Arethusa 31.3 (1998) 285-311

Quasi Homo: Distortion and Contortion in Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*

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The subject of our paper is one particular grotesque body--that of the emperor Claudius as depicted in Seneca's Apocolocyntosis. In this short prose satire on the (attempted) deification of Claudius, written in 54 c.e. shortly after Nero's accession, Seneca presents Claudius as a distorted and contorted specimen--both a monstrous beast and a ridiculous buffoon. Of course, this picture of Claudius contributes to the satirical bite in an obviously iconoclastic way. But we believe that the ethical and political significance of Claudius' barely-human body has not been fully appreciated. By situating the Apocolocyntosis in its contemporary ethical and political context, we aim to show that Claudius' vile body, his monstrous appearance and his lack of control over his body, have a broader ideological function.

I. Claudius the Beast

Hercules Meets a Monster

One of the most memorable moments in Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* is the narrative of Hercules' reaction to the sight of Claudius, newly arrived among the gods after his death (5.1-3).

> in caelo quae acta sint audite: fides penes auctorem erit. nuntiatur Ioui uenisse quendam bonae staturae, bene canum; nescio quid illum minari, assidue enim caput **[End Page 285]** mouere; pedem dextrum trahere. quaesisse se cuius nationis esset: respondisse nescio quid perturbato sono et uoce confusa; non intellegere se linguam eius: nec Graecum esse nec Romanum nec ullius gentis notae. tum Iuppiter Herculem, qui totum orbem terrarum pererrauerat et nosse uidebatur omnes nationes, iubet ire et explorare quorum hominum esset. tum Hercules primo aspectu sane perturbatus est, ut qui etiam non omnia monstra timuerit. ut uidit noui generis faciem, insolitum incessum, uocem nullius terrestris animalis sed qualis esse marinis beluis solet, raucam et implicatam, putauit sibi tertium decimum laborem uenisse. diligentius intuenti uisus est quasi homo.
>
> Here is what happened in heaven: my informant will be responsible for the reliability of the account. An announcement was made to Jupiter that there was a visitor of a respectable size and with very white hair. He was making some sort of threat as he kept shaking his head; he was also dragging his right foot. When asked his nationality, he had made some answer with a confused noise and in indistinct tones. It was impossible to understand his language: he was neither Greek nor Roman, nor of any known race.
>
> Jupiter then instructed Hercules, who had travelled the whole world over and seemed familiar with every nationality, to go and find out his nationality. Hercules was badly shaken by the first sight of him--he hadn't been scared by all possible monsters yet. Seeing the strange sort of appearance and the weird walk and hearing the hoarse and incomprehensible voice that belonged to no land creature, but seemed more appropriate to a sea-monster, he thought his thirteenth labour had arrived. On a closer inspection, it appeared to be something like a man. [1] **[End Page 286]**

Hercules' first reaction on seeing the monstrous Claudius is that his thirteenth labour has arrived. That

is, Hercules the monster-slayer is here presented in comic guise as afraid at the sight of another monster. Claudius is not immediately recognised as human. This is not the only place where Seneca describes Claudius' misshapen appearance in the *Apocolocyntosis*. At 1.2, reference is made to his limp through quotation of Virgil *Aeneid* 2.724, *non passibus aequis* ("with unequal steps"), and, at 6.2, comes a reminder of his "shaking hand" (*illo gestu solutae manus*). At 11.3, Augustus, in his speech opposing Claudius' deification, points in exasperation at *corpus eius dis iratis natum* ("his body, born when the gods were in a rage") and suggests that the other gods would bring their status into disrepute by agreeing to the deification of such a monstrosity. Twice doubt is cast upon the very nature of Claudius' existence: at 3.1-2, *cum anima luctatur* ("he has been struggling with the breath of life"), *nemo enim umquam illum natum putauit* ("nobody ever thought that he existed") and at 4.2, *animam ebulliit et ex eo desiit uiuere uideri* ("he did indeed gurgle his life out and from then on ceased to have even the appearance of existence"). [2]

It is upon the physical depiction of Claudius that we wish first to focus, not in the medical sense of attempting to ascertain the cause and nature of his infirmities, variously diagnosed as poliomyelitis and as cerebral palsy, [3] but precisely on his portrayal as a distorted monster. Claudius' is a veritable vile body: the focus and locus of the satire. Seneca's preoccupation with Claudius' physical deformities has widely been regarded as trivial ridicule, essentially different from the satire elsewhere in the work of the emperor's serious political faults, such as his abuse of justice, his excessive grants of Roman citizenship, and his executions of the eminent. [4] We aim to show here **[End Page 287]** that Claudius' physical appearance has a powerful ethical and political significance, specifically by bringing to bear evidence afforded by other works of Seneca, *De Ira* and *De Clementia*, evidence which reflects both long-established and contemporary attitudes. This discussion will offer a new, integrated view of the attack on Claudius in the *Apocolocyntosis* and will in turn shed light upon *De Clementia*. To do so we shall focus upon the "monstrosity" of Claudius' appearance, by which we mean the ways in which he is rendered sub- or non-human in this text. The concept of "monstrosity" covers a considerable range of physical, moral, and, by extension, political ideas in Roman thought, as will become clear, with a central notion of something unnatural, deformed, or prodigious which readily shades into the realm of the barbaric and the bestial.

The Deformations of Anger

First, Seneca's *De Ira*. Seneca twice devotes attention to the appearance of the angry man, early in *De Ira* 1 and again early in Book 3 in a very similar passage (1.1.4-5):

> flagrant ac micant oculi, multus ore toto rubor exaestuante ab imis praecordiis sanguine, labra quatiuntur, dentes comprimuntur, horrent ac surriguntur capilli, spiritus coactus ac stridens, articulorum se ipsos torquentium sonus, gemitus mugitusque et parum explanatis uocibus sermo praeruptus et conplosae saepius manus et pulsata humus pedibus et totum concitum corpus "magnasque irae minas agens," foeda uisu et horrenda facies deprauantium se atque intumescentium--nescias utrum magis detestabile uitium sit an deforme.
>
> His eyes blaze and glitter, his whole face is scarlet with the blood that surges from the lowest depths of the heart, his lips quiver, his teeth are clenched, his hair bristles and stands on end, his breathing is forced and harsh, his joints crack from writhing, he groans and moans, bursts out into speech with scarcely intelligible words, pounds his hands together continually and stamps the ground with his feet. His whole body is excited and "performs great angry threats"; it is an ugly and horrible picture of distorted and **[End Page 288]** swollen frenzy--you wouldn't know whether to describe this fault as more abominable or more ugly. [5]

And (3.4.1-3):

> nulli certe adfectui peior est uultus . . . anhelitus crebros tractosque altius gemitus, instabile corpus, incerta uerba subitis exclamationibus, trementia labra interdumque compressa et dirum quiddam exsibilantia. ferarum . . . minus taetra facies est . . . quam hominis ira flagrantis.

