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Foreword

Greetings readers,

It is my pleasure to introduce Volume 2 of *Vexillum: The Undergraduate Journal of Classical and Medieval Studies*. Despite some editorial adversities, we have met with great success this year! More than thirty submissions have been refined to a select number of papers which truly represent the breadth of classical and medieval studies research, the quality of papers that are being produced by students across the world, and the passion with which undergraduates approach the production of serious scholarship from such an early age.

In this volume we are publishing one book review (Guynes), one senior thesis (Ferris), eleven papers dealing with the ancient and Classical worlds, and five with late antiquity and the Middle Ages. We present literary studies (Bock, Clayborne, Graf, Owen, Walsh, Rider-Bezerra, etc.); archaeological studies (DiBattista, Gauthier, Hunter, Leggett, etc.); new interpretations (Ferris, Leggett, Potti, Denton, Ferro, etc.); and many other cross-disciplinary topics.

We encourage authors published in this volume to invite others to read *Vexillum*, and to familiarize your professors and colleagues with the journal. We at the Editorial Staff look forward to future years of great success that will match this year in quality, quantity, and interdisciplinary nature of the studies presented.

The editorial staff would also like to announce that the current Editor-in-Chief, Sean Guynes (Western Washington University), will be handing over the position to a highly qualified man, Mr. Jordan Long (Portland State University), who served as Editor this year. In addition, Mr. Guynes and Mr. Long have conferred, and are appointing Mr. Andrew Pedry (George Mason University) as Senior Editor of *Vexillum*.

Welcome to our new Editor in Chief, Jordan Long, and our new Senior Editor, Andrew Pedry. With them at the head of the journal, *Vexillum* will surely go far.

Thank you to everyone for your support and readership.

Sean A. Guynes
Editor-in-Chief

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Review of Russell Zguta, *Russian Minstrels: A History of the Skomorokhi*
(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978)

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An exploration of the social and cultural history of the *skomorokhi*—East Slavic minstrel-entertainers prominent in Kievan Rus’ and Muscovy between the tenth and seventeenth centuries C.E.—and their impact on Russian society and art at large, *Russian Minstrels* is of dire significance to scholars and lay people in a number of fields. Though Zguta’s work is principally meant for Slavicists, folklorists, oral literature specialists, music historians, and medievalists, selected sections of the study are recommended for art historians and classicists, especially those interested in comparative literature. Just as Nikolai Karamzin set out to write the first definitive history of Russia during the early nineteenth century, Zguta has written the first comprehensive English-language analysis of the *skomorokhi*’s role in Russian cultural and social history, which is supported by a historiographical discussion and textual evidence from contemporary chronicles, registers, and literary works as well as artistic and toponymic evidence. Zguta “rescue[s] the Russian minstrels from the historical obscurity to which they have been relegated”¹ by framing them within the context of their contributions to medieval Russian popular culture and by countering past assumptions of the *skomorokhi*’s distance from medieval Russian *haute culture* through meticulous archival research and analysis of past studies and their biases. Though more than thirty years old, Zguta’s *Russian Minstrels* is still the primary study of *skomoroshestvo*, its origins and history, and its influence on Russian oral literature and performing arts. It is the essence of good historical writing—concise but exhaustive in its content and coverage—and should be found among any collection on medieval Russia and Eastern Europe.

¹ Zguta, 121.

Russian Minstrels is divided sensibly into five chapters, the first three of which cover the three historical divisions of *skomoroshestvo* (origins, golden age, decline), while the latter two analyze the influence of the *skomorokhi* and Russian oral literature and performing arts. In his short introduction, Zguta puts his study in context, and points out that the *skomorokhi* “have been the subject of only two brief monographs and a handful of specialized essays.”² The status of *skomorokh* studies today is unchanged, with the exception of this one book. Chapter one, “Origins and Early History,” provides the background for the *skomorokhi* but also for the subjection of existing sources to Zguta’s “rigorous scrutiny.”³ The author challenges the notion held by many Slavacists that the origins of the *skomorokhi* lie outside of the Slavic world, either in Byzantium or Western Europe—it is true, Zguta points out, that medieval Germanic *Spielmänner* and Byzantine court musicians were active in Russia and sometimes popular with the elite, especially the *organon* players and Byzantine troupes. To be sure, the *skomorokhi* did not appear on record until the eleventh century, after the official conversion of Kievan Rus’ to Orthodox Christianity under Vladimir I in 988, but Zguta believes, as do Beliaev and Afanas’ev, that the *skomorokhi* evolved from pagan priests and performers of rites among the pre-Christian Eastern Slavs. This origin explains the *skomorokhi*’s strong connection to Russian pagan festivals like the *Koliada*, *Maslenitsa*, and the *Rusalii*, as well as their strong condemnation by church officials early on and throughout their history. Even after the East Slavs’ conversion, Zguta notes, the *skomorokhi* contributed to the medieval Russian religion called *dvoeverie*, or dualism, which was popular among many newly converted peoples.⁴ The *skomorokhi* were also widely viewed as powerful magicians whose music had

² Zguta, xi.

³ Zguta, xii.

⁴ c.f. Bogomilism in Bulgaria, or Manichaeism, though the latter was a separate, non-Slavic phenomenon.

supernatural power, they gained a "reputation as warlocks,"⁵ and they were condemned by church officials for taking precedence over the priests in marriage and other domestic ceremonies.⁶

In chapters two and three, Zguta outlines the golden age and the decline of the *skomorokhi* and divides the history of *skomoroshestvo* along three historical dates: 988, the conversion of Kievan Rus', marking the end (anachronistically) of paganism and thus the creation of the *skomorokh* as a separate class; 1571, the year that Tsar Ivan IV (the Terrible) sacked Novgorod, once the center of *skomoroshestvo*, forcing the *skomorokhi* to move to Moscow, which was the "beginning of a period of rapid decline"; and 1648, when Tsar Aleksei published two edicts against the *skomorokhi*, making their existence illegal. It is interesting to note the dearth of information on the *skomorokhi* during the period between the late eleventh century and 1571—while they appear in unofficial sources, most especially proscription by Orthodox clergymen, they are nonexistent in the state chronicles and records, as they had been both before and after this period. Ironically, however, this period also marks the high point of the *skomorokhi*, their epoch or golden age. They were so prominent a cultural institution, Zguta remarks, that they appear as illuminations in church documents and on the walls of churches themselves, even though these very same documents and the churchmen were the most avid enemies of the *skomorokhi*, seeing them as "the direct antithesis of the Christian ethic"⁷ and as pagan holdovers. This period, also called the "Northern" period, was a time of migration for the *skomorokhi* northward to lands where conditions were more economically and socially favorable, partly because of the lack of Mongol influence in the northernmost cities. However, while Zguta spends no time whatsoever discussing the possible relation between the *skomorkhi* and the Mongols because of a lack of written evidence, it seems likely that the Mongols played a much greater role in the rise of the status of the *skomorokh* during the period than Zguta is willing to admit. Whatever the case, by the reign of Ivan IV,

⁵ Zguta, 9.

⁶ Zguta, 13-14.

⁷ Zguta, 24.

the *skomorokhi* were widespread in nearly every province and were quick to follow the trail of Ivan's campaigns, many making a double living as paid soldiers. Demographically speaking, Zguta concludes through state records that in some areas the *skomorokhi* outweighed or matched the number of residents employed in more practical professions, such as bakers, butchers, and tanners. It was also during this period that the *skomorokhi* enjoyed widespread court patronage; however, Ivan IV's forced transplantation of the *skomorokhi* from the North to Moscow, a city already teeming with other minstrels, encouraged the minstrel-entertainers to seek employment in other fields, beginning the steady decline of *skomoroshestvo*. The last straw for the *skomorokhi* came during the zealous reign of Aleksei Romanov who, at the insistence of his religious supporters, proscribed the *skomorkhi* completely, banning their entrance into towns and cities. This ban was not solely due to the clergy's fear of the *skomorokhi* as pagans, but was coupled with economic revolts and a string of violence and robberies meted out by several bands of itinerant *skomorokhi* called *prokhozhe*, the most famous of whom was Grishka Muryshka.⁸ This series of crimes climaxed in the mid- to late-seventeenth century.⁹ Zguta makes it clear that the *skomorokhi* as a class were blamed for the actions of a few, but regardless of the *gramoty* issued by Aleksei against the *skomorokhi* and their mass excommunication, Zguta cites evidence that some still existed—even in large numbers—as late as 1768, when P. A. Demidov wrote to G. F. Miller about his investigation of folk singers in the Urals, who appeared to be *skomorokhi*. Though the *skomorokhi* died out, Zguta is intent on proving their influence on later Russian cultural and social identity, which he does quite successfully in his final chapters.

Chapters four and five offer a discussion of the influence of the *skomorokhi* on medieval Russian popular culture, especially oral literature and the performing arts. Perhaps the most famous oral literature of the Kievan Rus' period is the *bylina* (pl. *byliny*), oral heroic epics that were taken from their

⁸ Zguta, 49.

⁹ Zguta, 63.

traditional court setting and transmitted to the rural population by the *skomorokhi*, who imbued them with the bawdy humor typical of their craft.¹⁰ Zguta further posits that the *istoricheskie pesni*, or historical songs, many of which concern the campaigns of Ivan IV, were composed by those *skomorokhi* involved in the campaigns; and, just as he does concerning the *byliny*, Zguta provides evidence towards the importance of the *skomorokhi* as spreaders of folktales (*skazki*), folk remedies and charms (*zaklinaniya*), and Russian proverbs. Regarding the performing arts, it is impossible to separate the *skomorokhi* from music, theatre, and dance, for they were part and parcel to the livelihood and popularity of the medieval Russian minstrel-entertainers. They also had a profound influence on contemporary music, including Orthodox Church music and festival songs as well as the popularization of musical instruments. Because "dance has been described as one of the most ancient manifestations of man's spiritual and emotional being,"¹¹ the *skomorokhi* as representatives of Russia's pre-Christian beliefs naturally had a major role to play in Russian dance, most obviously in the *khovorod*, a circle dance in which the entire community would dance together. Zguta also points out that in the many cases in which the *skomorokhi* are depicted in art, they are often shown in traditional dancing poses. Though dancing itself is hard to study chronologically, the significance of the *skomorokhi* was such that their dances have been recorded in art and tradition. Zguta dedicates the majority of chapter five, "Contribution to Music, Dance, and Theatre," to the influence of the *skomorokhi* on theatrical traditions. Though Soviet historians have claimed that Tsar Aleksei invented the first Russian theatre troupes, Zguta makes it obvious that the *skomorokhi* were the original thespians of Russia, most notably as puppeteers and religious performers during those formerly pagan holidays taken over by the Orthodox Church.¹² Zguta's conclusion is that, had the *skomorokhi* not intervened and "nurtured them in their embryonic

¹⁰ Related to the Russian *skomorokhi* are the South Slavic and Albanian *guslari*. Milman Perry and A.B. Lord studied South Slavic *guslars* in the Balkans in the twentieth century to discover the oral origins of Homeric epic, and Robert Elsie has studied the Albanian *gulsars* in our century.

¹¹ Zguta, 107.

¹² Zguta. 110.

state,” earlier performing arts that, like the *skomorokhi*, were pagan leftovers, would have “withered and died.”¹³

The *skomorokhi*, as Zguta bemoans, “can truly be described as the forgotten class of Russian medieval society,”¹⁴ but *Russian Minstrels: A History of the Skomorokhi* challenges the notion that the *skomorokhi* were not more than itinerant travelling entertainers whose existence had little effect on Russian popular culture, either then or now, and that in the scheme of Russian cultural and societal history, they meant very little. In fact, as *Russian Minstrels* shows, the *skomorokhi* were only one of many classes of medieval minstrel-entertainers, and they played a major role before Kievan Rus’ Christianization as priests, and thereafter as entertainers, spiritual advisers, and transmitters of Russian high culture to the masses in the form of *byliny*, theatre, music, and historical songs. Contrary to many historians’ opinions, the *skomorokhi* were so prominent as to be painted among the illuminations and paintings in Orthodox documents and churches, to receive payment two to three times that of ordinary court officials, and to outlast officials’ proclamations that illegalized not only their livelihood but the *skomorokhi* themselves. Any Russian historian, medievalist, folklorist, or music historian who has not found themselves enamored of the story of the *skomorokhi* and the wonder of the “epoch of the *skomorokhi*”¹⁵ as analyzed and recited in Russell Zguta’s *Russian Minstrels*, has not completed their education.

¹³ Zguta, 120.

¹⁴ Zguta, xi.

¹⁵ Zguta, 1.

Induit me dominus ciclade auro:
The *Ordo Virtutum* as Liturgical Commentary

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During the twentieth century historians have gone from dismissing mystic Hildegard of Bingen's poetic work as bad Latin to lionizing Hildegard for her anachronistic genius. The task of contemporary Hildegardian scholars is to honor her individuality while elucidating her significance for the twelfth-century "Renaissance." In this study of her musical drama, the Ordo Virtutum, I challenge and modify other historians' theories of when the play could have been performed to lay the foundation for an argument that the Ordo Virtutum can be interpreted as a liturgical commentary on the mass for the Consecration of Virgins and a detailed analysis of what comments Hildegard makes on this section of the liturgy, using the text of the play and the ordo in the Mainz Pontifical as my two primary sources. I conclude that the field of Hildegardian studies would benefit from more in-depth and highly detailed intertextual analysis focusing on her debt to the liturgy of the twelfth century along with other texts she alludes to, and that this more literary approach may be the key to decoding and articulating her role and significance in her historical context, thus ending her isolation as a peculiar visionary.

"Like all religions, Christianity is deeply paradoxical, because it must give significance to both life and death. Paradox is not, by definition, solvable; it can only be asserted, experienced, lived. Christian devotion is especially inflected with paradox, because it places at the very center the shocking, oxymoronic enfleshing of the divine. It is this coincidence of opposites that late medieval women sought to convey and live."¹

Historiography: *Ordo Virtutum*

In the introduction to a recent collection of critical essays on the work of Hildegard of Bingen, Maud Burnett McInerney, the editor of the volume, makes the following statement: "Abbess, virgin, prophet, poet, theologian, scientist, musician, natural historian, exorcist, excommunicate and saint—no

¹ Caroline Walker Bynum, "Patterns of Female Piety in the Later Middle Ages," in Jeffrey Hamburger and Susan Marti, eds., *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 188.

other single figure of the Middle Ages embodies quite so many contradictions.”² These “contradictions” have fascinated and puzzled contemporaries and historians for centuries and have inspired differing opinions about Hildegard’s work, her role in monastic and lay society, and her underlying philosophy. Regarding her work, particularly her musical and poetic compositions, there has been a shift detectable on the critical barometer even during the twentieth century. In reaction to strict German and English grammarians who denigrated the “weak” Latin verse Hildegard employed in her collection of songs, the *Symphonia*, and particularly her musical drama, the *Ordo Virtutum*, two generations of historians set out to explicitly rehabilitate her reputation.³ These historians thrived on and have been stymied by the attractive quality that initially drew them to study and promote Hildegard of Bingen: her prolific and apparently anachronistic talent—her singularity. As Hildegard’s modern-day defenders have struggled to extricate her poetic and musical work, especially the *Ordo Virtutum*, from the grasp of earlier criticism, they have been confronted again and again with the problem of her significance. They have, therefore, shifted their focus from trying to establish her in the canon of medieval literature to trying to find a way to incorporate her liturgical musical drama into the mainstream of twelfth-century monastic scholarship, an attempt that has yet to come to fruition.

Most early German and English works that pass harsh judgment on Hildegard’s verse and the *Ordo Virtutum* were published during the first third of the twentieth century and today are hard to find. Fortunately, they were so offensive to modern Hildegardian scholars that one can find a sampling of their observations in quite a few of their essays. From Gunilla Iversen, in a collection of critical studies on the *Ordo Virtutum*, we learn that Guido Maria Dreves “said in 1909 that [Hildegard] mastered neither the Latin language nor poetic form so that her own texts could only be considered ‘Kladden,’ not

² Maud Burnett McNerney, “Introduction: Hildegard of Bingen, Prophet and Polymath,” in Maud Burnett McNerney, ed., *Hildegard of Bingen: A Book of Essays* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998), xviii.

³ McNerney, xxiii.

finished work but rough drafts or sketches.”⁴ In McInerney’s introduction, she noted F. J. E. Raby’s “offhand treatment” of “Hildegard, the famous mystic, whose sequences are in prose”⁵ in his 1927 text *A History of Christian Latin Poetry*. English historians of medieval liturgical drama ignored the *Ordo Virtutum*,⁶ and a German arranger butchered Hildegard’s original musical vision by fixing “flaws” in Hildegard’s composition.⁷ Beginning with Peter Dronke’s treatment of Hildegard in *Poetic Individuality in the Middle Ages* (1970), the first wave of Hildegardian scholars felt the need to react against this seeming abuse and began to seriously analyze Hildegard’s works for the first time in light of her previous neglect.

Peter Dronke is the acknowledged father of modern Hildegardian studies, followed closely behind by historians such as Barbara Newman and Carolyn Walker Bynum. The first wave of critical assessment of Hildegard’s work that followed the publication of his *Poetic Individuality in the Middle Ages* in 1970 concerned itself with her “overpowering, electrifying presence” as a theologian, poet, musician, and dramatist.⁸ Dismissing earlier German criticism of Hildegard’s verse by commenting that detractors like Josef Gmelch “could not envisage principles of poetic form beyond the conventional ones of regular metre and rhyme”—in a footnote, no less—Dronke opined that her songs “contain some of the most unusual, subtle, and exciting poetry of the twelfth century” and that the *Ordo Virtutum* is “at the summit of twelfth-century dramatic achievement.”⁹ No longer were Hildegard’s idiosyncratic Latin

⁴ Gunilla Iversen, “*Ego Humilitatis, regina Virtutum*: Poetic Language and Literary Structure in Hildegard of Bingen’s Vision of the Virtues,” in Audrey Ekdahl Davidson, ed., *The Ordo Virtutum of Hildegard of Bingen: Critical Studies* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992), 79.

⁵ McInerney, xxiii.

⁶ Robert Potter, “The *Ordo Virtutum*: Ancestor of English Morality Plays?” in Audrey Ekdahl Davidson, ed., *The Ordo Virtutum of Hildegard of Bingen: Critical Studies* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992), 31.

⁷ Audrey Ekdahl Davidson, “Music and Performance: Hildegard of Bingen’s *Ordo Virtutum*,” in Audrey Ekdahl Davidson, ed., *The Ordo Virtutum of Hildegard of Bingen: Critical Studies* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992), 2.

⁸ Peter Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages: A Critical Study of Texts from Perpetua (†203) to Marguerite Porete (†1310)* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 144.

⁹ Peter Dronke, *Poetic Individuality in the Middle Ages: New Departures in Poetry, 1000-1150* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 151.

and unfamiliarity with the conventions of Latin verse a flaw, for Hildegard composed her songs “in a poetic *Kuntsprosa*, or ‘free verse,’”¹⁰ and her poetry “achieves a visionary concentration and an evocative and associative richness that set it apart from nearly all other religious poetry of its age.”¹¹ In 1987, Barbara Newman wrote one of the first modern book-length studies on Hildegard’s work, calling her “a woman fascinating in the sheer breadth of her accomplishment, yet strangely alienated from her context.”¹² Newman decides to place her in what she calls the “sapiential tradition” that “will link her not only with contemporaries but also with kindred spirits of other times and places,”¹³ after discarding mystical, “women’s writing,” political, or “prescholastic” frameworks for interpretation.¹⁴ Both Dronke and Newman, while they differ in their method of approach to their subject—one by literary analysis, the other by feminist theology—have strikingly similar attitudes. They argue that Hildegard of Bingen is a person of significance in twelfth-century intellectual history who had been wrongly passed over, and that there is a supernal quality to her work that transcends her historical context and makes her unique. The second generation of Hildegard’s scholars inherited this conflict and has yet to resolve it.

The cohort of historians writing about Hildegard’s *Ordo Virtutum* in the past fifteen years, the self-named second wave or generation, has still continued to defend Hildegard’s reputation rather than make a serious attempt to place the drama in historical context. In the first and so far only collection of critical studies dealing specifically with the *Ordo Virtutum*, a collection published in 1992, each author makes the point of first defending the work as original and aesthetically significant. Audrey Ekdahl Davidson embarks on an in-depth analysis of the musical score, saying, “its remarkable text is set to music which is no less powerful in its aesthetic effect.”¹⁵ Robert Potter disputes that the drama is an

¹⁰ Dronke, *Poetic Individuality*, 157.

¹¹ Dronke, *Poetic Individuality*, 179.

¹² Barbara Newman, *Sister of Wisdom: St. Hildegard’s Theology of the Feminine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), xv.

¹³ Newman, *Sister of Wisdom*, xvii.

¹⁴ Newman, *Sister of Wisdom*, xvi.

¹⁵ Ekdahl Davidson, 1.

early morality play, stating that the “*Ordo Virtutum* stands alone and unprecedented, a unique creation of its kind.”¹⁶ Pamela Sheingorn contends that Hildegard’s scheme of the Virtues is unique.¹⁷ Julia Bolton Holloway claims that the *Ordo Virtutum* is a virtuoso play on the monastic tradition of vicarious disobedience versus actual adherence to the Benedictine Rule.¹⁸ Gunilla Iversen opines that Hildegard, unlike her contemporaries, drew her “free verse” style from the psalms.¹⁹ Clifford Davidson, who has produced several performances of the *Ordo Virtutum*, explains that its “originality of design is unparalleled, and hence it is vital that its structure and meaning be understood and respected.”²⁰ By emphasizing, again, Hildegard’s superior uniqueness, these scholars only manage to hint something of the *Ordo Virtutum*’s significance in the history of twelfth-century literature and monastic culture; other scholars of the second wave were left with the task of establishing her significance.

In the aforementioned recent book of essays on Hildegard’s contribution to twelfth-century literature published in 1998, McInerney boldly proclaims that the time has come “for Hildegard to be appreciated in the fullest context of medieval history.”²¹ McInerney then proposes that the goal of today’s Hildegardian scholars is to “re-establish her as a complex, original and important contributor to the intellectual currents of the twelfth century, as a part of the mainstream rather than the margins.”²² Although two of the wide-ranging essays of this volume touch on her verse and music, no essay focuses specifically on the *Ordo Virtutum*, leaving a more comprehensive word on the historical context of this liturgical drama, somehow so very significant and beautiful, unspoken.

¹⁶ Potter, 40.

¹⁷ Pamela Sheingorn, “The Virtues of Hildegard’s *Ordo Virtutum*; or, It Was a Woman’s World,” in Audrey Ekdahl Davidson, ed., *The Ordo Virtutum of Hildegard of Bingen: Critical Studies* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992), 47.

¹⁸ Julia Bolton Holloway, “The Monastic Context of Hildegard’s *Ordo Virtutum*,” in Audrey Ekdahl Davidson, ed., *The Ordo Virtutum of Hildegard of Bingen: Critical Studies* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992), 63.

¹⁹ Gunilla Iversen, 80.

²⁰ Clifford Davidson, “The *Ordo Virtutum*: A Note on Production,” in Audrey Ekdahl Davidson, ed., *The Ordo Virtutum of Hildegard of Bingen: Critical Studies* (Kalamazoo, Mich: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992), 111.

²¹ McInerney, xxv.

²² McInerney, xxv.

Critical attitudes toward Hildegard's work as a poet, musician, and dramatist have shifted throughout the twentieth century from dismissive criticism, to eloquent and analytical apologetics, to a nascent attempt to appreciate works like the *Ordo Virtutum* within the context of the textually rich and vibrant twelfth-century "renaissance." In 2004, an intriguing volume entitled *Maistresse of My Wit: Medieval Women, Modern Scholars* was published in the University of Sydney's *Making the Middle Ages* series with the aim of allowing scholars of medieval women to reflect on how they first encountered and became enamored with their subjects. Towards the end of Constant J. Mews's invaluable retrospective on the course that both Hildegardian studies and her popular fame have taken in the past thirty years, he muses that Hildegard, while interesting, did not remain the "maistresse of his wit."²³ Rather, she "expanded my area of awareness, by alerting me to a breadth of imaginative vision quite different from anything encouraged by the schools of Paris in the twelfth century. She was only one of a number of creative teachers in the twelfth century, each of whom has something to say."²⁴ Perhaps this particular attitude, eschewing the temptation to become "narrow disciples of Hildegard,"²⁵ will guide the twenty-first-century scholars who continue to propose new models of interpretation and contextualization for her haunting music and Latin verse in the *Ordo Virtutum*. This essay will begin, therefore, to tentatively address this need for new models and approaches for analyzing the *Ordo Virtutum*—specifically, in this case, as a liturgical commentary, a traditional twelfth-century literary form.

Source Description: *Ordo Virtutum*

The *Ordo Virtutum* is a musical drama composed sometime around 1151 by the Benedictine *magistra* Hildegard of Bingen (1058-1179). Hildegard of Bingen was the tenth child in a noble family and was given to the convent at Disibodenberg in the Diocese of Speyer, under the care of a mystic named

²³ Mews. Constant J., "Encountering Hildegard: Between Apocalypse and The New Age," in Louise D. d'Arcens and Juanita Feros Ruys, eds., *Maistresse of My Wit: Medieval Women, Modern Scholars, Making the Middle Ages*, vol. 7 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, Inc., 2004), 90.

²⁴ Mews, 90.

²⁵ Mews, 92.

Jutta. After Jutta's death in 1136, Hildegard was elected *magistra* of her community at Disibodenberg. Around 1150, she established a community for twenty young women of noble birth in Rupertsberg, where the *Ordo Virtutum* was most likely performed. Since she was a young girl, Hildegard experienced waking visions that accompanied severe physical weakness.²⁶ In her first *vita*, begun when she was still alive by one of her loyal scribes and containing several autobiographical sections, she writes, "whenever I saw these things deep in my soul I still retained outer sight, and that I heard this said of no other human being."²⁷ Though Oliver Sacks has argued that Hildegard's "visions" were migraine-induced,²⁸ she still differs from other mystics in that her visions of the future and "unfathomable" things occurred when she was awake and lucid; therefore, one can read works like the *Ordo Virtutum* with relative certainty that the words and the music and imaginative vision behind them are those of an artist in full mastery of her craft.

Scholars studying the *Ordo Virtutum* today have a fortunately reliable manuscript tradition on which to rely. The music and text of the *Ordo Virtutum* is the last entry in the *Riesenkodex*, MS 2 in the Hessische Landesbibliothek, Wiesbaden,²⁹ and most scholars believe that this "collected edition" of her works was compiled toward the end of her life in her own scriptorium.³⁰ There are also two other copies of the *Ordo Virtutum* extant: one written for Johannes Trithemius in 1487, probably copied from the *Riesenkodex*, and another in a gathering of the MS Dendermonde 9, which is currently missing.³¹ Although the original copy is still intact and accessible, there is currently no critical edition of the text of *Ordo Virtutum*: the closest equivalent is Peter Dronke's meticulous translation and introductory essay in

²⁶ Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages*, 145.

²⁷ Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages*, 145.

²⁸ Oliver Sacks, *Migraine: Understanding a Common Disorder* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 106-108.

²⁹ Peter Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 156.

³⁰ Marianna Schrader and Adelgundis Führkötter, *Die Echtheit des Schrifttums der heiligen Hildegard von Bingen* (Cologne-Graz: Böhlau-Verlag, 1956), 154-79; Guibert of Gembloux, *Guiberti Gemblacensis, Epistolae quae in codice B.R. Brux. 5527-5534 inueniuntur*, ed. Albert Derolez (CCCM 66, 1988), xxx-xxxii; *Hildegardis Bigensis: Epistolarum I*, ed. Lieven Van Acker (CCCM 91, 1991), xxvii-xxix, quoted in Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, footnotes 2 and 3.

³¹ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 156.

his *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*. The text of the play itself is quite short, and as it unfortunately was passed over for full inclusion in the critical editions of *Scivias* and of the *Symphoniae*, a collection of Hildegard's other songs, one cannot be sure when a critical edition of the play will be released. The scholar of the *Ordo Virtutum*, however, is blessed with much more certainty as to the authorship and origin of her text than the texts many other historians study, and he or she can proceed to study the work with confidence that he or she is truly engaging with a twelfth-century text composed by a twelfth-century woman named Hildegard of Bingen.

The *Ordo Virtutum* occupies a curious position in the history of medieval drama. The play, recorded during the last few decades of Hildegard's life in the *Riesenkodex* or "giant codex" that contains her visionary and lyrical works,³² seems to be clearly kin to both earlier medieval allegories such as Prudentius' *Psychomachia*, written in the fifth century, and later medieval morality plays such as *The Castle of Perseverance* or *Everyman*, from the fifteenth century. The play features seventeen solo roles for female vocalists (sixteen embodied virtues and *Anima*, the Every soul protagonist), one spoken male role (*Diabolus*), a female chorus, and a male chorus,³³ and it tells the story of *Anima's* fall from innocence and her redemption through the intervention of the embodied virtues, in particular *Humilitas* and *Castitas*. Certain elements of the *Ordo Virtutum*, however, have prompted spirited inquiry since Peter Dronke reintroduced the *Ordo Virtutum* to an English-speaking academic audience in 1970. Scholars have investigated whether the play can, in fact, be considered a true morality play in the same tradition as the English vernacular dramas of the fourteenth century and onward and also whether the play was ever performed, among many other critical questions of genre and significance within the history of performance.

³² Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 156.

³³ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 154.

The *Ordo Virtutum*, according to Robert Potter, bears some superficial similarities to later morality plays, but this resemblance is deceptive.³⁴ Like later plays such as *The Castle of Perseverance*, *Mankind*, and *Wisdom*, the *Ordo Virtutum* focuses “on the progress of the Soul from innocence into sin and on to repentance—the pattern of action which embodies the definitive structure of the later vernacular moralities.”³⁵ Several scholars, however, have noted two important differences worth discussing: the unique constitution of the *dramatis personae*, and the *Ordo Virtutum*’s “philosophical, musical, and poetic elevation.”³⁶

Robert Potter points out that the sixteen embodied virtues are “arrayed against a single and badly outnumbered opponent, the Devil,” unlike later morality plays such as *The Castle of Perseverance*, in which God Himself is outnumbered by the forces of evil.³⁷ Furthermore, as Pamela Sheingorn argues, Hildegard’s array of powerful virtues is unique in that the Virtues do not have to oppose their antithetical vices, as in the *Psychomachia*, and that “the selection of Virtues does not correspond to any scheme or list of Virtues devised by medieval thinkers.”³⁸ The language and “lofty tone”³⁹ of the *Ordo Virtutum*, furthermore, is distinct from the feel of later morality plays. Unlike later morality plays such as *Wisdom*, in which the *Anima* character degrades herself “in prodigal scenes of London underworld debauchery and legal satire, culminating in a dance of Vices, devils, gallants, whores, and perjured jurymen,”⁴⁰ the *Ordo Virtutum*’s *Anima* falls from grace tastefully offstage. The language of the *Ordo Virtutum*, praised with both sympathetic and apologetic eloquence by scholars such as Peter Dronke,

³⁴ Robert Potter, “The *Ordo Virtutum*: Ancestor of English Morality Plays?”, in Audrey Ek Dahl Davidson, ed., *The Ordo Virtutum of Hildegard of Bingen: Critical Studies* (Kalamazoo, Mich: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992), 33.

³⁵ Potter, 32.

³⁶ Potter, 34.

³⁷ Potter, 33.

³⁸ Pamela Sheingorn, “The Virtues of Hildegard’s *Ordo Virtutum*; or, It Was a Woman’s World,” in Audrey Ek Dahl Davidson, ed., *The Ordo Virtutum of Hildegard of Bingen: Critical Studies* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992), 47.

³⁹ Potter, 34.

⁴⁰ Potter, 38.

demonstrates Hildegard's "special gift for fusing and compressing images";⁴¹ Pamela Sheingorn suggests that despite "the implication of direct and simple action given by [the] plot summary, Hildegard's text is filled with metaphor and allusive language susceptible to a variety of interpretations."⁴² These elements of the *Ordo Virtutum* lead many scholars to remark about comparing the drama to later morality plays, perhaps most evocatively said by Robert Potter, that "[i]t is the difference between a Byzantine icon and a Bruegel painting. Both indeed may be devotional works of art, but they are of a different order."⁴³

Performance Theories

Turning to the problem of the performance of this "elite ceremony of innocence,"⁴⁴ there are two schools of thought: a more conservative view of the role of women in medieval productions, and Peter Dronke's alternative performance theory, which many Hildegardian scholars accept or modify slightly today. As there is no direct evidence for a performance of the *Ordo Virtutum*, scholars such as Ekehard Simon claim that "it is poor sociology to claim [...] that Hildegard and the nuns of Bingen would have staged the Ordo in the convent cloister," as "theatre was the province of men."⁴⁵ Peter Dronke and his successors, however, point to a persuasive body of circumstantial evidence that suggest that Hildegard of Bingen and her nuns did in fact put on such a production.⁴⁶

Peter Dronke's argument, reiterated by other recent essays on Hildegard's play, aims to "remove certain historical misconceptions."⁴⁷ First of all, if "it was unusual for medieval religious women to perform plays, Hildegard was far-reachingly unusual," which, considering her

⁴¹ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 150.

⁴² Sheingorn, 47.

⁴³ Potter, 38.

⁴⁴ Potter, 38.

⁴⁵ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 152.

⁴⁶ In addition to the following summary of Peter Dronke's theory, it should be noted that every single scholar in Audrey Ekdahl Davidson, ed., *The Ordo Virtutum of Hildegard of Bingen: Critical Studies* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992) assumes or explicitly states that the *Ordo Virtutum* was staged. The scholars featured in this book are Audrey Ekdahl Davidson, Robert Potter, Pamela Sheingorn, Julia Bolton Holloway, Gunilla Iversen, and Clifford Davidson.

⁴⁷ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 153.

accomplishments—preaching tours, performing exorcisms, correspondence with popes and emperors—is not that far-reaching of a claim to make.⁴⁸ A woman who dressed her nuns “in white veils, rings, and elaborately designed tiaras” on feast days despite criticism from her contemporaries was probably not going to shy away from putting on a play.⁴⁹ Furthermore, there are certain clues in the text of the *Riesenkodex*—compiled during the last years of her life—that suggest a stage production.⁵⁰ Not only does the text of the play have carefully written music accompanying it, but it also contains guiding phrases more intended for performers than readers.⁵¹ Expressions such as *felix*, *gravata*, *infelix*, *Querela penitentis*, and *penitens*—in addition to the constant *strepitus* applied to *Diabolus*—are unnecessary to the reader, as the lyrics convey these emotions quite well by themselves: they would be useful, however, as stage directions.⁵² Dronke also suggests a direct correspondence between Hildegard’s twenty nuns (“*viginti puellis nobilibus et de divitibus parentibus natis*,” and therefore more likely to be musically trained) and the female roles in the *Ordo Virtutum* (*Anima*, the sixteen Virtues, and three women left over for the chorus of embodied souls).⁵³ This correspondence and the very specifically rendered “costumes” for these same sixteen Virtues in the miniatures accompanying the text of *Scivias*, probably composed around the same time, all suggest to Dronke and other Hildegardian scholars that the play was performed.

Upon what occasion this play would have been performed, however, is open to debate. Several scholars have suggested that the most likely opportunity would have been the inauguration of Hildegard’s monastery at Rupertsberg,⁵⁴ without much justification for this claim beyond the fact that such an event would have fit several dramatically felicitous criteria: a special ceremony which many

⁴⁸ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 153.

⁴⁹ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 153.

⁵⁰ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 153.

⁵¹ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 154.

⁵² Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 154. In English: happily, depressed, unhappily, lamenting penitently, penitently, and the Devil, “shouting.”

⁵³ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 154. In English: “twenty noble girls and born of wealthy parents.”

⁵⁴ Sheingorn, 51.

people, lay and religious, were bound to attend. A more interesting theory advanced by Pamela Sheingorn suggests another alternative that also fits these criteria: that it was performed at the ceremony for the consecration of virgins.

The ceremony for the consecration of virgins was perhaps the most important rite of a nun's life, during which her parents handed her over to the Bishop, as though in marriage to Christ, and she received the robe, veil, and crown of a nun, pledging and receiving certain assurances in return, much like any other marriage ceremony. The text of this liturgy, which will be addressed in far more detail later on in this essay, will be drawn from the most influential and complete published version of the liturgy that most closely resembles what would have been used in Disibodenberg and Rupertsberg during Hildegard's lifetime, *Le Pontifical Romano-Germanique Du Dixième Siècle*, edited by Cyrille Vogel. This text will be referred to as the Mainz Pontifical for the remainder of this essay.⁵⁵

Sheingorn suggests that the *Ordo Virtutum* would be performed directly before the mass for a nun's consecration would begin.⁵⁶ She argues that there are "many ways in which [the *ordo* for the consecration of virgins] and Hildegard's play form an appropriate whole, echoing and re-echoing similar themes," and that the ending of the play "provides a perfect transition to the *Ordo* for the Consecration of Virgins."⁵⁷ Sheingorn then proceeds through the ritual elements of this *ordo*, pointing out the corollaries she perceives between them and the dramatic action of the *Ordo Virtutum*. The similarities she points out between the *Ordo Virtutum* and the *ordo consecratio sacrae virginis* are indeed striking, and any reader who examines both texts is bound to agree that they are related both dramatically and

⁵⁵ Of course, to use a text even closer to that used in Hildegard's lifetime, one would have to travel to Disibodenberg and Rupertsberg in order to examine the original manuscripts that may have been in local use at that time—manuscripts that may or may not exist. Where applicable, version "B" of the rite in the Mainz Pontifical will be used, a version associated with Bamberg, because this is the closest fit geographically. The Mainz Pontifical, as edited by Vogel, is a monumental work for which space does not permit a full source description. However, Vogel gives a full and thorough background of the documents that would eventually constitute this version of the liturgy in a companion volume; see Cyrille Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy: An Introduction to the Sources*, trans. William G. Storey and Niels Krogh Rasmussen, O.P. (Washington, D.C.: The Pastoral Press, 1986).

⁵⁶ Sheingorn, 52.

⁵⁷ Sheingorn, 52-53.

thematically. The claim, however, that the *Ordo Virtutum* is somehow incomplete, that the ending of the *Ordo Virtutum* provides a “perfect transition” into the *consecratio virginum*, or that the two texts “form an appropriate whole” is a bold one, and bears far greater scrutiny.

I. Incomplete Ordo?

Sheingorn interprets the fact that the *Ordo Virtutum* “echoes and re-echoes” themes in the *ordo* for the consecration of virgins as evidence for her theory that the *Ordo Virtutum* was performed in preparation for that specific mass. In the process of making an argument on timing, however, she makes an implicit argument about the *Ordo Virtutum*’s literary character that remains unexamined throughout the rest of her article: if the *Ordo* and the *ordo* form “an appropriate whole,” then the *Ordo Virtutum* must be in some way incomplete as a dramatic work. This assumption proves puzzling after even the most cursory reading of the *Ordo Virtutum*; the play has a clear beginning, middle, and end. Happy *Anima* is unable to resist *Diabolus*’s temptation to enjoy the world she has foresworn, then she falls and the Virtues lament her and sing of themselves; finally, a battered *Anima* returns, the Virtues bind *Diabolus*, and everyone joins in one final choral number proclaiming Christ’s mission in the world. Beyond a superficial coherency, furthermore, there is a strong internal structure to the work, a thematic integrity that does not rely on that of the *ordo* for the consecration of virgins.

Looking at the opening and close of the *Ordo Virtutum*, we find that Hildegard has posed and answered her own questions independent of the mass for the consecration of virgins. The *Ordo Virtutum* begins with the Patriarchs and Prophets asking the Virtues, “Who are these, who are like clouds?”⁵⁸ The rest of the drama is an in-depth answer to this question and to *Diabolus*’s counterpoint that “none of you even know what you are!”⁵⁹ Each of the seventeen Virtues introduces herself independently, but the overall theme of the Virtues’ identity revolves around very specific imagery

⁵⁸ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 161.

⁵⁹ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 165.

regarding Christ's body ("we shine with him, building up the limbs of his beautiful body"⁶⁰), plant imagery ("fruits of the living eye"⁶¹), and martial activity ("We must fight [*militare*] with you, royal daughter [i.e. *Anima*]."⁶²), and eroticism (as *Humilitas* says, she will "keep [the Virtues'] place in the royal wedding-chamber"⁶³) that simply does not occur in the *ordo*.⁶⁴ Furthermore, these initial themes are not random: they are resolved in the final scene, in which the cast, as Christ, the "fiery fountain of love"⁶⁵ and "champion,"⁶⁶ speak of His body, the loss of *viriditas* (Hildegard's word for Edenic greenness), and the ultimate significance of this struggle against the flesh: healing and restoration of what was lost.

Sheingorn has presented no compelling argument as to why we should believe that the *Ordo Virtutum*'s final word is not, in fact, the final word that Hildegard had in mind, which makes Sheingorn's argument that the *Ordo Virtutum* is only the first half of a nun's consecration seem tenuous. I would argue, in fact, that her argument about the sequence of and transition between these two events is in fact logically untenable, or at the very least logistically impractical.

II. Transition between the Ordo and ordo?

Sheingorn cites Audrey Eckdahl Davidson's argument that the last chorus of the *Ordo Virtutum* is a procession within the same church in which the mass for the *consecratio sacrae virginis* would take place, doing so in order to argue that *Anima* would be received by the bishop as the Christ who spoke at the end of the *Ordo Virtutum*, calling it "a perfect transition."⁶⁷ Looking carefully at the text of the *Ordo Virtutum* and Cyrille Vogel's published version of the Mainz Pontifical, however, complicates this

⁶⁰ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 161.

⁶¹ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 161.

⁶² Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 163.

⁶³ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 167.

⁶⁴ Although the *ordo* is essentially a marriage ceremony, with the nun as bride and Christ as bridegroom, the nuptial imagery in the liturgical text is not erotic, and does not refer to Song of Songs.

⁶⁵ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 179.

⁶⁶ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 181.

⁶⁷ Sheingorn, 52.

interpretation. Sheingorn asserts that the “final speech” of the *Ordo Virtutum* is in Christ’s voice;⁶⁸ yet this assertion is only partially accurate. Most of the final chorus is indeed in Christ’s voice, as embodied by eighteen to twenty female singers, but according to Dronke’s edition of the play, the final sentence is not—it is in the voice of the Virtues and Souls. “So now,” the nuns would sing, “all you people, bend your knees to the Father, that he may reach you his hand.”⁶⁹ At this point, according to Sheingorn, the bishop as *Sponsus* would take “*Anima*” into the pseudo-marriage ceremony of a nun’s consecration. This act does not quite make sense in terms of the end of the *Ordo Virtutum*, as the Virtues and Souls themselves speak as Christ, and the only aspect or “Person” of God that is outside this performance is God the Father, not God as *Sponsus*. They are not offering *Anima* to Christ: *Anima*, with the other Virtues and souls, is Christ, urging *omnes homines* to humble themselves before God. At this point, *Anima*’s character development is complete, and her role as an individual irrelevant; she is a part of Christ’s body. Therefore, from the perspective of the *Ordo Virtutum*, a transition into a ceremony for “*Anima*’s” consecration does not logically follow.

Coming from the perspective of the Mainz Pontifical text, a transition also does not seem inevitable. Sheingorn notes that before the mass for her consecration, the girl receives the bishop’s hand as a bride would her husband’s at the church door, given by her parents.⁷⁰ She does not make clear in her argument, however, whether she believes that the role of *Anima* would be played by the girl herself; if so, the logistics of how an independent *Anima* would extricate herself from her role in the chorus within the church, go outside, and in the care of her parents, receive the bishop at the door, sound convoluted. More likely, Sheingorn believes that the character of *Anima* represents the girl who is to be consecrated; in other words, the girl playing *Anima* and the girl undergoing consecration are not the same person. This separation already creates a disconnect, not a transition, between the action of

⁶⁸ Sheingorn, 53.

⁶⁹ Dronke, 181.

⁷⁰ Sheingorn, 54.

the *Ordo Virtutum* and that of the mass to follow. And perhaps this disconnect is a necessary one, considering that *Anima* falls from purity (whether she falls from chastity remains ambiguous) and that the ceremony to follow is that of a wealthy virgin of good family! If we are envisioning the bishop moving down the aisle of the church to receive the girl's hand at the door during the finale of the *Ordo Virtutum*, we are confronted, again, by the last lines of the *Ordo Virtutum*: the *Father* will reach you his hand. If God the Father is to take the girl's hand, then how does the audience turn the outstretched hand of the bishop into that of God the Son, the *Sponsus*? A transition between the *Ordo Virtutum* and the *ordo*, assuming they were performed on the same day and in that order, as Sheingorn argues, is possible despite these subtle but jarring symbolic difficulties and disconnects, but it is by no means "perfect," which undermines her assertion that the two performances form "an appropriate whole."

III. Symmetry between the *Ordo* and the *ordo*

Sheingorn's argument that the *Ordo Virtutum* leads into the *ordo* depends upon the two works' essential symmetry ("echoing and re-echoing themes"), which is odd considering that the two texts cannot be parallel and continuous at the same time. In both dramatic productions, the female protagonist receives a garment that signifies her commitment to virginity and the work of a nun, she is promised to the divine *Sponsus* and receives a crown, virtues of various kinds are to aid her in this religious life, and she resists the devil. If the *Ordo* and the *ordo* are to be two halves of one dramatic event, then it would seem that the second half recapitulates the first, which would be a strange choice for a public entertainment: why, exactly, would Hildegard reinvent the wheel? Furthermore, while the intertextual dialogue between the two texts is distinctly audible, a closer examination reveals that they are not, actually, symmetrical or parallel at all. In the liturgy as printed in the Mainz Pontifical, the focus of the action is on the maiden's veiling and robing itself—multiple blessings are said over the dress, the veil, the crown, and the ring. Only afterward does the girl put them on and lead the congregation in

various antiphons.⁷¹ Upon a close reading of the *Ordo Virtutum*, the reader notices that *Anima* has already been robed.

In fact, in the beginning of the play, *Anima* laments the “grievous toil [and] harsh weight” that she bears “in the dress of this life.” *Anima* is already clothed with a “dress” that she is tempted to take off, and *Scientia Dei* tells her to look at the dress she is wearing to help her remain steadfast;⁷² considering that any reference to robes and dresses probably does relate back to the original liturgy in which the maiden is robed, the “dress” that *Anima* already wears is most likely that of a nun. *Anima*, in addition to representing a sort of Every soul, is a nun, not a girl becoming a nun. Unless the *Ordo Virtutum* can be seen as a sort of ultimately hopeful cautionary tale as a prelude to the *ordo*, the adventures of *Anima* and the Virtues can best be seen as a sequel to the initial consecration. This understanding completely undermines Sheingorn’s argument—either the *Ordo Virtutum* and the *ordo consecratio sacrae virginis* are two separate though related works, or her performance scenario is incorrect and the *Ordo Virtutum* could only be staged *after* the *ordo* for any kind of sequential “wholeness” to make sense.

As a performance theory, Sheingorn’s hypothesis is compelling: there are very striking similarities between the two works, and it would make sense for the *Ordo Virtutum* to be staged directly before the *ordo* not, perhaps, as a single text, but as a single community event. When Sheingorn attempts to make the argument that the ceremony completes the action of the *Ordo Virtutum*, however, she makes an argument about the text of the *Ordo Virtutum* that is found wanting and that is unnecessary for her otherwise quite convincing theory about when the play could have been performed. When one tries to eliminate the differences between the two texts in order to make a connection between them, one misses the richness of both, and particularly that of Hildegard’s innovative musical,

⁷¹ Cyrille Vogel, *Le Pontifical Romano-Germanique Du Dixième Siècle* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1963), 44.

⁷² Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 163.

dramatic, and theological work. One perceives in the *Ordo Virtutum* a many-layered meditation on the significance of a religious life, of a woman's life, of the Church's life, and of a human soul's life, all centered around echoes and re-echoes of the liturgy that shaped Hildegard's community and Hildegard herself. While it is reasonable and interesting to speculate that the performance of the *Ordo Virtutum* and the ceremony of the consecration of holy virgins may have coincided, or even that the *Ordo Virtutum* could have been composed for such an occasion, the interaction between the *Ordo Virtutum* and the text that inspired it is even more intriguing. As two separate yet related texts, the *Ordo Virtutum* can be seen not only as a preparation for, or participation in, a specific liturgical ceremony, but also as a legitimate commentary on the *ordo consecration sacrae virginis* itself.

IV. The *Ordo Virtutum* as a Liturgical Commentary: Proposal

The tradition of liturgical commentary, a well-known branch of Christian theology since the Patristic period that elucidated the symbolic meaning of ritual actions for the spiritual benefit of priests and readers, underwent an interesting shift in style during the twelfth century before a more identifiably scholastic style of liturgical commentary became consolidated in the thirteenth. Liturgical commentaries became more inventive in their execution, and there are recognized examples of such commentaries that venture beyond an expository format. For example, the *Seal of Blessed Mary* by Honorius Augustodunensis, written probably by 1103,⁷³ while technically an example of a commentary on Song of Songs and not a specific mass from the liturgy, marks a departure from purely expository commentary in that Honorius deliberately manipulates and reframes this poem as a dialogue between Mary and Christ before commenting upon his arrangement. Not only is this treatment notable in the history of Marian theology,⁷⁴ but it is also important to note for the purpose of trends in the writing of commentary on scripture and liturgy that Honorius takes a deliberate, artistic liberty with a sacred text for the sake of

⁷³ Honorius Augustodunensis, *The Seal of Blessed Mary*, trans. Amelia Carr (Toronto: Peregrina Publishing Co., 1991), 13.

⁷⁴ Honorius Augustodunensis, 18.

instruction, almost dramatizing what was originally a written poem. Although by no means a fully realized work of drama or a commentary indirect in its allusions, this work does suggest that it is not unreasonable to assume that commentary could be done in such a way at this time.

One may question, however, to what extent Hildegard would have had access to the text of the liturgy—that is, beyond the actual performances of the *ordo* whenever a new nun joined her fold—and to what extent she would have had the education to comprehend it, as standards for the education of female religious have never been known to enjoy full parity with those of their brethren. In the area in which Hildegard was born and raised, however, there was a rich and well-documented tradition of rigorous scribal education; Disibodenberg, where she spent the formative years of her life before becoming *magistra* at Rupertsberg, has been identified with the Hirsau reform movement⁷⁵ which, like many other twelfth-century reform movements, called for a strict observance of the Benedictine Rule while also resisting outside authority and interference.⁷⁶ The association with this movement may explain the great deal of freedom Hildegard was able to exercise in running her community and staging dramatic productions.

Although women were “generally excluded from the discourse of eleventh-century papal reform,” as Alison Beach writes in a recent study on female book production in twelfth-century Bavaria, many women worked “as scribes, helping to copy biblical and liturgical texts, patristic sermons and commentaries, saints’ lives, histories, grammars, and canon law texts.” Nowhere was this sort of activity as encouraged as in the monasteries affiliated with Hirsau.⁷⁷ The longstanding debate in Hildegardian studies over the extent to which Hildegard wrote her own works and to what extent her scribes influenced the style of her prose, a debate too broad to engage here, remains unresolved; however,

⁷⁵ Barbara Newman, “‘Sybil of the Rhine’: Hildegard’s Life and Times,” in Barbara Newman, ed., *Voice of the Living Light: Hildegard and Her World* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 6.

⁷⁶ Alison I. Beach, *Women as Scribes: Book Production and Monastic Reform in Twelfth-Century Bavaria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 26.

⁷⁷ Beach, 30.

there is a broad consensus that Hildegard did have some education, and, if she did, it would, considering Beach's research on Bavaria, have centered around the transmission of texts. Even before one considers the extent to which the liturgy and sacred texts affected any twelfth-century convent or monastery, one should note that these texts would have included liturgies and commentaries.

It is therefore reasonable to assume that Hildegard of Bingen would have been intimately familiar with the liturgy in a religious culture where "nearly all aspects of this life were informed by liturgy, that is, by church services, the sacraments, and other ritual actions."⁷⁸ Furthermore, the majority of artwork made and used in convents—"liturgical books, vestments for the celebration of Mass, altar hangings, liturgical implements, and much more – were required because of the liturgy."⁷⁹ As Barbara Newman writes in an essay about visionary and visual worlds of religious women, "nuns and their monastic brethren belonged to a Latin textual community grounded in Scripture, exegesis, and liturgy. This culture was textual to its core, in contrast to the fundamentally oral and performative culture of the aristocracy."⁸⁰ Every student of the Middle Ages quickly learns that the literature of this period is characterized by a high degree of intertextuality, and that most works of scholarship that flowered after the Gregorian reforms of the late eleventh century were commentaries, meditations, and variations on the foundational texts and themes of Christianity: Scripture, the Patristics, monastic Rules, and the liturgy. As Caroline Walker Bynum notes, making a broader point about the veracity of hagiographic accounts of female behavior in the Late Middle Ages, "the religious behavior we see in texts is of course mediated by texts and constructed by those who created the texts."⁸¹ To live, worship, and work in a

⁷⁸ Gisela Muschiol, "Time and Space: Liturgy and Rite in Female Monasteries of the Middle Ages," in Jeffrey Hamburger and Susan Marti, eds., *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 191.

⁷⁹ Muschiol, 191.

⁸⁰ Barbara Newman, "The Visionary Texts and Visual Worlds of Religious Women," in Jeffrey Hamburger and Susan Marti, eds., *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 151.

⁸¹ Caroline Walker Bynum, "Patterns of Female Piety in the Later Middle Ages," in Jeffrey Hamburger and Susan Marti, eds., *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 178.

cloistered religious community in the Middle Ages can be seen in itself to be an exercise in intertextuality and interdiscursivity, the nun an incarnate and conversant participant in the texts that ordered the religious universe of the twelfth century. Hildegard of Bingen's *oeuvre*, then, can be read as a collection of texts steeped in and imbricated with the Scripture and liturgy of her religion, a meditation on a meditation.

V. The *Ordo Virtutum* as a Liturgical Commentary: Analysis

The central event in the mass for the consecration of a holy virgin is when she receives the robe of a religious, or "takes the veil." In the liturgy for this rite, the robe of a nun is to be a "sign for the conservation of chastity," a promise of blessing and a challenge to the new nun to be worthy of it:

And as you bless all of your religious to yourself for everything pleasing, so also make this woman worthy of blessing, and here at hand, most merciful father, so that this wholesome garment of your aforementioned servant N. might be a covering, so that she might be made wealthy in this knowledge of devotion, in this beginning of sanctity, in this strong defense against all weapons of the enemy, so that, if she is chaste, she may receive the gift of the sixtieth fruit and, if a virgin, the hundredth wealth of gifts, in both parts remaining chaste.⁸²

In this invocation, there is a clear connection between chastity and the worthiness and success of the woman, symbolized by the garment she receives and dons before the end of the ceremony—blessing, in the form of "knowledge of devotion" and "the beginning of sanctity," "the gift of the sixtieth fruit, and if a virgin, the hundredth wealth of gifts" are all contingent on her remaining chaste. The robe itself represents promised divine protection of her chastity or maidenhood,⁸³ her future as an effective spiritual mediatrix of her community,⁸⁴ and also a source of moral strength and comfort.⁸⁵ The outfit of

⁸² Vogel, 40; passage translated by Kathleen Fung.

⁸³ "so that this wholesome garment...might be a covering"

⁸⁴ Earlier in this prayer, the bishop would call for blessing of her robe "as you poured forth a prayer for the clothing of Aaron, a blessing of ointment flowing from the head into the beard," thus identifying the robe of a female religious with the priestly caste of ancient Israel – and her own time period.

⁸⁵ "strong defense against all weapons of the enemy, so that...she may receive the gift of the sixtieth fruit and, if a virgin, the hundredth wealth of gifts."

the nun, given to her by the bishop, is therefore a fully developed metaphor and external sign of her future life of pious devotion.

Later in the *ordo* the promise of support and solace represented by the robe is even further elaborated and complicated. When the bishop prays for the actual consecration of the woman, he pleads:

Let there be in her, Lord, through the gift of your holy spirit, sensible modesty, wise kindness, serious mildness, chaste liberty; let her be fervent in charity and delight in nothing outside of you, let her live in a praiseworthy manner and desire not to be praised. Let her glorify you in the sanctity of her body and glorify you in the purity of her soul, let her fear you in love and serve you in love. For to you is the honor, to you the glory, to you the will, in you is the solace of grief, in you is the ambiguity of advice, in you is the defense from injury, patience from tribulation, abundance from poverty, bread from fasting, medicine from illness. In you she shall have everything, which she longs to enjoy above all and which she is sworn to guard.⁸⁶

The tension in this passage is intriguing and also rather fraught. Through the pervasive pairing of opposites in this mixed blessing, the text of the liturgy points to a sharp divide between the promises of God and the harsh reality of earthly life and how her life is to be the site of both, summarized in the idea that she is to “have everything” in God, including a participation in the divine nature made possible by her continued chastity. The positive and gentle gifts of modesty, kindness, mildness, and liberty are qualified by restrictive and weighty commands to be also sensible, wise, serious, and chaste. And although she may expect to encounter grief, ambiguity, injury, tribulation, poverty, fasting, and illness, God will give her respite—if she proves her love through her continued sexual purity. While practicing this severe gentleness, dismissing hardship in favor of invisible, celestial aid, she is to “live in a praiseworthy manner and desire not to be praised.” The holy virgin must balance the joyful and painful aspects of the Christian life within her own character, reconcile the disparity between her lived experience in a convent and the spiritual realm in which she is wed to an invisible Lord, and do so without desiring recognition for this ethical and metaphysical feat.

⁸⁶ Vogel, 43.

