



# CORVUS

THE JOURNAL OF THE  
CARLETON UNIVERSITY  
CLASSICS SOCIETY

VOLUME III  
2012-2013

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# CORVUS

## The Journal of the Carleton University Classics Society

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President: Alan Dempsey  
Co-ordinator: Matthew Robertson

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To all of the supporters of Corvus, the editors offer their most sincere thanks.

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## CONTRIBUTORS

**Brandon Francis** is currently in his fourth year at Carleton University and will be completing his double major in Greek and Roman Studies and History this semester. He plans on doing an MA in Classics within the next two years.

**Jeremy Roberts** is a fourth year student at Carleton University majoring in Political Science with a minor in Greek and Roman Studies. When not studying, Jeremy also serves as Special Assistant to Canada's Finance Minister, Jim Flaherty.

**Shelley Hartman**, former #1 rock jock for CHEZ 106, went back to school at 56, and has finally found her calling. A fourth year GRS major, she hopes to do an MA in Europe.

**Bernardo Mingarelli** is a GRS Honours Major at Carleton University with a keen interest in Late Roman Antiquity. The next step in his academic career is an MA in the fall of 2014. Until then he plans on going overseas to teach English as a second language and to continue his creative writing.

**Jesse Rottenberg**, intrepid rock-climber, graduated from GRS in 2012. He is currently attending Law School at the University of Saskatchewan and is able to spell Saskatchewan, which sounds a lot like Sasquatch. While this may not be categorical proof for the existence of Sasquatch, it will certainly qualify for a History Channel Special.

**Colleen Dunn** is a second- year Greek and Roman Studies student with a minor in Anthropology. She has had a 36+ year career in Pediatric Diagnostic Imaging and is still involved in her profession on a part time basis in Ultrasonography at CHEO. She is pursuing her Classics studies purely for interest and is enjoying it tremendously!

**Christina Jenness, Thomas Prince and Jonathan Ouelett** attended their field schools during the summer of 2012. All three highly recommend that you try archaeology if you're interested – it's the experience of a lifetime!

## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

My studies at Carleton University are soon coming to an end, and while I look forward to what awaits me, I am also tempted to look back. I am incredibly rewarded when I do. I have spent four years getting to know the students in the College of the Humanities, and whether my fellow students are studying Classics, Humanities or Religion there is always common ground. Nonetheless, there is a great deal of diversity among us – interests vary from Greek philology to medieval philosophy and encompass everything in between and beyond. Diversity, which makes our studies so unique and fascinating, is the theme I hope to transmit with this year's *Corvus* Journal. Ranging from research essays to fiction to poetry, and from Classical Greece to the fall of the Roman Empire, this year's submissions reflect the varied interests and talents that surround us at Carleton.

This publication is incredibly important to me, as I'm sure it is to many of my colleagues, because it provides an opportunity for sharing my love of Classics with anyone who is curious. This particular volume of *Corvus* is also an excellent defence against the detractors of Classical Studies – those who would argue that such studies are 'useless'. For a lesson on media literacy, consult Brandon Francis' work. Jeremy Roberts' article provides an excellent model for the aspiring politician. If you would like to know how civilizations like our own come to end, Shelley Hartman is an important starting point. Or perhaps you would like some compelling reading for the summer? Try Bernardo Mingarelli and Jesse Rottenberg. Armchair adventure? Read the archaeology section. For thoughtful insight or a quick laugh, Colleen Dunn's poetry will do the trick. Without a doubt, this journal proves that Classical Studies ought to be highly valued, whether for entertainment or for important insights into modern society.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank two professors who have worked tirelessly to make my time at Carleton successful and without whom neither the Classics Society nor *Corvus* could have happened. Greg Fisher and Liz Klaassen have offered insight, support and humour for the many projects that I have undertaken at Carleton, and they have inspired me to continue my studies in Classics. I am sure that I am not alone in my gratitude to them.

*—Sarah Grant*

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

This year's edition of *Corvus* signifies the end of a chapter for both the journal and the Carleton University Classics Society. For most of us who have been involved in the journal and the CUCS, this will be our last year at Carleton. Next year, CUCS will be in the hands of a new crop of Greek and Roman Studies enthusiasts who are given the task of continuing to progress the society and help broaden the reach of Classics in general. Since I came to Carleton in 2007, I have seen first-hand the many changes that this society has undergone. I was there in 2007 when the society nearly collapsed; and I was here in 2010 when it was skilfully revived by a fresh set of hands. It is my hope for *Corvus* and the CUCS that a new group of eager young minds will continue its legacy. Matthew Robertson is set to take the reigns next year as president and the responsibility now falls on him to encourage a younger generation of soon-to-be Classicists to develop bonds with their peers, the program, and the society. Matt has proved himself to be eager and capable of organizing events, raising money and encouraging anyone and everyone to be a part of our small society. I wish good luck to Matt and to those who will be a part of *Corvus* and the Society in the future, and thank all those who have helped us in the past. Finally, I want to thank Sarah Grant and her editorial team for putting together this year's edition of *Corvus* and Prof. Downie, Prof. Klaassen and Prof. Fisher for helping and guiding us for so many years.

Cheers,

*Alan Dempsey*

President

Carleton University Classics Society



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication would not have been possible without the help and encouragement of many individuals. Some might say that it required an entire village. There is not enough room here to thank every deserving person, but I shall try.

I owe the success of this publication to the efforts of the contributors and editors (p. 3-4). There were many times when I thought I was asking too much, and each time they offered to help even more.

The faculty and staff of the College of the Humanities have provided immense support to students, both educational and administrative. My colleagues and I have been encouraged to reach our highest potential, and I hope that this publication reflects the well-appreciated efforts of faculty and staff. In particular, Dr. Susan Downie has helped throughout this year with planning fundraisers and other events. Dr. Greg Fisher has encouraged students to undertake this project since the first publication of *Corvus* in 2011. Dr. Liz Klaassen has ceaselessly offered her administrative and moral support to the Classics Society.

Alan Dempsey, President, and Matthew Robertson, Co-ordinator of the Classics Society have organized numerous fundraisers to give much-needed financial support to *Corvus*.

Finally, I would like to thank the students of the College of the Humanities who have given encouragement, offered financial and moral support for this project and all the people involved. Of all students, Tristan Wicks deserves an honourable mention for starting *Corvus* three years ago. This publication rests on the years of his work as Editor-in-Chief for the previous volumes of *Corvus*.

*-Sarah Grant*  
Editor-in-Chief

# THE BATTLE AT PYLOS AND SPHACTERIA, 425 BCE

BRANDON FRANCIS

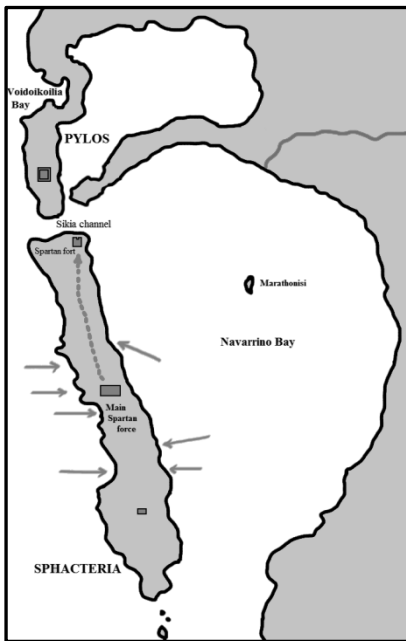
**Abstract.** This paper attempts to present the many controversies and significances of the Spartan defeat by the Athenians at Pylos and Sphacteria in 425BC during the Great Peloponnesian War. Thucydides himself claims that this was the most surprising event in the war. Controversies arise over Thucydides' reliability as an historian; inaccuracy in the topographical descriptions of the area, specifically with the harbor and its southern channel; the supposed Spartan plan to blockade the entrances of the harbor and their failure to do so; the strategic importance of occupying the island of Sphacteria; issues over the naval battle; and the reasons for Spartan failure. Despite its controversies, the fighting at Pylos and Sphacteria highlights the changing style of warfare, and the internal weakness of Sparta.

Of all the events Thucydides chose to write about and discuss in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, he described the Spartan defeat at Pylos and Sphacteria, in 425 BCE, as the most surprising event in the war.<sup>1</sup> It is no surprise, then, that this event is one of the most controversial topics in both Spartan history as well as in Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War. Controversies arise over Thucydides' reliability as a historian, the inaccuracy of topographical descriptions of the area (specifically regarding the Sphacterian

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, Charles Foster, trans. *Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War*. London: Harvard University Press, 1919: 4.40

harbour and its southern channel), the supposed Spartan plan to blockade the entrances of the harbour and their failure to do so, the strategic importance of occupying the island of Sphacteria, issues over the naval battle, and the reasons for Spartan failure. Despite its controversies, the fighting at Pylos and Sphacteria highlight important aspects such as the changing style of warfare, the rise of importance in the role played by light-armed troops and the internal weakness of Sparta, as the potential for losing only 120 *Spartiates*<sup>2</sup> was enough for them to sue for peace. This essay will present these controversies



<sup>2</sup> The term *Spartiates* refers to the privileged Spartan citizens as opposed to the *perioikoi* or *helots* of lower status. Demand, Nancy. *A History of Greece In Its Mediterranean Context*. 2nd ed. Cornwall-on-Hudson: Sloan Publishing, 2006: 137-138.

and their significance and take a specific position on each one in an attempt to understand what happened at Pylos and Sphacteria in 425 BCE.

It is necessary to begin by discussing the author of the subject himself, Thucydides. There is much debate about whether or not Thucydides was relying on personal autopsy [*lit. seeing with one's own eyes*]<sup>3</sup> for his account of the events at Pylos and Sphacteria. This controversy arises among scholars because of the many inaccuracies in Thucydides' descriptions of topography. Thucydides' major error in topography is his measurement of the channels leading into the Bay of Navarino as he states, "the island of Sphacteria lies close in to the shore [...] room for two ships abreast on the side nearest Pylos and the Athenian fortifications, and for eight or nine on the other side nearest the mainland."<sup>4</sup> The main problem with this statement is Thucydides' measurement of the southern channel being only eight or nine ships wide because, in reality, the southern channel is approximately 1200 metres wide and even the entire Peloponnesian fleet could not have blockaded the width.<sup>5</sup> Scholars such as Pritchett, who have conducted topographical research of the area, suggest that Thucydides' measurement of the southern channel was his only major topographical flaw, otherwise other topographical details of

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<sup>3</sup> "autopsy, n.". OED Online. December 2012. Oxford University Press.

<sup>4</sup> Thuc.4.8

<sup>5</sup> Gomme, Arnold W. *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1956: 443.

the fighting are accurate.<sup>6</sup> To Pritchett, it seems plausible that Thucydides did visit Pylos and Sphacteria. Other historians, however, believe this major topographical error is evidence enough to suggest that Thucydides had never visited the site.<sup>7</sup> This theory arises from research done by Gomme, who suggests it would have been too dangerous for Thucydides to travel there at the time<sup>8</sup>.

However, if Thucydides did not rely on personal autopsy, it is reasonable to believe that the use of informants was necessary. One basic argument is that Thucydides received his information from poor sources, which would explain his inaccuracies.<sup>9</sup> A stronger argument is that Thucydides received his information from the Athenian commander, Demosthenes, as Thucydides seems to describe in detail every area in which Demosthenes participated, while only briefly touching on other portions of the battle<sup>10</sup>. Such an argument is supported by the fact that Thucydides was likely acquainted with Demosthenes. The two likely would have consulted in 424/3 BCE as colleagues on the board of *strategoi*.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Pritchett, William K. *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography: Part 1*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965: 29.

<sup>7</sup> Rubincam, Catherine. "The Topography of Pylos and Sphacteria and Thucydides' Measurements of Distance." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* (2001): 82.

<sup>8</sup> Gomme, 484.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

<sup>10</sup> Silhanek, D.K. "Pylos Revisited: Thucydides' Primary Source." *The Classical World* (1970): 12.

<sup>11</sup> Westlake, H.D. "The Naval Battle at Pylos and its Consequences." *The Classical Quarterly* (1974): 213.

Thucydides also may have consulted the Spartan prisoners from Sphacteria when they were brought to Athens, but it is unlikely they would have had knowledge of how their superiors reacted to the naval battle in the Bay of Navarino.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, it is safest to assume that Thucydides was not relying on personal autopsy and told the best narrative he could with the sources available to him.

The next controversy to analyze is the slow Spartan reaction to the construction of fortifications at Pylos by Demosthenes' troops. Thucydides mentions two separate Spartan responses to the situation. In the city of Sparta, the news of the Athenians at Pylos was not taken seriously because they believed that the Athenians would leave as soon as a Spartan force arrived.<sup>13</sup> Despite the feelings in Sparta about the severity of the situation, King Agis, and the majority of the Spartan army already in the process of invading Attica, turned around immediately upon realizing the seriousness of the Athenian presence at Pylos.<sup>14</sup> It is difficult to believe, as Thucydides suggests, that the Spartans at home did not see the same threat as King Agis. They likely would have known that their best strategy was to attack the fort before it was completed.<sup>15</sup> Demosthenes likely understood his vulnerability during construction as well for, as Thucydides implies, the

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<sup>12</sup> *ibid*, 214.

<sup>13</sup> Thuc.4.5

<sup>14</sup> Thuc.4.6

<sup>15</sup> Strassler, Robert B. "The Opening of the Pylos Campaign." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* (1990): 119.

fortification was hastily completed before the Spartans could attack.<sup>16</sup>

Demosthenes was also at a disadvantage in numbers and is estimated to have had only 200 men, including only about 90 hoplites.<sup>17</sup> It is therefore shocking that it took so long for the Spartans to send out troops, as the first expedition did not depart until King Agis returned home.<sup>18</sup> Sparta was only a two or three day march from Pylos and constructing the fort took six days.<sup>19</sup> The slow reaction to send troops may have been because of a festival the Spartans were celebrating at the time, as Thucydides suggests.<sup>20</sup> However, a more likely explanation is that the Spartans could not send out troops due to security issues. The advantage for Demosthenes building a fort at Pylos was that it encouraged helot desertion and rebellion in Messenia and Laconia.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the fear of helot revolt in Sparta forced the remainder of the Spartan army to stay in the city to act as security until the rest of their force returned from Attica, since they could not go to Pylos without any force left to defend Sparta.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Thuc.4.4

<sup>17</sup> Wilson, Jarod. *Pylos 425BC: A Historical and Topographical Study of Thucydides' account of the Campaign*. Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1979: 65.

<sup>18</sup> Strassler (1990), 119.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*, 118.

<sup>20</sup> Thuc.4.5

<sup>21</sup> Hanson, V.D. *A War like no other: how the Athenians and Spartans fought the Peloponnesian War*. New York: Random House, 2005: 117.

<sup>22</sup> Strassler (1990), 119.

Possibly the most controversial topic with regards to the battle of Pylos and Sphacteria, in 425 BCE, is the exact nature of the Spartan battle plan. Thucydides describes the Spartan preparations as follows,

Meanwhile the [Spartans] were busy with their preparations to attack the fortification both by land and by sea [...however...] it was their intention, in case they should fail, to take the place before [the Athenians] came, to block up the entrances to the harbour and thus make it impossible for the Athenians to anchor inside and blockade them.<sup>23</sup>

Thucydides' Spartan plan to blockade the entrances was perfect as it allowed for the Spartans to avoid a sea battle with the superior Athenian navy which had thus far been Sparta's strategy in the Peloponnesian War.<sup>24</sup> In spite of this, topographical issues seem to contradict the plan attributed to the Spartans by Thucydides. As previously mentioned, there was no way the Spartans could have hoped to blockade the southern channel as it was too wide. The Athenian navy could easily have passed through the channel, which they did. Thucydides' Spartan strategy depended on the existence of narrow entrances to the bay, of which there were none, and,

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<sup>23</sup> Thuc.4.8

<sup>24</sup> Kelly, T. "Thucydides and Spartan Strategy in the Archidamian War." *The American Historical Review* (1982): 35.



therefore, it may be concluded that Thucydides did not possess accurate information of the Spartan plan.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, it is striking that Thucydides fails to mention anything of the advantageous Voidokoilia Bay, just north of Pylos. This bay would have offered an ideal place for landing and was very close to the Peloponnesian troops who were besieging Pylos, enabling whoever landed to come up on them from behind.<sup>26</sup> For this reason, it is conceivable that Voidokoilia Bay fit into the Spartans' plan in some way. The historian Gomme supports this theory, maintaining that it was probable for a Peloponnesian force to have held the sandbank to prevent the Athenian fleet from entering in any way.<sup>27</sup> There is another argument that supports Thucydides' Spartan plan to block the entrances. This argument suggests that Thucydides was mistaken about the Spartans blocking the southern channel, as they knew this was not possible, and instead blocked the northern channel, the entrance to Voidokoilia, and placed hoplites on Sphacteria and the mainland.<sup>28</sup> The problem with this strategy, however, is that a sea battle would be necessary in the bay and Thucydides is quite clear in claiming that the Spartan plan was to avoid such an incident.

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<sup>25</sup> Samons, L.J. "Thucydides' Sources and the Spartan Plan at Pylos." *Hesperia* (2006): 530.

<sup>26</sup> Wilson, 80.

<sup>27</sup> Gomme, 484.

<sup>28</sup> Wilson, Jarod and T. Beardsworth. "Pylos 425BC: The Spartan Plan to Block the Entrances." *The Classical Quarterly* (1970A): 49.

