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Iuno... Saeuissima: Patriarchy, Divinity, and Villainy in Imperial Roman Epic

Written by Nolan M. Cicci

Advised by Prof. J. M. Colvin

Juno is a Roman deity with a significant amount of scholarship around her impact on Roman literature and Roman social life. Her divine department is as the protector of motherhood, banks, family order, marriage, and women in general. Many Roman temples still exist that immortalize her. However, there is another aspect to her character that is at odds to her portrayal in day-to-day Roman life, mainly her portrayal in the Roman epics of Virgil's *Aeneid* and Silius Italicus' *Punica*.

Virgil (fl. ~26. B.C.) and Silius Italicus (b. ~26 A.D.) wrote, respectively, examples of epic literature, both which detail the myths that revolve around Roman bellicosity. Both portray the queen of the heavens, Juno, in a negative light. These accounts of Juno's relationships to Roman heroes and villains provide a view into their authors' viewpoints especially regarding theories of divinity, the purposes of mythography, and the Roman understanding of female status. These interpretations of Juno as an adversarial deity reveal not only the authors' propagandistic and deeply political ideologies, but also the social norms underpinning their stories.

In both epics, the authors portray Juno as a temperamental, rageful, and jealous deity. Virgil's Juno frustrates Aeneas' retinue at every step, manipulating Aeneas' journey by redirecting his Trojans to Carthage and the embrace of Dido, and inspiring the Latins to assemble against the Trojans when they arrive in Italy.¹ Silius Italicus, informed by Virgil's epic, would later expound on this aspect of Juno. Silius Italicus' Juno continues to favor the Carthaginians.² In both epics, the authors depict Juno consistently as overtly antagonistic to Romans; tellingly, nowhere does the interpretation vitiate against her role as queen of the Olympians.

¹ Virgil, *Aeneid*, LCL 63 (Cambridge, MA, 2000), pp. 9; 263; 305; 427.

² Silius Italicus, *Punica*, LCL 277 (Cambridge, MA, 2000), pp. 5-7; Silius Italicus, *Punica*, LCL 278 (Cambridge, MA, 2000), p. 15.

Virgil and Silius Italicus embellished their epics in order to underscore their epic's respective religious and social significance. These epics do not impart historical fact. Rather, these epics demonstrate the politics prevalent at their respective times of composition. Both epics have been enormously influential, even into modernity. Some contemporary scholars have attempted to approach Juno's hostile depictions as extensions of Roman patriarchy — a villainous female, possessing immense power, conspiring against virile Romans. Others have interpreted Juno's role as a protectress of foreign power — less a problematic female, more a problematic partisan of a foreign army and caretaker of foreign leaders. Both interpretive frameworks are valid in their own right. Yet, in isolation, these interpretations fail to explain the Roman veneration of Juno in their Civic Polytheism.³ In consonance, however, these two interpretative frameworks reveal much about the sexism, chauvinism, and religious sensibility that permeated Roman Civic Polytheism.⁴

Juno's literary antagonism did not deter Romans from making Juno's temples into mints and banks;⁵ it did not militate against veneration;⁶ it did not deprive her of devotees.⁷ By allowing complexity to reign, by approaching her literary depictions from a perspective of intersectionality, and by taking this literature seriously as literature and not as historical text, a new explanation of Juno's villainy comes into focus.

Understanding a deity as adversarial reveals much about Roman conceptions of the divine and speaks to a definition of divinity that differs profoundly from our own.

³ M. Beard, et al., *Religions of Rome, vol. 1: A history* (Cambridge, 1998); J. Scheid, *An introduction to Roman Religion* (Edinburgh, 2003).

⁴ R. D'Ambra, *Roman Women* (Cambridge, 2006); B. Isaac, *The invention of racism in classical antiquity* (Princeton, 2013).

⁵ A. Hands, "Juno Moneta," *The numismatic chronicle* 10 (1910), pp. 1-12.

⁶ F. Dolansky, "Reconsidering the *Matronalia* and women's rites," *The classical world* 104.2 (2019), pp. 191-209

⁷ A. Ziolkowski, *Between geese and the Auguraculum: The origin of the cult of Juno on the Arx* (Chicago 1993), p. 207.

This paper seeks to explore the variance between Juno's veneration and her villainous portrayal in the Roman epic. On the one hand, Juno's depiction in literature permits the exploration of her patriarchal authors. On the other hand, the fact of her cultus permits examination of the society that venerated her. Keeping these two examinations in mind, we will explore the variance between her literary villainy and physical worship.

Aeneid and *Punica*, written by Virgil and Silius Italicus, respectively, have had a dramatic impact on Roman literature. *Aeneid* recounts a tale of the foundation of Rome. *Punica*, while not nearly as beloved as the *Aeneid*, is similarly important simply because it is the longest surviving piece of Roman epic.

Publius Vergilius Maro was born in 70 B.C. near Mantua, in the Po River Valley in Northern Italy,⁸ close to the epicenter of the Roman Empire. Virgil was the son of a moderately wealthy landowner. Although little is known about his parents, Virgil's family received Roman citizenship in his boyhood. Virgil's family farmed the land they owned, and they were of relatively humble means.⁹ His parents had wealth enough to send him to study law in Rome. However, Virgil clearly preferred writing and philosophy to the study of law.¹⁰ Some scholars speculate that one of the reasons Virgil wanted to distance himself from Roman law and politics is that the Roman Civil War and the assassination of Julius Caesar both transpired during his time studying Rome.¹¹ I think this increasingly unstable Rome soured him on the nature of Roman politics and made him disillusioned with Roman law.

⁸ P. Jones, *Reading Virgil: Aeneid I and II*. (Cambridge, 2011)

⁹ T. Frank, *Virgil: a biography*. (Blackwell, 1922) ; F. Titchener "Virgil and the Aeneid Background." *Utah State University Classics Department*, (Logan, 2004.)

<https://www.usu.edu/markdamen/1320AncLit/chapters/11verg.htm>.

¹⁰ L. Weeda, *Virgil's Political Commentary: In the Eclogues, Georgics and Aeneid*. (2015)

¹¹ N. Horsfall, *A Companion to the Study of Virgil*, (1995)

Virgil, returning to the countryside of Mantua, tended to a farm of his own, far from the political strife of the city. However, Roman politics would continue to dramatically impact his life. During the Second Triumvirate, a period typified by political tumult, Virgil's farm was confiscated from him and reallocated to soldiers as payment from the Roman government.¹² During this time, he started writing *Bucolics*,¹³ the first of his three surviving works. *Bucolics*, which valorized aspects of the countryside by using the epic meter of dactylic hexameter, describes, in heroic terms, the rustic life. This meter and purpose is evident in his use of language to describe the fertile land, "I used to wonder, Amaryllis, why so sadly you called on the gods, and for whom you let the apples hang on their native trees. – The very pines, Tityrus, the very springs, the very orchards here were calling for you!"¹⁴ *Bucolics* also incorporated aspects of civil discourse, especially the confiscation of farmland and the treatment of Roman citizens.¹⁵

Virgil's second compilation, *Georgics*, continued his advocacy for the farming lifestyle. Written in the epic meter, dactylic hexameter, and set in four books, *Georgics* describe various farming tasks, such as viticulture, animal husbandry, and respecting agricultural deities. *Georgics*, BK. IV, describes the social structure of bees, likening a well lived life to that of a worker bee.¹⁶ Less of an agricultural manual, and more of political and philosophical treatise, *Georgics* explores human nature against the violence of the empire.

¹² N.M. Horsfall, *A Companion to the Study of Virgil*, (1995)

¹³ Also called the *Eclogues*.