Even accounting for the complexity of the liturgical vision of the life of a female religious, there is a clear logic to the message the bishop is imparting to the nun and to the community gathered to witness her consecration. When the nun takes the robe, the veil, and the crown, the sartorial sign of her new status and role in life, she does so as an affirmation of her present and eternal commitment to chastity, a goal blessed by God and the Church, and that in return she will be richly blessed with a wide range of virtues, consolations, and responsibilities despite any suffering she may encounter throughout life. When we look at the text of the liturgy, we see that chastity is paramount: chastity is the highest gift, the greatest reward, and the greatest honor and protection a woman of God can receive or bestow, and it is the ultimate source of a woman's spiritual authority. When we turn to the text of the *Ordo Virtutum*, we find an intricately woven commentary that modifies this logic and what it meant not only for the life of the female religious, but also what it meant for the congregation from which she had been set apart.

Anima, the protagonist of the *Ordo Virtutum*, initiates the action of the drama with a reflection on her "robe" that appears confusing and contradictory. After the Patriarchs praise the Virtues, and the embodied Souls lament their fallen state, *Anima* sings her first lines:

Anima (happily):
 O sweet divinity, oh gentle life,
 in which I shall wear a radiant robe [*vestem*],
 receiving that which I lost in my first manifestation –
 I sigh for you, and invoke all the Virtues.⁸⁷

The longing for the "radiant robe" seems anticipatory, the true solace for some mysterious loss, perhaps for having "fallen into the shadow of sins" like the embodied Souls.⁸⁸ The Virtues arrive to greet and praise her, and she is happy to see them. Then, however, the Virtues sing the following line: "We must

⁸⁷ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 161.

⁸⁸ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 161.

fight together with you, royal daughter.”⁸⁹ In response to this invitation, *Anima* becomes deeply distressed.⁹⁰

Anima, depressed, laments:
 Oh grievous toil, oh harsh weight
 that I bear in the dress of this life:
 it is too grievous for me to fight against my body.⁹¹

The meaning of this statement is unclear. The same Latin word, *vestem*, is used to speak of the “radiant robe” she *shall* wear and the “dress of this life” that she can no longer bear all within the space of ten lines. While the interpretation that the “radiant robe” is the veil of a nun in contrast to the “dress” of the body immediately presents itself, the next twenty lines make it clear that *Anima* already wears the robe of a nun, or a robe of some kind that should inspire obedience to God and the Virtues, and that it is a robe that she is attempting to “complete”: that is, a robe that symbolizes an ongoing role she is bound to fulfill.⁹² How, then, does *Anima* long for something she already has, yet casts aside so quickly? We could speculate that we are perhaps missing some crucial stage direction, an interlude during which *Anima* puts on the “radiant robe” and then has a change of heart, or that Hildegard was taking advantage of some contemporary dramatic convention that her audience would have immediately understood, or even that Hildegard made a continuity error in an excess of poetic enthusiasm. If we take this contradiction at face value, however, we are confronted again with *Anima*’s paradox: how can one desire something one already has, especially if what one desires is chastity? Moreover, what about this situation inspires such defeat, despair, and ultimately defection in favor of *Diabolus*’ enticement: “What use to you is toiling foolishly, foolishly? Look to the world: it will embrace you with great honour”?⁹³

⁸⁹ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 163.

⁹⁰ The English translation does not clearly show that *Anima*’s sudden depression is a result of the Virtues’ previous line. In the Latin text, however, their line, “Nos debemus militare tecum, o filia regis,” directly precedes the stage direction, “Sed, gravata, *Anima* conqueritur,” [Emphasis on “Sed” mine] showing a causal relationship between the Virtues’ call to arms and *Anima*’s abrupt change in mood.

⁹¹ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 163.

⁹² Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 163.

⁹³ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 165.

Considering that the most obvious meaning of the object of *Anima's* desire for the “radiant robe” or *vestem* is the monastic habit that represents a nun’s chastity, the “beginning of sanctity,”⁹⁴ and that *Diabolus's* temptations are carnal in nature,⁹⁵ we must pay great attention to how Hildegard is saying what she is saying about this central image and metaphor of a nun’s ritual performance of religious life.

In the liturgical *ordo*, the logic that governs the rewards of chastity consecrated to God is linear; in the *Ordo Virtutum*, the logic is circuitous. As far as the Mainz Pontifical is concerned, a chaste woman, remaining chaste, may dedicate herself to God and be guaranteed blessing. In the *Ordo Virtutum*, the ideal of chastity through dedication to God is first seen as the one quality that will redeem *Anima's* original sins, whatever they are. The performance of this highest virtue and dedication—that is, non-performance of sexual acts—sends *Anima* into an endless feedback loop in which ambitious piety gives way to rebellious discouragement, neither of which provide her true comfort or support; for example, when *Scientia Dei* tries to tell her that she already wears the dress of a virgin of God as “a daughter of *salvation*” (emphasis mine), *Anima* retorts by saying that she cannot *complete* the dress, missing *Scientia Dei's* point entirely, which the Virtue notes by saying, “You do not know or see or taste the One who has set you here.”⁹⁶ At this point, *Anima*, though fretful, remains chaste, yet chastity is not enough—fulfilling her role as a holy virgin does not protect her from *Diabolus's* snares, as the blessing given by the bishop suggested it would, and the *Every soul* joins the Devil.

If the protection of chastity, the performance of an inaction, is not enough to safeguard a nun from perdition, then what is? *Castitas* is actually one of the more prominent characters in the *Ordo Virtutum*: once *Anima* returns to the Virtues, battered by her adventures in some sort of worldliness, it

⁹⁴ Vogel, 40.

⁹⁵ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 165: The Virtues sing, “Ah, a certain wondrous victory already rose in that Soul, in her wondrous longing for God, in which a sensual delight was secretly hidden, alas, where previously the will had known no guilt and the desire fled man’s wantonness.”

⁹⁶ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 163.

is *Castitas* who deals the final blow to *Diabolus* after *Victoria* ties him down.⁹⁷ She claims this honor by virtue of her nurturing a “sweet miracle” “in a virgin form” – that is, giving birth to Christ – despite *Diabolus*’s taunts that she is somehow incomplete because she has never joined in “the sweet act of love” with a man.⁹⁸ Although *Castitas* plays an important role in the climax of the drama, the most important Virtue is *Humilitas: gloriosa regina, suavissima mediatrix,⁹⁹ vera medicina.¹⁰⁰* The focus of *Anima*’s redemption, and the mechanism which it follows, are therefore radically de-centered from the virtue of chastity to a different character trait entirely: humility.

Queen Humility, in the end, is Hildegard’s comment on the paradox and contradictions of a nun’s life inherent in the liturgy that created it, desiring that which one should already have: not a *quid pro quo* relationship with God based on chastity, but an endless, honest return to God with the wounds that we have received throughout our life, obedient or disobedient. In a very real way, *Anima* is not “better” or more holy at the end of the play than she was at the beginning; she begins by lamenting her loss and seeking a remedy, and she ends scarred and broken “in many vices” through her pride, begging *Humilitas* to rescue her. *Humilitas* replies:

All you Virtues, lift up this mournful sinner,
with all her scars, for the sake of Christ’s wounds,
and bring her to me.¹⁰¹

Anima is redeemed not because of the “robe” she wears or casts off, but because of Christ’s sacrifice. The finale of the *Ordo Virtutum* affirms that the currency of salvation and blessing is not purity but grace, and turns from the tensions and difficulties of a strictly religious life to address the whole community, as the Virtues, *Anima*, and embodied Souls come together and sing as Christ, then as themselves:

⁹⁷ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 179.

⁹⁸ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 179.

⁹⁹ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 164.

¹⁰⁰ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays.*, 174. In English: “Humility: glorious queen, sweetest mediator, true remedy.”

¹⁰¹ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 175.

“Now remember that the fullness which was made in the beginning
 need not have grown dry,
 and that then you resolved
 that your eye would never fail
 until you saw my body full of jewels.
 For it wearies me that all my limbs are exposed to mockery:
 Father, behold, I am showing you my wounds.”
 So now, all you people,
 bend your knees to the Father,
 that he may reach you his hand.¹⁰²

The Virtues and the pious life they represent are not irrelevant to the soul’s restoration; as they declare in their first aria, “we shine with [the Word of God], building up the limbs of his beautiful body.”¹⁰³ Chastity, humility, and the other virtues of the religious life do not, in this specific presentation of Hildegard’s vision, set the monastic spiritually and physically apart from the human race as the text of the liturgy suggests; the Virtues and those who entrust themselves to the care of the God in whom the Virtues have such vibrant personification to begin with are the true faithful, the true religious, regardless of their position in society or level of purity, including, in Hildegard’s vision, *omnes homines*.¹⁰⁴

Conclusion: Some Suggestions for Further Research and Study

Hildegard’s commentary on the liturgy particular to her way of life opens a specific, complex rite to a more general interpretation and application for her community, as all effective commentaries do. And while her method and execution are extraordinary, confusing at times to the modern reader and perhaps even to the contemporary audience member, her work is not one of isolated genius or visionary uniqueness, but rather one deeply rooted in and indebted to the texts that were so important to her life and the lives of other medieval German Christians in the twelfth century. These texts were undergoing rapid reinterpretation as the scholastic school of liturgical commentary solidified and expanded and lay

¹⁰² Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 181.

¹⁰³ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 161.

¹⁰⁴ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 180. It would be profitable to pursue reverberations of this reading of Hildegard’s philosophy in the *Ordo Virtutum* in Hildegard’s other works; however, space does not permit a full treatment or consideration of this question.

and religious piety became increasingly focused on the humanity and physical body of Christ.¹⁰⁵ Placing Hildegard in dialogue and opposition to contemporary texts opens her work to an even broader range of interpretive richness, and to a reexamination and exploration of her significance in the intellectual “renaissance” of the twelfth century.

Further study of the rest of her work, particularly visionary works such as *Scivias*, may reveal a further elaboration not only of the all-inclusive theology of the *Ordo Virtutum*, but also a further debt to the liturgical texts that shaped the devotional life of her community. It is exactly this sort of thorough comparative analysis of texts related to and alluded to in her works, which may and almost certainly do go beyond the text of the liturgy, that may assist Hildegardian scholars in their efforts to fully contextualize Hildegard in her twelfth-century milieu. Barbara Stuhlmeyer, a German scholar, has already begun to apply this comparative and contextualizing model in her musicological studies of Hildegard’s other songs, work currently only available in German. However, as Honey Meconi stated in a review of Stuhlmeyer’s 2003 book in *Early Music*:

"Dispelling the notion that there is nothing with which to compare Hildegard’s compositions, Stuhlmeyer draws mostly on her own discoveries to discuss three offices (the Liudger Office from the Benedictine Monastery of Essen-Werden, the Willehad Office from Bremen Cathedral, and the Ursula Office from the Civitatense Antiphoner) as well as works by Hildegard’s close contemporary, Peter Abelard. She concludes that Hildegard’s style, though individualistic, is compatible in many respects with 12th-century compositional practice and melodic structure."¹⁰⁶

More research and thought in English taking Stuhlmeyer’s approach, to which this essay is a small and slight contribution, could open up new, specific interpretative possibilities for the new generation of Hildegardian scholars who wish to appreciate Hildegard as an able contributor to the intellectual history of the twelfth century and situate her within its greater context. . Analyses centered and focused around

¹⁰⁵ Bynum in Hamburger and Marti, eds., *Crown and Veil, inter alia*.

¹⁰⁶ Without access to this particular issue of *Early Music*, I must direct the reader to the FAQ page of the International Society of Hildegard von Bingen Studies website: <http://www.hildegard-society.org/faq.html>.

formative texts in dialogue with the rest of Hildegard's *oeuvre* could do a great deal to ground her work in her own time: such detailed, carefully constructed arguments could and perhaps should frame any broader efforts, such as those made in the literature reviewed earlier in this essay, to place Hildegard in a vertical history such as the history of medieval drama or music or in a horizontal history that compares this *magistra* to a contemporary and correspondent such as, for example, Peter Abelard or Bernard of Clairvaux.

Such an approach would not only provide scholars of Hildegard with an exciting and fecund territory to explore, but would also have the added advantage, perhaps a chivalrous one, of considering Hildegard's texts as though they are thoroughly medieval texts, as deeply resonant in the careful glosses and allusive commentaries as those of her less striking contemporaries. To write such detailed comparisons, to even go so far as to write commentaries upon commentaries of liturgy—arguably the medieval Church's ultimate commentary on Christian life and doctrine—has the advantage, perhaps a poetic one, of engaging with the record of the past at an almost Augustinian level of sophistication. Such insight grants the historian not only a new skill with which to ply his or her craft, but also the gift of better understanding the texts she studies by participating in their full elucidation, much like the ritual, liturgically observant medieval women who embodied the paradox of faith, and the scribes and artists who are the true subjects of her inquiry, research, and imagination.

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Feeling and Belonging in the *Philoctetes*

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This paper explores the tension between openness to oneself and membership in ones community by assessing the disparate accounts of Philoctetes' abandonment on Lemnos provided by Odysseus and Philoctetes himself. This tension seems to surface not only in Sophocles' Philoctetes but throughout much of ancient Greek literature.

In Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, Odysseus's and Philoctetes' descriptions of Philoctetes' abandonment on Lemnos present two equally compelling yet conflicting accounts of a community's decision to cast aside one of its members. Philoctetes, representing the voice of the individual, emphatically asserts that the community has committed an act of violence by forsaking him. Odysseus, speaking on behalf of the community, contends unwaveringly that it has justly sacrificed Philoctetes in order to accomplish its goals. The perspectives these men articulate in their speeches seem inextricably linked with the attitudes they have toward themselves. In fact, by calling attention to the ways in which Odysseus and Philoctetes are respectively closed and open to their own empathic feelings, Sophocles vividly illustrates that one's place in the community is not able to be separated from openness to one's emotions.

The first goal of Odysseus's account is to definitively locate both himself and Neoptolemus within the social order. After introducing Neoptolemus as "κρατίστου πατρὸς Ἑλλήνων τραφεὶς Ἀχιλλέως παῖ Νεοπτόλεμε," the son of the most powerful man of the Greeks, he explains that he left Philoctetes behind on Lemnos only because "ταχθεὶς τὸδ' ἔρδειν τῶν ἀνασσόντων ὕπο," he was commanded to do so by the ruling men. Here he makes a point to identify himself as a cooperative member of the social and military system: it was not his own interests, but the interests of the community, that compelled him to act. At the same time, therefore, he removes himself from the

emotional responsibility—and all of its accompanying feelings—that the decision to abandon Philoctetes created for him. It is, perhaps, also noteworthy that the description of a communal order follows one of a depressingly isolated Lemnos (“βροτοῖς ἄστιπτος οὐδ’ οἰκουμένη”); through this contrast Odysseus both identifies with and glorifies the centrality of the Greek social order to which he belongs. Philoctetes is much less eager to identify himself—and Neoptolemus—in the same terms; that is, primarily as a member of the same social order. He calls Neoptolemus simply “ὦ παῖ πατρός ἐξ Ἀχιλλέως,” leaving out the glorification present in Odysseus’s account (“κρατίστου πατρός Ἑλλήνων”). When he introduces himself to Neoptolemus, he protests the notion that one’s position within that order is so essential, remarking almost haphazardly, “κλύεις ἴσως τῶν Ἡρακλείων ὄντα δεσπότην ὄπλων.” While this matter is of utmost important to Odysseus, it does not seem to carry the same importance to Philoctetes.

Odysseus’s continued efforts to identify with the larger social order depict him as an apathetic, hard-hearted individual. He explains unapologetically that he had to place Philoctetes “ἐξέθηκ” (*outside*), a word that concretely establishes social order as an exclusive entity while affirming that Odysseus belongs within that entity. Odysseus then paints a particularly grotesque picture of Philoctetes’ snake bite, remarking, “νόσω καταστάζοντα διαβόρω πόδα,” that Philoctetes was dripping with respect to his foot with a devouring illness. Not only is Odysseus’s account here void of any sympathy for Philoctetes, but he also seems to be faulting his fellow comrade for having such an offensive wound. He similarly reports:

ὄτ’ οὔτε λοιβῆς ἡμῖν οὔτε θυμάτων
παρῆν ἐκήλοις προσθιγεῖν, ἀλλ’ ἀγρίαις
κατεῖχ’ ἀεὶ πᾶν στρατόπεδον δυσφημίαις,
βοῶν, στενάζων.

(Sophocles 8-11)

Only to the most stoic would the ability of the community to perform its routines (“λοιβῆς, θυμάτων”) in peace unquestionably trump the life of a fellow comrade. His depiction of Philoctetes as being savage (“ἀγρίαις δυσφημίαις”), without having expressed any understanding of the agony causing his wild

shouts, is equally as callous. It is, therefore, only possible for Odysseus to align himself so precisely with the values of the community by closing himself off to his own feelings of responsibility for Philoctetes. The use of the verb “προσθιγεῖν” emphasizes the misplaced quality of Odysseus’s priorities here—it is Philoctetes’ wound, not the sacrifices and the libations, which require tending to and touching.

In his description of the same event, Philoctetes uses dramatic language full of the painful feeling that is missing in Odysseus’s account. Standing apart from the community that has deserted him, he hides no part of his feeling:

οἱ δισοοὶ στρατηγοὶ χῶ Κεφαλλήνων ἄναξ
 ἔρριψαν αἰσχροῦς ὦδ’ ἔρημον, ἀγρία
 νόσω καταφθίνοντα, τῆς ἀνδροφθόρου
 πληγέντ’ ἐχίδνης ἀγρίῳ χαράγματι

(Sophocles 264-268)

Where Odysseus explains that Philoctetes had to be placed *outside* (“ἐξέθηκ”), Philoctetes asserts that the two generals and the ruler of the Kephallonians cast him out (“ἔρριψαν”) shamefully (“αἰσχροῦς”) into a state of desertion (“ὦδ’ ἔρημον”); since that time he has wasted away (“καταφθίνοντα”) with only his savage illness (“ἀγρία νόσω”) to keep him company. His language places particular emphasis on the ways in which he has been isolated and set aside from the social order, appealing to the humanity of the audience, and to that of Neoptolemus, to understand and empathize with his suffering. In keeping with this notion, the verb “φθίω”—used frequently in reference to plants and other vegetation—suggests that human life, just like plant life, must be tended to in order to thrive. Therefore, as Philoctetes stands apart from the social system that has wronged him, he acknowledges the necessity of, and longs for, an empathic community to support his well-being.

It is fitting, then, that Philoctetes continues his account by describing the sadism of the men who were not simply blind, but actively delighted in their decision to abandon him:

τότ’ ἄσμενοί μ’ ὡς εἶδον ἐκ πολλοῦ σάλου
 εὐδοντ’ ἐπ’ ἀκτῆς ἐν κατηρεφεῖ πέτρῳ,
 λιπόντες ὄχρονθ’, οἷα φωτὶ δυσμόρῳ

ράκη προθέντες βαιὰ καὶ τι καὶ βορᾶς
ἐπωφέλημα σμικρόν, οἷ' αὐτοῖς τύχοι.

(Sophocles 271-275)

One striking component of this description is the marked distance that these men maintain from the ostracized Philoctetes. Using two different verbs, Philoctetes emphasizes their leaving (“λιπόντες”) and going away (“ῥχονθ”), not having interacted with him but having simply seen (“εἶδον”) him. They place forward (“προθέντες”)—again, refusing to involve themselves—a rag and a small share of food as fit for a beggar (dative of advantage, “οἷα φωτὶ δυσμόρῳ”). Their physical distance from Philoctetes is imitative of the emotional distance that Odysseus creates in his account of the event. At the same time, the audience is meant to feel as close to Philoctetes as ever in the face of the sadism of the community that is glad (“ἄσμενοί”) to have coldly ostracized one of its members.

There is little doubt that the humanity of Philoctetes is meant to be more honest and relatable than the hard-heartedness of Odysseus and his military comrades. There is, however, something futile, if not misguided, about Philoctetes’ refusal to move beyond the injury that the community has caused him. A closer examination of Philoctetes’ language suggests that the men who abandoned him were not solely responsible for the distance that existed between them—he, too, contributed to such a distance. To Philoctetes, these men have lost their own faces, their individuality: they have become one collective entity with one feeling (“ἄσμενοί”). “οἷ' αὐτοῖς τύχοι,” the embittered Philoctetes asserts, wishing that the same circumstances could befall them. With such an attitude, Philoctetes might forever be sleeping on the shore inside his shelter alone, “ἐν κατηρεφεῖ πέτρῳ.” A central quandary of the *Philoctetes*, therefore, is whether it is possible to be open to oneself and to belong to a community at the same time: to find a middle ground between, on the one hand, Odysseus, and on the other, Philoctetes.

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Aeneas's Labyrinth and the Fall of Troy

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This paper explores the use of the Labyrinth image in Aeneid 2. It identifies the latent labyrinth image and proceeds to draw comparisons between the latent labyrinth in Aeneid 2 and the more explicit labyrinth of Aeneid 6. It then goes on to show how Vergil uses this image and its implications to efface his own narrative voice in Aeneid 2 and replaces it with Aeneas' own. Thus Aeneas has as much authority in the narrative as does the poet himself.

Aeneas remembers the fall of Troy in Book 2 of the *Aeneid*. Harmless as this statement might seem, there is more to it than might be noticed at first glance. Not only does Aeneas *remember* the fall of Troy, he does so from a couch. The psychoanalytic connotations of this image in our day are perhaps anachronistic, but they are not inappropriate. Aeneas' retelling of the fall of Troy is a form of therapy. Aeneas *re-members* the fall of Troy, that is, he rebuilds it, he creates. Vergil forces his readers to ask the question *Just whose poem* is Book 2? I argue that Book 2 is Aeneas' poem as much as it is Vergil's, and that Vergil himself signals this by building a particular image into the poem which speaks to the relationship between the artist and his creation. This image is the labyrinth. The labyrinth and its connotations undergird much of Book 2, but not explicitly. Yet there is no dearth of evidence for its existence. Furthermore, connections with the Daedalus doors in Book 6 (lines 14-33) will also support the underlying structure of the labyrinth image in Book 2. Finally, I will show how Vergil uses the labyrinth to efface his own presence and to share interpretive authority with Aeneas.

I

First, a technical detail should be taken care of in order to ensure a smooth and understandable argument. My argument owes much to an article written by Paul Allen Miller entitled: *The Minotaur*

within: Fire, the Labyrinth, and Strategies of Containment in Aeneid 5 and 6. Miller's analysis of Vergil's use of fire and the labyrinth as symbols for passion and the containment thereof has allowed me to draw many connections of my own to Book 2. While Miller sees the labyrinth symbol in a few passages in Book 5 and the famed Daedalus passage in Book 6, I expand the symbol and apply it to almost all of Book 2. I will begin by defining or at least denoting my expansion of the labyrinth motif. Thereafter I will proceed to show how Book 2 is as much Aeneas' own poem as it is the poet's.

Miller aligns the labyrinth with a Lacanian model. He begins by calling attention to the difference between Lacan's conception of "the symbolic" and "the imaginary", the symbolic referring to "the socially sanctioned realm of law and literature" (Miller 233) and the imaginary referring to "that initial coming to consciousness of the child that occurs before its wishes and desires are controlled and mediated by the social world around it" (Miller 233-234). Thus the "symbolic" is constructed consciousness and the "imaginary" is unconstructed or chaotic consciousness. Miller goes on to associate the symbolic with ancient conceptions of masculinity and the imaginary with ancient conceptions of femininity. This point bears only marginally on my argument. What is more important is that the symbolic can be seen as the frame of mind of an artist. From there it is not difficult to make the logical step of associating the symbolic with poetry in general.

Of the labyrinth itself Miller writes, "From this point of view, the labyrinth would be analogous to the symbolic itself, the social realm of language and ideology whose role is to subsume and contain the monsters of the imaginary. The labyrinth as the symbolic functions as a mechanism of repression, which makes a controlled, socially sanctioned desire possible." (Miller 234). Obviously this holds great relevance to the Daedalus passage in Book 6 since the labyrinth is a creation, which in turn speaks to the very nature of the *Aeneid* itself. In any case, it is clear that the labyrinth as a symbol is closely related to the suppression of monstrous desire.

But the labyrinth image is not just a symbol of repression. It is also a kind of underworld. Numerous scholars (William Fitzgerald, Michael Putnam, et al.) writing about connections between the story of Daedalus and Aeneas have compared the labyrinth with the underworld. Indeed, Brooks Otis states bluntly "It seems plain that the labyrinth in some sense symbolizes the underworld, the Kingdom of the Dead" (Otis 284). Both structures are underground, and both house monsters such as Cerberus or the Minotaur. Moreover both of them are extremely difficult to escape. As the sibyl tells Aeneas, the underworld is easy to enter, but to exit: "hoc opus, hic labor est" (6.129). The difficulty of escaping the labyrinth is shown by the fact that the only person who can solve it is the great artist himself. So the labyrinth is associated with the underworld and all that the underworld connotes. They are both places of darkness and danger. And they both bewilder and entrap hapless adventurers. The image of the labyrinth/underworld is essential because Aeneas recounts the fall of Troy with this image as the dominating figure.

II

Book 2 begins "Conticuere omnes intentique ora tenebant/ Inde toro pater Aeneas sic orsus ab alto" (2.1-2). Thus the first thing the reader/listener learns is that Aeneas is taking over the function of narrator. This substitution is immediate cause for suspicion. The narrator has an interest in casting himself in a good light with his story—thus he is on the defensive. As W.R. Johnson writes, "Vergil's narrator forces his surrogate narrator to reveal himself...He must tell more, reveal more, about his fears and hopes, than he wishes to reveal, lay bare the dark corners of his mind, where, unconsciously, his dreamwork has caused his fears and his self hatred to manifest themselves in the uncanny and recurrent symbols that various critics have detected in Book 2" (Johnson 53). Aeneas has an interest in presenting himself to Dido as one who was not a coward, but rather a hero in defeat. It is remarkable to the modern reader that he reaches deep within his own soul to remember the fall of his home city.

The first product of Aeneas' recital is his version of the wooden horse story. The horse itself is described in terms that make it seem as if the Trojan horse is a little labyrinth. From the beginning, it is clear that the Greeks *construct* the horse, making it symbolic. Then follows the description of its engorgement "delecta virum sortiti corpora furtim/ includunt caeco lateri penitusque cavernas/ ingentis uterumque armato milite complent" (2. 18-20). In his definition of the labyrinth, Miller says "It simultaneously holds within itself that which it is dangerous to let out, and keeps out those who would try to probe too deeply within and fall prey to monsters better left undisturbed" (Miller 234). The Greeks inside the horse are certainly too dangerous to let out, and they are simultaneously concealed and (despite Laocoon's virile projectile) shielded within. Furthermore the horse, like all symbols, requires interpretation. Sinon (once again, in spite of the ardent Laocoon) persuades the Trojans to accept *his* interpretation, which is of course (much like the hallways of a maze) misleading. And so it goes until the Trojans, wrapped up in the winding passages of Sinon's lies, bring the horse into the city. With each misinterpretation (e.g., Sinon, Laocoon's death) or error in judgement (the horse itself, the hesitation of the horse before it enters) they make, they enter further and further into the labyrinth symbolized by the interior of the horse.

When night falls, so does Troy—but the Labyrinth rises. Vergil writes "Vertitur interea caelum et ruit Oceano nox/ involvens umbra magna terramque polumque/ Myrmidonumque dolos; fusi per moenia Teucric/conticuere sopor fessos complectitur artus" (2. 250-254). Night rushes from the ocean, as do the Myrmidonic tricks, and sleep *embraces* their limbs. As R.G. Austin comments "Night seems almost to take a personal interest in the Greeks, whose craft she must conceal as she carries out her normal enveloping function" (Austin 117). The Trojans are enfolded in the labyrinth now. Bernard Knox has famously described the Trojan horse as a form of the serpent image, which "strikes from concealment, as the Greeks did from the horse" (Knox 380). But it's not just an ordinary concealment from which the Greeks strike. They strike at *night*. It is almost as if the darkness which masked the

Greeks inside the horse has now proceeded from the horse and hides them in the city as well. Indeed, Vergil writes “*Illos patefactus ad auras/reddidit equus laetique caverna robore promunt*” (2.259-260). Austin notes that “the dactylic rhythm and the faintness of the pause at the fourth-foot caesura...combine to give an effect of speed” (Austin 121), so that the Greeks seem to rush out of the horse, even as night rushes from the Ocean.. They emerge (lit: bring themselves forth) under the cover of the night, which will serve as their labyrinth.

Back in line 250 the heavens are literally turned. Now the labyrinth, the underground lair in which the serpent writhes, has turned over as well and has come forth among the buildings of Troy. This labyrinth/underworld both figuratively and literally appears in the form of dreams. During the fall of Troy Aeneas is visited by both Hector and Creusa. Hector is a ghastly vision, carrying wounds, his beard caked with blood and his feet swollen, having been pierced by leather bonds. As the Poet says “*Quantum mutatus ab illo / Hectore qui redit exuvias indutus Achilli/ vel Danaum Phrygios iaculatus puppibus ignis*”(2.274-276). And Aeneas describes Creusa's shade as “*nota maior imago*” (2.773). Hector is a dream and Creusa is some sort of shade, but both are evidence of the land of the dead seeping into the land of the living. And both of these episodes anticipate Aeneas' ascent from the underworld through the gate of false dreams.

Further evidence for the confusion and chaos of this labyrinthine underworld can be found in Aeneas' actions and his narration. When he is about to waken Aeneas narrates “*Diverso interea miscentur moenia luctu*” (2.298). It is noteworthy that the very walls are mixed in this sentence, for these mixed up walls seem to have an effect on Aeneas later, when he is trying to flee the city with his family and loses his wife. Why does a man who has lived all his life in a particular city all of a sudden forget the layout of the streets? Why does Aeneas, even with “*confusam...mentem*” (2.736) forget where he is in this crucial moment and leave behind Creusa? In any case it is striking that the city should become so bewildering (despite the presence of the Greeks and the fire) and that the lands he has

walked throughout his whole life would become an unknown maze. This new enigma of a city also takes advantage of Aeneas' "confusam mentem" in other ways. During the fighting he dons Greek armor to attack the Greeks. But in doing so he plays the very trick which the Greeks have played on the Trojans "Vadimus immixti Danais" (2.396). Thus Aeneas' own identity is confused, lost among the twists and turns of the "caecam...noctem" (2.397). Thus night, the labyrinth, and the underworld are intertwined in Book 2.

But it is not satisfactory simply to point to all the labyrinth images in the Book 2 alone, especially since Daedalus' labyrinth plays such a large role in the beginning of Book 6. Investigations of the connections between the Daedalus passage and Book 2 yield promising results. George Duckworth points out the connection between the even numbered books of the *Aeneid* during a summary of Vergil's various rhetorical structures, saying that Vergil stresses "The alternation of the books, those with even numbers being of a more serious and tragic nature than those with odd numbers, which are lighter and serve to relieve the tension" (Duckworth 186). Thus Books 2 and 6 are linked by their gravitas. But they are also linked by the labyrinth.

These connections reverberate across the poem, from the fall of Troy to the Daedalus doors, and serve not only to create cohesiveness within the poem, but also to make a point about the poem as a whole. Daedalus' doors are the key to understanding Vergil's message in Book 2 and therefore, a short exposition which holds Book 2 in mind is necessary.

The passage containing the episode with the doors is only about 19 lines long (6.14-33), yet it echoes throughout the poem, as related scholarship echoes throughout history. Eleanor Winsor Leach points out that the authority of interpretation is uncertain in this passage: "We can see how an absence of narrative preparation makes the location of interpretive authority uncertain" (Leach 118). The power of interpretation (which bad narrators so often abuse) is abdicated in the Daedalus passage, or at the very least, obscured. As the narrator in this passage abandons its authority, so too does Vergil's narrator

abandon its authority in Book 2 by making Aeneas himself the narrator. Furthermore Leach states that this kind of uncertainty “sets up a tension between seeing and interpretation that may apply to other moments of the journey conveyed by reported description” (Leach 120). So in both Book 2 and Book 6 the narrative (or interpretive) authority is in question.

There are many points of comparison between Aeneas and Daedalus. The passage in Book 6 begins thus, “Daedalus, ut fama est, fugiens Minoia regna/ praepetibus pennis ausus se credere caelo/insuetum” (6.14-16). Both Aeneas and Daedalus are fleeing. While Aeneas flees the wreck of Troy, Daedalus flees the ancient Minoans. Both Aeneas and Daedalus dare to trust themselves to heaven. Although Daedalus literally flies, Aeneas (perhaps despite himself) chooses to trust himself to heaven by doing heaven’s bidding. And finally, “insuetum” is a perfect adjective to describe Daedalus and Aeneas together since Aeneas must seek a completely new homeland and Daedalus sought to fly, which was obviously an innovation. Further comparisons can also be made. One of these is the element of reversal in both stories. In the Daedalus passage, the great inventor “enavit” (6.16) through the air and dedicates the “remigium alarum” (6. 19) to Apollo. Thus Daedalus’ world has been turned inside out. He swims in the air, and rows with oars of wings. This is comparable to Aeneas’ escapade in Greek armor. In each case, the world is upside down, or inside out. The reverse of what is expected is what occurs. Another comparison is that in Book 6 the narrator calls the Minotaur “Veneris monimenta nefandae” (6.26) and at the beginning of Book 2 Aeneas calls his pain “infandum” (2.2). Thus the Minotaur and Aeneas’ anguish over the loss of his homeland is unspeakable. Yet in either case a traumatic and monstrous event has occurred which renders an unspeakable burden.

III

Thus far the connection between the image of the labyrinth and Book 2 has been firmly established, both in terms of an abstract analysis, and a more concrete comparison between the events

of Book 2 and the Daedalus doors. Now we will see how Vergil uses the labyrinth image to blur the bounds between his voice and Aeneas' voice in Book 2.

Recall that Eleanor Winsor Leach writes that the lack of narrative authority in the *ekphrasis* of the Daedalus doors "sets up a tension between seeing and interpretation that may apply to other moments of the journey conveyed by reported description" (Leach 120). This tension is not only present in the Daedalus ekphrasis, but is also present in Aeneas' narration in Book 2. Close examination of the proem in Book 1 and what is really the mini-proem of Book 2 shows that Vergil really intends for Book 2 to be poetry spoken from Aeneas' mouth as much as he intends that it should be spoken from his own.

The beginning of Book 2 refers back to the proem of Book 1. The most noticeable evidence for this is his diction at the beginning of Book 2. Aeneas will have to renew ("renovare") and to remember ("meminisse" lit: to have remembered) his pains for the narration, even as Vergil asks the muse to recall (memora) the reasons behind Juno's anger. In addition to this diction for memory Aeneas asks a single, sharp rhetorical question which resembles Vergil's "Tantaene animis caelestibus irae?" (1.11). Aeneas asks "Quis talia fando/ Myrmidonum Dolopumve aut duri miles Ulixi/ temperet a lacrimis?" (2.7). Finally Vergil calls Aeneas "Pater Aeneas" (2.2). *Why?* Aeneas has not yet succeeded at his task, nor has he reached Italy. What could be the reason for calling him "Pater" here? It is my suggestion that Aeneas is Pater, because in this passage he is also "Auctor" (which wouldn't have fit metrically as "pater" does). Thus Vergil makes Aeneas take his place as narrator, with the full authority of interpretation.

But what purpose does this serve? The answer lies in Book 2's mini-proem. Aeneas says "et jam nox umida caelo/praecipitat suadentque cadentia sidera somnos" (2.8-9). This sentence is more than just a beautiful way of referencing the time of day. It also calls up associations with the labyrinth motif. Aeneas is signaling to his audience that his account will be a creation, or a work of art. He will have to *re-member* the fall of Troy. Thus Vergil abdicates his authority in Book 2 in favor of Pater Aeneas, who

leads us back into the labyrinth of fallen Troy. Not only must Aeneas contain his passion within it, he must also conceal his passions inside it.

Thus the retelling of the fall of Troy is a kind of therapeutic act, in which Vergil wants Aeneas to speak himself. Aeneas will rebuild the maze of Troy, sharing interpretive authority with Vergil, and he will do so by using the labyrinth as an image of sublimated trauma. So Vergil's voice and Aeneas voice together are the thread which will lead us out of the maze into which we are cast by the mini-proem of Book 2. Aeneas' narration in Book 2 takes on greater significance as a cathartic performance, and Vergil effaces his own presence as narrator in order to give life and depth to his great Hero.

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The Change in Rite: From Inhumation to Cremation During the Greek Dark Ages

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This paper is a re-examination of the cause of the widespread change in burial rite from inhumation to cremation during the end of the Mycenaean culture. Cremation had previously been explained as a function of Anatolian influence. This paper seeks to explain why internal societal influence is a more likely explanation for the cremation phenomenon. By examining the arrangement of grave goods, the extent of cremation, and textual evidence, I argue that previous Mycenaean practices were responsible for the emergence of cremation.

The years between the end of Mycenaean culture and the beginning of Archaic Greek culture are notoriously fraught with uncertainty. Many histories of Greece focus on Mycenae and the rise of the Greek city state, but completely ignore the years between. The lack of permanent settlements and increased pastoral life during the Greek Dark Age¹ resulted in far less archaeological data than previous and subsequent eras. However, the data which does exist shows some continuity with previous Mycenaean culture. Some of the best evidence of the Submycenaean period² came from the graveyards in the Dark Age settlements. The breakdown of the culture and the subsequent redistribution of the Greek population led to a change in burial practice that had some commonalities with previous Mycenaean society.

Cremation burial began during the Submycenaean and became the accepted standard by 700 BCE.³ This shift is well attested and widespread, but the reasons for it are not entirely clear. During the

¹ The Greek Dark Age is comprised of a group of historical periods between the end of Mycenaean culture and the beginnings of Greek city states in the 9th century BCE. Roughly 1200-800 BCE. William R. Biers, *The Archaeology of Greece: An Introduction*, (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1987), 94.

² The Submycenaean period is a more specific period immediately following the breakdown of Mycenaean culture. Roughly 1100-1050 BCE. Mervyn R. Popham, *Lefkandi I: the Iron Age: the Settlement, the Cemeteries* (Athens: British School of Archaeology, 1979), xiii.

³ Ian Morris, *Burial and Ancient Society: the Rise of the Greek City-state* (Cambridgeshire: Cambridge UP, 1987), 21

early twentieth century the importance of the cremation shift was disregarded—folklorist John Lawson simply argued that the Greeks wanted the body to decay and that the method did not matter⁴. Since then, there has been interest in the change in funerary practice. Many theories have attempted to explain the sudden shift to an entirely new form of burial. The outdated arguments of archaeologists Anthony Snodgrass and Spyridon Iakovidis attempted to show the influence of Anatolian culture on Greek burial practice.⁵ Yet, they did not adequately demonstrate Anatolian influence on Attic⁶ society, nor did they effectively argue parallels between Euboean⁷, Chalcidian⁸, and Dodecanese⁹ cremation patterns.¹⁰ More recent arguments disputed their claims, and attempted to reexamine the issue of the cremation burial shift. One explanation of the impetus behind the sudden shift towards cremation burial was a change in ideology. Archaeologist Marina Thomatos speculated that “if one is to assume that some new ideology existed for the perception of the body, one may assume that this too was influenced from somewhere in the East.”¹¹ Yet, Thomatos, Iakovidis, and Snodgrass all ignored internal influence such as change in social stratification and previous Mycenaean rituals which may have influenced the seemingly newfound choice of cremation burial.

Thomatos disagreed with Iakovidis and continually asserted that the rite of cremation was not brought about by direct or indirect influence of a foreign group, although Thomatos did not offer a substantial explanation for the change.¹² Thomatos based his argument against Iakovidis on the strongly

⁴ John K. Papadopoulos, *The Early Iron Age Cemetery at Torone* (Los Angeles: UCLA, 2005), 393.

⁵ Cremations occurred in Anatolia prior to their appearance in Greek archaeological record. According to archaeologist Marina Thomatos, the instances of Anatolian cremations are an unlikely influence on Greek cremations occurring on the Peloponnese peninsula because of a lack of material linking Anatolia and Greece during the Dark Age. Marina Thomatos, *The Final Revival of the Aegean Bronze Age: a Case Study of the Argolid, Corinthia, Attica, Euboea, the Cyclades and the Dodecanese during LH IIIC Middle* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2006), 174

⁶ Attica is the region of Greece situated on the Attic peninsula.

⁷ Euboea is the second largest Greek island. It is located in the northern Aegean.

⁸ Chalcidia is a region in the northwest Aegean.

⁹ The Dodecanese islands are located in the southern Aegean.

¹⁰ Thomatos, 174.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 177.

¹² *Ibid.*.

Greek cultural foundation of the cemeteries excavated. In addition, Thomatos argued that Anatolia had little to no influence on the Argolid¹³ during this period.¹⁴ In his examination of the excavation of the cemetery at Torone¹⁵, archaeologist John Papadopoulos also disagreed with Iakovides. Iakovides argued that Euboea had cultural influence over Torone and came to the conclusion that there were parallels between the cremation styles in both locations. Yet, Papadopoulos stated that burial patterns at Torone did not resemble other Greek cemeteries such as Lefkandi or any known Euboean site.¹⁶ He argues against external influence and turns to Mycenaean civilization. Papadopoulos writes, "If anything, the closest parallels for the Torone cremations are the [...] Submycenaean tombs of Athens."¹⁷

The question remains as to why the Greeks adopted the rite of cremation. The process of cremation was in no way economically beneficial. Archaeologist Mike Parker Pearson reported that Bronze Age burials in the Scottish Isles required about a ton of dry wood to successfully cremate a corpse.¹⁸ While Pearson's figure is a liberal estimate, it is not unrealistic. 19th century coke-fired¹⁹ cremators required 500 kilograms of fuel to get up to working temperature and 250 kilograms for each subsequent cremation.²⁰ While coke-fired cremators operate differently from Greek pyres, they illustrate the amount of fuel needed for a far more efficient cremation process. The open air cremations of certain Hindu sects are a much closer analog for ancient cremations. An environmental non-governmental organization reports that 400-600 kg²¹ of wood is used for a modern open air cremation.²² Therefore an estimate of between half and a full ton of wood is an appropriate estimate for an ancient cremation.

¹³ The Argolis is a geographical region situated on the eastern part of the Peloponnese peninsula.

¹⁴ Thomatos, 174-177.

¹⁵ Torone is located in the central Macedonian region of Greece.

¹⁶ Papadopoulos, 394.

¹⁷ Ibid...

¹⁸ Mike Parker Pearson, *The Archaeology of Death and Burial*, (College Station: Texas A&M UP, 2001), 49.

¹⁹ Coke is a form of coal.

²⁰ Douglas J. Davies, "Cremators", (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), 146.

²¹ 40-60% of one ton.

²² Mahendra Gaur, *Indian Affairs Annual, 2006*, (Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2006), 30.

While there was some prosperity towards the end of Late Helladic IIIC period²³, the distribution of wealth during the Greek Dark Age “[spread] more widely, if more thinly, across the population base.²⁴” Based on evidence of many Dark Age graveyards, it is impossible to draw definitive connection between economic status and preference of cremation.²⁵ There was no economic impetus to choose cremation over inhumation, especially during the Dark Age. The amount of timber required would be an economic strain on all communities desiring to cremate any portion of their populace. Yet, restrictions on cremation only appeared when absolutely no timber was available. Moreover, the presence of timber itself was not necessarily a factor in the adoption of cremation. Greater Macedonia for example, was known for its desirable and copious supply of silver fir and pine trees, but practiced no cremation.²⁶

This shift in burial practice appeared most visibly in a few cemeteries in Greece. The cemeteries of Torone and Lefkandi provided ample evidence for the change in rite. These cemeteries all experienced a shift towards cremation which to some degree involved rites associated with inhumation burial. No known graveyard displays an exact chronology beginning with inhumation, followed by cremation burials treated similarly to inhumation, and ending with a pure form of cremation burial. Yet, each graveyard contains a general transition from inhumation to cremation burial with intermediate forms like a secondary cremation (Torone) or a cremation/simulacrum²⁷ burial (Lefkandi/Vergina/Assarlik).²⁸ While cremation did not become the dominant form of burial in each cemetery, after LHIIC²⁹ cremation became the normal form of interment.³⁰

²³ The Helladic periods refer to the chronology of Mycenaean culture. The Late Helladic IIIC period immediately precedes the Dark Ages. 1190-1050 BCE. Biers, 60.

²⁴ Thomatos, 177.

²⁵ Papadopoulos, 397.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 394.

²⁷ A simulacrum burial contains a substitute for the dead which has been adorned as if it were a corpse. Popham cites graves which had no skeleton but contained earrings, pins, and bracelets. Popham, 212.

²⁸ Vergina, a cemetery located in the central Macedonian region of Greece, shows evidence of the same simulacrum phenomenon as Lefkandi. The site of Assarlik in Asia Minor, while less closely related to the other cemeteries, exhibits a similar pattern. Popham, 212-213.

²⁹ Abbreviation of Late Helladic IIIC

³⁰ Thomatos, 171.

The Iron Age cemetery of Torone displays an almost perfect chronology of the shift from inhumation to cremation in the sense that there is no evidence of an “inhumation tomb contemporary with or later than a cremation tomb of the later period of use of the cemetery.”³¹ Papadopoulos’s dating gave accurate approximations of tombs relative to one another, but not within a wider chronological context. This means that the final inhumation tombs were between LHIIIC and the Early Protogeometric.^{32 33} Torone was significant because of the cremation style that occurred there. As in Athens, a “secondary cremation” occurred, in which the corpse was burned outside of the grave with the ashes collected in a vessel. After 700 BCE, “primary” cremation became the dominant form of burial. The deceased was burned on a pyre within the tomb itself.³⁴

Like Torone, the Attic cemetery of Perati also showed “secondary cremation” burials. In his excavation of Perati, Iakovides noted eighteen cremation burials. The cremations occurred at all phases³⁵ of cemetery. In terms of Mervyn Popham’s chronology of Lefkandi, the first two phases were LHIII, while the third was Submycenaean.³⁶ The burials were of both sexes, and occurred in all age groups—including children. Iakovides determined that there was no pattern in the cremations, and therefore no conclusion could be drawn based on who was buried—the cremations at Torone were also of all ages and sexes.³⁷ Due to the lack of foreign material, Iakovides ruled out direct foreign influence. He also noted that because young children were cremated, it was unlikely that the idea for cremation spread through members of the Attic population traveling abroad.³⁸ The pottery in the graves of the cremated children

³¹ Papadopoulos, 359.

³² Ibid..

³³ Early Protogeometric is the first division of the Protogeometric era. This period dates 1050-900 BCE. Popham, xiii.

³⁴ Morris, 21

³⁵ A phase is a demarcation of time created by the archaeologist based on human occupation or habit. The cemetery at Perati had three phases. The first of which ended in 1190/1185 BCE. The final phase ended in 1075 BCE. Spyros Iakovides, *Excavations of the Necropolis at Perati* (Los Angeles: UCLA, 1980), 10, 110.

³⁶ Popham, xiii.

³⁷ Iakovides, 10; Papadopoulos, 395.

³⁸ Iakovides, 10.

was of a local variety, making it likely that the cremations were not foreigners.³⁹ Iakovides came to the conclusion that “cremation had been known and practiced in several regions of Anatolia from the early Bronze Age [...] It was then adopted by Mycenaean settlers in the cemetery at Muskebi.”⁴⁰ The cremations of Perati were not as complete as other Greek cremations which occurred around the same time. The bodies were burned for far less time than the cremations of Lefkandi and Torone. Iakovides comments, “This incomplete cremation meant that the same body might be partly charred and partly calcinated.”⁴¹ Iakovides also mentioned that the bone fragments were bluish in color.⁴² According to Jonathan Musgrave, gray-blue coloration of the osteological material indicated that the bones were “very poorly burned: some organic content still present.”⁴³ Musgrave acknowledged that a variety of sources can be the source of skeletal staining, citing “green = bronze, purple = cloth of Homeric hue and quality.”⁴⁴ Yet, Musgrave did not list any grave goods or organic material that could cause bluish staining. Judging by Iakovides's report of shorter cremations, it is fair to say the cremations of Perati were a “fair/poor-average/variable” on Musgrave's *DGCREM* (*degree of cremation*) scale.⁴⁵ In a separate examination of Dark Age cremation, Musgrave wrote that the skeletal material was in general “heavier, and, for want of a better work ‘chunkier.’”⁴⁶ He argued that “this may reflect a change in technique or tradition; or indeed both.”⁴⁷

The Dark Age site of Lefkandi, like Torone, was composed almost entirely of graves that had cremated remains. Only five burials were confirmed inhumation graves, while twenty more were

³⁹ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 16.

⁴¹ Ibid., 10.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Papadopoulos, 245.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 246.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 245.

⁴⁶ Musgrave, Jonathan. “Dust and Damn'd Oblivion: A Study of Cremation in Ancient Greece.” *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 85 (1990): 275

⁴⁷ Ibid...

possibly inhumed.⁴⁸ Lefkandi did not necessarily show the first transition from inhumation to cremation so much as it showed an intermediary form of cremation burial representative of the Greek Dark age. In 117 graves at Lefkandi, there was no trace of skeletal material found. Many of these tombs were sealed cist⁴⁹ graves which contained traces of clothing. Yet excavators did not find discoloration of the soil indicative of decayed bone. In addition there were a few inhumation graves in which the bones did not indicate decay on the scale needed for the entire corpse to disappear. The soil itself was not acidic enough to cause decomposition of an entire skeleton.⁵⁰

While an inhumed corpse could not have disappeared without a trace, the small bone fragments left after a cremation could have decomposed unnoticed.⁵¹ Tombs that lacked skeletal material and contained earrings, pins, or bracelets laid out in the style of an inhumation burial began in the Submycenaean period and continued into the Protogeometric. Archaeologist Petros Themelis' interpretation of the vast number of tombs lacking skeletal material, some of which were in the style of inhumation tombs, was that a "secondary cremation" must have taken place. Themelis also looked at the data from the pyres found at the graveyards at Lefkandi. Excavators found small groups of bones in the pyres which Themelis asserted were the result of bone collection after the cremations took place.⁵² Themelis' interpretation was that the corpses were not buried in the pyre itself, but their remains were collected and buried after. The statistical data also supported this point because there was a rough one-to-one ratio between tombs and pyres at the Palia Perivolia graveyard at Lefkandi.⁵³

The associated grave goods also distinguished the few inhumation graves at Lefkandi. In a Protogeometric grave at Lefkandi, ten arrow heads and an iron sword were entombed with the corpse.

⁴⁸ Popham, 211.

⁴⁹ A cist is a stone enclosure of a grave. Cist graves are sealed with a fitted lid. Popham 212.

⁵⁰ Popham, 211.

⁵¹ Ibid.,.

⁵² Bone collection is the process of taking bone fragments from the funeral pyre and placing them in a cremation urn. Themelis records four definite cases of bone collection occurring at Lefkandi. Popham, 210.

⁵³ Popham, 212.

Themelis considered this and another inhumation grave to be “warrior graves.”⁵⁴ The rite of inhumation generally grew rarer in the years leading up to Geometric and Classical periods in Greece. Yet, two of the five definite inhumation graves were considered warrior graves, one of which was buried during the Protogeometric. Themelis considered this statistically significant and worth examining. He discussed a possible interpretation of the inhumation burials, arguing the possibility that these graves contained warriors buried in an older Mycenaean style, as if to hearken back to the days of palatial prosperity. He acknowledged that this interpretation assumes the Dark Age population possessed a working knowledge of culture prior to the Mycenaean collapse. Themelis ultimately found this interpretation too speculative and lacking data. But other theories concerning the shift from multiple to single burials argued for the continuity between the cultures of the Middle Helladic⁵⁵ and Submycenaean period. The idea of a Submycenaean society that possessed a notion of Middle Helladic burial practice is not unbelievable.⁵⁶

The significance of inhumation burial at Lefkandi was inextricably linked to ceremony because of the presence of war-related grave goods. If there was symbolic importance for inhumation at Lefkandi, the same was true of cremation. The difference in burial style at Lefkandi directly contradicted Lawson's statement that, “at no period [...] have the Greeks regarded inhumation and cremation as means to different religious ends.”⁵⁷

This so-called “secondary cremation” style indicative of Lefkandi may have appeared in other Dark Age sites. When the site of Vergina was initially excavated by Manolis Andronikos, he considered inhumation the normal burial type because of the arrangement of grave goods. However, like at Lefkandi, there was almost no skeletal material, with only a few teeth at most. Andronikos attributed the lack of skeletal material to the acidity of the soil. This explanation was problematic because the soil at

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁵⁵ The Middle Helladic is the period of Mycenaean culture prior to the Late Helladic. 2000-1550 BCE. Biers, 60.

⁵⁶ Thomatos, 169.

⁵⁷ Papadopoulos, 393.

Vergina could not possibly be acidic enough to have dissolved an entire skeleton.⁵⁸ Themelis suggested that a similar phenomenon occurred at both Lefkandi and Vergina. In addition he made a comparison between Lefkandi and another site. At the site of Assarlik, excavators found full-length cist graves with no definite traces of burning as well as no traces of skeletal material. This cist grave might be a parallel to both Vergina and Lefkandi, although the arrangement of grave goods was not well documented, and therefore impossible to tell whether they were arranged in an inhumation-style burial.⁵⁹ The burial remains at both Lefkandi and Vergina suggested that a simulacrum may have been buried as the primary burial, followed by cremation as a secondary form.

The Dark Age cremations which occurred at Lefkandi, Vergina, Assarlik, and to some extent Torone and Athens had roots in symbolism. The arrangement of the grave-goods in the simulacrum burials at Lefkandi, Vergina, and Assarlik gave them incredible significance. The secondary cremations at Torone and Athens demonstrated a culture that seemed to be experimenting with a new form of burial and symbolism. Yet, all these anomalies and significant features still do not provide evidence for the reasons behind the change in rite. The Anatolian argument of Iakovides lacked evidence and cannot properly explain the presence of cremation in most regions of Greece. The general lack of evidence for the period as well the low number of sites make it hard to create a convincing model for the shift.

During the end of Mycenaean culture all of Greece was experiencing a restructuring of society. The newly formed social stratification may have accounted for a shift in burial practice because the power of the elite had diminished. During LHIIIA-IIIB⁶⁰, there were almost no cremation burials and the elites were "in a position to determine what types of burials were 'allowed.'"⁶¹ As the power of the elite class changed, so did their ability to control burial practice. As a result, the changing lower class may have desired to display their wealth through a costly cremation. There is textual evidence to support the

⁵⁸ Popham, 213.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ IIIA and IIIB are more specific breakdowns of the third Late Helladic period.

⁶¹ Thomatos, 177.

idea that cremation burials were a sign of status. In *The Iliad* there are a few descriptions of large pyres. In one scene Homer wrote, “those who were about the dead heaped up wood and built a pyre a hundred feet this way and that; then they laid the dead all sorrowfully upon the top of it.”⁶² While Homer is not known for his historical accuracy, Ian Morris argued that Homer's descriptions of burials were “unattended evidence” and contained some truth relevant to culture.⁶³ He argued specifically the size of the mound used in the cremation of Patroclus connected the concepts of cremation and status.⁶⁴ William Furley took it further and argued that “Homeric piety” is “to burn as many animal thigh-bones as possible, [and], regarding corpses, to give them their 'ration of fire.'”⁶⁵ The works of Homer made many references to cremations and made them appear as if they were common for the period. While this is not true, the stories undoubtedly have basis in truth.

Regardless of whether a changing social structure allowed cremations to occur commonly, the religious or ritualistic purpose remains unexplained. However, a possible explanation for the appearance of cremation in the Dark Age was the need for purity. The Greek conception of impurity of the flesh was a continuous and widespread belief. The dead body was viewed as the epitome of impurity. In the Classical period, mourners dealing with a corpse were briefly shut off from society. Those who visited the house of the mourners purified themselves afterwards.⁶⁶ During the Archaic period,⁶⁷ rotting flesh was just as unappealing to the Greeks. Once a body had been entombed, it was only handled after the flesh had decomposed. One exception was tomb Σ3 at Perati; the bones had in fact been moved before decomposition, but a secondary offering of seashells was placed on charcoal where the body had been positioned. This was assumed to have happened because the body had been moved, revealing the

⁶² Homer, *The Iliad of Homer*, (New York: Classics Club, 1942), 354.

⁶³ Morris, 45.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁶⁵ William D. Furley, *Studies in the Use of Fire in Ancient Greek Religion* (New York: Arno, 1981), 2.

⁶⁶ Walter Burkert, and John Raffan, *Greek Religion Archaic and Classical* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1985), 79.

⁶⁷ The Archaic Period saw the development of the Greek city state and written culture. It began in the middle of the 7th century ended with the defeat of the Persians in 479 BCE. Biers, 148.

importance attributed to the impurity of the flesh.⁶⁸

While the phenomenon of tomb reuse is a separate issue in the archaeology of the Late Helladic period, it is related to the change in rite. Archaeologists William Cavanagh and Christopher Mee theorized that in multiple inhumation graves from LHIIIC, older burials were cremated before new burials were entombed.⁶⁹ Cavanagh said, “the flame consumes the corrupt flesh leaving the grave chamber clean and the bones white.”⁷⁰ Thomatos rejected Cavanagh's theory because of a lack of evidence. Yet Cavanagh's theory touched upon the concepts of secondary burial, fire, and purification. The concept of a fire ritual attached to a re-internment seems almost obvious. Carl Blegen theorized that a purificatory ritual would have the practical purpose of countering the stench of decay.⁷¹ Blegen, Cavanagh, and Mee all shared the theory that multiple burials were the impetus behind a fire ritual in burial.⁷²

During the earlier Mycenaean periods there was a definite connection between sanctity and fire ritual. Sacred hearths as well as ashen remains were present in the megaron⁷³ structures. There were consistent traces of burning at all strata at Ayia Irini,⁷⁴ as well as lanterns and braziers at the sanctuaries of Phlyakopi⁷⁵ and Mycenae.⁷⁶ Textual evidence related to ritual existed in Linear B tablets from Pylos. In the Pylian tablets there was mention of the “pu-ka-wo” or “fire-tender”/“fire-kindler” in association with religious acts.⁷⁷ In the Middle Helladic period “layers of fire, ashes, charcoal and traces of burning are frequently attested in funerary locales...and their presence has been considered purificatory.”⁷⁸ Blegen, Cavanagh and Mee all shared the view that the fire rituals were a response to multiple burials, but all

⁶⁸ Thomatos, 168.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ William G. Cavanagh, and Christopher Mee, *A Private Place: Death in Prehistoric Greece* (Jonsered: Paul Åströms Förlag, 1998), 112.

