10-1-1998

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The Great Mother and the Great Race: The Importance of Troy in Roman Imperialism

LUCILE G. APPERT

In 204 BC, the Roman Senate invited the goddess Cybele, the Magna Mater (Great Mother), to leave her native Asia Minor and to join the Roman state cult of deities. In a polytheistic state that sanctioned the worship of hundreds of deities in addition to the classical pantheon, such a gesture was routine. The political and social ramifications of importing this goddess from Asia Minor continued to be felt for centuries, however, and after the induction of Cybele, no other foreign deities were ever added to the Roman state cult.

It is my contention that the case of the Magna Mater reveals the kinds of stresses and negotiations that riddle what is often regarded as the monolithic Western foundation of Greco-Roman culture. This paper began as a study of how the importation of the Asian cult of the Magna Mater highlighted the tensions at the margins of Roman culture, but it became instead an analysis of how those margins were created. The Romanization of the Magna Mater cult can be read as a paradigm for the way Rome (and later the West) used Oriental culture to further its own imperial exploitation of the East: the Oriental silence provided the whole cloth out of which the West fashioned its models of holy and unholy, and through them, itself. The splitting of the Magna Mater cult could never be completely effected, however, and the result was the constantly shifting margins that the Romans tried to fix with political rhetoric and literature, but only succeeded in making more fluid. The transformation of the Magna Mater cult illustrates the anxieties underlying Western imperialism as well as the constant revisions of the cultural text which are required to compensate for those anxieties.

I. The Cult and Its History

Formal worship of Cybele originated in Phrygia, a region in
Asia Minor that also claimed to be the birthplace of the cult of Dionysus, infamous for its Bacchanalian revels. In Greek and Roman mythology, Cybele is the Great Mother Earth, mother of all gods and humans. Cult worship focused on Cybele’s relationship with her mortal lover, Attis, who died after castrating himself; the cult’s main festival, celebrated in late March, commemorated his mutilation, death and resurrection. Worship on cult holy days involved processions in honor of the goddess that featured loud music, frenzied dancing, and violence. Lucretius, a Roman poet of the first century BC, used his own observations as well as reports in Greek sources to compile this description of a Magna Mater parade:

her [the cult statue] head they wreathed with a battlemented crown . . . she was escorted by her mutilated priests; taut tymbrels thunder under their hands and hollow cymbals sound all around, and horns threaten with harsh-sounding blare, and hollow flutes inflame their minds with Phrygian cadences; they carry weapons in front, symbols of their violent frenzy . . . they strew the path of her progress with bronze and silver . . . and snow down rose-blossom over her. Then comes an armed band . . . who join in mock conflict and leap in rhythmic movement . . .

For the Romans, by far the most controversial element of Cybele's processions was that connected with the initiation into her priesthood. The mythical Attis served as a model for Cybele's priests: during the annual celebration of Attis' resurrection, male initiates into the priesthood danced themselves into a religious frenzy, in the midst of which they castrated themselves. The new eunuch flung his severed scrotum into the crowd watching the procession. The person who caught it was obligated to outfit the priest in women's clothing and jewelry for the next year. From the time of their castration, priests in the Magna Mater cult went about in elaborate drag consisting of long and belted robes, usually yellow (the Roman bridal color) or multicolored, and turbans or caps with long ear flaps that could be tied under the chin. They were often bejewelled and heavily made up with a chalky white foundation, and their long hair was bleached and dressed in elaborate women's styles. The spontaneity and spiritual intensity of

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the public ceremonies honoring Cybele presented a challenge to
the Roman state, which had historically orchestrated religious rit-
uals using extreme decorum and pomp to reinforce its control of
ideology.

