

# *Aisthesis*

*Volume VII • Spring 2018*

*Undergraduate Journal of Classical Studies  
Stanford University*

Sappho 16

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*Stanford University*

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Stanford University*

## Aisthesis

Aisthesis is a student run publication, operating within the Stanford University Department of Classics. It takes its name from the Greek αἴσθησις, which denotes sense perception, cognition, or moral discernment. This journal is dedicated to showcasing exactly such judgment, as well as intellectual capacity and originality, and thus publishes only the most impressive undergraduate research in the field. For additional information, please visit us online at: <https://classics.stanford.edu/projects/aisthesis-undergraduate-journal>.

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## Letter from the Editors

Classics is a discipline of communication across time. The field strives to understand the thoughts and experiences of people living millennia ago, in cultures vastly different from - yet at times uncannily similar to - our own. In pursuit of this understanding, classicists take many different paths, focusing on myriad elements of classical antiquity which, combined, create a vibrant whole.

This year's issue of *Aisthesis* showcases the immense variety of Classics as a discipline. Our publication encompasses many of the fields which make up classical scholarship: translation, philology, literary criticism, material culture, and more. We are proud that *Aisthesis* continues to expand the geographical and temporal scope of the papers we publish in accordance with an inclusive understanding of the classical canon. As such, we are delighted to present this year's wide-ranging selection of outstanding academic efforts.

To conclude, we thank the Stanford Department of Classics for their constant support over the years, the Associated Students of Stanford University for financially supporting the publication of this journal, everybody who submitted a paper for consideration, and our hard-working student editors. The papers we received this year were excellent, and we hope you enjoy reading them as much as we did.

Raleigh Browne, Sophia Furfine, and Emma Grover  
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## Submissions

We invite readers to submit to the 2018-2019 volume of *Aisthesis*. We accept critical essays in a classical context within fields including linguistics, philosophy, literature, history, drama, art, and archaeology. We also accept translations of Greek and Latin.

A submission consists of an email to [aisthesis.stanford@gmail.com](mailto:aisthesis.stanford@gmail.com) with the subject heading “submission title, field.” Within the email, please include two files: one with your contact information (including the title of your submission, as well as your full name, university, class year, and daytime phone number), and one that is the essay with an abstract. To facilitate blind review, please remove all identifying information from the essay. Papers should include a 200-word abstract and may be in .doc, .docx, or .pdf format.

The maximum suggested word count is 10,000 words or about 30 double-spaced pages, excluding notes and bibliography. Longer papers may be accepted if the additional length is justified by the content matter. The paper is to be formatted in Chicago style, but submissions prepared using other standard bibliographic formats will still be reviewed on the condition that the author reformat the paper in Chicago style if it is accepted for publication.

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# [Sappho 16]

OISHI BANERJEE

*STANFORD UNIVERSITY*

a cavalry's host, or an infantry's,  
 or a navy's, they say, on the earth dark  
 is the most beautiful thing; I still say it's that, what  
 ever one loves

(a wholly) simple matter, clarifying  
 (to all this fact), for she who greatly rose  
 in beauty above (humans), Helen, her husband  
 the (wholly excellent)

(abandoning), stepped to Troy (sailing)  
 and neither her (child) nor her loved (parents)  
 (at all) recalled, but mislead her did  
 ( )

( ) for ( )  
 ( ) airily ( )  
 ( ) now Anaktoria (to remember)  
 she who is (not) present

(whom) I'd rather, with her lovely step  
 and the bright radiance of her face, see  
 than the Lydians' chariots and armored  
 (foot) soldiers.

# Take Care Not to Catch the Madness: Celsus' Definition and Diagnosis of Madness

LEAH F. BORQUEZ

*BRYN MAWR COLLEGE*

## ABSTRACT

Celsus' extant work, *De Medicina*, has been instrumental to the medical field both in the ancient and Medieval eras in regards to surgery, dermatology, and diet. In the third book on treatment of diseases, Celsus writes at length on causes and treatments of insanity. More interestingly, he invokes two tragic heroes, Sophocles' Ajax and Euripides' Orestes, as case examples in order to do so. With carefully laid out symptoms, I shall reexamine the myths of these heroes as medical cases as described by Celsus. Although written in the 5th century BCE, the figures of Ajax and Orestes take on changed roles in the Roman Empire, so they will be examined as tragic heroes through the Roman perspective. Most scholarship on Roman medicine focuses on Galen, and those who study Celsus typically analyze him as a medical historian using the Proemium. However, I shall examine Celsus as a medical author, encyclopedist, and a reflection of early imperial understanding of the human body and medicine. Through careful analysis of language, Roman medicine, and performative myth, I aim to explore the role of the madman in Roman society as well as the impact of social values on the understanding of medicine.

With characters who tear their children limb from limb, slaughter a herd of cattle, attack apparitions no one else can see, and gouge their own eyes out, it is no surprise that many modern scholars first look to Greek tragedy when creating a history of insanity. However, tragedy is not an expression of the reality of ancient medicine. Many ancient medical authors chose to focus on somatic disease as opposed to issues of the mind. However, in the first century CE, the Roman encyclopedist Celsus wrote one of the most detailed medical texts on insanity that has survived. Immediately following a section on fever, *De Medicina* treats madness the similarly as it treats other diseases that today would not be categorized under the umbrella of mental illness. It is in this section that Celsus invokes Greek tragic examples for the first and only time. These two cases, those of Orestes and Ajax, are used as examples for the same type of madness. As both tragedies, Euripides' *Orestes* and Sophocles' *Ajax*, survive, it is possible to study the works describing the patient from both a medical and literary standpoint. This unique perspective makes it possible to not only understand what Roman madness was, but also the role the madman played in society and how cultural values made an impact on the medical field as a whole.

Aulus Cornelius Celsus is an encyclopedist whose only extant

work is *De Medicina*, the section of his encyclopedia discussing disease and health. Other sources suggest that the lost sections his encyclopedia included sections on agriculture, law, military tactics, and rhetoric<sup>1</sup>. Celsus was not the only author to write about medicine in an encyclopedia, but he was the first to dedicate an entire section to it. Both *De Agricultura* by Cato the Elder and *Naturalis Historia* by Pliny the Elder write about medicine in the context of life on a farm, surrounded by nature. In fact, Pliny cites Celsus as one of the experts he consulted when writing his work. However, neither man writes much about medical theory, but rather practical solutions that a person could perform in their own home. Surviving works indicate that Celsus was the first Roman to combine Greek medical theory and basic practical medicine in an encyclopedic work<sup>2</sup>. Celsus does not work within a single school of ancient medicine such as the naturalists and the Empirici, but rather combines elements that he has found to be effective. Celsus also differs from his contemporary encyclopedists in regards to his style of writing. In Roman thought, an encyclopedia is writing

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1 Jason König and Greg Woolf, "Encyclopaedism in the Roman Empire," in *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, ed. Jason König and Greg Woolf (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 39.

2 John Scarborough, "Roman Medicine to Galen," in *Aufstieg Und Niedergang Der Römischen Welt: Teil II: Principat: Band 37: Philosophie, Wissenschaften, Technik: 1. Teilband: Wissenschaften (Medizin Und Biologie)*, ed. Wolfgang Haase and Hildegard Temporini, (Berlin, 1993), 30.



that is based off the gathering and synthesis of information from sources that vary in location, time, and author<sup>3</sup>. Because Celsus is a technical writer who almost exclusively writes in the third person, he is quite different than his fellow encyclopedists writing on medicine. Pliny's style is more informal and he relies heavily on the first person as he is addressing his work to his nephew, and Cato writes as though he is giving advice, and is unique because of the frequency of the second person<sup>4</sup>. The third person format of *De Medicina* eliminates the barriers between the author and the reader. These factors resulted in *De Medicina* becoming an authoritative text in the field of medicine until Galen.

*De Medicina* opens with a brief history of medicine that Celsus compiled known as the *Proemium*<sup>5</sup>. It is by no means exhaustive, but it does give an insight to a period of medicine with little surviving writing as well as into Celsus' own methodology. He discusses the various schools of medicinal thought that were dominant when he was writing, and in his writing he utilizes a combination of them when he recommends cures. Celsus is

3 König and Woolf, "Encyclopaedism," 32.

4 Harry M. Hine, "Subjectivity and Objectivity in Latin Scientific and Technical Literature," in *Authorial Voices in Greco-Roman Technical Writing*, ed. Liba Taub and Aude Doody, 17-23.

5 For more information on Celsus as a historian, see Heinrich von Staden, "Celsus as Historian?," in *Ancient Histories of Medicine*, ed. Philip J. Van Der Eijk (Netherlands: Brill, 1999), 251-295.

heavily draws from Hippocratic medicine, meaning there is an identifiable internal cause of a disease, and in order to treat it the most important thing is to alter these organs in a way. However, he also borrows heavily from Asclepiades<sup>6</sup>, who pays closer attention to external symptoms, and believes that proper treatment includes a strict regimen including a dramatic shift in a patient's diet. The works of Asclepiades are lost, but are known to have relied heavily on the traditions of the Cult of Asclepius. The third school of thought is primarily Hellenistic, and is based in the belief that in order to treat illness, it is imperative to understand all the organs of the body and have an exhaustive knowledge of how they work normally, not just how they operate when diseased. Much of this was based in surgery, a practice that was only briefly legal in Hellenistic Egypt and Greece. Doctors would use prisoners, still living, and cut them open in order to observe organs as they operated in a living person. Celsus disapproves of this method, as it is cruel to a living person, although he believes there is value in performing such surgeries on bodies that are dead.

After this preface, Celsus divides his work into clear sections. Celsus discusses insanity in the eighteenth chapter of his third book, which is on disease. Before continuing with medical

<sup>6</sup> For more information on Asclepiades, see T. Clifford Allbutt, *Greek Medicine in Rome* (London: Macmillan and co., 1921), 176-191.

instruction, he notes that a person can be labelled as insane “*exitu deprenduntur*,”<sup>7</sup> which is translated as being detected by the end result [of his actions]. He breaks madness down into three types: acute, melancholy, and chronic. A person suffering from acute madness could be depressed, hilarious, violent, nonviolent, maintaining the appearance of sanity, or irrational. Because of this, Celsus recommends a variety of cures; however they all entail changes in diet, exercise, and interaction with those who are close to them. It is imperative that the patient have one or more caregivers who are able to help them because they have a healthy relationship with the patient. Another aspect of insanity, and acute insanity in particular, is physical illness, usually manifesting as a fever. When describing this phenomenon, he uses the adjective *phreneticus*, which is borrowed directly from the greek φρενητικός. As a medical term, *phreneticus* is a descriptor for a type of madness that is usually accompanied by a fever<sup>8</sup>. As the mind and body are inseparable in ancient medical thought<sup>9</sup>, physical illness or fever is a sign of madness. Φρενητικός is also an adjective, but it refers to someone who is sound of mind, or a master of their state of

<sup>7</sup> Celsus, *De Medicina*, 3.19.3.

<sup>8</sup> Celsus, *De Medicina*, 3.18.1-2.

<sup>9</sup> For more on the connection between the mind and the body, see *On the Sacred Disease* by Hippocrates.

mind. Unlike what it comes to be used as in Latin, the Greek root is the absence of madness. It is also not a medical term, but rather a way to describe a person's ability to be at peace with themselves. Φρενητικός, and its noun form, φρέν, are often used in Greek tragedy, usually in a compound form<sup>10</sup>, associated with madness. It is commonly negated or is used in conjunction with νόσος (fever, plague, disease) to describe a character who is considered to be insane by those around them. However, by the early Imperial period, to be φρενητικός was not just a mental state or a condition of the soul, but rather a condition that took a toll on both the mind and the body of the person affected, resulting in somatic disease.

The second type of insanity is melancholy. Interestingly, Celsus never uses the Latin equivalent *melancolia*, but only the Greek form μελαγχολία, harkening back to more established medical tradition. This is a compound word (μελαγ-χολία) from the noun χολία, meaning guts, and the verb μελαγγραφής, meaning to be marked with black. Because of this, the word when broken down has nothing to do with a deep depression. It is a reflection of what was understood by ancient medical experts to cause it —— excessive black bile. Celsus' cure to μελαγχολία is white hellebore, sleep, bloodletting, and a shift in diet. However, for the melancholic

<sup>10</sup> Ruth Padel, *Whom Gods Destroy: Elements of Greek and Tragic Madness* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 32.

and severely depressed madman, there is a strong emphasis of the importance of strong and loving relationships<sup>11</sup>. The main part of the healing process is spent with loved ones doing activities they enjoyed while sane, listening to the reassurances and affirmations of their loved ones, and the security of knowing that there is always someone there should it be necessary for any reason. This type of relationship is reflective of ideas of Roman friendship<sup>12</sup> in which two people share every joy, every sorrow, every ailment, and every reward. For this to be a true friendship according to Roman though, this is not done with ulterior motive, but just because there is such a deep bond between the two people.

The third and final type of insanity that Celsus discusses is notable both as it is chronic and described by giving the tragic examples of Orestes and Ajax. It is a long-term affliction, but “*adeo ut vitam ipsam non impediatur; quod robusti corporis esse consuevit*” (while it does not shorten life, for usually the patient is robust)<sup>13</sup>. Like acute insanity, there are multiple ways a patient could be

insane. Celsus comments on this thusly:

*Huius autem ipsius species duae sunt: nam quidam imaginibus, non mente falluntur, quales insanientem Aiacem vel Orestem percepisse poetae ferunt: quidam animo*

11 Celsus, *De Medicina*, 3.18.18.

12 Cicero, *De Amicitia*, 22-23.

13 Celsus, *De Medicina*, 3.18.19.

*desipiunt. ... Ergo etiamsi semel datum veratrum parum profecerit, interposito tempore iterum dari debet. Neque ignorare oportet leviozem esse morbum cum risu quam cum serio insanientium.*

Now of this type there are two species: for some are deceived by some sorts of phantoms, not their mind, the poets say that this sort of insanity entirely seized Ajax or Orestes; others are foolish in respect to their soul. ... Therefore even if one dose of the hellebore has little effect, after an interval another should be given. It should be known that a madman's illness is less serious when accompanied by laughter than by gravity. (19-20)<sup>14</sup>

Celsus' use of *percepisse* in this section is key to understanding the way he perceived insanity. The definition of *percipisse* is to seize entirely, occupy, or take wholly. Since the verb is used in the active voice, it is placing the responsibility, and therefore source of the madness, outside of the person who is considered to be mad. Instead, it is more of an invading force, violently taking over all parts of a person and controlling their actions. It is almost as if insanity is invading a person as an army would an enemy camp.<sup>15</sup> This is further demonstrated from deconstruction of the verb. It is a compound verb from the preposition *per* and the verb *capere*. The root verb *capio* means to take hold of or to grasp. While it can be used in an abstract sense (such as *consilium capere* - to make

<sup>14</sup> Celsus, *De Medicina*. Translation is my own.

<sup>15</sup> For examples of *percepisse* in such contexts, consult Marcus Cornelius Fronto, *Correspondence*; and Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*.

a plan), it is usually used in a more literal and physical sense. The preposition *per* is used to mean through, completely, by the side of, in the midst of, and across. When combined with *capere*, it takes on its more abstract meaning of completely. It is more grasping something in its entirety, completely taking over the object. Celsus chose to use *percipisse*, which takes the agency away from the person affected, and makes that person a victim of madness coming upon them and taking over control of all their mental and physical actions.

Although all three types — acute, melancholic, and chronic - are subsets of insanity, distinct in the way a madman acts. Celsus states in the beginning of the section that a madman can only be properly identified as such by the results of his own actions<sup>16</sup>. This suggests that a person can only be mad if he is labelled as such by his peers. In order to make this process more scientific, Celsus makes it clear that each of the three types of insanity cause the victim to act in distinct ways. Acute insanity can manifest in a variety of ways; however, the change is always noticeable and abrupt. The acute madman does not threaten those around him, but is mostly a danger to himself due to rash physical behavior. Melancholy results in a depressed madman. This is unique from the other types

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<sup>16</sup> Celsus, *De Medicina*, 3.3.18.3-4.

because the melancholic is never raving or so obviously acting quite different to the typical person, as a melancholic could be shy or introverted. To detect melancholy is to properly detect a deep depression<sup>17</sup>. Chronic insanity is the most dangerous of the three, as it does not only endanger the victim but also those around them. The chronic madman is violent and raves, their entire being having been overtaken by the disease. Celsus describes how strictly they must be watched, stating,

*Ubi perperam aliquid dixit aut fecit, fame, vinculis, plagis coerendus est. Cogendus est et attendere et ediscere aliquid et meminisse: sic enim fiet, ut paulatim metu cogatur considerare quid faciat.*

When he says or does anything wrong, he is to be coerced by starvation, fetters and flogging. He is to be forced both to fix his attention and to learn something and to memorize it; for thus it will be brought about that little by little he will be forced by fear to consider what he is doing.<sup>18</sup>

The only way to get through to one who is chronically mad is to strip them down to the bare essentials of what is needed to live. In order to begin to help the madness, the patient would have to be brought to the edge of death. Although this may be the easiest to detect, it is also the most severe.

<sup>17</sup> Celsus, *De Medicina*, 3.3.18.17-18. In this case, *tristitia* is being translated as depression. This is in part that *melancholia* refers to a set of symptoms and actions that are associated with modern Major Depressive Disorder.

<sup>18</sup> Celsus, *De Medicina*, 3.3.18.21



Unlike in cases of acute insanity and melancholy, Celsus identifies an outside source as the cause of chronic insanity. This is peculiar, as Celsus has described all other diseases as having an internal cause<sup>19</sup>. As he laid out in his introduction, Celsus is drawing both from the Hippocratic Corpus and the works of Asclepiades<sup>20</sup>, combining both understanding of internal causes and external effects and cures. However, in this case, the cause is external, with no internal factors working with it, unlike the causes of all other diseases he describes in Book Three. In addition, he makes a distinction between being duped by phantoms and being duped by the patient's own soul. What the phantom is is never specified within the work, as the word *imago* is used. The phantom could be a spirit or a god, but it must be an entity that is entirely separate from the patient themselves. This suggests that the patient, while insane, does not have control of their very essence<sup>21</sup>. Instead, whatever this outside source is replaces it with that which makes them mad. It is also important to note that although chronic, this madness is described as occurring in bursts, with intermittent

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19 Celsus, *De Medicina*, 3.1.13-15.

20 Celsus, *De Medicina*, 3.1.11-19.

21 For further examination of this implication in *Ajax*, see David J. Bradshaw, "The Ajax Myth and the Polis: Old Values and New," in *Myth and the Polis* ed. Dora C. Pozzi and John M. Wickersham, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 99-126.

periods without fits. However, would a chronically insane patient still be considered insane while not having a fit? A similar situation is discussed earlier about acute madness, where Celsus states not to trust a madman even if they seem rational because it is all trickery<sup>22</sup>. But the key difference is the acuteness of the madness. The chronically mad do not simply endure a single fit, but rather suffer from recurring fits. For this reason combined with the differentiations Celsus makes, a person who is chronically insane should not be considered out of their mind while not in a fit. They are not without the condition of madness, however they have regained agency over their own souls and minds so actions taken during this time should not be considered acts of madness.

Celsus only gives examples of madmen concerning insanity where the victim is tricked by phantoms. Although elsewhere in his work he refers to experiences with patients, here he simply names two mythic figures and moves on. Perhaps he does this so the reader could identify a person who is insane due to phantoms, or possibly so his reader can comprehend what Celsus means when he writes, “*quidam imaginibus, non mente falluntur*”<sup>23</sup>, or even to invoke a reaction from his reader because of the heroes he mentions. By invoking myth, the description is sure to strike a

22 Celsus, *De Medicina*, 3.18.4.

23 Celsus, *De Medicina*, 3.18.18.

chord with a Roman audience, as the Romans were a pious people. Orestes shows up quite often in Roman literature, especially in the early imperial period. He is primarily held up, along with Pylades, as an example of a perfect friendship. Their story appears in many forms, including works of Cicero, Manilius, Ovid, and Lucian<sup>24</sup>. There is also evidence that Orestes was a figure who was carried over from Greek mythology into the Roman canon evidenced by extant Latin fragments of tragedy, even finding a place in popular culture, as there were gladiators named after him<sup>25</sup>. He would be widely recognized even if a particular person was not well-versed in myth. In addition, the myth of Orestes was a favorite of the emperor Augustus. As a part of early imperial propaganda, Augustus would draw parallels between himself and Orestes<sup>26</sup>. They both had intertwined and confusing histories murdering family members, and Orestes' story, he was forgiven in Athens. By drawing this comparison, the emperor hoped to justify his own actions and avoid some kind of retribution and increase his popularity

with among the citizens. Ajax was also a popular figure<sup>27</sup>, and was

24 Cic., *De Amicitia*, 24.; Manilius, *Astronomica*, 579-605.; Ovid, *Ex Ponto*, 3.69-88.; Lucian, *Amores*, 47.

25 Alan Cameron, *Greek Mythography in the Roman World*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 231-232.

26 Stefan Tilg, "Augustus and Orestes: Two Literary Clues," *The Classical Quarterly* 58, no.1 (May 2008): 368-370.

27 Martina Treu, "Ajax," *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Sophocles*, ed. Rosanna Lauriola and Kyriakos N. Demetriou (Brill, 2017), 36-41, <http://>

the titular character in a tragedy by Ennius<sup>28</sup>, the vast majority of which has unfortunately been lost. In addition, because he was a key warrior in the Trojan War, it made sense to incorporate him into Roman mythology. Since Romans were said to have been descended from Trojans, many of the heroes of the Trojan War held prominence in early imperial Rome<sup>29</sup>. He even influenced written myth, as the character of Dido in Virgil's *Aeneid* featured strong parallels and allusions to Sophocles' play<sup>30</sup>, including her madness and eventual suicide. In addition, it is known that *Ajax* was quite a popular play in antiquity, and was put on many times well into the Roman world<sup>31</sup>. For these reasons, it is clear that both Orestes and Ajax would be known by most Romans, along with their stories that prominently feature madness.

Before examining the plays themselves, it is important to understand the breadth of tragic language regarding insanity. Of the many words used to describe madness in tragedy, *μελαγχολία* is never used<sup>32</sup>. It seems to only be used as a medical condition that

many associate with madness. Unlike the Latin *insania*, the vast  
[booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/books/b9789004300941\\_003](https://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/books/b9789004300941_003).

28 Ennius, *Aias*.

29 Cameron, *Greek*, 224-228.

30 Vassiliki Panoussi, *Greek Tragedy in Vergil's "Aeneid": Ritual, Empire, and Intertext*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 182-198.

31 Treu, "Ajax", 40.

32 Ruth Padel, *In and Out of the Mind: Greek Images of the Tragic Self*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), 68-77.

majority of Greek words for madness are not negated, the notable exception being φρέν and its derivatives. Unchanged, φρέν means to be the master of one's mind or to be mentally sound. However, it is often negated, compounded with various prefixes, or used in conjunction with νόσος to describe a character who is considered to be insane by those around them<sup>33</sup>. There is no single sufficient definition for φρέν. It has to do with one's mind or state of mind, but can also could be a person's will or wits. It is essential to have a good and quiet φρέν in order to be considered sane. For this reason, it is a common descriptor in tragedy as it is incredibly flexible when combined with nouns or prefixes, able to more specifically describe the mind of the madman.

Λυσσάς and its derivatives are commonly used to describe madness. It has a very violent connotation and can be translated as "raving" or "raging." In many instances, λυσσάς is used when a madness is described or defined by an outside agent or when describing a madman's behavior<sup>34</sup>. This behavior is best described as if it was a raving and hungry wolf, ready to tear its prey violently apart. It stands apart from other madness words both because of this violence and also for the fact that Euripides once chose

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33 Padel, *Whom*, 13-14.

34 Padel, *Whom*, 17-20.

to personify λύσσα on stage<sup>35</sup>. She became a spirit used often in mythology both in the Greek and Roman periods, possessing a human and instilling this violent, mad frenzy into them. In Roman mythology, she was a child of Gaia and Aether, and associated with the Latin words *furor*, *ira*, and *rabies*.

Unlike λυσσάς, μανία was never personified in tragedy. Instead, it could be used as a weapon by a spirit or god. A madman could both be described with an adjectival derivative of μανία, or have μανία forced onto them by the source of their madness. Although used in tragedy, it is in prose where μανία is more likely to be found. Usually, λυσσάς is used in instances when μανία could have been used, since both have a more violent connotation. However, μανία does not necessarily have the animalistic aspect of λυσσάς, and is always used as a temporary form of madness<sup>36</sup>. It can be a fit of madness before one returns to sanity, however one could never always be so. In addition, μανία suggests that it comes from within one's self. This is better reflected in the verb form, μαίνομαι<sup>37</sup>. Unlike the verb form of λυσσάς, λυσέως, μαίνομαι is a deponent and has no active form. It is more akin to maddening one's self or being maddened.

35 Euripides, *Heracles*, 815-875.

36 Padel, *In and Out*, 163-164.

37 Padel, *Whom*, 23-27.

There are other terms that are used in more specific circumstances. In situations involving Dionysus, a verb such as βαχέω would be used. These are very specific references, as they are referring to activities surrounding the Bacchic cults or rites. Because of the nature of the rites, Bacchic words are also used to portray violence without limit and also evokes a sense of chaos. Forms show up quite frequently in Euripides' *Bacchae*, as one may expect, however it is not in common use in other plays. However, the persistence of the Cult of Dionysus would make the story and connotations of madness easily identifiable to a Roman audience. If it is used, it is usually used when making a comparison of the character in question to the maenads. While not uncommon, occasionally the word νόσος is used in describing madness. The definition of the word is literally "disease" or "plague". In cases that use νόσος, it is clear that there is a separation established from the person who is mad and the madness itself. With this relationship, it is possible for madness to invade a person's body and infect them, equating madness to a sickness.

