To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by John Paul Hampstead entitled "Toward a Material History of Epic Poetry." I have examined the electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in English.

Elizabeth Jane Bellamy
Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Anthony Welch

Thomas J. Heffernan

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges
Vice Provost and Dean
of the Graduate School

Toward a Material History of Epic Poetry

A Thesis Presented for
the Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

John Paul Hampstead
May 2010

Copyright © 2010 by John Paul Hampstead

All rights reserved.

I dedicate my thesis to my parents, Robert Allison Hampstead and Deborah Ann Hampstead, whose wisdom and encouragement shaped me for this work since my childhood, my sister Emily Clarissa Hampstead, whose genius continues to challenge and inspire me, and Ryan Frances Lacey, whose love and constancy let me bear my labor.

Acknowledgments

I am profoundly grateful to my thesis committee for their support and indulgence during this project. Anthony Welch first trained me in the comparative study of epic poetry in his undergraduate lectures on *Paradise Lost*; his graduate course on seventeenth century authorship and authority occasioned a fascinating and timely re-reading of that poem. Tom Heffernan's expertise in Mediterranean antiquity intimidated and instructed me, but it was his yearlong seminar "The History of the English Language," an intellectual odyssey from the evolution of the pharynx to Caribbean pidgins, which gave me the ambition to undertake a project of this scope. Most of all, though, Jane Bellamy's weekly meetings, careful reading, and patient guidance helped me clarify and organize my thinking: without her advice, very little of this project could have been written.

Abstract

Literary histories of specific genres like tragedy or epic typically concern themselves with influence and deviation, tradition and innovation, the genealogical links between authors and the forms they make. Renaissance scholarship is particularly suited to these accounts of generic evolution; we read of the afterlife of Senecan tragedy in English drama, or of the respective influence of Virgil and Lucan on Renaissance epic. My study of epic poetry differs, though: by insisting on the primacy of material conditions, social organization and especially information technology to the production of literature, I present a discontinuous series of set pieces in which any given epic poem—the *Iliad*, the *Aeneid*, or *The Faerie Queene*—is structured more by local circumstances and methods than by authorial responses to distant epic predecessors.

Ultimately I make arguments about how modes of literary production determine the forms of epic poems. Achilleus' contradictory and anachronistic funerary practices in *Iliad* 23, for instance, are symptomatic of the accumulative transcription of disparate oral performances over time, which calls into question what, if any artistic 'unity' might guide scholarly readings of the Homeric texts. While classicists have conventionally opposed Virgil's *Aeneid* to Lucan's *Bellum Civile* on aesthetic and political grounds, I argue that both poets endorse the ethnographic-imperialist ideology '*virtus* at the frontier' under the twin pressures of Julio-Claudian military expansion and the Principate's instrumentalization of Roman intellectual life in its public library system. Finally, my chapter on Renaissance English epic demonstrates how Spenser and Milton grappled with humanist anxieties about the political utility of the classics and the unmanageable archive produced by print culture. It is my hope that this thesis coheres into a narrative of a particularly long-lived genre, the epic, and the mutations and adaptations it underwent in oral, manuscript, and print contexts.

Table of Contents

1. Common Ground: *Themis*, *Polis*, and Orality in *Iliad* 23 1

2. *Virtus* on the Frontier: The *Aeneid*, *Bellum Civile*, and Roman Ethnography 22

3. Managing the Archive: Humanist Memories in *The Faerie Queene* and *Paradise Lost* 44

Works Cited 74

Vita 81

Chapter 1

Common Ground: *Themis*, *Polis*, and Orality in *Iliad* 23

"Peleus' son led the thronging chant of their lamentation,
and laid his manslaughtering hands over the chest of his dear friend:
'Good-bye, Patroklos. I hail you even in the house of the death god.'"
-*Iliad* 23.18-9[1]

In much of the philosophical and aesthetic thought of Western modernity, from the Enlightenment through the 20th century, Homer came to represent an idealized totality, a unified and complete picture of an ancient worldview.[2] Everything happens for a reason; every person has a stable role in society; the order and nature of the cosmos is immanent in every object, occurrence, and action. Classical philology, however, eventually constructed a different story: as the linguistic and archaeological evidence accumulated, scholars separated the Homeric text into various strata and posited theories of multiple authorship, origins, and influences. Homer began to resemble a patchwork quilt of sometimes sloppily assembled bits of myth, legend, and narrative, rather than a formally perfect frieze that preserved a mass of details in a static, organized, and intelligible structure.

Recent critics, operating out of this disenchantment with Homeric unity, have nonetheless attempted to repair the epic's integrity by proposing various narratives that might contain the dissonance, the "noise" of Homer. Specifically, in the final quarter of the *Iliad*, the strangely repetitive yet ineffective forms of mourning Achilleus undergoes in the aftermath of Patroklos' death—antiphonal lamentation, vengeance, sacrifice, and funerary games—have been construed as a narrative of political development, from a maligned origin

[1] I defer to Richard Lattimore's translation of the *Iliad* and follow his spelling of Greek names throughout.
[2] I will draw upon the work produced by the early Georg Lukacs' utopian impulses, Erich Auerbach's dialectical history of representation, and Mikhail Bakhtin's subversive heteroglossia.

in *oikos*-based vengeance to the valorized end of *polis*-based competition. The very structure of the *Iliad*, according to this reading, justifies new political and social arrangements by presenting the *polis*, or something like it, as the definitive solution to the fatal instabilities of archaic Greek sociopolitical life. My reading of Book 23, while engaging the epic's form along similar lines, accounts for its ideological ruptures and anachronistic discontinuities by re-considering its production in a performance tradition of oral-formulaic verse: the oral epic, as the store-house of elite memory and values, piles new changes and developments in its native oral culture onto one another without evaluating their respective merits, even without awareness that any explanation might be necessary. However, my argument does not fully abandon the naïve doctrine of Homeric harmony; by pushing the quest for organic unity back into the *Iliad* itself, I read Achilleus' multiple forms of mourning as strategies aimed at restoring the cultural and ideological "common ground" upon which archaic Greek society was based.

I take a more modest position, then, by not assimilating these discrete episodes into a coherent narrative: I argue instead that precisely by preserving old forms alongside the new *without* comment or preference, the *Iliad* allows its audience to reflect on what has been gained by recent trends toward greater centralization and deliberative decision-making, but also on what has been lost by the abandonment of ancient communal rituals and their inflexible continuities. Beginning with a recapitulation of the 'Homeric harmony' position and an examination of what, if anything, can be salvaged from it, I move to the insights of Parry and Lord's oral-formulaic hypothesis and its main competition, German neoanalysis, illustrating the complex origins of Greek epic in order to dismantle the idea of ideological coherence. My reading of *Iliad 23* follows that initial problematic and comprises most of the chapter, calling upon various anthropological theories of sacrifice and funeral to highlight

the incompatibility of the episodes and disrupt the sociopolitical development narrative favored by recent critics. Ultimately, by reminding ourselves of the friction between these episodes and the irreducible multivalence of the Homeric poems, we will be in a better position to understand the great pains taken by later epic poets like Virgil and Milton to relax these tensions, structure their narratives, and set their cultures in order.

Georg Lukacs, reconsidering his own *Theory of the Novel* in a retrospective preface, characterizes the methodological shortcomings of his earlier work as a product of the times. Disregarding for the moment its contingent motivations and youthful indiscretions, we can nonetheless acknowledge *Theory*'s eloquence and admit its influence, especially in the longevity of Lukacs' nostalgic vision of the "epic world":[3]

> The world is wide and yet it is like a home, for the fire that burns in the soul is of the same essential nature as the stars; the world and the self, the light and the fire, are sharply distinct, yet they never become permanent strangers to one another, for fire is the soul of all light and all fire clothes itself in light…
>
> When the soul does not yet know any abyss within itself which may tempt it to fall or encourage it to discover pathless heights, when the divinity that rules the world and distributes the unknown and unjust gifts of destiny is not yet understood by man, but is familiar and close to him as a father is to his small child, then every action is only a well-fitting garment for the world. Being and destiny, adventure and accomplishment, life and essence are then identical concepts.[4]

Referring to the periods that produced heroic poetry as "the happy ages" and "the integrated civilizations" where aesthetics, metaphysics, and ethics were unified, Lukacs sets the stage for his subsequent discussion of Greek tragedy and philosophy (not to mention his main

---

[3] It is highly significant, of course, that Lukacs makes no mention of epic distance or epic past, but instead imputes the aesthetic qualities of the poetry to the metaphysical 'worldview' of the culture, the "integrated civilization," as he calls it, that produced and performed it.
[4] *ibid.* pp. 29, 30.

course, the ironic, heterogeneous, and disruptive modern novel).[5] Now we will leave Lukacs for a moment to hear from two other proponents of the traditional 'organic unity' position.

Though writing in a different context (Stalinist Russia) and reaching an antithetical conclusion (epic as dead rather than living, chilling rather than animating), Mikhail Bakhtin worked from many of the same philosophical premises as Lukacs and similarly assessed Homeric epic as an all-encompassing, completely coherent totality, albeit describing it in critical, rather than nostalgic terms:

> The individual in the high distanced genres is an individual of the absolute past and of the distanced image. As such he is a fully finished and completed being. This has been accomplished on a lofty heroic level, but what is complete is also something hopelessly ready-made; he is all there, from beginning to end he coincides with himself; he is absolutely equal to himself… All his potential, all his possibilities are realized utterly in his external social position, in the whole of his fate and even in his external appearance; outside of this predetermined fate and predetermined position there is nothing. He has already become everything that he could become, and he could become only that which he has already become.[6]

While this deterministic, even dystopian vision may remind contemporary American readers more of revolutionary, authoritarian communism than ancient Greek society, Bakhtin critiques the rigidity of traditional, patriarchal cultures and opposes the stifling monologism of epic to the free-wheeling carnivalesque modes of 'Rabelaisian' vernacular literature and the dialogic imagination of the modern novel. Still, like Lukacs, Bakhtin identifies a coherent, stable, totalizing worldview free from inconsistency, change, or alternative visions. My own project, which seeks to identify and describe competing modes of orality, or at least

---

[5] Lukacs quotes Novalis' claim that "philosophy is really homesickness," a belated and ill-fated attempt to reconstruct an answer to the question "how can life become essential?" Homeric epic, naturally, represents the answer before the question would or could have been posed, before it needed to be posed. Eric Havelock has described the relationship between Greek epic and philosophy as an antagonism based on the latter's abstracted, reflective relationship to language (because written and permanent), as opposed to the immediacy and transience of oral verse.

[6] Bakhtin, M. M. "Epic and Novel." rpt. *Essentials of the Theory of Fiction.* eds. Michael J. Hoffman and Patrick D. Murphy. Durham: Duke UP, 2005. p. 54.

cognitive experiences in oral culture, recovers a kind of "dialogism" of multiple voices within this supposedly monologic text.

While Lukacs yearned for a lost unity of metaphysics and Bakhtin condemned the tyranny of a unified voice, Erich Auerbach's analysis of the epic in terms of its style comes closest to the descriptions of epic performances witnessed by the Parrys and Albert Lord, and thus it is appropriate that he ends my account of the "organic unity" or "Homeric harmony" position. In his oft-cited analysis of the Homeric digression at the moment when the nurse Eurekleia recognizes Odysseus' scar, Auerbach rejects the prolonging of suspense as a reason for the change of place and time and instead points to the demands of the oral-epic style itself (though his work predates oral-formulaic theory): "the Homeric style knows only a foreground, only a uniformly illuminated, uniformly objective present."[7] He delineates the features of this style, speculating that

> The more original cause must have lain in the basic impulse of the Homeric style: to represent phenomena in a fully externalized form, visible and palpable in all their parts, and completely fixed in their spatial and temporal relations.[8]

The peculiar immanence, the present-ness of the Homeric poems that fascinated Lukacs, Bakhtin, and Auerbach is a product of the oral-formulaic method of composition, as articulated in its original and strictest sense by Milman Parry's student Albert Lord.[9] By continually recalling and redeploying the familiar patterns of old themes—city-sacking, bride theft, departures, returns, assemblies, arming, sacrifices, funerals, catalogues, deaths—the epic singer fills out a narrative with self-contained and internally consistent episodes. The singer fills out the narrative, rather than building it, because the song (of Achilleus' wrath or the return of Menelaus or the sack of Thebes) has certain unchangeable cardinal events: at

[7] Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis*. trans. William R. Trask. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1953. p. 7.
[8] *Ibid.* 6.
[9] Lord, Albert B. *The Singer of Tales*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1964.

the minimum it begins somewhere, for a specific reason, and must end with a pre-determined conclusion.

The art of the epic singer, then, is not found in the creation of novel situations, surprise endings, or suspenseful sequences, but in the manipulation of known elements, the specific way the singer elaborates on the banquet theme, what he chooses to include or exclude, the way he balances certain expansions of some themes against contractions of others. Albert Lord lists the changes and choices Advo Mededovic made in the song "The Wedding of Smailagic Meho" during one performance in July 1935:

> We have seen in this song changes stemming from addition of details and description, expansion by ornamentation, changes in action (such as those concerned with the disguise), that seem to stem from the tension of essentials preserving certain conglomerates or configurations of themes, changes in the order of appearance of the *dramatis personae*, shifting of themes from one place to another, forming new balances and patterns. Yet the story has remained essentially the same; the changes have not been of the kind that distort the tale. If anything, they have enhanced it.[10]

Mededovic chooses to emphasize or de-emphasize certain non-essential elements according to his own poetic temperament, his particular gifts (Lord knew some singers to possess especially spectacular versions of certain themes), and the interests of his audience. When we couple this mode of composition with the nascent alphabetic script in archaic Greece, the swelling of a bride-theft tale into a full-blown *Iliad* seems almost inevitable. In an environment suited to the transcription of songs, oral epics only grow longer: elaborations by various poets are recorded and no longer forgotten.[11] Details and incidents once contingent on the poet's whim are now permanent. Descriptions, catalogues, and divine

---

[10] Lord, *ibid.* p. 105.

[11] Lord maintains that the concept of a transitional poem between oral and literate composition is an absurdity (pp. 156-7), but it seems that the 'fullness' of the Homeric epics, which are so much longer, more varied, and all-explaining than anything found in the South Slavic tradition, is due to precisely this transition.

explanations, each invented by individual poets in specific performances, accrete in the expanding text, eventually producing the effects noticed by Lukacs, Bakhtin, and Auerbach.

Instead of speculating on a hero's individual psychology to create a special dramatic atmosphere, the epic singer puts his character through an especially elaborate version of a typical incident, like arming before battle, which precludes any kind of 'alienation' or separation between subject and environment. As their texts grew larger and more elaborate and detailed explanations of each incident were filled in by successive poets, the Homeric epics took on the almost omniscient aspect that Bakhtin found oppressive. The cognitive demands of oral performance, which allowed the singer to concentrate only on the theme he was narrating at the moment, determined the continuously illuminated present tense that Auerbach noticed. Paradoxically, then, the accumulation of orally-generated material in an evolving text produced both the appearance of a "totality" and the radically disjunctive and inconsistent underlying episodic structure. Not that any single audience listening to a bard's performance of a tale from the Epic Cycle would have found the experience 'disjunctive': it is only in the conversion of the epics from orality to textuality, the side-by-side presentation of separate performances, and the abstracted relationship literate people have to language that the ruptures appear.

Oral-formulaic theory allows the literary critic to imagine how a poet working in the Greek heroic tradition might have composed his verse, and it goes a long way toward explaining the seemingly alien aesthetic of the Homeric poems. In fact, the theory revolutionized Homeric studies, and stopped the German analysts in their tracks, who were working from the assumption that the poems were composed piece-meal by a series of scribes, and who had dedicated themselves to sifting through the textual layers like archaeologists. In response to Lord's model, a younger generation of scholars created a new

methodology they called neoanalysis, which focused on the relationships between the Homeric poems and the other lost works from the Trojan Cycle summarized by Proclus. Like Lord's original articulation of oral-formulaic theory, neoanalysis presumes a single author and attempts to describe the extent of his borrowing, adaptation, and invention of motifs from the other poems.[12] Recent neoanalysts have sensibly abandoned the single-author position, and evidence continues to mount that the Greek epics had an exceedingly complex origin: Indo-European praise poetry, heroes from the Mycenaean period, a gradually expanding reservoir of place names, an Aeolic phase that imported dialectal features from Asia Minor and preceded the flowering of the Ionic phase, an eventual concentration of activity in Thessaly, and a treatment of the pantheon derived from Near Eastern sources have all played roles in the evolution of Greek epic.[13] Far from representing a coherent totality, the Homeric texts contain a variety of materials produced by an array of local contexts separated temporally and spatially. Because Book 23 depicts an important funeral, it serves as a locus for divergent materials to gather themselves; funerals are everywhere the same and everywhere different, and each variation jostles against the next. In this spirit, attuned to the conflicts and rifts within the text, we can begin to read of Patroklos' death and of Achilleus' wrath.

Having torn through the ranks of the Trojans to find Hektor and kill him, avenging his comrade, Achilleus finally allows himself to bury Patroklos, though his *menis* cannot be sated. The epithet used to describe Achilleus' hands, "manslaughtering" (*androphonos*; the Loeb edition shows "man-slaying"), carries a grim irony when we consider it in context: a

---

[12] The standard comprehensive overview of the German sources remains M. E. Clark's "Neoanalysis: A Bibliographical Review." *The Classical World*, 79.6 (July-August 1986), pp. 379-94.

