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**THE ROLE OF PHILHELLENISM IN THE POLITICAL INVECTIVE OF  
THE LATE ROMAN REPUBLIC**

A Thesis in

History

by

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## ABSTRACT

The late Roman Republic was plagued with political strife in various forms, with the result that political rhetoric became an essential tool for prominent men to gain support and denigrate their opponents. This rhetoric took many forms and appealed to different popular sentiments. Among these various charges, accusations of philhellenism became frequent tools of invective for Romans who hoped to appeal to the miso-hellenic sentiments of certain groups in the city. This thesis examines the various ways in which accusations of philhellenism were employed in the political rhetoric of the late Roman Republic, addressing specifically issues of Greek living, luxury, and symbols of power, and shows that in spite of the overwhelming influence Greece had over Rome, miso-hellenic sentiment had a strong presence in Rome. For those whose lives were overly imitative of the Greek lifestyle, charges of philhellenism were readily employed by their opponents in an effort to appeal to this hostility to Greek culture and thus to alienate the philhellenes as un-Roman and unreliable.

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## Introduction

The Romans have been compared both to their predecessors and their successors in an effort to understand the various ways that the cultures influenced each other. However, the Greeks have been a particular point of comparison for studies in Roman history, for their social and political advancements in the archaic and classical periods greatly influenced the rise of Rome from the third and second centuries BC onward. Roman culture is often examined with reference to its Greek models and set apart by its own innovations.

The comparison between the two cultures is not, however, a modern invention. The ancients themselves regularly reflected on their relationships to each other in an effort to establish their own identity and to set boundaries between themselves and outsiders. The Romans in particular devoted much time to distinguishing themselves from their eastern Greek neighbors, who were renowned for their intellectual and scientific advances and who under Alexander the Great had established the largest Mediterranean empire up to that point. Seeing themselves as the successors to the Hellenistic kingdoms, the Romans strove to establish their own place in the Mediterranean and eclipse the monumental advancements and legacy left by their Greek predecessors. As is often the case in establishing an identity, it was at the expense of an out-group. Roman self-definition was partially in direct contrast to Greek culture, and the Greeks were viewed very negatively as a result.

The interaction between Romans and Greeks was complex. On the one hand, they admired the Greeks for their artistic and intellectual developments, but they also were threatened by the prestige Greeks enjoyed throughout the Mediterranean. Much has been written on this complicated, and often contradictory, relationship between Roman and Greek culture.<sup>1</sup> In spite of the many contributions that

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<sup>1</sup> See for example, N. Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes to the Greeks* (Athens 1974); E. S. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome* (Berkeley 1984), 203-72; *Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome* (Ithaca 1992),

the Greeks made to Roman culture, they were often cast as moral inferiors who posed a threat to the stable Roman republic. Greek culture was portrayed as one of lazy indulgence in contrast to the active and moderate Roman life. Throughout classical literature, especially in the last century of the Republic, Romans faulted the Greeks for their leisurely lifestyle which focused more on athletics, discussions, and artistic pursuits than on politics and war.<sup>2</sup> While the Romans acknowledged Greek superiority in those fields, they viewed them as impractical and therefore frivolous. Instead, activities which were more pragmatic and served to advance the state, such as farming and military training, were laudable.

The creation of this value system, then, which relied on one's active involvement in the community, caused Greek culture, or at least what the Romans perceived of as Greek culture, to be cast as an opposing category. Greek culture became the antithesis of the idealized Roman life, and anyone who succumbed to the pleasure-seeking life of the Greeks risked being accused of moral degeneracy. Here there exists a distinction between private and public morality. Many aspects of Greek life, particularly the intellectual pursuits, were acceptable in Roman private life, but condemned publically. Therefore private study of the philosophers was without consequence unless it was considered to threaten the public good. However, private morality did not allow for wealth and luxury, so that men who indulged in their own wealth rather than bestowing it upon the Roman populace fell victim to intense censure. The natural result of Roman miso-hellenic sentiment was that by the late second and first centuries BC, Romans were frequently accusing each other of being philhellenes – of imitating this lifestyle that traditional Roman mores regarded as selfish and weak. Roman society had created a theoretical archetype of the debased Greek, and therefore people who exhibited characteristics belonging to that archetype were cast as Greek-lovers.

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esp. 223-71; B. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton 2004), esp. 381-405; J. P. V. D. Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens* (London 1979), 60-64.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Sall. *Cat.* 8; *Hist.* 3.34.1, 25-26 (McGushin); Polyb. 6.42; Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 1.1-5.

It is important here to define 'Greek' culture, for it can have such varying implications. For the purposes of this paper, 'Greek' and 'Hellenistic' culture will be synonymous. In other words, by 'Greek' I do not refer to the culture of classical fifth-century Athens, nor even of the early fourth-century Greece. I will discuss Greek culture in the Hellenistic context in which the Romans viewed it – a blending of classical Greek customs with those of the Greek East which occurred after the Macedonian conquest of Asia and the Persian Empire. Therefore, customs that may traditionally be attributed to the Persians and Asians were absorbed into the wider Greek (or Hellenistic) culture that spread eastward from mainland Greece. This assimilation of Greek and Persian was no different from the fifth-century assimilation of Persian and Median, with the result that the two cultures became essentially synonymous. Greece came to embody all the eastern Mediterranean customs, especially those that were deplorable to the average Roman – laziness and indulgence, effeminacy and promiscuity, deceit and tyranny.

In this thesis, I will be examining Roman manipulation of these miso-hellenic sentiments in late Republican rhetoric. The frequency of incorporating perceived Greek behaviors into political and judicial invective is striking. It is so prevalent, in fact, that modern scholars have found it difficult to separate these rhetorical and propagandistic characterizations of men from the historical figures themselves. Such is the nature of rhetoric – it need not accurately reflect reality so long as it appeals to an idea that has the potential to be real. In other words, because invective operates in the framework of popular beliefs and prejudices, we can assume that even if the accusations made were not factual, they reflected what the speaker hoped his audience would think and react to.

Ideally, studying the role of philhellenism in ancient rhetoric should focus on political and judicial speeches as well as personal letters, as these are the most direct evidence for accusations against others, and indeed the texts of Cicero and those preserved in the historians will be a major focus in this paper. That such speeches or letters frequently circulated in the late Republic is evident from

various references to speeches made throughout Cicero's *Brutus*.<sup>3</sup> However, because of the nature of the ancient evidence, many contemporary first-century sources survive only indirectly in the histories and biographies of later periods. When reading Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* or Suetonius' *Lives of the Caesars*, traces of earlier invective are apparent.<sup>4</sup> Frequently these later sources reference the speeches or letters of particular individuals that contained accusations against their opponents. For example, in his *Life of Augustus*, Suetonius mentions various occasions where Octavian was the target of abuses by Antony and his followers, both in speeches and in personal letters.<sup>5</sup> In this way many of the accusations made against the prominent men of the first-century BC were incorporated into these later texts, and sometimes even presented as fact. Therefore the following discussion will also make reference to these later works, with the assumption that many of the negative characterizations contained therein are a reflection of the first-century sources available to the ancient authors. Whether or not these characterizations of the historical individuals are true is unimportant here, for they were represented as truth, and that is the main interest in the study of Roman invective. As will be shown, hostility to Greek culture was widespread at the end of the Republic, and therefore accusations of Greek-inspired living were effective ways to cast one's opponents as un-Roman and therefore alienate them from the senate and the people.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, *Brut.* 63, 81, 99, 160, 163.

<sup>4</sup> For example, H. J. Rose, "The Departure of Dionysus," *AnnLiv* 11 (1924), 25, has shown that in his *Life of Antony*, Plutarch quotes almost directly Cicero, Delliis, Olympos, and some documents recording Antony's attacks on Cicero. Much of his information also seems to have been transmitted to him orally by his grandfather or other eye-witnesses, with particular interest in his activities in the East. C. B. R. Pelling's commentary on the *Life of Antony* (Cambridge 1988), 26-31, discusses these and other sources, such as the autobiography of Augustus and the history of C. Asinius Pollio, with supplementary bibliography.

<sup>5</sup> For example, *Aug.* 2.3; 7.1; 13.2; 16.2.

## Chapter 1: Origins of Anti-Hellenism

The scanty evidence for anti-Greek sentiment within Rome in the centuries before the Punic Wars suggests that it increased remarkably during the last two centuries BC. Much has been said as to the origins of such feelings amongst the Romans, particularly those of the senatorial class, but it is worth surveying the topic in order to identify particular reasons why accusations of philhellenism became increasingly useful in Roman political invective, especially in the last few decades of the Republic.

### **Romans and Greeks in the Third and Second Centuries BC**

By the third century BC, Romans and the Italian Greeks coexisted with only minimal conflict.<sup>1</sup> Greek emigrants had settled portions of southern Italy since the eighth century BC, and the initial colonization seems to have been quite aggressive, attracting the enmity of the native Italians and disrupting many of their southern settlements. The Greek settlements also became embroiled in various conflicts in southern Italy with both Greek and non-Greek towns. However, trade between the Latins, Greeks, and Etruscans was extensive, as can be seen in the exceptional numbers of Greek trade items, especially pottery, excavated throughout the Italian peninsula.<sup>2</sup> Greek influence on Roman culture, whether directly or indirectly, can be seen through the importation of Greek religion,

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<sup>1</sup> For discussions on the settlement of southern Italy by Greeks, see K. Lomas, *Rome and the Western Greeks, 350 BC-AD 200* (London 1993), 18-35; T. J. Dunbabin, *The Western Greeks* (Oxford 1948), 146-7; J. Boardman, *The Greeks Overseas: Their Early Colonies and Trade*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (London 1999), Chapter 5, esp. 161-210.

<sup>2</sup> Such trade goods are especially visible in excavated burials throughout Italy, though it has been shown that most Italian acquisitions of Greek trade goods arrived through intermediaries, especially the Etruscans: Lomas, *Rome and Greeks*, 27-28; I. S. Ryberg, *An Archaeological Record of Rome from the Seventh to the Second Century B. C.* (Philadelphia 1940), 47-48. For the 'orientalizing' period in Italy under Greek influence, see T. J. Cornell, *The Beginnings of Rome* (London 1995), 81-86. Archaeological evidence shows that in the fifth century commercial interactions between the Greeks and Rome declined, as there is a noticeable decrease in Attic pottery found in the area: Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 225. This decline also reflects the decline of Etruscan influence in Rome.

philosophy, and institutions, and there is little evidence that the Romans as a whole resisted this influx of foreign culture.<sup>3</sup>

However, at the end of the third century Roman history drastically changed course. After consolidating power within the entire Italian peninsula south of the Po Valley,<sup>4</sup> the Romans for the first time looked beyond their shores and began asserting their dominance over foreign lands and peoples, beginning with the First Punic War in 220 BC. Within the next fifty-three years, the Romans brought under their rule the entire *oikoumene*<sup>5</sup> and thence began a new phase as the strongest imperial power in the Mediterranean region. This domination began in the west with the wars against the Carthaginians in the late second century (264-146 BC), followed by the wars against the Macedonians (215-168 BC), and Syrians (192-188 BC). In 146 BC, the destruction of both Carthage and Corinth brought all of Africa and Greece into the Roman sphere and, after Attalus III's bequest of Pergamum to Rome in 133, the Romans began also to lay hold of Asia Minor.<sup>6</sup>

Rome's new position in the Mediterranean resulted in an increase of patriotism on the part of the Romans. Latin replaced Greek as the literary language<sup>7</sup>; a new historical tradition was established,

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<sup>3</sup> See for example Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 86-92.

<sup>4</sup> Roman expansion in Italy began as soon as the city had been established. Following their defeat of Pyrrhus of Epirus at Beneventum in 275 BC, the Romans put down a few final revolts in southern Italy and, upon the victory at Aesernia in 263, they completed their conquest of the Italian peninsula. For further discussion on the Roman acquisition of Italy, see Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 322-64; J.-M. Davis, *The Roman Conquest of Italy*, trans. by A. Nevill (Cambridge 1997).

<sup>5</sup> Polyb. 1.1. This 53-year period ended with the defeat of Perseus of Macedon in 167 BC, whereupon Rome had direct or indirect control over Spain, North Africa, Italy, Greece, and western Asia Minor, and had defeated major Hellenistic powers.

<sup>6</sup> On destruction of Carthage, Polyb. 38.19-22; of Corinth, Polyb. 39.2-3; on Roman acquisition of Pergamum, Str. 13.4.2; Livy *Per.* 58-59; Just. 36.4.5; *OGIS* 338 = *IGRR* IV.289 = R. K. Sherk, *Rome and the Greek East to the Death of Augustus* (Cambridge 1984), no. 39.

<sup>7</sup> Livius Andronicus is traditionally said to have been the first to translate Greek poetry into Latin at the end of the third century BC, though there are major problems with this dating since many philologists believe that there must have been significant Greek influences and native foundations preceding Livius. For his fragments, see W. Morel et. al. (eds.), *Fragmenta Poetarum Latinorum Epicorum et Lyricorum*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Stuttgart 1995), 17-38. Further, Athenian New Comedy was adapted by Plautus and Terence into Latin plays of similar character, though adapted to reflect local Italian traditions. See S. J. Harrison, *A Companion to Latin Literature* (Oxford 2005), 15-21.

separating the Roman past from the Greek past<sup>8</sup>; and the Romans, in particular those of the senatorial class, seem to have developed a hostility toward Greeks and their culture, promoting instead a so-called nativist Roman tradition. In fact, Romans defined their own identity and culture in part by comparing and opposing themselves to the Greeks and their culture.

No matter the origins of this miso-hellenism, it was directed eastward toward the Greeks of the mainland, the Aegean, and the coast of Asia Minor rather than toward those dwelling in the west. This may be due in part to the rapid Italicization of Greek immigrants who settled in southern Italy,<sup>9</sup> and may explain the use of the term *'semigraecus'* which was applied to prominent Italian Greeks of the third and second centuries BC, such as Livius Andronicus and Ennius, implying that their Greekness was somehow diluted.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, early Romans may have first been exposed to Greek luxury through their southern neighbors, but through time as they came into more direct contact with the eastern Greeks, and as Roman public mores began shunning wealth, that association directed itself more toward the East.<sup>11</sup> While this differential treatment of Italian Greeks may seem like a double standard, such views are explicitly expressed in Cicero's *Pro Flacco*. In the midst of his attempt to call into question the

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<sup>8</sup> Naevius had started this tradition in the later half of the third century BC with his *Bellum Punicum*, which contained flashbacks to Aeneas' arrival in Italy in the midst of his narration of the First Punic War. For his fragments, see Morel, *Fragmenta Poetarum*, 38-71. Fabius Pictor's Greek history about the Punic Wars heavily influenced his more famous successor, Polybius. Quintus Ennius' *Annales*, written in Latin verse, detailed Roman history from the sack of Troy to the defeats of Philip V and Antiochus III. Cato's *Origines*, however, was the work that unofficially established Latin as a suitable language for prose writing. See Harrison, *A Companion*, 21-22; Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes*, 135-37. Harrison (22-30) also discusses briefly the issue of Hellenic influence on Latin writers.

<sup>9</sup> Lomas claims that the sparse number of Greek inscriptions found in Italy may suggest that those Greeks who had settled had quickly adopted the Latin language. Several Greek towns in Campania also seem to have been quickly Latinized; see Lomas, *Rome and Greeks*, 27-28. However, it is difficult to draw any broad conclusions from this inscriptional evidence, as it may only be a result of the find patterns and not actually reflect the reality of archaic Italy. For the Greek inscriptions of Italy and Sicily, see *JG XIV*.

<sup>10</sup> Suet *De Gram* 1; Varro *Re Rust.* 2.1.2.

<sup>11</sup> Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes*, 73; Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 306. Dunbabin (*Western Greeks*, 75-83) claims that the Greeks of early Magna Graecia were probably richer than their contemporaries dwelling in cities of Greece and Asia, as illustrated in the stories about the extravagance of Sybaris: Hdt. 6.127; Ar. *Daitaleis fr* 216; Peace 344. While this may be the case, there is little indication of any Roman condemnation of this lifestyle before the establishment of the Roman over-seas empire in the early second century BC.

testimonies of the prosecution's witnesses, he gives some insight into the contemporary Roman perceptions of Greeks.

In his defense of L. Valerius Flaccus, probably in October of 59,<sup>12</sup> Cicero asserts that Greek witnesses are unreliable because Greeks are deceitful and will say anything if compelled to do so.<sup>13</sup> Yet since both his and the prosecution's witnesses are Greeks, he has to further delineate the degrees of deceit amongst the different groups of Greeks. Cicero condemns Asia, and by extension the residents of Asia, as more unstable, unreliable, and greedy than mainland Greece, quoting presumably well-known proverbs that emphasized the rotten nature of Asians:

*Utrum igitur nostrum est an vestrum hoc proverbium, 'Phrygem plagis fieri solere meliorem'? Quid? de tota Caria nonne hoc vestra voce volgatum est, 'si quid cum periculo experiri velis, in Care id potissimum esse faciendum'? Quid porro in Graeco sermone tam tritum atque celebratum est quam, si quis despiciatui ducitur, ut 'Mysorum ultimus' esse dicatur? ... Quam ob rem quae vobis fit iniuria, si statuimus vestro nobis iudicio standum esse de vobis? Equidem mihi iam satis superque dixisse videor de Asiatico genere testium; sed tamen vestrum est iudices omnia quae dici possunt in hominum levitatem inconstantiam, cupiditatem, etiam si a me minus dicuntur, vestris animis et cogitatione comprehendere.<sup>14</sup>*

Thereupon is this our proverb or yours: "The Phrygian tends to become better when beaten"? What is more, is this not a common saying of yours about all of Caria: "If you wish to try something dangerously, it is most effectively done against a Carian"? Further, what is a more common and widespread phrase in Greek discussions than to say that someone is the "last of the Mysians," if he is regarded with contempt? ... On this account what harm is done to you if we decide to judge you as you judge yourselves? I for my part already seem to have said more than enough about the Asian race with regards to their witnesses, but nevertheless it is for you, judges, to comprehend in your minds and with reflection all of these things which are able to be said against the unreliability, instability, and greed of these men, even if they have been argued poorly by me.

He drives his point further homeward when he praises residents of the true and authentic Greece (*vera et integra*), particularly the Athenians and the Spartans, in contrast to the Asian Greeks who were easily persuaded to follow Mithridates of Pontus in his resistance to Rome.<sup>15</sup> Yet the Greek city most superior

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<sup>12</sup> Cic. *Ad Att.* 2.25.1.

<sup>13</sup> *Pro Flacc.* 9-12, 19.

<sup>14</sup> *Pro Flacc.* 65-66; see also 17.

<sup>15</sup> *Pro Flacc.* 61-63.

in culture and reliability, Cicero claims, is Massilia,<sup>16</sup> a seventh-century colony in Gaul that had resisted Carthage in the sixth and fifth centuries and had long been in *amicitia* with Rome. Cicero chooses this city, with its aristocratic government and its close ties to Rome, as the least offensive of the Greek cities. And conveniently, Cicero's character witnesses on Flaccus' behalf just so happen to come from this respectable city.

Cicero's model of Greek character gradations, which favors the testimonies of his witnesses over those of the defense, is arguably a case of special pleading and may not reflect wider Roman prejudice. However ancient rhetoric often found its power in manipulating popular opinions to one's favor. This tactic was established first in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, where he says that one must determine the popular opinions and premises and exploit them in order to produce an effective case.<sup>17</sup> By targeting commonly held values, prejudices and attitudes, a speaker will gain the favor and understanding of the audience and be able to persuade them to a certain opinion. Therefore, Cicero's *Pro Flacco* should be examined as a reflection of widely held prejudices within the Senate and possibly within the wider Roman populace, or at least a reflection of prejudices that Cicero estimated to be widely held.<sup>18</sup> From this speech, then, Cicero hopes that his contemporaries believe that the further west the Greeks, the less offensive they were.

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<sup>16</sup> *Pro Flacc.* 63.

<sup>17</sup> Arist. *Rhet.* 1392b. D. Cohen has shown how the Athenians appealed more to these social ideals and prejudices than to the laws in order to win legal suits against their rivals: see *Law, Violence and Community in Classical Athens* (Cambridge 1995), esp. 61-86. He concludes by saying, "Legal rhetoric is made possible through an understanding of the shared moral judgments on which the political community is based" (191). Within Rome as well, rhetoric depended on emotional appeals to the people, and therefore accusations made within speeches can be considered to reflect a certain popular sentiment. Of course, not all members of the populace would be sympathetic to the same accusations, and thus the judgments contained therein do not automatically represent the opinions of all Romans, but one should assume that the speaker would use arguments that were most likely to appeal to a majority of the target audience. Even G. Herman, who opposes Cohen on his agonistic model, agrees that political and judicial speeches can be used to reconstruct popular views: see *Morality and Behaviour in Democratic Athens: A Social History* (Cambridge 2006), 136-54.

<sup>18</sup> Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 306. Though traditionally scholars have considered these speeches to be directed primarily at the senatorial elite, F. Millar has shown that the crowd also played a vital role in the political and judicial process of the Republic: see *The Crowd in Rome in the Late Republic* (Ann Arbor 1998), esp. 73-123; also A. M. Riggsby, *Crime and Community in Ciceronian Rome* (Austin 1999), 129-36.

The existence of such a perception makes it more understandable why the Roman hostility to Greek culture did not target the Greeks of southern Italy, but rather those of mainland Greece and the Aegean region. Asian Greeks were the most hateful, as they not only practiced Greek customs, but were also strongly influenced by the eastern traditions of the native Anatolians and the Persians. Indeed, many of the Roman attacks on Greek culture address aspects that the Greeks themselves had used in polemic against the Persians and other eastern kingdoms,<sup>19</sup> but it seems that by the second century BC the Romans had for the most part conflated Greek and Eastern customs. No longer were the extravagant lifestyles of the eastern monarchs separate from the moderate lives of the classical Greeks. The extension of Greek rule over the Persian empire, however incomplete and short-lived, had caused the two cultures to be assimilated in the minds of the Romans. At the same time, this explains the more intense hostility that the Romans had toward the Asian Greeks than the mainland Greeks, though none were completely safe from such associations.<sup>20</sup>

Unfortunately, the ancient sources give little help to the origins of Roman hostility toward the whole of the Greeks and their culture. Petrochilos suggests<sup>21</sup> that the Bacchanalian Affair of 186 BC<sup>22</sup> may have created for the Romans an uneasiness toward Greek culture and philosophy, which resulted in greater caution amongst the Roman senatorial class regarding other aspects of Greek culture. Others have argued that Roman conflicts with Greek and Eastern dynasts had made them wary of monarchy

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<sup>19</sup> E.g. Herodotus describes Solon's censure of Croesus for his dependence on his wealth (1.29-34) and the excessive greed of Darius (1.187). However, the most extensive source for the Persian stereotype in the eyes of the Greeks is Aeschylus' *Persae*. For a fuller discussion on Greek perceptions of the East, see Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 257-303; on these perceptions especially in Greek drama, see E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian* (Oxford 1989), esp. 56-100.

<sup>20</sup> See A. Spawforth, "Shades of Greekness: A Lydian Case Study," *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity* (Washington, D. C. 2001), 375-99. Isaac (*Invention of Racism*, 317-18) rejects the idea that Romans saw 'shades' of Greekness based on geographical location, but rather distinction was made 'between ancient, fifth-, and fourth-century Greeks and their descendants whom they had defeated.' Certainly this chronological distinction was of primary concern to many Romans, but Cicero's speech here does indicate that Romans may have perceived some difference between the western and eastern Greeks. Indeed, as mainland Greeks became more conflated with the 'soft' eastern habits, they separated themselves from the more 'pure-bred' western Greeks who avoided the allure of such moral threats.

<sup>21</sup> Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes*, 186.

<sup>22</sup> *ILLRP* 511.

and all things associated with it, including the ruler's wealth, semi-divine status, and unbridled power.<sup>23</sup> Petrochilos also suggests that the Romans suffered a sort of inferiority complex. As the new power in the Mediterranean, many Romans were conscious of the fact that their political influence was not matched by their cultural influence, and thus they offered many excuses as to why the Greeks maintained superiority in literature, art, and philosophy in spite of their political weakness.<sup>24</sup> The Greeks, in the Roman conception, were lazy and thus had the leisure time to hone 'trivial' skills, but with the result that their former military prowess was depleted.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, the Romans claimed that they lagged in philosophical and artistic sophistication because of their hatred of idleness. Their regular involvement in more practical skills, such as farming and soldiering, prevented them from ever having the time to develop their own aptitude in the arts and philosophy.

### **M. Porcius Cato**

Perhaps the best known opponent of Greek culture, and essentially the father of the anti-Greek movement, was M. Porcius Cato. Before discussing Cato's objections to many influences from the Greek world, it is necessary to acknowledge that Cato did not oppose all aspects of Greek culture. He himself was educated in the Greek manner; he had at least a conversational knowledge of the Greek language during his career, and in his older age is said to have devoted himself to Greek literature.<sup>26</sup> The precise nature and date of Cato's education in Greek language and literature is highly debated, but the fact of the matter is that Cato was not hostile to all things Greek.<sup>27</sup> This attitude makes his attacks upon Greek

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<sup>23</sup>See A. Erskine, "Hellenistic Monarchy and Roman Political Invective," *CQ* 41 (1991), 106-20.

<sup>24</sup> Petrochilos (*Roman Attitudes*) discusses this theme throughout his book. For example, on the superiority of the Greek language (23-33); the inferiority of Greek military exploits (93-104); and education (171-82).

<sup>25</sup> For example: Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 22.4; Sall. *Cat.* 8; Cic. *De Or.* 1.105; 1.195ff; *Pro Cael.* 40.

<sup>26</sup> Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 2.4, 12.4; Val. Max. 8.7.1.