There is also the mystery of where Thucydides' harbour is actually located. It is generally believed that the harbour which Thucydides describes is, in fact, the Bay of Navarino. One proponent of this idea, Pritchett, conducting his own, topographical research of the bay, concluded that it afforded adequate shelter for boats as he reportedly saw vessels, relative to the size of ancient ships, anchor at Gialova in all seasons.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, other scholars argue against this on the grounds that Thucydides never realized exactly how large the Bay of Navarino actually was. In fact, Gomme proposes that the Bay of Navarino would not have been called a harbour as it was too deep, the water was too choppy because of the winds, it offered few landing places for triremes, and it had rocky cliffs, which led him to conclude that, for ancient ships, the bay might as well have been the open sea.<sup>30</sup> The problem with Gomme's account is that he never provides sufficient evidence that the bay was not the site of Thucydides' harbour but instead argues that, if Thucydides had seen the bay, he could not have called it a harbour. Nevertheless, Gomme certainly has reason to be skeptical, for if the Bay of Navarino was the harbour mentioned by Thucydides, its southern entrance could not have been blockaded; an occurrence which does not fit his account of the Spartan plan. A recent theory brought up by Robert Strassler suggests that the harbour was a cove off the southeast corner of Pylos, at the eastern end of

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<sup>29</sup> Pritchett, 17.

<sup>30</sup> Gomme, 483.

the Sikia channel.<sup>31</sup> This theory supports Thucydides' measurements of the two channels, as the Sikia channel could have been blocked by eight or nine ships and the Tortori channel by only two triremes, as it was only thirty-five yards wide.<sup>32</sup> The question which arises, however, is that the Spartans do not seem to have followed through with this plan and it is certainly difficult to believe that they were unprepared when, as Thucydides describes, the Athenian fleet arrived from Prote the next day.<sup>33</sup>

Adding to the problems associated with the Spartan plan to block the harbour entrances, is the question of why the Spartans stationed hoplites on Sphacteria and what strategic purpose the island held. Thucydides is vague about the importance of Sphacteria, stating only that the Spartans feared the Athenians would occupy the island and use it against them.<sup>34</sup> Pritchett argues for the strategic importance of Sphacteria by describing its importance during the Greek War of Independence, when its occupation by armed Greek forces was threatening enough to force the Ottomans to storm the island.<sup>35</sup> The problem with this comparison is that ancient weaponry could not match the range and firepower of their more modern counterparts. If the Athenians had occupied Sphacteria, their missiles would have done little damage to the

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<sup>31</sup> Strassler, Robert B. "The Harbor at Pylos, 425 BC." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* (1988): 199.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid*

<sup>33</sup> Thuc.4.13

<sup>34</sup> Thuc.4.8

<sup>35</sup> Pritchett, 23.

Spartans sailing through the channels.<sup>36</sup> Also, using Sphacteria as a base to launch an attack would have been useless as it could be observed from the mainland, and an attack thereon would have been difficult to carry out due to its limited landing areas.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, the Spartan occupation of Sphacteria could not prevent the Athenians from using Pylos as a base nor could it prevent them from sailing into the bay to fight the Peloponnesian fleet, which they did.<sup>38</sup> Thus, Thucydides' account of the Spartan plan to blockade the entrances does not fit with the Spartans stationing their hoplites on Sphacteria. The island does not seem to have offered any great advantage to the Athenians fighting against them and its occupation by the Spartans could not aid in the blockade.

Thus far, it has been addressed that Thucydides' Spartan plan to blockade the entrances to the harbour and avoid a naval battle could not have worked and was, therefore, not likely attempted by the Spartans. The southern channel could not be blocked, the Spartans failed to block Voidokoilia Bay, and placing men on Sphacteria could not significantly assist the blockade. Therefore, we may assume that Thucydides did not actually know the Spartan plan and, because he never examined the area himself, he attributed a plan to the Spartans which seemed reasonable with respect to the strategy the

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<sup>36</sup> Samons, 532.

<sup>37</sup> Samons, 533.

<sup>38</sup> Wilson and Beardsworth (1970A), 48.

Spartans had followed thus far in the war.<sup>39</sup> In that case, Thucydides is most likely wrong in stating that the Spartans wanted to avoid a sea battle. A sea battle would have been necessary for the Spartans to control the bay and to prevent any tactical landings of Athenians to assist their countrymen at Pylos.<sup>40</sup> This might help to explain why the Spartans did not set up a blockade, as it is very difficult to accept Thucydides' portrayal of lazy, unprepared Spartans who simply neglected to block the entrances.<sup>41</sup> If the Spartans' strategy had included plans for a sea battle, the tactical importance of occupying Sphacteria can be explained. The Spartans must have been willing to risk their hoplites on the island as part of a plan to win a naval battle because the hoplites on the island would have the duty of presenting a shore to friendly or hostile forces when shipwrecked, offering no safe place of retreat for the Athenians.<sup>42</sup> Even though the Athenians had superior naval tactics, the Spartans may have believed themselves to have a chance at victory due to their numerical advantage of approximately sixty-five triremes compared to an Athenian force of forty to fifty triremes.<sup>43</sup>

A final controversy to consider is that the Spartans on Sphacteria never attempted an escape. All that Thucydides mentions on the subject is that the Spartans were guarded by

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<sup>39</sup> Samons, 539.

<sup>40</sup> Wilson and Beardsworth (1970A), 49.

<sup>41</sup> Thuc.4.13

<sup>42</sup> Samons, 537.

<sup>43</sup> Wilson, 94.

two Athenian triremes that circled around the island in opposite directions.<sup>44</sup> If this is so, considering that the troops were already being smuggled food by helot ships,<sup>45</sup> a Spartan escape would seem plausible as well, perhaps to Sphacteria's northeast sandbar, as the distance was only 200 metres.<sup>46</sup> One possible explanation suggests that, had the Spartans attempted an escape, even in small groups, the Athenians would surely have noticed and attacked the depleted force on the island.<sup>47</sup> This is a problem because Thucydides himself states that Demosthenes never actually knew the size of the Spartan force on the island until the fire destroyed the woods and revealed their numbers.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, the Athenians would not be able to see if the force on the island were depleted. There are two plausible reasons, then, to suggest why the Spartans never attempted an escape. First, Thucydides may have underestimated the number of Athenian triremes guarding the island which would make escape difficult.<sup>49</sup> A second theory, which is more plausible, suggests that the Spartans did not see a need to escape, because they believed that the Athenians were just as vulnerable as themselves and could not maintain the blockade much longer. This was because the winter season

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<sup>44</sup> Thuc.4.23

<sup>45</sup> Wilson, Jarod and T. Beardsworth. "Bad Weather and the Blockade at Pylos." *Phoenix* (1970B): 117.

<sup>46</sup> Thuc.4.26

<sup>47</sup> Wilson and Beardsworth (1970B), 118.

<sup>48</sup> Thuc.4.30

<sup>49</sup> Wilson and Beardsworth (1970B), 118.

was coming and shipments of food would decrease,<sup>50</sup> leaving over fourteen-thousand Athenians living on a short supply of food and water.<sup>51</sup> It is likely for these reasons that the Spartans never attempted an escape, because they believed they could outlast the Athenians.

Moving away from the controversies, the fighting at Pylos and Sphacteria must be analyzed in order to illustrate its significant to Spartan history. One notable aspect was the importance of light-armed troops fighting against the Spartan hoplites on Sphacteria. Thucydides comments on the effectiveness of the light-armed troops by stating,

[The Spartans] were not able, however, to engage with the hoplites or to avail themselves of their own peculiar skill in fighting; for the light-armed troops kept attacking them with missiles from either side and thus held them in check, and at the same time the hoplites did not advance against them, but remained quiet.<sup>52</sup>

This illustrates how the Spartans were unable to engage their enemy due to the effective use of missiles. It is generally believed that Demosthenes had learned about the combined use of light-armed troops and hoplites from his experience in Aetolia, and must have believed using this combined force

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<sup>50</sup> Kagan, D. *The Archidamian War*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974: 239.

<sup>51</sup> Gomme, 466.

<sup>52</sup> Thuc.4.33

was appropriate at Sphacteria.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, there is little doubt that the light-armed troops were very successful, largely due to the sheer size of their force. Demosthenes' force consisted of some 8000 rowers, 800 archers, and 2000 light-armed troops facing only 420 Spartan hoplites, accompanied by their helots. This gave the Athenians an overwhelming numerical advantage at a ratio of twenty to one.<sup>54</sup> Nonetheless, the fighting at Sphacteria was significant due to the use of combined forces which foreshadowed the changes in warfare that would be brought in by the fourth century.<sup>55</sup>

The fighting at Sphacteria also highlighted Sparta's significant internal problems. When the four hundred and twenty Spartans on the island were cut off from the mainland following the naval battle, the Spartan government saw it as a serious enough situation to send representatives to negotiate an armistice with the Athenian officials for the purpose of ending the war and getting their men back as soon as possible.<sup>56</sup> This event shows the internal weakness of Sparta as the potential loss of only a small number of Spartiate citizens was enough to make the Spartan government consider ending the war.<sup>57</sup> The severity of the issue can further be emphasized by the drastic measures taken by the Spartans to

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<sup>53</sup> Sage, M.M. *Warfare in Ancient Greece: A Sourcebook*. London, New York: Routledge, 1996: 45.

<sup>54</sup> Hanson, 116.

<sup>55</sup> Sage, 45.

<sup>56</sup> Thuc.4.15

<sup>57</sup> Cartledge, Paul. *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History 1300 to 362BC*. New York: Routledge, 2002: 206.



ensure the safety of their men. For example, the Spartans agreed to surrender their entire fleet to the Athenians under the terms of the armistice,<sup>58</sup> the Spartans offered freedom to any helot who had risked their life to take food to the island<sup>59</sup> and, lastly, as discussed by Paul Cartledge, the men that had surrendered to save themselves at Sphacteria were neither ostracized socially nor compelled to commit suicide.<sup>60</sup> The question which remains is why 420 hoplites were so valuable to the Spartans. The answer lies in the fact that this number represented one-tenth of the Spartan army, 180 of whom were elite Spartiates, whose numbers were already a minority in Laconia. All things considered, the fighting at Sphacteria exposed many shortcomings of the Spartan social system and revealed their internal problems.

The fighting at Sphacteria was also very significant as it was an occasion on which the Spartans lost. This not only destroyed the notion of Spartan invincibility in warfare, but the Spartan choice to surrender rather than die fighting, unlike the men at Thermopylae, shocked the Greeks and changed the entire dynamic of the war.<sup>61</sup> This change in dynamic can be seen in 'Thucydides' account of the battle as he described how the Athenians gained confidence when the Spartans were losing and, realizing they were not as invincible as had been thought, became obsessed with the idea of attacking

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<sup>58</sup> Thuc.4.16

<sup>59</sup> Thuc.4.26

<sup>60</sup> Cartledge, 219.

<sup>61</sup> Hanson, 115.

Spartans.<sup>62</sup> The reaction of the Spartan surrender is best described by Thucydides who states,

This event caused much more surprise among the Hellenes than anything else that happened in the war. The general impression had been that Spartans would never surrender their arms whether because of hunger or any other form of compulsion; instead they would keep them to the last and die fighting as best they could.<sup>63</sup>

Thus Sparta's militaristic image was destroyed at Sphacteria.

In conclusion, the fighting at Pylos and Sphacteria, in 425 BCE, is no doubt a very controversial and significant topic in Spartan history. It is more likely that Thucydides did not rely on personal autopsy, but instead used informants, such as Demosthenes, for information about the fighting. The slow Spartan reaction to the construction and occupation of Pylos by the enemy can be explained as a safety precaution against the security threat of a helot uprising. Thucydides' Spartan plan to block the entrances to the harbour and avoid a naval battle seems inaccurate as topographical issues concerning the southern channel, Voidokoilia Bay and Sphacteria itself reveal that it could not be done. This therefore suggests that the Spartans did intend to fight a naval battle, which explains the tactical importance of occupying Sphacteria. The Spartans never attempted an escape the island either because more triremes guarded the island than has been suggested or

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<sup>62</sup> Thuc.4.34

<sup>63</sup> Thuc.4.40

because they believed they could outlast the Athenians. The battle on Sphacteria shows the importance of using light-armed troops which foreshadows the change in warfare found in the fourth century. The call for an armistice and peace in exchange for only a few Spartiates and only several hundred soldiers exposed the internal weakness of Sparta. Lastly, the Spartan defeat and surrender shattered the Spartan image of invincibility in battle as well as the idea that they would rather fight to the death than surrender.

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# THE POLITICAL GENIUS OF PTOLEMY SOTER

JEREMY ROBERTS

**Abstract.** In the bloody and tumultuous period that marked the post-Alexander world there were few men who stood out more than Ptolemy Soter. Ptolemy's dynasty in Egypt touched two great empires, beginning at the collapse of Alexander's, and ending upon its absorption into Augustus' Roman Empire. Despite the chaos of this time frame, Ptolemy built a solid foundation for his kingdom largely due to his political genius. By understanding the value of four of the key staples of politics, Ptolemy demonstrated his leadership prowess and his ability to adapt to and exploit the power vacuum left by Alexander's demise.

From Plato to Machiavelli, and from Napoleon to Karl Rove, politics has often been compared to the act of waging war. Politics contain defined enemies and allies, commanding figures, strategy and tactics, and can even be a blood sport in itself. In his defining treatise, *The Art of War*, Sun Tzu makes an insightful statement, declaring that "supreme excellence consists of breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting."

<sup>1</sup> This statement seems to have true meaning when examined in the context of Ptolemy Soter, a general of Alexander the Great and Hellenistic Pharaoh of Egypt. In the turmoil that marked the wars of the Diadochi, Ptolemy stood out above the rest as a keen political tactician. Although it would be false to state that Ptolemy did not fight in order to

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<sup>1</sup> Giles, Lionel, trans., *Sun Tzu's The Art of War*. Public Domain, 1910: 29.

secure his position, Sun Tzu's observation is still fitting. Much of Ptolemy's success came from his political manoeuvring and tact, which allowed him to navigate the treacherous minefield of the age without excessive military action. In fact, Ptolemy demonstrated throughout his Egyptian career four of the key qualities of a successful politician. He understood the importance of: (1) 'Messaging'; (2) 'Moderation'; (3) 'Incrementalism'; and (4) 'Consolidation'. Ptolemy's understanding of these four factors – especially the importance of messaging – made him a true political genius of his time.

Often, the mark of a truly successful politician has been their ability to marshal a strong messaging apparatus. In our study of ancient figures, like Ptolemy Soter, we tend to refer to messaging as 'propaganda'. In analyzing Ptolemy from a variety of sources, it becomes clear that Ptolemy was not simply adept at propaganda, he was a master of it. This is evident in one of his first acts in the wars of the Diadochi: the seizure of Alexander's corpse. We are told by ancient source Diodorus Siculus that Ptolemy's desire was to entomb Alexander's body in Alexandria, the city which he himself had founded in Egypt.<sup>2</sup> Diodorus goes on to say that "entombing him in this and honouring him with sacrifices such as are paid to demigods and with magnificent games; he won fair requital not only from men but also from the gods."<sup>3</sup> By this, we can

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<sup>2</sup> Walton, F.R., trans., *The Library of History of Diodorus Siculus*. Boston: Harvard University Press, 1933-1967: 18.28.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

assume that the acquisition of the body instantly gave Ptolemy prestige within the annals of history, for he honoured and controlled Alexander's memory through possession of the body. The political value of talismans, in ancient times, cannot be under-appreciated, making Alexander's body incredibly significant.

However, it is also evident that the act of seizing the body had a more far-reaching scope as an act of propaganda than mere prestige-grabbing. Control of the corpse brought with it political power. Historian Andrew Erskine, who has studied the subject of Alexander's body at length, argues that, after Alexander's death, the city of Babylon continued to be perceived as the political centre of the empire due to the presence of his body. We can see from this that, even after death, the body of the man continued to hold political power, and it continued to be the focal point of the empire.<sup>4</sup> Ptolemy's seizure of the body from Perdiccas demonstrates the value that the successors placed upon the body. He recognized the propagandist value of possession, in that it provided him legitimacy to claim to be Alexander's successor.<sup>5</sup> Using the body as a messaging tool, Ptolemy advertised himself as a successor of Alexander, giving him political legitimacy in Egypt.

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<sup>4</sup> Erskine, Andrew. "Life after Death: Alexandria and the Body of Alexander." *Greece and Rome* 49.2 (2002): 165.

<sup>5</sup> Errington, R.M. "Bias in Ptolemy's History of Alexander." *The Classical Quarterly* 19.2 (1969): 241.



Moreover, Ptolemy realized that the body allowed him to tap into Alexander's own propaganda machine, which was quite impressive in itself. Historian R.M Erskine sums this up nicely, stating that "Ptolemy, advertising himself as the guardian of Alexander's body, could share in Alexander's superhuman charisma."<sup>6</sup> For Ptolemy, the link to Alexander had dual importance. It allowed him to appear legitimate in the eyes of his new subjects, while also evoking the love and loyalty of the soldiers, whom he relied upon to solidify his new regime.<sup>7</sup> Nostalgia has always been a powerful tool of propagandists, as it taps into an underlying desire of the people, or of the army in this case, to hearken back to a more glorious or better time. Ptolemy clearly understood this fact when he used the body to evoke nostalgia of Alexander in his propaganda efforts.

Ptolemy further developed his image as protector of Alexander's legacy by centering himself at Alexandria, in Egypt, and celebrating the city as a one of Alexander's key achievements. Ptolemy invested huge sums in the development of Alexandria as his capital and centre of power. This allowed him to emphasise the glory of Alexander (centred around the body itself) and position himself as the physical protector.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, we see that Ptolemy expanded the ideal of Alexander beyond just the body to encompass the entire city which he founded. This was not unprecedented, as

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<sup>6</sup> Erskine, 175.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, 173.

<sup>8</sup> Errington, 241.

worshiping a city's founder as a hero, such as Aeneas of Rome, was common in the ancient world.<sup>9</sup> As monarch in Alexandria, Ptolemy became *de facto* protector of both the body and the city, on a symbolic and physical level.