[13] West, M. L. "The Rise of Greek Epic." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 108 (1988), pp. 151-72.

word normally used to denote the prowess of a warrior or the utility of a weapon appears at a funeral. Achilleus' hands are no longer being used for man-slaying, but for a mournful embrace. In a sense, *androphonos* suggests both the cause of Patroklos' death (remember that he was killed while wearing the armor of Achilleus) and the aftermath: more man-slaughter in a continuous cycle of vengeance and blood-feuding. With Hektor dead, Achilleus now knows that his own death is imminent, but his wrath demands more slaughter: sheep and cattle will be burnt on Patroklos' pyre, but also horses, dogs, and young Trojan captives, a particularly destructive instance of the funerary rite, unique in Homer.[14]

Yet if Achilleus's grief and wrath are excessive to the point of alienating him from the Achaian community and filling his mind with evil thoughts (his cannibalistic impulse at Hektor's dying side, for one),[15] Book 23 presents another Achilleus, strikingly different from the warrior who purges his grief through bloodshed. The funerary games, which include chariot racing, archery, boxing, a footrace, and wrestling, are overseen by a calm, even magnanimous Achilleus, who encourages the Argives to compete for honor in commemoration of Patroklos. Achilleus takes pains to ensure fair play, as when he makes Phoinix a judge at the chariot race "to mark and remember the running and bring back a true story,"[16] and insists that Aias and Idomeneus cease their trivial squabbling before it escalates. Committed to a kind of distributive justice that contrasts favorably with Agamemnon's autocracy,[17] Achilleus strives to honor merit while minimizing jealousy and rewards good

---

[14] Richardson, Nicholas. *The Iliad: a commentary*, vol. 6. New York: Cambridge UP, 1993. p. 188. "The poet, it seems, is trying to portray a funeral of a special kind, and the excesses of destruction in which Akhilleus indulges are above all a demonstration of his intense grief at Patroklos' loss" (189).

[15] *Il.* 22.345-8.

[16] *Il.* 23.361.

[17] The most obvious point of contrast between the two styles of leadership occurs when Achilleus satisfies Agamemnon with an unfired cauldron worth an ox at 23.890-4 although

counsel even among non-competitors (Nestor). The son of Peleus, the most violent man in the world, "finds himself in a politics born of contending (and not easily resolvable) interests in which decisions give rise to new problems,"[18] to which he easily adapts, if only for the time being.

So, two versions of Achilleus: one driven into a frenzy by grief and rage who takes his only solace in a cathartic destruction; the other a savvy leader who unites his community in ways that flawed Agamemnon cannot. How can these two aspects be reconciled? In the Homeric text itself, the abrupt transition from mourning to celebration comes without warning or explanation:

> …then [they] laid out the tomb and cast down the holding walls
> around the funeral pyre, then heaped the loose earth over them
> and piled the tomb, and turned to go away. But Achilleus
> held the people there, and made them sit down in a wide assembly,
> and brought prizes for games out of his ships, cauldrons and tripods…[19]

Even the Danaans do not expect funerary games from Achilleus, it seems. Critics have approached the reconciliation of the Greek camp from a number of angles, first through the social reintegration at the heart of death rituals. Comparativists Emile Durkheim and Georges Dumezil explored the mythological and anthropological basis of funerary rites, including public lamentation and animal sacrifice. Following this tack, we might read the excessive destruction at Patroklos' funeral as a collective aggressive reflex by the burying

---

he was a non-competitor, compared with Agamemnon's petulance in the fateful quarrel over Briseis "of the fair cheeks" in Book 1.

[18] Hammer, Dean. *The* Iliad *as Politics: The Performance of Political Thought*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002. p. 142. Hammer's study eschews the debate over whether Homer is 'political' or 'pre-political,' insofar as Homeric society depicts the institution of the *polis*, by re-framing 'the political' as "processes of public decision-making regarding the organization of community life."

[19] *Il.* 23.255-9.

group against external threats, that is, in the face of a socially disruptive death, the stricken group lashes out to demonstrate its undaunted aggression and undiminished unity.[20] Meanwhile, we can interpret the funerary games as an opportunity for Achilleus to distribute symbolic capital to the survivors as they both uphold the traditional social order and pursue minor realignments in status and alliance.

This anthropological course of investigation, focusing on the destruction-reconciliation dynamic in death ritual, has been refined into a sociopolitical narrative about cultural change at the end of Dark Age Greece. Scholars have taken the "wide assembly," or *eurun agona*, in which the Greeks assemble as a kind of *polis*, or public political institution, as opposed to the *oikoi* or extended households which had constituted the primary 'political' (if the anachronism be tolerated) institution. In this reading, as articulated by Hammer and others, the older, violent, kinship based death rituals characterized by vengeance and antiphonal grieving are found wanting and replaced by athletic competition in a public, discursive sphere. Funerary games become the basis of the hero cults around which the *polis* coheres. Scholars of this bent see the Homeric poet(s) justifying the emerging *polis* as opposed to the older structures based on the wealth and charisma of the *basileus*. Unfortunately, this model, while it provides a compelling account of the epic's adaptation to cultural change, leaves some questions answered.[21]

---

[20] Seaford, Richard. *Reciprocity and Ritual: Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City State*. New York: Oxford UP, 1994. pp. 86-92. Seaford cites Durkheim, Malinowski, Burkert, and Girard on "aggressive funerals."

[21] Namely: if the funerary games, as the basis of a hero cult of Patroklos, truly reintegrate the Greek community, then why is Achilleus still isolated and grieving when Priam visits in Book 24? Does Achilleus' attempt to strip Antilochus of his prize recall Agamemnon's abuses in Book 1? It has been suggested on the bases of linguistic evidence and internal coherence that the games are a later interpolation, sandwiched by older, more 'primitive' forms of grieving and death ritual; this remains consistent with the polemic, pro-*polis* reading of the funerary games and subsequent hero cult. It is unnecessary to view this 'interpolation' as a textual process; an earlier version of the *Iliad* might have contained the germ of the games, which

Noting that by its very nature the epic strives to comprehend and reproduce the entirety of its native culture while maintaining a unity of religion, politics, and aesthetics, I propose to read the disjunction between the respective moods of the sacrifices and games (or ritual and *polis*) as a contest between two opposed oral cultures. In addition to the political ramifications of the emergence of the *polis* and a Panhellenic culture at the end of the Dark Ages, we can also detect a difference in public, communal oral culture. On the one hand, we have the inflexible, repetitive, ritual-bound wailing and lamentation of the *androphonos* death ritual, and on the other, the discursive, deliberative reasoning that decides what is best for the community in the *eurun agona*. To the extent that the oral epic tries to manage its native verbal culture, it must weigh these modes of orality, one ancient, the other emerging, against one another. Ultimately I will argue that while the centralization and new politics of the *polis* offered Dark Age Greeks increased stability and a more finely-tuned sense of justice, it sacrificed the communal experience of ritual and the traditional authority of *themis*, "that which is put in place," or customs, mores, right ritual.[22] Even as the *polis* created new institutions for the community to gather around, such as athletic competitions and hero cults, the discursive, rational politics revealed "common cause" to be an illusion: the new political field is composed of competing parties arguing for their own interests.

To say that the received *Iliad* 'prefers' or favors one mode of communal experience and social organization over the other distorts the text in several ways. First, the sociopolitical development thesis offers up terms for comparison which the *Iliad* does not actually compare; the text itself presents the stages of Achilleus' mourning—immediate

---

were then expanded by a later bard who wanted to use them to make a point about public ethics, distribution, and reconciliation.

[22] This is also related to the development of literacy and the appropriate role of epic poetry (didactic or 'merely' aesthetic?). Havelock argues that Plato rejects the didactic oral poetry in favor of literate philosophy; I am arguing that this debate can be seen taking place even earlier, within the Homeric texts themselves.

vengeance, sacrifice, and games—adjacent to one another, connected in a seemingly logical temporal sequence, without explicitly evaluating their respective merits. Secondly, the progression narrative locates the solution to the problem—Achilleus' alienation from his community due to his excessive *menis*—at the games, though later, in Book 24, Achilleus, possessed by "standing fury," attempts to desecrate Hektor's body (which is preserved by Zeus) and apparently still mourns in his hut while Priam pays him supplication.[23] The political development hypothesis ultimately superimposes its own teleological structure onto the painfully slow, strangely disjunctive process of Achilleus' reconciliation that occupies the last fourth of the *Iliad* and does not actually conclude until Achilleus' death.[24]

Rather than a moral evaluation of political structures or even a coherent movement toward death, Achilleus' mourning takes multiple, anachronistic, and even contradictory forms: it is as if Achilleus repeatedly and unsuccessfully attempts several forms of a mourning process: vengeance, sacrifice, and the games. In order to uncover the inconsistencies and contradictions that undermine the neat developmental narrative proposed by Hammer, we must examine each form in its turn, considering several possible interpretations and weighing them against one another.

The first form of mourning is wailing, lamentation, and vengeance, and the *Iliad*'s description of the ritualized laments roughly corresponds to other historical and archaeological evidence, though in a confused order: there are ashes, the cutting of hair, Trojan women forced to wail answered by Achilleus and Antilochus (who is "on the other

---

[23] *Il.* 24.1-22.

[24] Thetis links the death of Hektor to Achilleus' own death at 18.94-6, and following the logic of this prophecy, Achilleus can never truly rejoin the Achaians and can only join Patroklos in death. To the extent that the archetypal mourner, covered in ash and sometimes self-mutilated, presents himself as a being neither fully living nor dead, but in between states so as to assist the deceased in his journey, Achilleus never stops mourning until he too enters the land of the dead.

side," implying the customary antiphonal arrangement), and more intense mourning by Patroklos' closest kin relations, Achilleus and Thetis. This excessive, passionate, even frenzied emotional display eventually provokes a violent outburst: the collective lamentations assert the survivor's connections and duties to one another and the dead and fan the flames of *menis*. Indeed, in archaic Greek society, the women's performance of sorrow urged the mourning men on toward vengeance. According to Margaret Alexiou, Solon strictly regulated lamentation in the 6th century precisely in order to tamp down blood feuding and extra-legal vengeance:

> Although the act itself rested with the men, unless there was no male survivor, the women maintained the consciousness for the need to take revenge by constant lamentation and invocation at the tomb… The restrictions imposed on women in funeral ritual might well have been designed to end internecine strife between clans by removing the responsibility for punishment in cases of homicide from clan to state...[25]

Alexiou brilliantly uncovers the relation between the interior affect of grief, its exterior appearance as lamentation, and the social obligations of retaliatory vengeance, integrating them all into a deterministic cycle that supersedes the state's claims to authority and justice.

Emile Durkheim, after considering the variety of 'piacular' or death rites among Australian aborigines and other groups, famously concluded in 1912: "One initial fact remains constant: Mourning is not the spontaneous expression of individual emotions."[26] Subsequent anthropologists followed Durkheim's line and investigated mourning as a social process, a relationship between the living rather than between the living and the dead. Malinowski began by identifying the initial, contradictory emotional responses to death, horror of the corpse and love of the deceased, and used them to interpret practices ranging

---

[25] Alexiou, Margaret. *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*. 2nd ed., rev. Dimitrios Yatromanolakis and Panagiotis Roilos. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002. p. 22.
[26] Durkeim, Emile. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. trans. Karen E. Fields. New York: The Free Press, 1995. p. 400.

from mummification to cremation.[27] In his functionalist framework, the death ritual and its attendant doctrine of immortality allow the survivors to overcome distress:

> … in all this religion counteracts the centrifugal forces of fear, dismay, demoralization, and provides the most powerful means of reintegration of the group's shaken solidarity and of the re-establishment of its morale.[28]

The funeral ritual, in Malinowski's view, is a solution to an existential crisis, and it occurs from necessity; the continuity of tradition, the common ground on which communities depend would be impossible without it. Mourning is a social process conditioned by kinship and loyalty ties that counteracts the disintegrative, disruptive effects of death; many of the mourners are more-or-less 'performing' their loyalties and relationships, committing to them again, rather than expressing 'genuine' grief.

If mourning must be done from necessity, as Malinowski believed, then the lamentations' connection with vengeance operates under a similarly ineluctable logic: to let the death of a kinsman go unavenged is to deny kinship itself. Within a society dominated by the loyalties owed to the *oikos* (household) and the *genus* ("clan"), such a denial is unthinkable. The killing spree Achilleus embarks on following the ritual lamentation should be understood according to this automatic and unquestionable retaliatory vengeance. The piercing wails and conventional laments of the women and kinfolk, therefore, arise from necessity and are subject to the same unyielding, time-honored demands of *themis*, "that which is done," as the act of vengeance.

---

[27] The horror at the natural processes of decay explains several aspects of Achilleus' behavior, including his concern that the body of Patroklos be protected while he seeks vengeance, his desecration of Hektor's body, the distinction between unclean clotted blood and pure flowing blood, and the words he uses when ordering the Greeks to build the pyre: "so that with more speed the unwearying fire may burn him / away from our eyes, and the people turn back to that which they must do" (*Il.* 23.52-3).

[28] Malinowski, Bronislaw. *Magic, Science, and Religion.* New York: Doubleday, 1954. p. 53.

Murder begats murder begats murder: Rene Girard called vengeance "the interminable, infinitely repetitive process" that spreads like a contagion and tears communities apart.[29] Living in terror of the uncontrollable violence and bloodshed released by cycles of vengeance, people instituted sacrificial rites to deflect their aggression onto a substitute victim. For Girard, the purpose of sacrifice is to redirect the automatic, inflexible violence demanded by vengeance into its proper channel, a kind of preventative violence. This hypothesis of substitution accords with some details in Patroklos' funeral; recall that Achilleus' spectacularly destructive display, which included the sacrifice of twelve Trojan youths, was apparently motivated by his extreme *menis*, "for my anger over your slaying."[30] But if sacrifice is supposed to quell the bloodthirsty impulses that motivate vengeance, Achilleus' sacrifice comes too late: Hektor has already been slaughtered.

Other points in the funeral narrative suggest an alternate reason for the sacrifice, namely, that the deceased soul demands respect. Durkheim regarded this explanation, invariably offered by the aborigines he interviewed, as a naïve superstition that obscured the relations between the living survivors participating in the funeral.[31] The idea of obligation to the dead resonated with archaic Greeks just as it did with early 20th century aborigines, though—the ghost of Patroklos demands that Achilleus commence the sacrifice while appearing to him in a dream; Achilleus reciprocates this relationship between the living and the dead by making specific promises to Patroklos regarding the details of the sacrifice. The traffic of obligation, honor, blame, blessing, and curse between the living and the dead

---

[29] Girard, Rene. *Violence and the Sacred.* trans. Patrick Gregory. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1972. p. 14.
[30] *Il.* 23.23.
[31] Tellingly, Girard regarded the ignorance of the true nature of sacrifice as crucial to its efficacy. Rather than the god or the dead demanding blood, instead the transcendent, uncontrollable lust for violence that lurks at the boundary of community requires satisfaction and the theology of the sacrificial animal merely insulates man from man.

during the funeral rite (which itself represents the transformation from living to dead) suggests the classification and manipulation of categories of being systematically enumerated by Claude Levi-Strauss in *The Savage Mind*. The living transform an object from the ordinary to the sacred through ritualized lustrations, isolation, and other methods, and finally destroy it in an act of communion (generally the animals sacrificed to the sacred are at least partially eaten in a feast) with the deity, the dead, or other sacred entities.[32]

We know that Achilleus cannot achieve true communion with Patroklos until he too dies by the walls of Troy; if they are meant to bridge the gap between the living and the dead, Achilleus' sacrifices do not complete their work. As we have seen, each model of the relationship between funerary ritual, vengeance, and sacrifice proposed by anthropologists and based on data from extant cultures fails to account for the disjunctures and contradictory details in the *Iliad*. Malinowski explains the general necessity of the unified, violent response to the existential crisis of death, but the repetition of mourning in multiple forms implies that the rituals may be broken; Girard's model is best applied to the anger that motivates the sacrifices but cannot make sense of the inclusion of *both* the pursuit of vengeance and the sacrifice; Levi-Strauss charts the connections between the living and the

---

[32] Levi-Strauss, Claude. *The Savage Mind*. trans. George Weidenfeld. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966. pp. 223-8. Levi-Strauss's account of the transformation from living to dead suggests the foundations of hero cults: "these rites assure the conversion of men who are no longer living men into ancestors" (237). Walter Burkert's work in *Homo Necans* (trans. Peter Bing. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), on the other hand, associates sacrifice and funerary ritual with initiation rites, and so instead of emphasizing the production of ancestors, he attends to the transformations undergone by the survivors:

> We see here how deeply sacrificial and funerary ritual permeated one another. By joining together to honor the dead, the survivors, and especially the young, would have been initiated, integrated into the continuity of the society, and educated in the tradition all at once. The rituals of sacrifice, funeral, and initiation are so closely related that they can be interpreted through the same myths and may even partially overlap. The myth tells of death and destruction, while in sacrifice an animal is killed. By encountering death symbolized in word and ritual, succeeding generations are molded into successors. In this way society is consolidated and renewed (56).

dead implicit in Patroklos' ghost's demands, although Achilleus' sacrifices do not bring about communion. The proliferation of contradictory detail and multiple forms, apparently without the awareness or commentary of the narrative voice, should be understood as a result of the epic's "storage function," its tendency toward the preservation and accumulation of information over time: the contradictions and inconsistencies indicate the piling-up of cultural changes.[33] On the other hand, the inclusion of various forms of mourning for Patroklos might simplify signify, by means of the encyclopedic cataloguing of known practices, a particularly special, elaborate process, fit for a hero.

Certainly, then, it is folly to attempt to identify a single ideology of mourning in the *Iliad* that underlies both Achilleus' vengeful killing spree and his later sacrifices (while deferring the games until later). It is possible, though, to understand both practices as similar cognitive experiences within an oral culture: both the lamentation and sacrificial ceremonies are forms inherited from the ancestors and prescribed by the dead that are unquestionable by the living. The symmetrical relationship between Patroklos' demands and Achilleus' promises represents an unbreakable continuity from generation to generation that embodies *themis*, the unchallenged mores and customs comprising "that which is done." The community assimilates the individual into a hierarchical structure; each single mourner's voice dissolves into a wailing chorus; ghosts cannot be argued with. Above all, necessity and unity characterize the lamentations and sacrifices.