> There is surely no other passion whose look is worse . . . the rapid breathing and deep-drawn sighs, the unsteady body, the broken speech and sudden outcries, the lips now trembling, now tight and hissing out a curse. Wild beasts . . . are less hideous in appearance . . . than a person inflamed by anger.

These descriptions, which seem to derive from Philodemus' [6] present the archetypal angry man. There are two essential points. First, the angry man is portrayed as a monster. Seneca is explicit about this at *De Ira* 3.3.2: *necessarium est itaque foeditatem eius* [sc. *irae*] *ac feritatem coarguere et ante oculos ponere quantum monstri sit homo in hominem furens,* "so the first need is to prove how disgusting and fierce [anger] is and to depict how monstrous it is when one person is angry at another person." Second, the angry man is said to be "devoid of self-control," *impotens sui*. [7] In both respects, Claudius matches the picture of angry man. The emphasis on the monstrousness of anger matches the sight of Claudius in the *Apocolocyntosis*, particularly when focalised through the eyes of the monster-slaying Hercules. And the lack of self-control shown by the angry man coheres closely with the description of Claudius in the **[End Page 289]** *Apocolocyntosis* in which he so clearly manifests a lack of self-control over his own body, for example, in his unintelligibility (5.2: *perturbato sono et uoce confusa*, "with a confused noise and in indistinct tones") and his shaking hand (6.2: *illo gestu solutae manus*, "that gesture of his shaking hand"). Furthermore, this lack of self-control extends from his body into the political arena. The political acts for which Seneca attacks Claudius are chiefly cases of *saeuitia* and *crudelitas*, [8] which, given the tendency of the angry man to be portrayed as savage (*saeuus*) and cruel (*crudelis*), [9] may legitimately be regarded as manifestations of *ira* and of his lack of the self-control which was expected of the good ruler (a point to which we shall return). It is apparent that Seneca's portrayal of Claudius is informed by the archetype of the angry man in at least one important strand of contemporary ethical thought. [10] His physical misshapenness and his lack of self-control are external indications of a character disturbed and deformed by the passions. [11] He is monstrous, inside and out.

Before leaving *De Ira*, it is important to note that Seneca states that, of all the passions, anger is the most visible: *ira se profert et in faciem exit, quantoque maior, hoc efferuescit manifestius*, "anger shows itself openly and appears in the face, and the greater it is, the more visibly it boils over" (1.1.5). This seems to participate in the traditional idea that a person's character was the same externally and internally, an idea which helps to account for the denotation of aristocrats in Greek society as kaloÐ kégayo¤ (literally, "beautiful and good"). The opposite idea is epitomised by Thersites in *Iliad* 2.212-20: **[End Page 290]**

> . . . one man, Thersites of the endless speech, still scolded,
> who knew within his head many words, but disorderly;
> vain, and without decency, to quarrel with the princes
> with any word he thought might be amusing to the Argives.
> This was the ugliest man who came beneath Ilion. He was
> bandy-legged and went lame of one foot, with shoulders
> stooped and drawn together over his chest, and above this
> his skull went up to a point with the wool grown sparsely upon it.
> Beyond all others Achilles hated him, and Odysseus. [12]

The man who is ugly outside is therefore ugly inside and *vice versa*. And this central tenet of ancient ethical thought is also central to ancient political thought, as we shall now demonstrate, both in positive cases, such as Seneca's Nero, and in negative cases, such as Homer's Thersites and Seneca's Claudius. [13]

The Politics of Monstrosity

Seneca's portrayal of Claudius in the *Apocolocyntosis* as a distorted and sub-human beast or unnatural monster in terms congruent with the picture of the archetypal angry man of *De Ira* is further illuminated by *De Clementia*, the essay written shortly after the *Apocolocyntosis*, a panegyric couched as advice to the young emperor Nero on how to rule. [14] **[End Page 291]** The virtue advocated in this work, *clementia*, is a manifestation of self-control which is particularly suited to the ruler. *Clementia*, as Seneca tells us, is essentially the exercise of self-restraint in the punishment of opponents in a situation

where the ruler has absolute power and could exact the ultimate revenge if he chose: *clementia est temperantia animi in potestate ulciscendi uel lenitas superioris aduersus inferiorem in constituendis poenis*, "Clemency means restraining the mind from vengeance when it has the power to take it, or the leniency of a superior towards an inferior in fixing punishment" (2.3.1). [15] The underlying principle here is that a man cannot rule others if he cannot rule himself and that the ideal ruler therefore possesses supreme self-control. Hence the virtues *temperantia*, *moderatio, continentia,* and *clementia* recur frequently in imperial iconography and can be traced back through Hellenistic kingship literature to Plato's commendation of svfrosÊnh. [16]

Early in *De Clementia*, Seneca describes the good ruler thus (1.3.3):

> illius demum magnitudo stabilis fundataque est quem omnes tam supra se esse quam pro se sciunt, cuius curam excubare pro salute singulorum atque uniuersorum cottidie experiuntur, quo procedente non, tamquam malum aliquod aut noxium animal e cubili prosilierit, diffugiunt, sed tamquam ad clarum ac beneficum sidus certatim aduolant.
>
> Firm and well-grounded greatness belongs only to the man whom all men know to be as much their friend as he is their superior; whose concern they daily find to be vigilant for the safety of each and every one of them; upon whose approach they do not flee as if some evil or deadly beast had leaped from his lair, but rush eagerly forward as toward a bright and beneficent star. **[End Page 292]**

The negative imagery here assimilates the bad ruler to a beast or monster from whom everyone flees. [17] The theme of the bad ruler's sub-humanity recurs later in *De Clementia* where Seneca likens the cruel ruler to a beast (1.25.1):

> crudelitas minime humanum malum est indignumque tam miti animo; ferina ista rabies est sanguine gaudere ac uulneribus et abiecto homine in siluestre animal transire. quid enim interest, oro te, Alexander, leoni Lysimachum obicias an ipse laceres dentibus tuis? tuum illud os est, tua illa feritas.
>
> Cruelty is an evil thing befitting least of all a man and is unworthy of his spirit that is so kindly; for one to take delight in blood and wounds and, throwing off the man, to change into a creature of the woods, is the madness of a wild beast. For what difference does it make, I ask you, Alexander, whether you throw Lysimachus to a lion or yourself tear him to pieces with your teeth? That lion's maw is yours and its savagery yours.