¹⁴ Virgil, *Eclogues*, LCL 63 (Cambridge, MA, 2000) p. 27

¹⁵ Virg, *Ecl*, LCL 63

¹⁶ Virgil, *Georgics*, LCL 63 (Cambridge, MA, 2000)

Finally, there is *Aeneid*, undoubtedly the most famous of Virgil's three surviving poetic works. Augustus, the first Roman Emperor, commissioned Virgil to produce an epic story, both in structure and in scope, that would retell the founding of Rome. Virgil never completed his commission, dying on 21 September, 19 B.C..¹⁷ Virgil's will stipulated that his draft of the *Aeneid* be destroyed after his death.¹⁸ Augustus intervened and the incomplete epic was edited by fellow poets Varius Rufus and Plotius Tucca and published thereafter.¹⁹ *Aeneid* again witnessed the epic style of dactylic hexameter, and, due to the resulting massive popularity of this work, dactylic hexameter became closely associated with Virgil similarly as it was to Homer.²⁰

Born around 26 A.D., Tiberius Catius Asconius Silius Italicus, earned renown more for his political life than his writings. Few details of his life are certain and our knowledge of his life flows from *Punica* and from a smattering of minor writings from Martial, Pliny the Younger, and Sidonius Apollinaris. Pliny the Younger's letter defines an understanding of Silius Italicus' character and his reputation to the Roman people. Pliny the Younger wrote to his contemporary, Caninius Rufus, shortly after the death of Silius Italicus. This letter is not a eulogy of Silius Italicus; rather, Pliny devotes most of its contents to muse about the "pity for human frailty."²¹ All the same, this letter preserves an opinion of Silius Italicus.

A member of the senatorial elite and consul under Emperor Nero, rumor held that Silius Italicus "had offered his services as an informer"²² in order to attain political

¹⁷ N.M. Horsfall, *A Companion to the Study of Virgil*, (1995)

¹⁸ W. Wallis, "The Encyclopedia Britannica. // Virgil" (1911)

¹⁹ W. Wallis, "The Encyclopedia Britannica. // Virgil" (1911)

²⁰ L. Morgan, "Getting the measure of heroes: The dactylic hexameter and its detractors." *Latin Epic and Didactic Poetry: Genre, Tradition and Individuality* (2004): 1-26.

²¹ Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, LCL 55 (Cambridge, MA, 2000) p. 185

²² Plin. *Let*, LCL 55, p. 183

clout. This rumor alleges Silius Italicus to have betrayed the trust of his fellow politicians to Emperor Nero. The accusation soured Silius Italicus' reputation among his peers.²³ Silius Italicus earned significant public respect first by skillfully governing Asia and then by retiring from politics. Unlike other pseudo-retired consuls, Silius Italicus actually stayed out of politics.²⁴ He would live out his retirement as an academic, engaging in conversation with other scholars, submitting his writings to public review, and buying up massive amounts of property. He spent most of his retirement at his home in Campania rather than his other houses, a fact that attracted criticism.²⁵ Silius Italicus, rustivating far away from the city, did not attend the accession of Trajan, a task he was expected to undertake.²⁶ Whether this offense was due to failing health, a lack of political interest, or simply that Silius Italicus wanted to stay at home instead is debated. Pliny the Younger takes this moment as an opportunity to praise both the new emperor as well as Silius Italicus himself, stating his absence was, "an incident which reflects great credit on the Emperor for permitting this liberty, and on Italicus for venturing to avail himself of it."²⁷

While primarily known for his political career in his own time, he produced the longest surviving Latin epic, *Punica*. *Punica* is massive, comprising seventeen books in approximately 12,000 lines of dactylic hexameter. Silius Italicus published *Punica* in installments; the release dates of some sections are known, others are not. While Silius Italicus surely produced other writings, only *Punica* survives.

²³ Plin. *Let*, LCL 55, p. 183

²⁴ Plin. *Let*, LCL 55, p. 185

²⁵ Plin. *Let*, LCL 55, p. 185

²⁶ Plin. *Let*, LCL 55, p. 185

²⁷ Plin. *Let*, LCL 55, p. 185

Silius Italicus was an outspoken enthusiast for the works of Cicero and Virgil.²⁸ Pliny the Younger states that Silius Italicus was so fond of Virgil that he would celebrate Virgil's birthday every year with, "more solemnity than his own, and at Naples especially, where he would visit Virgil's tomb as if it were a temple."²⁹ Both in structure and in content, Virgil's influence pervades *Punica*. In adopting the heroic hexameter, Silius Italicus both emulates Virgil and places his work in the epic tradition. Likewise, *Punica* takes inspiration from both *Aeneid*'s plot points and from characters and situations in *Aeneid*. Characters introduced in *Aeneid* return, either as historical reference or as full-fledged new iterations. We see this device in Silius Italicus' description of Juno and other characters that are subject to Juno's actions. The classical reception of Silius Italicus' *Punica* was less than positive. Pliny the Younger describes Silius Italicus' work: "He took great pains over his verses, though they cannot be called inspired, and frequently submitted them to public criticism by the readings he gave."³⁰

Silius Italicus died at the age of 75. His death was notable for two reasons: first, Silius Italicus' passing inspired Pliny the Younger to write the biographical letter to Caninius Rufus, ironically meaning his death helped provide significant insight into his life; second, his method of passing, starving himself to death after discovering a fatal tumor, roused several Stoics. Specifically: his ability to enjoy the end of his days, knowing that he was going to perish soon as well as his willingness to commit suicide as opposed to succumbing to his illness inspired Stoics.³¹

²⁸ Martial, *Epigrams*, LCL 480 (Cambridge, MA, 2000) p. 43

²⁹ Plin. *Let*, LCL 55, p. 185; Mart. *Epi*, LCL 480, p. 45

³⁰ Plin. *Let*, LCL 55, p. 185

³¹ Stoic philosophy values taking control of one's life in the pursuit of living, or in this case, dying, well. Stoics believe that the nature of man is predicated on the fact that man is only in control of himself, and therefore, Silius Italicus' suicide in the face of illness and old age is something to be commended. Seneca, in the first line of his first published letter to his friend, Lucilius, writes, "Ita fac, mi Lucili; vindica te tibi..." Which can be translated to: Carry on, my friend Lucilius, free yourself... which echoes the sentiments of Silius Italicus.

While certainly not as popular as Virgil, Silius Italicus still provides a full characterization of Juno in his work. From what little we know about his life we can see the political and social situations that influenced his writings and the reasoning behind his epic poetry. Simply put, his writings were informed by his life as a politician and his love of Virgil. Virgil's *Aeneid* codifies Rome's mythos of foundation. Silius Italicus' *Punica* is the longest surviving Latin epic. Silius Italicus, prominently inspired by Virgil in his diction and writing style, serves as a continuation of Virgil's poetic style.³²

Epic conforms to many general conventions in the past century. Epic is a very specific genre. Originating as a Greek genre and transitioning later into a Latin idiom, epic relies more on style than on content. Virgil and Silius Italicus both labored in the shadow of Homer. These preliminary works, such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* laid the groundwork for the epic structure of dactylic hexameter. Homer inspired Virgil who would then inspire Silius Italicus. Homer himself was similarly inspired by previous works of epic magnitude like the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. While evidence for Homer's influence by the *Epic of Gilgamesh* are scant,³³ we know that Virgil was directly influenced by the works of Homer³⁴ and we know explicitly that Silius Italicus was directly inspired by the works of Virgil in his epic poem.³⁵ In antiquity, epic was generally defined by the use of dactylic hexameter.³⁶ Virgil's inspiration by Homer is apparent in the first lines of their respective epics, "Arma virumque cano || Troiae qui primus ab oris"³⁷ or in English, "I sing of arms and the man || who first from the coast of

³² Mart. *Epi*, LCL 480, p. 43

³³ G. Gresseth, "The Gilgamesh Epic and Homer." *The Classical Journal* 70, no. 4 (1975): pp. 1-18.

³⁴ T. Kerns. "Homer in Virgil." *Anthós* 1, no. 3 (1992): p. 5

³⁵ Mart. *Epi*, LCL 480, pp. 43-45 ; Plin. *Letters*, LCL 55, p. 185

³⁶ Dactylic hexameter is a rhythmic convention with a structure of six feet, used originally as a method to remember epics through oral storytelling, by the time of Virgil, transitioned as less of a memorization tactic into a definite format to describe heroic epic.

