Philology in an Ideological Climate

This panel will explore just some of the ways in which the techniques of philology can be used or abused to advance or discredit an ideological agenda. This expansive topic will be approached through a focus on Roman poetry of the Augustan period and the early empire, with four papers that explore the consequences for interpretation in the works of Virgil, Horace, Ovid, and Statius. Some of the issues raised include the ways in which the philology can be invoked to support a tendentious reading of an ancient text; how the contemporary political contexts of a work of literature can complicate its later reception and how philology can be claimed as a tool to erase or add to those complications; and how ideological preoccupations can affect the seemingly impartial interpretations of a text in a philological commentary. The four case studies presented by the panelists will provide the background for an open discussion to conclude the session.

Time Requested: 2 hours

AV Requirements: PowerPoint

Aeneas in Baghdad: The Weekly Standard, Neocons and 9/11

This paper will consider Virgil in the context of the neoconservative movement that since (and somewhat before) September 11, 2001 has been anxious to find, particularly in the texts of classical antiquity, justifications for what conservative public intellectual Niall Ferguson has himself embraced as his own "neo-imperialism." Just as Thucydides was enlisted during the rise of the neoconservative imperialist *Project for The New American Century* as a justificatory text for imperialist adventures in Iraq, Iran and beyond, so Virgil, in a quieter way, was put to similar service. The works of Victor Davis Hanson or Donald Kagan have received greater fame and greater notoriety, but Eve Adler's 2003 *Virgil's Empire. Political Thought in the* Aeneid, fits, or was perhaps supposed to fit into the same orbit. The blurb by Harvard neocon Harvey Mansfield "This is a major work, of a kind one does not often come across" is somewhat surprising from a thinker not often associated with the poet Virgil. But it makes more sense as one reads Ch. 11 of *Virgil's Empire*, "World Empire." And the blurb helps explain why the book, uniquely I believe for books on Virgil, was reviewed by Robert Royal in *The Weekly Standard*, the neocon magzine edited by Mansfield's student William Kristol.

In Adler's book Carthage is "critiqued as a model of human enlightenment" as the blurb continues, while Rome is upheld as a "model of universal religion" directed unflinchingly towards world empire. The paper will consider the uses of philology to uphold this binary view of the struggles depicted in the *Aeneid,* and will also explore some of the ways in which a more complex view of what is happening in the poem may be detected in the flurry of translations of the *Aeneid* that have appeared in the last

decade. I end with a reflection on the presence of Virgil at the 9/11 memorial in New York City.

The "old philological instinct": Commenting on Ovid's *Remedia amoris*

The dense referentiality of Ovid's poetry is perhaps nowhere more evident than in his *Remedia,* which revisits and revises the poetic tradition wholesale. A sample of examples will demonstrate the challenges posed for the commentator observing the broad sweep of Ovid's literary interests as foregrounded by the poem, and will develop from these examples some open-ended questions about the responsibilities of the commentator and the limits of interpretation. As the term "philology" itself fades from and into disuse, both the business of commentary writing and the range of types of commentary grow; but is the post-philological commentary an oxymoron—or should it be? In other words, what should a commentary be, and what role might philology play in reaching an answer?

The Embarrassment of Jupiter in Horace's *Odes*

Most modern readers of Horace would probably concur with the assessment of Jasper Griffin that Horace's "religion is, in a way, a thin subject" (2007: 195). And yet the gods, and Jupiter in particular, play a central role in the drama involving the identities of Horace and Augustus—the evolving relationship between poetry and power—that belongs to the overarching trajectory of the *Odes*. At one level, Horace sets up a clear parallel between Jupiter and Augustus: in an ongoing struggle between Jupiter/Augustus and Horace/Muses, the chief god represents both the kind of poetry Horace refuses to write and the kind of power he refuses to pursue. This parallel, however, can also take the form of competition, with Augustus opposing Jupiter and even supplanting him. Jupiter, in short, is a key player in Horace's poetic and political ideology. But his association with two phenomena that most modern readers find uncongenial, religion and panegyric, has often caused readers to minimize the chief god's importance in Horace's poetry. The purpose of this paper is to explore how Horace negotiates his relationship with Jupiter and how readers have responded to this negotiation.

