

28th SYDNEY LATIN SUMMER SCHOOL

17th-21st JANUARY 2022
University of Sydney via Zoom

LEVEL 4.4

Claudian *Selections*

Instructor:

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Salvete Omnes!

Welcome to the 2022 Latin Summer School, Level 4.4!

In the late fourth century the poet Claudian came to prominence as the court panegyrist (poetic praiser) for the Emperor Honorius. Claudian's panegyrics innovatively drew on the genre of epic, and in so doing, formed a new hybrid genre often labelled as 'epic panegyric' (I prefer epic epideixis). Claudian also wrote some of the most brutal invectives to survive antiquity, targeting the political enemies of the imperial court, principally the Eastern eunuch consul Eutropius, the Eastern political magnate Rufinus, and the African rebel Gildo. Most focus on these poems, but others are definitely worthy of consideration, including Claudian's poem in praise of Serena, the adopted daughter of Theodosius I and the wife of the western potentate Stilicho, and his minor poems.

We know relatively little about Claudian. He was probably Christian, but his poetry large isn't. Greek was his native language (some of his minor poems are in Greek). He probably died before Stilicho's fall from grace in 408 as his last poem takes place before then. His work is fascinating for a large variety of reasons. His style is unique, and deeply intertextual, especially to Virgil, but also Lucan and other classical poets. His focus is normally political, but his poems abound in literary details, including the kind of rich characterisation that transcends the quotidian dimensions that are typically associated with panegyric (especially Latin prose panegyrics, collated as the *Panegyrici Latini*).

I have chosen six for us to read. These showcase Claudian's range, and include some of my favourite bits, including the terrifying Goddess Megaera, the invective against Eutropius (arguably the most fierce invective extant from antiquity), Claudian's description of a supernova (which we know happened), his praise of Theodosius' adoptive daughter Serena (a rare example of a panegyric praising a woman), and a poem about an electric stingray (from his minor poems).

If we don't get through it all, that is fine. I taught some Claudian at the LSS in 2019 so I am well aware that the going can be a little slow, at least initially ...

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|-----|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Mon | The Evil Goddess Megaera | <i>In Ruf.</i> 1.118-163 |
| Tue | The Eunuch Eutropius | <i>In Eut.</i> 1.1-36 |
| Wed | Honorius' Supernova | <i>De Cons. Hon. IV.</i> 171-202 |
| Thu | In praise of Serena | <i>Laus Serenae.</i> 35-49, 86-107 |
| Fri | On the Electric Stingray | <i>Carm. Min.</i> 49 |

I look forward to meeting you in January, probably over zoom!

MH

Resources

The Latin text that we will use is from the loeb edition.

The two Loeb volumes are freely available at:

<https://archive.org/details/L135ClaudianI>

<https://archive.org/details/L136ClaudianIITheGothicWarRapeOfProserpina>

You can also find them here

<https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Claudian/home.html>

Be wary of Platnauer's English translation – it is very outdated, and occasionally simply wrong!

Additional Reading:

Cameron, Alan. (1969) "Theodosius the Great and the Regency of Stilico," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 73, 247-280.

Cameron, Alan. (1970) *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Clarendon Press, Oxford).

Coombe, C. (2018) *Claudian the Poet* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).

Ware, C. (2012) *Claudian the Roman Epic Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge)

Ware, C. (2016) "Eutropius, Lucan and the Ladies of Elegy," in *Lucan and Claudian: Context and Intertext*, D.P. Nelis, L. Galli-Milic and V. Berlincourt (eds) (Universitätsverlag Winter, Heidelberg), 243-54.

Monday

Megaera and Rufinus (Claud. *In Ruf.* 1.118-163)

The evil goddess Megaera appears to Rufinus.

