New Classicists

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Editors' Foreword

It has been a busy year for the New Classicists team. We would like to first thank Dr Greg Gilles for his years of dedication and service to the journal, who has departed as Chief Editor and has assumed a new role as Editor-at-Large. There have been new changes to the journal as a result.

The first of these changes has been to split the Chief Editor role in two. Filling these roles are Dr Jordon Houston and Giuseppe L. (Joey) Ficocelli who represent both the Early Career Researcher and the Postgraduate interests of the publication. Jordon has been with the journal since its inception back in 2018 and has helped as Editor, and later the journal's Submission Coordinator, on several of our published articles. Joey has been with the journal since 2020 and brings his extensive experience of organising seminar series to the table and we hope to take advantage of that in the near future. We hope the splitting of the Chief Editorial role will bring a fresh perspective into the management of the publication and help continue to steer New Classicists in a new and innovative direction as it always has. The journal has also seen a change in its primary financier. We would like to thank the Institute of Classical Studies in London for kindly agreeing to cover the journal's operational costs and help us achieve our goal of promoting exciting new research coming from postgraduate and early career researchers. Another of these changes is the expansion of the editorial board to accommodate the increasing number of submissions. New Classicists has welcomed a new Submissions Coordinator (Dr Guendalina Taietti), nine new Editors, and two Special Edition Editors. The focus with this expansion was to bring on editors from several different backgrounds, countries, and specialisations, to help us publish as many new and diverse articles as possible.

While all these changes were happening, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic had clearly impacted on a variety of functions such as the quantity of applications, issue with timelines, and finding reviewers. As a result, we only have two articles to present to you for the first half of this year. Nonetheless, we

have ensured that we maintain the quality of our publications and we are very excited to present these to you. We are also happy to say that 2022 has seen positive changes regarding the issues mentioned above. We are happy to say that submissions have returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Our first paper is by Olivia Puekert Stock, who has a MA in Latin from Lund University. Her paper which looks at the use of oaths by using six comedies of the playwright Terence. Our second paper is by Donald McCarthy, who is a doctoral student with the Department of Classics at the University of Toronto. His article looks at Boethius's *Consolatio Philosophiae* and the intertextuality with the literary canon, especially Vergil and Seneca the Younger.

We hope you enjoy our sixth issue and continue to take a keen interest in New Classicists. We are already hard at work getting articles ready for the next issue.

Best regards,

Dr Jordon Houston and Giuseppe L. Ficocelli

Co-Editors-in-Chief

"Pro Iuppiter!" Oaths in Roman Comedy
Olivia Puekert Stock

Introduction

Topic and Material

All human beings have a need for assertions and promises in order to feel persuaded and assured, just as all people have ways of expressing themselves interjectionally: for instance, out of joy, frustration or grief. What these two phenomena have in common is the ambiguous term *swearing*. To swear originally meant "to affirm with an oath",[1] which often was – and sometimes still is – connected to religious actions, for instance swearing by a god or something equivalently sacred. In many languages, original oaths degenerate into interjectional expressions, for instance the English "by God!".

Oath-taking was not an uncommon practice during ancient Roman times, on state and individual levels, formally and informally, seriously and casually. Individual swearing is the *topos* of this article, which is an excerpt from the chapter on oaths in the MA-thesis '"*Pro Iuppiter*". A Study of the Use of Oaths, Curses, and Prayers in Roman Comedy'.[2] To reveal some notions on how the Romans utilized this phenomenon, with an emphasis on informal use, is thusly the aim and purpose of this article. Fairly few studies exist about this topic[3] and there is certainly a research gap to fill, which was the outset of this project. In extension, the study aims at illuminating hints of the Romans' attitude toward their gods and goddesses. Hence, only religious-associated expressions are researched. Oaths in comedy have not previously been examined from this perspective, making this analysis an innovation offered by this study. Additionally, this research contributes to the diachronic knowledge of Latin

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[1] Skeat 2013, 621.
[2] Find link to the thesis under 'References'.
[3] E.g., Gagnér 1920; Müller 1997, Ch. 5.

swearing regarding perjury-infliction, since it has a strong focus on degenerated short-forms of previously real oaths.

How the ordinary Romans of antiquity spoke has been quite the riddle for Classical scholars, because little textual evidence of colloquial speech exists. However, one place where day-to-day speech is preserved is in Roman comedy, since it is meant to portray – more or less – daily situations. Scholars are not unanimous regarding the extent to which the comedies reflect the spoken language at the time of their composition; however, it is undeniably a colloquial-style Latin, which differs immensely from other genres.

The works of two Roman comedy playwrights are preserved: twenty-one plays by Titus Maccius Plautus and six by Publius Terentius Afer. Plautus wrote in a more vivid, playful, and 'cheeky' style than Terence, whose style was more ordinary and constrained.[4] As the intention of this study was to research how ordinary Romans used religious-rooted expressions in everyday situations, Terence's works were thus the most appropriate for this endeavor. Naturally, we cannot know if the Romans preferred the excessiveness of speech found in Plautus' comedies. Indeed, it would have been the most representative to include the works of both authors, but unfortunately it was deemed too great an undertaking for the scale of a master's project. Hence, the six plays, all *fabulae palliatae*, by Terence – *Andria*, *Hecyra*, *Heauton timorumenos*, *Eunuchus*, *Phormio*, and *Adelphoe* – constitute the foundation of this investigation, thus meaning that the results cover the middle of the second century BC. [5]

Methodology

The study was performed using a triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative methods, in order to provide a large number of perspectives on the ways in which Romans used oaths.

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[4] Conte 1994, 97. For a detailed review of the scholarship of Terentian language, see Karakasis 2005, 4-12.
[5] For the Latin texts the Oxford edition by Lindsay & Kauer (1926) was used.

Discourse analysis and hermeneutics were utilized. Due to the broadness of the study, two definitions of *discourse* were used. The first definition is the more pragmatic one – "language-in-use" or "situational context of language use", which aims to reveal meaning from the specific context of an utterance.[6] The second, a sociological definition by Foucault, who wrote that discourses are "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak", was used to cover the question regarding the Romans' religious attitude.[7] Thereafter, the analyzation process was structured around hermeneutics: an "interpretative philosophical reflection" spiraling from the result of a qualitative study of particulars to a generalized, quantitative picture.[8]

The study relies upon two operative methods: corpus analysis and an adaption of the ancient *septem circumstantiae*. The former, corpus analysis, is a quantitative analysis of a closed collection of texts[9] and was used both manually – as all six comedies, the corpus of the study, were closely read and all instances of oaths excerpted – and in electronic form since searches for parallels to the Terentian expressions were made in online databases for the sake of nuance and comparison. The latter method, the so-called *septem circumstantiae* ("seven circumstances"), is a set of seven questions originating from rhetoric with the purpose of aiding investigation, determination, and representation of a case of any kind and has been utilized in vastly different ways during antiquity, the Middle Ages, and modern times. Traditionally, they are ascribed to the Greek rhetorician Hermagoras, although quite recently it has been suggested that their inventor is Aristotle.[10] Following in the Greeks' footsteps, Cicero developed his own Roman version in *De Inventione Rhetorica*, where he arranged the circumstances, or *certa praecepta* or *loci* as he calls them, into statements that

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[6] Gee 2014, 19; Fairclough 1992, 3.
[7] Foucault 1972, 42.
[8] Babich 2017, 1.
[9] Baker 2010, 93.
[10] Robertson 1946, 8-9; Sloan 2010.

serve to check or build a strong argument.[11] Furthermore, he holds that arguments are supported by two kinds of attributes (*attributae*): that of persons (*personae*) and that of actions (*negotia*).[12] The attributes of persons include "name, nature, manner of life, fortune, habit, feeling, interests, purposes, achievements, accidents, and speeches made". The attributes of actions are comprised of "a brief summary of the whole action comprising the sum of the matter", an "inquiry […] as to the reason for this whole matter, i.e. by what means, and why, and for what purpose the act was done", as well as an inquiry of "what happened before the event […]; then what was done in the performance of the act, and […] what was done afterwards", followed by inquiries of "place, time, occasion, manner, and facilities", as well as of the "adjunct of an action" ("genus", "species" or "result"), and finally "the consequence".[13]

This study's methodological adaption was developed upon these attributes of Cicero's, which were condensed by Thomas Aquinas into the neat hexameter verse "*quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando*" ("who, what, where, by what aids, why, how, when").[14] This resulted in a method with the hexameter verse serving as a spine, to which specific sub-questions – inspired by Cicero's attributes – were provided. In order to equally determine the contexts in which the oaths were spoken in Terence's comedies, all instances were examined using the aforementioned questions in the following, newly adapted manner:

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[11] Cic. *Inv. rhet.* 1.34, 1.44.

[12] Cic. *Inv. rhet.* 1.34.

[13] Translation by Hubbel 1949: Cic. *Inv. rhet.* 1.34: "*Ac personis has res attributas putamus: nomen, naturam, victum, fortunam, habitum, affectionem, studia, consilia, facta, casus, orationes.*". 1.37: "*Ex his prima est brevis complexio totius negoti quae summam continent facti*"; "*deinde causa eius summae per quam et qua mob rem et cuius rei causa factum sit quaeritur*"; "*deine ante gestam rem quae facta sint continenter usque ad ipsum negotium; deinde, in ipso gerendo negotio quid actum sit; deinde, quid postea factum sit.*". 1.38: "*locus, tempus, occasio, modus, facultas.*". 1.41: "*Adiunctum negotio*"; "*et genus et pars et eventus.*". 1.43: "*consecutio*".

[14] *S.T.* 1-2, Q7, A3. Translation by The Fathers of the English Dominican Province 1920.

Lines	QUIS: nomen	QUIS: status/ordo	QUIS: sexus	QUIS: aetas	QUID: factum/dictum	QUID: consecutio dicti	UBI: locus	QUIBUS AUXILIIS: divinitas	CUR: affectio	CUR: consilium	QUOMODO: compositio verborum	QUANDO: occasi
Ad. 483	Geta	A slave, servus	Male	Senex?	"immo <u>hercle</u> extorque, nisi ita factumst, Demea." **Interjectional/Informal oath with assertory meaning.**	Demea is quite put off-guard and does not know what to answer, as he says to himself "pudet: nec quid agam nec quid huic respondeam scio." (485-486)	Near Micio's house (as Hegio and Geta arrive from the country-side, i.e. from the same direction Demea is heading).	By swearing by Hercules.	Confidence, bravery.	To make Demea believe in his and Hegio's story.	*Hercle* is an alternative for *Hercules* based on another stem.	Dialogue.

