PONS AELIUS

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General Editor's Comments

The theme of this edition is 'experience'. Experience can define an incredible range of events and circumstances but the message that emerges throughout the papers in this volume is how experience can be dictated by others and the (obvious) problems this can result in. This edition of *Pons Aelius* will take your across the Greek world, and into modern times. You will discover how a women's experience of childbirth could be controlled by others, the troubles of Fabia, and how issues of profession are illuminated across Plautus' work. You will also get the chance to see a lighter side to identity, as you follow Ovid's experiences of dolphins (and question what he really might have seen), walk the city of Rome with Martial, better understand misgivings and pressure in the sword fighting arena, and understand how philosophy can become a gift of well-being. All of this may be capped by a visit to Athens, to view how experience could be rendered and interacted with through material culture.

Experience is something personal to all and oftentimes hidden because of it, but it is hoped not only will this papers inform and educate but will pull aside the curtain, even for a second, and provide a piece of insight into the people of the past. After all, history is defined by people, their actions, and yes, their experiences.

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Justine McLean, *To Train a Militia: the Experience of Public Training in Classical Greece and the Early Modern Holy Roman Empire*

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Introduction and Research Aims:

The purpose of this paper is to explore classical Greek martial training, and our evidence for it, through a comparative lens from the early modern world, particularly the Holy Roman Empire (HRE). This experiential and comparative approach is primarily concerned with the common anxieties of training from the perspective of the individual that can be teased out from the sources and comparisons. There are many sources that have been used to construct a martial culture of ancient Greece (or at least Athens/Sparta), but we lack martial arts treatises apart from one each on wrestling and Pankration.[1] The study of the martial culture and combat training of the medieval/ early modern world has seen significant research output in recent years, in no small part due to the Historical European Martial Arts (HEMA)

[1] Ijäs 2020

movement.[2] This paper is not just a (very short and incomplete) comparative history of these phenomenon but will also include an experiential and phenomenological component to 'back up' the comparisons with, as I have taken part in many similar training/ demonstration activities to those done in the HRE and Classical past, and will use this to investigate that experience from the individual's perspective. Of course, I am very far removed from their time and culture, but as will be argued, certain important parts of the experience are likely consistent. If HEMA treatises, experiential analysis and Classical sources all match up, it should tell us something about the experience of training with arms in the Classical world. This experiential analysis alongside comparing a small selection of period sources will demonstrate several key anxieties to martial training that likely define part of that experience in the Classical and Early Modern world.

In order to perform a fruitful comparison, it is important that the points of reference are comparable in the first place. Their respective military systems, both operated in a world of mercenaries, professional soldiers and militias, and both had a decidedly public face to some of (but certainly not all) their military (or militarily adjacent) training.[3] In particular the paper will focus on training for skill at arms, but many other forms of (often indirect) training existed, such as hunting,[4] sports,[5] and dancing.[6] But

[2] Marsden 2016: Preface

[3] Tlusty 2011: 189ff; Wheeler 1982

[4] Wees 2004: 91; Swinny 2015

[5]Wees 2004: 92; Schwartz 2013: 46; Tlusty 2011: 195

[6] Schwartz 2013: 49-53; Tlusty 2011: 195 210 217-21

it is also important to know that the situations they trained for are also at least broadly comparable, therefore a brief description of the different epoch's warfare will be presented.

Classical Greece:

The hoplite and his phalanx (alongside the Trireme) stands 'supreme', although these are hardly the only ways of waging war in the period.[7] If there is any sort of broad scholarly agreement, a 'hoplite battle' develops in the archaic and early classical period, and then evolves into more complex 'combined arms' warfare during the Peloponnesian War (431–404BC) and beyond.[8] It was, at least in the standard interpretation (if there is one) a battle of motley non-professional militiamen, after all "the classical hoplite was never a uniform creature".[9] It was also supplemented by mercenaries and some cities had programs for maintaining professional (or near enough) soldiers.[10] Skirmishers and perhaps some cavalry are also involved.[11] The exact mechanisms by which hoplite battles were won or lost are hotly debated, but the seemingly crucial 'othismos' (push) would occur, one side would yield and turn to flee.[12] At this point the defeated can expect heavier casualties. The victors would erect a monument, a parlay would return the dead, and terms could perhaps be reached.[13]

[7] Wees 2004: 61ff

[8] Schwartz 2011: 11ff; Kagan and Viggiano 2013: 10-12; Matthews 2012: 240-1

[9] Wees 2004: 52

[10] Pritchett 1974: 221-4

[11] Wees 2004: 61ff

[12] Matthews 2012: 205ff

[13] Wees 2004: 134-8, 184ff

Early Modern Holy Roman Empire:

Although in the high medieval period, battle has traditionally been considered to have been dominated by heavy cavalry (which would make a very poor comparison, culturally speaking, to Classical Greece), there has been a shift to infantry overtime.[14] Warfare is dominated by blocks of pikemen (with halberdiers and swordsmen as well) and musketeers (sometimes crossbowmen/archers), with cavalry fulfilling various roles.[15] The idea being to reduce the integrity and strength of the enemy with missile fire, then hopefully break the opponents pike blocks and drive the enemy from the field.[16] Rogers goes so far as to say that "there is a striking degree of continuity in tactics from Ancient Greece through the early Renaissance, deriving from the essentially constant capabilities of the human body and the limited possibilities for variation in hand-held weapons of steel and wood."[17]

Methodological Issues:

If we wanted to better understand Classical or Early Modern military/ martial arts training for ourselves, attempting to recreate some

[14] Rogers 2010: 203-4

[15] Jörgensen et al 2005

[16] Rogers 2010

[17] Rogers 2010: 208

approximation of that experience seems like an obvious place to begin. Activities like HEMA, archery and sport shooting seem like obvious choices. It is worth stating that "…'archaeology by experience' is quite commonly confused with experimental archaeology by the lay person and even the professional."[18] This experiential and experimental archaeology are often contrasted with each other. Dolfini and Collins state that "The lower rung [compared to experimental archaeology]… would be crowded by a penumbra of hazily defined re-enactment activities, educational demonstrations, and leisurely experiences, which seem to lack any unifying marker. They are normally grouped under the somewhat belittling term of 'experiences'."[19] There are clearly significant methodological issues to consider. If "the senses are historical"[20] then "excavating our own sensory stratigraphy"[21] (nor indeed emotional state) is really rather challenging. We are not 5th century Greeks or Burghers of the 16th Century HRE, nor are we doing exactly what they did, as obvious as that is. A practitioner researcher doing HEMA has to live with that tension, and consider, philosophically, what one is 'actually' reconstructing as well as what one is 'aiming' to reconstruct, to relive, or even what one is trying to achieve.[22] Lukenchuk states that "most of practitioner research is autobiographical, in addition to phenomenological, since it describes, interprets and endows the lived experience with meaning…"[23] In that vein it is worth stating that my main

[18] Jeffery 2004: 13

[19] Dolfini and Collins 2018: 37

[20] Hamilakis 2014: 118

[21] Hamilakis 2014: 119

[22] Mondschein 2021; Schmidt 2021

[23] Lukenchuk 2006: 426

interest is in the works of the mid-late 16th century fencing master Joachim Meyer. I have been studying (and occasionally teaching, currently to a few of my A level students) his system for about six years. It is from an autobiographical experiential perspective, combined with textual comparatives from both the HEMA and classical sources, which will provide insight into the experience of training.

This modern experience is not intrinsically done in the same way, or for the same reasons as in the past. Modern martial arts training (itself hugely diverse in nature, purpose and method) generally has two major focuses self-improvement and preparation for 'self-defence', which are not mutually exclusive. It is not (usually) in the hopes of preparing to fight in a militia for 'the good of the community' and to gain or maintain prestige behoving of one's social rank.[24] There is, to varying degrees, a performative aspect to most modern training but distinctly personal aims affect its focuses, practices and the mind-set in which participants approach it, which is certainly true in HEMA.[25] However, that does not mean that modern experiences do not have something to add to our understanding, and it seems impossible that training in Free Imperial Cities or Classical Polies was divorced from 'self-defence' or 'performing masculine virtue' to focus entirely on the Commonweal.[26]

[24] Forgeng 2015: 37; Tlusty 2011: 221; Crowley 2012: 119; Wees 2004: 97; Lowe 2020 243ff

[25] Schmibt 2021: 247-2; Zillinger 2021: 351-3

[26] Marsden 2016: 63ff; Rawlings 2000: 234-6

Comparing the Experiences

There were a few major avenues for public training with arms in the HRE, the shooting or archery club/ competition[27] and the Fechtschulen (public exhibitions/tournaments, as well as the possibility of potentially lethal brawls with strict legal/social expectations)[28]/ Fencing Schools. Drill could also be taught when inducted into the actual military force, in a similar way to some Greek commanders.[29]

Classical Greek training (with arms) is often assumed to be either non-existent or very personal and small scale[30]excluding perhaps 'chosen men' such as the Theban Sacred Band or the later Ephebia of Athens.[31] However, there is one clear exception that bears resemblance to the early modern practices, that of the Hoplomachia. Most famously they feature in Plato's dialogue the Laches, where we are introduced to the public demonstrations of men who are available to hire to teach others how to fight in hoplite arms (ἐν ὅπλοις). Specifically, the platonic dialogue revolves around hiring a Hoplomachos to educate a young son and the nature of courage. Meyer's 1570 manual (et al) have similarities to the Laches, both texts suggest, often public, martial training/ activity as a cure to young men's tendencies to drinking and other stereotypical issues of mores.[32] Both

[27] Tlusty 2011: 189ff

[28] Amberger 2007: 183-4; Tlusty 2011: 89ff, 210ff

[29] Pritchett 1974:219-221; Whaley 2013: 496

[30] Wees 2004: 89

[31] Pritchett 1974: 221ff

[32] Forgeng 2015: 42; Plat. Lach. 181e

likewise suggest such training is a necessary, or at least useful, preparation for war.[33]

However, our main interest is in the experience of undergoing such training publicly, so this leads to the question, what exactly is 'public training'? Classical Greek training is envisaged as "mainly informal, private exercise, most of it aimed at general physical fitness rather than specialist combat skills."[34] This might not capture the full picture. Of course, training entirely alone and unobserved is not public, such as 'solo drills' or individual cutting or target practice. However, training usually requires several people and often takes place in a public or semi-public place (a club for example). Martial arts training (in fact, much physical training) is often intrinsically public. Even Theocritus (3rd century BC) has a father son training montage.[35] Rather than a hard and fast divide, I would suggest training is on a continuum, from solo drills in one's own household, to exhibitions in front of an audience. There certainly is, at least for me, the desire to 'do better' than others and one's past self. In my time at UWTSD our university HEMA society would organise a martial arts demonstration at the annual 'medieval day', which were somewhat similar to Fechtschulen. Shooting competitions are also deeply public affairs, in my experience each person lines up behind the stand and carefully watches the clay's flight and the actions of the shooter ahead of them. There is certainly a much greater

[33] Forgeng 2015: 43; Plat. Lach. 182a

[34] Wees 2004: 89

[35] Theoc. 24. 125-6

element of social pressure to 'do well', with a bit of adrenaline and fear when competing or training in more public arenas. This is probably better preparation for the highly public nature of combat in the Classical Greek or Early Modern world. Furthermore, the demonstration of martial virtue is not just for the battlefield, but also in training and in competition. After all, the people you lived and trained with may well also be the people you fight alongside.[36] What follows below is a comparison of various personal experiences, and a small selection of evidence from the Classical and Early Modern world to try to hone in on the shared nature of this experience.

1. *Anxiety over seeming foolish or failing, despite actual or proclaimed expertise.*

Modern Concern: Personal Experience: I undertook some aid work in Ukraine in August 2022. We were doing some refresher training on tourniquet use before heading to Kharkiv, and I was asked to prove I knew how to use one. However, I had been trained and practised with my own tourniquet which was with my ballistic vest (not required to be worn in Kyiv), and borrowing a different style, fumbled with it for a few more seconds than is acceptable. I felt acutely embarrassed, as I had assured the instructor that I knew what I was doing.

Early Modern Concern: Meyer 1570: "the practice of combat has its origin in a true rational foundation, and is not based on slipshod sword mummery… the knightly art of combat has always been held in great

[36] Crowley 2012: 45; Tlusty 2011: 204-6, 221

esteem… while street-mummers are taken for the most worthless and useless folk in the world."[37]

Classical Greek Concern: Plato's Laches: "people would be on the look-out for even the slightest mistake on his part, and he would incur much grievous slander; for the pretension to such skill arouses jealousy, so that unless a man be prodigiously superior to the rest in valor he cannot by any means escape being made a laughing-stock through professing to be so skilled."[38]

2. *Concern over martial performance.*

Modern Concern: Personal Experience: When sparring at any of the clubs I have attended, I sometimes feel an anxiety that my performance might be judged, the instructors often watch from the side-lines. After an exchange, one might receive a nod, a smile or some critique from them. Furthermore, one's peers are also quite free to watch as well. As silly as it seems, one wishes to do well in front of one's peers for fear of any loss of face, or perhaps just not showing the best that you can do.

Early Modern Concern: ""What peasants war were you in? How many have you killed, you cripple?"... For citizen soldiers like Zeindlweber… verifying physical prowess through close combat were the paths to honour, status and materiel reward."[39]

[37] Forgeng 2015: 49

[38] Plat. Lach. 184b-c

[39] Tlusty 2011: 91

Classical Greek Concern: Although the Iliad is not classical, it is foundational to Classical culture and therefore something to draw upon here. The Iliad's applicability to Classical warfare is made by Wees suggesting "it may have been precisely because heroes and hoplites were not worlds apart that the Iliad remained an inspiration to later generations…"[40] The Iliad is so full of disputes over honour, and the desire to use violence to gain honour/ display prowess that it's hard to pick a particular passage. However, the public ridicule of those who cannot live up to such standards demonstrates this, such as when Odysseus rebukes a lessor warrior "You are a coward and no solider; you are a nobody either in fight or council; we cannot all be kings"[41].

Plato also suggests that a city might host regular drill and what might be martial contests in which winners receive praise and losers receive shame.[42] Although this does not necessarily reflect reality, perhaps it does reflect attitudes. However, it is worth noting that the (imagined?) sparring activity in Xenophon's Cyropaedia ends on a lighter note of mutual embarrassment and mirth,[43] so just as in modern HEMA, the experience is hardly constantly a tense one.

3. *A suspicion of martial arts masters/other interpretations.*

Modern Concern: One of the beautiful things about HEMA is the multiplicity of focuses and interpretations. It can also be somewhat frustrating if one splits their time between different clubs, as ingrained

[40] Wees 2004: 153-165

[41] Hom. Il. 2.200-205

[42] Plat. Laws. 8.829a-831b

[43] Xen. Cyrop. 2.3.17-20

habits may be applauded in one setting and criticised in another. My instinctual gut reaction is to fall back on what I know best, and it takes a conscious effort to actively explore new options, for example in a different styles of footwork in the clubs I attend practices.

Early Modern Concern: In the early modern world, this suspicion occurs both from other masters and the general population.[44] Pseudo-Hans Döbringer states "illegitimate masters…will be praised by the uncomprehending just for the liveliness of it as they fiendishly arrange themselves with those beautiful parries and wide fencing-around and deliver wide and long hews slowly and sluggishly."

Classical Greek Concern: Plato's Laches: "And yet in all the other arts, the men who have made a name are to be found among those who have specially pursued one or other of them; while these persons, apparently, stand out from the rest in this particularly hapless fate of their profession. Why, this man Stesilaus, whom you watched with me in that great crowd as he gave his performance and spoke in those high terms of himself before us, I have watched elsewhere giving a finer entertainment in the form of a very real display that he made against his will."[45] Plato then goes on to describe how this man's own invented weapon fails in a naval battle.

Conclusions:

[44] Tlusty 2011:215-7; Price 2011: 94

[45] Plat. Lach. 183c ff

In summing up, similar martial anxieties and therefore similar experiences are clear in this comparative, which is not terribly surprising considering certain social/economic/political parallels. These anxieties help might help us to better understand the ancient world in two main ways.

Firstly, the Hoplomachia themselves are clearly viewed with some element of suspicion, as are their events which is similar to how Fencing Masters in the Early Modern world. This should not be surprising, spurious martial arts masters still come in for ridicule today.

Secondly, although authors such as Wees may be correct that most training was private,[46] the non-private needs exploring, the Hoplomachia's 'sales pitch'[47] may be more than it appears, the comparative evidence could suggest as much. There might well have been an intense anxiety for them to prove themselves and their training when in public. However, we cannot be certain.

