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Kleos - *Amsterdam Bulletin of Ancient Studies and Archaeology* is a peer-reviewed, open access academic online journal, launched in 2014, which publishes current research and review articles by graduate and PhD students, as well as starting independent researchers, from the fields of archaeology and ancient studies (i.e. classics and ancient History). Kleos also provides reviews of recent books, conferences and exhibitions. The journal is published once a year and its main goal is to provide a possibility to graduate and PhD students to publish their research. The journal thus mainly aspires to serve as a platform for starting academic careers, and help students and starting researchers to share their research, gain experience in publishing, and improve their scientific skills. At the same time the journal aims to provide an overview of the research being conducted within the fields of archaeology, ancient history and classics, and support the interdisciplinary dialogue between these adjacent academic disciplines.



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COVER ILLUSTRATION

Medallion at the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Austria (photograph by Roberto Accinelli); Geoglyphs of Cerro Lechuza, Peru (photograph by Aldo Accinelli); Benin Bronze at the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Austria (photograph by Roberto Accinelli); Church at Helsingør, Denmark (photograph by Aldo Accinelli); Chullpas at Ayaorqo, Peru (photograph by Aldo Accinelli); Stockholm Cathedral, Sweden (photograph by Aldo Accinelli).

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The Kleos editorial board is supported by an interdisciplinary group of renowned scholars, covering fields from classic linguistics to archaeological theory and heritage studies, brought together within the Kleos Academic Advisory Council (AAC). The members of this board hail from prominent Dutch research institutes – such as ACASA. The AAC functions in an advisory role to the editors, providing them with advice in their consideration of specific theme issues or search for peer reviewers from particular niche areas. Thanks to their help, the editorial board has a wide network of experts and peer-reviewers at their disposal. Their endorsement is invaluable and paramount to guarantee the quality of the journal. The editors of Kleos would like to thank the following members of the Academic Advisory Council for their valued contribution to Kleos.

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EDITORIAL**ARTICLES**

Unveiling the symbolic significance of Mycenaean weaponry: exploring material culture and death in the Late Bronze Age Argolid

Meilin Lyu ▶9-26

Suspend your disbelief: spontaneous generation in Antigonus's paradoxography

Ariella Goldberg ▶27-41

Rome and its allies in Asia Minor: a study on political relationship between Rome, Rhodes, and Pergamon from the Peace of Apamea to the end of Third Macedonian War

Dapeng Chen ▶42-56

Hadrian's ecumenical vision of Empire: reconsidering the ideological function of personifying the Roman provinces on Hadrianic coinage

Grace MacLachlan ▶57-73

Carthago prosperanda est: representation of Carthaginians in video games

Corine Gerritsen ▶74-89

Holocaust, Colonialism, Slavery: entangled histories of a Benin Bronze from a Jewish Collection

Leah Niederhausen ▶90-105

LETTERS AND REVIEWS

Emma M. Payne (2021). *Casting the Parthenon Sculptures from the Eighteenth Century to the Digital Age*. London: Bloomsbury Academic. ISBN 9781350120358.

Lindsay Morehouse ▶106-110



The seventh Kleos issue is out! As always, we are proud to present the work of starting scholars of (r)Ma and PhD-level. The papers included in the issue cover a wide range of subjects, starting with the second millennium BCE in Mycenae, to discussions about repatriation and colonialism in existing collections. As is our custom, you will find the papers ordered in chronological order, leaving aside disciplinary divides.

The first paper by Meilin Lyu, entitled *Unveiling the symbolic significance of Mycenaean weaponry: exploring material culture and death in the Late Bronze Age Argolid*, explores the burial customs of the Late Bronze Age Mycenaean civilisation. The paper focuses on the relationship between weaponry assemblages and evolving societal structures. It examines weaponry found in various grave types, analysing their roles as symbols of prestige and social identity. The study highlights how shifts in burial practices reflect broader changes in Mycenaean society and elite representation.

In the second paper, *Suspend your disbelief: spontaneous generation in Antigonus's paradoxography*, the author, Ariella Goldberg, focuses on Antigonus and his work on spontaneous generation, showing how he engages with contemporary discourse and encourages inquiry through a recollection of wonderful events. Furthermore, the article introduces the history and critical reception of paradoxography, as well as its stylistic features.

The third article is authored by Dapeng Chen, it is entitled *Rome and its allies in Asia Minor: a study on political relationship between Rome, Rhodes, and Pergamon from the Peace of Apamea to the end of Third Macedonian War*. This paper analyses the evolving relationship between Rome and its allies in the East Mediterranean during the first half of the second century BCE. The author focuses on disputes and Roman hostility and suggests that Rome weakened its dissatisfied allies by granting autonomy to rebellious regions and encouraging further revolts.

The fourth paper of this issue is *Hadrian's ecumenical vision of Empire: reconsidering the ideological function of personifying the Roman provinces on Hadrianic coinage*, written by Grace MacLachlan. The topic is the personification of Roman provinces in a systematic way to reshape the traditional image of defeated provinces, projecting a more harmonious relationship between

Rome and its territories. This paper examines Hadrian's coinage as part of a broader imperial strategy to foster an idealized, ecumenical vision of the Roman Empire, while also challenging earlier scholarly interpretations influenced by early 20th-century imperialist perspectives.

Corine Gerritsen's paper, *Carthago prosperanda est: representation of Carthaginians in video games*, examines how game designers address gaps in the historical record due to the lack of Carthaginian literary texts. It analyses two games exploring how ancient and historiographic sources influence digital depictions of Carthage. The study combines historical research and game studies to highlight the impact of Roman and Greek sources on these representations and how developers creatively fill in the historical lacunas.

As part of the Archaeology & Memory class of the Archaeology Research Master of the University of Amsterdam was initially developed the next paper, *Holocaust, Colonialism, Slavery: entangled histories of a Benin Bronze from a Jewish Collection*, by Leah Niederhausen. The article examines the history of a Benin Bronze which was looted by Nazis in 1934 and sold in 2018. It explores the broader debates surrounding the restitution of Benin Bronzes while situating the Benin Bronze within the contexts of the Holocaust, colonialism, and slavery, highlighting the complexities of restitution and transitional justice.

Lastly, Lindsay Morehouse presents a book review of *Casting the Parthenon Sculptures from the Eighteenth Century to the Digital Age* by Emma Payne. Morehouse situates Payne's book as interesting new research on objects that are usually cast aside.

As always, this issue would not have been possible without the help of our anonymous expert peer reviewers. We are extremely grateful to them for taking the time out of their busy schedules to peer review the papers and provide the authors with indispensable feedback.

As on previous years, our editorial team has gone through some changes. We have two new members, Aron Ouwerkerk and Lorenzo Iuliano, who are part of our Classics team. They started at the initial stages of the editorial process of issue 7 and have demonstrated to be valuable to the team. On the other hand, several of our editors have concluded their cycle with Kleos and this is their last issue. We want to thank them wholeheartedly for the work they put into the journal: Aurora Hamm and Sílvia Maciel of the Archaeology team, Stefan Dingenmans of the Ancient History team and Bas Wagenaar of the Classics team. We also want to thank to previous members of the team that helped during the editorial process of issue 7, Daphne de Vos, Reinier Langerak, Levan Losaberidze, Orgesa Selamaj and Arjen van Lil.

As usual, we hope you are looking forward to our next issue, which will be published next year and we hope you enjoy reading this issue!

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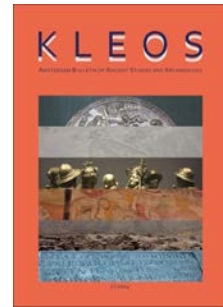
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Unveiling the Symbolic Significance of Mycenaean Weaponry: Exploring Material Culture and Death in the Late Bronze Age Argolid

Meilin Lyu

ABSTRACT

This paper delves into the Late Bronze Age Mycenaean civilisation's burial customs, to elucidate the dynamic relationship between weaponry assemblages and evolving societal dynamics by focusing on Mycenae, Dendra, and Prosymna. During the Palatial period, these societies underwent significant transformations, transitioning from kin groups to nuclear families as political units, reflecting shifts in societal organisation and power dynamics. The research scrutinises the specific weaponry findings in shaft graves, tholos tombs, and chamber tombs, elucidating their roles in combat functions and as prestige objects. By categorising the morphology of weaponry types, this study investigates the practicality of these weapons in warfare and their symbolic significance. The contextual analysis of burial sites unveils military identity and broader social conditions. The presence of precious material and intricate designs in weaponry underscores their roles in projecting social status and identities. This paper emphasises the intricate relationships between weaponry, elite representation, and cultural identity, providing fresh insights into Mycenaean militarism and social dynamics.

INTRODUCTION

During the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1700-1100 BC), the Mycenaean civilisation in the Argolid region of mainland Greece underwent changes in burial customs that reflected ideological and political shifts in societal organisation and power dynamics. Emerging palatial centres like Mycenae and Midea, originally developed as small settlements, consolidated, governed by individual chiefs or allied groups who acquired wealth through various means. Burial customs symbolised identities after death and evolved from earlier single burials in pits and cists to the reuse of Middle Helladic (MH)

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► [Profile page](#)

burials, marking a transition from kin groups to nuclear families as political units. In the Palatial period, power became concentrated within the Mycenaean network, focusing on individuals and the control of prestige goods as indicators of status.¹ Rich burials in chamber tombs and tholos tombs demonstrated control over exotic materials. The peak of Mycenaean civilisation in the Aegean occurred in Late Helladic IIIA2, leading to an expansion of settlements. Consequently, the emphasis shifted from luxurious burials to labour-intensive building programs, resulting in a decline of prestige objects in tombs. As such, chamber tombs were popular throughout the Argolid in Late Helladic III and were continuously in use until the end of Late Helladic IIIC.²

This paper aims to explore the specific weaponry findings in different tomb types within the Mycenaean civilisation, namely shaft graves, tholos tombs, and chamber tombs. The Argolid region, known for its fertile soils and strategic location, played a prominent role in the Mycenaean world. The primary focus lies on the burial sites located at Mycenae as the dominant site, with Dendra and Prosymna as independent centres in the direct neighbourhood of the Mycenaean king. These sites were selected based on the abundance, quality, and diversity of weaponry funerary offerings, allowing for a detailed, topical exploration of their significance.

The prominent Shaft Graves of Grave Circles A and B in Mycenae marked a new era of elite burials, with the former being located south of the Lion Gate and enclosed by shelly sandstone slabs.³ In comparison, Grave Circle B was distinguished by a greater number of burials and complex construction techniques, with a roof that sealed the lower part of the shaft and earth filling the upper part to prevent water seepage.⁴ Both grave circles have a similar, diversified range of weaponry assemblages; in particular, the swords and daggers have outstanding depictions of hunting and fighting scenes, which could symbolise the ideals of men.⁵ Tholos tombs, such as those in Prosymna and Dendra, were circular structures with a narrow dromos and a stone corbel vault roof.⁶ They were primarily used for single burials and displayed conspicuous consumption. The tholoi tomb at Dendra has demonstrated a highly diverse range of sword types and rare finds

1 Nakassis et al., 2010.

2 Lantzas 2014.

3 Grave Circle A dated from late MH/early LH to LHIIA, and Grave Circle B dated from the latter half of MH to LHI (Mylonas, 1966).

4 Mylonas 1966, 98-99.

5 Voutsaki 1999, 115.

6 Ibid., 118.

TYPE	DATE	TOMB
Shaft Graves	late MH/early LH — LHIIA (Mylonas 1966)	<i>Grave Circle A</i>
Shaft Graves	latter half of MH —LHI period (Mylonas 1966)	<i>Grave Circle B</i>
Tholos Tomb	LHII ca. 1500-1400 BCE (Wace et al. 1953)	<i>Prosymna</i>
Tholos Tomb	LHIIIA ca. 1450-1350 BCE (Persson 1931)	<i>The Royal Tomb of Dendra</i>
Chamber Tombs	LHI-LHIIIA1 (Steinmann 2020)	<i>Dendra Site</i>
Chamber Tombs	LHI-LHIIIB2 (Steinmann 2020)	<i>Prosymna</i>

Figure 1.

Approximate datings of tombs discussed in this article (created by author).

of defensive weaponry, including armour pieces and ornaments of helmets, despite instances of looting. Additionally, the Argolid region had numerous chamber tombs, including 16 at Dendra and 50 at Prosymna, which were underground graves with a passage and a sealed entrance. In comparison to other forms of tombs, chamber tombs were recognised as encompassing a more extensive and more varied community, both in terms of social interactions and economic dynamics.⁷ As such, these burial customs and sites provide valuable insights into Mycenaean militarism and evolving societal dynamics during the Late Bronze Age (see figure 1).

RESEARCH QUESTION AND AIM

Mycenaean funerary practices have been extensively researched and supported by rich but somewhat fragmented archaeological evidence due to varying publication and excavation documentation styles, degrees of preservation, and the limited contexts of buried individuals, leading to divergent interpretations.⁸ Scholars have proposed various theories on how Mycenaean

⁷ Wright 2008.
⁸ Lantzas 2014.

treated their ancestors and constructed their identity through burial structures, depicted iconography on steles and funerary monuments, and the re-deposition of the dead by examining the positioning of human remains and traces of commemorative feasting.⁹ However, it remains debatable whether modern concepts can be used to deduce past agents' behaviours. The concept of "ownership" is a modern Western idea and may not be suitable for interpreting the distant past of another society. It is also contentious whether prestige materials necessarily imply status and wealth, whether weaponry symbolises ideal masculinity, and whether burial artefacts directly reflect biography of the deceased, as the individual may not have used these items. Additionally, the use of typology has been criticised for not taking into account of burial contexts and making generalisations about individual actions.¹⁰

This paper aims to explore the social construction of death representation during the Mycenaean period, focusing primarily on weaponry assemblages and arrangements as material evidence. By gathering detailed datasets on the morphology of weaponry types, lengths of objects, and their chronology, this research aims to examine the use and function of specific weaponry objects, to gain insights into both their practicality in military actions and their significance as ornamental items within the ideological framework of Mycenaean civilisation.

Adopting a Foucauldian archaeological analysis approach, this paper does not seek to uncover a "historical truth" but rather (re)produce a discursive "truth-making process".¹¹ This approach deconstructs how power relations and discourse were embedded in and supported by changing social conditions and structures, reflecting the collective attitudes of Mycenaean communities towards death across each period. By analysing both the funerary cycle of tombs and the arrangement of material goods, as Cavanagh & Mee suggested, in relation to the broader socio-economic context of Mycenaean society, this paper aims to uncover the emotional states and attitudes towards the dead.¹² Special attention is given to the details of buried weaponry types and decoration features to postulate the reasoning behind their placements and to understand how weaponry assemblages reflect the socio-economic and ideological developments of the time, genealogical ties to ancestors, regional characteristics within Mycenaean burial traditions, and norms of behaviour established

9 Gallou/Georgiadis 2006.

10 See Voutsaki 2010c, Boyd 2014, Brück 2016.

11 Khan & MacEachen 2021, 4.

12 Cavanagh/Mee 1998.

through repetition and continuity.¹³

WEAPONRY FURNISHINGS AT BURIAL SITES FOR COMBAT FUNCTIONS

Swords were related to the unique warrior identity, requiring individuals to train themselves in this specific technique of martial arts, therefore symbolising "an ancient tradition of exercising legitimate, socially sanctioned violence on behalf of a community".¹⁴ The bronze sword, in particular, had limited sharpness due to its material, in comparison to iron. Long and thin swords could be used to cleave the target through bending, causing extended slicing to the skin, in contrast, short swords had the drawback of losing balance for the user when inflicting a deep cut on an opponent.¹⁵

Conversely, daggers were traditionally widespread and conveyed the "pluralistic" identities of warriors, butchers, hunters, etc. Their popularity also indicates it was a personal item carrying the male identity, suitable for small-scale combat to injure legs and arms as attack targets. From the cross-sections of swords and daggers, we can determine that low convex midribs or high angular midribs could result in elliptical or rhomboid shapes, providing greater force to the blades.¹⁶ Further, bows or spears as weaponry would require increased distance and be optimal for group performances.¹⁷

SWORDS (SEE FIGURE 2)

Karo categorised Mycenaean swords from Grave Circle A into Types A and B. Type A had a narrow Minoan blade, a short tang, and a flared handle with cylindrical handles made of wood or perishables, and knobs of alabaster, marble, or ivory. An example from Grave Circle A had a gold-adorned handle with a lion and panther design.¹⁸ Designed for wide slashes, Type A swords were slow and ceremonial, symbolising status, and eventually fell out of use.¹⁹ Type B swords were more practical, featuring a strong, rounded midrib, a widened blade, and a long-handled tang covered in gold. An example from Grave Circle A has intricate spiral, leaf, and wavy line patterns on the handle.²⁰ Single-edged swords used until the Late Helladic II were effective for slashing

¹³ Hobsbawm/Ranger 1983.

¹⁴ Molloy 2010, 424.

¹⁵ Ibid., 419.

¹⁶ Papadopoulos 1998, 34.

¹⁷ Molloy 2010, 413.

¹⁸ Numbered IV 295.

¹⁹ Georganas 2010, 306; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1993, 41; Molloy 2008, 416; O'Brien 2009, 187.

²⁰ Numbered IV 3398, Karo 1915, 197.

Type	Date Range	Description	Length Range (cm)	Cross-section
Type A	MHIII-LHIII A1	long, tapering blade, pointed mid-rib, short tang with 1-3 rivets and 2 in shoulders organic handle has decayed	55-100 (considerable variability)	flat-blade with midrib
Type B	MHIII-LHIII A1	projecting tongue of metal blade forming the handle, squared shoulders, broad tang with 1-3 rivets and 2-3 in shoulders	33-55	graduation to pointed oval
Single-edged/ <i>Schlachtmesser</i>	MHIII-LHIII A1	full tang handle with organic hilt plates; (Type II) solid cast handle with a loop	35-70	extended triangle
Type C	LHI-LHIII B	horned hilt, full tang handle, 0-3 rivets and 2 in shoulders, with flanges, shoulders, quillons, and ricasso;	50-90	flat-blade with midrib
Type Di „cruciform“ sword	LHIII-LHIII B	rounded knob, blade form similar with Type C with greater percentage of shorter blades; 0-3 rivets and 2 in shoulders,	35-65	flat blade with midrib; variants with flat mid-rib to pointed oval
Type Dii	LHIII A2-LHIII C	T-shaped plate, reduced midrib profile compared to Type Di; pointed-oval blade cross-section for deeper cuts, 0-3 rivets and 2 in shoulders,	35-45	flat midrib to pointed oval section

Figure 2.

Sword types relevant to the burial sites discussed in this article (adapted from Papadopoulos 1998).

but had slippery handles secured with wrist cords.²¹ Type C swords, with improved hilt-blade attachments, were shorter, lighter, and used for cutting linen or leather.²² Type D swords had enhanced shoulders, offering balance and power for close combat.²³

DAGGERS (SEE FIGURE 3 AND FIGURE 4)

In general, Type I, II, and cruciform daggers were apt to deliver slashing strokes, with the cruciform type especially suited for stabbing. Additionally, they served as secondary weapons alongside swords and spears.²⁴ Type I tangless dagger likely served as an auxiliary weapon for well-equipped warriors. In particular, Types I and II were found exclusively in the shaft graves A and B. The homogeneity in shape and technique also indicates them having been locally manufactured. From the rivet-scheme of daggers, we can also observe that rivets in the Mycenae and Prosymna were either thick and short or thin and large, which was influenced by northern styles.²⁵

From the meticulous categorisation and physical testing of weaponry by scholars, we could see the continuous efforts of the Mycenaeans placed on the technical performances of weaponry corresponding to different attacking strategies. Additionally, these weaponry assemblages were also elegant and decorative in appearance. As such, we can deduce the concentrated efforts spent on weaponry production in this period. The overwhelming distinctions in weaponry types also highlight the level of expertise and craftsmanship involved in the processes. At these three sites—Mycenae, Dendra, and Prosymna—evidence of a wide range of weaponry types indicates the wide circulation and popularity of weaponry enjoyed in the Argolid. Finally, this weaponry assemblage could imply that there was advanced military development, possibly indicating standardised military formations and active military activities conducted in this period.

WEAPONRY FURNISHINGS AT BURIAL SITES AS PRESTIGE OBJECTS

Mycenaean funerary practices included intricate burial arrangements, such as the separation of grave circles by peribolos walls. Grave Circle B at Mycenae suggested competition among elites through conspicuous consumption, leaving the centre-left section vacant.²⁶ The exclusivity of tholos tombs and clustered chamber tombs, like at Prosymna, indicated prolonged use and

²¹ Also referred as "Schlachtsmesser". Molloy 2010, 417.

²² *Ibid.*, 418.

²³ Molloy 2008, 420.

²⁴ Papadopoulos 1998, 47.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

	Description	Date Range (from the specimens provided)	Length Range (cm)	Sites
Tangless Daggers	Type I	tangless, broad and convex butts; tapering blades with/without a midrib; slant edges, 2-4 gold or silver plates rivets on the edge of the butt	Late MBA— Early LBA	not more than 20 (L) 5.5 (W)
	Type IA	mostly tapering, slightly thickened daggers	MHIII— LHIIIA2?	Dendra, Grave Circle A
	Type IB	tangless midrib daggers, mostly oval	MHIII- LHIIIA1	Grave Circle A and B; Prosymna; Dendra
	Type II	elongated triangular „winged“ blades; with/without midrib, slant edges, four huge rivets of gold or silver plates in the butt in a triangular pattern	MHIII-LHII	23.6-43 (L) 6cm (W)
	Type IIA	tangless	MHIII—LHI	Grave Circle A and B
	Type IIB	short tang	(MHIII)— LHII?	

Figure 3.

Dagger types relevant to the burial sites discussed in this article (adapted from Papadoupoulos 1998).

Type	Description	Date Range (from the specimens provided)	Length Range (cm)	Sites
Tanged Daggers	little homogeneity in forms, all tongue-shaped (rectangular tang), U-shaped or tapering blade; flat or rounded butts, 2-3 rivets	LHI/LHII —LHIIIA/ LHIIIB	15.4-31 (L) 3.2-5.7 (W)	
Variant B	Tapering blade	LHI— LHIIIA		Prosymna (Argolid)
Horned Daggers	comparatively rare, upward horned shoulders, with long and broad tang, triangular blade with or without sharp midrib, 2-7 rivets with large variations in formation	MHIII— LHI	26.4-39.5 (L) 6.3-8 (W)	
Variant A	Triangular blade	MHIII-LHI		Grave Circle A
Variant B	Elongated Triangular blade	MHIII-LHI		Grave Circle B

Figure 4.

(continued) Dagger types relevant to the burial sites discussed in this article (adapted from Papadopoulos 1998).

