

Article

Porphyry on Asclepius's and the Gods' Departure from Rome

John Granger Cook 

Humanities and Social Sciences, LaGrange College, LaGrange, GA 30240, USA; jcook@lagrange.edu

Abstract: Eusebius transmits a fragment of Porphyry's *Contra Christianos* in which the philosopher claimed that a disease or plague (νόσος) had seized the city for many years because there was no longer any sojourn (ἐπιδημία) of Asclepius and the gods there. Since Jesus was honored, no one experienced any public help from the gods. Porphyry's claim that Asclepius and the gods no longer dwelt in Rome resembles one of the elements of the ancient Roman ritual of *evocatio*, in which the tutelary deities were called out of a city by a Roman commander. It is only an analogy, since the Christians did not promise the tutelary deities that their images would be carried to their own city and given a cult, and they certainly did not make use of an obscure Roman military ceremony. Whether or not the ritual was practiced in the Imperium is not the central question of this article. Instead I wish to show that the implicit debate between Eusebius and Porphyry alludes to similar arguments between pagans and Christians in antiquity and that there are important analogies between Porphyry's argument about the departure of Rome's tutelary gods due to the presence of worship of the Christian deity in the city and the ritual of *evocatio*.

Keywords: Porphyry; Asclepius; *evocatio*; plague

1. The *Contra Christianos* of Porphyry¹

Porphyry's *Contra Christianos* (*Against the Christians*) only survives in brief fragments, allusions, and testimonies (Becker 2016). It created such a furor in ancient Christianity that Constantine claimed it had been destroyed, like the works of Arius. Socrates—based on his source Athanasius—transmits this excerpt from a letter of Constantine ca 332/333 to the bishop and the people, which includes the sovereign's edict against Arius.

Ὡςπερ τοίνυν Πορφύριος ὁ τῆς θεοσεβείας ἐχθρὸς συντάγματα ἅττα παρὰ νόμον κατὰ τῆς θρησκείας συστησάμενος ἄξιον εὖρατο μισθὸν ἄξιον εὖρατο μισθὸν ... ἀφανισθῆναι δὲ τὰ ἀσεβῆ αὐτοῦ συγγράμματα οὕτως καὶ νῦν ἔδοξεν Ἀρείῳ τε καὶ τοῖς αὐτῷ ὁμογνώμονας Πορφυριανοὺς μὲν καλεῖσθαι ... πρὸς δὲ τούτοις καὶ εἴ τι σύγγραμμα ὑπὸ Ἀρείου συντεταγμένον εὐρίσκειτο, τοῦτο πυρὶ παραδίδοσθαι, ἵνα μὴ μόνον τὰ φαῦλα αὐτοῦ τῆς διδασκαλίας ἀφανισθῇ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑπόμνημα αὐτοῦ ὅλως ὑπολείπειτο. Ἐκεῖνο μὲντοι προαγορεύω, ὥς, εἴ τις σύγγραμμα ὑπὸ Ἀρείου συνταγὴν φωραθῇ κρύψας καὶ μὴ εὐθέως προσενεγκὼν καὶ πυρὶ καταναλώσας, τούτῳ θάνατος ἔσται ἢ ζημία· παραχρῆμα γὰρ ἀλὸς ἐπὶ τούτῳ κεφαλικὴν ὑποστήσεται τιμωρίαν.

Just as indeed Porphyry the enemy of godly religion who has composed some lawless treatises against religion found a suitable reward ... his impious writings have been obliterated, so now it seems fitting that Arius and those who are like-minded should be called "Porphyrians" ... and in addition to this, if any writing composed by Arius should be found, this is consigned to the flames, so that not only the evils of his teachings should be destroyed but that there should



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no longer be any memory at all of him. This consequently I decree, that if anyone should be detected hiding a treatise written by Arius who does not immediately bring it forward and destroy it, the penalty for this individual will be death. For immediately after condemnation (s)he will be subjected to the capital penalty (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 1.9.30–31 = [Smith 1993](#), 38T [p. 30] = [Opitz 1934](#), Urkunde 33 [pp. 66–68]; cp. [Cook 2000](#), p. 125).