³⁷ Virg. *Aen*. LCL 63, p.1

troy..." Notably, both this opening as well as the structuring of this preliminary line mirrors that of the earlier Homer in *Iliad* who writes, "μῆνιν ἄειδε θεὰ || Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος"³⁸ or in English, "Sing o' goddess of the rage || of Peleus's son Achilles..." This formatting inspiration would continue into Silius Italicus' *Punica* who uses this structure as well.

Aeneid consists of hexameters divided into twelve books and comprises 9883 lines. So influenced by Homer was Virgil, that *Aeneid*'s first half, which recounts the wanderings of Aeneas, can be helpfully termed Odyssean; the latter half, describing Aeneas' arrival in Italy, might be similarly termed Iliadic. Virgil derived episodic intent from Homer by using these respective terms.

Virgil also had the added pressure of producing a piece of writing that both glorified the Roman empire and Roman emperor while still maintaining the structure of epic literature. This can be seen in the depiction of the two respective shields of Achilles and Aeneas. In the ekphrasis of Achilles' shield, Homer describes many things that are not outwardly Greek focused, such as a field being plowed for the first time or men and women dancing together.³⁹ Conversely, the depiction of the Shield of Aeneas is purposefully describing the future of Rome. From Romulus and Remus, "He (Vulcan) had fashioned, too, the mother wolf lying stretched out in the green cave of Mars; around her teats the twin boys hung playing, and suckled their dam without fear..."⁴⁰ or the depiction of Emperor Augustus Caesar, "But Caesar, entering the walls of Rome in triple triumph, was dedicating to Italy's gods his immortal votive gift—three hundred mighty shrines throughout the city."⁴¹

³⁸ Homer, *Iliad*, LCL 170 (Cambridge, MA, 2000) p. 1

³⁹ Homer, *Iliad*, LCL 171 (Cambridge, MA, 2000) pp. 322 - 333

⁴⁰ Virgil, *Aeneid*, LCL 64 (Cambridge, MA, 2000) p. 105

⁴¹ Virg. *Aen.* LCL 64, p. 111

Scholars debate whether or not Virgil wrote *Aeneid* with the innocuous intention or critical. Augustus commissioned Virgil to write *Aeneid* to glorify the Roman empire and the Roman emperor. Was Virgil following the orders of Augustus, or, did Virgil use *Aeneid* to subtly critique Augustus and Augustus' policies? Those in favor of Virgil performing his task without malice will point to a specific section of book VI of *Aeneid* wherein the father of Aeneas, Anchises, gives a prophetic speech in the Underworld where he states,

"Augustus Caesar, son of a god, who will again establish a golden age in Latium amid fields once ruled by Saturn; he will advance his empire beyond the Garamants and Indians to a land which lies beyond our stars, beyond the path of year and sun, where sky-bearing Atlas wheels on his shoulders the blazing star-studded sphere."⁴²

showing that Virgil sought to name-drop Augustus to please the emperor. However, those who believe that Virgil did not like Augustus will quote later in book VI wherein, when Aeneas is leaving the underworld he exits,

"Two gates of Sleep there are, whereof the one, they say, is horn and offers a ready exit to true shades, the other shining with sheen of polished ivory, but delusive dreams issue upward through it from the world below. Thither Anchises, discoursing thus, escorts his son and with him the Sibyl, and sends them forth by the ivory gate."⁴³

Dissenters point to this moment as a retort to the idea that, while Virgil does speak of the greatness of Augustus, Virgil rescinded his admiration by implying that the prophecy was through the lens of a misbegotten dream.⁴⁴ In my estimation, Virgil was a fan of Augustus as his artistic sponsor, but was more circumspect with the thoughts of empire.

Virgil's intent was for *Aeneid* to be expressly political and his depiction of Juno was likewise political. Firstly, Virgil postulates that Juno is the divine protectress of

⁴² Virg. *Aen.* LCL 63, p. 589

⁴³ Virg. *Aen.* LCL 63, p. 597

⁴⁴ W. Avery, "Augustus and the" *Aeneid*", *The Classical Journal* 52, no. 5 (1957): pp. 225-229. ; T. Frank, "Augustus, Virgil, and the Augustan Elogia." *The American Journal of Philology* 59, no. 1 (1938): pp. 91-94. ; S. Grebe, "Augustus' Divine Authority and Virgil's *Aeneid*." *Virgilius* (2004): pp. 35-62. ; L. Weeda, *Virgil's Political Commentary: In the Eclogues, Georgics and Aeneid*. (2015)

Carthage and the princess Dido. Secondly, Juno's femininity represents the dangers of an ill-kept house. Thirdly, *Aeneid* establishes that Carthage and Rome, at the mythic start of their political disagreements, is due to Juno's direct interference.

Silius Italicus' *Punica* is massive. Focusing on the Second Punic War — 218 - 201 B.C. — the epic contains over 12,000 hexameters, divided into seventeen books.⁴⁵ The Second Punic war was substantial in its impact on Roman life and has a breadth of preserved writings, both fictional and biographical. Silius Italicus contrives and diluted to myth this war. This war witnessed Hannibal's march through the Alps accompanied by war elephants,⁴⁶ an event recounted in the *Punica*.⁴⁷ *Punica* is, at best, historical fiction, describing real events on an epic scale. However, as Michael von Albrecht argues, Silius Italicus' *Punica* conforms more by the malleable tropes of poetry rather than the rigid formulations of history.⁴⁸

Silius Italicus' *Punica* was not well-liked during its own time as we have seen in the testimony of Pliny the Younger.⁴⁹ Even so, it is a rare piece of ancient literature that survives in full. Therefore, it has garnered a significant amount of attention and readership. *Punica*'s overly dramatic and grandiose style is charming, though long-winded. Silius Italicus employs and emphasizes gruesome details to an almost laughable degree. This invention accrues to Silius Italicus' characterization: visceral descriptions of several people, places, and concepts simply drip from the page.

⁴⁵ P. Sabin, "The Mechanics of Battle in the Second Punic War", *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*. (Feb. 1996)

⁴⁶ E. T. Salmon, "The Strategy of the Second Punic War", *Greece and Rome: Cambridge University Press*, (Cambridge, England, 1960)

⁴⁷ Sil. *Pun*, LCL 278 pp. 141-145

⁴⁸ M. Albrecht, *Roman Epic: An Interpretive Introduction* (Leiden, NL, 1998) p. 293

⁴⁹ Plin. *Let*, LCL 55, p. 185

Silius Italicus clearly derives inspiration from Virgil's *Aeneid*. Both authors try to frame Juno as an antagonist who seeks to quell the efforts of the respective protagonists.

Silius Italicus assigns Juno the task of initiating the Second Punic War. Both the timeframe and her hatred for Rome are explained by stating that,

“When she saw Rome lifting her head high among aspiring cities, and even sending fleets across the sea to carry her victorious standards over all the earth, then the goddess felt the danger close and stirred up in the minds of the Phoenicians a frenzy for war. But the effort of their first campaign was crushed, and the enterprise of the Carthaginians was wrecked on the Sicilian sea; and then Juno took up the sword again for a fresh conflict.”⁵⁰

Here, Juno appears as divine antagonist, just like in *Aeneid*. Both *Aeneid* and *Punica* share the opinion that Juno had a special interest in Carthage and the Carthaginian people; in *Aeneid*, Dido, princess of Carthage, enjoys Juno's favor; in *Punica*, Hannibal Barca, general of the Carthaginian forces, enjoys Juno's favor. Indeed, Juno is the inspiration of Hannibal Barca's implacable hatred for Rome and the Roman people;

“...that may pass-provided that the banks of the Ticinus cannot contain the Roman dead, and that the Trebia, obedient to me, shall flow backwards through the fields of Gaul, blocked by the blood of Romans and their weapons and the corpses of men”⁵¹

Juno gives guidance to Hannibal in his military campaigns, an example of which can be seen in book X of *Punica* when, after planning to launch an attack against Rome, Juno intervenes by sending the God of Sleep to Hannibal so that, “...he may not be eager now to behold the forbidden walls of Rome [because the] lord of Olympus will never suffer him to enter there.”⁵² Juno also laments the failure of Carthage and intervenes to save Hannibal from death at the hands of the Romans.⁵³ Just as Aeneas was as much Roman as the city proper, so too is Hannibal Barca as much Carthage as the city proper,

⁵⁰ Sil. *Pun*, LCL 277. 7-9

⁵¹ Sil. *Pun*, LCL 277. 7-9

⁵² Sil. *Pun*, LCL 278, p. 77

⁵³ Sil. *Pun*, LCL 278 pp. 465-476

reflected in Juno's willingness to defend Hannibal as an extension of Carthage. Here Hannibal Barca is an extension of Carthage, a city that enjoyed Juno's patronage.