⁷¹ Chrysanthi Gallou, *The Mycenaean Cult of the Dead* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2005), 121.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Biers defines the megaron as “perhaps the most conspicuous and distinctive feature of Mycenaean architecture is the central hall, or megaron.” The megaron contains a permanent hearth surrounded four columns. Biers, 66-7.

⁷⁴ Ayia Irini is a Mycenaean settlement on the Cycladic Island of Keos.

⁷⁵ Phlyakopi is a Mycenaean and Cycladic settlement on the island of Milos.

⁷⁶ Gallou 120.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

saw the practice as lacking supporting evidence.⁷⁹ Yet, excavations of many tombs in the Argolid showed evidence of some type of burning: chamber tomb⁸⁰ 10 had a thin layer of ashes, and a wall with burn marks. Other tombs like the Dendra tholos⁸¹, Dendra tomb 13, Asine I:1, Asine I:7, Berbati I, Berbati III, Deiras I, and Prosymna VII contained “human skeletal remains and offerings [that] were accidentally blackened, scorched, and even calcinated.”⁸² In addition to ashen layers within the tombs, archaeologists have discovered burnt objects throughout palatial period graves.⁸³

Fire ritual had been an integral part of Greek funerary ritual since the Middle Helladic period. The stress placed upon the impurity of dead flesh also existed simultaneously throughout Greece. Models attempting to explain the shift to multiple burials have argued that fire ritual had practical uses during the Middle Helladic. Ashen layers discovered in many tholoi and cist graves from the Middle Helladic also strengthened this concept. The idea of palatial-era fire ritual existing into the Protogeometric period is therefore not unbelievable. If the fire ritual associated with purification of the tomb was applied to the corpse, the natural outcome would be a cremation. The Dark Age cemeteries like Perati, Torone, Lefkandi, and Vergina all displayed forms of cremation which were not the fully realized “primary cremations” seen after 700 BCE. The Dark Age cremations combined rites that were typical of inhumation burials (Vergina) or displayed cremations of a lesser quality (Perati). These cemeteries could have applied older fire rituals and created a new form of burial. In the process, intermediate forms of cremation were created which involved elements of inhumation.

The paucity of evidence, geographical scope, and difficulties in precise dating have made satisfactory models of the change in burial practice nearly impossible. For there to be a single theory

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁸⁰ Biers defines a chamber tomb as consisting “of a rectangular chamber cut into the side of a hill and approached by a long entrance passage...” Biers, 335.

⁸¹ The tholos is a beehive shaped chamber tomb constructed during the Mycenaean era. Tholoi also are cut into the side of a hill and have a long entrance passage. Biers, 71.

⁸² Gallou, 120.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

which explains the shift to cremation following the collapse of Mycenaean civilization is unlikely. However, the shift to cremation appears to be from an internal source, rather than foreign influence. The new practice was likely derived from two societal factors present during the collapse of palatial civilization. These factors were the change in societal structure and previously held Mycenaean beliefs. The change in social structure is obvious in the archaeological record, while the Mycenaean beliefs are evident in textual sources like Homer and the Pylian tablets. The fire rituals that began in the Middle Helladic period were well attested in various tholoi and chamber tombs. These ashen layers have been used to explain multiple internment burial. The Greek conceptions of impurity of dead flesh could have very well led to the use of fire to destroy everything but the bones of a corpse. As this ritual became more widespread it underwent changes in style. The secondary inhumations present at Lefkandi, Perati, and Torone were one form. While the “simulacrum” burials at Lefkandi, Assarlik, and Vergina were another. Through the combination of ritual and societal change the process of cremation was standardized and primary cremations became the dominant form of burial after 700 BCE.

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An Archaeological Approach to “Hellenization” in the Seleucid Empire

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The remains of Seleucid cities in the Near East such as Ai Khánum and Seleucia on the Tigris have long defied explanation. Both Hellenic and Near Eastern peoples once inhabited these cities, and the evidence for the types of interactions they once had is contradictory. Did they form a new culture that was a pure hybrid of what had come before? Did the Greeks live separately from the natives, as the latter underwent an inexorable process of "Hellenization"? This paper will investigate which domains of Greek culture were open to mixing and which were carefully preserved during the Hellenization of the former Persian Empire, and venture explanations as to why. Emphasis is placed on the active role of material culture in constructing ethnic identities in light of large-scale intermarriage during the initial years of these cities.

Introduction

Upon his death in 323, Alexander the Great was the supreme ruler of an empire greater than any the world had ever seen. Though his infighting successors quickly broke it apart, the kingdoms they built from the rubble of his conquests would soon match their General’s grand designs. A Macedonian officer named Seleucus Nicator consolidated the eastern portion of the General’s conquests into the independent Seleucid Empire, which at its height stretched from Asia Minor to Afghanistan. Seleucus and his descendants instituted a massive program of colonization to solidify their initially tenuous grip on these far-flung regions. Two of these cities have been especially well preserved for modern excavators: Seleucia on the Tigris in Babylonia (central Iraq) and Ai Khánum in Bactria (northern Afghanistan).

These cities were constructed on irrigated plains at the intersections of major waterways—providing each with natural defense, agricultural independence, and access to vital trade routes. These factors attracted waves of Greek migrants and retired soldiers to join with sizeable native populations to settle in these fledgling cities. Scholars have long disagreed over the exact nature of the multiethnic

society that resulted. Two seemingly contradictory processes have been proposed to explain ethnic dynamics in the Seleucid East: the subjugation of native populations and their forced assimilation of Greek culture through a process of “Hellenization”, or the creation of an entirely hybrid culture through fusion of Greek and native populations.¹

Both interpretations are oversimplifications of the data that fail to accommodate the full range of archaeological evidence from Seleucia and Ai Khánum. A more nuanced picture of culture change in Seleucid cities during the critical first generations after their foundation is required. This paper first provides summaries of the regional and urban contexts in which ethnic interactions would have taken place, and the archaeological evidence for ethnicity in them. A more theoretically precise definition of “ethnicity” will then be used to reconcile the conflicting evidence at Ai Khánum and Seleucia. It will ultimately be shown that rather than being a simple proxy for ethnic identities, material culture can play an active role in their creation.

Regional Context

Ai Khánum

The foundation of Ai Khánum can be dated to the beginning of the 3rd century BC during the reign of Seleucus Nicator or one of his immediate successors.² It sits on the bank of the Oxus River where it meets with a tributary, the Kokcha River. The Greeks were not the first to exploit this area, as archaeological survey of the city’s hinterland has shown.³ The plain between the Oxus and Kokcha was cultivated since the Bronze Age; the surveyors even uncovered a trading outpost from the far-off Indus

¹ G. Traina, “Notes on Hellenism in the Iranian East (Classico-Oriental Notes, 6-8),” *Iran & the Caucasus* (2005): 1–14; R. Mairs, “The ‘Temple with Indented Niches’ at Ai Khanoum: Ethnic and Civic Identity in Hellenistic Bactria,” in *Cults, Creeds and Contests in the Greek City After the Classical Age*, ed. R. Alston, OM Van Nijf, and C. Williamson (Leuven: Peeters, 2010).

² Susan Sherwin-White, *From Samarkhand to Sardis: a New Approach to the Seleucid Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). 21.

³ Jean-Claude Gardin and Pierre Gentelle, “I. L’exploitation Du Sol En Bactriane Antique,” *Bulletin De l’Ecole Française d’Extrême-Orient* 66, no. 1 (1979): 1-29; G. Fussman, “Southern Bactria and Northern India Before Islam: A Review of Archaeological Reports.,” *The Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116, no. 2 (1996).

Valley civilization. Nevertheless, the researchers found that irrigation networks on the plain only reached their fullest extent with the coming of the Seleucids and the founding of Ai Khánum.⁴

The plain was at a strategic position in both the Bronze and Iron Ages because it put whomever dwelt there in control of the international trade in lapis lazuli, a stone as highly valued in the ancient world as its geologic occurrence was limited. The Sar-e Sang mines, one of the only sources of lapis known until the modern era, are located in a deep valley carved by a tributary of the Kokcha far to the east in the Pamir Mountains.⁵ The Oxus, in turn, linked the rugged mountains of Afghanistan with points further west near the Iranian Plateau. Excavations of the treasury at Ai Khánum confirm the importance of the region's mineral wealth in the city's economy -- in addition to blocks of unworked lapis, excavators uncovered traces of agate, beryl, carnelian, turquoise, sapphire, onyx⁶. Control of the gem trade was likely a key reason for the city's foundation and a source of power for Ai Khánum's ruling elites.

Seleucia

Seleucia on the Tigris had similar geographic advantages to Ai Khánum, and both were integrated into the same trade network. A well-travelled caravan route known as the Great Khorasan Road led from Bactria across the northern edge of the Iranian Plateau to Mesopotamia.⁷ Seleucia is located precisely where this road crosses the Tigris River, a position that also placed it in control of all maritime trade with India travelling up the Tigris from the Persian Gulf.⁸ The "King's Canal" at Seleucia led in turn from the Tigris to the Euphrates River; the city was built to take advantage of this waterway

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Gary W. Bowersox and Bonita E. Chamberlin, *Gemstones of Afghanistan* (GeoVision, Inc., 1995). 47

⁶ Paul Bernard, *Etudes De Géographie Historique Sur La Plaine d'Ai Khanoum, Afghanistan* (Paris: C.N.R.S., 1978); Frank Holt, *Into the Land of Bones Alexander the Great in Afghanistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). 160.

⁷ J Cook, *The Persian Empire*, 1st ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1983).

⁸ William Woodthorpe Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilization* (New York: The New American Library Inc., 1961).

and not *vice versa*.⁹ Opis, a trading center in operation since the Bronze Age, was located near the King's Canal; Seleucia diverted its trade revenue and may have even physically incorporated it.¹⁰ For several centuries after, Seleucia was the nexus of trade between India, the Mediterranean, and places in between. An extensive network of irrigated farmland dominated the city's hinterland on both sides of the Tigris; here too surface surveys have shown that cultivation began in the Bronze Age but increased markedly during the Hellenistic period.¹¹

Discussion

The Indus Valley outpost and the King's Canal both show that the Seleucids placed their cities to capitalize on existing agricultural lands and trade routes rather than to create new ones. Aside from the insight into the logic that governed where the Seleucids settlement, this provides a context for the first interactions between the settlers and natives. Greek traders would have needed to interact with native merchants and work within pre-established social networks and infrastructures of docks and warehouses.¹² During his life, Alexander made the appeasement of Persian and Bactrian elites a key part of his strategy for securing his newly conquered empire.¹³ The coming of the Greeks did nothing to change the geographic realities that produced wealth for the regions' inhabitants; there is no reason to assume that native elites were restricted from the upper class in these cities. The characterization of the Seleucid Empire common in modern scholarship – a Greek elite ruling a native peasant class¹⁴ -- is untenable. Socio-economic distinctions thus did not necessarily correlate with ethnic distinctions. The urban forms and material remains unearthed by excavators at Aï Khánum and Seleucia suggest that

⁹ Bert Van der Spek, "Feeding Hellenistic Seleucia on the Tigris and Babylon", 2004. in: Richard Alston, O.M. van Nijf, eds., *Feeding the Ancient City*. (Leuven: Peeters, 2004). 33-45.

¹⁰ Clark Hopkins, *Topography and Architecture of Seleucia on the Tigris* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1972). 150.

¹¹ Van der Spek, "Feeding Hellenistic Seleucia on the Tigris and Babylon."

¹² Hopkins, *Topography and Architecture of Seleucia on the Tigris*. 150.

¹³ James Romm, "Alexander's Policy of Perso-Macedonian Fusion," in *The Landmark Arrian: the Campaigns of Alexander: a New Translation*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 2010), 385.

¹⁴ Traina, "Notes on Hellenism in the Iranian East (Classico-Oriental Notes, 6-8)."

social dynamics were much more complex than that.

Syncretism and Urban Form

Ai Khánum

The layout of Ai Khánum is roughly triangular, with 30m drops to the Oxus and Kokcha preventing attack on two sides. The third edge of the city runs along a large hill rising above the plain, which was used as the city's acropolis. Elite residences cluster around the southern portion of the city, while those of the lower classes were likely relegated to the north side of the city, the acropolis, and the plain beyond the walls. The main street runs along the acropolis, and the rest of the city is laid out in a basic grid plan. The city center included a massive administrative complex containing offices, elite residences, and a treasury. A gymnasium, heroön (monumental tomb and center for a hero cult), and temple abut the palace. This complex of buildings was the most conspicuous public area in the city, reflected by its central location in the city plan.

The relative degree of syncretism displayed by different buildings at Ai Khánum is highly variable, and this has long puzzled excavators. Some structures, such as the gymnasium and heroön, are clearly Greek in form and bear inscriptions in a conservative form of literary Greek, while others are an amalgam of Greek, Bactrian, Persian, and Mesopotamian influences. Corinthian columns support the administrative center, yet the layout is clearly derivative of Achaemenid palaces such as those at Persepolis and Susa¹⁵. Most surprisingly for a "Greek" city, the only temples unearthed at the site are of Persian and Mesopotamian design and bear no trace of the rich tradition of Greek religious architecture.¹⁶

¹⁵ Paul Bernard, *Ai Khanoum on the Oxus: A Hellenistic City in Central Asia*, vol. 53, Proceedings of the British Academy (Great Britain: University of Oxford Press, 1967). 82

¹⁶ Mairs, "The 'Temple with Indented Niches' at Ai Khanoum: Ethnic and Civic Identity in Hellenistic Bactria."

Seleucia

Seleucia's urban layout reflects its role as a trading capital. The city blocks were huge for a Hellenistic city, measuring 140x70m.¹⁷ A branch of the King's Canal from the Euphrates bisected the city horizontally and emptied into the Tigris. Two more branches split off from the main canal before entering the city and flowed around the north and south walls to form a moat. A caravan route ran parallel to the Canal in the southern portion of the city, leading west from a port on the Tigris. Remains of public structures are only found along the northern and southern edges of the city.

A large square, likely one of the city's agoras, lay at the center point of the city along its northern walls.¹⁸ To the north was what may once have been the city's theater, to the east a stoa, and to the west the city archives. A heroön found here with a Greek dedicatory inscription parallels that at Ai Khánum.¹⁹ The public buildings to the south, located as they were along the main caravan route leading from the city's port, were likely meant to capitalize on trade-related traffic. The city's excavators noted the prevalence of east-west roadways over those running north-south, which suggests restricted permeability between the two centers.²⁰ The ability to easily move goods through Seleucia was seemingly given precedence over the ability to move within it.

It is interesting to note that the structures more associated with Greek culture and administration – such as the heroön and archives– are less associated with trade activity in the city's layout. Relatively few portions of this massive city have been excavated, however, and it remains unclear whether the unearthed structures represent only part of a potentially more complex cityscape. But based on the nature and position of the agora and its surrounding buildings there is little doubt that the area served some administrative function. The large volume of clay bullae found in the archives,

¹⁷ Hopkins, *Topography and Architecture of Seleucia on the Tigris*. 1.

¹⁸ Antonio Invernizzi, "Seleucia on the Tigris - Center and Periphery in Seleucid Asia," in *Center and Periphery in the Hellenistic World*, ed. Per Bilde et al., Studies in Hellenistic Civilization (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1994), 230-250.

¹⁹ Mairs, "The 'Temple with Indented Niches' at Ai Khanoum: Ethnic and Civic Identity in Hellenistic Bactria."

²⁰ Invernizzi, "Seleucia on the Tigris - Center and Periphery in Seleucid Asia."

which attest to role of this section the wider functioning, confirms this. Furthermore, the bullae themselves provide a useful body of evidence for ethnic interactions on a more personal scale.

The Archives at Seleucia

The ruins of Seleucia's archive contained nearly 25,000 clay bullae, making it by far the largest Hellenistic archive yet known.²¹ These bullae, having been stamped by the owner's signet ring, would have sealed the papyri once stored in these archives. Though drawing from a normalized collection of motifs, these seals were used to identify individuals in day-to-day business and legal transactions and are thus a key piece of evidence for conceptions of personal identity.²²

Depictions of the Greek goddesses Athena and Tyche are two of the most common types uncovered from the archives: there were 663 impressions of Athena from 328 distinct seals and 914 impressions of Tyche from 322 seals.²³ Depictions of Athena rigidly adhere to one of two classical design norms while the Tyche seals exhibit a complex iconography that heavily incorporated Mesopotamian and Egyptian themes.²⁴

The other seal impressions largely depict other members of the Greek pantheon, though approximately 20% are of Mesopotamian gods such as Nabu.²⁵ Several seals display syncretic deities that draw equally on both traditions; Apollo-Nabu is the most common.²⁶ The variety of motifs used on stamps seals in the archives at Seleucia, especially the Tyche impressions, show that though the majority of the forms were ultimately Greek in origin, their widespread use was by no means evidence of Hellenization in the traditional sense of an outright assimilation into Greek society.

²¹ "Seleucia on the Tigris: The Clay Sealings." Centro Ricerche Archeologiche e Scavi di Torino 2006

²² Sharon C. Herbert, "Hellenistic Archives from Tel Kedesh (Israel) and Seleucia-on-the-Tigris (Iraq)," *Bulletin of the University of Michigan Museums of Art and Archaeology* XV (2005): 65-86.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Centro Ricerche Archeologiche e Scavi di Torino 2006

Discussion

The material remains from Aï Khánum and Seleucia clearly confound any interpretation that relies solely on paradigms of “fusion” or “segregation.” The traditional agora, stoa, archive, and heroön at Seleucia suggest a Greek character to the city’s administration, which is seemingly contradicted by their isolation from trade activity and the heavily syncretic seals used there daily in important transactions. Judging solely by the architecture at Aï Khánum, one might infer that the city’s residents practiced Mesopotamian religion, were subject to Persian-style administration, studied Greek culture in the gymnasium, and enjoyed Classical drama in the theater. Though this is clearly a caricature of archaeological reasoning, it makes clear the contradictory lines of evidence coming from the excavations and misinterpretation they can produce. Many scholars cherry-pick data to fit a simpler narrative: one of the first publications of the excavations at Aï Khánum cited the gymnasium and heroön alone as evidence that the city was an “outpost of Hellenism” in the barbarian east.²⁷

It is obvious that Aï Khánum and Seleucia were multiethnic cities, but what exactly this means in a practical sense is still unclear. The old adage in archaeology that “pots do not equal people” is especially valid here. Just because a temple looks “Mesopotamian,” there is no reason to think that it was used by Mesopotamians to worship Mesopotamian gods. It is difficult to resolve the archaeological evidence into a coherent picture of ethnic dynamics because material culture does not passively reflect the identity of those that create it. Archaeological approaches to ethnicity must instead examine material culture in light of the active role it plays in constructing and maintaining group identities.²⁸ This is a more fluid view allows the analysis to move beyond the conception of ethnicities as concrete, bounded entities. The reality, especially at Seleucia and Aï Khánum, is much more complex.

²⁷ Bernard, *Ai Khanoum on the Oxus: A Hellenistic City in Central Asia*, 53.

²⁸ Margarita Díaz-Andreu García et al., introduction to *Archaeology of Identity* (London: Routledge, 2005). 9.

Untangling Ethnicity in the Material Record

Ethnic Groups and Ethnies

An ethnic identity is rooted in the perception of shared common ancestry with others in a community. A useful insight provided by contemporary anthropology is that ethnic groups develop through the use of certain cultural traits to distinguish members of the in-group from the out-group.²⁹ Exactly which cultural traits – such as a language, art style, religion, etc. – a group or individual can use to assert an ethnic identity will change over time and largely depend on social context³⁰. A German speaking in her native tongue would be making a public, though possibly unintentional, assertion of German identity if she were in England but not in Austria.

This highlights the fact that ethnicities are essentially conceptions about how certain "types" of people are expected to act; they are ideas within people's heads rather than physically bounded groups in a population. The term "ethnie" emphasizes that ethnicities are culturally constructed categories, in contrast with "ethnic group."³¹ Ethnies and ethnic groups certainly can co-vary, such as in the ethnic enclaves of modern cities. But the historical context in which Aï Khánum and Seleucia were founded suggests that, at least for the initial generations, this was not the case.

The Role of Inter-marriage

The difficulty in studying the ethnic makeup of the Seleucid Empire ultimately stems from the actions of Alexander himself. The General had strongly encouraged inter-marriage between Greek soldiers and local women, and thus significant subsets of the population (even the ruling Seleucid

²⁹ Geoff Emberling, "Ethnicity in Complex Societies: Archaeological Perspectives," *Journal of Archaeological Research* 5, no. 4 (1997): 295-344.

³⁰ R. Mairs, "Greek Identity and the Settler Community in Hellenistic Bactria and Arachosia," *Migrations & Identities* 1, no. 1 (2008): 19-43.

³¹ F.J. Gil-White, "Are Ethnic Groups Biological 'Species' to the Human Brain?" *Current Anthropology* 42, no. 4 (2001): 515–553.

dynasty) were genetically heterogeneous.³² This suggests that it was “occidental” and “oriental” cultures that were struggling for influence – not necessarily the people themselves. With the blurring of group lines brought about by intermarriage came the need to redefine and reassert one’s ethnic identity, and the patterns of syncretism in these two cities can be explained by the selective use of cultural traits as ethnic markers. Later waves of genetically “pure” migrants would have still had to operate within the framework of ethnic markers established during the first few generations. This explains the seeming contradiction seen in the archaeological record, where some aspects of Greek culture remained static while others were open to hybridization. By focusing on ethnies rather than ethnic groups, the archaeological evidence becomes much more coherent.

Discussion

Where the architecture at Ai Khánum displays a great degree of syncretism, cultural boundary maintenance was either impractical or unimportant. A lack of readily available stone and laborers trained to work it forced the designers of the city to build the kind of flat-roofed mud brick buildings characteristic of Achaemenid architecture.³³ The Temple with Indented Niches was the largest temple at Ai Khánum and occupies a central position along its main road, which suggests it may have been used by a majority of the city’s inhabitants. It is laid out in a manner that closely parallels Mesopotamian religious architecture rather than the expected Greek norms.³⁴ These building styles were likely transmitted to Bactria by the Achaemenids and were thus absorbed into the local architectural tradition.³⁵

The Temple with Indented Niches’ design reflects the input of local architects into city planning.

³² James Romm, “Alexander’s Policy of Perso-Macedonian Fusion,” in *The Landmark Arrian : the Campaigns of Alexander: a New Translation*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 2010), 386.

³³ Bernard, *Ai Khanoum on the Oxus: A Hellenistic City in Central Asia*, 53: 77

³⁴ S. B Downey, “The Citadel Palace at Dura-Europos,” *Syria* 63, no. 1/2 (1986): 27–37.

³⁵ Mairs, “The ‘Temple with Indented Niches’ at Ai Khanoum: Ethnic and Civic Identity in Hellenistic Bactria.”

Religious practice at Ai Khánum seems to have borne little or no ethnic connotation, and an individual could worship at the temple without making an explicit statement about their ethnic affiliation.³⁶ Though poorly contextualized, the artifacts found within the temple suggest that deities from a variety of traditions were worshiped therein.³⁷ Indeed, a comparison with Ptolemaic Egypt suggests that syncretistic cults were actively used during the first few generations of Hellenistic rule to encourage unity in the populace.³⁸

In contrast, the structures with purely Greek features, such as the heroön and the gymnasium, must have had more explicit ethnic connotations. Their very existence in the original city plan was a conscious assertion of Greek culture by its designers. Excavations of Ai Khánum's gymnasium uncovered several inscriptions and statues dedicated to Hermes and Hercules – the traditional protectors of Greek gymnasia. This suggests that this building's function was consistent with other gymnasia in Greek society; it was a center for the education and enculturation of young men into Greek traditions and values.³⁹

The heroön commemorated the mythical founder of the city, and would have played a similar role as the gymnasium. A list of "Delphic maxims," familiar to any educated member of the Hellenic world, were inscribed on it in literary Greek.⁴⁰ These maxims detailed the civic and moral responsibilities of the ideal Greek man⁴¹, in essence presenting the same lessons from the gymnasium in a much more publicly visible context. The heroön at Seleucia likely served a similar function for that city's inhabitants.⁴²

Each of these explicitly Greek structures served as metaphorical storehouses of Greek traditions, but just because they had strong ethnic connotations does not mean their use was restricted only to

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Paul Bernard, "The Greek Colony at Ai Khánum and Hellenism in Central Asia," in *Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul*, ed. Fredrik T Hiebert and Pierre Cambon (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2008), 93.

³⁸ Romm, "Alexander's Policy of Perso-Macedonian Fusion." 387.

³⁹ Bernard, "The Greek Colony at Ai Khánum and Hellenism in Central Asia." 89.

⁴⁰ Bernard, *Ai Khanoum on the Oxus: A Hellenistic City in Central Asia*, 53.

⁴¹ Bernard, "The Greek Colony at Ai Khánum and Hellenism in Central Asia." 94

⁴² Mairs, "The 'Temple with Indented Niches' at Ai Khanoum: Ethnic and Civic Identity in Hellenistic Bactria."

those of Greek ancestry. Such buildings would have played a key role in defining what exactly it meant to be Greek to all the citizens of Ai Khánum and Seleucia. They were centers for the expression of Greek identity, and corresponded to ethnies rather ethnic groups.

Each of these structures, and the various degrees of syncretism they display, reflect decisions by the city's architects in the initial years of each city. They represent the means by which ethnicity was conceived and delineated in the public sphere. The seals from Seleucia, however, are personal items. They represent how individual and group identities articulated on a much more dynamic level than public architecture. In light of the variability and experimentation that characterized depictions of other Greek deities, the stasis in Athena designs is anomalous and suggests that depictions of this goddess could have been used as means cultural boundary marking for the wealthy citizens at Seleucia. Athena played a pivotal role in Greek religion for centuries, and by using time-honored ways of portraying her on public and private documents, a wealthy citizen could display an affinity to Greek culture.

Before the advent of the Hellenistic era, Tyche was a minor member of the Greek pantheon and would have lacked much of the cultural baggage of other deities. Artisans would have had to develop their own styles for portraying her, drawing from local traditions. A positive feedback may have resulted: any who wished to project a non-Greek or a hybrid identity chose those styles which, in turn, encouraged artisans to create more heavily syncretic images on new signet rings. Thus, at Seleucia a conservative "Greekness" was contrasted with a more innovative hybrid style. The distributions of these very common objects point to two different ethnies in the populace. Though they mirror the patterns seen in public architecture, the seals emphasize that personal identity can be much more ambiguous than group identity.

Conclusion

This analysis of ethnicity in Seleucid cities has thus far treated "Greeks" and "locals" as two

monolithic entities. The reality of group divisions was surely more complex. Greek, Macedonian, Bactrian, Persian, Jew, Babylonian, and other ethnies may each have used various overlapping ethnic markers to display their identity. This would have been further compounded by myriad regional and tribal affiliations that would have subdivided the populace. But because ethnies are so often defined along cultural boundary lines -- as exemplified by the ancient tendency to divide the world into "Greeks" and "barbarians" -- binary distinctions tend to become more salient over time. Ethnies in modern-day America such as "Hispanic" and "Native American" have developed through similar processes wherein only shared cultural traits are highlighted. What may once have been perceived as intractable differences among various Bactrian tribes would surely have become much less salient when faced with an invading army that was completely foreign, just as would the differences among mainland Greeks, Macedonians, and Ionians when isolated in an unfamiliar land.

This reflects the dynamic nature of ethnic markers and the processes by which they are created. Cultural norms that favored endogamy would have ultimately begun to reify these groups, increasing in-group homogeneity and making the abstract opposition between "Greek" and "non-Greek" more concrete as the generations progressed. It is likely that, over time, different ethnies actually did come to correspond with distinct groups within the populace. But the groups that resulted may have had only a minor resemblance to the settlers of those first generations. What it meant to be "Greek" at Seleucia and Ai Khánum in the 2nd century BC would have been very different from what it meant in the 4th century, just as being "Italian" has different connotations in New York and Naples. The extent to which some local populations also favored conservatism and separation from the Greeks is an avenue for further research, as relatively little is yet known about what should be considered, for instance, characteristically "Bactrian".

Concrete answers to the difficult questions of ethnicity ultimately lie in the fields of psychology and neuroscience, which are currently shedding light on the aspects of human cognition that makes

societies so readily divide themselves into increasingly smaller groups. Archaeology answers an equally significant question by showing how material objects allow these abstract concepts to shape the real world. Regardless of whether the architectural syncretism in the palace or temple at Aï Khánum only reflects the practical decision of an architect limited by his raw materials and labor force, over the centuries individuals asserting a mixed Greco-Bactrian ethnics could look to the patchwork of architectural motifs as an archetypal example of their identity. The same is true for the more distinctively Greek structures, whose conservative style does not necessarily reflect ethnically charged decisions at the time of their design. Rather, over time their conservative style would have attracted those who wished to assert their "Greekness."

People and ideas from the vast spread of Alexander's empire were allowed to intermingle on the streets of Seleucia and Aï Khánum and produce something entirely new. The fluid conceptions of ethnic identity brought on by intermarriage in the first generations of the Seleucid Empire established a framework that would define the social dynamics of all who came later. This is the true legacy of "Hellenization" in the Seleucid Empire. Rather than an "east meets west" accident of history, the complexity of Seleucid urbanism reflects fundamental processes that have driven cultural change for millennia.

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From Mockery to Respect: The Housekeeper's Suicide in Apuleius's *The Golden Ass*

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Apuleius' The Golden Ass is one of the few surviving Roman novels, told from the unique first-person perspective of Lucius, a man who has turned into a donkey and is trapped in abusive servitude. The novel is peppered with a variety of colorful minor characters. This paper explores the shifting relationship between Lucius and one such minor character, the nameless housekeeper of his captors. When Lucius first encounters the housekeeper, he mocks her weakness and subservience, but his contempt changes into respect after two simultaneous events: Lucius' failed escape and the housekeeper's suicide. This paper will argue that Lucius' changing perspective on the nameless housekeeper reflects his changing view of himself. While his previously confident attitude allowed him to mock the old woman, Lucius' failed attempt at escaping his captors forces him to face his own captivity and respect certain subtly rebellious elements of the housekeeper's suicide. Thus, Lucius learns the power of humility, a principle to which he will adhere more fully at the end of the novel as a devotee to the goddess Isis.

In Apuleius' novel *The Golden Ass (Metamorphoses)*, Lucius's changing impressions of other characters, fluctuating between friendly companionship and bitter enmity, color his first-person narrative. One such character in *The Golden Ass* is the nameless old woman, a submissive and exploited housekeeper of the thieves who have stolen Lucius. When the thieves first capture Lucius, he looks down upon the old woman and mocks her subservience to the robbers, believing himself to be on some level defiant and capable of escape. He constantly refers to her with insulting language such as "a delirious and drunken old hag"¹ ("*delira et temulenta illa... anicula*"²), or "crafty old woman" ("*astutulae anus*"³). However, after attempting a dramatic escape and failing, Lucius realizes that he, like the housekeeper, is property of the thieves, and, like the housekeeper, cannot openly defy his masters. He thus comes to respect the old woman's suicide, which, though submissive, contains subtle and

¹ All translations are my own. They are as literal as possible in order to facilitate analysis of the original syntax.

² Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 6.25

³ Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 6.27

paradoxical traces of defiance. Lucius's shift between contempt and respect for the old woman's obedience parallels his sense of loss of free will: after his failed attempt at escape, Lucius realizes that he, no more independent than the old woman, is incapable of conspicuous subversion and must find dignity in obedience.

The old woman makes her first appearance in *The Golden Ass* when "thus the hostile men admonished a certain old woman bent with heavy aging, to whom alone the health and care of such a group seemed to have been relegated" ("*...anum quandam curvatam gravi senio, cui soli salus atque tutela tot numero commissa videbatur, sic infesti compellant*"⁴). First of all, Lucius contemptuously refers to the woman as "anus," a humorously degrading word which means "hag" or "old maid." Lucius's mockery of the old woman stems principally from her obedience and lack of agency. The housekeeper first appears in the accusative, the object of the harsh verb "compellant," which, though it literally means "chided" or "rebuked," has as its root the verb "pello," which means "beat," "push," or "drive out." Thus, Apuleius immediately presents her in a syntactically and semantically vulnerable position. She is also "bent with heavy aging" ("*curvatam gravi senio*") the passivity of the participle "curvatam" and the physical weakness implied by this image suggest a lack of agency. In the relative clause that follows, the old woman, "to whom alone the health and care of such a group seemed to have been relegated" ("*cui soli salus atque tutela tot numero commissa videbatur*") appears in an oblique case for the second time, the passivity of the participle "commissa" implying that she has had no choice as to whether or not to work for the thieves.

The band of thieves proceeds to insult the woman, calling her "you corpse of the tomb and dishonor to life and first and only annoyance to hell" ("*busti cadaver extremum et vitae dedecus primum et Orci fastidium solum*"⁵). Despite this abuse, the old woman's response is submissive. When she finally speaks for the first time, she does so as a "trembling at this and terrified, with a shrill voice, old woman"

⁴ Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 4.7

⁵ Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 4.7

(*"tremens ad haec et stridenti vocula pavida sic anus"*⁶). The word order in this sentence, with the submissive, frightened epithets "tremens" and "pavida" preceding the noun "anus," which refers to the old woman herself, suggests that, to Lucius, the old woman's submission overtakes her identity. The housekeeper's actual response is even more submissive: she addresses the thieves, "most brave and most faithful young men hosting me, an entire meal at hand of pleasant taste has been cooked, and copious bread and wine poured flowingly into polished goblets" (*"fortissimi fidelissimique mei hospitatores iuvenes adfatim cuncta suavi sapore percocta pulmenta praesto sunt, panis numerosus vinum probe calicibus ecfriticatis affluenter immisum"*⁷). The double superlatives and lavish praise which the old woman bestows upon her masters ironically contrasts their obviously rude and lawless character. Through the exaggeratedly lavish, regal character of this dinner for criminals, Lucius pokes fun at the old woman's subservience. Much to Lucius's contempt, the thieves' housekeeper seems to pander to the brutish and wicked men who have enslaved both her and Lucius.

Lucius, on the other hand, although his confidence is waning, continues to see himself as an openly defiant rebel against his captors. He has recently defecated on a group of villagers determined to beat him to death, relishing the graphic description of,

"my stomach, contracted, overflowing with those raw vegetables and filthy with a watery stream, dung having been cast out in a pipe-like manner, sent away some [of my attackers] with a spray of liquid from my rear, and others with the stench of the stinking fume from my now shaking haunches"

(*"aluus artata crudisque illis oleribus abundans et lubrico fluxu saucia fimo fistulatim excusso quosdam extremi liquoris aspergine, alios putore nidoris faetidi a meis iam quassis scapulis abegisset"*⁸).

Lucius, unlike the appeasing and submissive old woman, has performed an act of violent, overt contempt towards his attackers. He revels in this moment of agency and rebellion, coloring it with similes like "fistulatim," "in a pipe-like manner," and using vivid sensory images such as "faetidi," or

⁶ Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 4.7

⁷ Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 4.7

⁸ Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 4.3

“stinking.” His body, contrasted with the old woman’s “bent” one, has an almost majestic role in his act of rebellion: Lucius mentions the active roles of specific body parts such as “aluus,” “stomach,” “extremi,” “rear,” and “scapulis,” “haunches” and describes them using prideful words such as “abundans,” meaning “overflowing” or “abundant.” Immediately following this scene, Lucius concocts a plan to escape from the thieves: he will pretend to be incapable of moving further until the band of men decides to leave him behind, thus setting him free. When describing this plan, Lucius refers to himself as “resolute” (“*obstinatus*”⁹), a word connoting bravery and defiance. He is proud of his subversive plan, which he sees as “such a good plan of mine” (“*tam bellum consilium meum*”¹⁰), foiled only by the randomness of “luck” (*sors*¹¹). Lucius’s idea that bad luck alone causes his failure implies confidence in his own power to deceive and defy his captors. Lucius glorifies his acts of defiance: his perception of himself as a brave rebel gives fuel to his mockery of the old woman’s submission.

Lucius’s clear sense of agency compared to the submissiveness of the housekeeper becomes particularly evident when he temporarily escapes from the thieves’ den, physically fighting her. This scene, in which Lucius graphically and almost enjoyably describes his defeat of the obedient old woman, symbolizes his perceived defeat of obedience itself. Lucius begins to recount the scene by describing the way he “with a push I broke the leather strap by which I was tied down and tore myself away with a four-legged run” (“*nisu lorum, quo fueram destinatus, abrumpo meque quadripedi cursu proripio*”¹²). Lucius emphasizes the glory of his act of rebellion, ending each clause with a violent verb and emphasizing the oppressive nature of the leather strap which he broke, reminding his readers that “I was tied down” (“*fueram destinatus*”) by said leather strap. However, when the old woman engages in combat with him, Lucius portrays her not as rebelling or attacking of her own initiative, but simply as working as a obedient cog within the system of the thieves. Lucius recounts that “and I, mindful of the

⁹ Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 4.4

¹⁰ Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 4.4

¹¹ Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 4.4

¹² Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 6.27

fatal plan of the thieves [to kill me], was not moved by any pity, but, with kicks of my hind feet having been stricken against her, I immediately dashed her to the ground" (*"nec tamen ego, memor exitiabilis propositi latronum, pietate ulla commoveor, sed incussis in eam posteriorum pedum calcibus protinus adplodo terrae"*¹³). Lucius emphasizes that he does not pity the old woman because he is "mindful of the fatal plan of the thieves," implying that his shameless violence against her springs from the fact that he holds her accountable for the actions of the thieves.

Furthermore, Lucius uses language of submission when describing the old woman's attacks, suggesting that she has no initiative. The old woman grabs onto Lucius' reins "so that for some time she with her dragging followed me running away" (*"ut me procurrentem aliquantisper tractu sui sequeretur"*¹⁴). Lucius describes grasping onto him, a tactic that objectively could be perceived as tenacious and brave, as the dependent act of "follow[ing]" and emphasizes her lack of dignity through the word "dragging" (*tractu*). Thus, in physically attacking the old woman, Lucius perceives himself as squelching submission and obedience itself and proceeds to rebel by running away.

When Lucius's escape plan fails, his perception of himself as a rebel, which has set him apart from the submissive housewife, fades. Lucius' helplessness first arises when, aware that his rider, Charite, is unknowingly leading him into the hands of his captors, he cannot save himself. Unable to speak human language, "thus in my mind silently I remonstrated: 'what are you doing, unhappy girl? What are you enacting? Why are you hurrying to Hades? What are you trying to do with my feet?'" (*"sic in animo meo tacitus expostulabam: 'quid facis, infelix puella? Quid agis? Cur festinas ad Orcum? Quid meis pedibus facere contendis?'"*¹⁵). Lucius uses two modifiers, the prepositional phrase "in my mind" (*in animo meo*) and the adjective "silent" (*tacitus*) to emphasize his silence, and he places these two modifiers before the verb, his silence overtaking his remonstrating. Furthermore, the desperate,

¹³ Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 6.27

¹⁴ Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 6.27

¹⁵ Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 6.29

repeated questions further emphasize Lucius's vulnerability. In this passage, Lucius's impotence contrasts and impedes his defiance: although he has the knowledge necessary to defy his captors and escape, his non-human status and inability to speak render him completely helpless.

When the band of thieves inevitably finds Lucius and Charite, they further crush Lucius's rebellion by mocking him for the first time. Upon seizing Lucius and Charite, "they greeted us with a spiteful laugh, and one out of the group called: 'in what direction with hurrying footsteps do you accomplish this path and not fear the ghosts and evil spirits of the stormy night?'" ("*risu maligno salutant, et unum e numero sic appellat: 'quorsum istam festinanti vestigio lucubratis viam nec noctis intempestae Manes Larvasque formidatis?'*"¹⁶). The thieves' laughter and implication that Lucius would be childish enough to fear ghosts humiliate and degrade Lucius in a more personal way than the beatings he has received thus far, especially because Lucius's alleged fear directly contradicts his image of himself as a brave rebel. Lucius emphasizes the impression this mockery has made on him by placing the "spiteful laughter" ("*risu maligno*") in an emphatic position before the verb. Furthermore, the casual connotations of the joking and the quotidian verb "greeted" ("*salutant*") imply that the thieves do not see Lucius as a formidable opponent and do not perceive his rebellion attempt as a threat. Lucius's perception of himself as a rebel is crushed. As the thieves lead him back, Lucius recounts, "I became mindful again of the pain of my hoofs and I began to limp, with my head wavering" ("*reminiscor doloris ungulae et occipio nutanti capite claudicare*"¹⁷). As one of the thieves tells him, "you stagger and totter" ("*titubas et vaccillas*"¹⁸). Lucius's posture becomes submissive and vulnerable. The emphasis on words that signify "waver" and "totter," implying vacillation, contrast the resolute decision-making present in Lucius's fight scene against the old woman. Lucius's idea that he, unlike the old woman as he perceives her, is capable of rebellion vanishes.

¹⁶ Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 6.29-30

¹⁷ Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 6.30

¹⁸ Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 6.30

When Lucius, Charite, and the band of thieves return to the lodging, they come upon an astonishing scene. As Lucius describes it, “and, lo, that old woman hung from a certain branch of a tall cypress wearing a noose. They tossed her, after immediately being taken down, attached to her noose, headfirst off a cliff, and, with the girl tied up in chains, they fell with spirits like wild animals upon the dinner that the unhappy old woman had prepared with a final diligence” (“*et ecce de quodam ramo procerae cupressus induta laqueum anus illa pendebat. quam quidem detractam protinus cum suo sibi funiculo devinctam dedere praecipitem puellaque statim distenta vinculis cenam, quam postuma diligentia praeparaverat infelix ancilla, ferinis invadunt animis*”¹⁹). The old woman present in this scene is a far cry from the “drunken old hag” in previous scenes. Through her suicide, she morphs from a comedic character to a tragic character. Lucius is struck by the sight of the dead housekeeper, as indicated by the dramatic word “lo” (*ecce*) which draws the readers in and points to the importance of the passage. Paradoxically, though until this moment Lucius has always felt contempt towards the old woman’s obedience, he now has respect for her after she performs a twofold act of supreme obedience. Firstly, she commits suicide because she has not been able to fulfill her duty to the thieves. Strikingly, she even leaves a dinner for the thieves in a final act of subservience. For the first time, Lucius praises the old woman’s obedient character, referring to the very act of subservience for which he mocks her when he first meets her in Book IV, as “diligence” (*diligentia*). Why has Lucius’s attitude towards the old woman changed so drastically?

First of all, Lucius’s change in attitude towards the old woman directly follows his realization that he, like the old woman, is inescapably subservient to the band of thieves. He himself having submitted to the thieves, Lucius can no longer criticize the old woman’s subservience. In this passage, for the first time, Lucius draws parallels between himself and the old woman. The thieves toss the old woman’s body off of a cliff, an apparently commonplace act of cruelty of the thieves against their

¹⁹ Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 6.30

property. When Lucius's fellow donkey becomes exhausted and refuses to budge any further, the thieves "threw him, having been drawn back a bit from the road, still breathing, through a very tall edge of an abyss into the neighboring valley" ("*paululum a via retractum per altissimum praeceps in vallem proximam etiam nunc spirantem praecipitant*"²⁰). When Lucius later slows down, one of the thieves declares, "I will immediately throw him headlong, about to be a most welcome morsel for vultures" ("*protinus eum vulturiis gratissimum pabulum futurum praecipitabo*"²¹). Lucius's vocabulary when describing the old woman's plunge off of a cliff overlaps heavily with the vocabulary in these two passages, with forms of either the verb "praecipito" or its corresponding adjective "praeceps" occurring at least once in each of the three passages, and the adverb "protinus" occurring in two of them. These similarities in vocabulary draw a connection between the old woman and the donkeys, implying that they share the same disposable status in the eyes of the thieves. The woman and the two donkeys are all also the accusative direct objects of the sentences in which they are either thrown off cliffs or threatened with this possibility: they are all passive objects of the thieves' actions. Thus, Lucius's sudden respect for the old woman stems partially from a new understanding of solidarity.

Furthermore, although the old woman has remained overtly very subservient to the band of thieves in ways which Lucius mocks, her outward submission ultimately contains elements of rebellion. Firstly, the old woman is the property of the band of thieves; by destroying herself, she destroys her captors' property. In dying, she ends a life of subservience, choosing extinction over the beatings and reproach she would inevitably receive for allowing Lucius to escape. The old woman's suicide and preparation of dinner also indirectly belittle her masters by turning them into the beings they claim to dominate: beasts with "spirits like wild animals" (*animis ferinis*). The old woman's actions, while outwardly serving her masters, indirectly insult them as well, causing them to act in a manner that invites a slight mockery from Lucius. Thus, the old woman demonstrates to Lucius that, though as slaves

²⁰ Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 4.5

²¹ Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 6.26

they cannot participate in overt, conspicuous forms of rebellion, they can turn their obedience into rebellion.

In the next chapter, although Lucius's rambunctiously rebellious character has been squelched, he does manage to escape from the thieves' grasp, using the tactic of the old woman: obedience. Lucius takes a passive role in this escape plan. He recounts, "and, by Hercules, he gave me the suspicion that he had mixed into the vessels a sort of soporific poison. For all of the men, every one of them, lay overcome by wine, all as if they were dead. Then with no pain, with the robbers having been hindered by crafty binds and constrained at his judgment, with the girl having been placed on my back, he led an escape to his homeland" (*"Et hercules suspicionem mihi fecit quasi soporiferum quoddam venenum cantharis immisceret illis. Cuncti denique, sed prorsus omnes vino sepulti iacebant, omnes pariter mortui. Tunc nullo negotio artissimis vinculis impeditis ac pro arbitrio suo constrictis illis, imposita dorso meo puella, dirigit gressum ad suam patriam"*²²). Lucius devotes the vast majority of this account to emphasizing Tlepolemus's accomplishments. Lucius himself has had almost no role in this story: he mentions himself only once, as an adjective in an oblique case tucked away within an ablative absolute and between the two far more grammatically important ablatives. He also only exists within this plan as "my back" (*dorso meo*): he does not refer to his identity or his character, but merely a body part. Lucius does not take an active role in the escape plan, but only when he obeys Tlepolemus and Charite, this escape plan succeeds. Much like the old woman, when Lucius is obedient, he manages to rebel against the band of thieves.

Throughout Apuleius's novel *The Golden Ass*, the protagonist Lucius undergoes an enormous physical change, morphing from human to donkey. This physical change spurs various psychological and emotional changes, one of which is reflected in Lucius's attitude towards his captors' housekeeper. When Lucius believes himself to be capable of defiance and rebellion, he mocks the old woman's

²² Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 7.12

subservience. However, once he understands that, as an ass, he cannot openly rebel against his powerful masters, he comes to recognize and respect the subtle elements of rebellion to be found in obedience. In fact, Lucius's only successful escape plan occurs when he obeys Tlepolemus and Charite. In learning to obey, a formerly self-aggrandizing Lucius learns the power of humility, a principle by which he will later live his life as a devotee to the goddess Isis.

Provincial Identity in a Roman World: Thugga (Dougga)

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The Roman Empire included vast territories and groups of people, in which unique identities and cultures merged. This phenomenon did not happen in a unidirectional or predictable way, but instead amassed a great deal of regional and intraregional variety. In order to understand the process of change and integration of the indigenous and Roman cultures that occurred during the Roman Empire, it is beneficial to begin with a small scope and progress towards the larger picture. In this paper I will focus on the identity of Roman North Africa, and specifically on one city in that province, Thugga (modern day Dougga), the best-preserved Roman city in Tunisia. The city of Thugga serves not so much as a model for the cultural trend in Roman North Africa in general, but as a case study for analyzing the process and idiosyncrasies of that dynamic in one particular location.

Recent Scholarship on the topic of “Romanization”

Scholars have been studying the spread of Roman culture for many years, but this study has recently begun to shift away from the ethnocentric, unidirectional explanations to more in-depth approaches that focus on cultural exchange rather than a mandatory or predictable, cultural implantation. It is no longer appropriate, for example, to view the Romans as a “civilizing force” that helped areas to progress from their indigenous “backward” ways. The use of the term “Romanization” has even come into question because the term is used to embody both the process and the outcome, making it its own explanation.¹ Indeed, archaeologists have often used a ranking system based on how “Roman” sites are by quantifying their material evidence. However, this approach assumes that there is a pure “Roman” culture to look for, which, given Rome’s diverse mix of influences, never really existed.²

¹ David J. Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power and Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 207.

² Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 6.

We can no longer study integration as the exclusive process of increasing the Roman Empire's socio-cultural and political homogeneity.³

Given these realizations, scholars are now taking into account the fact that Roman culture and the responses to its spread were diverse and unpredictable.⁴ This approach is more difficult of course, in that we need to know how to study cultural change in the absence of a definition of what each culture includes. Greg Woolf provides a useful model, defining: "the range of objects, beliefs and practices that were characteristic of people who considered themselves to be, and were widely acknowledged as, Roman."⁵ Scholars have used varying strands of this new approach in their studies of Roman provinces, focusing on the interactions between different cultures along with how these interactions occurred,⁶ and studying the tension between the acceptance of Roman ways and the resistance to it.⁷ Although these approaches are all certainly steps in the right direction, none are without flaws.

Scholars now realize that the evidence for provincial societies must focus more on archaeology than text because the lives of the average provincial inhabitant, including how and why they adopted certain Roman cultural traits, were rarely documented.⁸ As this study too will show, finding the identity of the native group in a province can be very difficult when most of the studied remains, including monuments and statues, directly tie to the elite and Roman inhabitants. Some scholars, such as M. Millett, argue that the spread of Roman culture was an elite phenomenon, while remaining indigenous

³ Roman Roth, "Roman culture between homogeneity and integration," *JRA* 66 (2007): 9.

⁴ Roth, "Roman culture between homogeneity and integration," 8. Responses could range from retaliation in multiple ways such as physical riots or cultural resistance, or simply acceptance of the Roman rule. Each area would often have varying degrees of these responses.

⁵ Woolf, 11.

⁶ This practice used to be widely popular with anthropologists, though it is no longer their major focus. The study can include imitation and rejection of different aspects of Roman society. Woolf, 15.

⁷ This form of study also looks at the mixtures of elements from pre-Roman and Roman traditions. Woolf, 19.

⁸ Ramsay MacMullen, *Romanization in the Time of Augustus* (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, 2000), xi.

groups maintained a relatively traditional lifestyle.⁹ Mattingly, expands this scope, arguing that the “search for a discrepant experience directs us to look across the social spectrum, not simply at the imperial elite, and to try and assess the impact of empire from different perspectives.”¹⁰ My study will attempt to utilize this sort of “bottom-up” approach, which, combined with other localized studies, could lead to interconnections with the process of cultural change across the empire.¹¹

Early History of Roman North Africa and Thugga

Long before the conquering power of the Roman Empire swept over the ancient world, the empire of Carthage ruled over North Africa and its neighboring lands with a forceful hand. However, in response to this threat, the Romans fought multiple wars against the Carthaginian Empire, and eventually removed it as one of its most intimidating rivals.¹² Although Rome conquered the Carthaginian territory [figure 1], spreading its culture along with every aspect of Roman society, the Punic culture of the Carthaginians remained in many areas of the Roman North African society such as its economy, political system, religious institutions, language and nomenclature, and the placement of cities and their layout. As long as the Roman rule was not threatened, Roman culture became gradually integrated into the existing cultures of the conquered societies. North Africa is a prime example of this due to its past complexity and influence. Unfortunately for historians, most textual evidence of the Carthaginian Empire and Roman North Africa comes from Greek and Roman sources who hold some obvious biases, which leaves the interpretation of local groups primarily to archaeologists.

Although the Romans completely destroyed the city of Carthage in 146 BCE, they left many cities and towns previously under the Carthaginian territory intact and expanded the existing urban

⁹ Roth, “Roman culture between homogeneity and integration,” 7. Referencing Millett’s work: *Romanization of Britain: an essay in archaeological interpretation* (1990).

¹⁰ Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power and Identity*, 213. By discrepant he means “exhibiting difference.”

¹¹ Peter van Dommelen and Nicola Terrenato, “Local cultures and the expanding Roman Republic,” *JRA* 63 (2007): 9.

¹² Carthage was destroyed in 146 BCE after fighting three wars against Rome.

systems, including the city of Thugga. Four types of cities dominated Roman North Africa: 1) the old Phoenician towns, almost all of which were located on the coast with a sizeable immigrant population, often forming the most cosmopolitan of cities in the Roman period (Carthage, Leptis Magna); 2) old native settlements (Caesarea, Cirta, Thugga); 3) Roman purpose-built veterans' colonies and towns around them; and 4) the most prevalent type, modest cities of the interior, usually market towns, which grew out of native villages and hamlets.¹³ It is by maintaining sites that were previously occupied, like Thugga, that Romans circumvented the need for major engineering and building projects, in favor of expanding and embellishing these sites when necessary. This is the major reason that Thugga had such a gradual incorporation of Roman ways of life and an ever-present tie to its origins.

The city of Thugga probably began as a small Libyan settlement¹⁴ and was controlled by varying groups for many years. The Carthaginians first controlled the area, but historians believe that, as recorded by Diodorus Siculus, Eumachos, commander of the Syracusan tyrant Agathocles, took over in the late 4th century BCE. Diodorus described it then as a "city of good size."¹⁵ Though there are few remains dated solely to the pre-Roman age, historians believe that Thugga was most likely a Numidian urban center early on. This speculation is based on an early necropolis with dolmens to the north, vestiges of a sanctuary to Ba'al Hammon including neo-Punic steles, and a Punic-Libyan mausoleum (restored by Claude Poinssot).¹⁶ The mausoleum had two inscriptions on it, written in both Punic and Libyan [**figure 2**], which named the likely man who constructed it, Ateban.¹⁷ Many believe that this was

¹³ Susan Raven, *Rome in Africa* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 106. The Roman veteran colonies and towns would have been built much later than 146 BCE. For example, Timgad, a Roman colonial town, was built c. 100 CE under Trajan.

¹⁴ This is also shown in the origins of the name Thugga, which is thought to have derived from the Libyan name TBGG from the word TBG meaning to protect. *Encyclopedie Berbere*, vol. 16, edited by Gabriel Camps (Provence: Edisud, 1995), 2522.

¹⁵ This belief assumes that the city mentioned by Diodorus of Siculus, Takai, is actually Thugga. Diodorus described it as "Τώκας πόλιν εὐμεγέθη" (Diod. 20.57.4). Translation by Devyn Hunter.

¹⁶ Few royal Numidian mausolea remain. The main linking example is the Mausoleum of Bes, located at the site of Sabratha, Libya.

¹⁷ *Encyclopedie Berbere*, 2522.

a tomb dedicated to the Numidian king Massinissa (c. 240-148 BCE). The tomb was built in three levels and capped with a pyramid [figure 3]. The first level had the tomb space, with Aeolic capitals and lotus motifs. The second level was of the Ionic order and the third repeated the Aeolic with a relief of a four-horse chariot. The pyramid contained Sirens holding the sphere of heaven, with a lion symbolizing the sun at its top. This mixture of architectural orders and styles demonstrates the existing cultural exposure to Greek, Egyptian, and Near-Eastern groups,¹⁸ a connection that would affect the city's later characteristics.

Thugga Under Roman Rule

Caesar annexed the Numidian territory in 46 BCE, thus adding the city of Thugga to Rome's possession of Africa Nova and making Thugga a "double city," both a *civitas* of native inhabitants and a small *pagus* of Roman settlers. Though Thugga became a Roman city, one does not see any immediate or visible changes in the archaeological record or "built environment". Since the city was built on a hill with winding streets [figures 4 and 5], the Romans could not institute their favored orthogonal street plan,¹⁹ thus leaving the city in its original layout and design.²⁰ Since Thugga had previously been an agricultural city, the inhabitants most likely chose to simply expand and intensify the pre-existing production tactics in order to obtain greater amounts of wheat. Wheat was extremely important to the Romans for feeding their population and their soldiers, as stated by Pliny the Elder, "Tritico nihil est fertilius."²¹ The farming towns like Thugga had to shift from a subsistence to a market economy, but the

¹⁸ Paul MacKendrick, *The North African Stones Speak* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 25.

¹⁹ Though the Romans typically favored the orthogonal street plan, they often left older cities' original streets in tact, such as at Ostia and Pompeii. When they built cities from scratch, such as at Timgad in present day Algeria, they instituted the grid pattern streets. This shows that the Romans did not always enforce a set standard for every city, and were accustomed to adapting to the local environment and foundations.

²⁰ E. Lennox Manton, *Roman North Africa* (Essex: Anchor Brendon Ltd, 1988), 27.

²¹ Pliny, *NH*, XVIII.21. Translation by Devyn Hunter: "Nothing is more fertile than wheat."

Romans often allowed many who had been “fixed” on good agricultural land by the Carthaginians or Numidian kings to keep their small properties.²²

The people of Thugga also maintained a level of autonomy in their political system, though the details of the process are slim. The *civitas* most likely consisted of *suffetes*, the Punic equivalent of Roman consuls, who were chosen by elections of the full citizen body and based largely on birth and wealth.²³ The existence of these magistrates can be assumed based on an inscription mentioning them found in the city, describing the dedication of a sacred space to the divine Augustus and Tiberius.²⁴ Unfortunately, few inscriptions or substantial archaeological material exists during the first few centuries of Roman occupation in Thugga. This “dead zone” in the archaeological record might lead one to assume that few changes took place during this time period. Further excavations should aid in the understanding of this period.

Though there is no evidence of a political mixing of the two groups early on, they appeared to have been more socially integrated as seen through the material record. The most prominent archaeologist who has excavated Thugga, Claude Poinssot, argued for years that the native inhabitants of the *civitas* led entirely separate lives from that of the Roman *pagus* members; however, recent scholarship and excavations have shown that these two groups must have intermixed socially and culturally in the city. Poinssot believed that the two different groups occupied different areas of the city, with Romans building their own new area, separate from the former city.²⁵ After further studies of the site, scholars today point out that there would have been a geographical divide in the public places such as separate living areas and fora, pointing to the fact that both groups must have actually shared the areas. Recent excavations have also shown that Libyo-Punic architecture existed in the “Roman”

²² D. J. Mattingly, *Tripolitania* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1995), 138.