Since it was clearly illegal to have a writing of Arius in one's possession, it is quite possible that it was also illegal to have a copy of the *Contra Christianos*.² In an edict of 17 Feb. 448, Theodosius II and Valentinian wrote:

θεσπίζομεν τοίνυν ὥστε πάντα ὅσα Πορφύριος ὑπὸ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ μανίας ἐλαυνόμενος κατὰ τῆς εὐσεβοῦς θρησκείας τῶν Χριστιανῶν συνέγραψε, παρ' οἰωδῆποτε εὕρισκόμενα πυρὶ παραδίδοσθαι.

We decree therefore that all the things that Porphyry, driven by his madness, has written against the religion of the Christians—in whoever's possession they be found—shall be consigned to the flames. ([Smith 1993](#), 40T [p. 32] = *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum* 1.1.4 [[Schwartz 1927](#), p. 66] = *Codex Iust.* 1.1.3.1)

It is apparent that copies of the document had survived after Constantine's statement that it had been destroyed. However, the action of the Byzantine sovereigns in 448 probably destroyed the complete copies that still existed, and we are left with a puzzle that Adolf von Harnack attempted to solve in his edition of 1916 and which Matthias Becker has recently and very ably edited in 2016, although many questions remain unanswered.

Eusebius of Caesarea was one of the few patristic writers who actually knew the Greek version of the original and who responded to Porphyry with a twenty-five-book treatise. Jerome wrote, "Eusebius published innumerable volumes, among which are these: ... *Against Porphyry*, who wrote in Sicily during that time as some believe, twenty-five volumes (Jerome, *Vir. illustr.* 80 Eusebius ... *edidit infinita volumina, de quibus haec sunt ... contra Porphyrium, qui eodem tempore scribebat in Sicilia ut quidam putant, libri uiginti quinque*; cf. [von Harnack 1916](#), 17T). Eusebius's work has unfortunately perished, and there is little reason to believe that Porphyry wrote in Sicily (see [Morlet 2010](#), pp. 12–14).³

2. The Fragment of the *Contra Christianos* in Eusebius on Asclepius

Eusebius in his *Praeparatio evangelica* includes this text from Porphyry:

περὶ δὲ τοῦ μηκέτι δύνασθαι τι κατισχύειν τοὺς φαύλους δαίμονας μετὰ τὴν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν εἰς ἀνθρώπους πάροδον καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ καθ' ἡμᾶς τῶν δαιμόνων προήγορος ἐν τῇ καθ' ἡμῶν συσκευῇ τοῦτόν που λέγων μαρτυρεῖ τὸν τρόπον. "Νυνὶ δὲ θαυμάζουσιν εἰ τοσοῦτον ἐτῶν κατεῖληφεν ἡ νόσος τὴν πόλιν, Ἀσκληπιοῦ μὲν ἐπιδημίας καὶ τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν μηκέτι οὐσης. Ἰησοῦ γὰρ τιμωμένου οὐδεμιᾶς δημοσίας τις θεῶν ὠφελείας ἦσθετο." Ταῦτα ῥήμασιν αὐτοῖς ὁ Πορφύριος.

Concerning the powerlessness of evil demons to rule any longer after the passage of our savior among people, so the defender of demons⁴ in our time bears witness in his propaganda piece against us in this manner: "And now they wonder that for so many years the plague (or "disease") has gripped the city, Asclepius and the other gods no longer dwelling⁵ there. For since Jesus has been honored no one has perceived any public help from the gods." These are the very words of Porphyry. (*Praep. evang.* 5.1.9–1 = [Becker 2016](#), 65F [p. 367] = [von Harnack 1916](#), fr. 80 [p. 94]).⁶

Porphry believed that Jesus was a mortal, so of course, the worship of Jesus was unacceptable. This is clear from his comments on the nature of Jesus in *De oraculis haurienda*.⁷ If Porphyry is serious and not merely evoking a rhetorical flourish, then he accepts the thesis that the gods have left Rome because of the worship of Jesus. There was an *Aedes Aesculapii* (temple of Aesculapius) built in Rome after a plague there ca 293 B.C.E. According to the legend, a serpent from the god's shrine in Epidaurus had crawled onto the Roman delegation's ship. In Rome, it escaped and crawled onto the island known then as the *Insula Tiberina*.⁸ When the snake arrived on the island, the plague ended.⁹ Lawrence Richardson notes that a number of inscriptions have been found from "grateful suppliants" of Aesculapius, but "few seem to have been found in the vicinity of the church of S. Bartolomeo which is believed to stand on the site occupied by the temple".¹⁰ In Eusebius's fragment, the tale is reversed: Jesus' worship has driven Asclepius out as the plague rages in the city, presumably Rome.

