

Pudor and *Pudicitia*: Lost Morals and the Fate of the Roman Republic

David Konstan (2003 & 2006) and Robert Kaster (2005) have already convincingly shown that the ancient lexicon for emotion cannot simply be mapped onto ours. One such word is the Latin *pudor*, which has a much wider semantic range than the English “shame”, despite also having some crossovers of meaning. For example, in both English and Latin *pudor* and shame can refer to a painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior (for example, Cic. *Fam* 5.12.1). This paper will focus on the conception of *pudor* in Cicero’s *Pro Caelio*. In this work, *pudor* forms an essential element of Cicero’s defense of Caelius. One of the central aims of the speech is to show that Caelius has both *pudor* and *pudicitia*, which derives from *pudor*, and that Clodia, and by extension her brother Clodius, possesses neither. Although feeling *pudor* could be a negative experience, such as when an elite Roman male was caught doing something that threatened his social and/or political standing, Cicero also presents it as an essential emotion for the maintenance of the state. This paper will suggest that, following the Greek philosophical tradition, Cicero presents *pudor* as a type of fear, in particular the fear of discovery. It is thus a prohibitive emotion as much as it is a retroactive one in the *Pro Caelio*. Cicero argues that *pudor* is an essential emotion for behavioral control. He suggests that, although young men may play up, if they have *pudor*, they will not cross certain boundaries. However, if someone lacks *pudor*, then they will cross important boundaries and threaten the state. In this respect, this paper will suggest that the ethical position presented in the *Pro Caelio* is not simply for rhetorical effect, and it will also show that it is consonant with the ethics he presents in his philosophical works on politics. In these, Cicero argues that law is natural but that bad habits corrupt natural law.

Cicero’s attack on Clodia has already been analyzed by scholars such as Katherine A. Geffcken (1973), Marilyn Skinner (1983), Ann Vasaly (1993), and Anne Leen (2001), who

have pointed out that we must take Cicero's depiction of Clodia as a *meretrix* and her over-the-top sensuality with a grain of salt. Regardless of the historical veracity of Cicero's depiction, his representation of Clodia relies on stereotypes of women who transgress social norms. It is in this transgression of gender roles that Clodia lacks *pudor* and *pudicitia*. Cicero is relentless in his depiction of her lack of *pudor* and *pudicitia*, and he consistently represents her as an anti-*matrona*. However, her lack of the two traits that are essential for a woman's self-regulation are more than just a strategy to discredit Clodia, and Cicero presents her lack of these emotions as having a serious impact on the Roman state. This paper will also argue that the focus on Clodia's lack of *pudor* and *pudicitia* is a symbol of Rome's declining republic as much as Lucretia is of its origins (Joplin 1990). If rape of chaste women signifies positive political changes and the chastity of women signals the maintenance of those political systems, the question that Cicero seems to be asking in the *Pro Caelio* is how can the state be protected if women are no longer chaste but willing sexual partners? His answer lies in the normative ethics of *pudor*. *Pudor* is an essential, normative ethical emotion; however, it is also an inherently Roman trait, and it operates alongside other Roman emotions such a *virtus*, the desire for *gloria*, *honor*, *dignitas*, *labor* as a regulatory concept. Those who possess *pudor* will be better politicians because their *pudor* drives them to act rightly. It also gives them knowledge of how to interact with others. It thus reaffirms Roman social and political roles and hence, according to Cicero, helps to maintain the *res publica*.

Bibliography

Geffcken, Katherine A. (1973), *Comedy in the Pro Caelio* (Mnemosyne, Bibliotheca Classica Batava Supplementum; Leiden: Brill).

- Joplin, P.K. (1990), 'Ritual Work on Human Flesh: Livy's Lucretia and the Rape of the Body Politic', *Helios*, 17, 51-70.
- Kaster, Robert A. (2005), *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome* (Classical culture and society; Oxford, England; New York: Oxford University Press).
- Konstan, David (2003), 'Shame in Ancient Greece', *Social Research*, 70 (4), 1031-60.
- _____. (2006), *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press).
- Leen, Anne (2001), 'Clodia Oppugnatrix: The Domus Motif in Cicero's "Pro Caelio"', *The Classical Journal*, 96 (2), 141-62.
- Skinner, Marilyn B. (1983), 'Clodia Metelli', *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (1974-), 113, 273-87.
- Vasaly, Ann (1993), *Representations: Images of the World in Ciceronian Oratory* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press).