²³ G.I. Ikurite, “Punic Religious and Political Influences in Roman North Africa,” *The Phrontisterion (the classical association)*, 5, (1967): 42-47.

²⁴ ILS 6797.

²⁵ Claude Poinssot, *Les Ruines De Dougga* (Tunis: Ministère des Affaires Culturelles Institut National d’Archeologie et d’Arts, 1983), 11.

forum at the heart of the city,²⁶ demonstrating the fact that the inhabitants combined the earlier architecture with later, more “Roman” additions. Poinssot’s earlier interpretation largely reflected the ideology that he wanted to impose on the city. Saint-Amans posits that Poinssot was influenced by his own experience of viewing “la ville européenne, moderne, juxtaposée à la vieille medina, sans jamais la recouper”.²⁷ This demonstrates the way that archaeologists and historians can shape their arguments in a personally biased way. This is especially an issue in the previously colonized areas of North Africa. Today, we have only begun to reevaluate past interpretations such as this.

Although Roman era ruins date from the beginning of the reign of Tiberius (14-37 CE) continuing to be built until around the Severan age (3rd century CE), the traces of life in the city of Thugga leave behind a picture of a group with a unique and syncretized identity. A patron of the *pagus*, L. Postumius Chius, donated one of the first major urban expansion projects. It included the paving of the forum, the erection of an altar to Augustus, a shrine of Saturn, and an arch, as testified by an inscription.²⁸ These initial choices of dedications demonstrate the patron’s acceptance of Augustus as his leader, while paying homage to Saturn, the god that most mirrors the city’s original religious beliefs. During the reign of Claudius (41-54 CE), patrons donated multiple building projects including a market, a sacred space to Ceres, and temples to Fortune, Venus, and Concord.²⁹ Two of the people who named themselves in the Claudian inscriptions as the patrons refer to themselves as patrons of both the *civitas* and *pagus*,

²⁶ Sophie Saint-Amans, *Topographie Religieuse de Thugga (Dougga): ville romaine d’Afrique proconsulaire (Tunisie)* (Bordeaux: Ausonius, 2004), 60. Unfortunately, the descriptions of the Libyo-Punic architecture in the archeological articles on the site are slim. Thus, I would assume that this characterization would include an earlier time of construction than the Roman occupation, and possibly building techniques used across pre-Roman North Africa.

²⁷ Saint-Amans, 59.

²⁸ AE 1914.172. “*Imp(eratori) Ti(berio) Caesari divi Aug(usti) f(ilio) Aug(usto) pontif(ici) maximo tribunic(ia) potest(ate) XXXVIII co(n)s(uli) V / L(ucius) Manilius L(uci) f(ilius) Arn(ensi) Bucco Ilvir dedicavit / L(ucius) Postumius C(ai) f(ilius) Arn(ensi) Chius patron(us) pag(i) nomine suo et Firmi et Rufi filiorum / forum et aream ante templum Caesaris stravit aram Aug(usti) aedem Saturn(i) arcum d(e) s(ua) p(ecunia) f(aciendum) c(uravit).*”

²⁹ Discussed by Mustapha Khanoussi, “Thugga (Dougga) sous le Haut-empire: une ville double?” *L’Africa Romana*, Atti del X Convegno di Studio Oristano (1992): 599, Inscriptions: AE 1922.109, CIL 8.26464, and CIL 8.26603.

*“patronus pagi et civitatis Thugg(ensis) [p]ago dedit itemque dedicavit.”*³⁰ The fact that citizens considered themselves a patron of both groups demonstrates that there must have been some sort of shared identity, and that both groups would have benefited from the spaces and monuments that they donated. Although these building projects appear as solely Roman constructs, they were built surrounded by the previously existing Numidian/Punic buildings and forum, and Khanoussi points out that it was not until the time of Antoninus Pius that a citizen of the family of the Gabinii donated porticoes to the Forum with columns and decorations.³¹ This shows that the inhabitants did not rush to dramatically alter the existing spaces to make them more acceptably “Roman.” Instead, they gradually incorporated varying characteristics and both groups, along with their traditions and architectural styles, coexisted for long periods of time. This coexistence, although it hints at both a process of acculturation and perhaps resistance, allows us to see the development of the city in a much more dynamic way over time.

Throughout the years of Thugga’s status as both a *pagus* and *civitas*, patrons continued to donate and build various monuments, especially religious spaces, yet the Roman identity never fully dominated or destroyed the former culture of the Thugganese residents; instead a unique mixture of cultural attributes arose organically. The religious traditions of the Carthaginian Empire survived and easily became integrated into the Roman practices due to the Punic religion’s previous influences from the Phoenicians, Greeks, and neighboring cults. The early inhabitants of Thugga most likely worshipped the two major Punic gods of Ba’al Hammon and Tanit, amongst many other more minor gods.³² Their religious traditions included submission to the gods and the necessity to appease them throughout their

³⁰ *AE* 1922.109 and *CIL* 8.26603. Both have the same exact phrase within the larger inscription.

³¹ Mustapha Khanoussi, “L’évolution urbaine de Thugga (Dougga) en Afrique proconsulaire : de l’agglomération numide à la ville africo-romaine,” *Comptes-rendus des séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 147 (2002): 147, <http://www.persee.fr/web/> (accessed October 15, 2011).

³² Ikkurite, 42.

rituals including sacrifice (mostly of animals, but occasionally of infants, as well).³³ Since the Thugga residents already had a history of polytheism, sacrifices, and rituals, those who wished merely had to adapt their system to appear a bit more “Roman,” by embracing practices such as a shift in names and architectural design. Tanit became widely identified with Juno-Caelestis and Ba’al with Saturn.³⁴ The preoccupation with these two gods, amongst many others that related to Punic gods, can be observed throughout the North African province.

Thugga is no exception; yet, it contained more varied cults and religious buildings than anywhere else in Roman Tunisia, displaying the city’s unique religious and cultural makeup. Several buildings were dedicated to deities that the inhabitants would have directly linked to their previously worshipped gods, such as the temple to Liber Pater (linking to the wine god Shadrach) and the temple of Caelestis (linking to the goddess Tanit).³⁵ Many of the temples represented various traditional Roman gods that might not have had a direct Punic link. During Hadrian’s reign a Roman citizen constructed temples to Fortuna, Concord, Mercury, and Venus,³⁶ while two other Romans worked on building projects nearby creating temples to Concord, Neptune, Frugifer, and Liber Pater.³⁷ Behind the sanctuary for the latter four temples, the patrons created a small theater that was most likely used for the initiations and celebrations of the mystery cult of Liber Pater.³⁸ One of the most well-known and best preserved buildings at Thugga, the Capitolium [**figure 6**], was built in 166 or 167 CE and dedicated to the gods Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva.³⁹ It sat at the heart of the city, beside the forum and surrounded by other public buildings and temples, facing out over the views of the town and countryside.

³³ Ikkurite, 43.

³⁴ Raven, 153. Examples of the worship of the cult of Saturn can be seen at sites such as Ain Tounga, Lambaesis, and more.

³⁵ MacKendrick, 67.

³⁶ *CIL* 8.26471.

³⁷ *CIL* 8.26467.

³⁸ Poinssot, 54.

³⁹ *CIL* 8.15513.

Around the same time as the construction of the Capitolium, P. Marcius Quadratus dedicated a large theater [figure 7].⁴⁰ It sat at the top of the city slope, allowing for an easier building process by using the natural terrain, a practice used often by the Greeks. The theater had a wonderful aerial view of the landscape and city and observed Roman characteristics of the stage.⁴¹ It had a semi-circular *cavea* with five stairways reaching the top of the seating area and a *frons scaenae* with many columns and decorations.⁴² The theater seated about 3500 citizens, a low number compared to the 5000 estimated inhabitants around that time. This discrepancy in space and numbers at the theater versus a vast number of temples might signal an unbalanced emphasis on religion rather than on entertainment, reflecting the dour Punic religious origins.⁴³

Thugga continued to develop after it gained the status of a *municipium*⁴⁴ with several building projects, the Temple of Saturn serving as a prime example of Thugga's enduring and adapted Punic identity. Sometime between 193-211 CE, a new Temple of Saturn was built [figure 8]⁴⁵ on a high place over top of the Punic sanctuary dedicated to Ba'al Hammon.⁴⁶ The placement and god of this temple alone advertise a connection to Thugga's Punic origins. The original sanctuary to Ba'al had a *tophet* used for sacrificial offerings and images of animals sacrificed on the altar. When the later inhabitants reconstructed it, they used the same layout with three cells, and merely expanded it⁴⁷. The use of the three vaulted apsidal *cellae*, with geometric mosaic floors and a horizontal arrangement, reflected the

⁴⁰ *CIL* 8.26528.

⁴¹ MacKendrick, 68. The stage area was long and narrow.

⁴² Poinssot, 27-31.

⁴³ Manton, 114-115. The Carthaginians had practiced many rituals before the Roman occupation, but they did not appear to have had as many sources of entertainment as the Romans such as theaters or circuses.

⁴⁴ Probably during Septimius Severus' visit to the province in 202/3 CE. First mentioned on inscription in 205 CE: *CIL* 8.26539.

⁴⁵ *CIL* 8.26498. The inscription mentions that the *pagus* and *civitas* together dedicated the temple, showing their growing cohesion.

⁴⁶ Poinssot, 65.

⁴⁷ Patrizio Pensabene, "Il tempio di Saturno a Dougga e tradizioni architettoniche d'origine punica." *L'Africa romana* (1989): 255.

most prevalent characteristics of religious buildings in North Africa [figure 9].⁴⁸ Throughout North Africa, thirteen temples with three cells and a large central court area, like that of the Temple of Saturn, have been found⁴⁹. This Romano-African style also existed in other temples at Thugga including the Temple of Tellus, Mercury, and Concordia.⁵⁰ Excavations of the temple have also uncovered indentations of footprints on the ground of the entrance, indicating a spot for removing shoes or praying, a Punic tradition.⁵¹ The Temple of Caelestis, the goddess whom the Thugganese viewed as their goddess Tanit, was also built during the early 3rd century CE,⁵² demonstrating the continuous link to Thugga's past. By mixing traditional Punic architectural forms and religious sentiments with Roman elements the temples both displayed and influenced the unique identity of the people of Thugga.

Most of the wealthy homes that archaeologists have excavated have been dated to sometime in the third century, revealing that it took many years for such large, "Roman" style homes to emerge, yet they still contained aspects that connected them to their pre-Roman history. The success and significance of the wheat harvest at Thugga brought wealth to the city that allowed for some very wealthy residents.⁵³ Poinssot recorded that most houses sat along the street with only a small door facing out and were built in the oldest Mediterranean style, still used in some Islamic areas today.⁵⁴ The major homes that are best known for their well intact mosaics often had many attributes of homes that one might see in Pompeii or Rome. The "House of Dionysus and Ulysses" contained multiple mosaics [figure 10] of mythological and epic scenes that may allude to the religious cults in which the owners participated,⁵⁵ the stories that they valued, or simply the image of themselves that they wanted to

⁴⁸ Pensabene, "Il tempio di Saturno," 253. Many originally Roman temples throughout the Roman world had a triple cella, such as the Capitolium in Rome (6/4th century BCE), however the North African ones had the characteristic of the vaulted apsidal *cellae*, setting them apart from the Roman format.

⁴⁹ Pensabene, "Il tempio di Saturno," 263.

⁵⁰ Saint-Amans, 222.

⁵¹ Pensabene, "Il tempio di Saturno," 262.

⁵² *CIL* 8.26460.

⁵³ Manton, 115.

⁵⁴ Poinssot, "Il tempio di Saturno," 19.

⁵⁵ Poinssot, "Il tempio di Saturno," 46-47.

project to others.⁵⁶ The Baths of the Cyclops, also constructed in the early 3rd century CE had a mosaic of three Cyclops forging the bolts of Jupiter in the cave of Vulcan on the floor of the frigidarium.⁵⁷ Although these scenes certainly mirror those of mosaics in many Roman homes, the inhabitants of Thugga probably knew these myths for years before the Roman occupation due to their exposure to the Phoenicians and the Greeks, thus showing the combination of a new art style with familiar subjects. Recent excavations have also shown that some of the wealthier homes with elaborate mosaics had origins from the Numidian age, including the House of Dionysus and Ulysses and the House of the *trifolium*.⁵⁸ This evidence once again affirms that the Roman occupants and the newer Roman constructions, such as the additions on these homes, did not take place separately from the original areas of the city.

Finally, the *necropoleis* surrounding the city demonstrate how varied and yet united the identities of the inhabitants remained throughout the period. Archaeologists have excavated five major tomb areas around the city, including the Northeast, Northwest, West, South, and Southeast sites (in order of usage date).⁵⁹ Though the burial types greatly varied, the main styles consisted of steles and *cippi*, along with ten *mausolea*.⁶⁰ By reading the inscriptions on the tombs, archaeologists can try to decipher whether the person chose to identify him or herself as a native or a Roman.⁶¹ The majority appears to be local citizens, though scholars are unsure of the exact number of Romans who originally came to Thugga.⁶² The names inscribed on the tombs are the best indicator of the person's identity by

⁵⁶ This practice can be seen at the House of the Faun at Pompeii in which the *dominus* had the mosaic of Alexander the Great in his *tablinum* to display his power and knowledge to his guests. These scenes were more than just decoration; they allowed for the viewers to engage in them and influenced their view of the people living in the home.

⁵⁷ Poinssot, 56.

⁵⁸ Khanoussi, "L'évolution urbain de Thugga (Dougga)", 142.

⁵⁹ Mustapha Khanoussi, Louis Maurin, et al. *Mourir à Dougga. Recueil des inscriptions funéraires* (Bordeaux, France: Ausonius, 2002), 48.

⁶⁰ Khanoussi and Maurin, 49.

⁶¹ By the term "Roman" I mean a colonial Roman, emigrant, of Roman ancestry, or simply culturally Roman.

⁶² Khanoussi and Maurin, 77.

offering a valuable sign of linguistic loyalty⁶³. There were three accepted ways in which most Africans changed their names under the Roman occupation: taking a completely new and unrelated Latin name, adapting an original name to a similar sounding Latin one, or translating the original name directly into Latin⁶⁴. Romans also offered an intermediate stage of name change. Roman names had a *praenomen*, *gentilicium*, and a *cognomen*, so they allowed newly enfranchised citizens to keep their old *cognomen* while accepting new *praenomen* and *gentilicium*.⁶⁵ Most natives from Thugga only had one name, a common trait of all areas in pre-Roman Africa. Some might add a name such as their father's to distinguish themselves as well [figure 11].⁶⁶ Many of the later tombs have two names, adding a more Roman name to their native one, demonstrating the syncretization of the inhabitants identities.⁶⁷ Despite these variations, members of the *civitas* and *pagus* were buried together for the entirety of the city's occupation, demonstrating that the inhabitants did not think it necessary to distinguish themselves not only in life, but also for eternity. These cultural marks of "Africanness," "Romanness," or "sameness" in the names and tomb styles shows the cultural complexity of the area and the personal choice in identity that the Thugganese developed.⁶⁸

⁶³ Ramsay MacMullen, "Provincial Languages in the Roman Empire." *The American Journal of Philology*, 87, No. 1 (1966): 9, <http://0-www.jstor.org.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/stable/292973> (accessed October 14, 2009).

⁶⁴ Zsuzsanna Varhelyi, "What is the evidence for the survival of Punic culture in Roman North Africa?" *Acta antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 38, 4 (1998):395.

⁶⁵ Anthony R. Birley, "Names at Leptis Magna." *Libyan Studies; annual report of the Society of Libyan Studies*, 19, (1988): 1-2.

⁶⁶ Khanoussi and Maurin, 79. Examples of one name: Calcarica (n°168) and Berenecae (n° 137). Examples with names with added description: "Amplia Tulusi" Amplia, daughter of Tulusus (n° 62) and "Adzutor Regilli", Adzuctor, son of Regilus (n° 17).

⁶⁷ Khanoussi and Maurin, 81. Examples of two names: Bassa Dativa (n°131) and Celsus Solutor (n°219).

⁶⁸ See: Karen B. Stern, "Keeping the Dead in Their Place: Mortuary Practices and Jewish Cultural Identity in Roman North Africa," in *Cultural Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*. Ed. Erich Gruen. (Los Angeles: Getty Museum Publications, 2011), 307-35. This chapter demonstrates the complexity of a burial site in North Africa, focusing on the Jewish identity and how it contained aspects from the local region as well.

Conclusion

Although the city of Thugga certainly developed and changed throughout the Roman era, it did so in a way that used characteristics from both the Roman culture and the indigenous culture to create a unique identity for the inhabitants. This process is neither linear nor does it advance outward from solely one direction. The members of both the *pagus* and *civitas* lived together as one community, with the views of both groups merging gradually over time. By examining the dates and construction of the major monuments in Thugga, one can infer that the city largely remained as it existed before the Roman occupation for many years. Though the inhabitants constructed many buildings in the city throughout the empire that outwardly appear “Roman” (especially in the second and third centuries CE), many of these buildings contain traces of the original Thuggan traditions. By studying these ruins we can begin to observe the “discrepant experience” that permeated all ranks of society. The Roman occupation did not only affect the elites of the city. Instead, I argue that the occupation affected the lives of all the inhabitants, including the Roman residents themselves. The Africans and Romans living in Thugga did not need to differentiate between their identities; Roman Africans and African Romans became primarily synonymous. Those that lived in Thugga during the Roman occupation lived their lives through a mixture of Roman and Libyo-Punic traditions that they actively asserted, embedding them into their society. The two groups lived as one across the city, even in death. More data is needed in order to better construct what these discrepant experiences would have contained, but I believe that this is a good starting point. By using an example like the city of Thugga, one can begin to understand the complex process of changing cultures and identities that occurred in the province of North Africa, and in the wider Roman world.

Appendix: Figures

Figure Sources

- Figure 1: "Tunisia: Africa Proconsularis" <http://boisestate.edu/courses/westciv/punicwar/>
- Figure 2: "Libyan and Punic inscription from the mausoleum in Dougga" now in the British Museum, by Inconnu
http://lookaboo.com/o/pictures/picture/1565448/Libyan_and_Punic_inscription_from_the_ma
- Figure 3: Libyo-Punic Mausoleum, taken by Devyn Hunter
- Figure 4: Winding streets at Thugga, taken by Devyn Hunter
- Figure 5: Scenic view of Thugga, taken by Devyn Hunter
- Figure 6: View of the Capitolium, taken by Devyn Hunter
- Figure 7: Theater at Thugga, taken by Devyn Hunter
- Figure 8: Temple of Saturn, by Pradigue, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Temple_saturne_dougga_.jpg
- Figure 9: "Plan du temple de Saturne," from *Les Ruines de Dougga*, page 64.
- Figure 10: "Ulysses and the Sirens," by Habib M'henni, Bardo Museum, 2nd c CE, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mosaïque_d%27Ulysse_et_les_sirènes.jpg
- Figure 11: Stele of Adzuctor, from *Mourir a Dougga*, #17 page 3 of "planches"

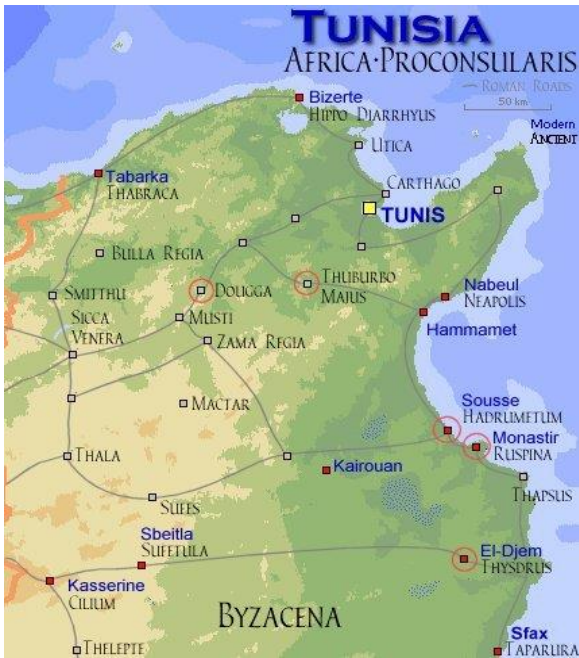


Figure 1: Map of Africa Proconsularis (Dougga=Thugga).



Figure 2: Bilingual Mausoleum inscription.



Figure 3: Libyo-Punic Mausoleum.



Figure 4: Original winding streets.



Figure 5: Scenic view of city, demonstrating the slope on which it was built.



Figure 6: Capitolium on hillside of city.



Figure 7: Main theater with me standing.



Figure 8: Ruins of Temple of Saturn.



Figure 10: Mosaic of Odysseus and the Sirens

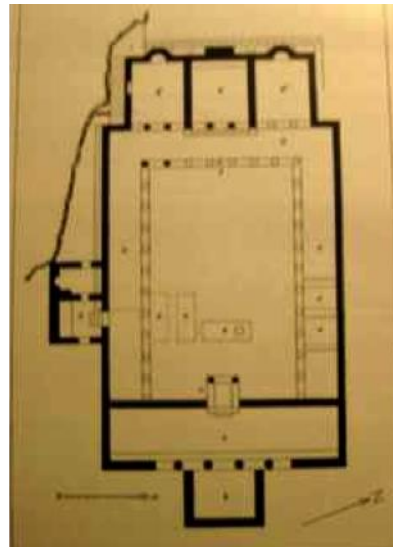


Figure 9: Plan of Temple of Saturn (note the form of the three cellae)



Figure 11: Stele of Adzutor's burial:
"D(is) M(anibus) Adzutor Regil<l>I
p(ius) v(ixit) a(nnis) XXIII h(ic)

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Celticity: Migration or Fashion?

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The definition of the Celts and Celtic is at the core of Celtic Studies, either in antiquity or the early medieval period. The modern pop-culture understanding of the people, and their culture is very different to the evidence from ancient times; however even when examining archaeological sites and the writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans we find discontinuities. The archaeological evidence shows a migration of culture from the Celtic homeland in central continental Europe, a myriad of Halstatt and La Tène artefacts, stone henges and circles, scattered across Gaul and into the British Isles (the home of the modern day Celts). The historical record sees a distinction between the Keltoi/Gauls and the tribes of the British Isles, however similarities between them are apparent. The linguistic evidence is unclear, showing some relationships between the British Celts and the ancient Keltoi, but nothing definitive. The genetic evidence gives the clearest answer to the question “Celticity: Migration or Fashion?”, that the Celts of the British Isles are not genetically related to the original ancient Keltoi (not recently). This paper ultimately shows that Celticity was due to the spread of fashion and not an actual migration of people from the Celtic homeland.

Introduction

Who were or are the Celts and how are they to be defined? This is the biggest question of Celtic Studies. Surely the Celts existed (and might still today), but it is difficult to find truth amongst the legends, modern misunderstandings and the ‘hard’ evidence (which is often contradictory). This paper attempts to synthesise available evidence to address the theories of invasion and cultural overlay in terms of the spread of ‘Celticity’ during antiquity and to determine if the ancient Celts existed as a definitive, genetically distinct peoples, or if what has been perceived as ‘Celtic’ archaeological evidence is a localised art form which was popularised and spread across parts of Europe. This paper ultimately concludes that it is indeed fashion not migration that led to the spread of ‘Celticity’ in antiquity, specifically in regards to the British Isles, the home of the modern day Celt.

The Historical View

This section is brief owing to the fact that most of the sources about the ancient Celts were Greco-Roman and while offering some useful information for this paper do not give much insight into the migration or fashion debate; also remembering that they show only the classical Mediterranean viewpoint.¹ What is important for the debate, from sources such as Posidonius, is the geographical context and physical descriptions of the Celts/Keltoi.² According to the Greeks the 'Keltoi' lived in many separate tribes across mainland Europe, spreading from the Rhine and Danube into Gaul but there is never mention of the Keltoi being in Britannia.³ Our current "historiographical tradition... regularly refers to the movements of people as agents of historical change" particularly at the time in the Iron Age and early medieval periods when the mainland Celts (despite being Romanised they still maintained much of the La Tène material culture) were said to have invaded or migrated to the British Isles.⁴ The physical descriptions give us a mixed pool of possible genetic traits to draw from, which suggests they were not, at least on the continent, one genetic group; certain genes and traits are characteristic of specific groups e.g. red hair was a trait developed in Scandinavia with the Vikings, or microcephaly is predominantly found in the gene pool of Japan. Therefore if a group has a mixture of such traits, they show interbreeding between groups⁵. However, this does not mean they weren't a cohesive cultural unit. The biggest obstacle in deciphering the ancient historical record is quite simply that "the Celts wrote no history."⁶

¹ J. V. S. Megaw and M. R. Megaw, "Ancient Celts and Modern Ethnicity", *Antiquity* 70 (1996): 177.

² J. J. Tierney, "The Celtic Ethnography of Posidonius", *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, no. 60C (1960): 247-75.

³ Patrick Sims-Williams, "Genetics, Linguistics and Prehistory: Thinking Big and Thinking Straight", *Antiquity*, no. 72 (1998): 505-28.

⁴ Lynette Olson, "Genetic Evidence and the Early Medievalist", *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association* 4 (2008): 213.

⁵ Anthony J. F. Griffiths et al., "Population Genetics," in *Introduction to Genetic Analysis* (New York: W. H. Freeman and Company, 2012), 609.

⁶ Aedeon Cremin, *The Celts in Europe*, (Sydney, New South Wales: The University of Sydney – Centre for Celtic Studies, 1992), 6.

The Linguistic Story

The linguistic side of the debate is brief owing to the often confusing and contradictory accounts; however almost all the sources used for this paper whether, historical, archaeological, genetic or linguistic mentioned the clear connection between the ancient languages of the Irish, Welsh, Cornish and Scottish within the Isles and also to the ancient languages of Gaul. The linguistic evidence is hard to match up with exact migrations or archaeological cultures and it is an imprecise science, with languages not evolving at a constant rate. It relies on comparing words across languages, which causes problems for Pictish, which appears to be non-Indo European, or non-Proto-Indo European, which the other Celtic/Gallic languages are.⁷ An explanation for this discrepancy with archaeological cultures and/or genetics and linguistics is argued quite forcibly by Sims-Williams; he argues that you cannot equate languages with any one group and that languages are not always ancestral. A transfer of language does not require a migration of the people to happen, even in ancient times.⁸

The Archaeological Record: La Tène and Halstatt, Henges, and More

The art styles of Halstatt and La Tène and the material cultures they are associated with are almost completely synonymous with Celticity in archaeology, or at the very least show close contact with the 'Celtic' manufacturers. Cremin is convinced from the spread of 'Celtic' settlements and La Tène artefacts that the 'Keltoi' from central Europe and Gaul did migrate across Europe, towards the East and also into the British Isles.⁹

The archaeological and historical evidence of a spread into Turkey and its surrounds seems to be undisputed, so this paper will instead focus on the supposed western migration across the British Channel.

⁷ See note 3 above.

⁸ See note 3 above.

⁹ Cremin, *The Celts in Europe*.

According to one of Cremin's maps most of Europe was classified as part of Celtica in the second century BC, she seems to equate Celticity with language, which does by most definitions include Britain and Ireland, the *almost* perfectly correlated spread of La Tène objects (summarised in a map) and lifestyle.¹⁰ However Ireland has barely any Halstatt or La Tène objects so can they really be Celtic if material culture is the sole definition? Surely this would show that people did not migrate, successfully to Ireland if they did not bring their wares with them; but yet they share linguistic, religious and some genetic similarities with 'Celts' in Britain and Iberia.

Lifestyle and language can be similar without the same ethnic group or 'civilization', spread of ideas and items come just as easily through trade, and the way people live depend on resources available, how advanced their technology is, climate etc. For instance you wouldn't say that the ancient Egyptians and Mesopotamians were the same group, due to all the common factors they share. There is an interesting point in Megaw and Megaw from Otto-Herman Frey about grave goods; which is valid for this argument since most La Tène archaeological finds are from burials.¹¹ Just because someone has La Tène grave goods does not mean they were Celtic, like his analogy that just because someone has Coca-Cola and a baseball cap does not mean they are American. What this does mean is that "it indicated the presence or influence of people who first produced" the Celtic grave goods.¹² This would mean cultural overlay/fashion is the agent of cultural change into 'Celticity'.

There is also the argument that there is no sense of Celtic unity in ancient times; firstly since they did not produce their own writings we cannot know this for certain and as discussed before, the Greek and Roman sources carry their own bias. Secondly the archaeology does not explicitly show a lack of unity, in fact quite the opposite. All of the so-called 'Celtic' areas on Cremin's map share language,

¹⁰ Ibid., 25(map) and 7.

¹¹ J.V.S. Megaw and M.R. Megaw, "Ancient Celts and Modern Ethnicity", 180.

¹² See note 9 above

culture, customs and art (things which Renfrew says we are allowed to apply the term “Celtic” to).¹³

There is no doubt that the Celts did exist in the archaeological record, at least showing unity of material culture and at some level language even if they were not a ‘nation’ or ‘polity’ like in Greece or Italy. They appear to draw strong parallels with the ancient Mesopotamians, who were definitely not a united group but shared linguistic, material and religious cultures.

Torcs also seem to follow this Mesopotamian pattern of culture. The torc is an ancient symbol of a Celt or Gaul, they are found in classical texts, statues, carvings and as part of grave goods. Cremin says that “all Celts, whether men or women, were said to wear one” as what she sees as a deliberate act of identifying their Celticity.¹⁴ However we know that other cultures had very similar items so they cannot be a purely Celtic invention, but even though other cultures have similar jewellery, it does not retract from the significance of it to the Celts as the mark of a warrior. The appearance of the torc does show continuity through the regions described by Cremin, perhaps it is not migration, but a gold torc could definitely be called fashion.¹⁵

If the artefacts cannot give us an answer, perhaps stone circles and henges will. Stone henges themselves are meant to be “exclusive to the British Isles”, whilst not strictly true most stone circles and alignments appearing in the well-known Celtic/Gallic places – Brittany, Wales, Cornwall, Scotland and France.¹⁶ Oddly barely any of these appear in eastern England, something that correlates with the genetics of this region. Oppenheimer believes that the distribution of these lithic monuments is consistent with the Stone Age genetic inputs.¹⁷ This Stone Age commonality could be an early Celtic link.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 179.

¹⁴ Cremin, *The Celts in Europe*, 52-53.

¹⁵ Cremin, *The Celts in Europe*, 6-7.

¹⁶ Aedeon Cremin *et al.*, *Archaeologica: The World's Most Significant Sites and Cultural Treasures* (North Sydney, NSW: Random House, 2007), 150-151.

¹⁷ Stephen Oppenheimer, *The Origins of the British: The new prehistory of Britain and Ireland from ice-age hunter gatherers to the Vikings as revealed by DNA analysis* (London: Constable & Robinson Ltd., 2006), 256.

Although a huge Iron Age migration may not have taken place, perhaps the movement of 'Celts' happened earlier, and later the circles had Druidic significance for the Celts, who now separated for millennia, were still conducting trade and cultural contact. Whilst James does reject the idea of the ancient Celts, and their migration he does offer a good explanation for the similarities in the archaeological and linguistic records, saying that they arose out of a "parallel development" of peoples in close contact, rather than sharing an origin.¹⁸

The Genetic Evidence: The Nature of It and What It Tells Us

Unfortunately most of the genetics in this paper is predominantly focused on 'the Isles' (Britain and Ireland), as that is where most of the research has been focused out of nationalistic interest and ease. However that does not mean there haven't been attempts to link any 'Celtic' DNA to that of mainland Europe. One problem with attempting to define an ancient ethnic group or race is the 'ancientness' of the scientific samples, as Sykes describes, it is a fine line between good and bad preservation.¹⁹ Uncovering enough DNA to analyse and make viable conclusions is sometimes an impossible task. The slightest mistake can cause degradation, something one can ill-afford when working on the likes of the Cheddar Man.²⁰

What makes uncovering the genetic existence or identity of the ancient Celts aggravating is that it is easy to get DNA from the current population, and easy to get a broad scale view of the current population - but not of the ancients. We do not have hundreds or millions of perfectly preserved fossils, bog-men or even teeth of the ancient Celts to compare with the ancient Vikings, Romans etc. to determine if they were genetically distinct in antiquity. It would take three minutes or less to obtain

¹⁸ Simon James, *The Atlantic Celts: Ancient People or Modern Invention?* (London: British Museum Press, 1999)

¹⁹ Bryan Sykes, *Blood of the Isles: Exploring the genetic roots of our tribal history* (London: Transworld Publishers – Corgi Books, 2006), 22-29.

²⁰ See note 16 above

enough DNA from a classmate, as easy as a cheek swab²¹. Analysis takes much longer, but there are a variety of techniques, in this case population genetics techniques need to be used, since we want to uncover information about the Celts on a broad scale.²² But here is where the number of ancient samples becomes an issue – how can we get an idea of an ancient population with few if any ancient samples, or with copious modern samples which have undergone mutations, interbreeding, ‘dilution’ and possible genetic extinction since ancient times?

Bryan Sykes and his team focused on using variations of the ‘Molecular Clock’ method to trace back the mitochondrial (mtDNA or mDNA) and Y-chromosomal DNA of their modern subjects to when the ‘clan mothers’ and ‘clan fathers’ originally colonised the British Isles.²³ The reason they used mt and Y-chromosomal DNA is twofold.

Firstly mitochondrial DNA is often the only type of DNA, which survives in preserved human remains, or is usually the best preserved, and the easiest to extract, since it is separate to the nuclear DNA, and similar to obtaining bacterial DNA. Secondly mtDNA is inherited through maternal lineage without any input from a father’s DNA; therefore a maternal grandmother, mother, her male and female children all share identical mtDNA. The lack of male mtDNA to combine with in fertilisation makes the mt genome haploid (only one parental contribution), which in turn means that mt DNA types are called haplotypes, with certain haplotypes being more common amongst certain populations. The absence of interfering male DNA makes mtDNA analysis simpler.

²¹ School of Molecular Bioscience – Discipline of Molecular Biology, *Molecular Biology and Genetics A MBLG 2071/MBLG2971 Laboratory Manual Semester 1, 2011* (Sydney: The University of Sydney, 2011), 5.5-5.8.

²² Griffiths et al., *Introduction to Genetic Analysis* 609-649.

²³ Cold Springs Harbor Laboratory, “Genetic Origins”, *Dolan DNA Learning Center*, <<http://www.geneticorigins.org/>> (accessed 5 August, 2011); Sykes, *Blood of the Isles*

New mutations, which can distinguish haplotypes, occur occasionally and are easy to find. Analysing these inherited mutational variations can determine the relationships between individuals or whole population groups or even species.²⁴

When two groups deviate from a common ancestor they both accumulate a “unique set of random DNA mutations” and so long as these mutations occur at a constant rate then the “number of mutations is proportional to the length of time that two groups have been separate”. This is what we call the molecular clock and independently determined events (established through methods such as carbon dating and geochronology) are attached to give a more definite timescale. The observed mutation rate does not actually reflect the true mutation rate since the mtDNA mutates at a rate far higher than nuclear DNA, but Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms (SNPs) patterns are inherited more or less unchanged following Mendelian laws through thousands of generations, and there is a high statistical probability that many of these mutated regions have “back-mutated” to the original state (something which is very common in all species).²⁵

It is through this method, with statistical and comparative adjustments that Sykes and other geneticists have determined the “mitochondrial Eve” and specifically for Sykes the “Seven Daughters of Eve” whom with a few lesser daughters, all indigenous Europeans are descended from – Ursula, Helena, Jasmine, Xenia, Tara, Velda and Katrine; known as “clan mothers”²⁶. This means that it is theoretically possible to trace the origins of the people of the British Isles back to one of these daughters, to see if they share common ancestry with people living in the Celtic heartland of central Europe.

On the male side with the Y-chromosome, it is inherited from a paternal lineage with no female input, but unlike mtDNA, which is carried by all people, Y-chromosomes (at least for the purposes of this paper) are specific to males. Y-chromosomal SNPs are inherited like mtDNA SNPs but do not have the

²⁴ See note 19 above

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Sykes, *Blood of the Isles*, 135-138.

same high rate of back-mutation but are instead thought “to represent a unique mutation event that occurred once in evolutionary history”, so in other words each major SNP is likely to represent one major “clan father” or dominant male ancestor – such as Niall or Somerled.¹⁹ Such groupings of Y-chromosomal DNA (which is haploid) are called haplogroups, with the basic principles of mtDNA haplotypes applying. There are 20 paternal clans worldwide with 8 clans being in Europe, 5 of which are present in the British Isles – Oisin, Wodan, Sigurd, Eshu and Re²⁷. Therefore the molecular clock method can be used on Y-chromosomal DNA as well, allowing possible Celtic paternal lineage to be traced back.

Perhaps the biggest problem of the genetic approach is what Sykes points out, and what is at the crux of this whole debate: “*When it comes to getting hold of a definition of the Celt, or Celtic, a definition to be tested by genetics, I found myself struggling*”²⁸. This is undoubtedly a problem for any geneticist who has tried to define the Celts and their movements. Being of European origin, both the groups of Celts are likely to have inter-bred with neighbouring populations and share haplotypes/haplogroups with them – it is very unlikely they were genetic isolates, unlike the Native American Indians, who were genetic isolates until recent times due to not only geography but their large founder effect.²⁹ Furthermore the exact definition of what makes a Celt is a common problem across disciplines – everyone has different opinions about who the Celts were, where they lived and whether the spread of ‘Celticity’ was migration or fashion. The genetics does not deal with art styles or language but it can complement it; here is what Bryan Sykes and Stephen Oppenheimer have concluded about the Celts and their genetic roots:

²⁷ Ibid., 193-194.

²⁸ Ibid., 68.

²⁹ Griffiths et al., *Introduction to Genetic Analysis*, 633-638

The DNA of Ireland

The maternal clan of Ursula appears to be the oldest in Ireland (originating in Greece) with approximately 10% of all Irish men and women as direct descendants with an arrival date in Ireland of approximately 7,300 years ago. Helena (who has the strongest presence in the Isles) is the dominant mtDNA present in the Irish population, with Tara, Jasmine, Xenia, Katrine, Velda and even Ulrike all showing an occurrence of approximately 10% or less in the modern Irish population.³⁰

All of these clan arrivals (except for minor ones like Ulrike) date between 7,500 and 4,500 years ago which means that the maternal ancestors of the Irish arrived as early as the Palaeolithic, before the Neolithic Revolution and definitely not in the classical or medieval periods.³¹

Roughly 80% of Irish men belong to the paternal clan of Oisin, arriving in Ireland approximately 4,200 years ago, with penetrance of the chromosome varying in a gradient between regions in Ireland, something which Sykes suggested shows the effects of the 12th Century Anglo-Norman invasion, confirmed by the Y-chromosomes showing a clear correspondence to Anglo-Norman surnames and the A blood group (highly prevalent amongst Anglo-Normans, and not amongst the indigenous Irish).³²

The origin myth of Brutus coming across from Spain and the rest of the Iberian Peninsula was shown to have genetic basis with a particular Atlantic Modal Haplotype signature found in the Isles only on the Irish Y-chromosomes; this is a signature common with the Basques and Galacians in Spain and is the most common signature in the Irish clan of Oisin.³³

The DNA of Scotland and Its Islands

In Shetland and Orkney Oisin is yet again the major paternal clan at roughly 60%, with the majority of the remaining 40% belonging to Wodan and Sigurd. As the names may suggest, these Islands

³⁰ Sykes, *Blood of the Isles*, 182-201.

³¹ Ibid.

³² See note 30 above.

³³ Ibid.

have Celtic/Pictish and Viking heritage. The results were tested against the Y-chromosomes of Norway and it was found that roughly 58% were Pict and 42% were Viking.

There was just as much Viking mtDNA in the north islands, suggesting the Vikings brought their women with them when invading the Isles (not the traditional picture painted by historical sources). However the Pictish ancestral base still holds on strongly with about 60% of North Islanders being of Pictish descent.³⁴

In Pictland (Grampian and Tayside) Sigurd and Wodan are present but in low levels, suggesting Pictland has virtually no Viking ancestry which is “what we would have to expect from the history and the archaeology” of the region.³⁵ The mtDNA from the Pictish heartland is more ancient than that of Ireland with Ursula as the oldest again at 9,200 years ago and the youngest from Jasmine’s clan arriving about 5,000 years ago. Already we can see that the maternal ancestry of Britain and Ireland is ancient and consistent, despite the Vikings and other visitors. As Sykes points out “it takes a lot to displace indigenous genes, especially on the female side.”³⁶

The Hebrides were very different to not only the rest of Scotland but the rest of the Isles with unusually young branches of the Jasmine and Tara clans, which have what Sykes calls “a distinctly seaborne flavour about them”, coming from the Atlantic coast as more recent immigrants.

Argyll on the maternal side was more similar to Pictland than the Hebrides, and the Highland coast was in between these values. On the paternal side Pictland is definitely Pictish, Argyll has 30-40% “replacement of Pictish by Gaelic Y-chromosomes” with all areas except for the North Islands showing little to no Viking footprint. The replacement by the Gaels, is probably explained by history, with a “hostile replacement of Pictish males by the Dalriadan Celts, most of whom relied on Pictish rather than Irish women to propagate their genes” but this is hard to definitely determine since the Picts and Irish

³⁴ Ibid., 226-262.

³⁵ Ibid., 246.

³⁶ Ibid., 249.

Gaels/Celts are extremely close genetically, so any statistical estimates are difficult. The geneticists insist that this gives us a solid conclusion that “the Picts and the Celts have the same underlying genetic origins.”³⁷

The DNA of Wales

The Welsh mtDNA pattern is remarkably similar to Ireland and Pictland with Helena dominating at approximately 47%. Like the other traditionally ‘Celtic’ areas of the Isles, Wales has almost no Norse or Viking lineage or other signs of settlement. What Sigurds are in Wales have a different signature to the Viking Y-chromosomes. So Wales too, is almost completely indigenous.³⁸

The DNA of England

England is a big complicated mixture, not surprising given its history and geographical position. The maternal trend is much the same as the other regions however there is a trend from east and north to the south and west of England seemingly right along the Danelaw, with Helena at 43% in East Anglia getting up to 47% in the north and much more presence of the minor clans, particularly Ulrike. This indicates female immigration “into the east [of England] from continental Europe” a trend not shown in the west or north.

The male side shows huge differences – Oisin is still the largest with 51% in East Anglia, increasing west to Wales and North to Scotland; where Oisin decreases, Wodan increases with his highest in East Anglia, but almost no Sigurds in East Anglia, but plenty in the north; suggesting that the east saw the effects of later immigrations, lessening into heavily ‘Celtic’ areas.³⁹

³⁷ Sykes, *Blood of the Isles*, 253.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 276-286.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 316-326.

The DNA of the British Isles in Summary

The genetic evidence clearly shows the people of the British Isles are an old people with very consistent genetics, especially on the female side, with any replacement being from the Dalriadan Celts, the Vikings and other Western Europeans in the East of England. Across the British Isles there was consistently a “lower than expected amount of accumulated mutations in the Y-chromosomes” which seems to be a frequent feature of Celtic regions.⁴⁰

However, these replacements are minute with no ‘invading’ people since the Stone Age having contributed much more than 5-10% to the indigenous genetics of the Isles.⁴¹ This is as Olson suggests – great evidence for cultural overlay as the driving force behind the spread of ‘Celticity’.⁴² Sykes calls his indigenous people of the British Isles Celts owing to their pre-Roman status, longevity of their genetics and because they spoke Celtic languages, but this is one of many interpretations of ‘Celt’, for he also acknowledges that the continental Celts deserve the name too. Your genetics does not necessarily exclude you from belonging to a cultural group.⁴³

No evidence for a great migration from continental Celts as history suggests, was found in the genetics. Both Oppenheimer and Sykes agree there is “there is no genetic... evidence for this” ‘invasion’ or migration theory.⁴⁴ Basically “three quarters of British ancestors arrive long before the first farmers” and therefore such a migration any later than the Neolithic is a myth.³²

Conclusions: so who were and are the Celts and how did their culture spread?

From the genetics there appears to be two definitions of Celt – those who were the indigenous inhabitants of the British Isles from as early as 10,000 years ago and the mainland Celts as described by

⁴⁰ Sykes, *Blood of the Isles*, 286.

⁴¹ Oppenheimer, *The Origins of the British*, 470.

⁴² Olson, “Genetic Evidence and the Early Medievalist”, 217.

⁴³ Sykes, *Blood of the Isles*, 338.

⁴⁴ Oppenheimer, *The Origins of the British*, 471-472.

Posidonius and others.⁴⁵ The linguistics would group all of them together; which has evolved over time to now almost solely focus the Celtic language in the Isles, this is problematic since “basically, language has nothing to do with genetics”.³ The archaeology shows a mixed view depending on interpretation, it can lend itself as Cremin puts it as including both the mainland Celts and those of the British Isles, or it can include only the classical definition of ‘Keltoi’ with the material culture spreading via trade to the Isles.⁶ Likewise the history backs the view of the traditional ‘Keltoi’ but who after the fall of Rome, moved around, and possibly migrated to the Isles, taking their culture, language and genes, with them.

However, both Sykes and Oppenheimer agree that there is “no evidence at all of a large-scale immigration from central Europe to Ireland and the west of the Isles... The ‘Celts’ [of the Isles]... are not, as far as I can see from the genetic evidence, related to the Celts ... from the heartlands of Hallstadt and La Tène.”⁴⁶ In other words, there was never a big ‘invasion’ or migration of the ‘Keltoi’ to the British Isles. A “large-scale” immigration or invasion in these times with such small populations could have constituted a few dozen or a few hundred people, since population size is important in determining how easily new mutations or genes will become fixed or lost. Hence neutral (i.e. neither beneficial or detrimental) alleles tend to disappear due to genetic drift – for example a combination of not marrying the locals and genetic drift meant little to no Roman genes in Britain, and likewise the Celts made no apparent genetic impact.⁴⁷ The spread of the “uniquely Celtic” art forms and languages is, according to this evidence, cultural overlay.⁴⁸ This is not to say that the indigenous peoples of the British Isles weren’t Celtic; by the linguistic definition, and modern perception they are. Most of the current inhabitants of the Isles have ‘Celtic’ roots, or as Sykes puts it “overall, the genetic structure of the Isles is stubbornly Celtic, if by that we mean descent from people who were there before the Romans and who spoke a

⁴⁵ See note 2 above

⁴⁶ Sykes, *Blood of the Isles*, 332.

⁴⁷ Griffiths et al., *Introduction to Genetic Analysis*, 638.

⁴⁸ Cremin, *The Celts in Europe*, 22.

Celtic language.”⁴⁹ What is important when considering the ancient Celts is to remember that it is a “brand”, which changes its meaning depending on context and what specialisation it is discussed in relation to.⁵⁰ Just because you are not genetically or linguistically Celtic does not mean that you are excluded from the wider Celtic “brand”. Essentially the mass Celtic migration in the Iron Age is a myth but the material culture was spread like ‘fashion’, making the people of the British Isles Celtic at least in part. The ‘Keltoi’ did not migrate to the Isles, however their legacy lives on, due to their close contact with their ‘cousins’ across the channel. It was an importation of ideas, technology and language without genetic input.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Sykes, *Blood of the Isles*, 226 – 262.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 66-67.

⁵¹ Oppenheimer, *The Origins of the British*, 245.

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Aristotle's Theory of Colors

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This paper presents two Aristotelian explanations of color: a locational and a material. It presents both definitions, and then it focuses on his material explanation- specifically how to understand what black and white constitute and are constituted by. It argues that black and white are ontologically basic (not constituted by smaller particles). The amount of fire in the determinate body determines the amount of black and white particles, and a high degree of transparency decreases the proportion of black to white particles, and a low degree increases it. Considering the relationship between black and white and the basic qualities hot, cold, wet, and dry, the basic qualities determine which kind of determinate body is present, but they do not constitute the black and white upon that body.

Introduction

In this essay, I investigate Aristotle's theory of colors. I look at his locational definition; Aristotle defines it as the limit of the transparent in determinately-bounded bodies. Then I show his material explanation of what objectively constitutes color, in which Aristotle constructs color from ratios of white and black. I concentrate on Aristotle's material explanation of colors; specifically, how to understand what the primary colors black and white constitute and are constituted by. I argue that black and white are ontologically basic, and then I present a series of counterarguments and responses to help understand how black and white relate to the presence of fire and the degree of transparency, whether they are further reducible, and how the construction of the plurality of colors from black and white parallels Aristotle's construction of complex bodies from hot, cold, moist, and dry humors.

Color Qua Limit of Transparent in Determinate Bodies

To understand what the "transparent" is, Aristotle says in *De Sensu* 3 that the transparent is "not something peculiar to air, or water, or any other of the bodies usually called transparent, but is a

common nature and power, capable of no separate existence of its own, but residing in these, and subsisting likewise in all other bodies in a greater or less degree¹" (439^a22-25). The transparent is present in determinate bodies (those with surfaces) and indeterminate bodies (those without surfaces) and is itself bounded and unbounded. The transparent in indeterminate bodies has no bounding extreme or surface, while that in determinate bodies has one (439^a27-29).

The locational definition of color in *D.S.* is that it is the limit of the transparent in a determinately-bounded body. Aristotle explains this definition of color from two perspectives; from that of the transparent and that of the determinate body. From the perspective of the transparent, Aristotle argues that "colour [is] actually either at the limit, or [is] itself that limit" of the bounded transparent in a determinate body (439^a29-31). From the perspective of the body, because determinate bodies have bounding extremes, their own color is "definitely fixed" (439^b5-7), and specifically at that extremity of the body (439^b10-11).

This is in contrast to the unbounded transparent in indeterminate bodies. Aristotle says in *D.A.* 2.7 that the transparent is "what is visible, and yet not visible in itself, but rather owing its visibility to the colour of something else; of this character are air, water, and many solid bodies²" (418^b4-6). It is also found "in the eternal upper body" (418^b6-9). Here, the transparent is of the kind without its own determinate boundary, and it resides in bodies that are also boundless, such as water and air. Because it has no boundary, it has no color of its own, but owes its visibility to the color at the boundary of a nearby determinate body. This explains why (unlike the color of determinate bodies) the color of

¹ I use translations of *De Anima (D.A.)* by J.A. Smith, *De Generatione Animalium (G.A.)* by A. Platt, *De Generatione et Corruptione (G. et C.)* by H.H. Joachim, *De Partibus Animalium (P.A.)* by W. Ogle, *De Sensu (D.S.)* by J.I. Beare, *Metaphysica (Metaph.)* by W.D. Ross, *Meteorologica (Meteor.)* by E.W. Webster, and *Physica (Phys.)* by R.P. Hardie & R.K. Gaye in Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Edited by Jonathan Barnes. Vol. One and Two. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984. I cite pagination from Immanuel Bekker's 1831 Berlin edition.

² By 'solid bodies,' I think he means bodies without a determinate boundary, yet are solid. According to the presented interpretation, if it has a surface, then it must be visible in itself, or have its own color.

indeterminate bodies is “not the same when one approaches and views it close by as it is when one regards it from a distance” (439^b3-5).

Aristotle defines color as “the limit of the transparent in determinately bounded bodies³” (439^b11-12). We can now go back and understand *De Anima* 2.7, where Aristotle says that “whatever is visible is colour” (418^a28-29) and that color is “what lies upon what is in itself visible; ‘in itself’ here means not that visibility is involved in the definition of what thus underlies colour, but that that substratum contains in itself the cause of visibility” (418^a29-31). It seems like he says that two things are what is visible: the color and what color lies upon. Alan Code explains that “a color is a feature of a surface, and since color is the cause of visibility, it follows that the cause of visibility is a *per se* attribute of surface.”⁴ Adding the premise that color is at the limit of the transparent, Code says: “On this theory, the color of the body is a feature that its surface possesses insofar as that surface is the limit of something transparent⁵.”

Black and White in Determinate Bodies

We have found that color is at the limit of the transparent in determinate bodies. We can now look at different interpretations of what objectively constitutes color. When fire or a fire-like substance is present in the transparent in an indeterminate body, it produces light (and its absence produces darkness) (418^b11-14, 19-21). However, when fire is present in the transparent in a determinate body, it produces the primary color white, and its absence produces black (439^b15-19). The ancient Greek term ‘λευκός,’ which I have translated as the primary color, white, has also been used in extant literature as

³ Code, Alan. “Aristotelian Colors as Causes.” In *Festschrift for Julius Moravcsik*, edited by J. Woods D. Follesdall, London: College Publications, 2008. (I cite page numbers from the pdf version on Code’s webpage on the Rutgers Department of Philosophy website: pg. 10, n. 21.). I am taking Code’s proposed translation of 439^b11-14 (instead of J.I. Beare’s in the Barnes edition), which maintains Aristotle’s premise that indeterminate bodies do not exhibit their own color.

⁴ Code, op. cit. 11.

⁵ Ibid. 12.

'pale,' 'shining,' and 'colourless.'⁶ However, here it is used only to refer to the primary color whose opposite is black. So Aristotle defines white and black to be what is produced on the surface of a determinate body when fire is present in or absent from the transparent therein.

Plurality of Colors From Ratios of Black and White

Aristotle argues that the plurality of colors are formed from mixtures of the primary colors. He explains that "when bodies are mixed their colours also are necessarily mixed at the same time; and that this is the real cause determining the existence of a plurality of colours..." (440^b14-16). Specific ratios of white and black form the different colors. There are many colors because "the ingredients may be combined with one another in a multitude of ratios" (440^b18-20).

There are two categories of colors: those "based on determinate numerical ratios," and those that "have as their basis a relation of quantitative excess" (440^b20-21). The first category is those colors composed of numerical ratios of black and white. He says: "those involving numerical ratios (ἐν ἀριθμοῖς εὐλογίστοις), like the concords in music, may be those generally regarded as most agreeable; as, for example, purple, crimson, and some few such colours" (439^b32-440^a2). Specifically, some may be mixed "in the ratio of 3 to 2, or of 3 to 4, or in ratios expressible by other numbers" (439^b28-29). Richard Sorabji interprets this category to only include colors composed of very simple ratios⁷ (such as 3/2 or 3/4).

The second category is those that "may be juxtaposed according to no numerically expressible ratio, but according to some incommensurable relation of excess or defect" (439^b29-31). "The other

⁶ Platnauer, Maurice. "Greek Colour-Perception." *The Classical Quarterly* (Cambridge University Press) 15, no. 3/4 (Jul.-Oct. 1921): 155-6.

⁷ Sorabji, Richard. "Aristotle, Mathematics, and Colour." *The Classical Quarterly, New Series* (Cambridge University Press) 22, no. 2 (Nov 1972): 299.

compound colours may be those which are not based on numbers" (440^a3-4).⁸ Sorabji supposes this category to only include colors not expressed in rational numbers at all. It is for this reason that he thinks a major oversight in Aristotle's theory is that there is no middle ground for ratios that are non-simple, but composed of rational numbers, such as "256:243."⁹

Sorabji interprets three groups of colors in *D.S.* 4.¹⁰ He interprets the first group to be the primary colors white and black and either grey or yellow "if, as is reasonable, we regard grey as a variety of black (for the alternative is that yellow should be classed with white, as rich with sweet)" (442a21-23). The second group is according to Sorabji those colors from the direct mixture of black and white. Aristotle says: "crimson, violet, leek-green, and deep-blue, come between white and black" (442a23-25). The last group is the colors that are mixed out of the secondary colors rather than out of black and white. Aristotle says: "and from these all others are derived by mixture" (442a23-25).

Sorabji gives no definitive statement on whether he thinks the second group is entirely those colors composed of very simple ratios of black and white. However, for the last group, he suggests they are composed of irrational ratios of black and white¹¹. He cites this as an oversight in Aristotle's theory because if two secondary colors mix, which are each composed of simple ratios, such as red (e.g. 1 to 2) and blue (e.g. 3 to 4), then mathematics suggests that the resultant color will also be composed of a simple ratio.¹² Overall, Sorabji argues that Aristotle thinks that black and white in "very simple ratios" produces agreeable colors including purple and crimson, and black and white in ratios that are not expressible in rational numbers produces the other colors. Sorabji's analysis will come up again when I

⁸ Aristotle puts forward an alternative that "while *all* colours whatever are based on numbers, some are regular in this respect, others irregular" (440^a4-5). Sorabji argues that there are too few simple ratios to think that all colors could be based on simple ratios. Therefore, when Aristotle says that the other colors are "not based on numbers," he does not mean "not based on simple ratios," but instead "not based on rational numbers" *ibid.* 299, n 2.

⁹ Plato says this is in rational numbers in *Timaeus* 36B (ἄριθμος πρὸς ἀριθμῶν).

¹⁰ Sorabji, *op. cit.* 296-7.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 297.

¹² *Ibid.* 299.

look at the parallel between this theory and Aristotle's theory in *Generatione et Corruptione* 2 of the composition of bodies from hot, cold, wet, and dry.

Black and White Ontologically Basic

I argue that white and black are ontologically basic (nothing constitutes them). The main passage in support of the non-reduction is at 439^b15-19, where Aristotle says that white and black are generated in determinate bodies "in the same way" as light is produced in air from the presence of fire. Light is not reduced to anything; at its most basic status, it is what is produced when fire is present in the transparent in an indeterminate body.