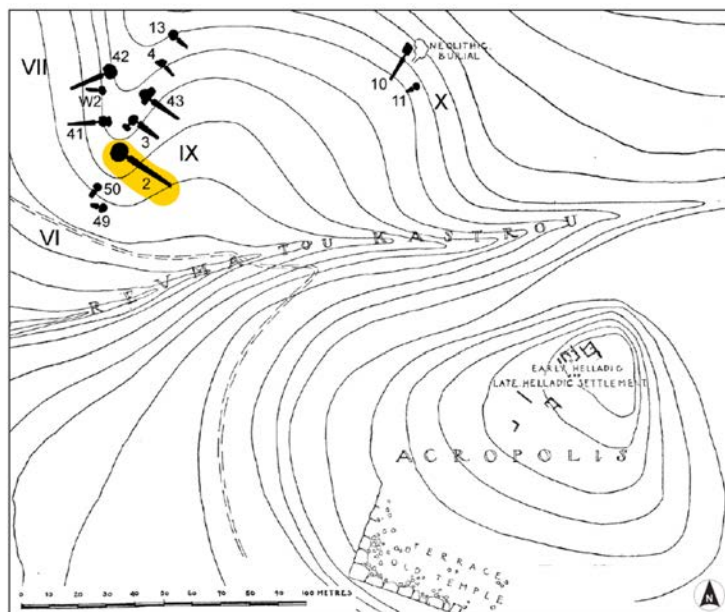


Figure 5.

Arrangement of chamber tomb 2 at Dendra (adapted from Persson 1931, figure.53), showing its proximity to the Acropolis.

individual investment.²⁷ Burial spaces communicated social status, with chamber tombs hosting dozens and the dromos above housing hundreds.²⁸ Strategic placements of burials, such as Chamber Tomb 2 at Prosymna's hill (see figure 5) and Dendra burials near the citadel, linked burials with daily life, thereby acting as a steadfast backdrop to the daily rituals of the living, while simultaneously expressing the nuanced facets of military identity.²⁹

Weaponry, often combined with precious metals, bronze utensils, gold jewellery, and seals, functioned as prestige objects. Examples include gold-covered handles, ivory or semi-precious stone knobs, and decorated rivets. These decorations, though not impairing weapon usage, manifested aesthetic appreciation and socio-economic motives. Artefacts made of gold, silver, amber, and ivory were scattered, with shaft graves displaying them dramatically. Swords and daggers in shaft graves were elaborately decorated, indicating individual craftsmanship and early experimentation for "self-representation and wearing, owning or displaying".³⁰ Moreover, the swords deposited in the grave circles were of an impressive diversity and quantity.³¹ These deposited swords with diversified midrib profiles and rivet systems have further indicated that they were likely individually made by bronze-smiths in single-use moulds. Further, the diverse designs reflect early experimentation, with distinct decorations showing continuous improvement. The weaponry in shaft graves represents the palatial display of material wealth, connections to distant regions, and bellicose tendencies.³² This cultural concept of "conspicuous consumption" intensified social stratification in the Early Mycenaean period, as the swords were likely associated with a select few high-ranking warriors, perpetuating social inequality among lesser warriors and non-military officials.³³ Comparatively, the royal tholoi at Dendra were simpler, with weaponry mainly inlaid with gold. Chamber tombs lacked prestigious objects, possibly due to the Mycenaean belief in circulating wealth rather than depositing it. During the Mycenaean Palatial period in LHIIIA-B, palatial elites controlled conspicuous consumption, consolidating power through the

27 Steinmann 2020, 403.

28 Boyd 2015, 207.

29 Ibid., 212.

30 Schallin 2016, 184.

31 A minimum of 36 blades were restored in Grave V, and a minimum of 42 in Grave IV, Harrell 2014, 4.

32 Ibid., 3.

33 Kramer-Hajos 2016, 81.

distribution of gold and exotic materials.³⁴

MYCENAEAN MILITARISM CULTURE AND IDENTITY IN BURIAL CUSTOMS

The weaponry assemblages in Mycenaean burials served fluid purposes, reflecting the changing social constructions and ambitions of the living. These assemblages were not homogeneous hoards; the sources could be obtained through trade, interpersonal exchange, marriage, or custom orders. From the evidence of the increasingly tailored weapons in the Shaft Grave Period, including Type A, B and C, though they were capable of inflicting mortal injuries, Molloy through test-wear analysis hypothesised that they were more suitable for a series of minor, unpleasant, non-lethal injuries, suggesting unique social functions.³⁵ This form of "highly ritualised" public sword fights would have projected swordsmen's masculine honour and personal worth at their highest, as a symbol of equality. Also, this type of autonomous activity would be considered as an external authority, where the faction leader profited by extending swordsmen's social obligations.

As Voutsaki notes, the representation of swords in burials reflects an "agonistic ethos" akin to that promoted in Homeric epics.³⁶ She recognises these weapons as luxurious gift exchanges or symbols of conspicuous consumption. Drawing a parallel to modern military enthusiasts, weapon collections in Mycenaean societies signified battles fought or diplomatic gifts received. Evidence of advanced weapon production suggests that high-ranking elites possessed custom-made collections for special occasions. Alternatively, Chapman theorises that these precious objects were initially exchanged and collectively owned by the community as joint property.³⁷ Over time, the accumulation and appropriation of these gifts by specific individuals led to social stratification, with the most powerful ruling the communities.

Malafouris extends the analogy of the body schema from neurology to archaeology, suggesting that Mycenaean swords became "phantom limbs" for their owners, inseparable from their identity.³⁸ When a Mycenaean warrior or leader died, the sword symbolised the person beyond temporal and spatial constraints, serving as an inter-space symbol during life and continuing after death. This argument goes beyond Vermeule's anthropomorphism,

³⁴ Voutsaki 1997, 45.

³⁵ Molloy 2008.

³⁶ Voutsaki 1993.

³⁷ Chapman 2000.

³⁸ Malafouris 2008.

where the weapon is seen as animated.³⁹ The rich decorations and practical functions of these weapons, participating in battles and rituals, made them "psychological weapons" that transmitted a "message" on various occasions. The weapon itself does not entail life, but it is instilled with it through its owner's use.

Harrell hypothesises a complete cycle of weaponry gift exchange between faction leaders and swordsmen.⁴⁰ A swordsman demonstrating military ability or true warrior characteristics would receive a sword from the faction leader. Upon the leader's death, new power dynamics emerged as successors bestowed swords. Initially, these swords served as proof of the swordsmen's prowess, strengthening social bonds and fuelling competition. In LHIIIA, similar material assemblages and burial customs emerged, indicating competition among elite peer-polities at local and regional levels, such as the ephemeral monumentality in tholos tombs.⁴¹

During the palatial period, Mycenaean society transformed into a redistributive state dominated by a powerful central authority controlling economic activity.⁴² In LHIIIB, imports of prestige goods were tightly controlled, with valuable materials like gold and ivory exclusively manufactured at Mycenae, while Midea processed the semi-precious stones and glass.⁴³ Although there is no direct evidence of palatial centres under attack, the use of Type D swords and spears indicates increased warfare, mobility, and raiding.⁴⁴ Superior weaponry played a vital role in the Mycenaean palatial centres. Ortner describes these warriors as 'domesticated', subordinated to the palace and losing their individual prestige, contrasting with the Shaft Grave period's luxurious burials.⁴⁵ The commemorative ceremonies, heroic athletic games, and feasting held in memory of ancestors within Mycenaean communities or corporate groups illustrate the transformation of an individual's identity after death.⁴⁶ These ritualised performances in dark, enclosed tombs underscore the symbolic relationship between the deceased and their kin group. The tripartite architectural structure of Mycenaean tombs, comprising dromos, stomion, and chamber, adds to this symbolic transformation.⁴⁷ Imagining the interlinked sequences of funerary

39 Vermeule 1975.

40 Harrell 2014.

41 Kramer-Hajos 2016, 73-75.

42 O'Brien 2008, 28-29.

43 Voutsaki 2010b, referenced by Kramer-Hajos 2016, 143.

44 O'Brien 2009, 319.

45 Kramer-Hajos 2016, 104.

46 Gallou/Georgiadis 2006; Boyd 2014.

47 Boyd 2014.

processions, we understand that the Mycenaeans believed in a liminal stage between life and death, holding funerals to console the deceased and signal the legitimate transference of power and succession rights.⁴⁸ Accepting that inanimate objects could intercommunicate with humans through their materiality, they could transform into "intermediaries" or "agents" to convey the symbols of power and prestige, that are "created, read and understood by all".⁴⁹

The placement of weaponry in burials by family or community members, with rich ornamentations, clearly aimed to enrich the deceased and highlight the actions of the living. These weapons could be interpreted as the deceased's belongings, gifts from close members, or acts of community obligation for ancestral worship.⁵⁰ Frequent disturbances to tholos and chamber tombs by family members, such as in the Prosymna chamber tombs 4 and 29 where only skulls and long bones were preserved, show that remains were transformed into ancestral hoards, no longer viewed as significant individuals.⁵¹ Initially, weaponry burials aimed to depict an individual's martial identity, but over time, through competition and emulation, they came to symbolise the broader 'Mycenaean identity'. Secondary mortuary practices often involved re-arranging the last burials while sweeping aside bones from previous ones, in line with Mycenaean beliefs that decomposition signified the spirit joining the ancestors.⁵² This practice of 'breakage' reflects a social trend that placed less emphasis on individualism in funerary burials. It could further be argued that these re-used and multiple burials would make individuals unable to determine for whom the tombs were placed, therefore cohering to the deeper cultural ideology of the common mainland identity.⁵³

Further, according to Cavanagh & Mee, approximately 1000 Mycenaeans were buried in Prosymna's 48 chamber tombs.⁵⁴ Over time, the number of rich burials decreased while poorer chamber tombs increased, suggesting a shift towards consumption during life and indicating economic stability through formal burials.⁵⁵ Noticeably, the settlement at Prosymna, which had remained a site for small community burials since the Middle Bronze Age until the beginning of the palatial period, transformed into a large-

⁴⁸ Gillis 2016, 286-288.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 208-211.

⁵⁰ Boyd 2014.

⁵¹ Gallou/Georgiadis 2006, 132.

⁵² Mee 2010, 288; Boyd 2015, 208.

⁵³ Voutsaki 2010a.

⁵⁴ Cavanagh/Mee 1998.

⁵⁵ Shelmerdine 2006, 79.

sized "proto-urban" mortuary form without kinship ties.⁵⁶ However, the surrounding tombs of Chamber Tomb 2 at Prosymna may still have been placed with close family members.⁵⁷ This mortuary change suggests the emergence and establishment of a central administration, which attracted followers and ruling elites, forming a central agency and consequently increasing population and cultural uniformity.⁵⁸

Whitley suggests that weaponry burials should be understood as symbolic representations of high elites and low elite warriors, rather than mere biographical facts.⁵⁹ The "excessive" number of swords at the Grave Circles and Dendra were functional types with material decoration, only later embellished with gold hilts for the burials.⁶⁰ Although the jewellery on weaponry mainly displayed ornamental functions, its styles conveyed important political and social messages about the protected status of the deceased to other elites. Ornamental spiral motifs observed in Chamber Tomb 2 at Prosymna, related to sovereignty in Mycenaean art, lacked explicit iconography for the king himself. By mystifying the role of the divine king, the funerary weaponry assemblages imply the general Mycenaean ruler ideology.

CONCLUSION

This study mainly examines weaponry in the Mycenaean civilisation, focusing on shaft graves, tholos tombs, and chamber tombs in the Argolid region, particularly Mycenae, Dendra, and Prosymna. The paper then analyses weaponry types such as swords, daggers, and spears, revealing their practical military utility and symbolic significance within the Mycenaean ideology. A central finding is the evolution of burial customs from single burials in cists to the reuse of Middle Helladic burials. Chamber and tholos tomb burials, rich in exotic materials, attest to this change in societal values and resource control. The zenith of Mycenaean civilisation during Late Helladic IIIA2 led to settlement expansion, shifting focus from lavish burials to labour-intensive construction projects, reducing the prominence of prestige objects in tombs. This shift indicates a move towards greater economic stability and the centralisation of power, transforming smaller community burials into larger, more organised mortuary practices.

The study has also highlighted the glorification of death as a characteristic feature of Mycenaean civilisation and the fluidity of

⁵⁶ Wright 2008, 149.

⁵⁷ Steinmann 2020, 406.

⁵⁸ Wright 2008, 148.

⁵⁹ Whitley 2002.

weaponry within tombs, often being displayed, reused, and incorporated into new burial contexts. Weaponry burials were initially symbols of individual martial prowess, and a powerful political weapon in social and political competitions, reserved for a select few. Gradually, they evolved into representations of broader social identities and elite status, highlighting the role of material culture in signalling power and prestige within Mycenaean society. Lavish ornamentation and complex engineering of the weapons serve as semiotics, functioning as both agency and performance, motivating their "coming-into-being" in the world. Through the artifact, the enacted person temporarily possesses the artifact, which in turn becomes a "person." When that person dies, the weapon, having symbolically "died" with them, becomes the enduring symbol of the deceased. This symbol detaches itself from the deceased and reattaches itself to the next owner, perpetuating the cycle of symbolic association. By depositing these assemblages in burials, they accompanied the deceased to the afterlife, inadvertently serving as markers of group membership and potentially indicating ethnic identity acceptance. Thus, just as mourners participate in the circulation of life, weaponry also participates in the circulation of representations.

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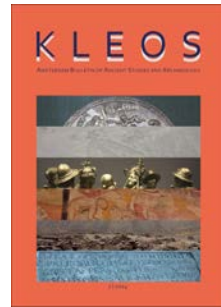
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Suspend Your Disbelief: Spontaneous Generation in Antigonus's Paradoxography

Ariella Goldberg

ABSTRACT

The term 'paradoxography' ('marvel-writing') refers to compilations of excerpted historical, ethnographical, natural scientific, and biological phenomena, which emerged in 4th century BC Alexandria with the purpose of presenting extraordinary phenomena.¹ Twentieth-century scholarship has depicted paradoxography as a misuse of legitimate historical and scientific works for the purpose of entertainment, while recent scholarship casts a more generous view of the relationship between paradoxographical compilations and their source texts. Nonetheless, the nature of paradoxography's engagement with science remains a desideratum of research. The present article focuses on Antigonus (fl. c. 240 BC) and his *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* (Συναγωγή ιστοριῶν παραδόξων), demonstrating how he invokes wonder in spontaneous generation—a biological process thought in antiquity to explain the appearance of organisms without being generated by another of their kind, such as insects in rotting matter.² Antigonus assumes his readers' familiarity with spontaneous generation, unlike other topics he discusses. This article demonstrates that, by positioning spontaneous generation as an object of wonder, Antigonus engages with contemporary discourse and encourages inquiry into this generative process. I introduce the history and critical reception of paradoxography, its stylistic features, and analyse Antigonus's references to spontaneous generation to emphasise his work's participation in scientific inquiry.

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► [Profile page](#)

¹ On paradoxographical methods, see Jacob 1983, 132-133.

² The titular adjective παράδοξος is broadly construed. I use the translation of this title in Lightfoot 2021. S. White 2015 provides three alternatives: *Collection of Amazing Stories*, *Collection of Marvellous Tales*, and *Collection of Puzzling Reports*. These translations tend to prioritise the purpose of the compilation, which is to evoke wonder.

INTRODUCTION TO 'PARADOXOGRAPHY'

The conception of paradoxography as a literary genre is modern, designating compilations of extracted phenomena presented as marvels that emerged around 4th century BC Alexandria. The rise of paradoxography was facilitated by access to libraries in urban centres such as Alexandria, Pergamum, and Athens.³ Alexandria was particularly central to the development of paradoxography, due in part to support from the Ptolemies, whose court provided a social setting for the presentation of wonders; paradoxography also furthered Ptolemaic political objectives by symbolising their control over the earth's natural marvels.⁴ The earliest author associated with paradoxography is Callimachus of Cyrene (4th-3rd century BC), the poet and librarian of the Museum of Alexandria.⁵ Although Callimachus is most famous for his poetry and the Πίνακες, a complete catalogue of the books contained in the Museum, he also wrote the *Collection of Wonders over the Whole Earth according to Locations* (Συναγωγή θαυμάτων τῶν εἰς ἅπασαν τὴν γῆν κατὰ τόπους). Callimachus is partially preserved in the *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* by Antigonus, perhaps of Carystus (fl. c. 240 BC).⁶ Antigonus calls Callimachus's work "[...] a collection of strange phenomena from which we will write down as many as seems to us to be worth hearing [... ἐκλογὴν τῶν παραδόξων, ἧς ἀναγράφομεν ὅσα ποτὲ ἡμῖν ἐφαίνετο εἶναι ἀκοῆς ἄξια]."⁷ Antigonus then paraphrases Callimachus's work and arranges the entries by topic, rather than geographic location.⁸

Early authors who would later be recognised as paradoxographers include Agatharchides, Lysimachus, and

³ Yu 2016, 2.

⁴ Greene 2019, 34; Lightfoot 2021, 52-57.

⁵ Pajón Leyra 2011, 19.

⁶ The name 'Antigonus' appears at the beginning of the collection, potentially referring to Antigonus of Carystus, a 3rd-century BC biographer, art historian, and sculptor associated with the court at Pergamon. U. v. Wilamowitz proposed this attribution, merging several Hellenistic figures into one identity; see Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1881, 169-177; cf. Schepens/Delcroix 1996, 377 note 1 and 401 note 89. O. Musso disputes Antigonus's authorship of the *Collection*, arguing for its compilation during the 10th-century AD reign of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus; see Musso 1976, 1-10; id. 1977, 15-17. T. Dorandi supports Wilamowitz's identification of Antigonus of Carystus but suggests that a different Antigonus may have authored the *Collection*; see Dorandi 1999, xi-xxii; id. 2005, 121-4; cf. Köpke 1862. Nonetheless, as Lightfoot contends, the *Collection's* references date to a time before or during Antigonus of Carystus's *floruit*, supporting the work's 3rd-century BC dating and Wilamowitz's argument for its Antigonian authorship; see Lightfoot 2021, 42-43 note 1. While the authorship of the *Collection* cannot be established with certainty, the present study accepts the Hellenistic dating for its analysis. For further discussion, see Sassi 1993, 459-65; Scott Fitzgerald 2006, 378 note 11; Vergados 2007, 737 note 2.

⁷ Antigonus, *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* 129.6-8. Greek text is adapted from Westermann 1839.

⁸ Scott Fitzgerald 2006, 316-317.

Philostephanus of Cyrene, who was a student of Callimachus.⁹ Paradoxographers consulted authoritative works by scientists, historiographers, and poets, including Aeschylus, Alcman, Aristotle, Ctesias, Herodotus, Theophrastus, and Xenophanes, extracting “[...] ‘wonders’ (thaumata [θαύματα]), ‘singular’ things (idia [ἴδια]), and those events that occur against expectation (paradoxa [παράδοξα]).”¹⁰ The designation of thaumata, idia, and paradoxa as such is based on the author’s perception of his own work and the subjective response that he expects to evoke. In the case of Antigonus, this intentionality provides a lens into what would have been considered worthy of wonder in 3rd-century BC Hellenistic culture.

Authors associated with paradoxography did not necessarily consider themselves paradoxographers or attribute their work to a specific genre.¹¹ As C. Delattre argues, “paradoxographic texts develop through imitation of previous writers and reformulation, not through adaptation of an ideal model.”¹² In fact, the term ‘paradoxographer’ (ὁ παραδοξογράφος) is not attested until the Byzantine age in the work of 12th-century scholar Johannes Tzetzes (1110-1180 AD).¹³ In his *Thousands* (Χιλιάδες), also known as the *Book of Histories*, (βιβλος ιστορική), Tzetzes uses the term for the first time to characterise Anthemius of Tralles, a 6th-century architect and mathematician. In the relevant passage (*Book of Histories* 2 35, 154), Tzetzes lists “Ἄνθεμιος... ὁ παραδοξογράφος” alongside other authorial sources for the fabled account of Archimedes utilising solar reflection to set fire to the Roman fleet during the siege of Syracuse.¹⁴ Anthemius, however, is not a writer of paradoxography according to the modern definition; other sources primarily identify Anthemius as an engineer, having been the architect for the reconstruction of the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople after it was destroyed by an earthquake in 557 AD.¹⁵ Moreover, according to I. Pajón Leyra, Tzetzes avoids using the term ‘paradoxographer’ when discussing literature related to the marvellous, indicating that he does not use it with its modern connotation.¹⁶

K. Yu points out the problems with classifying paradoxography

9 Yu 2016, 2.

10 Geus/King 2018, 431.

11 For the view that literary genre was not systemically defined in antiquity, see Rosenmeyer 2006, 426-437.

12 Delattre 2018, 206 note 7.

13 Lightfoot 2021, 46. All translations throughout this article are the present author's own unless stated otherwise.

14 Kiessling 1826, 46.

15 Pajón Leyra 2011, 92-93 note 217.

16 *Ibid.*, 92-93.

as a distinct genre due to its intersections with historiography, zoology, medicine, and aretology, noting that paradoxographers are often better known for their work in other fields.¹⁷ When ancient sources discuss marvellous tales, they name a variety of authors, not all of whom are considered to be associated with paradoxography by modern scholarship. For instance, in his *Attic Nights (Noctes Atticae)*, Aulus Gellius (c. 123-170 AD) lists Aristeas Proconnesius, Isigonus of Nicaea, Ctesias, Onesicritus, Philostephanus, and Hegesias among the authors of “[...] Greek books full of wonders and stories, unheard of and unbelievable [*libri Graeci miraculorum fabularumque pleni, res inauditae, incredulae*] [...]”¹⁸ Of these, only Isigonus of Nicaea is today considered a writer of paradoxography, although he is foremost known as a historian.¹⁹ Thus, in antiquity and the Byzantine period paradoxography appears intermixed with other literature in which interest in the marvellous is commonplace.²⁰ Pajón Leyra summarises that while it is uncertain whether paradoxographical authors considered their work as a distinct genre, ancient and Byzantine non-paradoxographical authors made no distinction between paradoxography and other texts featuring similar content.²¹

Instead, ‘paradoxography’ is an etic term that developed through the modern publication of texts. In 1568, Xylander published the earliest edition of the works of paradoxographers, including Antigonus, Apollonius (fl. 2nd century BC), and Phlegon of Tralles (fl. 2nd century AD). Scholars credit Anton Westermann with introducing paradoxography as a genre to the modern world with his 1839 publication of *Παραδοξογράφοι, Scriptores Rerum Mirabilium Graeci*.²² It is with this acknowledgement that the present study examines paradoxography, following Delattre, as “[...] a discursive practice embedded in an extensive corpus” rather than as a genre.²³

CRITICAL RECEPTION OF PARADOXOGRAPHY

Although paradoxographers often selected accounts that their source authors designated as inconsistencies or exceptions to rules, they also intentionally excised their topic of interest from its

¹⁷ Yu 2016, 1.