This imagery is one of many elements in Seneca's panoply of persuasion designed to reinforce his theme that the young emperor Nero should maintain his *clementia* and eschew its opposites, namely *crudelitas* and *saeuitia*. But when brought alongside Seneca's portrayal of Claudius in the *Apocolocyntosis*, this imagery suggests that the ridicule of Claudius' misshapen and monstrous appearance has a political significance. The point is that Claudius' deformity *in itself* indicates a bad ruler and a savage and unpredictable regime.

Vile Bodies and Beautiful Bodies

The *Apocolocyntosis* and *De Clementia* differ in emphasis and function, but are mutually illuminating when read together because they **[End Page 293]** reflect--and in turn shape--the same ideology since they were produced within the same context, place, and time, as Eleanor Leach has observed. [18] Together they manifest the view that there is a significant relationship between the ruler's appearance and the character of his regime. In both works, the bad ruler is portrayed in sub-human, bestial terms. The converse also applies. The good ruler is depicted as handsome and superhuman. Thus in the *Apocolocyntosis*, Seneca pauses to portray Nero as a beautiful youth resembling Apollo whose reign will be a reign of prosperity and justice (4.1): [19]

> Phoebus ait, "uincat mortalis tempora uitae
> ille mihi similis uultu similisque decore
> nec cantu nec uoce minor. Felicia lassis

saecula praestabit legumque silentia rumpet.
Qualis discutiens fugientia Lucifer astra
aut qualis surgit redeuntibus Hesperus astris,
qualis, cum primum tenebris Aurora solutis
induxit rubicunda diem, Sol aspicit orbem
lucidus et primos a carcere concitat axes:
talis Caesar adest, talem iam Roma Neronem
aspiciet. Flagrat nitidus fulgore remisso
uultus et adfuso ceruix formosa capillo."

Says Apollo, "Let him surpass a mortal span,
Image of me in looks and beauty as well,
In song and voice no less. To a weary folk
He'll bring glad times, to muted law a tongue.
Like the Morning Star, setting the stars to flight,
Like the Evening Star, rising with the stars' return,
As the shining Sun, whenso the ruddy dawn,
The shades of night dispersed, brings back the day,
Looks on the world and starts his chariot off:
So Caesar comes, so Nero will appear to Rome,
His bright face fired with gentle radiance,
His neck all beauty under his flowing hair." **[End Page 294]**

In *De Clementia,* the good ruler is similarly portrayed as beautiful, for example, like a star or the sun or the beautiful king bee. [20] Such descriptions are not, of course, confined to Seneca. Compare a piece of poetry from a closely contemporary context, Calpurnius Siculus' fourth *Eclogue*, the centre-piece of a book which adopts from Virgil the allegorical dimension of pastoral poetry. [21] Here the young herdsman-cum-singer, who hopes to win favour from the emperor Nero, describes him like this (4.84-86):

at mihi, qui nostras praesenti numine terras
perpetuamque regit iuuenili robore pacem,
laetus et augusto felix arrideat ore.

But on me may he who with present power
and young strength rules our lands and everlasting peace
smile a glad beneficent smile with august face.

Such depictions of the good ruler as beautiful and, in particular, the assimilation of the good ruler to deity participate in a central feature in Greco-Roman religious thought. This is an ideology which identifies its gods with physical perfection and which has profound reservations about the place on Olympus of Hephaistos/Vulcan, a god so physically deformed by his lameness that he is a ready candidate for being thrown out of heaven (Homer *Iliad* 1.586-94 and 18.395-97). [22] It seems highly likely that such attitudes to beauty and the divine underlie the celebration of the Apollo-like Nero and the scandal roused by Claudius' attempt to gate-crash Heaven. Moreover, it seems more than coincidental that Claudius, like Thersites, is deformed by lameness in particular, which creates a suggestive parallel with the case of Vulcan. [23] **[End Page 295]**

It seems evident that the *Apocolocyntosis* and *De Clementia*, although they differ in emphasis and perspective, belong to the wider pattern of discourse prevalent around the time of Nero's accession and reveal the same ideology according to which there is a significant relationship between the ruler's appearance and the character of his regime. The bad, weak, old, and ugly Claudius with his bad, weak, and ugly regime has been replaced by the beautiful, good, and young Nero who will preside over a golden age. [24] Claudius' vile body is succeeded by Nero's beautiful body.

Accordingly, it seems to us that the commentators and critics who neglect or dismiss Seneca's physical attack on Claudius in the *Apocolocyntosis* on the grounds that it is personal or trivial satire miss the point. [25] Claudius' vile body, his monstrous appearance and lack of control over his body, have a broader ideological function: this is how Seneca indicates that Claudius is ethically flawed and one of

the ways in which he assimilates him to the stereotypical bad ruler in ancient political thought. [26] Moreover, this view of the coherence of Seneca's satirical attack on Claudius in the *Apocolocyntosis* in turn illuminates *De Clementia*. It is notable that there is no explicit reference to Claudius in this work. Nor does there have to be, because he has just died and is the obvious, implicit, counterpoint to Nero. Claudius, then, is present in Seneca's essay not literally, but on the metaphorical plane: Nero is urged not to sink into the sub-human bestiality of the bad ruler exemplified by his predecessor, but to maintain his own (alleged) superhuman and beneficent conduct. That, of course, is why Nero is invited in the very opening sentence of the work to look at himself in the mirror provided by Seneca's words in this treatise (*De Clementia* 1.1.1): *scribere de clementia, Nero Caesar, institui, ut quodam modo speculi uice fungerer et te tibi ostenderem peruenturum ad uoluptatem maximam omnium*, "I have undertaken, Nero Caesar, to write on the subject of clemency, to serve in a way the purpose of a mirror and so reveal you to **[End Page 296]** yourself as one destined to attain the greatest of all pleasures." His beautiful appearance is both a manifestation and a guarantee of his perfect character as an ideal ruler. In *De Clementia,* Nero is to see himself as a good ruler: this will show in his appearance, just as Claudius' badness showed in his whole body.

