

Flavian War and Autocracy in Context: Abstracts

Alice König, St Andrews

Reading War and Autocracy in Frontinus' Strategemata: a case study for Flavian literary studies

This paper has two aims: to integrate Frontinus' *Strategemata* more fully into discussions of Flavian literature and history (goaded, not least, by its recent omission from Frédéric Hurlet's survey of Flavian literature towards the start of the 2016 Wiley-Blackwell *Companion to the Flavian Age of Imperial Rome*); and to use that text and other examples of 'Flavian' prose (particularly Tacitus' *Histories* and Josephus' *Jewish War*) to explore the relationships which ancient and modern writers construct between texts and contexts. The bulk of the paper will look at the ways in which war and autocracy are represented within Frontinus' *Strategemata*; but it will also use the *Strategemata* as a case study for examining the challenges inherent in relating the content of a text to its Flavian context (both the perils of extrapolating from context to text, and vice versa). Along the way, it will reflect on the uses to which Flavian and post-Flavian prose is often put in the interpretation of Flavian verse (with some cross-reading of Frontinus' *Strategemata* and Silius Italicus' *Punica* to focus discussion), and on the roles played by different genres (not just different texts) in shaping cultural, literary and academic discourse. With Frontinus' help, it will also consider the universality (not just the Flavian particularity) of war and autocracy as cultural and literary themes – and indeed the interplay between contextual specificities and long-established paradigms/cultural memory in the (Flavian) evolution of these themes.

Doug Lee, Nottingham

Flavian civil war in context: Issues of allegiance and identity

Civil war raised acute dilemmas with regard to the loyalties and self-identity of Roman soldiers which were generally lacking from wars against non-Romans. This paper offers some thoughts on these dilemmas across a broad sweep of Roman history, from the Late Republic through the Principate to Late Antiquity, and thereby aims to contextualise these aspects of civil war in the Flavian period and to highlight continuities and changes in how these dilemmas were addressed. Particular attention will be given to the strategies used by civil war leaders to persuade their forces to confront another army which also proclaimed its allegiance to Rome.

Andreas Kropp, Nottingham

The "Flavian" coinage of king Herod Agrippa II (AD 49 to 97)

Sam Hayes, Exeter

Dominus et heros: Martial's epic Domitian

In the first eight poems of *Epigrams* 7 Martial establishes the emperor Domitian as a divine epic hero, campaigning in the Black Sea region to restore the grand *pax Romana* to the Histrian regions of his empire. Martial is infamous for his grand panegyric style when praising Domitian, but in this book he especially emphasises the *princeps'* supreme power and authority at Rome and in battle as a divine, epic figure. In this paper I explore the themes and motifs that Martial develops from epic predecessors to create a portrait of an absolute conqueror and ruler, his *dominus et heros*.

In particular, Martial exploits the geographic region of Domitian's Second Pannonian War – the Danube delta on the coast of the Black Sea – to celebrate the emperor's imminent homecoming. The epigrammatist alludes through language and metre to the travels of Aeneas and the return voyage of the Argonauts to further emphasise the already Iliadic portrayal of Domitian as a new heroic favourite of Athena. Monsters and watery dangers abound in book 7, and while the emperor is historically recorded to have returned to Rome by land, this focus on an epic, aquatic *nostos* further reinforces Martial's depiction of the emperor as a divine hero for the contemporary age. Not focusing on any specific hero as a parallel, Martial draws themes from across canonical epic to create in Domitian a composite epic hero greater than the sum of its parts. By highlighting the emperor's heroic martial prowess, the epigrammatist reinforces the traditional image of the emperor as a parallel to Jupiter on earth, and creates a supreme image of the emperor as autocrat.

