

# STUDIA ANTIQUA

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A STUDENT JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY  
OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

VOLUME 18, NUMBER 1  
SUMMER 2019

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY  
PROVO, UTAH

# STUDIA ANTIQUA

## A STUDENT JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

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## ABBREVIATIONS

All abbreviations are taken from *The SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd ed., 8.4.2.

AB	Anchor Bible
<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
BARIS	BAR (British Archaeological Reports) International Series
BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Classical Journal</i>
<i>ClQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament Series
<i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CW</i>	<i>Classical World</i>
EJL	Early Judaism and Its Literature
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
GR	<i>Greece and Rome</i>

<i>HALOT</i>	<i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament.</i> Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. Translated and edited under the supervision of Mervyn E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999
HCOT	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
HCS	Hellenistic Culture and Society
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion
<i>Herm</i>	<i>Hermanthema</i>
<i>HSCP</i>	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
LAI	Library of Ancient Israel
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LNTS	The Library of New Testament Studies
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NTL	New Testament Library
OTL	Old Testament Library
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
<i>Sound</i>	<i>Soundings</i>

SP	Sacra Pagina
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

## LOEB CLASSICAL LIBRARY REFERENCES

The following are those Loeb Classical Library (LCL) volumes cited in this year's issue. See *The SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd ed., 6.4.2 for style guidelines, and 8.3.14.3 for appropriate abbreviations of ancient texts.

*Aeschylus*. Edited and translated by Alan H. Sommerstein. 3 vols. LCL 145–146, 505. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.

*Catullus, Tibullus, Pervigilium Veneris*. Translated by Francis Warre Cornish, J. P. Postgate, and J. W. Mackail. LCL 6. 2nd ed. Revised by G. P. Goold. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1988.

*Diodorus of Sicily*. Translated by C. H. Oldfather et al. 12 vols. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1933–1967.

*Greek Iambic Poetry: From the Seventh to the Fifth Centuries BC*. Edited and translated by Douglas E. Gerber. LCL 259. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by A. T. Murray. Revised by George E. Dimock. 2 vols. LCL 104–105. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Horace. *Odes and Epodes*. Edited and translated by Niall Rudd. LCL 33. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Horace. *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*. Translated by H. Rushton Fairclough. LCL 194. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926. Rev. and repr., 1929–1966.

*Josephus*. Translated by Henry St. J. Thackeray et al. 10 vols. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926–1965.

*The Apostolic Fathers*. Edited and translated by Bart Ehrman. 2 vols. LCL 24–25. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.

*Theocritus, Moschus, Bion*. Edited and translated by Neil Hopkinson. LCL 28. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015.

*Virgil*. Translated by H. Rushton Fairclough. Revised by G. P. Goold. 2 vols. LCL 63–64. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999–2000.

## EDITOR'S PREFACE

I am very pleased to present to the reader this latest issue of *Studia Antiqua*. Notably, it is the longest in over five years in terms of final page count. To complement that, these pages hold seven papers—the most this journal has published in a single issue since Fall 2011. I am extremely proud of the efforts made by students, faculty, and editors to realize these important milestones, and I look forward to the bright future of *Studia Antiqua*.

This year *Studia Antiqua* received ten submissions! Thank you to all who submitted papers! After much deliberation, seven papers were chosen for publication. They reflect a variety of topics from the ancient Near East. This year's first paper, written by Zakarias D. Gram, discusses the Greek philosopher Xenophanes and the impact of his theological writings. Makayla Bezzant then offers a new reading of pomegranate symbolism in *The Hymn to Demeter*. Jacob Fuge's paper explores the aniconism of the returning Judahite exiles. Hanna Seariac discusses the role Canidia the witch played in Horace's poetry. Tyler Harris performs a semantic investigation of terms used to describe deafness in the Hebrew Bible. Jacob Inman evaluates Josephus's manipulation of Jewish nationalistic tales. Lastly, Samuel Mitchell seeks to recover pagan and Johannine influences in the Ignatian epistles.

I am very excited to present the hard work and research of these scholars to you, knowing full well that many sincere thanks need to be given to all who have contributed to *Studia Antiqua*'s success this year. Special gratitude is extended to R. Devan Jensen, Emily Strong, Emily Cook, and all others in the Religious Studies Center (RSC) at Brigham Young University (BYU) who have assisted with this year's issue. The RSC provides the internship of *Studia Antiqua* editor, and has done so for several years now. I am thankful to those whose financial donations have made *Studia Antiqua* possible. My deepest appreciation also goes to Dr. Lincoln Blumell, who led the effort in gathering faculty reviewers for the following papers. To each of the professors who volunteered their time and offered critiques for improvement, I express my heartfelt gratitude. Tyler Harris has played an important editorial role in this issue as well. He will take over as next year's editor, and I have no doubts that *Studia Antiqua* is in capable, thoughtful hands. He has already offered a great deal of help in making this year's issue come to life, and I am grateful for that. Thank you all. I hope that you will find the following offerings satisfying and exciting!

Samuel Mitchell  
Editor-in-Chief, *Studia Antiqua*



GREATEST AMONG GODS AND MEN:  
THE RECEPTION OF XENOPHANES'S THEOLOGY  
BY ANAXAGORAS AND DIOGENES

ZAKARIAS D. GRAM

*Zakarias D. Gram will graduate from Brigham Young University in classical studies in August 2019. He will begin Cambridge University's MPhil in classics with an emphasis in ancient philosophy in fall 2019.*

**Abstract:** Although he has been disregarded in the past, Xenophanes has recently been vindicated as an interesting and original philosopher in his own right, particularly in his theological writings. This paper seeks to reaffirm the fundamental differences between Xenophanes' theology and the more common Homeric view of the gods, and to track the influence that Xenophanes had on later philosophers, specifically Anaxagoras and Diogenes of Apollonia. While there are no distinct verbal allusions or echoes of Xenophanes in their writings, his basic theology is clearly transmitted to the later philosophers, who then apply it in their writings about mind and air, respectively.

The primary inquiry of the majority of pre-Socratic philosophers was natural philosophy, especially cosmology and cosmogony. However, some early philosophers discussed theology as well, beginning the western theological tradition in Greece. One such person was Xenophanes (flor. 540 BCE), whose primary occupation as bard has caused many to think of him as a second-rate philosopher at best.<sup>1</sup> His vocation has indicated to many that he was not truly disinterested in his own philosophical writings.<sup>2</sup> However,

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1. For more biographical information on Xenophanes, see Daniel W. Graham, trans. and ed., *The Texts of Early Greek Philosophy: The Complete Fragments and Selected Testimonies of the Major Presocratics; Part I* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 95–97.

2. See John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1908), 128. Note also: "Recent work on Xenophanes' epistemology and his cosmology has made much of his scientific work clearer and more impressive . . . He has, to a great extent, been rescued from his traditional status as a minor traveling poet-sage who railed against the glorification of athletes and made some interesting comments about the relativity of human conceptions of the gods. Instead, he has come to be seen as an original thinker in his own right who influenced later philosophers trying to characterize the realms of the human and the divine, and exploring the possibility that human beings can gain genuine knowledge and wisdom, i.e., are able to have a god's eye view of things and understand them" (Patricia Curd, "Presocratic Philosophy," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Xenophanes's reputation has been redeemed in recent years, and many have especially taken note of his innovative theology. Like other early philosophers, though precious little remains of his words, we can reconstruct elements of Xenophanes's theology, as his are the first recorded writings about the gods that depart from Homeric myth. Although theology was never the main focus of any pre-Socratic, Xenophanes's thought impacted the depiction of god by later philosophers, including Anaxagoras and Diogenes of Apollonia. This paper will briefly examine Xenophanes's embryonic theology and then trace his influence on these two intellectual successors. The nature of the transmission of Xenophanes's writings to the later philosophers will be discussed, and we will find that it is difficult to ascertain exactly how his ideas were passed on to his successors. It remains clear, however, that the ideas he proposed about god took hold in Greek philosophical traditions and were favorably received and elaborated on by both Anaxagoras and Diogenes.

Xenophanes's own theological writing is preserved in just a handful of extant fragments, several of which (B11, B12, B14, B15, and B16)<sup>3</sup> are negative in nature. Xenophanes rebukes his contemporaries for ascribing traits to the gods that mortals exhibit, for example:

ἀλλ' οἱ βροτοὶ δοκέουσι γεννᾶσθαι θεοὺς,  
τὴν σφετέρην δ' ἐσθῆτα ἔχειν φωνὴν τε δέμας τε.

But mortals think gods are begotten,  
and have the clothing, voice, and body of mortals. (B14)<sup>4</sup>

Xenophanes criticizes the human tendency to portray gods, both in appearance and behavior, as immortal beings with human characteristics. Each culture makes their gods look like themselves: Αἰθιοπέες τε [θεοὺς σφετέρους] σιμοὺς μέλανάς τε / Θρηκίκες τε γλαυκοὺς καὶ πυρροὺς [φασὶ πέλεσθαι] (B16: "Africans [say their gods are] snub-nosed and black, / Thracians blue-eyed and red-haired"). If animals could create their own gods, then they would "make their bodies / just like the body [each of them] had" (B15: σώματ' ἐποίουν / τοιαῦθ' οἷόν περ καὶτοὶ δέμας εἶχον [ἔχαστοι]). However, Xenophanes challenged his audience to think otherwise and not accept fallible, imperfect gods:

[Winter 2016 Edition], ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/presocratics/>).

3. For further information on pre-Socratic fragments, see Hermann Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker: Griechisch und Deutsch*, ed. Walther Kranz, 3 vols. (orig. ed. 1903; vols. 1–2 repr. Dublin and Zürich: Weidmann, 1966; and vol. 3 repr. Zürich and Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1964). Most so-called "fragments" from pre-Socratic philosophers are preserved in the writings of Aristotle, later philosophers, or in polemical treatises from early Christian authors.

4. English translations are taken from Graham, *Texts of Early Greek Philosophy*.

### 3 GRAM: GREATEST AMONG GODS AND MEN

οἱ βροτοὶ δοκέουσι γεννᾶσθαι θεοὺς, / τὴν σφετέρην δ' ἐσθῆτα ἔχειν φωνὴν τε  
δέμας τε (B14: “Mortals think gods are begotten, / and have the clothing, voice,  
and body of mortals”).

Instead of envisioning deities as mere representations of mortals, Xenophanes describes his god in four extant fragments:

εἷς θεός, ἔν τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι μέγιστος,  
οὔτι δέμας θνητοῖσιν ὁμοίος οὐδὲ νόημα.

One god, greatest among gods and men,  
not at all like to mortals in body nor in thought. (B23)<sup>5</sup>

οὔλος ὄραϊ, οὔλος δὲ νοεῖ, οὔλος δὲ τ' ἀκούει.

All of him sees, all thinks, all hears. (B24)

ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθε πόνοιο νόου φρενὶ πάντα κραδαίνει.

But without any toil he shakes all things by the thought of his mind.  
(B25)

αἰεὶ δ' ἐν ταύτῳ μίμνει κινούμενος οὐδὲν  
οὐδὲ μετέρχεσθαί μιν ἐπιπρέπει ἄλλοτε ἄλλῃ.

He remains ever in the same place moving not at all,  
nor is it appropriate for him to flit now here, now there. (B26)

Xenophanes has a different god in mind than Zeus, who is moved to anger and lust almost constantly in Homer's work. But for Xenophanes, god must be the most perfect being there is. His statement that he is the “greatest among gods and men” (B23) leads to all his other conclusions.<sup>6</sup> If he is the greatest, and causing something to move is better than being moved, then he must “shake” or move all things. He also does not move at all, since that would imply that his initial location was imperfect or inferior to the one he moved to.<sup>7</sup> By combining these two conclusions, we are led back to B25, in which he “shakes” other things without physically moving himself (cf. B26).

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5. See E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (London: Cambridge University Press; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951), 181, where he argues that this statement is still faith-based, not knowledge-based.

6. I will refer to Xenophanes's god as “he” throughout, although it is not clear whether Xenophanes would assign his god any physical gender. Grammatically, however, he uses the masculine “god” (“θεός”).

7. Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers: Volume 1, Thales to Zeno*, in *The Arguments of the Philosophers*, ed. Ted Honderich (London: Routledge & Keagan Paul, 1979), 84.

B24 also indicates the omniscience of god, who perceives reality with every part of his being. His perfection in knowledge and perception may be compared to the limited senses of humans, who are only able to perceive that which is spatially close to them. Humans can only see one thing at a time (at least in focus), while god can see everything at once, since all of him perceives in every way. Perhaps Xenophanes feels that differentiated body parts (eyes for sight, ears for hearing, etc.) are strong in only one function, with the result that they are lacking in every other mode of perception and are thus imperfect. In order for god to be completely perfect, all of him must perceive in every way so that one part of him is not lacking when compared to another.

Thus, Xenophanes does not conceive of god as anthropomorphic, a significant departure from Homer and Hesiod. Instead, he sacrifices god's anthropomorphism in exchange for absolute perfection, superiority, omniscience, and omnipotence. However, Xenophanes, limited by the novelty of this concept in ancient Greek thought, finds himself incapable of entirely shedding anthropomorphic features from god. Thus he still uses words like "see" and "hear," although these are the functions of human senses.

While Xenophanes largely departs from the typical Greek pantheon, it is noteworthy that he may still maintain the existence of other gods: "One god, greatest *among gods*" (B23; emphasis added). Either Xenophanes still felt that it was appropriate to have other gods, or, as Barnes points out, perhaps he is simply saying that god would be greater than other gods, even if they do not exist: "Xenophanes, I conclude, was a monotheist, as the long tradition has it; and he was an *a priori* monotheist: like later Christian theologians, he argued on purely logical grounds that there could not be a plurality of gods."<sup>8</sup>

This kind of god, so different from the Olympians, became fundamental and standard for many later Greek thinkers. Anaxagoras (born ca. 490 BCE) was one such philosopher, who shows evidence of building on Xenophanes's theology as he discusses his idea of *νοῦς*. Anaxagoras lived almost a century after Xenophanes, and, like Xenophanes, was born in Ionia but spent most of his life in Athens.<sup>9</sup> In his cosmology, every substance exists in a mixture with at least many, if not all, other substances. Thus, there is no pure wood or water; instead, all objects are mixed with each other. "Mind," however, is the one exception.

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8. Barnes, *Presocratic Philosophers*, 1:92. For his argument that leads to this conclusion, see 89–92. See also Graham, *Texts of Early Greek Philosophy*, 131. For a contrasting opinion, see Werner Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers: The Gifford Lectures*, 1936 (London; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947; repr., 1948–1968), 43–44.

9. See Graham, *Texts of Early Greek Philosophy*, 271–72.

At the beginning of Anaxagoras's fragment B12, he says: νοῦς δὲ ἐστὶν ἄπειρον καὶ αὐτοκρατέες καὶ μέμικται οὐδενὶ χρήματι, ἀλλὰ μόνος αὐτὸς ἐπ' ἑωυτοῦ ἐστὶν ("But mind is boundless and autonomous and mixed with no object, but it is alone by itself"). While it does exist in living things and serves as an animating force in these beings, νοῦς, or "mind," also exists "alone by itself" and is "mixed with no object."<sup>10</sup> This parallels Xenophanes's description of god and his total perfection. Anything mixed with god must by necessity be less great than god, and therefore imperfect and lesser, since god is the greatest (cf. Xenophanes's B23). Similarly, if god (or in this case, νοῦς) has anything that is not god within it, it is imperfect, and therefore cannot be god.

Anaxagoras also claims that νοῦς is ἄπειρον, which has a spatial implication. While Xenophanes's god is omniscient and omnipotent, this description suggests that Anaxagoras adds omnipresent to the list.<sup>11</sup> "Mind" is present in every other matter, which effectively renders it omnipresent: ὁ δὲ νοῦς, ὅς ἀεὶ ἐστὶ, τὸ κάρτα καὶ νῦν ἐστὶν ἴνα καὶ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα (B14: "Mind, which always is, is very much present now where everything else is").<sup>12</sup> As will be shown, Anaxagoras's νοῦς is also omnipotent, as it created order in the cosmos and caused the revolution in which the whole universe now turns.

The only possible verbal parallel between the two authors is their use of νοεῖ/νοῦς (cf. Xenophanes B24). Xenophanes uses this in an extant passage and Anaxagoras uses this term extensively. Nevertheless, one word is not enough to securely identify an allusion or even an echo, and so we cannot conclude that Anaxagoras read Xenophanes, but thematic parallels are more easily identifiable than any direct linguistic relationship.

Anaxagoras asserts the intellectual omnipotence and omniscience of νοῦς, which provides important thematic overlap with Xenophanes.<sup>13</sup> Throughout B12, Anaxagoras repeats that "[mind] exercises complete oversight over everything and prevails above all," that "all things that have soul, both the larger and the smaller, these does mind rule" (γνώμην γε περὶ παντὸς πᾶσαν ἴσχει καὶ ἰσχύει μέγιστον . . . ὅσα γε ψυχὴν ἔχει καὶ τὰ μείζω καὶ τὰ ἐλάσσω, πάντων νοῦς κρατεῖ), and that if it were not purely "mind," it could not rule in this way. Furthermore, νοῦς set in motion the revolution that produced the current

10. Jaeger, *Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers*, 165.

11. Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers: Volume 2, Empedocles to Democritus*, in *The Arguments of the Philosophers*, ed. Ted Honderich (London: Routledge & Keagan Paul, 1979), 107. For a different reading, see Graham, *Texts of Early Greek Philosophy*, 319, who argues that since νοῦς is only present in animate things, it is not omnipresent.

12. This passage is complicated by B12, where it seems that "mind" is completely separate from all things. Perhaps B14 represents an earlier passage than B12, or B12 is some kind of nuance.

13. Jaeger, *Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers*, 164.

cosmos, just as Xenophanes's god moves everything "by the thought of his mind" (B25): καὶ ὅποια ἐμελλεν ἐσεσθαι...πάντα διεκόσμησε νοῦς, καὶ τὴν περιχώρησιν ταύτην, ἣν νῦν περιχωρεῖ τὰ τε ἄστρα καὶ ὁ ἥλιος καὶ ἡ σελήνη καὶ ὁ ἄηρ καὶ ὁ αἰθήρ οἱ ἀποκρινόμενοι (B12: "And the kinds of things that were to be . . . all these did mind set in order, as well as this revolution with which the stars, the sun, the moon, the air, and the aether which were being separated now revolve"). Finally, Anaxagoras writes that "things mixed together, things separated, and things segregated, all these did mind comprehend" (B12: καὶ τὰ συμμισγόμενά τε καὶ ἀποκρινόμενα καὶ διακρινόμενα πάντα ἔγνω νοῦς). Again, there are no noteworthy linguistic parallels (except νοῦς) between Xenophanes's and Anaxagoras's statements, but both claim that god/"mind" knows all things.<sup>14</sup>

While all of its attributes imply it, Anaxagoras does not explicitly call νοῦς "god." Indeed, it is not certain that Anaxagoras would have considered νοῦς something divine or worthy of worship at all. Cornford, for example, sees in Anaxagoras's νοῦς "an admirable scientific economy," a substance "deprived even of intelligence and life and reduced simply to motion."<sup>15</sup> Whatever Anaxagoras considered νοῦς to be in nature, its accidental properties line up remarkably with Xenophanes's god and even contribute additional, non-contradictory characteristics to it. Furthermore, "mind" fulfills a god-like role in Anaxagoras's cosmology as its governing universal power. While it may not be a "god" in the traditional sense, neither is Xenophanes's, because of god's singularity over and instead of the Homeric gods. Similarly, both god and "mind" are the governing principles of all other things in the cosmos, thereby fulfilling divine roles.

The strand of thinking is picked up by a later philosopher, Diogenes of Apollonia (flor. 440 BCE), who may have been contemporary with Anaxagoras.<sup>16</sup> Diogenes, though he does not innovate as much, exhibits a similar theology to Anaxagoras's. Diogenes chooses to describe air using some of the aforementioned attributes, since air is a life-giving force. As Dreßler states,

14. It is interesting to note, however, that Xenophanes says that god moves things "by the thought of his mind (νόου)" (B25), foreshadowing the importance of νοῦς in Anaxagoras's writings.

15. Francis M. Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy: A Study in the Origins of Western Speculation* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1957), 154; see 153–54 for his brief discussion on Anaxagoras. It is perhaps worth noting that although Xenophanes's god does exhibit intelligence and life, he is not necessarily animated or relatable either.

16. Unfortunately, we have little biographical information on Diogenes, though he is often considered the last of the pre-Socratics. See Graham, *Texts of Early Greek Philosophy*, 434–35.

Erstens sieht er, als Erbe der älteren Vorsokratiker, das Universum als geordnetes System mit festen Maßen. Zweitens meint er, ähnlich wie Anaxagoras, dass ein allmächtiger Geist hinter dieser Ordnung steht. Und drittens identifiziert er diesen Geist, anders als wahrscheinlich Anaxagoras, mit (seiner Grundsubstanz, der Luft, und diese mit) Gott.<sup>17</sup>

Fragment B5 is the most pertinent in its description of the characteristics of air: καὶ μοι δοκεῖ τὸ τὴν νόησιν ἔχον εἶναι ὁ ἀήρ καλούμενος ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ ὑπὸ τούτου πάντα καὶ κυβερνᾶσθαι καὶ πάντων κρατεῖν (“And it seems to me that the bearer of intelligence is what men call air, and by this all things are steered and it controls all things”). Diogenes was influenced by Anaxagoras to a great extent, which is evident in his use of κρατεῖν (cf. Anaxagoras B12).

Similar to Anaxagoras’s writings, there is no linguistic allusion to or echo of Xenophanes by Diogenes, though “Xenophanian” ideas about god are present in the works of the latter.<sup>18</sup> Diogenes directly states that air (ἀήρ) is a vessel of “intelligence,” just as Xenophanes’s god perceives with all of his being. Diogenes uses νοήσις (B5: νόησιν) for “intelligence,” harking back to Anaxagoras’s νοῦς. Both words may be linked with intelligence through perception, similar to the way in which god “thinks” (νοεῖ) in Xenophanes. Additionally, air, which “steers and controls all things” (cf. B5), is also omnipotent, like Anaxagoras’s νοῦς and Xenophanes’s god, although Diogenes does not clearly state how it controls all things. It is possible that it does this through its intelligence, like god, but perhaps it simply controls all through its life-giving force.<sup>19</sup>

Xenophanes undoubtedly had a lasting influence on his successors, especially as they formulated their theologies. In all three pre-Socratic instances there is a progression from Homer and Hesiod’s anthropomorphic gods to a non-anthropomorphic image of perfection.<sup>20</sup> Rather than squabbling Olympians who are rarely able to impose their will without resistance, the pre-Socratics present a unified power that controls everything in the cosmos.<sup>21</sup> Interestingly, while Xenophanes claims that god is “not at all like to mortals

17. Jan Drefler, “Diogenes von Apollonia und die Entstehung des Gottesbeweises in der griechischen Philosophie,” *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, Neue Folge, 156 (2013): 134: “First, as an heir of the earlier pre-Socratics, he views the universe as an ordered system with set bounds. Secondly, he believes that an omnipotent spirit is responsible for this order, similar to Anaxagoras. And thirdly, he identifies this spirit, probably contrary to Anaxagoras, as [his primary element, air, and he identifies this as] god.”

18. Barnes, *Presocratic Philosophers*, 2:278.

19. Graham, *Texts of Early Greek Philosophy*: 459.

20. Gregory Vlastos, “Theology and Philosophy in Early Greek Thought,” *Philosophical Quarterly* 2 (1952): 116–17.

21. Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy*, 177, argues that the Olympian gods are actually a progression away from previous gods that were abstract.

in body,” he maintains some human-like attributes such as seeing, thinking, and hearing. By the time Anaxagoras and Diogenes are writing, however, god (θεός) has become even more abstract and ethereal, symbolized instead by “mind” (νοῦς) or air (ἀήρ). Both Diogenes and Anaxagoras have strong conceptual parallels with Xenophanes, although they do not clearly allude to his work. It would be an overstatement to suggest that either philosopher had Xenophanes’s texts in front of them as they penned their own works, but his innovative ideas on god permeated Greek theology. It is unclear exactly how these ideas were transmitted, as there is little scholarship on the history of Xenophanes’s writings’ reception. Further, the specific details of the attributes of air and “mind,” innovating on Xenophanes’s god, still remain unclear (such as whether they move). These and other subjects deserve further investigation.



# POMEGRANATE IMAGERY: A SYMBOL OF CONQUEST AND VICTORY

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**Abstract:** Pomegranate seeds tied Persephone to her fate as queen alongside Hades in the Underworld. Typically pomegranates were commonly known symbols of fertility and marriage. However, they were also viewed as protective in the Greek romance of Leucippe and Clitophon. The pomegranate, often transported from Israel and Syria into Greece, had Judaic symbolism behind it as well, where it alluded to victory and battle. Accordingly, Hades's use of the pomegranate can be seen as the last move in a manipulative conflict played between gods and goddesses.

## INTRODUCTION

Fruits such as grapes, apples, and olives can be found woven into the myths and narratives of ancient religious and cultural traditions. They took on significant symbolism and meaning in these civilizations. One particular fruit that captured the attention of several ancient societies was the pomegranate. Many of these communities shared similar ideas regarding the symbolism of the pomegranate, with most ideas associated with fertility, and in some cases, funerary rites and connections to the underworld.<sup>1</sup> The latter was especially so in the Greco-Roman world, with pomegranates being used in the infamous myth of Hades and Persephone. In *The Hymn to Demeter*, Persephone, the daughter of Demeter and Zeus, is captured by Hades and, after eating pomegranate seeds, is forced to stay in the underworld for a third of each year.

By partaking of the pomegranate seeds, Persephone was no longer able to return completely to her mother and had to descend to her husband Hades for a fraction of the year, thus creating the seasons. Why exactly was it chosen as the

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1. David M. Whitchurch and C. Wilfred Griggs, "Artifacts, Icons, and Pomegranates: Brigham Young University Egypt Excavation Project," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 46 (2010): 226–29.

fruit that bound Persephone? For the purposes of this paper, a survey of pomegranate symbolism throughout the various cultures in the Mediterranean and Levant areas will be taken and compared to those associated with the Hades and Persephone myth. Even though the earliest connotations of both funerary and fertility rights have more or less been fastened to the pomegranate, the following will propose an alternative reading of pomegranates in the story, allowing this fruit to become a symbol of conquest and victory.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF POMEGRANATES

The pomegranate icon began to appear in the Late Bronze Age but found most of its significance in the Iron Age.<sup>2</sup> Native to Syria and Israel, the pomegranate became popular in other areas through trading. For the Egyptians, the pomegranate symbolized nobility, as only higher members in social circles had access to the fruit.<sup>3</sup> In Greece, however, it was more accessible to all members of society, and there its ties to the underworld were cemented.<sup>4</sup> The association the pomegranate had with the underworld was apparent through chthonic votive offerings of the fruit in ancient tombs and later in temples to the goddess Persephone.<sup>5</sup> The pomegranate became both a representation of binding marriage and later the symbol of the bridal couple Hades and Persephone.<sup>6</sup> In some areas, eating and drinking in a man's home constituted the act of binding a woman to a man in marriage.<sup>7</sup> The pomegranate was used in several marriage ceremonies to bless the bridal couple with abundance and many children—in some places pomegranate seeds were thrown after them.<sup>8</sup> Thereafter, in various areas of Greece and its territories, Persephone became a goddess associated with marriage—Locrian brides often gave offerings to Persephone on their wedding day, bringing their bridal peplos to be blessed by her.<sup>9</sup>

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2. Cheryl Ward, "Pomegranates in Eastern Mediterranean Contexts during the Late Bronze Age," *World Archaeology* 34 (2003): 530.

