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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>Editors</i> | 2 |
| <i>Contributors</i> | 3 |
| <i>Message From The President</i> | 5 |

ARTICLES

| | |
|---|-----|
| To Pierce or Transfix: The Story of the Bone, the <i>Περόνη</i> and the Fibula..... | 7 |
| Direct and Indirect Bias in Tacitus' <i>Histories</i> | 51 |
| A Legacy of Greatness: The Portrayal of Alexander in Abrahamic Traditions..... | 61 |
| The Emperor Trajan and the Politics of Power | 77 |
| Islamic Conquests and the Culture of the East | 92 |
| Popular Disillusionment..... | 108 |
| A Discussion of Cultural Origin: Palmyra | 123 |

POETRY

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| The Whispering Wall..... | 138 |
| Remembering Tullia..... | 140 |

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK

| | |
|--|-----|
| Introduction..... | 141 |
| Digging up the Past: | |
| Archaeology in Badia Pozzoveri, Italy | 142 |
| The Ancient City of Argilos: A Greek Excavation..... | 147 |

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HONOURABLE MENTION

Sarah Grant

The editors would like to extend a special thank-you to our predecessor, Sarah Grant, who was the Editor-in-Chief of last year's journal. Through hard work, dedication and leadership, Sarah produced a journal of excellent quality - a quality which this year's editorial team strove to maintain. Despite having graduated in 2013, Sarah has provided advice and guidance to the new editors, and has consistently been available for hands-on assistance.

We express our deepest thanks.

CONTRIBUTORS

Shelley Hartman has just completed her B.A. Honours in Greek and Roman Studies at Carleton and considers these last four years the best time of her life. She wishes to thank her friends and professors for their warmth and inspiration. Notably, Shelley truly feels that everything one needs to know about life, one can learn by studying the Classics. She hopes to pursue an M.A. in Classics or Ancient History.

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Colleen Dunn is a mature student who returned to university in 2010 after a 30+ year career in pediatric diagnostic imaging and still performs ultrasonography on a casual basis at our Ottawa's Children's Hospital. As a year part time second-year student, she is working on a B.A. Combined Honours in Religion and Greek & Roman Studies. Colleen says that Carleton University is providing her with information and inspiration, and she encourages people of all ages to enjoy the many benefits of a university education!

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Since its first launch in 2011, this journal has come to represent many things. It was not only run, filled, edited and published through the hard work of many individuals, but also funded by them. It came to represent a group of friends and colleagues attempting to pump new life blood into our beloved program. Now, their hard work continues to pay off through the time and effort of those in Greek and Roman Studies today. This year we had two wonderfully hard-working editors, Paige Brennan and Ryland Patterson, at the helm of Corvus. Through deliberation and judgement, they compiled a fantastic lineup of not only academic papers from our fellow students, but also poetry, for the second year in a row. This is why I must take this opportunity to thank both Paige and Ryland for their hours of hard work that made Corvus possible this year. The other individuals and groups I must thank are Andrew Beatson, our treasurer, and Fawn Leslie, our coordinator, for being devoted to our passion and also willing to spend a Saturday with me learning the ins and outs of drafting a budget. I would also like to thank Jonathan Ouellet, our editor of the Archaeology section, for the hard work he put into the journal for the second year in a row. I would also like to thank Dr. Gregory Fisher and the College of the Humanities for their continued support in our endeavour to bring this work to paper each year. I would also like to thank all those who submitted their works to the journal and the archaeology section. It is these people that allow our

program to show the value in a Classical education, and how that can apply to a variation of fields and studies. Finally, I would like to thank you, the reader, and all the members of the Classics Society for your continued support. It is this support that will allow us to improve the way we function on a yearly basis. I am truly honoured to be the President of the Carleton University Classics Society for 2013-2014.

*-Matthew Robertson
CUCS President*

TO PIERCE OR TRANSFIX: THE STORY OF THE BONE, THE *Περόνη* AND THE *FIBULA*.

SHELLEY HARTMAN

Such a tiny and innocuous thing is a word, but a word has explosive potential. Encrypted within a word - as if it were a deliberately designed information storage device - are all the memories, sounds, peoples, and landscapes it has experienced since it was first created. The narratives encapsulated in certain words can be traced back thousands of years, and their origins thousands of years before that. This paper began as an examination of the source for the ancient Greek word for pin, buckle, brooch, and bone, the *περόνη*, or *perónē*. Latin has a similar word, *fibula* for the pin, but it did not refer to any bone. The etymology of both words was studied and worked back through history to their respective origins in the literary record. The decorative ornaments are likewise examined in their archaeological context. However, there remained the nagging question of why the *perónē* referred to a bone at all, at the same time as it identified a pin, buckle or brooch. Comparative animal anatomy indicated that the *perónē*, which today is referred to by its Latin name, *fibula*, was a rare bone, and was absent in ungulates, the common domesticated food animals. The *perónē* always occurred in pairs and large well-developed ones were found in predator species. As both words are Indo-European in origin, a possible explanation presented itself, which connected the pins to

Männerbünde. At some point in time the bone and pin were one and the same, and the bone could only be acquired from the successful hunt of a large and dangerous animal. The *perónē*, or *fibula*, was always worn in pairs close to the face - this suggests that they were symbols of status and perhaps marked some achievement. To prove the validity of the idea that pins could be made from these bones, the author made one from the hind leg of a coyote. Further research suggested that the *perónē* indeed was a symbol of accomplishment and has remained so into the present era around the world in the form of medals of heroism, outstanding achievement, and valour.

Etymology and Literary Record

In English today, the word ‘fibula’ refers to an ancient brooch with a pin, coil, and plate. It is also the name of the smaller lower leg bone. In Latin, *fibula* meant “that which serves to fasten two things together, a clasp, buckle, pin”¹ and is related to the Latin *figo*, “to fix, fasten, drive or thrust in, attach, to fix by piercing through”², which is cognate with the ancient Greek, *sphingo*, “to bind fast, tight, to shut close”.³ In French, *fibule* refers to the ancient pin but *péroné* is the word for the second smaller leg bone.⁴ *Péroné* comes from the ancient Greek *περόνη*, *perónē*, which means “the pin or tongue of a buckle or brooch” and “the small bone of the...leg”.⁵ The Greek verb *περόνάω*, *peronàō*, means “to pierce or transfix”, and another word,

¹s.v. *OLD*

²*Ibid.*

³s.v. *LSJ*⁹

⁴s.v. *Le Robert*

⁵s.v. *LSJ*⁹

πεῖρω, *peírō*, means “to pierce or strike through”.⁶ The definitions show that the Greek word meant both the pin and the bone, and suggest that the Greek word *perónē* predates the Latin *fibula*, which, only later, came to refer to the same bone as in Greek.

In the last 40 years, *fibula* or *fibule* has become widely used in English and French as the scientific name for the smaller lower leg bone, but it was not always this way. Prior to the 1970s, French-speaking countries used *péroné* in medicine, osteology and anatomy.⁷ At the turn of the last century, L. Jammes, in his French work on dissection from 1904, identified the two bones of the shank as the “tibia et péroné”.⁸ During that same period, however, English-speaking countries employed *fibula* for the small bone.⁹ Going back further, these two words remained linguistically separate, though in the early 1700s they were used together at times for clarity. According to Robert Baker, a British surgeon and author of a 1697 English text on anatomy, “the fibula, or peroné, is as long as the other [tibia], but much slenderer, plac’d on the outside of the leg”.¹⁰ The sources of nomenclature came from divergent schools, the Latin and the Greek, and this division can be traced back to the 1500s.

Vesalius, considered the founder of modern

⁶Ibid.

⁷Denise Leger-Boucher, *Anatomie et Physiologie*. (Ottawa: Editions du Renouveau Pedagogique Inc., 1968), 83.

⁸L. Jammes, *Zoologie Pratique Basee sur la dissection*. (Paris: Libraires de L’Academie du Medicine. 1904), 531.

⁹George Kent, *Comparative Anatomy of the Vertebrates*. (Saint Louis: Mosby, 1978), 191.

¹⁰Robert Baker, Chirurgen, *Cursus Osteologicus. Being a Compleat Doctrine of the Bones*. (London: I. Dawks, 1697), 63.

anatomy, released his revolutionary collection of illustrations of human anatomy from human dissection (hitherto forbidden) in 1543. He labeled the bone in question the *fibula*.¹¹ Vesalius based his anatomical knowledge on the Latin translation of Galen. Galen (129-199) was the pre-eminent physician and researcher of his time. He codified all previous anatomical knowledge, broadened it with his own exceptional work and had Greek names for virtually all the bones and organs. His book, “*The Usefulness of Parts of the Body*”, written between 165 and 175, was translated into Latin around 1310 and into French in 1566.¹² Before this time the source of all anatomical information came from the work of Galen, which meant that for 1300 years, in the Western world, “there was only Galen”¹³. With the invention of the printing press, Galen’s material became widely available. He called the second shank bone περόνη, the *perónē*.¹⁴ Given that περόνη meant both the pin and the bone in Greek, the Latin word for pin, *fibula*, appears to have been appropriated, during translation in 1310, to mean the bone as well. The Latin translation of his work is likely the first place the word *fibula* is ever used to refer to the bone. This theory is reinforced by evidence from the glossators of the Middle Ages such as Paulus Diaconus (730-800), who recorded the word *fibula* as having no reference to anatomy.¹⁵

¹¹J. B. Saunders, and Charles D. O’Malley, *The Illustrations from the Works of Andreas Vesalius of Brussels*. (New York, The World Publishing Company, 1950), 85.

¹²Margaret Tallimadge May, *Galen: On the Usefulness of Parts of The Body*. (Ithika: Cornell University Press 1969), 4.

¹³Ibid. 13.

¹⁴Galen *UP* 3.9.

¹⁵*A Dictionary of Latin of the Middle Ages* is currently missing from the Carleton Library due to construction.

The 1500s also saw the Greek works of Hippocrates (460-370 BCE) being formally translated into Latin and printed. “The first edition of Hippocrates’ work was published in Rome in 1525”.¹⁶ Hippocrates referred to the small leg bone as the *perónē*, *περόνη* in *Des Articulations*.¹⁷ This reading is not present in all manuscripts but does appear in a few influential ones used for the 10-volume collection, in French, of his works published in Paris in 1839 by Émile Littré.¹⁸ Elsewhere in the collected works, it is only referred to as “the smaller bone”.¹⁹

The use of *fibula* for a pin, buckle or brooch can be found in many early Latin writings. From the late first century BCE Vergil, in the *Aeneid*, wrote that “[the spear] struck one of these [splendid brothers] in the waist where the sewn belt chafed the belly and the buckle [*fibula*] bit the side-straps”.²⁰ In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid directed attention to “[a] Tegean girl, the green glades’ pride and grace. A plain brooch [*fibula*] pinned the collar of her dress”.²¹ There is also a very interesting reference to the fibula in Livy. Fierce fighting took place between Roman and Spanish forces by the Tagus River. Victory went to the Romans in large part due to the outstanding performance of their cavalry. Lucius

¹⁶Marie-Laure Monfort, “First printed editions of the Hippocratic Collection” *Bibliothèque interuniversitaire de médecine et d’odontologie*, http://www.bium.univparis5.fr/histmed/medica/hipp_va.htm

¹⁷*Hp. Art.* 62.

¹⁸This work would seem to be the source of part of the definition in Liddell and Scott (*LSJ*).

¹⁹*Hp. Fra.* 16.

²⁰*Verg. A.* 12.274.

²¹*Ov. Met.* 8.321.

Quinctius, according to Livy, rewarded his officers for valour with delicate gold chains and fibulae.²² This is possibly the first Latin record of the pin having the military function of an award of merit, valour or high achievement.²³

Going back further still, the earliest references to *περόνη*, both the bone and the pin, can be found in Classical Greece. In 429 BCE Sophocles used pins with shocking effect. He had Oedipus blind himself with *περόνας*, the pins of Jocasta, in the tragedy, *Oedipus Tyrannus*.²⁴ Herodotus (484-429 BCE) introduces an interesting anecdote about straight pins as ornaments in book 5 of *The Histories*. Sometime perhaps between 510 and the 480s BCE following a disastrous encounter between the Athenians and the Aeginetans²⁵, the sole survivor of the Athenian party returned to his city. The wives and mothers of the slain Athenians took their dress pins and stabbed him to death.²⁶ The result, according to Herodotus, was that the women of Athens were prohibited from wearing the long pins from that time onward. They were forced to abandon the Doric dress and began to wear the Ionic costume, which required no pins. Herodotus, with his customary attention to detail, added that the dress came from neighbouring Caria in the first place. Further, he informed his readers that, in response, the Aeginetans and the Argives enacted a law requiring that their women's straight pins be even longer by half.²⁷ Straight pins began

²² Quinctius alter praetor suos equites catellis ac fibulis donavit.

²³ Liv. 39.31.18.

²⁴ Soph. *OT* 1269.

²⁵ *OCD* 12.

²⁶ Hdt. 5.87.2-3.

²⁷ Ibid. 5.87-8.

to disappear around 550 BCE and pins and fibulae continued in the Greek archaeological record until about around 400-350 BCE.²⁸

The *Odyssey*, as well, features several references to the *perónē*. When Antinoos is attempting to impress Penelope with gifts, he presents her with a fine robe and "in it were twelve double pins, golden all through"; clearly, the pins were considered high status pieces²⁹. It may be worth noting that other suitors gave her a necklace and earrings but the robe and the pins are preeminent. Later, in an attempt to identify the stranger, Penelope asks him to describe what Odysseus was wearing. Odysseus, in disguise, describes the pin, *περόνη*, which he had worn when he left for the war.³⁰ This passage is astounding not only for the rich description in Homer but because Odysseus chooses to describe a pin, suggesting that it was an object which he apparently considered to be unmistakably his and with which he personally identified. The description runs for six lines. This passage is all the more fascinating because of where the pin may have originally been made.³¹ Lastly, ca. 800 BCE, the first reference to the pin, *περόνη*, can be found in the very first Greek literary work ever, the *Iliad*. Athena mocks the

²⁸H. L. Lorimer, *Homer and the Monuments*. (London: MacMillan & C. Ltd, 1950) 339, and Reynold Higgins, *Greek and Roman Jewellery*. (Berkeley: University of California Press. 1980), 132.

²⁹*Od.* 18.290-294

³⁰*Ibid.* 19.226-31

³¹This particular pin has been identified as what is called a "bolt fibula", and has only ever been found in Etruscan graves from the very early 7th century (Lorimer, 511). Several different examples of this kind of fastening device can be seen in Curtis, *Memoirs of the American Academy*, iii, 29, pl. 9 (1919).

wound of Aphrodite, saying that Aphrodite "tore the tenderness of her hand on a golden pin's point".³² Homer describes how the Gerenian horseman, Nestor, "pinned (περονήσατο) about him a great vermilion mantle"³³ and Hera "pinned (περονᾶτο) [an ambrosial robe] across her breast with a golden brooch (ἐνετῆσι)".³⁴

Concerning the *perónē* as a bone, Xenophon, (430-354 BCE) wrote about it in his instruction manual, *On the Art of Horsemanship*. He identified the lower leg of a horse as the shank, and, in speaking of the bones, called them the "pillars of the body". He added that if the horse was ridden over hard ground, "the legs will swell, and the skin will fall away, and when this gets loose the pin (περόνη), too, is apt to give way." As noted by the translator E.C. Marchant in a footnote in *On the Art of Horsemanship*, Xenophon was writing about the horse as it appeared from the outside. From a visual examination or by feeling the shank, a horse appears to have the second, smaller leg bone, but it is, in reality, "the back sinew of the shin".³⁵ Domesticated animals such as the cow, sheep and horse, as well as deer and antelope do not have fibulae, as they are "absent [in some mammals], as in ungulates".³⁶ This bone however is present in predator species, such as lions, wolves, dogs and bears, and a favoured object of the Greek hunt, the wild boar.³⁷

³²Hom. *Il.* 5.425.

³³Ibid. 10.132.

³⁴Ibid. 14.180.

³⁵Xenophon. *Scripta Minora*.. "Art Of Horsemanship" 1.5 Trans E.C. Marchant, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1968), 300-1.

³⁶Kent 191, 205.

³⁷Judith M. Barringer, *The Hunt in Ancient Greece*. (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press 2001) 15.

In an attempt to understand how the ancient Greeks viewed their own language, it is worth remarking that they made the study of the origins of Greek words a subject of serious intellectual inquiry. Plato (428– 348 BCE) explored the question in the dialogue, *Cratylus*. He put forward that “the correctness of all the names we have discussed was based upon the intention of showing the nature of the things named”.³⁸ Plato’s examples in the dialogue indicate that he felt that the name of something referred to unique qualities particular to the individual item. Following his logic, the bone, *perónē*, was called ‘the pin’ because of its function as a pin. Here it is well worth noting that both Greek and Latin are Indo-European languages. The root of *perónē* is **per-* in Proto-Indo-European and means, “to strike”.³⁹ The root of *fibula* is **d^hig^w-* and means “to stick, or to fix”.⁴⁰ These definitions are useful as they relate to function; they position the origins of the terms relative to each other in time, at least the Chalcolithic Era, and help to place the words in chronological sequence - the Greek *perónē* predating the Latin *fibula*.

In ancient Greek, the bone and the pin shared the same name, and as they have such a long associated history, it appears likely that the probable origin of the pin was, in fact, the bone itself. This particular bone had a particular function: it held things together. The bone was called the *περόνη* because it was used “to pierce or transfix”.⁴¹ If the pin had originally been made of some other material, then it

³⁸Plat. *Crat.* 422d.

³⁹Calvert Watkins, *The American Heritage Dictionary of Indo-European Roots*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000) 65.

⁴⁰Ibid. 20.

⁴¹s.v. *LSJ*⁹

would be unlikely that the bone and pin would share the same name. Further, if any other material or any other bone had been used as a fastener, it is plausible that the material or other bone would likely share its name with the pin.

In summary, the ancient Greek word for both the pin and the bone was *περόνη*, *perónē*. References to the pin are found in Homer, Herodotus and Sophocles, and to the bone in Xenophon, Hippocrates and Galen. Galen's work, "*The Usefulness of Parts of the Body*" was translated into French in 1566, at which time the French followed the Greek tradition and adopted *perónē* as the anatomical name. Today *péroné* remains the name of the bone in French, although in the 1970s it was replaced by *fibule* solely in medical and zoological material, presumably in response to the growing internationalization of science. In contrast, the Latin word *fibula* denoted the pin alone. In the eighth and ninth centuries Latin glossators identified *fibula* with the pin or brooch but still made no mention of the bone. The first instance of *fibula* as the bone seems to have occurred in 1310 with the Latin translation of Galen's "*The Usefulness of Parts of the Body*". English medical texts used both *fibula* and *péroné* into the 1700s, with the Latin being exclusively adopted sometime thereafter. Today, *fibula* and *fibule* are the names for the ancient pin or brooch in both English and French. Medicine in general uses *fibula* for the bone, while *péroné* continues to be the word for the bone in French.

Archaeology

The literary record of the clothes-fastener is, however, dwarfed when compared to the vast material history. The fullest and most varied account of the *fibula*, is the rich

chronology produced by the work of archaeologists who, over the last two and a half centuries, have unearthed and catalogued thousands of them throughout Greece, Rome and Europe as grave goods. However, the terminology for these objects can be distracting. H. L. Lorimer, in *Homer and the Monuments* firmly dispatched all notion that the *perónē* and the *fibula* could possibly be mistaken for the same thing when she wrote, "straight pin is the only possible meaning for this word [περόνη, *perónē*]... 'brooch' is really a pin with a hinged top plate, a 'shield', while 'fibula' is used by archaeologists to denote a fastener on the same principle as a safety pin".⁴² This safety pin design originated from an adaptation made to a straight pin by coiling the middle of a pin one and sometimes two full turns and hammering one end flat for the catch.⁴³ In what must surely have been a direct reference to both the story of the Athenian women and Sophocles' play, Lorimer noted that, "a safety pin, however large, is an unhandy instrument with which to murder a man and not particularly apt even for putting out one's own eyes".⁴⁴ More recent examples of the fibula style were made of gold, silver or bronze, and were highly decorated.⁴⁵ Further back in time they featured less ornamentation and gradually were simpler in design⁴⁶ until, in the early Mycenaean Age, the safety-pin shape disappears altogether.⁴⁷ After the collapse of the

⁴²Lorimer 338.

⁴³The penannular brooch favoured by the Celts is, in reality, a straight pin cut in two, with one half forged into an incomplete circle and the other half given an eyehole.

⁴⁴Lorimer 338.

⁴⁵Chr. Blinkenberg, *Fibules Grecques et Orientales*. Copenhagen: Andr. Fred. Host and Son, 1926), 104.

⁴⁶Ibid. 40.

⁴⁷Higgins 70.

