able to return to once we have explored the mystical sources of Parmenidean monism.

Divine Madness – Oracle vs. Allegory

There are significant differences between Plato and Parmenides' approaches to myth. Plato does not reject mythological and oracular knowledge as epistemic sources, but it is the process of logical testing that occupies him. He praises the divine madness of the prophets above those who use technical procedures to interpret signs[26] and even states that "madness from a god is finer than self-control of human origin."[27] Yet Plato does not claim this kind of knowledge for himself. The prophetic and mythological narratives in his dialogues are reports he has heard from others. In *Gorgias,* his authority is Homer[28] and in Book X of *the Republic*, we are asked to accept the account of Er's journey based on nothing but hearsay. Even when Socrates' famously invokes the Delphic oracle in his Apology, he claims to have received the prophecy second hand.[29]

What we see more often in Plato is allegory. These are stories, such as the myth of the cave or of the three metals in *The Republic*, which are explicitly invented in order to help in the author's exposition of his ideas. The chariot race in *Phaedrus* is another good example of this. Plato does not claim any authority, divine or otherwise, for his account. It is a rhetorical expediency: "To describe what the soul actually is would require a very long account, altogether a task for a god in every way; but to say what it is like is humanly possible and takes less time."[30] This suggests that not only is it easier to talk about the soul by way of allegory, but that to do otherwise is beyond the epistemic possibility of mortals. This would fit with his high estimation of prophecy and madness. Nonetheless, Plato's own mythological inventions are allegorical and expository. So despite some surface similarities with *On Nature*, Plato's myths are of a different nature.

Parmenides presents his poem as an experience he actually had, not as something he heard about from

[22]. Plato, *Parmenides,* 128c-d.
[23]. Plato, *Sophist*, 261c-264b.
[24]. Plato, *Parmenides,* 162a-b.
[25]. Plato, *Sophist* 259e.
[26]. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 244c.
[27]. Plato, *Phaedrus,* 244d.
[28]. Plato, *Gorgias*, 523-527.
[29]. Plato, *Apology*, 21a.
[30]. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 246a.

someone else. This makes the narrative in *On Nature* categorically different from anything in Plato, placing it in the category of prophecy. Normally, for Plato, this would make the poem a manifestation of the divine madness discussed in the *Phaedrus*. However, for Plato, it would then lie outside of the realm of philosophical discussion. "A poet," comments Plato, "if he is to be a poet, must compose fables, not arguments."[31] The prophetess at Delphi and the priestesses of Dodona, for example, "accomplish little or nothing when in control of themselves."[32] The prophet is completely accidental to the prophecy, which is perhaps why Plato never claims this kind of knowledge for himself. He has a high degree of respect for it, but it is ultimately what he projects to supplant with philosophical inquiry.

Parmenides' visionary material, however, depicts the philosopher entering into the presence of the divine without losing his reason. The goddess invites him to logical inquiry with the contents of her discourse: the mortal is told to judge the divine. Rose Cherubin goes as far as to say that "where the gods or their agents have not chosen to reveal things to us [...] we may still have access to a road whose orientation is *aletheia*, and that road is the road of inquiry."[33] This strikes us as a slight overstatement: Parmenides is firmly within the long tradition of thinkers who are very pessimistic about the epistemic possibilities of ordinary mortals who, "knowing nothing wander two-headed; for helplessness in their breasts guides their distracted minds."[34] The revelation is necessary, however its divine source does not preclude rational engagement with its contents. In fact, Parmenides is introducing a mode of reasoning that links philosophy and prophecy, positioning the philosophical act as the rational engagement with the irrational. In Joseph I. Breidenstein Jr.'s discussion of Parmenides' project, he describes this new conception of reasoning as "the experience of being reasonable qua the oneiric eternity that characterises philosophic subjectivity."[35] Logic is an "artistic-ethical event" and bids us to meditate on the goddess' arguments. This contemplation has as its goal and effect the "experience of unchanging being."[36]

This contemplative experience of being is, we argue, the key to understanding *On Nature*. But to understand where this contemplative impulse is coming from, we need to look more closely at how the poem relates to contemporary mystical and oracular practices.

Oracles

One of the major difficulties in interpreting *On Nature* is that we have very little idea of its *Sitz im Leben*. Did it have a cultic or ritual purpose, perhaps as an initiatory incantation? Or was it meant simply as a text for private consideration? While the precise purpose of *On Nature* is impossible to reconstruct, the poem has clear links to the mystery traditions of ancient Greece, particularly Orphism, and it has features consistent with the practice of incubation and dream oracles.

One of the greatest obstacles to a plausible determination of the *Sitz im Leben* of *On Nature* is the text's abrupt beginning. We are not told that the narrator is having a vision, nor that he is asleep or perhaps even dead. The poem does not describe a ritual context, which makes it difficult to decisively identify Parmenides' visionary method. We can assume that the original audience understood the nature of what they were reading or listening to without needing such an introduction. We, however, are left to reconstruct a plausible account based on the available clues.

The practice of inducing oracles through dreams is well attested in antiquity and it seems plausible that Parmenides can, at least broadly speaking, be placed in that tradition. There were an incredible variety of oneiric practices in the ancient world: some involved nothing more complicated than lying in a dark cave,[37] while others employed elaborate rituals, most commonly wrapping oneself on the pelts of sheep who had been sacrificed for the purpose[38]. Peter Kingsley situates Parmenides specifically in the Apollonian

[31]. Plato, *Phaedo*, 61b.
[32]. Plato, *Phaedrus,* 244b.
[33] Rose M. Cherubin, "Alētheia from Poetry into Philosophy: Homer to Parmenides," *Logos and Muthos: Philosophical Essays in Greek Literature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), 59.
[34] Parmenides, 6.4-7.
[35] Joseph I. Breidenstein, *Nietzschean, Feminist, and Embodied Perspectives on the Presocratics* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 205.
[36] Breidenstein, 210-211.
[37] Eric R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2023), 110.
[38] Leslie D. Johnston, "Incubation-Oracles," *The Classical Journal* 43, no. 6 (1948): 349.

Pholarcos tradition. His argument relies heavily on a series of Greek inscriptions discovered at Velia in the 1960's, one set identifying certain individuals as belonging to a long line of healer-priests of Apollo Oulios.[39] A further inscription, discovered later at the same site, places Parmenides in this line of healers.[40] But even outside of the Pholarcos line of priests, incubation, the act of sleeping in a holy place either for healing or to contact divinities or spirits, was practiced widely: Dodds believes the practice to be pre-Hellenic and traces its origins at least to second millennium Egypt.[41] Even if we are not completely convinced by Kingsley's arguments, we can still find reason to place Parmenides more broadly in this tradition.