<sup>27</sup> For a more exhaustive discussion on this, see Astin, *Cato the Censor* (Oxford 1978), esp. 157-81; Kienast, *Cato der Zensor* (Rome 1973), 101-15; Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes*, 166-70.

luxury and culture all the more striking, but it also helps the historian to distinguish the more ‘offensive’ Greek habits in Cato’s eyes from the more ‘acceptable.’

The bulk of Cato’s charges against Greek culture are preserved by Plutarch and Pliny the Elder. The time elapsed between Cato and these imperial writers allows for the possibility that the later accounts may be exaggerated. However, both Plutarch and Pliny probably had access to Cato’s own writings, especially his letter to his son, Marcus, in which he warned him about the many faults of the Greeks.<sup>28</sup> He viewed the contemporary Greek people as ‘most worthless and ignorant’ (*nequissimum et indocile*) as well as deceitful and fickle,<sup>29</sup> and contrasted their emphasis on words with the Roman tendency toward action.<sup>30</sup> Thus later descriptions of Cato’s hostile attitude to Greek culture may have been inflated, they were certainly rooted in prejudices contained in his own writings. And while Cato’s opposition to luxurious living certainly targeted more than just Greek culture, he does seem to have associated the Greeks in particular with extravagance. He reveals just this sort of sentiment in his speeches against excessive living, in which he includes mention of many Greek luxury items.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, the most conspicuous instance of Cato’s hostility toward the Greeks is the episode with the visiting philosophers to Rome. In 155 BC, three Athenian philosophers, including Carneades the Academic and Diogenes the Stoic, came to Rome to appeal the 500-talent fine imposed on Athenians after a suit brought by Oropus. The philosophers began speaking and attracting audiences of Romans, and especially the city’s youth, with the result that:

λόγος κατέχειν, ὡς ἀνὴρ Ἑλλήν ἐκπληξίν ὑπερφυῆς πάντα κηλῶν καὶ χειρούμενος ἔρωτα δεινὸν ἐμβέβληκε τοῖς νέοις, ὑφ’ οὗ τῶν ἄλλων ἡδονῶν καὶ διατριβῶν ἐκπεσόντες ἐνθουσιῶσι περὶ φιλοσοφίαν.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Astin, *Cato*, 169.

<sup>29</sup> Cato *Ad Marc. fil. fr.* 1 (Jordan, p. 77) = Pliny *NH* 29.14.

<sup>30</sup> Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 22.4.

<sup>31</sup> Astin, *Cato*, 173. While many ancient authors state that Greek luxury first entered Rome in the early to mid-second century (see Chapter 3 below, pp. 41-59), it is apparent that Greeks were associated with luxurious wining and dining long before this: cf. *pergraecari* in Plautus, *Poen.* 603; *Bacch.* 813; *Most.* 22, 64, 960. Cato also refers to salted fish from the Greek East in his polemic against imported luxury items (Polyb. 31.25.5).

<sup>32</sup> Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 22.3.

A report spread throughout that an extraordinarily wondrous Greek man, charming and subduing everyone with his speaking, had struck a terrible passion in the youth, on account of which they became possessed with philosophy and abandoned their other pleasures and amusements.

While many of the Romans were delighted to see their young men engaging in such intellectual pursuits, Cato was distressed that they would be persuaded to seek glory through words rather than by military deeds. As a result, he argued for the dismissal of the philosophers from Rome in order that the youth might return their ears to the laws and magistrates (τῶν νόμων καὶ τῶν ἀρχόντων...ἀκούωσι).<sup>33</sup> Cato's opposition to the philosophical teachings, however, was multi-faceted. Certainly he was uneasy about the youth learning to value words over deeds, but even more so he feared that they would be deceived by the eloquent words of the philosophers, whose profession depended on "verbal expertise at the expense of truth."<sup>34</sup> Such skills were based on deception and encouraged trivial pursuits that were not valued in Cato's ideal model of a practical Roman lifestyle.

In spite of all this, none of Cato's surviving writings show any evidence of him using specifically miso-hellenistic accusations against other prominent Romans. Regardless, Cato's belief in the poisoning effect of Greek culture certainly persisted into successive generations and instances of its use in invective are implicit, if not explicit, in the later sources of the second century BC.

### Scipio Aemilianus

Unfortunately, only a small sampling of second century texts have survived to the modern period, and political speeches and writings are especially sparse. However, traces of hostility to Greek culture manage to appear in the accounts of the historians and biographies, both contemporary and

<sup>33</sup> Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 22.5. See also Pliny *Ep* 5.20.4; Cic *Pro Scauro* 3, for the excessive garrulousness of the Greeks.

<sup>34</sup> Astin, *Cato*, 178-79, who notes that Cato's expulsion of the philosophers was not an isolated event – similar incidents occurred at other times and under the authority of different Romans. For example, in 166 BC the senate gave M. Pomponius the authority to everything necessary to expel all philosophers and rhetoricians from the city (Suet. *Rhet.* 1); in probably 154 the senate expelled two Epicurean philosophers from the city (Athen. 12.547a); and in 92 the censors protested the founding of Latin rhetorical schools in the city (Suet. *Rhet.* 1).

later. The second century historian Polybius provides some insight into the Roman political thought of the time. Despite his Greek origin, Polybius dwelled in Rome for years as an Achaean hostage and he became intimately acquainted with Roman politics. In Book 31 of his Roman history, he digresses into an encomium about his good friend and protégé, Scipio Aemilianus. Polybius makes the point to distinguish Scipio from other young Romans, and in particular he mentions that Scipio does not participate in the Greek lifestyle in the way that his peers did:

Πρώτη δὲ τις ἐνέπεσεν ὀρμὴ καὶ ζῆλος τῶν καλῶν τὸ τὴν ἐπὶ σωφροσύνη δόξαν ἀναλαβεῖν καὶ παραδραμεῖν ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει τοὺς κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἡλικίαν ὑπάρχοντας. ὧν δὲ μέγας οὗτος καὶ δυσέφικτος ὁ στέφανος εὐθήρατος ἦν κατ' ἐκείνον τὸν καιρὸν ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ διὰ τὴν ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον ὀρμὴν τῶν νέων, οἱ δ' εἰς ἐταίρας ἐξεκέχυντο, πολλοὶ δ' εἰς ἀκροάματα καὶ πότους καὶ τὴν ἐν τούτοις πολυτέλειαν, ταχέως ἠρπακότες ἐν τῷ Περσικῷ πολέμῳ τὴν τῶν Ἑλλήνων εἰς τοῦτο τὸ μέρος εὐχέρειαν.<sup>35</sup>

And first an impulse and desire to pursue a good life fell upon him, to seek a reputation for moderation and to exceed in this respect his peers who were also starting out. For this crown, being great and difficult to attain, was easy to catch in Rome at this time on account of the degenerated impulses of the majority of the youths. For some squandered their lives on the amours of young boys and others on prostitutes, and many to musical entertainments and drinking and the extravagances involved, swiftly being overpowered by the license of the Greeks in this respect during the war with Perseus.

Polybius further commends Scipio for his restraint both in dining and drinking, as well as in financial manners, as compared to contemporaries who had fallen victim to avarice under the influence of the Macedonians.<sup>36</sup> While Polybius is not charging Scipio's peers with 'immoral' Greek living outright, he does give the impression that avoidance of such behavior reflected one's integrity, with the result that he implicitly denounces all other young Romans in favor of Scipio and gives more insight into the shape of anti-Greek sentiment. The association between these activities and Greece is not directly mentioned, but it is implied by Polybius' suggestion that such behavior rapidly grew in the years after the wars with Perseus. The Greek mentor further praises his protégé for spending his spare time hunting rather than

<sup>35</sup> Polyb. 31.25.2-4; cf. Diod. Sic. 31.26.6-7.

<sup>36</sup> Polyb. 31.25.8-9.

arguing and litigating in the forum to win popular favor, thereby echoing Cato's profession of the Roman value of deeds over words.<sup>37</sup>

Polybius' praise of Scipio's lifestyle underlines the hostility in Rome toward luxury, leisure, and excess that often was associated with the East, but his account has been written off as purely a subjective encomium to his good friend, revealing nothing of Scipio's true character. However subjective Polybius' portrait of Scipio may be, his portrayal of Scipio's moral superiority through avoidance of Greek trivialities is clear.

That Polybius was not alone in this moral ideal is evident through surviving fragments of Scipio's own speeches. Macrobius records that Scipio himself made declamations in 129 BC, in which he attacked the Greek-style arts education that many Roman youth were receiving.<sup>38</sup> More interesting is a fragment from one of Scipio's speeches.<sup>39</sup> The speech contains Scipio's accusations against another Roman, P. Sulpicius Galus,<sup>40</sup> for his numerous luxurious and womanly habits, casting him as a well perfumed, ornately decorated drunken man with a plucked beard and a rancid smell who is indistinguishable from a common 'butt-slut' (*cinaedus*). The accusations contain no explicit reference to Greek culture, yet his characterization of Galus easily fits into the archetype of a depraved Greek life as described by his tutor, Polybius. Galus according to Scipio embodies the exact portrait of the hellenized Roman that Polybius denounced in the passages cited above (p. 14). Further, the oratorical nature of this fragment also indicates that Scipio believed such charges against Galus could be effective in alienating him from the favors of the audience. These fragments, therefore, contain some of the earliest evidence of the oratorical benefits of philhellenic accusations in Roman rhetoric.

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<sup>37</sup> Polyb. 31.29.5-12.

<sup>38</sup> Macrobius *Sat.* 3.14.7.

<sup>39</sup> Gell. 6.12.4-5 = H. Malcovati, *ORF*<sup>3</sup> (Turin 1966) fr. 17, p. 127. See also Astin, *Scipio Aemilianus* (Oxford 1967), 255, who suggests that Scipio made these accusations in the *recognitio equitum*, in which the censors interrogated men on their financial, physical, and moral fitness before enrolling them into the *equites*.

<sup>40</sup> Gellius calls him Gallus, but in all likelihood the man's name was Galus, as that was a common cognomen among the Sulpicii. See Malcovati, *ORF*<sup>2</sup>, 127.

## Tiberius Gracchus

The agrarian reforms proposed by Tiberius Gracchus in 133 BC caused much upheaval in Rome, largely because of the immense popular support they elicited and the intense elite opposition to them. With his reforms and the Roman plebeians behind him, Tiberius became for the Roman senatorial class a force to reckon with, and there was much opposition to his growing influence. Indeed, the upper classes were threatened by the proposed reforms, as they would have resulted in land redistribution to the benefit of the masses and the detriment of the elite, but they also felt personally slighted. Whereas Roman law did not technically require the *tribunus plebis* to present legislation before the senate before going to the people, consultation with them was customary. However, Tiberius took his proposed law to the popular assembly before discussing it with the senate, thereby giving them no chance to object and initiating a sequence of events that would lead to his murder soon afterwards.<sup>41</sup> Further, Tiberius' unconstitutional run for re-election to the tribunate made the senators nervous, as they disliked the prospect of him returning to office and avoiding prosecution for other unlawful acts.

The intense opposition to Tiberius amongst the senatorial class naturally resulted in propagandistic efforts to demonize him as a demagogue. Ancient accounts indicate that accusations of *regnum* were extremely prominent in this propaganda, with the result that Tiberius' murder was viewed as a necessity for the preservation of the Republic.<sup>42</sup> Modern scholarship does not agree on the nature of these accusations, debating whether they were just deliberate slander or a reflection of a genuine fear amongst the elite, but regardless Tiberius' opponents made many attempts to portray him as nothing more than an aspiring tyrant. According to the accusations of his neighbor, not only was

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<sup>41</sup> Ti. Gracchus was not the first tribune to ever take an agrarian bill straight to the assembly. Gaius Flaminius did just this in 232 BC, when he proposed a law to the *plebs* that would distribute the *ager Gallicus* to landless Romans. Fortunately for Flaminius, his breach of tradition did not end as poorly as did Tiberius', but his actions were remembered for generations and considered by some to be the beginning of the perversion of the Roman people: Polybius 2.21.8.

<sup>42</sup> Sall. *Bell. Jug.* 31.7; Cic. *Rep.* 2.49; *Pro Mil.* 8; 72; *Brut.* 103; *In Cat.* 1.29; *Phil.* 8.13; *De Amic.* 41; *De Off.* 1.76, 109; Val. Max. 3.2.17; 5.3.2e; 6.3.1d; Plut. *Ti. Grac.* 19.2 f; Quint. *Inst.* 5.13.24. For various interpretations of these charges, see Astin, *Scipio*, 195, 228; H. C. Boren, "Tiberius Gracchus: The Opposition View," *AJP* 82 (1961), 358-69.

Tiberius aiming to rule Rome, but he was positioned in such a way that foreigners such as Eudemus of Pergamum recognized him as the next king of Rome and presented him with a diadem and a purple robe.<sup>43</sup> The implications of tyranny and their relation to Greek stereotypes was a major *topos* in Republican rhetoric and will be discussed more fully below (chapter 4), for the close associations between tyranny and Greek history and drama could not be disputed.<sup>44</sup> In a city like Rome whose constitution mixed aristocratic, democratic, and monarchic elements, the rise of a demagogue threatened the balance of these elements and, consequently, the stability of the state.<sup>45</sup>

Another probable element of the propaganda against Tiberius Gracchus was the influence of his Stoic and Cynic Greek rhetoric teacher, Diophanes of Mytilene, and the Stoic philosopher, Blossius of Cumae.<sup>46</sup> Plutarch states that after killing Tiberius, Nasica and his comrades targeted his supporters, sending some into exile without trial, while arresting and executing others. Only three of these men are mentioned by name, and two of them are Tiberius' Greek associates.<sup>47</sup> Blossius was interrogated relentlessly and then acquitted;<sup>48</sup> Diophanes was not so lucky and was numbered amongst the condemned. The prominence of these two men in the trials following Tiberius' murder on the Capitoline Hill would perhaps suggest, as some modern scholars have, that they played a major role in Tiberius' new-found democratic method.<sup>49</sup> While this cannot be proven, Plutarch certainly wanted his reader believe just that.

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<sup>43</sup> Plut. *Ti. Gracc.* 14.2.

<sup>44</sup> See for example, J. R. Dunkle, "The Greek Tyrant and Roman Political Invective of the Late Republic," *TAPA* 98 (1967), 151-71; Erskine, "Hellenistic Monarchy," 106-20.

<sup>45</sup> Polybius (6.1-10) praises Rome for her mixed constitution and attributes to it the success and stability of the recently created Roman empire in the Mediterranean. Hence, if one element overpowers the others, the balance is disrupted and the government stability crumbles.

<sup>46</sup> Plut. *Ti. Gracc.* 8.4-5.

<sup>47</sup> Plut. *Ti. Gracc.* 20.

<sup>48</sup> Interestingly, Blossius went on to Asia where he befriended Aristonicus and joined his rebellion after the publishing of Attalus III's will, which bequeathed his kingdom of Pergamum to the Romans: see Cic. *De Am.* 37; Val. Max. 4.7.1; S. K. Eddy, *The King is Dead: Studies in the Near Eastern Resistance to Hellenism, 334-31 BC* (Lincoln 1961), 178.

<sup>49</sup> Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes*, 126.

Tiberius' Greek education also earned the disapproval of Scipio Aemilianus because of its emphasis on music and dancing.<sup>50</sup> As in the cases already discussed, Scipio does not directly equate this behavior or education with the Greeks, but the ancient sources make it clear that music was a prominent feature of Greek education. Roman education emphasized music and other arts much less, considering them to be impractical and an example of Greek luxury.<sup>51</sup> As discussed in the introduction, Roman valuing of utility over frivolity meant that their education focused more on rhetoric and speech than music and literature. Therefore, Scipio's charges against Tiberius' musical education not only highlights the latter's devotion to Greek culture, but also portrays him as one indulging in the trivial pursuits that Scipio himself had avoided in his youth.

### Early First Century BC

The trend of using philhellenism as political invective continued to grow in the early first century BC. War with the Italians and competing factions within Rome provided an ideal environment for the refining of political rhetoric and certain *topoi* were developed for speeches against opponents, one of which, of course, being philhellenism.<sup>52</sup>

L. Cornelius Sulla spent much time in the east during the wars with Mithridates, and we are told that he received many Greek honors while he was there including the victor's laurel wreath and

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<sup>50</sup> Macr. 3.14.6-8.

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, Polyb. 31.25.4; Cic. *Rosc. Am.* 134; *Verr.* 2.5.31. On the role of music and the arts in Greek education, see D. A. Kidd, *Roman Attitudes to Education* (Christchurch 1958), 12-13; on Roman education, see Petrochilos (1974) 172-77. The general role of Greek education in Rome is a complicated one. While traditionalists such as Cato denounced certain aspects of the curriculum, they themselves had a Greek education to a certain extent, and the line between 'acceptable' and 'dangerous' interest in Greek culture is blurry. However, many prominent Romans seem to have embraced all aspects of Greek education, especially the members of the so-called 'Scipionic Circle': Scipio Aemilianus, Laelius, Terence, Panaetius, and Lucilius. For a more extensive discussion on Roman attitudes to Greek and Roman education, see Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes*, 163-82; Kidd, *Attitudes to Education*, 7-26; H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. by G. Lamb (New York 1956), esp. 325-41.

<sup>52</sup> Another major theme in political invective of the first century BC was social status and ancestry, as discussed in T.P. Wiseman, *New Men in the Roman Senate, 139 B.C. to A.D. 14* (Oxford 1971).

initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries.<sup>53</sup> Further, the wealth his army brought back from Greece supposedly had a softening effect on his soldiers and Rome as a whole, while he himself became more severe and power-hungry than before, resembling a canonical Greek tyrant.<sup>54</sup> Yet his 'Greek' behavior was not exclusively a result of his eastern campaigns. His fondness for the theater and wine was apparent from a young age, and his sexual dalliances with both women and boys fit right in with the stereotype of the immoderate Greek.<sup>55</sup>

In stark contrast to Sulla was his main adversary, Gaius Marius, who seems to have rejected all aspects of Greek culture and appealed to the miso-hellenic sentiment of some Romans. The ancients had different interpretations of this abstention from Greek life. Sallust views it as noble and a mark of Roman virtue;<sup>56</sup> Plutarch, on the other hand, faults him for his excessive rejection of everything Greek, saying that if he had shown reverence to it, he would not have attempted a tyranny or been driven by ambition and insatiable greed.<sup>57</sup> Petrochilos has suggested that Marius was really just compensating for his lack of Greek education and using that deficiency to his advantage to win popular support.<sup>58</sup> This interpretation of Marius' actions raises some interesting possibilities. First, if Marius was indeed using his Greekless education for political advantage, it would imply that the association with Greek culture could be harmful to one's career. By separating himself from the education that had become so trendy in Rome since Scipio Aemilianus, Marius portrayed himself as the 'common man' from rural Arpinum, who was uncorrupted by extravagant, foreign influences.<sup>59</sup> Closely related to this is the possible identification of the target audience for this anti-Greek propaganda. Sallust's account suggests that Marius' home-grown Roman character appealed to the people, as evidenced by the masses who

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<sup>53</sup> Wreath: Plut. *Sull.* 17.5-6. Eleusinian Mysteries: Plut. *Sull.* 26.1.

<sup>54</sup> Sall. *Cat.* 11-12; Plut. *Sull.* 30.4-5; 33.1-4.

<sup>55</sup> Plut. *Sull.* 2.2-4; 36.1.

<sup>56</sup> Sall. *Jug.* 63.3; 85.12, 32.

<sup>57</sup> Plut. *Mar.* 2.

<sup>58</sup> Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes*, 166.

<sup>59</sup> See especially Marius' consular speech in Sallust (*Jug.* 85).

intermittently supported him early in his career. The vast majority of Romans would not be able to afford Greek education or luxuries and it might follow that they held those who could in disdain.<sup>60</sup>

Regardless, both Plutarch and Sallust are clear that Marius portrayed himself and the anti-Hellenophile, and when the environment was suitable, he used this to his political advantage.

## Conclusions

As this survey of the origins and growth of anti-Greek sentiment in Rome shows, the issue is far from black and white. Many prominent figures who were staunch opponents of Greek culture, most notably Cato the Elder, also devoted much time themselves to traditionally Greek pursuits. This seeming contradiction is perhaps rooted in the contrast between private and public morality in Rome. Cato expelled the philosophers from Rome because their teachings encouraged the youth to value words over military deeds. If such ideas took hold in the city, they would undermine the ideological and military foundations of Roman society which were the source of their imperial success in the third and second centuries BC. However, Cato gladly pursued Greek studies on his own in the privacy of his home. His devotion to the Greek literature was earnest, yet controlled, therefore preventing it from corrupting his soul.<sup>61</sup>

The inconsistent acceptance of things Greek is also related, however, to the Roman opinions on contemporary versus classical Greece. Early Roman culture and society had been greatly influenced by the Greeks and they were not unaware of that fact. As Isaac has pointed out, "The contribution and influence of historical Greece could not be denied, but would not prevent many Romans from disliking

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<sup>60</sup> However, many of the negative reactions to Greek culture and lifestyle originated not in the general populace, but amongst the upper classes, who were more threatened by the cultural capital that the prestige of Hellenic culture provided to their senatorial peers.

<sup>61</sup> Astin, *Cato*, 178.

and disparaging contemporary Greeks.”<sup>62</sup> Thus the equation of Greeks with degenerate morals and lifestyles was a reflection of Roman perceptions of Greece in their own time.

An important point to note from this overview is that accusations of Greekness were not always explicit – the outright equation of an adversary to a Greek was not necessarily the most popular or effective tactic. Instead, Romans chose to zoom in on and sensationalize particular inappropriate behaviors that were stereotypically associated with Greece in order to discredit their opponents. Some charges that appear in ancient invective certainly contradict traditional Roman values, but cannot be directly associated to any other ‘foreign’ culture. However, in many cases the context of the charges, or discussions of such behaviors elsewhere in Latin literature, make it clear that the nature of these behaviors is ‘foreign,’ and in particular, Greek.

In the following chapters, I will explore some of these ‘Greek’ characteristics that Roman politicians attributed to their opponents in order to denigrate them to the Senate or the people. In each case, I will first examine the evidence for the ‘Greek’ nature of the theme, and then I will discuss the various instances in which rhetorical use of it was employed.

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<sup>62</sup> Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 382.

## Chapter Two: Living the Greek Life

In the years after the Social War and Sulla's dictatorship, anti-Greek invective became increasingly prominent in Roman political rhetoric. Not only did many Romans have regular interaction with both mainland and eastern Greeks by this time, especially as slaves and tutors, but they also traveled to these lands more frequently, whether as magistrates, soldiers, or merchants. As a result, Greek influence in Rome became much more direct than had been the case a century before. With such an increased presence of Greek culture in Rome, it only followed that Romans would indulge more, or at least be accused of indulging more, in the Greek lifestyle. Such is the impression given by Sallust in his introduction to his account of Catiline's conspiracy:

*Huc accedebat quod L. Sulla exercitum quem in Asia ductaverat, quo sibi fidum faceret, contra morem maiorum luxuriose nimisque liberaliter habuerat. Loca amoena, voluptaria facile in otio ferocis militum animos molliverant. Ibi primum insuevit exercitus populi Romani amare potare; signa tabulas pictas, vasa caelata mirari.*<sup>1</sup>

Thus it followed that L. Sulla allowed to his army, which he had led into Asia, too much freedom and luxury, contrary to ancestral custom, in order to cultivate their loyalty. The amenable environment and the pleasure in leisure had easily softened the warlike spirits of the soldiers. There did an army of the Roman people for the first time become accustomed to love and to drink, and to admire statues, paintings, and engraved vessels.

For Romans who admired and emulated the Greek lifestyle, their reputation was easily assailed by their enemies. The second-century Roman historian, Aul. Postumius Albinus, was ridiculed by his contemporaries, especially M. Porcius Cato, for writing his histories in Greek and adopting other unrespectable Greek habits (κατὰ τὸν λοιπὸν βίον ἐζηλώκει τὰ χεῖριστα τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν).<sup>2</sup> Around the turn of the first century BC, a Roman senator by the name of T. Albucius was mocked by Q. Mucius Scaevola for his love of Greek culture:

*Graecum te, Albuci, quam Romanum atque Sabinum*

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<sup>1</sup> Sall. *Cat.* 11.5-6.

<sup>2</sup> Polyb. 39.1.1-12.

*municipem Ponti, Tritani, centurionum,  
praeclarorum hominum ac primorum signiferumque,  
malvisti dici. Graece ergo praetor Athenis,  
id quod malvisti te, cum ad me accedis, saluto:  
'chaere' inquam 'Tite.' lictores, turma omnis chorusque  
'chaere Tite.' hinc hostis mi Albucius, hinc inimicus.*<sup>3</sup>

Albucius, you preferred to be called Greek rather than Roman or Sabine, a citizen of Pontus rather than of Tritan, a standard-bearer of the centurions rather than of famous leading men. When you Greek approach me as praetor of Athens, which you preferred to be, I greet you thus: "Chaere [Greetings], Titus," I say. The lictors, the entire crowd, and the chorus say "Chaere, Titus." For this, Albucius is my enemy, my adversary.

Further, the term '*graeculus*' was frequently used as a pejorative for both Greeks and philhellenes alike.<sup>4</sup>

In the first century, then, Romans who openly associated with Greeks and admired their culture were targets for accusations of philhellenism, as seen in the case of Lucullus. After his retirement from public life, Lucullus withdrew into a life of pleasure and was often criticized by his contemporaries on account of this.<sup>5</sup> Lucullus had spent much time in the Greek East during his campaigns against Mithridates, during which he became the benefactor and founder of many Greek and Asian cities.<sup>6</sup> In his retirement, many of the luxuries enjoyed by Lucullus were Greek in nature and intended specifically for the delight of his numerous Greek visitors. He entertained them lavishly, opened up his personal library to them, essentially turning his house into a *prytaneium* (the traditional Greek meeting places for discussing official business).<sup>7</sup> Such extravagance, especially as it appealed to Greeks, was highly offensive to many of his more 'upright' peers.

