TransAntiquity

Cross-Dressing and Transgender Dynamics
in the Ancient World

Edited by Domitilla Campanile,
Filippo Carlà-Uhink, and
Margherita Facella

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TransAntiquity explores transgender practices, in particular cross-dressing, and their literary and figurative representations in antiquity. It offers a ground-breaking study of cross-dressing, both the social practice and its conceptualization, and its interaction with normative prescriptions on gender and sexuality in the ancient Mediterranean world. Special attention is paid to the reactions of the societies of the time, the impact transgender practices had on individuals' symbolic and social capital, as well as the reactions of institutionalized power and the juridical systems. The variety of subjects and approaches demonstrates just how complex and widespread "transgender dynamics" were in antiquity.

Domitilla Campanile (PhD 1992) is Associate Professor of Roman History at the University of Pisa, Italy.

Filippo Carlà-Uhink is Lecturer in Classics and Ancient History at the University of Exeter, UK. After studying in Turin and Udine, he worked as a lecturer at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, and as Assistant Professor for Cultural History of Antiquity at the University of Mainz, Germany.

Margherita Facella is Associate Professor of Greek History at the University of Pisa, Italy. She was Visiting Associate Professor at Northwestern University, USA, and a Research Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation at the University of Münster, Germany.

Routledge monographs in classical studies

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Contributors

Domitilla Campanile (PhD Ancient History 1992) is Associate Professor at the University of Pisa, where she has taught courses on Roman history, historical geography, and history of ancient historiography since 2001.

Campanile's main research areas include republican political history, the economic and social history of Asia Minor, religion in Asia Minor, the imperial cult, cultural life during the Early Empire, the Second Sophistic, Roman historiography, the reception of classics in Hollywood movies, and the presence of Greek myth and literature in popular culture. She is an advisory editor for *Studi Classici e Orientali* and *ClassicoContemporaneo*.

Filippo Carlà-Uhink is Lecturer in Classics and Ancient History at the University of Exeter. After studying in Turin and Udine, he worked as a lecturer at the University of Heidelberg and as Assistant Professor for Cultural History of Antiquity at the University of Mainz. His main research areas are the social and economic history of the Roman world, the history of the Roman Republic, the cultural history of ancient Rome, with particular attention to space concepts and the construction of space, as well as the construction of normative social behaviours and values, and the reception of antiquity in modern media. Among his publications are *L'oro nella tarda antichità. Aspetti economici e sociali* (Zamorani 2009), *Questioni tardoantiche. Storia e mito della "svolta costantiniana"* (with M. G. Castello, Aracne 2010), *Economia e finanza a Roma* (with A. Marcone, Il Mulino 2011), as well as the articles "Pasolini, Aristotle and Freud: Filmed Drama between Psychoanalysis and 'Neoclassicism'" (in I. Berti and M. G. Morcillo (eds) *Hellas on Screen*, Steiner 2008); "Milan, Ravenna, Rome: Some Reflections on the Cult of the Saints and of Civic Politics in Late Antique Italy" (in *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 45(2), 2010, pp. 197–272); "Pomerium, fines and ager Romanus: Understanding Rome's First Boundary" (in *Latomus* 74, 2015, pp. 599–630). He edited the collective books *Gift Giving and the "Embedded" Economy in the Ancient World* (with M. Gori, Winter 2014) and *Caesar, Attila und Co.: Comics und die Antike* (Philipp von Zabern 2014).

Alexandra Eppinger is a teaching fellow in Ancient History at the Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, where she teaches courses on Roman history and

numismatics. She was awarded a PhD in Classical Archaeology by the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg in 2013. Her dissertation focused on the role of Hercules in Late Antiquity, and was published as *Hercules in der Spätantike. Die Rolle des Heros im Spannungsfeld von Heidentum und Christentum* (Harrassowitz 2015). Her research interests include late antique cultural history, ancient discourses on sexuality and gender, the intersection of pagan and early Christian practices, and atheism in antiquity.

Margherita Facella is Associate Professor of Greek History at the University of Pisa. She was Visiting Associate Professor at the Northwestern University (Chicago, IL) and a research fellow of the Alexander von Humbold Stiftung at the University of Münster. Her research focuses on the political and cultural history of the Hellenistic and Roman Near East, in particular of Commagene, where she participates in the excavations and investigations conducted by the University of Münster's Forschungsstelle Asia Minor. She is author of *La dinastia degli Orontidi nella Commagene ellenistico-romana* (Giardini 2006) and co-editor of the volumes *Kingdoms and Principalities in the Roman Near East* (with T. Kaizer, Franz Steiner Verlag 2010) and *Lokale identität im Römischen Nahen Osten: Kontexte und Perspektiven* (with M. Blömer and E. Winter, Franz Steiner Verlag 2010).

Fabio Guidetti received his PhD in Art History in 2011 from the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, with a thesis on the use of ceremonial chariots in Late Antiquity. He was an affiliated fellow of the American Academy in Rome in 2008/2009 and held a Frances A. Yates fellowship at the Warburg Institute in 2014/2015. As a member of the research group on Illustrated Astronomical Manuscripts at the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, he has edited two volumes on ancient astronomy (*Antiche stelle a Bisanzio*, Edizioni della Normale 2013; and *Poesia delle stelle*, Edizioni della Normale, forthcoming). He currently works as a postdoctoral fellow at the TOPOI project at the Humboldt University in Berlin. He has published widely on various aspects of ancient art, history, and religion. His research interests include the study of Roman visual, literary, political, and religious culture; ancient and modern antiquarianism; the reception and transmission of texts and images from Antiquity to the Middle Ages.

Martijn Icks is a Lecturer in Ancient History at Queen's University Belfast. He obtained his PhD at the University of Nijmegen with a thesis that was subsequently published as *The Crimes of Elagabalus: The Life and Legacy of Rome's Decadent Boy Emperor* (I.B. Tauris 2011). From 2009 to 2011, he held a Marie Curie fellowship at the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg. With Eric Shiraev, he published the edited volume *Character Assassination throughout the Ages* (Palgrave Macmillan 2014). His current research interests include reception studies, imperial visibility in Late Antiquity, and the art of defamation from Antiquity to the present.

Fiorella La Guardia studied Classics, specializing in Anthropology of Ancient Greece, at the University of Pisa, where she also acquired her PhD in Classics

(2007). Her doctoral research focused on the ethnic interrelationships between Greeks and non-Greeks in Ancient Sicily from the eighth to the fourth centuries BCE. She has published articles on various topics relating to ancient Greek culture and the study of Sicilian folk tradition. Her current research is conducted in collaboration with the Laboratorio di Antropologia del Mondo Antico at the University of Pisa (http://lama.fileli.unipi.it), and extends to a range of topics in ancient Greek myth and religion, funerary customs, and Sicilian folklore.

Enrico Medda is Professor of Greek Literature at the University of Pisa, and co-editor of the journal *LEXIS. Poetica, retorica e comunicazione nella tradizione classica*. His main research interests are in ancient Greek poetry, theatre, and oratory; he is currently preparing a critical edition with commentary of Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*. He is author of *La forma monologica. Ricerche su Omero e Sofocle* (Scuola Normale Superiore 1983), *La tragedia sulla scena* (with V. Di Benedetto, Einaudi 1997*)*, *Lysiae in Hippothersem, in Theomnestum et fragmenta ex incertis orationibus* (Le Monnier 2003), *La saggezza dell'illusione. Studi sul teatro greco* (ETS 2013), and has co-edited the volume *ΚΩΜΩΙΔΟΤΡΑΓΩΙΔΙΑ. Intersezioni del tragico e del comico nel teatro del V secolo a.C.* (Edizioni della Normale 2005). He has also published translations with commentary of Euripides' *Orestes* (Rizzoli 2001) and *Phoenissae* (Rizzoli 2006) and of the whole corpus of the orations of Lysias (Rizzoli 1991–1995).

Andrea Raggi, (PhD Ancient History 2003) is currently Associate Professor in Roman History at the University of Pisa where he teaches Roman history, Greek epigraphy and juridical epigraphy. He was a visiting graduate student at Brasenose College, University of Oxford, under the supervision of Professor Fergus Millar (1998/1999), and a visiting postdoctoral fellow at the Department of Classics, Northwestern University (Evanston, IL) (2004/2005). His research focuses on the political history of the Late Roman Republic; the spread of Roman citizenship in the provinces; the administrative history of the Roman Empire. He has published numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals, and is author of *Seleuco di Rhosos. Cittadinanza e privilegi nel l'Oriente greco in età tardo-repubblicana* (Giardini editori e stampatori 2006), a book which was awarded the silver medal at the Seventh Gérard Boulvert International Prize in Roman Law competition in 2007.

Valerio Simini studied Classics and Egyptology at the University of Pisa, specializing in the study of ancient music. He has published various articles and is co-author of a book on music and lyrics in ancient Egypt, *Sono venuta correndo a cercarti, Canzoni e musica nell'antico Egitto* (with M. Betrò, ETS 2009).

Christian Stoffel is a research assistant in the Department of Classics at the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn (Germany) and co-editor of the classical online journal *thersites*. He has published articles and book chapters on space in Latin literature, on the aesthetics of shipwrecking and erotic dreams in Roman epics, on Roman declamation and on classical

reception (in pop culture). He is currently finishing his dissertation on nocturnal spaces in Roman prose literature.

Chiara O. Tommasi, former student of Classics at the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa (1991–1995), received her PhD from the University of Pisa (2000), where she is currently Lecturer of History of Religions. She has published extensively on poetry of the fifth and sixth centuries CE (Corippus, Dracontius, the Latin Anthology, Sidonius Apollinaris) and on "esoteric" trends in Latin culture, investigating the reception of Gnosticism and Platonism in authors like Tertullian, Apuleius, and Marius Victorinus. Her most recent work is a monograph on Martianus Capella, *The Bee-Orchid. Religione e cultura in Marziano Capella* (M. D'Auria 2012). She is currently working on a monograph about Lucan and religion, and on a commentary on Arnobius of Sicca's *The Case against the Pagans*.

Bobby Xinyue is a teaching fellow in Latin Language and Literature at the University of Warwick, and was previously a Lecturer in Classics and Ancient History at the University of Exeter. He studied at Oxford and in London and completed his PhD at University College London. His published work so far has dealt with Augustan poetry.

Preface

*Domitilla Campanile, Filippo Carlà-Uhink,
and Margherita Facella*

It is well known that over the centuries a dual perception has arisen about the ancient world, in particular about Rome. On the one hand stands the Classical Antiquity of white marble and philosophical discussions on the nature of Being, or on the perfect constitution, while on the other stands a sordid world of lust and depravity, of which the orgies and perversions of the emperors were emblematic. Subsequently, all this second side was relegated to the erotica cabinets in museums, serving as a visual reminder of the "moral change" brought about by Christianity. This ambiguity notoriously created difficulties for the writers and scholars who were presenting the ancient world to their readers, and these difficulties were bound only to increase when, as evinced from the ancient sources, episodes of cross-dressing, or more generally of transgender performance, also came into play. Generally, they were either glossed over or presented as a sign of moral depravity.

A good example is afforded by the story of the reception given to Emperor Elagabalus, which has been studied in recent years by Martijn Icks (one of the contributors to this volume). [1] Elagabalus is relevant to our topic, as the ancient sources frequently mention his cross-dressing, his habit of referring to himself with feminine names, as well as his desire to become a woman. While up to the mid-nineteenth century, to put it very schematically, Elagabalus had been represented as "the tyrant" and characterized by unbridled depravity, which the "good authors" would not even dare to define more specifically (Tillemont, for instance, just alludes to a "continuous sequence of crimes against decency, against humanity and against all sorts of laws" committed by this emperor),[2] the rise of the Decadent movement in art and literature brought about a *rapprochement*, whereby he was seen as a predecessor of the lifestyle celebrated by the movement, until the emancipation movements, in particular in the twentieth century, finally led to the young Syrian emperor's rehabilitation, enabling him to be viewed as a precursor of the gay liberation movement.[3]

This brief if oversimplified story reveals that circumstances have indeed changed over the intervening decades and centuries, and at different stages, episodes such as those known about Elagabalus, as well as ancient sexuality and sexual morality in general, attracted a growing attention. But another mistake arose: relying on the categorization of people as "hetero-" or "homosexual", in itself dating from the second half of the nineteenth century, [4] most episodes of

transgender performance were perceived as indicators of the performers' sexual orientation. It was thus that Elagabalus became a "gay icon", an appropriation that, while understandable and appropriate from the point of view of the gay movement, from a scholarly perspective is nonetheless anachronistic.

Only a special category of transgender performance escaped this destiny – that practised in religious ceremonies, which has become a field of studies of particular interest to the structuralist school. Starting from the seminal works by Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner,[5] and culminating in the publications by Pierre Vidal-Naquet and Claude Calame,[6] structuralism has concentrated on cross-dressing rituals in and for themselves, abstracting them from the abundance of other similar practices and actions, with the inevitable consequence of simplifying and confining a more multifaceted and widespread phenomenon. It is particularly important to highlight that this isolation of cultic cross-dressing went hand-in-hand, in the structuralist school, with its interpretation not as a form of transition or a crossing of gender boundaries, but rather as a "sublimation" into an ideal "hermaphroditic" status which was perceived as an "archetype".[7]

In this sense, all those disciplines dedicated to the study of the ancient world – ranging from Ancient History and Archaeology, to the Cultural History of Antiquity or the Study of Ancient Religions – have long trailed behind any developments or paradigms being established in social and gender studies. Indeed, from Marjorie Garber's seminal study on cross-dressing, which argued that transvestism cross-culturally represents the Lacanian "Third",[8] and from the introduction and establishment of the term "transgender" as an umbrella concept in the 1990s to criticism of this term and, as a corrective, the rise of the concept of "genderqueer", the amount of literature on the topic has increased exponentially.[9]

In this regard, interdisciplinary communication seems to have been lacking, determining a delay in the field of Classics and Ancient History that we wish to highlight and address. While, for instance, studies on sexuality in the ancient world (its sexual morality and sexual roles, along with "homo-" and "bisexuality") have flourished over the last three decades,[10] implicitly or explicitly their theoretical starting point, even when it comes in for criticism, is based on Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, published between 1976 and 1984,[11] and on Judith Butler's studies, in particular *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies that Matter*. Now, while Butler has undoubtedly made a significant contribution to gender studies, as well as indirectly facilitating an understanding of gender from different historical periods, it needs to be underlined that the harshest critics of her works come precisely from the transgender sphere: Butler's main thesis, that every form of body, sex, and gender is produced by the dominant hegemonic power (heteronormativity), has in actual fact been perceived to suppress the urgency of personal identity at the root of most transgender experiences.

Little of all these debates has filtered into other disciplines, and almost nothing into the study of the ancient world. An awareness of this gap in knowledge has led a group of scholars from different disciplines (Ancient History, Classical Philology, Classical Archaeology and Egyptology) to put together a shared project. This book is the initial result of these efforts, in which the entire breadth of

transgender behaviours and performances in the ancient Mediterranean world is investigated through a strong focus on trans-disciplinary dialogue, in particular with the social sciences.

Following an introductory workshop, *Travestirsi nel mondo greco-romano*, held at the University of Pisa, Italy, on 27 and 28 May 2013, in which the preliminary results of our research were discussed, we focused on a comparison of the various perspectives which emerged there in order to elaborate a shared methodology for further research. We were then in a position to proceed to an enlargement of the field of study and of the perspectives considered, as well as extending the collaboration to more scholars.

As a result, the present volume contains 13 chapters, which explore transgender practices and their literary and figurative representations in the ancient Mediterranean world. Stretching from Pharaonic Egypt to Late Antiquity, all the contributions combine a careful sifting of ancient literary, epigraphic, and visual sources with models and theories derived from the social sciences and gender studies. As a whole, the book tries to underline the interdependency of ancient perceptions of cross-dressing, transgender and their culturally constructed images, as well as their "embeddedness" in political, social, and religious practice and discourse.

As is only natural for such wide-ranging research in its initial phases, the volume does not pretend to be exhaustive, covering every aspect or manifestation of everything "transgender" in the ancient world; rather, it is a first attempt at delivering a more clearly defined image both of this social practice and of its conceptualization, as well as its coexistence with normative prescriptions affecting gender and sexuality in the various cultural, political, and social contexts.

Drawing on both gender studies and social studies in a broader sense, the first chapter by Filippo Carlà-Uhink is consistently supported by cogent theoretical reflections, and provides a general introduction to the entire volume. This systematic overview of cross-dressing aims to create an explanatory grid for its occurrences in the Greek and Roman world in order to show that cross-dressing does not generally affect the actor's gender of belonging.

Four thematically organized sections follow, which investigate cross-dressing in the social, political, and sacred spheres, in literary discourse and in mythology. The research includes both episodes of cross-dressing that actually (or most probably) took place, as well as imaginary examples of cross-dressing attested to in the literary and figurative tradition, which are indicative of the perception of this phenomenon by the society of the time. The study has been approached from different (sometimes even opposing) perspectives, which in our opinion integrate with, rather than contradict, each other: indeed, the heterogeneous nature of the results at which the different contributions arrive enriches the volume and constitutes its strength.

In other words, this volume represents a starting point rather than a point of arrival (hence the absence of a final chapter with conclusions): this is just a first step, which we want to present to the community of scholars, in the hope that it may encounter their favour and attract their interest, leading to the formation of a broader and more diverse network of people working on the subject.

This Preface would not be complete without acknowledging the essential contribution of the University of Pisa, which financially supported the workshop of 2013. Our thanks go also to the director of the university's Dipartimento di Civiltà e forme del sapere, Alessandro Polsi, for his encouragement and participation in the meeting.

We would also like to thank the participants who have shown themselves to be passionate about the subject and patient with our never-ending suggestions. The anonymous reviewers provided us with extremely helpful comments for improving the book from the initial proposal we submitted. Last, but not least, this book owes a great deal to Elizabeth MacDonald-Zoppi, who revised the language and style of the contributions, to Amy Davis-Poynter and Elizabeth Thomasson, the editor and editorial assistant at Routledge who took care of this project, and to Carlo Ferrari, who took care of a formal revision of the volume and composed the index.

Notes

1 Icks 2011, in particular pp. 123–213.
2 On this remark by Le Nain de Tillemont, see Icks 2011, p. 127.
3 See Nugent 2008.
4 See, for example, Foucault 1976, pp. 132–135; Greenberg 1988, pp. 3–4.
5 van Gennep 1909; Turner 1967.
6 Vidal-Naquet 1968a, 1968b, 1981, 1989; Calame 1977.
7 For example, Brisson 1976, 1986.
8 Garber 1992.
9 For an introduction, see Stryker and Whittle 2006.
10 It is impossible to provide a succinct overview of the literature on this topic; we will therefore refer here only to the "classics" in the field, such as Dover 1978, Dalla 1987, Skinner 2005, Langlands 2006, Cantarella 2007, Davidson 2007, and Williams 2010.
11 Foucault 1976, 1984a, 1984b.

Part I

Transgender dynamics in the ancient social and political space

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1 "Between the human and the divine"

Cross-dressing and transgender dynamics in the Graeco-Roman world

Filippo Carlà-Uhink

Introduction

The decision to dedicate a collective volume to cross-dressing and transgender dynamics in the ancient world necessarily requires an introductory explanation.[1] While the first concept is clear, in that it is taken to refer to a series of practices whose relevance and meaning (for instance, in religious rituals) have already been explored in scholarship, subsuming these practices into the bigger frame of transgender dynamics, as happens throughout this volume, is new and requires explanation. The concept "transgender" is a modern category, developed in the 1990s as an "umbrella" term to cover and define the range of experiences of those who, for a short time or for most of their lives, behaviourally adopt elements (from clothes to anatomical characteristics) generally attributed to a gender which does not correspond to their sex at birth. It is, therefore, a category that is completely different, if not opposed, to that of homosexuality, and has an ontological nature.[2] Starting from the premise that a new vocabulary has the power to generate the object it defines,[3] it is clear that a transgender identity has existed only since the last decade of the twentieth century.[4] Additionally, the concept of transgender has recently come in for very strong criticism: it has been underlined, for example, how academic definitions of transgender often fail to mirror the real-life experience,[5] as this concept – until very recent times – has also only partially managed to emerge from the academic milieu, and enter the collective perception of gender and sex, in which identity and orientation are still generally strongly connected.[6] At the same time, by ontologizing the ideas of gender and of sexuality, it obscures the intersections of these categories with concepts of class, ethnicity, nationality, wealth, education, etc.[7]

Nonetheless, in Classical Antiquity, it is possible to identify forms of behaviour and action which might fall into our modern category of transgender. Starting from a constructivist view of gender as performance,[8] all those behaviours implying a performative assumption of characteristics, which, in the culture of reference, are not generally ascribed to the birth sex of the actor, can be defined as transgender. In this sense, this volume does not deal, for instance, with herma-phroditism, which is the co-presence of masculine and feminine physical

and/or performative characteristics, or with the passage from one gender to another.[9]

It is not only an exercise in definition, since it is obvious that one cannot investigate ancient sexuality through modern categories; the question as to whether the ancients were more or less tolerant is in this sense by no means historical,[10] despite whatever political relevance it may have acquired outside academia.[11] But a systematic analysis of such behaviours in their cultural and social contexts,[12] such as we wish to offer in this volume, highlights a complex code of behavioural norms and perceptions and, more generally, aspects of ancient sexuality which would otherwise be only partially visible. Starting from Foucault's assumption that sexuality is experience, and thus a correlation of knowledge, norm, and subjectivity,[13] this introductory chapter aims to shed light on mentalities, structures of power, forms of political self-representation, and on their reciprocal connections. In order to achieve that, I will first analyse the adoption of transgender elements in discourse, and illustrate thus the mental structures underlying gender issues in the Graeco-Roman world. After that, I will reflect on the practice of cross-dressing in Classical Antiquity, and finally, I will concentrate on some very significant examples of "performative gender (self)reassignment".[14] All in all, I will argue that Greek and Roman mentality recognized gender boundaries as a central element, constitutive of the human – their transgression was admitted only as part of a "posthuman world", and therefore considered as revealing a divine nature or a divine protection.

The "transgender discourse"

A clear distinction between gender identity and sexual orientation, as known in Western (intellectual elite) culture since Simone de Beauvoir,[15] could not have existed prior to the introduction in the nineteenth century of the category of homosexual. Before that moment (and still today in more conservative milieus), a person who was recognized as sexually "deviant" compared to the admitted norm, was defined or labelled according to the categories of the other gender.[16] The deviant male has, thus, been feminized in discourse, and the deviant female masculinized. This is what I define as "transgender discourse". While in the ancient world, as in the modern, such socially dominant discourse could have contributed, in a situational way, to changing the forms of self-representation (as in the well-known case of male homosexuals adopting feminized modes of expression),[17] the application of this kind of discourse does not require any kind of transgender practice, such as cross-dressing. A few examples will suffice. As is well known, homosexual practices were accepted when they fell within specific culturally defined boundaries, and censored when they infringed them.[18] In Greece, the main boundary was connected to the age of the people involved: over a certain age, it was considered "deviant" to have a passive role in homosexual acts,[19] incurring the risk of being framed as feminine, as shown on many occasions, for example, by Aristophanes.[20] In this case, deciding whether the central issue was not penetration but desire is irrelevant, since an excessive and insatiable sexual

desire was attributed to women, and is therefore part of the same feminizing discourse.[21]

Aeschines' *Against Timarchos* provides a very good example: in 346 BCE, the orator successfully rebutted an accusation against himself by arguing that, according to Athenian law, Timarchos was not authorized to speak in front of the assembly, because he had been a prostitute.[22] The speech makes it absolutely clear that intercourse between an *erastes* and *eromenos* in accordance with the traditional norms is perfectly acceptable.[23] Aeschines thus pretends not to linger on what Timarchos did as a boy, as if this had been "pardoned";[24] in point of fact, however, it was not possible to criticize it in the first place,[25] and it is alluded to only so that an overview of Timarchos's "sexual development" may be provided. A passive role in homosexual acts adopted by adult male citizens could not be punished, but it could be ridiculed – and this is precisely what Aeschines does, in order to present the public with a negative image of Timarchos (which also includes excessive drinking).[26]

Timarchos's relationship with Hegesandros is thus presented in strongly feminized terms:

> During the same archon-year in which he was on the Council, Hegesandros the brother of Krobylos was a treasurer of the goddess' funds; they were engaged in stealing, collectively and very amicably, a thousand drachmai from the city. A reputable man, Pamphilos of Acherdous, discovered the affair; he ran up against Timarchos and was very angry with him, so at an Assembly he rose and spoke: "Athenians, they are stealing from you, a man and a woman together, a thousand drachmai". When you expressed astonishment, about how it could be a man and a woman, and what the story was, he went on after a bit: "Don't you understand what I'm saying? The man is Hegesandros over there, though he too used himself to be Leodamas' woman; the woman is Timarchos here".[27]

The transgender element in the discourse is so strong that Aeschines even claims that a failure to condemn Timarchos would lead to the women becoming uncontrollable.[28] Aeschines is not new to this, since here, as in other speeches, he has also attacked Demosthenes' *anandria*, his lack of masculinity, by highlighting the femininity of his clothes.[29] A deviation from normative masculinity implies an automatic passage to a feminine type of vocabulary. Such discursive use of references to the other sex is recurrent throughout the most diverse literary genres, ranging from Hypereides, according to whom nature clearly divided humanity into men and women, and men ought not to be disrespectful of the "gift" they have received by attempting to transform into women,[30] to Epictetus, who condemns men who depilate their bodies by using nature as his argument, because they ignore the boundary between masculine and feminine.[31]

In Rome, saliency was accorded instead to social status: the passive role was unacceptable if the active participant was of inferior status, and this applied particularly when a citizen was penetrated by a slave.[32] With the first century BCE

and the "Hellenization" of Roman culture, age may also have become a more relevant factor than before, along the lines of the Greek model, as may be seen in Caesarian and Augustan poetry.[33] Deviant behaviours could be legally forbidden, for instance by the *Lex Scatinia*, even if it was probably very rarely applied,[34] as well as leading to social and political penalties such as, according to the praetor's edict, the prohibition to make applications on behalf of others.[35] Above and beyond this, as in Greece, this points to a feminization in critical discourse. Examples range again from oratory (Cicero on Catiline and on Antony),[36] to epigrams (Martial), to satire (in particular, Juvenal 2). Martial's epigram 1.24, for example, is entirely played out against the contrast between a masculine exterior appearance (and a masculine form of political engagement) and sexual practices that are feminized through the use of the verb *nupsit*.[37]

The passive role in homosexual intercourse is thus defined as *muliebria pati* (by Sallust, Tacitus, and Ulpian).[38] Once again, the feminization does not imply any form of transgender practice; it applies to any behaviour which is perceived as not appropriate for a Roman citizen or, from the philosophical perspective of a Cicero or a Seneca, as being "against nature". Living according to nature means not only procreating, but generally keeping to the *decus* of the Roman *vir*.[39] When "passive homosexuals" (a concept no Roman would have understood) are deprived of particular rights, with the argument that women have never enjoyed them,[40] the point is no different. Once again, the proximity is purely discursive, as these same people have not been deprived of many other rights which women have never had,[41] and it is wrong to claim that in the general perception deviant males are entirely transformed into women.[42]

In the sixth satire, Juvenal also presents effeminate men ("similar to the *cinaedi*"), who move and dress like women; but this is a sign of moral degeneration which has no relevance in the sexual sphere since, as the poet continues, such people are the most dangerous when it comes to seducing the wives of other men.[43] Practices which deviate from the recognized norm of gendered behaviour are thus presented as belonging to the other sex, whether they are of a sexual nature or not, and in discourse therefore imply a gender switch, without, however, implying any sort of transgender enactment.[44] This becomes particularly evident when this type of discourse is used without any reference to sexual practices, but in more general forms of criticism of any deviation from the "good old" traditions.[45] Polybius writes that Prusias of Bithynia knelt in front of the Senate and the gods as a woman;[46] Hannibal appears to have complained about his soldiers, who had become women because of living in the lap of luxury;[47] Pompey the Great was considered feminine because he was too deeply in love with his young wife;[48] Hadrian "wept like a woman" when Antinous died.[49] Cowardice in war is another form of behaviour which automatically entails a feminization of discourse,[50] including the statement in Plato's *Timaios* that women are the reincarnation of cowardly men.[51] Even Catullus, in a much less critical way, uses elements traditionally attributed to femininity to describe his brother, in order "to articulate an experiential and epistemological stance outside the normative masculine symbolic".[52] On the same page, there is also some medical literature: when Caelius Aurelianus, who derives

his information from Soranus of Ephesus, describes effeminate men who dress and walk like women, he is not hinting at a sex change or the practice of cross-dressing; what this, in fact, amounts to is a discursive assimilation of behaviour in order to provide subsequently a "biological" explanation for this "corruption".[53]

This kind of feminization is also frequent in the creation of ethnic stereotypes, and particularly in the description of peoples who are accused of *tryphe*: from a Greek perspective, the Persians, the Lydians, and the Etruscans; for the Romans, the Etruscans and the Greeks (especially of Southern Italy). Velleius Paterculus applies the typical Etruscan stereotypes to Maecenas, who "when any relaxation was allowed him from business cares would almost outdo a woman in giving himself up to indolence and soft luxury"[54]: what is criticized in him is actually his penchant for luxuriousness, never his sexual behaviour. Martial compares himself, a hairy Spaniard, to the depilated Corinthian who cannot claim to be his brother, but rather his sister.[55]

While this kind of discourse is widespread, quite apart from any reference to sexual practices, it is nonetheless very significant for understanding how the ancient world structured its perception of gender. This offensive instrument indeed reveals that the boundary between male and female was considered to be impermeable, and underlines its importance: by connecting a form of social censorship with a slide into the opposite behavioural frame, which is automatically that of the opposite gender, the gender boundary is continually reinforced.[56] Everything is constantly dominated by a binary opposition of the genders,[57] as Corbeill has recently demonstrated through his study of grammatical gender in Latin.[58]

In explaining ancient sexuality, it is therefore a mistake to replace the male–female binary opposition with an active–passive one,[59] which may rely on similar modern models.[60] The basic polarity is the male–female one, on which the active–passive distinction is superimposed (in a way which connects masculinity with activity and femininity with passivity),[61] but also bringing into the frame the categories of age, social position (and citizenship),[62] and desire.[63]

Figure 1.1 graphically represents the ancient mind-set and the boundaries that were at stake, identifying the crucial point, in Greece as in Rome, in the role of the young men whose beauty is feminine (Lucretius's *puer membris muliebribus*).[64] They are still on the "masculine side" of the graph, since their passivity is socially acceptable, but they have yet to find a way to commence their transformation into full adult men.[65] In other words, while they are not by definition effeminate, they have not yet attained virility either,[66] and there is an acute danger that they will fail to achieve this transformation and slide back into the feminine, merely passive,[67] half of the graph. It is no coincidence that Pliny the Younger defines this moment as *in lubrico aetatis*, a "slippery point".[68]

Polemon states, in apparent contradiction to what has been said up to now, that *in masculino femininum et in feminino masculinum est*,[69] but it would be wrong to attribute excessive importance to this sentence – also considering the fact that Polemon famously "regarded effeminate physical characteristics with extreme distaste".[70] Indeed, as highlighted further by Gleason:
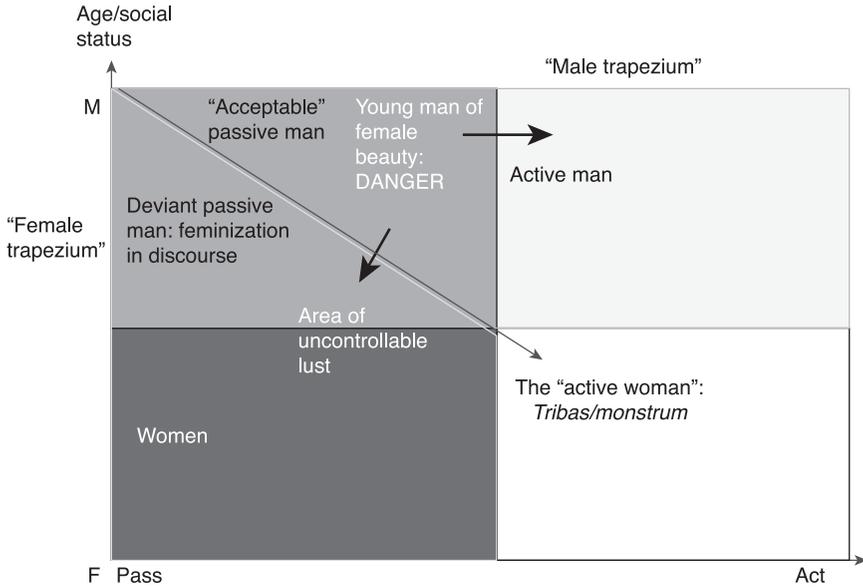
Figure 1.1 Schematic representation of gender roles in Greek and Roman mentality.

Polemon ... moves from *epiprepeia* to gender when he instructs us to determine our overall impression of a physiognomic subject, then to eliminate signs that conflict with it, and then "take a good look at the man and think over whether he seems masculine or feminine to you." At this point Polemon announces his intention to move on to animal signs but warns his reader that knowledge of these will do him no good unless he can distinguish between masculine and feminine types.[71]

The quoted sentence appears here, when the author is describing the physiognomic characteristics of what is constituted by masculine and feminine, so as to help distinguish males from females among animals. This means that he insists on the natural difference subsisting between the genders, and only argues for the existence of a series of common traits which develop differently in males and females.[72] This is stated in the clearest way by Diodorus Siculus:

Both the male and the female have each their own sexual attributes, simple and distinct, but there is also in each case an adjunct that creates a false impression and deceives the casual observer: the female, in her parts, has an appendage that resembles the male organ, and the male, conversely, has one similar in appearance to that of the female.[73]

Even Laqueur's theory that sexual dimorphism is only a modern invention, and that Antiquity conceived of the female genital organs as "internal" male organs,[74] must be rejected. While even Laqueur admits that the one-sex model is not

incompatible with a clear gender distinction,[75] a recent publication has revealed many of the book's flaws, especially in its dealing with Classical Antiquity: first of all, his model may not have been shared by the entirety of society, and "one-" and "two-sex" models coexisted in a much more complex context.[76] As Laqueur himself realized, for instance, Aristotle was "deeply committed to the existence of two radically different and distinct sexes".[77] Even with Laqueur's argument that sex is a cultural construct starting from gender,[78] the distinction between the genders and the sexes does not become less clear-cut. The ancient world is not a world in which, "there existed many genders, but only one adaptable sex",[79] and there was no possibility of moving more freely along a scheme conceived as a spectrum rather than a boundary,[80] as shown in a famous fable by Phaedrus, according to which forms of deviation originated from Prometheus' haste, following the invitation of Liberus, which caused the erroneous distribution of some parts.[81]

We are dealing with a binary opposition in which, if A diminishes, then B becomes dominant and vice versa, while never breaking the constitutive border. A feminine man is not a woman, nor is a masculine woman a man: perhaps in medical literature, the former is just a "dry woman" whose uterus has moved upwards, and the latter is a man with gonorrhoea (which implies a feminization through the loss of his virility).[82] Claudius Ptolemaeus argues in the *Tetrabiblos* that specific astral contexts provoke a weakening or a reinforcement of masculine or feminine characteristics.[83] The same is true for the world of magic: spells and talismans cannot change the gender, but can make the men effeminate and the women masculine.[84] This binary opposition is the reference point for all discourse.

The masculinization of women is dealt with in fewer sources (and Roman more often than Greek), and in these few cases, their presentation is from a purely male perspective. Thus, masculine women can sometimes be considered in a positive light: since men are, in such a mentality, superior to women, their desire to be like men can be perceived as a positive challenge against their own weakness, according to the model of the "progress narrative".[85] But even when they are presented in a negative way as emblems of the corruption of morality,[86] ancient literature (and its public) yet turns them into instruments for ridiculing their husbands (or male relatives), who, dominated by their wives, automatically become feminine.[87]

The complete domination in discourse of the binary opposition of male–female is a way of naturalizing and objectifying the dynamics of social power, since "cultural conceptions of the sexes are intimately and systematically linked to the organisation of social inequality".[88] In this sense, the ancient mind-set is comparable to modern "sex-role theories" which, by referring to biological characteristics, end up with a naturalization of discourse, adopting the biological category of sex in order to cover their lack of reference to the underlying structure.[89]

Cross-dressing in the Graeco-Roman world

The "transgender references" analysed so far, which are used to highlight any violations of masculine normativity,[90] can also be developed into a form of

punishment, a physical constriction to adopt the opposite gender in performance, which has no other function than making manifest before the entire community the abandonment of masculine normativity. This damages the social capital of the victims, but it does not imply a change in gender. Charondas of Catane decreed that deserters should wear female clothes for three days;[91] after Crassus's defeat, the Persians had a *doppelgänger* of the dead Roman general hang around dressed as a woman.[92] Such practices are not different from other forms of "humiliation of virility" foreseen by the law: adulterers in Rome could be castrated, or forced to publicly practise oral sex on and be penetrated by the husbands of their lovers; in Athens, they were raped with radishes.[93] None of this leads to any form of breach in the gender boundary, but publicly enacts an abandonment of normative manhood, as a consequence of the wrongdoers' immoral and illegal actions.[94]

In a similar way, the aforementioned connection between excessive expressions of feelings, emotional or irrational behaviour, and femininity can be found, for instance, in the explanation by Valerius Maximus and Plutarch of the Lycian funerary rites, which envisaged male-to-female cross-dressing.[95] It is, thus, no surprise if similar "transgender references" develop also into the widespread idea that cross-dressing is practised by other, barbarian cultures, which are victims of their *tryphe* and unable to correctly draw the distinction between male and female. Therefore, the Greeks and Romans behaving in this way are also framed as barbarians.[96] As an example of the tyrannical behaviour of Aristodemus of Cumae, it is said that he compelled the boys of his town to dress up like women, and the girls to look like boys.[97]

But from a moralistic perspective, the "confusion" between male and female which can be visualized and enacted in cross-dressing very often appears to be rather a matter of luxury than of sexuality:[98] as femininity was a characteristic connected with *tryphe* – "an excessive concern for one's appearance" was presented as effeminate.[99] Many cases, which have often been read against a sexual background, probably refer instead to purely aesthetic practices, such as the depilation of the body or of the eyebrows, which may have aimed to achieve a younger appearance rather than to enact a gender change.[100] Once again, their description in feminine terms represents a purely discursive shift, and does not refer to any specific sexual behaviour. Even references to "feminine garb" in the sources do not seem in many cases to allude to cross-dressing practices, referring to robes which were not designed for women, but simply perceived as too luxurious and "soft" for a normative man – for example, silk, which was forbidden to men in Rome on account of its inappropriateness for a virile appearance.[101] Men wearing clothes considered too luxurious were perceived as feminine and therefore as deviant, or as adulterers, again because of the overlapping between femininity and excessive desire, but with no reference to actual sexual practices.[102] According to Plutarch, Titus Quinctius Flamininus was astonished at the behaviour of Dinocrates of Messene, who wore women's clothes and danced, not because of the sexual connotations of this act, but simply because this appeared incompatible with his military deeds (revealing again the Roman bias against the "luxurious" Greeks).[103] In 142 BCE, Scipio Africanus the Younger attacked P. Sulpicius Ga(l)lus in a public

speech, defining him as a *cinaedus*, because he dressed in front of a mirror, wore perfume, shaved his eyebrows, and allegedly had a passive role with a man in sex (an element which must be added to the other ones, and does not derive logically from them), all things which are normatively expected from women.[104] Around 20 years later, Caius Gracchus attacked Maevius because he wore too many rings and so, "because of a womanly cupidity, he adorned himself as a woman".[105]

Seneca the Elder says that it is admissible to wear women's and slaves' clothes, but not for the praetor going to the tribunal, who otherwise is guilty of *maiestas*.[106] Ulpian distinguishes between clothes for men, children, women, and slaves,[107] while Pomponius writes that

> there is no difference between men's clothing and men's garments; but the intention of the testator makes for difficulty, if he himself had been in the habit of using certain clothing which is also suitable for women. And so, in the first place, it must be held that that clothing constitutes the legacy which the testator intended, not what is in fact female or male. For Quintus Titius also says that he knows that a certain senator was accustomed to use women's dinner dress, and if he were to leave women's clothing would not be regarded as having expressed an intention in respect of what he himself used as if it were men's clothes.[108]

As can be clearly seen, not only is there no censorship of a man wearing women's clothes (even if Ulpian defines women's clothes as those that cause, when worn by a man, *vituperatio*), but at times it also seems hard to recognize which clothes are actually masculine and which feminine. At stake is an aesthetic practice that has no implications for gender ascription or sexual behaviour.[109]

When Seneca the Younger defines cross-dressing as against nature, his perspective is the moralistic, and Stoic, one of criticizing the loss of simplicity: crossdressing is here in the same category as parties, night life, growing roses in winter, or trees on the roof. Once again, it is not clearly defined from a sexual perspective, and there is no reason to think that this passage refers in any way to a passive role in homosexual intercourse.[110] But even where a sexual connotation is clear, what Seneca points his finger at is anything "unnatural". When he writes about a slave who is shaved and dressed as a woman, engaged in a continuous battle against time so as to seem eternally young (and not a woman!), even if he is his owner's *vir* in the bedroom,[111] Seneca is again pointing at a non-philosophical life. Additionally, it is not the cross-dresser who "slides into the wrong trapezium", demonstrating once again that cross-dressing is not automatically connected to a particular sexual role or form of desire. The attitude presented by Seneca the Elder is not all that different, when he comes up against the case of a young man who, having crossdressed, was then raped by ten of his peers. While the orator is surprised, as was his nephew, at the unnatural behaviour, it is clear that the law still recognizes the raped young man as a complete male, quite apart from the clothes he was wearing.[112]

Thus cross-dressing and its perceptions and conceptualizations do not trouble an essentialist position, in which male and female are clearly defined genders with

natural characteristics which must be respected. In other words, transvestism does not contribute to greater fluidity of the gender boundary, but ultimately reinforces it. This is particularly clear in the cases of functional cross-dressing, which is encountered in both myth and history.[113] Examples range from Achilles hiding on Skyros – a way of cross-dressing which will only serve to highlight his masculinity[114] – to the necessity of transvestism in order to enter contexts forbidden to a gender (e.g. Clodius who takes part in the celebrations for Bona Dea),[115] or to the military stratagems which imply the cross-dressing of at least a group of the soldiers.[116] Hymen's donning of female dress to follow his beloved to the Eleusinian Mysteries, to be there kidnapped with the other girls, also belongs to this category, as well as Leucippus's instance of cross-dressing to trick Daphne, who despised the male sex.[117] Female-to-male cross-dressing is also very often functional, since it again falls into the category of the "progress narrative", allowing women to access resources and opportunities, which they otherwise would not have.[118] This is valid for the fictional story of the Athenian women dressing up as men to vote in the *ekklesia* in Aristophanes' *Ekklesiazusae*; for Agnodice of Athens, the first female physician, who had to dress as a man in order to learn and practise medicine, and was then put on trial under suspicion of having seduced the women of the city;[119] for Axiothea from Phlius, who was supposed to have cross-dressed to take part in Plato's lectures;[120] or for the wife of Calvisius Sabinus, who had to look like a soldier to be able to visit a military camp.[121]

A symbolic form of female-to-male cross-dressing, which again does not endanger gender boundaries, underpins the law which forced prostitutes in Rome to wear a toga. Similar provisions are known to have occurred also in other periods (such as Venice in the Middle Ages). Once again, this seems to confirm the gender boundary: prostitutes break the limits socially imposed on normative women, and signal this by a performative switch to the other gender, and thus to male clothes.[122] This is not incompatible with Duncan's interpretation, according to which this was an additional unmasking of the prostitutes as actresses.[123]

The proximity of cross-dressing to acting underlies indeed the best-known and most controversial case of cross-dressing in the ancient world: Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*.[124] Even if the comedy has a wealth of allusions to Agathon's sexual passivity, which is once again criticized because of his age (Aelian also confirms that on account of his beauty, Agathon continued to be passive even when he was too old for that),[125] this has nothing to do with the transgender performance. Indeed, the main cross-dresser in the comedy is not Agathon, but Mnesilochos, who becomes Palamedes, then Helen, and finally Andromeda.[126] The entire comedy revolves around the topic of veridicity and fiction in literary works, and especially the theatre. Agathon, an author of tragedies, owns women's clothes, but he wears them – as he explicitly states – when he writes verses for female characters:

> [M]y dress is in harmony with my thoughts. A poet must adopt the nature of his characters. Thus, if he is placing women on the stage, he must contract

all their habits in his own person. . . . If the heroes are men, everything in him will be manly. What we don't possess by nature, we must acquire by imitation.[127]

The point at stake is thus imitation, but imposed on a gender – and a nature – which are undoubtedly masculine; this cross-dressing is therefore once again perceived by the mind-set of the ancient world as functional.[128] Even when he refuses to help Euripides since he would be too good as a woman, and would end up stealing all the boyfriends, Agathon moves on the level of mimetic perfection, and not of sexual issues.

Theatrical representations imply cross-dressing and thus the violation of gender norms, as shown by Garber.[129] As argued by Bassi and Duncan, theatre simultaneously reveals and unmasks the dynamics and mechanisms which produce and regulate social conventions about gender, and in the same way can endanger those conventions, generating alienation among the spectators.[130] Plutarch's *Life of Phokion* refers to an actor who had to impersonate a queen; he was strongly criticized because he wanted many handmaidens and thus, because of the easy short-circuit between reality and representation underpinning also Aristophanes' comedy, he would have corrupted the Athenian women.[131] The issue at stake is therefore whether acting should be inspired by identification (the actor performs roles similar to his character) or simply be considered a *techne*, in connection with the moral debate about reality and *mimesis*.[132] As argued by Duncan, Agathon is the personification – and not only in his representation in the *Thesmophoriazusae* – of the tension between the different conceptions of theatre and acting, between constructivism and essentialism.[133] His changing gender here is therefore unsettling in connection with the problem of verisimilitude, imitation, identity and its crisis, but not with sexual behaviour.

The same can be said of Hercules, cross-dressing with the Lydian queen Omphale, as reported by Cratinus in his *Omphale* and by Ovid in the *Fasti*.[134] The latter work, in particular, seems to relativize the importance of the exchange of dresses, since it argues that "the reason was that they were preparing to celebrate in all purity".[135] Ovid also presents the same myth from a quite different perspective in the *Heroides*. Here Deianeira does not seem to be particularly happy about what happened. She accuses her husband of being subdued by a woman, who forced him to wear her clothes. Nonetheless, she never hints at a "gender transition" or a less than virile manner of behaviour.[136] Thus, in the Herculean myth, Loraux has recognized an entire pattern of reference to the female sphere, through which, nonetheless, "Herakles loses nothing of his masculinity when wearing a peplos."[137] Indeed, while dressed up, he even conceives a child with Omphale. As underlined by Cyrino,

certain super-virile figures are capable of performing, or absorbing, femininity without the risk of becoming feminised. In fact, as I will argue, the female costume can serve to camouflage, cover, protect, and thereby ultimately reinforce the power of the male hero,[138]

since "the secure reality of maleness must re-emerge as an expected product of the transvestism for the episode of drag to be considered a success".[139]

Ultimately, it is in the form of a butch that classical literature relates the one case of people adopting a gender different from their sex at birth in their private lives. In Lucian's fifth *Dialogue of the Hetairai*, Leaena admits to a friend that she had sexual intercourse with two "manly women", Demonassa and Megilla. Once they are alone, Megilla removes what happens to be a wig, shows her shaved head, and explains to a baffled Leaena that she is not a man, since she does not have male genitals. For the same reason, neither is she a hermaphrodite. But, "don't make a woman out of me – said she – my name is Megillos, and I've been married to Demonassa here for ever so long; she is my wife".[140] When Leaena asks whether she experienced the same as Teiresias, Megillos answers: "No, Leaena . . . I was born a woman like the rest of you, but I have the mind and the desires and everything else of a man".[141] Leaena's question is anything but stupid, since it hints, as will become clear below, at the divine sphere as being the only possible source of gender reassignment. But Megillos/Megilla is performing of his own volition. Leaena is then ashamed of telling her friend what really happened afterwards (i.e. how Megillos could achieve an active role). Importantly, the protagonist is a male only behind closed doors. When she is outside, Megilla takes on a female role, with a wig and female dress in order to avoid social ostracism. In the end, it is important to underline that Lucian himself introduces the entire episode with a very ironic tone, denigrating the behaviour of Megillos. It is thus too far-fetched to apply to this text (as to the entire ancient world) Butler's theory of drag as a pastiche which "fully subverts the distinction between inner and outer psychic space and effectively mocks both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity".[142] While this might be valid from an academic and heuristic perspective, it is of doubtful validity when applied, even today, to the individual performers in their interactions with the surrounding society, and surely completely inappropriate for the Graeco-Roman world. Cross-dressing does not imply changing gender; it can have many other meanings and functions and it alludes only in very limited cases to the desire to be different.[143] But if even a performance in drag does not allow a change of gender, what could possibly allow a person to change gender in the classical world?

Gender reassignment in Classical Antiquity

The ancient world did not have anything comparable to gender reassignment surgery.[144] The only kind of surgery practised was castration; but even if some sources categorize eunuchs as women, this is relevant either to medical considerations,[145] or again at the level of "transgender discourse" when taken from an offensive perspective. It does not, however, imply any gender change. Other authors define them as "neither men nor women",[146] but it would be a mistake even to consider the eunuchs as a third sex, following the statement of Galenus, according to which sterilized male and female pigs formed a third sex.[147] While all evaluations appear to fit their characterization as typically Oriental, and therefore

Other,[148] quite apart from any possible negative opinions about this practice,[149] castration was rather supposed, as Seneca explicitly states, to create *pueri perpetui*, and not women.[150] The dominant *topoi* in the description of eunuchs are those of the young men of feminine beauty: the way they walk, their long hair,[151] their sexual passivity.[152] This becomes clear with those eunuchs who, castrated at a later age, can still have active sexual intercourse: according to Juvenal, they were a particular predilection of the Roman women.[153] Favorinus, born a hermaphrodite, and later described as a eunuch, but accused of adultery, was certainly not thought to have become a woman.[154] The use of castration as a form of punishment for adulterers in Rome (presumably illegal and practised as a vendetta),[155] and also for homosexual intercourse in Late Antiquity,[156] is at the same time not a way of inducing a gender change. Rather, it is a symbolic punishment of the part of the body which was considered guilty, and a significant deprivation of virility, similar to the punishments *en travesti* described above.

To understand how a gender change could be possible in Antiquity, it is necessary to return to Agathon. He also appears as a character in Plato's *Symposium*, funnily enough in the company of Aristophanes. Here, he is again presented as a dangerous, liminal character, not only because he is enchanting, but also because he is able to cross normative boundaries. These are, however, the ones between the human and the divine, since the Platonic Agathon appears to be Eros personified.[157] The possibility of crossing the established gender boundaries, which are so closely watched, can only be a trans- and superhuman possibility, which implies a divine nature or divine intervention. In this way, the actor "relinquishes the gender (sexual identity) ordinarily associated with his or her anatomical sex and lays claim to the gender associated with the opposite sex".[158]

But controlled crossings of the gender boundary, under the supervision of the divine, happen in order to reinforce, once again, the boundary itself and foster identity ascriptions. This is the case of the so-called passage rituals, which can imply ritual cross-dressing,[159] mostly in connection with the passage to adulthood, as in the Athenian *Oschophoria*,[160] in wedding rites,[161] or in other particular ceremonies, starting with the aforementioned Lycian funerals.[162] At stake is, once again, the passage from the status of *puer*/*pais* to the acquisition of clear-cut male or female *habitus*, and therefore to the phase in which a breach of the normative code becomes unacceptable.[163] Cross-dressing ritually marks, thus, the point at which the danger of sliding into the wrong trapezium is at its greatest.[164] On Cyprus, both males and females cross-dressed during particular rites for an androgynous divinity assimilated with Aphrodite.[165] According to Plutarch's *Life of Theseus*, finally, a rite existed in which men even simulated birth pangs (a form of the so-called "couvade").[166] Attic red-figure vases show iconographies of cross-dressing komasts, referring to ritual cross-dressing, as shown by Miller, who distinguishes, maybe a bit too strictly, between religious rites in which transvestism is mandatory, licensed, or tolerated.[167] In Rome, cross-dressing is practised in the *Saturnalia*. This is a feast which, through a controlled and provisional reversal of social norms, actually reinforced the existing roles and boundaries,[168] and hence leaves no scope for claiming that similar practices were well accepted outside the context of such rites.[169]

If these rites, as such, do not imply any kind of gender change, the principle underlying them – divine surveillance of the gender boundary and therefore solely divine authority over its possible trespass – allows the identification of specific persons or groups who, in performance, can be considered almost as "post-op" transsexuals. In Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, Lucius is sold to a group of eunuch

Figure 1.2 Bas-relief from Cyzicus representing a Gallus in women's garb (46 BCE). Paris, Musée du Louvre 2850.

Source: Photo © Musée du Louvre, Dist. RMN – Grand Palais/Christian Larrieu.

priests of the Syrian goddess. Lucius/Apuleius describes them as *cinaedi*, but the priests perform and talk of themselves exclusively in feminine terms, using feminine adjectives.[170] In their performance, self-representation, and self-ascription, the priests have turned into women. This gender reassignment is allowed, achieved, and guaranteed through the intervention of the goddess herself, and this is the difference between the normal (male) eunuch and the (female) "eunuch priest", as demonstrated by Roller.[171] This form of self-representation is not only literary, since an inscription from Cyzicus (dating from 46 BCE) represents a priest in female dress celebrating rites in honour of the Great Mother of the Gods (Figure 1.2).[172] The Gallus Menneas, represented in a long (apparently feminine) robe on an inscription from Comama, Pisidia, is another example of the same form of iconographic self-representation.[173]

Interestingly, the (female) self-representation of the priests contrasts with their denigration as simple eunuchs by Lucius/Apuleius. The latter contests their religious practices, nor does he admit any real divine intervention, thus treating them as if they were unbalanced degenerates, and underlining the gap between a performance and its reception. Juristically, Roman law did not accept the change enacted by the priest: in 77 BCE, Genucius, a eunuch priest, did not receive an inheritance because legally he could not be considered either a man or a woman.[174] There are two points at stake here: the role of the divine sphere as author and guarantor of the gender change; and at the same time, the necessity that this change be recognized and accepted by the public: "subjectivity is . . . a process of auto-poiesis or self-styling, which involves complex and continuous negotiations with dominant norms and values and hence also multiple forms of accountability."[175]

When the public fails to acknowledge the enacted change, social censorship intervenes in activating once more the denigrating "transgender discourse". Other texts about the eunuch priests of Cybele, a goddess typically represented as Oriental since the fifth century BCE,[176] confirm this. The relevant epigrams of the *Anthologia Palatina* (the oldest one composed in the second century BCE), for instance, on two occasions define these priests in feminine terms (thus implying an acceptance of the gender change and of divine intervention),[177] while on other occasions criticizing them as degenerate men who dress as women (using masculine pronouns and adjectives).[178]

This opens up a possible new perspective for the interpretation of Catullus 63.[179] It has been claimed that Attis, through castration, remains a *puer* and refuses full manhood because of his hatred of Venus.[180] But the poem is much more attuned to the Apuleian episode: the eunuch priests, *Gallae*, are always defined by Catullus with feminine nouns and adjectives, revealing an acceptance of their gender change. Attis himself is *notha mulier*, and following the castration takes on a feminine grammatical gender. The ensuing problem is that Attis cannot accept himself, and positions himself exactly in the fracture between performance and reception on which Apuleius plays. This is revealed by the doubts he expresses when talking to himself:

> For what shape is there, whose kind I have not worn? I (now a woman), I a man, a stripling, and a lad . . . Now will I live a ministrant of gods and slave to Cybele? I a Maenad, I a part of me, I a sterile trunk! . . . Now, now, I grieve the deed I've done; now, now, do I repent![181]

This doubt causes the intervention of Cybele, who strikes Attis in a frenzy since s/he "over-rashly seeks to fly from my empire".[182] Catullus mostly focuses on the internal perspective of the young Attis, who was subjected to the reassignment and cannot escape the inexorability of a transition, which was desired and carried out by the goddess: even in the phase of doubt, all adjectives related to Attis are in the feminine gender.[183]

When trying to explain the Scythian *Anarieis*, who "become eunuchs and attend to female chores, live as women and are called in the same way", the Greeks suggest that they are considered to have been rendered so by the gods.[184] The Pseudo-Hippokrates tries to give a scientific explanation of their becoming impotent, and connects it with horse-riding. On the one hand, this implies that he does not recognize a possible intervention by a Scythian divinity: therefore, he considers such men, no matter how they are treated in their community, as "merely" cross-dressers. On the other hand, he does this only after underlining that "to me it seems that this illness is divine, too, as all the other ones . . . all illnesses are of the same kind, and all are divine".[185] Not surprisingly, then, gender transition among animals, too, is considered as a *prodigium*, a sign of a disturbance of the *pax deorum*, which must be expiated. In Rome, when such a case was reported, the normal procedure was to consult the Sibylline Books. Just before the Battle of Lake Trasimene (217 BCE), according to Livy, a cock became a chicken and a chicken a cock;[186] in the same period of the Second Punic War, in Spoletum a woman became a man,[187] and in Alexandria (this is also a clear case of transition), a *cinaedus* appeared to be pregnant.[188]

Transition is therefore only possible for divine beings, who can change the gender of animals and humans (the eunuch priests, Attis), as well as their own.[189] In most cases, the gods are androgynous, in the sense of "a choice of one sex or the other, and not the simultaneous possession of both".[190] In Euripides' *Bacchae*, Dionysus, as a god, can cross this boundary,[191] but for Pentheus, who does not recognize him as a god, he is merely effeminate, *thelymorphos*.[192] When Pentheus asks, "The god, what did he look like? You claim you saw him clearly," the god, unrecognized by the king, answers: "He looked as he wished to look: I had no say in the matter."[193] The subsequent punishment is quite obvious: Pentheus himself must cross-dress, after losing his mind, so that the city can laugh at him, since he breaks the social rules acceptable for a king.[194] The chorus defines him as a ludicrous "imitator of women" (*gynaikomimos*).[195] He worries about his dress and his hair,[196] but this represents cross-dressing, rather than a gender switch, since he clearly says that he is a man (*aner*).[197] Nonetheless, it must be underlined that in his folly, once Pentheus is in women's clothes, he is convinced he has acquired supernatural powers:[198] this is again connected to the divine properties associated with crossing the gender boundary.

Dionysus is a god particularly linked to a wealth of similar episodes. In a fragment from *The Edonians*, Lycurgus addresses him as "man–woman", *gynnis*, asking him whence his garb comes;[199] while in Statius's *Achilleid*, Thetis states that women's clothing becomes him.[200] Mythology testifies to many similar examples, starting from Zeus developing a "male uterus" (*arsena nedyn*) in the thigh for Dionysus after Semele's death.[201] Jupiter transitions into a female to assume the figure of Diana, in order to seduce the nymph Callisto. This is not just cross-dressing: even if he did assume her dress and imitate the goddess, in Ovid he is said to take over her *facies* and her *cultus*,[202] while Statius even more clearly says that he *virgineos . . . induit artos*,[203] while Valerius Soranus defined him as *progenitor genitrixque*.[204] Another example in Rome is Vertumnus, to whom Propertius attributes a meaningful statement:

> My nature suits any role: turn me to which you please, and I shall fit it well. Clothe me in silks, and I will become a none too prudish girl: and who would deny that, wearing the toga, I am a man?[205]

Some gender reassignment cases can be found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and they all appear to have been carried out by divine figures: Caeneus asks Neptune to let her become a man, and this wish is granted;[206] after the transition, however, his enemies make fun of him, since they do not understand the power of the god, but Caeneus – who has also become invulnerable – exterminates most of them, finally dying crushed under trees and rocks.[207] In addition, Iphis transitions from female to male after many prayers, thanks to direct intervention by Isis.[208] The same story appears in Antoninus Liberalis, but here the protagonist is Leucippus, Galatea's son, and the intervening deity is Leto.[209] In the same chapter of his work, Antoninus presents us with transgender myths, which all show divine intervention in allowing transition (e.g. Poseidon in the case of Hypermnestra). The most famous mythical transitioner, in both directions and, in one version of the myth found in Eustathius, up to six times,[210] is nonetheless Teiresias. Quite apart from the possibility that, from a structuralist perspective, this is connected with his function as a seer and mediator between opposites, as argued by Brisson;[211] and from the possibility, again suggested by Brisson, that in the original version of the myth, Teiresias' transition was brought about by Athena, as related by Tzetzes,[212] the myth is connected with a magical and religious background in which the snake has a strong sacred and symbolic meaning, connected with Gaia and Themis, and therefore to the divine sphere.[213]

Gender reassignment is possible, therefore, only through divine intervention, which, by definition, transcends the rules of the natural.[214] But admitting the possibility of breaking a boundary only under specific, and superhuman, circumstances, reinforces the boundary itself and makes it more visible, while at the same time opening up a negotiation about the legitimacy of the individual who, unlike the other members of his or her group, claims for him/herself the right to violate that boundary.[215] Apuleius' priests cross the boundary and claim a legitimacy deriving from divine authority. But this claim is not recognized by Apuleius/Lucius: the negotiation fails and what opens up is a conflict of legitimacy.

The king is not naked! But he wears women's clothes!

Hellenistic kings and Roman emperors appear on different occasions to have performed transgender acts; according to the perspective outlined above, these performances had the function of claiming for themselves a divine nature or a particular connection with the divine sphere. It is no coincidence that in Rome, the available information is consistently connected to figures who are known to have adopted the forms and styles of Hellenistic kingship, and to have claimed a divine nature. Such episodes are mostly related by the critical sources, the expression therefore of groups which did not recognize this legitimacy and attacked these performances as ridiculous and inappropriate for a normative male, still less for a ruler. Nonetheless, the existence of at least one source, a coin revealing the imperial wish to be presented in this way, excludes the possibility that such episodes were all offensive inventions.[216] I cannot go into detail here on every single case, but it is important to underline that the phenomenon is characteristic of the Hellenistic and post-Hellenistic period and does not appear to have existed during the Greek Classical period.

The first known example is Alexander the Great. Ephippus wrote that the king often dressed up as a divinity, in particular to perform the roles of Ammon, Hermes, Herakles and Artemis.[217] After him, the Hellenistic world is full of examples of kings performing in drag as goddesses, collected in 1958 by Rosenbach:[218] Ptolemy Lagos appearing on coins as Athena, Demetrius Poliorcetes presenting himself as Athena (and as Apollo, since he also wanted his sister to be called Athena),[219] but also as Tyche on coins, and Ptolemy IV Philopator portrayed as Aphrodite.

As already mentioned, divine power implies both the possibility of transitioning and of operating a transition on chosen people – this latter was the power enacted by Mithridates VI, who changed the gender of his lover, as shown in Chapter 7 of this volume by Margherita Facella. It is far more difficult to reach an understanding of Cleopatra VII, who is sometimes represented with masculine traits, or directly as a man, mostly on private dedications, but also on a famous stela from Beijing.[220] What is hard to decide is, whether this is a consequence of the perceived masculine nature of monarchic rule, and therefore a sort of "progress narrative" (which applies particularly in the case of Egypt, where there is a long pharaonic tradition in this sense);[221] whether a transgender performance can also be understood in these cases as representing a claim to a divine nature; or whether it may be that both concepts simultaneously apply in a form of multifunctional representation.

Many Roman emperors, as shown by Varner,[222] were portrayed later in forms intentionally assimilative of genders, in a way which "unequivocally asserts the transcendence of imperial authority over prescribed gender roles."[223] This is no sign of a lack of sexual dimorphism, since such portraiture is reserved for the charisma of kingly and imperial authority, or for religious (e.g. priestly) charisma.[224] Examples of this kind, "helping to foster an identity for the emperor that is not beholden to traditional gender categories",[225] occur for figures such as Augustus. A first example in Rome, even if it is the most problematic case, might be

Julius Caesar, whose adoption of typical forms of Hellenistic kingship in self-representation should not be doubted. It is well known that Caesar was often defined with female names: according to Curio, he was "a man for all women, and a woman for all men".[226] While this was a very common occurrence for important politicians (at the level of "transgender discourse"),[227] and it happened particularly with reference to his relationship with Nicomedes IV – and therefore with a clear sexual hint,[228] it is not unusual, as underlined by Cantarella, for Caesar to show no trace of being bothered by such jokes. On the contrary, when called "a woman" by a senator, writes Suetonius, he compared himself to Semiramis and the Amazons.[229] Cantarella's explanation (Caesar's renowned virility, as demonstrated by his military achievements, was so above all suspicion that he did not care)[230] seems nonetheless insufficient, and such jokes could have implied, in the frame of Hellenistic kingship, that he had the ability to change gender. This must be interpreted next to Caesar's ambition to change nature – e.g. cutting the isthmus of Corinth or diverting the Tiber;[231] and of his role as a member of the *gens Iulia*, and thus as a descendant of Venus.

The connection between this family and Venus is much clearer in the case of Caligula, the first emperor to "unveil" the monarchic reality of the imperial power, also through the explicit adoption of Hellenistic forms of self-representation.[232] Suetonius relates that the emperor frequently cross-dressed. In saying this, the biographer mixes the discursive aspect, connected with excessive luxury, and real cross-dressing, which developed into gender transition and divine identification. Caligula, indeed, performed as Venus, as well as other deities, following Alexander's model.[233] This is confirmed by Cassius Dio, who not only clearly states that Caligula thought he should be considered above the rest of mankind, but also that in this way he was impersonating many gods and goddesses, such as Jupiter, Neptune, Hercules, Bacchus, Apollo, Juno, Minerva, and – with presumably a greater relevance given his family history – Venus.[234] The emperor, aware of Alexander's precedent, was thus claiming a divine nature not only by dressing up as different gods and goddesses, but also through his transgender performance.[235] A public ready to recognize his legitimacy in doing this would have to recognize his divinity. This legitimacy was not recognized on account of senatorial opposition, presumably, and definitely not by Suetonius, who, as mentioned, presents this alongside simple discursive offences and depicts the entire performance as ridiculous.

Nero was apparently married twice to men: once to Sporus, and once to Pythagoras.[236] Since Roman law never admitted same-sex marriage,[237] in order to justify this performance, the emperor must have claimed the authority to change the gender of one of the partners. In the first case, it was Sporus who was turned into a woman (and so the emperor's divine authority was applied to another person, as in the case of Mithridates VI);[238] with Pythagoras, it was Nero himself who transitioned (and the transition was performed, according to Suetonius, through the very loud cries of pleasures he produced on the first night). His transition was not universally recognized in this instance either, and in the literary sources, these performances became a sign of licentiousness and decadence.[239]

Domitian, in spite of being keen on recovering the "traditional" institutions and traditional Roman morality, wanted to be considered a *dominus et deus*, and was represented in a surprising sculpture as Minerva, with his own facial physiognomy and a female hairstyle, as demonstrated by Varner.[240] It is well known that Minerva was Domitian's personal deity, and this enabled him to wear the *aegis*, too, thus practising a form of cross-dressing no different from Caligula's.[241] Coins show the same kind of assimilation with Vesta and Ceres.[242] Around a century later, according to the *Historia Augusta*,[243] Commodus (who claimed divine nature also by performing as the *Hercules Romanus*) would appear in the arena dressed as an Amazon – and indeed he also assumed the name *Amazonius* for his official titulature, giving the same name to the month of December. In still other performances, he played Hercules dressed in female clothes,[244] or more simply cross-dressed in full public view.[245]

More famously, Elagabalus, unsuccessfully trying to construct legitimacy for the cult of Baal in which he was priest, performed frequently as a woman and wanted to be called Bassiana.[246] Two episodes related by Cassius Dio are particularly relevant. In the first one, the emperor falls in love with Aurelius Zoticus, invites him to Rome, and when he meets him, frames himself in a very feminine way by refusing to be called *dominus*: "Call me not Lord, for I am a Lady."[247] This is not a case of cross-dressing, but the official, performed declaration of an achieved transition. In an even clearer way, in the second episode, the emperor, promising the court physicians great rewards, asks them to perform surgery on him so that he might acquire female genital organs.[248] In this way, the attempt is made to bring the transition far beyond the level of simple performance. It is quite irrelevant whether these episodes really did happen or not: the ancient mentality considered a transgender performance as a possible form of imperial

Figure 1.3 Gold coin with the representation of "Galliena Augusta" (*RIC* V. 1, p. 136, n. 74). From the Collections of the British Museum, 1864,1128.131.

self-representation (as a divine figure, the emperor could change his own gender or that of other people).[249] On the other hand, such performances were the object of a negotiation, and were utterly rejected by some groups, and particularly by the senatorial aristocracy, which denied such a legitimacy to the emperors and, very much like Apuleius with the priests, presented these episodes as ridiculous, as Martijn Icks shows in Chapter 4 of this volume.

The last example is Gallienus. While some sources define him as effeminate (without alluding to any episode of cross-dressing),[250] a specific coin type represents him as a woman.[251] The portrait is the normal one with a beard, but the adoption of a crown of ears of corn and, most of all, the legend *Gallienae Augustae* leaves no doubt that Gallienus is here presented in a transgender way – and therefore as a divine figure.

Indeed, this coin type has troubled scholars for a long time. Alföldi's idea, that this identification was connected to the Eleusinian Mysteries and deeply anti-Christian,[252] is not acceptable; nor is Kent's implausible solution, according to which the legend may be a hypercorrect vocative.[253] Further steps towards a correct interpretation were made by De Blois, who recognized through the iconography of the crown the divine figure of Minerva,[254] presented as a Roman interpretation of the Palmyrene goddess Al-Lat – the goddess of peace. In this sense, the coin should be read in the context of Odaenathus' victory over the Persians (264 CE),[255] and fits perfectly into the more general framework of Gallienus's self-representation, since "he too posed deliberately as a deity bringing peace and prosperity, a demigod, a saviour or an imperial servant and protégé of the gods whose *pietas* and universal virtues produced universal welfare".[256] On other coins, indeed, he is represented as Hercules, Mercury, or Jupiter.[257] This reading has been accepted by MacCoull, who argues that:

> Gallienus was placing himself astride a shifting boundary that was seen as fluid and not necessarily determined, the better to embody his being in contact with the supernatural force that had helped bring victory and peace to the endangered East.[258]

MacCoull thus corrects some issues in the interpretation of De Blois, which was still very bound to the idea of a sort of "divine hermaphroditism", rather than a possible transition, and which considered this form of imperial self-representation typical only of Hellenistic kings and of the Julio-Claudian emperors (and therefore as a deliberate recovery of "a very old-fashioned type of personal apotheosis by Gallienus").[259]

Nonetheless, this explanation still seems to fall too short – Gallienus does not represent the goddess on the coins, but himself as the goddess. MacCoull's "contact with the supernatural force" is once again the claim to a divine nature which allows the complete control of gender (and sex), and therefore enables a transgender self-representation, even directly in divine forms, as had already happened with Alexander the Great and Caligula. If Alföldi was wrong in stressing the Eleusinian component, he was headed in the right direction when he claimed that the feminine

name implied a complete identification of the emperor with the goddess (in his opinion, Demeter).[260] Other Gallienic coins seem to show "transgender icon-ographies" (e.g. a turreted crown for the emperor, generally associated with female personifications). While "the deliberate ambivalence of gender in these images again creates a fluid visual persona for the emperor that eclipses standard definitions of masculine and feminine",[261] it is important to underline that this is rigorously connected with his divine nature, and not simply with his charismatic authority or general superiority.

Conclusions

In the end, gender transition was possible in the classical world, and was possible in the sphere of performance. What enabled such performances to be made public, and accorded certain individuals the legitimacy to cross boundaries, was a divine nature or a deep, close contact with the divine sphere. Transitioning is possible for deities, or is enacted by deities. Transgender enactment in the classical world was thus a way of claiming superhuman powers and capacities in the public domain. But whenever the public at whom the performance was aimed did not recognize such superhuman qualities, the transition would fail and the boundary-crosser would appear as a rather ridiculous figure, falling back into the derogatory "transgender discourse". The claim to legitimacy implied in the act can end in a failure, while the act itself, whatever the outcome, is not a way of enfeebling the border crossed, but rather of reinforcing and underlining it. The general consequence of transition performances, both the successful and the failed ones, is a process of territorial-ization;[262] that is, a strong and clear-cut definition of spheres and boundaries. Transgender dynamics are not transcultural dynamics; they do not lead to the crea-tion of something new. Nor are they the sign of a breach in the gender boundary or an opening up of the normative description of gender behaviour. On the contrary, in the past as today, transgender dynamics are often a way of hiding a process of reinforcement and of sedimentation of existing gender stereotypes.