Coen Willem Schuurmans Stekhoven, St. Andrews

Mediating Power: Martial and the Emperor Domitian

Past scholarship has often portrayed Martial as either a subservient sycophant or a subversive rebel. In this paper I try to get beyond this dichotomy of sycophancy/ subversion, and instead propose a more nuanced assessment of Martial's role in the formation of Domitianic ideology. As my point of departure I take the work of Art L. Spisak, who in his *Martial: A Social Guide* (London 2007) describes Martial as a so called 'power broker', a mediator within a process of ongoing legitimation between the Emperor and various social groups. Unfortunately Spisak does not elaborate much on this thought-provoking concept. I therefore try to show how Martial fulfilled this role as intermediary by reading anew two well-known series of epigrams, the poems on Domitian's Sarmatian campaigns and the epigrams of the lion/hare cycle. In the Sarmatian epigrams, on the one hand, we see Martial offering (what I believe to be) prescriptive praise to the Emperor. The poet asserts that the Emperor, although it is his duty to defend the borders of the empire against external enemies in his campaigns, must also regularly make his appearance in Rome in order to allow the different classes of society to approach him to express their concerns and make requests. The poems on the lion and the hare, telling the story of a lion trained to hold a hare between its jaws without harming it, on the other hand, seem instead to be aimed at the Emperor's subjects. Various scholars have already noted that throughout the cycle, the lion is closely associated with Domitian. Reading these epigrams (esp. *Epgr.* 1. 51) against the background of Tacitus' *Agricola*, I, however, want to suggest that the hare must stand for the subject, who is admonished to be obedient and to keep a low profile.

Patrick Finglass, Nottingham

Staius and Stesichorus

This paper compares Polynices' departure from Thebes in the Lille fragment of Stesichorus with the same episode in Staius' *Thebaid*, and considers whether Staius' treatment may be drawing on and interacting with that of his Greek predecessor.² Tommaso Spinelli (St. Andrews) 'War and Kingship in Staius' *Thebaid*: The Disruption of the Herculean Paradigm'

Tommaso Spinelli, St Andrews

War and Kingship in Staius' Thebaid: The Disruption of the Herculean Paradigm

I propose to explore the problematisation of the figure of Hercules in the *Thebaid* as an effective political paradigm within the evolution of Flavian imperial propaganda. Numismatic and iconographic evidences show that the figure of Hercules, often associated with the Julio-Claudian emperors, was generally avoided by Flavians as a reaction to Nero.¹ However, when Statius writes, Domitian has come back to a public Herculean propaganda (involving temples, statues and coins) that may have stimulated a reflection on this figure and its inherent contradictions.² Hercules' treatment in the *Thebaid* offers an interesting perspective on this political issue. Looking at the first book of the poem, I would show how the hero's allegoric victories over monsters are evoked but also problematized by allusions to Ovid's deflating treatment of Apollo (*Met.* 1.416-567) and Hercules (*Met.* 9.1-275).³ In particular, the reawakening of the Lernean Hydra's poison, the role of anger in Polynices' fight against Tydeus and Adrastus' tale about Apollo will be read in a singular narrative line aimed at showing how they undermine Virgil's theology of power. Recent scholarship has explored the attempts of many characters in the *Thebaid*, who try to figure as 'new Hercules' and fail.⁴ This perspective highlights a continuity with the *Aeneid* in which the hero often becomes a gauge to assess other characters attempting to be his followers. In this paper, I will move from the question "who attempts to be a new Hercules?" to the question: What do we learn about the *Thebaid* and its wider Flavian context from Statius' problematisation of Virgil's Herculean paradigm?

Stefano Briguglio, Pisa

Tyrants and lovers: Creon, Oedipus and the curse of autocracy in Statius' Thebaid

This paper explores Creon's metamorphosis into a tyrant through the analysis of several passages from Statius's *Thebaid*. As in a wicked succession to the throne, Eteocles and Polynices killed each other only to prepare Creon's kingdom, which immediately turns into an autocracy: scholars have analyzed both actions and words used by Statius to depict the transformation of this ruler into a tyrant (most recently, see e. g. Ganiban 2007, pp. 195-9; Bessone 2011, pp. 150-6). However, I argue that this topic deserves deeper attention; I will examine relevant intertexts (from Homer, Vergil, Lucan) and images that allow us to understand better how Statius creates the last tyrant of Thebes.

In Book 11, Statius portrays the beginning of Creon's kingdom by using obsessively images and terms that had informed the description of the beginning of Eteocles and Polynices' conflict for power (Book 1). Furthermore, as in the case of the sons of Oedipus, Creon's passion for the throne is described as a proper erotic frenzy (11, 655-60), similarly to that of tyrants in Senecan tragedy. Lust for power also destroys the king's feelings towards Menoeceus: even when mourning over his son's body, Creon is haunted by political power (12, 60-103); but it's not enough. During his speech, Creon's condition is reflected in his enemy Oedipus: as a result, Creon ultimately recognizes their common condition of bereaved parents. As K. Pollmann points out in her commentary, the situation refers to the dialogue of Priam and Achilles in *Iliad* 24, where the two enemies get awareness of their common grief. But the curse of the Theban throne perverts even the Homeric model: at the

¹On the use of Hercules by Julio-Claudians see Dio 59.26; 62.20.5; Svet. *Nero* 21; 53. See also Hor. *Carm.* 3.3.9 with Nisbet-Rudd (2004: ad loc.); Harrison (1990: 286). Coins with the inscription *Herculi Augusto* were issued under Nero (Roscher 1.2982). On Flavian period see Svet. *Vesp.* 12 and Scotts (1936: 14). It is also worth noting Lucan's use of Hercules (*B.C.* 4.589-660) in the context of civil wars. Ahl (1976: 91-103); Lovatt (2005: 202-203; 211-14).