Cn. Pompey was also closely associated with the East, especially after his campaigns in Greece and Asia and his reorganization of the eastern provinces. That he was quite loved by the people of these

<sup>3</sup> Cic. *De fin.* 1.9, quoting the satirist Lucilius. Albucius was well known for his Greek sympathies. He had studied in Athens as a youth and, after being exiled for extortion sometime after 104 BC, spent the remainder of his life in Athens studying Epicurean philosophy. Cf. Cic. *Brut.* 131; *Scaur.* 40; *Tusc. Disp.* 5.108-09; *Prov. cons.* 15-16.

<sup>4</sup> For example: Cic. *In Verr.* 2.4.127; *Phil.* 13.33; *Pro Sest.* 110; Dio 46.18.1; Juv. *Sat.* 6.184-94. However, '*graeculus*' did not always carry negative connotations and could sometimes be used as a term of endearment. For more on this, see Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes*, 17-21.

<sup>5</sup> Plut. *Comp. Luc. et Cim.* 1.7.

<sup>6</sup> Plut. *Luc.* 29.4.

<sup>7</sup> Plut. *Luc.* 41.1-2. For more on the Greek-inspired extravagance of Lucullus' house, see Chapter 3 below, pp. 41-59.

lands is apparent through his supporters at the battle of Pharsalus, whose contingents were largely of eastern origin.<sup>8</sup> In the eyes of his contemporaries, Pompey was greatly influenced by many of his Greek supporters, especially Theophanes of Mytilene, one of his most trusted advisors and the man to appeal to when one wished to put pressure on him.<sup>9</sup> Pompey's policy of philhellenism was further emphasized in 55 BC, when he built the first permanent stone theater in Rome – something which up to that point had only existed in Greek cities.<sup>10</sup>

Yet not even Pompey was the easiest target for accusations of philhellenism. In the decades following his death, a new Roman general, who also exercised great influence over the Greek East, came to symbolize the corrupting influence of Hellenistic culture to a large portion of the Roman elite. Mark Antony had always loved the Greek lifestyle, and our sources imply that he openly lived it,<sup>11</sup> and regularly compared himself and his troops to Hellenistic predecessors.<sup>12</sup>

These associations between Romans and Greeks must have been apparent to a large percentage of Romans. However, just because Romans were open about their associations with Greeks did not mean they were safe from political attacks. The unease about Greek culture, especially amongst the Roman upper classes, has already been mentioned, and politicians are certain to have exploited any ties that their opponents had with Hellenistic culture, whether blatant or not. Yet as is usually the case with political invective, much of the rhetoric of Hellenism was based on characteristics less obvious. There was a whole range of behaviors and ideology that the Romans regularly associated with the Greek East,

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<sup>8</sup> App. *BC* 2.70; Caes. *BC* 3.3-4. A. Rossi has argued that the latter emphasized the eastern contingents of Pompey's army specifically in order to cast the commander as a Roman who has defected to Hellenism and, therefore, has gained the support of Rome's eastern provinces: see "The Camp of Pompey: Strategy of Representation in Caesar's *Bellum Civile*," *CJ* 95 (2000), 239-56. For further discussion on this, see Chapter 4 below, pp. 60-84.

<sup>9</sup> Cic. *Ad Att.* 5.11.

<sup>10</sup> Plut. *Pomp.* 42.

<sup>11</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 23.2: φιλέλλην ἄκούων ἔχαίρειν, ἔτι δὲ μᾶλλον φιλαθήναιος προσαγορευόμενος ("he rejoiced in hearing himself called a 'philhellene,' and even more in being called a 'philathenian'"). Plutarch also states that Antony openly participated in the Athenians' games, mysteries, and other morally dubious activities.

<sup>12</sup> For example, he compared his troops to the Ten Thousand in Xenophon's *Anabasis* (Plut. *Ant.* 45.6); his fortune and power to those of the Persian kings (Plut. *Ant.* 37.1).

and these played a large role in accusations against one's opponents throughout the end of the Republic. In many cases, accusations of philhellenism were more subtle and indirect, but this did not diminish their force.

The overarching Roman impression of Greek culture was one of *mollitia*, meaning 'softness' or 'effeminacy.' As Catherine Edwards has shown, *mollitia* implied various undesirable qualities, including homosexuality, passivity, indolence, and indulgence.<sup>13</sup> The term *mollitia*, and the analagous Greek word *μαλακία*, was among the greatest of insults to a Roman because it indicated that one was indulging in womanly behavior, and therefore was subordinated to the more virile men surrounding him.<sup>14</sup> In the Roman mindset, sexual passivity and insatiability, feminine appearance, and idleness were closely associated with Greece and the Greek East, as evidenced in a letter to Caesar: "These [cunning, eloquent and clever] disciplines are a product of the Greeks. But there is no manliness, vigilance, or hard work among the Greeks" (*Parantur haec disciplina [ingenium versutum, loquax, callidum] Graecorum. Sed virtus, vigilantia, labor apud Graecos nulla sunt*).<sup>15</sup> The Romans condemned the Greek East for its excessive wealth, which will be discussed more fully in the next chapter, and its corrupting climate, both of which were considered agents of 'softness.'<sup>16</sup> As a result, political invective intended to de-Romanize an opponent and cast him as a Greek sympathizer regularly employed these effeminate characteristics in its portrayal of the accused. In this chapter, I will discuss the role of the Greek life in political invective, particularly in terms of appearing and behaving in what the Romans perceived of as the stereotypical Greek manner.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> C. Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge 1993), Chapter 2, pp. 63-97.

<sup>14</sup> See Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, 77-78.

<sup>15</sup> *Ad Caes. sen.* 9.3. Tradition attributes this letter to Sallust, but R. Syme has shown that it was probably written by someone simply imitating the Sallustian style: see *Sallust* (Berkeley 1964), Appendix II, esp. 322-51. For a fuller discussion on the letter and bibliography, see J. C. Rolfe (trans.), *Sallust* (Cambridge 1921), xvii-xx.

<sup>16</sup> See for example: Str. 14.2.16. Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 56-109, gives a thorough discussion of both ancient and modern understandings of the connection between the environment and a people's ethnic and moral nature.

<sup>17</sup> The looks and habits of Greeks and other barbarians has been discussed in Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens*, esp. 214-27, who deals with clothing, appearance, food, sexuality, and other topics that will be addressed in this and the following chapter.

## Greek Appearance

An ancient man's personal appearance was the easiest way for him to represent himself to the populace. Depending on the garments worn, his age, social status, and ethnicity could be easily discerned by his peers. For an adult Roman man, the toga was the foremost symbol of Roman citizenship and separated him from the many outsiders that regularly flocked to the big city for business and employment.<sup>18</sup> Further, Roman men were supposed to be strong and virile, free of all the weaknesses that the Romans associated with women, and this ideal was maintained in their physical appearance. As a result, when certain Romans paid especial attention to their appearance in a way that only women typically did, or when they traded their toga for an article of foreign clothing, it was cause for alarm.

By forsaking traditional Roman dress, men were portrayed as also forsaking their fatherland and their people. As Mayer has shown, accusations against one's un-Roman appearance were often key proofs of an individual's cultural (and implicitly, moral) degeneration because of their evocative visual power, and therefore emphasizing the foreign or effeminate appearance of an opponent became a rhetorical *topos* in late Republican invective.<sup>19</sup> The accused was cast as one who had 'gone native,' and traded his own honorable Roman mores for debased foreign ones. Charges such as these appeared in the second century against the great general, Scipio Africanus. His adversary, Pleminius, pointed out his adoption of the Greek *pallium* in place of the toga as one of many proofs that the conqueror of Hannibal

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<sup>18</sup> That the toga was closely associated with Roman citizenship can be seen in Plut. *Pomp.* 24.7, where Roman citizens are mockingly wrapped in togas by their pirate captors, "so that there might be no mistake about him [being a Roman] again" (ὥς δὲ μὴ πάλιν ἀγνοηθεῖν). For a fuller discussion on the symbolic role of the toga, see S. Stone, "The Toga: From National to Ceremonial Costume," in J. L. Sebesta and L. Bonfante (eds.), *The World of Roman Costume* (Madison 1994), 13-45. For a general discussion of the role of dress in civic and cultural identity, see Bonfante's introduction to the same volume, pp. 3-10.

<sup>19</sup> K. I. Mayer, *Cultural Renegades in Plutarch's Lives* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas-Austin, 1997), Chapter 3, esp. 107-10; see also J. Heskell, "Cicero as Evidence for Attitudes to Dress in the Late Republic," in Sebesta and Bonfante, *The World of Roman Costume*, 133-45; R. MacMullen, "Roman Attitudes to Greek Love," *Historia* 31 (1982), 493.

and his troops had turned to a life of self-indulgence and effeminacy (*aeque molliter cohortem totam Syracusarum amoenitate frui*).<sup>20</sup>

The connection between Hellenistic dress and cultural degeneracy occurred more frequently into the first century BC as general animosity toward the East increased within Rome. As a result, one's appearance was increasingly subject to criticism by opponents, as seen in Cicero's defense of Rabirius: "and so you can accuse him [Rabirius] as often as you wish of wearing a *pallium*, and of having certain insignia that were not typical of a Roman man" (*Itaque obicias licet quam voles saepe palliatum fuisse, aliqua habuisse non Romani hominis insignia*).<sup>21</sup> Though this is only a brief reference to the arguments of the opposition, Cicero makes it clear that they have been repeatedly using Rabirius' Greek garments as evidence that his character had degenerated. Consequently, Cicero attempts to curb any negative effects such implications may have had on Rabirius' case by asserting that his client donned the Greek *pallium* only by necessity.<sup>22</sup> He also cites C. Verres' donning of a *tunica pulla* and a *pallium* as visible proof of his scandalous behavior during his governorship in Sicily.<sup>23</sup> Similar accusations were later made against Antony, for he had dressed his children by Cleopatra not in the traditional Roman toga, but in Hellenistic and Median garb,<sup>24</sup> and he himself deviated from the traditional Roman dress (ἐσθῆτί τε ἔξω τῶν πατρίων ἐχρήτητο).<sup>25</sup>

Mayer has argued that while most of the Roman writers saw Antony's Hellenistic costume as a sign of moral decay, Plutarch instead saw it as a practical necessity for Antony's eastern policies, and also a return to Antony's youthful depravity.<sup>26</sup> In doing so, he shows that not all historians, ancient or modern, saw cross-cultural dressing as cultural betrayal. While he certainly makes a valid point, Mayer

<sup>20</sup> Livy 29.19. Pleminius also accuses Scipio of consorting with rhetoricians and athletes in the *gymnasia*, further emphasizing his Hellenized behavior. For more on the *gymnasia*, see below, pp. 31-32.

<sup>21</sup> Cic. *Pro Rab.* 25; cf. 27.

<sup>22</sup> Mayer (*Cultural Renegades*, 131-33) has given much discussion to this idea of the political necessity of cross-cultural dress.

<sup>23</sup> *Verr.* 4.54-55; cf. 5.31, 40, 86-87; 137; Heskell, "Cicero as Evidence," 133-35.

<sup>24</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 54.5. The significance of these garments will also be discussed on p. 76 below.

<sup>25</sup> Dio 50.5.3.

<sup>26</sup> Mayer, *Cultural Renegades*, 136-48.

overlooks the importance of contemporary Roman attitudes towards Antony's foreign dress. First, even if Antony's degeneration was simply a return to his former ways, that in no way prevented his opponents from accusing him of being corrupted by Hellenistic culture, which had certainly taken root in Rome before Antony's youth. If anything, his opponents could have claimed that Antony's time in the East only revived and exacerbated his latent Hellenistic tendencies. The charges did not depend on portraying Antony as corrupted during the course of his career – his corruption by Hellenistic culture was just as valid even if it had occurred in his youth. Second, Mayer's emphasis on Plutarch's view of the Eastern Greeks overlooks the opinions of Plutarch's sources. Plutarch is not openly condemnatory about eastern customs in the way that Dio or Suetonius are, but the very nature of the information at Plutarch's disposal implies that a wealth of information existed in the early-second century AD that closely associated Antony with eastern dress and behaviors. It is in no way unreasonable to assume that at least during his lifetime and the subsequent reign of Augustus, Antony was regularly depicted as one who had 'gone native,' whether or not Plutarch shared that view a century later.

Beyond clothing, a Roman's appearance also elicited censure when it bore too much resemblance to Greek fashions. In the late Republic, Roman men kept their hair short and their faces free of whiskers, unlike their Greek contemporaries.<sup>27</sup> Letting facial hair grow was a sign of laziness, and long hair on the head was effeminate. Thus Caesar alluded to Antony's long hair, as well as his portly stature, with derision in an effort to highlight his disrespectful care for his appearance.<sup>28</sup> Yet because of the relationship between Greek culture and effeminacy in the eyes of the Romans, overly groomed individuals were also ridiculed. While Romans should maintain a respectable appearance, any man who was over-careful in his dress, bathed too often, wore copious amounts of perfume, and plucked

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<sup>27</sup> Such disapproval can be seen in Seneca, *Ep.* 5.2; 48.7. For further discussion on the semiotics of hair, see D. Christensen, "Unbearding Morality: Appearance and Persuasion in *Pro Caelio*," *CJ* 100 (2004), 61-72.

<sup>28</sup> *Plut. Ant.* 11.3; cf. 18.1, which also mentions his unkempt beard.

unwanted body hair was considered excessive. Suetonius records that Julius Caesar was accused of being vain for these very behaviors:

*Circa corporis curam morosior, ut non solum tonderetur diligenter ac raderetur, sed velleretur etiam, ut quidam exprobraverunt, calvitii vero deformitatem iniquissime ferret, saepe obtrectatorum iocis obnoxiam expertus ... Etiam cultu notabilem ferunt; usum enim lato clavo ad manus fimbriato nec umquam aliter quam ut super eum cingeretur, et quidem fluxiore cinctura.*<sup>29</sup>

He was quite peevish about the care of his body, as he not only trimmed and shaved carefully, but he even depilated himself, as some have accused him, and truly he bore the deformity of baldness most unfairly, often subjected to the ridicule of disparagers... They also considered his grooming to be remarkable; he wore a purple-striped [senatorial] tunic with fringes all the way to his hands and never was it not girded up around him, and indeed with a loose belt.

Caesar's opponents further emphasized his effeminacy by drawing attention to how he scratched his well-groomed head with only one finger,<sup>30</sup> and how he donned his toga in a feminine, ill-girt manner.<sup>31</sup>

Plutarch states that this was interpreted as a sign of the general's weakness and passivity.

### Greek Behavior

Roman disdain for effeminate men was closely related to their role in homosexual relationships.

The effeminate man was seen as one who was willing to play the passive, or female, role in sex, and therefore he was incompatible with power in the eyes of the Roman elite.<sup>32</sup> He also was a symbol of Greek culture, since at least some Romans viewed homosexuality to have originated in Greece, and

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<sup>29</sup> Suet. *Div. Iul.* 45.2-3. By plucking out his beard, Caesar may have been trying to look more youthful in an attempt to take a sexually passive role with another man: see Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, 69. However, Edwards (82-83) also points out that some men plucked their beards and acquired other typical characteristics of the effeminate *cinaedus* in order to attract lascivious women, who were attracted to such men largely because their husbands were less suspicious and less threatened by them. For Julius Caesar, who was accused of having promiscuous relationships with both men and women, these descriptions of his appearance may refer to both cases. For Caesar's reckless sexual behavior, see for example Suet. *Div. Iul.* 49-52.

<sup>30</sup> Plut. *Caes.* 4.9; Macr. *Sat.* 2.3.9; Dio 43.43.5. Clodius levied similar accusations against Pompey (Plut. *Pomp.* 48.5-7; Amm. Marc. 17.11.4). For more on the ideology of gestures, see A. Corbeill, *Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome* (Princeton 2004), 107-39.

<sup>31</sup> Suet. *Div. Iul.* 45.3.

<sup>32</sup> Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, 64. Whereas in Greece, it was permitted for a grown man to have sexual relations with young freeborn men, in Rome this was not the case, especially since anal penetration was viewed as a humiliating act. Therefore, in Rome pederasty was only acceptable with non-Roman boys: cf. Cic. *De Rep.* 4.4; MacMullen, "Roman Attitudes," 491-92.

especially in the Greek *gymnasium*.<sup>33</sup> Many prominent Romans of the first century BC, then, fell subject to such accusations in their adversaries' efforts to delegitimize their power. For example, Cicero accuses Clodius of submitting to the desires of other men,<sup>34</sup> and also recalls Antony's promiscuous youth and especially his relationship with Curio, who treated him like a wife.<sup>35</sup> In a similar way, Julius Caesar was the subject of many homosexual jokes for his relationship with Nicomedes of Bithynia:

*Pudicitiae eius famam nihil quidem praeter Nicomedis contubernium laesit, gravi tamen et perenni obprobrio et ad omnium convicia exposito. Omitto Calvi Licini notissimos versus: Bithynia quicquid et pedicator Caesaris umquam habuit.*

*Praetereo actiones Dolabellae et Curionis patris, in quibus eum Dolabella 'paelicem reginae, spondam interiorem regiae lecticae,' at Curio 'stabulum Nicomedis et Bithynicum fornicem' dicunt... Cicero... quondam etiam in senatu defendenti ei Nysae causam, filiae Nicomedis, beneficiaque regis in se commemoranti: 'Remove,' inquit, 'istaec, oro te, quando notum est, et quid ille tibi et quid illi tute dederis.'*<sup>36</sup>

Indeed nothing stained his reputation for chastity except his intimacy with Nicomedes, nevertheless he was charged with great and repeated scandal and exposed to the censure of all. I omit the most famous lines of Calvus Licinus:

Whatever Bithynia possessed,  
And the lover of Caesar.

I pass over the accusations of Dolabella and of the elder Curio, in which Dolabella calls him "the rival of the queen, and the inner partner of the royal couch," and Curio, "the brothel of Nicomedes and the slut of Bithynia." Even Cicero [made accusations], when Caesar was defending in the senate the case of Nysa, the daughter of Nicomedes, and recalling the favors that he had paid toward the king. Cicero said: "Depart from that, I beg of you, since it is well known both what he has given to you and what you have given to him."

<sup>33</sup> Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 4.70; cf. *Tusc. Disp.* 5.58; Nepos *Alc.* 2.2; Tac. *Ann.* 14.20; Polyb. 31.25.3; Sall. *Cat.* 11.55; 13.3. The Romans disapproved of promiscuous heterosexual relationships as well since they regarded any sexual desire and insatiability as a female characteristic. Such sexual excess, then, can be associated with the general lack of restraint in the East as perceived by the Romans, but is not so specifically Greek as to warrant extensive discussion here. For more on this, see Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, Chapters 1 and 2. For Roman perceptions of this 'Greek love,' see MacMullen, "Roman Attitudes," 484-502; Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens*, 225-27; for background on Greek and Roman views of homosexuality, see K. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge 1978).

<sup>34</sup> For example, *Pro Mil.* 55; *De har resp* 42; *De domo sua* 49, 139.

<sup>35</sup> *Phil.* 2.44-45, where Antony is further accused of turning his toga into a harlot's. Curio is also called Antony's 'husband' (*vir*) in *Phil.* 2.50. The relationship is especially offensive because Antony, who was the younger of the men and therefore should have waited for Curio to pursue him, actively pursued his 'sexual master' instead; see Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, 64-65.

<sup>36</sup> Suet. *Div. Iul.* 49.1-3.

Edwards argues that these accusations of effeminacy were intended more to humiliate and emasculate the accused rather than to provide a specifically sexual insult,<sup>37</sup> and that is certainly the case, but she pays little attention to the role that Greece played in these charges as well.<sup>38</sup> By displaying their opponents as feminine and sexually passive, Romans were highlighting the Hellenistic nature of their lifestyles in an effort to cast them as traitors of Roman culture and potential threats to the stability of the state. Therefore, in order to further emphasize the Greek behavior of these sexually passive men, claims of other aspects of their Hellenistic lifestyle followed.

Homosexual behavior was only one of a larger set of disreputable activities that the Romans associated with the Greek lifestyle, especially as it related to the *gymnasium*. To the Romans, the Greeks were a lazy people who indulged in trivial pursuits as often as possible,<sup>39</sup> and the *gymnasium* was the center of this culture of thought. Here men enjoyed physical training, homosexual romps, and philosophical discussions on topics such as philosophy, politics, and religion. Romans did not shun these activities altogether, but they did value action over discussion, and therefore the *gymnasium* was nothing but a waste of time and public funds.<sup>40</sup> The physical training associated with these Greek gathering places was impractical in Roman eyes, for it produced athletes, not soldiers. Perhaps this was the intention behind Cicero's mention of Antony's gladiator-like body, though he may also have simply

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<sup>37</sup> Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, 68.

<sup>38</sup> However, she does reasonably suggest (94), 'the "anti-Greek" rhetoric that has come to be associated with accusations of effeminacy was grafted onto an established Roman practice...of attempting to humiliate one's rivals by likening them to women.' By the late Republic for sure, such charges had been conflated to the degree that they were regarded similarly by the Romans. An effeminate man was one heavily influenced by Greek culture, and vice-versa. Never did the Romans go so far as to suggest that Greek culture itself was 'feminine,' but the two characteristics were closely interconnected: see Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, 95-96.

<sup>39</sup> See for example, Polybius (6.42) says that they put as little energy into military affairs as possible. Cicero also repeatedly emphasizes that the Greeks prefer to discuss matters rather than act on them (*Tusc. Disp.* 1.1-5; *De Or.* 1.105, 195-97; *Pro Cael.* 40); cf. Sall. *Cat.* 8. All of this follows in the tradition of Cato the Elder; see Ch. 1, pp. 11-13 above.

<sup>40</sup> For more on Roman attitudes toward the *gymnasium*, see Petrochilos *Roman Attitudes*, 177-82; F. Yegül, *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge 1992), 6-29. The maintenance of the *gymnasium* was especially expensive because of the oil necessary for the physical activities. Some towns had oil funds or endowments, but others relied heavily on the donations of wealthy townspeople or patrons: see A. H. M. Jones' *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian* (Oxford 1940), 221-26.

desired to cast Antony as a member of the lowest and most *infamis* classes in Rome.<sup>41</sup> Antony was no stranger to the Greek *gymnasia*, and by referencing the philhellene's athletically trained body Cicero emphasized that un-Roman behavior to his audience. The philosophical discussions frequently held at the *gymnasia* were likewise suspect to many of the more traditional Romans, for philosophical discussions promoted idleness and often focused on theoretical topics that had little practical application. In particular, conservative Romans despised the teaching of Epicurean philosophy to their youth. In contrast to the more accepted Stoic philosophy, which encouraged traditional Roman mores such as civic involvement, self-restraint, and hard work, Romans viewed Epicureanism as hedonistic – the embodiment of the degenerate Greek culture of excess and instability that participation in the *gymnasium* promoted.<sup>42</sup> However, many Romans still chose to attend *gymnasia*, or were at least accused of doing so by their opponents in order to cast them as philhellenes. In the passage cited above (pp. 26-27), Scipio Africanus' involvement with the *gymnasium* is provided as evidence for his moral turpitude, and this continued to be the case into the first century BC. Antony most certainly offended his fellow Romans when he laid aside his own symbols of command in order to preside over activities in the Athenian *gymnasium*, and even more so when he enrolled Caesar's son by Cleopatra into the *ephebes*, to be educated in the Greek manner.<sup>43</sup>

Many Romans enjoyed leisure activities beyond the *gymnasium* as well. Lucullus retired into private life after his extensive eastern campaigns, and this withdrawal into his own private delights drew the criticism of his contemporaries:

οἱ δὲ περὶ τὸν Κράσσον καὶ Πομπήϊον ἐχλεύαζον τὸν Λούκουλλον εἰς ἡδονὴν ἀφεικότα καὶ πολυτέλειαν αὐτόν, ὥσπερ οὐ τοῦ τρυφᾶν μᾶλλον τοῖς τηλικούτοις παρ' ἡλικίαν ὄντος ἢ τοῦ πολιτεύεσθαι καὶ στρατηγεῖν.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> *Phil.* 2.63.

<sup>42</sup> For more on Roman views of philosophy, see A. A. Long, "Roman Philosophy," *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy* (Cambridge 2003), 184-210; Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes*, 141-96.

<sup>43</sup> *Plut. Ant.* 33.4; 71.2. Antony himself had also been educated in the Greek manner, a fact which Plutarch (*Ant.* 2.5) aligns with his "boastful and prodigal life" (κομπώδη καὶ φιλοτιμίας).

<sup>44</sup> *Plut. Luc.* 38.4; *Comp. Luc. et Cim.* 1.7; *Pomp.* 48.4.

The supporters of Crassus and Pompey mocked Lucullus for giving himself up to pleasure and extravagance, as if luxuriousness was not more unsuitable to men of such an age than politics or military affairs.

Likewise, Antony regularly indulged in trivial pleasures during the height of his career, eliciting similar criticisms:

εἰς Ἀσίαν διέβη καὶ τῶν ἐκεῖ πλούτων ἤψατο... ἐν Ῥώμῃ δὲ Καίσαρος στάσεσι καὶ πολέμοις ἀποτρυχομένου πολλὴν αὐτὸς ἄγων σχολὴν καὶ εἰρήνην ἀνεκυκλεῖτο τοῖς πάθεσιν εἰς τὸν συνήθη βίον.<sup>45</sup>

He went into Asia and there they took hold of the wealth there... and while Caesar was at Rome, being exhausted by war and civil strife, Antony was enjoying much leisure and peace, and devoted his mind to the passions in his customary life.