3. The Gods as Demons

Eusebius's charge that the gods are evil demons was one frequent in ancient Christianity. Justin, in a defense of Christianity against the charge of impiety, noted Socrates' attempt to move people away from demons (i.e., the false gods of Greek polytheism) and the charge of atheism that he consequently incurred (a common charge against ancient Christians; cf. Schäfke 1979, pp. 627–30):

οὐ γὰρ μόνον ἐν Ἑλληνιστὶ διὰ Σωκράτους ὑπὸ λόγου ἠλέγχθη ταῦτα, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν βαρβάροις ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ Λόγου, μορφωθέντος καὶ ἀνθρώπου γενομένου καὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ κληθέντος, ᾧ πεισθέντες ἡμεῖς τοὺς ταῦτα πράξαντας δαίμονας οὐ μόνον οὐ θεοὺς εἶναι φαμεν, ἀλλὰ κακοὺς καὶ ἀνοσίους (5) δαίμονας—οἱ οὐδὲ τοῖς ἀρετὴν ποθοῦσιν ἀνθρώποις τὰς πράξεις ὁμοίας ἔχουσιν.

And not only among the Greeks were these things through Socrates condemned by reason [logos], but also among the non-Hellenic peoples by the Logos Himself, who assumed a human form and became man, and was called Jesus Christ. Through our belief in Him we claim that those who do these things are daimones, not only are they not gods but they are evil and ungodly daimones, whose actions should not be compared with those of virtue-seeking people (Justin 1 *Apol.* 5.4; trans. modified of Falls 1948, p. 38; cp. the edition and trans. of Munier 2006, pp. 140–41).¹¹

Celsus was likewise scandalized by the Christian identification of the Roman gods with demons:

ἀλλὰ συνθήσονται μὲν εἶναι ταῦτα ἐπὶ τιμῇ τινων ἢ ὁμοίων ἢ ἀνομοίων τὸ εἶδος, οὔτε δὲ θεοὺς εἶναι, οἷς ταῦτα ἀνάκειται, ἀλλὰ δαίμονας, οὐδὲ χρῆναι θεραπεύειν δαίμονας ὅστις σέβει θεόν.

But, although they will agree that these things [i.e., images] are intended for the honor of certain beings, whether they resemble their shape or not, yet they think that those to whom they are dedicated are not gods, but daemons, and that no one who worships God ought to serve daemons (Origen, *Cels.* 7.62; trans. of Chadwick 1953, p. 447).

Tatian (*Oratio* 13.2–3) makes a similar denunciation in a treatment of the soul's search for truth, "seeking God in error it formed many gods following the resisting devices of daemons" (ζητοῦσα τὸν θεὸν κατὰ πλάνην πολλοὺς θεοὺς ἀνετύπωσε τοῖς ἀντισοφιστεύουσι δαίμοσι κατακολουθοῦσα). This principle of ancient Christianity can be traced back to Paul (1 Cor 10:20) and even further back to the Septuagint (Ps 105:37).¹²

Asclepius himself did not escape this charge and was identified in a text of Jerome as one who does not heal souls but destroys them. Origen identified him as a demon (*Cels.* 3.25 quoted below in § 5), just as Eusebius does.¹³ This sort of investigation could proceed far into late antiquity.

4. Christians as the Cause of Disasters, Including the Plague

Porphyry's charge that the Christians and their faith were the cause of the plague was commonplace in antiquity. Tertullian famously wrote that pagans "take the Christians to be the cause of every disaster to the State, of every misfortune of the people" (*existent omnis popularis incommodi a primordio temporum Christianos esse in causa*): "*Si Tiberis ascendit in moenia, si Nilus non ascendit in rura, si caelum stetit, si terra movit, si fames, si lues, statim 'Christianos ad leonem'*" (If the Tiber reaches the walls, if the Nile does not rise to the fields, if the sky doesn't move or the earth does, if there is famine, if there is plague, the cry is at once: "The Christians to the lion!").¹⁴ Cyprian, in his response to a certain pagan named Demetrianus, faces a similar charge:

Sed enim cum dicas plurimas conqueri et quod bella crebrius surgant, quod lues, quod fames saeviant, quodque imbres et pluvias serena longa suspendant nobis imputari, tacere ultra non oportet ...