illa ubi caeruleo uestes conexuit angue
nodauitque adamante comas, Phlegethonta sonorum
poscit et ambusto flagrantis ab aggere ripae 120
ingentem piceo succendit gurgite pinum
pigraque ueloces per Tartara concutit alas.
est locus extremum pandit qua Gallia litus
Oceani praetentus aquis, ubi fertur Vlixes
sanguine libato populum mouisse silentem. 125
illic umbrarum tenui stridore uolantum
flebilis auditur questus; simulacra coloni
pallida defunctasque uident migrare figuras.
hinc dea prosiluit Phoebique egressa serenos
infecit radios ululatuque aethera rupit 130
terrifico: sensit ferale Britannia murmur
et Senonum quatit arua fragor reuolutaque Tethys
substitit et Rhenus proiecta torpuit urna.
tunc in canitiem mutatis sponte colubris
longaeuum mentita senem rugisque seueras 135
persulcata genas et ficto languida passu
inuadit muros Elusae, notissima dudum
tecta petens, oculisque diu liuentibus haesit
peiolem mirata uirum; tum talia fatur:
'otia te, Rufine, iuuant frustraue iuuentae 140
consumis florem patriis inglorius aruis?
heu nescis quid fata tibi, quid sidera donent,
quid Fortuna paret: toto dominabere mundo
si parere uelis! artus ne sperne seniles!
namque mihi magicae uires aeuique futuri 145
praescius ardor inest; noui quo Thessala cantu
eripiat lunare iubar, quid signa sagacis
Aegypti ualeant, qua gens Chaldaea uocatis
imperet arte deis, nec me latuere fluentes
arboribus suci funestarumque potestas 150
herbarum, quidquid letali germine pollens
Caucasus et Scythicae uernant in crimina
rupes, quas legit Medea ferox et callida Circe.

saepius horrendos Manes sacrisque citai
nocturnis Hecaten et condita funera traxi 155
carminibus uictura meis, multosque canendo,
quamuis Parcarum restarent fila, peremi.
ire uagas quercus et fulmen stare coegi
uersaque non prono curuauit flumina lapsu
in fontes reditura suos. neu uana locutum 160
me fortasse putes, mutatos cerne penates.
dixerat, et niueae (mirum!) coepere columnae
ditari subitoque trabes lucere metallo.

Tuesday

The Eunuch Eutropius (Claud. *In Eut.* 1.1-36)

Semiferos partus metuendaque pignora matri
moenibus et mediis auditum nocte luporum
murmur et attonito pecudes pastore locutas
et lapidum diras hiemes nimboque minacem
sanguineo rubuisse Iovem puteosque cruore
mutatos visasque polo concurrere lunas
et geminos soles mirari desinat orbis:
omnia cesserunt eunucho consule monstra.

heu terrae caelique pudor! trabeata per urbes
ostentatur anus titulumque effeminat anni.
pandite pontifices Cumanae carmina vatis,
fulmineos sollers Etruria consulat ignes
immersumque nefas fibris exploret haruspex,
quae nova portendant superi. Nilusne meatu
devius et nostri temptat iam transfuga mundi
se Rubro miscere mari? ruptone Niphate
rursus barbaricis Oriens vastabitur armis?
an morbi ventura lues? an nulla colono
responsura seges? quae tantas expiet iras
victima? quo diras iugulo placabimus aras?
consule lustrandi fasces ipsoque litandum
prodigio; quodcumque parant hoc omine fata,
Eutropius cervice luat sic omnia nobis.

Hoc regni, Fortuna, tenes? quaenam ista iocandi
saevitia? humanis quantum bacchabere rebus?
si tibi servili placuit foedare curules
crimine, procedat laxata compede consul,
rupta Quirinales sumant ergastula cinctus;
da saltem quemcumque virum. discrimina quaedam
sunt famulis splendorque suus, maculamque minorem
condicionis habet, domino qui vixerit uno.
si pelagi fluctus, Libyae si discis harenas,
Eutropii numerabis eros. quot iura, quot ille
mutavit tabulas vel quanta vocabula vertit!

Wednesday

Honorius' Supernova (Claud. *De Cons. Hon.* IV. 171-202)