Euripides' *Orestes* opens after the murder of Clytemnestra, and Electra is allowing her brother to sleep between fits of madness. Orestes has been cursed with madness, plagued by visions of his bloody mother and the Furies attacking him when he wakes. In

her opening, Electra curses Apollo, who suggested they kill their mother and continues,

ἐντεῦθεν ἀγρία συντακείς νόσῳ δέμας  
τλήμων Ὀρέστης ὄδε πεσὼν ἐν δεμνίοις  
κεῖται, τὸ μητρὸς δ' αἵμά νιν τροχηλατεῖ  
μανίαισιν· ὀνομάζειν γὰρ αἰδοῦμαι θεὰς  
Εὐμενίδας αἵ τόνδ' ἐξαμιλλῶνται φόβον.

Ever since then poor Orestes here, his body wasting away with a cruel disease, has taken to his bed, whirled in madness by the blood of his mother. I shrink from naming the goddesses, the Eumenides, who work to create this fear. (35-38)<sup>38</sup>

Here, she describes Orestes' madness as if it were a sickness, using the word for plague and having the madness be an external suffering rather than an internal issue. He also seems to be physically sick as well as suffering mentally. Electra describes him as ἀθλίῳ νεκρῷ<sup>39</sup> (luckless corpse), a description that repeats throughout the beginning of the work, with Menelaus asking τίνα δέδορκα νεπτέρων;<sup>40</sup> (what corpse am I looking at?) and Pylades helping him, asking this of Orestes: περιβαλὼν πλεθροῖς ἔμοισι μλεθσὰ νωχελῆ νόσῳ<sup>41</sup> (wrap your body, sluggish with your illness, about mine). Orestes is physically fatigued and has

38 Euripides, *Orestes*, ed. and trans. David Kovacs, Loeb Classical Library 11, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 414-416.

39 Eur., *Or.*, 83.

40 Eur., *Or.*, 385.

41 Eur., *Or.*, 800-801.



a fever. Electra describes him in her opening speech with “ἀγρία συντακείς νόσῳ δέμας τλήμων”<sup>42</sup> (his body wasting away with a cruel disease) because “ὦν οὔτε σῖτα διὰ δέρης ἐδέξατο, οὐ λούτρ’ ἔδωκε χρωτί”<sup>43</sup> (during this time he has neither swallowed food nor bathed). Orestes seems to be of stable mind, only to suddenly fall in prolonged and violent fits of madness. During these, he sees apparitions, and describes two of them during a fit. He cries,

ὦ μητερ, ἰκετεύω σε, μὴ ’πίσειέ μοι  
τὰς αἵματωπούς καὶ δρακοντώδεις κόρας.  
αὗται γὰρ αὗται πλαησίον θρώσκουσ’ ἐμοῦ.

...

ὦ Φοῖβ’, ἀποκτενοῦσί μ’ αἱ κθνώπιδες  
γοργῶπες, ἐνέρων ἔρειαι, δειναὶ θεαὶ.

...

μέθεες· μί’ οὔσα τῶν ἐμῶν Ἐριούων  
μέσον μ’ ὀχμάζεις, ὡς βάλῃς ἐς Τάρταρον.

O mother, I beg you, don't sic on those bloody-faced, snaky maidens! Here they come leaping toward me! ... O Phoebus, these bitch-faced fierce-eyed ones mean to kill me, these priestesses of the dead, dread goddesses! ... Let me go! You are one of my Erinyes and have grasped me about the waist to hurl me into Tartarus! (255-265)<sup>44</sup>

He then tries to shoot them with an imaginary bow. Electra describes this fit saying “ταχὺς δὲ μετέθου λύσσαν”<sup>45</sup> (you quickly

42 Euripides, *Orestes*, ed. and trans. David Kovacs, Loeb Classical Library 11, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 34-35.

43 Eur., *Or.*, 41-42.

44 Eur., *Or.*, 440-441.

45 Eur., *Or.*, 254.

fall into madness), as the staging would allow Orestes to move frantically about the stage as if being violently attacked. Although λυσσής and μάινομαι are to describe Orestes' madness, οἴστρω is also used as a metaphor "being stung by madness"<sup>46</sup>, making an allusion to Io.

In all instances of Orestes' madness, there is an identified outside agent. Both Orestes and Electra explicitly blame Apollo for their current situation, as he suggested the matricide. Even the phantoms that plague Orestes have an identified source, as they are the Erinyes triggered by his mother's death<sup>47</sup>. In addition, there is a very clear divide between Orestes while in a fit of madness and Orestes while not in a fit. Not only does he change the look in his eyes and his behavior, but when he is returned to his original state of mind, he has no memory of what he did or saw just moments previous<sup>48</sup>. With Orestes, it is not only the madness that is the punishment, but also grief, as he is facing real consequences of matricide from his community. However, Orestes does not suffer alone. His sister Electra takes care of him at home, tending to his physical health, although she cannot do anything in regards to the madness, as it scares her. Pylades is another caretaker that enters

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46 Padel, *Whom*, 15-17.

47 Padel, *In and Out*, 168-179.

48 John R. Porter, *Studies in Euripides' Orestes*, (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 302-304.

part way through the play<sup>49</sup>, who both physically supports Orestes through the rest of the work, but is also willing to bear the side effects of helping Orestes through the madness. It is because of this relationship that Orestes is able to function quite well throughout. Although he does suffer the madness, once he has the support and care of Pylades<sup>50</sup>, he seems to heal of the physical side effects much faster. This is because he is no longer bearing the burden on his own shoulders, and this is just an example of how important a good friend is to living the best life possible.

Ajax's descent into madness, on the other hand, occurred in context of the Trojan War. After Odysseus wins the arms of Achilles over Ajax, Ajax sets out to get revenge. Because she is fond of Odysseus, Athena decides to prevent this and torture Ajax with madness. In fact, Athena explains to Odysseus how she did it:

Ἐγὼ σφ' ἀπείργω, δθσφόρους ἐπ' ὄμμασι  
 γνώμας βαλοῦσα, τῆς ἀνηκέστου χαρᾶς,  
 καὶ πρὸς τε ποιίμνας ἐκτρέπω σύμμεικτὰ τε  
 λείας ἄδαστα βουκόλων φρουρήματα.

It was I who held him back from his irresistible delight, casting on his eyes mistaken notions, and I diverted him against the herds and the various beasts guarded by the herdsmen and not yet disturbed. (51-54)<sup>51</sup>

49 Eur., *Or.*, 791-795.

50 Porter, *Studies*, 78-81.

51 Sophocles, *Ajax*, ed. and trans. Hugh Lloyd-Jones, Loeb Classical Library 20, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 34-35.

Here we have Athena, who is a clear outside agent, who is taking over Ajax's perception, leading him to actions he would never do while sane. While slaughtering the prizes of war, Ajax believes he is killing his fellow Greek warriors and whipping Odysseus to death<sup>52</sup>. However, he is not simply mistaking sheep for humans. While insane, Ajax held the gods in much higher regard than he showed throughout the Trojan War, for he had previously expressed that he did not need the gods, inciting Athena's wrath<sup>53</sup>. Because of this, it must not be only Ajax's vision that Athena took control of, but also his mind and soul. His madness is most often described with νόσος, sometimes described further with an accompanying participle. However, the chorus once uses διαπεφοιβάσθαι, meaning "to be driven mad". Much of the writing on Ajax's madness is not using madness words, rather describing the actions taken<sup>54</sup>, which were violent, irrational, and raving. While Orestes is often described during and after his fits using key madness vocabulary, Ajax's madness manifests more through the interpretations of his actions given his character.

Ajax is a fascinating case for chronic madness in the way Celsus describes it. By including it in his definition of chronic madness,

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52 Soph. *Aj.*, 89-117.

53 Soph., *Aj.*, 91-93.

54 Soph., *Aj.*, 91-93, 284-330, 430-480.

Celsus suggests that if Ajax were to survive, he would suffer more fits, still presumably set on him by Athena. In Athena's role in Sophocles' *Ajax*, however, there is no indication that she intends to seek more retribution. But considering Ajax's aversion to religion and Athena's favoritism of Odysseus, she would likely continue tormenting Ajax. It is also necessary to address Ajax's suicide. By Celsus' definition of chronic madness it is long but "*adeo ut vitam ipsam non impediatur*". Celsus does not see madness as causing the death of those overcome by phantoms, although it could contribute to it. When he commits suicide, Athena no longer was holding control over Ajax's mind, therefore he was not in a fit of madness. While making his decision to end his life, he had agency over his actions<sup>55</sup>, and he was in a sound state of mind in relation to the insanity he experienced earlier. It is clear from the context that Ajax did not commit suicide while in a state of madness, but carefully considered the social implications of the actions he took while mad.

Immediately after returning to his sane state of mind, Ajax is faced with the aftermath of the actions he took while mad. He faced this alone and is physically removed from all those around

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55 For further debate on Ajax's death, see: John Gilbert, *Change of Mind in Greek Tragedy*, (Germany, 1995), 120-143.; Elise P. Garrison, *Groaning Tears: Ethical and Dramatic Aspects of Suicide in Greek Tragedy*, (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 45-53.

him<sup>56</sup>. As his men and Tecesslamsa gather outside the hut, they discuss what happened among each other, but they do not attempt to reach out to Ajax in an intimate way. The only way they attempt to connect with him is by telling him that they are dependent on his survival and social standing<sup>57</sup>. However, Ajax is faced with a situation where there is no good solution for him morally or socially. If he were to leave the hut and admit what he has done, then the rest of the Greeks will call for his death, and his fellow generals were unlikely to stop them. In addition, were he to return home, it would be this event that would follow him and stay with his family.<sup>58</sup> If he were to leave, punishment may fall on all his dependents for his actions, considering they were the ones who were closest to him. But Ajax took hold of his own fate and chose to die at the blade of an enemy,<sup>59</sup> even if that enemy was not the one wielding the blade. The language Sophocles uses helps the audience recognize that the actions that Ajax chose were actions he chose of his own agency, not that of Athena's.

In respect to the performance of tragedy, Romans were not as

fond of the theater as the Greeks were. Although there were original

56 Vayos Liapis, "Genre, Space, and Stagecraft in *Ajax*," in *Staging Ajax's Suicide*, ed. Glenn W. Most and Leyla Ozbek, (Scuola Normale Superiore Pisa, 2015), 127-130.

57 Soph., *Aj.*, 485-524.

58 Soph. *Aj.*, 450-465.

59 Eur. *Aj.*, 654-663.

plays written (most of which are now lost), they all were based on the same myths that were portrayed in Greek tragedy<sup>60</sup>. The staging of a tragedy was bringing a familiar myth to life, portraying the stories that the Roman public knew well<sup>61</sup>. So when a tragedy was performed, it was a demonstration of values and unity of the Roman people around a shared mythography. This was used as a tool in the early Roman Empire, as many of the tragic figures fought in or are connected to the events of the Trojan War. By performing their stories, it was promoting the foundation myths that were being written around the same time. It was pushing this history into every aspect of Roman life, and it took originally Greek myths and reinforced them into the Roman canon. As the empire was beginning to solidify its own identity and culture separate from that of the republic, it incorporated elements of Greek culture, helping unify the state. As the Romans see tragedy as a manifestation of their mythology, the Greeks conquered by the Romans see the personification of their own history and culture enduring under a different rule. Tragedy is not only a familiar format to first-century Romans, but it is a uniting aspect of culture.

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60 Ingo Gildenhard, "Buskins & SPQR: Roman Receptions of Greek Tragedy," in *Beyond the Fifth Century: Interaction with Greek Tragedy from the Fourth Century BCE to the Middle Ages*, ed. Ingo Gildenhard and Martin Revermann, (New York: de Gruyter, 2010), 156.

61 Cameron, *Greek*, 228-233.

So the question remains, why Orestes and Ajax? Both Orestes and Ajax are identified as mad by those around them and are mad because of the actions of an outside divine agent. In both works, the characters are introduced by others describing their madness. There is never a point in either *Orestes* or *Ajax* in which the ancient audience could question the insanity of the titular characters due to the language used in the play. In addition, the fact that they were both inflicted with madness by a god is consistent with Celsus' definition of madness completely overtaking them, as they are mad due to apparitions rather than their own mind. By having this outside agent, Celsus creates a distinction between the sane and the insane crystal clear, and this is very well demonstrated in the myths of Orestes and Ajax. However, using myths as an example creates a gray area when it comes to methods of medicine. With Hippocrates, there is a rise in what is called "naturalistic medicine"<sup>62</sup>, getting its name from their core belief that all diseases have a natural cause. This does not mean that religion and medicine are separate in Roman culture. Medical cults continued into the Roman period, and religion was an accepted part of everyday life. Early ideas on everyday medicine were based in magic and natural

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62 Ralph Jackson, *Doctors and Diseases in the Roman Empire*, (London: British Museum Publications, 1988), 19-22.



healing methods not based in Greek thought<sup>63</sup>. By using mythical examples, Celsus reinforces the bonds between religion and the art of medicine. Religion is a constant element of Roman culture and thus of Roman understanding of medicine.

Orestes and Ajax are also good examples for Celsus as they are opposites when it comes to the treatment of the mad. Although they are both met with hostility from other outside members of their respective communities, Orestes receives help and treatment from those around him. There is no moment in the play in which he is left alone. He always is supported by either Pylades or Electra - a friend or a family member. The care that they give him is what enables him to survive and function as a man outside of his fits of madness<sup>64</sup>. In addition, it is only because of these relationships that he lives. Although condemned to suicide, Electra comes up with a plan to avoid it (albeit it does contain more murder)<sup>65</sup>, and if it were not for Pylades' friendship and protection, there are many times Euripides' Orestes in which he would have died. Their relationship is so strong that it has a large literary presence outside of tragedy.<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, Ajax has no such support. Already

63 Scarborough, "Roman Medicine," 13-17.  
 64 Elizabeth S. Belfiore, *Killing Among Friends*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 137-139.  
 65 Eur., *Or.*, 1191-1203.  
 66 Orestes and Pylades are used as examples of a pure and good relationship in both Greek and Roman philosophy on friendship and love.

physically isolated from those closest to him, none of those who could have been Ajax's caretaker attempted to support him in an intimate way<sup>67</sup>. Instead, they were afraid of him and tried to hold him back from anything he may damage. Because of this, Ajax's shame and guilt is multiplied and he has effectively been cut off from his community. While Ajax was still suffering, the lack of a strong relationship to help relieve any pain was a large contributor to his actions. This is why Ajax's life was shortened by his madness whereas Orestes' was not.

Orestes and Ajax were by no means the only characters who were seen as mad in the tragic corpus, however they are the only ones that could be considered to be medically mad. Like modern scholars, Roman authors draw on Greek tragedy for examples of mad individuals. One of the favorite myths of insanity to both modern and ancient scholars is the madness depicted through Pentheus and Agave in Euripides' *Bacchae*, as it is a tale of a king who denied the gods resulting in his death at the hands of his insane mother. It is referenced in many contemporary works such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and Livy's *History of Rome*<sup>68</sup>.

Albeit in different ways, Pentheus and Agave both represent the mad in Greek society. On the one hand there is Pentheus, who

67 Soph., *Aj.*, 342-367.

68 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 577-578.; Livy, *History of Rome*, 39.13.

is so hubristic to deny the existence of a god and is punished with madness for it. Agave, on the other hand, is completely transformed into a bacchant, with the strength and will to rip people and animals apart. However, for the purpose of analyzing Celsus, Pentheus will be the only other possibility I shall examine. Because women's medicine is approached in a different way than male health, I am avoiding examples of insane women<sup>69</sup>. Pentheus' madness at first glance seems quite similar to that of Ajax and Orestes, as they are all identified as mad by characters around them, are made mad by a god as a result of their actions, are punished harshly for it, and the madness causes a complete change in self. However, he is passed over as an example used by Celsus.

Pentheus was king of Thebes, and when a strange new religion entered his land led by someone he did not consider to be a god, he set out to stop it. However, the play is not structured through the view of Pentheus, but rather of Dionysus. When the play opens, Dionysus states his intent to get revenge<sup>70</sup> on Pentheus for not worshiping him by making him mad<sup>71</sup>. As this indicates, Pentheus

69 For more on women's medicine, see: Jackson, *Doctors*, 86-112.; Helen King, "Women's health and recovery in the Hippocratic Corpus," in *Health in Antiquity*, ed. Helen King, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 150-162.

70 Euripides, *Bacchae*, 43-54.

71 For further discussion on the character of Dionysus, see: Gilbert Norwood, *The Riddle of the Bacchae*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1908), 18-20.

does not begin the play in a state of madness, nor does it plague him for an extended period of time. Much of the discussion of madness in the *Bacchae* surrounds the behaviors of the bacchantes, thus uses language specific to the rites and rituals surrounding them. During Pentheus' initial reactions to the maenads and the Bacchanalia, various characters refer to Pentheus as "out of his mind" or "mad" for going against the god, but in all these instances compounds of φρέν are used. This suggests that they do not consider him mad meaning insane, but rather mad meaning illogical or irrational. However, Pentheus is soon possessed by Dionysus. Dionysus describes this process like so: "γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἐς τὸ σῶμ' ἔλθη πολὺς"<sup>72</sup> (for the god enters the body by force), and he intends this:

τεισώμεθ' αὐτὸν. πρῶτα δ' ἔκστησον φρενῶν  
 ἐνεῖς ἐλαφρὰν λύσσαν· ὡς φρονῶν μὲν εὖ  
 οὐ μὴ θελήσῃ θῆλυν ἐνδῦναι στολήν,  
 ἔξω δ' ἐλαύνων τοῦ φρονεῖν ἐνδύσεται.

Let us punish him! First drive him from his senses, put giddy madness in his breast! If he is sane, he will never agree to put on women's clothing, but if driven from his senses he will. (850-853)<sup>73</sup>

Here there is a very clear outside source of madness, who is describing the insanity as is invading the body. The result is not of

<sup>72</sup> Eur., *Bacch.*, 300.

<sup>73</sup> Euripides, *Bacchae*, ed. and trans. David Kovacs, Loeb Classical Library 495, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 94-95.

Pentheus maddening himself, but rather the process is something he cannot control. While possessed by Dionysus, what Pentheus perceives to be real shifts:

καὶ μὴν ὄρᾶν μοι δύο μὲν ἡλίους δοκῶ,  
 δισσὰς δὲ Θήβας καὶ πόλισμ' ἐπτάστομον·  
 καὶ ταῦρας ἡμῖν πρόσθεν ἡγεῖσθαι δοκεῖς  
 καὶ σῶ κέρατα κρατὶ προσπεφυκέναι.  
 ἀλλ' ἢ ποτ' ἦσθα θήρ; τεταύρωσαι γὰρ οὖν.

Look, I seem to see two suns in the sky! The seven-gated city of Thebes - I see two of them! And you seem to be going before me as a bull, and horns seem to have sprouted upon your head! Were you an animal before now? Certainly now you have been changed into a bull. (918-922)<sup>74</sup>

What Pentheus sees is clearly not indicative of reality. Not only is his view of the landscape shifted, he also sees Dionysus in a different way, presumably a truer form of the god. When Pentheus expresses this to Dionysus, the god simply replies “τὰς δὲ πρὶν φρένας / οὐκ εἶχες ὑγιεῖς, νῦν δ' ἔχεις ὄϊας σε δεῖ” (your previous mental state was not sound, now you have the thoughts you ought to have)<sup>75</sup>. With this line, Dionysus attempts to negate the implication that he has driven Pentheus mad. To Dionysus, this was his goal, so Pentheus is seeing what he intended. From Pentheus' point of view, another's will has been imposed over his own,

74 Euripides, *Bacchae*, ed. and trans. David Kovacs, Loeb Classical Library 495, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 100-101.

75 Eur., *Bacch.*, 947-948.

resulting in making decisions he would not otherwise make. This makes the madness of Pentheus similar to that of Orestes and Ajax. However, Pentheus is killed fairly soon after by his mother.

One of the most important differences between *De Medicina* and Pentheus is the duration of the madness. In order to qualify as a chronic madness, it must be affect the one who is mad for a significant duration of time. However, Pentheus' madness was never intended to do so. Dionysus' revenge is not the madness per se, but rather the murder of Pentheus at the hands of his mother. He uses madness as a tool to achieve his goals, but Pentheus was never meant to live in a mad state for an extended period of time. Although Ajax also dies in a circumstance related to his madness, his illness was still chronic. But Pentheus and Ajax differ in the circumstances in which they were driven insane. At first glance they are similar - both were driven mad by a vengeful god, both had mistaken perceptions as a part of this madness, and both ultimately died. However, Athena never intended for the madness itself to kill Ajax. She released him of the vision knowing that his actions would continue to plague him for the remainder of his life. Dionysus, on the other hand, always intended Pentheus to die by his mother's hand. He even tells this to Pentheus in his insane state, albeit not

in the clearest way, and Tiresias warns Pentheus when he is sane<sup>76</sup>. Celsus also states that a madman is identified by the results of their actions. Ajax faces these results, and ultimately kills himself for it. There is never a result of Pentheus' madness. The disastrous result in the *Bacchae* is Pentheus' death and the repercussions it has on his family. This does not negate the fact that Pentheus could be considered mad, however it does raise problems with the ability to identify him as such in the eyes of Celsus. Especially with chronic madness, there must necessarily be a longer timeline that includes the fits of madness as well as the consequences of the actions taken while insane.

In Roman literature, on the other hand, Pentheus is described as mad by Ovid with the word *rabies*. Unlike *insania*, *rabies* does not directly have a connotation with the mind. It can apply to a variety of things, including inanimate objects and animals. It is much more violent than *insania*, with a definition much more akin to “rage” or “frenzy” rather than “unsound”. While the word choice is influenced by the need to meet meter, the context in which Pentheus is labeled as mad is quite different. The *Metamorphoses* never describes Dionysus' involvement in Pentheus' death, but rather describe Pentheus to already be mad, presumably

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<sup>76</sup> Eur., *Bacch.*, 298-327.

for denying the existence of a god who was also his uncle. The omission of this aspect of the tale is also an indication of which parts of the story were considered valuable to Romans at the time. By this reasoning, it is not phantoms that are misleading Pentheus, but rather his own soul and choices. He has no one else other than himself to blame for his madness and ultimately his death.

Although portrayed as mad in Greek tragedy, the evolution of Pentheus' role in Roman myth resulted in a significant shift in how his character can be read. Many aspects of the *Bacchae* are retained and utilized in Roman theater and religion, but the role of Pentheus in that story was not. Instead of his death as a punishment given by Dionysus, it was more indirect in that the mad nature of the Bacchantes were the cause of his death, only brought to Thebes because of his own behavior. Roman Pentheus does not have a madness similar to that of Orestes and Ajax, and one could argue that he is not mad at all<sup>77</sup>. Because of this, it would be counterproductive for Pentheus to be included as a case example in *De Medicina*. It is important to note that this does not negate the presence and prominence of madness in Roman reception of

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<sup>77</sup> See: E. M. Blaiklock, *The Male Characters of Euripides*, (Wellington: New Zealand University Press, 1952), 213-230.; Norwood, *The Riddle*, 58-67.; Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, "Tragedy and Religion: The *Bacchae*," in *Euripides: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Erich Segal, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 163-170.



the *Bacchae*, but rather it is solely placed on the shoulders of the Bacchantes<sup>78</sup>. This type of Bacchic madness is what is written about in Livy<sup>79</sup>, and the violent madness of the rites were cause of them being banned. In Roman history, to take part in the Bacchanalia was a choice made by the participants, therefore it could not be a disease if one chose that fate for themselves. After Julius Caesar lifted the ban, however, the nature of the cult changed dramatically. Unlike before, the wild madness that was associated with the Bacchanalia ended, most likely because the participants were of a higher class in a militaristic society<sup>80</sup>. The Bacchanalia as they were contemporary to Celsus were not mad or insane, merely joyous and incredibly sexual. Although madness played a key role in Euripides' play, Roman ideas about Bacchus and his rites changed the reception of Pentheus dramatically, with madness no longer being closely associated with him.

While not the only mad figures in Greek tragedy, Celsus chose Orestes and Ajax to represent chronic madness for very clear reasons. First and most importantly, both men clearly display the symptoms that Celsus describes for this type of madness. It is easy to identify what made them insane (and they are labelled as such in

78 Ov., *Met.*, 710-733.

79 Livy, *History of Rome*, 39.13.

80 Arthur Evans, *The God of Ecstasy: Sex-Roles and the Madness of Dionysos*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 126-127.

the work), what the insanity caused them to do, and the duration of the insanity. Both men also must grapple with the results of their actions. If it was not possible to identify the madness, it would be useless to have any example at all. Pentheus is a rather ambiguous example that would require justification, and scholars today continue to debate on the mental state of Pentheus throughout the *Bacchae*<sup>81</sup>. Second, the figures of Ajax and Orestes are prevalent in Roman culture. With widely known myths, just their names is enough context for the reader of *De Medicina* to understand what chronic insanity entails. This enables Celsus to omit lengthy descriptions of the chronically mad, but simply give two different, yet accurate examples. In addition, Celsus does not have to justify labelling Ajax or Orestes as mad. Since they are a part of Roman society as men who were known to be driven mad, Celsus is likely not be challenged in calling them mad, as he may be with Pentheus. Third and finally, Orestes and Ajax do not only serve as cases of madness, but cases of treatment. With differing outcomes, Orestes and Ajax demonstrate the necessity for correct treatment and care

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81 In addition to sources listed in note 69, see: Anna Camari, “The Madness Narrative in Euripides’ *Bacchae*,” in *Wisdom and Folly in Euripides*, ed. Poulheria Kyriakou and Antonios Rengakos, (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016), 241-257.; Gregory W. Dobrow, *Figures of Play: Greek Drama and Metafictional Poetics*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 70-89.; J. Michael Walton, *Euripides: Our Contemporary*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), 137-144.

of the mad. In doing so, it encourages the reader to treat an insanity well as opposed to implementing a possibly disastrous cure. A large part of this regimen is the importance of Roman friendship - having someone so close they are able to share the burden of the madness in order to help a cure. Pentheus can display none of these qualities or modes of cure, as he is killed while mad by his mother who is also mad.