In the preface to the second edition of *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler asks: "What will and will not constitute an intelligible life, and how do presumptions about normative gender and sexuality determine in advance what will qualify as the 'human' and the 'livable'?"[263] The answer is:

> To the extent the gender norms (ideal dimorphism, heterosexual comple-mentarity of bodies, ideals and rules of proper and improper masculinity and femininity, many of which are underwritten by racial codes of purity and taboos about miscegenation) establish what will and will not be intelligibly human, what will and will not be considered to be "real", they establish the ontological field in which bodies may be given legitimate expression.[264]

This is relevant for Antiquity too: dimorphism, heterosexual complementarity, ideal rules, and normative behaviour all defined in ancient Greece and Rome what was and was not intelligibly human. But we should not forget that:

The human is a normative convention, which does not make it inherently negative, just highly regulatory and hence instrumental to practices of exclusion and discrimination. The human norm stands for normality, normalcy and normativity. It functions by transposing a specific mode of being human into a generalized standard, which acquires transcendent value as *the* human. . . . The human is a historical construct that became a social convention about "human nature".[265]

Contrary to our modern Western perspective, therefore, over this sphere of the conventional and normative human, there was space for the superhuman, transgender sphere of the divine.

Notes

1 Previous or partial versions of this chapter have been presented not only in Pisa, but also at the universities of Mainz, Roehampton, and Saarbrücken. I would like to thank all the participants in the ensuing discussions, since they enriched this chapter incredibly with their questions and suggestions. In particular, I would like to thank (in alphabetical order) Marta García Morcillo, Marion Gindhart, and Christine Walde.
2 Valentine 2007, p. 4.
3 Valentine 2007, pp. 98–99, which also insists on the political value of such new categories. The other, equally famous, example is that of homosexuality – a concept introduced in the nineteenth century which, as a new descriptive category, influenced the evolution of behaviour as forms of self-representation and self-ascription: Connell 1987, pp. 156–157. See also Connell 1987, p. 76, where the term transgender is not used, but it is underlined how the debates around cross-dressing and transsexuality are giving rise to the construction of a new category of gender; and Feinberg 1996, pp. x–xi.
4 Valentine 2007, pp. 154–155. On the risks of anachronistic comparisons, with particular reference to the Native American berdache, see also pp. 155–157.
5 Butler 1999, pp. xiv–xvii; p. xi underlines in particular how non-normative sexual practices can destabilize gender categories. See also Garber 1992, pp. 132–134; Valentine 2007:

> [T]he primary categories I've discussed above – "transgender" and "homosexuality" – are only available in their contemporary meanings as discrete categories because of a central distinction that developed in the United States in the twentieth century between gender and sexuality (or, remember, "gender" and "sexuality"). The distinctions between biological sex, social gender, and sexual desire were elaborated first by early-twentieth-century European sexologists.
>
> (p. 57)

6 Indeed, such a distinction is still not widespread, since in homophobic discourse, homosexuals are still presented as the product of a "gender distortion" (and male homosexuality, in particular, as a distortion of a "feminine psyche"); also in homosexual discourse, for example, the category of gay is often adopted in self-description by pre- and post-surgery transsexuals: Valentine 2007, p. 236.
7 Valentine 2007, pp. 61–62; 100–101. Valentine 2007, pp. 238–239, underlines in particular how this separation was generated by a desire to "re-evaluate" only male (white) homosexuality.
8 Butler 1999, pp. 9–12. Butler's position has, meanwhile, been superseded by highlighting the fact that seeing gender as performance is limiting, and one must insist on its ontoformativity: "social practice continuously brings social reality into being,

and that social reality becomes the ground of new practice" (Connell 2012, p. 866). See also Walters 1997, p. 30, on gender as "metaphoric use of biological sex".

 9 On this, see Brisson 1986; on Hermaphroditos in Graeco-Roman culture and art, see Oehmke 2004.

10 As asked e.g. by Greenberg 1988, p. 3. See also Foucault 1984a, pp. 247–251.

11 Especially in insisting on and making more widespread a constructivist approach to sexual morality – as has been done thoroughly by Nussbaum 1999, pp. 299–331. See also Skinner 2005, pp. 1–3.

12 Edwards 1993, pp. 65–66.

13 Foucault 1984a, p. 10.

14 I will not examine the Jewish or Christian mentality, nor will I deal here with the cultural (and juridical) change in Late Antiquity, partially dealt with by other contributions in the volume: see Chapter 8 by Tommasi and Chapter 13 by Eppinger.

15 For example, Halperin 1990, p. 25.

16 Foucault 1984a, pp. 27–29.

17 Valentine 2007, p. 51.

18 Halperin 1990, pp. 23–24.

19 See e.g. Aristoph., *Frogs* 56–58, where Dionysus confesses his passion not for a woman, not for a boy, but "unluckily" for an adult man. In a fragment of Theopompus Comicus's *Medos*, for example, Mount Lykabettos says that next to it, "too old youngsters give themselves to men of their same age": *Fr*. 29 Kock. See also ps.-Luc., *Am*. 26, which gives another perspective on the topic: the reason appears to be that men over 20 years old have a harder body, which gives less pleasure to the active counterpart (cf. also §10).

20 Cantarella 2007, pp. 68–69.

21 That is, "insatiable as women": Arist., *Probl*. 4.26. See Keuls 1985, pp. 82–86; Halperin 1990, pp. 22–24; Dean-Jones 1992, pp. 75–76; Edwards 1993, pp. 81–84.

22 Dover 1978, pp. 19–109 (with criticism by Davidson 2001, pp. 20–22), and Cantarella 2007, pp. 77–78 in general on this oration.

23 For instance, if they are older than 40, the *choregoi* are allowed to have intercourse with the boys of the choir, as they are at a stage in their life in which they have strong self-control (Aesch., *Tim*. 11–12).

24 Aesch., *Tim*. 39.

25 Indeed, Aeschines' trouble is demonstrating that Timarchos had been a prostitute as an adult (had he been so when he was underage, the responsibility would not have been his in any case, but belonging rather to those who exploited him, along with his clients: Aesch., *Tim*. 13). This was the only factor that could help him to achieve success, since adult male prostitutes were not eligible as archons, nor could they become priests, take up any public office, or speak to the *ekklesia* (Aesch., *Tim*. 18–21; 29). He has to demonstrate that Timarchos's lovers were paying him, by playing on the very thin line separating gift and payment (compare with Aristoph., *Plout*. 143–159, and see Carlà and Gori 2014, pp. 7–9). Thus, the rest of the speech is constructed in such a way as to make Timarchos an object of suspicion and ridiculous in the eyes of the public.

26 Aesch., *Tim*. 24–28.

27 Aesch., *Tim*. 110–112; transl. N. Fisher.

28 Aesch., *Tim*. 185.

29 Aesch., *Tim*. 131; 167.

30 Hypereid. Fr. 215. Winkler 1990, pp. 194–195; Fabricius 2007, p. 65.

31 Epict. 3.1. 27–33.

32 Walters 1997, p. 30; Skinner 2005, pp. 195–197. It is no coincidence that Artemidorus, who generally attributes a very positive meaning to dreams of sexual intercourse with one's own slave, adds, "to be penetrated by a household slave is not good. For it signifies being both despised and harmed by that slave" (Artemid. 1.78; transl. D. E.

Harris-McCoy), even if this occurrence is clearly inserted into the section dealing with sexual intercourse in compliance with the law. On "Roman homosexuality", see in general, Williams 2010.

33 Veyne 1978, pp. 50–51, and now Williams 2010, p. 69, underline how attraction to young boys was in any case already an important topic in the Republican period (e.g. pp. 60–61).

34 Dalla 1987, pp. 71–99; Richlin 1993, pp. 569–571; Cantarella 2007, pp. 141–152. Williams 2010, pp. 130–134, argues that the *Lex Scatinia* did not govern male–male sexual relationships, but more generally *stuprum*.

35 *Digesta* 3.1.1.6. Dalla 1987, pp. 53–54: those who have been raped by enemies or brigands are exempted from the punishment.

36 Cic., *Cat*. 2.10.22–23; see Dalla 1987, pp. 28–29. Cic., *Phil*. 2.44–45. Cicero uses the same rhetorical strategy also in his letters: so Curio is defined as *filiola* in Cic., *Att*. 1.14.5. On the *Philippicae*: Edwards 1993, pp. 64–65. On Cicero's use of effeminate gait and movements as a form of political invective, see Corbeill 2002, pp. 194–196. More generally on his use of effeminacy as a political *topos*, see Gonfroy 1978, who points out how this rhetorical device aimed to imply not only that the opponent was behaving in a feminine way, but also that he did not deserve to be a free man, since he was behaving like a slave.

37 For a similar use, see also the new, convincing interpretation of Catullus 6 proposed by Corbeill 2015, pp. 95–99.

38 Sall., *Cat*. 13.3; Tac., *Ann*. 11.36. See Walters 1997, pp. 30–31.

39 Cic., *Fin*. 5.12.35. See Gonfroy 1978, pp. 219–222; Dalla 1987, pp. 30–31; Williams 2010, pp. 18–19. It is therefore not true, as claimed by Veyne 1978, pp. 48–49, that this is a later development. On the rhetoric of nature, see Williams 2010, pp. 269–277.

40 *D* 3.1.1.5.

41 Cantarella 2007, p. 222.

42 *Contra* Miller 1998, p. 183.

43 Iuv., *Sat*. 6.365.1–26.

44 Edwards 1993, p. 77; Walters 1997, p. 33.

45 For example, Sen., *Contr*. 1.pr.8–9; Gell. 1.5.2–3.

46 Polyb. 30.18.5; 32.15.7–9.

47 Strab. 5.4.13.

48 Plut., *Pomp*. 48.5–7. See Edwards 1993, p. 85.

49 *Hist. Aug.*, *Hadr*. 14.5. This only refers to the excessive reaction, and not to the fact that the two had a male–male relationship; see Williams 2010, pp. 64–65.

50 See, for example, Liv. 7.13.6: "since the enemy flouts us with every species of insult, as though we were women cowering behind our rampart (*haud secus quam feminas*)"; transl. B. O. Foster.

51 Plat., *Tim*. 42 b–c.

52 Miller 1998, p. 184.

53 Cael. Aur., *De morb*. 4.9; see Dalla 1987, pp. 33–35 (but there is also here the admission of a strong connection with age). On Cael. Aur., *De morb*. 4.9, see Schrijvers 1985.

54 Vell. 2.88.2; transl. F. W. Shipley.

55 Mart. 10.65. On this stereotype of the Greeks in general, see Edwards 1993, pp. 92–97.

56 See Arist., *Pol*. 1254b, from where it is clear that the sexes are only two, and clearly opposed to each other. See Cohen 1987, p. 159; Edwards 1993, p. 78.

57 It is possible that such a binary opposition was unknown to Etruscan culture before the sixth century BCE, as argued by Izzet 2007, pp. 84–87. On such a binary opposition as a product of a normative, stable, and binary heteronormativity, see Butler 1999, pp. 30–31.

58 Corbeill 2015, in particular pp. 2–8.

59 For example, Dover 1978, in particular pp. 102–103; Veyne 1978, pp. 52–53; Foucault 1984a, pp. 64–65; 115 ("pour les Grecs, c'est l'opposition entre activité et passivité

qui est essentielle et qui marque le domaine des comportements sexuels comme celui des attitudes morales"); Montserrat 1996, pp. 16–20; Skinner 2005, p. 77. See Davidson 2001 for a reconstruction of the genesis of the "penetration model" in the late 1970s, its overwhelming success, and its rightful critics; and Williams 2010, pp. 258–262. See Davidson 2007, pp. 101–166, for an extremely critical appraisal of scholarship up to that moment, mostly of Dover and Foucault.

60 Valentine 2007, pp. 162–163, shows how this frame has been used to explain the world of the Brazilian *viados*.

61 Corbeill 2015, pp. 134–135.

62 See also Williams 2010, pp. 155–156. The feminization in discourse corresponds, for example, in Athens with the previously described legal structure, to the loss of the role and status of a full citizen: Halperin 1990, p. 97.

63 Davidson 2001, pp. 29–31, argues, for example, that in Greece desire played a much bigger role than activity/passivity. In this sense, I would not agree that gender, as a social fact, is composed of all these aforementioned elements (Montserrat 2000, pp. 153–154), but would rather insist on the fact that it is merely one of them, interacting with all of them, in shaping the social positioning of the individual. This remains true even if one were to admit, following Nussbaum 1999, p. 308, that there is a conspicuous difference between what is said and what is done – e.g. when denying verbally that anal sex can provide any pleasure to the passive participant.

64 Lucr. 4.1053. See also Ath., *Deipn*. 605d. Dover 1978, pp. 68–73, argues that an aesthetic shift leading to boys with a feminine appearance being considered as more beautiful might have taken place in the fourth century BCE.

65 See, for the change in their physical appearance, Ligurinus in Hor., *Od*. 4.10, who will regret having been cruel, when he discovers that his boyish looks have given way to a virile beard (*facies hispida*). See also Ath., *Deipn*. 3.605d, in which Clearchos says that boys are attractive as long as they look like women, as well as Aesch., *Tim*. 95 and the previously mentioned passage in the *Amores* by the pseudo-Lucian (see above, note 19).

66 Cantarella 2007, p. 246; Williams 2010, pp. 23–24.

67 The few references to the *tribades*, "active women", such as Martial's Lucretia, whose clitoris is used to penetrate her partner (Mart. 1.90; see also 7.67, on the *tribas* who *pedicat pueros* – but here Martial also clearly underlines that cunnilingus is no proof of virility: see Williams 2010, p. 224), refer to them as *monstrum*, since they automatically fall out of the admissible scheme: see Kunst 2007, pp. 254–255. Skinner 2005, pp. 252–254, argues that the literary figure of the *tribas* was a consequence in discourse of the increasingly autonomous role of women in the social and economic sphere. The possible use, in sexual intercourse, of toys such as *olisboi*, discussed for example by Galenus, does not change the role at all, since the mechanical device is not considered a part of the body of the active participant; nor can it, according to Hippocratic medicine, satisfy the woman, since it does not produce sperm: see Dean-Jones 1992, p. 80.

68 Plin., *Ep*. 3.3.4; see Richlin 1993, pp. 533–535; Williams 2010, pp. 81–82.

69 Polem., *De Physiogn.* (Arab version), 1.192 Foerster.

70 Gleason 1995, p. 27. Gleason highlights how Polemon used effeminacy as a discourse to attack his rival Favorinus.

71 Gleason 1995, p. 36. See also pp. 58–60, even if Gleason appears to be completely aligned with Laqueur 1990.

72 The Latin text corresponds to the Latin translation of the Arab Polemon by G. Hoffman. See also the Istanbul Polemon: "Having masculine traits is a sign in males of them (enjoying a) proper condition and the like, while having feminine traits in them points to something different, pertaining to corruption" (Ghersetti 2007, p. 483).

73 Diod. Sic. 32.12; transl. F. R. Walton.

74 Laqueur 1990, pp. 25–62.

75 Laqueur 1990, pp. 61–62: "the paradox of the one-sex model is that pairs of ordered contrarieties played off a single flesh in which they did not themselves inhere".

76 King 2013, in particular pp. 31–48. Laqueur relies substantially on Galenus, and uses him, as King shows, in a patchy way, and in general it is difficult to see how one author could represent the common point of view. For the same reason, I do not deal here with specific philosophical schools and their theories on gender – e.g. with the Cynic Hipparchia, on whom see Hartmann 2007. It is necessary to underline additionally that evolution in medical thought does not automatically change the forms of discourse, still less those of social practices. This must be borne in mind, even if with Skinner 2005, pp. 151–154, it has to be admitted that Laqueur might be right in his reference to the fourth century BCE and later, not for the archaic period and for the fifth century BCE. In an even more convincing way, Fabricius 2001, pp. 58–63; 2007, pp. 67–72, agrees in part with Laqueur's arguments, showing that the ancient way of imagining gender was less connected to the definition of natural characteristics, but that nonetheless a clear element of dimorphism is present in the *Corpus Hippocraticum* and in general in pre-Hellenistic Greek culture. Fabricius thus corrects the erroneous claims advanced by Delcourt 1961, pp. 56–57, according to whom archaic Greek sculpture did not show any trace of sexual dimorphism. According to Fabricius (2001, pp. 43–46), Hellenistic culture would have brought about a progressive closure of dimorphism; she underlines nonetheless (pp. 54–56) that the feminization of male iconographies corresponds at the same time to a clear reformulation of female iconographies, in order to keep the distinction evident!

77 Laqueur 1990, pp. 28–31.

78 Laqueur 1990, p. 8: sex was "a sociological, and not an ontological category".

79 Laqueur 1990, p. 35.

80 See Foucault 1984a, pp. 170–171, who insists on the similarity and complementarity of masculine and feminine in Greek medicine, but also rightly underlines their difference, or rather, opposition.

81 Phaedr. 4.16. See Kunst 2007, p. 255; Williams 2010, pp. 233–234.

82 Aret., *De caus.* 4.5; see Foucault 1984b, 156–157.

83 Ptol., *Tetrab.* 3.14.

84 Kyranides 1, Letter K. On this and on astrological literature, see Montserrat 1996, pp. 149–150.

85 Garber 1992, pp. 118–127. Ischomachos' wife in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* is of this kind (10.1): see Foucault 1984a, p. 113.

86 See Kunst 2007, pp. 251–253.

87 On this, see Xinyue, Chapter 11 in this volume.

88 Collier and Rosaldo 1981, p. 275.

89 Connell 1987, pp. 47–54.

90 For example, Petr., *Satyr.* 81.5.

91 Diod. Sic. 12.16.1.

92 Plut., *Crass.* 32.2.

93 Aristoph., *Nub.* 1083; Hor., *Sat.* 1.2.44–46; Val. Max. 6.1.13; Mart. 2.60; Luc., *Peregr.* 9.

94 It is not therefore a simple symbolic transformation into a woman, as argued by Dover 1978, p. 106.

95 Val. Max. 2.6.13: "Therefore the Lycians are right to put on women's clothes when they have occasion to mourn, so that irked by the unsightliness of their dress they may the sooner wish to discard a foolish grief"; transl. D. R. Shackleton Bailey; Plut., *Cons. Apoll.* 22:

> They say that the lawgiver of the Lycians ordered his citizens, whenever they mourned, to clothe themselves first in women's garments and then to mourn, wishing to make it clear that mourning is womanish and unbecoming to decorous men who

> lay claim to the education of the free-born. Yes, mourning is verily feminine, and weak, and ignoble.
>
> (transl. F. C. Babbitt)

96 Ath. 12.528f–529a on Sardanapalus. Athenaeus has many other examples in the 12th book. This is a part of the "construction of the barbarian" taking place in Greece in the fifth century BCE: see Hall 1989, pp. 201–210.

97 Plut., *Mul. Virt.* 26. See also Facella, Chapter 7 in this volume.

98 As already noted by Delcourt 1961, p. 1 and Dover 1978, p. 2, it is important to note that the sources present more frequently cases of male-to-female cross-dressing rather than female-to-male, but this can be explained by the general gender bias of the sources, mostly concerned with male figures, actions, and behaviours.

99 Williams 2010, p. 142.

100 See Gleason 1995, pp. 74–76. Of course, such practice, independently from its primary aim, could then become the target of criticism and invective in the form of the "transgender discourse": Gonfroy 1978, pp. 225–227.

101 Tac., *Ann*. 2.33.1; Dio 57.15.1. This is not connected directly to a characterization of silk as feminine. For critical voices on excessively luxurious clothes (that might be identified as feminine), see e.g. Sen., *Ben*. 7.9; Suet., *Calig*. 52. On the connection between effeminacy and luxury, since the latter leads to a *gynaikon bios*, see also Ath. 12.515–516 (and in general the entire Book 12 of the *Deipnosophistai*, dedicated to luxury). A parallel can be found in Renaissance England, when men who were taking "excessive" care of their clothes were accused of effeminacy, see Garber 1992, pp. 27–28.

102 Ath. 12.521b states this explicitly for Syracuse.

103 Plut., *Flamin*. 17.6.

104 ORF[2] 21.IV.17.

105 ORF[2] 48.XX.58.

106 Sen., *Contr*. 9.2.17. See Manfredini 1985, p. 264 and Raggi, Chapter 2 in this volume.

107 *Digesta* 34.2.23.2.

108 *Digesta* 34.2.33; transl. A. Watson.

109 Contrary to what is argued e.g. by Dalla 1987, pp. 20–23. Examples of this kind are known from other historical periods. One famous example is Lord Cornbury, governor of New York and New Jersey between 1701 and 1708, who was presumably even portrayed as a woman: Garber 1992, pp. 52–53. Another example is provided at pp. 61–62.

110 Sen., *Ep*. 122.7: *non videtur tibi contra naturam vivere qui commutant cum feminis vestem? Non vivunt contra naturam qui spectant, ut pueritias pendeat tempore alieno?* Winkler 1990, p. 175, interprets, for example, this passage as related to a passive role in sexual intercourse.

111 Sen., *Ep*. 47.7.

112 Sen., *Contr*. 5.6. See Dalla 1987, p. 55, for the juridical aspects of this case.

113 I will refer to myths and fictional stories as well as to historical cases: since what is at stake here is the ancient mentality, and not the factuality of the episodes, fiction is just as revealing as "real-life" episodes.

114 Cyrino 1998, pp. 226–238, connects this myth to the passage rites to adulthood which imply also cross-dressing (see below); she insists in particular, to support this, on the "femininity" of young Achilles' beauty in the relevant texts. On Achilles' myth, see also Delcourt 1961, pp. 9–10, and Guidetti, Chapter 12 in this volume.

115 Iuv., *Sat*. 6.314–341. See Campanile, Chapter 3 in this volume, on Cicero's use of this episode to "feminize" Clodius.

116 For example, Xen., *Hell*. 5.4.4; Plut., *Sol*. 8.4–6; Polyain. 4.1.1; 5.1.4. There are many other similar examples, see e.g. Hdt. 4.146 (on the wives of the Minyae, rescuing their husbands from capital punishment by means of cross-dressing).

117 Paus. 8.20.2–4. See, among many other examples, Ant. Lib. 41 (Procris dressing as a man to approach Cephalus); Hyg., *Fab*. 190 (Theonoe dressing as a man, after Apollo's advice, in order to find her father and sister).

118 Garber 1992, pp. 67–71.

119 Hyg., *Fab*. 274. On Agnodice, see King 2013, pp. 127–204.

120 Diog. Laert. 3.46. It is true that we know about other female students following Plato (Diog. Laert. 3.46; POxy 3656), so this was probably not a necessity, but it is in any case connected to the "superior" status of male philosophers, in conformity with the model of the progress narrative.

121 Tac., *Hist*. 1.48.2 – the story is slightly different in Plut., *Galb*. 12.1: here the woman is dressed as a soldier to be able to enter the camp and meet her lover there. In any case, it is an example of functionalistic cross-dressing.

122 Garber 1992, p. 141. In other contexts, prostitutes were made recognizable through extremely luxurious clothes, which were forbidden to the other women: so Ath. 12.521b for Syracuse.

123 Duncan 2006, pp. 157–159.

124 On this comedy, see also Medda, Chapter 9 in this volume.

125 Ael., *HV* 13.4.

126 Arist., *Thesm*. 765–784; 850–928; 1010–1134.

127 Arist., *Thesm*. 148–156; transl. E. O'Neill.

128 On cross-dressing in theatre, see in general Garber 1992; in particular, pp. 39–40.

129 Garber 1992:

> The more I have studied transvestism and its relation to representation the more I have begun to see it, oddly enough, as in many ways normative: as a condition that very frequently accompanies theatrical representations when theatrical self-awareness is greatest.
>
> (p. 353)

130 Bassi 1998; Duncan 2006.

131 Plut., *Phoc*. 19.2–3.

132 Duncan 2006, pp. 12–13.

133 Duncan 2006, pp. 25–57.

134 Cyrino 1998, pp. 215–226.

135 Ov., *Fast*. 2.317–330.

136 Ov., *Her*. 9.53–110. See also Propert. 4.9.50. See Eppinger, Chapter 13 in this volume, on this episode and its interpretations in Christian literature.

137 Loraux 1990, pp. 37–39. Loraux interprets all these elements as structural to the logic of polarity, which defines the figure of Hercules in myth.

138 Cyrino 1998, p. 209.

139 Cyrino 1998, p. 210.

140 Luc., *Dial. Het.* 5.3. It is worth noting that Megillos is the name of the Spartan in Plato's *Laws*, and this might have been Lucian's punch-line.

141 Luc., *Dial. Het.* 5.3.

142 Butler 1999, pp. 186–189.

143 Butler 1999:

> If one thinks that one sees a man dressed as a woman or a woman dressed as a man, then one takes the first term of each of those perceptions as the "reality" of gender: the gender that is introduced through the simile lacks "reality", and is taken to constitute an illusory appearance. In such perceptions . . . we think we know what the reality is, and take the secondary appearance of gender to be mere artifice, play, falsehood, and illusion.
>
> (p. xxiii)

144 The two cases presented by Diod. Sic. 32.10–11, of two girls who, in Arabia and at Epidaurus, all of a sudden appear to have developed a tumour in their inguinal parts which, exploding, generated male genital organs, are here irrelevant, since they are not the product of free will or of a conscious transgender enactment: Diodorus himself presents the cases as medical instances of "hidden hermaphroditism". Other similar cases are attested to in ancient sources, but they all follow the same scheme (for modern examples, see Laqueur 1990, pp. 126–128). The first attested gender reassignment surgeries were those practised almost at the same time (in 1931) on Dora Richter and on Lili Elbe.

145 Dalla 1978, pp. 51–57, but many of the sources presented here do not really present eunuchs as "women".

146 For example, Eur., *Or.* 1528. See also Anth. Lat. 109 and Corbeill 2015, p. 144.

147 Galen. 4.569. Montserrat 2000, pp. 157–158, seems indeed to over-interpret the sources in this sense. The connection suggested by her between the castrated priests of Cybele (see below) and the Vestal virgins, both belonging to a third sex since they both renounced their reproductive possibilities, is not convincing. Generally, the third sex is in itself not third, but a space of possibility which starting, once again, from a bipolar structure, tries to achieve its transcendence, as argued by Garber 1992, pp. 11–13.

148 Hall 1989, pp. 157–158.

149 For example, Quint., *Inst. Or.* 5.12.19.

150 Sen., *Ep.* 122.7; even more explicit, ps.-Luc., *Am.* 21. See also Plin., *NH* 11.37.

151 Petr. 119.20–27.

152 Petr. 23.3.

153 Iuv., *Sat.* 6.366–378. See also Mart. 6.67. See Dalla 1978, pp. 30–37.

154 Philostr., *V. Soph.* 489.

155 Hor., *Sat.* 1.2.44–46; Val. Max. 6.1.13; Mart. 2.60.2.

156 Cantarella 2007, pp. 234–236.

157 Duncan 2006, pp. 51–52.

158 Greenberg 1988, p. 40.

159 See in this volume, Chapter 6 by La Guardia. In general on cross-dressing and on transgender experiences as rites of passage, see Halperin 1990, pp. 143–147; Miller 1999, pp. 241–243.

160 Plut., *Thes.* 22–23. See Delcourt 1961, pp. 6–9.

161 Plut., *Lyc.* 15: on the wedding day, the bride dresses up as a man; Plut., *Mul. Virt.* 4, on Argive women wearing a beard (connected by Plutarch with the Argive women's refusal of inferiority to their foreign husbands); Plut., *Quaest. Gr.* 58 on grooms wearing female clothes on Cos.

162 Plut., *Quaest. Gr.* 58: a priest of Herakles in Antimacheia cross-dressed for a particular kind of sacrifice; Plut., *Mul. Virt.* 4, on the *Hybristika* at Argos, during which both males and females cross-dressed.

163 Cyrino 1998, p. 211. See also Ament 1993, pp. 15–18.

164 See Foucault 1984a, p. 277. See also Delcourt 1961, p. 5.

165 Macrob., *Sat.* 3.8.4 (quoting Aristophanes); Serv., *ad Aen.* 2.632 on this androgynous deity. See Delcourt 1961, pp. 27–29. Iconographic representations of this deity exist, which could go back to the Neolithic period, as now demonstrated by Christou 2012. This could be typical not only of Cyprus: a statuette dating from the mid-seventh century BCE, apparently representing an Aphrodite with a beard, was found in Perachora: Payne *et al.* 1940, pp. 231–232.

166 Plut., *Thes.* 20. Aetiologically, Plutarch explains these rites through the myth of the abandoned Ariadne. See Delcourt 1961, pp. 14–15. For a criticism of the social anthropological approaches to the interpretation of these rites, which still does not exclude at all their function as rites of passage and does not contradict what is being argued here, see Leitao 2012, pp. 4–7.

167 Miller 1999, in particular p. 246, but I disagree with her idea that transvestite symposiasts bring about "the creation of what we might call a sexless third gender" (p. 247).

168 Versnel 1993, pp. 146–163.

169 Cyrino 1998, p. 213: "in Roman society, the transvestite, as the negotiator of boundaries, can be seen as an essential agent in the formation and organization of gender identity itself".

170 Apul., *Met*. 8.24–30.

171 Roller 1998, p. 118. But Roller considers the eunuch priests to be asexual, and claims that they are sometimes considered as men who became women, sometimes men who have made themselves even inferior to women. The important point at stake here is acceptance among the public – quite a difficult issue, considering that the *gallus* was an "ideological scare-figure" for Roman masculinity (Williams 2010, pp. 195–196). At the same time, what I am arguing rules out the idea that castration makes the eunuch priests androgynous (so Delcourt 1961, pp. 31–32).

172 See van Straten 1993, pp. 255–256; Roller 1998, p. 120. See also Greenberg 1988, pp. 98–99; 105–106.

173 Bean 1959, p. 71, n. 5.

174 Val. Max. 7.7.6. See Dalla 1978, pp. 204–207; Gardner 1998, pp. 145–146; Roller 1998, p. 125. See in general Dalla 1978 and Gardner 1998 on the juridical regulations and limitations for eunuchs.

175 Braidotti 2013, p. 35.

176 Hall 1989, p. 153.

177 *Anth. Pal.* 6.222; 233.

178 *Anth. Pal.* 6.217–220; 234; 237. See Roller 1998, pp. 123–124. Still less could Christian authors accept the transgender performance of the eunuch priests: Augustine, when dealing with the cult of the Mother of the Gods, defines it as being against nature, since in it the men must *muliebria pati* (Aug., *CD* 6.8.).

179 In general, Catullus "stands out by his innovations in the use of grammatical gender as a literary device": Corbeill 2015, pp. 86–87.

180 Skinner 1997, pp. 136–137.

181 Catull. 63.62–73; transl. L. C. Smithers: *Quod enim genus figura est, ego non quod obierim? Ego mulier, ego adolescens, ego ephebus, ego puer . . . ego Maenas, ego mei pars, ego vir sterilis ero? . . . Iam iam dolet quod egi, iam iamque penitet*.

182 Catull. 63.80; transl. L. C. Smithers.

183 This implies, especially in comparison with Apuleius and the *Anthologia Palatina*, that the gender reassignment has taken place and not, as claimed by Miller 1998, p. 183, that the man "constantly threatens to become woman". See also Roller 1998, pp. 127–128, insisting rather on the eunuch as metaphor for the poet, i.e. someone alienated from his social context. On Catullus's use of gender in this poem, see now Corbeill 2015, pp. 92–95, showing how the poet uses grammatical gender to ascribe particular meanings to the text.

184 Hdt. 1.105.

185 Ps.-Hipp., *Aer.* 22.

186 Liv. 22.1.13.

187 Liv. 24.10.10.

188 Phleg. Trall. 36.26.

189 On the fluidity of divine gender in Roman culture, see now Corbeill 2015, pp. 104–142.

190 Corbeill 2015, p. 118.

191 In this sense I cannot agree with Bassi 1998, pp. 221–225, who considers Dionysus' appearance as an effeminate Lydian as transvestism. Bassi does not recognize the divine capacity to change nature at will (something human beings cannot do, as Pentheus demonstrates with his failed attempt at transvestism; see below). While Dionysus could have changed Pentheus' gender, he does not do so, because his aim is

making the king ridiculous, which is achieved through cross-dressing unconnected with gender reassignment.

192 Eur., *Bacch*. 353.
193 Eur., *Bacch*. 477–478; transl. D. Kovacs. See also, for example, Ant. Lib. 10, where Dionysus transforms first into a girl, then into a bull, a lion, and a leopard to punish the Minyades.
194 Eur., *Bacch*. 821–861.
195 Eur., *Bacch*. 980–981. On Pentheus' cross-dressing in relation to discourse on integrity and the dominance of the male sphere in classical Athens, see also Bassi 1998, pp. 201–203.
196 Eur., *Bacch*. 917–962.
197 In this sense I do not agree with Bassi 1998, p. 231, according to whom Pentheus' behaviour is not just cross-dressing, since "Pentheus takes on the persona of a woman when he puts on her clothes." First of all Bassi uses "persona" in its dramatic sense, and does not take into consideration the possible "interiorization" of the female habitus through Pentheus in the public's understanding. Pentheus is not made into a woman, he is made into an effeminate man – which is functional to his being made to look ridiculous – and these are two very different things.
198 Eur., *Bacch*. 945–951.
199 Aesch., *Fr*. 61. See Delcourt 1961, pp. 24–27; Delcourt interprets these episodes as signs of androgyny, but it is important to underline that Dionysus never presents male and female characteristics at the same time (but, for clothing and in comic occurrences: Arist., *Ran*. 45–48), and in point of fact seems capable of changing his gender whenever he wants.
200 Stat., *Ach*. 1.262–263.
201 See also Ament 1993, pp. 6–10. It is not relevant here when this myth developed and with which specific "function": on this, see Leitao 2012, pp. 58–99.
202 Ov., *Met*. 2.425.
203 Stat., *Ach*. 1.263.
204 Aug., *CD* 7.9. I do not deal here with divine figures who are perfectly androgynous: on this, see, among others, Tommasi Moreschini 1998 and 2001. Guittard (2002) has shown that the formulation *sive deus sive dea*, known from literary sources (as Cat., *Agr*. 139) and inscriptions (as in *ILLRP* 291–293), does not refer to any kind of divine androgyny, and rather applies to gods connected with unknown, wild, or enemy places; at the same time, it reveals a divine type of society, conceived of as a parallel to human society and often structured around male–female couples (pp. 46–47).
205 Propert. 4.2.21–24; transl. G. P. Goold. Vertumnus transforms into an old woman in Ov., *Met*. 14.654–660. From the Hellenistic period on, also, Priapus is in most cases represented in female clothes, or feminized also in the figure. While this can seem contradictory with the representation of a god whose main character is the giant phallus, it should not surprise, since it hints, on the one hand, at the feminine lack of control in the sexual sphere which characterizes this god, but also at his capacity to break conventions: as Oehmke (2007, in particular pp. 266–274) has formulated it, this makes him no "half man", but a "superman".
206 Ov., *Met*. 12.190–207.
207 Ov., *Met*. 12.459–535. See also Verg., *Aen*. 6. 447–449; Stat., *Ach*. 1.264.
208 Ov., *Met*. 9.666–797.
209 Ant. Lib. 17. See La Guardia, Chapter 6 in this volume.
210 Eustath., *Ad Od.* 10.494. Eustathius references an elegiac poem, *Teiresias*, by a Sostratus, who might be Sostratus of Alexandria, a poet of the first century BCE. In this version, Teiresias is a girl who concedes herself to Apollo in order to learn music from him. Afterwards, when she refuses the god her favours, she is transformed into a man, then again into a woman (the circumstances are here unclear), again into a man by an offended Hera, and into a woman again by Zeus. She then becomes a man again (and

only this is Teiresias) after the intervention of the Muses, until finally Aphrodite makes Teiresias into a woman again, before getting angry and transforming her into a mouse. All transitions are direct divine interventions.

211 Brisson 1976, pp. 52–53. According to Brisson, everything qualifies Teiresias as an earthborn creature who operates as a mediator between the human and the divine.

212 Tzetzes, *Sch. Lyk. Alex.* 683. In the most widespread version, Teiresias appears instead to have become blind after seeing Athena naked. Then, thanks to his mother's intercession, he seems to have received the power of divination. In Ant. Lib. 17, Siproites changes sex after seeing Artemis bathe.

213 Brisson 1976, pp. 47–48. Brisson argues that the two snakes may represent the androgynous, while Teiresias, who had a long life, as snakes in ancient zoology were thought to enjoy, may himself be connected with the snake, an animal that protects the oracles of Gaia and Themis. See also Delcourt 1961, pp. 36–42.

214 See also Ament 1993, in particular p. 3.

215 This constructivistic approach, based on performance, helps in overcoming a purely structuralist approach to the interpretation of myth, such as the one developed by Brisson (1976, pp. 3–10), according to whom, a "simultaneous bisexuality" is typical of the "archetypes", compared to a "successive bisexuality" of the "mediators" (a theory which might apply to Teiresias, but hardly to Caeneus or Iphis). Such an approach, indeed, does not allow an interpretation of the role of transgender performances in society and politics, which is what I shall attempt in the following paragraph.

216 An analysis of the ways in which some performances are adopted in literary sources as a form of slander, against specific emperors, is provided in Chapter 4 of this volume by Martijn Icks.

217 Athen. 12.537e–f.

218 Rosenbach 1958, p. 37.

219 Plut., *Dem.* 24.1.

220 Clarysse and Yan 2006, pp. 833–834; Clarysse and Yan 2007, pp. 96–98.

221 So, for example, Roy 1998, pp. 124–126; but Clarysse and Yan 2007, p. 97 claim, with good argument, that such pharaonic tradition was not followed in the Hellenistic period. On pharaonic Egypt, see Simini, Chapter 5 in this volume.

222 Varner 2008, pp. 185–189.

223 Varner 2008, p. 185. This also implied, somehow in the opposite sense, as underlined by Varner, the representation of goddesses with portraits resembling the emperors.

224 On this, I disagree with Varner 2008, pp. 193–196, who argues that this form of representation could be adopted by large groups. The examples that he quotes are either explicitly, or arguably, connected with cults and priestly figures, or do not allow an understanding of the context in which they were realized; sometimes they may only be a consequence of re-use (I am not here considering the cases, presented by Varner, where both in the imperial families and more widely in society, the members of a couple were represented as similar to each other, with the woman's features generally adapted to the those of the man).

225 Varner 2008, p. 187.

226 Suet., *Iul.* 52.3. See also Richlin 1993, pp. 531–532.

227 Caesar was indeed frequently defined as effeminate by his opponents, starting with Sulla: Suet., *Iul.* 45.3.

228 Suet., *Iul.* 49. See Edwards 1993, pp. 91–92.

229 Suet., *Iul.* 22.2. See also Corbeill 2002, p. 207 on Caesar's unusual lack of reaction to such forms of invective. Dio 43.20.4 seems to state the contrary (so Williams 2010, p. 378), but the text actually highlights that Caesar was "troubled" by the rumours about his affair with Nicomedes, not about the sexual aspects of it. Varner 2008, p. 198, assumes a form of Caesarian performance challenging the gender conventions. The same is argued by Corbeill 2002, pp. 205–208, who claims that an effeminate

appearance could have been adopted by Caesar in order to show, performatively, that he belonged to the people, "to align himself with modes of behavior contrary to those of the dominant political class" (p. 206). I argue that Caesar's self-representation goes much further than this, directly adopting forms of Hellenistic divine kingship in connection with his "transgender" performance.

230 Cantarella 2007, pp. 200–203.
231 Plut., *Caes.* 58.8–10.
232 Winterling 2003, pp. 86–87; 107–110.
233 Suet., *Cal.* 52; Aur. Vict., *Caes.* 3.11–12.
234 Dio 59.26.5–6.
235 See Varner 2008, pp. 198–199. Nonetheless, Varner still cannot separate the trans-gender performance from a possible passive sexual role. On Caligula's claim to divine honours, see Winterling 2003, pp. 130–144; maybe too reductive, but rightly putting Caligula's "divine performances" into context. See also Rosenbach 1958, pp. 38–40.
236 Suet., *Ner.* 28–39; Tac., *Ann.* 15.37.4; Aur. Vict., *Caes.* 5.5. See Varner 2008, pp. 199–200, with whom I disagree only on the use of the concept of "hermaphrodite".
237 Against Boswell 1994, pp. 80–107 and Veyne 1978, p. 40, Dalla 1987, pp. 63–69, demonstrated clearly that same-sex marriage did not exist in Rome. Cantarella 2007, p. 225, has argued that these performative acts were simply an act of provocation before society, devoid of any legal meaning, while Williams 2010, pp. 279–286, admits that such a marriage "was inconceivable; if two males were joined together, one of them had to be 'the woman'". Similar rites are referred to by other literary sources (Mart. 12.42), but it is clear that they were either invented (Skinner 2005, pp. 251–252), or performed ceremonies with no juridical validity. Juvenal, in particular (2.117–138), after presenting such a wedding, makes it evident by adding that, "if we are allowed to live just a little longer, those marriages will take place, they'll take place openly, they'll even want to be reported in the news" (transl. S. M. Braund). It might be worth mentioning, in any case, that the wedding described by Juvenal involves a priest of Mars.
238 On Nero's marriage with Sporus, see Campanile, Chapter 3 in this volume.
239 According to Dio 62.6.3, Boudicca compared herself to the women who reigned over the Romans, i.e. Messalina, Agrippina, and Nero "who, though in name a man, is in fact a woman, as is proved by his singing, lyre-playing and beautification of his person" (transl. E. Cary). This does not seem to be a reference to such crossing performances, but rather the usual "transgender discourse" explicitly applied to Nero's passion for singing and to his licentious lifestyle.
240 Varner 2008, pp. 187–188.
241 Mart. 9.20.
242 Varner 2008, p. 188.
243 *Hist. Aug., Comm.* 11.8–9.
244 *Hist. Aug., Comm.* 9.6.
245 *Hist. Aug., Comm.* 13.4.
246 *Epit. Caes.* 23.3.
247 Dio 80.16.1–6; transl. E. Cary.
248 Dio 80.16.7.
249 See Varner 2008, p. 201: "The transgressive behavior of these emperors, especially in terms of sexuality and gender, may have been carefully calculated to communicate to Roman audiences the transcendent position and power of the Emperor".
250 Iul., *Caes.* 313b–c. In this sense, it is impossible to follow Geiger 2013, p. 263, who connects Julian's description with these coins.
251 This is not the place to enter the huge debate about the choice of coin types, or discuss how representative they were of chosen, top-down, imperial propaganda. On this, see Cheung 1998 and Carlà and Castello 2010, pp. 36–57.

252 Alföldi 1928. A connection with the Eleusinian Mysteries, based on the assumption that the crown of corn must refer to Demeter, is still held by Varner 2008, p. 189 and Geiger 2013, pp. 259–263; but it had already been demonstrated as wrong by Rosenbach 1958, in particular pp. 26–27. It is also clear that these coins cannot be assumed to be a mistake, since they were minted in Rome on different occasions. Indeed, other examples of "wrong genders" in numismatics, above all the famous issues bearing the legend *sacra sinatus* (*BMGC* Lycaonia, Isauria, and Cilicia, p. 101, n. 29, Mallus), which personify the Senate as feminine, are the result of interference from the widespread Greek legend *hiera synkletos* (as in, for example, *BMGC* Lydia, p. 342, n. 103, Tralles): Corbeill 2015, pp. 74–75.
253 Kent 1973.
254 Gallienus had indeed a close relationship to Minerva: Rosenbach 1958, p. 35.
255 De Blois 1976, p. 157.
256 De Blois 1976, p. 122. See also pp. 157–159, where it is even claimed that "Gallienus went further than almost any of his predecessors in the identification of his person with various divinities".
257 De Blois 1976, pp. 125–126; 155–157.
258 MacCoull 1999, p. 238.
259 De Blois 1976, pp. 153–155.
260 Alföldi 1928, pp. 124–125. Rosenbach 1958, p. 34, interpreted the legend erroneously in the opposite way, as the emperor "appropriating" the goddess, by giving her his own portrait. Geiger (2013, pp. 263–264) goes in the right direction, but he also still thinks of Demeter rather than of Minerva. See also Bray 1997, pp. 220–223.
261 Varner 2008, p. 189. Here also are the references to the coins with a turreted crown.
262 De Landa 2006, pp. 12–14.
263 Butler 1999, p. xxiii.
264 Butler 1999, pp. xxiv–xxv.
265 Braidotti 2013, p. 26.

2 Cross-dressing in Rome between norm and practice

Andrea Raggi

The aim in this chapter is to identify and analyse the legal sanctions in Roman law that could be imposed on anyone deemed to have cross-dressed; the personal motivations for doing so could be most disparate, and will not be investigated here.[1] As such, despite some brief references to sumptuary laws, this chapter does not focus either on the practice and significance of cross-dressing in Roman society,[2] or on the role Roman law played in regulating dress; rather it is about the role of dress and appearance in law, on their consequences in the criminal sphere, and is therefore in search of explicit laws prohibiting cross-dressing in Rome.

Modern legal systems have played a considerable role in policing the language of dress, at first with explicit laws that served to regulate social boundaries, and more recently with implicit ones. For example, several ordinances explicitly prohibited cross-dressing in a number of cities in the United States starting from the mid-1800s.[3] By the beginning of the twentieth century, dozens of cities had similar laws that targeted cross-dressing, and these bans lasted until recently.[4] Nowadays, there are no ordinances explicitly prohibiting cross-dressing in Western countries, but the regulation of dress persists through a range of public forms of governance (in legislative halls, in the military, in schools, in the courtroom).[5]

Arrests still occur for cross-dressers, but on a charge of public indecency and disorderly conduct (e.g. drunken driving), or if the act constitutes a threat to public order. An Italian law prohibited individuals from assembling 'disguised' in public places; in other words, it forbade individuals to 'masquerade' for unlawful purposes; this law was repealed in 1981.[6] Currently, the Italian Criminal Code (*Codice Penale*) prosecutes as aggravating circumstances the voluntary act of altering one's appearance by any means (Italian: *travisamento*), if this disguise is believed to be functional to the completion of a criminal act.[7] In point of fact, a person who simply cross-dresses using the other gender's clothes is not criminally liable in the West.

Let us now see if any judicial aspects in the sources can be identified dealing with transvestism in ancient Rome. There are quite a few episodes of male transvestism mentioned by the sources,[8] dating back mainly to the late Republic and the early Imperial age. Among the best known cases is the dressing up of Clodius in women's garb during the celebration of Bona Dea.[9] Cicero insinuates

that, during his three-year governorship of Sicily, Verres asked that female clothes
be manufactured for him in Malta, as he often donned a long female tunic.[10] In a
number of passages in their poems, Martial and Juvenal mention (with contempt)
the habit on the part of certain characters in Rome of dressing up as a woman: the
latter, for example, targets a descendant of Q. Caecilius Metellus Creticus who
wears *multicia*, light and elegant clothes generally used only by women, and
pleads in court wearing *vestes perlucidae*.[11] Suetonius and Tacitus dwell on Nero's
wedding rites, in which the emperor forces his lovers to dress up as women.[12]

Despite the political aims of the passages quoted above, it is clear that these
behaviours were mainly disapproved of from a 'moral' point of view. Already in
the second century BCE, Scipio Africanus blamed P. Sulpicius Galus, *homo
delicatus*, for the use of a tunic described as *chirodyta* (a bad transliteration from
the Greek *cheiridōtós*, "provided with sleeves"), which Gellius, recalling a verse
by Vergil (*Aen.* 9.616), depicts as typically feminine.[13] Some decades later, and
even in the course of the first century CE, the two Senecas and Quintilian recall with
severity the phenomenon of transvestism, attributing it to moral degeneration.[14]

In view of these examples and the others which shall be taken into consideration
hereafter, one might presume that such behaviours were subject to a sanction by
the law, above all by the Roman magistrates who were responsible for the protection
of public decorum.[15] This was not the case, however, if they were performed in
private. Thus, Seneca the Younger reports on a slave who was forced to dress as a
woman, to depilate himself in order to look younger, and was kept in an artificial
boyhood, with the obligation of catering to all his master's whims in the home.[16]
As Richlin suggests, this is a case which makes it clear that owners tried to prolong
the physical characteristics of boyhood in their slaves;[17] however, it also shows
that transvestism on the part of slaves, freedmen (ex-slaves) or people of low
rank that had been imposed against their will was in certain cases unavoidable, and
disregarded by the law, as were cases of passive homosexuality.[18]

What about Roman citizens with full rights who held important posts in Roman
society? In this regard, a passage may be quoted from the *Digest* written by the
second-century CE jurist Sextus Pomponius, taken from his commentary on
the work of Quintus Mucius Scaevola (the renowned jurist who lived between
140 and 82 BCE); the passage concerns a possible case of an unusual legacy of
women's clothes by an unnamed Roman senator:

> *Inter vestem virilem et vestimenta virilia nihil interest: sed difficultatem facit
> mens legantis, si et ipse solitus fuerit uti quadam veste, quae etiam **mulieribus**
> conveniens est. Itaque ante omnia dicendum est eam legatam esse, de qua
> senserit testator, non quae re vera aut muliebris aut virilis sit. Nam et Quintus
> Titius* [= Mucius] *ait scire se quendam senatorem **muliebribus cenatoriis** uti
> solitum, qui si legaret **muliebrem vestem**, non videretur de ea sensisse qua
> ipse quasi virili utebatur.*

> There is no difference between men's clothing and men's garments; but the
> intention of the testator makes for difficulty, if he himself had been in the habit

of using certain clothing, which is also suitable *for women*. And so, in the first place, it must be held that that clothing constitutes the legacy which the testator intended, not what is in fact female or male. For Quintus Titius [= Mucius] also says that he knows that a certain senator was accustomed to use *women's dinner dress*, and if he were to leave *women's clothing* would not be regarded as having expressed an intention in respect of what he himself used as if it were men's clothing.[19]

(*Dig*. 34.2.33)

The issue at stake is if a male testator could leave as a legacy of *vestimenta virilia* even one item of clothing which is suitable for women. The case is unique and has led to difficulties (*difficultatem facit mens legantis*) not only in Roman jurisprudence, but even more so among modern scholars, in understanding a text that is ambiguous in its structure, wherein the links between the testator's intention and the *verba* in which this intention is articulated are opaque.[20]

Indeed, we learn from the *Pauli receptae Sententiae* that only those belongings used by a male individual "in accordance with his manhood" could be given as a part of an inheritance.[21] However, we must bear in mind that the *Pauli Sententiae* were reconstructed by ancient scholars on the basis of passages attributed to the jurist Paulus in post-classical works, and are therefore certainly not authentic. Furthermore, one must consider that in Rome there was an ancient custom, still observed in the Imperial age, of bequeathing objects used exclusively or predominantly by the wife to the future widow while the testator was still alive; namely, that every item intended for the wife's personal use could, at the husband's discretion, be legated.[22] In addition, while Roman law clearly differentiated between *vestimenta virilia* and *vestimenta muliebria*, and regulated rigidly any legacies of male clothing, it also recognized the existence of *vestimenta communia*, as stated by the jurist Ulpian.[23]

As a result, it is clear that the boundaries between the two types of clothing, male and female, were not so clear-cut in Roman society: some items of clothing could be worn indifferently by both men and women. Callistratus, a Roman jurist of the Severan age, states that the term *vestis* may refer generically either to male or female clothing.[24] The decisive criterion was obviously personal taste, which would change according to time, place and social environment. An individual living in a particular urban or rural environment, or belonging to a specific social class, could not be considered reprehensible if he wore robes deemed exclusively feminine in other places and environments. However, in Rome, the moral criterion that the wearing of certain clothes should not damage a man's decency in public was considered crucial: in actual fact, Paulus's *Sententiae* uses the expression *salvo pudore virilitatis*, and Ulpian uses the terms *sine vituperatione* and *sine reprehensione*. Clothes that cannot be worn by a man without being prejudicial to *pudor virilitatis*, or leading to *vituperatio* and *reprehensio*, are considered *muliebria*: this points to a subjective reaction by individuals who deemed it offensive to their masculine identity to dress in a certain way, and disapproved of such behaviour; but above all, it reveals an objective and 'social' reaction, inasmuch

as the use of female clothes was thought to damage a man's reputation in Roman society.[25] Nevertheless, no lawful sanction emerges from the quoted passages, and *vituperatio* and *reprehensio* are not legal terms in the technical sense such as, for example, *infamia*, which followed a conviction for defamatory crimes.

In view of all this, let us consider the answer to the question posed by Pomponius: whether it was possible for a male testator to leave female clothing as a legacy or not. The approach taken is in line with the jurisprudence indications cited above, and actually leads to a focus being placed on the habits of the testator: basically, one should not take into account the type of clothes left, but only the intention of the testator (*de qua senserit testator*). The legacy is what the testator meant, not what is considered to be male or female: if the testator considers an item of female clothing as male, this may be included in the legacy. As an example, Pomponius refers to the case, reported by Mucius Scaevola, of the unnamed senator who used to wear women's garments while dining, as *vestes cenatoriae*. Even Mucius Scaevola, like Pomponius, was of the opinion that the testator could also consider as male garments any that it would not be inappropriate for men to wear (that is, *sine vituperatione* or *sine reprehensione*), even though they were usually worn by women. However, if the senator left a legacy of 'women's clothing', he would not be regarded as having included any that he himself wore as if they were men's.[26]

As has been recently and rightly observed, this passage from the *Digest* tries to answer the legal dilemma of the cross-dressing senator without any social, moral or sexual considerations.[27] Nevertheless, apart from the resolution of the case, the most interesting feature is the lack of surprise on the part of the jurists, who clearly were not disturbed at the idea of a senator dining in drag.[28] In the end, and returning to the point from which we started, the passage suggests the idea that even people of higher rank could indulge in this kind of behaviour (namely, wearing female clothing, which they used as if it were men's: *qua ipse quasi virili utebatur*) without incurring any legal consequences, at least when this occurred privately.

Two declamations in Seneca the Elder's *Controversiae* – a collection of preparatory rhetorical exercises (not of forensic oratory) – allow us to make further remarks on transvestism in Rome in a public context and from a legal point of view. Transgressions such as transvestism were an important part of the structures and themes of the rhetorical genre. On this issue, and in general on the aim and role of declamation, recent scholarship has embarked on a debate: on the one hand, the point is stressed that most of Seneca the Elder's declamations provide a conventional view of *Romanitas* in order to set youngsters (*adulescentes*) and students on the right road to true Roman manhood, to promote their ethical development, and preserve the social status quo; on the other hand, it is retorted that these rhetorical exercises are in a certain sense the place where either the declaimer reflects on his own theoretical background, or where techniques clashing with the traditional customs of the Roman elite are used, rendering these also as vehicles of political critique.[29]

The first declamation we are interested in presents the episode of the *adulescens* who makes a wager on appearing in public dressed as a woman.[30] Over the course of this night of exploits, the young man suffers violence (*raptus*) at the hands of a

gang of ten youngsters; he decides to act against them by bringing a criminal charge of *vis* ('violence'), and succeeds in winning the case. Subsequently, he seeks to talk in a *contio* (the people's informal meeting in Rome), but a magistrate prevents the *adulescens* from addressing the Roman people, accusing him of being an *impudicus*; as a result, the young man charges the magistrate with *iniuria* ('mistreatment') by means of an *actio iniuriarum*.[31]

   The magistrate holds that the violence suffered by the young man can be justified by his transvestism, and also calls attention to the conviction of the gang of ten youths who physically abused the *adulescens*: he thus rules that the young man should not complain about the prohibition to *contionari*. In favour of the young man and the legitimacy of the *actio iniuriarum* brought against the magistrate, the defending speaker pleads that the *adulescens* resolved to dress as a woman on a dare and as a joke, and that he had always been serious in his public conduct before that episode.

> *Raptus* **in veste muliebri**. *Inpudicus contione prohibeatur.*
>
> *Adulescens speciosus sponsionem fecit* **muliebri veste** *se exiturum in publicum. Processit; raptus est ab adulescentibus decem. Accusavit illos de vi et damnavit. Contione prohibitus a magistratu reum facit magistratum iniuriarum.*
>
> For the magistrate: **Muliebrem vestem** *sumpsit, capillos in feminae habitum conposuit . . . Et hoc de sponsione forsitan venerit, ut auderet inpudicus contionari. Date illi* **vestem puellarem**, *date noctem: rapietur. Sic illum vestis sumpta decuit, ut videretur non tunc primum sumpsisse. Facta totius adulescentiae remitto, una nocte contentus sum: sic imitatus est puellam, ut raptorem inveniret . . . Apud patres nostros, qui forensia stipendia auspicabantur, nefas putabatur brachium toga exserere. Quam longe ab his moribus aberant qui tam verecunde etiam virtute utebantur! Constat hunc stupratum, cum damnati sint qui rapuerunt.*
>
> *Pars altera*: *Constat semper gravem, semper serium fuisse; sed hoc iocis adulescentium factum est. Ceterum tam nota erat verecundia eius, ut nemo iam sine sponsione crediderit.*

> The man who was raped *in women's clothes*. An unchaste man shall be barred from speaking in public.
>
> A handsome youth betted he would go out in public *in women's clothes*. He did so, and got raped by ten youths. He accused them of violence, and had them convicted. Forbidden by a magistrate to speak to the people, he accuses the magistrate of injuring him.
>
> For the magistrate: He put on *women's clothes*, made his hair look like a woman's . . . Perhaps this too is the result of a bet, that he should dare to speak in public, though unchaste. Give him *girls' clothes*, give him darkness – he will get raped. He was so suited by the dress he put on that it looked as though

it wasn't the first time he had put it on. I pass over everything he did as a youth – I am satisfied to talk only of a single night; he imitated a girl to such effect that he found someone to rape him. . . . In our fathers' time, those who were starting off their career in the courts were thought to be acting outrageously if they poked an arm out of their toga. How far from such a character were those who were so modest even in the use they made of something good! It is agreed that this man was violated – those who raped him have been convicted.

The other side: It is agreed that he was always grave, always serious; but this was the outcome of a youthful prank. Yet his modesty was so well-known that no-one would believe his challenge without a bet.

<div align="right">(Sen. Contr. excerp. 5.6)</div>

The issue at stake is that of the civic rights of the *adulescens* who got raped: in the end, the episode changed his status, for as the victim of a sexual assault, he had been barred from public life on the grounds of *impudicitia* ('sexual misconduct'), despite having proved a charge of violent physical attack against his aggressors. The attribute of *impudicus*, it is clear, derives from the unwanted and passive violence experienced by the *adulescens* in the rape, and has a precise connotation in the sexual vocabulary of the Romans:[32] the young man had been compelled to submit to a homosexual *stuprum per vim inlatum*, namely forced penetration that would cause a loss of *pudicitia* (and so a loss of social standing).[33] The status as *impudicus*, therefore, and not his disguise as a woman, authorized the magistrate to bar the young man from a public activity such as speaking in a *contio*.

There is evidence from some literary sources that a Roman citizen, guilty of morally reprehensible public acts, was prevented from speaking in a *contio*.[34] The magistrate underlines the fact that it is almost certain that the *adulescens* dared to dress up as a woman in public also on other occasions, but this behaviour did not lead to any convictions. In the end, this transvestism was a blunder, inasmuch as it led to the young man's rape, but it did not result in a sanction imposed by the authority in charge.

The second passage from Seneca the Elder's *Controversiae* which attracts our attention is contained in a famous episode also reported by other sources[35] and concerns the proconsul of Gallia Cisalpina, L. Quinctius Flamininus (cos. 192 BCE), brother of the renowned Titus.

Flamininus in cena reum puniens. Maiestatis laesae sit actio.

Flamininus proconsul inter cenam a meretrice rogatus, quae aiebat se numquam vidisse hominem decollari, unum ex damnatis occidit. Accusatur laesae maiestatis. . . .

13. *Montanus Votienus has putabat quaestiones esse: an quidquid in magistratu peccavit proconsul vindicari possit maiestatis lege . . . Non quidquid peccavit aliquis in magistratu, maiestatem laedit. Puta aliquem, dum magistratus est, patrem suum occidere, veneno uxorem suam necare: puto, non hac lege causam dicet, sed aliis, parricidii et veneficii . . .*

14. . . . *Si non omne non recte factum hac lege vindicari potest, an id quod sub auctoritate publica geritur. Nam cum adulterium committit, cum veneficium, tamquam civis peccat; cum animadvertit, auctoritate publica utitur, in eo autem, quod sub praetexto publicae maiestatis agitur, quidquid peccatur maiestatis actione vindicandum est. Dic enim mihi, si, cum animadvertere debeat legitimo cultu ac more solemni usus, interdiu tribunal conscenderit* **convivali veste** . . . *non laedet maiestatem? . . .*

17. *Silo Pompeius has adiecit quaestiones: an, si quod facere ei licuit fecit, non possit maiestatis lege accusari. Potest, inquit; haec enim lex quid oporteat quaerit, aliae quid liceat. Licet ire in lupanar; si praecedentibus fascibus praetor deducetur in lupanar, maiestatem laedet, etiamsi quod licet fecerit. Licet qua quis velit veste uti; si praetor ius* **in veste** *servili vel* **muliebri** *dixerit, violabit maiestatem. . . .*

How Flamininus executed a criminal at dinner. An action shall lie for *lèse-majesté*.

Flamininus, when proconsul, was once asked a favour by a whore while dining. She said she had never seen a man's head being cut off. He had a condemned criminal killed. He is accused of *lèse-majesté*. . . .

13. Votienus Montanus thought the questions were as follows: can any crime committed by a proconsul during his magistracy be punished under the law concerning *lèse-majesté*? . . . Not every wrong done by someone during his magistracy harms the majesty of the state. Suppose someone kills his father or poisons his wife during his term of office; he will, surely, plead his cause not under this law, but under others, those on parricide and poisoning. . . .

14. . . . If not every illegal action can be punished under this law, can an action which is done on public authority? When he commits an adultery, a poisoning, he sins as a private citizen; when he executes a man, he is exercising public authority, but any wrong done under the show of public authority is to be punished by an action for *lèse-majesté*. Tell me: if, when he ought to carry out sentences of death in the prescribed dress and according to the ritual, he ascends the tribunal by day *in a dinner suit* . . . will he not be harming the majesty of the Roman people? . . .

17. Pompeius Silo added these questions: if he did something he had the right to do, can he be accused under the law on *lèse-majesté*? Yes; this law is concerned with what should be done, others with what is allowed. One is allowed to go into a brothel; but if a praetor, preceded by his axes, is escorted into a brothel, he will be harming majesty, even though he is doing something he is allowed to do. One is allowed to wear what dress one likes; but if a praetor acts as judge *in the clothing of* a slave or *a woman*, he will be impairing majesty.

(Sen. *Contr*. 9.2)

Hence, we are dealing here with a case concerning public authority, and not a private citizen as in the previous *controversia*. The crux of the dispute is whether a Roman magistrate can be accused of *maiestas* when he commits an offence in the exercise of his functions.[36] *Crimen maiestatis* was, in broad terms, a crime of treason against the Roman State; namely, the Roman people in the Republic and the emperor in the Empire. Each act intended to diminish the dignity or the authority (*maiestas*) of the Roman State (conspiracy against state security, sedition and uprising, high treason in favour of an enemy, misuse of powers by a magistrate or a former magistrate) fell into this category.[37]

As regards the subject matter in dispute, the rhetorician Votienus Montanus notes that not every instance of abuse committed by a magistrate during his term of office affected the *maiestas* of the Roman people. However, if not every act carried out unlawfully by a magistrate as a private individual falls under a *crimen maiestatis*, any reprehensible conduct which occurs in the exercise of a public function should be pursued in the name of the *lex maiestatis*. Therefore a magistrate, when he has to judge a case, cannot go to court in a dinner suit, but only wearing the traditional attire, otherwise he offends the majesty of the Roman people.

The rhetorician Pompeius Silo also agrees with these arguments: although it is in general lawful to do some discreditable acts, yet they are not suitable for a magistrate. While it is certainly legal to wear whatever dress one wishes – and, it has to be said, definitely also to cross-dress – a judge performing his duties dressed as a slave or as a woman clearly affects the *maiestas* of the Roman people with his behaviour. Again, it is clear that transvestism may be without consequence (only morally reprehensible) for a private individual, whereas it signifies misconduct for a functioning magistrate: if a praetor gives judgement when improperly dressed, says Pompeius Silo, he is undoubtedly guilty of *crimen maiestatis*.

The case reported by Seneca the Elder therefore confirms that there was a lack of interest on the part of the law in conduct which could be considered immoral, such as cross-dressing. First of all, it is interesting to note the correspondence established between a woman's attire and a slave's, which symbolizes, in referring to – and in assigning the magistrate to – inferior social positions, a *deminutio* of the judge's reputation. The very fact that the charge of *crimen maiestatis* is possible even in a case such as a judge wearing a slave's attire in court denotes that the irregularity of the conduct is not related to cross-dressing per se, but to the act of exercising a public function while 'inappropriately dressed' – in a way, that is, which was not in keeping with the distinction of the position.[38]

Second, clear evidence may be found in juridical sources on the *lex maiestatis*: apart from this declamation, no source presents a trial *de maiestate laesa* linking a charge of transvestism to a Roman magistrate during his term of office. As a matter of fact, it has been already noted that the whole story about Flamininus acceding to a request from a prostitute presents an anachronistic notion of *maiestas*.[39] When carried out by a public official, there was the possibility that cross-dressing could prompt censure (*nota censoria*) by the magistrates in charge of safeguarding morality in Rome, but certainly not a sanction based on any law.[40]

Some scholars believe that a number of legal stipulations known to us regarding clothing in Rome may constitute an attempt to repress behaviour deemed to be immoral, such as transvestism.[41] As a matter of fact, clothing, and especially public attire, had been repeatedly codified and controlled in various ways in Rome, insofar as it was an important mechanism for social, and possibly political, control.[42]

For example, for the Republican period, we may recall a *lex Oppia*, enacted in 215 BCE, which prohibited female Roman citizens from wearing coloured clothes in a showy, ostentatious way.[43] In a lengthy passage, Livy (34.1–34.8.3) recounts the attempt by women from the city of Rome to have the law repealed in 195 BCE, in this way supporting the initiative of the tribunes of the people M. Fundanius and L. Valerius. The attempt was strongly opposed by the consul M. Porcius Cato; however, the manoeuvre was successful and the law was eventually repealed. There is no doubt that the law was intended to discourage women from wearing the *vestimentum versicolor* during the Hannibalic War, and it must be considered as either an emergency frugality measure, what we might call a sumptuary provision, or a mourning measure for the Roman defeat at Cannae.[44]

We know of at least two restrictive measures regarding Roman dress dating from the early Imperial age. Suetonius reports a decision by Augustus that assigned to the *aediles* the task of preventing Roman citizens from entering the *forum* if not dressed appropriately.[45] This incident leads Manfredini to believe that the *aediles* had the power to send upper-class individuals home if caught cross-dressing in public.[46] Nevertheless, it is clear that the measure was part of Augustus's policy of restoring the *mos maiorum*: in point of fact, the *princeps* also encouraged citizens to wear the toga when attending religious festivals and the theatre.[47] It seems that Augustus's efforts to impose the use of the toga were not a great success. Even if his passage should not be read literally, Juvenal nevertheless observes that in his day, the toga was hardly seen in Italy except to clothe the corpses of the dead at funerals; as a matter of fact, decades later, the Emperor Hadrian had to issue an edict in order to compel senators and *equites* to wear the toga in public.[48]

A decree of the Senate issued under Tiberius in 16 CE forbade Roman men to wear silk robes.[49] Silk, originally produced in China, began to be imported into Roman territory in the course of the first century BCE: the high costs involved in its production and trade made silk clothing a luxury item and, as such, an obvious target for any moralizing discourse in Roman society, attracting the attention of state authorities with a set of regulations on luxuries.[50] Therefore, it is not possible to recognize in this measure an attempt to repress behaviour deemed to be immoral and enacted by Roman citizens belonging to the upper classes.[51] It is true that the Romans did not consider silk clothing as properly masculine,[52] but a passage by Pliny the Elder, permeated by moralizing sentences against precisely this type of clothing, might provide an insight as to the reasons for the use of silk in men's wear: it allows you to withstand the summer heat better,[53] a sort of justification that has already been found in the passage by Juvenal concerning Caecilius Metellus Creticus. In the end, it was common enough for Roman men to discard the toga for more comfortable clothing.

We have sufficient data here to conclude, without much hesitation, that the Romans were absolutely unaffected by a prohibition on cross-dressing. On the whole, there is no evidence that dressing as a woman was forbidden by law, or that those acting in this way were condemned to any kind of penalty, however slight;[54] ultimately, cross-dressing might only prompt a *nota* by the censors in Rome. After all, like a latter-day cross-dressed Roman magistrate on duty, even Lord Cornbury, governor of the royal provinces of New York and New Jersey from 1702 to 1708, an alleged public cross-dresser, does not seem to have been sanctioned by Her Majesty the Queen, whom he claimed to represent better in women's clothes than in men's.[55]

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 See, for example, the conclusions by Richlin 1993, p. 548: "the marking by mainstream culture of particular travesties of the toga, or of the adoption of women's clothing, is reacting to a deliberate reference by a subculture to the cultural (political/gender) meaning of the toga".
   The absence of terminology for this type of switching of attire in Ancient Greek or in Latin is remarkable. Obviously, considering the juridical status of women in ancient Rome, the sources are completely silent on whether or not sanctions on female cross-dressing did exist; however, see McGinn 1998, particularly pp. 156–171, for further considerations.
   I will not take into consideration Roman legislation influenced by Christianity, on which see Manfredini 1985, pp. 267–271; Cantarella 2007, pp. 226–237; see also Dalla 1987, pp. 135–164; in addition, Tommasi, Chapter 8 in this volume.
2 See Carlà-Uhink, Chapter 1 in this volume.
3 For example, in 1864, the city of St. Louis adopted Ordinance No. 5421 which stated: "Whoever shall, in this city, appear in any public place . . . in a dress not belonging to his or her sex, or in an indecent or lewd dress . . . shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor".
4 See Bennett Capers 2008, pp. 6–10.
5 On the nature and significance of cross-dressing in Western countries, see the convincing analysis by Garber 1992.
6 Legge di P. S., art. 85 (TULPS 1931); Legge 24.11.1981, no. 689.
7 *Codice Penale*, art. 339, 625, 628.
8 "It is true that for Roman men, dressing up as women was quite a widespread custom": Cantarella 2007, p. 227 (English transl. 2002, p. 178). For a collection of examples, see Tracy 1976; Krenkel 2006.
9 See Campanile, Chapter 3 in this volume. On Antony's alleged transvestism, see also Sussman 1998, particularly pp. 120–123.
10 Cic. 2 *Verr*. 4.103: *insula est Melita . . . in qua est eodem nomine oppidum, quo iste numquam accessit, quod tamen isti textrinum per triennium ad **muliebrem vestem** conficiendam fuit* ("The island of Melita is . . .; in it there is a town, also called Melita, which Verres never visited, but which none the less he turned for three years into a

factory for the weaving of *women's dresses*"); Cic. 2 *Verr*. 5.31 and 86 (*talaris tunica*). On the use of effeminacy images in Cicero in order to denigrate his political opponents, see Gonfroy 1978.

11 Juv. *Sat*. 2.65–68, 70–71: *sed quid non facient alii, cum tu **multicia** sumas, Cretice, et hanc vestem populo mirante perores in Proculas et Pollittas? . . . 'sed Iulius ardet, aestuo'* ("But what will others not do, when you wear *gauze*, Creticus, and, while the people are staring in amazement at this garment, you deliver an impassioned finale against women like Procula and Pollitta? . . . 'But July's blazing – I'm sweltering'"). Juv. *Sat*. 2.75–78: *quid non proclames, in corpore iudicis ista si videas? quaero an deceant **multicia** testem. acer et indomitus libertatisque magister, Cretice, perluces* ("Just think how you would protest if you saw those clothes on the person of a judge. I question whether *gauze* is right even for a witness. You fierce, indomitable champion of liberty, Creticus – you are transparent"). On Juv. *Sat*. 2, see Richlin 1993, pp. 543–554.

12 See Carlà-Uhink, Chapter 1, and Campanile, Chapter 3 in this volume; recently, see Charles 2014 with previous secondary literature; and on same-sex marriage, Heyman 2012.

13 Gell. *N.A*. 6.12.1–6. For other examples in Varro and Pliny the Elder, see Manfredini 1985, p. 258.

14 See, for example, Sen. *Ep*. 122.7: *non videntur tibi contra naturam vivere qui commutant **cum feminis vestem**?* ("Do you not believe that men live contrary to Nature who exchange *the fashion of their attire with women*?"); Quint. *Inst*. 5.9.14: *fortasse corpus vulsum, fractum incessum, **vestem muliebrem** dixerit mollis et parum viri signa* ("and one could perhaps say that to have the body hair plucked, to walk with a mincing gait, or to wear *clothes like a woman's* were signs of an effeminate und unmanly character"), discussed by Halperin 1990, pp. 88–90; cf. also Richlin 1993, p. 541.

15 The censors, with regard to Roman citizens: see in general, Suolahti 1963, pp. 47–52; more recently, Humm 2010.

16 Sen. *Ep*. 47.7: *alius vini minister **in muliebrem modum** ornatus cum aetate luctatur; non potest effugere pueritiam, retrahitur, iamque militari habitu glaber retritis pilis aut penitus evulsis* ("another, who serves the wine, must dress *like a woman* and wrestle with his advancing years; he cannot get away from his boyhood, he is dragged back to it, and though he has already acquired a soldier's figure, he is kept beardless by having his hair smoothed away or plucked out by the roots").