Any interpretation against mine that reduces the primary colors to further basic things has to take into account how the primary colors relate to both the transparency in the determinate body and the presence of fire (i.e. the passage at 439^b15-19). One major passage cited in support of a reduction is in *D.S.* 3, where Aristotle says: "it is therefore the transparent, according to the degree to which it subsists in bodies (and it does so in all more or less), that causes them to partake of colour" (439^b8-10).¹³

According to the theory that I have presented, which is also how I interpret Alan Code,¹⁴ the presence of fire and the degree of transparency both do not constitute color. Instead, the presence of fire and the transparency are necessary causes of color. The transparent must be in the limit of the determinate body, but the degree of transparency does not affect the shade. It is as simple as this: the presence of fire causes white, and the absence causes black at the surface of the determinate body. This still leaves unexplained 439^b8-10; specifically how to interpret the statement that the degree of present

¹³ In an unpublished draft, Eric Butler argues that Alexander of Aphrodisias thinks that this passage says that the possession of color is directly proportional to the maintenance of transparency (degree to which it remains rather than escapes from the body). However, this conflicts with my view that color is a feature of a surface. It is because the indeterminate body has no surface that it does not have its own color, not (as Butler suggests) because the transparency does not remain in the indeterminate body. (By his request, I will not cite page numbers.)

¹⁴ Code, *op. cit.* 8.

transparency affects the body's partaking of color. I will offer an interpretation in my section 'First Reply, Part B.'

First Counterargument - Degree of Transparency Constitutes Bodies

In contrast to my claim that white and black are ontologically basic, Justin Broackes argues that only the degree of transparency constitutes the primary colors. He argues that "the white or light *is* the highly transparent and the black or dark *is* the non-transparent."¹⁵ He says that "colour in bodies involves only one [element] (*colour* in the bounded). Transparency may be the essence of colour both in unbounded things and in bodies...."¹⁶ On his view, the presence of fire in the transparent of a determinate body does not cause white (and its absence black), but instead just the degree of transparency causes them.

In support of his identity claim, Broackes appeals to the previously quoted 439^b8-10 in *D.S.* 3, and he cites *Meteor.* 3.4, in which Aristotle argues that "when there is a cloud near the sun and we look at it it does not look coloured at all but white, but when we look at the same cloud in water it shows a trace of rainbow colouring" (374^b25-29).¹⁷ Broackes seems to be interpreting this passage to say that when we see the cloud in the sky, the cloud is highly-transparent, and so it appears white, but when it is in the water, it is less transparent, and so it appears darker.¹⁸ Broackes also cites *De Generatione*

¹⁵ Broackes, Justin, "Aristotle, Objectivity, and Perception." Edited by David Sedley. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford University Press) XVII (1999): 62.

¹⁶ Ibid. 62-3, n. 13.

¹⁷ Ibid. 62-3, n. 13.

¹⁸ There are problems with this interpretation fitting within its context. Before the passage, Aristotle argues that "an object appears black because sight fails; so everything at a distance becomes blacker, because sight does not reach it" (374^b14-15). Because "reflection diminishes the sight that reaches them" (374^b21-23), objects seen through reflection should be darker than when seen through the air. Thus, a better interpretation may be that the cloud in the water appears darker, not because it is less transparent than the cloud in the sky, but because it is seen through the reflection in the water.

Animalium 5.1, where Aristotle says: "black is not transparent, for that is just what is meant by 'black', what is not shone through" (780^a33-35).¹⁹

First Reply - *Mixing of black and white- preliminaries (from D.S. 3)*

Against Broackes, he himself acknowledges that his theory seems to contradict 439^b15-19, because on his view, white and black are not generated in determinate bodies "in the same way" as light is produced in air from the presence of fire.²⁰ According to him, white and black are generated only by the degree of transparency, but light is caused by the transparency *and* the presence of fire.

I will look at both *D.S. 3* and *G. et C. 1.10*, in order to suggest a much more detailed mechanism for how Aristotle's primary colors combine in specific ratios to form other colors. Aristotle discusses in *De Sensu 3* how to understand the mixing process, and that section reveals necessary conditions for black and white to mix. My interpretation may help understand why black and white are ontologically basic and how to interpret the passage at 439^b8-10 that says that the degree of transparency is directly related to the body's the partaking of color.

In my interpretation, there are two agents involved before combination: two blobs of uniform color (of any color). And there are two requirements for these agents; each must be attached to a separate matter piece, and each must be not divisible into minima.

Aristotle requires that each color to-be-mixed be related to its own underlying matter. He says: "when bodies are mixed their colours also are necessarily mixed at the same time; and that this is the real cause determining the existence of a plurality of colours..." (440^b14-16). Bodies (matter) must be mixed at the same time as colors, and therefore each blob of color must be attached to a separate

¹⁹ Broackes, op. cit. 63.

²⁰ Ibid. 62-3, n. 13.

matter piece.²¹ This rules out the possibility that the blobs of color are divided and combined on one piece of undivided matter.

For the second requirement of my model, each to-be-mixed blob of color must be undivided into minimal particles. In 440^b4-10, Aristotle says that “mankind as a whole” can be divided into minimal parts, namely individual men, but an individual man is himself a “least part,” and so he cannot be divided into minima. When he discusses the mixture of those things “not divisible into minima,” he says that it is by “complete interpenetration must we conceive of those things to be mixed” (440^b10-13). He argues that the bodies to which colors are attached are “not divisible into minima,” and so mix in this way. Therefore in my model the blobs of color and the separate piece of matter attached to each must be themselves “least parts” or undivided into minima²². In summary, two blobs of uniform color must each be attached to their own pieces of matter, and they must be undivided into minima before mixture occurs.

Mixing of black and white- process (from G. et C. 1.10)

When Aristotle presents his theory in *D.S.* 3 of the mixing of colors from the interpenetration of the bodies, he refers to a previous discourse on mixture (440^b13-14), which I interpret to be *G. et C.* 1.10.²³ If we go back to the requirements from before, we have two blobs, each of any uniform color, each attached to a piece of matter, and each not divisible into minima. He requires in *De Generatione et Corruptione* that the underlying matter of the two agents must be the same in kind so that the agents

²¹ I will argue later from looking at *G. et C.* 1.10 that Aristotle thinks that this matter must be the same for both agents.

²² This does not rule out that during the mixing process each blob can divide into black and white particles. We can look at Aristotle’s example of the individual man (440^b4-10). An individual man is a unity in so far as he is the “least part” of mankind, but he is himself composed of different parts (i.e. hand, arm), and when mixing occurs, he would be split up into these parts to allow for interpenetration. Likewise, the color blob can be a least part and also be split up into black and white contraries.

²³ W.S. Hett also makes this inference, “Loeb Classical Library No. 288,” (1957).

can “reciprocate, i.e. are such as to act upon one another and to suffer action from one another” (328^a19-21). From the added information, each blob must have the same kind of matter.

Aristotle also argues that the agents that mix with one another must “involve a contrariety,” because, he says: “these are such as to suffer action reciprocally” (328^a33-34). With respect to our model, ‘agents’ refers to each blob of color, and black and white are the contraries. To understand the relationship between the agents and the contraries, Aristotle also says that the agents combine “more freely” if they are first divided into smaller bits, and then these bits are juxtaposed with one another (328^a34-^b3). From this information, I now nuance that model by claiming that when mixture begins, the two agents (blobs of color) divide into smaller black and white contraries.²⁴ These new contraries are each a black or white particle attached to a piece of matter that is itself same in kind to that of the other particles. These contraries are then juxtaposed with one another, and during this middle phase they suffer action reciprocally.

Finally, Aristotle says that when there is not an extreme amount of one agent in comparison to the other, the agents both become “an intermediate with properties common to both” (328^a29-32). The mechanism that I propose is as follows: after the contraries are juxtaposed with one another, they come together in groups. The ratio of black to white particles within each group accords with the ratio of total black to white particles. The contrary particles suffer action reciprocally in these groups, and in doing so, all the particles in each group turn into new particles of the color specified by the ratio. These new particles, or “intermediates” together compose a new large blob that is the color of them. The new blob of color, although it is divisible into the new particles, it is indivisible into its most basic *explanatory* level: that of the black and white contraries.²⁵

²⁴ It is not the case that the blobs of color divide into particles of neutral color that themselves change in shade from black to grey to white. This is because of Aristotle’s premise that only contraries suffer action reciprocally; therefore, the contraries must be on the most basic level during the mixture process.

²⁵ Aristotle gives an alternate scenario when an extreme quantity of one agent is brought together with a much smaller amount of another. In this case, he says the effect is “not combination, but increase of the dominant”

For example, if a red blob combines with a blue blob, then each blob first divides into black and white particles. If the overall ratio of black to white particles is 2:3, then in each group, 2 black particles comes together with 3 white particles, and that group forms five particles of, say, the color purple.²⁶ This new purple blob is composed of these purple particles or “intermediates.”

It is important to note that after the mixture process, the new color blob is composed of the new particles and not black and white particles. Thus the mixture process is indeed combination rather than juxtaposition²⁷, and so the color blob is indivisible into minima. I think that black and white are explanatorily basic (i.e. necessary) for the new color, but they are not sufficient. If they were sufficient, the new color could be reduced to only black and white particles. Instead, the new intermediate color must have properties that the combination of black and white together does not.

How does my reconstruction match with the passage at 439^b15-19, which says that black and white are generated in determinate bodies in the same way as light is generated in the transparent medium? I think that the amount of fire creates the amount of black and white particles in a body, and then color is determined by this ratio. If we accept that black and white are ontologically basic, how does this reconstruction of the mixing process help us understand how to interpret 439^b8-10 that says that the degree of transparency is directly related to the body’s the partaking of color? The most intuitive interpretation seems to be that a low degree of transparency in the determinate body increases the proportion of black to white, and a high degree of transparency decreases the proportion

(328^a24-27). He gives the example of a drop of wine and ten thousand gallons of water, where the form of the drop of wine dissolves, and “is changed so as to merge in the total volume of water” (328^a27-29). To explain this in my model, we can say that when one agent is much larger, it supplies an extreme amount of particles in its specific ratio, so that the overall ratio of black to white particles will be very similar to that of it.

²⁶ For example assume each blob supplies five particles. If the red blob supplies them in the (B:W) ratio 1:4 and the blue blob supplies them in the ratio 3:2, there would result a total ratio of 4:6, which would result in two groups, each with the ratio 2:3.

²⁷ In juxtaposition, Aristotle says the constituents are combined only relatively to perception i.e. if you are far enough away (or have weak vision) it looks like the two distinct constituents are one (328a13-16). In contrast, both agents in combination become intermediates with properties common to both agents (328a29-32, b20-24).

of black to white particles in a determinate body.²⁸ Thus the degree of transparency is a variable that changes the color, but it is not the only thing required for color in a determinate body- fire is required as well (contra Broackes). This interpretation is also counter to that of Code, who does not argue for color to be affected by how much transparent is in the body. With my interpretation, however, white and black remain as ontologically basic units that are not constituted by smaller particles.

Second Counterargument - *Reduction to Hot, Cold, Wet, Dry*

Some of Aristotle's higher-level qualities are derived from hot, cold, wet, and dry. In *Meteorology* 4.12, Aristotle explains that the qualities that differentiate the homogenous natural bodies are derived from "the hot and the cold and the mixtures of their motions" (390^b6-10).²⁹ While describing the composition of animals in *P.A.* 2.1, Aristotle says: "wet and dry, hot and cold, form the material of all composite bodies; and all other differences are secondary to these" (646^a16-18).³⁰ Here, he also derives higher-level qualities of bodies from hot, cold, wet, and dry. In this section I will first show why one may think that Aristotle would include the primary colors black and white as among the group of qualities that are derived from the hot, cold, wet, and dry. Then I will investigate what Aristotle means by "derived."

Some contemporary and medieval commentators support the reduction of the primary colors to the basic qualities. Sorabji thinks that the primary colors reduce to the elements; therefore, if he thinks

²⁸ Perhaps during the interaction with fire, the degree of transparency increases the relevant amount of black or white particles. Another possibility that is more undeveloped is that the degree of transparency does not affect the amount of black or white in the to-be-mixed color blobs, but it is necessary to create the intermediate during the mixing process, and so it affects the color of the intermediate then.

²⁹ In 4.8, he says that mixed bodies are distinguished by two qualities: the first are capacities for acting on a sense, and the second "express [the body's] aptitude to be affected" (385^a1-11). He specifies that the second kind differentiate the homogenous natural bodies. Some examples of the eighteen that he lists include the aptitude or inaptitude "to solidify, [and] melt" (385^a14). The 4.12 passage says that the second kind are derived from hot, cold, wet, and dry (390^b6-10), but Aristotle does not explicitly rule out that the first kind (which includes white) are also so derived.

³⁰ Of the kind of differences he means, he gives the examples "heaviness or lightness, density or rarity, roughness or smoothness" (646^a18-20). These seem to be common sensibles (not specific to one sense organ), but he does not explicitly rule out sensibles like color.

the elements are derived from hot, cold, wet, and dry, then he would support the stronger reduction. Broackes is unsure of the reduction, but his best evidence for it is at *Phys.* 1.6, where Aristotle says: "some contraries are prior to others, and some arise from others- for example sweet and bitter, white and black..." (189^a17-19).³¹ Broackes claims Aristotle says here that white and black arise from contraries. We have the reduction if we assume that by 'contraries' Aristotle means hot, cold, wet, and dry. The medieval commentators John Philoponus, Albert the Great, and Thomas Aquinas all concluded that color derives from hot, cold, wet, and dry. Philoponus says: "colours and tastes and all perceptible qualities are determined by the way in which hot and cold and dry and wet are mixed."³² Albert the Great says: "sweet and bitter, and white and black, arise out of the four primary qualities."³³ Aquinas says: "tangible qualities are the causes of the other sensible qualities."³⁴

If there is indeed a reduction of the primary colors to the basic qualities, like these early commentators thought, then we can ask what Aristotle means by "derived." T.K. Johansen, Victor Caston, and Justin Broackes all agree that Aristotle's higher-qualities in *G. et C.* 2.2 and *Meteor.* 4.8-9 cannot be stripped away to nothing else than hot, cold, wet, and dry. Johansen argues that the reduction of the tangible qualities such as "the viscous and the brittle" in *G. et C.* 2.2 (329^b33-34) to moist and dry is not a reduction such that the thing to-be-reduced is nothing else than what it is reduced to.³⁵ Appealing to Aristotle's doctrine that sense objects are causally active as such,³⁶ Johansen says that

³¹ Broackes, op. cit. 84.

³² Philoponus, *Commentary on On Coming-to-Be and Perishing*, 232. 8-13 in *On Aristotle's On Coming-to-Be and Perishing 1.6-2.4*. Trans. C.J.F. Williams. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999: 143.

³³ Albert the Great, *Physica* 1.3.4 in *Opera Omnia*, ed. Borgnet (Paris, 1890), volume 3: pg. 56. Broackes's translation. op. cit. 85. Albert the Great is commenting on the *Phys.* 1.6 passage when he says this.

³⁴ Aquinas, Thomas. *Sentencia Libri De Anima*, 562 in *A Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*. Trans. Robert Pasnau. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999: 286.

³⁵ Johansen, T.K. "Aristotle on the Sense-Organs," 181, n. 8.

³⁶ Cf. Broadie, Sarah. "Aristotle's Perceptual Realism." *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* (University of Memphis) 31 (1993): 138. Broadie says that color is causally active as such. She cites as evidence the signet-on-wax passage in *D.A.* 2.12.

if viscosity is reduced away, then it is not the case that "it is viscosity as such that causes a perception of viscosity."³⁷

Caston uses the *Meteor.* 4.8-9 example to show that higher-level qualities such as color can have their unique powers, which "depend crucially on the elemental powers that underlie them, while remaining distinct and efficacious in their own right"³⁸ These unique powers allow higher-level qualities to have explanatory primacy, at the same time as they are derived from lower-level qualities.

Broackes argues that in *Meteor.* 4.8-9, the four basic qualities provide what is necessary for the higher-order qualities, but they are not sufficient themselves. With the example of plastic, he says that "something with an appropriate mix of the four basic qualities might have all that was necessary to be plastic," however 'plastic' is not identical to whatever is a certain mixture of the four basic qualities.³⁹

Overall, as a counterargument against my claim that black and white are ontologically basic, one could argue that the primary colors are derived from hot, cold, wet, and dry. And, by "derived," Aristotle means that the basic qualities provide the necessary material for black and white, but are not sufficient for black and white. Black and white still have unique properties and so cannot be reduced to only hot, cold, wet, and dry. This counterargument says that black and white themselves are *composed of* hot, cold, wet, and dry as part of their necessary ingredients.

Second Reply - Only Parallel with Hot, Cold, Moist, Dry

I think that the model of reduction that the counterargument presents explains how Aristotle constructs complex bodies from hot, cold, wet, and dry in *G. et C.* 2, and how he constructs the plurality

³⁷ Johansen, T.K. op. cit. 181, n. 8.

³⁸ Caston, Victor. "The Spirit and The Letter: Aristotle on Perception." In *Metaphysics, Soul, and Ethics: Themes from the work of Richard Sorabji*, edited by Ricardo Salles, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004: 273. He uses this point to support a material change during the process of perception, while maintaining color itself as the prime cause of the perception of color.

³⁹ Broackes, op. cit. 81-2.

of colors from black and white.⁴⁰ For these theories, the basic qualities themselves compose the higher-level qualities, but the higher-level qualities possess properties that cannot be reduced to the basic. However, I do *not* think that it explains the relationship between hot, cold, wet, and dry, and black and white, because although the basic qualities are necessary, they do not compose black and white. I will first show how the counterargument's model of reduction matches the first two theories, and then I will show how it does not match the third theory.

There are four levels in Aristotle's theory in *G. et C. 2* of the composition of bodies from the basic qualities. Aristotle first posits a base substratum that serves as matter for the contraries. He says: "We must reckon as a principle and as primary the matter which underlies, though it is inseparable from, the contrary qualities; for the hot is not matter for the cold nor the cold for the hot, but the *substratum* is matter for them both" (329^a29-33). On the second level, Aristotle posits the contrary qualities hot, cold, wet, and dry. To understand what contraries are, he says in *Phys. 1.5* that "everything, therefore, that comes to be by a natural process is either a contrary or a product of contraries" (188^b25-26).⁴¹ To see how this works in *G. et C. 2*, there are four simple bodies (Fire, Air, Water, and Earth) on the third level;⁴² these simple bodies are each made up of two of the contraries. Aristotle explains: "For Fire is hot and dry, whereas Air is hot and moist (Air being a sort of vapour); and Water is cold and moist, while Earth is cold and dry" (330^b3-6).

Lastly, I assert that on the fourth level, perceptible bodies are constructed from contraries present in excess amounts. Aristotle says that the simple body, Fire, is distinct from the perceptible body, fire: "the simple body corresponding to fire is fire-like, not fire...and so on with the rest of them"

⁴⁰ Butler argues that the status of black and white as ontologically basic units from which other colors are made parallels the relationship between the elements (earth, air, fire, water) and the composite bodies. Instead, I argue that it parallels the relationship between *the basic qualities* and the composite bodies. (By his request, I will not cite page numbers).

⁴¹ Aristotle names black and white as examples of these contraries, and says explicitly: "the intermediates are derived from the contraries- colours for instance, from black and white" (188^b23-5).

⁴² These simple bodies are what Sorabji calls 'elements,' and from which he derives black and white.

(330^b23-25). Perceptible fire is “an excess of heat”; he explains this by saying that boiling is an excess of heat, and therefore fire is “a boiling of dry and hot” (330^b25-29). I interpret this to mean that perceptible fire is like the simple body Fire, except with an excess of the contrary hot.⁴³ Aristotle summarizes his composition of bodies in *G. et C.* 2: “we have firstly that which is potentially perceptible body, secondly the contraries (e.g., heat and cold), and thirdly Fire, Water, and the like” (329^a33-^b1).⁴⁴

This system parallels Aristotle's theory of the plurality of colors from the primary colors black and white. Recall that determinate bodies serve as underlying matter (first level), and the contraries are white and black (second level). Simple ratios of the contraries produce pleasant colors (third level) and excesses (I follow Sorabji here, and consider ‘excesses’ those not expressible in rational numbers) produce the other colors (fourth level). Black and white are similar to hot, cold, wet, and dry in being irreducible basic qualities from which higher-level qualities are derived.

Both of these two theories match the counterargument's model of reduction because (1) the basic qualities *compose* the higher-level qualities, and (2) the higher-level properties in both theories have properties that can't be explained by the lower-level qualities. Regarding the first point, although one may think that Aristotle means that the contraries are only qualities of the simple bodies (i.e. they do not compose them), when he explains in *G. et C.* 2.4 the manner in which the simple bodies transform into one another, it is more intuitive to construct the simple bodies from the contraries. He says: “For Water is moist and cold while Earth is cold and dry- so that, if the moist be overcome, [and be replaced by dry] there will be Earth” (331^a34-36). If one contrary is replaced by another, then a new simple body is present. Because the contraries determine which simple body is present, they are more than just properties of the simple bodies. Instead, they are units of composition of the simple bodies. As for the second point, the simple bodies are *not* each another term for what is a certain combination of contraries. The higher-level qualities still have properties that cannot be explained only by the basic

⁴³ Later, he says: “flame is par excellence Fire” (331^b25).

⁴⁴ I think Aristotle includes the fourth level in the words “and the like.”

qualities. Although for these two theories the basic qualities do in fact compose the higher-level ones, the basic qualities are necessary but not sufficient.

As an example of how the counterargument's theory of reduction applies to both theories, if we have matter with the contrary fire and another matter of the same kind with the contrary dry, when they are combined in a simple ratio, they form matter of the same kind with the contraries fire and dry. The new combined body (Fire) has properties that the combination of fire and dry does not have. Similarly, if we construct a red particle from black and white particles, the intermediate has properties that the combination of black and white does not. However, in both cases, the basic qualities compose the intermediate.

However, this model of reduction does not work for the relationship between the qualities hot, cold, wet, and dry, and black and white. I think black and white are ontologically basic, at the same time as they are derived from hot, cold, wet, and dry. It is as simple as: hot, cold, wet, and dry together determine the kind of the determinate body that produces black and white from the presence of fire in the transparent in its limit. Hot, cold, wet, and dry are necessary for that specific determinate body to be present, but in contrast to the counterargument model, they do not compose black and white. Only in this sense are hot, cold, wet and dry necessary for black and white but not sufficient.⁴⁵ The matter underlying the hot, cold, wet, and dry is the same as that underlying the black and white.

Conclusion

Overall I have showed Aristotle's locational definition of color, and then I investigated how Aristotle reduces color to more basic qualities. Throughout the essay I tried to show how my choices of interpretation relate to those of other interpreters. The first major position that I argued for in this essay

⁴⁵ Against the *Phys.* 1.6 passage, one could argue that when Aristotle says that white and black arise from contraries, he means not that they arise from hot, cold, wet, and dry, but from the specific contraries of the presence and absence of fire.

is that white and black are ontologically basic units that result from the presence and absence of fire in the limit of the transparent in a determinately bounded body. After presenting a model of how the plurality of colors results from black and white, I argued that the degree of transparency is a variable that changes the proportion of black to white particles. The second major position is that hot, wet, dry, and cold are necessary but do not compose the primary colors black and white, which is in contrast to how these basic qualities are related to the composite bodies and how black and white are related to the plurality of colors.

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The Absence of Archaic Altruism: Hesiod's Greek Deities and Their Effect on Humanity

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*As Greece emerged from the Dark Ages following the invasion of the Sea Peoples, farmers and townspeople of the early first millennium B.C.E. faced the task of rebuilding a shattered society. Few written records remain from the era, but historians continue to turn to Hesiod for assistance in reconstructing the cultural and societal norms. More of a pessimist than his contemporary Homer, Hesiod's works depict a Greek society run by the whimsical and self-serving nature of a pantheon of deities, most of whom have little regard for humanity. As a result of this morality—or perhaps immorality—displayed in *Theogony*, Hesiod then provides advice to fellow Archaic Greeks in *Works and Days* that reveals a society concerned with survival at the hands of merciless gods. Thus, despite the lack of a historical analysis of civilization that might come with authors such as Thucydides, Hesiod's text continues to aid in a reconstruction of ancient Greek culture.*

In Thucydides' record of the Peloponnesian War, he relates to his readers the chaos that resulted from the plague of Athens:

...Athens owed to the plague the beginning of a state of unprecedented lawlessness. Seeing how quick and abrupt were the changes of fortune which came to the rich who suddenly died...people now began openly to venture on acts of self-indulgence which before then used to keep dark....As for the gods, it seemed to be the same thing whether one worshipped them or not, when one saw the good and the bad dying indiscriminately....¹

Though Thucydides writes from a viewpoint that disregards the role of the deities in daily life, his underlying theme about the Athenians' response to tragedies shares striking similarities with Hesiod's: Humankind suffers from a gross lack of control over their circumstances. For the Athenians facing the plague, this manifested itself in the way that nothing they did could heal them from the brutal effects of the sickness. For Hesiod and the Archaic Greeks, the attributes of the gods and the way that the gods respond to humanity forces mortals into a cycle of helplessness.

¹ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. by Rex Warner, (New York: Penguin Books, 1954), 155.

The vengeful and self-seeking nature of the gods made it impossible for humans to control anything in their lives, as the immortals acted and reacted based on their own selfishness. Whereas the actions of immortals in *Theogony* lack any boundaries, uncontrollable circumstances bind the actions of man. The immortals abuse their power and lack morals. This general credo applies not only to the original deities of Ouranos and Gaia, but also to the later and more powerful deities of Zeus and even Demeter. None of these deities operates under any sense of altruistic tendencies. As such, humans live under constant fear of what they will suffer at the hands of the immortals. While on one level, some of the gods' actions appear to help others, at the core these actions still retain a deep motivation for revenge. As a result, the humans of Hesiod's *Works and Days* do not have any semblance of control over their own work or existence; they live and work at the mercy of the deities who command crops and seasons.

As posited in Hesiod's *Theogony*, the helpless state of humanity stems from the self-interest of the gods. Though the cunning nature of the gods manifests itself in different forms depending upon the deity, the stories of both Zeus and Gaia share certain distinct similarities that support this. Both deities face oppression in some form, and yet rise up in opposition for their own self-serving purposes. Both provide a pretense for altruistic tendencies that might contradict the aforementioned selfish attributes, but ultimately continue to serve themselves. Finally, neither deity harbors any qualms about hurting others in their path of self-advancement, which in turn leaves immortals with power over circumstances that humans then cannot control.

Multiple characters within Gaia's story live up to Hesiod's view of the gods. While Gaia, or "broad-bosomed earth" (Hesiod, *Theogony*, line 117),² remains one of the prime examples of this, Ouranos continues the trend. Given the context of Ouranos' oppression of Gaia, the self-seeking nature of the gods immediately emerges. Ouranos "was driven to hate [their children] from the beginning. So

² All quotations from Hesiod are taken from Hesiod, *The Poems of Hesiod*, trans. by R. M. Frazer (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983).

he hid them away, each one, as they came into being” (Hesiod, *Theogony*, lines 155-157). Hesiod does not describe any threat these children posed to Ouranos. Ouranos’ mere dislike of these children serves as enough motive for him to seek their oppression. As a result, Gaia herself suffers; the “pain in her heart” (Hesiod, *Theogony*, line 163) reflects the psychological and emotional pain that she experiences as a result of Ouranos’ selfish decisions.

But Gaia responds in kind toward Ouranos for his actions. Though she cannot take vengeance herself, she was able to convince one of her children to execute her violent plan in response to Ouranos’ actions. At the outset, Gaia seems to speak words of altruism and love for her children, saying that “if you will follow as I advise you, we shall avenge this wicked dishonor” (Hesiod, *Theogony*, lines 164-166, emphasis added). Her motivations truly stem from the goal of selfish gain. Previously in the text, Hesiod describes how “huge Gaia was groaning within and feeling constrained, and so she contrived an evil device” (Hesiod, *Theogony*, lines 159-160). Hesiod makes no mention here of Gaia’s sense of grief over her children. Later on, her children even suffer as a result of their actions in helping Gaia rebel against Ouranos, as their father threatens that since “they had committed a terrible criminal act...*tisis*, ‘vengeance,’ was destined to follow” (Hesiod, *Theogony*, lines 209-210). Gaia, therefore, harbors no remorse over sending her children into destruction as long as she can rest in the knowledge that her vengeance will be served. Her altruistic tendencies only result in fleeting thoughts for her own advancement, a pattern substantiated later on in the text: She helps Rhea to deceive Kronos about the birth of Zeus and “received him [Zeus]...in order to nurse him....And she swaddled a great stone and put it into the hands of Ouranos’s son...who...sent it down into his stomach” (Hesiod, *Theogony*, lines 480-487).

These examples of ruthlessness coming from the goddess intended to symbolize the Earth hold menacing implications for those living on that Earth. If such a being cares not even for her own children and only utilizes them in an effort to free herself from bondage, then there can be no hope for a

peaceful life for humans. The only gifts that Gaia ever bequeathed upon humans included “the high mountains,” which prevented quick travel through Greece, and “the exhaustless sea that rages with waves,” which brought the Greeks the Sea Peoples and other dangers (Hesiod, *Theogony*, lines 129 and 132). As a result of her trickery, the Greeks can never see Gaia as a giver of things, merely a deceiver. It is not until the introduction of Demeter in *Works and Days* that this new perception of the Earth begins to produce crops to humans, with the fruit of Demeter providing for the Greeks on a yearly basis (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, line 32). At the same time, though, even with this shift to a slightly more benevolent Demeter, the Greeks held little to no control over their farming circumstances, as will be discussed later.

In response to the power of the gods and the examples of trickery exhibited in the Gaia story, Greeks also strive to gain control over their circumstances through deceit and selfish ambition. Unfortunately, the formula does not work so productively for the Greeks. Whereas Gaia is able to trick Kronos by sending a boulder down his gullet, every time the Greeks attempt to achieve self-advancement, Zeus thwarts their efforts. Hesiod addresses this pattern in his “Exhortation to Justice” in *Works and Days*. The inclusion of this passage serves as an indication of trickery and selfishness among the Greeks, in some ways reflective of how the Greeks might try to mimic the gods. At the same time, though, Hesiod reminds his fellow farmers what happens when they engage in such selfish behavior: “...upon those who are lovers of hubris and hard-hearted deeds far-seeing Zeus, son of Kronos, dispenses his punishing justice. Often even a whole city pays for the wrong of one person” (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, lines 238-240). Hesiod sharply reminds the Greeks that while the gods capably function under a selfish attitude, the lack of control that the Greeks face under the power of Zeus makes it impossible for them to do likewise. Gaia, in all of her power and violence, will do nothing to help the Greeks, leading to a sense of frustration and helplessness in life for the Archaic Greeks.

These attributes emerge even more clearly throughout accounts of Zeus' story. At the very beginning of the tale, Hesiod relates how "Great Kronos swallowed each of these [his own] children as each of them came out of the holy womb of their mother...For he had learned of the future...how he was destined to meet with defeat at the hands of his son..." (Hesiod, *Theogony*, lines 459-464). Kronos knows beforehand of the likelihood of his own offspring overthrowing him. His actions of "swallowing" each of his children show, rather than a desire to rule justly, a desire to preserve his own power. This violence and oppression of others depicts the selfish nature so prevalent in all of Hesiod's Greek deities—performing actions to advance their own ambition. As a result, Greeks have no reason to think that these gods will bestow gifts upon them if the immortals have only ever sought their own power.

Even more so, though, the actions of Zeus himself represent a deity determined for self-preservation. Zeus releases Kronos' brothers from bondage—and "in return for this kindness they showed themselves grateful to him by giving him both the crash of the thunder and the smoldering bolt and flash of lightning..." (Hesiod, *Theogony*, lines 503-505). Zeus will eventually use these weapons to exercise dominion over "all immortals and mortals" (Hesiod, *Theogony*, line 506), thereby strengthening his own position as authority, a self-seeking motive. Though upon obtaining kingship, Zeus "fairly apportioned their honors" (Hesiod, *Theogony*, line 885) to those who had assisted him, he has no reason to initially rise up against Kronos and the Titans other than vengeance. It is only through this motivation that he is able to rally others around him, since he had "freed [them] from bondage secure" (Hesiod, *Theogony*, line 659). Therefore, though Zeus may have appeared to be a more benevolent ruler than past supreme deities, motivations of vengeance and self-preservation still drove his rebellions and desire for power more than anything else.

The story of Prometheus continues this trend with another vibrant example. Intent upon outwitting Zeus, Prometheus lies and deceives the superior god. When Zeus confronts Prometheus, the deceiver proceeds to lie to Zeus. In response, Zeus "planned in his heart evil which he would bring to

fulfillment for mortal men" (Hesiod, *Theogony*, lines 551-552). As Prometheus continues to insult Zeus, Zeus responds in several ways: he "made as the price of fire an evil for men" (Hesiod, *Theogony*, line 570), and "created women as an evil for men and conspirers in troublesome works" (Hesiod, *Theogony*, line 600-601). Though Prometheus never truly threatens Zeus in all his power, Zeus feels his image and reputation have fallen under attack by the impunities of the Prometheus. This necessitates revenge.

This interaction between Prometheus and Zeus serves as a multi-layered example of the consequences of an attempt to benefit human interest. Though Prometheus falls under the category of deity, his actions classify him as a friend of humans: "[Zeus] hid fire, which the goodly son of Iapetus [Prometheus] stole back...to give it to men, secretly carrying it in a fennel stalk's hollow" (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, lines 49-52). However, because of Prometheus' deceit, Zeus then punishes humans more with the creation of Pandora. Ironically, the desire to prevent men from obtaining fire is not what angers Zeus. Rather, the intent with which Prometheus deceives Zeus causes Zeus to punish humanity, saying that "you [Prometheus] rejoice in your theft of my fire and in having deceived me, being the cause of great pain to yourself and mean in the future" (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, lines 55-56). In his actions, Prometheus merely harms Zeus' pride, but even for this, Prometheus and all of humanity suffers. This cost of humanity's gain counteracts the initial benefit. Thus, whenever humanity tries to control fate to create a favorable outcome, the effort results in more harm, leading to a feeling of helplessness.

Hesiod's discussion of the human existence in *Works and Days* perpetuates this sense of helplessness. Since no altruistic effects result from the actions of the deities, Hesiod has no reason to suppose that the gods might do anything for humans out of benevolence. The gods, who theoretically rule everything, look after only their own concerns. If benefitting humans would help them gain revenge on a rival deity, then perhaps the humans will be blessed. But this rarely occurs. More often than not, Hesiod feels that humans suffer from merely being caught in the middle of the gods and lacking any control at all, which in turn leads to a repetitive, pointless existence on the part of humanity. For Hesiod,

“the earth is abounding in evils and so is the sea. And diseases come upon men by day and by night, everywhere moving at will, bringing evil to mortals silently” (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 101-103). This view emerges prominently throughout *Works and Days*, both in Hesiod’s references to Zeus and even in the existence of “The Farmer’s Calendar.”

Zeus’ role as perpetuator of human helplessness continues throughout the entirety of *Works and Days* as the character referenced the most by Hesiod. Not all of these references are negative. The opening lines of *Works and Days* compose “An Introductory Hymn to Zeus” in which Zeus is cited as the being “through whom mortal men are both dishonored and honored; they become famous and do not become famous as almighty Zeus wills. Easily he strengthens the faltering, easily shatters the strong, easily makes the flourishing fade, the faded to flourish...” (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, lines 3-7). These lines reflect the tone of a person who not only feels himself subject to Zeus’ decisions, but also holds little control over what happens. The fact that through Zeus all of this happens leaves little room for humans themselves to impact the events in their own lives.

More often than not, though, the effects of Zeus’ control manifest themselves negatively in Hesiod’s view. Practically every instance of a hardship is accompanied by an explanation of Zeus’ actions that resulted in the hardship. Because of Prometheus, “Zeus hid our livelihood when he was angered at heart” (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, line 47). Resultantly, life on earth becomes much more difficult. The human beings of Hesiod’s day had no control over this occurrence—they merely continued to live their lives and struggle for survival in response. Further along in the text, Hesiod reminds his audience that “Zeus...sends terrible suffering from heaven upon them, famine together with plague, and makes the people perish” (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, lines 242-243). These events significantly affect the people of Hesiod’s community, and yet the people can only respond to the decisions of Zeus. The most that the Greeks can do is hope that their attempts to avoid hubris result in a less wrathful Zeus: “sometimes he makes them pay by giving their broad army defeat or bringing their wall down, or he, Zeus, son of

Kronos, destroys their ships on the sea" (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, lines 240-241). Thus, most if not all references to Zeus depict Hesiod's feeling of humanity's helplessness in the face of all-powerful Zeus who overthrew his father.

Clearly, Zeus controls the cosmos for the typical Greek farmer. Any negative event that happens results from the actions of Zeus, whether or not the Greek actions warrant it. Any positive event takes place merely because it advances Zeus' own agenda. Therefore, Hesiod's belief that humanity lacks any semblance of control over circumstances culminates in a feeling of insignificance and inadequacy. Nothing that humanity does will actually result in the bettering of circumstances. Nothing that humanity does not do will ultimately affect the broad scheme of the cosmos. The resulting attitude creates an apathetic attitude toward life. Hesiod summarizes these emotions in his description: "we live in the age of the iron race, when men shall never cease from labor and woe by day, and never be free from anguish at night, for hard are the cares that the gods will be giving" (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, lines 176-178). The only thing a human can do, then, is farm without hope of circumstances changing.

The tone of Hesiod's sections titled "The Farmer's Calendar" finalizes this conclusion. The calendar sections outline for Hesiod's readers the times and ways to farm during the year. In his introduction, Hesiod lays out several guidelines for his fellow farmers: "The following law applies to the plainsmen: strip to sew, strip to plow, strip to reap. So do if you want to care for all the works of Demeter each one in its season, that they each may seasonably grow..." (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, lines 388-394). Here, Hesiod's outline of a law shows how a farmer must do whatever he can to achieve the best growing season possible. Hesiod's reasoning for this rests in the fact that "he who puts off his work is wrestling with ruin" (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, line 414). Humans can try to counteract their lack of control by working, but even then, surprises can happen.

Within the text of "The Farmer's Calendar," Hesiod again depicts gods who are ultimately in control. Hesiod encourages farmers to "pray to Zeus Chthonian and to the holy goddess Demeter that

the holy grain of Demeter will grow to fulfillment..." (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, lines 465-466). As much as a person works, Demeter still maintains ultimate power in what grows from her soil. Demeter, in stark contrast to Gaia, produces crops for humans that they then survive on. In one sense, this could be seen as a god showing benevolence for humanity. However, Demeter also runs on her own calendar: "So do if you want to care for all the works of Demeter each one in its season, that they each may seasonably grow..." (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, lines 392-394). Demeter's produce may be good, but farmers must still abide by her schedule. This furthers the conclusion that the fact that Hesiod even feels that he can credibly write a guide for farmers concerning what to do and when to do it reflects yet again the inherent feeling of helplessness in the face of the gods. With Zeus, "hard it is for mortal men to fathom his thinking" (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, line 484). Therefore, mortals such as Hesiod strive to take what they *can* understand—the seasons—and formulate them into a code for possible survival.

Other texts of Hesiod's day and later Greek society confirm Hesiod's view of human lack of control amidst the selfish and vengeful nature of the gods, thereby sealing the fate of the Archaic Greeks. In "On the Folly of Humanity," Rhianos of Bene states that "truly, we humans have minds that err and senselessly endure the uneven distribution of the gods' gifts..."³ Even these opening lines mirror the lack of care the gods have given to their mortal counterparts. Rhianos claims an uneven distribution. Such a downfall would likely result from either the gods lack of caring or a desire for the gods to see their favorites triumph over others. The mindset of helplessness that the Greeks have continued with is reflected even earlier in the opening words, how they have "senselessly endured." This feeling, reminiscent of helplessness, reflects a feeling that humans felt they could not change their outcome.

In *The Greeks and the Irrational*, E. R. Dodds draws a similar conclusion about the mindset of the Archaic and even Bronze Age Greek societies. Dodds bring to light the development of the concept of

³ Rhianos of Bene, "On the Folly of Humanity," from *Ancient Greece: Documentary Perspectives*, ed. S. V. Spyridakis and B. P. Nystrom (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall-Hunt, 1985), 182.

“ate,” or “that experience of divine temptation or infatuation.”⁴ The intent of this Greek word meshes perfectly with the sense of helplessness that Hesiod’s writing embodies. For Hesiod, events take place as the result of the actions of the gods, based on their vengeful and selfish nature, meaning that humans are merely tossed around in the cosmos. Dodds carries this development a step further in his discussion of the *Iliad*. For Agamemnon, the king not only lacked control of his environment, but he also lacked control over his own actions:

“Not I,” he declared afterwards, “not I was the cause of this act, but Zeus and my portion and the Erinys who walks in darkness: they it was who in the assembly put wild *ate* in my understanding, on that day when I arbitrarily took Achilles’ prize from him. So what could I do? Deity will always have its way.”⁵

Such a depiction aligns wholeheartedly with Hesiod’s views of the helplessness of humanity. Agamemnon claims he had no option other than obeying the gods, just as Hesiod feels he has no option other than living under the events the gods decree.

The society that Hesiod lived in, though having recently emerged from the Dark Ages of Greece, did not view its circumstances as much better than the previous centuries. Though the Greeks were recovering from the attacks of the Sea Peoples and were slowly repopulating the towns, their outlook on life continued to be bleak. They thought themselves ruled by the whims of self-seeking and vengeful deities. Nothing that the humans could do would effectively alter the courses of these deities’ actions. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the Archaic Greeks looked to their own polises for their survival, with the people of each polis trying to help each other survive while at the same time denying neighboring polises any form of friendship. On the basis of this assumption, the Corcyrans appealed to the Athenians for aid against the Corinthians: “We must therefore convince you first that by giving us this help you will be acting in your own interests, or certainly not against your own interests.”⁶ The

⁴ E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), 2.

⁵ Homer, *The Iliad*, 19.86 ff., quoted in E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), 3.

⁶ Thucydides, 54.

Greeks learned from the examples of their deities. If the gods would not display kindness for the sake of kindness, than neither would a Greek polis extend kindness to another if there were a chance of their own polis members suffering.

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Delia as Nemesis: The Tibullan Mistress Evolved

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The Tibullan poetic mistresses are commonly considered independent of one another. Unlike Propertius and Ovid, the collection addresses two mistresses, Delia of Book I and Nemesis of Book II, whose pseudonym is identified with the goddess of the same name. Although it seems that the poet-lover has adopted a new beloved in the second work, he never formally introduces her nor does he dismiss Delia. Further, there is a distinctive shift in poetic disposition that accompanies the Nemesis cycle, the genesis of which begins to take shape in Book I. This paper examines these developments and explores the idea of continuity between the works and the development of the poetic perspective. I will argue that it is not the new mistress that effects the speaker's transformation but rather, the poet's characterization of the mistress is a product of this conversion. The poet-lover's fruitless attempts in love encourage an aberrant deification of the beloved in an effort to satisfy his infatuation. This paper discusses the intertextual transformations that take place between Books I and II as a reflection the poet-lover's fixated amorous condition and considers the identity of Nemesis as the evolved Delia of Book one.

Among the Latin elegists, Tibullus is unique in his celebration of two poetic mistresses. Cornelius Gallus, who dedicated his four books to a woman named Lycoris, effectively established a paradigm for focusing on a single mistress that was largely maintained by the later elegists. Propertius commits *Monobiblos* and Book 2-4 to Cynthia, Ovid's *Amores* centers on his affair with Corinna, and Sculpicia's small collection is dedicated to Cerinthus. Unlike his contemporaries, the Tibullan books revolve around the poet's relationship with *two* women. While this deviates from the traditional archetype, it is generally thought that the mistresses were independent of each other, evidence that the poet-lover had ended his relationship with the first woman and chosen a new beloved.¹ Book One is devoted to Delia, although it also features three pederastic poems.² The second book exclusively recounts Tibullus's affair

¹ The terms "poet" and "poet-lover" will be used throughout to refer to the poetic speaker or persona and not to Tibullus the poet.

² *Tib.* 1.4, 1.8, 1.9. Full consideration the pederastic affair between the poet and the boy Marathus extends beyond the scope of this paper and will not be discussed.

with a woman named Nemesis, whose pseudonym is identified with the goddess of the same name. Although the mistress's name change suggests that Nemesis is a new figure, Tibullus never formally introduces this new woman, nor does he dismiss Delia. His refusal to define the moments when his relationships begin and end is yet another paradigmatic deviation unique to Tibullus. Further, there is a distinctive shift in poetic disposition that accompanies the Nemesis cycle, the genesis of which begins to take shape in Book One. This suggests that rather than contrasting isolated affairs, the poet has constructed a series of maturing, interconnected moments between the books. This paper examines these developments and explores the idea of continuity between the works and the development of the poetic perspective. In this endeavor, I will first consider the poet's treatment of the mistresses on their own merit, paying close attention to how they are introduced and dismissed within each book. Of course, within this conversation it is necessary to examine the possible implications of the curious pseudonym of the second mistress, Nemesis.³ In this way, I believe we can detect a progressive reshaping of the poet's disposition and understand these changes as chronological. I would argue that it is not a *new* mistress that effects the speaker's transformation but rather, characterization of the mistress is a product of the *poet's* conversion. I will discuss the intertextual transformations that take place between Books One and Two as a reflection of the poet-lover's fixated amorous condition and consider the identity of Nemesis as the evolved Delia of Book One.

The first poem of the Delia series introduces the poetic themes that will remain consistent throughout both books. We begin to understand the poet's fascination with religion and become acquainted with his ambitions and displeasures with his world. His ideal life is that of the countryside, as it is an escape from the troubles of the world (25-6). He finds comfort in the *Lares*, the familial gods of

³ For a study of the metrical value of the pseudonym and the role it plays in our understanding of the text, see Emma Stafford, "Tibullus' Nemesis: Divine Retribution and the Poet," in *What's in a Name? The Significance of Proper Names in Classical Latin Literature*, ed. Joan Booth and Robert Maltby (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2006), 33-48.

homestead whom he honors (19-24).⁴ He rejects wealth and fame gained in the pursuit of military glory (1-3; 51-2), struggles with ideas of duty and freedom (5-6) as well as love and death (59-69), and fantasizes about a modest pastoral life that will provide an escape from these concerns (67-8). At first, he does not name Delia but fantasizes about embracing his *domina* on a cool night in the countryside (45-48).⁵ Then, he announces that the life of a soldier and the gifts of war are not for him, but instead that he will be prisoner to his *puella* and will soldier for her alone: *Non ego laudari curo, mea Delia,* “Glory has no charms for me, my Delia” (1.1.58).⁶ He envisions his beloved weeping at his funeral pyre and attempts to prove his merits as a lover, urging her to love him before old age sets in. Immediately, the mistress is thrust into the poet’s fantasy. The intimate domain of the lover is entangled within the external conflicts of the poet. The amorous focus is part of these concerns, yet in his fantasy, the mistress is an element of his “solution,” or escape, from troubles. This is not a vision of the future nor of the past—it is a persuasive appeal and a fantasized desire. The relationship is part of the poem’s thematic conflicts. The woman will not join the poet in the countryside but will be the figure standing in the way of his dream: *me retinent uinctum formosae uincla puella,* “I am held a prisoner, fettered by a lovely girl” (1.1.55). Expressions of imprisonment and servitude in an attempt to alter this reality will remain constant throughout his struggles as a lover.⁷

The following elegy is a wildly emotional appeal outside Delia’s locked door, a variation on a common elegiac poem called the *Paraklausithyron*, or “Song at the Closed Door.”⁸ Up to this point in the

⁴ For the *Lares*, see David Orr, “Roman Domestic Religion: A Study of the Roman Household Deities and Their Shrines at Pompeii and Herculaneum” (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1972).

⁵ Delia’s late introduction within this first poem indicates that there are additional important thematic issues central to this work that accompany the amorous tone. The poet’s “outside world” often intersects with his experiences in love. This trend is expressed here.

⁶ For the translation referenced throughout this paper, see Guy Lee, trans., *Tibullus: Elegies* (Cambridge: St John’s College, 1975).

⁷ Within this very first poem’s mention of the poet as “*servuus Delia*,” it becomes clear that servitude in particular is central to his role. Rarely treated negatively, his is a willing servitude. See Robert Maltby, *Tibullus: Elegies. Text, Introduction and Commentary* (Cambridge: Francis Cairns Publications, 2002).

⁸ For further explanation of the *Paraklausithyron*, see Lee, 109, and Frank Copley, *Exclusus Amator: A Study in Latin Love Poetry*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1956.

poem there has been no real interaction between the poet and his girl, yet immediately we experience his feelings of abandonment and desperation. In this poem we get a glimpse of the role of religion and treatment of the divine in the elegies of Tibullus. Religion is deeply knitted into the erotic world of Tibullus. His appeals to amorous deities and the magic of witches are central to his strategies to gain the affection of his beloved.⁹ Additionally, among the Latin elegists, Tibullus is often distinguished as the “poet of feeling.”¹⁰ His unrestrained emotionality arouses a sense of vulnerability and subtle wildness that bids for our sympathy. The *Paraklausithyron* highlights these distinctively Tibullian qualities. At the threshold of his beloved’s home, the poet pleads with the door as if the door itself were a divine being; he begs it to open for him, reminding it of the kindness he has shown it in the past: *te meminisse decet quae plurima uoce peregi supplice, cum posti florida serta darem*, (“It is right that you should remember all of my prayers and promises when I hung those garlands of flowers on your post” (1.2.13-14). Lee notes the implied religious tone throughout, specifically in respect to the “Door,” which is addressed as if it were a god through the use of language that is characteristic of hymns.¹¹ The poet calls to Delia and asks her to sneak out to him, claiming that Venus provides special protection for lovers: *quisquis amore tenetur eat tutusque sacerque qualibet*, “The love-possessed are sacred, safe to wander where they will” (1.2.29). He continues on to explain that he has asked a witch to compose a special spell for her, so she can easily sneak past her husband. This same witch has promised a spell to free him from his love, although he does not wish for this relief, nor does he think it possible (1.2.61-62). He would prefer to appeal to the gods: *non ego totus abesset amor sed mutuus esset orabam, nec te posse carere uelim*, “I

⁹ For a full exploration of religion and Tibullus, see Eli Edward Burriss, “The Religious Life of Tibullus as Reflected in His Elegies,” *The Classical Weekly* 22, no. 16 (1929): 121-26, and B. Robert Palmer, “Is There a Religion of Love in Tibullus?” *The Classical Journal* 73, no. 1 (Oct. - Nov. 1977): 1-10. For the worship of domestic gods such as the *Lares* in Tibullus, see Orr.

¹⁰ Lee expands on the distinctive emotive quality of Tibullian elegy. I would agree with this assessment. His poems seem almost erratic in form and content, seemingly driven by a wildly emotional force that is constantly reacting to his external experiences. See Lee, 10.

¹¹ The Door addressed as a god, 1.2.7: *Iana difficilis domini...* And later, *fixo dente* and the following anaphora of *illa*, characteristic of hymns: 1.2.19. See Lee, note 18, 110.

prayed that love be mutual, not absent altogether. How could I ever wish to live without you?" (1.2.65-66).

Here we gain a deeper understanding of the poet's relationship with Delia. He implies that she has sneaked out at night to see him before and that he is hoping that she will do so again. Perhaps she is absent on this night because she is afraid, so he offers her the protection of Venus and turns to witchcraft as a last resort.¹² His feeling of super-human strength as a lover under the shield of Venus attests to his loss of reality.¹³ In spite of all of these troubles, the poet-lover refuses to seek relief from his love-sickness. Rather, he wishes still that his love would be returned, with the grace of the gods to whom he prays. In growing frustration he cries out to Venus:

*Num Veneris magnae uiolauī numina uerbo
et mea nunc poenas impia lingua luit?
num feror incestus sedes adiisse deorum
sertaque de sanctis deripuisse focis?
non ego, si merui, dubitem procumbere templis
et dare sacratis oscula liminibus;
non ego tellurem genibus perrepere supplex
et miserum sancto tendere poste caput.* (1.2.81-89)

Has word of mine profaned the majesty of Venus
And is my tongue now paying the price of blasphemy?
Can I be accused of defiling the gods' temples
Or of stealing garlands from their holy hearths?
If guilty I'd not hesitate to fall down on my face in the
Porch and kiss the consecrated threshold,
To crawl in penance on my knees and beat my wretched head
Against the holy door.

The function of the *serta* (garlands), *supplex* (suppliant/worshipper) and *postes* (door-posts) is an echo from the earlier passage at Delia's doorstep (1.2.13-14), but is here used in connection to the sacred

¹² The appearance of witches and witchcraft appear throughout both books, although it is only in the *Nemesis* series that he is willing to submit to their power. For the role of witchcraft in the Roman world, see Robert Turcan, *The Cults of the Roman Empire*, trans. Antonia Nevill (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), and B. Kimberly Stratton, *Naming the Witch: Magic Ideology and Stereotype in the Ancient World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), particularly Stratton's understanding of the role of the witch in Tibullian elegy.

¹³ *non mihi pigra nocent hibernae figora noctis, non mihi cum multa decidit imber aqua*, "In the freezing winter's night no frost can bite me; no rain can damp me though it falls in floods" (1.2.31-32).

shrine of Venus. Robert Palmer suggests that the plea at the door is representative of ritual worship, portraying Delia's doorstep a shrine itself and thus equating Delia with Venus.¹⁴ I agree with the interpretation of the door as sacred. The parallel between the two thresholds and the "holy door" is equally evocative. However, this does not specifically justify the conclusion that there is a direct relationship between the *domina* and Venus. Rather, it suggests that the beloved can embody the divine *in place of* Venus. The *domina* inevitably assumes the role of a goddess the moment the poet assumes the role of worshipper. The plea at the door resembles the ritual devotion at 83-88 in connection to Venus because the *domina* is, in effect, worshiped as a goddess herself.¹⁵ Despite this treatment of the mistress, the poem concludes with Venus:

At mihi parce, Venus, semper tibi dedita seruit mens mea. (1.2.100)
But Venus, my devoted heart is ever at *your* service. Have mercy.

Although Delia is able to adopt the role of the goddess as the poet plays patron, there has been no transference of divine nature. She does not replace Venus nor act as a member of her divine household. The two exist independently, their bond only in their sanctity.

A pastoral Delia is a recurrent fantasy throughout Book One. Unfortunately, the poet's dream will never be realized because Delia lives in the city and has been enticed by a wealthy lover. Nevertheless, it is this situation that inspires the fantasy in Poem Five. He envisions Delia as the mistress of his farm, hostess to Messalla, and ruler of this domain: *illa regat cunctos, illi sint omnia curae, ac iuuet in tota me nihil esse domo*, "She can rule us all, take charge of everything, and I'll enjoy non-entity at home" (1.5.27-30). It is here that she seems to embody the divine, for she adopts the role of observer

¹⁴ See B. Robert Palmer, "Is There a Religion of Love in Tibullus?" *The Classical Journal* 73, no. 1 (Oct. - Nov. 1977): 1-10. This thought is shared by M. C. J. Putnam, though no textual support is offered. See M. C. J. Putnam, *Tibullus: A Commentary* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973).

¹⁵ The figures only resemble each other in their divine qualities but not as components of the same godly identity. In fact, as we will soon discover, the *domina* is often set in conflict with the gods.

and hostess to the holy.¹⁶ But alas, he is refused access to his mistress and realizes that all of this is impossible, the transition between these contrasting realities abrupt and emotional. In response he asks: *num donis uincitur omnis amor?* “Must every love surrender to a bribe?” (2.5.60). Yet, he does not have the resources needed for this end and so he offers himself, as poor man, in servitude to her.¹⁷ Willing to submit even to the harshest humiliation, he gladly offers his service, suggesting that he will willingly escort her to see other men if that is what she desires. We see here that even outside the world of his fantasy, the irrational state continues; his pleas go unanswered, and Delia is unfaithful and unmoved. The poem ends in bitterness.

The last of the Delia series highlights the poet’s various desperate appeals to his beloved. The poem begins in anger, cursing his devious Delia who has betrayed him with the very lies he taught her to use against her husband when she would sneak out to be with him, (1.6.5-15). Delia has been unfaithful to her husband and to the poet.¹⁸ He threatens her suitors and blames her husband for his carelessness (1.6.15-8), going so far as to nearly impose violence on her (55).¹⁹ However, this thought is quickly retracted in consideration of her mother, (1.6.56-68). Although this poem is the last of the Delia elegies and expresses a sense of erratic desperation and tension, there is no formal dismissal or rejection of the mistress.²⁰ Rather, the poet closes the verse with optimism: *nos, Delia, amoris exemplum cana simus*

¹⁶ Messalla, Tibullus’s patron, is yet another figure who is often portrayed as divine. Delia’s service to him is a divine privilege. For more on this subject, see F. David Bright, *Haec Mihi Fingebam: Tibullus in His World* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 38-98.

¹⁷ This, of course, is a pose. As a Roman knight and landholder, the poet would not have been considered “poor.” See Lee, 14-15.

¹⁸ It is important to remember that she has already been unfaithful to her husband with the poet, although it is unclear if this man is indeed her husband, (cf. *Tib* 1.6.67). Her “infidelity” only applies when she is unfaithful to the poet.

¹⁹ Instead, he threatens her infidelity with the wrath of Venus: *hanc Venus ex alto flentem sublimis Olymps spectat et infidis qum sit acerba monet*, “Aloof on high Olympus, Venus sees her tears and warns us how merciless she is to infidelity” (1.6.83-84).

²⁰ If we are to consider the conventions maintained within the elegiac tradition (which I will soon discuss) we would expect some expressed closure to this relationship. As the amorous theme is central to the books, the end of this affair greatly influences the content and direction of the work. However, there is no evidence to this effect or that the relationship has actually ended except that this is the last poem that features Delia.

uterque coma, "Delia, you and I must be Love's paradigm when we are both white-haired" (1.6.85-86).

There is no conclusion to the affair; the last note is hopeful.

Before beginning our consideration of Book Two, it is important to discuss the unique pseudonym of the new *domina*, Nemesis. There are no other parallels in extant Latin elegy that directly attribute the name of a divine figure to a mistress. The pseudonym is a very important key to our understanding of the text and has inspired a great deal of scholarship, especially in the attempts to decode these names in search of a real historical woman.²¹ However, for our purpose the importance of the pseudonym is in its *intention*. Tibullus conceptualized the mistress within the text and purposefully chose a name to represent her within his work. In this way, the poet controls our perception of the *domina*. The intended implications of the assigned name are central to our understanding of the poet's mistress.