II. Race, Class and Gender — Imperial Containment

The importation of the Magna Mater coincided with the great
influx of wealth from the first Roman imperial ventures. Looking
back on this period, Roman historians of the late Republic and
Empire drew specific connections between the first successful
Eastern campaigns and the beginnings of decadence at Rome. As
was the case in the British empire, the Roman justification for
imperial exploitation relied heavily upon maintaining the distinc-
tions between the civilized imperial culture and the debased con-
quered regions. The example of the Magna Mater provides an
excellent illustration of how the Roman government employed
elaborate strategies to allow unrestricted appropriation of imperi-

al wealth while separating it from its "foreign" origins. Efforts to
achieve containment were displaced across three key pre-existing
categories of difference: class, race and gender.

The Roman oligarchy took several decisive steps to establish
Magna Mater as an aristocratic cult. As popular movements
increased the economic and political power of plebeians, the
patricians maintained their position by keeping a tight control on
ideology. In advance of her arrival, the patricians drew specific
parallels between the movement of Cybele from Asia Minor to
Rome and the arrival in Italy of Aeneas and the Trojan nobility
after their city (also in Asia Minor) had been sacked by the
Greeks. The Roman aristocracy believed that this mythical event
was the founding of their "race", and in fact the cult statue of the
goddess actually came from the small kingdom of Pergamum,
which Romans understood to be the original Troy.

Patrician families organized themselves into sodalities
responsible for greeting the goddess on her arrival at Rome, and
these same groups commemorated the event annually with ban-
quets in Cybele's honor. The offering to the goddess at these din-
ers also reinforced class distinctions; the traditional oblation
consisted of herbs, white cheese, oil, and vinegar, an ancient
Roman peasant dish that recalled the purer roots of the patricians
as well as their social superiority:

the aristocrats wanted to honor the Phrygian Goddess with this moretum (the Latin name for the dish), since by her gift of the herbs she had kept primitive man alive. Cybele is therefore older than Ceres, who gave the corn and was worshipped especially by the plebs; her feast was that of a younger goddess, submissive to the power of the Mother of the Gods, Cybele. Consequently, the Megalensia of the aristocrats preceded the Cerealia (a plebeian festival April 12-19).

Thus the disordered, potentially dangerous traditional worship of the goddess was overshadowed (Roman superstition would not allow it to be altogether discarded) by six days of ceremonies in her honor that featured three of the most sacred ritual performances in Roman culture: the banquet, drama, and athletics.

The Aeneas/Cybele connection had implications for international politics as well. Evocatio (literally, "I call out") was a traditional Roman ritual of warfare in which a priest stood on the border of the territory under siege and "called out" the native deity or deities with a promise of better worship for the deity at Rome. The Romans believed that their victory indicated the "choice" of the god to "become Roman". When a new region was conquered, cult statues of the native deities were borne in the triumph at Rome (along with royal or important prisoners and looted wealth) and ensconced in temples there. Once they possessed the gods of a conquered people, the Romans considered their right to dominate and exploit them divinely sanctioned.

Therefore, the removal of the Magna Mater from Asia Minor can be seen as evocatio on a grand scale, a symbolic move that could be used to justify Roman imperial endeavors in this region and especially the Roman attitude toward Oriental culture. Furthermore, Roman possession of the Mother of the Gods ended the need for the use of evocatio because Rome now had the greatest and oldest divine power on its side. Appropriately, the cult statue of Cybele was first lodged in the temple of Victoria, the standard repository for booty, on her arrival at Rome. It is impossible to approximate the psychological effect of this acquisition on Rome's "enemies" (i.e., those whose lands the ruling parties
wished to control), but it is significant that King Attalus III of Pergamum, a descendant of the ruler who had sent Cybele's statue to Rome, willed his kingdom to the Roman empire at his death in 133 BC. Yet while the state was busy "Romanizing" Cybele's cult, "great care was taken to keep up the foreign character of the cult" by giving the festival a Greek name (Megalesia or Megalanesia) and situating it on the calendar between the Kalends and Nones of the month. The Kalends was the first day of the new moon and thus the first day of the month (even in the Republic, the two only rarely corresponded, but the pretense of keeping a lunar calendar was continued) and the Nones were the days before the first quarter, an uncertain period usually lasting five to seven days. Because the length of the Nones was uncertain, they were considered "nefas" (unholy) and no native Roman festivals were held between the Kalends and the end of the Nones. Like the patricians themselves, there was a sense of Cybele being at once un-Roman and ultra Roman.