17 Richlin 1993, p. 536.

18 See the *dictum* of the orator Haterius regarding a freedman criticized for having a relationship with his former master and defended by his lawyer with these words in Sen. *Contr*. 4. pr. 10: *inpudicitia in ingenuo crimen est, in servo necessitas, in liberto officium* ("Losing one's virtue is a crime for the free-born, a necessity in a slave, a duty for the freedman": Cantarella 2007, p. 131, English transl. 2002, p. 99); compare the commentary by Dalla 1987, p. 37; Richlin 1992, pp. 258–259, note 11. On the legal realities of forced sex for slaves and freedmen, see Joshel 1992, pp. 30–31, 33–34, with previous secondary literature.

19 Transl. by Watson 1998, vol. 3, p. 155.

20 Watson 1971, p. 88, asserts that "this is the only text in the Digest concerning a purely hypothetical situation . . . It is not difficult to detect a hint of malice"; see also Watson 1971, p. 96; Guarino 1972, pp. 148–149; Albanese 1980, for a series of apparent incongruities in the text.

21 *P.S*. 3.6.80: *veste virili legata ea tantummodo debentur, quae ad usum virilem **salvo pudore virilitatis** attinent* ("when clothing for males is bequeathed, this only applies to garments used by men *for reasons of modesty*"); cf. *P.S*. 3.6.81: *muliebri veste legata omnia quae ad usum muliebrem spectant debebuntur* ("when female clothing is bequeathed, all garments intended for the use of women are included"). Transl. taken from Scott 1932.

22 See the clear account by Astolfi 1969, pp. 232–236.

23 *Dig*. 34.2.23.2 (Ulp. 44 *ad Sab*.):

> *vestimenta omnia aut virilia sunt aut puerilia aut muliebria aut communia aut familiarica. Virilia sunt, quae ipsius patris familiae causa parata sunt, veluti togae tunicae palliola . . . reliquaque similia . . . **Muliebria sunt**, quae matris familiae causa sunt comparata, **quibus vir non facile uti potest sine vituperatione**, veluti stolae pallia tunicae . . . Communia sunt, quibus promiscui utitur mulier cum viro . . . quibus **sine reprehensione** vel vir vel uxor utatur.*

> All clothing is men's or children's or women's or that which may be worn by either sex or that worn by slaves. Men's clothing is that provided for the benefit of the head of the household, such as togas, tunics, cloaks . . . and the like . . . *Women's clothes* are those acquired for the benefit of the matron of a household, *which a man cannot easily use without occurring censure*, such as robes, wraps, undergarments . . . Clothes adapted to the use of either sex are those which a woman shares in common with her husband . . . of the type that a man or his wife may use it *without criticism*.

> (Transl. by Watson 1998, vol. 3, p. 152)

24 *Dig*. 50.16.127 (Call. 4 *de cogn*.): '*vestis' appellatione tam virilis quam muliebris et scaenica, etiamsi tragica aut citha-roedica sit, continetur* ("In the designation 'clothing' male, female and theatrical, whether tragic or citharoedic, are included". Transl. by Watson 1998, vol. 4, p. 458).

25 Astolfi 1969, pp. 251–252.

26 See above all the commentary on the passage by Astolfi 1969, pp. 252–254 (together with the clarification in Astolfi 1971); see also Manfredini 1985, p. 263; Dalla 1987, pp. 20–22.

27 Tuori 2009. The remark by Richlin 1993, p. 540, namely, that a cross-dresser could make a will, is unwarranted.

28 Cantarella 2007, p. 228.

29 See Migliario 1989, particularly p. 545 on Sen. *Contr*. 5.6: she argues that declamations reflect actuality; a different approach is taken in van Mal-Maeder 2007; on manhood: Richlin 1997; on rape in declamations: Packman 1999; according to Kaster 2001, declamations provide themes, like rape, suited to cleaning up a 'social mess' of the sort that a member of the Roman elite was educated to consider with disgust; on the debate in recent scholarship: Lentano 2011. See further Stoffel, Chapter 10 in this volume.

30 For commentary on the passage, see Richlin 1993, pp. 564–565; see also Gunderson 2003, pp. 38–39, who makes a comparison between Sen. *Contr*. 5.6 and Seneca's preface: ultimately, transvestism denotes rhetorical perversion.

31 This allegation against a magistrate, as noted by Manfredini 1985, p. 266, was not licit in Roman law (see *Dig*. 47.10.15.6), for there was no right to accuse a Roman magistrate while on duty.

32 *Impudicus*, literally 'unchaste', denotes a person who undergoes passive sexual penetration, and it is often used as a synonym for *cinaedus*. The status of *impudicus* in the Roman upper classes meant loss of honour, admission of inferiority, and a lack of virility: see Richlin 1993, p. 535; Williams 2010, pp. 191–193.

33 That rape was subject to sanction, as attested by sources from both the Republic and the Empire, is shown by Fantham 1991; on the concept of *stuprum*, see Richlin 1993, particularly pp. 561–566; Williams 2010, pp. 103–136; for an analysis of *pudicitia* in Roman declamations, see Langlands 2006, particularly pp. 247–280.

34 For sources, see Pina Polo 1989, pp. 74–75; also Dalla 1987, pp. 51–62, with other examples. Cf. also *Tabula Heracleensis* (*RS*, no. 24), lines 108–125, for regulations for Roman municipal magistrates and senators, debarred from public life if, for example, they have prostituted their person (lines 122–123). Bonner 1949, p. 105, attempts in

vain here, as in other places, to claim the origin of the 'laws' of declamations in Greek or Roman reality: for a critique, see Crook 1995, pp. 163–167.

35   Cic. *De Senect.* 42; Val. Max. 2.9.3; Liv. 39.42–43 (184 BCE), who gives two versions of the escapade of Flamininus. A commentary on this declamation can be found in Suerbaum 1993, particularly pp. 102–108; Berti 2007, pp. 332–337.

36   However, a Roman magistrate could be sued only after the expiration of his term of office: cf. note 31.

37   On laws and trials *de maiestate*, see Ferrary 2009 with previous secondary literature; on the evolution of the term *maiestas* over time, see Frézouls 1992. It is well known that the use of anachronism in the rhetorical genre was pervasive, and that *maiestas* as a *crimen* did not yet exist at the time of Flamininus. On the relationship between declamation and law, see now Lentano 2014.

38   Cantarella 2007, p. 228 correctly observes that the illegality of the praetor's behaviour was not linked to 'sexual transvestism', because the charge of *crimen maiestatis* could be brought in cases where he wore a slave's outfit: however, see my comment below in the text. Even if it seems that the toga was a mandatory garment for Roman citizens working in the law-courts, the sources cited by Edmondson 2008, p. 23, on that requirement do not envisage sanctions for infringement, only "sardonic witticism" by the people involved (cf. for a severe critique of magistrates' inappropriate dress, Edmondson 2008, p. 35).

39   Thus rightly, Ferrary 2009, particularly p. 240 and note 68; moreover, we have knowledge that the proconsul was not charged with *maiestas*, but "fut seulement chassé du sénat par Caton lors de sa censure" (184 BCE). Bonner 1949, pp. 108–109 presents a misleading commentary on this declamation, pointing out that it exploits the vagueness of the concept of *maiestas*.

40   My point of view differs from the conclusions arrived at by a number of scholars: see Manfredini 1985, p. 264: "vestirsi da donna è lecito ma se lo fa, ad esempio, un magistrato . . . non lo è più, e può integrare anche un *crimen maiestatis*"; Dalla 1987, p. 23: "il trasgressore cade sotto la sanzione criminale della *maiestas*"; see also Dalla 1987, pp. 77–78.

41   See the remarks by Manfredini 1985, pp. 261–262.

42   See the recent and comprehensive essay by Edmondson 2008.

43   Liv. 34.1.3: *Tulerat eam C. Oppius tribunus plebis . . . ne qua mulier plus semunciam auri haberet neu vestimento versicolori uteretur neu iuncto vehiculo in urbe oppidove aut propius inde mille passus nisi sacrorum publicorum causa veheretur* ("The tribune Gaius Oppius had carried this law . . . that no woman should possess more than half an ounce of gold or wear a parti-coloured garment or ride in a carriage in the City or in a town within a mile thereof, except on the occasion of a religious festival").

44   On the *lex Oppia*, see Culham 1982 (the law is a *lex sumptuaria*); Elster 2003, pp. 217–220, no. 98 ("war die *lex Oppia* vermutlich kein bloßes Luxusgesetz"). Edmondson 2008, p. 28 believes that the story in Livy reveals norms operating at the time of Augustus.

45   Suet. *Aug.* 40.5: *etiam habitum vestitumque pristinum reducere studuit, ac visa quondam pro contione pullatorum turba indignabundus et clamitans: "en Romanos, rerum dominos gentemque togatam!"* [= Verg. *Aen.* 1.282] *negotium aedilibus dedit, ne quem posthac paterentur in foro circave nisi positis lacernis togatum consistere* ("he desired also to revive the ancient fashion of dress, and once when he saw in an assembly a throng of men in dark cloaks, he cried out indignantly: 'behold them Romans, lords of the world, the nation clad in the toga' and he directed the aediles never again to allow anyone to appear in the Forum or its neighbourhood except in the toga and without a cloak"). See Edmondson 2008, pp. 23 and 32–33; Louis 2010, pp. 330–331.

46   Manfredini 1985, p. 262: "le persone di riguardo, le quali si facessero trovare in pubblico con abbigliamento effeminato, potevano essere sottoposte a misure di polizia

urbana per mano degli edili e costrette a tornare a casa". McGinn 1998, p. 202 believes that the *aediles* in 22 CE proposed "a sumptuary reform that seems to have embraced rules on clothing – specifically, repression of transvestism", a hypothesis entirely absent from Tiberius' letter addressed to the Senate (Tac. *Ann*. 3.53–54).

47 Cf. Suet. *Aug*. 44.2 and Rawson 1991, pp. 508–545, on the *lex Iulia theatralis*.

48 Juv. *Sat*. 3.171–172: *pars magna Italiae est, si verum admittimus, in qua nemo togam sumit nisi mortuus* ("In much of Italy, to tell the truth, no one puts on a toga unless he's dead." Transl. by Braund 2004, p. 181). *H.A.*, *Vita Hadr*. 22.2–3: *senatores et equites Romanos semper in publico togatos esse iussit, nisi si a cena reverterunt. Ipse, cum in Italia esset, semper togatus processit* ("he ordered senators and knights to wear the toga whenever they appeared in public, except when they were returning from a banquet. And he himself, when in Italy, always appeared thus clad"); cf. Gell. *N.A.* 13.22.1.

49 Cass. Dio 57.15.1: ὁ Τιβέριος ἀπεῖπε μὲν ἐσθῆτι σηρικῇ μηδένα ἄνδρα χρῆσθαι, ἀπεῖπε δὲ καὶ χρυσῷ σκεύει μηδένα πλὴν πρὸς τὰ ἱερὰ νομίζειν ("Tiberius forbade any man to wear silk clothing and also forbade anyone to use golden vessels except for sacred ceremonies"); see also Tacitus:

> *proximo senatus die multa in luxum civitatis dicta a Q. Haterio consulari, Octavio Frontone praetura functo; decretumque ne vasa auro solida ministrandis cibis fierent, ne vestis serica viros foedaret. . . . Adiecerat et Tiberius non id tempus censurae nec, si quid in moribus labaret, defuturum corrigendi auctorem*

> at the next session, the ex-consul, Quintus Haterius, and Octavius Fronto, a former praetor, spoke at length against the national extravagance; and it was resolved that table-plate should not be manufactured in solid gold, and that Oriental silks should no longer degrade the male sex. . . . Tiberius, too, had added that it was not the time for a censorship, and that, if there was any loosening of the national morality, a reformer would be forthcoming.

(Tac. *Ann*. 2.33)

50 See Nardi 1984; see also Edmondson 2008, pp. 32–34.

51 In this sense, Dalla 1987, p. 19.

52 See, for example, Suet. *Cal*. 52: *vestitu calciatuque et cetero habitu neque patrio neque civili, ac ne virili quidem ac denique humano semper usus est. Saepe . . . in publicum processit; aliquando sericatus et cycladatus* ("in his clothing, his shoes, and the rest of his attire he did not follow the usage of his country and his fellow-citizens, not always even that of his sex, or in fact, that of an ordinary mortal. He often . . . appeared in public; sometimes in silk and in a woman's robe").

53 Plin. *N.H.* 11.78: *nec puduit has vestes usurpare etiam viros levitatem propter aestivam* ("nor have even men been ashamed to make use of these dresses because of their lightness in summer"). It is also true that the toga was never designed to be 'everyday wear': Edmondson 2008, p. 39.

54 Despite the lack of a close examination of all the relevant sources, this point has been correctly understood by Cantarella 2007, p. 228, English transl. 2002, p. 179: "Dressing up as a woman, then, was a private habit which enjoyed relatively wide social toleration, and had no particular legal consequences". As noticed before, a divergent position has been defended by Manfredini 1985, particularly pp. 266–267, when stating that sometimes cross-dressing "poteva produrre conseguenze penali come un'imputazione di *maiestas* se il travestito era un magistrato . . ., o provocare qualche limitazione della capacità giuridica o di agire, come nel caso dell'*adulescens* . . ., o legittimare l'intervento di polizia degli edili".

55 On the whole story, see Bonomi 2000, who, however, questions its authenticity.

3 The patrician, the general and the emperor in women's clothes

Examples of cross-dressing in Late Republican and Early Imperial Rome

Domitilla Campanile

Introduction

This contribution to research into transvestism focuses on some instances of its occurrence in Rome. While I hope that the examples it presents can indeed help to define and historicize this phenomenon in the period spanning the end of the Republic to the first century CE, I should clarify from the outset that my research represents a first step in the investigation of a subject that, over the course of time, will benefit from more in-depth studies, carried out on a wider-ranging geographical basis, and with the support of expanded methodologies.[1] Of all the cases I have analysed so far, the following therefore is the most representative selection, and may point the way to further exegetic developments.

To this end, I have opted for a strong selection, focusing on a small number of events and situations and, for the moment, excluding those explicitly linked to rituals or religious experiences. In addition, I have tried to present cases whose documentation is chronologically as near as possible to the event itself, and have limited the overall period to approximately a century in order to avoid an excessive time lapse between the various situations. Furthermore, the chosen period covers approximately the years from the end of the Republic to the death of Nero, a crucial century not only on account of the ground-breaking constitutional change that occurred in Rome. The wealth of available sources – a wealth that is certainly relative in comparison to the general conditions regarding documentation in the ancient world – enables us to grasp the importance of this period from the point of view also of the social changes under way, evident in the transformation in relationships and individual behaviour.[2]

Without further ado, I would like to introduce two statements which derive from an analysis of the documentation, statements that in my opinion are essential in order to understand behaviour that would otherwise be opaque and difficult to decode for contemporary people, who of course are guided by mindsets, concerns, and an approach to duty that are completely different to those pertaining in Rome.

This, then, is the first case. In the era we are interested in, as in other eras in the ancient world, the conviction was widespread that, despite creating a reciprocally

defining relationship, a certain permeability existed between appearance and identity. A kind of symbiosis feeds the link between the individual and what s/he wears.[3] In other words, the appearance is but an exterior manifestation of whatever lies hidden within, to the extent that it becomes possible, and indeed acceptable, to make deductions on the nature of an individual on the basis of the clothes that s/he is wearing and the manner in which s/he wears them, because clothes are, along with other elements (and apart from, of course, the social status s/he enjoys), an indicator of an individual's personality and the disposition of his/her soul. Clothes maketh the man. Or clothes transform him/her, and in their turn the person, through the clothes s/he wears and the way in which s/he wears them and moves about in them, transmits his/her real identity to others.

The second statement may be found in the consideration that, as far as political struggle was concerned, the Romans of the Late Republic did not feel themselves constrained by the need for truth, or indeed a sense of shame or respect when accusing their adversaries of behaviour considered ignoble, degrading, or immoral.[4] Hitting below the belt was acceptable; but more often than not, even the belt was dispensed with.

In the political arena, the practical expression of the concrete nature of these postulates and their interaction may contribute to an understanding of some aspects that emerge from the cases of transvestism I have analysed. On the part of political adversaries, in fact, ridiculing or condemning certain items of clothing meant in actual fact striking at a deep level. Without going into detailed lists, I shall limit myself to mentioning quirks in gait, ways of sitting, posture of the arms, the habit of scratching one's head, the length of one's hair, the manner, more or less casual, of wearing one's toga,[5] along with all the imaginary, unreal or real practices of hair removal stigmatized by the orators and attributed in turn to almost all the public characters of the first century BCE.[6]

Thus, the objective of whoever invented or highlighted these habits was obviously that of placing the adversary in a bad light, discrediting and degrading him by insinuating that these actions revealed an erotic inclination or practice characterized by homosexual passivity. Being accused of beauty-care practices, or peculiar types of posture or clothing, implied precisely this, since any special treatment of the body – either excessive attention or, on the contrary, neglect – were considered as signals of passive homosexuality.[7] Insinuations or direct accusations of this inclination were liable to deprive whomever was their target of the indispensable social standing required for success in the public arena; in fact, the adversary found himself relegated to the shameful and lesser terrain of weakness and passivity, demoted to the area occupied by women and slaves, reduced from political adversary to sordid caricature.

Clodius

Among the champions of an aggressive style of oratory, desirous of fully exploiting this accusatory strategy, Cicero stands out. The first case I intend to present centres on the notorious scandal regarding Bona Dea and the sacrilege committed by Clodius in December 62 BCE. The state of the documentation is advantageous, as

both the news and sources regarding the event are very close to it and, at least at the beginning, not even hostile to Clodius; for this reason, it is possible to reconstruct the facts with a certain level of accuracy.

The scandal, which occurred in the space of a few hours, may be summarized in these terms.[8] The feast of Bona Dea was celebrated on the night between 4 and 5 December 62 BCE; the rite, as it was *pro populo*, was supposed to take place in the house of a magistrate *cum imperio*, such as Julius Caesar, who at that time was *praetor* and *pontifex maximus*. Only women from the highest social classes (among whom were Aurelia, Caesar's mother, Pompeia, his wife, and Julia, his daughter) and the Vestals participated in the sacrifice, and the ceremony was enhanced by musicians and dancers, while men were strictly forbidden to attend. Clodius, who was supposed to take up a position as *quaestor* the following day, gained access to the house disguised as a cithara player in order to meet Pompeia; when he was unmasked, he barely managed to escape. The violation of the rite meant it was interrupted on the spot by those celebrating it.

On 1 January 61 BCE, not quite a month after the scandal, Cicero informed his friend Atticus of the occurrence in rather neutral terms, but things evolved rapidly. The events that followed this farcical and sacrilegious episode[9] involved Senator Q. Cornificius forcing the hand of the consuls M. Valerius Messalla Niger and M. Pupius Piso Frugi, who were favourable to Clodius, by formally raising the issue in the Senate and asking for a debate. At the end of this, the opinion of the *pontifices* and of the Vestals was requested through a *senatus consultum*. The opinion, which was technically impeccable, suggested celebrating the sacrifice correctly in order to restore divine order, which had been overturned by the *nefas*, and the *instauratio* took place immediately.[10]

In the wake of the opinions delivered by the *pontifices* and the Vestals, the penal consequences of Clodius' actions were bound to come to the fore, along with the need to charge the accused, something that did indeed occur after much debate, especially as to the precise charge that could be brought against the patrician. The least remote of the possibilities seemed to be *incestus*;[11] after a series of irregularities set in train by the various parties, above all by Clodius, who did not want to have to go to trial, the orator Hortensius managed to find a solution that allowed for a trial thanks to a compromise regarding the composition of the jury. It was indeed a remarkable court case on account of the identity of the accused, the gravity of his previous actions, the widespread knowledge of his guilt, and the austere personality of his defence lawyer, G. Scribonius Curio. Above all, however, it was remarkable for the fact that the key witnesses – Clodius' slaves – were not present, but presumed missing. Cicero's testimony proved to be particularly damaging as it dismantled Clodius' alibi. The trial concluded a few days prior to 15 May 61 BCE with an acquittal, 31 votes against 25, and the certainty that all the favourable votes had been paid for dearly.[12] It is into this framework that we have to insert our case.

In his listeners, Cicero managed to modify the understanding of what took place: what had been merely a ploy to obtain a rendezvous with a woman, in Cicero's hands becomes a life-defining action that brings Clodius' real self to light. In fact, Cicero unmasks the patrician, revealing that it was not a case of disguise,

but rather of transvestism. He re-interprets the episode, turning the wearing of clothes that disguise the wearer's identity into a choice of garments that facilitates an evolution in the real identity, leading to a celebration of the real self.

The orator strategically manipulates different phenomena, making what was in fact a disguise come across as Clodius' underlying objective; that is, donning a disguise that would entail the wearing of feminine clothes as an indispensable premise for success.[13] To Clodius' detriment, Cicero manages to shift the focus from disguise to transvestism, while carefully avoiding getting entangled in the reason why Clodius had got himself smuggled into Caesar's house; that is, in order to meet Pompeia, Julius Caesar's wife. The construction of the image of a vice-ridden, effeminate patrician would not in fact have held up when faced with Clodius' original motivation, a clandestine, thrilling rendezvous with a matron during a religious ceremony. Regarding the *affaire*, Cicero emphasized the grotesque aspect and its disreputable nature: Clodius' real guilt was moral and consisted precisely in the disguise, not in the adultery. Roman citizens therefore had to be aware of Clodius' antisocial character and of how inopportune it would be for such an individual to accede to the *honores*.

Despite having been on good terms with Clodius up to that point, Cicero now became one of his most abhorred enemies; indeed, he continued to throw this episode back in Clodius' face on account of its inexhaustible narrative, comic, and defamatory potential, as well as the obvious pleasure of the public every time he did so.

Trickery and disguise are typical of comedy, and deceit by means of the use of the clothes of the opposite sex is always a sure-fire way of getting a laugh; the use of a disguise in order to seduce is an ancient narrative instrument that is both tried-and-tested and effective.[14] But sexual identity is a fundamental component of personality, and disguise – whatever the need for it may be and wherever it may be used – can give rise to a level of tension in the eye of the beholder that can only be overcome by means of a liberating, denigratory laugh, along with a scandalized reaction, innuendo, and so on. In the *In Clodium et Curionem* (written in 61 BCE and circulated in 58 BCE), a text conceived both to offset the violence of the speeches pronounced by Clodius against him and to call the Senate to order following the shocking acquittal,[15] Cicero, aware of all these means at his disposal, expresses himself through invective.

Cicero also exploits a consequence of the disguise. As has already been observed, every type of clothing requires a certain type of gait and appropriate movements. The disguise, therefore, since it requires a complete modification of one's usual demeanour, places whoever is using it in an impossibly challenging situation: if the transformation is successful, the protagonist will become a target of damaging accusations; if it is not successful, the protagonist will be held up to ridicule as awkward and clumsy;[16] the same is also true for Clodius' paradoxical situation, where it was clear to everyone that the real purpose of the disguise was to meet another man's wife. The attempted adultery and the sacrilege are cited once and not taken up again because it is far more damaging for Clodius' image to focus on the dressing up than on what he is really to blame for.

Furthermore, the difficult situation that Clodius has placed himself in is a vehicle for skilful and witty ripostes by the orator. When accused of being *rusticus*, Cicero retorts that it is natural to seem like a yokel in comparison to such an elegant man, who wears a long-sleeved tunic, a turban and red stockings, displays all the gestures of a cithara player, speaks in falsetto and depilates himself; soon the irony turns to invective with the suggestion that he should be ashamed of behaving like this in Rome and entering the Senate.[17]

However, as is always the case when a Claudius needs to be offended, and as Cicero will repeat with enormous success in the *Pro Caelio*, thus destroying Pulcher's sister Clodia's reputation, the definitive blow arrives by evoking the shame inflicted on his great antecedents on account of his behaviour. This is followed by simulated relief that the blindness of one of the greatest among them, Appius Claudius, means at least that he has been spared the sight of the depths to which his descendants have sunk.

The court room and the theatre are stages, places where a story is told; comic theatre is a reference point for Cicero's attacks, but there are also touches of tragedy: curious to participate in the feminine rites, Clodius who disguises himself and is then discovered, has parallels with Pentheus in Euripides' *Bacchae*.[18]

Cicero exerted himself so that the Romans might not forget the scandal, in order to exploit it in the political arena. In 56 BCE (*De Haruspicum Responso*, §44), he derides Clodius' switch to the *popularis* political side, which was imputable simply to another change of apparel: Clodius divests himself of his crocus-yellow tunic, the turban (*mitra*), the dainty sandals and red stockings (*muliebres soleae purpureaeque fasceolae*), the brassiere (*strophium*), the cithara (*psaltarium*) and lo and behold, *a flagitio, a stupro est factus repente popularis*; again in 56 BCE (*Pro Sestio*, §116), Cicero mentions how Clodius is in great demand at feminine gatherings as a *psaltria*. Until eventually, in the *Pro Milone*, Cicero pushes it to the limit, saying that Clodius had been overpowered by a rival gang on the Appian Way because *mulier inciderat in viros*.[19] After ten years of vicious opposition and conflict in which no holds had been barred, Cicero mercilessly returns to the same point, since he was certain the public would accept and snicker at the idea that death had revealed the true nature of the tribune: that of a woman – Clodius – who had run into some men and been overpowered by them. The fact that the public was receptive to this kind of *post-mortem* ferocity brings us back to what was mentioned at the beginning about the absence of any kind of constraint when attacking an adversary; it also allows us to conclude that this liberty was conceded to orators precisely because the public was keen to give free rein to its aggressiveness and disposed to include abuse and a proclivity for personal attacks among the elements of political discourse.[20]

Mark Antony

The second case contributes even further to clarifying how the phenomenon of transvestism was used in political rhetoric in the first century BCE. After Julius Caesar's assassination, a struggle ensued between the Caesaricides and followers

of the dead dictator. Cicero, who was among the most influential and authoritative politicians on the anti-Caesar side, opposed Mark Antony and used any means to remove the consul from the political scene. Despite assassination attempts and explicit intimidation on the part of Mark Antony, Cicero decided to leave the security of his villas and as from 1 September 44 BCE was back in Rome. It was then that he began to proclaim or circulate speeches against his enemy, which – probably by Cicero himself – were called The Philippics.[21] On 19 September 44 BCE in the Senate, Mark Antony viciously attacked the absent Cicero, who responded with a second speech against Mark Antony, the second Philippic, published towards the end of November.

The second Philippic represents one of the masterpieces of Cicero's rhetoric from the forum; it attained instant fame and added a powerful stimulus to Mark Antony's hatred – he placed Cicero's name at the top of the proscription list. A correlation between Mark Antony's implacableness and the second Philippic is assured, for example, by Juvenal (10.120–128). While it is true that Cicero ably turns Mark Antony's own slogans of *clementia* and *beneficia* against him, the real success of the speech derives, however, from the insulting and scarcely credible situations that Cicero manages to create for the benefit of his public, thus giving them an illusion of reality. The equation between notorious subversives such as Clodius and Catilina[22] remained a useful technique for striking out at Mark Antony, but it is the recourse to comic narrative that composes the elements in such a way as to etch them on the memory. In this way, and despite the falsehood, the adversary is diminished and placed on a clearly inferior level compared to his accuser: he is forced to wear a dunce's cap that was all the more humiliating because it was so far removed from the image that Mark Antony wished to give of himself.

It was clear to Cicero, a practical and theoretical expert in judicial oratory and its rules, the extent to which the accusation of passive homosexuality (a standard accusation for every political adversary) had been inflated and at this stage lacked any real power. By manipulating the victim's image, the accusation could be assured of capturing listeners; but the accusation lacked this dramatic element, because constant recourse to it had worn away the sense of an offence and was therefore no longer sufficient to damage the adversary irreparably. In other words, it was no longer sufficient to show a picture; this time it was necessary to tell a story. The aim of the speech is still that of expelling Mark Antony from the civic body, but the means by which this is to be achieved are not substantiated through a chain of persuasive reasoning and a list of the ruinous actions carried out by Mark Antony. This is because ridicule is far more harmful, and a degraded caricature may indeed successfully replace the real image. The fact that the accusations have no real basis in the victim's past counts for very little; what counts is that the shadow of infamy and the ridiculous sticks to Mark Antony, and that the politician no longer provokes fear in people, but laughter.

The starting point for this story rests on some facts that were well known to the public. Mark Antony was an orphan – his father, Marcus Antonius Creticus, had died in 72/71 BCE – and he lacked the wherewithal that would have enabled him to pursue a career as a magistrate. He personally did nothing to improve his own

situation: gambling, dissipation, expensive tastes, bankruptcy – this is what Cicero berates him for; but these facts, which were sufficient to throw a shadow of ambiguity over Mark Antony's personality, merely constitute the premise on which to build the story.

In point of fact, Cicero proceeds to describe the solution dreamt up by the young man to get himself out of the predicament he was in (2.44–47), and highlights the element of degradation by underlining the changes in his attire and appearance. When he was declared bankrupt, a very young Mark Antony was still wearing the *toga praetexta* (*Tenesne memoria praetextatum te decoxisse?*); then, as soon as he was old enough to wear the *toga virilis*, he cast it off and put on women's attire (*Sumpsisti virilem, quam statim muliebrem togam reddidisti*) in order to engage in high-level prostitution (*Primo vulgare scortum, certa flagitii merces, nec ea parva*). However, the unexpected happens: Curio takes him under his wing and rescues him from the street, making an 'honest woman' of Mark Antony (*qui te a meretricio quaestu abduxit et, tamquam stolam dedisset, in matrimonio stabili et certo collocavit*).[23]

This transformation is marked by another change of attire, so that the bio-graphical stages may be identified according to the changing clothes: from the *toga praetexta* to the *toga virilis*, and from the prostitute's robe to the stole. The progressive descent into squalor and the apparently timely – but in actual fact even more shameful – rescue are marked by further changes in attire.[24] Soon we find ourselves right in the middle of a comedy:[25] there is the golden-hearted prostitute who falls in love, a free-born maiden of noble and important origins forced by poverty into this trade (Mark Antony), along with the young tearaway who wants to marry her (Curio); then there is the *durus pater* (Curio Senior), who fails to comprehend how all this could have befallen his son and reacts violently, putting the 'maiden' out of the door (still Mark Antony), and then barring it with guards. In this way, the *topos* of the *exclusus amator* is re-created, but with the roles overturned: it is the 'woman' (Mark Antony) who is kept away, while in the comedies, it is the young lover who is kept far from the girl's house.[26]

The only thing missing here is a *mitis senex* who might act as a go-between. And sure enough he soon appears: Cicero, the old family friend who arrives on the scene and tries to make everyone see sense in order to restore peace to the family. Cicero's role is also inverted, with respect to what might normally be expected in a comedy: he does manage to calm the old man down and convince him to pay his son's debts (that is, Mark Antony's, for which the young Curio had made himself guarantor), but instead of acting as a matchmaker and uniting the young lovers, he makes the separation of the two a prerequisite for settling the situation. In this way, Cicero enters the story, he becomes a witness to the facts as well as an actor and can therefore vouch for what he is setting down (2.45: *Scisne me de rebus mihi notissimis dicere?*).

It hardly needs saying that Cicero's version is based on real data elaborated in a fantastical way. Compared to the comedy that Cicero puts together, Mark Antony's bankruptcy, his friendship with Curio, and Curio Senior's irritation over their dissipation count for hardly anything; as does the difference between truth and lies.

What counts instead is the representation of Mark Antony who, due to his lack of money and a propensity for dissipation, prostitutes himself dressed as a woman. As if this were not enough, the scenario serves to frame a story that Cicero comes up with deliberately to strike the imagination of the public. The comic number concludes magisterially by leaving something unsaid, something that honesty precludes being mentioned (2.47: *Sed iam stupra et flagitia omittamus: sunt quaedam, quae honeste non possum dicere*).

As has just been mentioned, the motif that underpins the story and gives it a comic slant is indeed disguise. Once the orator has understood just how useful is the image of Mark Antony dressed as a woman for destroying his character, all the elements are organized in this story wherein each episode is identified on the basis of a different outfit. The symmetry is certainly deliberate, endowing the story with a sense of equilibrium and making it unforgettable: to offset two masculine outfits proper to the *civis*, the *toga praetexta* and the *toga virilis*, there are two feminine ones – that of a prostitute and that of an honest woman. The clarification that Mark Antony passed immediately (*statim*) from the *toga virile* to *muliebris*, highlights just how out of place Mark Antony is in the political assembly.

Nero

The third case takes us far from the impassioned hatreds that characterized the end of the Republic, and on to another end – that of Nero's reign. During the summer of 65 CE, Poppaea Sabina, Nero's second wife, died; I shall not discuss the causes of her death here; suffice it to say that, while in the sources, the emperor is blamed on account of a kick he gave to his pregnant wife, modern scholars have doubts about this version, because in this episode (as in others over the course of Nero's life), they have identified the use of literary motifs present in the bio-graphies of the ancient tyrants.[27] The deceased empress was subsequently deified and honoured as Venus.[28] Grief-stricken at the death – or struck by remorse at having caused it – Nero sought out substitutes for his lost love, but none of them turned out to be satisfactory (Cass. Dio, 62.28), until, that is, the image of Poppaea reappeared in the features of Sporus, a freed youth.[29]

Nero's new marriage to Statilia Messalina in 66 CE[30] did not impede the emperor from marrying Sporus during a trip to Greece; the youth had been castrated to stop him taking on more decidedly masculine features, and Nero wed him, despite – as Cassius Dio recounts – being already married to Pythagoras.[31] Nero gave Sporus the dowry that was his due in accordance with the contract and officially celebrated his marriage to him, his new wife,[32] dressed in accordance with the rules for marriage ceremonies and with his head covered by a veil, while for the occasion, Tigellinus, prefect of the Praetorian Guards, acted as a kind of bridesmaid. From that time on, Sporus was called Sabina (the deceased empress's name), addressed as 'My Lady', 'Queen', 'Mistress', and wore feminine clothes that were in keeping with the role. Dio Chrysostom's testimony is even more significant. Sporus had at all times to dress like a woman, he wore his hair long in the matronal style, and was accompanied and served only by girls.[33] The transformation of Sporus into Sabina,

which was made possible through the extraordinary similarity of the two, was therefore also achieved by means of the constant and exclusive use of feminine clothes and hairstyles.

An initial reading of Nero's conduct points to a very strong aspiration in him to universal metamorphosis, change, and domination. Subjugating and modifying nature by inverting its polarities constitutes a superhuman characteristic present in several of his actions during the final phase of his reign. The wish to leave no stone unturned in order to elevate himself above and beyond the human marks the final stage of development in Nero's peculiar conception of an emperor's role;[34] a will to power that is in this case evident and absolute, since here Nero had set his sights on changing an individual's sex by means of clothes, and blocking time through castration: thus would he bring the woman he loved back to life by intervening on another's features.[35]

The wish to overcome and subjugate nature on the emperor's part is an interpretation of Nero's behaviour which is not intended to be exclusive, and which is compatible therefore with other possible explanations.[36] If we recall how Curio referred to Julius Caesar as "every woman's man and every man's woman", we may wonder whether what was originally intended as a vicious attack on a political adversary such as Caesar, became with Nero an objective and an agenda.[37] Nero's wish to experience anything hitherto untried, his need, verging on exhibitionism, to draw attention to what should remain discreetly hidden, may be attributed to the new social, and above all artistic, norms from the Hellenistic world. From the Hellenistic age on, a certain deviation from the rules occurred in art, leading to a Dionysian absence of inhibitions, seen in the blithe representations of sexual aggression wherein all manner of erotic experience is celebrated in every possible manifestation. It must also be underlined, on account of its relevance to the aim of this chapter, that the figure of the hermaphrodite had become the preferred subject in art, a theme that crystallized and exalted the joy of intensified sensual pleasure, as well as the opportunity to enjoy an unparalleled experience of this pleasure.[38] It is to this joy in experiencing untried pleasures in forms that had not been sanctioned by experience that Nero's relationship with Sporus may be attributed; the youth's transvestism may also be explained by this impulse on the part of the emperor.

If, on the other hand, one wishes to look at Nero in another light and consider the story as part of the sinister legend foisted on him by historians and writers, the following path may be tried. One should note, in that case, how the episode of Nero's lost love, his sorrow and search for a worthy substitute, the way in which he found it eventually in a person of the opposite sex with respect to his dead wife, bears a similarity to an episode in another imperial court – here too transvestism played a significant role. The setting is the Persian court and the protagonist of the story is the hetaira Aspasia, who had become Artaxerxes' concubine following the Battle of Cunaxa against Cyrus the Younger. The death of Tiridates, Artaxerxes' favourite eunuch, had prostrated the king with grief; to console him, Aspasia – who bore a remarkable similarity to the deceased eunuch – took to dressing herself in his clothes and jewellery. In this way Artaxerxes found comfort and joy.[39]

This story, which was well known, may therefore have been taken up and used by whoever intended recounting the end of Nero's reign. But what in the Persian account amounted to a eulogy of Aspasia's devotion through the use of disguise, is elaborated here in such a way as to become a further accusation against Nero. It provides a demonstration of the exceptional negativity of this individual and what set him apart from most of humankind – a story in which the way a youth was obliged to dress in a manner contrary to what was customary for his sex constituted an essential part of the emperor's eccentric cruelty.

Conclusions

The three cases that have been selected here throw light on different aspects of transvestism in Rome at the end of the Republic and the beginning of the Empire. The first two cases illustrate the political use made against adversaries of an accusation of transvestism. As scholars have already shown, accusations of possessing whatever traits were deemed to belong to the feminine sphere, and the imputation that inevitably followed of weakness and inadequacy in terms of the role required by society, constituted a powerful arm against enemies and rivals, but in the cases under examination, it is possible to go even further.

It may also be postulated that Clodius' and Mark Antony's disguises, whether real or imaginary, underline their vice-ridden and passionate natures, thus precluding them from taking their place among their peers in the honourable political assembly. By donning feminine attire, they have voluntarily excluded themselves from the *cives Romani*, as well as from a society that has no place for them; the sound body of citizens must react by excluding those who are beyond the pale. I feel, therefore, that Cicero's argument in *De Haruspicum Responso* (§44) is extremely significant: when he finds fault with Clodius' lack of *animi virilis dolor*, the orator is underlining the fact that while others had tried to overthrow the State for various motives, and while this was wrong, it was at least the result of virile resentment – *animi virilis dolor*.[40] Clodius, who is far removed from feeling anything approaching this, cannot therefore aspire to taking his place even among a group of characters – calamitous for the State but not completely lacking in dignity – such as Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, Lucius Appuleius Saturninus, or Sulpicius Rufus.

This is the content that Cicero intends to transmit, aware that the public's willingness to reject Clodius or Mark Antony depends largely on his ability to present them as dangerous and undesirable. At that time, the most effective way to achieve this was to put together a story in which transvestism emerges as an adversary's lifestyle choice.

The interpretation given to Nero's behaviour is less straightforward. On the one hand, we can detect in it the same derogatory intention of depicting the emperor as an immoral and shameful ruler. On the other hand, however, the great quantity of evidence means that this behaviour cannot be written off as a mere forgery by hostile sources. It may be interpreted, instead, as a deliberate attempt on the part of the emperor to experience everything, and in this way place himself beyond the reach of natural limits.

Notes

1 See also the introductory reflections by Giorcelli 1995, especially p. 7.
2 The first indications in Treggiari 1996; Morstein-Marx and Rosenstein 2006.
3 For a worthwhile discussion, see Gherchanoc and Huet 2007; Baroin 2012.
4 Gonfroy 1978 and Hallett 1977 are still relevant; Edwards 1993: pp. 63–64 and Tatum 2007 are useful. The best formulation may be found in Syme 1939:

> In Rome of the Republic, not constrained by any law of libel, the literature of politics was seldom dreary, hypocritical or edifying. . . . Again, the law-courts were an avenue for political advancement through prosecution, a battleground for private enmities and political feuds, a theatre for oratory. The best of arguments was personal abuse. In the allegation of disgusting immorality, degrading pursuits and ignoble origin the Roman politician knew no compunction or limit.
>
> (p. 149)

Adams 1982 is crucial on the lexis used for insults.
5 The habit of scratching one's head: Plut., *Pomp.,* 48, Plut., *Caes.,* 4. For an excessively casual manner of wearing one's toga: Plut., *Caes.,* 4 and Macrob., 2.3.9.
6 On hair removal, Gleason 1990: pp. 404–405. Relevant: Suet., *Divus Augustus,* 68:

> *Prima iuventa variorum dedecorum infamiam subiit. Sextus Pompeius ut effeminatum insectatus est; M. Antonius adoptionem avunculi stupro meritum; item L. Marci frater, quasi pudicitiam delibatam a Caesare Aulo etiam Hirtio in Hispania trecentis milibus nummum substraverit solitusque sit crura suburere nuce ardenti, quo mollior pilus surgeret.*
>
> In early youth he [= Augustus] incurred the reproach of sundry shameless acts. Sextus Pompey taunted him with effeminacy; Mark Antony with having earned adoption by his uncle through unnatural relations; and Lucius, brother of Mark Antony, that after sacrificing his honour to Caesar he had given himself to Aulus Hirtius in Spain for three hundred thousand sesterces, and that he used to singe his legs with red-hot nutshells, to make the hair grow softer.
>
> (Transl. by J. C. Rolfe in Loeb edition, 1914)

7 Rather than citing the extensive successive bibliography, I feel it might be useful to recall here the pioneering studies on this subject carried out by Gonfroy 1978, Veyne 1978, MacMullen 1982, Wiseman 1985, Gleason 1990, Graf 1993, Cantarella 2007. But Süss 1910: pp. 249–250 is still relevant.
8 For a systematic collection of all the sources, see Moreau 1982, also crucial for an understanding of the entire affair and its dating. See also at least Balsdon 1966, Geffcken 1973, Wiseman 1974: pp. 130–137, Mulroy 1988, Pina Polo 1996, Tatum 1999: pp. 62–86, Fezzi 2008: pp. 34–44. Brouwer 1989 is extremely useful regarding the Bona Dea cult and the religious problems, and now also Schultz 2006, Šterbenc Erker 2013, Mastrocinque 2014, Arnhold 2015. For reminiscences of Alcibiades' mimicry of the Eleusinian Mysteries, see Geffcken 1973: p. 69.
9 Cic., *Ad Atticum,* 1.12.3: *P. Clodium, Appi f., credo te audisse cum veste muliebri deprehensum domi C. Caesaris, cum pro populo fieret, eumque per manus servulae servatum et eductum; rem esse insigni infamia. Quod te moleste ferre certo scio.* (Transl. by E. O. Winstedt in the Loeb edition, 1912): "I expect you have heard that P. Clodius, son of Appius, was discovered in woman's clothes in C. Caesar's house, where the sacrifice was going on: but a servant girl managed to smuggle him out. It has created a public scandal: and I am sure you will be sorry to hear of it." Twenty days later, Cicero defines it as *Fabula Clodiana* (*Ad Atticum,* 1.18.2, 20 January 60 BCE).
10 The prudent behaviour of Julius Caesar throughout the entire affair must be noted, along with his desire not to make an enemy of Clodius and his powerful following: he

did not take an obvious stance on the question, despite being the *pontifex maximus*, nor did he initiate legal proceedings *de iniuria* against Clodius, proceeding rather towards a rapid divorce from Pompeia.

11 Moreau 1982: pp. 83–98 is very important on this point; see also Manfredini 1987: p. 11: "Fino alla fine della repubblica, il crimine di incesto sembra non andare oltre ai casi di violazione o tentata violazione di stati di castità e purità sacerdotale. Questo spiega l'accusa di incesto mossa a Clodio". ("Up to the end of the Republic, the crime of incest does not seem to go beyond cases of violation or attempted violation of states of chastity and priestly purity. This explains the charge of incest levelled at Clodius"). Sources from the trial in Alexander 1990: pp. 116–117, no. 236.

12 Just as, more than a century later, Seneca recalls in *Epist.,* 97.3. In the speech *In Clodium et Curionem* (Puccioni 1971: p. 121, no. 6; Crawford 1994: p. 240, no. 6), Cicero is satisfied when he says that Clodius emerged from the court case stripped as naked as a castaway, *Ut ille iudicio tamquam e naufragio nudus emersit*.

13 See Butrica 2002: pp. 513–516. If Clodius' awareness is a given, there is less certainty regarding his motives; scholars suggest, apart from the desire to meet up with Pompeia (accepted by almost everyone), there is the curiosity of participating in rites that were off-limits to men, the wish to pull off some kind of a stunt, a wager, along with arrogance and immaturity. See, for example, Wiseman 1974.

14 See Geffcken 1973 and Mulroy 1988. It may be relevant to recall here how in myth, not only does Zeus transform himself into a woman in order to seduce Callisto, but he even pushes disguise to the limit by becoming a shape-shifter (a swan with Leda, rain with Danae).

15 Only a few fragments of the speech remain, mostly conserved in the *Scholia Bobiensia.* I have used Puccioni's edition of 1971 and Crawford's (1994); see also Crawford 2002.

16 This can immediately be seen in Cicero's double level of irony: Puccioni 1971: p. 125, no. 24; Crawford 1994: p. 243, no. 24; *Sed, credo, postquam speculum tibi adlatum est, longe te a Pulchris abesse sensisti*. The play of words centres on *Pulcher*, an adjective and *cognomen* of the *gens* Claudia, in order to indicate just how far Clodius has removed himself from his family group by his actions: he cannot manage even to be *pulcher*. Geffcken 1973: pp. 79–81.

17 Puccioni 1971: pp. 123–124, no. 21. *Psaltria*, a female cithara player, is the term that Cicero uses most frequently in order to remind everyone of the specific nature of Clodius' disguise, by emphasizing the grotesque and inappropriate features of the action. *Psaltria* is also the title of a comedy by Titinius: Guardì 1984: pp. 139–141. Geffcken 1973: pp. 75–77 is also important. See now also Hall 2014.

18 Mulroy 1988.

19 *Pro Milone*, 55. See also Williams 2010: p. 160; Benda-Weber 2014: p. 132.

20 See also Corbeill 1996; Pina Polo 2010.

21 I limit the bibliographical indications here to Sussman 1994, 1998; Ramsey 2003; Cristofoli 2004; De Siena 2006; Stevenson and Wilson 2008; Ott 2013. On the text, see Magnaldi 2008.

22 De Siena 2006; Evans 2008. On Mark Antony's slogans of *clementia* and *beneficia*, see Angel 2008.

23 See McGinn 1998: pp. 159–160; Sussman 1998; Dyck 2013.

24 It should be remembered that descending from, and cleaving to Heracles, which was greatly emphasized by Mark Antony (on this, see Huttner 1995; Ritter 1995: pp. 70–85), was not a risk-free enterprise, since a well-known episode in the myth centred on the period that the hero spent in women's attire with the queen of Lydia, Omphale.

25 Sussmann 1998, see also Edwards 1993: pp. 64–65, 189; Corbeill 1996: pp. 105–106, 148–149; Edmondson 2008; Hammar 2013: pp. 308–312.

26 Hughes 1992. On the relationship between Cicero and Curio Senior, see McDermott 1972.

27   Data on Poppaea Sabina in *PIR*[2] P850 and Raepsaet-Charlier 1987: no. 646. Her death: Tac., *Ann.,* 16.6; Suet., *Nero,* 35.3; Dio, 62.27. On Nero and the tyrant motif that provokes the death of a pregnant wife, see Mayer 1982; Ameling 1986; Holztrattner 1995; Di Branco 2002; Vout 2002; Champlin 2003: pp. 107–111. On the construction of the figure of the tyrant, see Catenacci 2012.

28   Dio, 63.26.3. See Holztrattner 1995 and Kragelund 2010.

29   Bessone 1979; Champlin 2003: on Sporus, see the whole of Chapter 6, pp. 145–177; Tougher 2013.

30   On Statilia Messalina, see Raepsaet-Charlier 1987: no. 730.

31   The relationship with Pythagoras was symmetrical with that with Sporus, but the roles were reversed. Around 64 CE (when he was still married to Poppaea), Nero appears to have taken this freedman as a husband; see Tac., *Ann.,* 15.37; see Pipitone 2015.

32   Suet., *Nero,* 28:

> *Puerum Sporum exsectis testibus etiam in muliebrem naturam transfigurare conatus cum dote et flammeo per sollemnia nuptiarum celeberrimo officio deductum ad se pro uxore habuit; exstatque cuiusdam non inscitus iocus bene agi potuisse cum rebus humanis, si Domitius pater talem habuisset uxorem. Hunc Sporum, Augustarum ornamentis excultum lecticaque vectum, et circa conventus mercatusque Graeciae ac mox Romae circa Sigillaria comitatus est identidem exosculans.*

> He castrated the boy Sporus and actually tried to make a woman of him; and he married him with all the usual ceremonies, including a dowry and a bridal veil, took him to his house attended by a great throng, and treated him as his wife. And the witty jest that someone made is still current, that it would have been well for the world if Nero's father Domitius had had that kind of wife. This Sporus, decked out with the finery of the empresses and riding in a litter, he took with him to the assizes and marts of Greece, and later at Rome through the Street of the Images, fondly kissing him from time to time.

> (Trans. by J. C. Rolfe in the Loeb edition, 1914)

On Tigellinus and epithets for Sporus (κυρία, βασιλίς, δέσποινα): Dio, 63.13. Devereux 1982 should be read in general.

33   Dio Chrys. 21.6–7. See Hawley 2000; Gangloff 2006: p. 331; and Tougher 2013: pp. 63–66, whereas the interpretation in Woods 2009 is not accepted.

34   I discussed this with Filippo Carlà-Uhink, whom I wish to thank because the suggestion of a link between Sporus's transformation and the imperial will bent on control and transcendence is his. Champlin 2003 is generally useful; see also Curry 2014.

35   For a full discussion of these actions and objectives, see Carlà-Uhink, Chapter 1 in this volume.

36   Verdière 1975 provides some parallels between Nero's union with Sporus and the initiatory rites for the cult of Magna Mater, Cybele. However, I am not overly convinced by this exegetic line.

37   Suet., *Divus Iulius,* 52: *Curio pater quadam eum oratione omnium mulierum uirum et omnium uirorum mulierem appellat.* We are dealing here with the aforementioned Curio, father of Mark Antony's friend of the same name.

38   Zanker 1998 is fundamental on this subject.

39   Xen., *Anab.,* 1.10.2; Plut., *Artax.,* 26.3–5 and *Per.,* 24.11; Iust., 10.2.1; Athen., 13.576, Aelian., *VH,* 12.1. See Fogazza 1970; Briant 1996: pp. 280, 290, 293; Puiggali 2004; Campanile 2006.

40   Cic., *De Haruspicum Responso,* 44: *Fuit in his omnibus etsi non iusta, (nulla enim potest cuiquam male de re publica merendi iusta esse causa,) gravis tamen et cum aliquo animi virilis dolore coniuncta.*

4   Cross-dressers in control

Transvestism, power and the balance between the sexes in the literary discourse of the Roman Empire

Martijn Icks

Effeminacy was not a good trait for a Roman emperor to possess. Allegedly, the general Silvanus found this out the hard way in 355 CE, when he decided to revolt against Constantius II and claim the imperial purple for himself. As symbols of imperial power *par excellence*, purple mantles were hard to come by, so that Silvanus, who had to make do with any attributes he could find, resorted to wrapping himself in a purple dress he took from the women's apartments.[1] The future emperor Julian, who records the tale in a panegyric to Constantius II, describes with glee what happened when the cross-dressing pretender showed himself to his men:

> Then the soldiers, resenting his treachery, would not tolerate the sight of him thus dressed up in women's garb, and they set on the miserable wretch and tore him limb from limb, nor would they endure either that the crescent moon should rule over them.[2]

This response may seem a tad extreme to our modern sensibilities. In fact, things did not happen quite as Julian describes, since Ammianus Marcellinus and other sources assure us that Silvanus was accepted as emperor by his men and ruled for several weeks before he was murdered.[3] Nevertheless, it is interesting that Julian mentions that the soldiers resented their commander's bid for power not only because it constituted a betrayal of Constantius, but also because he engaged in cross-dressing. Moreover, this act is associated with the 'East', since the 'crescent moon' mentioned in the text was a symbol of the Persian Empire. Julian was wise enough to avoid any association with female attributes at his own usurpation, telling the soldiers that 'it was not fitting for him to wear a woman's adornment' when they sought to crown him with one of his wife's ornaments. According to Joannes Zonaras, he even regarded it as a bad omen.[4] In both cases, the authors relating these events seem to imply that cross-dressing and imperial power were not a happy match.

Roman concepts of manliness and power

To the ancient Romans, one's masculine status was conditional, something that had to be upheld and could always be contested. In the words of Maud Gleason, it was 'an achieved state, radically underdetermined by anatomical sex'.[5] Above all, 'being a man' was associated with an active sexual role – that is, with being the penetrating sexual partner – and with martial qualities such as military prowess and courage on the battlefield.[6] Men who fell short of the mark were presumed to suffer from *mollitia*, a term that can be translated as 'softness' or 'effeminacy'. Among the telling signs of this affliction were a preoccupation with appearance, the use of perfume and cosmetics and a habit of depilating one's body hair. Typically, 'soft' men lacked bravery and were inclined to passive homosexuality. In contrast to the true Roman *vir*, they were unable to restrain themselves, recklessly indulging their appetites for feasting, drinking and sex. It is not surprising, then, that *mollitia* was taken to be induced by an excess of luxury, which flowed into Rome from Greece and the decadent world of the 'East'.[7]

The notion that traditional gender lines could become so easily blurred did not prompt Graeco-Roman authors to put the validity of these lines into question. On the contrary, men and women who took on the appearance and behaviour of the opposite sex were in most cases despised and ridiculed, as they were considered sexually ambivalent and morally depraved.[8] This ambivalence was all the more problematic if the person in question happened to be an emperor or empress. After all, members of the imperial family were supposed to fulfil an exemplary function. As the man at the top of Rome's socio-political hierarchy, the emperor was the epitome of manliness, dominating even the most powerful senators and claiming unparalleled *virtus* as a triumphant military commander. Through his images, which were everywhere in sight, he displayed himself as the embodiment of the ideal Roman *vir*: masculine, powerful and invulnerable.[9]

As Filippo Carlà-Uhink discusses in Chapter 1 of this volume, genuine transitions from one gender to the other were held to be the privilege of the gods, and could only be achieved through an act of divine intervention. Examples of gender transgression in imperial representation should thus be seen in the light of the emperor's superhuman status.[10] However, the senatorial aristocracy resisted rulers who defied traditional gender lines. In their eyes, emperors who put on female clothing undermined the masculinity that formed one of the key attributes of their supreme position. Graeco-Roman authors usually associate this practice with notorious 'bad' emperors such as Caligula, Nero and Elagabalus, whose appropriation of female attributes is invariably condemned in the harshest terms in ancient histories and biographies. Perhaps even more alarming to the sensibilities of these authors, powerful women could engage in cross-dressing, too, donning men's clothing and sometimes even riding into battle, as Queen Semiramis of Assyria and Queen Zenobia of Palmyra allegedly did.[11] These women, then, not only intruded on the 'masculine' domain of ruling, but took on a male appearance and performed actions that were considered as defining traits of Roman masculinity.

In this chapter, I will examine the role of transvestite rulers in the works of imperial historians and biographers. It is *not* my purpose to enquire into the (presumably) actual practices of cross-dressing by Roman emperors and empresses, or into instances of gender-ambiguous self-representation on their part. Rather, I am interested in the ways that transvestism was employed as a literary instrument to characterize those in charge. How did authors from the time of the Empire employ notions of cross-dressing and related transgender activities to construct discourses of imperial power? Given that they conceived of the ruling of empires as the sole province of men, how did they imagine that the phenomenon of rulers in drag affected the power balance between the sexes? If kings and emperors forfeited their masculine role by putting on female clothing and make-up, did that prompt powerful women to start behaving in a more 'manly' fashion? Likewise, if powerful women started to dress up and act like men, how did that reflect on the gender status of the male rulers they challenged? And how was cross-dressing related to the 'East' – the region traditionally associated with effeminate kings? Starting with this last question, we will first turn to Graeco-Roman perceptions of three iconic cross-dressing rulers from Assyria and Babylonia: Sardanapalus, Nanarus and Semiramis.

Literary depictions of 'Oriental' rulers: Sardanapalus, Nanarus and Semiramis

In the eyes of the Greeks and Romans, 'Oriental' peoples like the Persians and the Syrians were characterized by extravagance, luxury and servility, and hence were more fitted to be slaves than warriors. Hardly considered men, they were generally regarded as immoral sexual perverts who drenched themselves in perfume and surrounded themselves with eunuchs – creatures with whom in any case they had a lot in common.[12] Therefore, it is not surprising that the figure of the effeminate eastern king loomed large in the Graeco-Roman imagination. In Book 12 of his *Deipnosophistae*, Athenaeus devotes considerable attention to such monarchs, whose androgynous gender stood in stark contrast to the 'masculine' status of their kingship. As the author records, these 'female-kings' lived secluded lives in their harems, where they spent their time wearing women's clothing and taking care of their bodies in 'feminine' ways; for instance, by depilating their body hair. Although they possessed strong sexual urges, their sexual role was always passive – which, to Greeks and Romans, placed them in the same inferior category as women, slaves and others who allowed their bodies to be penetrated.[13]

Undoubtedly the most notorious among the effeminate eastern kings was the mythical Sardanapalus of Assyria. His story, first told in detail in Ctesias' *Persica*, has been preserved in the works of several authors, mainly Diodorus Siculus.[14] Allegedly,

he lived the life of a woman [βίον ἔζησε γυναικός], and spending his days in the company of his concubines and spinning purple garments and working the softest of wool,[15] he had assumed the feminine garb [στολὴν μὲν γυναικείαν

ἐνεδεδύκει] and so covered his face and indeed his entire body with whitening cosmetics and the other unguents used by courtesans, that he rendered it more delicate than that of any luxury-loving woman [ἀπαλώτερον πάσης γυναικὸς τρυφερᾶς]. He also took care to make even his voice to be like a woman's, and at his carousals not only to indulge regularly in those drinks and viands which could offer the greatest pleasure, but also to pursue the delights of love with men as well as with women; for he practiced sexual indulgence of both kinds without restraint, showing not the least concern for the disgrace attending such conduct.[16]

One could hardly imagine a more splendid specimen of 'Oriental' effeminacy. Everything about Sardanapalus, from his transvestism to his exaggerated care of his appearance, radiated *mollitia*, which Graeco-Roman authors associated with political, social and moral weakness.[17] Indeed, Diodorus makes the king personally responsible for the decline of the Assyrian Empire. As he relates, when Sardanapalus granted an audience to the Median general Arbaces, the latter only had to take one look at his sovereign's effeminate appearance to decide that he was 'worthy of no consideration' and to press on with the revolt he had been contemplating. As a result, the rule of the Assyrian kings, 'which had endured from the time of Ninus through thirty generations, for more than one thousand three hundred years', came to an infamous end.[18] Such were the perils of relying on cross-dressing kings.

Equally fascinating is the case of Nanarus, a satrap of Babylonia at the time of the Median Empire, whose story is related by Nicolaus of Damascus, but ultimately goes back to Ctesias. Allegedly, this thoroughly 'soft' man wore earrings, make-up, and shaved his whole body.[19] His appearance earned him the scorn of the mighty warrior and huntsman Parsondes, who entreated King Artaeus to make him satrap in Nanarus' stead. So far, this seems like just another story of an effeminate 'Oriental' ruler losing his position to a more masculine rival, but the narrative takes an interesting turn when the king refuses the request of Parsondes and the vexed Nanarus manages to take him captive. Taunting him with the fact that he has let an allegedly inferior figure get the better of him, Nanarus has the warrior's body shaved, his eyes underlined and his hair plaited, forcing him to learn to play the harp and sing. Soon the masculine Parsondes has changed beyond all recognition – so much so that a Median ambassador picks him out as his favourite among all the female musicians at a party, not realizing that this 'woman' is actually a man! Eventually, the masculine status of Parsondes is restored and Nanarus gets his comeuppance.[20] However, the fact that such a 'manly' warrior could so easily and successfully be transformed into a 'female' harp player confronts the reader with questions about the stability of gender categories and the supposed inferiority of those labelled as feminine or unmanly.

On the opposite side of the spectrum of such effeminate rulers as Sardanapalus and Nanarus, Graeco-Roman authors also credit the 'East' with another striking figure: a queen with the ambition and skills of a man. Diodorus, once again following Ctesias, writes in great detail about Semiramis, who appears to be very loosely based on the Assyrian queen Sammuramat.[21]

Whereas the author of the *Library of History* placed Sardanapalus at the end of Assyrian history, Semiramis is placed near the beginning, when the Assyrians were still a warlike people. As the wife of one of King Ninus' councillors, she allegedly first attracted the monarch's attention during the Siege of Bactra. Diodorus records that she got involved in the battle and managed to seize part of the acropolis with a group of soldiers. As a result, the city was taken and the awestruck Ninus forced Semiramis' husband to abandon her, taking her for his wife and queen. After his death, she took over as sovereign and accomplished many great works, such as the foundation of Babylon, the building of its impressive walls, the construction of ubiquitous roads and monuments, and the subduing of Libya and Ethiopia. She even waged war on India, although her attempts at conquest failed.[22]

Semiramis not only stepped outside traditional gender roles, but also shed the clothing assigned to her sex. When she first travelled to Bactra, she devised 'a garb which made it impossible to distinguish whether the wearer of it was a man or a woman', and which was apparently so convenient that it would be adopted by the Medes and Persians of later generations.[23] In other words, as Janick Auberger has correctly pointed out, she was wearing the traditional clothing of a Persian male, transforming herself from woman to man.[24] Yet the passage also implies a second gender transformation, taking place on a much broader scale. After all, if Semiramis inspired future Median and Persian men to adopt a style of clothing that Greeks did not recognize as masculine – and that Strabo would unequivocally deride as 'feminine'[25] – she was effectively turning the entire male Median–Persian population into cross-dressers, or at least into people whose dress rendered their masculinity ambiguous.

In another version of Semiramis' biography, also preserved by Diodorus, the queen persuades King Ninus to grant her his sceptre and royal garments for a period of five days – and immediately has him arrested and locked up once he complies.[26] Prompted by stories such as these, Michel Casevitz and Auberger have branded her as a man-devouring femme fatale – a 'monstre féminin insatiable', in Auberger's words – who usurps men's power, uses them for her pleasure and then discards them.[27] The text does indeed provide some examples of such behaviour, most notably the contention that Semiramis slept with all the most handsome of the soldiers and afterwards had them put to death.[28] However, it would be an error to dismiss the life story of the Assyrian queen as merely a Graeco-Roman indict-ment of weak 'Orientals' and their subjection to female rulers. In fact, despite the occasional criticism or negative anecdote, Diodorus' Semiramis is on the whole presented as a positive figure achieving great things. The same is true of her portrayal in Justin's much shorter account, which puts a lot more emphasis on cross-dressing. According to this author, Semiramis had to impersonate her son Ninyas in order to seize power – both of them had a weak voice and a similar cast of features, we are told – but met with general approval when she finally revealed who she really was. Indeed, her confession 'increased the admiration of her, since she, being a woman, surpassed not only women, but men in heroism'.[29] She is cast in a less favourable light at the end of her life, when she is seized by an incestuous

desire for her son, who decides to kill her. Remarkably, Ninyas then turns into a typical secluded 'female-king', 'as if he had changed sexes with his mother', starting a tradition that would culminate in Sardanapalus many generations later.[30]

Other authors are far more hostile towards Semiramis. The Christian author Athenagoras, for instance, calls her a 'lascivious and blood-stained woman'. Paulus Orosius rails against her for several paragraphs, denouncing this blood-thirsty queen who 'had the will of a man and went about dressed like her son', slaughtering people left, right and centre. Mention is also made of Semiramis' 'continuous adulteries' with men who are afterwards put to death.[31] As Sabine Comploi has argued, the negative tone of these authors, which only occasionally surfaces in Diodorus, may be much closer to Ctesias' original treatment of the queen in his *Persica*. Were that the case, the author of the *Library of History* would have diverged quite far from his source material, turning an intimidating harridan and femme fatale into an inspiring and highly competent leader – probably to make her fit his view that successful rulers were to be held up as exemplary figures.[32] Yet even if Diodorus and Justin appear to have been relatively at ease with the notion of a woman in charge[33] – at least in the exotic otherworld of the 'East' – others were not as broadminded. Perhaps most telling is a remark by Ammianus Marcellinus, who criticizes Semiramis as 'the first of all to castrate young males, thus doing violence, as it were, to Nature and wresting her from her intended course'.[34] It seems that, whenever women seized control, men were in danger of losing their virility – sometimes in a very physical fashion.

Literary depictions of cross-dressing men and 'masculine' women in the early Principate

The phenomenon of cross-dressing kings and queens was not limited to exotic countries and the mythical past, but also occurred within the Roman Empire. Caligula was the first Roman emperor said to have frequently appeared in drag. According to Suetonius, the allegedly mad ruler 'did not follow the usage of his country and his fellow-citizens' as far as shoes and clothing were concerned, 'not always even that of his sex; or in fact, that of an ordinary mortal', appearing in silk, women's robes and female shoes, and dressing up as gods and goddesses.[35] Suetonius also records that Caligula enjoyed displaying his wife Caesonia to his soldiers while she was riding by his side 'decked with a cloak, helmet and shield'. Evidently, the passage should not be taken to indicate that Caesonia usurped a masculine position, but highlights Caligula's lack of a sense of propriety, since the biographer adds that the emperor also liked to display his wife to his friends 'in a state of nudity'.[36] All in all, these references to cross-dressing do not evoke the image of a weak, effeminate ruler, but that of a capricious madman who considers himself above the traditional boundaries of gender and culture.[37]

Nero followed suit: as Suetonius records, he 'put on the mask and sang tragedies representing gods and heroes, and even heroines and goddesses'. Sometimes, the mask would show his own face – in other words, the emperor was 'playing himself'

– while at other times, he would wear masks displaying the features of women with whom he happened to be in love. We could interpret the latter as a tribute to their beauty, but also as Nero's attempt to appropriate their beauty for himself and thus to become the very thing he desired.[38] The emperor certainly showed a possessive streak in amorous matters, even going so far as to castrate another one of his lovers, the boy Sporus, in an attempt 'to make a woman of him'. The latter was married by Nero 'with all the usual ceremonies, including a dowry and a bridal veil', then dressed up as an empress and transported everywhere in a litter. Cassius Dio, twisting this bizarre story into something truly uncanny, records that Nero was prompted to these actions because Sporus resembled his deceased, and dearly missed, wife Poppaea.[39] However, the ruler not only placed other men in a female role, but was also happy to play the bride himself. According to Suetonius, he let himself be penetrated by his freedman Doryphorus and 'was even married to this man in the same way that he himself had married Sporus, going so far as to imitate the cries and lamentations of a maiden being deflowered'.[40]

The transvestism of Caligula and Nero is not presented in an 'Oriental' context, but rather invokes the atmosphere of the theatre, with the emperors dressing up for various female parts. In fact, Cassius Dio's account of Nero's reign is so saturated with references to the theatre, actors and acting, both in its vocabulary and in the scenes it describes, that the whole description works as an 'extended drama'.[41] Thus, one might venture, cross-dressing is mostly associated with Hellenistic culture in the case of these early emperors. Indeed, it is in Greece that Nero allegedly took Sporus as his bride, leading all the inhabitants of that country to celebrate the marriage and even to pray that the newlyweds would be blessed with legitimate children.[42]

Literary depictions of Agrippina the Younger form an interesting counterpart to those of Nero. Although she is not said to have engaged in cross-dressing, she certainly intruded further into the 'masculine' domain of Roman politics than any woman had done before her. Describing her ascent to power as the emperor Claudius' new wife, Tacitus remarks:

> From this moment it was a changed state [*verso ex eo civitas*], and all things moved at the fiat of a woman – but not a woman who, as Messalina, treated in wantonness the Roman Empire as a toy. It was a tight-drawn, almost masculine tyranny [*adductum et quasi virile servitium*]: in public, there was austerity and not infrequently arrogance; at home, no trace of unchastity, unless it might contribute to power. A limitless passion for gold had the excuse of being designed to create a bulwark of despotism.[43]

Judith Ginsburg has pointed out that the opening words of this paragraph (*verso ex eo civitas*) echo the words that Tacitus had earlier used to describe the period of Augustus' sole rule after his victory at Actium (*verso civitatis statu*).[44] Agrippina's rise to 'almost masculine' power thus parodies that of the first emperor. The narrative that follows has many traits of a comic play, with the naïve, weak-willed Claudius in the role of *senex stultus* and the domineering Agrippina in the role of

matrona imperiosa.[45] Usurping ever more male privileges, the empress apparently sat in state before the Roman standards when the rebellion of the British king Caratacus had been quelled, being paid homage by the prisoners of war as if she were their conqueror. According to Cassius Dio, she often accompanied the emperor in public and even gave audience to embassies – 'one of the remarkable sights of the time'. In fact, the historian relates, she had more power than Claudius himself and 'desired his title outright'.[46]

After Claudius' inevitable murder – yet another male ruler fallen victim to female ambition! – Agrippina intended to reign through her son. The ancient authors give countless examples of her scandalous intrusions into the domain of government. Tacitus records how she eavesdropped when Nero discussed politics with senators and even went so far as to oppose senatorial decisions. Cassius Dio claims that she 'managed all the business of the Empire' and that the emperor was so subservient that he would often walk beside her litter when she traversed the streets of Rome, displaying his servility for all to see. In a complete reversal of gender roles, Agrippina allegedly received embassies, corresponded with kings and governors, and did not hesitate to remind Nero that she had made him emperor – implying that she could also remove him from power if she pleased.[47] Ancient authors also criticize her in her 'proper' role as wife and mother, since not only is she accused of poisoning her husband Claudius, but also of having incestuous relations with her son.[48] Yet Agrippina's power would not last. As Dio relates, the turning point came when she intended to mount the tribunal on which the emperor was talking to an Armenian embassy. Prompted by his advisers Burrus and Seneca, Nero hastened down to greet her and prevent her from making an inappropriate appearance. From then on, the emperor's advisers 'laboured to prevent any public business from being again committed to her hands'.[49] Eventually, tired of her scheming, Nero would have her murdered.

Although Agrippina's 'masculine' behaviour stands in striking contrast to her son's effeminacy, it should be noted that Nero's most flagrant transgressions of traditional gender boundaries – cross-dressing, marrying another man, engaging in the 'unmanly' activities of acting and singing – only occurred after his mother had left the stage. Rather than her domineering presence, it appears to have been her absence that prompted the emperor to develop his effeminate ways without restraint. However, another strong woman would soon spring up to challenge his authority: the formidable Boudicca, queen of the Iceni, who led Britain in revolt against Rome. Cassius Dio, in particular, contrasts this 'manly' woman with the 'unmanly' Nero. Although she is not presented as a cross-dresser in a strict sense, Boudicca's appearance is anything but frail and delicate, as the historian relates:

> In stature she was very tall, in appearance most terrifying, in the glance of her eye most fierce, and her voice was harsh; a great mass of the tawniest hair fell to her hips; around her neck was a large golden necklace; and she wore a tunic of divers colours over which a thick mantle was fastened with a brooch. This was her invariable attire. [Οὕτω μὲν ἀεὶ ἐνεσκευάζετο.][50]

The 'large golden necklace' may be a reference to a torque, as Marguerite Johnson has suggested; this was an ornament that was worn by Celtic men and women (although perhaps no longer in the first century CE), but was most closely associated with Celtic warriors. Cassius Dio may well have mentioned the item to enhance Boudicca's masculine aura.[51] Unlike Tacitus, who presents the character first and foremost as a wronged wife and mother, Dio never mentions that she has a husband or children. And whereas Tacitus does not give us a physical description, Dio's Boudicca has the stature and voice of a man.[52]

Standing on a tribunal – a 'decidedly male space in antiquity', as Johnson remarks[53] – and brandishing a spear, the fearsome queen addresses her people, mocking the Romans as weaklings who cannot endure hunger, thirst, cold and heat, and require such luxuries as kneaded bread, wine and oil – quite unlike the Britons, obviously, who can survive on 'any grass or root'. The worst of the lot is Nero, who 'though in name a man, is in fact a woman, as is proved by his singing, lyre-playing and beautification of his person'. Finishing her appeal, Boudicca exclaims:

> May this Mistress Domitia-Nero reign no longer over me or over you men; let the wench sing and lord it over Romans, for they surely deserve to be the slaves of such a woman after having submitted to her so long.[54]

In other words, Nero's effeminacy was just the tip of the iceberg, indicative of a *mollitia* that was so widespread that an entire people lost its claim to masculinity. Whereas Greeks and Romans usually projected their disdain for emasculated cultures on the 'East', they were now themselves contrasted with the Britons as a slavish, effeminate and decadent people.[55]

What makes this accusation doubly interesting, of course, is that the Britons, allegedly so strong and vigorous (and thus 'masculine'), were themselves led by a woman – one who spoke and acted as if she were a man. Addressing this issue, Cassius Dio's Boudicca contrasts herself with other female rulers, mentioning as examples the Egyptian queen Nitocris, Semiramis, Messalina, Agrippina and the 'female' Nero. Whereas these held sway over weak, slavish people, the warrior queen claims, she rules the Britons, whose women possess no less valour than the men.[56] Or, to put it differently, whereas the dominance of the other queens merely reflected the effeminacy of the menfolk in their respective cultures, Boudicca's own position of power provides testimony to the strength of British women. It is remarkable that her list of names includes both Messalina and Agrippina as presumed rulers of the Roman Empire, thus disqualifying as a proper emperor not only the effeminate Nero, but also the feeble Claudius.