The Ptolemies, as a dynasty, also took this to another level by linking themselves to Alexander in death. When Ptolemy's son took over after the death of his father, one of his first acts was to inter his father next to Alexander, implying a semblance of equality between the two.<sup>10</sup> It would seem improbable that Ptolemy Soter had nothing to do with these funeral plans, as he himself would have recognized the benefit to his dynastic line to not only be held as a protector, but also an equal. To use Erskine's words, it would seem likely that Ptolemy Soter wanted to emphasize the fact that "whether living or dead, the Ptolemies were inseparable from Alexander."<sup>11</sup>

Ptolemy's messaging also went well beyond the use of symbolism. Following the lead of Alexander, Ptolemy sought to establish a cult around himself, which naturally celebrated his connection to Alexander. Analysis shows that the Ptolemies established a cult in honour of Alexander and that, over time, the Ptolemies were gradually added to the pantheon of those worshiped.<sup>12</sup> Some of this involved building an

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<sup>9</sup> Erskine, 174.

<sup>10</sup> Lattey, Cuthbert. "The Diadochi and the Rise of King-worship." *The English Historical Review* 127 (1917): 332.

<sup>11</sup> Erskine, 165.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*, 175.

alleged connection of kinship to Alexander, which was done with the mastery of one skilled in propaganda.<sup>13</sup> One of the most prominent ways in which the Ptolemies fostered this link was through coinage, the mass media of the ancient world. Alexander was celebrated on coinage, fostering a cult-like devotion to his memory.<sup>14</sup> Since Ptolemy minted these coins, and fostered the link, it would seem highly likely that he too gained a level of devotion through this connection.

Thankfully for Ptolemy, his chosen kingdom was fertile ground for a cult that included worshipping the monarch as a divinity. Alexander had introduced this notion into his own propaganda during his conquest, making it a strategy with which Ptolemy was undoubtedly familiar. Despite Egypt's familiarity with divine rulers, the Greek and Macedonian soldiers upon whom Ptolemy relied had not been too open to the idea until Alexander familiarized them with it.<sup>15</sup> In Egypt, their system of government was founded upon the notion of a divine Pharaoh, who ruled on behalf of the gods.<sup>16</sup> In order to fit into this model, Ptolemy tapped into Alexander's own divinity. As we saw from his cult-creation, Ptolemy sought to establish bonds of kinship between them, which advertised to the public the message that if Alexander was divine, and Ptolemy was related to Alexander, then Ptolemy must also be

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<sup>13</sup> Tarn, W.W. "Two Notes on Ptolemaic History." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 53 (1933): 61.

<sup>14</sup> Erskine, 172.

<sup>15</sup> Lattey, 327.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*, 322.

divine. In order to further cement the idea, the Ptolemies also adopted certain Egyptian which were expected of royalty. Most notably, the Ptolemies began to practice a policy of brother-sister marriage in order to keep their divine blood pure.<sup>17</sup> Although the dynasty established these practices over time, Ptolemy Soter clearly set all of this in motion by building his family's connection with Alexander and by adopting the mantle of Pharaoh.

Although the acquisition of the body and the development of a cult were strong moves to support Ptolemy's messaging machine, the Pharaoh truly hit his stride when he turned his attention to the writing of history. It is not for naught that the adage 'history is written by the victors' bears enormous truth. Ptolemy set about writing the history of Alexander the Great as he wanted it told, allowing him to present himself in a prominent role.<sup>18</sup> Most scholars agree that Ptolemy used the history of Alexander to exaggerate his own importance.<sup>19</sup> He recognized the messaging value of controlling history, as he could ensure that his participation became part of myth.<sup>20</sup> The story of Alexander, still fresh in the minds of all, was a potent tool to control. Ptolemy, using his messaging apparatus, adopted another role by becoming Alexander's narrator, a fact

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<sup>17</sup> *ibid*, 332.

<sup>18</sup> Erskine, 173.

<sup>19</sup> Errington, 234.

<sup>20</sup> Hadley, R.A. "Royal Propaganda of Seleucus I and Lysimachus." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 94 (1974): 64.

that was not missed when Oliver Stone directed his film about Alexander.

Perhaps the most potent example of Ptolemy's propagandist influence in history writing is the ancient sources which survive him. Although Ptolemy's original work did not survive to the modern day, most of the ancient sources on the period cite Ptolemy's work as the guiding manual for their writing. This means that the works of historians such as Diodorus are filled with the aggrandizement of Ptolemy as a character. In fact, in one scene of Diodorus' narrative, the historian claims that "Ptolemy, who had the best soldiers near himself and wished to encourage the other commanders and friends to face the dangers, taking his long spear and posting himself on the top of the outwork, put out the eyes of the leading elephant."<sup>21</sup> This unapologetic aggrandizement of Ptolemy in history served to elevate his reputation and attach himself to the charisma of Alexander.<sup>22</sup> The scene of Ptolemy bravely facing off against an elephant is wholly reminiscent of Alexander's own brave, and sometimes reckless, antics. Ptolemy wanted to foster that relationship with his rewritten history. This history would secure his dynasty's connection with the dead conqueror and ensure its prominent place in the narrative.

A final note is that Ptolemy's messaging machine was also used to attack others. Like all good political tacticians, Ptolemy recognized that he could use propaganda both to

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<sup>21</sup> Diod.18.34.

<sup>22</sup> Erskine, 172.

aggrandize himself and to attack and discredit his enemies. The most prominent example of this comes from his attacks against Perdiccas. Ptolemy recognized that Perdiccas was his most dangerous opponent. Perdiccas had control of the central government and the ability – briefly – to turn the military and propagandist might of the empire against Ptolemy's separatist actions.<sup>23</sup> Ptolemy strengthened his position in Egypt through strong messaging, and outlasted Perdiccas. Furthermore, he exacted a form of revenge against his opponent by subtly distorting Perdiccas' role in the annals of history.<sup>24</sup> Ptolemy ensured that Perdiccas' role in the history was suppressed, while emphasizing his own role. This was undoubtedly done so as to remove the nasty label of 'separatist' which was hurled at him by Perdiccas.

Therefore, if one thing is proved beyond a doubt, it is that Ptolemy the politician was no stranger to a strong messaging machine. He presented himself as a protector, inheritor and narrator of Alexander's legacy. Then, he attacked his opponents so as to discredit their own ambitions. By tying himself and his dynasty to Alexander, Ptolemy sought to adopt his friend's own propaganda machine and use it for himself. In order to have a strong foundation for his dynasty, Ptolemy built his kingdom on top of Alexander's memory, literally and figuratively.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Errington, 236.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*, 239.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*, 242.

Although messaging was undoubtedly the most crucial aspect of Ptolemy's political strategy, it was but one of four parts. The second aspect of his success was his understanding of moderation, another key asset to a political leader. This defined Ptolemy's political career from the beginning, as he sought to only control Egypt, and not the entire empire. Ptolemy seems to have recognized that Egypt was incredibly rich and also well protected by a narrow desert approach. If he were able to build a strong navy, Egypt would be theoretically impregnable, giving him a position of strength and security against the other successors.<sup>26</sup> This act of moderating his ambition within reason allowed him to achieve the success he did. Ptolemy did not over-reach. He realized early on that his chance at political power lay in separatism and that Egypt was the prime candidate for the basis of a new kingdom.<sup>27</sup> DiadochiThe entire Empire could not be easily controlled by one man; Ptolemy recognized this far before the others, and moderated himself appropriately.

A striking example of this moderation came after the death of Perdiccas, when the power-brokers negotiated over the future administration of the empire. Historians largely agree that after Perdiccas's assassination, Ptolemy was offered the regency of Alexander's two heirs.<sup>28</sup> Many believed that holding the body gave him claim to the regency and the

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<sup>26</sup> Lattey, 322.

<sup>27</sup> Eskine, 172.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*, 171.

empire, in order to keep all three together.<sup>29</sup> However, in an act of moderated restraint, Ptolemy refused the regency. In doing so, he accomplished something beneficial to himself in severing the link between the body and the empire, and claiming ownership over only the former.<sup>30</sup> Ptolemy now had sole providence over the body, and was free to use it within his moderate kingdom. In the end, it is quite possible that Ptolemy's moderation not only kept him alive in a time of unrestrained ambition, but also allowed him to achieve his political success.

The third quality which made Ptolemy a successful political tactician was his understanding of incrementalism. Successful political leaders tend to understand that progress is made in small, pragmatic steps, and that grand ambitions are typically toxic in practical politics.<sup>31</sup> Ptolemy adheres to this closely, pairing it with his moderation. Once he had secured Egypt, he realized that Phoenicia and Coele Syria, as they were called, would provide an effective buffer zone to cement the kingdom's security.<sup>32</sup> Syria was well placed to provide an offensive base for an invading army, as well as a defensive buffer for the kingdom. Therefore, Ptolemy set about to conquer the region and bring it into the fold of his modest

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<sup>29</sup> *ibid*

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*, 172.

<sup>31</sup> Flanagan, Tom. *Harper's Team*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007: 208.

<sup>32</sup> Diod.18.43.



kingdom.<sup>33</sup> In demonstrating his incremental approach, we see that Ptolemy was patient in biding his time for the optimal moment to seize the land. He waited until his competitors had vacated the region and were distracted elsewhere before seizing the opportunity.<sup>34</sup> Ptolemy understood that patience and small steps would allow him to achieve success.

The fourth and final quality which Ptolemy extolled was a focus on consolidation. After seizing a moderate piece of Alexander's empire, Ptolemy increased his power and prestige through messaging, and then incrementally expanded where it benefitted him. All the while, he consolidated his foundation, strengthening his base. This is the factor that distinguishes him from Alexander the most, as Alexander did little to consolidate his vast empire. Most ancient authors agree that Ptolemy had prowess in exercising political authority.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, he seems to have benefitted from the loyalty of his soldiers, many of whom were drawn from Alexander's former men.<sup>36</sup> By consolidating his core, he ensured that he had a loyal following and a safe base of power from which to operate. This consolidation allowed him to successfully establish a resilient dynasty in a time of turmoil.

We also see this consolidation in action as he took incremental steps to acquire Syria. When Ptolemy seized the

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<sup>33</sup> Wheatley, Pat. "Ptolemy Soter's Annexation of Syria 320 BC." *The Classical Quarterly* 45.2 (1995): 434.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid*, 437.

<sup>35</sup> Diod.18.39.

<sup>36</sup> Diod.18.28.

region, he quickly garrisoned the cities, fortified the area, and then withdrew back to Egypt.<sup>37</sup> By leaving a strong military presence, he was ensuring that he consolidated his gains. Moreover, he did not simply garrison the cities in order to create an atmosphere of occupation. In consolidating his control he also sought out alliances with locals, securing their approval of his garrisons.<sup>38</sup> In other words, Ptolemy did not simply grasp for power with blind ambition, but rather seized pieces which he felt would be useful and secured those pieces through both military presence and collaborative diplomacy.

After having examined these four aspects of Ptolemy's political skill, one cannot help but be impressed by his achievements. Ptolemy was undoubtedly a masterful political strategist, using his understanding of these four elements to secure himself as the Pharaoh of Egypt, and establish a Hellenistic dynasty. It is telling that Ptolemy's kingdom was the last Hellenistic kingdom to fall to the Romans. Beyond simple military manoeuvring, Ptolemy understood the warfare of politics, and how best to exploit situations. He used propaganda to establish a strong bond between himself and the powerful memory of Alexander. He demonstrated a respect for moderation and did not overreach, like many of the other Diadochi. He also understood incrementalism, and ensured that he never took sweeping measures, acting only when the time was right. Finally, he broke with Alexander in recognizing the importance of consolidating his gains. He

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<sup>37</sup> Wheatley, 433.

<sup>38</sup> Diod.18.43.

remained secure in Egypt because of the loyalty and support he built himself in Alexandria. In the end, Ptolemy emerges as a political genius who followed a proven historical formula for success.

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# ENTROPY, INDIVIDUALISM AND THE COLLAPSE OF CIVILIZATION

SHELLEY HARTMAN

**Abstract.** Nothing is random; everything is systematic and self-organizing. These non-arbitrary arrangements have been studied over many centuries and various laws and mathematical equations have resulted. It can be argued that civilization, too, is not random. Archaeologists and anthropologists have mapped out standard sequences in the evolution of societies and humanity's narratives are not infinitely variable. If civilization itself is not random, it should therefore be predictable. This paper explores the possibility that certain scientific principles can prove useful in the study of history and especially the rise and fall of civilizations. It will consider how the difference equation, tangential line segments and local straightness can be employed to examine issues concerning the human component. Additionally, the laws of thermodynamics will be applied to the problem of the rise of fall of civilizations, focusing on to the Athenian loss in the Peloponnesian War and the crossover from the Roman Republic to the Roman Empire. Although this analysis is very brief, the implications may be significant.

Nothing is random: non-linear events are predictable. Examples of non-random arrangements are everywhere: the unfurling fractal geometry of smoke, the design of honeycombs and the spiral of sunflower florets, schooling fish, sand dunes and ocean waves. If anything should define randomness, it ought to be grains of sand and drops of water, yet they cannot. Everything is systematic and self-organizing. These non-arbitrary arrangements have been studied over

many centuries and various laws and mathematical equations have resulted.

It can be argued that there is nothing random about civilization. Archaeologists and anthropologists have mapped out standard sequences in the evolution of societies.<sup>1</sup> And even humanity's narratives are not infinitely variable, as Joseph Campbell has shown.<sup>2</sup> If civilization itself is not random, it should therefore be predictable. This paper explores the possibility that certain scientific principles can prove useful in the study of history and especially the rise and fall of civilizations. Part 1 will consider how the difference equation, tangential line segments and local straightness can be employed to examine issues concerning the human component, such as whether people can learn from earlier mistakes (Thucydides) and whether the axiom that history repeats itself (Polybius) is accurate. The laws of thermodynamics will be applied in Part 2 to the problem of why civilizations rise and fall, with attention to the Athenian loss in the Peloponnesian War and the crossover period from the Roman Republic to the Roman Empire. Although this analysis is very brief, the implications may be significant.

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<sup>1</sup> Renfrew, Colin and Paul Bahn. *Archaeology: Theories, Methods, and Practice*. London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 2008: 178-81.

<sup>2</sup> Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Novato, California: New World Library, 1949: 28-9.

### USEFUL DEFINITIONS<sup>3</sup>

Law of Conservation of matter: Matter cannot be created or destroyed, it can only change state.

Conservation of energy: Energy is indestructible; it can only change form. Energy entering into a reaction must be totally accounted for, at the end of the reaction.

Difference equation: reflects the change or difference as variables change.

Entropy: a measurement of the energy that is not available for work during a thermodynamic process. Energy loss. (eg. unwanted heat generation in machines)

Thermodynamic: Greek meaning hot + Greek meaning force or power.

Laws of thermodynamics:

1. "the energy of the universe remains constant"<sup>4</sup>

2. "the entropy of the universe tends to increase" (energy becomes less available)<sup>5</sup>

3. "at absolute zero, entropy is zero".<sup>6</sup>

Equilibrium: (a) common understanding is balance, (b) but it is in fact maximum entropy, the

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<sup>3</sup> The seemingly meaningless things learned in high school that teachers said might someday be useful.

<sup>4</sup> Williams, A.D. Jr. "Physics: Thermodynamics." *Encyclopedia American*. Vol.22. D. G. Creighton ed. USA: Rand-McNally, 1962: 31-2.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

dissipation of all energy and not actually mentioned in the Laws of Thermodynamics.

Work: from mechanical engineering, the realized physical and useful lift / turn of a machine, such as a locomotive or car engine.  $\text{work} = \text{energy} - \text{entropy}$ .

Local straightness: a mathematical phenomenon whereby a tiny part of a curved line, when magnified, appears straight.

General Systems Theory: from Greek meaning system, which is made up of parts or members. GST is, quite simply, an attempt to identify common systems in all disciplines.

Exothermic: Giving off heat.

#### APPLICATIONS OF SCIENCE TO BETTER UNDERSTAND PROBLEMS IN OTHER FIELDS

There are many recent examples of interdisciplinary research. Mathematics and statistics have long been successfully paired with biology. Thermodynamic concepts have recently been introduced into evolutionary biology with a tremendous result, Punctuated Equilibria, or evolution by leaps and bounds,<sup>7</sup> as opposed to gradual Darwinian evolution. Ecology employs system modeling for population density, migration and evolution that incorporates biological, geological and mathematical concepts.<sup>8</sup> Sociologists have been trying to integrate the laws of thermodynamics and general

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<sup>7</sup> Eldridge, Niles and S.J. Gould. "Punctuated Equilibria: The Tempo and Mode of Evolution Reconsidered." *Paleobiology* (1977): 3 (2) 145.

<sup>8</sup> Colinvaux, Paul. *Ecology*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1986: 214.



systems theory into their disciplines, perhaps in an attempt to make them feel like scientists. In the past, sociologists have focused on the wrong things, fought amongst themselves and made up incomprehensible names for terms that already existed.<sup>9</sup> No one is fooled. Anthropology has developed ethnographic analogy, a good example of which comes from Jared Diamond, author of *Guns Germs and Steel*, as he matched the organizational and bureaucratic complexity of the Aztec and Incan civilizations to "their Eurasian counterparts."<sup>10</sup> Anthropologists are using human genetics to track population migration, and archaeology has embraced everything from ground-penetrating radar to paleobotany. And then there is Economics. Here many of the early ideas in political theory and the equation for population growth were developed and the difference equation has become indispensable for calculating interest and derivatives. Recently, however, the field has chosen to concentrate on equilibrium. Economists focus on the equilibrium between price and availability which, if anything, changes second by second.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, economists have mistaken the term equilibrium for balance.<sup>12</sup> As far as history is concerned, to the best of this author's knowledge, no one has attempted to use mathematics, the

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<sup>9</sup> Bailey, Kenneth D. *Social Entropy Theory*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990: 13-15; 21-2.