II. Claudius the Clown

In the first part of this paper, we have demonstrated the broader ethical and political function of the attack upon Claudius' monstrous appearance in the *Apocolocyntosis*, pointing to the philosophical rationale underlying this apparently standard personal satire. We now turn to other symbolic dimensions to Claudius' physical deformity, the existence of which has also been marginalised, perhaps because scholars are nervous about stating the obvious. In addition to the physical manifestation of *ira* that strengthens both the force of the satire and the ideological message of the *Apocolocyntosis,* the attention paid to the outward form of the defunct emperor should remind the reader of attitudes towards deformity in the ancient world and the sinister symbolic possibilities the deformed and disabled presented to the superstitious. [27] The report of Antonia's disgust at her unfinished half-witted son is followed by an account of his sister's alleged fear for the future (Suetonius *Claudius* 3.2): *mater Antonia portentum eum hominis dictitabat nec absolutum a natura sed tantum incohatum . . . soror Liuilla cum audisset quandoque imperaturum, tam iniquam et tam indignam sortem p. R. palam et clara detestata est* ("His mother Antonia often called him 'a monster of a man, not finished but merely begun by Nature'. . . When his sister Livilla heard that he might one day be emperor, she openly and loudly prayed that the Roman people might be spared so cruel and undeserved a fortune").

The anecdotes of Suetonius offer a useful starting point for the main argument of this part of our paper, which complements the approach taken in the first part. The appearance of Claudius has clearly been **[End Page 297]** exploited by Seneca who implies not only that Claudius the *prodigium* was predictive of bad times to come, but also that he transformed himself into the instigator of social breakdown when the time was ripe, in an ironic realisation of the supernatural. The Claudius of the Senecan satire represents the grotesquerie of an historical period which was, in every sense, an aberration in the Roman experience. That is, Claudius' vile body not only represents his ill-concealed inner turpitude, but also evokes the distortion of civic life.

The clear identification of Claudius' rule with the time of the Saturnalia provides the comic anchor of the *Apocolocyntosis*, as Versnel sees in his masterly treatment of the Saturnalian *princeps.* [28] Such a phenomenon would not be dangerous if it were confined to the period set aside for controlled chaos. [29] Claudius' rule is represented as something suited to festival time, but not to the seriousness of everyday political use, hence the horror of discovering that the monster-emperor was in for a lengthy term of office. [30] The focus on Claudius' personal habits, particularly those involving fluidity and the release of inhibitions--his farting and soiling of himself described so graphically by Seneca at the end of section 4 (even the process of his dying is described in fluid terms as *animam ebulliit*, "he bubbled up his life")--works as a metaphor for a social Saturnalia which knows no boundaries of space or season and over which Claudius presides as Carnival personified. Appropriately, Seneca describes him slightingly as "a cock standing on a dunghill" (*gallum in suo sterquilino*, 7.3) and as *Saturnalicius princeps* ("a Saturnalian emperor," 8.2).

It will be evident that this approach relies in some measure on post-classical constructs of carnival, notably Bakhtin's, in which an inappropriate person is temporarily elevated to the position of supreme power. [31] **[End Page 298]** The text of the *Apocolocyntosis* itself suggests that Claudius' prolonged

position as Lord of Misrule was a sick practical joke played upon the people of Rome, rather than an intimation of divine displeasure. Whatever the cause, society waits a long time to be restored to a proper rhythm of political life. The misshapen king who should have been elevated only temporarily has become a permanent feature--and this fact contributes significantly to the sustained sinister comicality of Seneca's work. The phenomenon of *monstrum* maintaining his position as emperor over a prolonged period disturbs "the jolly relativity" [32] which defines the constraints of misrule; what should be a fragile and ephemeral artefact of carnival turns out to be a tenacious solid. [33]

Why "Pumpkinification"?

Explorations of the properties of the pumpkin and the gourd genus to which it belongs have not given scholars much confidence in resolving the problem of pumpkinification. [34] The characteristics of the vegetable do not explain the process of "pumpkinification," the *apocolocyntosis*, a word formed by analogy with *apotheosis*, of Claudius. [35] It either means that the emperor is metamorphosed into a pumpkin or that the pumpkin emperor is made into a god. "Immortalisation of a cabbage head" is one interpretation discussed by Ball, but he is equally sceptical about the match between this title and what actually happens in the satire's narrative. [36] Ball's reading assumes that Claudius is always empty-headed, not that he only becomes devoid of content when he attempts deification. Athanassakis has the **[End Page 299]** boldest discussion, and the strength of his argument lies in his visualisation of Claudius at the end of the work. He offers a more vividly farcical interpretation by concentrating upon the round and ball-like appearance of the gourd and justifying the title of the work by the actions of the supernatural powers at the end of the satire. [37] Claudius is tossed about like a volitionless and emasculated ball, treated as a round gourd plaything: his globularity is emphasised in section 8.1, where he is described as *rotundus . . . sine capite sine praeputio* ("globular . . . without head, without foreskin"). This attends more to the physicality of the image but at the same time examines the notion of Claudius as a vacuous airhead. [38]

While accepting this emphasis upon Claudius' vacuity, we need not exclude the grotesquely physical. Bristol's discussion of Shakespeare's Falstaff provides a useful analogy. Bristol observes that "Falstaff is mainly described as a series of large vessels or containers filled with vile excremental matter" and that this denunciatory language "is suddenly interrupted with an image of savory, festive abundance. This is the language Bakhtin identifies as belonging to the 'lower bodily stratum,' in which degraded excremental images coexist with images of the digestive organs that consume food--dead meat--and turn it into 'beastliness' which is both living flesh and bodily waste." [39] Claudius can readily be aligned with Falstaff when we combine his "pumpkinification" with Suetonius' characterisation of him as "very eager for food and drink at any time and place" (*Claud.* 33.1) and with Seneca's emphasis on his corporeality.

Linked to the image of Claudius as a vessel ready to be constantly refilled is the useful property of the pumpkin and related gourds as water carriers. Eden [40] emphasises the vacuity of the genus once the fleshy contents have rotted away leaving the dry outer skin as a container or flask. The versatility of the pumpkin and its potential for "inner" metamorphosis is significant in the discussion of the "pumpkin" emperor. Athanassakis' Claudius is a round vessel which has outlived its purpose and is fit only to be kicked around. One thinks of the fate of the pumpkin after Halloween **[End Page 300]** celebrations. It functions through the festival as a sinister but simultaneously (and accordingly) apotropaic symbol, with a spooky candle deposited within its hollowed-out shape. After Halloween it soon withers away and is consigned to the compost or trash-can. The point is, though, that the gourd species, of which the pumpkin may be a less robust member, can have its life prolonged and be reused. It is precisely this combination of the destructible and the durable which makes the gourd image so appropriate to Claudius. Claudius is, after all, a ruler who should not outlast the festivities, but who does outlast them nevertheless.