But yet, when you say that very many are complaining and are blaming us because wars are arising more frequently, because the plague, because famine are raging, and because long droughts are suspending rains and showers, I should be silent no longer ... (*Ad Demetrianum* 2.2; trans. Deferrari 1958, p. 168).¹⁵

This plague—the so-called plague of Cyprian—is the one that Porphyry witnessed for so many years in Rome.¹⁶ Arnobius in the first book of his *Adversus nationes* (1.3) responds to the pagans' charge that Christians are responsible for the disasters that afflict humankind. He mentions plagues in the following passage:

Sed pestilentias, inquiunt, et siccitates, bella frugum inopiam locustas mures et grandines resque alias noxias, quibus negotia incursantur humana, dii nobis inportant iniuriis vestris atque offensionibus exasperati.

"But pestilence", they say, "and droughts, wars, famines, locusts, mice, and hailstorms, and other harmful things with which human affairs are visited, are brought upon us by the gods in their anger at your wrongs."¹⁷

This debate between pagans and Christians was clearly quite lively in antiquity.

5. Asclepius as a God of Healing in the Contest Between Paganism and Christianity

Porphyry's charge that Asclepius had left the city (probably Rome) was also important because of the god's intrinsic importance in the Greco-Roman world where for centuries, he had been known as a healer. For example, a famous inscription from Epidaurus (IG IV², 1, 121–22) from around 350–300 B.C.E. details many cures wrought by the god.¹⁸ For centuries, the god was associated with healing in the Mediterranean, as one may see from the large collection of testimonies gathered by Edelstein and Edelstein (1946). The god was not only associated with healing, however. In one of Artemidorus's dream analyses, he describes the consequences of seeing Asclepius's statue in motion: κινούμενος δὲ ἢ προσιὼν ἢ εἰς οἰκίαν εἰσιὼν νόσον καὶ λοιμὸν μαντεύεται· τότε γὰρ μάλιστα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις δεῖ τοῦ θεοῦ τούτου (When in motion, however, either approaching or entering a home, he forebodes sickness and plague; for at that time especially people stand in need of this god).¹⁹ Asclepius's fame lasted into late antiquity. The emperor Julian wrote, "At any rate,

when I have been sick, Asclepius has often cured me by prescribing remedies” (ἐμὲ γοῦν ἰάσατο πολλάκις Ἀσκληπιὸς κάμνοντα ὑπαγορεύσας φάρμακα).²⁰

Porphry probably alludes implicitly to the obvious comparison between the healing miracles ascribes to Jesus and those ascribed to Asclepius. Justin, by the middle of the second century, responds to the pagans’ argument: ὅτε δὲ πάλιν ἔμαθον προφητευθέντα θεραπεύειν αὐτὸν πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ νεκροὺς ἀνεγερεῖν, τὸν Ἀσκληπιὸν παρήνεγκαν (Then, too, when they found out that it has been prophesied that he would cure every illness and raise the dead to life, they brought forward Asclepius).²¹

The god appears several times in Celsus’ critique of Christianity. Origen notes these instances:

Εἴτα πανταχοῦ μὲν ἢ πολλαχοῦ δυνάμεις ἐγίνοντο, ὥς καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τοῖς ἐξῆς παρατίθεται Ἀσκληπιὸν εὐεργετοῦντα καὶ τὰ μέλλοντα προλέγοντα ὅλαις πόλεσιν ἀνακειμέναις αὐτῷ, οἷον τῇ Τρίκκῃ καὶ τῇ Ἐπιδαύρῳ καὶ τῇ Κῷ καὶ τῇ Περγάμῳ ...

Again, if miracles have occurred everywhere or in many places, as even Celsus thinks, quoting later the instances of “Asclepius who did good and foretold the future to whole cities which were dedicated to him such as Tricca, Epidauros, Cos, and Pergamum” ...²²

Celsus appeals to the Greek heroes:

Διοσκούρους καὶ Ἡρακλέα καὶ Ἀσκληπιὸν καὶ Διόνυσον ὀνομάζει, τοὺς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων πεπιστευμένους παρ’ Ἑλλήσι γεγονέναι θεούς, καὶ φησιν οὐκ ἀνέχεσθαι μὲν ἡμᾶς τούτους νομίζειν θεούς, ὅτι ἄνθρωποι ἦσαν καὶ πρῶτον, καίτοι πολλὰ ἐπιδειξαμένους καὶ γενναῖα ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων· τὸν δ’ Ἰησοῦν ἀποθανόντα ὑπὸ τῶν ιδίων θιασωτῶν ὥφθαί φαμεν·

... [he] mentions “the Dioscuri, Heracles, Asclepius, and Dionysus”, men who were believed by the Greeks to have become gods. He says that we “do not tolerate the opinion that they are gods because they were human in the first place, even though they performed many noble acts on behalf of humankind; yet we say that after Jesus died he appeared to his own confraternity”.