<sup>10</sup> Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs and Steel*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc, 1997: 360.

<sup>11</sup> Chaining, Alpha C. and Kevin Wainwright. *Fundamental Methods of Mathematical Economics*. New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin: 124-5.

<sup>12</sup> Perhaps that is why the financial world is in such disarray.

laws of thermodynamics and general systems theory to interpret the past.

#### PART 1: HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

Who was the first person to say, "History repeats itself"? An Internet search will lead to a quote from George Santayana's 1905 publication of *The Life of Reason*, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."<sup>13</sup> The current cultural meme supposing that history has a cycle and that its discovery has been a very recent one, produces a mute weariness in Classicists, for, as Ronald Syme noted in 1939, in ancient Rome "[t]here was fair evidence at hand to confirm the deeply-rooted belief, held among the learned and the vulgar alike, that history repeated itself in cyclical revolutions."<sup>14</sup> He pointed to the work of Cornelius Nepos (c. 50 BC) in *Eumenes* 8.3, "And if any one reads the acts of those veterans, he will find the proceedings of ours like theirs, and be of opinion that there is no other difference between them but that of time." Syme was also certainly contemplating Polybius as well, who was writing in the middle of the first century BCE.<sup>15</sup> In his *Histories*, Polybius described

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<sup>13</sup> Santayana, George. *The Life of Reason*. Vol. 1. Last retrieved Feb. 24, 2012: 12.92.

<sup>14</sup> Syme, Ronald. *The Roman Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939: 251.

<sup>15</sup> Polybius. *Histories*. trans. Evelyn S. Shuckburgh. London, New York: Macmillan, Reprint Bloomington, 1962: 6.4; 6.9.10

ἀνακύκλωσις τῶν πολιτειῶν, "cycle of constitutions."<sup>16</sup> He observed that monarchy was followed by despotism, then aristocracy and oligarchy, then democracy and mob-rule. After that, there was generally a period of chaos and civil war, which would eventually settle and result in monarchy again. It can be argued that Augustus, in the first century BCE, learned much from history as he consolidated all power in the state to himself and became the first monarch of the Roman Empire.<sup>17</sup> A number of later emperors used Augustus as a governing template, thus putting the lessons of the past to use.<sup>18</sup> Thucydides, from the fourth century BCE, in *The Peloponnesian War* wrote, "It will be enough for me, however, if these words of mine are judged useful by those who want to understand clearly the events which happened in the past and which (human nature being what it is) will, at some time or other and in much the same ways, be repeated in the future."<sup>19</sup> In the Ancient Greek language ἀνακύκλωσις τῶν πολιτειῶν, "cycle of constitutions" goes back as far as Plato.<sup>20</sup> But, after the fall of the Roman Empire, nothing more is heard of what could be called succession theories.

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid*, 6.9.10; s.v., *LSJ*

<sup>17</sup> Syme, 332-3

<sup>18</sup> Boatwright, Mary T., Daniel J. Gargola, Richard J.A. Talbert. *The Romans: From Village to Empire*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004: 356; 366-7; 377.

<sup>19</sup> Thucydides. *The Peloponnesian War*. trans. Rex Warner. Harmondsworth Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1954: 1.22.4

<sup>20</sup> s.v., *LSJ*

In modern western literature the first early references to cycles of social and historical change began to re-emerge in the 1500s through the works of Machiavelli <sup>21</sup> and later political theorists such as Marx and Engels, in the mid 1800s.<sup>22</sup> So what happened? Between the fall of the Roman Empire and the Renaissance, the Greek concepts of revolving systems of government and of cyclical time, itself, were eradicated under the crush of Christianity and its dominant linear cosmogony.<sup>23</sup> As Palti explained, there was "a Christian theological reaction against the classical cyclical view of history". This is less shocking when one considers that during this time science, mathematics, philosophy and even medicine were also forcibly ignored. For 1300 years, in the western world, "there was only Galen."<sup>24</sup> For 1300 years, no one learned, and no one learned from history at all: today the tools are again available.

Now there is easy access to classical texts, and libraries and bookstores are filled with 2500 years of historical data. To interpret this information better, it is necessary to understand, or perhaps more accurately, to internalize the concept of

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<sup>21</sup> Machiavelli. *Discourses on Livy* (1517). trans. Christian Detmold. Last Retrieved Feb. 12, 2012: 100-1

<sup>22</sup> Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engles. *The Communist Manifesto* 1884. Last Retrieved Feb. 22, 2012. pp. 1-14

<sup>23</sup> Palti, Elia Hose. "Time, Modernity, and Time Irreversibility." *Philosophy and Social Criticism* (1977). 23 (5), 28.

<sup>24</sup> Saunders, J.B., and Charles D. O'Malley. *The Illustrations from the Works of Andreas Vesalius of Brussels*. New York: The World Publishing Company. 13. Originally Published: Vesalius, 1543 De Humanica Corporis Fabrica.

cyclical time. To accomplish this it may be useful to look to other disciplines to help fill in the picture. A graph in which the x-axis represents time and the y-axis represents population or empire is constructive (Fig. 1). Mathematical models of curves and line segments may be able to visibly show periodicity. Chemistry and physics could come into play with the laws of thermodynamics.

If, as the ancients observed, history repeats itself, then the initial question that must be asked is why can no one learn from the past? The problem appears to be one of perspective; this conclusion becomes clear by considering linear or local straightness. In the twenty-first century, life in all parts of the world is being informed through a phenomenon called local straightness. All curves visible on television or on a computer exist because of, and as a result of, this mathematical equation.<sup>25</sup> Microscopically, the images are created by assembling coloured blocks or pixels together, which are themselves flat-sided. Pulling away a great distance the eye loses sight of the flat lines and sees the squares blurred together as a curve. The reverse is similar.

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<sup>25</sup> Chassery, J.M., D. Coeurjolly and I. Sivignon. "Duality and Geometry Straightness, Characterization and Envelope." *Discrete Geometry for Computer Imagery* (2006). Kuba, Nyul and Palagyi eds. Germany: Springer-Verlag. 4, 6-7.

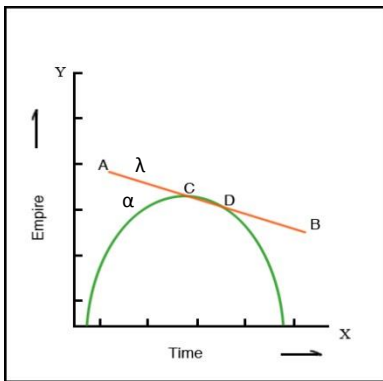


Fig. 1. Local Straightness

Presented with an actual curve like curve- $\alpha$  above, which could represent growth rate over time, the magnification of any tiny part of that curve will result in what looks like a straight line, defined by line segment CD, because the amount of curve relative to its length is so small it approaches zero. The length of CD is found by using the difference equation, the length of the curve CD is found by solving for the area of the defined space. Picture curve- $\alpha$  as all of Roman history and then imagine the tiny segment CD of curve- $\alpha$  as the span of a human life. The tiny curve, when magnified, appears locally straight and this phenomenon is called local straightness. It is hard to be aware of the curve, when all you perceive is a straight line.

From time immemorial, it has often been thought that the world was flat and with good reason. From the perspective, the senses and all of the experiences of the people if was confirmed. Their feet were on the ground, and the ground extended to the horizon in a straight line. Their days consisted of waking, activity and then sleep. Increasing the scale, in the spring there was birth, followed by maturity and ending with harvest. Their lives seemed like straight lines, too, from birth, through life to death, and never long enough. Human life is relatively short and this directly affects behaviour. Decisions are proportional, made on the basis of immediate needs: food, shelter, spouse, children, marriages and short-term gains such as winning a battle, or crushing a foe. Even rational beings are slaves to biological imperatives bookended by time<sup>26</sup> and so a concern for the grand lengthy scale of centuries is not how life is lived. When the human scale is measured in years it is impossible in general, to plan, imagine or act on the scale of empire. Further, it is extremely rare for an individual with the vision or motivation, to also have the means to act. Generally, historians or academics do not to have 18 legions at their disposal.

After this relatively short life comes death. Death is a prime motivator for short-term gain; and humans take death badly. It always comes as a shock, whether the individual is buried with red ochre and spear points or in a mahogany box with holy water. Mankind has generally considered death cruel

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<sup>26</sup> Dawkins, Richard. *The Selfish Gene*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976: 21-65.

and unfair.<sup>27</sup> Dr. Marios Kyriazis, a scientist who studies aging, complained that it was unjust.<sup>28</sup> People find it unacceptable because they can think and this drives them crazy. It is conceited for the human race to say *cogito ergo sum* when it should be *ēdo ergo sum*.<sup>29</sup> But why is there death? Complex organisms have a best-before date governed by telomeres at the end of chromosomes; imagine them stacked one on top of another like a tower of single blocks. At specific times a telomere disappears and the tower gets shorter, then later another disappears, then another until they are all gone and death follows.<sup>30</sup> The role of telomeres in death was first discovered by Alexey Olovnikov.<sup>31</sup> Death is an elegant solution to a practical problem. Cell division is not always perfect, mutations occur and accumulate in a body over time until eventually there are too many. By then, some might say fortunately, all the telomeres are gone and the creature expires, thereby preventing it from passing along its defective genetic material through further procreation. Death is not tragic at all. Heraclitus of Ephesus, a Greek philosopher of the

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<sup>27</sup> The only organisms that are close to living forever are viruses and bacteria. Realizing what people would have to give up to achieve immortality, most would stop wishing.

<sup>28</sup> Llewellyn-Smith, Julia. "Modern-day Methuselahs." *The Ottawa Citizen*. Thursday November 17, 2011. E6.

<sup>29</sup> "I eat therefore I am." -Shelley Hartman.

<sup>30</sup> Or think of it as a multi-staged rocket where eventually none of the boosters are left.

<sup>31</sup> Calder, Nigel. *Magic Universe: The Oxford Guide to Modern Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003: 424.



fifth century BCE, summed this up rather well when he said, "To [the] god[s] all things are beautiful, good, and right. Men, on the other hand, deem some things right and others wrong."<sup>32</sup>

Therefor, life appears linear and it is finite. Then it happens all over again. Whether it is named a system or a cycle, it most certainly is the repetition of a pattern. The only difference is that the players are not the same as the players in the cycle before. Increase the scale of the system, adding lots of people and resources, and a culture will result, *sui generis*,<sup>33</sup> which will appear to have its own cycle of birth, maturity and decline. As with biological systems from single-celled organisms, to mammals to ant colonies, the secrets of success are purpose, organization and division of labor (independent of resources, predation and disease). The same is true of clans, tribes and civilizations. Humans are social animals dependant on one another whose social units work best when everyone is pulling in the same direction, regardless of the size of the population. However, just as the internal organization of a worm is virtually the same but far less complex than that of a wolf,<sup>34</sup> when size increases (in this case population size), there is a requirement for increased organizational complexity which leads to constitutions, bureaucracies and departments

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<sup>32</sup> Harris, William trans., *The Complete Philosophical Fragments of Heraclitus* (1994).  
Last Retrieved Feb. 25, 2012: 106.

<sup>33</sup> Of its own group.

<sup>34</sup> Campbell, Neil A. *Biology*. Menlo Park: The Benjamin Cumming Publishing Company, 1987: 780.

of homeland security. Without the relative growth in complexity with size, the cultural entity will not survive. Organizational complexity applies to human societies, as well as all to living organisms.

## PART 2: THE COLLAPSE OF CIVILIZATIONS

The laws of thermodynamics are also elegantly expressed in human cultures. When dealing with populations certain things are predictable. If there are two adults and they have four children, and then those four children have four children, over time there will be  $4^n \times t$  ( $t$  = time) children, a geometric progression which looks like curve- $\alpha$  in the following graph. The curve may look familiar. It was conceived by Thomas Malthus, clergyman, economist and demographer from the early 1800s. His equation was  $N(t+1) = (1+r)N(t)$  where  $N$  is population, ( $t$ ) is time and ( $r$ ) is the rate of change. This curve just takes off. When deaths and other limiting factors such as food availability are added to the equation the result is represented by curve- $\lambda$ .

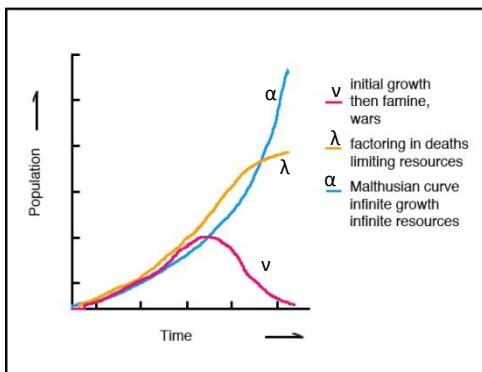


Fig. 2. Population growth

It resembles graphs found in the world of biology and animal prey population density modeling.<sup>35</sup> And if a population begins to increase and then things go horribly wrong as a result of war, famine, or severe weather events, curve- $v$  rises and then falls to an extinction level.<sup>36</sup> The most profound example in human history of such finality was the population collapse of Easter Island.

<sup>35</sup> Colinvaux, 223

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*, 212

$d$  – change  
 $t$  – time  
 $r$  – rate of change

$N$  – population  
 $K$  – carrying capacity

$$\frac{dN}{dt} \frac{1}{N} = r$$

Fig. 3. Standard population growth

$$\frac{dN}{dT} = aN \left( 1 - \frac{N}{K} \right),$$

Fig. 4. Population crash if  $K$  approaches 0

This curve resembles a birth-life-death cycle of a living organism but, strikingly, also matches the curves produced during thermodynamic reactions of closed systems. In essence, the two graphs are analogous and describe the same thing. At the start of an exothermic reaction or at the start of population growth both are consuming products and releasing heat or work so the graph goes up. As the products become scarce (food limitations in the population and finite reactive compounds in the reaction), the curve flattens at the top, and as resources are used up and thoroughly exhausted the curve goes down and finally crashes. Both systems stop producing heat/work as, in the chemical reaction, all the reactive agents are gone or, in the population, all the people are dead. The analogy can be continued to include human metabolism (or that of any biological organism). When young, the metabolic rate is high, it crests during middle age, declines substantially with years, and ceases entirely at death.

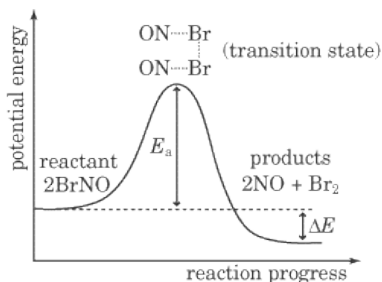


Fig. 5. Exothermic chemical reaction: beginning, middle and end; Analogous to Population graph of Easter Island (kentchemistry.com)

When growth declines entropy begins to increase. When a chemical reaction stops, it has reached a state of high entropy. In a culture, bonds begin to break, the underlying faith in the system begins to erode and people start to act more and more as individuals, until the system itself fails.<sup>37</sup> This is the case with chemical reactions, organisms, and societies as well. Unless new energy is introduced into the system, the reaction will come to a halt. Athens began charting a course for empire after driving off the Persians and absorbing the wealth of the Delian League.<sup>38</sup> Augustus brought the wealth of Egypt and Trajan the wealth of Dacia home to Rome inaugurating and perpetuating a golden age.<sup>39</sup> Strikingly, these events are paralleled in thermodynamics by the observations of Ilya

<sup>37</sup> One could say that late Athenian democracy was like a 10,000-headed dog; not likely to survive.

<sup>38</sup> Demand, Nancy. *A History of Ancient Greece in its Mediterranean Context*. Cornwall-on-Hudson: Sloan Publishing, 2006: 215-24.

<sup>39</sup> Boatwright, et al., 288, 370

Prigogine, who received the 1977 Nobel Prize for chemistry because of his discovery of dissipative structures.<sup>40</sup> He observed that reactions could continue, and entropy be avoided, if new energy was introduced into the system. This was a clever work-around for the entropy rule in the second law, and it certainly prolonged the life of the Roman Empire.

Considering organizational complexity, one example of a city-state, which failed to increase its administrative framework as it expanded its territory, was Athens after the Persian Wars. As mentioned above, it had, with the acquisition by force of the member states in the Delian League, and with the vast wealth acquired through spoils of war with Persia, reached Empire but had the organizational system of a small city-state. Although now in control of a rich and vast empire, its system of government remained a radical democracy. Its style of government differed greatly from the later Roman in a number of ways, specifically in that too many people had decision-making rights. Henrik Ibsen, in his play, *An Enemy of the People*, famously said that the majority is always wrong. In matters of huge import, an uneducated mass can be easily swayed by clever talk, will opt for quick rewards, will take short-sighted self-interested positions, and will make wrong decisions. There are many examples. The Athenians

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<sup>40</sup> Before studying chemistry, Prigogine studied the classics (Greco-Roman) at the Athenaeum in Ixelles, Belgium. Somehow I am not surprised. He is also considered the father of Chaos Theory.

Prigogine, Ilya. *Autobiography* (1977). Retrieved Feb. 24, 2012.

pursued policies which they knew disturbed the Spartans.<sup>41</sup> They voted for war with Sparta, when diplomacy would have worked. They jeered Spartan envoys trying to free Spartan captives after the Battle of Sphacteria. The Athenians voted to annihilate the population of Mytilene and became ruthless butchers in the territories of Delian League members.<sup>42</sup> Further, they voted to launch the Sicilian Expedition which resulted in the destruction of much of their navy and army. These events are not the work of a good governing system. A democracy is only useful on a small scale, such as a city council or a tribal meeting.