Clearly this is only a very surface level overview that, it is hoped, at least suggests an experiential and comparative approach to be one worthwhile investigating when it comes to the nature of military training in Classical Greece.

[46] Wees 2004: 89

[47] Wheeler 1982: 225

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Marios Koutsoukos, *Fruits of the Divine Work: Attaining* Eudaimonia *Through Theurgy*

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Theurgy, 'the divine work', is one of those systems of spiritual practice which flourished in what John Dillon aptly terms the 'Underworld of Platonism', in Late Antiquity. It is a life-long pursuit of communication with the divine One, employing ritual expertise to invoke and manifest the multiform taxonomies of cosmic beings with the aim of gradually elevating the practitioner's soul through the successive spheres of being (Majercik 1989:1-3).

But what purpose does this ascension of the soul serve in practical terms? Why would one decide to devote the tremendous effort and discipline required to achieve it? The purpose of this paper is to examine these questions from an emic perspective, to the degree that is possible, in order to shed more light on our current understanding of the motives behind theurgy. It is not always easy (nor entirely feasible for that matter) for modern scholars of antiquity to adopt such a perspective and understand primary sources in perfect sync with the cultural and philosophical subtext which they carry. Yet, in order to approximate this analytical perspective as much as possible, we will have to rely mainly on Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis*[1]. Iamblichus was a Neoplatonic philosopher who flourished in the first half of the fourth century as the head of the School he founded in the city of Apamea, in modern-day Syria. His work *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and* Assyrians,

[1] The original text of the *De Mysteriis* cited in this paper is that of Clarke et al., 2003. All translations are also taken from the same edition, with emendations by myself.

commonly referred to by the abbreviation of its Latin title simply as the *De Mysteriis,* is an epistolary treatise in defence of theurgy. It is the most complete and intricate description of Iamblichus' theurgic system whose influence transcended the borders of the School of Apamea and the Near-East and shaped the metaphysics of the Platonic School of Athens in the middle of the fifth century onwards. The scope of this paper prohibits it from going into the minute details of Iamblichus' theurgic system. Rather, it will focus solely on the last chapter of his work and argue that the bottom-line goal of theurgy is the attainment of well-being[2]. Through a discussion of Iamblichus' own arguments on the matter, we will show how this well-being is not merely a perceived state of mind but it also a lived physical experience, encompassing the body and fully harmonising the theurgist's physical existence with all the components of the cosmos.

To understand how such a unification of the material and the immaterial can be conceived of as possible, not to mention highly desirable, one must first adopt the Iamblichean understanding of what theurgy is: it is a synthesis of science (in the Platonic sense of the term[3]) and metaphysics. It essentially provides a philosophical background for ceremonial magic and religious rites. At the same time, Iamblichean theurgy takes Neoplatonism out of the purely intellectual sphere and puts it into tangible and effective action

[2] Chapter X, which Iamblichus entitles *ὁ περὶ εὐδαιμονίας λόγος* (the discourse concerning happiness). The translation 'well-being*'* for '*εὐδαιμονία*' used in this paper's title follows that given by Clarke et al. 2003:351. For the purposes of this paper, the terms *eudaimonia*, well-being and happiness are used interchangeably.

[3] For an elucidating discussion of Plato's philosophy of science and what constitutes science in the Platonic understanding, see Gregory 2000:62-67 & 83, and also DiGiacomo 2022:17 & 22-23

by considering rationality and revelation as interlinked and complementary[4]. In order to better adopt the aforementioned emic perspective, we need to first understand that Neoplatonism is an etic term. It refers to the interpretation of Plato's philosophy and metaphysics which began in 245 CE when the celebrated philosopher Plotinus moved from Alexandria, where he had studied, to Rome and there amassed about him a large group of followers[5]. In truth, however, Plotinus, just like Iamblichus after him and all the other 'Neoplatonists', regarded himself simply as a Platonic philosopher who wasn't so much inventing new interpretations of Plato as he was following in the master's footsteps, being a link in an unbroken 'golden chain' of intellectuals which was perceived to go back even further than the Classical Era, to Pythagoras and the Pre-Socratic philosophers themselves[6]. This belief, however, did not mean that Neoplatonic philosophers were Platonic purists. If anything, they were children of their time; a time of pronounced syncretism in religio-philosophical thought and ritual practice. As such, connecting the dots between Platonic metaphysics and ceremonial magic that could impact physical reality wasn't so much of an innovation as it were a natural conclusion of the era's dominant way of thinking. In this context, *eudaimonia* (happiness, or well-being in the broader sense- of the term) was understood both as a philosophical as well as a physically achievable *desideratum*. In Plato's *Symposium*[7], Diotima and Socrates discuss the purpose of having good things (τἀγαθά), i.e., intelligible sources of well-being (*εὐδαιμονία*) as well as physical ones, like health or beauty. They very quickly reach a unanimous

[4] Addey, 2014:239-240 & Shaw, 1985:4-6

[5] Remes, 2008:1

[6] Remes, 2008:3-5

[7] *Symp.,* 240e-205a

consensus: happiness (*εὐδαιμονία*) is the result of one's possession of the good:

—And what will one attain who gets good things? —That's easy to answer, I said; he will be happy. — Yes, she replied, those who are happy are happy through the acquisition of good things, and we have no further need to ask for what purpose a man wishes to be happy, when he wishes to be so.

—Καὶ τί ἔσται ἐκείνῳ ᾧ ἂν γένηται τἀγαθά; —Τοῦτ' εὐπορώτερον, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ἔχω ἀποκρίνασθαι, ὅτι εὐδαίμων ἔσται. —Κτήσει γάρ, ἔφη, ἀγαθῶν οἱ εὐδαίμονες εὐδαίμονες, καὶ οὐκέτι προσδεῖ ἐρέσθαι ἵνα τί δὲ βούλεται εὐδαίμων εἶναι ὁ βουλόμενος.

As Price[8] observes when discussing the concept of *eudaimonia* in Plato, these aforementioned 'good things' can be distinguished between goods which facilitate action and goods which are attained through action. Thus, the sources of man's well-being can rely on conditional or unconditional goods. Conditional goods are resources at one's disposal that when put to proper use lead to a positive outcome, but when used badly can have catastrophic effects. They are what enables one to do more than the average person. From a more Neoplatonic point of view, this 'average person', as we shall presently see, is none other than the non-theurgist, the man bound by the bonds of necessity and fate. On the other hand, unconditional goods are those whose possession and usage cannot have negative results. Wisdom, for instance, is such an unconditional good.

[8] Price, 2011:11-13

For Iamblichus, divine foreknowledge (*θεία πρόγνωσις*), a quintessential result of theurgy properly practiced, is one such unconditional good. The Apamean sage makes it abundantly clear that this type of foreknowledge has nothing to do with vulgar magical techniques of divination or prognostication[9]. When it is conjoined with the gods, it truly gives the practitioner a share in divine life, a life full of all the goods (*Μόνη τοίνυν ἡ θεία μαντικὴ συναπτομένη τοῖς θεοῖς ὡς ἀληθῶς ἡμῖν τῆς θείας ζωῆς μεταδίδωσι*).

Nevertheless, this gods-given foreknowledge is not all-encompassing or all-seeing. In a way, it is a conditional good as well since it relies on the providence of the gods themselves. When it is necessary to exercise virtue, Iamblichus says, being in a state of uncertainty concerning future events contributes positively to a more virtuous course of action undertaken. In effect, the gods provide to the theurgist all that they need for the improvement of the soul (*ἕνεκα τοῦ τὴν ψυχὴν βελτίον ἀπεργάζεσθαι*[10]), effectively acting as the dispensers of both conditional and unconditional goods. Thus, we find theurgy's ultimate aim to be firmly grounded in Platonic reasoning: if theurgy is union with the gods and union with the gods is attainment of all that is good, then theurgy is the obtainment of all that is good (i.e. *eudaimonia*) through communication and establishing an affinity with the gods, as stated by Iamblichus[11]:

Know, then, that this is the first road to well-being, having for souls the intellectual plenitude of divine union. But the sacred and theurgic gift of

[9] *Myst*., X.3.288.5-11

[10] *Myst*., X.4.289.15

[11] *Myst*., X.5.291.8-12

well-being is called the gateway to the creator of all things, or the place or courtyard of the good.

Αὕτη μὲν οὖν νοείσθω σοι (ἡ) πρώτη τῆς εὐδαιμονίας ὁδός, νοερὰν ἔχουσα τῆς θείας ἑνώσεως ἀποπλήρωσιν τῶν ψυχῶν· ἡ δ' ἱερατικὴ καὶ θεουργικὴ τῆς εὐδαιμονίας δόσις καλεῖται μὲν θύρα πρὸς θεὸν τὸν δημιουργὸν τῶν ὅλων, ἢ τόπος ἢ αὐλὴ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ.

When starting on this path of union with the divine, the soul is purified through its experiencing of the good and, alongside with it, the body as well –though to a lesser degree since it is immersed in matter and, therefore, subject to the imperfections of that sphere (*ἁγνείαν τῆς ψυχῆς πολὺ τελειοτέραν τῆς τοῦ σώματος ἁγνείας*[12]). It is only once this purification has taken place that the mind (διάνοια) is released from "everything which opposes it" and union with the gods is achieved[13].

In order to understand this experience of *eudaimonia* from a Platonic perspective and how it encompasses both the physical and the intelligible aspects of an individual's being, we must turn our attention to the *Philebus*, the Platonic dialogue which focuses on that very theme. In this dialogue, Philebus contends that the good consist of enjoyment (*τὸ χαίρειν*), pleasure (*ἡδονὴν*) and delight (*τέρψιν*) and everything similar to those[14]. All of these, obviously, are physical aspects of well-being. On the other hand, Socrates, his collocutor, on the other hand, maintains that true *eudaimonia* is derived

[12] *Myst*., X.5.291.12 & 292.1

[13] *Myst.*, X.5.292.1-3

[14] *Phlb.*, 11b4-6

from though (*φρονεῖν*), and intellection (νοεῖν) and memory (*μεμνῆσθαι*) and all that is related to these, i.e., correct belief (*δόξαν τε ὀρθὴν*) and true reasoning (*ἀληθεῖς λογισμούς*)[15].

As Jorgenson[16] points out, Socrates is not directly opposing these characteristics of *eudaimonia* to the physical ones put forth by Philebus, but rather presents them as better and more agreeable to physical experiences of well-being. In other words, physical *eudaimonia* is not entirely excluded from the picture of union with the divine; it just plays a secondary role and is just one of the first steps towards it. In effect, Iamblichus is adopting the viewpoint of Socrates in the *Philebus* and expounding upon it. His wholistic view of a unified cosmos, where material and intelligible things are but different hypostatic links in the same chain of being, couldn't exclude any expression of the good, even if it were merely physical. After all, the Platonising mind recognises an intrinsic connection between the divine and the good. All that is bad, Iamblichus argues, comes from a forgetfulness (*λήθη*) concerning what is good and from a deception (*ἀπάτη*) concerning what is bad. Just as the good is intrinsically connected with the divine[17], so is the bad inseparable for the mortal, where fate and necessity are the operative forces[18]. According to Iamblichus, it is through the "sacred methods" (*ἱερατικαῖς ὁδοῖς*) of theurgy that one is to be liberated from the bonds of necessity and fate and thus

[15] Phlb., 11b7-c1

[16] Jorgenson, 2018:119-122

[17] *Myst.*, X.4.289.6-7

[18] *Myst.*, X.5.290.10-11

experience a better, more refined form of well-being through direct communication with knowledge of the divine[19]:

Thus, we must consider how one might be liberated and set free from these bonds [of necessity and fate]. There is, indeed, no way other than the knowledge of the gods. For understanding the Good is the paradigm of well-being, just as obliviousness to the Good and deception concerning evil constitute the paradigm of evil things. The one, therefore, is united with the divine, while the other, inferior, destiny is inseparable from the mortal.

Σκοπεῖν δὴ δεῖ τίς αὐτοῦ γίγνεται λύσις καὶ ἀπαλλαγὴ τῶν δεσμῶν. Ἔστι τοίνυν οὐκ ἄλλη τις ἢ τῶν θεῶν γνῶσις· ἰδέα γάρ ἐστιν εὐδαιμονίας τὸ ἐπίστασθαι τὸ ἀγαθόν, ὥσπερ τῶν κακῶν ἰδέα συμβαίνει ἡ λήθη τῶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ ἀπάτη περὶ τὸ κακόν· ἡ μὲν οὖν τῷ θείῳ σύνεστιν, ἡ δὲ χείρων μοῖρα ἀχώριστός ἐστι τοῦ θνητοῦ.

Necessity and fate are concepts intrinsically linked with the sublunary world of matter in Neoplatonism. Necessity, in the Platonic theology of the *Timaeus*, is that which governs the behaviour of all material things, in contrast to the activities of the intellect, which are associated with the soul[20]. Necessity can be understood as natural or causal necessity: this means that material things are always determined by the agency of external causes. They are the mercy of circumstance, i.e., fate. The soul, on the other hand, is able to perform rational actions and be the cause of these. In effect, intellect can

[19] *Myst.*, X.5.290.12 & 291.1-2

[20] *Tim.*, 46c-e

manipulate necessity and break its vicious circle which generates human passions[21].

Within this theurgic context, fate is to be understood as the supernatural source of all physical necessity. In the *Chaldean Oracles*, a text received by Late Antique theurgists as profoundly authoritative, we read the aphorisms 'do not turn your attention to nature; her name is marked by fate[22]' and also that 'the theurgists do not become part of the herd of fate[23]'. This portrays accurately the contradictory vision of theurgists who, according to Shaw[24], held that only through mortal existence human beings could come to experience the bliss of immortality. Thus, it becomes evident that although the intellectual goods of the cosmos take precedence over the material ones, they must both coexist in a harmonious state, rectified through theurgy, in order to produce *eudaimonia*. The embracing of this precedence of intellectual happiness over material well-being is also the dividing line between theurgists and vulgar magicians. A magician would pursue *eudaimonia* by seeking to address everyday problems and satisfy material needs and wants through supernatural means. A theurgist, on the other hand, has much higher aims, befitting a philosopher who seeks to be in unity with the all-encompassing one[25]. In Iamblichus' words, this notion is expressed in the following terms[26]:

[21] Mason, 2006:284-285

[22] Fr. 102: *Μὴ φύσιν ἐμβλέψῃς· εἱμαρμένον οὔνομα τῆσδε*

[23] Fr. 163: *Οὐ γὰρ ὑφ' εἱμαρτὴν ἀγέλην πίπτουσι θεουργοί*

[24] Shaw, 2016:177-178

[25] Corrigan in DeConick et al., 2013:524 & 526

[26] Myst., X.7.293.4-6

Nor do the theurgists pester the divine intellect about small matters, but about matters pertaining to the purification, liberation and salvation of the soul.

Οὐδὲ περὶ σμικρῶν οἱ θεουργοὶ τὸν θεῖον νοῦν ἐνοχλοῦσιν, ἀλλὰ περὶ τῶν εἰς ψυχῆς κάθαρσιν καὶ ἀπόλυσιν καὶ σωτηρίαν ἀνηκόντων.

It is safe to suppose that these 'small matters' Iamblichus mentions are spells such as those found in the *Greek Magical Papyri*, where gods are invoked to secure the love of a woman[27], to cause illness to another person[28], to grant success in gambling[29], to separate a couple[30], or perform a healing[31]. In what way then does theurgy differ from vulgar magic on a practical level, when it too calls upon the same gods as the magician in its search for *eudaimonia*? Is it only through the perceived loftiness of its purpose? No. Divine epiphanies, i.e. the physical manifestation of the gods on the material plane, is the practical aspect of theurgy's attainment of *eudaimonia*. Regardless of the operator's philosophical conceptions of what constitutes the good, it is ritual expertise which brings down the dispensers of all that is good and receives *eudaimonia* directly from the source[32]:

The disposition of the souls of those making invocations receive, at the epiphany of the gods, a perfection freed from and superior to passions,

[27] PGM VII 981-993

[28] PGM IV. 2441-2621

[29] PGM VII 423-428

[30] PGM XII 365-375

[31] PGM XXIIa 9-10

[32] *Myst.*, II.9.87.11-13 & see also II.6.81.10-12

and at the same time an activity entirely better than they themselves could attain, and they participate in a love divine and an enormous gladness of mind.

Αἱ τῶν καλούντων τῆς ψυχῆς διαθέσεις ἐπὶ μὲν τῆς ἐπιφάνειας τῶν θεῶν παθῶν ἐξηλλαγμένην καὶ ὑπερέχουσαν παραδέχονται τὴν τελειότητα ἐνέργειάν τε κρείττονα παντελῶς, καὶ θεῖον ἔρωτα καὶ εὐφροσύνην ἀμήχανον ὅσην μεταλαγχάνουσιν.