The context of an utterance can easily be examined using this table. It reveals who (*QUIS*) spoke – the person's name (*nomen*), social status (*status/ordo*), gender (*sexus*), and age (*aetas*) – as well as what (*QUID*) that person said, the consequence of this statement (*consecution dicti*), where (*UBI*) it took place (*locus*), which aids (*QUIBUS AUXILIIS*) were utilized – in these cases which divinity (*divinitas*) was called upon – and, further, that person's triggering feeling (*affectio*) behind the utterance, its purpose (*consilium*), and, finally, some remarks upon the composition of words (*compositio verborum*) and when (*QUANDO*) the utterance was made (*occasio*).[15]

The hundreds of instances of oath expressions could thereby be assembled into a perspicuous catalogue, which constitutes the result basis for this investigation. In particular, the sub-questions *affectio*, *compositio verborum*, *status/ordo*, *sexus*, *aetas* and *occasio* generated intriguing information. Consequently, the study's focal point lies in its interpretation of the function of the expressions with a clear focus on triggering feelings and linguistic trait features. Accordingly, the interpretations have led to a categorization based on function and form presented below.

Findings[16]

Definitions

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[15] Speech-act theory was considered as a method for the study, but was ruled out, since, as Raudevere (2005, 181) states, it "does not take into consideration affective relations, power relations, and shared goals", which adapting *septem circumstantiae* better allowed."
[16] For the statistics and numbers presented in this article I must refer to the extensive result tables in the appendix of the MA-thesis. For comprehension's sake, note that the numbers in parentheses are instances of the expressions' occurrence in Terence's six comedies.

First and foremost, it is of great importance to define what an oath is. Indubitably, there are countless perspectives on the matter; however, the stipulative definition for this study is based upon three definitions made by Sommerstein and Torrance (2014), Callaway (1990) and Echols (1951).

A so-called **formal oath** must include the following two requirements explicitly: a "*Tenor*"/"*Declaration*", a "*Call to Witness*" and an (often implicit) "*Conditional self-curse*".

i.   A "Tenor" or "Declaration" is the central part of an oath, which declares the oath's request, which could be either "*assertory*", asserting something about the present or past, or "*promissory*", promising something for the future.[17]

ii. A "Call to Witness" is the "swearing by objects, divinities, and cosmic forces, as well as the calling upon of divinities and cosmic forces to act as a surety for the promise", that is, what has been stated in the "Tenor"/ "Declaration".[18]

iii. A "Conditional self-curse" is the condition, added by the swearer to the divinity or cosmic force being sworn to, which is "to take effect if the assertion is false or if the promise is violated, as the case may be; that is, (s)he prays that in that event (s)he may suffer punishment from the guarantor power".[19] This step is often implicit and derived from the swearer's knowledge and understanding of the gods' serious punishments upon perjurers, who have sworn falsely in their name.

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[17] Sommerstein & Torrance 2014, 1; Callaway 1990, 14.
[18] Callaway 1990, 13; cf. Sommerstein & Torrance 2014, 1.
[19] Sommerstein & Torrance 2014, 1.

An **informal/interjectional oath** differs from the formal oath in that it does not fulfill the three aforementioned conditions and is, therefore, "strictly speaking, no oath at all" but rather a by-product or a degenerated short-form of a real oath, often containing a marker-word (for example an interjection) and the central part, the "naming of a god".[20] Although these degenerated short-forms of oaths may sometimes share the function of real oaths, that is, to assert or promise, it is not a requirement. This kind of oath and its vast diversity constitutes the focal point of the investigation.

Informal/Interjectional Oaths

According to the *circumstantiae* analyses of all oaths in Terence, the informal/interjectional oaths could be divided into three separate groups depending on their function: the emphasizers, *pro/o Iuppiter*, and the asseverations.

The first group is '*The Emphasizers*', which contains the most common god-mentioning expressions *(me)hercle, pol, edepol and (m)ecastor*. These are so called since the investigation found that they have lost their original oath meaning – presumably due to overuse. Thus, they simply appear to enhance statements or questions similarly to other emphasizing adverbs such as "*certe, enim, profecto, uero*",[21] as Gagnér noted and which is confirmed in this research.

"*(Me)hercle*", "(by) Hercules!", the most frequently used oath expression, occurs 104 times (102 *hercle*, 2 *mehercle*) in Terence's six comedies. *Mehercle* is

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[20] Echols 1951, 293; Sommerstein & Torrance 2014, 81, 315.

[21] Gagnér 1920, 45: "Particulae, quae sunt *hercle* et *pol, mehercle* et *mecastor* et *medi, medius fidius, ecastor* et *edi, edepol,* quamquam primo, ut supra demonstratum est, *(o) Hercle!* etc., *me, Hercle, iuua(to)!* etc., *me Dius Fidius iuuet! e Castor!* Etc., *e de Pol!* ualuerunt, tamen ipsae, cum in obtestando fere et affirmando adhiberentur, affirmantes paulatim factae a Plauti saltem temporibus nihil aliud atque aduerbia affirmantia, ut *certe, enim, profecto, uero,* significant." /My translation: "Particles, such as *hercle, pol, mehercle, mecastor, medi, medius fidius, ecastor, edi,* and *edipol,* although powerful at first, as demonstrated above, *(o) Hercules!* etc., *Hercules help me!* etc., *May Dius Fidius help me! Castor!* etc. *Pollux!,* nevertheless the very same, while generally employed to call to witness and to affirm, were gradually made affirmations signifying nothing else than affirmative adverbs, such as *surely, indeed, certainly,* and *truly,* at least from the time of Plautus."/

commonly thought to be a short-form of the full oath "*ita me Hercules iuvet*", "As (sure as) Hercules may help me", as suggested by Gagnér, although Hofmann claims that it relates to *mehercules* and that *mehercle* is a crossing between *hercle* and *mehercules*.[22] *Hercle* on its own is explained by Gagnér to stem from another Greek noun-stem, alternative to the more common *Hercules*.[23]

According to Aulus Gellius, an antiquarian active during the 2nd century AD, only Roman men swore by Hercules. As women never sacrificed to him, they did not swear by him.[24] This holds true in Terence as well, as all 104 instances of *(me)hercle* are spoken by males. Furthermore, the expression is uttered an equal amount of times among the lower social status groups (*servi, parasiti, lenones*: 52) and the youngsters and the old men of slightly higher social status (*domini* <*adulescentes + senes*>: 52). Out of them all, the slaves score highest with a count of 42 instances, followed by the younglings with 31. Male slaves, old men and male adolescents are all main characters in the comedies and share, approximately, around an equal amount of lines in the plays, so this result should not be too affected by the issue of relativity.[25] Hence, it can safely be claimed that *hercle* was not bound to any social status or age but used freely and liberally by all men.

Hercle is mostly used in an assertory manner (82), primarily emphatically like the English 'certainly' or 'really' provide a sentence with, for example: "*emori hercle satius est*"/ "*Really, I would rather die*" (lit. "*By Hercules, I would rather die*").[26] The promissory oaths (9) work in a similar manner, although emphasizing something that is to come using a future tense, for instance: "*non*

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[22] Gagnér 1920, 21; Hofmann 1936, 29-30.
[23] Gagnér 1920, 9: "*Formae igitur, de quibus supra disputaui, hoc modo ortae sunt*: Ἡρακλῆς > **Herecles > Hercoles > Hercules. **Ἥρακλε > **herecle > hercle > *hercole > hercule*."
/My translation: Hence, these forms, of which I discussed above, were born in this way: [see scheme above] /
[24] Gell. 11.6.
[25] Statistics can be misleading if not seen relatively, as men have many more lines in the plays than women. The same applies to the representation of status groups, as all characters do not have an equal number of lines. This is what here is referred to as "the issue of relativity".
[26] *Ph.* 956.

hercle faciet" / "*He certainly shall not do so!*" (lit. "*By Hercules, he shall not do so!*").[27] This very worn-out use of the original oath indicates a rather mild respect for the gods and, when used falsely, it indicates a nearly non-existing fear of the wrath of the gods, which was inflicted upon perjurers. The expression seems so degenerated from a real oath that the utterers did not reflect upon the fact that they swore by a divinity at all. In the cases of *pol*, *edepol*, *ecastor,* and *mecastor* the same conclusions can be drawn since they too are most commonly used in this casual manner.

It can be observed that *hercle* is mostly used in junction to clearly negative feelings (43). In addition, the negative use is further extended to situations concerning deceit or trickery (16), making the connection to negativity more apparent. In spite of this, it is noteworthy that the oath can be used to give emphasis to clearly positive feelings (16) as well. Moreover, out of all eleven instances of oaths used to emphasize sarcastic statements, *hercle* (7) on its own is employed more frequently than all other investigated expressions combined (4). This further highlights the fact that *hercle* is reduced from an old sacred oath to a degenerated, non-religious form, while the enhancement of sarcasm is far from the function of an oath.

Furthermore, *hercle* can be used in two other conspicuous ways, when combined with the key verb forms *perii* and *quaeso*/*obsecro*.[28] In Terence, we find six instances of the true expression of force and/or despair "*perii hercle*" / lit. "By Hercules, I'm ruined!" (equivalent to the English "Goddamn it!", as beautifully translated by Barsby).[29] *Hercle*, when paired with *quaeso*/*obsecro*, either parenthetically or as a main verb, serves to strengthen a request, which can be either pleading or slightly more demanding in nature.[30]

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[27] *An.* 775.
[28] On the general use of *quaeso*, *obsecro*, and *perii*, see Müller 1997, 97-101, 134-135.
[29] *Ad.* 227, 637; *Eun.* 905-907, 984; *Haut.* 736-737; *Phorm.* 385-386; Barsby 2001a, 277.
[30] Pleading: *Eun.* 362, 466; *Ad.* 247-249. Demanding: *Ad.* 281-283; *Eun.* 562.

The sentence position of the informal/interjectional oaths and if or to what extent it affects their meaning deserves attention as well. Goldberg notes that both *hercle* and (*ede*)*pol* are of a kind which "functions as an emphatic interjection" and that "the emphasis [is] created more by its position than its literal sense".[31] The dissertation by Gagnér contains an impressive and extensive collection of the instances of *hercle/mehercle*, *ecastor/mecastor*, *pol/edepol*, *medius fidius*, *edi*, *medi* and their place of order in the sentence in Plautus and Terence.[32] He concludes that they in most cases, regardless of position, serve to emphasize the whole statement, although some instances seem to pertain to a single word.[33] Despite this, as the graph below (Fig.1.) demonstrates, there is a clear preference for placing the oath in a certain place.
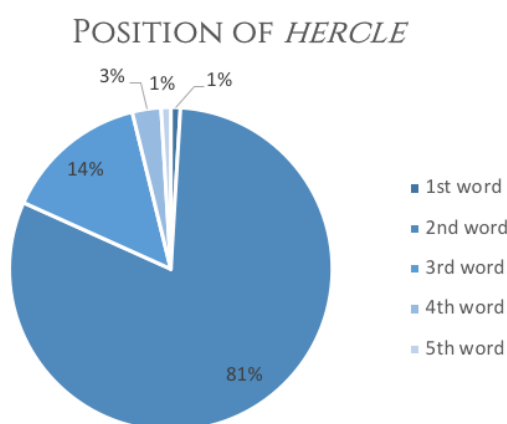

Fig.1. *The position of the interjectional/informal oath hercle.*

The aforementioned statistics (Fig.1.) make it clear that *hercle* is positioned in second place in the surrounding cluster of words four out of five times, that is, either directly after the word it wishes to emphasize (e.g. "*nescio hercle*") or in

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between if there are two words involved (e.g. "*non hercle arbitror*").[34] When positioned in third place, it is usually due to an additional adverb, interjection, conjunction, or explicitly spelled-out pronoun preceding the *hercle* and the main word(s) wished to be emphasized.[35] Sometimes *hercle* is placed after all main words (e.g. "*non malum hercle*"),[36] which deviates from the norm, as is also the case with *hercle* as fourth or fifth word.[37] Hypothetically, these rare deviations could be due to the complex verse meter.