Mycenaeans, the straight pins disappeared as well from the archaeological record. The pins re-entered Greece, in pairs again, at the end of the Greek Dark Age (1100-900 BCE).⁴⁸ Reminiscent of the return of the Heraklidai, the pins appear to have come back down from the north, from Indo-European cultures along the major rivers of southeastern Europe where the straight pins had an unbroken history from the Bronze Age.⁴⁹ The brooch, a pin with a hinged plate, became more widespread in the eastern Mediterranean by 600 BCE⁵⁰ and became enormously popular all over Europe in later centuries. But here the long, straight pin itself is of central importance, and less so the other adaptations. From deep in history and continuing up and into the Classical period, serving the function of clothes-fasteners and ornaments, were substantial straight pins, the *perónē*, made of gold, silver, iron and copper. The earliest pins were made of bone and continued to be made of bone even after the beginning of the Chalcolithic period (fig. 1).

Bone pins have been found in Greece and Crete. From the excavations at Karphi and the region of the Lasithi Plain, Crete, over two-dozen bone pins were recovered, dating from the Iron Age, one 13 cm long.⁵¹ Bone pins were also found in Paliakastro VII, of LM IB origin.⁵² A bone pin, apparently the only offering, was

⁴⁸Paul Jacobsthal, *Greek Pins and Their Connexions with Europe and Asia*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 182.

⁴⁹*Ibid.* 182, Higgins 90.

⁵⁰Lorimer 383.

⁵¹"Karphi. A City of Refuge of the Early Iron Age in Crete". anonymous. *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, (Vol. 38 1937/1938), 87-8, 91, 94, 96.

⁵²L. H. Sackett and Mervyn Popham, "Excavations at Palaikastro VII". *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, (Vol. 65, 1970), 239.

found in a Spartan grave of a male dating from the MH in Geraki.⁵³ Many straight pins dating to the early seventh century BCE have been found at the temple of Artemis Orthia also on the Acropolis in Sparta (of which only 11 were illustrated).⁵⁴ Some were of bronze and others of iron and all were in poor condition. The iron pins had rusted away and only the top bulbs or ornaments of bronze remained.⁵⁵ The site was damp and close to a watercourse, which explained the damage to the metal artifacts.⁵⁶ A remarkable seal stone with a double boar motif, a bronze dagger and five bone pins have been discovered in a LH III B chamber tomb in Argos.⁵⁷ Bone pins also have been unearthed from Indo-European warrior graves from the Black Sea region dating about 3000 BCE.⁵⁸ Others of the same period (which are illustrated in David Anthony's *The Horse, The Wheel and Language*) are approximately 15 cm long.⁵⁹ Bone pins from that period and that region are also on display (in The Hermitage, St. Petersburg, Russia) (fig. 2). What is perhaps most interesting above all is the enormous frequency of pins in graves in general, over the entire time period.

⁵³Joost Crouwel, "Prehistoric Geraki: work in progress." *Sparta and Laconia: From Prehistory to Pre-Modern*. (British School at Athens Studies, Vol. 16, 2009), 75.

⁵⁴R. M., Dawkins et al., "Laconia: I. Excavations at Sparta." *The Annual of the British School at Athens*. (Vol. 13, 1907) 109-10.

⁵⁵Ibid. 110.

⁵⁶Ibid. 117.

⁵⁷Nikolas Papadimitriou and K. Shelton, "T 164: An Early LH Built Chamber Tomb from Argos". *The Annual of the British School at Athens*. (Vol. 96, 2001), 48, 50, 62, 68.

⁵⁸David W. Anthony, *The Horse, The Wheel and Language*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 304.

⁵⁹Ibid. figs. 12.11, 13.9.

An object in a burial has significance. These pins represented special meaning for their owners and an importance over and above that of all the other excluded possessions. Bone pins, the first of the sort, were not difficult to make, so the significance was not due to the production method. Although metal artifacts were also found in the graves, the earliest pins were not made of this more exotic material. These facts suggest that the worth of the pin had some relationship to the material it was made of; the bone itself may have had a unique value. In later periods, despite the change in material from bone to iron and precious metals such as copper, silver and gold, the pin continued to carry a symbolic value: they are one of the objects most often found in internments. It is the view of the author that the original bone pin may have been the warrior's ultimate prestige good and his supreme definition of self. This bone pin may be symbolic of the successful completion of a young man's rites of passage.⁶⁰

This would never have been postulated were it not that this particular bone is strikingly unique. The *perónē* or *fibula* does not exist in domesticated food animals such as sheep, goats or cattle or in wild species such as deer and antelope.⁶¹ Long straight pins made out of these bones would have required the dispatching of a large predator species, such as bear, lion, panther, wolf or dog or a dangerous adversary such as the wild boar.⁶² A great deal

⁶⁰The term comes from Arnold van Gennep and his 1909 work, in *Les rites de passage*, which was translated in 1960 by Monika B.

Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Cuffee, with the same title, *The Rites of Passage*.

⁶¹Kent 205.

⁶²This bone is also present in other animals such as raccoons and guinea pigs, but is much too small to be considered a trophy of any kind.

of courage, strength and skill would have been necessary to obtain such bones. The bones are rare; each such animal has only two located in their lower hindquarters. One successful hunt would produce a pair of bones. Cleaning and sanding would produce a pair of pins, which could then been worn, one on each side of the upper chest, on material near the face, which is the primary area for display. This was also the customary method for fastening clothing and cloaks among Indo-European cultures from all of Europe east to the Tarim Basin in western China⁶³ (fig. 3).

To ascertain whether the bone could function as a pin, the author made a pin from the fibula of a coyote (fig. 4). The author took a coyote hind leg, skinned and defleshed it. Once the tibia and the fibula were separated from the femur at the knee, the two bones were found to be further joined at the top and bottom by sinew and connective tissue. The top part of the fibula separated moderately easily with a knife, but roughly the bottom one-quarter was more securely attached to the tibia. The fibula was then hewn free with a heavy stroke of a knife across the shaft where the sinew bound the lower parts of the bones together.⁶⁴ Sanding the cut end of the longer part of the fibula on a stone, with the grain, produced a smooth slightly rounded point that made the bone usable as a pin. The joint at the top of the bone prevented it from sliding through the fabric, and the rounded point prevented it from catching or cutting the threads. Not only did this prove the feasibility of the

⁶³Heather Pringle, "Battle for the Xinjiang Mummies". *Archaeology* (Vol. 63, 4. 2010), 35.

⁶⁴The bones were then boiled for half an hour. An Exacto knife was used to remove the leftover material. After the bones had dried, they were put in a Clorox bleach bath, which cleaned them up, but damaged the bones themselves. This is therefore not recommended.

bone as a pin, but it was also useful in indicating the comparative size of the bone pin. The coyote fibula was 14 cm in length and produced a pin about 9 cm in length; a wolf fibula is approximately 20 cm in length and would probably make a 15 cm pin, the same length as the two pins from the Indo-European graves mentioned earlier. This is very suggestive - the origin of the pin may have been that of a hunting trophy, which had the special representative value of courage, strength and skill. The bone pin would have had a compounded emblematic significance if the hunt were conducted as part of an initiation.

Initiation and Hunting

Walter Burkert gave a summary description of the function of initiations when he observed that these rituals helped one navigate "...the crisis-strewn path that leads to adult life".⁶⁵ The examination of initiation and other rituals associated with profound events such as birth, maturity, marriage and death began in earnest with the research of Arnold van Gennep. *Les rites de passage* was first published in 1909 and from its title comes the universally recognized term "rites of passage". The understanding of that term is owed to van Gennep's calm analysis and to his clear explanations. There are universal common moments of change in all human cultures.⁶⁶ These moments are generally dealt with in a similar way, by "rites of separation, transition rites and

⁶⁵Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*. trans. John Raffan (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985), 264.

⁶⁶Arnold van Gennep *The Rites of Passage*. trans. Monika B. Vizedom, Gabrielle L. Cuffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1960), 3.

rites of incorporation".⁶⁷ The transition from young man to adult is one of the most significant. The rituals were meant to "integrate the young into the patriotic community"⁶⁸ and were of grave import. There is no meaning without consequences. Successful completion of the rituals was essential; failure would destroy all of life's prospects.⁶⁹ Human cultures have long shared hunting as part of initiation rituals into male adulthood. In many parts of the world today fathers outfit their sons (and daughters) with hunting boots, camouflage clothing and their first rifles; younger children get wooden guns, plastic bows and plush deer heads to mount on their bedroom walls. Courage, stamina, stealth, and patience are all virtues that should be taught to the young.⁷⁰ From other regions, perhaps the best known hunting ritual is that of the Maasai of Africa documented fifty years ago (and reported by Queeny to be still going on whenever possible), the young male initiates, armed only with spears, were required to kill an adult male

⁶⁷Ibid. 11. Very recently, controversy has developed concerning van Gennep's work. One criticism is that he overlooked the multiple, unique qualities in the world's distinct cultures (Marinatos 2003:130). However, careful reading of *The Rites of Passage* clearly shows that van Gennep included, in the general framework of the universally recognized rites of passage which he illuminated, numerous and varied examples of culturally specific additions by diverse peoples to these rites. For the purpose of this investigation, van Gennep's analysis and his terminology, including rites of passage, initiation, and the three-part process of separation, transition and incorporation are accepted as he defined them.

⁶⁸Burkert, Walter, *Homo Necans*. trans. Peter Bing (Berkeley: University of California Press 1983), 48.

⁶⁹ibid. 26.

⁷⁰Xen. *Hunt*. 12.6.

lion to establish their warrior status.⁷¹

For the ancient Greeks, hunting was part of their rituals of initiation as well.⁷² For the definitive Greek coming of age story, consider the boar hunt in the *Odyssey*. When Odysseus was old enough, he went to visit his grandfather Autolykos from whom he received wonderful presents. Following a splendid sacrifice and a night of feasting, Odysseus and his uncles, the sons of Autolykos, went on a boar hunt with their dogs and retainers. Odysseus was the first to spear the boar but received a terrible wound. However, with careful tending by his mother's family, Odysseus survived. He bore the scar all his life and the memory of the event never faded.⁷³ Greek heroes faced some of their most memorable challenges when hunting boar: the Calydonian boar of Aetolia, Theseus and the Crommyonian sow, and Herakles against the Erymanthian pig.

Hunting was regarded as preparation and training for the warrior⁷⁴ and was part of the rights of passage for males in Sparta and Crete.⁷⁵ Spartan males in their schooling were bound together by age group and, at the age of adulthood, participated in the *krypteia* where these young men stalked, hunted and killed individuals in their slave population at night.⁷⁶ On Crete, youths of a certain

⁷¹Edgar Monsanto Queeny, "Spearing Lions with Africa's Masai", *National Geographic*. (Vol. CVI 487-517, Washington: National Geographic, 1954) 492, *ibid.*, 497.

⁷²Barringer 10.

⁷³*Od.* 19. 409-466.

⁷⁴Xen. *Hunt.* 12.1.

⁷⁵Barringer 10-11.

⁷⁶Nancy Demand, *A History of Ancient Greece In Its Mediterranean Context*. (Cornwall-on-Hudson: Sloan Publishing, 2006), 137.

age joined the men in their halls as a class of servants. They received military and endurance training, and practiced the "war-dance, which was invented and made known by the Curetes", or Kouretes, the warrior guardians of the baby Zeus.⁷⁷ Knowing the steps, the movements and the music of these dances "confer on you definite social status"⁷⁸ and are part of the initiation ritual. At first the young men rose with experience and finally spent months away from the towns and their families in the countryside hunting and enjoying the company of older men.⁷⁹ When the young men returned, they were given "a military habit, an ox and a drinking-cup".⁸⁰ As bachelors they enjoyed great freedom, were grouped into a unit or herd, an *αγέλη* or an *agela*, and would "devote themselves to hunting, sport and ritual contests, which take place on appointed days to the accompaniment of music".⁸¹

The Athenians considered hunting a major interest, and this is attested to, by inference, through the visual record.

Scenes of the hunt on pottery were common; the prey most often pictured was the boar and deer, and sometimes the hare and panther.⁸² The hunters were mounted or unmounted, individual or in groups, with hunting weapons or those usually associated with battle.⁸³ Xenophon wrote

⁷⁷Strab. 10.3.7.

⁷⁸Jane E. Harrison. "The Kouretes and Zeus Kouros: A Study in Pre-Historic Sociology". *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, (Vol. 15 Published by: British School at Athens 1908/1909), 326.

⁷⁹Burkert 1985, 261.

⁸⁰Strab. 10.4.21.

⁸¹Burkert 1985. 261.

⁸²Barringer 60-9.

⁸³Barringer 60-9.

an entire book about it.⁸⁴ It is unclear how hunting may have figured in an initiation ritual, but Athens did have a system for training its youth for later responsibilities called the *Ephebeia*.⁸⁵ The written record for the *Ephebeia* is difficult to piece together, however, Plutarch seemed to indicate that it existed during the time of Alcibiades, in the middle of the fifth century BCE.⁸⁶ The duties of the Athenian young males included swearing an oath, "to defend public and religious institutions, to help expand the territory and to obey the laws".⁸⁷ Attendance lasted for two years according to Aeschines.⁸⁸ Referencing Aristotle's *Athenian Constitution*, the young men at age 18 attended a three-year enlistment. They were marshaled together in units, participated in a religious ceremony that involved "making a circuit of the temples", and spent the first year in drill and weapons training. After that first year there was an assembly where the novices "received a shield and spear from the state", at which time they began wearing a military-style cloak. They then spent a further two years guarding the countryside. During this time they enjoyed special status.⁸⁹

Regarding Macedonian customs, Athenaeus reported an example of hunting as an initiation ritual into adult male society when he noted that, to join in at dinner and properly recline on benches as a man, one had to have first killed a

⁸⁴Xen. *Hunt*.

⁸⁵Barringer 47.

⁸⁶Plut. *Alc.* 15.4. Considering the period, it seems likely that rituals of this kind would have been older than written records themselves.

⁸⁷Barringer 49.

⁸⁸Aeschin. 2.167-8.

⁸⁹Aristot. *Const. Ath.* 42.1-5.

wild boar without a net.⁹⁰ Plutarch observed that older males presented their young favourites with armour when they came of age, which is reminiscent of the rituals of Crete and Athens.⁹¹ The frequency and wide distribution throughout the Greek world of Hermes depicted both as a youth and as a bearded man - as Marinatos puts it, "Hermes in two forms" - indicates that he may have functioned as a mediator between "adolescence and mature adulthood and that his role was to be a 'guide' across boundaries".⁹² It is therefore justified to conclude that all Greeks had some form of ritual initiation containing similar elements of physical and mental training and the honing of hunting skills, which would be useful for the warrior and the citizen.⁹³ The substance of these rites would have come down over the centuries from their ancestors.

Bones and Trophies

Ancient or primitive hunting trophies should be considered in their chronological and cultural contexts. The *Metamorphoses* provides the reader with a sparkling and subtle awareness that, for the ancients and for less

⁹⁰Ath. *Dei.*1.18.

⁹¹Plu. *Mor.* 761 b as cited by Barringer, 113. Includes reference to *Lyc.* 17.1, 15.3.

⁹²Nanno Marinatos, "Striding across boundaries: Hermes and Aphrodite as gods of initiation." *Initiation in Ancient Greek Ritual and Narratives: New Critical Perspectives.* eds. David Brooks Dodd and Christopher A. Faraone (London: Routledge, 2003). 138.

⁹³Regarding the ancient Greeks, this process has by some, been called simply 'training for civic responsibilities', but the age sets, religious rites, separation, military training and then re-entry into the citizen body are all hallmarks of a standard initiatory practice, regardless of the simplicity or complexity of the culture.

differentiated societies, much of the natural world was imbued with an energy with which the post-modern 21st century West is entirely unfamiliar.⁹⁴ The spheres of spiritual and temporal concerns overlapped, and daily life was not far removed from its "magico-religious foundations".⁹⁵ The animal artifacts which remain - the skins, bones, claws, feathers and teeth - were never solely ornamental but were infused with meaning as well. Humans have always gathered skulls, horns, antlers and bones in ritual assemblages.⁹⁶ In Western cultures today, mothers put away baby teeth and little locks of hair. In the deep past, tooth-pendants of the cave bear and fox, as well as stone, ivory and shell beads have been unearthed from Aurignacian deposits dating from 43,000 to 21,000 BCE in Hungary and southern Austria.⁹⁷ Peoples of New Guinea had dogtooth necklaces, which were used during death exchanges.⁹⁸ They also wore double boar tusks, especially when joined to form an almost perfect circle, as amulets, and the Nagas of Assam did the same.⁹⁹ Boar-tusk amulets have been found at various locations in Greece and other parts of the Balkan Peninsula.¹⁰⁰ Double lion claws and

⁹⁴Ov. *Met.*

⁹⁵Gennep 2.

⁹⁶Burkert 1983, 38.

⁹⁷Joachim Hahn, "Aurignacian Signs, Pendants and Art Objects in Central and Eastern Europe." *World Archaeology*. (Vol. 3, No. 3, 1972), 252, 255, 259-60.

⁹⁸Paula Brown, "Chimbu Death Payments." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*. (Vol.91, No. 1, 1961), 85.

⁹⁹William Ridgeway, "The Origin of the Turkish Crescent". *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*. (Vol. 38, Jul. - Dec., 1908), 242.

¹⁰⁰*ibid.* 245.

leopard claws functioned in a similar fashion for peoples of Uganda and East Africa and, in India, tiger claws were valued, worn, and contained ritual power.¹⁰¹

Pausanias described how the tusks of the Calydonian boar were kept in the Temple of Athena Alea at Tegea in Arcadia, and should have remained there but for the fact that Augustus learned of them after the defeat of Antony and took them back to Rome.¹⁰² Goat horns were found under the floors of the temple of Apollo at Dreros.¹⁰³

Vergil described the offerings that Nisus made at the temple of Diana, when he entreated her, saying "...I myself have enriched your altars with the spoils of my hunting, hanging my offerings in the dome of your temple or nailing them on your holy gables".¹⁰⁴ Wolf tooth amulets and wolf fur were reported by Pliny to have been used to make children less fearful, and the wearing of a lion's tooth would influence how one was perceived by the general public and by the aristocracy.¹⁰⁵

In North America the canine teeth of mammals were an almost constant feature on indigenous apparel. The perforated canine teeth of elk, bear, horse, buffalo, and members of the dog family have been documented, and the use of elk teeth on clothing is almost conclusive proof that it originated with the Northern Plains Indians.¹⁰⁶ Men wore

¹⁰¹Ibid. 242.

¹⁰²Paus. 8.46.1.

¹⁰³Spyridon Marinatos, "Le temple geometrique de Dreros". *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*. (Volume 60, 1936) 224.

¹⁰⁴Ver. Aen. 9.407-10.

¹⁰⁵Plin. Nat. 28.78, 28.25.

¹⁰⁶Raymond W. Wood, "Perforated Elk Teeth: A Functional and Historical Analysis". *American Antiquity*, (Vol. 22, No. 4, 1957), 381.

the teeth on necklaces often accompanied by bear claws and other articles, or alone as ritual objects. The largest collections of elk teeth were featured on the apparel of women with as many as 100 to 600 sewn on the upper parts of the garment, and a proper dress required 300.¹⁰⁷ These costumes showed enormous prestige, hunting ability and economic value when one considered that 100 teeth would purchase a horse.¹⁰⁸

A powerful expression of hunting prowess and status or authority in Mediterranean antiquity was the boar tusk helmet, particularly popular in LHI and LHII Bronze Age Greece, and indeed considered a "characteristic of Bronze Age Greece" itself.¹⁰⁹ Astoundingly, such a helmet is found fully described in the *Iliad*. The explanation is straightforward: it was made of an inner system of leather straps covered with felt upon which were sewn dozens of boar-tusk plaques, each perforated in the four corners.¹¹⁰ This was ivory armour.¹¹¹ Experience with teeth from various species suggests that the boar tusk was fairly easy to split along its central axis, especially when thoroughly dried. What is quite staggering is the number of tusks that would be required to create such a piece; perhaps 80 to 100 tusk plates, 2 plates per tusk, 2 tusks per animal, therefore 20 to 25 wild boars.¹¹² This helm can be considered as

¹⁰⁷Ibid. 382-3.

¹⁰⁸Ibid. 383.

¹⁰⁹Lorimer 217, 212.

¹¹⁰Hom. *Il.* 10.261-5.

¹¹¹And not the first of its kind. This could be called a characteristic of Indo-Europeans; 'high status graves found on the Dneiper River', see notes 118-120.