In effect, as Gregory Shaw has pointed out[33], the degree to which the theurgist attains *eudaimonia* is perceived as a gift from the gods themselves, a product of divine providence. True and lasting well-being only begins when mortal passions are overcome and replaced by something much more fulfilling to the soul than mere material goods.

To reiterate and conclude, theurgic well-being is a ritualistic approach to the process of purifying and perfecting the soul. Despite its focus on the intelligible, it does not negate the existence of the body. In fact, it is a process where the first stepping stone is the purification of the body, so that it also enjoys everything good. Furthermore, the gradual ascent towards theurgic *eudaimonia* prepares the mind for communication and communion with the divine. In turn, this leads to a union with the gods, who are the source of all that is good and the dispensers of well-being throughout the cosmos. Finally, this participation in an utmost state of contentment and bliss deposits the human soul in the bosom of the demiurgic god (*τῷ δημιουργικῷ θεῷ*) securing a unification of the alone with the alone.

[33] Shaw, 2003:37-39

This theurgic paradigm of attaining well-being rests partly upon the philosophical understanding that the world of matter is subject to a determinism beyond one's control and partly upon the belief that this preordained fate can be transcended through focused ritual action. In this light, *eudaimonia* is not entirely an intellectual achievement, a point of view of the individual, but something which is bestowed from an outside agency. Nevertheless, this 'gift', as Iamblichus calls it, is actively earned through ritualistic communion with the One and not passively received through mere supplications. Theurgy enables the practitioner to assume control of their own fate up to a certain degree and thus takes precedence over simple religious praxis. In other words, the key to *eudaimonia* is a proactive engagement with the cosmos and its spiritual taxonomies.

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Joe Broderick, *Martial and his Rome: Lived Experience of the Imperial City*

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Introduction

Marcus Valerius Martialis, known to us as Martial, was born in Bilbilis, Spain, in approximately AD 40, before moving to Rome in around AD 64, where he remained for most of his life.[1] It was in the imperial capital where Martial sought his fame and fortune, writing over 1,000 (largely) short poems, called epigrams, as he made his way in the city as a client of influential and affluent patrons.[2] An epigram is broadly defined as a short, witty poem culminating in a striking thought or expression, although the initial definition in Greek points to an inscription of some kind, often dedicatory in tone, but also sometimes representing the creator or donor.[3] Pierre Laurens offered a more representative definition, of epigram as 'a brief, tightly structured poem, written for preference in the elegiac distich, tied to an object or a particular circumstance, the interpretation of which is shaped by a powerful controlling intellect.'[4] The essential, specific features of what constitutes an epigram, particularly a Latin epigram in its development from Hellenistic forms, has been widely debated, but overall, the genre's most characteristic features are

[1] Nisbet 2015: i.

[2] Nisbet 2015: viii.

[3] Sullivan 1991: 78.

[4] Laurens 1989: 25.

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brevity, a bipartite structure, a pointed twist in the conclusion achieved by wit or humour, and the foregrounding of the authorial persona.[5]

For a significant period, Martial's epigrams have been mined as a source of social history for the Rome of the Flavian dynasty, since so much of Martial's poetry focuses on the everyday events and occurrences of Rome and her people, a concept largely absent from the more elevated forms of Latin literature such as epic. However, as numerous historians have begun to argue, Martial's epigrams comprise light and witty verse, focusing on humour and jokes, meaning Martial's work throws at best an intermittent light on Flavian Rome, as well as the assertions that realist writers such as Martial, in their offering of images of Roman life, are also likely to be consciously constructing a reality that sets up central aspects of their self-representation, rendering any study of historical fact troublesome.[6] With that said, with such an abundance of repeated references made to the city of Rome and the people within, as well as Martial's own insistence that his epigrams are tied to living reality,[7] it is feasible that certain elements of authenticity would be conveyed. It is within this argument that this article will be couched, that of a writer whose work can be suitably examined for a lived experience of everyday Rome.

Martial as the tour guide *par excellence*

[5] Lausberg 1982: 20-9; Citroni 2019: 39-40; Watson 2005: 201.

[6] Roman 2010: 88; Woolf 1993: 203-21; Fitzgerald 2007: 7.

[7] Martial *Epigrams*: Rome 10.4.

Inside the very first of the twelve books of epigrams, Martial gives his reader an insight into the Rome in which he both lives and operates. In 1.70, this takes the form of his book standing in for Martial at the morning greeting of patrons. Here, Martial directs the book through the streets of Rome, the reader witnessing the grandeur and size of the city's monuments. Martial highlights a temple and the house of the Virgins, before *inde sacro ueneranda petes Palatia cliuo, plurima qua summi fulget imago ducis* ('from there, make for the holy Palatine by way of the Sacred Way, where glistens many a portrait of our Commander-in-Chief').[8] Martial then reminds his book not to linger at the sun-rayed Colossus, a gigantic wonder which apparently surpasses the famous masterwork at Rhodes. Further in the same book, Martial gives out directions for finding the nearest bookshop with copies of his work, somewhere *contra Caesaris est forum taberna scriptis postibus hinc et inde totis, omnis ut cito perlegas poetas* ('Opposite Caesar's Forum there's a shop with its doorposts entirely covered in writing, front and book, so you can quickly skim through all the poets').[9] Both of these epigrams highlight the sheer scale and size of Flavian Rome, not to mention its apparent beauty, but we also receive a sense of a shared writing community, of a popular shopping street for bibliophiles. Martial utilises this technique expertly throughout his corpus, that of magnifying the architectural brilliance of Rome through the lens of simple directions, as though given in passing to a stranger. This is used in a similar vein in the third book, where Martial is wondering aloud as to the whereabouts of an associate, Canius Rufus, which allows Martial to artfully sketch a vision of Rome's opulence and opportunities for relaxation for his

[8] Martial 1.70. 5-6. Translated by Gideon Nisbet.

[9] Martial 1.117. 10-2.

reader. Martial questions whether Rufus ambles along the colonnaded walks of the Argonauts, is washing in many of Rome's bathhouses, or even *rure Tulli fruitur atque Lucani?* ('partying at the country villa of Tullus and Lucanus?')[10] Finally, in an epigram from the fifth book, Martial highlights how one can enjoy life in Rome if freed from the constraints of business, informing his friend of the ideal spots for leisure: *sed gestation, fabulae, libelli, campus, porticus, umbra, Virgo, thermae, haec essent loca semper* ('Instead, going out for a drive, some plays, some little books, the Campus, the portico, a bit of shade, the Virgo, the baths. That's where we'd be, that's what we'd work at').[11] The key setting of this epigram is the Campus Martius, where so many of the city's public amenities, including porticoes, baths, and temples, were situated.[12]

While Martial can certainly conjure spectacular images of Rome to the audience's mind's eye, the epigrammatist is also adept at highlighting the smells of the city. In an epigram from the fourth book, Martial composes a humorous and satiric ditty on the wicked odour of a woman he knows, building on a *cumulatio* of similes which evoke her horrific stench.[13] The reader is treated to comparisons of the fumes rising from the polluted Tiber, a weary veteran's boot, exhalations of wretched defendants, and wrestlers out of the Sabines. The smell of the exhalations of the defendants has been interpreted to mean that their bad breath has been caused by a bad diet, on account of being poor, their distress stemming from being unable to afford a

[10] Martial 3.20. 16

[11] Martial 5.20. 8-10; Howell 1995: 99-101.

[12] Howell 1995: 100.

[13] Soldevila 2006: 114.

lawyer.[14] From Martial's lived experience in the imperial city, while Rome is presented as rather striking and beatific in places, the smells do not echo this. Akin to so many other large cities, Rome is afflicted with numerous bad smells, on account of the diverse population and pollution caused to the waterways.

Along with the smells predicative of a sizeable city, there is also the issue of noise, something which Martial brings to life in the most vivid way. 9.68 gives us Martial bemoaning a schoolteacher for keeping him awake: *nondum cristate rupere silentia galli: murmure iam saeuo ueberibusque tonas* ('The crested cockerels have not yet shattered the silence, and you're already laying down a backbeat of furious mutters and smacks'); it is sunrise and already the lessons have begun.[15] In an exaggerated method of humour, Martial claims the lauding of the crowds in the Flavian Amphitheatre is less deafening, chastising the schoolmaster for keeping him awake all night.[16] This is enhanced by epigram 12.57, where Martial justifies to a friend his retreat from Rome, detailing all the diverse professions in Rome in a small space, a picture of the multitudes crammed in together. It is an assault on the senses for the reader, Martial describing the rattle of the moneylender's grubby table, the shouts of the disciples of Bellona, and someone hammering gold-dust, driving the speaker to distracted exhaustion.[17] Once again, Martial cannot sleep because of this cacophony, exaggerating this effect for the reader in the final lines of the epigram where Rome itself is at his bedside,

[14] Lilja 1972: 129

[15] Henriksen 2012: 285-7.

[16] Martial 9.68

[17] Boehrer 2013: 62.

continuously jostling him awake. Also present in the epigram is how the themes of sleep, urban space, and money are tightly linked. Martial voices to his friend that *nec cogitandi, Sparse, nec quiescendi in urbe locus est pauperi* ('Sparsus, there's no space at Rome for a poor man to think in peace and quiet'), before detailing how his companion's broad driveway and vineyard at his large townhouse renders him incapable of recognising Martial's plight.[18] Here, sleep and space are treated as commodities as something which one can purchase, where two friends can have wholly separate lives based purely on money. The satire of Martial conveys an image of noisy inner cities against the quiet of the outskirts, an image which still rings true some 2000 years later. This epigram in particular serves as a wonderful contrast to the poems discussed earlier; this is the real city living, this is the real Rome for so many, a chaotic, cramped, and unrelenting urban suffocation. Martial's experience is one of someone both trapped in a confined environment and yet fully immersed in Rome's vastness.[19]

These streets in Rome, however, do provide Martial with an abundance of easy targets to lampoon in his epigrams, including hypocrites (5.8), false friends (4.40), perverts (3.80), undesirable guests and inept hosts (3.82), legacy hunters (9.8), and an almost interminable procession of social climbers (3.59). Rome is full, to almost a bursting point, of undesirable people and characters who inspire so much of Martial's material. The epigrammatist may perhaps exaggerate their frequency for humorous purposes, but a city such as Rome must necessarily have possessed a certain amount of such

[18] Martial 12.57. 3-4.

[19] Rimell 2008: 26.

personages, so that these lampoons would maintain relevance for the reader.[20] That is, if the personages and circumstances were entirely the poet's own creation, unknown to the audience and Roman society at large, the joke would fall flat.

Domitian as Rome's rebuilder

Martial wrote many epigrams on the diversity of people and professions mixed in together on Rome's streets, but some of them move away from the ideas discussed above, highlighting the positive changes brought to Rome by the emperor Domitian (r. 81-96). Praise poems were very common to epigram, particularly to an influential figure within the context of hopeful expectation of gifts or patronage, so we must remain cautious taking Martial literally. Nevertheless, Martial's focus on Domitian as a great rebuilder of Rome and restoring it to its rightful grandeur is a frequent theme throughout the books, and with Domitian as one of Martial's key expected readers, it would have made sense for these praise poems to reflect reality, at least to an extent. In 7.61, Martial praises Domitian on his urban legislation, whereby hawkers and their obtrusive booths have been moved off Rome's streets and back into their own doorways: *nunc Roma est, nuper magna taberna fuit* ('Now it is Rome; not long ago it was one huge stall').[21] Before Domitian's reforms, rude street vendors had taken the city away from the people, commanding the lanes, but now the emperor has restored Rome, so to Martial's lived experience, he feels as if the majesty of the imperial city is

[20] Sullivan 1991: xxiii, 113.

[21] Martial 7.61. 10.

now returned, as well as being provided with a modicum of space. As mentioned, this theme is continued throughout Martial's corpus, with a *Nova Roma* rising like a phoenix from the ashes of the great fires of Nero's apparent fiddling; never has Rome been more beautiful or architecturally impressive than under Domitian, with a seemingly endless list of constructed or restored landmarks for all to admire and appreciate.[22]

Martial as client

Thus far, we have charted Martial's lived experience in Flavian Imperial Rome chiefly through his physical descriptions of the city, but we also need to discuss more of Martial's experience as a client poet in Rome, and his apparent struggles in succeeding as a writer. In his third book, Martial reveals to his reader the difficulties on surviving in Rome as a poet, specifically 3.38 in his rebuttal to an associate who aims to succeed in Rome by writing poetry: *insanis: omnes gelidis quicumque lacernis sunt tibi, Nasones Virgiliosque uides* ('Lunatic. See that lot in the ice-matted overcoats? Every last one of them is a Naso or a Virgil').[23] Martial is reminding the reader that the ability of the poet is of no consequence, the profession itself will provide little remuneration, certainly not a liveable income. This life of client poet in Rome is tough and wearisome, Martial detailing the routine in a separate epigram, where the first two hours of the day grind down the clients paying their respects to their patrons, then later

[22] Sullivan 1991: 153-5.

[23] Martial 3.38. 9-10

commanded to make their way to a dinner at a different patron's home after some customary leisure activities.[24] This *cumulatio* once again builds on the hustle and bustle of Rome, to the extent that even outwardly pleasant activities become tedious when they are compulsory for Martial.[25] This epigram also seeks to convey another complaint: that this strenuous routine does not allow Martial the time and *otium* for his writings, too busy is he as an attendant.

One may try and surmise that Martial's lived experience of Rome was a largely negative one if we use the epigrams from this discussion. However, the preface to the twelfth book, where Martial has now departed the chaos of Rome for the rustic quiet and simplicity of his former home Bilbilis, reverses this notion. Addressing his friend Priscus, Martial admits to missing Rome; Bilbilis lacks a ready audience for his work, his Spanish hometown providing limited opportunities for the showcasing of his wit and satirical observation. Rome is also the home of many cultural benefits Bilbilis does not possess: the libraries, the theatres, and literary parties and symposiums Martial thought he had been satiated by.[26] At the conclusion of the preface, Martial illuminates some of the anxieties over the level of quality this book, written away from Rome, has in comparison to his others. The poet worries that these epigrams may appear provincial and unsophisticated: *ne Romam, si ita decreueris, non Hispaniensem librum mittamus, sed Hispanum* ('so that I don't end up sending Rome a book that's not so much made in Spain as Spanish through

[24] Martial 4.8

[25] Soldevila 2006: pp. 138-9.

[26] Martial 12. Preface.

and through').[27] Rome, therefore, is Martial's literary home, the place which provided him with the inspiration for his material, and his audience. For all Martial's protestations concerning the noise, the smell, and the people, it is something he needed to produce his great work, his lived experience in the imperial city forging deep, unbreakable bonds within his literary psyche.

Conclusion

Martial's Rome seems very real, almost hyper real, leaving the reader with a sense of their surroundings bordering on discombobulation, as the epigrammatist brings to life the streets of the imperial capital like no other author achieves, giving us a spectacular vista of regular people going about their business. This Rome is highly significant, because it is something normally neglected by other forms of ancient literature, who opt instead to focus on mythological figures and lives of the cultural and societal elite. Martial, however, possesses no such discrimination, shining a light through his epigrams on everyone and everything he can conjure for his reader, depicting scenes and figures from everyday life, ranging across the entire spectrum of literary and human existence.[28] As we have mentioned earlier, through Martial's genre and his manner of writing, we must charge extreme caution taking Martial at his word. These epigrams are not confessional poetry or travel writings, so they will not necessarily be striving for a totally realistic treatment of Rome. However, this does not mean that we cannot

[27] Martial 12. Preface.

[28] Dominik 2016: 413.

glean elements of truth and experience from Martial's epigrams, with his own protestations reinforcing this within an epigram in the tenth book, where Martial criticises the reading of the higher genres of literature as futile, containing nothing pertaining to real life: *hominem pagina nostra sapit*.[29] Martial's page *smells* human, it is real life, and something the epigrammatist feels is tremendously relevant and worthwhile for people to read, rather than waste their time consuming more epic, mythological dross. Martial's lived experience, chiefly told by way of his bringing to life of Rome's streets through his epigrams, is something tangible we can learn from, and moreover, is something we should value as a worthwhile component of Flavian Rome's social history.

[29] Martial 10.4. 11.