The Emphasizers also include two expressions *"pol"* and *"edepol"*, "(by) Pollux", originally oaths by Pollux, as well as *"ecastor"* and *"mecastor"*, "(by) Castor", originally oaths by Castor. Again, Aulus Gellius provides information on the gender usage of these oaths: both sexes may swear by Pollux, while Castor is reserved for women only.[38] This pattern was found to be followed by the characters in Terence's comedies, although the women favor using the expressions by Pollux (*pol*: 45; *edepol*: 10) rather than Castor (7). Furthermore, the women exceed the men in the usage of *pol* (men: 10, women: 45), but the men use *edepol* more often than women (men: 13, women: 10). Despite the fact that the oaths by Pollux were available to both sexes, many scholars refer to *pol* as a "woman's oath", "female speech marker" or "female oath" in Terence.[39] Evidently, this is true, as it is more than four times as frequently used by women and much more so if the issue of relativity is sorted out (men − 10, women − 45 or ≈ 346, if applying the Ullman method).[40] Ullman highlights this further, as he shows the decline in the male usage of *pol* throughout Terence's plays, while also quoting a

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[34] *Eun.* 304–306, 217–218.
[35] *Ad.* 268-270; *Eun.* 727-729; *Haut.* 521-523, 619-621; *Hec.* 305-308, 782-783; *Phorm.* 643-644, 869-870; *An.* 336-337, 347.
[36] *Eun.* 273-274; cf. *Phorm.* 774-775, 1048-1049; *Eun.* 967-969, 355-356.
[37] *Phorm.* 163-164, 623-625; *Eun.* 67-70, 562.
[38] Gell. 11.6.
[39] Barsby 2001b, 381, footnote 32; Barsby 1999, 201, 606n.; Nicolson 1893, 101; Martin 1995, 151, 293.; Brown 2019, 198, 229n.; Adams 1984, 50.
[40] "Ullman's method" here refers to the rough calculation made by Ullman (1943, 88), who concludes that on average in the six Terentian plays men speak roughly 7.69 times as many lines as women and by multiplying the number of expressions uttered by women by 7.69 one obtains a comparable data for the use between the sexes.

few lines from Titinius preserved in Charisius, a contemporary of Terence, which point to the fact that *pol* (and *edepol*) was not just a woman's oath, but an effeminate oath in a man's mouth.[41] This is further supported by a passage from Cicero's *De Oratore*, where a man called Egilius, who is wrongfully accused of being effeminate in a slanderous remark, in turn pretends to be just that – effeminate – using *pol* to strengthen his witty comeback.[42] One such instance of a man using *pol* for an effeminizing effect can be found in Terence, according to Barsby's interpretation. It concerns the case when Chaerea, the youngling in *Eunuchus* who trades places with the eunuch bequeathed to a *meretrix* in order to get first-hand access to a beautiful girl living with the courtesan, tells his friend Antipho what happened after he had barred the door and was left alone with the girl of his desires, disguised as a eunuch:

"an ego occasionem mi ostendam, tantam, tam brevam, tam optatam, tam insperatam amitterem? tum pol ego is essem vero qui simulabar."[43]

"Was I going to let slip the opportunity when it was offered to me, so great, so fleeting, so desired, so unexpected? If I had, I would actually have been what I pretended to be, *(putting on a female voice)* for heaven's sake."[44]

Barsby's interpretation of this particular situation is fitting and certainly reminiscent of the example of the effeminate *pol* in Cicero. As always, it would have been interesting to examine if the Greek model had any specific effeminizing expression to see if it was a Greek or Roman practice. Adams raises this question, but he also concludes that Terence (and Plautus) "were of course

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[41] Ullman 1943, 89: Charisius (1.198, 17K.).
[42] Cic. *De or.* 277.
[43] *Eun.* 605-606.
[44] Translation by Barsby 2001b, 381. See also Barsby 2001b, 381, footnote 32; Barsby 1999, 201, 606n.

drawing on genuine Latin idiom".[45] This reasoning goes well in hand with the notion that the Roman plays were adapted versions of the Greek originals, not mere translations, which is a widespread misconception, since they had to have an impact on the Roman audience. However, *rursus ad rem*, regarding the nine other instances of *pol* spoken by men in Terence, there is no trace of an effeminizing touch and, as far as this study is concerned, they could all have been replaced with *hercle*, a purely male oath, without any noticeable shift in meaning. For instance, when Syrus shouts after Clitipho: "*By Pollux, you better keep those hands to yourself after this!*" ("*at tu pol tibi istas posthac manus!*"),[46] the tone is the opposite of ridiculously effeminizing: this is a threat or warning. To conclude, in Terence, *pol* is definitely used more frequently by women than men, but for the most part there is nothing to support the claim of it being an effeminizing oath in a man's mouth, apart from one notable exception.

Again, turning to the *circumstantiae* results of the 55 instances of *pol*, 23 of *edepol*, and 7 of *(m)ecastor* in Terence, more information can be extracted. Regarding the persons behind the instances of *pol*, they are more often of lower social status (32; *meretrices, servi, ancillae, nutrices*) than higher (23; *dominae, domini <adulescentes + senes>*). Moreover, *pol* is, just as *hercle*, mostly uttered in sentences triggered by clearly negative feelings (28); however, it is quite commonly used to enhance clearly positive sentences as well (19). As always, there are some obscure and complicated examples, 'in-betweens' (7), which include elements of both positive and negative feelings: schadenfreude, to provide one example. The same applies for *edepol* as well, which is used nearly twice as often in sentences triggered by clearly negative (11) feelings than clearly positive (6) ones. Deviating from the others are *(m)ecastor*, which mostly emphasizes statements triggered by positive feelings (5/7). It is of course problematic to draw conclusions from so few examples as in this case. However,

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[45] Adams 1984, 77.
[46] *Haut.* 590.

it is established by other scholars that Plautus favored much more the oaths by Castor and includes them 118 times in his plays.[47] Consequently, a similar investigation concerning the triggering feelings of *(m)ecastor*, as well as of the other expressions, would be interesting to carry out on the substantially larger corpus which Plautus' plays constitute.

After revision of the use of the informal/interjectional oaths sworn by the demigods Hercules, Pollux, and Castor in Terence, an interesting observation arises in comparison to the Greek use of informal oaths. In all of Greek comedy, according to statistics provided by Sommerstein and Torrance, Hercules (Herakles) is sworn by only five times, Castor once, and Castor and Pollux together, "The Twin Gods", an additional handful of times.[48] As is the case with the Romans, Hercules (Herakles) is sworn by exclusively by men among the Greeks; however, oaths by Castor and Pollux were open to both sexes in Sparta, where they were used.[49] Again, this indicates that it was a Roman custom to call upon these demigods so frequently. In fact, perhaps the Romans actually chose to swear by them as more casual expressions, merely serving to emphasize a statement or question, due to the fact that they were not Olympians.

Considering this, they might not have taken perjury into account at all, especially while using the short-forms of the demigods' names: *pol, hercle*. In fact, out of all oaths – informal as well as formal – all instances where an oath is used in junction with a false statement (perjury) Hercules is informally sworn by using *hercle* (6).[50] This further proves the notion that these expressions no longer carried the meaning or intention of real oaths. It might even indicate that it was considered "deaconic swearing"[51] and the substitute short-forms of the demigods' names were not considered proper invocations. It is noteworthy that all these six

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[47] Ullman 1943, 88; Brown 2019, 236, 486n.; Nicolson 1893, 99.
[48] Sommerstein & Torrance 2014, 318.
[49] Sommerstein & Torrance 2014, 321.
[50] *An.* 438-442, 194; *Ph.* 623-625, 774-775; *Haut.* 550-555, 610-612.
[51] Echols 1979, 112: "bootleg profanity, the use of a sound-alike substitute for the genuine article, such as "Gosh darn it", …".

instances of perjury, albeit clearly not thought of in that way, are spoken by male slaves. Indeed, this is not too surprising, since slaves in comedy are tricksters and masters of deceit. However, it could also point towards a larger religious disrespect from the males of this lower social status group. On the other hand, the customs of gender-use – males swearing by Hercules, women by Castor, and both sexes by Pollux – are thoroughly upheld, which actually indicate a persisting respect towards the practices surrounding these gods.

All in all, the act of informally swearing by demigods, truly or untruly, should be regarded as a phenomenon not merely borrowed from the Greeks, but as a distinct Roman custom. Again, it must be remembered that the audience watching Terence's comedies were Romans, not Greeks. Although the comedies are *fabulae palliatae* and set in an Attic setting, the Roman audience, which supposedly was very acquainted with Greek culture, surely would not comprehend all the nuances of Greek expressions compared to their own. Thus, it makes more sense that the author would adapt, not translate, some expressions so as not to lose the comic effect or risk a lack of comprehension from his audience. In *Heauton timorumenos* (61-66) we find an explicit example of this, where an oath to Athena in Menander's Greek original, namely "πρὸς τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς δαίμονας", "by the numen of Athena", is replaced by Terence to "*pro deum atque hominum fidem*", "by the faith of the gods!",[52] rather than an oath by the Roman equivalent Minerva.

The fact that these expressions are so rarely found elsewhere than in Terence and Plautus is perplexing. Conjecturally, it could be due to their colloquiality and that most preserved Latin literature is not written in such a style. Indeed, when used elsewhere, it seems that the few oath-emphasizers occur mostly in dialogues or retold dialogues, such as the example of *pol* from Cicero above, or in texts where the author is reasoning with himself, such as

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[52] Brothers 1988, 167, 61ffn.

Tacitus in *Dialogus*.[53] Therefore, the Roman comedies are an invaluable source of everyday spoken Latin.