¹¹²Lorimer estimated 70-80 tusks but did not consider that they were split down the axis into 2, 214, based on Reichel HW.2.

nothing less than a declaration of power and great hunting prowess. Its scarcity even in prestige graves shows that it was a rare and precious item.¹¹³

In the modern world, trophies from the hunt remain popular. Deer canine teeth, fox teeth, boar bristles, talons and other Jagdtrophäen can be set into fine gold and silver jewelry today. This style of jewelry has been fashionable in Europe for centuries. Trophy racks and candelabra made of antlers are popular among rural and urban Western cultures alike.

This kind of emblem, sign or trophy, be it a necklace of deer teeth, a boar-tusk amulet or a pair of straight pins worn in clothing around the face would convey the same message in all cultures. It would confirm to everyone that the person bearing these objects had conquered his fears, had mastered the skills, had faced dangers and had made the successful transition from boy to man - that he had passed his initiation. In ancient Greece, the *περόνη* or *perónē* constitutes a surprisingly large portion of grave goods. A pin, buckle or brooch is referred to as a symbol of royalty or high status by the Greek Seleucids in 1 Maccabees 10.89. An early Latin record of a pin having the military function of an award of merit, valour or high achievement is found in Livy. Lucius Quinctius, according to Livy, rewarded his officers for valour with delicate gold chains and fibulae.¹¹⁴ An inscription in Greek from Egypt of the first century refers to a military award in the form of a pin being given to an official.¹¹⁵ There is also a Greek

¹¹³Ibid. 215.

¹¹⁴Liv. 39.31.18. "Quinctius alter praetor suos equites catellis ac fibulis donavit."

¹¹⁵s.v. *LSJ*⁹.

word, *πέρπερος*, *perpereu*, which means vainglorious,¹¹⁶ suggesting by its root repetition, that perhaps wearing too many pins was considered ostentatious. As mentioned earlier, warrior graves have been abundant sources of bone pins in Greek and other Indo-European regions dating back to roughly 3,000 BCE and the Copper Age.

The Greeks are part of a large language family, and it is understood that the Indo-Europeans shared much more than just linguistic roots. The ancestors of Celts, Germans, Slavs, Romans, Greeks and others migrated west out of a large area consisting of the Pontic-Caspian Steppes, Ukraine, Bulgaria, and Romania during what has been called The Yamnaya Horizon, around 3300-2500 BCE.¹¹⁷ Evidence has been found for shared knowledge of a male deity, myths, all the words for the wagon and its parts, cattle herding, a reverence for horses, horseback riding, the notion of the guest-friend, and elaborate funeral rituals. Boar-tusk ornaments, dog-tooth necklaces, and thin bird-bone tubes accompanied the dead.¹¹⁸ Hundreds of boar-tusk plaques, perforated on the four corners have been found in high status graves of about 4,300 BCE on the Dnieper River and the north shore of the Sea of Azov in the Ukraine, the heart of this region, including 40 sewn directly onto the thighs and shirt of one single male.¹¹⁹ Daggers, axes, red ochre, deer teeth, dog teeth and bone pins were also placed in these ancestral graves.¹²⁰

Wolves and dogs played very prominent roles in

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Anthony 300.

¹¹⁸Ibid. 182, 249, 362, figs. 9.7, 11.10.

¹¹⁹Ibid. 181.

¹²⁰Ibid. 249, 303-4.

this culture. The animals functioned in mid-winter rituals and sacrifices, and represented death.¹²¹ These Indo-Europeans occupied an area centred only 800 km north of Macedonia. They are believed to have engaged in male initiation rituals. The juveniles collected in groups referred to as *Männerbünde*, which is defined as:

“A cultic warrior brotherhood of young males, bound by oath to a god and to each other and a ritual union with their ancestors, in training to be the men, or the leading men, of their society. The word is used in age-set systems in which the military aspect of the youth’s formation is particularly important” (Kershaw 2000: xi).¹²²

This “band of men” called *koryos*, were known for the belts they wore.¹²³ Their goal or mission was, in small part, to steal cattle. Their symbol was the dog or wolf and they may have been dressed in nothing but wolf or dog pelts. The initiates wore two belts and the leader wore one. The graves of these warriors contained metal objects, red ochre, dog-

¹²¹Ibid. 410.

¹²²The premise that *Männerbünde* were characteristic of Indo-European cultures is fortified by a century of research by scholars of literature, mythology, historical records, linguistics and archaeology. Kris Kershaw’s monograph, *The one-eyed god: Odin and the Indo-Germanic Männerbünde*, provides plentiful references to earlier writers on the subject, linguistic reconstructions and synthesis and is an excellent source for the topic which is not within the scope of this paper. Kershaw points out that *Männerbünde* “was an established item of the anthropologist’s lexicon well before [the 1930s]” (Kershaw 2000 xi), but others in the academic community consider this concept, applied to pre-historic Europe, to be highly speculative.

¹²³Anthony 364.

tooth necklaces and, in some, bone pins.¹²⁴ At this time, it is unknown what species the bones came from, but it seems likely it was a dog or wolf, if indeed, anatomically, they had differentiated by that time.

These archaic rituals from five thousand years ago, the Chalcolithic Era, find striking parallels in Greece some 1500 years later. During the Mycenaean Period there is evidence for a dominant male deity, wagons, cattle herding, a special fondness for horses, the guest-friend relationship and elaborate funeral rituals. In the *Iliad*, Agamemnon, Menelaus and Diomedes, all wearing animal pelts, planned a daring night raid on the Trojan camp.¹²⁵ Also in the *Iliad*, during the games held following the death of Patroklos, participants in athletics wore nothing but their belts.¹²⁶ All regions of Greece had some kind of male initiation ritual, which featured training, hunting, and often, daring exploits. According to Spartan historical narratives, their ancestors, the *Heraklidae*, came from the north down into the Peloponnese.¹²⁷ The Spartan warrior wore a cloak the colour of red ochre, which was secured about the shoulders by a fastening pin, a *perónē*. The graves in the Kerameikos indicate that the soldiers may have been interred with these exact same items.

In Book II of the *Hellenica*, Xenophon recounts how Chaeron, Thibrachus, Locrates and other Spartan warriors were buried in the Athenian graveyard, the Kerameikos in 403 BCE.¹²⁸ This mass grave of 13

¹²⁴Ibid. 304, 364.

¹²⁵Hom. *Il.* 10.20, 29, 177

¹²⁶Hom. *Il.* 23.680.

¹²⁷Demand 136.

¹²⁸Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.32-34.

individuals is very significant, as it is “the only surviving example of a tomb of Spartan warriors”.¹²⁹ When it was excavated in 1930, it was discovered that the Spartans were not interred with any grave goods.¹³⁰ They were also buried without their helmets, armour, weapons or shields. The Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Athens has confirmed that the Spartans were laid to rest in a cloth material, which is presumed to be their red cloaks.¹³¹ The Keramikos is a low-lying area with the Eridanos River running through it. Due to the damp conditions, no iron pins would have survived, but their bronze ornamental tops should be present. The Institut has verified that small metal artifacts have been found in the graves.¹³² The Spartans’ cloaks were their shrouds and their pins may have represented great personal and cultural worth. The pins themselves may have been tokens of initiation into the warrior’s life and their supreme definition of self.

The premise that the pin was far more than a simple device used “to pierce or transfix” finds support in etymology and archaeology. There are, however, many

¹²⁹Jutta Stroszeck, “Kerameikos I: The discovery of the Ancient Cemetary”, *Great Moments in Greek Archaeology*. ed. P. Valavanis, (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum 2007) 65.

¹³⁰Franz. Willemsen, “Zu den Lakonien im Kerameikos” *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Athenische Abteilung* (1977), 132.

¹³¹Jutta Stoszeck, “Lakonisch-rotfigurige Keramik aus den Lakedaimoniergräbern am Kerameikos von Athen (403 v. Chr.) *Archäologischer Azeiger* (2006).

¹³²Stroszeck 2011 pl. Final identification of these artifacts is forthcoming. The Spartan burials are the focus of an extensive publication that is currently being prepared by Dr. Jutta Stroszeck and the DAI and will cover work done at the site over the last 80 years.

questions that remain to be answered and trails to be followed before the argument that the pins were ritual liminal objects can be proven conclusively. The species from which the Greek bone pins originated must be ascertained. Of critical interest are the pins from Indo-European graves found in Ukraine and presently in Russian museums. It remains to be determined whether the bone pins have been examined by osteologists for species identification, and it would be most useful to obtain DNA analyses of them if such tests have been performed. Notwithstanding, it does appear that the narrative of this bone pin traces back 6,000 years to the Chalcolithic Era, the Copper Age, in Thrace and the Pontic-Caspian Steppes. The pin, based on the evidence presented here, likely was first made from a most unique bone, and both shared the name *perónē*. Linguistic and material metamorphoses have taken place over the millennia, but the bone and the pin have survived in the Western lexicon to this day. The *perónē* appears to have been a cultural symbol of accomplishment and this ritual emblem has persisted into the historic era: we still pin medals on our heroes.

List of Illustrations:

Figure 1. Artist's interpretation of styles after descriptions from Blinkenberg and Higgins. Drawings by the author.

Figure 2. Bone "tools", Black Sea Littoral, Hermitage Museum.

Photograph by and permission of Dr. S. Downie.

Figure 3. Figure made of wood showing position of double pins, ca. 1500 BCE, Tarim Basin.

Drawing by the author, from a photograph by Victor Mair, with permission.

Figure 4. From top to bottom, coyote tibia and fibula, fibula alone and bone pin.

Produced and photographed by the author.

Illustrations:

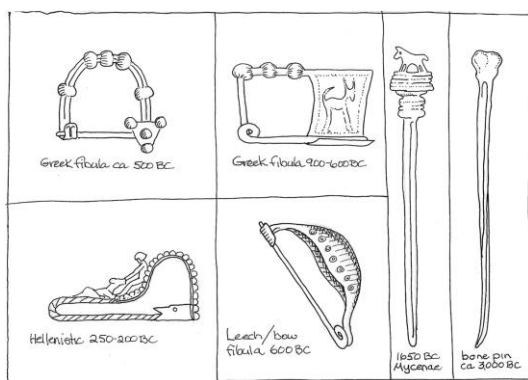


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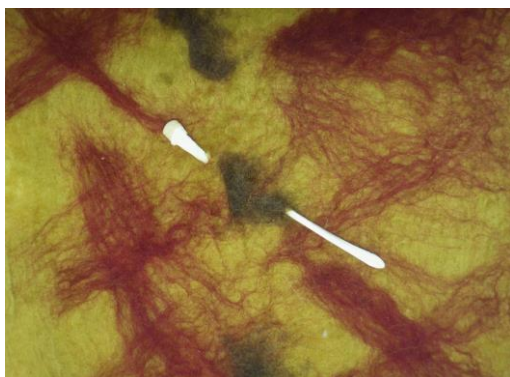


Fig.3. Top to bottom, coyote tibia and fibula, fibula alone,
and pin.
Produced and photographed by the author.

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DIRECT AND INDIRECT BIAS IN TACITUS' *HISTORIES*

SCOTT DANIEL WINGES

In both of Cornelius Tacitus' grand historical works, *Historiae* and *Annales*, he vowed to be an independent, impartial historian, steadfastly bent on pursuing veracity.¹ In the case of the *Annals*, Tacitus believed that this was feasible since he lacked the "...customary incentives..." required for *ira et studium*.² Presumably, he meant that he had no reason for hatred or favouritism since the reigns of the Julio-Claudian dynasty were either before his time or during his early childhood. His childhood may also suffice as an explanation for his assertion of non-partisanship in the *Histories* with respect to S. Sulpicius Galba, M. Salvius Otho and A. Vitellius. As for the Flavians - T. Flavius Vespasianus Senior and Junior, and T. Flavius Domitianus - Tacitus patently disclosed his relationship with them, but was still resolved to maintain his standard of impartiality.

As noble as this precept of Tacitus might sound,

¹Tac.*Hist.*1.1, Tac.*Ann.*1.1

²Tac.*Ann.*1.1 Although Tacitus himself may have been exempt from persecution, at least one member of his extended family was murdered by Emperor Gaius (Caligula). Gn. Julius Agricola's father, the erudite L. Julius Graecinus became a senator during the reign of Tiberius and reached the rank of praetor. His refusal to prosecute M. Junius Silanus at Caligula's behest brought about his demise (Syme, *Tacitus*, 20). This could have affected Tacitus' outlook on Caligula. Unfortunately, how Tacitus broached this subject (or whether he even described it at all) is unknown since the account of Caligula's reign is not extant.

biases will always exist. It is unavoidable, and as stringently as authors may try, their biases, moulded through their experiences, will seep into their writings subtly or otherwise. Of course, biases are not all of one category. There are familial, personal, political, cultural, social, and religious biases to name a few, and there can be considerable overlap between them. The previously listed biases might be further categorized according to the person's degree of engagement - in other words, whether it is 'indirect' or 'direct'. Those biases that develop through incidents that do not directly include the person, but certainly have an impact on him, I have classified as 'indirect' biases whereas those that arise from experiences that involve the person directly I have labelled 'direct' biases. The purpose of this paper will be to determine whether it is possible that an indirect bias with respect to familial ties and a direct bias with regard to his own personal experiences exist in Tacitus' *Histories*.

A Miser and Two Scoundrels

"As for myself, Galba, Otho and Vitellius were known to me neither as benefactors nor as enemies."³

Thus reads Tacitus' 'disclaimer' in the prologue of his work. It appears to hold true insofar as these emperors were most likely not direct benefactors nor enemies of Tacitus. Since Cornelius Tacitus' birth is generally assigned to either 55 or 56 CE,⁴ he would have been no more than

³Tac.*Hist.*1.1

⁴Anthony R. Birley, 'The Life and Death of Cornelius Tacitus', *HZAG* 49.2.2 (2000), 230-247. Birley posits a *terminus post quem* of AD 58 (236).

fourteen years old during the Year of the Four Emperors (69 CE), and as a result, ineligible for military or political duties. However, this does not necessarily preclude family or friends and consequently, Galba, Otho and Vitellius may in fact be indirect benefactors or enemies of Tacitus.

Information on Tacitus' family, let alone Tacitus himself, is extremely scarce. At best, there is conjecture that his father was a procurator of *Gallia Belgica*.⁵ On the basis of more recent findings, Birley speculates that his mother may have hailed from the *gens Caecina*.⁶ There is no evidence that Tacitus' family was mistreated by Galba, Otho or Vitellius. As for Tacitus, he remains completely silent on the topic of his family. Be that as it may, this is certainly not the case with his spouse's family. In his monograph entitled *Agricola*, Tacitus wrote about several members of her family. A number of these members suffered abuse or the death penalty at the hands of these or earlier emperors, and this could have affected Tacitus' opinion of them.

The ignominious death of Julia Procilla, the

⁵ Ronald Syme, *Tacitus Two Volumes*, (Oxford, 1958) 613. The father was also called Cornelius Tacitus. He is mentioned in Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (Syme, *Tacitus*, 60).

⁶Birley, 'Life and Death of Cornelius Tacitus', 232. A funeral inscription discerned by Geza Alföldy to be of Tacitus hints at the existence of further names for the historian. Based on the environmental context and the restrictions of the inscription itself, Birley speculates that the possible names are Caecina Paetus. These names could reflect Tacitus' maternal family since it was not unusual for additional names to be taken from the mother's line (230-232). If this deduction is true, and Tacitus is related to the *gens Caecina Paeti*, it could shed light on whether Tacitus exhibits a bias towards various Caecinae Paeti and if so it aids in answering why.

dignified mother of Gn. Julius Agricola, could have given Tacitus a jaded view of Otho. The account of her death is related in the *Agricola*. According to Tacitus, she was murdered on her own estate, which was situated near the town of Intimilium, in 69 CE. She was one of many victims of Otho's marauding fleet.⁷ The coastal raiding of Otho's men is also depicted in Tacitus' *Histories*.⁸ Interestingly, and perhaps significantly, there is no mention of Julia Procilla, even when he discussed the raid against the town of Albintimilium.⁹ It is possible he believed that a story of such a nature was not appropriate for the grand theme of history. More likely, he consciously chose to omit that story from his work lest he be accused of bias against Otho, and justifiably so, since the killing of the mother of his beloved father-in-law would likely affect his opinion of Otho. Granted, Otho was not in charge of the raid, or even in command of the fleet, however, they were still his men and he was the one who had chosen such unqualified leaders.¹⁰

Indeed, perhaps Procilla is not absent from this account, but is included or at least alluded to in a surreptitious way. The anecdote of the courageous Ligurian woman is curious.¹¹ The description of a brave woman, a victim of the same raid and near the same town as Procilla, makes it tempting to substitute that woman with Procilla, and perhaps this was Tacitus' intention. If this is true, then one might infer that Tacitus was aware he was biased with

⁷Tac.*Agr.*7

⁸Tac.*Hist.*2.12-13

⁹Tac.*Hist.*2.12-13, Tac.*Agr.*7 note 19. Albintimilium is an alternate name for Intimilium.

¹⁰Tac.*Hist.*2.12

¹¹Tac.*Hist.*2.12-13

respect to Procilla, but was still determined to pay tribute to her so he opted to express the incident in a furtive manner. In this way, Tacitus appears unbiased as he is not outwardly associating his father-in-law's mother's death with Otho's attack, but at the same time he is doing just that - albeit obliquely. Readers of his monograph are free to draw inferences of their own. Nevertheless, the possibility remains that Procilla's death did affect his overall opinion of Otho and would lead Tacitus to possess a familial, indirect bias towards him.

*It was the best of times, it was the worst of times*¹²

"My official career owed its beginning to Vespasian, its progress to Titus and its further advancement to Domitian. I have no wish to deny this; but writers who claim to be honest and reliable must not speak about anybody with either partiality or hatred."¹³

This admission of benefactions along with his claim that it will not affect his partiality naturally induces the reader of the *Histories* to test the validity of his statement by looking for indications of flattery. If he owed his career to the Flavians, how could he not show signs of gratitude? At first, Tacitus' very critical characterization of Domitian presents him as the independent historian, especially in light of the honours received by him. Possibly his quaestorship and military command, and definitely his praetorship, a priesthood and consulship were owed to Domitian.¹⁴ However, although admittedly meagre, if one

¹²Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*, 1.

¹³Tac.Hist.1.1

¹⁴Syme, *Tacitus*, 65.

considers all the references to Domitian in the *Histories* as a whole, one cannot help but sense that Tacitus harboured a hatred for him. Domitian is depicted as a rapacious youth, already exhibiting indecent traits at a young age, which are soon masked under a deceptively congenial veneer.¹⁵ In fact, he is in some ways the antithesis of Titus, suspected of disloyalty even to his own family and inclined towards cruelty.¹⁶ At this point, it would be wise to recall Tacitus' own caveat in his preface: "adulation bears the ugly taint of subservience, but malice gives the false impression of being independent".¹⁷ The *Agricola* reveals that the catalysts for his indignation towards Domitian were familial and personal and so this time Tacitus' bias was not only indirect, but also direct.

Even if Otho's indirect responsibility for the death of Julia Procilla did not engender feelings of resentment on the part of Tacitus, Domitian's treatment of his beloved father-in-law, Agricola, certainly did. The monograph alone is a vivid testimony to the importance of this man in Tacitus' life. He has nothing but the utmost respect for Agricola; in fact, his monograph often reads like a panegyric. Nevertheless, Agricola was sorely mistreated by Domitian. He denigrated him. He was jealous of his achievements and his authority. He compelled him into early retirement.¹⁸ Domitian even deprived him of what was considered a senator's prerogative - the proconsulship

¹⁵Tac.*Hist.*4.2, 40, 68

¹⁶Tac.*Hist.*4.86

¹⁷Tac. *Hist.* 1.1.

¹⁸Tac.*Agr.*42 He was forty-four years old (Syme, *Tacitus*, 23).

Although some may argue that he retired of his own volition, he really had no other option, considering that he had incurred the envy of Domitian.

of either Asia or Africa.¹⁹ Indeed, rumour had it that Domitian had even been responsible for Agricola's death.²⁰ This mistreatment of a revered father-in-law would have made it very difficult not to develop a familial, indirect bias towards Domitian.

Tacitus must have known that his relationship with Agricola would jeopardize his claim to impartiality. Perhaps for that reason, Agricola is not mentioned or alluded to once in the extant portion of the *Histories*.²¹ Discussion of Agricola might only serve to remind readers of the monograph, in which Tacitus vehemently denounced Domitian. This would shatter his credibility as an independent historian when he described Domitian's life and reign in the *Histories*. Perhaps he also refrained from mentioning Agricola because Agricola was a partisan of Vespasian. He had joined this imperial contender after the death of his mother.²² Not only that, but Agricola also received many significant honours under Vespasian. Vespasian bestowed upon him patrician status, the governorship of Aquitania, a consulship, a priestly office and the governorship of Britannia.²³ He was treated very well by Vespasian, and consequently this might have greatly manipulated Tacitus' opinion of Vespasian, or at least readers would be inclined to believe that Tacitus was pro-Vespasian on account of this. As it already stands, his characterization of Vespasian is significantly more positive

¹⁹Tac. *Agr.*42

²⁰Tac. *Agr.*43 On the one hand, Tacitus did concede that undeniable evidence of poison was wanting. On the other hand, he did not categorically dismiss the rumour (43).