3. Whitchurch and Griggs, "Artifacts, Icons, and Pomegranates," 225–26.

4. Whitchurch and Griggs, "Artifacts, Icons, and Pomegranates," 226.

5. See Patricia Langley, "Why a Pomegranate?," *British Medical Journal* 321 (2000): 1153–54. The pomegranate was also symbolic of rebirth because of its connotations of death—it became an image for a reawakening in nature. Cf. Hildegard Schneider, "On the Pomegranate," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 4 (1945): 120.

6. Langley, "Why a Pomegranate?," 1154. See also Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, "Persephone and Aphrodite at Locri: A Model for Personality Definitions in Greek Religion," *JHS* 98 (1978): 109.

7. Campbell Bonner, "Hades and the Pomegranate Seed (*Hymn to Demeter* 372–4.)," *Classical Review* 53 (1939): 3–4.

8. Ward, "Pomegranates in Eastern Mediterranean Contexts," 532.

9. Sourvinou-Inwood, "Persephone and Aphrodite at Locri," 114–15.

Pomegranates also appear in other Greek, Israelite, and Syrian sources.<sup>10</sup> In the romance about Leucippe and Clitophon, the two protagonists give thanks for their safe travels before a statue of Zeus holding a pomegranate. The Hebrew word *Capthor* means both “Cappadocians” and “pomegranate.” Graham Anderson argues that the pomegranate became symbolic of Zeus protecting and guarding the Cappadocians, holding the pomegranate in his hand.<sup>11</sup>

Ancient Judeo-Christian texts also give us cultural interpretations and symbols of the pomegranate. The pomegranate symbolized fertility in both ancient Hebrew (c. 1200–445 BCE) and Jewish beliefs.<sup>12</sup> The fruit of Eden was traditionally a pomegranate,<sup>13</sup> an image that conjured symbols of hope and everlasting life that continued into early Christianity.<sup>14</sup> Pomegranates figure as icons of hope and prosperity in Num 13:2, 23, being a fruit brought back when the twelve Israelite spies returned from Canaan.<sup>15</sup> Saul, resting under a pomegranate tree, waited while Jonathan fought and defeated the Philistines (cf. 1 Sam 14:2). Here the pomegranate represented hope and served to demonstrate the approaching victory of Saul’s military campaigns.

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10. Notably cited is Whitchurch and Griggs’s “Artifacts, Icons, and Pomegranates,” which has an extensive history of archaeological findings of pomegranates and their meanings throughout Greece, Israel, Syria, and Egypt. For other extensive looks into Greek symbolism, see Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, trans. John Raffan (Oxford; Malden, MA: Blackwell and Harvard University Press, 1985), 160–61; and Efthymios G. Lazongas, “Side: The Personification of the Pomegranate,” in *Personification in the Greek World: From Antiquity to Byzantium*, eds. Emma Stafford and Judith Herrin, vol. 7 of *Publications for the Centre of Hellenic Studies, King’s College London* (Burlington, VT; Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2005; repr., London; New York: Routledge, 2017), 99. For Israelite or biblical connotations, see Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews: Volume 3, Moses in the Wilderness*, trans. Paul Radin, rev. ed. (Baltimore; London: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 270.

11. Graham Anderson, “The Mystic Pomegranate and the Vine of Sodom: Achilles Tatius 3.6,” *AJP* 100 (1979): 516–17.

12. Asaph Goor, “The History of the Pomegranate in the Holy Land,” *Economic Botany* 21 (1967): 218.

13. Confusion with the Latin name for pomegranate, *pomum granatum* (“seeded/grained apple”), which arose through translating the Hebrew Bible in the fourth century CE, caused readers of the Vulgate to associate the Eden story with an apple. Whitchurch and Griggs, “Artifacts, Icons, and Pomegranates,” 224.

14. Along with these Jewish symbols, the Mishnah describes the use of pomegranate wood in a Passover offering. Whitchurch and Griggs argue that putting a rod of the wood through the animal carcass “from the mouth to the buttocks” meant the pomegranate was associated with the sacrificial lamb and the power it had to save. Whitchurch and Griggs, “Artifacts, Icons, and Pomegranates,” 230.

15. Whitchurch and Griggs, “Artifacts, Icons, and Pomegranates,” 229.

## THE POMEGRANATE IN *THE HYMN TO DEMETER*

As previously noted, the pomegranate plays a prominent role in *The Hymn to Demeter*, which came into popularity with the cult of Demeter at Eleusis. The hymn would have been performed at festivals in Eleusis and other areas.<sup>16</sup> As a result, there were many variants of the myth rather than a single canonical text.<sup>17</sup>

The beginning of the myth deals with the kidnap and rape of Persephone, followed by her mother Demeter's search for her. Demeter leaves Olympus and wallows in agony on earth among mortals, finally stopping in Eleusis disguised as an old woman. Hermes finds her there and goes to retrieve Persephone, as ordered by Zeus. Unbeknownst to everyone else, Persephone had eaten pomegranate seeds given to her by Hades—partaking of food in the underworld meant she could not leave permanently. Final negotiations between the Olympians eventually settled that Persephone would spend two-thirds of the year in Olympus with her mother and the other third with Hades in the underworld.<sup>18</sup>

While pomegranates were mostly associated with hope and abundant prosperity, there are darker connotations that scholars have noted as well. In terms of the pomegranate and its ability to mark marriage and its indissolubility, many contend that it had manipulative power as well. Artemidorus argued that the pomegranate was associated with slavery and subjection.<sup>19</sup> John Myres has noted that there is a hint of such malicious intent, since Hades used the pomegranate as a love spell or charm to trick Persephone.<sup>20</sup> He argues that the phrase ἀμφὶ ἑ νομήσας cannot mean anything other than “moving it to and fro about himself,” resulting in not just feeding the seeds to Persephone, but Hades actually anointing himself with it.<sup>21</sup> Myres argues that Hades's anointing himself with the pomegranate and making physical contact with her bound Persephone to him, recalling the fruit's efficacy in marriage contracts. This phrase not only escapes the notice of the reader, but also the notice of Persephone, who realized she was under a spell of some sort later when, as she was with her mother, she felt a sense of longing towards her husband.<sup>22</sup>

16. Robert Parker, “The *Hymn to Demeter* and the *Homeric Hymns*,” *GR* 38 (1991): 4.

17. The particular version of the myth studied in this paper was used at Eleusis by the Demeter cult. See Parker, “The *Hymn to Demeter*,” 4–5.

18. Parker, “The *Hymn to Demeter*,” 4–5.

19. Anderson, “Mystic Pomegranate,” 517.

20. John L. Myres, “Persephone and the Pomegranate (*H. Dem.* 372–4),” *Classical Review* 52 (1938): 51–52.

21. Myres, “Persephone and the Pomegranate,” 52.

22. Myres, “Persephone and the Pomegranate,” 52.

While there is clear deception evident in Hades's use of the pomegranate on Persephone, this might not be the sole reason why he chose this particular fruit. By reading the *Hymn* with connotations of the pomegranate from other ancient myths, we realize that Hades could have been advancing beyond a simple love spell and exercising more power than initially realized.

### REEVALUATING POMEGRANATE SYMBOLISM IN *THE HYMN TO DEMETER*

There are numerous ways to interpret the *Hymn's* use of pomegranate symbolism. For instance, like the protective power of the pomegranate as shown to the Cappadocians by Zeus, perhaps Hades used the fruit to protect Persephone's claim to dominion over the underworld with her husband. If she were to leave the underworld, that claim would no longer hold. Thus, the use of the pomegranate meant he as her husband could secure a way for the originally kidnapped queen and bride to return to him, should Olympus ever act against his wishes.

Likewise, Hades could be seen as a salvific figure. The pomegranate as a symbol of hope and prosperity could signal his giving her pomegranate seeds an allowance to a prosperous future as his consort in the underworld. While moderns might not see this perspective as redemptive or justifying, Hades's actions allowed for her increased social status in the Greek pantheon. Persephone now had a sure future and secured power over the other gods and goddesses.<sup>23</sup> Her death as entrance into the underworld allowed for Persephone to be reborn as Hades's bride. He too experienced a rebirth. Now married, Hades had a queen to rule alongside him. The pomegranate symbolized new life for not only Persephone as a bride and queen but also for Hades as married king of the underworld.

Recall, however, the pomegranate's representing impending success in Saul and Jonathan's battle in 1 Samuel. In *The Hymn*, Demeter is the only opponent to Zeus and Hades. Because she no longer gave sustenance and fertility to the earth, crops and mortals began to wither and die, and Zeus became anxious for her return to her divine duties. He attempted almost everything in order to return the world back to normalcy but failed with each embassy he sent to persuade Demeter. The remaining option was to return Persephone back to her mother. Demeter had now become victorious in her own way. Using her own feminine powers of nurturing and fertility, she overcame the masculine dominance she had been subjected to. Using this tactic in order to

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23. Burton Raffel, "Homeric Hymn to Demeter 1-89," *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 9 (1970): 420.

defeat them, she reinstated her own power and was on her way to lay claim to the spoils of her victory.

Nonetheless, it was Hades who employed the final battle tactic in this divine war over power. Hades used one final strategy to maintain the power he had acquired. By feeding Persephone the seeds, he himself went up against Demeter, leaving behind Zeus's authority and asserting his own power as well as protecting his own interests. Although Demeter was victorious in getting Zeus to submit to her requests, Hades had not truly acquiesced to her. Zeus, being the father-god in the pantheon, held the most divine control until Demeter fought back. Having lost the fight, it would seem that Demeter then laid claim to her entitled prize, but Hades would not have it. In his own way, Hades proved himself stronger than his brother Zeus as he bested Demeter, outsmarting both of them. Because of the seeds, Persephone would have to return to her husband for a third of the year and live separated from her mother. The pomegranate then symbolized much more than his entrapment of Persephone in the underworld and the binding of their marriage—now it also represented Hades's victory of power over Persephone, Demeter, and even Zeus. This alters the previous reading with the Cappadocian symbolism. Hades did not necessarily use the pomegranate to protect his and Persephone's reign in the underworld, but to protect his authority and power against female resistance.

Demeter's attempt to retrieve her daughter fully employed the use of her feminine powers. Masculine power had dominated the pantheon until Demeter engaged her feminine strengths to face Zeus and demand her daughter's return. At this moment, feminine power not only became equal to that of Zeus's masculine authority but also could prove to be superior to Zeus's control. This feminine supremacy developed into the opposition Hades had to defeat in order to retain his bride. His use of the pomegranate disputed the feminine fight and reinstated his own masculine superiority over Demeter's conquests. As the pomegranate represented protection for the Cappadocians, Hades used the pomegranate to protect himself and his authority from Demeter and her feminine devices.

The pomegranate symbolized so much more than the potency traditionally ascribed to it. Through the ages and cultures that cultivated it, the pomegranate was known as a sign of abundance and hope—but it can also be interpreted as a symbol of dominance, victory, and insurance of that victory. Hades had bested not only Demeter but also Zeus himself, the god over all gods. In his own devious way, he complied with Zeus's demands to return Persephone, knowing that she would not be able to stay away from him forever. Hades's

deceit towards Persephone was not only for his own future life with his bride but also to best Demeter and prove his ultimate power over his brother and the other gods. Demonstrating that Zeus could be defeated, Hades not only kept his wife but also protected his authority, proving to be even more powerful in one respect than the ultimate ruler of the gods.

JUDAHITE ANICONISM:  
A DETERMINING FACTOR IN TENSIONS  
BETWEEN THE *AM HĀ'ĀREŠ* AND THE *HAGGÔLĀH*

JACOB FUGE

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**Abstract:** Judahites' attitudes toward and observance of aniconism developed and intensified over time, particularly after their exile. When they returned to their homeland around 538 BCE to rebuild the temple per the mandate of Cyrus of Persia, the repatriates (*haggôlāh*) were challenged by the people who had remained in the land (*am hā'āreš*). By examining the encounters between the repatriated exiles and the people of the land, the aniconic tendencies of the returning exiles emerges as the underlying reason for that tension.

## JUDAHITE ANICONISM

Jill Middlemas argues that aniconism “is the technical term . . . [for] the phenomenon whereby no images are employed or permitted in the worship of a deity.”<sup>1</sup> This precludes the use of anthropomorphic or theriomorphic (animal-like) representations. Judahite aversion to the use of idols was an exception in the broader religious culture of the ancient Near East.<sup>2</sup> Aniconism is a broad subject,<sup>3</sup> and cannot be covered fully within the scope of this paper. Instead, focus will be given to depictions of deity as anthropomorphic statuary during

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1. Jill Middlemas, *The Divine Image: Prophetic Aniconic Rhetoric and Its Contribution to the Aniconism Debate*, FAT 2/74 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 1.

2. Patrick D. Miller, *The Religion of Ancient Israel*, LAI (London: SPCK; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 24.

3. For other topics regarding aniconism, see the compiled and wide-ranging essays of Karel van der Toorn, ed., *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, CBET 21 (Leuven: Peeters, 1997). Some prominent entries include an effort to understand the role of iconographic representations of deity in an aniconic framework (see Izak Cornelius, “The Many Faces of God: Divine Images and Symbols in Ancient Near Eastern Religions,” in *The Image and the Book*, 21–43), and whether the Jerusalem Yahwist cult ever used a graven image in the temple’s holy of holies (see Herbert Niehr, “In Search of YHWH’s Cult Statue in the First Temple,” in *The Image and the Book*, 73–95).



the Iron Age and Persian period in Judah, though much of what is said here is true regarding iconic depictions in general.<sup>4</sup>

Scholars have defined essentially two different types of aniconism, *de facto* and programmatic aniconism. *De facto* aniconism refers to the refusal to use images within a religion, whereas programmatic aniconism (also known as iconoclasm) refers to systematically and actively seeking to destroy images.<sup>5</sup> The Judahite shift from *de facto* aniconism to programmatic aniconism began in the reign of Hezekiah. By the time he was king, idol worship had crept into the Yahwist cult. To return to what he felt was the true religion, he practiced programmatic aniconism and destroyed these images, including the bronze serpent of Num 21 (2 Kgs 18).<sup>6</sup> King Josiah went further and destroyed Phoenician, Moabite, and Ammonite idols found in temples throughout the land (2 Kgs 23). Both of these reforms were meant to bring Judah's cult in line with the commandment to not "make . . . an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is . . . on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Exod 20:4). A few decades after Josiah's reign, the Babylonians conquered Judah and deported its upper-class citizens, leaving behind "the poorest people of the land" (2 Kgs 24:14). This paper will explore

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4. Iconic depictions could include anthropomorphic statuary, cylinder seals with depictions of animal-like figures, clay jars with human faces or animals etched into them, and so forth. An icon has essentially come to mean anything that resembles a human or animal figure, whether heavenly or earthly. See Cornelius, "The Many Faces of God" 21–22; Ronald S. Hendel, "Aniconism and Anthropomorphism in Ancient Israel," in *The Image and the Book*, 205–28; and Karel van der Toorn, "The Iconic Book: Analogies between the Babylonian Cult of Images and the Veneration of the Torah," in *The Image and the Book*, 229–48.

5. These two distinctions were put forth by Tryggve N.D. Mettinger in *No Graven Image? Israelite Aniconism in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context*, ConBOT 42 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1995). Jill Middlemas (*The Divine Image*, 6), suggests three different theories regarding aniconism's development over time: (1) the classic stance—strict aniconism was practiced since the time Moses received the Decalogue, (2) an evolutionary perspective—a gradual rejection of images developed over time, and (3) a revolutionary position—a sudden and dramatic shift brought about the destruction of cultic images. Jacob Milgrom ("The Nature and Extent of Idolatry in Eighth-Seventh Century Judah," *HUCA* 69 [1998]: 1–13) would likely agree with Christoph Uehlinger's conclusions (see Christoph Uehlinger, "Anthropomorphic Cult Statuary in Iron Age Palestine and the Search for Yahweh's Cult Images," in *The Image and the Book*, 97–155) and would suggest that the reforms of Josiah and Hezekiah weren't successful at eradicating idols from the popular religion completely. The author of this work agrees with the conclusions of Uehlinger and Milgrom and reads their data as supportive of the evolutionary theory set forth by Middlemas. Hezekiah initiated reforms (2 Kgs 18) which, though largely reversed by Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:1–18), were later reinforced by Josiah (2 Kgs 23). Thus, the official cult grew progressively more aniconic with time.

6. All biblical quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Thus, when this paper references the "Hebrew Bible," it refers to the Masoretic tradition as represented in the Leningrad codex.

how aniconic tendencies adopted before their captivity both differentiated the exiles from the “people of the land” and served as a primary factor that heightened tension between the two groups.

### THE TIMING AND POPULARITY OF ANICONISM

The dating of various books within the Hebrew Bible presents an issue at the heart of aniconic studies. Mosaic authorship claims that the commandment to avoid icons and idols was received at Sinai by Moses before the Israelites even entered the promised land (see Exod 20). Archaeology suggests that Judahites did not tend to aniconism until around the time of Hezekiah’s reforms. This contradiction is resolved if we accept the work of many source critics who date the composition of Exodus and Deuteronomy anywhere from the reign of Hezekiah to the Babylonian exile (c. 716–587 BCE).<sup>7</sup> Whether the Judahites received the commandment for aniconism at Sinai or during Hezekiah’s purge matters little for the purposes of this paper. That it happened prior to the exile, however, is of great concern. This dating of these works means that the Judahites had received the commandments of aniconism before the exile. By the time that the upper-class Judahites were exiled, there would already have been a policy of aniconism in place within the official cult of YHWH. This would have included the aniconic tendencies associated with the command to not marry foreign women or men. As cited by Nehemiah (Neh 13:23–29; Ezra 9–10), aniconism was an important reason to avoid marrying foreign women.

The aniconic shift in the popular religion of ancient Judahites is most readily seen through the disappearance of Judean pillar-figurines in the homes of Judah around the time of the exile. These clay figurines with exaggerated female reproductive features were previously found in abundance throughout the region.<sup>8</sup> Judean pillar-figurines have been shown to have been used as representations of Asherah, a female fertility goddess, in the Iron Age,<sup>9</sup> though

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7. See Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, rev. and enl. ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997); Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, JSOTSup 15 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 79; Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966), 26.

8. For more on the intended use of these figurines, see Erin Darby, *Interpreting Judean Pillar Figurines: Gender and Empire in Judean Apotropaic Ritual*, FAT 2/69 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); and Francesca Stavrakopoulou and John Barton, eds., *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah* (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2010).

9. See Raz Kletter, *The Judean Pillar-Figurines and the Archaeology of Asherah*, BARIS 636 (Oxford: Tempvs Reparatum, 1996); and Rainer Albertz and Rüdiger Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012).

they nearly disappeared once the Judahites were exiled.<sup>10</sup> These figurines were replaced by other cultic statuary during the Persian period, which implies that the “people of the land” utilized icons and idols. The Persian period saw an abundance of cultic statuary that has been found throughout the Levant.<sup>11</sup> Of note, however, is the fact that there has been no discovery of Persian period icons or idols at Jerusalem. This suggests that the returning Judahites were aniconic after the exile.

### *HAGGÔLĀH AND AM HĀ'ĀREṢ*

In the opening verses of Ezra, King Cyrus of Persia commissions a group of those Judahites who were exiled to return to their native land and rebuild their temple (Ezra 1:1–5). Several waves of exiled people came over the following decades to work on the monumental project—though when they returned, they found their homeland inhabited by ethnic foreigners. The repatriates are called *haggôlāh*, while those they encountered in their homeland are labelled *am hā'āreṣ*.

The term *haggôlāh* (הגולה) is largely free from the confusion and ambiguity associated with *am hā'āreṣ* (עַם הָאָרֶץ; see below)—its root word “*galah*” (גלה) refers to being exiled, and the term itself means “those that were exiled.” The first attestation of *haggôlāh* in the Hebrew Bible is found in 2 Kings, when the Judahites, the “elite of the land,” were taken “into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon” (2 Kgs 24:15). It is always used in reference to those Judahites who were in Babylon or had come from Babylon.<sup>12</sup>

The term *am hā'āreṣ* (עַם הָאָרֶץ) is used quite broadly in the biblical text.<sup>13</sup> Literally it means “people of the land.” The interpretation has for almost a century centered on the idea of a governing body of landowners. This is problematic, though, because there are only a few contexts within which the word is used that could possibly fit this presumed meaning. Even within those limited contexts, there is no conclusive evidence that such instances would allow for

10. Uehlinger, “Anthropomorphic Cult Statuary,” 173–204.

11. Ephraim Stern, *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period, 538–332 B.C.* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute and Israel Exploration Society, 1973; repr., Warminster, UK: Aris & Phillips, 1982), 141.

12. Peter R. Bedford, “Diaspora: Homeland Relations in Ezra-Nehemiah,” *VT* 52 (2002): 147–65, esp. 149. For *haggôlāh* in its various forms, see Ezra 1:11; 2:1; 3:8; 4:1; 6:16; 19–21; 8:35; 9:4; 10:6–8, 16; and Neh 7:6; 8:17 (cf. Bedford, “Diaspora,” 149).

13. For other attestations of *am hā'āreṣ* in the Hebrew Bible, see Gen 23:7, 12–13; 42:6; Exod 5:5; Lev 20:2, 4; Num 14:9; 2 Kgs 11:14, 18–20; 15:5; 16:15; 21:24; 23:30, 35; 24:14; 25:3, 19; 1 Chr 5:25; 2 Chr 23:13, 20–21; 26:21; 33:25; 36:1; Ezra 4:4; 10:2, 11; Neh 9:24; 10:30–31; Esth 8:17; Jer 1:18; 34:19; 37:2; 44:21; 52:6, 25; Ezek 7:27; 12:19; 22:29; 33:2; 39:13; 45:16, 22; 46:3, 9; Dan 9:6; Hag 2:4; and Zech 7:5.

this interpretation.<sup>14</sup> In rabbinic understanding the term refers to the uneducated poor farmers throughout the land of Judah; this definition, however, does not fit the context of this paper.<sup>15</sup> The “people of the land” explain their own origins to the returning exiles, stating that they had “been sacrificing to [YHWH] ever since the days of King Esar-haddon of Assyria *who brought us here*” (Ezra 4:2; emphasis added).

In 2 Kgs 17:24 the citizens of the Northern Kingdom were deported and replaced with foreigners, people from “Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria. . .” We later see in 2 Kgs 24:14 that when the Judahites were exiled to Babylon, only the upper class was taken, leaving behind “the poorest people of the land.” It is unknown whether the ethnically diverse northern imports and the remaining lower-class Judahites in the south intermarried and mixed. Such uncertainty leaves unclear which group is to be considered the “people of the land.” For the purposes of this paper, what is most important to remember is that the *am hā`āreṣ*, whether northern foreigners or southern lower classes, continued to use icons and idols while the Judahite elites were in exile.

## POSTEXILIC ANICONIC TENSION

The friction between the *am hā`āreṣ* and *haggōlāh* is largely expressed through religious contention. The repatriates began their work on the temple and were met by local resistance (Ezra 4:1–4).<sup>16</sup> That there was a distinction between the locals and the exiles is clear by the latter’s declaration: “You shall have no part with us . . . but *we alone* will build to the Lord” (Ezra 4:3; emphasis added). The *am hā`āreṣ* were trying to interrupt the temple building of the repatriates. Once the temple was completed, it began to function as it did prior to the exile (Ezra 3:2; 6:18). The same teachings that inspired Hezekiah and Josiah’s aniconic reforms were directing the worship of the *haggōlāh* and were resisted by the *am hā`āreṣ*.<sup>17</sup>

This argument is not without its challenges. Though the *am hā`āreṣ* were trying to interrupt the exiles’ reconstruction of the temple, this does not equate

14. John Tracy Thames, Jr., “A New Discussion of the Meaning of the Phrase ‘*am hā`āreṣ* in the Hebrew Bible,” *JBL* 130 (2011): 109–25, esp. 110.

15. For more on the use of the word in rabbinic literature, see Solomon Zeitlin, “The Am Haarez: A Study in the Social and Economic Life of the Jews before and after the Destruction of the Second Temple,” *JQR* 23 (1932): 45–61.

16. Bedford, “Diaspora,” 151.

17. The aniconic tendencies of the repatriates weren’t the only factors in the tension between them and the idolatrous people of the land. Nehemiah had to correct a problem with Sabbath observance (Neh 13:15–22), since the “people of the land” were trying to sell wares in Jerusalem on the Sabbath.

to a local fear that the *haggolah* were reinstating aniconic policy. However, the biblical authors call them “adversaries” (Ezra 4:1) and suggest that their attempts to halt the temple’s construction were really plots to keep correct religious practices from being restored. In the perspective of the repatriated temple builders, the *am hā’āreṣ* were their enemies because they were trying to thwart their efforts to bring back something that was crucial to Judahite identity (and threatening to that of the *am hā’āreṣ*): the aniconic cult.

Over time, those who had returned from exile and their posterity intermarried with the *am hā’āreṣ* (Ezra 9). In Ezra 9:11, Ezra laments the wickedness of the people in choosing to marry foreign wives, which had been prohibited “by your servants the prophets, saying, ‘The land that you are entering to possess is a land unclean with the pollutions of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations. They have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness.’” The word for “abominations” (תועבה) is also used in Deut 7:25–26, where YHWH promises the people that he will deliver the Israelites from the inhabitants of the land. He further exhorts them to destroy their idols (פסל) and “abhorrent thing[s]” (תועבה).

Part of Ezra’s teachings were centered on correcting this practice, trying to reclaim the people from the “abominations” (תועבה) of those that they married. He issued a call to the people that they “send away all these wives . . . according to the law” (Ezra 10:3), drawing on the commandment (Deut 7:1–6) to not marry foreign Canaanites. In this pericope, YHWH teaches that marrying these women would “turn away [their] children from following [him], to serve other gods” (Deut 7:4). This is followed by some of the most powerful aniconic language in the Hebrew Bible: “But this is how you must deal with them: break down their altars, smash their pillars, hew down their sacred poles, and burn their idols with fire” (Deut 7:5). This intense rhetoric recurs when YHWH repeats this instruction later in the same chapter: “The images of their gods you shall burn with fire . . . Do not bring an abhorrent thing (תועבה) into your house, or you will be set apart for destruction like it” (Deut 7:25–26). The construction of the temple and challenges with marrying foreign wives formed a focal point of contention between the returning exiles (*haggōlāh* הגולה) and the “people of the land” (*am hā’āreṣ* עַם הָאָרֶץ).<sup>18</sup>

Central to the contention between the exiles and the “people of the land” was the concern of the *haggōlāh* to remain true to their aniconic practices

18. Nehemiah may also have been frustrated with the “people of the land,” whose children, as a result of their interethnic marriages, were losing the “language of Judah” (Neh 13:23–29, esp. 24). This issue of language loss is really centered on the prophetic encouragement to avoid idolatrous influences from foreign cultures. When he came to Jerusalem, Nehemiah again had to correct the people for yielding to marriage with foreign wives.

and thereby retain the purity of the Yahwist cult. Only by doing this would they receive the promised strength and deliverance from their enemies at the hand of YHWH (see Deut 7:12–24, which lists the very blessings which would have saved them from the threats of the Babylonian and Assyrian invasions). Aniconism was a proactive defensive policy against future invasion by foreign powers and cultures. This notion reinforces the thesis of this paper, which has shown that the aniconic tendencies of the Judahite exiles heightened tensions between them and the idol-worshipping “people of the land.”

# CANIDIA: META-MUSE OF ANTI-ELEGY

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**Abstract:** This paper attempts to analyze Canidia as the meta-muse of anti-elegy (rather than Paule's characterization of her as the "anti-muse of elegy") by looking at all of her appearances within Horace's works. Canidia is compared to other elegiac muses to show her transformation into more of an iambic figure. She is also examined within the context of Grecian witchcraft. She disgusts Horace, but he still continues to write poetry about her. She must therefore be viewed as a muse who combats the norms of elegiac poetry.