The theory behind the dangers of leisure was that it softened people. They were no longer accustomed to hard work and therefore became weaker, both physically and mentally, and this was held as the greatest of dangers in the minds of the Romans. In addition, devotion to leisure often implied avoidance of public involvement and in Rome holding magistracies was of utmost importance to the elite. A man who gave up that opportunity was selfish for refusing to serve the state and dangerous because of the corrupting effects of leisure.

Idleness also gave people time to indulge in baser pursuits, such as sex and drinking. Like the fifth-century Greeks before them, the Romans mixed their wine and disapproved of excessive drinking and drunkenness. However, Roman mentality held that the contemporary Greeks had long ago submitted to the allure of alcohol, following in the tradition of Alexander the Great who was legendary for his drinking bouts.<sup>46</sup> In fact, the Roman *cena*, which centered around eating, political discussions, and rhetorical exercises, was a stark contrast from the Greek *symposium*, at which drinking and prostitution played a major role. As with so many other customs that the classical Greeks had attributed to 'barbarians,' excessive drinking had come to signify not only Macedonian and Asian, but also Greek

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<sup>45</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 24.1; 56.4.

<sup>46</sup> Plut. *Alex.* 4.5; 23.1; *Quaes. conv.* 1.6.1.

culture by the end of the Hellenistic period. Thus both Polybius and Diodorus cited the drunken and debauched behaviors of Roman youths as evidence of the Greek laxity that had permeated Rome since Perseus' defeat in 168 BC.<sup>47</sup>

That the drinking habits of many first century BC Romans became political issues is manifest in a number of cases. Sulla participated in drinking bouts from an early age, and Lucullus likewise gave way to wine, but only after his retirement from public life.<sup>48</sup> Even Cicero's son was criticized for his bibulousness and his resulting behavior,<sup>49</sup> and Suetonius' comment that Julius Caesar was known for his sobriety is probably a reflection of Caesarian defensive propaganda during his wars with Pompey.<sup>50</sup> However, the most notable example of a drunkard in the ancient record is none other than Marc Antony. The triumvir was notorious for his love of wine, and the prevalence of this fact in the ancient accounts show that his drunkenness probably played a major role in the propaganda of his opposition. Certainly the stories are extreme enough to fit perfectly into Octavian's anti-Antony propaganda. For example, Cicero records the following story:

*tu istis faucibus, istis lateribus, ista gladiatoria totius corporis firmitate tantum vini in Hippiae nuptiis exhauseras ut tibi necesse esset in populi Romani conspectu vomere postridie. o rem non modo visu foedam sed etiam auditu! si inter cenam in ipsis tuis immanibus illis poculis hoc tibi accidisset, quis non turpe duceret? in coetu vero populi Romani negotium publicum gerens, magister equitum, cui ructare turpe esset, is vomens frustis esculentis vinum redolentibus gremium suum et totum tribunal implevit.*<sup>51</sup>

You, with that throat, those lungs, that gladiator-like firmness of your whole body, polished off so much wine at Hippias' wedding that on the following day it was necessary for you to vomit in the view of the Roman people. Oh what a horrible thing not only to see, but also to hear! If this had happened to you at dinner in those monstrous goblets of yours, is there anyone who would

<sup>47</sup> Polyb. 31.25.4; Diod. Sic. 31.26.7.

<sup>48</sup> Sulla: Plut. *Sull.* 2.2-3; 36.1. Lucullus: Plut. *Luc.* 39.1.

<sup>49</sup> Pliny *NH* 14.147.

<sup>50</sup> *Div. Iul.* 53. On a similar vein, Geiger has suggested that a fragment from Cornelius Nepos (in Suet. *Div. Aug.* 77) may be a remnant from Octavian's counter-propaganda in his war against Antony; see J. Geiger, 'An Overlooked Item of the War of Propaganda Between Octavian and Antony,' *Historia* 29 (1980), 112-14. Because Antony's drunkenness was a major *topos* in Octavian's propaganda, Geiger suggests that Antony retaliated with similar accusations. Nepos' fragment, then, would be a record of Octavian's response to an Antonine attack. That Antony was accustomed to hurling back charges leveled against himself is apparent in the sources (Cic. *Phil.* 3.15), so Geiger argues that this fragment may be one further indication of this.

<sup>51</sup> Cic. *Phil.* 2.63; see also Plut. *Ant.* 9.4; Pliny *NH* 14.148.

not consider it unsightly? But indeed, conducting public business in an assembly of the Roman people, the master of the horses, for whom it would be shameful to even belch, vomited, filling his own lap and the entire platform with digested food bits that reeked of wine.

Plutarch also makes numerous references to Antony's excessive drinking, often in conjunction with other deplorable acts of his, such as spending extravagantly, philandering, and hanging around pimps and actors.<sup>52</sup> In fact, so well known were Antony's binges that shortly before Actium, he even published a short pamphlet *de sua ebrietate*.<sup>53</sup> Pliny tells us that this pamphlet served to glorify all of Antony's drinking adventures, but it may also have been a tongue-in-cheek response to Antony's accusers, exaggerating his binges in a sarcastic criticism of their charges. Charlesworth has even suggested that Suetonius (*Aug.* 16.2) incorporates these Antonian responses to Augustus' accusations in his characterizations of the emperor, stating that it was 'better to lie fuddled with drink than to lie fuddled with fear.'<sup>54</sup>

For Antony and others like him, drunken revelries often were held in the company of individuals who were morally questionable to many elite Romans, not only courtesans and pimps, but also actors and mimes. Romans disapproved of the theater and related arts because they in no way aided in the development of the ideal Roman soldier or statesman, and as a result those who were affiliated with theater were considered *infamis*.<sup>55</sup> Theater productions appealed to the masses, and Roman unease

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<sup>52</sup> See for example, Plut. *Ant.* 2.3; 21.1-2; 29.1; 51.1-2; 71.2; see also Cic. *Phil.* 2.6, 12, 15, 58; 3.35; 13.31.

<sup>53</sup> Pliny *NH* 14.148. Geiger ('An Overlooked Item,' 113) postulates that the discussions in this pamphlet may have addressed subjects beyond Antony's drunkenness, such as Octavian's sexual morals. See also K. Scott, "Octavian's Propaganda and Antony's *De Sua Ebrietate*," *CP* 24 (1929), 138-40, who gives a thorough overview of earlier discussions on this pamphlet, and states that its publication immediately preceding the battle of Actium suggests that its tone was wholly serious.

<sup>54</sup> M. P. Charlesworth, "Some Fragments of the Propaganda of Mark Antony," *CQ* 27 (1933), 174.

<sup>55</sup> Nepos *Vit. praef.* 5. For the status of performers and the social ideology of the theater/arena, see T. Wiedemann, *Emperors and Gladiators* (London 1992), 28-30; H. N. Parker, "The Observed of All Observers: Spectacle, Applause, and Cultural Poetics in the Roman Theater Audience," in B. Bergmann, *The Art of Ancient Spectacle* (Washington, D. C. 1999), 164-66. For a thorough discussion of actors in Rome, their origins and status, see H. Leppin, *Historionen: Untersuchungen zur sozialen Stellung von Bühnenkünstlern im Westen des Römischen Reiches zur Zeit der Republik und des Principats* (Bonn 1992).

about large mob assemblies supplemented their distrust of the theater.<sup>56</sup> Gathering in the theater and watching performances also seemed to promote idleness, which was in direct conflict with Roman values of industry and hard work, and could easily lead to moral turpitude.<sup>57</sup> Dramatic productions provided a myriad of obscenities, sexual affairs, tricks, and political commentaries to the audience and thus threatened the moral makeup of those watching. Further, actors themselves were considered among the lowest of classes because of their reliance on deceit for success. Men convincing their audience that they were somebody else, perhaps even a woman, was deplorable to the upper classes. Because of the nature of roles played and gestures made, as well as their skill in deception, actors were often associated with femininity.

Because of the Greek origins of the theater, men accused of living like a Greek were often associated with actors and mimes. This was especially the case for Romans whose behavior bordered on the tyrannical, since ‘favor shown to actors was part of a familiar pattern of tyrannical behavior.’<sup>58</sup> Therefore Sulla, Lucullus and Antony, three would-be tyrants, are portrayed as fraternizing with, and sleeping with, dissolute actors from a young age.<sup>59</sup> Even worse, Antony frequently behaved like an actor himself. On multiple occasions, he is said to have dressed like a slave in order to sneak around without being identified.<sup>60</sup> Beyond the more obvious social taboos that this violated, Antony’s theatrical antics showed him to have a Greek character trait particularly associated with the theater – deceit.

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<sup>56</sup> Edwards (*Politics of Immorality*, 98-136) discusses thoroughly the symbolic role that the theater and related arts played in Rome, both for the plebeians and for the elites; cf. Leppin, *Histrionen*, 135-55.

<sup>57</sup> This was exactly Scipio Nasica’s argument against the building of a permanent theater in Rome in 154 BC: see Livy *Per.* 48; Val. Max. 2.4.2.

<sup>58</sup> Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, 131.

<sup>59</sup> Sulla: Plut. *Sull.* 2.2-4; 36.1. Lucullus: Plut. *Luc.* 40.1. Antony: Plut. *Ant.* 9.3. For the tyrannical tendencies of these men, see pp. 60-73 below.

<sup>60</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 6.2; 10.4-5; 14.1; 29.1.

Petrochilos has thoroughly explored the theme of deceit in Roman prejudice against the Greeks.<sup>61</sup> Cicero is quite frank in both his private letters and his public speeches that Romans, or at least those to whom he hoped to appeal, regarded Greeks as an untrustworthy, beguiling race:

*Atque etiam e Graecis ipsis diligenter cavendae sunt quaedam familiaritates, praeter hominum perpaucorum, si qui sunt vetere Graecia digni. Isti vero fallaces sunt permulti et leves, et diuturna servitute ad nimiam assentationem eruditi.*<sup>62</sup>

And indeed any acquaintances from Greece itself ought to be dealt with very carefully, except for very few of them, if any are worthy of the Greece of old. Truly very many are deceitful and frivolous, and they are educated in excessive agreement by a long tradition of servitude [i.e. they are flatterers and yes-men].

The Romans traced the deceitful nature of the Greeks all the way back to the Trojan War and Odysseus' crafty deception that led to Troy's destruction, as reflected in the *Aeneid*.<sup>63</sup> This stereotype was maintained in the historians. Livy compares the Romans to the Greeks and the Carthaginians after their 'deceptive' victory over Perseus.<sup>64</sup> The concept of deceit was a useful tool for denigrating one's opponents to the senate and crowds in Rome, both because it emphasized their untrustworthiness and it cast them as having fallen subject to corrupting foreign influences. Thus immediately after Cicero concludes his discussion on the unreliability of Greeks in general, he accuses Pompey and his quaestor, P. Plautius Hypsaeus, of submitting false financial accounts for the eastern cities.<sup>65</sup> Cicero already attributes much of Pompey's success in the East to deception (*errore*) earlier in that speech,<sup>66</sup> and he continuously draws connections between the general's actions and the lax practices and the shameless license characteristic of the Greeks (*dissolutam Graecorum consuetudinem licentiamque impudentem*).<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *Roman Attitudes*, 43-45.

<sup>62</sup> Cic. *Qfr.* 1.16; see also 2.4 (*[Graecorum] ingenia ad fallendum parata*); *Pro Flacc.* 9-10; 23

<sup>63</sup> *Ver. Aen.* 2.43-44, 49, 65f, 77-80; 105-07, 152-55, 195-98.

<sup>64</sup> Livy 42.47. Rome had been unprepared for war with Perseus and knew that if they engaged with him, they would lose. Their deception as Livy saw it was that they sued for peace with the Macedonian king in order to buy themselves time to make preparations, and then attacked when Perseus' guard was down. For Roman perceptions of Carthaginians as deceptive, see also Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 324-35.

<sup>65</sup> *Pro Flacc.* 20.

<sup>66</sup> *Pro Flacc.* 15.

<sup>67</sup> *Pro Flacc.* 20.

Though not stating it outright, Cicero is hoping to display the Greekness of Pompey's character by repeatedly juxtaposing his deceitful actions with the poorly regulated practices of the Greeks.

As already mentioned, Antony falls subject to similar accusations because of his love for the theater and his own dalliances in deceit. Plutarch mentions four different occasions on which Antony dressed in rags and tried to pass himself off as a slave.<sup>68</sup> While in one case Plutarch says that he did this following Caesar's murder in order to avoid danger, at other times Antony is presented as simply playing around, getting his kicks out of deceiving others:

Οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ κάκεινην ἐπειράτο προσπαίζων καὶ μειρακιευόμενος ἰλαρωτέραν ποιεῖν ὁ Ἄντωνιος· οἷον ὅτε, Καίσαρι πολλῶν ἀπαντῶντων μετὰ τὴν ἐν Ἰβηρίᾳ νίκην, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐξῆλθεν. εἶτα ἄφνω φήμης εἰς τὴν Ἰταλίαν ἐμπεσοῦσης ὡς ἐπίασιν οἱ πολέμοι Καίσαρος τεθνηκότος, ἀνέστρεψεν εἰς Ῥώμην. λαβὼν δὲ θεράποντος ἐσθῆτα νύκτωρ ἐπὶ τὴν οἰκίαν ἦλθε, καὶ φήσας ἐπιστολὴν Φουλβία παρ' Ἀντωνίου κομίζειν εἰσήχθη πρὸς αὐτὴν ἐγκεκαλυμμένος. εἶτα ἢ μὲν ἐκπαθῆς οὖσα, πρὶν ἢ τὰ γράμματα λαβεῖν ἠρώτησεν εἰ ζῆ ὁ Ἄντωνιος· ὁ δὲ τὴν ἐπιστολὴν σιωπῇ προτείνας ἀρξάμενην λυεῖν καὶ ἀναγινώσκειν περιβαλὼν κατεφίλησε.<sup>69</sup>

However, Antony tried to make her [Fulvia] more light hearted, playing in sport and acting like a young boy; for example, when many were going out to meet Caesar after his victory in Spain, he also departed. Presently, a rumor burst suddenly into Italy that the enemies were advancing since Caesar was dead, and Antony turned back to Rome. Taking the clothing of a slave, he came to his house by night, and declaring to Fulvia that he carried a letter from Antony he was brought in to her in his disguise. Then she, being distressed, asked if Antony was alive before she took the letter. Then he, handing her the letter in silence, threw out his arms as she began to read it and kissed her.

Plutarch presents this story without any overt criticisms, but places it in the context of Antony's attempts to reform his careless ways under the advice of Caesar. Although Antony had abandoned many aspects of his debauched life when he married Fulvia,<sup>70</sup> he still took joy in his deceptions. The repeated mention of this activity throughout Plutarch's biography of Antony would suggest that this was a well-known fact – Antony enjoyed playing the slave. Most certainly such stories would not have spread through Rome on their own; is it far more likely that Antony's servile acts made up a part of the

<sup>68</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 6.2; 14.1; 29.1.

<sup>69</sup> *Ant.* 10.4-5.

<sup>70</sup> *Ant.* 10.2-3.

Augustan propaganda against him, casting the reprobate as one indulging in base theatrical pleasures, tricking his peers into believing himself to be another, and dishonoring his Roman citizenship by dressing as a slave. This especially explains the account in the *Life of Antony* (29.1), where he and Cleopatra spend their time in various trivial activities, including dressing up as slaves to sneak around Alexandria and spy in the windows of the commoners for entertainment. Whether or not this story was in any way based on reality, it fit perfectly with the Augustan portrayal of Antony as a man enslaved and bewitched by an eastern queen, who wasted his life indulging in foreign frivolities rather than honorably serving his state.

### **Conclusions**

In the first century BC, then, many aspects of Hellenistic culture were present in Rome. For those who openly indulged in behaviors regarded by the Romans as characteristically Greek, accusations of philhellenism were fair game. One's appearance was often the first indication of a deeper degeneration into Hellenistic culture, and therefore men who preferred the *pallium* to the toga or failed to shave their whiskers were suspected of cultural treachery. Similarly men who displayed laziness and *mollitia* in its various forms were seen to be corrupted by the softening influence of the Greek East. If such plagues were to take hold in Rome, many members of the elite worried that they would bring the empire's downfall. The 'soft' peoples of the Greek East indulged in various lovely pleasures, but they were consequently weak and failed to maintain their power in the face of the stronger, more virile Roman power in the West. If such softening were to occur also in Rome, a new power might soon overthrow them.

In the face of such a threat, Romans became increasingly wary of Greek influence in Rome and were more than willing to point out the Hellenistic downfalls of their peers. Not all of these behaviors were necessarily overt in their Greek nature, but because the ancient sources are abundantly clear that

Romans viewed their contemporary Greeks as licentious pedophiles and lazy drunkards who delighted in the deceitful arts of the theater, it is clear that Romans who were affiliated with these activities were cast by their opponents as carriers of the Hellenistic plague. Further, these activities were rarely enjoyed in isolation. Men who drank excessively typically associated with pimps and actors, and in many of the cases, happened to be men who had spent significant time in the East.

This chapter has dealt primarily with accusations revolving around the Greek lifestyle. In the Roman mindset, the behaviors and characteristics discussed above signified the debauched nature of the contemporary Hellenistic world. They were deplorable and dishonorable and held no place in ideal Roman society. Not only did the Hellenistic world represent a baser lifestyle, but it embodied even greater ideas that were opposed to traditional Roman customs. The next two chapters will build on the perceptions discussed in this chapter to present the utilization of more ideological accusations of philhellenism against prominent Romans.

## Chapter Three: Luxurious Indulgences

The behaviors discussed in the previous chapter, when combined, present a picture of a relaxed, indulgent life. Whereas Roman virtue depended on industriousness, honesty, and strength, the Roman view of the Greek lifestyle allowed more freely for pleasures of the flesh. However, these baser activities that the Romans condemned were symptomatic of a much greater problem. *Luxuria* was a threatening concept to Republican Romans and was a term loaded with negative implications. *Luxuria* meant leisure, excessive spending, and extravagant living, but these seemingly harmless pursuits elicited great suspicion and hatred from the Romans, for collectively they symbolized corruption, weakness, and destruction.

For the Romans, to live like a Greek meant 'to live a life of dissipation.'<sup>1</sup> The Romans associated their eastern neighbors with all kinds of luxurious and sumptuous living, and not without reason. The wealth of the East was a topic of long historical and literary discussion, from the legendary gold of Midas and the treasuries of Croesus to the more recent extravagance of Alexander's empire and the Hellenistic kingdoms.<sup>2</sup> The East was the source of precious trade goods, such as gold, perfume, and purple dye, and the Greeks in particular provided Rome with much of her art, from sculpture and paintings to pottery and jewelry.<sup>3</sup>

The Romans, on the other hand, had a long tradition of frugal living, saving their money or investing it rather than squandering it away on prodigal pleasures. Aulus Gellius claims that early Roman households were encouraged to live humbly by sumptuary legislation, and archaeological

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<sup>1</sup> Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes* 46.

<sup>2</sup> See for example Polybius' description of the greed and luxury of Perseus of Macedon and Eumenes of Pergamum: 29.8.10-9.13.

<sup>3</sup> For extensive references on these trade goods, see T. R. S. Broughton, *Roman Asia Minor*, vol. 4 in *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome* (Paterson, NJ 1959), 614-15 (perfume); 620-23 (gold and other metals); 623-24 (dyes); T. Frank, *Rome and Italy of the Republic*, vol. 1 in *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, 352-54.

evidence indicates that in the early centuries of Roman history there are few signs of wealth or economically based social stratification.<sup>4</sup> Numerous other passages support this idea that the early Romans were simple, hard-working folk, and show that later generations remembered and (often) admired their ancestors for it.<sup>5</sup> A case in point is Seneca's letter to Lucilius, in which he commends the humble and rustic house of Scipio Africanus in contrast to the ornate and expensive homes of his own day.<sup>6</sup> As a result, avoidance of *luxuria* became one of the key distinctions that Romans used to separate themselves from their eastern neighbors and cast themselves as moral superiors.

Much has been written on Roman attitudes to luxury and wealth,<sup>7</sup> but a brief survey here will prove helpful for the subsequent discussion on accusations of luxurious living in political invective. Eastern luxury was closely associated with eastern 'softness' by many Romans, both as a cause and an effect. The excessive wealth in the East had an unfortunate effect of corrupting the peoples who lived there. They spent their time indulging in expensive activities and paid little attention to their own labor. Never was moderation necessary because the riches flowed so greatly that bankruptcy was a non-issue. Further, the more the easterners enjoyed their otiose lifestyles, the less likely they were to return to honest hard work. They became lazy and weak and therefore had to rely on guile and wit rather than strength and virtue to defeat their enemies.

Because of these softening effects, Edwards categorizes *luxuria* as a subset of effeminacy.<sup>8</sup> One's devotion to wealth and riches was a strong indication of an effeminate nature, and the pleasure-seeking tendencies of those possessing such wealth was not dissimilar from the natural instability that Romans believed women to possess. Further, the ornate clothing and adornments associated with

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<sup>4</sup> Aul. Gell. *NA* 2.24.1. For archaeological evidence, see Ryberg, *Archaeological Record*, 49-50; Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 53-54.

<sup>5</sup> For a more thorough discussion of these passages, see Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes* 56-58.

<sup>6</sup> Sen. *Ep.* 86.4-10.

<sup>7</sup> For example: Gruen, *Culture and Identity*, esp. 105-13; Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes* 69-87; Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, *passim*; D. C. Earl, *The Political Thought of Sallust* (Cambridge 1961), 41-45.

<sup>8</sup> Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, 68-81.

eastern peoples all indicated an excessive devotion to personal appearance, which as already discussed was reproached by many Roman men. The more exotic and ornate a man was, the more effeminate he appeared in the eyes of his peers.

Roman belief that the Greek East was the source of luxury is abundantly clear, and many of the ancient authors tie the introduction of this wealth into Rome with the city's moral decline. They saw that the increased presence of fine trade goods softened their youths and their soldiers.<sup>9</sup> The exact date for this acquisition of eastern luxuries, however, varies greatly across the authors. Livy gives multiple stages for the corruption of Romans and the army, starting in 212 BC with Marcellus' victory over Syracuse and his removal of its various Greek artworks to Rome. He says that the introduction of these beautiful statues and treasures first gave Romans a taste for Greek works of art, which soon led to the 'reckless plundering of every kind of treasure, both sacred and profane' (*licentiaequae hinc sacra profanaque omnia uolgo spoliandi*),<sup>10</sup> and he later puts the same claims in the mouth of M. Porcius Cato.<sup>11</sup> However, Livy also attributes much blame for Rome's moral decline to Cn. Manlius Vulso's triumph over the Asiatic Gauls in 187 BC, which he says first brought Greek luxury into Rome itself:

*luxuriae enim peregrinae origo ab exercitu Asiatico inuenta in urbem est. ii primum lectos aeratos, uestem stragulam pretiosam, plagulas et alia textilia, et quae tum magnificae supellectilis habebantur, monopodia et abacos Romam aduexerunt. tunc psaltria sambucistriaeque et conuiuialia alia ludorum oblectamenta addita epulis; epulae quoque ipsae et cura et sumptu maiore apparari coeptae. tum coquus, uilissimum antiquis mancipium et aestimatione et usu, in pretio esse, et quod ministerium fuerat, ars haberi coepta. uix tamen illa quae tum conspiciebantur, semina erant futurae luxuriae.*<sup>12</sup>

For the origin of foreign luxury was brought from Asia into the city by the army. They first carried into Rome golden couches, valuable tapestries for coverlets, bed-curtains and other textiles, and those things which were considered to be such magnificent household furniture –

<sup>9</sup> E.g. Sall. *Cat.* 11.5-7. Livy (39.1) draws a comparison between the armies who fought against the hardened western tribesmen and those who fought the softened, luxurious eastern armies, claiming that the former sharpened their skills and increased their valor, while the latter degenerated with exposure to the wealth of the East and the easy defeat of its effeminate armies. For more on this, see A. Rossi, "Parallel Lives: Hannibal and Scipio in Livy's Third Decade," *TAPA* 134 (2004), 359-81.

<sup>10</sup> Livy 25.40.1-3; Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.129.

<sup>11</sup> Livy 34.4.4.

<sup>12</sup> Livy 39.6.6-9. See also Frank, *Rome and Italy*, 352-54, who discusses luxury items including furniture and tapestries.

one-footed tables with side boards. Then cithara-players and harp-players and other types of games suitable for feasting were added to the banquets, and the banquets themselves began to be supplied with greater care and expense. And the cook, the most worthless of slaves both in value and utility to the ancient Romans, began to have value, and that which had been a matter of service began to be regarded as an art. Nevertheless, those things which used to be scarcely considered soon would be the seeds of luxury.

Other authors such as Pliny the Elder, though not mentioning Vulso's triumph specifically, blame the introduction of luxury into Rome on the subjection of Asia.<sup>13</sup> The fragmentary nature of Cassius Dio's later books prevent an exact understanding of his view, but certainly he also saw corrupting Asian luxury entering Rome sometime after Vulso as well.<sup>14</sup> Alternately, Polybius, who lived during the period of Roman expansion and the beginnings of corruption, placed the blame on events a few decades later, particularly on the war with Perseus, which exposed the Roman army to a variety of deplorable Greek customs and luxuries.<sup>15</sup> Florus prefers blaming the Syrian wars and the later acquisition of Pergamum.<sup>16</sup> Sallust's view is unique, as he is the only historian to place the corruption of the army in the first century BC, criticizing the extreme license granted by Sulla to his armies while campaigning in the East.<sup>17</sup>

Regardless of when this corruption in Rome began, the ancient authors all blamed it on conquest in the East, which led to the softening of the army, the influx of wealth into Rome, and the resulting adoption of eastern customs. Petrochilos claims that eventually the blame for degeneracy in

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<sup>13</sup> Pliny *NH* 34.14, who traces the corruption to Cn. Manlius in 187 BC.