²¹Syme, *Tacitus*, 21, note 8.

²²Tac. *Agr.*7

²³Syme, *Tacitus*, 22.

than his descriptions of the other emperors. Discussing Agricola in detail could only hurt his claims to veracity and impartiality.

Of course, one does not have to look as far as Agricola to find a reason for Tacitus' enmity towards Domitian. The *Agricola* paints a vivid picture of the atmosphere of Domitian's reign. According to Tacitus, "Fifteen whole years... [were] taken from us... [and] all the most energetic have fallen victims to the cruelty of the emperor."²⁴ For Tacitus, this period was a nightmare - a period where "every sigh was registered against us; and when we all turned pale, [Domitian] did not scruple to make us marked men by a glance of his savage countenance".²⁵ Tacitus witnessed the deaths of fellow senators - colleagues or possibly even friends. His description makes it seem as though his very life was constantly at risk. He also appears to have felt deeply guilty for the death of his fellow senators: "...we senators led Helvidius to prison, watched in shame the sufferings of Mauricus and Rusticus and stained ourselves with Senecio's innocent blood".²⁶ Tacitus may have emerged from this period physically unscathed, but clearly not mentally. As his description shows, he could not help but harbour animosity towards Domitian, an animosity that would have given birth to a personal, direct bias and would have overwhelmed any of Domitian's positive traits. Unfortunately, since Domitian's reign in the *Histories* is not extant, one can never know how Tacitus portrayed him in that work. However, the few insights that have survived

²⁴Tac.Agr.3

²⁵Tac.Agr.45

²⁶Tac.Agr.45

imply a Domitian much like the one portrayed in the *Agricola*.

There is no absolute evidence that Tacitus' opinion of the emperor Otho was affected by the death of Julia Procilla, since after all she was not a blood relative. Likewise, the characterization of Vespasian and Domitian may very well be well-balanced or as balanced as any historian could have made it. However, total acceptance of this is rather difficult since the adulation and reverence that Tacitus lavishes on Agricola, leads the reader to believe any assault on Agricola and his family was an affront to Tacitus as well. In the same way, the tumultuous and horrifying personal experiences of Domitian's reign as presented in the *Agricola* must have had a significant effect on Tacitus' psyche. When it came time to write the *Histories*, it would have been virtually impossible to lay that aside. Although the *Histories* reveal other biases as well, both indirect and direct, especially with respect to Domitian, Tacitus' familial and personal biases would have had the greatest impact on his account of that emperor's character and reign.

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A LEGACY OF GREATNESS: THE PORTRAYAL OF ALEXANDER IN ABRAHAMIC TRADITIONS

HAJAR SARAH TOHME

Abstract

This essay analyzes the role of Alexander the Great in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It addresses many different sources, including various versions of the Alexander Romance as well as the narratives of Joseph Ben-Gorion, which have influenced Alexander's reputation in these three traditions. The analysis of the Judaic tradition focuses on two accounts of Alexander's time in Jerusalem. The portion about the Christian tradition compares the different reasons behind the portrayals of Alexander the Great among the Roman Christians and the Christians of the east. This essay also addresses the Islamic tradition in which Alexander is mentioned as *Du'l-Qarnain* ("two-horned") in the Qur'an. The possible sources behind Alexander's depiction in the Qur'an are also discussed. This research ultimately displays that Abrahamic traditions have influenced one another in their portrayals of Alexander the Great with the main similarity being his alleged role in the gate that split the tribes of Gog and Magog. The essay concludes that the incorporation of the legends of Alexander the Great into these monotheistic traditions is a testimony to the fact that people attempted to preserve his ventures in their narratives, even after countless conversions from polytheistic religions to monotheistic ones.

A Legacy of Greatness: The Portrayal of Alexander in Abrahamic Traditions

Alexander the Great is undoubtedly one of the most complex characters in ancient history. For centuries,

scholars have studied the different perspectives that surround the man who ruled much of the known world and died at the young age of thirty-three. While various histories from different parts of the world include Alexander in one way or another, whether favourably or not, some of his most interesting portrayals are present in the traditions of the three Abrahamic faiths. In the Judaic tradition, the Ethiopic version of Pseudo-Callisthenes's Alexander Romance, as well as narratives of Joseph Ben-Gorion, assert the notion that Alexander was a man who acknowledged the existence of one god. The Christian tradition follows this pattern in presenting Alexander as a messianic figure who also pays homage to the God of Abraham. Finally, the Islamic tradition even contains a reference to Alexander the Great in their holy scripture, the Qur'an. This essay seeks to present the different sources that influenced the three monotheistic traditions in their depictions of Alexander. This work also aims to convey the idea that each tradition influenced the other in more than one way, especially due to the fact that Alexander's encounter with the tribes of Gog and Magog is acknowledged by all three traditions. All of these similarities suggest that although many civilizations had abandoned polytheism for belief in one supreme deity, there was an effort by the Abrahamic faiths to continue to include Alexander the Great in their narrative as a messianic prophet of God.

Judaic Tradition

Some of the earliest Jewish legends concerning Alexander the Great are found in the Ethiopic version of Pseudo-Callisthenes's Alexander Romance. Translated into English

by Sir Ernest A. Wallis Budge in 1933, the text describes Alexander's first encounter with the Jews after his conquest of Tyre and Sidon. Alexander conquered the Phoenician cities and then wrote a letter to the Jewish elders of Jerusalem. He commanded them to acknowledge his rule and pay tribute to him. The Jewish elders replied to Alexander and said: "We are under the rule of Darius, the king of Persia, and we cannot come under thy dominion."¹ Angered by their refusal to submit to his rule, Alexander is believed to have told his companions:

*"Behold, I will accept help against these Jews from God, for they and their kings have been accursed from the beginning; if God were to give them power they would not let a man move about on earth. But I will carry them away, and will show them the dominion of my majesty as if they were slaves."*²

Alexander then gathered his soldiers to venture to Jerusalem. The Jews, hearing of Alexander's arrival, were terrified. The Jewish high priest, who was under oath to King Darius of Persia, approached Alexander and his men and with him he brought the Roll of the Laws from which he began to recite the prophecy of Daniel. Alexander inquired as to what the high priest was reading, and the high priest informed him that it was a book from God that was delivered to them by their prophets.³ Jewish belief states that when Alexander heard the word of the prophecy, he began to weep and tremble. Also, he hurried east toward

¹Ernest Budge, *The Alexander Book in Ethiopia*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 40.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., 41.

the Jewish sanctuary and paid homage to the Jewish god, his scriptures, and his prophets. After, having rid himself of his armour, Alexander prayed with his men that the god of the sanctuary would prosper their way.⁴

Later on, the text narrates that Alexander's men asked him what he planned to do with the Jews. The soldiers reminded him of the arrogant letter that the Jews had sent to him, and his men also said that "[t]hey have acted wickedly and deceitfully towards every king, and they have never been really subject to any of them."⁵ Alexander responded and asserted that he had not paid honour to the Jews but rather to "the God of the words whose name is [written] upon them".⁶ In turn, the Jews, who were surprised that Alexander chose to acknowledge their god and Holy Scripture, begged for his forgiveness and explained that their letter was only intended to avoid a pretext for conflict with Darius of Persia. In turn, Alexander answered the Jews and said "I have forgiven thee and thy people, and above all the nations which have come into subjection unto us."⁷ After this, the legend tells that Alexander left Jerusalem to cross the Euphrates and found the city of Baretta.

This legend from the Ethiopic version of Pseudo-Callisthenes's writings is important for an initial understanding of Alexander's role in the Judaic tradition. The story presents the Jews as people who are subject to the king of Persia but still choose to anger Alexander for the sake of refusing to break an oath. The text repeatedly makes note of the fear that the Jews felt when they became

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., 42.

⁷Ibid., 43.

aware that Alexander and his men were entering Jerusalem. Moreover, it conveys the idea that the faith of the Jews is what ultimately saved them from having their city sacked in the same way that Alexander had attacked Sidon and Tyre. In addition, the story portrays one of the most powerful men of antiquity bowing before the Jewish God and acknowledging his divinity as lord of all things on earth. Alexander the Great's supposed reverence to their monotheistic god is an embedded concept in Jewish historiography.⁸ This concept is also present in Joseph Ben-Gorion's version of Alexander's visit to Jerusalem, which was written in the tenth century. However, in contrast with the Ethiopic version of Pseudo-Callisthenes, Joseph Ben-Gorion tells of Alexander's initial encounter with divine intervention that made him choose to spare the Jewish people.

According to Joseph Ben-Gorion, Alexander and his men were approaching Jerusalem with the intent of attacking the city. On the outskirts of the city, however, they were stopped by a figure dressed in white who wielded a mighty sword resembling lightning.⁹ Alexander, full of fear, quickly knew that this man was a messenger of God and he bowed before the apparition and asked, "[w]hy wilt thou slay thy servant?"¹⁰ The messenger tells Alexander that he must not attack Jerusalem and that when he reaches the city, he will meet a man that resembles himself (the apparition). The messenger commands him to pay homage to God at that point in time and perform all of the required rights.¹¹

⁸Ibid., 47.

⁹Ibid., 257.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., 258.

Once Alexander entered Jerusalem, he realized that the high priest of the Jews was the figure who resembled the messenger he had encountered on the way to the city. Alexander prostrated himself and saluted the high priest. The Jews were stupefied by his action, and Alexander explained to them his encounter with the messenger.¹² Later, Alexander ordered statues of himself to be set inside the sanctuary in order for him to be remembered by the people. The high priest informed him that this was not customary, and so Alexander chose to bestow wealth and gold upon the sanctuary instead. Before he departed Jerusalem, the high priest read to Alexander from the Book of Daniel, and Alexander rejoiced at the prophecy. Alexander departed the city for Nablus and when he founded the city of Tur-Bazel, he ordered the building of a sanctuary to the Jewish god.¹³

There are indeed many similarities between the two accounts of the same encounter at Jerusalem. The Ethiopic version, however, is not specific as to why Alexander chose to revere God, while Joseph Ben-Gorion includes the story of the messenger from God that commands Alexander not to destroy the city. In both versions, the Book of Daniel is featured, as is the prophecy. Also, both stories mention that Alexander left Jerusalem and founded Baretta on the Euphrates River. However, it is important to note that in Ben-Gorion's account, this city is known as "Tur-Bazel." Joseph Ben-Gorion also states that after these events at Jerusalem, many Jewish boys were named Alexander, known in Hebrew as *Sander*.¹⁴ The most important similarity is that Alexander has a strong feeling of devotion

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., 259.

¹⁴Ibid., 260.

to the monotheistic god of the Jews and it is the faith of the Jews in their god, as well as divine intervention in Ben-Gorion's account, that saves Jerusalem from being sacked by Alexander the Great and his men.

Christian Tradition

The Christian tradition's incorporation of stories about Alexander the Great echoes many of the principles present in the earlier Judaic traditions. Averil Cameron writes of the stories told by early Roman Christians and says, "[t]hese texts have something important to tell us, in terms of the sociology of knowledge, about how the Christian system was articulated in the early period, and thus about how it got itself established in the Roman Empire."¹⁵ Cameron's statement is applicable for acknowledging the differences in portrayal that are offered by Jewish and Christian historiographies concerning Alexander the Great. During the reign of the emperor Constantine, the Roman Empire was Christianized and thus many traditional perspectives embedded in Rome's history underwent change. Since the time of Julius Caesar, the Romans highly revered Alexander, and Caesar is said to have visited one of the alleged tombs of Alexander the Great when he was present in Alexandria in 45 BCE.¹⁶ It is commonly believed that Julius Caesar idolized Alexander the Great, especially in terms of his conquests in the East. Moreover, in *Parallel Lives*, Plutarch compares the life of Julius Caesar to that of Alexander the Great. All of these factors convey the notion that Alexander was an important figure in the Roman

¹⁵Richard Stoneman, *Alexander the Great: A Life in Legend*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 181.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 196.

interpretation of historical events. Moreover, since he possesses a favourable image in the Roman perspective, Christians sought to maintain this image during the conversion of Rome. There are many reasons as to why the Christians chose to retain Alexander's glorious reputation in their dialogue. The most prominent reason involves culture.

Although the Roman religion was changing, many components of their culture remained, thus preserving a strong Roman identity that would stay undivided with the conversion to Christianity. Also, an emphasis on a united culture would promote more conversions to Christianity from the Romans, who would not be obliged to rid themselves of their history along with their polytheistic gods. In this sense, Cameron's quotation serves as an explanation why the high reverence for Alexander the Great among the polytheistic Romans was transferred into the Christian tradition of the Romans.

Aside from the influence of Alexander the Great on Christian Romans, research about the legends of Alexander the Great among the Christians of the Orient has also been conducted. According to Stephen Gero, an academic who generally focuses on Persian Christianity, the oldest oriental 'witness' to the legends of Alexander the Great is present in the Armenian version of the Alexander Romance. The Armenian version represents a translation made directly from the Greek interpretation. Moreover, scholars have found particular interest in the Armenian version of the Alexander Romance because it retains an abundant amount of illustrations, which many believe is characteristic of the lost prototype of Pseudo-Callisthenes.¹⁷ Gero notes,

¹⁷ Stephen Gero, *The Legend of Alexander the Great in the Christian Orient* (1990), 4.

however, that there seems to be a lack of literature involving stories about Alexander in early Christian Egypt; he explains that the reason for this might be that Alexander was too much of a Greek character to be featured in the narrative of the Coptic Christians.¹⁸ As a result, while the Romans felt that they should retain stories of Alexander the Great even after their Christianization in order to strengthen ideas of shared history, the Coptic Christians of Egypt chose to ignore many legends about him in order to avoid Greek influences in their own narrative. In both cases, culture and notions of shared narratives are a basis for either the inclusion or elimination of Alexander the Great.

Aside from the Armenian and Egyptian versions, Gero's work also addresses the Syriac version. Many scholars believe that the Syriac version of the Alexander Romance is a direct translation from the lost Middle Persian version. However, Gero believes that the translator was probably a Nestorian Christian, because he asserts that in Zoroastrian Persian literature, Alexander is constantly portrayed as a negative figure. Once again, the reason behind this negative portrayal might be an attempt to glorify Persian history over that of a Greek figure such as Alexander. It is therefore highly unlikely that the Syriac version is a direct translation of the lost Middle Persian copy as Alexander is an admirable character in the Syriac interpretation.¹⁹ In addition, the Syriac version is what influenced the perception of Alexander the Great among the Arab Christians. There was an Arabic translation of the Syriac text made by the Arab Christians, but like the Persian version, the original form is also lost. However, Stephen Gero notes that much of the lost Arabic translation

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., 5.

of the Syriac version, which he believes was written in the early ninth century, is still preserved in the non-Qur'anic legends of Alexander found in the Islamic narrative.²⁰ Also, according to Gero, the lost Arabic tradition was the basis for the Ethiopic version mentioned earlier in the analysis of the Judaic tradition concerning Alexander the Great.²¹

The main legend of Alexander in the Christian tradition is the story that tells of his building of the "Gates of Alexander" to shut in the people of Gog and Magog in the Caucasus. Aside from the Alexander Romance, this legend is also found in the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius; however, recent research has determined that the legend was originally in Pseudo-Methodius's work and was then added to later versions of the Alexander Romance and not vice-versa.²² Stephen Gero concludes his essay on this topic and writes:

"The image of Alexander as an apocalyptic guardian of civilization and inspired prophet of the one God was mediated to the medieval Muslim and Byzantine world through the literary activity of these oriental Christians, whose pivotal intellectual and religious contributions to the civilization of the Mediterranean are still all too insufficiently appreciated".²³

From Stephen Gero's research, it is easy to understand how the Christians of the Orient impacted the legends of Alexander the Great that would become entrenched in the Islamic tradition. Moreover, it is clear that the many

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., 6.

²²Ibid., 8.

²³Ibid., 9.

versions and translations of the Alexander Romance have contributed to the numerous stories of Alexander in the three Abrahamic faiths. While it appears that Alexander retains a favourable image in the Christian tradition, it is also important to note that Christians of the West, most notably the Romans, traditionally revered Alexander for reasons similar to those of the polytheistic Romans before them. They did not choose to hold him in high regard for the same reasons that the Eastern Christians did.

Islamic Tradition

After his analysis of Alexander the Great's image in Christianity, Stephen Gero discusses Alexander's place in Islam. Many Muslims believe that Alexander appears in *sura* eighteen of the Qur'an under the name *Du'l-Qarnain*, which has been anglicized to Dulcarnain. This name literally means "two-horned" in the Arabic language and has been identified with Alexander due to representations of him in coinage wearing a helmet with two horns.²⁴ This figure features in the Qur'an as a powerful hero who succeeds in shutting in the tribes of *Yajuj* and *Majuj* by means of an iron gate, or in some interpretations a dam, which Muslims believe will stand until the Day of Judgment. The *Yajuj* and *Majuj* tribes of the Qur'an are traditionally identified with the biblical Gog and Magog.²⁵ The source for this story in the Qur'an has long been debated. The legend relating Alexander to Gog and Magog is not found even in the earliest form of the Greek Alexander Romance. This legend was only included in the later Byzantine rendition of the text. On the other hand, the

²⁴Ibid., 6.

²⁵Ibid.

story of Alexander and the gate is related in early material that tells of legends concerning him. As a result, scholars claim that these early legends influenced the account that is present in the eighteenth *sura* of the Qur'an.

One of the earliest legends of Alexander that is believed to contain many parallels to the story found in the Qur'an is from a short Syriac narrative titled "An Exploit of Alexander, the son of Philip the Macedonian." This text is also commonly known as the *Neshana*, the Syriac word for "exploit." This short narrative describes how Alexander made a gate of iron and positioned it toward the North so that the *Hunaye* would not attack the land.²⁶ The general belief is that the *Hunaye* is another name for either the tribe of Gog or Magog. Although the manuscript does not follow the Syriac version of the Alexander Romance, it claims to have been taken "from the writings in the house of the archives of the kings of Alexandria".²⁷ The assumption, however, is that this narrative is based on the original Syriac version and not the direct translation from Greek. Either way, the apocalyptic element of Alexander as a messiah is present, as is his gift as a prophetic instrument. Other themes from the Qur'anic text are also present, such as the horns of Alexander, the journey from East to West, and the famous gate.²⁸ Because of all these similarities, as well as the fact that the Syriac narrative is an ancient source, the *Neshana* is generally considered to have influenced the legend of Dulcarnain that is found in the eighteenth *sura* of the Qur'an.

Andrew Runni Anderson has also researched the role of Alexander the Great in the Islamic narrative. Despite

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

the parallels between the Christian and Islamic traditions that connect Alexander with Gog and Magog, many Islamic scholars have denied that the identity of Dulcarnain is Alexander the Great. These scholars claim Dulcarnain is one of the old kings of Yemen while others identify him with Cyrus the Great.²⁹ In the 19th century, many German classicists argued that the identification of Dulcarnain with Alexander is a misinterpretation of events that are accredited to Moses. It was not until 1890 that Theodor Nöldeke was able to prove that the source of Dulcarnain was in the Christian legend about Alexander that originated in the Syriac tradition. After this, academics accepted the belief that Dulcarnain and Alexander the Great are in fact the same figure.³⁰ It was the Jewish accounts of Alexander rather than historical information that helped Nöldeke come to this conclusion, because both traditions depict Alexander as a hero whose actions reflect that of a messiah.³¹

In his work, Anderson also offers specific examples of coinage that strengthen Alexander's epithet of "two-horned". He states that in the first generation after Alexander's death, King Lysimachus of Thrace and Ptolemy Soter of Egypt both issued coins that depicted Alexander wearing ram's horns. This became a symbol of legitimacy that was associated with succession. As a result, Egypt during this time period also features coins of Ptolemy Soter with ram's horns.³² Because Alexander the Great was frequently portrayed with ram's horns on ancient coinage, Anderson also agrees with Nöldeke that the

²⁹(Anderson, 102).

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

Dulcarnain of the Qur'an is Alexander the Great.³³ Moreover, it has been noted by many academics that the Medieval Persian Romance about Alexander, known as the *Iskandarnamah*, like various other adaptations of the Alexander Romance in Persian literature, features both pre-Islamic as well as Islamic legends from many cultures of West Asia.³⁴ Although it seems that many texts have influenced the depiction of Alexander in the Islamic tradition, the parallels present among all three Abrahamic narratives proves that they all originate from the same sources.