## INTRODUCTION

The *Epodes*, the classical poet Horace's collection of poems that were drawn from bucolic predecessors, do not disgust nearly as much as his muse, Canidia the witch, does. Even though she is mentioned only four times in two separate bodies of texts (*Epodes* and *Sermones*),<sup>1</sup> Canidia holds vast sway over Horace. While other Augustan poets like Vergil, Catullus, and Propertius engaged in epic and elegy, Horace turned to a vulgar mode of expression: iambic poetry.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, his work directly opposes contemporary poets, and we can best describe his muse as the meta-muse of anti-elegy.<sup>3</sup> Canidia is a

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1. Unless otherwise noted, all primary sources used in this paper are taken from the Loeb Classical Library (LCL), and all English translations are the author's. *Sermones* reflects the Latin name for Horace's *Satires* (see *Horace: Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, LCL 194 [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926; rev. and repr., 1929–1966]), and it and abbreviations for it (i.e., *Sermones*, *Sermo*, and *Serm.*) will be used throughout this paper to refer to the *Satires*.

2. Iambic poetry is a form popularized by Greek poets and known for its obscenities and invective elements. See Douglas E. Gerber, "Introduction," in *Greek Iambic Poetry: From the Seventh to the Fifth Centuries BC*, ed. and transl. Douglas E. Gerber, LCL 259 (1999), 1–4.

3. Throughout his monograph, Paule refers to Canidia as the anti-muse of elegy. I change this phrasing because I think that to refer to someone as an "anti-muse" implies that

sensual, senile sorceress who seduces Horace to engage in the same work that she does: the work of destruction. No matter how many pretenses he offers, he has a morbid fascination with her witchcraft. He tries to make it seem like she finally wins by giving her the last words of *Epode* 17; however, he reports these last words, exercising dominance over her. Horace wrestles Canidia and her magic, engaging in a creative relationship with her that is characterized by sexual overtones. Such “poetic intercourse” continues throughout the *Epodes*. Despite his disgust with her, he still prefers this meta-muse of anti-elegy to the muse of elegy.

### CANIDIA THE MUSE

When a poet writes, he enters into a relationship with his muse. Such elegiac muses are often beautiful women whose sexual relationships usually end in heartbreak. Elegiac poets sincerely love their subject matter,<sup>4</sup> but that affection is often not mutual.

Horace manipulates long-standing elegiac tradition both to call the reader’s mind to elegy and to show how Canidia contrasts with it. Describing her unique role within Horatian verse can be formulated in a simple phrase: the meta-muse of anti-elegy. This phrase consists of many different components. Horace writes her as a “meta” figure who is meant to deliberately fill the role of muse of his poetry. The term “meta” here emphasizes how he creates her to function as a part of the genre of anti-elegy/iambic poetry. He does not draw wholly upon his real life,<sup>5</sup> but creates a woman to represent everything that elegy does not symbolize. If all the disgust of iambic poetry were to be embodied, it would certainly resemble his disgusting muse Canidia.

Maxwell Paule decides to refer to Canidia as “the Anti-Muse,”<sup>6</sup> but this term proves problematic, because it implies that she does not inspire anything. She cannot be an anti-muse since she does inspire poetry in the same way any other muse would. The method she uses to ensnare the poet may consist of magical (instead of physical) charms, but she nevertheless still functions as

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they do not inspire anything. On the contrary, we see how Canidia inspires Horace’s poetry and that she becomes the muse for his genre of choice: iambic poetry. Thus, she functions as a meta-muse or self-referential muse of anti-elegy (since iambic poetry seems to oppose elegy).

4. W. P. Trent, “The Roman Elegy,” *The Sewanee Review* 6 (1898): 271.

5. Some may take the connection between Canidia and Gratidia, a woman believed to be Canidia, for granted and assume that Horace models Canidia on a past lover (see David Bain, “‘Waiting for Varus?’ [Horace, *Epodes*, 5, 49–72],” *Latomus* 45 [1986]: 127). This does not appear to be the case, as she symbolizes much more than a potion maker (see Anderson, “Horace’s *Satire* I,8,” 4).

6. Maxwell Teitel Paule, *Canidia, Rome’s First Witch* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 134.



a muse of poetry. To suggest otherwise would fundamentally misunderstand her function within Horace's poetry. She inspires him to write iambic poetry even though he would prefer to write elegy. However, Canidia does not inspire Horace to write iambic poetry for the sake of writing iambic poetry but because she opposes the genre of elegy. She lacks everything an elegiac mistress would, but still functions in a similar way. Obviously, she exerts power over Horace for a period of time, like elegiac mistresses controlling their poets. Nevertheless, she functions as a muse who opposes elegy—hence the term “anti-elegy.”<sup>7</sup>

The name *Canidia* could originate from the Latin adjective *canus* (“white,” “gray”), which harks back to elegiac depictions of women, especially beautiful women.<sup>8</sup> If Horace indeed works with this etymology, he creates both irony and tension. Canidia's name may suggest beauty, but she is not beautiful. Although her name may call back to elegiac muses, she does not represent one. Horace thus creates a tension between this etymological connection and Canidia's witchy characteristics.

Horace chooses Canidia's name to establish her role *in conflict* with elegy and beauty. This can be explained by observing Catullus, who uses the word *candida*, a derivative of *canus*, to describe his muses. He even deifies his beloved elegiac muse, Lesbia, when he refers to her as *candida diva* (Catullus LXVIIIa.70).<sup>9</sup> Catullus also uses *candidus* to refer to figures associated with love and lovely women.<sup>10</sup> This connection to love contrasts nicely with Horace's use of a *canus* derivative.<sup>11</sup> Horace immortalizes Canidia within his poetry, but does not deify or praise her, except in a lie (*Epode* 17).

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7. Another appropriate description of Canidia would be “the muse of iambic poetry,” though this term does not fully capture Horace's project. Throughout the *Epodes*, Horace shows that more masculine men write bucolic or iambic poetry, while more feminine men spend their time with elegiac mistresses. Horace separates himself from these softer poets when he directly attacks them and their mistresses.

8. George Davis Chase, “The Origin of Roman Praenomina,” *HSCP* 8 (1897): 122.

9. Caroline A. Perkins, “The Figure of Elegy in *Amores* 3.1: Elegy as *Puella*, Elegy as *Poeta*, *Puella* as *Poeta*,” *CW* 104 (2011): 324.

10. John W. Zarker, “Lesbia's Charms,” *CJ* 68 (1972–1973): 112.

11. Horace uses a *canus* derivative to refer to Maecenas his patron as “shining Maecenas” (*candide Maecenas*, *Epode* 14.5). Horace also debuts Canidia in Maecenas's garden. Such connectivity underscores Horace's manipulation of this term. Writing iambic poetry tortures Horace and he discloses that Maecenas requested that he do it (*Epode* 14.5). Perhaps Horace connects these two figures because they both have the power to compel him to do or feel something. Although Horace enjoys writing poetry, he does not like iambic poetry, but Maecenas continually asks him when he will be done with his poetry. As his patron, Maecenas funds Horace's expenditures and thus has the power to compel him to do things, like engaging his disgusting muse Canidia. Canidia fuels Horace's inspirations and has the power to compel him to write about subject matter that he does not enjoy. He illustrates how they both compel him against his will to further show his disgust with Canidia.

Canidia represents a different kind of *candida* that elegiac poets do not seem to use. Tibullus, a Golden Age elegiac poet, hopes that his elegiac muse, Neaera, “may be happy and that [her] fate may be shining” (*sis felix et sint candida fata tua*, *Elegy* III.VI.30). At the beginning of the same poem, Tibullus refers to personified Liber as *candide* (*Elegy* III.VI.1), connecting this figure to Neaera. Throughout his poetry, Tibullus uses *candida* to refer to its religious significance.<sup>12</sup> He deems it a term that is good enough to describe his mistress.<sup>13</sup> Propertius, another Golden Age elegiac poet, also uses this same word to describe the complexion of his own mistress, demonstrating its long-standing position within the elegiac world.<sup>14</sup> Canidia breaks from this tradition and does not mirror the shining, beautiful muses other poets interact with.

An elegiac mistress must also be *formosa*, or shapely. For instance, Catullus differentiates his Lesbia from Quintia, another elegiac mistress, when he states that he finds Lesbia *formosa*, but not Quintia, though other individuals do (Catullus LXXXVI.1, 5).<sup>15</sup> This word spans other elegiac poets’ works, as Propertius uses it to refer to the natural, beautiful curvature of a woman.<sup>16</sup> Tibullus also applies the same term to his Delia when describing her feet (*Elegy* I.V.24).

While other elegiac women all have *forma*, Canidia does not. Horace describes her “withered breasts” (*mammae putres*, *Epode* 8.7) and “soft belly” (*venterque mollis*, *Epode* 8.9). He contrasts her entirely lacking *forma* with an elegiac muse. Not only does Canidia not have the key characteristic of an elegiac muse, she has the exact opposite of it. Not once does Horace refer to her as *formosa*—he shows only how she may have *canus* in her name; however, she embodies none of its necessary characteristics. She is “horrible to look at” (*horrendas adspectu*, *Serm.* I.8.26), though her name etymologically suggests that she would resemble a beautiful goddess more than an ugly hag.

Canidia differs much in appearance from Pyrrha, the beautiful elegiac muse in Horace’s *Carmen*, but they serve a similar purpose. Pyrrha represents

12. See “*candidus*” in *A Latin Dictionary*, comp. Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1879), 277, where *candida* can refer exclusively to goddesses, showing a connection to divine and reinforcing the earlier point made about the deification of Lesbia.

13. Joan Booth and Robert Maltby, “Light and Dark: Play on *Candidus* and Related Concepts in the Elegies of Tibullus,” *Mnemosyne*, Fourth Series 58 (2005): 124–32.

14. R. O. A. M. Lyne, “Propertius and Tibullus: Early Exchanges,” *ClQ* 48 (1998): 542.

15. When *formosa* applies to a woman in Catullus, she becomes worthy of elegy and elevated above other women—see Zarker, “Lesbia’s Charms,” 112.

16. Archibald W. Allen, “Notes on Propertius i.2 and i.8,” *CP* 45 (1950): 36. *Formosa* appears to define the elegiac mistress’s capacity to be attractive—see Konstantinos P. Nikoloutsos, “Beyond Sex: The Poetics and Politics of Pederasty in Tibullus 1.4,” *Phoenix* 61 (2007): 60.

an ideal elegiac mistress: “[Now] the trusting boy enjoys your goldenness, he hopes you will always be available, always affectionate, not knowing of the deceitful breeze” (*quin nunc te fruitur credulus aurea, / qui semper vacuum, semper amabilem / sperat, nescius aurae / fallacis*, *Odes* I.5.9–12). Pyrrha exerts power or magic over the person she attracts, deceiving him into thinking that she will always be a golden mistress. The initial rush of her presence blinds the poet, but she quickly departs as soon as she grows tired of him. Horace hoists Pyrrha up as an archetype of elegiac mistresses: beautiful, charming, attractive, but also deceitful. Her appearance does not resemble her personality. Catullus also understands this idea when he says that “it befits her to write on the wind and swift water” (*dicit: sed mulier cupido quod dicit amanti, / in vento et rapida scriber oportet aqua*, Catullus LXX.3–4). Both Horace and Catullus use wind imagery to show how fickle and changing the elegiac mistress is. While Canidia does not look like an elegiac mistress or behave like one, she, Pyrrha, and the unnamed woman in Catullus (presumably Lesbia) all deceive men. Pyrrha and Lesbia do it through their charm—Canidia, however, relies on her magic to enjoy the same success.

### CANIDIA THE WITCH

Horace plays on the Greco-Roman tradition of witchcraft to formulate Canidia. He develops her by harking back to infamous Grecian witches—Medea, Hecate, and Circe. Each of these witches enjoys some notoriety regarding her deadly methods. While Medea relies heavily on potion making to kill her enemies,<sup>17</sup> Circe engages in both spell work and potion making,<sup>18</sup> and Hecate prefers to involve herself in the affairs of men by using her personality.<sup>19</sup> Canidia does not resemble just one of these witches, but all of them.

Canidia exceeds Greek witches in ugliness. While traditional classical depictions of Medea, Hecate, and Circe render these women as beautiful goddesses or as “an aspect of the goddess,”<sup>20</sup> Horace’s Canidia is completely different. As previously explored, her name generates both irony and tension—her ironic ugliness has separated her from both muses and witches, all her beautiful predecessors.

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17. Charles Segal, “Black and White Magic in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*: Passion, Love, and Art,” *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics*, Third Series 9 (2002): 7.

18. Hugh Parry, “Circe and the Poets: Theocritus IX.35–36,” *Illinois Classical Studies* 12 (1987): 7–8.

19. Patricia A. Marquardt, “A Portrait of Hecate,” *AJP* 102 (1981): 247–49.

20. Nancy Tuana, “Medea: With the Eyes of the Lost Goddess,” *Sound* 68 (1985): 254.

Scholars have long compared Canidia to Medea, which would suggest that Canidia's magic pales in comparison to Medea's deathly spells.<sup>21</sup> However, even if one makes this comparison, Canidia's witchcraft greatly overpowers Medea's because she shows cruel creativity beyond that of other witches. Medea's magic consists of patterns—she employs the same strategies over and over again as they are successful. Canidia experiments with a variety of different types of magic, including attempting to steal livers, creating love potions, controlling people, and watching a young boy starve to death.<sup>22</sup> She prolongs pain and torture, while Medea swiftly disposes of her enemies for her own personal gain. Medea's motivation stems from her desire to punish those who harm her, performing magic on a personal level. Canidia's magic appears more random than Medea's, and her motivations do not receive much attention at all. Perhaps we can attribute this to Euripides's psychological interests,<sup>23</sup> but Horace also consciously separates her from the Grecian tradition to emphasize the style and reach of her magic.

Medea, an earlier witch, seeks *only* to destroy, not to influence—she's hell-bent on obliterating those she dislikes and whomever may stand in her way, much like Circe turning men into pigs (Homer, *Od.* 10.212–307). Their motivation is contained within their sexual desires and their lack of fulfillment,<sup>24</sup> so these earlier witches seem to be internal, introspective, and emotional creatures. Meanwhile, Canidia, a much later witch, ensnares Horace through her magic for the whole of the *Epodes*, inspiring him to write poetry that he does

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21. See Meredith Prince, "Canidia Channels Medea: Rereading Horace's *Epode* 5," *CW* 106 (2013): 610. An elementary understanding of witchcraft's evolution produces such an idea. But since witchcraft differed so much between Canidia's and Medea's times, their magic would obviously be different (see Barbette Stanley Spaeth, "From Goddess to Hag: The Greek and the Roman Witch in Classical Literature," in *Daughters of Hecate: Women and Magic in the Ancient World*, ed. Kimberly B. Stratton with Dayna S. Kalleres [New York: Oxford University Press, 2014], 41–70). Comparing their magic in this way is inaccurate because Canidia inherits the Medean magic, but since the definition of magic has changed over time, she naturally practices it in an expanded context.

22. When Canidia buries the small boy in *Epode* 17, she performs a magical ritual. This is evidenced by the boy's initial plea as he gives himself to her magic and describes how she has the power to use spells (*Epode* 17.1–7). He also undergoes physical transformations because of her potions (17.22–23) and declares that he no longer denies magic (17.27–29). This scene thus contains magical elements and may even hark back to Horace's *Sermo* (I.8) where Canidia steals herbs from Maecenas's garden.

23. Monica Silveira Cyrino, "Sex, Status and Song: Locating the Lyric Singer in the Actors' Duets of Euripides," *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica*, New Series 60 (1998): 82–83. Euripides pays special attention to the emotions and psychological status of particularly female choral characters. This is evident as he discusses Medea.

24. Our perspective on earlier witches's focus on sexual desire may have developed during the Christian era, but evidence exists for this view within the classical sphere as well—see Margaret Denike, "The Devil's Insatiable Sex: A Genealogy of Evil Incarnate," *Hypatia* 18, no. 1 (2003): 27; and Spaeth, "From Goddess to Hag," 41–70.

not wish to write. In this way, her magic clearly succeeds as she continually mystifies him. He would not even be writing about her if she did not inspire him to do so. Later witches therefore appear to be much more concerned with the external—seeking money, fame, power, or influence over another person. Unlike earlier witches, later witches' magic is not an external display of an internal struggle but rather a manifestation of them seeking what is external. Though Watson says Canidia's magic is "vain, ineffectual, and pretentious," such is the case only if one considers the magic Horace describes, not the magic he presides over and invents.<sup>25</sup>

To this end, Horace introduces a new kind of witch—one who, while in close connection with her literary predecessors, goes beyond the mark and develops the need to control and manipulate for sport, not just for sexual gratification. Magic changes over time and does not involve a specific archetype, even though early witches often fit this mold. There are distinct forms of magic that require a different practitioner. While Medea, Circe, and even Hecate are beautiful and delicate creatures, Canidia is a hag, more animal-like, disgusting.<sup>26</sup> Their physical differences separate them because she does not fit the practitioner archetype of the past. This description of Canidia begins early in the *Sermones* and continues throughout the *Epodes*, offering some liberty for the rest of the *Epodes*.

Horace mentions hags in *Epodes* 8 and 12 with sexual appetites and senile appearances similar to Canidia and the Roman witch archetype—these unnamed women could potentially be our central muse Canidia, as they resemble her in both appearance and attitude. They bark at him, insisting that his performance does not satisfy them, suggesting that a bucolic poet<sup>27</sup> would do so more (*Epode* 12). Horace suggests that his poetic intercourse with these women does not result in the elegiac poetry that he craves, but instead becomes as rough and withered as Canidia herself. The *Epodes* never become elegiac but stay consistently iambic throughout, which suggests that the muse remains Canidia throughout the entirety of *Epodes* because she embodies the characteristics of iambic poetry. And yet she differs from her literary predecessors in a multitude of ways, not only in appearance but in goals and practice.

25. Lindsay C. Watson, *A Commentary on Horace's Epodes* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press: 2003), 182.

26. Spaeth, "From Goddess to Hag," 41–70.

27. Horace names Amyntas of Cous in *Epode* 12. Vergil mentions Amyntas in his *Eclogues*, referring to him as a very good bucolic poet (*Ecl.* 2.35–73, 3.66–67, 5.8–19, 10.37–77). He makes an appearance in Theocritus in a similar fashion (*Theocritus, Id.* 7). We do not know whether he existed as a real poet, but the thought here is intriguing. While he does not write iambic poetry (at least to our knowledge), he still breaks from the elegiac tradition, which allows him to be masculine enough to handle a muse like Canidia.

While we must be careful not to assume that Canidia's magic is *not* of the same cloth as Medea's, Circe's, and Hecate's (since she is directly connected to these witches), Horace does differentiate her by focusing on the power that she lords over him, the poet.

### CANIDIA IN THE *SERMONES*

The *Sermones*, a series of satirical works by Horace, introduce Canidia in *Sermo* I.8. She is positioned in the Garden of Maecenas, a *locus amoenus*. She and her companion Sagana, another witch in the *Sermones*, enter it with the intent to steal herbs for their witchcraft as Priapus, a Roman god of fertility, is protecting the garden.

Maecenas, who was Horace's patron, had earlier remodeled a graveyard into these gardens. Platner describes this action as "transforming this unsavoury region [from the graveyard] into a beautiful promenade. . . . [These] gardens were near those of Lamia."<sup>28</sup> The transformation suggests that Maecenas's infiltration beautifies, making one wonder what happens when Canidia invades this same garden, "converted from a plague spot into a place of beauty."<sup>29</sup> Horace mentions this garden in *Odes* III.29.12, contrasting its beauty to "the smoke, splendor, and din of Rome" (*fumum et opes strepitumque Romae*). It can also be viewed in contrast to the lair of Lamia the legendary Roman child eater, as will be examined later in this section. Although someone within the garden could still see Rome's smoggy fog and potentially even the lair of Lamia, it protected them from that negativity—until Canidia came.

Even though Maecenas thought he transformed the space, it remained a liminal space between life and death.<sup>30</sup> Despite its loveliness, the garden had come from a graveyard. The life of the new flowers budding under Priapus's auspices is juxtaposed with Canidia, who ushers in a tension between life and death. Maecenas attempts to cover all the remaining graveyard elements with the beauty of flowers and new life, but underneath lurk connections with death. Such deathly elements attract Canidia to the garden previously invaded by Maecenas's infiltration.

Priapus, as guardian of the garden and god of fertility, clearly represents life, while conniving and liver-stealing Canidia represents death. Horace constructs a satirical battle between the two as she invades his space. She and Sagana invoke Hecate and Tisiphone, a witch and a Fury unmistakably

28. Samuel Ball Platner, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, rev. Thomas Ashby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929), 269.

29. Ellen Churchill Semple, "Ancient Mediterranean Pleasure Gardens," *Geographical Review* 19 (1929): 438.

30. Paule, *Canidia*, 37.

connected with death, as they scour the garden to “gather bones and harmful herbs” (*ossa legant herbasque nocentis*, *Serm.* I.8.22). Horace makes a direct reference to the garden’s past while also suggesting that harmful herbs lurk there between the beautiful flowers.

The collection of harmful herbs also suggests that one of Canidia’s hobbies is potion making and that she intends to inflict harm. Her magic is not simply creating love potions; she concocts potions with the capacity to injure, maim, harm, or even kill. Horace sets her apart from other witches through this development of her cruelty. Even within a garden, Canidia sniffs out the harmful herbs.

Horace’s placement of Canidia here suggests something revelatory about her. Even though he as poet is *vates* (“prophet”), it is *Canidia* who reveals a key aspect about how someone could defeat her. Staying true to the constraints of the genre he works in, Horace has Priapus—who symbolizes life, as he is connected to fertility—expel a loud noise, which scatters the witches. Horace could be inserting himself as Priapus in this particular scene,<sup>31</sup> and if he indeed represents the poet, then this accidental instance of nature becomes even more interesting. Horace becomes the safeguard of nature while Canidia sneaks into the garden—the *locus amoenus*, his poetry—and he scrambles to expel her, realizing his artificial methods are not effective enough. What eventually does stop her is not artificial but natural. Neither Priapus nor his skill and honor can do anything about the witches in the garden—only an accidental fart drives the scene forward.<sup>32</sup> This scene functions as commentary on the natural versus the unnatural. Canidia reveals the concealed potential perversion of nature lurking within the garden, while he (Horace/Priapus/the poet) learns that only nature can overcome this perversion.

Horace also discusses Canidia in the context of a dinner party in *Sermo* II.8. She is connected with human sacrifice, deepening her witchy conviction. There she morphs into a supernatural creature who first interacts with nature at its most basic level and then perverts it for her witchy purposes. He only briefly comments on her: “[As] if Canidia had breathed on them, in a worse manner than African snakes” (*velut illis / Canidia adflasset peior serpentibus Afris*, *Serm.* II.8.94–95). He clarifies her connection to nature when he compares her to an African snake—but again she goes beyond the natural with devastating consequences.

31. Martha Habash, “Priapus: Horace in Disguise?,” *CJ* 94 (1999): 285.

32. William S. Anderson, “The Form, Purpose, and Position of Horace’s *Satire* I,8,” *AJP* 93 (1972): 8.

The purpose of mentioning Canidia in the midst of a dinner party seems evasive, but Freudenburg notes that “this is the *only* place in extant Latin literature where the salt and barley is mentioned without specific reference to the *mola salsa* . . . sprinkled on sacrificial victims.”<sup>33</sup> By the time that Horace was writing, the only acceptable form of human sacrifice was killing unchaste Vestal Virgins in order to restore order to the universe.<sup>34</sup> His connection of Canidia with human sacrifice indicates it to be an unnaturally cruel and perverted phenomenon.

Greco-Roman society did not generally approve of human sacrifice, even within mythology, because of its cruelty.<sup>35</sup> The sacrifice of Iphigenia was not well received even in the fifth century BCE, when Aeschylus refers to her as “sister, cruelly sacrificed” (*Cho.* 241). Athena swoops in to save Iphigenia by performing a magical metamorphosis, which shows that magic surpasses human sacrifice, even when society did not necessarily approve of it either. Those who did perform human sacrifice often connected it to the supernatural, as a way of pleasing the gods, but no traces of that notion exist within the Horatian canon. Canidia performs human sacrifice not only for sport, but for elevating herself above the supernatural. Her methods include using natural ingredients, extracted from beautiful places but distorted from their original purpose. By strengthening this connection to human sacrifice, Horace elevates Canidia; not only does she become more venomous than a natural creature, she transcends social norms and natural law and participates in nasty affairs.

Horace more subtly develops this same view of Canidia by placing her in the Garden of Maecenas in *Sermo* 1.8, which is in close proximity to Lamia’s lair. Diodorus Siculus describes Lamia as a beautiful woman who incidentally happens to devour children (XX.41), whereas Horace portrays Canidia as a ghastly hag who happens to enjoy human sacrifice. By the first century CE (shortly after Horace’s lifetime), Lamia was seen more as a seductress who used her sexuality to lure and eat young men.<sup>36</sup> This effectively makes Canidia the double of Lamia.

33. Kirk Freudenburg, “Canidia at the Feast of Nasidienus (Hor. S. 2.8.95),” *TAPA* 125 (1995): 214.

34. Celia E. Schultz, “The Romans and Ritual Murder,” *JAAR* 78 (2010): 518.

35. Andrejs Petrowski and Bert Klein, “Iphigenia,” in *Brill’s New Pauly Supplements I – Volume 4: The Reception of Myth and Mythology*, ed. Maria Moog-Grünwald, <http://www.brillonline.nl/entries/brill-s-new-pauly-supplements-i-4/iphigenia-e526970?s.num=0> (accessed May 3, 2019). In section B.1.1, “[Reception in] Literature and philosophy,” Petrowski and Klein discuss how human sacrifices were cruel and “subjected to ethical reflection.”

36. Leonhard Schmitz, “Lamia,” *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, ed. William Smith, 3 vols. (London: John Murray, 1880), 2:713–14.



Both women are smelly, supernatural, serpentine creatures who are shunned and feared by the rest of society. When Horace describes Canidia as having breath or venom worse than a snake (cf. *Serm.* II.8.95) and places her in close proximity to Lamia's lair, he creates a connection between the two because of their serpentine characteristics. Both creatures disgust those who see them. Horace shows that Canidia resembles Lamia in terms of reception and disgust. However, even though they are disgusting creatures, both possess some level of intrigue. There is something about the unnatural and supernatural that engages the human mind. We cannot comprehend or even stop this force in a deliberate manner—it can only be ended with an accidental action, which happens in *Sermo* I.8 and *Epode* 17.

The comparison of Lamia to Canidia (and that of Hecate to Lamia)<sup>37</sup> creates a stronger witch than previously conceived. The infamous witches in antiquity—Lamia, Medea, Hecate, and Circe—all find their way into Horace's poetry when he attempts to describe Canidia. She embodies characteristics of each, but he adds another layer of Roman cruelty to develop her more fully.

In the *Sermones*, Horace shows Canidia to have supreme supernatural powers that stem from her willingness to pervert nature for her wicked deeds. Horace establishes early that when interacting with Canidia, one must cease and desist from artificial methods because nature ultimately stops her. This proves particularly interesting for understanding his interactions with her throughout the *Epodes*.