What reasons are there, internal to the poem, that allow us to read it as an incubation oracle? Incubation was seen as "dying before you die."[42] The act of going into a cave, of stilling the body and remaining in silence is a ritual enactment of death. By separating oneself from the community, the collectively constructed identity that one wears in everyday life begins to break down, and one is open to other sources of inspiration.[43] Incubation is therefore a *katabasis*, a journey to the underworld. Does Parmenides present his account as a *katabasis*? Concerning 1:9, in which the Daughters of the Sun escort the narrator "after leaving the House of Night for the light," David Gallop notes that εἰς φάος, as in his translation, is connected to the Daughters of the Sun, rather than the narrator.[44] That is, they do not escort him "into the light", but rather came into the light themselves in order to escort Parmenides back whence they had come. John Palmer comes to a similar conclusion and judges the obstacles to any other interpretation "insuperable" on purely grammatical grounds.[45] And it is not strange at all that the Daughters of the Sun would come from the Underworld, since the Tartarus was where the sun went to rest every night.[46] J.S. Morrison identifies a "traditional topography" developed by the poets and employed by Parmenides, allowing us to identify the setting of the poem as *Hades*.[47] Among many examples he cites *Theogony* (744ff), which mentions not only the "House of Night", but describes night and day passing each other under the "great threshold of bronze."[48] Both Morrison[49], and Kingsley[50] translate 1:9 similarly to Gallop and come to the same interpretive conclusion.

Oracles in antiquity solved an epistemic problem. How are mortals to access truth? This was not an abstract issue for philosophers, but a challenge experienced daily. When a new thought comes into ones mind, how did it get there? Having no notion of subconscious thought processes, the ancients were forced to conclude that spontaneous thoughts had an external source.[51] Oracles provided a formal or ritualized method of accessing this source, albeit one that demanded interpretation. Heraclitus tells us, 'the lord whose oracle is the one in Delphi neither says (λέγει) nor conceals (κρύπτει) but gives a sign (σημαίνει)'.[52] Tor argues that Parmenides' goddess employs signs to guide the *kouros* towards truths which lie outside of ordinary human experience and which, therefore, human language fails to adequately capture. These signs "offer a starting point from which, with well-directed effort, we can gain insight and understanding concerning our inquiries."[53] Some readers have taken the paradoxical nature of the text to suggest that the goddess is speaking in riddles[54] however, while the goddess' words may be difficult to understand, they do not seem to be obscurantist. She employs mythological imagery and negative signifiers to point towards what is, but she does so in an attempt to formulate a clear, logical, accessible account. She says precisely what she means and there is no reason not to take the text at face value. Thus, *On Nature* bears only a limited resemblance to traditional oracles: it offers "signs" directing the *kouros* towards that which cannot be fully elucidated by human speech,

[39] Peter Kingsley, *In the Dark Places of Wisdom* (Inverness: Golden Sufi Centre, 1999), 56 ff.
[40] Kingsley, *In the Dark Places of Wisdom,* 139 ff.
[41] Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational,* 111.
[42] Breidenstein, p. 202.
[43] Bredenstein, p. 203.
[44] David Gallop, "Introduction," in *Parmenides of Elea* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 6.
[45] John Palmer, *Parmenides and Presocratic Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 53.
[46] Kingsley, *Reality*, p. 30.
[47] J. S. Morrison, "Parmenides and Er," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 75 (1955): 60.
[48] Morrison, p. 59.
[49] Morrison, p. 60.
[50] Peter Kingsley, *Reality* (Inverness: Golden Sufi Centre, 2004) 26.
[51] J. H. Lesher, "Archaic Knowledge," in *Logos and Muthos: Philosophical Essays in Greek* Literature (Albany: State University of New York Press), 21
[52] Heraclitus, DK22, B93.
[53] Tor, "Language and Doctrine in Parmenides' *Way of Reality*," 111.
[54] Cf. Kingsley, *Reality,* 67.

but, unlike most oracular deities, the goddess is trying to communicate clearly.

To better understand what is going on, let us turn to the mystery traditions.

Orphism and The Mystery Cults

The central myth of Orphism is the journey to the underworld and if we interpret *On Nature* as a *katabasis* we see only the first of several important points of contact between Parmenides and Orphism. Both Orphism and the practice of incubation are associated with chthonic goddesses[55] and thus form a parallel, or perhaps even a reaction to, the Olympian tradition represented by Homer and Hesiod.[56] The identity of Parmenides' goddess has been much debated, but whether we take her to be Persephone, as Kingsley argues, or Nyx,[57] or as nameless and unknown, the association with the mystery traditions is hard to ignore. The hexameter Parmenides uses is the same as we see in the Orphic hymns,[58] and the association between Parmenides and Orphism is attested in antiquity; for example when Simplicius considers whether Parmenides' spherical cosmos is identical with the cosmic egg of Orphic myth.[59]

However, there is a serious problem with placing Parmenides within the mystery traditions. Not only were the mysteries kept secret, but more importantly they were nonverbal[60]. Carl Kerenyi describes at Eleusis a "wordless initiation that led to a knowledge which it was neither necessary nor possible to clothe in words."[61] After the initial description of the journey, Parmenides' encounter with the goddess is explicit and verbal. The goddess intends to give a trustworthy account,[62] and Parmenides, in turn, intends his audience to understand what he relates. Nor would it seem that Parmenides was interested in keeping secrets; the Eleatic school published their work and seems to have taught their doctrines openly. Just as Parmenides' poem is too exoteric to be interpreted as a typical oracle, he also cannot be seen as simply an Orphic. The thematic similarities show that his work is linked to the Orphic tradition[63], but the very act of presenting his ideas clearly and in writing puts him outside of it.

Is it possible that Parmenides was guilty of betraying some secret? Did he put into words that which was supposed to remain unsaid? As far as we know, none of his contemporaries accused him of such. We can contrast this with Aeschylus who was attacked for betraying the secrets of Eleusis in his plays.[64] Aeschylus was said to be influenced by Parmenides[65] but he was working in a different medium. If, as Kerenyi argues, dance played a central role in the cult at Eleusis,[66] and indeed in ancient mystery cults generally,[67] then the close association between the mysteries and tragic theatre becomes clear. Aristotle indicates this in his discussion on catharsis, describing tragic theatre as a cultic ritual.[68] A dramatic performance could therefore provide an opportunity to betray a wordless mystery. Parmenides, on the other hand, could not have betrayed the mysteries of Eleusis, Orpheus or any other cult, for such mysteries cannot be betrayed by words.

Monism and its Ethical Consequences

Parmenidean monism asks us to believe something that radically contradicts our everyday experience. There are not many things, but only one. It is *paradoxical* in the Greek sense. That is, it demands of us to hold as true something contrary to (*para*) our normal beliefs (*doxa*).[69] If this conflict between appearance and reality is so apparently absurd, why believe it at all? As mentioned above, Aristotle in particular seems to have had very little time for the notion, and he is far from alone. Yet clearly the Eleatics experienced *something*, an interior phenomenology that compelled them with an even greater force than the world of the senses. A failure to grasp this is why it is so common to see Zeno's paradoxes treated as if they were a sort of logic game, as if, because they are so "obviously false", the only

[55] Morrison, "Parmenides and Er," 60.
[56] Breidenstein, 23.
[57] Morrison, 60; Breidenstein, 209.
[58] Anthony Long, "Poets as Philosophers and Philosophers as Poets," *Logoi and Muthoi* (2019): 325.
[59] Breidenstein, 209.
[60] Breidenstein, 64.
[61] Kerenyi, *Essays on a Science of Mythology,* 180.
[62] Parmenides, 8.50.
[63] We can acknowledge this link while remaining agnostic about its character: it may have been direct, or may have involved the mediation of other cultural practices or movements that were informed by Orphism.
[64] Breidenstein, 90.
[65] Breidenstein, 90.
[66] Kerenyi, 167.
[67] Kerenyi, 158.
[68] Breidenstein, 90.
[69] Palmer, *Parmenides and Presocratic Philosophy,* 190.

task for the reader is to find the error.[70] Perhaps the paradoxes were meant to shake the reader out of their conventional views, leaving them open to a deeper understanding. In any case, Zeno reportedly gave his life attempting to live the doctrines of his teacher,[71] showing that monism was not only to be taken seriously, but also has ethical consequences.