Celsus seems to believe that Asclepius is a healer:

Καὶ πάλιν ἐπ’ ἂν μὲν περὶ τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ λέγεται ὅτι πολὺ ἀνθρώπων πλῆθος Ἑλλήνων τε καὶ βαρβάρων ὁμολογεῖ πολλάκις ἰδεῖν καὶ ἔτι ὄραν, οὐ φάσμα αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἀλλὰ θεραπεύοντα καὶ εὐεργετοῦντα καὶ τὰ μέλλοντα προλέγοντα, πιστεύειν ἡμᾶς ὁ Κέλσος ἀξιοῖ ...

Again, when it is said of Asclepius that “a great multitude of people, both of Greeks and barbarians, confess that they have often seen and still do see not just a phantom, but Asclepius himself healing people and doing good and predicting the future”, Celsus asks us to believe it ...²³

Origen grants Asclepius’ premise for the sake of argument, but then affirms that those individuals who perform the cures are actually evil:

Ἵνα δὲ καὶ δῶ ἰατρόν τινα δαίμονα θεραπεύειν σώματα τὸν καλούμενον Ἀσκληπιόν, εἴποιμ’ ἂν πρὸς τοὺς θαυμάζοντας τὸ τοιοῦτο ἢ τὴν Ἀπόλλωνος μαντείαν ὅτι, εἴπερ μέσον ἐστὶν ἢ τῶν σωμάτων ἰατρικὴ καὶ πρᾶγμα πίπτει οὐκ εἰς ἀστεῖους μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ φαύλους, μέσον δὲ καὶ ἡ περὶ τῶν μελλόντων πρόγνωσις—οὐ γὰρ πάντως ἐμφαίνει τὸ ἀστεῖον ὁ προγινώσκων—, παραστήσατε πῶς οὐδαμῶς μὲν εἰσι φαῦλοι οἱ θεραπεύοντες ἢ οἱ προγινώσκοντες ἀντὶ δὲ τρόπῳ ἀποδείκνυνται ἀστεῖοί τινες ...

However, supposing I grant that a daemon called Asclepius possesses the power of healing and cures bodies, I would say to people who admire this or Apollo's power of divination, that if the cure of bodies is a thing indifferent and a gift which happens to be given not only to good people but to bad, and if foreknowledge of the future is a thing indifferent also (for the man who has foreknowledge does not necessarily manifest goodness), show me then how those who perform cures or who possess foreknowledge are not bad at all ...²⁴

Origen grudgingly accepts Asclepius's power to heal but classifies him as a demon and indicates that the people who heal in Asclepius's name may actually be evil. Arnobius takes a different approach to the problem of Asclepius's healings. He argues that Asclepius could only cure a few:

Et quoniam beneficia salutis datae aliorum numinum comparatis et Christi, quot milia vultis a nobis debiliū vobis ostendi, quot tabificis adfectos morbis nullam omnino retulisse medicinam, cum per omnia supplices irent templa, cum deorum ante ora prostrati limina ipsa converrerent osculis, cum Aesculapium ipsum datorem ut praedicant sanitatis, quoad illis superfuit vita, et precibus fatigaret et invitarent miserrimis votis?

And since you compare the other deities and Christ with respect to the benefits of health given them, how many thousands of sick people do you want us to show you; how many suffering from wasting diseases whom the applications of no medicine restored, although as suppliants they went through all the temples; although they prostrated themselves before the faces of the gods and swept up the thresholds themselves with kisses; when, as long as life remained, they wore out with most piteous prayers Aesculapius himself, the giver as they call him of health?²⁵

This debate was resolved in favor of Jesus simply by Asclepius's disappearance from the stage in late antiquity. The debate regarding miracles carried out by pagans and Christians continued into the fourth century. Alessandro Capone has recently argued that Jerome's *Vita Hilarionis* intentionally depicted the life of Hilarion with his many miracles as an alternative model to the miracle-worker Apollonius, in whom pagans (and Christians) continued to retain a lively interest.²⁶