### CANIDIA IN THE EPODES

The concept of “poetic intercourse” rings especially true in Horace's *Epodes* as he discusses how he has sex with nasty women like Canidia. Procreation is natural, since life comes from it, whereas Canidia manipulates nature in order to destroy it. Her magic differs from her literary predecessors because it is of “unprecedented cruelty,” which is evident when she engages in human sacrifice in *Epode* 5.<sup>38</sup> She collects materials in preparation for such activities, but she also serves to disgust the reader, especially when contrasted with the central character Priapus.<sup>39</sup>

Canidia's perversion of nature is highlighted in the *Epodes*. In *Epode* 17, Canidia and her fellow hags capture an unsuspecting boy to steal his liver for

37. Erwin F. Cook, *The Odyssey in Athens: Myths of Cultural Origins*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 89.

38. C. E. Manning, “Canidia in the *Epodes* of Horace,” *Mnemosyne*, New Series 23 (1970): 399.

39. E. Adelaide Hahn, “*Epodes* 5 and 17, *Carmina* 1.16 and 1.17,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 70 (1939): 213.

their magical purposes. Horace describes how she buries the boy alive and starves him to death so that she can collect his liver. Despite his protests and curses, which conclude the poem, no savior attempts to rescue the boy, leading the reader to assume that he dies.

The setting here is somewhat similar to that in *Sermo* 1.8. It takes place in a graveyard near the Esquiline, a Roman hill,<sup>40</sup> and is centered on the interaction between a male figure and the witches. There is a shift from a *locus amoenus* to a *locus horridus*, implied by the sparse details given by the sacrificial victim referring to a dark forest graveyard. This transition in scenery is due not only to genre but also to the perception of Canidia. In the *Sermones*, she was somewhat silly. She ran off cackling and did not exhibit numerous monstrous characteristics. Here Horace tries to portray her as evil while staying true to the basic elements he included in *Sermones*. The audience must laugh at her evil because she leaves the little boy in a hole in the ground for days and just stares at him; Horace's attempt at comedy is highly ineffective.

Bearing this in mind, Horace could be the little boy in this *Epode*,<sup>41</sup> and, if he does parallel both the little boy and Priapus, a discussion on victimhood is necessary. Canidia entraps this boy, and he eventually resigns to the fact that he will die by her hand. Looming over him as he stands in the hole, she awaits his starvation, intending to use his liver for a love potion (*Epode* 5.30–40). This type of excessive cruelty is satirically contrived and is meant to intrigue Horace's audience. Instead of simply killing the boy in a quick and easy fashion, Horace's witch prefers to lord over him for many days and watch as the torture and torment unfold. While her magic may not be efficient, it certainly has an element of cruelty previously unseen in typical depictions of witches. Additionally, she places the rotten food in front of him, so that his eyes will rot away as well (of course Horace writes this to show the absurdity of the situation). While she intends to inflict as much cruelty and pain on him as possible, she ends up creating a scene that is laughable.

Canidia still displays her uniquely Roman cruelty, but Horace undercuts it by showing the lengths she will go to in order to appear cruel. Circe's transformation of the crew members into pigs was relatively quick and somewhat painless (Homer, *Od.* 10.229–40). Even Medea's infanticide did not drag itself out,

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40. Marguerite Johnson, "Witches in Time and Space: *Satire* 1.8, *Epode* 5 and Landscapes of Fear," *Herm* 192 (2012): 13–14, makes the interesting connection between the placement of the Gardens of Maecenas and this graveyard. They appear to be in close proximity to each other. This idea is particularly useful because it strengthens the amount of parallels between the two scenes and solidifies the importance of discussing them in relation to each other.

41. See Hahn, "*Epodes* 5 and 17, *Carmina* 1.16 and 1.17," 213–30.

no matter how disturbing and off-putting it was.<sup>42</sup> Horace makes Canidia even crueler than these witches because she prolongs the experience of her magic. He depicts her as a bumbling, stumbling witch who wants to have sex with whomever she considers to be the best performer (*Epode* 12.14–20). She is not the delicate muse with whom he falls in love and can write quaint dainty verses about, and she derives pleasure from sex and snatching livers. Regardless of how disgusting she is or how much she insults him, Horace still draws something from her that he does not draw from anyone else. The tension in their relationship represents him struggling with her magical influences over the course of a collection of iambic poems he does not want to write.

In *Epode* 5, Canidia begins her liver-harvesting process in order to concoct a love potion for a man she wishes to have. She presumably gives the potion to Horace, because from that point forward he writes about the hags with whom he has sex, although he resents it. His affair with a ghastly woman continues as he cannot break the spell and she continually overpowers him. This shows that her love potion definitely worked but could not overpower her witchy attributes. She is such a witch that, even under the influence of a potion, Horace recognizes her magic but cannot seem to halt the affair. Her magic gets the job done, but he longs to show a more disgusting and disturbing witch that ever before—a witch whose inner nature cannot be hidden, even though she may cast spells and cook potions.

Horace's recognition that her magic works and that one must submit to her occurs again in this poem. The little boy (Horace) echoes this point and recognizes a solution: "When I have been ordered to perish and breathed my last, I will haunt you nightly as a Fury" (*Ubi perire iussus exspiravero, / nocturnus occuram Furor, Epode* 5.91–92). Much like Priapus, the boy realizes that there is nothing that he can do presently to stop Canidia from working her terror upon him, but he also recognizes that he will have time to take revenge on her later. His opportunity eventually comes in *Epode* 17. Her influence remains strong over him, but the bonds of death, a natural occurrence, will ultimately grant him victory over her. Horace captures the witch in the end, doing so through a complex narrative, which itself empowers him to restrict her witchcraft.

Canidia makes her final appearance in *Epode* 17, where she and Horace engage in direct dialogue with one another. He begins by supplicating to her and submitting to her will, and then she responds sarcastically. This response

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42. Nicholas A. E. Kalospyros, "The Greek Vision of a Female Infanticidal: The Euripidean Medea and the Murderess of Alexandros Papadiamantis," *Parnassos (Ιαπωνιασσός)* 49, no. 1 (2007): 65–86.

ultimately closes off the poem, unlike the little boy/Horace's final remarks in *Epode* 5. Furthermore, *Epode* 17 finishes the collection as compiled by Horace. Even though she may have the last word, we must take caution and remember that Horace writes the poems and reports her words. Although it may at first seem like she has completely overpowered the poet, a closer look at Horace's plea and the last lines of the poem proves otherwise.

Horace's plea does not satisfy Canidia. He offers to play a song for her, lying about his feelings for her: "[Or] if you wish my lyre as a liar to sound forth: you chaste, you good woman, you walk as a golden star among the stars" (*sive mendaci lyra / voles sonari, tu pudica, tu proba / perambulabis astra sidus aureum, Epode* 17.39–41). Canidia reacts to this by asserting that it was better if he did not give this plea at all (*Epode* 17.53–55).

Her ghastly appearance contributes to her witchy powers. If she wished, she could concoct a potion that allowed her to look more desirable. But her deliberate choice to remain disgusting means she enjoys her appearance for some reason. Another possible and intriguing interpretation of this section involves her inability to finish off a man. Horace allocates certain levels of power to her, even engages in poetic intercourse with her, which allows him to be at least somewhat vulnerable. Despite doing this, he also does not allow her to overpower him. Her disgusting and ghastly appearance prevents him from being completely overpowered by her. Unlike elegiac poets who encounter the problem of falling deeply in love with their muse, Horace's Canidia disgusts him so much that he does not run the risk of such a dilemma. As aforementioned, she gives someone a love potion and this sparks a level of infatuation with her, but critically her appearance prevents him from loving her truly. While a potential detriment, this certainly can be seen as an asset because it separates her from the realm of elegiac muses.

While Canidia may disgust Horace, she possesses a remarkable sense of self-confidence that allows her to mock his sexual prowess (or lack thereof) and assert a measure of dominance over him. Throughout the *Epodes*, the unnamed hags, all of whom he cannot seem to stop having sex with, lack physical beauty—which means that there must be something else about them that intrigues him. This could come from a love potion or from her intelligence. Nevertheless, Horace establishes this dominance over himself, only to undercut it in his poetry.

Since Horace reports Canidia's words, we must remember that he also has the power to manipulate her and her ideas. She exists within his work as his creation. While he subjects himself to her because of her magic, ultimately she is the puppet and can be molded into whomever he pleases. She ends the

*Epodes* with this: “[Am] I supposed to cry over the failure of my doing art on you?” (*plorem artis in te nil agentis exitus*, *Epode* 17.81). Despite her magic working perfectly on him for a series of poems, his control over her constitutes his ultimate victory. While she may have the last word, that last word comes through Horace.

Canidia is thus woefully and deliberately unfinished. In *Sermo* 1.8, she scurried away without fully achieving her purpose. In *Epode* 5, she never officially concludes her liver-harvesting. And here in *Epode* 17.81, she doesn’t finish Horace off. He offers a glimpse into her cruelty but never consummates it because of his ultimate control over her. She may have power to change his appearance (*Epode* 17.21–23) and his feelings for her, but she is not able to control him forever.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout the *Epodes* and *Sermones*, Horace constructs a uniquely Roman witch. She surpasses the witchcraft of Medea, Hecate, Circe, and Lamia, although he satirizes her particular brand of evil. While other witches depended on internal motivations to forward their witchcraft, Canidia presents a unique evil as she relies on external motivations to accomplish the same thing. Her witchcraft ends up being both impersonal and personal. In the *Epodes*, Horace engages in poetic intercourse with her. Both strive to overpower each other: she engages in liver snatching; he in insulting. At the end of the *Epodes*, they have their final encounter together. Although she has the last word, he reports them, showing that he ultimately overpowers her. His relationship with her shows that he constructed her as the meta-muse of anti-elegy.

# EVALUATING DEAFNESS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE: A SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF <sup>ל</sup>הרש

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**Abstract:** In this paper, I explore the semantic value of the Hebrew root denoting deafness in the Hebrew Bible, <sup>ל</sup>הרש. A majority of its attestations have been rendered by translators and lexicographers in a way that conveys conditions other than deafness, especially muteness. I propose a basic model for ascertaining the semantic value of <sup>ל</sup>הרש in the context of its adjectival and verbal occurrences. I find that an approach of rendering the root idiomatically allows for a majority of its attestations to reflect a semantic of deafness and, in a number of instances, to represent the condition in a way that is not socially marginalizing or stigmatizing in nature.

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to conduct a reassessment of the term used to indicate the impairment of deafness in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>1</sup> This will be done through a semantic analysis of the attestations of the Classical Hebrew root <sup>ל</sup>הרש, which is connected with deafness, among other conditions. I will begin by introducing the discipline of biblical disability criticism and assessing the bearing it has had on an understanding of deafness as an impairment and disability in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>2</sup> From there, I will identify the attestations of the

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1. I must thank Dr. Matthew Grey, Dr. Donald Parry, and Dr. Stephen Ricks each for their valuable counsel in the preliminary stages of my research. I express further appreciation to Dr. Ricks, to Sam Mitchell, to my wife, and to the anonymous reviewer of my article for their careful readings of my final draft and their suggestions for improvement. Lastly, I thank my deaf parents, Jason and SteVee, and my wonderful wife Sarah for their love and support of my endeavors. Naturally, I accept ultimate responsibility for the thoughts and conclusions posited here.

2. For an important understanding on the distinction between impairment and disability in modern disability studies, see Lennard J. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* (London: Verso, 1995), 73–74: “One could go so far as to say that disability, in our sense of the word, did not exist in such a world. Of course, impairments existed, but the impaired body was part of a lived experience, and in that sense functioned. It was not defined strictly by its relation to means of production or a productive economy.

root, examine its treatment by lexicographers, and offer an alternate suggestion for understanding the root's basic semantic value and rendering in translation. This root can be translated from a basis of deafness in more occurrences than acknowledged by major lexicons. I will then address the importance of this semantic treatment of חרשׁ<sup>11</sup> for an understanding of deafness in the Hebrew Bible. In doing so, the need for further research to examine the experience of deafness in the broader ancient Near East will be demonstrated.<sup>3</sup>

## DEAFNESS AS “DISABILITY” IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

If a date for the foundation of biblical disability criticism had to be identified, scholars in this field would likely point to November 20, 1995, when the first session of the “Religion and Disability Studies Consultation” was held at the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting.<sup>4</sup> That same year, Hector Avalos, professor at Iowa State University, released his monograph *Illness and Health Care in the Ancient Near East*, a work viewed as one of the first to illuminate this new field's possibilities.<sup>5</sup> Since then there have been many publications on the construction of disability in the biblical text. These works have tended either to revolve around specific biblical passages and the role of disability in them, or to discuss the broader

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But by the mid-nineteenth century, the body *an sich* had become the body *für sich* and the impaired body had become disabled—unable to be part of the productive economy, confined to institutions, shaped to contours defined by a society at large.” In addition, “impairment” is used here in connection with its nuance in disability criticism, not as a component of the designation *hearing impaired*, which is no longer considered orthodox as an inner-cultural term within the Deaf community nor acceptable for use by outsiders of the Deaf community as an indicator for the condition of deafness. See “Community and Culture—Frequently Asked Questions,” *National Association of the Deaf*, <https://www.nad.org/resources/american-sign-language/community-and-culture-frequently-asked-questions/>, for information from one organization of the Deaf, among many, on the incorrectness of several terms in referring to deaf people, as well as the incorrectness of an assumed natural relationship between muteness and deafness.

3. I have demarcated the scope of my research in this paper to an internal analysis of חרשׁ in the Classical Hebrew of the Hebrew Bible. For the Hebrew utilized throughout this paper, see Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1967/1977), which itself is based on the Masoretic Text of the Leningrad Codex B19A. More research on חרשׁ and deafness in the Hebrew Bible has yet to be done from a basis of textual criticism, historical linguistics, and comparative linguistics. These methods have not been applied in the present paper for the sake of space, though they will be part of my continuing research on this subject.

4. Hector Avalos, Sarah J. Melcher, and Jeremy Schipper, “Introduction,” in *This Able Body: Rethinking Disabilities in Biblical Studies*, eds. Hector Avalos, Sarah J. Melcher, and Jeremy Schipper, SemeiaSt 55 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 1–9, here 3.

5. Rebecca Raphael, *Biblical Corpora: Representations of Disability in Hebrew Biblical Literature*, LHBOTS 445 (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 15–16.

function of disability within the Hebrew Bible as a whole.<sup>6</sup> Few efforts have been made to systematically investigate a single disability in its entirety in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>7</sup>

Deafness is a condition that typically falls under the wider classification of “disability” in today’s social vernacular.<sup>8</sup> The designation of “disability” is a modern one, and, as a nuanced term in disability criticism, one that modern critical scholars bring with them into their reading of the biblical text.<sup>9</sup> Many of the conditions termed “disabilities” today can be found in the Hebrew Bible, including deafness, blindness, and muteness; however, the category delineated by the modern use of “disability” does not have a perfect analogy in Classical Hebrew. Rather, the biblical authors had their own contemporary categories for these conditions.

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6. For works centered on a specific passage, see Jeremy Schipper, *Disability Studies and the Hebrew Bible: Figuring Mephibosheth in the David Story*, LHBOTS 441 (New York: T&T Clark, 2006); and *Disability & Isaiah’s Suffering Servant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). For works surveying disability in the Hebrew Bible at large, see Raphael, *Biblical Corpora*; and Saul Olyan, *Disability in the Hebrew Bible: Interpreting Mental and Physical Differences* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Avalos, Melcher, and Schipper, eds., *This Aabled Body* is a figurative volume for biblical disability criticism that has compiled essays which reflect both approaches listed above.

7. Although few in number, some efforts to examine an impairment across the biblical corpus have been conducted. A noteworthy and exhaustive study is that done by Ray McAllister in his “Theology of Blindness in the Hebrew Scriptures” (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2010). A recent treatment on biblical deafness by Mike Gulliver and William John Lyons, “Conceptualizing the Place of Deaf People in Ancient Israel: Suggestions from Deaf Space,” *JBL* 137 (2018): 537–53, deals with the impairment, albeit on a sociological level. I am not aware of any comprehensive treatment of the semantic basis of the lexeme denoting the condition of deafness in the Hebrew Bible that anticipates this paper’s analysis.

8. Olyan, *Disability*, 2: “As a contested category, there is no single agreed-upon definition of disability in disability studies . . . There is, however, a virtual consensus among scholars in disability studies that disability, like gender, is a social construction rather than something ‘natural and timeless,’ a cultural product that has contributed significantly to the generation and maintenance of inequality in societies.” It is also important to note that, while society may regard deafness as a disability, the Deaf community does not accept the label (cf. Raphael, *Biblical Corpora*, 141: “The Deaf community often distinguishes deafness from disability, viewing itself as a linguistic minority, not a disabled population”).

9. In present Western society, the word *disability* is used in a broad sense to refer to conditions corresponding with a lack of function of the human body, usually relative to a socially constructed ideal of “normality.” These conditions can be emotional, mental, or somatic in nature. In disability criticism, however, different terms are used to encapsulate different nuances of how an individual’s condition is perceived. The term *impairment* is used within a social model of disability to indicate a condition that is connected with a loss of function of the human body. The term *disability* is used in representing the social prejudices faced by individuals with impairments on the grounds of their lack of bodily function, seen as different from a perceived “normality.” This distinction is taken from and explicated further in Nyasha Junior and Jeremy Schipper, “Disability Studies and the Bible,” in *New Meanings for Ancient Texts: Recent Approaches to Biblical Criticisms and Their Applications*, ed. Steven L. McKenzie and John Kaltner (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2013), 21–37, here 35.



In a number of works produced by biblical disability scholars, several categories of disabilities are treated. The only “native” category with a specific Hebrew designation is מום, “defect.”<sup>10</sup> This category, sketched predominantly in Lev 21:17–23, 24:19–20, and Deut 23:2[1], is comprised of somatic impairments, including blindness, lameness, dermal conditions, hunched backs, broken bones, and damaged genitalia, which preclude men of priestly lineage from participating in cultic offerings.<sup>11</sup> Curiously enough, in these qualifying passages, deafness is never designated as מום. On the grounds of its nominative structure, however, deafness can be attributed to a separate native but unnamed category. Schipper calls attention to an internal noun pattern in Hebrew, the *qittēl*, which includes terms designated as מום as well as those that are not, including “deaf” and “mute.”<sup>12</sup> Thus, deafness is classified by its morphology into a group including a number of other somatic impairments, a categorization that is difficult to define due to its inclusion of terms not associated with such impairments.<sup>13</sup> Olyan defines a number of unlabeled but native categories based on the grounds of different combinations of somatic impairments in clusters at various places throughout the Hebrew Bible.<sup>14</sup> He concludes that the grouping of these impairments, both מום and “non-defect,” was reflective of the societal stigmatization imposed on the impaired—specifically through the way these groups were set in parallel to other marginalized demographics in the biblical text.<sup>15</sup> Olyan’s conclusions are incomplete, however, since he only treats adjectival attestations of חרשׁ.<sup>16</sup> I seek to offer a fuller assessment of חרשׁ that considers its verbal attestations as well.

10. Saul Olyan differentiates between “native” classification qualifications and terminology, which originate in the biblical text, and “nonnative” modern language and critical categorization brought by scholars to the text, e.g., the modern use of the term “disability.” See Olyan, *Disability*, 12–13.

11. Olyan, *Disability*, 27. Bracketed numerals refer to English versification where it varies from the Hebrew.

12. Schipper, *Disability Studies*, 65–70. Edgar Kellenberger remarks in his essay that this noun pattern excludes any designations of mental and psychological impairments—see “Mesopotamia and Israel,” in *Disability in Antiquity*, ed. Christian Laes (London: Routledge, 2017), 47–60, here 48.

13. Joshua Fox, *Semitic Noun Patterns*, HSS 52 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 265: “Many of the adjectives in *qittēl* refer to bodily defects. . . . [Some] Hebrew *qittēl* adjectives refer to personal characteristics that are not necessarily defects.” These “non-defective” adjectives include “bald,” “proud,” and “seeing well.”

14. Olyan, *Disability*, 124. For a few examples of these “unlabeled impairment groupings” identified by Olyan, see Isa 35:5–6 and Deut 28:28–29.

15. Olyan, *Disability*, 121–24.

16. Olyan, *Disability*, 181–87. A quick glance through his monograph’s scripture citation index shows that a majority of the verses where verbal attestations of חרשׁ appear in the Hebrew Bible are not treated in this work, and the verses that are cited do not bear on

## DEAFNESS AS A TERM IN BIBLICAL HEBREW

The triconsonantal lexical root for the term “deafness” in the Hebrew Bible is  $\text{חרש}^{\text{II}}$ , which is homophonous with roots that have several other meanings, including  $\text{חרש}^{\text{I}}$  (“to cut in, engrave, plough”),  $\text{חרש}^{\text{III}}$  (with a derived nominal form meaning “wood, wooded height”), and  $\text{חרש}^{\text{IV}}$  (with a number of derived nominal forms, including “magic art or magic drug,” as well as the proper name of a Levite).<sup>17</sup>  $\text{חרש}^{\text{II}}$  appears fifty-seven times in the biblical corpus: nine times as an adjective, forty-seven times as a verb, and once as a noun. The definition of  $\text{חרש}^{\text{II}}$  provided by BDB is first “be silent, dumb, speechless,” then “be deaf.”<sup>18</sup>

### ADJECTIVES

An analysis of  $\text{חָרַשׁ}$ , the adjectival use of  $\text{חרש}^{\text{II}}$ , is important for understanding its verbal forms, as the adjective will serve to secure a semantic meaning for the root at large.<sup>19</sup>  $\text{חָרַשׁ}$  in its various forms appears nine times in the MT of the Leningrad Codex.<sup>20</sup> It is often used substantively and is typically indefinite.<sup>21</sup> In all but one occurrence, at least one other adjective designating a somatic impairment can also be found in the same verse.<sup>22</sup> The method of adjectival analysis begins with the basis of the semantic range offered by lexicons for the term  $\text{חרש}^{\text{II}}$ , being the impairments of deafness and muteness. Evidence is then collected from the context of each attestation, via terms and ideas, which lends to identifying either one impairment or the other as the primary intended

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the use of  $\text{חרש}^{\text{II}}$  in those verses. The verses containing the adjectival occurrences of  $\text{חרש}^{\text{II}}$ , however, are cited frequently.

17. “ $\text{חרש}^{\text{II}}$ ,” BDB 361; “ $\text{חרש}^{\text{III}}$ ,” *HALOT* 1:357–58. The numbering of these homophonous roots of  $\text{חרש}$  and their conceptual definitions follows BDB, 360–61. Cf. *HALOT* 1:357–58, where a similar numbering system is employed; however, BDB  $\text{חרש}^{\text{III}}$  is removed from its list of roots and treated nominatively, and BDB  $\text{חרש}^{\text{IV}}$  is counted as  $\text{חרש}^{\text{III}}$ .

18. “ $\text{חרש}^{\text{II}}$ ,” BDB 361. A similar semantic range is presented in “ $\text{חרש}^{\text{II}}$ ,” *HALOT* 1:357–58.

19. The use of the pointed  $\text{חָרַשׁ}$  here is used to distinguish between the adjectival form and the lexical root mentioned throughout the paper.

20. Exod 4:11; Lev 19:14; Ps 38:14[13]; 58:5; Isa 29:18; 35:5; 42:18–19; 43:8. A thorough examination of the text-critical issues of the verses in which  $\text{חרש}^{\text{II}}$  appears was not conducted in the preparation of this paper. While I have attempted to draw only on internal evidence in the MT of the Leningrad Codex, there will be one textual variant that has bearing on a use of  $\text{חרש}^{\text{II}}$  that will be treated below. Its inclusion is only due to its bearing on the term.

21. Two definite uses of the adjective are identified in Isa 29:18 and Isa 42:18. An attributive use of the adjective is used in Ps 58:5[4], and the adjective is used in predicate position in Isa 42:19.

22. Seven instances (Exod 4:11; Lev 19:14; Isa 29:18; 35:5; 42:18, 19; 43:8) occur with blindness (root  $\text{עור}$ ) and two (Exod 4:11; Ps 38:14) with muteness (root  $\text{אלם}$ ). Ps 58:5[4] has no other impairment term.

understanding.<sup>23</sup> The different indications of somatic function and impairment that elucidate the meaning of all nine attestations of חָרַשׁ can be grouped into five cases: (1) juxtaposition with a separate term indicating vocal impairment; (2) relationship with the vocal verb קָלַל (“to curse”); (3) relationship with the aural noun אָזָן (“ear”); (4) relationship with the aural verb שָׁמַע (“to hear”); and (5) proximity to a use of חָרַשׁ with a secured definition.

*Adjective Case 1: Juxtaposition with Term for Muteness (Exod 4:11)*

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלָיו מִי שֵׁם פֶּה לְאָדָם אוֹ מִי־יִשׁוּם אֵלָם אוֹ חָרַשׁ אוֹ פִקֵּחַ אוֹ עֵוֶר הֲלֹא  
אֲנִכִי יְהוָה

*And the LORD said to him, “Who gives man speech? Who makes him dumb or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?”<sup>24</sup>*

In this verse, the most important factor in narrowing the semantic possibilities of חָרַשׁ is the fact that the idea of vocal impairment that חָרַשׁ could represent is already encompassed by the adjacent term אֵלֶם. Here, חָרַשׁ is juxtaposed with the *qittēl* adjective אֵלֶם, “mute,” just as פִּקֵּחַ, “seeing,” is juxtaposed with עוֹר, “blind.”<sup>25</sup> Thus, with the option of muteness already occupied, this substantive adjective is left only to represent the concept of aural impairment. The resultant translation of “deaf” is a notion that most commentators of Exodus agree with.<sup>26</sup>

*Adjective Case 2: Relationship with Vocal Verb קָלַל, “To Curse” (Lev 19:14)*

לֹא־תִקְלַל חָרַשׁ וְלִפְנֵי עוֹר לֹא תִתֵּן מִקְשָׁל וְיִרְאֵתָּ מִפְּאֵלֶיךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה

*You shall not insult the deaf, or place a stumbling block before the blind. You shall fear your God: I am the LORD.*

23. That is to say, there is little way that scholars could preclude a secondary or resultant impairment, e.g., muteness that *can* be experienced simultaneously by those who are deaf; however, the assumption that both impairments always appear together is not founded and certainly is not to be supported by the premises of this paper.

24. The English translation of the presented verses are taken from Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). All renderings of Hebrew terms and phrases in the body of this paper are presented in quotation marks; variants to the NJPS’s wording reflect my own translation.

25. For lexical information on these terms, see the following: אֵלֶם: BDB 47–48, HALOT 1:57; פִּקֵּחַ: BDB 824, HALOT 3:959–60; עוֹר: BDB 734, HALOT 2:803.

26. For commentators who translate this use of חָרַשׁ as “deaf,” see John I. Durham, *Exodus*, WBC 3 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 47; Cornelis Houtman, *Exodus*, 4 vols., HCOT (Leuven: Peeters, 1993), here 1:409; William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 182.