The deliberative revision of *themis* and the successive challenges issued to Agamemnon's autocratic rule manifest themselves most completely in the funerary games inexplicably following the sacrifice, where player is divided against player in competition for honor and treasure. The mysterious, transcendent common ground of right ritual is laid bare

---

[33] Havelock, Eric. *The Muse Learns to Write*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1986. pp. 54-62.

as a public space, an arena for political conflict within the community. Levi-Strauss's analysis of the funerary rites of the Fox Indians may be instructive here:

> Games thus appear to have a *disjunctive* effect; they end in the establishment of a difference between individual players or teams where originally there was no indication of inequality. And at the end of the game they are distinguished into winners and losers. Ritual, on the other hand, is the exact inverse; it *conjoins*, for it brings about a union (one might even say communion in this context) or in any case an organic relation between two initially separate groups, one ideally merging with the person of the officiant and the other with the collectivity of the faithful.[34]

As Patroklos' funeral games begin with chariot racing, the pitting of player against player and the measuring of merit immediately leads to conflict: Idomeneus and Aias, straining to see whose horses lead the pack, begin insulting each other's eyesight. Achilleus, out of character, ends their quarrel by counseling tranquility and patience.[35] Another series of disputes arises during the distribution of the prizes following the chariot race: the best horseman, Eumelos, has his chariot destroyed by Antilochos' reckless driving and finishes last, but Achilleus wants to give him the second-place prize. Other tensions bubble up in subsequent games, notably during the deadlocked wrestling match between Odysseus and Aias that prefigures their final, fatal dispute (and suggests that the "political" truces hashed out in the games are temporary, contingent, and fragile). The games' competitive arena, by its very nature, tends to expose latent rivalries and formalize conflict instead of encouraging reconciliation.

Scholars who find the emergent *polis* in the *eurun agona* emphasize how competing claims are balanced in the quest for justice, and have described a cognitive shift in social relations.[36] As Dean Hammer put it,

---

[34] Levi-Strauss, *ibid*, p. 32.
[35] *Il.* 23.492-8.
[36] cf. Vincent Farenga's study of grief and pity in "Narrative and Community in Dark Age Greece: A Cognitive and Communicative Approach to Early Greek Citizenship." *Arethusa* 31 (1998), pp. 179-206.

> Achilles must be able to recognize, and in turn respond to, claims made by others. Within this political field, as constituted by others, we arrive at the answer to Achilles' question of who shall readily obey. Ready obedience derives from the recognition by leaders that they act in a space constituted by others.[37]

The accommodation of others' claims checks the coercive power of the *basileus* whose authority can now only be justified to the extent that he pursues some kind of fairness. Inevitably, scholars who address this question valorize the ethical and political 'progress' made by this shift, which preceded the establishment of systems of governance and concepts of citizenship. Concomitant with the opening up of the political field populated by 'others,' though, is the loss of community, unity, and identity represented by the inviolable dictates of *themis*, a devastating loss to a culture dedicated to reproducing its aristocratic warrior values through traditional, didactic oral poetry. "That which is done" can no longer be collectively assumed by the members of the community, but instead becomes a matter for debate.

The disintegration of the unified sacrificial community into a new field of political actors would have seemed threatening to epic poets because it implied a challenge to the traditional ways of doing things praised in epic, but also because it represented a mode of orality (improvisational deliberation) incompatible with epic itself (the recitation of wisdom received from ancestors). Since the Homeric epics are more-or-less oral poems committed to text, they do not comment or reflect on this disintegration and simply record it alongside everything else, resulting in the jarring, disjunctive texture previously noted.

An ecological, Darwinian metaphor might clarify the subsequent literary history of epic: we can think of the epic genre as an organism, whose niche or 'job' is to reproduce aristocratic warrior values by assembling and re-organizing materials from its linguistic environment, whether the environment is made up of oral traditions, historical manuscripts, or printed

---

[37] Hammer, *ibid*, 142-3.

astronomical treatises. Major advances in publication technology like alphabetic writing and moveable type rapidly alter the epic's linguistic environment; along with increases in the volume and complexity of the materials the epic must assimilate, technological advances are linked to changes in the cognitive and even metaphysical relationships people have to language. Each technological advance shocks the epic's system, and the epic must adapt to its new environment. The transcription of oral epic created ruptures and incoherence and impeded its ability to transmit a unified system of values; later literate poets invented increasingly sophisticated methods of unifying ever-diversifying manuscript cultures in their search for common ground.

Chapter 2

Virtus on the Frontier: The *Aeneid*, *Bellum Civile*, and Roman Ethnography

Although Tacitus could write in his dialogue on oratory that "the adornment of the poet is demanded nowadays also in the orator... fresh from the sacred shrine of a Horace, a Virgil, a Lucan,"[38] Virgil and Lucan have since grown further apart in critical estimation, in both ideological and aesthetic terms. By the late 20th century, critics would read Lucan as a nihilistic, deconstructive, anti-imperialist anti-Virgil whose poem "desecrates" Roman history and identity. This chapter brings the *Aeneid* and *Bellum Civile* back into a common conversation about Roman national identity by examining how both poems rely on ethnographic discourse to articulate Roman *virtus*. I discuss '*virtus* on the frontier' in four major episodes: Aeneas at Evander's hut, the triumph of Augustus on Aeneas' shield, Lucan's echo of the first of those scenes with Caesar at Amyclas' hut, and Cato's resolute *virtus* at the Sahara. Quotations from Caesar's *Gallic War* and Tacitus' *Agricola* and *Germania* illuminate the poetry, revealing how the epic poets structure the performance of *virtus* according to models from the instrumentalized, Julio-Claudian imperial ethnography.

Two primary material conditions under the Julio-Claudian regimes serve as the foundation of Roman ethnographic discourse: Rome's ongoing expansion into and transformation of barbarian Gaul and Germania, and the Principate's establishment of a centralized public library and education system. These material conditions allowed a long-running public conversation about Roman identity to take place in the context of barbarian encounters; both Virgil and Lucan deployed ethnographic strategies to articulate Roman *virtus* and can be profitably read as participating in a common project rather than being fundamentally opposed. Essentially, I present an argument about how the material contexts

[38] *Dialogus*, 20.

of Roman intellectual life—expansion, centralization, and the subsequent purposeful ethnography—influenced the form of their epics, from Aeneas' resemblance to a provincial administrator to the civic dignity of Cato's march to the ends of the earth.

I. Reception of Virgil and Lucan

While many ancient Roman sources praise Virgil and Lucan in the same breath, without hesitation or awareness of any contradiction, the history of their subsequent joint reception has been a narrative of increasing opposition. David Quint's *Epic and Empire* is a masterful study of the two rival traditions that Virgil and Lucan founded in epic literary history: Virgil's teleological, divinely-justified narrative legitimizes Augustan rule and is subsequently adapted for imperial ends by later poets; Lucan's episodic, bitter "losers' epic" entertains counterfactual desires and is repeatedly resurrected by Republican or 'anti-authoritarian' poets.[39] The Virgilian/Lucanian opposition, while certainly well-developed in literary history, has been taken even further by 20th century classicists.

Frederick Ahl's *Lucan: An Introduction* modestly claims that Lucan only tries to disentangle the ideology of Caesarism from the Roman ideal and historical necessity, but in 1987 John Henderson and WR Johnson published deconstructive interpretations that stressed the poets' dissimilarity to an even greater degree. Johnson's *Momentary Monsters* depicts a Lucan of destabilized centers who mocks rational order and whose heroes or 'great men' are only "momentary monsters, brief, ironic patterns glimpsed in the wild kaleidoscope of history" (19). Henderson's oft-cited article "The Word At War" is witty, energetic, and often eccentric, coining words like "deathstiny" and "Caesarsuccess seizure": Henderson's

[39] *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form From Virgil to Milton.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1993.

Lucan reads "civilization [as] just an orgiastic procession of self-mutilation, built on the self-falsifying logic of war" (169).[40]

Much of the contemporary work on Lucan still operates in the anti-Virgilian paradigm: Sklenar rejects the Republican, Stoic Lucan for an anarchic nihilist[41]; Monica Matthews' philological commentary on *Bellum Civile*, Book 5, reads irony and subversion into every Virgilian allusion, in the traditional manner.[42] There are, however, critics who have challenged this simplified oppositional model, which may be reaching the point of exhaustion: Vasily Rudich reads Lucan's extravagant texture as symptomatic of an encoded 'acting-out' under an authoritarian censorship[43]; more recently, Charles Martindale has claimed that we should read Lucan as writing for a prevailing taste, a 'decadent' (though he thinks this word is empty) Neronian aesthetic, and resist the temptation to import any kind of progressive politics or earnest ideological commitment into his poetry.[44]

My own project emerges from a desire to read these Roman epics in a way that escapes this over-determined opposition constructed by poets and scholars. By placing Virgil and Lucan in the material context of imperial territorial expansion and cultural centralization (i.e., public libraries, art, architecture), and by reading them alongside an imperialist ethnographic tradition from Caesar's *Gallic War* to Tacitus' *Germania*, I demonstrate how both poems incorporate ethnographic thought in their accounts of Roman *virtus*. Barbarians are not simply the unknowable 'other' in Roman ethnography: they serve as complex screens

---

[40] Ahl, Frederick. *Lucan: An Introduction*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1976; Johnson, W. R. *Momentary Monsters: Lucan and his Heroes*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1987; Henderson, John. "Lucan/the Word at War." *Ramus* 16 (1987), pp. 122-64.

[41] Sklenar, R. *The Taste for Nothingness: A Study of* Virtus *and Related Themes in Lucan's* Bellum Civile. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2003.

[42] *Caesar and the Storm: A commentary on Lucan,* De bello civili, lines 476-721. New York: Peter Lang, 2008.

[43] *Dissidence and Literature under Nero: The Price of Rhetorization.* New York: Routledge, 1997.

[44] *Latin Poetry and the Judgment of Taste*. New York: Oxford UP, 2005. pp. 217-36.

for the projection of Roman desires and anxieties; moreover, there is a sense in both Virgil and Lucan that Roman *virtus* is expressed in its proper form at the frontier, in interactions with barbarians, precisely at the site of 'empire,' so that the articulation of *virtus* is intimately bound up with ethnographic thought (which, to me, is an inherently imperialist approach).

II. The Materiality of Ethnography: Expansion, Transformation, Centralization

As Rome's empire grew more cumbersome and exacerbated the severity of demographic and economic crises, the Senate was increasingly viewed as unwieldy, inefficient, and corrupt, and its traditional authority was eventually seized by an alliance of warlord-generals. Julius Caesar finally emerged from civil war as Dictator, but his public works projects were left unfinished at the time of his assassination; his successors in the Julio-Claudian dynasty simultaneously solidified their grasp on Roman cultural-political life and Rome's grasp on the barbarian world. The continuous march of imperialist expansion northward into Gaul and eastward toward the Rhine and Danube demanded a complex flow of raw materials, tax revenues, and manpower that transformed the interior of Italy, the frontier provinces, and the barbarians 'beyond the pale' with whom Rome traded. Meanwhile, as the Senate's influence waned, intellectual activity shifted from private, aristocratic collections in rural villas to centralized public libraries and publicly subsidized architecture and literary competitions in Rome's urban center.

Barry Cunliffe has provided a dynamic model of imperial economic activity in the Romano-barbarian world based on a core-periphery model with multiple tiers. Urban Rome, as the inner core, voraciously consumed tax revenue and unfinished goods, which were mostly produced in the 'inner periphery,' i.e., the stable Romanized provinces comprising most of the empire. So taxes and goods flowed inward to Rome from the provinces, and soldiers (and the cash that supported them) flowed outward from the provinces toward the

'outer periphery,' i.e., the frontiers. Meanwhile, even further from Rome, the beyond-frontier zone controlled by barbarian chiefdoms was transformed by the flow of slaves toward Rome and luxury goods in the form of gifts from Rome (which had the effect of intensifying economic stratification and coercive power among the barbarians). During the Julio-Claudian period, the frontier zone was constantly pushed away from Rome under a host of demographic and economic pressures.[45]

The importance of Cunliffe's model to my study is its insistence on the interdependence and mutual transformation of the Roman and barbarian worlds as a complicated, dynamic process, rather than a dichotomy of 'Roman' and 'other.' Cunliffe shows us how the Roman experience, even in the urban center, was structured by interactions with the barbarian world, and how completely they interpenetrated each other. This entwining, in turn, conditions how epic poets thought about the practice of Roman *virtus* on the frontier.

The centralization of Roman intellectual life under imperial control occurred in parallel to this territorial expansion. Elizabeth Rawson claims that early in the first century BC, Roman intellectual activity was in a period of "incomplete specialization" and was decidedly *not* institutionalized: there were no centers for higher learning, no public libraries, and no public salaries for teachers, doctors, or engineers as there had been in Athens. "The chief libraries were in the palaces and villas of the great nobles" and the contents were often "the spoils of the East."[46] In a basic way, this lack can be explained by the Roman view that intellectual pursuits belonged to *otium* (leisure) rather than *negotia* (care of property, clients, advancement). Intellectual life was hampered by the scattered, rural collections and the

---

[45] *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians: Spheres of Interaction.* London: Batsford, 1988.
[46] *Intellectual Life in the late Roman Republic.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985. p. 39.

scarcity of good copyists: Romans of means relied on their own scribes and secretaries to produce copies rather than booksellers, and at one point in his *De Lingua Latina*, Varro breaks off a technical discussion because he knew the copyists' shoddy work would not reproduce it accurately (43).

Rawson's study does not include the Julio-Claudian period, though she notes

> ...the most famous collections seem to be outside the city. One would think it inconvenient to have them scattered through Latium and Compania; the pattern of intellectual life must have altered considerably when with Pollio and soon Augustus, the great public institutions in the Atrium Libertatis, and then on the Palatine and in the Temple of Pax, were set up (42).

Lionel Casson fills in many of the gaps by recounting the development of library technology, their holdings, staffing, and patrons. We know for certain that Caesar planned to build Rome's first public library, which was completed under Augustus. After that, numerous archives were built on the Palatine Hill or near the Forum, in the urban center of Rome's imperial architectural activity. Libraries in the Atrium Libertatis, Templum Apollinis, Porticus Octaviae, Templi Augusti, and Domus Tiberianae were all completed during the Julio-Claudian period; we know from a grave monument that Tiberius had centralized the public library system under one director, styled the *procurator bibliothecarum*. The libraries were large, each containing tens of thousands of rolls, separated into Greek and Latin sections, generously staffed by specialized scribe-slaves, and equipped with reading rooms for work and study.[47] The 'public' libraries still served an educated, elite audience, but their collections and the readings they hosted allowed the Principate to sanction Roman intellectual activity.[48]

---

[47] *Libraries in the Ancient World*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2001. Remember Rawson notes that with imperial patronage came imperial censorship: Ovid's erotic works were banned from the public libraries, as was Caesar's verse *juvenilia*.

[48] Dix, T. Keith. "'Public Libraries' in Ancient Rome: Ideology and Reality." *Libraries and Culture*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (Summer, 1994), pp. 282-96.

I would also argue that as Roman intellectual activity moved from aristocratic, rural *otium* to public, urban institutions, it also became purposeful, or instrumentalized according to imperial needs, *especially* ethnography.[49] This shift from philosophical withdrawal to public service reveals how, for instance, with Cato's civic-minded march into the Sahara, Lucan rejected Senecan "escapism."[50] Emma Dench claims that

> It is in the context of a growing self-consciousness about imperial rule that we should see Roman interest in building up traditions about what it 'really' meant to be Roman: all the true values of civilization, but also distinctive moral and cultural virtues, piety, austerity, and self-control.[51]

Roman ethnography has traditionally been distinguished from Greek ethnography on the basis of its accuracy, purpose, audience, and theoretical framework. Greek ethnographers seem more philosophically inclined, speculative, interested in the marvelous, and eager to explain the origins and traits of various peoples as resulting from climate and the actions of the cosmos/gods (i.e. *autochthony*). Roman ethnography was more closely based on the direct observation of the barbarian world through military campaigns, and was written to aid the *vita activa* of provincial administration—it focused on cultural values and social organization, noticing how geographical features delineated peoples and determined their movements (although the cultural assumptions and moralistic tendencies of the Roman ethnographers ensured that the choices and emphases they made in their ethnographies reflected their own concerns about Rome). Roman ethnographic discourse should be a central site for scholarly investigations of the Julio-Claudian instrumentalization of intellectual life.

---

[49] The establishment of a network of reliable bookshops was a corollary development in the Roman book-trade during the first century AD; this alternative to aristocratic gift-exchange has been described by Raymond J. Starr in his "The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World." *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 31, No. 1 (1987), pp. 213-23.

[50] See my discussion of Lucan, which draws on Jonathan Tracy's ideas, near the end of this chapter.

[51] *Romulus' Asylum: Roman Identities from the Age of Alexander to the Age of Hadrian.* New York: Oxford UP, 2005. p. 66.

III. *Virtus* on the Frontier

It is at this point that I will engage previous interpretations of Virgil and Lucan, and try to rein in these increasingly distant figures, attempting to pull them back together and comprehend how the common material conditions of their patronage and composition structured in advance an imperial-ethnographic ideology of *virtus*. Ultimately I will argue that in both epics, Roman *virtus* is performed on the frontier, by interacting with the barbarian world, and that the poems rely on ethnographic discourse to frame these encounters.

First, though, we should complicate this relationship between *virtus* and the core-periphery model in several ways. According to moralizing ethnographers, urban Rome is decadent, effeminate, voluptuous, and corrupting: individual Romans are moral and admirable to the extent that they retain the values of their provincial upbringing or harken back to the *mos majorum* (ways of the ancestors) of simpler times. So we might say that it is easier to be virtuous in the provinces than in Rome; good people go to Rome from the provinces, Romans go to the provinces to govern and be good. Additionally, barbarians are noble or admirable to the extent that they have not been corrupted by Roman luxury—Caesar says that the Germans are stronger because wilder than the Gauls, and Tacitus relates how Agricola, governor of Britain, 'civilized' the barbarian nobility and thus enslaved them. Lastly, since the barbarian and Roman worlds have completely interpenetrated each other, the 'performance of *virtus* at the frontier' can take place on the edge of the known world, as when Cato exhorts his men before they march into the Sahara (*Bellum Civile* Book 9), *or* it can happen in Rome itself, in the ethnographic spectacle of the Triumph, the apogee of Roman *virtus*, when conquered peoples and their artifacts are transported from the frontier to Rome and displayed for the masses (as in Augustus' triumph on Aeneas' shield at the end of *Aeneid* Book 8). This moralized structuring of space, with antecedents in ancient Greek notions of

the 'fortunate Hyperboreans' and 'blameless Ethiopians,' forms part of the deep conceptual foundation upon which a more specific, instrumentalized, Julio-Claudian ethnographic superstructure can be built, the ideological motivator intended to keep the demographic and economic imperial 'machine' running smoothly.[52]

In the summer of 83 A.D., after several successful campaigns in Britain, Julius Agricola's legions were champing at the bit, anticipating the opportunity to advance through the Scottish Highlands (*Caledonia*) not only to crush the remaining opposed British tribes, but also to satisfy a peculiarly moralized geographical curiosity:

> [The army] began to cry that nothing could bar the way before its courage (*virtuti*), that Caledonia must be penetrated, that the farthest shores of Britain must once for all be discovered in one continuous campaign.[53]

Tacitus makes both Agricola and the barbarian war-leader, Calgacus, explicitly address the significance of northern Britain's extremity: for Calgacus, the Romans' inexorable drive to the ends of the earth evidences their insatiable greed as *raptores orbis* (robbers of the world); Agricola, on the other hand, exhorting his troops to face thirty thousand massed Britons, reminds them that *nec inglorium fuerit in ipso terrarum ac naturae fine cecidisse* ("nor would it be inglorious to fall at the world's and Nature's end").