It appears that the sources for the legends of Alexander the Great in the Abrahamic traditions are many, especially considering the numerous translations of the Alexander Romance as well as its many renditions. Despite these countless sources, it seems that the portrayal of Alexander among all three is consistent. He is depicted as a messianic, almost apocalyptic hero that acknowledges and pays homage to the God of Abraham. The main comparison among the three traditions, however, is the connection of Alexander to the gate that was built between the tribes of Gog and Magog. This is an event that is acknowledged by Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike. The main idea to be concluded from these similarities is the notion that Alexander the Great was so important in the narratives of polytheists throughout the ancient world that even after conversion, people strove to include him in their religious narratives, and even went so far as to claim that he paid homage to their god. Alexander the Great's role in the three Abrahamic traditions as a devotee of the one god is

³³Ibid., 101.

³⁴Eden Naby, "Iskandarnamah: A Persian Medieval Alexander-Romance." *Journal of Near Eastern Studie*, 41.2 (1982): 152-154.

undoubtedly one of his greatest legacies. Aside from his obvious role in historical events, Alexander the Great has surprisingly found a place as a devoted monotheist in the historiographies of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, which in itself is a testimony to his legacy of greatness.

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THE EMPEROR TRAJAN AND THE POLITICS OF POWER

JEREMY ROBERTS

The word ‘imperialism’ often evokes images of the Roman Empire. Notions of a burgeoning civilization, militaristic expansion, soaring architecture, and powerful leaders are all tied implicitly to the broad-ranging history of Rome. At its height, the Roman Empire stretched across 5 million square miles, encompassing one fifth of the world’s population. This peak period was overseen by the emperor Trajan, who ruled Rome from 98-117 CE. Often called *Optimus Princeps*, Trajan was considered one of Rome’s most adept leaders. In fact, later Roman emperors were often blessed with the Latin proverb *felicius Augusto, melius Traiano*, which means ‘[may he be] luckier than Augustus and better than Trajan’. Under Trajan’s rule, the expansion of the empire was undertaken through the annexation of four key regions: (1) Dacia, (2) Nabataea, (3) Armenia, and (4) Mesopotamia. When examining these imperial actions, it becomes clear that they can be viewed through a realist interpretation of imperialist theory, as laid out by Hans Morgenthau in his famous work *Politics Among Nations*.¹ This essay will argue that the motives behind the four conquests of Trajan can best be understood through the theoretical framework of realism, and that the three primary motives were: (i) military strategic balancing, (ii) economic gain, and (iii) acquisition of prestige for the emperor.

¹Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations* (New York: Knopf, 1985).

In making this argument, this paper will first provide a biographical overview of the character of Trajan, using ancient sources as a means to understand how contemporaries perceived him. Building on Trajan's biographical details, historical background will then be provided for the four major annexations in order to put them into context. Following this, the theoretical principles of realism will be outlined, and this will serve to demonstrate how the motives identified in this paper are drawn specifically from the realist school of thought. This framework will draw upon the works of Morgenthau, as well as historical figures including Hobbes, Thucydides, and Machiavelli. With a foundational knowledge of the historical events, the final step will be to apply the realist theoretical framework to the four annexation case studies and demonstrate how the motives were realist in nature. To begin with, it is important to have a good understanding of the person in question, the emperor Trajan. Trajan was widely celebrated by his contemporaries as a competent administrator, tactician, and leader. One must always be cautious when examining primary sources from the ancient world, for they are riddled with bias – both known and unknown. Some of the writers from Trajan's time, including the famed historian Pliny the Younger, were friends of Trajan and beneficiaries of his patronage. Nevertheless, the works of Pliny, Cassius Dio, and Aurelius Victor provide a good broad picture of the emperor upon which we can draw some conclusions. Cassius Dio commented that Trajan was known for "his justice, for his bravery, and for the simplicity of his habits",² whilst Pliny

²Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, trans. Bill Thayer (Loeb Classical Library, 1925) : 6.2.

wrote that “his seriousness is not lessened by his cheerfulness, his gravity by his simplicity, or his dignity by his humanity.”³ Both of these comments reflect a positive image of a balanced character.

Moreover, their praise continues when it comes to what really matters – administration at home and abroad.

Aurelius Victor noted that Trajan is remembered for his “integrity at home, bravery in arms, and prudence in both”.⁴ He is said to have “possessed diligence in military matters”⁵ and “did much to reform the administration of affairs”.⁶ One of the most striking anecdotes about Trajan was that, unlike previous emperors, he “always marched on foot with the rank and file of his army”.⁷ This creates the image of a soldier-emperor, in touch with his people. This also reinforces a strongly militaristic component to his identity. However, Trajan biographer Julian Bennett cautions against drawing certain conclusions from this. She suggests that “to accuse Trajan of megalomania, of being a pathological warmonger as it were, would contradict the assessment of his contemporaries, namely that he endeavoured to avoid hostilities where he could”.⁸ This is important to keep in mind as we turn to look at his imperial conquests.

³Pliny the Younger, *Panegyric in Praise of Trajan (Excerpts)*, trans. FPGarland (New York, 1905): 02.

⁴Aurelius Victor, *A Booklet About the Style and the Manners of the Imperatores*, trans. Thomas Banchich (Canisius College Translated Texts, 2009): 148.4.

⁵Ibid., 148.13.

⁶Dio, 68.4.

⁷Ibid., 23.1.

⁸Julian Bennett, *Trajan Optimus Princeps: A Life and Times* (London: Routledge, 1997): 189.

Trajan oversaw the expansion of the Roman Empire to its largest size, which involved the annexation of client-states as well as the conquering of new provinces. The first annexation involved the client-state of Dacia, which had grown rebellious and was acting as a lightning-rod for anti-Roman sentiment in the region.⁹ The leader of Dacia, Decebalus, began to amass an army, and humiliated Rome in several battles.¹⁰ In order to deal with the revolt, Trajan prosecuted two wars against the Dacians which were perceived as wars of vengeance.¹¹ The punitive campaign was highly successful and concluded with the Roman annexation of the state as a province after the death of Decebalus.¹² Trajan was widely celebrated for this victory, and was granted the epithet ‘Dacicus’.¹³ Historian Mary Boatwright suggests that “it was possibly the sheer success of the Dacian Wars that spurred Trajan to further expansion.”¹⁴

Regardless of whether the Dacian success spurred him on, Trajan’s next annexation was of an entirely different breed. The kingdom of Nabataea, centred on the ancient trading city of Petra, was annexed in a bloodless conquest. Bennett tells us that the event was “commemorated with coins bearing the legend *ARAB (ia) ADQ (uisita)* –“ ‘Arabia

⁹Ibid., 86.

¹⁰Susan Mattern, “Rome and the Enemy: Imperial Strategy in the Principate.” in *Roman Imperialism: Readings and Sources*, Champion, Craig Brian (Malden, Blackweel Pub, 2004): 193.

¹¹Bennett, 99.

¹²Ibid., 101.

¹³Dio, 10.2.

¹⁴Mary Boatwright, Daniel Gargola and Richard Talbert, *The Romans, from Village to Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004): 373.

gained [for the empire]’ – as if to convey the impression that the process was entirely peaceful”.¹⁵ This annexation proved to be much less difficult than that of Dacia, but represented an important shift from client-state to imperial province.

The final two annexations can be regarded in concert, as they both took place during Trajan’s Parthian War. Parthia was Rome’s greatest enemy and was considered the other great superpower of the known world.¹⁶ The critical region between both empires was comprised of the territories of Armenia and Mesopotamia. Both empires competed for influence and control over these territories, as they provided a buffer zone against future attacks, and an easy route for invasion. Trajan invaded both regions, conquering them and drawing them into the Roman fold as provinces.¹⁷ He then continued on into Babylonia, taking Parthia’s capital city, Ctesiphon, and installing a puppet-king.¹⁸ This arrangement did not last long, but represented an enormous achievement for a Roman emperor.

With the historical background laid out, it is now critical to establish the theoretical framework of realism as a theory of imperialism through which to analyze these annexations. Realism, as described by Morgenthau, is founded upon several key principles. Namely, it revolves around the notion that states are the key players in international relations, and that all states are driven by a desire for power.¹⁹ Realists believe that states, like

¹⁵Bennett, 176.

¹⁶Boatwright, 373.

¹⁷Bennett, 194.

¹⁸Ibid., 200.

¹⁹Morgenthau, 05.

individual human beings, are driven by self-interest and are in competition with one another, following a traditionally Hobbesian understanding of human nature.²⁰ This overarching belief is more important to realists than ideology or other motives, and they assert that any policy which attempts to ignore this reality is destined for failure.²¹ In this view, imperialism is merely the natural ambition of states to increase their power. To determine whether an action was indeed imperialistic, one must observe a status quo in international relations.²² An imperialistic state will attempt to overthrow the status quo and alter “the power relations between the imperialist nation and its prospective victims”.²³

Morgenthau argues that a state engaged in military imperialism inevitably practices a form of deterrence and constant preparation for war.²⁴ This falls into our motive of military strategic balance. Following realist theory, a state with imperialist ambition will seek to project military strength in order to deter other states from going to war.²⁵ Furthermore, should this strategy of deterrence fail, the military force can then be deployed quickly and advantageously.²⁶ This effectively boils down to a struggle of power between competing states. Morgenthau draws on a plethora of historical events to demonstrate this motive in

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., 72.

²³E.N. Luttwak, “The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire,” in *Roman Imperialism: Readings and Sources*, Champion, Craigie Brian (Malden: Blackwell Pub, 2004): 280.

²⁴Morgenthau, 93.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

action. It is easy to see that realist theory reaches as far back as Thucydides who, in writing his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, demonstrated the strategic balance of power that existed in Greece between the Athenians and the Spartans.²⁷

With regards to economic gain, Morgenthau is quick to note that he views economic exploitation as subordinate to the overall goal of increased power.²⁸ However, he does not dismiss them as motives. He suggests that victory in conquest brought economic advantages and hurt the state's enemies.²⁹ We know that economics played a large role in the military actions of the ancient world, as Trajan spent vast sums on wars.³⁰ Moreover, he also spent heavily on peace, building infrastructure projects, ensuring the continuity of the grain supply, and presenting shows to keep the common people loyal.³¹ All of this meant that as Rome expanded its power, it also required increased resources - a by-product of imperialism according to realist theory.

Finally, it is imperative to recognize the importance of prestige in imperial policy. This prestige was vis-à-vis the state, as Suzanne Mattern demonstrates in arguing that “for the Romans, their hegemony and their very security depended on universal recognition of their empire’s *maiestas*, its ‘greatness’.”³² In fact, this notion of state prestige is tied closely to the motive of military strategic

²⁷Thucydides, Martin Hammon, and P.J. Rhodes, *The Peloponnesian War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

²⁸Morgenthau, 63.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Dio, 7.1.

³¹Bennett, 103.

³²Mattern, 193.

balance, and under most conditions it would not be considered separately. However, there is a flip side to prestige that Morgenthau does not necessarily address directly. For the Roman Empire, under strong leaders like Trajan, it is hard to separate acts designed to increase the prestige of the state with acts designed to increase the prestige of the emperor. Machiavelli, who would undoubtedly be considered a realist, argues that “nothing does more to give a ruler a reputation than embarking on great undertakings and doing remarkable things.”³³ Because these two notions are so intertwined, this essay will consider prestige primarily from the perspective of Trajan and how his imperial actions benefitted his personal power.

Turning to an application of the theory to our case studies, it is clear that two of the three motives are present in Trajan’s annexation of Dacia. Morgenthau suggests that “isolated revolts would be dealt with swiftly and efficiently by preponderant Roman power”.³⁴ This is indeed the case with Dacia, where Trajan reacted ruthlessly in crushing the uprising led by Decebalus. Bennett tells us that “a punitive campaign is indicated by coins issued in 101 which bear the image of *Mars Ultor* – Mars the Avenger – referring to the need to restore Roman prestige over a people who in the past fifteen years had killed two Roman generals and countless men.”³⁵ This would not have been acceptable behaviour from a client-state, which was allowed to remain politically autonomous, but was expected to act as an ally

³³Niccolao Machiavelli and David Wooton, *Selected Political Writings* (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co, 1994): 67.

³⁴Morgenthau, 96.

³⁵Bennett, 87.

and recognize Roman military supremacy. The acts of rebellion were provocations against Roman military power and had to be dealt with in a heavy-handed fashion. This is indeed what happened, as Rome evicted the Dacian population, gave their land to colonists, and brought the head of Decebalus back to Rome as a trophy of war.³⁶

As Trajan's first campaign as emperor, the Dacian campaign also provided an opportunity to increase his personal prestige. Trajan celebrated a great triumph upon his return to Rome, and Bennett tells us that it was "an extravaganza the like of which Rome had not seen before".³⁷ Moreover, the celebration was then propagated across the empire on coins and architecture.³⁸ Coinage was, in essence, the mass-media of the ancient world.³⁹ The most famous of these propagandist creations was the column of Trajan, a triumphal column erected in the heart of Rome which depicted his victory over the kneeling, defeated barbarians.⁴⁰ This column would have helped Trajan to project greater personal prestige in his international dealings, and would serve as a reminder to his enemies and allies not to cross him.

While concrete evidence is lacking on an economic motive for the annexation of Dacia, this is certainly not the case for Nabataea. The trading city of Petra in the kingdom of Nabataea sat at the crossroads of the important spice route, and controlled trade flooding into Syria, Egypt, and Judaea, from which it entered the Mediterranean market.

³⁶Dio, 14.3.

³⁷Bennett, 103.

³⁸Ibid., 102.

³⁹Jeremy Roberts, "The Political Genius of Ptolemy Soter," *Corvus Journal* 3 (2013): 34.

⁴⁰Dio, 5.3.

Control of this region gave Rome a more direct grasp on this important route. In addition, from a military strategy perspective, some have suggested that Trajan was merely safeguarding his rear prior to launching his Parthian campaign.⁴¹ This would give him two reasons for annexing the region, despite the fact that it was not in open revolt like Dacia.

However, historian Warwick Ball suggests that personal prestige played the largest role in the Nabataean annexation. He suggests that “it is rather the lack of any threat or difficulties that is the real explanation for Nabataea’s annexation: it simply provided an easy conquest with little effort for Trajan to feather his cap with – not to mention his nest, given the money.”⁴² He goes on to state that “perhaps simple land-grabbing for personal glory was the overriding consideration”.⁴³ In other words, Trajan recognized that his annexation of Dacia had increased his personal power and prestige. In seizing another key territory, with little to no resistance, he was showing off his new found power of deterrence and further increasing his prestige. The fact that this was a bloodless annexation may suggest that the Nabataeans had seen the lengths Trajan to which was willing to go if he was challenged, and they decided that passive acceptance was the more prudent route. Regardless, it is clear that all three realist motives played a role in Trajan’s annexation of this province.

Finally, the annexations of Armenia and Mesopotamia during the Parthian War demonstrate all three

⁴¹Warwick Ball, *Rome in the East: the Transformation of an Empire* (London: Routledge, 2000): 63.

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³*Ibid.*

realist motives as well, with particular emphasis placed on military strategic balance. As was stated above, these twin regions represented the buffer zone between Rome and its most dangerous enemy, the Parthian Empire. Because of this, the region was characteristically volatile.⁴⁴ Trajan sought to control this territory as a way to secure a defensible line against Parthia, and to demonstrate Rome's increased power and confidence.⁴⁵ Mesopotamia had never before been held by the Romans. Historian C.S. Lightfoot tells us that "having deposed and murdered the Armenian king, and having subjected his kingdom to the ancient equivalent of the blitzkrieg, Trajan forced his army to march south again in order to secure the passes across the eastern Taurus and gain a foothold in Mesopotamia before the Parthians could rally to its defence."⁴⁶ That statement demonstrates Trajan's desire to go above and beyond Rome's previous power, and to establish himself on Parthia's doorstep in preparation for his forthcoming invasion.

Like Nabataea, the conquests of Armenia and Mesopotamia brought with it economic gain as well. Both provinces were wealthy, controlling access to the Persian Gulf, Babylon, and India.⁴⁷ These provinces were wealthy because of the constant flow of incense, spices, gold and gems along major trade routes.⁴⁸ In fact, it is telling that following the annexations, Trajan commissioned a great road from the Red Sea to Damascus in Syria in order to

⁴⁴Boatwright, 370.

⁴⁵C.S. Lightfoot, "Trajan's Parthian War and the Fourth-Century Perspective," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990): 121.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 118.

⁴⁷Boatwright, 370.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

better facilitate the new trade routes that he had now secured.⁴⁹

Finally, like his other annexations, the Parthian War on a whole brought great personal prestige for the emperor. Bennett tells us that following the annexations, “coins were subsequently issued proclaiming these territories [Armenia and Mesopotamia] as subjected to the power of the people of Rome”, by which Trajan means himself.⁵⁰ Moreover, securing these vital regions allowed him to launch the first successful invasion of Parthia in many years, a campaign which concluded with his taking of the Parthian capital of Ctesiphon, a tremendous achievement, and one which earned him the epithet ‘Parthicus’.⁵¹ Whether or not the invasion of Parthia was necessary is highly questioned. Modern scholars like Bennett, as well as ancient historians like Cassius Dio, suggest that his real reason for the Parthian War was a desire to win renown.⁵² Regardless, it is clear that prestige played a role in motivating Trajan’s annexations in this region.

Therefore, in analyzing these four case studies, it becomes clear that a realist theory of imperialism provides a strong framework through which to analyze the imperial actions of the emperor Trajan. We see clearly that Trajan was astutely aware of the balance of military power between Rome and its enemies – namely Parthia, but also Dacia. In order to counter that, the emperor engaged in strategic military policies designed to deter Rome’s opponents from attacking and to demonstrate Roman

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Bennett, 196.

⁵¹Ibid, 195.

⁵²Ibid., 212 and Dio 17.1.

power. As Trajan annexed or conquered new territories, Rome inevitably benefited from new economic opportunities, as was seen clearly through its ability to access the profitable spice route through Petra. Finally, we see that these imperial actions were designed to bolster the prestige of the emperor and, by extension, the state. A powerful emperor was better able to practice policies of deterrence and more effectively deal with enemies such as Parthia. Fascinating similarities emerge with a mere cursory glance at American foreign policy during the Cold War, when America sought to deter the Soviets through strategic military balance, gained economic advantage through access to resources like oil in the Middle East, and bolstered the prestige of presidents like Ronald Reagan through their actions. If history is indeed repeating itself, as many like to suggest, then perhaps such comparisons merit further study in the future.

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ISLAMIC CONQUESTS AND THE CULTURE OF THE EAST

EDEN JARVIS

There have been many recent scholarly examinations of the seventh-century Islamic conquests and whether the arrival of the Muslims really precipitated large-scale destruction and an end to the Hellenistic culture of the East. The current idea is that the arrival of Islam was a changing *evolution* of the pre-existing culture as opposed to wholesale destruction and replacement with a new culture. Did the Islamic conquests drastically change life in the cities and surroundings they conquered? The purpose of this paper is to show that the Muslims found in the Middle East a pre-existing civilization which they conquered with little resistance and then built upon to create the Muslim Caliphate. This paper will look at the archaeological and written records, taking into account such things as pottery and coin deposits, the continued occupation of cities and the construction of new public monuments, and the status of the economic situation prior to the conquests to show that the arrival of the Muslims was not a devastating and destructive end to the prior way of life in ancient Syria and Palestine.

For the purposes of this paper we will be looking primarily at Roman Palestine with a focus on Jerusalem, and Syria with a focus on Antioch – these two provinces constituted the vast majority of the frontier for the Roman settlements bordering on Arabia, and were the areas most directly affected by the Muslim conquests. These areas are also jointly referred to as “Syria-Palestine” throughout this paper to refer to the general frontier region as a whole.

The State of the Region Prior to and During the Arrival of the Muslims

When trying to determine the effect of the Muslim conquests on the local populations, it is necessary to look at the status of these cities prior to the invasion. If we are dealing with heavily fortified and thriving cities that were left as smoking ruins in the wake of the Muslim conquests, then it can certainly be supposed that the Arabs had a negative impact on the cities they conquered. This was previously considered the actual outcome of the conquests, and Peter Charanis tells us that it was originally believed that these cities declined to such an extent that it seems they ceased to exist - a theory that was drawn from excavations at only two to three sites.¹ Clive Foss writes that the literary sources from the following two hundred years reveal very little about the seventh century; most of the major accounts are written too long after the events they record to be considered accurate and we are left instead with the archaeological record to fill the gaps in our knowledge.² According to Mayerson, the Roman sources are hostile and filled with prejudice and bias against the invading Muslims, while the Arab sources are relatively few and appear to contain gross fabrications and errors in chronology which make them unreliable as evidence. As a result, scholars in the past have leaned heavily upon the Roman sources and created an inevitably negative image of the conquests themselves and the period immediately

¹ P. Charanis, "Cultural Diversity and the Breakdown of Byzantine Power in Asia Minor," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 1975, no. 29: 5.