Monism is a felt intuition, a revelation, before it is a well-argued philosophical doctrine. The metaphysics takes root in the soil of myth and lived ritualised experience designed to incite just such an intuition. The mysteries were not communicable in words, but they did have specific mythical content. The Kore-Demeter myth, central to the mysteries at Eleusis, is cyclic in nature. The connection to the annual agricultural cycle is obvious, but by ritually participating in the cycle, the initiate becomes one with it. One of the characteristics of the mystery traditions is the fluid identity of the participants[72] who become the Kore, descend to the underworld and return again as queen, becoming the grain planted in the earth. The meaning is inescapable. The life of the earth, of every plant and animal, is also the life of the initiate. And the life of the gods is also hers. Despite appearances, there is no disjunct between ourselves and the objects of our experience. None of this, it would seem, was articulated in words because the purpose was direct experiential knowledge; there is a difference between mere "knowledge of" something and "knowing it and being it."[73] However, to articulate these ideas, to put them in a form whereby they could be "judged by reason", requires some kind of monism that makes a distinction between the world of appearances and the world as it really is.

Accounting for this incommensurability between appearance and reality is the challenge before any monistic philosophy. Centuries after Parmenides, the Gnostics would construct elaborate myths to explain how reality, which was once single whole and perfect, could have begun to manifest multiplicity. The particulars of these myths are not important here, except that they all invoke a series of mythic events happening, at least figuratively, in time. Parmenides instead provides an epistemic explanation for the appearance of duality; it is not the fault of a god or aeon that humans are stuck in the world of appearances. It is simply their own incorrect interpretation of what they see in front of them.

Privatio Boni

The goddess describes our naive beliefs about the world as being in error, however the nature of this error is not easy to discern. She describes the wrong view as the idea that "being and not-being have been thought both the same and not the same."[74] The meaning of this is unclear, but her later discourse in Fragment 9 offers a clue to a possible interpretation: "All is full of light and obscure night together, / Of both equally, since for neither [is it the case that] nothing shares in them."[75] To be full of night– that is, darkness, negativity, emptiness– means sharing in its being. In other words, it is not coherent to imagine one thing as a lack of something else. Everything that exists, exists fully and does not admit of any lack. Night is not lack of day, but its own reality, existing in its own right for the simple reason that it is there "for thinking." This somewhat speculative interpretation of Fragment 9 that we are proposing would seem to ignore the fact that the goddess has begun to talk about "mortal beliefs"[76] and so it would be logical to conclude that she is condemning, rather than endorsing, the view that there are two independently existing and mutually irreducible principles (light and night). However, given that the great majority of the original text was given over to the realm of appearances, Parmenides evidently thought it was worth discussing.[77] Furthermore, we must account for the fact that the cosmology that she labels as "mortal belief" is unique to Parmenides, and he could not have been criticizing his contemporaries for holding a view that was original to him.[78] Indeed, the goddess wants the *kouros* to learn the beliefs of mortals, even though they are ultimately false.[79]

The question is, why? It would be unsatisfying and absurd to stop with the idea that change, motion and multiplicity are impossible. Some account must be given of the world as we experience it, even if that account is only approximately accurate. And if we understand *doxa* to mean not the specific beliefs held by Parmenides' contemporaries, but rather beliefs

[70] Ibid.
[71] Kingsley, *Dark Places of Wisdom,* 226.
[72] Breidenstein, 89.
[73] Kerenyi, 213.
[74] Parmenides, 6.8-9.
[75] Parmenides, 9:3-4.
[76] Parmenides, 8:51.
[77] Gallop, "Introduction," 21.
[78] Palmer, 167.
[79] Parmenides, 10:30.

about the phenomenal world in which mortals find themselves,[80] then the goddess' words are not so mysterious. Furthermore, if we understand 1:31-32 as Gallop translates it, ("...how the things which seem had to have genuine existence, permeating all things completely."), then the realm of seeming is not unimportant or false. Palmer argues that the error of the "wandering" mortals is the "naming" of two the principles, "light" and "night", two endlessly combating forces.[81] However, Parmenides gives no indication that "light" and "night" are in an adversarial relationship. In fact, all things are "full" of them, suggesting coexistence rather than conflict. Further, while Palmer rightly rejects the idea that, according to the goddess, the mortals should have only named one principle and not two, it is not clear what the alternative is. If there is only one principle, then we are forced to speak of its lack or limitations. Where Being is not, we must have Non-Being, which is precisely what Parmenides wants to avoid. The seemings, because they are "there for thinking" are real. The error is not in supposing that things that are not real are real. It is just the reverse: the error is in believing that the seemings are not real at all.

Carl Jung discusses this idea in *Aion* in the context of gnosticism. Non-Gnostic Christians, struggling with the paradox of a good and all-powerful deity and the existence of evil, had chosen to deny evil– and by consequence all privations, darkness and negativity– any ontological status at all, a doctrine that became known as the *privatio boni*. In *De Divinis Nominibus*, Dionysius the Areopagite expresses this with admirable clarity:

> Evil in its nature is neither a thing, nor does it bring anything forth. Evil does not exist at all and is neither good nor productive of good. All things which are, by the very fact that they are, are good and come from good; but in so far as they are deprived of good, they are neither good nor do they exist. That which has no existence is not altogether evil, for the absolutely non-existent will be nothing, unless it be thought of as existing in the good superessentially (ὑπερούσιον). Good, then, as absolutely existing and as absolutely non-existing, will stand in the foremost and highest place, while evil is neither in that which exists nor in that which does not exist.[82]

The difficulty with this formulation, from a Parmenidean perspective, is as follows. If "good" is coextensive with both being and non-being, and evil has no being whatsoever, neither in the existent or non-existant, in what sense can we talk about evil at all? How can we even think of it or name it, much less experience it? A clearer example of what the Goddess calls the way of opinion is hard to imagine.