¹⁸ Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 9.4.3.

¹⁹ Pajón Leyra 2011, 90.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 92-93 note 217.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 89. On the lack of an independent literary genre of paradoxography in antiquity, see Dorandi 1999, xiii-xvi.

²² Pajón Leyra 2011, 96; Lightfoot 2021, 46 note 4. For bibliography and editions, see Pajón Leyra 2022, 406.

²³ Delattre 2018, 206.

surrounding explanation, thus portraying the topic as more exceptional than originally described. As J. Lightfoot notes, the paradoxographer cherry-picked his thaumata, distorting their original meaning.²⁴ This selective presentation made topics that were reasonable in their original explanatory context seem more surprising or unusual in the paradoxographical work.

It is this tendency toward manipulation which has long led to the negative critical reception of paradoxography. Ancient authors such as Polybius, Diodorus of Sicily, and Lucian disparage wondrous tales and, by extension, paradoxography, suggesting that the use of wonder for entertainment conflicts with the pursuit of truth.²⁵

20th-century scholars such as G. Schepens, K. Delcroix, W. Schmid, O. Stählin, A. Giannini, and J. Romm collectively characterise paradoxography as a trivial repurposing of 'true' science, condemning it as derivative, consumer-oriented literature lacking in originality and critical engagement with its subject matter, thereby marginalising paradoxography to the realm of 'pseudo-science'.²⁶ Lightfoot offers a compelling counterargument, contending that "these assumptions about the supposed lack of intellectual interest or value in this material have [...] led to the allegation that these collections must have been aimed at a popular audience, which is also supposedly an automatically credulous audience."²⁷

The paradoxographer's omission of explanatory material does not reflect a lack of interest in scientific explanation, but rather serves to achieve the desired impact on the reader. Recently, scholars have suggested that paradoxography may arise from Hellenistic sympotic contexts in which wonder-telling was common as a form of entertainment and intellectual stimulation; R. Greene asserts that paradoxography unintentionally recreates sympotic discourse, adapting it into a textual form and allowing solitary readers to privately enjoy the pleasures once experienced primarily in social settings.²⁸ According to Greene, an appetite for wonder was "[...] shared by the masses and the intelligentsia alike."²⁹ Paradoxography's stylistic and rhetorical features facilitate stimulating wonder and scientific inquiry.

24 Lightfoot 2021, 74.

25 Greene 2019, 30 note 9.

26 Schepens/Delcroix 1996, 409; Schmid/Stählin 1920, 237; Giannini 1963, 248, 432; Romm 1992, 92. For further discussion of scholarly reception of paradoxography, see Lightfoot 2021, 52.

27 Lightfoot 2021, 52.

28 Greene 2019, 39-40. See also Pajón Leyra 2011, 77-80.

29 Greene 2019, 40.

STYLISTIC FEATURES OF PARADOXOGRAPHY

Stylistic choices in paradoxography appear to be designed with the subjective experience of the reader in mind. The paradoxographer curates a sense of wonder by excluding details that would reveal the cause behind certain observations. This is evident in entry 3 of Antigonus's *Collection of Marvellous Investigations*, which states that, in Cephallenia, cicadas are found, seemingly inexplicably, only on one side of a river that divides the land.³⁰ The source of Antigonus's information is Aristotle's *History of Animals* (Τῶν περὶ τὰ ζῷα ἱστοριῶν), where it appears in a longer section about local varieties of animals.³¹ Preceding the example about cicadas, Aristotle explains that certain species of animals occur only in certain places due to their need for particular environmental conditions to thrive.³² Aristotle then describes the tendency for environmental characteristics to vary over short geographical distances, such as neighbouring regions.³³ This additional information justifies the fact that cicadas live on one side of the river but not the other side; presumably, only one side of the river offers them suitable conditions to thrive.

With Aristotle's explanation, a seemingly unlikely scenario—the presence of cicadas on one side of a river but not the other—is provided theoretical basis. In contrast, Antigonus excludes the information about variable environmental conditions. After several more entries, Antigonus remarks that to determine “[...] whether these things are so according to purpose or chance, much attention is needed [εἴτε κατὰ προαίρεσιν εἴτε κατὰ τύχην οὕτως ἔχει, πολλῆς ἐστὶν ἐπιστάσεως δεόμενα].”³⁴ Schepens and Delcroix interpret this statement as “[...] typical of the pseudo-scientific spirit in which the author compiled his digest of natural wonders” and an indication that the paradoxographer was not interested in Aristotle's rationalisation.³⁵ This reading, however, ascribes a sense of frivolity that is not actually present. Instead, Antigonus's statement should be read as an invitation to the reader to engage in the necessary inquiry to determine the purposeful or coincidental nature of the observations.³⁶ Given Antigonus's relatively transparent citation style, it is possible that readers may have searched for elucidation in the source text;

³⁰ Antigonus, *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* 3.

³¹ Aristotle, *History of Animals* 7.28.

³² *Ibid.*, 7.28.24-25.

³³ *Ibid.*, 7.28.25-27.

³⁴ Antigonus, *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* 20.12-14.

³⁵ Schepens/Delcroix 1996, 391-392.

³⁶ The present author's interpretation of Antigonus' statement agrees with D. Eleftheriou's translation: "Mais on aurait besoin d'un examen attentif pour déterminer si ces comportements sont intentionnels ou s'ils sont dus au hasard". See Eleftheriou 2018, 137.

although, for this particular entry, he gives no details on his source. Alternatively, if read aloud in a social setting, this text may have stimulated discussion as to why such a statement could be true. This possibility would suggest a manner of engagement with the text resembling that of the *paignia* of Late Antiquity—the tricks, games or playful poetry over erudite dinner conversations.³⁷

Besides decontextualisation, paradoxography displays a technical, paratactic style in which entries are arranged with little authorial commentary and an ambiguous (or non-existent) overarching narrative. However, entries are often grouped according to thematic or locational concurrence.³⁸ Themes might include water marvels, zoological wonders, and persons of impressive longevity.

There is also an expressed interest in the location of wonders. Entries often concern “[...] contemporary wonders in local topographies rather than those from myth [...].”³⁹ The association of the paradoxa with their respective locations indicates an appeal to credibility. A prerequisite for an entry to be a thauma (θαῦμα) is its belonging to the real world; the entry will only evoke an appropriate sense of wonder if the reader believes that the phenomenon is real—in other words, a confirmed empirical observation.⁴⁰ The choice of sources confirms this interest in demonstrating the credibility of the thaumata. It was custom to draw from a wide variety of sources to give the impression of comprehensiveness. The citation standards are, however, inconsistent. Antigonus adheres to the language of his original source and often cites sources by name, while authors of later paradoxographical collections tend to be less concerned with citation.

The deliberate elimination of explanation heightens the sense of paradox associated with the topic at hand but, as Lightfoot argues, it does not indicate a lack of interest in the potential explanation.⁴¹ The following sections support this argument by focusing on Antigonus’s entries concerning spontaneous generation, a widespread notion by the time he wrote about it.

THEORETICAL ACCOUNTS OF SPONTANEOUS GENERATION

Scholars observe that spontaneous generation was widely

³⁷ Dufault 2019, 51-69.

³⁸ For examples and references, see Lightfoot 2021, 65-68.

³⁹ Yu 2016, 3.

⁴⁰ See Schepens/Delcroix 1996, 382-9 on the credibility of the marvels contained in paradoxographical collections.

⁴¹ Lightfoot 2021, 78.

recognised during classical antiquity and beyond.⁴² However, it was always worthy of scientific inquiry. J. Farley objects to the portrayal of spontaneous generation in the history of science as an intuitive phenomenon that was gradually and expediently disproven by rigorous experimentation, with the final blow delivered in 1858 by Louis Pasteur.⁴³ Similarly, K. Zwier encourages scholars to take seriously Aristotle's evidence-based defence of spontaneous generation, rather than to view it as a result obtained by intuition, popular folklore, or previous thought.⁴⁴

Spontaneous generation is theorised by Aristotle to account for the appearance of whole species of animals, such as certain insects, hermit crabs, fish, eels, and oysters.⁴⁵ Aristotle articulates his theory of spontaneous generation multiple times, forming the philosophical basis for this phenomenon.⁴⁶ Often referenced is Aristotle's *Generation of Animals* 762a18-29, which claims that animals and plants are formed in the earth when liquid containing πνεῦμα ('air') and θερμότης ψυχική ('soul-heat') within the earth become enclosed, interacting and forming a structure akin to a frothy bubble. Aristotle integrates spontaneous generation into the framework of sexual generation, in which the female parent supplies the material principle through menstrual fluid and the male parent the formative principle (semen). Analogously, in cases of spontaneous generation, earthy material provides the female component and environmental heat provides the male component. Aristotle argues for the regularity of this nonetheless extraordinary generative process.

Zwier significantly concludes that Aristotle does not invent the term 'spontaneous generation' but rather acquires it from common usage.⁴⁷ By comparing Aristotle's use of terms such as 'to occur spontaneously' in *Physics* 2.4-6 with similar phrasing regarding the spontaneous generation of plants and animals, Zwier determines that "[...] there is no obvious indication that

42 Dudley 1997, 144; Kruk 1990, 268; McCartney 1920, 102. This phenomenon also appears in didactic poetry, flourishing through the Roman period (e.g., Oppian, *Cynegetica* 2.561-69; *Halieutica* 1.762; see Osorio 2020 for discussion of examples from Virgil's *Georgics*).

43 Farley 1977, 2.

44 Zwier 2018, 2. See note 1 for further details. Older scholarship, Zwier contends, tends to dismiss Aristotle's handling of spontaneous generation as an acceptance of popular opinion, or a contradiction with his own theories. For these views, see McCartney 1920, 102 and Vartanian 1973, 307, respectively.

45 On insects, see Aristotle, *History of Animals* 538a1-3; 552a16, a21, a29-30; 557b1, b8. On hermit crabs, see *History of Animals* 548a15. On fish, see *History of Animals* 569a10-27. On eels, see *History of Animals* 570a16-23. On oysters, see *Generation of Animals* 763a26-34. See other examples in McCartney 1920, 104-108 and Vartanian, 1973, 307.

46 See Aristotle, *Generation of Animals* 715a20, b25; 713b10; 732b10; 743a35; 757a30, b20; 758a5; 761a15, b20f; 762a5-63a30; *History of Animals* 539a15-25.

47 Zwier 2018, 19.

Aristotle is coining the term, or even applying it in a non-standard way.”⁴⁸ Further, Zwier analyses an instance in Plato’s *Sophist* in which the stranger calls it common knowledge that nature produces living things spontaneously, without deliberate intent.⁴⁹ Zwier argues that this statement provides evidence for the pre-Aristotelian familiarity with routine spontaneous generation.

Before Antigonus’s *floruit*, other non-paradoxographical works also document the spontaneous generation of plants and animals. G. L. Campbell catalogues references in Pre-Socratic philosophy, citing figures such as Pythagoras, Anaximander, Anaxagoras, Empedocles, and Democritus.⁵⁰ Additionally, Theophrastus, Aristotle’s student and successor as head of the Lyceum, acknowledges the notion that both plants and animals arise from matter, despite being hesitant about spontaneity in general.⁵¹ Theophrastus describes worms appearing in ripe fruit on trees, in the moist space under the bark of certain trees, and in pot-herbs; he attributes their presence to specific environmental conditions, such as dampness and the direction of the wind.⁵²

The fact that spontaneous generation is expressed in Aristotle’s work as an already-existing concept suggests that this idea was somewhat ubiquitous some 100 years prior to Antigonus’s Hellenistic dating. Antigonus acknowledges this cultural familiarity by noting its transmission through hearsay (ἀκοή), a claim unique to this entry.⁵³ As such, Antigonus’s work engages with a contemporary interest in spontaneous generation.

SPONTANEOUS GENERATION IN ANTIGONUS

By alluding to his readers’ knowledge of spontaneous generation, Antigonus interacts with, as Delattre puts it, “[...] a community of expectations between author and reader.”⁵⁴ This interaction is significant because it shows how Antigonus deliberately challenges conventional ideas about the natural world. As Delattre explains, “[...] even if *phusis* [φύσις], ‘what nature offers to us’, and *doxa* [δόξα], ‘what we know of nature’, define common expectations, the two notions differ precisely in the paradoxographic text: the paradoxographer points out elements of the world that belong to *phusis*, but are contrary to *doxa*.”⁵⁵ Antigonus invites readers to suspend their disbelief and view

48 Ibid., 18-19.

49 Plato, *Sophist* 265c7-9 in Zwier 2018, 19 note 36.

50 Campbell 2003, 330-33. See also Osorio 2020, 31-32, 35; Totelin 2018, 62; Dudley 1997, 144.

51 For discussion of spontaneous generation in Theophrastus, see Balme 1962, 102-4.

52 Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants* 4.14.11.

53 Antigonus, *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* 89.15-16.

54 Delattre 2018, 208.

55 Ibid.

spontaneous generation as a reality, presenting nature as a realm of marvels. Unlike Aristotle, who appeals to generalisability to demonstrate the routine nature of spontaneous generation, Antigonus emphasises its singularity. Interestingly, while Antigonus inverts Aristotle’s method of proof, he nonetheless engages in a form of generalisation by grouping diverse, local references under the theme of spontaneous generation. This reflects a similar scientific approach, one that recognises a shared cultural interest, gathers data, and organises it around a broad concept.

Antigonus distinguishes his task from Aristotle’s, noting that while Aristotle’s extensive body of work comprises almost 70 books, his own entries serve to summarise, not explain, the curiosities found in Aristotle’s writings.⁵⁶ Antigonus’s entries on spontaneous generation showcase techniques to prompt a sense of awe among his readers. Entries 19, 88, 89, and 90 are discussed here in detail.⁵⁷

Entry 19 contains multiple examples of the spontaneous generation of animals, which Antigonus calls ‘singularities’ (ἴδια), beginning with *bugonia*, the generation of bees from ox corpses.⁵⁸ Throughout the entry, Antigonus references Archelaus the Egyptian, thought to be part of the Alexandrian court of either Ptolemy II Philadelphus (309–246 BC) or Ptolemy III Evergetes (c. 284–222 BC).⁵⁹ Antigonus claims that, in Egypt, burying a bull in specific locations with the horns protruding above the ground and uncovering it later results in the emergence of bees due to the animal’s decomposition.⁶⁰ Antigonus supposes that this phenomenon inspires a certain Philitas to address bees as “ox-born” (βουγενεῖς).⁶¹ Following this, Antigonus claims that scorpions are generated from crocodile carcasses and wasps from horse carcasses.⁶² He corroborates these respective claims with

56 Antigonus, *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* 60.16-20.

57 See also *Ibid.*, 84, 85.

58 *Ibid.*, 19.8-9. See Olck 1897, 434-435 for examples of this phenomenon. For discussion of *bugonia* in Vergil, see Osorio 2020. On uncertainty about whether *bugonia* should be seen as a form of spontaneous generation, see Totelin 63-64; for the purposes of this study, the fact that *bugonia* entails non-parental generation is sufficient.

59 Archelaus the Egyptian is also known as Archelaus of Chersonesus, which presumably refers to Chersonesus Mikra, an Egyptian settlement near Alexandria. Archelaus supposedly wrote a prose paradoxography, making him a reputable source for Antigonus. Numbers of Archelaus’s epigrams are from Lloyd-Jones/Parsons 1983. For further discussion, see Westermann 1839, xxii-xxiv; Lightfoot 2021, 55 note 29; Smith 1867, 264; Schepens 1996, 404-5; Greene 2019, 34.

60 Antigonus, *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* 19.9-13. For a more thorough discussion of this passage and its source, see Lightfoot 2021, 55.

61 Antigonus, *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* 19.15. Antigonus seemingly alludes to Philitas of Cos, the scholar, elegiac poet, and teacher of Ptolemy Philadelphus during his reign. For information on the life and work of Philitas, see Spanoudakis 2002, 19-74.

62 Antigonus, *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* 19.17-18.

Archelaus's epigrams 125 and 126.⁶³ Concluding the entry, Antigonus credits Aristotle with the notion that scorpions originate from decaying bergamot mint.⁶⁴

The entry aligns with Lightfoot's observation that paradoxographical collections often group marvels into loose thematic clusters, allowing readers to contemplate potential connections between each wonder.⁶⁵ Antigonus ensures that spontaneous generation is attested, and thus appreciated as a marvel, by citing diverse authors such as Philitas, Archelaus, and Aristotle, positioning them as equally credible and relevant to each other. According to Lightfoot, texts engaging in unexpected dialogue evoke the wonder central to paradoxographical collections.⁶⁶ These citations also provide readers with the option to investigate further. While Aristotle attempts to justify the routine nature of spontaneous generation by aligning it with his theory of sexual generation and assigning it to multiple species, Antigonus emphasises its singularity, attempting to use this feature as a marker of legitimacy.⁶⁷ He does so by focusing on the substance from which the spontaneously generated animals appear. Aristotle's theory of spontaneous generation places importance on environmental conditions, but Antigonus takes this further, implying that there may be specific qualities inherent to the dead animal from which living animals are generated. A similar strategy is seen in entry 90, where Antigonus cites Aristotle's observation of another spontaneously generated animal: a type of mite called 'akari' that is generated in wax.⁶⁸ Beginning another thematic section on spontaneous generation, entry 88 states that lice emerge from small bumps on the body resembling hair follicles and, if moistened, cause a disease which afflicted Alcmaeon of Croton, the naturalist philosopher, and Pherecydes of Syros.⁶⁹ In entry 89, Antigonus states that snakes are generated from decaying human corpses if the deceased had inhaled the odour of snakes before death; the singularity of spontaneous generation is demonstrated by the specificity of this condition and the specific body part from which the snake emerges.⁷⁰ He quotes epigram 129 by Archelaus:

63 Ibid., 19.21-22, 19.24-25.

64 Ibid., 19.26-27. See Aristotle, *History of Animals* 577b6-8.

65 Lightfoot 2021, 65.

66 Ibid., 68.

67 Antigonus, *Collection of Marvellous Investigations*, 19.8; 89.3.

68 Ibid., 90. See Aristotle, *History of Animals* 557b6-8.

69 Antigonus, *Collection of Marvellous Investigations*, 88.

70 Ibid., 89.2-6.

πάντα δι' ἀλλήλων ὁ πολὺς σφραγίζεται αἰὼν ·
ἀνδρὸς γὰρ κοίλης ἐκ μυελοῦ ράχεως
δεινὸς γίνετ' ὄφεις, νέκυος δειλοῖο σαπέντος,
ὃς νέον ἐκ τούτου πνεῦμα λάβη τέρας,
τεθνεότος ζωῆν ἔλκων φύσιν · εἰ δὲ τόδ' ἐστίν,
οὐ θαῦμα βλαστεῖν τὸν διφυῆ Κέκροπα.

Long eternity puts a seal on all beings through each other
For from the marrow of the spine of a man
A terrible snake comes into being, from the wretched corpse
after it has decomposed,
Which by this marvel takes new breath,
By wrestling living nature from the deceased. And if this is
so,
It is no wonder that the two-natured Cecrops was born.

Antigonus asserts that the epigram provides a stronger testimony to the phenomenon of spontaneous generation than mere hearsay.⁷¹ He situates spontaneous generation as a wonder and a rarity while nonetheless affirming its prevalence through citation. By emphasising its status as an object of wonder, Antigonus instills value in the phenomenon, inviting reflection. Although Antigonus is familiar with the Aristotelian explanation of spontaneous generation, he uses singularity, rather than Aristotle's generalisable theory, as proof of the phenomenon. This choice does not indicate a failure to grapple with Aristotle's work, but rather a desire to stimulate wonder and scientific inquiry in this rumoured concept.

CONCLUSION

Antigonus's *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* does not symbolise a decline in interest in 'serious' science, but rather a growing interest in nature's marvels that flourished through the Hellenistic and Roman periods. When considered in this light, Antigonus's Collection offers a valuable reminder that scientific engagement appears in a variety of different literary contexts and is not limited to explanatory modes. This study contributes to research on paradoxography by focusing on Antigonus's treatment of spontaneous generation—a topic that, according to Antigonus, has spread through hearsay. By simultaneously emphasising the validity and singularity of spontaneous generation, Antigonus portrays it as a phenomenon worthy of wonder. Antigonus's collection stimulates thought and potential conversation on similar topics as those in Aristotle's theoretical accounts.

⁷¹ Ibid., 89.15-16.

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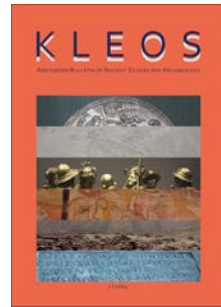
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Rome and its Allies in Asia Minor: A Study on Political Relationship between Rome, Rhodes, and Pergamon from the Peace of Apamea to the End of Third Macedonian War

Dapeng Chen

ABSTRACT

The Battle of Magnesia (190 BC) ended with the victory of the Romans and their allies, and the distribution of former Seleucid territories west of the Taurus Mountains to Rhodes and Pergamon, who contributed crucially to Rome's victory. Although the Romans *de facto* held the sole supremacy of the Mediterranean, Rhodes and Pergamon acted as independent states. Their relationship did not always go smoothly, whilst Rome's dissatisfaction and enmity towards Rhodes and Pergamon grew steadily.

The paper will analyse substantial events and turning points in the relationship between Rome and its primary allies in the Eastern Mediterranean from the Peace of Apamea (188 BC) to the aftermath of the Third Macedonian War (171-168 BC): the disputes between Rhodes and Lycia with Roman interventions and Roman hostilities to Rhodes and Pergamon after the Third Macedonian War. By examining surviving literary accounts and comparative studies of the Rhodo-Lycian and Pergamene-Galatian conflicts, this paper suggests a Roman strategy to allies with whom they were dissatisfied. The Romans could sink their allies' strength by granting autonomy to revolting areas whose armed rebellions had been suppressed by the allies recently and by encouraging them to revolt again.

INTRODUCTION

After the Roman victory over the Seleucid King Antiochus III at Magnesia, the Romans did not seek to establish direct control over Asia Minor. Instead, they distributed former Seleucid territories west of the Taurus Mountains to their allies Rhodes and Pergamon, who became the successors of Seleucid influence in Western Asia Minor.