For identifying madness, Celsus relies heavily on interpreting the actions of others. In order for such a system to work, his audience is assumed to be working with an idea of what is considered normal or acceptable behavior for a citizen. While this is an insight into ancient practice of medicine, it also reveals information about Roman social structure. Or even a step further, that medicine plays a role in the creation of Roman identity. From a more technical standpoint, Celsus' contributions to the development of Roman medicine has not been explored to the extent it deserves. Usually read as a historian of medicine, his text is technical medical information that maintained authority in the field for quite some time, influencing many great medical writers after him. It would be prudent to read him as such, and to study the way in which he writes about health and the human body. In general, it is important for scholars to investigate Celsus to a greater extent due to the

multiple roles he fills in the understanding of Roman society.



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# Classifying Tartessian and Lusitanian: A Review and Comment on Recent Scholarship

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## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to review and appraise recent scholarship on the classification of the languages at the western periphery of the ancient Mediterranean world: Tartessian and Lusitanian. The problem of Tartessian, the name conventionally given to the language represented in a series of Orientalizing Period inscriptions found in the extreme southwest of Iberia, is largely wrapped up in the decoding of the script; while certain linguists have determined Tartessian to be a Celtic language on the basis of more liberal decipherments, the standard view takes issue with this methodology, and has rejected this position *in toto*, save the presence of Celtic onomastic forms in the corpus, which is nearly universally acknowledged. In light of the uncertainties surrounding decipherment, the latter approach seems prudent. Lusitanian presents the opposite problem, as it is easily readable and transparently Indo-European, but it is unclear where in the family it falls. While certain voices have argued for a Celtic identity of Lusitanian, it is here argued that the presence of /p/ in the indigenous Lusitanian lexicon disqualifies that view, and that given the religious, lexical, and grammatical resemblance of Lusitanian to the Italic languages, it is reasonable to posit a close linguistic relationship therebetween, if not membership in that family.

It can be stated broadly that ancient Iberia comprised of the following speech communities: Lusitanian appears to have been spoken in what is now central and northern Portugal, “Iberian on the east and south coast, Celtiberian in the northeastern-central region, Tartessian in the southwest, and probably Basque in the northeast.”<sup>1</sup> This paper intends to review scholarship on the classification of the two westernmost of these languages, Tartessian and Lusitanian, and discuss the various positions that have been reached regarding these classifications. These two languages will be treated together for a number of reasons – in addition to their obvious geographic proximity, the two languages have been studied primarily by the same academic community, and have both been argued to be Celtic. While their linguistic relatedness is a subject of rather heated debate, and their attestations differs greatly in quality and quantity, they have nevertheless been examined primarily by the same persons and perspectives as one another, and have both been employed to explain prehistoric Western European cultural development, especially questions in Celtic studies.

This paper will consist of two sections, reviewing and discussing views on the classification of Tartessian, and then of Lusitanian. The former will proceed primarily from a series of articles written in conversation with one another regarding John T. Koch’s proposal that Tartessian is a Celtic language, appearing in *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* in 2014. The latter will focus on the evidence regarding the classification of Lusitanian, especially the relationship that the attested inscriptions hold with Celtic and Italic languages. Ultimately, it will be the aim of this paper to appreciate the linguistic character of ancient Iberia by considering possible identities of the languages attested in the region, and perhaps work at dispelling certain of the less rigorous proposals that address the problems of Tartessian and Lusitanian.

#### TARTESSIAN: AN OVERVIEW

Tartessian is the name given to a language attested in a series of

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1 Wodtko, 336-337.

stone inscriptions (ie. the Southwest Inscriptions) found in the southwest of the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>2</sup> The corpus of approximately ninety<sup>3</sup> inscriptions is typically dated between the eighth and sixth centuries B.C.,<sup>4</sup> while others like Koch, have suggested that writing in the script of the Southwest Inscriptions plausibly took place as early as the late eighth century B.C. and possibly even earlier.<sup>5</sup> Many of the surviving attestations of the Southwest Script are found on what appear to be funerary stelae that were later reused for other tombs;<sup>6</sup> the longest inscription, for example, was discovered on the bottom of a stone reused for paving in the Republican-era Roman town at the Mesas do Castelinho site in Portugal.<sup>7</sup> While the surviving inscriptions are surprisingly numerous, however, the nature of script has been the primary impediment to comprehending precisely what is being communicated in these inscriptions.

Written in a script widely accepted as being descended from a Phoenician abjad that was used in Atlantic Iberian emporia like Cadiz beginning in the Orientalizing Period,<sup>8</sup> the attestations are inscribed *in scripta continua*,<sup>9</sup> complicating efforts to parse the corpus.

Consideration of Tartessian's possible Celtic identity dates to the nineteen-eighties, when Spanish philologist José Antonio Correa first suggested the classification of the Southwest Inscriptions as Celtic (a theory referred to by John Koch as 'Correa I'); he would later amend this position, substantially altering his hypothesis in 1996 by suggesting that the matrix language attested in the Southwest Inscriptions is non-Indo-European, and that the traces of Celtic within the corpus merely represent onomastic elements (a theory referred to by John Koch as 'Correa II').<sup>10</sup> While the

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2 Koch 2010, 187.

3 Valério, 439.

4 Ibid, 439-440.

5 Koch 2014b, 360.

6 Valério 2014, 439.

7 Guerra, 65.

8 Valério, 443.

9 Koch 2014b, 340.

10 Ibid, 339.

standard view in the field rejects the Celticity of Tartessian<sup>11</sup> while identifying certain sequences as Celtic onomastic elements,<sup>12</sup> some scholars continue to approach the language as plausibly, probably, or certainly Celtic, notably Jürgen Untermann, who took the position that Tartessian may be Celtic, but that given the state of the evidence, “[a] conclusive decision cannot be taken yet,”<sup>13</sup> and John T. Koch, whose position on the Celticity of Tartessian has oscillated between certainty (“Tartessian is simply a Celtic language”)<sup>14</sup> and qualified support (“the one-language hypothesis (Indo-European Celtic) is on balance stronger than that of Celtic names in a non-IE matrix language”).<sup>15</sup> While Koch maintains this position, however, the majority view seems to be that his work on Tartessian is methodologically dubious, and that there is no conclusive evidence for the Celticity of Tartessian.

#### TARTESSIAN: HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Relatively little is known about the extreme southwest of the Iberian Peninsula in the period over which Tartessian is attested, but as these matters have featured prominently in the arguments of John T. Koch, it is important to note two particularly relevant pieces of non-linguistic evidence. The first of these is the Bronze Age “warrior” stelae that populate the extreme southwest of the Iberian Peninsula; as Koch notes, these objects appear to be culturally continuous with the stelae on which the southwest inscriptions are found.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the images of warriors by which the type is identified have led some to propose that these stelae were funerary in purpose,<sup>17</sup> corroborating the view that the corpus of the Southwest Inscriptions is largely funerary in nature.

Far more prominent in the discussion of Tartessian,

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11 Wodtke, 336.

12 Koch 2014b, 339.

13 Ibid, 340.

14 Koch 2010, 185.

15 Koch 2014b, 335.

16 Ibid, 357.

17 Ibid, 358-9.

however, is Koch's adduction of Herodotus' *Histories*. The three passages said to be relevant to the inscriptions are as follows:

For the Ister, beginning in the land of the Celts and the city of Pyrene, flows through the middle of Europe. The Celts live beyond the Pillars of Hercules, and border the Cynetes, who are the westernmost inhabitants of Europe.<sup>18</sup>

For the Ister flows through all of Europe, rising among the Celts who are the westernmost inhabitants of Europe, except for the Cynetes.<sup>19</sup>

When they came to Tartessus they made friends with the king of the Tartessians, whose name was Arganthonius; he ruled Tartessus for eighty years and lived a hundred and twenty.<sup>20</sup>

Koch has proposed, on the basis of these passages, that 1. the language represented in the Southwest Inscriptions was spoken in the kingdom of Tartessos,<sup>21</sup> and 2. that the name of the king Arganthonios (Gk. Ἀργανθωνιος) is Celtic,<sup>22</sup> that this can be taken as a member of the Tartessian lexicon,<sup>23</sup> and that this is "reason to think that Celtic was spoken in Tartessos."<sup>24</sup> Naturally, the "increasingly certain"<sup>25</sup> conflation of Herodotus' Tartessos with the culture that produced the Southwest Inscriptions, as well as the faith that Koch apparently has in "Ἀργανθωνιος" as an indicator of Celtic identity have both come under fire. As the conflation of a semi-

18 Hdt. 2.34.

19 Hdt. 4.48.

20 Hdt. 1.163.

21 Koch 2010, 186.

22 Koch 2014b, 351-352.

23 cf. Koch 2014a, 377.

24 Valério, 442.

25 Koch 2010, 185.



mythical kingdom and corpus of inscriptions is demonstrated even in the nomination of the language of the southwest inscriptions as “Tartessian,” Miguel Valério has questioned Koch’s use of the term, and appealed for the use of a more “neutral” term, “Southwestern.”<sup>26</sup> To this point, Koch concedes, noting that the name “Cynetian” may perhaps be more appropriate for the matrix language attested in the inscriptions.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, Blanca María Prósper argues that the archaeological sites associated with Herodotus’ Tartessos are located to the east of the area in which the vast majority of the Southwest Inscriptions have been found, a rejoinder perhaps most expository in revealing that Koch has essentially identified the Southwest Inscriptions as Tartessian on the sole basis that both fall beyond the Pillars of Hercules.<sup>28</sup> In addition to the rejection of this association, the view that Ἀργανθωνιος has any bearing on the Celticity of the Southwest Inscriptions has been dealt with thoroughly.<sup>29</sup> The Celtic identity of the personal name itself is a matter of debate: Joseph F. Eska has noted that “Ἀργανθωνιος... is not so ‘transparently Celtic’ as claimed by K[och],”<sup>30</sup> and Prósper has proposed that apparently Celtic elements could have been loaned into a non-Celtic language in Tartessos from Celtiberian.<sup>31</sup>

Ultimately, it is evident that the historical information adduced by Koch from Herodotus in order to produce a historical milieu and single onomastic element attested outside of the Iberian Peninsula are controversial at best, and at worst, are viewed by others in his field as having enough evidential holes to disqualify it.

#### TARTESSIAN: ORTHOGRAPHY AND SOUND STRUCTURE

It is immediately apparent upon considering the issues

26 Valério, 440-1.

27 Koch 2014a, 493.

28 Prósper 2014, 481-2.

29 Then again, this should also follow naturally from the plausible – if not probable – disassociation of the Southwest Inscriptions and the kingdom of Tartessos.

30 Koch 2014b, 351.

31 Prósper 2014, 481-2.

surrounding Tartessian that the greatest source of debate, and the greatest impediment to the classification of Tartessian, is the illegible script of the Southwest Inscriptions, a script that no one can seem to read extensively with a satisfactory degree of certainty.

The script is generally held to be descended from the Phoenician abjad, a notion consistent with the pattern of Orientalization in the contemporary Mediterranean, and easily explainable by the existence of Iron Age Phoenician trading posts in the region of the Southwest Inscriptions.<sup>32</sup> In addition to this, Koch has proposed that the Southwest Script was influenced by the Cypriot semi-syllabary, in order to explain the ‘redundancy’ problem of the Southwest Script, that is, that stops are marked with a secondary articulation that correlates exceptionlessly to the following vowel.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>34</sup> On this matter, Eska agrees that there is potential merit to such an argument,<sup>35</sup> and while the connection seems random, the mention of a ship bound from Tartessos in connection with a Cypriot divinity in Sardinia’s ninth-century Phoenician Nora inscription suggests that Tartessos had a commercial relationship with the island.<sup>36</sup>

While there is generally consensus about the origin of the script, how to decipher it has proved an issue of the utmost contention. It is a debate particularly relevant to the matter at hand insofar as those who have proposed a Celtic identity for Tartessian rely heavily on etymologies to plead their case, and it is widely accepted that Celtic onomastic forms are visible in the corpus. Naturally, since the method by which the script is decoded determines the forms deciphered, and the identity and composition of those forms determines how Tartessian is to be classified, it is clear that any attempt to classify Tartessian hinges on one’s reading of the attestations.

The most immediately apparent of the problems regarding the decipherment of Tartessian is that the inscriptions are written *in scriptio continua*, necessitating that decipherment begin with

32 Koch 2010, 187.

33 ie. taa, tee, tii, too, tuu, are the expected forms, but \*ta, \*tae, etc.

34 Koch 2014b, 385-6, 388.

35 Eska, 428.

36 Koch 2010, 188.

segmentation; naturally, this further layer of linguistic ambiguity has led to further debate over which forms can be said to appear in the corpus. The most conservative voice in the debate on the segmentation of the Southwest Inscriptions is likely Javier de Hoz, who casts doubt not only on the identification of the matrix language of the inscriptions as Celtic or Indo-European,<sup>37</sup> but has gone so far as to question the validity of the widely accepted Celtic onomastic forms found in the corpus,<sup>38</sup> a position extreme even among the majority who reject the Celticity of Tartessian. The view that Koch has been fairly liberal in his segmentation of Tartessian, however, is hardly unique to de Hoz, though: this view is held by Prósper, who in her response to Koch's proposal characterizes the segmentation of Southwest scriptio continua as "usually taken to be mostly arbitrary,"<sup>39</sup> while Valério notes that in forty-eight of 155 entries, Koch etymologizes forms dubious due to the problem of segmentation "without any note of caution."<sup>40</sup> On this note, Valério goes on, in his response to Koch's proposal, to note that a number of the etymologies given appear only once in the corpus, and thus cannot possibly have their segmentation corroborated elsewhere,<sup>41</sup> concluding that "the Celtic solution (or K[och]'s Celtic solution) is imposed on the evidence, rather than being a consequence thereof."<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, this approach is defended by Koch in his rebuttal to these statements:

If comparison with related scripts and techniques of cryptography continue, but we are not allowed to look for words in the resulting transcriptions, the language can never be deciphered. Ideally, etymology will not be the only criterion for word divisions, and usually it is not.<sup>43</sup>

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37 Valério, 447.

38 Koch 2014a, 344.

39 Prósper 2014, 468.

40 Valério, 447.

41 *Ibid*, 459.

42 *Ibid*, 461.

43 Koch 2014a, 501.

It is in this manner that a number of the etymologies employed by Koch in his demonstration of the Celticity of Tartessian are disqualified in the eyes of his fellows, and likewise that Koch is able to approach the question of classification with greater certainty than others who have approached the question. The question of segmentation, however, is merely the tip of the iceberg, as far as disagreements over decipherment are concerned.

This is compounded by the absence of a monographic representation of /m/ in the Southwest Script,<sup>44</sup> a problem that Koch has attempted to account for, but has not *succeeded* in accounting for, in the view of his critics. Eska, for example, notes that Koch's etymologies necessitate that certain members of the <b> sequence, as well as <n> and a rare grapheme parsed by Koch as <m> each must occasionally represent /m/; here Eska is keen to note that it is not likely that such a script would have been developed for an Indo-European language with /m/, and even should one suppose, as Eska does, that the script was adapted from an originally Iberian script, it would follow that the Tartessians should have made use of <m>, as the Celtiberians were able to.<sup>45</sup> "Koch," writes Prósper on the matter, "tiptoes around the uncertainties of the graphic selection of <m>, <b<sup>a</sup>a>, <nb<sup>a</sup>a> to render a labial nasal, which is unacceptable if his etymologies are to be taken seriously at all."<sup>46</sup> Valério raises this issue as well:

[N]ot only does [Koch] suppose that /m/ might be written with two different m-signs attested a total of just seven times, but he also posits a substantial number of cases in which b<sup>a</sup> or nb<sup>a</sup> (ie. p<sup>a</sup> or np<sup>a</sup>) are used for reflexes of Proto-Celtic \*m... Since maintaining a principle of economy for postulated orthographic rules is a hallmark of any decipherment,

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44 Eska, 428-9.

45 Ibid, 428-9.

46 Prósper 2014, 478.

one wonders why the same sound would be written in no less than four ways in K[och]'s Celtic Tartessian.<sup>47</sup>

These major orthographic and phonological discrepancies prove numerous: a similar question is risen, for example, by Eska concerning Koch's proposal that /w/ > Ø/\_V, such that V[a]; Eska regards this sound change as highly implausible, which disqualifies further proposed etymologies.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, Prósper takes issue with Koch's proposal that Tartessian <e> is the reflex of seven Proto-Indo-European phonemic sequences (ie. /w/, /e/, /aj/, /a:j/, /ja:j/, /ej/, and /oj/).<sup>49</sup> Ultimately, it is abundantly clear that neither the manner in which Koch has deciphered the Southwest Inscriptions, nor his derivation of the deciphered forms from Proto-Indo-European are seen as sound by a majority of Koch's peers.

#### TARTESSIAN: ETYMOLOGIZING THE CORPUS

While it is clear that Koch's colleagues consider the majority of his etymologies to be inadmissible from their discussion of the approaches utilized by Koch to elucidate the orthography and sound structure of Tartessian, Koch certainly seems to think them useful; thus, to appreciate the argument in full, it will be important to touch on certain of the more substantial etymologies, under the assumption that the methods by which they have been reached have been questioned at length.

The only widely agreed-upon etymologies found in the Southwest transcriptions appear to be those relating to Celtic onomastic elements. Other than this body, which seems to be nearly universally accepted, the most promising etymology appears to be the verb *naṛk<sup>e</sup>e-*, which appears suffixed as *naṛk<sup>e</sup>ent<sup>i</sup>*, *naṛk<sup>e</sup>en<sup>i</sup>*, *naṛrk<sup>e</sup>:n*, *naṛk<sup>e</sup>enb<sup>i</sup>*, *naṛk<sup>e</sup>enai* and *naṛk<sup>e</sup>*, in addition to other forms.<sup>50</sup> The word, which appears numerous times, presumably in funerary formulae, is taken by Koch as a reflex of PIE \**ner*, "under, below, left," and PIE \**ḱéi-*,

47 Valério, 450-1.

48 Eska, 429.

49 Prósper 2014, 479.

50 Koch 2014b, 407, 412-3.

“lie down.”<sup>51</sup> While this is convincing, and the word appears often enough to be easily segmented within *scriptio continua*, this analysis has received a mixed response. While Prósper agrees that the form is the strongest evidence for a Celtic verbal system in Tartessian,<sup>52</sup> and Valério expresses a similar appreciation for the analysis, the latter also suggests that the translation is very far from certain, as a verb appearing in a number of funerary epigraphs could have any number of meanings, and crucially, that while a number of the verb forms appear to be plausibly Indo-European, there are just as many that do not.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, Eska notes in his review that the form *naṛk<sup>e</sup>ent<sup>i</sup>*, which Koch parses as an athematic 3pl. ending,<sup>54</sup> can be understood not only as the Indo-European verb *naṛk<sup>e</sup>e-nt<sup>i</sup>*, but also as *naṛk<sup>e</sup>e-n-t<sup>i</sup>*, a verb form that would be more consistent with Iberian.<sup>55</sup>

While the verb *naṛk<sup>e</sup>e-* appears to be the only non-onomastic lexical item widely considered by those who do not accept Tartessian as Celtic, other pieces of evidence are important in appreciating Koch’s approach. He presents, for example, the Tartessian *ro-* as a verbal prefix, and as the reflex of PCelt. \**φro-*. While this argument is convincing in a number of respects, it is difficult to say how certain this assessment could be, given that the sequence is two segments long, and that a plausibly common two-segment sequence would likely appear any number of times in a *scriptio continua* inscription. Additionally, Koch attempts to suggest that the wide distribution of Celtic onomastic elements in the corpus is consistent with the “wide agreement” that Celtic was spoken in the extreme southwest of Europe at least as early as the seventh century BC.<sup>56</sup> In the first place, the term “wide agreement” is curious, as it is clear that he is perhaps the only prominent figure in this debate who maintains that Tartessian is “simply Celtic.”<sup>57</sup> What Koch is suggesting, however, is

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51 Ibid, 373.

52 Prósper 2014, 480.

53 Valério, 462-3.

54 Koch 2014b, 372.

55 Eska, 432-3.

56 Koch 2014b, 346.

57 Koch 2010, 185.

easily dispelled by Prósper, who poses the rather obvious notion that even if approximately one third of the forms deciphered by Koch represent Celtic onomastic forms, a scenario in which Tartessian is non-Celtic is nevertheless unproblematic, for these words could have been loaned into the language at any point.<sup>58</sup> Ultimately, the etymologies proposed by Koch, while potentially convincing should one accept them, are problematic at best and generally inadmissible.

#### TARTESSIAN: DISCUSSION

Having reviewed the historical evidence, the state of the linguistic evidence, and salient points prominent in that body, it seems evident that the majority opinion – that is, the rejection of the Celticity of Tartessian – is the only prudent position. In fact, given the illegibility of the Southwest Inscriptions, and the poverty of substantial evidence that can be tenably extracted from the corpus, it is fair to suppose that no conclusion can be reached. This seems to be the attitude of everyone who has taken up this question except for Koch; Joseph Eska is particularly candid in his appraisal of Koch's analysis: “[f]or K[och],” he notes, “it seems that almost anything goes in the interest of finding a Celtic analysis. I have to wonder whether even one specialist in historical linguists vetted K's books on Tartessian before they were published,”<sup>59</sup> adding emphatically that “[t]he lack of rigour in K[och]'s linguistic analyses in the interest of establishing Tartessian as Celtic is manifest and profound.”<sup>60</sup> A similar result is reached by Valério, who concludes that “[u]ltimately, although fellow Celticists and Indo-Europeanists must still be heard on this topic, I cannot but observe that the material seems too meager and too problematic to apply the comparative method conclusively.”<sup>61</sup>

This appears to be the most, if not the only, reasonable conclusion. It is perhaps relevant in this instance to mention Koch's Celtic from the West hypothesis, a theory coauthored with archaeologist Barry Cunliffe that contrasts with the orthodox view that Celtic

58 Prósper 2014, 469.

59 Eska, 434.

60 Ibid, 435.

61 Valério, 463.

languages developed in the “North Alpine Zone,” developing intertwined with the La Tene and Hallstatt cultures, by proposing that “Celtic probably evolved in the Atlantic Zone during the Bronze Age,” such that the “Atlantic Zone” is defined as “Ireland, Britain, Armorica, and the north and west of the Iberian Peninsula.”<sup>62</sup> This is salient insofar as it explains Koch’s enthusiasm for his earlier-than-conventional dating of the inscriptions, and for the Celticity of Tartessian. After all, should one endeavor to show that Celtic languages first emerged near the Atlantic, it is only logical that the oldest attested Celtic should appear on the Atlantic coast.

Nevertheless, the evidence does not quite stack up. Foremost in the parade of confounding analyses is Koch’s adduction of Herodotus’ *Histories*. In the first place, it is unclear why a passage that states that “[t]he Celts live beyond the Pillars of Hercules, and border the Cynetes, who are the westernmost inhabitants of Europe” should suggest that Tartessian is Celtic, since the Southwest Inscriptions are found in the westernmost section of Europe, which Herodotus states explicitly is not Celtic. This is made all the more confusing by Koch’s response to Valério’s objection to the term “Tartessian,” in which he suggests that the language could be referred to as “Cynetian.”<sup>63</sup> Moreover, it is peculiar that Koch should place so much value on the personal name Ἀργανθονιος, given that there is no indication that the Southwest Inscription has any direct relationship with Herodotus’ Tartessos. In fact, as Prósper notes, the archaeological sites that have been associated with Tartessos are located in Western Andalusia,<sup>64</sup> to the east of the bulk of the Southwest Inscriptions. Moreover, even *if* one associates Tartessos with the language that has come to bear its name, Eska appears to be justified in arguing that Ἀργανθονιος “is not so ‘transparently Celtic’ as claimed by K[och].”<sup>65</sup> While the name certainly seems plausibly Celtic, it is difficult to imagine that the possible identity of a personal name should entail the identity

62 Cunliffe and Koch, 1.

63 Koch 2014a, 493.

64 Prósper 2014, 481-2.

65 Koch 2014b, 351.



of a speech community. Moreover, it is possible that, as Prósper suggests, the element Ἀργαυ- was loaned from Celtiberian or a related dialect,<sup>66</sup> and given that -os is an attested ending for Iberian names,<sup>67</sup> it seems perfectly plausible that the king was Iberian.

Given the lack of any substantial non-linguistic evidence,<sup>68</sup> it is then necessary to turn to language. Upon turning to language, however, it is not clear that a significant deal more can be grasped. The sound structure is difficult to comprehend with a great deal of assurance, but it seems as though /m/ is plausibly absent from the language, and that /p/ is most certainly absent from the inventory,<sup>69</sup> a fact remarkably conducive to proving the Celtic identity of Tartessian, but paradoxically, not prominent in Koch's argument. Additionally, the repeated verb *naŕk<sup>ce</sup>-* appears to be safely extractable from the text, and in a number of respects, Indo-European. Nevertheless, given the high degree of well-attested forms of *naŕk<sup>ce</sup>-* that do not appear to be Indo-European, their plausible identity as Iberian, and the dearth of Celtic comparanda for the etymology proposed,<sup>70</sup> this is not a sufficiently conclusive piece of evidence on to hang an argument. What is left is the Southwest Inscriptions, a corpus not conclusively read by anyone. The ambiguity of certain graphemes, and the absence of given segmentations has elicited decipherments that either contrive misleading etymologies through a set of ingenious but unrealistically baroque and occasionally inconsistent sound changes and orthographic assumptions, or do not produce much of note, other than the widely agreed-upon Celtic onomastic forms. Ultimately, given the dead ends yielded from the textual and linguistic evidence that can be adduced with any confidence, the inability to satisfactorily decipher the corpus appears to be the most prudent beginning and end of inquiry regarding the classification of

66 Prósper 2014, 482.

67 Eska, 431.

68 Except, perhaps, for Herodotus' note that the Cynetes, and not the Celts, were the "westernmost inhabitants of Europe," which actually seems to suggest that the Southwest inscriptions were written by a non-Celtic group.