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Karen Fox, *Ovid's Orcastrated Exile*

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The Fishue

(Figure 1. A map of the Black Sea and the Bosporus Strait connecting it to the Mediterranean Sea, the Greek colonies are labelled. Available from: https://oxfordre.com/classics/page/3991)

In exile, Ovid wrote the *Tristia,* meaning 'sadness' in Latin. The experience of exile on the Black Sea Coast is told through five books of poetry that he wrote for his audience in Rome. Ovid Specifically refers to the climate, the weather, and an animal in the Black Sea region in *Tristia* 3. 10. 43-44:

tum neque se pandi possunt delphines in auras tollere; conantes dura coërcet hiems;

[At such times the curving dolphins cannot launch themselves into the air; if they try, stern winter checks them;]

The mention of dolphins in this line of the *Tristia*, is not unsurprising considering that the dolphins that inhabit the Black Sea have no known predators and therefore, the cetaceans dominate the food chain. The Black Sea will have been, and continues to be, a relatively safe space for their species.[1] The interesting aspect of this line stems from Ovid's comment on the dolphins not jumping out of the water, a behaviour known as breaching, surfacing behaviour or porpoising, and if they do try, the climate prevents them.[2] I propose that Ovid's use of the dolphin in this paratactic line, is reflective of an observation of the different species of cetacean in the Black Sea and I will demonstrate this by exploring the characteristics, behaviours, and the habitats of the Bottlenose, Common Dolphin and Harbour Porpoise. I will show that by ecocritically evaluating this line, a specific subspecies of Cetacean was first recorded in Ovid's Tristia.

The Dolfins

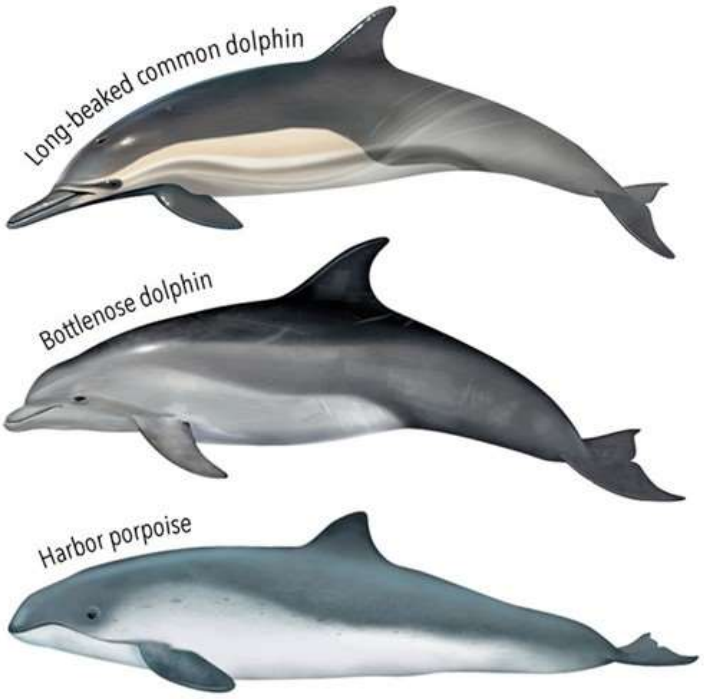
The Common Dolphin (*Delphinus Delphis* [**DD**]) is one of the most recognised dolphins in the Black Sea. The Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops Truncatus* [**TT**]) also appears in large numbers as does the Harbour Porpoise (*Phocoena Phocoena* [**PP**]).[3] Although the latter is not technically a dolphin, the difference between a dolphin and a porpoise is in their

[1] Sanchez et al 2017: 217-218. A Shark was once introduced to the Black Sea but due to the high salinity levels it very quickly left.

[2] Hunt 2017: Online.

[3] ACCOBAMS 2021: 14; Birkun Jr et al. 2014: 288-289 who estimates cetaceans that occupy the numbers to be somewhere in the range of 200,000 and 600,000 from a number of surveys conducted with different methods.

appearance as ‘dolphins have longer snouts, bigger mouths, more curved dorsal fins, and longer, leaner bodies than porpoises’. [4] Figure 2 shows the differences in features among all three cetaceans, and they are distinctive differences, but they do look very similar to the untrained, or indeed the uninterested, eye. The DD has a unique yellow stripe that starts at its melon,[5] and runs down the sides of its body. The TT is recognised generally through its falcate dorsal fin and is coloured grey to black with a light underside.[6] The PP objectively looks very similar in colouring to the TT, but it is seemingly less lean without the defined dolphin rostrum,[7] and as mentioned earlier, this is why the PP is not classed as a dolphin.



(Figure 2. An illustration of the three cetaceans that inhabit the Black Sea demonstrating their

[4] WWF 2022: Online

[5] The protruding part of a dolphin’s head.

[6] Wursig and Perrin 2009: 250

[7] Coming from the Latin to mean beak. The rostrum is sensitive and is used by dolphins to feel objects.

different physical characteristics. Available from: Rurik 2020 https://keypennews.org/stories/dolphin-pays-a-rare-visit-to-the-kp,3605)

TenanSea

The DD's preferred habitat covers the entire Black Sea, its Bosporus strait, and the Marmara Sea and while this may, at first glance, seem to cover all the Seas in the Pontic region, the DD does not go into the Sea of Azov located in the upper northeast part of the Black Sea.[8] The TT is similar in geographical population to that of the DD except it has been known to populate the Kerch strait that leads to the Azov Sea.[9] PP, however, has been known to populate all known areas of the Black Sea, the connecting straits, the Azov and Marmara Sea, the North Aegean.[10] While all three Cetaceans have been sighted in quite broad geographical areas, PP has more area coverage than the dolphins indicating that they are more readily adaptable to populate the Black Sea and its connecting marine topographies as seen in Figure 3 above. Nevertheless, the likelihood of which cetacean are spotted can be narrowed down further as they have certain habitat preferences. The DD has a principal habitat of open sea which is more than 200m deep,[11] and this is further evidenced by the low recordings of DD stranding off the Bulgarian coast.[12] Whereas the TT and the PP prefer the 'circumlittoral area

[8] Birkun Jr et al. 2014: 132

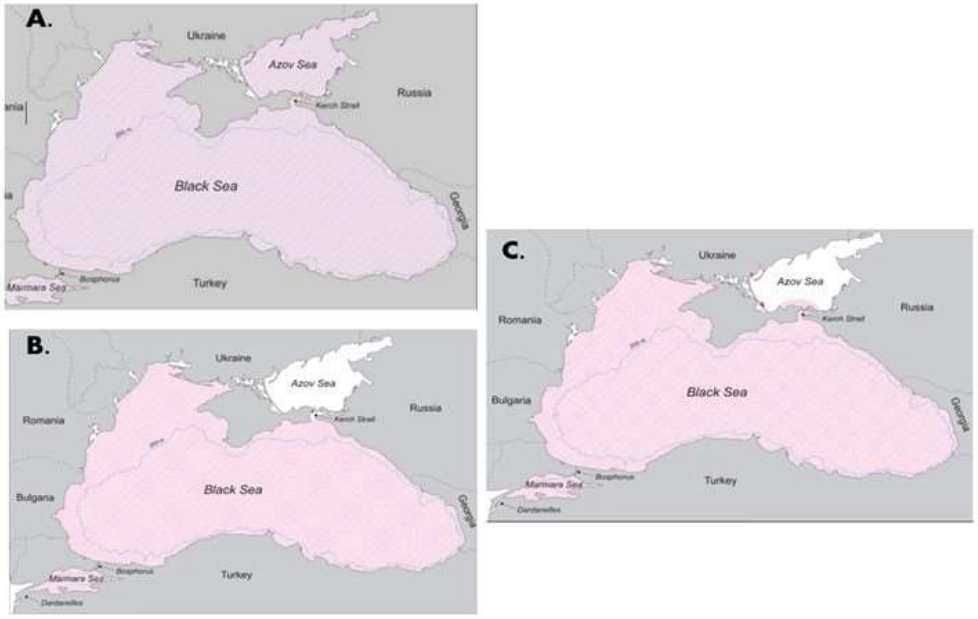
[9] Birkun Jr et al. 2014: 137

[10] Birkun Jr et al. 2014: 128

[11] Birkun Jr et al. 2014: 132; Sánchez-Cabanes et al. 2017

[12] Raykov and Panayotova 2012: 1824 who state there was only three sightings of this from 2006-2010.

over the continental shelf (usually more than 6 m but less than 200 m deep)'.[13] Coupled with the PP's preference for the shallow shore side of the sea over the straits, it has been known to enjoy fluvial and estuarine environments, and seeks out brackish waters and lagoons visiting rivers at warmer times of the year.[14]



(Figure 3. A habitat map detailing the common areas the three cetaceans of the Black Sea have been known to occupy. Map A shows the geographical range of the Harbour Porpoise; Map B for the Common Dolphin; Map C for the Bottlenose Dolphin. Available from: Birkun Jr et al. 2014)

The habitat preferences of the Cetaceans can vary depending on migration and breeding patterns. As the DD prefers deeper waters, their migration patterns tend to be either in or out of the Black Sea with no seasonal consistency. The TT has been observed to seasonally migrate towards the Bosporus Strait and the southern sea area during the colder months and Uluduz et al noted in his study in 2020, that during winter no

[13] Birkun Jr et al. 2014: 138;.128; Reeves and Notarbartolo di Sciara 2006; Uluduz et al. 2020

[14] Birkun Jr et al. 2014: 128

TT calves were sighted on the southern black Sea littoral.[15] Contrastingly, the PP cetacean had the highest number of calves spotted during the winter months as seen below in figure 4.[16] This indicates a high level of activity from the PP during winter on the littoral of the Black Sea.

Season	*Phocoena phocoena*		*Tursiops truncatus*		*Delphinus delphis*	
	Calf	Juvenile*	Calf	Juvenile	Calf	Juvenile
Winter	5	NA	0	3	0	1
Spring	4	NA	7	3	1	0
Summer	2	NA	3	2	4	0
Autumn	0	NA	0	4	0	0

(Figure 4. Number of sightings of young animals during the land-based observations. * Only one category of young animals (calves) was recorded for the harbour porpoise because the remaining age categories are difficult to distinguish reliably from the shore. Available from: Uluduz et al. 2020 p.435)

To Sea, Or Not Too Sea

Behaviourally, all three of the Cetaceans do display some degree of surfacing behaviour, which is why aerial and vessel surveys are the favoured, and the recommended, method of observation in the majority of population studies and censuses.[17] The DD can breach the water, but much prefers the agility involved in acrobatic bow rides,[18] and can usually be found doing this alongside vessel surveys which makes them somewhat

[15] Uluduz et al. 2020: 435

[16] Uluduz et al. 2020: 435

[17] ACCOBAMS 2021:7-11; Birkun Jr et al. 2014 :144 for details of the methods used on the largest scale surveys.

[18] This is where the dolphin will ride alongside a vessel and start jumping at the front. They appear to swim in line with the bow of the vessel to perform in this way.

harder to count.[19] The TT fully breaches the water and in the first study of its kind, Lusseau 2006 looks at why they do and concludes that it is a combination of non-vocal communication and a feeding patterns,[20] but this conclusion does not take into consideration the full scope of theories in place for the TT breaches such as the suggestion of ectoparasite removal, simply play behaviour and the ironic, human observation.[21] Crucially, the PP does not breach the water at all.[22] The PP is extremely shy and while it may exhibit a behaviour known as 'porpoising', in which the porpoise breaks its head above the water,[23] it never fully breaches the water. This may be because of the preferred habitat of the PP is shallow waters, lagoons and rivers which would not be able to accommodate the force of impact a full breach would cause.[24]

Fin

The PP's preference for these shallow areas for habitat and breeding, especially during the winter months, indicate that this cetacean would have been the animal Ovid is referencing in line 44. This is further enhanced by the geographical positioning of Tomis as seen in figure 1, which is mainly a

[19] Wursig and Perrin 2009: 10; 256.

[20] Lusseau 2006 :263, Lusseau states that this non-verbal communication is used as a defensive measure against prey but as the dolphin has a limited number of prey and is at the top of the food chain in the Black Sea, this does not encompass all the reasons they may breach the water.

[21] Wursig and Perrin 2009: 6 &10. Wursig and Perrin explain that there are a multitude of reasons for breaching that are hard to define into a simple cause and reason. The reason for the human observation being ironic is that by breaching the water, humans can, in turn, observe the dolphins by their breaching.

[22] Breach in this context is defined as at least 50% of the dolphin leaving the water.

[23] NOAA 2022 : Online explains that this is much different to the way the dolphins break the water as the Harbour Porpoise only touches the surface to breathe and this can be heard more than seen.

[24] NOAA 2022 : Online states that the Harbour Porpoise is more likely to roll on the surface of the water rather than break and splash on the water.

coastal town that is south of the Danube River and has many inlets surrounding the town from the Danube to the Black Sea. These shallow, oxygenated areas of connection across land would have been the first to freeze during the winter months and this, in combination with the breeding activity observed from Uluduz et al. 2020 in the same season, and the behavioural trait that the PP does not breach the water, provides strong evidence that Ovid was observing the behaviour of the Harbour Porpoise, not a dolphin. It is a logical conclusion for Ovid to state, with the high activity of the Porpoise during this time, that the reason the assumed dolphin is not demonstrating breaching, a characteristic associated with dolphin behaviour, is due to ice forming in the water. It does not seem reasonable for a poet to be able to distinguish that this is a different animal altogether from the dolphin and furthermore, the assumed dolphins' behaviour promotes, and further enhances, his argument in this section of the *Tristia*; that it is too cold to be authentic to one's nature and one cannot exist as one is meant to in the environmental conditions of Tomis.

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Antonia Aluko, *Intersectionality in Plautus' Poenulus: Issues of Identity*

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Intersectionality describes the overlapping and interconnecting layers of marginalisation a person faces due to having two or more marginalising characteristics within their identity (e.g. race, sexuality, gender, (dis)ability, age etc). Intersectional theory is valuable in understanding identity,[1] and how different characteristics intersect/interact within the world of Roman comedy. By reading intersectionally, we can begin to understand social hierarchies, revealing facets of what we determine identity to be. In comedy this creates humour. Roman comedy, regardless of stylisation/perversion, reflects real lives and so, comedy emanates from the truth of everyday experiences as we recognise ourselves.[2]

Plautus' *Poenulus* (254 to 184 BCE) was a *palliata*, a Roman comedy adapted from a Greek original,[3] likely written in the beginning of the third-century BCE whilst the Second Punic War (218 to 201 BCE), or Hannibalic

[1] For the purposes of this article, I deem identity to be the characteristics that typify an individual or group of people.

[2] In this way, Roman comedy resembles observational comedy, where humour emanates from aspects of everyday life (Byrne 2012: 9). It is the recognition of ourselves and our unique experiences that we see in comedy which creates humour and resonates with us (Byrne 2012: 9-10). Dutsch has already written of how Roman comedy, regardless of its stylisation or perversion, reflects real lives and experiences (Dutsch 2008: 47). See Dutsch 2008 for more on the nature of Roman comedy's real-life influences.

[3] The *Καρχηδόνιος* (the Carthaginian) by Alexis.

War, was still in living memory. The plot surrounds Agorastocles who is enamoured by Adelphasium, a prostitute, kidnapped from Carthage and enslaved and by the end of the play it is revealed that she is a free woman.

Stereotypes/stock characters recur in Plautine comedies.[4] There are similarities between the rigidity stock characters' actions/personalities and Roman social hierarchy.[5] The *servus callidus* (clever slave) is confined to stock behaviour regardless of attempts to change social status/identity in the plot. These regular comedic facets remind the audience of the strict, immovable social structure they adhere to.[6] Group

Plautine scholarship on the *Poenulus* has reached an impasse as scholars mention the play in passing[7] or focus on nuanced aspects, e.g. reconstructing Punic or singular lines/characters[8]. As a result, this paper will use intersectionality to bring forth and answer questions of identity within the *Poenulus.*

As noted above, Intersectional Theory, coined by Crenshaw to explain Black women's experience of racism and sexism in modern society, defines how a person can experience layers of difference or 'marginalising characteristics'[9] excluding them from society and each of those distinct

[4] O'Bryhim 2020: 123, 131.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] E.g. Raia 1983; Manuwald 2011; Lomas 2014; Prag 2014; Witzke 2015.

[8] Including but not limited to Krahmalkov 1988; Franko 1995; Franko 1996; Dutsch 2004; Bork 2018; Moodie 2018.

[9] I will use this term to describe a person's identifying aspects that can be discriminated against e.g. race/ethnicity, gender, class (or enslaved status), sexuality, disability etc.

groups.[10] When these different characteristics meet, the individual is at a unique social location and has an exclusive experience dependant on how their identity is understood and presented. These social locations can be placed onto a social map that can be viewed, analysed, and investigated.[11] This paper explores the social map of the *Poenulus'* characters to further understand each of the social locations/experiences that can be attributed as intersectional.

