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CONTENTS

Faculty Feature: Dr. Fish

Dr. Jeffrey Fish, an Associate Professor of the Classics department, did not always dream of studying Homer and the Iliad. Before attending Baylor University for his undergraduate degree, he considered pursuing a career as a pianist. Although he realized this was not his real calling, his interest in music is still evident. Dr. Fish describes his classes as "music to be improvised… coming alive like a song."

Dr. Fish makes his students a priority, which is a reflection of his own Baylor experience. He was inspired by influential professors at Baylor, particularly Dr. James Vardaman, and came to appreciate the effect a teacher can have on a student's life. With the encouragement he found at Baylor, Dr. Fish chose to pursue his love of Classics by continuing on to earn his Masters at Brown University and a PhD at the University of Texas. This professor has experienced rich culture around the world, and even considers Naples, Italy, to be a second city to him. But he chooses to invest in the students of Baylor University. Students studying Classics are reading the most important and influential works of Greece and Rome. Fluent in Latin, Greek, German, and Italian, Dr. Fish believes in the importance of using the medium of language to understand the ancient world. Although learning a new language can be difficult, he emphasizes that this skill, "gives you a window into a text that you don't get in a translation." With the Christian heritage at Baylor, many students are able to use language to gain a deeper understanding of the Bible.

Finding a balance between teaching and researching can be a difficult feat for professors. A program known as the Green Scholars Initiative acts as a major resource for Baylor professors. This program encompasses a huge collection of rare biblical texts and artifacts that will be a part of the Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C. Through the Green Scholars Initiative, documents that are usually reserved for professors are now put into the hands of undergraduate students at approximately forty institutions. "It's a way to mentor students that I never dreamed I would have," he explains. In addition to teaching a wide range of Greek classes, Fish spends much of his time working with students analyzing papyri. With the help of professors, students get the opportunity to be a part of a publication. Dr. Fish possesses a rare passion for education, and he shares this with those around him. He

shares these words of advice for Baylor undergraduate students: "Trust that now is the time to become educated about what is nourishing, not just what is practical…this is a place where you can grow."

Faculty Feature: Dr. Smith

Dr. Alden Smith is the associate dean of the Honors College and director of the University Scholars program.

As a high school student, Dr. Smith claims that college wasn't even on his radar until one of his teachers, Zineisa Sprowles, drew upon his love of reading and began to challenge him. Once he began college, another teacher, Dr. Phil Lockhart, further inspired him and made him realize he wanted to spend his life reading Greek and Latin, and teaching others.

Dr. Smith was drawn to Baylor in 1994 after teaching at Rutgers University as an Assistant Professor and Lecturer. Then, halfway through his tenure track, he visited Baylor to get a feel for the university. He was struck by the way Baylor, as an institution, values teaching:

"Teaching means something to Baylor, and that was what did it for me. I knew Baylor would be a good place for me."

He is currently directing seven theses of junior and senior students in the Honors College, but that number varies greatly from semester to semester. In total, Dr. Smith estimates that he has worked on 25-30 theses during his time at Baylor, and he rarely turns down the opportunity to work with any student, resulting in his ability to say that "the range of the students [he] directs is really quite remarkable."

Dr. Smith is continually impressed by the ambition of his students, and this semester, he is directing a thesis about the Georgics, the second major work by the Roman poet Virgil. This one is "really quite noble" because the student is willing to engage a difficult text and a difficult author.

"There's just a sea of scholarship on Virgil. It's my favorite poem from antiquity, and it shows a lot of fortitude that he's willing to write on his professor's favorite poem."

When speaking about his role in the thesis writing process, Smith says "it's sort of like being a conductor of an orchestra—you can't play the music, but you can push and guide it in a certain direction. I get to see the big picture and help students figure out how to get there. In the end, the ultimate joy and participation in the music is theirs."
In his spare time, Smith enjoys playing basketball and racquetball on Fridays, playing drums for the "rock and roll service" at his church on Sunday mornings and planning Latin flash mobs at the Richland Mall for his Baylor Fellows project.

The flash mob, which was made up of 18-20 students from his class and the Latin Dance Society, took place at the Richland Mall, outside of Santa's castle with a snow machine. The students were dressed in togas and recited Latin they memorized from the Pro Caelio Oratio.

When looking to the future, Dr. Smith is unsure about the direction in which his work will take him, but is excited to see what his next steps will be. The most challenging thing about being a professor, he says, is that you find out it's a busier life than you thought it would be—"it turns out to be this incredible life you couldn't even picture."

In the Annales*, Tacitus makes frequent mention of leisure activities of all sorts, including banqueting, chariot racing, gladiatorial games, and theater. This paper argues that Tacitus uses these references to characterize Nero vividly and negatively in Books XIV and XV of the* Annales*. By approaching Tacitus'* Annales *from a literary perspective and considering his persuasive techniques, the importance of his references to leisure and entertainment take on a new level of significance. In particular, Tacitus' description of leisure problematizes his claim to write* sine ira et studio *and bears on the larger question of his approach to the writing of history.*

Leisure and Entertainment in the *Annales* of Tacitus

Kirsten Kappelmann

Leisure activities, sport, and spectacle in the ancient world are topics that fascinate students of antiquity today.[1] Such subjects conjure up images of lavish banquets, daring chariot races, and brutal gladiatorial games, images that leave the reader hungering for more. In his masterpiece, the *Annales*, Tacitus, one of the greatest Roman historians, makes frequent reference to leisure activities, ranging from brief mention to detailed discussion of topics such as banquets (*epulae*), drinking, architectural spectacles, chariot races, and games. But how do these references function in the context of the *Annales* as a whole? Does Tacitus merely find them historically significant, or do his intentions run deeper? In this paper, I will argue that Tacitus uses descriptions of and references to leisure activities and entertainment to paint vividly negative portrayals of some of the historical figures about whom he writes. For the purposes of this study, I will limit my discussion to the Neronian books, namely, Books XIV and XV. To accomplish this, I will first locate this paper within the debate concerning the extent to which bias plays a role in Tacitus' writing. Second, I will turn to specific instances of entertainment and leisure in the Neronian books of the *Annales*, considering banquets (*epulae*) and shows, such as games and chariot races.

The Question of Bias in Tacitus

To begin, let us consider the debate surrounding bias in Tacitus.[2] Tacitus famously claims to write "without anger and zeal" (*sine ira et studio*, 1.1).[3] But what does he mean by this statement? F. R. D. Goodyear, one of the leading contributors to the study of Tacitus' writing, claims that Tacitus selects and arranges material in order to induce a specific reaction in the mind of his reader.[4] Thus, far from being a completely unbiased historical account of the events occurring during the reigns of the emperors from Tiberius to Nero, the *Annales* serve as a conduit through which Tacitus implicitly presents his own views regarding the empire and the particular characters involved in its workings. Lest such an approach make Tacitus seem malicious and conniving, however, consideration of a claim Ronald Martin makes will prove useful. According to Martin, it is important to remember that even if Tacitus deliberately intended to convey his own interpretation of the historical events, he believed that interpretation to be justified, and ought not to be condemned for using emotionally charged situations and descriptions to influence the reactions of his readers.[5] Thus, for the purposes of this paper, I will hold an intermediate position, combining Goodyear's and Martin's approaches and maintaining that Tacitus indeed uses strong emotional connections to convince his readers of the validity of his portrayal of the characters in the *Annales*.

This seems a reasonable stance to take on the question of bias in Tacitus, but how does it relate to the topic at hand, namely, Tacitus' references to and descriptions of leisure activities and entertainment? Although Tacitus employs many tactics to persuade his audience of the legitimacy of his representations of the events he narrates, one of the ways he does so is through the use of entertainment and leisure with respect to some of the main historical figures in the *Annales*. Most of these situations center around Tiberius and Nero, two emperors whom Tacitus seems particularly to have disliked. As Catherine Edwards points out, citing Annales 3.55, Tacitus claims that decadence, and consequently vice, was at its height during the period from about 31 B.C. to A.D. 68/69, a span of time that stretches from the reign of Tiberius to that of Nero.[6] Such a statement demonstrates that the sumptuousness and luxuriousness of the empire was of notable consequence to Tacitus. Similarly, Emily Gowers observes that this reference in 3.55 indicates not only the significance of Tacitus' concern, but also that Tacitus, along

with other ancient historians, viewed the difference between the idealized simplicity of antiquity (i.e., the Republic) and the over-the-top indulgence of the empire as a morally significant contrast.[7] Such comments indicate that examination of Tacitus' references to leisure and entertainment is well merited and might bring to light further perspectives on Tacitus' writing.

Eating and Drinking: *Epulae*

The Romans loved their food and wine, and evidence of such a fondness is not lacking in Tacitus' descriptions of the imperial dining habits. I will approach this topic through an examination of dinner parties and banquets (*epulae*). Although Tacitus employs the word *epulae* to refer to private meals as well as foreign festivities, his most frequent use of the word suggests formal banquets provided or engaged in by members of the imperial household.[8] Thus, the word often indicates that Tacitus is providing a description of the penchants and character traits of the emperors.

One of the most vivid examples of Tacitus employing this technique occurs in Book XIV of Annales, in a scene in which Agrippina, "with her ardor for retaining power" (*ardore retinandae . . . potentiae*, 14.2) attempts to seduce Nero "in the middle of the day, at a time when Nero was heated by wine and banqueting" (*medio diei, cum id temporis per vinum et epulas incalesceret*, 14.2). E. C. Woodcock, in his commentary on the *Annales*, notes that by Roman standards, drinking before noon was considered a mark of the lowest depravity.[9] Thus, in this reference to *epulae*, Tacitus accuses Nero not only of the moral weakness of being seduced by Agrippina, but also of the commonly despised fault of becoming drunk in the morning. To a modern reader such a reference is overshadowed by disgust at the results of Agrippina's seduction and Nero's depravity, but to a Roman reader this detail would have only increased the magnitude of the offense. With the subtlety of a single phrase, Tacitus uses a reference to *epulae* to cast a negative light on Nero's character.

Another way in which Tacitus employs mentions of *epulae* to depict Nero negatively is manifested in the implied connection that exists between banqueting and murder throughout the Neronian books of the *Annales*. In his description of Nero's plots to murder Agrippina, Tacitus claims that, although poison introduced into her food at a banquet (*epula*) was initially the preffered method, such an approach was

rejected due to the difficulty of administering the poison with so many attendants standing by (14.3). Thus, by explicitly stating the details of the murder plot in such an extravagant context, a context that would have excited the imaginations of his Roman readers, Tacitus manages to convey a sense of dramatic urgency and sinister corruption. The importance of the reference is bolstered by Martin's observation that Book XIV is bookended by murder, beginning with that of Nero's mother, and ending with that of his wife.[10] This narrative framework together with other scenes of murder and assassination throughout the rest of the book combine to reveal murder as one of the defining characteristics of Nero's reign. By including within the ominous beginning of Book XIV a reference to a banquet, Tacitus uses the vivid picture of an *epula* to heighten the drama of the circumstances surrounding Agrippina's death and to incriminate Nero further in his deceptive plotting.

A similar example, in that it involves an assassination attempt, takes place in Book XV. This time, however, the plot is against Nero. The conspirators are aware of Nero's enjoyment of spending leisure time in Piso's villa at Baiae, "by whose pleasantness Caesar having been captivated frequently kept coming and was engaging in baths and banquets, with watchings and the labor of his station having been neglected" (*cuius amoenitate captus Caesar crebo ventitabat balneasque et epulas inibat omissis excubiis et fortunae suae mole*, 15.52). Under the guise of describing a murder conspiracy, Tacitus slips into the text a reference to Nero's debauchery, subtly indicating to the reader Nero's degenerate character. But he does not stop with a mere mention of excessive behavior; rather, he offers commentary regarding the results of such action, claiming that Nero was neglecting his duties as *princeps* because of his excessive love of luxury and pleasure.