Calgacus' speech has become a touchstone for critics who think of Tacitus as an ambivalent imperialist or even anti-imperialist, but if we read it alongside other passages about *imperium*'s moral and cultural transformations of space, the speech instead becomes an almost romantic lament about the disappearance of the last 'pure' barbarians, the closing-off of the possibility for Romans to perform traditional *virtus* on the frontier. Elsewhere in the

---

[52] See James Romm's *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1992) for a treatment of this moralized, conceptual geography in Rome's Greek predecessors; the section "Antipodal Ambitions" (pp. 124-40) more precisely focuses on Roman military expansion.

[53] *nihil virtuti suae invium et penetrandam Caledoniam inveniendumque tandem Britanniae terminum continuo proeliorum cursu fremebant* (*Agricola* 27).

Agricola, Tacitus ascribes moral dimensions to imperial spaces according to Cunliffe's core/periphery model: Agricola himself is virtuous in part because of his traditional upbringing in the old Greek colony at Massilia where he benefited from *provinciali parsimonia* (provincial simplicity); and Tacitus understood how acclimating the Britons to Roman luxuries, including teaching the well-born rhetoric, building promenades and baths, and encouraging elites to don the toga, made them easier to control.[54]

In fact, Agricola's entire career arc represents a narrative of *virtus* on the frontier: according to Tacitus, Agricola chose difficult assignments in obscure, strife-ridden provinces precisely to avoid contamination by the corrupt Domitian in Rome, a model of an upright career in the service of a bad emperor. It is only after the Flavian dynasty gave way to Nerva and then the aggressive, expansionist Trajan that Tacitus can properly celebrate his father-in-law's martial virtues (and at the outset of his book, Tacitus figures his biography as a return to the *mos majorum*, implying its similarity to Julio-Claudian imperial ethnography, which had fallen silent under the Flavians). Though Tacitus presents Roman conquest at the ends of the earth—and thus the disappearance of the frontier at the far reaches of the North Sea—in a poignant, nostalgic speech delivered by a barbarian, he writes at the end of a long tradition of instrumentalized Roman ethnographic discourse, a tradition begun by Julius Caesar's *Commentaries on the Gallic War*.

Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres ("All of Gaul is divided into three parts"), Caesar writes at the opening of his *Gallic War*, immediately offering his readers a moralized imperial structuring of space: "of all these peoples the Belgae are the most courageous (*fortissimi*), because they are farthest removed from the culture and civilization of the Province," and

[54] *Agricola* 21.

because they are the nearest to the fearsome Germans.[55] Composed as a series of dispatches from the field back to the Senate, Caesar's *Commentarii* justified continued military action in Gaul, excursions into Britain, and even the (temporary) crossing of the Rhine by constantly evoking threatening, warlike peoples just on the other side of the frontier.[56] The Senate already felt uneasy about Caesar's naked striving for personal glory and was skeptical of the utility of his Gallic campaigns; by depicting, in essence, a 'national security' scare, Caesar aligned the good of the Roman people with his own desire to accumulate power through military achievement. This alignment, in my view, signifies the beginning of a truly imperialist ethnography: a moralized structuring of space, a certain imagining of the frontier, designed to encourage both the extension northward of the borders of the Roman *imperium* and the centralization of authority *within* its borders.

Julius Caesar's military, political, and literary achievements make him uniquely suited to the investigation of imperial ethnography's origins. As Thomas Burns put it,

> Only conquest produced real knowledge of the barbarian world, but then it ceased to be barbarian. Thus conceptually the barbarians were forever retreating from Roman understanding.[57]

Rome's commandment to perform *virtus* on the frontier, coupled with its dramatic transformation of colonized territories, continually pushed the frontier outward. Military occupations helped to urbanize populations by building roads, bridges, and administrative centers, and that initial construction was closely followed by a more dramatic wave of economic development termed 'Romanization' that churned its way through the Empire and involved, among other things, the abandonment of hilltop *oppida* for unfortified, gridded

---

[55] *Bell. Gall.* 1.1.
[56] Gardner, Jane F. "The 'Gallic Menace' in Caesar's Propaganda." *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Oct. 1983), pp. 181-9.
[57] *Rome and the Barbarians 100 B.C.—400 AD.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 2003. p. 182.

Roman towns. Already, in Book 6's ethnographic *excursus*, placed among material describing his raid across the Rhine in 53 B.C., Caesar took pains to describe the Gauls as soft and enervated by Roman civilization, as if to justify aggression against the wilder Germans, whose "whole way of life is composed of hunting expeditions and military pursuits."[58] Caesar's writings, unlike, say, Hadrian's foreign policy or the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, who both admittedly were forced to manage a larger, more complex territory than Caesar, show no acknowledgment of a *limit* to the Roman empire, but rather "his goal had been to create and then conquer a cultural and geographic buffer and then move on to greater conquests elsewhere."[59]

Caesar's narratives of glorious barbarian conquests promoted martial values and imperial aggression alongside the presentation of practical dilemmas in provincial administration and descriptions of barbarian social organization, providing ideological cover for Rome's voracious expansion and consumption in the following decades. Virgil's *Aeneid*, which sought out a divine, heroic origin for the Julio-Claudian line, construes Aeneas' invasion of Italy, negotiations with the autochthonous Italians, intermarriage, and inevitable city-founding victory according to patterns laid out earlier in *Bellum Gallicum*, but the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, too, are marked in their own ways by the intensive instrumentalization of Roman intellectual life under the Principate. Recent scholarship has shown how Virgil's entire *oeuvre*, sponsored by Maecenas, engages with Rome's political transformation in several modes: the *Eclogues* tend to celebrate the cultural life made possible by the tranquility and prosperity of Augustan Rome while still registering the disruptions of the previous twenty years of civil war; in many ways the *Georgics*' agricultural wisdom serves as advice to the ascendant Augustus, who must learn to prudently manage Rome's resources and politics; and

[58] *Bell. Gall.* 6.21.
[59] Burns, p. 138.

of course the *Aeneid*'s mythologized martial triumphalism lends the Principate an aura of inevitability.[60]

My theme '*virtus* on the frontier' allows only brief mention of Virgil's thoroughly political, social poetry prior to the *Aeneid*, but I do want to linger on a passage from the fourth *Georgic*, of beekeeping. In the great didactic poem's last book, Virgil depicts a society, unlike the herds in the previous section, based on industry and *ars*, an urbanized culture with hierarchical labor division whose members all contribute to the production of honey.[61] Virgil promises Maecenas a "wondrous pageant of a tiny world"[62] complete with chieftains, tribes, and battles, and the poem moves quickly to a description of a court politics based on battlefield prowess and the competition of *virtus* (*Georgics* 4.67-102). The bee-keeper, whom Christopher Nappa claims we should read as a stand-in for Augustus, allows his hives to expend their aggression in battle; Virgil tells the bee-keeper to examine the chieftains after battle and to kill the inferior (*deterior*) chief and to allow the palace to be occupied only by the better (*melior*) one.[63]

Neither the bee-keeper nor the chieftains need to encourage the pugnacity of the bees, but rather aggression in the hives rises from the "spirits of the crowd" (*animos vulgi*), and so strife and turmoil fall upon (*incessit*) the kings; the role of the bee-keeper or emperor

---

[60] David Meban's article "Virgil's *Eclogues* and Social Memory" (*Arethusa* 130.1 [Spring 2009], pp. 99-130) reads Eclogue 4 as a celebration of the Julio-Claudians' ascension as a *gens aurea* (golden race), Eclogue 5's elegy for Daphnis as a version of the deification of Julius Caesar, and Eclogue 9's exilic song by Moeris as an account of the dislocations caused by civil war. Christopher Nappa's *Reading After Actium: Vergil's* Georgics, *Octavian, and Rome* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2005) claims the *Georgics* were addressed to Augustus himself, counseling him on the cultivation of an entire society and exposing him to the multiple perspectives of the people he must govern.

[61] The *Georgics*' preoccupation with the transformation of nature by art and labor, when viewed through the lens of imperial ethnography, seems to evoke the expansion and upkeep of Rome's estate, that is, its empire, with political as well as moral and economic valences, a guide to making the provinces productive.

[62] *Georgics* 4.3.

[63] Fairclough's translation for the Loeb edition renders these words "meaner" and "nobler."

is not to inspire his people with bloodlust so much as it is to properly harness their naturally occurring aggression. The bee-keeper directs his hives' aggression outward so that the bees compete amongst themselves for glory and the better ones can be identified and singled out for honors. Virgil makes it clear that the unspecified actual conflicts are beside the point: he notes that the battles can be ended by "the tossing of a little dust" and quickly moves on to the promotion of the better sort. In the 'war passage,' then, we see how the restless energies of the mob are channeled into battle against foreign enemies, how the bee-keeper uses war to discard the wasteful burden (*prodigus*) weakened by sloth and draw the nobler servants closer to his court. In short, Virgil shows Augustus how to skillfully appropriate Rome's martial fervor and make it work for his own ends, rather than allowing civil war to erupt: more generally, this is what Roman ethnography's moralized structuring of space accomplishes in making the frontier the site of the performance of *virtus*.[64] There is no question of peace; the issue is whether war will be beneficial to the state or disastrous. Lucan echoes this sentiment in the veterans' lament in *Bellum Civile* 2: "We do not beg the gods for peace... deliver us as foes to every nation—but divert civil war from us!"[65]

Turning to the *Aeneid*, in some ways the central document of Rome's empire, we are met with abundant examples of '*virtus* on the frontier' as Aeneas wanders the Mediterranean and hears premonitions of Rome's glorious future. Anchises' long prophecy to Aeneas at the end of Book 6, for example, praises Augustus for feats unrivalled even in mythology: "not even Hercules crossed so much of the earth" (*nec vero Alcides tantum telluris obivit*), he exclaims, and later comes the famous admonition *tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento* ("you,

---

[64] Seeking to avoid the civil tumult that followed Nero's death, from Vespasian on, Roman emperors systematically redeployed legions to the periphery of the empire where they could not mount challenges to imperial authority (Burns, 157).

[65] *Non pacem petimus, superi... omnibus hostes reddite nos populis: civile avertite bellum* (*Bellum Civile*, 2.47, 52-3).

Roman, remember to rule the nations with authority").[66] Since I am concerned here with instrumentalized (or militarized) ethnography's connections to epic, though, I will focus on the latter half of the *Aeneid*, the colonization of Italy that bears so many resemblances to the imperial management we have seen in Caesar and Tacitus. Classicists conventionally compare the last six books of the *Aeneid* to the bellicose *Iliad*, not without reason, but I argue that Aeneas' quest to build a city and his alliances with the indigenous Italians resemble the deeds of Roman imperialists as recounted in their ethnographies more than the raiding and plundering carried out by Agamemnon's Achaeans.

I begin at the moment that old Evander, humble king of the Arcadians and enemy to the Rutulians, finally throws his support to Aeneas by quoting an old soothsayer: "it is not right that any man of Italy should control a people so great (*tantam*): hope for (*optate*) leaders from abroad!"[67] Why are the Italians so uncontrollable? More to the point: why are the Italians' indigenous political organizations incapable, on their own, of maintaining the order and stability that can only be established by foreign (*externos*) rule? Like the Celtic Aedui, Caesar's loyal client tribe in Gaul, the Arcadians are threatened by aggressive neighbors and penned in by geography, but the instabilities of barbarian political life go deeper than that: their very way of life (pastoralism, war, hardship, increased exposure to the elements)[68] generates an aggressive, passionate national character that finds its most dramatic expression

---

[66] *Aeneid* 6.801, 851.

[67] *Aen.* 8.502-3, Fairclough renders *tantam* as "so proud." He also shows "choose" for *optate*, but I feel that the passive connotation in "wish for" or "hope for" more accurately captures the Italians' mood, since they must wait until Aeneas arrives to conquer them (as an adjective, the word can even mean 'welcome').

[68] I will quote here a portion of M. Hutton's translation of Tacitus' *Germania* 14, which offers a social and material explanation for the Germans' aggressive national character: "Should it happen that the community where they are born be drugged with long years of peace and quiet, many of the high-born youth voluntarily seek those tribes which are at the time engaged in some war; for rest is unwelcome to the race, and they distinguish themselves more readily in the midst of uncertainties."

in the war-leader, here Turnus, the charismatic figure around whom always-temporary coalitions form.[69]

After making his pact with Aeneas, Evander immediately proceeds to the next step in client-patron negotiations that further cements the alliance: the giving of a well-born hostage, his son Pallas.[70] We know from Tacitus' remarks that the Roman (re)education of indigenous aristocracies was essential to the creation of a loyal ruling class that could effectively manage provincial barbarians, and Evander's hopes for Pallas' attachment to Aeneas reflect this strategy.[71] Evander supplicates Aeneas for Pallas' (re)education:

> Further, I will join with you Pallas here, our hope and comfort; under your guidance let him learn to endure warfare and the stern work of battle; let him behold your deeds, and revere you from his early years. To him I will give two hundred Arcadian cavalry, choice flower of our manhood, and as his own gift, Pallas will give you as many more.[72]

Roman generals routinely took barbarian hostages to establish the client-patron networks necessary for governance, but as Evander's speech shows, hostage-taking had paternal and even pedagogic aspects.[73] Pallas will learn endurance, the arts of war, and reverence for Aeneas, and then Italy will become governable, transformed from an unknown country of

---

[69] One of many ethnographic parallels to Evander's plea to Aeneas can be found in *Bellum Gallicum* 1.32-3, when Diviciacus, leader of the Aedui, complains to Caesar about "the outrage of Ariovistus" the German and requests his patronage.

[70] As in *Bell. Gall.* 2.13, when after his tribe, the Suessiones, are besieged in their *oppidum* Noviodunum (a generic name meaning 'new fort'), King Galba offers both of his sons as hostages to Caesar.

[71] It is worth quoting a substantial portion of Fairclough's translation of *Agricola* 21, a compelling account of imperialist pacification: "Moreover he began to train the sons of the chieftains in a liberal education, and to give a preference to the native talents (*ingenia*) of the Briton as against the trained abilities (*studii*) of the Gaul. As a result, the nation which used to reject the Latin language began to aspire to rhetoric: further, the wearing of our dress became a distinction, and the toga came into fashion, and little by little the Britons went astray into alluring vices: to the promenade, the bath, the well-appointed dinner table. The simple natives gave the name of 'culture' (*humanitas*) to this factor of their slavery (*servitutis*)."

[72] *Aen.* 8.514-9.

[73] Joel Allen's *Hostages and Hostage-Taking in the Roman Empire* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2006) explores the varied forms this practice could take, including creditor-collateral, host-guest, conqueror-trophy, father-son, teacher-student, and masculine-feminine.

impoverished, perpetually warring tribes to a *civitas* ordered by political hierarchy and military force.

Even the gift of cavalry is typical of Rome's negotiations with friendly barbarians; we see Caesar deploy barbarian horsemen, noted for their 'natural' equestrian skills, throughout the *Gallic War*.[74] Strikingly, Virgil portrays the initial stages of the founding of Rome—Aeneas' reception and barbarian alliances—according to the standard procedures of imperial administration found in Roman ethnography, as if Aeneas were a Roman general planting colonies in transalpine Gaul. Virgil's casting of *pius* Aeneas, the ultimate ancestor of Roman virtue, as an imperial general had two basic effects: Virgil translated the mythological hero into terms contemporary readers could understand, but also justified and glorified Julio-Claudian expansionism, naturalized it, motivated it. In time, Rome's traditional *virtus* would be softened by the vices of urban civilization, but Virgil suggests that by seeking out and subduing barbarians at the ever-retreating frontier, Romans emulate the character of their *pater*. Thus Virgil understood the expansion of Rome's frontiers to be a program of national moral revival, as Tacitus did, whose father-in-law Agricola subdued a Britain grown rebellious under Nero's inattentive, self-indulgent reign.

But success in military campaigns still had to be translated into political influence: the institution of the Roman triumph, an exorbitant combination of military parade, ethnographic spectacle, award ceremony, and public execution, served this function. The triumph was also a carefully scrutinized public relations event in which incidental details

[74] For instance, in *Bell. Gall.* 7.13, when Caesar finally catches up with Vercingetorix, the coalition-building warlord of "supreme influence" (*summae potentiae*), and starts a cavalry skirmish, the Roman horsemen are beaten until Caesar sends four hundred German cavalry as reinforcements. In 8.11, Caesar uses barbarian horsemen to escort his foragers.

became portents, good and bad.[75] During the Roman Republic, the Senate awarded the triumph to very successful generals returning from foreign campaigns: Pompey's pre-eminence stemmed in part from his three triumphs. The spectacle was appropriated by the cult of Augustus, whose triple triumph in 29 B.C. (Dalmatia, Actium, and Alexandria) forms the climax of the prophecies on Aeneas' divine shield; Augustus and his successors reserved the triumph for the Julio-Claudian dynasty alone.[76]

Lucan stresses the critical ethnographic component of the Roman triumph at the beginning of the *Bellum Civile* when he asks why his countrymen waged civil "wars that could win no triumphs," that is, wasteful wars that would produce no foreign prisoners or booty, *unproductive* wars (to underscore imperialist economics).[77] Lucan's elegiac mood quickly gives way to counterfactual desire and a hypothetical, imaginary triumph, a potential catalogue of exotic, vanquished foes, including the Chinese (*Seres*) and the peoples living beyond the Araxes River in the Caucasus. It is important that we acknowledge Lucan's insistence on militarism generally and foreign aggression specifically; the poet only wishes that his martial epic had a happier, or at least glorious, subject. As in Virgil's advice to the bee-keeper in *Georgic* 4 on how to properly manage Roman aggression, Lucan wishes that Caesar had directed his ambition and armies outward, to the frontier, the fitting site of Roman *virtus*.