² C. Foss, "Syria in Transition, A.D. 550-750: An Archaeological Approach," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 1997, no. 51: 189.

following them.³ Recent scholarship, however, has begun to examine other factors affecting the towns and cities both before and after the Islamic conquests in order to get a more accurate picture of the situation.⁴

Averil Cameron tells us the Eastern Empire was experiencing serious difficulties even before the Arabs showed up.⁵ Several factors in the late sixth and early seventh centuries led to the weakening of the defences and the economy of the Eastern Empire. Under Justinian there was widespread abandonment of frontier fortifications in favour of a mobile army under the control of the Ghassanids which could respond to the threat of raids from the Saracens.⁶ The region was affected by several natural disasters, local disputes, and an overall decline in trade. Cameron tells us that decades of campaigning against the Sasanians made it difficult for the government to keep up with the military pay owed to the soldiers.⁷ There was so much time and so many resources spent conquering and reconquering cities from the Sasanians that it was an economic drain on the regions of the East. Antioch was taken by the Sasanians in 610 and remained under their control for twenty years; it was briefly recaptured by the Romans before the Muslim conquests, but there was not

³ P. Mayerson, "The First Muslim Attacks on Southern Palestine," *Transaction and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 1964, no. 95: 155.

⁴ A. Walmsley, "Economic Developments and the Nature of Settlement in the Towns and Countryside of Syria-Palestine, ca. 565-800," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 2007, no. 61: 319.

⁵ A. Cameron, 1993. *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity*. (London: Routledge. 1993), 187.

⁶ S.T. Parker, "An Empire's New Holy Land: The Byzantine Period," *Near Eastern Archaeology*, 1999, 62: 137.

⁷ Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity*, 187.

sufficient time to rebuild and refortify defences and so it remained under Muslim control for the next three hundred years.⁸ The Sasanian invasions caused serious destruction to many of the frontier cities, and therefore, the flight of many refugees in search of safe haven.⁹ Following their occupation of Palestine which ended in 627, there was little time to rebuild before the arrival of the Muslims.¹⁰ Similar conditions were felt in other regions across the frontier.

The end of the sixth century and the first decades of the seventh were very tumultuous in Palestine and Syria. In 540, Antioch was captured by the Sasanians: the city itself was burned to the ground and its population deported, but before and after the fact, it had suffered several natural disasters including two devastating fires, six earthquakes with large scale destruction of the city, three separate plague outbreaks, and the large-scale death of crops on two different occasions.¹¹ This left a severely weakened and drained city that was still attempting to recover well into the seventh century. Palestine was likewise struck by natural calamity, and combined with the passage of armies in conquest and recovery, the economy was severely weakened; the region saw a slow halt to production and commerce in many cities and small towns.¹² All of these factors - decline in productivity, natural disaster, abandonment of fortifications, depletion of resources following the wars with the Sasanians, and depopulation of the cities due to fleeing refugee populations combined to

⁸ Foss, "Syria in Transition," 191.

⁹ Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity*, 187.

¹⁰ Parker, "An Empire's New Holy land", 137.

¹¹ Foss, "Syria in Transition," 190.

¹² Walmsey, "Economic and Other Developments in Syria-Palestine," 321.

create an overall weakening of the defences of Syria and Palestine. When the Muslims arrived, it was not to find heavily fortified and thriving communities which they proceeded to destroy – they found instead a severely weakened and crippled Eastern frontier ready to capitulate to a change in leadership in many places without even a token resistance.

As many of the fortifications along the borders had been abandoned in favour of a mobile defensive unit, the cities of Syria and Palestine were not prepared for an ordered attack from the south. The conflicts with the Sasanians had caused the Eastern Empire to shift its focus towards Persia, their biggest rival, never suspecting an organized assault from the region of Arabia. All along the frontier the archaeological record tells the same story: the border towns took no great precautions to protect themselves from an ordered attack - at best, they were prepared and provisioned to defend against Saracen border raids in small bands.¹³ The major battles associated with the conquests where the Romans suffered heavy losses mostly took place in the countryside. Most of the cities surrendered on favourable terms to the Muslims; many of them offered little or no resistance and as a result did not suffer heavy damages.¹⁴ Decker tells us: “once these cities surrendered, the huge areas of territory they controlled presented little obstacle to conquest.”¹⁵ Archaeology has recently been used to support the theory that most towns in Syria and

¹³ Mayerson, “The First Muslim Attacks on Southern Palestine,” 183.

¹⁴ R. Schick, “Archaeological Sources for the History of Palestine: Palestine in the Early Islamic Period: Luxuriant Legacy,” *Near Eastern Archaeology*, 1998, no. 61: 75.

¹⁵ M. Decker, “Frontier Settlement and Economy in the Byzantine East,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 2007, no. 61: 220.

Palestine offered little or no resistance to the Muslims because of their weakened condition.¹⁶ The population capitulated to the Muslims because they had no resources to fight them off and they weren't overly destructive or cruel in their methods of taking the cities. It has even been shown that Caesarea – long thought to have been sacked and very nearly destroyed because of what the hostile Roman sources had to say – was left mostly unharmed; there is little archaeological evidence to support its destruction, or that of any other town taken over by the Muslims in the surrounding area.¹⁷ It is now believed by many scholars that the cities they encountered were left intact and the extent of the destruction had been exaggerated in the antique sources.¹⁸ There has been no evidence apart from the hostile literary sources to support the theory of evacuation, slaughter, and destruction during the Muslim conquests. Instead, the physical evidence reveals a continuation of the Roman way of life after the Islamic conquests.

Continuity and Prosperity

Like the Christians and the Jews before them, the Muslims began their rule as a distinctive minority in comparison with the Hellenes of the Empire, who greatly outnumbered their new rulers.¹⁹ According to Charanis, the population of the larger cities in Syria-Palestine sat in the tens or even

¹⁶ Walmsey, "Economic and Other Developments in Syria-Palestine," 319.

¹⁷ R. Schick, "Archaeological Sources for the History of Palestine," 76.

¹⁸ Walmsey, "Economic and Other Developments in Syria-Palestine," 332.

¹⁹ G.W. Bowersock, "Polytheism and Monotheism in Arabia and the Three Palestines," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 1997, no. 51: 1.

hundreds of thousands before the Muslim conquests.²⁰ If the conquests did not drastically reduce the population in the cities as we now suspect, this number would have only continued to grow in the thriving environment after the invasions and the general population would have drastically outnumbered the Arabic-speaking elite. In Syria and Palestine, the Muslims inherited a complete system of governing their population. They took over Christian provinces and used many elements of the Roman administration to effectively govern their new subjects.²¹ They introduced a new type of building – the mosque²² – and replaced the grandiose public buildings of the Roman world with the bazaar and the mosque of the Islamic world.²³ They did not destroy the public buildings they found already in existence, but many of them ceased to fill their previous functions, and as we will see later, the Muslims continued to build new public buildings, including Christian churches, for their subjects. The archaeological evidence discovered to date shows there was no real break in the continuity of the eastern Mediterranean provinces under Muslim control; the Islamic rulers took over the Roman administration which they found in place and continued to employ the former officials to run it.²⁴ Following the conquests there was a period of rebuilding and change which gave rise to what would later become the Muslim Caliphate.

Coins and pottery are key dating tools for

²⁰ Charanis, "Diversity and Breakdown of Byzantine Power in Asia Minor," 4.

²¹ O. Grabar, "Islamic Art and Byzantium," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 1964, no. 18: 72/3.

²² Ibid.

²³ Foss, "Syria in Transition," 189.

²⁴ Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity*, 188.

determining periods of occupation and prosperity in a particular location. In Antioch, pottery which has been dated to the sixth and seventh centuries reveals constant occupation of the city throughout Roman and Arab rule.²⁵ In Palestine, finds from the seventh century provide a continuation of regional ceramic traditions, including Palestinian fine tableware and Jerash bowls, named after the city of their origin.²⁶ In keeping with the Roman administration they employed, the Muslims also began to mint coins in the style of contemporary Roman coins. The obverse showed an imperial figure bearing a cross on a staff or rock, while the reverse bore the standard Roman “M”, symbolizing their currency. The names of the mints where the coins were produced were written in Greek while they sometimes had countermarks in Arabic.²⁷ The fact that coins were being minted so soon after the conquest shows a continued and stable economy in Syria and Palestine. That the coins were originally minted in the Roman style shows a desire to maintain the status quo in the cities rather than a drastic shift away from the established culture of the Roman Empire. By 697, the Roman-style coins were replaced by coins bearing Islamic religious inscriptions in Arabic.²⁸ This supports the theory of an evolution of the new culture as the Arabs gradually shifted away from the use of coins that closely resembled the former Roman currency. In areas in Syria, archaeologists have uncovered large stores of coins, but very little pottery. This surplus of coinage and decrease in pottery could indicate a large

²⁵ Foss, “Syria in Transition,” 195.

²⁶ Walmsey, “Economic and Other Developments in Syria-Palestine,” 330.

²⁷ Schick, “Archaeological Sources for the History of Palestine,” 95.

²⁸ Ibid.

military population – the soldiers would require shops and markets to support their lifestyle – and a relatively small civil population; however, there has been no conclusive study to support this.²⁹

We know through coins and pottery that people continued to live and trade in the regions of Syria and Palestine following the Muslim conquests. We also know, from looking at the existence of an active urban community in the eighth century, that this can be used as evidence for continuity and even to some extent prosperity in the seventh century – several cities show signs of size reduction but continued economic growth.³⁰ Schick tells us that many former urban centres from the Roman period contracted into smaller villages but notes that this could be because of their reduced administrative importance and is not necessarily indicative of a drop in population.³¹ Clive Foss tells us that in Antioch, pottery and coin finds indicate that life in the city continued after the Muslim conquests but on a smaller scale,³² while Cameron argues for population growth, development of cities, and increased levels of cultivation to indicate thriving communities, not shrinking ones.³³ Whether the communities of Syria-Palestine continued on a smaller scale or continued to thrive and prosper is a subject still up for debate amongst scholars. It is clear, however, that in neither scenario are we looking at a drastic reduction of population or a devastation of the way of life found in Syria and Palestine prior to the

²⁹ Foss, “Syria in Transition,” 196/7.

³⁰ Walmsey, “Economic and Other Developments in Syria-Palestine,” 332.

³¹ Schick, “Archaeological Sources for the History of Palestine,” 88.

³² Foss, “Syria in Transition,” 195.

³³ Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity*, 180.

arrival of the Muslims in the seventh century.

Rebuilding and Change

A central aspect of daily life in ancient civilizations is their involvement in religion. Under Muslim control the Christian, Jewish, and pagan religions of Syria and Palestine continued to thrive. In order to support this theory we need to look no further than the many examples of churches and public buildings constructed or repaired after the conquests, or the existence of a multi-lingual, multi-religious society. The co-existence of the different religions and the construction of new churches is perhaps the largest indicator we have that the culture of Syria-Palestine was not eradicated by the Muslim conquests. Bilingual inscriptions found throughout the region indicate that the Greek-speaking population was able to accept their Arab rulers and to co-exist.³⁴ According to Parker, Aramaic-speaking Syrians and Greeks lived throughout Palestine; the region possessed a diverse ethnic, religious, and linguistic character.³⁵ Sidney Griffith tells us that “the monastic communities of the Holy Land were famously multilingual in the Byzantine and early Islamic periods[...] though Greek was the dominant language of the ecclesiastical culture.”³⁶ The continuation of a Greek ecclesiastical culture and the use of Greek-speaking officials to run the administration shows us that Christian and polytheistic communities continued to exist under

³⁴ Ibid., 181.

³⁵ Parker, “An Empire's New Holy land,” 139.

³⁶ S. Griffith, “From Aramaic to Arabic: The Languages of the Monasteries of Palestine in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 1997, no. 51: 11.

Muslim rule; it wasn't until later in the eighth century that Arabic was adopted as the local ecclesiastical language for purposes of survival and continuation.³⁷

With the foundation of the Umayyad dynasty under Mu 'awiya, the situation in Syria and Palestine stabilized considerably; the core of the Caliphate focused on Palestine and the region benefitted enormously, particularly Jerusalem.³⁸ For the Arabs, Antioch was an important base for expansion and defence, and Jerusalem was the third holiest city after Mecca and Medina. In Antioch, Clive Foss paints a bleak picture of the city after the conquests; public buildings lay in ruins, destroyed or else occupied as small-scale dwellings, the city appeared as a "vast field of ruins" possessing none of its former character, the wide boulevards had small buildings erected at random, and the aqueducts had long since stopped working.³⁹ This report conflicts with much of what we have seen so far of the state of affairs following the conquests and it makes it hard to know whether the city was a ruin or a thriving urban centre. This is a perfect example of a description of the supposed "smoking ruins" theory previously favoured by scholars. One characteristic of the early Islamic period in Syria-Palestine is the use of former public buildings as private dwelling space.⁴⁰ This would explain the appearance of abandonment of the public buildings or their occupation as small-scale dwellings. One thing that has become apparent is that the Greek-speaking Christians and the Arabic-speaking Muslims could not understand the cultural practices of one another; they were faced with a completely

³⁷ Ibid., 24.

³⁸ Schick, "Archaeological Sources for the History of Palestine," 76.

³⁹ Foss, "Syria in Transition," 195.

⁴⁰ Schick, "Archaeological Sources for the History of Palestine," 88.

alien entity with whom they strove to co-exist in a relatively short period of time.

In contrast to the above description of Antioch, Jerusalem experienced a period of prosperity under the Caliphate. Under the Umayyad dynasty, Jerusalem saw a period of substantial growth and rebuilding after its capture. The Muslims put a lot of investment into Jerusalem in particular; the construction of the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock took place in this time period, as did construction of the Golden Gate, the Dome of the Chain, and a complex of palaces to the south of the Haram. Even the roads in and around Jerusalem underwent repair under the guidance of ‘Abd al-Malik, the successor of Mu ‘awiya.⁴¹ The Dome of the Rock is the oldest surviving Islamic monument, and it is interesting to note that no mosques have been found dating to the period before ‘Abd al-Malik and the Umayyad dynasty in 692. One theory has purported that ‘Abd al-Malik sought to attract pilgrim traffic towards Jerusalem and away from the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, which at the time were under the control of his hated rival; this could explain why Jerusalem in particular saw a boost in construction and prosperity under his leadership. However, Jerusalem was not the only city to see growth, change, and rebuilding.

It was not just the Islamic buildings that benefitted from the reign of the Umayyads; Christian churches also saw substantial increases in construction – further indication of thriving Christian communities and evidence that the Christians were neither persecuted nor forbidden from observing their religion under Muslim rule.⁴² The survival of churches suggests culture and vitality within the

⁴¹ Ibid., 84.

⁴² Ibid., 86.

city and within the Christian community. There are many church mosaics that have been found which date to between 635 and 639, which indicates that construction on these churches was completed after the Muslim conquests.⁴³ The continued construction “indicates that the inhabitants neither fled as refugees nor were killed off by the Muslims, but were undisturbed by the fact that the Muslims were conquering them”.⁴⁴ Averil Cameron tells us “... the large number of mosaic pavements surviving from this period in Palestine demonstrate the level of investment in buildings.”⁴⁵ Surely this signifies that the Muslim rulers sought to improve the overall appearance and function of the cities that they ruled. It seems that the Umayyads rarely converted churches into mosques, but instead allowed them to function in their original capacity.⁴⁶ The co-existence of church and mosque reveals that the Muslims did not seek to impose Islam on their subjects but allowed them to practice their own religious beliefs.

Many churches dating to the Abbasid dynasty have been found with carefully removed and repaired damage to the images of people and animals – faces and identifying features were removed and carefully replaced with blank tiles or cement filler, possibly in direct relation to the prohibition on the depiction of anything that possessed the breath of life.⁴⁷ Those churches that were found with their images still intact were believed to have not been in use at the time of the prohibition; it is unclear whether the Christians did the damage to the images themselves or

⁴³ Ibid., 76.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity*, 180.

⁴⁶ Schick, “Archaeological Sources for the History of Palestine,” 88.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 87.

whether it was at the direct instruction of the authorities.⁴⁸ Whatever the cause of the damage, the fact that the churches continued to operate after the prohibition and had carefully removed the offending pieces of their mosaics shows a co-operation and co-existence between the Islamic and Christian religion within Syria-Palestine.

All of these factors together reveal a period in the seventh century that – while still recovering from war with the Sasanians, unavoidable natural catastrophe, and the associated economic decline in the sixth century – was nevertheless set upon a course of growth, rebuilding, and prosperity. The towns, cities, and surrounding countryside enjoyed for the most part a relative peace under their Muslim rulers. Evidence of thriving Christian communities, the founding of new settlements and the growth of existing cities shows a continuation of the prior Hellenic civilization instead of sweeping destruction and oppression of the native population. The continued use of the Greek language, the former administration and coinage, and the evidence from pottery finds combine to tell us that life in Syria and Palestine continued on without any great disruption following the Muslim conquests. The construction of new churches and public buildings indicates that the Muslims found a civilization in midst of recovery which they conquered with little resistance and built upon pre-existing systems to found what would later become the Muslim Caliphate.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

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POPULAR DISILLUSIONMENT

AARON GOLDSTEIN-STORSETH

One of the many themes that characterize the nature of our modern world – particularly prevalent in Western society – is an increasing sense of political disenfranchisement. Fostered by intellectual dialogue, new communication technologies, and the loosening of rigid cultural, international, and ethnic boundaries, the distance between all of us has been shortened. Consequently, we now have a window into international affairs, and a platform for critical discussion of world events. For example, a young student in Turkey can share his experience of his country's increasingly de-secularizing policies, and a man present during the Egyptian Arab Spring protests can upload a video of police brutality that the world would not otherwise see. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, there is now a space for voices to counter and discredit official government policy. Edward Snowden's disclosure of unconstitutional government surveillance and Julian Assange's collection of condemning documents, known as WikiLeaks, are demonstrations of this trend. Accordingly, the thin veneer of representative governance in many countries has been scratched away. Contradicting the populist rhetoric they espouse, government policy has often been shown to be self-serving, arbitrary, and exploitative, encroaching on universally established human rights. However, it must be explicitly stated, despite the claims of many overzealous conspiracy theorists, governments - at least in the manner I use the term - are not singular entities, working in tandem to take away all that we hold dear. A much more accurate picture would be the conception of

government as a bureaucratic nightmare, with a variety of departments and individuals, each having different and often contradictory interests. The problem, and the reason why many are becoming disillusioned with our current political system, is that these interests are increasingly relevant only to a small corporate, industrial, and military elite. Thus, many citizens who do not wish to intervene in international conflicts, such as those over trade commodities, are feeling unrepresented – and ultimately impotent in their ability to influence national decisions. Accordingly, many are withdrawing from political affairs, and voter apathy is at an all-time high.¹

This type of popular disillusionment is a phenomenon that has been prevalent in a variety of time periods throughout human history. One of the most relevant of these is the Hellenistic age, 323 – 31 BCE, an oft-overlooked transitional period which shares a large number of similarities to our own. At first glance it may seem odd to claim that the modern world shares a parallel relationship with one that is thousands of years old. For this reason, there are those who trivialize what occurred in the ancient past as irrelevant, dismissing it as a time of ignorance and barbarism, nothing like us now in our modern splendour and enlightenment. However, the current genocides of our day, and those in the recent past, demonstrate quite sharply that which is essentially human has stayed the same throughout the ages: exploitation and domination of the weak using violence, egotistical and narcissistic ambition, a

¹Elections Canada, *Voter Turnout at Federal Elections and Referendums*, accessed December 2013
(<http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=ele&dir=turn&document=index&lang=e>)

desire to understand and relate to the world around us, and finally, a capacity for both the most atrocious and compassionate of acts. Therefore, if one brushes away the glossed-over, mythical, and romanticised remembrances of antiquity, one can witness the common humanity in our history: a process which entails a detailed analysis of the past - or at least, the texts we have about them - with a critical eye, considerate of the context in which they were written.

This paper aims to explore the links between the Hellenistic age and our own, with specific emphasis on the rise of popular disillusionment. I will do so by making use of classical scholar Peter Green's notion of the Hellenistic period as a "distant mirror" to our current one. Green believed that the Hellenistic period had relevance to contemporary social and political realities, more so than any other ancient history he had studied, contending that: "Alexandria, Antioch, and Pergamon reflect contemporary fads, failings, and aspirations, from the urban malaise, from Veblenism to *haute cuisine*, from funded scholarship... to a flourishing dropout counterculture, from political impotence in the individual to authoritarianism in government, from science perverted for military ends to illusionism for the masses, from spiritual solipsism on a private income, to systematic extortion in pursuit of the plutocratic dream."² Green attempts to leave these parallels unspoken in his work, avoiding heavy-handed comparison, preferring to let the evidence speak for itself. I believe the nature of these cross-periodical comparisons is indicative

²Peter Green, *Alexander To Actium: The Historical Evolution of the Hellenistic Age* (Los Angeles: University of California Press), p. XVI

of just how useful this line of inquiry between our modern world and the Hellenistic one can be. Following this line of thinking, I will examine Hellenistic economic and political developments, and examine how they affected society at large, relating them to current political trends.