The next group contains only one expression, *"pro/o Iuppiter!"*, "(by) Jupiter!", due to its peculiar usage, which is found to be strong and reactive in nature. The range of emotions it can express is broad, examples of which include the forceful anger as seen in "*pro Iuppiter, tu homo adigi' me ad insaniam!*" / "*By Jupiter, human, you are driving me insane!*", or pure despair in "*o Iuppiter, quid ego audio? actumst, siquidem haec vera praedicat.*" / "*By Jupiter, what am I hearing? It's over, if what he says is true!*", or ecstatic happiness in "*pro Iuppiter, nunc est profecto interfici quom perpeti me possum, ne hoc gaudium contaminet vita aegritudine aliqua.*" / "*By Jupiter, now is certainly [the time] when I could endure being put to death, so that life may not spoil this joy by any anguish!*".[54] Thus, its excessively dramatic nature can be both positive and negative, although the expression is predominantly used to enhance negative feelings (12) over positive ones (3).

Conspicuously, Gellius does not give any information about the customs of swearing by Jupiter, but in Terence it is strictly a male habit, since all sixteen instances are spoken my men. In Greek comedy, oaths by Zeus (Jupiter) were available to both men and women, although it is also noted that the female use had declined and become a rarity by the time of Menander.[55] Menander is the Greek comedy writer, whose plays most of Terence's comedies are based upon. Consequently, it is not too surprising that Terence constricts the oaths by Jupiter to male characters (including the asseverative oath, the curse, and the prayer to Jupiter[56]). Furthermore, to call upon the almighty Jupiter is not as common in Roman as in Greek comedy, where oaths by Zeus are very ubiquitously used.[57] For the Greeks, Zeus was the go-to god in informal oaths (he even has an aspect

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[53] Tac. *Dial.* 14.4, 26.1, 26.2, 30.4.
[54] *Ad.* 111-112, 464-465; *Eun.* 549-552.
[55] Sommerstein & Torrance 2014, 320, 322.
[56] *Phorm.* 807-808 (see below); *Ad.* 713-714; *Eun.* 1048-1049.
[57] Barsby 1999, 189, 550n.; Sommerstein & Torrance 2014, 320.

named Ὅρκιός, 'the Oath-god')[58] and instances of casual, informal oaths to Zeus are found in dialogues outside of comedy as well.[59] To swear by Jupiter seems as more of an eyebrow-raising, dramatic, and more sparsely used informal oath for the Romans, according to Terence as well as the few other Latin examples of the oath, when spoken interjectionally.[60]

A middle-ground group of oaths is the *'Asseverations'*, of which the far most frequent expression is *"ita me di ament"*, "as (sure as) the gods may love me" (with the variant "*ita/sic me di amabunt"*, "as (sure as) the gods shall love me"). These stand out somewhat from the other interjectional oaths, since they, to an extent, still contain an asseverative element. In addition, they are more reminiscent of real oaths in form, as the full formula is contained – in opposition to, for instance, *hercle*, which originally was "*ita me Hercules iuvet*". In a passage from Plautus, we find that an almost endless number of deities could fit within the *ita me…ament* construction:

"CHRY. **ita me** Iuppiter, Iuno, Ceres, Minerua, Lato[na], Spes, Opis, Virtus, Venus, Castor, Polluces, Mars, Mercurius, Hercules, Summanus, Sol, Saturnus dique omnes **ament**, ut ille cum illa nec cubat neque ambulat neque osculatur neque illud quod dici solet.

NIC. ut **iurat**! seruat me ille **suis periuriis**."[61]

"CHRY. **As sure as** Jupiter, Juno, Ceres, Minerva, Latona, Spes, Opis, Virtus, Venus, Castor, Pollux, Mars, Mercury, Hercules, Summanus, Sol, Saturnus, and all the gods <u>love me</u>, he did neither sleep with her, walk with her, kiss her, or do with her what is usually said.

NIC. How he **swears**! May he save me from **his perjurations**."[62]

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[58] Sommerstein & Torrance 2014, 6, 318; Pau. 5.24.9-11.
[59] E.g., Pl. *Cri.* 43b: "Οὐ μὰ τὸν Δία"; 50c: "Ταῦτα νὴ Δία" /"No, by Zeus…".
[60] E.g., Ap. *Met.* 26; Verg. *Aen.* 4.590ff; Prudent. *Perist.* 396ff.
[61] Plaut. *Bacch.* 892-898.
[62] My translation.

From these Plautine lines it is deductible that the Romans thought of the *ita me di ament*-formula as actual swearing, following the use of the verb *iurare* ("to swear") found in the response to the long exclamation. Also noticeable is the presence of the word *periurium* ("perjury"), which reveals that the oath is not considered truthful. Conspicuously, it is used in junction with both gods and demigods, which shows that any false swearing involving Olympic gods was still considered perjury, as opposed to swearing by demigods, as discussed above.

In Terence, this asseveration is found twenty-four times, spoken by men (16) and women (8) alike in a variety of contexts. Originally, it functions to assert the truthfulness of a statement, as in this example: "*nam ita me di ament, quod me accusat nunc vir, sum extra noxiam.*"/ "*As sure as the gods may love me, concerning the things you accuse me of now, husband, I am without guilt.*".[63] There are, however, quite a few weaker usages of *ita me di ament* as well, which resemble the use of the emphasizers described above, as is observable in this case: "*vale, Antipho. bene, ita me di ament, factum: gaudeo.*"/ "*Farewell, Antipho. Very well done: I'm glad.*"/ lit. "*Farewell, Antipho. Well done, as sure as the gods may love me: I'm glad.*".[64] Here, *ita me di ament* serves no further purpose than providing emphasis and there would be no obvious shift in meaning if replaced by "*bene hercle factum*"/ "*very well done*"/ "*by Hercules, well done*". Considering this, one could argue both for and against a nuance-difference between these expressions. First of all, the use of *hercle*, or *pol* for that matter, is abundantly frequent, while *ita me di ament* is not as common. This could indicate, just as suggested for *o/pro Iuppiter*, that they are reserved for special occasions, which is the case with the first example, where Sostrata earnestly swears to her husband that she bears no blame. Naturally, this does not explain the weaker use demonstrated by the second example, where *ita me di ament* is interchangeable

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[63] *Hec.* 276.
[64] *Phorm.* 883. Even the parenthetic, second-place position of *ita me…* here resembles the (here-called) emphasizers', cf. Müller 1997, 146.

with any of the emphasizer oaths. One suggestion to a slight nuance here is that *ita me di ament* is used equally frequently in situations involving clearly positive (10) and negative (10) emotions,[65] while both *hercle* and *pol* are used predominantly negatively, perhaps thus making *ita me di ament* a safer option for enhancing a positive statement, as the case with "*bene factum*/ "*well done*" above.

Furthermore, there are a couple of unique examples in the comedies reminiscent to *ita me di ament*. Firstly, there is the asseveration by Jupiter found in *Phormio*: "*vin scire?* **at ita me servet Iuppiter,** *ut propior illi quam ego sum ac tu homo nemost.*"/ "*You wanna know?* **As sure as Jupiter watches over me,** *no human is closer [= more closely related] to her than you and I*".[66] This expression serves the same purpose as the asseveration *ita me di ament* and there is no indication that they would not be interchangeable – to a man, that is, as they are the only ones allowed to swear by Jupiter.

Secondly, a slightly different formula is found in Terence, which undoubtedly keeps the same meaning as the other asseverations: "**di me,** *pater,* **omnes oderint ni** *mage te quam oculos nunc ego amo meos.*"/ "*Father,* **may the gods hate me unless (it is true that)** *I love you more than my own eyes.*".[67] In comparison to examples from Greek drama and comedy presented by Echols this could be labelled as a conditional asseveration, as there is an element of a self-curse, which is to be inflicted upon the swearer in case of perjury.[68] With that said, it seems highly improbable that the youngling Aeschinus, who previously had deceived and plotted against his biological and adoptive father, intended to invoke a self-curse on himself. Rather, he simply wished to dramatically express his new-discovered love for his biological father, who suddenly changed his manner from ill-tempered to ingratiating.

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[65] The remaining four examples are in-betweens and share traits of both positive and negative emotions.
[66] *Phorm.* 807-808.
[67] *Ad.* 700-701.
[68] Echols 1951, 293.

Formal Oaths

Lastly, there are indeed some oaths labelled 'formal'. Be aware of the stipulative definition of 'formal' in this study, which merely means that the three requirements for an oath are upheld. Consequently, the situation and occasion of the oath do not necessarily have to be considered 'formal'. Additionally, worth noting is that swearing without swearing *by* anything is possible as well and several examples of this are found in Terence, mostly with a verb meaning "to swear" (e.g., *deiuro, iuro, adiuro*) or a mention of "*ius iurandum*" ("oath") or "*fidem*" (here: "word of good faith").[69]

In the Terentian comedies, three categories of formal oaths can be arranged: assertory oaths, oaths to strengthen requests, and oaths to strengthen commands. What differentiates a formal assertory oath from an interjectional/informal assertory oath is the presence of an 'oath-verb' (*testor, adiuro*). Further, naturally, the formal ones do not share the interjectional and/or exclamatory nature of the interjectional/informal oaths. The oaths used to enhance a request are indicated by the inclusion of a verb meaning 'to ask, request' (e.g., *obsecro, oro etc.*) followed by the oath-indicating preposition *per*, which reveals what is being sworn by. Oaths as commands are signalized by a verb in imperative mode followed by the oath-indicating preposition *per*.

Surprisingly, only two of the eight instances of formal oaths are assertory in Terence: one quite long and formal in tone, the other short and snappy. In the first example, Pamphilus (*Andria*) earnestly swears to the maid of his lover that he has not lost the love for his girl and shall never desert her, despite the fact that his father has decided upon him marrying the neighbor's daughter. At first, he swears (*adiuro*) by all the gods (*per omnis deos*) intending to make Mysis, the maid, believe his following statements.[70] Thereafter he concludes his passionate

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[69] *Eun.* 331-333; *Hec.* 60-63, 112-114, 267-268, 402, 697, 750-752, 754-755, 870-871; *Ad.* 161-166, 306-308, 330-334, 469-477; *An.* 401-402, 462, 727-729.

[70] *An.* 693-695: "*Mysis, per omnis tibi adiuro deos numquam eam me deserturum*, […]".

speech with the addition "*non Apollonis mage verum atque hoc responsumst.*"/ "*Apollo's answer is not more true than this*",[71] referring to the famous oracle of Apollo at Delphi, which adds further credibility to his initial asseveration. The second instance is less elaborate but still serves the same function. Here Pamphilus (*Hecyra*) calls upon the gods as witnesses (*id testor deos*) to assert to his father and his wife's father that he is not to blame for the separation that has occurred.[72] In this case, it is about calling down the gods as witnesses directly rather than swearing by them. However, the intention is all the same: to increase credibility and assert truthfulness.