Given these examples, it seems that Tacitus commonly employs references to *epulae* to cast a negative light on the character of Nero. Regardless of whether these accusations are correct or not (although, given the other sources regarding Nero's habits, they would seem to be so) the contexts in which Tacitus uses such allusions indicate that he employs them to shape his reader's perception of Nero. In many of the examples discussed here, Tacitus' mentions of *epulae* are not necessary to convey accurately the historical information contained within the *Annales*; yet, he chooses to include such references. In so doing, he succeeds in shrewdly incriminating Nero in debauchery and corruption and cleverly charging him with a depraved character.

Shows, Games, and Races

Perhaps even more so than *epulae*, shows, games, and races played an essential part in the life experience of the average person living in the empire under the Julio-Claudians. Donald Kyle goes so far as to claim that participation in such entertainment events was an important part of what it meant to be Roman.[11] Given this contention, Tacitus' use of references to and descriptions of games and races ought to be carefully considered. Scholars have observed that other historians used accounts of games to reflect the emperor's character as Kyle, for example, notes that Suetonius and Cassius Dio do in their works.[12] Although he does not include Tacitus in his statement, given the debate surrounding bias in Tacitus, it seems reasonable to explore the possibility that Tacitus shares this trait with his fellow historians. I will argue that Tacitus too includes stories centered within the context of sport and spectacle to paint a colorful portrait of Nero, a portrait that is significantly less than favorable. I will consider two aspects of Nero's involvement in public spectacle, namely, his personal participation in chariot racing and gladiatorial games and his support of Greek sport.

First, and perhaps most important, is Tacitus' description of Nero's own participation in the games. In Book XIV, Tacitus writes of Nero's love of chariot racing and theater, a love that leads the emperor to engage in such pastimes himself. According to Kyle, such action was considered disgraceful and beneath the high rank of *princeps*, with the result that an emperor ought never to appear in such a spectacle himself.[13] Before Nero, Augustus himself had implemented many laws against actors and other entertainers, setting a precedent for future emperors; such laws prevented actors from participating in legal processes, prohibited members of senatorial families from marrying people involved in entertainment, and legally identified actresses as prostitutes.[14] The condemnatory language with which Tacitus describes Nero's escapades is consistent with the low social status of actors and other performers. Tacitus calls Nero's desire to play the lyre publicly a "foul pursuit" (*foedum stadium*, 14.14) and speaks of his chariot racing as an "indiscriminate spectacle" (*promisco spectaculo*, 14.14). Such derogatory language reflects badly on Nero, leading the reader to a negative evaluation of his character.

Nero's poor judgment does not stop with his own disgrace. Even more serious are Nero's unfortunately successful attempts to involve men of noble birth in the spectacles of the arena (14.14). D. S. Potter remarks that there were generally two perceived reasons for young men to consent to participate in such shows: either they were eager to flatter the emperor, or they were, quite simply, crazy.[15] Thus, Tacitus portrays Nero's inappropriate behavior as not only affecting himself, but also as corrupting the noble young men of Rome.

A second aspect of Tacitus' portrayal of Nero in relation to sport and games is the way in which he treats the subject of Greek forms of entertainment. In 14.21 of the *Annales*, Tacitus describes in detail the growing popularity of foreign modes of entertainment under Nero's reign. He begins by emphasizing that it is now the fourth term of Nero's consulship, which indicates the degree to which Nero's influence is involved while allowing Nero's personality to lurk in the background throughout the section. According to Edwards, Roman writers were disposed to connect the decline of morality and the corruption of the young men with acceptance of foreign practices and goods, and Tacitus seems to be no exception to this trend.[16] By presenting Nero as the catalyst for the growing popularity of Greek entertainment, Tacitus implies that he is also responsible for the increasing moral decay in Roman culture.

A specific example of this concern appears in Book 14.20. After describing the types of entertainments being accepted, Tacitus says the degeneration, corruption, and shame of the youth came about "with the *princeps* and senate being instigators, who not only granted license to vices, but also applied force so that Roman noblemen would be defiled with the pretense of speeches and songs on the stage" (*principe et senatu auctoribus, qui non modo licentiam vitiis permiserint, sed vim adhibeant ut procures Romani specie orationum et carminum scaena polluantur*, 14.20). Such behavior on the part of the Roman noblemen directly defy the laws made by Augustus and was exacerbated by the fact that the entertainment in which they were engaging was Greek in origin, which would have made such escapades even more questionable. Thus, appealing to the reader's sense of morality and holding up antiquity as the model of virtue, Tacitus presents Nero as the person responsible for the vices of the young men, not only by encouraging them by example (according to H. A. Harris, Nero was one of the most zealous patrons of Greek games[17]), but by forcing them to disgrace themselves as well. Throughout the

section, Tacitus uses the controversy surrounding the appropriateness of Greek forms of entertainment to level accusations both explicitly and implicitly against Nero's character.

Conclusion

As an integral part of Roman society, leisure, sport, and entertainment provide an illuminating glimpse into the psychology of the times. This paper has argued that, in his *Annales*, Tacitus makes full use of this fact, employing references to and descriptions of leisure activities and entertainment to shape his reader's perceptions of his characters, particularly Nero. Through his mentions of *epulae* and his discussion of entertainments such as chariot racing, theater, games, and Greek sport, Tacitus attempts to present to the mind of his reader a carefully yet subtly contrived picture of Nero. Tacitus' *Annales* is a brilliant example of ancient historical writing, but it is more than that: through the use of implicit persuasive techniques such as those discussed in this paper, the *Annales* stands as a great work of descriptive literature.

NOTES

[1] Such a claim is supported by the slew of recent scholarship on the topic. For recent surveys of leisure, sport, and spectacle in the ancient world, see Andrew Dalby, Empire of Pleasure: Luxury and Indulgence in the Roman World; Emily Gowers, The Loaded Table: Representations of Food in Roman Literature; Donald G. Kyle, Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World; D. S. Potter, The Victor's Crown: A History of Ancient Sport from Homer to Byzantium; and D.S. Potter and D.J. Mattingly, Life, Death, and Entertainment in the Roman Empire.

[2] For an example of two contrasting opinions, see T.J. Luce, "Ancient Views on the Causes of Bias in Historical Writing" and Norma Miller, "Style and Content in Tacitus." Miller and argues that Tacitus' style conveys his own position on the topic at hand, compromising his claim to be unbiased, whereas Luce suggests that such an approach forces modern conceptions of bias onto Tacitus that are not consistent with his own view of what it means to write history.

[3] All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

[4] Goodyear, Tacitus, 31.

[5] Martin, Tacitus, 114-15.

[6] Edwards, The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome, 28.

[7] Gowers, The Loaded Table: Representations of Food in Roman Literature, 16.

[8] Allen et. al., "Nero's Eccentricities before the Fire (Tac. Ann. 15.37)," 99.

[9] Woodcock, Tacitus Annals XIV, 86. See note on "per vinum et epulas."

[10] Martin, Tacitus, 163.

[11] Kyle, Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World, 300.

[12] Ibid, 303. See Suet 3.20, 32 and D.C. 5.21.

[13] Kyle, Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World, 303-4.

[14] Boatwright, "Theaters in the Roman Empire," 189.

[15] Potter, The Victor's Crown: A History of Ancient Sport from Homer to Byzantium, 291.

[16] Edwards, The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome, 102-3.

[17] Harris, Sport in Greece and Rome, 61.

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The Roman poet Horace is perhaps best known for his philosophic stance of carpe diem*, or living a life mindful of the present moment. This paper argues that one of Horace's poetic methods of supporting this argument is through the trope of the Underworld. Horace transforms this trope into a body of associations that by metonymy ironically become symbolic not of death, but of life.*

Horace and the Underworld: Trampling Death by Death

Jeff Cross

Operating during a capricious time of change as the *Imperium Romanum* marched inexorably into the political environs of monarchy, the illustrious poet Horace redefined the boundaries of his genre and enrolled himself not only among the greatest lyric poets, but also among the greatest poets of history. The genre with which Horace concerns himself encompasses neither the lofty and martial heights of ancient Epic, nor the plaintive measures of Tragedy, but rather festive banquets, the strife of lovers, and the sympotic enjoyment of fine wine. Nevertheless, all throughout the *Odes*, Horace himself goes to war with one particular power, namely death and the cruel Underworld, which so often looms in the future as its material embodiment.[1] Although Horace does acknowledge the necessity and inevitability of death, he consistently seeks to undermine any feelings of dread or despair accompanying it either by directing the attention of the reader to the present moment or by demonstrating how an individual can transcend death through their artistic creations. In particular, I wish to address in this paper Horace's evocation of the Underworld as a storehouse of a variety of images and motifs. I will argue that Horace, in his war against the universal enemy of death, specifically targets these images and motifs for the distinct purpose of subverting them, thereby conquering death by means of death itself.

In light of this objective, it is necessary to consider briefly the development of the Underworld as a theme in Horace's *Odes*. While death itself occurs frequently as a theme, direct references to the Underworld are sparse but significant. In his first nod to the Underworld, Horace speaks of it as including "night and fabled spirits / and the meager house of Pluto" (*nox fabulaeque Manes / et domus exilis Plutonia*, *Odes* 1.4.16), thereby linking his own descriptions with an implied preexisting tradition that remains unspecified. An additional effect of this description is that it is both macroscopic and somewhat indefinite, pricking the curiosity of the reader and providing a foundation for future and more detailed expositions.[2] Therefore, just as the *Odes* progress and various themes develop and take shape, so also does Horace's depiction and appropriation of the Underworld.

Foremost in the elaboration of this motif is the clear establishment of a mediator between the realm of the living and the realm of the dead. Traditionally, this task fell to the lot of Mercury, and Horace makes no departure here from normative Roman mythology and religion. Readers are introduced to Mercury most closely in *Odes* 1.10, where Horace, in the style of a Greek hymn, offers a panegyric to the god. Summarizing events and duties and characteristics associated with Mercury, Horace mentions his civilizing and acculturating influence, his birth, his theft of a lyre from Apollo, his guidance of Priam through the Greek camps to the tent of Achilles, and his responsibility as the shepherd of departed souls. As a result, it is often pointed out that Horace associates Mercury with Augustus.[3] This poem in particular has drawn interest because Augustus brought civilization and peace back to Rome after decades of strife. He also celebrated and reinvigorated the civic culture with public buildings and monuments as well as with a renewed emphasis on the patronage of the arts. All of these acts of Augustus could readily be identified with the deeds and traits of Mercury as praised by Horace in this ode.[4] Whether there is a connection, however, between Augustus and the purview of Mercury over the Underworld remains unclear. Nevertheless, Mercury's relevance to Horace's own appropriation of the Underworld is a matter of great significance and one to which I will return shortly.