Although King Eumenes II of Pergamon sometimes publicly acknowledged Roman support behind the rise of his realm, he acted in many ways as an independent ruler and "common benefactor" [κοινὸς εὐεργέτης] of the Greeks, a title which was

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► [Profile page](#)

also granted to the Romans.¹ The king declared wars as he saw fit, conducted diplomacy as he wished, and even used the Roman legions to expand his realm.² The Rhodians were more concerned with their trading interests and tried to stay out of conflicts unless their independence was threatened.³

Rhodes and Pergamon were not henchmen of Rome but equal *amici et socii*.⁴ However, their friendship with Rome was not constant. Their relationship deteriorated after a decade, and during the Third Macedonian War (171-168 BC), they finally lost Roman favour. The Rhodians tried to stay neutral and to mediate between the Romans and King Perseus of Macedonia, which incurred Rome's wrath. Rhodian power collapsed as a result.⁵ Furthermore, the Romans were furious with Eumenes because of a rumour that Eumenes had made a secret treaty with Perseus.⁶ The Senate plotted to replace him with his brother Attalus and demanded that he leave Italy immediately when he wished to revisit Rome.⁷

Was the change in Roman attitude the result of a series of acts by the Rhodians and Pergamenes after the Peace of Apamea? Or was it due to their disloyalty and misconduct during the Third Macedonian War? These are not simple questions. This article will analyse the Rhodo-Lycian conflict, the conflict between the Attalids and the Galatians, and the Roman intervention to examine Roman strategy in western Asia Minor from the Peace of Apamea until the end of the Third Macedonian War.

REVIEW OF EVENTS AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

In 189 BC, the Senate granted Caria and Lycia to the Rhodians in return for their contribution to the previous war against Antiochus. According to Polybius, the ten commissioners sent by the Senate tried to satisfy both the Rhodians and the Illyrians, who pleaded the commissioners not to punish their kinsman Lycians severely, and gave them ambiguous replies; the Lycians revolted against the Rhodians because of that divergence. In 178 BC, the defeated Lycians dispatched a mission to Rome, and the Senate responded by declaring that Lycia was given as a friend and ally [ὡς φίλοι καὶ σύμμαχοι] rather than a gift [ἐν δωρεῇ] to Rhodes. Eventually, Rhodes was deprived of Caria and Lycia by the Romans

¹ SEG 47.1745; OGIS 763 = RC 52; Syll³ 630; Thonemann 2013, 37-38.

² Livy 38.12-28; Zimmermann 2011, 36.

³ Berthold 1987, 167-178; Ager 1991, 26-29.

⁴ Matthaëi 1907, 184-187; Gruen 1984, 55-69.

⁵ Magie 1950, 110; Ager 1991, 29-37.

⁶ Polybius 29.5-9.

⁷ Polybius 30.1.4-8.

after the Third Macedonian War.⁸

There has been a considerable scholarly debate about the Rhodo-Lycian dispute in the second half of the last century, although much less recently. The majority consider that Lycia was initially given to Rhodes as a gift; however, there is a dispute on the Roman reply to the Rhodians and Lycians: some scholars believe that the involved parties misunderstood the commissioners' response.⁹ Others argue that Roman commissioners consciously gave an ambiguous answer, and the Senate's decision in 178 BC was a deliberate attempt to weaken Rhodian power.¹⁰ A few scholars admit the ambiguity of the response but are reserved towards the commissioners' intention.¹¹

Unlike most scholars, H. Schmitt, E. Gruen, V. Gabrielsen and R. Behrwald question the credibility of the account by the contemporary Greek historian Polybius. Schmitt and Gruen point out that Polybius 22.5 and 25.4 used Rhodian sources, providing an interpretation in favour of the Rhodians.¹² Gruen further argues that Rome and Rhodes remained friendly until the end of the Third Macedonian War. Gabrielsen considers there was no reason for the Rhodians to send other embassies, and the account was added later. Following Schmitt, Behrwald questions the credibility of Polybius and advocates that there was no indication of the collaboration between the Rhodians and the Seleucids and consequential Roman hostility.¹³

In 168 BC, the Galatians revolted against Eumenes when his position was weakened because of Roman dissatisfaction towards him; the Galatians were defeated in 166/5 BC and despatched a mission to Rome. In response, the Senate granted the Galatians autonomy.¹⁴

The Pergamene-Galatian struggle is less controversial than the Rhodo-Lycian event. F. W. Walbank, the author of the still seminal commentary on Polybius, argues that Polybius' account implies that the Romans had no intention of ending the conflict because of their dissatisfaction with Eumenes.¹⁵ Walbank's interpretation coincides with that of many scholars.¹⁶ Gruen disagreed and held

8 Polybius 21.18-24, 22.5, 25.4, 30.31; Livy 37.52-56, 41.6.8-2.

9 van Gelder 1900, 142-143; Berthold 1987, 170; Eckstein 1988, 414-444; Bresson 1998, 74-77; Wiemer 2003, 277-288.

10 Fraser/Bean 1954, 107-117; Larsen 1968, 245-247; Errington 1972, 193-194; Bresson 1999, 106-118; Dmitriev 2011, 311.

11 Ager 1997, 277; Errington 2008, 233.

12 Schmitt 1957, 97-98; Gruen 1975, 58-81.

13 Gruen 1975, 58-81; Gruen 1984, 123; Gabrielsen 1997, 47-53; Behrwald 2000, 84-88.

14 Polybius 29.22.3-4, 30.28; Rankin 1996, 198-199; it is difficult to tell the exact time of Eumenes' victory over the Galatians; see Walbank 1979, 454.

15 Walbank 1979, 419.

16 Magie 1950, 23; McShane 1959, 183; Hansen 1971, 122; Hopp 1977, 52; Allen 1983, 142; Rankin 1996, 198; Dmitriev 1999, 410-411; Zimmermann 2011, 36-38.

that the Senate declaring Galatia as autonomous was aimed at restricting the Galatians.¹⁷

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGIES

Historians specialising in Hellenistic Rhodes or Pergamon have often limited themselves to Roman-Rhodian or Roman-Pergamene aspects and rarely synthesise them, even though they may reveal a coherent pattern of Roman behaviour. Through a comparative study, this paper attempts to analyse how the Romans treated their allies and how they reacted to the existing Hellenistic institution of diplomacy.

Literary sources are primary to this research, providing vital information on the political relationship between Rome, Rhodes and Pergamon. Polybius' work, though fragmentary, documents major diplomatic activities of this period. However, his Achaean origins, his personal ties with Roman patrons, and his political views make his narratives impossible to be unbiased. To use Polybius' texts requires meticulous source criticism.

Books 35 to 45 of Livy are also essential. Livy used Polybius' work as his source in many cases but cited several texts from Annalist or other Roman sources as well, which preserved narratives from the views of the Romans, particularly concerning Roman-Pergamene and Roman-Rhodian relations during the Third Macedonian War. Diodorus Siculus, Appian of Alexandria, and Justin's epitome also offer valuable fragments.

THE RHODO-LYCIAN DISPUTE

Almost all current debates about the Rhodian-Lycian dispute revolve around the request of the envoys from Ilium and the response of the ten commissioners in Polybius 22.5. Most previous studies accept Polybius' explanation with but a few questions.¹⁸ This paper argues that Polybius' accounts of the cause of the Lycian revolt and the Lycian embassy in 178 BC were shaped by Rhodian sources and a cover-up. Therefore, there were no Rhodian and Ilian envoys with contradicting requests and no responses by the ten commissioners, at least concerning Lycia.

THE TEN COMMISSIONERS

Because of the importance of Polybius 22.5, further discussion requires a re-examination of the passage:

“At the time when the ten commissioners were administering the affairs of Asia, two envoys, Theaetetus

¹⁷ Gruen 1984, 577-578; cf. Polybius 30.28.2.

¹⁸ See notes 9, 10 and 11.

and Philophron, arrived from Rhodes asking that Lycia and Caria should be given to the Rhodians in return for their goodwill and active assistance in the War with Antiochus; and at the same time two envoys from the people of Ilium, Hipparchus, and Satyrus, came begging that, for the sake of the kinship between Ilium and Rome, the offenses of the Lycians might be pardoned. The ten commissioners, after giving both embassies a hearing, attempted as far as possible to meet the requests of both. For to please the people of Ilium they took no very severe measures against the Lycians; but, as a favor to the Rhodians, they assigned Lycia to them as a gift. Owing to this decision a quarrel of no trivial character arose between the Lycians and the Rhodians, themselves. For the representatives of Ilium, visiting the Lycian cities, announced that they had softened the anger of the Romans and had been instrumental in obtaining their freedom. Theaetetus, however, and his colleague published in Rhodes the message that Lycia and Caria, south of the Meander, had been given to Rhodes as a present by the Romans."¹⁹

The first point of doubt is that the Polybian account is the only one. Livy and Diodorus' fragments make no mention of this. Polybius 21.46 mentions a territorial dispute between Eumenes' and Antiochus' emissaries over the ownership of Pamphylia, which was eventually referred to the Senate, whilst they did not do so in the case of Lycia.²⁰ Moreover, according to Livy, the missing part in Polybius 21.46 mentions that Rhoeteum and Gergitha were given to Ilium as a gift because of Ilium's kinship with Rome, but not the Ilians' request or the ten commissioners' response.²¹

Secondly, the account itself is problematic: before the Ilian emissaries, Polybius described two Rhodian emissaries and their demands, but there seems to be no reason for the Rhodians to send emissaries to claim [ἀξιοῦντες] Lycia and Caria since the Senate had already explicitly decided, in the summer of 189 BC at the negotiations in Rome, that Lycia and Caria south of the Meander should be given to Rhodes.²² The ten commissioners' task was only to deal with the details of the Senatorial decision, and this decision was included in the Senate's reply to all the

¹⁹ Polybius 22.5.1-8. All English translations in this paper are cited from the Loeb edition.

²⁰ Polybius 21.46.10-11.

²¹ Livy 38.39.10.

²² Polybius 21.24.6-10.

delegates in Rome.²³ Polybius and Livy record this clearly: Caria and Lycia were given directly to Rhodes, which is in line with the Roman arrangement of Asia Minor west of the Taurus Mountains.²⁴

The ten commissioners arrived in Asia Minor in the summer of 188 BC and waited until Antiochus III ratified the treaty.²⁵ The Rhodians had more than one year to learn of this, and there was no reason to claim this land, which had been a *fait accompli*.²⁶ Moreover, since the grant of Caria and Lycia was decided by the Senate, it seemed unreasonable for the ten commissioners not to submit a request that contradicted the Senate's previous decision to the Senate but tried to accommodate both parties "as far as possible". Whether intentional or not, Polybius' usage of the word "negotiate" [ἔχρημάτισαν] is rather misleading, as if Lycia and Caria had been given to Rhodes by negotiation with ten commissioners. Livy's expression here is entirely different:

"The people of Rhodes were given confirmation of what they had been granted by the earlier decree: they were accorded Lycia and Caria as far as the River Maeander, with the exception of Telmessus."²⁷

Besides, the first revolt of Lycia did not, as Polybius implies, take place immediately after the rejection of the alliance in 188 BC.²⁸ Zimmermann and Bresson believe it took place after 180 BC, whilst Wiemer argues for 185 or 184 BC.²⁹ The Lycian embassy set out from the outskirts of the revolt and arrived in Rome after Lycia had been completely subdued by the Rhodians.³⁰ It seems impossible that the embassy was delayed on the way for about ten years.

Gabrielsen rightly points out the dubiousness of the causes of the Rhodian-Lycian dispute in Polybius 22.5.³¹ This account is not at the end of Book 21, the central account of the settlement of Asia Minor by ten commissioners but was added later. It is possibly a narrative invented to conceal the real cause of the revolt in Lycia in favour of the Rhodians.³²

Taking together the other accounts of Polybius, Livy, Diodorus

23 Livy 37.55.4-6.

24 Polybius 21.24.7-8; Livy 37.55.5.

25 Polybius 21.42.6; Livy 38.39.5-6.

26 Gabrielsen 1997, 47-50.

27 Livy 38.39.13-15.

28 Polybius 22.5.10.

29 Zimmermann 1993, 115; Bresson 1999, 107-109; Wiemer 2003, 266-267.

30 Polybius 25.2-3.

31 Gabrielsen 1997, 47-53.

32 Schmitt 1957, 97; Gruen 1975, 58-81; Walbank 1979, 181.

and Pompeius Trogus, it is not difficult to conclude that Lycia and Caria were explicitly given to Rhodes by the Senate as a reward.³³ The entire Eastern Mediterranean knew about this decision.³⁴ The revolt may have had other reasons: Lycia had a privileged position in the Eastern Mediterranean trade and was rich in timber for shipbuilding.³⁵ The Rhodians had coveted this rich land for a long time.³⁶ The Lycian embassy in 178 BC stated that Rhodian oppression was even more brutal than that of Antiochus. In a speech of the Rhodian delegate Astymedes to the Senate in 164 BC, he mentioned that Lycia and Caria brought Rhodes enormous revenues.³⁷ However, it is also possible that these speeches were exaggerated for rhetorical or political purposes.³⁸ The details of Rhodian rule are hardly known, but it is not a sensible explanation to attribute the cause of the Rhodo-Lycian dispute to two emissaries from Ilium.

THE ROMAN INTERVENTION

The ten commissioners' reply is also referred to in Polybius's account of the Lycian embassy to Rome in 178 BC, but there is no trace in Livy's account.³⁹ This mission may have been just one moment within a larger shift in Roman attitudes towards Rhodes after the Treaty of Apamea. The Romans may or may not have been irritated with the Rhodians because of the Rhodian escort of Perseus' bride Laodice in exchange for shipbuilding timber.⁴⁰ Still, the dissatisfaction of Rome was explicit: the Rhodians sent an emissary to Rome immediately after receiving the Senate's decision.⁴¹ However, the Senate's reply was deferred, according to Polybius, contrasting sharply with the swift and straightforward response to the Lycian mission, which A. Eckstein overlooks.⁴²

It is probably less likely that the Romans were outraged simply by a mediation attempt of Rhodes in 168 BC: King Prusias II of Bithynia, who also mediated between Romans and Macedonians, was rewarded by the Senate instead of being punished.⁴³ The act of mediation did not constitute an offence to Rome, and it

33 Polybius 21.24, 46; Livy 37.55.4-7, 56.1-6; 38.39.13-15; Diodorus 29.11; Appian, *Syriaca* 44; Justin, *Epitome* 31.8.9.

34 Livy 37.55.4-6.

35 Bresson 1999, 111-113.

36 Bresson 1999, 107.

37 Berthold 1987, 204-205.

38 Livy 41.6.9; Bresson 1999, 111-113.

39 The year when the Lycian mission arrived in Rome is disputed. According to Walbank, the reception may have taken place in the summer of 178 BC. See Walbank 1979, 277-278.

40 Polybius 25.4.8; Appian, *Macdonica* 11.2; Schmitt 1957, 97-98; Behrwald 2000, 86.

41 Polybius 25.4.6-10; cf. Behrwald 2000, 85.

42 Polybius 25.5.4-5; Eckstein 2008, 355.

43 Polybius 29.19.5; Berthold 1987, 204-205; Eckstein 1988, 426-434.

continued to occupy an important place in Roman foreign affairs after the Third Macedonian War.⁴⁴ Nor was neutrality in war offensive to the Romans: Roman *amicitia* was not an alliance of mutual defence, and Rhodes did not remain completely neutral; they sent a fleet to assist the Romans, but this fleet was refused. Moreover, staying neutral did not lead to wars: Ariarathes IV, king of Cappadocia, who fought alongside Antiochus III in the Roman-Syrian War, only had to pay a mere 600 talents of silver in reparations.⁴⁵

P. J. Burton argues that Roman diplomacy was based on moral norms, *fides* and *amicitia*. There was no actual Roman enmity towards their friends during this period.⁴⁶ He claims that the Romans punished the Rhodians because they said their original intention was to negotiate peace when congratulating the Senate after Perseus was defeated, which was arrogant and proud. Therefore, the Roman punishment was "hard but fair."⁴⁷

In Livy's work, there are accounts of Rhodians being arrogant. One example is a haughty speech from the Rhodian peace-negotiating mission in 169 BC based on annalist sources, in which the envoy declaimed that the Rhodians would take against the Romans if they declined the peace offer. Livy commented that "even now, these statements cannot be read or heard without indignation."⁴⁸ The Senate returned no answer but immediately despatched legates to declare Caria and Lycia free.

This speech and the Senatorial response to it are considered an annalistic fabrication.⁴⁹ Polybius' accounts show that the actual purposes of this embassy were to renew friendship with Rome and petition to import corn from Sicily.⁵⁰ This fabrication was to justify Roman punishments on Rhodes after 168 BC since the Rhodians had acted in Perseus' interest for some time.

Although fictional, one may conclude from Livy's story that Rhodes had indeed triggered Roman suspicion and anger, and the annalistic narratives were influenced by such hostility; also, one way the Romans could express this anger was to declare the freedom of their allies' subjects.

The primary literary sources are contradictory regarding this matter. Still, the Roman punishment of Rhodes was uncommon. Other Roman allies were also arrogant, proud and morally questionable but were spared in these situations. For example, the

44 Livy 44.14.8-13; Eckstein 1988, 426-434.

45 Polybius 27.3; Livy 38.37.5-6; Berthold 1987 181-186.

46 Burton 2011, 6-27.

47 Burton 2011, 278-299.

48 Livy 44.14.5-13, 15.1-2.

49 Briscoe 2012, 507-508.

50 Polybius 28.2, 16; Walbank 1979, 328.

Aetolian League abandoned its alliance with Rome, insulted Roman legates and refused the peace offers of the Romans several times, causing the Senate to be furious. However, they still conducted a treaty and alliance as soon as they accepted Roman terms, whilst the Rhodians, displaying only little arrogance in comparison to this, were threatened with total destruction and their requests for an alliance were deferred several years.⁵¹ Their petition to sacrifice and dedicate to Jupiter at Capitoline was also turned down, which is the only known case of the second century BC.⁵² There must have been further reasons beyond the Rhodians' ill-timed mediation.

Berthold believes that the Romans had changed their attitude because after the Third Macedonian War, as the undisputed master of the Mediterranean, the Romans no longer needed their former allies. Nevertheless, it is doubtful that such a drastic change in Roman attitudes could have occurred in such a short time.⁵³ Wiemer suggests that the suspicion and hostility in Rome towards Rhodes was waiting for an opportunity to express itself, and the arrival of the Lycian mission was just such an opportunity.⁵⁴

THE GALATIAN REVOLT

Rome's latent discontent, suspicion and hostility towards its allies come into a clear view when their dealings with Rhodes are compared with their attitude and acts towards Eumenes in 168-166/5 BC.

A series of successful campaigns against the Galatians enabled the Attalids to establish and consolidate some degree of control over the area before the Third Macedonian War.⁵⁵ However, instead of being awarded again as a faithful ally of Rome, a rumour of a secret agreement between Eumenes and Perseus during the war raised anger and hostility towards the king among the Romans.⁵⁶ The alienation of the Romans from Eumenes had weakened the latter's influence in Asia Minor, and the Galatians seized the opportunity to rebel against Pergamon.⁵⁷

When the rebellion broke out, Eumenes sent his brother Attalus to Rome to request the Senate's assistance.⁵⁸ Attalus received a warm welcome in Rome, but the Senate planned to split the Attalid kingdom and create a separate one for Attalus instead of

51 Polybius 30.4.2-5.16, 19.17, 21, 23.2-4, 31.19-20; Livy 45.20.4-25.13; Diodorus 31.5.

52 Marsi 2016, 14-15.

53 Berthold 1987, 195-212.

54 Wiemer 2003, 287-288.

55 Rankin 1996, 197-198; Evans 2012, 34-36; Ma 2013, 53-54.

56 Gruen 1984, 563; Errington 1972, 242-248.

57 Polybius 29.22.3-4; *OGIS* 305; Walbank 1979, 395.

58 Polybius 30.1-3.

assisting Eumenes.⁵⁹

There was a less plausible story about Attalus aiming to betray his brother, but finally giving up the idea.⁶⁰ In the end, the Senate declared Ainos and Maroneia free and sent Publius Licinius Crassus to Galatia.⁶¹ The peace attempt of the Roman legate failed, and “the words of Roman envoys had had such weight with those prosperous kings Antiochus and Ptolemy that they at once made peace, whereas with the Galatians, Roman words were without effect”.⁶²

Despite lacking Roman military support, Eumenes defeated the Galatians at Phrygia in 166/5 BC.⁶³ In that year, a Galatian mission arrived in Rome, and the Senate responded by granting Galatian autonomy.⁶⁴

GRUEN'S INTERPRETATION

The events around the Galatian revolt have been discussed in depth by E. Gruen. He first argues that modern historians do not hesitate to suggest that the Senate intended to incite war between the Galatians and Eumenes. Still, Polybius apparently had no evidence for the extra instructions given to Licinius and could only guess at the Senate's intention.⁶⁵ From Livy's account, there is no basis for such a judgement since the commissioners' purpose was unambiguous.⁶⁶

However, Gruen's view seems problematic. First, the sending of Licinius and the liberation of Ainos and Maroneia were linked. Since the handling of these two cities' affairs was contrary to Attalus' demands, there is no reason to assume that the Senate would meet Attalus' request in the Galatian affair.⁶⁷ Secondly, when relations between the two countries had been cordial in the past, the Senate had hardly responded to fulfil Eumenes' request.⁶⁸ At a time when Rome was hostile to Pergamon, and Eumenes had to “leave Italy as soon as possible”, it seems unlikely that the Senate would assist Pergamon.⁶⁹ Furthermore, the negotiations excluded Attalus. Also, in terms of the outcome, Licinius failed to end this war; on the contrary, the Roman words “were without effect”.

59 Polybius 30.1.6-8.

60 Polybius 30.2; Hansen 1971, 122.

61 Polybius 30.3.5-7.

62 Livy 45.34.10-14.

63 Diodorus 31.14, 16-17; Evans 2012, 40.

64 Polybius 30.28.

65 Polybius 30.3.8-9; Gruen 1984, 577.

66 Livy 45.34.10.

67 Polybius 30.3.5-7.

68 Errington 1972, 175-178; Hopp 1977, 34-58.

69 Polybius 31.19.8.

All this makes one wonder about the Senate's real intention in sending Licinius to Galatia. The Senate did not necessarily intend to encourage the Galatians to fight Eumenes, but clearly, it did not intend to end this war.