There is a small amount of epigraphic evidence that shows that there was a minor precedent for the use of the real name Nemesis, specifically five examples from the imperial period.²² These, however, do not offer a large enough sample for us to assume that the name was popular. It is improbable to think that Tibullus, a learned poet, was not familiar with the goddess by the same name and the implications her name suggests. For this reason, we must consider the character of the goddess.

²¹ See Stafford as well as Bright, 99-123. There are multiple difficulties one faces in an attempt to discover the historical identity of a mistress—namely, our uncertainty as to whether or not a real mistress exists. In this paper I consider the role of the woman within the text to be the full range of her existence. I do not discount the possibility that Delia may have well been the pseudonym for a real historical woman; however, consideration of this extends beyond this paper. A. R. Baca has supported the idea of Nemesis as an invention of the poet's disenchantment of the also-fictitious Delia; see Baca, *Delia and Nemesis in the Corpus Tibullianum* (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1965). Bright has taken issue with this interpretation, considering it impossible to become "disenchanted" with a literary invention. However, I would note that poetry is often an expression of real experience, even if reinterpreted fantastically. It only takes one disheartening experience with any kind of acquaintance to understand this feature of human nature. The poet's understanding of the relationship need be the only pretense for his creation; the beloved has the ability to embody the accumulation of human qualities as understood by the poet.

²² See Stafford, 34-36 for a discussion on the metrical value of the pseudonym. Ancient evidence (Apuleius, *Apol.* 10) tells us Delia's "real name", but see Bright on the difficulties of trusting the ancient source. Additionally, Nemesis rather than Delia is mentioned in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* (3.535-8). Yet the use of the poetic name in poetry itself cannot account as proof of a woman's existence; rather, we might assume that it is employed with the intentions of inspiring the idea of the mistress as presented by Tibullus.

Nemesis is the Greek word for “righteous indignation” and is often associated with Dike, the goddess of moral justice. Originally a Greek goddess, she is described as the daughter of Nyx, the personification of night, by Hesiod.²³ The understanding of Nemesis was two-fold in antiquity: she both embodied the personification of retribution and later evolved as a concrete divine figure, with a distinctive cult in Attica.²⁴ Many scholars have looked to the characteristics of the goddess as a way to explain this pseudonym, citing her reputation for retribution as a defining element of the mistress herself.²⁵ Some have attributed this change as reflective of the failed relationship in the previous book. A.R. Baca suggests that by changing the pseudonym, the poet attempts to channel the wrath of the goddess as Delia’s punishment. Bright dismisses this analysis and argues that Nemesis is not a woman at all, but merely an abstract, contrasting reflection of his former lover.²⁶ All of these interpretations stem from the view that there is some connective allusion to the former mistress. In Baca’s interpretation, Nemesis adopts the role of punisher, yet the poet never wishes to harm Delia. In fact, all suggestion of violence is retracted in the last poem. In Bright’s analysis, the character of Nemesis is presented as standing in opposition to Delia. Yet Delia and Nemesis share many of the same characteristics; one is not “good” and the other “dark,” as is often suggested. Both are greedy (1.5.60; 2.3.53-4); both reject the poet’s advances, causing him a great deal of anguish (1.2; 1.4); both are beautiful (1.5.43-6; 2.3.1-4); both are described as caring or good (1.1.63-4; 2.6.44); and both are city women. It is the poet’s attitude

²³ Hes, *Theo*. 221ff. Also see the Orphic Hymn to Nemesis, which describes her righteous indignation.

²⁴ See Stafford, 38-41. Even within her cult, the divine figure continued to be representative and attached to her moral qualities. For Nemesis as connected to theaters, amphitheaters and stadia in the Roman Imperial period, see Michael B. Hornum, *Nemesis, the Roman State and the Games* (Leiden: Brill, 1993). There were also connections between her and Diana in the Roman era as well as connections to the wheel. The erotic poet Catullus characterizes her as a punisher for those who violate lovers and poets (*Cat.* 50.18-21). The Myth of Narcissus and Echo (Gr. Narkissos and Nikaia) likewise highlights her role in matters of love; in this tale, Nemesis punishes Narcissus for his pride and unwillingness to offer love to another. The goddess makes him fall in love with himself while remaining incapable of accepting his own affection. See Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Charles Martin (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2005). For Nemesis associated with arrogance and fortune, see also the *Tristia*, 5.8.7-12, in Ovid, *The Poems of Exile: Tristia and the Black Sea Letters*, trans. Peter Green (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

²⁵ See Stafford.

²⁶ See Bright and Baca.

that marks the “darkness” of Book Two, not that of the woman. Further, the poet never refers back to Delia in the Nemesis series, nor does he reference any particular retributive characteristics of his beloved, unless we consider his own torment as an unrequited lover—but this torment is also attributed to Delia, who rejects his advances. Interestingly, in the Tibullan texts, Venus is the goddess who often adopts the role of harsh avenger in the world of love: *iniusta lege relictæ Venus*, “Venus takes revenge when unlawfully abandoned” (1.5.58). Perhaps in this way we can see that we cannot accept a straightforward interpretation of Nemesis as representing all the characteristics equated with the goddess. Rather, she is an abstraction of this figure. The character of the divine is blurred and reinterpreted.²⁷ The “unrelenting mistress” is not specific to either mistress; it is a theme that endures throughout both books. The domain of the lover is entangled in conflict and servitude, pitted against a fantasy to resolve this by virtue of the pastoral existence. Yet neither Nemesis nor Delia fulfills this wish, and one cannot be seen in opposition to the other. Rather, Nemesis embodies the rapacious, unfaithful characteristics of Delia expressed in the end of Book One, thus contributing to the disenchanting tenor of Book Two.

The introduction of Nemesis occurs much later in the second book. The first poem of the second book resembles the first of the Delia series. The setting is similarly pastoral, taking place during *Ambarvalia*, a spring festival of the fields. Again we are presented with important thematic issues, all of which mirror those previously mentioned. There is no mention of a new mistress.²⁸ Although he reports that he is suffering at the hands of Cupid, characterized in the lines following:

*hic iuueni detraxit opes, hic dicere iussit
limen ad iratae uerba pudenda senem;
hoc duce custodias furtim transgressa iacentes
ad iuuenem tenebris sola puella uenit* (2.1.67-70)

²⁷ It is common for Tibullus to play with the traditional role of the gods. In addition to deifying other figures such as Messalla within his elegy, his versions of myth are often unique. See *Tib.* 2.1 for the role of Cupid in the ritual feast during *Ambarvalia*, the spring festival of the fields.

²⁸ This mimics the late introduction of Delia in the first poem, although in this case, Nemesis appears much later into the book.

He robs the young of riches and commands the middle-aged
 To use unseemly language at an angry woman's door.
 Guided by him the girls steps over sleeping sentries,
 Creeping to lover in the lonely dark.

Maltby considers this passage to be a “stock theme” in elegy.²⁹ While this may be true, it is important to note that this also describes the exact situation that the poet experiences with Delia. The similarities are highlighted by the preceding passage, indicating that he is at present, a victim of Cupid's violence. Is it not the poet who is middle-aged often cursing at an angry woman's door? Was it not Delia who often sneaked out to visit him at night? The similarities must be acknowledged. Perhaps this accounts for the unmentioned mistress as we are assumed to understand the source of the poet's pain from the onset. It is not until halfway through the third poem of Book Two that Nemesis is mentioned by name: *ut mea luxuria Nemesis fluat utque per urbem incedat donis conspicienda meis*, “My Nemesis shall float in luxury and strut the Roman streets parading gifts of mine” (2.3.55-56). Although Tibullus has seemingly found himself another “greedy” girl, he has resigned himself to her nature and to the idea of offering her the riches of love.³⁰ He pleasantly submits and is pleased to entertain the idea of providing his beloved with gifts (2.3.53-62). This is interesting if we are to consider the same struggle he faces in Book One, but instead of offering the goods his love desires, as a poor man he offers his service to her. If we are to compare our first picture of Nemesis to that of Delia, we will see a much different form of introduction. Nemesis is absent during the first poem, whereas Delia is featured from the onset within the poet's idealized world. The same treatment is not given to Nemesis, and furthermore, the setting is much harsher and the hopeful tone muted. The poet's unexplained transition between mistresses must be considered in light of this new perspective.

²⁹ Maltby, 207.

³⁰ Nemesis is twice referred to as Venus in this poem, in 2.3.3 as a compliment to her beauty and again at 2.3.54 as a vision of Venus who is persuaded by fine gifts. This is an interesting comparison. If she had been intended to embody the goddess Nemesis, it is curious that she would here resemble Venus.

As previously mentioned, the manner of Nemesis's introduction and Delia's dismissal is unusual. Propertius's mistress, Cynthia, endures throughout his work and is clearly introduced in the opening line of Book One: *Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis, contactum nullis ante cupidinibus*, "Cynthia was the first. She caught me with her eyes, a fool who had never before been touched by desires" (1.1.1). She is dismissed in 3.24 and 3.25 and reported dead in 4.7: *inter complexus excidit umbra meos*, "Her shade then slipped away from my embrace," (4.7.95).³¹ Following the same trend, Corinna of Ovid's *Amores* dominates the whole of the introductory poem, seeming to appear to him as an epiphany.³² Likewise, she is dismissed in 3.14, followed by the elegy that features Ovid's abandonment of love.³³

Why is Tibullus so ambiguous in his account of the relationships that dominate his books? In his anger he does not spite Delia, and in his excitement he does not give us any details about his new lover. It is as if we are to have some understanding of her in his life from the onset. He offers us no description of Nemesis except that she is a muse (2.5.110-112), that she is "good" (2.6.44) and beautiful (2.4.35), and that she has *oculi loquaces* (2.6.43). We know more concrete details about Delia but not many: she is beautiful with long, blond hair (1.5.44) and, like Thetis, has blue eyes (1.5.46). Such a physical description of the mistress is substantially lacking from a work that is often considered "erotic," especially if we compare this deficit to the 1.5 of Ovid's *Amores*, which details every part of his mistress's body.³⁴ There is also a serious lack of events or memories between the poet and Nemesis; the only memory he describes is that of her sister's death in 2.6. In the Delia series, we know that Delia was upset that he was leaving for war (1.3), that he had spent time by her side when she was ill (1.5), that he had taught her tricks to sneak past her husband, and that he had a relationship with her mother (1.6).

³¹ She is also mentioned in 4.8, as part of a memory or reflective poem. No new mistress is ever introduced.

³² See *Amores* 1.5, in which her body and the nature of an erotic encounter are described in great detail.

³³ Ellen Greene, *The Erotics of Domination: Male Desire and the Mistress in Latin Love Poetry* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998)..

³⁴ Philip Hardie, *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 30-60.

There are no additional stories of courtship added to the Nemesis series. The Propertian elegies detail multiple arguments, fond memories and erotic encounters, as does Ovid's poetry. Tibullus offers us neither such an account nor an erotic description of Nemesis.

There is a distinctive change that accompanies the second book and which is highlighted in 2.4, the poem following Nemesis's introduction. The first look at this Tibullan mistress is hopeful; although we know that she desires gifts from a wealthy man, the poet is willing to accept this fate—a change that has already been noted in contrast to the first book. Poem Four details a wildly expressive rant of an infatuated lover. The poet exclaims outright that he is a slave to his mistress; he surrenders his freedom and accepts the harshest slavery to the bonds of love (2.4.1-6). He dismisses Elegies and Phoebus, the Muses and his patron, since they bring him no help in this matter (2.4. 12-14). Nemesis wants wealth, but Tibullus's poetry provides no solution, and so he must find ways to provide for her. In his desperation, he turns to the most outrageous solutions:

*At mihi per caedem et facinus sunt dona paranda,
ne iaceam clausam flebilis ante domum.
aut rapiam suspensa sacris insignia fanis:
sed Venus ante alios est uiolanda mihi.
Illa malum facinus suadet dominamque rapacem
dat mihi: sacrilegas sentiat illa manus. (2.4. 21-26)*

I must take to crime and bloodshed to provide her with the gifts
That save me from those weeping vigils at her door;
Or steal the sacred offerings hung up on temple walls:
And Venus shall be first to be profaned.
She tempts me to do evil and devotes me to a grasping
mistress; she deserve to suffer sacrilege.

He continues in his treatment of Venus: *fecit ut infamis nunc deus esset Amor*, "Love is now a God of evil reputation," (2.4.39). The poet submits to the condition demanded of him, willing even to sell off his country home and *Lares* for the money it would bring him: *illius est nobis lege colendus Amor*, "Love's worship means obedience to her laws" (2.4.51).

This moment illustrates a total value conversion. Each of the things that the poet held dear to him throughout both books is profaned. He surrenders to greed and denies his identity. He wishes to save himself from the sorrowful plea at his beloved's door, but as far as we know, this has not happened in Book Two. Could he be referencing Delia? He shuns his patron Messalla, along with the gods of poetry and family estate that serve as the foundation for his fantasy. As a poet who is noted for having such a committed sense of religion throughout his elegies, here he rejects nearly all the gods previously held dear to him.³⁵ In 1.2, the poet claims that he will crawl on his knees for forgiveness if there was any thought that he had "profaned the majesty of Venus," but here he revels in such an idea, claiming that she is an evil goddess. He now worships his beloved, who he has fully submitted to at the close of the poem. In order to provide Nemesis with gifts, he will steal from the temple of Venus, taking the sacred offerings and dedication gifted to the goddess. Here there is a literal transference of the divine from Venus to Nemesis. The poet is in total servitude to the woman and, as a worshipper, will provide her with the gifts intended for the most sacred of temples. Nemesis is first compared to Venus in 2.3 and later fulfills the transformation in 2.4.³⁶ She has not only taken Venus's place, but she has also forced him to reject all other divine figures in favor of her. The religious poet lies down in veneration of his mistress and his mistress alone. Rather than merely rejecting the gods on account of his unanswered pleas to them and remaining distraught by the character of his *domina*, he becomes worshipper of his deified mistress.³⁷ She is transformed in the eyes of the poet and made to represent what he deems most vital: a figure to obey and to worship. His willing offer as a servile lover expressed in the first poem of Book One has been fully realized. This poem illustrates the pinnacle of his continuous delusion.

³⁵ Most noticeable is his treatment of Venus.

³⁶ Note the comparison between Delia and Venus in 1.2 previously discussed.

³⁷ For an alternative view, see Saara Lilja, *The Roman Elegists' Attitude to Women*, *Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae*, Series B, Tom. 135, 1 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1965), 288. Lilja notes that the word "dea" is never used to describe either mistress, nor is either equated to a specific deity. Cf. Palmer as well as G. Lieberg, *Erasmus 17* (1965): 750-751, which deem this interpretation insufficient as it disregards the value of poetic subtleties, which takes precedence as a poetic device over surface topics.

Devotional servitude provides him with his bond to the mistress: Here he can play out the role of worshipper in the hope of gaining the favor of his goddess, Nemesis.³⁸

This conversion does not last for long. Although the poet condemns Venus in Poem Four, he still calls out to her at the end of Book Two, thus showing the poet's instability and continued struggle to mend the disparity between his emotional desires and the reality of the situation. He is unwilling to come to terms with the truth, because he is fiercely holding onto what he wants. This denial continues through to the very last poem. In 2.6 the poet is tortured by the idea that his Nemesis is again with someone else. He calls for *Amor* to lay down his weapons (2.6.15-16) and considers suicide (2.6.18), yet it is hope that urges him onward. In this last poem he seems to come in and out of the wild, dream-like state we see in 2.4. He acknowledges his blasphemous tongue but forges onward.³⁹ He is encouraged by *Spes* (Hope), who promises him Nemesis: *Spes facilem Nemesim spondet mihi, sed negat illa: ei mihi, ne uincas, dura puella, deam*, "Hope guarantees me Nemesis, but Nemesis says No. Ah, cruel girl, you ought to let a goddess win" (2.6.28-9). Here, added at the end of Book Two, Tibullus cleverly acknowledges the interplay between the persona of the goddess and his mistress. The woman is a woman yet again, but his estimation of her continues to be unreasonable. He remains unwilling to desert her. This is reminiscent of 1.6 when he curses Delia's husband; here, too, he finds someone else to blame for his mistress's ways, cursing her *lena: tunc tibi, lena, precor diras: satis anxia uiuas, mouerit e uotis pars quotacumque deos*, "I curse you then, and pain enough would be your life were the gods to grant the least of all my prayers" (2.6.53-4). Of course, the gods are unresponsive. This is his last remark of the series. Again, there is no conclusion at the end of the Nemesis series. The last poem featuring Delia is hopeful, but here Nemesis only provokes curses and frustration.

³⁸ See Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love – Psychoanalysis, Feminism and the Problem of Domination* (New York: Pantheon, 1988), which details the role of voluntary submission to the idealized beloved and the role of devotion servitude as the affirmation of the self. In this theory the lover's servitude becomes a confirmation of the self, a kind of recognition and acknowledgement.

³⁹ *tu miserum torques, to me mihi dira precari cogis et insane mente nefanda loqui*, "You torture my unhappiness. You make me cure myself and with a mind unbalanced utter blasphemy" (2.6.17-8).

We might understand this last note as an illustration of the poet's progressive delusion. Despite the expressive sorrow that is maintained throughout both books, he will remain hopeful. However, in the last book, his expressions of hope are dulled and heavy-hearted as if he were a wearied traveler. He does not understand his beloved as a straightforward woman. Rather, the mistress represents something to him: she is a goal and an abstraction. It has been this way from the first mention of Delia, who was equated with his dream of the country. From the first poem we understand that the poet's mistress is rooted in fantasy. She is an expression of his emotional dream, and his emotions likewise dictate her character. He cannot abandon her, regardless of how she treats him, because this would also mean he would have to abandon his dreams and be forced to come back to the reality he so desires to abandon.⁴⁰ It is only with her that this fantasy is realized.

Delia represents a life of hope and freedom from a world of military glory, war, and greed. Nemesis is a reflection of the struggle to maintain this dream. Delia has rejected him in poem 1.6, and Nemesis emerges as his conception of what kind of woman Delia has become. She is not a "retributive goddess" in the way of one who exacts revenge, but instead embodies the kind of torture experienced by the poet throughout his ordeal. If Nemesis was a new woman, there is no suggestion that she is a different kind of woman. There is no mention of new experiences that they have shared. There are no pleasant memories from their past. She is introduced as if the poet and audience already know her. Nemesis is the evolved *domina*, and specifically, she is what Delia has become: an expression of the poet's pain and a misunderstanding of why he cannot have what he so desires. She represents the disintegration of reality and collapse of the original relationship; Nemesis is the name assigned to Delia as a reflection of how the poet copes with this. The poet's growing desperation for her as fulfillment of his vision encourages the creation her new identity, indicative of his rejection of reality. He is unable to accept Delia as she is.

⁴⁰ It is not that she is a fictitious character, but rather that his desires have sculpted his vision of his beloved. It is through this intensely emotional lens that he shapes our perception of her.

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Sexual Morality in Ancient Egyptian Literature

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Ancient Egyptian literature often incorporates sexual ethics that are not fully explained or comprehensively explored within the works. It is often difficult for a modern reader to understand these sexual ethics. Generally, the ancient Egyptian literary corpus assumes a cultural context with which ancient Egyptian readers were familiar. In this paper, I argue that the religious and cultural practices of ancient Egypt were inseparable from common customs, including sexual, reproductive, and erotic customs. I appeal to archaeological and other historical records to illuminate some of the more confusing sexual elements of numerous literary works. Throughout, I try to remain mindful of the differences in sexual morality in ancient Egyptian society between commoners and royalty, between the indigenous population and Greek or Roman immigrants, and between inhabitants of the civilization at different time periods.

Ancient Egyptian literature often incorporates sexual ethics that are not fully explained or comprehensively explored within the works. The ancient Egyptian literary corpus assumes a cultural context with which ancient Egyptian readers were familiar. Notably, the pervasive religious and cultural practices of ancient Egypt were inseparable from common customs, including sexual, reproductive, and erotic customs. Contextualizing ancient Egyptian literature with archaeological and other historical records illuminates the more confusing sexual elements of numerous literary works. In turn, sexual morals and certain religious and cultural beliefs concerning sex can be extracted from ancient Egyptian myths and tales. The praise or condemnation of certain sexual acts in Egyptian literature, for example, provides evidence for which sexual acts were considered acceptable and taboo, in what eras, and by whom.

Ancient Egyptian stories appear to present conflicting opinions of the moral status of male homosexuality. In *The Book of the Dead*, a religious text, one of the negative confessions is, "I have not

copulated with a boy,” which seems to outright condemn homosexuality.¹ In *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*, the god Seth is condemned after his nephew Horus’s semen is discovered within him. Horus, on the other hand, is not condemned. Whereas *The Book of the Dead* seems to condemn homosexuality, *The Contendings of Horus and Seth* seems to only condemn one partner.

By contextualizing *The Contendings of Horus and Seth* it becomes clear that Seth is not being condemned for homosexuality, but rather his passivity. Ancient Egyptians rarely viewed homosexual relations as loving, but rather as one man raping another to exert domination.² This interpretation of homosexuality explains why the act would be considered sinful in *The Book of the Dead*, and it is consistent with Seth’s emasculation and shame as the receiving partner. Furthermore, the story begins with Seth sodomizing the younger Horus, which was considered a sneaky way to enact revenge, not necessarily an erotic or amorous act.³ This view of homosexuality shines a different light on Isis’s rage upon realizing that Seth attempted to rape her son. She is not outraged that her brother and brother-in-law acted sexually with her son, but that he almost dominated him. This explains her reaction: planning to trick Seth into eating Horus’s semen-laced lettuce. Though by eating semen Seth is not participating in anal sex, he is receiving the seed of another man, which, within the context of ancient Egypt, made him the passive person. Indeed, ancient Egyptian superstitions held that a man’s semen was venomous for other men.⁴

Isis’s decision to disguise the semen in lettuce is not arbitrary but invokes religious symbolism. Lettuce was one of the most common ancient Egyptian aphrodisiacs and was featured in festivals for the ithyphallic god of fertility and procreation, Min.⁵ Isis is dually insulting Seth. Not only is he consuming semen, he is also eating it with an aphrodisiac, insinuating romance and love. Without the knowledge

¹ William Simpson, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 3rd ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, 2003), 270.

² Lise Manniche, *Sexual Life in Ancient Egypt* (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University, 1987), 22.

³ Karol Myśliwiec and Geoffrey Packer, *Eros on the Nile* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, 2004), 30.

⁴ Myśliwiec and Packer, 34.

⁵ Jack R. Harlan, “Lettuce and the Sycamore: Sex and Romance in Ancient Egypt,” *Economic Botany* 40.1 (1986): 4.

that lettuce was an ancient Egyptian aphrodisiac, however, it would be difficult to ascertain the double-entendre. For ancient Egyptians this insinuation would have made the episode even more shameful and perhaps funny, because homosexual relationships were rarely considered loving.

However, *The Tale of Neferkare and the General Saset*, a popular folk tale concerning a king and his lover, presents both of the homosexual characters as rather silly. They commit the affair in secret, indicating that it is shameful. Furthermore, Saset is specifically described as a bachelor, which was uncommon for male adults and perhaps looked upon with suspicion or derision.⁶ Some sources outside of the literature suggest that most ancient Egyptians would have considered their relationship an aberration for undermining the traditional family structure.⁷

This characterization of homosexuality does not necessarily contradict that present in *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*, however. Though the relations are presented much differently, it is important to remember that *The Contendings of Horus and Seth* describes rape, whereas *The Tale of Neferkare and the General Saset* describes a non-aggressive homosexual relationship. Instances of intimate or consensual homosexual relationships were largely condemned by religious texts as foolish means of satisfying sexual appetite.⁸ Horus does not give Seth his semen as a means of satisfying his sexual appetite; in fact, he does not even give Seth his semen through sexual intercourse. On the other hand, the relationship between Neferkare and Saset is clearly consensual because Saset lowers his ladder so that Neferkare can ascend to his room and join him in bed. Since the ancient Egyptians religion considered consensual homosexual sex a misappropriation of sexuality, the different attitudes toward Horus and Neferkare make sense.

⁶ R. B. Parkinson, "'Homosexual' Desire and Middle Kingdom Literature," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 81 (1995): 60.

⁷ R. B. Parkinson, *Voices from Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Middle Kingdom Writings* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma, 1991), 54.

⁸ Myśliwiec and Packer, 33.

One tomb from the Fifth Dynasty of the Old Kingdom may seem to contradict the religious prohibition of homosexuality by presenting two male manicurists, Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep, so intimately that some archaeologists interpret their relationship as romantic. The tombs' various suggestive aspects include images of the two men touching noses and torsos.⁹ Other images in the tomb portray the two men fishing and fowling, sexual metaphors common in ancient Egyptian myths.¹⁰ The intimacy of the two men is very apparent, and appears to reflect a culture accepting of their relationship. However, this tomb is not necessarily incongruous with Egyptian religion. The two men are not necessarily lovers, since the word used to describe their relationship – *sn* – can be translated to brother or friend in addition to lover.¹¹ Also, the two men are not depicted engaging in anal intercourse. Ancient Egyptians may not have been opposed to camaraderie or affection between men, but simply opposed to anal intercourse.¹² If the two were lovers, however, and were known to engage in anal intercourse, there is still the possibility that this relationship does not contradict the religious views they and their society held.

Over the millennia-long history of ancient Egyptian civilization, it would be difficult to imagine no cases of publicly accepted homosexuality or no changes in religious views, such as those towards homosexuality. The first depiction of Horus and Seth's sex as reciprocal from the Pyramid of Pepi I dates to the same period as the tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep, which suggests that views of homosexuality may also have been changing during this time period.¹³ Furthermore, a scene on the tomb's wall depicts an erotic song about Horus and Seth.¹⁴ Perhaps Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep were buried within a dynamic society whose religion temporarily approved of homosexuality, as

⁹ Greg Reeder, "Same-Sex Desire, Conjugal Constructs, and the Tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep," *World Archaeology* 32.2 (2000): 203, 205.

¹⁰ Reeder, 196.

¹¹ Reeder, 195.

¹² Reeder, 205.

¹³ Reeder, 202.

¹⁴ Reeder, 202.

evidenced by changing thought on Horus and Seth. Indeed, in the early phases of religious development in ancient Egyptian civilization, the idea of adult men living together with mutual consent was considered ethically neutral.¹⁵

As was the case with homosexuality, castration appears in numerous ancient Egyptian literary works, and it is portrayed differently in each work. In *The Papyrus Jumilhec*, Seth commits crimes and takes the form of a bull, prompting the god Anubis to cut off Seth's penis and testicles as punishment multiple times. This punishment is curious because Seth apparently regenerates his penis and testicles each time they are removed, or he has many penises and pairs of testicles to spare. Certain religious symbols and concepts of the phallus add understanding to *The Papyrus Jumilhec*.

Seth's appearance as a bull is particularly noteworthy because of the symbolic significance of bulls in ancient Egyptian religion. Min, the aforementioned god of fertility and procreation, was commonly identified with bulls, and he was described by ancient Egyptians as the "bull, who penetrates females."¹⁶ The imagery of Min as a bull penetrating females is not only sexual but also highly aggressive. This view of heterosexual sex is consistent with the previously mentioned view that homosexual sex was a method of domination. If the bull is considered an aggressive symbol, then Seth's appearance as a bull may have been deliberately symbolic of Seth's aggression. In *The Papyrus Jumilhec*, Seth becomes a bull in one instance to approach Isis and, after he cannot dominate her, spills his seed on the ground. Indeed, an interpretation of Seth as a bull as a sexually aggressive character is consistent with the story.

If this is the case, then is Anubis's punishment the removal of aggression? This may be, since the hieroglyphic symbol for "phallus" also has connotations of violence, specifically sexual violence.¹⁷ However, the castration of Seth is more likely symbolic of the removal of power, which may be related

¹⁵ Myśliwiec and Packer, 37.

¹⁶ Myśliwiec and Packer, 17.

¹⁷ Tom Hare, *ReMembering Osiris: Number, Gender, and the Word in Ancient Egyptian Representational Systems* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University, 1999), 109.

to aggression. Ancient Egyptians clearly associated the phallus with power. During wartime, Egyptians often dismembered their opponents, symbolizing complete power over the enemy.¹⁸ The reverence for phallic power is reflected in *The Papyrus Jumilhac*. For instance, Anubis imprisons Seth after removing his penis and testicles. It is probably not a coincidence that Seth also loses power when he loses his genitalia. Rather, his genitalia are associated with the notion of power.

Associating penises with power was in no way unique to *The Papyrus Jumilhac*; the concept was imbedded in ancient Egyptian religion. The Egyptian cosmogony credited a penis, without the help of any women, with the creation of the world, and the hand Atum used to masturbate was indeed a sacred religious symbol.¹⁹ The phallus received particular attention in ancient Egyptian religious artwork for its ability to inseminate.²⁰ In fact, a common Egyptian justification for the superior status of males was that men bore sole responsibility for creating new life.²¹ The most striking religious example of the phallus as a symbol of power, however, is the myth of Osiris.

In Plutarch's *Isis and Osiris* there is a clear correlation between Osiris's castration and his fall from the throne. Osiris only regains power when his member is reattached. Plutarch was retelling one of the most important myths in ancient Egyptian religion; the myth of Osiris would have profoundly impacted all phallic conceptions in ancient Egyptian literature, just as it impacted other forms of art and culture. Osiris was often depicted with an erect penis and worshipped for his penis's ability to give life.²² Mummies often have bound phalluses, simulating Osiris's erection in death and alluding to the masturbatory creation myth.²³ The cult of Osiris worshipped his immense power, of which his penis was an extension. By procreating posthumously Osiris both regained his throne (Horus was simply an

¹⁸ Myśliwiec and Packer, 27.

¹⁹ Myśliwiec and Packer, 7.

²⁰ Myśliwiec and Packer, 9.

²¹ Harlan, 8.

²² Harlan, 8.

²³ Hare, 25-26.

incarnation of Osiris, as sons were thought to be) and conquered death (he became the king of the afterlife).

The association of the phallus with power also exists in *The Tale of the Two Brothers*, in which Bata voluntarily castrates himself to prove his sexual purity. For example, Bata loses strength and vigor immediately after removing his penis. Additionally, he only becomes a powerful man after he is reborn with a penis.

The Tale of the Two Brothers also draws on ancient Egyptian views of adultery. After Anubis's wife attempts to commit adultery, Bata calls her "a sexually aroused slut."²⁴ Such harsh language suggests a culture extremely opposed to adulterous affairs. However, this position on adultery is incomplete; adulterous females paid a bigger price than adulterous males. Though men could legally keep concubines, adulterous women were often executed, at least before Graeco-Roman times.²⁵ When adultery was discovered, private (and drastic) steps were usually taken to deal with the matter, so official records rarely refer to it.²⁶ This is consistent with *The Tale of the Two Brothers*; both Anubis and Bata execute their unfaithful wives. The execution of Bata's wife could possibly be an exception to the rule of dealing with adultery privately. However, since Bata was the pharaoh at this time, dealing with the matter officially may have been the same as dealing with the matter privately.

Harsh punishments for adultery appear elsewhere in ancient Egyptian literature. In *King Cheops and the Magicians*, Webaoner's adulterous wife is executed. Government officials conduct the execution and bodily desecration, like the execution of Bata's wife in *The Tale of the Two Brothers*. The wife's lover receives a much different fate, however: a magical crocodile ensnares him. This does not necessarily contradict the previously stated unequal punishments for adultery for men and women, because the townsman with whom she slept was not considered an adulterous man, but an accomplice

²⁴ Simpson, 84.

²⁵ Manniche, 20, 21.

²⁶ Dominic Montserrat, *Sex and Society in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Padstow, U.K.: Kegan Paul International, 1996), 104.

to adultery. Some sources state that if the government did intervene in cases of adultery, women would have their noses slit and their male accomplices would receive one thousand lashes.²⁷ Though both sexes received distinct punishments, each punishment was severe.

There may have been religious grounds for the pattern of punishment in the folktales. One religious explanation for adultery's taboo nature was the myth in which a goddess betrayed her husband, the god Monthu.²⁸ This myth also set the precedent of condemning adulterous women, but not necessarily adulterous men. Ancient Egyptian religion stressed the desecration of adulterous bodies (like Anubis's wife and Webaoner's wife) so the souls would not be able to rest peacefully in the afterlife.²⁹ Also, one of the reasons ancient Egyptian religion forbids adultery is to avoid the humiliation of the husband.³⁰ This explains why adulterous women, like those in *The Tale of the Two Brothers* and *King Cheops and the Magicians*, and their male accomplices, like the townsman with whom Webaoner's wife sleeps, were punished: they humiliated the husbands. Since husbands did not humiliate themselves by sleeping with concubines and slaves, this was acceptable.

One sexual practice that was almost universally condemned in ancient Egyptian society, on the other hand, was incest. However, some of the most revered characters in ancient Egyptian literature engage in incestuous relationships. In *Isis and Osiris*, for instance, the sexual relations between two siblings are not only portrayed positively; they were necessary for the eventual triumph of Horus. Other Egyptian myths involve sexual relations between Geb and Nut, Shu and Tefnut, and Seth and Nephthys, without questioning the morality of such relationships.

²⁷ James Bronson Reynolds, "Sex Morals and the Law in Ancient Egypt and Babylon," *Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology* 5.1 (1914): 21.

²⁸ Pnina Galpaz-Feller, "Private Lives and Public Censure: Adultery in Ancient Egypt and Biblical Israel," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 67.3 (2004): 156.

²⁹ Galpaz-Feller, 156.

³⁰ Galpaz-Feller, 154.

The archaeological record suggests that incest was not common or accepted in Egypt.³¹ Some exceptions did exist, however, in which ancient Egyptians tolerated incest. In the Graeco-Roman era, during which the Greek-born Roman citizen Plutarch wrote, there were many documented instances of sibling marriage.³² This was, in all likelihood, a cultural import. The other exception, which predates the Graeco-Roman era, was that members of the royal family could marry kin.³³ There were practical and religious justifications for this exception.

When ancient Egyptian literary works refer to incest, it often occurs between divine characters, like Isis and Osiris in *Isis and Osiris*, or royal figures, who were considered divine. Since gods were special entities, they could and did have incestuous affairs. It is possible that incest was even a way of differentiating the gods from humans by contrasting their sexual morals. To legitimize power or keep within the royal bloodline, some pharaohs married close relatives, and their actions could be justified because of the religious belief that the pharaoh was Horus. Like the gods, pharaohs' penchants for incest may have existed to deliberately differentiate the king from commoners.

Separating a culture's literature from its cultural and religious practices denies the reader the fullest possible understanding of authorial intent and metaphorical understanding. An examination of ancient Egyptian society and its religion enables a fuller comprehension of the society's literature. The various representations of sexuality and sexual practices in ancient Egyptian stories and myths are sometimes explained through contextualization. They also challenge assumptions of ancient Egyptian sexual life and add to the understanding of ancient Egyptian sexuality.

³¹ Manniche, 29.

³² Brent D. Shaw, "Brother-Sister Marriage in Graeco-Roman Egypt," *Man* 27.2 (1992): 269.

³³ Manniche, 29.

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Reflections on the *Malleus Maleficarum* in Light of the Trial of Joan of Arc

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The sensational European witchcraft trials of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had their foundations in medieval ideologies. In 1487 Heinrich Institoris, with some help from James Sprenger, published what became the definitive text on the subject, called The Malleus Maleficarum, or The Hammer of Witches. Within fifty years, the position put forth in the treatise became widely accepted, and it became the guidebook for judges prosecuting witchcraft trials. Did the treatise reflect what people at the time believed about witches, or was it a departure from learned thought? About fifty-five years before the publication of The Malleus Maleficarum, Joan of Arc was tried for heresy, including witchcraft, by an ecclesiastical court. An examination of this trial reveals that, while its judges and Institoris agreed about the activities of witches, they differed on a key point: the witches' pact with the devil. Institoris's theoretical basis for the existence of witches was their pact, while the judges in Joan's trial did not believe witches had these pacts. This indicates that the publication was not representative of beliefs then current in France.

The sensational European witchcraft trials of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had their foundations in medieval ideologies. In 1487 Heinrich Institoris, with some help from James Sprenger, published what became the definitive text on the subject, called the *Malleus Maleficarum*, or the "Hammer of Witches." Within fifty years, the position put forth in the treatise became widely accepted, and it became the guidebook for judges prosecuting witchcraft trials.¹ Did the treatise reflect what people at the time believed about witches, or was it a departure from learned thought? About fifty-five years before the publication of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, Joan of Arc was tried for heresy, including witchcraft, by an ecclesiastical court. An examination of this trial reveals that, while its judges and Institoris agreed about the activities of witches, they differed on a key point: the witches' pact with the devil. Institoris's theoretical basis for the existence of witches

¹ Hans Peter Broedel, *Malleus Maleficarum and the Construction of Witchcraft: Theology and Popular Belief* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), 7.

was their pact, while the judges in Joan's trial did not believe witches had these pacts. This indicates that the publication was not representative of beliefs then current in France.

The historian Richard Kieckhefer separates witchcraft into three categories: sorcery, invocation, and diabolism. He defines sorcery as "maleficent magic," essentially a spell or curse designed to cause harm.² Invocation, according to Kieckhefer, involves calling on the devil to assist in the magic, while diabolism is an explicit pact with the devil, which includes worship and sexual intercourse.³ He argues that "diabolism played little or no role in popular belief" and that the idea of diabolism "was evidently the product of speculation by theologians."⁴ However, this is not reflected in Joan of Arc's trial, as she was not accused of diabolism, but of witchcraft in a general sense. This suggests that in France prior to the publication of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, many learned people may not have believed in diabolism—only in sorcery and invocation, which they grouped together as witchcraft.

Joan of Arc, an illiterate peasant from France, began having revelations of angels speaking to her when she was thirteen years old. Four years later, in 1429, she followed what she believed to be the advice of St. Catherine and St. Margaret and went to the Dauphin of France, the future King Charles VII; convinced him to give her an army; lifted the siege of Orleans; and pushed the English out of Reims so that Charles could be crowned.⁵ She cut her hair short and wore men's armor while leading the soldiers, who believed she was sent from God. In 1431 she was captured by the Burgundians, who sold her to the English to be tried by an ecclesiastical court in Rouen for heresy.⁶ The trial had three parts: a preparatory interrogation in which the judges asked Joan questions from January 9 to March 25, during which she was not officially charged with anything; the

² Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials: Their Foundation in Popular and Learned Culture, 1300-1500* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), 5.

³ Kieckhefer, 6.

⁴ Kieckhefer, 31, 38.

⁵ Regine Pernoud, *The Retrial of Joan of Arc* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1955), 4.

⁶ Karen Sullivan, *The Interrogation of Joan of Arc* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), xii.

accusation phase, in which she was read the seventy counts against her, all of which she denied; and the sentencing phase, in which the twelve counts for which she was convicted were read in public.⁷ Following the sentencing phase, she confessed to all the charges against her, though a day later she recanted her confession and was subsequently burned at the stake as a relapsed heretic.

Although the English were motivated to find Joan guilty of heresy, as her actions allowed their enemy to take the crown of France, the questions she was asked were based on information obtained from people she had known throughout her life. As the historian Frances Gies notes, three men were sent to the village where she grew up and to the various places where she stayed while on her campaign. The investigators, named the Lorrainer, Bailly, and Petit, all reported favorably. The Lorrainer said that “he had found nothing in Joan which he would not wish to find in his own sister.”⁸ These three men brought a large array of trivia to the attention of the court, and it was on this information that the judges based most of their questions for Joan. They did not inquire about every aspect of her life, only those events that could be related to one of the crimes of which she was suspected, mainly heresy and witchcraft.

The information about witches in the preliminary questions could be seen as a reflection of what the common people who knew Joan believed about witchcraft; however, as the findings were not entered into the court record, it cannot be known what the judges chose to leave out. Also, as the records do not show the questions the investigators asked the people, it is unknown whether the people knew the information they were giving was related to witchcraft. Therefore, the questions reflect only what the judges believed could be incriminating evidence of Joan’s participation in witchcraft and not the beliefs of the common people who supplied the information. The judges were the type of learned men whom Kieckhefer claims believed in diabolism, while the ordinary people did not, though this is not reflected in Joan’s trial record. While this seems to

⁷ W.P. Barrett, trans., *The Trial of Jeanne d’Arc* (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1931), 2.

⁸ Frances Gies, *Joan of Arc: The Legend and the Reality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 158.

contradict Kieckhefer's argument, he makes very clear distinctions about the years of the trials he examined, which all came after Joan's. The learned people prior to the publication of the *Malleus Maleficarum* agreed with the commoners about witches' behavior independent of the devil.

Joan was captured within the jurisdiction of Pierre Cauchon, the Bishop of Beauvais, who was one of the primary judges.⁹ Assisting him was Jean Le Maistre, who represented the Inquisition, and Beaupere, Midi, and Coucelles, who represented the esteemed University of Paris. Masters of theology also wrote letters giving their opinions on the accusations. Essentially, the judges represented a high echelon of ecclesiastical men. They did not have different categories of witchcraft, and the record shows that their conception of it fits most closely to what Kieckhefer defined as sorcery, not diabolism.

On matters of sorcery, the judges in Joan's trial and the *Malleus Maleficarum* are in agreement. Institoris wrote that witches can "transport themselves from place to place through the air."¹⁰ The subject was certainly a matter of interest in Joan's trial. The judges asked her questions about her jump out of the tower of Beurevoir, when she heard the English were on their way to take her to trial. They asked her whether "the leap was made at the counsel of her voices" and whether she knew that she would survive the fall.¹¹ She answered that St. Catherine told her "almost every day not to jump," but that she leapt anyway and "commended herself to God," not intending to kill herself.¹² The judges wanted her to admit that the voices told her she would survive the fall, as it was a very high tower, asking again the next day "how she expected to escape from the tower...between two pieces of wood."¹³ Joan testified that she had been hurt in the fall

⁹ Barrett, 2.

¹⁰ Montague Summers, trans., *The Malleus Maleficarum* (New York: Dover Publications, 1971), 99. [Part II. Qn.1 Ch. 2].

¹¹ Barrett, 113.

¹² Barrett, 114.

¹³ Barrett, 119.

and did not escape. The judges were suspicious about whether she believed she could fly or not, even though she obviously could not fly, as she had not escaped.

Similarly, both the *Malleus Maleficarum* and the judges in Joan's trial were suspicious of fairies, as superstitions about their existence were loosely related to witchcraft. Institoris wrote that those whom old women call "the Good People" are actually witches or "devils in their forms," and a footnote written by Montague Summers in his translation of the *Malleus Maleficarum* indicates that the Good People are fairies.¹⁴ The fact that fairies could actually be witches or devils indicates that old superstitions were regarded as a belief in witches. That the fairies could be either witch or devil makes the fairies very sinister.

The suspicion of fairies was present in Joan's trial, as was their association with witchcraft. On February 24, 1431, she was questioned about a tree that grew near her village. She answered that some "called it the Fairies' Tree; and near by is a fountain," and that she heard "that people sick of the fever drink of this fountain and seek its water to restore their health."¹⁵ The judges then questioned her about her association with the tree, for merely knowing of a magical tree was not incriminating. She testified that "sometimes she would go playing with the other young girls, making garlands...and often she heard the old folk say that the fairies frequented it."¹⁶ She then stated that those old folk were not in her family; however, further questioning revealed that her godmother, Jeanne, the wife of Mayor Aubery of Domremy, said to Joan that she had seen the fairies there.¹⁷ Evidently, Joan was aware that having a witch in the family was cause for concern. Three weeks later, still as part of the preliminary trial, Joan was asked if her godmother was "held to be a wise woman," and Joan answered further that "she [Jeanne] was held and reputed to be an

¹⁴ Summers, 193. [Part II, Qn. 2, Ch. 8].

¹⁵ Barrett, 64.

¹⁶ Barrett, 65.

¹⁷ Barrett, 65.

honest woman, and not a witch or sorceress.”¹⁸ However, when questioned about “those who consort with fairies,” Joan answered that “she [herself] did not believe in it and thought it was witchcraft.”¹⁹ Even though Jeanne saw and believed in fairies, Joan maintained that her godmother was not a witch, because she did not consort with them. The judges indicated their association of fairies and witchcraft by inquiring about the reputation of Joan’s godmother, yet another instance of their ideas and Institoris’s ideas agreeing on a subject.

The judges in Joan’s trial and the authors of the *Malleus Maleficarum* thought witches used objects to create their magic. Institoris wrote that witches “make their instruments of witchcraft by means of the Sacraments or sacramental things of the church, or some holy thing consecrated to God.”²⁰ The historian Keith Thomas recounts that a “plethora of sub-superstitions...accumulated around the sacrament” and that one who sneaked a piece of the consecrated wafer out of the church “was widely believed to be in possession of an impressive source of magical power.”²¹ Since with holy objects everyday things could be transformed into magical ones, witches’ objects were not limited to the holy. Things that could hold magical power also included herbs, wax figures, animal testicles, serpents, bird’s nests, twigs, seeds, grains, and bones.²² Joan’s judges were concerned about the objects she had: her armor, her rings, her sword, and her standard, which was a banner with an inscription. The armor was part of the heresy accusation, for a woman dressing like a man was seen to defy God’s natural order. The other objects, however, were investigated for their magical properties.

The judges asked Joan about her rings during three different sessions of the preliminary trial. The first time, she described her rings and demanded that the court return those they

¹⁸ Barrett, 119.

¹⁹ Barrett, 130.

²⁰ Summers, 115. [Part II, Qn. 1, Ch. 5]

²¹ Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scriber’s Sons, 1971), 34.

²² Summers, 118, 121, 135, 138. [Part II, Qn. 1, Ch. 7]

confiscated, though it did not.²³ She denied that she had ever “cured anyone with any of her rings,” showing that the judges were interested in their magical properties.²⁴ The second time, the judges asked whether the “good wives of the town did not touch her ring with their own,” and Joan replied that “many women touched my hands and my rings; but I do not know with what thought or intention.”²⁵ The final time, the judges fixated on the inscription, which was marked with three crosses and the words “Jhesus Maria,” and inquired why Joan “gladly looked at this ring when she was going to battle.”²⁶ She responded that it was in honor of her parents who gave her the ring and also to honor St. Catherine.²⁷ As the judges could not prove the ring performed miracles, they were then interested in whether Joan received strength for battle from looking at the ring. Their interest in the ring related to their notion of sorcery, the concept that witches used what Kieckhefer categorized as “extraordinary substances.”²⁸

Similarly, the judges believed Joan’s sword had extraordinary properties. Joan testified that the angels told her that the sword was behind the altar at the church of St. Catherine de Fierbois, the namesake church of one of her three angels. She sent a man to retrieve the sword, and, when the priests of the church rubbed the sword, “all the rust fell off at once without effort,” and they gave it to her.²⁹ The judges asked whether she had the sword with her when she was captured, which she did not.³⁰ They seemed to think the sword had protective powers. Then they inquired as to “what blessing she said or asked over the sword,” and “if she ever put her sword on the altar ... to bring it better fortune.”³¹ Since they thought the sword protected her, they wanted her to admit that she had charmed the sword to give it those properties. Even though Joan testified that she

²³ Barrett, 79.

²⁴ Barrett, 79.

²⁵ Barrett, 88.

²⁶ Barrett, 129.

²⁷ Barrett, 129.

²⁸ Kieckhefer, 5.

²⁹ Barrett, 71.

³⁰ Barrett, 71.

³¹ Barrett, 71.

found the sword in an extraordinary way, the judges did not think that it was magical on its own; they believed she caused it to be magical.

The judges also thought that Joan's standard or banner had magical properties as a result of some action she had taken. They wanted to know the pattern of her standard, and she stated that it had "a field sown with lilies; the world was depicted on it, and two angels," and on it was again written, "Jhesus Maria."³² They asked Joan who told her to write these words on it, and she said it was by the angel's command.³³ A few days later they returned to the subject, asking for the name of the soldier who "caught butterflies in her standard," an event Joan denied.³⁴ They asked whether "she herself threw or had others throw holy water" on the standard, which she denied.³⁵ Again, the judges thought Joan created an extraordinary object through either the words inscribed on it or some action linking it to the sacrament or both.

Up to this point, Joan's judges the *Malleus Maleficarum* were in agreement as to the activities that Kieckhefer defined as sorcery. They both associated witches with the ability to fly, with fairies, and with charmed objects. However, the two sources disagree about two fundamental ideological principles: that witches had a pact with the devil that included sexual intercourse, and that witches perform harmful magic rather than healing magic. The absence of these two activities from Joan's trial is crucial, for she would not have been considered a witch without them if she had been tried according to the *Malleus Maleficarum*.

A witch's pact with the devil was the way she obtained magic, according to the *Malleus Maleficarum*. Through her pact, "the witch truly and actually binds herself to be the servant of the devil and devotes herself to the devil, and this is not done in any dream or under any illusion, but

³² Barrett, 73.

³³ Barrett, 73.

³⁴ Barrett, 73.

³⁵ Barrett, 73.

she herself bodily and truly cooperates with, and conjoins herself to, the devil.”³⁶ Institoris clarifies that by “bodily and truly cooperates,” he meant in a sexual way. According to this document, witches “devote themselves body and soul to all evil...and indulge in every kind of carnal lust with Incubi and Succubi and all manner of filthy delights.”³⁷ This was also the reason most witches were women, according to the text, for “all witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which in women is insatiable.”³⁸ The historian Hans Peter Broedel argued that it was “the specifically sexual link between demons and witchcraft” that Institoris thought characterized witches, distinguishing them from seers or medicine men.³⁹ Although Kieckhefer argued that the belief in diabolism came solely from the learned classes “who could make no sense of sorcery except by postulating a diabolical link between the witch and her victim,” diabolism was not present in Joan’s trial.⁴⁰ Joan’s virginity was verified by Charles VII before he allowed her to act on his behalf, and it was not in question throughout her trial. As Gies described the proceedings, a committee of ladies examined Joan and found her to be “a true and complete virgin.”⁴¹ She also testified that she was a virgin and had “vowed to keep her virginity as long as it should please God.” She stated further that she believed the angels would no longer come to her if she did not stay a virgin.⁴² Throughout the trial the judges referred to her as the “woman commonly known as *The Maid*,” indicating they, too, believed she was still a maid.⁴³

In addition to a pact with the devil, another key component of witchcraft was the intent to do evil. According to Institoris, a witch will “produce real and actual evils and harm.”⁴⁴ Broedel argues that “the alleged witch had to be linked directly to some specific injury.” This emphasizes

³⁶ Summers, 7. [Part I, Qn. 1]

³⁷ Summers, 21. [Part I, Qn. 2]

³⁸ Summers, 47. [Part I, Qn. 6]

³⁹ Broedel, 24.

⁴⁰ Kieckhefer, 36.

⁴¹ Gies, 55.

⁴² Barrett, 101.

⁴³ Barrett, 105.

⁴⁴ Summers, 6. [Part I, Qn. 1]

the negative, destructive property of a witch's activity. However, Joan's activities that the judges thought were miraculous or magical were all positive. The judges asked her whether she had found a missing pair of gloves that the king was consecrated with, whether she had pointed out a married priest, and whether she had found a missing cup, all of which she denied.⁴⁵ Even the miraculous act to which Joan admitted was positive: She testified that women were praying before the image of Our Lady for a stillborn child that had been dead for three days, and "she went and prayed with the other maidens, and at last life appeared in the child, which yawned thrice, and was afterwards baptized: and immediately it died and was buried in consecrated ground."⁴⁶ Such an act was seen to have saved the soul of the child, as it could go to heaven after being baptized, indicating that this revival was not a malicious act. Thomas argues that, beginning with Edward the Confessor (r. 1042-1066) and practiced until the eighteenth century, English kings performed the same miracles, curing people with ailments in their head, neck, and eyes.⁴⁷ However, as kings were believed to be anointed by God, they were seen to have special powers that a lay person could not claim. The judges did not mention whether the miracle was suspicious because it was a commoner performing it or whether it was seen as witchcraft, but the important point is that the miracle was a positive one, not an act intended to cause harm.

During the exploratory pretrial phase, the judges asked Joan many questions, some relating to witchcraft, as has been noted above. It is clear from these examples that the judges believed in sorcery and superstition, though not in diabolism and the inherent evil nature of a witch's activities. This conflicts with the major basis of Institoris's theory on witches, that witches enter a pact with the devil to commit evil. At the beginning of the trial on March 28, the articles of the accusation were read aloud, and the goal of the trial was stated partly as, "to the end that she should be

⁴⁵ Barrett, 87, 111.

⁴⁶ Barrett, 89.

⁴⁷ Thomas, 193.

denounced and declared by you her said judges as a witch, enchantress, false prophet, a caller-up of evil spirits, as superstitious, implicated in and given to magic arts.”⁴⁸ The accusations included charges that Joan had “performed, composed, mingled in and commanded many charms and superstitions...called up demons and evil spirits,” and that she “was lessoned and initiated by certain old women in the use of spells, divinations, and other superstitious works or magic arts.”⁴⁹ Joan denied all the charges that did not match her earlier answers. Another accusation was that Joan was “deceived by evil spirits, and that she ha[d] frequently consulted them in her actions; or, to mislead the peoples, she ha[d] perniciously and falsely invented such fictions.”⁵⁰ This shows that the judges believed that the angels who spoke with Joan were either evil spirits or just figments of her imagination. The devil is not mentioned anywhere, nor is an explicit pact. This conception of a witch would fall into Kieckhefer’s definition of invocation, as the judges saw that Joan spoke with evil spirits but not with the devil. Institoris does not make distinctions such as these; for him the definition of a witch is absolute.

Following the reading of the accusations, the judges drew up twelve charges against Joan, but, ultimately, despite their previous rigorous questions that pertained to the subject, only one, the fourth question, contained a reference to witchcraft: “The said woman says and affirms that she is as certain of future and purely contingent events, and that they will be realized.”⁵¹ Thomas argues that the Church did not object to attempts to “foretell the future by purely natural means,” indicating that it was the belief that Joan’s saints were actually evil spirits that was the issue.⁵² Of all the accusations of witchcraft, only a charge of knowing the future made the final cut, which shows the judges were uncertain of the proof of witchcraft, as Joan’s denials were never refuted. The

⁴⁸ Barrett, 139.

⁴⁹ Barrett, 142, 143.

⁵⁰ Barrett, 166.

⁵¹ Barrett, 227.

⁵² Thomas, 254.

historian Marina Warner argued that the judges “concentrated on charges of minor sorcery because by implicating her in such activities, she would be naturally guilty of the more fundamental crime.”⁵³ However, the judges did not find Joan guilty of the graver crime, as they apparently did not feel there was enough proof to convict her of sorcery. Concerning the voices, the charge was that she did not have sufficient evidence to prove to herself that they were angels, and, since her belief was accepted so lightly, the voices were merely superstitions.⁵⁴ This sounds more like heresy for circumventing the church’s role rather than a charge of speaking with evil spirits.

The twelve charges were sent to many prominent members of the church, and eight of their letters are included in the trial record. Of all these prominent men, only two even mentioned anything related to witchcraft. The Lord Bishop of Lisieux wrote, “One of two things must be accepted: either that there have been deceptions and phantasms on the part of devils who usurp the form of angels and sometimes counterfeit the appearance and likeness of different persons, or that they are lies humanly conceived and invented to abuse gross and ignorant natures.”⁵⁵ Again, he did not equate Joan’s voices with a pact with the devil, merely that she might have been deceived by the devil. He believed she was either gullible or a liar, but not a witch. Master Raoul Le Sauvage, bachelor of theology, was even more forgiving, calling her “presumptuous” for divining the future and advised the judges to “take into account the frailty of womankind” and to allow her to be “charitably admonished to reform, and not to presume so much upon revelations which may be uttered and invented by the evil spirit.”⁵⁶ He wanted to allow Joan to be forgiven for her crimes, to allow her to reform her ways.

The judges then threatened Joan with torture, something the *Malleus Maleficarum* strongly recommended. Institoris wrote, “she is to be exposed to questions and torture to extort a

⁵³ Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 102.

⁵⁴ Barrett, 236.

⁵⁵ Barrett, 257.

⁵⁶ Barrett, 261, 263.

confession of her crimes.”⁵⁷ The judges showed Joan the instruments of torture that would be used against her “in order to restore her to the way and knowledge of truth, and by this means to procure the salvation of her body and soul which by her lying inventions she exposed to such grave perils.”⁵⁸ However, due to “the hardness of her heart and her manner of answering,” it was decided “that the torments of torture would be of little profit to her,” and they did not do it.⁵⁹ Institoris would have disagreed with this decision, for he felt that even though a witch “will sooner be torn limb from limb than confess any of the truth,” due to the devil’s help, she might eventually confess if the devil abandons her.⁶⁰

The judges convicted Joan on every charge, including those of belief in evil spirits and divination. The historian Regine Pernoud argues that, since the judges had “absolutely no foundation” to build a case against her for witchcraft, they made her “male attire the symbol of her refusal to submit to the Church,” indicating that Joan’s answers were insufficient for a guilty verdict.⁶¹ Once she knew that she was going to be burned, Joan confessed to all charges and put on women’s clothes again. The judges removed the death penalty and excommunication from her sentence and instead sentenced her to life imprisonment. However, the following day she again wore men’s clothes and renounced her confession, saying she confessed, “only for fear of the fire.”⁶² The judges declared her a relapsed heretic in public, and her sentence was the same sentence Institoris would have recommended. The *Malleus Maleficarum*’s sentence for one “who hath confessed to Heresy, is Relapsed, and is also Impenitent” is that their “temporal body should

⁵⁷ Summers, 223. [Part III, Qn. 13]

⁵⁸ Barrett, 279.

⁵⁹ Barrett, 280.

⁶⁰ Summers, 223. [Part III, Qn. 13]

⁶¹ Regine Pernoud, *Joan of Arc: By Herself and Her Witness* (London: Macdonald, 1964), 179.

⁶² Barrett, 319.

be consumed in the flames.”⁶³ It was a common belief that witches should be burned for their crimes.