In *Aeneid*, Aeneas and Dido both represent the potential of their cities. In *Punica*, both cities are realized. In *Aeneid*, Aeneas serves as the singular hero whereas the villains are plural, e.g. Dido, Turnus. Conversely, in *Punica*, the villain is singular and Rome's heroes are plural, e.g. Scipio, Fabius Maximus. In each case, the characters of these epics are synonymous with their respective cities.

When Scipio routes Hannibal's army, Jupiter says to Juno, "What grief preys upon your heart? Tell your husband what it is. Is it the plight of Hannibal that torments you, and anxiety for your loved city of Carthage?"⁵⁴ In this way, Silius Italicus frames Juno not in terms of a hatred for Rome, but rather a love of Carthage. Guided not by wrath or anger, an intense sense of jealousy drives Juno.

Between *Aeneid* and *Punica*, Juno's antagonism did not stem from hatred but from love. This idea of Juno not hating Rome could help explain why her worship was still venerated in Roman society. Perhaps she is indifferent to the Roman city in matters outside of the involvement of Carthage and her characterization of a protectress of Carthage was an established fact in Roman society, but this did not exclude her from Rome entirely.

Modern commentators often misconstrue Roman religion as a simple one-to-one latinization of characters found in the ancient Greek polytheistic religion. While it is true that both religions were polytheistic, and that Greek counterparts heavily inspired Roman gods and goddesses (e.g. Zeus to Jupiter, Poseidon to Neptune, Hades to Pluto, etc...) Various authors characterized the gods and goddesses differently and

⁵⁴ Sil. *Pun*, LCL 278 pp. 465

dramatically altered these deities over time due to various cultural influences and shifts in political thought.

Accruing to the realities of veneration, in contrast to the polytheistic nature of Roman religion, an ancient Roman silversmith would surely pray to Vulcan, the blacksmith god, rather than Bacchus, the revelry god. Still some gods and goddesses were worshiped on a universal level; deities like Jupiter, as king of the gods, and Venus, as the god of love and beauty, enlisted near total worship because of the inherent popularity in what they represent. Practitioners of this Roman Religion, a Roman Civic Polytheism, assigned well drawn personalities to these divinities. Juno's department included social and cultural elements such as women, childbirth, and maternal love. While lacking the universal appeal that Jupiter and Venus enjoyed, she was certainly worshiped more than the deities with a tighter appeal, such as Mars or Diana.

Roman religion was hardly eremitic. Romans developed a practice that would be later coined as *interpretatio Romana*, a propensity to equate the foreign gods and goddesses with domestic gods and goddesses. By way of example, the Romans the Germanic deity, Odin, to that of the Roman deity, Mercury. The similarities of these respective gods' departments creates an archetypal effect caused by the *interpretatio Romana*.⁵⁵

For a Roman, all religion was political and all politics were religious. Rome's second king, Numa, was alleged to have brought religion into the state and established the practices of the first religious Roman cults. Indeed, Numa put the civic into Roman

⁵⁵ A. Bammesberger, "Hermes-Mercury and Woden-Odin as Inventors of Alphabets." *Anglistische Forschungen: Old English and Their Continental Background* 217 (1991): pp. 409-419. ; M. Grau, "Putting Hermes Back into Hermeneutics." *Refiguring Theological Hermeneutics: Hermes, Trickster, Fool*, pp. 79-103. (New York, 2014)

Civic Polytheism.⁵⁶ Dependent from the state-sponsored nature of Roman Civic Polytheism, Roman religion was thereby an instrument of imperialism. Likewise, often political leaders justified political or social action.⁵⁷

But the pantheon of Roman Civic Polytheism was porous, Politicians could nominate others posthumously or living as new gods worthy of worship.⁵⁸ We see this impulse in myth in Aeneas; we see this impulse in history through Caesar and Augustus.⁵⁹ Thus Roman Civic Polytheism was a type of statecraft, both in the area of foreign policy and domestically.

In literature, characters accrued to specific gods. Quite apart from their veneration, these deities were templates for the character design.⁶⁰ By way of example, a Roman writer could opine a character to be the child of Jupiter, as Jupiter, as the father of heroes such as Hercules, fits written Jupiter's character template. If the character needed to be expressly clever and crafty, the character could be related to Mercury, such as Ulysses. The gods' character traits were well known and in Roman pop culture, the gods could serve as metonyms.⁶¹ Metonymy, by which a trait is communicated by reference to a character, serves to demonstrate a character's likeness with that trait, e.g. Pluto refers to wealth as in a plutocracy. Aeneas is similarly a metonym for pious. Romulus and Remus are both children of the war god Mars and a Vestal virgin, thus invoking both the brutal bloodlust of the god of war as well as the understanding that

⁵⁶ Livy, *History of Rome 1*, LCL 114 (Cambridge, MA, 2000) pp. 62-69

⁵⁷ I. Gradel, *Emperor worship and Roman religion*. (Oxford, 2002)

⁵⁸ L. Kreitzer, "Apotheosis of the Roman Emperor." *The Biblical Archaeologist* 53, no. 4 (1990): pp. 211-217.

⁵⁹ P. Garnsey, "Religious toleration in classical antiquity." *Studies in Church History* 21 (1984): pp. 1-27.

⁶⁰ M. Seo. *Exemplary Traits: Reading Characterization in Roman Poetry*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

⁶¹ Virg. *Aen.* LCL 63-64

Rome will be founded by those who have a direct understanding of the future empire's hearth and home.⁶²

Roman Civic Polytheism was rather less predicated on text than on material. The Roman calendar was packed with specific days for worshiping particular gods and goddesses. These days would witness large parades, and ceremonies in which practitioners could worship in a household shrine, or in an established temple. Juno, always popular among women because of her departmental focus on feminine affairs, enjoyed worship at both religious events and at her own temples. For example, Matronalia, a ceremony in which Roman men and women would pray to Juno for help in childbirth and child rearing.

Juno also served as the patron deity of those who minted coins, the temples of her veneration also served as banks for the Roman empire, showing an aspect of her characterization that is less seen in literary depictions. Just as Juno's interventions could bring a household in order, so too does her patronage of the treasury bring order to society. The temple of Juno Moneta, which housed the Roman treasury, was located among the triad of temples on the Capitoline Hill. Martial credits the sacred geese of Juno with the protection of these temples by Gaulic invaders and 390 B.C. stating, “Geese: This bird saved the Tarpeian temple of the Thunderer.”⁶³ Even then, however, it was debated whether or not the goddess directly inspired the geese to become agitated at the enemy or if they just did what geese do, as Plutarch says,

“The geese hissed at them and rushed at them impetuously, and, at the sight of arms, became even more excited, and filled the place with piercing and discordant clamour. By this the Romans were aroused, and, when they comprehended what had happened, they forced back their enemies and hurled them over the precipice.”⁶⁴

⁶² Virg. *Aen.* LCL 63-64

⁶³ Mart. *Epi.* LCL 480, p. 230

⁶⁴ Plutarch, *Moralia: On the Fortune of the Romans*, LCL 304, (Cambridge, MA, 2000) p. 373

This depiction of this event shows that, in either respect, Juno had a prominent place in the common cultural mindset for the typical Roman as there was worship, myths, and infrastructure set up to support the generally benevolent, or at least, not anti-Roman, divinity of Juno as a major player in the Roman pantheon.