Like most speeches in Graeco-Roman works of history, Boudicca's words are certainly not genuine, but invented by Cassius Dio, who records what he imagines she may (or should) have said on the occasion. The sentiments she expresses are therefore not those of the historical Boudicca, nor are they precisely Dio's own.[57] For one thing, the narrative makes it clear that the Romans were not yet as degenerate as Boudicca assumes in her speech, since in the end they prevailed and

defeated the Britons. Through her appearance and actions, the queen is emphatically presented as a barbarian 'other' – untainted by the decadence of Roman civilization, but prone to savage cruelty and human sacrifices. The fact that she, a woman, could be a war leader and deliver a harangue only serves to underline this barbaric otherness.[58]

Nevertheless, some of the opinions she voices clearly reflect Cassius Dio's personal sentiments, such as her seething contempt for Nero and her refusal to regard the emperor as a 'real man' because of his scandalous habits of singing and playing the lyre.[59] In the historian's view, the dominance of such a weak, effeminate ruler could only spell disaster for the Romans. In fact, Alain Gowing has suggested that the words which Dio employs in the opening of his account of the British revolt, 'all this ruin was brought upon the Romans by a woman', may be deliberately ambiguous, referring not only to the queen of the Iceni, but also to Nero himself.[60]

Boudicca's revolt thus serves as a dire warning in Dio's narrative. When emperors failed to live up to masculine ideals, they lost control of their empire and would be challenged by rebels and usurpers – some of whom might even be women.

Literary depictions of third-century CE cross-dressing rulers

As we have seen, the cross-dressing emperors of the early Principate are not associated with the effeminate world of the 'East' (except to the extent that the 'East' could be said to include Greece). Things are quite different with regard to the uncontested champion of imperial cross-dressers, Elagabalus. Both Cassius Dio and Herodian take pains to link the emperor's effeminate appearance and behaviour to his 'Oriental' origins.[61] As Dio records:

> When trying someone in court he really had more or less the appearance of a man [τινὰ ἀνήρ πως εἶναι ἐδόκει], but everywhere else he showed affectations in his actions and in the quality of his voice. For instance, he used to dance,[62] not only in the orchestra, but also, in a way, even while walking, performing sacrifices, receiving salutations, or delivering a speech. . . . He worked with wool, sometimes wore a hair-net, and painted his eyes, daubing them with white lead and alkanet. Once, indeed, he shaved his chin and held a festival to mark the event; but after that he had the hairs plucked out, so as to look more like a woman [ὥστε καὶ ἐκ τούτου γυναικίζειν].[63]

This account clearly invokes the descriptions of Sardanapalus by Diodorus and Athenaeus, which Dio must have used – if he did not base his account directly on Ctesias' *Persica*. In fact, the historian frequently calls Elagabalus by the name Sardanapalus and claims that the Romans nicknamed him 'the Assyrian'. As he records, the emperor 'could not even be a man', wanted to be addressed as 'Lady' by his lover Zoticus, and took for a husband the brutish charioteer Hierocles, who frequently beat him up. He even went so far as to prostitute himself in the palace, soliciting passers-by in a 'soft and melting voice'.[64]

Herodian adds that the praetorians were disgusted by the sight of the emperor 'with his face made up more elaborately than a modest woman would have done, and effeminately dressed up in golden necklaces and soft clothes'.[65] Elsewhere, he gives a detailed description of these 'soft clothes', stating that their effect was 'something between the sacred garb of the Phoenicians and the luxurious apparel of the Medes' – a style of dress that many Greeks and Romans considered decidedly unmanly, as we have seen. The 'necklaces and bangles' the boy allegedly wore only strengthened this impression.[66] Any man who dressed and behaved as Elagabalus did stood in danger of losing even the last shreds of his masculinity, but the emperor allegedly welcomed, rather than feared, this prospect. Cassius Dio records that he circumcised himself in worship of his god and even took up the plan to 'cut off his genitals altogether' from a desire that was 'prompted solely by his effeminacy'.[67] In two inserted passages, it is stated that the young ruler wanted a vagina implanted in his body by means of an incision.[68]

In the *Historia Augusta*, Elagabalus' feminine characteristics are also emphasized, although they are not presented in an 'Oriental' context. According to the anonymous author, the emperor always bathed with women, had his beard depilated, dressed up as Venus and wished to wear a jewelled diadem, 'in order that his beauty might be increased and his face look more like a woman's'.[69] In a striking passage, we are told:

> He gathered together in a public building all the harlots from the Circus, the theatre, the Stadium and all other places of amusement, and from the public baths, and then delivered a speech to them, as one might to soldiers, calling them 'comrades' [*quasi militarem, dicens eas conmilitones*] and discoursing upon various kinds of postures and debaucheries. Afterward he invited to a similar gathering procurers, catamites collected together from all sides, and lascivious boys and young men. And whereas he had appeared before the harlots in a woman's costume and with protruding bosom [*muliebri ornatu processisset papilla eiecta*] he met the catamites in the garb of a boy who is exposed for prostitution. After his speech he announced a largess of three aurei each, just as if they were soldiers [*quasi militibus*], and asked them to pray the gods that they might find others to recommend to him.[70]

As the author is at pains to point out, the scene closely resembles an *adlocutio*, an activity located firmly in the masculine domain of military command and warfare. Perverting his role as supreme commander of the Roman troops, Elagabalus undermines his masculinity twice: first by appearing in drag and identifying himself as a female prostitute; then again by appearing as a male prostitute. As was the case with Caligula and particularly Nero, his cross-dressing is associated with the sphere of the theatre and, even more so, the shady, licentious world of the brothel. In another passage, the author claims that Elagabalus made the rounds among the prostitutes of Rome in disguise, distributing presents – a perversion of the largesse that more conventional emperors would hand out to the Roman populace.[71]

Once again, women stepped in to fill the gender niche that the emperor left vacant. As the *Historia Augusta* records, Elagabalus took his grandmother with him whenever he went to the praetorian camp or the senate house, 'in order that through her prestige he might get greater respect – for by himself he got none'. Allegedly, he did no public business without the consent of his mother, Julia Soaemias, whom he even invited to come into the senate-chamber to witness the drawing up of a decree (hence defying a taboo that even the strong-willed Agrippina had respected). Moreover, he also established a 'women's senate' on the Quirinal Hill, presided over by Soaemias, to take decisions about matters concerning protocol and etiquette.[72] Perhaps it is no coincidence that the anonymous biographer consistently calls this woman Symiamira, a name that is reminiscent of Semiramis.

Several decades later, the balance of power between the sexes was once again overturned during the reign of Gallienus. As John Bray has noted, this emperor seems to have become associated with cross-dressing and the assumption of feminine characteristics, although it should be stressed that no specific episode of cross-dressing can be attributed to him.[73] According to the author of the *Historia Augusta*, this 'most contemptible of all women' admitted matrons into his imperial council and dyed his hair yellow.[74] When he held a triumphal procession, 'twelve hundred gladiators ostentatiously adorned in the gold-embroidered clothes of women' were among the participants.[75] In Julian's satire *Caesares*, Gallienus enters the banquet hall 'with the dress and languishing gait of a woman'.[76] Although it is unclear what the origin of these cross-dressing stories is, they may well have something to do with the remarkable GALLIENAE AVGVSTAE coins minted for the emperor and apparently addressing him in a feminine dative singular.[77] As Carlà-Uhink argues in Chapter 1 of this volume, Gallienus appears to identify himself with Minerva on these coins, claiming the capacity to transgress gender boundaries because of his divine status.[78] For those inclined to hostility towards the emperor, however, such a transgression would have been taken as welcome evidence of his effeminacy.

In the *Historia Augusta*, Gallienus' weak reign is contrasted with that of female rulers, since the emperor is such a disgrace that 'even women ruled most excellently'. Unlike Elagabalus' mother and grandmother, however, they did not do so in accordance with the emperor, but in defiance of his authority. In the West, one Victoria took charge after the death of her son, the Gallic emperor Victorinus. She struck coins in her own name and handed the reins of the Gallic Empire over to Tetricus, 'solely that she might always be daring the deeds of a man'.[79] In the East, Queen Zenobia ruled the Palmyrene Empire in the name of her son, Vaballathus. This remarkable woman is said to have boasted descent from Cleopatra and to have worn the robes of the Punic queen Dido, thus associating herself with famous female rulers from the (mythical) past. According to the anonymous biographer, she dressed as a Roman emperor when she came to public assemblies, 'wearing a helmet and girt with a purple fillet, which had gems hanging from the lower edge, while its centre was fastened with the jewel called *cochlis*, used instead of the brooch worn by women, and her arms were frequently bare'. Likewise, she preferred a carriage to a woman's coach, often rode a horse, and

sometimes even walked a couple of miles with her foot-soldiers. As if that was not 'masculine' enough, we also learn that she 'hunted with the eagerness of a Spaniard' and 'often drank with her generals'. Even her voice, the author records, was 'clear and like that of a man'.[80]

Like Boudicca in Cassius Dio's account, Zenobia and Victoria are explicitly held up as strong female counterexamples to a weak, effeminate emperor. After the Palmyrene queen had finally been defeated by Aurelian, he asked her why she had dared to rise against the might of Rome. 'You, I know, are an emperor indeed,' she responded, 'for you win victories, but Gallienus and Aureolus and others I never regarded as emperors.' It is a concise formulation of the close link between masculinity and military prowess in Graeco-Roman culture. As the *Historia Augusta* records, Zenobia was put on display in Aurelian's triumph, but was granted her life and spent the rest of her days on an Italian estate, where 'she lived with her children in the manner of a Roman matron'.[81] Thus all ended well. Once a woman had been put in her place and had been stripped of the masculine attributes she had usurped, she could be reintegrated in the domestic sphere to play the role that was traditionally hers to play.

Conclusion

With ruling and warfare tagged as exclusively masculine activities in Graeco-Roman culture, any deficiencies that emperors displayed in these fields were inevitably perceived in terms of gender. If political authority and military prowess made a man, those who lacked these qualities must suffer from *mollitia*, a physical and mental 'softness' that undermined their masculinity. In Graeco-Roman literature, such rulers often lost their authority to strong, ambitious women. These could be members of their own family, like Agrippina and Julia Soaemias, but also outsiders who challenged them in military terms, like Boudicca and Zenobia. Undoubtedly, some women may indeed have seized the opportunity to exert power when it presented itself, defying the norms of a culture which credited them with limited intelligence and supposed that their natural domain lay not in politics, but in marriage and child-rearing. At the same time, however, the juxtaposition of 'strong women' and 'weak men' in histories and biographies functions as a literary device, stressing the incapability of these leading men by showing that 'even women' could challenge their authority and do a better job of ruling than they did. As the author of the *Historia Augusta* was not ashamed to admit, 'it was with deliberate purpose that I included the women [in my biography], namely that I might make a mock of Gallienus'.[82]

For Graeco-Roman authors who were out to criticize imperial behaviour and representation, cross-dressing was an obvious way to signal that the natural balance of power between the sexes had been overturned, as were associated activities such as wearing make-up, spinning wool and passive homosexuality (for men), and horse-riding and warfare (for women). It should be noted, though, that not every weak man was represented as a cross-dresser, nor was every strong woman. For instance, in accounts of Mark Antony's alleged subservience to the

domineering Cleopatra, he is nowhere said to have donned female clothing.[83] Likewise, ancient authors did not need to present Claudius and Agrippina as cross-dressers to signify their inverted power relationship. Alternative means were available to communicate this message – in this case, the modelling of emperor and empress after stock characters from comic theatre. Moreover, not every instance of imperial cross-dressing in Graeco-Roman literature endowed men with 'feminine' weakness and women with 'masculine' strength. Caesonia, dressed up as a soldier by Caligula, is not meant to be taken as a powerful, 'masculine' woman, since she clearly has no agency in the matter; nor does the emperor's own habit of frequently appearing in drag characterize him as a submissive personality with a weak grip on power. In many other cases, though, references to cross-dressing and related activities *do* indicate that a ruler is not only perverted, but also weak and vulnerable to challenges by men and women alike.

Although transvestism and the reversal of gender roles could be associated with the theatre and the brothel, they were often linked to the exotic world of the 'East'. Zenobia was placed in the tradition of Dido and Cleopatra, Elagabalus was regarded as the Roman Empire's answer to Sardanapalus, and even the British warrior queen Boudicca allegedly contrasted herself to Semiramis. Typically, cross-dressing 'Oriental' rulers were supposed to reflect the effeminacy of 'Oriental' culture as a whole. Hence, the Assyrian Empire allegedly spawned a whole string of 'female-kings' leading the secluded lives of women, starting with Ninyas and culminating in Sardanapalus. Likewise, the gender-ambiguous garb of Semiramis was said to have been adopted by Median and Persian men, turning them all into quasi-cross-dressers, while the transvestism and even transsexualism of Elagabalus were connected to his Syrian origins. In a similar vein, Cassius Dio regarded Boudicca as the typical product of the 'manly', but barbarian culture of Britain. Cross-dressing emperors, on the other hand, were usually presented as aberrations who were certainly not representative of Roman culture in general. Nevertheless, the fact that Boudicca could raise the suggestion that Nero's unmanly behaviour and appearance had emasculated his subjects – even if the outcome of the battle would prove that suggestion wrong – betrays an anxiety that even the world-conquering Romans stood in danger of losing their masculinity. Time and time again, therefore, ancient authors branded cross-dressing and related activities as essentially 'un-Roman', stressing that such practices had no place in a world where, ideally, men knew how to lead and women were happy to follow.

Notes

1 See Avery 1940 for the symbolic importance of the purple *paludamentum* in the fourth century CE.
2 Julian, *Oratio* 2.98D–2.99A: θῆλυν δὲ οὐχ ὑπομένοντες ὁρᾶν ἐνδεδυκότα στολὴν τὸν δείλαιον. See Icks 2012 for a discussion of negative descriptions of imperial investiture ceremonies in late antiquity. Unless indicated otherwise, all translations are taken from Loeb editions.
3 Ammianus Marcellinus 15.5.1–31; Eutropius 10.13; Aurelius Victor 42.16; *Epitome de Caesaribus* 42.10. For a brief discussion of Silvanus' usurpation, see Bleckmann 2000.

4 Ammianus Marcellinus 20.4.17–18: *non congruere aptari muliebri mundo* (18); Zonaras 13.10.

5 Gleason 1995, p. 59.

6 For Roman associations of masculinity with an active sexual role and bodily impenetrability, see Walters 1997; Brisson 2002, pp. 41–71; van den Hengel 2009, pp. 164–179; Williams 2010. For Roman associations of masculinity with martial qualities, see Eisenhut 1973; Wardle 2002; McDonnell 2006.

7 Edwards 1993, pp. 63–97; Corbeill 1996, pp. 128–173; Corbeill 1997. In Chapter 1 in this volume, Filippo Carlà-Uhink discusses the associations between effeminacy and *tryphē* in Roman ethnic stereotypes.

8 Brisson 2002, pp. 66–71. In Chapter 3 in this volume, Domitilla Campanile discusses how prominent figures in the late Republic and early Empire were mocked for acts of cross-dressing.

9 The gendering of imperial statues has been analysed in great detail by van den Hengel 2009.

10 See also Varner 2008. Examples of gender-transgressing representation include images of such 'bad' rulers as Nero and Domitian, but also the likes of Augustus and Aurelian's wife Severina.

11 These cases will be discussed in detail below.

12 Isaac 2004, pp. 335–351, 371–380; see also Balsdon 1979, pp. 60–64, 66–67; Hall 1989. It is hard to determine to what extent the 'Oriental' eunuchs in Graeco-Roman literature reflect historical characters. See Lenfant 2012 for an excellent discussion, which is particularly concerned with eunuchs in Ctesias' *Persica*.

13 See Gambato 2000 for the 'female-kings' in Athenaeus. Much has been written on Roman notions of (passive) homosexuality; see, for instance, Richlin 1993, Walters 1997 and Williams 2010.

14 König 1972, pp. 154–160. The name Sardanapalus may have been inspired by the great Assyrian king Ashurbanipal, while some details of his biography – particularly his death in the flames – may have been inspired by Shamash-shum-ukin, Ashurbanipal's brother and ruler of Babylonia; see Lenfant 2004, pp. xlv–xlviii, 245 note 253; Eck 2015, pp. 62–63.

15 Working with wool was part of the ideal image of the *matrona*; see Larsson Lovén 1998. Men, of course, were not supposed to occupy themselves with such domestic chores.

16 Diod. 2.23.1–2. See also Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 12.528f–529a, who paints a similar picture, adding that the king painted his eyelids, blackened his eyebrows and had his beard shaved close. The story of Sardanapalus is also related by Justin 1.3, who describes him as 'a man more effeminate than a woman . . . surpassing all the women in the effeminacy of his person and the wantonness of his looks' [*vir muliere corruptior . . . cum mollitia corporis et oculorum lascivia omnes feminas anteiret*]. All cited translations of Justin are by J. S. Watson.

17 See note 7 for *mollitia*. The combination of excessive 'masculine' lust with a passive sexual role was also a common stereotype with regard to effeminate men; Edwards 1993, pp. 81–84. However, it should be noted that Diodorus does present Sardanapalus as a capable military commander when circumstances push him (2.25.1–3). Eck 2015, p. 68 points out the contrast with Justin 1.3, where the king is portrayed as a militarily inept coward.

18 Diod. 2.24.3–4; 2.28.8. According to Justin 1.3.3, Arbaces, setting eyes on the king, felt 'indignant that so many men should be subject to one so much of a woman [*indignatus tali feminae tantum virorum subiectum*], and that those who bore swords and arms should obey one that handled wool'. See note 15 for the significance of working with wool in Graeco-Roman literature.

19 Nicolaus of Damascus: *FGrHist* 90 F4. According to Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 12.530d, Nanarus 'wore women's clothing and jewellery'.

20　*FGrHist* 90 F4.
21　See Eilers 1971 for a detailed discussion of the origins of the Semiramis myth. More recently, also Lenfant 2004, pp. xliv–xlv, 236 note 115; Eck 2015, pp. 61–62.
22　Diod. 2.4.1–2.20.5.
23　Diod. 2.6.6. This story may well have inspired Justin's portrayal of Semiramis as a cross-dresser posing as her own son (Justin, 1.2.1–4); see note 29. Diodorus does not make it clear whether Semiramis kept wearing her self-designed clothing after her journey to Bactra.
24　Auberger 1993, p. 258.
25　Strabo 11.13.9: θηλυστολεῖν ('wearing women's clothes').
26　Diod. 2.20.3–5.
27　Casevitz 1985, p. 120; Auberger 1993, pp. 253–262 (quote on p. 262).
28　Diod. 2.13.4.
29　Justin 1.2.6. According to Eck 2015, p. 67, Justin is 'presque obsessionel' in his preoccupation with 'Oriental' transvestism. As he suggests (70–71), the notion of Semiramis dressing up as her son may have been inspired by Ctesias' remark about her gender-neutral travel clothes (Diod. 2.6.6).
30　Justin 1.2.11: *veluti sexum cum matre mutasset*. In Diodorus' account (2.20.1), there is no mention of incest, nor is Semiramis killed by her son. However, Diod. 2.21.1–2 likewise contrasts the effeminate, secluded Ninyas with his militarily active mother. See also Lenfant 2004, p. 51 note 237.
31　Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christianis* 30.1 (= *FGrHist* 688 F1 20.1m) (transl. B. P. Pratten); Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos* 1.4.4–8.
32　Comploi 2000, pp. 230–237.
33　But see also Eck 2015, p. 67, who stresses Justin's misogyny.
34　Ammianus Marcellinus 14.6.17.
35　Suetonius, Caligula 52: *ne virili quidem ac denique humano semper usus est*. Cassius Dio 59.26.6–7 adds that the emperor not only impersonated male deities, but also Juno, Diana and Venus, and that he played the roles of maidens as well as married women. See also Flavius Josephus, *Antiquitates Iudaicae* 19.30.
36　Suetonius, Caligula 25.3.
37　See Carlà-Uhink's Chapter 1 in this volume for the emperor's transgression of gender boundaries as a marker of his superhuman status; also note 10 in this chapter.
38　Suetonius, Nero 21.3. According to Cassius Dio 63.9.5, all of Nero's women's masks were fashioned after the features of Poppaea Sabina, 'in order that, though dead, she might still take part in the spectacle'.
39　Suetonius, Nero 28.1–2: *in muliebrem naturam transfigurare* (1); Cassius Dio 62.28.2–3; 63.13.1–2. See Campanile, Chapter 3 in this volume, for a tentative interpretation of Nero's alleged transgression of gender boundaries, with particular attention to the case of Sporus.
40　Suetonius, Nero 29. Tacitus and Cassius Dio call the freedman Pythagoras (Tacitus, *Annales* 15.37; Cassius Dio 62.28.3; 63.13.2). As Jan Meister has pointed out, the name Doryphorus – 'Spear bearer' – has obvious phallic connotations (Meister 2014, p. 68).
41　Gowing 1997, pp. 2569–2570.
42　Cassius Dio 63.13.1.
43　Tacitus, *Annales* 12.7.3.
44　Ginsburg 2006, p. 19; Tacitus, *Annales* 1.4.1.
45　Ginsburg 2006, p. 23. See Bauman 1992, pp. 179–203 for a discussion of Agrippina's actual role in Roman politics.
46　Tacitus, *Annales* 12.37.4; Cassius Dio 60.33.7; 60.33.12.
47　Tacitus, *Annales* 13.5; Cassius Dio 61.3.2; 61.7.3.
48　Tacitus, *Annales* 14.2; Suetonius, Nero 28.2; Cassius Dio 61.11.3–4, admitting that the incest story may just be slander. Both Tacitus (*Annales* 13.2) and Dio (60.31.6) also

denounce Agrippina's marriage to Claudius as incestuous, making the empress doubly guilty of this charge.

49 Cassius Dio 61.3.3–4. Tacitus reports the same incident: *Annales* 13.5.

50 Cassius Dio 62.2.3–4. Boudicca's 'invariable attire' stands in contrast to Nero's ever-changing costumes.

51 Johnson 2012, p. 83; Johns 1996, p. 27.

52 Tacitus, *Annales* 14.35; Braund 1996, pp. 141–142.

53 Johnson 2012, p. 81. Note the contrast to Agrippina, whose thwarted attempt to mount a tribunal signalled the moment she started to lose her grip on power; see note 49. According to Tacitus, *Annales* 12.37.4, Agrippina *did* sit on a tribunal when Caratacus and the other prisoners of war paid homage to her; see note 46.

54 Cassius Dio 62.3.1–62.6.5: Μὴ γάρ τοι μήτ᾽ ἐμοῦ μήθ᾽ ὑμῶν ἔτι βασιλεύσειεν ἡ Νερωνὶς ἡ Δομιτία, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκείνη μὲν Ῥωμαίων ᾄδουσα δεσποζέτω ῾καὶ γὰρ ἄξιοι τοιαύτῃ γυναικὶ δουλεύειν, ἧς τοσοῦτον ἤδη χρόνον ἀνέχονται τυραννούσης (6.5).

55 In contrast, Tacitus' account of the British revolt (*Annales* 14.29–39) presents the Romans as a dominant, violating and hence masculine force, whereas the Britons are characterized as 'a band of females and fanatics' [14.30: *muliebre et fanaticum agmen*] whose troops include 'more women than soldiers' (14.36). See also Adler 2008, pp. 180–181; Johnson 2012, pp. 51–53.

56 Cassius Dio 62.6.2–3. As an explanation for the improbable 'fact' that Boudicca was aware of such distant figures as Nitocris and Semiramis, Dio has her say that 'we have by now gained thus much learning from the Romans'.

57 Adler 2008, pp. 177–179.

58 Adler 2008, p. 189; Johnson 2012, pp. 82–86. Tacitus, *Annales* 14.35 stresses this otherness even further by remarking that it was common for the Britons to fight under female leadership.

59 Adler 2008, pp. 192–193.

60 Gowing 1997, pp. 2580–2581.

61 See Icks 2011, pp. 92–122 for a detailed analysis of Elagabalus' effeminacy and 'Oriental' characteristics in the accounts of Graeco-Roman historians and biographers; also Sommer 2004, whose conclusions are only partially in agreement with mine. Kemezis (2016) provides a thoughtful discussion of the historicity of the ancient accounts on Elagabalus, particularly with regard to the emperor's downfall.

62 See Corbeill 1996, p. 137 for the negative connotations of dancing: 'Part of the stigma of the dance derives from its associations with the passive role in male-male sexual encounters . . . The dance, it seems, indicated a commitment to a specific, predetermined lifestyle.'

63 Cassius Dio 80.14.3–4.

64 Nicknamed 'the Assyrian': Cassius Dio 80.11.2; lack of masculinity: 80.9.1: ὁ μηδ᾽ ἀνὴρ εἶναι δυνάμενος; addressed as 'Lady': 80.16.4; Hierocles: 80.15.1–3; prostituting himself in the palace: 80.13.3. In the *Historia Augusta*, it is Zoticus whom the emperor marries (*Elagabalus* 10.5).

65 Herodian 5.8.1: τὸ μὲν πρόσωπον καλλωπιζόμενον περιεργότερον ἢ κατὰ γυναῖκα σώφρονα, περιδεραίοις δὲ χρυσίνοις ἐσθῆσί τε ἁπαλαῖς ἀνάνδρως κοσμούμενον; see also 6.10.

66 Herodian 5.5.3–4. According to one anecdote (5.5.5–7), the emperor sent a portrait of himself ahead when he was travelling from Syria to the capital, so that the Romans could get used to his exotic appearance; see Icks 2011, pp. 17–18; Kemezis 2016, pp. 18–19.

67 Cassius Dio 80.11.1: ἀλλ᾽ ἐκεῖνο μὲν τῆς μαλακίας ἕνεκα ποιῆσαι ἐπεθύμησεν. According to the *Historia Augusta*, Elagabalus 'infibulated himself, and did all that the *galli* are wont to do' (7.2). The *galli*, eunuch-priests of Magna Mater, were notorious for their ritual castration and tended to be regarded as women by the Romans; see Roller 1999, pp. 301–325; Lightfoot 2003, pp. 62–63.

68 Cassius Dio 80.16.7; Loeb edition p. 471.

69 Bathing with women and depilating his beard: *Historia Augusta*, Elagabalus 31.7; dressing up as Venus: 5.4–5; diadem: 23.5.

70 *Historia Augusta*, Elagabalus 26.3–5.

71 *Historia Augusta*, Elagabalus 32.9. Cassius Dio has a similar tale, claiming that Elagabalus frequented the taverns and brothels at night to prostitute himself (80.13.2–3). In fact, there is a long literary tradition of 'bad' emperors and empresses prowling the shady parts of town at night in disguise; see Hekster 2005, pp. 153–155.

72 Grandmother: *Historia Augusta,* Elagabalus 12.3; consent of Soaemias: 2.1; 4.1–2; women's senate: 4.3–4.

73 Bray 1997, p. 218.

74 *Historia Augusta*, *Tyranni triginta* 11.1–21.1: *sordidissimus feminarum omnium* (translated as 'more contemptible than any woman' in the Loeb edition); Gallienus 16.6; 21.3–4. The colour yellow is significant, since yellow wigs were apparently associated with courtesans. Messalina is said to have put on a yellow wig for her nightly debaucheries (Juvenal 6.120); see Hekster 2005, pp. 154–155 note 9.

75 *Historia Augusta*, Gallieni duo 8.3: *mille ducenti gladiatores pompabiliter ornati cum auratis vestibus matronaru*. Since the Loeb edition erroneously translates this as 'twelve hundred gladiators decked with all pomp, and matrons in golden cloaks', I have used the translation provided by Bray 1997, p. 208.

76 Julian*, Caesares* 313 B–C.

77 *RIC* V.1, Gallienus's sole reign, nos. 74, 82, 87, 128, 359.

78 See also De Blois 1976, p. 157; Bray 1997, pp. 222–223; Varner 2008, p. 189.

79 *Historia Augusta*, *Tyranni triginta* 30.1: *optime etiam mulieres imperarent*; 31.1–4: *ut virile semper facinus auderet* (2). The biographer decides *not* to count Victoria and Zenobia among the 30 pretenders at the end of the book (31.7–10), adding two men from later times to round up the number: 'Now no one in the Temple of Peace will say that among the pretenders I included women, female pretenders, forsooth, or, rather, pretendresses – for this they are wont to bandy about concerning me with merriment and jests.'

80 *Historia Augusta*, *Tyranni triginta* 30.2; 30.13–18: *vox clara et virilis* (16). Voices appear to have been a favourite device of Graeco-Roman authors to signal transgender characteristics; compare Sardanapalus' efforts to make his voice like a woman's (Diod. 2.23.2), Boudicca's harsh voice (Cassius Dio 62.2.3) and the 'affectations' in the voice of Elagabalus (Dio 80.14.3).

81 *Historia Augusta*, *Tyranni triginta* 30.23–27: *vixisse cum liberis matronae iam more Romanae* (27).

82 *Historia Augusta*, *Tyranni triginta* 31.7.

83 On the other hand, Mark Antony was accused of cross-dressing in his youth in Cicero's *Second Philippic* (44); see Campanile, Chapter 3 in this volume, for a good analysis.

Part II

Ancient transgender dynamics and the sacred sphere

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5 Cross-dressing and the sexual symbolism of the divine sphere in pharaonic Egypt

Valerio Simini

In ancient Egypt the act of wearing the opposite gender's clothing (cross-dressing) was a custom which seems to have been restricted mainly to the divine sphere. There are a few representations of female pharaohs wearing clothes commonly associated with men (namely the king's attire), as well as others related to the Egyptian pantheon showing goddesses in male attire. In the present chapter, I intend to present a brief overview of these cases, in order to illustrate the symbolic meaning and purpose of this cross-dressing. Particular attention will be devoted to the "Myth of Anat and Seth", a composition dating to the Ramesside Era (1292–1075 BCE), where the goddess Anat is described as a "victorious goddess, a woman who acts as a man (or *a warrior*), clad (or *who wears a skirt*) like men, begirt (or *who wears a sash*) like women". Finally, I will briefly mention two episodes from the so-called "Cycle of Petubastis", a group of demotic texts greatly influenced by Greek literary tradition, where the cross-dressing does not occur in the religious sphere and has a completely different significance from that previously analysed.

Cross-dressing and power legitimacy: female pharaohs with manly attributes

Kingship passed from father to son, therefore pharaohs were traditionally men. Nevertheless, in rare cases, a woman could become king. Some images of female pharaohs represent them wearing traditional king's crowns and attire, while others display them as male rulers. However, rather than indicating a desire to wear male clothing or underlining their masculinity, they in fact represent official images chosen by the pharaohs themselves, in accordance with the priestly caste and the artists who executed the works. Thus, these types of documents do not provide information about the sexual identity of these pharaohs or the perception of it by contemporary society. The first question in reading these images should be: what symbolic values were the pharaohs attempting to express? Obviously the message consisted in the affirmation of their role as king. The pharaoh, in fact, was considered to be a combination of the human and divine and, since he was the offspring of the sun god Ra, acted as a male semi-divinity on earth. In life he was the personification of the sun god Horus, whereas in death he became the god of the afterlife, Osiris, father of Horus. Thus, the king was the link between human

beings and the divine community: by building temples for the gods, performing ceremonies and rituals and by making offerings to them, he guaranteed divine favour for Egypt. His five names were introduced by titles that demonstrated his relation with Egypt and with the gods. His attire was unique and distinguished him from ordinary human beings. Specific items of his clothing and regalia symbolized the power of kingship on earth and his connection with the divinities; indeed, apart from the king, only certain divinities could be represented with these items of regalia. Despite the physical anomaly, female pharaohs were considered pharaohs, semi-gods, embodiments of Horus, and rulers of Egypt. Thus, representations of female pharaohs in king's attire reflected the secular traditional iconography of the ruler.

In order to legitimize their kingdoms, female pharaohs had to create their own official image, by combining their sexual gender with a series of regal attributes traditionally linked to the opposite sex. Consequently, these images inevitably present a sexually ambiguous character rarely encountered in the representations of male pharaohs. The importance of this coexistence of the masculine and feminine dimensions in one being did not consist merely in shifting the pharaoh into a divine dimension (as shall be seen, androgyny was a characteristic of demiurge divinities). The pharaoh's main task was maintaining order on earth, just as that of the gods was guaranteeing equilibrium in the cosmos. If, therefore, the divine sphere was governed by the interaction of masculine and feminine forces, the throne of Egypt obtained its strength from the coexistence of masculine and feminine characters: the king and the queen. Kingship and queenship were complementary and interdependent.[1] The king's mother and the king's principal wife participated in cults and rituals dedicated to the pharaoh. Obviously, on a practical level, women were necessary for the throne, as only a woman could give birth to the king and only a woman could enable him to obtain an heir, thus guaranteeing the stability of his dynasty. From a religious point of view, kingship and queenship followed the divine prototypes: as the king was the personification of Horus, the king's mother was identified with the goddess Hathor, mother and wife of the god. In fact, as far back as the Old Kingdom (2575–2150 BCE), the pharaoh's mother had acquired great ritual significance, as well as assuming a central role in royalty as a symbol of female power in the religious and secular spheres.[2] Holding the title of *mwt nswt*, "King's Mother", she was instrumental in the legitimization of the new pharaoh. The new king could present himself as the son of a king and a queen and, at the same time, as the son of Ra and Hathor. The importance attributed to the king's mother endowed her with privileged status, comparable only to that of the pharaoh.

Any female pharaohs who presented an image of individuals in possession of both feminine and masculine elements therefore managed to attain the status of symbols of the equilibrium reigning over the throne of Egypt, which in its turn means that interesting cases of cross-dressing may be found in the figurative repertoire. Queen Khentkawes was the wife of King Menkaure (end of the Fourth Dynasty [2575–2450 BCE] and beginning of the Fifth Dynasty [2450–2325 BCE]); indeed, she herself may have been a pharaoh. In a relief in her mastaba (tomb) in

Giza, she is portrayed sitting on a throne, with a sceptre, a long robe and a false beard.[3] The original portrait by the decorators of the tomb did not include this regalia, which was added during the Fifth or Sixth Dynasty. Nevertheless, the relief is particularly striking since it is the most ancient representation of a woman with masculine or rather, more accurately, royal attributes. Another more easily interpretable case is that of Sobekneferu, daughter of pharaoh Amenemhat III (1818–1770 BCE). At the death of his successor Amenemhat IV (1770–1760 BCE), and due to the lack of an heir to the throne, Sobekneferu became pharaoh (1760–1755 BCE). The most interesting testimony of her reign consists of a statue that portrays her, discovered in Avaris.[4] Made from quartzite, the statue now lacks the head and limbs. The body, which is clearly female, is covered by a queen's robe, but over this the woman wears the typical kilt usually worn by the pharaoh. This kilt, along with the head-covering called *nemes*, of which little remains except the lower edges, are the only masculine items of clothing that are symbols of royalty. The statue is an emblem of a woman's desire to affirm her right to the throne. Her wish to be represented as a woman is confirmed by the fact that there are no representations of her as a man. There is also a cylindrical seal bearing her names in the British Museum, and on this seal the royal epithets, which are traditionally masculine, have been changed to the feminine.[5]

The case of Hatshepsut (1473–1458 BCE) is decidedly different: the numerous items of testimony concerning her long reign are extremely varied, since she was represented both as a woman with masculine attributes (royal), but in most instances as a man. Her wish to present herself as a man is unique in the history of Egypt and has led to her being studied by many scholars. Indeed, hypotheses have been formulated about her sexuality even in the field of psychiatry.[6] However, it ought to be clarified at once that no clear testimonies exist concerning either her sexuality or the attire she chose to wear in her private life. The testimonies portraying her which are familiar to us are official images, the result of a female pharaoh's choices. The iconography of a king indeed played a crucial role in his reign, as its principal function was connected with political and religious propaganda.[7] Hatshepsut was pharaoh Thutmose II's first wife, and they were both children of Thutmose I. Thutmose II had a daughter with Hatshepsut and a son with a queen of the harem, Isis: Thutmose III. At the pharaoh's death, his heir Thutmose III was still only a child. Initially, Hatshepsut carried out the role of regent for the young pharaoh, but then she became his co-regent. Before the seventh year of Thutmose III's reign, Hatshepsut took over the royal title, becoming the fifth pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty.[8]

Increasingly, the regent changed her official image, experimenting with three different types of iconography, ranging from that of a queen (and therefore a woman), to that of a female pharaoh, and finally to that of a male pharaoh.[9] Naturally, prior to her coronation, Hatshepsut was represented in the traditional manner of a queen. After acceding to the throne, however, her official image became that of a woman with the traditional royal attributes (which were traditionally masculine), most important among which of course was the crown. After this brief initial phase, affirmation of her status gradually emerged through a

progressive masculinization of her image. One of the most emblematic testimonies of this transformation phase may be found in the decorations of the principle sanctuary in Deir el-Bahari, in which Hatshepsut is portrayed with a feminine body, the short kilt, a false beard, the head-covering *nemes*, as well as an allusively feminine breast. Her skin is of an orange-pink hue, which is a compromise between the yellow traditionally used for women, and the red used for men.[10] Once this progressive transformation of her image had been completed, being noticeable also in the facial features of her statues,[11] Hatshepsut then presented herself with the traditional iconography of the male pharaoh. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the regent did not obscure her female identity, since she maintained her titles in a predominantly feminine mode. Indeed, Hatshepsut used royal names that contained references to female divinities, something that was obviously denied to male pharaohs, most likely in order to declare her divine nature and thus legitimize her rule.[12]

Mention should also be made of two other cases in which the connection between kingship and divinity is expressed by means of androgynous images of the monarchs.[13] In some representations of Akhenaten (1353–1336 BCE) and his wife Nefertiti, the woman is wearing the royal crown and the man has feminine features, giving them a similar appearance.[14] Among the few representations of the female pharaoh Twosret (1198–1190 BCE), there is a particularly interesting statue from Heliopolis.[15] It shows the monarch as a small-breasted woman wearing a long masculine robe and the *nemes*. The inscriptions on the monument, containing both masculine and feminine names, identify the female pharaoh.

It may be that during official ceremonies, female pharaohs wore the same attire as in their portraits (except, naturally, most of the portraits of Hatshepsut, where the regent is portrayed as a man, wearing the kilt and bare-chested). These, therefore, appear to be the only real cases of cross-dressing in Egypt, and ought to be read as events linked to religious and political propaganda. As shall be seen, other cases of cross-dressing are linked to imaginary personages; that is, divinities and the protagonists of works of literature.

Sexual symbolism of the divine sphere: a few general remarks

According to the Egyptian religion, particular qualities and powers were associated with specific genders. Nevertheless, some male gods could have typical female powers and vice versa. In these cases, the divinities were described with the attributes of the opposite gender. Consequently, the attributes of the opposite gender can be interpreted as symbols of particular qualities and can be schematized thus: the power to generate; the capacity to nourish; authority; and the fighting skills (aggressive power). As clarification of the phenomenon, examples are adduced here.

Obviously, demiurge divinities had the power to generate and possessed both male and female characteristics, the union of which allowed them to give life. For example, the god Amon was "the father of the father, the mother of the mother";[16]

the god Aten was "mother and father" of all that he made,[17] like Sokar[18] and Osiris,[19] who were "father and mother"; the god Khnum was "the mother who gave birth to the gods",[20] and likewise Ptah-Naunet, who begot the gods;[21] Atum was the "He-She".[22] Similar definitions were used for female divinities: Neith was "the father of fathers and the mother of mothers"[23] and, in the temple of Esna, her nature is described as two-thirds male and one-third female;[24] the goddess Amaunet was "the mother who was father".[25] In the Heliopolitan Cosmogony, the first divine couple, the god Shu and the goddess Tefnut, were generated by the creator god Atum, by his masturbation.[26] In the Coffin Texts from the First Intermediate Period (2125–1975 BCE), Atum and his hand become a divine couple.[27] Thus, the hand of the god came to be understood as a female entity. In this case, a part of the body of the god belonged symbolically to the opposite gender. The title "Hand of God" was borne by priestesses, together with other titles such as "Adorer of the God" and "God's wife", and by female divinities such as Isis, Hathor and Mut. Even though the androgyny of these creator gods was described in texts, it was not represented in the formal depictions at the temples. Instances of evidence such as statuettes and amulets representing androgynous pantheistic deities may be interpreted as private objects.[28]

The nourishing power was symbolized by female attributes, but in some rare cases, these may even be associated with a male god. Depictions in which goddesses are displayed in the act of suckling their offspring are very numerous. In fact, in Egypt, the act of nursing assumed a religious symbolic value. In the divine sphere, it represented the power to give life nourishment to the gods and was connected with the idea of the divine birth. Furthermore, ever since the Old Kingdom, the nursing of the pharaoh by a divine mother had been one of the recurring themes in Egyptian art.[29] Obviously, this power was associated with female divinities. One exception can be found in the figurines representing the popular minor male god, Bes, in the act of nursing.[30] This iconography may be attributed to the nature of Bes's role as protector of pregnant women and newborn babies. Hapi, the male god of the inundation, was generally represented as a man with pendulous breasts and a protruding stomach. These characteristics have been interpreted as a sign of androgyny, but as John Baines has pointed out, this iconography is derived from depictions of stout, successful officials and his attributes were a symbol of maturity, not androgyny.[31] Greco-Roman androgynous images, in which the primeval waters spill out from his breasts,[32] are to be considered as reinterpretations of his iconography.

Symbols of authority were prevalently the king's clothing and regalia. Some elements of the iconography of the king, such as the false beard and the crowns (typical of the pharaoh and the male gods) were associated with goddesses connected with the authority of the pharaoh. Mut, goddess of royalty and coronation, and the personification of kingship, was the deity most often depicted with the double crown. Other female divinities were shown wearing the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt, such as Mut-Nebet-Hetepet, Satis, Anoukis, Anuket-Ba, Wadjet, Iusaas and Hathor.[33] The goddess of Upper Egypt, Nekhbet, was represented with the white crown (symbol of Upper Egypt) and the tutelary

goddess of Lower Egypt, Wadjet, was represented with the red crown (symbol of Lower Egypt), as were Neith and Amaunet. The false beard was another typical male element of kings and male gods. Even this royal attribute, connected with the authority of the pharaoh, could sometimes be associated with female divinities.[34]

Since weapons were used exclusively by men, fighting skills were associated with the male gender and representations of female combatants are extremely rare. Apart from rare representations of royal women, it is interesting to notice that Egyptian women were never represented with weapons. In the only known image in which a woman holds a weapon, she is not Egyptian. It is the case of the tomb of Anta at Deshasheh, dating to the Fifth Dynasty (2450–2325 BCE), where the siege of an Asiatic town by Egyptians is depicted. In the scene, an Asiatic woman is holding a knife to defend herself against an Egyptian soldier.[35]

Evidence concerning women of the royal families seems to indicate their involvement in battles, but it is not clear if they did actually take part in wars. The tomb of Ahhotep I at Dra Abu el Naga contained weapons and golden fly pendants, which were usually given as honorific awards to those who had demonstrated military valour.[36] She belonged to the royal Theban family at the time of the Seventeenth Dynasty (1630–1540 BCE) and the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty (1539–1292 BCE), during the war against the Hyksos. Another queen, Ahhotep II, mother of King Ahmose (1539–1514 BCE), is commemorated in a stela from Karnak, the text of which suggests she participated in the same war.[37] An inscription at Sehel, made by the royal chancellor Ty, describes Hatshepsut (1473–1458 BCE) overthrowing the Nubian nomads and ravaging the Land of Nubia.[38] Nefertiti, wife of King Akhenaten (1353–1336 BCE), has been depicted in the act of smiting her enemies, a well-known iconography reserved for pharaohs.[39] These items of evidence are to be considered exceptions to the rule, according to which women did not use weapons or take part in wars.

Since weapons were clearly a male attribute, armed goddesses (so depicted to underline their warlike behaviour) were characterized by an inherent androgyny. The aggressive power of the goddess Mut has been symbolically represented as a phallus. In Chapter 164 of the *Book of the Dead*, the divinity has been described and depicted as a goddess with three heads: she has a human female head with the double crown; a leonine head (like the face of the goddess Pakhet); "and a phallus, and wings, with a lion's claw(s)".[40] Similar images can be found in the Khonsu temple at Karnak[41] and in the temple of Hibis in the Kharga Oasis,[42] where the goddess is shown with only one head. The aggressive power of the warrior goddess Sekhmet has been represented in a depiction in which she appears armed and, like Mut, with a lion's head and erect penis.[43] Other Egyptian warrior goddesses, such as Waset, the personification of victorious Thebes,[44] the vulture goddess Nekhbet,[45] and the goddess of hunting and war, Neith,[46] have been represented holding weapons. During the New Kingdom (1539–1075 BCE), the eastern goddesses Anat and Astarte entered the Egyptian pantheon and, like the Nilotic warrior divinities, were depicted holding arms.

As has been seen, the representation of androgynous aspects of certain divinities symbolically mirrored their specific powers, generally connected with the opposite

gender. Thus, the androgynous elements of a divinity expressed his (or her) specific power. The use of items of clothing of the opposite gender, such as the crown and the false beard, was one of the means of expressing this symbolic androgyny. Other elements of the opposite gender associated with divinities were anatomical parts of the body (breasts or phallus) or attributes (weapons).

The goddess Anat, "she who is clad like men"

The New Kingdom was a period of intense international trading and cultural exchanges, which saw some Levantine divinities incorporated into the established Egyptian pantheon. Worshipped by both the state and private individuals, their main function was giving protection. Anat[47] was one of these deities. The earliest evidence concerning the presence of the Levantine "great goddess"[48] of war and hunting dates back to the New Kingdom, despite the fact that her name appeared in the Middle Kingdom name-giving (1975–1640 BCE). According to Ugaritic myth, the "Maiden" Anat[49] was a young female characterized by strong androgyny, due to her violent temper. She was a hunter and a cruel warrior, whereas hunting and warfare were traditionally male practices. In Egypt, she was worshipped as goddess of war and protector of the pharaoh. Here she preserved her role as goddess of war, becoming (like Astarte, the other Levantine goddess worshipped in Egypt) the daughter of the god Ra, and consort of the god Seth.[50] Both the goddesses were the "hands" of the royal chariot,[51] a shield for the king,[52] able to repulse the demon of disease.[53] Anat could protect from dangerous animals[54] and, as goddess of fecundity, she was described as the "big cow of Seth".[55] She also appears in the "Myth of Anat and Seth", a legend garnered from two papyri and three ostraka, each of them from Thebes.[56] Nevertheless, as Alessandro Roccati has pointed out, the origin of this story, dating back to the Ramesside Era, may be traced to the Delta.[57] It is from this period, in fact, that the goddess became well known and particularly appreciated in Egypt and, in particular, in Pi-Ramses, the new capital of the empire located in the eastern Delta.

Each of the five documents is patchy, but the story can be reconstructed from the most complete texts, written in pChester Beatty VII, verso 1,5–6,7 and in pTurin CGT 54076. These documents are hieratic magical papyri, in which the legend is presented as a formula against poison. In the myth, the god Seth copulates with the personification of the semen of the god Ra, a goddess whose name, *tA mtwt*, has two meanings: "the seed" and "the poison".[58] Since only Ra could mate with this goddess, because she was necessary for his rebirth, the sacrilegious act of Seth has terrible effects: the poison enters his body. Anat, who is described as "the victorious goddess, a woman who acts as a man (or *a warrior: aHAwty*), clad (or *who wears a loin-cloth: sd*) like men, begirt (or *who wears a sash: bnd*) like women",[59] goes to Ra, her father, and asks him to release Seth from the Seed. The god does not allow her to speak and declares that the Seed is the wife of the God Above: Seth, whose act was stupid, should not be delivered from the Seed/ Poison. Then the goddess Isis arrives and recites a magical spell. The end of the story, in which Seth is presumably healed, has not been preserved.

Anat does not seem to have a focal role in the dynamics of the story; her role is quite different from that of a "victorious warrior", so it is difficult to understand why she is described as "clad like men, begirt like women". These definitions seem to be connected to her iconographical attributes rather than to her importance in the myth. Anat wants the poison to leave Seth's body: on the one hand, this would have saved Seth; while on the other hand, it would have saved Ra himself. As Jacobus van Dijk[60] has pointed out, the Semen/Poison was the primeval wife of Ra. She would have had to have intercourse with Osiris Lunae (one of the manifestations of Ra) during the night, in order to generate him again the following morning. If the Poison had remained in Seth, even Ra would have died. Probably, Anat's first intention was to save her father. Without any doubt, the main meaning of the expression "clad like men" refers to the masculine power of Anat, a divinity who possessed both male and female powers. But for a better understanding of this expression, it is necessary to identify the culture in which the myth itself has been created.

Canaanite motifs, similar to those in this legend, can be identified in the Ugaritic myth;[61] but, as van Dijk has stressed, the Levantine motifs have been incorporated into a typical Egyptian legend that mirrors the Egyptian mentality and religion.[62] Moreover, it is also to be noted that no Ugaritic text describes Anat's clothes. The reason for and the meaning of Anat's "cross-dressing", therefore, has to be sought in Egyptian culture. What follows is an analysis of both literary and iconographic Egyptian sources dating back to the same period of the texts where the myth appears. The results of this analysis point to two options: a) the expression may allude to the loin-cloth, a typically male item of clothing, as suggested by a linguistic and literary analysis; b) the expression is an allusion to her weapons, as we might deduce from the iconographical analysis.

Linguistic and literary analysis

Let us now turn our attention to the phrase, "clad (or *who wears a loin-cloth: sd*) like men, begirt (or *who wears a sash: bnd*) like women". The word *sd*, which generally means "to be clad", can also refer more concretely to a triangular loin-cloth used by men.[63] Despite the fact that this may not be the only literary case in which the association Anat–loin-cloth arises,[64] it should be borne in mind that the figurative documents in which it is possible to identify Anat are few and far between, and not one of them shows the deity attired in this way. In some magical spells, the verb *sd* has been symbolically employed, and in these cases, the powers symbolically assume the form that the reciters wear (*sd*) in order to protect themselves.[65] Like the word *sd*, the term *bnd* could also have a concrete meaning, referring to the sash with which the goddess has been represented. In any case, the combination of the verbs *sd* and *bnd* can be found in other magical spells with a symbolic value. In one of these, the reciter hopes to obtain the powers of the prototypes of male and female divinities: "I am clad (or *I wear a loin-cloth: sd*) like Horus, I am begirt (or *I wear a sash: bnd*) like Isis". Another spell recites: "I am clad (*sd*) in fayence (or *radiance*), I wear (*bnd*) uraei for [a] sash".[66] Even in this

case, the combination of the verbs indicates symbolically the magical possession of two different powers. Since the "Myth of Anat and Seth" is a magical formula, the expressions referring to the goddess had an undoubtedly symbolic meaning: in Anat, male and female power are united.[67] This confers an obviously androgynous appearance on the character. As has been seen, androgyny was a characteristic of certain traditional Egyptian deities, denoting their particular powers. Male attributes of female divinities could symbolize their power to generate, their authority, or their fighting skills and aggressive power. Her power to generate may be completely excluded, considering that Anat and Astarte were pregnant but did not give birth: their wombs "were closed by Horus and they were opened by Seth."[68] Being a divinity, she undoubtedly possessed authority, which in her iconography is symbolized by a crown, but in this story it is not highlighted. It is obvious here that Anat's androgyny is to be connected with her fighting skills and her aggressive power: Anat's role in this myth is that of the strong goddess of war, a status she possessed both in the Near East and in Egypt.

Iconographical analysis

As has been seen, it is Egyptian iconography that expressed these characteristics, displaying the goddesses with weapons. Izak Cornelius has published a catalogue of visual evidence on the Levantine goddesses, including Anat.[69] The only documents in which the depiction of Anat has an inscription enabling her definite identification are Cat. 1.1, 1.7, 2.1, 3.1, 3.7, 3.8,[70] and Figure 11[71] of Izak Cornelius' book. Each of these documents is Egyptian, except Cat. 3.1, which is a stela from Beisan, dedicated to Anat by an Egyptian official living abroad.[72] In all these documents, Anat wears a long female robe[73] and the *atef* crown, a combination of the white crown of Upper Egypt with ostrich feathers on each side. This headdress was worn by male gods and, during religious ceremonies, by kings, and was therefore a male item of clothing symbolizing authority. Anat was not the only goddess to be represented with the *atef* crown, as this head-covering was also worn by Astarte. Anat's authority has also been remarked on in Cat. 3.1 and in Figure 11, where the goddess is depicted holding a sceptre. Cat. 1.1, 1.7 and 3.7, each of which date to the Nineteenth Dynasty (1292–1190 BCE, and thus contemporary to the diffusion of the myth), are very interesting. Cat. 3.7 may confirm that the verb *bnd* has been used to indicate the female sash, since Anat is displayed wearing this item. Nevertheless, it is possible that the myth alludes generically to her female garments rather than to her sash, since Cat. 3.7 is the only document in which Anat is shown with this item of clothing. Cat. 1.1[74] and 1.7[75] show her with weapons. Therefore, Anat was never portrayed with a loin-cloth, while the masculine attributes associated with her are the crown, the sceptre and weapons.

Anat's cross-dressing: final remarks

Both authority and aggressive power were characteristics of the goddess, a divinity closely linked to the figure of the pharaoh. In fact, she represented his divine

mother, as well as being a symbol of his military power.[76] In the case of the myth, the words referring to her masculine clothes could also allude to her authority, but without any doubt, they intend to underline her status as "victorious goddess, a woman who acts as a warrior". The composer of the legend used a magical linguistic formula, with the combination of *sd* and *bnd* indicating the opposite and complementary aspects of Anat, the male and the female powers. The intent, in fact, was evidently to highlight the warrior (male) character of an adolescent female deity. However, there still remain two possible interpretations of the phrase "clad like men". A linguistic and literary analysis suggests a link between the goddess and the loin-cloth. Against this, from an examination of the few illustrated documents portraying her, it emerges that the masculine attributes associated with the goddess were limited to the *atef* crown and the weapons. Given Anat's role in this myth, insofar as it is possible, the reference to the crown, a symbol of authority, should perhaps be excluded. It may therefore be likely that the description of Anat as "she who is clad like men" refers to her warrior's "attire" and, more precisely, to her attributes: the weapons.[77]

Traces of cross-dressing episodes in late Egyptian literary tradition

A group of texts, known as the "Cycle of Petubastis", was written on many fragmentary demotic papyri. The stories describe a post-imperial Egypt (the historical context is the Late Period, 715–332 BCE), ruled by numerous weak rulers who fight each other for power. One of these princes is Petubastis of Tanis, who gives his name to the Cycle. These compositions were clearly influenced by Greek mythology and Homeric epics. The date of the Cycle is subject to debate by scholars: it has been variously interpreted as a Ptolemaic composition, as well as a product of a direct oral tradition of sagas dating back to the sixth century BCE.[78] A case of cross-dressing appears in the story "Naneferkasokar and the Babylonians"*,* a tale that probably refers to Necho I (672–664 BCE).[79] In the tale, some Egyptian soldiers in Babylonia have to wear female clothes, but unfortunately, it is very difficult to give an interpretation to the episode because the papyrus in which the passage appears is extremely fragmentary.[80] Another, more interesting, story from the Cycle is the tale "Egyptian and Amazons", written in the demotic Papyrus Vienna 6165.[81] Prince Petekhonsu, on a military expedition, arrives in Assyria. Then, with the Assyrian troops, his allies, he reaches the "land of women". The Amazon queen Serpet sends her sister Ashteshyt, dressed as a man, to the Egyptian camp to learn the purpose of the foreign troops.[82] Since nobody in the camp realizes that Ashteshyt is a woman, she can spy out who is the chief of the troops and work out his intentions. This advantage enables Serpet to attack her enemies and to win the first battle. In consequence, Petekhonsu decides to fight the queen in single combat. The encounter ends with the prince and the queen falling in love, a literary episode clearly influenced by the story of Achilles and Penthesilea. The Amazons and Egyptians form an alliance and win against the prince of India. Unfortunately, the end of the story has not been preserved.

There are substantial differences between the myth of Anat and the considerably later story of the Amazons: Ashteshyt's cross-dressing is functional to the dynamics of the story, whereas Anat's is not; Ashteshyt's cross-dressing is occasional, while Anat is defined as "a woman who acts as a man, clad like men", as she usually wears male attire. As is obvious, the main difference is the origin of the characters, one being a Levantine and then an Egyptian deity; the other a figure from Greek mythology. Nevertheless, the aesthetic similarities are striking. Like the myth of Anat, this episode shows an eastern warrior girl who wears male clothes. Both Anat – in particular, in the Ugaritic myth – and the Amazons in Greek mythology are the symbol of warrior girls who refuse to become adults through marriage.[83] It is also interesting that Amazons were horsewomen and, as has been seen, there are representations of a Levantine goddess (Anat or Astarte) on horseback. In both the stories, an episode of cross-dressing is used to underline the role of the mythological character in her own culture. Thus, similar iconographies appear in different cultures, bringing about strong symbolic messages. Obviously, the symbolic values are profoundly different. In Greek mythology, the gynocentric culture of the Amazons, the archetypal female warriors, symbolized the antithesis of patriarchal Greek society. On the contrary, many centuries earlier, Egyptians worshipped eastern warrior goddesses like Anat and Astarte, and used them as symbols of the authority and military power of the pharaoh.

Conclusions

From the documents known to us, cross-dressing does not appear to have been an established practice in Egypt. In the most obvious cases, it seems to be associated with characters to whom a divine nature had been attributed; that is, deities and female pharaohs. In these cases, the clothing traditionally connected with the opposite sex had the clearly symbolic objective of denoting a specific power possessed by whoever was wearing them. By contrast, the cross-dressing that appears in two literary compositions belonging to the "Cycle of Petubastis" had a different significance. One of these stories is too fragmentary to allow for an analysis, while the other shows the clear influence of Greek literature and comes under the category of functional cross-dressing, which was very frequent in Greek and Roman literature.

Notes

1 For a study on queenship, see Troy 1986.
2 On the role of the king's mother, see Roth 2001.
3 Verner 2001, fig. 85a on plate 32, fig. 85b on p. 174.
4 Louvre Museum E 27135. Delange 1987, pp. 30–31.
5 British Museum EA 16581. Petrie 1894, fig. 115 on p. 197.
6 See, for example, Margetts 1951.
7 For a study on these functions of the royal statuary during the reign of Hatshepsut, see Tefnin 1979, pp. 163–165.

 8 The date is uncertain. Hatshepsut dated her own reign from the accession of Thutmose III, but she was not crowned before the second year of his reign, yet no later than the seventh year.
 9 For a recent study on this subject, see Laboury 2014, with bibliography.
10 Ćwiek 2007, fig. 7 on p. 37, fig. 9 on p. 39, fig. 11 on p. 41, fig. 12 on p. 42.
11 Tefnin 1979; Laboury 1998, pp. 592–608; Laboury 2014, pp. 78–83.
12 Robins 1999.
13 The case of Cleopatra VII Philopator will not be dealt with here. In that regard, see Chapter 1 by Carlà-Uhink in this volume. A limestone stela dedicated to her on 2 July 51 BCE, the year she acceded to the throne, displays her as a male king offering to Isis Sononais. This representation may be an adaptation of a previous image in which the offering to the goddess was made by Ptolemy XII. It is likely that only the text was reworked after Cleopatra's accession, while the image of the ruler was not changed. Thus, the stela is probably not to be interpreted as evidence of either androgyny or of cross-dressing. Louvre Museum E 27113 = Bianchi 1988, no. 78 on pp. 188–189.
14 See, for example, Manniche 1987, pp. 25–27 and fig. 16 on p. 27.
15 Bassir 2013.
16 De Wit 1968, p. 141.
17 For the hymn, see Davies 1906, plates XXXII–XXXIII. See also pp. 27–30.
18 Erman 1900, pp. 30–33.
19 Bonnet 1952, pp. 571 and 866.
20 Sethe 1928, p. 48 (f).
21 Sethe 1928, p. 48 (f).
22 De Buck 1938, 161a.
23 Sauneron 1961, pp. 242–244.
24 Sauneron 1968, p. 137, col. 252.
25 Sethe 1929, §58.
26 Allen 2013, IV, PT 527 (§1248).
27 See Allen 2013, p. 72.
28 For examples of representations of androgynous deities, see Cooney 2008.
29 For a study on the iconography, see Maruéjol 1983.
30 See, for example, Bulté 2005, pp. 120–121, figs. 322–323.
31 Baines 1985, pp. 118–123, 126.
32 Baines 1985, fig. 81 on p. 121.
33 For the bibliography of the documents, see Capel and Markoe 1996, p. 206, note 4; Fazzini 2002, p. 71, note 27.
34 See, for example, the coffin of Nesamun from Deir el-Bahari, Cairo Museum JE 29611. Niwinski 1989, fig. 89 on p. 227.
35 Petrie 1898, plate 4.
36 Maspero 1903, p. 137.
37 Helck and Sethe 1906–1958, IV, p. 21, lines 10–16.
38 Habachi 1957, pp. 99–100, fig. 6 on p. 100.
39 See, for example, Forgeau 2008, fig. 5 on p. 16.
40 Allen 1974, pp. 160–161. For the vignette, see McCarthy 2002, fig. 18 on p. 192.
41 Lepsius 1849–1859, III, p. 219, fig. b.
42 Davies 1953, plate 2.
43 See Lanzone 1881–1886, plate CCCLXIV, fig. 1.
44 See, for example, Vernus 1982, plate I.
45 See, for example, Champollion 1825, plate XXVIII B.
46 See, for example, Champollion 1835–1845 II, plate CXLV (5, 3) and (6, 2).
47 For the bibliography on Anat in the Levant, see Smith 1990, note 132 on p. 101. For Anat in Egypt, see Stadelmann 1967, pp. 91–96; Leclant 1975, with bibliography. See also Lipinski 1996 and 2005; Day 1999; Cornelius 2008, *passim*.
48 On this subject, see Stuckey 2003.

49 In Ugaritic myth, her epithet was *btlt*, "Maiden", or "Virgin", a term that does not indicate her sexual virginity. Rather, the term means that she is a young and marriageable girl who has yet to give birth. Her status is perpetually adolescent, in which male and female are not completely distinct, crossing gender boundaries, and taking pleasure in traditionally male activities. See Day 1991; Walls 1992, pp. 78–86.

50 pChester Beatty I, 3–4. Gardiner 1932, p. 40, 4–5.

51 Ostr. Edinburgh 916 (now National Museum of Scotland A. 1956.319). Dawson and Peet 1933. The word used is *Dr.wt*, literally "hands", possibly the yoke saddles. See Schulman 1986; also Manassa 2013, p. 149.

52 Epigraphic Survey 1932, plate LXXX, col. 11.

53 pMag. Leiden. I, 343 and I, 345 recto XVIII 1. Massart 1954, pp. 24 and 85.

54 Lange 1927, X, 7.

55 pMag. Leiden I, 343 recto VI, 11. Massart 1954. Anat's epithets "Lady of Heaven" and "Mistress of the Gods" appear in many documents (see, for example, Cornelius 2008, pp. 80–81).

56 For the list and the bibliography of the documents, see van Dijk 1986, pp. 32–33.

57 Roccati 1972, p. 159.

58 The term is preserved only in pTurin CGT 54076, l. 2. Roccati 1972, p. 155. For the role of the semen/poison in this myth and in other texts, see van Dijk 1986, pp. 40–42.

59 pChester Beatty VII, verso 1,8–1,9; Gardiner 1935, plate 36; pTurin CGT 54076, l. 4–5; Roccati 1972, p. 155. The texts are not well preserved, but the sentences can be put together again from pChester Beatty VII, verso 1,9–2,1, where the words are repeated.

60 van Dijk 1986, pp. 31–51.

61 Jacobus van Dijk has dealt in particular with the topic of the Ugaritic myth, in which Canaanite motifs, similar to those of this legend, can be identified: see van Dijk 1986, pp. 38–39. The most significant are those in which Anat is described "as a man" by the god El (Dietrich *et al.* 1976, 1. 3 V 27 and 1. 18 I 16), and the story of Anat and Aqhat, in which Anat asks Prince Aqhat to sell her his bow. Aqhat refuses, saying that women should not be hunters, so Anat sends her henchman Yatpan to kill him. Pughat, the sister of the dead prince, wants to take vengeance on the murderer, so she dresses herself as a "hero", with a knife and a sword. The male attire (i.e. the hero's attire) is covered by a female outfit (Dietrich *et al.* 1976, 1. 19 IV 43–46).

62 See van Dijk 1986, pp. 38–39.

63 Janssen 1975, pp. 272–277.

64 Another Egyptian text appears to contain this association. I am currently working on a comparison of the two compositions.

65 See Allen 1974, p. 43 (Spell 32) and p. 71 (Spell 83).

66 On both spells and the relative bibliography, see van Dijk 1986, p. 36.

67 van Dijk 1986, p. 36.

68 pHarris III, 8–9. Leitz 1999, plate 14. Scholars have given different interpretations to the enigmatic passage. See van Dijk 1986, notes 25–26 on p. 35; Walls 1992, pp. 149–152.

69 Cornelius 2008.

70 A description of the items is given in Cornelius 2008, pp. 104 (Cat. 1.1), 106 (Cat. 1.7), 108 (Cat. 2.1), 111 (Cat. 3.1), 114 (Cat. 3.7) and 115 (Cat. 3.8).

71 For a bibliography of the stela, see no. 803-088-030 at www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/8ste555.pdf, accessed 16 September 2016.

72 Fig. 3 (with no inscriptions) and fig. 4 are identical to 1.1 and are probably fakes, so they are not taken into account here. Cornelius 2008, p. 22. The interpretation of Cat. 4.1–4.26, in which a goddess appears on horseback, is debated, since these depictions "can arguably be identified either with Astarte or Anat" (Schmitt 2013, pp. 223). Lipinski 2005, pp. 124–128, has suggested that it is Anat. However, it is more likely

that the goddess ought to be identified as Astarte, since – unlike Anat – she had a clear iconographic association with horses. See Hoffmeier and Kitchen 2007, in particular, pp. 134–136; for this interpretation, see also Cornelius 2008, pp. 82–83, 85.

73 In Cat. 3.8 only the upper part of the relief is preserved.

74 In the private stela, the goddess is displayed sitting on a throne, menacingly raising a battle-axe with her left hand and holding a spear and a shield with her right hand.

75 In the official relief, the standing goddess holds a battle-axe with the right hand and the symbol of life with the left one.

76 For the translation and the bibliography of inscriptions that show the close relation between the king and his "mother" Anat, see Leclant 1975, p. 254.

77 See the Canaanite story of Anat and Aqhat, in which Pughat is dressed as a "hero", i.e. she is armed.

78 See Rutherford 1997, p. 206.

79 Ryholt 2011.

80 Demotic pBerlin 13640. Spiegelberg 1932. The story is attested in other two sources: the unpublished pCarlsberg 303 in Copenhagen; and an early roman ostrakon from Edfu (O. IFAO D 890). See Chauveau 1991.

81 Volten 1962.

82 Vienna Demotic Papyrus 6165, II, 13–17.

83 On this, see Walls 1992, pp. 38–40.

6 Aspects of transvestism in Greek myths and rituals

Fiorella La Guardia

In the ancient world, transvestism was a phenomenon affecting different spheres of society. This contribution aims at analysing examples of transvestism as documented in myths and rites in ancient Greece, in order to investigate the functions and significance of this phenomenon. Particular attention will be paid to those cases which show a connection between transvestism and contexts linked with specific age-classes, such as coming-of-age rituals or myths and rites connected with specific festivals.[1]

I adopt the method of historical anthropology,[2] which aims at establishing a correlation between forms of thought and forms of societies. It posits that a full understanding of the phenomena examined depends on an examination of the socio-historical context to which the evidence belongs; or, to put it another way, what is advanced here is a reading of social phenomena and the forms of thought connected with them as historically and culturally determined.

Drawing upon the literary evidence, in the immense variety of stories connected with transvestism, I shall focus specifically on examples of transvestism associated with ritual contexts and, within this framework, on such cases involving cross-dressing (that is, inter-sexual transvestism).[3]

The examples selected for this analysis have no correlation to each other, nor are they linked organically; on the contrary, they constitute a fragmented set, which consists of instances taken from different eras of Greek history and documented by various authors. The *fil rouge* is represented by the protagonists of the stories: be they famous heroes or anonymous humans, *all* of them are young people facing a singular moment in their lives. In this set of stories, cross-dressing indeed appears to be "part of ceremonies that symbolized life's transitions",[4] and episodes of cross-dressing are attested also in the careers of several mythical heroes.[5]

The bulk of the evidence to be analysed in detail consists of:

1   pre-nuptial rites documented in Sparta, Argos and Kos;
2   the myth of Leukippos and Daphne recounted by Pausanias;
3   the story of Leukippos of Phaistos and the institution of the *Ekdysia*, as documented by Antoninus Liberalis.

Since these examples, in spite of their heterogeneity, share some common elements, the aim of this chapter is to investigate the possibility that they share a common

framework, connected with the contexts within which the episodes of cross-dressing occur. What remains to be seen is whether there is a possible correspondence between forms of thought and forms of society documented by the evidence put forward here.

Finally, despite containing aspects that require re-examination,[6] I think the so-called 'initiatory model' maintains its explanatory value at least for the cases under examination.

Transvestism in a wedding context: evidence from Sparta, Argos and Kos

Plutarch presents some examples of transvestism connected with pre-nuptial customs. In Sparta, the night before a wedding, the bride-to-be is cared for by a *nympheutria*, who shaves off her hair, makes her wear male shoes and garments and lays her down on a mat, alone, in the dark;[7] in Argos, the future bride wears a false beard on the wedding night;[8] conversely, at Kos, it is the bridegroom who dresses up in feminine garb when he welcomes his bride.[9] It must, furthermore, be noted that in the passage mentioned above, the information concerning Argos is connected with *Hybristika*, a festival at which "the women" dress up "in men's shirts and cloaks, and the men in women's robes and veils".[10]

The importance of these instances lies in what Delcourt wrote: "Si Plutarque signale ces usages, c'est qu'ils lui paraissent singuliers: survivances isolées de coutumes certainement plus générales à une époque ancienne".[11] All these data have been interpreted in various ways, but in the wake of van Gennep's seminal book[12] and other landmark studies devoted to the analysis of adolescent initiation,[13] most scholars have given prominence to the symbolic value of marriage as a threshold that the girl or boy has to cross in order to get to adulthood. As has been mentioned, on the eve of marriage, the girl or boy takes on the characteristics of the opposite sex. Another factor that must be taken into account is that, from a physiological point of view, young people are represented in the sources as being sexually undefined: Aristotle, for instance, describes the *pais* as having a female likeness.[14] As Pironti writes: "l'identité sexuelle est souvent représentée comme un aboutissement, comme le fruit d'un processus de maturation".[15] The main steps of this process are emphasised by specific ritual practices: in this framework, cross-dressing marks the moment at which the adolescent takes on the characteristics of both sexes as a stage of passage into adulthood. As Jean-Pierre Vernant famously said:

> Marriage is for the girl what war is for the boy: for each of them these mark the fulfilment of their respective natures as they emerge from a state in which each still shared in the state of the other.[16]

The two Leukippoi: transvestism in myth and ritual

Transvestism is a core topic in certain myths where the main character is a youth named Leukippos or Leukippe, who goes through sexual disguise or a change of sex. I shall consider two of these stories.[17]

Pausanias[18] tells of a Leukippos (son of Oinomaos, king of Pisa) who, since he is in love with Daphne, disguises himself as a maiden in order to be near her, because the girl spurns male company and spends her time hunting with her fellow maidens. But when Apollo, who also loves the girl, inspires in Daphne and the other virgins a desire to bathe, Leukippos refuses to join them; so the maidens, ripping off his clothes, discover that Leukippos is male and kill him.[19]

David Leitao, in discussing the practice of hair-growing and hair-cutting within adolescent ritual contexts, has drawn attention to the association between boy-hood hair-growing and femininity, noting that in the story told by Pausanias,[20] "the assimilation of the boy's hair to feminine hair has an explicit ritual context, since Leukippos was growing his hair for later ritual cutting".[21] According to Leitao, this story "is also important in that it presents, in somewhat abstract form, the boy's full transition to manhood" (although the threshold is not crossed), showing hints of adolescent transvestism rituals.[22] All these elements must be borne in mind when putting together a comprehensive interpretation of the examples of transvestism under examination.

Another Leukippos is, at Phaistos, the main character of a story – told by Antoninus Liberalis – which involves a change of sex and transvestism in a ritual context.[23] The case of the Phaistian Leukippos is of particular interest because the myth constitutes the *aition* of the *Ekdysia*, a 'Festival of disrobing', whose celebration, as shall be seen, seems to be connected once more with a pre-nuptial rite and with an oath of citizenship.