Once a system grows to include large numbers of people, complex commercial arrangement, trade, and vast distances, new organizations must be created to deal with the complexity of that growth and, arguably, there must be one single person in charge.<sup>43</sup> Had a single leader, with sound judgment and total control, emerged and a better bureaucratic system, loyal to the goals of the sovereign and country and which could efficiently carry out fair laws and policies be instituted, the Delian League might well have been an enduring empire for Athens. Instead, at the end of the Peloponnesian War in 404 BCE Athens was ruined.

The Romans, 250 years later, were in a similar position to the Athenians. Rome had annexed territory and expanded her

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<sup>41</sup> Demand, 263

<sup>42</sup> *ibid*, 269

<sup>43</sup> The organs of a large animal do not vote on what to do, they are directed by the brain.

boundaries. They had what Polybius considered an ideal constitution <sup>44</sup> but still behaved at times like a band of brothers. As foreign campaigns, by accident or design, brought staggering treasure into Rome, consuls became as wealthy as kings. Ambitions grew. Rome was growing too, but not by design. Aqueducts, roads and temples were built by individuals and by whimsy. There was no central administrative system for civic affairs. Laws were inconsistent from city to city, region to region, province to province. Rome had an empire but was running itself like a city-state. Individuals began to yearn for ultimate power and individualism always results in a true crisis for a chemical reaction, an organism, a colony or a country. <sup>45</sup> In thermodynamics, "If atoms of this material are all moving in unison the same direction, minimal energy is lost. If, however, the units move in uncoordinated random directions the energy... dissipates rapidly." <sup>46</sup> The situation in the empire devolved into political murders, the Social War, proscriptions and finally assassination.<sup>47</sup>

From the death of Tiberius Gracchus in 133 BCE till the death of Julius Caesar in 44 BCE there had been little but trouble. To save Rome and the Republic, new methods for running a government had to be adopted, as the old ones had

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<sup>44</sup> Plb.6.11

<sup>45</sup> Remember the dog with 10,000 heads; and Hutchinson, F.W. "Thermodynamics." Vol. 26. *Encyclopedia Americana* (1962). D.G. Creighton ed. USA: Rand-McNally: 538.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid*

<sup>47</sup> Boatwright, et al., 156-200



proven insufficient. Augustus recognized that ruling an enormous territory required new complexity, but ruling Rome had to appear just the same as always. He highlighted Roman virtues, took complete power for himself, created a level of bureaucrats concerned with the organization and functioning of an empire, rewarded those of merit, and had all citizens swear allegiance to him. Just as Polybius predicted in his "cycle of constitutions", after chaos and civil war, a king would emerge to establish order.<sup>48</sup> Augustus increased the layers of organization and complexity, and re-energized a system near maximum entropy with an enormous infusion of Egyptian wealth.<sup>49</sup> With this last, he staved off destruction, exactly like Ilya Prigogine did in thermodynamic reactions, by importing new energy into the system.

## CONCLUSIONS

Analogous systems are everywhere, in every one of humanity's endeavors, by virtue of the fact that the natural world exists through the expression of analogous systems. Humans are not exceptions.

History can teach. By studying history, patterns are discernable and several interesting conclusions may be drawn about how things are working or not working today. First, following the reasoning of Polybius; things will get worse before they get better. Second, there are no more lands to

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<sup>48</sup> Plb.6.4

<sup>49</sup> Boatwright, et al., 288-316

conquer, no more spoils of war and no new worlds to explore. Third, in the history of the world, never have food and kindness been used as tools of imperialism.<sup>50</sup> Fourth, never before have greedy people had hedge funds as a resource. Hedge fund operators are like rogue generals amassing outrageous short-term gains based on imaginary numbers, either of which is a threat to global stability. Fifth, all the nations of the world, although interconnected and interdependent, are presently focused on parochial self-interest, and that kind of individual-like behavior is destructive. At first glance there seems to be no impetus or institution to help nations see the big picture and advance a common goal. Hitler is gone and it is unlikely that there will be an alien invasion. Then of course, according to *The Economist*, there is China.<sup>51</sup> Not to worry. They have recently been infected with democracy so their current good fortune cannot last.

Nonetheless there are powerful, objective global forces recently created which are god-like, eternal, single-minded, unsentimental and reward talent. Multinational corporations may emerge as the new supreme unifying global monarchs. In the near future their goal will become very focused; nothing will be allowed to separate them from the money. It seems likely that they will soon choose to buy all the banks. Nationhood itself will blatantly be ignored. The corporate

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<sup>50</sup> It was a crazy idea and it will not last.

<sup>51</sup> Woodridge, Adrian. "The Visible Hand: State Capitalism." *The Economist* (2012). 3-18.

lions, the new *equites*, will certainly eliminate the members of the aristocracy who cannot change and no longer serve a useful purpose. Politicians, financiers and hedge-fund managers will be jobless. And concerning the people of this earth who can't produce, pull their own weight or keep up - they will once again be expendable, just like in the good old days of Rome.

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# CROSSING THE DANUBE

BERNARDO MINGARELLI

## CHAPTER 1: LAMENTATIONS

“Athulf.” A soft voice rang out from the distance, but he couldn’t make out who was calling him. The voice – a woman’s voice – continued calling his name, drawing closer with each call. It was elegant yet forceful. Who was she? “Athulf? Athulf, get up!” She sounded distressed now, in a state of panic. Wait, that voice – “Athulf! Athulf, help!” His heart began to pound, he knew that voice. He knew it as if it were his own.

“Alana!” shouted Athulf as he flew off the bed and crashed hard onto the floor. “Alana? Alana!” He landed on his hands and knees, his shuddering body drenched in a cold sweat. The hard wooden floor felt as cold as iron underneath him as his palms pressed into the space between the planks. His eyes flashed about until he found a female silhouette looking down on him from the bed.

“Athulf, calm down! You’re having another nightmare!” The figure tossed aside a blanket and hastened out of bed, placing her hands onto his shoulders.

The touch of her skin and the sound of her voice were warm and soothing. Athulf looked up at her face and felt his heart lightening. “Alana,” he whispered. Even as he looked at her the feeling of horror from the dream still clung to him.

Alana helped him sit up and took his right hand in hers. She looked down at his reddening palms. “Calm down, dear, everything’s alright,” she said as she encased his hand within hers then slowly embraced him.

Athulf wiped his wet brown hair from his face and looked about the small one-room haunt. He found his sword, a Roman spatha, and his throwing spears fastened to the far wall near the corner. His Roman breastplate and Pannonian leather armour rested on the floor just beneath them. The armour was custom fit to accommodate Athulf’s six-foot muscular frame. It was an expensive and masterfully crafted piece of Roman ingenuity.

Tiny granules of grain dotted the floor about the armor. He followed the trail with his eyes until he came to the source: a large bag of grain had dislodged, spilling its contents about the floor. A pile of dry firewood was stacked next to the fallen bag. In the center of the room he found a half-open soup cauldron steaming over the hearth-fire. The light aroma of cooked vegetables filled his nostrils.

Athulf sighed and enclosed his arms around his wife. Everything was as it should be. He gently rubbed her back with his left hand, feeling the softness of her long brown hair and the contour of her slightly arched back. His hand came upon a metallic object, Alana’s silver pendant. It must have fallen backwards while she slept. Athulf knew the ornament well. The silver pendant had an Arian cross etched into the center of the metal with the letters ‘S.P.Q.S.’ engraved just below it.



Alana felt him play with her necklace and pulled back from her husband. She gazed into his eyes and smiled. The way she smiled, her cheeks pointed toward the sky and her lips stretched but not parted, sent a shiver down Athulf's spine. She still smiled the same way she did fifteen summers ago when he first met her in Roman Pannonia. Her real name was 'Aula Aeliani' but Athulf's poor Latin comprehension at the time interpreted her name as 'Alana.' The name stuck. Alana was of what the Romans called 'barbarian descent.' Her mother, also named Aula, was Taifalan, the people who lived west of the Tervingians and Carpathian mountains. However, both her mother and father rejected her ancestry and proclaimed their family as proud and true Romans. So when Alana told her father that she was going to leave with Athulf, he legally disowned her after she convinced him that she would kill herself before changing her mind.

"Come, my heart, stand and compose yourself," she said.

Alana's words cut through Athulf's thoughts. He stared at her for a moment before he nodded and let her aid him to his feet.

"Let me get a damp cloth," said Alana. She turned away from her husband and moved to the far side of the room. Removing a wooden panel from the floor, she damped a linen cloth in a cool water cauldron hidden beneath. Alana returned to her husband and began to carefully clean away the drying sweat from Athulf's bare body and beard.

Athulf shuddered again as the water cleansed away the horrors of the nightmare.

The sound of heavy footfalls on the stone deck drew Athulf's attention to the entrance of their home. The door rattled under the weight of a pounding fist. His back stiffened. A bellowing voice erupted from outside, "Brother! You're not still sleeping, are you? Get out of bed you lazy horse!"

He sighed. The tired man nodded to his loving wife and placed his hand on her shoulder. He blinked and drew in a deep breath before making his way to the entrance. "Thrasamund, a good morning to y—"

Athulf's words fell short as his eyes and mouth widened in horror. What he found was not his friend, Thrasamund, but a dark being riding atop a nightmare steed with bow and arrow pointing at him. Every orifice of the horse leaked a black misty fluid and its eyes were hollow and empty. The rider, like his steed, leaked the same blackness and its face was featureless save for the stark white eyes that flared through. The back of the being's skull projected twice the length of any man's that Athulf had ever met.

A scream of pure terror pulled Athulf's heart from his chest: "Athulf!" He turned towards Alana, but didn't find her - she was gone. "Alana!" he cried as his insides wrenched.

The only response he received was pain. He looked down and found a vicious arrow in his chest. He roared in agony at the pain of the arrow, at the loss of his dear wife, nowhere to be found, and at the darkness quickly shrouding him. He clenched his trembling fist. "Alana, I cannot lose you!" he growled as he hurled his fist out at the encroaching void.

"Father! Father, wake up!"

Athulf's wild fist connected with the first face it came upon. Sweat poured from his disheveled hair and his brows were pushed together. A feverish white tint shaded his face. He gasped for air as he sat upright in his cot, his fist ready for another volley.

The strike sent a young man falling backwards onto his buttocks, having received the full force of it with his face. His blue eyes were wide in disbelief as they stared back at the menacing glare of his assailant; his hands prone on the damp earth. He appeared to have passed about seventeen winters. "Father?" he spoke, just barely above a whisper.

Athulf blinked out a bead of sweat and recoiled his head slightly as reality slowly drove itself back to his attention. He unclenched his fist and lowered his arm. "Braga...", his voice trembled.

"Yes, Father," returned his son. "You were dreaming again...."

He was dreaming again... the idea shook his mind like an earthquake wreaking havoc on the livelihood of a farmer, destroying everything he had fashioned with the labour of his own hands. He eased the pounding in his skull by gently stroking his temple. A sudden blast of cool wind blew open the flaps of the tent and sent chills down Athulf's naked body.

"Get dressed, Father," said Braga as he dragged himself off the ground and slapped the dirt from his hands and trousers. "The eastern tribes are here." Braga did not wait for a response; he grabbed his hairus, a one-handed sword, and threw the tent flap aside as he stepped out.

Athulf watched his son leave the tent, his braided blond hair fluttering as a light breeze swept past. He thought of Alana - Athulf roared as he grabbed his blanket and flung it across the tent. He sat on the end of his cot with his face nestled in his hands, shielding his eyes from the world.

He had been having these nightmares ever since the Tervingians fled the forest lands around the Prut River and made their way towards the Danube. They were elusive memories, horrific images of the past manipulated by his haunted mind. He dreamed of men screaming as they ran for their lives, of women being made into new wives, slaves, or pack mules, of the boys dead on the ground and the girls taken to be sold into slavery, and of the Horsemen. He always dreamed of the Horsemen.

"Athulf?" came a familiar voice from outside the tent. "Are you up, Brother?" A man of about forty winters pushed aside the tent flaps and peered in. His brown hair was braided and swayed as he leaned in. He wore his beard bronze and braided, as many military captains did. "Attawulf - " he used Athulf's formal name "- what in the Sky Father's name are you doing? Get up, you blubbering fool!" exclaimed Sarus as he stepped into the tent. He moved up to Athulf and, grabbing him by the shoulders, pulled him to his feet. "Come, brother, you look like a beaten dog!"

Athulf did not react.

Sarus grumbled. "Listen, Wulf, I've let you mourn long enough. For the last two months you've done nothing but mope around with your cloak pulled over your head, skulking away in your tent."

Athulf drew his brows together.

“Oh, don’t look at me like that, that’s not what I meant. We’ve all lost so much! Maybe you haven’t noticed but there are families out there mourning the loss of all their sons and daughters. Some are selling everything they own just to eat! You’re not the only one with problems, Brother!”

Athulf averted his gaze and stared at the earth, his hair and beard fluttering lightly as a breeze blew into the tent.

“Look Attawulf, you probably don’t know it - well you certainly don’t as you haven’t had a horn of wine with the men since - but do you know what they call you?” continued Athulf’s brother.

“Sarus —” started Athulf as he tried to interrupt his brother.

Sarus, Athulf’s brother, shook his head. “They call you Hunter Slayer,” his bearded mouth formed a smirk, “and they say you killed over a hundred Horsemen!”

Athulf rubbed his forehead.

Sighing once more, Sarus let go of Athulf. “Get dressed, Attawulf. Athanaric wants you at the meeting with the eastern tribes. He wants all the Balthi there.” He turned to leave.

“Why would he want—”

“Oh, just get dressed, you useless horse!” interjected Sarus as he spun to face him again.

Athulf frowned at his brother again. They stared at each other a long moment before Athulf began to nod. “I’ll be out soon.”

“Alright. Try to smile, Wulf. Or at least don’t look like the Christian god is coming to steal your soul.” Sarus almost stepped out when he checked himself. “Oh, I didn’t mean....”

Athulf waved his right hand past his head. “Don’t worry about it, Sarus. I appreciate your encouragement. Wait for me outside.” Athulf turned away from his brother and began to collect his equipment from around his untidy cot.

Sarus slowly bobbed his head and bit his lip until he was looking outside once more. “Aye, brother, just hurry up. Athanaric’s impatient today.” He glanced back at his brother before ducking out of the tent and into the morning air.

Athulf found his trousers and quickly pulled them on. He then looked down at his hairus, a Tervingian sword, and his armour resting atop the cot. He bent over and picked up the sword, holding it in both hands. He unsheathed the weapon from its leather-bound scabbard and gazed at the sharpened tip of the blade. His eyes slowly moved down to the long metallic wrist-guard and leather wrapped hilt, completed with an ovular pommel. Far off whinnying and the war cries of a score of men resonated from his memories. He felt the sharpness of the blade - Sarus kept it in good condition. A slight smile came to his face, and he muttered to himself: “Only a hundred, they say?”

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As Athulf stepped out of his tent, the fresh scent of morning dew and smothered bonfires met his nostrils. The grass was wet all about him, stamped down by the thousands

of moving refugees. Cool water droplets from the damp weather chilled his feet, unprotected by his sandals. It had rained and a light fog lingered on the ground. The sun peeked over the horizon, just enough to illuminate the endless rows of uniform tents with a brilliant red-gold. In either direction all he could see were the tents of a homeless people on the move. Above, the smoke of low-burning fires plumed, struggling desperately to remain alight in the wet morning world. Athulf closed his eyes and drew a deep breath. A quiet morning and a calm sunrise – a rare combination in these troubled times. He breathed deeply and tried to forget the nightmare.

A slight shuffle from directly ahead of Athulf roused his attention. He opened his eyes and found a small figure standing before him. A young boy, no more than five winters, stared up at him. His dirty-blond hair – a common trait amongst the Tervingians – was cropped short and his blue eyes were blank as they stared up at the man before him. The child made no attempt to speak and stood like a statue, timelessly gazing back at a passing man.

Athulf did not inquire who this was, he already knew. Kneeling down, he placed his hands on each of the young statue's shoulders. "My boy," mumbled Athulf as he looked Alaric in the eyes. No words or comforting gesture came to him. Even so, it was the most human interaction he'd had with his son in weeks. He sighed and gripped his hands on his son's shoulders, pressing them to give him reassurance that he was still alive inside. A sound to the left caught his attention and when he turned to look, he found Sarus confiding in one

of Athanaric's captains. An idea came to mind. "Sarus, he calls all of the Balthi, right?" he inquired.

Sarus looked over his shoulder at Athulf. "Yes...?" he said as he cocked an eye and tilted his head. Sarus glanced at Alaric then back to Athulf. His eyes widened and he tilted his head back. "Aye, every Balthi," he returned as his plump cheeks forced themselves into another smile.

"Well, Alaric, you heard uncle Sarus. Go get your dagger and strap it to your belt. Best be looking your manliest for your first gathering of the council," said Athulf as he let his son go.

Alaric, without breathing a word, produced a broad smile and ran into the tent.

After Sarus exchanged a few more words with the captain he set his attention on Athulf. "That's my brother!" said Sarus, grinning at his brother. "I've not seen the boy smile like that in many summers. But now you're going to have to explain to Athanaric why a boy is standing in the corner. Earth Mother help you with that one." Sarus raised his right hand and touched a golden arm-ring on his left bicep. The words *My mother around me, my father above me* were engraved on it.

The arm-ring was at the centre of Athanaric's idea for portraying faith in the gods. When Athanaric and Valens met on the Danube, seven summers ago, one of Valens' original conditions for the peace treaty was that all Goths, whom the Romans collectively called the Greuthungian and Tervingian tribes, convert to Arian Christianity. Athanaric outright rejected this condition. Valens still signed the treaty but word spread that those who converted to Christianity might be able



to seek support from Roman power. There followed a rampant persecution of all Tervingian Christians fell on Gothland and advocating for the gods became an important focus for Athanaric.