<sup>14</sup> Dio 19.64.

<sup>15</sup> Polyb. 31.25.4, quoted above, pp. 14.

<sup>16</sup> Flor. *Ep.* 1.47.7.

<sup>17</sup> *Jug.* 30, though he does trace the very beginnings of Roman desire for wealth and leisure to the destruction of Carthage in 146 BC (*Cat.* 10; *Jug.* 41.2). Sallust's later dating for the decline of Roman morality is partially dependant on his view that the removal of a *metus hostilis* facilitated the moral decline of a nation. In order for a state to maintain order and unity, it had to have a common enemy against whom it could unite. Once all external threats were removed, the state would begin to splinter internally as the individuals would pursue their own selfish desires rather than the common good. This political thought, which was derived largely from Posidonius (*FGrHist* 87 F 112) and is found in other Greek authors (for example, Arist. *Pol.* 7.1334 a-b; Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 27.2; Diod. 34.33.4-6), is also present in Polybius' *Histories*: see 6.18, 57; 31.25.6-7 (which also discusses the role of *luxuria* in a state's decline); 32.13.6. However, Paul suggests that Sallust was also influenced by the Latin writings of P. Rutilius Rufus: see G. M. Paul, *A Historical Commentary on Sallust's Bellum Jugurthinum* (Liverpool 1984), 124-25. The main difference between Polybius and Sallust in their dating for the origins of luxury and decline, then, is purely the determination of when the *metus hostilis* was removed – for Polybius, it was the defeat of Macedon, but for Sallust the defeat of Carthage. For more on this theory of imperial decline in Sallust and elsewhere, see Earl, *Sallust*, 41-59; T. J. Luce, *Livy: The Composition of His History* (Princeton 1977), 272.

Rome was focused on world domination rather than on the Greeks specifically,<sup>18</sup> but the continuous association of Greekness with the dissolute lifestyles in Rome proves otherwise.

### **Accusations of *Luxuria***

Political invective especially reveals that Greek culture was still largely blamed for the bad habits that swept throughout Rome in the first century. Otherwise, charges against hellenophile Romans would have had no bearing in political rhetoric. Many of these accusations of philhellenism were discussed in the previous chapter, especially those that dealt with Romans living according to supposedly Greek customs. The present discussion will look more closely at accusations of *luxuria* and their important relationship in these attempts to cast one's opponents as dangerous hellenophiles. However, it is important to note that not all instances of luxury and wealth were equal. Though excessive wealth could be a danger to society, it was much less so if it was spent on public rather than private pleasures: "The Roman people hate private luxury, but they delight in public splendor" (*Odit populus Romanus privatam luxuriam, publicam magnificentiam diligit*).<sup>19</sup> The dispensing of one's wealth through public gifts became a regular phenomenon in the Hellenistic world and Republican Rome. Known as *evergetism*, generous gifts to the city were important socio-political tools for individuals seeking to achieve support amongst the general populace.<sup>20</sup> The difference between the two is clearly presented in Cicero's speech against C. Verres, who had plundered the homes and temples of Sicily during his governorship there from 73 to 71 BC. Cicero contrasts Verres' offenses with those of Marcellus a century earlier, who had donated plundered Greek art for the decoration of the city and the enjoyment of all, rather than kept it for his own house and private enjoyment:

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<sup>18</sup> Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes*, 77.

<sup>19</sup> Cic. *Pro Mur.* 76. See Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, Chapter 4, who sees private luxury as a tool for establishing one's place in the Roman social hierarchy.

<sup>20</sup> The system of *evergetism* has been extensively explored in P. Veyne, *Bread and Circuses: Historical Sociology and Political Pluralism* (London 1990), esp. 201-60, on *evergetism* in the Roman Republic.

*Itaque aedificiis omnibus, publicis privatis, sacris profanis, sic pepercit quasi ad ea defendenda cum exercitu, non oppugnanda venisset ... victoriae putabat esse multa Romam deportare quae ornamento urbi esse possent, humanitatis non plane exspoliare urbem, praesertim quam conservare voluisset... Romam quae apportata sunt, ad aedem Honoris et Virtutis itemque aliis in locis videmus. Nihil in aedibus, nihil in hortis posuit, nihil in suburbano... Conferte Verrem... ut pacem cum bello, leges cum vi, forum et iuris dictionem cum ferro et armis, adventum et comitatum cum exercitu et victoria conferatis.<sup>21</sup>*

And thus he spared all of the buildings, public and private, sacred and profane, just as if he had come with his army to defend the city, not to fight it... He thought it fitting for the victor to deport many things to Rome which would be able to serve to decorate the city, as a humane man, not to wholly strip the city, especially since he had wished to preserve it... The things which were transferred to Rome, we see at the temple of Honor and Virtue and in other such places. [Verres] set up nothing in temples, nothing in the gardens, nothing in his suburban estate. Compare [Marcellus] to Verres. You should compare peace to war; laws to force; business and the speaking about rights to weapons; visits of allies to the victory of troops.

Luxuries of conquered territories, then, were permissible in Rome so long as they were displayed in public, for this prevented any individual from gaining any cultural advantage over his peers. Familiarity with Greek culture, especially art, literature, customs, and other uniquely Greek goods, was a source of prestige for the Roman elite, or what Edwards has called 'cultural capital.'<sup>22</sup> She continues,

For that reason 'Greece' posed a threat to the stability of Roman elite society. Gendering Greek culture as 'feminine' and philhellenes as 'effeminate' can be seen both in general terms as a strategy to defuse the threat to Rome's cultural identity and, in terms of conflicts between individuals, as a strategy to limit the value of Greek sophistication to those Romans who possessed it to an unusual degree.

Therefore, excessive public luxury, if it was going to exist in Rome, was for many members of the elite preferable to private luxury, for no individuals then would reap any benefits from the prestige goods.

Beyond his private hoarding of Greek art, Verres was highly susceptible to charges of *luxuria* because of his earlier campaigns in the East, which Cicero argues exposed him to the corruptive influence of wealth. Therefore, once he had free rein in Sicily and was surrounded by a plethora of beautiful Greek fineries, his already whetted appetite for luxury desired more. Yet he was not the only

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<sup>21</sup> *Verr.* 2.4.120-21. However, it does seem that Verres did not hoard all of the wealth for himself and did give some of it as gifts to Rome and friends; see R. Palmer, "C. Verres' Legacy of Charm and Love to the City of Rome: A New Document," *RendPontAcc* 51-52 (1978-79), 111-36.

<sup>22</sup> Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, 95.

Roman who fell victim to accusations of private luxury. Many of the prominent Romans that have been discussed above for their depraved Greek behavior also found themselves attacked for living lives of luxurious pleasure. Antony in particular is targeted for not only living luxuriously, but squandering every penny that he acquired, so much so that he was forced to plunder Rome in order to fund his debaucheries:

προσῆν δὲ τῇ κοινῇ κακοδοξία τὸ διὰ τὴν οἰκίαν οὐ μικρὸν μῖσος, ἦν ὄκει, Πομπηίου τοῦ Μεγάλου γενομένην, ἀνδρὸς οὐχ ἦττον ἐπὶ σωφροσύνῃ καὶ τῷ τεταγμένως καὶ δημοτικῶς διαιτᾶσθαι θαυμασθέντος ἢ διὰ τοὺς τρεῖς θριάμβους. ἤχθοντο γὰρ ὀρώντες αὐτὴν τὰ πολλὰ κεκλεισμένην μὲν ἡγεμόσι καὶ στρατηγοῖς καὶ πρέσβεσιν, ὠθουμένοις πρὸς ὕβριν ἀπὸ τῶν θυρῶν, μεστὴν δὲ μίμων καὶ θαυματοποιῶν καὶ κολάκων κραιπαλώντων, εἰς οὓς τὰ πλεῖστα κατανηλίσκετο πρόπῳ ποριζομένων.<sup>23</sup>

And to his general infamy was added substantial hatred on account of the house where he lived, which had belonged to Pompey the Great, a man no less admired for his moderation and his orderly and democratic manner of living than for his three triumphs. People were vexed when they saw that house closed for the most part to generals and magistrates and ambassadors, who were thrust with pride from the doors; instead it was filled with mimes and jugglers and drunken flatterers, on whom the majority of the available riches was squandered in the most violent and grievous manner.

Plutarch goes on to describe how Antony's insatiable spending caused the triumvirs to sell the properties of those they killed, to bring false charges against others for similar purposes, to levy burdensome taxes, and even to steal offerings deposited with the Vestal Virgins – so intense was Antony's abandon for the lavish and excessive.

According to Athenaeus, the root of luxury in Rome was L. Licinius Lucullus,<sup>24</sup> and indeed Lucullus did live out his retirement in elegance. After his impressive but inoffensive triumph in 66, Lucullus quitted public life because, "he had his fill of glory and because he accomplished an unfortunate end to his toils and struggles, so he gave way to an easy and luxurious life (μεστὸς ὢν δόξης καὶ πρὸς τὸ ῥᾶστον ἀναπίπτων τοῦ βίου καὶ μαλακώτατον ἐκ πολλῶν ἀγώνων καὶ πόνων οὐκ

<sup>23</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 21.2; cf. 2.3; 9.3-6; 21.3-4; 24.1-2; Cic. *Phil.* 2.35, 50, 58, 63, 66-68, 101.

<sup>24</sup> Ath. 6.109.

εὐτυχέστατον τέλος λαβόντων,)<sup>25</sup> and decided thereupon to live off of the vast fortune that he had accumulated during his years in the East. Plutarch likens Lucullus' life to an ancient comedy, in which the opening deals with political affairs and military commands, but the latter portion presents all manners of festivities, including drinking bouts, banquets, revels, and races.<sup>26</sup> Lucullus' house was exquisite, embellished with expensive ambulatories and baths, decorated with paintings and statues, and surrounded by gardens that were considered to be amongst the most costly of the imperial gardens (τῶν βασιλικῶν ἐν τοῖς πολυτελεστάτοις ἀριθμοῦνται).<sup>27</sup> He had a country home in Naples, where the terracing and landscaping was so ornate that it must have required expensive technical expertise, and another near Tusculum, which contained observatories, expansive rooms, and banqueting halls.<sup>28</sup>

Yet Lucullus did not invest his fortune only in his land. He also appears to have had liquid capital to a degree that most of his contemporaries could only dream.<sup>29</sup> He had at least two hundred purple robes in storage, and at his dinner parties his guests were provided with dyed textiles and gem-encrusted goblets, entertained by his private choruses and players, and fed with the most impressive array of meats and other dishes.<sup>30</sup> He had resources enough to entertain several Greeks for many days in a genuinely Greek (*i.e.* ornate) fashion and still embarrass them for the great financial burden he seemed to incur in the process; even when dining alone he expected a costly and impressive meal.<sup>31</sup> Concluding his extensive descriptions of Lucullus' *luxuria*, Plutarch states, "in these ways, then, he used

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<sup>25</sup> Plut. *Luc.* 38.2, though Plutarch notes that he may also have withdrawn because he considered the political state of Rome to be diseased and beyond repair.

<sup>26</sup> *Luc.* 39.1.

<sup>27</sup> *Luc.* 39.2.

<sup>28</sup> *Luc.* 39.3-4.

<sup>29</sup> Most of the wealthy Romans of the late Republic had little liquid income, for most of their wealth was invested in their land and farm equipment. Much of their available funds, especially those used to run for office, were therefore from loans that they hoped to repay upon gaining lucrative governorships in the provinces. Of course, if their political machinations failed, they were financially ruined, as was the case with Catiline. For more on this, see Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality*, 184. Since Lucullus was no longer running for offices, he had no need for loans, so presumably all of his money is his own. If this is the case, it further emphasizes the immensity of his wealth.

<sup>30</sup> Plut. *Luc.* 39.5-40.1.

<sup>31</sup> Plut. *Luc.* 41.1-2.

his wealth wantonly, as if it were a barbarian captive (εἰς ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ὑβριστικῶς ἐχρήτη τῷ πλούτῳ καθάπερ ὄντως αἰχμαλώτῳ καὶ βαρβάρῳ).<sup>32</sup>

Despite Petrochilos' assertion that Lucullus' excess did not seem to have outraged the Roman public,<sup>33</sup> the sources speak to the contrary. In addition to his own judgments on Lucullus' utilization of his fortune, Plutarch records that many of Lucullus' contemporaries disapproved of his life after his retirement.<sup>34</sup> That he had withdrawn from a public life into one of leisure was a horrible enough thought for many Romans, but the way in which he indulged in that free time was even more offensive. Tubero the Stoic accused him of living like a Persian king, and Cato criticized Lucullus' excursus on frugality and temperance when he himself lived a depraved life.<sup>35</sup> Further, the very fact that detailed descriptions of Lucullus' wealth circulated through Roman society reveals that his contemporaries were talking about, and probably exaggerating, his opulence, and since the distrust of luxury was an established *topos* in Roman rhetoric, there were most certainly charges brought against him for it.

Plutarch's account seems to preserve remnants of Pompeian accusations against Lucullus. Pompey and Lucullus had been rivals from a young age when both sought the favor of Sulla, and for the remainder of their careers they seemed always to be crossing paths and competing for prestige.<sup>36</sup> This polarity between the two generals is not purely a product of later historians either, for Lucullus was

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<sup>32</sup> *Luc.* 41.6.

<sup>33</sup> Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes*, 85.

<sup>34</sup> *Plut. Luc.* 38.4; *Comp. Luc. et Cim.* 1.4-7, esp. 7.

<sup>35</sup> Tubero: *Plut. Luc.* 39.3. Cato: *Plut. Luc.* 40.3. The named Tubero is likely L. Aelius Tubero, who was a good friend of Cicero's and supported the Pompeian cause. While it is possible that Plutarch is referring to his son, Quintus, this is not likely, as Quintus would have been but a lad while Lucullus was still alive. That Lucius would make such charges against Lucullus is no surprise, since his loyalties were to Cicero and Pompey, neither of whom was fond of Lucullus. The epithet, 'the Stoic,' is probably a confusion on the part of Plutarch, who must have read Quintus' history and confused him with an earlier Q. Aelius Tubero (*tr.* before 129 BC), the nephew of Scipio Aemilianus and student of Panaetius the Stoic.

<sup>36</sup> Plutarch (*Luc.* 4.4) states that 'the first ground for estrangement and jealousy' between them was after Sulla's death, when the former dictator passed over Pompey as guardian of his son in favor of Lucullus. Their careers continued to conflict as they were often assigned to similar campaigns, Pompey usually cleaning up the successes that Lucullus had started. The most notable of these campaigns, of course, are those against the pirates and Mithridates of Pontus. Appian (*BC* 2.9) records that after Pompey's victory over Mithridates, Lucullus was envious and considered the victory to be his own. Plutarch does note (*Luc.* 41.3) that the two eventually managed to be cordial, but that need not mean that slanderous accusations were not also made.

viewed by some of his contemporaries as the ideal foil to Pompey's ambition.<sup>37</sup> This jealousy between Pompey and Lucullus ought to be considered when reading the later sections of Plutarch's *Lucullus* because there are several incidents in which Pompey criticizes Lucullus' ornate and leisurely lifestyle. As already mentioned (pp. 32-33), he and Crassus ridiculed Lucullus' withdrawal from public life, blaming him for preferring pleasure to political and military activities. Pompey also seems to have mocked Lucullus for the impracticality of his country home, which he stated was very suitable for the summer, but would be uninhabitable in winter;<sup>38</sup> Lucullus wittily retorted that, like the cranes and the storks, he changes residences with the seasons. Plutarch presents this little anecdote in order to illustrate the expansiveness of Lucullus' holdings, but there is more to it. As Lucullus' chief rival, Pompey would most certainly have made every effort to highlight Lucullus' excessive spending as so ridiculous that his purchases were practically non-functional. For morally upright Romans who valued utility over pleasure, Pompey knew that revealing Lucullus' frivolity for what it was could help garner support for his own faction.

Lucullus' luxurious lifestyle as presented by Plutarch was heavily Hellenized. The pure excess of it all aside, Greek characteristics are prevalent throughout the descriptions. Foremost is his ownership of a house in Naples. The Campanian city was an ancient Cumaean colony on the western coast of Italy, and had maintained close ties to the Greek mainland for centuries after its foundation. Although it was sacked by Sulla in 82, Naples persisted as a premiere vacation spot for Romans who enjoyed indulging in Greek culture:

πλείστα δ' ἴχνη τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς ἀγωγῆς ἐνταῦθα σώζεται, γυμνάσιά τε καὶ ἐφηβεία καὶ φρατρίαι καὶ ὀνόματα Ἑλληνικὰ καίπερ ὄντων Ῥωμαίων ... ἐπιτείνουσι δὲ τὴν ἐν Νεαπόλει διαγωγὴν τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν οἱ ἐκ τῆς Ῥώμης ἀναχωροῦντες δεῦρο ἡσυχίας χάριν τῶν ἀπὸ παιδείας ἐργασαμένων ἢ καὶ ἄλλων διὰ γῆρας ἢ ἀσθένειαν ποθούντων ἐν ἀνέσει ζῆν· καὶ τῶν Ῥωμαίων δ' ἔνιοι χαίροντες τῷ βίῳ τούτῳ, θεωροῦντες τὸ πλῆθος

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<sup>37</sup> Plut. *Luc.* 38.2.

<sup>38</sup> Plut. *Luc.* 39.4.

τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς ἀγωγῆς ἐπιδημούντων ἀνδρῶν, ἄσμενοι φιλοχωροῦσι καὶ ζῶσιν αὐτόθι.<sup>39</sup>

And many traces of Greek education are preserved there, gymnasia, ephebeia, and phratrīae, and Greek names, even though the people are Romans... And those who retire there from Rome devote themselves to the Greek mode of life for the sake of rest, having labored in the education of children or especially those who, on account of their old age or sickness, yearn to live life of relaxation; and some of the Romans, taking joy in that life, and observing the multitudes of men from their same culture living there, gladly frequent that place and live there.

Even in the century after Lucullus, the emperor Nero frequented Naples specifically because he enjoyed the Greek pleasures that the city offered.<sup>40</sup> Further, Plutarch states that Lucullus attempted to impress especially his Greek visitors with his wealth. This would indicate that, at least in the eyes of his peers, Lucullus was modeling his luxurious lifestyle after a stereotypically Greek exemplum.

The luxuries that Lucullus enjoyed were also Hellenistic in nature because many of the expensive items in his home had their origins in the Greek East. His gardens, which will be discussed more fully in the next chapter, were heavily influenced by the pleasure-gardens of the Persian and Hellenistic kings, and his impressive library contained a wide selection of Greek scholarship and philosophy. He possessed numerous cloaks, dyed with the expensive purple dyes of the Near East, as well as other fancy textiles and drinking vessels.<sup>41</sup> Much of the discussion in Plutarch on Lucullus' extravagance focuses on his dining. He daily consumed foods that were acquired with difficulty and at great expense, and Plutarch called his table 'sumptuous and fitting for a satrap' (τὴν πολυτελεῖ καὶ σατραπικὴν).<sup>42</sup> Food and feasting is a common way to illustrate the sumptuous lifestyles in the ancient authors, and Lucullus is not the only one described as squandering money on dining. Plautus' plays refer repeatedly to the extravagant wining and dining that was associated with the Greeks, using the verb *pergraecari*.<sup>43</sup> In the second century, many of Cato's declamations against luxury cited the high prices that Romans were

<sup>39</sup> Str. 5.4.7; MacMullen, "Roman Attitudes," 488.

<sup>40</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 20, 25; Livy 35.16.3; Tac. *Ann.* 15.33; E. Champlin, *Nero* (Cambridge 2003), 80-81, 157-58.

<sup>41</sup> For the eastern origins of these goods, see Frank, *Rome and Italy*, 352-54.

<sup>42</sup> *Comp. Luc. et Cim.* 1.5, a satrap of course being a regional governor under the Persian kings.

<sup>43</sup> Plaut. *Poen.* 603; *Bacch.* 813; *Truc.* 87; *Most.* 22, 64, 960; see also Paul. *ex Fest.* 235L.

spending on Pontic pickled fish and other eastern foodstuffs.<sup>44</sup> Sulla's army indulged extensively in food and drink, staving off hunger and thirst by consuming appetizers before meals.<sup>45</sup> Further, Antony's revelries and his laxity with his army are regularly addressed with regard to lavish feasting.<sup>46</sup>

Other items of Greek luxury that were commonly denounced by the Roman elite were Greek works of art. Plutarch notes that the vast collection of art adorning Lucullus' homes, and Cicero expressed disgust over Verres' plundering of statues and paintings from Sicilian homes and especially shrines. He attempts to argue that while art is an acceptable and customary pursuit for Greeks, it has no place in Roman private society.<sup>47</sup> He further makes the point that, beyond the fact that private art collections served no practical purpose, Romans should not desire it because the only two ways of acquiring it, namely pillaging or excessive spending, were un-Roman.<sup>48</sup> Thanks to one of Cicero's letters to Atticus, we can see that his accusations against Verres were not purely his own rhetorical creation, for he expresses his own strong desire for art which he knows will subject him to similar accusations:

Hermae tui Pentelici cum capitibus aeneis, de quibus ad me scripsisti iam nunc me admodum delectant. qua re velim et eos et signa et cetera quae tibi eius loci et nostri studi et tuae elegantiae esse videbuntur quam plurima quam primumque mittas et maxime quae tibi gymnasi xystique videbuntur esse. nam in eo genere sic studio efferimur ut abs te adiuvandi, ab aliis prope reprehendendi simus.<sup>49</sup>

I am already quite enchanted with your Pentelic herms with the bronze heads, about which you write to me, so please send them and the statues and any other things you think would do credit to the place in question and to my enthusiasm and to your good taste, as many and as soon as possible, especially any you think suitable to a *gymnasium* and colonnade. I am so

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<sup>44</sup> Polyb. 31.25.5; see also Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 8.2; *Quaest. conv.* 4.2; Diod. 31.24; 37.3.6; Athen. 6.274f-275a, all of which Astin suggests are derived from Polybius: see *Cato*, 179 n. 60. The Pontic coast, as well as the Bosphorus and the Propontis, contained the most famous fisheries in the ancient world, and the salted fish in particular came from Amastris, Tieium, and Heracleia Pontica, among others; see Broughton, *Roman Asia Minor*, 626-27.

<sup>45</sup> Sallust (*Cat.* 13.3) describes this gluttony as one of the main cornerstones of Sulla and his army's luxury.

<sup>46</sup> E.g. Plut. *Ant.* 9.6, 43.2-3.

<sup>47</sup> See Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes*, 76-80 for an extensive discussion on art in the Verrine Orations: "In this speech Cicero has the tricky task of bringing home the enormity of Verres' thefts to a jury which is clearly unable to appreciate the intrinsic value of the treasures stolen. He is careful to pose as one who is not very familiar with the subjects and who has no personal interest in it" (78-79).

<sup>48</sup> Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.14, where Cicero says that a small bronze cost as much as 40,000 sesterces because of the great demand for Greek artwork; he addresses the issue of plundering throughout the remainder of the speech. Frank (*Rome and Italy* 352-54) gives many citations and prices for other expensive luxury goods.

<sup>49</sup> *Ad Att.* 1.8.2, translation following D. R. S. Bailey.

carried away by my enthusiasm for this sort of thing that I may need assistance from you, but may perhaps be censured by others.

### Luxurious Building

Lavish building projects also had the potential to arouse hostile accusations, as was shown above with the many houses and vast gardens of Lucullus. It was not only the furnishings that made a house or garden overly fancy – the complexity of the architecture also lent much prestige to these buildings. Edwards has given an extensive and impressive analysis of the role luxurious building played in Rome, and in the process examines many instances of political attacks aimed at the building projects of one's opponents, in which the accusers, 'insist that the luxurious offend against nature by disrupting an ordering of space determined by nature itself.'<sup>50</sup>

Cicero provides an excellent example of using luxurious building as a tool of invective against opponents:

*Gabinium...villam aedificare in oculis omnium tantam tugurium ut iam videatur esse illa villa quam ipse tribunus plebis pictam olim in contionibus explicabat, quo fortissimum ac summum civem in invidiam homo castus ac non cupidus vocaret.*<sup>51</sup>

Gabinus builds such a great house in the view of everyone, that that famous house [of Lucullus] which he as tribune of the plebs himself once expounded on with a drawing in an assembly, by which he (an upright man and free from desire) hoped to denounce the bravest and best citizen out of envy, seems to be nothing more than a peasant's cottage.

Here Cicero not only reveals the charges that Gabinus made against Lucullus for his elaborate villa, but he himself reproaches Gabinus for such excessive spending. Pliny records an even more offensive structure, the theater of M. Scaurus, built during his aedileship in 58 BC.<sup>52</sup> He describes the elaborate structure, with its 360 columns and seating for 80,000 spectators, as well as the myriad of statues decorating it throughout, and states that this building was a greater crime than the proscriptions of

<sup>50</sup> See *Politics of Immorality*, Chapter 4, esp. 144. Criticisms of technologically advanced building are also found in Sall. *Cat.* 13.1; Hor. *Od.* 3.1.33.

<sup>51</sup> Cic. *Pro Sest.* 93. The role of the home in establishing one's social identity is explored in S. Hales, *The Roman House and Social Identity* (Cambridge 2003), esp. 11-39.

<sup>52</sup> Pliny *NH* 36.113-15.

Scaurus' adoptive father, Sulla. The censorious tone of this passage certainly belongs to Pliny, but it is difficult to believe that Scaurus' contemporaries would not have been similarly scandalized, especially since it seems that Scaurus removed many of the valuable adornments to his private villa in Tusculum after the conclusion of the games.