In *Aeneid* and *Punica*, Juno's defining character trait is her ravenous jealousy towards the Roman Republic. Juno, one would assume, must have been a villain, hated in Roman society. After all, Juno is the antagonist in *Aeneid* and the progenitrix of the greatest enemy empire that Rome encountered in *Punica*. Such an assumption would be mistaken. In fact, Romans respected this goddess deeply in temples and in the homesteads of Rome. Architecture reflects the depth of this respect.

The Juno of literature is not the Juno of religious worship. Virgil and Silius Italicus root Juno's characterization in *Aeneid* and *Punica* in elements of her veneration. The author's describe her nature as imperious and volatile; however, for everyday Romans, Juno occupied a very different place in the structure of society. By correlating the extremity of Juno in literature with the mundanity in worship, we can explore the fraught nature in the blatant inconsistencies of Roman thought.

Romans show inconsistency in the very origins of Juno. Modern scholars trace the origins of Juno from her original characterization as an Etruscan deity, Uni, whom was later correlated with the Greek Hera, forming an entirely new goddess, Juno.⁶⁵ Many Greek stories pertaining to Hera by many Greek authors were later ascribed to Juno. *Aeneid*, is a continuation of Homeric epic and therefore certainly conflates Rome's

⁶⁵ J. Turfa, *The Etruscan World*. (Routledge, 2014) ; R. Hermans, "Juno Sospita: a foreign goddess through Roman eyes." *Processes of Integration and Identity Formation in the Roman Republic*, pp. 327-336. (Brill, 2012)

Juno⁶⁶ to Homer's Hera⁶⁷ Hera, pathetic in the minds of the Greeks due to Zeus' multiple infidelities, is unlike Juno in the minds of the Romans, who allotted her a greater degree of independence and agency. Less a victim of Jupiter's adultery, and more a character possessed by her own will, Juno acts with more autonomy in the Roman interpretation. Accordingly, Roman authors allowed Juno significantly more individuality and frame her as less reliant on her marital status. Consequently, Romans frame her as more actively antagonistic.

Juno's birth is one of the few conclusive things about her character. Keeping with the predilection of the *interpretatio Romana*, Greeks and Romans share salient details of Juno's birth. Born of the Titan, Kronos, called Saturn by the Romans, she was swallowed by him immediately after birth. Later, freed from the belly of her father by Jupiter, she allied with her siblings against the Titan, eventually defeating him and had Saturn, "banished to the dark land of death."⁶⁸ Jupiter prescribed her new duties as goddess: she is to oversee women, childbirth, marriage, and motherhood. Jupiter marries her and she becomes the first of the new gods to produce children, thus serving as queen of the gods and Jupiter's consort.⁶⁹

Authors, however, have characterized Jupiter with a promiscuous nature and consequently, many myths depict Juno as a woman scorned by her husband's gratuitous infidelity. Her subsequent revenge against women who dare to fornicate, consensually or not, with Jupiter is often the precipitating act to many heroic origin stories, especially if originating from Greek basis. This structure – Jupiter defiling his marriage, Juno responding to his transgression, and a subsequent accounting of a natural reality

⁶⁶ Virg. *Aen.* LCL 63, pp. 437-439

⁶⁷ Hom. *IL*, LCL 171, pp. 623 ; Virg. *Aen.* LCL 63, pp. 437-439

⁶⁸ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, LCL 42 (Cambridge, MA, 2000) p. 11

⁶⁹ Ov, *Met*, LCL 42, pp. 11 - 25

became the basic format for Roman myths. Notably, as mentioned earlier, their Greek counterparts directly influence these myths; Ovid lifts, for example, Juno's birth directly from Hesiod's *Theogony*.⁷⁰

Juno enjoyed veneration both in respect to her godhead and to her various aspects. Celebrants came together annually at a festival dedicated to Juno, the Matronalia.⁷¹ Celebrated on 1 March, party goers use this festival as a time to venerate Roman women, buying gifts for them and allowing them to breach typical Roman decorum. The party goers would subsequently pray to the goddess enlisting her aid for the prosperity and health of Roman women – especially after a childbirth; Ovid says, “her who is with child unbind her hair before she prays, in order that the goddess may gently unbind her teeming womb.”⁷²

So, we have an impasse: on the one hand, authors could frame Juno as villainous; on the other hand, celebrants valorized Juno in the temples and streets of Rome.⁷³ Juno's temples, such as that on the Capitoline Hill or that uncovered at Gabii present an aura of regal authority. That Juno was simultaneously an entity deserving veneration and a contemptible literary figure. For these depictions of Juno's villainy, we must turn to literature.

Virgil depicts a very different Juno than the Juno in day-to-day Roman life. Virgil prefaces his work with a prophecy that describes the eventual foundation of Rome by members of Aeneas' bloodline: a city so bright, it would eventually outshine the might of

⁷⁰ Hesiod, *Theogony*, LCL 57 (Cambridge, MA, 2000) p. 77

⁷¹ Ovid, *Fasti*, LCL 253 (Cambridge, MA, 2000) p. 139

⁷² Ovid, *Fasti*, LCL 253, p. 139

⁷³ P. Tucci, "Where high Moneta leads her steps sublime" 'Tabularium and the Temple of Juno Moneta." *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 18 (2005): pp. 6-33. ; D. Clay, "The Archaeology of the Temple to Juno in Carthage (Aen. 1. 446-93)." *Classical Philology* 83, no. 3 (1988): pp. 195-205. J. Moralee, *Rome's holy mountain: the Capitoline Hill in late antiquity*. (Oxford, 2018)

a city that Juno prefers, Carthage. In order to prevent the realization of this prophecy, Juno leads Aeneas into the Carthagian princess Dido's arms.⁷⁴ The very early lines of *Aeneid* warn of Juno's divine interference: "Tell me, O Muse, the cause; wherein thwarted in will or wherefore angered, did the Queen of heaven drive a man, of goodness so wondrous, to traverse so many perils, to face so many toils."⁷⁵ Virgil clarified Juno's motivation: "This, 'tis said, Juno loved [Carthage] above all other lands."⁷⁶ Virgil frames Juno not necessarily as a Roman antagonist, but rather as a Carthaginian partisan. Throughout *Aeneid*, Juno concocts plans to frustrate Aeneas' destiny. After Aeneas flees burning Troy, Juno commissions King Aeolus, keeper of the winds to, "Hurl fury into your winds, sink and overwhelm the ships, or drive the men asunder and scatter their bodies on the deep."⁷⁷ Later, Juno sends her messenger, the goddess of the rainbow, Iris, to deliver inspiration to the enemies of Aeneas, stating, "Why hesitate? Now, now is the hour to call for steed and chariot; break off delay, and seize the bewildered camp!"⁷⁸ Juno is unsuccessful in preventing the foundation of Rome, but Virgil imagines her interference to be the inspiration for the bellicosity between Rome and her favorite city, Carthage. Thus, the very foundation of Rome contained the germ that would lead to the three Punic wars, real historical events that Silius Italicus would mythologize and embellish in *Punica*.

In *Punica*, Silius Italicus depicts Juno as more openly and directly aggressive to Rome, again, Juno favored Carthage. Just as Juno favors Dido of Carthage, so too does she favor Hannibal Barca in *Punica*. Instead of trying to simply divert the Roman cause,

⁷⁴ Virg. *Aen.* LCL 63, p. 263

⁷⁵ Virg. *Aen.* LCL 63, p. 263

⁷⁶ Virg. *Aen.* LCL 63, p. 263

⁷⁷ Virg. *Aen.* LCL 63, p. 263

⁷⁸ Virg. *Aen.* LCL 64, p. 115

like Virgil describes in *Aeneid*, Silius Italicus writes her so that it seems she is out to prevent it from continuing forever. Several instances in *Punica* demonstrate Juno's willingness to obliterate Rome by influencing Hannibal Barca, whom "Juno inspired [...] and tormented his spirit with ambition."⁷⁹

Apart from Juno's relationship with Hannibal Barca, *Punica* does not offer any aspects of Juno's maternal nature: she is the guiding force behind his hatred of Rome.⁸⁰ *Punica*'s Juno seems particularly loving towards Hannibal Barca, both as a child and as a defeated adult.⁸¹ Perhaps Silius Italicus intends this depiction as an extension of her maternalistic characteristics. If, however, Hannibal Barca stands as synecdoche as a whole, perhaps these maternal connections are rather less personal and more civic.