The patricians could afford such a split chiefly because of the Roman notion of the international character of the aristocrat. The final accomplishment of a patrician education was an extended tour of the Mediterranean region and often a year of study in Greece, a tradition very similar to the Grand Tour of Europe undertaken at the conclusion of formal studies by young members of the British aristocracy. In order to maintain the image of a patrician "man of the world" as desirable, the lower classes were forced to absorb the dangers involved in sanctioning dabbling in inferior cultures. Hence, the Roman hegemony portrayed the threat of "going native" as a plebeian concern; such a claim could easily be supported by the readiness of Roman soldiers to settle in and intermarry with the natives of conquered regions, although this policy actually did more to spread Roman culture than to strengthen the languages and customs of the conquered peoples.

Marjorie Garber argues that a cultural crisis within a category of difference such as class will register in other categories, such as race and gender, as well:

one of the most consistent and effective functions of the transvestite in culture is to indicate the place of what I call "category crisis," dis-
rupting and calling attention to cultural, social, or aesthetic dissonances... I regard the appropriation of the transvestite as a figure for development, progress, or a "stage of life" as to a large extent a refusal to confront the extraordinary power of transvestism to disrupt, expose, and challenge, putting in question the very notion of the "original" and stable identity.

The case of the Magna Mater, where the Roman government’s most significant modification of cult worship was eliminating Attis, illustrates Garber’s point. While the life and death of Cybele’s mortal lover informed the traditional worship cycle of her cult, only the goddess herself was officially recognized as part of the Roman state cult and honored in its ceremonies. The Roman government viewed this liminal figure as a distinctly Oriental entity and an example of the sexual exoticism rampant in that culture; yet efforts to completely expunge Attis from the cult at Rome appear to have been on the whole unsuccessful. Although he did not emerge in official state cult worship of Cybele until the second century AD, terra cotta cult statues of Attis dating about 25 BC have been found in Cybele’s Roman temple on the Palatine Hill.

Both the act of emasculation and the femininity of the eunuch priests who imitated Attis smacked of homosexuality, a controversial subject at Rome, "universally practiced and universally reprobated". Cicero emphasizes its unRoman character, and the elder Cato, renowned as an ultra-conservative Republican moralist, linked a surge in male homosexuality among Romans to the same period of growing Oriental influences that brought the Magna Mater to Rome. Young boys, castrated and dressed as women in an elaborate fashion similar to that of the priests of Cybele, became more and more common in the late Republic and early Empire. The Emperors, with a few notable exceptions, were an eager market for these boys, and Nero went so far as to marry his favorite, Sporus, and re-name him Sabina.

The eunuch’s curious absent presence in Roman Magna Mater worship — priests castrated themselves in the street, yet the figure they were imitating remained unrecognized by the state cult — locates him as a key point of tension. The intersection of issues of race and gender (the blurring of two dangerous cate-
gories, the ethnic and the feminine) represented by this figure is a crucial element in understanding the heavy-handedness of Roman imperial policy toward the cult as a whole. The horror Roman men pretended to feel at the practice of ritual castration and their simultaneous passion for beautiful boy-women marked the eunuch, and thus the Magna Mater cult, as a site of transgression.

In spite of the Roman oligarchy's efforts to portray luxury and excessive wealth as foreign weaknesses, Roman sumptuary legislation dated back to the Twelve Tables, the very first recorded body of Roman law, and it targeted women almost exclusively. The tax of ten times the worth of an item costing more than 1500 denarii enacted by the elder Cato in 184 BC affected "dresses, carriages, women's ornaments, household furniture, etc.," and the Lex Oppia of 215 BC "forbidding a woman to wear more than one half ounce of gold, to wear a many coloured dress or to ride within the city in a carriage save at religious festivals" both identify the expenditure of money as a feminine vice.