Gruen then advocates that the Senate's declaration of autonomy for Galatia was not intended to undermine the Attalids but rather to restrict the Galatians since they had to remain in their settlements, and it was the Galatians who frustrated Roman peace effects the previous year.⁷⁰

However, it was Eumenes who had entered Galatia and won the war, and the declaration of autonomy favoured the defeated Galatian side. Shortly after the declaration, King Prusias II of Bithynia complained to the Senate that Eumenes by no means stopped meddling with Galatia, which violated the prior decree of the Senate.⁷¹

There seems to be no reason to think that the Senate would have sent a mission specifically to restrict the behaviour of the Galatians because of the two-sided conflict between Pergamon and Galatia. Gruen also argues that the Senate's arrangement did not hinder Eumenes' expansion into Galatia.⁷² Whilst that is true, it does not follow that the Senate did not intend to do so. Moreover, the Romans had historically shown little concern for peace in Asia Minor unless it directly threatened Roman interests in the area.⁷³ The Senate merely sent a mission of inquiry in response to the turmoil in Asia Minor around 180 BC, when the regional stability established by the Treaty of Apamea fell apart.⁷⁴ In 178 BC, the Senate also did not intervene in any way when Rhodes tried to suppress the second revolt of Lycia.⁷⁵

CONCLUSION

The material suggests a coherent kernel in the Lycian affair of 189-178 BC and the Galatian revolt of 167-166/5 BC: both Lycia and Galatia were spoils of war awarded by Rome to its allies Rhodes and Pergamon; their control over these territories was not secure, however, as Lycians and Galatians rebelled several times. When these revolts were suppressed, and the Lycians and the Galatians sent embassies to Rome, the Romans were notoriously suspicious and even hostile towards Rhodes and Pergamon. Therefore, their missions were looked upon favourably by the Senate, in contrast to the cold reception given to the Rhodian and Pergamene

⁷⁰ Gruen 1984, 577.

⁷¹ Polybius 30.30.2-6.

⁷² Gruen 1984, 577-578.

⁷³ Errington 1972, 181.

⁷⁴ Gruen 1984, 553.

⁷⁵ Berthold 1987, 167-178; Eckstein 2008, 355.

delegates.

Based on the discussions above, there is reason to assume that this was a diplomatic way for the Romans to sow discord and instability among their allies, ultimately weakening them. The Romans did not provide material or military support for their "freedom" or "autonomy" but merely incentivised the oppressed rebels to rise again.⁷⁶ The decisions of the Senate in 178 BC and 166/5 BC were not purely accidental but instead reflected a certain logic in Roman behaviour towards Asia Minor.

The Romans probably had no grand strategy: the liberation of Kaunos and Stratonikeia in 166 BC was perhaps a fortuitous event. If the exiles from the two cities had not travelled to Rome to demand the evacuation of Rhodian garrisons, the Senate would not have noticed them.⁷⁷ It also seems unlikely that the Senate would have granted freedom to Ainos and Maroneia if Attalus had not mentioned them in 167 BC.⁷⁸ However, the lack of a grand strategy meant something other than Rome being indifferent to affairs in Asia Minor. On the contrary, the Romans were simply waiting for an opportunity to express their hostility and to attack their allies.

Rome was a power that "had always been suspicious of strong neighbours" and whose goodwill disappeared quickly.⁷⁹ Their relationship with Rhodes and Pergamon was not always harmonious as Gruen argues, nor were their acts always just and fair, as Burton advocates.⁸⁰ With Macedonia disintegrated, the Ptolemies and the Seleucids declined, and Rhodes and Pergamon became the remaining substantial powers in the Eastern Mediterranean, resulting in a rapid loss of Roman favour shortly after the war.

76 Gruen 1984, 123-124; Rankin 1996, 199.

77 Polybius 30.21.2-3; Berthold 1987, 202.

78 Briscoe argues that the Senate's conspiracy concerning Attalus, the humiliation of Eumenes, and the proclamation of Galatian autonomy were part of a systematic plan to undermine Pergamon; there is no evidence that the Senate secretly planned the Galatian revolt and arranged the events followed. See Briscoe, 1969, 54-56.

79 Errington, 1972, 155.

80 Burton 2011, 278-299; Gruen 1984.

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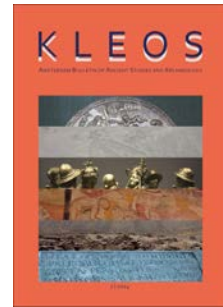
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Hadrian's Ecumenical Vision of Empire: Reconsidering the ideological function of personifying the Roman provinces on Hadrianic coinage

Grace MacLachlan

ABSTRACT

From as far north as Britannia to as far south as Africa and Mauretania, the provinces of the Roman empire came to be represented as allegorical female figures on a large variety of mediums including statues, mosaics and, most significantly, coinage. The personification of the provinces was a recurring phenomenon on Roman coinage, yet it is not until emperor Hadrian (117-138 AD) that this representational device was used in such a systematic and unprecedented way. This paper explores how Hadrian's utilisation of these personifications challenged the Roman tradition of using images of defeated and conquered provinces fallen to the might of Rome. The usage of coinage will be explored as part of the wider programme demonstrating how these policies worked in tandem to create and propagate an idealised 'ecumenical' view of the Roman Empire under Hadrian and how the empire stood to benefit from reconfiguring their relationship with the provinces. In highlighting and interrogating the ideologically charged nature of these personifications, this paper will also seek to counterbalance past scholarly interpretations of this series. In particular, challenging the dominant interpretation by Jocelyn Toynbee which was heavily influenced by the imperial climate of early twentieth-century Britain. Thus, it is essential to re-examine this ideology in light of the benefits to the imperial power of projecting an ecumenical vision of empire and how it might serve as encouragement for provincial collusion in the project of empire.

INTRODUCTION

Under the emperor Hadrian, in the early 130s AD, coins were minted depicting female figures that represented the Roman provinces. These figures were known as personifications of the provinces and had been a part of Roman iconography since the late Republic. Yet their appearance on Hadrianic coins marks an iconographical shift and creates a focal point through which to

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► [Profile page](#)

examine the changing ideological function of the personifications.

To understand how these coins could function as part of an ideological programme, the capacity of coins to carry messages will be outlined. This will demonstrate the importance and relevance of Hadrian's ideological programme. The study will illustrate the divergence from past representations, highlighting how these changes reflected the aims of the Hadrianic principate. The personifications of Hadrian will then be analysed iconographically, categorising the different types, as well as contextualising their appearance.

As these aims unfold, it is important to address previous scholarship particularly its failure to nuance and scrutinise the value these ideologised personifications held to Hadrian. This paper will also interrogate the influence of the imperial climate of early twentieth-century Britain – particularly how the creation of the Commonwealth of Nations in 1931 impacted Jocelyn Toynbee's seemingly uncritical acceptance of Hadrian's vision of empire. Thus, it seeks to counteract the influence that this imperial climate may have had on Toynbee's suppositions regarding the Hadrianic empire. Applying this critical lens will emphasise the benefits the empire derived from projecting this specific image of provincial unity and cooperation.

COINAGE AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

Coinage is considered the “[...] most pervasive mass medium of the period” for its ability to carry a great variety of messages across great distances, to many people throughout the empire.¹ It was a part of society at all levels. Thus, the imperial core could spread messages far and wide by utilising the two sides of the coins.

Since the Republic, coinage had been used for advertising, celebrating and commemorating first the Roman state and then individuals. In the Principate, the reverse became littered with images emphasising the exploits and virtues of the emperors and the imperial family. Arguably, the importance of coins meant that the choice or selection of themes “[...] to be propagated stemmed from the inner most circles”.² F. Kemmers highlights that breaks or uptakes in new themes during individual reigns can only be explained by personal involvement at the highest hierarchical level.³ Whilst emperors were engaged to differing extents with coinage as a communicative medium, there is little doubt that, as N. Hannestad claims, Hadrian put “[...] great reliance on his

¹ Kemmers, 2021, 339.

² Ibid., 341.

³ Ibid., 341.

coinage to announce clearly his progressive policy".⁴ Thus, his active involvement and the dynamism of coinage creates a perfect medium through which to conduct this study.

THE PERSONIFICATION OF THE PROVINCES

Personifications of provinces are figures represented in art or literature that embody a land or nation.⁵ Whilst an abstract figure of allegorical nature, each personification was meant to represent an actual geographical region.⁶ In part, they might have been modelled on inhabitants, but it is important to distinguish between a personification and a representation of a female inhabitant.⁷ A personification is a solitary figure, appearing isolated or sometimes interacting with the emperor, depicted as sitting, standing, or lying. There are two key types of personifications. The 'realistic' types normally feature the personifications in a mourning posture surrounded by trophies, the emperor, or Victoria. The other is the 'idealistic' type, which depicts a female figure in the Greco-Roman dress. To J. Ostrowski, the 'idealised' figures are often so generic that only the attributes or inscriptions distinguish them from one another.⁸ The Roman habit of personifying enemies or conquered land was an undeniable product of its imperial context.

Personifying the Roman provinces, however, was not a Hadrianic innovation; rather, no other emperor utilised the representational tool to the same extent. Before Hadrian, only twelve provinces had been depicted on Roman coinage.⁹ Hadrian's coinage far surpassed any previous engagement depicting a total of twenty-five provinces, two cities, and one river.

Hadrian's provinces represent a significant departure from the previous ideological function of a personified province. Formerly, the personifications were usually explicitly linked to significant events or contemporary circumstances. This is a prevalent feature in the Flavian use of personifications, which saw a dominance in the imagery of *IVDAEA CAPTA* or *DEVICTA*, referring to their success in the Jewish Wars (see figure 1).

The core of the previous iconography focused on images of submission and conquest and stood to stress and highlight their success against the province or boast that another land had been

⁴ Hannestad, 1986, 190.

⁵ Houghtalin, 1993, 6.

⁶ As Ostrowski comments the term province, when used in reference to personification, does not conform to the strict legal and administrative definition.

⁷ Houghtalin, 1993, 6.

⁸ Ostrowski, 1990, 567.

⁹ Toynbee, 1934, 22.



subjugated.¹⁰ Iconographically, they fall into the 'realistic' depictions and the provinces appear with trophies and frequently in positions of mourning. This is stressed by the reverse legends that proclaim CAPTA or DEVICTA. Hadrianic imagery avoided these types and the implicit way they enforced Roman might in favour of promoting images of cohesion and contribution.

Figure 1:

Vespasian's IVDAEA CAPTA sestertius (The British Museum, Asset no. 638014001, © The Trustees of the British Museum).

THE HADRIANIC SERIES

A distinct feature of Emperor Hadrian's reign was his peaceful journeys around the Roman Empire, visiting his provinces. To commemorate them, a series of coins were issued featuring a staggering twenty-five provinces. The provinces depicted were closely connected to Hadrian's proclivity for travel but, as will be demonstrated, it went beyond this.

Hadrian's coins were intended to convey a message to those within the boundaries of the empire. Two factors emphasise this. Firstly, they were issued on gold, silver and bronze; and of the bronze denominations: *sestertius*, *dupondius* and *as*. This means that these coins were very likely to have circulated amongst all social groups and members of society.¹¹ Whilst in larger volumes in urbanised areas, there is little doubt that coinage was used in rural areas too.¹² Secondly, there is no evidence that these coins were targeted towards a specific audience. Each personification was not deliberately created to be sent to the region it represented to drum up provincial loyalty.¹³ The Egyptian closed currency system

¹⁰ See: Cody, 2003, 103-123.

¹¹ Hekster, 2003, 26-9.

¹² Noreña, 2011, 262.

¹³ The only exception to this is the 119 AD Britannia issue, minted over a decade before the rest of the series, which has been found almost exclusively in Britain. See: Walker, 1988 for more.

provides evidence for this, as it meant that the three personifications representing Aegyptos, Alexandria, and Nilus never circulated there.¹⁴ Instead, they circulated the far corners of the empire representing and contributing to the Hadrianic vision of each of the provinces contributing to the whole.

Each of Hadrian's provincial personification can be categorised into four different types: PROVINCIA, ADVENTVS, EXERCITVS, and RESTITVTORI. R. Abdy has dated the series to the period 130—133 AD.¹⁵ The different types are identifiable by their reverses. The EXERCITVS type focuses on the emperor's address (*adluctio*) to the provincial troops, and as it contains no personification will not be explored.

The PROVINCIA types are identifiable by the representation of a female province on the reverse of the coin. The province is seated, standing, or reclining (see figure 2). She is normally depicted in Greco-Roman dress rather than in her native attire. Identification sometimes comes from items of native dress, but most commonly from attributes that hold significance for, or identify a specific geographical area.¹⁶

The ADVENTVS type shows Hadrian, normally togate, raising his right hand in greeting to the province, who stands facing him, holding an identifying attribute in one hand, and a patera, a sacrifice bowl, in the other (see figure 3). Between them is an altar. The legend reads ADVENTVI AVG followed by the province's name in the locative case.¹⁷ The altar and the legend suggest that these scenes represent the imperial sacrifices that commemorated the emperor's arrival in each province and region so honoured by his presence.¹⁸ Toynbee highlights the importance of the emperor being togate, rather than in military dress, suggesting it further emphasised the civilian nature of the tour and the emperor's desire to be depicted as a Roman citizen rather than a conqueror.¹⁹

The third type is the RESTITVTORI type, which depicts Hadrian raising a kneeling province to her feet (see figure 4). Hadrian, again togate, stands holding a scroll in one hand whilst extending the other to the personification. The personification is draped and shown with an identifiable attribute. In some issues, there is an item of further significance between the two figures. The legends read RESTITVTORI followed by the province's name in the genitive case. This legend refers to Hadrian as the restorer of the province

14 Geissen, 2012, 561.

15 R. Abdy and P. Mittag, 2020, 22- 26. Abdy's dating has superseded Mattingly's previous dating of 134-138 AD (Mattingly, *Coins of the British Museum*, cxx).

16 Kreitzer, 1996, 154.

17 Toynbee, 1934, 4.

18 Kreitzer, 1996, 155.

19 Toynbee, 1934, 4 no.1.



Figure 2:
AEGYPTOS, dupondius/as
(Grace MacLachlan
photographed with
permission of the Hunterian
museum, cat no. GLAHM.
26343).



Figure 3:
ADVENTVI AVG
MAVRETANIAE dupondius/
as (Grace MacLachlan
photographed with
permission of the Hunterian
Museum, cat.no GLAHM:
26333).



Figure 4:
RESTITVTORI HISPANIAE
sestertius (Grace
MacLachlan photographed
with permission of the
Hunterian Museum, cat.no
GLAHM: 26399).

and the scene confirms this by showing him raising the province, representing a more subordinate role of the province to the emperor.²⁰

PREVIOUS SCHOLARLY INTERPRETATIONS

Hadrian spent as many as twelve years of his reign as emperor away from Rome touring his vast empire.²¹ Yet, the emperor was no mere ancient tourist; his travels were politically loaded. M.K. Thornton calls his journeys “[...] striking and innovative features of his reign [...]” citing the fact that he was the “[...] first reigning emperor to depart from Italy except for the purpose of making war or a conquest”.²² The coins represented not only the places that Hadrian visited, but alongside these journeys, they formed part of a wider ideological message of his reign. This link between the emperor’s travels and coinage is perhaps best summarised by H. Mattingly in 1939:

[...] On his return from his last foreign journey... Hadrian decided to tell Rome and the world what he had hoped, planned, and accomplished [...] It was now to be made clear to every Roman that the Empire was no mere system of dependencies, but a living organism, alive in all its part, each member sharing in the common life and contributing something to its maintenance, each enjoying the personal interest and care of the Emperor [...]²³

Mattingly’s uncritical acceptance of this view of a ‘commonwealth’ reflects a wider attitude in early twentieth-century British scholarship and contributed to the failure to interrogate this idea as a part of a wider ideological repertoire under Hadrian. In this vein, discussing Toynbee’s 1934 *The Hadrianic School* is vital as it forms the core of information on these coins and remains the most influential study on the personifications. Toynbee’s iconographic insights remain essential, but her authority leaves modern scholarship reiterating many of her key suppositions. Though extremely useful for its thorough overview of the personifications and their history, her work is particularly entrenched in this imperialist mindset of the early

20 Vespasian issued a coin with very similar imagery, but that is believed to have a more general theme of restoring the Roman state or the *Oikoumene*. (Cody, 2003, 118-119).

21 Scholarly consensus is that these travels were broken up into three major periods. First, August of 117 to August 118 AD; second, spring of 121 to autumn of 125; third, spring of 128 to spring of 134 AD; and a much shorter final fourth period for a portion of 135 AD. (Kreitzer, 1996, 148).

22 Thornton, 1975, 452.

23 Mattingly, 1939, clxxi.

twentieth-century British Empire. This study cannot dismiss her work; instead, going forward, it aims to engage critically with Toynbee's work viewing and understanding many of its suppositions to be a product of its imperial context.

Toynbee's key interpretation is that the series reflects what Hadrian fundamentally stood for: "[...] the idea of the empire as a vast unit, a brotherhood of fellow citizens of the world living together on an equality in prosperity and peace".²⁴ This description, as well as Mattingly's, appears extremely compatible with the Balfour Declaration of 1926 in which Commonwealth states were defined as:

[...] autonomous Communities within the British Empire, **equal** in status, **in no way subordinate** one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though **united by a common allegiance** to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations [...]²⁵

Ninety years later Toynbee's work remains the leading authority on this topic. Following Toynbee, subsequent analyses have continued to interpret the series as reflecting the peace and prosperity of the empire during the Hadrianic age. However, these interpretations do not nuance nor call into question the ideological value of these personifications to Hadrian and the imperial core. What remains clear is that scholars have thus far failed to elucidate upon the ways that the imperial core benefitted by propagating an idea of unity and shared prosperity.

VISUALISING UTILITY

The personifications are depicted alongside accoutrements that identify their province. They range from flora and fauna to weapons, miniature mountains, and religious items. These attributes were carefully selected to represent each nation based on what was considered their contribution and value to the empire.

On the coins, it becomes clear that within the PROVINCIA type, there is a distinction between the representations of the provinces and how this links to the province's utility to the empire. Abdy argues that each depiction is devised around whether it is a militarised frontier province or part of the protected interior. The latter "[...] recline, relaxed in the security provided by the buffer of the outer reaches of the empire" (see figure 2). The former types

²⁴ Toynbee, 1934, 2.

²⁵ Balfour Declaration, 1926, 2. Emphasis author's own.



Figure 5:
Hadrianic sestertius of Dacia (Grace MacLachlan with permission from the Hunterian Museum, cat.no GLAHM: 26360).



Figure 6:
Hispania reclining (Grace MacLachlan, photographed with permission of the Hunterian Museum, cat.no GLAHM: 26365).

are alert, standing or sitting upright, armed with weapons unique to, or associated with, their nation.²⁶ They are ready to guard the empire's perimeter. On his Dacia coin, Thornton observes that, in contrast to Trajanic depictions, the focus is on the posture and distinguishing weapon (see figure 5). With the falx, the Dacian curved sword, Hadrian announced his expectation of Dacia; she is to defend the empire with her sword, and this is Dacia's contribution to its empire.²⁷

The more idyllic types represent the provinces that were safely within the borders of the empires, yet also similarly highlight the 'utility' of the provinces, namely of the resources that could be exploited. The attributes often refer to the agricultural importance

²⁶ Abdy and Mittag, 2020, 45.
²⁷ Thornton, 1975, 449.

of the province to the empire. Africa's status as the empire's breadbasket is referenced by a cornucopia and corn ears. Sometimes, however, the references appear more obscure.

Hispania appears as a reclining figure resting against rocks with her left arm, alongside two telling attributes (see figure 6).²⁸ The first is an olive branch in her right hand, referring to her economic contribution by recognising the importance of Spanish olive oil production. It is the rabbit located at Hispania's feet that is more puzzling. Toynbee suggested that it may be a humorous reference to claims in Roman poetry of a rabbit-infested Hispania.²⁹ However, she argues that this cannot rank amongst the importance of corn from Africa as a significant contribution to the empire's wealth and worthy of depiction. Instead, she highlights that the word for rabbit, *cuniculus*, also means to "mine" in Latin. Thus, her supposition is that:

The rabbit who burrows in his burrow may be, in fact, an allegory of the miner who burrows in his mine, thus symbolising the world-famous miners of Spain and the mineral wealth she contributed to the resources of Rome and of the Empire.³⁰

Focusing on what they can contribute to the empire, rather than their subjugation and oppression, these depictions represent a significant departure from the previous function. Whilst this has been observed by past scholars, an even more critical lens can be applied, and it can be claimed that an imperial attitude in these coins also appears to represent what Rome can take — what resources it can exploit — for the maintenance of its empire.

NEW IMPERIAL VISUAL LANGUAGE

Arguably, the Hadrianic age does represent a shift in the imagery of imperial communication, a reconfiguration of sorts, in contrast to earlier periods. The most notable observation is this shift away from depiction of violence and subjugation when displaying the personifications being the most notable observation.

This point is emphasised by the Hadrianic treatment of Britannia. In 119/120 AD, after a local uprising or military turmoil in the province, a Britannia coin was issued on bronze (see figure 7).³¹ It shows the province sitting on rocks armed with a spear and

²⁸ Abdy argues that the inclusion of the rocks in the depiction is that although she was a peaceful province under Hadrian, Hispania was known as a rocky and mountainous region.

²⁹ Toynbee, 1934, 104.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 105.

³¹ Abdy and Mittag, 2020, 46. They further argue that this type was deliberately sent to Britain to remedy the short supply of bronze coinage on the island.



Figure 7:
Britannia of 119/120 CE (Source: The British Museum, 66o822oo, © The Trustees of the British Museum).



Figure 8:
Britannia of PROVINCIA series of 130-133 CE (The British Museum, 687157oo1, © The Trustees of the British Museum)

a shield with a spiked boss. Despite the suggested military turmoil, she looks straight ahead, vigilant, not down and dejected. Toynbee suggests this is not Britannia CAPTA.³² With the military history of native revolts in the first century, such as Caratacus and Boudica, and the military turmoil that prompted its minting, this image of Britannia is significant in its departure from previous

³² Toynbee, 1934, 55.

imagery. On Hadrian's Britannia, there is no reminder of the subjugation of Britain nor the reinforcement of Roman supremacy following the revolt.

A point that further highlights the ideological significance of Hadrian's 119 Britannia coins is that her depiction has barely changed in the later series (see figure 8). In many ways, the 119 Britannia is the archetype of the armed and vigilant frontier province types, taking a share in the defence of the empire.

The continuity of Britannia's representation underscores that the contemporary history of the province itself was not the driving force behind the Hadrianic utilisation of provincial personifications. Rather, how they could be utilised as part of this wider ideological and iconographical programme was key. Toynbee's interpretation is that alert and vigilant Britannia formed part of a sisterhood of militarised personifications that worked in tandem to give the idea of definitive and strong frontiers around the empire.³³ Her uncritical vision of Hadrian's empire fails to emphasise how these peoples, now depicted as stalwart defenders of the Roman empire, were once its enemies. Presented in this way, their images demonstrated the 'imperialising' of their enemies and the achievement of the empire, in not only the pacification of these nations but in reconfiguring their image to represent the extent and control of the Roman empire.