Further developments of the Underworld motif include both descriptions of its inhabitants and those gods or creatures who enforce their infamous punishments upon them. *Ode* 1.24, wherein Horace attempts to console his friend and fellow poet Virgil on the occasion of the death

of their mutual friend Quintilius Varus, offers a fairly pessimistic view of the Underworld. Depicted here is Mercury, holding a savage (*horrida*) wand, compelling (*compulerit*) the dark herd of departed souls, deaf to the prayers (*precibus*) on their behalf of men such as Virgil and Horace. Besides the lack of compassion shown to all parties alive or dead concerned with the realities of death and the gloomy afterlife, the lack of optimism evident here is further exemplified by Horace's own apparent despair of any meaningful transcendence of death. As the *Odes* progress, however, this pessimism gradually metamorphoses into a growing assurance of poetic immortality. Indeed it is this idea, the pursuit of immortality by means of poetry, which most unifies the Underworld as a theme and poetic device in the *Odes*. The continual development and growing specificity characteristic of Horace's Underworld as the *Odes* progress add nuance and further associations that bolster the idea of poetic immortality and enable Horace to conquer death by using its own morbid imagery. Before I turn to his specific subversion of Underworld imagery, I wish first to discuss further the genesis and development of Horace's notion of poetic immortality.

The two poems which I have already discussed, *Odes* 1.10 and 1.24, together provide the best entry point into the discussion of Horace's ideas regarding poetic immortality. I have already briefly addressed the issue of pessimism in *Ode* 1.24 and mentioned that this is actually an anomaly of sorts in the context of the *Odes* in their entirety, a point which warrants further consideration. Although the latter half of 1.24 is a consolatory admonition addressed to Virgil, Horace utilizes the beginning half as an expression of his own feelings of anguish and sorrow. He wonders, "What shame or limit could there be to the longing / for so great a soul?" (*quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus / tam cari capitis*, *Odes* 1.24.1-2). In the intervening stanza before he introduces Virgil into the poem, Horace gives a tribute of praise to Varus' character in a speech much akin to a funereal dirge.[5] For Virgil's grief, the only solution, suggests Horace, is to endure "that which is unspeakable to correct" (*quicquid corrigere est nefas*, *Odes* 1.24.20), implying that, despite his prayers, piety, and poetic ability of mythic proportions, Virgil can in no way resurrect his friend from the dead. Nevertheless, Horace's pessimism here is not entirely consistent with his thought regarding immortality as it develops over the course of the *Odes*.

Although Horace does not seem to depict Mercury in a favorable light in this ode of consolation, his hymn to Mercury, which I have already discussed briefly, is positive both for the messenger god and, by implication, for Horace's own conception of poetic immortality. Besides the various associations which he creates between the god and Augustus, both scholarship and the testimony of the *Odes* themselves bear witness to Horace's own strong affinity for Mercury.[6] A prominent example of this occurs in *Odes* 2.17.29-30, in which Horace calls himself one of the "men of Mercury" (*Mercurialium...virorum*), a title that apparently wards off an early death. These two poems exhibit a further connection inasmuch as Horace is preserved from death through the patronage of the very god who holds the duty, as *Odes* 1.10 tells us, of shepherding the shades of the dead. It must be asked, therefore, why Horace exhibits such varying attitudes toward a god whom he identifies as his patron in more than one sense. Within the later ode involving Varus and Virgil, Horace mingles Mercury among such powerful associations as grief, anguish, and death. Thus, Horace only does harm to Mercury inasmuch as he places him in a context naturally devoid of positive imagery and representation. On the other hand, I suspect that the Mercury characteristic of *Odes* 1.10 permits Horace to make a point of metapoetic significance. Mercury himself is a cunning poet, like Horace, yet he is also a shepherd of the dead. Is this fact also in some way attributable to Horace?

The best explanation of Horace's poetic relationship with Mercury's purview over the Underworld and the shades of the dead is that, like the messenger god, Horace also assumes a kind of control over the fates of these souls. Throughout the corpus of Horace's *Odes*, the only possible means of escaping death is not one of body but of legacy. As early as the first poem of the collection, Horace declares his wish for an apotheosis of reputation similar to the renown which athletes gain in their victories, in the hopes that his patron Maecenas might name him among the greatest lyric bards. Continually growing in the confidence that this wish will be fulfilled, Horace presents himself as transforming into a swan in *Odes* 2.20, increasing his already illustrious name by flying to and fro throughout the nations of the earth. Finally, in *Odes* 3.30 Horace's poetry has become a glorious monument, impervious to the abuses of rain, wind, and time. "I shall not entirely die" (*non omnis moriar*, *Odes* 3.30.6), asserts Horace, certain not of the immortality of his soul, but rather of his abiding influence and legacy in the minds

and hearts of future generations. Since the poet can be assured of immortality through his own poetry, it is implied that he can also grant the same immortality to whomsoever he chooses.[7] This line of reasoning infuses extra meaning and even some slight irony to *Odes* 1.24, Horace's consolation to his friend Virgil. Although Horace refers to the ostensibly shared belief of himself and Virgil that poetry cannot bring human beings back from the dead, even in the midst of this difficult and grim statement of reality Horace secures for Varus the poetic immortality of which he himself is so confident at the closing of his *Odes*. To return to the relevance of this discussion for Horace's connection to Mercury, just as the messenger god is responsible for shuttling souls from the world of the living to the world of the dead, Horace as a poet is able to do the opposite and return a soul, its memory and legacy at least, to life.

I will now turn from the context and foundational goal of Horace's appropriation of the Underworld as a theme to his specific uses of this imagery as a means of subverting death. Mercury is one of the most readily apparent examples of this phenomenon. Indeed, I have already demonstrated how Horace juxtaposes Mercury's role in the Underworld with his own poetic prerogative which enables him to subvert the necessity of a complete death. Nevertheless, Horace invests his conception of the Underworld with many individuals and creatures besides the messenger god to accomplish similar purposes. Perhaps the most famous example of the Underworld theme in Horace's poetry is the vision from *Odes* 2.13 of the poets Sappho and Alcaeus performing before the shades of the dead. Horace begins the poem by explaining the impetus for this powerful vision, a near death experience in which he was almost struck and killed by a tree. The subsequent stanzas considering death teach readers that, while men are able to anticipate and avoid some dangers, death neither arrives at an expected time nor is there anyone who can escape it. Horace's presentation of the Underworld focuses upon the glorification of his two greatest poetic exemplars, Sappho and Alcaeus. These poets continue to sing of their favorite subjects even within the dismal halls of Pluto. Sappho, on the one hand, laments about her communal women, a reference to the somewhat elegiac nature of her poetry and even its possibly latent bisexuality. At the same time, Horace sees Alcaeus, the second famous poet from Lesbos, recounting in song the hardships of sea, flight, and war. What is even more remarkable than both of these sights is the reaction of the audience and the fixtures of the surrounding environment.

Besides the generic and unspecified shades of the dead present among this audience, Horace in *Odes* 2.13 depicts several famous criminals such as Prometheus, Tantalus, and Orion. Also in attendance is the monstrous dog Cerberus, here having one-hundred heads rather than three. All of these figures, as Horace puts it, "Marvel that both [poets] sing things worthy of a holy silence" (*utrumque sacro digna silentio / mirantur umbrae dicere*, *Odes* 2.13.29-30). This poetic performance not only induces such calm, but even briefly allows the three transgressors a respite from their labors. Cerberus, moreover, droops his ears as a sign of his pleasure.[8] The point of this vision is twofold, to argue that poetry can transcend the effects of death and to direct the reader's attention away from it, thereby conquering death through its own imagery. Horace's segue into his vision, "how nearly" (*quam paene*, *Odes* 2.13.21), implies that this entire experience is transpiring within his own still very much alive imagination. Therefore, the application of this vision is intended not for the souls of the dead but the souls of the living. Just as the performances of Sappho and Alcaeus turn away the attention of their listeners from the reality of death which they are currently experiencing, the poetry of Horace has the effect of making his own readers oblivious to their eventual and inevitable demise. By the end of the poem, we as readers have become so engrossed in the evocative imagery and beautiful rhythms of the poetry that we end up forgetting the grim note with which it began. This is in fact perhaps the chief programmatic goal of Horace's *Odes*, to encourage his readers to focus upon the present moment rather than dwelling upon the necessity of death. In effect therefore, this episode within the Underworld of poets enthralling their audience functions as a kind of *mise en abyme*. Horace depicts the mirroring and exact realization of the goal for his poetic program in the very place where it ought to be impossible. Death is thus defeated by its own imagery.

One of the common traits of Horace's poetry is his tendency to introduce images which accumulate more meanings and associations as the corpus moves forward. His appropriation of the Underworld theme confirms this fact, especially in the case of the famous hell-hound Cerberus. Pluto's prized pooch is first referenced in *Odes* 2.13 as a member of the audience listening to the performances of Sappho and Alcaeus. I have already pointed out how Horace portrays him with his ears drooping in pleasure at the sounds. Yet Cerberus reappears in other significant instances within the *Odes* as well. In a fashion similar to his treatment of Mercury, Horace hymns the god Bacchus, praising his

powers as the god of wine, his prowess in both war and peace, and ultimately the honor of his blessed wife Ariadne. Horace reflects upon the nature of poetry here in *Odes* 2.19 just as he did in his earlier praise of Mercury. While the messenger god is associated with poetry inasmuch as he is the father of the lyre, Bacchus is more often affiliated with the notion of inspiration, especially as it could be conveyed by the influence of wine.[9] Horace reinforces this connection by infusing the ode with imagery derived from *Odes* 2.13, which is also very much concerned with the nature of poetry. The final stanza of this hymnic praise of Bacchus returns to Cerberus who tamely licks the wine god's feet as he walks away. Just as the poetry of Sappho and Alcaeus tamed the fierce beast in the earlier poem, here also Bacchus leaves Cerberus in a similarly calm and docile state. In order to reach the full significance of Horace's association of Bacchus with Cerberus, and thereby the Underworld, we must briefly investigate the way in which Horace connects poetry, Bacchus, and wine.

Important for a fuller understanding of this connection is an article by Steele Commager which elucidates the significance of Horace's usage of wine in the *Odes*.[10] Commager's main argument is that Horace, through exhortations to and examples of banqueting and drinking, identifies wine with a need either to forget the past or to ward off worries concerning the future. This philosophy is best summed up in the phrase *carpe diem* which Horace coins in *Odes* 1.11. Implicit in Commager's argument is the idea that the present is the only moment during which death is not directly relevant, for there will continually be reminders of death in the past, while the imminent and ever-constant reminder of death is always in the future.[11] Wine, therefore, functions not only as a safeguard and defense against the fear and despair that attend death, but also as a catalyst for a kind of forgetfulness which enables men to enjoy better the present moment. At the close of the article, Commager transitions from discussing wine itself to Bacchus, the god who represents and governs wine and its effects. Commager's comments are relevant to this discussion because they demonstrate how Horace associates wine and Bacchus to such an extent that whenever one is mentioned, the other must also come to mind. Therefore, Horace, in *Odes* 2.19, creates a chain of associations linking Bacchus, representative of wine and its influence, with Cerberus, representative of the Underworld.[12] Put more simply, by means of this chain of associations, *Odes* 2.19 establishes a correlation between the Underworld and wine

with the result that when Horace here mentions Cerberus in the same context as Bacchus, the reader is meant to understand the triumph of the sympotic present over the future gloom of the Underworld. Once again, Horace has utilized the imagery of the Underworld to subvert itself and draw the reader's attention back to a lifestyle and philosophy of seizing the present moment.