These inferences became even stronger as the late Republic and Empire wore on. As the objects of gross expenditure shifted from feminine equipage to lavish dinner parties given by rich men, the gender associations did not. To earn a great fortune was masculine, but Juvenal lumps together "sensuality, effeminacy, prodigal displays of wealth". The passion for extravagant dinner parties spawned a series of sumptuary laws beginning in the second century BC, one of which directly addressed patrician celebrations honoring the Magna Mater. Observations by the elder Cato and Polybius that group together gormandizing and homosexuality (specifically gross expenditure on beautiful slave boys) take on a new significance when they are considered in conjunction with Magna Mater cult worship where gormandizing stands in for the homoerotic Attis figure. Emasculation itself represented an enormous expenditure, whether on the part of a master to protect his human and material property and/or gratify sexual desire, or by a man himself for the sake of spiritual gratification. The legal classification of luxury and excessive expenditure as feminine allowed the male patrician a form of sexual role-playing which was transgressive but not, as was the eunuch's state, irrevocable.
The law played a curious double role in the case of the Magna Mater: while it was used by Roman culture to define what was transgressive, its very existence made transgression possible. For this reason it appears more likely that Cybele worship and the Oriental culture it represented did not so much present a dangerous affront to Roman morals and culture as it was made to seem to do so by the government’s legislation and political rhetoric. The initial Roman encounter with the Magna Mater cult coincided with the beginning of a Roman military offensive that could no longer be justified by the need to secure contiguous lands nor by the need to quell old rivalries, both rationalizations for earlier wars. Instead, Rome’s subsequent attacks on Spain, Asia Minor, and much of Europe were purely imperial endeavors made with the intent of exploiting the conquered lands and peoples for profit.

The only way to reconcile these real motives with the Roman tradition of democracy and “freedom” was to pretend a need for defense of those very cultural institutions against a barbarous foreign world. The occasional raids on Italy and Rome by the Goths and other European tribes, as well as social and economic crises caused by pirates in the Mediterranean Sea, were basis enough for this claim. Thus the Roman government’s treatment of the Magna Mater cult, which the similarities to evocatio clearly mark as a prelude to a military attack on Asia Minor, can be seen as a paradigm for the effective means of rationalization and appropriation of imperial power.

Clearly, Roman law alone did not prove a sufficient means of containing Oriental influences; as the case of the Magna Mater suggests, the mixing of cultures intensified instead of abating. Roman literature, on the other hand, was highly successful in naturalizing imperial thought into Roman culture in a space of less than a century. Many of the texts that were instrumental in establishing a dominant imperial ideology at Rome have been in turn used as a basis for European, especially British, imperial discourse. The Roman Empire achieved Seneca’s enthusiastic vision of a homogeneous culture — “You will scarcely find any land which is still in the hands of its original inhabitants; all peoples have become confused and intermingled; one has come after
another" — not just through trade, but more importantly through exportation of Roman literature, philosophy, and drama. Intellectual commerce met a great deal of resistance in Asia Minor, however, where

The Greek and the Grecianized Oriental would not willingly admit the superiority of anything Roman, save that of the Scipionic legions over the degenerate Macedonian phalanx. The number of "Roman citizens" in the Eastern half of the Empire who knew not a word of Latin was probably great.

Ultimately, the Eastern resistance to Roman culture worked in Rome's favor: not only did it supply proof of the "native ignorance" of Asian races, but it also gave Latin writers carte blanche for portraying Asia Minor, its people, and its culture in literature, allowing them to be reduced to manipulatable symbols and images.

Edward Said observes the same phenomenon in his study, Orientalism, where he suggests that the Western habit of speaking for the Orient is a cultural response that is already evident in a much earlier period of Greek history. Analyzing two Greek dramas, Aeschylus's The Persians (c. 470's BC) and Euripides's The Bacchae (408 BC), Said observes that

The two aspects of the Orient that set it off from the West in this pair of plays will remain essential motifs of European imaginative geography. A line is drawn between two continents. Europe is powerful and articulate; Asia is defeated and distant. Aeschylus represents Asia, makes her speak in the person of the aged Persian queen, Xerxes' mother. It is Europe that articulates the Orient; this articulation is the prerogative, not of a puppet master, but of a genuine creator, whose life-giving power represents, animates, constitutes the otherwise silent and dangerous space beyond familiar boundaries.

