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Politics and Folktale in the Classical World

Abstract

The usurpation of myths and folktales for political purposes is a phenomenon that is well attested during classical antiquity. The preservation of heroic legends was probably motivated in part by social or political considerations, and the process continued into historical times. Our focus has now shifted from the question of historicity to the degree to which folktale has embellished history, and to what degree historical figures have exploited folktale and myth for real-life ends. The Peisistratid tyrants in Athens employed myths and religious symbols both in the initial stages of Peisistratus' rise to power and in the maintenance of the dynasty over several decades. Alexander the Great made special efforts to associate himself with the hero Heracles; the emphasis on Heracles diminished as Alexander's interests turned toward administration of a united Greek-Persian empire. Scipio Africanus was viewed by contemporary and later Roman authors as a Roman Alexander, a fact that is revealing about his personality but that complicates study of his own image-making efforts. Cato Censorius, on the other hand, created his own conservative Roman image by appealing to distinguished historical Romans and by emphasizing cardinal Roman virtues in his public oratory and literary efforts. Greek myths tend to generalize events, Roman myths make them concrete; Greek legends transcend time and space, Roman legends insist upon historicity; Greek myths are largely related to Greek religion, Roman myths and folktales are not part of Roman religion, but part of Roman history, and should be examined first of all from that perspective.

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Myths: Greek/Roman — Propaganda, political

IN the nineteenth century, the systematic process of debunking the myths of the classical Greek and Roman worlds was a major scholarly industry. The modern approach thus achieved rejected the kind of analysis that we find, for example, in Thucydides' opening chapters, where he surveys Homer for clues that will allow him to argue that the Trojan War was not a major undertaking in comparison to the war between Athens and Sparta. Thucydides took the historicity of Hómer and other legends for granted, and subjected them to the scrutiny of historical methods. The rationalistic scholarship of the nineteenth century sought to show that most of these legendary tales were un-historical, and to ascertain where possible their origins in other and earlier cultures. More recently, the quest for origins has given way to a new interest in the stories within the culture that has provided them to us. In the present study, I am especially concerned with the ways that these stories are incorporated into public life in historical times by historical figures.

Whether we call them myths or folktales,¹ the use of traditional tales in the service of a particular political system is far from new. It is in fact no great methodological step from describing the function of myths and folktales as "social charters" to saying that they are being exploited to support a specific regime. Indeed, from almost the moment that literature in the West sprang into being with Homer, his verses were subject, it has been argued, to political reading, revision, and interpretation.² Moreover, it is by no means improbable that the generation and preservation of many of these legends were motivated, in part, not so much by a desire to record oral history as to validate events with art: the *Nostoi* (Returns) of the Greek heroes, for example, that allegedly lie at the base of the composition of the *Odyssey*, do not simply record which hero returned, or finally ended up in what important region, they assert for historical societies their connection with the venerable past (KIRK 1965, 212-27). The examples of politicization or social teleology from Homer (such as the Thersites

episode in *Iliad* 2.216–77) are quite difficult and lend themselves to a wide variety of interpretations; my point is only that the use of myths and folktales for these purposes goes back to the beginnings of Greek literature. But there are numerous examples of the concrete and systematic exploitation of myths and folktale by political leaders in historical, or nearly historical, times.

Many Greek myths have incorporated elements that obviously are intended to assimilate a new deity into Greek society. The myths of Dionysus, for example, consist of several layers of stories in which the god becomes by degrees more hellenized, and eventually is incorporated into the Olympic pantheon.³ Similarly, the myths of Poseidon and Athena portray rival claims to the patronage of that city, which were negotiated, so to speak, within the myths themselves.⁴ Folktale elements are widespread within these myths, such as the story of Aphrodite's adulterous affair with Ares and the revenge taken by her lame husband Hephaestus, quoted in the *Odyssey* by Homer as the so-called Lay of Demodocus (*Odyssey* 8.266–366).

But as a source of folktale as such, as well as its politicization, one can hardly do better than to consult the first Book of Herodotus: there he provides us with the tale of Gyges, the meeting of Solon and Croesus, the story of Adrastus and Croesus' ill-fated son, Croesus' test for the oracles, the Bones of Orestes, and many more, all woven into the dynastic struggles of Greek and Ionian proto-history. Indeed, a great source of fascination in Herodotus is that these stories are attached to historical figures and enhance accounts of actual events; while the historical character of the assimilation of Dionysus into Greece may be debated, the historicity of Gyges or Croesus is not in doubt. The debate thus shifts its focus from the question of historicity to the degree to which folktale has embellished history, and to what degree historical figures have exploited folktale and myth for real-life ends.

When I teach this topic to my students of Classical myth, I frequently refer to the animated film by Ralph Bakshi, *Wizards*. In this film, the forces of Good are opposed to the forces of Evil; the forces of Evil are divided against themselves and therefore easily controlled by the Good, under the benign auspices of several good wizards. Eventually, however, the leader of Evil realizes that what is needed is a "Dream Machine," a machine that can provide the forces of Evil with a shared myth, a vision that will unite them and focus their energies to defeat the Good. The Dream Machine is duly created and has a powerful and immediate effect; most of the film then centers around the good wizards' attempts to find and destroy the Dream Machine.⁵

Perhaps the best-documented early Greek example of the creation

of such a Dream Machine may be found in the Peisistratid Tyranny of Athens, which began in 561/0 and continued, with some interruptions, until 510/9.⁶ The dynasty was very much a family affair: the founder, Peisistratus, was already in his fifties when he came to power for the first time, and his power passed to his son Hippias. The dynasty came to an end when Hippias' brother Hipparchus was assassinated by a disappointed lover, and Hippias was driven into exile; the passing of the dynasty heralded the beginning of democratic government in Athens (HIGNETT 1952, 123). This family had a clear understanding of the power of symbols, especially religious symbols and traditional emblems, in securing their claims to power; they moved collectively and effectively toward the creation of an Athenian Dream Machine. Whether this vision is to be ascribed to Peisistratus himself or to his sons is not clear; quite probably, this program was shared among all members of the ruling house: there was a sustained emphasis on spectacular religious symbol, especially with respect to Athena, the patron-goddess who loaned her name to the city itself.

Peisistratus, the founder of the dynasty, whose rise to power suffered several setbacks, seems to have focused his attention on the goddess Athena. The festival in her honor, the Great Panathenaia, was considerably enhanced during the period of the dynasty, though it was first reorganized a few years earlier, in 566/5, the archonship of Hippocleides. Ancient testimony linking Peisistratus with the reorganization of this festival is late and not in itself reliable. But the political context of the beginning of the festival is clearly the rise of Peisistratus to power, during or just after Athens' crucial wars with Megara in which Peisistratus was instrumental to victory:

In this year it was celebrated with special splendour, and athletic contests were for the first time included in the festival; in future the new type of celebration was held every four years and called the Great Panathenaia. This reorganization of a festival traditionally founded or remodelled by Theseus was evidently intended to lay fresh emphasis on his great achievement, the unification of Attica, which the new party proposed to restore in a more effective form (HIGNETT 1952, 113).

It is by no means far-fetched to speculate that the festival was sponsored by or under the influence of Peisistratus, five years before he actually seized power.