ECUMENICAL VISION OF EMPIRE

The dignity given to the provinces in their interaction with the emperor on the ADVENTVS and RESTITVTORI types marks the most significant departure from imperial imagery of the personification. The ADVENTVS type, in particular, where the province meets the emperor on equal footing and sacrifices alongside him, emphasises this. These types elucidate more clearly the aims of the overall series.

By showing the provinces alongside the emperor, Hadrian's vision unfolds. In presenting the provinces as integral to the empire, C. Ando argues that Hadrian "[...] retreated from an imperialist mentality that divided the world into people they had already conquered and people they had yet to conquer".³⁴ He further argues that Hadrian's coinage series announced that all those "[...] who had the capacity to appreciate the benefits of empire now lived within its borders".³⁵ In many ways, Hadrian's vision of his empire was about more than just peace around the empire; it was about cultivating a relationship between the

³³ Toynbee, 1934, 96.

³⁴ Ando, 2013, 330.

³⁵ Ando, 2013, 330.

emperor and the provinces, one that saw the emperor as the guarantor of their continued peace and the benefactor of their prosperity.

The emperors had long been viewed as the givers of 'civilisation' to their provinces. This created a rhetoric that blurred the reality of resource exploitation — whether natural, agricultural or manpower — by the Romans in the provinces and conquered territories. In many ways, this ignores the cruciality of the resources and benefits these provinces gave to Rome in maintaining the empire. Instead, Hadrian presented himself as an emperor who understood and appreciated the contributions of the provinces and what Rome owed to them. Consequently, he acknowledges what the empire takes from the provinces. Still, he reformulates the image of resource exploitation as recognition — almost praise — of the provinces' contribution to the empire's well-being, prosperity and peace, granting agency to the provinces in this way. Viewing the images in this light, it becomes clear that the personifications are depicted in this way because, ideologically, it benefitted the imperialist power to spread a message of a common goal or heritage.

THE ERASURE OF IMPERIAL VIOLENCE

However, peace did not abound. It is extremely significant to note that the Hadrianic depiction of Judaea does not refer to the tumultuous history between Hadrian and Judaea. As with Britannia in 119 AD, little trace exists of the contemporary Bar Kokhba revolt in the Hadrianic treatment of Judaea. To Toynbee, the Bar Kokhba revolt was the "one serious blot upon the Pax Hadriana". She claims:

The war was but an unpleasant, passing episode, a regrettable necessity, no fit occasion for a permanent record of the triumph of Roman arms. Hadrian had, after all, brought the sword to Judaea for the time being only; what he ultimately brought was peace.³⁶

To Toynbee, Hadrian did not follow the Flavian precedent in representing Judaea as subdued and defeated because it would have been "[...] completely alien to Hadrian's whole attitude and policy".³⁷ Instead, Judaea is almost indistinguishable from many other personifications. Whilst many scholars argue that Hadrian's Judaea highlighted his ecumenical vision, it seems that Hadrian did not want his depiction of Judaea to act as a reminder of the

³⁶ Toynbee, 1934, 119.

³⁷ Ibid., 119.



Figure 9:
Hadrianic sestertius depicting Judaea. Source: <https://vridar.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/hadrian-judea.jpg>

realities of empire and what questioning imperial power entailed. His actions in Judaea reveal that, when confronted with rebellion, an imperialist mentality remained behind his ecumenical attitude.

L. Houghtalin highlighted traceable hints of the revolt in Hadrian's depiction of Judaea. Most of the coins are of the *PROVINCIA* and *ADVENTVS* types. Unusually, on the *provincia* types, Judaea is always accompanied by the emperor.³⁸ P. Cimadomo suggests that "[...] Judaea could not yet stand alone on the coins, because it was not yet completely pacified".³⁹ To him, the emperor's presence was part of Hadrian's intention to show that it was he who pacified Judaea and finally brought this notoriously rebellious province into the folds of the empire.⁴⁰

Even more unusual is a rare coin that follows the artistic conventions of the *RESTITVTORI* types without the distinguishing legend *RESTITVTORI IVDAEA*. Judaea is on her knees before the emperor. In contrast to other *RESTITVTORI* types, Judaea is more submissively on both knees, kneeling perhaps in clemency, rather than being raised from one knee.⁴¹

The almost complete erasure of contemporary history in Judaea's representation reveals the fundamental importance of this ecumenical vision of Hadrian. Yet, his treatment of Judaea demonstrates that threats to the unity of his empire were treated harshly demonstrating that behind the veneer of unity and peace lay traces of the same attitude of his predecessors. Hadrian only sought to disguise it to better maintain control of his empire.

³⁸ Houghtalin, 1993, 353.

³⁹ Cimadomo, 2022, 109.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁴¹ Houghtalin, 1993, 353-4.

CONCLUSION

Hadrian's attitude towards the empire appears to mark a drastic ideological shift in the role of the provinces within the empire. With his coinage, the imperial core no longer aims to demonstrate the might of the empire, but to show its appreciation and acknowledgement of the provinces' role in maintaining it. The personifications of the provinces no longer reinforce the dichotomy between conquered and conqueror. Instead, Hadrian transformed the images into ones that represented his vision of empire, his achievements, and his accomplishments.

Hadrian's use of coinage highlights his desire to spread his message across the empire, informing his subjects of the peace and prosperity and emphasising that this came from provincial cooperation in the imperial enterprise. Hadrianic imagery appealed to the constituent parts of the empire and encouraged them to understand themselves as part of a whole, fostering a sense of common citizenship. Their differences, in the shape of their attributes, are only to distinguish the province and highlight its usefulness to the empire. Cultivating this unity encouraged and facilitated provincial cooperation, peace and stability across the empire.

In observing this shift, past scholars have been happy to proclaim these coins' observable equality, peace and prosperity as a hallmark feature of the Hadrianic empire. There is the failure to acknowledge that Hadrian, as the producing authority, sought to project a specific image of his empire, demonstrating that Hadrian understood that provincial co-operation was essential to maintaining the empire. The personification of the provinces worked to create a vision of 'empire' that was a Hadrianic construct, not a representation of reality.

Yet, this facet of the personifications is rarely emphasised. This article aimed to reconsider the use of the personifications of the provinces by Hadrian, moving away from the idea that they reflect a true state of happiness, equality and prosperity for all those within the borders of the empire. Instead, it stressed the ideological benefits of presenting images of the empire that reflected this. This study engaged with and critiqued the influence that the British imperial climate had on Toynbee's work. It sought to counteract this influence by focusing on the benefits that formulating these images of cooperation and unity brought to the imperial powers, rather than the provinces. In doing so, highlighting that imperialistic undertones remained in Hadrian's attitude toward empire hidden under his reformulation and visualisation of provincial cooperation and collusion and demonstrating how Hadrian justified the practices of empire in this way.

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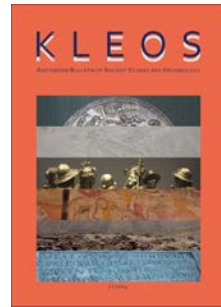
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Carthago Prosperanda Est: Representation of Carthaginians in Video Games

Corine Gerritsen

ABSTRACT

Roma Aeterna! Words corroborated by the continuous popularity of the Romans in the ever-growing video game industry. Games and movies, along with their respective fields of study, often favour the Roman Empire as the star of the show.¹ Instead, this paper analyses one of their greatest adversaries in video games: the Carthaginians. The article explores the representation of the Carthaginians in the digital ludic realm and the sources used to form these representations. Furthermore, the study analyses how game designers manage gaps in the historical record. The absence of Carthaginian literary texts means the creators turn to other sources or adopt alternative approaches. How can lacunas in sources turn into a depiction of a complex culture and society? The paper analyses two popular video games: *Imperator: Rome* and *Old World*.² The focus lies on the influence of ancient and historiographic sources in shaping digital representation, as evident from in-game texts and game files. This analysis requires a multidisciplinary methodology and perspective, combining historical research and game studies. The study demonstrates the great influence that Roman and Greek sources have on the representation of Carthage in video games. Additionally, I discuss developers' approaches to gaps in knowledge, and what other sources they employ to create a complete and layered representation.

INTRODUCTION

Digital Romans made their first appearance in 1982 in the game *Legionnaire*; it would only take five more years for one of their most potent enemies, the Carthaginians, to step into the digital playspace as well. *Annals of Rome* established the Carthaginians as

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► [Profile page](#)

¹ Bembeneck 2013; Lozano 2020; Machado 2020; McCall 2020.

² Paradox Interactive, *Imperator: Rome* 2019; Mohawk Games, *Old World* 2021.

a powerful force in the ancient world, and from here on out, they continued to appear.³ Even though surviving Carthaginian sources are scarce, the representation of this culture does not suffer from a lack of content in video games. These two elements seem contradictory and give rise to the questions: What are the key elements of digital Carthaginians, and what sources and game design approaches shape this representation?

This paper employs an interdisciplinary scope to analyse both the portrayal and processes at play in constructing ancient Carthaginians in the digital realm. Moreover, the study uses methodologies and sources from both history and game studies. The corpus of digital sources includes gameplay, in-game texts, and game files. With the game sources as a starting point, certain quotations, mentions of authors and specific events pointed to the inclusion of ancient sources, such as the writings of Polybius, Cicero, Horace, and Livy. The case study focuses on the recent games *Imperator: Rome*, a grand-strategy game, and *Old World*, a turn-based strategy game, as they are comparable in scope.⁴ These games allow us to address another important question: how are the absences of ancient sources translated into seemingly complete representations onscreen?

These two questions steer away from the issue: 'Is this game historically accurate?', since the answer is always 'no'.⁵ History, after all, is a construct. Moreover, the creators of 'historical' video games are not historians.⁶ Occasionally, the game studios are able to consult historians. More often, in smaller teams or when the budget is insufficient, team members do the research themselves, using online sources, academic works, and books.⁷ In both scenarios, developers encounter constraints, particularly regarding time and financial resources. Additionally, genre expectations push developers to adhere to successfully proven concepts.⁸ These elements highlight the difference in objectives between game creators and historians. Despite the challenges developers face in creating playable pasts, the games demonstrate a commitment to including a wide array of historical elements.

METHODOLOGY AND FRAMEWORK

This study falls within the domain of historical game studies and uses methods from both the discipline of history and game

3 Avalon Hill Company 1982, *Legionnaire*; Data Design Interactive et al 1987, *Annals of Rome*.

4 Paradox Interactive 2019, *Imperator: Rome*; Mohawk Games 2021, *Old World*.

5 Montfort 2003, 2-3.

6 Maguid 2019.

7 Grufstedt 2022, 97.

8 Arsenault 2009, 149-156.

studies. The representations of the past in video games proves a fruitful object of study: some approaches, demonstrated by Y. Grufstedt and A. Chapman, focus on the modes of representation, others on a specific period, exemplified by R. Houghton and C. Rollinger, and finally, some on the representation of a specific game, illustrated by A. Flegler and D. Dow.⁹ This article contains a similar representation angle but foregrounds an understudied object, digital Carthaginians.

The method consists of close-playing, as employed by S. Lammes, both *Imperator: Rome* and *Old World*.¹⁰ While playing, I took notes and captured the gameplay using Open Broadcast Software.¹¹ Due to the nature of these extensive games and in-game player decisions, it is virtually impossible to encounter all potential scenarios and content. However, all textual content, visible or invisible within a game session, is stored in game files.¹² The descriptive language elements in these files contain information on game elements such as cultures, names, events, and mechanics. By close-reading the texts that refer to the digital Carthaginians, certain quotes, authors, and other references to ancient sources emerge. All Carthaginian text files have been analysed, but for brevity's sake, the examples in this paper are limited.

Unfortunately, there is no extensive documentation of the full process of historical research by these specific game creators. Interviews attest to the consultation of texts by Roman authors, but do not list specific texts or how the sources were used.¹³ For other games by the same developers, the historical research included the reading and interpreting of Wikipedia, online academic databases, secondary literature, and primary sources.¹⁴ Developers likely used this standard approach for the creation of *Imperator: Rome* and *Old World*. By close-playing and close-reading the game files, texts by authors such as Polybius, Cicero, Horace and Livy can be found. Even though digital databases such as Perseus Digital Library and LOEB classical libraries allow for extensive searches through quick queries, in addition to previous familiarity with these sources, it is possible that not all ancient

9 Chapman 2016; Dow 2014; Flegler 2021; Grufstedt 2022; Houghton 2021; Rollinger 2021.

10 Lammes 2003.

11 OBS Studio, <https://obsproject.com/>, accessed on 02/04/2021.

12 The files for *Imperator: Rome* can be accessed through: Steam>Steamapps>common>ImperatorRome>game>common; the files for *Old World* can be accessed through Epic Games>OldWorld>Reference>XML>infos.

13 <https://www.vice.com/en/article/9k8gb3/finding-the-paradox-game-within-roman-history-for-imperator-rome>, accessed on 04/09/2023.

14 Grufstedt 2022, 97.

authors are included.¹⁵ Rather than providing an all-encompassing list, this study aims to display what types of sources are used for these games and to demonstrate how the sources shape the portrayal of the digital Carthaginians.

THE LEGACY OF CARTHAGE

In *Imperator: Rome*, players assume the role of a leader governing a historical city-state, tribe, kingdom, or empire. Players interact with and make decisions on various aspects, including religious, political, military, economic, and diplomatic affairs. The game entices players to complete missions to receive bonuses. The first three Carthaginian missions all aim to make Carthage the most influential trade power in the game. For example, one mission is titled “An end to Sicilian warfare”, which urges the player to “finally annex the island for once and for all” for their trade to prosper.¹⁶ Furthermore, every political entity has a “heritage” containing a description of the historical context. For Carthage, this states that “her heritage is one of a strong naval and mercantile power.” Even when a player has no previous knowledge of historical Carthage, these elements convey wealth and trade as key characteristics of Carthage.

In *Old World*, the emphasis on wealth is also evident. The game scenario “riches and influence” states, “[...] the time has come for Carthage to become the [...] richest Phoenician civilization.” Furthermore, Carthage is the only entity in the game that receives bonus gold through coastal cities and through two of their gods. The description reinforces the idea that Carthage should be wealthy, and the mechanics result in Carthage generating more income than any other culture, affording the player to quick riches.

This portrayal echoes the primary sources written by Roman and Greek observers, which predominantly include an admiring mention of Carthage’s wealth, often paired with a comment on the success of trade that provided these riches. For example, in the early 5th century BC, Thucydides wrote that “they have the most silver”.¹⁷ Over 250 years later, Polybius refers to Carthage as “the wealthiest city in the world”.¹⁸ Trade is attributed as the reason for this wealth, as Cicero expresses Carthaginians are “craving for mercantile voyages and commercial profit”.¹⁹

¹⁵ Perseus Digital Library, <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>, accessed on 3/09/2024; LOEB Classical Library, <https://www.loebclassics.com/>, accessed on 3/09/2024.

¹⁶ The quotes from the games were present in *Imperator: Rome* [1.5.3] and *Old World* [0.1.51079] and can be found in the game files.

¹⁷ Thucydides 6.34.

¹⁸ Polybius 18.35.

¹⁹ Cicero, *De Republica* 2.7.

In both games, the Carthaginians are constructed around elements of wealth and trade, and both grant Carthage bonuses related to trading abilities and wealth accumulation. Therefore, even when a player has agency to play as the realm, there is an enormous chance of creating Carthage with the same over-emphasised characteristics as those in the primary sources. The words of Thucydides, Livy, Cicero, and Polybius consistently appreciate Carthage's wealth and subsequent historiography, and easily accessible sources, such as Wikipedia, use the ancient words to emphasise this element. Developers thus shape mechanics and game design elements that recreate the curated conventional image of the past painted by specific ancient sources.

POWER AND INDIVIDUALS

Another core element is the importance placed on the power Carthage owes to well-known individuals and their families. Starting *Old World* as Carthage, the player is immediately introduced to Queen Dido, whose role they assume (figure 1). Although her historicity remains debated, this founder is given the leadership role in the game because of the near-mythical status ancient texts give her. Moreover, her introductory text strongly resembles the words of Virgil.

"I am a Phoenician princess, carrying the name Elissa, who fled my home in Tyre. Having escaped my brother Pygmalion, who murdered my beloved husband Acerbar, a priest of Hercules, I arrived in North Africa. With my husband's riches, I bargained [...]"²⁰

These are the first few lines in which Dido presents herself to the player. While the story of Dido is well known, this particular text remains strikingly close to the Aeneid.

"Dido rules this empire, having set out from Tyre, fleeing her brother. [...] Acerbar was her husband, wealthiest, in land, of Phoenicians[...] and loved with a great love by the wretched girl. But her brother Pygmalion[...] killed the unwary Sychaeus. But the ghost of her unburied husband came to her in dream [...] and revealed an ancient treasure."²¹

The most important elements, such as Tyre, her flight from her brother, her love for her husband, the murder, the names, and the

²⁰ Mohawk Games, *Old World* 2021.

²¹ Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.494. Kline (translation) 2002.



Figure 1.
Dido as the leader of the Carthaginians. Mohawk Games, Old World 2021, screenshot by author.

riches of her late husband, are concisely reproduced. In the last sentence of her game introduction, she tells the player, “I am ready to become [...] Queen of Carthage, goddess of my people”. The choice of the term “goddess” further underlines the direct influence of Virgil’s text, as he refers to Dido with this exact word.²² Dido’s story has been reimagined and altered throughout centuries, but the specific wording suggests distinct efforts to incorporate primary textual sources instead.

Another essential game mechanic in *Old World* is “Important Families”, who can grant bonuses or create problems. All the Carthaginian family names are derived from important and often-mentioned individuals or their families. The most famous individual is Hannibal, featuring in an abundance of ancient texts such as those by Cicero, Livy, Horace, and Polybius; the Barcid family thus makes an unsurprising appearance in the game as one of the important families.²³ Diodorus, in turn, extensively writes about the Magonids, the historical family preceding the Barconids in influence, and in *Old World* they appear side by side.²⁴ The other two are simply named after important Carthaginian individuals: Hannonid after Hanno the navigator and Didonian after Queen Dido (figure 2). The developers thus place the same importance on these great individuals and families as the primary sources do. Rather than favouring the chronological realities of the figures,

²² Ibid., 370, 405.

²³ Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum*; Cicero, *De Senectute De Amicitia De Divinatione*;

Horace, *Carmina* 2.12.2; Horace, *Carmina* 4.4.49; Livy 21.2; Polybius 1.24-44, 1.60-87, 2.13.

²⁴ Diodorus 13.43.5-6, 13.80.1-2, 14.50, 14.90.2-4, 15.54-70.



Figure 2.
Didonian family. Mohawk Games, *Old World* 2021, screenshot by author.

the developers prioritise incorporating families and figures that are widely recognised in sources.

The important families have power within Carthage, yet Carthage's geopolitical role within the games holds equal importance in its representation. In *Imperator: Rome*, the AI (artificial intelligence) determines the behaviour of the political entities surrounding the player. "Observer" mode offers the possibility to study the AI without player interference. Players are always faced with political instability, but the AI mode proves that Carthage hardly ever disintegrates in this game, as the Carthaginians effectively manage almost all rebellions. Furthermore, Carthage demonstrates rapid expansion, often outpacing its historical trajectory, demonstrated by the AI's early conquest of Hispania, decades before Hamilcar Barca's expansion (around 236 BC).²⁵ Most importantly, Carthage is the most powerful entity at the beginning of the game in the Western Mediterranean world. While Rome has the potential to expand quickly, Carthage is already a force to be reckoned with, often spreading influence through Hispania into Gaul.²⁶ This means that Carthage is programmed to be the biggest and most powerful enemy of the Romans. It echoes the sentiment of Roman writers who emphasise the greatness of their foe, as can be read in words

²⁵ Freeman 2022, 29-34.

²⁶ VALUE, <https://youtu.be/fROsZzaBQJ4>, accessed on 18/06/2021, 7:51-12:05.

such as Livy's "Carthaginians, destined to be such formidable enemies".²⁷ In the games, Carthage is coded to balance Rome mechanically.

However, the appearance of Carthage as the main challenge to Roman expansion does not spring solely from a game design need. The idea that Carthage wielded great influence and power, possibly posing the greatest threat to Rome's rise to power, is articulated in primary sources and historiography.²⁸ Admiration of specific individuals and their military genius often accompanied this notion. From the first moment, Hannibal and the Romans step onto the field of battle, the general's name becomes a synonym for fear: "Dread Hannibal", "Treacherous Hannibal", and "Hannibal at the gates".²⁹ He captures Rome's imagination and receives enduring popularity well into our day and age.³⁰ While Hannibal's military victories earned him and Carthage praise and awe from Roman writers, it is also common for Roman authors to represent their enemies with inflated greatness making any victory over them seem more significant. The mythic attraction of these characters remained persistent in history and in popular culture. Video games draw from referential codes for popular classical reception, and cinema and television pose unavoidable cultural references, as D. Lozano states.³¹ Indeed opera, movies and TV series have made characters, such as Dido and Hannibal, inescapable as cultural reference. A game featuring Carthage can thus not simply ignore the existence of these figures, and developers incorporate references to them in abundance.

FROM PRIMARY SOURCE TO KEY ELEMENT

The primary historical accounts, often characterised by a positive tone, shape the core pillars upon which Carthage in games is constructed. However, it is important to acknowledge another layer of complexity within these ancient Roman texts and their stance towards the Carthaginians. The statements of Carthaginian wealth often show up together with the warning that this wealth leads to greed, arrogance, and corruption.³² These views stem from earlier opinions on the Phoenicians and their cities, including Carthage, who were targets of the same negative sentiments.³³ The Carthaginians, in particular, are portrayed as untrustworthy

²⁷ Livy 5.29.

²⁸ Hoyos 2010, 2-4.

²⁹ Horace, *Carmina* 2.12.2; Horace, *Carmina* 4.4.49; Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum* 4.22.

³⁰ Bazalgette 2006, *Hannibal*; Bragaglia/Ulmer 1959, *Annibale*; Fleming 2001, *Hannibal: the Man who hated Rome*; Gallone 1937, *Scipione l'Africano*; Hufnail 2005, *The True Story of Hannibal*.

³¹ Lozano 2021, 47-48.

³² Cicero, *De Lege Agraria* 2.95.5

³³ Isaac 2004, 326.

and lacking in respect for the gods.³⁴ The ancient stereotype of Carthaginians thus portrays them as wealthy, and militarily powerful, but also corruptible, faithless, and oath-breaking. This stereotype functions as a cultural foil to the Romans and was directly opposed to some of the most vital Roman virtues: a life without extravagance, respect for the gods, and the keeping of oaths.