The division of the Magna Mater into distinctly different Oriental and Roman entities, like the division of Asian peoples into a master race and a debased race, illustrates the Western efforts to create the Orient as a known space, to use its silence to justify Roman exploitation.

Both Lucretius (whose description of a Magna Mater proces-
sion appears at the beginning of this essay) and his contemporary Catullus provide early examples of the way Roman ideology began to inform depictions of Oriental culture and eventually "speak for" it in Latin literature. In Poem 63 Catullus tells the story of Attis, a young devotee of Cybele who emasculates himself in a religious frenzy. The first lines of the poem make it clear that this "Attis" is not an Asian:

Carried in a fast ship over profound seas
Attis, eager and hurried, reached the Phrygian grove.\(^{20}\)

Awakening on the morning after his impassioned worship, Attis expresses not so much personal regret for his actions as a sense that he has somehow betrayed his homeland, which in its boasting of "the Forum, palaestra, racecourse and gymnasium"\(^{22}\) is clearly Rome (the change to feminine pronouns emphasizes Attis' deed):

There, looking at the open sea with tearful eyes,
With grief in her voice she addressed her native land:
"Land which begot me, land which brought me forth,
I am abject to abandon you like a runaway slave.
My feet have carried me to the groves of Ida
To be among snow in the cold lairs of wild beasts;
I shall visit their violent haunts.\(^{26}\)

Catullus juxtaposes the civilization of Rome and its institutions with the wilds of Asia Minor and its beasts so that he can portray Attis's worship of the goddess as a cultural regression. Through this contrast, Catullus constructs the distinctions between the Roman Cybele and her Oriental origins necessary to justify Roman imperialism as a "civilizing" mission.

One of the best examples of the integral role literature played in effecting Roman imperial strategy lies in the career of the first emperor, Augustus Caesar. Coming at the end of nearly a century of civil unrest, the Augustan period was celebrated as a reign of peace and prosperity. The peace was domestic, the prosperity was imperial: under Augustus' shrewd management, the Empire achieved one of the most thorough and profitable periods of
expansion yet. During his reign the arts, especially writing, flourished at Rome, and not without benefit for Augustus:

The first Roman emperor, appreciating the value of a trained public opinion, discharged the duties of a literary patron with discretion. He gave personal encouragement to the three outstanding authors of his day, to Livy, Horace and Virgil; he directed their efforts to further his own political schemes; but he allowed them great latitude in the performance of their tasks...24

It is interesting to note that the British neoclassicist writers of the early eighteenth century also referred to themselves as Augustans because of the political similarities between their own and the earlier Roman period, not the least of which was that of a growing imperial enterprise. Latin literature, and that of the Golden Age in particular, provided a significant portion of the models and allusions from which they constructed their own texts.

One of Augustus' stratagems for solidifying his power was to stress the ancient idea of the aristocratic right to rule. In doing so, he used Cybele as a symbol not just of the supreme power that Rome had achieved under the aristocratic rule of the senate, but more importantly of the idea that such power was inseparable from the Roman patrician class to which he belonged. Several works of art from the Golden Age convey this message, but by far the best known example in Roman as well as modern times is Virgil's Aeneid.25 Throughout the poem, Virgil emphasizes the will of the gods in the initial Trojan settlement of Rome, and indicates that the present Roman imperialism is part of a divine schema as well by conflating the images of Augustus and Aeneas.