My argument concentrates on three of the *Poenulus'* characters who exemplify difference in some way, exploring how they navigate their identity. Section 1 explores Adelphasium's creation of space to distance herself from the perspective of other enslaved prostitutes.[12] Section 2 analyses Milphio's weaponization of gender, language and meta-theatricality[13] to dominate women through obscuring his enslaved status. Section 3 briefly addresses the nurse, Giddenis, as the object of ridicule and, arguably, the most intersectional character in the play. This paper uses intersectionality to shed new light on the identities of the *Poenulus'* characters through demonstrating how notions of identity appear, interact, and intersect; creating a clearer understanding of how characters navigate and balance aspects of their identity in the context of their societies in the Plautine text.

[10] Crenshaw 1998: 314-5. These distinct groups can include but are not limited to various ethnic communities (e.g. the Black Community), the LGBTQ+ community, the Feminist Movement etc. Although each of these groups have a marginalising characteristic, the singular focus of the axis of their oppression can and has invited those who belong to more than a singular group e.g. Black women to face misogyny in the Black community and racism in Feminist spaces.

[11] Space in social geography is 'the container of social relations and events', Valentine 2013: 2.

[12] Valentine 2013: 3.

[13] Baldick 2008: 'metadrama [metatheatre]', the actor's awareness of their character's status.

I: Adelphasium

Through the *Poenulus*, Adelphasium repeatedly distances herself from women and slaves which suggests how she uses social affective distancing as a coping mechanism for the traumatic aspects of her identity as an enslaved sex worker (*Poen*.265-75). Social affective distance, conceived by sociologist, Bogardus, is outlined by Karakayali as the connection between sympathy and feeling socially near to another person or group.[14] Hence, if a person feels less sympathetic for another, they feel socially far or distanced from that person/group.[15] This idea of social distance, which can change depending upon whom is being addressed (affective distance) then explains Adelphasium's negative regard of groups to which she should belong (women, enslaved people and female sex workers) [16] as she struggles to reconcile with her social position at the intersection of class and gender.

Being pure is one of the facets that allows Adelphasium to insult, denigrate and distance herself from other sex workers. Adelphasium names the other prostitutes *servilicolas sordidas,* soiled slave-girls (*Poen*.267). These adjectives degrade the enslaved women whilst uplifting Adelphasium as exceptional as unlike the other prostitutes, Adelphasium is *purus* (pure) and unsullied. Plautus utilises purity as a praised characteristic to justify Adelphasium's critique of her peers. Unlike the other prostitutes she is not soiled as she retains virgin status regardless of enslavement.

[14] Karakayali 2009: 540.

[15] Karakayali 2009: 540-1.

[16] Adams 1983: 321; Witzke 2015: 9, 11; I will not conflate these groups as they each have unique experiences/social locations which deserve to be distinguished.

Adelphasium uses various synonyms for prostitute, *prosedas*, *alicarias* and *amicas,* to describe other sex workers but refers to herself only as a slave/*servus* (*Poen*.265-70, 363,1200). *Proseda*, derives from the verb, *sedeo,* and relates to the act of sitting. The ancient commentator Paulus draws the connection from Plautus' use of *prosedas* to women who advertise sex outside a *stabula* (animal stables/brothel, c.f. Paul.*Fest.*p.226M). *Proseda* is dehumanising, associating prostitutes to animals; thus, *prosedas* indicate lower classed prostitutes. *Amicas* (lover) seems kinder in comparison to the connotations of *proseda*. Similarly, *alicarias* is a spelt grinder, suggesting another lower-class worker. Hence, Adelphasium naming these women negative, socially low terms indicates her perception of other prostitutes and the variety in terms suggests she considers herself a high-class sex worker.[17] Adelphasium never specifies the type of slave she is, which could emanate from a position of shame/disgrace; as Lorde writes there is shame in identifying the aspects of difference you experience.[18] It is clear that her self-reference as a *servus* is another act of distance from the low-class workers she insults.

Adelphasium's disdain of other prostitutes is not simply a criticism against her peers but a show of her distancing from the enslaved class as an identification forcibly placed onto her and not something she had chosen. She marginalises this group to distract and distance from her intersectional identity as an enslaved prostitute. Intersectionality is helpful here in understanding how through belittling other prostitutes Adelphasium upholds

[17] Adams 1983: 321; Witzke 2015: 9.

[18] Lorde 1984: 114, 118.

the basis of her own lost identity. This allows her to assume a higher status for herself over other courtesans than what her intersectional identity entails. One can assume that Plautus portrays her in this manner to remind the audience that Adelphasium is a suitable love interest for Agorastocles even though she is currently in the role of slave.

Thus, Adelphasium as the *pseudo meretrix* (fake prostitute) is unlike other prostitutes not simply through her former free status as Rei suggests but also through the retention of her purity. The *pseudo meretrix* aligns with the role of the *puella* (girl) in remaining pure, subservient, and docile yet open to sexual activity via her profession, characteristics that fulfil the desires of the Roman male.[19] These characteristics place Adelphasium as a figure of ultimate Roman male desire, eroticising her innocence whilst elevating her from the debauched connotations of prostitution.

Adelphasium's disdain is a show of her distancing from forced assimilation into the enslaved class. Instead, she chooses to marginalise this group of lower classed sex workers to distract from her intersectional identity at the intersections of race (as a Carthaginian), class (as a sex worker) and gender (as a woman). At these intersections, she should experience extreme marginalisation from the other, 'socially respectable' characters (e.g. Agorastocles) in the play. Yet, through distancing herself, she is able to don the guise of a different role that places her socially above those who would be in the same class as her, she insults and denigrates them. As a result, Adelphasium moves from the role of an enslaved Carthaginian prostitute into

[19] Raia 1983: 1.

that of the sex labourer *puella*, once free but still pure. Through outlining her purity and difference as above other courtesans, Adelphasium demonstrates her use of distancing to cope with her new status as an enslaved freeborn sex worker.

II: Milphio

Plautus' *servus callidus* (tricky slave) trope and Milphio's possible occupation of the role has been extensively discussed.[20] Less scholarship discusses Milphio's utilisation of language to gain authority on the stage in contrast to his socio-economic position. Johnstone calls this authority 'status': tensions of dominance between characters on stage which differs from characters' social status. [21] Johnstone does not account for these character's lived experience and so, I propose the opposite, that language/dominance by Plautine slave characters allow them to gain verbal authority in a role that in the Roman Republic would usually lead to silence.[22] Milphio's language perpetuates the clever slave trope with double entendre and puns, allowing him to claim superiority/authority over women. He vies for more power within the *Poenulus'* social hierarchy by accessing and diminishing parts of his identity, valuing gender over enslavement.

Milphio, through his speech creates intersectional tensions, placing gender as the higher prized characteristic, enabling him to criticism women.

[20] See Maurach 1964; Maurice 2004; Moodie 2018; Stewart 2012.

[21] Johnstone 1979: 36; Moodie 2018: 322.

[22] Stewart 2012: 8.

Yet the object of Milphio's criticism is unclear: citizen or enslaved women or women in general. This ambiguity highlights that socio-economic status is less vital to one's identity in the *Poenulus* than gender, creating an opportunity where the enslaved Milphio can discriminate to protect his masculine identity. Lorde theorises that one with a singular marginalising characteristic criticises others with different characteristics to increase their own superiority; reminiscent of Black men's patriarchal access despite their marginalisation and using this access to exhibit misogyny/sexism.[23] This section demonstrates Milphio's speech as a platform where he gains status through marginalising others despite his own enslavement.

Milphio uses sexism, ableism and misogyny to uplift his status by claiming that he can keep a secret better than a mute woman (*Poen*.876). The deployment of *mutae mulieri* (dumb/mute woman) portrays Milphio's negative characterisation of women by placing himself as more intelligent if one translates *mutae* as dumb. The noun, *mulieri* (woman) creates ambiguity in the object of Milphio's denunciation: enslaved or free women.

If we translate *mutae* as mute, Milphio is using ableist language to suggest he is more trustworthy than a woman who has never spoken. This hypothetical woman becomes a target for ridicule, subverting the talkative women stereotype by having no voice. Milphio weaponizes humour to attack the intelligence of a disabled woman, irrespective of class. This ambiguity is interesting as marginalised groups e.g., women and enslaved people modify

[23] Lorde 1984: 117-9; Crenshaw 1998: 329, 331-3.

'dominant language' for subjective means.[24] Relation between these groups extends past comedy, demonstrating how marginalised communities gain power through speech despite their social standing and important when considering how diverse audiences could have resonated with this language and its purpose. As Richlin writes, all comedy contains a seed of truth.[25] Hence, there is truth behind the double meanings on stage. Perhaps, Milphio's words are purely a comic device which Plautus exploits to create comedy in his narrative. Even if this is so, I argue that Milphio's denigration of women is what facilitates this humour and so, we must recognise that misogynistic language enables Milphio's superiority, and demonstrates a conceptualisation of women as the crux of ridicule. In conflating all women despite class, Milphio emphasises and critiques their similarities as the object of male ridicule whilst increasing his own status on the stage, highlighting differences in sex.

Although de Melo has chosen to translate *mutae* as dumb,[26] the adjective's alternative meaning as mute/silent could suggest Milphio's sympathy towards the silencing of women on the Roman stage and wider society as an enslaved person whose role knows silence.[27] This positive reading contrasts his earlier responses to female dominance in Adelphasium's commanding tone, characteristic of the prostitute unlike submissive, female, Plautine voices (*Poen*.271-4).[28]

[24] Richlin 2017: 313.

[25] Ibid.

[26] *Poen*.876 trans. by de Melo 2012: 111.

[27] Klein 2015: 58; Stewart 2012: 8.

[28] Barrios-Lech 2014: 484.

Milphio's speech indicates he believes a trustworthy woman is one that is silent despite enslaved people associating silence with fear.[29] Milphio uses puns to impose silence upon women akin to disabled women without voice. Moodie highlights this use of double meaning in the *Poenulus* can be aggressive which aligns with the misogynistic and ableist the use of *mutae* as mute.[30] This misogyny subverts Milphio's enslaved role as, according to Stewart, he serves as Agorastocles' tool and talking piece.[31] Thus, Milphio acts beyond social expectations in criticising women, placing sex/gender above slave status.[32] Fitzgerald names these interactions between the household and social hierarchies as 'tensions' and these tensions can be viewed intersectionally.[33] Plautus enforces this conflict between societal roles and private intentions in slave characters.[34] Evidently, Milphio diminishes his enslaved identity to place his gender centre stage, as he knows that freedom after helping Agorastocles is unlikely (*Poen*.129-139).

Observing Milphio intersectionally unlocks the *servus callidus'* language use to diminish parts of his identity by utilising patriarchal

[29] Richlin 2017: 332; In Richlin's monograph, *Slave Theater in the Roman Republic*, she discusses how being silent onstage evokes connotations of fear, irrespective of class. She follows on, noting how in Roman drama, some forms of slave speech (e.g. "backtalk") is punishable by their master. Drawing on her analysis, it is clear to see how an enslaved person's speech can lead threats of reprimand (and possible, violence), eliciting fear from the possible danger speech would elicit. Is Milphio claiming that women should be in that position of fear through their silence? That may be too presumptuous to ask. Yet Milphio via his use of puns and comedic language alludes to wishing women to occupy the role of being silent like the women who, through disability, have no voice.

[30] Moodie 2018: 325.

[31] Stewart 2012: 187.

[32] Klein 2015: 58.

[33] Fitzgerald 2019: 189.

[34] Stewart 2012: 46.

condemnation of women. In deflecting/distracting from his marginalised experience, Milphio helps us navigate the social map within the *Poenulus*. Therefore, Milphio's use of comedic speech portrays the pressure between different aspects of one's identity.

III: Giddenis

Giddenis is the nurse, who, along with the main love interest, Adelphasium, was kidnapped and (presumably) sold into sex work. She is the one who recognises Adelphasium and Anterastilis' father and her former master, Hanno and thus, facilitates their recognition scene, uniting the father with his daughters. Barsby supposes that Giddenis was a Plautine addition to the Greek original, creating a layer of interest when looking deeper into her character.[35] We do not know why Plautus added Giddenis to the narrative but her position in text is a precarious one in terms of identity and so, she is important as the character whose social location has the most intersections. Much of the little scholarly discourse on Giddenis only mentions her in passing and mostly in relation to her master, Hanno; she has been largely omitted in scholarship as a minor character.[36] Greater analysis of her identity/experiences could help map her perilous social standing.

Giddenis is denied the recognition scene (*anagnorisis*) with her own son (accompanied by Hanno in his search for his daughters) that Hanno is permitted when commanded to be silent by her Carthaginian master (*Poen*.1145). In response, I ask "ain't she a Carthaginian too?" in the same vein as the speech supposedly written by Sojourner Truth.[37] Giddenis is

[35] Barsby 2004: 106.

[36] See Raia 1983 and Fantham 2011.

[37] Crenshaw 1998: 325; Sojourner allegedly wrote this eponymous speech describing the cruelty that she faced as an enslaved Black woman in 19th century America, criticising White women's ignorance and racism despite their shared female identity. I argue that Giddenis, is being thwarted by Hanno despite their shared Carthaginian origin, he is negating this aspect of Giddenis and their familiarity as

silenced, M Giddenis as an enslaved woman retains most parts of her identity despite a new enslaver, new location and changing the profession associated with her enslavement. She is tied to her ethnicity and yet loses its benefits all at once because of the other parts of her experience. Unlike Agorastocles, Giddenis is denied Hanno's connection via kinship and thus, protection from ridicule (*Poen.*1037).

Analysing the scene where Hanno and Agorastocles unite as kin, this connection allows Agorastocles to gain Hanno's aid, yet Giddenis is not entitled to this. She receives no benefit from aiding Hanno and instead will most likely remain an enslaved person. United origin does not erase Giddenis' other intersectional aspects: she remains an enslaved woman, subject to Hanno's patriarchal dominance, despite their shared foreigner status. Enslaved characters in Roman comedy are at the intersection of 'power relations between' the other characters.[38] Characters like Giddenis occupy this intersection of power and persona as a tool to display dominance, and here, Hanno's control. Even though when Hanno and Giddenis speak she is enslaved to the pimp, Lycus, she is still subject to him because freedom versus enslavement remains one of the most important axes of power and oppression in the Roman social hierarchy.

As the only female character in this palliata that speaks Punic, and she is silenced shortly after speaking (*Poen.*1145). Although Hanno is a character who faces harsh ridicule, he still makes Giddenis the crux of his joke where he calls her breasts *muliebri supellectili* (female furniture), referencing her

slave and master to misogynistically denigrate her, ignoring the aspects of her identity that unite them both.

[38] Fitzgerald 2019: 189.

past occupation as a nurse (*Poen*.1145).[39] He forbids her reunion with her son and denounces his own language in a female voice, reducing it to *clarus clamor* (loud shouting) rather than a touching scene of reunion (*Poen*.1146). Hanno's degradation and misogyny opposes the loyalty she provides in recognising him as her former master. It is Giddenis who enables Hanno to find his daughters through her recognition, but she is far from rewarded for this act, instead she is insulted and silenced (*Poen*.1120-31).

Giddenis' identity is precarious; she is the most marginalised character in this play as the kidnapped, aged, Carthaginian, female slave. At the intersection of age, race, gender, and class, Giddenis has no security whatsoever. Although the nature of Adelphasium and Anterastilis' maidenhood is a point of importance in the first act, there is no such talk of Giddenis' treatment under a new master, it is left unsaid if she has endured sexual assault and abuse since being kidnapped (*Poen*.1139). It is vague whether she would also have been a prostitute and if she were forced to engage in prostitution like the other women because of her age. Giddenis is left to the audience's imagination to understand her own experience. In looking further into her identity than her association to the other characters, we can uncover facets of Giddenis' identity and experience not previously explored as an enslaved (possibly in sex work), aged, Carthaginian woman. Giddenis' experience can be attributed as intersectional and for this, she faces extreme marginalisation in the play.

[39] Dutsch 2004: 626.