The connection of הָרַשׁ with the negated verb לֹא-תִקְלַל, “you shall not curse,” is the basis for understanding the adjective’s meaning. That the verb קָלַל in the *piel* stem can represent the vocalization of a curse is evidenced by the context of many of its uses.<sup>27</sup> Some scholars thus understand Lev 19:14a to be the prohibition of execrations against the deaf, with its underlying logic being that the deaf would not be able to hear or respond to curses pronounced against them.<sup>28</sup> This logical connection is paralleled in the second colon of the verse, where a different malign act (i.e., placing an obstruction before the blind) is prohibited on the grounds of the somatic impairment of the affected (i.e., the blind). Thus, the meaning of הָרַשׁ here is certainly “deaf.”<sup>29</sup>

*Adjective Case 3: Relationship with Aural Noun* (אָזְנוֹן (ים), “Ear(s)” (Isa 35:5)<sup>30</sup>

אֲזוּ תִפְתַּחְנָה עֵינֵי עִוְרִים וְאָזְנֵי הָרָשִׁים תִּפְתַּחְנָה

*Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.*

The meaning of הָרָשִׁים here is elucidated through its relationship to the aural noun אָזְנוֹן, “ears,” which is in fact explicit in the construct phrase of the two terms. There is no ambiguity in the verse that would allow the possibility of attributing the term to a vocal impairment. Following that logic, the translation of הָרָשִׁים here is “deaf.”<sup>31</sup>

*Adjective Case 4: Relationship with Aural Verbal Root* שָׁמַע, “To Hear” (Isa 42:18)<sup>32</sup>

הַחֲרָשִׁים שָׁמְעוּ וְהַעֲוָרִים הִבִּיטוּ לְרֹאוֹת

27. For example, Exod 21:17 demonstrates that the verb קָלַל is a discernable phenomenon. קָלַל as a vocal expression is noted in Lev 24:14 by the use of the participle הַשְּׁמָעִים, “those who heard,” as the designation for the individuals who witnessed the execration.

28. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 3A (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 1640: “Since the deaf cannot hear a curse, they cannot ward it off by a blessing.”

29. For commentators who translate this use of הָרַשׁ as “deaf,” see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1298; John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, WBC 4 (Waco, TX: Word, 1992), 302–3.

30. This same evidence can be applied to the use of the adjective in Isa 43:8 and Ps 58:5[4].

31. For commentators who translate this use of הָרַשׁ as “deaf,” see Willem A. M. Beuken, *Isaiah: Part II, Volume 2: Isaiah Chapters 28–39*, HCOT, trans. Brian Doyle (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 305; Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 251; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 19 (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 455; John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, WBC 25 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 5.

32. The same logic employed here applies to the adjectival uses of חָרַשׁ in Ps 38:14[13] and Isa 29:18.

*Listen, you who are deaf; You blind ones, look up and see!*

The non-aural meaning of החרשים is confirmed by its positioning relative to the aural verb שמעו. This sensory imperative is antithetical to the impairment of deafness; the same pattern is noted in the second colon of the verse, where העורים, “the blind,” are told to הביטו, “look.” On these grounds, the somatic impairment denoted here is deafness.<sup>33</sup>

*Adjective Case 5: Use of Immediate Context to Clarify Meaning (Isa 42:19)*

מִי עוֹר כִּי אִם-עֵבְדִי וְחֵרֵשׁ כְּמַלְאָכֵי אֲשַׁלֵּחַ מִי עוֹר כְּמִשְׁלֵם וְעוֹר כְּעֵבֶר יְהוָה

*Who is so blind as My servant, so deaf as the messenger I send? Who is so blind as the chosen one, So blind as the servant of the LORD?*

Here there are no clear indicators elucidating the correct impairment to be understood by the use of חֵרֵשׁ. With the confirmed identification of החרשים in the preceding verse as “deaf,” however, as well as the juxtaposition of sight and hearing in verse 20 in parallel to עור and חֵרֵשׁ in this verse, a translation of “deaf” rather than “mute” seems confirmed here.<sup>34</sup>

As seen in each case, חֵרֵשׁ in its adjectival form (חֵרֵשׁ) always arrives at a definition meaning “deaf.”<sup>35</sup> There is not a single adjectival attestation where a nonvocal meaning can be better secured than a nonaural one. This is supported either by the relationship of חֵרֵשׁ to context words connected with the somatic function of hearing (ear, the verb “to hear,” the verb “to curse”), or because חֵרֵשׁ is juxtaposed with another term already representing the impairment of muteness. The adjectival use of חֵרֵשׁ represents the condition of deafness on a fundamental level by modifying a subject as being deaf or acting substantively as such. We can thus see the root’s semantic meaning relating primarily to the impairment of deafness rather than muteness.<sup>36</sup>

33. For commentators who translate this use of חֵרֵשׁ as “deaf,” see Jan L. Koole, *Isaiah III*, 3 vols., HCOT (Kampen, the Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1997), 1:261; Childs, *Isaiah*, 328; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 19A (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 216; Watts, *Isaiah*, 122.

34. For commentators who translate this use of חֵרֵשׁ as “deaf,” see Koole, *Isaiah*, 1.261; Childs, *Isaiah*, 328; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 216; and Watts, *Isaiah*, 122.

35. Aside from consensus by commentators on the use of the adjective, both BDB and HALOT agree as to the number, location, and semantic value of the attestations of חֵרֵשׁ.

36. This is not to say that the root cannot and does not represent muteness. Most lexicons acknowledge that חֵרֵשׁ can reflect either deafness or muteness. If these two impairments reflected by the use of the root are to be understood in light of each other, it follows that one is likely the primary impairment, while the other is a resultant or secondary condition of the first, similar to the English “deaf” primarily invoking a sense of auditory impairment, but also (to the disappointment of some) secondarily connoting vocal impairment

## VERBS

While lexicons generally agree on the absolute connection of the adjectival attestations of  $\text{הָרַשׁ}^{\text{H}}$  with deafness, they tend to carry a broader and more nuanced semantic range for its verbal forms.<sup>37</sup>  $\text{הָרַשׁ}^{\text{H}}$  as a verb appears forty-seven times in the MT of the Leningrad Codex<sup>38</sup>—seven times in the *qal* stem, thirty-nine in the *hiphil* stem, and one in the *hithpael* stem. Of the seven *qal* stem attestations, BDB only connects two with deafness while associating the others with muteness. *HALOT*, however, connects all seven *qal* stem attestations with deafness. In both BDB and *HALOT*, all attestations of the *hiphil* stem except one are associated with muteness.<sup>39</sup>

The method applied in assessing the verbal attestations of  $\text{הָרַשׁ}^{\text{H}}$  will be the same as that for adjectival analysis with one addition: it will assume each occurrence is to be understood primarily from a basis of deafness. This assumption stems from two observations noted in the previous adjectival analysis: (1) All adjectival uses of  $\text{הָרַשׁ}^{\text{H}}$  can be attributed rather securely to a notion of deafness, and in most cases, a basis of muteness would not be viable; and (2) The existence of a separate root, אָלַם, the semantic value of which reflects a primary impairment of muteness.<sup>40</sup>

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as well. In light of earlier analysis, I argue that, in understanding the semantic basis of  $\text{הָרַשׁ}^{\text{H}}$ , deafness is the primary impairment, while either real or perceived muteness (i.e., the manifestation of speech impairments arising from a lack of aural function) is secondary. In other words, individuals who are deaf may manifest forms of vocal impairment as a result of their aural impairment, but muteness, as an isolated impairment, would not necessarily correspond with or lead to an aural impairment. Indeed, persons with a vocal impairment can and do receive and respond to aural stimuli. Thus, if there is a relationship between the impairments of deafness and muteness as denoted by the root  $\text{הָרַשׁ}^{\text{H}}$ , it is likely that the impairment of deafness takes primacy in the matter of semantics, and that the impairment of muteness, as a semantic possibility, would be secondary or resultant of deafness.

37. For lexical information on the verbal forms of  $\text{הָרַשׁ}^{\text{H}}$ , see “ $\text{הָרַשׁ}^{\text{H}}$ ,” BDB 361; *HALOT* 1:357–58.

38. Gen 24:21; 34:5; Exod 14:14; Num 30:5[4], 8[7], 12[11], 15[14] (x3); Judg 16:2; 18:19; 1 Sam 7:8; 10:27; 2 Sam 13:20; 19:11[10]; 2 Kgs 18:36; Isa 36:21; 41:1; 42:14; Jer 4:19; 38:27; Mic 7:16; Hab 1:13; Zeph 3:17; Ps 28:1; 32:3; 35:22; 39:13[12]; 50:3, 21; 83:2[1]; 109:1; Job 6:24; 11:3; 13:5 (x2), 13, 19; 33:31, 33; 41:4[12]; Prov 11:12; 17:28; Esth 4:14 (x2); 7:4; Neh 5:8.

39. That is to say, verbal attestations of  $\text{הָרַשׁ}^{\text{H}}$  in the *qal* and *hiphil* stems, as presented in many lexicons, never represent only a single basis of impairment. The *qal* attestations noted in BDB include references to both impairments, while the *qal* usages in *HALOT* are each connected with deafness. Both lexicons only attribute one *hiphil* attestation to deafness: 1 Sam 7:8 in BDB and 1 Sam 10:27 in *HALOT*. All other *hiphil* occurrences are connected to muteness. The point of demonstrating these discrepancies is to show that there is room for alternate readings and flexibility in an understanding of the underlying impairment reflected by the term.

40. See, for example, the adjectival use of the root in Exod 4:11 (included herein with Adjective Case 1).

In many instances of  $\text{הרשׁו}$  in the *hiphil* in both lexicons and English translations, the verb has been rendered not literally but metaphorically, with a nuance based on the construed impairment. One such example offered by some translators is the phrase “to hold one’s peace,” a metaphorical definition derived from the silence associated with the impairment of muteness.<sup>41</sup> Another such derived meaning is “to be idle,” again likely arising from the connection of silence with the impairment of muteness.<sup>42</sup> Similar idiomatic meanings for  $\text{הרשׁו}$  make sense considering the causative sense of the *hiphil* stem, as it would be unlikely for one to cause oneself to become literally and permanently impaired. An idiomatic reflection of the semantic value also works well in light of the grammatical contexts of many of these *hiphil* occurrences, which attribute the verbal idea to individuals and groups who, while not literally impaired, temporarily take on an aspect of a somatic impairment for some purpose.

What has not been assessed by these lexicons at all, and by few other scholars on a basic level, is how a starting point of deafness with  $\text{הרשׁו}$  could also render many of its attestations into idiomatic expressions. Aside from a literal basis of deafness, one such derived meaning could be “to ignore [by means of self-deafening],” arising from the lack of response to auditory stimuli manifested by those with aural impairments. It should be noted that some instances of the use of  $\text{הרשׁו}$  for this metaphorical meaning have connotations which are not negative. Another such derived meaning from a basis of deafness could be “to not fear” or “to not be afraid.” Many instances throughout the Hebrew Bible connect the aural sense with the experience of fear, both in connection with YHWH and with enemy forces.<sup>43</sup> It follows, then, that an inversion of the aural sense could carry a corresponding inversion of fear.

*Verb Case 1: Qal Attestation of  $\text{הרשׁו}$  as Deafness (Mic 7:16)*

יִרְאוּ גוֹיִם וְיִבְשׂוּ מִפֶּלַעַת גְּבוּרָתָם יִשְׁימוּ יָד עַל־פִּיהֶם וְאָזְנוֹתֵיהֶם יִתְחַרְשְׁנוּ

*Let nations behold and be ashamed despite all their might; Let them put hand to mouth; Let their ears be deafened!*

Both BDB and HALOT agree on a definition stemming from a semantic of deafness, and it is clear to see how the consensus is reached. Similar to the analysis of Isa 35:5 treated above, the impairment intended to be conveyed by

41. E.g., the translation of the verb in many instances in the KJV.

42. “הרשׁו,” HALOT 1:358.

43. For scriptures that connect aural function with fear, whether lexically (through aural verbs) or thematically (through themes like the reception of negative or terrorizing news), see Gen 3:10; Deut 4:10; 5:25; 13:12[11]; 17:13; 19:20; 21:21; 31:12–13; 1 Sam 4:6–7; 7:7; 17:11; 28:20; 1 Kgs 3:28; 2 Kgs 19:6; Ps 76:9[8], etc.

the verb תִּחַרְשְׁנָה here is clarified by its connection with the noun אַזְנוֹתָם, “their ears.” While no terminology here is specifically associated with muteness, the phrase יָשִׁימוּ יָד עַל־פִּה (“they will place [their] hand upon [their] mouth[s]”)<sup>44</sup> signifies allusion to vocal impairment. Thus, using logic similar to that in the analysis of Exod 4:11, תִּחַרְשְׁנָה can be doubly confirmed as “[they] will be deaf,” with the concept of vocal impairment captured here by the phrase “they will place [their] hand upon [their] mouth[s].”<sup>45</sup>

*Verb Case 2: Hiphil Attestation of חִרְשׁ as Deafness [BDB] (1 Sam 7:8)*

וַיֹּאמְרוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־שָׁמוּאֵל אֶל־תִּחַרְשׁ מִמֶּנּוּ מִזְעַק אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְיִשְׁעֵנוּ מִיַּד פְּלִשְׁתִּים

*And they implored Samuel, “Do not neglect us and do not refrain from crying out to the LORD our God to save us from the hands of the Philistines.”*

While *HALOT* connects this verbal form of חִרְשׁ to the derived meaning “to keep, be silent,” BDB defines it as “be not deaf.” Many attestations of חִרְשׁ in the *hiphil* are also figurative—they are attributed to characters, such as Samuel here, who are marked elsewhere as engaging in both vocal and aural activity.<sup>46</sup> Here, the children of Israel implore Samuel to cry to YHWH on their behalf. Part of that plea is the *hiphil* verb of חִרְשׁ with a negating adverb. If the verb is rendered from a primary basis of deafness, then its stative sense could be rendered “do not be deaf.” The causative sense of the *hiphil* stem, again negated, can also be used to render the derived meaning “do not cause yourself to be deaf.”<sup>47</sup> In understanding the nuance here of associating an aural impairment with Samuel, one can see how the use of חִרְשׁ, again here with the negating adverb, likely carries the derived nuance of “do not ignore.”<sup>48</sup>

44. See also the same phrase, albeit in a different tense and mood, in Job 21:5, where it still fits into a similar verbal context (Mic 7:16 = בִּישׁ in parallel with Job 21:5 = שָׁמַם). For one such example of verbs used in parallel, see Ps 40:15–16 [14–15].

45. In conjunction with BDB and *HALOT*, note also the association of the verbal use of חִרְשׁ in this verse with deafness in Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Micah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 24E (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 587; and Ralph L. Smith, *Micah–Malachi*, WBC 32 (Waco, TX: Word, 1984), 56.

46. E.g., the servant of Abraham (Gen 21), Jacob (Gen 34), Saul (1 Sam 10:27), Esther (Est 4, 7), etc.

47. For a basic introduction to the nuances of the Hebrew *hiphil* stem, including the stative and causative uses mentioned here, see Thomas O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1971), 211–13.

48. For one scholar in conjunction with this same position, see Ralph W. Klein, 1 *Samuel*, 2nd ed., WBC 10 (Nashville: Nelson, 2008), 63, where he renders the translation “do not be deaf toward us.” Also see Klein’s note on 67: “The people turned to Samuel and asked that he not ignore or be deaf to their need. In the Psalter it is often God who seems to be deaf to need (e.g. Pss 28:1; 35:22). . . . Ironically the Hebrew word for ‘being deaf’ is



Verb Case 3: *Hiphil* Attestation of  $\text{הַרְשִׁיׁל}$  as Deafness [HALOT] (1 Sam 10:27)

וַיִּבְנֵי בְלִיעֵל אָמְרוּ מִה־יִשְׁעֵנּוּ זֶה וַיִּבְזֶהוּ וְלֹא־הִבִּיאוּ לוֹ מִנְחָה וַיְהִי כִּמְחַרְשֵׁי

*But some scoundrels said, “How can this fellow save us?” So they scorned him and brought him no gift. But he pretended not to mind.*

If the *hiphil* participle here is to be received and not ignored as a variant reading, then an analysis of the form is still necessary.<sup>49</sup> There is no immediate clarification of meaning from the context of the verse so far as intended somatic impairment is concerned. A reading of silence could imply that Saul here refused to address the insubordination and criticism of the children of Belial. Understanding the term from a deaf reading, however, brings different and multiple perspectives. If the last colon is translated literally—“But Saul was like one causing oneself to be deaf”—it could support nuanced readings aside from a plain definition of aural impairment, like one of ignorance: “But he was like a deaf man, ignoring them.” Another idiomatic nuance from the deaf basis of  $\text{הַרְשִׁיׁל}$  could be rendered as “to not be afraid, to not fear,” with the last segment of this verse being “But he was like a man being deaf, not fearing their words” or “But he was not afraid.”<sup>50</sup> Regarding this fearlessness, the stative nuance of the *hiphil* of the verb could be demonstrated by Saul toward either the children of Belial (because of their treasonous behavior in

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used in Exod 14:14 to describe the *people’s* silence and inaction as Yahweh fights for them.” With regard to Klein’s concluding comment, such a use is not ironic because the term actually connects with the concept of deafness, not silence: see Verb Case 6 below. For a representation of the majority that associates the term with silence, see P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, & Commentary*, AB 8 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 140.

49. While the present paper does not engage in thorough text-critical analysis of each use of  $\text{הַרְשִׁיׁל}$  and its contexts, an important variant tradition, noted in *BHS* 461, is found in both in  $\text{כמו הדש}$  (כמו הדש) and  $\text{ὡς μετὰ μῆνα (ἡμερῶν)}$ , both of which reflect a reading of “[and it was] about a month [after/after],” rather than “[and he was] like one who is deaf.” Also see McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 191, for commentary on the alternate reading.

50. As far as understanding the function of Saul’s behavior in this verse in connection with deafness, a few things should be considered. First, the narrative suggests that Saul is not actually deaf. In fact, Saul is grammatically distanced from a literal impairment of deafness in this verse by two degrees of removal: (1) the  $\text{כ}$  preposition (“like, as”) and (2) the *hiphil* participle of the root (“one *causing* oneself to be deaf”). Second, it does not appear that this idiomatic deployment of deafness is alluded to in subsequent passages discussing Saul’s later life. Third, there is ambiguity in how Saul’s behavior here should be perceived. One possible reading could see Saul’s disregard for the children of Belial and their insubordination as a positive demonstration of prudence. Another could take his behavior here as a negative portrayal of apathy toward the children of Belial when he should have inflicted a stern punishment instead. A third reading could take both of these readings and understand the former as indicative of Saul’s early life and the latter as reflective of Saul in light of his entire narrative.

not bringing him a coronation offering), toward the impending conflict with the Philistines (which the children of Belial claim he will not be able to deliver them from), or both.<sup>51</sup>

*Verb Case 4: Overturning Silence—Self-Deafening as a Mechanism of Focus (Gen 24:21)*

וְהָאִישׁ מִשְׁתַּאֲהָ לָּהּ מִתְרִישׁ לְדַעַת הַהֲצָלִיחַ יְהוָה דְּרָכּוֹ אִם-לֹא

*The man, meanwhile, stood gazing at her, silently wondering whether the LORD had made his errand successful or not.*

There are no context words here tied to either aural or vocal somatic function to elucidate the meaning of the verb. Abraham's servant had earlier vocally addressed (root אמר) YHWH to set conditional requisites for the recognition and identification of Isaac's wife-to-be (vv. 12–14). Though Rebekah had already fulfilled these conditions (v. 20), the servant is still inquiring in v. 21. If the *waw*-conjunction at the beginning of v. 21 indicates that this verse temporally follows v. 20's events, then the servant is awaiting final confirmation that Rebekah's actions were indeed a manifestation of YHWH's will, perhaps necessitating that he again communicate with YHWH. This second (presumably vocal) supplication would preclude "הרש" here as representing figurative self-muting. This verse also states that the servant was "gazing" at Rebekah to know if she was YHWH's appointee. Understanding a derived nuance of "to ignore" from the deaf basis of "הרש" here, the servant of Abraham could have deafened himself in order to ignore audible distractions. Ignoring auditory stimuli that would otherwise avert his visual attention from Rebekah is key here, as his gaze is the sensory act which the verse identifies as potentially leading to the confirmation he seeks.<sup>52</sup> This deafness-derived nuance of "to ignore [by self-deafening]" serves as an example of how aural impairment denoted by "הרש" can reflect a positive or beneficial act.<sup>53</sup>

51. For a representation of the scholarly consensus rendering the verb of "הרש" here in connection with silence, see David Toshio Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 296, 300–301.

52. This is all to say that, despite the fact that the servant's prayer explicitly petitioned for the will of the Lord to be made known through the words of the woman, the wording of this verse states that he awaits further confirmation which will come, in some part, through an act of visual focus.

53. For a good example of the scholarly consensus seeing this verbal use of "הרש" in relation with silence, see Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18–50*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 143.

*Verb Case 5: Overturning Silence—Self-Deafening as a Mechanism of Ignorance (Jer 4:19)*

מְעִי מְעִי [אֲחִילָהּ כ] (אֲחִילָהּ ק) קִירוֹת לְבִי הִמְהִלֵי לְבִי לֹא אֲתָרִישׁ כִּי קוֹל שׁוֹפָר  
שָׁמַעְתִּי כ] (שָׁמַעַתָּ ק) נִפְשִׁי תְרוּעַת מְלָחָמָה

*Oh, my suffering, my suffering! How I writhe! Oh, the walls of my heart! My heart moans within me, I cannot be silent; For I hear the blare of horns, alarms of war.*

There is immediate context which could lend to the somatic impairment meant by the use of חרש<sup>11</sup> here, but both vocal and aural phenomena are present. At least one term is connected with spoken performance (e.g., root המה, “to murmur, make a noise”), but the vocal verbs are attributed to objects of the speaker’s body, not to the speaker himself. However, the *hiphil* verb of חרש<sup>11</sup> here is attributed to the speaker. Immediately proximate to it is the noun קול, “voice, sound.” In connection with the aural verb root שמע, “to hear,” קול is designated as aural stimulus, not as the speaker’s form of expression. Thus, the noun becomes charged with aural function, as does the verb of חרש<sup>11</sup>. Further, the *ketiv* of the verb here is conjugated to correspond to the speaker, but the *qere* associates the verb with נפשי, “my [the speaker’s] soul, life-force.” On the basis of a similar construction in v. 21 (verb root שמע + קול שופר), the *ketiv* is preferred by this paper, with the “soul” of the speaker only functioning in the vocative of direct address, with no connection to the aural verb. Due to these connections between the speaker and aural function words, a basis of deafness for the verb of חרש<sup>11</sup> here can be supported.<sup>54</sup> The layered derived nuances of deafness possible (i.e., ignoring and not fearing) are negated because the aural stimuli of the present verse (i.e., the “sound of [the] horn” and the “alarm of war”) overpower the speaker’s ability to self-deafen.

*Verb Case 6: Overturning Silence—Self-Deafening as a Mechanism of Fearlessness (Exod 14:14)*

יְהוָה יִלָּחֶם לְכֶם וְאַתֶּם תִּחְרְיוּן

*The LORD will battle for you; you hold your peace!*

There is no context in the present verse to clarify the intended impairment of the verb from חרש<sup>11</sup> here. Approaching the term from a basis of deafness does

54. For a representation of a scholarly consensus that understands the verbal use of חרש<sup>11</sup> here to be in connection with silence, see Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 21A (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 349–50 (note especially his comment, which is *contrary* to his translation, on the aural context of the verse: “the auditory sense is clearly dominant”).

reveal a number of supporting proofs from a slightly larger context, however. The only other use of *חַרַשׁ* in Exodus is an adjectival one in 4:11, which has already been demonstrated to connect to an idea of deafness. Secondly, Exod 4:11 and the present verse are not only connected by canonical designations, but also by source—some scholars attribute both verses to E.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, if the present verse is recognized as thematically parallel to the beginning of the preceding verse, then the verb of *חַרַשׁ* here could correspond to *אַל־תִּירָאוּ*, “do not be afraid,” in v. 13a.<sup>56</sup> The aural sense is connected with the experience of fear either lexically (root *יִרָא*) or by theme throughout the Hebrew Bible.<sup>57</sup> A derived meaning of *חַרַשׁ* could therefore be “to not be afraid” or “to ignore [a fear-inducing matter],” just as the underlying notion of muteness seen in *חַרַשׁ* has allowed for the derived understanding of “to hold one’s peace.”

There is ample evidence to defend a reading of several of the verbal attestations of *חַרַשׁ* from the basis of deafness. This is made possible through derived meanings, including “to ignore” and “to not fear, to not be afraid.” In my evaluation of each verbal usage of *חַרַשׁ*, I have determined that a definition stemming from a basis of deafness can be supported in all cases except those in Job, Proverbs, and Nehemiah. In each instance of *חַרַשׁ* in these three books, however, a meaning rendered from a basis of vocal impairment is supported. These instances preclude any suggestion that the root *חַרַשׁ* represents the condition of deafness alone, with no possibility of reflecting secondary or resultant conditions. However, my proposed approach to a method of understanding the semantic value of *חַרַשׁ* did not exclude the possibility of understanding the root and its derived forms from a basis of muteness, but rather that an understanding of the root from the condition of deafness should be the

55. In *Exodus*, Propp attributes Exod 4:11 (191) to E and Exod 14:14 (478–79) to JE, with further notes that the latter could be further scrutinized so as to demonstrate attribution to E. A contrary position is represented by Richard Elliott Freedman, who attributes 4:11 to E and 14:14 to J, in *The Bible with Sources Revealed: A New View into the Five Books of Moses* (New York: HarperOne, 2003), 124, 143. The evidence garnered from source criticism here is not central to my semantic argument but simply something worthy of note.

56. Although in *Exodus*, 462, Propp translates the verb of *חַרַשׁ* here as “you will be still,” on page 496 he connects this verse with the preceding one, as I have here. The parallel between the verb of *חַרַשׁ* in this verse and “not fearing” in the preceding verse can also be noted in the comparison of the present verse with Deut 3:22. This is further supported by the themes in other pericopes containing the form *יָהוּה* + verbal form of the root *לָחַם* + preposition with pronominal suffix *לָכֶם* (e.g., Exod 14:25; Deut 1:30; 20:3–4; Josh 10:14; 23:3, 10). Indeed, the verb of deafness in v. 14, in light of the parallel with the preceding verse, could be reflective of all three volitional ideas in v. 13a: not being afraid (*אַל־תִּירָאוּ*) of the approaching Egyptians; standing stationary (*הִתְיַצְבוּ*), perhaps as an indication of fearlessness; and seeing (*וַרְאוּ*) the works that the Lord would do on their behalf and that would justify their fearlessness.

57. See note 43 above.

primary approach. As mentioned above, the impairment of muteness could be perceived as being connected or resultant to the experience of deafness, but such a perception would not necessarily reflect a medical rule.

## NOUNS

### *Noun Case 1: Secretly or Fearlessly? (Josh 2:1)*

וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בְּרִנּוֹן מִן־הַשְּׁטִיִּים שְׁנַיִם־אֲנָשִׁים מִרְגָּלִים תְּרֹשׁ לֵאמֹר לְכוּ רְאוּ אֶת־  
הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת־יְרִיחוֹ וְנַלְכוּ וְנִבְאוּ בֵּית־אִשָּׁה זֹנָה וְשָׁמָּה רָחַב וַיִּשְׁכְּבוּ־שָׁמָּה

*Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim, saying, “Go, reconnoiter the region of Jericho.” So they set out, and they came to the house of a harlot named Rahab and lodged there.*

תְּרֹשׁ, the only example of תְּרֹשׁ as a noun, is taken adverbially to modify the way Joshua dispatches the two spies to Jericho.<sup>58</sup> There is no contextual information that secures the adverb to either a basis of muteness or deafness. Thus, the rendering of the NJPS, “secretly,” is as unsecured as any translation stemming from deafness would be. Assuming a basis of deafness, and in light of the semantic observations from my previous analyses, תְּרֹשׁ could allude to the passage of the twelve spies and their report to Moses in Num 13–14.<sup>59</sup> In light of the fear the children of Israel experienced in connection with the report of Canaan in Num 14:1–4, followed by Joshua and Caleb’s joint response to them in Num 14:6–9, this verse could reflect Joshua’s sending the spies into the land “deaf,” taken through a derived nuance adverbially as “fearlessly.” Indeed, this time only two spies are sent—the same number of spies who demonstrated faithfulness in Num 14:6–9 (i.e., Caleb and Joshua). In Num 14:1–3, the children of Israel express their fear regarding the report of the people of Canaan. In Josh 2:9–11, it is the people of Jericho, who, according to Rahab, are in terror regarding the report of the Israelites. I propose that the correct semantic meaning of תְּרֹשׁ here be connected with deafness, perhaps rendered as “fearlessly” or “without hesitation.”