This, then, is the story: Galateia weds Lampros, a poor shepherd from the Cretan city of Phaistos. When Galateia becomes pregnant, Lampros tells his wife that, if the baby is a girl, they will not be able to bring her up and will have to expose her. Sure enough, Galateia gives birth to a girl and so, in order to save her life, she raises the child as a male and names it Leukippos.[24] As Leukippos grows up, it becomes more and more difficult to hide her sex, so Galateia goes with her daughter into a temple of Leto and begs the goddess to change Leukippos's sex.[25] Leto fulfils Galateia's wishes[26] and

> this change of sex becomes a triple *aition*: first, the people of Phaistos sacri-fice to Leto Phytia ('grower'), who made male genitals grow on a girl; secondly, they give the name Ekdysia ('taking off') to this festival because the girl took off her *peplos* . . .;[27] thirdly, it becomes a custom to lie beside the statue of Leukippos the night before marriage.[28]

As Bremmer rightly observes, the text shows a juxtaposition of a first part "that connects the myth to a festival" and a second "that connects Leukippos to a pre-marital ritual".[29]

However, before discussing all these elements, another piece remains to be added to the puzzle. Since the epigraphic evidence from Crete reveals the presence of the term ἐγδυόμενοι in some inscriptions containing an oath of citizenship,[30] several hypotheses have been developed about the interpretation of the word and the possible connection between the act of undressing within a ceremony

inaugurating access to the civic and political community, and the festival of *Ekdysia* as witnessed by Antoninus Liberalis. Some scholars[31] in fact have explained ἐγδυόμενοι as a reference to the practice of inter-sexual transvestism as documented in the *Ekdysia* of Phaistos, while others have interpreted it as a reference to the procedure of *dokimasia*.[32] The two hypotheses do not necessarily exclude each other. What is worth pointing out here is that both the epigraphic evidence and the passage by Antoninus Liberalis bear witness to a state of transition from childhood to adulthood, focusing on different aspects of this transition.[33] As has been observed, "the Phaistian youth were apparently initiated into manhood, citizenship, and also marriage, at the same period of life"[34] and the epithet itself of Leto suggests she was connected with this transition.[35] What the text shows concerning a single person (Leukippos), may legitimately be presumed – in the light of the epigraphic evidence – to be a rite involving an entire age group, especially since there is evidence pointing to the existence of collective weddings in the archaic period.[36] In addition – as has been seen – the text of Antoninus explicitly links the *agalma* of Leukippos to a wedding context, making reference to the custom of lying down (παρακλίνεσθαι) beside it on the night before marriage.[37] As Bremmer says, "the myth does not reflect Cretan reality and Crete's historical initiation in every detail. It mentions Leukippos only but neglects the fellow members of his *agela*".[38] The progressive disappearance of age-classes effaced the collective character of the practice,[39] but the indication of a custom (νόμιμον δ᾿ἐστίν) along with our knowledge of education in Spartan and Cretan societies[40] support such a picture: the sources testify to the existence of collective weddings and their connection with the process of graduation.[41]

So it is not a causality if transvestism is well documented in contexts connected to marriage and/or civic graduation because these are contexts aimed at defining the roles that men and women play in society. As pointed out by Florence Gherchanoc: "le travestissement semble . . . avoir une valeur positive: il dit la norme, définit cette indispensable différence des sexes qui sert à penser la répartition des rôles sexués en même temps qu'il permet de s'approprier les vertus de l'autre sexe".[42]

Initiatory transvestism: virtues and limits of a model

The examples reviewed show a variety of contexts and situations marked by the presence of transvestism as a key factor. What needs to be discussed now is whether a generalisation is indeed possible; that is, whether there is a single possible interpretation for all the cases examined or not – is there any common element among them? And what precisely is the symbolic value of transvestism in such contexts? As has been seen above, all the main characters in these stories are young people faced with situations that represent a moment of transition in the course of their lives and consequently imply the acquisition of a new status. All the cases analysed have therefore been categorised by most scholars as examples of 'initiatory transvestism'; that is, transvestism organic to practices of initiation into a particular status or condition, whatever that may be. This interpretation

clearly appears to be part of the application of the initiatory paradigm to the study of customs and practices related to adolescence or, more generally, to coming-of-age ceremonies.[43]

As regards ancient Greece, a significant moment in the elaboration of inter-pretative models about practices connected with adolescence as a transitory stage was the publication of Vidal-Naquet's *Le chasseur noir*.[44] Since its first appearance, the essay has met with mixed reactions about its main assumption, according to which facts like those examined here are governed by a *law of symmetrical inversion*: "defining the mature Greek man in terms of his social roles, as hoplite warrior, citizen, husband and father, Vidal-Naquet claims that adolescence entailed a temporary identity that was the reversal of these roles".[45] It also indicates transvestism as one of the characteristic features of such an identity.

The theoretical model elaborated by the French historian and its explanatory value and applicability are nowadays at the centre of debate among scholars (classicists and anthropologists) of different orientations,[46] as evidence of the pivotal role this theory has played. As is generally accepted, the main limit to this approach lies in the fact that the law of symmetrical inversion, which constitutes the core hermeneutical axis of the model, "implies a rigidity to Greek thought that is unwarranted by the evidence":[47] the analysis reveals, in fact, that similar items are re-semanticised according to the contexts to which they belong, so that it is necessary to evaluate case by case. Such rigidness leads to an oversimplification of the identity of the young Greek man, because it fails to take into account that Greek society is a polisegmentary one[48] and social identity is therefore multi-faceted, determined by a variety of factors pertaining to different social groups and formations. However, if the concept of inversion represents the major weakness of the model, especially – as has been noted – in the case of "a transient category such as 'adolescent'",[49] the paradigm nevertheless maintains some kind of strength.

Its main virtue, in the interpretation outlined by Vidal-Naquet and its later developments, resides in the attention paid to coming-of-age ceremonies as a turning point in the establishment of those features which contribute to defining the social physiognomy of the adult man or woman. The usefulness of the model lies today in its applicability as a classification tool; that is, in the possibility it provides of cataloguing many aspects pertaining to adolescent status, but an assessment must also be made of the differences existing among them, which are instead historically determined. An analysis based on the historical anthropology method[50] points out how the data available from the sources need to be set within the socio-historical context to which they belong, because their meaning is culturally specific. To use de Saussure's terminology, there is a fundamental difference between the level of the *signifiant* and that of the *signifié*, because the latter is always specific and subject to continuous re-semanticising processes, whereas the former usually is not.[51]

What is undoubtedly worth underlining is the fact that the data which emerged through an examination of literary and epigraphic evidence we have offered force us to take into account the role age-classes have played in the structure of ancient Greek societies and, consequently, the place transvestism occupies within this

context. What the sources show, in fact, is the value assigned to age as a deciding factor in social consideration of transvestism. As regards the particular status of transvestism in a ritual context, the cases documented by comic authors represent an important counter-proof, testifying that a man dressed up as a woman is usually subject to derision and disapproval,[52] to stigmatisation, whereas no disapproval is documented in the cases of adolescent transvestism, or when transvestism is connected with specific social practices (e.g. ritual duties). Indeed, young people are seen to be characterised by sexual ambiguity, and the ceremonies in which they take an active part are intended specifically to seal their passage into adulthood. Therefore, in such a context, transvestism is not an element questioning the gender roles men and women have to play within a well-ordered society, and so it is not subject to social condemnation; rather, it functions as a marker of an 'in-between condition' (a transitional phase from boy/girlhood to adulthood) or – in the words of Gabriella Pironti – "un *opérateur symbolique de transformation* qui . . . se révèle étroitement solidaire du processus physiologique de développement et des changements de statut social qui ratifient les étapes de ce processus".[53]

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 Cf. Dodd 2003; Leitao 2003 and Lincoln 2003.
2 For a discussion of the rise of historical anthropology, see Di Donato 1990, especially pp. 13–179. For an overview of the elaboration of the historical anthropological method in the work of Louis Gernet and its further development in the works of Jean-Pierre Vernant, see Di Donato 1990 and 2013, pp. 191–197.
3 On this topic, see F. Carlà-Uhink, Chapter 1 in this volume.
4 On this topic, see Bullough and Bullough 1993, pp. 25–33.
5 For an overview of heroes experiencing transvestism, see Heslin 2005 (the most famous are Achilles, Herakles and Theseus).
6 See M. Facella, Chapter 7 in this volume.
7 Plut., *Lyc.*, 15.3: ἐγάμουν δὲ δι᾽ἁρπαγῆς . . . τὴν δ᾽ἁρπασθεῖσαν ἡ νυμφεύτρια καλουμήνη παραλαβοῦσα, τὴν μὲν κεφαλὴν ἐν χρῷ περιέκειρεν, ἱματίῳ δ᾽ἀνδρείῳ καὶ ὑποδήμασιν ἐνσκευάσασα, κατέκλινεν ἐπὶ στιβάδα μόνην ἄνευ φωτός. For a detailed discussion about the link between age-classes and wedding customs with regard to Spartan society, see Lupi 2000.
8 Plut., *Mul. Virt.*, 245 F: it is a custom πώγωνα δεῖν ἐχούσας συναναπαύεσθαι τοῖς ἀνδράσι τὰς γεγαμημένας.
9 Plut., *Quaest. Gr.*, 304 E: τὰς δὲ νύμφας οἱ γαμοῦντες δεξιοῦνται γυναικείαν στολὴν περιθέμενοι.
10 Plut., *Mul. Virt.*, 245 E–F: τὰ Ὑβριστικὰ τελοῦσι, γυναῖκας μὲν ἀνδρείοις χιτῶσι καὶ χλαμύσιν, ἄνδρας δὲ πέπλοις γυναικῶν καὶ καλύπτραις ἀμφιεννύντες (transl. by F. C. Babbit). On the *Hybristika* as a rite of passage, see Harrison 1912, pp. 505–508.
11 Delcourt 1958, p. 7.

12 van Gennep 1909.
13 See, for example, Jeanmaire 1939 and Brelich 1969; for a critical discussion of these two studies, see Dodd 2003, especially pp. 71–72. Graf 2003 (especially pp. 4–8) provides an outline of the emergence of the concept of initiation and its development up to the present.
14 Aristot., *GA*, I.20, 728a.
15 Pironti 2012, p. 96.
16 Vernant 1982, p. 23.
17 Other versions are documented by Hyg., *Fab.* 190; Ant. Lib., 10. See Leitao 1999.
18 Paus. VIII.20.2–4.
19 Pausanias' source has been identified in Parthenius of Nicaea (*Erotica* 15), whose narrative derives, in turn, from Phylarchus (*FGrHist* 81 F 32) and an otherwise unknown Diodorus (*Suppl. Hellenist.*, no. 380). For a sketched version, see Forbes Irving 1990, pp. 261–263.
20 Paus. VIII.20.3: ἔτρεφεν ὁ Λεύκιππος κόμην τῷ Ἀλφειῷ. ταύτην οἷα δὴ παρθένος πλεξάμενος τὴν κόμην καὶ ἐσθῆτα ἐνδὺς γυναικείαν κτλ.
21 Leitao 2003, p. 120.
22 Leitao 2003, p. 120. There is an in-depth discussion of examples showing a close interrelationship between marriage, hair-cutting and rites of passage characterised by cross-dressing in Gernet 1932, pp. 36–39.
23 Ant. Lib. 17, citing Nicander's *Heteroioumena*. Nilsson labelled the myth of Leukippos as "eines der schwierigsten Kapitel der griechischen Religionsgeschichte" (Nilsson 1906, p. 370).
24 ἐξέτρεφεν ὡς παῖδα κοῦρον ὀνομάσασα Λεύκιππον.
25 κατέφυγεν εἰς τὸ τῆς Λητοῦς ἱερὸν καὶ πλεῖστα τὴν θεὸν ἱκέτευσεν, εἴ πως αὐτῇ κόρος ἢ παῖς ἀντὶ θυγατρὸς δύναιτο γενέσθαι. Galateia reinforces her own prayers, citing other successful examples of a change of sex: Kainis/Kaineus, Teiresias, Hypermnestra, Siproites. For an interesting analysis concerning Kaineus, see Bremmer 2015, who points out how the myth of Leukippos represents "a striking parallel" to the myth of Kaineus (p. 269).
26 A further version of the story, identical to that told by Antoninus, with the sole exception of the names of the protagonists and the identity of the goddess invoked (Isis instead of Leto) is documented in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* IX, vv. 666–797. The Ovidian version also lacks the institution of a festival aimed at remembering the change of sex. On the relationship between the two texts and their own sources, see Delcourt 1958, pp. 3–5; Brelich 1969, pp. 201–202; Forbes Irving 1990, pp. 152–155. See also F. Carlà-Uhink, Chapter 1 in this volume.
27 Forbes Irving 1990, p. 152. For detailed analyses of transvestism in the *Ekdysia*, see Leitao 1995 and Pironti 2012; on *Leto Phytie*, see Willets 1962, pp. 172–179.
28 Ant. Lib. 17.6:

> Ἡ δὲ Λητὼ . . . μετέβαλε τὴν φύσιν τῆς παιδὸς εἰς κόρον. Ταύτης ἔτι μέμνηται τῆς μεταβολῆς Φαίστιοι καὶ θύουσι Φυτίῃ Λητοῖ, ἥτις ἔφυσεν μήδεα τῇ κόρῃ, καὶ τὴν ἑορτὴν Ἐκδύσια καλοῦσιν, ἐπεὶ τὸν πέπλον ἡ παῖς ἐξέδυ. Νόμιμον δ᾽ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς γάμοις πρότερον παρακλίνεσθαι παρὰ τὸ ἄγαλμα τοῦ Λευκίππου.

29 Bremmer 2005, pp. 33–34.
30 *Inscr. Cret.* I.IX.1, lines 99–100; I.XIX.1, lines 17–18; II.V.24, lines 7–9. For a detailed discussion of the Cretan epigraphic evidence, its content and the connection with practices related to the passage from boyhood to adulthood, see Leitao 1995, pp. 132–136.
31 See Delcourt 1958, p. 17; Leitao 1995, pp. 133–135; Pironti 2012, p. 99.
32 Whether or not credit should be given to Aristophanes' *Wasps* (v. 578) that the procedure includes a scrutiny of the αἰδοῖα of the *paides*, it seems likely that they have to some extent been judged on their physical appearance. For a general description of

the procedure, see Aristot., *Ath. Pol.*, 42.1–2. According to Bremmer, "the Ekdysia referred most likely to the festival where the novices stripped off their one dress before entering into their final stage of initiation" (Bremmer 2005, p. 33). On the connection between the *Ekdysia* and the procedure of *dokimasia*, see Heslin 2005, pp. 208–210, who is – more generally – critical of the theory of a transvestite ritual at the *Ekdysia*.

33 Leitao suggests that the transvestism of the *Ekdysia* is linked to the gender polarisation characterising Cretan society, according to which "the social development of boys was conceived of as a gradual progression from the feminine pole to the masculine pole" (Leitao 1995, p. 141).

34 Willets 1962, p. 176.

35 Apart from the Cretan evidence, other documents attest to the role of Leto as a goddess who, presiding over the coming-of-age process, shows a significant connection with citizenship: *IG* II² 1237, lines 123–125; *Inscr. Chios* 41; on these documents, see Leitao 1995, p. 136.

36 On this topic and its interpretation as a form of rite of passage, see Gernet 1928 (reprinted in Gernet 1968, pp. 21–61). Gernet discusses the practice of collective weddings as a peculiar one within the context of rural festivals and emphasises that within this context, "admission dans la société et mariage sont des idées qui s'attirent l'une l'autre" (p. 51). He draws attention to the fact that a significant part of such festivals is devoted to coming-of-age ceremonies marked by specific sacrifices, such as the *apellaia* or the *koureia* (p. 37), and that they sometimes include an exchange of clothes between the sexes (p. 42). Further observations are made in Gernet 1932, Chapter 1.

37 See "The two Leukippoi" and note 28. On the interpretation of Leukippos as *paredros* of Leto, see Pestalozza 1942, pp. 48–53, and the commentary by Papathomopoulos (Paris, 1968) on the text of Antoninus Liberalis. Papathomopoulos suggests that παρακλίνεσθαι may refer to "un rite magique de défloration symbolique, un mariage entre la vierge avant sa nuit de noces et la statue, peut-être ithyphallique et hermaphrodite, de Leucippos".

38 Bremmer 2005, p. 34; further remarks in Bremmer 2015, pp. 269–271.

39 On this topic, see Delcourt 1958, pp. 12–17.

40 For a detailed description of the Cretan process of graduation, see Bremmer 2005, pp. 34–35. On the similarities between Cretan and Spartan institutions, see Aristot., *Pol.,* 1271 b40. For a discussion of these aspects, see Brelich 1969, pp. 197–232.

41 See Strabo (X.20), drawing upon Ephorus, who says that the boys collectively married after leaving the *agela*: γαμεῖν μὲν ἅμα πάντες ἀναγκάζονται παρ᾽αὐτοῖς οἱ κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνον ἐκ τῆς τῶν παίδων ἀγέλης ἐκκριθέντες.

42 Gherchanoc 2003/2004, pp. 778–779.

43 For an in-depth analysis of the initiatory paradigm, its history and application in anthropology, folklore and the history of religions, see Lincoln 2003, who outlines a profile of the most influential scholars in the genealogy and development of this paradigm in the social sciences.

44 First published as Vidal-Naquet 1968a, the essay had an almost simultaneous English version as Vidal-Naquet 1968b; the French original was then revised for inclusion in Vidal-Naquet 1981. Furthermore, following criticism by some scholars, some assumptions were partially modified in Vidal-Naquet 1989.

45 Dodd 2003, p. 72. Dodd makes the scientific roots of Vidal-Naquet's reversal theory clear, identifying them not only in the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss, but also in the dialectic that informs the structuralism of Ferdinand de Saussure, according to which "the semantic differentiation that makes meaning possible must arise from acts of negation" (Dodd 2003, p. 72). A mechanism of reversal of social identity similar to that of Vidal-Naquet lies at the core of the famous Bakhtinian theorisation concerning the Carnival; see Bakhtin 1984. Further remarks are made in Mader 2005, especially pp. 159–160.

46 For a detailed discussion of this model (mostly oriented towards its rejection), see Dodd and Faraone 2003, Part III, wholly devoted to "Vidal-Naquet's *Black Hunter*"; see also Ma 2008 and Pellizer 2011.

47 Dodd 2003, p. 73.

48 That is, a society characterised by a categorisation into several subgroups. On the introduction of the category of 'polysegmentary societies', see Durkheim 1894, pp. 50–55; for a critical review of ancient Greek civilisation specifically, see Di Donato 2000, pp. xi–xii and Malkin 2001, pp. 1–28; for further developments concerning this topic, see also Ismard 2010.

49 Leitao 1995, p. 140, notes that if "inversion is particularly effective at articulating differences between stable categories, such as 'Greek' and 'barbarian' where crossover is rare, if not impossible", it seems less useful in the case of transient categories.

50 For an overview of the historical anthropology method in the work of Louis Gernet and its further developments in the works of Jean-Pierre Vernant, see Di Donato 1990 and 2013, pp. 191–197.

51 On the complex relationship between myth and ritual and their connection with the initiatory model, see the analyses by Versnel 1993 and Bremmer 2005.

52 See, for example, Aristoph., *Thesm.*, vv. 941–942 and 944, on which, see also E. Medda, Chapter 9 in this volume; Aristoph., *Ekkl.*, vv. 328–334 and 374–375; *Nub.*, vv. 1009–1023. As the comic evidence shows, the stigmatisation of an adult male dressed up as a woman is such that, as pointed out by Rosellini 1979 (pp. 17–18), it is the same for a man to be disguised as a woman or to have died, because such a disguise constitutes a denial of male identity. The same stigmatisation can be found in Aeschines' words against Demosthenes (see Aeschin. I. 131).

53 Pironti 2012, p. 103.

7 Beyond ritual

Cross-dressing between Greece and the Orient

Margherita Facella

Allusions to cross-dressing episodes are not infrequent in Greek and Latin texts and most of these allusions have not escaped the attention of scholars working on the religious traditions of the classical world. What has been sometimes overlooked, though, is the specific cultural and narrative frame in which these references should be set. Often recorded and explained as *strategemata*, *exempla virtutum*, *thaumasta* or *aitia* (just to quote the most frequently recurring cases), cross-dressing episodes were mostly extrapolated from their context by the ancient authors and adapted to suit their narrative purpose, so that for us they have lost chronological depth and definition.[1] The difficulty in analysing this type of evidence is therefore plain; that is, the risk of exponentially departing from the specific situation pertaining to each fact and of closely linking phenomena which can be connected only up to a certain point. In this chapter, I will focus on a few items of evidence which should alert us to the temptation of associating episodes of cross-dressing of a different nature and always explaining them as an expression of religious ritual.[2] A careful analysis of the literary texts and of their historical and rhetorical context will show the necessity of drawing appropriate distinctions and, at the same time, help us to understand the perception of cross-dressing behaviours by our sources.

Hybristika: ritual cross-dressing, aetiology, and the comparative approach

One of the most explicit and well-studied references to the practice of cross-dressing is offered by Plutarch in *De Mulierum Virtutibus* 245 C–F, where he mentions the existence at Argos of a festival called the *Hybristika* ("Outrageous Acts"), during which men and women exchanged dress. Plutarch associates these celebrations with a historical fact, the struggle between the Spartans and the Argives (c. 494 BCE)[3] and relates that the Argive women led by Telesilla successfully defended their city against the enemy:

> Some say the battle was fought on the seventh of the month now called Fourth, but in ancient times called Hermaeus by the Argives; others say it was at the new moon, the day in which they still celebrate the Hybristika ("Festival of

Impudence"), when women are dressed in men's tunics and cloaks and men in women's dresses and veils. To correct the loss of population, they united the women not with slaves, as Herodotus says, but with the best of the people living around (*perioeci*), whom they made citizens. The women, however, seemed to despise and neglect these husbands in bed, because they thought them below themselves. Hence the law which orders married women to wear beards when they go to bed with their husbands.[4]

(Plut. *Mul. Virt.* 245 E–F; transl. D. A. Russell)

The source to which Plutarch explicitly refers is Socrates, a local historian from Argos whose work is almost entirely lost to us.[5] Herodotus (VI, 76–77 and 83) reports quite a different story: in his version, the oracle consulted before the battle by the Argives in conjunction with the Milesians declares the victory of the *teleia* (feminine element) over the *arsen* (masculine element); but Cleomenes does not attack Argos, hence there is no defence by the women and no appearance of Telesilla. The attention is focused instead on the *oliganthropia* of Argos and the consequent conquest of the city by the slaves. The introduction of the women warriors and the poetess Telesilla,[6] the Argive perspective permeating the entire passage, and the differences compared with the Herodotean version (in particular, the substitution of slaves with *perioikoi*) suggest that it was a later re-elaboration (not to say invention) by Socrates and, most probably, other local historians, aimed at improving the reputation of their city.[7] In addition to this, the comparison with other stories of Greek women fighting and winning a victory over men reinforces the conclusion that the account has no historical reliability, and that the role reversal in the story is meant to explain the role reversal of the ritual.[8] It is therefore surprising to read that Werner Krenkel has considered the *Hybristika* as an example of popular cross-dressing traditions based on "historische Ereignisse".[9] The entire structure of the episode and its conclusion betray Plutarch's method of composition and the central role played by aetiology.[10] A chain of aetiologies provides the structure for *Quaestiones Graecae* and *Quaestiones Romanae* and there is no need to insist on how Plutarch's narrative in *De Mulierum Virtutibus* is also driven by the search for an *aition*.[11] The story of Telesilla and the women warriors was perfectly suitable for explaining both the origin of a celebration where men and women experienced a temporary reversal of social roles, and of a bizarre custom in which Argive brides wore a false beard on their wedding night.

In a paragraph dedicated to "Feste mit Beziehung auf die Doppelgeschlechtigkeit", Martin Nilsson[12] attempts to cast light on the cross-dressing aspect of the *Hybristika*, comparing this tradition with others involving the wearing of clothes of the opposite sex: first of all the rituals of Cos, which are also mentioned by the "philo-aetiological" Plutarch (*Quest. Graec.* 304 C–E).[13] In addition to these, Nilsson recalls the cult of the bearded Aphrodite at Cyprus, whose worshippers wore clothes of the opposite sex;[14] the tradition of a Spartan bride wearing a man's cloak and sandals;[15] and the sacrifices to Mutunus Tutunus by Roman women dressed in male clothes.[16] All these rituals were explained by the Swedish scholar

as marriage customs in which the enactment of cross-dressing was directed at confusing the powers of evil.[17]

The connection between cross-dressing and marriage had been highlighted a few years earlier by Ernest Crawley.[18] The disguise in the clothes of the opposite sex at Argos, Cos and Sparta was a wedding practice which Crawley had observed in various 'primitive' societies and which he described as 'inoculation': a means of overcoming sexual taboos. That ritual transvestism, however, went beyond the marriage sphere and was a much more complex problem, was soon made clear by James Frazer.[19] Exploring the custom of transvestite priests in the Pelew Islands (Western Pacific) and collecting *comparanda* in the ancient and contemporary world, Frazer realised that a single solution applicable to all cases was unlikely. At the end of his investigation, however, he came to the conclusion that

> the custom of men dressing as women and of women dressing as men has been practised from a variety of superstitious motives, among which the principal would seem to be the wish to please certain powerful spirits or to deceive others.[20]
>
> (Frazer 1914, vol. II, p. 264)

The comparative studies of Crawley and Frazer and the influential book by Arnold van Gennep[21] inspired the research of Robert Halliday, who dedicated an interesting essay to the *Hybristika* and to ritual practices of cross-dressing.[22] For Halliday, the donning of the clothes of the opposite sex is a typical 'rite de passage', aimed at creating a sense of unity in those who performed it. The exchange of clothes between boys and girls at the circumcision ceremonies of the Egyptians and of the Nandi in East Africa, the masquerade of men in female attire in some Northern African carnivals, and the 'Geese dancing' of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly in the UK were aligned with several traditions recorded by Graeco-Roman sources, some of which we have already mentioned. In all the collected instances – observed Halliday – the donning of the clothes of the other sex takes place at transitional moments which can concern the individual (circumcision, marriage, mourning, initiation of seers), as well as the entire community (seasonal and renewal feasts, festivals with social reversal).

Van Gennep and Halliday inaugurated a structuralist approach to the study of transvestism in ancient societies which for a long time has dominated scholarly discussions.[23] The construction of a theoretical paradigm, based on ethnological comparisons, to explain a widespread practice in classical antiquity was a great achievement, yet it caused an oversimplification of a multifaceted phenomenon and its confinement to the ritual sphere. The only transvestism which attracted scholars' attention was ritual transvestism[24] and it is not rare to come across cases where textual references to inter-sexual disguise, which have no direct connection with religious practices, have been interpreted instead as vestiges of a cross-dressing ritual. An emblematic example can be found in Georges Dumézil's analysis of the "Lemnian crime", which has been very influential and which deserves our attention.

Le crime des Lemniennes and functional disguise

The proverbial myth of the *dysodia* of the Lemnian women, the "foul smell" which had caused a sexual refusal by their husbands and the consequent massacre of the male population of the island by the outraged females, was masterfully examined by Dumézil in a work that has become a classic.[25] Through a careful exegesis, Dumézil showed that we have here a pseudo-historical projection of a ritual which, as Philostratus records,[26] took place on the island every year. More precisely, the legend of the malodorous Lemniads, who killed their husbands, ruled their country alone, and then were reconciled with the male sex when Jason and his companions arrived, reflects a local ritual that included the temporary separation of men and women and a new fire ceremony.

So far, so good. Then Dumézil goes a step further and, following Carl Fredrich,[27] maintains that in the Lemnian ritual, "un échange de vêtements entre le sexes serait à sa place".[28] The conclusion stems from the analysis of a passage by Herodotus on the Mynians, the children born from the union of the Lemniads with the Argonauts, and their turbulent relationship with the Spartans. Herodotus tells us that

> the descendants of the crew of the Argo were driven out by the Pelasgians who carried off the Athenian women from Brauron; after being driven out of Lemnos by them, they sailed away to Lacedaemon, and there camped on Taygetus and kindled a fire.
>
> (Hdt. IV, 145.2; transl. A. D. Godley)

The story continues with the meeting between the Mynians and the Spartans, the settlement of the Mynians in Spartan territory, and the intermarriages between the two groups. Over time, though, the Mynians became arrogant and impious, so that the Spartans seized them and cast them into prison, in order to kill them. The wives of the Mynians, who were Spartans, asked permission and were allowed to meet their husbands:

> But when the wives came into the prison, they gave their husbands all their own garments, and themselves put on the men's clothing; so the Minyae passed out in the guise of women dressed in women's clothing; and thus escaping, once more camped on Taygetus.[29]
>
> (Hdt. IV, 146.4; transl. A. D. Godley)

The lighting of a fire, the marriage with the local women, and the imprisonment of the Mynians convinced Dumézil that we are dealing with an aetiological explanation of an ancient Spartan ritual, as in the case of the anecdote about the Lemnian women. The ceremony must have implied "un feu allumé sur le Taygète, une separation des hommes et des femmes, de nouveaux marriages, une procession d'hommes déguisés en femmes et de femmes déguisés en hommes, peut-être aussi des sacrifices humains simulé."[30]

In point of fact, neither Herodotus nor Plutarch (who offers a similar version of the story, just one more affected by socio-political considerations),[31] make a

correlation between this legend and a Spartan festival. In other words, the existence of Spartan ceremonies associated with the Mynian deeds is a matter of guesswork and so is the cross-dressing procession which is supposed to have taken place in these ceremonies. The conclusion that the Lemnian rituals involved a cross-dressing performance, as did the alleged Spartan rites, derives therefore from compounded guesswork and circular reasoning by Dumézil.

What the episode of the Mynians certainly shows are some socio-political dynamics which typically develop between incomers and the indigenous population: new marriages, a new ethnic mix, and new conflicts. In a context which sees two clashing political groups, men disguised as women is not an unusual occurrence, as the following examples drawn from the Greek literary tradition illustrate. Herodotus (V, 18.1–20.5) narrates how some Macedonian men, disguised in women's clothes, killed their Persian hosts who had tried to take advantage of them.[32] Another stratagem based on camouflage is recorded by Xenophon in *Hellenica* (V, 4.3–V, 4.7) with regard to the liberation of Thebes from the Spartan garrison (379 BCE): dressed up as matrons and maidservants, Melon and another six Theban exiles entered the *Polemarcheion* with the help of Phillidas and assassinated the pro-Spartan polemarchs.[33] An interesting version of the Athenian conquest of Salamis, reported by Plutarch, also involves men disguised in feminine clothes. During the war of the Athenians against the Megarians, Solon sent a trusty man to Salamis who, pretending to be a deserter, convinced the Megarians to sail to Cape Colias in order to capture the most important women of Athens. At Cape Colias, the Athenians convened to perform the ancestral sacrifice to Demeter. And

> when Solon saw the vessel sailing back from the island, he ordered the women to withdraw, and directed those of the younger men who were still beardless, arraying themselves in the garments, head-bands, and sandals which the women had worn, and carrying concealed daggers, to sport and dance on the sea shore until the enemy had disembarked and the vessel was in their power.
>
> (Plut. *Solon* 8.5; transl. B. Perrin)

The Megarians fell into the trap and were massacred.

The attempt to classify all these episodes as examples of "ritual cross-dressing" is hardly convincing.[34] No link with a religious context transpires from the story of the Macedonians who kill their Persian hosts, nor from the account of the Theban leaders who liberate their city. The slaughter of the Megarians by the disguised Athenians did not give rise to any cross-dressed ritual: the annual ceremony at the promontory of Skiradion, which Vidal-Naquet relates to the "travesti féminin", should actually be connected with the second version of the capture of Salamis recorded by Plutarch (*Life of Solon* 9.1–4), which is very different and bears no trace of disguise, as the ceremony confirms.[35]

The narrative similarities shared by these passages rather suggest that we are in the presence of a historiographical *topos*, which characterises stories of conflicting relations between two groups. In the episode of the Mynians, as well as in the

others, what is described is a functional disguise, which must be distinguished from ritual cross-dressing or transvestism.[36]

Ritual cross-dressing or socially subversive dressing?

Among the examples of ritual cross-dressing, the story of Aristodemus *Malakos*, tyrant of Cumae, is often cited.[37] Our main source is Dionysus of Halicarnassus:[38]

> And to the end that no noble or manly spirit might spring up in any of the rest of the citizens, he resolved to make effeminate by means of their upbringing all the youths who were being reared in the city, and with that view he suppressed the gymnasiums and the practice of arms and changed the manner of life previously followed by the children. For he ordered the boys to wear their hair long like girls, to adorn it with flowers, to keep it curled and to bind up tresses with hair-nets, to wear embroidered robes that reached down to their feet, and, over these, thin and soft mantles, and to pass their lives in the shade. And when they went to the schools kept by dancing-masters, flute-players and others who, like these, pay court to the Muses, their governesses attended them, taking along parasols and fans; and these women bathed them, carrying into the baths combs, alabaster pots filled with perfumes, and looking-glasses.
>
> (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* VII, 9.3–4; transl. E. Cary)

Plutarch's account is much shorter: he limits himself to recounting that Aristodemus "accustomed the boys to wear long hair and golden ornaments, and he compelled the girls to cut their hair short around the neck, and to wear youths' cloaks over their short chitons".[39] Commenting on this passage, Jacques Boulogne remarks that "il se peut que nous soyons ici en présence d'une explication rationaliste de vieux rites qu'on ne comprenait plus",[40] and then compares this case with the story of the *Hybristika* and that of the Mynians. Yet the connection with rituals of initiation, strongly suggested by Vidal-Naquet,[41] does not emerge from the extant accounts. In Plutarch, the tyranny at Cumae is described as an overturning of normal social relations[42] and it is in this context that the cross-dressing takes place, a further example of the misconduct of the tyrant. Dionysus, on the other hand, argues that Aristodemus's impositions suited a precise political design, and were intended to weaken the young Cumaeans so as to make them unsuitable for the government of the city. The description fits into the broad *topos* of the *tryphe*, which inexorably makes them effeminate,[43] but as Nino Luraghi has rightly pointed out, most of the elements composing this description are not fictitious:

> [S]i tratta invece, almeno in parte, di componenti di uno stile di vita tipico delle aristocrazie greche, e in particolari ioniche, nel tardo arcaismo, permeate di elementi orientali, che la civiltà greca, col procedere del V secolo, rifiutò in modo sempre più netto, connotandolo in senso femminile e barbarico.[44]
>
> (Luraghi 1994, p. 100)

A good example mentioned by Luraghi is the parasol, which from being an Oriental male status symbol, in the Greek world became a feminine accessory.[45] In support of Luraghi's interpretation, a passage by Athenaeus (XII, 522d) on the people of Tarentum may be recalled, which shows how the gender determination of a garment could vary (or become restricted) over time: "He [= Clearchus of Soli] says that all the men wore transparent garments with a purple border, which are today a refinement of women's life."

   To sum up, Aristodemus is likely to have extended to the young citizens a refined education, which until that time had been restricted to the aristocracy, and this change was seen negatively by the later tradition.[46] It is likely therefore that fashion, rather than a mysterious ritual, was behind Aristodemus's agency. The episode becomes more comprehensible when compared to a passage on the tyrant Ortyges and his followers preserved by Athenaeus:

> But Ortyges and his companions, establishing themselves as tyrants, and having possessed themselves of the supreme power in Chios, destroyed all who opposed their proceedings, and they subverted the laws, and themselves managed the whole of the affairs of the state, admitting none of the popular party within the walls. And they established a court of justice outside the walls, before the gates; and there they tried all actions, sitting as judges, clothed in purple cloaks, and in tunics with purple borders, and they wore sandals with many slits in them during the hot weather; but in winter they always walked about in women's shoes; and they let their hair grow, and took great care of it so as to have ringlets, dividing it on the top of their head with fillets of yellow and purple. And they wore ornaments of solid gold, like women.[47]

> (Athen. VI, 259c–d; transl. C. D. Yonge)

Once again, we find here the historiographical pattern that associates tyranny with a reversal of social conventions. Ortyges and the other tyrants, who wear 'female' shoes and ornaments, remind us of the Cumaean youths, but the fashion of long hair recalls in particular Aristodemus and the *koronistai*, the long-haired young men with whom he fought against the barbarians (Plut. *Mul. Virt.* 261 E). There is no hint pointing to an initiatic context for Ortyges and his companions, so one wonders why we need to assume it in the case of the Cumaeans. The description of these tyrants has been deeply moulded by the later historiographical tradition, so it is the negative attitude towards them which attributes a female connotation to what was actually a fashion, or an outward way of distinguishing themselves by certain elite groups.[48]

Transvestites for love

Effeminacy is one of the main ingredients constituting the Graeco-Roman stereotypical image of a decadent 'Oriental' court society.[49] But it is actually in this setting that examples of women who cross-dress and assume a male role may be

found. The first case, recorded by Aelianus in the *Varia Historia*, is that of Aspasia of Phocea, a very beautiful girl of humble origin, who first became the concubine of the younger Cyrus and then of his brother Artaxerxes. When Tiridates, Artaxerxes' favourite eunuch died, Aspasia was the only one who managed to console the grieving king:

> The Persian was greatly encouraged by her sympathy and asked her to go to the bedroom and wait for him, which she did. When he came back he put the eunuch's cloak over Aspasia's black dress. Somehow the young man's clothing suited her, and her beauty struck her lover even more powerfully. Once overcome by this sight, he asked her to visit him in this attire until the severity of his grief waned. In order to please him she did so.
>
> (Aelian. *V.H.* XII, 1; transl. N. G. Wilson)

The concubine Aspasia is also mentioned by Xenophon and Plutarch,[50] who do not yet talk of her replacement of Tiridates. The story, however, is not necessarily a literary fiction, and we should not be surprised about the erotic relationship between a Persian king and a eunuch, since other examples confirm this practice.[51] In the case of Aspasia, the cross-dressing is enacted for erotic reasons and is limited in time and space; that is, to the sexual encounters with the king.

The choice made by Hypsicrateia is more radical: she was the concubine of Mithradates Eupator "who cut her hair short and was accustomed to ride a horse and to use weapons, so that it was easier to take part in his [= Mithradates'] fatigues and dangers".[52] Plutarch specifies that the woman wore the garment of a Persian male and displayed always a manly spirit and courage and, what is more, "the king called her *Hypsicrates*".[53] This detail has been latterly confirmed by an extraordinary epigraphic discovery. In 2005, in the Taman peninsula, at Phanagoreia (Cimmerian Bosphorus), Russian archaeologists uncovered a marble base, part of a funerary monument, which bears the following inscription:[54] Ὑψίκρατες γύν{η}αι / βασιλέως Μιθραδάτου / Εὐπάτορος Διονύσου / χαῖρε.[55]

This new document raises many questions, which concern not only the precise time and circumstances of the woman's death, but also the erection and structure of the monument.[56] For us, it is particularly relevant that the *gyne* is here recorded with the name in the masculine form.[57] Various attempts have been made to associate Hypsicrateia with a sort of Amazon,[58] a view which actually conflicts with the description given by Plutarch and Valerius Maximus. The importance of the Amazon myth and cult in Pontus is irrefutable and we can speculate on the attire of the statue of Hypsicrateia, whether it may recall that of the Amazons[59] or the horse-riding nomads of eastern Eurasia. At most, however, these traditions can provide reasons for the adoption of a 'Persian' male costume by the concubine; what they fail to do is to explain her adoption (or acceptance) of a male name. Hypsicrateia, as well as most probably Aspasia of Phocea, was not just a literary creation, and her example aptly confirms that cross-dressing was a complex phenomenon which went above and beyond the ritual sphere.

Conclusions

A closer look at a few passages, usually interpreted as evidence of ritual transvestism, has showed the necessity of a reassessment. In ancient, as in modern times, various causes and purposes could motivate cross-dressing behaviours, but such a simple consideration has often been disregarded in favour of a general trend which reads all cross-dressing episodes as ritual performance. This paradigm is a result of comparative ethnographic studies which have been ground-breaking and essential for the comprehension of transvestism in antiquity. Nonetheless, the collection of cases assembled over time to support an exclusively ritualistic basis for cross-dressing includes incongruous examples and inevitably induces us to oversimplify a more complex reality. As Walter Burkert has brilliantly stated with reference to ethnological comparisons for explaining the Lemnian festival of fire,

> By mere accumulation of comparative material, the outlines of the picture become more and more blurred, until nothing is left but vague generalities. In sharp contrast to the method of accumulation, there is the method of historical criticism; instead of expanding the evidence, it tries to cut it down, to isolate elements and to distribute them neatly to different times and places.[60]
>
> (Burkert 1970, p. 232)

Finally, there is no doubt that ritual and, in particular, initiatory transvestism played an important role in ancient Greek society, but the predominance of this type of cross-dressing in our evidence is a reflection of the Greek approach to this practice. Cross-dressing was perfectly acceptable within the ritual sphere or when it was an occasional camouflage for strategic purposes. Beyond that, cross-dressing behaviours were considered socially disturbing, as the association between tyranny and transvestism in our sources reveals.[61] Positive comments are expressed only for two female cross-dressers, concubines of Persian kings, who were hence considered as belonging to an eccentric 'Oriental' world and presented as having renounced their femininity for love. Certainly, our evidence regarding the Greek perception of cross-dressing is so scattered, both in time and place, that one should refrain from generalisations. However, what Artemidorus (II, 3.87) says, of a man who dreams of wearing female clothes, is instructive: "A woman's attire is auspicious only for bachelors and those who act on the stage. . . . But dreaming that one is wearing a colourful, or a woman's, garment at feasts and festivals does not hurt anyone" (transl. M. Facella).

Notes

1 This is particularly evident for Plutarch and Valerius Maximus, because of the anecdotal nature of their works, but it is also true for many other authors (see below).
2 On cross-dressing in ritual contexts, see La Guardia, Chapter 6 in this volume, which offers a complementary and essential view for an understanding of this phenomenon in all its expressions.
3 On the Battle of Sepeia, cf. also Plut. *Apopht. Lac.* 223 B 4 (Cleomenes). The date of the battle is discussed (see Hendriks 1980).

4 Plut. *Mul. Virt.* 245 E–F:

> τὴν δὲ μάχην οἱ μὲν ἑβδόμῃ λέγουσιν ἱσταμένου μηνός, οἱ δὲ νουμηνίᾳ γενέσθαι τοῦ νῦν μὲν τετάρτου, πάλαι δ᾽ Ἑρμαίου παρ᾽ Ἀργείοις, καθ᾽ ἣν μέχρι νῦν τὰ Ὑβριστικὰ τελοῦσι, γυναῖκας μὲν ἀνδρείοις χιτῶσι καὶ χλαμύσιν, ἄνδρας δὲ πέπλοις γυναικῶν καὶ καλύπτραις ἀμφιεννύντες. ἐπανορθούμενοι δὲ τὴν ὀλιγανδρίαν, οὐχ ὡς Ἡρόδοτος ἱστορεῖ τοῖς δούλοις, ἀλλὰ τῶν περιοίκων ποιησάμενοι πολίτας τοὺς ἀρίστους, συνῴκισαν τὰς γυναῖκας· ἐδόκουν δὲ καὶ τούτους ἀτιμάζειν καὶ περιορᾶν ἐν τῷ συγκαθεύδειν ὡς χείρονας. ὅθεν ἔθεντο νόμον τὸν κελεύοντα πώγωνα δεῖν ἐχούσας συναναπαύεσθαι τοῖς ἀνδράσι τὰς γεγαμημένας.

5 FGrHist 310 F6. On Plutarch's sources for this passage and, in particular, Arist. *Polit.* V, 1303 a6 (ed. W. D. Ross), see Halliday 1909, p. 212; Stadter 1965, pp. 45–53; Thomas 2014, p. 162.

6 A few verses of Telesilla have survived: see Page 1968, p. 207, fr. 409 and p. 248, fr. 464 (anon.). On Telesilla, see Maas 1934, coll. 384–385; Pizzocaro 1993; Franchi 2012. The story of Telesilla is mentioned also by Polyaen. VIII, 33 (who derives it from Plutarch; see Stadter 1965, pp. 17–19). For the *testimonia* on Telesilla's life and work, see Campbell 1992, pp. 70–83.

7 The story was considered a late invention already by Grote 1870, vol. IV, pp. 248–249 and Busolt 1895, p. 563 note 4. For a full discussion, see Luria 1933, pp. 211–220; Stadter 1965, pp. 45–53. On the Argive sources of Plutarch, see Jacoby in FGrHist 310 F6, III B Komm. Cf. also Boulogne 2002, p. 285 and Thomas 2014, p. 162.

8 See Graf 1984; Ament 1993, p. 16.

9 See Krenkel 1990, p. 466, which strangely refers only to Polyaen. VIII, 33, without mentioning Plutarch and later sources. The article collects several interesting passages related to transvestism in antiquity, but it does not systematically analyse them, or come to any conclusion.

10 As already Halliday 1909, p. 213 and Luria 1933, p. 215 had remarked. On the role of the religious and social importance of religious aetiology, see the introduction by Kowalzig 2007, pp. 24–32.

11 See Benefiel 2003/2004 and more generally, Marasco 1991; Schmitt Pantel 2009.

12 Nilsson 1906, pp. 369–374.

13 Plut. *Quaest. Graec.* 304 C–E: "Why is it that among the Coans the priest of Heracles at Antimacheia dons a woman's garb, and fastens upon his head a woman's head-dress before he begins the sacrifice?" Plutarch continues with the story of Heracles who had disguised himself in feminine garb in order to slip away from the protracted and exhausting fight against Antagoras and the Meropes. After the hero overcame the Meropes, he married Chalciope and donned a coloured garment. "Wherefore the priest sacrifices on the spot where it came about that the battle was fought, and bridegrooms wear feminine raiment when they welcome their brides." (transl. F. Cole Babbit)

14 Cat. 68.51; Macr. *Sat.* 3.8.2.

15 Plut. *Lyc.* 15.3.

16 Fest. p. 143 (Lindsay).

17 Nilsson 1906, p. 372: "Man sucht durch die verkleidung die bösen Mächte zu täuschen."

18 Crawley 1902, pp. 371–372.

19 Frazer 1907, pp. 428–435.

20 See the third edition of *Adonis, Attis, and Osiris* (London 1914), vol. II, p. 264.

21 van Gennep 1909, pp. 245–246, where the rituals of Cos are compared with those of the Koryak shamans.

22 Halliday 1909.

23 For a good overview, see Leitao 1995, in particular pp. 136–142, where he aptly identifies two main interpretations behind the most relevant studies of initiatory transvestism: the structuralist approach (which focuses on the structural features of the

cross-dressing performance) and the psychological interpretation (which searches for the psychological reasons for cross-dressing behaviour).

24   Cf. above all Jeanmaire 1939, pp. 153, 321; Eliade 1949, pp. 361–363; Delcourt 1958, pp. 5–27; Brelich 1969, pp. 31, 72; Calame 1977, vol. I, pp. 36–37, 258–260; Vidal-Naquet 1981, pp. 165–168; Dowden 1989, pp. 65–66; Hatzopoulos 1994, pp. 73–85; Waldner 2000, pp. 43–50 and *passim*; Ferrari 2002, pp. 118–124.

25   Dumézil 1924. The Lemnian legend was investigated by Burkert 1970 in a fundamental study of the relationship between myth and ritual, to which I refer for the collection of the sources.

26   *Her.* 53.5–7. Cf. also Myrsilos of Lesbos (FGrHist 477 F Ia = Sch. Ap. Rh. I 609): "and until now there is a day in the year when the women, because of their foul smell keep away husbands and sons".

27   Fredrich 1906, p. 77.

28   Dumézil 1924, p. 51. Similarly Halliday 1909, p. 215.

29   Hdt. IV, 146. 4: αἱ δὲ ἐπείτε ἐσῆλθον, ποιέουσι τοιάδε: πᾶσαν τὴν εἶχον ἐσθῆτα παραδοῦσαι τοῖσι ἀνδράσι αὐταὶ τὴν τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἔλαβον, οἱ δὲ Μινύαι ἐνδύντες τὴν γυναικηΐην ἐσθῆτα ἅτε γυναῖκες ἐξήισαν ἔξω, ἐκφυγόντες δὲ τρόπῳ τοιούτῳ ἵζοντο αὖτις ἐς τὸ Τηΰγετον.

30   Dumézil 1924, p. 52.

31   *Mul. Virt.* 247 B. Cf. also Plut. *Quaest. Graec.* 296 B. From Plutarch's account derives Polyaen., VII, 49. Herodotus' version is summed up by Val. Max. IV, 6, ext. 3 and Polyaen., VIII, 71 (fragmentary): see Stadter 1965, p. 21 and p. 64.

32   Hdt. V, 20.1–5:

> When Amyntas made this request and had gone his way, Alexander said to the Persians, "Sirs, you have full freedom to deal with these women, and may have intercourse with all or any of them. As to that, you may make your own decision, but now, since the hour of your rest is drawing near and I see that you are all completely drunk, allow these women to depart and wash, if this is your desire. When they have washed, wait for them to come to you again". When he had said this and the Persians had given their consent, he sent the women out and away to their apartments. Alexander then took as many beardless men as there were women, dressed them in the women's clothes, and gave them daggers . . . With that, Alexander seated each of his Macedonians next to a Persian, as though they were women, and when the Persians began to lay hands on them, they were killed by the Macedonians.
>
> (transl. A. D. Godley)

33   Xen. *Hell.* V, 4.5–7:

> Now, when they [= the polemarchs] had dined and with his zealous help had quickly become drunk, after they had long urged him [= Phillidas] to bring in their mistresses he went out and brought Melon and his followers, having dressed up three of them as matrons and the others as their attendants. . . . Then he [= Phillidas] led in the supposed courtesans and seated them one beside each man. And the agreement was, that when they were seated, they should unveil themselves and strike at once. It was in this way, then, as some tell the story, that the polemarchs were killed.
>
> (transl. C. L. Brownson)

34   So, for example, Vidal-Naquet 1981, followed, for example, by Hatzopoulos 1994, pp. 82–85 and Boulogne 2002 (see below). These three episodes are part of a group of seven stories analysed by Leitao 1999 and explained as 'initiatory narratives' on the basis of some shared narrative patterns. Leitao starts from the assumption that "these tales are primarily mythical narratives rather than either historical accounts or ritual etiologies" (p. 252). I agree with the conclusion that at present we have no evidence for ritual aetiologies (at least for the three above-mentioned cases), but I do not see why we should rule out the possibility that these tales reflect historical events. This is an

indispensable premise for Leitao (1999), who needs all of these stories to be legend and romances in order to validate his interpretation. But the reason given, that, "disguising armed youths in feminine garb is unlikely to have been tried even as few as seven times", is not sufficient for the ancient historian. Again, cross-dressing is forced into a ritualistic background and general similarities are preferred to remarkable differences.

35 In the original book in French, Vidal-Naquet confuses Plutarch's two versions, attributing the disguise to the second version, where the ceremony at Skiradion is mentioned (see Vidal-Naquet 1981, p. 166: "Par ailleurs, Plutarque raconte comment les Athéniens s'emparèrent de Salamine [alias Skiras] au moyen d'un travesti feminine, ce qui 'motivait' une cérémonie annuelle au promontoire de Skiradion"). In the English translation dating from 1998, Vidal-Naquet amends the misunderstanding: he admits that the ceremony at Skiradion derives from Plutarch's second version where the disguise does not appear (Vidal-Naquet 1998, p. 115), but he does not change his conclusion.

36 See Carlà-Uhink, Chapter 1 in this volume.

37 So tentatively Halliday 1909, p. 214, followed, for example, by Vidal-Naquet 1981, pp. 275–276; Caccamo Caltabiano 1984, p. 89; Mele 1987, pp. 156, 159; Antonelli 1994, p. 120; Boulogne 2002, p. 312; Bianchi 2015, p. 89. Several studies have been dedicated to Aristodemus: an updated bibliography can be found in Bianchi 2015.

38 Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* VII, 9.3–4:

> ἵνα δὲ μηδὲ τῶν ἄλλων πολιτῶν ἐν μηθενὶ γένηται μήτε γενναῖον μήτ᾽ ἀνδρῶδες φρόνημα, πᾶσαν ἐκθηλῦναι ταῖς ἀγωγαῖς τὴν ἐπιτρεφομένην νεότητα τῆς πόλεως ἐπεβάλετο ἀνελὼν μὲν τὰ γυμνάσια καὶ τὰς ἐνοπλίους μελέτας ἀλλάξας δὲ τὴν δίαιταν, ᾗ πρότερον οἱ παῖδες ἐχρῶντο. κομᾶν τε γὰρ τοὺς ἄρρενας ὥσπερ τὰς παρθένους ἐκέλευσεν ἐξανθιζομένους καὶ βοστρυχιζομένους καὶ κεκρυφάλοις τὰς πλοκαμίδας ἀναδοῦντας ἐνδύεσθαί τε ποικίλους καὶ ποδήρεις χιτωνίσκους, καὶ χλανιδίοις ἀμπέχεσθαι λεπτοῖς καὶ μαλακοῖς, καὶ δίαιταν ἔχειν ὑπὸ σκιαῖς· ἠκολούθουν τ᾽ αὐτοῖς εἰς τὰ διδασκαλεῖα τῶν ὀρχηστῶν καὶ αὐλητῶν καὶ τῶν παραπλησίων τούτοις μουσοκολάκων παραπορευόμεναι παιδαγωγοὶ γυναῖκες σκιάδεια καὶ ῥιπίδας κομίζουσαι, καὶ ἔλουον αὐτοὺς αὗται κτένας εἰς τὰ βαλανεῖα φέρουσαι καὶ μύρων ἀλαβάστρους καὶ κάτοπτρα.

39 Plut., *Mul. Virt.* 261 F: ἱστόρηται γάρ, ὅτι τοὺς μὲν ἄρρενας παῖδας ἤσκει κόμαις καὶ χρυσοφορεῖν, τὰς δὲ θηλείας ἠνάγκαζε περιτρόχαλα κείρεσθαι καὶ φορεῖν ἐφηβικὰς χλαμύδας κατὰ τῶν ἀνακώλων χιτωνίσκων.

40 Boulogne 2002, p. 312.

41 See Vidal-Naquet 1981, p. 274.

42 See Mele 1987, p. 156.

43 See Cozzoli 1965, p. 16. On the *tryphe* of the Greeks of Southern Italy, cf. Athen. XII, 518c–g. The hypothesis that we are dealing with an aetiological myth to explain the nickname *Malakos* is accepted by De Sanctis 1956, p. 451 note 1, Cozzoli 1965, pp. 16–17 and Berve 1967, p. 161, but rejected by Luraghi 1994, pp. 98–99 and Antonelli 1994, pp. 117–120 (who argued that *Malakos* is a Greek transcription of the Punic *mlk*).

44 Luraghi 1994, p. 100.

45 Sources and discussion in Miller 1992; 1997, pp. 198–206.

46 So Luraghi 1994, pp. 103–104.

47 Hyppias *ap.* Athen. VI, 259c–d (FGrHist 421):

> οἱ δὲ περὶ τὸν Ὀρτύγην τύραννοι ἔχοντες τὴν ἐκ Χίου δύναμιν τοὺς ἐνισταμένους αὐτῶν τοῖς πράγμασι διέφθειρον καὶ τοὺς νόμους καταλύσαντες αὐτοὶ διεῖπον τὰ κατὰ τὴν πόλιν ἐντὸς τείχους οὐδένα δεχόμενοι τῶν δημοτῶν ἔξω δὲ πρὸ τῶν πυλῶν δικαστήριον κατασκευάσαντες τὰς κρίσεις ἐποιοῦντο, ἁλουργὰ μὲν ἀμπεχόμενοι περιβόλαια καὶ χιτῶνας ἐνδεδυκότες περιπορφύρους. ὑπεδέδεντο δὲ καὶ πολυσχιδῆ

σανδάλια τοῦ θέρους, τοῦ δὲ χειμῶνος ἐν γυναικείοις ὑποδήμασι διετέλουν περιπατοῦντες κόμας τε ἔτρεφον καὶ πλοκαμῖδας ἔχειν ἤσκουν, διειλημμένοι τὰς κεφαλὰς διαδήμασι μηλίνοις καὶ πορφυροῖς· εἶχον δὲ καὶ κόσμον ὁλόχρυσον ὁμοίως ταῖς γυναιξίν.

48 Simplistically, Krenkel 1990, p. 474 concludes that Ortyges was a transvestite and his followers 'pathici'.
49 On Sardanapalus, the archetype of oriental debauchery, and on the effeminate Nanaros of Babylon, see Lenfant 2004, CXXXIII and Icks, Chapter 4 in this volume.
50 Xen. *Anab*. I, 10.2–3; Plut. *Artax*. 26.3–27.3; *Per.* 24.7. On Aspasia, see Barrigón Fuentes 2001.
51 Bagoas was a lover of Darius III and then Alexander (Curt. VI, 5. 23). On eunuchs at the Persian court and on their influence, see Briant 1996, pp. 284–288; Llewellyn-Jones 2002; Lenfant 2012.
52 Val. Max. IV, 6.ext.2:

Hypsicratea quoque regina Mitridatem coniugem suum effusis caritatis habenis amavit, propter quem praecipuum formae suae decorem in habitum virilem convertere voluptatis loco habuit: tonsis enim capillis equo se et armis adsuefecit, quo facilius laboribus et periculis eius interesset. quin etiam victum a Cn. Pompeio per efferatas gentes fugientem animo pariter et corpore infatigabili secuta est. Cuius tanta fides asperarum atque difficilium rerum Mitridati maximum solacium et iucundissimum lenimentum fuit: cum domo enim et penatibus vagari se credidit uxore simul exulante.

53 Plut. *Pomp.* 32.8:

ἐν οἷς ἦν Ὑψικράτεια παλλακὶς ἀεὶ μὲν ἀνδρώδης τις οὖσα καὶ παράτολμος· Ὑψικράτην γοῦν αὐτὴν ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐκάλει· τότε δὲ ἀνδρὸς ἔχουσα Πέρσου στολὴν καὶ ἵππον οὔτε τῷ σώματι πρὸς τὰ μήκη τῶν δρόμων ἀπηγόρευσεν οὔτε θεραπεύουσα τοῦ βασιλέως τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὸν ἵππον ἐξέκαμεν [κτλ].

54 See Kuznetsov 2007, 2008. Ed. pr. of the text: Bongard-Levine *et al*. 2006, pp. 277–278 (with mistakes, see SEG 65, 934; Gabelko 2013). For the historical commentary, see above all Bowersock 2008; Heinen 2012; Gabelko 2013 (for a full discussion and further bibliography).
55 "Hypsicrates, wife of King Mithradates Eupator Dionysos, farewell".
56 See Kuznetsov 2007, p. 242–243. Paul Bernard (*apud* Bongrad-Levine *et al*. 2006, pp. 279–288) suggested that the monument was erected by Pharnaces, while Bowersock (2008, pp. 600–601) placed it during the reign of Dynamis. The possibility that the monument was only a cenotaph is considered by Heinen 2012, p. 220.
57 After a thorough analysis of the stone, Gabelko concludes that the first line was cut later than the others and hurriedly. He suggests, interestingly enough, that this was due to the uncertainty of how to name and designate the deceased (Gabelko 2013, pp. 178–179). Savalli-Lestrade 2015, p. 204 emphasises that "la 'pointe' du texte reside précisément dans la juxtaposition d'un prénom masculine (Ὑψικράτης) et d'un nom féminin fortement connoté (γυνή)".
58 See already Ballesteros Pastor 1997, 2011. So also Heinen 2012, pp. 223–226 and Mayor 2014, pp. 339–353 (which indulges in too many flights of fantasy).
59 So Bernard, *apud* Bongrad-Levine *et al*. 2006, pp. 287–288.
60 Burkert 1970, p. 232. On the fire ceremony at Lemnos, see above (under "*Le crime des Lemniennes* and functional disguise").
61 Cf. Medda, Chapter 9 and La Guardia, Chapter 6 in this volume.

8 Cross-dressing as discourse and symbol in late antique religion and literature

Chiara O. Tommasi

Sieh mich an, Eliezer – spielt die Gestalt meiner Brust nicht schon etwas ins Weibliche hinüber? In meinen Jahren gleicht wohl die Natur sich aus. Weiber bekommen Bärte und Männer Brüste.[1]

(Thomas Mann, *Der Junge Joseph*)

Cross-dressing as reversal: introductory remarks

Moreover we drive away from the life of Christians the dances given in the names of those falsely called gods by the Greeks . . . decreeing that no man from this time forth shall be dressed as a woman, nor any woman in the garb suitable to men. Nor shall he assume comic, satyric, or tragic masks; nor may men invoke the name of the execrable Bacchus when they squeeze out the wine in the presses . . . Therefore those who in the future attempt any of these things which are written, having obtained a knowledge of them, if they be clerics we order them to be deposed, and if laymen to be cut off.

(Canon 62, Quinisext Council of 692 CE; transl. H. J. Percival)

Among the practical issues the Quinisext Council of 692 CE had to deal with was the survival of pagan practices (although by that time perhaps devoid of any trace of 'militant' heathenism), such as the aforementioned, which is recorded in Canon 62.[2] Likewise, Theodore Balsamon, when commenting on the passage, quotes Joannes Zonaras, who stated that cross-dressing practices pertaining to the Dionysian cult were still current among peasants, "unaware of what they are doing".[3]

The concerns expressed by the Fathers of the Church are easily understandable when one considers the social significance inherent in fashion.[4] Whereas gender and body have largely been exploited from a religious perspective, recent studies on ancient attire have only seldom considered its implications for religion.[5] Indeed, since a distinction between the sacred and the profane is possible by means of one's clothing (including coiffure, body art and tattoos),[6] every religion has used dress as a particular way of marking the difference between the laity and priests; or of identifying a precise hierarchical or ceremonial status; or, ultimately, of symbolizing different attitudes. Furthermore, among the ways to represent a

reversal, none is more immediate than the reversal of exterior appearance by means of a change of attire, either by wearing what each society attributed to the other gender, or to people belonging to a different social class, or even the donning of animal masks. This is, in fact, an effective device, representing a dramatic shift from the ordinary realm to the abnormal – and as such limited in time and space – in order to underline a new situation.[7] Conversely, much of the criticism directed against eccentric or luxurious attire, if not actual cross-dressing, was concerned with the implied risk of overstepping the boundaries of moderation and decency.[8]

The dynamics of cross-dressing provide an interesting case-study as far as religion is concerned.[9] Nonetheless, in spite of its being widely attested in ancient religious contexts, it is difficult to find univocal clarification of its actual meaning and significance. This may be due to the fact that the phenomenon often coincides with a simple mimicking of the opposite gender.[10] A comparative investigation that takes into account other contexts, such as shamanism or Vedic religion,[11] may be of some help in reconstructing the genesis of these practices. It is also possible to state that in many contexts, transvestism is institutionalized for only a limited number of cultic functionaries, and not in the broader society.[12] This chapter will consider cases that highlight different typologies of transvestism, with particular, although not exclusive, emphasis on late antiquity. Finally, it will be shown that the phenomenon of cross-dressing shares some intersections with concepts such as hermaphroditism, transvestism or transsexualism, which are constant objects of debate in specialist literature,[13] as well as being represented in ancient myths (e.g. that of Tiresias).[14] In classical sources, however, cross-dressing did not raise the same unease stirred up by hermaphrodites or androgynous beings, who were considered ominous.[15]

Along with a historical or cultural perspective, modern psychological inter-pretations may cast light on such phenomena, especially when divine action was directly involved in fulfilling the desire of liberation from one's biological sex in a sort of 'transhumanization'.[16] Such overlapping is particularly significant in two of the foremost examples, those of Dionysus and Attis: the ritual transvestism in their cults is the overt exteriorization of elements from their myths.[17]

Cross-dressing as initiation: Dionysus and related festivals

As the passage cited at the beginning attests, cross-dressing appears as a constant feature in the Dionysiac cult. Interestingly, Philostratus states that Apollonius[18]

> is said to have rebuked the Athenians over the Dionysia . . . When he heard that they were dancing sinuously to the call of the pipe, and in between the lofty verse and religious poetry of Orpheus were acting now as the Seasons, or the Nymphs, or as Bacchants, he undertook to denounce all this. "Stop burlesquing the men of Salamis," he said, "and many other brave souls, now buried. . . . If this is dainty dancing that leads to effeminacy, what shall I say about your trophies? . . . Where do these saffron clothes, such purple and

crimson dyes, come from? . . . A woman admiral sailed against you from Caria with Xerxes, and there was nothing effeminate about her; she had a man's clothing and arms, while you, more dainty than Xerxes's harem, are setting out to defeat yourselves, old men, young men, ephebes . . . but now perhaps they will swear to be Bacchants on their city's behalf and carry a wand, not wearing any helmet, but shamefully resplendent in 'woman-like' disguise, as Euripides says".

(Philostr. *Vit. Apoll.* 4,21; transl. C. P. Jones)

Other texts offer further confirmation of this practice,[19] whose simultaneously mythical and ritual significance is initially outlined in the agitated scene of Euripides' *Bacchae*, lines 821–846.[20] Dionysiac cross-dressing obviously points to the ambiguous bisexual nature of the young, beardless and smiling god, whose androgyny shares affinities with that of Phanes, a detail that may cast further light on the much-debated connections between Orphism and the Dionysiac cult. Cross-dressing in the Dionysiac cult has been explained either as a reflection of ancient agrarian seasonal magic; as a *rite de passage* in a liminal phase of adolescent initiations; or, ultimately, as the desire to reintegrate the primeval condition of humankind by means of contrasting polarities:[21] it is possible to surmise that all these explanations embody a part of the truth, as reflected in different ancient sources.

Leaving aside iconographic documentation,[22] cross-dressing occurred in other celebrations, such as the Athenian *Oschophoria* or the *Ithyphalloi*. However scantily attested, the names of festivals such as the *Endymatia* in Argos or the Cretan *Ekdysia* allow us to infer that the participants removed or changed clothing, probably to mark their entry into adulthood or marriage.[23] It is true that most of the aforementioned festivals – with the notable exception of the *Ithyphalloi* – have no relationship with Dionysus, yet it seems plausible that Dionysian cross-dressing reflected similar initiation patterns, especially if one bears in mind the fact that transvestism occurs during the infancy of Dionysus, when he was raised in feminine attire:[24] it seems probable that the significant passage from infancy, when children lived in the women's apartments, to adulthood was tangibly marked by a change in attire.[25] Initiatory transvestism, however, does not imply a transgression of the social order, yet it offers a confirmation of the normative aspect.[26]

Cross-dressing, along with other orgiastic patterns pertaining to Dionysian festivals, is also to be read in connection with the agrarian ceremonials, for in transitional periods, all the forces of nature must be re-awakened.[27] It is no coincidence that other Roman festivals centring on a crucial transition were also characterized by wearing a distinctive pattern of the other sex's attire. John the Lydian remarks that during the Roman feasts of Hercules Victorious, males don feminine robes, so that, after the winter's wildness and sterility, the embryonic offspring begins to be feminized.[28] Festus states that during the *Compitalia*, a winter festival celebrating the end of agrarian labours, the Salian virgins performed sacrifices adorned with the *apex*, the stick fixed to the cap of the *flamines* and of the Salian priests,

which had a particular prophylactic value.[29] Similarly, if credit may be given to a difficult passage in Varro, during the *Opiconsivia*, celebrated on 25 August, the *pontifex maximus* wore the *suffibulum*, a white cloth with a coloured band, usually reserved for the Vestal virgins.[30] Finally, an interesting testimony, whose relation with religion is still unclear, is to be found in the Syriac writer Bardaisan of Edessa, who attests that Celtic people have similar customs, which he connects to astral influences. Such a link allows us to surmise that Bardaisan is not merely relying on the cliché of Celtic homosexual behaviour that is attested in other Greek sources:

> [B]ut in the North, and in the country of the Gauls and their neighbours, such youths among them as are handsome the men take as wives, and they even have feasts on the occasion; and it is not considered by them as a disgrace, nor as a reproach, because of the law which prevails among them.[31]
>
> (Bardais. *De Fato* 35; transl. B. P. Pratten)

Cross-dressing as a reflection of emasculation: Attis and Christian eunuchs

Agrarian connections and orgiastic features can be found in another prominent example where transvestism and hermaphroditism intermingle; that is, the 'priests' of Cybele, whose emasculation practices and effeminate clothing are explained as an imitation of the story of Attis.[32] Furthermore, the fusion of Metroac and Dionysiac motifs was already present in Euripides and would subsequently be developed. The festival celebrated annually on the Palatine Hill at the end of March is a clear allegory of the passing of the seasons. Yet, after its introduction in Rome (204 BCE), the cult of the Magna Mater had been deprived of its orgiastic traits, these practices being limited to the celebration of the *Hilaria* and reserved for non-citizen adherents.[33] Many sources variously record the bizarre attire of the devotees, the "gracious feminine shawl", often in a saffron hue, along with headgear such as the *mitra* or the *tiara*, jewels, and faces whitened by means of make-up.[34] Emasculated priests are attested to elsewhere in the worship of fertility divinities, the phenomenon being explained either as a desire to imitate the goddess, or as a requirement of chastity made of sacred ministers.[35]

Firmicus Maternus's pamphlet against pagan cults, where he charges some priests with effeminacy and prostitution, provides an interesting example, for he is referring to the devotees of the goddess Caelestis; however, there is nothing testifying to castrated priests in the service of Caelestis, and therefore Firmicus probably had in mind the worship of Cybele. In fact, Firmicus does not mention emasculation and is probably employing the common derogatory charge of homosexuality.[36] Moreover, some of his expressions come very close to the contemptuous description of the catamite priests of the Syrian Goddess in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, who likewise epilate themselves and wear saffron tunics:[37]

> Tell me: is this a god, who demands a woman in place of a man, the chorus of whose priests cannot serve him unless by feminizing their faces, epilating their

skin and soiling their manly sex with a womanish attire? In their very temples can be seen deplorable mockery before a moaning crowd, men taking the part of women, revealing with boastful ostentation this ignominy of impure and unchaste bodies . . . They wear effeminately nursed hair and dress in soft clothes . . . Then, having made themselves alien to masculinity, swept up by playing flutes, they call their Goddess to fill them with an unholy spirit so as to seemingly predict the future to idle men. What sort of monstrous and unnatural thing is this? They say they are not men, and indeed they aren't. They want to pass as women, but whatever the nature of their bodies is, it tells a different story.

(Firm. *De err.* 4,2; transl. C. A. Forbes)

Emasculated priests were considered as *monstra*, and mocked, especially in Roman milieus, where practices of self-mutilation were forbidden to citizens.[38] At the same time, in the ascetic circles of late antiquity, the myth of Attis became a favoured one.[39] The Naassenes explain Attis as the prototype of the primordial man, devoid of any sexual differentiation, and of the soul craving to rejoin its heavenly homeland.[40] Likewise, Julian and Salustius consider him a generative god.[41]

Moreover, auto-castration practices also occur among Christians, as a result of an exceedingly literal exegesis of Matth. 19,12. Apart the famed example of Origen, some passages in Justin,[42] the *Acta Iohannis*[43] and Basil of Ancyra[44] suggest that other men pursued such an extreme form of asceticism; this practice, officially condemned at the Council of Nicaea,[45] is closely linked to heresy and considered sinister.[46] Basil explicitly mentions the risk of castrated men who play the role of eunuchs, but do not suffer a total loss of sexual desire, therefore acknowledging that male and female cohabitation in monasteries was to be avoided.[47] Whereas these cases may be considered extreme and isolated, Christian texts, on the other hand, are almost exclusively concerned with asceticism or virginity, often pursuing a genderless ideal or redefining the paradigms of manliness and womanhood.[48] For the present inquiry, it is worth mentioning both the cases of eunuch saints (Nereus and Achilleus, Largus and Smaragdus, Protus and Hyacinth, Calocerus and Parthenius, Tigrius and Indes, Ignatius the Younger, to mention only a few),[49] and the Passion of the two military saints Sergius and Bacchus, which, although set during the reign of Galerius, actually dates from decades later. The text presents an account of the punishment meted out to the two soldiers as a result of their refusal to celebrate a pagan sacrifice. Their military garb is removed and, after being forced to dress as women, they are paraded to the palace. This punishment, which has been related to late antiquity laws against homosexuals, finds a parallel in an episode from the life of Julian, when he punished deserters by compelling them to wear feminine attire.[50]

Cross-dressing as representation of ascetic longing

The opposite pattern, namely women renouncing their feminine nature, often by means of cross-dressing, in order to pursue ascetic goals, is much more widespread. As in the case of the emasculated saints, the basic idea is that the true ascetic is

genderless. Moreover, given the perception of eunuchs as liminal figures, transvestite female saints are often mistaken for eunuchs.[51] The ascetic theme intertwines with that of the 'manly woman', who overcomes the feebleness of her sex to achieve a bolder and stronger nature,[52] while being expected to suppress the demonic allure of her seductive powers. Both these motifs are susceptible to being read as an allegory of the re-attainment of humankind's bisexual condition before the Fall, and in some respects pave the way for the idea of an androgynous divinity. Such a representation has found great favour with philosophical and religious interpretations.[53] Besides the two celebrated *logia* (22 and 114) in the strongly ascetic *Gospel of Thomas*,[54] the idea occurs frequently in the majority of Gnostic systems. It may be of interest that even Catholic authors sometimes employ the image of an androgynous Christ,[55] as well as the iconography of a young, beardless Christ.[56]

This underlying belief also finds a counterpart in terrestrial reality, where it is rendered in the more concrete imagery of cross-dressing. Two figures, the Greek Thecla and the Roman Perpetua, are considered to be paradigmatically representative of this attitude.[57] In the *Passio Perpetuae*, the motif appears in an oneiric form, namely when Perpetua refers to the vision she had on the eve of her martyrdom: transformed into a man, she eventually overcomes a wicked Egyptian warrior – a scene infused with subtle ambiguity, not only because it refers to a dream, but also because of its sexual elusiveness, which even crosses the boundaries between humanity and bestiality, insofar as the darkly bestial Egyptian monster, revolving like a snake in the sand, patently represents the Adversary.[58] The idea of becoming male involves both sexes and assimilates the condition of Perpetua to that of the primordial Adam.[59]

Like Perpetua, Thecla of Iconium gradually loses her connotations as a real-life figure, becoming the prototype for motifs that recur in female hagiography. Attention should be paid to the episode in which the girl abandons her house in order to reach the Apostle Paul: she cuts off her hair and flees disguised as a man.[60] The passage from the *Acta Pauli* represents the first example of an enormous number of Christian narratives in which female ascetics dismiss feminine adornments and wear masculine attire.[61] Leaving aside any chronological and redaction issues, which are constant in this type of literature and often result in different versions, duplications or repetitions, it has been calculated that the theme recurs in more than 30 legends, from the fifth to the seventh century CE. On a first, basic, level, the motif finds its roots in the Greek novel (rather than being a relic of earlier Greek cults, like the one of the bearded Aphrodite, or that of Artemis),[62] as do other features more fanciful than real, which could be appealing for readers fond of intrigue and complicated plots.[63] Early Christian literature enhances a purely entertaining theme by superimposing on it an educational function that emphasizes virginity.