Interestingly, Silius Italicus also mentions the rediscovered temple of Juno at Gabii stating, "Nor did the beauty of Algidus detain him, nor Gabii, the city of Juno."⁸² Even in the context of having Juno as the villain in the text, *Punica* shows that there were Roman cities that still venerated her. Romans considered Juno to be of equal importance to other gods and goddesses. In both *Aeneid* and *Punica*, Juno favors the villains of Rome, it would follow, then, that Roman people might have underappreciated Juno; after all, she is the consistent villain in these two epics.

Clear and distinct differences existed between the literary characterization of Juno and her veneration by everyday Romans. While her personality is tempestuous and volatile both in religion and literature, Romans used these similarities differently in different circumstances. Juno's nature might have reflected Roman's anxieties towards

⁷⁹ Sil. *Pun*, LCL 277, p. 9

⁸⁰ Sil. *Pun*, LCL 277, pp. 7-9

⁸¹ Sil. *Pun*, LCL 278, p. 465

⁸² Sil. *Pun*, LCL 278, p.

marriage and childbirth.⁸³ Likewise, Juno's power of the purse could have reflected her proper matriarchal tendencies. Virgil and Silius Italicus, in this vein, depict Juno as a foil acting to the detriment of Roman values, the Roman people, and the Roman city.

As the Roman Empire expanded and changed, authors' descriptions and characterizations of Juno tended to stray further from original Greek characterizations. Simultaneously, more recent authors differed from earlier authors' characterizations of Juno. More recent Roman authors aligned Roman enemies with Roman deities, often without any previous known association, creating a slippage between literary and religious characterizations of the divine. This slippage caused the audience of these works to ascribe deities to these civilizations unnaturally and assume falsely the deities' role throughout Roman society.

It is important to note when examining the characterizations of Juno Roman ability to infiltrate cultures and adapt various elements from the culture into their own while still maintaining an essence of Roman nationality.⁸⁴ Silius Italicus' *Punica* takes place during the Second Punic War in which Juno guided the Carthaginian general Hannibal Barca, son of Hamilcar, to effectively nettle and antagonize Roman society with the intent of entirely obliterating it.⁸⁵ Naturally, Silius Italicus, being a Roman, ascribes a Roman deity when interpreting a Roman enemy. However, for the Carthaginians and Hannibal Barca, this deity had little to no significance in their expedition into Rome and Italy.⁸⁶ Our authors associate Juno with Carthage.

⁸³ P. Tucci, "'Where high Moneta leads her steps sublime' 'Tabularium and the Temple of Juno Moneta.'" *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 18 (2005): pp. 6-33.

⁸⁴ C. Ando, "Interpretatio romana." In *The Impact of Imperial Rome on Religions, Ritual and Religious Life in the Roman Empire*, pp. 51-65. (Brill, 2006)

⁸⁵ Sil. *Pun.*, LCL 278, pp. 141-145

⁸⁶ P. Sabin, "The Mechanics of Battle in the Second Punic War", *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*. (1996) ; E. Salmon, "The Strategy of the Second Punic War", *Greece and Rome: Cambridge University Press*, (Cambridge, 1960)

Carthaginians did not worship Juno.⁸⁷ While Silius Italicus based his narrative on real historical events that have left archaeological and material evidence, it is the *interpretatio Romana* that allows for the injection of mythology into historical events that subsequently becomes high drama.⁸⁸

By framing historical events in mythological terms, these events take on cosmic importance; no longer simply a fight between human institutions, the gods themselves are involved. In a manner similar to the Catholic cult of the saints and the United States' military,⁸⁹ so too can the Roman soldiers pray to their deities as a way to receive holy favor and beseech protection from a powerful enemy. Soldiers are able to imagine this violence as divinely ordained, and can frame their opponents as empowered by hostile gods or daemons.⁹⁰ Successful Roman generals or victorious Roman senators could ascend into the divine realm by act of government; apotheosis incentivised success.⁹¹ Though the Carthaginians did not venerate the deities our authors ascribed to them, the Romans believed that their subsequent ability to worship the successful campaign was akin to that of worshipping or dissenting against the gods and the fact that the Carthaginians themselves did not worship these gods is irrelevant.

As Roman religion was malleable, so too was Juno volatile. The controlling image of the divine is one of status. Roman deities, however, owing to their literary nature can change and be adapted to the author's whims even while the general understanding of

⁸⁷ C. Ando, *The matter of the gods: religion and the Roman Empire*. Vol. 44. (California, 2009)

⁸⁸ J. Prevas, *Hannibal crosses the Alps: the invasion of Italy and the Punic Wars*. (California, 2009)

⁸⁹ E. Terrell, "The Ancient Order of Saint Barbara." *U.S., Marines. Unit History*. (Camp Pendleton, California. 11th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, February 1, 1941)
<https://www.1stmardiv.marines.mil/Units/11TH-MARINE-REGT/History/St-Barbara/>.

⁹⁰ J. North, *Roman religion*. Vol. 30. (Cambridge, 2000)

⁹¹ L. Kreitzer, "Apotheosis of the Roman Emperor." *The Biblical Archaeologist* 53, no. 4 (1990): pp. 211-217. ; A. Chalupa, "How Did Roman Emperors Become Gods? Various Concepts of Imperial Apotheosis." *Anodos. Studies of the Ancient World* 6 (2006): pp. 201-207. ; R. Gabriel, *Scipio Africanus: Rome's Greatest General*. Potomac Books, Inc., (2008)

the deity remains the same. Romans had an ability to incorporate new gods and goddesses from other cultures, but this did not negate nor prevent Romans changing their gods by themselves absent external influence. Clearly, authors employed some license in depicting Juno in literature and this license differed from her characterization in circumstances of veneration. Our literary authors might have framed Juno antagonistically, we need not read this antagonism on to their religious culture more broadly. The general understanding of this deity and her realm of influence remains identical, but her personality could, and does, vary drastically.

Practitioners of Roman Civic Polytheism tended to alter their depiction of Roman divinities over time and the variance of Juno's characterization is likewise compressible. Authors were attuned to this fact. Alternatively, Juno can both be queen of the gods and patroness of powerful villains. Because these two opposing understandings of Juno exist so prevalently, we must assume that the religiosity behind Juno was equally segmented and crafted. Various authors and civic planners construct their understanding of Juno, perhaps without due understanding of the opposing characterization or perhaps with full understanding. This bilateral depiction provides an interesting look into the divide between the Roman understanding of their culture through culture and society.

Juno favors the Carthaginians, not the Romans that worship her. Authors imagine her to be patroness of the enemy. And yet, she is an imperial deity, in charge of maintaining empires. Romans imagine themselves destined to hold and maintain a diverse, pluralistic, world-empire. Why would Romans portray their empire at odds with the goddess of empire? Perhaps a postcolonial perspective can provide an answer.

When examining Juno, a postcolonialist approach can inform interpretations, both in propaganda and her role in territorial expansion. In my view, Romans authors

framed Juno antagonistically for two reasons: First, to heighten the narrative tension in their most important stories; Second, in order to frame themselves as underdogs.

Postcolonial theory can help us parse through these two impulses.