69 Prósper 2014, 471.

70 Valério, 463.

Tartessian, as the body of evidence stands. The wisest guidance may come from Eska, who concludes his response to Koch as follows: “I take no firm stand on what Tartessian is, but its Iberoid phonology and the fact that many of its word terminations are identical to Iberian suggests that we should be looking in that direction.”<sup>71</sup>

#### LUSITANIAN: AN OVERVIEW

Lusitanian refers to the language found on five inscriptions originating in the west of the Iberian Peninsula;<sup>72</sup> written clearly in the Latin script, it poses different interpretive questions, but has generated a remarkably similar debate. Whereas the Southwest Inscriptions are characterizable as primarily funerary epigraphs, the five attestations of Lusitanian represent religious formulae reminiscent of the Umbrian Iguvine tablets, and moreover, as Krzysztof Tomasz Wiczak notes, of the Old Latin ritual of *suovetaurilia*.<sup>73</sup> While Lusitanian is transparently Indo-European, the identification of Lusitanian as Celtic has been debated as well. While certain scholars like Jürgen Untermann<sup>74</sup> have argued that Lusitanian is Celtic, others, like Blanca María Prósper<sup>75</sup> and Dagmar S. Wodtko<sup>76</sup> have argued against this classification, and the former has gone so far as to espouse the notion that Celtic may be Italic.<sup>77</sup> While the question of Tartessian’s Celticity is one of deciphering forms, however, the proposed Celticity of Lusitanian is dealt with in terms of certain etymologies, grammatical features, and the character of Celtic and Italic expansion into Western Europe during prehistory. Moreover, while contact with Celtic seems certain, and Celtic onomastic forms appear in the corpus,<sup>78</sup> the presence of /p/ in several words, including PORKOM, “pig,” has complicated the argument that the language is

71 Eska, 435.

72 Wodtko, 336-7.

73 Wiczak 1999, 65.

74 Cunliffe and Koch, 3.

75 Prósper 2014, 473.

76 Wodtko, 349-50.

77 Prósper 2014, 476.

78 Wodtko, 362.

Celtic, and forced proponents of the theory to work around it. Thus, the question of the classification of Lusitanian is one of determining where within Indo-European's western flank the language fits, and how it is related to Italic and Celtic, through an approach that considers the religion, lexicon, and grammar of Lusitanian.

#### LUSITANIAN: RELIGION

The Lusitanian inscriptions are remarkably insightful not only insofar as they contain information about Lusitanian, but also in their connection of that speech community to a tradition of ritual sacrifices easily identifiable as Indo-European, with extensive comparanda in Indo-European religion.<sup>79</sup> This issue is treated extensively in Prósper's review of the inscription at Cabeço das Fráguas, which she identifies as obviously representing "a *suovetaurilia*, that is to say, the usually threefold sacrifice of a pig, a sheep and a bull to the local gods," a ritual, she describes as "a widespread IE rite," attested in textual and iconographic evidence from the Italic and Hellenic worlds.<sup>80</sup> The ritual is perhaps most transparently similar to the Umbrian Iguvine Tablets, but is also well attested in Indo-Iranian religion; analogues are less clear, but still, apparently extant in Germanic and Celtic religion as well.<sup>81</sup>

In addition to the clearly Indo-European content of the inscriptions, however, Lusitanian theonyms have been regularly adduced in order to better comprehend the placement of the language. A number of these lexical items appear to have cognates in other Indo-European languages (eg. Lusit. DEAE OIPAINGIAE, "cattle protecting goddesses" < PIE \*H3eui-p(e)H2(-o)- "(the one) protecting sheep"), and not unlike Tartessian, a number of the onomastic elements found in the Lusitanian inscriptions appear to be Celtic.<sup>82</sup> Then again, it is only logical to posit a fairly substantial degree of cultural contact between the speakers of Lusitanian and

79 Prósper 1999, 153-4.

80 Ibid, 153.

81 Ibid, 153-4.

82 Wodtko, 362.

the proximate Iberian Celts; this is discussed by Dagmar Wodtko, who qualifies the significance of these Celtic forms by suggesting a certain degree of cultural admixture between Celts and Lusitanians.<sup>83</sup> Ultimately, insofar as the classification of Lusitanian is concerned, these religious materials are helpful in two respects: 1. The rituals preserved in the Lusitanian inscriptions bear a striking resemblance to rituals attested elsewhere in the Indo-European world, especially in Italic, Hellenic, and Indo-Iranian religion, and 2. The theonyms recorded in these inscriptions demonstrate prolonged cultural contact with the Celtic world, but this is easily explained by the long-term geographic proximity of the Lusitanians to speakers of Celtic languages.

#### LUSITANIAN: THE LEXICON

Due to the extreme clarity of the Lusitanian inscriptions, and the identity of the language as clearly Indo-European, the efforts to classify Lusitanian have relied largely on producing etymologies for identifiable forms. Ultimately, however, upon examining the Indo-European comparanda for the Lusitanian lexicon, it is easy to see that the inscriptions' correlation to Celtic is part of a wider relationship with the Indo-European languages spoken in Central and Western Europe, and the most prominent result yielded from such a comparison is in fact a striking resemblance to Italic.

Prominent in the corpus are the words referring to the animals sacrificed, OILAM (the fem. acc. sg. of \*oila, "lamb" < PIE \*owi-lā, cf. Lat. ovis),<sup>84</sup> PORCOM (the masc. nom. & acc. (respectively) sg. of Lusit. \*porkos, "pig" < PIE \*pork-o-s, cf. Lat. porcus),<sup>85</sup> and TAV[, parsed on the basis of its context by Prósper and Francisco Villar as a damaged attestation of TAVRO; this is proposed by Prósper and Villar to be the masc. acc. pl. form, presumably of the nom. sg. \*tauros.<sup>86</sup> Reasonably certain in their translations, unlikely to be loaned into Lusitanian from Roman sources, they are easy to read and correlate clearly not only to Proto-Indo-European forms, but

83 Ibid, 349-50.

84 Prósper 1999, 156-7.

85 Ibid, 169.

86 Prósper and Villar, 13-4.

also to the Proto-Italic forms, as demonstrated in the table below.<sup>87</sup>

Language	Lusitanian	PIE	Proto-Italic	Proto-Celtic
<b>Pig</b>	*porcos	*porkós	*porkos	*forkos
<b>Sheep (Lamb)</b>	*oila	*h <sub>2</sub> ówis	*owis	*owis
<b>Cow</b>	*tauros	*táwros	*tawros	*tárwos

With the exception of \*oila, with can nevertheless be derived by suffixation and a well-attested /w/-deletion phonological rule,<sup>88</sup> every form appears to be easily derivable not only from Proto-Indo-European, but from Proto-Italic; perhaps more notably, two of the three forms here discussed cannot be derived from Proto-Celtic without writing new phonological rules.

There is however, more to be said regarding less common lexical items attested in the Lusitanian inscriptions, and their correlation not only with Celtic and Italic, but also with Germanic, and even Baltic language. In addition to the wide array of onomastic forms with clear Celtic cognates,<sup>89 90</sup> or for that matter, with clear Italic cognates,<sup>91 92 93</sup> the Lusitanian form INDI, taken to mean “and” (cf. OHG *unti*, Gaul. *ante-*), presents a boon to those who prefer a Celtic classification and an impediment for those who see its flaws.<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless, Prósper notes that Lusit. INDI may be a cognate of Lat. *inde*, “then, thereupon,” demonstrating a possible Italic identity for the word, and more importantly, emphasizing the plausibility of a non-Celtic identity

87 Penn Price Linguistics Lab Etymological Database System (PLEDS).

88 Vallejo, 282.

89 Prósper and Villar, 23, 25-7.

90 Witczak 2009, 157.

91 Prósper 1999, 157.

92 Prósper and Villar, 16-7, 20, 22.

93 Witczak 1999, 66.

94 Prósper 1999, 163.

for INDI.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, the list of onomastic forms with comparanda in branches of Indo-European spoken in prehistoric Central and Western Europe suggest that the lexical correspondences between Lusitanian and Celtic is overrated as a means of classification. It is apparent for example, that a number of words attested in Lusitanian have cognates in Germanic and Baltic, as has been suggested by Prósper,<sup>96</sup> Jürgen Untermann,<sup>97</sup> and Krzysztof Tomasz Witczak, who has identified *Lusit. Cumelius* as a personal name meaning “stallion” with cognates in Lithuanian (Lith. *kumelỹs*) and Latvian (Lat. *kumešļ* < Balt. *kumelias*).<sup>98</sup> Thus, the lexical inventory of Lusitanian is useful in classifying the language, for the words that appear in the language demonstrate 1. the certain Indo-European identity of the language, which has so far been treated as a given, but is obviously essential to our understanding of the inscriptions, 2. that in addition to its Indo-European identity, Lusitanian bears a significant degree of lexical similarity to the Indo-European languages spoken in prehistoric Western and Central Europe (ie. Baltic, Celtic, Italic, and Germanic languages), and moreover, that the family with which it shares the greatest degree of lexical similarity appears to be Italic, and 3. that a number of the most common words that can be said with certainty to be Indo-European non-onomastic forms appear to be plausibly descended from Proto-Italic, and certainly were not Celtic in origin.

#### LUSITANIAN: MORPHOLOGY AND PHONOLOGY

Finally, the grammar of Lusitanian can be addressed; specifically, Prósper and Villar’s thorough treatment of Lusitanian nominal morphology, will be discussed, as will the phonology of Lusitanian. The former should be helpful in demonstrating the possible Italic identity of Lusitanian, the latter helpful in definitively discounting the notion that Lusitanian is a Celtic language.

As regards Lusitanian morphology, a table of the relevant nominal morphological ending is produced below, adapted from

95 *Ibid*, 164.

96 Prósper 1998, 264-6.

97 Prósper 1999, 157.

98 Witczak 2009, 157.

Prósper and Villar (2009) and Prósper (1999), with the relevant Italic comparanda from Latin.

	<b>Fem. Sg.</b>	<b>Fem. Pl.</b>	<b>Masc. Sg.</b>	<b>Masc. Pl.</b>
<b>Nom.</b>	-a		-os	
<b>Acc.</b>	-am	-a(h)	-om	-o(h)
<b>Gen.</b>	-a			
<b>Dat.</b>	-a		-oi (-ui), later simplified to -o	
<b>Loc.</b>	-ae			

	<b>Lat. 1st Decl. Sing.</b>	<b>Lat. 1st Decl. Pl.</b>	<b>Lat. 2nd Decl Sing.</b>	<b>Lat. 2nd Decl. Pl.</b>
<b>Nom.</b>	-a		-us	
<b>Acc.</b>	-am	-ās	-um	-ōs
<b>Gen</b>	-ae			
<b>Dat.</b>	-ae		-ō	
<b>Loc.</b>	-ā			

The morphological system, which Prósper and Villar note “adds new evidence in support of the idea that Lusitanian is closely related to Latin and the rest of the Italic languages,”<sup>99</sup> bears a striking resemblance to that of Latin; upon applying a number of phonological changes, however, it is clear that the resemblance is even closer. The accusative plurals are explained by Prósper and Villar as the result of word-final /s/-debuccalization, apparently after long vowels – OILA (f. pl. acc. of \*oila, “sheep”), for example,

<sup>99</sup> Prósper and Villar, 1.

is parsed as a f. pl. acc. of OILA with an unwritten word-final aspirate (ie. OILA(H)), and \*oilās is reconstructed as the underlying representation.<sup>100</sup> Additionally, the masc. dat. sg. is parsed as an allomorph of -[oi], explaining the unexpected /u/ in the Lusitanian form.<sup>101</sup> Ultimately, the most substantial divergence between the two appears among the feminine singular endings, in the genitive, dative, and locative cases; in this case, Prósper and Villar propose that the fem. sg. dat. has been monophthongized from -ae in analogy with the masc. sg. dat. -o (simplified from -oi by sound change).<sup>102</sup> Thus, Lusitanian morphology stands as one of the reasons that the language is seen as unambiguously Indo-European, and also serves as evidence for the plausible Italic identity of Lusitanian.

The phonology of Lusitanian plays a different role in determining where in the Indo-European family tree the language falls, serving to disqualify the notion that it is a Celtic language. The most useful word in this discussion is likely PORCOM (masc. acc. sg. “pig”), which appears in another inscription, in the accusative, as PORCOM.<sup>103</sup> The word is transparently the reflex of PIE \*porkos (and perhaps, as discussed above, of PItal.\*porkos), does not appear to be a loanword from Latin (the Latin cognate is porcus),<sup>104</sup> and since the pig is an animal that, given its place in Lusitanian religious orthopraxy, was presumably kept by the Lusitanians for a considerable amount of time before the inscriptions were written, there is no reason to imagine that porkos was a loanword. The consequence of this is a preserved /p/ in Lusitanian, attested in a number of other words as well, albeit also in plausible loanwords, that should be prudently discounted as such evidence.<sup>105</sup> /p/ is useful upon considering that Proto-Celtic experienced unilateral /p/ deletion as part of its development from Proto-Indo-European;<sup>106</sup> moreover, the absence

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100 Ibid, 8.

101 Ibid, 11.

102 Ibid, 11.

103 Prósper 1999, 161.

104 Penn Price Linguistics Lab Etymological Database System (PLEDS).

105 Prósper 1999, 161.

106 Vallejo, 278.



of another Proto-Celtic, sound change /ō/ > /ā/, /ū/, suggests that Lusitanian is not a Celtic language on the same basis.<sup>107</sup>

While these two sound changes give a fairly definitive account of the Celticity of Lusitanian, exploring further sound changes is not supportive of that classification either. While in certain cases, PIE \*/kw/ > Lusit. /p/, as is the case in most Celtic languages, Wodtko is keen to observe that the nature of the change is different – in Lusitanian, that is, the change is conditioned, and occurs only in certain environments<sup>108</sup> (eg. PIE \*ekw-o-s “horse” > Lusit. <ICCONA>, an equine deity (cf. the Gaulish equine deity Epona)).<sup>109</sup> Moreover, the shift \*/kw/ /p/ is also attested in Osco-Umbrian language,<sup>110</sup> as are a number of the other sound changes observable in Lusitanian (eg. PIE \*/d/ > Lusit. /r/ in certain environments,<sup>111</sup> the apparent shift / e:/ > /i:/ in certain environments<sup>112</sup>). Upon reviewing the phonology of Lusitanian, it is apparent that the language is not Celtic, and that it has some affinity with Italic.

#### LUSITANIAN: DISCUSSION

Having reviewed the evidence presented in the Lusitanian inscriptions, it seems clear that the language is 1. Indo-European, 2. not Celtic, and 3. propinquitous to the Italic languages in every respect, if not Italic itself. At this point, it appears as though the first two of those points have been accepted as the majority opinion, while the third has been espoused by Prósper and Villar in a number of publications, the former going so far as to suggest:

Yet, if Lusitanian resembles any IE family, that is Italic. I find it worth considering that the Proto-Italic speakers (or whatever we choose to call them)

107 Prósper 1998, 262.

108 Wodtko, 352-3.

109 Witczak 2009, 157-8.

110 Ibid, 159.

111 Witczak 1999, 71.

112 Prósper and Villar, 16-7.

traversed *both* the Alps and the Pyrenées and were pushed into western Hispania and central Italy by Celtic-speaking tribes, which in turn had entered Hispania (where Italic is residual) and Italy (where we find the converse situation) in their footsteps.<sup>113</sup>

Given the evidence, this seems perfectly plausible. Most, however, have not made such a note on Italic language, and take the standard, conservative position. Wodtko, who seems to espouse a substantial connection with Celtic language (albeit apparently not a genetic relationship), suggests that “[t]he problem of Lusitanian is... its demarcation from Celtic in the west of the Iberian Peninsula and the justification for the assumption of an extensive body of loanwords on both the Lusitanian and Celtic sides.”<sup>114</sup> And José M. Vallejo, perhaps the most conservative voice in the debate, resolves that “the adscription of Lusitanian to a concrete linguistic family is a problem even today, given the poverty of material and shortage of incontestable etymologies.”<sup>115</sup>

Nevertheless, it is apparent that certain figures continue to find value in the Celticity of Lusitanian. The most prominent of these figures was likely the late Jürgen Untermann, who believed Lusitanian to be an archaic Celtic dialect that preserved /p/,<sup>116</sup> but he is joined by others from the last half century of Indo-European studies, as early as Corominas (1972), and as late as Ballester (2004).<sup>117</sup> An interesting compromise is proposed in Almargo-Gorbea (1993)<sup>118</sup> – that Lusitanian preserves /p/ because it is “pre-Celtic” – but such a designation is confounding.<sup>119</sup> Ultimately, ideas like those proposed by Untermann and Almargo-Gorbea appear to represent a fairly transparent attempt to explain away Lusitanian’s /p/, and none seem particularly feasible.

113 Prósper 2014, 476.

114 Wodtko, 362.

115 Vallejo, 283.

116 Cunliffe and Koch, 3.

117 Wodtko, 361.

118 Ibid, 361.

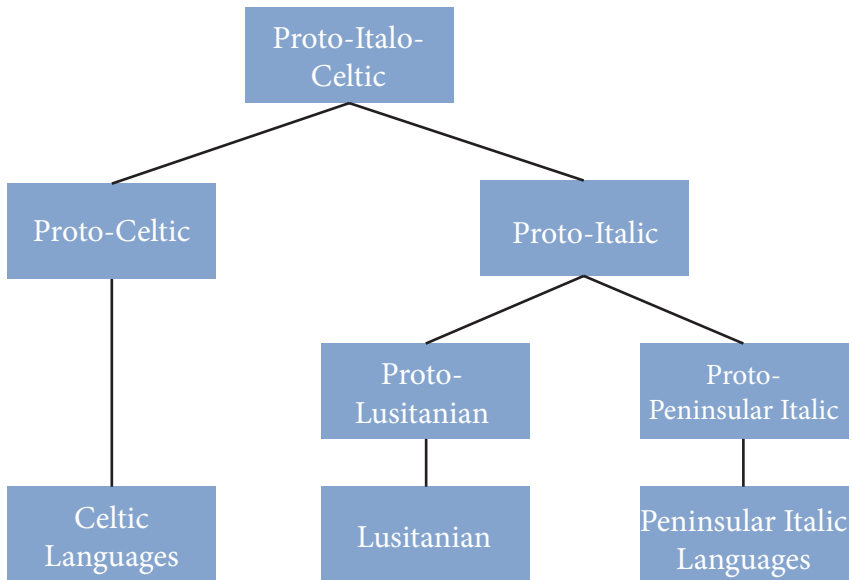
119 What, after all, constitutes the difference between this and the proposal that

Thus, it can be stated with a reasonable degree of certainty that Lusitanian is a non-Celtic language that developed from the western fringe of the Proto-Indo-European speech community (as suggested by its close relationship with Italic and Celtic, and to a far lesser extent, Germanic and Baltic). Regarding where in that continuum Lusitanian ought to be inserted, however, is a question that must be answered with a lesser degree of certainty. Nevertheless, on the basis of the close resemblance of Lusitanian and ancient Italic religion, the high degree of common cognates and cognate onomastic forms between Lusitanian and Italic, the grammatical resemblance, and the lack of negative evidence against such a connection, it seems likely that, as Prósper suggests, there is some relationship between Lusitanian and Italic. Supposing for a moment that this approach is valid, another question proceeds: where in the Italic family does Lusitanian belong, or is Proto-Lusitanian the sister of Proto-Italic.

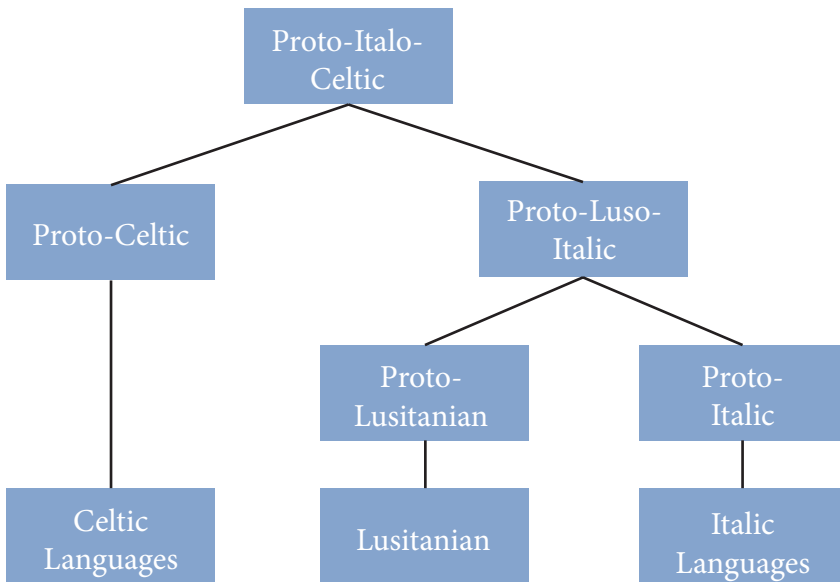
If Lusitanian is in fact to be taken as an Italic language, however, it is difficult to make a judgement on its location within the family on the basis of so few inscriptions. While a number of lexical comparanda, common phonological rules, and the similarity between the Lusitanian inscriptions and the Umbrian Iguvine tablets suggest that looking into a relationship between Lusitanian and *specifically* Osco-Umbrian is promising, it is perhaps more prudent to posit that Lusitanian was the first language (or one of the first languages) to split from Proto-Italic, and that the remaining Italic languages thus represent a “Peninsular Italic” subgrouping (cf. *fig. 1*). Then again, given that Proto-Italic is itself the reconstructed ancestor of the “Peninsular Italic” languages, it is more appropriate to posit that Italo-Celtic (assuming that grouping for the moment), split into Proto-Celtic and Proto-Luso-Italic, the latter of which then splintered into Proto-Italic and Proto-Lusitanian (cf. *fig. 2*). Given the data presented, this final proposal appears to be the most appropriate classification of Lusitanian, even if it is posited with more than a bit of apprehension.

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Lusitanian is an independent branch of Indo-European? And moreover, why call a language attested from Roman Iberia “pre-Celtic?”



*Fig. 1.* The Italo-Celtic Family Tree, Including Lusitanian as Italic.



*Fig. 2.* The Italo-Celtic Family Tree, Including Lusitanian as the sister of the Italic languages.

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# ἄνθρωπος μέτρον:

## Imperial Architecture as a Reflection of Political Authority

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### ABSTRACT

Located outside Rome in modern-day Tivoli, Hadrian's Villa was Emperor Hadrian's lavish oasis. But more than simply being grand, the Villa (which was designed by Hadrian himself) offers a unique opportunity to understand the politics of architecture during this imperial reign: although the Villa's "primary" sites encompass those which Hadrian himself would have enjoyed, the Villa becomes an urban extension of Rome with its "secondary" sites, home to its populace of numerous non-elite, everyday workers. It is possible to determine the status of these sites by examining their geometry: the Villa attributes to the "primary" and "secondary" classes distinct geometrical motifs—circular and rectangular—based on each shape's capacity to demonstrate luxury, as defined by Euclidean temporality. Thus, in "ἄνθρωπος μέτρον: Imperial Architecture as a Reflection of Political Authority," I propose that Hadrian utilized calculated architectural measurement in the Villa to enact a political mimesis of his mastered Roman empire. Using two specific sites (the "Maritime Theater" and the "Hospitalia"), I analyze not only how their respective "primary" and "secondary" statuses hinge on geometrical expression of luxury, but also how the significance of architectural structure relies on the way geometry imposes social politics on aesthetic vision.



Protagoras' anthropocentric "man is the measure of all things"<sup>1</sup> characterized the ideology of Periclean Athens, as it expressed the changed relationship between (the Greek) man and his environment.<sup>2</sup> In using reason to determine the true nature of "the existing things which (actually) exist" and "the non-existing things which do not exist," man not only positioned himself as the hinge upon which all objective and subjective determination could be made, but specifically established *measurement* as the tool by which such control could be gained. Being the "Greekling,"<sup>3</sup> Hadrian capitalized on the Athenian ability to solidify political authority through controlled measurement, yet he did so not by using democratic optical illusion,<sup>4</sup> but by using geometry and temporality in his Tiburtine Villa to establish an imperial stratification by means of architectural luxury. As I will argue with regard to the Hospitalia, structures comprising Hadrian's "secondary city"—that is, the spaces utilized by the community of non-elite, everyday workers of the Villa—are geometrically efficient and are designed to not only foster (the lower-class notion of) community, but to reinforce the functional reducibility of those inhabiting such spaces. And, by defining social class in terms of imperial function and value, Hadrian used the

1 As expressed by Plato in *Theaetetus* 152a, Protagoras' full statement is: "πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἄνθρωπον εἶναι, τῶν μὲν ὄντων ὡς ἔστι, τῶν δὲ μὴ ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν," translating to: "man is the measure of all things, of the existing things which (actually) exist, and of the non-existing things which do not exist."