² On the Herculean imagery reused by Domitian see *Silv.* 4.3.155-59; *Mart.* 9.64; 9.65; 9.101. On the Domitianic temple of Hercules see Darwall-Smith (1996: 135). On coins see Scotts (1936: 145). See also *Silv.* 1.1 and analysis in Newlands (2002: 46-73) and Ahl (1984: 91-102). On Hercules' contradictory nature see note 5.

³ On Ovid's Apollo see Meyers (1994: 61-62); Miller (2005: 165-180); McNelis (2007: 29-30). On Ovid's Hercules see Galinsky (1972b: 96-97); Parkes (2009: 481); Keith (1999: 223); Lovatt (2005: 195-208).

⁴ On the theme of Hercules and "false Hercules" in the *Thebaid* see Ripoll (1998: 146-59); Brown (1998: 146-59); Parkes (2009: 483-88); Lovatt (2005: 80; 195-210).

end of his monologue, Creon forbids the burial for Eteocles and Polynices with words that make him closer to Lucan's wicked Erichon, as I will show.

Helen Lovatt, Nottingham

Trauma and reconciliation in Valerius Flaccus

The Flavian period is distinctive because it is a period of reconciliation after civil war, similar to the Augustan period, but different because autocracy has hardened, and the Year of the Four Emperors showed that the imperial system was not necessarily a guarantee of stability. Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica* was almost certainly the first (mostly surviving) epic of the Flavian period. What can it tell us about the post-traumatic state of Flavian Rome? Stover has recently read Valerius as an epic of renewal and optimism, a Virgil for the Flavian age. But how does Valerius' representation of trauma, reconciliation and leadership reflect on his politics? This paper will focus mainly on the aftermath of the Cyzicus episode in comparison to Apollonius.

Angeliki Roumpou, Nottingham

Carthago delenda est? Cosmic War and the Empire in Silius Italicus 17

This paper discusses Silius' use of elemental and atomic imagery in his description of the two leaders, Scipio and Hannibal, as two great cosmic forces fighting for world domination. The two leaders are portrayed as equal in their military abilities and in their chance for victory. This equality shares similarities with Lucretius' perception of the *cosmos* and the equilibrium of the cosmic system necessary for the preservation of the world. Thus, several questions arise: what happens when Rome wins over Carthage and breaks the necessary equilibrium between them? Is Scipio's triumph in the closure of the epic an optimistic end or rather a pessimistic one? How does Carthage's annihilation signify the beginning of Rome's own destruction?

Danielle Frisby, King's College, London, and Will Leveritt, Nottingham

The Flavian Triumph: Negotiating Specificity and Continuum

This joint paper tackles the triumph, the integral element of public representation of warfare. As Newlands (2002) argues, representation of the triumph (especially in combination with divine association) was key to Flavian legitimization, and to Domitian's assertion of military authority in particular. Artistic and literary representations of the triumph, much like the ritual itself, necessarily demanded that the triumph be rendered in patterns evoking preceding triumphs -- the words, motifs, and orchestration are all acts of repetition. Yet the triumph itself was a rite which elevated and thus set apart the honorand; the combination sees them caught between the specific and the continuous as they inhabit the persona. Part of how the *triumphator* is represented visually is the process of "reification". He is detached from a familiar historical progression and an alternative space is created for the viewer which restricts and heightens their experience of the triumphing general. We examine the extent to which visual and literary communication of the triumph share in this process of detachment, and explore potential for subversion in the direction of "reification".

We focus on the component elements which make up Flavian visual and literary representation of the triumph. These elements, which include both historicizing and also mythologizing motifs, are arranged to constitute frameworks supporting a range of meanings surrounding the *triumphator*.

We consider the textual and visual negotiation of the balance between these motifs, which both place the *triumphator* in a timeless world of divinely approved military exemplars, and at the same time resonate with the specific historical instantiation of the triumph. We explore the potent and complex gap between these elements and the ways in which representation negotiates it to reveal the paradoxically frozen yet momentary nature of the individual's identity *qua triumphator*, one of the fundamental elements emblematising Flavian military power.