We shall see that throughout the *Bellum Civile*, particularly when stern Cato, the poem's moral center, marches his army into the Sahara's hostile landscape, Lucan uses tropes from Roman ethnography to dramatize and valorize *virtus* on the frontier.[78] Caesar's

---

[75] For a recent overview, see Mary Beard's *The Roman Triumph* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2007).
[76] *Aen.* 8.714-28.
[77] *Bell. Civ.* 1.12.
[78] Lucan aligns Cato with the conscience of the Roman people when he says that the "conqueror pleased the Gods, but the conquered [pleased] Cato" (1.128). A geographical description of Libya, emphasizing its sun-scorched, snake-infested barrenness as opposed to

impetuosity in Amyclas' hut and his defiance on the sea in Book 5, though, constitute an oft-cited Virgilian parallel that demands our attention. The deference and respect that Aeneas pays to King Evander, as well as the consideration each gives to omens, are reversed in Caesar's aggressive bribery and reckless disregard of the sailor Amyclas' warnings.[79] The scene of Aeneas' piety is apparently transformed into the stage for Caesar's tyranny, but other, more immediate comparisons can be drawn. Caesar allows nothing to sap his eagerness for battle, while Pompey's susceptibility to indulgence draws him toward his wife Cornelia;[80] Caesar willfully misreads the 'omen' of the storm as evidence of his own valor, but Pompey asks the helmsman about astronomy to distract himself from his cares.[81] On the other hand, Caesar's unflinching drive into the sea's hostile expanse can be favorably compared to Cato's Libyan adventure.[82]

Ironically, the very qualities that Lucan deplores in Caesar—his recklessness, aggression, insatiable appetite for conquest—mark him as a decisive, quick-thinking commander in the *Gallic War*, where the trait is termed *celeritas* (speed, quickness).[83] In his self-presentation as a daring but prudent general, Caesar is willing to venture into unknown

---

the Egyptian luxury enjoyed by Pompey and Caesar in Books 8 and 10, precedes Cato's march (9.411-44).

[79] The difference in social status between King Evander and Amyclas must play a part in Caesar's behavior, not to mention Aeneas' kinship with Evander and his comfort at arriving 'home'; Caesar's urgent orders to Amyclas might also reflect the vulnerability he feels at leaving his camp with *Fortuna* as his only companion (5.509-10).

[80] The only thing that makes Pompey *dubium* and *trepidum* is his wife (5.728-31).

[81] *Bell. Civ.* 8.161-70.

[82] Just as Caesar disdains the gods' attempts to check his aggression, Cato rejects his lieutenant Labienus' pleas to consult Jupiter at the Libyan temple, relying instead on his own Stoic reason to guide his actions (*Bell. Civ.* 9.564-86).

[83] Philip Stadter explores an instance of Lucan's use of traditional Caesarian *celeritas* in "Caesarian Tactics and Caesarian Style: Bell. Civ. 1.66-70." *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 88, No. 3 (Feb. – Mar. 1993), pp. 217-21.

territory, if only temporarily, before retreating to firmer ground.[84] Caesar's ability to anticipate barbarian movements and then relentlessly drive his legions to outmaneuver their war-bands was crucial to his success in Gaul, but brings disaster when he raises arms against fellow Romans. Lucan adapts *celeritas*, the speed that made Caesar's leadership exceptional in the *Gallic War*, to make his aggression seem gratuitous and cruel in the *Civil War*, playing on the popular memory of Caesar's genius in foreign campaigns to suggest that *virtus* on the frontier can become *vitium* at home.

It is in Cato's defiant, inflexible commitment to civic duty—the cause of *libertas*—even unto death that Lucan shows his readers *virtus* properly articulated on the frontier, at the ends of the earth. After the panoramic ethnographic *excursus* that maps out Libya's hostile climate and pestilential fauna, we read *hac ire Catonem dura iubet virtus* ("Stern virtue commands Cato to march through this [land]").[85] Pompey's fear and Caesar's appetite motivate their self-serving actions, but stoic Cato, in the accusative as *Catonem*, allows himself to be directed into the unknown frontier by *virtus*. His heroic feats make him an *exemplum* of Roman virtue, like the better (*melior*) sort of bee in *Georgics* 4. Cato's final march and suicide do not represent flight from duty but rather its fulfillment: Lucan and Cato's stoicism demands action, however quixotic, in contrast to Seneca's withdrawal into philosophical *otium*.[86] Jonathan Tracy claims that Lucan rejects 'escapism' in the last three books of *Bellum Civile* by showing how the Roman Civil War has become an all-eonsuming

---

[84] Christopher Krebs highlights Caesar's reluctance to commit his troops to *terra incognita* during his Rhineland excursions in "'Imaginary Geography' in Caesar's 'Bellum Gallicum.'" *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 127, No. 1 (Spring 2006), pp. 111-136.

[85] *Bell. Civ.* 9.444-5.

[86] As Anthony Welch has suggested to me, Cato rejects the oracle in favor of his own wisdom and marches into the Sahara, dependent only on an interior *virtus*. It is ironic that as Cato seeks to distance himself from urban Rome, he imagines the Stoic doctrines he once studied in manuscript libraries to be forever present in his own soul, denying the material basis of his motivations.

global conflict: neither Pompey's astronomical speculations in Book 8 nor Caesar's investigation of the source of the Nile in Book 10 allow an intellectualized 'escape' from civil war, which permeates everything. Cato rejects escapism and heads for *terra incognita* to prolong war and preserve freedom.[87]

For both Lucan's Cato and Tacitus' Agricola, then, the *iter durum* toward the frontier constitutes an appropriate response to corruption in Rome, even if those writers remain ambivalent toward conquest where Caesar and Virgil are enthusiastic. The blatantly imperialist narratives of Caesar and Virgil need the institution of the triumph to translate military action into political power, but Lucan and Tacitus commend the hard, unglamorous work of empire itself: Cato, mocking a weak-willed lieutenant deep in the Libyan desert, where they would die, sarcastically wondered "whether the noble purpose is enough, and virtue becomes no more virtuous by success?"[88] During the Principate's centralization and expansion during the Julio-Claudian period, *virtus* on the frontier became the panacea for the Roman *imperium*, the cure for all maladies, from foreign threats to civil unrest and courtly corruption. Ambitious imperialists could move closer to the center of power in Rome by demonstrating their *virtus* on the frontier, like Virgil's bees, and austere Stoics could honor *pater* Aeneas without flattering the emperor by testing their strength in harsh climates. Although it was an ideology deeply ingrained in Roman culture, the idea of '*virtus* on the frontier' was supple enough to be adapted even by critics of the Principate. Despite their polarized attitudes toward the incarnate *princeps*, both Virgil and Lucan let the ideology that lubricated the workings of Rome's imperial machine structure their heroic narratives: Virgil imagined Aeneas as a provincial administrator and Lucan rejected disinterested philosophy

[87] Tracy, Jonathan Edward. "Science, Egypt, and Escapism in Lucan." Diss. University of Toronto, 2009. Tracy's conclusion links Cato's active, suicidal stoic *virtus* to Lucan's participation in the Pisonian conspiracy against Nero.
[88] *Bell. Civ.* 9.571-2.

for instrumental ethnography, private aristocratic *otium* for purposeful *res publica*, both epics ensconced in the material conditions of Julio-Claudian *imperium*.

Chapter 3

Managing the Archive: Humanist Memories in *The Faerie Queene* and *Paradise Lost*

"You must linger among a limited number of master-thinkers, and digest their works, if you would derive ideas which shall win firm hold in your mind. Everywhere is nowhere."
-Seneca[89]

"And if I be a man of some reading, yet I am a man of no remembring..."
-Montaigne[90]

I. Classical texts and humanism's historical consciousness

The Earl of Essex blamed his traitorous rebellion on his Latin teacher. Shortly after the trial on the 19th of February, 1601, that found him guilty of treason, Robert Devereux, the second Earl of Essex, grew desperate for clemency and turned on his dependents, accusing them of encouraging his rising. Essex confronted Henry Cuffe, who was in Philip Sidney's term Essex's 'discourser,' a scholar employed to facilitate classical reading, and said "you were the principall man that moved me to this perfidiousnesse."[91] It seems that a politicized reading of Lucan by Cuffe finally convinced Essex to act; years later Isaac Casaubon mentioned the anecdote while reminding himself of the folly of the "book-trained politician (*politicus e libro*)."[92] Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton have pointed to Casaubon's critique of political counsel derived from classical learning in order to trace a shift in the relationship between the humanist intellectual and the state. Jardine and Grafton have taken pains to work out the assumptions and methodologies of the politicized humanist

---

[89] *Epistulae Morales* 2.
[90] "Of Bookes." *The Essayes of Montaigne.* trans. John Florio. New York: The Modern Library, 1933. p. 360.
[91] Camden, William. *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England.* 2nd ed. London: Benjamin Fisher, 1630. p. 187.
[92] This according to the Casaubon miscellany quoted in Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton's article "'Studied for Action': How Gabriel Harvey Read his Livy." *Past and Present*, no. 129 (Nov. 1990). p. 75.

'discourser' by examining Gabriel Harvey's extensively annotated folio Livy; Casaubon's remark signals the obsolescence of this kind of scholarly counsel and the arrival of a more efficient, specialized, and technical politico-military discourse.[93]

More broadly, the disappearance of the politicized discourser can be understood as a development characteristic of late humanism and early modernity. The enthusiasm felt by the first Renaissance philologists inspired Petrarch to write 'familiar' letters to Homer and Cicero as if they were personal acquaintances, but throughout much of the fifteenth century, humanists debated the applicability of the classics to contemporary situations. Indeed, even Erasmus mocked Christophe de Longueil's slavish, pedantic devotion to Cicero's prose style, arguing that the study and practice of rhetoric, as well as religion and law, had been utterly transformed since antiquity.[94] When humanist printers like Aldus Manutius cleared away the thickets of scholastic commentary from the margins of classical books in order to approach the primary sources more 'familiarly,' the lack of mediation between Renaissance reader and ancient author also rendered the texts stranger, more foreign, and opened them up to consciously historicist readings. Humanist reading practices veered between treating the classical authors as enlightened sages to be cited and imitated and, on the other hand, reading the ancient documents historically, as imperfect, perhaps biased pieces of evidence about an extinct, if still fascinating culture.[95]

---

[93] For another account of an English humanist's "careers" through the lens of his annotations, see William Sherman's *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995).

[94] *Dialogus, cui titulus Ciceronianus.* Oxford: Lichfield, 1693.

[95] See the chapter "Renaissance Readers and Ancient Texts" in Anthony Grafton's *Defenders of the Text* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1991), pp. 23-46, especially the discussion of the 1465 debate between Lorenzo Guidetti and Buanaccorso Massari regarding the interpretation of Cicero's first familiar letter. Guidetti is not troubled by unresolved obscurities in the text because he only looks for 'flowers' and elegant constructions to imitate, but the younger Massari insisted that without a rigorous knowledge of the history, politics, and customs of Republican Rome, Cicero's meaning was unintelligible.

Renaissance humanism in its fragile manuscript phase was constrained to the bibliophilic patronage of Italian princes and pontiffs, and permanently migrated northward only after the advent of print technology.[96] Although the émigré Polydore Vergil used advanced historicist methodologies to demolish the legendary 'Matter of Britain' in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* in his own *Anglica Historia* as early as 1534, it took several generations for loyal Tudor historians to accept the Italian's findings. Situated at the extremity of northern Atlantic Europe, England developed late, and judging by Casaubon's denunciation of the *politicus e libro*, a native *ars historica* appeared only in the seventeenth century.[97] During the Italian *quattrocento*, by comparison, Alberti had already warned of the classics' inapplicability to statecraft in his *The Advantages and Disadvantages of Letters* (*De commodis litterarum atque incommidis*):

> I cannot persuade myself that the republic needs book learning in its magistrates more than the practical knowledge gained by long experience and practice. I think I should clarify this point briefly here. I have noticed that, in fact, the government rarely holds meetings to discuss the heavens and planets, and never to discuss the nature of the gods, procreation, and the soul.[98]

So while the political usefulness, or instrumentality of ancient texts had been a conventional subject of debate throughout the course of Renaissance humanism, in the seventeenth century the question of the classics' applicability gave way to an early modern debate centered on historicist methodology. The humanists' utter alienation from antiquity was now

---

[96] For an overview of the subsequent spread of print technology, consult Lucien Febvre's chapter "The Geography of the Book" in his *The Coming of the Book* (trans. David Gerard. London: NLB, 1976); on England's slowly accelerating 16th century book trade, see especially pages 191-2.

[97] Anthony Grafton's *What was History?* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2007) brings to light the forgotten *ars historica* tradition in early modern Europe; Grafton focuses on the development of the philological methodologies humanists used to evaluate the credibility of ancient sources.

[98] Alberti, Leon Battista. *The Use and Abuse of Books*. trans. Renee Neu Watkins. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1999. p. 48.

assumed; the debate over which philological procedures the art of history might rely upon foregrounded the difficulty of recovering any certain knowledge of antiquity.

A second, related humanist debate forms another context for my reading of archival anxiety in *The Faerie Queene* and *Paradise Lost*: conflicting theories on what constituted the ideal library. Curators of manuscript libraries had long struggled to control and manipulate their information resources—their difficulties included bookworms, scribal error, prohibitive expense, efficient storage, and works of dubious provenance—but the deluge of printed books that swept across Europe in the sixteenth century brought urgent new problems to Renaissance intellectuals. Optimistic humanists had seen in the rediscovery of ancient texts the opportunity to unite all branches of human arts and sciences in vast universal libraries modeled after Alexandria; the fifteenth-century Popes Nicholas V and Pius II, for instance, spent fortunes amassing thousands of manuscript volumes on every topic in many languages. Even in humanism's manuscript phase, though, the overabundance of books in the papal libraries worried scholars like Angelo Decembrio, whose *De politia litteraria*, an eccentric, sometimes hilarious collection of learned dialogues on literary taste and book selection written in the spirit of Aulus Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*, was dedicated to Pius II in 1462.[99]

The fragility of manuscript culture, then, posed significant obstacles to the creation of an exhaustive library, but print's exponentially greater capacity for book production ended the dream of the *bibliotheca universalis* forever. The never-ending lists of new titles could not be mastered by any single scholar, and even large, well-endowed libraries could not accommodate every publication on every subject. Some aristocratic patrons, reacting against

[99] This difficult, idiosyncratic text remains unedited and untranslated; the only surviving print copy was produced in Basel in 1562. Anthony Grafton discusses Decembrio's *Politia* particularly with regard to its advice on principles of book selection, which tend toward classicist purism, excluding contemporary histories, vernacular literature, and cumbersome scholastic tomes, in *Commerce with the Classics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pages 19-35.

the vulgar, entrepreneurial spirit of print culture, still preferred painstakingly illuminated, expensive manuscript editions of canonical texts to printed copies, but these ornate manuscripts seem to have been mostly unread status symbols rather than volumes actively consulted by working scholars.[100]

Humanists committed to serious scholarship lauded the miraculous invention of the printing press in verse and woodcuts even as they struggled to order their libraries' distended catalogues.[101] Machines such as bookwheels, whose vertically rotating shelves allowed scholars to easily move heavy volumes without losing their places, helped mitigate the physical inconveniences introduced by print technology, and commonplace books often served to index personal libraries. Conrad Gesner's *Pandectae* (1548) was probably the most famous topical index of citations and was meant to accompany his mammoth *Bibliotheca universalis*, but scholars often used a condensed epitome without the complete catalogue. Gesner's work still clung to the dream of systematic universal knowledge, but in the seventeenth century, as the problems of ordering and efficiently using collections grew more

---

[100] For an example of the late 'scholarly' manuscript as useless boutique luxury object, see Thomas E. Burman's description of the deluxe polyglot Qu'ran produced by Flavius Mithridates in the 1480s for the Duke of Urbino: the Latin rendering is incompetent compared with prior translations, and the glosses, selected from traditional Arabic and Hebrew scholia, are bizarrely chosen and sometimes irrelevant, but the calligraphy and illuminations are gorgeous (*Reading the Qur'an in Latin Christendom, 1140-1560*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007. pp. 133-48). For an account of the lavish manuscript publication of satirical and obscene poetry undertaken by specialist stationers still later, in a northern European country, see Harold Love's *Scribal publication in seventeenth-century England* (New York: Oxford UP, 1993) and the critical apparatus of his variorum edition *The works of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester* (New York: Oxford UP, 1999). Arthur Marotti's *John Donne: Coterie Poet* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986) reads manuscript poetry circulated according to more informal, conversational modes in multiple social settings; Marotti's *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1995) illuminates how print transformed occasional poems into canonical works and commercialized literary patronage.

[101] Roger Chartier's *The Order of Books* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1994) remains the standard work on the various methods used to arrange, control, and supervise the mushrooming Renaissance archive.

pronounced, even professionals like the English judge Sir Julius Caesar had to create sprawling topical catalogues to organize passages to be cited at work. Rather than integrating the branches of human knowledge, indexes like Caesar's encouraged a wide-ranging, discontinuous reading method that adumbrates an electronic hypertextual environment, dissolving the unity of individual works into fragments for creative, user-friendly reassembly.[102] The apparent contradiction between the logical and systematic topical organization of humanists' scholarship and the disjunctive, choppy texture of their prose styles in works as diverse as Michel de Montaigne's *Essais* (1580) and Robert Burton's *The anatomy of melancholy* (1621) disappears when we imagine our authors flipping through their indexed commonplaces.