58. The pointed תְּרֹשׁ here is used to distinguish between the nominal form and the adjectival form.

59. The intertextual allusion to the former narrative hypothesized here is not a support for understanding the form of תְּרֹשׁ in this verse as reflective of a semantic of deafness, but rather a possible way of understanding the deaf basis of the term itself. The decision to begin from a semantic of deafness with תְּרֹשׁ stems from the method applied here, not from the possible allusion to Num 14.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have attempted to extract the intended semantic value for the root  $\text{חרש}''$  in its various forms through an analysis of a number of samples indicative of all the attestations of the root in the Hebrew Bible. In doing so, I have limited my qualifying evidence to internal support alone so as to understand the biblical meaning of the term. The evaluation of the adjectival form  $\text{חרש}$  demonstrated that the fundamental concept represented by the root  $\text{חרש}''$  was the condition of deafness. A number of verbal attestations were then examined—first those that have traditionally been associated with deafness by major lexicons, and then other verses that have been traditionally attributed to silence but which here have been shown to support a context of deafness.

While analysis of deafness as a disability in the Hebrew Bible has largely been performed by scholars using only the adjectival attestations of  $\text{חרש}''$ , this paper suggests a new evaluation of the root, especially its verbal forms, in understanding the term primarily from a concept of deafness. There are a number of possible derived meanings of  $\text{חרש}''$  from a basis of deafness, including “to ignore” and “to not fear.” It should not be taken as a matter of course that the concept of aural impairment was seen intrinsically as negative. The use of the root  $\text{חרש}''$  as a verb, with individuals who are established in context as not being impaired as objects, demonstrates the separation of *the concept of impairment* from *the impaired body*. It is possible that a comparable analysis of other roots associated with impairments would render similar results.

JOSEPHUS'S BLUNTING OF AMALEK AND  
PHINEHAS THE ZEALOT IN *JEWISH ANTIQUITIES*:  
A STATEMENT AGAINST NATIONALISM

JACOB INMAN

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**Abstract:** This paper proposes that the famous Jewish historian—Titus Flavius Josephus—purposefully changed the violent biblical narratives of the Israelites' encounter with the Amalekites (Exod 17:8–15) and the story of Phinehas the zealot (Num 25:6–15) in his parallel accounts found in *Jewish Antiquities* (*Ant.* 3.39–62 and *Ant.* 4.139–155 respectively). I argue that Josephus made these changes out of his own bitterness and opinions about the First Jewish Revolt (66–73 CE), to discourage nationalistic violence, to portray the Jews as a nonviolent people, and to show his Roman patrons that the Jews are not a weak race.

Titus Flavius Josephus—general, historian, and apologist—is as invaluable as he is unreliable in some respects. Very rarely do ancient sources survive the test of time, and the academic world is extremely fortunate to read a firsthand account of one of the most important events in Jewish history—the First Jewish Revolt (66–73 CE). In this sense, Josephus's work *Jewish War* is invaluable in that it provides otherwise unknowable details concerning the social, political, and economic climate leading up to the revolt against Rome. After the war, Josephus wrote his massive work, *Jewish Antiquities*, which is also extremely important but carries with it many questionable interpretations and reconstructions of the biblical text. How did Josephus's experiences and feelings about the war affect his writings? While the purpose of writing *Antiquities* was not to address Josephus's own postwar feelings, I will argue that Josephus's bitterness and opinions about the war certainly affected his recounting of Jewish history. Specifically, this study seeks to unveil how and why Josephus deliberately altered violent narratives of the Pentateuch, using the Israelites' encounter with the Amalekites (Exod 17:8–15; *Ant.* 3.39–62) and the story of Phinehas the zealot (Num 25:6–15; *Ant.* 4.139–155) as case studies. I will argue that Josephus deliberately made these changes to discourage

nationalistic violence, portray the Jews as a nonviolent people, and show his Roman patrons that the Jews were not a weak race.

To best demonstrate this, I will first compare what life was like for Josephus in Rome with the circumstances of most Jews post-70 CE. Doing so will bring to light several of Josephus's biases and will provide the context in which Josephus is writing *Antiquities*. Next, some general observations about *Antiquities* will be considered to further understand who Josephus's intended audience may have been. Once this foundation is laid, I will first work through the biblical text of the Amalekites, noting which details the biblical author includes and which he omits. Josephus's *Antiquities* will then be critiqued and compared with the biblical narrative, noting any scriptural liberties that Josephus takes. This same approach will then be applied to the Phinehas story. Finally, I will draw conclusions based on the evidence presented that Josephus did in fact manipulate these stories to condemn nationalistic violence and those who condone it, please his Roman patrons, and present the Jews as a powerful—but not rebellious—race. This conclusion will be congruent with Josephus's feelings about the rebellion against Rome and will help provide a greater context in which to better understand Josephus's interpretations of violent scripture.

## REVIEW OF SCHOLARSHIP

As some of the most important primary sources of information surrounding the First Jewish Revolt and Second Temple Judaism, the works of Flavius Josephus have drawn the attention of numerous biblical scholars, historians, and even lay religious people. This interest stems largely from Josephus's new insights on the Bible and his retelling of historical events. Accordingly, an exhaustive review of scholarship on Josephus will not be attempted here, but rather only the scholarship as it pertains to the discussion of Josephus's reworking of violent biblical narratives.

To begin, it is first necessary to discuss the most prominent and recent scholars to treat Josephus's character, motives, and works in a broad sense. Scholars Tessa Rajak, Louis Feldman, and Steve Mason best fit into this category. Tessa Rajak's book *Josephus: The Historian and His Society* analyzes Josephus's attitudes toward the First Jewish Revolt. While the main focus of this study will not be *Jewish War*, Rajak's conclusions about Josephus's character and attitudes in light of his sociopolitical background crosses over neatly into an analysis of *Jewish Antiquities*. For example, Rajak asserts that Josephus went to Rome with characteristics of a Greco-Roman upbringing coupled with



his distinctly Jewish responsibilities and identity. She argues that these characteristics greatly affect his approach to the biblical text.<sup>1</sup>

Louis Feldman similarly addresses Josephus's background and character in his works *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible* and *Studies in Josephus's Rewritten Bible*.<sup>2</sup> These two publications serve as companions in some respects, with the former primarily dealing with principles that guided Josephus in his understanding of the Bible,<sup>3</sup> and the latter seeking to examine why and how Josephus changed specific stories or characters. Feldman asserts that Josephus is writing *Antiquities* in the guise of midrash, in that Josephus is retelling the Bible but supplementing his rendition with his own defenses and justifications.<sup>4</sup> This is the case with Israel's war with the Amalekites, as well as with the account of Phinehas's "zeal."

Steve Mason edited the most recent translation and commentary on Josephus's works.<sup>5</sup> While Feldman's translation and commentary from this same series will be consulted for the *Antiquities* narratives,<sup>6</sup> Mason's translation and remarks in *Judean War*<sup>7</sup> and the connections he makes between *Life of Josephus* and *Antiquities* will be relied on throughout this study.<sup>8</sup>

To my knowledge, relatively few scholars have written about Josephus's interpretation of violent text specifically. Certainly, each of the biblical books has been compared with Josephus's version in *Antiquities*, but this study seeks to go further in analyzing whether Josephus consistently sanitizes these stories to demonstrate that nationalistic violence is an improper response to foreign rule. Louis Feldman once again has done excellent work in this area, treating our specific cases where Josephus changes the Amalek and Phinehas narratives. Feldman's book "*Remember Amalek!*" makes suggestions as to why Josephus embellishes or otherwise justifies Israel's war on the Amalekites,

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1. Tessa Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society* (London: Duckworth, 2002), 44–45.

2. Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible*, HCS 27 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) and Louis H. Feldman, *Studies in Josephus's Rewritten Bible*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 58 (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

3. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible*, xiv.

4. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible*, 16.

5. Steve Mason, ed., *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*, 10 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1999–).

6. Louis H. Feldman, trans. and comm., *Judean Antiquities 1–4*, vol. 3 of *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*, ed. Steve Mason (Leiden: Brill, 2000). This translation will be used for all passages quoted from *Antiquities* unless otherwise noted.

7. Steve Mason, trans. and comm., *Judean War 2*, vol. 1b of *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*, ed. Steve Mason (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

8. Steve Mason, trans. and comm., *Life of Josephus*, vol. 9 of *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*, ed. Steve Mason (Leiden: Brill, 2001), xiv–xv.

as we will examine in our case study later on.<sup>9</sup> Feldman also systematically works through the Phinehas narrative in a similar fashion in his article “The Portrayal of Phinehas by Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus.”<sup>10</sup> Outside of our case studies, Chris Frilingos wrote an article about the embellishment of Esther, where Josephus noticeably inserts God as an actor into the story and Josephus includes his own moral interpretation of the execution of Haman (*Ant.* 11.247, 267–268).<sup>11</sup> Frilingos further argues that this story is composed in light of the author’s “immediate surrounding and the imperial Roman-era language of violence.”<sup>12</sup>

Most recently, Michael S. Kochin wrote an article entitled “Freedom and Empire in Josephus,” dealing precisely with Josephus’s political stances on war by understanding where Josephus fits in the realm of ancient political thought.<sup>13</sup> Kochin’s main argument is that Josephus purposefully presents aristocracy as the preferred form of government in *Antiquities* and links kingship with idolatry to appeal to Rome’s distaste for kingship as well as to show that the Jews would not return to kingship.<sup>14</sup> These insights are useful in determining whether these violent narratives fit into this mold of Josephus continually criticizing nationalistic tendencies against foreign rule.

Finally, Robert Eisen has recently explored how the violent passages of the Bible have been interpreted from the biblical period to modern Zionism. His book *The Peace and Violence of Judaism* points out the ambiguity of these texts, and his chapter on rabbinic interpretation of violence is interesting when comparing Josephus’s suggested readings of the Bible with that of the early rabbis around the same period.<sup>15</sup>

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9. Louis H. Feldman, in “Remember Amalek!": *Vengeance, Zealotry and Group Destruction in the Bible according to Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2004), 27–45.

10. Louis H. Feldman, “The Portrayal of Phinehas by Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus,” *JQR* 92 (2002): 315–45.

11. Chris Frilingos, “‘It Moves Me to Wonder’: Narrating Violence and Religion under the Roman Empire,” *JAAR* 77 (2009): 825–52.

12. Frilingos, “‘It Moves Me to Wonder,’” 832.

13. Michael S. Kochin, “Freedom and Empire in Josephus,” *History of Political Thought* 39 (2018): 16–32.

14. Kochin, “Freedom and Empire in Josephus,” 17–27.

15. Robert Eisen, *The Peace and Violence of Judaism: From the Bible to Modern Zionism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

## JOSEPHUS'S JOURNEY TO ROME

Josephus was an experienced politician (*Life* 12–16), soldier (*J.W.* 2.566–568), and writer (*Ant.* 20.262–266).<sup>16</sup> He was a Jewish priest of royal descent, and though there is some debate on whether all Sadducees were priests and vice versa,<sup>17</sup> Josephus informs us that he personally worked his way through *each* sect until he settled on identifying himself as a Pharisee by the age of 19 (*Life* 1.10–12). As such, Josephus apparently spent some time as a Sadducee, even though he seems to emphasize throughout his works that he certainly is not one.<sup>18</sup> Rajak makes the interesting point that it would suit Josephus well to at least *present* himself as a Pharisee post-70 CE, because the Pharisees were the only respectable sect remaining after the war.<sup>19</sup> After Josephus's reluctant time as a war general in the revolt, Josephus miraculously dissuaded Vespasian from taking him as a prisoner during the siege at Jotapata (*J.W.* 3.341–408) and was granted Roman citizenship where he wrote his four works (*Life* 423).<sup>20</sup>

Before making Rome his permanent home, Josephus witnessed and documented the destruction of the temple. He makes clear in *War* (*J.W.* 7.253–262) and *Antiquities* (*Ant.* 18.23–24) that it was civil strife, not the Romans, that was to blame for this tragedy.<sup>21</sup> There are two groups in particular that Josephus condemns: the Zealots and the Sicarii. The Zealots appear to have

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16. Perhaps to downplay his controversial surrender to the Romans (discussed later), Josephus was eager that everyone knew how great of a writer and person he was. At the end of *Antiquities*, often considered the prologue of *Life*, Josephus boasts that no other historian (Jewish or otherwise) has accomplished what he has accomplished in writing such an accurate history of his people, and all in the Greek language. For additional commentary on Josephus's occupations, see Rajak, *Josephus*, 4, and Mason, *Life of Josephus*, xiv.

17. Lester L. Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1992), here 2:487.

18. See the commentary on *Life* 10–11 in Mason, *Life of Josephus*, 15–19.

19. Rajak, *Josephus*, 33. Rajak remarks that once the Sadducees and the Essenes had disappeared after the war, Pharisaism was what survived under the direction of Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai at Yavneh. She also disputes the claim made by recent scholars that Josephus's seemingly hostile attitudes toward the Pharisaic sect changed from *War* to *Antiquities*, arguing that Josephus was not always hostile toward the sect in *War*, and the sect itself did in fact change after the outcome of the war.

20. Upon convincing his small group of soldiers to enter a suicide pact with each other rather than give themselves up to the Romans, Josephus was left to escape and was brought before Vespasian. Protesting being sent to Nero, Josephus prophesied that Vespasian would become caesar. Vespasian eventually believed him, and thus begins Josephus's patronage to the Roman Empire. See also Rajak, *Josephus*, 185–94.

21. Notably, Josephus mentions in *Life* 17–18 that he noticed the beginnings of rebellion against Rome upon returning from his rescue mission of priests held captive in Rome (*Life* 13). Feldman makes the connection that perhaps Josephus's favorable view toward Rome began here, as he not only secured the priests held captive but also was sent back to Judea with gifts from Nero's consort Poppaea Sabina (Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible*, 149).

originated as an unorganized group of peasants from outside Jerusalem that fled to Jerusalem upon the Romans arriving in Judea about 67 CE (*J.W.* 4.128–138). In response to the Romans taking their land, this group organized a coalition against the Romans *and* the priestly aristocracy in Jerusalem by attempting to set up their own government, robbing, and murdering their own people in broad daylight (*J.W.* 4.138, 147–150). After the Zealots managed to murder Ananus the high priest and take control of Jerusalem,<sup>22</sup> they retained control of the temple despite their infighting until its destruction in 70 CE.<sup>23</sup> Josephus does not withhold his feelings about this group when he said, “for so [the ‘Zealots’] called themselves, as though they were zealous in the cause of virtue and not for vice in its basest and most extravagant form” (Josephus, *J.W.* 4.161 [Thackeray, LCL]).

The Sicarii are introduced in *War* as a group of knife-wielding assassins, first famous for their murdering of Jonathan the high priest. We are next informed that this murder was the beginning of many, and that the people began to fear even their friends because the Sicarii managed to spread panic wherever they were (*J.W.* 2.254–257).<sup>24</sup> Josephus’s most clear condemnation and blame of the Sicarii for the war, however, is found in *Antiquities*:

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22. Josephus presents Ananus delivering a very moving speech intended to incite the people of Jerusalem against the Zealots. Other than the speech succeeding to this end, the speech may also show additional insight into Josephus’s feelings about the Zealots. Ananus (or rather, Josephus) says “that even should we fall beneath their arms—God forbid that those words should ever be our lot!—we can suffer no greater cruelty than what these men have already afflicted upon us. . . . Is it not lamentable, that, while the Romans never overstepped the limit fixed for the profane, never violated one of our sacred usages, but beheld with awe from afar the walls that enclose our sanctuary, persons born in this very country, nurtured under our institutions and calling themselves Jews should freely perambulate our holy places, with hands yet hot with the blood of their countrymen?” (*J.W.* 4.180–183, [Thackeray, LCL]). This presents a binary view with the Romans being relatively nonviolent and tolerant toward Jews, contrasted with the Zealots who are violent toward their own people.

23. For an excellent summary of the role of the Zealots in *War*, see Richard A. Horsley, “The Zealots: Their Origin, Relationships and Importance in the Jewish Revolt,” *NovT* 28 (1986): 159–92.

24. Determining what Josephus meant by *sicarii* turns out to be a complex issue. Contrary to the view that the Sicarii were a group of Zealot extremists, Marijn J. Vandenberghe has recently written that the term *sicarii* may have been used as a rhetorical device by Josephus to brand a specific rebel group (different from the Zealots) he held directly responsible for the outbreak of the war. For a full discussion, see Marijn J. Vandenberghe, “Villains Called *Sicarii*: A Commonplace for Rhetorical Vituperation in the Texts of Flavius Josephus,” *JSJ* 47 (2016): 475–507. His work largely builds off Mark Andrew Brighton’s work, *The Sicarii in Josephus’s Judean War: Rhetorical Analysis and Historical Observations*, EJL 27 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), which argues that the term *sicarii* stems from a Roman legal term meaning “assassins” and may have been a label given originally by the Romans to this group. Brighton argues that Josephus’s main animosity toward the Sicarii is centered on their *exclusive* murdering of their own people, whereas

These gangsters . . . committed these murders not only in other parts of the city but even in some cases in the temple; for there too they made bold to slaughter their victims, for they did not regard even this as a desecration. This is the reason why, in my opinion, even God Himself, for loathing of their impiety, turned away from our city and, because He deemed the temple to be no longer a clean dwelling place for Him, brought the Romans upon us and purification by fire upon the city, while He inflicted slavery upon us together with our wives and children; for He wished to chasten us by these calamities. (*Ant.* 20.163–165 [Feldman, LCL])

After about three decades of reflecting on the destruction of the temple, Josephus concludes that the reason why the temple fell, and why the Jews were taken into slavery, was because the Zealots and Sicarii were killing their own people, even in the temple. Once the temple was destroyed and the Romans had made their final preparations for breaching Masada, Eleazar gave his famous speech and the Sicarii men and women committed mass suicide to die for their cause (*J.W.* 7.389–406). Mark Brighton argues that Josephus uses the Sicarii's mass suicide at Masada less as a heroic last stand against the Romans and more as the culmination of divine punishment against the group responsible for the war.<sup>25</sup>

Josephus's life after the war wasn't too bad for a captured war general and jobless priest. He writes in *Life*:

When we came to Rome, I was met with every provision from Vespasian. He even gave me lodging in the house that was his before the *imperium*. He honored me with Roman citizenship. He gave me a stipend for supplies, and continued [these] honors until his departure from life, taking back nothing of his goodness toward me—which brought me into danger on account of envy. (*Life* 423 [Mason])

Josephus's newly acquired citizenship earned him tracts of land he never lived on, imperial pensions, and no other responsibilities aside from writing his later works.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, Josephus's comfortable lifestyle in Rome starkly contrasts with that of his fellow Jews who were denied the privilege of Roman citizenship. In the years following the destruction of the Second Temple, Rome generally did not relinquish her grip on Judea or the Jewish people. Important

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the Zealots were more of a freedom-fighting group focused on killing Romans. He notes that the Sicarii are unlikely to be affiliated at all with the Zealots, because the Sicarii leave Jerusalem for Masada before the freedom-fighting of the Zealots even begins (144). Steve Mason goes further to suggest that Josephus's use of a Latin term in his Greek work may be indicative of Josephus's audience. Josephus does not define *sica* or *sicarii*, but does explain the murderous activities of Judeans with daggers. See Mason, *Judean War* 2, 207–8.

25. Brighton, *The Sicarii in Josephus's Judean War*, 142.

26. For more on Josephus's land allotments see Rajak, *Josephus*, 11, as well as Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible*, 55 for more on Josephus's responsibilities.

to note, however, Rome was tolerant of Judaism as a religion but was careful to preempt another demonstration of political nationalism.<sup>27</sup>

One of the first steps Vespasian took to discourage a second revolt was replacing the annual temple tax with the *Fiscus Judaicus*. This allowed Judaism to be a *religio licita*, but at the price of sponsoring the Roman deity that conquered the God of Israel.<sup>28</sup> Domitian reinforced this tax “most assiduously” as Suetonius recounts in his *Life of Domitian*:

The Jewish tax was exacted most assiduously. To the *Fiscus Judaicus* were reported those who lived as Jews without declaring this or who by concealing their origin did not pay the tribute imposed on their people. I recall when I was a young man being present when an old man in his nineties was examined by a procurator and a very large number of advisers to see whether he was circumcised. (Suetonius, *Life of Domitian* 12.2 [Reinhold])<sup>29</sup>

Whether hiding Jewish identity to avoid this tax or being secretly accused of *acting* Jewish and not paying this tax, one could expect a violent visit from Domitian’s tax collectors. Silvia Cappelletti suggests that Domitian’s seemingly sudden change in fiscal policy may be due, in part, to unexpected expenses for the rebuilding of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus that burned down in 80 CE, as well as to replenish funds spent on the temple inauguration ceremony that took place about a decade later.<sup>30</sup> In addition to the *Fiscus Judaicus*, Cassius Dio reports that Domitian executed many people, including his own cousin

27. E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian, A Study in Political Relations*, SJA 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 344.

28. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 345. Other scholars have challenged the view that the *Fiscus Judaicus* was an act of intolerance. Instead, scholar Leonard Rutgers and others suggest that the Jewish tax must be viewed in the greater context of Vespasian’s tax policy. Rutgers asserts that the Jewish tax, then, was more likely an act of ingenuity on the part of Vespasian for redirecting an already existing tax, and the Jews were just one group of many in the empire required to pay taxes. For Rutgers’s full discussion, see Leonard Victor Rutgers, “Roman Policy toward the Jews: Expulsions from the City of Rome during the First Century C.E.,” in *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome*, ed. Karl P. Donfried and Peter Richardson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 93–116, here 111–14. Additionally, Josephus and Cassius Dio contradict each other as to whether it was all “ethnic” Jews who were forced to pay the tax (Josephus) or if only “orthodox” Jews had to pay this tax (Cassius Dio). For a detailed discussion about this point, see Silvia Cappelletti, *The Jewish Community of Rome: From the Second Century B.C. to the Third Century C.E.*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 113 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 100–117. In response to Rutgers, Cappelletti and the primary sources, I argue that the fact Jews had to pay the tax is less important than what the tax represented. What is certainly clear is that the sacred half-shekel once paid to the temple in Jerusalem was now forcibly redirected to Rome and its pagan gods. Vespasian was not leaving a chance for the Jerusalem Temple to be rebuilt.

29. See translation and commentary in Louis H. Feldman and Meyer Reinhold, eds., *Jewish Life and Thought among Greeks and Romans: Primary Readings* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1996), 345.

30. Cappelletti, *The Jewish Community of Rome*, 129–30.

Flavius Clemens, for adopting certain practices of Judaism.<sup>31</sup> Other Jews, Jewish “sympathizers,” and “atheists” were deprived of their property.<sup>32</sup>

Vespasian further used the victory over the Jews as propaganda to endorse his newly acquired emperorship. Josephus records that Vespasian and Titus hosted a great procession in Rome where the victory over the Jews was celebrated with parade and sacrifice. The procession ended at the temple to Pax, where the Jerusalem Temple utensils and ornaments were displayed (*J.W.* 7.123–162). Between the half-shekel Jewish tax paid to build pagan temples and the propaganda laid by Vespasian and his successors regarding the victory over the Jews, the Romans made their position clear that the Jewish temple was not to be rebuilt.

These were the circumstances and context in which Josephus wrote *Antiquities* ca. 93–94 CE. Faced with criticism from his peers and feeling the need to defend his Jewish loyalties, Josephus endeavors to rewrite the history of the Jews “before they entered this last war against their will” (*Ant.* 1.6).<sup>33</sup> There is some debate among scholars as to whom *Antiquities* was primarily written. In light of the passages we will analyze next, Feldman’s assertion that Josephus was writing to Greeks, Roman patrons, and a smaller Jewish audience seems most likely.<sup>34</sup> To assure his audience that he would write an accurate history of the Jews, Josephus prefaces his work with the famous, but hollow, promise to write “neither adding nor omitting anything” (*Ant.* 1.17).<sup>35</sup>

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31. Martin Goodman contests that Suetonius’s account is not evidence that many were attracted to Judaism in Domitian’s time, as other scholars profess. Goodman writes, “I remain unconvinced by claims that Domitian punished less important non-Jews for Judaizing by subjecting them to the special tax, while more important non-Jews were executed for the same crime.” He acknowledges that Cassius Dio’s account and the coins issued by Nerva seem to indicate this phenomenon of non-Jews taking on Jewish practices, but the standard view that there were many non-Jews taking on Jewish practices is not well supported. See Martin Goodman, “The *Fiscus Iudaicus* and Gentile Attitudes to Judaism in Flavian Rome,” in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, ed. Jonathan Edmondson, Steve Mason, and James Rives (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 167–77, here 169.

32. Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 67.14.1–2. See also Feldman and Reinhold, *Jewish Life and Thought among Greeks and Romans*, 346. “Atheism” here refers to the rejection of pagan gods. As the Jews openly (or secretly) rejected the Roman pantheon, atheism was a charge many Jews were convicted of. See Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 379.

33. Josephus defends the historicity of *Antiquities* and his reputation as historian in *Ag. Ap.* 1.1–6.

34. Feldman, *Josephus’s Interpretation of the Bible*, 47–49. Josephus specifies that he is writing to the Greeks and for at least one of his Roman patrons in *Ant.* 1.5, 10, but Tessa Rajak argues that Josephus’s primary audience was always the Jews of the diaspora (see Rajak, *Josephus*, 178).

35. See Feldman, *Josephus’s Interpretation of the Bible*, 37–46 for Feldman’s nine theories as to what Josephus may have meant by this phrase. Something should also be said here about the potential sources used by Josephus in writing *Antiquities*. Generally, the majority of scholars believe that Josephus was using both a Hebrew and a Greek text,

## CASE ONE: THE AMALEKITE WAR

With a suitable introduction of the circumstances and context in which Josephus is writing *Antiquities*, we begin our case study of Josephus's rendition of the Amalekite war. The biblical account found in Exodus 17 is a mere eight verses long:

<sup>8</sup>Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim. <sup>9</sup>Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some men for us and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand." <sup>10</sup>So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. <sup>11</sup>Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. <sup>12</sup>But Moses' hands grew weary; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; so his hands were steady until the sun set. <sup>13</sup>And Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the sword. <sup>14</sup>Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this as a reminder in a book and recite it in the hearing of Joshua: I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." <sup>15</sup>And Moses built an altar and called it, The Lord is my banner. He said, "A hand upon the banner of the Lord! The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." (Exod 17:8–15 NRSV)

The author of Exodus was incredibly terse with the details of this war. The text provides no indication as to why this war happened or even who the Amalekites were. What is clear in these verses, however, is that the God of Israel prevailed against the Amalekites, the Amalekites will be utterly blotted out from under the heavens, and the Lord will war with the Amalekites for generations to come. Meager in the details but firm in its meaning, this story presents a nationalistic pride among the Israelites, chillingly backed by God's command of genocide on the Amalekites for generations to come.<sup>36</sup>

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with perhaps a few targums (see Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible*, 14–23). The use of multiple sources to write *Antiquities* thus becomes difficult when trying to reconcile Josephus's version of a narrative found in the Bible. The narrative passages that are currently being considered do not vary significantly between the Hebrew and Greek versions. Instead, it appears that Josephus may have been elaborating these texts using a variety of traditions known at the time, and perhaps Josephus was also using vocabulary and phrases typical of classical Greek literature. For an extensive study of Josephus's sources, see Harold W. Attridge, *The Interpretation of Biblical History in the Antiquitates Judaicae of Flavius Josephus*, HDR 7 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press for HTR, 1976), 29–41.