6. Asclepius's and the Gods' Departure and the Ritual of *Evocatio*

According to Porphyry, this disappearance began with the worship of Jesus. He insists not only the god's help, along with the help of other gods, is absent, but that Asclepius *himself* and the other gods no longer dwell in the city. There is an obscure Roman rite called *evocatio* that displays some similarities with Porphyry's claim. The literature regarding this rite is massive: see Wissowa 1907; Basanoff 1947; Kapp and Meyer 1931–1953, p. 1054, 44–61; Bruun 1972; Le Gall 1976; Rüpke 1990, pp. 162–64; Blomart 1997; Beard et al. 1998, pp. 1.132–34; Gustafsson 2000; Kloppenborg 2005; Rutledge 2007; Gephardt 2009; Ferri 2010; Grandi 2015/2016; Isaenko 2017; Champion 2017, pp. 141–43; Musiał and Gillmeister 2018; Dillon 2020, Cairo 2021. Festus, the second century epitomist of Verrius Flaccus, alludes to the ceremony in a text that is particularly relevant to the fragment under discussion:

Peregrina sacra appellantur, quae aut evocatis dis in oppugnandis urbibus Romam sunt + conata +, aut quae ob quasdam religiones per pacem sunt petita, ut ex Phrygia Matris Magnae, ex Graecia Cereris, Epidaurō Aesculapi: quae coluntur eorum more, a quibus sunt accepta.

We call foreign cults those that are dedicated to gods that have either been “summoned” to Rome from beleaguered cities or imported at time of peace on the

basis of particular religious considerations. They include Mater Magna from Phrygia, Ceres from Greece, and Aesculapius from Epidaurus, and are celebrated according to the tradition from which they came.²⁷

Varus's reference to Asclepius in Rome may well indicate that Porphyry's reference to Asclepius's former presence in "the city" also refers to Rome. Instead of "dedicated to gods", one can justifiably translate *evocatis dis* as, "gods who have been evoked". Pliny refers to the ritual:

Verrius Flaccus auctores ponit, quibus credat in obpugnationibus ante omnia solitum a Romanis sacerdotibus evocari deum, cuius in tutela id oppidum esset, promittique illi eundem aut ampliorem apud Romanos cultum. et durat in pontificum disciplina id sacrum, constatque ideo occultatum, in cuius dei tutela Roma esset, ne qui hostium simili modo agerent. defigi quidem diris precationibus nemo non metuit.

Verrius Flaccus cites trustworthy authorities to show that it was the custom, at the very beginning of a siege, for the Roman priests to call forth ["evoke"] the divinity under whose protection the besieged town was, and to promise him the same or even more splendid worship among the Roman people. Down to the present day this ritual has remained part of the doctrine of the Pontiffs, and it is certain that the reason why the tutelary deity of Rome has been kept a secret is to prevent any enemy from acting in a similar way.²⁸

Pliny's remark, made during the early imperial period, that *evocatio* remains part of the *disciplina* (doctrine) of the Roman pontiffs is important for establishing the existence of the cultural memory of the rite during the Imperium.²⁹

Aeneas recounts the introduction of the Trojan horse in his native city of Troy in Vergil: *Instamus tamen immemores caecique furore / et monstrum infelix sacrata sistimus arce* (yet we press on, heedless and blind with rage, and set the ill-omened monster on our hallowed citadel).³⁰ María Emilia Cairo remarks that Vergil's lines "point to the fact that the Trojans have been abandoned by their gods ..." (Cairo 2021, p. 3). *Servius Danielis* (the extended version of *Servius*) comments:

sane si peritiam, Vergilii diligenter intendas, secundum disciplinam carminis Romani, quo ex urbibus hostium deos ante evocare solebant, hoc dixit; erant enim inter cetera carminis verba haec eique populo civitatisque metum, formidinem, oblivionem iniciatis: unde bene intulit "immemores caecique furore," tamquam quos dei perdiderant.