If we are correct that the "way of opinion" is essentially a privationalist ontology, a metaphysical schema in which one opposite is seen as the lack of the other rather than a being in its own right, how is this importantly different from the "way of truth"? The Goddess feels this is a point of tremendous importance, and yet it is not clear on the surface what the practical difference between the two modes of thought could be. Again, if we look to Gnosticism, an answer suggests itself. For the Gnostics, antinomies emerge together from the pleroma, the fullness from which everything has its source.[83] Therefore each pair of opposites not only has a common source, but are ultimately one thing, two sides of the same coin. And this is not just metaphysical curiosity, but sparks an experience of fluid identity. In the extant Gnostic corpus, this is nowhere better expressed than in *The Thunder, Perfect Mind*. The unnamed speaker begins her poem by identifying herself with a long list of opposites. "For I am the first and the last./I am the honored one and the scorned one./ I am the whore and the holy one." She goes on to subvert every distinction and taboo: "I am the mother of my father and the sister of my husband, and he is my offspring." Finally, if the reader has not already guessed, she declares herself to be "the one who alone exists, and I have no one who will judge me."[84]

Thus, if there is only one thing that exists, every conceivable attribute can be imputed to it. One might just as easily call it "old" as "young", "light" as "dark", "same" as "different," "small" as "large" *et cetera*. This concern with identity and its relativity is a major feature of the mystery religions, wherein the experience of identity shifts– for example in

[80] Palmer, 168.
[81] Palmer, 170.
[82] Dionysius the Areopagite, qu. In Jung, *Aion:Researche sinto the Phenomenology of the Self*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 49.
[83] Stephan A. Hoeller, *The Gnostic Jung and the Seven Sermons to the Dead* (Wheaton: Quest Books, 1982), 66.
[84] Anon., "The Thunder, Perfect Mind," 271-272; 272; 277.

regression to infancy or gender inversions– were a major feature of the ritual participation in the myths.[85]

Kerenyi argues that the *coincidentia oppositorum* is basic to all of Greek religion. Each deity embraces the ambivalence of some primordial idea and, furthermore, broadens out, embracing multiple identities like an opening bud.[86] Thus, for example, Demeter, Persephone and Hecate all share a common identity that shifts as the story unfolds.[87] The connection between the mysteries and the theatre is helpful here: actors change masks just as the gods switch their names. The audience, through their empathetic connection with the characters on stage, experience a sense of universal oneness.[88] Similarly, the climax of the mysteries was to induce in the initiate the experience of her own being as infinite,[89] as "the ἀρχαί to which everything individual and particular goes back and out of which it is made, while they remain ageless, inexhaustible, invincible in timeless primordiality, in a past that proves imperishable because of its eternally repeated rebirths."[90]

Now we are positioned to circle back to Plato's *Parmenides*, and to evaluate its seemingly paradoxical conclusion in light of the *coincidentia oppositorum.* Unity, for Parmenides as in the mysteries, does not consist in a bland, featureless Form of "the One." It is the unity that lies beyond "the gates of Night and Day," behind the different masks which reality appears to wear. It is a unity that can accommodate both the one and the many, in which apparent non-being (Night) has being, and the whole play of relative existence always and completely is. Plato's logical striving brings him to the brink of the paradox, but cannot lead him past it to the vision of oneness – not the Form of the One, but the oneness of all forms – which is at the heart of monistic mystery. In the end, the mares of Platonic reason pull with all their might, but the mystagogic maidens do not appear to plead with Dike to open her doors.[91]

Although logical inquiry forms an essential element of the Eleatic project, *On Nature* cannot really be understood as separate from other mystical and monistic traditions that preceded and followed it. Arising in a milieu wherein the mystical and ritualised experience of oneness had a lot of currency, both in Orphism and the cult at Eleusis as well as the closely related rituals of tragic theatre, Parmenides differentiated himself by submitting his ideas to critical judgement. But to view the poem as only a set of logical propositions is to miss its power to transform the perception of the hearer. *On Nature* is initiatory in the sense that it is the beginning of a new path. It invites the hearer to embark on a new and transformative way of seeing the world. Parmenides' true genius lies in his ability to combine the oracular and revelatory with the rational and logical. He is able to acknowledge, on the one hand, the epistemic limits of mortals, while on the other optimistically affirming our possibilities.

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[85] Breidenstein, 64.

[86] Kerenyi, p. 124.

[87] Kerenyi, 130 ff.

[88] Breidenstein, p. 89.

[89] Kerenyi, 182.

[90] Kerenyi, 8.

[91] Cf. Parmenides, 1.5-16.

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NO COUNTRY FOR DIFFICULT WOMEN: DEATH, ABANDONMENT, AND THE TRAGIC ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE *AENEID*

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Introduction

Vergil's *Aeneid* presents some of the most enduring and well-loved female characters of all ancient literature.[1] The poem portrays such variety of characterisation for all its figures; and women are no exception. From Dido and Camilla as examples of unforgettable mortal women in the poem, to Juno and Venus in Vergil's own unique interpretation for the portrayal of the feminine divine, the poem is a magnificent site for studies in rich and complex character. For all the poem's richness, however, the *Aeneid* also participates in a literary trope that is at least as old as itself: that of the agonising depiction of the beautiful dying woman. This trope is familiar to the modern reader in many works such as Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, but in Vergil's hands, the issue of women's representation is also fundamentally tied to Aeneas' imperial enterprise of founding the Roman nation. Women are mostly absent from the doing and making of the imperial project at large in the *Aeneid*, but the manner in which they are made subservient to its demands is a troubling aspect of the poem with which the modern reader must reckon. In my paper, I will argue that the poem effectively solves its 'woman problem' by removing any and all difficult women from its narrative in service of the fulfilment of Aeneas' social and political vision. How this literary elimination is applied differs depending on the context, yet almost without fail, all women of the narrative storyline are subjected to it.

In the first section of the paper, I shall discuss the role of Creusa, the first wife of the poem's eponymous hero, as the very first woman who must be excluded from the narrative to this end. Next, a discussion of the role of the Trojan women refugees' appearance and intentional erasure. This will follow to connect the abandonment of the individual Trojan women in the figure of Creusa to that of the collective abandonment of the female contingent of the Trojan camp. Finally, in the third section, I aim to analyse two instances in which the deaths of female characters become exoticised spectacles. In doing so, I hope to show how the markedly gendered representation of their deaths sets them apart from their male counterparts in the epic and effectively converts the rarity of strong female presence to instances of sexualised tokenism. These two characters, Dido, the queen of Carthage, and Camilla, the female warrior who fights as a military leader in her own right, therefore, become exceptions that prove the rule. In this way, the manner of their respective deaths flattens the otherwise complex characterisation Vergil envisions for them and aligns with the larger imperial project of the poem from which women are excluded. Their perceived personal failures resulting in suicide (Dido) and death in battle (Camilla) work to reify the preexisting social structures of gender within the poem.

Convenient Death, Inconvenient Woman: Creusa and the Paved Road to Empire

The very first woman of the poem to be left behind is, of course, Aeneas' Trojan wife, Creusa. Amidst the aftermath of the fall of Troy, Aeneas is tasked with saving the household gods of the fallen city of Troy

[1] The Latin text of the *Aeneid* relies on the Loeb edition as edited and revised by H.R. Fairclough and G.P. Goold. Any translations are my own in consultation with the Loeb edition.

and to flee with his family and other Trojans who have survived the siege in order to establish a new Troy elsewhere.[2] In this project, Creusa, wife of Aeneas, is described in ways significant to Vergil's narrative storytelling. There is a clear contrast between the way Vergil depicts Creusa when she is alive and the message her shade delivers after her disappearance. This marked departure is the earliest instance in which the narrative reveals the way women may be viewed as disposable to the larger project of the *Aeneid.*