The ambiguous nature of the gourd has a metaphoric significance for Claudius. It appears in Epicrates (fragment 11, Vol. II Kock). The scene is a satirical swipe at the philosophical speculation conducted at Plato's Academy. Students are debating the origin and species of the gourd when a Sicilian doctor emits a loud fart to express his exasperation at the nonsense. [41] The doctor does not seriously disturb the debate and, though the main target here is the folly of philosophers in engaging in an absurd enquiry, the combination of gourd, absurdity, and fart seems striking. Was this in the mind of the author

of the *Apocolocyntosis* when he embodied in Claudius the elusive phenomenon and uncategorisability of the genus and described his dying fart? Epicrates is in Aristophanic vein here and the gourd is portrayed as proof of typically pointless subjects of philosophical speculation.

In Seneca's satire, the origin and genus of Claudius as a phenomenon are equally unresolvable. Even before the scene with Hercules, Claudius meets a mystified reaction to his inhuman and unprecedented appearance, as we have already seen: *nec Graecum esse nec Romanum nec ullius gentis notae* (5.2), "he was neither Greek nor Roman nor of any known race." Claudius is of a strange and indefinable species. When Claudius replies to Hercules that a wind blew him from Ilios (5.4), evidently a reference to the emperor's famous flatulence, it is just possible that Seneca is alluding to Epicrates' skit on Plato, but, even without the fortuitous fart (and the connection may be attributing a highly eccentric piece of intertextuality to Seneca), the parallel is suggestive. **[End Page 301]**

The Short Term Emperor

The satire very quickly establishes the motif of time and the problems caused by its distortion as significant. The Fates are accused of stringing out time and prolonging the agony, even at the moment of the emperor's demise: Mercury makes the point that Claudius' very existence has always been in doubt and that his ending has been constantly predicted throughout his reign (3.2):

> patere mathematicos aliquando verum dicere, qui illum, ex quo princeps factus est, omnibus annis, omnibus mensibus efferunt. et tamen non est mirum si errant et horam eius nemo novit: nemo enim umquam illum natum putavit.
>
> Let the astrologers tell the truth *some time*: they have been burying him every year, every month, since he became emperor. And yet it is no wonder if they are wrong and nobody knows his fated hour, for nobody ever thought he existed. [42]

In this way, Seneca sets the scene and marvels at Claudius' inexplicable survival, preparing the reader for further Saturnalian references as the satire unfolds. Claudius is explicitly referred to as a Saturnalian *princeps* throughout 8.3, the Olympus scene. Hercules has already accused him of playing the fool at 7.1. At Claudius' funeral (12.3)--itself a time of rejoicing, freedom, and licence--the deceased emperor's reign is called a Saturnalia which could not last indefinitely. The implication is that Claudius was never meant to be a permanent feature or fixture of Roman life and leadership.

An element of double bluff can be detected here because the *Apocolocyntosis* was probably being circulated at the time of the Saturnalia and this gives an added piquancy to the central focus on Claudius as a sinister figure of fun. [43] Not only will the bubble burst as he finally breathes **[End Page 302]** his last, but the pumpkin mask, hollowed out and filled with empty air, the windbag, will shrivel away to nothing. Indeed, the circumstances of Claudius' crowning are related by Suetonius as a sudden elevation of the bemused and terrified uncle of Caligula (*Claud.* 10), a version at odds with Josephus who portrays a process of astute actions carried out by Herod Agrippa and Claudius to ensure the latter's succession (*Jewish Wars* 2.205-23). The support of the praetorian guard was actively sought and the army was promised the usual donatives. The picture of a clownish figure who blunders into autocratic rule at the whim of the common soldier is much more appropriate for the satirist and especially colourful when that satirist is creating the atmosphere of carnival time as an historical explanation for the phenomenon that was Claudius.

The prospect of Claudius hoping for a fluke of fortune similar to that at his accession to take him into Olympus is doubly funny if the proper emphasis is laid upon his rapid rise to fame and status in Rome. And he very nearly makes it a second time. It is particularly ironic that, at the moment of death, the apotheosis that should belong to the newly deceased emperor is rapidly transferred to his successor. The full force of the poetic interlude about Nero can easily be lost. It is, after all, an implicit apotheosis in his lifetime. The audience is not cheated of a deification, but the honour is re-routed to become the panegyric of the emperor-to-be rather than the has-been ruler, Claudius. [44] It is a common feature of panegyric that it encourages the object of adulation to live up to extravagant expectations, that it functions as a prompting, even though the advent of the good emperor is presented as a *fait accompli*. Claudius is there as the negative role model for Nero as well as for the reader. [45]

The glowing portrait of Nero gains by the contrast with Claudius. Both emperors embody and bring out manifestations of bad and good rulers, as discussed in Part I above. The outer beauty of Nero bodes well as an indication of the inner *sophrosyne* of the rational man. Nero's life-span is to verge on the eternal, another artful counterpoint to Claudius, who outstayed his welcome, living and ruling well past the short and finite period of the festive season. Nero is a natural ruler and already a fixed body **[End Page 303]** in the heavens. His predecessor, far from being a permanent fixture, should, Seneca implies, never have been born and has quite unnaturally cheated death. Claudius is to be refused enrollment in the assembly of the gods and is summarily catapulted to the nether regions. While the verses upon Nero describe his meteoric rise, the buffoon ruler breathes his last in the presence of comic actors. His very demise plays out a carnivalesque tableau and ends upon a note of banality (4.2): *exspiravit autem dum comoedos audit ut scias me non sine causa illos timere,* "However, he breathed his last while he was listening to some comic actors, so you know I have good reason to be afraid of them."

The Exposure of Claudius

The depiction of Claudius as *monstrum* has been examined for its philosophical implications in the first part of this paper. Antonia's alleged unflattering remarks, if they were common knowledge, may well have been Seneca's inspiration for the encounter with Hercules on Olympus. There he is regarded anxiously by the initially hostile hero as a possible thirteenth labour (5.3: *putavit sibi tertium decimum laborem venisse*, "he thought that his thirteenth labour had arrived"), but is subsequently championed by Hercules who canvasses for him among the gods. In the *Hercules Oetaeus* attributed to Seneca, the hero has cause to complain that the *monstra* he destroyed have all reached the heavens before him. [46] The tragic Hercules boasted of his fearlessness in confronting every type of monster on earth, only to be forced to fear them in the sky above, once he had achieved his own apotheosis (*ut caelum mihi faceret timendum*, "to make the sky a source of fear for me," *H.O.* 74-75).