In the process of establishing himself as tyrant in Athens, in consequence of which the monopoly on political power by the old families

was eventually broken, and the foundations for democracy laid, Peisistratus had to come to power three separate times: he was deposed twice. He first seized power in 561/0 by taking advantage of the assignment to him of a personal bodyguard, which he used to take over the Acropolis, but this coup was short-lived: the major clans set aside their differences long enough to depose him. In his second attempt, he in fact aligned himself with one of these powerful Attic clans, and conspired to engineer a spectacular return to the city that forecast his debt to Athena and his understanding of the power of religious symbol. The episode is described for us by Herodotus (1.60.4-5):

In the village of Paeania there was a woman, whose name was Phye, three fingers short of four cubits tall⁷ and otherwise comely. They fitted this woman out in full armor (*πανοπλίη*)⁸ and mounted her in a chariot; then, after they had taught her a bearing that would give her the most distinguished pose, they drove into the lower city. They had sent heralds ahead who, having already reached the city, were, as instructed, making the following sort of proclamations: "O Athenians, receive Peisistratus kindly, because Athena herself has shown him exceptional honor and is bringing him back to her own Acropolis." They spread this announcement all over, and immediately the story reached the outlying villages that Athena was bringing Peisistratus back, and the townsfolk, too, convinced that the woman was indeed the goddess, not only prayed to the mortal woman but also welcomed Peisistratus back.⁹

After becoming tyrant, Peisistratus' attention to Athena did not falter. He proceeded to build for her, as Athena Polias ("guardian of the citadel"), a monumental temple and statue on the Acropolis. During his reign, the silver coins marked with Athena's owl are first minted and circulated; marble statues to Athena appear in increased numbers after about 540, and her clothing becomes more and more "Ionic" in style; architectural remains from the Acropolis show Athena defeating a giant in the Gigantomachia.¹⁰ As we shall see, the dynastic family had broad cultural interests; but perhaps the prominence of Athena in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* engendered their abiding concern with Homer and with the ordered recitation of the epic poems; the attention given to the poems under the Peisistratids was so great that it was later held (improbably) that the poems were first written down at this time, or were revised or in other ways edited under the Athenian tyrants, the so-called "Peisistratid Recension."¹¹ In any case, the

use of Homeric scenes on Attic pottery increases after about 550. Further, it has been argued that the popularity of Heracles, who was not especially an Athenian hero (as opposed to Theseus, who was, and in whom artistic interest was not great under the dynasty), derives from Peisistratus' identification of himself and his fortunes with Heracles, who was protected by Athena, goddess of Athens (BOARDMAN 1972 and 1975).

While Athena thus received her due, the dynasty did not confine its energies to her alone. The cult of Dionysus was urbanized by the creation of the Festival of the Great Dionysia inside the city of Athens, and by the incorporation of the new literary form of τραγωδία (*tragoedia*, "tragedy") into this Festival, including a new Theater and the inauguration of theatrical competitions; the new literary form thus became dedicated to and intimately identified with Dionysus.¹² The ornamentation of the Acropolis was supplemented by expansion of the Agora in the lower city; the reworking of the building that was later to become the Bouleuterion and the Stoa Basileios was consistent with the Peisistratid plan to make the cults and sanctuaries accessible, to bring government down from the Acropolis into the Agora, and the massive building program of Peisistratus' sons, including their attention to the water supply of the lower city, reflects their responsiveness to the needs of the Athenian populace.

The use of the god Hermes by the Peisistratids is also of interest in this regard. We happen to know that the Hermes cult was propagated in the Agora and the countryside by Hipparchus, an attempt to foster unity between the country and the city by establishing Herms along the roads to Athens from the outlying villages. Hermes is a singularly complex god; he was the god of the Herms, ithyphallic statues that stood in gardens and in many public places. He was the god of trade; later, in comedy, he is called *Empolaios*, "engaged in commerce," and *Agoraios*, "belonging to the market," the god of small tradesmen and craftsmen. His sacred titles mark him as the patron of the poor, of traders, and of thieves (cf. EHRENBERG 1962, 109-11, 147, 264). Whether or not the Olympian Hermes was originally or etymologically related to the ithyphallic, apotropaic statues known as Herms, or to the somewhat amorphous stone-pile *herma* used traditionally as boundary markers and now by Hipparchus as mileposts, is unimportant: there is ample and clear evidence that Athenians of the sixth century and later regarded them as the same divinity.¹³ Symbolically, Hermes and the Hipparchan Herms strengthened the claim of the dynasts to be representatives of the people, a claim that enjoyed unparalleled success.¹⁴ In all likelihood, this program should be associated with the

foundation by the Younger Peisistratus (Hipparchus' nephew) of the Altar of the Twelve Gods in the Agora, from whose statue of Hermes the distance to all the countryside Herms was calculated. Within this same context, the Stoa of the Hermai was constructed at the same crossroads entering the Agora.¹⁵ The special democratic value of Hermes as a symbol of government was not lost on the Peisistratids.¹⁶

Whether or not it is historically accurate to portray this attention to religion and myth by the Peisistratids as a conscious propaganda campaign, designed to bolster their political positions among Athenians, and especially among Athenians who were not among the aristocratic families, when analyzed in these terms a highly complex and coherent policy does emerge. In retrospect, all of this activity perhaps appears to be more systematic than it was. No doubt the campaign to honor Athena was, at least in principle, consciously chosen, but inevitably many of these maneuvers will have come about on the spur of the moment, or serendipitously. Even so, the Peisistratids, beginning with Peisistratus himself, were programmatically committed to the incorporation of religion into their governmental structure, and were aware of the need to unify various segments of Athenian society; the result of this commitment was an extensive, long-term, and highly successful propaganda campaign. The forms of this propaganda were various, but they led to a general increase in artistic awareness in Athens, a broadening of interest that is reflected in literary activity and in material remains from the era. Though the tyrants were violently expelled, it is fair to say that the Dream Machine that they created continued to function, and that it was upgraded and modernized two generations later by its most skilful operator, Pericles.

Of comparable interest is the exploitation at the individual level of the hero Heracles by Alexander of Macedon,¹⁷ in the context of two well-known episodes from the late 330s. He had, of course, an extraordinary life, one that invited anecdote and that self-consciously strove to become the stuff of legend.¹⁸ It would be very tempting indeed to scour the pages of Plutarch, Arrian, and Diodorus, and label this episode or that as borrowed folktale. The difficulty is that Alexander lived in historical times, and that many of the things that his biographers claim he did, or happened to him, may well have been factual; woe betide the analyst who labels as legend an episode that is demonstrably historical. But our theme is narrower: we are interested in the use of myth or folktale for political purposes, and in this arena historicity is of secondary importance. It is quite clear that Alexander was alert to the value of propaganda of all kinds, not least the value of myth to solidify his hold on the minds of his subjects. What I shall describe

here, briefly, is (I think) an instance of a well-formed propaganda campaign cut short, when Alexander changed his mind about the direction of his propaganda and began to recast his image after the death of Darius and the sack of Persepolis.

Alexander's conception, birth, and the identity of his father, were surrounded with controversy. These stories may well have been fostered by his mother, Olympias, to counteract her rejection by Alexander's father, Philip II, and embellished later by romanticizing historians; but there is ample evidence that Alexander himself, through much of his short life, remained sensitive to implications of illegitimacy.¹⁹ In the version of his conception that Alexander preferred, much encouraged by his mother, his true father was Zeus; Alexander consistently fostered this notion, especially with the claim to Heracles as his ancestor.²⁰ The Heracles story had numerous advantages, in particular the story of Heracles' dual parentage: he was the son of mortal Amphitryon on the one hand and of divine Zeus on the other, for Zeus was said to have visited Alcmena in the form of Amphitryon within a night of her impregnation by Amphitryon himself.

At one level there is his deep consciousness of his heroic ancestry (as an Argead [cf. BOSWORTH 1980, 198] he took his lineage back to Heracles and ultimately to Dionysus), at another there is his conviction that he was in some sense the son of Zeus, the equal at least of Heracles, and finally there is the conception of himself as god among men. These categories are fundamentally different . . . , but in Alexander's mind they must have been conflated. His acceptance of one role could lead automatically to another (BOSWORTH 1988, 278).

Alexander's attitude toward his own divinity is problematic, but it is quite likely that, in pagan terms, his belief in his divine descent and therefore in himself as at least partly divine, is genuine. A man who consistently performed deeds that were regarded as impossible, and whose flamboyant temper inspired him to feats of astonishing and successful valor, was rightly regarded as greater than human: legend was full of heroes who had one divine parent. A half-divine mortal, like Alexander or Heracles, could be detected largely through his personality and his deeds.