An interesting case to look at in reference to luxurious building would be Pompey's Theater, the first permanent theater ever built in Rome.<sup>53</sup> The popular general opened up the theater in 55 BC with much pomp, including athletic and musical contests, wild beast hunts, and feasting.<sup>54</sup> The theater itself was lavish, seating upwards of 40,000 people and adorned with four small shrines as well as a temple to Venus Victrix, and attached to it was the first public park in Rome, built in the Hellenistic monumental garden tradition, rather than the "naturalistic" Italian tradition.<sup>55</sup> Its plan was modeled directly on a Greek theater that Pompey had found pleasing during his visit to Mytilene after completing the war with Mithridates.<sup>56</sup> Pompey chose the Campus Martius as the ideal spot for his new theater, and while some have postulated that his motives for this were religious, it is very likely that he preferred to build his theater on the flat plain outside of the *pomerium* rather than utilizing natural hillsides as Greek theaters typically did in order to make the feat all the more impressive.<sup>57</sup> For all intents and purposes, the boldness and luxuriousness of this new building, which monopolized the Roman cityscape for centuries, should have brought immense censure upon Pompey by his contemporaries.

However, this is not the impression given by the sources. The Theater was exquisite and immense, but that fact did not bring odium upon its builder. Instead, a different variety of accusations

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<sup>53</sup> *LTUR* 5.35-38.

<sup>54</sup> For descriptions of these opening celebrations, see Plut. *Pomp.* 52.4; Plin. *NH* 7.7; Cic. *Ad Fam.* 7.1; Dio 39.38. Before the erection of Pompey's Theater, Romans built temporary theaters for their games and festivals. In 154 BC, Scipio Nasica prevented the construction of a theater (or destroyed it after its construction) because of its danger to the public morals (*tamquam inutile et nociturum publicis moribus*); see Livy *Per.* 48; Val. Max. 2.4.2. For more on the sites of Roman festivals before permanent theaters, see J. A. Hanson, *Roman Theater-Temples* (Princeton 1959), 9-26.

<sup>55</sup> See Hanson, *Theater-Temples*, 43-55. Hanson discusses the gardens in particular on pp. 53-55.

<sup>56</sup> Plut. *Pomp.* 42.4.

<sup>57</sup> Hanson (*Theater-Temples* 45-49) gives a brief overview of various propositions for Pompey's reasoning for the theater's location.

against Pompey surfaced, focusing on the moral threat of the theater rather than of the luxury. Tacitus records that some of Pompey's contemporaries, particularly the older men, denounced the Theater as a hotbed for idleness and democracy,<sup>58</sup> which would then corrupt the masses and encourage participation in other foreign and degenerate activities, such as the *gymnasium* and shameful love affairs (*degeneretque studiis externis iuventus, gymnasia et otia et turpes amores exercendo*).<sup>59</sup> In the late second century AD, Tertullian implies that Pompey feared criticism for his enormous theater, and so attached a shrine of Venus Victrix to the top and called the structure a temple to her, with the 'theater' serving merely as "steps for watching games" (*gradus spectaculorum*).<sup>60</sup> In a letter to M. Marius, Cicero makes no criticisms against Pompey or his luxurious building, though he seems unimpressed with the celebrations commemorating the theater's opening.<sup>61</sup> Amongst the many other references to the theater in the ancient record, none reveal anything about public outcry over the massiveness and expense of this building. Presumably, while the elite disliked the new gathering space for its democratic and leisurely effects, they did not accuse Pompey of luxurious building.<sup>62</sup>

There are several reasons why the Theater of Pompey may not have attracted the same odium that many of his contemporaries' building projects did. First, Pompey seems to have been a relatively modest man for his times, a fact for which he was widely commended, and charges of *luxuria* were not easily applied to him. He lived in a small house, and even when he built a nicer one next to the theater, it was still not large enough to excite envy.<sup>63</sup> He was also restrained in other areas of his life as well, so it seems that villainizing him to the people through the guise of luxury was not practical:

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<sup>58</sup> See also Cic. *Pro Sest.* 106, where he says the theater was one of three places in the city that the populace at large could make known their desires: *contione, comitiis, ludorum gladiatorumque consessu*.

<sup>59</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 14.20.

<sup>60</sup> Tert. *De Spec.* 10.5.

<sup>61</sup> Cic. *Ad Fam.* 7.1.

<sup>62</sup> J. A. Shelton, "Elephants, Pompey, and the Reports of Popular Displeasure in 55 BC," S. N. Byrne and E. P. Cueva (eds.), *Veritatis Amicitiaeque Causa: Essays in Honor of Anna Lydia Motto and John R. Clark* (Wauconda 1999), 231-71.

<sup>63</sup> Plut. *Pomp.* 40.5.

καὶ γὰρ ὁ Μέτελλος, ὅπερ οὐκ ἂν τις ᾤῳη, διετέθρυπτο τῷ βίῳ κομιδῇ πρὸς τὰς ἡδονὰς ἐνδεδωκῶς, καὶ μεγάλη τις εἰς ὄγκον καὶ πολυτέλειαν ἐξαίφνης ἐγεγόνει μεταβολὴ περὶ αὐτόν, ὥστε τῷ Πομπηίῳ καὶ τοῦτο θαυμαστὴν εὐνοίαν ἅμα δόξῃ φέρειν, ἐπιτείνοντι τὴν εὐτέλειαν τῆς διαίτης οὐ πολλῆς ἐπιτηδεύσεως δεομένην· φύσει γὰρ ἦν σώφρων καὶ τεταγμένος ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις.<sup>64</sup>

For Metellus, the very man who would not be imagined to do so, was made weak in his life, giving himself over altogether to pleasures; and some great change had come upon for pretension and extravagance, so that this also brought to Pompey wondrous favor along with reputation, who increased the thriftiness of his mode of life, which cost him nothing much in attention; for by nature he was temperate and orderly in his desires.

Further, while Pompey's Theater was lavish and Greek in every way, it was a completely public work. He did not attempt to incorporate it into his own personal abode, nor did he take home any of the exquisite furnishings after the opening games. The theater and its adjoining shrines and gardens were a gift to the Roman people and they loved him for it. Therefore, Pompey's theater serves as an example of *euergetism* that prevented accusations of luxurious building from being levied against Pompey. The lack of any surviving invective regarding the theater's extravagance may also suggest that by the 50s BC, the Roman people had become so accustomed to luxurious displays and games that the negative sentiments toward them had dissipated. Because of this indifference, Pompey's adversaries were forced to manipulate different miso-Hellenic sentiments, such as fears of democracy and leisure, in order to attack the building.

## Conclusions

The vital role of luxury in the political invective of late Republican Rome is without question. *Luxuria* had become a moral and political *topos* since the time of Cato the Elder, and the ever-increasing amount of wealth that flooded into Rome following her eastern conquests made these charges all the more effective. Luxury and wealth, therefore, were closely associated with the Greek East. As a result, *luxuria* was perceived as a highly effective political tool for denigrating one's opponents to the senate

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<sup>64</sup> Plut. *Pomp.* 18.2; cf. 53.1-4; *Ant.* 21.2; Lucan *Phar.* 9.197-203.

and the people. The regularity of accusations relating to squandered fortunes on dining, building, art, or other home furnishings reveals that politicians thought these acts likely to be considered offensive by other members of the populace. Further, *luxuria* was easily combined with other Greek-associated behaviors, such as excessive or homosexual sex, drunkenness, and deception, to produce a composite representation of a Roman who has forsaken his honorable ancestral ways in order to pursue his own leisure and pleasures. Discussions of Antony's luxury in particular were rarely separated from those of his degenerate lifestyle. Therefore, because of the well-established connection between *luxuria* and the Greek East and the frequent occurrence of it alongside of other stereotypically Greek offenses, seldom did ancient authors and politicians need to state the presence of miso-hellenic sentiment explicitly in such accusations.

Petrochilos has suggested that luxury was perceived in Rome from two perspectives:

"...either as a contradiction of old Roman strictness and the sign of a general lowering of moral standards, or as part of a new, more relaxed way of life in which it is combined with intellectual pursuits and thus with a different and somewhat broader moral outlook. Lucullus himself seems to have deliberately oriented this way of life – which was in some measure his own creation – towards the Greeks of his own day, though without severing connections completely with Roman friends and Roman public life."<sup>65</sup>

The difficulty of Petrochilos' assertion lays in part with his claim discussed above (p. 49) that Lucullus' lavish lifestyle did not outrage the Roman public. Petrochilos looks at Lucullus' seemingly inoffensive life and concludes that luxury was perceived differently depending on how it was executed. Indeed, there were differing degrees to luxurious spending, as seen in Cicero's ironic attack on Piso.<sup>66</sup> However, to say that Lucullus' lifestyle was less offensive because it was combined with intellectual pursuits and because he did not completely sever himself from Roman society ignores the ancient evidence. Greek

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<sup>65</sup> Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes*, 85-86.

<sup>66</sup> Cic. *In Pis.* 67, where he accuses Piso of pursuing a luxurious lifestyle without spending the necessary money to do it well, with the result that his 'refinement' borders on the gauche. See also Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, 201-03.

intellectual pursuits were not publically acceptable, though many pursued them privately.<sup>67</sup> Nor was Lucullus the only Roman to spend excessively without becoming completely removed from society. But most importantly, as has already been shown, Lucullus was indeed attacked for his splendor by Pompey, Cato, Gabinius, and others.

Certainly, the sumptuous life of Lucullus does not attract extensive censure in the ancient sources like Antony's does. However, the varying degree in animosity must be examined in conjunction with the varying degree of risk the two men posed to Rome. While Lucullus' wealth was preposterous in many ways, his behavior is not cast nearly as morally destructive as Antony's. Both shared a love for fancy possessions and artistic performances, and they both indulged in drinking and revelries, but Lucullus maintained a degree of moral restraint by not making public spectacles of his debaucherous behavior in the ways that Antony did. Further, Lucullus' indulgences were funded by the immense wealth that he had plundered during his campaigns in Asia, whereas Antony took to stealing from his fellow Romans in order to feed his insatiable desires. In other words, while his luxurious lifestyle was not laudable, it also did not offend on the same level as Antony's.

What Petrochilos sees as two varying perspectives on *luxuria* is instead a reflection of the political climate surrounding these two men. Antony's excessive spending was one of many deplorable habits attributed to him by Augustan propaganda. The dissolute characterization that was equated with him served as a political tool to cast him as the worst possible leader Rome could ever have. Antony was attempting to gain control of the state; Lucullus, on the other hand, was peacefully sitting next to the streams in his garden while reading a book. The role of these men in Roman politics was very different, and therefore the accusations used against them were of two completely different calibers. Lucullus' minimal involvement in politics meant that his opponents did not need to steal votes and legions away from him – they only needed to show their disapproval of his lifestyle in order to

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<sup>67</sup> Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes* 141-96, gives a thorough discussion of Roman interactions with Greek intellectual culture.

discourage other Romans from pursuing similar paths. However, Antony's political career was a huge and immediate threat to Octavian as well as many of the senators, and so the accusations against him were much more desperate, and their role in Augustan propaganda strongly influenced the 'historical' accounts written under the Principate. But as will be shown in the next chapter, not even charges of luxury were sufficient for Antony's enemies, and for men like him the ultimate charges of Hellenism were necessary.

## Chapter Four: Greek Power and Divinity

The previous chapters have dealt much with accusations of philhellenism based on one's lifestyle. A man's Greek appearance, activities, and devotion to luxury were all telltale signs that he had been corrupted by eastern influences. However, when all of these behaviors combined into one composite philhellene, a more immediately dangerous threat arose. An accumulation of wealth and overexposure to the soft Greek life had the potential to launch a Roman into the ultimate realm of Greek excess, which reached beyond one's personal life into the political sphere in the guise of absolute rule. To the Romans, the difference between monarchy and tyranny was a fine line, as is evident in Polybius' analysis of the Roman constitution.<sup>1</sup> A beneficent king could quickly become a tyrant once his excessive wealth and power corrupted his goodness:

The psychological basis of tyranny is...the appetite...it is brutal and lawless appetite – the lust of the flesh and the pride of power – which man has in common with beasts. Appetite of this kind, when it is once engendered, is the tyrant of all other appetites; and every passion is henceforth made to serve the purposes of a lust for self-gratification and self-assertion.<sup>2</sup>

The following chapter will address the various uses of kingship, tyranny, and related symbols of power in Roman political invective, as these were seen as the ultimate manifestation of Greek influence and therefore the greatest threat to the Roman state.

### **Kings and Tyrants**

The ancient historian Livy claims that Roman hatred of kings stemmed from their own early regal period, which ended in 504 BC with the overthrow of the tyrannical king, Tarquinius Superbus, and

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<sup>1</sup> Polyb. 6.4, 7. On the ambivalence toward kings both amongst the Greeks and the Romans, see E. Rawson, "Caesar's Heritage: Hellenistic Kings and Their Roman Equals," in *JRS* 65 (1975), 150-52 = ed. *Roman Culture and Society* (Oxford 1991), 169-88.

<sup>2</sup> E. Barker, *Greek Political Theory* (London 1918), 300-01.

the establishment of a republic.<sup>3</sup> Beyond the more obvious chronological historical problems surrounding the ancient accounts of the kings,<sup>4</sup> some scholars see Livy's explanation of Tarquinius' tyranny and its after effects as a reflection of first-century BC anti-monarchic ideology that resulted especially from interaction with the Greeks and other Hellenistic kingdoms in the second century.<sup>5</sup> Therefore Roman hatred of kings and tyranny was not a product of sixth-century events, but rather was a much later development. Several other sources for the negative perception of monarchy and tyranny in Rome, especially with relation to the Greeks, have been proposed. Edith Hall has shown that Greek drama presented a tyrant who exhibited many stereotypically 'eastern' habits, and the importation of these plays into Rome may have been partially responsible for the Roman conception of a Greek tyrant.<sup>6</sup> In addition, Rome's extensive interaction with various Hellenistic kingdoms during the second century BC, especially the Antigonids and Seleucids, gave them a sour taste for kingship.<sup>7</sup>

Regardless of when Roman distrust of monarchial governments actually arose, the early traditions of the Republic are laden with references to men executed for aspiring to kingship or tyranny. In 486, Spurius Cassius proposed an agrarian law to the people which would have benefitted the *plebs*. He was subsequently accused of aspiring to kingship and put to death.<sup>8</sup> Spurius Maelius (c. 439 BC), and Marcus Manlius Capitolinus (c. 385/4 BC) were similarly accused, the former having sold privately acquired grain at bargain prices and the latter having paid off the debts of the *plebs* out of his own

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<sup>3</sup> Livy 1.46-60.

<sup>4</sup> See Cornell, *The Beginnings of Rome* (London 1995), 119-130; A. Momigliano, "The Roman Kings," *CAH*<sup>2</sup> v. 7.2, 87-96.

<sup>5</sup> This is argued most extensively by Erskine, "Hellenistic Monarchy," 106-13, 115-18; see also Dunkle, "The Greek Tyrant," 158; Rawson, "Caesar's Heritage," 150-152. Cornell, on the other hand, asserts that the similarities between Tarquinius and the Greek tyrant model is not wholly anachronistic because the early Romans had close contact with the Greeks, and therefore rulers were likely to have modeled themselves on their contemporary Greek counterparts; see *Beginnings of Rome*, 145-46.

<sup>6</sup> Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian*, 154-59. For importation of the tyrant into Rome, see Dunkle, "Greek Tyrant," 152-55, who identifies the main characteristics of these tyrants as *vis*, *suberbia*, *libido*, and *crudelitas*.

<sup>7</sup> See Erskine, "Hellenistic Monarchy," 115-18, for extensive discussion.

<sup>8</sup> See Livy 2.41; Dion. Hal. 8.77-8; Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome* (London 1995), 271.

fortune.<sup>9</sup> The trend of accusing popular leaders with attempted tyranny continued into the last century of the Republic. As already discussed in Chapter 1, Tiberius Gracchus and Sulla also fell under such suspicion, though Sulla managed to escape the fate that most of his purportedly tyrannical predecessors had suffered. These stories of attempted tyrannies during the Republic may have been just as strongly influenced by late Republican politics as those of the kings, but they establish a manufactured tradition that aspirations to *regnum* were not to be tolerated. Thus, Cicero openly encouraged his fellow Romans to rid themselves of current tyrants, namely Antony, just as their predecessors had done:

*quod si se ipsos illi nostri liberatores e conspectu nostro abstulerunt, at exemplum facti reliquerunt. illi quod nemo fecerat fecerunt. Tarquinius Brutus bello est persecutus, qui tum rex fuit cum esse Romae regem licebat; Sp. Cassius, Sp. Maelius, M. Manlius propter suspicionem regni appetendi sunt necati: hi primum cum gladiis non in regnum appetentem sed in regnantem impetum fecerunt. quod cum ipsum factum per se praeclarum est atque divinum, tum expositum ad imitandum est.*<sup>10</sup>

But if those liberators of ours have removed themselves from sight, they have nevertheless left behind the example of their deeds. Those men did things which nobody had done. Brutus overtook Tarquinius in war, who at that time had been king when it was fitting for a king to be in Rome. Sp. Cassius, Sp. Maelius, and M. Manlius were killed because they were suspected of seeking a monarchy. These were the first to attack with swords not one aiming for monarchy, but one already reigning. Since that deed is remarkable and divine on its own account, it is one open for imitating.

Because kingship and tyranny were the acme of excess and greed, charges of *regnum* often focused on these vices. The main difference between simple charges of *luxuria* and those of *regnum* was merely a matter of degree, but the implications were much direr. Men who indulged in sumptuous living were dangerous to society, threatening to undermine its structures and corrupt its youth, with the result that a state once filled with strong and virtuous men would degenerate into one with soft and morally base people that were easily overthrown. However, the corruption of the populace would take some time; king-like behavior was a more immediate menace. A man seeking *regnum* might undermine and overthrow the government regardless of the depravity of the rest of the population, and thus a

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<sup>9</sup> Sp. Maelius: see Livy 4.13-16; Dion. Hal. 12.1-4; Cornell, *The Beginnings of Rome* (London 1995), 268. M. Manlius Capitolinus: see Livy 6.11-20; Cornell, 330-31.

<sup>10</sup> Cic. *Phil.* 2.114.

tyrannical individual was an even greater immediate threat than the corruption of the populace. If a man that ambitious were also to enjoy the support of the softened populace, he was all the more dangerous, for the easily swayed masses could outnumber the wiser and more educated aristocracy to put him into power. At least, that is how many Romans, especially the patricians, perceived it.<sup>11</sup>

The idea that monarchies were weak was partially based on Roman suspicion of excessive wealth and power, but it was also based on the reality of the Mediterranean in the second and first centuries BC. Rome had grown to become the strongest power in the Mediterranean and had eclipsed, and in some cases obliterated, the previously powerful Hellenistic kingdoms. Rawson has pointed out that this fact exacerbated Roman mistrust of monarchical governments, as they saw how weak the kingdoms of the Mediterranean were in comparison with their own mixed government.<sup>12</sup> Roman political theory already viewed monarchies as weak, and in the minds of late second- and early first-century Romans the declining statuses of the contemporary kingdoms throughout the region reaffirmed this belief.

This negative attitude toward rulers, whether they were kings, tyrants or demagogues, accordingly provided a *topos* for political invective of the late second- and early first-century BC. Erskine has argued that because Latin did not have its own word for tyrant, it was easier for *rex* to absorb some of the negative characteristics associated with τύραννος,<sup>13</sup> but he also notes that once the Greek τύραννος was introduced into third-century Rome via the Greek tragedies, *rex* often had a more neutral connotation. To support this claim, he cites the institution of the *rex sacrorum* in Roman religion and the comical representations of wealthy but inoffensive Greek kings in the plays of Plautus, among

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<sup>11</sup> Any man in Rome whose power depended greatly on popular support was very suspicious to the upper classes. The Roman elite viewed crowds as dangerous, unstable, and easily swayed by rewards, as revealed by Cicero (*Pro Flacc.* 15-19). Cicero uses this rationale to explain Roman distrust of the Greeks and the democratic nature of their politics. Therefore, someone who had risen to power simply because he had bribed the masses for their support, not because he had any qualifications to rule, was fearful to the traditional ruling class.

<sup>12</sup> Rawson, "Caesar's Heritage," 152.

<sup>13</sup> Erskine, "Hellenistic Monarchy," 120.

others.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the Romans did not inherently despise all kings with whom they interacted, and Erskine's examples of the neutral uses of *rex* certainly carry some weight. However, the very use of *rex*, *tyrannus*, and their cognates in the political rhetoric of the late Republic show that the terms were indeed charged with negative innuendos.<sup>15</sup> Erskine claims that only in political invective did *rex* acquire an unfavorable sense, and that public fears of the Hellenistic kings was only a result of Roman propaganda against the kings, but this discounts the negative representations of Greek tyrants in drama as well as the negative reactions to the Hellenistic kings in the mid-second century BC before such propaganda had become commonplace.

This relatively new tool for invective played a role in the opposition of several great men of the late Republic, especially in the post-Sullan era and again following the dictatorship of Caesar. During his campaigns in the east, Lucullus' behavior changed drastically. His early career had provided him with ample opportunities for wealth and power, but he resisted them. He refused rich treatment when in Egypt, he drove out the corrupt *publicani* from Asia, and he denied his soldiers the opportunity to plunder wealthy cities by bringing them into a peaceful alliance.<sup>16</sup> However, as his campaigns progressed and he sought to maintain the loyalty of his troops, he allowed them to plunder conquered cities,<sup>17</sup> and eventually his own sober character was corrupted by his successes. This decline provided his enemies with ample ammunition with which to attack him. He was repeatedly accused of seeking perpetual command of the army in order to increase his own power and wealth:

ἐν δὲ Ῥώμῃ καταβοᾶν καὶ διαμαρτύρεσθαι τοὺς δημαγωγούς ὡς πόλεμον ἐκ πολέμου διώκει Λούκουλλος οὐδὲν τῆς πόλεως δεομένης, ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τοῦ στρατηγῶν μηδέποτε καταθέσθαι τὰ ὄπλα μηδὲ παύσασθαι χρηματιζόμενος ἀπὸ τῶν κοινῶν κινδύνων.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Erskine, "Hellenistic Monarchy," 111-13.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Dunkle, "The Greek Tyrant," 151-71; for second century reactions to the Hellenistic kings, see Poly. 30.19.6; Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 8.12-13.

<sup>16</sup> Plut. *Luc.* 2.5-6 (Egypt); 7.5-6 (*publicani*); 14.2-3 (plundering). In his comparison between Lucullus and Cimon (1.4), Plutarch also notes that he had been disciplined and sober (πεπαιδευμένη καὶ σώφρων) in his youth.

<sup>17</sup> Plut. *Luc.* 17.4-7; 19.3-4; 29.2-4.

<sup>18</sup> Plut. *Luc.* 24.3; see also *Luc.* 33.4; App. *Mith.* 90.

But in Rome the popular leaders cried out against Lucullus and protested that he was pursuing war after war, not because any city needed it, but so that he might never lay aside the arms of his command nor cease to be engaged in the public dangers.

Few other specific accusations are preserved in Plutarch's account of Lucullus, but the biographer does imply that the accusations against him were numerous.<sup>19</sup> Plutarch is more forthright about his own belief that Lucullus' greed brought immense harm to Rome, for his victories and the riches brought back from the east led his successors, especially M. Licinius Crassus, to believe that campaigns against eastern peoples were easy and prosperous.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately for Crassus, his Parthian enemies proved to be much more menacing than expected and he was killed trying to conquer them. While this is only Plutarch's retrospective opinion, it certainly reflects the long-held Roman belief that individual wealth and power not only threatened its owner, but could inadvertently damage the state itself.

Pompey, who had spent much time campaigning in the East and had even been allotted Rome's eastern holdings in his settlement with Caesar and Crassus in 60 BC, was likewise accused of tyrannical behavior. Plutarch says that the senate lent their support to Lucullus in the hopes that he would oppose the tyranny of Pompey (ἀντίταγμα πρὸς τὴν τοῦ Πομπηίου τυραννίδα), and when he declined they found other mastheads in Crassus and the younger Cato, so suspicious were they of Pompey's growing power.<sup>21</sup> Cato also charged Pompey and the other triumvirs with tyranny before the consular election of 55 BC in an effort to secure the consulship for his own comrade, L. Domitius Ahenobarbus. When M. Favonius accused Pompey of wearing a diadem, a tell-tale sign of a tyrant,<sup>22</sup> Pompey claimed the so-called diadem was nothing more than a bandage on his leg to cover an unsightly ulcer. Favonius insisted that it mattered not where the white ribbon was worn, for it still implied revolutionary ambition. Pompey's Theater also provided opportunities for his peers to accuse him of tyrannical ambition, since it would appeal most of all to the masses. Tertullian's brief comment suggests that the erection of such a

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<sup>19</sup> Plut. *Comp. Luc. et Cim.* 1.7.

<sup>20</sup> Plut. *Luc.* 36.6-7.

<sup>21</sup> Plut. *Luc.* 38.2; 42.5.

