

Bean Berets and Lupine Lamellar: Armor and Plant Anatomy of the Selenetai in Lucian's "*A True History*".

Lucian's *A True History* is a fantastical parody of a variety of authors and genres, taking its audience through more and more ridiculous scenes that mimic the styles and situations of other authors. Lucian is making fun of philosophers in one scene, historians in another and literary critics in the next. Some of these mimics have been documented, but the sheer number of allusions in his works makes it difficult to document them all.

The scenes that are most underrepresented are those that seem to be simple absurdities: bitter melon boats, flying acorns, bean helmets, and bronze clothing. These descriptions, while ridiculous on the surface, have a basis in the reality of the Ancient Mediterranean and the original audience. Plant cultivars and anatomy play a very important role in Lucian's description of the Selenetai, where fava bean helmets and lupine armor as a visual shorthand that reminds the audience of Persian armor. Lucian is using this imagery to make a parody of Herodotus' description of the Persians, where the literary allusion and the anatomy cannot be properly realized without understanding both.

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