The Hellenistic era was an incredibly transformative period, characterized by the destruction of long-existing borders and political institutions. It was a time when the Mediterranean and Near East, through the catalyst of Alexander's conquests, was metaphorically - and in some places literally - burned to the ground, paving the way for new political, economic, and cultural systems to take root. First and most immediate of these changes was the increasingly monarchical and autocratic nature of governance. Officially, the political instrument of power came to be wielded by one individual: the divine king, who, following the example of Alexander the Great, initially gained his power through charisma and strength of arms. This of course contrasts with the prior Greek Polis and its emphasis on civil involvement. In terms of why the Polis as an effective political system was overrun, there was the "general failure of civic institutions to work, a general recourse to authoritarian rule supported by non-citizen armies, [and] a general alienation of the citizens from participation in the affairs of their community."³ After years of disunity and pointless rivalry, the Greeks had finally paid the price. R. Browning holds the belief that after the "glory of the Persian Wars and the prolonged bitterness of the Peloponnesian War, it was easy to conclude that the Greeks' finest hour was when they were united against the

³R. Browning, 'The crisis of the Greek city - a new collective study', (Review of c 83) *Philologus* 120 (1976), p 258

barbarians”⁴ Thus the Polis, as the dominant political unit, had shown itself to be completely dead, steamrolled by autocratic personal monarchy.

An important point to be raised is that even though the Hellenistic period can be described as incredibly violent and disruptive, it was also a time of economic growth and expansion, with the transition from a local to an international market. In terms of developments encouraging this growth, there were two specific factors that were the most important. The first was the slave trade. With the amount of war, piracy, and all-around violence and destruction, it should not come as a surprise that the slave trade intensified during this period. It was a booming industry, and Hellenistic leaders helped fund many of their wars by supplying the market. The second institution was the spread of associations of traders and merchant-ship owners to various ports around the Mediterranean. Accordingly, economic interplay and exchange between seaboard communities intensified. This helped foster, in the words of J.K. Davies, “one [economic] world out of what had been hitherto an assemblage of economic zones less intimately and more superficially connected.”⁵ A new urban intellectual culture was also developing, shaped by the quasi-globalism of the Mediterranean. Green describes this urban culture as characterized by “cosmopolitan commercialism, swarming crowds of entrepreneurs, bureaucrats, agents, craftsmen, and slaves.”⁶

⁴P.J Rhodes , “The Polis and the Alternatives”, in *The Cambridge Ancient History Volume VI* ed. D.M Lewis. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, Press, 2008), P.590

⁵J.K Davies, “Cultural, Economic, and Social Features of the Hellenistic World”, p.284

⁶ibid, p.155

This burgeoning intellectual culture resulted in new and innovative art, architecture, philosophy, and technology. However, despite these progressive advances, Hellenistic society became even more exploitative and decadent, with the sharp gap between rich and poor growing ever wider. Even though more capital was gained overall, the average standard of living actually fell. Green poignantly articulates this phenomenon, describing how “there remained a void at the heart of things, a rootlessness that was one of the Hellenistic age’s most enduring and characteristic.”⁷ There began to be a reaction to the growing opulence of urban culture – and against the sense of political powerlessness which struck at the Greek concept of freedom.

Dishearteningly, there was an absence of ideologically motivated social unrest, and no one - at least from what can be gleaned from the sources - attempted to definitively change the economic or political system. Most of the reactions, which were academic and escapist, advocated a withdrawal from political affairs. Two of the major philosophical streams of the day that best represent this focus are Epicureanism and Cynicism. Epicureanism is the belief that individuals should concentrate on attaining pleasure and avoiding pain, limiting their ambitions, and completely removing themselves from politics. Conversely, Cynicism rejected the materialistic nature of society, contending that one should attempt to live as simple and “natural” a life as possible (their claims become less inspiring when one realizes that many of the ancient Cynics were wealthy aristocrats and made no genuine effort to alter the system they attacked, yet hypocritically benefited

⁷Green, *Alexander to Actium*, p. 388

from). Both of these philosophies are intellectual and introspective responses to the growing lack of control and influence many had in governance. In other words, the “loss of external political freedom inevitably drove men inward on themselves.”⁸

There was some explicit social unrest in the Hellenistic period, but none that could be identified as an organized revolution aimed at changing the status-quo. Beyond minor rebellions, the only event that could seemingly be associated with revolution would be the attempts of the Spartan kings Cleomenes III and Agis at “social reform”. For instance, both employed egalitarian rhetoric, using words like ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’, promising to abolish debt, redistribute wealth on a mass-scale, and free the helots. However, rather than illustrating liberal altruistic desires to change an oppressive economic system, their actions, on closer inspection, are more indicative of *machtpolitik* – power politics. Cleomenes III and Agis had no concern for helot equality; their actions were desperate emergency acts to gain money, forestall true helot revolution, and ultimately, pave the way for a return of Spartan aristocratic supremacy. Thus, “any trace of purported idealism, revolutionary or other[wise]... during these fraught years turns out, on investigation, to be mere camouflage for the most squalid class warfare or ruthless *matchpolitik*.”⁹ In other words, it was the use of social revolution as a tool, merely the pursuit of authoritarian power by Cleomenes III and Agis.

Although it was written after the end of the Hellenistic age, another good source to observe the disillusionment with

⁸Ibid, p.53

⁹ibid, p.250

political leaders is Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*. Written in the first century CE, *Parallel Lives* is a series of biographies of Greek and Roman rulers. Rather than create a comprehensive collection of dates, facts, and a proper chronology of events, Plutarch was more interested in providing models of behavior for his contemporaries. In this manner, he acted as a moralizing or ethical observer of the Hellenistic political scene, concerned with chronicling the vice and virtues of historical figures. Accordingly, he wanted to demonstrate the contents of their souls more than their deeds, because to Plutarch "sometimes a matter of less moment, an expression or a jest, informs us better of their characters and inclinations, than the most famous sieges, the greatest armaments, or the bloodiest battles whatsoever."¹⁰ Most relevant to the topic of political disillusionment is one of the recurring motifs in Plutarch's work - his admonishment of the ego of many historical figures, holding power-hungry ambition and the "excessive pursuit of reputation"¹¹ as destructive forces. For this reason, he argues that many of history's injustices are caused by men seeking glory. This, however, does not lead him to Epicurean notions that one should avoid all ambition and live "life unnoticed". Rather, he contends that one should channel ambition into positive, noble pursuits.

Plutarch examines a variety of individuals through his moral lens, ranging from Alexander to the Gracchi brothers. Those who fought for honorable, communal, and

¹⁰Plutarch, *Parallel Lives: Alexander The Great*, Translated by John Dryden (<http://classics.mit.edu/Plutarch/alexandr.html>)

¹¹Geert Roskam, "Ambition and Love of fame in Plutarch'S LIVES OF AGIS, CLEOMENES, AND THE GRACCHI", in *Classical Philology Vol. 106 (3)*, p.1

republican reasons are praised, while those who sought personal glory are condemned. For example, Plutarch condemns Demetrius the Besieger as indulgent and insolent, referencing accounts that he participated in constant orgies, sometimes not even leaving to come out to his battle duties.¹² Likewise, Alexander is criticized for his ego and brashness, and Cleomenes III for his wrath and ambition. However, Plutarch's biographies must be looked upon with some suspicion. Very often he ignores – or excuses – individuals' actions because of their noble birth, or supposed honorable character. His primary aim was to provide role models for Roman values, not to mount a comprehensive attack on Hellenistic political developments.

Some may argue that a comparison between the autocratic governments of the Hellenistic period with our own is stretching a point too far. Ostensibly, contemporary Western representative democracies are constitutional, based on law, and not a tool to be used by one power-hungry individual. However, I believe the recent leaks by Edward Snowden about government surveillance illustrate that arbitrary government policy is still prevalent. It simply exists in a much more subtle form. Accordingly, the current censorship of information Snowden revealed are an attempt to restrict transparent critical discussion, freedom of expression, and freedom of privacy on digital communications. Moreover, like most historic infringements on civil liberties, government is claiming to be working in the public interest – enacting extreme policies

¹²Plutarch, *Parallel Lives: The Comparison of Demetrius and Antony*,
Translated by John Dryden
(http://classics.mit.edu/Plutarch/d_antony.html)

rather than moderate ones to address legitimate security or domestic concerns. To give a brief overview of these revelations, beginning on June 6th 2013, former National Security Agency employee Edward Snowden met with journalist Glenn Greenwald and began revealing documents about US and international mass surveillance programs, which were published by the *Guardian Newspaper*.¹³ The many United States-run programs, such as PRISM and X-Keyscore allow “analysts to search with no prior authorization through vast databases containing emails, online chats and the browsing histories of millions of individuals.”¹⁴ Perhaps more frightening, these surveillance systems – disregarding Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – are completely indiscriminate in their collection of data. In other words, one’s privacy is not breached only if one demonstrates suspicious behavior; rather, everything is passively collected into NSA servers.¹⁵ Furthermore, this is not a completely American issue. Snowden’s documents implicate cross-cooperation with many other NATO and EU countries, with most Western governments – Canada included – being heavily implicated in having similar programs. The relative lack of international condemnation

¹³Mirren Gida, *Edward Snowden and the NSA files – timeline*, “The Guardian”, accessed December 2013, (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/23/edward-snowden-nsa-files-timeline?INTCMP=SRCH>)

¹⁴Glenn Greenwald, *XKeyscore: NSA tool collects 'nearly everything a user does on the internet'*, “The Guardian”, accessed December 2013, (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/31/nsa-top-secret-program-online-data>)

¹⁵Glenn Greenwald, *XKeyscore: NSA tool collects 'nearly everything a user does on the internet'*, “The Guardian”

seems somewhat telling in this regard. These Orwellian revelations have come as a shock to the general public. The United States government's official response has been to label Edward Snowden a traitor, charging him with espionage and theft of government property.¹⁶ Undeniably he is guilty of these charges, and has broken American law, but there is irony in identifying a man acting selflessly to inform the world of illegal behavior as a traitor.

In my opinion, this demonstrates that there is a clear disconnect between the interests and concerns of the United States government and its citizens. Snowden undoubtedly did something overtly against the laws of the United States by leaking classified information. However, the information leaked implicates the government in actions of unconstitutional domestic surveillance. The United States government's tacit assertion that they are representing the will of their citizens on this issue can be unmistakably challenged. According to recent public opinion polls, the majority (49% vs. 44%) of American citizens believe that Edward Snowden is serving the interests of the public.¹⁷ Furthermore, former president Jimmy Carter has condemned the US government's actions, claiming that "America has no functioning democracy." Continuing his point:

¹⁶Peter Finn and Sari Horwitz, *US Charges Snowden with Espionage*, "Washington Post", accessed December 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-charges-snowden-with-espionage/2013/06/21/507497d8-dab1-11e2-a016-92547bf094cc_story.html

¹⁷People Press Research Centre, *Young People Say Leak Serves Public Interest*, accessed December 2013, (<http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/6-17-13%20NSA%20release.pdf>)

*“At a time when popular revolutions are sweeping the globe, the United States should be strengthening, not weakening, basic rules of law and principles of justice enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights... But instead of making the world safer, America’s violation of international human rights abets our enemies and alienates our friends.”*¹⁸

The relatively poor public and academic reception to the United States’ branding of Edward Snowden as a traitor illustrates, as a microcosm, how little many Western societies feel represented by their governments. Arbitrary submission to state authority is becoming less and less popular. Lies and excuses are no longer as easily swallowed. The world is becoming more aware of political realities. One can only remain optimistic that an increasingly less apathetic and more conscious public pushes for progressive changes towards a utopian future where the state and its citizens’ interests align.

The Hellenistic age shows us a time that was suffering in a much more severe and explicit sense from many of the same ills as our own: class-divide, economic exploitation, and popular disenfranchisement and apathy. The philosophies of the period, characterized by Epicureanism and Cynicism, illustrate an intellectual desire to break with politics, seeing no method - or perhaps possessing no strong desires - to change the status-quo. Further, Plutarch’s writings show exasperation with egotistical, ambitious, and

¹⁸Katie McHugh, *Jimmy Carter: ‘America no longer has a functioning democracy’*, “Daily Caller”, accessed December 2013, (<http://dailycaller.com/2013/07/17/jimmy-carter-america-no-longer-has-a-functioning-democracy/>)

autocratic individuals running the system at the time. Admittedly, the sources on this subject of popular disillusionment are thin, and require in-depth analysis and a large amount of conjecture. One needs to be wary of the context of these surviving works, as writers were generally aristocratic or had wealthy aristocratic patrons. For this reason, they could not – or would not – be overtly contemptuous of society and political rulers; they would not bite the hand that fed them, or the system that sustained their affluence. In my opinion, this represents one of the most important lessons we can take from the Hellenistic period and much of antiquity in general: the importance of transparent, censorship-free international dialogue. As historians, much of the sources we examine only represent the opinions, thoughts, and beliefs of a small segment of the population. I can only argue about a “popular Hellenistic sense of disillusionment” to a certain extent, because I am constrained by the available sources. Conversely, thanks to our digital interconnectedness and the rapid information-sharing of our modern world, a vast amount of people are now given a voice and means by which that voice may be heard. Many times these voices may be silly, or irrelevant, but I fear that if we continue along our current political path, critical and dissenting voices will be muffled.

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A DISCUSSION OF CULTURAL ORIGIN: PALMYRA

LEAH ISELMOE

Culture has a nature akin to each group it defines; it is elastic, organic and constantly changing. With continuous interaction between different groups of people, cultures evolve and incorporate a multitude of aspects from one another. For example, many parts of what constitutes Canadian culture is also a part of British or American culture. These similarities aid in building an idea of what 'Canadian' is, but do not aid in separating 'Canadian' from the other two. In fact, being linked to those other cultures is an aspect of Canadian culture. To effectively examine the aspects that create a cultural identity, an examination of the origins of these aspects is necessary. In this paper, the origins of the culture of Palmyra will be examined. These are portrayed in art, religion and government: in identifying where Palmyra attained specific motifs, styles and even deities, one can identify 'what' makes up 'who' Palmyra was.

The idea of culture is constituted through social contact. To understand a culture, one must examine similarities to other groups and compare in an 'us' versus 'them' model.¹ This method has been used throughout history; the poet Vergil depicts barbarians "as different in language and appearance as in costume and arms".² This idea is still prevalent in the

¹Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz (eds.), *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities 300-800*, (Leiden, 1998), 21

²Vergil, *Aeneis* 8, 722-3. Quote from *Strategies of Distinction*, 17

modern study of culture, and has been built on over time. Not only is the understanding of difference between ‘us’ and ‘them’ a method in identifying culture, but so also is the “subjective factor, the belief in belonging to a group with common origins”.³ Culture is “imagined as a community, because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.”⁴ In modern society, your political and geographical location often shapes this comradeship. In the past, cosmological belief systems formed the organization of societies. Your identity was not based on your political geography, but on a more intimate scale. Your religious or familial ties played significant roles in self-identity. These aspects still create culture in the modern world, but with semi-divine rulers and religion no longer controlling the civic aspects of life, a sense of community is now created on more secular, nationalist terms.⁵ Culture becomes broader; individuals are more relevant in a group as opposed to separate or unique from others.

In ancient times, cultures seemed to have been more personal, changing per individual. “An individual may have many ‘selves’ according to the groups he belongs to”⁶, further complicating the cultural categorizing of an entire

³Pohl and Reimitz, *Strategies of Distinction*, 20

⁴Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: The Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983), 50

⁵Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 52

⁶Pohl and Reimitz, *Strategies of Distinction*, 21

society. In the study of ancient cultures, the individual identities available for study are often of a small group: the elites. Zenobia, the Queen of Palmyra, is an example of this elite cultural identity that existed throughout history and will be discussed later in this paper. Yet one individual of the upper social group would not have had the same cultural identity as the majority of the Palmyrene population, leading to uncertainties in understanding what defines this culture.

Another issue in the study of culture is the evolution of the definition of 'culture'. The modern understanding cannot be applied to the ancient peoples of Antiquity. Homogenous cultural states were rare in the ancient world; nationalism did not exist as it does today. Geographical location did not make up cultural identity; governing bodies did not give citizens a culture. Multiple groups co-existed in these political spheres and borrowed a multitude of aspects from one another throughout history. Unfortunately, in looking back at Antiquity, there are minimal sources available to understand and examine these imagined ties, let alone to know if and between whom they existed. Ancient sources are our only tools of reconstruction: material remains such as art and architecture, as well as written sources. Yet careful interpretation is vital in examining these aspects of ancient peoples. Biased or propagandistic portrayals of a specific group or situation are common. Often the surviving sources are produced by and for those of the elite class, who do not represent the view of the majority. Pieces of art and architecture were all deliberately created to portray specific messages which may lead to cloudy and misguided modern interpretations. Written sources are viewed with definite scrutiny; recording of ancient history is often written in a

propagandist, glorifying manner, and lasting material is heavily one-sided.

Due to minimal sources and this modern point of view on culture, 'who' or 'what' Palmyra's cultural identity was is rather difficult to define and cannot be easily reduced to a single idea or statement. As noted, culture is not a set list of aspects. It is unique at individual and group levels, portrayed in a multitude of ways often by its connection to other cultures. As a buffer state between the Roman Empire and Eastern powers, Palmyra became a mosaic of cultural identities. As a powerful trade centre, many different peoples congregated to this region and in doing so, influenced the cultural mosaic. Palmyra's economy, religion, art and governing style directly reflect the influence of these groups. Through tracing specific cultural aspects to their original cultures, an idea of Palmyra's cultural ancestry may be achieved. With the knowledge of ancestry, one may begin to form the definition of 'Palmyrene'.

Palmyra was an oasis originally used as a waypoint to stop during travels through the desert. It was not a large city; in fact, one may not have even called it a city at all, but a compilation of nomads, not at all an official major player in the Eastern world. Yet due to the decline of Emesa and of Nabatea's control of trade at the end of the first century CE, trade routes were forced to change⁷. The Roman Empire benefitted from these changes: the decline of trade from Petra due to Roman Antioch's growing importance is a prime example. Palmyra followed in Antioch's footsteps and took advantage of this opportunity. Quickly, Palmyra

⁷Warwick Ball, *Rome and the East: The Transformation of an Empire* (London, 2000), 74

developed from a remote oasis to an urban trading hub. As the Seleucid Empire declined, their control over the periphery regions was lost. Small Arab principalities emerged all over the East.⁸ Amongst those new locations, Palmyra was founded by four Arab tribes: the Komare, Battabol, Maazin and Amlaqi.⁹ These tribes lent their religious beliefs as well as familial loyalty to the new city. The safety of the trade caravans heavily relied upon this familial loyalty. Good relations with the nomad tribes were vital, as they often made the desert dangerous and costly for other travellers.¹⁰ A “complex fabric of hospitality, dependence and parentage between desert chiefs and city patrons”¹¹ of Palmyra maintained the reliability that Palmyrene caravans would deliver goods unharmed. Mounted archers protected the caravans, creating a reputation of safety that was good for business. Palmyra’s ties to the nomadic tribes were essential to their economy and apparent in their culture. The creation of a vast, reliable trade network created a mosaic of cultures. The realization of lucrative international commerce by exterior groups grew Palmyra from an Arab oasis community into a multi-cultural centre.

This Palmyrene network spanned western Asia and the Mediterranean, channeling merchandise through all the major centres along the way¹² and furthering their exposure to a multitude of cultures. It is of interest to note that

⁸Ibid

⁹Ball, *Rome and the East*, 74

¹⁰Peter M. Edwell, *Between Rome and Persia: The Middle Euphrates, Mesopotamia and Palmyra under Roman Control* (Oxon, 2008), 32

¹¹M. Gawlikowski, ‘Palmyra as a Trading Centre’, *BritISI*, 56 (1994), 27-33 at 31

¹²Ball, *Rome and the East*, 76

crossing the desert through Palmyra was in no way the most direct or logical route for trade. Yet to further Palmyrene business interests, there were agents all over the East. These agents at Dura Europos, Babylon, areas in the Persian Gulf and even areas at the mouth of the Indus ensured travel went in the Palmyrene direction.¹³ Palmyra did not become a trading centre naturally; the people made it one. With connections to the nomadic tribes, Palmyra was able to control a vast and dangerous force where neither Roman nor Persian influence had a stronghold: the desert.