[...] Non certius umquam
hortati superi, nullis praesentior aether
adfuit ominibus. tenebris involverat atra
lumen hiems densosque Notus collegerat imbres.
sed mox, cum solita miles te voce levasset,
nubila dissolvit Phoebus pariterque dabantur
sceptrata tibi mundoque dies: caligine liber
Bosphorus adversam patitur Calchedona cerni.
nec tantum vicina nitent, sed tota repulsis
nubibus exuitur Thrace, Pangaea renident
insuetosque palus radios Maeotia vibrat.
nec Boreas nimbos aut sol ardentior egit:
imperii lux illa fuit; praesagus obibat
cuncta nitor risitque tuo natura sereno.
visa etiam medio populis mirantibus audax
stella die, dubitanda nihil nec crine retuso
languida, sed quantus numeratur nocte Bootes,
emicuitque plagis alieni temporis hospes
ignis et agnosci potuit, cum luna lateret:
sive parens Augusta fuit, seu forte reluxit
divi sidus avi, seu te properantibus astris
cernere sol patiens caelum commune remisit.
adparet quid signa ferant. ventura potestas
claruit Ascanio, subita cum luce comarum
innocuus flagraret apex Phrygioque volutus
vertice fatalis redimiret tempora candor.
at tua caelestes inlustrant omina flammae.
talis ab Idaeis primaevus Iuppiter antris
possessi stetit arce poli famulosque recepit
natura tradente deos; lanugine nondum
vernabant vultus nec adhuc per colla fluebant
moturae convexa comae; tum scindere nubes
discebat fulmenque rudi torquere lacerto.

Thursday

i. Serena's birth (Claud. *Laus Serenae* 45-49)

Quodsi nobilitas cunctis exordia pandit
laudibus atque omnes redeunt in semina causae,
quis venerabilior sanguis, quae maior origo
quam regalis erit? non hoc privata dedere
limina nec tantum poterat contingere nomen
angustis laribus; patruo te principe celsam
bellipotens inlustrat avus, qui signa Britanno
intulit Oceano Gaetulaque reppulit arma.
claram Scipiadam taceat Cornelia gentem
seque minus iactet Libycis dotata trophaeis.
cardine tu gemino laurus praetendis avitas:
inde Caledoniis, Australibus inde parentum
cingeris exuviis. necdum moderamina mundi
sumpserat illa domus, cum te Lucina beatis
adderet astrorum radiis, o maxima rerum
gloria: post genitam didicit regnare Serenam.

ii. Serena's adoption (Claud. *Laus Serenae* 86-107)

Nec tua mortalis meruit cunabula nutrix.
ubera prima dabant gremio redolente Napaeae
ternaque te nudis innectens Gratia membris
adflavit docuitque loqui. quacumque per herbam
reptares, fluxere rosae, candentia nasci
lilia; si placido cessissent lumina somno,
purpura surgebat violae, factura cubile
gramineum, vernatque tori regalis imago.
omina non audet genetrix tam magna fateri
successusque suos arcani conscia voti
spe trepidante tegit. Gestabat Honorius arto
te pater amplexu. quotiens ad limina princeps
Theodosius privatus adhuc fraterna veniret,
oscula libabat teque ad sua tecta ferebat
laetior; in matrem teneris conversa querellis:
"quid? me de propriis auferre penatibus?" inquis;
"imperat hic semper!" praesagia luserat error
et dedit augurium regnis infantia linguae.
defuncto genitore tuo sublimis adoptat
te patruus magnique animo solacia luctus
restituens propius quam si genuisset amavit
defuncti fratris subolem [...]

Friday

On the Electric Stingray (Claud. *Carm. Min. 49 De Torpedine*)

Quis non indomitam dirae torpedinis artem
audiit et merito signatas nomine vires ?
Ilia quidem mollis segnique obnixa natatu
reptat et attritis vix languida serpit harenis.
5sed latus armavit gelido natura veneno,
et frigus, quo cuncta rigent animata, medullis
miscuit et proprias hiemes per viscera duxit.

naturam iuvat ipsa dolis et conscia sortis
utitur ingenio longeque extenta per algas
10attactu confisa subit. immobilis haeret :
qui tetigere iacent. successu laeta resurgit
et vivos impune ferox depascitur artus.
Si quando vestita cibus incautior aera
hauserit et curvis frenari senserit hamis,
15non fugit aut vano conatur vellere morsu,
sed propius nigrae iungit se callida saetae
et meminit captiva sui longeque per undas
pigra venenatis effundit flamina venis.

per saetam vis alta meat fluctusque relinquit
absentem victura virum : metuendus ab imis
emicat horror aquis et pendula fila secutus
Vtransit harundineos arcano frigore nodos
victricemque ligat concreto sanguine dextram.
damnosum piscator onus praedamque rebellem
iactat et amissa redit exarmatus avena.

Notes