In a way similar to all the instances which I have expounded to this point, Horace's last lengthy description of the Underworld in *Odes* 3.11 directs the mind to another one of his chief concerns, the battlefield of love. Herein, Horace breaks out the full repertoire of images referring both to poetry and the Underworld. Once again, he invokes Mercury, beseeching the messenger god to woo the young Lyde, still ignorant of marriage. Presenting several familiar motifs together in a tight sequence, Horace praises Mercury's ability to "lead tigers and forests as companions / and to delay swift streams" (*tigris comitesque silvas / ducere et rivos celeres morari*, *Odes* 3.11. 13-14). Immediately thereafter, Cerberus reappears and is once again tamed by a god.[13] These images are designed to recall *Odes* 2.13 and 2.19, wherein agents of poetry are powerful enough both to halt or slow bodies of water and to tame the beasts of the Underworld. Therefore, Horace's entire accumulation of Underworld images becomes relevant by the mere mention of a few. In order to strengthen further this connection to the Underworld, Horace begins to speak of another group of its inhabitants, the Danaids. The remainder of the ode is dedicated to a retelling of their story. Horace recalls how every daughter but one murdered their husbands according to the orders of their father and greatly praises the one daughter who did not follow through with the infamous and inglorious deed. It is clear that, in the context of the poem as a whole, the story of the Danaids is meant to be a cautionary tale for the maiden Lyde. Our overall impression as readers is that the Horatian narrator is trying to pursue this girl, with little success. Some commentators have suggested that Horace, by apparently putting the deeds of the first part of the poem, demonstrative of the efficacy of poetry, on equal footing with the speaker's effort to woo a maiden, implies that the virginity of the Danaids was part of their transgression.[14] If this is so, then the Underworld imagery suggested by Cerberus and the Orphic works of poetry is intended to be of service to this goal. Therefore, akin to his previous uses of the Underworld theme, here also Horace's imagery turns the focus of the poem from the realms of the dead to the present pursuits and battles over love.

While it is abundantly clear from the plethora of scholarship on the topic and from the *Odes* themselves that Horace wishes for his poetry to be a means of transcending death, I have here argued not only that Horace's descriptions of the Underworld allow him to accomplish this goal, but also that this theme and its accompanying images perform a kind of apotropaic function. It is true that Horace does not mind speaking about death and its inexorable necessity. Nevertheless, his primary motive for specifically invoking the Underworld is to utilize that very imagery against itself. As all of the previous examples prove, this imagery draws the attention of the reader away from the Underworld and onto the pastimes and realities of those still alive, whether they be drinking, flirting, or love-making.

NOTES

[1] Some useful insights regarding Horace's presentation of death which are relevant to this paper can be found in Hutchinson, "Horace and Archaic Greek Poetry," 43-4. Also, for a good overview of Roman religious views of death and the afterlife as seen in poetry, cf. King, "The Organization of Roman Religious Beliefs,"289-29 et passim.
[2] For a discussion of the usage of fabulae, cf. Nisbet and Hubbard, A Commentary on Horace: Odes, Book I, 69-70. I translate it in the traditional sense as a noun in apposition to Manes with an adjectival sense. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.
[3] A direct and quite obvious example of this which has led to this conclusion is Ode 1.2. Herein Horace invokes Mercury, beseeching him to appear on earth as a man and to revive the Roman empire from its recent destruction. Shortly thereafter, Horace encourages the god to take on the identity of Caesar's avenger, clearly a reference to Augustus.
[4] For a more comprehensive explanation, cf. Miller, "Horace, Mercury, and Augustus," 382-83 et passim.
[5] I owe this observation to Nisbet and Hubbard, A Commentary on Horace: Odes, Book I, 284.
[6] Ibid,127-128.
[7] Sullivan, "Horace and the Afterlife," 281. And cf. especially Odes [4].12 in which Horace recalls his beloved friend Virgil from the Underworld to partake in a final banquet and symposium.

[8] I owe the observation of Cerberus' pleasure to Garrison, Horace: Epodes and Odes, 278.
[9] Ibid, 76.
[10] Commager, "The Function of Wine in Horace's Odes," passim.
[11] Ibid, 71 et passim.
[12] Ibid, 79.
[13] Although it is true that some have believed this to be an interpolated passage (cf. Garrison, Horace: Epodes and Odes, 312), I concur with G. Williams who argues for its authenticity.
[14] Nisbet, R.G.M., and Niall Rudd, A Commentary on Horace: Odes, Book III, 151.

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St. Augustine has been accused of holding a Manichaean view of creation and considering the material world to be inherently evil. While Augustine's background as a Manichaean and a student of Platonic philosophy certainly predisposed him to a disapproval of the physical, his conception of an ordered hierarchy of goods (as demonstrated in his Confessions*) enables him to maintain a fairly orthodox position on creation in this work. While Augustine teaches that it is sin to prize created goods over the uncreated Good Who is God, he also teaches that this sin does not negate the goodness of created things, but rather shows the need for a Savior to re-order humans' unruly affections*

Hierarchy and the Goodness of Creation in Augustine's *Confessions*

Susannah Brister

Introduction

The first-time reader of St. Augustine's *Confessions* may end the book confused as to what exactly St. Augustine thinks of God's physical creation. At one time, Augustine affirms the Scriptural pronouncement that creation is "very good."[1] At another, he displays what seems to modern readers a strangely obsessive fear of enjoying it.[2] This conundrum has opened Augustine to the charge of agreeing (even after his conversion) with the Manichaean teaching that matter is evil. This charge, however, is unjust. Augustine is not, in this sense, a Manichaean. Rather, while Augustine certainly has Platonic leanings in his cosmology, he reconciles this philosophy with Scripture by appropriating the Platonic concept of hierarchy. A number of passages in the *Confessions* depict the existence of a hierarchy or ranking of things based on their lesser or greater degree of goodness—a ranking that exists not only among the constituents of nature in general, but also among the faculties of the human in particular. Augustine is thus able to say that,

when functioning properly within their hierarchical places, even material creation and man's sensual faculties are able to play a helpful role in the pursuit of God, the Ultimate Good.

Before beginning an exploration of Augustine's ordering structures, let us briefly consider the accusation and the evidence brought by those who perceive Manichaean leanings in the *Confessions*. Jason David BeDuhn, for example, believes in the reality of Augustine's "pessimism about the ultimate valuelessness of the material universe, despite the tendency of modern scholarship to highlight positive rhetoric about the world in Augustine's early writings. [Augustine] continued to believe that most of the limitations he experienced in his own being were the result of embodiment, a common trope of his culture reflected equally in Manichaean, Nicene Christian, and Platonic discourse."[3] BeDuhn goes on to reference statements made in Augustine's *De Diversis Quaestionibus Octoginta Tribus*, *De Quantitate Animae*, and *De Ordine*, statements affirmirming the view that the human soul is "imprisoned" as long as it is embodied.[4]

A cursory reading of the *Confessions* may appear to confirm the critics' accusations, as a number of Augustine's positions and statements initially sound Manichean in tone. Augustine sometimes takes a negative of things that modern readers consider entirely natural: the crying of a baby, for example, or the rush of emotions experienced by readers of poetry and viewers of stage plays.[5] In Book X, Augustine considers his five senses, elaborating one by one the sins into which the delights of each particular sense might lead him.[6] To take just one example, Augustine says that eating carries with it a *periculosa iucunditas*, a "perilous enjoyment," and he believes that in order to eat in a righteous manner, he must consider the food he is eating to be a sort of medicine to keep his body from dying.[7]

Yet, in his exposition of the book of Genesis in *Confessions* XI-XIII, Augustine does not ignore the fact that Scripture presents the physical creation as good. Throughout the Genesis creation story, the phrase "and God saw that it was good" echoes like a refrain, culminating in the final pronouncement, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."[8] Augustine concurs with this judgment of creation in the *Confessions*: "You are beautiful, and they are beautiful," he says, speaking of God and His material created things, "You are good, and they are good."[9] Augustine also blankly refutes the Manichaean conception of the inherent evilness of the physical world

in his discussion of the problem of evil, proving the statement "corruptible things are good," by mentioning that, for something to be corruptible, it must have some good in it that might be corrupted.[10] This consideration launches Augustine into a torrent of praise, declaring to God that "even if I saw only [corruptible things], though I should want better things, yet even for them alone I should praise You."[11] These passages show that, at least in some ways, Augustine holds a high view of the created, physical world.

How, then, can we reconcile these apparently contradictory pictures of Augustine, one of a not-fully-recovered Manichean afraid of the evil material world that surrounds him, the other of a Christian embracing nature as the good creation of God? That the tension exists is undeniable, but Augustine learns to live with this tension by viewing creation in terms of hierarchy. The *Confessions* reveal the fact that Augustine believes both creation in general and also man in particular to be subject to hierarchies that explain their natures. When the components of these hierarchies are operating in their proper places, the good creation and man act and interact in the way in which they were meant to do; when, however, the components' places are mixed or reversed, man sins and we see in creation the effects of the Fall.

Gerard J. P. O'Daly in his article "Hierarchies in Augustine's Thought," points out the presence of several of these structures in Augustine's work and notes that similar hierarchies may be found in Greek philosophers such as the Presocratics.[12] O'Daly writes that, for Augustine, "The degrees of the universe are degrees of goodness, of beauty, of unity."[13] Johannes Brachtendorf, too, speaks of Augustine's understanding of a hierarchical cosmology in which "beings as such are good, but some beings are better than others," and identifies the basis for this concept in the metaphysical framework Augustine inherits from Platonist philosophers.[14]

The idea of the hierarchy of lesser and greater goods is present early in the *Confessions*. In Book II, Augustine speaks of the delights of sense and of goods like friendship or power, but qualifies these as *extrema bona*, as things "of the lowest order of good."[15] These lesser goods are not meant to replace the higher orders of good, that is, "You, O Lord our God, and Your Truth and Your Law."[16] These lower goods of creation derive their goodness from the highest Good that is God, as Augustine explains in Book XI. Created things "neither are beautiful nor are good nor simply are as You their Creator" (*nec ita pulchra sunt*

nec ita bona sunt nec ita sunt, sicut tu conditor eorum); creation is not good or beautiful or even existent in the same fashion or magnitude as God, with the result that, when placed next to His Beauty, Goodness, and Being, the lower goods of the physical world seems in comparison not good or real or beautiful at all.[17] All good things are ripples flowing out from the stream of Goodness Whom Augustine calls *unum bonum meum*, "my only good,"[18] and some ripples are closer to the source than others. Thus, BeDuhn remarks that, while Augustine rejected the Manichaean understanding of creation as evil, "he found equally at fault those (even within his own community) who embraced the goodness of creation but lacked that edge of dissatisfaction that might direct them toward something higher (13.31.46)."[19] Creation is not evil—but it is certainly also not enough.

In keeping with this hierarchy of created and eternal goods, Augustine believes that the faculties of man are also arranged hierarchically, a theory he demonstrates in *Confessions* Book X. Coming after the at least quasi-historical narrative account of Augustine's own search for Truth, Book X is a philosophical interpretation of the preceding conversion narrative and a bridge to his subsequent interpretation of Genesis' Creation narrative.[20] In this chapter, Augustine describes a symbolic hunt through creation, in which he seeks to find Who and What is this God that he worships. Augustine initially conducts his quest through the mediation of his physical senses, as he "asks" earth, seas, air, and all their creatures whether they are the God he seeks—his "question" being his thought, and creation's answer, its beauty.[21]

Mid-search, having found thus far only clues of a Creator and not the Creator Himself, Augustine turns inward, away from his physical senses, to examine himself.[22] He finds that he, as a man, has two sets of faculties, outer and inner, corresponding to his outer body and inner soul. The question then arises: which is a more apt tool in Augustine's search for God, the outer senses or the inner "sense" that is reason? "But the interior part is the better," Augustine concludes, "seeing that all my body's messengers delivered to it, as ruler and judge, the answers that heaven and earth and all things in them made when they said, 'We are not God,' and, 'He made us'" (*Sed melius quod interius, ei quippe renuntiabant omnes nuntii corporales praesidenti et iudicanti de responsionibus caeli et terrae et omnium, quae in eis sunt*).[23] According to Augustine's understanding, reason must act as president and judge of the raw material clues gathered by the senses.