The most common formal oaths are the ones where requests are given in junction to swearing (5), either by divinities or abstract feelings, such as love and friendship, using the formula *ego per* [e.g., *deos, amicitiam, amorem*] *oro/obsecro, ut* [stating the request]. The purpose of these oaths is to make the requests more earnest, potent, and influential in order to increase the odds of an affirmative answer. Apart from making requests in this manner, it was also possible to formulate the oath as a command (1) to achieve a more serious and alarming tone: "*sed per deos atque homines meam esse hanc cave resciscat quisquam.*"/ "*But, by the gods and humans, beware so that nobody finds out that she is my [daughter]*".[73] This instance is particularly interesting, since humans are sworn by beside the gods. In addition to this example, we find humans being sworn by in a similar, but interjectional, way in the expression *pro deum atque hominum fidem*.[74]

All in all, the formal oaths used in Terence are all connected to feelings of sincerity and earnestness, while many also contain a pleading nature. The persons behind the formal oaths are almost exclusively from the higher social status group (7; *domini <adulescentes + senes>, dominae*) with only one example

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[71] *An.* 698.
[72] *Hec.* 476.
[73] *Phorm.* 764.
[74] For more on this expression, see the full thesis, 52-54.

from the lower (1; *meretrix*). Men (6) seem to use this kind of language more, as they have three times as many examples as women (2) in Terence. Besides, the two examples of female formal oaths are retold in monologues by men, strengthening that notion.

Conclusion

This article has provided a distinct categorization of different kinds of oaths and their differing functions: the degenerated emphasizer-oaths, the informal swearing by Jupiter, the asseverations, and the formal oaths.

By comparing Roman and Greek comedy, it can be established that the informal swearing by demigods was distinctly a Roman custom. This, as well as the fact that Terence's choice of oaths did not always correspond to the Greek model, supports the notion that his plays were not merely translations, but adaptions, of their Greek inspirations. Consequently, this somewhat indicates that Terence wrote in a way which actually reflected how the Romans of his time spoke.

An innovation in this study was to research the Romans' attitudes towards their gods using comedies. Regarding this, a decline in the reverence of the gods could be observed due to the bleak, casual usage of many oath expressions, especially ones containing short-forms of demigods' names. This can be concluded because of how absent the fear of perjury (which normally checks the upholding of an oath) seems to be with the swearers uttering these oaths. Simultaneously, the study clearly showed that the gender-rules for swearing were thoroughly upheld and that some cases of asseverations and formal oaths were still used as truly earnest swearing. This dubious phenomenon of individual swearing in Roman comedy has parallels in modern times. Consider, for example, how English expressions mentioning the Christian God have developed: from being taboo to speak, due to the sanctity of God's name, to now being heard daily in casual expressions like 'oh my God!', or '(by) God, no/yes!'.

The same can be said for my native language, Swedish, as well. Altogether, it indicates that the development of swearing follows a similar, perhaps even universal, pattern.

Finally, as always when working with ancient textual sources, one passionately wishes for some kind of recordings of how real native Latin-speaking Romans sounded, as to truly understand the use of these expressions. This dilemma brings to mind a wonderful anecdote about Mark Twain, who, allegedly a man of quite a liberal tongue, humorously answered his wife, when she recited all of his foul language back at him from a compiled list she had kept:

"You've got the words, my dear, but you haven't got the tune!"[75]

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[75] Echols 1951, 292.

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Vergil and Seneca in *Consolatio Philosophiae* Book 3
Donald McCarthy

An outlier in the sixth century, Boethius earned himself the title "last of the Romans"[1] for the breadth of his education in the classical canon, both Latin and Greek, which was an increasing rarity in the twilight of the Roman Empire.[2] This grounding in the classical tradition was axiomatic to all of Boethius's scholarly endeavours. This is most apparent in his ambitious, though ultimately incomplete, attempt to produce translations and commentaries in Latin of all the philosophical writings of Plato and Aristotle. He did this in the hope of establishing a clear harmony between the two thinkers – a project, which[3],

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[1] Though this lofty title has been applied to other famous personages of the last generations of the Roman Empire; see Synan, 1991, 475–91. Synan examines in detail the origin of the phrase "last of the Romans" as it has been applied to Boethius. He highlights the notable admission amongst even Boethius's staunchest critics, such as the fifteenth century humanist Lorenzzo Valla, that if nothing else Boethius was *eruditorum ultimus*; Synan 476n8. Mino Milani provides a poignant contrast to Boethius in an excursive overview of some of the main figures and events of the final days of the Empire, including Flavius Aetius (Milani, 1994, 7): "L'Impero, tuttavia, si difende; nel 451, sui campi di Châlons, le ultime legioni romane e gli ausiliari barbari al comando di Ezio, *l'ultimo dei Romani*, affrontano e sconfiggono gli Unni di Attila" (my italics).

[2] Comparisons to the education of St. Augustine immediately present themselves. Augustine was also very well trained in the classical tradition albeit more than a century before Boethius. Despite the relative proximity Augustine had to the golden age of *latinitas* and the heyday of the Western Roman Empire compared to Boethius, he famously claimed to have despised Greek while a schoolboy (*Conf.* 1.14.23: *cur ergo graecam etiam grammaticam oderam talia cantantem?*). Peter Brown characterizes him as "… the only Latin philosopher in antiquity to be virtually ignorant of Greek" (Brown, 2000, 24). Brown likely goes too far with this last statement (cf. Altaner, 1948, 73; and O'Donnell's commentary (1992) on the *Confessions ad* 1.13.20). Nevertheless, his point is pertinent as to Augustine's general weakness in Greek compared to Latin. It is probable that Boethius's knowledge of Greek was much greater than Augustine's, all the more impressive for the significant gap between the two men's lifetimes.

[3] In Boethius's own words (*In Perih.* II.79.16ff): *… ego omne Aristotelis opus, quodcumque in manus venerit, in Romanum stilum vertens eorum omnium commenta Latina oratione perscribam … omnesque Platonis dialogos vertendo vel etiam commentando in Latinam redigam formam. his peractis non equidem contempserim Aristotelis Platonisque sententias in unam quodammodo revocare concordiam … consentire demonstrem.* Danuta Shanzer presents Philosophia as the perfected embodiment of this self-imposed curriculum of Boethius's (Shanzer, 1984, 359). To be noted too that Boethius was not unique in the history of the ancient commentary tradition and he benefitted greatly from similar attempts made by earlier figures such as Porphyry, Proclus, and Iamblichus to name but a few; see Shiel, 1990, 349–72.

perforce, required direct engagement with the relevant texts without many concessions to literary subtlety or allusion.[4] In contrast, in his last and most celebrated text, the *Consolatio Philosophiae*, Boethius allowed himself to engage more profoundly with the artistry of his classical models. He produced a text richly interwoven with classical sources and which is not always transparent as to the intention of this profuse intertextuality. Nonetheless, Boethius evidently expected his readers to recognize his literary references and he "use[d] intertextual allusion as a form of display of his vast literary memory, as well as a means of eliciting textured response from his readership."[5] The following arguments in this paper are, in essence, a case study in the importance of recognizing the fundamentally intertextual nature of the *Consolatio* in order to achieve a proper exegesis of the work. While one can detect in the *Consolatio* allusions and responses to several Latin poets, orators, and philosophers to say nothing of the Greek tradition which so imbued his broader corpus,[6] Boethius seems to have had a particular affinity in this last work for the Augustan poet Vergil.[7] This influence, while present throughout the work's five books, is signalled even in the very first line of the *Consolatio*,[8] and is especially poignant

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[4] One can see the difficulty Boethius had in integrating any sort of subtlety into his earlier philosophical works when looking at the "dialogue" structure he gave to his first commentary *In Isagogen Porphyrii*. In that work, Boethius ostensibly engages in a platonic dialogue with his friend Fabius, but the effect is extremely superficial, and Boethius abandoned the approach in all his other writings prior to the *Consolatio*. See Lehrer, 1985, 70ff.

[5] Claassen, 2007, 3.

[6] Taking only the clearest references, essentially citations, of classical poets, Glei (1985) notes the following references in the *Consolatio*: "Zunächst gebe ich eine Übersicht der Autoren, die Boethius zitiert, geordnet in der Reihenfolge, in der sie behandelt werden sollen: Homer (4 mal), Vergil (4 mal), Lukan (1 mal), Euripides (2 mal), Iuvenal (1 mal) Catull (1 mal), Horaz (1 mal), Parmenides (1 mal), Empedokles (?) (1 mal)," 228. This of course does not take into consideration the considerable influence which prose authors, particularly Plato and Aristotle, exerted on the *Consolatio*.

[7] As pointed out by Joachim Gruber in his commentary on the *Consolatio*: "Vergil ist gleichsam immer präsent; das gilt nicht nur für die Gedichte, sondern auch für die Prosa" (2006, 19). Gruber's introduction is also useful for outlining the influence of Ovid, Seneca, Lucan, and others on the *Consolatio*.

[8] As highlighted by Helga Scheible (1972) *ad loc.*, 1M1.1 (**Carmina** *qui quondam* **studio florente** *peregi*) alludes to the (ante)penultimate line of Vergil's *Georgics* (4.564–5: *Parthenope* **studiis** **florentem** *ignobilis oti,* / **carmina**...).

at the close of Book 3 with Metrum 12, a retelling of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. Unsurprisingly, Boethius modelled his version of the myth heavily on Vergil's account in Book 4 of the *Georgics*. This is not, however, simply a moment of poetic inspiration drawn from the Mantuan poet but a purposeful allusion to didactic and a grafting of the philosophy embedded within the *Georgics* onto the *Consolatio*. Boethius combines Vergil's didactic intent with the stylistics of the Roman tragedian Seneca, who also wrote a brief retelling of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth in his play *Hercules Furens*. This paper will attempt to demonstrate that Boethius not only evoked the work of these literary predecessors in the *Consolatio*, but that he modelled his text after theirs in such a way as to create a didactic text of his own in the mould of the *Georgics*, a project crystallized in 3M12.[9]

Book 3 centres around Philosophia's attempts to reveal to Boethius what the true goal of all human life is, namely happiness (3P1.5: *ad veram, inquit, felicitatem*, "'to that true happiness,' said she"),[10] and then to explicate what happiness actually is. Through a series of logical arguments, she conducts her morose interlocutor ultimately to the conclusion that God is true happiness (3P10.10):

> *Quare ne in infinitum ratio prodeat, confitendum est summum deum summi perfectique boni esse plenissimum; sed perfectum bonum veram esse beatitudinem constituimus: veram igitur beatitudinem in summo deo sitam esse necesse est.*

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[9] The limits of space do not allow for a broader intertextual exegesis of all the metra of the *Consolatio*, and so I have decided to focus here almost exclusively on 3M12. This is the most fruitful place to begin such a study because it allows us to triangulate several distinctive features of Boethius's writing in a single poem: glyconic metre (as will be explained further below, Boethius often signals the relative importance of each metra in its metre), position (the third of five glyconic metra and the closing poem of book 3 of the *Consolatio*, almost the centre of the whole work), and clear intertextual reference to not only Vergil but also Seneca the Younger. The choice of a highly emotive myth, Orpheus and Eurydice, heightens the tension around the messages implicit in the metrum and signals to the reader to pay extra attention to what Philosophia is singing.