Even the universal catalogues and topical indexes of the humanists' new 'libraries without walls' could not succeed in managing the early modern print archive: if anything, the pressure to establish reliable criteria for the selection of good books increased in the seventeenth century.[103] Francis Bacon's *The Advancement of Learning* positioned itself as a survey of both desolate and fertile fields of scholarship, noting the universities' neglect of the arts for professional training and pointing academics toward areas promising for future research.[104] Gabriel Naudé's 1627 *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque*, translated into English by John Evelyn, represents the first modern library science treatise due to its comprehensive treatment and emphasis on unfettered public access. Naudé advises library-builders to seek books by experts only, not to discriminate against modern books in favor of ancient authors

[102] William Sherman offers a fascinating description of this prominent jurist's 1,200 page topical index in the seventh chapter of his *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), "Sir Julius Caesar's Search Engine." pp. 127-48.

[103] For a succinct review of this issue, see Clarke, Jack A. "A Search for Principles of Book Selection, 1550-1700." *The Library Quarterly*, 41.3 (Jul. 1971), pp. 216-22.

[104] Bacon, Francis. *Of the proficience and aduancement of Learning, divine and humane*. London: Henrie Tomes, 1605.

and not to exclude controversial works, but he addresses the magnanimous benefactors of public institutions rather than individual scholars.[105]

Some humanists gradually began promoting a strict, ascetic vision of the library that limited the appropriate number of books a scholar should own to the number that he could read and master completely. Ironically, this vision came not from a Renaissance humanist struggling to keep pace with the explosive productivity of movable type, but from the first century Stoic intellectual Seneca, whose second moral letter to Lucilius takes up the overabundance of books as its theme: "you must linger among a limited number of master-thinkers, and digest their works, if you would derive ideas which shall win firm hold in your mind. Everywhere is nowhere."[106] In Decembrio's *Politia*, when Ugolino Pisani presents his tedious neo-Latin comedy about kitchens to Leonello, Tito Strozzi reminds him of Seneca's admonition against frivolous, distracting books to shut him up.[107] Although Alberti does not explicitly cite Seneca, his warnings about the disadvantages of the literary life, particularly the young scholar's restless, compulsive (and expensive) pursuit of new books, recall Seneca's 'distraction':

> The desire to know and remember it all is constantly gnawing at him... Thus, as you see, the scholar is a very complex puzzle himself, and neither physically nor mentally ever, or hardly ever, gets any rest. Bleak solitude, hard labor, endless hours, great anxiety, difficult questions, total absorption, intense anxiety... almost no break in the onslaught of work and worry.[108]

More proximate to my discussion of early modern English epic poetry in time and space, and perhaps in mood, are Montaigne's *Essais*, several of which pick up Seneca's injunction against the ostentatious display of book-learning and the effects of distracted

---

[105] Naudeus, Gabriel P. *Instructions concerning erecting of a Library.* trans. John Evelyn. London: Bedle, Collins, and Crook, 1661.
[106] *Certis ingeniis immorari et innutriri opoertet, si veis aliquid tahere, quod in animo fideliter sedeat. Epist. Mor.* 2.
[107] Grafton, *Commerce.* p. 27.
[108] Alberti, *The Use and Abuse of Books.* p. 26.

reading on the operation of memory. In "Of Pedantisme," Montaigne begins by remembering the caricatures of pretentious scholars lampooned in the Italian comedies he saw as a boy, goes on to mention that Plutarch said Romans were insulted to be called a "Greek" or a "Scholar," and then shifts to a metaphor that trivializes and condemns pedantic reading practices:

> Even as birds flutter and skip from field to field to pecke up corne, or any graine, and without tasting the same, carrie it in their bils, therewith to feed their little ones; so doe our pedants gleane and picke learning from bookes, and never lodge it further than their lips, only to degorge and cast it to the wind.[109]

Here Montaigne amusingly repeats the rhetoric of nutrition—specifically, the notion that hunting down classical tags for instant, regurgitive quotation provides the mind with no real nourishment—originally found in Seneca's letter: "food does no good and is not assimilated into the body if it leaves the stomach as soon as it is eaten."[110] This hypocrisy is too much for Montaigne, and he immediately admits guilt to what he has been calling "pedantisme." Later, in "Of Bookes," the essay that provides one of this chapter's epigraphs, Montaigne admits that his whimsical, undisciplined reading habits have left his memory palace unfurnished and bare. Finally, in "Of Vanitie," from the last book of *Essais*, Montaigne blames his scattered reading on the vanity of contemporary authors who have written too many books: "What is idle babling like to produce, since the faltring and liberty of the tongue hath stuft the world with so horrible a multitude of volumes?"[111]

Seneca's call for the disciplined, prudently selected library tantalized Renaissance humanists because they knew it was no longer possible in a culture overflowing with books.

---

[109] Montaigne, *Essayes*. p. 99.
[110] *Non prodest cibus nec corpori accedit, qui statim sumptus emittitur. Epist. Mor.* 2.
[111] Montaigne, *Essayes*. p. 853.

Alberti finds no tranquility in quiet study, only restlessness and anxiety.[112] Montaigne suggests that the humanist is condemned to 'pedantisme' because of the expectations of other scholars and the sheer availability of books: when Montaigne admits his own guilt, he admits that 'pedantisme' has become the humanist's natural condition. Certainly the disintegrated yet cross-referenced database of classical quotation contained in Sir Julius Caesar's commonplace book would have been vulnerable to Seneca and Montaigne's critiques. Montaigne realizes that every humanist is a pedant, that technological and social change have created a total break between the reading habits of the past and present: in this sense Montaigne's accusing himself of 'pedantisme' signifies his historical consciousness.

We have two debates, then, two evolving humanist contexts to inform our reading of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590) and John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667): firstly, the gradual separation of humanist classicism and early modern statecraft amid broader concerns about the applicability of ancient wisdom in modernity, and secondly, the worsening 'crisis of the archive' which demanded simultaneously universal knowledge and a disciplined, ascetic limit to one's library. These questions are not neatly resolved in the period between Spenser and Milton. It is not simply that Spenser relies on classical learning uncritically to generate topical political counsel for Elizabeth and that Milton entirely rejects the applicability of classical knowledge, and it would be obviously inaccurate to claim that Spenser's epic shows no signs of straining to manage its sources, while Milton prudently selects only the oldest and most trustworthy source, the Bible.

As we shall see, Spenser toys with the unreliability of the Galfridian tradition that the Tudors enshrined as dynastic history while presenting Eumnestes' study as outdated and ill-

[112] Regarding the next phase of humanism at the end of the sixteenth century, Bart Giamatti writes, "Exhilarated and exhausted, the poets of the *fin de siècle*—Tasso, Camões, Spenser—took, at some deep level, exhaustion and the need to sleep as their themes." *Play of Double Senses*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975. p. 32.

equipped for modern scholarship. Milton's return to the creation of the universe can be read as a desperate attempt to order and systematize all human knowledge, especially the classical tradition, and not merely as an exclusionary or pre-emptive gesture. The tensions I have identified in the preceding pages are strands woven into humanist thought from its ancient beginnings,[113] and while no absolute demarcation can be drawn between Spenser and Milton's methods, in their epics these dynamics strike markedly different balances, owing to their specific historical moments and material conditions.

II. The humanist discourser and Eumnestes' archive in *The Faerie Queene* II.ix-x

Before moving to a reading of Memory in Book II's House of Alma, I want to pause and note that Spenser writes just as the figure of the Sidneian 'discourser,' exemplified in this chapter by Gabriel Harvey and Henry Cuffe, is disappearing from English political life. Of course English humanists still gained government jobs through the seventeenth century—Spenser's administrative and bureaucratic work for Lord Grey in Ireland is well known[114]—but both pragmatic officials and scholarly philologists scrutinized and questioned classical learning's relevance to contemporary statecraft. Spenser himself was quite aware of the growing divide between the humanists' archival memory and the power politics of early modern regimes. At some point while writing *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser realized that his

[113] For instance, although Seneca counsels the ruminative reading and thorough digestion of a few prudently selected authors in *Epistulae Morales* 2, we can see a foreshadow of the Renaissance humanists' indexes of quotations in *Epistulae Morales* 84, when Seneca famously compares literary composition to a bee flitting about, culling from various flowers pure honey.

[114] The documentary evidence was gleaned from British archives by scholars in the early twentieth century and described in Frederic Ives Carpenter's "Spenser in Ireland" (*Modern Philology*, 19.4 [May 1922], pp. 405-19) and Raymond Jenkins' "Spenser with Lord Grey in Ireland" (*PMLA*, 52.2 [Jun. 1937], pp. 338-53). In the late twentieth century, literary critics began producing post-colonialist readings of *The Faerie Queene* and *A View of the Present State of Ireland*; notable studies include Andrew Hadfield's *Edmund Spenser's Irish experience: wilde fruit and salvage soyl* (New York: Oxford UP, 1997), Willy Maley's *Salvaging Spenser: Colonialism, Culture, and Identity* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), and Richard McCabe's *Spenser's Monstrous Regiment: Elizabethan Ireland and the Poetics of Difference* (New York: Oxford UP, 2002).

ambition to become England's new Virgil could never be fully realized and that his career would not be capped by a completed, whole epic. Instead, claims Richard Helgerson, "the final shape of Spenser's career resembles the shape of old Melibee's": a pastoral initiation that earns a term at court, which results in eventual disillusionment and a humbled, wiser home-coming to the country. [115] As early as *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579), Spenser's verse alternated between monarchical encomium ("Aprill") and anti-courtly sentiment, as in "October" when Piers asks "O pierlesse Poesye, where is then thy place?/ If nor in Princes pallace thou doe sitt:/ (And yet is Princes pallace the most fitt)..."[116] *The Faerie Queene*, too, registers the sense of injured merit Spenser felt from his perceived neglect, and presents a series of demonic Elizabeths who are vain, sterile, reckless queens surrounded by flatterers.[117]

If the disappearance of the Sidneian discourser amidst the more profound separation of policy and humanist memory provoked generalized anti-court sentiment in Spenser's poetry, it also specifically informed his depictions of the classical archive. Toward the end of Book I's fifth canto, Una's dwarf warns the Redcrosse Knight of Lucifera's dungeon in the bowels of the house of Pride, inhabited by the neglected, ruined carcasses of antique generals, conquerors, and emperors:

> All these together in one heape were throwne,
> Like carkases of beastes in butchers stall.
> And in another corner wide were strowne
> The antique ruins of the *Romanes* fall:
> Great *Romulus* the Grandsyre of them all,
> Proud *Tarquin*, and too lordly *Lentulus*,

---

[115] *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983. pp. 96.
[116] Spenser, Edmund. *Poetical Works*. ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt. New York: Oxford UP, 1912. p. 457.
[117] I have argued in an unpublished seminar paper, "*Telos* and Temptation in the Underworld," that Philotime, the unmarried queen of Mammon's Cave in Book II, represents a demonic Elizabeth.

> Stout *Scipio*, and stubborne *Hanniball*,
> Ambitious *Sylla*, and sterne *Marius*,
> High *Caesar*, great *Pompey*, and fiers *Antonius*.[118]

We immediately notice that this stanza's list of Roman heroes is eccentric, even tendentious: Spenser associates Rome's legendary founder, Romulus, with typical villains like the tyrant Tarquin and the Carthaginian invader Hannibal, and places Republican heroes Sulla and Marius alongside the striving Triumvirs, Caesar, Pompey, and Antony. Self-destructive pride ostensibly unites the figures: Romulus committed fratricide in order to name the city after himself, for instance, and Tarquinius Superbus was exiled after his son raped Lucretia and the Roman people revolted. But Sulla, the first to cross the Rubicon, was not brought down by his pride: he voluntarily ended his dictatorship after reforming the constitution and retired to private life. Scipio Africanus, the general who defeated Hannibal at Zama, was renowned for his Greek learning and *clementia*: pride's inevitable fall did not obliterate Scipio's memory because he died in self-imposed exile at his estate in Camponia.

In this particularly contemptuous anti-courtly moment, Spenser collapses founder, villain, hero, and foreign threat under the label 'pride,' re-organizing the illustrious roll of Roman leaders into a hidden archive of forgotten carcasses ruined by their own pride. It is as if Spenser is reminding the prideful Elizabethan court that the alienated humanists still have the final word, that the intellectual's ordering of the historical archive can obscure and even obliterate any statesman's martial deeds. If early modern rulers reject the counsel of humanist discoursers, Spenser warns, then the humanists can in turn rewrite history and quarantine the memory of heroism, denying the monarch access to an inspirational and politically useful archive of conquerors.

---

[118] *FQ* II.x.49.

While Spenser's pose as an aggressively revisionist archivist was inventive and even daring, the trope of the worthy but forgotten Roman languishing in a neglected dungeon was not new to Renaissance thought at all, but instead stood at the very center of the early humanist enterprise. On December 15th, 1416, the Italian humanist Poggio Bracciolini wrote a letter to his colleague Guarino da Verona reporting his discovery of a complete copy of Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*, the first century ur-text of Latin rhetoric that had been known until then only in fragments. The precious book was hidden in a huge heap of manuscripts in the basement of a tower at St. Gall's monastery, near Constance, Germany. Poggio describes the manuscript of Quintilian as if it were a long-imprisoned man at death's door:

> By Heaven, if we had not brought help, he would surely have perished the very next day. There is no question that this glorious man, so elegant, so pure, so full of morals and of wit, could not much longer have endured the filth of that prison, the squalor of that place, and the savage cruelty of his keepers. He was sad and dressed in mourning, as people are when doomed to death; his beard was dirty and his hair caked with mud, so that by his expression and appearance it was clear he had been summoned to an undeserved punishment...
>
> There amid a tremendous quantity of books which it would take too long to describe, we found Quintilian still safe and sound, though filthy with mold and dust. For these books were not in the Library, as befitted their worth, but in a sort of foul and gloomy dungeon at the bottom of one of the towers, where not even men convicted of a capital offense would have been stuck away.[119]

Poggio describes the *Institutio Oratoria* manuscript as if it were the body of Quintilian himself in the characteristic familiar manner of the early humanists, but his relentless search for new manuscripts—in the same monastery, Poggio and his friends found Valerius Flaccus' *Argonauticon* and Vitruvius' *On Architecture*—also typifies the optimistic acquisitiveness of early humanism in its manuscript phase. This is what Bart Giamatti called "the romance of

---

[119] *Two Renaissance Book Hunters: The Letters of Poggius Bracciolini to Nicolaus de Niccolis*. trans. Phyllis Walter Goodhart Gordan. New York: Columbia UP, 1974. p. 194-5.

early humanism," the idea that the secondary, derivative Renaissance culture could identify with and imitate the virtuous ancients and find itself at home once again. [120]

Later humanists who consumed classical literature in condensed epitomes, commonplace databases, and vernacular translations felt less affinity with the ancients and sought rather to compartmentalize classical books, to bracket them off rather than draw them closer. Spenser, struggling to find a stable position in the rapidly changing world of late sixteenth century print culture, sentences prideful Roman history to prison rather than liberating it. The overwhelming print archive demanded not recovery and restoration but curation, selection, and exclusion: the spiritualized Protestant epic in both Spenser and Milton's hands proved a powerful tool for paring down the unmanageable pagan literature. At the same time, Spenser suggests that when early modern monarchs neglect their humanists, they risk neglecting their own archives: who will preserve the true memory of Elizabeth's reign, if not Spenser? Why does she disdain him? Spenser's menacing catalogue of ruined and neglected Roman heroes is an implicit threat to the early modern regime that has not supported him: in this rebellious, self-aggrandizing moment, Spenser imagines himself in complete control of the Renaissance archive, able to wield the power of life and death over books, knowledge, and memory.

Now we turn from Spenser's blustery pronouncements about his mastery of the humanist archive in a moment of anti-courtly rhetoric to a more extensive, humble, and anxious account of the archive that emphasizes its inapplicability, incompletion, questionable political utility, and, above all, its unmanageability: the house of Alma's inner recesses, representing the intellect's foresight, judgment, and memory in Book II.ix-x.[121] The first

---

[120] *Exile and Change in Renaissance Literature*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1984. p. 16.
[121] Davis, Walter R. "Alma, castle of." *The Spenser Encyclopedia*. Buffalo, NY: The University of Toronto Press, 1990.

chamber contains the melancholic Saturnalian prophet Phantastes, whose empty devices and idle fantasies are useless to Arthur and Guyon. The second room houses many paintings of magistrates, courts, tribunals, policies, and laws: an unnamed political counselor who has grown wise "through continuall practise and usage" occupies this room. Although the first chamber, which seemed frivolous and less pertinent to true wisdom, was described over four stanzas (49-52), Spenser tellingly only devotes two stanzas to policy before delving deeply into memory's archives.

Not only has Spenser divorced policy from memory, rehearsing the disappearance of the politicized discourser, he also makes policy solely dependent on practice and usage, rather than any kind of book learning. Normally the policy counselor's responsibility for judgment of present events, as opposed to the past, would explain his lack of memory's books. However, we note that with the word "practice," which suggests the importance of prior experience, Spenser tells us that practical wisdom for the present inevitably relies upon the past. The separation of policy and memory is revealed as an arbitrary categorization that both impoverishes counsel and neglects the archive, leaving statesmen uninformed, unnamed, and inactive, and relegating humanists to squalid, deteriorating libraries.

Spenser situates Eumnestes' chamber of memory, "th'hindmost rowme of three" (54.9), in the least accessible and least visited part of Alma's castle. Instead of a precisely furnished memory palace polished by frequent recollection, Arthur and Guyon find themselves in a study "ruinous and old" (55.1) with sagging walls, staffed by a decrepit, half-blind librarian who is also the oldest living human, Eumnestes, and his assistant, the little boy Anamnestes.[122] We quickly perceive a Platonic dualism structuring Spenser's scene of

[122] In Greek, Eumnestes is "well-remembring" and Anamnestes means the "re-minder," corresponding to Aristotle's distinction between memory and recollection. The contents of Eumnestes' library, history (*Briton moniments*) and mythic epic (*Antiquitee of Faerie lond*),

"infinite remembraunce": Eumnestes' active mind is concealed by his "feeble corse" (55.6); a youthful, perhaps illiterate boy who does not remember but only obeys enables the ancient historian's labor; most importantly, the ideal "immortal scrine" of Eumnestes' "incorrupted" memory (56.6-7) transcends the fallible, decaying, material books and scrolls "that were all worm-eaten, and full of canker holes" (57.9).