The living Creusa, in the few lines in which she appears, presents a character concerned with life and the possibility of survival. Vergil depicts her at different points appealing to Anchises, father to Aeneas and the head of the household, and then directly to Aeneas himself in order to invite them to consider her fate in the process of their decision-making. Creusa's pleas, therefore, reveal her desire for life and survival against the backdrop of the discussion between father and son. She argues that should they remain so devoted to the heroic ideal of dying quickly and honourably in battle, Creusa would be left to a horrific fate the realisation of which is neither swift nor heroic. In response to Anchises' initial staunch refusal to contemplate fleeing Troy, Creusa appears as first amongst the household figures who will express concern: "*nos contra effusi lacrimis coniunxque Creusa | Ascaniusque omnisque domus, ne vertere secum | cuncta pater fatoque urgenti incumbere vellet*" ("We, on the other hand, were bathed in tears. My wife Creusa, Ascanius, and all the household [pleading] that father would not bring all to ruin along with himself nor add weight to our crushing fate").[3] The emotional force of the phrase "*effusi lacrimis*"[4] in the middle of the dactylic hexameter underscores Creusa's role as the first figure named to oppose Anchises' stubborn refusal to leave the falling Troy. Her name, positioned emphatically at the end of the verse and juxtaposed against the "*nos contra*"[5] at the beginning, emphasises her position in Aeneas' the entire household in the attempt to convince Anchises. Aeneas, for his part, is unable to conceive of leaving his father behind. His renowned piety dictates that he should revert immediately to the heroic code and return to battle even though he has now been warned that further battle is futile by Hector's ghost as well as his goddess mother's clear instructions.[6] Once he prepares to return to battle, it is Creusa's call again that convinces him to consider his responsibility to his immediate family, and, in particular, to herself.

> *Ecce autem complexa pedes in limine coniunx*
> *haerebat, parvumque patri tendebat Iulum:*
> *"Si periturus abis, et nos rape in omnia tecum;*
> *sin aliquam expertus sumptis spem ponis in armis,*
> *hanc primum tutare domum. Cui parvus Iulus,*
> *cui pater et coniunx quondam tua dicta relinquor?"7*
>
> When lo! My wife, clasping my feet, clung to me on the threshold, and raising little Iulus to his father, [said], "If you are set to go to die, take us with you, too, [to face] all that may befall us together. But if from past experience, you place some hope in the arms that you have taken up, protect this house first. To what fate do you abandon little Iulus? To whom do you leave your father, and your wife, as I once was called?"

These lines are revealing in portraying a strong emotional request. Creusa's position of utter supplication in clasping Aeneas not by his knees as is customary, but by his feet, is remarkable in bringing across the force of her emotional appeal.[7] Her action of supplication in the verb "*haerebat*"[8] is delayed through enjambment of the line, adding more emotional force, just before she appeals to a code of familial responsibility that proves effective on Aeneas' sensibilities throughout the entire poem. Their child, Iulus, is raised not to a named Aeneas while he narrates this episode to Dido, but Iulus is meaningfully lifted to *his* father, "*patri*,"[9] in a reduplication of Aeneas' sense of duty to his own father, Anchises. The reappraisal of familial duty invoked by Creusa halts Aeneas' actions which, at the time, were leading him to follow Anchises' wishes. Creusa's intervention, as Christine Perkell notes,

[2] *Aen.* 2.289-295.
[3] *Aen.* 2.651-54.
[4] *Aen.* 2.651.
[5] *Aen.* 2.651.
[6] *Aen.* 2.289-295 and 2.594-621.
[7] In his commentary on this scene, Randall Ganiban notes that the strength of the normal supplication to one's knees here may indicate Creusa's beseeching of Aeneas, but also a physical hindering of his departure.
Vergil, *Aeneid Book 2 / Randall T. Ganiban.*, ed. Randall Toth Ganiban (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2008), 99.
[8] *Aen.* 2.674.
[9] *Aen.* 2.674.

establishes that she herself "expects from Aeneas certain actions expressive of family responsibility, both as father and as husband."[10]

The remainder of the speech, the only one a living Creusa gives in the entirety of the *Aeneid*, also reveals the hierarchy of Aeneas' priorities to which she makes direct reference. Her awareness of the psychological priorities of Aeneas' mission will be fully revealed later in the poem, but Vergil foreshadows them brilliantly while also intimating that Creusa herself is aware of her own position within the family hierarchy. Within the *tricolon* of her rhetorical plea, she first appeals to his responsibility to their child Iulus, next to his aged father Anchises, and only at the end, to herself, in the weighty and ironical phrase "your wife, as I was once called."[11] The final verb of this speech in the same line, *relinquor*, also plays with the readers' emotional sensitivities, foreshadowing what is to come. It is important to note that within the structure of the poem, this episode is being narrated to Dido by Aeneas after the fact and the reader recognises in the flashback narration that Creusa has already been left behind. Once Anchises is finally persuaded of leaving Troy after the arrival of omens from Jupiter,[12] Aeneas' plan for escape betrays the same suspicions that Creusa had entertained in the final part of her speech. Aeneas assures his father, addressed as "*care pater*,"[13] that they will share the same fate no matter what dangers may befall them. In a quintessential image of his familial piety, Aeneas carries the venerable old man on his shoulders.[14] His son, Iulus, is similarly physically joined to Aeneas while Creusa is relegated to following them at a distance: "*Mihi parvus Iulus | sit comes, et longe servet vestigia coniunx*" ("Let little Iulus walk beside me, and let my wife follow our steps from a distance").[15] Creusa is already, even while still alive, coming closer to occupying the space of 'having once' been Aeneas' spouse, gradually demoted from speaking and beseeching to following from behind, and finally disappearing altogether, lost to the mayhem of the siege.

In the narrative retelling of these events, Aeneas will also reiterate the gradual fading of Creusa from his mind, a parallel to her physical disappearance. Describing the fear he felt while escaping the besieged city of Troy in the company of the vulnerable family members in his care, Aeneas expresses his equal concern for "both his [young] companion and his burden [of Anchises]" in "*pariter comitique onerique timentem.*"[16] The use of enclitics in "*comitique onerique*"[17] binds father and son even more closely to one another in either of the relationships about which Aeneas is most concerned. The three of them present a unified image of familial care, while Creusa is described without any of this emotional concern. She simply follows them from behind ("*pone subit coniunx*"[18]).

That there are personal relationships which cannot be reconciled with Aeneas' *pietas* is a theme which the poem will return to again and again. In this instance, the patrilinear image of Aeneas with his father and his son can be sustained, but the poem presents Creusa's abandonment almost as a necessary condition not just of survival from the war's ruins, but also for the advancement of the poem's Roman political ambitions. Strikingly, when Anchises reveals the future descendants of Aeneas to him in the Underworld in the sixth book of the poem, the exclusion of women is stressed again. The description of the shield of Aeneas,[19] reflective of the future historical glories of the Roman empire, also presents a predominantly male vision of its future.[20] As David Quint points out, the vision of the Roman empire that finally moves the narrative forward is "an all-male business"[21] in which Aeneas is to inherit the patriarchal vision of the world of military glory he will come to establish by the end of the poem. This vision is notably free of mutual attachments and responsibilities to women. In her article, "Jupiter's *Aeneid*: *Fama* and *Imperium*," Julia Hejduk argues that the overall political vision of Jupiter as the figurehead of power in the poem is essentially one of moral bankruptcy. In her analysis, she identifies the scene in which Aeneas and his family contemplate leaving Troy as one which is ultimately aligned with Jupiter's vision for the advancement of Roman