In the early second century CE, Palmyrene merchants founded colonies called *fonduqs* in southern Mesopotamia.¹⁴ This led to further cultural mixing of ideas at Palmyra, as these merchants no doubt were still closely linked to the trading centre. Further ties to other centres lend proof to Palmyra's cultural mosaic. Palmyrene merchants and caravans were often financially and diplomatically protected by wealthy residents of other cities such as Charax and Vologessias.¹⁵ Multiple inscriptions record the gratitude of caravan members towards these supporters upon their safe returns.¹⁶

Trade was a private enterprise, and the merchants of Palmyra became rich and powerful individuals within the city. Many monuments from the second century CE were privately commissioned by these elites with "such lavishness rarely seen in other parts".¹⁷ The rebuilding of

¹³Ball, *Rome and East*, 74

¹⁴Edwell, *Between Rome and Persia*, 37

¹⁵Gawlikowski, 'Palmyra as a Trading Centre', 29

¹⁶*Ibid*

¹⁷Ball, *Rome and the East*, 76

the Temple of Bel in 139 CE was entirely funded by one man, Male Agrippa.¹⁸ This was the most important monument at Palmyra, and for only one man to have the ability to fund the entire project is a prime example of the importance and success of Palmyrene trade. Trade was closely linked to religion as it funded its monuments and cults, and Palmyra recognized trade as its support system. Inscriptions made by municipal authorities give the highest honours to those associated with the caravan business.¹⁹ Unlike other client kingdoms of Rome, Palmyra was controlled by this confederation of tribes for the first one hundred years of Rome's presence in the East.²⁰ This undoubtedly strengthened the Arab influence within the city, but by the second century CE, Hellenic institutions had been established within Palmyra and were the dominant civic authority.²¹ Palmyra did not use the dynastic system of government until the reign of 'Udaynath and his family in the third century CE.²² For good services to the Roman Empire they were awarded Roman titles, but even then a Palmyrene interpretation is apparent. A mixing of both Eastern and Western governing titles held by this family demonstrates a hybrid style at Palmyra. Zenobia went by the Parthian title *Wahballath*- meaning 'king of kings'²³ but was also a Roman citizen. The army of Palmyra followed Parthian arms and tactics as well,²⁴ demonstrating the mixing of Eastern and Western cultures

¹⁸Ibid

¹⁹Gawlikowski, 'Palmyra as a Trading Centre', 31

²⁰Edwell, *Between Rome and Persia*, 33

²¹Ibid

²²Ball, *Rome and the East*, 77

²³Ball, *Rome and the East*, 86

²⁴Ibid

at this trading centre.

Due to the ability for individuals to gain such vast power through trade, they had the ability to greatly affect the culture of Palmyra. The reconstruction of the Temple of Bel demonstrates the power of one individual placed into the forefront of Palmyrene life. This further demonstrates how Palmyra was affected by a multitude of different cultures from different places. Palmyra grew from the migration of people who aimed to partake in the lucrative trade business built up in the area, and their cultures came with them. Over time these cultures mixed and morphed, creating this unique city. The origins of religion at Palmyra demonstrate the impact of outside culture on the city. Multiple gods made up the Palmyrene pantheon, yet each of these gods can be traced to neighbouring cultures of Palmyra - none originate there. The founding tribes brought their gods to this new city, and they made up the main cults of the Palmyrene pantheon: Ba'al-Shamin, Aglibol-Malakbel, Arsu and Atargatis.²⁵ Deities were brought to the region with migrating merchants from multiple areas²⁶ as Palmyra evolved from a remote desert oasis to a trading centre. Baal-Shamin is of Syro-Pheonician origin as well as Astarte, Eshmun and Melqart.²⁷ Other gods can be traced from all over the Eastern territories: Allat, the Arab 'Anonymous God' who was a part of the Nabataean pantheon, Bel the Mesopotamian god also known as Bel-Marduk²⁸, along with Samas, Nanaia and Ishtar from the

²⁵Ball, *Rome and the East*, 74

²⁶M.I. Rostovtzeff, 'The Caravan-Gods of Palmyra', *JRS*, 22/1 (1932), 107-116, at 108

²⁷Ibid

²⁸Ball, *Rome and the East*, 86

Babylonian religion, as well as Jarhibol and Aglibol the moon god.²⁹ Hadad and Atargatis from Northern Syria are also present in Palmyrene worship.³⁰

As trade was the *raison d'être* of Palmyra, religion reflected this. There are two gods that illustrate the trade-oriented culture at this centre: Arsu and Azizu. They are both well-known figures from nomadic Arabian mythology.³¹ Also known as Roudha or Radhou appearing in Safaitic inscriptions throughout the desert, Arsu had originally been a goddess.³² Through the creation of Palmyrene religion, Arsu became the camel god and caravan protector alongside Azizu at Palmyra. Azizu was the 'rider-god and protector of horses' in Northern Syria whose cult migrated with the merchants and soldiers who travelled all over the Eastern provinces.³³ Although each of these deities was wide-spread in the Near East, they were paired together at Palmyra. This is an understandable occurrence as both camels and horses were worshipped in Arabia,³⁴ being vital tools in survival of trade and humanity in the harsh climate. Votive offerings at Puteoli in 11 CE demonstrate their reverence and importance to the merchants of the East: gold and bronze camels and horses with inscriptions dedicating them to Dusares and Wadd hoping for safe travel along the caravan route.³⁵ It was believed that Arsu and Azizu guided and protected the caravans from raiders and evil. Due to this important role, Arsu and Azizu played

²⁹Rostovtzeff, 'The Caravan-Gods of Palmyra', 108

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., 110

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

prominent roles in Palmyrene culture. Thousands of *tesserae* have been found picturing Arsu, who is often paired with Azizu in low-relief.³⁶ These clay lumps were originally used as tickets of admission to sacred funeral banquets honouring gods or the deified deceased (see fig. 1). The image of a specific deity displayed on such large-scale produced and circulated objects demonstrates the prominence of Arsu and Azizu in Palmyrene culture. A relief found by Moritz Sobernheim in 1899 further illustrates the importance of this theological duo's importance.³⁷ Now at the Damascus Museum, this relief depicts three figures: Arsu, Azizu and a priest who commissioned the piece to celebrate his safety after an expedition. The first god is Arsu seated on a camel, turned to the left and looking out at the viewer. He is dressed in cultural hybrid attire wearing a Roman cuirass, Eastern-style trousers, and holding a spear. Azizu is on horseback following Arsu's camel, and is also turned left with his face directed at the viewer. He is displayed in more civil attire as opposed to the military style of Arsu, and holds a spear to match.³⁸ The priest is depicted before the two gods turned to the right and presenting them with an offering of incense over a burning altar. The inscription lends the modern viewer more information about these Palmyrene gods:

“To Arsu and Azizu, the good gods who reward Ba’lai has made [this], son of Jarhibole, priest of Azizu the good and merciful benevolent god, for his safety and that of his brothers; month Tisri’, the year XXV. Let Iarhai, the

³⁶ Ibid., 111

³⁷ Ibid., 108

³⁸ Ibid., 109

sculptor, be remembered.”³⁹

The inscription is dated to 113 CE, and illustrates these gods’ roles as protectors of travellers who undoubtedly accompanied trade caravans. In the examination of Palmyra, direct aspects of other cultures can be identified as they create a patchwork that is ‘Palmyrene’. The ‘Irano-Hellenistic style’, as Ball identifies it, is prevalent in the relief discussed in the way each god is dressed - Arsu in an Eastern military outfit, and Azizû in the civil attire of Rome.

Although many cultures donated their deities to Palmyra, there was no theological Greco-Roman influence.⁴⁰ This does not seem to be due to anti-Roman sentiment; Hellenization is apparent as Rome and Palmyra became important economic partners in trade. Greco-Roman styles are evident not in the subject matter of religion, but in Palmyrene art; their gods often had an alternative Greek name and many sculptures were created in the Greco-Roman style. A first century CE relief sculpture found at Bir Wereb near Palmyra illustrates this mixture in Palmyrene art: three deities (see fig. 2) believed to be Ba’al-Shamin, Aglibol and Malakbel⁴¹ are portrayed in a mixture of Greco-Roman and Eastern styles:

“The three standing gods wear tight-sleeved tunics and are depicted in military garb: lamellar cuirasses and Roman cloaks fastened at the right shoulder with fibulae. They

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ball, *Rome and the East*, 86

⁴¹ Pepin Caroline, *The Divine Triad*, Collections and Louvre Palace, (1997)

grasp the hilts of their swords with their left hands, while their right hands, now missing, probably gripped spears or sceptres. The long, flowing hair of the central god is adorned with a calathos and a ribbon, in the Parthian style; he also wears Persian trousers. His beard indicates that he is Ba'alshamin, as opposed to Bel. He is flanked by two gods: beardless, bare-legged, with curly hair, their heads are surrounded by radiant haloes. These are the lunar god Aglibol, on the left, identifiable by his lunar crescent, and the sun god Malakbel, on the right."⁴²

The similarities in dress and weaponry to the previous Arsu-Azizu relief indicate the unique method in which Palmyra incorporated the various cultural influences of their society.

Funerary sculptures at Palmyra also demonstrate this cultural hybridism. The first funerary relief sculptures at Palmyra are dated to 65 CE when Roman dominance of the area began, demonstrating Palmyra's adoption of ideas.⁴³ "The frontality of the art, as well as the dress, the ornament and the framing of the reliefs are seen to be essentially Iranian variations on the underlying Hellenistic theme."⁴⁴ The idea was Greco-Roman, yet aspects of the individuals suggest different cultures. A third century funerary relief depicts a man in a Roman toga, paired with an Aramaic inscription (see fig. 2). This was a common theme at Palmyra - inscriptions in Palmyrene Aramaic detailing their name and genealogy, many being dated with a system that

⁴² Pepin Caroline, *The Divine Triad*, paragraph 2

⁴³ Maura K. Heyn, 'Gesture and Identity in the Funerary Art of Palmyra', *AJA*, 114/4 (2010), 631-661, at 632

⁴⁴ Ball, *Rome and the East*, 86

began with the foundation of the Seleucid Empire in 312 BCE.⁴⁵ The use of an Eastern-originated language and dating system paired with Western funerary practices demonstrates the hybridization of culture.

The choices of style within Palmyrene art are visual keys into understanding how these people identified themselves. Through lasting artifacts, modern scholars have the chance to understand the culture of Palmyra. A patchwork of multiple groups is evident at Palmyra. Influences that affect this culture can be seen through art, religion and military tactics. A solid, concise definition of Palmyrene culture is a difficult one to produce. Palmyra's various sources of inspiration shape its culture.⁴⁶ Commerce, Eastern gods, Western governance and Hellenization all played key roles in the creation of the city and the people who called it home. Through these influences the origins of Palmyrene culture are illustrated, giving the modern world a clue into who Palmyra was.

⁴⁵ Heyn, 'Gesture and Identity', 362

⁴⁶ Caroline, *The Divine Triad*, paragraph 4

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POETRY

THE WHISPERING WALLS

Have you walked the Wall on the rolling heath,
bones of Romans and English deep beneath?
Seen the shimmering shapes in the mauve twilight,
spied the spirits that stroll at the edge of your sight?

If the Wall could speak would we understand why
the silhouette of the stones kiss the Celtic sky?
The toil of Legions of Hadrian's hands,
carving the boundary of Roman lands.

Perhaps Trajan's heir planned the great Wall's meander
with hubris of existing beyond Great Alexander?
The spark of Augustus in Hadrian's breast
ignites the tall Wall from the East to the West.

If the Wall could shout out would it boast of its fame?
"Hundreds of years later you still know my name,
I kept out the Picts and belligerent tribes,
Raised you up from Barbarians, gave you civilized lives!"

But these aren't the words I hear as I wander,
my palm on the Wall I connect and I ponder,
and sure as the sunrise the Wall it does whisper,
it's the chatter of children, of brother, of sister!

Boys click their stick swords, girls giggle with dolls,
there are echoes of laughter in Hadrian's Walls!

Clinking of coins, the hum buzz of cartwheels,
boisterous farmers and merchants bartering deals.

Soft murmurs of lovers in shade of the Wall,
and mothers soothe babes in the folds of their shawls.
Sighing Empire soldiers so far from home,
groan through their duties for the glory of Rome.

I withdraw my hand, slowly vibrations fade,
the vicus hush silent but the past has been saved.
Still captured in stones so long after Rome's fall,
our history revisited at the whispering Wall.

-Colleen Dunn

REMEMBERING TULLIA

Once upon an ancient time I gazed through Tullia's eyes,
glimpsing blooms of Tusculum, as Tulliola, Cicero's pride.
Diligentia, indulgentia, doting daughter of delight,
cherished and protected, precious flower of his life.

Duty clenched within my fist, Terentia *mater* as my guide,
I draped in willowing flaming veils, fire and water for the
bride.

But though I yearned to nurture life created from myself,
deep disappointment grew within me and sadly there it
dwelt.

We truly walked through desperate days, tumultuous
thundering times.

Dangers lurked at every turn, was each decision good or
wise?

Yet every life has hills and troughs, even loving hearts feel
pain,

oh *Zeus* great things I saw and heard which will never
come again!

Love shone for me on golden days whilst my fortune stood
in stone,

this smiling rose of *pater's* life, a crimson spark of Rome.

It is not for me to judge him, surely gods decide such
things.

Though I Tullia wilted far too soon, my joyful soul still
sings!

-Colleen Dunn

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK 2013

“This is a once in a lifetime opportunity.”

These are words that have been spoken by parents and professors alike, and this statement is true in every sense of the word. As students, the ability to get our hands dirty “in the field” is of paramount importance to our ability to understand the past. Although a good knowledge of the ancient texts is important, and reading modern scholarship casts new light on the mysteries of the past, there is nothing for a student of the ancient world like experiencing archaeological fieldwork firsthand. The importance of fieldwork is greater than ever before, as we see invaluable artifacts in countries like Egypt and Syria destroyed or lost on the black market. The fact that we have an opportunity to work at excavating other such precious sites and items before they are lost to us helps to make us better students of the ancient world, and preservers of our collective cultural heritage. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Marianne Goodfellow, as she is the first archaeology professor of many students at Carleton University, and has been a great inspiration to all of us. I would also like to thank Professor Greg Fisher for serving as our supervisor for the Corvus journal. Since the beginning he has been key to its success and a great help to all of us in our studies.

-Jonathan Ouellet

DIGGING UP THE PAST: ARCHAEOLOGY IN BADIA POZZOVERI, ITALY

STEPHANIE DESJARDINS



Over the summer I was lucky enough to spend two months in Italy. Six of those weeks were spent working at a bio-archaeological dig site that was run by the university of Ohio and Pisa. The excavation took place at an abbey located at Badia Pozzeveri in the region of Tuscany.

At the abbey I worked in Area 1000, an area that during the medieval period was seen as a holy place since it was located right behind the abbey, and when the rain hit the roof and flowed down to the ground it was seen by the locals as holy water. The sacred nature of the ground meant that people of higher status were buried there. The bodily remains found in Area 1000 are very important to the study of the medieval period at the abbey, and provide a good insight into what the culture and society was like. In the summer of 2013 two new graves were discovered. Due to the acidic soil, the remains were poorly preserved. The first skeleton was reduced to two femurs, a couple of teeth and shadows of bone whereas the second

was nothing more than five teeth and a little bit of bone shadow. The teeth proved to be useful because they reveal a lot about a person's life from childhood. The way to find out about the individual is by looking at their stable carbon and nitrogen isotopes which measure the bone collagen and "reflect a composite of the isotope signatures of foods consumed during an individual's lifetime".¹ According to Drs. Reitsema and Vercellotti, by conducting a stable isotope analysis of human skeletal remains, one can learn the sex, age, and in some cases, the socio-economic status of the individual.² One important piece of information that the isotopes give us is what the individual ate. By examining what they ate one is able to "provide insights on social inequality and food access throughout an individual's lifetime".³ Another important piece of information stable isotopes reveal is the trading system, because stable isotopes can tell if the individual ate aquatic or terrestrial foods. This reveals trade routes because if the stable isotopes indicate that the individual ate fresh fish from a



certain coast but the individual lived far inland, it can be concluded that there must have been a trading route linking two places.

¹ Ibid.

¹ Ibid, 590 Reitsema, Vercellotti, 2012: 589

² Ibid.

³ Ibid, 590.



From Monday to Friday I would wake up at 7:30 a.m., dress, and eat breakfast across the street at the local café. At 8 a.m. I would

bike one mile to get to the dig site, and by 8:30 a.m. I would be at work on the site. Work consisted of pickaxing, shoveling, and troweling the area. We started our work every day by removing the dirt and dust that rested there overnight. Afterwards we would pickaxe to level out the ground and expand the edges of our site. The dirt that the pick axe had loosened was then shoveled away.

In the afternoon, or whenever the weather was too hot for physical labour, we went inside the abbey where we had a lesson on a myriad of different topics that included the history of the site, stable isotopes, G.I.S. methods, and new archaeological techniques. Afterwards, we went back out to the field where we would continue digging, troweling, and removing our finds from the field.

The only time when a student would not be digging in the field was when they were assigned to work in the lab. There were three labs: pottery and culture, G.I.S., and the bone lab. The pottery and culture lab was half a day long and consisted of cleaning pottery bits and then trying to assemble them back together again. The G.I.S. and bone

labs lasted for two whole days. The G.I.S. lab had two components to it. In the morning one would be out in the field taking coordinates of the dig area, trenches, and burial pits, and would then go into the abbey and plug these coordinates into AutoCAD and ArcGIS, programs allowing the mapper to submit information from the field into Google Maps. The end of the first day and the second day were dedicated to taking burials' coordinates and putting them into AutoCAD and labeling bones from skeletons. Lastly, during the bone lab students had the opportunity to clean bones and reassemble them into their anatomical position, carefully labeling each and every bone. Clean up time was at 5:30 p.m. and by 6 p.m. all of the students would be back at their living area. Showers and naps were taken, and afterwards a bit of time was set aside where the students would be able to write their field journals and update the field school blog to inform our readers what was happening in each section of the dig site. By 8:30 the students and instructors would walk half a mile to the local restaurant where dinner was served.

Weekends were our days off. I along with most of the students spent the weekends traveling all over Italy. During the six-week period I was able to travel to Rome, Pisa, Florence, Sicily, Lucca, and Cinque Terre.

In conclusion, I had the time of my life on this dig in Italy. I met incredible people, made some lifelong friends, was able to work on an incredible dig site, and was able to explore a country where my family came from. I would recommend that every student go on an archaeological dig if the opportunity arises. You will not regret it!

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THE ANCIENT CITY OF ARGILOS: A GREEK EXCAVATION

SARAH FILLETER



The summer of 2013 ended up being one of the most educational and significant summers of my life. Having a background in legal studies, I honestly never fathomed that I

would be given the opportunity to travel to another country to participate in an archaeological dig. I had always held an interest in archaeology, and in taking the Introduction to Archaeology class, I was able to meet Professor Marianne Goodfellow. She introduced me to the idea of becoming involved in archaeological fieldwork, regardless of prior experience. Upon further research, I discovered a Greek-Canadian archaeological site located in northern Greece along the coast, named Argilos.

Argilos is located outside of the city of Asprovalta, facing the Aegean Sea. We were lucky to wake up every morning and be able to get to our work site, which faced one of the most scenic views I have ever laid eyes upon.

At the site there were three areas which were being excavated this summer: the Koutloudis (named after the original land owner - it is one of the lower areas of the



site); the Slope (above the Koutloudis, the Slope follows a road up the hill, and is surrounded by the foundations of ancient structures); and the Acropolis (at the top of the hill, it consists of a Hellenistic mansion among other structures).

I worked on the Slope with eight other individuals from all over the world, two of whom were there in a supervisory

capacity. On the Slope, I specifically worked in a courtyard, which is formally known as House F. House F had been dug over many years, and we were able to find many missing pieces to important finds from previous years. It



was important to the organizers that we learn all aspects of an archaeological dig, and thus we not only dug, but we also tracked all the stratigraphy units, took extensive measurements, learnt how to draw millimeter drawings to scale (including difficult angular detail), cleaned pottery, and finally learnt about the numerous different types of pottery

we were uncovering. All of this information was invaluable to my understanding of archaeology in that area.

We were also extremely fortunate to be able to travel throughout Greece during our time away from the site. The organizers coordinated group trips to many different locations, including but not limited to: Pella, Vergina, Stagira, Thassos, the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki and the Byzantine Museum.



My time at Argilos, though simply a grain of sand in a lifetime of experiences, will remain an extremely treasured and meaningful experience to me. I truly took a leap when I signed up, as I knew no one on the dig, I was unfamiliar with the location, and I did not speak the language. I found that by immersing myself with culture and new

experiences, I was truly able to find myself and explore a new side of myself educationally. I left my site, but a part of it remains with me in the memories and friendships that I have ‘unearthed’ through this experience.