By the same token, the attribution or question of divinity brought with it a responsibility to continue to perform the impossible, to validate one's divinity again and again. The adoption of Heracles as divine patron and ancestor had many advantages for Alexander, and he ap-

pears to have planned to promote this image in some detail. His initial military successes were in many instances regarded as impossible feats: the taking of Thebes by storm, for example; for to take a walled city without a prolonged siege was almost unheard-of, barring treachery from within.

Alexander adopted Heraclean attributes, and his impressive silver coinage with the bust of himself portrayed as Heracles (complete with lion-skin mantle) is common by 333, as Alexander was winning his showdown with the Persian Great King. In terms of Alexander's public image, the emphasis on Heracles was intended mainly for the Greeks, in particular for his Macedonian soldiers; on the one hand it established his legitimacy, and on the other it invoked on his behalf a hero whose Hellenic credentials were impeccable (and whose famous temper Alexander's easily rivaled!). In any case, Alexander is principally portraying himself at this time as a Greek destroyer of the barbarians of the East, taking vengeance for the desecration of Greek temples by the Persians in the Persian Wars 150 years before. As for the Persians, Alexander has not yet articulated a clear program: first, conquest, then rule.²¹

All this emphasis on Heracles is consonant with his actions before, during, and after his famous siege of the city of Tyre. Alexander had just defeated, but not killed, King Darius III at Issus (332). Though Darius was in flight, Alexander chose not to pursue him immediately, but rather to march to Egypt. What he had in mind we shall see presently. But on the way, as city after city surrendered to him, he asked for permission from Tyre to sacrifice in the Temple of Heracles, "the most ancient of those that the memory of men preserves."²² The propaganda theme is consistent: Alexander is paying homage to his ancestor and his patron. This god was locally known as Melqart, but was generally identified with the Greek Heracles, and it was the time of the great annual festival in February (Curtius 4.2.10; cf. Bosworth 1988, 65). The diplomatic niceties of this request have been thoroughly worked out: Alexander hoped to establish his claim to power by this act, and the Tyrians were unwilling to allow him to do so.

Alexander determined to storm the city. A complication was that Tyre was an island city, inaccessible from land except by ship, and Alexander did not yet have the ships to establish a naval blockade; in any case, he had no time for a lengthy siege, but conceived the astounding plan of building a causeway to the island, where he could employ his newly improved siege towers and engines directly against the walls.²³ I believe that Alexander's engineers had convinced him that this could be done quickly, or perhaps that he had commanded

them to devise a way for it to be done so; in any case, that he expected a short, spectacular campaign in keeping with his past successes.²⁴ It was at just this time that Alexander supposedly had a prophetic dream, in which Heracles appeared to him, stretching out his right hand to lead him into the city (Arrian 2.17.1; Plut. 24.3). Events, however, took a nasty turn, and the causeway could not be completed without horrible loss because of naval interference from the Tyrians and bad weather. After seven difficult months, Alexander's luck turned: he acquired a large number of ships, the causeway was finished, and the siege brought to a successful conclusion. The slaughter after the victory was not pretty, but Alexander ordered that those who took refuge in the Temple of Heracles should be spared. He proceeded to carry out his sacrifice to Heracles, and included traditionally Greek features, such as athletic contests and a torch-race; he dedicated in the temple the siege engine that had breached the walls, and also consecrated a Tyrian ship that he had captured and that was sacred to the god-hero (Arrian 2.24.6).

The concept of the causeway was, I believe, as Heraclean as the rest of his actions: he would not only sacrifice to Heracles, not only would Heracles appear to him in a vision, he would perform a labor on the scale of a Heracles. To take a walled city was already a divine feat; Tyre itself had withstood a siege by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar II for 13 years (Lane Fox 1973, 181–82). He had reason to believe that he could bring it off from a technical perspective, but he had underestimated both the logistical problems and the tenacity of the Tyrians. His initial assessment of the victory he actually achieved was probably mixed, for the length of the siege and its cost in lives and money certainly exceeded his expectations. But viewed from afar, even seven months probably seemed incredibly fast; combined with his storming of Gaza shortly thereafter, where he literally built a mountain to enable his siege engines to surmount the walls (Arrian 2.26.2–27.7)—still another “herculean” feat—Alexander's image will have been untarnished by the setbacks on the siege at Tyre, and instead rather substantially enhanced by his success.

For the purposes of our analysis the significant point is that both the style and the tactic of the campaign were influenced heavily by Alexander's wish to appear Heraclean; the appeal to the Heracles legend was not fortuitous or incidental to these campaigns, but rather programmatic.

From Gaza, Alexander went to Egypt in 332/1, where, without apparent warning or reason,

a longing (*πρόσ*) took hold of him to come to [Zeus] Ammon in Libya. Partly he wanted to ask something of the oracle, since it was said that the oracle of Ammon was infallible, and that . . . Heracles consulted it . . . when he was going into Libya to find Antaeus, and into Egypt to find Busiris. And partly Alexander had a sense of rivalry with . . . Heracles, since he was descended from [him]; he also traced his descent back to Ammon. . . . Indeed, he set out for Ammon with this notion, that he would learn more truly the facts about himself, or that he would say he had learned them.²⁵

Alexander was publicly coy about what questions he asked, and what responses he received; Arrian, reflecting early sources, indicates only that "he received the answer his soul desired" (3.4.5). Other sources are not so reticent, and perhaps Alexander later allowed the information to leak: he had been greeted spontaneously by Zeus's priest as "son," to which Alexander responded by calling him "father"; he may also have received an answer to the problem of the death of Philip and some very favorable predictions about his future in Persia.²⁶ Everything, in short, he could have wanted. In this context, which he has heavily invested with Heracleian overtones, Alexander's birth was legitimized and his divine descent confirmed.

Perhaps in late 333, more likely in early 332, after Damascus (where she was taken prisoner) but prior to the siege of Tyre, Alexander had taken an educated Persian woman of noble lineage named Barsine as his mistress. This union resulted in a son, who must have been born very near to the time of Alexander's siege of Gaza (332) or journey to Ammon at Siwah (winter of 332/1). Significantly, this child was given the name Heracles.²⁷

Very soon, however, Alexander's image undergoes a dramatic change. Events were moving quickly, and within months Alexander found himself claimant by conquest to the throne of the Persian Empire. His difficulties in reconciling the religious and formal responsibilities of this new role, which he clearly decided to take on, among his supporters from the traditional Greek states and (especially) his Macedonian troops, have been well studied; this is not the place to rehearse the process in detail. How, if at all, he would have solved this problem, his premature death prevents us from knowing. But as Alexander became increasingly Persianized, his Greek roots were less and less emphasized, and the image building took on shapes unfamiliar to his old followers.

Heracles, prototypically Greek, faded rather quickly into the

background. Heracles, whose lion-skin mantle was essential to his iconography, may in fact have been a liability among the Persians, for whom Alexander's concern will have become increasingly sensitized. For the lion was a symbol of Ahriman, the incarnation of Evil, while the sun was sacred to Ahura-Mazda, incarnation of the Good. To welcome the lion was to welcome Evil, and this must have had a damaging effect on Alexander's image among the Persians.²⁸ While he was still the conquering avenger, this was all to the good; but when he sought to become a rightful King of Kings, he could no longer portray himself in this way. Alexander may have learned this lesson, too, at Tyre. For all his efforts to sustain his image as Heracles there, he knew well of the Tyrians' concern about a possible defection by Apollo (the Sun), over whom Alexander and the Tyrians waged what appears to us now as a rather silly campaign of recruitment. During the siege, the Tyrians reported a vision in which Apollo had revealed that he would abandon the city; the Tyrians treated the god as a deserter and bound the base of his statue with cords and reviled him as *Alexandranistes* (Diodorus 17.41.7-8, Plut. *Alex.* 24.3-4).