2 Pollitt, 69.

3 "Historia Augusta, 1: Hadrian" (5).

4 As evidenced by architectural structures such as the Parthenon, which employed calculated optical illusions (Pollitt notes the different aesthetic interpretations of the Parthenon's curved stylobate on page 76), measurement in classical Athens was used to establish Athenian grandeur by producing a democratic visual affect. This is to say, the Parthenon's engineered aesthetic engendered a common viewing experience rooted in the "egalitarian" social stratification: the shared biological "struggle[] to reconcile" the structure's opticality reaffirmed an Athenian equality (all of the citizen viewers were "ἄνθρωπ[οι]" experiencing the same biological response) and reinforced the idea that a generic man ("ἄνθρωπον" lacks the specificity of a definite article) could master and impact nature in the same way.

Villa's architecture to establish an urban microcosm reflective of his political authority: "hous[ing] the imperial household required the physical plant of a small city, and [Hadrian's] architectural inventiveness....[constructed an] ideal city [which] had private residential quarters ranging from elegant bedroom suites and outdoor dining rooms and reception rooms, to comfortable guest chambers with mosaic floors, to barracks for soldiers and slaves."<sup>5</sup> In other words, the symbolism of this Tiburtine Rome—a "city" which Hadrian personally constructs—reaffirms Hadrian's imperial power along Protagorian terms: *the* man is the measure of all things, and "secondary" structures such as the Hospitalia reveal the way that Hadrian utilized calculated architectural measurement in the Villa to enact a political mimesis of his mastered Roman empire.

Before examining the Hospitalia's "secondary city" classification, it is necessary to investigate an example of architectural luxury in the Villa to understand how these two kinds of spaces differ. I will use the Maritime Theater as an example of "primary city" architecture, since it, as Hadrian's "private retreat within his palatial estate,"<sup>6</sup> is reflective of high extravagance. This lavishness is communicated through the geometrical construction of the space: as is visible in *Figures 1, 3 and 4*, the structure is arranged according to a series of concentric circles characterized by different material qualities which fully enclose the third, or centermost (and most private) ring, transforming it into an island. While there are only three wholly circular physical concentric rings, aesthetic figurations of the outer two circles fractalize the concentric design within the innermost ring: the iconography of the moat's rippled aquatic contour iterates throughout the Theater, most notably in the alternating concave/convex internal partitions ("reverse-curves") in the center of the island. These partitions, though "flamboyant in the entire repertoire of Roman architecture,"<sup>7</sup> structure the geometrical echoes of the innermost ring, since they are the visible segments of larger concentric circles encompassing

5 Stambaugh, 79.

6 Jacobson, 72.

7 *Ibid.*, 73.

their respective curvilinear structures. This idea is perhaps most clearly seen in *Figure 2* at the Northern entrance of the island, where the center circle containing semicircular vestibule CD is “enclosed” by the larger circle containing internal partition AB.

The significance of this layout resides in how Hadrianic luxury relies upon a strong geometrical design, but particularly one based on circles, instead of rectangles. Regarding the central ring of the Maritime Theater, “[t]he general arrangement of the rooms around the central atrium follows that of a conventional Roman villa, but it departs from the normal scheme in being circular rather than rectangular in shape.”<sup>8</sup> In other words, the internal partitions, despite having four “corners” where all of the individual reverse-curves intersect, defy a purely rectangular classification<sup>9</sup> with their curvilinear shapes: the internal partitions form a shape akin to that of the Reverse-Curve Pavilion, which contains a “major, governing circle...encroached upon on its cardinal axes by four incurving” shapes.<sup>10</sup> Given this information, what is peculiar about using the circle, aside from how “it departs from the normal scheme,” is its geometrical inefficiency, at least according to Euclidean geometry, which emphasizes efficiency along rectangular (perpendicular) lines. In the Maritime Theater, more time would be required to travel between two points since the curved path is not the shortest one geometrically possible. Thus, the purposeful construction of inefficiency relied on Euclidean principles to convey the temporal grandeur of the singular person travelling along the curvilinear distances inside the centermost ring. In other words, the Maritime Theater, with circles abound, is luxurious in the way its architecture does not contextualize Hadrian’s actions as purely functional, but rather having a leisurely component indicative of imperial luxury. This circular design of the Maritime Theater differs markedly from that of the rectangular *Hospitalia*, which mechanizes architectural

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8 Ibid., 72.

9 The definition of rectangle is “a parallelogram [a quadrilateral with opposite sides parallel and equal] all of whose angles are right angles” (Merriam Webster).

10 MacDonald and Pinto, 94.

space for the purpose of emphasizing the functional presence of the Praetorian Guard<sup>11</sup> members who would have been occupying the space.<sup>12</sup> As seen in *Figures 5* and *7*, the basic layout of the Hospitalia resembles any modern living environment designed to house a large number of people: there is a main corridor (number 1<sup>13</sup> in *Figure 7*) which provides access to all of the off-shooting cubacula (“common utilitarian scheme”<sup>14</sup>), which are “repeated, often matching chambers.”<sup>15</sup> Yet, intrinsic to any space with more than one inhabitant is a communal ethos, which is fostered, in the case of the Hospitalia, through this architectural design in two main ways: first, the repetitive nature of the cubacula emphasizes the inhabitants’ function at the Villa. Like the rooms, each guard is one of many in a larger space or body, identical in their individual fungibility. Of course, since this fungibility is not communal (i.e., the guards as a whole were necessary for the emperor’s security), the guards’ function and identity were intricately tied to their importance as one in the group. Additionally, given architectural similarities between the Hospitalia and Roman military forts such as Segontium (*Figure 13*), the

11 As defined by Sandra Bingham, the imperial Praetorian Guard was “an elite unit of the Roman army, whose primary responsibility was to safeguard the emperor and his family...[T]he Praetorians became responsible for specialized military tasks involving issues of security” (ii).

12 There is debate surrounding who precisely would have occupied the Hospitalia. The name itself suggests it served as a place “reserved for the visitors to the court” (Description located at the Hospitalia). However, its shared characteristics with other non-noble “secondary buildings” at the Villa—such as black-and-white mosaic floors, “squared architectural shapes, simple frescoes, and multi-seated latrines” (MIT)—and its similarities to the Caserma dei Vigili at Ostia support the idea that the Hospitalia would have housed the Praetorian Guard. Furthermore, considering the space, though built on top of the Republican Villa, dates to the first phase, 118-125 CE (Digital Hadrian’s Villa Project), it makes sense that one of the first buildings constructed at the Villa would be a guard barracks for the very necessary imperial guard.

13 Any further numbers referring to rooms in the Hospitalia, except where included in external quotations, are based on those in *Figure 7*.

14 MacDonald and Pinto, 68.

15 Ibid.

16 Best, 122.

repetitive layout further reinforces the Praetorian Guards' functional presence by drawing upon the Roman military's "grid-shaped camp"<sup>16</sup> design to quite literally contextualize Hadrian's Praetorian Guard in a space characteristic of their profession (see footnote 11).

Second, the architectural design renders the corridor a communal place since it is the same habitative threshold for all of the Hospitalia's inhabitants. In looking at the way that Hadrian was *the* man who measured all things, designing a common threshold such as this one would "construct" the interactions of the space: not only were the inhabitants living with two other people in each room, but they were forced to interact with the others since they were necessarily in physical proximity when entering and exiting their rooms. Whereas Hadrian could successfully obtain isolation and solitude in his Maritime Theater, the Praetorian Guard could only access varying sizes of community because of the Hospitalia's architectural efficiency. In this way, the architectural layout was intricately tied to the social dynamic, as these two community-building features, combined with the communal altar at the end of the main corridor (seen in *Figure 6*),<sup>17</sup> common latrines, and lack of immediately accessible spaces for the guards,<sup>18</sup> created this collective lower-class "mass" of "secondary citizens" present at the Villa to serve the emperor.

Yet the Hospitalia's efficiency stems precisely from the rectangular iterations that guide the space's layout and the way in which Euclidean functionality<sup>19</sup> reduces temporal grandeur. For example,

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17 Using the Caserma dei Vigili at Ostia as a model, room number 2 "could have been a sanctuary dedicated to the cult of the emperor" (description located at the Hospitalia). Having an altar would thus establish a communal center in the Hospitalia and, more importantly, would do so around a part of the Hospitalia that directly references the emperor himself, given the niches of the sanctuary/shrine.

18 The spaces immediately around the Hospitalia, including the Library Courtyard, Maritime Theater, and the Imperial Palace, were exclusive spaces for those of the "primary city." In this way, a sense of community within the Hospitalia was aided by the sheer isolation of this group of "secondary citizens" in this section of the Villa.

19 Any space with multiple and adjacent non-rectangular rooms would be inefficient since there would be "unused" space where the two rooms do not perfectly align.

the Hospitalia's main corridor is long, but not grand since it is the requisite length for accommodating a certain number of bedrooms: as evidenced by the Maritime Theater, temporal grandeur is a luxurious inefficiency, meaning the route must simply take a relatively longer time to travel than it would if it were composed of purely rectangular paths. Although it would take some amount of time to traverse the Hospitalia corridor, its rectangularity necessarily means that it is "direct," so the corridor remains sheerly distant, devoid of temporal luxury. This idea extends to the cubicula, which utilize right angles (they are "rectangles" with adjoining alcoves for inhabitants' beds, much in the style of a triclinium), meaning there is no "wasted" space: where one room stops, another begins. In this way, the distance of the main corridor exists as a way of enclosing an efficient "warehouse" of cubicula, which architecturally function less as "bedrooms" and more as places for Hadrian to efficiently store the (sleeping) Praetorian guard. Though decorations certainly make the space preferable to others (such as the Cento Camerelle), the functional efficiency of this main corridor (and thus the emphasis on the quantity of guards inside the cubicula) only reflects Hadrian's luxury in being able, as emperor, to "own" the Hospitalia inhabitants as "property," and not the luxury of the Hospitalia inhabitants themselves.

Furthermore, the decorations reinforce the aforementioned functional reducibility of the Praetorian Guard by drawing upon skills unique to their profession and/or by exhibiting a geometrical efficiency. The mythological frescoes of the individual cubicula potentially do both, notably utilizing for aesthetic appreciation the literary skills required by the military<sup>20</sup>: William Harris suggests

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20 As Best notes, "Of course my concern here [with Livy] is with the tessera and the obviously written orders for the troops. In this instance the written orders permit of silence in arming and mustering men for action when the enemy is close enough to detect verbal commands or bugles sounding the call to assembly" (124). He speaks in response to Livy 7.35.1 ("vigiliis deinde dispositis ceteris omnibus tesseram dari iubet, ubi secundae vigiliae bucina datum signum esset, armati cum silentio ad se convenirent," After arranging the watches, he ordered the *tessera* to be given to the rest of the troops; when the bugle sounded for

that “craftsman’s literacy” would have been distinct to certain professions (such as the military) since “it is obvious that the Greeks and Romans never went beyond” an economy “which provides a certain number of clerical jobs and gives some incentive, though not an overwhelming one, to an artisan or shopkeeper to read and write.”<sup>21</sup> In this way, including mythological frescoes in the *Hospitalia* would have reinforced to Praetorian Guard inhabitants how their functional literacy (both in general and particularly of the scenes painted) was a product of their functional presence at the Villa. Additionally, the particular fresco of *Figure 14* exhibits principles of geometrical efficiency (though it cannot be determined how geometry would have applied to any or all other *Hospitalia* frescoes): the positioning of Minerva, Juno, and Venus creates an aesthetic 90° corner with Juno at the center, thus using the vanishing point created by this corner to emphasize Juno’s visual alliance with the 90° angle (her feet also create an internal 90° angle, emphasizing that she herself forms the corner). The significance of this visual is tied to the column upon which Venus rests (particularly when one considers how Venus herself completes the columnar shaft): the inclusion of such an entity transforms the goddesses into architectural features, specifically columns, of which the *Hospitalia* is noticeably devoid. In this way, the fresco ekphrastically recreates the architectural space of the individual cubiculum, albeit with a Euclidean twist: the three goddesses highlight the space’s three alcoves, but placing Juno’s corner in the middle of an alcove (*Figure*

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the second watch they were to muster round him in silence) and *Aeneid* 7.637 (“sonant it bello tessera signum,” the word is giv’n) to establish the literacy of the Roman military. (Translations by Daniel Spillan and John Dryden, respectively.)  
 21 Harris, 18-19. Harris later on supports Best’s hypothesis about military literacy, noting “the military environment must have given a certain impetus to writing, not only because it created documentation but because it gave young men opportunities for advancement and, incidentally, having removed them from their families, gave them an incentive to become letter-writers” (253). Two examples that Harris uses to prove military literacy are graffiti and informal inscriptions from Roman Britain, many of which “can be tied to military personnel or to others whose presence was a result of the military occupation” (269).



15) implies the presence of an inefficient corner (decorated with “columns” no less) extending the cubiculum past its “rectangular” structure, as if to reinterpret the room in a more luxurious way. However, the space in reality is not luxurious, and the literacy used to understand and appreciate such mythological scenes—and its effects—would have paradoxically reinforced the contrast between the elite possibility of architectural inefficiency and lack thereof because of the Praetorian Guards’ functional need for literacy.

Unlike the frescoes, the *Hospitalia* mosaic floors do not draw upon requisite skills of the Praetorian Guard; however, they do possess an intricate internal geometry notwithstanding their relatively low quality.<sup>22</sup> They are geometrically arranged so as to form an abundance of 90° angles, as is viewable in *Figures 8-9* and *11-12*. In the case of room number 3 (*Figure 9*), though each vegetal design is enclosed in a circle (which all align to a highly rectangular grid), each point within the design itself is aligned to larger rectangles formed by the intersection of their connecting lines: for example, in each vegetal pattern are four “spades” (see *Figure 10* for a digital illustration of the vegetal pattern of room number 3), the points of which form a rectangle (outlined in purple in *Figure 9*) which is located inside the larger rectangle (outlined in red in *Figure 9*) formed by the circular intersections. And, though all of these intersections and 90° angles are not explicitly distinguished in the mosaic’s pattern, it is necessary to understand that the viewer, upon seeing such a mosaic, visually processes the image as a series of 90° angles both with the help of imagination and/or optical illusion.<sup>23</sup>

But what is the significance of such geometry? MacDonald and Pinto question the meaning of the *Hospitalia*’s mosaic floors and propose that “the rooms perhaps [were] intended for those whose

22 According to the description of the site at Hadrian’s Villa, “the decoration of these floors is undoubtedly of a lower standard than that of other more refined mosaics found in the villa, thus strengthening the belief that these rooms served a more practical use.”

23 Such is the case with the Parthenon, whose curved stylobate leads the viewer to visually process the structure in a certain way.



profession and responsibilities are symbolized in the mosaics.”<sup>24</sup>

I suggest that both of these questions might be answered by first understanding the inherently political nature of the mosaics’ Euclidean rectangles with regard to aesthetic vision, including not just what is seen, but how the body must be manipulated and moved to do so. In a 1999 research study, scientists supported the idea that rectangular-based patterns were more visually stimulating than their circular counterparts: “Moskowitz et al. (1974), comparing the reversal VEPs<sup>25</sup> of sharp- and round-cornered patterns with different angles, found that the 90° sharp-cornered pattern elicited the largest response [and the 180° pattern the smallest].”<sup>26</sup> In light of this experiment, it can be surmised that humans are inclined to aesthetically appreciate the most complex 90° intersections in a given room, such as corners, which are composed of two different 90° angles (the one formed between both walls and the one formed between the walls and the floor). Yet, in order to see corners comfortably, humans must physically “bow” or look down at this point. In this way, one such interpretation of the politics of aesthetic vision in the *Hospitalia* stems from the way in which “physically subservient behavior” (“bowing”) arises as a result of the space’s rectangular design.

It is possible to analyze the mosaics using this “corner theory” because, being on the floor, they would be the visual extension of the aesthetically-stimulating 90° angles populating the space; however, the aforementioned politics and meaning of such mosaic floors do not stem from the fact that such a design plays off of these visual evoked potentials, but rather the context in which it does. In spaces where *opus sectile* is present, the “effort” to lower one’s head is “worth” it: the “art” of such floors was not only in the pattern, but in the color and exquisite imported materials utilized to make such a design. In this way, “bowing” represents a high-class understanding of the value of the flooring. In the case of the monochromatic *Hospitalia* mosaics,

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24 MacDonald and Pinto, 161.

25 As defined by the same study, visual evoked potentials are “the cortical electrical responses elicited by visual stimulation” (91).

26 *Ibid.*, 99.

however, the “bowing” required to look at the vegetal designs can be interpreted to only be about the physical act of looking down since being physically acquiescent to one’s visual inclinations here yields no luxury. This potential behavior in the *Hospitalia* remains particularly true when one considers the aesthetic resonance between the vegetal designs (particularly that of room number 3, but all of them to varying degrees<sup>27</sup>) and the layout of the Maritime Theater (*Figure 10*): the curvilinear “reverse-curves” occupying the vegetal center parallels the Maritime Theater’s internal partitions, the four “spades” of the vegetal design are aligned along a smaller concentric circle than that containing the four cardinal “semi-clovers,” and the whole design is enclosed by an outer circle. Thus, to answer the two questions from before, the significance of the mosaic floors may lay in this resemblance to the Maritime Theater: given that the floors parallel this most private and “characteristically Hadrian” space, the “bowing” motion required to acquiesce to one’s natural geometric and aesthetic affinities might psychologically turn the mosaics into imperial proxies. In other words, the non-luxurious nature of the mosaics’ geometrical, rectangular efficiency may reinforce the subservience of those inhabiting the *Hospitalia* by quite literally invoking a subservient physical position akin to the (imperial) figurative one between the Praetorian Guards and the “Greekling” himself.

Though such a theory may only be an unintended effective function of Hadrian’s design choices (this is to say, Hadrian might not have actively designed the floors to produce such a “bowing” motion), that the vegetal designs of the *Hospitalia* floor resemble the Maritime Theater in any way touches on the mosaics’ continually-

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27 As MacDonald and Pinto note, “These black-and-white mosaics in the central panels of the cubicles are all patterned with repeating circular or rectangular shapes either deployed on a grid or extended from the grid intersections. The Island Enclosure peristyle shape is immediately recognizable in the mosaics of rooms 1 and 10, the Enclosure plan-scheme is imitated by the design in room 2, and the ubiquitous Roman octagon appears in room 8. The chrysanthemum pattern of room 3 suggests the protruding curves of the Arcaded Triclinium and the Water Court vestibule” (92). Note: the numbering system they use is different from that of *Figure 7*.

mentioned functionality: Hadrian's mere inclusion of such a visual (whether or not in a place where someone might be drawn to look) at least functions as a "nod" to himself, reinforcing that the Praetorian Guard functionally occupies his Villa and serves his empire. And, in light of all the visual evidence discussed, the purposeful inclusion of such an artistic motif to at least this self-referential effect would not be beyond the scope of Hadrian's imagination.

In light of the architectural mastery of "secondary city" sites like the Hospitalia, one is prompted to re-examine the way in which Hadrian's Villa represents the imperial city, particularly when one considers the "geographical expanse" that the Villa attempts to cover with "provincial nomenclature" alone.<sup>28</sup> As discussed during the course of our academic program, Hadrian's aspirations for the Roman empire were that of a "bilingual" empire, as he placed an emphasis on a multiculturalism inclusive of the Hellenistic East and its political, aesthetic, and geometrical traditions. Hadrian successfully achieves this vision, at least in his "ideal city" of his Villa, by merging such architectural practices with those of Roman culture to fully solidify a political authority characteristic of his imperial interests. And, in doing so, he is able to use measurement to quite literally "measure... all things," including incommensurables such as humanistic value, as is the case in the Hospitalia, where Hadrian effectively defines the Praetorian Guard by the architectural measure of its social worth. In this way, Hadrian reaffirmed his position at the political center of ancient Rome by being the sole man who maintained the imperial capability to employ geometric and temporal space to not only construct social measurement, but to also use it as a vehicle by which he could, in turn, display his own political authority.

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28 As Stambaugh (and MacDonald and Pinto) note, Hadrian named parts of his Villa after different areas in the Greco-Roman-Egyptian world: "The villa became an idealized model world, with its Canopus representing Egypt, its Vale of Tempe representing northern Greece, its Poecile representing Athens, its temple of Aphrodite representing Cnidus in Asia Minor, even its cryptoporticus representing the entrance to the underworld" (79).

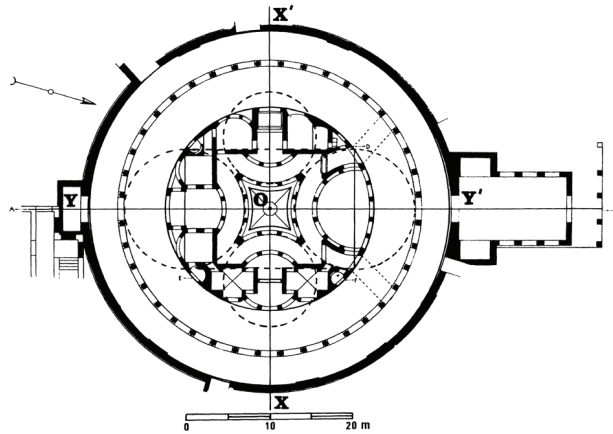


Figure 1. The ground plan for the Maritime Theater at Hadrian's Villa, with a proposed geometrical basis. Diagram courtesy of Jacobson, David, "Hadrianic Architecture and Geometry" (73).

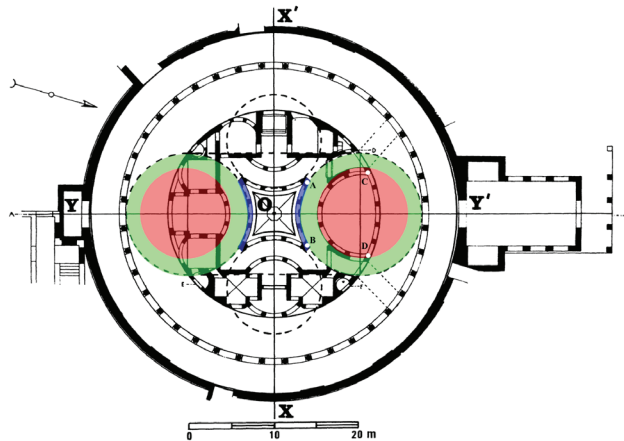


Figure 2. A closer look at Figure 1. The different colors distinguish between the smaller concentric circles located on the "island" of the Maritime Theater. The internal partitions are marked in blue and the circles of which they are a part are marked in green; those formed by the semicircular vestibules are marked in red.

Color highlighting by Margaret Corn.



Figure 3. The digital recreation of the Maritime Theater in Hadrian's Villa Canopus Virtual World, created by IDIA Lab in conjunction with the Virtual World Heritage Laboratory at Indiana University, the National Science Foundation, and the Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies. Image courtesy of IDIA Lab.



Figure 3. The digital recreation of the Maritime Theater in Hadrian's Villa Canopus Virtual World, created by IDIA Lab in conjunction with the Virtual World Heritage Laboratory at Indiana University, the National Science Foundation, and the Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies. Image courtesy of IDIA Lab.





Figure 5. A semi-aerial view overlooking the main corridor of the Hospitalia from atop the restored section of room number 2 in Figure 7. Photo by Margaret Corn.



Figure 6. A frontal view of room number 2 in Figure 7. The communal altar is visible, as is the opus reticulatum tiling and remains of the original Republican Villa on which the Hospitalia was built. Photo by Margaret Corn.

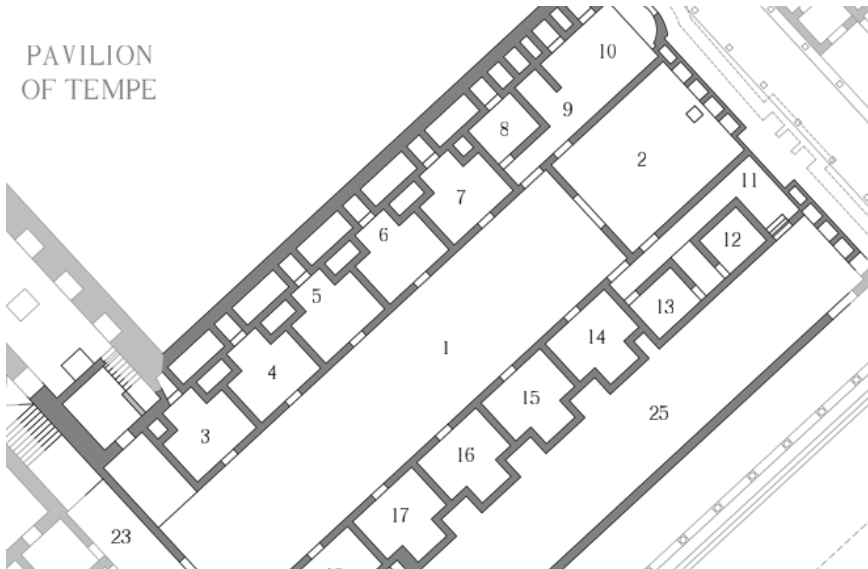


Figure 7. The ground plan for the Hospitalia. Diagram courtesy of the Digital Hadrian's Villa Project.