[10] Christine G. Perkell, "On Creusa, Dido, and the Quality of Victory in Virgil's *Aeneid* V," *Women's Studies* 8, no. 1–2 (January 1981): 207.
[11] *Aen*. 2.678.
[12] *Aen*. 2.679-704.
[13] *Aen*. 2.707.
[14] *Aen*. 2.707-708.
[15] *Aen*. 2.710-11.
[16] *Aen*. 2.729.
[17] *Aen*. 2.729.
[18] *Aen*. 2.725.
[19] *Aen*. 6.756-853.
[20] *Aen*. 8.615-731.
[21] David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton*, Literature in History (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1993), 29.

imperium.[22] The Trojans, under the leadership of Aeneas, must first survive and leave by Jupiter's tacit support in order to be able to found the city which will bring *fama* and *imperium* to the head of the divine order at a later time. This context only makes the words Creusa's shade addresses to Aeneas more disquieting:

> *illic res laetae regnumque et regia coniunx*
> *parta tibi. Lacrimas dilectae pelle Creusae.*
> *Non ego Myrmidonum sedes Dolopumve superbas*
> *aspiciam, aut Grais servitum matribus ibo,*
> *Dardanis, et divae Veneris nurus.*
> *Sed me magna deum genetrix his detinet oris:*
> *iamque vale, et nati serva communis amorem.*[23]
> There [in the Hesperian lands] happy fortunes, a kingdom, and a royal bride await you. Banish your tears for your beloved Creusa. I shall not behold the proud dwellings of the Myrmidons or Dolopians, nor shall I, a Trojan and the daughter-in-law of divine Venus, become a slave to Greek matrons. But the great mother of the gods detains me here on these shores. And now, farewell and guard your love for the child we share.

Beyond the moral and ethical obligations of Aeneas as the hero, the vision presented here problematises the status of women in the poem as a whole. One problematic issue of this speech lies within the fact that a dead woman's voice is now utilised to not only absolve her husband of any past negligence towards her, but also to amplify the promise of empire that Jupiter has voiced in the first book.[23] It is odd to imagine these to be the parting words of a woman who has been left behind after having voiced so clearly her desire for escape and for survival. In effect, these words add another ethical stamp of approval to Aeneas' future pursuit of empire. Creusa, therefore, becomes party to her own erasure of identity through the speech that Vergil assigns to her shade.[24] It is almost as if the speech is celebrating that, at least through her death, Creusa has escaped the indignities of slavery. The vision of the future promised to Aeneas is one of political fulfilment and personal happiness, but for her, death is almost a mercy given that she can play no meaningful role in the androcentric project of building a new nation. Whether or not Aeneas' journey can truly include happier personal fortunes and the "*res laetae*"[25] suggested by the shade of Creusa is difficult to determine given the many challenges he is yet to face. Regardless, once she is left behind, Aeneas is given narrative permission never to consider her again. He will not encounter her in the Underworld nor reflect about her loss beyond this point.[26] Moreover the only request her shade makes of him is one to which Aeneas is already committed: the care for their child. She and her memory are together being reduced to the same fate of abandonment. Commentators have noted that Creusa stands in for an identity that Aeneas must overcome, that she "represents a past which must be forsaken."[27] Therefore, her death serves as the first of many weak links Aeneas must sever in the fulfilment of the glorious imperial vision for Rome.

Varium et Mutabile[28]: The Mercurial Presence of the Mercurial Trojan Women

When Aeneas makes preparations to leave the falling city of Troy, he finds himself to have become the *de facto* leader of a large number of survivors who

[22] Julia Hejduk, 'Jupiter's *Aeneid*: *Fama* and *Imperium*', *Classical Antiquity* 28, no. 2 (2009): 317–18.
[23] *Aen.* 1.258-289.
[24] One might also reasonably think about the questions of reliability of the narrator in this instance. It is Aeneas, after all, who is returning to this scene in his recounting of the events to Dido. Whether or not he is revising the past, however, does not take away from the gravity of the speech of Creusa and its impact on the story as a whole in this instance. If the speech is to be taken as a genuine experience of Aeneas, the Vergillian narrator is ascribing a speech to Creusa that will absolve its hero. And if Aeneas is inventing this as a psychological salve to his traumatic experience, he is adding the flourishes of imperial thought to her speech in an uncomfortably male-centred manner.
[25] *Aen.* 2.784.
[26] Drawing connections between this aspect of being left behind and effectively becoming forgotten, Monica Gale notes how neither Creusa nor Dido are mentioned by Aeneas after the Underworld episode. The only references to them are one by Ascanius to Creusa at 9.297 and two to Dido in the context of the gifts she had given the Trojans that are now being given away. Monica R. Gale, 'Poetry and the Backward Glance in Virgil's "Georgics" and "Aeneid"', *Transactions of the American Philological Association (1974-)* 133, no. 2 (2003): 340.
[27] E. N. Genovese, "Deaths in the "Aeneid"", *Pacific Coast Philology* 10 (1975): 23.
[28] From Mercury's second speech to Aeneas: "*varium et mutabile semper | femina*" ("always a fickle and changeable thing is woman;" *Aen.*4.569-70).

have gathered from all around the city.[29] Amongst them, the poem mentions there are "*matresque virosque | collectam exsilio pubem*" ("Both women and men, a group gathered for exile").[30] At this stage, the followers of Aeneas certainly include women (and possibly children and the elderly). They are a "pitiable crowd," "*miserabile vulgus*,"[31] of refugees and not a group of youthful warriors in search of destined lands. But despite being mentioned in passing here, it is difficult to imaginatively sustain the presence of women throughout certain sections of the first few books of the poem. Is the reader to suppose, for instance, that there are women onboard the ships during the shipwreck scenes in the first book or perhaps at the point of landing at Carthage? Or is it possible that women as a collective in the *Aeneid* do not actually represent a stable category, meaning that their presence, absence, or intentional changeability in character are there to fit the needs of the plot's sociopolitical project? If, as the scholar Georgia Nugent suggests, women can become "the bearer of certain meanings, as an empty space to be filled by authorial desire,"[32] then it is even more notable and striking when Vergil chooses to portray them after long periods of absence.

The events of Book 5 of the poem are illustrative of this oscillating portrayal in that the Trojan women appear after a long period of having been deemed inconsequential to the plot of the poem. The way Vergil portrays their reappearance exposes the ultimate patriarchal division of men's and women's realms in the foundation of a state that harbours imperial ambitions from the beginning. The fifth book begins with the Trojan fleet having left Carthage to the flames of Dido's funeral pyre,[33] a scene of great symbolic significance to which I shall return. Aeneas decides that since the anniversary of his father's passing is nearing, he can honour Anchises by hosting funeral games for him.[34] The whole exercise of the games also raises morale in the Trojan camp after the setbacks in Carthage and allows Aeneas to showcase his ability for good governance and to exercise magnanimity towards his followers, resetting the mood from his personal entanglement with Dido to one of trusted leader amongst his men. While fathers and sons are thus engaged in the funeral games of Anchises, the women are set apart to mourn by the shores. The athletic and competitive exhibition of the games not only celebrates valour and masculine codes of epic heroism, but it also functions as an opportunity for unifying the generations of men in what Nugent describes as underscoring "not only paternal pride but also patriarchal continuity."[35] Vergil, in fact, ends the joyful episode of fathers revelling in their sons' military and athletic capabilities by creating a direct link between Aeneas' celebration of his father and the future of Rome. Looking ahead, Ascanius is to revive equestrian elements of these contests, aspects that will mythically travel down generations until they reach the *ludus Troiae* of Augustus' Rome.[36] Meanwhile, the interruption of the narrative of the games to reintroduce women only occurs after this patrilinear continuity has been established and celebrated. Not only that, but the narrative reemergence of Troy's women is aligned with the larger disruptive force of female deities in the poem, spearheaded by Juno. Once the poem turns its gaze to the women, they are physically and emotionally separated from the men: "*at procul in sola secretae Troades acta | amissum Anchisen flebant*" ("But far apart, in a lonely seafront, the Trojan women were weeping for the loss of Anchises").[37] Many words of this introductory phrase highlight the women's exclusion: they are positioned in a lonely seafront "*sola acta*"[38] and the words *procul* and *secretae* in the same line further emphasise their isolation. The sibilant sounds of the verse also invoke a sense of uneasiness, a harbinger of disruptive events to come when the frenzied women set fire to their own ships in an attempt to prevent further wanderings.[39] Physically, the Trojan women are not welcome to witness the celebration and prizewinning of their menfolk; and emotionally as well as culturally, they must occupy the feminine space of ritual grieving.[40]