The next (and last) clear indication of Alexander's use of Heracles as a model or inspiration comes from the capture of the mountain fortress at Aornus in 326.²⁹ After Gaugamela, when Darius was finally defeated and Alexander truly became Persian King of Kings, Heracles was never again as important in his propaganda.³⁰ In short, it appears that Alexander had formulated a thoroughgoing strategy to associate himself with Heracles, a strategy that would legitimize his birth, and thus his status as King of Macedon, and would automatically show him as a demi-god on the level of the hero, who was popular not only in Greece and in Greek cities but also in various areas of western Persia through association with Persian gods such as Melqart. This propaganda campaign was carried out in great detail in the 330s. But after Gaugamela and the death of Darius, Alexander's needs and interests changed, and the Heracles motif virtually disappears from his public image.³¹

In turning to the politicization of myths and folktales by the Romans, we immediately confront a methodological problem. Discussion of Greek myths and legends, for all its difficulties, has a fairly clear range: we have the gods, goddesses, and lesser divine beings; we have Homer, the major heroes, and associated stories; we have Apollodorus and associated stories, and so on. But the situation has been greatly different for Rome. It is widely assumed or asserted that the Romans had no mythology, or at any rate that it was very limited, that in fact they borrowed their most interesting myths from the Greeks.³² Of course, this issue need not detain us, for we could easily illustrate the

politicization of Greek legends in Roman politics, or trace the process by which the Romans naturalized the Greek stories into their own culture, as has often (and usually) been done.³³ It would be fairly easy to treat Augustus or a later emperor in the same fashion that we have treated Peisistratus and Alexander. But Augustus was, in important respects, at the end of a difficult process of hellenization and orientalizing that made possible his multifaceted approach to symbols in support of the principate, through literature, public art, law, and so on. A more authentic approach, therefore, will be to attempt to find the proper range of discussion for the politicization of Roman myths, legends, or folktales, as opposed to the politicization of myths by Romans; this study will thus serve as a preliminary investigation to a full treatment of the topic. Before attempting to characterize the differences between the Greeks and the Romans further, let us first work through a couple of Roman examples. To delineate a "Roman" point of view, we must work within the Republic, especially the middle Republic from the Hannibalic War to the Gracchi (218–131), when "Roman" values were first being clearly articulated.

To find a Roman Alexander, we need look no farther than P. Cornelius Scipio (236–183), conqueror of Hannibal, known as Africanus,³⁴ and a brief discussion of Scipio will illustrate some of the problems we face. A remarkable man by any standards, he both stretched and shaped the Romans' outlook on contemporary events and values, and generated within his lifetime or shortly thereafter a pervasive legend that must be confronted in any serious discussion (SCULLARD 1970, esp. 18–23). Scipio was an avid Hellenophile, and found that his romantic, flamboyant way of life more than once set him at odds with a Senate that was still largely conservative and ambivalent about things Greek. As a matter of fact, creation of a Roman Alexander within the historiographic tradition of the middle Republic was evidently the precise goal of many writers of that time. History-writing among the Romans themselves was still in its infancy at the end of the third century, and many of the most important contemporary writers were Greeks, who admired Scipio above all Romans, and who assimilated to Scipio's already great deeds the legends of Alexander. A Roman like Scipio quickly inspired fear and distrust in his Roman fellow-senators, and the embellishments of his legend will have provided him no unmixed benefit within the Roman hierarchy.

At Scipio's conception, as at Alexander's, [Jupiter] was reputed to have taken the form of a huge snake [Liv. 26.19, Gellius 6.1]. Scipio's own pretence of communing with Heaven was elaborated

into the story that, every morning before dawn, he repaired to the cella of the Temple of Iuppiter Capitolinus and spent some time closeted alone there with his heavenly father. The keepers of the temple were alleged to have noticed, with awe, that the dogs, who, at this hour, would bark at, and would even attack, anyone ascending the Capitol, paid to Scipio alone the tribute of refraining from molesting him. (TOYNBEE 1965, 505)

These tales are, of course, reminiscent of the tales about Alexander, whose associations with Heracles and Zeus we have already examined. Thus we find Scipio associated with Hercules (serpent at conception) by the story of his birth, and with both Neptune and Jupiter. Neptune is said to have provided him with inside information that enabled him to win a difficult siege, and (as the synopsis above illustrates) Scipio sustained a lengthy and close relationship with Capitoline Jupiter. Moreover, much of the discussion about Scipio now resembles that with respect to Alexander; it is often difficult to tell whether the parallels we can detect between Alexander and Scipio were fortuitous and real or invented and false, and scholars still debate the meaning and sincerity of Scipio's visits to Capitoline Jupiter (see SCULLARD 1970, 233-38) in much the same way that it is necessary to confront Alexander's view of his own divinity.

Iconography, too, is an unsettled debate. SCULLARD (1970) and BIEBER (1973), working independently and almost contemporaneously on coinage portraits, arrive at drastically different conclusions. SCULLARD (1970, 247-51, with plates on pp. 41 and 43) believes that Scipio's image appeared on coins similar to each other and minted in Scipio's lifetime (indeed, from the late third century), from New Carthage (Spain) and from Canusium (Italy); he believes that these coins exhibit a facial resemblance to an almost certainly genuine portrait on a gold signet-ring from Capua which is contemporary or nearly contemporary with Scipio himself (i.e., the early or middle second century), though he concedes (250) that there are some difficulties and that alternative interpretations are possible. If he is right, these coins were not minted by Roman authority, for

none of the moneyers down to the middle of the first century had dared to mint the head of a living person on their coins, as the Greek Hellenistic rulers had done from Seleucus I and Ptolemy I on to the last of their dynasties. The Roman Senate would not have allowed this for anyone.³⁵

In order to sustain his argument, however, SCULLARD (247) must reject

the accuracy of the Scipio-image on another series of coins from the early first century, the Blasio-series.³⁶ These portraits do not resemble those on the earlier coins at all, but have been identified with Scipio, an identification accepted by Bieber: "[The portrait] shows a meager neck, small eyes, a pointed nose. The large ears and the features of the face are purely Roman. It is a realistic portrait we see here" (BIEBER 1973, 879).

BRECKENRIDGE (1973, 835-40), on the other hand, while willing to grant that one or more of these coins might represent Scipio, evidently believes (mainly, it seems, because of the style of the helmet portrayed) that the Blasio-series does not represent a human at all, but perhaps Mars or some other god. He notes, however, that honorific portraiture became increasingly common in the first half of the second century, to the point that it received censorial attention in 158 (cf. Plin. *N.H.* 34. 30), and that T. Quinctius Flaminus was honored by Greek moneyers with a portrait-coin in 197, following his victory at Cynoscephalae. Therefore, a Spanish portrait-coin of Scipio is possible. Unfortunately, his main argument is that realistic native Roman portraiture cannot be proven to extend this early, so that he is ultimately not interested in the question of the identification of the portraits. Presumably, he would argue that close physiognomic analysis is unlikely to be fruitful in any case.³⁷

The variance in these assessments is startling. I can but add a fourth opinion. Breckenridge, it seems to me, has evaded the issue; for Scullard, it does not matter whether the portrait is Roman or foreign, only whether the identification is secure and whether it is realistic. On this issue, I agree with Scullard and Bieber: the portraits appear to me distinctive and relatively realistic, not generic or idealized. On the other hand, I do not see much resemblance between the New Carthage coin and the signet-ring from Capua that everyone agrees is intended to be Scipio.³⁸ There are differences to my eye in the shape of the profile: where the nose on the signet-ring is straight or slightly concave (and pointed, as in the Blasio-series, at the end), on the New Carthage coin the nose is slightly hooked and, if pointed, pointed somewhat downward; also, where the hairstyle of the signet-ring shows long, straight hair consistent with literary descriptions of Scipio, the New Carthage coin shows much shorter hair. As for the Canusium coin, the nose is different (but not much different) from the signet-ring and the Blasio-series, and the hair, while long, is somewhat curled, especially at the side-burns, much in the manner of the Carthaginian Barcids (see coins in SCULLARD 1970, 42, especially the center coin, which depicts Hannibal). In my view, the New Carthage coin and

the Canusium coin portray different men, neither of whom was Scipio, though the Canusium portrait could be Scipio. The Blasio-series, on the other hand, could without much imagination be the same man as on the signet-ring; the difficulty is that Scipio is bare-headed and long-haired on the ring, but the figure on the coins is wearing a (Greek) helmet. The shape of the nose, however, is quite close, and if one allows for pulling back the hair from the forehead in order to cover it with the helmet, the forehead could have been the same shape.