Conclusion

The *Poenulus'* characters exhibit intersectional experiences that highlight how complex identities map onto the world of Roman comedy. Through consciously analysing the perspectives of various characters in the play (the enslaved female prostitute, the enslaved man, the aged, enslaved nurse turn sex worker) using intersectionality, we can view the different social locations that appear in this text and what it reveals about identity in Plautine drama within the historical context of Republican Rome. Identity in the *Poenulus* is complicated and multifaceted and we must use approaches that do not omit/obscure markers of identity but highlight how different identities interact with one another. Carthaginians as the focal point of a Roman play after the Second Punic War is a significant point of interest when considering race and ethnicity in the Roman Republic. However, when we begin to consider how racism, classism and misogyny intersect and constantly appears in this text, we must observe how these different modes of discrimination impact our understanding of how identity is conceived in this tumultuous time.

This paper demonstrates how intersectional theory can reveal more about classical texts and notions of identity and what we perceive identity to be in different social contexts (e.g. the Roman world and its texts). Comedy reveals parts of what we believe identity to be and the experiences that follow. Plautus, in using comedy, gives us a glimpse into the society within his text, what characteristics and intersections exist and how these characters navigate, map and categorise their own identities and the identities of others.

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Sisi Xie, *The Experience of Fabia the Vestal Virgin in the Late Republic*

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Introduction

The Vestal Virgins, priestesses of Vesta and attendants of the sacred fire, were well-known for their thirty-year vow of virginity and unique religious status.[1] Scholarly attention on the Vestals mainly focuses on their status and functions as a priestly college.[2] However, the investigation of individual Vestals has long been hindered by limited historical testimony. Little information can be extracted from existing records, which were exclusively produced by male authors and would inevitably obscure the lived experience of the Vestals. Nevertheless, the Vestal Fabia, sister of Cicero's wife Terentia, could serve as a valuable case study for the reconstruction of her family connection and role in the political struggle of the late Roman Republic.

Fabia was the first Vestal recorded by contemporary or near-contemporary literary sources, namely by Cicero and Sallust. he was accused by Clodius of committing an *incestum* with Catiline in 73 BC but was successfully acquitted.[3] Ten years later, her participation in the Bona Dea festival, alongside with other Vestals, allegedly provided divine justification for Cicero's decision to execute the conspirators. Although the ritual of *captio*

[1] For general description of the Vestals in sources, see Dion. Hal. 2.67; Plut. *Num*. 10.

[2] Fundamental works on the Vestals include Beard 1980 and 1995; Cornell 1981; Lovisi 1998; Staples 1998; Parker 2004; Wildfang 2006 and so on.

[3] The term *incestum* referred to the sacrilegious sexual intercourse between a Vestal and her lover.

separated the Vestals from their agnate family, current scholarly opinions propose that the Vestals still maintained close connections with their families and could participate in public affairs to harvest benefits for their relatives, as the case of Fabia will demonstrate. By looking into historical accounts concerning Fabia, the paper aims to recover her participation in the party strife prior to and during the so-called Catiline Conspiracy. From a broader perspective, it will also discuss what role the Vestals could play in a male-dominated political realm and how the literary sources describing Vestals as culprits of *incestum* adopted a new narrative pattern by the late Republic.

Family Background

Fabia was born into an aristocratic family whose legal and political status enabled her to be selected as a Vestal. One of the many criteria recorded by Gellius demanded that the parents of a successful candidate must be living residents in Italy and not have undergone any type of *capitis deminutio* (diminished legal status), which included falling into slavery, engaging in base occupations (*negotiis sordidis*) and undergoing emancipation.[4] The order of the Vestals was largely restricted to patrician families with illustrious birth (*honesto loco*). Hence, Suetonius suggests that during the reign of Augustus, the nobility had become unwilling to offer their daughters to Vesta, and Gellius reveals a difficulty in making up 20 maidens for a choice by lot.[5]

[4] Gell. *NA*. 1.12.9. Details of the three types of *capitis demunitio* can be found in Nicolas 1962 :96.

[5] Suet. *Aug*. 31.3; Gell. 12.6. The *lex papia* in Gellius is unrecognisable.

The paternal parentage of Fabia as well as that of her half-sister Terentia is obscure. Based on her name, it can only be assumed that she might be identified as the daughter of the patrician Fabii.[6]

The financial conditions of Fabia are equally ambiguous due to the patchy nature of our sources. The inauguration ceremony of *captio* separated the Vestals from their paternal family both ritually and legally: Fabia would enjoy financial independence and sovereignty, since she no longer inherited property from her paternal family and was removed from the *patria potestas* (power of the father) of her father.[7] Livy claims that when establishing the priestly order, Numa assigned the Vestals a *stipendium pubicum* (public stipend) from the state to support their service to the cult.[8] His statement might reflect not only the practice of his own time, namely the late Republic and early Empire, bit probably also earlier periods and thus could be applied to Fabia, the last historical record of whom referred to 58 BC. The choice of the word *stipendum*, traditionally described the annual payment of soldiers, suggests that the Vestals received a yearly stipend both individually and collectively as a college.[9] Additionally, the order also earned income from rental revenues and individual donations, allowing the Vestals to make financial decisions and participate in transactions.[10] In summary, Fabia was

[6] Carp 1981: 193.

[7] Gell. 1.12.9; Gaius. *Inst*. 1.145. For the legal status and inheritance of the Vestals, see Wildfang 2006: 64-67; Kroppenberg 2010: 422-425.

[8] Livy. 1.20.3.1.

[9] Examples of traditional usages of *stipendium*: Livy. 4.60.6; Cic. *Pis*. 36.88; Caes. *Civ*. 1.23.4. A close reading of possible explanations of *stipendium* could be found in Wildfang 2006: 70-71.

[10] Wildfang 2006: 72.

delivered from a noble family to the priestly college of Vestals, obtaining legal and financial independence. Her connection with both her paternal and maternal family was not completely severed, as demonstrated by her association with her enatic sister Terentia.

Accusation of *Incestum* in 73 BC

The first appearance of Fabia in historical evidence sees her being accused of *incestum* with Catiline, which can be safely dated to 73 BC based on the testimony of Cicero and Orosius. Another Vestal, Licinia, was also involved in the accusation, but both were eventually acquitted.[11] Literary sources describing the event preserve little information about the procedures and details of the trial, as the main focus of the ancient authors rests with other complexities. It would be tempting to follow Plutarch's account to believe that Clodius accused Fabia of adultery with Catiline in 73 BC, as a strategy of "raising agitation and confusion".[12] Lewis and Cardoux notice the anachronological nature of this account, though each arrives at different conclusions. Estimating the ages of Clodius and Cato in 73 BC, Cardoux supposes that Clodius was able to make a radical accusation at the age of 19 or 20, and that Cato was equally "capable of resolute action" in his early

[11] Cic. *Cat*. 3.9 dates the discovery of the Allobroges envoys in "the tenth year after the acquittal of the virgins". Oros. 6.3.1 places the trial in the same year when Lucullus laid siege to Sinope, presumably in the winter of 74/73 BC. See *MRR* vol. 2, 106; Cardous 2005: 167.

[12] Plut. *Cat. Min.* 19.3. The assumption is accepted in *MRR*: 114; Wildfang 2006: 97.

political career.[13] While Lewis points out one discrepancy if the passage was to be ascribed to the *incestum* in 73 BC: subjected to Clodius' calumniation was not only Fabia but also "other priests and priestesses".[14] Another possibility is that Clodius brought up the case of Fabia in the sacrilege trial in 61 BC for his blasphemy at the Bona Dea festival.[15] He might seek to evade condemnation by attacking one of the Vestals in court, namely Fabia, and questioning the verdict of acquittal made by the *pontifices* in 73 BC.[16] The attempt to reopen the once settled trial of suspicious Vestals can find precedence in the case of 114/3 BC, when the judgment of Pontifex Maximus Lucius Metellus Delmaticus was challenged by the plebeian tribune Sextus Peducaeus. Eventually all three Vestals were condemned.[17] Clodius might intend to follow the precedent of Peducaeus, but his attempt was unsuccessful. It would be safer to assume that Fabia was accused by an unmentioned accuser, which is not uncommon in records of previous cases.

Traditionally, cases of *incestum* were decided in a pontifical court presided by the Pontifex Maximus, as the charge of 114/3 BC demonstrates. But this is not applicable to the trial of Fabia, since the Pontifex Maximus Quintus Metellus Pius was still away in Spain battling against Quintus Sertorius.[18] Thus, the case might fall into the collective decision of the

[13] Cardoux 2005: 174-5.

[14] Lewis 2001: 148.

[15] For the trial, see Cic. *Att*. 1.13.3.

[16] Lewis 2001: 148.

[17] Cass Dio fr. 87.3-5 ; Plut. *Mor*. 284B; Macrob. *Sat*. 1.10.5; Oros. 5.15.22.

[18] *MRR*: 111.

pontifices, among whom Quintus Lutatius Catulus was a friend of Catiline. Catulus as a senior *pontifex* might exploit his vantage position and influence the verdict of the case.[19] Catiline's gratitude for Catulus' aid is revealed in their private correspondence recorded by Sallust.[20] As for Fabia, she had Marcus Pupius Piso as her defender, who was quaestor in 83 BC and consul in 61.[21] Cicero claims that Piso regained his reputation "in the trial of the two Vestals", probably through successfully defending the accused priestesses.[22] Due to the reference to Piso in Cicero, the case of Fabia became the first in which a defender of the suspected Vestal was recorded. Vestals in previous trials still had the chance of gaining acquittal, but details of how they defended themselves are now lost.[23] The fact that Piso could win high praise in a religious court indicates that the crime of breaking the vow of virginity was debatable and that the Vestals were able to exert personal or political connections to be exculpated.[24] There is no medical method attested to check if a Vestal was physically penetrated; otherwise, a court defence would not be necessary. The assumed loss of virginity became a matter of negotiation

[19] Oros. 6.3.1. See Lewis 2001: 145.

[20] Sall. *Cat*. 35.1. Also Cardoux 2005: 167.

[21] *MRR*: 63, 179.

[22] Cic. *Brut*. 236.

[23] Successful acquittal of previous Vestals include the charge of Postumia in 420 BC, Tuccia in c.230 though she proved herself innocent by performing a miracle, and Aemilia in 178 BC.

[24] Wildfang 2006: 97, though she presents the Vestals in a too proactive manner without substantial evidence. The acquittal of the charge of *incestum* could hardly be "secured".

that could be argued and disputed in courts.[25]

With meagre fragments of sources surviving, the personal connection between Fabia and Piso cannot be tracked. Yet it is worth examining why these two Vestals were subjected to accusation. The "scapegoat" theory, which suggests that the Vestals was charged with the most severe violation of religious taboo in times of religious hysteria and political disturbance, finds little support in the case of Fabia and Licinia.[26] Instead, the attack against the Vestals might be a political strategy to upset the patrician forces behind the priestesses. The contest between accusers and defenders of the Vestals could be attributed to a struggle between the *Populares* and *Optimates* and could be more specifically explained in a post-Sullan context.[27] After the death of Sulla, his constitutional reforms underwent a series of debate and modifications, led by two opposing groups.[28] Both Vestals and their alleged paramours, along with the defender Piso and the supporting *pontifex* Catulus, came from aristocratic families and had previously stood in line with Sulla.[29] Piso in 81 BC divorced his wife Annia, who had been the wife of Cinna, turning to the side of Sulla.[30] Catiline served under Sulla in 82 BC and enriched himself during Sulla's proscription.[31] As for Catulus, during his

[25] Beard 2004: 172.

[26] Cf. Cardoux 2005: 179. For the scapegoat theory, see Cornell 1981: 27-8, followed by Staples 1998: 134; DiLuzio 2016: 151.

[27] Cardoux 2005: 178. Cf. Wildfang 2006: 96, though her distribution of the *Populares* and *Optimates* is suspicious.

[28] See Steel 2014 for an interpretation of the post-Sullan era.

[29] Cardoux 2005: 178.

[30] Vell. Pat. 2.41.2.

[31] *MRR*: 72.

consulship in 78 BC, he opposed his colleague Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, who violently attacked the constitution of Sulla.[32] On the contrary party, Clodius, who might not be the accuser of Fabia but exploited the trial later, adopted a populist political stance throughout his career. Plotius, the formal accuser of Licini with an equally obscure identity, might have similarly taken a radical approach to attack the pro-Sullan party connected with the Vestals and their male lovers.[33]

The hypothesis that the accusation was a strategical move of party strife opens the question of what impact being convicted of committing *incestum* could have laid on the Vestals and the faction that they belonged to. The Vestals were living symbols of Rome's inviolability and integrity. Violation of their physical intactness was regarded as threatening to the fate of the state, and both the convicted Vestals and their lovers would receive death punishment.[34] The Vestals not only enjoyed religious privileges and rights but could also exploit their status to harvest political or economic benefits for their relatives.[35] That might explain why the noble families were willing to devote their daughters to the cult of Vesta instead of establishing marital alliances.[36] The Vestals, with their priestly offices and prestige, provided a

[32] Sall. *Hist*. 1.47-49; App. *BCiv*. 1.105; Dio Cass. 52.17.4.

[33] Plotius: Plut. *Crass*. 1.2. For the analysis of party struggle, see Cardoux 2005: 178-9. Also see Riggsby 2002 for the change in Clodius' name.

[34] For the live burial of the Vestals, see Dion. Hal. 2.67; Plut. *Num*. 10.4-7. For male culprits, see Dion. Hal. 8.89.3.5; Fest. 309L.

[35] The most thorough analysis is Gallia (2015). Also see Staples (2004), 144-5; Kroppenberg (2010), 420; Wyrwińska (2021), 143-4.

[36] Gallia 2015: 82.

source of prestige and authority for their families. The condemnation of Fabia could have constituted a severe attack on the reputation of her family connections and a loss in factional political capital.[37] Nevertheless, Fabia was less connected with her agnatic relatives as with her half-sister Terentia, and the surviving sources do not allow any speculation about her family origin. As later occurrences demonstrate, Fabia continued to act in favour of Terentia and therefore, of Cicero with her priestly status and religious activities.

Aftermath of the Accusation

After escaping condemnation of the unforgivable religious offence, Fabia did not receive any explicit mention in historical accounts. Theoretically, the tenure of the Vestals lasted for thirty years, but if we were to believe Plutarch's testimony, many of them remained in the priesthood instead of returning to a secular life.[38] Since Fabia had become a Vestal in 73 BC and was implicitly mentioned in Cicero's letter to Terentia in 58 BC, it can be inferred that Fabia was one of the Vestals who participated in the Bona Dea festive cult in 63 BC hosted in the house of the presiding consul Cicero. Dio Cassius informs us that during the course of sacrifice conducted by the Vestals, the fire unexpectedly burnt up to a very great height.[39]

The Bona Dea festival was held the previous night before the senate meeting that discussed the punishment of Catiline and his fellow conspirators.

[37] Gallia 2015: 103.

[38] Plut. *Num*. 10.2.

[39] Dio Cass. 37.35.4. The flame on the altar was regarded as auspicious. Cf. Verg. *Ecl*. 8.106.

In Plutarch's account, the sacrificial fire initially appeared to extinguish but then suddenly burst back into a bright blaze. The Vestals interpreted this as an encouraging sign for Cicero to "carry out his resolutions" and urged Terentia to pass on the message to him.[40] The priestesses here were not only practitioners of festive rituals but could also offer religious expertise, which was accepted as the motivation and justification of Cicero's political decision. The self-rekindled fire resonates with the miraculous story of the Vestal Aemilia. She was also accused of *incestum* when the sacred fire went out in 178 BC, but a great flame rose from the cold ashes after her prayer as proof of her innocence.[41] In both cases, the extinguishment of fire symbolised a contemporary danger and had caused common anxiety, although on different scales, and its revival conversely signaled a restoration of order and security. What is noteworthy in Plutarch's narrative is the combination of personal ambition and public interest. The Bona Dea festival was held annually at the household of one of the consuls, allowing only female participants but held "for the benefit of the Roman people (*pro populo Romano*)".[42] Terentia was the agent who urged by her desire to partake in Cicero's political perplexities, "passed on the message given by the Vestals to her husband and invited him against the conspirators."[43] A sign foretelling the fate of the state was intertwined with the career advancement of the consul and the personal ambition of his wife. As for the role of the Vestals and Fabia, they appeared

[40] Plut. *Cic*. 20.

[41] Dion. Hal. 2.68; Val Max. 1.1.6-7.

[42] Cic. *Har*. 37.

[43] Plut. *Cic*. 20.2.

as a collective advise body among whom no individual name is singled out. Plutarch shows an awareness of the family relationship between Fabia and Terentia, but did not reveal their connection, which makes it difficult to gauge the role of Fabia in this episode. The Vestals presenting an attitude supporting Cicero's scheme of putting the conspirators to death can hardly be taken as their political inclination. In other words, Fabia's involvement in the Bona Dea festival did not raise suspicion, at least not from Plutarch and Dio Cassius, that she was exploiting her priestly office to favour her sister's husband.