This passage in Book X reveals a rough sketch of Augustine's anthropological hierarchy. It is the inner, spiritual, rational capabilities of man which enable him to read creation's message. A similar movement occurs in Augustine's "ascent" with his mother Monica: as the two converse, they "passed in review the various levels of bodily things … And higher still we soared, thinking in our minds and speaking and marveling at Your works: and so we came to our own souls, and went beyond them to come at last to that region of richness unending."[24] In seeking God, Augustine and his mother climb the hierarchical ascent from outer sense to the inner mind or soul (*mentes*), and indeed beyond. [25]

For man must go beyond. So far Augustine has given us helpful tools in the search for God: the senses act as messengers (*nuntios*) which serve the mind so that reason may translate the senses' information into meaningful messages.[26] Yet this in itself is not enough to allow the soul to attain to God. We see this demonstrated in Augustine's discussion in Book V of certain philosopher-astronomers. These philosophers are extremely capable in the gathering of information about creation—both their senses and their reason are fully functioning as they predict the movements of the heavenly bodies. However, Augustine censures, "They do not religiously enquire what is the source of that gift of understanding by which they enquire these lesser things: and if they find that it is You that have made them, they do not give themselves to You that You should preserve what You have made: nor do they slay in sacrifice to You what they have made themselves to be."[27] Even reason, then, will not always render to man a true picture of reality; like the physical creation, the inner life of man, while originally created good, is now subject to the corruptions of sin. Reason, too, must be submitted to its proper Head, which is the Logos, the True Reason that is Christ.[28]

Here we see Augustine's final iteration of the proper hierarchical functioning of man: the senses submit and serve the reason, which in turn submits and serves God. The astronomer passage also demonstrates what Augustine believes happens when this hierarchy is overturned—that is, when the reason is not subjected to God's guiding, or the senses are not subjected to reason's judgment, or both. This upheaval is called sin, and it has dire consequences for man's reason and his freedom.

When man upsets the correct order of mind and body, he does so out of what Augustine calls an *inmoderata … inclinatione* an "immoderate inclination" to a created good.[29] Speaking from his own experience, Augustine confesses to God:

> [things in space] were not good enough for me, I was not good enough for You: You are my true joy, and I am subject to You, and You have made subject to me the things below me that You have created. This was the right order and the middle way of salvation for me, that I should remain in Your image, and so in You should dominate my body. But when I rose against You in my pride and *ran upon my Lord with the thick neck of my shield*, those lower things became greater than I and pressed me under so that I could neither loosen their grip nor so much as breathe.[30]

As the narrative of Augustine's long and arduous conversion makes apparent, Augustine struggled with dependence on the lusts of the flesh. For many years, these kept him from returning to the Christian Church, even as Augustine became more and more certain of the Christian doctrines. Disordered by sin, Augustine valued a lower good (physical pleasure) over a higher (God Himself); thus, Augustine's mind and will were paralyzed, enslaved to his senses.

This is the second consequence of the hierarchical inversions caused by sin: reason itself becomes unreasonable. Referencing Romans 1:20, Augustine writes in Book X that "man can interrogate [creation], and so should be able clearly to see *the invisible things of God understood by things which are made*; but they love these last too much and become subject to them, and subjects cannot judge."[31] The proud philosopher-astronomers of Book V, for example, are described as having "self-conceits like birds" and "curiosities … like the fish of the sea": even reason, when not submitted to God, becomes beastly.[32] This is significant, as reason is what separates man from the animals.[33] As O'Daly notes, "Sin, although a consequence of pride and a perverse desire to imitate God's omnipotence, in fact results in a fall to a lower order of creation."[34] In sin, man becomes animal-like, further upsetting the cosmic and anthropological order.

For Augustine, the physical creation, then, is not intrinsically evil, as the Manichaeans taught; however, it must be enjoyed by man in its proper place in the hierarchy of Good, lest, in upending the order and giving a created good an undeserved preeminence, man's own inner order be upset and his greater faculty (reason) be dominated by the lesser (sensory capacity). With this principle in mind, let us consider how Augustine's view of the correctly ordered man and man's desire for the correctly ordered goods informs our reading of one of the more Manichean-sounding passages in the *Confessions*.

After recounting his spiritual search for God and exploring the nature and capacities of memory, Augustine turns to a description of his current spiritual state. Beginning with the assertion that "Thou dost command continence," Augustine proceeds to detail the snares of each of his five senses.[35] Remembering that Augustine does indeed believe that the delights of the physical world are good things (if lower than spiritual delight), we may see in his description of each sense his concern that pleasure be always secondary to usefulness, and that his mind be in control, not controlled. Augustine does not assume that it is best to abstain from food, food being material and therefore tainted; rather, "it is not any uncleanness in the meat that I fear but the uncleanness of my own gluttony."[36] The litmus test for Augustine is whether or not he is able to do without some pleasure; if he cannot, then he is under the dominion of sensory pleasure, and thus in sin.[37] Of visually pleasing things he says, "Let these things not take possession of my soul; let God possess it, who made these things and made them exceedingly good: yet He is my good, not they."[38] Augustine does not in this passage teach that God commanded abstinence from the pleasures of an evil physical world, but rather that in all things He commanded *continentiam*, which may be translated, not abstinence, but self-control.[39]

And yet, even the saint himself confesses that such control is often beyond his grasp. What then is to be done? Who will rightly order man's desires and faculties? The answer lies in God. Just as the goodness of the physical world derives from its Creator, so the right ordering (and hence the proper functioning) of man is a gift from God. As convincing and helpful as the Platonist philosophers are to Augustine, here he finds their philosophy truly wanting. Augustine writes that Platonic philosophy taught him about the Word of God, eternal and immutable;

but of the Word made flesh these philosophers had nothing to say.[40] And this is a very serious failing, for it is the Word made flesh that Augustine—and every man—so desperately needs:

> Rightly is my hope strong in Him, for You will heal all my infirmities through Him who sits at Thy right hand and intercedes for us; otherwise I should despair. For many and great are my infirmities, many and great; but Thy medicine is of more power. We might well have thought Thy Word remote from union with man and so have despaired of ourselves, if It had not been made flesh and dwelt among us.[41]

Only by this gift of God—salvation and sanctification through the blood and intercession of Christ—can lop-sided, disordered men be turned upright once more, their eyes opened to see the Truth that saves them.

Thus, we see that the accusation that Augustine is a residual Manichean is neither just nor accurate. The *Confessions* demonstrate that rather than condemning the material creation as evil, Augustine condemns human beings' sinfully disordered desire for and enslavement to it. Unlike the Manicheans, Augustine affirms that the world, as Scripture teaches, was created good; but he also believes that the goods found in the physical world are infinitely inferior to goods of the spiritual realm. When men displace God, the ultimate Good, in their hearts, replacing Him with the inferior good of some created thing (seduced by sensory pleasure and so inverting the body-mind hierarchy at the same time), they sin; but Augustine believes that there is hope for sinners in the Word made flesh, who came to redeem and re-order His wayward children.

NOTES

[1] Genesis 1:31; Page and Rouse, St. Augustine's Confessions, , XIII.XXVIII.

[2] Ibid, X.XXXI.

[3] BeDuhn, Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma, I, 258.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Page and Rouse, Confessions, I.VII, I.XIII, III.II.
[6] Ibid, X.XXX-XXXIV.
[7] Ibid, X.XXXI; Foley, Confessions, 213.
[8] Genesis 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25,31.
[9] Foley, Confessions, , 236-37.
[10] Ibid, 130.
[11] Ibid, 131.
[12] O'Daly, "Hierarchies in Augustine's Thought," 149.
[13] Ibid, 147.
[14] Brachtendorf, "The Goodness of Creation and the Reality of Evil,", 82-84.
[15] Page and Rouse, Confessions, II.V; Foley, Confessions, 30.
[16] Foley, Confessions, 30.
[17] Page and Rouse, Confessions, XI.IV; Foley, Confessions, 236-37.
[18] Page and Rouse, Confessions, I.V; Foley, Confessions, 4.
[19] BeDuhn,, Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma, 2, 401.
[20] Cooper, "Why Did Augustine Write Books XI-XIII of the Confessions?" 38.
[21] Page and Rouse, Confessions, X.VI.
[22] Ibid, X.VI.
[23] Foley, Confessions, 194; Page and Rouse, Confessions, X.VI.
[24] Foley, Confessions, 178.
[25] Page and Rouse, Confessions, IX.X.
[26] Ibid, X.VI.
[27] Foley, Confessions, 77.
[28] For a discussion of the identification of Christ with Logos/ reason, see Jeffrey, A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition, 459-60.
[29] Page and Rouse, Confessions, II.V;Foley, Confessions, 30.
[30] Foley, Confessions, 125.
[31] Ibid, 194.
[32] Ibid, 77.
[33] Page and Rouse, Confessions, III.VI.
[34] O'Daly, "Hierarchies in Augustine's Thought," 146.
[35] Foley, Confessions, 211.
[36] Ibid, 215.
[37] Ibid, 216.
[38] Ibid, 217.

[39] Page and Rouse, Confessions, X.XXIX.
[40] Foley, Confessions, 126-27.
[41] Ibid, 228.

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This paper discusses the use of the lyra*,* cithara*, and* barbitos *throughout Horace's* Odes*, pointing out how Horace explicitly connects those instruments with the establishment of peace in Rome. Horace's continual association of harp-like instruments with peace underlines his vital importance to Rome as* Romanae fidicen lyrae*; not only did he support the kindling of peace with Augustus's ascent to power and the beginning of the* Pax Romana*, but he also actively spread that peace through his poetry.*

Lyre, Lyre, Peace on Fire: Horace as *Romanae Fidicen Lyrae*

Rachel Smith

In his book Polyhymnia: The Rhetoric of Horatian Lyric Discourse, Gregson Davis argues that the Roman poet Horace "defines his lyric vocation by insisting on its 'soft,' anti-militaristic character."[1] Although Davis goes on to discuss the relation of epic and lyric in particular, this statement nonetheless portrays well how Horace wanted to define himself in his poetry. Throughout his Carmina, or Odes, Horace associates the instrument of the lyra and its harp-like relatives, the cithara and barbitos, with this same soft and anti-militaristic character. He does this in order to establish these instruments as tranquil, peace-making, and unwarlike. Why is it necessary, though, that these instruments in particular be instruments of peace? The answer to this question can be found in Odes 4.3.23 when Horace calls himself Romanae fidicen lyrae, "the lyre-player of the Roman lyre." This grand title presents Horace as the highest of the Roman poets and the best in song and lyric.[2]

In this essay I will show how Horace associates the lyra, cithara, and barbitos with peace; because of this, when he says he is the Romanae fidicen lyrae, he depicts himself as the peace-maker of Rome. To begin this discussion I will present the historical context of Horace's Odes by explaining the need for peace in Rome, as well as discussing the importance of Horace's poetry during the Augustan era. I will then go on to show how Horace associates the cithara, barbitos, and lyra with peace-

making and how he in turn implicates himself as the bringer of such peace. Finally, I will examine more closely what his role as the Romanae fidicen lyrae meant for the identity of the Roman world.