Whatever the substance of the *lacuna* between sections 7 and 8 of the *Apocolocyntosis*, Hercules and Claudius have clearly come to some arrangement. Hercules has a vested interest in Claudius' petition for divinity, being himself "a self-made god." [47] The ease with which Hercules gatecrashes the Olympian senate suggests that doors do automatically open for him; either that, or he uses brute force to achieve what for a genuine god should **[End Page 304]** come naturally (or perhaps we should say supernaturally). The success of Claudius' claim to godhead relies heavily upon duplicating the peculiar circumstances that elected him emperor. Hercules' canvassing for Claudius mimics the kind of process which ensured his accession to a lofty position on earth when the strong arm of the military backed his seizure of power.

However, it is not so easy to reproduce these unique conditions on Olympus. Claudius is rapidly recognised and named as a Saturnalian king. The Olympian senate would itself have to be indulging in a festival of fools in order for such an aberration to occur a second time. Saturn had, of course, been expelled from Olympus, so the unceremonious banishment of Claudius makes a fitting "action-replay." Janus is quick to point out that an acceptance of Claudius would make the august body a laughing-stock. As the god of doors and doorways, he is clearly the most appropriate deity to deny Claudius entrance to Olympus by defending the door against the gatecrashing Hercules and his protégé. Janus emphasises the ludicrous nature of the proposal. His case against Claudius, that such an addition would devalue the membership, is almost certainly a jibe at Claudius' own willingness to extend Roman citizenship (9.3): *multa dixit de magnitudine deorum: non debere hunc vulgo dari honorem* ("He spoke a lot about the greatness of the gods: this honour should not be given to all and sundry"). [48] Janus articulates the resistance to the *monde renversé* which Claudius carries with him wherever he goes.

It is left up to Augustus to make the decisive contribution and ensure that Claudius is expelled to the nether regions. The Augustus of the *Apocolocyntosis* gives a show of false humility in the Olympian gathering, but is effective in carrying the day (10.1): *patres conscripti, vos testes habeo, ex quo deus factus sum, nullum me verbum fecisse: semper meum negotium ago* ("I have you, honourable members, as witnesses that from the time that I became a god I have not uttered a word. I always mind my own business"). Augustus' attack on Claudius comprises a catalogue of "judicial" murders. Eden notes "the subtle reminiscences of his style" and suggests a "new seriousness of tone and stature of authority to this debate." [49] However, it is surely typical of Augustus' style in controlling decisions that he pretends not to influence such proceedings. [50] Not **[End Page 305]** surprisingly, Augustus' testimony and wishes are adhered to. He obviously has the same political clout on Olympus as he had in the

Roman Senate, even when he is adopting a low profile. Claudius is summarily dismissed. The nature of Augustus' prosecution of Claudius makes interesting reading, for it focuses on the grimmer side of the ruler who so far has been depicted as farcical. There has been a hint of his vicious persecutions in the encounter with Hercules, but his grandfather itemises his worst excesses and hypocrisies in his dealings with his family and the senatorial class.

Saturnalia and Carnival

Claudius' passion for litigation, particularly his eagerness to sit in judgement himself wherever possible, and also his tendency to appease the crowd with summary "justice," introduces another aspect of the Saturnalian reign. The time of Saturn was also associated with the first appearance of laws in Latium, a sign that the foundations of a civilised era had been created. [51] This could be seen as at least partially at odds with the atmosphere of licence in the celebratory festival associated with Saturn. Alternatively, and in deference to the dialectics of the situation, these might be considered complementary categories, mutually defining, for who better to preside over the period of non-law than the figure who symbolises law itself? This is certainly the way in which the common representation of Licence and Lent at carnival gatherings in the post-classical period have been interpreted. So, for example, Bristol 1985 offers a stimulating treatment of the battle between Carnival and Lent in his chapter, "The Festive Agon: The Politics of Carnival." The paradox is embodied in Shakespeare's King Claudius in *Hamlet*, curiously enough, who is depicted **[End Page 306]** as "a Carnivalesque Lord of Misrule, a sovereign figure of authority who is also pleased to indulge in drinking bouts and indiscreet public fondlings." [52]

Claudius would have been an embodiment of such a dialectic, the oppressive representative of law unleashed during a suspension of "normality," had he not prolonged the masquerade. He appears as a Roman equivalent of Lenten restraint in so far as he takes upon himself the role of "public prosecutor" and keeps up the Augustan tradition of imperial guardian of society's "moral values." [53] However, in the judgement of history as seen operating in the *Apocolocyntosis*, he distorted the law by introducing summary justice and on-the-spot punishments to appease the crowd (cf. Suetonius *Claud*. 15.2). Even in the sober conduct of state affairs, he could not conceal his carnivalesque tendencies. Claudius, then, presents a paradox: he is indeed *Saturnalicius princeps* ("a Saturnalian emperor," 8.2), but it is not a carnival that he presides over.

This is made clear as Claudius travels to the Underworld. His route is, logically, via his own funeral, an event he fails to recognise because it is the scene of so much rejoicing. The reversals Claudius' reign set into motion continue until the final curtain. Bakhtin comments on the consistent carnivalisation of the nether world which lends itself to this representation because of the levelling process of death: "death discrowns all those who wear crowns in life." [54] This is the place where emperors become slaves. Since Claudius was renowned for promoting the lowly to positions of trust, it seems absolutely appropriate that he should exchange his kingship to become a clerk in thrall to Caligula. In his case, normal circumstances are restored by this final punishment. This outcome also denotes the turning back of the clock since it reminds us that this was the state of affairs at Caligula's assassination and that this should never have been altered in the excitement of the moment. That is, the celebrations *start* at the point of Claudius' death and arrival in the Underworld. The "Saturnalian emperor" has finally been dethroned and the accession of the new, young, and beautiful emperor Nero proclaimed: this, if anything, is the real carnival.

The rich and exuberant scatological tendencies in Seneca's work firmly contextualise it within the classical tradition of violent and graphic **[End Page 307]** corporeal discourse. However, Claudius' physical shape and bodily functions are also symbols of transgression and the chaos principle in the affairs and running of the state. The author of the *Apocolocyntosis* celebrates the return of Claudius to the shell of his disempowered body. The relentless critique of Claudius the emperor in a central position of control is conducted by an author who has already distanced and objectified the character of his satiric victim. The figure of Claudius has come full circle, reclaimed by the author of the *Apocolocyntosis* for his previously passive function as a powerless butt of humour, removed to a place where he can no longer do any harm, that is, to the literature but not the reality of the Saturnalia. [55]

In this way, the *Apocolocyntosis* can be read as a highly suitable offering for a Saturnalia. [56] It celebrates the failure of Eden's "insubstantial spook" [57] to gain entry into Olympus and sends this

ephemeral being, mere wind and wraith, to his proper place among the shadows. Claudius as carnival king is finally exposed and dethroned, as he should have been within the short duration of festival time. The physical form of Claudius is pivotal to this portrayal of a product of a carnivalised time--a temporary object, a gourd whose flesh has withered away and is now, as ever, only fit for the circumscribed space and time of the festivities of misrule and reversal.