Cybele makes several key appearances in the work, but it is a Cybele completely cleansed of her disturbing Oriental trappings. For example, in Book Three Anchises, Aeneas' elderly father, tells of the Trojan race's origins on the island of Crete and its native connection with Cybele:

From there [Crete], if I recall it well, our first Forefather, Teucrus, sailed to the coast around Point Rhoeteum and chose it for his kingdom. As yet no Ilium [Troy] stood, no citadel;
By locating the original worship of Cybele among the Trojans, Virgil uses the conflation of past and Augustan present in the poem to set up the Trojan rites to the goddess, "devoutly kept," as somehow different from Oriental rites brought with her to Rome. Thus the patrician worship of the Magna Mater at Rome becomes a return to the original state of cult worship, while the Oriental rites by comparison give an indication of the cultural "impurity" of Asia once the Trojan race had decamped.

In these and the other references to Cybele throughout the Aeneid, Virgil creates a distinction between Asian and Trojan worship of the Magna Mater and suggests that the reasons for its existence lie in the bigger difference between the cultures of Troy and of Asia. Virgil indicates his distrust of Troy's "Asian wealth", symbolized in the king and queen's fifty children, by locating some of the most gruesome acts of pillage in Book Two in their castle while stressing that Aeneas lived in a farmhouse outside of the city with his father, a shepherd. Virgil also emphasizes the Asian origins of Dido, the Carthaginian queen whose desire for Aeneas endangers his founding of Rome, by repeatedly describing her and her wealth as "Sidonian" after her native region of Asia Minor. Virgil's depictions of Oriental luxuriousness stand in strong contrast to the Spartan purity of Aeneas, his followers, and the rural Latins with whom they finally settle.

The treatment of the Magna Mater in the Aeneid is an excellent example of the ways in which the artificial boundaries between the Roman and the Oriental world were naturalized into the pre-existing Roman myth structure. Other works of the Golden Age and later periods reinforce Virgil's cultural divisions: in Book Eight of The Golden Ass, a second century Latin novel by the North African writer Apuleius of Madauros, Lucius the "ass-man" is sold to a group of the Magna Mater's eunuchs and is party to their greed and sexual depravity — the object of their devotion is referred to as the "Syrian goddess", something distinctly different at this point from the Romanized Cybele. Both
Horace, who in several of his satires makes fun of hosts overly concerned with the slaves' matters of food and entertainment, and Petronius, who wrote during the licentious reign of Nero, focus on the banquet as an indicator of cultural values, chiefly the respectable Roman versus the luxurious Oriental. In the section of Petronius' Satyricon entitled "Trimalchio's Dinner Party," the offending host is an Asian freedman living in Rome whose extravagant manner of living testifies to his native bad taste.

The influence of Latin literature stretched far beyond its intended contemporary audience. When classicists jokingly compare the Romans' belief in their own cultural superiority to a similar tendency in the British,

Roman success was proof enough of her enjoyment of divine favor. . . . Other imperial peoples, including the British, have recaptured this particular form of smugness: 'Land of hope and glory, home of God's elect,'

they actually point out a key connection between the two cultures.

The twelfth century British historian Geoffrey of Monmouth begins his Latin account of the British people thus:

After the Trojan War, Aeneas, . . . came with Ascanius [his son] by ship unto Italy. . . . Later, when his own last day had come, Ascanius, now king in his stead. . . . begat a son whose name was Silvius.

Silvius' son is Brutus, whose mission to conquer and settle Britain parallels that of Aeneas in Italy. Thus the British claim is elevated from being a master race to being the master race, the divinely begotten and protected Trojans, a move that adds tremendous weight to their own imperial endeavors. It is therefore no coincidence that during the beginning of England's imperial boom in the eighteenth century, Alexander Pope began work on a British version of the Aeneid, this one focusing on the voyage of Brutus and his band of Trojan nobles, those captured and enslaved by the Greeks, to settle England. Interestingly, Pope specified in his notes about the project that where Aeneas' chief virtue had been piety, Brutus' was benevolence.