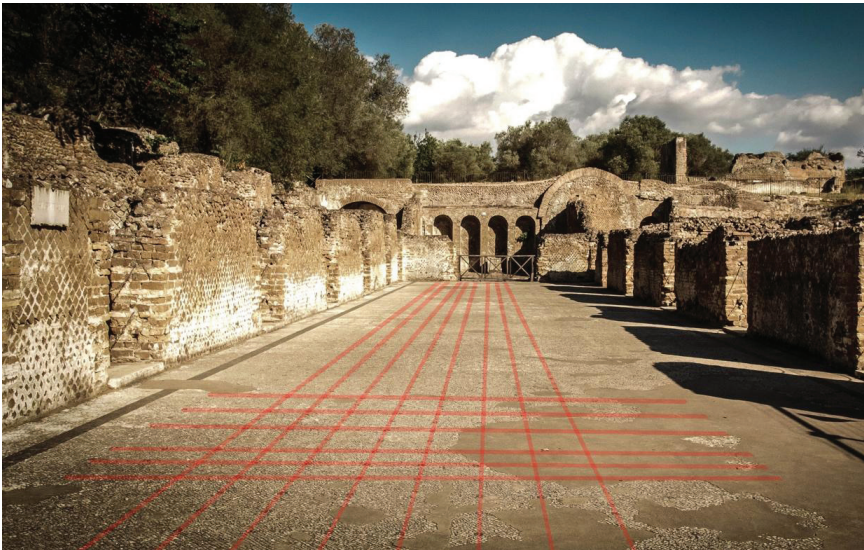


Figure 8. The main corridor of the Hospitalia (facing the other direction from Figure 5). The red lines mark those “created” by the mosaic’s flower pattern. Photo by Margaret Corn.



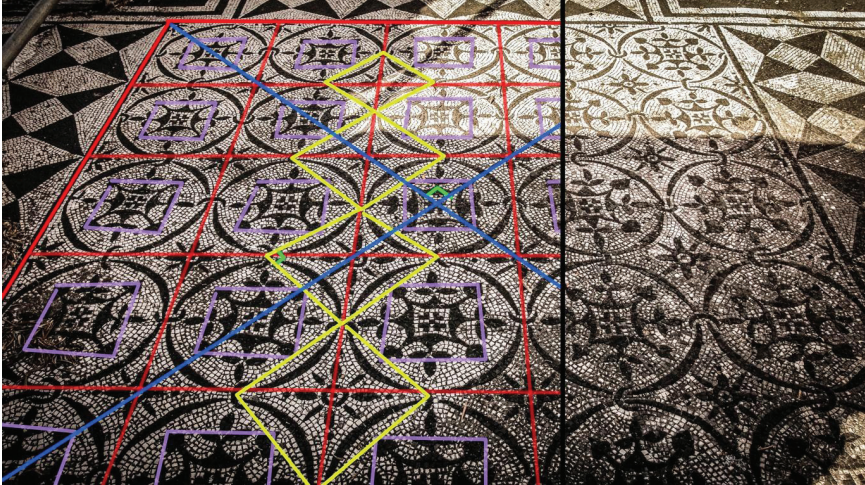


Figure 9. The mosaic floor of room number 3 in the Hospitalia. To the right of the added black dividing line is the unaltered original image; to the left is the continuous floor with lines detailing the geometry of the mosaic. The red lines highlight both the frame of the part of the mosaic that would have been seen and the rectangular alignment of the circles. The purple lines highlight the squares formed by connecting the edges of the “spades” in the vegetal design. The blue lines highlight the diagonals of the mosaic floor, the yellow lines highlight the diamond pattern connecting the circles, and the green lines highlight the right angles that form from the intersection of any two colored lines. Photo and color highlighting by Margaret Corn.



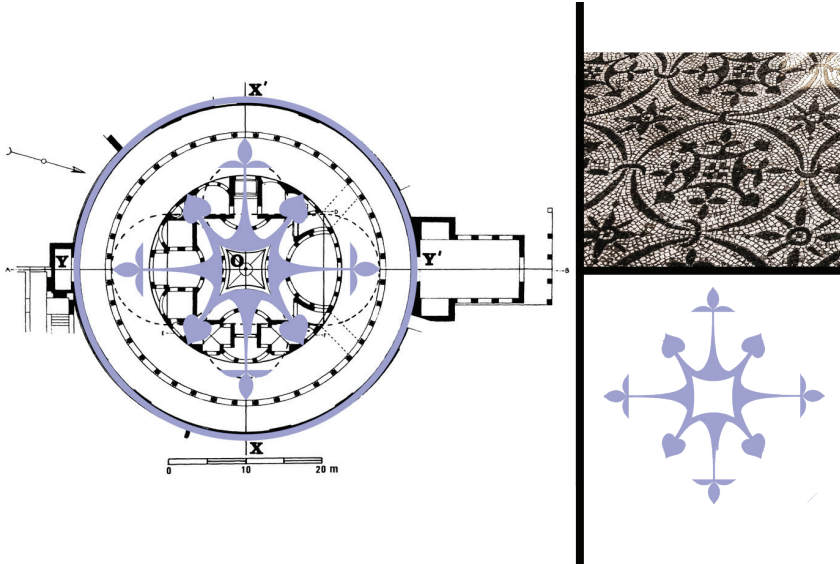


Figure 10. (From the upper right-hand corner, clockwise) A zoomed-in portion of Figure 9; a digital illustration of the interior portion of vegetal pattern from Figure 9 (not to scale); and the overlay of the vegetal pattern onto the ground plan of the Maritime Theater (Figure 1). Graphics by Margaret Corn.



Figure 11. The mosaic floor of room number 16 in the Hospitalia. The red lines highlight both the frame of the part of the mosaic that would have been seen and the rectangular alignment of the octagons. The purple lines highlight the diamond connecting the octagons, the blue lines highlight what would have appeared as right triangles (with the beds placed in their respective alcoves), and the green lines highlight the right angles that form from the intersection of any two colored lines. Photo and color highlighting by Margaret Corn.



Figure 12. The mosaic floor of a third room in the Hospitalia. The red lines highlight both the frame of the part of the mosaic that would have been seen and the rectangular alignment of the flower design. Photo and color highlighting by Margaret Corn.

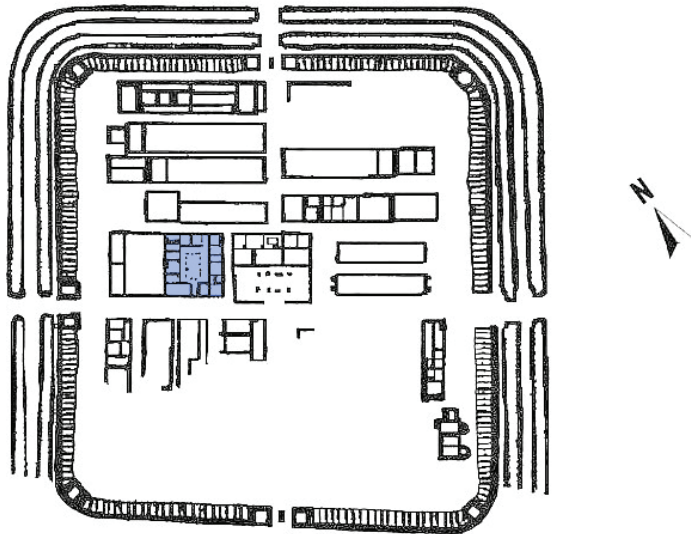


Figure 13. An overhead diagram of Segontium, a Roman military fort located in modern-day Wales. The structure highlighted in blue shares a particular architectural resonance with the Hospitalia. Diagram courtesy of Collingwood, R.G., “The Archaeology of Roman Britain” (Figure 6). Color highlighting by Margaret Corn.



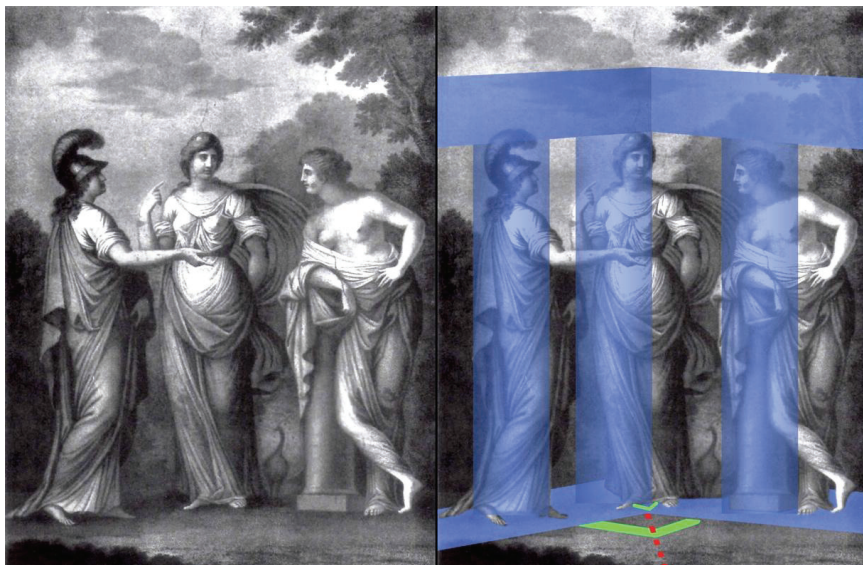


Figure 14. A sketch recreation of a Hospitalia wall fresco of Minerva, Juno, and Venus (respectively). The version on the right includes blue color highlighting to emphasize the scene's internal architecture (the green indicates where the right angle is located and the red marks the diagonal line on which the "viewer" stands). Photo by Digital Hadrian's Villa Project and color highlighting by Margaret Corn.



Figure 15. A superimposition of Figure 14 onto the back wall of a Hospitalia cubiculum. As is visible, the "corner created by Juno" (see Figure 14) would be located in the center of this wall. Photo by Margaret Corn.

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# On Believing Simonides: Plato and Polemarchus in *Republic 1*

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## ABSTRACT

Polemarchus is the first character in the *Republic* to engage with Socrates in a serious philosophical discussion about justice. After only a few pointed questions from Socrates, however, it becomes clear that Polemarchus is out of his depth; his thinking on justice has not resulted in any philosophically defensible principles according to which one might consistently pattern his behavior. Still, he gives voice to two important intuitions about the nature of justice, namely (1) that justice has something to do with what is *due* or *fitting*, and (2) that it has something to do with *benefit* and *harm*. With these, Polemarchus touches on two aspects of justice which Plato will make central to his own constructive account of the soul and the state. I argue that the primary object of Plato's criticism is not the set of intuitions Polemarchus has about justice, nor the substance of his poorly constructed arguments, but the method by which Polemarchus attempts to develop his good intuitions into philosophically defensible propositions. This method is a familiar one: Polemarchus appeals to the words of an authority, in this case the lyric poet Simonides. In this episode, Plato makes his first suggestion that poetic appeals of this kind are of little to no use in the work of philosophy. Indeed by quoting Simonides, Polemarchus invites nothing less than Socrates' first substantive critique of poetry in the *Republic*.

The project of building the ideal “city in speech” dominates Plato’s *Republic*. For the many students and casual readers who are directed to focus on only a handful of famous passages, it may well be taken for granted that constructing a hypothetical utopia is an interesting thought experiment, and a philosophical project of lasting value. However, any reader who has not carefully read the first and second books of the *Republic* will have missed the fact that Socrates proposes this project only because his initial inquiry into the nature of justice—pursued in Book 1 along the lines of a traditional Socratic dialogue<sup>1</sup>—fails to arrive at any

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1 One can hardly pick up a monograph or article on the first book of the *Republic* without being reminded that it has the features of a self-contained Socratic dialogue, not unlike Plato’s other aporetic dialogues, and is thought by some to have been composed earlier as an independent work. That this has become a standard incipit for scholarly treatments of *Resp.* 1 is only evidence that it has proven widely perplexing as an introduction. I accept the unity of Book 1 and Books 2-10, though this has been a topic of spirited debate for well over a century. Following the initial suggestion of K.F. Hermann in 1839 that *Resp.* 1 may have been composed as a separate dialogue, several stylometric studies sought to bolster and advance the claim. The most notable are Ritter (1888), von Arnim (1896) and (1912), and Wiliamowitz (1920). See Brandwood (1990) for analysis of these and every other major attempt at establishing a Platonic chronology by stylistic analysis up to the 1970s. Stylometric arguments for disunity have had their premises forcefully challenged and, only occasionally, defended. C.M. Kahn (1993) gives the most succinct modern argument for unity, though it should be said that almost all of the commentators referenced in the present study are in this camp. For an argument that *Resp.* 1 was an earlier composition without strict dependence upon stylometry, see P. Friedländer (1969: 63-7). Vlastos (1991: 248-51) continues to entertain the idea that Book 1 was not composed as the work’s introduction, “on the strength of the preponderance of the stylistic evidence,” and criticizes both Irwin (1977: 323) and Annas (1981: 17ff.) for too quickly dismissing it.

positive conclusions about what justice is (τὸ δίκαιον ὃ ἐστίν).<sup>2</sup>

During his combative interchange with Thrasymachus in Book 1, Socrates begins to suggest that men ought to pursue justice not only for the positive consequences that result from just behavior, but because justice itself is something of inherent value. In Book 2, Glaucon and Adeimantus challenge Socrates to put some proof behind this central thesis, and Socrates proposes to do so by “the theoretical observation of a community in the process of formation.”<sup>3</sup> He reasons that just as it is easier to read text written in large letters than in small letters, so it will be easier to observe justice in its larger manifestation, that is, in an entire community rather than in a single individual. Having done this, Socrates and his colleagues will be able to observe justice in its pure form and understand what makes it worth pursuing. Thus, the remainder of the *Republic* is Socrates’ response to the challenge issued by Glaucon and Adeimantus and, as it were, a second attempt necessitated by the failure of the more conventional attempt in Book 1.

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2 This formulation of the question is first introduced during Socrates’ discussion with Polemarchus (*Resp.* 332c). It reappears at the end of Bk. 1 when Socrates declares that until he knows *what justice actually is*, it will be difficult for him to say whether or not it is something good (354c). Note that “justice” is referred to both as τὸ δίκαιον and δικαιοσύνη; for the purposes of this article, the two should be treated as generally interchangeable.

3 *Resp.* 369a. Trans. R. Waterfield (1993).



I am not the first to notice that Polemarchus plays a pivotal role in *Republic* 1, but much remains to be said.<sup>4</sup> In fact it is Polemarchus who convenes the very symposium that gives birth to the *Republic* when he persuades Socrates and his companions to remain at his home in the Piraeus for the evening. There, Socrates strikes up an informal conversation with Cephalus, Polemarchus' aging father. This conversation is brief; Cephalus passes the discussion on to his son, and it is under Polemarchus that the *logos* takes on the form and tone of a short Socratic dialogue. Cephalus has no real interest in defining justice on Socratic terms and is eager to excuse himself, while Thrasymachus will deny that justice is worth having even if one can define it. Polemarchus, by contrast, follows Socrates' lead and dutifully tries to answer his questions about what justice is.<sup>5</sup> Wedged between the disinterest of Cephalus and the distasteful polemic of Thrasymachus, Polemarchus joins the ranks of those other interlocutors who engage with Socrates only to be shown that they do not understand their own propositions.<sup>6</sup>

4 Annas (1981: 23) says of Polemarchus' contribution that "it is not obviously weak and inadequate as was Cephalus' attempt." See also Cross and Woollery (1964), 4.

5 Strauss (1964: 76-7) interprets Cephalus' and Thrasymachus' notions of justice as correspondent, leaving Polemarchus idiosyncratic and sandwiched between them. By his assessment, Cephalus' understanding of just conduct depends upon law or custom to determine what does or does not belong to someone, and is therefore a "subdivision of justice in Thrasymachus' sense," which is essentially legal positivism.

More than this, Polemarchus is the first to give voice to two ideas about justice that will reappear and, indeed, be reappropriated at various points throughout the *Republic*. These are (1) that justice has something to do with propriety, or what is due and fitting to each person, and (2) that justice has something to do with the proper allocation of benefits and harms among the constituent members of a group. Given their reapplication in his own constructive account, we have reason to think that Plato at least respects these sentiments and in several cases shares them.<sup>7</sup> This complicates an otherwise-straightforward reading of *Republic 1* that has Plato dismissing certain popular beliefs and clearing the way for his own account of justice. It is true that Socrates refutes Polemarchus' ideas when they are presented as coherent principles, but this does not necessarily mean that he—or Plato—is criticizing the intuitions on which they are based.<sup>8</sup>

6 Of the three in *Resp.* 1, the Polemarchus episode most closely resembles Plato's other aporetic dialogues. These include the dialogues of definition (*Euthyphro*, *Charmides*, and *Laches*) as well as the *Protagoras* and the *Meno*. See Kahn (1993), 135 for more discussion. Shorey (1933: 210) notes at the end of Polemarchus' discussion that "a tentative, minor dialogue might close here."

7 They re-appear, for instance, [1] in the tripartition of the soul at 420d, 443a-b (see Ch. 3), and [2] in Socrates' first program of legislation for the guardians at 456ff, where policies are defended for being "viable and beneficial" (δυνατά τε καὶ ὠφέλιμα, 457c). He will argue that the law-giver must judge which policies will have the greatest positive and negative impact on the polis (462a). Cf. Kahn (1993), 136-39, and the conclusion of the present article.

8 Page (1990: 249) is quite right that Socrates is less interested in refuting and more intent on "confounding," that is, "upsetting Polemarchus' tendency

## I. Some Intuitions about Justice

Polemarchus has his finger on several different aspects of justice. However, for lack of effort or deficit of training, he has not formulated his good intuitions into philosophically defensible principles according to which one might consistently pattern his behavior. Annas' view that Polemarchus represents the "ordinary man" in this regard almost hits the mark, but is too imprecise.

Polemarchus and his brother, Lysias, belong to a metic family which by all accounts possessed great wealth and participated extensively

in the civic affairs of Athens.<sup>9</sup> He is, in my view,

\_\_\_\_\_ to assume that his view is both self-evident and comprehensive." I have here raised the perennial questions: how does Plato relate to the historical Socrates and, in turn, how is the historical Socrates related to the Socrates of Plato's dialogues? G. Vlastos (1991: 45-50) has argued that Plato produced two versions of Socrates, one in the early dialogues that resembles the historical Socrates, and a more distinctly Platonic version in the middle dialogues (of which the *Resp.* is one). Penner (1992: 122-31) speaks of two categories – "Socratic dialogues" and "Platonic dialogues" – to drive the point home. Following Aristotle's view that Plato was influenced by Heraclitean or Pythagorean traditions, Penner contends that where there is talk of flux, forms, or anything cosmological "we are hearing Plato rather than the historical Socrates." Cf. Arist. *Met.* i. 987a-b. Vlastos and Penner represent the approach in Platonic studies initiated by K.F. Hermann (1839) which postulates Plato's development as a philosopher and departure from Socrates over time, with reference to the chronology of the dialogues. In opposition stands the so-called "Unitarian tradition," which includes Shorey, Jaeger, Friedländer, and most recently C.M. Kahn. While I am more persuaded by the latter school of thought, the argument of this paper does not depend upon a particular solution to the so-called "Socratic problem." Any reference to Socrates is exclusively to the character that appears in the *Republic* and in the other dialogues upon which I draw.

<sup>9</sup> *Lys.* 12.19-20. Howland (2004: 189ff.) argues that *Republic* 1 and 2 have a "polemical subtext" in which Plato deliberately engages with aspects of Lysias' speech. I do not agree with his conclusion, but he makes some valuable observations regarding the silent presence of Lysias in *Republic* 1 (pp. 180-

ordinary only in the sense that he is not an adept philosopher.<sup>10</sup> On these grounds, I have found it expedient to distinguish between *intuition* and *proposition*. Readers of Kant or Hume may find this terminology tendentious, but I speak of “intuitions” only to describe things less clear than ideas or opinions and decidedly less formalized than principles. They might be compared to senses or instincts, except that intuitions, in my usage, may be the products of reason or experience in addition to some innate faculty of cognition. Propositions, on the other hand, are statements which affirm or deny the predicate of any subject and can be either true or false.<sup>11</sup> To illustrate with a Polemarchan example, the difference is between an intuition such as “justice has something to do with harm and benefit,” and a proposition such as “justice is conferring benefits to friends and harm to enemies.” I contend

that Polemarchus’ thinking on justice is limited to the realm of

1, 191), which had completely escaped my notice. See D. Nails (2001) for a complete summary of the biographical sources for Cephalus’ family.

10 He is, however, treated as one of Socrates’ familiars, both in the opening of *Resp.* 1 and his other appearance at *Phaedrus* 257b. In the latter, Socrates refers to Polemarchus as having “turned to philosophy” (ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν...τέτραπται). It is not clear that Socrates meant anything serious by this, because he says it in passing while making a jab at Lysias, nor do we know what precisely such a conversion would entail. Crombie (1962: 79) describes Polemarchus as “a *bien-pensant* of no very great intelligence;” Cross and Woosley (1964: 2) find him “very limited in his capacity for clear thinking, and insufficiently trained intellectually.” So too Reeve (1988: 8), who says that Polemarchus is “neither sharp enough nor well trained enough.”

11 Here I follow Aristotle. “Proposition” is his ἀπόφανσις and λόγος ἀποφαντικός (*de Interpretatione*, iv-v).

intuitions, but that Socrates' questions cause Polemarchus to give voice to his intuitions in certain propositions that he is not equipped to defend.

It has not been adequately pointed out that Polemarchus enters the conversation with an off-hand interjection (ὕπολαβὼν).<sup>12</sup>

Socrates supposes that he has dispatched with Cephalus:

οὐκ ἄρα οὗτος ὅρος ἐστὶν δικαιοσύνης, ἀληθῆ τε λέγειν καὶ ἅ ἂν λάβῃ τις ἀποδιδόναι.

So, this is not a definition of justice, to tell the truth and to return what one has borrowed.

Polemarchus is not convinced:

πάνυ μὲν οὖν, ἔφη, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὑπολαβὼν ὁ Πολέμαρχος, εἶπερ γέ τι χρῆ Σιμωνίδη πείθεσθαι.

“Certainly it is, Socrates” – Polemarchus interrupted – “that is, if one is to believe Simonides.”<sup>13</sup>

The conditional that forms the second part of Polemarchus' interjection – “if one is to believe Simonides” – is treated at length in the second section of this article. For now, we note simply that Polemarchus enters the conversation to affirm (πάνυ μὲν οὖν) a statement that Socrates has negated: telling the truth and repaying debts is a ὅρος δικαιοσύνης. Polemarchus comes forth not to stake out a new position, but to defend one that has come under attack.

It is, therefore, perplexing that scholars have contrived an

<sup>12</sup> *Resp.* 331d.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

assortment of questions to which they suppose Polemarchus is giving an answer. Annas maintains that he puts forth “the best the ordinary person can come up with when challenged to reflect on what justice is.”<sup>14</sup> This is reasonable insofar as any of the men who are witnessing the discussion will have been prodded to think about what justice is, as will those of us reading *Republic 1* in the present day, but it is not accurate as a description of the circumstances that cause Polemarchus to make his entrance. In fact, he has not been asked a question at all. Nettleship’s account is more deceptive yet: “Polemarchus comes forward in a confident way to answer the question ‘What is justice or morality?’”<sup>15</sup> Polemarchus lives up to his name and enters the fray with confidence, I admit, but not in response to this question.

Some interpreters go even further afield. Kimon Lycos contends that Polemarchus is “set the specific task of showing how the terms in which Cephalus understands justice...signify something unqualifiedly good.”<sup>16</sup> If Polemarchus has been set this task by Plato or by Socrates, he seems only peripherally aware of it. For

<sup>14</sup> Annas (1981), 23.

<sup>15</sup> Nettleship (1968), 16. Joseph (1935: 4) is a little closer: “The conversation gives Socrates the opportunity to raise the question whether what justice is can be told by giving a list of duties.” This is one of the questions that Plato has Socrates raise for his readers to chew on but, again, it is not the question to which Polemarchus is responding.

<sup>16</sup> Lycos (1987), 32.

he addresses only one part of Cephalus' definition and, moreover, makes precious few references to "the good" or to "goodness" in any general sense. C.M. Young's seems at first a more plausible explanation: Polemarchus means to defend the truth of some, though not all, of the "causal instances of Cephalus' definition."<sup>17</sup> In other words, there are certain cases in which this definition would cause an unjust outcome, as Socrates easily demonstrated with the madman example, but in other cases it would actually cause one to act justly.<sup>18</sup> Thus Polemarchus can accept Socrates' counter-example as proof of the former while setting out with poetic reinforcement to provide evidence of the latter. But this dangerously eschews what Polemarchus actually says. He does not meet Socrates' example with a counter-example, and never will do so, making instead an unqualified appeal to Simonides.<sup>19</sup>

If we can see more substantial questions about justice steaming up from the discussion, we must not assume that Polemarchus

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17 Young (1979), 406-8. I refer to "Cephalus' definition" for the sake of convenience, though I acknowledge that it is something of a misnomer. More accurately, Socrates formulated a definition out of Cephalus' scattered remarks on old age. Annas (1981: 22): "No doubt Cephalus did not intend to 'define' justice..." and so Reeve (1988), 6.

18 Socrates' asks Cephalus "...or may these very actions sometimes be just and sometimes unjust?" (*Resp.* 331c).

19 E.g. 332a. Beginning in 332e, Polemarchus will be asked to name fields in which just people or just action are useful. He is not, however, demonstrating that Cephalus' sentiment yields just action, but specifying cases in which Simonides' maxim is applicable.

can too. The question before him is whether telling the truth and repaying debts is a ὄρος δικαιοσύνης, and his answer is “yes.” It is left to us to puzzle over what exactly Socrates and Polemarchus mean by ὄρος δικαιοσύνης. Almost all modern translators render it as “a definition of justice,” but this is not the only option. We might take ὄρος more literally, as a “mark of justice,” or even construe it as “boundary.” In this case, Socrates’ question may be whether Cephalus has identified in truth-telling and repaying debts the *extent* of justice, or the outer limit of its relevance.