<sup>22</sup> Cato: Plut. *Pomp.* 52.1. Favonius: Val. Max. 6.2.7; Amm. Marc. 17.11.4.

popular structure would have aroused the enmity of the senatorial elite, and therefore Pompey attached a temple to Venus Victrix in order to avoid accusations of *regnum*, and Tacitus claims that this was precisely the case.<sup>23</sup> In addition to charges by Pompey's senatorial adversaries, many of his own soldiers mocked his refusal to lay aside sole authority by calling him 'Agamemnon' and 'King of Kings.'<sup>24</sup>

The portrayal of Pompey as a king or tyrant was bolstered by contemporary literary depictions of him and his army, as argued by Rossi.<sup>25</sup> She shows that Caesar's descriptions of Pompey and his troops in the *Bellum Civile*, especially following his defeat at Pharsalus, reflect traditional depictions of eastern monarchs and their armies. Caesar's narrative of the aftermath of the battle of Pharsalus and his plundering of Pompey's camp emphasizes the excessive luxury (*nimiam luxuriam*) of Pompey's army, though no other historians of the Civil Wars mention this offense to any great extent.<sup>26</sup> The description of Pompey's camp and Caesar's plundering of it directly reflects a particular archetype in earlier histories, namely that of victories over eastern armies, as established in Herodotus' account of the battle of Plataea and its aftermath when the victorious Pausanias and his army plundered Mardonius' camp.<sup>27</sup> The theme is revisited, sometimes with modifications, in the various accounts of Alexander's victory at Issus,<sup>28</sup> and again here in Caesar.

Rossi's argument is well presented, but she overlooks one important factor – the assimilation in the Roman mind of Greek and eastern habits. She writes:

Caesar's political discourse in *BC*...tends towards a process of de-familiarization of the enemy, of de-romanization. It is through this strategy that the description of Pompey's camps and of his behavior assumes crucial ideological significance. Via this representation, the Pompeians are stripped altogether of their national identity as Romans, for their behavior becomes specifically linked to a foreign and, more specifically, to Oriental ethnicity.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Tert. *De. Spec.* 10.5; Tac. *Ann.* 14.20.

<sup>24</sup> Plut. *Caes.* 41.2.

<sup>25</sup> Rossi, "Camp of Pompey," 239-56.

<sup>26</sup> Caes. *BC* 3.96.1-2; Rossi, "Camp of Pompey," 240.

<sup>27</sup> Hdt. 9.80-83.

<sup>28</sup> For example, see Diod. Sic. 17.35.1-4; Curtius 3.11.20; Plut. *Alex.* 20.6-8.

<sup>29</sup> Rossi, "Camp of Pompey," 247.

Rossi is correct to assert the benefits to Caesar of using such descriptive language about his enemy, as it did indeed serve to alienate Pompey and his supporters from patriotic Romans, who viewed his opposition to Caesar as an attempt to establish a tyranny. However, Rossi overlooks the tendency in late Republican Rome to assimilate Greek and eastern traditions into one great, seemingly menacing culture that threatened the 'civilized' Roman west. Such a conflation between Greeks and the peoples of the East is evident in Caesar's exaggerated enumeration of Pompey's troops, emphasizing not only the Anatolian contingent, but also those from Greece and Ionia, while completely passing over any specific mention of his Roman and Italian supporters.<sup>30</sup> Caesar is not presenting Pompey as a purely eastern monarch, but as a Hellenistic king embracing both Greek and eastern traditions.

It is important to note that in contrast to most of the ancient sources discussed here, Caesar's *BC* is not a direct speech or attack against Pompey; it is presented as a neutral narrative of his struggles with the great general after his campaigns in Gaul. However, this work is no less a piece of political invective than any speech made to the assembly. His portrayal of the events leading up to his perpetual dictatorship was directly intended to serve as political propaganda in favor of his regime, casting himself as the liberator of the Roman people.<sup>31</sup> Because these commentaries contained many allusions to other historical and literary traditions, we can surmise that he intended them primarily for the better educated senatorial classes, whose support he was always seeking to gain. His retelling of the Civil War, then, served to portray his aggression against Pompey not as an attempt to create his own dictatorship, but to prevent the degenerate Pompey from taking sole control of Rome. The general had already been defeated and killed and thus negative portrayals of him served little purpose as far as discouraging Pompeian sympathies, but Caesar's aim was to remind his readers of the Hellenistic threat from which he himself had saved the state.

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<sup>30</sup> Caesar, *BC* 3.3-4; Rossi, "Camp of Pompey," 248-49.

<sup>31</sup> See S. Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (Oxford 1971), 139-40.

Unfortunately for Caesar, these implications that he employed against Pompey were soon turned against him. As Rossi points out, "After the year 47, a representation of Pompey as the incarnation of the Oriental threat would have just reminded the audience and the readers all too well of the threat that the now orientalized Caesar posed to the Roman system."<sup>32</sup> Such suspicions of Caesar were a direct result of his behavior in the years following Pharsalus. According to Dio, Caesar dressed in kingly garb, wearing a triumphal toga to all of the public games and always had a laurel wreath around his head.<sup>33</sup> None of these articles had necessarily negative connotations since they were part of the typical triumphal regalia, but when someone wore them regularly, their close associations with kingships of old were cause for concern. Even worse, Caesar sat in a golden chair with a wreath of gold, both of which were symbols of ancient Etruscan royalty,<sup>34</sup> and he drove around the city and games in a chariot, following the custom of the ancient eastern monarchs.<sup>35</sup> The incident at the Lupercalia in 44 BC was the climax of all of these honors. Though Caesar never accepted the diadem repeatedly offered to him by Antony at the Lupercalia, the reality of the monarchical threat that he posed sunk into the minds of many Romans.<sup>36</sup> All of these actions resulted in many attacks on Caesar involving the word *rex*, especially by Cicero, who said that not only had Caesar aimed at monarchy, but he had actually succeeded in attaining it:

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<sup>32</sup> Rossi, "Camp of Pompey," 254.

<sup>33</sup> Dio 43.43.1; *Caes. Phil.* 2.58; *Plut. Ant.* 9; *Pliny NH* 8.21. Dio also says that Caesar wore high red boots in the tradition of the Alban kings. This offense was of course Italian in origin, not eastern, but it buttressed the image of Caesar as one aiming for kingship. As for the wreath, both Dio and Suetonius (*Div. Jul.* 45) explain that Caesar's excuse for wearing it was to cover his bald spot, but that his contemporaries quickly jumped to conclusions regarding his kingly aspirations because of its close resemblance of the Hellenistic crowns.

<sup>34</sup> *Cic. Phil.* 2.85; Dio 44.6.1-3; Rawson, "Caesar's Heritage," 148. The golden wreath was also worn by the tyrants of Syracuse and thenceforth had become closely associated with tyranny; see for example Duris, *FGrHist* 76 F 14, who speaks of the golden wreath of Dionysius I. For more on the overlap of monarchy and tyranny in Syracuse, see S. I. Oost, "The Tyrant Kings of Syracuse," *CP* 71 (1976), 224-36.

<sup>35</sup> Dio 44.6.4; Rossi, "Camp of Pompey," 253; Weinstock (*Divus Julius*, 413) has suggested that Caesar's conception of kingship was influenced by his experiences in the east.

<sup>36</sup> For a thorough discussion on this event, see Weinstock, *Divus Julius*, 331-40, esp. 338-40. Caesar did not, however, shrink from allowing diadems to be placed on his statues: see *Plut. Caes.* 61.8; *Suet. Caes.* 79.1; Dio 44.9.2; *App. BC* 2.108; Weinstock, *Divus Julius*, 319-20.

*multos annos regnare meditatus, magno labore, magnis periculis quod cogitarat effecerat; muneribus, monumentis, congiariis, epulis multitudinem imperitam delenierat; suos praemiis adversarios clementiae specie devinxerat. quid multa? attulerat iam liberae civitati partim metu partim patientia consuetudinem serviendi.*<sup>37</sup>

Intending to reign for many years, he achieved what he had planned with great effort and many dangers. With spectacles, memorials, gifts, and banquets he charmed the ignorant multitudes; he prevailed over his own followers with rewards and over his enemies with a show of clemency. What else? He introduced to the free city the custom of servitude, partially through its fear and partially through its resignation.

Elizabeth Rawson has shown that such accusations were more metaphorical than literal, denying that Cicero would have seen Caesar as pursuing an actual kingship,<sup>38</sup> but regardless Cicero's use of the term suggests that king-like behavior was a threat, even if it was purely metaphorical, and his contemporaries used it to arouse popular and senatorial fear against the would-be dynast.<sup>39</sup>

Several years later after the defeat of Pompey and the death of Caesar, Cicero made charges against Marc Antony in his *Philippics* that echoed the political rhetoric of his predecessors. In these speeches, Cicero not only accuses Antony of aspiring to kingship, but of behaving as if he had already attained it.<sup>40</sup> And of course, claims Cicero, his quest for eminency had the unfortunate side effect of bringing discord and disaster to Rome and his fellow citizens.<sup>41</sup>

Antony's affiliation with kingship followed closely in the footsteps of his friend Julius Caesar, to whom Antony had supposedly offered a diadem at the Lupercalia, hoping that he might take control of Rome and its empire.<sup>42</sup> This occasion has been the subject of much debate, both ancient and modern, concerning what Antony's actual motives were and whether Caesar had a role in planning it, but none of

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<sup>37</sup> Cic. *Phil.* 2.116; see also Cic. *De Off.* 3.83; *De Div.* 2.110; *Phil.* 1.3; 2.85; *Ad Fam.* 11.27.8. Cicero elsewhere compares Caesar unfavorably with Alexander the Great (*Ad Att.* 13.28.3) and says that his tyranny will be worse than those of the Persians (*Ad Att.* 10.8.2).

<sup>38</sup> Rawson, "Caesar's Heritage," 149-50.

<sup>39</sup> See also Plut. *Caes.* 60; Caesar continued to be associated with tyranny even after his death: Cic. *Ad Att.* 16.2.3; *Phil.* 1.36; 10.8.

<sup>40</sup> *Phil.* 2.35.

<sup>41</sup> *Phil.* 2.55.

<sup>42</sup> Cic. *Phil.* 2.85-87; 3.12; Plut. *Ant.* 12; *Caes.* 61.1-7; Suet. *Div. Iul.* 79.

these issues affect the fact that Antony offered Caesar the diadem,<sup>43</sup> showing that he was not opposed to the idea of monarchy. Another suspicious precursor to Antony's bid for power was the territorial allotments of the Second Triumvirate in 43 BC, in which Antony received control over the eastern portions of Rome's empire.<sup>44</sup> All of these seemingly innocent moves later would aid Antony's opponents in accusing him of tyrannical behavior, which reached a whole new level once Antony had affiliated himself with the eastern Greek queen, Cleopatra.

Cicero's *Philippics*, all but the second having been delivered between 2 September 44 and 21 April 43 in an effort to alienate Antony to the senate and people, provide an extensive assemblage of monarchical accusations against him.<sup>45</sup> Cicero had modeled his speeches and their title after the orations delivered by Demosthenes in fourth-century Athens in the face of Philip II's threatened domination of Greece.<sup>46</sup> This conscious allusion to a tyrannical threat of an earlier time reveals that Cicero conceived of Antony as a new Macedonian-style dynast who aimed at overthrowing the entire Roman order to establish his own personal hegemony throughout the Mediterranean. As a result, Cicero explicitly equates Antony with an eastern ruler throughout the fourteen speeches. He calls Antony's domination in Rome cruel and arrogant (*crudelem superbamque dominationem*),<sup>47</sup> and claims he violently forced the passage of legislation which granted him greater power.<sup>48</sup> Even more, he supposedly intimidated the senate by employing a bodyguard to follow him around, an act which had been associated with tyrants since the reign of Peisistratus in sixth century Athens.<sup>49</sup> He brought weapons into the city in much greater number than either Sulla or Caesar had in order to disperse his opponents and rescind many of

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<sup>43</sup> For these debates, see Weinstock, *Divus Julius*, 331-40; Rawson, "Caesar's Heritage," 148-150.

<sup>44</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 30.4. This was the same allotment that had fallen to Pompey less than two decades beforehand, and had aided his opponents in casting him as an eastern monarch.

<sup>45</sup> D. R. Shackleton Bailey, ed. and trans., *Cicero: Philippics* (Chapel Hill 1986), xi.

<sup>46</sup> Cic. *Ad. Brut.* 2.3.4; apparently Brutus had initially suggested naming them *Philippics* as a joke, but Cicero decided that the title was fitting and used it anyway.

<sup>47</sup> *Phil.* 3.34; see also 3.29 (*taeterrimum crudelissimumque dominatum*).

<sup>48</sup> *Phil.* 5.10; 6.3; 7.15; 13.5.

<sup>49</sup> *Phil.* 2.6, 15, 19. For the tyranny of Peisistratus, see Hdt. 1.59; Dunkle, "Greek Tyrant," 164.

Caesar's *acta*, despite his claims to be the defender of them.<sup>50</sup> Cicero further implies that Antony's tyranny is worse than Caesar's was, and that his murder would bring fame and glory to whoever might muster the courage to commit such an act.<sup>51</sup>

Even more overt antagonism toward Antony's newfound power appears in the *Third Philippic*, wherein Cicero draws a direct comparison between him and the infamous Tarquinius Superbus:

*atque ille Tarquinius quem maiores nostri non tulerunt non crudelis, non impius, sed superbus est habitus et dictus, quod nos vitium in privatis saepe tulimus, id maiores nostri ne in rege quidem ferre potuerunt ... quid Tarquinius tale qualia innumerabilia et facit et fecit Antonius? senatum etiam reges habebant: nec tamen, ut Antonio senatum habente, in consilio regis versabantur barbari armati. servabant auspicia reges; quae hic consul augurque neglexit ... quis autem rex umquam fuit tam insignite impudens ut haberet omnia commoda, beneficia, iura regni venalia? quam hic immunitatem, quam civitatem, quod praemium non vel singulis hominibus vel civitatibus vel universis provinciis vendidit? nihil humile de Tarquinio, nihil sordidum accepimus, at vero huius domi inter quasilla pendebatur aurum, numerabatur pecunia ... supplicia vero in civis Romanos nulla Tarquini accepimus, at hic et Suessae iugulavit eos quos in custodiam dederat ... postremo Tarquinius pro populo Romano bellum gerebat tum cum est expulsus; Antonius contra populum Romanum exercitum adducebat tum cum a legionibus relictus.*<sup>52</sup>

But that Tarquinius, whom our ancestors did not endure, was not reckoned and called cruel or impius, but merely proud, a fault which we often have endured in private citizens, but which our ancestors were not able to endure even in a king... What sort of thing did Tarquinius do, of the sort which Antony both did and still does innumerable times? The kings also had a senate; nevertheless armed barbarians were not taking part in the counsel of the king as they do when Antony is presiding over the senate. The kings observed the auspices, which this consul and augur neglects... Moreover, what king ever was so extraordinarily shameless that he held all loans, benefits, and rights of the kingdom to be for sale? Is there any immunity, any citizenship, any reward which this one was not sold to individual men, towns, or entire provinces? We have heard nothing base or sordid concerning Tarquinius, but indeed the gold in Antony's house has been weighed in a little basket, and the money has been counted... Indeed we have heard of no capital punishments against Roman citizens under Tarquinius, but this one butchered those at Suessa whom he had given into custody... Finally Tarquinius was waging war on behalf of the Roman people when he was expelled; Antony was leading his army against the Roman people when he was abandoned by his legions.

By asserting that Antony was a greater threat to the state than even Tarquinius Superbus, the most hated king in Roman history, Cicero was creating Antony as a new degree of evil tyrant. Tarquinius had

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<sup>50</sup> *Phil.* 2.108-09.

<sup>51</sup> *Phil.* 2.117. This reference to the murder of aspiring tyrants brings to mind the murders of Sp. Cassius, Sp. Maelius, and M. Manlius Capitolinus mentioned only a few sections earlier in the speech (2.114).

<sup>52</sup> *Phil.* 3.9-11.

been proud and arrogant, but he had never directly threatened the Roman people; he was not a traitor. Antony on the other hand had been influenced by evil Hellenistic forces, including wealth and power, that made him lose sight of his Roman loyalties, and as a result he proved to be a much greater menace than any before him. Such was the picture that Cicero strove to present in his *Philippics*.

However, not all connections between Antony and Hellenistic monarchies were so explicit. At times, it seems that Antony's opposition either manufactured stories about him or manipulated certain of his actions in order to subtly emphasize his similarities to the Hellenistic kings. Most notably is the story in Plutarch's biographies of both Antony and Brutus, in which Antony's treatment of Brutus' dead body is strangely reminiscent of Alexander the Great's treatment of the murdered Darius.<sup>53</sup> The passage is not overtly depreciatory to Antony – he kindly drapes Brutus' body with his cloak and orders that he be given the proper funeral rites. However, by drawing subtle similarities between him and the great Macedonian conqueror, other more negative similarities between the two that are mentioned elsewhere, such as Antony's drunkenness and licentiousness, gain strength, and the analogue becomes more complete. Unfortunately for Antony, Roman perceptions of Alexander were complicated. On the one hand, they viewed him as a great military leader whose vast empire was enviable, and they often strove to surpass him in imperial might. However, Alexander was also the embodiment of Hellenistic culture as the Romans saw it – classical Greek customs polluted by Macedonian and eastern habits such as drunkenness, sexual license, and luxurious living – and many of the Hellenistic kingdoms despised by traditional Romans, and defeated by them in the second century BC, were the successors of Alexander. Thus while Alexander was an admirable figure in the Roman mindset, he also was a reminder of the dangers of eastern influences.<sup>54</sup> Further, the analogy between Antony and a Hellenistic ruler was

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<sup>53</sup> See Plut. *Ant.* 22; *Brut.* 53; compared to *Alex.* 43; This parallel was first suggested by W. W. Tarn, "Cleopatra and Antony," *CAH*<sup>1</sup> 10.68.

<sup>54</sup> Both Polybius (29.21) and Diodorus Siculus (31.10) made this connection between Alexander's conquest of Persia and the subsequent failure of the Macedonian empire. Negative Roman sentiment about Alexander can be

bolstered by his close association with Cleopatra, a queen who was both Greek and eastern. She was perhaps the epitome of this assimilation between Greece and the East, and Antony being her consort was naturally drawn into that same 'Hellenistic' sphere. Because of his extensive activities in the East, both in Anatolia and in Syria, and his close relationship with this eastern queen, Antony was implicitly cast as a Hellenistic monarch threatening to disrupt Roman power in the West.

### **Other Symbols of Greek Power**

Monarchy and tyranny were certainly the major focus of the Roman perception of Greek power, especially in the late Republic with Rome's battles against the Hellenistic monarchs. However, the political rhetoric in Rome also utilized other symbols of Greek power to denigrate opponents. That such charges were probably less common is reflected in the surviving political speeches, which make little mention of Greek power structures beyond those of monarchy and tyranny, and to a lesser extent democracy. The rarity of these charges, further, likely shows that the sentiments and prejudices contained within them were less common in Rome. If they were wide-held opinions, they would likely have survived in more of the ancient texts.

As it is, the best account of non-monarchical symbols of Greek power comes from Plutarch's *Life of Antony*. This biography describes Antony's activities during a winter spent in Athens. Beyond throwing a feast for the Athenians, a custom which was not foreign to Romans, Antony took on the role of their gymnasiarch.<sup>55</sup> This position of authority was originally connected to the athletic games during the classical period of Greek history, but in the Hellenistic period the gymnasiarch had become an elected government position in the local civic *gymnasia* scattered throughout the Greek East. He was

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seen in Cicero's (*Ad Att.* 13.28.3) unfavorable comparison of Julius Caesar to Alexander. For a more extensive discussion on Roman perceptions of Alexander the Great, see Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes*, 98-104.

<sup>55</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 33.4. S. C. R. Swain, "Cultural Interchange in Plutarch's *Antony*," *QUCC* 63 (1990), 156, rightly points out that Plutarch himself shows no contempt for Antony's behavior in Athens, yet the nature of the story most reasonably indicates that Plutarch's sources were more censorious.

entrusted in particular with overseeing the youth in the *gymnasium*, and often heavy financial responsibilities would accompany this office, particularly that of providing the necessary oil for the *gymnasium's* patrons. Therefore, the office-holder was usually a wealthy patrician whose service as gymnasiarch served a liturgical purpose.<sup>56</sup>

Plutarch tells that Antony was the gymnasiarch while in Athens and he fully played the part:

τὰ τῆς ἡγεμονίας παράσημα καταλιπὼν οἴκοι μετὰ τῶν γυμνασιαρχικῶν ῥάβδων ἐν ἱματίῳ καὶ φαικασίοις προΐει καὶ διαλαμβάνων τοὺς νεανίσκους ἐτραχήλιζεν.<sup>57</sup>

Leaving the emblems of his command at home, he went forth in a Greek robe and white shoes with the wands of a gymnasiarch, and laying hold of the youths, he overpowered them.

Beyond abandoning all insignia of his Roman command, the problems with Antony's behavior were two-fold. First, he had taken a position typically filled by Greek men, whom Romans viewed as inferiors. What is more, his temporary post was as a member of an institution, the *gymnasium*, which the Romans viewed as wholly Greek and not suitable for a respectable Roman to participate in. The *gymnasium* did not promote traditional Roman ideals, allowing boys and men to relax and banter instead of being more politically or militarily active. Further, the physical training in these gathering places failed to produce soldierly physiques, and homosexual love (dubbed *amor Graecorum* by some Romans) ran rampant throughout them.<sup>58</sup>

Antony's close ties to the Greeks, especially Athens, are further evident in Plutarch's account of the general's departure from Athens. Plutarch says that as he was leaving, Antony took a wreath from the sacred olive tree in the Erechtheion and filled a vessel with water from the Clepsydra, the sacred spring just below the gates of the Acropolis.<sup>59</sup> The olive crown evoked images of the ancient Olympic Games, as the victors there were crowned with wreathes of olive, but it also had strong ideological ties

<sup>56</sup> See Jones, *Greek City*, 221-26.

<sup>57</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 33.4.

<sup>58</sup> See Petrochilos, *Roman Attitudes*, 49, 177-82, who points out that by the Empire, the *gymnasia* were symbols of moral degeneracy (181 n. 1). For '*amor Graecorum*' see Chapter 2 above, pp. 22-40.

<sup>59</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 34.1

to power, triumph, and divinity.<sup>60</sup> As for the Clepsydra, little is known about its significance, but the spring was sacred to the Athenians.<sup>61</sup> By possessing water from such a significant Athenian spring, Antony was closely connecting himself with the city and its heritage.

It is important to note that this section of Plutarch makes no explicit mention of these activities in Athens ever playing a role in Roman accusations against Antony. The biographer simply presents the events as part of Antony's experience while in the east. Therefore, it would be a misuse of the evidence to assert that his popularity in Athens was ever manipulated by his opposition, but the likelihood of this having happened is certainly high. Antony was receiving foreign honors that distinguished him in the eyes of the Athenians and certainly if any of his opponents had ever learned of these honors, he would have recalled them in invective against Antony. Even more, Plutarch's sources for these detailed accounts of Antony's eastern activity are most certainly polemical against Antony, for as has already been shown, anti-Antony propaganda was prominent during the last years of the Republic and influenced most imperial writers.

### **Persian Power**

Another theme that appears in late Republican political rhetoric is the resurgence of Persian power. For example, Plutarch notes that Tubero the Stoic called Lucullus a 'Xerxes in a toga' (Ξέρξην αὐτὸν ἐκ τιβέεννου) after seeing the elaborate gardens that he had built at his Neapolitan villa.<sup>62</sup> This comparison between Lucullus and Xerxes appears elsewhere in the ancient record as well, but in the mouth of Pompey rather than Tubero.<sup>63</sup> Such an equation was well-founded, as the Persian kings had

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<sup>60</sup> Pind. *Ol.* 3.11-25; Paus. 5.11.1. This association was largely indebted to the crown worn by the statue of Zeus at Olympia, who embodied all of these concepts. And as mentioned above (p. 68 n. 34), the crown became closely associated with tyranny after the tyrants of Syracuse adopted it as part of their own insignia.

<sup>61</sup> See further discussion in J. M. Camp, *The Archaeology of Athens* (New Haven 2001), 70-71; A. W. Parsons, "Klepsydra and the Paved Court of the Pythion," *Hesperia* 12 (1943), 191-267.

<sup>62</sup> Plut. *Luc.* 39.3.

<sup>63</sup> See Vell. Pat. 2.33.4; Pliny *NH* 9.170.

been famous for their beautiful *παράδεισοι*, which Xenophon described, and which in their domesticated versions became very popular throughout the Mediterranean in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.<sup>64</sup> Lucullus' garden was specifically associated with the Persians and tyranny because of its combination of land and water. The reorganization of the boundaries between the sea and the land was especially tyrannical because it was artificial and viewed as a hubristic attempt to defy the laws of nature.<sup>65</sup> Further, the advanced technology required to attempt such a task was something that only the most powerful of men would be able to afford.

Persian characteristics also played a role in the propaganda against Antony at the end of the Republic. Plutarch alludes to the public scandal, incited by Octavian, when Antony named his children by Cleopatra Alexander, Ptolemy, and Cleopatra, granted his two sons vast kingdoms in lands technically belonging to the Romans, calling them Kings of Kings, and dressed all of the children in the Median and Macedonian style.<sup>66</sup> He also gave to the older two, Alexander and Cleopatra, the surnames Sun (*Ἥλιος*) and Moon (*Σελήνη*), respectively.<sup>67</sup> The identification with these celestial deities was part of an ancient Iranian royal tradition that proclaimed the king as a descendant of gods and had continued into the first century BC via the Pontic dynasty.<sup>68</sup> The king himself was not divine, but was perceived to be of divine makeup, and thus had a fiery nature. Antony cast himself as the successor of the Persians when he compared his own fortunes to those of the Persian kings.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.7; 1.4.10; *Oik.* 4.4-24. For more on the Persian paradises, see P. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*, trans. by P. T. Daniels (Winona Lake, IN 2002), 201-3; D. Stronach, "The Royal Garden at Pasargadae," *Archaeologia iranica et orientalis: miscellanea in honorem Louis vanden Berghe*, (Gent 1989), 475-502. For a very general overview of Roman gardens and their eastern predecessors, see G. Bazin, *Paradeisos: The Art of the Garden* (London 1990), 9-29, esp. 17-20.