These opposing terms are difficult to disentangle, but persisting along this tack will alert us to the philosophical and material issues that constrained humanist activity in late sixteenth century England. Eumnestes has outlived Assaracus, Nestor and Methusalem: his memory and authority stretch backward to include the ancestors of the Trojans, the eldest Greek warrior in the *Iliad*, and the longest-lived patriarch from Genesis, encompassing the Roman, Greek, and Hebrew traditions. In this sense, Eumnestes has attained the pinnacle of humanist understanding and has presumably integrated these three systems of knowledge in his mind, although his material tools are rather limited. There is reason to doubt Eumnestes' mental fitness, however. Spenser claims that humanist study's enervation of the body is counterbalanced by its animation of the mind: "Weake body well is chang'd for minds redoubled forse" (55.9), but we should question this mind/body distinction. To do this, we return to another one of Alberti's vivid images of the over-worked young scholar:

> Poor creatures, how exhausted, how listless they are, thanks to long hours of wearisome reading, lack of sleep, too much mental effort, too many deep concerns.[123]

Humanist scholarship exhausts the mind as well as the body, and indeed, Eumnestes shows the symptoms of mental fatigue. Seemingly paralytic, Eumnestes "in a chaire was sett," whereupon he begins "tossing and turning [books] withouten end" (58.1-2), a man whose

---

correspond to the muses Clio and Calliope, respectively (Barker, William W. "Memory." *The Spenser Encyclopedia*).

[123] *The Use and Abuse of Books*. p. 18.

absent-minded "endlesse exercise" (59.2) causes him to constantly lose and misplace books, which are eventually retrieved by Anamnestes.

Eumnestes also seems to integrate the three methods of information storage familiar to Renaissance humanists: memory and oral recitation and manuscript scrolls and codices. Of these media, only Eumnestes' memory is infallible, but it is silent and inaccessible by Arthur and Guyon. The knights must approach history not through the mentally ordered comprehensive wisdom of Eumnestes, the ultimate historian, but in his worm-chewed, lacunae-riddled books: the humanist is only as useful as his material archive; early modern regimes cannot rely solely upon their counselors' genius but must properly equip them. We cannot help but notice that Eumnestes' pathetic reliance on his boy Anamnestes to fetch volumes would have been eased if his study had a bookwheel, invented by Agostino Ramelli in 1588, and that his endless tossing and turning of pages might have been expedited by the compilation of a topically indexed commonplace book. Like Montaigne, Eumnestes drowns in an unmanageable sea of books.

As noted before, the chronicles the knights consult—Arthur examines *Briton moniments* and Guyon *The Antiquitee of faery lond*—prove inscrutable, incomplete, and perhaps even fictitious. Jerry Leath Mills has argued that Arthur's reading of *Briton moniments* should be understood as an example of the 'conventional' historical reading that encouraged prudence in princes, though he seems unaware of the deep mistrust early modern humanists felt toward the *politicus e libro*.[124] Mills works to prove that the four interregna that break dynastic succession in *Briton moniments* result directly and indirectly from God's punishment of sin with sterility and debilitation, not natural causes. Arthur is supposed to recognize this pattern and prudently avoid sin in his own reign. "In the chronicle, then," claims Mills,

[124] "Prudence, History, and the Prince in *The Faerie Queene*, Book II." *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 41.2 (Feb. 1978), pp. 83-101.

"there is an artfully achieved yet thoroughly conventional pattern of deferred retribution for sin."[125] But Mills omits a discussion of the most important political context of the poem's composition, the praise of Elizabeth by means of her Welsh, Tudor lineage: is Arthur supposed to learn from the chronicle, or Elizabeth? In my reading, *Briton moniments'* destabilizing interregna and withering dynasties render the poem completely unsuitable for the praise of Elizabeth; only the abundant, fanciful and fertile golden age narrative of *The Antiquitee of Faery lond* can present a seamless, untroubled lineage and future of the Tudor dynasty.[126]

Just before Arthur reaches the point in *Briton moniments* that would tell of his own reign, the narrative abruptly breaks off in mid-sentence, without narrative closure or appropriate punctuation:

> After him Uther, which *Pendragon* hight,
> Succeeding There abruptly it did end,
> Without full point, or other Cesure right,
> As if the rest some wicked hand did rend,
> Or th'Author selfe could not as least attend
> To finish it: that so untimely breach
> The Prince him selfe halfe seemed to offend,
> Yet secret pleasure did offence empeach,
> And wonder of antiquity long stopt his speach.[127]

Not only does *Briton moniments* lack the key piece of information that makes it relevant to its reader, but the cyclical process of dynastic dissipation and regeneration has transfixed Arthur. The book itself is supposed to contextualize Author's life but is defective, and if Arthur is supposed to interpret the events of the narrative, particularizing its archetypes to his life, to 'study for action,' as Jardine and Grafton might say, he is instead silent,

---

[125] Mills, 98.
[126] As Harry Berger writes, "Spenser places traditional material in historical perspective by quotation and revision: he depicts it as something old, separates those elements which are still valid from those which are inadequate or outmoded, and transforms it into something new." *Revisionary Play*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988. p. 38.
[127] *FQ* II.x.68.

wondering, "ravisht with delight" (69.1). Likewise when Guyon finishes *The Antiquitee of Faery lond*, both knights are "beguyled" and forgetful of time (77.1, 4). The knights have been enthralled by another Spenserian fiction, a show that seems substantial and dynamic but only numbs and paralyzes.

"How brutish is it not to understand" (69.7) what one has inherited from and owes to the motherland, exclaims Arthur at the end of *Briton moniments*, though he himself does not understand. The word 'brutish' here has multiple valences: the literal meaning suggests that an ignorance of history signifies uncultured barbarity, but 'brutish' plays on Brutus, the great-grandson of Aeneas who murdered his parents[128] and founded Britain, implying that Arthur's current inability to recognize his own ancestors falls into a genealogical and national pattern established by Brutus. Finally, because of the Brutus pun, 'brutish' also connotes 'British,' that vague, muddy concept that became at once politically charged and discredited by scholars during the Tudor dynasty: to what extent has Spenser's nascent *ars historica* dismantled Britain's own political mythology?

How should the humanist striving for position at court order his archive, if all of his books are fiction? Arthur and Guyon escape Eumnestes' overflowing archive to read intensively, linearly, deeply in single books, according to Seneca's dictum in the second moral letter, but their minds are still hypnotized, "beguyled," seduced, not enlightened. Spenser finds himself condemning Roman history to the dungeon and letting Eumnestes' misunderstood archive fall into ruin. At a historical moment when memory has been amputated from policy, the Tudors are sterile, and monarchs are distracted rather than instructed by the archive, is to be British not to understand?

---

[128] According to Geoffrey of Monmouth's version, Spenser's primary source for *Briton moniments*.

III. Milton's invocations: humanist hierarchies, the universal archive, and the end of epic

Composed for inclusion in the epic's second edition published in the summer of 1674, Andrew Marvell's quirky poem "On Mr. Milton's *Paradise Lost*" performs a rhetorical maneuver that seems indecorous in a piece praising the "Mighty Poet." Marvell writes that he began reading *Paradise Lost* skeptically, "misdoubting" Milton's execution of his theme even as he mimics Milton's grand style, but later was soon won over and then overwhelmed by the scope of Milton's achievement. Marvell echoes some of *Paradise Lost*'s language and then ends the poem with a defense of blank verse ironically written in heroic couplets.[129] Andrew Shifflett has shown how Marvell's basic structure of friendly skepticism, whole-hearted approval, and then 'imitation' closely parallels Ben Jonson's "To My Chosen Friend," a similar praise poem prefixed to Thomas May's translation of Lucan's *Pharsalia*. Shifflett also ascribes to Marvell the difficult "Tom May's Death": Marvell, Milton (whose *Paradise Lost*, one might say, is Lucanian), Jonson, May, and Lucan are thereby connected in a kind of Stoic republican coterie whose 'middle way' between violence and retirement involved publication in their miniature 'republic of letters.'[130] Shifflett's theory is plausible on formal evidence alone, and it holds rich implications for the group's political tenor, which through these three poems descends from triumphant praise to satire to an indirect, coded acknowledgment of a 'fellow traveler.'

---

[129] There are at least two jokes in the poem: Marvell claims that when he first approached *Paradise Lost*, he fearfully imagined a vengeful, blind Milton overwhelming the world with his massive poem like spiteful Samson crushing the Philistines (6-10). Later, when Marvell deprecates his bondage to fashionable rhyme in front of the perfector of blank verse, he kids about picking a word just because of its rhyme: "I too, transported by the mode, offend,/ And while I meant to *praise* thee must *commend*" (51-2). And Marvell's defense of his initial skepticism as "yet not impious" in line 24 may playfully allude to Milton's 'godlike' quality.

[130] *Stoicism, Politics, and Literature in the Age of Milton*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1998. pp. 107-28.

My reading of Marvell's "On *Paradise Lost*" remains open to the possibilities Shifflett suggests: indeed, I want to push the Stoic resonance a little further, back toward Seneca's carefully limited library and his prudent reading practices. I have already shown how the proliferating archive of print culture wrought profound changes on early modern literary forms, for example how the reliance on topically indexed commonplace books and compendious catalogues, "libraries without walls," produced a disjunctive texture in Montaigne's prose. We have also seen how the pressure to manage an obsolete archive and to remember the right books in a political culture grown skeptical of antique learning strained Spenser's ability to present Tudor dynastic propaganda in *The Faerie Queene*. Now I argue that we can read Marvell's friendly judgment of Milton's epic in the terms that Seneca laid out in his second moral letter: Marvell worries that a single epic, even one by John Milton, will not be able to order the enormous print archive of mid-seventeenth century England. Marvell's evaluation is an economic one, in the sense that Seneca lays out a "Stoic economy of the library" in which it is better to thoroughly read a few classic books than to look through many mediocre books: will Milton's epic live up to its promise? Will *Paradise Lost* be a book that successfully includes and re-orders many other books, justifying its inclusion in Marvell's library?[131]

The second line of the poem is critical: when Marvell reads The Argument and sees Milton "in slender book his vast design unfold," he begins to "misdoubt." Milton's stated intention to narrate the creation of the universe, the war in heaven and the fall of man reminds Marvell of that old discredited early humanist notion of the *bibliotheca universalis*, the building or book that arranges all branches of human knowledge according to their rightful

[131] If Milton's "vast design" in *Paradise Lost* succeeds, then his book, from a Stoic perspective, would be more successful than Gesner's *Pandectae*, because reading the epic would entail immersion in one book that illuminates all others, rather than distractedly flitting about through a disintegrated topical index.

relationships. It has been eighty years since Montaigne confessed that a deluge of vain books ruined his memory, seventy years since Spenser gave up on Eumnestes' decaying, fictitious heaps, but now Milton wants to write an epic that remembers *everything*, that shelves and catalogues the universal humanist archive, and Marvell can only read on hesitantly. Marvell realizes that Milton will succeed and continues using a vocabulary of almost cosmic vastness to describe *Paradise Lost*'s project: Milton will have to find his way through a "wide field" (13) and span a work "so infinite" (17).

Finally Marvell concurs that *Paradise Lost* does paradoxically represent a carefully limited but truly universal library:

> But I am now convinced that none will dare
> Within thy labors to pretend a share.
> Thou hast not missed one thought that could be fit,
> And all that was improper dost omit:
> So that no room is here for writers left,
> But to detect their ignorance or theft (25-30).

Milton has lived up to Seneca's ancient admonition: he has perfectly chosen every fitting item to admit into his archive and has excluded every single vain or unworthy volume. As students of literary history know, Marvell is right to predict that Milton's completion of the *bibliotheca universalis* will have an apocalyptic effect on the epic tradition. On Judgment Day, all creation is brought to light, accounted for, and put in its proper place. After that, there is nothing else to be done.

Earlier in this chapter, while discussing Spenser's banishment of Roman history to Lucifera's dungeon, I mentioned that the spiritualized Protestant epic, in both Spenser and Milton's hands, had proved a powerful tool for paring down the untrustworthy traditions of ancient pagan literature. The late humanists of seventeenth century England were swamped in printed books and looking for ways to curate, select, and exclude texts, not discover more. In large part, it was Milton's command of ancient languages, especially Hebrew and its

Semitic relatives, which allowed him to convincingly order the humanist archive. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton subordinates Greek and Latin culture to the original, correct Hebraic understanding of the universe. In a spirit similar to Isaac Casaubon's historical consciousness, which made him doubt that a philologist could tell a statesman anything useful, Milton exposes the classical tradition as a corrupted product of its (fallen) time.

Milton goes further than most skeptical early modern historicists, though, because he not only denies the classics' direct applicability, but also reveals the true Hebraic foundation underlying the false Greco-Roman civilization. Milton manages the universal archive by creating hierarchies of humanist knowledge, by selecting one book—the Hebrew Bible—over many others, including Homer, Hesiod, Virgil, Ovid, Lucan, Dante, Tasso, and Ariosto, but also by revealing the relationships between Hebrew, Greek, Roman, and Christian learning. Milton establishes hierarchies of knowledge throughout *Paradise Lost* (indeed, he seems to have been practicing archival management of this kind since "The Nativity Ode"), but the invocations of Books 1, 3, 7, and 9 are particularly intense sites of book selection, because Milton's poetic voice begins in hell, ascends to earth, heaven, and then back down to earth and hell, freely adopting the literary traditions appropriate to each realm.

Epic poets conventionally announce their themes in the first phrase of their works—the *Iliad* begins with Achilleus' *menis* or 'wrath'; the *Aeneid* opens *arma virumque*, 'arms and the man,' and Lucan promises to sing *Bella... plus quam civilia*, 'of war worse than civil'—and Milton, too, announces his subject this way. Milton asks the Heavenly Muse to sing "of man's first disobedience," that is, "man's *first* disobedience," a phrase that has far-reaching implications for Milton's conception of subsequent literary and political history. Throughout the invocation, Milton takes pains to claim a certain chronological priority for his poem; by telling the story of the fall of man, *Paradise Lost* will precede and potentially supersede its epic

forbears. Indeed, Milton repeats the word "first" three times in the twenty-six line invocation: he says the Heavenly muse "first taught" the chosen seed and that the same Spirit "from the first wast present" at the creation of the universe. By invoking the Holy Spirit, Milton accesses a knowledge and an ontological category prior to the distortions of the epic tradition: the Spirit who *first* taught, taught truest, the Spirit who was *first* present was *fundamentally* real, not derivative. The repeated adjective *first* is meant to establish Milton's position relative to epic literary history: his teachings are older than the Greeks or Romans and his picture of the cosmos is truer.

We should also read Milton's first phrase "of man's *first* disobedience" as referring to Milton's relative position within epic literary history: Milton seems to imply that rather than chronicling truly glorious deeds, epic literary history actually depicts "disobedience." *Paradise Lost*, then, tells the story of the original disobedience, the first of a series continued by other epics, although they don't know it. This denigration of epic literary history and classical culture runs throughout Book 1: we note that the Greeks and Romans mistake fallen angels for gods and give them false, idolatrous names. Likewise, classical epic mistakes what is actually disobedience for glory, *kleos*, *fama*, or, we might say, the classical tradition has become corrupted, has obscured the truth, and needs Milton's Hebrew to emend and correct it.

It is of course fitting that Milton, as he sets out to re-arrange thousands of years of humanist culture into a more orderly archive, casts himself as a Moses figure, at once the first legislator, the divinely inspired prophet, the seer that liberated his people, and the learned illuminator who mastered astronomy, geometry, geography, and all ancient languages

in order to compose the Pentateuch.[132] Fitting because the Semitic languages were considered the summit of humanist learning, because as Milton advanced in years, he grew to prefer Hebrew poetry to Greek and Latin,[133] and because contemporary Hebrew scholarship in seventeenth century England was pertinent to his epic's subject matter. For instance, John Selden's *De Diis Syris* (1617), "a philological inquiry into the names of the pagan gods of the Hebrew Bible as well as a pioneering study of cultural anthropology and comparative religion," provided the material for the catalogue of demons in Book 1.[134] Milton assumes the authority of the Mosaic lawgiver because in the first two hellish books he admonishes a wayward people and corrects a corrupted tradition obsessed with self-aggrandizing heroism. Not only does Milton in the first two books proclaim the disobedient basis of epic martiality, deconstructing Homer and Virgil, but he also articulates an alternative theogeny, *contra* Hesiod, that locates the birth of the classical deities in Hell. It is crucial to remember that Milton does not simply reject classical mythology or throw it out of his universal archive. These traditions of knowledge are not banished from Milton's library, but they are limited to more circumscribed roles: Milton calls up Turnus and Caesar through the character of Satan only to serve as illustrations of sinful hubris and disobedience, not so that he can praise their deeds.

---

[132] See Jason Rosenblatt's *Torah and Law in* Paradise Lost (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994) for a learned treatment of the various Mosaic traditions present in the poem, and for its reading of the middle Edenic books as governed by the perfect moral covenant of the Hebraic Torah, which is debased into Pauline 'law' after the Fall. Rosenblatt argues that Milton saw Republican England as a second Israel that could be governed by an eternal godly law such as the Torah, but that after the Restoration, Milton lost his faith in human institutions and could only see human government as the damning Pauline law of the New Testament.

[133] On this complex issue see Charles Martindale's *John Milton and the Transformation of Ancient Epic* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), pages 20-8.

[134] Rosenblatt, Jason. *Renaissance England's Chief Rabbi: John Selden*. New York: Oxford UP, 2006. p. 77.