Conclusion: Claudius the Body

It is evident that Seneca uses the distortion and contortion of Claudius' body--both his ugliness and misshapenness and his failure to control his speech and gestures, his farting and defecation--for a broader ideological purpose: to condemn him and his reign as ethically and politically flawed. The monstrous body of this buffoon emperor symbolises the chaos that he has brought to the running of the state. His reign has been a temporary glitch, a Saturnalian interlude with something of the Bakhtinian **[End Page 308]** carnival about it. Yet this carnival is no joyous, fertile release of inhibitions, but a chaotic and terrifying nightmare, the end of which the *Apocolocyntosis* celebrates by sending this empty, broken, and ephemeral body to the darkness of the underworld and by welcoming the advent of the beautiful, young, god-like emperor Nero.

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Notes

1. This is the Penguin translation by J. P. Sullivan, 1986.

2. Later, Suetonius puts a similar comment into the mouth of Claudius' mother (*Claudius* 3.2): *mater Antonia portentum eum hominis dictitabat nec absolutum a natura sed tantum incohatum*, "His mother Antonia often called him 'a monster of a man, not finished but merely begun by Nature,'" a passage discussed in Part II below. Suetonius subsequently offers a more generous estimate of his appearance, at least while he refrains from movement (30): *auctoritas dignitasque formae non defuit ei, uerum stanti uel sedenti ac praecipue quiescenti, nam et prolixo nec exili corpore erat et specie canitieque pulchra, opimis ceruicibus*, "He possessed majesty and dignity of appearance, but only when he was standing still or sitting and especially when he was lying down; for he was tall but not skinny, with an attractive face, handsome white hair, and a full neck."

3. On Claudius' physical infirmities see Levick 1990.14-15.

4. For the view that satire of Claudius' physical traits is trivial see Ball 1902, Eden 1984, and Griffin 1976, e.g., 132: "Claudius is not always ridiculed for serious faults."

5. Translations from *De Ira* by Susanna Morton Braund, based upon J. W. Basore's Loeb translation, 1970.

6. See Fillion-Lahille 1984.117-18.

7. *De Ira* 1.1.2, cf. Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 4.77: *iratos proprie dicimus exisse de potestate, id est, de consilio, de ratione, de mente*, "we say appropriately that angry men have passed beyond control, that is, beyond consideration, beyond reason, beyond intelligence."

8. Claudius' *saeuitia* and *crudelitas* in the *Apocolocyntosis*: he "sacked Rome" (5.4, 6.1); his shaky hand became firm only for giving the command of execution (6.2); Augustus condemns him in the divine council for his executions of members of the imperial family (11.5); those who meet him on his arrival in the Underworld were all executed on his command (13.4-5); his indictment in the Underworld court of Aeacus catalogues his numerous executions (14.1). See Susanna Braund 1993.56-69.

9. *De Ira passim*, e.g., 1.5.2, 2.5.3, 3.5.1, 3.18.1, 3.19.1.

10. Not only is he said to have been irascible, but he is said to have been aware of it, to the extent that he issued an edict which excused both anger and irascibility: *irae atque iracundiae conscius sibi,*

utramque excusauit edicto (Suetonius *Claudius* 38.1).

11. It is curious that lameness is a recurring feature among kings of antiquity--to give just one example, Oedipus. It is as if kings need to be marked out as different, but, of course, such a difference can easily be constructed as negative rather than positive.

12. The translation is R. Lattimore's, 1951.

13. The link between appearance and morality is central to Corbeill's 1996 analysis of abuse in the political arena of late Republican invective, particularly in Cicero. He argues that "the Romans tended to view physical peculiarities as marking a deviation from humanity's natural state and . . . the deformed individual is responsible for any physical peculiarity he bears" (9). See especially his Chapter 1 on physical peculiarities (14-56), for example, the view that bodily defects might preclude an individual from holding political or sacred office in the late Republic (25). Our argument here suggests that these late Republican views persist into imperial times, a point which seems to gain confirmation from Gleason's (1995) attention to self-presentation, for example, in voice, gesture, and deportment, and her focus upon physiognomic texts in the Second Sophistic.

14. On *De Clementia* as panegyric, see Susanna Morton Braund (forthcoming).

15. Translations from *De Clementia* are by Susanna Morton Braund and are based on J. W. Basore's Loeb translation, 1970.

16. The classic discussion of the imperial virtues is Charlesworth 1937. See now Wallace-Hadrill 1981, Wallace-Hadrill 1983.142-74, and the compendious survey of material in Fears 1981. On the Platonic-Stoic "fundamental canon" of virtues see North 1966.166-67; on Hellenistic canons of virtue *ibid*. 174-75. On the problems associated with "canons" see Wallace-Hadrill 1981.300-07. On Hellenistic "kingship treatises" cf. Adam 1970.

17. It is possible to translate *malum* as "monster," see *OLD malum* 7c, e.g., Luc. 10.34: *terrarum fatale malum*, "a monster deadly to the earth." On *monstrum* see Nisbet and Hubbard on Horace *Odes* 1.37.21 and on "the emperor as monster" see Garland 1995.50-52, who just skims the surface of the issues we are exploring here.

18. On the shared ideological impetus of Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* and *De Clementia* see Leach 1989.

19. Cf. Barton's discussion of the physiognomic code that Suetonius uses in his physical description of Nero, 1994.57-58.

20. Like a star: 1.3.3, quoted above; like the sun: 1.8.4, *tibi non magis quam soli latere contigit. multa circa te lux est, omnium in istam conuersi oculi sunt*, "you can no more hide yourself than the sun can. A flood of light surrounds you; towards it everyone turns their eyes"; like a king (*sic*) bee: 1.19.2, *praeterea insignis regi forma est dissimilisque ceteris cum magnitudine tum nitore*, "moreover the appearance of the king [bee] is striking and different from that of the rest both in size and in beauty." On Nero's appearance cf. Grimal 1971.