The *Malleus Maleficarum* became the authoritative guidebook within fifty years of its publication, according to Broedel, and through it “the learned definition of witchcraft had stabilized.”⁶⁴ Thomas argues that it was the publication of this treatise as well as a papal bull issued in 1484 that linked witchcraft with heresy by insisting on the witches’ pact with the devil.⁶⁵ As the very prominent judges in Joan’s case did not believe in diabolism, it can be safely asserted that, in France prior to the publication of *The Malleus Maleficarum*, even the learned classes did not believe in diabolism only in sorcery and invocation, which they grouped together as witchcraft. It seems that Institoris created a new theory of witchcraft that blended previously held notions of witchcraft, such as sorcery, with more theoretical and ideological notions, such as diabolism. Perhaps he encountered the idea of diabolism from a different region, and the *Malleus Maleficarum* is not representative of beliefs in France only. As Kieckhefer showed, witchcraft trial records are few prior to the publication of *The Malleus Maleficarum*, though it seems that its publication shaped not only the trial method, but also the theoretical conception of witches in France.

⁶³ Summers, 259. [Part III, Qn. 31]

⁶⁴ Broedel, *Malleus Maleficarum and the Construction of Witchcraft*, 7.

⁶⁵ Thomas, *Decline of Magic*, 439.

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The Quest for Prester John

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The Quest for Prester John explores the origin of the myth of the Eastern Christian potentate “Prester John” and follows the nearly five century search of one of history’s most sought after apparitions from the popular craze inaugurated by the circulation of the mysterious Letter of Prester John in the 12th century to the fruitless conclusion in the Horn of Africa in the 17th century. The social and political impact on Medieval Europe is examined as well as the diplomatic blunders with the rulers of the Golden Horde and Ethiopia caused by the false hopes and assumptions. A rich (and often conflicting) variety of historical documents are consulted from The Travels of Marco Polo to Prester John of the Indies: A True Relation of the Lands of the Prester John being the narrative of the Portuguese Embassy to Ethiopia in 1520.

The legend of Prester John is one of the most fascinating and powerful myths of all time. To say that Medieval Europeans knew little about the world outside of their native continent is truly an understatement. It was an age in which much was assumed rather than ascertained about the exotic lands beyond. For most of the Dark Ages, Europeans were constrained to their native soil, with very few chances to explore or make direct contact with the outside world, the most notable exception being the Pax Mongolica. This was not by their own volition, but rather out of compulsion. The North African and Arab spice trade monopoly controlled all of the territories and caravan routes around the Mediterranean world. This period of isolation fanned the flames of European imagination. Out of this fire were forged dogmatic beliefs in monstrous races such as the Amazons and the cynocephali, miraculous wonders like the Fountain of Youth and rivers full of precious stones in Terrestrial Paradise, and mysterious, enchanted islands in the Atlantic like the Land of Promise of the Saints, Avalon, or more importantly, Antillia; home of the legendary Seven Cities. But of all the myths spawned by European imagination, it can be argued that the legend of Prester John was the most powerful of all. The legend of Prester John was one of the most prevailing forces in history that would greatly influence the social and

political landscape of Europe. From this myth would stem a rich plethora of literature, European exploration into Asia, and diplomatic missions to Africa.

The question that begs to be asked is when and where did this Prester John come from and by whom? Like the legend itself, there are few certainties about the true origin of Prester John. However, what is known is that the first written account about Prester John occurred in the chronicle *Historia de duabus civitatibus* by Otto, Bishop of Freising. In this account Otto refers to the Prester as “Presbyter Johannes.”¹ In the account, Prester John defeats an army of Medes and Persians before his failed attempt to reach Jerusalem. Otto heard this tale from Bishop Hugh of Jabala. Though it has been suggested that Bishop Hugh created the tale, it is more reasonable to believe that the tale had been told orally long before Otto heard it from Bishop Hugh in 1145. Since the nineteenth century, historians have made the connection between Bishop Hugh’s tale of the Prester’s victory over the Persians with an actual historical battle where the empire of Kara-Khitai defeated the Seljuk Turk ruler Sanjar of Persia in 1141.² It is thought that this legend of Prester John was interrelated to the legend of the shrine of St. Thomas among the Nestorian Christian community in India.³ Living in India, Prester John was assumed to be an adherent to Nestorian Christianity, which the Vatican considered heretical.⁴ However, India was significant to Medieval Christians because they believed that after Pentecost, the Apostle Thomas was sent there and preached the gospel, converting and baptizing the Hindus into Christians. There the apostle died and was enshrined by the followers of the faith he had preached unto.⁵ While this piqued the interest of some, what happened next took Europe by storm.

¹ Charles F. Beckingham and Bernard Hamilton, *Prester John: the Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes* (Aldershot, Great Britain: Variorum, 1996), 2.

² Robert Silverberg, *The Realm of Prester John* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1972), 8-9.

³ Beckingham and Hamilton, *Prester John*, 8.

⁴ Silverberg, *The Realm of Prester John*, 8.

⁵ Vsevolod Slessarev, *Prester John: The Letter and the Legend* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1959), 7.

A mysterious letter appeared in Europe to Emperor Manuel. The author of this letter introduced himself as, "Prester John of the Indies, greatest king of the Christians..."⁶ What follows in the *Letter of Prester John* can best be described as a utopian fantasy. In the *Letter*, the author claims to have sixty kings as his vassals and possesses the strongest castles in the world, numbering sixty two. The author claimed that his empire spread over a vast land that extended beyond the Muslim nations of the Near East.⁷ "You should know that our parts consist of three Indies: India Major, Middle India, and India Minor. The one we dwell is India Major, and the body of St. Thomas the Apostle is in this one. And know also that ours is the land of elephants and camels and lions and griffins, which griffins have such great strength that they can fly and at the same time carry an ox for their young to eat."⁸ Other fascinating creatures are described. "There are in our lands also unicorns who have in front a single horn of which there are three kinds: green, black, and white."⁹

The letter also describes various monstrous peoples in the dominion. Described are those that possess only one eye, those with four eyes in the front and back, those with only a round foot, and a race of Christians no larger than five year old children. There are also those who "are men from the waist up, and in the other direction they are like a horse, and they eat raw meat and carry bows..."¹⁰ Near Babylonia are "the Giants who each year pay us tribute and are subject to our orders."¹¹

Also described are the characteristics that can best be described as "heaven on earth." "There are no thieves in our country, neither among our citizens, nor among the foreigners, for God and St. Thomas would have confounded them, while we would have put them to death."¹² "Let it be known that nobody in our land dares to commit the sin of lechery, for at once he would be burned, because the

⁶ Francis M. Rogers, *The Travels of the Infante Dom Pedro of Portugal* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1961), 150.

⁷ Slessarev, *Prester John*, 4.

⁸ Rogers, *The Travels of the Infante Dom Pedro of Portugal*, 150.

⁹ Slessarev, *Prester John*, 71.

¹⁰ Rogers, *The Travels of the Infante Dom Pedro of Portugal*, 151.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 152.

¹² Slessarev, *Prester John*, 76.

sacrament of marriage has been ordained by God; nor does anybody dare to lie in our country, for he would be hanged.”¹³ No sin was tolerated. To contrast the austerity, the writer also includes works of Christian charity. The author writes, “...as for the poor of our land, we have them supported from our own income out of love for God.”¹⁴

While all of this fascinated the whole of Europe, the military aspect undoubtedly intrigued the ambitious monarchs and military leaders. The author describes in the *Letter* that when he goes to battle, a cross is carried in front of the army so that all can be reminded of the cross of “Our Lord Jesus Christ...”¹⁵ The author vowed to reconquer the Holy Land and invites the West to join forces in the military campaign. In return, he promises positions of power and large estates.¹⁶ Towards the conclusion the author wrote the striking sentence, “If you can count the stars of the sky and the sands of the sea, you will be able to judge thereby the vastness of our realm and power.”¹⁷ The *Letter* ends with an unusual request and explanation that he be addressed as a priest. “It is on account of our humility to be called by a less important name and title.”¹⁸

There is little known about the origin of the *Letter of Prester John* and how it was introduced in Europe. Alberic de Trois Fontaines, a chronicler of the age, recorded the arrival of the *Letter* in 1165. From there the message was sent to the rest of the Christian kings.¹⁹ It is thought that the author of the *Letter of Prester John* was a Western European of the twelfth century who probably spent part of his life in the Near East where he could become acquainted with the legends of India, Prester John, and the Christians of St. Thomas. The purpose of the letter is still the matter of much debate. Many feel that the author was creating a piece of literature and possibly attempting to inspire the Crusaders and increase

¹³ Ibid., 77.

¹⁴ Rogers, *The Travels of the Infante Dom Pedro of Portugal*, 151.

¹⁵ Ibid., 151-52.

¹⁶ Slessarev, *Prester John*, 4.

¹⁷ Silverberg, *The Realm of Prester John*, 2.

¹⁸ Ibid., 37.

¹⁹ Silverberg, *The Realm of Prester John*, 33.

their morale with the news that a powerful ally was marching to meet them and help in the fight to reconquer the Holy Land.²⁰ As one of the modern age might nonchalantly say, the *Letter* was a “big hit.” To say so would be the understatement of the past millennium. Originally written in Latin, the *Letter of Prester John* was translated into French, English, Italian, Hebrew, German, Russian and Serbian.²¹ Though the origin of the *Letter* was unknown and clearly dubious, copies were in frenzied circulation throughout the continent by the closing years of the twelfth century.²²

As author Robert Silverberg best described it in his book, *The Realm of Prester John*, “The quest for the realm of Prester John would become one of the greatest romantic enterprises of the middle ages, a geographical adventure akin to the search for El Dorado, for King Solomon’s mines, for the Fountain of Youth, for the Holy Grail, for the Seven Cities of Cibola, for the land of the Amazons, for the lost continent of Atlantis.”²³ Logic and reason would conclude that this *Letter of Prester John* was a fraud. However, Europe readily accepted the *Letter* as authentic and enthusiastically believed that there **was** a powerful priestly king of India, whose empire stretched to the ends of the earth. This was not just the masses, but men in high places as well. Prince Henry the Navigator, for example, was anxious to find Prester John.²⁴ The *Letter* prompted the reply of Pope Alexander III to this “King of India.” The pope’s physician, known only as Philip, was entrusted with the delivery of the Pope’s letter, but nothing has been heard of this Philip or the pope’s letter since.²⁵ Why would the pope go to such lengths if he did not also believe in this Prester John? As the *Letter* continued to circulate, additions began to lengthen and further fantasize the priestly king and his realm.

St. Thomas mythology was continuously amended into the *Letter* through the following centuries as late as the fourteenth. In the original, Apostle Thomas had only been mentioned once in

²⁰ Slessarev, *Prester John*, 55.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

²² Silverberg, *The Realm of Prester John*, 1.

²³ Silverberg, *The Realm of Prester John*, 8.

²⁴ Slessarev, *Prester John*, 5-6.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

passing. A twelfth century addition stated that St. Thomas was periodically resurrected during major holidays to preach to the people of Jesus from the Prester's palace. One particular addition stated, "Know that nobody dares to lie in the city of my lord St. Thomas, for he would soon die a miserable death."²⁶

Whatever the purpose or intent of the author of the original *Letter of Prester John*, it can be said with certainty that the impact that the *Letter* had on Europe far exceeded any and all of the wildest expectations that he might have dreamt. The influence and implications were far reaching; extending across centuries, vast geography and several generations. The *Letter* launched Western exploration into a wild goose chase across extensive, exotic terrains in two different continents that would last for centuries due to the dogged determination and persistent ignorance of Medieval Europe. From this point onward, early Western travelers to the Orient had two major goals of visiting the shrine of St. Thomas and going to the court of Prester John.²⁷ Rumors of this powerful Christian potentate of the East continued to surface and flourish. It was said that this Prester John was a descendent of the Magi recorded in the Gospels in the New Testament and that he was lord over the same subjects that the Magi had ruled before him. The Prester's riches were also the subject of much rumor. It was said that he was so rich that his scepter was made entirely of emeralds.²⁸ These rumors of the potentate's most noble birth and his riches further intensified the desire to find the realm of the great Prester John.

In the quest for Prester John, he would be considered and identified with various rulers who appeared to suit the identity as described in the *Letter*. Of these rulers, Genghis Khan was considered a possibility.²⁹ This suspicion seemed to be further justified with the Mongolian invasions of Central Asia and lands in modern day Iran and Afghanistan from 1219-23. These invasions under "Chinggis Khan" had an immense impact on the legend of Prester John. Beleaguered crusaders in Egypt spread the word that

²⁶ Silverberg, *The Realm of Prester John*, 143.

²⁷ Rogers, *The Travels of the Infante Dom Pedro of Portugal*, 103.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 101.

²⁹ Slessarev, *Prester John*, 6.

Prester John or his son King David was coming to join forces and rescue the crusaders.³⁰ However, the crusaders and their native continent were greatly mistaken. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Genghis Khan was not a Christian as Europeans had assumed. In fact, the Khan was not an adherent to any of the great religions. If he did harbor hostility towards Islam, it was strictly political and did not pertain to the actual religion. When Genghis Khan unleashed his Mongolian terror on Christendom, Europeans immediately realized that this barbaric onslaught could not possibly be orchestrated by Prester John. They rejected Genghis Khan as being the identity of Prester John. This was a serious blow to the legitimacy of a Christian potentate of the East. However, the belief in Prester John was by now so dominant and concrete in European thought, that despite this major setback, faith in the Prester was unshakable. Although the priestly king had so far proven to be more myth than man, they continued steadfastly in search of him. In their desperation to find him, Europeans abandoned many of the fundamental characteristics that were described in the *Letter*. One example being the priesthood of Prester John. None of the kings that were considered in the aftermath of the Mongolian attack against European states fit the profile.³¹ It is important to note that although Genghis Khan would no longer be considered the Prester John, the Khan would still play a big role in the legend of Prester John, albeit a separate identity. After the Mongolians withdrew from attacking Europe, diplomatic relations between the Mongolians and the Europeans were forged. John Plano of Carpini, a member of the papal envoy to Mongolia, did not fixate on Prester John as other later explorers and diplomats would. He makes only one reference to the priestly king. He records an account of how, "Chinggis, having conquered the Ethiopians, the people of Lesser India, invaded Greater India, whose king, Prester John, defeated the army by sending against it copper men mounted on horses and stuffed with explosive Greek fire..."³²

³⁰ Beckingham and Hamilton, *Prester John*, 159.

³¹ Beckingham and Hamilton, *Prester John*, 160-63.

³² *Ibid.*, 164.

The *Letter of Prester John* was not the only fantasized account to be produced about the Prester. Many others, travel accounts in particular, were circulated in Europe and further fueled the frenzy for the potentate. One such account is the *Book of the Infante Dom Pedro of Portugal Who Traveled Over the Four Parts of the World*. This work was a sixteenth century fictional fantasy written about a real prince, Dom Pedro, who, as the title suggests, traveled all over the world. It was written under the pseudonym Gómez de Santisteban, who claimed to have been one of the twelve who journeyed with the prince on his voyage. Popular from the start, there have been over one hundred editions of the book published in Portuguese and Spanish over the centuries.³³ In the book, Dom Pedro and his company enter into the realm of Prester John and visit with the king.³⁴ There are many fascinating exchanges between the parties and Santisteban writes of many of the customs and traditions of the Prester. One in particular is the ascension of the king. Santisteban wrote, “And when Prester John dies, no one can become the new Prester through inheritance or through personal power, but only through the grace of God and through the intervention of the holy Apostle, who selects him in the way which we shall now relate. All the ordained priests in the city of Alves, which is called Edicia, draw nigh. And they all go in procession around the Apostle. And as for the one whom it pleases God to be Prester and lord of all the others, the Apostle extends his arm toward him and opens his hand.”³⁵ This “Apostle” obviously refers to St. Thomas. Eventually, Dom Pedro expresses to Prester John that he and his company must return to the West. The Prester graciously gives Dom Pedro nine thousand pieces of gold to aid them in their return journey. In addition, Santisteban claims that the Prester also gives Dom Pedro his *Letter* to the Western rulers to be taken and delivered when they finish their journey.³⁶ And so Santisteban gives credit to Dom Pedro for being the one who introduced the *Letter* to Europe. This of course is

³³ Rogers, *The Travels of the Infante Dom Pedro of Portugal*, vii.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 149.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, viii.

³⁶ Rogers, *The Travels of the Infante Dom Pedro of Portugal*, 149.

problematic given the fact that Santisteban's book is a work of fiction. Undoubtedly, there were many who came to believe this false claim.

Considered the most famous traveling account of the era, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* further stirred European expectations to a higher level. According to Sir John Mandeville, possibly a pseudonym, the realm of Prester John is called the "isle of Pentoxere." Furthermore, Prester John had a great castle made that he titled "Paradise." Mandeville reveals that Prester John's realm is rich, but is surpassed by the "land of the Great Khan of Cathay." Reason being, according to Mandeville, the journey to the isle of Pentoxere is far longer and more perilous than the journey to the Mongolian lands.³⁷ Mandeville describes a unique relationship between the Khans and the Presters. "This same royal King Prester John and the Great Khan of Tartary are always allied through marriage; for each of them marries the other's daughter or sister."³⁸ Mandeville further writes of seventy two provinces in the isle of Pentoxere, each being ruled by a king with kings subordinate to them. All of these kings pay tribute to Prester John. Most of the realm adheres to the same Christian faith as their supreme priestly king. As to be expected from a fictitious travel account, Mandeville includes many exotic wonders to behold in the isle of Pentoxere. He describes the "Gravelly Sea"; an impassable sea of gravel containing no water, but full of great fish fit to eat. "In the land of Prester John there is a great plenty of precious stones of different sorts, some so big that they make from them dishes, bowls, cups and many other things too numerous to mention."³⁹ Mandeville also writes of horned wild men who, rather than invoke speech, grunt like pigs. Of the Prester's living quarters Mandeville writes that Prester John resides in his principal palace in the city of Susa. According to Mandeville, when the Prester rides out into battle, three crosses of gold adorned with precious stones are carried before him.⁴⁰ This contrasts with the

³⁷ John Mandeville, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, trans. C. W. R. D. Moseley (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 167.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 168.

³⁹ Mandeville, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, 168.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 169-70.

account of Dom Pedro mentioned previously. But such discrepancies are to be expected when studying pseudohistorical accounts.

On the subject of travel accounts of the era, Marco Polo's *Travels* cannot be neglected. The famous Venetian, like Mandeville and Santisteban, has a fascinating episode to write of Prester John. Like Santisteban, Polo too writes of the distinctive relationship between the Khan and Prester John, albeit a more comprehensive, contrasting account. Originally the Tartars (Mongols) were a great plains people who lived on the borders of Chorch. They had no sovereign or king among them. However, they were required to pay tribute to, "...a great prince who was called in their tongue UNC CAN, the same that we call Prester John, him in fact about whose great dominion all the world talks."⁴¹ The Tartars began to multiply exceedingly; so much so, Prester John began to fear a power imbalance in the status quo. He feared a conflict against him could materialize by the confidence in the swelling numerical might of this tributary people. To resolve this issue, Prester John decided to send one of his barons to execute his order for the Tartars to be spread out over various countries. The Tartars became aware of the Prester's plan. They were enraged by this policy and unanimously migrated to a distant land across a desert in the north where they would no longer be under the dominion of the Prester.⁴² As Polo best stated it, "Thus they revolted from his authority and paid him tribute no longer."⁴³ The tale continues with the rise of "Chinghis Kaan" as king of the Tartars. Chinghis became king in 1187. According to Polo (obviously biased), "He was a man of great worth and of great ability (eloquence), and valour."⁴⁴ When word of this new lord spread, a great multitude of Tartars from various countries and regions all over gathered unto the new king. From that point, Chinghis raised a well provisioned army and set forth on his conquest. He conquered eight provinces. According to Polo, he treated the peoples of his newly

⁴¹ Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo: The Complete Yule-Cordier Edition*, ed. Henry Yule and Henri Cordier (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1993), 1:226.

⁴² Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, 226-27.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 238.

acquired territories humanely and the people came to be faithful servants to him. In 1200 A.D., Chinghis sent an embassy to Prester John to acquire the Prester's daughter as his wife. This request angered Prester John greatly. To the representatives of Chinghis he replied, "What impudence is this, to ask my daughter to wife! Wist he not well that he was my liegeman and serf? Get ye back to him and tell him that I had liever set my daughter in the fire than give her in marriage to him, and that he deserves death at my hand, rebel and traitor that he is!"⁴⁵ The embassy embarked back to Chinghis and told all that Prester John had replied to the Kaan's request.⁴⁶ According to Polo, when Chinghis Kaan heard the message, "such rage seized him that his heart came nigh to bursting within him..."⁴⁷ After hearing the priestly king's reply, the Kaan vowed revenge on Prester John. According to Polo, He mustered the largest force that had ever been seen or heard of. He sent word to Prester John, "to be on his defence." Prester John did not think that Chinghis Kaan's forces were a serious threat, but he mustered a force of many different nations, "...that it was a world's wonder," in the hope that he could capture and execute the Kaan. Chinghis Kaan arrived at the plain of Tanduc in the realm of Prester John.⁴⁸ Prester John marched his forces to the plain of Tanduc and set his camp twenty miles apart from the Kaan's camp. For two days both armies rested so that they, "...might be fresher and heartier for battle." During this rest period, Chinghis Kaan summoned Christian and Saracen (Muslim) astrologers. He enquired of them whether he or Prester John would be victorious. The Saracens were unable to give a prediction. By divination, the Christians were able to predict that he would be victorious over Prester John. This greatly delighted the Kaan and he held the Christians in high esteem thereafter.⁴⁹ After the period of rest, the two hosts met in battle. According to Polo, "...it was the greatest battle that ever was seen."⁵⁰ Both sides saw a great number among their ranks die in the battle, but at the conclusion of the battle, Chinghis

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 238-39.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 240.

⁴⁸ Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, 240.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 241-42.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 244.

Kaan was victorious as predicted by the Christian astrologers. Prester John himself was killed in the battle. From that day on, Prester John's kingdom fell gradually day by day to Chinghis Kaan until the whole realm of the Prester was conquered.⁵¹ The province of Tenduc with its chief city of the same name was ruled by the king that is of the lineage of Prester John. At the time that Marco Polo was writing his *Travels*, he writes of the then current king by the name George who ruled the land under the "Great Kaan."⁵² This King George did not have dominion over the whole of what his ancestor Prester John had ruled. "It is a custom, I may tell you, that these kings of the lineage of Prester John always obtain to wife either daughter of the Great Kaan or other princesses of his family."⁵³ Polo informs the reader that, "You must know that it was in this same capital city of Tenduc that Prester John had the seat of his government when he ruled over the Tartars, and his heirs still abide there; for, as I have told you, this King George is of his line, in fact, he is the sixth in descent from Prester John."⁵⁴ Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Polo's account is that it crushes the aura of invincibility that had surrounded Prester John. Not only that, but Polo's account contradicts the previous versions and conventional wisdom about this illusive potentate. According to Polo, Prester John was a tributary ruler under the dominion of the Khan. This of course, contradicts the all powerful ruler of a borderless land that stretched to the ends of the world that the stiff-necked Europeans had come to know. Because of this fact, Polo's account of Prester John would not be appreciated then as it is today. Polo's writing on Prester John contradicted what Europeans wanted to believe. Therefore, while many merchants largely embraced Polo's *Travels* for its wealth of geographical knowledge, the accounts about Prester John were primarily ignored. Medieval Europe continued searching for the priestly king.

After centuries of searching, Prester John had yet to be discovered. While the priestly king could not be found, many false presumptions had been made. Jacques de Vitry misinterpreted Genghis Khan's

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 284.

⁵³ Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, 284.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 284-85.

campaign for the labor of a Christian ruler. Andrew of Longjumeau erroneously identified the Prester as the Kerait chieftan Togrul, a wang-khan. Marco Polo was of the same opinion and as seen previously, he claimed to have discovered King George, the supposed sixth generation descendent of this wang-khan. William of Rubruck was convinced that Prester John was Kuckluk, the Naiman prince. In reference to the search for Prester John in Central Asia, Friar Odoric said, "But as regards him not one hundredth part is true of what is told of him as if it were undeniable..."⁵⁵ With these words the quest for Prester John in Asia ended. However, the search was by no means over. Reason would have shown that the Europeans had been chasing a figment of pure imagination. But as is often the case, man's passions continued to hold sway over reason. This should not come as any surprise. Prester John was by now so ingrained in European thought and belief that the continent would persistently continue the quest. In fact, from this time forward, the search would intensify because the Europeans felt that they had narrowed the search down to one last area.⁵⁶ After the 1320s, the realm of Prester John shifted from Central Asia to Africa. This was first proposed by Dominican friar Jordanus de Sévérac in the aftermath of his voyage to India. He discovered that Prester John simply was not there. He concluded that Prester John must reign in Ethiopia, a land which was little known to Europe.⁵⁷ To the modern mind, this shift may seem unexpected and bizarre. In reality, it was only a matter of time before this geographical leap occurred. As mentioned in the *Letter of Prester John*, the author claimed to be the ruler of three Indias. In the modern world, when one thinks of India, they think of the subcontinent nation. However, the concept of India was a very vague one in Medieval Europe. Many geographers of the day considered Ethiopia to be one of the Indias. After having searched the other two Indias, it is no surprise that all attention was turned to the last India to find the powerful Prester John. Thus the search transferred to the ancient kingdom of Ethiopia. The fact that the ruler of Ethiopia was a Christian seemed to further justify their

⁵⁵ Silverberg, *The Realm of Prester John*, 139.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Slessarev, *Prester John*, 84.

reasoning and new course of action.⁵⁸ By the mid fourteenth century, the quest for Prester John had completely transitioned to Ethiopia.⁵⁹ Europe came to consider the name “Prester John” as a hereditary title for all of Ethiopia’s kings. This naturally confused the Ethiopian delegates in 1441 who knew that their king, though a bearer of multiple names and titles, never held this title, “Prester John.” Nonetheless, Europeans were convinced and continued to refer to the kings of Ethiopia by this title.⁶⁰

Because of its location, Ethiopia had always been difficult for Europeans to make contact with. Francisco Alvares was part of a Portuguese mission in 1520 to reach Ethiopia. This was the first European embassy to reach the Court of Ethiopia and return safely.⁶¹ Lebna Dengal, who had ascended to the throne at the age of twelve, was the king of Ethiopia when Alvares and the Portuguese embassy of Dom Rodrigo de Lima arrived.⁶² Throughout the narrative, Lebna Dengal is referred to as Prester John. Reflecting on one meeting, Alvares describes the physical features of whom he blindly believed to be the Prester: “In age, complexion, and stature, he is a young man, not very dark in colour; he is very much a man of breeding, of middling stature; like that, his face is round, the eyes large, the nose high in the middle, and his beard is beginning to grow. In presence and state he fully looks like the great lord that he is.”⁶³ Alvares and the rest of the Portuguese embassy undoubtedly had to give a report to their government after its return to Portugal. The fascinating element in all of this is that these men unwittingly further added to the diplomatic confusion between Europe and Ethiopia and further enhanced the legend of Prester John. As was their custom in the age of exploration, the Portuguese wore out their welcome as guests in Ethiopia. In the seventeenth century, after much turmoil and Ethiopian bloodshed caused by the Jesuit priests and missions, King Fasiladas ordered all Catholic priests

⁵⁸ Silverberg, *The Realm of Prester John*, 163-64.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 189.

⁶¹ Francisco Alvares, *The Prester John of the Indies: A True Relation of the Lands of the Prester John being the narrative of the Portuguese Embassy to Ethiopia in 1520*, ed. C.F. Beckingham and G.W.B. Huntingford (Cambridge: The University Press, 1961), 1.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 304.

out of the country. Ethiopia would readopt its policy of isolation from the outside world that the country had adhered to for centuries before the arrival of the Portuguese. The pope tried to send French Capuchins twice. Both times, they were executed by the Ethiopians. Franciscans smuggled themselves into Ethiopia but were caught and stoned. With the exception of a very few, Ethiopia sealed itself off from the rest of the world and would not let foreigners, especially Catholics and their missionaries, into the country.⁶⁴

This diplomatic disaster stirred Europe out of its deep delusional slumber to face a grim revelation. As best stated by Silverberg, "...the Portuguese experience had convinced Europe for all time of the folly of the Prester John myth. Prester John had been found, and he was no king of miracles, but only a black-skinned chieftain of a wild and primitive land, who dined on raw beef and imprisoned his brothers on mountaintops. Reality had destroyed the golden vision."⁶⁵ The great mystery of the powerful, elusive Christian king Prester John of the Indies unraveled, recounting a quest that spanned hundreds of years only to conclude that it had all been in vain. To know that for nearly half a millennium Europe's most sought after individual, a man who became powerful enough to influence the Western social and political landscape, was nothing more than a concoction of the mind must have been an embarrassing disappointment and realization to the Europeans like no other. Being one of the greatest myths of all time, the legend of Prester John has reserved an enduring place in the history of Western Civilization most importantly, but also in African and Asian history as well. Unlike many myths that fade from time and memory, Prester John has stood the test of time. The great English playwright and poet William Shakespeare referred to Prester John in his play *Much Ado About Nothing*. In the first scene of the second act, the character Benedick exclaims, "Will your Grace command me any service to the world's end? I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes that you can devise to send me on; I will fetch you a toothpicker now from the furthest inch of Asia; bring you the length of Prester John's

⁶⁴ Silverberg, *The Realm of Prester John*, 313-14.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 314.

foot; fetch you a hair off the great Cham's beard; do you any embassage to the Pygmies...You have no employment for me?"⁶⁶ To be merely mentioned in one of the plays of Shakespeare, considered widely to be the greatest playwright of all time, is an honor that was rarely given to factual individuals, much less fabled entities.

The legend of Prester John is truly one of the most fascinating chronicles of history. Medieval Europe breathed life into this fictitious king and added an air of legitimacy to his existence with their desperate quests throughout Asia and Africa to find him. The search for a powerful Christian potentate of the East ended hundreds of years ago. However, the quest for Prester John has not. Since the nineteenth century, modern historians and scholars have been diligently seeking the origins of the priestly king. Though their aims are quite different, modern historian and scholars are undertaking a task just as strenuous as that adopted by the Medieval explorers before them. Though some knowledge has come to light, the origins of Prester John continue to be shrouded in mystery and elude the modern age. Given that the legend was conceived in the Dark Ages, there is little hope that the world will ever fully know the origins of the Prester. Thus, Prester John will continue to captivate man's imagination until the end of time.

⁶⁶ William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, ed. David L. Stevenson (New York: Signet Classic, 1998), 27.

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Eve and Her Daughters: Eve, Mary, the Virgin, and the Lintel Fragment at Autun

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The lintel fragment of Eve from the Cathedral of St. Lazaire at Autun has been praised by art historians as one of the greatest monumental figural works of the Romanesque period. Many have viewed this work as representing the typical image of Eve as an evil, seductive, and treacherous figure responsible for the fall of man, and whom misogynistic medieval thinkers blamed for the innately evil nature of women. However a few scholars, such as Linda Seidel, Karl Werckmeister, Denise Jalabert, and Areli Marina have noted a uniqueness in the features of this Eve figure, one which strays from the “repellently ugly or hatefully seductive” Eve that most associate with the biblical figure and her depictions in art. Seidel, briefly muses over the idea that perhaps viewers could read this figure as representing both the sinful Eve and the penitent Mary Magdalene. Building on this thought, the work of the other scholars above, and my onsite work at Autun and the surrounding sites, this paper proposes the idea of a conflation not only of Eve and Mary Magdalene but of the Virgin Mary as well. I hope to reveal, by way of formal description, short histories of the scorn of Eve, the cults of the Virgin and Mary Magdalene, and their relation to each other as well as brief comparison to the tympana at Neully-en-Donjon and Anzy-le-Duc, that there is a legitimate possibility that this lintel fragment was meant to bring to mind all three of these figures.

As night begins to fall, several people gather outside the grand Cathedral of Saint-Lazare, waiting to begin a penitential ritual. As the bell rings several of the laymen drop to their knees and begin a serpentine crawl towards the north portal. The onlookers chant a prayer in low voices and watch the penitents whose faces show remnants of the ashes that were thrown on them. The air is still and the sound of the chant and eventually the low moans of the crawling sinners is all that can be heard in the quiet village. As one penitent approaches the north portal he sees first the figure of Saint-Lazare who has escaped the mouth of death. Then he sees a beautiful figure below, whom he recognizes as Eve flanked by the devil and her husband Adam (Figure 1)¹. However, she seems to empathize with him, as she mirrors his crawling state, in the position more regularly given to the Magdalene (Figure 2). Is that a

¹ All figures are found at the end in the appendix.

tear falling from her eye? A tear for her own fall from grace and that of all mankind. He has never before looked at her so closely... Her face looks not like that of an evil, sinful woman but has a calmness and grace almost like that of the heavenly mother, the Virgin Mary (Figure 3). He continues to crawl into the dark church, across the cold stone floor towards the altar. As he reaches the altar he waits for his other sinful brothers and sisters in the hope that soon, his awful sins will be forgiven.

The lintel fragment of Eve from the Cathedral of St. Lazaire at Autun (Figure 1) has been praised by art historians as one of the greatest monumental figural works of the Romanesque period. She is the first large scale nude since antiquity and her graceful sinuous body looks more like a figure from the works of Gauguin (Figure 4) or El Greco (Figure 5) as noted by Kingsley Porter² or even Cezanne (Figure 6) as noted by Culture Minister Andre Malraux who pronounced Gislebertus "a Romanesque Cézanne" in the 1960s.³ Many have viewed this work as merely representing the typical image of Eve as an evil, seductive, and treacherous figure responsible for the fall of man, and whom misogynistic medieval thinkers blamed for the innately evil nature of women in general. However a few scholars, such as Linda Seidel, Karl Werckmeister, Denise Jalabert, and Areli Marina have noted a uniqueness in the features of this Eve figure, one which strays at least to some extent from the either "repellently ugly or hatefully seductive"⁴ Eve that most associate with the biblical figure and her depictions in art. For example Seidel, briefly muses over the idea that perhaps viewers could read this figure as representing both the sinful Eve and the penitent Mary Magdalene.⁵ Building on this thought and the work of the other scholars above, I would like to propose the idea of a conflation not only of Eve and Mary Magdalene but of the Virgin Mary as well. Thus in this study I hope to reveal, by way of formal description, short histories of

² Porter, Arthur Kingsley. Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads. Vol. 1. (New York: Hacker Art, 1966), 121.

³ "Art: Romanesque Cezanne." *Time Magazine* (Friday, March 3, 1961). *TIMEs Online*. <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,897696-1,00.html>>.

⁴ Kraus, Henry. The Living Theatre of Medieval Art. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967), 42.

⁵ Seidel, Linda. Legends in Limestone: Lazarus, Gislebertus, and the Cathedral of Autun. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1999), 103-104.

the scorn of Eve, the cults of the Virgin and Mary Magdalene, and their relation to each other as well as brief comparison to the tympana at Neuilly-en-Donjon (Figure 7) and Anzy-le-Duc (Figure 8), that there is a legitimate possibility that this lintel fragment was meant to bring to mind all three of these figures.

A Short History

The Cathedral of Saint-Lazare was built around 1120-1132, with consecrations in 1132 and in 1146. At the beginning of the twelfth century, before this church was built, the bishop of Autun was Norgaud. He was staunchly opposed to Cluniac reforms which he thought undermined his authority. However, on his death Norgaud was succeeded by Etienne de Bâge from Salieu who was a supporter of Cluny's reforms.⁶ In his book, Arthur Kingsley Porter tells us that much like Vezelay, Autun was not a priory of Cluny but was still closely connected. He cites the fact that Bishop Etienne de Bâge, who had Autun's cathedral built, even went there to die.⁷ He discusses artistic similarities between Autun and Cluny via the sculptural work of Gislebertus. However, he does not believe, like Denis Grivot and George Zarnecki, that Gislebertus worked at Autun, Cluny and Vezelay but that these sites are the work of three different ateliers. Grivot and Zarnecki believe, "Gislebertus...must have been trained at Cluny, and from there went to Vezelay, where the mutilated remains of a tympanum...strongly suggest his handling. It is a reasonable hypothesis...that when he was called to Autun, his work at Vezelay was taken over..."⁸

Saint-Lazare was originally a pilgrimage church which hoped to share in the wealth that nearby Vezelay received as a result of the popularity of pilgrimage on the way to Santiago de Compostela. The church supposedly held the relics of Lazarus, who was the brother of Mary Magdalene, whose remains, it was said, were held at Vezelay. While the church attracted pilgrims in general, it also attracted lepers who believed the church held the remains of the "Lazarus full of sores" from Luke chapter sixteen. This conflation of the resurrected Lazarus with that of the poor, ill Lazarus is furthered by the mixture of

⁶ Grivot, Denis, George Zarnecki, and T.S.R. Boase. *Gislebertus, Sculptor of Autun*. (Paris: Trianon, 1961), 11.

⁷ Porter, Arthur Kingsley. *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, 107.

⁸ Grivot, Zarnecki. *Gislebertus, Sculptor of Autun*, 11.

iconography located on the cathedral. This is best shown on the north portal which has a depiction of the resurrection of Lazarus on the tympanum as well as a depiction of the Lazarus of sores on one of the capitals. Unfortunately, the cathedral suffered damage due to the Revolution. Luckily the famous Last Judgment tympanum (Figure 9) was plastered over and thus ironically protected, however the north portal, which was originally used as the main entrance since the west façade faced the burial ground,⁹ and the tomb of Lazarus were smashed to bits.

Formal Description of the North Portal

However at the end of the nineteenth century the statue of Eve was rediscovered. Denise Jalabert writes of the rediscovery of the Eve fragment, which she learned from Abbé Berthollet, the curator of the Rolin Museum. Jalabert writes that,

“In 1866...a house located at number 12 Champ de Mars Place in Autun was being demolished, there was a large engraved stone, one meter thirty centimeters long and seventy centimeters wide, on which there was to be seen, amidst the foliage, the crawling figure of *Eve* leaning on the right elbow and knees, while with her outstretched left arm she picks an apple from behind her...”¹⁰

Surprisingly, after this great discovery, the owner of the house paid no attention and freely gave over the relief to the architect, Roidet-Houdaille. After the architect died, he passed on the Eve fragment to his daughter. She was later suffering financially so she made a deal with Abbé Terret, the choirmaster at Autun, who paid her debt in return for Eve. Following this, Abbé Terret dealt with a few legislative battles over the ownership of Eve but in the end the sculpture remained in Autun, housed at the Rolin Museum.

⁹ Grivot, Zarnecki. Gislebertus, Sculptor of Autun, 146.

¹⁰ Jalabert, Denise. “The Eve of the Autun Cathedral: It’s Place in the History of Romanesque Sculpture.” Gazette des Beaux-Arts 35, ser. 6 (1949): 300.

Similarly in 1837, thirty years before the rediscovery of Eve, Jalabert writes that Abbé Devoucoux discovered a short text in the archives of the diocese of Autun. It was dated June 24, 1482 and in the following words described the north portal at Autun:

“...in the tympanum, there is the story of the resurrection of...St. Lazarus sculpted in large stone images; and below this story there are images of Adam and Eve; and on the upper part of the pillar which divides the wings of said portal, there is a small image in the shape of a bishop with a mitre, representing St. Lazarus, and below this there are some other images in the old style.”¹¹

Denis Grivot and George Zarnecki created a reconstruction of the portal (Figure 10), which shows how they believe the portal may have looked. Werckmeister cites in his footnotes that Grivot and Zarnecki believe that a number of relief fragments found in the Musée Rolin belonged to the tympanum. The five fragments that they have found have the following scenes or figures on them (from left to right on the reconstruction): a) an angel (Figure 11), b) a healing miracle (Figure 12), c) the Assumption of the Virgin Mary (Figure 13), d) a figure of youth (Figure 14), e) unidentified feet and f) Saint Martin (?) (Figure 15).¹² Moreover, they think that this tympanum was similar to that at Cahors (Figure 16) which was subdivided with a large central scene and other supplementary scenes. However Werckmeister states that the iconographical identifications that Grivot and Zarnecki attribute to the tympanum do not relate to the main subject in a “meaningful way”.¹³ Moreover, it seems that these scenes do not coincide with the 1436 text which described the tympanum as holding merely the resurrection of Lazarus. Perhaps

¹¹ Werckmeister, O.K. “The Lintel Fragment Representing Eve from Saint-Lazare, Autun.” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 35, (1972): 1.

¹² Grivot, Zarnecki. *Gislebertus, Sculptor of Autun*, 150-151. They seem to have put forth the most complete iconographical descriptions for Autun however many of their explanations are disputed and questioned by others.

¹³ Werckmeister, O.K. “The Lintel Fragment Representing Eve from Saint-Lazare, Autun,” 1.

these fragments that Grivot and Zarnecki attribute to the tympanum actually belong on the trumeau beneath the mitred Lazarus where the text says there were “some other images in the old style”.¹⁴

It is also interesting to note that on the lintel, in their reconstruction, they have Eve flanked by Satan to the right and then they label the entire left half of the lintel as the space for Adam. However this seems like a very large space for one human figure. Perhaps Adam shared the left side either with a figure of the God-head or at least his symbolic hand coming down from the heavens. This would not be out of place when one looks at other examples from the same period such as the Doors at Hildesheim (Figure 17), a capital from a portal at the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela (Figure 18) and the Souvigny Bible (Figure 19). At Hildesheim, the artist represents God as an actual figure in the first two scenes on the left panel and also with a heavenly hand in the last scene on the left panel. However at Santiago de Compostela and in the Souvigny Bible the artist represents God in figural form.

As a result of the portal’s destruction, almost nothing is left in situ. However there are two decorations from the original portal that remain in situ, that is one arch with folia and rosettes and four capitals, two on each side. Denis Grivot and George Zarnecki have also tried to identify these capitals. They believe that, starting from left to right, that the capitals show a) the Dives in Hell and Lazarus with Abraham (Figure 20), b) The Prodigal Son (Figure 21), c) The Widow of Nain (Figure 22) and d) the Dives and Lazarus (Figure 23).¹⁵ These identifications may or may not be correct, however one that has been disputed is the capital which Grivot and Zarnecki identify as The Widow of Nain. Abbe Terret, who as stated above was the choirmaster at Autun and who was also an archaeologist and historian of the Cathedral, identified this capital not as the widow of Nain but as a scene depicted Christ with Mary Magdalene at his feet and Lazarus behind him. This seems to make more sense in context with the rest of the cathedral. Grivot and Zarnecki do not agree with this because of two reasons, the first that it is rare for an artist to portray Lazarus in the nude and he has never been shown without his grave and

¹⁴ Werckmeister, O.K. “The Lintel Fragment Representing Eve from Saint-Lazare, Autun,” 1.

¹⁵ Grivot, Zarnecki. Gislebertus, Sculptor of Autun, 151.

second that they believe it would be repetitive to show a risen Lazarus on the capital since the tympanum already shows the resurrection of Lazarus.¹⁶ To their second objection, I think this can easily be refuted. The argument that it would be repetitive does not seem to apply here because, first Lazarus is already shown twice on the portal without counting this capital. Thus, it does not seem that the artist was concerned with repetition of this figure. Moreover, the tympanum scene and that of the capital show different scenes from the story which would make it less repetitive. The tympanum is said to have shown the resurrection of Lazarus which probably resembled the scene on the side of the *Noli me Tangere* capital in the nave (Figure 24). However the disputed capital on the north portal (Figure 22), if it is of Mary Magdalene, would have shown a different scene from the tale of Lazarus and could also be seen as a foreshadowing of the *Noli me Tangere* capital inside the cathedral (Figure 25).

The figure of Eve, as stated above, is one of the greatest works of monumental figural Romanesque sculpture. One of the first things one may notice is her strange positioning, horizontally on the lintel. There is no other example of Eve like this in Romanesque works. Usually Adam and Eve were represented standing vertically either on a capital, like that at Vezelay (Figure 26) or even on a jamb like at Saint-Antonin-Noble-Val (Figure 27). The only other example I could find of a horizontal figure on the lintel was at Saint-Michel d'Aiguilhe in Puy (Figure 28). Here we see two mermaids lying horizontally on the lintel one with the tale of a snake and one with that of a fish. It is curious that this would be what the sculptor(s) chose to place on the main portal of this small chapel because usually mermaids are beings of enchantment and persuasion, luring victims in. However, here they are the entrance to a church, so they are not luring them into a place of sin and corruption. One reason the artist could have chosen to place Eve like this could simply have been due to artistic innovation or the design plan. However, it seems that there must be more behind the placing of the figures, as Werckmeister suggests. Gislebertus could have simply chose to place them on the jambs or trumeau as is depicted in the

¹⁶ Grivot, Zarnecki. Gislebertus, Sculptor of Autun, 147.

nineteenth century reconstructed trumeau figures of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha on the west façade of Autun (Figure 29). However, he chose to place the figures unorthodoxly on the lintel and Werckmeister believes that this is tied to a penitential procession that occurred at Autun and other churches in the area¹⁷ and even today, which I used as a basis for the imagined scene at the beginning of this presentation.

Werckmeister believes that the iconographic program of the north portal is based on the Office of the Dead and that it was used both to remind the local laypeople of the sacrament of reconciliation and penance along with being used for a penance ritual. The Office of the Dead incorporates the same themes of penance and forgiveness, which are shown on the portal, and also makes allusions to Lazarus and the Last Judgment. Moreover, Werckmeister goes on to discuss the idea of the portal's use for a penance ritual. He cites sources where the ritual has been described starting from the tenth century.

Werckmeister states that several of the penitential treatises describe the following scene:

“...on Ash Wednesday...those sinners ready to undergo public penance were to present themselves in front of the church, clad in sackcloth and barefoot, prostrate themselves before the bishop, and proclaim their guilt. After...their penance, the bishop conducted them into the church...and were then told ‘that, as Adam was expelled from Paradise, so they, too, are ejected from the church because of their sins.’ Finally, servants ritually expelled them from the church...while the clergy followed, chanting a quotation from Genesis iii, 19, ‘With sweat on your brow shall you eat your bread.’”¹⁸

Thus it seems that the portal is sculpturally and “allegorically”¹⁹ supposed to relate to the sinners who are undergoing the ritual. Werckmeister also explains that while the sinners were in their prostrate position, ashes were strewn on them and the bishop and clergy recited the following line from Genesis: ‘Remember, man, that you are dust and will return to dust’. Thus Werckmeister states that these penitents are undergoing the same punishment that Adam and Eve went through after their great sin.

¹⁷ Werckmeister, O.K. “The Lintel Fragment Representing Eve from Saint-Lazare, Autun,” 15-23.

¹⁸ Werckmeister, O.K. “The Lintel Fragment Representing Eve from Saint-Lazare, Autun,” 18.

¹⁹ Werckmeister, O.K. “The Lintel Fragment Representing Eve from Saint-Lazare, Autun,” 18.

Thus when we observe the figure of Eve we notice that she is in a position that looks like she is crawling with her knees bent on the ground line and her right elbow supporting her in this position. She is in the position of the penitents but she is also in the position given to the penitent Mary Magdalene. At Saint-Hilaire in Foussais, there is a sculpted image of Mary Magdalene in a prostrate position on her elbows and knees much like that of Eve (Figure 30a). In this image she is washing the feet of Christ and he points to her and motions to the man next to as if to say that they should look to her as an example (Figure 30b).²⁰ At Autun, Gislebertus has sculpted Eve in a graceful manner with sinuous curves which are mimicked in the swaying of the foliage and the waves in her hair. Moreover, her body is shown in a contorted view. When viewed from the front, one sees her face and lower body in profile and a frontal upper body. However, the masterful carving of this work creates a figure that is almost in the round, protruding out from the surface fifteen inches. And when you walk to the left you can see her entire face (Figure 31). Surprisingly her face is not depicted in the way you would expect an artist to depict Eve. This Eve is shown with a graceful visage, with large thoughtful eyes, a small, delicate mouth and a teardrop falls from her left eye (Figure 32), enforcing her remorseful and penitent nature. Denise Jalabert notes that Eve's face is practically a mirror image of the face of the Virgin Mary on a capital within the church depicting the *Flight from Egypt* (Figure 3).²¹

Now let us turn to the context of this portrayal of Eve. We see Eve among trees, with a central branch partially hiding her nudity. However this depiction of Eve is not merely one of her after the fall but shows her reaching back with her left hand to grab the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. Thus this is a conflation of Eve before and after the Fall. On the tree we can see the dragon-like claw of Satan (Figure 33) bending the tree towards Eve to ease her plucking of the fruit. When we move to the face there is once again a conflation of narrative. She cups her right hand to her mouth as if she is about to

²⁰ Also above the scene of the House of Simon is the scene of *noli me tangere* with Christ and Mary Magdalene after his resurrection (Figure 30c).

²¹ Jalabert, Denise. "The Eve of the Autun Cathedral: It's Place in the History of Romanesque Sculpture," 303.

whisper to Adam. However, her face does not show any hint of her being a scheming seductress following the will of Satan. Instead, it is almost as if we are led to sympathize with her. She is grieving for the sin that she has already committed and the hand which she may be using to whisper to Adam also doubles as a sign of grief.

This description of the north portal helps elucidate the sculpture relation between Eve, Mary Magdalene, and the Virgin Mary. We see a figure of Eve who is prostrate with a tear in her eye in the position usually given to the Magdalene, penitently washing the feet of Christ with her hair and tears. However she is nude, in the act of sin and grieving for the sin as well which are all characteristics of Eve from before and then after the fall. However, we see an Eve who is graceful and calm despite her forthcoming banishment and the sin she has committed with only a tear falling from her eye. This is similar to many depictions of the Virgin who is always calm and graceful and calls to mind her mourning at the foot of the crucifix. Thus in the figure of Eve we have the presence of three women. We have the sinful Eve, the penitent Mary Magdalene prostrate as if begging for forgiveness before Christ and the heavenly Virgin who is without sin and through her purity is able to redeem the sins of mankind and come full circle as the Second or New Eve who intercedes on behalf of all sinners.

The Scorn of Eve and the Cults of the Virgin and Mary Magdalene

The following are a few lines from a medieval liturgical drama about the Fall:

“Oh, evil woman, full of treason...
Forever contrary to reason,
Bringing no man good in an season:
Our children’s children to the end of time
Will feel the cruel whiplash of your crime!”²²

Here an infuriated Adam cries out these words after their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. There has been much written about the Fall of man and the guilt bestowed on women due to Eve’s great sin.

²² Kraus, Henry. The Living Theatre of Medieval Art, 44.

Henry Kraus and Areli Marina provide thorough studies which discuss the writings on Eve and the fall. One group, which seems to be the most prevalent, is the group which attributed to Eve all the blame for the fallen state of man and the evilness of women. Kraus focuses on this group which included theologians like Sts. Bernard and Augustine.²³ However, Marina brings to light another group of writers which includes St. Ambrose, who did not have such a scornful view of Eve and focused on the idea that the Fall brought about free will.²⁴

While Eve was the object of scorn for many of the faithful, the Virgin and Mary Magdalene became figures of adoration during the middle ages. Marina states that the “gaze of the twelfth century saw women as twofold: as Eve and as Mary...However the popularity of the cult of Mary Magdalene is evidence of the fluidity of those two roles.”²⁵ The cult of the Virgin as the “Mother of Mercy” was initiated, according to Kraus, at the end of the tenth century by the order of Cluny.²⁶ The Virgin was known as the Second Eve because she was seen as the woman who through her grace, faith and virginity was able to redeem not only women but all humankind from their fallen state. St. Paul said that “as the First Eve’s disobedience brought sin into the world, the Second Eve’s obedience enabled human salvation.”²⁷ This theme is shown in the *Siegburg Madonna* (Figure 34), a sculpture of the Virgin from Cologne. In this work we see the Virgin Mary holding the Christ child in her left arm and in her right hand

²³ Kraus, Henry. *The Living Theatre of Medieval Art*, 42-46. An example of St. Bernard’s writing from Kraus’s chapter is: ‘Eve was ‘the original cause of all evil, whose disgrace has come down to all other women.’” An example of St. Augustine’s writings on Eve can be found in Karen Armstrong’s *The Gospel According to Women*: “What is the difference whether it is in a wife or a mother, it is still Eve the temptress that we must beware of in any woman. I fail to see what use woman can be to man, if one excludes the function of bearing children.”

²⁴ Marina, Areli. “Gislebertus’s Eve: An Alternative Interpretation of the Eve Lintel Relief from the Church of Saint-Lazare, Autun.” *Athanos* 13, (1995): 10-11; An example St. Ambrose’s writings from Marina’s article: “And the women said: ‘The serpent deceived me and I ate.’ That fault is pardonable which is followed by an admission of guilt the woman is therefore not to be despaired of, who did not keep silent before God, but who preferred to admit her sin...Although she incurred the sin of disobedience, she still possessed in the tree of Paradise food for virtue. And so she admitted her sin and was considered worthy of pardon.”

²⁵ Marina, Areli. “Gislebertus’s Eve: An Alternative Interpretation of the Eve Lintel Relief from the Church of Saint-Lazare, Autun,” 10.

²⁶ Kraus, Henry. *The Living Theatre of Medieval Art*, 46-47.

²⁷ Apostolos-Cappadona, Diane. *Encyclopedia of Women in Religious Art*. (New York: Continuum, 1996), 126.

she holds up a small apple. By doing so, Andreas Petzold says she “identifies her[self] as the new Eve.”²⁸ Thus this idea of a relation between Eve and the Virgin was established by the early Christian writings and continued through into the times of the Middle Ages.

However, how does Mary Magdalene fit into this spectrum of sin and redemption? The cult of Mary Magdalene developed around 1050 at the Cluniac Abbey at Vezelay.²⁹ Mary Magdalene gave the faithful a figure which they could relate to on a human level; a midway point between the Eve and the Virgin. She was of course a holy figure, but in no means perfect, not one without sin and not a virgin. While the Virgin Mary was the ideal model for Christians to emulate, Mary Magdalene provided a more realistic aim of someone who had been in a state of utter sin and through faith and honest penance was forgiven and became a favorite of Christ. It is interesting to note that the Doors at Hildesheim (Figure 17) show not only a few scenes of Adam and Eve on the left panels but also that they show images of Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary as well. It is believed that the two halves of this work have a typological relation, one relating the Old Testament to the New Testament (Figure 35)³⁰. For example the creation of Eve from the rib of Adam is set across from the scene of Christ’s resurrection with Mary Magdalene at his feet (*Noli me tangere*) and Eve nursing Cain is juxtaposed with the scene of the Adoration of the Magi with the Virgin holding the Christ child in her arms. Thus with these scenes there is a sense that Christ is the New Adam while both Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary are the New Eves together. Thus there seems to be a trinity of women created; while Mary Magdalene sinned like Eve, she achieved salvation like the Virgin, leading to a trinity where Eve is the sinful woman, Mary Magdalene the earthly, humanly and penitent woman and the Virgin is the heavenly and redemptive woman.

²⁸ Petzold, Andreas. *Romanesque Art*. (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1995), 123.

²⁹ Grivot, Zarnecki. *Gislebertus, Sculptor of Autun*, 17.

³⁰ This figure shows a typological map of the Doors of Hildesheim which was show in my recitation for Art History 101.

Comparison to Neuilly-en-Donjon and Anzy-le-Duc

Two examples from churches close to Autun show this interest in a relation between Eve, Mary, and the Virgin as well as simply that of the Virgin and Eve. The first is in Neuilly-en-Donjon (Figure 7). The church of Neuilly-en-Donjon was built during the second quarter of the twelfth century and dedicated to Mary Magdalene.³¹ The tympanum of the main portal shows the “same serpentine, El Greco-like style”³² which is found not only at Autun, but also, as Arthur Kingsley-Porter, points out is at Anzy-le-Duc and Vezelay. This portal holds a tympanum with a depiction of the Virgin enthroned with the Christ child in her lap with the Magi bringing gifts (Figure 36). The scene is placed on the backs of two large dragon-like monsters, which many believe symbolize the evil in the world. On the lintel, at the left, there is a depiction of the Fall (Figure 37), where a serpent emerges from a tree from which Eve plucks a fruit and hands it over to Adam. To the right of this scene is a depiction of the supper at the house of Simon the Pharisee where Mary Magdalene is believed to have washed the feet of Christ with her tears and hair (Figure 38). Thus this tympanum seeks to show a close relation between Eve, Mary Magdalene, and the Virgin. Andreas Petzold states that, “In each of these scenes the woman is defined in relation to man: Eve as Adam’s sexual partner and temptress; Mary Magdalene by her self-abasement and selfless love of Christ; and the Virgin Mary as the mother of Christ--- the vessel through which God assumed human form.”³³ Thus, here on this tympanum we see the trinity of women proposed above all laid out instead of being conflated into one figure.

Similarly the south priory tympanum at Anzy-le-Duc (Figure 8) shows this idea of the redemption of man through the Second Eve who reverses the sin of the Original Eve. This tympanum was completed around the 12th century. The viewer is compelled to think about the relation between Eve and the Virgin and can concretely correlate Eve with sin and hell, which is shown by the damned in the lintel beneath

³¹ Petzold, Andreas. *Romanesque Art*, 123.

³² Porter, Arthur Kingsley. *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, 121.

³³ Petzold, Andreas. *Romanesque Art*, 123.

her (Figure 39), and the Virgin with redemption and salvation with the saved being taken into Heaven on the part of the lintel beneath her (Figure 40). Although this tympanum does not show any reference to the Magdalene, it still helps to further the idea of the relation between these women. There are definite connections between the Virgin and Eve and also between Eve and the Magdalene, thus when these three women are shown together it is evident that one can tie the strings together and create a relation between the three of them.