<sup>65</sup> Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, 145-46. See also Sall. *Cat.* 13.1; Hor. *Od.* 3.1.33.

<sup>66</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 54.4-6.

<sup>67</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 36.3.

<sup>68</sup> For example, the Pontic dynasts adopted the Persian crescent-and-star symbol and included it on most of their coinage. This idea of the sacral kingship and its connections to the Sun and the Moon is discussed by G. Widengren, "The Sacral Kingship of Iran," in *Sacral Kingship* (Leiden 1959), 245-46, 250.

<sup>69</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 37.1.

The ancient writers further equate Antony to eastern and especially Persian dynasts in more subtle ways. According to Cicero, it was the custom of Persian and Syrian kings to have several wives and give them entire cities as a dowry.<sup>70</sup> Antony was infamous for his generous bequeathals of lands in both Asia Minor and the Near East to his Egyptian wife, Cleopatra.<sup>71</sup> While Plutarch makes no explicit connection between Antony's actions and the custom of Persian kings, it is certainly possible that this rumor about Antony was manufactured by the opposition in order to show him not only as a traitor to Rome, but as a reincarnation of a Persian dynast.

Discussion of these Persian characteristics attributed to Lucullus and Antony by their contemporaries reflects the Roman blending of both classical Greek and eastern customs, including Persian, following the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great. The Greeks had developed their own negative opinions of the Persians, but the two cultures were greatly conflated in the late-fourth and third centuries BC. The Romans, as a result, "adopted many of the attitudes and anti-Persian prejudices developed by the Greeks, but attributed them to other eastern peoples, closer to the Mediterranean, which played a larger role in their existence."<sup>72</sup> Comparisons between Roman generals and Persian dynasts, then, emphasized the eastern aspects of Hellenistic culture, but were not necessarily divorced from Hellenistic culture as a whole. Therefore, calling Lucullus or Antony Persians did not separate them from this trend of anti-Hellenistic invective, but reaffirmed their place within it.

### **Divinity**

Perhaps the most characteristically eastern royal custom was the relationship between the king and the divine. Persian tradition held that the king, though not himself divine, was the intermediary

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<sup>70</sup> Cic. *Verr.* 2.3.76

<sup>71</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 36.1-2. The two were married in 37 BC despite the fact that Antony was still married to Octavia; see Plut. *Comp. Dem. et Ant.* 4.1; Suet. *Aug.* 68.2. On the role this marriage played in Octavian's propaganda, see Charlesworth, "Some Fragments," 175.

<sup>72</sup> Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 380.

between the gods and men. He offered sacrifices and prayers on the behalf of the people and any failure of his was considered a direct result of divine dissatisfaction.<sup>73</sup> Other eastern civilizations, such as the Egyptians, viewed their rulers as human incarnations of the divine.<sup>74</sup> Roman orators and politicians were aware of these belief systems and indeed strove to find ways in which they might reveal their opponents as participants in these eastern cult beliefs.

As Caesar's popularity grew after Pharsalus, he was bestowed with previously unheard of honors that were 'greater than human dignity' (*ampliora etiam humano fastigio*).<sup>75</sup> His use of a chariot for transportation and his donning of an eastern-style tunic and diadem were all evocative of the Persian kingship that was so closely tied to the divine.<sup>76</sup> Weinstock goes further and suggests that Caesar's campaigns in the East compelled him to develop a Roman version of the ruler cult, especially to legitimize his position as king in the eyes of his potential Parthian enemies, plans that are perhaps reflected in Suetonius' statement that he erected statues of himself beside those of the gods and even was given a special priest.<sup>77</sup> This new ruler cult was not instated until the establishment of the principate under Caesar's adopted son, Octavian/Augustus, but Caesar himself set the precedent for these developments.

Antony followed in Caesar's footsteps in many ways, and his claims to divinity were no different, though more overt. Antony repeatedly cited his mythological genealogy that traced back to the great Hercules through his son, Anton.<sup>78</sup> What is more, Antony placed himself in the tradition of many

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<sup>73</sup> For an extensive discussion of the relationship between the Persian kings and the gods, see Briant, *Cyrus to Alexander*, Chapter 6, esp. 240-54.

<sup>74</sup> See, for example, D. Redford, *A History of Ancient Egypt: Egyptian Civilization in Context* (Dubuque 2006), 63-66, 72-74.

<sup>75</sup> Suet. *Div. Jul.* 76.1.

<sup>76</sup> These symbols had long before been introduced into Greece as symbols of power under the reign of Alexander and his successors. For further discussion, see Weinstock, *Divus Julius*, 333-36; Rossi, "Camp of Pompey," 253-54.

<sup>77</sup> Weinstock, *Divus Julius*, 413; Suet. *Div. Jul.* 76.1.

<sup>78</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 4.1-2; 36.4; 60.3. Many other towns and families in and around Rome similarly claimed ties with mythological heroes in order to legitimate their ancient foundations. For further discussion, see T. P. Wiseman, "Legendary Genealogies in Late Republican Rome," *G&R* 21 (1974), 153-64.

Hellenistic kings before him by proclaiming himself to be the ‘New Dionysus,’<sup>79</sup> and he thereupon surrounded himself with all of the insignia of the Bacchic cult:

εἰς γοῦν Ἔφεσον εἰσιόντος αὐτοῦ γυναῖκες μὲν εἰς Βάκχας, ἄνδρες δὲ καὶ παῖδες εἰς Σατύρους καὶ Πάνας ἠγοῦντο διεσκευασμένοι, κιττοῦ δὲ καὶ θύρσων καὶ ψαλτηρίων καὶ συρίγγων καὶ αὐλῶν ἢ πόλις ἦν πλέα, Διόνυσον αὐτὸν ἀνακαλουμένων χαριδότην καὶ μειλίχιον.<sup>80</sup>

At any rate, as he went into Ephesus women as Bacchantes and men and boys as Satyrs and Pans scattered about led the way, and the city was filled with ivy and thyrsos and harps and pipes and flutes, all invoking him as Dionysus the Giver of Joy and the Gracious.

To round out his identification with Dionysus, Antony’s consort, Cleopatra, was named the ‘New Isis.’<sup>81</sup>

The shock in Rome would have been huge since divinity and rulership were not connected in the Roman religious mindset, at least in the historical period. Even worse, Roman opinions of Dionysus were equivocal at best. Only a few decades before, Rome’s great Pontic foe, Mithridates VI Eupator, had been equated with the deity and called the ‘New Dionysus,’<sup>82</sup> and the god’s eastern roots and debauchorous habits also tainted Roman devotion to him. The cult of Dionysus had further left a sour taste in the mouth of Romans in the second century BC after the Bacchanalian Affair of 186, which resulted in a *senatus consultum* severely limiting the cult’s practices but not ridding the city of the cult

<sup>79</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 24.3-4; see also *Ant.* 26.3 (as Bacchus); 60.3; Vell. Pat. 2.82.4 (as Liber); Dio 48.39.2. Many other Hellenistic rulers before Antony, including Demetrius Poliorcetes and Antiochus VI were closely associated with Dionysus: see Scott, “Octavian’s Propaganda,” 133-34, 137.

<sup>80</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 24.3.

<sup>81</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 54.6; Dio 50.5.3. Isis, of course, was the mythological consort of Osiris, with whom Dionysus was identified.

<sup>82</sup> Mithridates was proclaimed the ‘New Dionysus’ by the Dionysiac Artists (Athen.5.213D), but the ties between the two are also seen in inscriptions and literature: see for example, Cic. *Pro Flacc.* 60; Athen. 5.213D; *Inscriptions de Délos* 1562; I. G. Kidd, *Posidonius* (Cambridge 1999), 2.872. A further connection between the two was found in the semi-mythical birth story of Mithridates which echoed that of Dionysus: Plut. *Quaes. conv.* 1.6.2; Just. 37.2.1-3; Dio Chrys II.294; Eur. *Bacc.* 1-3. For representations of Mithridates as Dionysus on Pontic coins, see M. J. Price, “Mithridates VI Eupator, Dionysus, and the Coinages of the Black Sea,” in *NC* 8 (1968), 1-12.

altogether.<sup>83</sup> Beyond the obvious emphasis on drunkenness and revelry, the mystery aspect of the rites was typical of eastern religions and viewed as highly suspicious by Roman authorities.<sup>84</sup>

Fortunately for Octavian, “Antony’s [self-] identification with the god of wine gave Octavian a chance to follow up the old attacks of Cicero,” namely that Antony was a drunken sot.<sup>85</sup> It also allowed him to manipulate traditional Roman religious values to his benefit, as is evident in his speech made before Actium:

τίς δ' οὐκ ἂν θρηνήσειε καὶ ἀκούων καὶ ὄρων...ἡμῶν μὲν ἢ τῶν νόμων ἢ τῶν θεῶν τῶν προγονικῶν μηδὲν προτιμῶντα, τὴν δ' ἄνθρωπον ἐκείνην καθάπερ τινὰ Ἴσιν ἢ Σελήνην προσκυνοῦντα, καὶ τοὺς τε παῖδας αὐτῆς Ἥλιον καὶ Σελήνην ὀνομάζοντα, καὶ τὸ τελευταῖον καὶ ἑαυτὸν Ὅσιριν καὶ Διόνυσον ἐπικεκληκότα, κακ' αὐτῶν, καθάπερ πάσης μὲν τῆς γῆς πάσης δὲ τῆς θαλάσσης κυριεύοντα, καὶ νήσους ὅλας καὶ τῶν ἡπείρων τινὰ κεχαρισμένον;<sup>86</sup>

Who would not weep when he both sees and hears Antony...[who] has not honored us or his ancestral laws or gods, and bows to that woman as if she were some Isis or Selene, and names her children Helios and Selene, and last of all also named himself Osiris and Dionysus, and after these things, as if he were lord over all the earth and sea, also gave away freely whole islands and some of some of his lands?

Not only had the formerly great general challenged contemporary Roman religious beliefs by proclaiming himself to be a deity, but even worse he claimed to be a Greek deity about whom opinions within Rome were highly complex. He was casting himself more as the successor of the Persian, Hellenistic, and Pontic kings who enjoyed an elevated divine status, than of the great Roman generals before him. Indeed, Julius Caesar had laid the groundwork for attaining divine status, but Antony had taken this ideology to the next level.

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<sup>83</sup> *CIL*<sup>2</sup> 1.581 = *ILLRP* 511.

<sup>84</sup> Various other aspects of the Dionysiac cult, beyond its mysterious rites, were more closely related to Anatolian than to Greek traditions: see I. Tassignon, ‘Les éléments anatoliens du mythe et de la personnalité de Dionysos,’ in *RHR* 218, no. 3 (2001), 307-37.

<sup>85</sup> Scott, “Octavian’s Propaganda,” 137. Rose, “Departure of Dionysus,” 27-30, argues that the departure of the deity from Antony in Plutarch *Ant.* 75.3-4, is an Augustan response to Antony’s claim to divinity. For Octavian, it was necessary to separate Antony from the deity, at least in the eyes of the East, in order to legitimize Antony’s murder without incurring the enmity of the eastern provincials for killing a god.

<sup>86</sup> Dio 50.25.3-4.

Interestingly, Scott has pointed out that Suetonius's *Life of Augustus* preserves Antonine propaganda that pressed this same point, but here with reference to Octavian.<sup>87</sup> Just as the adopted son of Caesar had criticized Antony for identifying as Dionysus, the latter accused Octavian of assuming the role of Apollo at one of his dinner parties.<sup>88</sup> However, this was not just any dinner party – it was modeled after the *lectisternium*, in which the images of six gods and six goddesses were placed on dinner couches and given a lavish banquet. Antony claimed that Octavian and his friends had dressed the parts of the gods rather than honoring their images, and therefore had taken on the identity of Apollo as his own. Antony brought the accusations to an end by calling Octavian 'Apollo Tortor' ('the Tormenter'), a pleasant parallel to Antony's nickname, 'Dionysus the Carnivorous and Savage' (ὄμηστις καὶ ἀγριώνιος).<sup>89</sup> Therefore we see the utility of accusing one of claiming divinity, with the assumption that conservative Romans would be shocked and scandalized by such blasphemy.

## Conclusions

While claims to divinity were extreme cases, many leading Romans displayed wealth, greed, and luxury enough to be likened to monarchs and tyrants. Not all accusations specified that these purported dynasts were Greek in nature, and in fact some accusations and associations were more evocative of Etruscan or Italian rulers rather than Greek or eastern. Yet as shown above, the very nature of anti-monarchical sentiment was rooted in the Roman reaction to the Hellenistic monarchs of especially the second century BC. The memory of the Roman monarchy may have aided in the distrust of exceedingly powerful men, but it was the kings such as Perseus and Antiochus who had really established the Roman enmity toward monarchy. Because of this suspicion of men aiming at *regnum*, especially among the elites, accusations of tyranny or monarchy were easily manufactured against big-name generals. Other positions of power that were associated with Greece, such as the *gymnasiarch*, provided a similar effect

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<sup>87</sup> Scott, "Octavian's Propaganda," 140-41.

<sup>88</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 70.

<sup>89</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 29.4.

when utilized in invective. These symbols of Greek power effected unease among portions of the Roman population, as they were viewed as a threat to the stability of Rome, as well as a threat to the happiness and well-being of the citizens. Models of Hellenistic monarchs with which Romans were most familiar were negative, emphasizing their greed and cruelty. Further, Rome had defeated every monarch that she had ever come up against, and as a result the Romans saw monarchies as weak and easily overthrown.

Further ammunition against political opponents was found in Persian characteristics. The characteristics often targeted are related to those that the Greeks themselves had denounced in the fifth century, but they had since come to be associated with Greek/Hellenistic culture in the eyes of the Romans, for the Persians had a great influence on this culture that developed after Alexander's conquests over them, as he and his successors greatly incorporated various aspects of Persian life and ideology into their own Macedonian and Greek lifestyles. As a result, accusations relating to Persia were not separate from Hellenistic culture; they simply emphasized the most offensive aspects of it.

Claims to divine status provided an even more offensive charge, drawing closely on the traditions of those eastern powers that had supposedly corrupted Greece since the fourth century. Roman religious beliefs did not permit men to be assimilated to gods, and while not too long after the end of the Republic emperors began to be deified, never did they receive that honor in Rome until after their deaths. The idea of a living person being a god was ridiculous to the Romans. As a result, those who dared to equate themselves to a semi-divine or wholly divine monarch risked to threaten various groups within Rome. In the case of Antony, he exacerbated the severity of his claims to godhead by assimilating himself with a deity particularly contentious in the Roman public consciousness. Dionysus was a Greek god, but his mythology and cult had been heavily influenced by the traditions of lands further east, and his cult had caused severe discord within Rome a little over a century beforehand.

Kingly and divine aspirations therefore were the ultimate form Greek depravity in the Roman mindset, and for those Romans most successful and influential in the last decades of the Republic, accusations along these lines were readily made. The more powerful one became, the greater threat to the state, and especially the senate. Naturally, such a man thereupon fell subject to accusations of a greater severity, with the result that only the most threatening Romans were attacked with these lofty charges. Interestingly, many of those who were subjected to this category of invective were in the end overthrown or killed. Of the instances discussed here, only Lucullus avoided any major opposition. This discontinuity is likely due to the nature of Lucullus' lifestyle as opposed to the more menacing goals of men such as Caesar and Antony. Lucullus was acting kingly in many ways, but his most offensive habits did not arise until after he had retired from public life. Charges of dictatorial aims appeared toward the end of his Asian campaigns, but after he lost the command to Pompey he withdrew rather than persevering. While he continued living the kingly life, he did so only in terms of kingly pleasures – he no longer strove for continuous domination over the army.

In a similar vein, Gaius Verres had been accused of acting like a Greek tyrant during his governorship in Sicily, as can be seen in Cicero's speeches against him.<sup>90</sup> Cicero calls Verres the King of the Sicilians (*rex Sicilorum*), and accuses him of adopting the customs of the Persian and Syrian kings. However, once again Verres was not a threat to the entire state. His ambition was on a smaller scale than that of men like Caesar and Pompey. Although his treatment of the provincials was deplorable, he was never seen as a usurper of the general Roman order, and therefore the charges against him did not have the dire consequences for him that they would for others.

Pompey, Caesar and Antony, on the other hand, maintained their dictatorial behavior and repeatedly pushed the envelope beyond kingly aspirations to divine ones. Because they persisted in these indiscretions, the charges against them by their opponents became more and more severe. That

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<sup>90</sup> See for example, *Verr.* 2.3.71, 76-77, and esp. 2.3.31 (...*Verrem alterum dominum illorum ac tyrannum*).

the charges of *regnum* and divine aspirations proved effective is evidenced in the subsequent career of Caesar's adopted son, and Antony's greatest foe, Octavian. The young man rejected many of the honors that Caesar and Antony had welcomed, and even faulted Alexander the Great for facilitating the corruption of great cities such as Alexandria.<sup>91</sup> After eliminating his opposition, Octavian separated himself from his more tyrannical deeds of the Triumviral Period and recreated himself as the beneficent leader. He rejected any honors that could have revealed him as another aspiring monarch and cast himself and the savior of the Republic.<sup>92</sup> The overwhelming success of Octavian's career shows how beneficial it was to avoid any behavior that could be interpreted as anything other than republican.

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<sup>91</sup> See for example Plut. *Ant.* 80.1.

<sup>92</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 28.

## Conclusion

Looking back at the themes covered in the preceding chapters, it is apparent that accusations of philhellenism and Greek-style living were common in the political rhetoric of the late Roman Republic. The composite representation of the 'Greek' embodied many of the most deplorable traits in the Roman conception. Greece was plagued with passive, indulgent people who devoted themselves to trivial activities instead of striving to strengthen the state, and Romans who exhibited these same characteristics could be cast by their enemies as un-Roman and a threat to Roman hegemony. 'Greekness' was a predecessor to downfall. The presentation of oneself as a true-blooded Roman was an assurance for political survival, and therefore accusations to the contrary were widely employed by the opposition. This sentiment persisted well into the early years of the Empire, in which the moralist writings of Seneca, Pliny and others continued to denounce the evils of Hellenistic culture, and was especially evident during the reign of Nero, who was endlessly criticized by the elites for his devotion to all things Greek – sexual proclivities, music and theater, luxurious living – though only after his death. In the eyes of his contemporaries and successors, this devotion to the Greek life was both the cause of Nero's monstrous and tyrannical reign and a reflection of his degeneracy.<sup>1</sup>

The rhetoric of philhellenism was, however, contradictory in that many who accused their opponents of acting Greek were themselves accused of philhellenism in some way. They lived in a Greek fashion even while declaiming the Greek lives of others. To a degree this rhetoric is purely for oratorical effect, to show the speaker's skill in traditional invective and also to cast his opponent in a generally negative light. Because of this, Edwards has stated that we should not assume that the audience hearing these charges believed the literal truth of these claims, but rather viewed them as a representation of the opponent's general character.<sup>2</sup> While this may be the case, it in no way means

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<sup>1</sup> See Champlin, *Nero*, esp. 54-61, for discussions on Nero's love of these various aspects of Greek culture.

<sup>2</sup> Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, 10.

that such charges were any less of a threat to the audience, for if it was not thought that they would be effective, they would never have been made. The frequency of accusations appealing to miso-hellenic sentiment, however, proves that they were influential.

While the use of philhellenism as a tool of invective informs us of Roman perceptions and prejudices regarding the Greeks, it also says something about the specific groups amongst whom such accusations were most effective. Many of the implications of 'Greekness' threatened the elite senatorial class more than the general population. For example, excessive wealth and luxury could increase an individual's social standing regardless of his family history, and this fact frightened many of the long-established elite families whose hereditary statuses were in jeopardy. Private wealth was the most offensive type of wealth because not only did the upper classes resent the threat it posed to themselves, but also the lower classes resented that the wealth was not paying for their own pleasures in the guise of public games, buildings, or feasts. Works of euergetism, on the other hand, allowed wealthy Romans to garner popular support and avoid the severe censure from all sides that they might otherwise be forced to endure, though their senatorial peers may still have disapproved. However, even in the case of private luxury the masses were not always as offended as their elite counterparts, as can be seen in Cicero's *De officiis*:

*Cn. Octavio, qui primus ex illa familia consul factus est, honori fuisse accepimus, quod praeclaram aedificasset in Palatio et plenam dignitatis domum; quae cum vulgo viseretur, suffragata domino, novo homini, ad consulatum putabatur.*<sup>3</sup>

We are told that Cn. Octavius, who was the first from his family to be made consul, was held in honor because he built a home on the Palatine that was beautiful and full of merit. When it was seen by the masses, it was thought to have gained votes for its master, a new man, in his run for the consulship.

Cicero implies here that Octavius' newly built home, though large and impressive, in no way offended the general populace because it was blatant it lacked ostentatious adornment, and in fact may have

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<sup>3</sup> *De off.* 1.138.

aided its owner in attaining the consulship.<sup>4</sup> The focus of these accusations toward the elite can also be seen in Caesar's *Bellum Civile*, where the repeated allusions to Persian and Greek rule were often subtle, appealing to the scholarly intellects of the elite rather than the popular knowledge of the masses. Similarly, the declamations against leisure and public gatherings reveal unease amongst the elite regarding popular politics and democracy.

While the elite may have felt more threatened by Hellenistic living than the general populace, the legions were probably the least persuaded by these charges. Troops benefitted greatly from the campaigns that Rome undertook in the East, for they received portions of the plunder. The repeated claims that eastern campaigns softened Roman soldiers were proof of this. However, like the general populace the army did not approve of private wealth from which they reaped no benefits. Plutarch indicates that Clodius, in his attempts to rally Lucullus' troops against him, contrasted their toilsome and profitless efforts against the Pontic forces with the troops of Pompey, who he claimed enjoyed the riches of their campaigns and the luxury of leisure after completing their wars in Spain.<sup>5</sup> He continues by claiming that while the soldiers endured these hardships, Lucullus himself was piling wagons and camels high with bejeweled vessels. This shows that the troops of these prominent generals cared little about their commanders' eastern lifestyles so long as they were able to enjoy the pleasures along side of them.

Therefore it is apparent that the class most threatened by the pursuit of the Greek lifestyle in Rome was the elite. The effeminate behaviors associated with Greek passivity robbed a man of the *virtus* that was necessary for public service, and the luxurious lifestyles of the Greeks provided senators advantages over their peers in the competition for social prestige. Further, accusations of tyranny,

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<sup>4</sup> In a similar way, Augustus' house (formerly that of Hortensius) was ostentatious in its lack of ostentation. Suetonius says that it was neither remarkable for size or elegance (*Aug.* 72-73), though it must have been much larger than the average Roman house.

<sup>5</sup> *Luc.* 34.2-4.

monarchy, or even democracy reveal that the oligarchic upper classes feared the subversion of their monopoly over the Roman political process.

In the last few decades of the Republic, these accusations played a major role in denigrating political opponents to fellow Romans, but even earlier Romans such as the Gracchi continued to be charged for their philhellenic behaviors. The persistence of these charges even after their deaths shows how much first-century Romans felt threatened by the examples set by their predecessors. By continuing to cast the deeds of Ti. Gracchus and others as foreign and un-Roman, first-century politicians were able to excise his Greek behaviors from their ancestral customs (*mos maiorum*) and discourage their contemporaries from following in his philhellenic footsteps. This trend continued into the empire with the moralist writings of Seneca and Pliny, who declaimed the Greek-inspired lifestyles of their late-republican predecessors.

This survey of the various charges levied against political opponents in the late Republic highlights one very important point – they are all interconnected. Men subjected to polemical speech focusing on their effeminacy were also likely to be accused of luxury or tyranny. In other words, someone portrayed as a philhellene in one sense was probably going to be accused of other instances of philhellenism as well. It was all a matter of degree – those whose Greek-inspired behaviors were extreme and various were cast as a threat to society. Edwards has claimed that it is significantly problematic to try to designate certain of these practices as ‘foreign,’<sup>6</sup> but the close associations between luxury, tyranny, and other aspects of Greek life, at least in invective, is striking. The biggest threats to the Roman order were those who were most entrenched in the Greek life. As a result, charges of philhellenism were most effective against men who spent significant time in the East and were shown to participate in as many deplorable Greek customs as possible. Even for men like Sulla and Antony who were dissolute in their early lives, the force of the accusations made against them

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<sup>6</sup> Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, 176.

depended on their campaigns in the East. Even Caesar avoided charges of homosexual proclivities up until when he spent extensive time in Bithynia. Lucullus likewise seems to have been a morally respectable man until his protracted wars in Asia Minor eventually wore away at his resolve and he gave in to the temptations of the East. Antony, of course, is the most prominent victim of miso-hellenic rhetoric to the degree that the historical accounts are heavily influenced by the propaganda levied against him by his opponents. He is often portrayed as one who openly proclaimed his eastern loyalties and who sought to be the successor of the Hellenistic kings. The threat of these aspirations was supplemented by his dissolute Greek lifestyle, consisting of squandering revelries and deplorable proclivities, resulting in an overall representation of the whole of Greek culture threatening the stability of Rome.

This study of Roman political invective and the role that miso-hellenism played in it has shown that, despite the innumerable ways that Greek culture influenced the Romans, the rhetoric of Roman politics emphasized the supposed degenerate nature of Greek life. As is the case with most prejudices, Roman perceptions of the Greeks as weak, effeminate, deceitful people who preferred lazy indulgence to practical industry were not a reflection of reality. Indeed, the Greeks were not the only people subjected to Roman hostility and prejudice. However, the prominence of so-called philhellenic lifestyles in deprecatory political speeches reveals that the speakers expected their audience to understand this characterization of the Greeks and be horrified by it.

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