21. On the allegorical dimension of Calpurnius Siculus see Leach 1973.

22. On lameness and Hephaistos, see Garland 1995.113-14.

23. On Thersites' deformities, see Garland 1995.80-81.

24. For Nero's presiding over a golden age see *Apocolocyntosis* 4.1 and *De Clementia* 2.1.3 with Gatz 1967.135-36.

25. See n. 4 above.

26. For a similarly "monstrous" depiction of a recently deceased/deified emperor, again as part of panegyric of the new emperor, cf. Pliny's portrayal of Domitian as a terrifying monster lurking in a cave at *Panegyricus* 48.3: *nuper illa immanissima belua . . . uelut quodam specu inclusa nunc propinquorum*

sanguinem lamberet, nunc se ad clarissimorum ciuium strages caedesque proferret, "recently that terrifying monster . . . lurking in his den licked up the blood of relatives he has murdered or emerged to plot the massacre and slaughter of his most distinguished citizens."

27. See Garland 1995.69-71, on the deformed as human portents, e.g., "According to the differing perceptions of different social groups, prodigies might be interpreted as retrospective, i.e., pointing to a breakdown in the moral and natural order; prognostic, i.e., serving as a warning of what was to come; deterministic, i.e., containing the power to generate evil within the community; or symptomatic, i.e., being a concurrent part of the horrors which they demonstrate" (70).

28. The approach taken throughout this section was developed independently of Versnel. Versnel's point about Claudius prolonging the chaotic aspects of the *Saturnia Regna* demonstrates the dual perspective of the Saturnian myth and the negative potential of the Golden Age model with a Saturnian prince at the helm. He does not focus on the physical appearance of Claudius as a carnival figure.

29. On the Saturnalia see Balsdon 1969.124-26 and Gleason 1986.

30. Garland 1995.48-55 compares the situation of the "freak" and the emperor and suggests that "monsters and emperors gravitated inevitably towards each other" (49). Thus the emperor became a "patron of human oddity." He describes the licence granted in general to emperors which allowed them to indulge their monstrous appetites and he points to the satirised Claudius as a creature combining actual disability with grotesque whims.

31. See Miller's discussion, including apposite quotations from Bakhtin, at the start of his essay in this volume.

32. The expression is a translation of Bakhtin's phrase "veselaia otnositel'nost." See 1984.88.

33. For the grotesque body and attendant symbolism at carnival time, see Teuber 1993.186. Gowers 1994 offers a telling discussion of the images of sterility and ephemerality associated with the reign of Nero.

34. The pumpkin is the most familiar member of the gourd family for the UK reader. Squashes are relative newcomers on the UK scene. "Pumpkin" is the translation given both for the Greek *kolokuntê* and the Latin *cucurbita* in Liddell and Scott, p. 864. Whatever *kolokuntê* meant to the Greeks and Romans, we have to assume that some vegetable with typical gourd-like properties is being referred to by Seneca and was therefore cultivated and a familiar sight in the ancient Mediterranean area! Versnel 1993.120, n. 41 refers to a long discussion of this problem by J. L. Heller, "Notes on the Meaning of kolokÊnth," *ICS* 10 (1985) 67-117.

35. The challenges presented by the title and the work's generic origins have been most recently reviewed by Lund in his text and commentary.

36. See the discussion in Ball's introduction: 1902.49-58.

37. Athanassakis 1973.2-3.

38. "Numbskull" is a possible English equivalent of this insult. A popular modern term of abuse in the UK is "dickhead," which paradoxically uses the male member, rather than excluding it, to denote crassness. "Fuckwit," of Australian origin but now becoming current in the UK, is another vivid insult in the same vein.

39. Bristol 1985.204-05.

40. Eden 1984.3-4.

41. This is more decorously translated in G. C. Field's (1930.38-39) discussion of the famous fragment.

42. Text and translation here are taken from P. T. Eden's 1984 edition.

43. The function and reception of the *Apocolocyntosis* as a text for festival time is explored by Nauta 1987.

44. Eden assesses the function of the fulsome but standard praise of Nero at this point (1984.78).

45. See Nauta on role models and the negative "Fürstenspiegel" (1987.74). Versnel's observations on the endless thread for Nero's New Age and the problem of prolonging the short reign of Saturn are very apposite here (1993.106-07).

46. *H.O.* 64-98. The authorship of the play is still a subject of debate. Nevertheless it makes some interesting cross-referencing with this passage. It seems appropriate for the comedy that Claudius has arrived to take his place alongside Hercules' conquests, even though Hercules did not encounter him on earth.

47. See Eden's note and discussion on 9.6 (1984.115).

48. This is forcefully argued in D. Braund 1980.

49. Eden 1984.115.

50. See the unwitting testimony of Velleius Paterculus 2.89 and the less harmonious picture presented by Suetonius *Augustus* 54.

51. *primus ab aetherio venit Saturnus Olympo, / arma Iovis fugiens et regnis exsul ademptis. / is genus indocile ac dispersum montibus altis / composuit legesque dedit*, "Saturn was the first to come from high Olympus, in flight from the weapons of Jupiter and an exile, his kingdom wrested from him; he it was who designed laws and bestowed them upon a savage race scattered across the high mountains" (*Aeneid* 8.319-22). On the importance of the law to the Romans, see Gransden 1976 *ad loc*. Panegyrics for each new emperor invariably included hopes or claims that laws would be "liberated" or restored. Cf. Seneca's claims for Claudius, *Consolatio Ad Polybium* 13.1-2. Versnel discusses the dangerous equality which can prevail in Saturnian time. The claim uttered in *adulatio* that the Saturnian ruler presides over a new age of justice bears further examination, precisely because Saturn's is a kingdom of laws and simultaneous lawlessness, another feature of this polarised picture of a Golden Age.

52. Bristol 1985.207.

53. This is a much discussed feature of Augustus' "new deal" for Rome. See Dixon 1992.79-80 and Edwards 1993, index s.v. Augustus, e.g., 37-42 and 56-62 on sexual *mores*.

54. Bakhtin 1984.109-10.

55. Tacitus' treatment of Claudius has strongly Saturnalian overtones. He even attributes the question *an ipse imperii potens* ("Am I still emperor?") to him during the Silius affair, surely a symbolic moment in a rule which the historian depicts as a mixture of mime and farce (*Ann*. 11.31). See the interesting discussion in Dickison 1977.

56. Ammianus reports the jibes and jeering of the Antiochenes against Julian at festival time. See Gleason 1986.113-15, a study of an emperor striking back within the limits of licence; cf. Versnel's allusion 1993.122, n. 49.

57. Eden 1984.4.

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