36. Avi Sagi has written an article analyzing the moral problems and complexities involved with interpreting this text morally or literally. He argues that while literalists attempt to "justify the text as is, the moral trend strives to *reinterpret* the text in the light of moral assumptions" (see Avi Sagi, "The Punishment of Amalek in Jewish Tradition: Coping with the Moral Problem," *HTR* 87 (1994): 323–46, here 346). Additionally, Robert Eisen has gathered and commented on the work of many scholars regarding the ideology of "non-participation" in the wars of the Hebrew Bible. The theory suggests that "Israel does not



What should Josephus do with a passage like this? If he blames the Zealots and the Sicarii for their nationalistic motives but wants to present the Jews as a strong race, Josephus must somehow retain his Jewish pride while also shrouding uncomfortable details about the Jews' treatment of other races. Early rabbis living near the time of Josephus identified the Roman Empire as the new Amalekites, further complicating this passage's implications.<sup>37</sup> How do you justify wiping out an entire race "from generation to generation"? You make them the worst race ever to exist. Where the Hebrew text uses only 119 words to tell this story and the LXX uses 184, Josephus employs an astounding 1,039 words to fill in the "untold" details of why the Amalekites are the worst people imaginable.<sup>38</sup>

Due to the length of Josephus's account, a summary must suffice. Josephus begins the Amalek narrative by first elevating the Israelite's fame throughout all the land. Other nations began to fear the Hebrews, and the Amalekites—"the most warlike of the peoples there" (*Ant.* 3.40)—began conspiring with neighboring kings to engage in a preemptive attack against Israel (*Ant.* 3.39–42). Meanwhile, Moses and the Israelites were not expecting any hostilities, and Josephus is sure to include that the Hebrews had virtually no resources, whereas the Amalekites were well equipped with "weapons, money, food, and the other things" (*Ant.* 3.43). Upon learning of the Amalekites' intentions, Moses delivers a motivating speech about God's aid in past difficult times and then assures the Hebrews that they should not have any problems going to war with the Amalekites (*Ant.* 3.43–48).<sup>39</sup> Joshua is then selected as general, Moses himself commands the preparations for war, and Moses gives a final encouraging speech to Joshua and the people before marching off to battle (*Ant.* 3.49–52).<sup>40</sup> Finally, Moses's hand raising results in an Israelite victory,

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fight for itself—rather, God fights for the Israelites." Eisen argues that cases such as these, where God is put in a warrior context, the stories may be exaggerated in a way to reflect the seventh century BCE biblical author's insecurities in the midst of an imminent enemy invasion. See Eisen, *The Peace and Violence of Judaism*, 51–52.

37. Eisen, *The Peace and Violence of Judaism*, 104–5.

38. For a breakdown of word comparisons between the biblical text and *Antiquities*, see Feldman, "Remember Amalek!," 27–28.

39. Feldman suggests that Josephus intentionally inserts the suddenness and unexpectedness of the attack as means to promote sympathy for the Israelites in Feldman, *Judean Antiquities 1–4*, 242.

40. Joshua is one of Josephus's heroes. Clearly unsatisfied with Exodus's portrayal of Joshua as a simple yes-man in these verses, Josephus includes that Joshua was "a most courageous man and excellent in enduring toil and most capable in understanding and in speech, one who worshipped God outstandingly and who had made Moyses [*sic*] his teacher of piety toward Him and who was honored among the Hebrews" (*Ant.* 3.49). Moses is also one of Josephus's heroes in these verses and throughout *Antiquities*. Josephus portrays Moses commissioning forces to guard the water he had just sprung from a rock and

the Israelites amass a great wealth from the war spoils, Moses builds an altar, and Moses *predicts* that the Amalekites would perish with utter annihilation (*Ant.* 3.53–60).

The changes and expansions that Josephus makes in his account of the Amalekite war are unquestionably intentional. Where the Bible did not offer an explanation for the war, the conditions the Israelites were in before the war, or who the Amalekites were, Josephus takes the liberty of filling the reader in on each of these details. The Amalekites were a paranoid and warlike people, and the Israelites were completely caught off guard by this attack. Moses's role is enhanced to depict a war general capable of uplifting his troops with powerful speeches, and the Israelites' conditions improve after the war. Perhaps the most noticeable change is the absence of God's decree to utterly blot out the Amalekites from generation to generation. God is completely removed from Moses's *prediction* that the Amalekites would perish "because they attacked the Hebrews, and that while they were in the desert land and exhausted" (*Ant.* 3.60).<sup>41</sup> Verse 55 is particularly interesting, where Josephus states: "This was the most splendid and most timely victory that our ancestors won. For they overcame their attackers and injected fear into their neighbors." Josephus takes this problematic episode and manipulates it by putting the Israelites wholly on the defensive, but victorious nevertheless. This accomplishes his design to squash nationalistic overtones while still presenting the Jewish people as warriors.

## CASE TWO: PHINEHAS THE ZEALOT

Our second case study explores the actions of Phinehas the zealot, found in Numbers 25. Before Phinehas's act of "zeal," the biblical account begins the story with Moabite women luring away Israelite men to worship their gods (Num 25:1–2). Troubled by this, God commands Moses to gather all the chiefs of the people who have yoked themselves to Baal Peor (the Midianite god) and impale them in the sun for all to see (vv. 3–5). Our pericope then follows:

<sup>6</sup>Just then one of the Israelites came and brought a Midianite woman into his family, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of the whole congregation of the Israelites, while they were weeping at the entrance of the tent of meeting. <sup>7</sup>When Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he got up and left the congregation. Taking a spear in his hand, <sup>8</sup>he went after the Israelite man into the tent, and pierced the two of

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staying up all night instructing "Jesus" [Joshua] in war strategy (*Ant.* 3.50). For more on Josephus's portraits of Joshua and Moses, see Feldman, *Josephus' Rewritten Bible*, 376–460, as well as Feldman, "Remember Amalek!," 32–33.

41. Feldman, "Remember Amalek!," 37.

them, the Israelite and the woman, through the belly. So the plague was stopped among the people of Israel. <sup>9</sup>Nevertheless those that died by the plague were twenty-four thousand. <sup>10</sup>The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>11</sup>"Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the Israelites by manifesting such zeal among them on my behalf that in my jealousy I did not consume the Israelites. <sup>12</sup>Therefore say, 'I hereby grant him my covenant of peace. <sup>13</sup>It shall be for him and for his descendants after him a covenant of perpetual priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the Israelites.'" <sup>14</sup>The name of the slain Israelite man, who was killed with the Midianite woman, was Zimri son of Salu, head of an ancestral house belonging to the Simeonites. <sup>15</sup>The name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi daughter of Zur, who was the head of a clan, an ancestral house in Midian. (Num 25:6–15 NRSV)

Unlike the Amalek case, the author of this pericope in Numbers did not relent in providing gory details. Phinehas appears to not have hesitated in grabbing a spear and running it through not just Zimri, but Cozbi as well in one fell swoop. The Lord (through Moses) praises Phinehas for his zeal and promises him a covenant of peace as well as a perpetual priesthood for him and his posterity.

Why would Josephus modify this heroic story? After all, Phinehas was a priest like Josephus, and other rabbis living near the time of Josephus generally applaud Phinehas for his actions.<sup>42</sup> The difficulty of the Phinehas narrative for Josephus is that it does not mesh well with his attitudes toward those who disregard the law and act radically in the name of the divine. In other words, the fact that Phinehas is a zealot who receives a twofold blessing from God for acting similar to how the Zealots acted during the Jewish War toward Rome is problematic.<sup>43</sup>

To remedy this, Josephus enshrouds Phinehas's act in a sea of added context.<sup>44</sup> He begins the story with Hebrew youths being seduced by Midianite women. The Midianite women agree to marry the youths on condition that the youths prove their loyalties to them by worshipping their gods, arguing that their gods are common whereas Judaism's God is not. The Hebrew youth submit to these stipulations and drag prominent men into Midianite worship

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42. Feldman, "The Portrayal of Phinehas," 318–19. Phinehas's example set a precedent for people like Mattathias in 1 Maccabees, who killed a Jew that was attempting to offer a sacrifice on a heathen altar (1 Macc 2:26).

43. Feldman, "The Portrayal of Phinehas," 326–27.

44. Josephus cuts the actual verses about Phinehas's zealotry nearly in half, while on the other hand twenty-nine times as many verses are devoted to the context of the story. See Feldman, "The Portrayal of Phinehas," 316.

practices (*Ant.* 4.131–140).<sup>45</sup> Eventually, Zimri the Israelite begins consorting with Cozbi, and Moses anxiously calls an assembly of the people to plead that they repent and change their ways. In a detail completely absent from the biblical text, Zimri rebels against Moses in *Antiquities*, accusing him of being a tyrant and hypocrite who enslaved the people under the guise of God's laws (*Ant.* 4.141–150). Moses then dissolves the assembly, and Phinehas kills Zimri and Cozbi, setting off a chain reaction of young men slaying many of the transgressors (*Ant.* 4.151–155).

Josephus makes some interesting omissions and additions. Whereas in the biblical story there was no chance at repentance, Josephus's Moses explicitly invites the people to repent before any serious action is taken. Zimri's speech is entirely new to the story, again in an attempt to justify killing only the worst of people. Feldman comments that not only is Zimri's speech against Moses's leadership, but it also attacks Judaism's core belief of exclusivity. In effect, Zimri is proposing that Judaism be more open to other religious views.<sup>46</sup> Equally noticeable, Josephus purposefully omits the distinction of Phinehas being a zealot as well as God's twofold blessing that should follow. Each of these changes soften the zeal of Phinehas without necessarily downplaying Phinehas's righteous intent. Josephus does, however, insert the positive description of Phinehas: "Being superior in both daring of soul and courage of body, to such a degree that if he should be involved in any danger, he did not leave until he had prevailed and obtained victory in it" (*Ant.* 4.153). This description is simply a weak attempt to give Phinehas some mortal praise (as opposed to divine approval) without condoning his action.

## CONCLUSION

The war with the Amalekites and the story of Phinehas's zeal are just two places in *Antiquities* where Josephus manipulates the biblical narrative to fit his political ideology and feelings towards the kind of nationalistic violence that brought down the temple in Jerusalem. The Amalekite conquest of the Bible is a nationalistic story, perhaps originally written in similar circumstances to that of Josephus, where an oppressed group was attempting to assert their identity in the midst of stronger foreign powers.<sup>47</sup> Josephus needed only to tweak

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45. There are a few interesting things going here. Feldman notes that Josephus is caught with the dilemma of answering the criticism made against the Jews that they were illiberal, while also making sure not to condone intermarriage. This results in a massive expansion of this story designed to have generic meaning to his contemporary Jewish readers tempted by pagan practices. See Feldman, *Judean Antiquities 1–4*, 378 fn. 393.

46. Feldman, *Judean Antiquities 1–4*, 380 fn. 408.

47. Eisen, *The Peace and Violence of Judaism*, 52.

the story to show that the Jews are not a violent people and that the Romans were not the new Amalekites. The story of Phinehas as told by Josephus demonstrates that rebelling against legitimate authority and legislature does not work. Additionally, the Jews offer a hand of mercy (via repentance in this case) before acting violently. Sanitizing the biblical text like this is found elsewhere in *Antiquities*, such as the omissions of Moses slaying an Egyptian (Exod 2:12) or Elijah being called a zealot (1 Kgs 19:19). Whoever Josephus's readers were, the message of *Antiquities* was clear: the Jews are powerful warriors, but not because they are an inherently violent or rebellious people.

# SYNTHETIC IGNATIUS: RECOVERING PAGAN AND JOHANNINE INFLUENCES IN THE IGNATIAN EPISTLES

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**Abstract:** Scholars have long noted similarities to Matthew and Paul in the epistles of Ignatius. However, only in recent decades has much thought really been given to both Greco-Roman and Johannine influences in the Ignatian corpus. By highlighting both pagan and Johannine contributions to the writings of Ignatius, much can be determined about Ignatius's own self-understanding as a martyr for God and the early Christian community, as well as his theological conception of Christ's salvific role.

## INTRODUCTION

The epistles of Ignatius of Antioch are primarily occupied with themes of martyrdom, ecclesiastical authority, and unity.<sup>1</sup> Students of and experts in Ignatian scholarship have often followed a similar or related trajectory with their work. Only in recent decades has the Antiochene bishop's Greco-Roman context been emphasized. Further, while attention has been given to some Christian sources for the Ignatian epistles, only a small amount has been devoted to what appears to be a primary source of Ignatius's, the Fourth Gospel traditionally ascribed to John. However, by observing Ignatius's synthesizing of his Greco-Roman and Johannine backgrounds, much can be determined

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1. Bart Ehrman, ed. and trans., *The Apostolic Fathers 1: I Clement, II Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Didache*, LCL 24 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 203, notes: "The letters of Ignatius have received far more scholarly attention than any of the other writings of the Apostolic Fathers. In part this is because of the inherent intrigue surrounding their composition: these are letters written by an early second-century church leader, the bishop of Antioch, who was literally en route to his martyrdom in Rome. In part the scholarly interest derives from the letters' historical significance: they embody concerns that came to characterize the early Christian movement towards orthodoxy—in particular the quest to root out heresy from the churches and to stress the importance of the church's hierarchy, with a sole bishop exercising ultimate authority and presbyters and deacons serving beneath him."

about Ignatius's theological reckoning of the term *theophoros* (θεοφόρος), which in turn influences his own self-understanding.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this paper, then, is to show that Ignatius employs a mixture of pagan cultic terminology and Johannine motifs in order to convey to his audience not only Christ's salvific role but his own as well.<sup>3</sup>

## A REVIEW OF IGNATIAN SCHOLARSHIP

Much has been said and written about Ignatius of Antioch and his epistles.<sup>4</sup> J. B. Lightfoot and Theodor Zahn are credited, and appropriately so, with laying the foundation of important elements of Ignatian scholarship, especially in regards to the historicity and inclusivity of the so-called genuine

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2. For information on accentuation, see William R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 36.

3. This paper uses the term "pagan" to describe non-Christians whose ritual and cultic vocabulary and activities inform the writings of Ignatius of Antioch.

4. An exhaustive list of Ignatian scholarship that touches upon all aspects of the Antiochene bishop and his epistles is far beyond the bounds of this work. What follows, however, are those scholarly contributions which are most relevant to this paper moving forward, and that serve as a solid foundation upon which I have built my argument. For information regarding Ignatius and his epistles generally, see Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*; Michael Holmes, ed. and trans., *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 166–271; Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*; Paul Foster, "The Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch," in *The Writing of the Apostolic Fathers*, ed. Paul Foster (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 81–107; Gregory Vall, *Learning Christ: Ignatius of Antioch & The Mystery of Redemption* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2013); Timothy D. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History*, Tria Corda 5 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); and Claudio Moreschini and Enrico Norelli, *Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature—A Literary History*, vol. 1: *From Paul to the Age of Constantine*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 105–9. In regards to the larger cultural context surrounding Ignatius and his works, see Allen Brent, *The Imperial Cult and the Development of Church Order: Concepts and Images of Authority in Paganism and Early Christianity before the Age of Cyprian*, Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 45 (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Philip A. Harland, "Christ-Bearers and Fellow-Initiates: Local Cultural Life and Christian Identity in Ignatius' Letters," *J ECS* 11 (2003): 481–99; and George Heyman, *The Power of Sacrifice: Roman & Christian Discourses in Conflict* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007). For further information on ancient martyrdom and suicide, see Arthur J. Droge and James D. Tabor, *A Noble Death: Suicide and Martyrdom among Christians and Jews in Antiquity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992); Candida R. Moss, *The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Idem, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom: Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); Paul Middleton, *Radical Martyrdom and Cosmic Conflict in Early Christianity*, ed. Mark Goodacre, LNTS 307 (London: T&T Clark, 2006); G.W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).

epistles.<sup>5</sup> William Schoedel's *Ignatius of Antioch*, while several decades old, examines many aspects of the epistles, some of which are relevant to this paper.<sup>6</sup> Continuing in that scholarly tradition, Bart Ehrman and Michael Holmes have published collections of patristic writings (including Ignatius's seven traditional epistles) which offer helpful introductions to primary sources, in addition to summaries of prior and current scholarship.<sup>7</sup> Recently, more and more scholars are recognizing the value of the Greco-Roman cultural context of the Ignatian letters.<sup>8</sup> For instance, Philip Harland expertly weaves together

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5. For more on the work of Lightfoot and Zahn, see Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, ix–xx; Foster, “The Epistles of Ignatius,” 82–84; Christine Trevett, *A Study of Ignatius of Antioch in Syria and Asia*, Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 29 (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1992), 9–15; and Moss, *The Other Christs*, 41. While matters of historicity and authenticity are of extreme importance in other areas of Ignatian scholarship, such issues pose less of a problem for the present paper. However, some critics of this work might argue that a lack of Ignatian historicity would limit the effectiveness (and, perhaps, the necessity) of determining pagan and Johannine influences that impacted the Antiochene bishop. So as not to detract from the main purpose of the paper, some information on the complicated process of dating and Ignatian recensional history will be provided in this note. The traditional dating of the Ignatian epistles is around 110–117 CE, during the reign of Trajan (based upon Lightfoot's scholarship, which still holds scholarly consensus today; see Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 170), though there are proponents for both earlier and later estimates. Foster wryly notes that the “majority of scholars retain the traditional dating . . . without showing awareness of its flimsy basis” (Foster, “The Epistles of Ignatius,” 88). For further information, see Foster, “The Epistles of Ignatius,” 84–89, esp. 88–89 (wherein he posits potential dates for *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, which would help with the dating of the Ignatian epistles, while also suggesting 125–150 CE as the most likely time of Ignatius's writing and subsequent martyrdom); Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 4–7 (he notes the traditional date, though he is clearly skeptical of it); Vall, *Learning Christ*, 52–54; Trevett, *A Study of Ignatius*, 3–9, esp. 9 (suggesting a compositional date sometime around 107 CE); Heyman, *The Power of Sacrifice*, 183 (proposing 108 CE); Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, 14–19, esp. 19 (on the opposite side of the spectrum, suggesting a date sometime during the reign of Antoninus Pius [138–161 CE]); and Moss, *The Myth of Persecution*, 16 (cf. Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 14–19, esp. 19; and Idem, *The Other Christs*, 41—Moss is highly skeptical of the authenticity, and therefore the historicity, of the Ignatian epistles). As for epistolary recensions, Ignatian scholars recognize three—short, middle, and long (see Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 3–7; Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 170–77; and Moss, *The Other Christs*, 41). Foster offers a welcome summation of Ignatian recensional history: “[The] consensus which has emerged in modern scholarship and is reflected in printed editions is that the seven epistles of the Middle Recension [i.e., *To the Ephesians* (Ign. Eph.), *To the Magnesians* (Ign. Magn.), *To the Trallians* (Ign. Trall.), *To the Romans* (Ign. Rom.), *To the Philadelphians* (Ign. Phld.), *To the Smyrnaeans* (Ign. Smyrn.), *To Polycarp* (Ign. Pol.)] represent the genuine form of the epistles of Ignatius, though perhaps it would be better from a text-critical perspective to say that they represent the earliest recoverable stage of the textual transmission of the Ignatian letters.” Foster, “The Epistles of Ignatius,” 84.

6. Specific examples from Schoedel that either enhance or contrast with this work will be examined below.

7. Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, ix–xx; Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 209–13.

8. Harland notes that Lightfoot used what information was available to him in his day: “Over a century ago, J. B. Lightfoot devoted attention to Ignatius' ‘vivid appeal to the local experiences of an Ephesian audience,’ particularly regarding the Christ-bearer



ancient archaeological and epigraphic evidence to support his conclusion that Ignatius was deliberately using pagan terminology when describing his journey to Rome.<sup>9</sup> Allen Brent largely researches Ignatius's appropriation of pagan language to establish monarchical episcopacy.<sup>10</sup> Gregory Vall, whose study of Ignatius admits a theological perspective,<sup>11</sup> attaches value to the cultural context of the epistles, but he is also wary of Brent's tactics: "[Brent] seems so eager to find pagan religious imagery in Ignatius's letters that he frequently overlooks the biblical background to Ignatius's vocabulary."<sup>12</sup>

Drawing upon the work of these scholars, as well as other research that is relevant to this paper, it will be shown that Ignatius was both a man of the Greco-Roman world, as well as a faithful Christian bishop bound for martyrdom. While there are many factors which influenced the composition of his epistles, this paper will examine the use of the pagan term *theophoros*, and the divine titles for Jesus and the literary theme of unity from the Fourth Gospel. Ignatius synthesizes pagan and Christian imagery and terminology in order to

metaphor and local evidence for processions, but there is far more archeological evidence now available. Other scholars have since given some attention to these metaphors, but often in a cursory way and rarely, if ever, with reference to local cultural life as attested in archeological evidence from Roman Asia. William R. Schoedel's commentary, for instance, rightly understands the Christ-bearers in terms of a Greek religious procession, noting that 'bearers' of sacred things can be found within this context (citing Plutarch, *Moralia* 352B, where the image is also used metaphorically); he also notes the importance of the background of the mysteries for understanding Ignatius' use of 'fellow-initiates.' Yet Schoedel and other scholars largely ignore an abundance of artefactual remains that can illuminate what, concretely, these passages would spark in the imaginations of Ignatius and the addressees of his letters." Harland, "Christ-Bearers and Fellow-Initiates," 482. Schoedel, hesitant of the proposal of *theophoros* and Johannine influence on the Ignatian epistles, does give credit where it is due: "Hellenistic Judaism rather than Gnosticism often provides the background for an understanding of Ignatius' spirituality." Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 17. Holmes adds, "The character of Ignatius's debt to Hellenistic culture is much debated. Gnostic affinities have been alleged on the basis of mythological elements in such passages as *Ephesians* 19 [i.e., its hymn] or the themes of 'oneness' and 'silence,' but recent investigations have indicated that these elements are also found in the wider popular culture. These investigations, together with observations about the form and style of his letters, suggest that Ignatius mirrors more the popular culture of his day than any specific esoteric or gnostic influences." Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 175.

9. See Harland, "Christ-Bearers and Fellow-Initiates," 482–83.

10. The following are publications of Allen Brent's that deal with Ignatius and *theophoros* to one degree or another: *The Imperial Cult and the Development of Church Order* (full citation in note 4); *A Political History of Early Christianity* (London: T&T Clark, 2009); *Ignatius of Antioch and the Second Sophistic: A Study of an Early Christian Transformation of Pagan Culture*, ed. Christoph Markschies, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 36 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006); *Cultural Episcopacy and Ecumenism: Representative Ministry in Church History from the Age of Ignatius of Antioch to the Reformation, With Special Reference to Contemporary Ecumenism*, ed. Marc R. Spindler, Studies in Christian Mission 6 (Leiden: Brill, 1992).

11. See Vall, *Learning Christ*, 1–26.

12. Vall, *Learning Christ*, 83 (see also 79–87).

conceptualize his own understanding of who he and Christ were and why they did what they did.<sup>13</sup>

### “PAGAN” IGNATIUS

In writing to his audiences throughout Asia Minor,<sup>14</sup> Ignatius was somewhat familiar with the milieu of pagan terminology that described significant processions and rites.<sup>15</sup> Ignatius appropriated some of this terminology in his epistles, the most prominent instance of such being *theophoros*,<sup>16</sup> which was used at the beginning of each epistle in a very formulaic manner.<sup>17</sup>

Today, scholars like Brent and Harland help to illustrate what *theophoros* would have meant to a Greco-Roman audience.<sup>18</sup> Of note is the fact that *theophoros* was a title, not a surname,<sup>19</sup> and was used to describe the “image-

13. This paper’s Greek and English text and translations from the Ignatian epistles come from Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, while New Testament translations are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

14. Schoedel proposes a potential chronology for the composition of the letters: Ignatius would have traveled to Philadelphia and Smyrna (where *Philadelphians*, *Smyrnaeans*, *Polycarp*, and *Romans* would have been written), where he also received embassies from the Christian communities in Ephesus, Magnesia, and Tralles (to whom *Ephesians*, *Magnesians*, and *Trallians* were written)—all under the guard of ten soldiers. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 11. For the purposes of this paper, there is no need to refute Schoedel’s proposal.

15. “Ignatius’ characterization of Christians at Ephesos as fellow-processionists bearing sacred objects alludes to aspects of cultural life that would be familiar not only in Syria but also in the cities of western Asia Minor.” Harland, “Christ-Bearers and Fellow-Initiates,” 490; cf. 497–99. Harland offers a helpful introduction to Greco-Roman processions, complete with a lengthy list of appellations and positions that includes *theophoros*. “Christ-Bearers and Fellow-Initiates,” 488–89. Another similar and interesting list of cultic titles in relation to a Bacchic *thiasos* from around 160 CE (just a few years following the dating of the Ignatian epistle; cf. note 5) is recorded in an inscription. Hugh Bowden, *Mystery Cults of the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 128–29. This list also includes the title and position of *theophoros*.

16. For further information on the appropriation of other “pagan” terms in the Ignatian epistles, see Brent, *Ignatius of Antioch and the Second Sophistic*, and Harland, “Christ-Bearers and Fellow-Initiates.”

17. See Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 7, 35–37; cf. Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 174. See also note 20.

18. For instance, see Harland, “Christ-Bearers and Fellow-Initiates,” 487: “Ignatius’ characterization of the Christian group at Ephesos as ‘companies’ or ‘fellow-travellers, God-bearers, temple-bearers, Christ-bearers and holy-object-bearers adorned in every respect with the commandments of Jesus Christ’ . . . clearly evokes images from the world of processions (*Eph.* 9.1–2). So, too, his brief, but perhaps no less significant, summary of the Smyrnaeans’ identity as, among other things, ‘the holy-object-bearing’ assembly that is ‘most fitting for its God’ . . . Ignatius was, of course, not the first to draw on the analogy of processions to express (metaphorically) devotion to the gods, or to the Jewish (-Christian) God specifically, as is clear from Philo, and the analogy (including the term ‘Christ-bearer’) was to persist within Christian circles long after Ignatius as well.”

19. Schoedel claims: “[*Theophoros*] may designate him as a martyr in the same way that later martyrs were said to be *χριστοφόροι* (“bearers of Christ”). . . . It is more likely that

bearer”<sup>20</sup> who carried the emblem of the god(s) in cultic processions.<sup>21</sup> Even Schoedel agrees that Ignatius’s journey through Asia Minor was “staged” not only to garner local Christian attention and support but to send a message of “mythic proportions.”<sup>22</sup> Brent further fleshes out this mythic journey, using many archaeological and epigraphic sources to reconstruct what he argues is the origin of monarchical episcopacy in the Ignatian epistles. A multitude of large and small images and icons mark the presence of the god in a pagan procession, and a variety of persons with just as many designations and titles bear them.<sup>23</sup> While this paper will not deal with the intricacies of terminology that Brent explores in several of his works,<sup>24</sup> it is critical to understand the basic

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Theophorus is a name adopted by Ignatius at his baptism despite the fact that the adoption of Christian names was not common until the middle of the third century. . . . The meaning of the name Theophorus is best elaborated in terms of other expressions in the letters . . . Thus Ignatius shares with a wide range of pagan, Jewish, Christian, and Gnostic writers a conception of God dwelling within human beings” (Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 36–37). Schoedel’s assumption that *theophoros* as a second name was simply an adopted title rests upon his admitted caveat that this practice “was not common until the middle of the third century,” which was one hundred years *after* Ignatius’s martyrdom (cf. note 5).

20. Cf. *Eph.* Salutation (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 183), *Magn.* Salutation (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 203), *Trall.* Salutation (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 215), *Rom.* Salutation (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 225), *Phld.* Salutation (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 237), *Smyrn.* Salutation (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 249), and *Pol.* Salutation (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 263), where it is rendered “the Image-bearer” (ὁ καὶ Θεοφόρος).