The last activity of Fabia is attested in Cicero's private letter to his family. In 58 BC when Cicero was forced into exile and his property confiscated, Terentia took shelter with the Vestals, probably in the *Atrium Vestae*.[44] It seems common to translate "*a Vestae*" into "from the temple of Vesta", but if Terentia was to stay with the Vestals, she could have more plausibly lived in the house of the Vestals, rather than the temple, which was a sacred and secret domain. Though no precise speculation can be formed about her age, by this time, Fabia might have reached the rank of a senior Vestal, which enabled her to possess greater authority and to shelter her half-sister.[45] She could hardly provide any support than temporary accommodation. Cicero's exaggerated expression that Terentia was "*ad tabulam Valeriam ducta*" implies that the Fabia was unable to intervene on behalf of her enatic relative using her priestly status.[46]

[44] Cic. *Fam*. 14.2.

[45] For the three ranks of Vestals, see Plut. *Num*. 10.

[46] For earlier examples of the Vestals interceding in political matters, see Ridley 2000: 223; Gallia

Among the three episodes of Fabia, she was predominantly remembered for the accusation of *incestum* with Catiline. The extent to which this accusation affected her priestly status and authority is uncertain. However, it is worth examining the textual representation of Fabia and the scandulous trial in historical sources. Prior to the case of Fabia, accounts of Vestals committing or being accused of *incestum* mostly focus on the licentiousness of the guilty Vestals, with little attention on the male culprit in the love affair. For instance, the three Vestals condemned of *incestum* in 114/3 BC (Aemilia, Licinia and Marcia were depicted as corrupted and wantonly having a multitude of lovers.[47] In contrast, when relating the episode of Fabia's *incestum* with Catiline, the ancient authors tend to cast Fabia as a subsidiary figure to reflect Catiline's immorality and wantonness.[48] Fabia was not blamed for putting Rome at risk by surrendering her virginity, which was a typical criticism that her predecessors had received. Instead, being suspected of defiling a sacred virgin was regarded as proof of the moral degradation of Catiline, who had a guilty mind (*animus inpurus*) and allegedly kept illicit connection with some females.[49] The authenticity of the alleged sexual deviance between Fabia and Catline is covered in obscurity, but its disgraceful nature might explain why Cicero never mentions his sister-in-law directly in all his works, even if the *incestum* of 73 BC could be exploited to launch harsh attacks against Catiline. While Cicero avoided incriminating

2015: 78-9.

[47] Dio Cassius. fr. 87.3; Plut. *Mor*. 284B.

[48] For example, Sall. *Cat*. 15.1; Oros. 6.3.1.

[49] Sall. *Cat*. 15.1.

Fabia by not bringing up the case or the acquittal, other literary sources did not hesitate to connect Fabia with Terentia and Cicero, rather than with her paternal family.

Conclusion

Fabia's religious activities, or more precisely the remaining records of her activities, were centred around the factional tension between opposite coteries. Her priestly status did not keep her entirely immune to political danger but might have made her an expedient and valuable target for religious prosecution. The accusation of *incestum* against Fabia and Catiline could be the result of party strife in the post-Sullan milieu. After gaining acquittal of the dishonoured crime, she was entirely connected with her half-sister Terentia. Her participation in the Bona Dea festival is implicitly indicated, and she was able to bring Terentia's family into the common dwelling of the Vestals for protection. Reconstruction of her personal experience provides a glimpse into the Vestals' participation in the political struggle in the 70s to 60s BC. The Vestals became more actively involved in public affairs due to family connections and perhaps growing personal initiatives. Individually, they could exploit their priestly position to defend themselves in trial and support their relatives from both agnatic and enatic connections. When acting collectively, their ability to provide religious counsels and potentially influence contemporary public affairs should also not be ignored.

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Zeren Deniz Ataçocugu, *Visits to the Grave in Classical Athens: An Experience Depicted on White Ground Lekythoi*

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The honouring of the dead did not end after the funeral in Athens during the Classical period, c. 500 – 300 BCE, and visitation of graves was expected.[1] These visits are depicted on white-ground *lekythoi*, vases which carried perfumed oil, produced in Athens. The earliest examples of these vases, depicting grave visits, date to c. 480 – 470 BCE and were continually produced throughout the fifth century BCE.[2] The *lekythoi* themselves were common grave offerings and would be used in the very activities they depicted.[3] They provide invaluable insight into the lived experience of fifth century Athenians as they honoured their dead. By close analysis of the scenes, the figures and objects they include, we may gain some understanding of who visited the grave, what they dedicated, and what motivated the visits.

The theme of mourning occurs consistently on Attic painted pottery from as early as the eighth century BCE and remained popular throughout the Classical period in Athens.[4] Grave visits became the most common scenes on white-ground *lekythoi* after the mid fifth century BCE, and they generally follow a standard type.[5] Two figures stand either side of a monument, commonly identified as funerary *stele*, and bring grave offerings. These

[1] Osbourne 2008: 199

[2] Oakley 2004: 145

[3] Neils 2004: 32

[4] Shapiro 1991: 629.

[5] Pipili 2009: 241

offerings consist of baskets, ribbons, wreaths, and *lekythoi*.[6] An example of a scene which follows this standard typology can be seen in figure one, two figures stand either side of a *stele* adorned with ribbons. A variety of figures are shown in these scenes, but it is female figures who are depicted most frequently.[7]

Figure 1. White-Ground *Lekythos.* c. 450 – 400 BCE. A cloaked figure (left) and figure carrying a basket (right) either side of funerary *stele.* © Newcastle Upon Tyne, Great North Museum, Shefton Collection (854), 2022.

Who visited the grave?

Women in Classical Athens held little status as individuals, but religion was one element of life in which women were allowed prominence. The daughters of some priestly families carried baskets in the processions of the

[6] Hosoi 2014: 9

[7] Oakley 2004: 214

Dionysia and Panathenaea, forty Athenian women served as priestesses to the city's cult, and female only festivals such as the Adonia and Thesmophoria were open to women across Athenian society.[8] The care of the dead was another intrinsically religious activity designated to Athenian women. The close female relatives of the dead were expected to devote themselves to the burial, and continued visitation, of their deceased family members.[9] Women were tasked with preparing the body for burial, the *prothesis*, in which they would lay out the body within the home before washing, anointing, and dressing it before the funeral.[10] Aristophanes references this duty in his *Lysistrata,* in which the titular character mentions carrying out a funeral and rites performed at the grave.[11] The women in the family were also the ones to lead the funeral procession, the *ekphora,* which saw the body ceremonially delivered to the graveyard from its initial resting place in the family home.[12] Sophocles' *Antigone* illustrates how seriously this duty was taken, with Antigone going to her grave rather than letting her brother remain unburied.[13] It is clear from the evidence that carrying out the duties surrounding death and burial was a distinctly feminine experience, albeit one delegated by men, which explains the dominance of female figures on the white-ground *lekythoi*.

Of course, it is not only women in these scenes. On the left of the scene in figure one, a cloaked male figure who holds a stick can be seen. An elderly man, cloaked and with a stick, was often placed in scenes opposite a young,

[8] Pritchard 2014: 189

[9] Pritchard 2014: 191

[10] Chrystal 2017: 148

[11] Aristophanes *Lysistrata* 612 – 13: London

[12] Osbourne 2008: 198

[13] Sophocles *Antigone:* London

lightly armoured male figure who may have been meant to represent the deceased. This interpretation places the cloaked figure in the role of the mourner and creates an intensely emotional scene as the youth and potential of the deceased is mourned.[14] However, it can be incredibly difficult to identify figures meant to represent the dead. John Oakley supposes armoured male figures must represent the deceased as it is unlikely men would wear armour to visit graves in reality.[15] Nathan Arrington makes a similar observation about nude male figures in

Figure 2. Attic white-ground *lekythos*. c. 440 – 430 BCE. Bosanquet Painter. Women holding libation bowl (left) and youth (right) either side of grave *stele*, lekythoi and wreaths adorn the base. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (23.160.39).

[14] Pipili 2009: 243

[15] Oakley 2004: 165

these scenes.[16] These arguments are convincing as these types of figures rarely bring grave offerings so may be the recipients of them instead. A nude male figure can be seen beside a grave in figure two, a female figure offering libation stands opposite. Oakley also discusses the possibility of *eidola,* winged stick figures which appear in some scenes, denoting the deceased status of the figures they are depicted above; but again the evidence is too ambiguous to make any strong assertions.[17] Despite the lack of certainty, the concept that the spirits of the dead were present during grave visits may help to explain the motivations behind the visits. Mourners could find comfort in knowing the dead were waiting at the graves to receive them and were present as they were honoured.[18] This insight into how the visits were conceptualised is preserved by the scenes on the white-ground *lekythoi.*

What was taken to the grave?

The most common types of grave offerings were *lekythoi*, ribbons, wreaths, and baskets which carried these items. These baskets, an example of which can be seen carried by a woman in figure three, were open and did not have handles. They appear on pottery in a funerary context but also appear on red figure vases in a variety of other contexts. Baskets were carried in religious processions and also played a part in wedding preparations.[19] So their presence in a funerary context is invocative of these religious and marital activities which would inspire grief as the deceased loved one could no longer

[16] Arrington 2014: 5

[17] Oakley 2004: 212

[18] Arrington 2018: 8

[19] Reilly 1989: 417

take part. The presence of the basket during the grave visit may also reference the *ekphora* and therefore have stirred up the feelings of grief felt at the funeral.

Lekythoi themselves are the most common vessels shown being taken to, and adorning, the grave; they can be seen carried in baskets, be held by visitors, or adorn the steps of the grave.[20] Funerary *lekythoi* reference themselves in these scenes by the depiction of the vase on a vase itself. This had the effect of doubling the offering made by the grave visitor as they left a pictorial depiction of the dedication they had just made. This also provides insight into the commercial aspect of grave visits, as by

Figure 3. Attic white–ground *lekythos*. c. 450 – 400 BCE. Bosanquet painter. A youth with spears and woman with basket visit the grave. *Stele* with sash, lekythoi, and wreaths at base. Mirror and lekythos hang in the field. Athens, National Museum (CC1692).

[20] Oakley 2004: 205

depicting this vase in a distinctly funerary context, Athenian painters allowed the viewer to identify the *lekythoi* with funerary custom and thus created more demand for their work.[21] The presence of *lekythoi* in these scenes also made reference to domestic scenes, this might be anticipated as the figures we see are most often women. The home and grave are conflated in these scenes mainly by the objects which appear, the offerings put on the grave also appear in domestic contexts as household objects.[22] This conflation is especially obvious when the items hang in the field as if they are on a wall, an example of this can be seen in figure three where a *lekythoi* and mirror hang above a woman making dedications. This comparison with the domestic sphere could be a reference to the role of women and how the care for the dead was seen as one of their domestic duties even though it allowed them outside of the home. Alternatively, this conflation could be seen as a way to keep the deceased close to home, by depicting the grave as part of the home the dead never truly left the family. Perfume vases, as well as wreaths and ribbons, also played an important role in the marriage ceremony.[23] So again, the grief of the dead being taken from the living, especially if they were women who died before marriage, is reinforced by the presence of these items.

Visitors to the grave are often shown holding ribbons and wreaths, and using them to decorate the grave.[24] Like baskets, ribbons had a diverse range of uses including religious and festival use so their appearance in these scenes stresses the ritual nature of the grave visit.[25] Wreaths also decorate the

[21] Neils 2004: 33

[22] Arrington 2014: 3

[23] Algrain 2015: 51

[24] Oakley 2020: 221

[25] Oakley 2004: 204

tombs in these scenes; usually made of olive or myrtle, they were used to reward victorious athletes as well as being exchanged by a couple on their wedding day.[26] Again, we see that the objects dedicated at the grave were never exclusively funerary and often referenced religious life and marriage. Ribbons can also be seen used to adorn the *stele* in these scenes, an example of which can be seen in figure four. In this action, the *stele* becomes the object of ritual and is used in place of a living person or the body during the *prothesis.* The *stele* would also be anointed with oil in place of the body, which helps to explain why *lekythoi* were so popular in a funerary context.[27] With this in mind, we can understand the adornment of the *stele* as an outlet for the grief of the mourners and how the grave was viewed as a place where direct contact with the dead

Figure 4. Attic white-ground *lekythos*. c. 450 – 440 BCE. Achilles painter. Woman ties ribbon to a funerary *stele*. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (08.258.16).

[26] Reilly 1989: 420

[27] Hosoi 2014: 19

could be made. The presence of these grave offerings and their diverse significances, as well as the interaction with the *stele*, reveal how complex and interwoven the iconographies of death, marriage, and life were in Classical Athens and how the grief in these funerary scenes was often derived from the juxtaposition of the joy experienced in other scenes which included the same objects.

When and why did the visits take place?

The number of objects we see in a scene may also be an indication of the frequency at which grave visits took place. Oakley suggests a ribbon tied around a *stele* may have been the equivalent to the modern custom of leaving flowers at a grave and that multiple ribbons meant the grave was regularly attended to.[28] This can be seen in figure one, on which the *stele* is decorated with multiple ribbons and the basket carrier brings even more, suggesting the adornment of the *stele* with ribbons was a continual honour made to the dead. Sometimes, among the multiple *lekythoi* which sit at the base of the *stele*, fallen vessels can be seen, this occurs on around ten white-ground *lekythoi* and suggests the lekythoi may have been on the grave for some time. Arrington reminds us that fallen vessels in attic vase painting could be used to indicate motion, and so these fallen *lekythoi* could be present to indicate both the passing of time and create a sense of movement in the scene as the grave visit is carried out.[29] Numerous objects in these scenes point to repeated and continual visits to the grave, and given the importance of honouring the

[28] Oakley 2004: 204

[29] Arrington 2014: 2

dead in Classical Athens, it is reasonable to assume these visits would have been a somewhat regular occurrence.

Annual visits to the grave were dictated by religious festivals. The *Genesia* was an annual festival which honoured those who had been dead for multiple generations; the *tritopatores*, or thrice-ancestors. The purpose of this festival was to appease the spirits of the dead and avoid the reappearance of their vengeful ghosts who felt their resting places had been neglected.[30] This appeasement was a widespread concern, and with this motivation in mind we could read the leaving of *lekythoi* which depicted grave visits not only as a double offering but as a double insurance against these potentially vengeful spirits. Furthermore, there were legal motivations for these visits to the grave. The attitude someone took towards their deceased relatives was used to judge their morality and claims to inheritance could be undermined if proper respect had not been given to the dead.[31] Additionally, the failure to carry out the proper visits to the tombs of one's parents and grandparents could lead to a man being prosecuted for poor treatment of his ancestors.[32] Another compelling motivation for the care of the dead was the wish that the same kindness would be showed when those visiting the graves died themselves, we could view the scenes on these *lekythoi* as both reflections of reality and aspirational scenes in which the living are setting the standard for the care

[30] Chrystal 2017: 149

[31] Osbourne 2008: 199

[32] Pritchard 2014: 191

they wish to be shown in death. One specific motivation can never be ascribed to the visits but through the scenes on the *lekythoi* we can gain some insight.

Overall, the scenes of grave visits on white-ground *lekythoi* show us how integral women were to the care of the dead in Classical Athens. Consideration of grave offerings reveals how the objects dedicated at the grave were often associated with feminine and domestic contexts as well as referencing religious and nuptial contexts, and could be used to articulate the grief of the visit by invoking practices the dead could no longer partake in. The scenes also provide insight into the frequency of the visits and how the familial, religious, and legal expectation of Athenian society motivated these visits. On a more intimate level, analysis of the figures present and how they interact with the grave goods and stele can provide some indication of how individuals articulated and felt grief during these ritual visits, with the stele taking the place of the body. These observations are made all the more compelling due to the fact we gain this insight from the very objects which not only articulate the process but were used within it.

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Abigail Carr, *'Technology run riot': The Impact of Birth Interventions on Women's Birth Experiences in 1970s Britain*

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The medicalisation of childbirth fundamentally changed women's experience of pregnancy and labour. Post-war Britain saw increased medical intervention to artificially induce or accelerate birth through surgery or the use of drugs, practices which coincided with the advent of new technologies, the establishment of the NHS, and most crucially with the Peel Report (1970), which advised that all births should take place in hospital.[1] Such interventions were perceived by some feminist writers and natural birth advocates to have removed control from the pregnant woman and thus reduced her own involvement in, and satisfaction with, her birth experience.[2] Conversely, obstetricians maintained that women appreciated intervention as it made childbirth easier.[3] In exploring the veracity of these competing perspectives, this article will determine how pregnant women themselves felt about birth intervention, and how it impacted their experiences. The initial focus will be on induction, a procedure undertaken to initiate birth by rupturing the amniotic sac and artificially stimulating contractions through medication. This practice accounted for 41% of NHS hospital deliveries in England by 1974 and therefore represents one of the more significant changes that came

[1] Davis 2012: 85; Tew 1990: 155.