Cross-dressing as literary device: the female transvestite saints

The story of Pelagia, which arose in the Syro-Palestinian milieu during the fifth century CE, functions as a model for the following hagiographies. Not wishing to

be identified with her past life, the former dancer Pelagia of Antioch fled in male attire and found refuge on Mount Olivet, where she decided to live as a man, becoming admired for her asceticism. Her sex, however, was revealed only after her death. This legend is in all probability the result of a conflation between the story of an unnamed converted harlot, praised as an example by John Chrysostom,[64] and a 15-year-old virgin called Pelagia, martyred under Diocletian, who is celebrated in another homily by the same Chrysostom and also by Ambrose:[65] that confusion arose between these saints is also supported by the fact that their feasts fall on the same day, 8 October.

Among the various legends that decline the theme of the female transvestite saint, the story of Eugenia (set in Egypt under the reign of Commodus) is particularly interesting: she also is the offspring of a noble pagan family, who converts to Christianity after reading the adventures of Thecla, subsequently abandoning her family, and seeking refuge in the male monastery under Helenus (or Helias). A dream reveals the truth to Helenus, but he lets the young woman live in the monastery, under the name of Eugene, where she acquires the fame of sanctity. The beauty of the putative 'Eugene' attracts in vain the lascivious desires of a woman named Melanthia, who falsely charges 'him' with harassment (a variation on the Potiphar's wife motif).[66] This has taken place during anti-Christian persecution and Eugene is taken before the magistrate: to save her life, and because the judge also happens to be her father, Eugenia reveals her real nature. Admiring her firmness, Eugenia's family embraces Christianity: her father is appointed bishop, but has to face imperial hostility and is eventually executed, as are Eugenia and her companions, who, in the meantime, had repaired to Rome.

The same theme variously recurs in the Egyptian legend of Saint Marina or (in other sources) Margaret,[67] who becomes the abbot of a male monastery, but is charged with having made a nun pregnant, and is condemned to death. Only the disclosure of her true biological sex allows her to demonstrate her innocence. Similarly, the complicated legend of Saint Matrona showcases the same plot, but for the fact that the pregnant accuser is the daughter of an innkeeper who had an illicit affair with a soldier and that Matrona's innocence is discovered only after her death.

Sometimes the patterns are varied or dramatized for the sake of the narrative, as in the case of Anastasia, who seeks refuge in a monastery near Alexandria to avoid the emperor Justinian's insistent courtship and Theodora's jealousy. There she lives as a eunuch, calling herself Anastasius, and in enforced chastity, survives. Similar vicissitudes indeed appear (without any pretension to being exhaustive) in the stories of other saints such as an homonymous Saint Anastasia, as well as Apollinaria, Athanasia, Susanna, Theodora, and Euphrosyne; the latter, in order to escape a forced marriage, takes refuge in a monastery, disguised as the eunuch Ysmaragdus, until she eventually reveals her true identity to her dying father.[68]

It seems that the desert of Scetis was where such stories flourished, because they manifest the tension between male monastic milieus and heroic examples of women's piety that serve as a sort of atonement for alleged female guilt. However, these legends soon crossed the sea and reached the Western world, lasting throughout the Middle Ages.[69]

Many scholars have tried to present a taxonomy of these different legends and their recurrent patterns. Stephen Davis, in particular, outlines five models underlying these stories: the lives of earlier transvestite saints (Thecla); the lives of holy men (Saint Antony); the late antique role of eunuchs; the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife; early Christian discourse on the female body.[70] As far as the last of these is concerned, on the one hand, it is undoubtedly true that the 'transvestite saint' legends subvert bipolar gender categories; but on the other, in its pursuit of sameness (in the wake of Gal. 3,28), this discourse necessarily assumes the prior existence of difference. Although the encratite nuance displayed in Thecla's story is not as radical as it was once held to be, the *Acta Pauli* seem to reflect ascetic tendencies attested to in Pauline literature: these would become more widespread in the second or third century CE, especially among movements such as Montanism or Gnosticism. The *Passio Perpetuae* has been connected to Montanist milieus, and the figure of Thecla enjoyed support from heterodox currents that insisted on celibacy and asceticism.[71]

Cross-dressing between norm and exception: some caveats

As with the case of eunuchs, the Great Church, therefore, felt the exigency of conveying these extravagant forms of asceticism in more normal ones. This concern is reflected in the thirteenth canon of the Council of Gangra[72] and in Jerome's brilliant taunts against those over-ascetic women who emaciate their bodies by exhibitionist fasting and "change their garb and assume the mien of men, being ashamed of being what they were born to be – women. They cut off their hair and are not ashamed to look like eunuchs".[73]

At the same time, Deuteronomy's prohibition of cross-dressing,[74] whose apparent oblivion has struck many commentators of the lives of transvestite saints, is reasserted by Ambrose in his fifteenth letter,[75] with statements that come very close to those of Jerome; namely, the incongruity of perverting nature. Moreover, if a certain indulgence is accorded to women dressing in the fashion of men, because they pursue the ideal of the *mulier virilis*,[76] men who degrade themselves in womanish attire are an object of blame and reproach: while accusing pagan (i.e. counterfeit) cultic practices of cross-dressing (i.e. counterfeiting one's true nature), Ambrose's ultimate aim is a new Christian formulation of the gender paradigms. It may be worth adding that Ambrose probably targeted "men who seek the presbyterate and the diaconate simply that they may be able to see women with less restraint". These are stigmatized by Jerome in the aforementioned *Epistle 22* – an issue that comes close to that of the alleged eunuchs and the *virgines subintroductae*:

> such men think of nothing but their dress; they use perfumes freely, and see that there are no creases in their leather shoes. Their curling hair shows traces of the tongs; their fingers glisten with rings; they walk on tiptoe across a damp road, not to splash their feet. When you see men acting in this way, think of them rather as bridegrooms than as clergymen.
>
> (Jerome, *Ep.* 22,28; transl. N. A. Fremantle)

Notwithstanding the fact that female cross-dressing was in theory forbidden by the mediaeval church (also under the influence of German laws),[77] it seems that in practice, the prohibition did not affect daily life, provided it took certain socially desirable forms and was circumscribed. In addition, whereas female-to-male cross-dressing was tolerated in virtue of the attempt to become man-like, male-to-female transvestism was regarded negatively, either because it was considered to express a desire to have easier access to women for sexual purposes, or because it implied a loss of virility.[78]

Conversely, by means of transforming these motifs into 'fiction', and offering a literary escape for ascetic goals, the Church tried to balance excess. It should be observed, however, that cross-dressing actually occurred in some Egyptian monasteries[79] and similar episodes are reported in Western milieus as well, as may be inferred from some passages in Gregory of Tours (the story of Papula).[80]

Considered as a "highly controversial sign of female piety",[81] "transvestite disguise is assumed as a kind of impenetrable panoply for preserving inviolate and immaculate virginity for Christ",[82] being at the same time an exterior sign of the rupture with the secular world. These stories are twofold in nature and purpose. Surely the emphasis is placed on the positive vision of virginity, insofar as it represents a model of sanctity to be imitated; yet at the same time, it paves the way for interpretations that emphasize the autonomous role of women, where renouncing sex means eluding social constrictions.[83] However, if it is exaggerated or anachronistic to state that cross-dressing was a way to emancipate women, likewise is it erroneous to state that this deprived them of their own feminine individuality.[84] Rather, these stories represent "moments of slippage" or "spaces where the self-evidence of gender conventions and the relationships for which they were foundational might have been thought otherwise".[85] As already observed by Bullough, the woman dons male clothing at a time when she is undergoing a crisis in her life, and transvestism seems to denote a breaking with her former existence.[86] It is perhaps possible to parallel the kernel of all these legends with the aforementioned theory of initiatory cross-dressing attested to in ancient Greece and Rome.

Moreover, in expressing at the same time the roles of virgin, mother and mystic, the transvestite saint represents a theological symbol of 'paradox', because the process of sanctification takes place in two stages: they pursue redemption in the guise of men, but are always granted sainthood as women. Their final recognition and the accent placed on their exposed body, which has metamorphosed from a symbol of perdition into one of purity,[87] is thus particularly significant.

As a final corollary, it may be observed that the reshaping of gender paradigms influenced by early Christianity, which challenged the expected ideals of the Graeco-Roman world by means of an insistence on the spiritual rather than corporeal aspects, along with the ascetic search for a sexless ideal, also influenced sartorial prescriptions and their interpretations.[88] Nevertheless, a paradoxical relic of such an attitude can perhaps be perceived over the course of the centuries that followed, and indeed even today: namely in the ambiguous statute of Christian religious clothes, and in particular that regulating priestly frocks.[89]

Notes

 1 The sentence is taken from one of the final chapters of Thomas Mann's *Der Junge Joseph*, when Jacob contemplates the transformation of his body because of old age and concludes that this testifies to the bisexual nature of God. In addition, Mann consistently shows a penchant for the theme of doubleness/androgyny, which recurs in the figure of Clawdia (*Der Zauberberg*) and, most of all, in that of Felix Krull, the eponymous 'hermetic' hero of his last, unfinished, novel.
 2 Translation by H. J. Percival (Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, second series vol. 14).
 3 PG 137,726, cited by Casadio (1999), p. 120. At the beginning, Balsamon mentions John Skylitzes' *History*, where a patriarch named Theophylaktos is attacked for having introduced "evil" into religious celebrations: are we to identify – as Kaldellis (2012), p. 200 inclines to do – the otherwise unknown Theophylaktos with the homonymous Archbishop of Ochrida, author of an apology for eunuchs? The mention of Theophylaktos, however, has no relation with the subsequent discussion of transvestism.
 4 Barthes (1967); Carter (2003).
 5 With the exception of Botta (2009); Upson Saia (2011); Schrenk *et al*. (2012); Upson Saia *et al*. (2014).
 6 Crawley (1931); Arthur (1999; 2000). Entwistle (2000) and Saggioro (2007) provide useful surveys.
 7 See the seminal essay of Versnel (1993); recently, Fugger (2013).
 8 Tracy (1976); Upson Saia (2011), pp. 31, 47; Raggi, Chapter 2 in the present volume. Doerfler (2014) notes that Tertullian's *De Pallio*, 4, equates ostentation, subversion of nature and cross-dressing.
 9 For the definition and delimitation of cross-dressing and related phenomena, we benefited in particular from the work of Garber (1992); and of Bullough and Bullough (1993), who state (p. x) that cross-dressing was not directly related to homosexuality until the eighteenth century. See also the distinction put forward by Gamman and Makinen (1994), namely that cross-dressing does not possess the same sexual implication of transvestism.
10 Vedeler (2008), p. 462, who in turn quotes King (1993), and distinguishes different aspects of transvestism, while also emphasizing that, except for primary transsexuals (whose interest is not in dressing as the opposite sex, but in physically being the opposite sex), a strong cultural element is central to the behaviour.
11 Bleibtreu-Ehrenberg (1970); Gallini (1963), p. 220 mentions the Scythian 'shamans' described by Herodotus (1,105; 4,67) credited with having a "feminine spirit". Doniger O' Flaherty (1973, Chapter 9; also Doniger 1999, Chapters 5 and 6) deals with Hindu mythology. Central Asian shamans can in some respects be paralleled to North American *berdaches*; see also the Indian *hijras*, on which Nanda (1990) and Reddy (2006).
12 Vedeler (2008), p. 467.
13 Stoller (1975). As to our knowledge, the first modern theorist to have linked transvestism with same-sex attraction was Hirschfeld (1910). Further more recent references include Valdes (1995); Ekins and King (1996); Stryker and Whittle (2006); Valentine (2007). Herdt (1994) also takes into account influential theorists like Devereux, Garfinkel and Foucault. Gleason (1990) considers examples derived from ancient physiognomic and medical literature.
14 Brisson (1976).
15 Plin., *Nat. Hist.* 7,4; 31,12.
16 Delcourt (1958), Eliade (1962), Zolla (1981), Brisson (1997).
17 Roscoe (1996), p. 203; Casadio (2003).
18 *Vit. Apoll.* 4,21 (transl. C. P. Jones [2005]).
19 See also Philostr. Min., *Imag.* 1,2; Ael. Arist., 41,9 (ed. Keil). Conversely, the statement in Luc., *Calumn.* 16 is devoid of any religious meaning.

20 For this much-celebrated passage, cf. Farnell (1909), pp. 160–161; Gallini (1963); Seaford (1981); Bremmer (1992); Csapo (1997), p. 280; Casadio (1999), pp. 116–121; Gherchanoc (2003/2004). Di Benedetto (2004), pp. 41–43, suggests that the theatrical model is to be found in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousai* (on which see also Medda, Chapter 9 in this volume).

21 Casadio (1999), pp. 117–119, summarizing the different scholarly interpretations.

22 Frontisi-Ducroux and Lissarague (1983); Miller (1999).

23 Nicander, *frag.* 45 (Schneider/Gow). Leitao (1995) offers the most detailed analysis of the festival, with sound considerations on some excesses put forward in the psychological explanations. See also La Guardia, Chapter 6 in this volume.

24 Apollod., 3,4,3; Sen., *Oed.* 418–423; Nonn., *Dion.* 14,159–167. This evidence has been compared with similar myths referring to Theseus, Iphigenia, Caineus and Achilles, as well as to another ephebic ritual recorded in Pausanias (8,48): Bremmer (1992; 2015).

25 A striking parallel occurs in the *Hong Lou Meng*, the famous eighteenth-century Chinese novel, where during his youth Baoyu lives in the female apartments dressed as a woman.

26 Gherchanoc (2003/2004), p. 774.

27 Porphyry, *Simul.* 7,14 and Lyd., *Mens.* 4,160 seem to support the agrarian interpretation, equating Attis, Adonis and Dionysus.

28 Lyd., *Mens.* 4,67.

29 Fest. 439 (ed. Lindsay).

30 Varr., *Ling. Lat.* 6,21, together with Fest. 474 L. Versnel (1993), p. 188 persuasively suggests interpreting the passage as ritual cross-dressing.

31 *De Fato* 35, translated by B. P. Pratten (from Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 8), together with the commentary by Hofeneder (2011), pp. 161–164.

32 Roscoe (1996), p. 219, offers an interesting comparison with the Sumerian myth of Ishtar, herself a transvestite. See also Carlà-Uhink, Chapter 1 in this volume.

33 The 'official' cult of the Mater, with its Roman priestly collegium, took place in April. Iulius Obsequens, 44, mentions a slave of a Roman consul, who after emasculating himself in the service of the Magna Mater was exiled from Rome.

34 Varr., *Sat.* 120; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 2,19; Euseb., *Praep. Ev.* 2,8; Iuv., 2,83–98; Arn., 5,17; Aug., *Civ. Dei* 7,26.

35 Nock (1925), p. 28 records the ancient etymology of *castus* from *castrare* (Isid., *Orig.* 10,33).

36 Parker (1997).

37 Firm., *De err.* 4,2, on which see Turcan (1982), p. 199.

38 Caner (1997), p. 398. For eunuchs in late antique society, see Ringrose (2003).

39 Sfameni Gasparro (1981); Turcan (1997).

40 Hipp., *Ref.* 5, 7,13–15.

41 Iul., *In Matr. Deor.* 161c; Sal., 4,2,7.

42 *Apol.* 1,29.

43 *Act. Ioh.* 53–54.

44 *De Virg.* 61, PG 30,793A.

45 Canon 1; see also *Apostol. Const* (end of the fourth century CE), canons 22–24.

46 Clem., *Strom.* 3,1,1,2–4; Epiph., *Panar.* 58 (on the otherwise unknown Valesians); Bas. Ancyr., *De Virg.* 62, PG 30,797A.

47 Caner (1997), p. 412.

48 Kuefler (2001), p. 221.

49 Tougher (2004).

50 Zos., *Hist. Nov.* 3,3,4–5, a reference highlighted by Woods (1997), who concludes that the legend is far-fetched and, in many instances, chronologically inconsistent, although the likely source of actual inspiration may be found in the passion of Iuventinus and Maximinus. In Chapter 1 of this volume, Carlà-Uhink adds some information indicating how this usage derives from a law supposedly attributed to Carondas of Catania.

51 Davis (2002), p. 22.
52 Mattioli (1983); Mazzucco (1989); Aspergren-Bjerre (1990).
53 Tommasi Moreschini (1998; 2001). Corbeill (2015), Chapters 4 and 5.
54 The passage obviously relies on the Pauline statement of Gal. 3,28: see Meeks (1964); Buckley (1985); Arai (1993).
55 Mar. Vict., *adv. Ar.* 1,51; Epiph., *Pan.* 49,1 describes the vision experienced by a Montanist prophetess, according to whom "Christ appeared to her in a white robe and in the form of a woman". The female or maternal imagery is developed at greater length in the *Odes of Solomon* (second century CE), especially in the nineteenth ode, which states

> the Son is the cup, and the Father is He who was milked; and the Holy Spirit is She who milked Him; Because His breasts were full, and it was undesirable that His milk should be ineffectually released. The Holy Spirit opened Her bosom, and mixed the milk of the two breasts of the Father.

Passage quoted from and discussed by Radford Ruether (2005), pp. 132–134; and more generally, Bynum (1982).
56 Matthews (1997); Davis (2002), p. 35.
57 Burrett McInnerey (2003), Chapter 1.
58 10,6–14.
59 Castelli (1991).
60 Chapters 25 and 40, respectively.
61 In recent times, the subject has been the object of burgeoning attention: see Anson (1974), Bullough (1974), Patlagean (1976), Petropoulos (1995), Davis (2002), Abdalla (2003), Grayson (2009), Giannarelli (2010), Upson Saia (2011), Chapter 4, together with Hotchkiss (1996) and Lubinsky (2013).
62 As hypothesized by Usener (1879), a thesis notoriously opposed by Delehaye (1905), pp. 231–233. Mangogna (2006), p. 148, observes that knee-length dresses are often associated with Artemis (Charit., 6,6,5; Ach. Tat., 8,12,1), remarking that some manuscripts mention a possible consecration to Artemis on the part of Thecla.
63 Indeed, in Greek novels, the female characters often disguise themselves as men, when they are forced to separate from their lovers and, understandably, wish to avoid taking undue risks and have a safe journey: Ach. Tat., 5,17,3; 19,2; Heliod., 5,8; 6,10.
64 *Hom. 67 in Matth.*, PG 58,636–637.
65 PG 50,579–584; Ambr., *Virg.* 3,33 and *Ep.* 2,7,36. There is also a third Pelagia (from Tarsus), who, likewise, is celebrated on 8 October.
66 Davis (2002), p. 25, who also puts forward some interesting (although, perhaps, too subtle) observations about the figure of Joseph, whose extraordinary beauty was sometimes explicitly characterized as feminine.
67 In this case too, a conflation occurs between two martyrs from Antioch (Marina, who lived in Antioch of Pisidia, whose feast falls on 17 July; and Margaret, from Syriac Antioch, who is celebrated on 20 July) and the transvestite saint called Margaret, who is celebrated on 8 October.
68 All these vicissitudes are referred in the *Acta Sanctorum*, respectively, 10 March (Anastasia); 9 October (Athanasia of Antioch); 5 January (Apollinaria); 6 September (Susanna); 11 September (Theodora); 11 February (Euphrosyne).
69 In addition, we have also to reckon with the similar pattern of the bearded saints, such as Saint Galla and Saint Paula of Avila: Gulley (2014). It is worth briefly recalling the mediaeval developments of the theme, such as the stories of Saint Wilgefortis/ Uncumber, or that of the twelfth-century CE virgin Hildegund (Leclercq [2006]), not to mention Joan of Arc or the She-Pope Joan.
70 Davis (2002), p. 29: the 'deconstruction' of the female body also affects the very signs of femininity (breasts that become "shrunken with ascetic practices" or the drying up of the menstrual flow).

71 Davis (2001), p. 99, on a Manichean Psalm Book that mentions Thecla; see also August., *Contra Faustum* 30,4; *Epistula Titi* p. 55,304 (ed. De Bruyne).

72 "If any woman, under pretence of asceticism, shall change her apparel and, instead of a woman's accustomed clothing, shall put on that of a man, let her be anathema." This passage, which also became a civil sanction about 40 years later (*Cod. Theod.* 16,2,27,1) can be compared to the information on a sect led by Eustathius of Sebaste, where celibacy was prescribed and women cut their hair short: Upson Saia (2011), p. 70.

73 *Ep.* 22,27 (transl. by N. A. Fremantle in Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, second series vol. 6).

74 *Deut.* 22,5, on which see Vedeler (2008) and Sacher Fox (2009), who stress how Deuteronomy is consciously differentiating Israel from its Middle Eastern neighbours, particularly in regard to cultic transvestism.

75 See Doerfler (2014).

76 In this context, it is important to discuss *De Virginibus* (2,26–33), the story of a Christian woman condemned to being exposed in a brothel, but saved by a merciful soldier who exchanges his clothes with her, before they are discovered and martyred: by wearing the sword, shield and cuirass, she becomes a true soldier of Christ.

77 Bullough and Bullough (1993), p. 46, quoting *Grágás* (early twelfth century), pp. 203–204.

78 Bullough (1974), pp. 1382, 1391; Vedeler (2008), pp. 464, 473. In this sense, Augustine's reproach in the *De opere monachorum*, of some Carthaginian long-haired wandering monks (probably belonging to a sect like the Messalians?), is easily explicable, see Upson Saia (2011), p. 80. Gregory of Tours (10,15) describes how during a revolt that distressed Radegunde's convent, the abbess was charged with keeping a transvestite male in the convent and pretending he was a woman. In fact, this person was actually a male, who had been emasculated as a consequence of disease. As in the case of the eunuchs denounced by Basil of Ancyra, the story may point to the implication that if a man lives in a nunnery, his secret purpose is to gain sexual satisfaction from the nuns. On this passage, see Partner (1993).

79 Davis (2001), p. 35.

80 *Gloria Confessorum* 16, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum* 1,2,306, on which see Barcellona (2003).

81 Castelli (1991), p. 44.

82 Anson (1974), p. 31.

83 Patlagean (1976).

84 Hotchkiss (1996), p. 13.

85 Castelli (1991) compares these saints to the Vestal virgins and their ambiguous statute, discussed by Beard (1980); quoted passages are from Castelli (1991) p. 47.

86 Bullough (1974), p. 1391.

87 Ashbrook Harvey (1990), p. 51.

88 Upson Saia (2011), p. 32.

89 Garber (1992), p. 210, together with the whole of Chapter 9.

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Part III

Transgender as subversive literary discourse

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9 "O saffron robe, to what pass have you brought me!"

Cross-dressing and theatrical illusion in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*

Enrico Medda

For anybody interested in the forms of transvestism documented in Greek culture in the fifth century BCE, *Thesmophoriazusae* (or *The Women at the Thesmophoria*) by Aristophanes (staged in 411 BCE) represents a cornerstone, if only because as many as four male characters in this play appear on stage in female costumes. The underlying reason for the interest the comedy arouses in this sense resides in the complex interaction – amounting almost to a short circuit – it frames among the different root causes to which transvestism could be ascribed in the Athens of that time. The first two are closely linked: on the one hand, there is the ritual significance of transvestism, present with various functions within many cults;[1] while on the other, there is the theatrical significance of all this, which in its turn leads to the religious dimension from which the first forms of tragedy and comedy are descended, with forms of disguise that enabled actors to take on 'other' identities in the context of the Dionysian cult. By his very nature, the Dionysian actor has the chance to change his identity by means of his costume and mask, a process that necessarily also entails – and this is the third important root that the comedian draws on in this comedy – the overcoming of sexual diversity. In the Athens of the fifth century BCE, the profession of actor was in fact off-limits to women and all the female characters were played by men. This underlying lack of verisimilitude, obviously upheld by theatrical convention, was exacerbated in Old Comedy on account of the grotesquely exaggerated representation of male and female features that characterised the costumes: the women's had copious padding for the stomach, buttocks and enormous breasts, while the men's had an obtrusively large leather phallus.[2]

In this comedy, Aristophanes inhabits the terrain with great acumen, presenting 'real' women (in actual fact, male comic actors attired in feminine costumes) juxtaposed with 'fake' women (that is, male comic actors playing male characters who, in the context of the comic simulation, for various reasons decide to wear feminine clothes). But what turns the play into a real *tour de force* of variations on the theme of disguise is the author's decision to graft a second level of theatrical simulation of a tragic nature onto the first level of comedy, which contributes to creating an exceedingly fertile terrain for a virtuoso incursion into the realm of

transvestism and gender ambiguity, along with the implications that such practices take on in relation to the theatrical experience.

It is necessary to focus first of all on some decisive choices made by Aristophanes in preparation for this project:

1   the inclusion among the characters of a man of the theatre who was a contemporary of his, Euripides;
2   the choice, among the three major tragedians, of the one who on several occasions had been criticised for creating female characters who were excessively passionate and 'immoral' (such as Phaedra, Medea, Stheneboea, Melanippe), thus coming across, in the eyes of many citizens, as a threat to the rigid separation of roles between men and women prevalent in Athenian society;
3   setting the action within a female community preparing for a ritual celebration, the feast of the two goddesses Demeter and Persephone, which was off-limits to men, and attributing a plan of vendetta against Euripides to the women. This forces the tragic poet, who wishes to get into the celebrations for the feast in order to pick up information, to make use of an emissary (Inlaw) who will have to disguise his sexual identity;[3]
4   making the protagonist (Inlaw) face a series of difficulties deriving from the change of sex, which will necessitate the use of stratagems on his part that are typical of the theatre of Euripides;
5   giving Euripides an active role as a director and actor in two of the second-degree tragic *mise-en-scènes* (thus creating an admirable meta-theatrical game, whereby a comic actor plays a tragic author who, within the framework of the comic fiction, decides to play the tragic actor by impersonating some of his own characters in front of the intra-dramatic public of the comic characters and the extra-dramatic one of the Athenian citizens present in the theatre).

In this system of Russian matryoshkas, disguise plays a crucial role. The protagonist, an elderly male, undergoes a transformation on stage into a woman, for which Aristophanes actually creates the neologism γυναίκισις (*Thesm.* 863: 'womanisation'). This allows him to enter the context of the ritual, which was off-limits to men, by setting up a conflicting situation that is full of comic potential, and which soon explodes. But this was still not enough for Aristophanes' over-flowing creativity. To the conflict between the sexes, he also adds two 'intermediary' characters in feminine attire, Agathon and Cleisthenes, both real Athenians well known to the audience for their effeminate demeanour;[4] and it is no coincidence that one of the two, Agathon, is also a celebrated author of the theatre from the younger generation:[5] the blending of sexual confusion and the theatrical ambience could not be deeper.

Thus, in *The Women at the Thesmophoria*, the use of feminine attire by a male character is presented in three ways: as the 'legitimate' attire of a man who aspires to be as close as possible to women (*Thesm.* 574–576); as a disguise that is of use in carrying out a deception; and finally – at the second level of dramatic fiction –

as the tragic feminine costume worn by Inlaw, who had already worn a feminine comic costume, which in its turn had covered the masculine costume beneath.

The play on disguise takes up the entire prologue of the comedy (lines 1–278), in which Euripides, who is looking for someone who might manage to sneak into the women's feast in order to uncover their plans for vendetta, heads to Agathon's house accompanied by Inlaw. Agathon, a high-profile personage in the Athens of that time, whose sexual behaviour was familiar to the audience, obviously represented a legitimate target for Aristophanes' satire. But it is not on the personal level that the playwright intends to attack: at the centre of the comic game lies not the person of the poet, but the profession he has espoused as the author of tragedies,[6] the characteristics of which offer the comic poet an opportunity to pillory the controversial current of 'new music' to which Euripides was also very close.

The young poet leaves his house at line 101, languidly singing elegant verses of such overwhelming femininity that they even seem capable of sexually arousing Inlaw (cf. lines 130–133); above all, however, he appears on stage attired in feminine garb and with a clearly theatrical demeanour, reclining on a truckle bed or, as others maintain, on an apparatus called *ekkuklēma*, like the tragic heroines in the throes of passion.[7] First of all it must be observed that Aristophanes does not here intend to present the character as if he were got up in a feminine tragic costume; he is simply presented as a man dressed like a woman. In fact, the poet is wearing a κροκωτός, the saffron robe that, in Aristophanes' comedies, is often considered to be particularly seductive,[8] and which also played an important role in some rites such as the *Arkteia* at Brauron, where it was worn by young girls facing the transition from childhood to puberty;[9] he is also wearing a κεκρύφαλος, a broad ribbon for the hair whose form we are familiar with from numerous testimonies from vase painting, and a στρόφιος, the wide band used by women to bind the chest. These details of attire are associated with a physical appearance tending to the feminine, to which had to correspond a mask that clearly connoted this sense. Euripides, in fact, describes Agathon as being εὐπρόσωπος, λευκός, ἐξυρημένος, γυναικόφωνος, ἁπαλός, εὐπρεπὴς ἰδεῖν ("of comely face, fair complexioned, shaven, with a feminine voice, soft and pleasant to behold", lines 191–192). These are the features that ancient Athenians typically associated with women, who lived for the most part confined within the domestic ambience, juxtaposing them with the rough, bearded and tanned appearance of the adult male, to whom belonged the public arena.

Agathon therefore introduces at the very beginning of the play an unsettling presentation of gender, towards which the reaction of many of those present in the audience must have been similar to that shown by Inlaw on stage. Seeing the poet attired in this manner, Inlaw first snaps, "I see no man here, I see Cyrene" (that is, a notorious prostitute, lines 97–98); then, after Agathon has delivered himself of a virtuoso monody in which he simultaneously plays the part of the female chorus and the coryphaeus, Inlaw attacks him in a long tirade (lines 130–145) for the startling mix of masculine and feminine elements that distinguish his person. From what strange and exotic country does this damsel hail (ποδαπὸς ὁ γύννις;

line 136)? What has the κροκωτός got to do with the βάρβιτος? Or the κεκρύφαλος with the lyre? Or the mirror with the sword? In Inlaw's eyes, Agathon is not a man (and here Aristophanes even uses the vulgar jibe καὶ ποῦ πέος; line 142), but neither is he a woman ("then, where are your breasts?", line 143).

These jibes offer important indications about the appearance of this character on stage,[10] and they clarify that he is dressed like a woman, but does not intend by this to mask the fact that he belongs to the male sex. Aristophanes indeed wishes to present Agathon as a male *manqué*, a characteristic that enables the creation of a game of a meta-theatrical nature, because it sets up tension between the character's sexuality and the way in which it should be portrayed by the comic costume: in fact, Agathon is wearing a costume that lacks the distinctive features both of masculinity (the leather phallus, a mainstay appendage of male comic costumes) and of femininity (the breasts, which are always greatly accentuated in female comic characters).[11]

There is, however, another fact of great relevance that must be borne in mind, if one wishes to grasp the dramatic function of Agathon's disguise. Inlaw himself takes care to emphasise that his attack on Agathon's sexuality is carried out by parodying a passage in a lost trilogy by Aeschylus, the *Lykourgeia*, which comprised the tragedies *The Edonians*, *The Bassarids* and *The Youths*. An ancient commentator specifies that the question, ποδαπὸς ὁ γύννις; comes from *The Edonians*, and that in the original context, the term γύννις ('damsel', a word that defines the character's ambiguous sexuality with an irreverent tone) referred in actual fact to the god, Dionysus, captured and interrogated by the Thracian king, Lycurgus, who was opposed to his cult.[12] Unfortunately it is not possible to define with any certainty how many of Inlaw's words can be traced back to Aeschylus, but it is probable that other elements present in his jibes derive from the Lycurgus trilogy, in particular the question τίς ἡ τάραξις τοῦ βίου; ("what is this disorder of his life?", line 137), which expresses the unease caused by the spectacle of Agathon's attire.[13] The attack on Agathon's ambiguity is therefore formulated in terms that can be traced back directly to the god of the theatre, and reveals itself to be part of a polemic against tragedy that manifests itself more clearly when Agathon replies to Inlaw's criticism by outlining the aesthetic theory that should explain the sense of his disturbing attire. The robe is presented by Agathon as matching his line of thought ("I am wearing the robe that corresponds to my thought", line 148),[14] on the principle that a poet should conform his habits to the plays that he intends to create (lines 149–150). Thus, an author who aspires to writing about and dealing with feminine things must be capable of feeling like a woman, which requires a μετουσία τῶν τρόπων, even on the physical level, and which may be compensated for by the μίμησις of the characteristics that were not given to one's body by nature (lines 151–152).[15] Wearing feminine clothes thus becomes a way of eluding the coarseness of masculinity, which would take from the poetic result: "it is not fitting for a poet to be hairy and coarse", says Agathon in lines 159–160, reminding us that the great poets of Ionia (Ibycus, Anacreon of Teos, Alcaeus) used to wear a diadem and were languid in their movements. Agathon's appearance on stage is therefore a direct consequence of the mimetic

nature of his poetry, which aims at imitating the languidness and elegance of women: and the acclaimed cross-dressing tragic poet is the means by which Aristophanes can polemically attack a poetic style that claims to be able to infuse tragedy with the capacity to recreate reality through an exaggeratedly mimetic approach. The mimetic process does indeed rebound on the author who uses it: the poet who by means of art creates customs and verse that wish to faithfully portray reality from a feminine point of view faces the ridiculous necessity of having to wear women's clothing in his own everyday life, and thus transforms into a grotesque being of uncertain sexuality, as well as an easy target for the confident masculinity of a comic character like Inlaw.[16]

The attack on Agathon runs along the same lines as the one Aristophanes made on Euripides 15 years earlier in *The Acharnians* where, in taking issue with Euripides' decision to bring lame and beggarly characters unworthy of tragic poetry on stage, Aristophanes had portrayed the tragic playwright in the act of writing with his legs akimbo and dressed in the same kind of rags he had imagined for his characters on stage:

> You write with your legs akimbo, even though you could keep them planted on the ground. Of course, you create such lame characters! And why do you wear such rags, such dismal attire, like something straight from the scene of a tragedy? Of course you create all these wretches!
>
> (*Ach.* 410–413; transl. E. Medda)

The comic perspective was in that case inverted: Euripides' habit of wearing rags translated itself into the creation of characters who resembled him. The Euripides of the *Thesmophoriazusae* in any case seems to remember also having suffered from the 'mimetic illness', when he cuts off Inlaw's criticism of Agathon with the words, "Stop the barking. I too was like that at his age, when I first started to write" (lines 173–174).

As an elderly male secure in his masculinity, Inlaw makes some jibes at the ambiguous playwright's attire, but he is about to undergo a tough punishment. Agathon in fact refuses Euripides' request that he go to the Thesmophoria for him, justifying this by saying that the women would think he had slipped in among them in order to cheat them out of their nocturnal secrets and appropriate their "Cyprian pleasures" through deception, with the consequent risk of severe punishment (lines 203–205).[17] Thus the first instance of cross-dressing on stage in the character of Agathon is circumscribed to the dimension of poetic polemic, and may not be seen as functional to the plan of deception centring on the creation of a fake woman who can participate in the Thesmophoria. For this purpose, a new character is necessary: Inlaw steps forward and receives a new disguise, in relation to which Agathon becomes his helper, giving Inlaw the benefit of his long experience in cross-dressing matters and providing all the garments and accessories necessary to turn him into a perfect woman.

This second instance of disguise on stage immediately comes across as very different. First of all, contrary to what happened with Agathon, Inlaw's advanced

age (cf. lines 63 and 146) and the clearly virile features of his costume clash badly with the attempt to achieve a feminine appearance, guaranteeing a comic effect. In addition, comic fantasy forces a large-scale transformation on Inlaw, which goes beyond the change of clothes and includes a physical and psychological change that will complete the transformation into a woman (the γυναίκισις, in fact, which would not have been necessary for Agathon). The first step is the shaving of his cheeks, thus removing the most distinctively masculine characteristic; it is done quickly and sloppily, covering the unfortunate Inlaw's cheeks with cuts; he shrieks and tries to flee with only half his face shaved (lines 217–229).[18] Then follows the depilation of the pubic area, carried out – in accordance with the usual female practice – with the flame of an oil lamp, while the wretched Inlaw desperately tries to protect the tip of the phallus (which, unlike Agathon, he keeps well in view, and which Euripides gets him to remove in case it is burnt together with the hairs).[19]

Therefore, while in Agathon's case, the feminine attire is superimposed on a male sexuality that has not been completely obliterated, with results that are intentionally ambiguous and unsettling, in Inlaw's case we are dealing with full-on comic fiction, which necessitates him *becoming* female, despite there being no real practical need for this, since the feminine costume would in any case have covered the depilated parts and the phallus remains as a part of his comic costume (indeed it will be this feature that unmasks the deception at the moment of the body search imposed by the women on the intruder). In this case too, Aristophanes aims at creating tension between the two levels of the comic costume: Inlaw wears a feminine costume over his masculine one, thus laying the groundwork that will allow a transferral of the tension to the dialogue scene within the Thesmophorion, where the women confront the transvestite, who seems to be one of them, but expresses judgements about their moral and sexual habits worthy of Euripides himself.

Once Inlaw has achieved the necessary change of sex, he receives in sequence from Agathon the women's κροκωτός, the binding strip for the breast, the bonnet and the diadem, the cloak and sandals; and as Euripides helps him dress, he seems increasingly to take on a female psychology, so much so that he looks at himself in the mirror (remarking that the image he sees reflected there resembles Cleisthenes; that is, the beardless effeminate character who will appear on stage later on), and asks Euripides to adjust the robe over his leg while worrying about how the bonnet suits him.[20] In the end, Euripides, satisfied with the result, remarks, "this man really is a woman, at least in appearance" (lines 266–267), and urges Inlaw to add the last touch by "putting on an act" with his voice (γυναικιεῖς, line 268) in order to be completely convincing.

Inlaw's feminine disguise, like Agathon's, is *not* a tragic theatrical disguise; it is the means for a deception centring on a change of sexual identity within the first degree of comic fiction. This enables the change to be accepted without difficulty by the women gathered at the Assembly, despite the fact that some elements are obviously lacking in verisimilitude. In actual fact, when Inlaw blurts out an incautious speech, in which he maintains that, after all, women should be grateful to Euripides for having revealed only a minimal part of their evil deeds

(lines 466–519), they threaten to punish whoever this woman is who has spoken by depilating her vulva with hot ash (lines 537–538: this constitutes a parodic feminine equivalent of the punishment Athenians meted out to male adult adulterers caught red-handed).[21] For these women, therefore, Inlaw is a woman and as such has to learn the lesson: "so she, a woman, will learn not to speak ill of women in future" (lines 538–539).

What causes this certainty to waver is the arrival of Cleisthenes, who arrives on the scene in a hurry, shaven and dressed up in such a way as to be taken by the women themselves as one of them (lines 571–572). The manner in which he introduces himself at line 576 is memorable: γυναικομανῶ γὰρ προξενῶ θ' ὑμῶν ἀεί ("I am crazed about women, and I always make myself your champion"). For him, Aristophanes coins the verb γυναικομανεῖν ("to be crazed about women"), by means of an efficacious twisting of the epic epithet γυναιμανής (*Il.* 3.39, 13.769), specifically reserved for the womaniser, Paris. Cleisthenes also has a propensity for women, but of quite the opposite type: he would like to be a woman, not to have one. Given access to the Thesmophoria (unlike Agathon, whose nature, as a tragic poet μιμητής to feminine pleasures, would have placed him at risk of aggression), Cleisthenes reveals that he has heard of the presence in the sanctuary of one of Euripides' relations who, to disguise himself as a woman, has had himself shaved and his hairs burnt off. In this way, tension is created among the characters who, for whatever reason, have been cross-dressing. In Cleisthenes' eyes, in fact, Inlaw is an impostor two times over: towards the women, but also towards those who, like himself, have the right to wear feminine clothes.

The arrival of Cleisthenes unleashes a rapid investigation: the women put Inlaw on the spot with a series of questions on the previous year's Thesmophoria, until the suspect betrays himself with a lapsus by mentioning the ἀμίς, that is, the receptacle used by men (and not by women) for urinating. At this point, Aristophanes gives Cleisthenes the task of undressing the impostor for a body search in order to ascertain the real sex (an action which would have been excessive for women even in a comedy). The victim's frantic response leads to a revelation: when he is asked to remove the στρόφιον, Inlaw complains that the honour of a mother of nine children is being violated (line 637), but straight after this, having removed the breast binding, when the women point out his muscular chest and the most unfeminine form of the breasts, the wretch justifies this characteristic in exactly the opposite way, saying that it is due to the fact that 'she' is infertile (lines 638–642). At this stage, the cat is out of the bag: the feminine disguise comes up against the ineluctable masculinity of the body. Cleisthenes asks straight out where his virile member is, which Inlaw has been desperately trying to hide between his legs (lines 643–648), and when eventually the phallus pops out, this revelation instantaneously turns its owner into a prisoner, a male so out of place in the context of a female ritual that he deserves a commensurate punishment.

Aristophanes has created a complete circuit for Inlaw's use of disguise, showing it both at the beginning when it was being put together, and at the end when it is demolished. With both these phases he associates a character whose sexuality

is intermediate, outlining in this way not only the opposition between the male and female genders, but also that between two forms of disguise, one of which (Inlaw's) is totally inappropriate, while the other (Cleisthenes') is acceptable and entitled to take precedence over the former.

At this point, Inlaw, having been plunged brusquely back into the masculine world, has to acknowledge just how risky was his attempt to change sex to trespass on the feminine sanctuary. Into the comic fiction there now filters the extra-dramatic reality of the *polis*, which brands this kind of behaviour as depraved and, in such a case, also impious. The women's reaction, which also involves a magistrate from the city, brings the perpetrator to the brink of the death penalty. In this way a situation is created that seems to have no solution; it has been created by Aristophanes' comic genius in order to take up and bring to a crisis point his polemic against tragic theatre. To Inlaw, the only way out, in fact, is represented by having recourse to the illusory power of Euripides' tragedy: this entails the staging, with the collaboration of the author himself, of some of the typical Euripidean situations where the characters, faced with an event that seems to condemn them to certain ruin, invent a plan that will allow them to save themselves. In this way, the game of meta-theatre bursts onto the stage with all its force, and disguise, which up to this point has remained at the level of purported reality (that is, comic fiction), now begins to take on its more overtly tragic connotations.

Inlaw, first on his own and then with the guidance of Euripides, tries to stage the stratagems characterising the playwright's *Telephus*, *Palamedes*, *Helen* and *Andromeda* in sequence; and, since two of these tragedies have female prota-gonists, there arises a new need for disguise, this time, however, at the second level of dramatic fiction. Inlaw takes on the identity of the two tragic heroines, Helen and Andromeda; but contrary to what he has just experienced, in order to see this through, he needs an audience within the comedy that accepts the theatrical convention and 'believes' that he is what he claims to be. And it is precisely on this point that Aristophanes sneakily throws a spanner in the theatrical works. The 'internal' audience of women at the Thesmophoria is not at all a docile one, and its reaction is such that a pernicious friction arises between the 'comic' and 'tragic' character, the result of which is that the former does not allow the latter to fully exist.

But let us return to feminine disguises. Irritated by the failure of his attempt with *Palamedes*, Inlaw elects to perform *Helen*, a play that was staged the previous year, in 412 BCE. It is significant that the first argument used by Inlaw in favour of this idea is just how easy it is to take on a female identity: "I shall imitate the new Helen. After all, I'm already wearing a woman's robe" (lines 850–851). The remains of the woman's costume previously worn by Inlaw, once its primary function has come to naught, are therefore to be reutilised in the dimension of the second-level theatrical fiction, giving rise to Inlaw/Helen's new 'Euripidean' identity. At this point, Critilla, the woman who is guarding the prisoner, shows herself to be absolutely impermeable to this fictitious reality. She drags into the attempted second-level fiction reality data coming from the first-level fiction (that is, what in the intra-dramatic dimension is posited as 'reality': it is not possible for

this to be Egypt, we are at the Thesmophoria in Athens), and – with a procedure typical of Old Comedy – reality data from the extra-dramatic dimension as well. Critilla rejects in fact the mythological and high-sounding names cited by Inlaw/Helen and substitutes them, mangling them, with similar-sounding names of contemporary personages: for example, the king Proteus becomes the Athenian Proteas, who has been dead for ten years (cf. lines 874–876, 881–883).

This clash of dramatic levels is particularly significant, from the point of view of disguise, coming precisely at the moment when the new value that Inlaw wishes to give his feminine robe is rejected by Critilla, putting the spotlight back on the previous one: αὖθις αὖ γίγνει γυνή, / πρὶν τῆς ἑτέρας δοῦναι γυναικίσεως δίκην ("So now you're turning back into a woman, even before you get your comeuppance for the first transformation into a woman?", lines 862–863). Critilla will not allow the second γυναίκισις, and stymies the attempt by Euripides/Menelaus and Inlaw/Helen to perform the lyrical duet from the recognition scene in *Helen*, warning the newly-arrived character (that is, Euripides disguised as Menelaus) about the real nature of the individual who is trying to pass himself off as Helen. Inlaw then tries to overcome the obstacle by drawing Critilla into the tragic fiction and speaking of her as if she were Theonoe, sister of Theoclymenus, who in *Helen* helps the two newly-weds to escape the king's wrath. But Critilla responds by railing at him and rejects with all her might the intrusion of tragic illusion into comic reality: "Inl. – This is Thenoe, daughter of Proteus. Cr. – No, by the two goddesses, I will be no-one but Critilla of Gargettos, and you are a blackguard" (lines 897–898).

The mechanism of tragic theatre cannot therefore get underway without the complicity of the audience, which reduces the likelihood of Inlaw's theatrical feminine disguise being successful. In any case, Aristophanes does not leave the task of upsetting the tragic fiction only to Critilla: it is precisely from within the tragic fiction that an element of weakness arises, when Inlaw himself calls to mind the traces of the first disguise that disturb the efficacy of the second. When, in fact, Euripides/Menelaus addresses him with a tragic-style verse, asking him to look at him ("Turn to me your pupils", line 902),[22] he replies, "I stand shamed before you for the affront my cheeks have undergone" (line 903). In the tragic dimension, this is supposed to allude to the scratches that Helen inflicted on herself when she was suffering, but its formulation is such that it immediately recalls the traces of the sloppy shave inflicted on the character in the prologue.[23] The riposte undermines the seriousness of this decisive moment in which Inlaw/Helen shows his/her face, and leads to his/her recognition, while the riposte by Euripides/Menelaus ("Who on earth is this? I'm speechless" (line 904), a direct quote from Eur. *Hel.* 548–549: "How you do amaze me and render me speechless by showing yourself") represents a sort of comment, not so much on the amazement at finding the lost bride again, but more on the repugnant effect of Inlaw's cheeks, which are covered in nicks. Inlaw as a real person appears from beneath the tragic robes to remind Euripides that he has not forgotten what was inflicted on him.

When Inlaw/Helen eventually gets to his decisive request, "Take me away, take me, take me, take me away" (line 915), Critilla stands her ground: "By the two goddesses, if anyone tries to take you away, you'll both rue the day; you'll get the

rough end of this torch" (lines 915–916); in this way, she has identified an accomplice in the second tragic character ("Alas, you too seem to be a blackguard, and this fellow's accomplice", lines 920–921), and cuts short the exchange by announcing the arrival of the Councillor, accompanied by an archer, who is to guarantee the guilty party's punishment. Euripides has no choice but to flee, and the Councillor, by ordering that the prisoner be put in the pillory, nullifies Inlaw's new identity, throwing him back into the real dimension of imminent punishment. At this stage, Inlaw implores the Councillor in most significant terms:

Inl.:   Councillor, by your right hand, which you are so fond of opening and extending when you are offered money, do this small favour for me, even if I have to die.
Coun.:   And what favour is that?
Inl.:   Order the archer to undress me and bind me naked in the pillory: I would not have it that I, an old man got up in a saffron robe and a diadem, should be a cause of laughter among the crows when I provide them with a banquet.

<div align="right">(lines 936–942)</div>

The feminine robe, divested of its theatrical significance, once again becomes merely an inappropriate adornment that worsens the already harsh sentence inflicted on the character. To be exposed to public ridicule while wearing the κροκωτός represents an unbearable end, almost worse than death. Inlaw now clearly realises just what the cost has been for his impiousness and for the attempt to violate the difference between the sexes with his disguise: he describes himself baldly for what he is – an old man got up in saffron and a diadem, destined to die a miserable death. Thus, when the Councillor denies him this favour and replies that the Council has decided that he be tied just as he is, a desperately tragic exclamation escapes the poor man's lips: ὦ κροκῶθ' οἷ' εἴργασαι ("O saffron robe, to what pass have you brought me!", line 945), comically attributing the responsibility for his ruination to the κροκωτός. The loss of his masculine identity coincides with the loss of his reputation.

However, it is precisely the type of punishment inflicted on him (Inlaw reappears on stage tied to a σανίς, a wooden plank to which the condemned were bound by means of an iron collar)[24] that confers a certain appearance to his figure on stage, allowing one last virtuoso attempt to alter comic reality through tragic illusion and make a woman of him one last time. Appearing briefly in Perseus' costume, Euripides sends an implicit message to Inlaw that he should now take on the role of Andromeda, the protagonist of the eponymous tragedy which had been staged a short time previously ("It would seem the man won't betray me, but by running out in Perseus' costume like that, he has given me the signal that I must become Andromeda", lines 1010–1012). The feminine costume that Inlaw is still wearing, and the fact that he is tied to the plank correspond in fact to the heroine's situation, whose father has had her chained to a cliff from where she will be devoured by a sea monster. Aristophanes thus brings to completion his subtle retribution on this

character. Inlaw, who had been contemptuous of Agathon's sexual behaviour, as well as his poetry, winds up having to do exactly the same thing on stage: sing a monody in feminine attire (lines 1015–1055).[25]

Leaving aside, also in this case, the complex para-tragic characteristics of the scene, I shall limit myself to highlighting what appears to be the most interesting aspect from the point of view of gender confusion. Here too, the tragic fiction fails on account of a character, the coarse Scythian archer, who is completely impermeable to theatrical convention; but, by contrast with what happened with Helen's part, this time Inlaw does not attempt to impose his new tragic identity as 'real', but mixes his alleged nature as a female character with his real identity as an unhappily disguised male. So, even if he refers to himself in the feminine, there are traces of expressions that are obviously irreconcilable with tragic simulation: at a certain point, Inlaw/Andromeda asks to be allowed to go home to his/her wife (lines 1020–1021), and then speaks of the Scythian who has bound him to the plank, stating that his song is not that of a virgin on her way to be married, but a παιᾶνα . . . δέσμιον ("a song for the stocks", lines 1034–1035). But above all, if Euripides' Andromeda invoked Perseus, Inlaw now invokes "the man . . . who beforehand removed my hairs and made me put on the saffron robe and, what's more, sent me to this temple where there are women" (lines 1040–1046). Inlaw/ Andromeda's monody intentionally overlaps and contaminates the two dimensions of the disguise (realistic and theatrical) that Aristophanes has developed through-out the comedy; the supposedly tragic character therefore also carries out the demystifying function that had been Critilla's in the scene from *Helen*. The unfortunate old man can take no more of this disguise, which has ruined his life, and this time it is he himself who impedes the realisation of the tragic μηχάνημα. When Euripides, who takes on the part of Echo's voice, asks him to do what he must – that is, cry in a convincing way – he finds the irritating repetition of every line by Echo unbearable, and on several occasions breaks with the fiction (cf. lines 1074–1081), openly telling his accomplice to take himself off.

And so it is that when Euripides appears again as an actor in his own play in the role of Perseus saving poor Andromeda, Aristophanes exacerbates the short circuit between the two identities, opening up the way for an overtly obscene joke. Euripides/Perseus comes on stage declaring his love for the maiden (lines 1098–1118), but he comes up against the coarse Scythian archer who, like Critilla, brings him back to comic reality, and above all takes delight in demolishing the gender misunderstanding. For the umpteenth time, it will suffice to raise Inlaw's robe to show his sexual organ: once again the phallus settles the question (σκέψαι τὸ σῦκο· μή τι μικρὸν παίνεται, "Look at the . . . fanny. Does it seem small?", line 1114). The barbarian's crude suggestion, should Perseus actually wish to give vent to his passion, is to turn Inlaw around and make a hole in the plank from behind (lines 1123–1124). The archer's boorishness leaves no room for the possibility that the reality created by the tragedy might win out. Euripides has to flee and Inlaw remains alone and despairing, invoking Perseus with a last incongruous grammatical feminine: "Perseus, remember that you abandon me here in despair" (line 1134).

Euripides therefore has to yield and settle the matter with the women. He presents himself in the Thesmophorion and asks for peace, promising, in exchange for Inlaw's life, that he will say nothing further against them. They accept his proposal, provided that Euripides manages to get rid of the Scythian archer. But there is a price to be paid, and Aristophanes still has one final variation on the theme of cross-dressing up his sleeve, and a subtle jibe to make at the tragedian. It falls to Euripides to wear the last feminine disguise in the comedy, and this time it is not a tragic but a comic one: he has to disguise himself as an old procuress[26] and bring a beautiful dancer to the archer, offering her for the price of a drachma, hoping in this way to distract him and finally get the prisoner freed. Where the elevated style and costumes of the tragic world have failed, there does comedy succeed, with one of its typical characters, which Euripides has to interpret in person; and where the *mekhanai* in his tragedies did not succeed, the grace of the beautiful Elaphione does instead; by undressing, she arouses the Scythian, with whom she slips off. Tragedy's vaunt that it can create reality must yield before the fantasy of comedy, which celebrates its triumph. When the barbarian returns, not only have Euripides and Inlaw made off, but the women behave like their allies by giving the archer, who asks if they have seen an old woman and an old man dressed in a saffron robe escaping (that is, basically two men disguised as women), deliberately misleading directions. Only in this way can tragedy and comedy ultimately become allies, in a playful dimension that is expressed in this simple and pleasing closing comment, representative of both Aristophanes' play and these considerations of mine: "We have jested enough now."

Notes

1 See La Guardia, Chapter 6 in this volume, pp. 99–107.
2 On the costumes worn by the actors of the so-called ἀρχαῖα κωμῳδία, see Pickard-Cambridge 1968, pp. 210–231; Stone 1981; and most recently, Compton-Engle 2015. The elements that specifically distinguish the two sexes are analysed by Saïd 1987, pp. 229–231; for a more wide-ranging discussion of the relationship between the comic costume and the portrayal of the body, cf. Foley 2000 and Stehle 2002, pp. 372–377.
3 See Carlà-Uhink, Chapter 1 in this volume, p. 12 (the character Inlaw is described there as 'Mnesilochos').
4 The themes of sexuality and the definition of gender in ancient Greek comedy and mime have been the object of lively debate in recent decades. The model of sexuality based on an aggressive actor and a passive object of attention, developed by Kenneth J. Dover in the 1970s, and the idea that comic theatre was a means of validating the masculinity of Athenian citizens as well as asserting their superiority, have been gradually superseded and integrated with a broader approach to gender as a dynamic act, through the contribution of feminist and queer theories. As a result, more recent studies have highlighted the relevance of class and social differences in the formation of various cultural attitudes about sexuality, showing that sexuality and eros are rather more complicated than a simple dialectic between active and passive agents. For a useful summary of some of the most relevant contributions in the field, see Florence 2014, pp. 366–380.
5 The sources on the life and works of the poet (born around 447 BCE) have been collected by Snell and Kannicht 1986, pp. 155–168 (= *TrGF* 1 no. 39). We know from Plat. *Prot.*

315 e that around 430 BCE, the young Agathon was the παιδικά of Pausanias, and in Plat. *Symp.* 177 d, 193 b–c, Aristophanes alludes to their intimate relationship (*TrGF* 39 T 3 and 15: see also T 11, 22a and 25: Snell and Kannicht 1986, p. 156); the fictional date of the banquet is 416 BCE when Agathon was approximately 30 years old.

6   "Agathon is ridiculed qua poet, through exploitation of the literary, theatrical and technological meanings of ποιεῖν" (Muecke 1982, p. 43).

7   The possibility that Agathon makes his entry on stage using the ἐκκύκλημα is a topic of discussion among the interpreters of the play. The fact that the character is defined οὗτος οὑκκυκλούμενος at line 96 has seemed to many to be a strong indication of the use of this apparatus in tragedy being parodied (in this sense, see the note by Austin and Olson [2004] to line 96, with bibliography; Mastromarco and Totaro 2006, p. 447 note 14; Bonanno 2006, pp. 76–80). Nevertheless, it is possible that Agathon may have appeared on stage on a truckle bed, as a parody of the entry on stage of some of the tragic heroines languishing in the throes of erotic passion, such as Phaedra (cf. Pickard-Cambridge 1946, pp. 101–103; Di Benedetto and Medda 2002, p. 23 note 28).

8   Cf. Aristoph. *Thesm.* 138, 253, 941, 1220, *Lys.* 44, 47, 51, 219–220, *Eccl.* 879, *Ran.* 46, and also Cratin. fr. 40.2 K.-A. In Araros fr. 4 K.-A. the saffron robe is attributed to young unmarried women; a number of testimonies to this may also be found in tragedy (Aesch. *Ag.* 239, Eur. *Hec.* 468, *Phoe.* 1491), where the robe also assumes a connotation of luxury and wealth.

9   On the link between the 'saffron-coloured robe' and the rites at Brauron, cf. Perusino 2000, pp. 521–526, with a further bibliography and sources; Giuman 2002, pp. 80–81; for a survey of the whole cult of Artemis Brauronia, see Giuman 1999 and Parker 2005, pp. 228–248.

10 The robes worn by the young poet are listed in the sequence of questions that Inlaw asks him from line 134 on. There is no reason to suppose, as does Muecke 1982, p. 49, that they were not actually worn by Agathon, who "[a]s a tragic poet . . . might be expected to be wearing tragic costume". The idea that the various items of clothing are an exaggeration largely deriving from the Aeschylean model (see below), and not a description of the poet's appearance on stage, debases the comic play based on the visuals; but above all, it empties of wit the poet's statement that ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν ἐσθῆθ᾽ ἅμα τῇ γνώμῃ φορῶ ("I am wearing a robe that corresponds to my thought", line 148). Against Muecke's idea that Agathon is wearing a long Ionian tunic in the style of Anacreon, cf. also Stehle 2002, p. 379 and note 37.

11 Duncan 2006, p. 35 rightly observes that Agathon cannot be placed in the category known nowadays as 'drag queen'; rather, he is "a disrupter of categories (masculine/feminine, poet/actor, actor/character) and thus less easily dismissed".

12 Cf. *schol.* R *in Aristoph. Thesm.* 136 ἐν τοῖς Ἡδωνοῖς πρὸς τὸν συλληφθέντα Διόνυσον· ῾ποδαπὸς ὁ γύννις;᾽ (= Aesch. fr. 61 R.²).

13 On the possibility of finding other elements deriving from Aeschylus in the passage, see also Rau 1967, pp. 109–110 and Radt 1985, pp. 182–183. By contrast, Austin and Olson 2004 *ad loc.* declare their scepticism that the question τίς ἡ τάραξις τοῦ βίου; may be attributed to Aeschylus.

14 The strange use of ἅμα in this phrase gives rise to some interpretative difficulties, which have led some interpreters to needless conjectures. The translation cited is that normally followed by editors, but it is also possible that the expression ἅμα τῇ γνώμῃ is merely an 'Agathonian' mannerism in order to say 'intentionally'; cf. Austin and Olson 2004 *ad loc*.

15 The outline of poetic mimesis by Agathon has been the object of numerous studies: on the topic, I shall limit myself to indicating Saetta Cottone 2003, where the reader may find a large bibliography on the subject. For a reductive reading, which refuses to attribute at that stage to Agathon the development of an artistic theory of mimesis, cf. Muecke 1982, pp. 54–55 (according to which [p.55], μίμησις here is only "disguising oneself the way an actor would").

16 Indeed, Inlaw focuses on the feminine features of the poet, noting the absence of the phallus and attacking Agathon as a passive homosexual and εὐρύπρωκτος (cf. lines 200 and 206); this allows him to stress male superiority (see Stehle 2002, pp. 381–383). For a more wide-ranging reading of this, which identifies in Agathon a figure that points up the risks inherent not only in practising the art of tragedy, but also, insofar as they are capable of arousing a wish to imitate them, of even watching tragedies, see Duncan 2006, pp. 42–47.

17 Zeitlin 1981, p. 178 observes that Agathon is not a suitable candidate for gaining entry to the Thesmophoria, because he is too perfect as a woman and would become a potential rival to the real women; he does not require a disguise, thus reducing the comic effect of the choice of cross-dressing, which instead can achieve its full comic effect only if it is the coarse and burly Inlaw who is disguised. The observation is correct, but I maintain that there is also another reason not to assign the role of infiltrator to Agathon: the fact that he is a tragic poet. Allowing him to gain entry to the Thesmophoria would have come into conflict with the role Aristophanes envisaged for Euripides, who will have to play the part of a theatrical demiurge in relation to the character/Inlaw in the scenes that follow. The ridiculing and defeat of the claims of the art of tragedy, which holds that through the use of mimesis it can shape a form of reality capable of deceiving the audience, requires a character that will lend itself to being manipulated and becoming a victim. Agathon would have been too autonomous as a tragic poet to be suitable for this role.

18 The dramatic importance of the marks left by the shaving is confirmed, on the one hand, by the allusion that Inlaw himself will make to how obvious they are at line 903 (see below, p. 145); and on the other, by the famous vase in Würzburg (Martin von Wagner Museum der Universität Würzburg, H 5697), on which the potter has reproduced on Inlaw's cheeks all the marks left by the razor.

19 According to Stehle 2002, pp. 385–386, in this scene, "Inlaw's phallus is in danger of losing its gender-specific meaning" (p. 385), and the poet makes Inlaw intentionally use it in such a way as to violate the conventions of gesture regarding this part of the comic costume ("what Inlaw experiences as a mortification to his manhood could appear to the audience as a reduction of the phallus to an artefact" [p. 386]).

20 There is a remarkable similarity between this section regarding Inlaw dressing up in feminine attire and the scene in Euripides' *Bacchae*, where Pentheus disguises himself as a woman and worries about his robe falling in the right manner down to his ankle, as well as the feminine accessories that Dionysus makes him wear (Eur. *Ba.* 925–938). It is likely that Euripides intentionally echoed the scene by Aristophanes: for a detailed examination of the points of verbal contact, see Di Benedetto 2004, pp. 40–41, who was the first to point to a possible imitation of the scene by Aristophanes on the part of Euripides.

21 Drakon's homicide law considered the killing of an adulterer caught *in flagrante delicto* justifiable (cf. Demosth. 23.53–56) and according to Lys. 1.49, it stated that ἐὰν τις μοιχὸν λάβῃ, ὅ τι ἂν βούλεται χρῆσθαι ("[the laws] instruct the man who catches an adulterer to treat him in any way he pleases", transl. by S. Todd). The aggrieved husband had thus the right to put the offender to death at once (this is the case in Lysias' first speech *On the murder of Eratosthenes*); or, if he preferred, to accept compensation from him, holding him as a prisoner until he paid the sum agreed, and inflicting on him various bodily humiliations. Among these, according to Aristoph. *Nub.* 1083 (see also the ancient scholium *ad loc.*) was the so-called ῥαφανίδωσις: a radish was pushed up the adulterer's anus and his pubic hair was pulled out with the help of hot ash (cf. also Aristoph. *Pl.* 168). For other sources on this practice, see Lipsius 1905, p. 431 and note 47. Some scholars have expressed doubts about its real existence, but Aristophanes' jokes would have not been understandable had his audience not been familiar with such a form of punishment.

22 The line, of uncertain authorship, is included by R. Kannicht among the *Tragica adespota* (*TrGF* vol. 2, F 67).

23 Regarding this riposte, and other points that unmask the tragic theatrical fiction, cf. Sommerstein 1994 *ad loc.*

24 On the σανίς and the practice of ἀποτυμπανισμός for which it was used, cf. Gernet 1968, pp. 302–329; Austin and Olson 2004, notes on lines 930–931; Cantarella 1991, pp. 41–46.

25 On the gradual assimilation of Inlaw into Agathon, see above all Stehle 2002, pp. 395–396.

26 There is some room for doubt regarding the practicalities of how Euripides would have disguised himself, above all in relation to the short amount of time available for the actor to change costume (at line 1169, he is still talking to the women and he is perfectly recognisable to them; at line 1172, he is already acting like an old crone in disguise; and at line 1177, he begins the dialogue with the Scythian). Sommerstein 1994, in the note on lines 1160–1175, maintains that the disguise is limited to a veil that Euripides puts on once the deal has been worked out with the women; Stehle 2002, pp. 397–398 suggests instead that the tragic poet also removes the beard from his mask. In any case, it must have been something pretty rudimentary.

10 Declaiming and (cross-) dressing

Remixing Roman declamation and its metaphorology

Christian Stoffel

Tyrannicida in veste muliebri: declamatory remixing[1]

I can still remember the night an up-and-coming DJ was playing in one of Rome's most popular clubs. During his set, the older guests acted like music critics, discussing the greatest musicians and songwriters they had been lucky to witness in the 'good old days' and their influence on today's music scene. Meanwhile we younger people nodded ironically. He was really good, turning the audience on and off at will, using samples of classic hits and reworking the old material. That night, he put on Livy's record about the rape and suicide of *Lucretia*[2] but remixed it, using other beats (from the song *Cloelia*), and softened its overall tone. I even thought I caught some parts of that old *Verginia*-track.[3] The intro went like this: *Tyrannicidae praemium. Tyrannus cum in arcem duci iussisset cuiusdam sororem, frater habitu sororis ascendit et occidit tyrannum. Eodem habitu magistratus illi praemii nomine statuam collocavit. Iniuriarum reus est.* "A reward for tyrannicide is offered. After a tyrant had ordered the sister of a certain man to be carried to the citadel, this man dressed in his sister's clothes went up instead and killed the tyrant. As a reward the magistrate raised a statue of him in this particular outfit. In return the magistrate is accused of injustice" (*Decl. Min.* 282; transl. C. Stoffel).

So the DJ made *a* Brutus confront *a* lusting Sextus Tarquinius, in his best impersonation of Lucretia. Hearing that new song, we were all forced to imagine the founder of our Republic in *veste muliebri* (Didn't chaste Lucretia make a woollen dress?) and as an insidious cross-dresser striving for a *praemium*, not *libertas*. After penetrating the *inexpugnabilem arcem* in *habitu sororis* and killing the tyrant, he accused the magistrate of insulting him due to the form of the reward: he demanded that we owe our liberty to his act of courage alone, and that we remove the statue from a public space and erase the image of him in woman's dress from our memories (How could you ever forget such a melody?). I think there for the first time I really began to question the virtuous greatness of our Brutus.[4] I began to understand Lucretia's sufferings as I stood on the dancefloor and imagined the statue of the cross-dressing *tyrannicida*, which, of course, I had to perceive as an odd transformation of Lucretia's dead body carried to the *forum*.[5] But this time, although the dagger was soaked in blood, the sister was untouched and alive. After the music had faded out, I asked myself: had the *Lucretia*-song (and its remixes) not always

been about role-playing and disguise, false appearances and corporeal illusions,[6] about how and from what authoritative perspective it would be performed?[7]

Putting the song in perspective: the cross-dressing of Roman models

In this admittedly (meta-)literary and declamatory first section, I suggest that *declamatio minor* 282 not only opens up a wide range of intertextual references, especially for the story of Lucretia, but by doing so, it also re-emphasises the inherent (gender) debates of one of the Roman Republic's most famous founding legends. Thus, this declamation enables the recipients to investigate the stage props necessary for (re-)telling and (re-)staging this story, and to see what happens to its value system when the characters' traditional costumes are changed. What happens when it is disputed whose and what kind of 'body' (wearing which dress?) should be placed in the *forum*, to be remembered by future generations? So, in this declamation, Lucretia does not serve as a fixed model of an idealised past (something she never actually was), as her female body does not constitute a lifeless *monumentum perenne* of normative values imbibed by soon-to-be-elite men. This declamation rather re-enacts Roman history with the irony of cross-dressing and offers to make it anew.

By putting *declamatio minor* 282 within the parameters of a DJ's remixing performance, I not only mean to pay tribute to Henri-Irénée Marrou and high-light the most distinctive configurations of declamation. I also intend to show the culture-critical potential of the genre, as well as its ambiguity and openness to interpretation: it not only repeats 'classic old hits' like those of Livy's *Lucretia*, but challenges and enriches them by blending them with new elements – here with the discursive theme of cross-dressing, which definitely has the potential to undermine the traditional representation of male virtue – by placing them in the framework of a dispute and making the interpretation dependent on the different *sententiae* and *colores* of the role-playing declaimers.

Therefore, my goal is to question or at least (re-)evaluate the accepted academic position that declamation should be regarded as a socio-cultural institution whose main function is the (re-)production of and contribution to the normative values of the Roman male elite. I argue for the (meta-)literary, culture-critical, and per-haps even subversive qualities of declamation's role-playing, as well as for its overall reflective and performative framework. So as we have just observed, and as we shall see subsequently, the themes of dressing and cross-dressing are crucial for both an understanding of the genre's inner workings and the scholarly narra-tives and judgements of it. I will refer to this particular use of (cross-)dressing metaphors which is both inherent in the genre and shapes the discourse on it as the metaphorology of declamation.

Underneath the dress: the metaphorology of declamation

Roman declamation, divided into the disputing *controversia* and the advising *suasoria*, was once a marginalised genre in classical studies, believed to be just

good enough to produce artificial and corrupt showpieces or repetitive and stereotypical school texts of no permanent value.[8] Declamation was thought to be the hollow and unsubstantial[9] version of the pulse and flesh of the *rostra*, where real battles of words had to be fought and male bodies had to meet any physical requirements.[10] The sources appeared to provide sufficient support for a complete condemnation of declamation's effeminate degeneracy and indulgence in self-styling (e.g. Sen. *Contr*. I praef. 8–10; cf. also Quint. *Inst*. V 12.17–23). In this regard, one could simply follow certain dominant notions in the Roman cultural imaginary (or what at least appeared to be such) which likewise connected a man's (overly) ornate and artfully composed speech with make-up and cosmetics (e.g. Cic. *Orat*. 23.78), attacking certain rhetorics as a female kind of illusive disguise (e.g. Quint. *Inst*. VIII praef. 18–20; VIII 3.6; X 2.12),[11] or comparing a misplaced and inept *ornatus orationis* with a man in a woman's robe and a woman in a man's triumphal outfit (e.g. Quint. *Inst*. XI 1.3).[12]

Without a doubt, rouged declamation, as the sources seemed to suggest, was believed to frequently cross the fine line of honesty and respectability and to become an infamous and unmanly form of acting.[13] This could always be linked to the (institutional) transvestism of the Roman stage, where, except in *mimi*, female roles were played by men, but by socially suspect men and not by (future) elite males.[14] Yet, the 'appropriate' (whatever this appropriateness may mean) impersonation of women was a vital part of the declaimer's performance.[15] Declamation was attacked as a delicate, fake, and theatrical exercise that differed greatly from the so-called manly spectacles such as gladiator fights or athletic races and their respective training (Sen. *Contr*. IX praef. 4–5). Therefore, the Maecenas-like 'drag', which broke the traditional dress code of a *vir forensis*[16] walking through the city *solutis tunicis* and speaking softly, was believed to be the perfect figurehead for the whole despised genre and style (cf. Sen. *Epist*. 114.6; Tac. *Dial*. 26.1–2). For a long time, scholars simply followed the prevailing metaphorology on untrue speech and declamation (the normative side of *talis oratio qualis vita*-reasoning)[17] seeming to apostrophise the Roman declaimers in disgust: "*Get rid of the heavy make-up!*" But they did so without realising that they too were declaiming, having donned a Roman toga, along with a Catonian frown and *habitus*.[18] In this way, even classical scholarship had turned out to be an entertaining masquerade.