In view of this, I regard the identification of the Blasio-series with Scipio Africanus as likely, because Blasio (from the *gens Cornelia*) may well have been working from an accurate portrait bust of his famous ancestor. Moreover, the reverse of the Blasio-coins has the Capitoline triad Jupiter-Juno-Minerva: while this need not be interpreted as a reflection of Scipio's close connection to the Capitoline Temple, it seems pointless to resist this obvious reference. Finally, while an honorific portrait of Scipio in New Carthage or Canusium would be possible, it is otherwise exemplified in this era only by the avowedly extraordinary issue for Flamininus in 197; and questions about Flamininus, even more a hellenizer than Scipio, simply compound our problems.

Probably, then, no coin-portraits of Scipio from his lifetime were made, certainly not by Roman moneyers. No statues, either, if Valerius Maximus is to be believed (4.1.6):

Our ancestors lacked no good intentions for bestowing awards on the elder Africanus, inasmuch as they tried to adorn his very great benefits with marks of equal distinction. They resolved to place statues in the Comitium, on the Rostra, in the Senate-House, and finally in the very chamber of Jupiter Optimus Maximus; they resolved to place his bust, dressed in triumphal array, near the gods' couches on the Capitoline; they resolved to assign him successive consulships and perpetual dictatorship for all the years of his life. But by allowing none of these things either to be given to himself by plebiscite or to be enacted by senatorial decree he conducted himself almost as greatly in declining honors as he had in earning them.³⁹

Indeed, there remains this great difference between the legend of Scipio and the legend of Alexander: while Scipio may be "associated" with Hercules, and be "favored" by Jupiter, he never styles himself in word or image as Hercules⁴⁰ and it is unlikely that Roman (as opposed to Greek, or hellenizing) authors would portray him as a semi-divine son of Jupiter. For all his flamboyance, in fact, Scipio remained

fundamentally a Roman aristocrat, committed to the maintenance of Roman values within Roman tradition.

In the study of the articulation of Roman values, no figure is better studied than M. Porcius Cato the "Elder," otherwise known as "Censorius," whose long life (234–149) spans the Hannibalic War, Roman expansion into Greece, the life of Scipio Africanus himself, and the destruction of Corinth and Carthage.⁴¹

A "new man" from Tusculum, Cato attained the consulship at the relatively young age of 39; within fifteen years he had become one of the dominating forces of Roman politics, having achieved an unparalleled position of personal influence in all spheres of Roman public life: in literature, in law, in foreign policy, in internal politics, in public morality. He was, indeed, one of the most original, versatile, and colorful men in all of antiquity, one who stamped an impression of his personality indelibly upon all with whom he came into contact. It is highly instructive to examine the mechanisms by which Cato, after his active military career was over, was able to maintain a position of authority, despite a lack of eminent ancestors and a certain political isolation from powerful clans. I have argued elsewhere (RUEBEL 1972 and 1977) that this achievement was largely the result of a conscious adoption of a specific "image," which he himself came to understand only gradually, but with decisive force.⁴² In fact, Cato is both a well-documented model of the creation of a Roman public image and a paradigm of such a program for what later generations would think of as "traditional."

Among the earliest of Cato's autobiographical statements are comments about his youthful toil in the rocky ground of the Sabine country, and the frugal way of life that he practiced. Concepts of hard work, related to words like *parsimonia*, *industria*, *labor*, *strenuus*, and *duritia* are leitmotifs in the preserved fragments of his orations. Closely tied to these notions is that of subservience of individual gain to that of the Roman State, along with other traditional Roman virtues such as *fortitudo* and *constantia*.⁴² He was a vigorous champion of Roman culture in this form, which he regarded as morally superior to all others; in particular, he championed the Roman way of life over the Hellenic, and the use of Latin over Greek.⁴⁴

All of these attitudes we regard as so characteristically Roman that it is sometimes underestimated how often other Romans did not share them, or shared them only vaguely, especially during Cato's lifetime, when the Roman aristocracy was still defining its relationship to the rest of the Mediterranean world and its attitudes toward foreign cultures in general. For later generations, "Cato Censorius [did] more than

any other Roman to make his fellow-citizens conscious of the essence of *Romanitas*” (LEEMAN 1963, 20; see PÖSCHL 1939). As Greeks looked to Homer or other traditional tales for lessons and portrayals of distinctive values, Romans looked to the great historical figures of their past; in Cato we have an example of a historical figure who was to become a model for emulation not only by later Romans but also by his contemporaries (cf. Plut. *Cato* 19.7–8), much as semi-divine heroes were models for emulation by Greeks.

Everywhere in his public performance it is evident that Cato came to regard himself as a “teacher,” so to speak, to his society. Even his literary activity can thus be seen as a growing self-awareness of his image. In the *De Agricultura*, for example, Cato includes not only practical guidelines for farming, but also scattered ethical aphorisms. He evidently collected aphorisms, and published at least one collection of them, ostensibly for the edification of his son (who would have been perhaps in his thirties when they were published) but actually for the Roman aristocracy in general. As ASTIN (1978, 340) notes, the idea of such a collection was not novel; what was different was reducing these precepts to writing and allowing them to pass into general circulation.

Cato wrote his books for the purpose of instruction, probably thought automatically in those terms without seriously considering alternatives, and perhaps had a heightening sense of usefulness—and of self-importance—as he applied the concept to topic after topic. (ASTIN 1978, 209)

If Cato himself became a model with this public didacticism, to what models did he himself refer? Not surprisingly, we find that he publicly emulated another historical Roman who embodied all these virtues. He frequently referred to the venerable figure of Marcus Curius Dentatus, who had lived on a small farm near Cato’s own:⁴⁵

He would always wander over to this place and gaze at the grounds and the dwelling. The insignificance of the one and the simplicity of the other gave him some idea of the character of this man who, though he had attained pre-eminence among the Romans by subjugating the most warlike tribes and by driving Pyrrhus from Italy, with his own hands used to cultivate this plot of ground and, after three triumphs, lived in this farmhouse. Here it was that the ambassadors of the Samnites found him, seated in front of the fire, engaged in boiling turnips. They had come to offer him a large sum of money, but he sent them away saying, “A man who can be satisfied with such a meal has no need of gold. As

far as I am concerned, possessing gold is less attractive than conquering those who possess it.” With his head full of these things Cato would return home and, when he contemplated instead his own house, his estate, his servants, his way of life, he would exert himself all the more and would cut back inessential expenses. (Plut. *Cato* 2.1–3)⁴⁶

Despite Cato’s well-known and fully attested pride in his own accomplishments (*haud sane detractor laudum suarum*, in Livy’s words),⁴⁷ no comparisons will be found, either from Cato himself or from any other Roman author, between Cato and any heroic (in the Greek sense) or divine figure. Cato in fact apparently resisted this sort of emulation, perhaps again as a self-conscious example to others.