The Roman Empire was extraordinarily influential in both the propulsion of cultural diffusion as well as economic domination.⁹² Internally diverse and geographically enormous, the Roman empire exerted an immense influence on several peoples throughout its expansion.⁹³ The Romans were enthusiastic colonizers, unencumbered by the moral implications of conquering other lands. Indeed, Romans believed an ever-growing empire was seen as a continuation of Roman ideals.⁹⁴ In *Aeneid*, Virgil discusses this territorial mindset multiple times, and he entrenches this idea into the mythical founding of Rome. Virgil bases this imperial prophecy as he sets into action the events of Juno's maleficence that he bases a vision of a glorious empire that would besmirch her favored land,

"Yet in truth she had heard that a race was springing from Trojan blood, to overthrow some day the Tyrian towers; that from it a people, kings of broad realms and proud in war, should come forth for Libya's downfall: so rolled the wheel of fate"⁹⁵

In republican Rome, the ideas of Roman superiority would continue to proliferate in the Mediterranean, much to the dismay of Carthaginian traders, merchants, and politicians. The populace of Carthage, whose society was predicated on trade and commerce as its fundamental basis as opposed to land acquisition and bellicosity, saw Rome as a challenge to both trade, specifically in Sicily, and as a

⁹² T. Hölscher, "The concept of roles and the malaise of" identity": Ancient Rome and the modern world." *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome. Supplementary Volumes* 7 (2008): pp. 41-56.

⁹³ Britain for example. Please see: R. Hingley, "Britannia, origin myths and the British Empire." *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal* (1994).

⁹⁴ R. Laurence, *Cultural identity in the Roman Empire*. Psychology Press (2001)

⁹⁵ Virg. *Aen.* LCL 63, p. 265

challenge to their own sovereignty.⁹⁶ The resulting Punic wars would see both empires acting in a colonial manner.

Carthaginians structured their empire around Mediterranean merchant capital: they were traders, not raiders. The Carthaginians relied on trade to such an extent that any challenging force would be met with immediate suppression by means of a hired army or navy.⁹⁷ While Carthage occupied a very important part of the Mediterranean's economy, when it came to territorial growth and expansion, Carthage was much more focused on expanding trade routes as opposed to borders. However, the Carthaginian defeat after the First Punic War led to the Carthaginians experiencing a new vigor in their resentment towards the Roman Empire.⁹⁸ This resentment led into the Second Punic War, during which *Punica* takes place. Silius Italicus would have the reader believe that Hannibal Barca and Juno herself inspired the Carthaginians; to get revenge, destroy the Roman Empire, murder as many Romans as they can, and expand their territory. This embellishment, however, is an example of Silius Italicus adding to recorded history.

As Juno provides oversight for empires in her capacity as an imperial deity, so too can the methods of postcolonial theory illuminate her depictions in *Aeneid*, *Punica* and in recorded history. In the context of these two works, she is actively antagonistic, perhaps this antagonist characterization allows her to fulfill her imperial capacity. This characterization could be a carryover from the Greek tradition as Hera offers Paris

⁹⁶ D. Hoyos, *Carthage: A Biography*. (Routledge, 2020) ; W. Ameling, "The rise of Carthage to 264 B.C.." *A companion to the Punic Wars* (2011): pp. 39-57. ; D. Stone, "Africa in the Roman empire: connectivity, the economy, and artificial port structures." *American Journal of Archaeology* 118, no. 4 (2014): pp. 565-600.

⁹⁷ L. Rawlings, "The Carthaginian Navy: Questions And Assumptions." *New Perspectives on Ancient Warfare*, pp. 253-287. (Brill, 2010)

⁹⁸ D. Hoyos, *Carthage: A Biography*. (Routledge, 2020) ; J. Lazenby, *The First Punic War*. (Routledge, 2016)

rulership over Eurasia.⁹⁹ Alternatively, this characterization could reflect the Roman idea that the expansion of empire required divine support. Expanding an empire is onerous. And perhaps, Romans would believe that empire-building could amount to perverse punishment. Perhaps Juno's antagonism is a reflex of the idea of Roman ingenuity; Romans can defy even the divine.

Juno is the deity of empires, and her depiction in Roman literature is an index of imperial thinking. Being a colonial power is fatiguing, but the Romans thought themselves duty-driven. Writers sought to valorize and mythologize the Roman territorial expansion across Eurasia and it follows that they would use Juno as a bit of rationale. While she is against the Roman people, serving as the villain of the empire, her involvement in *Aeneid* and *Punica* ironically strengthened the Roman identity and in so doing, forged a more cohesive empire.

Juno very rarely acts with physical violence in the texts. More frequently, she orders someone to act, either violently or not, to the texts' respective protagonists. For instance, instead of intervening violently, like Jupiter striking down Tullus Hostilius with a lightning bolt,¹⁰⁰ Juno intervenes by sending Aeneas to Dido.¹⁰¹ Romans assumed that women would never act with physical violence, stereotyping them as being inherently weaker. Juno's characterization follows this pattern. In keeping with this controlling image, she is more of a manipulatrix than a pugilist. Perhaps Virgil is responding to the preserved dangers posed by Roman women, using Juno as a surrogate for their perceived lack of ability. Likewise, Aeneas' shield, which Virgil uses to foretell

⁹⁹ P. Walcot, "The judgement of Paris," *Greece & Rome* 24, no. 1 (1977): pp. 31-39. ; M. Davies, "The judgement of Paris and Iliad book XXIV," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 101 (1981): pp. 56-62.

¹⁰⁰ Livy, *History of Rome: Book I*. English Translation by. Rev. Canon Roberts. (New York, NY, 1912) Chapter 31 p. 1

¹⁰¹ Virg. *Aen.* LCL 63, p. 265

future events, depicts the abduction of the Sabine women,¹⁰² suggesting that Romans viewed women both as manipulable and non-violent.

Punica extends Virgil's ideation. Juno is more direct in *Punica*, influencing the champion of Carthage, Hannibal Barca. While a woman can instigate violence, men must fight, owing to the physicality of war. Juno's jealousy leads her to intervene into the affairs of Dido and Hannibal Barca, inspiring rage in both.

Rome was an extremely patriarchal society. Romans did not educate women to the same degree as men, nor did Romans educate women in similar topics: male students undertook rigorous training in grammar, speech, and debate, while women's education dealt in practical concerns, such as learning how to operate a loom or how to clean garments.¹⁰³ Romans barred women entirely from participating in politics regardless of their social standing and relative class.¹⁰⁴

Perhaps surprisingly, Juno is not often considered defined by these physical traits as domestic handicraft is not among her divine departments. Despite being a patroness of women, this domesticated department is reserved for Minerva.¹⁰⁵ In contrast, Juno represents women of high social standing and wealth. This idea – in Latin, *dominae*, meaning mistresses – need not necessarily busy themselves with chores as these responsibilities were put upon slaves and servants.¹⁰⁶ These High-class women were heads of their households and were typically responsible for the day-to-day functioning

¹⁰² Virg. *Aen.* LCL 63, pp. 100 - 113

¹⁰³ A. Wilkins, *Roman education*. (Cambridge, 1905) ; S. Mohler, "The iuvenes and Roman education." *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, vol. 68, pp. 442-479.

¹⁰⁴ R. Bauman, *Women and politics in ancient Rome*. Routledge, 2002. ; K. Milnor, "Women in Roman society." (2011).

¹⁰⁵ Y. Guerrier, "Arachne and Minerva: women, power and realization." *Myths, Stories and Organizations: Premodern Narratives for Our Times* (2004): pp. 151-64. ; F. Graf, "Athena and Minerva: two faces of one goddess?." In *Athena in the Classical World*, pp. 127-139. (Brill, 2001)

¹⁰⁶ J. Hallett, *Fathers and daughters in Roman society: Women and the elite family*. Vol. 682. (Princeton, 2014)

of a large Roman estate.¹⁰⁷ The *Paterfamilias* still had supreme authority, and his wife would bear responsibility for the functioning of the household. Juno's femininity fits into this category of womanhood: not necessarily responsible for undertaking crafts, but responsible for the structures of power that enable the craft formation to be undertaken.