A distinctly negative Carthaginian stereotype thus existed in antiquity, rooted in Orientalist views. Popular culture, including video games, still struggles with this type of portrayal, as is the case with multiple Eastern cultures in Sid Meier's *Civilization* series.³⁵ The negative aspects of Carthaginians are notably absent in the presented case studies. One potential explanation is that the games are relatively recent, and the awareness of Western bias and Orientalist interpretations receive more attention in society.

In *Old World* and *Imperator: Rome*, only the main positive aspects of Carthage are magnified. These elements have been perpetuated by historical books and popular media, allowing the perception of the representation as authentic or accurate by the player. Because of previous conventions, the mythological image of Carthage becomes the authentic one, and this discursive authenticity is continued and legitimised in these game elements.³⁶ As Rome, players face the greatest challenge when confronting Carthage, reflecting the historical rivalry and the struggle for dominance between these ancient powers. While alternate game narratives could have explored other facets of Carthage's history, the focus on trade, wealth, and powerful leaders reinforces the significance of these elements and underscores the formidable nature of Carthage as the ultimate adversary. The contemporary games present the same narrow portrayal of Carthage as the ancient sources did. By focusing heavily on the key attributes, these are overemphasised, ensuring a Carthaginian legacy as a captivating and challenging force in gaming realms.

WHEN THE SOURCES REMAIN QUIET

In *Imperator: Rome*, there is one framework for all governments, modelled after the Roman Empire. Governments consist of eight offices, named differently for each political entity. While there is substantial information about the Roman government, this is not the case for Carthage.³⁷ Livy provides us with terms for the leaders, incorporated in the game as Suffete and Co-Suffete, but

³⁴ Ibid., 328.

³⁵ Mol/Politopoulos 2021, 44-51.

³⁶ Pfister 2020, 62-63.

³⁷ Hoyos 2020, 50-57.



other titles of political offices remain unknown.³⁸

Figure 3 shows the titles of all offices, and none is left blank. The developers' approach to this gap in knowledge demonstrates a distinct pattern: words such as Augur and Magistrate are Roman and indicate similar offices in Carthage. Other titles such as Shephat, Mefahked, Kahen, and Rophet are Hebrew words. The word "Rophet", רֹפֵא in Hebrew, means doctor. The description of this government function states, "this office is the most senior doctor".³⁹ Kahen, or כהן, simply means priest, and the in-game function is that of a high priest.⁴⁰ Mefahked, or מפקד, which translates to commander, is an office for military leadership.⁴¹

The inclusion of Hebrew words points to historical considerations. Both the Punic and Phoenician languages have been handed down sparingly.⁴² This is not the case with the Hebrew language, which has preserved written traditions. Hebrew is linguistically closely related to Phoenician, and thus, by proxy, Punic.⁴³ The decision to use a linguistic relative of Punic and incorporate Hebrew words in *Imperator: Rome* to fill in the gaps in knowledge demonstrates the intention to come as close as possible to the original language.

Old World has no offices, but the game includes a great number of individual names. The developer approaches are similar to those of *Imperator: Rome*. The game files list all the names that can appear for Carthaginian characters. Some of these, such as Thubabath, Sapanba'al, and Imilce, are known Punic or Phoenician names, but the majority of this list consists of names from other Semitic languages, most often Arabic or Hebrew, such as Famiruz,

Figure 3.

The government offices of Carthage. Paradox Interactive, Imperator: Rome 2019, screenshot by author.

38 Livy 28.37.2, 30.7.5.

39 Brown 2004, 951.

40 Ibid., 497.

41 Ibid., 823-823.

42 Adams 2003, 200-201, 205-206.

43 Gras et al. 2006, 82-85.

Nasma, Tabiba, Zohur, and Hannah.

The game creators fill their game with references to Latin texts but mostly use words of linguistically close relatives of the Punic language for names and titles. The average player is most likely unaware that these names and titles are not Punic but are instead Hebrew or, in some cases, Arabic. The games do not communicate the use of a specific language, rather, developers choose closely related alternatives to fit in seamlessly. Despite the limitations in time, finances, and accessibility to sources, developers aim to create a historical close possibility to present the players with a cohesive representation of Carthaginians.

RELIGION

A similar approach emerges from the analysis of Carthaginian religion in *Imperator: Rome*. Some Carthaginian deities appear on epigraphic, numismatic, or other material sources, and several are included in *Imperator: Rome* (Figure 4).⁴⁴ The game mechanics require each political entity to be able to swap their four main gods with at least three different ones per domain. The developers run into another problem here, since there are not enough names of Carthaginian deities that survived.⁴⁵ Once again, they face the challenge of producing alternatives.

In the game, the gods venerated around Phoenicia make up the rest of the selection, such as gods who originated from an earlier Canaan civilisation or the Arabian culture group. According to the founding myth of Carthage, people originally from Tyre created the city as a colony, as both games make explicit to the player. Once again, the choice to bring gods from Phoenicia is grounded in historical reference and possibility.

POLITICAL STRIFE

The historical record often fails to provide specifics about political strife within and beyond Carthage, except for conflicts with the Roman Empire. Archaeological evidence grants some information about events, but it remains a fraction of the complete picture. Moreover, archaeological research is not always accessible to those outside of academia.⁴⁶ The developers of *Imperator: Rome* seek to include political tensions and rebellion for each playable entity. While some conflicts, like the Sicilian Wars, find their roots in historical accounts, many smaller-scale problems and internal

⁴⁴ Tanit, Melquart, Ba'al Qarnaim and Ba'al Hammon are included, for more information see:

Bongiovanni 2014, 2-3, 9-10, 26; Bos 1989, 111-119; Hoyos 2020, 14-17; Lancel 1992, 197.

⁴⁵ Which gods were all venerated is still a topic of academic debate, for a short overview on the topic see: Hoyos 2020, 14-17.

⁴⁶ Hoyos 2020, 53-110.

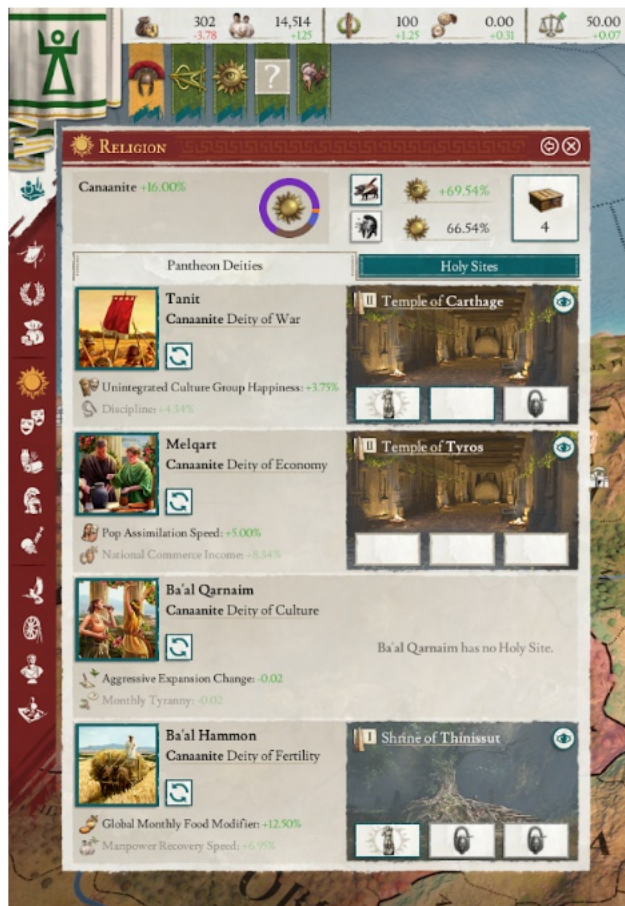


Figure 4.
Deities of Carthage.
 Paradox Interactive,
Imperator: Rome 2019,
 screenshot by author.

strife lack a solid historical foundation.⁴⁷

The developers devised a system in which important families engage in intense power struggles. Historical sources confirm this type of power dispute, but the families and individuals depicted in *Imperator: Rome* merely represent historical possibilities.⁴⁸ Furthermore, vassals situated at the fringes of Carthage's sphere of influence are more prone to rebellion in this game. An explanation could be rooted in the idea that these distant vassals would be inherently harder to control, making them logical candidates for stirring unrest and challenging Carthage's dominance. While these elements are entirely fictional within the game's narrative, the game features historical possibilities. As Grufstedt points out for two other Paradox games, even when developments during the gameplay are counterfactual in nature, they are still infused with historical references and grounded in historical possibility.⁴⁹ The game elements in *Imperator: Rome* might be similar in historical fabrication but remain within the plausible, and use historical references where possible to

⁴⁷ Hoyos 2010, 181-184.

⁴⁸ Hoyos 2020, 40-42.

⁴⁹ Grufstedt 2022, 4-12.

compensate for the gap in the sources and weave together one cohesive representation.

Imperator: Rome and *Old World* use similar approaches to address silences of sources to create a complete and complex representation of Carthaginian culture. Both games employ names and titles from Semitic languages, linguistically close relatives to Punic, to compensate for our lack of knowledge of the Punic language. Secondly, regarding religion, *Imperator: Rome* includes deities for Carthage that belong to the Phoenician area because of the Carthaginian relation to Tyre. In the case of political strife, game developers opt for choices that make sense in the known historical context. Important individuals, even though they are non-historical, fight over power, and rebellions appear most on the outskirts of the realm, even though these are not actual historical events. The game ventures into ahistorical representations caused by a lack of sources, but developers create a possible historical Carthage, filled with content referencing history.⁵⁰

CONCLUSION

This study examined the key elements comprising the representation of Carthaginians in the video games *Imperator: Rome* and *Old World*. It analysed which historical sources informed the elements and examined the degree of their influence. Moreover, the study discussed developer approaches to the absence of historical information.

The analysis pinpoints three main characteristics of digital Carthaginians in games. There is a clear emphasis on Carthage's wealth as a result of trade, on the individuals most often mentioned by primary sources, and on the geopolitical power and influence of Carthage in antiquity. All three elements are abundantly present in texts by Roman and Greek writers, such as Polybius, Cicero, Horace, and Livy. Although the games might not seem to critically engage with their sources, this study shows that the games are heavily influenced by these texts, sometimes even closely imitating the words of ancient authors. This means that the positive historical opinion present in the written sources shapes the portrayal of Carthage, creating a teleological component. The existing biases are magnified by their constant repetition and perpetuation, perhaps first by the other media and now by video games alike. Within the games, it is almost impossible not to gather wealth and influence, making an argument about the past that Carthage's riches and power were inevitable.

⁵⁰ Grufstedt 2022, 4-12.

The decisions of game designers considering historical unknowns further demonstrate their approach to history. Linguistically, close relatives of the Punic language are used to create the cohesive whole of Carthaginian titles and names. In other instances, game creators make decisions based on what fits within the historical context. This is evident in including Phoenician gods, combined with the core mechanics of digital Carthaginians: generating wealth and geopolitically balancing the Roman Empire. The developers do not rely solely on imagination but make references to history where possible and extrapolate from sources plausible histories lacking in ancient texts.

Finally, to look beyond the two games in this case study, it is important to stress how the representation of the past and the medium of video games itself are shaped by existing conventions: historical conventions, game genre conventions, cultural conventions, and many more. Writing about historical cinema, P. Rosen states that the past must be “recognisable as significantly ‘historical’, that is, signifying a generally accepted minimum of referential pastness”.⁵¹ As Chapman points out, this also means that game developers are incentivised to incorporate elements that are already known to the public and are less likely to take risks and create a diverging alternative. If games present history in a too-unfamiliar way, there is a chance that players will reject the representation. Through games, game developers not only create a dialogue between themselves and players but also between the ancient world and its digital representation. These games thus demonstrate how there are no great diversions of the traditional main elements of the Carthaginians in discursive authenticity. Rather, all the choices of the game creators seem to align with the established conventions of what Carthage is. Alternate game narratives could have explored different facets of Carthage's history, but instead, the representation perpetuates and intensifies the existing one. In any regard, the Carthage of history was a formidable force, and this remains true in the realm of video games. As *Imperator: Rome* boldly proclaims, “Carthage shall endure!”

⁵¹ Rosen 2001, 178.

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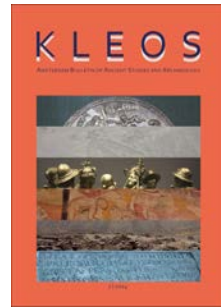
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Holocaust, Colonialism, Slavery: Entangled Histories of a Benin Bronze from a Jewish Collection

Leah Niederhausen

ABSTRACT

In 2018, a German auction house sold a Benin Bronze from the collection of German-Jewish publisher Rudolf Mosse. It had been forcefully auctioned off by the National Socialist regime in 1934, making the Bronze a Nazi-looted object. Therefore, prior to the sale, the auction house came to a financial agreement with Mosse's heirs. Since 2018, debates on restitution and the Benin Bronzes have developed tremendously. On the one hand, the Benin Bronzes—a group of cultural objects from the Royal Kingdom of Benin in today's Nigeria that were violently looted by British soldiers in 1897—have become emblematic for a new rise of urgency concerning colonial restitution, and multiple museums and national government have returned Benin Bronzes to Nigeria. On the other hand, in 2022 the US-based *Restitution Study Group* opposed these returns and claimed that the Bronzes should be made accessible to descendants of enslaved people in the US. They claim that the Kingdom of Benin had created the Bronzes from brass that the Kingdom had received for its active role in the transatlantic slave trade.

This article dives into the object history of this Benin Bronze from Mosse's collection, situating it within the intersecting violent contexts of the Holocaust, colonialism and slavery. Therefore, this article connects the case of the Benin Bronze to an influx of relational approaches in transitional justice, the study field that explores the long-term effects of mass violence as well as the specific judicial and non-judicial processes that have been developed to confront these episodes of mass violence. The aim is to showcase the potential and limits of material culture approaches and provenance research for transitional justice, as well as to critically reflect on mechanisms of restitution that in

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► [Profile page](#)

themselves are influenced by processes of meaning-making, prioritization and selection.

INTRODUCTION

In March of 2018, the German auction house *Zemanek-Münster* auctioned a Benin Bronze, part of the infamous group of cultural objects from the Royal Kingdom of Benin that were violently looted by British soldiers in 1897. The auction caused quite a stir when it became public that the Bronze had been part of the collection of Rudolf Mosse (1843–1920), a German-Jewish publisher whose extensive art collection had been forcefully auctioned off by the National Socialist regime in 1934, making the Bronze a Nazi-looted object. Based on the Washington Principles—international soft-law guidelines for the restitution of Nazi-looted art—the auction house consequently came to a financial agreement with Mosse’s heirs and the Bronze’s sale could proceed as planned.¹

Since 2018, much has happened in the discussions around loot and restitution, in academic, policy and public spheres. Amongst others, F. Sarr and B. Savoy in late 2018 published a fundamental report on the restitution of African cultural heritage which contributed to a “hype about the question of [colonial] restitution”.² The Benin Bronzes have become emblematic for this hype and multiple national governments and museums in the Global North have returned collections of Benin Bronzes to the national government of Nigeria.³ The German national government as well officially transferred ownership of more than 1,100 Benin Bronzes from public German collections to Nigeria in 2022.⁴ The Benin Bronzes have become subject to countless studies and projects, resulting, for instance, in digital infrastructures, such as Digital Benin, which aims at making Benin Bronzes in museum collections in the Global North more accessible.⁵

In 2022, the US-based *Restitution Study Group* (RSG) criticised the restitution of Benin Bronzes to Nigeria due to the Bronzes’ entanglements with the transatlantic slave trade. The *Restitution Study Group* is a not-for-profit institute which advocates for reparations and restitution to descendants of enslaved Africans. The group published a call to action that Benin Bronzes located in the US should not be returned to Nigeria but should remain in the US.⁶ The group claims that the Bronzes were made of melted

¹ Zemanek-Münster 2018.

² Sarr/Savoy 2018; Sarr cited in Storm 2019.

³ Sandkühler/Epple/Zimmerer 2021, 12.

⁴ Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung 2022.

⁵ Luther 2022.

⁶ Restitution Study Group 2022.



Figure 1.

The Benin Bronze from Rudolf Mosse's Collection sold in 2018 (Kunstsammlung Rudolf Mosse, Berlin, Rudolph Lepke's auction house (Catalogue nr. 2075, board nr. 21), 29 & 30/05/1934, Berlin).

down manillas, brass bracelets introduced as a form of currency by Portuguese traders, which were also used to pay slave traders in, for instance, Lagos.

This article connects these three violent contexts of the Holocaust, colonialism and slavery by exploring the Benin Bronze that was auctioned in Germany in 2018 as a material interrelation of structural violence. It does so by connecting the Bronze to recent developments in the field of transitional justice towards more relational approaches that highlight the interconnections between different contexts of violence. The goal is to reflect on the potential of material culture approaches for transitional justice, as well as contributing to a more differentiated understanding of restitution as a concept that in itself is influenced by notions of selection and meaning-making.

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE, RESTITUTION AND THE HISTORIKERSTREIT

2.0

Restitution is part of the larger field of transitional justice. The study terrain of transitional justice, “the hegemonic, or dominant discourse of our time for redressing historical injustice”, explores the long-term effects of mass violence as well as the specific judicial and non-judicial processes that have been developed to confront these episodes of mass violence, such as international criminal tribunals, reparations, restitution, truth commissions, commemorations or public apologies.⁷ The practice of transitional

⁷ Immler 2018, 2, 150; Teitel 2003, 69.

justice as seeking to deal with past violence can be traced back to Antiquity and as J. Elster rightly states “democratic transitional justice is almost as old as democracy itself.”⁸ Transitional justice as a study field, however, mainly developed in the direct aftermath of the Second World War and in the 1980s and 1990s, when the transition of societies such as South Africa and Argentina from apartheid states and dictatorships to democracies called for new instruments and mechanisms to facilitate and guide a societal transition.⁹

While transitional justice developed from context-specific approaches that differentiated between different contexts of violence and how to respond to them, recent approaches call for a more relational understanding of transitional justice. As K. Neumann and J. Thompson have stated, the field of transitional justice is moving out of its own compartmentalisation with an increase of interdisciplinary and cross-contextual approaches to dealing with violent pasts in the present.¹⁰ More relational approaches to transitional justice foreground various aspects: ‘Holistic approaches’ focus on the relation between specific mechanisms of transitional justices and broader notions of peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.¹¹ ‘Dialogical approaches’ focus on the social dimension of justice, on the dialogues between victims, perpetrators, individuals and their families, communities and institutions.¹² ‘Historical approaches’ underline continuities and similarities between different violence contexts. For instance, they reflect on the Holocaust as a continuation and culmination of colonial violence, or on transatlantic slavery as inherent to colonial socio-economic exploitation which endures into the present.¹³ Overall, as N. Immler illustrates, relational approaches to transitional justice are about recognising the deeply entrenched and systemic patterns of injustice inherent to society at large.¹⁴

That relating different contexts of mass violence to one another is far from uncontested became evident in a particularly public way in the so-called *Historikerstreit 2.0* in Germany. Calling back to the first *Historikerstreit*—an open dispute among German historians determining the singularity of the Holocaust in contrast to Stalinism in the 1980s—the *Historikerstreit 2.0* evolved around the question whether the Holocaust may or may not be compared

8 Elster 2004, 3–4; Yusuf 2022, 8.

9 Bevernage 2012, 6–11; Leebaw 2009, 266–270; Teitel 2003, 70.

10 Neumann/Thompson 2015, 10.

11 Boraie 2006; Laplante 2018.

12 Barkan 2000; Immler 2020.

13 Evans/Wilkins 2019; Zimmerer 2

14 Immler 2022, 6.

to colonial violence.¹⁵ The discussion began in early 2020 when German politician Lorenz Deutsch and German commissioner against antisemitism Felix Klein rejected the invitation of Cameroonian philosopher and political theorist Achille Mbembe as keynote speaker to the *Ruhrtriennale* cultural festival.¹⁶ A major figure in postcolonial theory, Mbembe has published extensively on African history and politics, whereby he focuses on questions of power, subjectivity and what he has called the “postcolony” in contemporary Africa.¹⁷ In this context, he has also compared the state of Israel to the apartheid system in South Africa.¹⁸ This interconnection of apartheid and the state of Israel prompted Deutsch and Klein in 2020 to accuse Mbembe of “antisemitic Israel-critique, Holocaust relativisation, and extremist disinformation.”¹⁹ Following this, numerous historians and memory scholars, including J. Habermas, J. Zimmerer, M. Rothberg, A. Assmann, and D. Moses entered the public debate.²⁰ Essentially, the debate developed between opposing understandings of the Holocaust as a unique *sui generis* event on one side, and the continuation and culmination of colonial violence on the other.

Restitution occupies a central place within these discussions on the comparability of the Holocaust and colonial violence, as illustrated by several publications and conferences.²¹ Furthermore, German policymakers apparently feel a need to underline that a rise of colonial restitution does not contest the singularity of the Holocaust. For instance, on the opening of the controversial ethnographic museum *Humboldt Forum* in 2021, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier emphasised a German responsibility towards colonial restitution as a means to enter into dialogue about colonial violence.²² Yet, shortly after he added that “the memory of the civilizational rupture of the Shoah is and remains unique in our national memory. It is part of our identity.”²³ This connection between colonial collections and the Shoah’s uniqueness characterises the close entanglements of restitution and memory in contexts of the Nazi and colonial past that have developed in Germany over the past decades.

In short, restitution is tightly connected to broader frameworks

¹⁵ Frei 2001, 8; Rothberg 2022, 1317.

¹⁶ Deutsch 2020; Sznajder 2022, 9–13

¹⁷ Mbembe 2001.

¹⁸ Mbembe 2015, vii–viii; Mbembe 2016, 23–26.

¹⁹ Deutsch 2020; Deutschlandfunk 2020.

²⁰ Habermas 2021; Zimmerer/Rothberg 2021; Assmann 2021; Moses 2021.

²¹ See for example Marengo 2022 and Sandkühler/Epple/Zimmerer 2022.

²² Der Bundespräsident 2021, 6–7.

²³ Ibid., 8.

of transitional justice, memory and meaning-making, whereby questions of interrelations and cross-references between different contexts of (historical) injustice become more and more pressing. This article intends to build on these growing interrelations by reflecting on the potential of a more multilayered understanding of material objects that can serve to make tangible some of the interrelations that transitional justice is grappling with.