The liminal space that Roman aristocrats occupied — Trojan
but not Asian, Roman but not Latin — and later the British (Roman but not pagan compounded with the distinctions between Trojan and Asian) fuels the need to create an insurmountable cultural barrier between East and West. The patricians in the Roman government feared the "cultural attack" of the Orient precisely because they feared the Orient in themselves, the same conflict at the heart of the British imperial anxiety of going native. The Roman treatment of the Magna Mater illustrates the ways in which this conflict determined imperial policy, the divisions between the "Roman" facets of the cult (those that were politically, socially, or economically useful), and the "barbaric" (those with the potential to undermine the Roman power structure) that were simultaneously being extended to Oriental culture as a whole. The problem lay in the fact that these boundaries were arbitrary: there was really no way to separate effectively those aspects of the cult and culture that Rome kept and glorified from those that served as Rome's pretext for seizing power. In literary texts, however, the Romans discovered by far the most effective means of fixing insecure boundaries, and, in so doing, of perpetuating the Roman (Western) aristocratic hegemony.

Nashville, Tennessee

NOTES
2. These rites, held March 15-20, closely parallel celebrations of the Christian Lent and Easter. In their Hellenistic form, they include passion plays, fasting, and a celebration of Attis's resurrection. See Vermaseren, 115-20.
4. Meyer, 139.
5. Vermaseren, 97.
6. Calpurnius Piso, Posidonius, Sallust, and Polybius all insisted that Roman luxury and decadence resulted from contact with foreign countries, especially those in Asia Minor. Because he was a Greek who rose to power in the Roman provincial government, Polybius's version of the excesses of early Roman imperial culture is particularly interesting. See Polybius: The Histories, trans. Mortimer Chambers (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966).
7. Beginning with the Struggle of the Orders in the fifth century BC, when
plebeians forced patricians to grant them their own political assembly, the truce between the upper and lower classes had been an uneasy one. Moreover, there was an ever-increasing imbalance between the two populations because the ranks of plebeians were continually swelling with freedmen and provincials who came to town, while the shrinking patrician class had no means of replenishing itself. Augustus remedied this situation by establishing the imperial prerogative to raise plebeian families to aristocracy.

8. Vermaseren, 125. Although the connection between Ceres and the plebeians was ancient, records of an organized cult worship before 202 BC do not exist. Since the events of the Cerealia mirror those of the patrician Megalesia (a schedule of fraternity banquets, games, and plays), it seems almost certain that this festival developed in conjunction with or in response to the patrician festival. See Scullard, 102.

9. See Vermaseren, 38, for the connections between evocatio and the Roman adoption of Cybele.


11. Fowler, 7-8


15. Balsdon, 229.

16. William Stearns Davis, The Influence of Wealth in Imperial Rome (New York: Macmillan, 1910), 159. Although dated, this work provides an excellent analysis of the economic ramifications of imperial power at Rome, including how Romans made their fortunes, how much those fortunes amounted to, and how they spent them.

17. Davis, 152.

18. Davis, 51.

19. Davis, 49


21. Il. 1-2. The source for this poem is a translation by C.H. Sisson included in Meyer, The Ancient Mysteries. The book is a compilation of passages from ancient writers that deal with specific mystery cults. The section on Magna Mater is especially helpful because it contains a variety of perspectives, including the works of early Christian writers, a Greek historian and a Latin historian, a Latin poet, and a Latin prose writer.

22. l. 60.

23. ll. 48-54


25. On the Gemma Augustea, an exquisitely carved cameo that depicts the apotheosis of Augustus, Cybele stands beside Augustus, and several classicists interpret Augustus's wife Livia as being portrayed as Cybele as well. See

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Vermaseren 75, 86, and plate 58. Vermaseren also says that Augustus lived in a
house opposite Cybele's temple on the Palatine hill, Rome's most prestigious dis-

26. 11.148-56. All citations of the Aeneid are take from Virgil: The Aeneid,
27. See especially Satires 1.6, 2.2, and 2.4.
29. Geoffrey of Monmouth: Histories of the Kings of Britain, trans. Lucy
30. See Ian R. Jack, Augustan Satire (Oxford: Oxford University Press,
1942), and Hugh A. MacDougall, Racial Myth in English History: Trojans,
Teutons, and Anglo-Saxons (Hanover, NH: UP of New England, 1982).