The ring made Athulf think of Alana and how long they had to conceal her faith from the rest of his people. He, a royal member of the Balthi, was always surrounded by the judge's most loyal henchmen and military commanders. Athulf kept Alana's faith in the Roman God a secret, but he himself did not believe in it him. The only other who knew was Sarus. Normally Alana had kept the pendant concealed underneath her shirt and fastened to her bosom by means of a leather thong. But one night, just outside of Alana and Athulf's homestead, she had forgotten to tie the pendant and upon leaning down to lift a bag of ground flour, the pendant slipped out. Sarus moved swiftly to grab the bag of flour and let Alana refasten her swinging Gothic heresy. She looked about anxiously but fortunately nobody was around. Sarus knew she wasn't a threat to Athanaric's authority and so he did not report her; instead he gave her a grave warning to be more careful in the future.

"Brother?" questioned Sarus.

The words snapped Athulf out of the past. "Yes, I'll need to send the Mother a libation tonight for help on this one," responded Athulf. He rose to his feet with a light chuckle and reached over to press his own arm-ring, except only found skin. He had forgotten to put it on. Athulf turned to re-enter the tent. However, he found his way was blocked by Alaric, standing there holding up the arm-ring with both hands, a big

smile on his face. "Ah," he said, and nodding in thanks to his son, he took it. He removed his left wrist-guard and slid the ring up his arm. "Now, let's have a look at you," he said as he took a step back and looked upon his youngest son.

Alaric's brown tunic went down well past his knees; it must have been one of Braga's extras. It was held around his waist by a rugged brown cord. On his left side he proudly displayed Athulf's old hunting knife, and though the weapon was longer than most Roman and Gothic daggers, going almost as low as his tunic, it made him look more prepared for war.

Athulf's bearded face curled up in a smile. He extended his arms before him as if he were about to introduce Alaric to someone: "Ah there you are, young Gadrauhts. We'll make you a fine Balthic soldier yet. But I think we've delayed long enough. Let's get going." Athulf allowed Alaric to walk ahead of him, to lead the way to Athanaric's chamber. He turned to Sarus and nodded.

The three marched down a winding corridor of tents. Everywhere they looked, votive idols of Gothic gods stood protectively outside tent entrances. Carts and wagons filled with sickles, shovels, and other farming tools created a maze-like walkway. Athanaric had managed to capture these tents during his last war with the Romans. But after the Tervingians were defeated by the Horsemen, Athanaric gave out every last tent to his supporters for an insignificant price. Men, women, and children of lesser fortune slept underneath their carts, huddling together for warmth. Some had the luxury of a wolf-

fur cloak, others curled up in the fetal position with nothing more than the tunics on their backs.

*If only they had known more, Athulf thought, about how dire the situation was.*

Two summers ago reports of horse-riding demons came flooding in from the eastern Alan tribes, those who lived beyond the Greuthungians in the Great Steppe. The Tervingians ignored the rumours. However within mere months Ermanaric, the Greuthungian king, began to request support. He reported that many of the Alan tribes had been enslaved and were being used to invade the central steppe. Athanaric refused, stating that their problems were of no concern to the forest tribes, a decision which every person would soon lament. In response, Ermanaric attacked and burned down the Tervingian villages nearest to the steppe, yet ordered none to be looted. By the time Athanaric had mustered an army, with Fritigern and Alavivus as his commanders, word arrived that Ermanaric had offered himself to the high priest as a sacrifice. Shortly after, another messenger approached Athanaric. This time it was a boy of five winters, named Viderichs, the son of Ermanaric's successor, Vithimer. Viderichs wore a black brooch and offered himself to be Athanaric's slave. Following the king's son were thousands of refugees speaking of nothing but the devastation of their homes at the hands of the Horsemen. Not even Athanaric could ignore the situation anymore. The following day, he sent seven thousand soldiers with Viderichs back to Vithimer and diverted the rest of the mustered army to handling the refugees. The following month news came

that the seven thousand Tervingians were massacred and Vithimer himself had been killed in battle. That was when the Horsemen appeared in the forests.

Athulf frowned and kicked a stray rock that lay in his path.

A young girl lying beneath an empty wagon, embraced in the arms of her slumbering father raised her head as they passed by. Her long blond hair was dirty and knotted, naturally forming into uneven dreadlocks. Blotches of dirt tinted her lightly tanned face. She had her arms clasped around her knees, her body shivering uncontrollably. Her light blue eyes looked up at Athulf expressionless.

“Here.” Alaric, squatting down before the girl, produced the remains of a small chunk of stale bread from his tunic and held it out to her. His young face was adorned with a cheerful smile and his voice was calm.

The girl hesitated. She looked at Alaric then back at Athulf. She did not accept his gift. The girl tightened her grip around her knees as she lay flat on the grass.

“It’s still good. I don’t have anything else,” said Alaric as he shrugged a shoulder, still holding the chunk of bread out.

The girl again looked at Alaric then back at Athulf.

Athulf nodded to her. “Eat,” he said.

“Earth Mother take care of you, Alaric,” said the young girl as she reached forth and took the meal; her expression did not change.

Alaric did not reply. He smiled at the girl once more and rejoined Athulf as they set off again.

*Sarus was right*, Athulf thought as he watched his son approach. He had spent all this time locked away, grieving,

while others with even less kept on walking. Alana came to mind again; she would be proud of him.

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They eventually rounded the last bend of the tent-city and came upon a large sunken structure; Athanaric's quarters. The structure was a large hole dug into the ground, lined with wood and then roofed over. The wood on the roof was tied together with rope, covered in a thick layer of mud and then covered with more wood to insulate it from the elements. In the center was an opening that allowed the smoke from the hearth to ventilate and could be closed if needed. Such a building was commonly seen amongst the poorer Tervingian and steppe families but would often have plaster lining between the wooden beams to make it more permanent. This was just Athanaric's temporary abode while they waited for the eastern tribes.

As they approached the sunken headquarters, Athulf and Sarus greeted Athanaric's honor-guard before making their way down a steep set of stairs to the entrance of the building.

The two blond haired guards nodded in approval to Athulf and Sarus. When their eyes fell upon young Alaric, one of them snorted a laugh while the other remained stoically unimpressed. Neither guard though denied Alaric's entry.

## CHAPTER 2: BAD BLOOD

Sarus opened the mighty door at the base of the stairs. A rush of warm air and the distinct smells of burning wood and

wet fur fled from the submerged chamber. Yet the sensation of warmth was immediately burned away by the sound of Athanaric's rage.

"I will *not* let the Roman religion contaminate *our* tribes, *our* clans, Fritigern! *Perhaps* you weren't paying attention those summers ago when that same man you want to run to was marching on our homes, *raping* and *pillaging* our farms! *Burning* our villages!" Spit flew from Athanaric's mouth as he pointed his finger at Fritigern.

Athanaric was a big man and carried himself confidently. A heavy bear-fur cloak rested on his shoulders and he was fully clad in scale mail, chainmail, leather armour. Two swords were strapped to his right side. One was a fine hairus, a long slashing sword, ornately decorated with Gothic runes and carvings of wolves. The other was a Roman spatha given to him by the Roman Emperor, Valens, as a symbol of their peace treaty, signed seven summers before. On his head he wore a golden diadem.

"But Judge, the tribes have lost everything – we've no lands to call our own – and continuing the persecution of the Christians will just upset the tribes more!" responded Fritigern with two hands set before him as he pleaded.

Fritigern, one of Athanaric's generals, was thinner than Athanaric but stood firm against the verbal assault. His dirty-blond hair fell past his shoulders and his blond beard was braided. He stood a little less than six feet in height and was well built. Like many of the other men in the room, he wore only his scale mail. It looked much better than the Roman

chain shirts and to wear both, as Athanaric did, would be suspicious.

Standing about in the room were the remaining members of the Balthi family which, aside from Athulf, Sarus and young Alaric included their cousin, Raginmar, who was in charge of all provisions and captain of two contingents of soldiers. He was also Athanaric's only remaining son. Hildefons, Raginmar's only remaining son and the captain of two contingents was there. Sandulf, dressed in a white robe with an ornate staff in one hand and a hood covering his grey haired head, was Athanaric's life-long friend and was by far the eldest man in the room. His beard was of a marvellous length. Sandulf, 'The Truest Wolf' was a very good name for him. Not only was he Athanaric's confidant but he was also known amongst the men for being the most capable at calming the Judge when his temper flared. As head priest and a close acquaintance of every Tervingian tribal leader, he was a powerful man, yet he remained humble. Others present included Alavivus, Athanaric's second general, and several members of Athanaric's honor guard.

Athanaric gazed upon Athulf and Sarus as they entered his domain. He waved his hand to cut off Fritigern from speaking further. He frowned as he looked down on Athulf. "So you're up and about again, Attawulf?" His tone was cold and inquisitive.

Athulf nodded and looked at the floor. Just as he was about to speak, Sarus stepped forward and whispered something into Athanaric's ear.

The Judge grunted as Sarus stepped back to stand next to Alaric, but his expression remained fixed. Athanaric turned his attention to Alaric. "And this... 'warrior' is?" he said as he looked down on him with crossed arms.

"This—" started Athulf.

"I am Alaric Athulf's son, Great Father, and I will avenge our people!" shouted Alaric and drew forth his father's knife. He solidified his oath of vengeance by slapping the knife-hilt on his chest.

The response broke the room into laughter.

Athanaric smirked. "Go sit by the hearth, Alaric, and keep quiet." He pointed towards a chair by the fire.

"Yes, Great Father," Alaric said with much excitement and did exactly as directed.

"Athulf," began the Gothic Judge as he faced the recovering man.

Sarus leapt forward and whispered something into his ear. Athanaric listened. After a frown and a nod he about faced to return to his original position in the room – forgetting about Athulf.

"Thank you, grandfather," Sarus said as he nodded to Athulf for them to join the council about the warm hearth fire.

The two exchanged glances with the other men present, in place of introduction so as to not interrupt Athanaric who began to speak with Raginmar about the current food shortage.

Athulf looked around the room for Braga. *Where was he?* he thought. He checked the corners of the room but to no avail.



He frowned. *Was Braga so upset with him that he would miss such an occasion as this?* It didn't seem likely but he had no other explanation.

Sandulf, recognizing Athulf's actions, walked across the chamber and whispered to him in his hoary voice, "Your son is acting as the liaison for the steppe tribes. We sent him to escort them here just before you arrived."

Athulf paused a moment and then nodded. He brought his right hand up to his long brown beard and played with it casually. Another smile curled onto his face as he brought his attention back to the conversation.

Sandulf, the old wolf, content with the response, turned his attention back to Athanaric and made his way to stand by young Alaric's side. His fingers began to tap the folds of his long robes.

"Our counters estimate that we have forty thousand men and at least one hundred and twenty thousand women, children, and elderly." Raginmar read from a small scroll and took care to speak clearly. "The numbers of livestock being hauled is harder to say as families are beginning to kill their chickens and oxen for food. It seems as though there are about two hundred oxen, and thousands of chickens and pigs. The counters think that we have enough grain, if we ration, to last no more than one month; twice that on half rations. These estimates include the food needed to feed the five thousand horses. If we let all the horses go, not that we would, it would save us one extra month of grain. We must hope that the eastern tribes have enough food for themselves."

Athanaric listened with a grim expression on his face. "Alavivus, any news from the north?"

"As you know men and families are daily moving south and into our camps. We hear the same story over and over again – the Horsemen have stopped slaughtering everyone and begun to enslave entire communities, demanding heavy taxes in return for their lives. They slay everyone who disagrees and any army that approaches. They move too quickly. One man said that they had managed to capture one of them but the bastard swallowed his tongue." Alavivus shrugged his shoulders and stroked his blond beard as he stood in silence.

Athanaric stared into the hearth-fire for a long moment and the room fell silent. The only thing that buzzed through the air was the distant sound of rummaging equipment from nearby tents stirring to wakefulness, and the crackling of the hearth fire as the logs were slowly consumed. Athulf looked over at Alaric, sitting perfectly still with his left hand resting on his knife and the other turned inwards on his right knee. He sat like a Northern king. The thought amused him but was short lived, as the thumping of numerous boots suddenly arose. Athulf and Sarus, standing nearest to the door, turned their heads toward it and listened. Someone was coming. They made their way over to the other side of the hearth, out of the way of any impending introductions.

The door opened casually and there stood Braga, tall and proud in his scale mail. He glanced about the room looking for something and found it when he caught sight of his father smirking on the far side of the fire. He nodded and turned his

head back toward the council. "Great Father," said Braga to Athanaric with a confident and commanding voice. He stood with his head held high and his chest puffed out. "I bring you Viderichs, son of Vithimer and Judge of the Eastern Steppes." He stepped aside to reveal a young boy of no more than seven winters now standing in the doorway.

The boy's black hair was cropped short and ornamented by a large crown of gold that was too large for his head. He wore custom-made hard leather armor, embroidered with numerous Gothic runes that proclaimed his divine authority and familial connections with Vithimer and Ermanaric. About his waist he wore a large ornate dagger made of gold and a scabbard decorated with jagged lines that looked like thunderbolts. He stood just over half the height of Braga, a sense of calmness upon his face. Viderichs entered into the room without giving a single glance to any other except Athanaric.

"Saphrax, son of Abrax," continued Braga.

As Saphrax entered next, Athulf and several others in the room shuffled their feet and glanced nervously at others present. Whether Saphrax was insane and practiced self-mutilation or was a man with unmatched experience in war, he was covered in scars from face down; his left arm looked as though a chunk of it had been removed but eventually re-healed. His muscular frame exceeded that of any other in the room, including Athanaric, with hands that looked as though they could crush an unprotected head with little effort. From his muscles bulged his veins and his height threatened the chamber roof. A great scar ran from the front of his face

around to the rear of his head, leaving a conspicuous partition in his long black hair and beard. His skin was worn and tanned like leather, as if his armour were just a luxury instead of a necessity to repel blows. His dark brown eyes gazed across the room at each of the members of the council present, stopping on Raginmar. He nodded his head in affirmation to Athulf's uncle, whom he must have recognized, and then to Sandulf, whom every Goth alive must have known. Athulf had only known the man by name, but had never met him in person; he doubted he would ever forget him now.

Saphrax nodded to those present. "Gadrauhts," he said as he made eye contact with all. The name was one that eastern tribes reserved only for men of equal status or for those who have experienced warfare.

Athulf had never seen eyes like these. Saphrax's eyes were not those of a man who had lost much, but of one who was prepared to do what he must to get it all back. They were wide with intelligence and fixed with determination. A cold shiver ran down the Tervingian's spine.

Before Braga could formally introduce the next tribal leader, Viderichs moved swiftly across the room and halted before Athanaric. The boy Judge stood with his back straight and his gaze fixated on Athanaric. "Gadrauhts, Balthi's son," he said as he lifted his small arm.

The Western Judge frowned. He glared back at the adolescent leader. "Gadrauhts' son," replied Athanaric as he reached down and clasped arms with Viderichs. Murmurs of laughter and whispers arose amongst the Tervingians. "Your

father,” continued Athanaric, “died with six thousand of my brothers. You won’t make the same mistake.” His voice was cold and remorseless. He let go of Viderichs and folded his great arms across his chest. “Last time I saw you, *boy*, you had a black brooch on. It’s best you don’t overstep your importance.”

Saphrax’s brows drew together and his jaw locked back. With a clenched fist he pushed his way past Braga and prepared to paint the floor with Athanaric’s blood. The other steppe-men cast vicious glances at one another.

“*Perhaps*,” interjected Sandulf, raising his hoary voice, “it is best if we discontinue such a discussion. Both the people of the steppe and of the forests have lost much.”

The chamber was deathly silent, save for the low crackling of the hearth-fire, as the two behemoths leered savagely at one another. The boy ruler, long since forgotten, took three steps out of the way but kept his gaze focused on Athanaric.

Athulf cast a worried look at Sarus. His brother stood with his back straight, a hand on the hilt of his hairus, his eyes fixed and his expression fit for war.

“Let the Earth Mother deal with you then,” retorted Saphrax in a thick accent. He turned his back on the Judge and walked back to the door. The grizzled warrior grumbled something under his breath that only those by the entrance seemed to hear. He about-faced and stood with broad arms folded across his chest.

Athulf sighed.

This time his brother got his attention by turning to face him. “Athulf, have you noticed the boy’s face?” he whispered.

Athulf looked at Viderichs. The Eastern Judge's cheeks were gaunt. Large purple bags weighed down his eyes and he was constantly licking his lips. The boy looked famished. He hadn't noticed because most children of that age did not eat much, especially in the steppe where food was scarcer.

"Braga," interrupted Sandulf's calm voice before Athulf could respond to his brother, "perhaps you could continue with the introductions?"

"Yes, Sky Wolf!" responded Braga to Sandulf with a clear and enthusiastic tone. Braga extended his right hand toward the blond-haired man standing next to Saphrax. "Alatheus, Suffert's son, Commander of the steppe cavalry and Chieftain of the far eastern tribes."

Alatheus stepped forward and nodded, "Gadrauhts." His long blond beard glowed in the fire's light, a stark contrast against his skin, tanned by a lifetime under the steppe sun. His wide eyes seemed to take in every detail of the room as they glanced about. He stood a whole head length shorter than Braga but the recurve bow strapped across his back peered defiantly over his shoulder. A full quiver of arrows made from animal hide hung from his left hip, rattling as he moved and a broad sword hung on the other side.

Athulf did not know who this man was. He had neither heard of nor seen him before. *It is likely*, he considered to himself as Braga introduced the remainder of Viderichs' honour guard, *that Alatheus is one of the commanders appointed by Vithimer after Ermanaric's sacrifice*. But he did know the kind of man Alatheus was. The good men of the far eastern tribes were the best cavalry and archers, exceeded only by the

Horsemen. They and the Alan tribes east of them were the first to confront the enemy, and they resisted longer than any. But once they were defeated, it was just a matter of time for the western tribes.