When people expressed surprise that, although there were statues of any number of undistinguished men, there was none of him, he replied, “Well, I would rather have people ask why there is no statue of me than why there is one.” (Plut. *Cato* 19.6)

Plutarch has just (19.4) improbably noted that “the people” put up a statue of Cato in the Temple of Salus, with the following inscription:

When Rome (*τὴν Ῥωμαίων πολιτείαν*) was in a state of decline and decay (*ἐγκεκλιμένην καὶ ῥέπουσαν ἐπὶ τὸ χειρόν*), he became Censor and, by providing sound leadership and by the example of his sober conduct, set it on the proper path again (*εἰς ὀρθὸν ἀποκατέστησε*).

SANSONE (1989, 223) rightly follows Astin in concluding that this was unlikely to have been dedicated during Cato’s lifetime:

While a publicly authorized statue of a living senator is a possibility which cannot be excluded at this date, it would be surprising, especially in view of the silence in other sources; and an inscription in such terms . . . is extremely improbable. (ASTIN 1978, 103 n. 89)

But there is no reason to doubt that the statue was real,⁴⁸ and while Cato will not have seen this statue dedicated, he would have heartily approved the image of himself thus portrayed.

In sum, to uncover the ways that Romans politicized their own myths, we shall have to study the mythologization of Romans by other Romans, not tales told of gods or heroes by Greeks. The Romans did not in general encourage or approve of identification with heroes or divinities; heroization, as it is often put, is a Greek, not a Roman,

concept (SCULLARD 1970, 247 n. 11). While Hercules was a much-loved hero, Romans of the Republic did not "identify" with him; they may have sought his help or assumed that he had assisted them, but they did not "portray" themselves as Hercules. In the imperial period, things have changed; emperors after Augustus, who himself approached the issue with extreme caution, could become divine, and grew less and less wary of the symbolism of emperor-worship. But the well-known sculpture of the emperor Commodus portrayed as Hercules, holding his club over his right shoulder, chest bare, and draped with a lion skin, would have been rejected by Scipio and would have shocked Cato.

Greek myths and legends sought to annul or to minimize the limiting effects of history: their gods and heroes do not operate within specific historical times, the times are always in the dimmest recesses of the remote past, in a kind of eternal time that could be anytime whatsoever. In some sense this must be why a character like Heracles could accrue so many layers of fable around him; as the legend grew, new stories were added to the old, with no thought of chronological contradiction. The Romans, by contrast, insisted upon the historical locales in space and time of their legends: they were "abnormally single-minded in this conversion of their mythology into history," a process in the service of which they invoked all the lessons of Hellenistic rationalistic thought (GRANT 1971, 222-23); their greatest heroes were always heroes in a specific historical moment, part of their history as well as of their consciousness.

Insofar as this mythmaking occurred through the medium of Roman literature, it was a conscious process at the upper levels of Roman society, not a true set of "folk" tales at all (GRANT 1971, xvi). We can almost literally observe the process by which the Romans took the events of their past and traditional tales of commonly observed types and converted them into stories that would validate the essential character and customs of the Romans, for themselves and for others. Cato, so important in other respects, was also a pivotal figure in this process (GRANT 1971, 34). For his *Origines* portray a picture of an Italy united under Roman rule, and the fulfillment through action of his own strong sense of duty and subordination of the individual to the state, while allowing for the pursuit of *gloria* through noble deeds in war. His first Book concerned the deeds of the Kings of Rome, the second and third the origins of the cities of Italy (Nepos 3.3). SMITH (1939/40, 163-64) argued that this was to illustrate a vision of a unified Italy as the proper unit around which to build the history of the Roman people, a pan-Italian vision comparable, we may suppose, to the fourth-century

pan-Hellenism of the quixotic Isocrates. But this is inverted; rather, Cato is showing that Rome is the center of Italy and that Rome is thus the rightful ruler, the rightful focus of power and glory for all of Italy. This is a subtle plan, and it may be doubted whether Cato's vision was that subtle. But in fact it does not matter. Perhaps Cato's interest was merely a pedestrian antiquarianism that he could not resist perpetrating on the rest of his society. Whether or not Cato intended this message, it was the effect of his writings as of his life, as well as of the writings and lives of other writers and politicians in this formative period. In this sense, he thus exhibits a fellowship with Livy, who stands at the end of this creative process and whose first pentad is the greatest manifestation of the literary enactment of the politicization of Roman folktales. Livy clearly approached his goal with conscious motivations, but the sheer size of his project led to repeated failures and losses of direction. For a work like Livy's, "its power to mean is overtaken by an array of pluralities. . . . In some sense, then, it is Livy's *performance* of his 'definitive' role, not what he wrote, that 'matters'" (HENDERSON 1990, 121). The emergence of Rome as a serious world power was contemporary, and not by coincidence, with her first native writers of history, and with their attempts to justify and vindicate Rome's political position, and hence with both the mythologization of their past and the politicization of their myths.

I am reminded of a college friend's remark, made within one of our (quite typical) undergraduate debates on eternal verities; of the search for God he said, "If he exists, there is no need to search for God, for there is nothing in which he cannot be found." So, indeed, with the politicization of Roman mythology: there is virtually nothing Roman in which the process is not at work, if we accept the premise that Roman myths and folktales existed. That such a premise could be doubted is decidedly odd, in view of the relentless proliferation of folktale-style stories about Mars and Rhea Silvia, the machinations of Amulius and Numitor, the brothers Romulus and Remus, Titus Tatius, the Horatii and Curiatii, Tarquin and the Sybilline books, Brutus the tyrant-slayer, Lucretia the chaste victim, Cincinnatus, Fabricius and the Samnites, Horatius at the bridge, Tarpeia the traitress, countless stories about the origins of Roman *cognomina*, and so on. The essential realization is that Roman traditional tales are not to be treated as appendages to, derivative from, or dependent on Roman religion, as with many of the Greek myths, but as organic, integral parts of what the Romans viewed as history.

The Roman gift for storytelling was not inferior to the Greek, but it adopted a wholly different orientation. The Roman approach to

myths and folktales was thoroughly concrete: at the same time that the myths of the Greeks were, so to speak, becoming history, the Romans were transforming their history into myth. They provide, in fact, the most thorough and completely documented instance in the Western world of the use of folktales and myths as social charters, and should be studied as such.⁴⁹

NOTES

1. For pragmatic purposes, I use the term "myths" to refer to stories about the gods, or where the gods are the principal characters, "legends" to refer to stories about the more important heroes, and "folktales" to refer to stories about ordinary human beings that have been embellished with elements of the divine; see KIRK 1974, 20-29. Very useful is the ancient handbook by Apollodorus, *The Library of Greek Mythology*, now available in a convenient translation (ALDRICH 1975). The standard Greek text is R. WAGNER's Teubner edition (1926). A fine anthology, mixing summary with translated quotations from original sources, is MORFORD and LENARDON 1985. For an exhaustive treatment, L. PRELLER's classic companion works on Greek (Berlin 1894) and Roman (Berlin 1865) mythology have not been superseded; both are now available only in reprint. In this article, abbreviations of ancient authors are either obvious or in accordance with conventions established in HAMMOND and SCULLARD 1970, ix-xxii; the latter will itself be abbreviated *OCD*²; finally, all two- or three-figure dates, and all one-digit centuries, are B.C.E.; all four-figure dates, and all two-digit centuries, are C.E. All translations from ancient sources are mine unless otherwise indicated.

2. References conveniently summarized and assembled in KIRK 1965, 60-62 with 231.

3. See SELTMAN 1960, 166-67, who argues specifically that three "Greek statesmen" regularized the cult of Dionysus in Greece: Periander of Corinth (c. 625-585), who introduced his festival; Cleisthenes of Sicyon, who replaced an old hero-cult with the cult of Dionysus and strengthened his worship in Delphi in combination with the founding of the Pythian Games in 582; and Peisistratus of Athens, who made Dionysus patron of the theater, and about whom much more will be said below.

4. Hence, the Athenians "voted" to choose the olive, the gift of Athena, over the pool given by Poseidon; both stories are woven together loosely with the legend of Cecrops, heroic ancestor of the Athenian kings. See Apollodorus 3.177-80.