By contrast, recent scholarship (this time in the guise of new historicism) has been pulling Roman declamation out of the marginalising shadows of the schoolroom and unmanly decadence. It pays great attention to it both as a literary genre and an important socio-cultural and even political practice. These scholars who read declamation as proper literature tend to highlight its parallels with other genres such as comedy, epigram, and the novel; they usually stress the frequency of literary motifs, reminiscences, and appropriations in general. The renewed interest in declamation as a socio-cultural phenomenon has emerged from and centres on a simple and old question: why did the Romans need to give rise to such a strange institution and hold on to it for so long? One influential answer was given by Mary Beard, who focused on the functions of Roman declamation and

argued that it was some form of *mythopoesis*; that is, an endless discursive process of renegotiating and remixing of archetypes, traditions, and values within a fixed set of characters, motifs, and rules, all of which could provide a unique view of *Romanitas* and Roman manhood in particular.[19]

Subsequently, many scholars concurred[20] and, accordingly, tried to pull away the declaimer's costume, scraping the superficial marvellousness off his declamations and, generally speaking, looking behind the curtain of his stage. This was in order to expose the declamation's inner functions, its inherent value system, and its contributions to the consolidation and (re-)production of Roman (elite) culture.[21] So these scholars are now in a hurry to unmask declamation and find again the austere Catonian face underneath the declaimer's entertaining and sometimes disconcerting costume and mask. By doing so, they act as if the socio-cultural importance of declamation were only to be found in the nude male body that allegedly lies behind its roles and costumes. There is a generalised notion that declamation affirms and preserves the social status quo[22] and that it must no longer be located at the corrupt margins of imperial culture, but at its vital heart. This is seen as the route which Roman boys were supposed to take in order to achieve true manhood, from an adorned robe to a fastened *tunica*.[23]

But what if the severe Cato, at least occasionally, does not even enter the *theatrum declamationis* (see Mart. 1. pr.)? What if costume, stage, and props actually *are* the real substance here? What if behind the mask, the only thing one can find is another mask, and behind that yet another . . .? For, more often than not, declamation is a show and an act of entertainment absolutely in need of its manifold *personae*, none of whom may be more 'real' or 'true' than any other.[24]

Elite values or patterns of transgression?

Costumes and stage props, masking and cosmetics, and transgressions like cross-dressing are, as we have seen, illustrative metaphors of literary criticism which dictate(d) the semantics; that is, the way one was/is supposed to speak of oratory in general and of the allegedly false rhetorics of declamation in particular.[25] In the first preface of Seneca the Elder's collection, for example, the declaimer Porcius Latro tries to veil the flaws of his speech with finesse and prevent the audience from looking openly at his *nuda membra*.[26] These highly engendered metaphors help us to understand the development of (scholarly, themselves sometimes declamatory) judgements and narratives of declamation from antiquity onwards, but they are also a vital part of the themes and inner structures of the genre itself.[27] Therefore, discussing important elements of declamation, almost all studies have to deal with various sorts of transgressions like cross-dressing[28] and with a certain blurring of once reliable dichotomies and traditional certitudes. These instabilities unquestionably characterise a great deal of declamation in general, and Seneca the Elder's *controversiae* in particular. An example of this has already been mentioned; namely, the critical potential of the theme of cross-dressing in *Decl. Min.* 282, which is superimposed on the *Lucretia*-story and thereby reveals its inherent and problematic gender dynamics.

Such transgressions are usually displayed through the body itself, through body adornment, clothes, or other communicative and social signs like voice, gesture, and *habitus*. In this way, it is often doubtful whether the identity shift created in such a way is just temporal or perpetual.

Here are a few examples of transgressions: some declaimers debate an alleged prostitute's ability (or fictional right) to progress from shabby *lupanar* to the holy temple of Vesta (Sen. *Contr*. I 2). Can she wash the dirt and shame off her body in order to become a 'clean' Vestal? Others wonder about the civic rights of an *adulescens* who is raped by a group of male peers while out in a woman's dress (Sen. *Contr*. V 6: *adulescens speciosus sponsionem fecit muliebri veste se exiturum in publicum. Processit, raptus est ab adulescentibus decem*. "A rather handsome youth vowed to appear in public in a woman's dress. He went out and was raped by ten other youths"; transl. C. Stoffel). Has this role-play in disguise with its (unexpected) sexual consequences in the form of his maculated body changed the youth's status forever? In a *formula* of an older *controversia*, handed down by Suetonius, a slave trader makes a beautiful slave dress up like a freeborn in order to fool the customs and avoid due taxes (Suet. *Rhet*. 25.9).[29] In the corpus of the *declamationes minores*, an *ancilla* is dressed in *matronali habitu* by her owner in order to marry an *archipirata* and save his son, who had been taken hostage by pirates (*Decl. Min*. 342: *scripserunt piratae patri ut mitteret vicariam filiam, futuram archipiratae uxorem. Misit ille matronali habitu ancillam*. "The pirates wrote to the father that he should send his daughter [as a replacement for her brother] to become the captain's wife. He instead sent a slave dressed up like a lady"; transl. C. Stoffel). The question whether the subsequently released *ancilla* should live on like a freeborn is answered by one declaimer with explicit reference to the playing of fictional roles on stage, which, unlike a 'real' public appearance, do not change one's status and true identity (*Decl. Min*. 342.9).

In another *controversia* in Seneca the Elder's collection (Sen. *Contr*. IX 2), which is based on a historical incident and a harsh piece of invective by the censor Cato the Elder,[30] the proconsul Lucius Quinctius Flamininus kills a captive during a lavish dinner in order to satisfy the perverse wish of a *meretrix* who wants to see a man decapitated with her own eyes: *Maiestatis laesae sit actio. Flamininus proconsul inter cenam a meretrice rogatus, quae aiebat se numquam vidisse hominem decollari, unum ex damnatis occidit. accusatur maiestatis*. "Let us suppose there is a case about injured majesty. During dinner a prostitute, who had never seen a man decapitated, asked the proconsul Flamininus to do just this, and he had one of the prisoners killed. Therefore, he is accused of crime against majesty" (transl. C. Stoffel).

After several declaimers have pleaded and debated the proconsul's rights and his effeminate *persona*,[31] the words of Silo Pompeius are eventually remembered: dividing this case into a private and a public sphere and Lucius into a private and a public person, he argues in more general terms that transvestism would have no consequences for a private man (while remaining morally blameworthy), whereas for an appointed magistrate, it would represent a forbidden transgression (IX 2.17).[32] This mention of transvestism might not only be a reflection of Lucius'

alleged effeminacy, but also of the questionable (sexual) status of his lover, about which the sources disagree.[33]

Thus, as we have seen, 'natural' dichotomies like *castus/incestus*, manly/unmanly, freeborn/slave, etc., are blurred or at least temporarily challenged. This is accompanied on a meta-literary level by frequently used themes of (attempted) disguise and deception, which refer to the role-play by the declaimer himself. This means that, while the declaimer is dressing up as a prostitute, a slave, or a *vir fortis*, and is performing his oratorical task with the necessary *ethopoeia* (an imaginary dress, if you will), the respective characters can repeat or undercut the acting on the 'story' level with the use of meta-costumes and thus double over in a highly reflective manner.[34] So, declamation itself gives us an insight into its own constitutive mechanisms of staging, role-playing, and disguising. In this game, simply changing the toga can signal both a transformation of the declaimer's whole *persona* and language, and represents an obvious wink to the audience.[35] This is additionally highlighted by a set of unchanging questions posed by the declaimers: what truth, what (bodily) integrity lies behind the appearance of a case or a character? What is real, what is mere acting, and what is simply a costume? Is this 'true' manhood or are we witnessing only "*histrionic* acts of manliness"?[36] One could go even further and argue that these questions are of such importance in Roman declamation because its theoretical background and semantics, as has been seen, are full of abrasive attacks against effeminate, untrue, and corrupt modes of declaiming, highlighting the extent to which they troubled the enforcers of male authority.[37] Some declamations therefore could be showcases that ironically test the boundary between male attire and true (corporeal) manhood or the theory for its practicability.[38] These connections between declamatory theory and practice are highlighted by Erik Gunderson, who argues that the aforementioned *raptus in veste muliebri* of Sen. *Contr*. V 6 can also be regarded as a reflection of the theories and discursive strategies of declamation itself. For it seems to mirror Seneca the Elder's own preface to Book I, where his *assault* "on rhetorical perversion is itself a sort of rape, a piece of sexual violence aroused at the sight of men in metaphorical drag".[39]

In addition, the acting out of the conflicting categories while impersonating an adult advocate can occasionally slide in the opposite direction and become a subversive mockery, or just an entertaining transgression that seems to impede the declaimer's way to 'true' manhood.[40] This is because the declaimer's verbal persuasiveness and acting capabilities, as Joy Connolly points out, may have not only "suspect traces, an air of extravagance and superfluous artificiality": the declaimer may also be accused of "using techniques paradoxically discordant with elite Roman *mores*", because his means of persuasion are based on rhetorical insincerity and he is forced to act like "women, slaves, and groups of people who were defined, at least in part, by their 'feminine' and 'servile' aspects".[41] So, to declaim more often than not means to seduce like a wily prostitute, in the knowledge that the revered eloquence is thought of as an enticing girl:[42] *qui declamationem parat, scribit non ut vincat sed ut placeat. Omnia itaque lenocinia conquirit* (Sen. *Contr*. IX praef. 1: "Who prepares a declamation, does not write

it to win [the case] but to please [the audience]. Hence he procures all [the] means of a panderer"; transl. C. Stoffel). What is witnessed, therefore, is a form of imaginary performance that is paradoxically both a necessary and dangerous form of (gender) role-play. So, even if we agree for a moment with declamation's sole socio-cultural function of building an elite, what can we really say about the highly complex and multilayered performance of a young Roman who is supposed to be following in Cato's footsteps, but instead gives voice to an *ancilla*, who 'herself' has to imitate *matronalis habitus*? In this case, what would be an appropriate impersonation?

Concluding remarks

In the wake of all these considerations, it comes as rather a surprise that, despite presenting such conflicting and troubling situations of social or familial disorder[43] in a highly performative, yet reflective context of this kind, declamation is usually thought to offer some kind of imaginary escape route into an idealised and stable 'reality' with fixed notions of gender and identity. That is to say, many scholars tend to assume that by playing many conflicting roles,[44] by introducing contradicting values, and by adopting 'minor voices' (that is, of women or slaves), the declaimer, himself an elite male or on his way to becoming such, learns not only to assign culturally and socially appropriate places to the *personae* of various status, gender, and identity, but also to prevent role-confusion and disorder.[45] This may be called the normative side of appropriateness, the impregnable terror of *aptus* and *decorum*. So, the dialogic chaos which is produced by the different voices of the declaimers is thought to be reducible to a monologic unity. However, a crucial part of the genre's back-and-forth consists precisely in the fact that it does not solve the tensions provoked. It neither offers an escape to a reliable truth or a 'right' reading, nor to a 'correct' judgement of the whole case or character: there simply is no solution to the personal, identity, and social conflicts of declamation; or even 'worse' – there may be innumerable solutions.[46]

   It seems to me that somewhere within this conceptual, polyphonic, and discursive openness of the genre, particularly that of Seneca the Elder's collection of excerpts, lies the cause of the strong tendency on the part of ancient and modern observers alike to revert to the discussed metaphorology. This metaphorology not only accuses declamation of having a fake and therefore effeminate appearance, blaming declaimers for the use of deceptive masks and costumes, but also of having reduced the whole literary and performative art to both a single socio-cultural function and a single (male) voice and body. Robert A. Kaster, for example, argues that by means of declamation, Roman boys were trained to fear (and then fix) all forms of social mess.[47] Victoria E. Pagán shares this position, saying that "the transgressive subjects of declamation . . . reinforce basic morality and social attitudes about status and gender".[48] Gender transgressions, or transvestism in particular, are therefore seen as (imagined) forms of a social or identity crisis that has to be overcome by restoring 'natural' and thus normative order. They are treated like rhetorical obscenities and stylistic transgressions,

which also have to be eradicated in order to keep up a decent and appropriate textual 'body'.[49] Zola M. Packman accordingly reads the above-mentioned *controversia* about the raped cross-dresser as a rather conservative moral warning to young Romans, who are the main and presumably the only addressees of the genre, not to confound or transgress their destined roles.[50]

But is the declamation, and the *controversia*, in particular, with its disputing *pro* and *contra*[51] only an affirmative literary genre?[52] Can its (role-playing) transgressions only be seen as a means of ultimately perpetuating traditional values and not of releasing one's imagination and creating a subversive or, at best, a taboo-breaking form of entertainment?[53] Does it force binary categories to clash in a performative and discursive framework, only to fade away, or do these binarisms, as often suggested, simply re-emerge in the end, maybe even in a stronger way? In this chapter, I have argued for the former. There must be some way to appreciate declamation without tearing off the declaimer's dress. Let us always remember the picture of the cross-dressing *tyrannicida*, even if he himself asks us to erase it from our memories.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 In the following, I am going to remix Marrou's (1956, p. 300) famous comparison between Roman declamation and jazz improvisation: the perfect declaimer, as Pliny the Younger puts it with regard to Isaeus (*Epist*. II 3), just like a DJ, has to be great at improvisation (*ex tempore*), memorising (*incredibilis memoria*) and interacting with the crowd (*poscit controversias plures; electionem auditoribus permittit*).

2 Liv. I 57.4–60.3. Winterbottom (1984) p. 396 *ad loc.* lists "the story of Lucretia" as one of the models of *Decl. Min.* 282. Indeed, Lucretia seems to be *the* perfect character for a *controversia*; cf. Aug. *Civ.* I 19; cf. also Langlands (2006) for Livy's presentation of the polluted, yet guiltless Lucretia (pp. 78–122).

3 It is remarkable that Calpurnius Flaccus's declamation 45 offers a somehow gender-inverted version of the *Verginia-/Lucretia*-myth, featuring a handsome boy who is killed by his own father in order to save his *pudor* from a lusting tyrant; cf. Tabacco (1985) pp. 120–121. This confirms the reading of the *Lucretia*-myth as a gender debating *exemplum*.

4 Despite all its ideological and affirmative colour, Livy's narrative about the *exempla* of Rome's past is certainly less monumental and one-sided than is generally believed (Stevenson [2011] p. 188). In point of fact, Calhoon (1997) reads the episode as an instance of Roman manliness in crisis.

5 Liv. I 59.3: *Elatum domo Lucretiae corpus in forum deferunt.* Cf. Verginia's corpse erected like a statue in Liv. III 48.7: *Icilius Numitoriusque exsangue corpus sublatum ostentant populo.*

6 Lucretia, as a highly discursive character, fluctuates between these themes (cf. Joshel [2002], especially pp. 173, 183 and Stevenson [2011], especially p. 186): In Liv. X 23,

the female cult of *pudicitia* is presented as a counterpart to male *virtus*, but as Val. Max. VI 1.1 shows, Lucretia disrupts such a binary system. The role-play in Petron. 9.5 by the male characters Encolpius, Giton, and Ascyltos is, of course, not to be neglected. There is also Mart. I 90, an epigram about a transgressive woman named Bassa, who initially seems to be chaste, like a second Lucretia, but is subsequently unmasked as a lesbian *fututor* who imitates (either with her huge clitoris or by other means) male penetration and *adulterium*. Mart. XI 16.9–10 presents an ostensibly chaste Lucretia who secretly reads the poet's titillating poems. Mart. XI 104, a plea to a timid and modest *uxor*, meditates on the daily routine of decency and the obscene activities at night, which finds its climax in the character of Lucretia in lines 21–22. The late antique rhetorician Emporius (574.7) describes Lucretia's self-inflicted wound as a sign of gender crossing (*de deliberativa materia*).

 7 Cf. Klindienst (1990) p. 60. The fact that the magistrate is accused of *iniuria* proves that this *controversia* and cross-dressing as its main theme raise questions about self-representation: how the hero wants his gender identity to be categorised, remembered, and recounted by future generations. The theme is remodelled in the eleventh declamation by Choricius of Gaza; see Penella (2013) pp. 242–243, who does not see any critical potential in the theme of cross-dressing at all.

 8 For standard criticism of and polemics against declamation, cf. Fairweather (1981) pp. 132–149; Berti (2007) pp. 212–247.

 9 Like a shadow or a copy of the real thing, *iudiciorum consiliorumque imago* (Quint. *Inst*. II 10.12), a *supervacua artis imitatio* (20.3), or like a dream (X 5.17; Sen. *Contr*. III praef. 12). For the semantics of 'effeminate *umbra*', see Moretti (2010) pp. 84–99 and Berti (2010).

10 Even if such evaluations were understandable, they would nevertheless be false, given the intellectual and socio-cultural functions of declamation as a basis of communication, a propaedeutic exercise for public speech, and cognitive meta-training (cf. Walde [2001] p. 969).

11 Cf. Wyke (1994) p. 144; Plaut. *Most*. 273–295; Cic. *Att*. II 1.1; see also Connolly (1998) p. 132.

12 For the rhetorical trope of virile and feminine 'dressing', cf. Moretti (2010) pp. 81–84; for the dress code of Roman orators, see Quint. *Inst*. XI 3.137–149: orators seemingly had to find the right balance between a masculine yet elegant look; see also Connolly's (1998) p. 144 discussion of the eunuch as a disconcerting rhetorical trope in Quint. *Inst*. II 5.10–12; V 12.17–20.

13 The declaimer is regarded as being in continual danger of becoming an actor, as stated, for example, in Sen. *Contr*. III praef. 3 about Severus Cassius; see also Quint. *Inst*. II 10.8; Ps.-Longin. *Subl*. XV 8; cf. Richlin (1997) pp. 99–100; Fantham (2002). In Quint. *Inst*. III 8.51, the declaimer's 'acting duties' are depicted more positively in the context of *ethopoeia*: *enimvero praecipue declamatoribus considerandum est, quid cuique personae conveniat*. For forms of impersonation, see also Quint. *Inst*. III 8.49–54; IX 2.29–37; IX 2.58–63; XI 1.41.

14 For a discussion of transvestism on the Roman stage, see Gold (1998).

15 Cf. Fairweather (1981) pp. 151–152; Ps.-Quint. *Decl*. CCLX 1: *in plerisque controversiis plerumque hoc quaerere solemus, utrum ipsorum persona utamur ad dicendum, an advocati: vel propter sexum, sicut [in] feminis, vel propter aliquam alioqui vitae vel ipsius, de quo quaeritur, facti deformitatem.*

16 Sen. *Contr*. V 6: *Apud patres nostros qui forensia stipendia auspicabantur, nefas putabatur bracchium toga exerere.*

17 Cf. Cic. *Brut*. 52; Sen. *Epist* 114; Quint. *Inst*. XI 1.30; Sussman (1978) pp. 85–89, 95–97, 107–111; Fairweather (1981) pp. 50–73. Cf. also Quint. *Inst*. VIII 3.6: *Sed hic ornatus (repetam enim) virilis et fortis et sanctus sit nec effeminatam levitatem et fuco ementitum colorem amet: sanguine et viribus niteat.*

18 Cf. Sen. *Contr*. I praef. 9 (Cato's famous words: *orator est, Marce fili, vir bonus dicendi peritus*) and 10 (Seneca's order: *Ite nunc et in istis vulsis atque expolitis et nusquam nisi in libidine viris quaerite oratores*). I would argue that nowadays it is mostly agreed that such attacks do not depict oratorical realities, but rather constitute a witty form of declamation against declamation. Cf. Soverini (1985) p. 1731, concerning the beginning of the *Satyrica*, and Gunderson (2003) p. 37, who has an almost identical perspective on Seneca's *praefatio* in Book I of the *controversiae*. To take it a step further: what I am doing here can certainly be called a declamation on declamation on declamation.

19 Beard (1993), especially p. 56.

20 In this vein: Richlin (1997); Bloomer (1997a); Connolly (1998); Gunderson (2000; 2003); Connolly (2007); Corbeill (2007).

21 Similarly, Lentano (1999) p. 571; Ronning (2007) p. 51.

22 See Imber (2008) p. 164, who considers declamation as a kind of catalogue of morals and appropriate behaviour; Bloomer (1997a) p. 58 argues that behind declamation's troubling surface lies a projected "idealized social and family order"; cf. Connolly (1998) p. 148; Kaster (2001) pp. 325–326.

23 Much like the brothel visits which are praised by Cato as a system-stabilising practice (cf. Hor. *Sat*. I 2.31–35). Declamation, therefore, is seen as a kind of adolescent test-run before choosing the 'real' and honourable role in life; cf. Cic. *Off*. I 32.117. In Sen. *Contr*. V 6, the defender of the raped cross-dresser also argues that the act of cross-dressing is just a test-run and quite a common adolescent joke: *Constat semper gravem, semper serium fuisse, sed hoc iocis adulescentium factum est*. For further discussion of this declamation, see Andrea Raggi, Chapter 2 in this volume.

24 For declamation as a show and a literary and theatrical entertainment, cf. Sussman (1978), especially p. 133; Berti (2007) pp. 149–154, 178–182; Hömke (2009).

25 Cf. also, for example, Sen. *Contr*. I praef. 8–9; 21: *utilissima est dissimulata subtilitas quae effectu apparet, habitu latet*; Ps.-Quint. *Decl*. CCLXX 2.

26 Sen. *Contr*. I praef. 21: *Ipsa enim actio multas latebras habet, nec facile potest, si quo loco subtilitas defuit, apparere, cum orationis cursus audientis iudicium impediat, dicentis abscondat. at ubi nuda proponuntur membra, si quid aut numero aut ordine excidit, manifestum est.*

27 Discussions of appropriate dress are to be found, for example, in Sen. *Contr*. I praef. 21; II 1.24, 5.7, 6.2, 7.4, excerpt. 7; V 6.

28 As Raval (2002) p. 150 points out, transvestism or cross-dressing "disrupts binary categories such as man and woman by creating a disjunction between the anatomy of the performer and the gender being performed".

29 *Venalicius cum Brundisi gregem venalium e navi educeret, formoso et pretioso puero, quod portitores verebatur, bullam et praetextam togam imposuit; facile fallaciam celavit. Romam venitur, res cognita est, petitur puer quod domini voluntate fuerit in libertate* (Suet. *Rhet*. 25.9).

30 The main sources for this historical incident are Cic. *Cato* 42; Liv. XXXIX 42–43; Val. Max. II 9.3; Plut. *Cato Maior* XVII 2–6; *Flamin*. XVIII 2–XIX 4. Cato the Elder kicked Lucius out of the senate because of this misconduct in office in order to attack his more prominent brother Titus Quinctius Flamininus. Cf. Braund (1998) pp. 14–18; Pfeilschifter (2005) pp. 370–378.

31 Sen. *Contr*. IX 2.1: *obicio histrionum iocos*; IX 2.8: *Quid ego nunc referam, iudices, ludorum genera, saltationes et illud dedecoris certamen, praetorne se mollius moveret an meretrix?*

32 *Licet qua quis velit veste uti; si praetor ius in veste servili vel muliebri dixerit, violabit maiestatem*. Cf. Cicero's words about the different duties of a public and private *persona* in *Off*. I 34.124.

33 The declaimers use *meretrix* (*passim*), *scortum* (IX 2,7, 8), *muliercula* (IX 2.8), *obscena puella* (IX 2.9) and also *amica* (IX 2.11), thereby echoing both the different traditions and Cato the Elder's invective, who arguably changed the woman into a male lover in order to discredit Lucius morally for his effeminacy, as well as the general reversal of roles (cf. Pfeilschifter [2005] pp. 376–377). Livy relates two versions, speaking of both a *Philippum Poenum, carum ac nobile scortum* (Cato the Elder) and a *famosam mulierem* (Valerius Antias). Cicero (*Cato* 42) uses *scortum*, while Valerius Maximus (II 9.3) talks about a *muliercula* and *meretrix*. Plutarch several times speaks of *meirákion* (*Cato Maior* XVII 2–6) and *meirakískos* (*Flamin.* XVIII 3), but is also informed about Valerius Antias' version (*Flamin.* XVIII 4).

34 Parallels to the meta-theatre of the disguise-loving and gender-debating comedies of Aristophanes or Plautus are obvious. Cf. Enrico Medda, Chapter 9 in this volume.

35 Cf. Sen. *Contr.* IX 3.13: *qui non fuerunt contenti unius linguae eloquentia: cum Latine declamaverant, toga posita sumpto pallio quasi persona mutata rediebant et Graece declamabant*.

36 Connolly (1998) p. 136.

37 As Cicero puts it in *Off.* I 36.130–37.135, it must have been difficult for the elite male to keep his own dignity at the right level of decency exactly between female adornment (too much) and rustic negligence (not enough). Everything (body, movement, gesture) could be read as a sign of either maleness or effeminacy (cf. Sen. *Epist.* 52.12).

38 Cf. Hömke (2009) pp. 253–254, who argues that certain rhetorical *praecepta* are at times picked up within the declamations themselves and discussed or questioned for entertaining purposes.

39 Gunderson (2003) p. 39.

40 Cf. Bloomer (1997b) pp. 212–213. The role-play already begins with the declaimer's imitation of former famous orators, defined as a necessity in Sen. *Contr.* I praef. 6.

41 Connolly (1998) pp. 130–131; for quite a similar argument, Moretti (2010) p. 84.

42 Cf. Moretti (2010) pp. 81–84.

43 This is defined by Bloomer (1997a) p. 70 as "familial and social injury", and by Gall (2003) p. 110 as "Prototypen bürgerlicher Alpträume".

44 Cf. Bloomer (1997a) p. 67 and Imber (2001) pp. 208–209, who both show declamation's tendency to exhibit conflicting *personae* and transgressions of categories.

45 Cf. Bloomer (1997b) p. 200, (1997a) pp. 62–64; Imber (2001) pp. 209–212, (2008) p. 164. See also Kraus (2007) pp. 463–464, who has reasonable doubts about this theory.

46 That is why the didactic intention of Seneca the Elder's collection of excerpts is as follows (Sen. *Contr.* I praef. 6): *primum quia, quo plura exempla inspecta sunt, plus in eloquentia proficitur*.

47 Kaster (2001) p. 335.

48 Pagán (2007/2008) p. 165. Cf. Ronning (2007) pp. 55–56, 79, who argues rather that normative role models such as *pater familias*, *casta puella*, *pius filius*, *matrona univira* underpin the conflicts intrinsic to declamation.

49 Cf. Fairweather (1981) p. 195 on Sen. *Contr.* I 2.23 (*obscenitate et verborum et sensuum*); fittingly, this *controversia* is about someone *qui tribadas deprehendit et occidit*. Cf. also Sen. *Contr.* IV praef. 9: *Quaedam enim scholae iam quasi obscena refugiunt nec, si qua sordidiora sunt aut ex cotidiano usu repetita, possunt pati*.

50 Packman (1999) p. 20. According to this reading, Seneca the Younger appears to follow in his father's footsteps by attacking transgressive and 'unnatural' ways of living such as transvestism in Sen. *Epist.* 122.

51 We must not confuse the dispute, which always offers, at least in the performative framework of role-playing, a for *and* an against with one-sided polemics against (gender) transgressions or transvestism, even if written in satirical mode; cf. Narducci (1991) p. 128; Berti (2007) pp. 28–29; Lentano (2011) pp. 226–229.

52 Cf. Lentano (2011) pp. 231–232, who argues that declamation challenges central values and models; Lentano (1998) p. 23 is quite similar. Cf. also Ronning (2007) p. 80, a fairly experimental concept of once-fixed role models which are set in motion by the declaimer.

53 Hömke (2002) pp. 281–282 raises the same question and thereby criticises the focus of recent socio-cultural scholarship on declamation's supposedly sole function as elite production. For declamation as an instrument for political critique, cf. Gall (2003), especially pp. 125–126; Lentano (2011) pp. 219–226.

11 *Imperatrix* and *bellatrix*

Cicero's Clodia and Vergil's Camilla

Bobby Xinyue

Introduction

Male-to-female cross-dressing in the literature of the late Republic and the Augustan age has attracted scholarly attention since the late 1990s.[1] Less attention, however, has been given to female-to-male cross-dressing. Raval examined one such case: the story of Iphis in Book 9 (704–797) of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Raval argues that this sole instance of female-to-male cross-dressing in the *Metamorphoses* – in contrast to numerous instances of male-to-female cross-dressing in the poem – suggests that Ovid, and Roman society as a whole, were less concerned about femininity than masculinity; and that, although female-to-male cross-dressing challenges and 'denaturalises' gender binaries, the Iphis story nevertheless highlights how social institutions such as marriage rely on apparent gender binaries.[2] More recently, DeBrohun offers a useful analysis of the female characters in Book 4 of Propertius who express a desire to cross-dress or take on characteristically male roles or traits, namely Arethusa (4.3) and Tarpeia (4.4). She argues that these characters use changes of clothes – real or imagined – as a sort of 'enabling strategy' to attempt an identity switch, thereby crossing between the worlds of *amor* and *Roma*.[3]

The works of Raval and DeBrohun are emblematic of the approaches scholars usually take when studying female-to-male cross-dressing in Latin literature: using one or one set of example(s) from a single author to reflect on transgender discourse in that author or genre. Subsequently, their conclusions, though very persuasive in their individual settings and innovatively highlighting the dynamic between gender and genre in Latin poetry, might not be applicable when taken out of their immediate literary context. Despite their limitations, the arguments of Raval and DeBrohun demonstrate reliably that ancient literary representation of cross-dressing illuminates the negotiation between sexual transgression and social convention.[4] Latin authors such as Propertius and Ovid clearly used the themes of cross-dressing and sexual transgression to reflect on gender constructions in Roman society at a time when the Augustan moral legislation set out exactly what was expected from men and women.[5] Literary representations of transvestism, as Raval and DeBrohun (and, more generally, Garber) have shown, provoke debate on the performance of gendered roles, and carve out a

space (known as 'the third' in Garber's Lacanian terminology) for challenging conventional idea(l)s about women.[6]

This chapter will build on and enrich the conclusions of the works of Raval, Debrohun, and others by examining two further examples of female-to-male cross-dressing in Latin literature, namely Clodia from Cicero's *Pro Caelio* and Camilla from Vergil's *Aeneid*, in order to demonstrate some patterns in the represent-ation of female-to-male cross-dressing.[7] Cicero's defence speech was given in April 56 BCE,[8] and Vergil's epic was published in 19 BCE; during this time the political landscape of Rome changed considerably. This chapter will interpret the cross-dressing of these two female characters within the context of the works in which they appear – bearing in mind the generic conventions and the structure of each work – and integrate its readings into the socio-political setting in which these two works were created. By adopting this approach, I will argue that these two instances of female-to-male cross-dressing are presented in a way that condemns any attempt by women to enter the world of men; and when female-to-male cross-dressing falters, which is the case for both Clodia and Camilla, the female cross-dresser is explicitly sexualised or cruelly mocked. I will suggest that this pattern has much to do with the perception that elite women were, during this period, increasing their participation in the male-dominated political world. In light of this, our male authors' unsympathetic depiction of these female-to-male cross-dressing episodes, especially their emphasis on the female failure to cross-dress convincingly as men, can be interpreted as an attempt to put women 'back in their place'.

Clodia the *imperatrix*

In Cicero's *Pro Caelio*, Clodia Metelli is not depicted literally as a female cross-dresser at any point; nor do we have evidence that she ever cross-dressed.[9] However, at points in the speech, Clodia is characterised as the female head of her household (*matrem familias*, §32; *mater familias*, §57) and thus takes on a role that usually belongs to men.[10] Towards the end of the speech, Cicero further mascu-linises Clodia by calling her an *imperatrix* (§67), which conjures up in the audience's mind the image of Clodia dressed as a general, with strong associations with war and hyper-masculine clothes. Cicero's use of *imperatrix* here represents the first and only attestation of this word in Classical Latin;[11] and the context in which this word appears makes it important for our discussion.

In sections 56–69 of the speech, Cicero defends Caelius against the charge of poisoning. The prosecution alleged that Clodia had discovered Caelius' plan to murder Dio, the leader of the Alexandrian deputation sent to Rome in 57 BCE to plead against the restoration of Ptolemy XII Auletes; wishing to conceal the crime, Caelius therefore attempted to poison Clodia with the help of her slaves. In his refutation, Cicero adopts a three-step approach, which Dyck usefully summar-ises in his commentary.[12] First, Cicero casts doubt on Caelius' motive for wanting to poison Clodia (§56). Then, he diverts attention from the prosecution's narrative of Caelius' testing of the poison on a slave with an emotional outburst about Clodia's

(alleged) poisoning of her husband Metellus Celer (§59–60). Finally, Cicero reduces *ad absurdum* the prosecution's claims about the plan for Caelius' friend Licinius to pass the poison to Clodia's slaves at the Senian Baths, whereby Clodia's agents were to catch Licinius in the act (§61–62) – but the agents burst out of hiding prematurely and Licinius escaped (§63). Cicero focuses on the agents' failure to capture Licinius (§64–65) and portrays the events which took place at the baths as shambolic, illogical, and lacking plausible strategic coordination; in doing so, he asserts that the (prospective) testimony of Clodia's agents cannot be trusted (§66). It is at this point – at the height of his mockery of the agents' inept performance as witnesses to the transmittal of poison – that Cicero refers to Clodia's men first as *lautos iuvenes mulieris beatae ac nobilis familiares* ('elegant young men, the friends of a wealthy and noble lady', §67); and then, improbably but vividly, as *fortes viros ab imperatrice in insidiis atque in praesidio balnearum collocatos* ('valiant warriors stationed by their commandress in a fortified ambush at the baths', §67). Cicero's representation of Clodia both as an elite woman (*mulieris beatae ac nobilis*) and the female mastermind behind an ambush (*imperatrix*) lays the groundwork for making a final gibe at Clodia and her agents, as the orator goes on to question, sarcastically, how and where the agents hid themselves: *alveusne ille an equus Troianus fuerit qui tot invictos viros muliebre bellum gerentes tulerit ac texerit* ('whether it was the famous bath-tub or a Trojan horse that carried and concealed so many invincible heroes waging a woman's war', §67).

The similar language of *fortes viros* and *invictos viros*, together with the military imagery associated with each phrase, encourage the audience to connect the *imperatrix*, who is responsible for the action of the *fortes viri*, with the woman behind the *muliebre bellum* waged by the *invicti viri*, namely Helen. Both the *imperatrix* and Helen are the cause of armed conflicts that culminate in a sinister plan: the former devises an ambush at the baths; the latter sets in motion a warfare that concluded with the use of the *equus Troianus*. By connecting Clodia in her role as *imperatrix* with Helen, Cicero indirectly elicits a comparison between the respective roles of the two women in instigating these 'wars'. Unlike Helen, who in the Trojan War is the prize fought over by men, Clodia is presented by Cicero as the leader of men; and while Helen is arguably the emblem of sexualised femininity *par excellence*, Clodia is presented as masculinised. Through this implicit comparison, Cicero stresses that Clodia is stepping into a role that is the very opposite of the female; yet at the same time, she is assessed with regard to (the) femininity (of Helen): Clodia's metaphorical cross-dressing is therefore to an extent construed as a perversion of the female sex, rather than any success in taking on a different, stronger male role. Clodia's inadequate attempt to fully embody a male role is further suggested by her absence from the 'military' action itself, as Cicero does not name her throughout section 67. The absence of Clodia's name in Cicero's portrayal of her as an *imperatrix* implicitly highlights the ideas of disguise and role-playing, which are particularly apt in a speech that opens with the theme of theatrical performance.[13]

The portrait of Clodia as a powerful woman in male military garb, cross-dressed to control the action of men from behind the scenes, conveys a salient point about

the dynamic between men and women. The connection between Clodia's subduing of men and her operating away from public scrutiny is already present in Cicero's usage of the word *familiaris* (§67, 'intimate', *Oxford Latin Dictionary* s.v. 4) in his first description of Clodia's agents.[14] This adjective anticipates the comparison between Clodia and Helen later in the section, making the text pregnant with sexual connotations, and especially the idea of seduction. As Cicero develops the two prominent aspects of his initial portrayal of Clodia – that is, occupying a position of power (*beatae ac nobilis*) and 'intimate' with her men (*familiares*) – by later calling her an *imperatrix* on the one hand, and comparing her to Helen on the other, Cicero alleges that Clodia may have used her female sexuality to affect the goings-on in a predominantly male environment – the public baths. Clodia is clearly a woman, but her femininity and elite status allow her to control men; and by emphasising her authority over men, Cicero portrays her as an *imperatrix* manipulating *fortes viri*. Men who come under the military command of a woman can hardly be considered *fortes*; indeed, Cicero's sarcastic repetition of *viri* (*fortes viros*; *invictos viros*) draws attention to their lack of manliness. Clodia's attempt to take on a male identity, it seems, has stripped real men of their masculinity. The imagined cross-dressing of Clodia thus helps the orator to highlight the unusual power of this woman, who, in Cicero's eyes, is corrupting the men around her, fighting her way into an exclusively male space, and posing a threat to the world of men.

The image of Clodia as a sinister *imperatrix* here towards the end of Cicero's speech caps a number of earlier depictions of her in which the orator alludes to famous women who took up deadly weapons. In section 18, Cicero refers to Clodia as *Palatina Medea*, thus comparing her to the terrifying woman driven by her passion to take excessive revenge against the man who had rejected her.[15] In section 62, while questioning how Clodia managed to smuggle her fully-dressed male agents into the public baths, Cicero carefully chooses the phrase 'by means of her usual one-penny transaction' (*quadrantaria illa permutatione*), which not only alleges that she negotiated this act of human smuggling through sexual favours, but also recalls a remark that Caelius made in his defence speech where he described Clodia as 'the one-penny Clytemnestra' (*quadrantaria Clytemnestra*; cf. Quin. *Inst.* 8.6.53).[16] Additionally, it should be noted that both Medea and Clytemnestra are, like Clodia, imagined as apparently aspiring to military roles. In Euripides' *Medea*, the protagonist herself rejects the role of the woman as ἀθλιώτατον ('most wretched', Eur. *Med.* 232), and claims that she would rather stand in battle three times than once bear a child (250–251); and in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Cassandra envisages Clytemnestra after killing her husband crying out as if she were a soldier rejoicing in a routed enemy (Aesch. *Ag.* 1236–1237). Cicero's depiction of Clodia as *imperatrix*, therefore, literalises this metaphorical language and makes Clodia the embodiment of the unnatural rejection of femininity with which these two notorious figures from Greek tragedy are associated.

In between these two references to Medea (§18) and Clytemnestra (§62), Cicero conjures up an image of Clodia as a deranged woman at the head of a household, thereby substantiating the links between Clodia, Medea, and Clytemnestra. For example, in section 35, Cicero directly questions Clodia's sanity: 'in what

appears to be a moment of sheer, unbridled madness you have wanted all this brought up in the forum and in court' (*quae tu quoniam mente nescio qua effrenata atque praecipiti in forum deferri iudiciumque voluisti*); and twice in the speech, Cicero refers to Clodia as *mater familias* (§32 and §57). Leen points out that Cicero's emphasis on Clodia's position as the *mater familias* of a previously distinguished Roman household, which now lacks an authoritative male presence, puts Clodia at the centre of 'public chaos and political anarchy'.[17] By being at the head of a *domus*, Clodia is seen as taking control of what is supposed to be owned by men, thereby destabilising the gender and socio-political status quo, which lies at the heart of Cicero's vision of a healthy Republic. In this way, Cicero's portrayal of Clodia as a larger-than-life *mater familias*, in conjunction with his comparisons of her to Medea and Clytemnestra, serves to alienate, demonise, and masculinise Clodia's character, which subsequently makes his portrayal of her as an *imperatrix* more probable.

Yet this depiction of Clodia as a dangerous, warlike 'woman in drag' is quite clearly facetious. Prior to calling Clodia an *imperatrix* in section 67, Cicero argues (§64–65) that the prosecution's claim that Clodia's agents leapt out of their hiding place in the baths prematurely makes no sense – much like an ill-conceived play without a proper plot or ending: *velut haec tota fabella veteris et plurimarum fabularum poetriae quam est sine argumento, quam nullum invenire exitum potest!* 'Take, for instance, this little drama, the work of an experienced poetess with a great many plays to her credit: how devoid it is of plot, how lacking in any proper dénouement!' (§64). In section 65, he goes on: *mimi ergo est iam exitus, non fabulae; in quo cum clausula non invenitur, fugit aliquis e manibus, deinde scabilla concrepant, aulaeum tollitur.* 'So here we have the conclusion, not of a proper play, but of mime – of the sort in which, when no one has managed to devise a satisfactory ending, someone escapes from somebody else's clutches, the clappers sound, and up goes the curtain.'

The phrase used to refer to Clodia, *veteris . . . poetriae* (§64), conveys Cicero's deep disdain for the orchestrator of the ambush – a farcical event which he deems to be a *fabella*, a mime (*mimi*, §65).[18] Yet the reference to a mime has a further point, since the women's parts in mime were often played by *meretrices*.[19] Thus the theatrical metaphor not only recalls Cicero's frequent portrayal of Clodia as a *meretrix* throughout the speech (cf. §1, 37–38, 48–50, 57), but also sees Clodia transformed swiftly from playwright (*veteris . . . poetriae*) to actor, who will then go on to play the role of *imperatrix* in Cicero's own rendition of 'The Farce at the Baths'.

The figure of the *imperatrix* is thus improbable and even farcical, but at the same time deadly, threatening to strip men of their masculinity as she transgresses the limitations placed on women's activities and powers. Cicero's depiction of a cross-dressed Clodia perhaps points to his (and his Roman audience's) deep distrust of and total contempt for the kind of women who, in their eyes, have acted in ways that breached what is considered acceptable for the Roman *matrona*. Yet even as Clodia is portrayed as a masculine *imperatrix*, she remains strongly associated with sexualised female figures such as Helen. Although Cicero's Clodia rejects the role of the ideal Roman *matrona*, her attempt to embody its opposite,

in the guise of a man and military general, instead results in her becoming a different antithesis to the *matrona* – one that is closely linked with the degrading language of *meretrix*. In this respect, the transgression of Clodia also underlines her inability to convincingly self-masculinise, and the implausibility of a woman fully overcoming her sexuality.

Camilla the *bellatrix*

Another example of female cross-dressing comes in the form of Camilla in Vergil's *Aeneid*.[20] Appearing last in the catalogue of Italian forces at the end of Book 7, Vergil introduces Camilla as a weapon-bearing *bellatrix*:

> *hos super advenit Volsca de gente Camilla*
> *agmen agens equitum et florentis aere catervas,*
> *bellatrix, non illa colo calathisve Minervae*
> *femineas adsueta manus, sed proelia virgo*
> *dura pati cursuque pedum praevertere ventos.*
> *. . .*
>
> *illam omnis tectis agrisque effusa iuventus*
> *turbaque miratur matrum et prospectat euntem,*
> *attonitis inhians animis ut regius ostro*
> *velet honos levis umeros, ut fibula crinem*
> *auro internectat, Lyciam ut gerat ipsa pharetram*
> *et pastoralem praefixa cuspide myrtum.*

> Last of all came Camilla, the warrior maiden of the Volsci, leading a cavalry squadron flowering in bronze. Not for her girlish hands the distaff and wool-basket of Minerva. She was a maid inured to battle, of a fleetness of foot to race the winds. . . . Young men streamed from house and field and mothers came thronging to gaze at her as she went, lost in wonderment at the royal splendour of the purple veiling the smoothness of her shoulders, her hair weaving round its gold clasp, her Lycian quiver and the shepherd's staff of myrtle wood with the head of a lance.
>
> (Book 7, lines 803–807, 812–817; transl. D. West)

The *bellatrix* is instantly presented as diametrically opposed to the *matrona*, whose presence in the passage is hinted at by the words *turbaque . . . matrum* (line 813) immediately following *iuventus* in the previous line (thus collectively suggesting family wholesomeness). Camilla spends her time on the battlefields (*agmen agens equitum*, line 804), unknown to marriage (*virgo*, line 806) and unsuited to the task of weaving (lines 805–806). Her lack of interest or skill in *lanificium* 'precludes her from any association with the faithful passivity so valued by Roman men in their women'.[21] In connection with this, it should be noted that a married Roman woman usually wears a garment over the tunic known as the *stola*, which Latin authors often mention in their writing as a shorthand for all the virtues of the ideal

wife (cf. Ov. *AA* 1.31–32; Martial 1.35.8–9); and over the tunic and *stola*, a woman can wear a mantle, known as a *palla*, which covers the head (if required) and wraps the body for both warmth and modesty.[22] Here, Camilla's costume could not be further from the dress code of the *matrona*: she dons a purple cloak, her hair is fastened in gold, and she carries a quiver and a spear (lines 816–817).

Camilla's appearance as a *bellatrix* in striking military costume evokes, on the one hand, the Amazon warrior-queen Penthesilea, who is also described as a *bellatrix* (Book 1, line 493) and with whom Camilla is later explicitly compared (Book 11, line 662); and on the other hand, Dido, *dux femina facti* (Book 1, line 364), whose outfit for the hunt in Book 4 (lines 136–139) is virtually identical to that of Camilla.[23] By aligning Camilla with Penthesilea (both of whom appear last in their respective catalogue), Vergil portrays Camilla as un-Roman and alien; and her 'otherness' is further reinforced by the similar outfits worn by her and Dido, the queen and founder of Carthage, future enemy of Rome.[24] Importantly, the language used by Vergil to describe Camilla's entry (*advenit*, line 803) and the gathering of onlookers (*effusa*, line 812) strongly suggests the ceremony of the *adventus* of a great Republican commander.[25] But instead the crowd sees – or, more accurately, is awe-struck by (*miratur*, line 813) – a woman in male military uniform, exotic and eye-catching: she is a μέγα θαῦμα.[26] Thus, set against the background of a conventional and typically Roman public occasion, filled with a nameless but familiar crowd of married women and youths, the entry of Camilla – a strikingly dressed *bellatrix* – destabilises the roles of men and women in military-political rituals. For the contemporary readers of the *Aeneid*, the entry of the cross-dressed Camilla can be seen as a transgression of Roman norms, an intrusion of the 'other' into the male domain of warfare and military rituals that challenges the power, prominence, and authority of men.

Readers encounter an image of the infant Camilla in a speech by Diana in Book 11, where the goddess reveals that Camilla's father, Metabus, dedicated his child to her when Camilla was still a baby (lines 557–566), and that Camilla was armed with a spear and a quiver as soon as she could walk (*utque pedum primis infans vestigia plantis | institerat, iaculo palmas armavit acuto | spiculaque ex umero parvae suspendit et arcum*, lines 573–575). Diana then goes on to say (lines 576–577): 'Instead of gold in her hair and a long cloak to cover her, a tiger skin hung from her head all down her back' (*pro crinali auro, pro longae tegmine pallae | tigridis exuviae per dorsum a vertice pendent*). Scholars have noted an apparent inconsistency between the absence of a gold hairpin here in the description of the outfit of the infant Camilla (cf. *pro crinali auro*) and the prominent gold hairpin worn by the adult Camilla, which caught the eye of onlookers in Book 7 (*ut fibula crinem | auro internectat*, lines 815–816).[27] Further, the animal skins worn in Book 11 by the infant Camilla (*tegmine . . .| tigridis*), which symbolise her wild upbringing as a huntress and removal from civilised society (*Strymoniamque gruem aut album deiecit olorem*, '[she] shoots the white swan or crane from the river Strymon', line 580), are swapped for a purple cloak of Volscian royalty in Book 7 (*ut regius ostro | velet honos levis umeros*, lines 814–815). The discrepancies between Camilla's outfits should not be explained away simply by saying that

one might expect the leader of a contingent to wear distinguishable clothing.[28] Rather, the acquisition of gold ornament and purple garment by the adult Camilla evokes the notion of alien effeminacy,[29] which itself is predicated on the 'natural' difference between male and female.[30] Numanus Remulus in Book 9, for example, extols Italian men for hardiness and tough upbringing (lines 603–613), while taunting Ascanius that the Trojans' clothing and pastimes betray their womanly character:

> *vobis picta croco et fulgenti murice vestis,*
> *desidiae cordi, iuvat indulgere choreis,*
> *et tunicae manicas et habent redimicula mitrae.*
> *o vere Phrygiae, neque enim Phryges, ite per alta*
> *Dindyma, ubi adsuetis biforem dat tibia cantum.*
> *tympana vos buxusque vocat Berecyntia Matris*
> *Idaeae; sinite arma viris et cedite ferro.*

> You like your clothes dyed with yellow saffron and the bright juice of the purple fish. Your delight is in dancing and idleness. You have sleeves to your tunics and ribbons to keep your bonnets on. You are Phrygian women, not Phrygian men! Away with you over the heights of Mount Dindymus, where you can hear your favourite tunes on the double pipe. The tambourines are calling you and the boxwood fifes of the Berecyntian Mother of Mount Ida. Leave weapons to the men. Make way for the iron of our swords.
>
> (Book 9, lines 614–620; transl. D. West)

Gold and purple in the Trojans' clothing (line 614) characterise their eastern effeminacy; only women, not men, are supposed to be associated with such brightly coloured, dainty clothes (line 617). Importantly, the concluding words of Numanus, *sinite arma viris* (line 620), map this 'orientalist' and gendered dichotomy onto the literary project of the *Aeneid* (cf. *Arma virumque cano*, Book 1, line 1).[31] Against this background, the figure of Camilla, who had been armed since childhood and eventually matured into a *bellatrix*, 'calls into question the convention of feminine *mollitia* in its transgression of the norms of gender and genre'.[32] Yet it can also be said that the adult Camilla's incorporation of gold and purple into her costume is an act that is typical of women: her undomesticated upbringing as a wild huntress does not fully prevent her from acting out her femininity in adulthood. Previously in Book 7, the description of Camilla in the catalogue hints at a female intrusion into the male arena of war and the subversion of male power; now, in light of the image of the infant Camilla in Book 11, and the speech of Numanus in Book 9, readers may begin to question whether Camilla can truly enter the world of men and undermine male authority. Camilla appears to be no more than gold and purple femaleness clad in *arma*, a woman in men's clothes (while the Trojans are men with an outwardly effeminate appearance).

   Both the femaleness of Camilla and the Trojans' effeminacy receive further attention later in Book 11 when Camilla encounters an elaborately dressed Trojan opponent called Chloreus on the battlefield:

> *forte sacer Cybelo Chloreus olimque sacerdos*
> *insignis longe Phrygiis fulgebat in armis*
> *spumantemque agitabat equum, quem pellis aënis*
> *in plumam squamis auro conserta tegebat.*
> *ipse peregrina ferrugine clarus et ostro*
> *spicula torquebat Lycio Gortynia cornu;*
> *aureus ex umeris erat arcus et aurea vati*
> *cassida; tum croceam chlamydemque sinusque crepantis*
> *carbaseos fulvo in nodum collegerat auro*
> *pictus acu tunicas et barbara tegmina crurum.*
> *hunc virgo, sive ut templis praefigeret arma*
> *Troïa, captivo sive ut se ferret in auro*
> *venatrix, unum ex omni certamine pugnae*
> *caeca sequebatur totumque incauta per agmen*
> *femineo praedae et spoliorum ardebat amore*

It then so chanced that Chloreus appeared, a man who had been consecrated to Cybele on her mountain, and in days long past had been a priest. She saw him a long way off, resplendent in his Phrygian armour and spurring his foaming warhorse. The horse-cloth was of hide with gold stitching and over-lapping brass scales in the shape of feathers. He himself shone with exotic indigo and purple. The arrows he shot from his Lycian bow were from Gortyn in Crete and the bow hanging from his shoulder was of gold. Gold too was the helm on the head of the priest, and on that day he had gathered the rustling linen folds of his saffron-yellow cloak into a knot with a golden brooch. He wore an embroidered tunic and barbaric embroidered trousers covered his legs. Whether her intention was to nail his Trojan armour to the temple doors or to sport captive gold on her hunting expeditions, she picked him out in the press of battle, and blind to all else and unthinking, she tracked him through the whole army, burning with all a woman's passion for spoil and plunder.

<div align="right">(Book 11, lines 768–782; transl. D. West)</div>

Earlier in Book 11, Camilla is depicted as carrying a golden bow and weapons belonging to Diana (*aureus ex umero sonat arcus et arma Dianae*, 'the golden bow and arrows of Diana rang on her shoulder', line 652), which she later describes as 'womanly' (*muliebribus armis*, line 687).[33] This detail crucially demonstrates that Camilla is well aware of her own femininity despite her outwardly male appearance and military attire. In the passage above from Book 11, Chloreus is decked in gold from head to toe; his former occupation as a priest of Cybele (line 768) moreover suggests that he is a eunuch, the ultimate effeminate man.[34] Upon seeing Chloreus, Camilla is said to be caught between two minds (lines 778–780): either to dedicate the arms of Chloreus in the temples, which is an 'impeccable Roman usage' of war spoils, or to vaunt herself in captured gold, which is not a Roman practice but an option taken up by epic heroes.[35] Yet the delayed appearance of the word *venatrix* (line 780), following *auro* (line 779), dramatically undercuts the heroic aspect of wearing spoils, since it recalls the image of the infant Camilla whose outfit lacked

any kind of gold. The collocation of *auro | venatrix* thus again hints at the idea of feminine self-adornment, which becomes apparent in line 782, as Vergil explicitly attributes Camilla's reckless pursuit of Chloreus' golden weaponry to her gender (*femineo . . . amore*). It is Camilla's innate womanly self that made her susceptible to its fatal attractions.[36]

The femaleness of Camilla is fully recognised in the scene of her death later in Book 11. Vergil tells us that Arruns threw a spear at Camilla as she chased Chloreus, which 'fixed itself under her exposed nipple and, driven deep, drank of her virgin blood' (*hasta sub exsertam donec perlata papillam | haesit virgineumque alte bibit acta cruorem*, lines 803–804). Throughout the *Aeneid*, as we have seen, Vergil desexualises Camilla: she is a *bellatrix* and a *venatrix*, uninterested in and unsuited to the tasks and life-trajectory of traditional womanhood. Yet in her moment of death, Camilla is explicitly sexualised and re-feminised. The image of a virgin losing blood from her nipple evokes simultaneously the defloration of a bride and the act of suckling.[37] The fact that Camilla undergoes a 'grotesquely accelerated sexual maturation, from virgin to bride to nursing mother' at the moment of death constitutes 'a reproach to her way of life'.[38] For someone who dresses like a warrior and tries to live the life of a military man, it is cruelly ironic that the lasting image of Camilla is that of *stripped* woman (*exsertam*, 'exposed'), oozing femaleness.

Furthermore, since Camilla acts as a kind of foil for the Trojans – in that a cross-dressed woman is the reverse mirror image of an effeminate man – it is conceivable that the manner in which Vergil depicts Camilla's death has implications as to how readers construe masculinity. By suggesting that Camilla's desire for gold spoils is typically female (*femineo . . . amore*), and by exposing her womanliness at the point of her death, Vergil allows Camilla's 'real' self to win out. The apparently inevitable emergence of the 'real' self trumps outward cross-dressing, which, in turn, implies that the effeminate appearance of the Trojans will eventually give way to 'real', innate manliness. Camilla's first appearance in the catalogue of Italian tribes suggests that masculine women are perceived as a threat to masculinity. Yet her ultimate failure to overcome her female instincts underlines the idea that it is impossible to subvert gender completely or successfully, which thereby affirms that masculinity cannot be threatened.

Looking ahead to the end of Vergil's epic when Juno finally concedes defeat in Book 12, it is worth noting that the goddess specifically asks Jupiter not to alter the clothing of Italian men (*ne vetus indigenas nomen mutare Latinos | neu Troas fieri iubeas Teucrosque vocari | aut vocem mutare **viros** aut **vertere vestem***; 'do not command the Latins to change their ancient name in their own land, to become Trojans and be called Teucrians. They are men. Do not make them change their voice or native dress', lines 823–825). Jupiter agrees to this request by confirming: 'Ausonia's sons will keep their father's speech and manners, as their name is, so it will be: the Trojans, merged into the mass [literally 'the body'], shall sink only' (*sermonem Ausonii patrium moresque tenebunt, | utque est nomen erit; commixti corpore tantum | subsident Teucri*, lines 834–836). Here in Book 12, Jupiter's assent finally resolves the tension that had existed between the Trojans' feminine clothing and their masculine selves by having the Trojans be subsumed into the

manly 'mass'/'body' (*corpore*, line 836) of the Italians. In choosing the word *corpus*, Jupiter's speech covertly, but conclusively, asserts the power of the masculine 'body' over feminine outward appearance.

Conclusions

Since the landmark study by Gleason, it is now generally recognised that in Roman culture, masculinity is not an innate quality, but one that must be acquired and even earned.[39] It is, in essence, a system of gender that requires constant performance of activities associated with male roles. This system becomes destabilised, however, when somebody who is not a man tries to earn masculinity: a female cross-dresser acting out conventionally male roles presents a particular challenge to the Roman construction of masculinity. In such instances, it becomes necessary to nullify the effectiveness of this identity switch and reassert an essentialist view of gender: this, I contend, is what lies beneath Cicero's portrayal of Clodia in section 67 of the *Pro Caelio* and Vergil's depiction of the death of Camilla in Book 11 of the *Aeneid*. By situating his depiction of Clodia as an *imperatrix* at the fulcrum of the *Pro Caelio*'s dynamic engagement with both tragic and comic drama, Cicero identifies Clodia with the dangerous masculine women of Greek tragedy, while at the same time ridiculing and neutralising the threat to masculinity she carries as the *mater familias* of a powerful Roman household. That the orator's portrayal of Clodia as a masculine *imperatrix* recalls at the same time highly sexualised female figures (such as Helen and the *meretrix*) further indicates that, in Cicero's eyes, gender inversion is not possible for women. In a similar vein, Vergil presents the cross-dressed Camilla as incapable of escaping the fatal weaknesses of her gender, despite her attempts to transgress and disrupt the norms of the epic world of men. The close association between *arma* and *vir* introduced by the opening words of the *Aeneid* is only momentarily contested by Camilla: her eventual failure to dislodge this gendered pairing not only reinforces the exclusion of women from the military arena, but also underlines the immutable futility of challenging the masculine hold on *arma*. The failure of the *imperatrix* and the *bellatrix*, therefore, points to an underlying rhetoric about the impossibility of women earning masculinity.

Additionally, the ways in which Cicero and Vergil neutralise the threat of powerful women and render their cross-dressing ineffective should not be read in isolation from contemporary discussions about the prominent women of the late Republican era, such as Sempronia, Hortensia, Fulvia, and Cleopatra. Suspected of taking part in the Catilinarian conspiracy of 63 BCE, the portrayal of Sempronia by Sallust as a woman *quae multa saepe virilis audaciae facinora conmiserat* ('who had often committed many crimes of masculine daring', *Bellum Catilinae* 25.1) exemplifies a Republican historiographic tradition that deployed women in possession of political power as signifiers of moral decline and the breakdown of social order.[40] The sharp contrast between the committer of these crimes – a woman – and the masculine nature of her crimes, moreover, points to the author's perception that activities it was previously thought only men (or those possessing

qualities strongly associated with the male) were capable of performing, were now being carried out by women. Both the perceived prominence of aristocratic Roman women in the public sphere and the invective against their participation in the politics of the late Republic find further manifestations in Hortensia's protest against proposed taxation in 42 BCE (see App. *B.C.* 4.5.32–34) and the attack targeted at Fulvia by Octavian's faction during the Perusine War (see Vell. Pat. 2.74.3; App. *B.C.* 5.4.33; Mart. 11.20).[41] As Maria Wyke has shown, even the representation of Cleopatra in the poetry of Vergil, Horace, and Propertius could be seen as operating within such invective patterns, for the poets depict the Egyptian queen as one who 'transgresses all the social and political constraints which Roman society imposed (ideally) upon its women'.[42] Cicero and Vergil's rhetoric on the cross-dressing of Clodia and Camilla is closely connected to this gendered discourse of the late Republic and early Principate, which was developed by male authors to vilify and censure women whom they believe have gained excessive political authority and whose prominence spelled a threat to Roman conceptions of masculinity and patriarchal power. Yet the representational language of female cross-dressing distinguishes itself from that discourse and is perhaps more sinister in that it seeks to reaffirm the notion that it is impossible for women to fully assume a masculine role, and that female transgressions are merely transient.

Notes

1 See, for example, Cyrino (1998); Lindheim (1998); Raval (2002); DeBrohun (2003) pp. 156–184. On transvestism in later Latin literature, e.g. Statius' *Achilleid*, see Heslin (2005) pp. 193–236.

2 Raval (2002) pp. 151, 167. Other treatments of this episode have typically focused on aspects of same-sex sexual desire; see, for example, Kamen (2012).

3 DeBrohun (2003) p. 30.

4 The studies of Zeitlin (1981) and Loraux (1989) have usefully explored the ways in which scenes of cross-dressing in ancient literature and art highlight flexibility in gender definition and the recognition of gender as a primarily social construction. For the connection between socio-political disorder and transgressions of gender roles in the cultural discourses of Augustan Rome, see Bauman (1992) pp. 10–11; Edwards (1993); Wyke (2002) pp. 215–221.

5 See, for example, the interpretation of Hercules' transvestism in Prop. 4.9 by Welch (2005) pp. 112–132, and Eppinger, Chapter 13 in this volume. The *Lex Iulia de Maritandis Ordinibus* was passed in 18 BCE, followed a year later by the *Lex Iulia de Adulteriis Coercendis*; then in 9 CE, the *Lex Papia Poppaea* was instituted.

6 Garber (1992) pp. 10–12, 16–17; Raval (2002) pp. 162–164; DeBrohun (2003) pp. 28–29.

7 This chapter seeks to break new ground by looking at Clodia and Camilla *together* and from the angle of cross-dressing. It is hoped that this approach may be considered 'original' (if it is at all possible to say anything entirely original about the *Pro Caelio* and the *Aeneid*). Translations of passages from the *Pro Caelio* and the *Aeneid* are taken from D. H. Berry (2000, revised with corrections 2008, Oxford University Press) and D. West (1990, revised edition 2003, Penguin), respectively. The text of the *Pro Caelio* is drawn from A. R. Dyck (2013); the text of the *Aeneid* from the Oxford Classical Text (R. A. B. Mynors ed. 1972).

 8 The cross-dressing of Clodius in the Bona Dea scandal is analysed by Campanile, Chapter 3 in this volume.

 9 For a full biography of Clodia Metelli, see especially Skinner (2011); also Hejduk (2008).

10 See also Leen (2000–2001) pp. 153–154.

11 Dyck (2013) *ad loc.*

12 Dyck (2013) p. 145.

13 The trial of Caelius convened during the *Megalensia* of 56 BCE, a festival held on 4 April in honour of the Magna Mater that included dramatic performances (cf. Ov. *Fast.* 4.187–188). Leigh (2004) pp. 325–326 argues that *ludus* in the speech alternates between 'play' and 'festival'. Scholars have long recognised that the *Pro Caelio* is inundated with allusions to drama and mime. See Geffcken (1973); Dumont (1975); Salzman (1982); Arcellaschi (1997); Leigh (2004).

14 The *familiaritas* between Clodia and her household slaves has already been alluded to by Cicero in §58: *si enim tam familiaris erat mulieris, quam vos vultis, istos quoque servos familiares esse dominae sciebat* ('If he [i.e. Caelius] was as intimate with the woman as you make out, then he would of course have been aware that her slaves were intimate with her too.'). For further discussion of this passage, see Leen (2000–2001) p. 149.

15 The prosecution called Caelius 'pretty boy Jason', *pulchellus Iason*; cf. Fortunatianus, *Ars rhetorica* 3.7 (= p. 124 ed. Halm).

16 A *quadrans* was the usual price of admission to the men's baths; cf. Sen. *Ep.* 86.9.

17 Leen (2000–2001) p. 147.

18 Skinner (2011) p. 125: 'Cicero's construction of Clodia as poetess was wholly negative, as she was not only an unimaginative hack but an old, creatively exhausted one.'

19 Austin (1960) on §65. See Lactant. *Inst.* 1.20.10; Beare (1964) pp. 154, 169, 267–274; Skinner (2011) p. 125.

20 The character of Camilla in the *Aeneid* has been the subject of several studies. See, for example, Schönberger (1966); Brill (1972); Arrigoni (1982); Basson (1986); Boyd (1992).

21 Boyd (1992) p. 216, with references to the archetypal image of wifely *lanificium* in written sources, such as Livy's Lucretia (1.57.9). Note also that Augustus apparently required his daughters to learn spinning and weaving, and paraded the fact that he wore clothes made by his female relatives (Suet. *Aug.* 64.2, 73). As Edwards (1993) p. 80 puts it so well: 'Good women sat at home and spun'.

22 Harlow (2012) p. 39.

23 Verg. *Aen.* 4.136–139: *tandem progreditur **magna stipante caterva** | Sidoniam picto chlamydem circumdata limbo; | cui **pharetra ex auro, crines nodantur in aurum**, | **aurea purpuream subnectit fibula vestem**.* ('She came at last with a great entourage thronging round her. She was wearing a Sidonian cloak with an embroidered hem. Her quiver was gold. Gold was the clasp that gathered up her hair and her purple tunic was fastened with a golden brooch.') On similarities between Camilla, Penthesilea, and Dido, see, for example, Lyne (1987) p. 136 note 57; Nugent (1999), especially p. 261; Horsfall (2000) on Book 7.814–815.

24 Observations made by Boyd (1992) in her study of Camilla and the tradition of ethnographic writing are instructive. For example, p. 218: '[It] is no coincidence . . . that in a catalogue describing non-Roman leaders, a place has been found for a woman whose leadership is an inversion of typical or normative roles for women in Roman society'; p. 221: 'Virgil places Camilla so adorned at the close of *Aeneid* 7 to evoke a long tradition of alien effeminacy.'

25 Horsfall (2000) on 7.812. For usages of *effusus* in the context of an *adventus*, cf. Liv. 1.14.8, *CLE* 271.13, Cic. *Pis.* 51. Note also Hor. *Carm.* 3.14.1–10, which depicts the *adventus* of Augustus from Spain, welcomed by a crowd of married women and youths.

26 Boyd (1992) p. 223. Cf. Serv. ad 7.813: *sed melior sensus est, si . . . accipiamus: ea enim sexus uterque miratur quae sunt posita contra opinionem, ut mirentur feminae arma in muliere, viri ornatum in bellatrice*. Clothing is one of the criteria for measuring 'otherness' at *Aen.* 8.722–723: *incedunt victae longo ordine gentes, | quam variae linguis, habitu tam **vestis** et armis* ('The defeated nations walked in long procession in all their different costumes and in all their different armour, speaking all the tongues of the earth.')

27 See, for example, Horsfall (2003) on 11.576 with references.

28 See, for example, Fratantuono (2007) p. 340.

29 Boyd (1992) p. 221.

30 On the 'natural' hierarchy of gender, see Keith (2000) p. 22.

31 Keith (2000) p. 20. See also Hardie (1994) on 9.620.

32 Keith (2000) p. 27 makes this remark with regard to the pointed collocation of *proelia virgo | dura* (7.806–807). Horsfall (2000) on 7.806–807 rightly notes that *dura* can be taken with *virgo* as well as *proelia*.

33 This is the only use of the adjective *muliebris* in the Vergilian corpus. Keith (2000) p. 28 rightly draws our attention to Servius' notes on the word *muliebris*, in which the ancient commentary explains that Vergil uses the adjective in the sense of 'belonging to the female sex'. On Camilla's *aristeia*, see especially Fratantuono (2007) pp. 340–343.

34 On the name, appearance, and 'biography' of Chloreus, see Horsfall (2003) on 11.768 with references.

35 Horsfall (2003) on 11.778–779. Much has been written about the dangers and moral ambiguities of wearing military gear stripped from the defeated in the *Aeneid*; for a summative account, see Tarrant (2012) pp. 22–24.

36 See also Keith (2000) p. 28.

37 Fowler (1987) p. 196.

38 Oliensis (1997) p. 308; Fowler (1987) p. 196.

39 Gleason (1995). More recent studies on Roman masculinity lend further support to the work of Gleason: see, for example, Manwell (2011) on gender and masculinity in the poetry of Catullus.

40 Wyke (2002) pp. 215–216. See also Paul (1985); Boyd (1987); Bauman (1992) pp. 67–68; Hemelrijk (1999) pp. 84–86.

41 See Hallett (1977) pp. 154–155, 160–163; Keith (2002) pp. 79–80; Wyke (2002) pp. 219–220.

42 Wyke (2002) p. 220.

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Part IV

Transgender myth

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12 The hero's white hands

The early history of the myth of Achilles on Scyros

Fabio Guidetti

λάνθανε δ᾿ ἐν κώραις Λυκομηδίσι μοῦνος Ἀχιλλεύς,
εἴρια δ᾿ ἀνθ᾿ ὅπλων ἐδιδάσκετο, καὶ χερὶ λευκᾷ
παρθενικὸν κόρον εἶχεν, ἐφαίνετο δ᾿ ἠΰτε κώρα

Achilles alone . . . kept hidden among the daughters of Lycomedes,
learned about wool working instead of arms, wielded a girl's broom
in his untanned hand, and looked just like a girl
  [Bion of Smyrna], *Epithalamium of Achilles and Deidameia*, lines 15–17[1]

The story of Achilles being disguised as a young girl among the daughters of king Lycomedes of Scyros is undoubtedly the most famous ancient myth about cross-dressing, and is well attested in literature and the visual arts from the mid-fifth century BC to at least the fifth century AD.[2] As happens when dealing with ancient mythology, this story has been subject to a great variety of changes, both in its literary and visual accounts. The myth of Achilles on Scyros was especially popular in the Roman imperial and late antique period, when it was among the favourite choices for domestic decoration and funerary sculpture. In this chapter, however, I will focus on the early history of this myth, discussing its absence from the archaic version of Achilles' story (as found in Homer and the epic cycle) and its sudden appearance in Athenian literature and art around the mid-fifth century BC, with the aim of investigating its significance and the reasons for its success.