ONE OBJECT, THREE CONTEXTS OF VIOLENCE

The Benin Bronze auctioned off in 2018 was created in the mid-19th century in the Kingdom of Benin and is made mostly of brass. As mentioned above, the *Restitution Study Group* argues that the materials used for the creation of the Benin Bronzes stem from the transatlantic slave trade. The transatlantic slave trade entailed the capture, sale, and purchase of what is estimated to have been 12.5 million enslaved people from the African continent across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas between the 16th and the 19th century.²⁴ The tremendous violence of the slave trade as well as its contribution to deeply entrenched socio-economic injustices today cannot be overstated.²⁵

In rising scholarship on the backgrounds and effects of the slave trade, A. Ryder, F. Fuglestad and others have also investigated the involvement of African slave traders and in particular the involvement of the Kingdom of Benin.²⁶ Ryder describes how the Kingdom of Benin traded enslaved people for brass manillas (the price for an enslaved man in the early 16th century was 57 manillas).²⁷ Indeed, a recent geochemical analysis into the materials used for the Benin Bronzes concluded that manillas served as the principal metal source for the making of the Bronzes.²⁸ However, as both A. Ryder and F. Fuglestad showcase, the Kingdom of Benin played more of a minor role in slave trade and the sale of male (although not female) enslaved people was even prohibited in the Kingdom between the mid-16th and 18th century.²⁹ Even after the ban was lifted, the Kingdom's involvement remained comparatively small and instead a limited trade of commodities was carried out.³⁰

The *Restitution Study Group* brings forward the involvement of the Kingdom of Benin in transatlantic slave trade as an argument as to why Benin Bronzes located in the US should stay in the US,

24 Fuglestad 2018, 1.

25 Evans/Wilkins 2019, 141.

26 Ryder 1969; Fuglestad 2018.

27 Ryder 1969, 40.

28 Skowronek et al. 2023, 12.

29 Fuglestad 2018, 10, 15.

30 Ryder 1969, 45, 198; Fuglestad 2018, 91–92.



Figure 2.
Portuguese Brass Manilla
(*Museu da Abolição, Recife,*
inv. nr. 2.016.276).

where they would be accessible to descendants of enslaved people.³¹ When the *Smithsonian Institution* in Washington D.C. announced in October 2022 the intention to transfer ownership of 29 Benin Bronzes to Nigeria, the *Restitution Study Group* sued the museum to prevent the return. Even though the case was dismissed in July 2023 due to a lack of subject-matter, the group continues to fight for access to the Benin Bronzes, and in May 2024 submitted a new petition to the US Supreme Court.³² The *Restitution Study Group's* claims are contested and scholars such as J. Zimmerer warn against playing off (descendants of) victims of slavery and colonialism against each other.³³ Nevertheless, the group's claims evidently show both the urgency for slavery reparations and the everlasting entanglements between colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade.

The Benin Bronzes are materialisations of these entanglements. Created as royal court objects, representing the wealth, power and history of the Benin Kingdom, they are of the highest historical and cultural importance.³⁴ In 1897, British forces violently sacked Benin City and subjugated the Kingdom of Benin to colonial rule.³⁵ They destroyed the city and its surroundings, killed countless Edo people and looted 3,000–5,000 cultural objects.³⁶ As F. Sarr and B. Savoy describe, colonial loot was at the very heart of the colonial enterprise.³⁷ Large-scale looting of cultural objects often aimed at the undermining of collective identities, for instance during the destruction of the palace in Lombok by Dutch troops in 1894 or the suppression of the Maji Maji Rebellion in today's Tanzania by German troops from 1905–1907. Many of these cultural objects held ancestral, spiritual, religious, and political significance. To quote A.-M. M'Bow "the peoples who were victims of this plunder, sometimes for hundreds of years, have not only been despoiled of irreplaceable masterpieces but also robbed of a memory that would doubtless

³¹ Restitution Study Group 2022.

³² Osazuwa 2024; Restitution Study Group 2024.

³³ Zimmerer cited in zur Lage 2023.

³⁴ Pugh 2022, 147.

³⁵ Osadolor 2021, 208.

³⁶ Hicks 2021, 111, 113, 137.

³⁷ Sarr/Savoy 2018, 13.

have helped them to greater self-knowledge [...]”.³⁸ After their loot, many of these cultural objects became objects on high demand on the international art market. The Benin Bronzes specifically were highly prized, equated to the Greek Parthenon Marbles, and were bought by collectors all over the world.³⁹ Because of their comparatively well-documented looting history, the Benin Bronzes make a special case of colonial looting, and should, as O. B. Osadolor argues, be seen as a collective category of colonial-looted objects rather than being dealt with on individual merit.⁴⁰

Like thousands of other Benin Bronzes, the Bronze that was auctioned off in 2018 made its way to Europe where it was bought at an unknown point in time by Rudolf Mosse, a Berlin-based German-Jewish publisher. In the 1880s, Mosse had started to amass a collection of fine and applied art, antiquities and ethnographic objects. In 1912, art historian M. Osborn praised Mosse’s collection as one of the “greatest and richest collections of modern art” of its time.⁴¹ Rudolf Mosse died in 1920. Consequently, his art collection, along with his other properties, was inherited by his son-in-law Hans Lachmann-Mosse (1885–1944). It remained in his possession until May 1934, when the collection, including the Benin Bronze, was seized and sold by the German National Socialist government in Berlin.⁴² Subsequently, Lachmann-Mosse managed to emigrate to the US. The forced sale was part of an extensive looting campaign that formed an integral part of National Socialist ideology to glorify German cultural heritage and dehumanise marginalised groups.⁴³ Before and during the war, the National Socialist government seized an estimated three million works of art.⁴⁴ Looting in this context aimed at destroying not only individual identities and property but the complete cultural existence of Jewry in Europe.⁴⁵ As J. Kemperman and H. Piersma state “to rob someone of their belongings constitutes not only a material loss, but also a loss of social status, connectedness, security and identity, and in a sense the partial loss of self.”⁴⁶

After the Second World War, the Bronze was in a private collection before the Berlin art dealer family Bassenge bought it in

38 M’Bow 1978, 4.

39 Osadolor 2021, 213; Savoy 2022, 19; Thebele 2018, 9.

40 Osadolor 2021, 218.

41 Osborn 1912, 282.

42 Pucks 2015, 47.

43 Lubina 2009, 30, 70.

44 Ibid., 30.

45 Bajohr 2007, 42–45.

46 Kemperman/Piersma 2022, 185; Niederhausen/Stutje 2024, 25.

1966. The Bronze stayed in the family's possession until the *Zemanek-Münster* auction in 2018 where, after a financial agreement with Mosse's heirs, it was offered for €40,000–80,000.⁴⁷ The whereabouts of the piece today are unknown.⁴⁸

Hence, it becomes evident that the Benin Bronze that was auctioned off in 2018 is in the center of three highly complex and—although different—highly interrelated contexts of mass violence whose legacies endure into the present and future.

CHANGING MEANINGS OF MATERIAL OBJECTS

Much has been written on the changing meanings of material objects across time and space. While material objects were often perceived as “independent entities with defined boundaries”, from the 1980s on, scholars such as B. Latour or I. Kopytoff brought forward an understanding of material objects not as stable property but as engaging actors in social relations.⁴⁹ By decentring human agents from social relations and memories, mnemonic agency is ascribed to material objects as well.⁵⁰ Instead of attributing material objects one fixed meaning, their changing meaning in changing contexts is highlighted.⁵¹ Consequently, I. Gaskell and S. A. Carter argue that “properly interpreted, any material culture can be a source of information about the past”.⁵² When material objects can incorporate changing meanings based on social interactions with humans, it follows that material objects can also uncover present narratives human agents construct around those objects. Therefore, material objects do not only offer information about the past but about their present contexts as well. This insight of material objects as narrators of different pasts and presents is the core of the methodological approach of object biographies.⁵³ First introduced by I. Kopytoff in 1986 and further developed by for instance C. Humphries and A. C. T. Smith, object biographies are based on the idea that not only humans, but objects can have lives that reveal their entanglements with people and other objects over time. Thereby, object biographies provide “a strategy to map the connections and transitions that occur over the life-course of an object, which can, in turn, unravel a changing web of organizational relations.”⁵⁴ Central hereby stands the

⁴⁷ Zemanek-Münster 2018; Barlovic 2018.

⁴⁸ Zemanek-Münster 2018.

⁴⁹ Humphries/Smith 2014, 482.

⁵⁰ Steel 2013, 192.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Gaskell/Carter 2020, 4.

⁵³ Kopytoff 1986, 64.

⁵⁴ Humphries/Smith 2014, 477.

realisation that material objects are not independent and static entities by themselves but that they are entrenched in (post-)social structures; thus, object and humans are entwined in constant processes of meaning-making.⁵⁵

Recently, these notions of object lives that interact with different entities in different times and spaces have been foregrounded also in provenance research. Whereas provenance research often focuses on the history of an object's ownership, an emerging approach of social provenance research underlines a non-linear conceptualisation of objects' provenance that is influenced by and influences a variety of social, cultural and financial actors.⁵⁶ Drawing on the concept of "the social life of things" put forward by A. Appadurai, social provenance research seeks to move beyond viewing cultural objects solely in terms of their owners, their looting and restitution.⁵⁷ Instead, it focuses on the broader social entities and material cultures associated with these objects. While traditional provenance research typically emphasises ownership history, social provenance research aims to explore the social contexts and structures surrounding material objects that have shaped their historical paths beyond notions of ownership. Among others, a social provenance foregrounds class, gender and race in a field that often focuses on national heritage and private property.⁵⁸ Furthermore, social provenance research opens the possibility of multiple provenance histories that can co-exist and influence each other.

To give an example, the newly opened National Holocaust Museum in Amsterdam exhibits a large number of personal objects that once belonged to victims of the Holocaust that were deported from the Netherlands. Among these objects are a leather toolbox and diamond cutting instruments that belonged to Elias Spitz (1874–1945), a diamond cutter from Amsterdam who was deported to Bergen-Belsen in 1944. In the context of the museum exhibition, the toolbox and the instruments are displayed as symbols for the persecution and murder of Jews, and to commemorate the life of Elias Spitz. In another context, it could also tell the story of the diamond trade in the Netherlands, of the development of diamond cutting tools, or of the labor exploitation in diamond mines in the Global South and its lasting ecological damages.

In essence, material objects may be associated with a certain person or group, but they can also be connected to other

55 *Ibid.*, 482, 489.

56 Mooren/Stutje/van Vree 2022, 16–17; Niederhausen/Stutje 2024, 27–28.

57 Appadurai 1986.

58 Niederhausen/Stutje 2024, 27–28.



Image 3.
 Toolbox and diamond cutting instruments of Elias Spitz (National Holocaust Museum Amsterdam), photograph by the author.

individuals, families or social categories, such as religious communities, professions, gender identities or political groups. For each of these groups, the same material object can hold different meanings.

RESTITUTION AND MEANING-MAKING

To conclude, what is the connection between all these different possible meanings of material objects and transitional justice and how does this, in turn, relate to the sale of a Benin Bronze from Rudolf Mosse’s collection in 2018?

As mentioned above, the field of transitional justice is experiencing an influx of relational approaches to dealing with past injustices in the present. Restitution is taking a central position in transitional justice as a tangible and material engagement with past looting and violence. Within restitution contexts, the material objects themselves are often defined by their moment of loot and return. However, as approaches such as object biographies or social provenance research illustrate, a narrow scope on ownership falls short of recognising the various social and cultural meanings that material objects take across time and space. In contrast to what an ownership-centered approach to material objects suggests, their meaning is far from static and defined; rather, material objects’ meanings change constantly depending on their context and interconnections with other agents. The Benin Bronze that was auctioned in 2018 is a prime example for these changing meanings; it is both a Nazi- and colonial-looted object and is part of ongoing efforts for the recognition and addressing of transatlantic slavery. Beyond these contexts of violence, the Bronze also holds significance as a

cultural object telling the history of a people, as a family heirloom, as a symbol for ongoing socio-economic injustices, and much more.

When engaging with these various layers of meaning that material objects incorporate, they materialise an interconnectedness between different contexts and agents. Therefore, they make tangible a more complex and relational approach towards the past—and past injustices—which is developing in the transitional justice field. Rather than seeing material objects mainly as objects of transitional justice mechanisms—such as restitution—, they can also become instruments or mediums of transitional justice by mapping structural violence within a confined material space.

Nevertheless, while these various layers of material objects might challenge an ownership-centered approach to provenance and restitution and even though it might be possible to acknowledge multiple contexts of violence, a material object can still only be physically present in one place. Thus, when dealing with material objects that materialise different contexts of loot and violence, the moment of restitution creates an insight into societal value-making at the time of the return. What is considered the one most important context of violence that needs to be addressed via restitution? In the case of the Benin Bronze from the auction in 2018, the auction house came to a financial agreement with the heirs of Rudolf Mosse and therefore confirmed the Bronze's legitimacy as a Nazi-looted object. Whereas the Bronze's colonial backgrounds were discussed in the media, a possible return to Nigeria was merely a point of discussion, and a connection of this particular Benin Bronze to the transatlantic slave trade was even less likely. However, the last six years have seen numerous developments that give reason to at least consider a different outcome today or in the future. Benin Bronzes have become symbols of large-scale colonial loot. Multiple restitutions of Benin Bronzes in recent years underline their public and political importance in engaging with colonial pasts and presents. Its rise in public attention raises the question of whether today the sale of a Benin Bronze could happen without at least causing a larger public discussion. The argument by the *Restitution Study Group* that Benin Bronzes in the US should not be returned to Nigeria because of the Kingdom of Benin's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade underline not only rising claims for slavery reparations, they also emphasise an important aspect of materiality of cultural objects. Whereas provenance research and restitution discourses often focus on the importance that objects gain by being part of specific collections or groups, the claims by the *Restitution Study Group* shift attention

towards questions of how material objects are made and where their materials come from. Further, in the light of rising questions regarding environmental destruction as part of colonial exploitation and its ongoing effects on human and more-than-human livelihoods today, it is possible that this question of materiality and the material's origins will receive more attention in restitution contexts as well.

Therefore, this article wants to stress that restitution is and remains a question of selection and prioritisation, foregrounding the question of 'Who decides?'. Restitution is far from self-evident: it is the result and catalyst of ongoing discussions around ethics, meaning-making and memory. Reflecting on various entangled histories of material objects can help to uncover and better understand these discussions and to imagine alternative outcomes based on different readings of the objects' histories. Therefore, the past that restitution aims to address is never only one past – it is but one of the many pasts that live in, around and beyond material objects.

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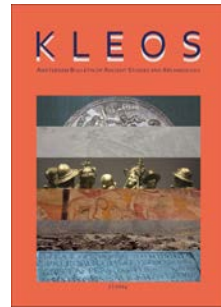
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Emma M. Payne (2021). *Casting the Parthenon Sculptures from the Eighteenth Century to the Digital Age*. London: Bloomsbury Academic. ISBN 9781350120358.

Lindsay Morehouse

In early 2024, the British Museum saw negative press centred on the Duveen Gallery, the current home of the Parthenon sculptures.¹ These marble friezes, metopes and pediments were created to adorn the top of the Parthenon in Athens and were removed by Lord Elgin in the early 19th century. Recent news stories have revealed the gallery's urgent need for renovation and the controversial nature of staging a fashion show in front of the sculptures. Such press has contributed to the ongoing and contentious discussion surrounding whether the sculptures should stay in the British Museum or be returned to Greece.²

E.M. Payne's 2021 book *Casting the Parthenon Sculptures from the Eighteenth Century to the Digital Age* looks at the development and impact of plaster casts of the Parthenon sculptures, which were taken as a way to record and replicate the friezes in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Payne's book is an immediate and relevant read, especially in light of these recent events and the ongoing debate. Based on Payne's PhD research at University College London, *Casting the Parthenon Sculptures...* contextualises the practice of creating plaster casts within the history of archaeology and assesses how casts serve not only as documentation of archaeological finds but also as valuable historical objects in their own right. By specifically focusing on the Parthenon sculptures—which were replicated many times, by many artists, and for many purposes—Payne presents a clear case study through which questions of value, biography, and authenticity can be examined and is a study that has the potential to contribute new perspectives to the repatriation discussion.

Chapters one and two take a historical approach to the subject of the Parthenon and its casts. Chapter one—"The Emergence of Fauvel and His Successors"—deals with the role of plaster casts:

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researches questions of authenticity, heritage, and reception. In February 2024, she received her PhD in Archaeology from the University of Amsterdam, which focused on questions of authenticity and provenance of a group of Late Antique Egyptian Funerary stelae. She holds previous degrees in Classics (BA, Macalester College) and Classical Archaeology (MPhil, University of Oxford). She currently lives in Sweden.

► [Profile page](#)

¹ Ho 2024; Ruiz 2021; Villa 2024.

² See, for example: Herman 26 September 2023, Herman 03 January 2023.

how they grew in popularity within the Early-Modern study of art history and as study and collection objects linked to the Grand Tour in the 19th century. Chapter two—"Plaster Casts, Elgin and the British Museum"—looks at the history of the Parthenon sculptures, outlining Elgin's missions to Greece and identifying the various methods employed to create the casts. The chapter highlights the impact and influence that such casts had on art history and archaeology in this period, their roles in museums, and how the British Museum in particular has treated and cared for both the casts and originals. Chapters three, four, and five look at modern documentation methods with a focus on 3D scanning. Chapter 3—"Condition Studies and the Role of 3D Imaging"—focuses on the different sets of casts that have been made of the Parthenon sculptures and how they differ from one another. Payne observes that the techniques used to create the casts introduces differences in the final result, as do environmental conditions and human interventions to the originals (both in situ and post-extraction). Chapter 4—"3D Imaging and the West Frieze"—uses the West Frieze as a case study to examine how 3D modelling can be employed in order to learn more about the relationship between the original sculptures that remained in situ and the casts taken in the 18th and 19th centuries (or, the 'indexical nature', p. 159). In the end, Payne's research on the West Frieze—consisting of analyses of 3D modelling data and historiographical research—demonstrates that some deterioration of the original sculptures may have occurred at a different point in the objects' history than previously thought, rewriting the timeline of the original sculptures and emphasising the many actors that have made an impact on them (p.111-114, 124-125, 129). In a similar vein, chapter 5—"3D Imaging and Cleaning the Parthenon Sculptures"—looks at the sculptures that were removed by Elgin and compares them with their cast counterparts. The history of conservation of both cast and sculpture is examined in light of shifting views of authenticity (or, as Payne specifies, 'veracity' and 'accuracy', p. 158), weighing various interventions and how they impact our understanding of the objects. Chapter 6—"An Authentic Source of Evidence?"—provides a more in-depth discussion of the sculptures, cast, and their authenticity. Examining the changing value and perceived significance of casts over time: from documentary to aesthetic.

Payne's study demonstrates how 3D scanning may be employed to learn more about an object's biography: by comparing original to reproductions, one may discover how and when changes have occurred.³ It may also be used to document

³ Gosden/Marshall 1999; Appadurai 1988.

changes going forward: it has the possibility of being a valuable tool used to track rates of future decay (p.128). Payne cautions that 3D scanning also has weaknesses: it is not an objective analysis, and some steps in the process may have an interpretive bias (p.119): for instance, it is not always possible to acquire all necessary data for a scan, and the analysis requires a certain level of interpretation (p. 83-84, 119). Therefore, archival and historiographical research is still essential for understanding the full history of an object, even when such technology allows for new methods of analysis (p.120).

Payne's interdisciplinary examination of the Parthenon casts and sculptures not only leads to discoveries about the sculptures' biography—particularly the timeline of deterioration—but it also raises important questions about authenticity. In some cases, plaster casts may show a more faithful version of the Parthenon sculptures than the originals, since they were created before certain aspects of the originals were damaged (p.79, 81). However, like 3D scanning, the creation of plaster casts is not objective. Artist interpretation plays a role in the appearance of the final product (p.119): in some cases, details may be omitted in the casting process, and in others, details may be added based on artist interpretation or a desire for a more complete look (p.128). Since both original and cast have been influenced by many actors throughout their 'natural life use' (p. 182), it is difficult, if not impossible, to access the 'original' version of a sculpture or to see the 'maker's touch' (p.160). Ultimately, both the plaster casts and the originals are equally authentic and significant (p.183, 186) in their own ways, and "[...] while casts can, in many circumstances, form useful surrogates, it is essential to recognize that they contain additional layers of touch and intervention and are objects in their own right, separate from the sculptures from which they were moulded" (p.129). Therefore, because of the layers of human intervention to both original and cast, the relationship between the sculptures and the casts is one that requires a nuanced vocabulary: distilling the objects down to 'original' or 'copies' (or 'real' or 'fake') does not fully express the meaning and role that the objects have taken on over time (p.183-184).

Payne deals with these complex topics in a largely digestible manner. There is some repetition between various chapters, as Payne introduces the different angles through which the casts might be studied. For instance, both chapters one and two outline the history of the Parthenon sculptures. This repetition is noticeable, but at the same time serves a purpose to introduce the history of both originals and casts respectively. Payne's study is also incredibly detailed. However, in the middle chapters, this may run the risk of being marginally too technical for a general

audience.

The interdisciplinary nature of the study results in a final product that would be of interest to those wishing to know more about a multitude of topics within archaeology, reception studies, and art history. Specifically, this book is a great resource for anyone looking to learn more about possibilities of 3D scanning for archaeological study, object biography, ambiguous objects (forgeries, copies, objects with complex histories of intervention or alteration), histories of archaeological documentation and collecting, and the Parthenon sculptures. What Payne contributes to the latter discussion is an additional perspective and added nuance to the ongoing dialogue about the sculptures. Though repatriation itself is only mentioned briefly (p.29), links are made throughout the study between the casts, class, and nationalism (p. 23, for instance), reminding the reader that the collection, documentation, conservation, and display of archaeological material are not neutral acts. Likewise, Payne's invaluable discussion about authenticity and investigations into the history of conservation and damage to the sculptures inspires the reader to question oft-quoted motivations against repatriation, and to reflect on how the significance of an object can change for audiences over time.⁴

Once popular items in museum collections, the popularity and use of plaster casts saw a decline for many years as value shifted towards 'original objects'. Nevertheless, casts and their role within the history of art, archaeology, and museums have gained increased interest in recent decades both in scholarship and museum practice, and plaster casts are increasingly understood and valued as more than simply copies.⁵ Payne's study is an invaluable case study for this. The casts of the Parthenon sculptures were used varyingly as reproductions: for recording purposes, as art objects, as pedagogical tools, as stand-ins for the originals in museums, and as objects for scholarly analysis (and sometimes experimentation) by archaeologists and scholars. Now, thanks to Payne's study, we get a clear picture of the unique value of the plaster casts of the Parthenon sculptures: not just as reproductions to replace the originals, but as authentic and significant objects in their own right.⁶

⁴ Herman 26 September 2023.

⁵ Frederiksen/Marchand 2010; Born 2002.

⁶ See, for example: Hitch/Fennel 16 June 2024.

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