[2] Kitzinger 2004: 18.

[3] Tacchi 1971: 1135-6; *A Time to Be Born* [film] 1975. The term obstetrics refers to a branch of medicine focusing on the care of pregnant women and childbirth.

with medicalisation.[4] Other birth interventions associated with induction will then be explored, primarily in reference to the 1970s but with some exploration into the 1980s.

The medicalisation of labour began in the 1930s which saw a mechanical approach to childbirth involving the increased use of forceps and uncomfortable birth positions, practices which were perceived by later critics to have reduced the pregnant woman to a simple vessel of reproduction.[5] By the 1960s and 1970s new technological procedures such as induction replaced old mechanical ones, and thus the obstetrician still retained control over the birthing process. Indeed, the scale of this influence also increased as hospital deliveries represented 96% of births by 1974.[6] Doctors favoured medicalisation as it allowed them to manage the labour as they saw fit and cope with complications during childbirth.[7] However, many interventionist procedures were introduced without any real consideration of their efficacy or safety. Author Marjorie Tew suggested that consultant-led hospitals had higher stillborn and perinatal death rates than home births based on data from 1970, and feminist writer Ann Oakley showed that there were no comprehensive studies conducted to prove the superiority of any interventionist obstetric practice before these were implemented on a national scale.[8] Oakley further suggested that doctors only promoted medicalised

[4] Cartwright 1977: 745-6.

[5] Tacchi 1971: 1134; Kitzinger 2004: 2; Tew 1990: 140-1.

[6] Cartwright 1979: 1.

[7] Tew 1979: 1388.

[8] Tew 1979: 1390; Tew 1990: 26; Oakley 1993: 20.

births to retain their dominance over the field; by the 1970s the (often male) obstetricians had reached a greater status of expertise on birth than their female patients, and therefore felt they had earned the medical right to take control of her birth experience through intervention.[9] This illustrates why medicalisation came to be so heavily criticised in the 1970s and 1980s: the obstetrician's appropriation of birth was seen by feminists and natural birth advocates as both an affront to women's individual autonomy and a potential threat to their health.

Nonetheless, intervention persisted and continued to affect birth experiences. Studies conducted in the last thirty years have shown that the amount of control a woman retains in childbirth is central to this experience, in terms of the health and happiness of both mother and baby.[10] For the purposes of this article, then, this notion of control will be the main indicator of how intervention impacted women's birth experiences, and can be understood in two ways: the first being physical control (meaning the extent to which a woman was conscious of what her body was doing, and whether she could influence this), and the second being emotional control (meaning the extent to which she *felt* that she was leading her own birth experience). Due to the lack of comprehensive data gathered on women's experiences from this period, most information used in this essay is sourced from qualitative studies, feminist literature, and documentaries from the 1970s and 1980s. These sources contain both statistical evidence and first-hand accounts

[9] Oakley 1993: 23.With this came perceiving the pregnant woman as a patient in that she was unwell and in need of treatment (or at least monitoring), which only the obstetrician could provide. See Young 1984: 56.

[10] Clesse et al. 2018: 164; Williams 1997: 243; Arney and Neill 1982: 11.

of birth experiences, which taken together provide a substantial overview of the experience of medicalised pregnancy in this period from the patient perspective, rather than the medical which has traditionally dominated. They are perhaps limited in how much they represent the national experience of birth intervention, but nonetheless present a more reliable picture of the woman's perspective than socio-medical surveys, for example, which tended not to take this into consideration as thoroughly.[11]

The foremost birth intervention which came with the shift towards medicalisation in the 1970s was induction, which in some hospitals counted for over half of labours. Obstetricians most frequently employed induction when babies were overdue (as there were serious risks associated with this), however it was increasingly utilised in the 1970s for other reasons also: many obstetricians felt that it led to shorter labours (which they perceived as the aim of modern obstetrics, and as something which women wanted) and allowed the hospital to cope the best it could since births were timetabled.[12]

While some women did appreciate induction because it allowed them to emotionally prepare for the birth, knowing when it would be,[13] a significant proportion of women did not always agree with these medical perceptions. This is evident in a study conducted by statistician Ann Cartwright in 1977, which showed that only 16% of women surveyed actually *wanted* an

[11] Oakley 1993: 21.

[12] *A Time to Be Born*; Cartwright 1977: 747; Tacchi 1971: 1135.

[13] *A Time to Be Born.*

induction.[14] Some women felt that it was 'unnatural' and 'rushed' the baby before it was ready,[15] suggesting that they perceived induction as an affront to them being able to manage their pregnancy themselves. Moreover, a further 66% of women said they did not feel they had a choice in whether or not they were induced,[16] which indicates that many women felt pressured into it. Indeed, Jan Williams gives an account of one woman who, at a doctor's appointment, was coerced into having an induction, despite protesting and saying she wanted to discuss it with her husband first.[17] In this case, not only was the woman's physical control over her labour taken away from her before it even began, but her emotional control was also removed in that the doctor 'magnified the doubts of her ability to manage the birth herself.'[18] This type of coercion, Williams argues, was rooted in the obstetrician's claim that induction was safest for the baby, which was why many women accepted the procedure.[19] However, acceptance cannot be equated with satisfaction in terms of birth experience, and this is further evident in that 78% of women surveyed by Cartwright stated that they would prefer not to be induced again.[20]

[14] Cartwright 1977: 747. Cartwright interviewed a random sample of 2,182 women who had live births in 1975, from twenty-four study areas across England and Wales. 24% of the women in this total were induced, though this proportion ranged from 6% to 39% within the study areas. These women gave birth in medically controlled locations, including GP maternity hospitals, teaching hospitals, and private hospitals. They were interviewed when their babies were three to four months old, and therefore the memories of their birth experience were relatively clear.

[15] Cartwright 1979: 106; Cartwright, 1977: 748.

[16] Cartwright 1977: 748.

[17] Williams 1997: 238.

[18] Ibid.,238.

[19] Ibid.,238.

[20] Cartwright 1977: 748

Furthermore, women's acceptance of induction in this period did not necessarily mean that they felt informed enough to retain any control during induced labour. A significant theme throughout several surveys of birth experiences is that many women felt underprepared,[21] which could both reduce their control and worsen their anxiety surrounding childbirth. Cartwright's study showed that two-fifths of women wanted more information about induction before they had it, and a further 43% of mothers who were induced said that they had not discussed induction with any health professional during their pregnancy.[22] That some women felt unprepared because of this highlights the importance of control in the birth experience, and the difference that knowledge could make to this. For example, Cartwright offers an account of a woman who, upon arrival at the hospital, was induced with little discussion, leaving her 'scared stiff having things done and not knowing what it was.'[23] This woman further described feeling as though she was 'just a thing – not a person with a mind,'[24] suggesting that some women could feel entirely powerless at the hands of birth intervention, having been reduced to less than a person and thus lost the ability to lead their own birth experience (in other words, having lost emotional control). This is supported by Oakley's research which confirmed that women who had induction were more likely than those whose labour was spontaneous to suffer

[21] Davis 2012: 107; Oakley 1984: 245; Cartwright 1977: 248.

[22] Cartwright 1977: 745, 748.

[23] Cartwright 1979: 94-5.

[24] Ibid.,94-5.

from post-partum depression,[25] indicating how an emotionally stressful birth experience could have serious and damaging consequences for new mothers.

Moreover, women lost physical control over their birth experience through induction itself, specifically through the way it forced contractions. What obstetricians saw as shorter labours were not necessarily seen by women as *better* labours, for the artificial stimulation of 'uterine activity' via an oxytocin drip could cause contractions to come faster and stronger than the woman could naturally cope with.[26] This could lead to a particularly painful labour in which the woman was unable to follow the pace of her own body; indeed, Cartwright's study found that induced women who received more painkillers experienced the same levels of pain as women with less painkillers in spontaneous labour.[27] Additionally, imperfect technology meant that oxytocin levels could become too high, at which point the uterus muscles could go into spasm, leading to surgical intervention.[28] One woman interviewed for the 1975 documentary *A Time to Be Born* stated that her oxytocin drip was increased so much that she had very strong and 'bad' contractions, which ultimately led to a drop in the foetal heart rate that saw her 'shoved' into theatre for an emergency c-section.[29] This demonstrates that not only could induction lead to a more difficult and complicated childbirth, but also that women were consistently unable to manage either their pain or

[25] Oakley 2016b: 693; Cahill 2008: 339.

[26] *A Time to Be Born.*

[27] Cartwright 1977: 745, 747.

[28] *A Time to Be Born*.

[29] Ibid.

their bodies in induced labour, whether this was due to the physical process of induction itself or the lack of autonomy it permitted.

Beyond induction, other birth interventions to which women were subjected (and may not have initially wanted) could also significantly affect their birth experience,[30] the most common of these being the use of anaesthesia or painkillers. Due to the intensity of induced contractions, women undergoing induction were significantly more likely to be administered anaesthesia than those in spontaneous labour: 89% of induced women (compared to 79% of non-induced women) surveyed by Cartwright received pain relief during labour.[31] Women who were induced (and therefore already at some risk during childbirth) were more likely to receive pethidine especially, which is striking considering that its dangers were well-known to obstetricians by the early 1970s.[32] Indeed, pethidine was known to cause women to become drowsy and sickly during labour, and could also affect the baby for up to several days after birth.[33] Several women in Kitzinger's documentary described not wanting anaesthesia during labour for this reason: one mother stated that it would make you 'drugged out of your mind,' with another saying that she refused to have an epidural because 'I wanted the messages coming from the baby to tell me directly what I had to do.'[34] This

[30] These procedures could be employed independently of induction, but all were used more frequently in induced labours in this period.

[31] Cartwright 1977: 747.

[32] Cartwright 1977: 747; Kitzinger 2004: 167.

[33] Kitzinger 2004: 167; King's Fund Centre 1978: 18.

[34] *Birth: A Film About Feelings and Experiences* [film] 1986.

suggests that women viewed anaesthesia as something which would remove them from their connection to their body and their baby, and thus they considered being 'alert and awake' (and therefore in control) as important to their birth experience.[35]

To some extent, epidurals were viewed as preferable to pethidine (though were not used as often), as they numbed sensation from the waist-down but did not make the woman drowsy and thus did not entirely remove her from the experience.[36] Many women therefore spoke more favourably of epidurals than any other part of their labour, with 63% of mothers interviewed by Cartwright stating that they would have an epidural again.[37] Some greatly appreciated that it allowed them to be fully, mentally present in the labour without the distraction or fear of pain,[38] in which case epidurals allowed them to have emotional control over their birth experience. In some ways it allowed them to have physical control also, not in the sense that they could control their body but in that their body was no longer being controlled *by* their pain, which Kitzinger suggests was a huge advantage for women who had suffered previous sexual abuse especially.[39] However, for some women epidurals led to health complications which required even further intervention and made for a difficult childbirth. Epidurals could cause changes in blood pressure that put the baby at risk, and more frequently the lack of sensation meant that women did not always know when to push with their contractions.[40] This

[35] Ibid.

[36] *A Time to Be Born*.

[37] Cartwright 1977: 747, 748.

[38] Kitzinger 2004: 166; Michaels 2018: 56-7.

[39] Kitzinger 2004: 150.

[40] Ibid.,164.

increased the likelihood of forceps delivery or emergency c-section; for example, both of the women filmed for *A Time to Be Born* were induced, received epidurals, and had to have their baby delivered by forceps.[41] Another woman, the same who was 'shoved' into theatre for an emergency c-section, had received an epidural after her induction, despite insisting this was 'the last thing I wanted.'[42] This suggests that poor experiences with epidurals were not uncommon among induced women, and highlights that within medicalised childbirth, women could be subjected to increasingly interventionist procedures that they explicitly did not want, and which significantly reduced their control.

Further interventions which impacted birth experience were those which can be understood as surgical: namely, episiotomies and c-sections. Episiotomies were common among induced women in this period, with over half of those in Cartwright's study having one during labour.[43] However, this was likely part of a general trend: the *Perinatal Mortality Survey* (1963) showed that 41% of women having hospital births were subject to routine episiotomies whether they were induced or not.[44] They perhaps became more common with inductions because they were required when the uterus pushed the baby down the birth canal too fast, which was more likely to occur when contractions were artificially stimulated.[45] Episiotomies in particular were

[41] Tew 1990: 132-3; *A Time to Be Born.*

[42] *A Time to Be Born.*

[43] Cartwright 1977: 748.

[44] McIntosh 2012: 107, 108.

[45] Kitzinger 2004: 198.

heavily criticised by natural birth proponents and feminist writers from the 1970s, with Kitzinger describing it as a form of female genital mutilation and Oakley stating that they represented the 'more troublesome' aspect of labour in women's memories.[46] Indeed, first-hand accounts from women who had episiotomies supports this; one woman interviewed for Kitzinger's documentary described becoming overwhelmed by the hospital staff who 'crowded' around her telling her to push when she did not yet need to, resulting in an episiotomy that she was 'extremely angry' about when she 'felt the pain of the cut' a few days after labour.[47] She described the most frustrating part of the experience as being that 'none of that was necessary' – she felt that if she had been left with her husband and midwife she could have 'eased' her baby out, without having an episiotomy, 'which is what I wanted to do and which I felt I could do.'[48] Here it is clear that this woman associated this interventionist procedure not only with unnecessary pain but with removing her emotional and physical control over her birth experience, leaving her frustrated and 'in a panic' rather than calm and able to give birth at her own pace.[49]

Caesarean sections similarly and substantially could affect women's birth experiences. This procedure was marginally more likely to occur as an emergency surgery if induced labour failed, but if a serious risk was identified antenatally it could be planned.[50] While it was somewhat rare, accounting for

[46] Kitzinger 2004*:*198; Oakley 2016a: 542.

[47] *Birth*: *A Film.*

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Cartwright 1977: 748; Tew 1979; 24, 128.

only 5.3% of births in 1972 and 10.5% in 1985,[51] it represents the most interventionist procedure possible. Whether regional or general anaesthesia was used, the woman loses all physical control over her labour and is left entirely in the hands of the obstetrician. One woman who had both an elective and emergency c-section in the 1980s described the planned surgery as 'far worse' because she was 'wide awake' during it;[52] this illustrates that even if women were familiar with (or informed about) certain interventionist procedures, they could still have a negative experience with them. It also suggests that the element of emotional control is important, as being conscious of what was happening to her body and how little control she had over it was evidently more traumatising for this woman than being removed from the experience completely. Furthermore, much like with induction, one of the common themes among women who found c-sections distressing was that they were not provided enough information about it, even when it was elective. Historian Angela Davis gives the example of one woman who had attended antenatal classes which proved useless because her c-section was not a 'normal delivery,' and thus she found the experience 'extremely traumatic.'[53] In this respect, it is clear that the lack of information left her feeling scared and powerless when things went 'wrong.'[54] Davis describes another expectant mother who had an elective caesarean in 1978, but upon arrival at the hospital was alarmed to discover that the procedure involved

[51] Tew 1990: 127.

[52] Davis 2012: 73.

[53] Ibid.,72.

[54] Ibid.,72.

surgery; this was likewise described as traumatic for the woman,[55] further illustrating that knowledge and confidence were significant to satisfaction with, and control over, the birth experience.

To conclude, birth interventions significantly impacted women's birth experiences. Pregnant women agreed to intervention when it was best for their baby,[56] and in this way they accepted it. However, this does not mean that these women actually *wanted* intervention, or that acceptance immediately translated to a good childbirth experience. While they were understood as necessary, many birth interventions were retrospectively viewed as generally negative experiences. Furthermore, the elements of intervention which caused the most distress in pregnant women were arguably those which reduced her control the most, illustrating that this was an extremely important element of the birth experience. That the lack of sufficient explanation of these procedures was common to all of them (including anaesthesia) [57] suggests further that the extent to which women were able to make an informed choice regarding birth intervention was significantly limited. Indeed, general dissatisfaction with intervention led to what Oakley has called a 'consumer revolt' against medicalisation in the 1970s,[58] and the impact such intervention had on women's birth experiences was undoubtedly crucial to this.

[55] Ibid.,72-3.

[56] Ibid.,98

[57] Cartwright shows that 'many mothers' did not know what drug they received during labour, presumably because they were not told; see Cartwright 1977: 747.

[58] Oakley 1984: 236.

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