[29] *Aen.* 2.799-800.
[30] *Aen.* 2.797-798.
[31] *Aen.* 2.798.
[32] S. Georgia Nugent, "Vergil's "Voice of the Women" in *Aeneid* V," *Arethusa* 25, no. 2 (1992): 256.
[33] *Aen.* 5.1-7.
[34] *Aen.* 5.44-71.
[35] Nugent, "Vergil's "Voice of the Women" in "*Aeneid*" V," 260.
[36] *Aen.* 5.597-603.
[37] *Aen.* 5.613-614.
[38] *Aen.* 5.613.
[39] *Aen.* 5.654-663.
[40] After the events of Book 5, there is one more instance in which a Trojan woman is recalled into the narrative: the unnamed mother of Euryalus is supposedly the only woman who has accompanied the Trojan mission to Italy (9.216-18). It is notable that her presence, too, is related to the performance of stylised grief that functions to heighten the emotional weight of the loss

This division of realms and spheres is made even more prominent given that structurally, these events follow the scenes set in the radically transgressive world occupied by Dido and her female leadership in Books 1-4. That world, in which women could rule and the boundaries between male and female spaces were brought under question, is being gradually dismantled and 'corrected' to the established gendered world order. The fifth book begins with Aeneas leaving Dido behind and overcoming the model of susceptibility to female influence on the individual level, and at the end of Book 5, the entire collective of Trojan women is abandoned. Such abandonment reflects an ideological step in Aeneas' journey as well. This point in the poem, therefore, marks the beginning of a new project in which the ones who continue on to Italy, described as "*lectos iuvenes, fortissima corda*" ("selected youths and the bravest souls"),[41] are no longer just survivors, suppliants, or guests, but are in fact transforming into the role of aggressor and coloniser. As Nugent points out, "the abandonment of the women serves as an important and explicit marker that those who do not or cannot accept and advance the (proto-) Roman mission must be excluded from and left behind by the society."[42]

Lingering on the Death of 'Deviant' Women: Dido, Camilla, and Tragic Pre-destiny

Both the death of Creusa and the leaving behind of the Trojan women on Sicilian shores are similar in that they represent aspects of Aeneas' past which must be forsaken for the success of his future mission. They are also analogous in that the women in each case are made willing participants to their own subsequent abandonment. Elina Pyy refers to this phenomenon as the committing of "narrative suicide" in service of the male hero's search for a new national identity.[43] Vergil's treatment of the major non-Trojan women of the poem, namely Dido, Camilla, and Amata, who play much more significant roles in the narrative of the poem, diverges from the earlier model in that they do not submit to being excluded from their respective domains as willingly. A troubling similarity remains, however, as the poet consigns all of them to death in one form or another.[44]

Both Dido and Camilla occupy distinctive positions that are outside the boundaries of social norms for Vergil's Roman audience. Their exceptional gendered status is remarked upon internally within the poem with a sense of both awe and contempt. Dido's political power and her unique position of leadership is the source of much tension; Venus first describes her to Aeneas with the phrase "*dux femina facti*" ("a woman is the leader of the enterprise"),[45] commenting on the uniqueness of her status and placing emphasis on the word *dux* which is also used to describe Aeneas, the symbolic prototype of a Roman ruler. Camilla is similarly portrayed with special attention to the exceptionality of her role as military leader and strategist. She is a warrior, but also markedly and explicitly portrayed as a woman throughout. One of her many gendered descriptors identifies her as "*bellatrix*,"[46] a word that itself stands out for its singularity, used only once more in the entire poem to reference Camilla's Homeric predecessor, Penthesilea.[47]

It is not surprising, then, to see that Vergil treats both Dido and Camilla as fundamentally gendered subjects (and therefore, othered) throughout the poem, but especially at the moments of their death. In her book concerning women in Latin epic, Alison Keith has convincingly argued that as a subject matter, female death is "pervasively sexualised [...] and the violence and sexuality of the male heroes of epic are consistently displaced onto the female body, which is represented as the site where sexuality and violence

of loved ones (9.473-502). Similar to the setting for the narrative reappearance of women in Book 5, she will also be removed from view once her display of grief begins to negatively impact the overall success of the imperial war project.

[41] *Aen.* 5.729.

[42] Nugent, "Vergil's "Voice of the Women" in "*Aeneid*" V," 274.

[43] Elina Pyy, *Women and War in Roman Epic*, The Language of Classical Literature ; Volume 33 (Leiden ; Brill, 2021), 273.

[44] I am excluding a full discussion of Amata's suicide as it falls outside the scope of the paper. However, her death also forms part of a larger theme in which dissenting women are made to capitulate to the demands of the political force of Aeneas' mission. In analysing her role, Yasmin Syed has argued that *furor* has a different gendered impact in the poem and even when women like Amata express reasonable concerns and questions of dissent, they are ultimately shown to be susceptible to destructive female passion and frenzy.
Yasmin Syed, *Vergil's Aeneid and the Roman Self: Subject and Nation in Literary Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 117–22.

[45] *Aen.* 1.364.

[46] *Aen.* 7.805.

[47] *Aen.* 1.494.

coincide."[48] To clarify this point with respect to the *Aeneid*, we can note that nowhere else does Vergil spend so much time in proleptic anticipation of a character's death than he does for Dido and for Camilla. Well before both their actual deaths, the reader is alerted to their impending doom and invited to revel in their upcoming suffering. Dido speaks of herself as already on the path to dying in her speech to Aeneas with words such as "*moritura*"[49] and "*moribundum.*"[50] Camilla's death is also anticipated well before the fateful moment of her fall in battle by Diana's intervention into the text as she begins to mourn her beloved devotee prior to her dying.[51] The extended lingering gaze on their upcoming suffering thus prepares the reader for a similarly protracted death scene.