The Scyrian episode in archaic epics

The story of Achilles' cross-dressing on Scyros has strong links with the tale of his erotic adventure with Deidameia, king Lycomedes' daughter. This love affair leads to a son, Neoptolemos, who, according to the prophecies, will be the eventual conqueror of Troy. Although his crucial role in the ending of the war is first attested only in the fifth century BC in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* (lines 343–347), Neoptolemos was already known to Homer. Having recalled the conquest and sack of Scyros by Achilles in an earlier phase of the war (*Il.* 9.667–668), the *Iliad* mentions that Neoptolemos was raised there (*Il.* 19.326–327): thus, it may be assumed that

Achilles' son was conceived through a Scyrian woman and born on Scyros, though Homer never specifies Deidameia's name or her royal descent.[3] The *Iliad* says nothing about the nature of the relationship between Achilles and Neoptolemos' mother: the hero's son might have been conceived through rape; that is, through Achilles exerting his normal rights as a conqueror. In any case, for the poet of the *Iliad*, this information seems not to have been relevant. We may wonder at the reason behind this silence: as Fantuzzi has recently suggested,

> sexual life, or the experience of love, would perhaps have represented something far too human and commonplace, to be integrated into the Iliadic poetics . . . something not relevant enough to the specific values and concern prevailing in the *Iliad* (war, and war-won glory).[4]

Achilles' intercourse with Deidameia was definitely mentioned in the epic cycle, more precisely in the *Cypria*, according to the summary of that poem included in Proclus's Χρηστομαθία γραμματική, written presumably in the second century AD (Procl. *chr.* lines 129–131 Severyns = *Cypria* argumentum 7b–c West).[5] But again, Proclus's concise summary says nothing about the kind of relationship linking Achilles to Neoptolemos' mother, not to mention any reference to the hero's cross-dressing.[6] The latter is explicitly mentioned in a scholion to *Il.* 19.326, which recounts the whole story of Achilles' disguise as a girl at Lycomedes' court, his discovery by Odysseus and his eventual departure for war, as well as his love affair with Deidameia and the birth of Neoptolemos, who in turn joined the Greek army after his father's death. However, the final sentence attributing this story to the epic cycle (ἡ ἱστορία παρὰ τοῖς κυκλικοῖς) has rightly been linked by recent scholarship only to the last part of the scholion, referring to Neoptolemos' departure for Troy, and not to the whole Scyrian myth.[7] We must therefore conclude that, as Fantuzzi puts it, the epic cycle certainly "contained a version of the encounter between Achilles and Deidameia", but "neither the fact that the young Achilles was led to Scyros by an anxious protective parent nor the trick of cross-dressing or its detection by Odysseus appears to be attested" in ancient epic tradition.[8]

Achilles on Scyros in fifth-century Athens: Cimon, Euripides, Polygnotus

The theme of Achilles' cross-dressing first occurs with certainty only in the mid-fifth century BC.[9] Around this time, the story of the hero's disguise as a girl at Lycomedes' court was the focus of a play by Euripides, the *Skyrioi*, which is now lost; its precise date is unknown.[10] On the basis of a fragment of *hypothesis* preserved on papyrus (*PSI* XII 1286, col. II, lines 9–27) and a few extant fragments (notably frg. 683a Kannicht) we can assess that the play portrayed Achilles dressed as a girl and occupied with typically feminine tasks such as combing wool. But Euripides' play is not an isolated testimony: the story of Achilles' stay on Scyros was quite popular in mid-fifth century BC Athens, both on stage and in the visual arts. A painting by Polygnotus of Thasos, depicting "Achilles leading his

life on Scyros together with the maidens" in what sounds like a scene from a gynaeceum, is mentioned in the second century AD by Pausanias in his description of the Propylaea of the Athenian Acropolis (Paus. 1.22.6). Admittedly, Pausanias does not explicitly state that Polygnotus' painting was preserved in the Propylaea, since he mentions it only in association with another work by the same painter, representing the sacrifice of Polyxena, which was located there. The association between the two is made possible by the fact that both episodes, as Pausanias remarks, have been omitted by Homer, because these shameful stories are not consistent with his portrayal of Achilles as a positive, paradigmatic hero. Pausanias here makes a very interesting point: the inconsistency with Achilles' heroic character is precisely the main reason why writers and artists proved so interested in this myth throughout antiquity and later. In any case, the depiction of Achilles on Scyros fits in quite well with the other five Polygnotan paintings described by Pausanias as hanging in the same place, all depicting subjects from the Trojan saga, and all featuring mythical heroes in rather non-heroic activities.[11]

The period generally assumed for Polygnotus' activity (*c*. 480–440 BC) coincides with the establishment of Athenian hegemony in the Aegean. The painter from Thasos is known to have worked on important public buildings at this time, including the famous *Stoa Poikile* in the Agora, whose decoration, accomplished in the 470s or 460s BC, was strongly imbued with the ideology of the period following the Persian wars. This was when the *strategos* Cimon was the leading figure in the city, and aimed to legitimate the Athenians' ambition for hegemony through the commemoration of their mythical and recent military achievements.[12] If Polygnotus' Trojan paintings, subsequently located in the Propylaea, were indeed originally produced as a coherent cycle, they may possibly be ascribed to the same patronage. But it is admittedly rather hard to place the Achilles-on-Scyros episode in this ideological context in a plausible way. It is easy to link the sudden appearance, in mid-fifth-century Athens, of myths taking place on Scyros to the Athenian conquest of that island, achieved by Cimon around 475–470 BC. Under these circumstances, a different myth emphasizing the connection between Athens and Scyros was especially publicized: according to this story, Theseus, the mythical founder of Athens, left the city, disgusted by the intemperance of its inhabitants. He then took refuge on Scyros, but was killed there by king Lycomedes, who was jealous of his power and authority. Cimon and the Athenians clearly used this story for ideological purposes: the Athenian attack on Scyros was presented as vengeance for Theseus' murder, and Cimon even brought the hero's relics, allegedly found on the island, as an oracle had prophesied, back to Athens.[13] But, as P. J. Heslin has pointed out,[14] if the myth of Theseus' death on Scyros is perfectly explicable in the context of Cimonian propaganda, the same cannot be said for the story of Achilles' disguise as a girl, which has no immediately perceptible political significance.

Unfortunately, due to the fragmentary state of preservation of Euripides' *Skyrioi* and the loss of Polygnotus' painting on this subject, it is very difficult to assess the role of these two works in the elaboration and diffusion of the myth of Achilles on Scyros. An analysis of the earliest extant depictions of this mythical episode in Athenian vase painting will, it is hoped, help our understanding of the subject.

Achilles on Scyros in Athenian vase painting

The earliest possible representation of Achilles dwelling among Lycomedes' daughters was tentatively recognized by Gloria Ferrari in an Attic red-figure *kylix* once in the Elie Borowski collection, attributed by Beazley to the Oedipus Painter and dated c. 470–450 BC.[15] As Ferrari rightly observes, the scenes on the two sides of the cup take place in a unified setting, suggested by the presence of four identical Ionic columns, distributed in pairs on the two sides. One side (Figure 12.1) depicts a gynaeceum scene with three female spinners, one (presumably an older woman) seated at the centre and two standing at either side, all dressed in a chiton, a mantle and a snood; on the left, another feminine element, a mirror, hangs from the wall. On the other side (Figure 12.2), a young warrior is putting on his armour: he has already donned his greaves, and is busy fastening the cuirass on top of his short chiton, while another young man, clad only in a mantle, is handing him a helmet and a shield; a third man, an older bearded warrior with a cuirass and spear, stands to the right. The difference between the arrangement of the human figures and the architectural elements in the two scenes is striking: the group of the three spinners in the gynaeceum is framed by the two flanking columns in a symmetrical and rather static scene: as Ferrari puts it, "the women are where they belong, . . . doing what proper girls normally do, and they will remain there".[16]

By contrast, the scene with the three male characters conveys an impression of imminent movement. The two columns do not frame the whole group, but only the

Figure 12.1 Attic red-figure *kylix* attributed to the Oedipus Painter, c. 470–450 BC.
          Private collection. Side A: scene of gynaeceum.

Source: Photograph © 2016 The Bridgeman Art Library, London.

Figure 12.2 Attic red-figure *kylix* attributed to the Oedipus Painter, c. 470–450 BC. Private collection. Side B: departure of a warrior.

Source: Photograph © 2016 The Bridgeman Art Library, London.

two youths to the left; the older warrior on the right is located outside the architectural frame. We may assume that he has just left the house: his feet point towards the outside, his left arm is extended to the right, while his head is turned back towards the main character, inviting him to follow. The central figure, although standing firmly on the ground, is actually caught up in two opposite movements: the head is turned to the left towards the helping youth, the right leg is depicted frontally, while the left foot points towards the right, in the direction of the older warrior.

The interpretation of this image as the departure of Achilles from Scyros, as put forward by Ferrari, is suggested especially by "the pointed contraposition of the arming to the spinning of the three girls".[17] This is of course true, but it has to be admitted that there is no firm evidence confirming that the vase depicts an identifiable mythical scene: no character is clearly recognizable as Achilles, Deidameia or Lycomedes, and no reference is detectable to either cross-dressing or concealment and unveiling. The vase could likewise depict a generic young warrior leaving his house, where the women of the household will wait for his return by busying themselves with typical female activities. In other words, the decoration of the vase can be interpreted as depicting not a specific mythological episode, but simply the ideal contrast between male and female occupations:[18] a contrast which is of course essential in the story of Achilles on Scyros, but

could also be formulated without any recourse to this mythological paradigm. More evidence to support Ferrari's interpretation can perhaps be offered by the interior of the cup, which is decorated with the image of a Satyr holding a casket (Figure 12.3). Since Satyrs are usually not supposed to handle household objects, this detail could suggest a link with a theatrical play, in particular with a Satyr-play. Scholars have long supposed that Euripides' *Skyrioi*, given its non-tragic subject matter, was not a proper tragedy but, if not an actual Satyr-play, at least a sort of melodrama *in lieu* of a Satyr-play, like *Alcestis*.[19] But, in my opinion, there is too little evidence to positively identify this *kylix* as representing Achilles' departure from Scyros: nevertheless, the vase is worth discussion because, paradoxically, it can be seen as a good depiction not of the myth of Achilles on Scyros in itself, but rather of the social and anthropological interpretations attached to this myth by modern scholars.

A more reliable identification of the myth of Achilles on Scyros has been advanced for a scene depicted on an Attic red-figure volute *krater* whose provenance is debated (Italy or Cyrene?), preserved at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, attributed by Beazley to the Niobid Painter and dated c. 450 BC[20] (Figures 12.4 and 12.5).

Figure 12.3 Attic red-figure *kylix* attributed to the Oedipus Painter, c. 470–450 BC. Private collection. Interior: Satyr holding a casket.

Source: Photograph © 2016 The Bridgeman Art Library, London.

Figure 12.4 Attic red-figure volute *krater* attributed to the Niobid Painter, c. 450 BC.
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. 33.56. Side A: Achilles leaving Scyros.

Source: Photograph © 2016 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The main scene (Figure 12.6) depicts a rather common theme in Athenian vase painting: the departure of a warrior. A youth, almost fully armed with cuirass, sword and spear, holds the hand of a woman, who is handing him his helmet and his second spear; the two are staring into each other's eyes, thus emphasizing the strong emotional relationship between them. Seated on the left, an old man with white hair and beard looks at the scene, his right hand raised towards the youth, his left hand resting on a staff.
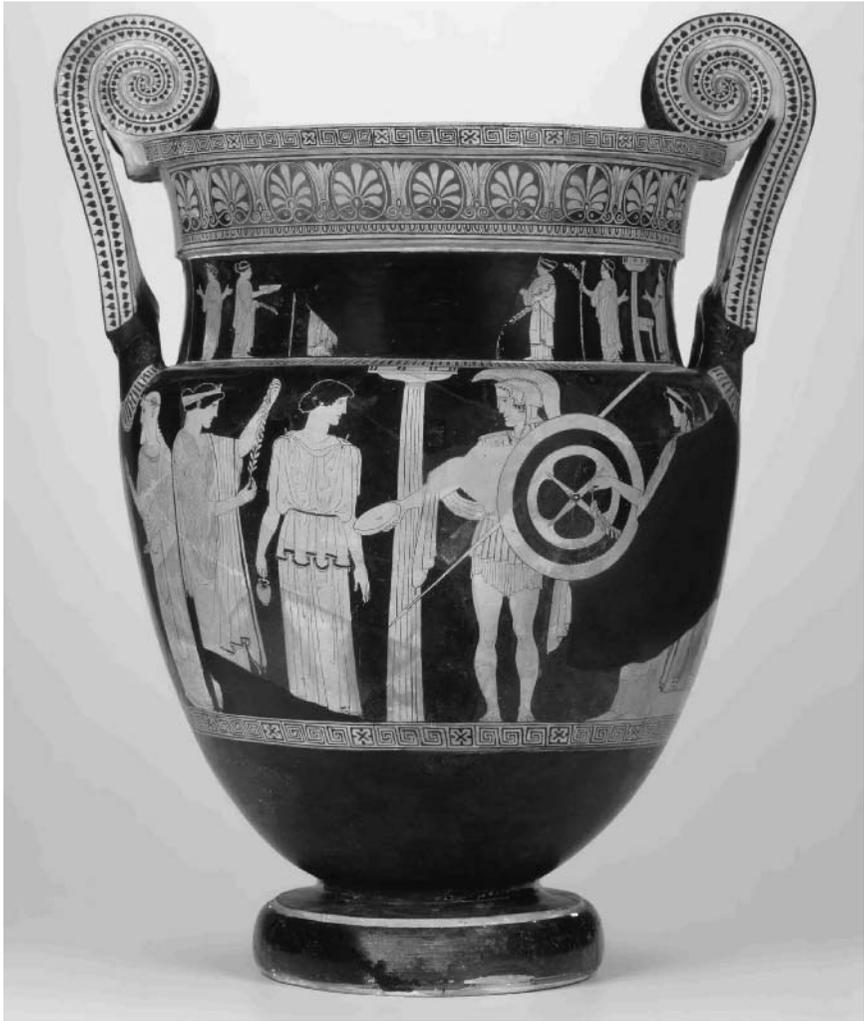
Figure 12.5 Attic red-figure volute *krater* attributed to the Niobid Painter, c. 450 BC.
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. 33.56. Side B: Neoptolemos
leaving Scyros.

Source: Photograph © 2016 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

These three main characters are framed and separated from one another by four
female figures, spaced out in a perfectly balanced composition: from left to right,
the first one (clearly younger than the others) is leaning on the back of the old
man's chair; the second is holding a wreath; the third has a *phiale* in her right hand
and an *oinochoe* in her left; and the fourth holds a veil with both hands. Inside this
carefully balanced scene, two vertical elements (a Doric column on the left, a spear

Figure 12.6 Attic red-figure volute *krater* attributed to the Niobid Painter, c. 450 BC.
        Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. 33.56. Detail of side A: Achilles
        leaving Scyros.

Source: Photograph © 2016 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

on the right) further contribute to isolating the dramatic centre of the depiction,
with the farewell between the youth and the main female character. As Erika Simon
rightly pointed out,[21] when compared with the usual iconography of the 'departure
of a warrior', this scene shows a number of peculiarities: first, an exceptional
number of women (five) are depicted; second, there is clearly a strong accent on
the privileged relationship between the young warrior and one of the female
characters; third, the attributes held by the side figures are not all that usual, and
may be the cue for a more accurate interpretation. A standard feature in these
departure scenes is the pouring of a libation, as the warrior and his relatives pray to
the gods to propitiate the young man's homecoming from war: the *phiale* and the
oinochoe, as well as the wreath, can easily be explained as allusions to this ritual.
The same cannot be said about the veil: Simon is probably right in recognizing it,
together with the wreath, as a reference to a wedding ritual. In this case, the
attributes pertaining to the two spouses are depicted in a chiastic composition,
with the girl next to the armed youth holding the bride's veil, while the one next to
the bride holds the young man's wreath. The presence of wedding allusions within
this departure scene, along with the unusual number of female characters, make
the identification of the scene depicted on the Boston *krater* with an episode
from the myth of Achilles on Scyros, as proposed by Simon, quite persuasive: if so,
here the painter chose to focus particularly on the tragic destiny of Deidameia,
deprived of her husband on the very same day as her wedding.

   The emphasis on Deidameia's sufferings, more than on Achilles himself, is
further accentuated if we accept the interpretation of the scenes on the other side of
the vase as alluding to the departure of Neoptolemos: after losing her husband,

Figure 12.7 Attic red-figure volute *krater* attributed to the Niobid Painter, c. 450 BC.
  Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. 33.56. Detail of side B: Neoptolemos
  leaving Scyros.

Source: Photograph © 2016 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Deidameia will also have to witness her son leaving for war. Admittedly, the
departure scene on side B of the *krater* (Figure 12.7) is quite unspecific, and precise
hints for identification are lacking.

The scene takes place under the porch of a building (marked by a Doric column
at the centre and a door at the right end): a youth, in full armour with shield, spear
and helmet, is pouring a libation from a *phiale*. The young warrior is surrounded
by four women: two of them hold wreaths, a third one has the *oinochoe* for the
libation, while the fourth, preserved in a very fragmentary condition, stands in
front of the door. The small scene under the handle of the vase may be more useful
for the purpose of suggesting an identification (Figure 12.8): a young hunter,
dressed in a chlamys and holding two spears with his left hand, is approached by
two characters, an adult man on the left and an old man on the right; communication
is shown between the youth and the adult man, who are looking into each other's
eyes. The adult and the old man have wreaths on their heads and staffs in their
hands, and the latter also holds a twig in his left hand: these attributes qualify the
two men as ambassadors.

All these features make an identification of the two as Odysseus and Phoinix,
asking Neoptolemos to follow them to Troy, quite plausible: the small scene under
the handle may be a prelude to the warrior's departure depicted in scene B, while
at the same time contributing to the identification of this latter, rather unspecified
scene with a particular mythological episode.

A third depiction of the myth of Achilles on Scyros has been identified by Erika
Simon in another Attic red-figure volute *krater*. The vase, found in 1956 in Spina

Figure 12.8 Attic red-figure volute *krater* attributed to the Niobid Painter, c. 450 BC.
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. 33.56. Detail of scene C under the right
handle: Neoptolemos between Odysseus and Phoinix.

Source: Photograph © 2016 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

(from tomb 18C of the Valle Pega necropolis) and preserved in the Museo
Archeologico Nazionale in Ferrara, is attributed by Beazley to the Boreas Painter
and dated c. 460–450 BC[22] (Figures 12.9 and 12.10).

One side of the vase depicts Neoptolemos leaving Scyros (Figure 12.11): the
young hero is standing in the centre of the scene, dressed in a cuirass and mantle
and holding a spear; Odysseus and Phoinix lead him towards the right, where a
young attendant is waiting with the hero's shield, while Neoptolemos turns his
head back to say farewell to his mother Deidameia and his grandfather Lycomedes.

In this case, the inscriptions with the names of the characters assure beyond any
doubt the identification of the episode. On the other side (Figure 12.12), an ephebe
is shown standing among four young women: he wears a *himation* and rests his
right shoulder on a staff; his blond hair (rendered with diluted black paint) falls

Figure 12.9 Attic red-figure volute *krater* attributed to the Boreas Painter, c. 460–450 BC.
Ferrara, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. 44701. Side A: Neoptolemos
leaving Scyros.

Source: Photograph © 2016 Polo Museale dell'Emilia Romagna – Museo Archeologico Nazionale
di Ferrara.

freely over his shoulders. The four women are looking towards him, making
forceful gestures and movements, their arms raised in expressions of surprise and
powerful emotion. The two women who are most distant from the centre are
moving towards the ephebe, bringing him two objects: the one on the right holds a
cuirass, while the one on the left has a sack, probably to be used for his journey.

Figure 12.10 Attic red-figure volute *krater* attributed to the Boreas Painter, c. 460–450
BC. Ferrara, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. 44701. Side B: Achilles'
discovery on Scyros.

Source: Photograph © 2016 Polo Museale dell'Emilia Romagna – Museo Archeologico Nazionale
di Ferrara.

At the right edge of the scene, a king, sitting on his throne, richly dressed
with chiton and mantle and holding a staff, looks on at the scene, his right arm
raised in the same gesture of heightened emotion characterizing the four women
(Figure 12.13). As Simon rightly points out, "that is not a silent departure but
a scene of surprise and agitation".[23] Another significant detail is noticeable in the
figure of the old man, whose teeth are visible through the open mouth.

Figure 12.11 Attic red-figure volute *krater* attributed to the Boreas Painter, c. 460–450 BC. Ferrara, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. 44701. Detail of side A: Neoptolemos leaving Scyros.

Source: Drawing by Gino Pelizzola. Photograph © 2016 Polo Museale dell'Emilia Romagna – Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Ferrara.

Figure 12.12 Attic red-figure volute *krater* attributed to the Boreas Painter, c. 460–450 BC. Ferrara, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. 44701. Detail of side B: Achilles' discovery on Scyros.

Source: Drawing by Gino Pelizzola. Photograph © 2016 Polo Museale dell'Emilia Romagna – Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Ferrara.

Figure 12.13 Attic red-figure volute *krater* attributed to the Boreas Painter,
c. 460–450 BC. Ferrara, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. 44701.
Detail of King Lycomedes, from side B.

Source: Drawing by Gino Pelizzola. Photograph © 2016 Polo Museale dell'Emilia Romagna –
Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Ferrara.

This is a characteristic way of expressing strong emotions in fifth-century
art,[24] whose invention is attributed by Pliny to Polygnotus,[25] the same painter
who was the author, according to Pausanias, of the first depiction of Achilles
on Scyros attested by literary sources. The surprise and agitation shown by the
female characters and the old man make an interpretation as a standard departure
scene quite implausible; moreover, the uncommon number of female characters,
the ephebe's blond hair (a well-known characteristic of Achilles), and the
association with a depiction of Neoptolemos leaving Scyros all point towards an
interpretation of the scene on side B of the vase as Achilles among Lycomedes'
daughters.

These three vases, one *kylix* and two *krateres*, are all linked to the context of the symposium, a social occasion to which only men were admitted: thus, it must be borne in mind that these images were created to cater for a male viewer's expectations, and of course reflect a male point of view on the story of Achilles' disguise and its gender-related implications. This remark is particularly important as regards the *kylix* by the Oedipus Painter, which seems only loosely, if at all, connected with the mythological episode. Rather than recounting a story, the quiet and balanced figures on this vase are depicted in a sort of symbolic scene, whose imagery focuses on the ideal contrast between male and female activities and spaces, as well as their transmission from one generation to another: while the girls remain within the house together with the seated older woman, who is busy spinning and weaving, the young warrior prepares to follow the older man outside the building, in order to fulfil a man's duty in the male world of war. It is not on the whole implausible that, in the mind of a viewer from the ancient world, this depiction could have raised an association with the story of Achilles' stay among the girls and his subsequent decision to follow Odysseus to war, glory and death. But here the link with the mythological narrative is subordinated to an exemplary statement of gender contraposition and the generational transfer of social models, by focusing on the different roles which young men and women were expected to play in fifth-century Athenian society.

The other two vases are more interesting from a narratological point of view: in both of them, the reference to a mythological episode is more clearly recognizable, although with the emphasis on different moments and details of the story. Moreover, both vases associate Achilles' myth with another episode from the same saga: Neoptolemos' departure for Troy. The association between these two episodes is extremely significant: Achilles' discovery on Scyros and his subsequent departure to join the Greek army mark the initial stage of the Trojan war, just as Neoptolemos' arrival at Troy brings the expedition towards its conclusion. Thus, a viewer could find the whole story of the war summarized and condensed in these two scenes, in a refined strategy of allusion and association of ideas. However, these two departures are not only parts of one common narrative; they can also be deliberately contrasted with one another, as two quite similar, but emotionally opposite, episodes. Neoptolemos' departure for Troy is hardly a dramatic scene: every viewer knows that the young hero will be the final conqueror of the city; by leaving Scyros, he fulfils these expectations and sets out for victory and immortal glory. The case of Achilles is different: his departure is a highly theatrical scene, in which three emotionally significant issues occur together. First, the discovery of Achilles' true identity and his intercourse with Deidameia is an authentic *coup de théâtre*, bringing great turmoil to Lycomedes' court; second, Achilles has to leave Scyros just when his love for Deidameia has finally been granted public acknowledgement and legitimation: the two lovers have to separate on their very wedding day; third, every viewer obviously knows that Achilles will never come back from Troy, where an untimely death awaits him, and immortal glory.

The painters of the two *krateres* exploited this dramatic potential in very different ways. The Boreas Painter chose to concentrate on the agitation in

Lycomedes' court at the discovery of Achilles' identity: his depiction skilfully contrasts the noble figure of the young hero, still depicted as an ephebe, with the heightened gestures of Lycomedes and his daughters, emphasizing the disruptive effect of the sudden appearance of war in the peaceful context of the Scyrian gynaeceum. In this respect, the Ferrara *krater* can perhaps be considered as a predecessor of what was later to become the most widespread iconography of the Scyrian episode, which focused on the dramatic revelation of Achilles' true identity. As a scheme, it was probably invented in the late classical period[26] and became standard, especially in Roman imperial times.[27] On the contrary, the Niobid Painter depicted a more static scene, in which the tragic potential of the story is suspended, and emotions are expressed only through the intimate relationship between the main characters: the expression of love between Achilles and Deidameia relies only on the figures' gazes and gestures, in a composition whose dramatic force is in no way diminished by its sense of calm and equilibrium. While the Boreas Painter contrasts the agitated scene of Achilles' discovery with the tranquil departure of Neoptolemos, the Niobid Painter pairs the latter's departure with the simultaneous wedding and farewell between his parents: the artist's emphasis is less on Achilles' departure for Troy than on the doomed love of Lycomedes' daughter. In any case, it is important to note that, in this early phase, the dramatic potential of this mythological episode is exploited only by staging the conflicting emotions of the main characters, without making explicit reference to Achilles' cross-dressing.

The significance of Achilles on Scyros

These depictions of Achilles on Scyros are a testimony to how this myth managed to be narrated in different ways from the very beginning of its history, in a plurality of approaches that coexisted up until the end of antiquity. The principal variations in the long history of this myth can be organized around two main polarizations:

1   Cross-dressing as transition versus cross-dressing as deception. Achilles' cross-dressing can be interpreted in an anthropological way as a sort of coming-of-age *rite de passage*, a momentous transition in shaping the hero's personality as an adult male. On the other hand, from a narratological point of view, Achilles' cross-dressing can be viewed as a consciously deceptive device, functional to the needs and expectations of an already fully shaped self.

2   Cross-dressing as a temporary versus permanent condition. Achilles' cross-dressing can be seen as the mark of a transitional period in his life, with his ultimate refusal of women's clothes indicating an irrevocable separation with the past and the beginning of his true heroic (male) career. On the other hand, Achilles' feminine condition can be intended as just one among many concurrent aspects of his character: in this way he can acquire, in addition to his unquestionable heroic qualities, another set of positive values traditionally connected with the feminine sphere, such as beauty, refinement and eroticism.

In general terms, both these polarizations tend to shift from the first to the second pole over the course of time, especially with the passage from classical Greece to Hellenistic and Roman culture. Achilles' disguise among the girls has traditionally been viewed as the mythical representation of a coming-of-age ritual, in which the denial of the young hero's masculinity only serves the purpose of enhancing his male and heroic character, through his love affair with Deidameia and the final unveiling of his real nature by Odysseus.[28] According to this theory, the myth of Achilles on Scyros symbolizes the critical transition from the indeterminateness of boyhood to the completeness of adulthood, and it seems quite obvious that this significance decreased over time, in particular with the loss of importance of Achilles as a role model for young citizens.

However, this is not entirely true. The importance of Achilles as a role model for young males seems to have actually increased from classical Greece to the imperial and late antique periods.[29] But the main objection to the interpretation of Achilles' cross-dressing as representing a coming-of-age ritual is provided precisely by the anthropological comparisons of cross-dressing rituals involving young boys. Through a careful re-examination of the ethnographic evidence, P. J. Heslin has demonstrated[30] the incompatibility between the story of Achilles on Scyros and gender-related *rites de passage* for adolescents in tribal societies. During these rituals, boys are secluded from their homes and families in order to integrate them into an exclusively male environment, with the purpose of enforcing gender solidarity within the community of men. On the contrary, the story of Achilles on Scyros is centred precisely on the undermining of the hero's male identity: Achilles is blocked inside an exclusively female community, at his mother's behest, preventing or at least delaying his development into a full-grown male member of society. The idea that a boy could achieve a new status as an adult man through the denial of his own masculinity is completely alien to what we know about coming-of-age rituals in tribal societies. Far from representing a *rite de passage* to manhood, the myth of Achilles on Scyros poses a serious threat to Achilles' gender identity, showing how evanescent and unstable gender differences can be if a boy is wrongly included in a community of the opposite sex. As a consequence, as Heslin asserted, the anthropological interpretations of the myth based on ethnographic comparisons should be abandoned in favour of a more banal explanation centring on the competition for prestige among Greek archaic communities: the myth of Achilles' cross-dressing was probably a local Scyrian invention, designed to give the island a more eminent (and more Greek) status in comparison to the 'official' epic version, which depicted Scyros as a small stronghold sacked by the Greeks on their way to Troy.[31]

In the mid-fifth century BC, with the conquest and colonization of Scyros by the Athenians, as well as their appropriation of the mythical past of the island (despite focusing primarily not on Achilles, but on Theseus), the story of Achilles on Scyros entered the broader Greek world for the first time, and it was immediately taken up by writers and artists. This story was appealing not only because it gave rise to the possibility of manipulating the traditional features of mythological characters, thanks to "its potential to undermine the manliness of the paradigmatic epic

hero";[32] but also because it offered the opportunity to discuss other aspects of great interest to fifth-century Athenian culture, especially in tragedy, such as the contrasts between will versus destiny, war versus love, the tranquility of peace versus the pursuit of glory. As we have seen, it is precisely this tragic potential that attracted the attention of fifth-century vase painters, rather than the detail of Achilles' cross-dressing, which at this early stage is still completely absent from visual representations. In the fifth century BC, the story of Achilles on Scyros was interesting mainly because, by offering a version of the myth that was quite different from the traditional epic material, it opened a more nuanced way of interpreting one of the most famous heroes in Greek culture, making him much more exploitable as a character in literature, drama and the visual arts. The different ways this myth is depicted in vase painting further testify to the absence of a fixed anthropological or ideological meaning to the story. The reason for the success of the story of Achilles on Scyros can rather be attributed primarily to its unquestionable dramatic potential, which led to sustained interest in this myth on the part of artists and writers: an interest which, arising in fifth-century Athens, would continue without interruption for the rest of antiquity, leaving its mark well into modern and contemporary culture.

Notes

1 Fantuzzi 2012a; Fantuzzi 2012b: pp. 43–58; Hopkinson 2015: pp. 519–523 [translation by Hopkinson 2015].
2 Roussel 1991: pp. 121–178 analyses the literary sources on Achilles on Scyros; visual sources are listed in Kossatz-Deissmann 1981: pp. 55–69. The second most famous mythological episode of cross-dressing, although less well attested than the story of Achilles on Scyros, is the myth of Hercules and Omphale, on which see Boardman 1994; Eppinger, Chapter 13 in this volume.
3 It is questionable why Achilles should have conquered and sacked a Greek city such as Scyros: it has been suggested (Fantuzzi 2012b: p. 22, note 5) that the Homeric Scyros is not to be identified with the Greek island of the Sporades, but rather with a city (of which we know nothing) situated in Asia Minor, not far from Troy.
4 Fantuzzi 2012b: p. 3.
5 Proclus's *Chrestomathia* is edited by Severyns 1938–1963, vol. 4; for a brief introduction to Proclus's work, see West 2013: pp. 4–11.
6 As West 2013: p. 107 rightly points out, Proclus's γαμεῖ (translated as 'épouse' by Severyns) "may mean no more than 'had intercourse with'".
7 Fantuzzi 2012b: pp. 21–29; Tsagalis 2012; West 2013: pp. 103–104.
8 Fantuzzi 2012b: p. 26.
9 On the myth of Achilles on Scyros in fifth-century BC Athens, see Heslin 2005: pp. 195–203.
10 Jouan and Van Looy 1998–2002, vol. 3: pp. 51–74; Kannicht 2004: pp. 665–670, particularly p. 667 on the uncertainty about the date (the *Skyrioi* are generally classed among Euripides' early plays, but without firm evidence); Fantuzzi 2012b: pp. 29–38. There was also a *Skyrioi* written by Sophocles, which dealt with Neoptolemos' departure for Troy.
11 Pausanias' list includes six paintings by Polygnotus, representing: Philoctetes on Lemnos; the theft of the Palladium; Orestes killing Aegisthus; the sacrifice of Polyxena; Achilles on Scyros; and the encounter of Odysseus and Nausicaa.

12 Among the most recent studies on the *Stoa Poikile* and its paintings, see De Angelis 1996; Di Cesare 2002; Stansbury-O'Donnell 2005.

13 The story of Theseus' death on Scyros and the search for his tomb can be found in Plutarch, both in the *Life of Theseus* and the *Life of Cimon* (Plu. *Thes.* 35–36; *Cim.* 8,3–7). On the conquest of Scyros, its integration into early Athenian history, and its role in legitimating the Athenian hegemony, see Podlecki 1971; Tausend 1989; Moreau 1990: pp. 215–218; Shapiro 1992; McCauley 1999; and especially Fell 2004.

14 Heslin 2005: pp. 199–201.

15 Beazley 1963: pp. 451–452, no. 3; Leipen 1984: p. 17, no. 13; Carpenter 1989: p. 242; Christie's 2000: pp. 86–87, no. 83; Ferrari 2002: pp. 89–90; Fantuzzi 2012b: pp. 35–36. Record of the vase on the *Beazley Archive* website: www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/record/ 5D7951DB-6D47-43CC-B049-F187D075ADB2, accessed 23 September 2016.

16 Ferrari 2002: p. 90.

17 Ferrari 2002: p. 90.

18 As suggested by Fantuzzi 2012b: p. 35: "Unless the two sides of the cup simply depict the opposition between typical manly and female occupations (an alternative interpretation which cannot be easily discarded)".

19 Thus Körte 1934: p. 12.

20 Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 33.56. Caskey and Beazley 1931–1963, vol. 2: pp. 77–81, no. 108; Beazley 1963: p. 600, no. 12; Simon 1963: pp. 57–61; Beazley 1971: p. 395; Kemp-Lindemann 1975: pp. 58–60; Kossatz-Deissmann 1981: pp. 65–66, no. 176; Burn and Glynn 1982: p. 130; Carpenter 1989: p. 266; Prange 1989: p. 183, no. N 13; Schefold and Jung 1989: pp. 141–142; Kossatz-Deissmann 1992: p. 300, no. 16; Touchefeu-Meynier 1992: p. 776, no. 13; Walter-Karydi 2015: pp. 227–228. Record of the vase on the *Beazley Archive* website: www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/record/ 6D6A771D-29DC-4C01-8F76-985BC60E4436, accessed 23 September 2016.

21 Simon 1963: pp. 57–58.

22 Ferrara, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 44701. Alfieri and Arias 1958: pp. 44–46; Alfieri 1963, 1964; Beazley 1963: pp. 536, no. 4, 1658; Simon 1963: pp. 57–58; Beazley 1971: p. 384; Alfieri 1979, pp. 24–26; Burn and Glynn 1982: p. 125; Deubner 1988: pp. 138–140; Carpenter 1989: p. 255; Schefold and Jung 1989: pp. 139–140; Kossatz-Deissmann 1992: p. 300, no. 14; Touchefeu-Meynier 1992: p. 776, no. 11; Lissarrague 1998: pp. 70–72; Walter-Karydi 2015: pp. 228–229. Record of the vase on the *Beazley Archive* website: www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/record/63AA7C6F-F89B-4183-841C-D56B87602CA1, accessed 23 September 2016.

23 Simon 1963: p. 58.

24 According to Deubner 1988: p. 140, this feature conveys feelings of "exertion, pain, imminence of death . . . vivaciousness of expression".

25 Plin. *nat.* 35,58: "Polygnotus Thasius . . . plurimum . . . picturae primus contulit, siquidem instituit os adaperire, dentes ostendere, voltum ab antiquo rigore variare" ("Polygnotus of Thasos . . . first contributed many improvements to the art of painting, as he introduced showing the mouth open and displaying the teeth and giving expression to the countenance in place of the primitive rigidity" [translation by Rackham 1961, with modifications]).

26 Scholars have traditionally attributed the invention of this iconography to Athenion of Maroneia, a painter of the late fourth century BC, on the basis of Plin. *nat.* 35,134: "Athenion Maronites . . . pinxit . . . Achillem virginis habitu occultatum Ulixe deprendente" ("Athenion of Maroneia . . . painted . . . an Achilles disguised in female dress detected by Odysseus" [translation by Rackham 1961, with modifications]).

27 The earliest preserved example of the standard version of the episode is a painting on the ceiling of Room 119 (the so-called 'Volta di Achille') of Nero's *Domus Aurea* (Meyboom and Moormann 2013, vol. I: pp. 228–230; vol. II: pp. 158–165).

28 Vidal-Naquet 1981: pp. 164–169; Cyrino 1998: pp. 226–239.

29 Cameron 2009.

30 Heslin 2005: pp. 205–236.
31 In Heslin's words:

> The Achilles-in-Scyros myth . . . probably had its origin in the local patriotism of the people of Scyros; this picture of Achilles' stay as a draft-dodger was more flattering to them than the Homeric and cyclic story that they were conquered by Achilles.
>
> (Heslin 2005: p. 228)

32 Heslin 2005: p. 227.

13 *Hercules cinaedus?*

The effeminate hero in Christian polemic

Alexandra Eppinger

No ancient hero was more celebrated for his manly prowess than Hercules, and no ancient hero – with the possible exception of Achilles – was as notorious for transgressing gender as Jupiter's son.[1] Sold into servitude to the Lydian queen Omphale to expiate his guilt after the senseless murder of Iphitus, he adopted female dress and undertook female tasks. Ancient artworks depict Omphale carousing in the lion skin and brandishing the club, while Hercules is shown in soft, female garments, spinning wool and voluntarily subservient to the queen.[2] Gender roles are inverted, and the social order is overturned.

Hercules' adventures at Omphale's court are presented in ancient literature from the Classical period to Late Antiquity in significantly different ways. Some authors entirely omit the cross-dressing when recounting the Lydian episode, emphasising instead the heroic deeds Hercules performs at the queen's behest (Apollod. 2.6.3; Diod. 4.31.5–8), or the humiliation of his servitude (Soph., *Trach*. 248–257).[3] Only in the Latin and other contemporary sources does transvestism play an important narrative role, adding either a new layer of degradation to the hero's servitude, or a new comic angle.[4]

In a well-reasoned study, Cyrino concludes that the cross-dressing episode serves to "reaffirm [Herakles'] high-octane masculine sexuality", and can be interpreted as the "transitional passage from human to divine in Herakles' life".[5] However, in the literary tradition, there are also indications of a negative attitude towards the hero's transvestism, culminating in condemnation by Christian authors uninterested in affirming either Hercules' heroic masculinity or his divine fate: to these works, Cyrino's interpretation cannot be applied.

Therefore, I suggest that the transvestite Hercules should also be examined in terms of the ancient discourse of the 'effeminate man'. The Graeco-Roman construct of the *kínaidos*/*cinaedus* was a man "who failed to be fully masculine, whose effeminacy showed itself in such symptoms as feminine clothing and mannerisms", and thus "a gender-deviant, a 'non-man' who has broken the rules of masculine comportment";[6] our hero shares several such characteristics. The traditionally reviled figure of the *cinaedus* could thus be cited alongside Biblically based attacks on anything 'pagan' and 'immoral' when explaining the abuse heaped on the cross-dressing Hercules by Christian apologists, who built upon ancient concepts of sexual and, correspondingly, social deviance.

Hercules cinaedus?

Long before Christian condemnation of the cross-dressing episode, Ovid provided a version of the Hercules–Omphale narrative, which, for our purposes, helpfully highlights aspects considered problematic due to their inversion of conventional gender roles. His unique take on the story in the *Fasti* produces a comical effect by describing Hercules ruining Omphale's clothing when trying to put it on: her shoes are split by his big feet, her bracelets are broken (*Fast.* 2.321–324; cf. Stat., *Theb.* 10.646–648). The episode is presented as one of the two *aitia* for the practice of nudity at the Lupercalia,[7] and according to Robinson, should be understood as a "comical interlude" of a "sexual", and "low and vulgar" nature; the humiliation of male cross-dressing is not emphasised.[8] A religious motivation is probable here: Hercules and Omphale do not share a bed because they will celebrate the mysteries in the morning (*Fast.* 2.327–330), implying a ritual background to the transvestism.[9]

In the *Heroides*, Ovid changes his tune: when Deianeira bitterly rebukes her husband, Hercules' transvestism is a humiliation (*Epist.* 9.53–118), and the Lydian episode is a *crimen* (9.53). Through the poetic persona of Deianeira, Ovid paints a picture of the effeminate Hercules, which is almost a precursor to the Christian apologists' scathing criticism. However, it must be borne in mind that in the *Heroides* it is the jealous wife who speaks, not the poet himself. The effeminate hero of this poem is thus the figure whom Deianeira wants the reader to imagine,[10] not the unequivocally male Hercules of the *Fasti*. In the specific case of the cross-dressing Hercules, some Christian authors do not distinguish between author and poetic persona, seeming to take literary representations such as the *Heroides* at face value as condemnations of transgressive behaviour.

The picture that Deianeira paints borders on the grotesque. Bedecked with jewellery, Hercules wears a girdle (*zona*) and *mitra* – a kind of veil or headscarf, usually worn by women (9.57–66).[11] In the non-Roman 'East', the *mitra* was also worn by men, presumably as a kind of turban, leading to accusations of effeminacy in Western sources (Verg., *Aen.* 4.215–218; 9.614–620).[12] In Rome, the *mitra* represented opulent luxury and effeminacy, as demonstrated by Cicero's attacks on Clodius (*Har. Resp.* 44).[13] In the *Heroides*, it is a clear indicator of Hercules' debasement, evoking Oriental luxury (the *mitra* was generally assumed to be of Lydian origin),[14] and here, Hercules also wears a purple Sidonian gown (*Epist.* 9.101), just as in the *Fasti*.[15] Exotic, colourful and luxurious clothing could indicate effeminacy in a Roman male,[16] and the dye's origin suggests the 'decadent' East.[17]

Undertaking a female task – wool spinning – is presented in the *Heroides* as the height of disgrace. Behaving like a woman is thus worse than wearing female clothes and jewellery, as it subverts the 'natural' order of things.[18] This is highlighted by the depiction of Hercules in Lydia, with the hero afraid of Omphale's threats to him in his role as her "serving girl" (9.74). So the gender shift seems complete: not only does Hercules outwardly look and act like a woman, but he has also become as timid as a woman.[19]

Deianeira stresses that Hercules' conquered foes, Busiris and Antaeus, would have been ashamed to be defeated by a Hercules dressed in such garments (9.69–72). Equally shameful is Omphale attired in the lion skin (9.111–112), an image that Tertullian later developed (see below under "Christian polemic"). The thought of Hercules recounting his heroic exploits seated at Omphale's feet also appals Deianeira: his apparel should reduce him to silence (9.81–102). When dressed and behaving like a woman, it is no longer his place to speak of the manly deeds to which Deianeira alludes at the beginning of the poem, thus heightening the contrast between his former heroism and his current state (9.13–22, 33–34, 37–38).

The formerly unconquered hero's effeminacy, the result of his defeat at the hands of a woman (9.107–108, 114), is made explicit by the terms Deianeira uses: he is likened to a *lasciva puella* (9.65), and is called a *mollis vir* (9.72). Significantly, later in the poem, the same adjective describes Omphale's body (*molle latus*; 9.122), indicating that Hercules has reached a similar state of 'softness' to the queen.

To the Roman mind, *mollitia* ('softness', 'effeminacy') was a clear sign of deviancy, indicating that an adult male is not fully masculine: he who is *mollis* possesses not *virtus*, but instead a woman's inferior moral qualities.[20] *Mollitia* is antithetical to *virtus*,[21] and thus to the nature of Hercules in his traditional role of *exemplum virtutis*. Using the language of *mollitia*, Ovid, through Deianeira, emphasises Hercules' total humiliation at Omphale's hands. A man subservient to a woman – and especially a foreign woman – is beyond the pale and endangers Roman morals.[22]

Moreover, *mollitia* is associated with the construct of the *cinaedus*: adult effeminate men are frequently (but not exclusively) portrayed as taking the receptive (i.e. passive, 'female') role in anal intercourse.[23] No such sexual adventure is attested for Hercules, but a *cinaedus* need not necessarily be sexually passive. According to Williams, effeminacy need not be tied to a particular sexual role: it is an umbrella term for a number of deviant behaviours,[24] several of which are displayed by Hercules. Effeminacy "was associated with excess, self-indulgence, and lack of self-control, whether embodied in one's sexual practices or in other ways".[25] The image of a *cinaedus* thus encompasses men failing to exercise self-restraint in pursuing sexual relations (often adulterous), creating the figure of the effeminate womaniser.[26] Latin literature presents examples of men defined as *cinaedi* who as youths indulged in sexually passive behaviour with other males before, as adults, willingly submitting to their wives, or engaging in sexual practices with women deemed demeaning to men.[27] The latter is applicable to Hercules as Omphale's slave: despite taking the active part in their erotic relationship (as far as is discernible), he remains her slave – just as slaves penetrating their masters remain slaves and therefore subservient. This type of role reversal was viewed as deviant, in that it inverts the accepted social order.[28]

Various versions of the myth depict Hercules as possessing several of the prerequisites for being a *cinaedus*. His transvestism is only one element, and not necessarily the most significant. Numerous and indiscriminate amorous liaisons, a gluttonous appetite, and often unprovoked fits of violence (such as the murders of Iphitus and Lichas), all match the cinaedic inability to control one's desires and

passions. Hercules' prodigious appetite was already ridiculed in Old Comedy and satyr plays, and remained a subject into Late Antiquity[29] when, in a rare motif, the hero is sometimes depicted as the loser in a drinking contest with Dionysus, himself notoriously effeminate.[30] However, unlike the depictions of his excesses by Christian authors, the gluttonous Hercules of comedy and visual arts remains a likeable, essentially positive figure: "good-natured rather than terrifying".[31]

Thus, the pre-eminent criterion of a *cinaedus* was "an inversion or reversal of his gender identity: his abandonment of a 'masculine' role in favour of a 'feminine' one".[32] This is exactly how Hercules' activities at the Lydian court are described by Ovid's Deianeira and by the Christian writers, and the 'educated' reader would recognise such conduct. Hercules, at least in some aspects of his life, may be viewed as effeminate.

Christian polemic

The most thorough censure of Hercules' cross-dressing escapade is to be found in Christian polemic.[33] When the apologists addressed the contemptible behaviour of pagan deities and heroes, a recurrent theme is moralising criticism of Hercules' character and deeds. Greek and Roman authors had not hesitated to criticise Hercules for moral failings when the opportunity arose – citing his intemperate sexuality, his excessive appetite, and episodes such as the drunken rape of the priestess Auge;[34] so, rebuking the hero for his indisputable faults was hardly novel when Christian writers began focusing on what they viewed as conduct that was incompatible with their religious values.

Hercules, with his diverse adventures and ambiguous personality, was an amalgam of everything these authors considered offensive in the figures of pagan myth and religion. From his birth as the result of adultery, his deeds achieved by brute force alone, his unworthy service to others, his unprovoked violence, to his suicide and subsequent apotheosis, he embodied everything that was wrong with the pagan pantheon. In addition to this, in the apologists' eyes Hercules was unable to master himself. His battles were fought against outside forces, mere mortal foes, not against his own weaknesses – "sins", "vices", and "temptations" – which would have proved his true *virtus* (Lact., *Inst*. 1.9.4, 6).[35] Furthermore, since Christian authors expected their audience to be familiar with Hercules, that most popular of all pagan heroes, lengthy explanations were unnecessary.[36] The reader would presumably understand brief allusions to his (mis-)deeds. Artistic images of the cross-dressed Hercules can be traced into Late Antiquity,[37] and the transvestite hero was even considered a fitting funerary motif: a Late Antique Egyptian relief, probably once part of a funerary edifice, depicts him in female garments, supposedly intoxicated, within the context of the Dionysiac cycle.[38] As a consequence of these aspects of his myth, which were incompatible with Christian morality, as well as his continuing popularity, Hercules was a favourite target of Christian polemicists, who also used him as a means of criticising pagans for worshipping such figures.[39]

Tertullian, the most scathing Christian critic of Hercules, identifies lust (*libido*; *Pall*. 4.3.1) as the motivating factor in the hero's exchange of male for female

dress: in his deliberations in *De Pallio* on "clothing . . . that estranges from nature and modesty" (4.8.1; transl. V. Hunink), Tertullian cites acts of transvestism which violate the divinely ordained natural order.[40] Achilles was forced to don women's clothing at the behest of his anxious mother Thetis – bad enough, since Achilles was no longer a child in whom one might tolerate such behaviour, a "breach of nature" (4.2.2–3) – but Hercules has no such excuse. Tertullian unleashes a barrage of bitter criticism, surpassing his predecessors in condemning the transvestism of Achilles, Hercules and several historical figures.[41] The boxer Cleomachus, who exchanged male for female attire and *persona*, is mentioned (4.4): an exceptionally strong, 'manly' man becoming effeminate for love, just as is alleged against Hercules.[42] However, Tertullian does not spell out the reason for Cleomachus' change of clothes and consequent feminisation, simply mentioning boxing gloves exchanged for bracelets, and "sportsman's wrap" for a thin, loose garment (4.4.3). Using what Hunink describes as a "striking obscenity" (*intra cutem caesus et ultra*, "being cut inside and outside his skin": 4.4.1),[43] Tertullian also characterises Cleomachus as a pathic, the passive partner in homosexual intercourse. So the act of transvestism is criticised, and also the accompanying gender transgression: in the case of Achilles, he is explicitly called *effeminatus* (4.2.3). And as with Hercules, *libido* is the reason for this deviancy (4.5.1). That effeminacy is Tertullian's main concern in this passage is demonstrated by the transition to his next subject, Alexander the Great. He explicitly states that, unlike the preceding examples, censure of the king's style of dress does not imply lack of virility (4.6.1).[44] In *De Pallio*, therefore, Hercules stands in a chronological line of notorious effeminates. As Tertullian devotes most attention to him (with Achilles a close second), his case of transvestism seems the gravest. Certainly, with the most popular hero as its protagonist, it was one of the most notorious, as such depravity appeared most objectionable in a celebrated *exemplum virtutis*.[45]

Tertullian makes explicit the sexual side of Hercules' transvestism, under-lining the aspect of *libido*: "so much then was granted to the Lydian secret mistress, that Hercules prostituted himself in Omphale (*prostitueretur*) and Omphale in Hercules" (4.3.2). Effectively calling Hercules a (male) prostitute can be read as an allusion to passive sexual behaviour,[46] connected with the construct of the *cinaedus*.[47] Tertullian's Hercules is *impudicus* ("sexually immodest"): *impudicitia* is "loss of one's sexual integrity", usually denoting the passive role in penetrative intercourse,[48] and the "opposite of what was appropriate to male sexuality".[49]

Turning to the lion skin, Tertullian describes what this heroic accessory suffers in becoming Omphale's attire. It is softened (*mollitas*), smoothed and drenched in balsam and fenugreek oil (4.3.5–7) – and if it could, would have roared for shame at this outrage (*contumelia*). The lion skin, which in artworks was visual shorthand for 'Hercules', here indicates that its owner is just as *mollis*.

Tertullian does not describe Hercules' appearance in the queen's luxurious, silken garments; presumably his readers are to imagine something even worse than the spectacle of the lion skin adorning Omphale (4.3.8).[50] In a final sentence on the Hercules episode, the imagery of prostitution returns: "What this Hercules looked like in Omphale's silken gown? This has already been indicated through the

description of Omphale in Hercules' hide" (*in Herculis scorto*; 4.3.8). The use of *scortum* here is an obvious pun. In its older sense of *pellis*, *scortum* can mean the lion skin, but it was also one of the most common terms for "prostitute". Significantly, it was the standard term for male prostitutes, and was more pejorative than *meretrix*, used of female prostitutes.[51] Both Hercules and his emblematic accessory are thus *scorta*, both are *molles*.

Tertullian alludes to the Lydian episode once more in the *Ad Nationes*. He mentions the *fasciae Omphales* (2.14.7), thus confirming that the central – and most despicable – part of the story is Hercules donning a uniquely female accessory (the Roman equivalent of a brassiere).[52] Listed among other (sexual) misdeeds, namely the rape of wives and virgins, and the affair with Hylas, which led to his abandoning the Argonauts, this highlights the hero's effeminate lack of self-control. Presumably, the term *turpitudo* in the following paragraph is meant to encompass all these misdemeanours (2.14.8).

Thus, by employing the traditional *topoi* reserved for the condemnation of effeminacy, Tertullian echoes Ovid's treatment of the Omphale episode;[53] however, he did not have to rely only on the *Heroides'* harsh censure of Hercules' effeminacy. Drawing on ancient discourses on deviant sexuality and behaviour, he appealed to both pagans and Christians, for they were united in their disapproval of effeminacy.[54]

Tertullian is not alone in his castigation of Hercules' cross-dressing and lack of self-restraint: authors such as Origen, Clement of Alexandria, and particularly Lactantius, make similarly derisive comments. Origen twice mentions Hercules' "effeminate bondage" and "undignified slavery with Omphale" (*Cels.* 3.22; 7.54; transl. H. Chadwick),[55] the latter phrase responding to Celsus' exhortation to worship men who died nobly and were mythologised – such as Hercules and Asclepius – rather than Christ. To refute Celsus' arguments, Origen cites two unworthy deeds of Hercules: his Lydian servitude, and the theft of an ox in Lindos, which he then devoured whole. This behaviour, also mentioned by Lactantius and Gregory of Nazianzus (Lact., *Epit.* 18.9; Greg. Naz., *Or.* 4.77, 4.122), illustrates Hercules' general intemperance and lack of self-restraint, leading to the hero famed for rescuing people from monsters destroying a farmer's livelihood because of his voracious appetite (Lact., *Inst.* 1.21.33–35).

The failure to control his sexual impulses is highlighted by Clement through allusion to the episode at Thespiae, where Hercules in one night deflowered the 50 daughters of Thespios (Clement uses the wrong form Thestios; *Protr.* 2.33.4; cf. Arnob., *Nat.* 4.26). Clement's use of *diaphtheíras* classifies this sexual adventure as a crime. Hercules is called a bridegroom, thus branding him an adulterer (*moichós*): presumably, the hero 'married' the first woman, and then committed adultery with the remaining 49! This corresponds to the womanising, adulterous behaviour of *cinaedi*. A few lines later, Clement alludes to homosexual affairs with boys (*paídon phthorás*; 2.33.4): the indiscriminate sexuality that characterises the hero's failure to master his desires includes males, namely Hylas.

In the *Divinae Institutiones*, Lactantius mocks Hercules for his servitude at Omphale's court, emphasising that the humiliation of having to serve another

– particularly a woman – is exacerbated by the hero being forced to wear female garments and undertaking female tasks.

> No one has denied the fact that Hercules was slave not only to king Eurystheus (which could be seen as honourable up to a point) but also to Omphale, a woman of great impropriety, who dressed him up in her own clothes and made him sit at her feet spinning wool.
>
> (*Inst.* 1.9.7; transl. A. Bowen and P. Garnsey)

In his *Epitome*, Lactantius employs the word *abiectus* to depict Hercules wearing female garments and sitting at Omphale's feet, forced to spin wool (7.4): the implication is that casting aside male identity and submitting to female will is depraved.[56] The wool-spinning imagery was later taken up by Prudentius: "We see the Tirynthian twirling spindles. Why, if not that he was the sport of a light-of-love?" (*fusos rotantem cernimus Tirynthium; / cur, si Neaerae non fuit ludibrio*; *Perist.* 10.239–240; transl. H. J. Thomson). Here, *Neaera* obviously refers to Omphale, and the poet makes clear the reason for the hero's debasement. Hercules, in submitting to a woman's (sexual) whims, chose to be an object of derision (*ludibrium*).

What we witness in the descriptions of Hercules' servitude is, as Lactantius indignantly exclaims, *detestabilis turpitudo* (*Inst.* 1.9.7). *Turpitudo* is often used in connection with prostitution, with the sense of "indiscriminate sexual behaviour" and resulting "social/sexual disgrace".[57] This provides an additional layer to Lactantius' diatribe, and seems to echo Tertullian's earlier vilification of the transvestite Hercules. The superlative adjective is later chosen by the author to characterise Liber/Bacchus, who became "the shameful victim of passion and lust" (*ab amore ac libidine turpissime victus est*; *Inst.* 1.10.8). Again, effeminacy is implied, with Lactantius emphasising how the god's passions get the upper hand (*Inst.* 1.10.9). Lactantius cites *voluptas* as the reason for Hercules' contemptible behaviour (*Inst.* 1.9.7), stressing to his readers that there is no morally defensible reason for such shamelessness. It is a consequence of Hercules' life-long failure to control his destructive passions – *libido*, *luxuria*, *cupiditas*, *insolentia* (*Inst.* 1.9.4) – which are the result of his birth through Alcmene's adultery (*Inst.* 1.9.1; see also *Epit.* 7.3). This unvanquished hero (*invictus*; *Epit.* 7.4) was defeated by a woman, through his own moral failings. Worse still, everyone, according to Lactantius, knows of Hercules' servitude from reading poetry and going to the theatre (*Inst.* 1.9.7–8), and yet people still worship him, making them as morally corrupt as the hero himself.[58]

So in addition to his cross-dressing, Lactantius censures Hercules for his indiscriminate sexuality, which is in keeping with the construct of the *cinaedus*. A slave to his vices, he has filled the world with *stupra*, *adulteria* and *libidines*, inflicting shame and disgrace on men and women alike (*Inst.* 1.9.1). His same-sex affair with Hylas is also ridiculed by Prudentius, who, by calling the youth a *mollis puer*, underlines the connection between effeminacy and sexual passivity (*C. Symm.* 1.116–119).

Why censure the transvestite Hercules?

I have argued that certain traits and deeds of Hercules can be interpreted in the context of the pre-Christian construct of the *cinaedus*. This effeminate side to the hero's character may have contributed to Christian condemnation of him, providing another polemical angle, and further underscoring his profound unworthiness.

Christian writers were not favourably disposed towards the gender inversion of men adopting female dress, and *vice versa*. They might tolerate it occasionally, as with the 'transvestite saints', but on the whole, cross-dressing was viewed as transgressive,[59] with Biblically based moral and religious reservations underpinning this hostility. Biblical passages dealing with transvestism are of interest when examining Christian imagery of the cross-dressing Hercules. Transvestism by either sex was condemned in the Old Testament, as against God's will: "a woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God" (*Deut*. 22:5);[60] and Paul groups effeminate men (*malakoí*, the Greek equivalent of *molles*)[61] among sexual offenders (*1 Cor*. 6:9). In the light of such passages, censure of the transvestite Hercules is hardly surprising. Tertullian makes it clear that his disapproval of transvestism is rooted in Scripture: "I do not find any dress cursed by God except that of women worn by men. *For cursed* – it is written – *is every man who clothes himself in a woman's garment*" (*Idol*. 16.2; transl. J. H. Waszink and J. C. M. van Winden).

Echoing Biblical directives, Clement pronounced that men should not bear signs of effeminacy (*malakía*) on their faces or any other bodily part, or in their movements (*Paid*. 3.11.73–74). Scriptural passages had their equivalents in a Graeco-Roman tradition similarly disapproving of effeminacy. This negative attitude towards the undermining of gender roles, one of society's foundations, should be taken into account when examining Christian treatments of the transvestite Hercules, who was still present in contemporary literature and artworks. The apologists were aware that Scriptural arguments would not suffice to convince the intended pagan readership of the immorality of their gods and heroes;[62] evoking a general disdain for effeminate men might thus be a promising addition to their rhetorical arsenal. So they drew upon pre-existing notions of 'correct' behaviour in relation to male effeminacy, or sexual misconduct, and attributed such moral preconceptions to Christian teachings in order to criticise traditional Roman sexual mores.[63] Christian authors were familiar with the construct of the *cinaedus*, as is obvious from the works of, for example, Clement (*Paid*. 3.15.2) and Firmicus Maternus, who denounced Liber/Bacchus as a *cinaedus* (Firm., *Err*. 6.7; cf. Lact., *Inst*. 1.10.8; Prud., *C. Symm*. 1.122–128), and provided astrological aetiologies for the various types of *cinaedi* (*Math*. 3.6.4; 7.25.7, 9, 12, 19–23; 8.29.7).[64]

Effeminacy in pagan figures was criticised, often when condemning public spectacles, where gender-transgressive behaviour by actors playing mythological characters (including Hercules) highlighted the connection between paganism,

unmanliness and 'sin'.[65] Likewise, effeminacy in contemporary men was denounced right from the beginning in Christian writing.[66] Prudentius warns against mature men, whose bodies were made by the creator "rude and their limbs hard", turning effeminate (*mollescere*) through wearing refined clothing (*Ham.* 282–285; transl. H. J. Thomson). Castigating men who wear "flowing robes not made from sheeps' fleeces but of the spoils taken from branches of trees and fetched from the eastern world" (287–289), Prudentius depicts a man "weaving downy garments with strange threads from many-coloured birds" (294–295)[67] – an exact description of Hercules' experience at Omphale's court. Clearly, the imagery of the effeminate man wearing luxurious garments, thereby feminising himself, still resonated in the increasingly Christianised environment of Late Antiquity.

Accusations of sexual misconduct or general lack of self-restraint were utilised by Christians in Late Antiquity to discredit their enemies, as evidenced in Augustine's attacks on the Manichaeans.[68] Slanderous attacks of this type had been commonplace for centuries, so Christian authors were merely following an established tradition.[69] Unsurprisingly, this strategy was employed against pagan gods and, through them, their worshippers – seen as dangerous enemies of the Christians. While Hercules provided ample material for criticism (even by pagan intellectuals), the cross-dressing and submission at Omphale's court, familiar to many readers, added another angle. An attack on his monster-slaying, which demonstrated physical prowess, might not succeed with the intended readership,[70] but pointing out Hercules' moral failings, including his gender-transgressive behaviour and his sexual adventures, could prove more effective, as it built upon pre-existing stereotypes. Killing monsters carried connotations of delivery from evil, which was hard to contest; effeminacy, on the other hand, was ridiculed throughout Greek and Roman literature,[71] and such behaviour could not be redeemed.

So by depicting Hercules as an intellectually challenged strong man who was prone to excess, as well as casting him in the related, and reviled, role of the *cinaedus*, Christian authors highlighted their religion's moral rectitude:[72] they clearly connected paganism and the effeminacy which played a prominent role in one of the best-known stories about the pagans' favourite hero, Hercules.[73]

In conclusion, I do not wish to suggest that Hercules was generally, or even frequently, seen as a *cinaedus* in Graeco-Roman literature and artworks. Ultimately, pagan writers' treatments of his transvestism were probably meant to "reaffirm his high-octane masculine sexuality".[74] However, by occasionally employing the language of *mollitia*, those well-known stories provided ample material for anti-Herculean Christian polemic: the apologists turned the transvestite hero into an effeminate figure, deviant in terms of gender norms and sexual behaviour, and therefore to be reviled. Imagery such as the cross-dressing Lydian Hercules, and the hero unable to master his baser instincts, must have been irresistible to these authors when faced with the challenge of disparaging pagan myth's most popular figure. They required the most potent rhetorical weapons, and so by alluding to the Graeco-Roman archetypal image of the 'unmanly man', the Christian apologists added a new, damning and persuasive sense of sordidness to Hercules.

Notes

1 I am grateful to Domitilla Campanile, Filippo Carlà-Uhink and Margherita Facella for inviting me to contribute to this volume, for their careful reading of the manuscript, and for their many useful emendations. Cary MacMahon provided many helpful suggestions, and reviewed my English.

2 For example, Kampen 1996: pp. 235–239.

3 See Cyrino 1998: pp. 219–220. In ancient art, this episode appears from the Classical period onwards, demonstrating that the transvestism was not a Hellenistic addition to the myth; nor was it devised by Roman poets as 'foreplay' in Hercules' erotic adventure with Omphale (Cyrino 1998: pp. 214–215. See also Schauenburg 1960: pp. 57–75; Kampen 1996; Stafford 2012: pp. 133–134). Omphale with the lion skin was depicted in the fourth century BCE, but images of Hercules wearing female garments are frequent only in the Roman period, Hercules and Omphale being one of the most popular mythological couples in late Republican and early Imperial art (Oehmke 2000: p. 148). Loraux makes much of Diodorus' description of Hercules receiving a *peplos* from Athena (Diod. 4.14.3), but this episode can be discounted when considering the hero's transvestism: Llewellyn-Jones has demonstrated that the term *peplos* was often applied to male clothing or even gender-neutrally to unspecified garments (Loraux 1990: pp. 33–40; Llewellyn-Jones 2005).

4 Stafford 2012: pp. 132–133. See also Robinson 2011: p. 228. For relevant passages, see Oehmke 2000: p. 148 note 11.

5 Cyrino 1998: pp. 216–217. See also Loraux 1990: p. 39, "Herakles is all the more the masculine hero for being dressed as a woman and performing women's tasks."

6 Williams 2010: p. 197.

7 The cross-dressing episode is the Greek *aition*; the Roman version is Romulus and Remus pursuing cattle-thieves while nude, providing an origin for the nudity of the Luperci (Ov., *Fast.* 2.359–380). See Robinson 2011: pp. 249–250.

8 Robinson 2011: pp. 225, 229, 237. Fantham speaks of "burlesque and epic parody" (1983: p. 193).

9 Fantham 1983: pp. 194–195.

10 For a reading of these passages as a reaffirmation of Hercules' masculine power, see Cyrino 1998: pp. 222–223.

11 For depictions of Hercules wearing a *mitra*, see Brandenburg 1966: pp. 88–90; Oehmke 2000. The *zona* could also be worn by men: see Robinson 2011: p. 239.

12 In religious contexts, it was worn by the Coan priest of Hercules (Plut., *Quaest. Graec.* 304 C–D), the *archigallus* in the cult of Cybele, and the god Dionysus in his oriental guise (*mitrephóros*: Diod. 4.4.4). See Brandenburg 1966: pp. 53–57, 62, 133–148. See also Loraux 1990: pp. 36–37.

13 For similar examples, see Brandenburg 1966: p. 59. See also Williams 2010: p. 141. In artworks, the *mitra* appears as the headdress of hermaphrodites (Brandenburg 1966: pp. 94–95), Priapos and Eros (Oehmke 2000: p. 182 note 23). On Clodius, see Campanile, Chapter 3 in this volume.

14 Brandenburg 1966: p. 10.

15 *Fast.* 2.319: the tunic is dyed with Gaetulian instead of Sidonian or Tyrian purple, emphasising luxury; see also Robinson 2011: p. 240. Similarly, Propertius (4.9.47) and later Statius (*Theb.* 10.648) dress Hercules in a purple gown.

16 See Edwards 1993: p. 68; Kuefler 2001: p. 57; Williams 2010: p. 141. On the connection between love of luxury and moral ruin in the Roman mind, see Edwards 1993: pp. 173–180.

17 On notions of the effeminate East, see Williams 2010: pp. 149–151.

18 On the subversion of gender roles through transgressive behaviour, see Edwards 1993: pp. 87–88.

19 In the first *Elegy on Maecenas* (author unknown), Omphale beats Hercules for "breaking the threads with that hard hand" (*Eleg. in Maecen.* 1.75–76; transl. J. Wight Duff and A. M. Duff). Lucian has Omphale hit Hercules, who is wearing a "saffron (*krokotós*) and purple gown" with her sandal (*Hist. Conscr.* 10; transl. K. Kilburn). On *krokotós* in a cross-dressing context, see also Medda, Chapter 9 in this volume.

20 See also Kuefler 2001: pp. 20–21, 24–25. See also *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* VIII col. 1378, line 13 to col. 1379, line 52 s.v. *mollis*; VIII col. 1384, lines 22–76 s.v. *mollitia*.

21 Williams 2010: p. 146.

22 See also Kampen 1996: p. 235; Williams 2010: pp. 150–151.

23 Vogt 2003: pp. 44–45; Williams 2010: p. 157.

24 Williams 2010: pp. 156, 167.

25 Williams 2010: p. 168; cf. pp. 151–156.

26 Williams 2010: p. 157. On *incontinentia* in effeminates, see Edwards 1993: pp. 81–84, 91–92.

27 Williams 2010: p. 167. See, for example, [Verg.] *Catal.* 13.

28 Williams 2010: pp. 31–32; see also Mart. 3.71.

29 Galinsky 1972: pp. 82, 88; Stafford 2012: pp. 105–117.

30 For example, the mosaic in the *triclinium* of the 'House of Dionysus' in Sepphoris (Galilee): see Talgam and Weiss 2004.

31 Galinsky 1972: p. 88.

32 Gleason 1990: p. 412.

33 In the context of this chapter, only the Christian condemnation of the effeminate Hercules is of interest. Positive depictions of Hercules in apologetic and other early Christian texts – for example, as the virtuous protagonist of Prodicus' "Choice of Hercules/Hercules at the Crossroads" (Bas., *Ad Iuv.* 5; Iust. Mart., *Apol.* 2.11.3–5; see also Eppinger 2015: pp. 147–150); or as the hero who abolished human sacrifice in Rome (Lact., *Inst.* 1.21.8) – are therefore disregarded. For the treatment of Hercules by Christian authors in general, see Eppinger 2015.

34 See Galinsky 1972: pp. 10–12, 47; Stafford 2012: pp. 82–85, 94–95; see also Arnob., *Nat.* 4.35.

35 See also Kuefler 2001: pp. 120–121.

36 His exploits were disseminated in literature and art up to the very end of Antiquity and beyond: see Eppinger 2015.

37 The mosaic from the villa of Liria (Spain, probably third century CE) is an example of a late depiction of Hercules and Omphale (Muth 1998: catalogue no. H 24).

38 Török 2005: pp. 98, 101 note 47.

39 For example, Lact., *Inst.* 1.18.6; 5.10.16; Firm., *Err.* 12.5.

40 On Tertullian's line of reasoning in *Pall.* 4, see Hunink 2005: pp. 174–241. Pseudo-Justin Martyr gives the same reason (*eros*) for Hercules' submission to Omphale (Ps.-Iust. Mart., *Or.* 3.1 [ed. Marcovich]).

41 Hunink 2005: p. 175. These figures include unnamed Roman emperors, the Assyrian ruler Sardanapalus and the Egyptian king Ptolemaios VIII Euergetes 'Physcon'. The identity of another effeminate ruler, a *Subnero*, is unclear; the name is intended as censure of a particular Roman emperor, but his identity remains elusive (Hunink 2005: pp. 211–212). Tertullian does not supply sordid details (*tacendum est*: 4.5.1), presumably assuming his audience was familiar with their stories; see Hunink 2005: p. 209.

42 According to Strabo, Cleomachus "[fell] in love with a certain *cinaedus* and with a young female slave who was kept as a prostitute by the *cinaedus*, [imitating] the style of dialects and mannerisms that was in vogue among the *cinaedi*" (Strab. 14.1.41; transl. H. L. Jones).

43 Hunink 2005: pp. 205–206; see also Adams 1983: p. 322.

44 Alexander is criticised for adopting Persian clothing, symbolising (oriental) decadence and luxury, and seen as effeminate by Greeks and Romans; however, the latter aspect is not stressed here (see also Hunink 2005: pp. 214, 216).

45 Lucian calls the sight of the transvestite hero, who was supposed to embody heroic manliness, a "shocking spectacle" (*théama aíschiston)*, describing him as "disgracefully feminised" (*Hist. Conscr.* 10).

46 In the Greek sources, the male prostitute usually takes the passive role in sexual intercourse; in Rome, some male prostitutes were paid to penetrate their customers. Both were held equally in contempt (Williams 2010: pp. 40, 48, 90–91).

47 See also the synonyms in Poll. 6.126: *kínaidos, pórnos, akáthartos, bdelyrós, katapýgon.*

48 Williams 2010: p. 191.

49 Kuefler 2001: p. 88. See also pp. 81, 95.

50 In the sixth century CE, the *topos* of Hercules' inappropriate clothing was developed by John Lydus, who has him wearing a *sandyx*, a sheer linen tunic in a flesh-like hue that makes the wearer appear nude (*Mag.* 3.64) – arguably worse than purple silken gowns.

51 Adams 1983: pp. 322–323, 325–326. On the unclear association between "hide", "leather" (*scortum* in the sense of *pellis*) and "prostitute", see ibid. pp. 323–324.

52 *Oxford Latin Dictionary* p. 677 s.v. *fascia* 2a; *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* VI col. 297 s.v. *fascia*.

53 See *Pall.* 4.3.3 for his recounting of Hercules' deeds; note the unusual order of defeated enemies, particularly Diomedes (part of the canonical Twelve Labours), and the Egyptian king Busiris (a less well-known foe, one of the hero's *parerga*). See also Hunink 2005: p. 197.

54 See also Kuefler 2001: pp. 218–219.

55 Clement describes Apollo and Hercules as "bowed beneath the yoke of slavery" to Admetus and Omphale respectively (*Protr.* 2.35.1; transl. G. W. Butterworth).

56 In his diatribe against Hercules, Lactantius was probably also motivated by Hercules' role as the protector of the emperor Maximianus Herculius, reviled as a persecutor of Christians: having attacked Maximianus in *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, Lactantius afterwards turned his attention to the emperor's divine ancestor (Monat 1984: p. 575).

57 McGinn 1998: p. 132; see also pp. 133–134.

58 A recurrent theme in the apologists is pagans apparently unconcerned by their gods' perceived misdeeds and ludicrousness – or even taking their cue from them (cf. Arnob., *Nat.* 4.35; Firm., *Err.* 12.4–5; Lact., *Inst.* 5.10.16).

59 Upson-Saia 2010: p. 43. Upson-Saia emphasises that the male disguise used by cross-dressing female saints is always temporary and incomplete (2010: p. 47). On the male martyrs forced by the Roman authorities into female dress, exchanging clothes with a Christian virgin to protect her virtue, and the strategy of turning this "gendered humiliation" into "religious exaltation", see Kuefler 2001: pp. 240–244.

60 This stricture, however, is not found in the section on sexual transgressions, but among more general prescriptions, including what actions to take on finding your brother's runaway donkey.

61 Kuefler 2001: p. 166.

62 See, for example, Lact., *Inst.* 5.4.4–6.

63 See also Kuefler 2001: pp. 167–168.

64 See Gleason 1995: pp. 66–67.

65 Kuefler 2001: pp. 210–213.

66 Kuefler 2001: p. 217.

67 On the contrast between 'real' men and *molles*, see Prud., *Perist.* 14.67–78.

68 Baker-Brian 2013a: pp. 507–510.

69 Edwards 2013: pp. 26–27, 32–33. On the tradition of ascribing effeminacy to enemies, see Koster 1980: pp. 83, 111–112, 118–119, 150, 286–287.

70 Long before the apologists, pagan writers ridiculed Hercules' monster-slaying, comparing it unfavourably with philosophers' intellectual feats (Galinsky 1972: pp. 130–131; e.g. Lucr. 5.22–54).
71 Vogt 2003: p. 46.
72 See also Baker-Brian 2013b: p. 39.
73 See also Kuefler 2001: p. 218.
74 Cyrino 1998: p. 217.

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