To translate ὄρος as “definition” risks importing several modern assumptions about the intellectual work of definition—a topic of enduring contention among philosophers—and might distort the scope or intent of Polemarchus’ remarks. Yet questioning whether Polemarchus *thinks* he is defining justice is not helpful either, and requires too much unfounded psychologizing besides.<sup>20</sup> I am content to leave the matter on Plato’s terms: Polemarchus believes that Cephalus’ ideas qualify as a ὄρος δικαιοσύνης, or at least that they should not have been so casually dismissed as such. He does not explain to what degree or in which respect he believes this to be the case, but simply that it is *if* Simonides is to be believed. Socrates’

first question, then, is the natural one: what does Simonides say

<sup>20</sup> My skepticism of this approach is shared by Cross and Woozley (1964: 6-10) and Annas (1981: 22).



about justice (περὶ δικαιοσύνης) that Polemarchus thinks is correct

(ὀρθῶς)?<sup>21</sup> Here Polemarchus quotes the maxim:  
τὸ τὰ ὀφειλόμενα ἐκάστῳ ἀποδιδόναι δίκαιόν ἐστι.  
It is just to render what is owed to each.<sup>22</sup>

The first bit of discussion is dedicated entirely to interpreting what this means (331e-332c). Thereafter the first phase of refutation (332c-334a) runs until Socrates concludes that Polemarchus' just man might turn out to be a skillful thief. The second (334b-336a) follows Polemarchus' own re-statement of his position, from which Socrates will force an admission that it is not possible for a truly just man to harm anyone, even if they are enemies.

Both phases of the discussion are dominated by the favorite analogy of Socrates' whereby he equates virtues like justice with skilled crafts (*technai*).<sup>23</sup> This analogy is introduced by Socrates and, as several have pointed out, not Polemarchus. What is more

difficult to determine is the extent to which the analogy appeals

21 Cf. *Prot.* 339a, where Protagoras avers that the greatest part of a man's education is in his ability to evaluate which things a poet has said correctly or incorrectly (ἅ τε ὀρθῶς πεποιήται καὶ ἅ μὴ).

22 Adam reads the entire first half of Polemarchus' discussion as an elaboration on the second part of Cephalus' definition; he has all but abandoned the first. One thing is clear, in his view: "The words do not profess to be a definition of justice: if they did, τὸ would appear before δίκαιον." Adam (1902: n. 331e)

23 Reeve (1988: 8) argues that all of Socrates' arguments somehow depend upon the analogy, except for the discussion on friends and enemies with respect to actual goodness or badness (334c-335a). Reeve's statement may overreach; the second phase focuses on "function" which, while rooted in the relationship between craft and craftsman, shifts the focus to the *dikaios anēr* rather than the *dikaiosunē technē*.

to Polemarchus as a good way of thinking about justice. Annas goes much too far in saying that Polemarchus “implicitly thinks of justice as a skill.”<sup>24</sup> Beversluis denounces this as an assumption without support in the text, though he makes something of the same error when he argues that Polemarchus has been “coerced into endorsing an analogy which he is disinclined to endorse and into affirming a thesis which had never entered his head, namely, that justice is a *technē*.”<sup>25</sup> Nettleship has quite usefully spoken of the “point of contact” between Polemarchus’ notion of justice and Socrates’ conception of *technē*, by which he means the commonality that inspires Socrates to bring the analogy into conversation with Simonides’ maxim.<sup>26</sup> A *technē* describes certain proprietary relationships between a body of knowledge, a practitioner, and the intended recipient or product. This attention to propriety is one feature of the analogy that makes it a potentially suitable model upon which to develop the intuitions Polemarchus has put forth, especially his sense that justice has something to do with what is

24 Annas (1981), 24-6. Beversluis (2001: 210) unsurprisingly criticizes this as an assumption with no foundation in the text, and I think he is right.

25 Beversluis (2001), 207.

26 Nettleship (1968: 18-19; 22) also uses the phrase “point of identity.” This is, by most accounts, the fact that practitioners of the *technai* have an ability (*δύναμις*) that is unique to them because they have “knowledge of their business.” I say “Socrates’ conception” because it seems likely that, upon further examination, Socrates and Polemarchus would not conceptualize *technai* in the same way.

fitting or proper for each person or thing. In the second phase of the discussion, this connection becomes more clear when Socrates asks whether it is the part of the just man (ἔστιν δικαίου ἀνδρός) to harm anyone, and he quickly concludes that this cannot be the just man's "function" (τοῦ δικαίου ἔργον).<sup>27</sup>

My view is that Polemarchus entertains the analogy from a critical distance. At the decisive juncture where Socrates introduces *dikaioṣunē* as something comparable to medicine or cookery, Polemarchus responds with what I am inclined to read as a careful disclaimer: "if it's necessary to follow what has been said previously..."<sup>28</sup> Later, when Socrates asks whether the just man who is skilled in guarding money will also be skilled in stealing it, Polemarchus admits that this is what the *logos* indicates (ὡς γοῦν ὁ λόγος σημαίνει) though he clearly does not agree.<sup>29</sup> In any case, his ideas about justice are so loosely formed that nothing about the *technē* analogy stands out to him as obviously problematic. The analogy might even be attractive, at least until Socrates extends it to show that justice must be some kind of petty thievery. At this Polemarchus recoils (οὐ μὰ τὸν Δία), and it is clear that the analogy

<sup>27</sup> *Resp.* 335b and 335d, respectively.

<sup>28</sup> *Resp.* 332d: "εἰ μὲν τι, ἔφη, δεῖ ἀκολουθεῖν, ὃ Σώκρατες, τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν εἰρημένους..." Cf. *Prot.* 312a. "εἰ μὲν τι τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν ἔοικεν..."

<sup>29</sup> *Resp.* 334a.

has come into conflict with his better intuitions.<sup>30</sup>

Polemarchus' lack of any coherent propositions about justice in its essence (τὸ δίκαιον ὃ ἐστίν) leaves him vulnerable, and it is not surprising that commentators have long accused Socrates of taking advantage. Perhaps the most cogent argument of this kind is Beversluis' contention that Socrates is practicing a type of sophistry by peddling two irreconcilable conceptions of *technē*.<sup>31</sup> One accepts the possibility of misusing a *technē* to achieve ends other than those for which it exists. By inference from boxing, medicine, and military strategy, Socrates concludes that "if a just person is good at protecting money...he's also good at stealing it," and thus occasions Polemarchus' first admission of ignorance.<sup>32</sup> The other notion of *technē* precludes such misuses; this is the one that informs Socrates' proof that the just man cannot make someone less just by the practice of the *technē dikaiosunē*, just as a musician cannot make someone less musical by practicing the musical *technē*. To this, Socrates adds the rather contrived comparison to heat, which cannot make something cold, and moistness, which cannot make something dry.<sup>33</sup>

30 *Resp.* 334b.

31 Beversluis (2001), 217-8.

32 *Resp.* 333e-334a. Cf. *Hippias Minor* 375d-76b. The argument that contraries are functions of the same capacity was later used by Aristotle as a proof that virtues are not crafts. See *Eth. Nic.* v. 1129a and *Anal. Pri.* xxxvi. 48b.

33 *Resp.* 335c-d.

If Beversluis is right, Socrates is analogizing justice with two contradictory conceptions of *technē*, trading on an ambiguity that allows him to have his cake and eat it too. This is undeniably “irritating,” and probably sophistical, but it does not amount to a non-sequitur.<sup>34</sup> I am entirely persuaded by Beversluis’ point, but it does not change the fact that Socrates is able play on both notions of *technē* because Polemarchus accepted premises that allow for both. Socrates asked in reference to the boxer, “isn’t it the person who is best at landing blows who is also best at protecting himself?”<sup>35</sup> Polemarchus’ affirmative answer admitted the implicit premise that the same *technē* can be used to achieve opposite ends, though this is only the case if the boxing *technē* is defined exclusively as the act of landing blows and not defense. The next example has a doctor protecting his patient from disease as opposed to a doctor purposefully infecting the patient, and is by far the stronger proof. On the other side, with the examples of farming and shoemaking, Polemarchus agreed that the usefulness of each *technē* is based on the specific outcome it provides (here, crops and shoes).<sup>36</sup>

There appears to be a general consensus, however, that Socrates’ arguments are formally sound even though they are at several

<sup>34</sup> This word is Annas’ (1981: 32).

<sup>35</sup> *Resp.* 333e.

<sup>36</sup> *Resp.* 333a.

places based on premises that do not correspond to the experience of reality.<sup>37</sup> Socrates pushes the conversation *ad absurdum* in that his sound arguments yield conclusions that most people simply would not accept.<sup>38</sup> Polemarchus is forced into several such conclusions: that justice is only useful for non-action and that the just man is a skilled thief are the two that bring the conversation to aporetic standstills.<sup>39</sup> Had he more time, Polemarchus might realize that these follow from several dubious premises which he should not have accepted.<sup>40</sup>

All of this is further evidence that Polemarchus is being asked to participate in a type of inquiry for which he is not adequately equipped. And whether we conclude that Socrates' arguments are strong or weak, we cannot be sure of the degree to which Polemarchus' own intuitions about justice correspond to the things he is induced to say. The conflict here is not, I emphasize,

between Polemarchus' definition and Socrates' refutation, but

37 Tulin (2005) has offered the most analytic reading of the Polemarchus episode. He argues that the compositional order of Socrates' arguments contradicts and confuses the order of their logical sequence, but that they nevertheless result in sound conclusions (pp. 291-5; 301). Annas (1981) frequently defends the validity of Socrates' arguments on similar grounds. So too Joseph (1935: 6): "the absurd conclusions are reached fairly from false assumptions."

38 Cross and Woosley (1964), 10; Nettleship (1968), 18.

39 *Resp.* 331d-e, and 334a-b, respectively.

40 Polemarchus does, on one occasion, recognize an error and correct himself. See 334e-335b: "...we're probably making a wrong assumption about friends and enemies."

rather between Polemarchus' cloudy intuitions about justice and Socrates' desire for a more concrete articulation. The question that Plato seems to be raising is how Polemarchus or anyone else might develop viable intuitions into philosophically defensible positions.

It may be that Polemarchus attempts to do this by analogy with the crafts, and Plato's aim is to demonstrate why justice can be neither learned nor practiced as a technical skill.<sup>41</sup> However, as we have already seen, the *technē* analogy is introduced by Socrates and only tentatively endorsed by Polemarchus. This would place the onus of Plato's argument on Socrates and his transparently weak arguments. If this is the case, we may doubt whether Polemarchus' own assumptions have any substantial bearing on the outcome of the discussion. H.W.B. Joseph proposed an alternative that has the virtue of locating Plato's point in Polemarchus' errors rather than Socrates' misleading suggestions. In Joseph's view, Polemarchus attempts to define justice by specifying examples of just action. Plato's thesis, then, is that "justice is not to inform a man's conduct only on special occasions, and so cannot be defined by any list of a

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41 Irwin (1977: 203ff) has most forcefully made this argument. Others include Collingwood (1958: 18), Cross and Woosley (1964: 13), and Woodruff (1990: 81). Several others counter that Plato in fact maintains positive applications of the *technē* concept. Warren (1989) depends largely upon *Republic* 1 to argue that Plato views statecraft as a preeminent *technē*, indeed as the "mastercraft." Others in this camp include Levin (2001), who incidentally offers the most complete review of the literature on both sides of the issue (see pp. 137-38).

just man's ἔργα or works.”<sup>42</sup> Some have responded that Polemarchus never truly attempts to list just actions, and I agree.<sup>43</sup> Yet Joseph caught something that we must not ignore: Polemarchus recognizes certain actions as “just” when he sees them, and can probably specify others, but he cannot explain what justice is. In Book 5, Socrates will argue that philosophers must be the rulers in the Kallipolis because they understand the eternal forms of things like justice, whereas others simply observe their manifestations.<sup>44</sup> Polemarchus may well be a representative member of the latter group:

τοὺς ἄρα πολλὰ καλὰ θεωμένους, αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ καλὸν μὴ ὁρῶντας  
μηδ' ἄλλω ἐπ' αὐτὸ ἄγοντι δυναμένους ἔπεσθαι, καὶ πολλὰ δίκαια,  
αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ δίκαιον μὴ, καὶ πάντα οὕτω...

Those who behold many beautiful things, but do not see beauty itself, nor are capable of following someone who is leading them to it; and can see many just things, but not justice itself, and so on...<sup>45</sup>

Plato is bringing out Polemarchus' problem as one not of bad intuition, but of bad methodology. It may be that Polemarchus fails because he tries to define justice with a list of just actions, by analogizing justice with the *technai*, or simply because he is a character trapped within the confines of the Socratic *elenchus* itself.

42 Joseph (1935), 11.

43 E.g. Cross and Woodley (1964), 5-6.

44 *Resp.* 473c-d; 475d-480a.

45 *Resp.* 479e.



<sup>46</sup> In any case, Polemarchus lacks the right tools for refining his intuitions about justice into defensible propositions, much less for discovering what justice is (τὸ δίκαιον ὃ ἐστίν).

Joseph was right to locate Plato's argument in whatever it is that renders Polemarchus unsuccessful, though his search for a "primary point," or single "moral" is unnecessarily reductive.<sup>47</sup> Annas follows Joseph closely, but the added strength of her interpretation is that it allows Plato to make several points at the same time. She suggests that Polemarchus intuitively thinks of justice as a *technē* and therefore accepts Socrates' analogy, but she agrees with Joseph that defining justice by specifying just actions is the fatal flaw of which Plato means to make an example. However, by dint of her view that Polemarchus is "the ordinary moral agent," Annas goes one step further.<sup>48</sup> Polemarchus and his father are disinterested in justice beyond its application in their own business dealings and are therefore "unreflective" men. This disinterest, says Annas, is Plato's "target;" by the end of the discussion he has shown us "the limits

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<sup>46</sup> Reeve (1988: 9, 108-10) argues that Plato wants to demonstrate "the problematic nature of the Socratic elenchus" in Socrates' exchanges with Cephalus and Polemarchus. Reeve sees something of Polemarchus in Book 7, where Socrates reflects on the negative impact his elenchus might have upon a young man whose conventionally-acquired ideas are rejected and, not knowing how to go about pursuing a different set of ideas, falls into living purely for the satisfaction of his desires (*Resp.* 538c-539a).

<sup>47</sup> Joseph (1935), 11.

<sup>48</sup> Annas (1981), 23-4, 21, 27.

of moral complacency.”<sup>49</sup> Annas sees Polemarchus as a certain type of person, which is not the same as recognizing that he makes a certain type of argument. Nettleship puts it most baldly—“Of what sort of person does Plato mean him to be a type?”—but the idea that Plato means to criticise whatever type of person Polemarchus represents is a latent feature of several interpretations.<sup>50</sup> On these terms, Plato’s criticism is not limited to defective ways of arguing but includes also certain defects of character.<sup>51</sup>

I am inclined to take Polemarchus on his own terms and to give greater credence to what he says before he comes under the influence of Socrates. We must not lose sight of the fact that Polemarchus enters the conversation without being called upon to do so, and without a specious question luring him in. Rather, he hears something about which he is confident, even passionate to the point of assertive. He makes what I can only read as an off-hand comment, the kind of thing we throw into a conversation not because we have thought it through, but because it strikes us in the

49 Annas (1981), 18-19, 30, 34. I suggested above (p. 5) that Cephalus is clearly disinterested; Polemarchus is not.

50 Nettleship (1968), 16.

51 Even Annas (1981: 29-30) admits that the positions Polemarchus ends up endorsing do not correspond to his own best intentions when faced with moral dilemmas. For example, Polemarchus reacts with alarm when Socrates suggests that his notion of justice might entail harming a good man simply because he is in the enemy camp (Resp. 334d). This seems a merciful indication from Plato that Polemarchus is, at the core, of decent character.

moment as the obvious thing to say. Philosophers must take care not to do this in a serious forum, but the party at Polemarchus' house is not a serious forum and Polemarchus is not a philosopher. This is, I maintain, Polemarchus at his most genuine, free from both the impositions of Socrates and the restraints of his own second thoughts. Cephalus' remarks alluded to the proprietary nature of justice, and in this regard Polemarchus is his father's son. He trusts that his intuitions will find a more concrete expression in the words of an authoritative poet, and a favorite maxim from Simonides comes to mind.

## II. Are We to Believe Simonides?

That the poetic dimension of the Polemarchus episode has been so overlooked is mystifying, especially given that poetry is a topic of great controversy throughout the rest of the *Republic*. Poetry is an interest of Plato's elsewhere, too, and I have therefore found it illuminating to consider the poetic elements of *Republic* 1 alongside very similar elements in the *Protagoras* and the *Phaedrus*. For if Plato was annoyed with men who could only name just actions as a definition of justice, might he also have had a gripe with those whose first instinct was to answer his questions by quoting poetry?

Polemarchus cannot claim the distinction of making the first poetic quotation in the *Republic*. His father recites from Pindar

during his musings on old age, though upon further examination it is clear that this is hardly comparable to what Polemarchus does with Simonides.<sup>52</sup> Cephalus quotes Pindar as a more artistic expression of a sentiment he has already expressed anecdotally, and the lines of poetry neither are themselves nor have anything to do with the objects of Socrates' impending refutation.<sup>53</sup> By contrast, Polemarchus invokes Simonides in an unmistakable appeal to the poet's authority on matters of morality, hoping to put some weight behind an idea that Socrates has begun to dispute. Polemarchus is, in effect, pitting Socrates' refutation against the weighty words of a wise poet, expecting that the latter will carry the day. That Plato must have several reservations about this tactic is indisputable. I argue that in the Polemarchus episode Plato demonstrates precisely why appeals to poetic authority cannot be the basis for a constructive account of justice.

From Cephalus' remarks, Socrates formulates a single question: is justice simply telling the truth and giving back what one has taken?<sup>54</sup> With the single example of returning weapons to a man

52 *Resp.* 331a. See Pindar (Loeb, 1997) frag. 214.

53 *Resp.* 331c. When Cephalus finishes his monologue, Socrates responds with approval (“παγκάλως λέγεις, ὃ Κέφαλε”) but effectively ignores the quotation by refocusing the discussion on *dikaio sunē*, asking whether it consists in the actions of truth-telling and repaying debts.

54 *Resp.* 331c.

gone mad, Socrates suggests that the same action may in one case be just and in another case be unjust, and has answered his own question. This cannot be a definition of justice (οὐκ ἄρα οὗτος ὄρος ἐστὶν δικαιοσύνης, 331d). At this juncture, Polemarchus interjects: πάνυ μὲν οὖν, ἔφη, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὑπολαβὼν ὁ Πολέμαρχος, εἴπερ γέ τι χρὴ Σιμωνίδη πείθεσθαι. “Certainly it is, Socrates,” Polemarchus interrupted, “that is, *if* one is to believe Simonides.<sup>55</sup>

This remark is brief and, as I have suggested, off-hand, but it does two important things. First, it positions Polemarchus as a proponent of the view that Socrates distilled from Cephalus’ remarks, not only as a commendable sentiment, but as a ὄρος δικαιοσύνης. Second, it introduces a conditional that, I maintain, amounts to a new question: are we to believe Simonides?

Even if Polemarchus thinks he is posing something of a rhetorical question (*of course* Simonides is to be believed!) I argue that Plato raises it as a serious one, and that the discussion between Polemarchus and Socrates is his demonstrative answer. We come away with the impression that it is certainly *not* necessary to believe Simonides as a matter of trust, but also that it is not clear what this would mean in the practical work of Socratic philosophy. The precise nature of Polemarchus’ invocation of and dependence upon Simonides has not received any sustained

55 *Resp.* 331d.

treatment. Most commentators are content to say that Polemarchus simply “quotes” the poet, and carry on with discussions about the *technai* or the other topics explored above. The first objective of this chapter is to demonstrate that Simonides and other poets are conspicuous throughout the entirety of the Polemarchus episode, from beginning to bizarre end, and as more than mere objects of quotation. It will then be clear that the involvement of Simonides is at least partially responsible for the conversation’s aporetic ending and, because this is the case, Plato means to say something about the value of poetic appeals in philosophical discussions such as this one.

### *Poetry as frame*

It is often noted with interest that Cephalus comes into Polemarchus’ house having just completed some sacrifices in the courtyard, and he passes the *logos* down to Polemarchus because he must go attend to some more.<sup>56</sup> By having Cephalus enter and exit with reference to religious rites, Plato frames our interpretation of anything Cephalus says with indications of the commitments he carries into the discussion and continues to maintain afterward. Cephalus is, without doubt, a religious man whose conception of justice is entangled with the demands of his piety. This seems to

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<sup>56</sup> *Resp.* 328c; 331d. See Adam (1902: ad loc.).

be a fruitful mode of interpretation, and one that pays homage to Plato's skill as a literary artist. What has not been as often pointed out is that Polemarchus' discussion is similarly framed, but with reference to poets and sages.<sup>57</sup>

We hardly need reminding that Polemarchus enters the conversation with a mention of Simonides. But Simonides will return at the very end of the episode when Socrates has determined

that harming enemies cannot be part of the just man's function:  
 μαχοῦμεθα ἄρα, κοινῇ ἐγώ τε καὶ σύ, ἐάν τις αὐτὸ φῆ ἢ Σιμωνίδην  
 ἢ Βίαντα ἢ Πιττακὸν εἰρηκέναι ἢ τιν' ἄλλον τῶν σοφῶν τε καὶ  
 μακαρίων ἀνδρῶν.  
 So, we will take up arms, you and I together, if someone should  
 say that Simonides, or Bias, or Pittacus, or any other wise and  
 happy man said this.<sup>58</sup>

Socrates names Simonides, who has not been mentioned since 332c, but he also introduces the sages Bias and Pittacus. Even this is not the whole story, for Polemarchus' discussion contains two full rounds of refutation (332c-334a and 334b-336a). The first ends when it seems that Polemarchus' just man will be good at stealing money as well as guarding it. Socrates concludes that Polemarchus picked this idea up from Homer (παρ' Ὀμήρου μεμαθηκέναι); that justice according to him as well as to Homer and Simonides

(καὶ κατὰ σὲ καὶ καθ' Ὀμηρον καὶ κατὰ Σιμωνίδην) is some kind

57 Strauss (1964: 70) acknowledge the point in passing, but makes absolutely no inference from it.

58 *Resp.* 335e.

of theft.<sup>59</sup> Precisely why both aporetic endings occur in reference to poetry will be considered hereafter; I set it forth now as clear permission from Plato to proceed along this line of inquiry. If Cephalus is hemmed in by a notion of justice as dictated by his piety, is it possible that Polemarchus is bound up in a notion of justice as defined by his poetry?

I argue that Plato is decisively rejecting the practice that Polemarchus' invocation of Simonides exemplifies, both for the present inquiry into the nature of justice and in the work of philosophy generally. His criticism seems to settle around two conclusions that are easily drawn from a careful reading of the Polemarchus episode (especially when one reads it alongside the *Protagoras* and the *Phaedrus*, as I do below), each of which I shall treat at length below. The first is that poetry, if it has philosophical content, does not state its meaning clearly, and the process of interpretation renders it susceptible to semantic equivocation. Second, the person appealing to a poetic authority may go beyond interpreting what the poet's words mean and in fact begin to speak on the poet's behalf. This obfuscates which ideas belong to the poet and which belong to the adherent, and blurs the line between the poet's original meaning and his follower's personal interpretation.

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<sup>59</sup> *Resp.* 334a-b.



Taken together, these ambiguities render a poetic sentiment of the kind Polemarchus quotes essentially unarguable—it can neither be proven true nor false with any conclusiveness—and is therefore out of place in a Socratic dialogue.

The topic of poetry in the *Republic* and elsewhere in Plato has generated a veritable mountain of scholarship. My small contribution is to offer a reading of Polemarchus' discussion with special attention to his dependence upon Simonides. That it is Simonides and not another poet is of consequence, and we must therefore begin with a sketch of Simonides' biography and, as far as can be discerned, his reputation by the time of Plato's writing.<sup>60</sup>

### *Simonides of Ceos*

Simonides (ca. 556-468 BCE) first composed under the patronage of Hipparchus at Athens, and thereafter made a sojourn in Thessaly. A second stint at Athens was marked by his friendship with Themistocles and the advent of the Persian Wars, whose battles and war dead provided an ample supply of subject matter for his poetry. Poems from this period increased his fame at Athens and abroad, such that the last decade or so of his life was spent in the employ of

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<sup>60</sup> H.S. Thayer (1975: 4) is unique, though serviceable to my purpose here, for arguing that Simonides holds “a central place in [Plato's] theorizing about and contention with poetry.”

Hiero of Syracuse, whose cohort of artists also included Pindar and Aeschylus.<sup>61</sup>

The field of Simonides' poetic activity was expansive, ranging from epinician odes to epitaphs, and recent expansions of his corpus have only underscored the point.<sup>62</sup> The 1992 publication of the "new Simonides" has brought to light several fragments which were previously unknown or had been known only anonymously, and even substantial portions of a narrative describing the Battle of Plataea.<sup>63</sup> This work is of great interest, for as Boedeker says it represents "a kind of poetry virtually unknown to us before: encomiastic narrative elegy that celebrates contemporary historical events."<sup>64</sup> This has inspired a reevaluation of Simonides' own elegiac

genre and speculation about a poetics that links epic poetry with

61 For an overview of the poems attributed to Simonides in this period, see Molyneux (1992), 147-210.

62 The Suda entry for Simonides (Adler  $\alpha$ -439) attests: "The following were written by him in the Doric dialect: the kingdom of Cambyses and Darius and (naval battle of) Xerxes, and the naval battle at Artemisium in elegiac meter, the naval battle at Salamis in lyric meter; threnoi (laments), encomia (odes), epigrams, paeans (odes of joy), tragedies and other things." Trans. Robert Dyer. "Simonides." Suda On Line. <http://www.stoa.org/sol-entries/alpha/439>. Suda contains a total of 8 entries with the lemma "Simonides;" only the first three refer to the lyric poet ( $\alpha$ -439-441).