5. BAKSHI 1977. For the present collection, it is of thematic interest to note that the Dream Machine portrayed in *Wizards* generates images of the Nazi war machine of World War II, in order to inspire the forces of evil. In fact, the attempts by Hitler to link the Nazi "myth" with classical Greece would also repay thorough investigation (KRAABEL 1989, 6-7).

6. Principal ancient sources on Peisistratus: Hdt. 1.59-64, 5.55-65, 6.34-41, 103-04; Thuc. 6.54-59; Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.* 13-19, *Pol.* 1314a-1315b. Good modern accounts are SCHACHERMEYR 1937; FORREST 1966, 178-89; and JEFFERY 1976, 94-99. The problems of the chronology of Peisistratus' ascension to power are complex and remain unsettled; a summary of previous scholarship, and of the evidence (with a proposal), may be found in RUEBEL 1973.

7. That is, just under two meters tall. The cubit ($\pi\eta\chi\upsilon\varsigma$), consisted of 24 "fin-

gers" (*δάκτυλοι*); the length of the finger, in turn, is calculated from the equivalence of 1 "foot" (*πούς*)=16 fingers; and the foot varied from about 295 mm to about 330 mm at various times in various regions (see *OCD*² 639). Phye was therefore at least 1.825 meters (or $71\frac{3}{4}$ inches) tall (1 cubit= $24/16$ [=1.5] feet \times 295 mm; 1 finger= $1/16$ feet \times 295 mm; $4\times 1.5\times 295=1770$; $3\times 1/16\times 295=55$; $1770+55=1825$ mm).

8. That is, with helmet, breastplate, spear, and shield. This is the standard garb for Athena in her familiar statues.

9. The historicity of this amazing story has been doubted (notably by Beloch; for references, see HOW and WELLS 1912, 83), but most scholars follow Herodotus: outlandish as it sounds, it probably happened. Note that, from Herodotus' version, the townspeople perhaps did not get a very good look at Phye, for she will have been driven straight to the Acropolis and Athena's temple, while holding a theatrically divine pose; the people of the outlying villages did not see her at all, but learned of it by hearsay. The truth of the event was clearly known to enough people so that Herodotus could find out the woman's name and village, but enough other people were impressed and spread the tale that it greatly helped Peisistratus in his second ascension.

10. References on coinage, statuary, and architectural fragments in JEFFERY 1976, 106-107.

11. Pseudo-Plato, *Hipparchus* 228b; Cicero, *De Oratore* 3.137 ([Peisistratus] primus Homeri libros, confusos antea, sic disposuisse dicitur ut nunc habemus: "Peisistratus is said to have been the first to arrange the books of Homer, which previously were confused, in the way that we have them now.") For discussion, see KIRK 1965, 211-14.

12. The traditional date for the first tragic competition is 534, which would be under the rule of Peisistratus himself: JACOBY 1904, 172, and his note on *FGrHist* 239 A 43. Of interest also are ELSE 1967 and WINKLER and ZEITLIN 1990.

13. See especially the inscription on one of Hipparchus' roadside Herms that calls itself "shining Hermes" (KIRCHNER and DOW 1937); Phrynicus, frg. 58 (=Plut., *Alc.* 20.7); *Andoc. Myst.* 62 (bis); Lysias VI (*Kata Andok.*) 11. On Hermes in general, see HERTER 1976, BURKERT 1979.

14. Cf. Aristotle, *Pol.* 1305a (*δημοκρατικός*), *Ath. Pol.* 16.7, and SCHACHERMEYR 1937, 191, "Für den Bauern blieb die Regierung des Peisistratos als goldenes Zeitalter in Erinnerung."

15. On the building program, see references in JEFFERY 1976, 107, and SHEAR 1978, esp. 7-11. On the countryside Herms, Pseudo-Plato, *Hipparchus* 228c-229d.

16. Despite some now badly outdated anthropological assumptions and other methodological problems, the suggestion of BROWN 1947 of a Peisistratid provenance for the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* remains attractive; the basic argument, that egalitarian Hermes lays claim to equality with aristocratic Apollo, is consistent with the text and with the propaganda campaign of the Peisistratids.

17. The principal ancient sources are: Plutarch's biography, the annalistic account of Flavius Arrianus (Arrian), Diodorus Siculus' *Library of History* Books 16.86-17, and the biographical study of Quintus Curtius. Of modern biographies, the soundest is now that of BOSWORTH 1988; Bosworth has also partially finished (1980) a very helpful commentary on Arrian, completed only for the first three books. See also *OCD*² 39-41.

18. Alexander's successful portrayal of himself as variously the champion of the Greeks and the Great King of the Persians has been much studied; refer to BOSWORTH 1988, 278-90.

19. Cf. the famous episode with Attalus, Plut. *Alex.* 9.7-11, Athenaeus 13.557d-e,

and Justin 9.7.3–5. On Alexander's relationship with Philip and Olympias, HAMILTON 1965; CARNEY 1987; FREDRICKSMEYER 1990.

20. On Heracles, crucial now is W. BURKERT 1979; GALINSKY 1972 and BROMMER 1984 (1972) are most useful.

21. Cf. Arrian 3.18.12. One can see that he is already hedging his bets, with a view toward the throne of Persia (he has instructed Darius to send to him henceforth as "King of Asia": Arrian 2.14.8; cf. BOSWORTH, 1980, 232–33), especially in his considerate treatment of Darius' family even at this early stage. Cf. also EHRENBERG 1938, 39–40.

22. Arrian 2.16.1; on Heracles and Melqart, see BOSWORTH 1980, 235–38.

23. On the siege, Arrian 2.16–24, Diodorus 17.40.3–47.6, Curtius 4.2.1–4, Plut. *Alex.* 24.2–25.2. For the technology of the campaign, Lane Fox 1973, 183–90, 520.

24. The building of the causeway had another point to it, often overlooked: when the Persians invaded Greece under Xerxes in 480, Xerxes had successfully bridged the Hellespont, but not without committing acts of impiety toward the gods (Hdt. 7.34–36). Alexander here overmatches Xerxes in every way.

25. Arrian 3.3.1–2. The omissions from the text are references to Alexander's relationship to Perseus, another interesting mythological association with possible links both to Greece and to Persia (suggestive references in Lane Fox 1973, 522).

26. Arrian 3.4.5; Plut. *Alex.* 27; Diodorus 17.51. BOSWORTH (1988, 73–74 and 282–83) accepts as from early sources only that Alexander was received as son of Ammon (Zeus); see also his note (1980, 271–72). FREDRICKSMEYER 1990, 310–12, and especially n. 42, has a lengthy discussion of Alexander's references to Philip as his father, and of the meaning in this context of the results of the visit to Siwah.

27. Plut. *Alex.* 21.4–5, Justin 11.10.2–3; BOSWORTH 1988, 64.

28. The dramatic presentation of this clash of symbols in Lane Fox 1973, 152, while unattested in the sources, is exactly right. Unfortunately, the coinage of Alexander remains an unsettled series of problematic issues; see OIKONOMIDES 1981, ix–xx, and his bibliography. An excellent example of Alexander's Heracles coinage may be found in GREEN 1970, 158; in contrast, his photograph of Alexander as Helios (p. 162) illustrates the changes. The inability to date the relevant iconography with reliability or precision is a major drawback in the study of Alexander.

29. Arrian, 4.28.1–5, where emulation of Heracles is presented as a motivating factor in the assault.

30. TARN 1948, II, 55–62, and especially 58–59, evidently thinks that the effort to associate Alexander with Heracles (and Dionysus) was the product of two hack epic poets from Alexander's court, Agis of Argos and Choerilus of Iasus. While the legends of Heracles in India may well be late, as he suggests, in my view the whole Heracles-campaign up through at least the Egyptian journey has a coherence that extends well beyond the purview of poets, good or bad.