Conflict and Chaos in the Rome of Horace

In 27 B.C. Augustus introduced an era that would come to be known as the Pax Romana. This was a period of relative tranquility in the Roman world, which lasted until approximately A.D. 180. In his newly established role as princeps, Augustus brought a fair amount of stability to Rome after the city had faced extreme conflict, which included the first and second triumvirates and civil wars. In fact, it is recorded in his Res Gestae that Augustus closed the door of Janus three times, indicating peace in the Roman world.[3]

The poet Horace was thirty-eight at the time Augustus assumed leadership and instituted this era of peace. His odes were published shortly after this. Horace longed for harmony in Rome during the time prior to Augustus, especially because he had firsthand experience of turmoil. Grant Showerman claims that, "the days of [Horace's] years fell in an age which was in continual travail with great and uncertain movement," and "history presents few parallels to the times during which Horace lived."[4] When Horace was sixteen a civil war began in Rome and lasted four years, culminating in the assassination of Julius Caesar. At the age of twenty-three he served for Marc Antony in the Battle of Philippi. After this Rome underwent land seizures and many people were displaced from their homes, including Horace's father.[5] Over the next decade there was more conflict, which finally desisted in the Battles of Actium (31 B.C.) and Alexandria (30 B.C.). Horace published the first three books of the Odes in approximately 23 B.C., just four years after Augustus became the imperator, leader, in Rome.[6]

Amidst all these chaotic events, there was a need for themes such as peace, gentility, love, silliness, and the bucolic. Horace provided them for the people in the songs and poems that comprise the Carmina. Although each of those themes appears throughout his poetry, peace emerges particularly frequently, and as a result, will serve as the overarching characteristic on which this paper will focus. By examining these

historical events, we can better see the political and societal chaos into which Horace was born, and consequently better understand the reason he portrays himself as a peace-maker in his poems.

Of course, it could be said that Augustus introduced the era of peace and Horace simply lived during it, encouraging its benefits throughout his poetry but not necessarily bringing peace himself. This is a possibility, but Horace does more than pay compliments to Augustan peace: he participates in and initiates peace himself. Elizabeth Haight suggests just such a situation:

> [Horace] would bring into Latin poetry a great new theme for a new world, not battles won and cities overthrown but the Pax Augusta, the peace that closed Janus' doors, brought back crops, protected children, recalled old arts, renewed virtue, and extended the fame of the Latin name and the Italian strength through all the world.[7]

She implies that although Augustus brought these restorations, Horace supplemented them with his poetry. He extended the peace beyond the farms, temples, and battlefields to literature.

Raymond Marks suggests a similar idea when reflecting on Horatian poetry as a whole, saying that "Horace identifies his power and authority over his poetic medium and his self-representation in it by different means, namely, by showing us how he has appropriated for himself an Augustan mode of behavior and has made it his own."[8] In his assumption of such authority over his poetry, Horace portrays himself as a sort of new Augustus, and gives his audience poetry that develops and strengthens peace. Horace takes Augustan reforms, extends and enriches them in his writing, and then returns them to the people as fuel for the fire that the Pax Romana was only beginning to kindle. The Romans craved peace, which the Pax Romana intended to bring. To Horace, though, this Pax was not enough, and he sought to transform the introduction of peace into the full embodiment of peace itself through his role as Romanae fidicen lyrae.

Instruments of Peace

One way in which Horace brings peace is in his references to various instruments. There are three stringed instruments in particular, which Horace designates throughout the four books of his Odes. Each of these is a type of harp with several strings; often these harps were made of turtle shell. The lyra, or lyre, was the most common of those prevalent within the poetry itself, but both the cithara and barbitos are mentioned as well. In contrast to other instruments named throughout the poetry, these three specifically denote tranquility and peace.[9] Horns, for instance, were often associated with summons to battle:

> Many delight in camps and the clarion
> mixed with the sound of trumpets and
> wars detested by mothers.[10]
>
> Multos castra iuvant et lituo tubae
> permixtus sonitus bellaque matribus
> detestata, *Odes* 1.1.23-25.

The cries of the trumpet and clarion were a call to take action and prepare for battle, but a quieter stringed instrument would not serve such a purpose well, which is why these instruments are not often associated with warfare.[11] Harps were used for leisure, entertainment, and performance, as are many stringed instruments today. Horace refers to them twenty-three times throughout the Odes, and each time he connects them with peace.

The barbitos is a deeper-sounding lyre mentioned throughout the Odes. Ode 1.32 references Alcaeus, from whom Horace derives much of his poetry, as a soldier having previously played the barbitos. Horace wishes to take up the instrument that at one time saw battles:

> We ask you, o barbitos, if we, free, played
> anything with you under the shade, that lives
> both in this year and in many, come,
> sing a Latin song,
>
> First having been strummed by a Lesbian
> citizen [Alcaeus], who, fierce in war, nevertheless

between attacks. . .was singing.

Poscimus, si quid vacui sub umbra
lusimus tecum, quod et hunc in annum
vivat et pluris, age dic Latinum,
barbite, carmen,

Lesbio primum modulate civi,
qui ferox bello, tamen inter arma. . .
canebat, *Odes* 1.32.1-2, 10.

Horace here summons the barbitos to play in the shade and in relaxation. The instrument once used during warfare is now at peace, entirely away from the battle. Restful themes remain after Horace takes up the barbitos, themes that are proliferated throughout his poetry. He, unlike Alcaeus, will play strains while free and at peace, not inter arma. The barbitos was employed by Alcaeus to ease troubles, and in the hands of Horace such ease will not only be continued, but also proliferated. He goes on to speak of the themes that Alcaeus sang and the themes that he will promote so that they might endure:

[Alcaeus was singing] of Liber and the Muses and

Venus. . .O glory of Phoebus, a turtle shell lyre
favored at banquets of highest Jove, o sweet consolation
of toils for me and with me calling according to custom,
be welcome.

Liberum et Musas Veneremque. .

.

o decus Phoebi et dapibus supremi
grata testudo Iovis, o laborum
dulce lenimen mihi cumque salve
rite vocanti, *Odes* 1.32.9-16.

The barbitos sang of Liber (wine), the Muses (music), and Venus (love). Horace renews these harmonious themes with the instrument hoping that its purpose as a "consolation of toils," lenimen laborum, will not only be recognized, but also welcomed. Here, he re-structures the barbitos as a peace-bringing instrument.

Likewise, Horace portrays the cithara as an instrument of peace. The cithara, an even closer relative of the lyre than the barbitos, appears nine times throughout the Odes. I will discuss two references in particular that pair the cithara and peace. In Ode 1.15 Horace says that the cithara will be invoked to stimulate thoughts that take a person's mind off the idea of war. When relating Nereus's prophecy Horace specifically labels the cithara as imbellis, unwarlike:

> Pointlessly, fierce under the guard of Venus,
> you will comb your hair and you will play on the
> unwarlike cithara songs favorable to women;
> pointlessly in the bedroom you will avoid
>
> detrimental spears and arrows of the Cretan reed
> and the clamor (of war).
>
> Nequiquam Veneris praesidio ferox
> pectes caesariem grataque feminis
> imbelli cithara carmina divides
> nequiquam thalamo gravis
>
> hastas et calami spicula Cnosii
> vitabis strepitumque, *Odes* 1.15.13-18.

Although Horace repeats nequiquam, pointlessly, to show the vanity of trying to avoid war, his description of the cithara as imbellis indicates the nature of the instrument to contrast it with the inevitability of war. The instrument will always be unwarlike, always possessing the ability to bring peace, even if that peace is temporary, as in this case. War cannot be avoided, but the cithara is the tool with which the herdsman of the poem is to try.

It is important to note that Horace is concerned with the instances in which these instruments are played because they correlate directly with how he views the nature of the instruments. He implies in 3.1 that the cithara will not bring peace if used to alleviate a deserved punishment:

> To one over whose impious neck
> a drawn sword hangs, no banquets of Sicily
> will elaborate a sweet flavor (for him),
> nor does the song of a bird or the cithara
>
> return sleep (to him).
>
> Destrictus ensis cui super impia
> Cervice pendet, non Siculae dapes
> Dulcem elaborabunt saporem,
> Non avium citharaeque cantus
>
> Somnum reducent, *Odes* 3.1.17-21.

Horace discusses here Damocles, whose greed for Dionysian power led him to sit beneath a sword suspended by a horse's hair, no longer desiring the banquets or entertainment.[12] Damocles, eager for the riches of a god, selfishly accepted Dionysus's offer to sit on his throne but received his just punishment. Here Horace alludes to this myth as a way to express that the cithara brings peace for times deserving of peace, implicitly emphasizing how he employs the use of the cithara "properly" in his Odes and thus imparting his authority on where, when, and how the cithara should be employed. He sings of the instrument just after the chaotic events of his youth, which was a time deserving of peace and, therefore, he speaks of the cithara as imbellis.

Horace's encomium of peace continues in his descriptions of the lyra, the most prevalent form of the lyre in the odes, and better elaborates how his designation, Romanae fidicen lyrae, is a title of peacemaker. The lyre is mentioned eleven times within the Odes, and the first of these occurrences tells the reader that Varius, another poet, will sing of battles and epic themes, but Horace will not. Instead, his "battles" will be trivial, such as the flirtatious encounters girls have with young men. Horace describes the themes he will sing on the lyre:

Shame and the powerful Muse
of the unwarlike lyre forbid me
to diminish the praises of egregious Caesar
and your praises through the blame of my wit. . .

we sing of banquets, battles of fierce virgins
with nails cut against young men,
we sing whether free or fickle if we are consumed,
but not beyond custom.

Pudor
imbellisque lyrae Musa potens vetat
laudes egregii Caesaris et tuas
culpa deterere ingeni. . .

nos convivia, nos proelia virginum
sectis in iuvenes unguibus acrium
cantamus vacui, sive quid urimur,
non praeter solitum leves, *Odes* 1.6.9-12, 17-20.

Horace refers to the lyre as imbellis, the same term used to describe the cithara in 1.15. He does this intentionally to relate these two instruments and to emphasize repetitively this notion of peaceful instrumentation. In this poem, his inspiration is Melpomene, the Muse, and he credits her as his source. He specifically labels her lyre as unwarlike because his lyric poetry (the root of which is, of course, lyra) is derived from her, and therefore his "lyre" is one of peace. We see in these stanzas that Horace does not want to sing of wars with an instrument that is imbellis, but rather, he wants to sing of leaders and harmless battles of love, themes that draw people away from chaos and lead them to praise and song. This instrument, just like its relatives, the barbitos and cithara, promotes and brings peace.

Romanae Fidicen Lyrae

As mentioned above, Horace began writing the first three books of the Odes just after Augustus assumed the title of princeps and at the start of the transformation that would occur during the period of the Pax Romana. Horace, who saw himself as the lyre-player of Rome, therefore felt that he had a duty to his state that surpassed that of other citizens. Horace writes in his very last ode that instead of battles he will sing of Caesar's era and its great reforms:

> Wishing to speak of battles and
> conquered cities, Phoebus reproached
> me with his lyre. . .your age, O Caesar,
>
> Returned fertile crops to fields and
> restored to our Jupiter the standards
> having been torn down from the arrogant
> doorposts of the Parthians,
>
> And closed the doors of Janus of Quirinus,
> free from battles, and you brought in controls
> on the licentiousness straying beyond the right
> order and you removed faults and recalled the old arts.
>
> Phoebus volentem proelia me loqui
> victas et urbis increpuit lyra. . .
> tua, Caesar, aetas
>
> fruges et agris rettulit uberes
> et signa nostro restituit Iovi
> derepta Prathorum superbis
> postibus et vacuum duellis
>
> Ianum Quirini clausit et ordinem
> rectum evaganti frena licentiate
> iniecit emovitque culpas
> et veteres revocavit artis, *Odes* 4.15.1-12.