What is equally striking is the prolonged agonising process of each woman's death in the company of their respective female attendants. Dido's initial attempt at suicide fails to bring her to quick relief and the reader is left with the text's glorification of her drawn-out suffering:

> *Illa gravēs oculōs cōnāta attollere rūrsus*
> *dēficit; īnfīxum strīdit sub pectore vulnus.*
> *Ter sēsē attollēns cubitōque adnīxa levāvit,*
> *ter revolūta torō est oculīsque errantibus altō*
> *quaesīvit caelō lūcem ingemuitque repertā.*[52]
> She, trying to raise her heavy eyes, faints once more. The wound set deep within her heart hissed. Thrice raising herself, she struggled to prop herself on her elbows and all three times, she fell back onto the bed. With wandering eyes, she sought the light in the lofty sky and when she found it, she let out a pained moan.

The depicted agony does little to move the plot or to add further characterisation for Dido. So, too, in Camilla's case, she must struggle in vain with the weapon that wounded her:

> *Illa manu moriens telum trahit, ossa sed inter*
> *ferreus ad costas alto stat vulnere mucro.*
> *Labitur exsanguis, labuntur frigida leto*
> *lumina, purpureus quondam color ora reliquit.*[53]
> Dying, she tried to draw out the spear by her hand, but the iron tip of the weapon was lodged deep within her ribs. Bloodless, she falls down and her eyes droop with death's coldness; the once glowing hue of her face fades away.

The *Aeneid* is an epic poem filled with instances of horrific death; its subject matter is, after all, concerned as much with warfare as it is with its hero, laid out in the poem's opening line, "*arma virumque cano*" ("Of arms and the man I sing").[54] Nevertheless, the length and the manner in which the poem portrays the dying scenes of its women is drastically different than the way it depicts the deaths of its male heroes.[55] This raises the question of why Vergil would conceive of such different notions in his approach to composing these scenes. As mentioned before, both Dido and Camilla become the objects of a uniquely sexualised and eroticised death. Dido stages her suicide on a mock replica of her marriage bed and chooses Aeneas' sword, with all its sexual implications, as the implement of her death.[56] Camilla also becomes the object of a similarly fetishised gaze in her death. She is described as wounded beneath her bare breast ("*sub exsertam ...papillam*"[57]) and the suggestion is made that her body could have been subjected not just to war wounds, but also 'defiled' as implied in the sinister tone of the verb "*violāre*"[58] to refer to her death. In answering the question of why the poem lingers with an almost ravenous gaze on the bodies of its dying women, Keith suggests that the mode of death of Dido and Camilla "authorises the epic hero's establishment of a normative order imperilled by her deviance."[59] In this way, if it suffices for Creusa and the Trojan women to simply disappear from the narrative as reluctant accomplices to the political ends of the poem,

[48] Alison Keith, *Engendering Rome: Women in Latin Epic*, 1st ed., Roman Literature and Its Contexts (Cambridge [England]; Cambridge University Press, 2000), 104.
[49] *Aen.* 4.308.
[50] *Aen.* 4.323.
[51] *Aen.* 11.535-537.
[52] *Aen.* 4.688-692.
[53] *Aen.* 11.816-819.
[54] *Aen.* 1.1.
[55] For reference, despite the graphic gore and bloody portrayals of the heroes who die in the second Iliadic half of the poem, all other deaths are dealt with in relatively short passages: 7 lines for Pallas (10.482-89), 6 lines for Lausus (10.814-820), 2 lines for Mezentius (10.907-8), and only 3 lines for the climactic death of Turnus (12.950-953). By contrast, Vergil devotes 20 lines to Camilla (11.801-6; 816-31), and a staggering 44 lines to Dido (4.659-705).
[56] *Aen.* 4.659-665.
[57] *Aen.* 11.803.
[58] *Aen.* 11.848.
[59] Keith, *Engendering Rome*, 130.

for the ‘deviant’ women represented by Dido and Camilla, a forceful show of their annihilation is deemed more appropriate in service of the same sociopolitical agenda.

It is also noteworthy that while the reader is invited to look upon the spectacle of the women’s death, the poem’s hero is permitted to be conspicuously absent from witnessing their end. If the three most significant deaths of women in the poem correspond to those of Creusa, Dido, and Camilla, Aeneas has been granted narrative permission to not directly look upon any of them. He, for whom the deaths of male mentors and peers cause emotional and physical turmoil, often resulting in taking immediate action, does not witness any of their deaths. He simply loses sight of Creusa,[60] leaves Carthage (even as Dido directly invites him to gaze upon her death: “*Hauriat hunc oculīs ignem crudēlis ab alto | Dardanus*” (“let the cruel Dardan’s eyes drink in this fire from far at sea”),[61] and finally, he is conveniently absent during the Camilla episode.[62] So while the deaths of Anchises, Priam, Pallas, and others mould his emotional responses and shape his character as man and hero, he can choose to renounce his connections to the women’s deaths and pursue his goals without their complicating influence.

Concluding Thoughts

Upon reflecting on the *Aeneid* as a whole, I remain in awe of its moral and political complexity as well as the incomparable beauty of its poetic language. It remains unclear to me whether the poem fully sides and advocates for the vision Aeneas is to achieve and the extent of scholarly debate about the topic of Vergil’s own political leanings reveals that it is perhaps not a question that is so easily answered. Nevertheless, regardless of whether the poem in the end promotes a positive or negative view of its eponymous hero, its treatment of women and their supposed fates is undoubtedly violent. One may wonder what kind of ruler Aeneas will become after he mercilessly kills his opponent, Turnus, in front of those who are to be his future subjects.[63] One may also wonder whether the depiction of Aeneas is meant to criticise a tyrannical vision of Jupiter, and in turn criticise pro-Augustan perspectives about Roman imperial supremacy (as was suggested by Hejduk).[64] Whatever the answers to these difficult questions may be, the fate of the poems’ women leaves little room for questions about their place in the realms they inhabit. They do not belong in its politics, they do not belong in its warfare, and insofar as they belong in its private sphere, that, too, is always secondary to the ideals of masculinity, *pietas*, and empire.

One of the challenges of loving the *Aeneid* as a reader whose social and political positionality does not align with Aeneas in any way is that for all the poem’s moral complexities, its brilliant ethical ambiguities, and for all its thought-provoking unanswered questions, the position of its women characters is troublingly clear. For a poem whose depiction of a woman ruler in Dido and a woman warrior in Camilla has inspired generations of artists and writers, the world of possibilities it allows and envisions for its women is exceptionally bleak. Of course, one could easily argue that men die, too, in this poem and that no one really is offered the grace of a happy and peaceful existence when desires for imperial supremacy and unending warfare reign. Yet, despite the violent deaths of Polites and Priam,[65] the unjust treatments of Lausus and Turnus,[66] and the tragedy of Nisus and Euryalus,[67] there is never a question about the fact that they belong in the spheres they occupy. That they have a right to the public sphere and that their private grievances given due consideration without essentialising their identity through their gender. But for the women? The only named mortal living woman at the end of the poem is one who does not speak, one who has no say in her future, and one whose purpose is to continue the patriarchal vision and line of her invader husband.

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[60] *Aen.* 2.741-755.
[61] *Aen.* 4.661-62.
[62] *Aen.* 11.498-886.
[63] *Aen.* 12.945-925.
[64] Hejduk, "Jupiter’s Aeneid," 323.
[65] *Aen.* 2.526-558.
[66] *Aen.* 10.811-820 and 12.945-925.
[67] *Aen.* 9.459-472.

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Gratias agimus tibi pro legendo.