[10] All translations taken from the Loeb editions cited in the bibliography.

"Therefore, so that our argument does not fall into an infinite regress, we must admit that the most high God is full of the most high and perfect good; but we have decided that the perfect good is true happiness; therefore true happiness must reside in the most high God."

Book 3 focuses especially on the correct path one must take in order to reach this goal, and from 3P1 until 3M9 Boethius, through the mouth of Philosophia, systematically enumerates the false goods of the physical world (3M1.11: *Tu quoque falsa tuens bona*, "So must you too, who now have eyes only for false goods…") which one must learn to reject on the road to true happiness:[11] wealth,[12] prestigious offices,[13] kingship or the "friendship" of kings,[14] worldly glory,[15] and pleasure.[16] The metra in Book 3 up to this point are largely repetitive of the material contained in their accompanying prose passages and reinforce the logical arguments presented therein.[17] Metrum 9 might be considered the turning point of Book 3, perhaps of the entire *Consolatio*.[18] Boethius first signals this by positioning 3M9 almost in the exact centre of the *Consolatio*, and by using dactylic hexameter verse in this poem alone. The effect is marked and produces

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[11] Summarized well at 3P2: *Atqui haec sunt, quae adipisci homines volunt eaque de causa divitias, dignitates, regna, gloriam voluptatesque desiderant, quod per haec sibi sufficientiam, reverentiam, potentiam, celebritatem, laetitiam credunt esse venturam. Bonum est igitur, quod tam diversis studiis homines petunt.*

[12] 3P3.11: *opes igitur nihilo indigentem sufficientemque sibi facere nequeunt et hoc erat quod promittere videbantur.*

[13] 3P4.2: [*dignitates*] *non fugare, sed inlustrare potius nequitiam solent.*

[14] 3P5.1: *An vero regna regumque familiaritas efficere potentem valet.*

[15] 3P6.1: *Gloria vero quam fallax saepe, quam turpis est!*

[16] 3P7.3: *tristes vero esse voluptatum exitus, quisquis reminisci libidinum suarum volet, intelleget.* 3M8 caps off Philosophia's enumeration of worldly evils in what is essentially a summary of the preceding sections.

[17] 3M4 for instance is a mere 8 lines long and uses a concrete example of a wretched tyrant (Nero) to bolster the point Philosophia sets out in 3P4.

[18] Gruber *ad* 3M9: "Genau in der Mitte der *Consolatio* steht dieser Hymnus. Er ist Dreh- und Angelpunkt der ganzen Schrift." See further in Gruber's introduction to 3M9 for discussion of the literary importance of the literal middle of classical texts. For the importance of 3M9 as an entry point for Plato into the *Consolatio*, see John Magee, 2009, 190f.

a hymnic prayer in the classical style.[19] Much ink has been spilled over this poem and the importance of the choice of dactylic hexameters,[20] and so in the interests of preserving space, we shall pass over it now in order to focus our attention on the final poem of Book 3, which most clearly reveals the intimate relationship between Boethius and his poetic models. Nevertheless, 3M9 makes clear that metre is an essential tool in Boethius's repertoire, one which he uses to signal important themes for the overarching intent of the *Consolatio* and which will prove important at 3M12. In moving forward to the end of Book 3, it is obvious that Metrum 12 stands in clear contrast to the preceding sections of the book. Through its core mythic story framed by a didactic preface and conclusion, 3M12 adopts a linguistic style reminiscent of Seneca's *Hercules Furens* and an artful didacticism modelled after Vergil's *Georgics*. The reader is meant to recognize the emphasis Boethius has placed on this poem through its metre and adaptation of a familiar story, and thereby arrive at a clearer understanding of his broader goals with the *Consolatio.* Moreover, the position of 3M12 in relation to its surrounding prose sections signals a philosophical importance to this metrum in particular. In the prose section 3P12, Philosophia and Boethius discuss the philosophic and cosmic nature of God as a sort of helmsman guiding the world,

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[19] Compare the direct invocation at the opening of the poem (3M9.1: *O qui perpetua mundum ratione gubernas*), the repeated and marked *Du-Stil* (6: *tu cuncta sperno*; 10: *tu numeris elementa ligas*; 13: *Tu triplicis mediam*; 18: *Tu causis animas*; 21: *ad te conversas reduci facis*; 23: *in te conspicuos animi*; 26: *tu namque serenum*; and 27: *tu requies tranquilla piis, te cernere finis*) and the use of the imperative mood (22: *Da, pater*; 23: *da fontem lustrare boni, da luce reperta*; 25: *dissice terrenae nebulas*; and 26: *atque tuo splendore mica*). Compare this stark use of the second person singular in Boethius to the second person invocations in the proem of the first book of Vergil's *Georgics* (*G*.1.5ff: *vos, o clarissima mundi | lumina … et vos, agrestum praesentia numina, Fauni, | ferte simul Faunique pedem … tuque o, … Neptune … dique deaeque omnes…*). As Richard Thomas notes in his commentary (1988) on the *Georgics ad loc.*, this is "a prayer for the poem's success, addressed to the appropriate deities, then to Octavian." Without delving into the complexities of Vergil's hexameters (for a brief discussion of which see Thomas's introduction, 28−32), it is perhaps useful to simply see the dactylic hexameter at work in a text which is not particularly epic (the Book 4 Orpheus-Eurydice epyllion aside), but in which the hexameter is quite at home as the language of prayer and invocation; this is obviously how Boethius himself has envisaged his own invocation of God the father (*pater*) at 3M9.
[20] Beyond Gruber's and Sheible's commentaries, see also e.g., Christian Mueller-Goldingen, 1989, esp. 377f.; Magee, 2009, 190ff.; Seth Lerer, 1985, esp. 137−45; Matthias Baltes, 1980.

a discussion heavily imbued with Platonism.[21] This image of the helmsman is continued in 4P1, wherein Boethius expresses his inquietude about the nature of good and evil, to which Philosophia responds with a poem wholly based on Plato's *Phaedrus*.[22] Orpheus and Eurydice in 3M12 stand at the centre of this philosophic moment of crisis in the *Consolatio*, illuminating the dialogue on God, nature, and evil through a highly stylized adaptation of the literary myth.[23]

Structurally, the first indication that 3M12 is remarkable in the *Consolatio* is its metre, which is not unique in the wider context of the work, but which is distinctive for a number of reasons. 3M12 is one of 5 glyconic poems in the *Consolatio* distributed equally through its 5 books, making it the most common metre Boethius used amongst the *Consolatio*'s 39 poems.[24] The glyconic produces a highly lyrical sound, and is devoid of harshness; it suggests a gentleness of form and content which is perhaps conducive to instruction.[25] While one should be wary of overestimating the thematic weight of any one metre, metre undoubtedly does play a role in determining poetic genre and tone.[26] Boethius was intimately aware of the connotations and uses of each metre he employed. For example, he certainly meant for his reader to remark on the elegiac couplets

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[21] O'Daly highlights the influence of Heraclitus (DK 22 B 41 and 64), Plato (*Philebus* 28d, *Laws* 709b), and Cleanthes (*Hymn to Zeus*) here (1991, 164n192).

[22] For further discussion of 3P12 and 4M1, see O'Daly (1991), especially 199−207.

[23] O'Daly (201): "To the flawed ascent of Orpheus in 3 m. 12 corresponds, as its positive antithesis, the successful ascent of the soul through the heavens in 4 m. 1. The poem cannot be understood except in relation to the account of the procession of souls in Plato's *Phaedrus*..."

[24] 1M6, 2M8, 3M12, 4M3, and 5M4. Steven Blackwood notes, however, that Book 4's glyconic poem (4M3) is slightly at odds with the other glyconics because its second syllable is short rather than long. Blackwood uses this aberration as a cornerstone of his attempt at delineating a pattern in the placement and structure of the *Consolatio*'s poems (Blackwood, 2015, 143−57). Nevertheless, the poem is certainly glyconic even if slightly varied and so should still, I believe, be counted in the final tally of glyconic poems. It simply seems unlikely that Boethius, who throughout the *Consolatio* went to great lengths to use a wide variety of metres, would so clearly emphasize the importance of the glyconic in 4 of the 5 books, and not in the remaining one. Admittedly, we might consider the glyconics to be second in number to the anapaestic dimeter if we include all the variations of this metre, which Boethius employs (anapaestic dimeter, anapaestic dimeter catalectic, anapaestic dimeter with diaresis).

[25] See Blackwood (2015, 69−70) for further discussion of the sonority and general features of the glyconic as well as the effect on 3M12 in particular (133−4).

[26] For further discussion, see Llewelyn Morgan, 2000.

with which he opens Book 1, one of the few metra in the *Consolatio* which Boethius's own persona sings (1M1.1–2):[27] *Carmina qui quondam studio florente peregi, | flebilis heu maestos cogor inire modos* ("Verses I made once glowing with content; | Tearful, alas, sad songs must I begin"). This first couplet is artfully placed as an introduction to the *Consolatio* as a whole; with the first verse of the elegiac couplet being a dactylic hexameter, a first-time reader of the work could be excused in thinking that this would be an epic poem.[28] However, the first words of the second half of the couplet, starkly sombre and elegiac, leave no doubt as to what Boethius is crafting (*flebilis heu maestos*), and the shorter pentameter line makes clear that this can be no epic.[29] Boethius does not return to this metrical form except at 5M1,[30] heightening the importance of the metre for that initial moment of the *Consolatio*. With the introduction of the personage of Philosophia after 1M1, it becomes quickly apparent that she has stumbled upon Boethius at his lowest point, and thus when he is most fit for woeful elegiacs.[31] To think that Boethius composed the *Consolatio*'s poems simply for pleasure and

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[27] There are only 4 poems which Boethius himself sings: 1M1, 1M3, 1M5, and 5M3.

[28] Cf. *Aeneid* 1.1: *arma virumque cano* …

[29] Cf. Ovid, *Amores* 1.1–4: *Arma gravi numero violentaque bella parabam | edere, materia conveniente modis. | par erat inferior versus—risisse Cupido | dicitur atque unum surripuisse pedem*.

[30] A comment must be made as to why Boethius reuses elegiac couplets at 5M1. Strangely, Scheible in her masterful commentary makes no mention of the metrical form at 5M1 and Gruber only notes briefly the repetition from 1M1. The answer is perhaps obvious—the difference lies in the fact that 5M1 is sung by Philosophia in contrast to 1M1 which was given to Boethius—elegiac has been overtaken by reason and knowledge in Book 5 and is no longer woeful; indeed, there is very little that is *flebilis* or *maestus* in 5M1, an allegory for the nexus of causation (5P1.19: *ordo ille inevitabili conexione procedens*) which creates "chance" (5P1.11 *casum vel fortuitum*). As noted by Claassen, "[i]n many ways, book 5 makes a new beginning in the text. Repetition of the meter of the first poem is a way of signalling this" (Claassen, 2007, 5n32).