Once the introductions had concluded, the Gothic commanders circled around the hearth. Athanaric and Viderichs stood at opposite ends, Viderichs staring at Athanaric, but the Western ruler did not once avert his eyes from Saphrax.

Sandulf frowned at the scene before him. "Raginmar, if you will."

"Viderichs, do you bring any news?" spoke Raginmar in a clear tone.

Viderichs responded by pointing to Saphrax.

"As you know, we've stopped sending messengers." Saphrax shrugged his right shoulder back as he spoke. "Our scouts report that the demons have subjugated all the eastern tribes that stayed behind. The tribes that you left behind met the same fate. I'm sure your scouts have reported the same."

Athanaric snorted.

Saphrax ignored the interjection. "It doesn't seem they plan on traveling south after us." He paused. "By the end of this moon cycle, they'll control all of Gothland, save for these lands nearest to the Danube."

"And what of your numbers, Viderichs?" questioned Raginmar. "What is the state of your army and its provisions?"

Viderichs, staring into the fire, again diverted the question by pointing to Saphrax.

“Not well—” was all he could say before Athanaric intruded with another snort. Saphrax narrowed his eyes and clenched his teeth as he glared at the Western Judge. He then looked to Sandulf for an answer.

Sandulf, the wise wolf, brought his brows together and pulled back his lips, causing his great white beard to conceal his mouth.

Saphrax exhaled but his eyes did not conceal his irritation. “We left our homes three moons ago – we’ve been living in the hills ever since. Our best cavalry were just as good as their common man; our best archers shot no better. Ermanaric gave his life to the sky god to stop them. Vithimer was slaughtered in the fields with no dead enemies around him. As we left the plains, the demons attacked in small bands. They struck at our weak points and took whatever they could carry. If we enforced our vanguard, they would strike our rear. If we enforced the rear, they would strike the vanguard. When we spread the army around, they just struck as we rested, keeping us from sleep. We lost more men when we tried to fight... so we stopped fighting. They only let us be once we had nothing left to take...”

Athulf stopped listening as his own memories began to cloud his attention; remembering the time when the Horsemen began to attack the forest lands.

"Damn it, Athulf! Don't go! People are already talking about moving south...." Alana was hysterical. She gripped Athulf's clothes and placed herself in his way as he tried to make for the door. "They say that God and Valens will support any who adopt the Christian faith! I like it as little as



you do. I left Rome, my citizenship, *my family*! I left it all behind to be here with you! I don't regret that. But *this* is suicide! Look at me!" she screamed. Her words seemed to bounce off Athulf. "They'll kill you like they killed Thrasamund!"

Thrasamund, Athulf's best friend, volunteered for the seven thousand infantry that Athanaric had sent east. Athulf's last memory of Thrasamund was him riding away on his horse with a smile and smug look on his face. He had no idea.

Athulf's back stiffened, "Alana, I removed myself from the affairs and politics of the Balthei *for you*. I can't just walk away from this war unnoticed! I am Balthei...." He finally looked down into Alana's eyes. "If I ran, Athanaric - my family - would brand me a traitor and hunt me down! Hunt *you* down and enslave Braga and Alaric! There's nothing I can do!" Athulf made for the door again.

"Will you not let go of your pride and honour, for heaven's sake!" Alana shrieked as she tried to pull him away from the door.

Athulf quickly spun around and clapped her mouth shut with his hand. "Damn it, Alana! Keep your mouth shut! Christianity is still outlawed. You are not the only one who sacrificed much to be here today! I cannot stay, woman. Go back inside, damn it. I will return soon..."

Athulf was snapped back to reality by a sudden eruption of violent shouting.

"If *you* had sent more than just seven thousand infantry to aid Vithimer, *we* could have pushed back those demons before any of this happened—" spat Saphrax, bellowing in rage.

"How *dare* you speak ill of our fallen! They gave their lives supporting *your* failed leadership! *You* are the gutless swine who hid in hills when they came after *us*—" Athanaric stormed around the hearth to roar in Saphrax's face.

"We didn't kill your brothers, dog, you did! By sending infantry to a cavalry war!" growled Saphrax. "The situation—"

"Damn your situation to the Sky Father's shit bucket, you inbred horse!" Saliva flew from Athanaric's mouth as he barked.

Alatheus stepped forward but was stopped by Sandulf's hand on his shoulder. The old Goth shook his head.

"Ermanaric sacrificed his life to the gods when he failed to succeed!" said Saphrax as he met Athanaric's cold glares. "And yet you still stand here! What sort of god-forsaken failure does that make y—"

Alatheus shouted, unconvinced by Sandulf's suggestion: "We have one!"

Athanaric cocked his fist back. "To the Romans with your Eastern King—"

"We caught one!" bellowed Alatheus a second time.

Alatheus' second shout was so loud that Athulf and Sarus found themselves gripping their swords. Athanaric fell dead silent and shifted his gaze to Alatheus. Saphrax, however, did not seem surprised and continued to stare down Athanaric, unfazed by the threat of violence.

"We caught it in the hills five suns ago on our way here," continued Alatheus.

"Why, in the Nine Worlds, did you not say so sooner?" grumbled Athanaric through his teeth as he slowly lowered his fist.

"We planned on it before you started acting like a bandit bred from the Earth Mother's piss!" snarled Saphrax.

Sandulf, swifter than a wolf shadowing its prey, stepped between Saphrax and Athanaric. "The time to argue has passed." His voice was stone cold and his eyes shifted carefully between the two adversaries. The room fell silent once more, save for the low crackling of the hearth-fire. "Alatheus, take Braga with you and bring us this prisoner," he added without eye contact.

"Right away, Wise Wolf," returned Alatheus.

Alatheus made for the door. Upon opening it, a cool breeze rushed in and caused the hearth to flutter and crackle. Braga saluted and followed the steppe archer out the entrance of the sunken hut, slamming the door shut behind him.

"Alaric," continued the wise one, "pass a wineskin to each man."

Athulf's youngest obeyed immediately.

"Gadrauhts," Sandulf said as he faced both of the Judges' honour guards, "there is no danger here. Summon the men of both peoples to the western fields. Do not delay."

The honour guards respectively looked to their masters. When neither Athanaric nor Viderichs questioned the command the guards nodded and made for the exit.

"Is it true? You have one?" said Sarus to Saphrax as he slowly approached the steppe warrior.

"It's true. But it's a waste of time anyway. All it does is laugh." Saphrax finally took his eyes off of the Western Judge and let his fists relax.

Athulf frowned. "It hasn't said anything?" he said as he followed his brother's lead.

Saphrax's tone had calmed. "Not a word, and it's not some Alan or Goth either; it's a pure bred."

It was not long before the door burst open and the prisoner was thrown in: a male figure with a linen bag over his head. He hit the floor with a hard thump, striking his head as he landed. He was breathing heavily but remained motionless. His leather clothes were ragged and worn; he did not move. A wicked stench of body odor and feces sullied the air of the chamber. Athulf did not hesitate to wrinkle his nose and cough in disgust. Braga and Alatheus entered the room behind the figure with cloths tied around their faces, shielding their noses. Sandulf and Athanaric, who were speaking off to the side, took their places by the hearth once more. All present stared down at the hooded prisoner lying before them.

"Stand it up," demanded Athanaric as he once again folded his massive arms and stared intently.

Alatheus and Braga leaned forward, and each grabbing hold of a shoulder dragged the prisoner up. Braga coughed as he breathed the foreigner's stench.

"It hasn't eaten well over the last few days," spoke Saphrax. "We had a temporary famine in our criminal cart."

The prisoner's legs were shaped like the curve of a bow, facing in opposite directions. At full height he stood shorter than Alatheus, but his head was the most troubling feature.

Around his neck hung a small wooden pendant, an abstract of a man with his arms pointing downwards and his knees pointing outwards; between his legs was another piece which made the man appear to have a tail running down past his feet.

"Remove the bag," ordered the Western Judge.

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CHARACTER LIST  
(May contain spoilers)

Alana Aeliani: Formal name Aula Aeliani, Athulf's Half-Roman wife who gave up her citizenship and family to be with him. Mother of Braga and Alaric.

Alaric Balthi: Athulf and Alana's five year old son.

Alatheus Suffert's Son: Greuthungian General of Cavalry and chieftain of the tribes that live in the eastern reaches of the steppe.

Alavivus: Tervingian General of Cavalry.

Athulf Balthi: Formal name Attawulf but is also sometimes referred to as "Wulf" by Sarus, his blood brother. Athanaric is Athulf's uncle, his father's brother.

Braga Balthi: Athulf and Alana's seventeen year old son, older brother of Alaric, and soldier.

Fritigern: Tervingian General of Infantry.

Hildefons Balthi: Son of Raginmar, Athulf and Althred's cousin, and Tervingian Captain.

Raginmar Balthi: Athulf and Althred's cousin, Athanaric's son, and father of Hildefons. Master of logistics and provisions.

Sandulf: Head priest of the Gothic Religion and Athanaric's personal advisor. He is also the most well-known and respected man amongst both gothic tribes.

Saphrax Abrax's son: Greuthungian General of Infantry. A big man covered in scars of war.

Sarus Balthi: Athulf's brother and Tervingian Captain. Nephew of Athanaric, his father's brother.

Viderichs Amal: Seven year old Greuthungian Judge. Son of Vithimer; Grandson of Eramanaric.

#### GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Gadrauhts: Gothic word for "soldier." Soldiers use this word as a formal greeting with either men of great importance or with those who have seen warfare. If used outside of this context, it is often comical or sarcastic.

Hairus: A Gothic style one-handed sword, often bound at the hilt by leather. Blade length varies between 1 ½ ft. – 2.5 ft.

Judge: There are two kinds of judges mentioned: The Tervingian and the Greuthungian.

- The Tervingian Judge is the chieftain of all the forest tribes west and south of the Prut River. The Tervingian tribes are all capable of acting independently without consultation of the judge. The Judge controls matters of war and foreign affairs. Dynastic Succession is not guaranteed.

- The Greuthungian Judge is more similar to a kingship. The judge is the representative of the East tribes living in the steppes north of the Black Sea, west of the Dnieper River. Dynastic succession is guaranteed.

Pannonia: A Roman province with the Danube River bordering to the east and north, roughly between Modern day Hungary, Austria, and Croatia.

Spatha: A standard issue longsword wielded by the Roman Military.

SPOQS: Spiritus Paterque Sanctus – The Father and the Holy Spirit. Arianism does not recognize Jesus as a being an extension of God.

Summers & winters as time: When counting back in years, one counts in summers as often many events took place during campaigning season in the summer. When counting one's age it is counted in winters as to survive the harshness of winter is a testament to one's age.

# IN THE FOREST OF THE BEAR

JESSE ROTTENBERG

He finds himself in darkness, sheltered by the boughs of ancient oaks which obscure the night sky. Moss is his crib. In the haze of his reveille, he is ignorant of his circumstance. Calm blankets him; perhaps the natural condition of all men detached from the trials of waking life. Sleep is the sole reprieve for sinners, still cursed with some morality and guilt. This is the reason for the restlessness of the wicked, their conscience, however stifled it may be, longs to deprive them of their only respite. But sleep is temporary, and as we are reborn into the world of the living, memory reminds us of our lot in life, our successes and our failures, for better or for worse.

He is Gaius Marcus Caellius and now he rises to survey his new surroundings. The rustling of his armour breaks the silence and he is startled by its sudden, metallic voice. His scabbard slaps the side of his leg as he stands, and the bone of his sword handle, undrawn, catches what faint starlight manages to pierce the canopy. Its whiteness assaults him and he finds he cannot bear to look at it. His helmet is gone; doubtless it fell somewhere in those awful woods. Gaius had been unaware of its loss, but so much had blocked his senses that he is hardly surprised to find it missing. His mind had been absent, the first to fall victim to fear. *The shouts from the tree line. Forward!* Perhaps to distract himself from the noise of his thoughts, which abruptly rise with such calamity that



Gaius can discern nothing but the violent passion of them, he explores pointlessly, blind in the night, his sylvan dormitory.

*Be quiet*, he whispers, but the voices ignore him. *Please, be quiet.*

His feet slip on the wet moss and he stumbles, unable to make out even the trunks of the trees around him. His foot catches on a crumbling log and he falls to the forest floor. His head strikes the branch of the tree, cutting his forehead. Pain takes hold of him and, for an instant, the voices fall silent. Gaius gropes his forehead, assessing his wound. The warmth of his blood greets his fingers and his hand lingers briefly, seduced by the comfort. When the voices return, he rages against them. Surging to his feet, he draws his sword and cuts through the darkness, hoping to silence his thoughts. Gaius rushes, slashing and whirling, cursing their judgement, cursing himself, cursing the world until his sword slices into the soft bark of a birch tree. The impact knocks him off balance and once again he falls to the ground. His sword stays embedded in the trunk and he lies, panting and sobbing, shamed by his pathetic outburst. He lies still until merciful sleep rescues him again.

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Life in camp had been hard. He was still not accustomed to the physical wear on his body. His days were filled with exercises and the endless minutia of tasks usually left for oxen. The boredom and exhaustion were so great that they overwhelmed the fear and anxiety, except when on the

ramparts. He would stand peering into the night, peering into the nothingness, the emptiness, knowing that from that dark void were born his enemies, men of wonderful and terrible powers, men who would kill him on sight. Even worse were those nights when the darkness rebuffed his gaze and stared back into him and he was forced to explore those destructive thoughts and doubts which exist in all men; which all men strive to ignore. Gaius often wondered if the other soldiers shared these fears, though none gave voice to them and none showed any sign of harbouring the same deep misgivings.

The men passed their time in drills and with gambling, but those did little to temper his boredom. One foggy day, when the clouds rose upwards from the mud, several of the native hunters of the camp returned with a bear, a source of great sport, they assured the men, which they chained to a post in the centre of camp. The bear sat upright with its forepaws limp, resting on its legs, its fur thick with mud. It showed no interest in the soldiers who quickly gathered around it. It would not meet their eyes and stared, instead, into the dirt. The bear, although massive in size, seemed so subdued, so defeated by its capture, that the men became dismissive of its danger. Soon the soldiers were challenging one another to see who could get closest. Some boasted that they would touch the captured brute, but invariably they would cower and dart back to the safety of their cheering companions. Closer and closer they came, while the others jeered and whistled at the bear.

One soldier, eager for the applause of his friends, seeking to prove his worth to them and perhaps also to himself, crept

up to the bear until its breath, visible in the cold air, formed clouds on the man's silver helmet. The ring of soldiers watched in silent amazement and, for an instant, Gaius saw the first signs of a smile forming on the young man's face, but the bear, with a speed that seemed impossible for an animal of that size, raised its paws and seized the man behind his shoulders. Before he could scream, or offer any reaction to the horror which was now inevitable, the bear bit down on his exposed neck. The bear stood up, the soldier dangling from his jaws. Its eyes, onyx spheres, for the first time visible to the circle, were filled with violence.

Gaius stepped back as the other men stepped forward drawing their swords. The bear tossed the body to the floor where it landed in a pose that confirmed its lifelessness. The soldiers made feeble attempts to approach the bear, but none dared to gain the ground which just minutes before they had taken for sport. One of the hunters emerged from the back of the crowd carrying a large, carved wooden spear, taller than he by a foot. The soldiers parted before him and his weapon. He thrust the spear towards the bear and it reared backwards, struggling with the chain around its neck. The hunter thrust again and the bear lost its balance and fell to the ground, doomed. The circle closed around it and soon it was dead, lying next to the foolish soldier who had enraged it so. A hasty grave was dug for the soldier, as the next day they were to continue their march west into the Teutoburg and abandon camp. In the distance, thunder clouds made a baleful façade and silent lighting announced the arrival of new rains.

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He awakes, the forest is illuminated by the sun, and for the first time, Gaius sees the woods around him. A thin mist lifts off the still-wet soil, catching the light and framing each tree with a luminous aura. His sword, still lodged in the birch above him, casts a thick shadow across his face. He struggles to remove it, and when he manages to wrench it free he nearly falls backwards to the ground. He returns it to his scabbard and stands, for a time, mimicking the oaks around him until a birdsong frees him from his trance.

*Where will you go now?*

Back, I must go back.

*You left that place, you left them.*

Then I will return and I will join them.

*They will not permit it.*

He tries to ignore this last thought, but it lingers. Still he remains determined. Gaius begins to follow his path from the night before, easily seen in the morning light. A trail of torn moss and shattered branches, littering the disturbed earth, winds through the trees.

*They will not permit it.*

He quickens his pace along the path, difficult in the thick bushes which are no doubt responsible for the tiny incisions that line his forearms. His armour bears no sign of wear, save light smears of mud and twigs that have become caught within its numerous, interlocking, plates. The sun reflects off of it and at a great distance he would have seemed ethereal in its lustre. The trail is desperate and winding and he struggles to

keep sight of it the further he progresses. He travels for hours through the forest. It was impossible to keep track of time as the sun seems to shine from all directions, its light scattered by the leaves.