31. Not that he ceased to identify with Heracles, but that the public use of this identification to foster his political image became less and less important. Heracles *may* have been used by Alexander in trying to justify to his troops his intention to cross India; while this does not emerge directly from the accounts of his speeches in our sources, Arrian (9.1–4) provides an excursus on the possible travels of Heracles in India, an excursus evidently motivated by controversy in *his* sources about the travels of Heracles (see also 4.28.2, where Arrian states that in his view Heracles never reached India). It is possible that this debate has its origins in contemporary historians who accompanied Alexander's army to the east. If Alexander did use Heracles for this purpose, this would of course be compatible with the thesis presented here, since his

purpose in that context will have been to influence his Macedonians and other Greeks. For a good general statement about Alexander and myth (or, as he portrays it, religion), see EHRENBERG 1938, 104–107.

32. BREMMER and HORSFALL 1987 continue this debate, taking up the issue as from WISSOWA 1912. Cf. the thoughtful review article by WISEMAN 1989, 129–37.

33. PRELLER 1865 is excellent and typical. The most serious attempt to tackle the Romans as a separate system is GRANT 1971; but while his premises are right, the book is disappointing, since almost 75% of it deals with heroic legends in the Greek mold and he fails in the end to carry out the investigation that his premises imply.

34. The standard biography is SCULLARD 1970. The principal ancient sources for Scipio's career are Polybius (who remained a friend of his family after Scipio's death and who consulted contemporaries about events in Scipio's lifetime) and Livy; but since Livy used Polybius among his sources, a good bit of energy has been expended upon sorting out the Polybian information in Livy from what he may have taken from other sources, such as Coelius Antipater, Claudius Quadrigarius, and Valerius Antias (cf. SCULLARD 1970, 25–27 and *passim*).

35. BIBBER 1973, 879–80, where she also has full references to work on the Scipio portraits, but she does not know Scullard's arguments. BRECKENRIDGE 1973, 838 notes that Julius Caesar was the first living Roman whose coin-image was authorized for Roman moneyers, and this by special decree of the Senate.

36. Named from the moneyer who minted the coins, Cn. Cornelius Blasio, who is dated by BROUGHTON 1952 (=MRR II), 436 to about the year 105.

37. Nor is he really interested in the signet-ring portrait, since it is signed by a Greek, Herakleidas (BRECKENRIDGE 1973, 845).

38. A portrait ring of Scipio is attested in Val. Max. 3.5.1, referring to Scipio's son, Lucius: *e manu eius anulum, in quo caput Africani sculptum erat, detraxerunt* ("and they pulled his ring from his hand, on which the head of Africanus had been molded").

39. *Non defuit maioribus grata mens ad praemia superiori Africano exsolvenda, si quidem maxima eius merita paribus ornamentis decorare conati sunt. Voluerunt illi statuas in comitio, in rostris, in curia, in ipsa denique Iovis optimi maximi cella ponere, voluerunt imaginem eius triumphali ornatu indutam Capitolinis pulvinaribus adplicare, voluerunt ei continuum per omnes vitae annos consulatum perpetuamque dictaturam tribuere; quorum nihil sibi neque plebiscito dari neque senatus consulto decerni patiendo, paene tantum se in recusandis honoribus gessit quantum egerat in emerendis.* On honorific statues at Rome, Pliny has a lengthy and interesting discursus: *N.H.* 34.20–32.

40. By an odd coincidence, the Barcid family of Carthage, including Hannibal himself, did portray themselves as Hercules on Spanish coins of the era. This Hercules is again the Tyrian Melqart in whose temple Alexander insisted upon sacrificing (see above), transported to Carthage with the rest of their Tyrian heritage.

41. The sources for Cato's life are many and varied. The most important are the full-fledged *Vita* by Plutarch; the quasi-biographical dialogue, *Cato seu De Senectute* by Cicero; numerous passages in Livy, whose work is intact for most of Cato's lifetime; and two lesser biographies, one by Cornelius Nepos and one by the anonymous author of *De Viris Illustribus*. In addition, a considerable amount of Cato's own work has survived, of which the fragments of some 80 speeches are most relevant for our purposes. The standard reference work to these fragments is MALCOVATI 1976; references in this paper to Catonian fragments are by fragment (F) number. The most significant modern study is ASTIN 1978, which supersedes all previous biographies; see also RUEBEL 1972 and 1977, and SANSONE 1989. TOYNBEE 1965, 500–17 has a solid, but impressionistic and moralistic comparison of Scipio and Cato worthy of Plutarch

himself; for the comparison, see also RUEBEL 1977. By far the most complete ancient source is Plutarch, to which I refer (abbreviated *Cato*) in the edition of Sansone (whose translations I also cite).

42. The notion of "image," which is an undercurrent throughout this article, has increasingly been recognized as no modern anachronism: see now YAVETZ 1983, esp. 214–27 on *existimatio* and *fama*, though Yavetz confines himself to political image-making as traditionally understood (laws, alliances).

43. Cf. e.g., F 128 M⁴: *ego iam a principio in parsimonia atque in duritia atque in industria omnem adulescentiam meam abstinui, agro colendo, saxis Sabinis, silicibus repastinandis atque consererendis*. ("For I already from the first had spent my entire youth in frugality and in hardship and in work, tilling the soil amid Sabine rocks, digging up and replanting pebbles.") In addition to frugality, Cato stresses his commitment to the farmer-soldier mystique: *De Agric.* praef. 4: *at ex agricolis et viri fortissimi et milites strenuissimi gignuntur* ("But from farmers arise the bravest men and most energetic soldiers"); F 124 M⁴, F 128 M⁴.

44. He was not so much hostile to Greek, which he knew well, or to Greeks or hellenizers, many of whom he counted among his friends, as he was actively and aggressively pro-Roman. See, extensively, ASTIN 1978, 153–81. It seems to me even so that Astin has not portrayed the complexity of Cato's attitude, which resembled that of sensitive Romans of all periods: *timeo Danaos et dona ferentes* (cf. RUEBEL 1972, 112–15).

45. Plut. *Cato* 2.1. Later (3.1), Plutarch also tells us that Cato's property bordered that of P. Valerius Flaccus, whose estate may be located near Eretum on the basis of Val. Max. 2.4.5: *habitabat enim in villa sua propter vicum Sabinae regionis Eretum* ("for he used to live on his estate near the town of Eretum in the Sabine region"; cf. WISEMAN 1971, 195). Hence, Dentatus and Cato both lived near Eretum as well.

46. SANSONE 1989, 205 has a fine note on this passage, in which he points out that Dentatus surprised the embassy both by the poverty of his fare and by the fact that he was cooking it himself. Sansone also argues, correctly, that Plutarch's source for the story was Cato's *Origines*; that Cato is said by Nepos (3.4) not to have used names in the *Origines* does not weaken this argument, for in fact Nepos only says that Cato omitted the names of the generals of battles: *atque horum bellorum duces non nominavit sed sine nominibus res notavit* ("and he did not name the generals of these wars, but noted events without names"); see also ASTIN 1978, 232–33. In Cicero's version of the Dentatus story (*De Off.* 3.40), the narrator says *audiebamus* (imperfect tense), which suggests that Cato used the story often.

47. Liv. 34.15.9 ("by no means a detractor from his own praises"); see also Plut. *Cato* 14.2.

48. Sansone notes that this statue is "otherwise unattested"; but in my view Cicero meant to paraphrase the inscription in *Pro Milone* 68: *sed quis non intellegit omnis tibi rei publicae partis aegras et labantis, ut eas his armis sanares et confirmares, esse commissas?* ("But who does not realize that all parts of the republic have been entrusted to you, sick and failing as they are, so that you might restore them to health and strengthen them with these weapons?"). This reference was made in 52, just after the burning of the very Basilica Porcia that Cato himself had built. Cicero's Latin is likely to be closer to the original than Plutarch's translation.

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