Here again, as in 1.6 we can see how Horace is dissuaded from themes of warfare. He is encouraged to sing of peace, and he does so by praising Augustus's reforms. His role as the lyre-player culminates in this ode because he sings about the source of his own peace and by doing so "[calls] together a community to join in creating and re-creating Roman identity and values."[13] His invocation of Augustus's peace further stimulates what he has been doing as a lyric poet. He unites the Roman people in the end, and can therefore be seen as a contributor to re-establishing Roman identity. Horace ends Odes 4.15 with the portrayal of a united nation, a clear identity, and a true establishment of peace saying:

> With Caesar as guardian of affairs,
> neither civil madness or force shall
> drive out leisure, nor anger which forges
> the sword and hates wretched cities. . .
>
> And we, on working days and sacred days,
> among the duties of jocular Liber,
> with our wives and children,
> first having prayed to the gods, rightly,
>
> will sing, with the virtuous custom
> of our fathers, a song mixed with Lydian flutes
> about dead leaders, and about Troy and Anchises
> and the progeny of gracious Venus.
>
> Custode rerum Caesare non furor
> civilis aut vis exiget otium,
> non ira, quae procudit ensis
> et miseras inimicat urbis. . .
>
> nosque et profestis lucibus et sacris
> inter iocosi munera Liberi
> cum prole matronisque nostris,
> rite deos prius apprecati,
>
> virtute functos more patrum ducesLydis remixto carmine tibiis
> Troiamque et Anchisen et almae
> progeniem Veneris canemus, *Odes* 4.15. 17-20, 25-32.

Some authors translate otium as peace, which further depicts the idea that Caesar's institution of the Pax Romana drove away conflict. Horace includes himself with the rest of the Roman people by saying nos. No longer is he on his own to make peace alongside Augustan reforms, but now, at the conclusion of his odes, with his lyre having brought peace, he and the rest of the nation can enjoy it.

In his last ode, Horace does sing of battles, but he sings with flutes (tibia) rather than with the lyre. As the Romanae fidicen lyrae he brought peace, but now, at the end of his playing, the instrument of Rome changes to a celebratory flute because all the people are united in a state of tranquility. Also with the flute, he will sing of the Battle of Troy. He will use an instrument other than the lyre to sing of battle, because the lyre is used for establishing and strengthening peace. By mentioning battle themes that will be sung, Horace indicates the fact that he has finally accomplished his goal as the fidicen lyrae. Peace reigns and Horace has put down his lyre at long last.

Conclusion

After noting the historical strife surrounding Horace's Odes, it is clear that Rome was in need of peace. Although much of the strife was suppressed by Augustus's reign and institution of the Pax Romana, Horace brought even more tranquility through his writing and songs. By continuously paralleling the lyre and its derivatives with times of peace and themes of anti-war, Horace presents himself as the peace-maker of Rome. Augustus was the instigator of peace, and Horace had no foundation and no inspiration without him, but the peace brought in by Horace united the people through poetry via the lyre. As the fidicen, Horace used his skill to make the Roman state a better place, a place at peace. Horace kindled the flame of peace as the Romanae fidicen lyrae and brought tranquility to the Roman world, a tranquility that continues in the hearts of his readers today.

NOTES

[1] Gregson Davis, Polyhymnia: The Rhetoric of Horatian Lyric Discourse, 27.
[2] Davis, Polyhymnia, 348.
[3] Augustus, Res Gestae, 13.
[4] Grant Showerman, "Horace, Person and Poet," 160.
[5] Elizabeth Hazelton Haight, "Horace on War and Peace," 161.
[6] Stephen Harrison, "Dateline of works and major political events," 347-348..
[7] Haight, "The Lyre and the Whetstone: Horatius Redivivus,"142.
[8] Raymond Marks, "Augustus and I: Horace and 'Horatian' Identity in Odes 3.14," 97.
[9] For example: horns, flutes, pipes, etc.
[10] All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.
[11] Kenneth Quinn, Horace: The Odes, 120.
[12] See Cicero's Tusculan Disputations 5.61.
[13] Johnson, Symposium of Praise: Horace Returns to Lyric in Odes IV, 182

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This paper explores the various characterizations that Tacitus applies in the Annales *to Agrippina the Elder, a member of the Julio-Claudian imperial family, the mother of Caligula, and the grandmother of the emporer Nero. I argue that Tacitus, a historian by nature, uses literary devices to make Agrippina the Elder the focal point of his dissent against the reign of the emporer Tiberius.*

A Multiple Persona Paradox: The Many Roles of Agrippina the Elder in Tacitus' *Annales*

Marcie Persyn

Introduction

In his analysis of Tacitus' characterization of women, an oft-overlooked issue, Ronald Syme has observed that "Some take Cornelius Tacitus for a misogynist…On the contrary, when occasion offers, the historian is happy to illustrate nobility, courage, and devotion in women, whatever their rank in society." Though many approaches to the Annales favor the more dominant, male characters who take center stage in the Roman Empire, Syme notes the intricacy with which Tacitus crafts his female characters, few of whom, especially women, occur as frequently and as consistently as Agrippina the Elder, the wife of Germanicus and mother of two imperials: Gaius Caligula and Agrippina the Younger. Agrippina's importance to the sense and character of Cornelius Tacitus' Annales in both her dignity and her desire for vengeance is undeniable. Through the artful rhetoric that characterizes the Annales and, arguably in some cases, corrupts its accuracy as an historical account, Tacitus fashions in Agrippina the Elder a multi-faceted character through whom he can manipulate his account of history, conveying far more through subtlety than he would ever say explicitly. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to analyze and distinguish the many forms of characterization present in Agrippina the Elder as she is described by Tacitus in

his great history, and to attempt to explain how these myriad roles are used to further Tacitus' goal of depicting the fluctuating status of Rome under the emperor Tiberius Nero in the early first century AD.

The Roman Princess: Who is Agrippina the Elder?

Much of our knowledge of the Julio-Claudians is derived from primary sources such as Cornelius Tacitus, a historian of the first and second centuries AD, or Suetonius Tranquillus, biographer of the Caesars. Tellingly, in our first encounter with Agrippina the Elder in the Annales, she is identified as the wife of Germanicus, grandson of Caesar Augustus, and listed in conjunction with their many children. The course of her life is recorded in Books 1-3 of the Annales, while the fates of her children extend into subsequent books: the downfalls of two of her sons are recorded in Book 4, the rule and eventual demise of her only surviving son, Caligula, is recorded in the lost books (most likely in Books 7 and 8, per Syme's reconstruction of the lost hexad, which treated the regimes of Caligula and Claudius), and the life of Agrippina the Younger continues up to the account of her murder at the hands of her own son, Nero in Book 14.

Suetonius provides the bulk of his account of Agrippina the Elder's life in his biographical account of the emperor Tiberius. Her role in Tiberius's rule is largely expounded upon in chapter 53, where Suetonius describes her exile and death in the tragic, gossip-mongering detail for which he is known. There is a notable difference, however, between the accounts of Tacitus and Suetonius. As noted by Charlesworth, the greatest disparity between the two accounts concerns the timeline of Agrippina's exile; namely whether she was exiled to Pandataria before or after the death of her grandmother-in-law, Livia. However, their works further diverge in the time and emphases allocated to various portions of Agrippina's life, variations that are both understandable and, indeed, to be expected due to the different purposes of their works.

In Suetonius, her name is included as merely a passing mention during the life and works of her husband, Germanicus, as the narrative focuses narrowly and with great detail, on either her young child Caligula or on the expression of her husband. The significance of this level of detail and the exclusive spotlight cast on her husband and son is clearly reflected in the very name of Suetonius' work, The Twelve Caesars. Agrippina as a character, for Suetonius, is important solely because of

her interaction with the male offspring of Caesar. The most attention, the most detail, is given to the end of her life, when she is framed for what amounts to treason, or maiestas, with public challenges to Tiberius' authority and, ultimately, her refusal to accept an apple from his table for fear of being poisoned. For this she was summarily exiled, beaten by the centurion set over her as a guard, and, out of shame or pride (Suetonius fails to mention), she commits suicide by starving herself (Tiberius 53). But the author's goal, even in her death scene, is to portray the qualities of yet another male Caesar, Tiberius, and the depths to which he was willing to sink to affirm his wavering rule. Similarly her final mention in Suetonius, in his Caligula, is a depiction of Agrippina as the mother to the future ruler, receiving a letter from Augustus promising Caligula's imminent return to her (Gaius 9); this depiction incorporates three men of the Julio-Claudian clan—Augustus, Germanicus, and Caligula—and serves as further proof of Suetonius' use of her as little more than a background upon which to portray the Caesarian men.

Tacitus' Take on Agrippina the Elder

In the Annales, Tacitus opts for a different tack in his characterization of Agrippina: many tacks, even, as the course of this paper will explore. His narrative includes much of the same content as Suetonius', but the pace and specifics of his narrative do not gloss over her in deference to the males of the house of the Caesars, but rather incorporate her among the heirs of Augustus. If Suetonius spends most of his vigor describing the death of Agrippina, Tacitus surely spends the majority of his describing her widowing. His earlier and later references to her are more clear-cut, more factual and dry, but when it comes to describing her with the freshly cremated ashes of her late husband, Tacitus opens the floodgates of his eloquence and, choosing to open Book 3 with her clutching Germanicus' remains, rendered in Latin as tenens urnam (Annales 3.1.23), he makes clear that this portrayal of the granddaughter of Augustus, both poignant and multi-faceted, is highly significant. This change in her characterization is not, however, to be thought of as the transition associated with dynamic characters—many would argue that Tacitus does not allow for, or possibly even believe in, the possibility of such a shift in nature and disposition, following the ancient idea that personality was fixed at birth. Nevertheless, whether this belief was truly propounded by Tacitus or not, Agrippina is not poetically de-

signed to be an evolving character, but rather a static woman who is repeatedly subject to fortune, or in the Latin: fortunae totiens obnoxia (Annales 2.75.6). The consistency of her suffering is indicated here by the word totiens—a word meaning "over and over again." Her various roles, therefore, emphasize her plight and are related to the larger picture of the first hexad of the Annales, namely the state of the empire under Tiberius.

Scholars to this day vary in their opinions of how to understand Tacitus' account of Agrippina the Elder. Some claim that she is cast by Tacitus in a heroic light, due to his latent approbation of Germanicus and thereby of his household, while others claim that Tacitus views her more dubiously than his overt narrative would portray and that, upon closer analysis, she is actually rendered as a woman fierce and perhaps even dangerous. Ultimately, those who choose to view the Annales as more than an historical account and who read his writings as passing through a rhetorical medium are able to find in her various literary devices, such as personification, foreshadowing, and even exempla (literally "examples," or even "paradigms", i.e model traits upon which later generations should base their actions). Whether or not Tacitus meant for any of these devices to be interpreted from his work is, of course, an unanswerable question, yet while its discussion may lead to no ultimate or concrete conclusion, it will still enlighten and perhaps allow for the development of further thought and reflection in Tacitean studies. An overview of the various interpretations of Agrippina is therefore a valuable exercise, for it lends the reader an informed perspective on Tacitus' characterizations of this undeniably important woman.