[31] Brigitte Balint sees an artful juxtaposition between the opening verses of the *Consolatio* and the closing prose: "The text begins with verse and ends with prose, so the two modes of composition represent in a very rough way the prisoner's self-indulgent, elegiac state of mind as the text opens, and his newly reawakened rational awareness by the *Consolation*'s end (Balint, 2009, 169). It is clear that the elegiac was chosen to present a contrast between Boethius's woeful state in Book 1 and his more enlightened, essentially un-elegiac one, by the end of Book 5. See Brazouski, 2009, 249–50 for some discussion of traces of elegiac language in 5M1.

mental refreshment,[32] though certainly a benefit of the interchanging prose-metre format of the work, is to ignore the thematic clues which he leaves in the contents and circumstances of his poetics. If this is not enough, we ought to remember the *Consolatio*'s very first word: *carmina*.

The glyconic metre of 3M12 is notable first for its relative rarity in Latin verse,[33] and second for the simple fact that Boethius reuses the same metre so often in the *Consolatio*. Both factors invite the reader to interpret 3M12 in conjunction with the themes of the other glyconic poems in the *Consolatio*. 3M12 should be read particularly in tandem with the glyconic final poem of Book 2. These two metra are implicitly joined by their placement at the ends of their respective books, but more importantly, they are thematically twinned because of their central theme of *amor* and its role in the bounds of nature. In 2M8 Boethius artfully delays the unveiling of *amor* as the true subject, both grammatical for the main clause of the first half of the poem and thematic for the poem as a whole, until line 15—a dramatic stretch from the sentence's beginning in line 1.[34] *Amor*'s role in the world according to Philosophia is to maintain a harmony (*concordes vices*) in the universe (*mundus*), which necessitates the imposition of fixed boundaries and limits on the natural world (2M8.9–10: *ut fluctus avidum mare | certo fine coherceat*, "The waves of the greedy sea | are kept

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[32] Philosophia recognizes the utility of the poems in breaking up the prose sections of the *Consolatio* (4P6.58: *Sed video te iam dudum et pondere quaestionis oneratum et rationis prolixitate fatigatum aliquam carminis exspectare dulcedinem...*).

[33] Horace famously asserted in one of his odes that he was the first to use Aeolic (the family of which glyconic is member) metre in Latin (3.30.13). While this was not strictly true as Catullus had used glyconic metre in two of his poems (34 and 61), it is certainly accurate that the metre was relatively rare in Latin letters.

[34] One immediately thinks of the centrality of *amor* under the guise of Venus in Lucretius's *De rerum natura*; cf. *DRN* 1.1–5. Gruber *ad loc.* is quite helpful for parsing the fairly complex, hypotactic structure of Boethius's poem: "Der erste Teil ist ein einziger Satz: Von 3 *Quod*-Sätzen zu je 2 Zeilen hängen 3 Finalsätze … ab, an die sich der dreizeilige Hauptsatz mit einem dreifach gegliederten Prädikat … anschließt, das Subjekt *amor* steht betont am Ende." See Gruber's comments on verse 15 in particular for cataloguing of some of the Greek philosophical tradition on which Boethius stands here.

within fixed bounds") [35] as much as for human beings (22–3: *Hic* (sc. *amor*) *sancto populos quoque | iunctos foedere continet*, "And love joins people too, | by a sacred bond"). While the force of *amor* in the natural world imposes a general adherence to these boundaries, Philosophia cautions that human beings are responsible for allowing themselves to be ruled by these principles (28–30: *O felix hominum genus, | si vestros animos amor, | quo caelum regitur, regat!* "'O happy race of men, | if the love that rules the stars | may also rule your hearts!'"). This must be read as a moment of intratextuality with 3M12, which begins with marked repetition of *felix* (3M12.1: *Felix, qui potuit …* "Happy was he who could …"), the only use of *felix* in a metrum after 2M8. The suggested union between the two poems indicates a didactic intent behind 3M12 built upon the principles set out in 2M8—the ultimate control nature/*amor* has over the universe, and the necessity that human beings not resist the impositions placed upon them if they hope to achieve happiness. [36] Boethius specifically adopted a timeless myth in 3M12 in order to frame Orpheus's ultimate failure to rescue Eurydice as a failure to obey the commandments of nature; Orpheus instead privileges an *amor* that blinded him to the path to happiness. [37]

In turning to 3M12 directly, it is important to note that out of all the poems in Book 3 and perhaps the entire *Consolatio*, 3M12 most clearly demands of the reader a close engagement with the classical tradition. Boethius adopts a famous myth, [38] Orpheus and Eurydice, and in doing so makes no secret of his dependence

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[35] Cf. Luc. *DRN* 1.1–4: *Aeneadum genetrix … alma Venus … quae mare navigerum, quae terras frugiferentis | concelebras …*

[36] Also compare the imagery of 3M2, especially the reminder that all things eventually revert to their natural state despite attempts to turn them towards something else; so we have the caged lion that regains a thirst for blood (7–16), a bird longing for the freedom of the forest (17–30), and the rising and setting of the sun (31–8). It is to be assumed, of course, that human beings fall under the same obligation.

[37] It must, however, be said that Philosophia does not necessarily judge Orpheus very harshly for his 'failure.' Blackwood (2015, 132) highlights the sympathetic attitude Philosophia takes towards Orpheus. The law set upon Orpheus—not to look back at Eurydice—was an impossible one to abide by because it ran contrary to the law of *amor*.

[38] The myth gained traction early on in literary history not simply in poetic texts, but in philosophy and religion as well (Gruber *ad loc*.). Other ancient writers generally approached the myth from one of two angles: the poetic and allegorical interpretations as favoured by Vergil,

on the three poets who had used the same story in their own works: Vergil (*G.* 4.453–527), Ovid (*Met.* 10.1–85 and 11.1–66), and Seneca the Younger (*HF* 569–91).[39] The latter text was especially important for Boethius's own composition, with Seneca's language clearly visible behind Boethius's verses, some lines lifted almost wholesale from Seneca's tragedy. Compare Boethius 3M12.40–1 (*tandem "Vincimur" arbiter | umbrarum miserans ait*, "At last 'We are overborne' in pity says | the ruler of the shades") and Seneca 582 (*tandem mortis ait 'Vincimur' arbiter*, "At last death's ruler said 'We submit'"). Seneca's lines were significant because they signalled a clear departure from his own source material (Vergil and Ovid) when he wrote his tragedy in the first century AD. Seneca was the first of the three to have given direct speech to Pluto, a detail which Boethius evidently adopted, identifying his source through the linguistic similarity to Seneca.[40] Vergil contrastingly passes by Pluto and Proserpina almost entirely, noting only (in the third person) that Orpheus approached them (4.469) and then, after his song, left with Eurydice returned (486: '*Iamque pedem referens casus evaserat omnis, | redditaque Eurydice superas veniebat ad auras, | pone sequens*,' "'And now, as he retraced his steps, he had avoided all mischance, and the regained Eurydice was nearing the upper world, following behind'"). Vergil's treatment here is startlingly fast-paced with the only speaking character in the tale being Eurydice in the moment of Orpheus' fatal mistake (494–8). Ovid, on the other hand, gives a relatively long section of direct speech to Orpheus but excludes

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Ovid, and Seneca; a rationalistic interpretation meant to explain away the mystic and fantastic from the myth that had engendered such a cult following (cf. Scheible, 122).

[39] While from the Senecan corpus the present paper will only address *Hercules Furens*, Gerard O'Daly has seen a possible link between Boethius's 3M12 and the pseudo-Senecan play *Hercules Oetaeus* as well, particularly regarding the philosophic framework within which each author operated (1991, 195): "It cannot be demonstrated that Boethius knew and used the *Hercules Oetaeus* … What is striking, however, is the way in which the two poets, working in different traditions and distinct mediums, can elaborate a philosophical model of failure and achievement on the basis of related myths."

[40] See John Fitch's commentary on *Hercules Furens ad* 569–89.

everyone else (*Met.* 10.17−39).[41] Metrically too, one notes certain similarities between Seneca and Boethius. It is marked for our purposes that Seneca's version of Orpheus and Eurydice is told within a choral ode (524−91) written in lesser asclepiads, a metre which is essentially a lengthened form of the glyconic: the lesser asclepiad is formed from a spondee, two choriambs (between which falls the caesura), and an iamb: − − − u u − ‖ − u u − u −. Compare this structure to Boethius's beloved glyconic, composed of a spondee, one choriamb, and an iamb: − − − u u − u −. This similarity may simply be a superficial resemblance; nevertheless, one should not dismiss out of hand a deliberateness behind Boethius's choice of a metre so acoustically similar to that of one of his models.

Beyond the above noted structural and linguistic resemblances between Seneca and Boethius, it would appear that Boethius was also attracted to and influenced by a few aspects of Seneca's choral ode beyond the simple retelling of the myth. When considering the first words of Seneca's chorus, one might see a thematic correspondence with the *Consolatio* (*HF* 524−5): *O Fortuna viris invidia fortibus*, | *quam non aequa bonis praemia dividis* ("O Fortune, ill-disposed to heroes | how unfair to the good the rewards you assign!"). With this reproachful address, "Seneca suggests that Fortune deliberately favors the unworthy and envies energy and industry."[42] In the context of the *Consolatio*, it is impossible not to compare this reproach of *Fortuna* with Boethius's own complaint stretching from the first lines of Book 1 until Book 5.[43] Seneca's Hercules, within the framework of this choral ode, stands in contrast both to the inequity of

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[41] Not including the one-word farewell "*vale*" which the poet gives to Eurydice at line 62. Thomas *ad G.* 4.485 even suggests that Orpheus's long speech in Ovid's version was "a commentary on [Vergil's] compression" in the latter's text.

[42] Fitch *ad* 524−32.