Sometimes the embarrassment of modern readers by Jupiter reflects Horace's own. For instance, in C. 1.34, a thunderbolt from a clear sky, which Horace experiences as Diespiter (Jupiter's ancient and venerable name) driving his thundering chariot, causes the poet to convert back from his foolish, "insane wisdom" of Epicureanism. Why is it that while some older readers see this as a genuine religious conversion (e.g., Fredricksmeyer 1976), most moderns describe it with words like "purports to" and "allegedly," downplay the direct experience of Jupiter's power to philosophical reflections on the vicissitudes of Fortune, and/or suggest that Horace's real message is

political rather than religious (e.g., Nisbet and Hubbard 1970: 377, Santirocco 1986: 73-77)? When Horace identifies himself as an Epicurean, readers never use the word "allegedly"; what causes us to believe that one poetic statement about himself is serious and another is not? How much is this conclusion encouraged by his own poetry, and how much by our own assumptions about what an intelligent man two thousand years ago could or could not have believed? The question is complex, for at the end of the ode Horace himself draws back from Diespiter to an emphasis on Fortune, the subject of the next poem.

There is also a sense in which Jupiter is embarrassed by the poet, stripped of his power. After the dramatic thunder of 1.34, Jupiter does not reappear until 2.6.17-18, where he has abandoned his role as Tonans to become the benign deity of warm weather. He makes a comeback in the Roman Odes (3.1-6), but receives some stiff competition from Augustus, teasingly juxtaposed by Horace's paratactic structure (e.g., 3.5.1-4: see Arieti 1990: 209). The final appearance of Tonans in *Odes* 3 is as a force that the wise man can bear philosophically (3.29.43-48). By *Odes* 4, Augustus has replaced Jupiter as the transcendent deity who receives prayers, restores fertility, and bestows military prizes upon "our Jupiter" (4.5.33-36, 4.15.3-8)—all thanks to the transforming and deifying power of the Muse (4.8.29). Throughout, the "gap between the told story and the one untold" (Lowrie 1997: 226), and the very different message that can emerge when we follow up Horace's footnotes (Fowler 1995: 263), gives the poet plausible deniability and the reader a vast choice of interpretations.

I have suggested two complementary phenomena, then, conveyed by the ambiguous "embarrassment of Jupiter": that Jupiter is an embarrassment (both to us

moderns and to the ancients), and that Horace embarrasses Jupiter in turn, elevating his patron—and himself—at the god's expense. In reading Horace's portrayal of Jupiter thus "ideologically," we are responding partly to our own preconceptions, partly to Horace's deliberate manipulation. Such are the pitfalls of philology, and also the proper joys: as John Locke observed, "It is vain to find fault with those arts of deceiving, wherein men find pleasure to be deceived."

Arieti, James. 1990. "Horatian Philosophy and the Regulus Ode (*Odes* 3.5)." *TAPA* 120: 209-220.

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Fredricksmeyer, E. A. 1976. "Horace *C*. 1.34: The Conversion." *TAPA* 106: 155-76.

Griffin, Jasper. 2007. "Gods and religion." In Harrison (2007), 181-94.

Harrison, Stephen J., ed. 1995. *Homage to Horace: A Bimillenary Celebration*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

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Lowrie, Michele. 1997. Horace's Narrative *Odes*. Oxford.

Nisbet, R. G. M., and Margaret Hubbard. 1970. *A Commentary on Horace: Odes, Book I*. Oxford.

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Politicizing the *Silvae*: The Reclamation of a Genre

Since their rediscovery in the fifteenth century, Statius' *Siluae* have been tarnished by their association with Domitian; they have been accused of flattery of a tyrannical emperor, and their style has accordingly been called decadent or mannerist. Moreover, his status as a professional poet of relatively humble origins added force to the accusation of insincere flattery. This paper will look at significant moments in the reception of Statius' *Siluae*, at their champions and denouncers, and at the political circumstances that shaped their stance. Politian (15th C) and Howell and Shepherd (21st C) on the one hand, and Dryden (17th/18th C) and Shackleton Bailey (21st C) on the other will be the focal point for discussion of Statius' demotion from the canon of major Latin poets and the recent, gradual reclamation of his place not only as epic poet but as inventor of a new genre of Latin poetry, *silua*.