Agrippina and the Personification of History

Among Tacitus' portrayals of Agrippina is his use of her in a prosopopoeaic manner to represent the eras of Rome. In a brilliant chapter describing Tacitus' depiction of Germanicus as an imago of the fallen republic, Ellen O'Gorman makes the claim that Agrippina—as wife, mother, and grandchild of the Caesarian clan—serves in her own respect as the fitting complement for Germanicus, an intermediary between the glorious past, the tragic present, and the doubtful future. Perhaps not quite the imago that her husband is, Agrippina embodies the same kind of ecphrastic effect, as she is associated almost inextricably with both death and birth. In Annales 3.1, Tacitus describes

her with a retinue consisting of the typical courtly servants, her children, and the ashes of Germanicus. These three kinds of companions in turn represent time—present, future, and past respectively—and Agrippina stands in the center, ambiguous and, for once, unsure (nescia, Annales 3.1.4). It is a heartrending and rich depiction and, according to O'Gorman: "Agrippina ['s] stance and gestures make of her body a historical corpus," and she is, at that moment, imbued with all the aspects of the Tiberian age: her proud memory, which drives her back to Rome seeking revenge (Annales 2.75.2); her unaccustomed sense of loss; and her inconsolable, hopeless grief, representing the atmosphere of Rome upon Germanicus' untimely death. Likewise, the way that Agrippina transitions from being the bearer of Germanicus' offspring (in her introductory scene in Book 1, she is pregnant at the frontlines of Europe) to being the bearer of his ashes serves as a picturesque symbol for her fate and that of her children, who would fall either to Tiberius or to the cutthroat political atmosphere fostered by the imperial age.

Agrippina and the Imperial Family

On the other hand, we can also see Tacitus presenting Agrippina as a literary foil for Livia, the widow of Augustus and matriarch of the Caesarian house. There are several clear parallels between the two women: they are both widowed by their respective husbands, both are respected women of nobility, and both come to be hated by Tiberius. Their relationship is left somewhat vague in historical accounts. On the one hand, Tacitus in Annales 3.3.2 describes Livia's response to Germanicus' death as little more than feigned grief, a response that hardly indicates any respect for Agrippina, or her family's sorrow. But then again, he also implies that only Livia prevented Tiberius from exiling Agrippina sooner, and according to Suetonius, Livia fostered Caligula to the point that he delivered a eulogy of high-praise for her upon her death (Gaius, 10). Perhaps these variant accounts reflect the progression of their relationship or the divergence of public opinions. In any case, Agrippina's opposition to Livia is especially evidenced in her desire to marry, a move that, according to Allen, would have strengthened the power of her faction, making her a viable rival for the mother of the emperor. How much more fitting it is then for Tacitus to make the pair literary foils, much as Germanicus plays foil to Tiberius.

Another literary role of Agrippina in the Annales is as the harbinger of the future actions of her daughter and namesake, Agrippina the Younger, the mother of the Emperor Nero and notorious for her ambition. In her paper "Memoriae Agrippinae: Agrippina the Elder in Julio-Claudian Art and Propaganda," Susan Wood argues that the artistic style used to depict Agrippina evolved over time. This evolution reflecting the political machinations of the Augustan household can be seen in the shift from the idealized portraiture common to the imperial bust style of the early Julio-Claudian rule to a more realistic representation that highlighted her resemblance to her daughter Agrippina Minor. Similarly, in the Annales, the motif of Agrippina's name serves to presage the actions of her daughter. Wood argues through the course of her paper that Agrippina's actions, both before and after the death of Germanicus, reveal in her an ambition for power mirroring the fears of Tiberius, who in Book 1 of the Annales hears of her work in fortifying the territories with dismay, viewing her actions as inappropriate for a woman, even a woman born in the line of Augustus (1.69.14-16). Her pride in her heritage is obvious from historical accounts, and clear, too, is the status accorded her by this birthright, as she remains in the public eye an influential figure even beyond the death of Germanicus. She garnered for herself "a sizable and loyal faction in Rome," earned not only by her inherited nobility, but also by the dignity, or rather the perceived dignity, of her actions. O'Gorman's argument follows one made by Walter Allen Jr. in early 1940's, who credits Agrippina with "undoubtedly…a small faction of her own, which was in opposition to the court." It is the breast-beating of these partisans that we witness at Agrippina's funereal disembarkation in Annales 3.1.25; it is their voices praising her at the interment of Germanicus in 3.4.1; and it is they who silently criticize the emperor Tiberius and the cruelties of his reign throughout the ordeal, all the while making a hero of Germanicus along with his wife and family.

Wood, however, depicts Agrippina as coveting the throne for herself, being a true precursor for her daughter, and makes much of the passage mentioned by both Suetonius and Tacitus in which she, at the altar of the Divine Augustus, indirectly challenges Tiberius out of desperation for a husband and, in Suetonius, is in turn accused by the emperor of desiring to rule (Tiberius 53; Annales 4.53). With this demeanor, Agrippina exemplifies what H. W. Traub defines as Tacitus' typical use of the word ferocia ("wildness"), a term he uses to describe

Agrippina on occasion, such as in association with Germanicus' death scene in Annales 2.72. Traub writes: "Ferocia is also very often used by Tacitus to denote rebellious or defiant political behavior on the part of certain Romans towards the princeps." If viewed in this light, she not only serves as an omen foreshadowing the life and death of her daughter, but also as a didactic warning against women overstepping their rightful circles, or indeed of any Roman crossing the emperor.

Agrippina: An Anti-Aeneas?

Having delved this deep into polyvalence of Tacitean characterization, it would be a severe oversight not to acknowledge the role Agrippina plays in figuring as a kind of anti-hero modeled after the archetypes of the Aeneid. Virgil's epic gained immediate popularity in the literary world of Augustus and, a century later, there can be little doubt that Tacitus, whose works centered on the same ruling family as that which employed Virgil, would have expressed some opinion on this work. In fact, Tacitus' response to the Aeneid is perhaps framed at the beginning Book 1, with a description of Augustus trying to legitimize a single man's right to claim mastery of what had once been the responsibility of hundreds (Annales 1.9.16). After the death of Augustus, it was left to Tiberius to take up the reins of governing, a responsibility that, according to Kraus and Woodman, he spent the rest of his life trying to outdistance. It took years of political maneuvering, propaganda, and the genius of Augustus for the survivors of the republic, disillusioned though they were with the old system that had cast them into the civil wars, to accept the new ruling class, if indeed they ever did. The Annales in particular might be read as an indirect response to Virgil's work, for though Tacitus writes under the auspices of the Flavian dynasty, he also lived during the time of the Julio-Claudian terror, Nero.

Thus, with Tacitus' subject matter so close to that of Virgil, T. S. Baxter, in a close study of Books 1 and 2, states:

> ...Tacitus may have intended his readers to see an ironic contrast between his characters and those of Virgil. Tacitus' characterization of Germanicus is… the reverse of Virgil's characterization of Aeneas. Aeneas, defeated and desolate, leaves Troy for Italy,

> where he achieves a spiritual rebirth. Germanicus, however, leaves Italy at the summit of his power and travels to the East, where he suddenly dies.

Following Baxter's lead, then, in interpreting Germanicus to be a kind of anti-Aeneas, I argue that the reader may find that Agrippina herself, rather than her husband, fulfills the role of hero of the Aeneid more thoroughly. After all, it is she, conquered and bearing the remains of her husband (like the Penates of Ilium) in one hand and the future emperor, her son Gaius Caligula (like Ascanius), in the other. It is she who sails to Rome, where she must confront the political designs of Rome's ruler. Finally, it is she who is urged to suppress the emotions engendered in her by loss, just as Aeneas must do in Book 1of the Aeneid (1.209). It would be by no means beyond the rhetorical skill of Tacitus to imbue his narrative with this kind of double-mockery of what Baxter deems the "optimism" of Virgil. Moreover, what more thorough form of criticism is there than not only to feminize the alleged forebear of the Julio-Claudians, but to have this "female Aeneas"—the last vestige of what was once a great dynasty, an unicum specimen antiquae (Annales 3.4.34)—be exiled and killed by a member of her own family? Viewed from such a perspective, Tacitus' Agrippina is a powerful political allusion indeed.

Conclusion

For an author as skilled as Tacitus, no one dynamic should be superficially imposed on Agrippina; as readers, we must not assume that a historian of such caliber would play favorites with the cast of his novels, or that he would mitigate his criticism toward her due to the tragedy that dogged Germanicus' household. Rather, an informed student of the Annales should, though it is difficult, attempt to grasp simultaneously all of the forms of Agrippina: the complement for Germanicus, the foil for Livia, the forerunner for Agrippina Minor, and the feminized anti-Aeneas. These are not multiple personalities for Agrippina, nor are they simply reflections of her development over time; they are renderings designed to enlighten the reader to Tacitus's perspective on the true state of the early empire. Her service as an imago reveals the importance of the royal family in the Tiberian age; her opposition to Livia shows not only how contentious royal relationships could be, but

also the presumed "true nature" of the court; her role as an omen warns that the imperial dynasty is only further souring; and as a caricature of Aeneas she begs the question of whether the Julio-Claudians were ever truly fit to rule in the first place. To overlook these literary devices and their subtle insinuations is to approach the Annales from the wrong angle. Embracing these, however, leads to greater comprehension not only of an incredible and strong-willed woman of Roman history, but also of the agenda and mindset of the author, whose writing sine ira et studio—by which phrase he claims his history as one written without anger or sycophancy—taunts scholars to this day. Without rage or zeal, he describes Agrippina, and without the emphasis of hatred or adoration, his words must be read.

NOTES

[1] Syme, "Princesses and Others in Tacitus," 41.

[2] Namely, the ruling clan of Rome from the time of Julius Caesar's dictatorship (ca. 49 BC) until the end of the rule of the emperor Gaius Nero in AD 68, whereupon control of Rome and its provinces passed to the Flavian dynasty.

[3] O'Gorman, Irony and Misreading in the Annals of Tacitus, 74.

[4] Syme, Tacitus, Vol. 1., 256.

[5] Charlesworth, "The Banishment of the Elder Agrippina," 261.

[6] Kraus and Woodman, Latin Historians, 104.

[7] Wood, "Memoriae Agrippinae: Agrippina the Elder in Julio-Claudian Art and Propaganda," 424.

[8] Traub, "Tacitus' Use of Ferocia," 261; Syme, "Princesses and Others in Tacitus," 41.

[9] O'Gorman, Irony and Misreading in the Annals of Tacitus, 69; Wood, "Memoriae Agrippinae: Agrippina the Elder in Julio-Claudian Art and Propaganda," 410.

[10] An imago refers to the waxen mask used in Roman funeral processions to represent the face of a dead ancestor of the family; the imago itself was typically saved and kept within the family house as a relic of the past in a time without pictures or video. If the late family member was particularly famous, or noteworthy, his imago would be kept in cabinets in the family's atrium, declaring to all comers their noble heritage. From this usage, however, as

well as their usage in funerals, stemmed the tendency to look upon imagines as not only mementos representing the past and its great figures, but also the representation of what men and women should aspire to be. For more information, see Flower, Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture.

[11] O'Gorman, Irony and Misreading in the Annals of Tacitus ,74-75.

[12] Ibid.,74.

[13] Charlesworth, "The Banishment of the Elder Agrippina," 260.

[14] Tacitus frequently makes use of such divergent accounts even to the extent of offering multiple versions of the same event (such as the death, or murder, of Germanicus, which occurs in Book 2). The lack of unity in public opinion further reflects the uncertainty of the era that his history entails.

[15] Allen, "The Political Atmosphere of the Reign of Tiberius," 7.

[16] O'Gorman, Irony and Misreading in the Annals of Tacitus, 409.

[17] Ibid., 418-419.

[18] Allen, "The Political Atmosphere of the Reign of Tiberius," 7.

[19] Traub, "Tacitus' Use of Ferocia," 261; Syme, "Princesses and Others in Tacitus," 252.

[20] Kraus and Woodman, Latin Historians, 108.

[21] Robert T. S. Baxter, 1972. "Virgil's Influence on Tacitus in Books 1 and 2 of the Annals." CP 67.4, 268.

[22] Ibid., 269.

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