21. See Harland, “Christ-Bearers and Fellow-Initiates,” 488–89. Ignatius does refer to the Ephesians as *theophoroi* as well (*Eph.* 9.1–2), but he does not distinguish them as having been “judged worthy” (*Smyrn.* 11.1; Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 259) as he has been. It is the coupling of these two honors—being a *theophoros* as well as a special witness—that sets Ignatius apart from his fellow Christians.

22. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 11–12.

23. For an introduction to this thesis, see Brent, *Imperial Cult*, 210–50. In another work, Brent argues that Ignatius’s appropriation of pagan vocabulary allows him to construct his threefold order of the Church (*Political History*, 195–208). He says that “[it] is directly on such a pagan political theology of ritual that Ignatius draws, as a ‘man constrained to unity,’ when he describes the bishop, presbyters and deacons as ‘projecting an image’ of, respectively, Father, Spirit-filled apostolic council and Jesus Christ. Those who join his procession, and those who elect ambassadors to proclaim peace, are not only participating in a joint sacrifice or proclaiming its significance as they accompany the martyr bishop wearing the τύπος of the suffering Father-God. They are specifically acting in the Christian liturgy by analogy with those who bear or wear divine imagery appropriate to the ritual to secure such *homonoia* or to celebrate such a *συνθυσία*. The bearing and wearing of images had of course a role in the dramatic re-enactment of the sacred story of a cult, such as that of Dionysus. In his case, as we have argued, we have the sacred story of the Father-God represented by the bishop sending his diaconal Son in the Johannine scene in the Upper Room, with its Spirit-filled circle of the apostles looking on.” *Political History*, 204. It is important to remember the warning given by Vall that Brent tends to focus heavily on the pagan influences on Ignatius, sometimes at the cost of equally important Christian contexts. Vall, *Learning Christ*, 83.

24. See the following by Brent: *Imperial Cult*, 210–50; *Cultural Episcopacy and Ecumenism*, 64–101; *Political History*, 142–51; *Ignatius of Antioch and the Second Sophistic*, 38–230.

concept of the arguments made by Brent and Harland in order to contextualize Ignatius's use of *theophoros*.

What, then, is the function of *theophoros* in the Ignatian epistles? Scholars like Brent and Harland are right to argue that *theophoros* is a cultic term taken from pagan ritual processions, and is meant to situate Ignatius in a kind of mystical journey that takes him through Asia Minor to Rome, and from there to heaven. Ignatius calls Ephesian Christians *theophoroi* (θεοφόροι) as well, but does not give them (or any other Christians, for that matter) the sacred trust entitled to him by God.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Jesus can be considered to be an exceptional person sent by God, sacrificing himself on the cross in order to extend grace to all mankind. Thus, while minor *theophoroi* are noted in Ephesus, the two major *theophoroi* of the Ignatian epistles are Ignatius and Jesus himself. Ignatius is the *theophoros* of Jesus, just as Jesus is the *theophoros* of God the Father. Ignatius's use of pagan terminology to establish the role of Jesus is expanded upon, however, when he incorporates Johannine influences into his epistles.

### “JOHANNINE” IGNATIUS

There are many instances where Ignatius apparently quotes from or alludes to phrases found in other early Christian texts.<sup>26</sup> While academics typi-

25. Cf. *Smyrn.* 11.1.

26. Says Holmes: “Whereas Ignatius makes very little use of the Old Testament, he is deeply indebted to early Christian tradition, which has pervasively shaped his vocabulary and thought. His heavy use of Pauline tradition (the way Paul responded to rejection likely offered a model for Ignatius) was shaped both by a more ‘mystical’ tradition (represented also in the Gospel of John) and by a concern for order and discipline (cf. Matthew). Ignatius likely knew a wide range of early Christian literature, but whatever that range was, we can demonstrate with certainty his use of only a few writings. He probably worked with the Gospel of Matthew (e.g., *Smyrn.* 1.1); there is no evidence of Mark, and only minimal (and not conclusive) evidence of Luke (*Smyrn.* 3.2). *Use of John* (cf. *Rom.* 7.3; *Phld.* 7.1) is unlikely. He has read 1 Corinthians and probably Ephesians and 1 and 2 Timothy. There are numerous echoes of other Pauline documents (his collection may have included 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Romans, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, and 1 and 2 Timothy), but it is difficult to determine whether these echoes reflect literary dependence or the use of traditional elements.” *Apostolic Fathers*, 174–75; emphases added. It is possible that Holmes is simply building on the work of Schoedel: “[It] is also unlikely that Ignatius was acquainted with the Gospel of John.” Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 9–10, esp. 9. Charles E. Hill debates against these opinions vigorously, however, affirming that Ignatius was well aware of the Fourth Gospel. See *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 421–43. See also Vall, *Learning Christ*, 40–51; Trevett, *A Study of Ignatius*, 15–27; Foster, “The Epistles of Ignatius,” 103–7 (wherein Foster is only willing to conclude that scholars can reliably assert Matthean and Pauline evidence in the Ignatian epistles); Moreschini and Norelli, *Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature*, 105–9.

cally recognize the employed Matthean and Pauline material,<sup>27</sup> there are clear Johannine motifs and themes in Ignatius as well.<sup>28</sup> In addition to claims of Ignatius's being a disciple of the author of the Fourth Gospel (traditionally "John"),<sup>29</sup> there are multiple factors that signal the authenticity of at least Ignatius's theological dependence on John, including matters ranging from dating and provenance to theological and literary influences.<sup>30</sup> What follows,

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27. See Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 174–75; Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 9–10; Vall, *Learning Christ*, 40–49; Trevett, *A Study of Ignatius*, 15–20, 22–23, 40–51; Foster, "The Epistles of Ignatius," 103–7; Moreschini and Norelli, *Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature*, 105–9.

28. For an examination of Ignatius's relationship to the Fourth Gospel, see Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 421–43.

29. Old traditions noted Ignatius to be a disciple of John, if sometimes only indirectly. See Trevett, *A Study of Ignatius*, 20–21; Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 722–23; Foster, "The Epistles of Ignatius," 82, 84. Cf. Foster, "The Epistles of Ignatius," 85–86, where a potential relationship between Ignatius and Peter is discussed.

30. While in-depth discussions regarding issues of dating, provenance, and historicity of the Fourth Gospel are beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to briefly touch upon them. Critics of Johannine traditional material in Ignatius might argue that because Ignatius never mentions the name of his source, any similarities in phraseology become circumstantial at best (for instance, see Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001], 23). Vall counters that Ignatius was writing, or dictating, these epistles en route to Rome, and would not have gone to the trouble to find and cite his sources, since he was likely quoting from memory. Ignatius may not cite his Johannine source material, but neither does he reference his Pauline or Matthean sources (see Vall, *Learning Christ*, 43; cf. Trevett, *A Study of Ignatius*, 15–19; contra Blomberg, *Historical Reliability*, 23–24). Hill seconds this opinion, stating that "[it] is surprising how routinely scholars assume that Ignatius, if he knew any NT books, had to have them in front of him as he wrote and must have held to the ideal of precise literal transcription, or perhaps that he had to reproduce exactly each source for his thoughts." *Johannine Corpus*, 427; see also 421–27. Naturally, this discussion further extends to matters of Johannine dating—if the Fourth Gospel were not written until perhaps the mid-second century, then there is no plausible way that Ignatius would have been referring to them. However, numerous scholars have come to the conclusion that the Fourth Gospel was most likely composed sometime around 80–100 CE—for instance, see Blomberg, *Historical Reliability*, 23–44, esp. 41–44; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester: Apollos; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 82–87; Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, ed. Francis J. Moloney (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 215; Mark L. Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 335–37; Marianne Meye Thompson, *John: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015), 17–22; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 6–8; Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, SP 4 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 1–6; and Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 421–43 (cf. his material on Polycarp [416–20], the dating of whom would also help to secure the dating of the Ignatian epistles). Further, Ignatius and John are connected with the Christian community at Ephesus (see Brown, *Introduction to John*, 199–206; Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 336; Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 430–31; Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 174, 182–201), making even more plausible this paper's claim that Ignatius was influenced by the Fourth Gospel. Trevett remarks that there appears to be some form of connection between the Johannine tradition and the epistles of Ignatius (see Trevett, *A Study of Ignatius*, 20–22, 125–26); and Marianne Meye Thompson notes similarities of content between John and Ignatius that strengthen

however, will focus on two major areas of Johannine emphasis in Ignatius: status and names of Christ, and the Johannine theme of unity.<sup>31</sup>

In both the epistles and the Johannine tradition, Jesus holds a variety of titles that distinguish him from ordinary men. Many of Jesus's Johannine titles have found their way into Ignatian vocabulary.<sup>32</sup> For instance, in both Ignatius

this paper's argument (see Thompson, *John*, 20). See also Brent, *Cultural Episcopacy and Ecumenism*, 72–80; cf. Foster, "The Epistles of Ignatius," 98–100. For scholarly discussion on the dating and composition of the Ignatian epistles, see note 5.

31. While not a main topic of this paper, worthy of note here is an instance of especial connection to the Johannine tradition, *Phld.* 7.1 (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 241): "Nevertheless the Spirit is not deceived, because it is from God; for it knows from where it comes and where it is going, and exposes the hidden things" (cf. John 3:8: "The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."). Vall notes this as the "strongest echo [of the Gospel of John in Ignatius] . . . at least at first blush." Vall, *Learning Christ*, 42. He further says: "Elsewhere Ignatius uses distinctively Johannine phrases such as 'living water,' 'the bread of God' (with eucharistic overtones), and 'the gift [δωρεά] of God,' as well as the more vaguely Johannine expression 'the door of the Father.' The imagery of shepherd, sheep, and wolves in *Philadelphians* 2:1–2 is reminiscent of John 10:11–14. Ignatius's affirmation that 'the Lord did nothing apart from the Father' echoes not only the diction but one of the central ideas of the Fourth Gospel. In the same context Ignatius explicitly affirms Christ's preexistence 'with the Father,' refers to him as God's 'Logos,' and says that he 'pleased the one who sent him in all things.' . . . [It] is especially in *Magnesians* 6–8 that Ignatius utilizes the basic Johannine summary of the Christ event: The Son came forth from the Father, accomplished the will of the Father, and returned to the Father. Ultimately, answering the question whether Ignatius knew the written Gospel of John or only Johannine oral tradition is not as important as the recognition that Johannine theology has deeply penetrated his thinking about the mystery of redemption." Vall, *Learning Christ*, 43.

32. Both Ignatius and John give Jesus a long list of names. In John, Jesus is called "the Word" (1:1); "the (true) light" (1:8–9); "the life" (1:4–5); "a father's only son" (1:14); "God the only Son" (1:18); "the Lamb of God" (1:29, 35); "the Son of God" (1:34, 49; 3:18); "Rabbi" or "teacher" (1:38, 49; 3:2 [contrast with Nicodemus in 3:10]; 4:31; 6:25; 13:13); "the Messiah" (1:41; 4:25–26, 29; 7:26–27); "him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote" (1:45); "the King of Israel" (1:49); "the Son of Man" (1:51; 3:13–14; 6:53); "the one who descended from heaven" (3:13–15); "his only Son" (3:16); "the Son" (3:17, 33–36; 5:19–24, 26–27); "the light that has come into the world" (3:19–21; cf. 8:12; 9:5); "the bridegroom" (3:29); "the one who comes from above (or heaven) is above all" (3:31); "a Jew" (4:9); "a prophet" (4:19, 44; 6:14 ["the prophet who is to come into the world"]); "the Savior of the world" (4:42); "the bread of life" (6:35, 48; cf. 6:32–58); "the Holy One of God" (6:60); "I am" (8:58); "the gate for the sheep" (10:7); "the good shepherd" (10:11); one with the Father (10:30; cf. 10:38); the "resurrection and the life" (11:25–27); "the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6–7); and "the true vine" (15:1). The names given by Ignatius (as found in Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 182–271) include "Jesus Christ our God" (cf. *Eph.* Salutation; for variations on this title, see also *Eph.* 18.2, *Pol.* 8.2); "God" (*Eph.* 1.1); "the Name" (*Eph.* 3.1; 7.1); "the Master of the house" (*Eph.* 6.1); the "only one physician, who is both flesh and spirit, born and unborn, God in man, true life in death, both from Mary and from God, first subject to suffering and then beyond it" (*Eph.* 7.2); "faith" and "love" (*Eph.* 14.1; *Trall.* 8.1); "teacher" (*Eph.* 15.1; *Magn.* 9.1); "God's knowledge" (*Eph.* 17.2); "the new man" (*Eph.* 20.1); "our never-failing life" (*Magn.* 1.2); "the one who is unseen" (*Magn.* 3.2); the "Son, who is [God's] Word that came forth from silence" (*Magn.* 8.2); "the new yeast" (*Magn.* 10.2); "our hope" (*Magn.* 11.1; *Trall.* Salutation, 2.2); "an undivided spirit" (*Magn.* 15.1); the only "son of the Father" (*Rom.* Salutation); "water living and speaking" (*Rom.*

and the Fourth Gospel, Jesus is “God.”<sup>33</sup> Likewise, in both Jesus is the great teacher from God,<sup>34</sup> the life,<sup>35</sup> and the door or gate.<sup>36</sup> These titles reflect Christ’s divine status. Not only is he higher than the earth, but he preexisted before its creation with the Father. Jesus is the Word, the very revelation of God that allows for mankind to see the image of the Father.<sup>37</sup> Jesus is thus uniquely qualified to teach, judge, and atone, offering eternal life to the believing and damnation to the wicked.

Another compelling evidence of Johannine influence in Ignatius is his major theme of unity. Ignatius’s emphasis on unity is expressed so that, as Jesus is one with the Father, so might each Christian community be one with their ecclesiastical leadership and the church as a whole.<sup>38</sup> The five chapters in the Fourth Gospel devoted to the so-called Last Supper of Jesus and his apostles are rife with Jesus’s pleas for the unification of the apostles and those that heed their words.<sup>39</sup> Jesus calls himself “the true vine” and commands that his apostles are to be one in him, part and parcel of the “Father’s planting.”<sup>40</sup> Jesus’s Intercessory Prayer of John 17, recycling the theme of Father-Son unity that is diagnostic of the Fourth Gospel,<sup>41</sup> pleads with God that the disciples may be

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7.2–3); “the unerring mouth by whom the Father has truly spoken” (*Rom.* 8.2); the “bishop” of Syria after Ignatius’s departure (*Rom.* 9.1; cf. *Pol.* Salutation); the imitator of the Father (*Phld.* 7.2); the “archives” (*Phld.* 8.2); “the high priest” and the “door of the Father” (*Phld.* 9.1); “the Savior” (*Phld.* 9.2); “the beloved” (*Smyrn.* Salutation); “the God who made you so wise” (*Smyrn.* 1.1); “Son of God” (*Smyrn.* 1.1); “our true life” (*Smyrn.* 4.1); “the perfect human being” (*Smyrn.* 4.2); “the perfect hope” (*Smyrn.* 10.2); and the “one who is above time: the Eternal, the Invisible, who for our sake became visible; the Intangible, the Unsuffering, who for our sake suffered, who for our sake endured in every way” (*Pol.* 3.2). In certain instances, some Ignatian titles listed could refer not only to Jesus Christ, but also to the Father and/or the Holy Spirit, as well as other authorized representatives of God, like the bishop. Hill conducts a similar project, albeit unbeknownst to me until after my own research was completed. *Johannine Corpus*, 431–41.

33. For a sample, see John 1:1, 18; 8:58; *Eph.* 1.1; 18.2; *Pol.* 8.2; *Smyrn.* 1.1; etc. See also note 32.

34. John 1:38 and *Eph.* 15.1. See also note 32.

35. John 1:4–5 and *Smyrn.* 4.1. See also note 32.

36. John 10:7 and *Phld.* 9.1. See also note 32.

37. John 1:1, 18; 10:30, 38; *Eph.* 7.2; *Magn.* 8.2; *Pol.* 3.2. See also note 32. Vall, in *Learning Christ*, 260–61, states: “What Ignatius says about Jesus Christ is fully compatible with the Johannine Logos Hymn, which ends with these words: ‘No one has ever seen God; the only-begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, has declared him.’ There can be little doubt that Ignatius learned the Christological use of the term λόγος from the Fourth Gospel, or at least from Johannine tradition.”

38. For a sample, see *Eph.* 5.1; *Magn.* 3.1; *Rom.* 3.3; *Smyrn.* 8.1–2; *Trall.* 3.1–3; and so forth.

39. John 13–17.

40. John 15:1; *Trall.* 11.1–2; *Phld.* 3.1.

41. See Vall, *Learning Christ*, 43.

one with him and the Father.<sup>42</sup> These chapters all lead to the climax of Jesus's life, namely his passion, crucifixion, and resurrection.

Ignatius's writings echo the Johannine call for unity, as the Antiochene bishop teaches that the bishop is the mind of Jesus, just as Jesus is the mind of the Father.<sup>43</sup> The plea for unification is a plea to be joined as one with Christ and enter into the heavenly chorus which praises him.<sup>44</sup> This call for unity is a natural preface to Ignatius's own martyrdom, a subject that preoccupies his mind often as he is escorted to Rome.<sup>45</sup> That this construction of the narrative is patterned after Jesus's own journey to the cross and empty tomb is clear, and will be discussed below.

### “SYNTHETIC” IGNATIUS

Ignatius uses pagan and Johannine sources to convey to his audience both Christ's salvific role as well as his own self-understanding as *theophoros*. Ignatius is the *theophoros* of Jesus (who, as the divine Word, is the *theophoros* of the Father) as he takes a mystical procession through Asia Minor in semblance of Christ's own journey to the cross. Adding Johannine influences to this pagan material, he describes Christ's salvific mission, as well as his own. Thus, what Ignatius says about Jesus can have meaning for himself.<sup>46</sup> The confluence and mixture of paganism and Johannine Christianity in his epistles lends a useful appellation for Ignatius: “synthetic.” This work will examine three instances from the Ignatian epistles that highlight “synthetic Ignatius”: Jesus as the “one teacher”; the function of the *Ephesians* 19 hymn; and the sacred journey of death and resurrection. In teaching about Jesus, Ignatius likewise discourses on his own special case of martyrdom. Naturally, Ignatius will not continually bring up the actual word *theophoros*, nor will he always cite a Johannine image with a pagan one. Instead, Ignatius expects his audience to

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42. John 17:6–26. Cf. Vall, *Learning Christ*, 88–117.

43. Cf. *Eph.* 3.2.

44. Cf. *Eph.* 4.

45. Cf. *Rom.* 1–5.

46. It should be noted here that Ignatius doesn't insinuate that all of Jesus's characteristics are his as well. While Ignatius does claim for himself some amount of divine or, perhaps closer to his original intent, *semi*-divine powers (cf. *Trall.* 5.1–2), he doesn't fully equate himself with Jesus. For instance, Jesus was the product of a virgin birth (an important aspect of Ignatius's theology that he emphasizes strongly; cf. *Eph.* 18–19), though Ignatius never claims such a divine origin for himself. He further argues that Jesus is a physical descendant of the biblical King David, but never associates himself with that (in)famous monarch (cf. *Eph.* 19). Thus, Ignatius recognizes his synthesis of pagan and Johannine terminology is acceptable to a certain limit in proclaiming himself and Jesus as *theophoroi*—but he never attempts to breach that limit and make bolder, more heretic claims.



recall these previously associated symbols and to piece them together to form the cohesive, even “synthetic,” message he presents.

Jesus is the “one teacher” in the Ignatian epistles, the instructor sent from God.<sup>47</sup> Ignatius is insistent throughout his corpus that he himself is not a teacher, especially not one of Christ’s caliber, but is instead a student still learning how to be a disciple, just like the Christians he is writing to.<sup>48</sup> One of the most frequent appellations given to Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is the title “Rabbi” or “Teacher.”<sup>49</sup> Ignatius takes this Johannine title and applies it to the pagan construction of *theophoros*: As teacher, Jesus is the *theophoros* of the Father, sent to instruct mankind and give them eternal life.<sup>50</sup> While Ignatius is a *mathētēs* (μαθητής) like everyone else in his audience, he singularly has been “judged worthy” of bearing the name of God in this procession through Asia Minor, to Rome, and ultimately to heaven.<sup>51</sup> To help modern readers conceptualize this idea, perhaps Ignatius could be likened to a teacher’s assistant, having a special responsibility to represent and teach the will of the true teacher (Jesus) while still being a student (*mathētēs*) like everybody else. Thus, as *theophoros*, Ignatius represents Jesus and his divine will, with attendant authority, while still occupying the role of an imperfect student. This doesn’t limit Ignatius’s role as *theophoros* to simply instructional, however—he is the image-bearer of Jesus and is representative of him in more ways than one.

The hymn in *Eph.* 19 refers to the singular excellence of Jesus the “star” in the midst of other celestial bodies, including the sun and moon, and denotes his power over worldly institutions, like magic and political kingdoms.<sup>52</sup> The hymn does not imply movement on the part of the “star,” though the phrase “when God appeared in human form to bring the newness of eternal life” (θεοῦ ἀνθρωπίνως φανερούμενου εἰς καινότητα αἰδίου ζωῆς) could imply

47. *Eph.* 15.1 (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 195).

48. Cf. *Eph.* 3.1.

49. For a sample, see John 1:38. See also note 32.

50. Cf. John 1:9–13.

51. Cf. *Smyrn.* 11.1 (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 259).

52. Holmes’s translation of the text of the hymn (*Eph.* 19.2–3) reads: “A star shone forth in heaven brighter than all the stars; its light was indescribable and its strangeness caused amazement. All the rest of the constellations, together with the sun and moon, formed a chorus around the star, yet the star itself far outshone them all, and there was perplexity about the origin of this strange phenomenon, which was so unlike the others. Consequently all magic and every kind of spell were dissolved, the ignorance so characteristic of wickedness vanished, and the ancient kingdom was abolished when God appeared in human form to bring the newness of eternal life; and what had been prepared by God began to take effect. As a result, all things were thrown into ferment, because the abolition of death was being carried out.” *Apostolic Fathers*, 199. For instances of astral imagery in the New Testament, see Matt 2, 2 Pet 1:19 (where Jesus is called the “morning star”), and Rev 22:16 (where Jesus is called the “bright morning star”; cf. Rev 2:28).

the movement of God from cosmic realms to earthly ones in order to manifest salvation to humanity.<sup>53</sup> The hymn could thus be interpreted as a sacred procession of Jesus, both as “star” and as “God appeared in human form,” to “bring the newness of life” to mankind. This “life” is the eternal life which Jesus brings from heaven to give to mankind on earth, as noted in John.<sup>54</sup> Similar to Ignatius’s own procession, there is a gathered congregation of persons about the *theophoros*—for Jesus the “star,” other heavenly luminaries encircle him, while Ignatius is surrounded by the faithful Christians (especially at Rome).<sup>55</sup> The surrounding congregations, both of stars and of mortal Christians, form “a chorus” about the respective *theophoros*.<sup>56</sup> The hymn by extension is a reference not only to Jesus’s sacred procession, but to Ignatius’s as well. The mixture of pagan and Johannine terminology and imagery allows for the hymn to teach further truths about the missions of both Jesus and Ignatius: both are uniquely chosen individuals who singularly represent God in important earthly functions that have eternal ramifications.

The sacred journey from passion to resurrection that both Jesus and Ignatius endure is also evidence of the synthetic nature of the epistles. Johannine Jesus’s discourses on unity and love are followed by the dark road to Calvary, which in turn gives way to heavenly resurrection.<sup>57</sup> It is in emulating this that Ignatius truly will, like Jesus, become “a word of God.”<sup>58</sup> Further, by accomplishing this mystical procession, Ignatius is making a sort of atonement or blood ransom for the Christian communities, similar to the crucifixion and

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53. *Eph.* 19.2–3 (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 199).

54. Cf. John 1; 6:27; etc.

55. *Rom.* 2.2 (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 227): “Grant me nothing more than to be poured out as an offering to God while there is still an altar ready, so that in love you may form a chorus and sing to the Father in Jesus Christ, because God has judged the bishop from Syria worthy to be found in the west, having summoned him from the east. It is good to be setting from the world to God in order that I may rise to him.” Cf. *Eph.* 4.1–2.

56. *Eph.* 19.2 (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 199). See also Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 51–53, 170–71.

57. See Trevett, *A Study of Ignatius*, 124–25, where she lists the number of historical moments in the life of Jesus that Ignatius mentions in his epistles. Of those mentioned, three are particularly emphasized in the Ignatian letters: “Jesus had been a teacher, the ‘only’ teacher, who ‘spoke and it came to pass,’ the one to whom the prophets had looked. He had given commands and ordinances”; “[Jesus] had suffered persecution and had been crucified in the time of Pontius Pilate and Herod the Tetrarch. His death had been a ‘mystery’ and his own suffering had been efficacious for the resurrection of believers”; and “Jesus Christ had been resurrected and had appeared in the flesh. The Father had raised him, or he had raised himself, ‘for us.’” Trevett, *A Study of Ignatius*, 124–25. Trevett’s final two historical moments (from the cross to the empty tomb) are combined together in this paper.

58. *Rom.* 2.1 (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 227).

atonement of Jesus himself.<sup>59</sup> This sacred procession underlies Ignatius's self-deprecation, as well as his concerns with and commitment to martyrdom. He is almost being forced to a martyr's death. His nervousness and anxiety to bear the Name and be put on a pedestal akin to Jesus are evident in his epistles.<sup>60</sup> However, Ignatius anticipates this event to make perfect his own worship of Jesus, longing to be where God is—he has, after all, been “judged worthy” to bear the name of God and be *theophoros* in this (eventually fatal) procession to Rome and for Christ.<sup>61</sup>

These three instances of “synthetic Ignatius” show that, while Ignatius may not have necessarily cited pagan and Johannine materials together, the imagery of both is nevertheless coupled with the content and intent of the epistles. Jesus as the one teacher from God instructs men and gives them eternal life, singular among his peers on his sacred journey from the cross to heaven. Ignatius, as both a student and “teacher's assistant” of sorts, instructs about Jesus, all while on his own procession that will end in Rome and martyrdom, after which he will enter heaven to be with God and Jesus.

## CONCLUSION

The epistles of Ignatius are complicated documents, with many facets of available study. This paper has examined one of those facets—namely, the synthetic nature of Ignatius in the mixture of both pagan and Johannine elements to convey his conceptualization of both his and Jesus's missions to his Christian audiences. This is accomplished by the use of *theophoros* and its various implications, which, when coupled with Johannine influences, enhances Ignatius's message and allow for greater cognition of what he believed Jesus to have done. This “synthetic Ignatius” is evident in his discussion of Jesus as the “one teacher,” in the *Ephesians* 19 hymn, and in the sacred procession from death to resurrection taken by both Jesus and Ignatius. A sense of his own self-deprecation and anxiety is also explainable when viewed in the light of “synthetic Ignatius.” Such a synthesis by Ignatius rings true to the Johannine theme of unity that serves as the hallmark of his epistles: “Therefore in your unanimity and harmonious love Jesus Christ is sung. . . .

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59. See *Pol.* 2.3 (“May I be a ransom on your [Polycarp's] behalf in every respect, and my chains as well, which you loved”) and 6.1 (“I am a ransom on behalf of those who are obedient to the bishop, presbyters, and deacons; may it be granted to me to have a place among them in the presence of God!”) Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 265, 267.

60. See Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 13–14.

61. Cf. *Smyrn.* 11.1 (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 259).

It is, therefore, advantageous for you to be in perfect unity, in order that you may always have a share in God.<sup>62</sup>

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62. *Eph.* 4.1-2 (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 187).