63 M. L. West's *Jambi et Elegi Graeci*, vol. 2, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1992) and Boedeker and Sider (2001) are the definitive sources for the new material, which is the result of new discoveries at Oxyrynchus (*P.Oxy* 3965, paired with *P.Oxy* 2327). O. Poltera (2008) offers the most recent collection of testimonia for Simonides, which may be consulted alongside the Loeb edition of *Greek Lyric*, vol. 3, ed. D. Cambell (1991).

64 D. Boedeker, "Heroic Historiography: Simonides and Herodotus on Plataea." In Boedeker and Sider (2001), 120-34. p. 120.

the early historiography of Herodotus.

An ode from Simonides' Thessalian period is the subject of a lively discussion in the *Protagoras* (339-347).<sup>65</sup> Having been roundly criticized by the dialogue's namesake, Simonides is defended in three somewhat comic interpretations by Socrates. It may be as Lamb suggested, that Socrates is "aping" literarily-inclined sophists like Hippias.<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, Maria McCoy has adroitly suggested that Socrates might be happy to engage with Simonides' poem because it was composed as a disputative response to Pittacus, and therefore contains an internal dialectic.<sup>67</sup> She argues that Plato includes this episode because it mirrors the interpretative task put upon his own readers: evaluating how the views of both parties in the dialogue bear on its conclusions.<sup>68</sup> At any rate, the discussion raises several of the same questions as the Polemarchus episode: the possibility of equivocating on definitions, the impossibility of deducing a single meaning, and the fact that a poet's words cannot defend themselves. Socrates concludes with

65 See Molyneux (1992: 121-22 and n. 39) for sources on this particular ode as well as the nature of Simonides' connection to Scopas. The Scopadae clan, along with the Aleuadae, were Simonides' noble patrons in Thessaly. Thayer (1975, 4) offers a lengthy examination of Plato's use of this poem in the *Prot.* (pp. 21-26).

66 *Prot.* 343c n. 1, pp. 198-99.

67 *Prot.* 343c: "It was against this saying, and with this aim, that he composed the whole poem as a means of covertly assailing and abasing the maxim, as it seems to me."

68 McCoy (1999), 359-60.

his view that arguing about poetry (τὸ περι ποιήσεως διαλέγεσθαι) is of little more value than the small talk at commoners' drinking parties.<sup>69</sup>

That excerpts from Simonides' poetry occurs on these terms in the *Protagoras* as well as in *Republic 1* gives further affirmation that Plato would have us think about poetry and interpretation in connection with Polemarchus. However there is more to be said, for both passages reflect on Simonides' status as *sophos*. In the *Protagoras*, Socrates explains that the saying of Pittacus to which Simonides was responding had received high praise from wise men. Simonides, "eager to get a name for wisdom" (φιλότιμος ὦν ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ), attempted to prove Pittacus wrong.<sup>70</sup> Recall that when

Polemarchus makes his quotation, Socrates responds:

ἀλλὰ μέντοι, Σιμωνίδη γε οὐ ῥάδιον ἀπιστεῖν—σοφὸς γὰρ καὶ θεῖος ἀνὴρ

Well, it sure isn't easy to disbelieve *Simonides*. For he is a wise and god-like man.<sup>71</sup>

We can only read this as deliberate irony, for Socrates will

give us reason to doubt that Simonides is extraordinarily wise.<sup>72</sup>

69 *Prot.* 347c.

70 *Ibid.* 343c.

71 *Resp.* 331e. The verb "ἀπιστεῖν" evokes distrust or lack of faith, and disobedience. Several, like Waterfield (1993: 9), translate simply as "disagree," though in my view this does not fully capture the right sense. The issue at hand is not simply deciding whether Simonides is right or wrong, but whether he is to be obeyed or trusted by virtue of being an especially "wise and god-like man" (σοφὸς γὰρ καὶ θεῖος ἀνὴρ).

72 Adam (1902: n. 331e) suggests: "σοφὸς and θεῖος were fashionable words

In any case, by the time of Plato's writing Simonides seems to have had a reputation for wisdom in more than poetry as, in Thayer's words, "a true sage; a man of wit, ingenuity, and with an interest in developing methods of education."<sup>73</sup> One function of the Polemarchus episode is, we shall see, to question whether the kind of wisdom Simonides has to offer is of any use to Plato's philosophical project.

### 1. Riddling like a poet

The banter over Polemarchus as the inheritor (κληρονόμος) of his father's *logos* makes it sufficiently clear that the first half of the discussion elaborates on the idea introduced by Cephalus and expressed in new terms by Simonides: that justice has something to do with repaying debts. Socrates admits that it is not easy to stake out a position against Simonides, by virtue of the poet's wisdom and semblance of divinity. But before Socrates can decide whether he believes Simonides or not, he has to understand what the maxim of praise: in the mouth of Socrates they are generally ironical."

<sup>73</sup> Thayer (1975: 9). Here Thayer references those traditions which suggest that Simonides was a pioneer in the field of mnemonics and memory training. The specific method attributed to Simonides is outlined by Cicero (*De Oratore*, 2.86) and Longinus (*Ars Rhetorica*, 1.2). The Suda (Adler α-439) credits Simonides with the invention of the entire field of mnemonics (καὶ τὴν μνημονικὴν δὲ τέχνην εἴρεν οὗτος), and even attributes to him the introduction of long vowels and double consonants to the Greek alphabet. These sources are later, but even in *Resp.* 1 Socrates mentions Simonides in concert with Bias of Priene and Pittacus of Mytilene (335e), two of the canonical Seven Sages.

means. Though generally considered part of the first refutation of Polemarchus, the first half-page (331e-332c) is in fact dedicated only to clarifying the meaning of the *refutandum*. Socrates opens the investigation straightaway:

τοῦτο μέντοι ὅτι ποτὲ λέγει, σὺ μὲν, ὦ Πολέμαρχε, ἴσως γιγνώσκεις, ἐγὼ δὲ ἀγνοῶ:

While perhaps *you* understand what he means by this, Polemarchus, I sure don't.<sup>74</sup>

Socrates may understand exactly what Simonides means, or what Polemarchus thinks Simonides means, or both. But even with dissimulated ignorance he can force Polemarchus into the role of interpreter and make his point: the maxim does not speak for itself. Until the essence of the quotation is distilled through interpretation, it will be impossible to demonstrate that it applies to the matter at hand *even if* all parties accept that its author is wise and ought to be listened to.<sup>75</sup>

Socrates has begged the question of interpretation already in his use of the verb λέγω, which expresses both “say” and “mean.” While (1) “Simonides says” and (2) “Simonides means” have a great deal of overlap, if both are taken at their literal extremes they can be made to stand for strictly (1) a statement and (2) an

<sup>74</sup> *Resp.* 331e.

<sup>75</sup> It seems likely that Socrates' admiration for Simonides is at minimum “ironical,” cf. Adam (1902: n. 331e).

interpretation of the statement. Socrates uses λέγω in both senses; sometimes it indicates simply what Simonides said, but other times Socrates seems to suggest what Simonides *meant* by what he said. Referring to the madman example, Socrates posits that Simonides surely didn't *mean* (δηλον γὰρ ὅτι οὐ τοῦτο λέγει) for his maxim to condone this, and Polemarchus agrees.<sup>76</sup> Socrates concludes:  
 ἄλλο δὴ τι ἢ τὸ τοιοῦτον, ὡς ἔοικεν, λέγει Σιμωνίδης τὸ τὰ ὀφειλόμενα δίκαιον εἶναι ἀποδιδόναι.  
 Simonides means something other than this, it seems, by 'it is just to render what is owed.'<sup>77</sup>

Here more clearly than elsewhere Socrates' focus on interpretation is facilitated by λέγω. When Socrates suggests that Simonides must *mean* something other than what he *says*, he is probing for which applications of Simonides' maxim Polemarchus will admit beyond its literal sense.

Polemarchus indulges, and explains rather matter-of-factly that Simonides thinks (οἶεται) that friends owe it to friends to do them some good, and nothing bad. This is not at all explicit in the maxim as quoted, but Polemarchus is nevertheless confident in it (ἄλλο μέντοι νῆ Δί').<sup>78</sup> He has put forth an interpretation that, if adopted, requires a substantial departure from Simonides' words. For the poet spoke simply of τὰ ὀφειλόμενα, but Polemarchus specifies

<sup>76</sup> *Resp.* 331e-332a.

<sup>77</sup> *Resp.* 332a.

<sup>78</sup> *Resp.* 332a.

“what is owed” as something subject to change depending upon the relationship between the lender and the borrower. Owing a friend money is not the same as owing the bank, nor is owing money to the bank the same kind of relationship as owing one’s parents something intangible like “respect,” and so on. Thus the issue here becomes simply one of categories. Polemarchus argues that if returning what one has borrowed from a friend will not actually benefit the friend, or will even cause the friend some kind of injury, then it does not fall under the category called τὰ ὀφειλόμενα. The extent to which something is “owed” depends upon the transaction that has taken place, but also the relationship between the parties. By agreeing that this is what Simonides meant, Polemarchus commits himself to defining just conduct in terms of specific relationships, friendly or unfriendly. Socrates brings up the counterpart to friends – enemies – and Polemarchus is consistent. If friends owe friends something good (ἀγαθόν τι), then enemies owe their enemies something bad (κακόν τι).<sup>79</sup>

Polemarchus has tacitly admitted that rendering what is owed to each (τὸ τὰ ὀφειλόμενα ἐκάστῳ ἀποδιδόναι) – whether or not it actually is just – cannot be usefully applied if taken literally. Of the many interpretive options available to him, his instinct

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<sup>79</sup> *Resp.* 332a-b.



is to construe the maxim in terms of friends and enemies. With these as the two possible referents of ἐκάστῳ, τὰ ὀφειλόμενα, upon which ἐκάστῳ depends, cannot refer to any fixed thing. Polemarchus can posit that a man owes his enemies something bad because he supplies a necessary link: this is what is *fitting* (ὅπερ καὶ προσήκει).<sup>80</sup> This is obvious enough, but it is another addendum to Simonides' maxim. Whereas τὰ ὀφειλόμενα refers to the construct of obligation that follows from a set of past actions (borrowing, lending), προσήκει describes a general circumstance that may exist at all times.

Why would Simonides say something other than what he meant? The issue is that as a sage and a poet writing in verse, he might not speak as directly as a philosopher would like. Socrates complains that Simonides was in fact “riddling like a poet” (ἠνίξατο...ὁ Σιμωνίδης ποιητικῶς) on the matter of justice.<sup>81</sup> We should not be surprised to hear Socrates sneer at a poet, but the preceding conversation has made one thing plain: Simonides is known only in his maxims, and if there are philosophical positions in them, they must be dug-out and stated more precisely. This would not be a problem if everyone could extract the same philosophical position – the same kernel of meaning – from a piece of poetry. We hardly

<sup>80</sup> *Resp.* 332b.

<sup>81</sup> *Resp.* 332c.

need more than experience and common sense to reject such a possibility, but Plato gives us even better proof of the fact in what follows.

According to Socrates, what Simonides meant was that “it is just to render to each what is fitting (τὸ προσήκον),” though in poetic abstraction he called it something else (τὸ ὀφειλόμενον).<sup>82</sup> It is, of course, impossible for Socrates or Polemarchus to know with certainty what Simonides meant, and they have set a troubling precedent. For there is nothing in the single line from Simonides to suggest that τὸ ὀφειλόμενον must refer to anything beyond its most literal sense but, because Socrates wants to stretch a single just action into a comprehensive definition of justice, he is eager to trade it out for the more inclusive term. We should not accept this equation of τὸ προσήκον and τὸ ὀφειλόμενον without question; it is reasonable, but there are many other reasonable options.<sup>83</sup> This is especially so if one is at liberty to switch out load-bearing words as Socrates and Polemarchus have done.

As it happens, Socrates’ first refutation hangs almost entirely upon τὸ προσήκον. As we have seen, the possibility that justice has to do with rendering something which is fitting to each is the very thing that makes it comparable to a skilled craft (*technē*). Thus

<sup>82</sup> *Resp.* 332b.

<sup>83</sup> See Tulin (2005), 282-3.

Socrates' next move is to analogize justice to medicine, cookery, and piloting a ship, which would be a substantially more difficult connection to draw without τὸ προσήκον expanding the meaning of τὸ ὀφειλόμενον. *Technē* analogies remain Socrates' primary method for refuting Polemarchus well into the second refutation, by the end of which he will have referred to over fifteen different *technai*. In the end, if someone were to take issue with Socrates' reformulation of the maxim, he would only need to make the case for substituting something else for τὸ ὀφειλόμενον. This could go on indefinitely, for there is simply no way to confirm with Simonides what he meant.

## 2. Simonides or Polemarchus?

Socrates, despite his insistent questions about Simonides, has in fact exposed *Polemarchus'* meaning, or at least Polemarchus' reason for making this particular quotation. For the edited version of the maxim which speaks in terms of τὸ προσήκον is no longer Simonides', nor is it tied to Cephalus' idea that justice consists in telling the truth and, very literally, giving back what one has taken (τὸ ἀποδιδόναι ἅν τις τι παρά του λάβῃ).<sup>84</sup> The notion that justice has something to do with what is fitting or proper for each

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<sup>84</sup> *Resp.* 331c.

person belongs to Polemarchus, and we expect Socrates to examine it as such. That Socrates presses onward by asking questions of Simonides is a peculiarity that deserves more attention than it has received.

By the time Socrates has reformulated the position up for consideration, he has required Polemarchus to speak on Simonides' behalf in a number of subtly different ways. Polemarchus has once been asked to explain what Simonides thinks (οἶεται), and another time to verify that Socrates correctly summarized what Simonides says (οὐχ οὕτω λέγειν φῆς τὸν Σιμωνίδην);<sup>85</sup> To open his first line of refutation, however, Socrates asks Polemarchus to answer questions as Simonides would answer them. He switches into hypothetical direct address:

εἰ οὖν τις αὐτὸν ἤρετο: ὦ Σιμωνίδη...  
If someone were to ask him: "Simonides..."<sup>86</sup>

Socrates wants to know what is owed or fitting that the art of medicine provides, and to whom medicine provides it, and Polemarchus is asked what Simonides would give as an answer (τί ἂν οἶει ἡμῖν αὐτὸν ἀποκρίνασθαι;). Socrates asks the same question about cooking, and then about the *technē dikaiosunē*. Polemarchus suggests that this third craft is the conferral of

<sup>85</sup> *Resp.* 332a and 332b.

<sup>86</sup> *Resp.* 332c.

benefits to friends and injuries to enemies; Socrates asks whether this is what Simonides means (λέγει), and Polemarchus responds in the affirmative (δοκεῖ μοι). From this point on, Socrates will shift to address Polemarchus and speak to him in the second person (ὦ φίλε Πολέμαρχε).<sup>87</sup> The first line of questioning is, however, directed to a dead poet for whom Polemarchus must speak as a surrogate. Plato here presents in almost comedic form the problems inherent to interpreting bits of poetry: the only way to know with certainty what it means, or to judge its value in a philosophical discussion, would be to ask the person who wrote it for an explanation. In the case of Simonides or Homer this is impossible, a fact which Socrates laments explicitly in the *Protagoras*.<sup>88</sup> The closest Socrates can get is to ask Polemarchus how he thinks Simonides would respond to a set of questions, but Plato would have us see that this is not very close at all. Polemarchus is not privy to any special information regarding Simonides' poetry, and he certainly does not have any connection to the poet himself.

Gadamer refers to precisely this phenomenon when he describes

87 *Resp.* 332e.

88 *Prot.* 347e: “And so a gathering like ours...requires no additional voices, not even of the poets, whom one cannot question on what it is that they say (οὐδὲν δέονται ἀλλοτρίας φωνῆς οὐδὲ ποιητῶν, οὗς οὔτε ἀνερέσθαι οἶόν τ' ἐστὶν περὶ ὧν λέγουσιν). When they are adduced in discussion we are usually told by some that the poet thought this or that, and by others, something different, and they go on arguing about something which they are ultimately unable to determine. No, this sort of gathering is avoided by cultured men...”

the poetics which Plato would have seen and perhaps resented in his day: “a poetic formulation taken out of context as creed or maxim went from the ear to the soul without the poet’s overall intention defining and limiting its application.”<sup>89</sup>

What we are left with are evidently *Polemarchus*’ answers to the questions about medicine, cooking, and justice. Could it be that Simonides’ wisdom depends entirely upon the reason of a latter-day disciple to carry his argument to completion? That Plato intended to raise such questions as these, while not certain, seems entirely plausible in light of his preoccupation with poetry in the *Republic* and with questions of interpretation in his other dialogues. In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates famously denounces the usefulness of written words on grounds that they cannot answer questions when asked. They will always say the same thing, and will therefore require someone to defend them if they come under criticism.<sup>90</sup> This problem is most clearly exemplified in the *Protagoras*, where Socrates calls upon Prodicus to come to Simonides’ aid (βοηθεῖν). Having been roundly criticized by Protagoras, Simonides’ rehabilitation is said to depend upon Prodicus’ skill (δεῖται τὸ ὑπὲρ Σιμωνίδου ἐπανόρθωμα τῆς σῆς μουσικῆς).<sup>91</sup> If anything is certain

89 Gadamer (1934), 47.

90 *Phdr.* 275e-d.

91 *Prot.* 339e-340a.

in the first part of the Polemarchus episode, it is that Simonides' maxim cannot speak for itself.

### 3. Defending Simonides

Polemarchus, in the end, admits that inflicting harm is not the business of a just person, and thereby recants his earlier statement that justice consists in benefiting friends and harming enemies. Socrates, with characteristic bluntness, concludes “it was not a wise man who said this” (οὐκ ἦν σοφὸς ὁ ταῦτα εἰπών).<sup>92</sup> Polemarchus agrees, though of course he had earlier affirmed that Simonides did mean to say this. Polemarchus is cornered: either he misunderstood what Simonides meant to say and derived from it his own amateurish conception of justice, or he understood Simonides perfectly and Simonides is therefore not a wise man. Socrates proceeds as if the former is true, and makes his ironic call to arms. Plato has set before us a choice between two if-then proofs. The first is the most obvious: if it was no wise man that said this, and Simonides said this, then Simonides is not wise. But this is not, in fact, what Simonides said; it is Polemarchus' understanding of what Simonides said, and so there is the second course which Socrates takes in stride: if no wise man said this, and Simonides is wise, then

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<sup>92</sup> *Resp.* 335e.

this is not what Simonides said. The impossibility of extracting one meaning from poetry is thus brought to its full conclusion. If a poetic maxim appears to have been refuted, its proponent can simply claim that the *refutandum* was not an accurate statement of the poet's meaning, and thereby leave the poet's wisdom beyond question.

Plato has already given us an indication that this is what we ought to see. Socrates said that it was hard not to trust Simonides (οὐ ῥάδιον ἀπιστεῖν) for he is wise and nearly divine (σοφὸς γὰρ καὶ θεῖος ἀνὴρ, 331e). I argue that ἀπιστεῖν must be taken as “disbelieving” rather than “disagreeing,” as it implies a type of mistrust that is more akin to doubt than to disagreement.<sup>93</sup> If challenging Simonides' view amounts to *disbelieving* him, might it be that Polemarchus' adherence to Simonides is a matter of simply *believing* him? Polemarchus' introductory remark introduced the conditional “if Simonides is to be believed” (εἴπερ γέ τι χρὴ Σιμωνίδη πείθεσθαι, 331e), and his use of πείθομαι cuts to the core of the problem. Is Polemarchus suggesting that we should *be persuaded* by Simonides in the same way that we might be persuaded by Socrates, that is, on the strength of his arguments? Or are we supposed to *believe* Simonides as a matter of trust, with an

<sup>93</sup> See n. 71, above.



effective faith (πίστις) in the wisdom of the poet and his poetry?<sup>94</sup>

In the Polemarchus episode, Plato has exposed the weakness of poetic authority in matters of philosophy. First, poetic authority is not derived from a poet's ability to defend his positions in a dialectical cross-examination. The ability of a philosopher to answer questions in defense of his position is of paramount importance to Socrates, as has become evident from even our cursory consideration of the *Phaedrus* and the *Protagoras*. A living conversation partner can answer certain questions about his meaning with reference to his experience (Socrates' preferred proof), but dependence upon a poetic authority does not admit this kind of questioning. Second, whether or not poets are able to contribute something of value to a philosophical discussion, they cannot be discredited by it. It may even become necessary for those who revere their poetic sources to "take up arms" against any who would ascribe base opinions to them. Socrates does not actually believe this, but Polemarchus might. "I am ready to do my part in the battle," he says, though to what degree he has grasped the irony of the situation we cannot tell.<sup>95</sup> Polemarchus came forth at the beginning to wield Simonides' poetry in defense of his father; now he answers Socrates' call to defend Simonides.

94 Shorey (1932) translates "if indeed we are to put any faith in Simonides."

95 *Resp.* 335e.

What, then, has Socrates accomplished? He has at least forced Polemarchus to recognize his lack of any tight propositions about what justice is. He has also suggested that Polemarchus has a weak grasp of the implications of the poetic sentiments he holds close to heart. However there is no evidence that Polemarchus has, as yet, abandoned his belief in the wisdom of the poets. He gives no sign of repenting of the idea that a better understanding of justice might be found in poetry, and Socrates does not press the matter. The call to arms with which the Polemarchus episode comes to a close has nothing to do with the *technai*, nor with listing just actions. It points the reader directly to Polemarchus' belief in poetic authority.

### III. Conclusion

Polemarchus starts out with a some good intuitions about the nature of justice. When pressed, he turns to the poetic authorities he trusts to express this loosely-formed ideas in more concrete propositions. It is my contention that Plato, through Socrates and Polemarchus, demonstrates precisely why poetic appeals of this type are unhelpful in the work of Socratic philosophy. However it would be a mistake to think of the Polemarchus episode as a freestanding parable with its own self-contained lesson. I suggested

at the outset that Polemarchus' discussion with Socrates in Book 1 introduces several ideas that will figure prominently in the remainder of the *Republic*, and a very brief consideration of the most outstanding examples is in order.

Polemarchus invites the first installment of Plato's critique of poetry, which will culminate with Socrates' rejection of poetic imitation (*mimēsis*) in Book 3. I suspect that Socrates' first argument against *mimēsis* contains another iteration of the Polemarchan principle of propriety. It is Socrates' contention throughout the *Republic* that each person can only do one job well, an idea which has its roots in the *technē* analogies Socrates levies against Polemarchus.<sup>96</sup> The would-be imitator cannot be good at representing more than one thing, nor can he actually be good at whatever type of work he is imitating.<sup>97</sup> There is good reason to doubt Socrates' assumptions here, but it is nevertheless an argument based on the constructs of propriety and function brought to the fore in the discussion with Polemarchus.

This paper has dwelt almost exclusively on propriety, but Polemarchus has one other salient intuition: that justice has to do with the allocation of benefit and harm. The *Republic* treats this

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<sup>96</sup> *Resp.* 333b, where Socrates asks which type of craftsman will be the most able to help in certain situations.

<sup>97</sup> *Resp.* 394e-395b.

theme in dozens of places, often in words that closely parallel the formulations Polemarchus himself set forth in Book 1.<sup>98</sup> The one worth pointing out here is the challenge issued by Glaucon and Adeimantus in Book 2 which, as we have seen, inspires the city-building project that dominates the *Republic*. The challenge to Socrates is to prove (in opposition to Thrasymachus) that justice is unqualifiedly beneficial and that injustice is harmful (καὶ ἀδικία βλάπτει).<sup>99</sup> In Book 5, Socrates begins the hypothetical legislative program to establish the constitution of the Kallipolis. He insists that the first *nomoi* (laws), which regulate the lifestyle of the guardians, must be judged on the dual counts of feasibility and benefit to the state.<sup>100</sup> From here, Socrates extrapolates that it is the obligation of the lawgiver in any state to pursue policies which contribute to whatever is the greatest good (μέγιστον ἀγαθόν) and avoid the greatest evil (μέγιστον κακόν), a pair of terms invoked for the first time in the *Republic* by Polemarchus.<sup>101</sup> If Polemarchus was

the first to identify benefit and harm as relevant aspects of justice,

98 E.g. *Resp.* 362b-c, where Glaucon avers that the just man uses his wealth to benefit friends and harm enemies.

99 *Resp.* 367d: τοῦτ' οὖν αὐτὸ ἐπαίνεσον δικαιοσύνης, ὃ αὐτὴ δι' αὐτὴν τὸν ἔχοντα ὀνίνησιν καὶ ἀδικία βλάπτει

100 E.g. *Resp.* 456c (δυνατά γε καὶ βέλτιστα); 457c concerning the equality of male and female guardians (δυνατά τε καὶ ὠφέλιμα); 457d on the abolition of private marriage (καὶ τοῦ δυνατοῦ πέρι καὶ τοῦ ὠφελίμου).

101 *Resp.* 462a. At *Resp.* 332a-b Polemarchus argued that friends owe their friends something good (ἀγαθόν τι) and enemies owe their enemies something bad (κακόν τι).

even his critics must admit that he hit upon a central concern of Plato's.

It remains to be studied precisely how, if at all, Plato meant for us to connect Polemarchus to arguments like these in later books of the *Republic*. The extent of it may be what I have already suggested, that Plato respects and shares Polemarchus' intuitions about justice, and that Socrates' discussion with him anticipates several of Plato's constructive arguments. It is my hope that future readers will at least entertain the idea that Polemarchus is remarkably close to having the right idea. In the end, it may be that he only stands in need of the same things we all require: a provocative teacher, better methods for analysis, and some time to think.

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