At last the trees become sparser and Gaius sees that he is nearing the edge of the great wood. When he finally passes the last of the oaks he is confronted with a bog. He remembers the fetid smell and hesitates before continuing. At points he is waist deep in the dark water, black like the forest floor. He continues because he knows he is close; he continues because he knows he is reaching his destination, his goal. Nearing the end of the bog, another smell, even more vile than the one before, finds him. He staggers, aware of what the smell foretells. He breaks through the last reeds and steps onto the sandy pass that separates the forest behind him from low wooded mountains, impassable. He draws his sword and runs north along the pass, the smell growing with every step. He must find them. He must find them. *He does.*

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The rain came on the second day of their march. It was cold and unrelenting and soon their cloaks were heavy with water. Worse were their wooden shields which became waterlogged and dragged in the mud, their arms unable to bear the weight. Some men simply cast them aside, while others, unwilling to abandon them, laboured with the shields through the steep terrain. The army moved through narrow passes bordered by swamps and trees. In the tight space the

men could not maintain regular formation and soon they were stretched in a thin line that was miles long. Gaius found himself at the rear of the group, doggedly keeping rhythm with the man in front of him. Behind him was the baggage train of mules and horses. On the first day of their journey, the German allies had left the line, their leader promising to return with new allies. The Romans, three legions strong, continued on alone, though the rain seemed determined to wash them out of the land. Gaius was focused on a small mountain that stood in the distance on the right of the pass.

In his place at the back, he couldn't see the arrows and javelins that flew out from the woods and landed among the front of the Roman line, but he heard the shouts that travelled through the formation. Some of the soldiers could not raise their waterlogged shields high enough to block the incoming projectiles. In the confines of the pass, the Romans collided with each other as they rushed to take defensive positions, and more than one man was trampled under the feet of his comrades. Riders who had been walking beside their horses fought with the panicking animals and struggled to regain their mounts. The woods were alive with movement and the light that passed through gaps in the trees flickered as thousands of fur-clad men poured out of the forest. They shouted in a guttural tongue, which en masse brought to mind the great roar of an angry creature, loosed from the realm of nightmares, too horrible for the waking world.

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The dead lie throughout the pass. Some are together while others lie alone on the edges of the battlefield, separated from their companions to lie wretched for eternity. The carcasses of horses mingle with the remains of their riders. The mass of bodies is so great that one cannot easily distinguish one man from the next, a horrible tumour, malignant on the land. The pile is festooned with all manner of viscera and bile, the hidden parts of man, the essence of his being, whose presence in the external world announces his demise. Streams created by the rain carry the last blood of the fallen soldiers down the pass and into the bog. Gaius is alone among the carnage; dead men provide no company. He makes his way carefully through the battle field, the earth, churned apart by hooves and feet, is littered with missiles. The wooden shafts sprout from the ground, a perverse imitation of the forest.

He searches among the dead for signs of his companions, but finds none. He fails to identify a single soldier within that pile. The dead are too many, too dense in their configuration and Gaius realizes they are all Roman. Every single one of the innumerable mass is Roman. He searches frantically for a barbarian body, but he finds none. He pulls Roman after Roman from the pile, casting bodies aside until he reaches the blood soaked earth beneath. Nothing, not one German.

Gaius walks out from the pile, stares into the forest and yells.

*I'm here.*

Only his echo answers, taunting him further. A murder of carrion crows pauses briefly in their meal and watches him confused or amused by the spectacle.

*I'm here. Face me. I'm ready.*  
The crows continue eating.

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Gaius leaves the pile behind and trudges back through the bog. The chorus of happy crows fades in the distance. Reaching the tree line, he sees that the outermost row has been decorated with human hands, nailed to the trunks. In his haste to find his comrades he hadn't noticed them, but now, as he retreats into the woods, the grisly ornaments are right in front of him. They form a line that stretches for hundreds of yards on either side of Gaius and he lowers his head as he slips back into the forest. He ignores his previous path, forcing his way east. The clouds, so oppressive in the days before, are gone, revealing the miraculous palette of the evening sky. The sun casts long shadows in front of him and he glances back towards the pass, only to be blinded by the orange light, preventing any sight of the massacre.

The ground becomes harder and rockier and he comes upon a pond in the midst of the trees. He stoops on the shore and drinks. Gaius stares at his reflection in the placid waters. He washes the dried blood from his brow. He sits with his back against a stump and looks at the pond. From out of the trees on the opposite side steps a wolf, its fur matted with blood and dirt. The wolf stops by the pool and laps up the cool water. Gaius watches it intently and notices a scar extending across the wolf's left eye, the disruption of the fur is noticeable even in the waning light. The wolf raises his head



and stares across the pond back at Gaius. The two of them, tired and alone...ashamed, separated only by the pond, stay locked in silent examination of each other. After some time - who can keep track when everything seems to stand still - the wolf turns slowly and returns up the small slope, pausing once to glance back at Gaius before disappearing into the impenetrable trees.

His solitude renewed, Gaius makes a shelter out of a deadfall and roof of cut branches. He manages to find some dry wood, somehow spared from the downpour, and soon he lights a small fire. Shadows shift quickly across the water, a curiosity to the fish below, and the sporadic light presents quick scenes of the trees. Gaius contemplates his future and mourns his failure.

He had run. As soon as he had heard the line was under attack, as soon as he had heard the shouts from the trees, at first sight of those grisly attackers clad in furs, more beast than man, he had broken rank and fled into the bog. He had left them, all of them. He was a deserter, an oath breaker and now they were gone. Their bodies destined to lie for centuries, picked at by the creatures of this savage land, until only their scattered bones would remain, bones which would soon be covered in new soil, the earth claiming them for its own. When he sleeps, dreams come to him, horrible and strange and the faces of the dead, vengeful, call for his life and he longs to give it to them. Waking in the dark, he kneels at the edge of the pond, staring at the surface, but there is no light to cast a reflection and he sees only blackness. He removes his sword and turns the point inwards, resting it on his abdomen.

*Do it.*

He hesitates.

*Do it.*

He presses lightly, the pain stops him.

*Do it, damn you.*

He extends his arms, fear causing him to exaggerate his movements, fear of the source of his pain. A sound catches his attention and he turns to face it. Standing on the edge of the woods is the wolf, its eyes hovering in the darkness. He stares at it and lowers his sword. The wolf looks back at him, and then turns back in to the woods merging with shadows and vanishing. Gaius looks into the woods, and feels them beckon him. He rises to his feet, returns his sword to its sheath and walks into the dark.

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The sun rises and its light warms Gaius' face. He hasn't stopped walking, always in the same direction, with no destination in mind, but sure of his bearing. He comes to a burn filled with the frail skeletons of charred oaks and his feet make clear tracks in the ash that covers the ground like snow. He steps on a fallen log and it crumbles beneath his foot. He reaches the middle of the clearing, with the forest hundreds of yards behind him. Ahead of him the forest resumes, as if he had circled the earth only to return back where he began.

As he nears the edge of the forest, he spots it, a great bear exiting from the tree line and stepping into the clearing. The bear's fur is a deep brown, like the soil of the pass after the

rain. Its thick coat accentuates the powerful muscles that wrap its frame. Even from a distance, Gaius can see that the claws extending from the bears paws make distinct cuts through layers of ash. The bear looks at him, fixating on his eyes, as it continues towards him. Gaius looks back at it and remembers the darkness beyond the camp wall and the ferocity of the captive bear's eyes as it seized the young soldier.

This bear is far larger than the one the hunters had brought into camp and no man could ever best it. It is as ancient as the forest around him, wild without measure. Gaius turns and steps towards the safety of the tree line, but he stops himself. He turns back to the bear, which closes on him with increasing speed. Gaius draws his sword and charges towards the animal, which rises to its feet to confront him. Gaius reaches the bear and calm overcomes him, a calm he has never felt before. He finds comfort as the great bear closes its arms around him, enveloping him.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK 2012

“You got a chance to hold history in your hands.” I quote a friend of mine who said this to me when I returned from my first foray into archaeological excavations in 2010 to the Republic of Macedonia. As I return from the Republic of Georgia, from my second excavation, I remember those words. As a student of archaeology I have had the chance to hold history in my hands and become more immersed in the topic that I study. In an ever changing world where budgets are often cut and students’ wallets seem to be shrinking, the chance for us to go out into the field and study is critical in our greater understanding of history. I know from my experience in fieldwork that I have been able to make connections and do research that has furthered my understanding of the ancient world to lengths that picking up a book simply cannot achieve. I would like to thank Professor Elizabeth Klaassen for her support to all of the students at Carleton who have gone on digs in the past years. Without her it would not have been possible.

*- Jonathan Ouellet*

# DIGGING IN THE DIRT: ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVENTURES IN TURKEY

CHRISTINA JENNESS



After taking Turkish language courses at Carleton University last year, it had become a dream of mine to combine my love of travel with my love of archaeology. An opportunity arose in summer of 2012, so I packed my bags for Gazipaşa, Turkey, to take part in the University of Lincoln-Nebraska's (UNL) archaeological dig at Antiochia ad Cragum.

The first session of excavations at Antiochia ad Cragum included fourteen students who were subdivided into two groups: archaeologists and architects. From 6:00 AM until 1:00 PM, the architects spent their time drawing and cataloguing while the archaeologists were digging and analyzing.

Antiochia ad Cragum sits on the cliffside of a mountain that overlooks the Mediterranean Sea, which is why it is also known as "Little Antioch on the Cliffs." Evidence found at the site



**Fig. 6 The pirate cove that  
was at the base of our**

suggests that it began as a Cilician pirate haven during the early years of the first century BCE. In that time Pompey the Great campaigned to rid the Mediterranean of Pirates and the haven became a legitimate settlement.

The main excavation is centered on a second century CE Roman temple that was uncovered in previous years. The site also includes a bath with extensive mosaics, a market, a colonnaded street with a gateway, a large early Christian basilica, monumental tombs and several as yet unidentified structures.

My trench-mate was also named Kristina, although spelled differently. Our trench was located on the South West corner of the temple that faced the beautiful Mediterranean Sea. On some mornings, the clouds would climb the mountain and surround the temple giving us a respite from the 45°C heat. While digging, we came across many artifacts, including: potsherds (burnt and unburnt), amphora toes and handles, roof tiles, opalescent glass shards from goblets, nails, animal bones and teeth, loom weights, bronze handles, and many coins. Our trench was the last one to find any coins.

The Roman mosaic that was found adjacent to the bathhouse was the most interesting and surprising thing we



**Fig. 1 My trench**

found. We were not sure about its condition or size.. After digging down to uncover the mosaic, we had to sweep and wash it to uncover the geometric patterned tiles underneath. Even though we were only able to uncover one third of the mosaic while excavating this year, it is clear that we stumbled



**Fig. 3 Half of the mosaic we uncovered**

upon one of the largest mosaics in southern Turkey, according to Michael Hoff, the lead archaeologist and director of the excavation. We were fortunate to find the tiles themselves in an almost perfect condition, which made it possible for a conservation team to begin work in preserving the mosaic.

The experience of travelling to Turkey and being able to discover artifacts that have not been seen in hundreds of years was an amazing adventure. I highly encourage everyone to try this experience because anyone of any age and ability can participate. This excavation taught me to take a chance, step outside my comfort zone, and go on an adventure. If an opportunity like this arises, do not let it slip by. You definitely will not regret it!



# SURVEY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SCHOOL AT STOBI MACEDONIA

THOMAS PRINCE

For the month of August, 2012, I attended the excavations at the archaeological site of Stobi in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The following is a review of my experience through pictures and commentary.



*The front gate of the Site.* The top line reads “Stobi” in the Macedonian alphabet. The Macedonians use a Cyrillic alphabet similar to Russian. To protect the site from looters it is completely fenced in, with guards on site 24 hours a day. I was informed looting is a major problem with most sites in Macedonia.

*The Semi-circular court or “The Semi-Circular Square” as it was named on the information panel in the right of the picture.* This was the area where the excavations by the field school were being carried out. This picture was taken roughly 3 weeks into the excavations. Three of the excavated rooms are visible in this picture: the room directly in front of the red umbrella and the





two adjacent rooms. The Semi-Circular court was believed to be a marketplace due to its location directly behind the Basilica. It later appeared to have been a home for squatters after the original town was abandoned.



*The beginning of excavations in my sector: Room 9 of the Semi-Circular court, Research Area 10 Sector 88 of Stobi.* On the first day of digging, most of the romantic notions of archaeology I had were cast aside as the group of seven that I was working with spent five hours to sweep and clean our level, including the walls, so that we could take the pictures seen above.



The discolouration in the soil was left by World War I trenches. The trenches led to frustrations throughout the dig as each section of the trench had to be given a separate locus record and documentation.

*The roof tile layer.* After two and a half weeks, and about 40 cubic meters of dirt removed, this was the result. This was another source of frustration as each tile had to be exposed and cleaned before any could be removed. The layer was uneven because in some parts of the

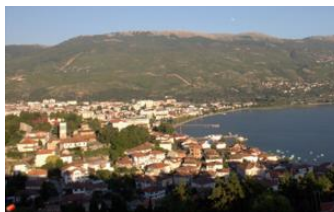


the room, mainly towards the centre, the floor was completely clear of roof tiles. Toward the center of this picture is what we believed to be a hearth. The cut stone slabs placed vertically in a rectangle, containing soil of a very different colour and texture, led us to this assumption. Along with the hearth, several *pythoi*, roman storage and transport vessels, had been uncovered. These were also thought to have been on the floor level.



*The fully excavated room.* We managed to completely uncover the floor level. Major finds included: the subterranean *pythos*,

which was believed to contain grain, was found almost completely intact, in the bottom left corner of the picture; several *pythoi* scattered across the room, some of which had wine residue on the fragments; a smaller hearth in the lower right side of the picture; a large broken *pythos*, which had blackened fragments, located toward the entrance of the room indicating that it was used as a fire pit; and the main hearth, with the difference in soil colour clearly visible, in the centre of the room.



*During the field school.* Day trips were taken to several locations around Macedonia. Skopje, the capital, Bitola, the archaeological site of Heraclea, the beautiful city of Ohrid (pictured in the top right), and the monastery of St. Naum, located near the Albanian border.

Working at Stobi this summer was the greatest experience of my life and confirmed my desire to become an archaeologist. I would highly recommend all aspiring archaeologists to attend a field school. Although I listed mostly the frustrations throughout the dig, the feeling of satisfaction upon overcoming these frustrations was total and more than made up for the effort put in.

# IN THE LAND OF THE GOLDEN FLEECE: ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA

JONATHAN OUELLET

You have probably already figured out that I was not digging anywhere near Atlanta. My excavations in 2012 brought me around the world to the Republic of Georgia, nestled amongst the Caucasus Mountains beneath Russia. The site, known as Nokalakevi, is also known as Archaeopolis in Greek.

The current excavations have been ongoing since 2001 as part of the current research project headed by Professor David Lomitashvili, of the S. Janashia State History Museum (now the Georgian National Museum) and the newly formed Anglo-Georgian Expedition to Nokalakevi (AGEN), co-directed by Ian Colvin, Dr Paul Everill and Benjamin Neil. The current team is made up of about half Georgian students and half international students.



As of 2012 I am the first Canadian to have been a part of the team.



The current excavations are split into two trenches (A and B). I was working on Trench A, which contained several stone features, along with a road from the second century CE, and a great deal of pottery. The stratigraphy showed phases from approximately the eighth to the sixth century BCE. The more important finds included several parts of zoomorphic figures, a bronze bracelet, a small red stone bead, and a great deal of completely intact pottery.



While not digging, we got an opportunity to visit several sites nearby, including some truly amazing orthodox churches, and to immerse ourselves in

the local culture. The thing that stood out to me the most while I was there was being immersed in the local culture. Several of the international students, including myself, volunteered to conduct English lessons with a group of 15 students between the ages of 15-17. These students to whom I taught English, and our Georgian archaeology counterparts, were some of the smartest students I have ever encountered. Additionally, I got the chance to play goaltender in the annual “Excavation Team vs. Senaki Government” football game (and I mean European football).



In the end I would go back without a second thought. Many travellers to this region have been mesmerized by the beauty of the Caucasus regions, and I can count myself among them. The ancient sites of this long under-studied place have much to show us, and I hope to go back to find what they have to offer.

# POETRY

## LADY PETRA

It's been hundreds of years since Petra was hewn  
from the sandstone cliffs by the Nabataeans.  
Clever and skilled they captured the rains,  
chiseling cistern and channels, rocky Petra they tamed  
A center for commerce, exotic caravan trade  
camel spice route to Gaza, a fortune was made!  
But Rome with her grasp took Lady Petra in hand  
"Your spice is our spice, goes by sea and not land!"  
So Petra she mellowed, she dozed and declined  
and a slumbering princess can be tricky to find!  
But Petra has opened her ruby-gem eyes,  
aware dangers surround her and greed most unwise  
All pray ancient gods guard and keep her from dust  
but all gods need our help, protect Petra we must!

*-Colleen Dunn*

## THE LADIES AT LUNCH

“By Zeus but I’m sick of sitting home spinning  
while Odysseus, the hero, runs around sinning!  
I swear if you had not asked me to dine,  
I’d have clunked his Greek noggin with a krater of wine.”

“Penelope, you go girl, I wish I could do it,  
When Caracalla and Geta are home I just dread it!  
Geta’s a bully and Caracalla’s a brute,  
Should’a had Severan girls that’s the Domna darn truth!”

“How sad for you Julia,” chirped nasty Olympias,  
“My Alexander’s so perfect I can scarcely conceive it,  
gorgeous and charming and witty and bright,  
his blood lust alone an Elysian delight!”

“She’s wacko,” I whispered to Cleo, “who asked her?  
Olympias plus luncheon equals social disaster!”  
A smirking exotic kohl-eyed Cleopatra,  
“Should I uncoil my bracelet and slip her my adder?”



“And where is our Dido?” I asked of our hostess,  
“Oh she’s whining and clinging to that Trojan Aeneas!”  
Groaning we clamored, “Can she not be more clever?  
Set her Carthaginian sights on a more fruitful endeavor!”  
  
Well lunch has been munched, we must disband our harem,  
“Thanks ever so much for the wine, olives and garum!”  
We’ll go drag our menfolk from the dark dreary Shade,  
peaceful puffy cloud slumber post our Juno lunch day.

*-Colleen Dunn*