Juno, Romans venerated, as the goddess of childbirth. Ovid states,

"Then in her tenth circuit the moon was renewing her horns, the husband was suddenly made a father and the wife a mother. Thanks to Lucina! [...] This name, goddess, thou didst take from the sacred grove, or because with thee is the fount of light. Gracious Lucina, spare, I pray, women with child, and gently lift the ripe burden from the womb."¹⁰⁸

This specific passage comes from Ovid's description of the Sabine women, meaning that her role as a goddess of childbirth superseded the protection of these kidnapped and raped Sabine women. Roman patriarchal hegemony was total; Romans, and their goddess of women, saw women only as valuable as to produce children for men and to run an estate. Roman misogyny sets forth their negative traits stereotypical in their characterization of women, however, these authors also mirror the so-called positive traits of high-class women, such as statecraft and homestead management.

The Roman family was a very ordered affair. Roman women enjoyed more independence than some other societies, but still lived in an intensely misogynistic and patriarchal society. Juno, as a divine representation of aristocratic womanhood, occupies an interesting position: her violent depiction in Silius Italicus' *Punica* and Virgil's *Aeneid* contrast with the Roman concept of the *Paterfamilias*. Like the United States' infamous nuclear family,¹⁰⁹ The Roman family exerted both social influence and political influence. To be a Roman was to believe in patriarchy. Patriarchy, the

¹⁰⁷ J. Hallett, *Fathers and daughters in Roman society: Women and the elite family*. Vol. 682. (Princeton, 2014)

¹⁰⁸ Ov. *Fast*, LCL 253, p. 89

¹⁰⁹ P. Sommacal, "Economic development and family structure: From pater familias to the nuclear family." *European Economic Review* 71 (2014): pp. 80-100.

validation of manhood above all others, was a fact of Roman law.¹¹⁰ Roman law invested greater rights in fathers, even compared to the rights of husbands: fathers controlled not only their wives, but also their daughters to a certain extent.¹¹¹ Roman myth reflected this social structure. Like Jupiter, faithless to Juno, Roman men could easily enjoy sexual congress outside of marriage, but this practice was unthinkable for women.¹¹² The Roman family model was a matter of legislation, supported by government operated social welfare and penalization.¹¹³

The Roman structuring of *Paterfamilias* constricted Roman women's legal autonomy. Still, by ancient standards, Roman women experienced a degree of freedom unparalleled to other societies.¹¹⁴ True, in contrast to our modern sensibilities, Roman women fell in the ownership of their fathers; even so, the independence of Roman women might be greater than expected.¹¹⁵ By the imperial period, Roman law regulated women's liberties, clarifying their relationships to their husbands. By the time Virgil and Silius Italicus wrote, women could inherit property, keep their family name, and exercise agency apart from their husbands.¹¹⁶ Of course, women's experiences varied depending on their social class. While women could eventually inherit property, never could women acquire property outside of inheritance, vote, participate in the Senate, or participate in government jobs.

¹¹⁰ R. Saller, "Pater familias, mater familias, and the gendered semantics of the Roman household." *Classical Philology* 94, no. 2 (1999): pp. 182-197. ; S. Thompson, "Was ancient Rome a dead wives society? What did the Roman paterfamilias get away with?." *Journal of Family History* 31, no. 1 (2006): pp. 3-27.

¹¹¹ J. Hallett, *Fathers and daughters in Roman society: Women and the elite family*. (Princeton, 2014)

¹¹² R. Saller, "Patria potestas and the stereotype of the Roman family." *Continuity and Change* 1, no. 1 (1986): pp. 7-22.

¹¹³ A. Richlin, "Approaches to the Sources on Adultery at Rome." In *Reflections of women in antiquity*, pp. 379-404. Routledge, 2013.

¹¹⁴ B. Bryan, *Mistress of the house, mistress of heaven: women in ancient Egypt*. (Hudson Hills, 1996)

¹¹⁵ R. Saller, *Patriarchy, property and death in the Roman family*. Vol. 25. (Cambridge, 1994).

¹¹⁶ S. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, whores, wives, and slaves: Women in classical antiquity*. (Schocken, 1995)

In the Roman world, a woman's experience depended on her family's wealth. Women from wealthy families enjoyed the benefits befitting their class. For poor women, their experience was also beholden to the deprivations of their class. Wealthy women controlled the day-to-day operations of their households and controlled the care of their children.¹¹⁷ Notionally, the *Paterfamilias* controlled the Roman family, and the wife of a wealthy Roman would control the household in his absence. For the lower-class women, this delegation was less important, if, indeed, it existed at all.

Romans depicted Juno as the divine representation of a wealthy mother, in charge of various household tasks and possessing authority in maintaining a living space. This traditional interpretation of Juno is a stark contrast to her extremely violent, imperialistic characterization seen in Silius Italicus' *Punica* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. Their respective depictions were not mistakes. Both authors were expressing anxieties about female power and women in positions of authority. For the authors, indeed for all Roman men, the idea of a woman in charge of men was frightening and atypical: a terror warranting a respective deity. Recall, Juno does not win in either epic. The writers, believing the empowerment of women to be dangerous, could not countenance a woman being victorious over a man.

To the Roman mind, the most powerful female deity was a villain. Why? The foundational epics reinforce the idea of female moral inferiority. Romans structured their society to deny female liberty and independence. Juno disrupts this system which has moral implications. Baked into these Roman stories is patriarchy. Our Roman writers did not seek to change the characterization of Juno for literary purposes, but rather to scrutinize and devalue the place of Roman women.

¹¹⁷ B. Shaw, "Raising and killing children: two Roman myths." *Mnemosyne* 54, no. 1 (2001): pp.31-77.

The dynamic of Juno's interpretation through these two epics versus her day-to-day understanding is intriguing. Throughout this paper, we have explored several modern ideas that can be used to illuminate our understanding of Juno, and using the classical texts of Virgil's *Aeneid* and Silius Italicus' *Punica*, we can see the complex variation between her depiction in those two epics versus her depiction in day-to-day Roman life. While there are several explanations to answer the question of this variance, no one specific understanding can be entirely accurate without the others. The Roman populace was multifaceted in their worship. These two Roman authors had ulterior motives so they may impact and reflect their society. All of these perceptions of this variance must be taken into consideration when exploring the characterization of the literary Juno.

The Roman authors, Virgil and Silius Italicus, both changed how we understand Juno. Their motives were based in patriarchy, gender, and the idea of Roman superiority to a Carthaginian enemy. These two Roman authors had the motive to describe Juno as a villain so that they may reiterate their perceptions and conclusions about what a Roman mother, wife, and female should entail in their society.

While these two Roman authors wrote about ideologies that could be, the depictions of Juno that we see on banks and in homes are, conversely, show the reality for the day-to-day Romans. These depictions show that women had roles in society that were not malicious or detrimental to the Roman way of life as a whole, but were rather intrinsically important to the foundations and functionality of Roman society. This variance in Juno's depiction is a direct result of these conflicting ideologies being prescribed to a figure that was known in Roman popular culture. This nuance was not lost to the Romans, who maintained these seemingly contradictory characterizations of

Juno equally and therefore created, for us in modernity, a narrative that is as contextual as it is binary.

The gods themselves have many character traits that are universal in their depiction across literary and archaeological evidence, but many of the gods also demonstrate different characteristics due to the influence of time, different authors, and different political leadership that wishes to use the gods to propel their ideological agenda. Because of the nature of what Juno represented, we see the reasoning for why Juno had a variance that was so pronounced. In Juno, we see how opinions change.

As modern scholars, have the benefit of observing this change in retrospect and can examine the history that colors this gradual change. Studying her changes throughout society is a direct mirror to examining how Roman society changed as a whole, in both personal and political opinions. She represents a figure that embodies necessary controversy, and in so doing, is more subject to these whims of ideology than many of the other gods. With the modern understanding of Juno's variance, a greater understanding and appreciation for the variance intrinsic to the Roman Empire can be formed. That is the true benefit of exploring the Roman deities as they are, with all of their complexities, their changes, and their misunderstandings included.

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