[43] One might even detect similarities to Seneca in the first metrum (1M1.17−18: *Dum levibus male fida bonis fortuna faveret,* | *paene caput tristis merserat hora meum*). Commenting on these lines Gruber synthesizes the centrality of *fortuna* for Book 1: "Somit ist *fortuna* ein Leitwort durch das ganze 1. Buch hindurch und ein Angelpunkt für die Diskussion." While Book 5 is principally devoted to a discussion of freewill, it begins with a last demand from Boethius that Philosophia prove whether chance (*casus*) exists or not (5P1.3: *Quaero enim, an esse aliquid omnino et quidnam esse casum arbitrere.*

Fortune and to Orpheus's failures (we shall pass over the fact that despite his successes in his twelve labours, Hercules inevitably will murder his family when a divine insanity is inflicted on him (987–1026));[44] while the latter is famed for his ill-fated venture to the Underworld, the former will ultimately succeed in his katabatic mission to retrieve Cerberus (56ff.). If this comparison was not clear enough for the mere presence of the Orpheus-Eurydice myth in the tragedy, Seneca underlines it with the closing lines of the choral ode (590–1): *Quae vinci potuit regia carmine, | haec vinci poterit regia viribus* ("The kingdom that could be conquered by song | can and will be conquered by force").[45] This is an example of Spiegelungstechnik,[46] a technique whereby the embedded literary character, Orpheus in this case, is used as a mirror (Spiegelungsfigur) for the protagonist in the wider narrative. Orpheus acts as a Spiegelungsfigur for Seneca's Hercules as well as for Vergil's Aristaeus. In Book 4 of the *Georgics*, Vergil devotes the last section of the book to an epyllion containing the Orpheus-Eurydice myth, the wider framework of which is Aristaeus's quest to regain his bees after they have all inexplicably died (4.317–20). After interrogating the shapeshifter Proteus, he learns through the latter's telling of the Orpheus-Eurydice tale that he has been punished for chasing Eurydice and unwittingly causing her (first) death (4.453–60). With this knowledge now in hand, Aristaeus is able to make the proper divine reparations for his crime through a sacrifice and regains his bees through the complex art of the bugonia (4.528–58). Vergil devoted so much attention to this myth because it emphasizes one of the central themes of the *Georgics*: the

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[44] Of some interest is that Vergil may have also recounted the Orpheus-myth at some length in another poem, the *Culex* (268–95), now often rejected as spurious and consigned to that odd body of work, the *Appendix Vergiliana*. Whoever the author of the *Culex* was, one might draw some comparison to the description provided therein of what gave Orpheus the courage to descend to the Underworld and to one of the central problems both in Seneca's choral ode and in Boethius's *Consolatio*—namely *Fortuna* (*Culex* 277): *sed fortuna valens audacem fecerat ante.*

[45] Galdi, 2009, 313–14: "die Orpheus-Erzählung habe somit — im Sinne der stoischen *praemeditatio* — die Funktion, den Leser bzw. den Zuschauer auf das tragische Schicksal des Protagonisten vorzubereiten."

[46] Galdi, 323n34.

necessity of proper knowledge and *labor* in the human struggle against nature.[47] Vergil introduces this as the core subject matter of the *Georgics* in the first lines of the poem, essentially summarizing each of the 4 books (*G.* 1.1–5):

> *Quid faciat laetas segetes, quo sidere terram*
>
> *vertere, Maecenas, ulmisque adiungere vitis*
>
> *conveniat, quae cura boum, qui cultus habendo*
>
> *sit pecori, apibus quanta experientia parcis,*
>
> *hinc canere incipiam.*

> "What makes the crops joyous, beneath what star, Maecenas, it is well to turn the soil, and wed vines to elms, what tending the cattle need, what care the herd in breeding, what skill the thrifty bees— hence shall I begin my song."

These lines "conve[y] a strong didactic tone,"[48] inciting the listener to study the bounds of nature; at what time to plough, how to tend vines, what care is necessary for husbandry, and what skills there are in bees and beekeeping. Aristaeus's success at the close of Book 4 is the success of the didacticism, a success underscored by the contrasting failure of Orpheus's *labor* as recounted just before (*G.* 4.491–3):[49]

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[47] The *Georgics* are a notoriously difficult text to penetrate, perhaps even, as purported by Thomas, "the most difficult, certainly the most controversial, poem in Roman literature" (16). This is not the place to offer yet another interpretation of the poem. Thomas's reading of it is very pessimistic, and while it is unclear whether this reading is tenable for the entirety of the poem, several purple passages do seem to evince a certain dourness in Vergil's outlook (1.199–203): *sic omnia fatis | in peius ruere ac retro sublapsa referri, | non aliter quam qui adverso uix flumine lembum | remigiis subigit, si bracchia forte remisit, | atque illum in praeceps prono rapit alveus amni.* Thomas *ad loc.*: "And where is the *uis humana* which can throughout life and without respite row against an opposing current? And finally, where in the poem is *labor* applied with explicit success… This is not a passing touch of pessimism, nor is it embellishment, it is the very heart of the poem."

[48] Thomas *ad* 1.1–4.

[49] Thomas *ad* 4.491–2: "words crucial to the poem, and indicating one of the main connections between Orpheus and the participants of the agricultural *Georgics*; Orpheus, paradigm for man

> *restitit, Eurydicenque suam iam luce sub ipsa*
>
> *immemor heu! victusque animi respexit. ibi omnis*
>
> *effusus labor atque immitis rupta tyranni*
>
> *foedera, terque fragor stagnis auditus Avernis*

> "He halted, and on the very verge of light, unmindful, alas, and vanquished in purpose, on Eurydice, now regained he looked back! In that instant all his toil was spilt like water, the ruthless tyrant's pact was broken, and thrice a peal of thunder was heard amid the pools of Avernus."

Boethius positions himself opposite Orpheus in a way similar to how both Seneca and Vergil position Hercules and Aristaeus in regard to Orpheus. Though Boethius begins the *Consolatio* in elegiac blindness, through the intercession of Philosophia and her logical guidance towards the true path to happiness, he will emerge successfully from the *Consolatio* in an enlightened state. This is an intentional contrast to Orpheus's inability to follow Pluto's directives, leading to his ultimate failure (3M12.10).[50] But Orpheus's downfall was not simply a failure to obey Pluto, but a commentary on his distortion of nature. Though Vergil, Seneca, and Boethius each make the Orpheus-Eurydice myth their own, they all include some familiar images from the myth which demonstrate the unnatural quality of Orpheus's music (3M12.8–12):[51]

> *Quondam funera coniugis*

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who controls not only nature, but even the powers of the Underworld, finds his own *labor* destroyed by a momentary lapse — a lapse caused by *amor*…"

[50] The 'mirror' relationship between Orpheus and Boethius can, of course, be further complicated, and while they do appear as opposites in some respects, the similarities between the two figures have also been well noted; cf. Blackwood (2015, 134): "In one sense, the poem speaks to the prisoner's sorrow: he is Orpheus, bereft of his loves, and awaiting his wife's imminent loss of himself. Orpheus' song thus becomes the poetic crucible of the prisoner's grief: he is the master poet whose modes grant him no solace."

[51] This inversion of the natural order of things is essential to the myth, appearing even in the *Culex* (278–85: *iam rapidi steterant amnes* …).

> *vates Threicius gemens*
>
> *postquam flebilibus modis*
>
> *silvas currere mobiles,*
>
> *amnes stare coegerat*
>
> *iunxitque intrepidum latus*
>
> *saevis cerva leonibus*

> "Of old the Tracian poet mourned
>
> his wife's sad death,
>
> he who before had made the woods so nimbly run
>
> and rivers stand
>
> with his weeping measures,
>
> and the hind's fearless flank
>
> lay beside savage lions."

Orpheus's song has crossed the bounds of nature, bounds which Philosophia highlighted at the close in 2M8. This unnaturalness is present in Vergil and Seneca too, demonstrating the literary importance not so much of Orpheus's unique powers but of his contravention of natural law.[52] Where Vergil appears to have had the most influence on Boethius's 3M12 is through his didacticism in comparison to Seneca's tragic schema. The short length of 3M12 limits the depth of typically didactic markers which one can find in longer poems such as Vergil's.[53] Yet, it is still possible to detect in 3M12 some definite didacticism, or at the very least, references to didactic poetry. This is principally true in the poem's framing verses, lines 1–4 and then the closing lines, 52–8. In 1–4 we see an emphatic anaphora: *O felix, qui potuit boni ... O felix, qui potuit gravis*. This is likely a reference to *Georgics* 2.490–2: *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas |*

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[52] Seneca's language is closest to Boethius's here (Sen. *HF* 572–6): *quae silvas et aves saxaque traxerat | ars, quae praebuerat fluminibus moras, | ad cuius sonitum constiterant ferae, | mulcet non solitis vocibus inferos | et surdis resonat clarius in locis.* Cf. Verg. *G.* 4.509–10.

[53] See above note 11 for some examples of this language.

atque metus omnis et inexorabile fatum | subiecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis avari ("Blessed is he who has succeeded in learning the laws of nature's working, has cast beneath his feet all fear and fate's implacable decree, and the howl of insatiable Death"). These lines are central to the *Georgics* as they encapsulate the essential goal of the work—to understand and thereby master nature.[54] Vergil does not purport to be one of those blessed persons who truly understand the nature of the universe,[55] but it would seem that he is praising indirectly one person who did—Lucretius. It seems beyond doubt that the phrasing *rerum cognoscere causas* is intentionally imitative of the title of Lucretius's own didactic poem, *De rerum natura*, and the aims of that work.[56] This literary beatitude signals that what follows is a direct lesson to be absorbed by the listener, who is in this case the character Boethius as Philosophia sings. That the real Boethius intended it as a didactic directive to the readers of the *Consolatio* is highlighted in the conclusion to the poem with the second person plural pronoun *vos* (3M12.52): *Vos haec fabula respicit | quicumque in superum diem | mentem ducere quaeritis* ("To you this tale refers, | who seek to lead your mind | into the upper day"). Boethius uses these Vergilian elements to signal to his readers that all the lessons Philosophia aims to teach him, and especially those in 3M12, are meant for the *felix hominum genus* (2M8.28) as well.

Through moments of intertextuality with his literary predecessors, Boethius joins in a game of mirroring and didacticism through embedded narrative which Vergil and Seneca had mastered centuries before. In his own adaptation of the Orpheus-Eurydice myth, Boethius manages to compress many of the central aims of the *Consolatio* into a mere 58 lines of verse while engaging palpably into a literary and philosophical tradition stretching back to the golden

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[54] Thomas *ad* 2.490.

[55] See the preceding lines 2.483−6.

[56] Thomas is not so eager to read the reference as being directly Lucretian, claiming only that the language is "redolent" of him. Nevertheless, this is by no means the general consensus; cf. Erren, 2003, *ad* 2.490: "Weil aus diesen Ursachen alles „geboren wird" was es gibt, ist *causas* auch Metonymie für *natura, rerum cognoscere causas* heißt *de rerum natura* studieren.

age of Latin letters. While 3M12 is certainly not the only metrum in Boethius's crowning achievement to which one could apply the methods presented in this paper, it is undeniably one of the richest sections of the entire *Consolatio*. This is not the first piece of scholarship to highlight the importance of his literary predecessors to Boethius's writing, however, deep analysis of the work's intertextuality is still relatively sparse. A true *desideratum* in the present author's opinion would be the production of a full program of intertextual exegesis of each of Boethius's metra, a program which would undoubtedly uncover further literary references and qualities heretofore ignored. Nevertheless, the beauty and intricacy of Boethius's own version of Orpheus and Eurydice is unquestionable, even were it to stand alone. If the only surviving fragment of the *Consolatio Philosophiae* were 3M12, we might still call Boethius the last of the Romans.

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