Conclusion

While mankind is forever bound to the original sin that Eve's act caused, "once fallen and forever after prone,"³⁴ they have been redeemed by the coming of Christ through the Virgin's purity. Moreover, mankind can look to the example of Mary Magdalene as the ideal and faithful penitent who like humankind is in the state of sin but is redeemable and follows in the footsteps of Christ. Eve, Mary Magdalene, and the Virgin Mary represent the three main archetypes of women, those of sin, repentance, and redemption. Eve is the mother of all women and thus has imbued them with her sin. However they can strive to be like their new mother, the absolutely obedient and pure Virgin Mary. But since this is out of reach they can look to Mary Magdalene. Thus this sculptural relation created between Eve, the Virgin and Mary Magdalene, as well as the background information on their cults can show that the lintel figure of Eve at Autun was meant to represent not only a sinful Eve, but also a penitent Mary and the redemptive Virgin.

³⁴ Kraus, Henry. The Living Theatre of Medieval Art, 46.

Appendix: Figures



Figure 1. Giselbertus, Eve, lintel fragment from the north portal of Saint-Lazare, Autun, ca. 1120-1132, Musée Rolin, Credit: Grivot/Zamecki



Figure 2. Noli me Tangere, nave capital from Saint-Lazare, ca. 1120-1132, Credit: Grivot/Zamecki



Figure 3. Flight from Egypt, detail of a capital from Saint-Lazare, now shown in the chapter house, ca. 1120-1132, Credit: Grivot/Zamecki



Figure 4. Paul Gauguin, Ève Bretonne, 1889

Figure 5. El Greco, *The Burial of Count Orgaz*, 1586



Figure 6. Paul Cézanne, *Leda with Swan*, 1880-82





Figure 7. Portal, West facade, Church of Sainte-Madeleine, Neuilly-En-Donjon, 12th century



Figure 8. Portal, South Entrance of Priory, Anzy-le-Duc, 12th century



Figure 9. Giselbertus, Last judgment, tympanum from the west façade Saint-Lazare, Autun, ca. 1120-1132, Credit: personal photo

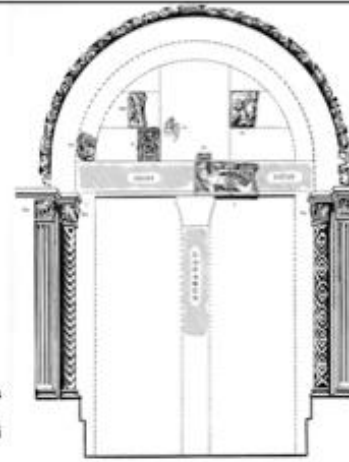


Figure 10. Reconstruction of the north portal at Saint-Lazare, Autun, created by Denis Grivot and George Zarnecki

FIGURE 10. THE NORTH PORTAL AT SAINT-LAZARE, AUTUN

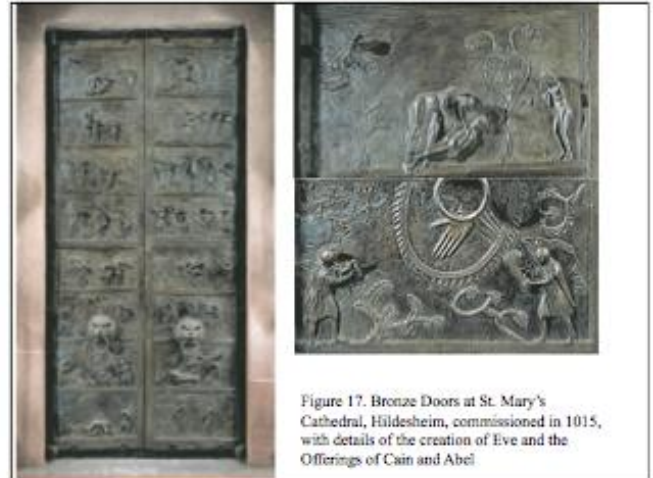
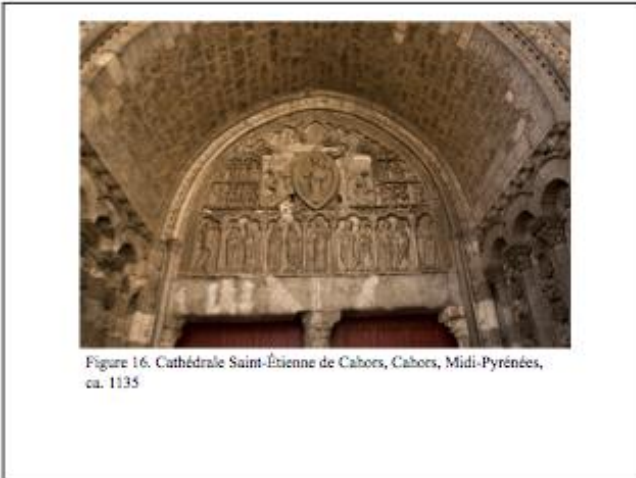
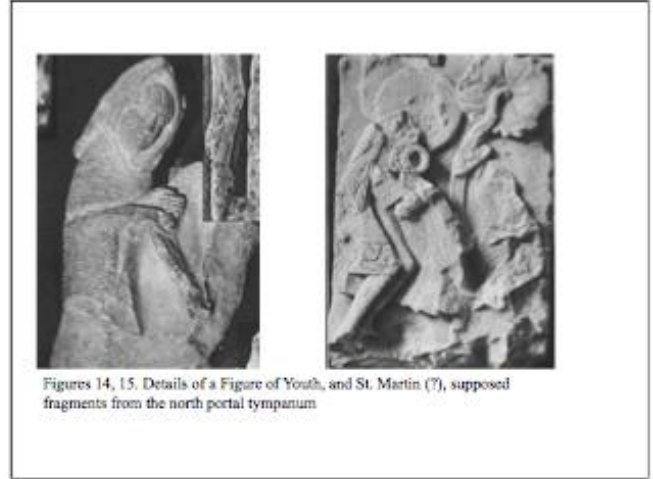
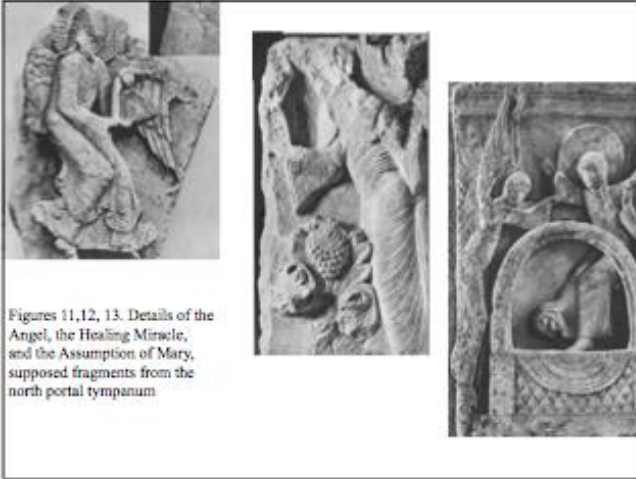




Figure 18. Capital from Puerta de las Platerías at Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela (South portal), early 12th century



Figure 19. Page from the Souvigny Bible, facsimile, ca. 12th century credit: personal photo



Figures 20 and 21. Dives in Hell and Lazarus and Abraham and the Prodigal Son, detail of capitals from north portal



Figures 22 and 23. Widow at Nain or Mary Magdalene, Christ, and Lazarus and the Dives and Lazarus, detail of capitals from north portal



Figure 24. Detail of Lazarus from the Noli me Tangere capital in the nave at Saint Lazare



Figure 25. Detail of Mary Magdalene and Christ from the Noli me Tangere capital in the nave at Saint Lazare



Figure 26. Nave Capital, Adam and Eve, Basilica of St. Mary Magdalene, Vezelay, ca. 1130



Figure 27. Jamb sculpture of Adam and Eve from Saint-Antonin-Noble-Val, 1120, near Montauban

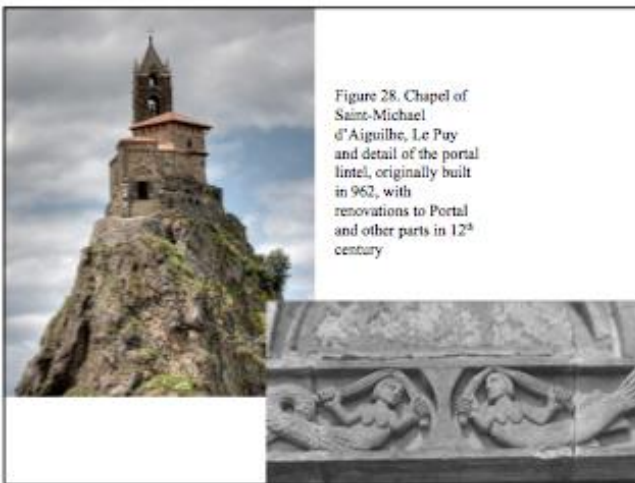


Figure 28. Chapel of Saint-Michael d'Aiguilhe, Le Puy and detail of the portal lintel, originally built in 962, with renovations to Portal and other parts in 12th century



Figure 29. Trumeau figures of Lazarus, Mary and Martha on west façade at Saint Lazare, reconstructed during the 19th century, Autun



Figure 30a. Detail of Mary Magdalene in the Scene of the House of Simon, Saint-Hilaire, Foussais, France, 12th century.



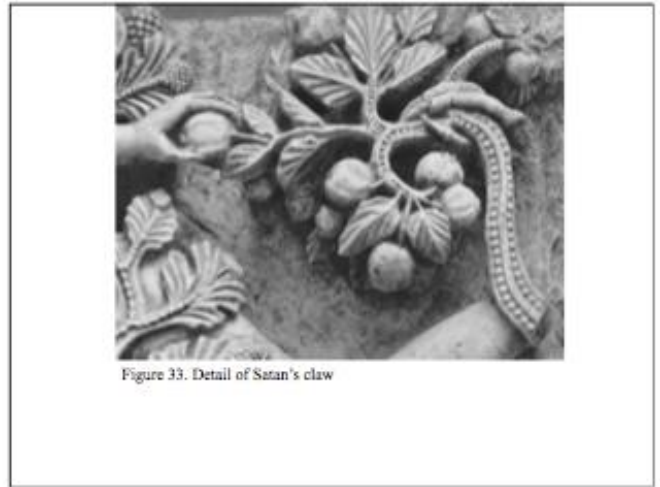
Figure 30b. Detail of Saint Hilaire showing Christ as well gesturing towards Mary Magdalene.



Figure 30c. Pull view of Saint Hilaire, with sculptural architecture with both the Meal at the house of Simon and the noli me tangere scene



Figure 31. Detail of Eve from the left



Old Testament	Comparison of Stories	New Testament
Evolution of Eve	Paradise Lost and the Paradise Counsel	Paul's Letters
Eve Presented to Adam	Substitution	The Three Marys at the Tomb
Temptation and Fall	Tree of Knowledge vs. Tree of Life (The Cross, Substitution)	The Crucifixion
Accusation and Judgment of Adam and Eve	Judgment	Judgment of Jesus by Pilate
Expulsion from Paradise	Separation from God vs. Reunion with God	Presentation of Jesus in Temple
Adam and Eve Working	Forbidden Fruit of Eve (Care and Many Issues) vs. Wealth	Adoration of the Magi
Offerings by Cain, Abel, and Abel's Sacrifice	Abel's Sacrificial Lamb vs. Jesus, Lamb of God	The Nativity
Cain Slaying Abel	Deposition, St. Andrew vs. Hope and Enduring Life	The Annunciation

Figure 35. Typological map of the Doors at Hildesheim



Figure 36. Detail of the Virgin Mary and Child on the tympanum of Neully-en-Donjon



Figure 37. Detail of Adam and Eve, Neully-en-Donjon



Figure 38. Detail of Mary Magdalene, Neully-en-Donjon



Figure 39. Detail of the damned on the tympanum at Anzy-le-Duc



Figure 40. Detail of the saved on the tympanum at Anzy-le-Duc

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Imagining Samarkand: Fruitful Themes in 13th-16th Century Literature on a Silk Road City

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The aim of this paper is to discuss the extent to which travelers, writers, poets and mythologies exchanged ideas about the city of Samarkand in the Mughal and Timurid eras causing the development of specific historical ideas surrounding this specific city. In order to do this, the paper lays out a brief history of the city, followed by literary analyses of histories of the city. It uses these analyses to illustrate the relationships between histories and myths which arose at various points on the silk road and to point to thematic development surrounding Samarkand. In doing this, it argues that an exchange of information about the city of Samarkand led to the development of an idea of the city which continues to impact academic discussions. The paper pays particular attention to Persian and Mughal Indian materials. It relies primarily on historical accounts from the 13th-16th centuries, myths and semi-historical accounts recorded in this time about earlier eras, and poetry from across Eurasia which references the city. In other words, this paper is not meant to be a history of Samarkand itself; it is rather provides a history of the myths and stories which surround the discourse of the Samarkand.

The ancient city of Afrasiab, which grew into Samarkand, was settled around the 7th century B.C.E. The city flourished under both the Achamenids and the Greeks; the Greeks knew the city as Maracanda, and Alexander the Great remained there with his troops for two years.¹ Samarkand remained the central city of Sogd throughout the first millennium C.E., however Sogdiana and the city were almost always dominated by a foreign empire.² Samarkand was taken by the Arabs in 712 and for two centuries Samarkand was the Eastern-most city of the Islamic world.³ While Muslims had nominal control in Fergana in this period, Samarkand was seen as the last great urban Islamic stop.⁴ Perhaps because of this, the period between the Arab invasion of Samarkand and the Mongol invasion in 1220

¹ Grenet, Franz. *Samarqand, History and Archeology in Encyclopedia Iranica*, Columbia University Press, July 2002.

² De la Vaissiere, Etienne. *Sogdian Traders: A History*. Translator: James Ward. Brill Publishers, Boston, 2005. p. 28.

³ De la Vaissiere, *Sogdian Traders*. p. 266.

⁴ Kennedy, Hugh. *The Great Arab Conquests: How the Spread of Islam Changed The World We Live in*. De Capo Press, Philadelphia PA, 2007, p. 294-295.

fomented many of the mythologies about the city, which will feature prominently in this paper. The vast majority of the population of Samarkand was executed upon the arrival of the Mongols, and the city took about a century to recover; during this time, it was ruled by Mongols, who at various points were in opposition to the Mongol capital at Karakorum.⁵ Emir Timur made the city his official capital in 1469 after a series of highly successful battles throughout Central and South Asia.⁶ While this paper makes an effort to focus on the Mongol and Timurid eras of the city, much of what was written by these dynasties was influenced by perceptions of earlier Islamic glory.

First- and second-hand travel literature and accounts by natives of the city would logically provide the most reliable information of the city, although already by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries many travelers and locals bought into previously established myths and semi-histories related to Samarkand. Samarkand proved a tempting subject for its conquerers, the most famous of whom was, of course Timur (Tamerlane), who wrote of his capital in his memoir, the *Mulfazat Timury*.⁷ Timur viewed his rise to power as divinely ordained by a saint.⁸ Timur's accounts of Samarkand largely relate to the terrors faced by the city before his arrival,⁹ and his role in creating a peaceful realm.¹⁰ Timur's style of conquest demanded that he spend 20 years traveling, from the Aegean Sea to Eastern India, in search to new lands and people to conquer¹¹. It was only after he conquered Delhi that he returned to Samarkand, in 1369 C.E., to rule his empire from that city.¹² From then on, his conquests often took place during excursions from the city, in one memorable instance, under the pretense of a hunting expedition. Timur largely writes of Samarkand as a place to be returned to; although times of peace in his Empire were

⁵ Hildinger, Eric, *Warriors of the Steppe: A Military History of Central Asia 500 B.C. To 1700 A.D.* Da Capo Press, Cambridge MA, 1997. p. 127 and 169.

⁶ Hildinger, Eric, *Warriors of the Steppe*. p. 178-179.

⁷ It is likely Timur did not compose this piece himself, but rather commissioned a subordinate to do so for him.

⁸ Timur, *The Mulfazat Timury: Autobiographical Memoirs of the Moghul Emperor Timur*, Translated: Charles Stewart, Oriental Translation Fund, London, 1930. p. 25.

⁹ Timur, *The Mulfazat Timury*. p. 12.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 138.

¹¹ Curtis, William Eleroy. *Turkestan: The Heart of Asia*. Hodder and Stoughton, New York, 1911. p. 187.

¹² Curtis, *Turkestan: The Heart of Asia*. 189.

rare, he spent these moments in Samarkand, where he built mosques and became a patron of the arts.¹³ Timur also recounts the many foreign peoples he brought back to Samarkand, including ambassadors and brides for members of court, which could indicate his desire to create a cosmopolitan capital reflective of his large empire.¹⁴ Finally, Timur portrays much of his early travel and conquest as adventurous opportunities for greatness, as he entered middle age he seems to have developed a greater desire to remain in Samarkand. He increasingly referred to it as both a religiously and cultural acceptable place for a man of his stature to reside.¹⁵ After establishing his throne in Samarkand in 1369, he repeatedly refers to battles and conquests along the frontiers of his realms as disagreeable¹⁶. Unfortunately, the *Mulfazat Timury* ends in the year 1375, limiting our knowledge about Timur's evolving relationship with his city as he entered old age.

The most notable of Timur's descendents to write on Samarkand are the Mughal dynasts, who, after conquering Samarkand and Bokhara, set their sights on the Afghan cities of Herat and Kabul, before ultimately conquering the Delhi sultanate in 1526. Babur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty conquered and lost Samarkand twice.¹⁷ He wrote of the city with great passion in his memoir, the *Baburnama*. Babur writes that when he thought of Samarkand "there was in me an ambition of rule and a desire of conquest."¹⁸ Like Timur, Babur believed that his conquest of Samarkand was divinely ordained, writing of a dream that predicts his capture of the city¹⁹. At some point he seems to have concluded that too long a respite in the city was dangerous, and blamed his relaxed lifestyle there in 1501 C.E. his territorial losses.²⁰ However, he does recognize that his historic claims to the city give him great power and legitimacy to his residents, something he seems to relish. He writes that he hoped that there was no

¹³ Timur, *The Mulfazat Timury*. p. 138.

¹⁴ Timur, *The Mulfazat Timury*. p. 148.

¹⁵ Timur, *The Mulfazat Timury*. p. 138-140.

¹⁶ Timur, *The Mulfazat Timury*. p. 140, p. 145, 153.

¹⁷ Babur, *Baburnama: The Memoirs of Babur*, Translated by Annette Susannah Beveridge. Luzac and Co, London, 1921, p. 90 and 141.

¹⁸ Babur, *The Memoirs of Babur*, p. 92

¹⁹ Babur, *The Memoirs of Babur*, p. 132.

²⁰ Babur, *The Memoirs of Babur*, 141-143.

likelihood that the Samarkandis would defend an Uzbek rule of their city, and that they were more likely to greet his forces as a return of legitimate rule.²¹ Also, unlike his ancestor, who rarely wrote of the people of Saarkand outside of describing their misery before his arrival, Babur writes that they are “sure-in-faith, law abiding and religious.”²² Babur is fascinated by the history of the city, positing that its people are descendents of Alexander the Great.²³ Finally, Babur wrote of a particular pleasure of Samarkand that would become a pet memory of his descendents: fruit. Like several travelers to be discussed later, Babur emphasized the sweets of the city; in a letter to his son, Hodayun, in which he encouraged him to retake the city if possible, he wrote, “How can one forget the pleasures of that country... like melons and grapes?”²⁴

Babur's account of Samarkand was used by Mughal rulers, who described their own origins, and his references to the semi-historical aspects of the city became rooted in their own accounts. For example, his son Hodayun, exposes the deep-seated hatred the Mughal leaders felt for the Uzbeks for holding their traditional homeland, along with their simultaneous fear and desire to reconquer Central Asia.²⁵

Later, Emperor Jahangir discussed the fruit of the city, a Mughali preoccupation. He mentions a poet from the city who appeals to him, and notes “What a pity... he hasn't come to give the devotees an apple of Samarkand wisdom.”²⁶ This reference unmistakable, and it is likely Jahangir was aware of the regions' reputation as the greatest fruit-producing region in the known world.

It was not only local rulers who composed first and second-hand memoirs describing the history and nature of Samarkand; foreign travelers, even those who did not visit themselves, were often fascinated by the city's history. Both Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta wrote about Samarkand, and each

²¹ Babur, *The Memoirs of Babur*, p. 131.

²² Babur, *The Memoirs of Babur*, p. 75

²³ Babur, *The Memoirs of Babur*, 75.

²⁴ Foltz, Richard. *Mughal India and Central Asia*. Oxford University Press, New York, 1998, 129.

²⁵ Hodayun, *Hodayunama*, 4.

²⁶ Samarqandi, *Conversations with Emperor Jahangir*. 81.

repeated legends about the place. Polo wrote during the reign of Khubali Khan in China, during which time another of Chengiz Khan's grandsons ruled over Samarkand.²⁷ Polo himself did not actually visit Samarkand, but retold the stories of his father and uncle, who traveled to Samarkand in 1262.²⁸

Although Polo is often treated as the first great western travelers in the region, he came out of a very particular tradition of travel to the east: a search for Christian support in broader Asia. Much of Marco Polo's knowledge of Central Asia likely came from previous expeditions sent to Mongol Khans in the hope of contacting Prestor John, and Polo himself chronicled the supposed history of the relationship between Chengiz Khan and Prestor John.

Thus, Polo's ideas about Samarkand were probably tinged by a need to find and recount stories of Christian allies in the East. Polo wrote that Samarkand "Is a noble city, adorned with beautiful gardens, and surrounded by a plain, in which are all the fruits a man can desire."²⁹ After cataloging the religions of its inhabitants, he proceeds to recount a tale of Chagatai Khan, who Polo believes became a Christian and built a glorious church.³⁰ After Chagatai's death, the new prince showed little inclination towards Christianity, and ordered the destruction of the church. However, the pillar that supported the roof of the church rose from the ground and proved indestructible.³¹ This myth illustrates the extent to which mythologies about Eastern Christian kings played into European desires and sensibilities in the 13th century.³²

Ibn Battuta, who visited Samarkand himself in 1334 C.E., writes that "[Samarkand] is one of the greatest and finest cities, and the most perfect in beauty."³³ Like others, Battuta focused largely on the orchards and fruits of the city; however, he also devoted some of his description to people, stating that

²⁷ Polo, Marco, *The Travels*. Translated: Ronald Latham. Penguin Books, New York, 1958. 81.

²⁸ Polo, *The Travels*. 13 (prologue).

²⁹ Polo, *The Travels*. 81.

³⁰ Polo, *The Travels*. 81

³¹ Polo, *The Travels*. . 82.

³² Polo, *The Travels*. 13 (prologue).

³³ Battuta, Abu Abdullah Muhammad. *Travels in the Near East, Asia and Africa, 1325-1354. Translated: Rev. Samuel Lee*. Dover Books, New York, 2004. 16

the inhabitants of Samarkand “are affectionate to the stranger and better than the people of Bokhara.”³⁴

Like Polo, Battuta was searching for specific religious implications in his travels. Moreover, he also reflects on the influence the Arab invasion had left on Samarkand. While visiting Samarkand, he remarked that many members of the city's population routinely visited the tomb of Qutham, son of Al-Abbas, who participated in the Arab conquest of the city and according to Battuta, “met a martyr's death” during the conquest.³⁵

A second European, who offers more direct knowledge of the city, is the ambassador Clavijo, who was sent by the Spanish Emperor Manuel to meet Timur and report on his empire.³⁶ From 1403 to 1406 Clavijo traveled from Castile to Samarkand, through Turkey and Iran, and then returned following a similar route.³⁷ Clavijo offers an interesting perspective because he was reporting in an official capacity, and was given a high level of access to Timurid officials.³⁸ Clavijo described the city in far greater detail than had earlier European travelers, and seemed most impressed by the displays of wealth within the city, and the extent to which peace was kept among people he described as fundamentally warlike.³⁹ He notes “the richness and abundance of this great capital... is indeed a wonder to behold and it is for this reason that it bears the name 'Samarkand'... two words which signify 'Rich Town.’” In addition, Clavijo touches upon a theme that was popular among the later Mughal writers: the majesty of the fruit of Samarkand. He writes “the melons of this country are abundant and very good, and at the season of Christmas there are so many melons and grapes to be had that it is indeed marvelous.”⁴⁰

Finally, unlike other travelers, Clavijo seems to have enjoyed great independence to travel among other foreign groups in the city, and provides useful information on its cosmopolitan nature. He

³⁴ Battuta, *Travels in the Near East, Asia and Africa*. 16.

³⁵ Ibrahimovich, Ibrahimov Nematulla. *The Travels of Ibn Battuta to Central Asia*. Ithaca Press, Reading, UK, 1999. 120.

³⁶ Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane: 1403-1406*. Translated: Guy LeStrange. RutledgeCurzon Publishers, Oxon, UK, 2005.

³⁷ Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*. xiii.

³⁸ Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*. 222.

³⁹ Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*. 245, 259, 263, 266, 290 etc.

⁴⁰ Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*. p. 286.

describes how Chinese, Russian, Mongol, Frankish, and Indian merchants and traders mingle in the city, promoting their goods.⁴¹ Additionally, he notes that the natives of the city are of a stunningly diverse background saying “here were seen to be Turks, Arabs and Moors of various sects, with Christians who were Greeks and Armenians, Catholics, Jacobites, Nestorians and Indian folk who baptize with fire in the forehead...”⁴² This description points to two things: first, Clavijo's emphasis on the diversity and lack of cohesion among the Christians within in the city seems to imply that he does not believe there was or ever could be an effective Christian rule within the city; second, his description of the vast diversity of the city points to a level of awareness of its history as a host city to empires.

Before turning to 13th-16th century semi-historical and poetic descriptions of Samarkand, it is important to spend a few moments on the city's position in the *Shahnameh* of Ferdowsi, written around the turn of the millennium. As most Persian language poets of the following centuries were intimately familiar with the *Shahnameh*, it is impossible to write about later epics and poems without reference to the mythology laid out by Ferdowsi.⁴³ In the *Shahnameh*, a king called Afrasiyab leads the Turanians against the Iranians and is the archenemy of the *Shahnameh*'s hero, Rostam. Afrasiyab is the grandson of Tur, who was granted all the lands of Central Asia as far east as the Oxus by his father when the lands of his realm were divided; hence the word Turanian for the peoples of Central Asia.⁴⁴ Afrasiyab took control of the Turanian lands after the death of his father. Among scholars, there is some dispute over whether Ferdowsi meant Afrasiyab to refer to Samarkand.^{45 46} For our purposes, however, the debate is largely irrelevant, as popular consensus beginning in the mid-11th century associated Afrasiyab with Samarkand

⁴¹ Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*. p. 289.

⁴² Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*. p. 289.

⁴³ It's important to note that most of the stories of Ferdowsi come from earlier Zoroastrian sources, but there is unfortunately not time to discuss this connection in this paper. See J. Kellen's *Avesta* in the *Encyclopedia Iranica*, along with E. Yarshater's article *Afrasiab* in the same *Encyclopedia*.

⁴⁴ Bodsworth, C.E., *Turan*. *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Columbia University Press, 2011.

⁴⁵ Pugachenkova, *Afrasiab*.

⁴⁶ Some scholars have argued that the name Afrasiab is a distortion of the original name of the city, see *Encyclopedia Iranica*; in this paper I have used Afrasiab to indicate the city and Afrasiyab to indicate the mythical character. They are pronounced identically.

and the surrounding region.⁴⁷

Tur and Afrasiyab are portrayed as wild men of the desert lands, who covet the fertile land of Iran to their west; despite this, they are also shown as shrewd and skilled warriors who in several instances pose a severe challenge to the Iranians.⁴⁸ Wrote Ferdowsi, "Many are the cities of Iran which you see to be in ruin, laid to waste by the rancor of Afrasiyab." Ultimately, Afrasiyab is defeated by the Persian Kay Khosrow. Afrasiyab's daughter Ferangis⁴⁹ and her descendents swear allegiance to Iran, symbolizing the acceptance of some element of Central Asian society into broader Iran.⁵⁰ This supposedly ancient history seems to be a call-back to Sassanid greatness before the fall of Iran to the Arabs, at which time Sassanid Persian culture dominated the artistic and cultural scene of not only Samarkand but all the great cities of Central Asia.⁵¹

Later scholars and poets used the connection between Afrasiyab and Samarkand extensively to characterize the urban peoples of Central Asia. A manuscript by an unidentified author from the 12th-14th centuries recounts the Persian myths and semi-histories associated with the exploits of Alexander the Great in the lands East of Greece. This so called "Iskandarnamah" repeats many of the myths of Afrasiyab, but with a stronger connection to the cities of Central Asia and a number of references to Alexander's fear of the "Turks and the descendents of Afrasiyab."⁵² These references reveal more about the relationship between Central Asia and Iran in the Mongol era than they do about the travails of Alexander of Macedon. While the Iskandarnamah uses romantic stories to recount Alexander's exploits in the region, his supposed fear of the descendents of Afrasiyab and his wish to return to and spend time in their realms protecting his new territorial possessions is likely reference to the two years he spent

⁴⁷ Pugachenkova and Rtveladze.

⁴⁸ Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*. p. 45, 109, 162, etc.

⁴⁹ For a discussion of the source of this name see Djalal Khaleghi Motlagh's *Farangis* in the Encyclopedia Iranica.

⁵⁰ Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*. p. 173-174.

⁵¹ Foltz, *Mughal India and Central Asia*. p. 1-3.

⁵² Southgate (Translator), *Iskandarnamah: A Persian Medieval Alexander Romance*. Columbia University Press, New York, 1978. p. 38, p. 58.

with his army in Samarkand.⁵³

In a later story of the *Iskandarnamah*, Alexander indeed returns to this land, and finds that it has been overrun by fairies,⁵⁴ who have been gifted the land by Afrasiyab.⁵⁵ When Alexander conquers the capital of this land, the author writes “Alexander and his men entered the city. They found a place like paradise, with all the kinds of fruits.”⁵⁶ While its not entirely clear that the author intended the realm of the fairies to be Samarkand, this mention of fruit draws direct parallels to contemporaneous non-fiction writing on the city.

Despite the disdainful and fearful attitudes that Samarkandis were branded with by their Iranian neighbors, at least one poet from Samarkand was able to make fun of the stereotypes and of the early attempts of Central Asians to fit into a classical Iranian society. Suzani of Samarkand who wrote in the late 12th and early 13th centuries is best known for his relatively obscene poetry, which was banned by most later Persian literary councils.⁵⁷ Suzani teased Samarkandis and other Central Asians. He writes “I for one, am a poet, not a Samanid; Nor from the race of the Sasanid Kings.... Here, they don't buy the Samanid renown, so damned are my manners and all I own!”⁵⁸ As a literary figure recognized by the court, Suzani was certainly aware of the negative perceptions of his hometown; his mocking writing is a clear attempt to lay claim to some of these perceptions and even promote some of the perceptions of Samarkand as a wild land on the outskirts of empire, albeit in a fond manner.

By the late 14th and early 15th century, Samarkand had largely recuperated from the Mongol invasion, and had developed better networks and exchanges with the rest of the Persian-speaking

⁵³ Southgate *Isakandarnamah*. p. 38.

⁵⁴ I cannot find a Persian edition of this *Iskandarnamah*, however it is likely “Fairy” is from the Persian word “Pari,” which typically refers to human-like creatures with a particular mythical feature. This fits the description in the book that “these fairies look like human beings, except for their legs.”(p. 77)

⁵⁵ Southgate, *Iskandarnamah* p. 76.

⁵⁶ Southgate, *Iskandarnamah*. p. 96.

⁵⁷ Sprachman, Paul. *Suppressed Persian: An Anthology of Forbidden Literature*. Mazda Publishers, Costa Mesa, California, 1995, p. 18.

⁵⁸ Sprachman, *Suppressed Persian*. p. 21.

world.⁵⁹ Perhaps for this reason, poetry from this era possesses little resemblance to earlier, fearful writings about the city. The most famous Persian poet to comment on the glories of Timur's realms in the 14th century was, of course, Shams al-Din Hafiz of Shiraz who wrote "If that Turk would just take my head in hand for her black Hindu mole I'd trade Bukhara and Samarkand."⁶⁰ Although likely apocryphal, the story of Timur's response to this line gained great currency in the region and was repeated by many poets and philosophers who were searching for approval from monarchs. Supposedly, Timur called Hafiz before him and retorted "Hafiz! Do you not know that I have wielded my sword in order to build up these cities? You would spoil my efforts by exchanging Samarqand and Bukhara for a Hindu mole!"⁶¹ Much to the pleasure and amusement of Timur, Hafiz then replied "indeed, because of just this exchange that I have fallen into such a beggarly state."⁶² This story was repeated by poets wishing to impress leaders even centuries later, indicating that comparison of a leader to Timur and his realms to Samarkand and Bukhara continued to be seen as a great compliment throughout the Turco-Persian world.⁶³

The poet Mutribi al-Asaam Samarqandi illustrates some of the difficulties in drawing clear lines between genres of literature surrounding the city. Mutribi travelled the world from Samarkand composing brief lines of poetry to impress monarchs. Through his narrative of his travel, he captured the attitude of the Shah Jahangir towards the history of Samarkand, and through his own verses he portrayed the attitude of Samarkand's artistic elite towards their homeland.⁶⁴ After several months spent entertaining the emperor, Samarqandi begs to return home. He recites a line of poetry praising Jahangir but insisting that "love of one's land is like an act of faith."⁶⁵ Jahangir responds by proposing options that

⁵⁹ Jackson, Peter. *The Cambridge History of Iran: Volume 6, The Timurid and Safavid Periods*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1986. p. 138.

⁶⁰ Samarqandi, *Conversations with Emperor Jahangir*. p. 20-21.

⁶¹ Samarqandi, *Conversations with Emperor Jahangir*. p. 20.

⁶² Samarqandi, *Conversations with Emperor Jahangir* p. 20.

⁶³ Samarqandi, *Conversations with Emperor Jahangir*. p. 21. See also Jackson, p. 141.

⁶⁴ Samarqandi, *Conversations with Emperor Jahangir*. p. 24 and 89.

⁶⁵ Samarqandi, *Conversations with Emperor Jahangir*. p. 89.

will lead to great wealth for Samarqandi, but Samarqandi repeatedly refuses, insisting he must return home at all costs. Finally, Jahangir relents, recognizing the poet's obvious love for Samarkand.⁶⁶ This exchange may have been meant to serve two purposes: first, it certainly illustrates the desire of the author to leave India and return to his homeland, which is probably factual. However, given his background, it is reasonable to assume that his writings would be presented to the local rulers once he arrived home, and repeated praising his homeland was therefore likely politically expedient.

Given this wide range of sources, we are left to ponder the themes that seem to run throughout many or all of them. The most common and straightforward theme in the writings about Samarkand is a preoccupation with fruit. Almost all purportedly non-fiction sources on the city discuss its fruit. The legacy of Sogdian trade routes meant that even in the 13th to 15th centuries and later dried fruit and other goods from Samarkand traveled long distances along the Silk Road, and had the opportunity to gain fame among foreign communities.⁶⁷ The Chinese were likely the first foreigners to taste Samarkandi apples and other fruits outside of the city itself; there is ample evidence that Sogdians were the most prodigious of the frontier traders, who exchanged goods in quick paced and flexible markets along the south-western Chinese border in the 7th and 8th centuries.⁶⁸ Unpreserved fruits being perishable, however, it seems likely that foreigners from further away had to wait to reach the city before they taste this pleasure; thus, it is notable that those who had never been there, including Marco Polo and the many Mughal kings, specifically referred to the fruit of Samarkand when describing their perception of it. This fact could be used to support two conclusions: first, that travelers and traders from Samarkand passed on news of the miraculous fruit of their hometown to those they met on the road. Second, that the fruit of Samarkand was common in regional markets and was often traded outside of the city, promoting a wider knowledge of its wonders.

⁶⁶ Samarqandi, *Conversations with Emperor Jahangir*. p. 191.

⁶⁷ Liu, Xinru. *The Silk Road in World History*. Oxford University Press, New York, 2010. p. 67-69.

⁶⁸ De La Vaissiere, *Sogdian Traders*. p. 217.

Both are likely true, and the writings of Ibn Battuta and Clavijo also show that foreign travelers who passed through the city passed on news of its fruits to their homelands, even when effective trade for the fruits would have been nearly impossible because of the distance. Clavijo's goal in describing the fruit of Samarkand seems to be quite similar to his goal in describing the rest of the city; to impress upon his masters in Spain the extent to which Samarkand was a well-ordered and wealthy society, both worthy of friendship and dangerous as a foe.⁶⁹ Fruit for Clavijo, Battuta and Polo seems to imply wealth and power. Polo's phrase "all the fruits a man can desire" seems to point to the fact that the Samarkandis never had a need to want for food, and feasted on the best in the world.⁷⁰ Additionally, it points to the theme that connects the Mughali writers to their fruit obsessions: foreign desire and longing for the wealth and splendors of the city. The Mughali references to fruit are easily understood within this context: their feeling of exile is often coupled with a perception that the goods of India are lacking in some manner, and this is true most strongly when they speak of fruit. Babur, having actually tasted the fruit of Samarkand, was perhaps most poetic in his descriptions. Moreover, he seems to have passed down this sense of longing to his offspring.⁷¹ In particular, at some point fruit seems to have become a metaphor among the Mughals for all that was good about Central Asia; this tendency is displayed when Jahangir requests that a poet bring "an apple of Samarkand wisdom."⁷²

The Mughali emperors certainly were not the only foreign writers to combine their musings on Samarkand with a deep longing, although they were certainly most effective at connecting this idea with fruit. Perhaps of all the writers discussed in this paper, their longing is most understandable, for they characterized Samarkand as their lost homeland, which had been unrightfully taken from them by Uzbek usurpers.⁷³ Even Timur, who rarely betrayed emotion in his writing, seemed to have a certain desire to

⁶⁹ Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*. p. 288-289.

⁷⁰ Polo, *The Travels*. p. 81.

⁷¹ Foltz, *Mughal India and Central Asia* p. 129.

⁷² Samarqandi, *Conversations with Emperor Jahangir*. p. 81.

⁷³ Foltz, *Mughal India and Central Asia*. p. 128-129.

raise Samarkand above other cities. In a moment of expressed nostalgia and love for his capital city, while traveling, he orders that Samarkand be exempt from all taxation and other revenue raising activities.⁷⁴

More interesting is the extent to which a sense of longing pervades the writing of those with no particular claim on the city. Ibn Battuta's description of the tomb of an Arab conquerer of the city, and the place it holds in the consciousness of Samarkand's residents on the city points to a longing for a shared heritage and joint membership in a broader religious community.⁷⁵ To Battuta, although Samarkand lies on the outskirts of Islamic civilization, its urban attitude and the positive efforts of its religious establishment mean that it could ultimately operate along the lines of a orthodox Muslim city.⁷⁶ While this could be considered less of a longing for Samarkand itself and more of a longing for a specific political and religious shared history, Battuta's determination to remain upbeat about the religious history he shares with an otherwise herterodoxical city points to his longing to incorporate the city into his own cultural sphere.

Similarly, while the mythical and semi-historical Persian language writings of Ferdowsi and those who followed him don't betray any desire or longing to *go to* Samarkand, or more generally Turan, they do seem to point to a desire to reintegrate it into what they see as a powerful and just civilization. In the *Shahnameh*, the fact that Ferangis, the daughter of Afrasiyab ultimately declares her loyalty to the just Persian empire of Kay Khosrow, implying a reintegration of the troubled Turanian lands into Iranian power.⁷⁷ It is important to remember that as Ferdowsi wrote Turkic power was spreading throughout the traditionally Persian-language cities of Samarkand, Bokhara, and their neighbors, and Ferdowsi likely wrote for an Iranian audience that was fearful of losing influence. Along the same lines, both the *Iskandarnamah* and the *The Ilahi-nama* of Attar use the name Afrasiyab to refer to Turks and infidels who

⁷⁴ Foltz, *Mughal India and Central Asia* p. 140.

⁷⁵ Ibrahimovich, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta to Central Asia*. p. 120.

⁷⁶ Battuta, *Travels to the Near East, Asia and Africa*. p. 16.

⁷⁷ Ferdowsi, *The Shahnameh*. p. 174.

are eventually brought under the sway of a righteous Muslim Persian Alexander, indicating a longing to re-civilize the wild lands to the east of Iran.⁷⁸

However, if a superiority complex is prominent in the Persian epics, so too is a sense of awe at the military power of Central Asia. Fear is the third most common theme in the writings about Samarkand, and while it is most obvious in Iranian works, it can also be found in Mughali and European writings. The line “many are the cities of Iran which you see to be in ruin, laid to waste by the rancor of Afrasiyab,” is the most evocative portrayal of the fear-inducing Central Asian Afrasiyab in the *Shahnameh*.⁷⁹ Despite this, after Key Khosrow beheads Afrasiyab he gives him an honorable burial to illustrate that he respected his glory in battle.⁸⁰ This scene seems to capture the attitude of Persian epics towards the Samarkandis and Central Asians more generally; despite belief in their impurity, a begrudging respect was offered to their military might.

While the Mughal emperors largely wrote of the remembered splendors of Samarkand and their longing for a glorious return, they also occasionally betrayed a deep fear of its current rulers, who had defeated Babur in battle twice.⁸¹ Babur wrote to his son about the need to retake the city from the Uzbeks, but also highlighted the perils of such a plan, and it is perhaps for this reason that it was never attempted.⁸²

Of the travel writers examined in this paper, Clavijo was the most impressed with the military power of Samarkand. Clavijo's description is noteworthy because while he describes the thrilling power of the Samarkandis of Timur's armies to bring terror to other regions, he also notes that within the city, Timur runs a well-ordered society capable of regulating itself.⁸³ He writes, “good order is maintained in Samarkand with the utmost strictness and none dare fight with another or oppress his neighbor by

⁷⁸ Attar, *The Ilahi-namah* p. 90 and Southgate, *Iskandarnamah*, p. 96.

⁷⁹ Ferdowsi, *The Shahnameh*. p. 173.

⁸⁰ Ferdowsi, *The Shahnameh*. p. 174.

⁸¹ Foltz, *Mughal India and Central Asia*. p. 129.

⁸² Foltz, *Mughal India and Central Asia*.

⁸³ Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*. p. 220.

force.”⁸⁴ Clavijo remarks that the Samarkandis are not even frightened of mocking the powerful Chinese, for they know that under Timur, they are militarily untouchable.⁸⁵

While some of the sources discussed- especially European sources more concerned with reporting than creating a specific historical narrative- are not bothered by the dichotomy between the “longing” and “fear” aspects of the Samarkand discourse, other authors do attempt to address this issue. Notably, Battuta addresses the issue by pointing out that Samarkand was once a full participant in Orthodox religious practice. This means it has the capacity to return to the cultural and religious sphere of the Arabs, despite the “devastation” visited on the religious practices of the region by the Mongols.⁸⁶

The manner in which the Mughals overcame the dichotomy between longing and fear was more straightforward. For them, the name Samarkand evoked a lost paradise, which could not be recaptured because of the plague of the Uzbek invaders.⁸⁷ Their longing for its fruit and its culture was likely intensified by their knowledge of the deep danger of mounting an invasion against the city.

With regards to Samarkand, the stories traded over time grew to focus on the themes of fruit, longing and fear, and seemed to transcend class, location, empire and historical era. Although there is not enough evidence to reasonably argue that each of the authors examined in this paper influenced others outside of their region, the dominance of these three themes across all of the works points to the fact that a specific set of beliefs arose about Samarkand, and were spread throughout Eurasia through literary, political and economic contact.

⁸⁴ Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*. p. 220.

⁸⁵ Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*. p. 222.

⁸⁶ Ibrahimovich. *The Travels of Ibn Battuta in Central Asia*.

⁸⁷ Babur, *The Baburnama*, p. 92.

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The Poet and the Prince: A Culture of Honor in Middle Welsh Panegyric Poetry

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Previous discussions of panegyric poetry focus on its essentially fictional nature and consider it unreliable as historical evidence. This essay presents a new paradigm for the evaluation of panegyric evidence to form significant conclusions about contemporary cultural expectations and self-perception in an honor/shame culture. This essay uses specific evidence drawn from twelfth and thirteenth-century Welsh panegyric poetry to provide a specific implementation of the paradigm.

The immediate reaction to medieval praise-poetry or panegyric is understandably one of doubt, based on its existence as an essentially hyperbolic form of literature. This has led many—including such well-known names as Gibbons, Voltaire, and Dryden¹—to reject its use in a historical context. While more recent arguments, such as those of Richard W. Kaeuper,² have established a clear standard for the historical interpretation of essentially fictive medieval genres, such as the *chanson de geste*, no such convincing argument has been made for the quasi-mimetic genre of panegyric. C. Stephen Jaeger made an attempt in his “Courtliness and Social Change,” writing that “the panegyrist's extravagant praise may well be intended to oppose the vices of a notoriously vicious king by fulsome praise of what he lacked. He was prodding and stinging the king by false praise, pushing him to change, and if the rest of the court heard it, so much greater the power of its irony to push him toward reform.”³ This raises two troubling questions. The first is a question of authorship: Can we, in fact, differentiate the Welsh poet and the Welsh prince between whom Jaeger assumes to exist a corrective agenda? The second is a question of

¹ For a discussion of some of these later authors and perceptions of Roman, medieval or Early Modern panegyric, see James D. Garrison, “Gibbon and the 'Treacherous Language of Panegyrics',” *Eighteenth Century Studies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1977), vol. 11.

² Richard W. Kaeuper, “Literature as Essential Evidence for Understanding Chivalry,” in *The Journal of Medieval Military History*, ed. Clifford J. Rogers, Kelly deVries and John France (Rochester: Boydell Press, 2007), vol. 4.

³ C. Stephen Jaeger, “Courtliness and Social Change,” in *Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals, 939-1210* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), p. 296.

oral-formulaic interpretation: Could the Welsh poet, in working within a rigidly defined and regulated genre conform to cultural expectations while manipulating his material obviously enough to provoke a reaction? I will suggest otherwise. As I will demonstrate, Welsh panegyric was both produced and consumed by the same social class, and in many cases by the same individual. Furthermore, panegyric was an essentially oral-formulaic tradition, in which the selection and manner of attributes to be praised has little if anything to do with the individual described. In an honor society, the assertion of conformance – either by an individual or another on his behalf – is just as important as the conformance itself. Jaeger's error is to assume an individual correlation for a genre that is clearly performative in nature and thus much more a collective expression. Thus, Middle Welsh panegyric poetry served simultaneously to establish and regulate social standards for the warrior aristocracy. In this essay, I will discuss the historical importance of panegyric poetry as a performative act, representing a component of a lord's self-perception. I will limit myself, for the sake of time and for the sake of presenting a clear picture, to the poetry of the age of the Gogynfeirdd or not-so-early poets (about 1100 to 1282), representing the strongest tradition of patronage of poetry and a period of increased Welsh political independence.

The noted historian of the American South Bertram Wyatt-Brown dedicated a chapter of his seminal *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* to demonstrating and then defining a theory of personal honor outside of any particular geopolitical context. According to Wyatt-Brown, honor is comprised of three basic components:

- 1) The inner conviction of self-worth
- 2) The claim of that self-assessment before the public
- 3) The assessment of that claim by the public

Thus honor “resides in the individual as his understanding of who he is and where he belongs in the ordered ranks of society [...] both internal to the claimant, so that it motivates him toward behavior

socially approved, and external to him, because only by the response of observers can he ordinarily understand himself. The internal and external aspects of honor are inalienably connected because honor serves as ethical mediator between the individual and the community by which he is assessed and in which he must also locate himself in relation to others.”⁴

He further highlights the “accepted congruence between personal values and the conventions imposed upon the individual by society. The internal man and the external realities of existence are united in such a way that he knows no other good or evil except that which the collective group designates. He reflects society as society reflects him.”⁵ The performative speech act of asserting one's conformance to social standards before peers is thus the crucial part of establishing self-perception. Yet the speech act did not have to be made by the asserting individual, although in many cases it was. The patronage of poets and resulting production of panegyric serves as just as clear – and perhaps even more memorable – a demonstration of one's conformance to social standards.

But are we to suppose, as Jaeger does, that the poets are a distinct group from the princes they praise, and thus the poets are essentially detached from the class whose standards they are asserting, ironically or otherwise? Certainly the Welsh laws provide for the distinct status of a poet or bard within the structure of the court. The *pencerdd* or court-bard had a distinct position at table, received customary remunerations from his patron, and was entitled to a share of several taxes and fees and ultimately receive land.⁶ The poet was required by law to be a freeman, and to receive the permission of his lord.⁷ While these laws are clearly idealized in many aspects, they show nevertheless that a poet, in the Welsh mind, was tied inextricably to the code of social conduct that also governed the military aristocracy. Many poets were in fact also warriors. Gwalchmai ap Meilyr writes of his own prowess in

⁴ Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 14.

⁵ Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, p. 15.

⁶ For a complete discussion of the privileges of the court-bard and the Chief of Song see Thomas Peter Ellis, *Welsh Tribal Law and Custom in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), p. 198.

⁷ *Ibid.*

battle alongside that of his lord's: "Gleaming my sword, lightning its fashion in conflict, glittering the gold on my warshield ... For Môn's prince I attacked in battle."⁸ Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr boasts that "On Bryn Actun's field I honoured a hundred, my red blade at my side; In one ebb, three hundred war-lords: May they enter heaven as one."⁹ Most significantly, there are two known poets in this period, Owain Cyfeliog and Hywel ap Owain Gwynedd, who are themselves lords, changing the perspective of the panegyric utterly on its head: "Fine men I sent into battle, fearless in combat, red-weaponed. Who vexes a brave man, let him beware!"¹⁰ Thus poets often (1) held land from their lord (2) fought in their lord's warband and (3) thus wrote poetry that governed not just their lord's place in society but their own. Or, to paraphrase Dr. Kaeuper, we know that uchelwyr (nobility) read or heard panegyric and heroic poetry; they mention traditional themes in their own writings; they inserted their own ideas into poetry and drew them from poetry; they patronized the writing of poetry and some – in this case, many – wrote poetry themselves.¹¹ The audience and authorship of this panegyric are thus demonstrated to be coterminous.

The formulaic structure of Welsh panegyric is clear from the enormous amount of thematic repetition. The poets praise military prowess: Compare Gwalchmai ap Meilyr, praising Owain Gwynedd: "Môn's war-lord, how brave his behavior in combat, and their bold defiance was battle's clamour, and before him rose a grim wild welter, and havoc and conflict and doleful death,"¹² with Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr's poem about Madawg ap Maredudd: "Mighty Madawg, battlefield's champion ... Keen for war, for fortress, for splendid field ... Famed his bloodstained hand on bloodstained field."¹³ Almost as often and perhaps closer to the heart of the poet, they praise generosity; with an echo, perhaps, of the role of the

⁸ Joseph P. Clancy, trans. *Medieval Welsh Poems* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), p. 124-125.

⁹ Clancy, p. 145. Even if we reject their claims to participation in war as literary self-promotion, we can still form conclusions based on their willingness – even eagerness – to identify with the warrior class they praise.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

¹¹ Richard W. Kaeuper, "Literature as Essential Evidence for Understanding Chivalry," in *The Journal of Medieval Military History*, ed. Clifford J. Rogers, Kelly deVries and John France (Rochester: Boydell Press, 2007), vol. 4, p. 2.

¹² Clancy, p. 128.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

lord in rewarding a poet for a performance. To Gruffydd ap Gwrgenau, Gruffydd ap Cynan is “triumph's red spear ... who gave me gold and well-trained horses.” Prydydd y Moch is even more direct, addressing Davydd ap Owain Gwynedd with “Mordaf, Nudd, Rhydderch, for giving. Superb ruler, restraining the strong. Pour out wealth to me for praising you, pourer of golden favor, Rhodri's descendant.”¹⁴ Mordaf, Nudd and Rhydderch are three semi-legendary figures from North Britain, all of whom share the epithet of Hael, meaning “generous.”

The poets also constantly praise genealogy. Llywelyn ab Iorwerth (Llywelyn I of Wales) is noted as “Rhun's descendant,”¹⁵ and Bleddyn Fardd mentions Llywelyn II's great-grandfather Owain Gwynedd and his ultimate descent from Beli, one of several common mythical Brittonic ancestors.¹⁶ Gwalchmai ap Meilyr goes so far as to announce that Owain Gwynedd is descended from Aeneas,¹⁷ and if that seems surprising, consider the author of the medieval *Life of Gruffydd ap Cynan* (Owain Gwynedd's father) who asserts quite seriously that his patron was indeed descended – with trips through most of Britain's mythic past, including the Coeling dynasty of northern Britain, Brutus of Troy, Aeneas and Anchises, Zeus, Saturn, and a succession of Greek islands – from Japhet, Noah, Methuselah and ultimately Adam, son of God.¹⁸ Yet the same text – in fact, the same page – reveals the reason for this preoccupation; Gruffydd's mother was Ragnallt, daughter of Olaf – a Danish princess from Viking Ireland. For a dynasty recently established, the need to assert their genealogy – and thus their legitimacy – causes panegyric to take on not an individually corrective role but a broadly social one – correcting perceptions of society to fit that which is expected. It doesn't matter if it's true or not.

The poet's role is thus to utilize the orality of the poem to make an assertion regarding his lord's

¹⁴ Clancy, *Poems*, p. 158.

¹⁵ Clancy, p. 160.

¹⁶ For Beli, Rhun, Urien, Owain or any of the other semi-legendary figures in Welsh genealogies, see *Bonhedd y Gwyr y Gogledd*, appendix to Rachel Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydain* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006).

¹⁷ Clancy, p. 128.

¹⁸ Paul Russell, ed. *Vita Griffini Filii Conani: The Medieval Latin Life of Gruffydd ap Cynan* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005) p. 53-55.

conformance to social standards. The act is an essentially performative one, 'performed' by convention before the court and composed out of an oral-formulaic tradition that stretched back centuries. Kenneth Jackson famously wrote that "Celtic poetry was composed in the head and without the use of writing; was recited orally to the assembled company in the chief's hall; and was handed down orally ... all this was fostered and practised by the institution of 'bardic schools' in which budding poets were given an elaborate training in their profession."¹⁹ The existence of a bardic school or tradition stretching back centuries is debated, most notably by Evans, who writes that "one of the more serious [difficulties with popular views] is their often-stated insistence on projecting the apparatus of Welsh 'bardic schools' – their poetic training, compositions, and so on – back ... The poetic traditions of [the Gogynfeirdd] ... will bear only a slight resemblance to those of [earlier poets]."²⁰ It may very well be that such a formal institution of "bardic schools" never existed as such, as although some later survivals have attested to their existence, there is no early evidence other than the provisions in the Welsh laws previously discussed. However, the oral-formulaic transmission of this poetry and its assorted tropes, figures and devices is clear and cannot be dismissed. In fact, many of the themes previously discussed are just as present in earlier poetry. Compare Aneirin's praise of Cynon: "Jewel-decked lord ... whoever he'd strike was not struck again. Sharp-pointed his spears, shield in pieces, he'd bore through war-hosts ... On the day of battle his blades were deadly,"²¹ to the Gogynfeirdd's praise of prowess. Or Taliesin's assertion that "Urien will not spurn me. Llwyfenydd's land, mine are their riches. Mine is their good will, mine their generosity ... from the best of kings, most generous I've heard of," to Prydydd y Moch's demand for monetary reward. And although these poems are chronologically much closer to the historical figures whose genealogy is so prized in Wales, we see such praise-worthy connections as "Urien's nephew,"²² or

¹⁹ Kenneth H. Jackson, *The Gododdin* (Edinburgh, 1969), 9, n.1 and 24. See discussion in J. E. Caerwyn Williams, *The Court Poet in Medieval Wales: An Essay* (Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), p. 13.

²⁰ Stephen S. Evans, *The Heroic Poetry of Dark-Age Britain* (University Press of America, 2002), p. 32.

²¹ Clancy, p. 54.

²² Clancy, p. 86.

“Cyndrwyn's son.”²³ In fact, given the later use of the same names – and the same traditions – in Gogynfeirdd poetry (a full list of which would require a book) it is clear that there is a continuing tradition, not just of names or events but also of social expectations and 'correct' praise for a lord. Is that to say, then, that there is some authoritative handbook which a poet could consult for the proper oral-formulaic tropes to describe his lord? Well, yes. There was a movement in medieval Wales in this period and later to codify and define the role of the poet; to set out the proper subjects for a poet to eulogize and to establish precisely the manner of his description, which resulted in a series of poetic grammars, which are largely ignored except as categories of poetic forms and have never been translated into English. In the last and most elaborate, that of Einion Offeiriad, we find: “A baron is praised for strength and prowess, and might, and power, and loyalty towards his lord, and wisdom, and discretion, and generosity, and agreeableness, and beauty of body, and good breeding, and other commendable things.”²⁴ Prowess, generosity, descent. Of course, a poet would not have to have been familiar with these manuscripts in order to write poetry that conformed to their standards; they are clearly a production, not a producer, of the oral-formulaic tradition of Welsh panegyric. But they are clear proof that panegyric is written not to praise particular aspects of an individual but to make specific, formulaic claims on his behalf.

Thus Welsh praise-poetry satisfies the active obligation in Wyatt-Brown's theory of honor, as a performative act in which a warrior-aristocrat asserts his fulfillment of society's standards for him. Thus, he understands his position in society – in an honor culture, his identity – as intrinsically linked with his identity as a ruler and as a member of the class described in the poetry. Much has been made of the apparently naïve Welsh fear of poetic satire echoed throughout Middle Welsh literature, like Kilhwch's threat to satirize Arthur's court in the *Mabinogion*, for example, or Taliesin's confounding of the bards in

²³ Clancy, p. 90.

²⁴ Anne T. E. Matonis, “Traditions of Panegyric in Welsh Poetry: The Heroic and the Chivalric” in *Speculum* (Medieval Academy of America, 1978), vol. 53 no. 4, footnote to p. 668.

Ystoria Taliesin. Perhaps this seems less naïve if we appreciate the power of satire to destroy the link between self-perception and public perception and thus to systematically destroy a lord's identity. An assertion of a lord's failure to meet social standards, thus, has great potency as a threat in an honor culture. This and other issues, especially the significance of the particularly Welsh brand of piety and Christianity and the entire sub-genre of religious panegyric, I wish I had had the time to address. But I will consider this essay successful if it has in some way provided a systematic framework for considering panegyric from a social and historical viewpoint.

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