In the famous invocation to light at the beginning of Book 3, Milton celebrates *lux fiat*, God's illumination of the universe through His glory, and quickly "escape[s] the Stygian pool," leaving the trappings of classical mythology in Hell where they belong (excepting a few blind Greek bards who seem to accompany Milton as Virgil accompanied Dante). As the narrative voice ascends to Heaven, the reader loses sight of the charismatic, evil heroes of the first two books: in Book 3's fifty-five line invocation nothing exists except God's light and darkness, its absence. Considered alongside the autobiographical excursus about his own physical blindness and his prayer for "celestial light" to "shine inward" (51-2), the transition from Book 2's forces of evil plotting against God to Book 3's emphatic, light-drenched monism recalls the theology of Augustine's *Confessions*, Book 7: Augustine rejects dualist Manichaeism, considers the perfection of God, and tries to move toward His light.[135]

As the invocation proceeds, Milton's metaphor of light and darkness seems to shift from metaphysical, spiritual 'light' to a meditation on the poet's own physiological blindness. The poet speaks of the "cloud" and "ever-during dark" that surrounds him, who is "from the cheerful ways of men cut off" (45-7). It is this blindness that brings about Milton's most profound alienation from the received humanist archive:

> But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
> Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
> Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
> Presented with a universal blank
> Of Nature's works to me expunged and razed,
> And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.[136]

If *Briton moniments* abruptly stopped in mid-sentence without punctuation and thereby disappointed Arthur's desire for teleological narrative closure, then the book of knowledge that Milton tries to read has been completely erased, "expunged and razed." Milton prays for

---

[135] Augustine. *Confessions*. trans. E. B. Pusey. Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1852. pp. 107-32.
[136] *PL*.III.45-50.

a "celestial light" to "shine inward," and the poet sounds as though he privileges the priority of spiritual divine revelation over the visual study of the humanist archive's books.

But at the end of the prayer-invocation, Milton clarifies the type of sight he desires: the poet asks to "see and tell of things invisible to mortal sight" (54-5). Does Milton here ask for spiritual salvation, prophetic sight, or poetic creativity in lieu of physical sight? His references to Homer and Tiresias at lines 35-6 suggest that physically blind bards have some compensatory vatic sight that can access the Muse, but Milton's metaphor is mixed: we can also read the dark cloud that veils the speaker as another reference to Moses' access to God.[137] There are several possibilities: in Exodus 19: 9 God appears to Moses in a dark cloud as a sign so that the people will listen, which might imply that God blinds bards to authorize their poetic vision. At Exodus 33: 18-23, though, Moses asks to see God's glory so that he can be sure he has found divine grace, but God tells him that no man shall live after seeing His face: God passes by Moses, covering him with His hand. This reading fits rather well because at this moment in *Paradise Lost*, the invocation to light at the beginning of Book 3, Milton is praying to be granted access to heaven to see God's glory: it makes sense that God would cover him as He covered Moses. The other Biblical passage that Milton might be referring to, though it seems unlikely, is Exodus 34: 29-35, when after receiving the Ten Commandments Moses' face glows, and he veils himself before the children of Israel.

So it is possible that Milton's inability to see the book of knowledge may just be a temporary effect of God veiling him in preparation for his journey up to Heaven: we should expect Milton to return from Heaven with revelations and covenants which will re-organize his universal archive even more authoritatively. We have also identified several inter-texts for this philosophically complex invocation. The reader moves from the heroic Hell of Books 1

[137] Additionally, would not the terrible cloud of God's presence be more likely to cut a person off from the cheerful ways of man than mere physical blindness?

and 2, replete with epic-scaled demons who compete with God, to a realm of light with no mention of evil, only 'Night,' the absence of light, which reminds of Augustine's rejection of pagan Manichaeism and abandonment of classical literature for Bible reading and a psychologized interaction with God's 'light' in Books 7 and 8 of his *Confessions*; Augustine's nuanced philosophical and aesthetic traversal from classical to Christian culture would have resonated with Milton. Besides Augustine, there are the blind Greek bards with whom Milton feels an affinity, although it is left ambiguous as to whether they have the same vatic ability that Milton prays for: although Homer did sing of things invisible to mortal sight, he described demonic, false gods, not the true nature of things. The Mosaic context is most intriguing because of what follows in Book 3: a systematic, if heterodox, explication of Protestant Christian theology, the sort of revealed law that Moses himself would have received on Sinai.

As Urania, known since Du Bartas' *La Sepmaine* (1578) as the Heav'nly Muse, lowers Milton safely down to earth in the invocation to Book 7, he entertains fears of his own demise. Leaving the presence of God and returning to the material realm, our poet seems especially nervous about the passage between Heaven and Earth (remember that Satan's journey from Hell to Earth was a superhuman, heroic 'odyssey') and hopes that the Holy Spirit does not accidentally drop him like Pegasus threw Bellerophon. This may simply be the fear conventionally experienced by mortals when they pass into other realms[138], as when a terrified Aeneas, though accompanied by the Sibyl, swung his sword at insubstantial ghosts

[138] But we should be aware of the Pindaric, Lucretian, Virgilian, and Renaissance associations of Bellerophon with the myths of Icarus and Phaethon, patiently uncovered in David Quint's "Fear of Falling: Icarus, Phaethon, and Lucretius in *Paradise Lost*" (*Renaissance Quarterly* 57.3 [Autumn, 2004], pp. 847-881). Upon his return to earth, Milton begs to be spared destruction for his transgressive high-flying; if Milton avoids the fate of Icarus, whose wings were melted by his proximity to the sun, then the Son, too, escapes Phaethon's punishment, though He similarly assumes command of His Father's glorious chariot.

near the entrance to Tartarus.[139] More serious are the threats to Milton's solitary "mortal voice" (24) after his permanent return to earth; he asks Urania's protection, surrounded as he is by scheming, vengeful Royalists and a barbarous rabble that resembles the Maenads who dismembered Orpheus.[140] When Milton says that Urania, the Heavenly Muse will protect him, and calls Calliope, the epic Muse, an empty dream, I take it to mean that in Restoration London Milton trusts his safety to God rather than his social position as poet. In this invocation we see a fairly balanced presentation of competing voices: Milton is perhaps insecure after leaving Heaven and more susceptible to violent, frightening stories from pagan literature, but despite his fears, the poet abides in the Holy Spirit.

Milton structures his last invocation, in *Paradise Lost* 9, not as an ending, but a beginning: "I now must change those notes to tragic" (5-6). The immediate precursor may be the proem of *The Faerie Queene* Book 1, when the erstwhile pastoralist Spenser is "now enforst a farre unfitter taske,/ For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine Oaten reeds" (1.3-4), but Milton's conscious shift of register in the midst of his epic also recalls Virgil's delayed exordium in *Aeneid* 7. Exchanging digressive romantic wandering for a dramatic, invasive siege, Virgil's *maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo,/ maius opus moveo* (7.44-5), "Greater is the series of things growing before me, greater is the work I undertake," anticipates Milton's "sad task, yet argument/ Not less but more heroic" (14-5) as *Paradise Lost* moves from a pastoral, Golden Age Eden to tragic Fall, exile, and cursed wandering, the beginning of human history proper. In this last invocation Milton recasts his essential Argument as God's wrath, noting its priority and superiority to other epic angers. By listing Achilles' wrath and Turnus' rage,

---

[139] *Aen.* 6.290-4.

[140] Apparently intellectual seventeenth century English poets who felt alienated from their society's institutions and patrons obsessed over the death of Orpheus at the hands of a crazed mob, while presentations of his triumph were typical in the sixteenth century. Louis, Kenneth R. R. Gros. "The Triumph and Death of Orpheus in the English Renaissance." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900.* 9.1 (Winter, 1969), pp. 63-80.

and then Neptune and Juno's ire, Milton subordinates the wrath of the epic hero himself to the wrath of the gods that curses the epic hero: like Odysseus and Aeneas, post-lapsarian humanity will quest and labor vainly, cut off from God but still subject to the historical patterns He has ordained. Most of the rest of the invocation rejects the "tedious havoc" of fallen epic warfare as inferior in dignity to Milton's cosmological, theological, and historical material.[141] Milton has now given us the blueprint of human history and the branches of knowledge spun out by the consequences of the Fall, ordering the hitherto ungovernable archive of Renaissance humanism, laying out a universal interpretative schema "so that," as Marvell wrote, "no room is here for writers left."

[141] For *Paradise Lost* as a didactic epic of knowledge rather than war, see Philip Hardie's "The Presence of Lucretius in *Paradise Lost*" (*Milton Quarterly* 29.1 [Mar., 1995], pp. 13-24).

Works Cited

Ahl, Frederick. *Lucan: An Introduction*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1976.

Alberti, Leon Battista. *The Use and Abuse of Books*. trans. Renee Neu Watkins. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1999.

Alexiou, Margaret. *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*. 2nd ed., rev. Dimitrios Yatromanolakis and Panagiotis Roilos. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002.

Allen, Joel. *Hostages and Hostage-Taking in the Roman Empire*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2006.

Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis*. trans. William R. Trask. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1953.

Augustine. *Confessions*. trans. E. B. Pusey. Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1852.

Bacon, Francis. *Of the proficience and aduancement of Learning, divine and humane*. London: Henrie Tomes, 1605.

Bakhtin, M. M. "Epic and Novel." rpt. *Essentials of the Theory of Fiction*. eds. Michael J. Hoffman and Patrick D. Murphy. Durham: Duke UP, 2005. p. 54.

Barker, William W. "Memory." *The Spenser Encyclopedia*. ed. A. C. Hamilton. Buffalo, NY: The University of Toronto Press, 1990.

Beard, Mary. *The Roman Triumph*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 2007.

Berger, Harry. *Revisionary Play*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Bracciolini, Poggio. *Two Renaissance Book Hunters: The Letters of Poggius Bracciolini to Nicolaus de Niccolis*. trans. Phyllis Walter Goodhart Gordan. New York: Columbia UP, 1974.

Burkert, Walter. *Homo Necans*. trans. Peter Bing. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983.

Burman, Thomas E. *Reading the Qur'an in Latin Christendom, 1140-1560*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.

Burns, Thomas. *Rome and the Barbarians 100 B.C.—400 AD*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 2003.

Caesar, Julius. *Commentarii de Bello Gallico*. trans. H. J. Edwards. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1917.

Camden, William. *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England*. 2nd ed. London: Benjamin Fisher, 1630.

Carpenter, Frederic Ives. "Spenser in Ireland." *Modern Philology* 19.4 (May 1922), pp. 405-19.

Casson, Lionel. *Libraries in the Ancient World*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2001.

Chartier, Roger. *The Order of Books*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1994.

Clarke, Jack A. "A Search for Principles of Book Selection, 1550-1700." *The Library Quarterly*, 41.3 (Jul. 1971), pp. 216-22.

Clark, M. E. "Neoanalysis: A Bibliographical Review." *The Classical World*, 79.6 (July-August 1986), pp. 379-94.

Cunliffe, Barry. *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians: Spheres of Interaction*. London: Batsford, 1988.

Davis, Walter R. "Alma, castle of." *The Spenser Encyclopedia*. ed. A. C. Hamilton. Buffalo, NY: The University of Toronto Press, 1990.

Dench, Emma. *Romulus' Asylum: Roman Identities from the Age of Alexander to the Age of Hadrian*. New York: Oxford UP, 2005.

Dix, T. Keith. "'Public Libraries' in Ancient Rome: Ideology and Reality." *Libraries and Culture*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (Summer, 1994), pp. 282-96.

Durkeim, Emile. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. trans. Karen E. Fields. New York: The Free Press, 1995.

Erasmus, Desiderius. *Dialogus, cui titulus Ciceronianus*. Oxford: Lichfield, 1693.

Farenga, Vincent. "Narrative and Community in Dark Age Greece: A Cognitive and Communicative Approach to Early Greek Citizenship." *Arethusa* 31 (1998), pp. 179-206.

Febvre, Lucien. *The Coming of the Book*. trans. David Gerard. London: NLB, 1976.

Gardner, Jane F. "The 'Gallic Menace' in Caesar's Propaganda." *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Oct. 1983), pp. 181-9.

Giamatti, A. Bartlett. *Play of Double Senses*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975.

---. *Exile and Change in Renaissance Literature*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1984.

Girard, Rene. *Violence and the Sacred*. trans. Patrick Gregory. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1972.

Grafton, Anthony. *Defenders of the Text*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1991.

---. *Commerce with the Classics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997.

---. *What was History?* New York: Cambridge UP, 2007.

Hadfield, Andrew. *Edmund Spenser's Irish experience: wilde fruit and salvage soyl*. New York: Oxford UP, 1997.

Hammer, Dean. *The* Iliad *as Politics: The Performance of Political Thought*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002.

Hampstead, John Paul. "*Telos* and Temptation in the Underworld." unpublished seminar paper (Dec. 2008).

Hardie, Philip. "The Presence of Lucretius in *Paradise Lost*." *Milton Quarterly* 29.1 (Mar., 1995), pp. 13-24.

Havelock, Eric. *The Muse Learns to Write*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1986.

Helgerson, Richard. *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

Henderson, John. "Lucan/the Word at War." *Ramus* 16 (1987), pp. 122-64.

Homer. *The Iliad of Homer*. trans. Richard Lattimore. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.

Jardine, Lisa and Anthony Grafton. "'Studied for Action': How Gabriel Harvey Read his Livy." *Past and Present* 129 (Nov. 1990), pp. 30-78.

Jenkins, Raymond. "Spenser with Lord Grey in Ireland." *PMLA* 52.2 (Jun. 1937), pp. 338-53.

Johnson, W. R. *Momentary Monsters: Lucan and his Heroes*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1987.

Krebs, Christopher. "'Imaginary Geography' in Caesar's 'Bellum Gallicum.'" *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 127, No. 1 (Spring 2006), pp. 111-136.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. *The Savage Mind*. trans. George Weidenfeld. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.

Lord, Albert B. *The Singer of Tales*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1964.

Louis, Kenneth R. R. Gros. "The Triumph and Death of Orpheus in the English Renaissance." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. 9.1 (Winter, 1969), pp. 63-80.

Love, Harold. *Scribal publication in seventeenth-century England*. New York: Oxford UP, 1993.

---. *The works of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*. New York: Oxford UP, 1999.

Lucan. *Bellum Civile*. trans. J. D. Duff. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1928.

Lukacs, Georg. *The Theory of the Novel*. trans. Anna Bostock. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971.

Maley, Willy. *Salvaging Spenser: Colonialism, Culture, and Identity*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. *Magic, Science, and Religion*. New York: Doubleday, 1954.

Marotti, Arthur. *John Donne: Coterie Poet*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986.

---. *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1995.

Martindale, Charles. *John Milton and the Transformation of Ancient Epic*. London: Croom Helm, 1986.

---. *Latin Poetry and the Judgment of Taste*. New York: Oxford UP, 2005.

Marvell, Andrew. *The Complete Poems*. ed. Elizabeth Story Donno. New York: Penguin, 1972.

Matthews, Monica. *Caesar and the Storm: A commentary on Lucan,* De bello civili, lines 476-721. New York: Peter Lang, 2008.

McCabe, Richard. *Spenser's Monstrous Regiment: Elizabethan Ireland and the Poetics of Difference*. New York: Oxford UP, 2002.

Meban, David. "Virgil's *Eclogues* and Social Memory." *Arethusa* 130.1 (Spring 2009), pp. 99-130.

Mills, Jerry Leath. "Prudence, History, and the Prince in *The Faerie Queene*, Book II." *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 41.2 (Feb. 1978), pp. 83-101.

Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. ed. William Kerrigan, John Rumrich, and Stephen M. Fallon. New York: The Modern Library, 2007.

Montaigne, Michel de. *The Essayes of Montaigne*. trans. John Florio. New York: The Modern Library, 1933.

Nappa, Christopher. *Reading After Actium: Vergil's* Georgics, *Octavian, and Rome*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2005.

Naudeus, Gabriel P. *Instructions concerning erecting of a Library*. trans. John Evelyn. London: Bedle, Collins, and Crook, 1661.

Quint, David. *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form From Virgil to Milton*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1993.

---. "Fear of Falling: Icarus, Phaethon, and Lucretius in *Paradise Lost*." *Renaissance Quarterly* 57.3 (Autumn, 2004), pp. 847-881.

Rawson, Elizabeth. *Intellectual Life in the late Roman Republic*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.

Richardson, Nicholas. *The Iliad: a commentary*, vol. 6. New York: Cambridge UP, 1993.

Romm, James. *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1992.

Rosenblatt, Jason. *Torah and Law in* Paradise Lost. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994.

---. *Renaissance England's Chief Rabbi: John Selden*. New York: Oxford UP, 2006.

Rudich, Vasily. *Dissidence and Literature under Nero: The Price of Rhetorization*. New York: Routledge, 1997.

Seaford, Richard. *Reciprocity and Ritual: Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City State*. New York: Oxford UP, 1994.

Seneca. *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*. trans. Richard M. Gummere. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1917.

Sherman, William. *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995.

---. *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

Shifflett, Andrew. *Stoicism, Politics, and Literature in the Age of Milton*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1998.

Sklenar, R. *The Taste for Nothingness: A Study of* Virtus *and Related Themes in Lucan's* Bellum Civile. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2003.

Spenser, Edmund. *Poetical Works*. ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt. New York: Oxford UP, 1912.

---. *The Faerie Queene*. ed. A. C. Hamilton. New York: Longman, 2001.

Stadter, Philip. "Caesarian Tactics and Caesarian Style: Bell. Civ. 1.66-70." *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 88, No. 3 (Feb. – Mar. 1993), pp. 217-21.

Starr, Raymond J. "The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World." *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 31, No. 1 (1987), pp. 213-23.

Tacitus. *Agricola*. trans. M. Hutton. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1970.

---. *Dialogus de oratoribus*. trans. W. Peterson. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1970.

---. *Germania.* trans. M. Hutton. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1970.

Tracy, Jonathan Edward. "Science, Egypt, and Escapism in Lucan." Diss. University of Toronto, 2009.

Virgil. *Georgics*. trans. H. Rushton Fairclough. rev. G. P. Goold. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1999.

---. *Aeneid.* trans. H. Rushton Fairclough. rev. G. P. Goold. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1999.

West, M. L. "The Rise of Greek Epic." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 108 (1988), pp. 151-72.

Vita

John Paul Hampstead was born in Augusta, Georgia, and grew up in Powell, Tennessee. He continued his family's tradition of attending the University of Tennessee, where he played rugby and received his B.A. and M.A. in English literature. John Paul began his Ph.D. at the University of Michigan in the fall of 2010.