Certainly if you try to diligently observe the skill of Vergil, according to the doctrine by the Roman rite, by which they customarily evoked ["called forth"] the gods of their enemies' cities, this is what he meant; for among the rest of the words of the rite there were these: "and may you strike that people and community with fear, terror and oblivion." Therefore he well included, "heedless and blind with rage," as though [speaking of] of those whom the gods have destroyed.³¹

"May you strike with terror, fear, and forgetfulness" occur in the spell, as depicted by Macrobius in the text quoted below. A bit later in the *Aeneid*, Vergil includes this telling statement of Aeneas, "*excessere omnes adytis arisque relictis/di, quibus imperium hoc steterat*" (all the gods on whom this empire was stayed [or "had stood"] have gone forth, leaving shrine and altar).³² It is interesting that Vergil's lines, from an Augustan author, bring the rite of *evocatio* to the mind of the ancient commentator, Servius, and the tradition of *Servius Danielis* (in brackets):

EXCESSERE quia ante expugnationem evocabantur ab hostibus numina propter vitanda sacrilegia. [[inde est, quod Romani celatum esse voluerunt, in cuius dei tutela urbs Roma

sit. et iure pontificum cautum est, ne suis nominibus dii Romani appellarentur, ne exaugurari possint. et in Capitolio fuit clipeus consecratus, cui inscriptum erat “genio urbis Romae, sive mas sive femina.” et pontifices ita precabantur “Iuppiter optime maxime, sive quo alio nomine te appellari volueris”: nam et ipse ait <IV 576> sequimur te, sancte deorum, quisquis es.]]

THEY WENT OUT since before a city was stormed the gods were called forth by the enemy in order to avoid sacrilege. [[That is why the Romans wanted kept secret the identity of the deity under whose protection the city of Rome is, and it is forbidden by pontifical law to call the Roman gods by their own names, so that they cannot be summoned forth. And in the Capitol there was a shield dedicated upon which it was written “To the spirit of the city of Rome, whether it be male or female.” And the Pontiffs prayed as follows: “Jupiter best and greatest, or by whatever other name that you have decided to be called.” For he himself says “We follow you; holy one among the gods, whoever you are. [A. 4.576]”]].³³

Presumably Vergil’s use of *excessere* (they went out) is what indicated the ritual of *evocatio* to Servius. Toward the end of the epic, Juno—who had been so hostile toward the Trojans—assents to Jupiter’s promise about the destiny of the Aeneas and his people: *adnuit his Iuno et mentem laetata retorsit. /interea excedit caelo nubemque relinquit* (Juno assented to this and joyfully changed her purpose; then she leaves heaven and quits the cloud).³⁴ Servius’s comment is:

MENTEM LAETATA RETORSIT iste quidem hoc dicit; sed constat bello Punico secundo exorata Iunonem, tertio vero bello a Scipione sacris quibusdam etiam Romam esse translata.

SHE JOYFULLY CHANGED HER PURPOSE. He indeed said this; but it is certain that during the Second Punic War Juno was won over/persuaded [“exorated”]; and during the Third War she was even transferred to Rome by Scipio by certain religious proceedings (or “sacred rites”).³⁵

Servius refers to Scipio’s use of *evocatio* to transfer Juno from Carthage to Rome. Macrobius gives a far more complete explanation of the rites that Scipio used to call forth Juno from Carthage:

(3.9.7) est autem carmen huius modi quo di evocantur cum oppugnatione civitas cingitur: Si deus, si dea est, cui populus civitasque Carthaginensis est in tutela, teque maxime, ille qui urbis huius populi que tutelam recepisti, precor venerorque veniamque a vobis peto ut vos populum civitatemque Carthaginensem deseratis, loca templa sacra urbemque eorum relinquatis, (8) absque his abeat is eique populo civitati metum formidinem oblivionem iniciatis, proditque Romam ad me meosque veniatis, nostraque vobis loca templa sacra urbs acceptior probatiorque sit, mihi que populoque Romano militibusque meis praepositi sitis ut sciamus intellegamusque. si ita feceritis, voveo vobis templa ludosque facturum.

The following is the spell used to call the gods forth when a city is surrounded and under siege: I call upon the one in whose protection are the people and community of Carthage, whether it be a god or a goddess, and upon you above all, who have undertaken to protect this city and people, and ask you all for your favor: may you all desert the people and community of Carthage, leave their sacred places, temples and city, and depart from them, (8) and upon this people and community heap fear, dread, forgetfulness, and come to Rome, to me and my people, with kindly spirit, and may our sacred places, temples, city be more acceptable and approved in your sight, and may you be well disposed to me

and the Roman people and my army. If you all should do these things so that we know and understand them, I vow that I will make temples and games for you.³⁶

One imagines that Macrobius's antiquarian interest in a ritual of the Roman Republic probably cannot be used to make the assertion that such a spell was used in all cases where the Romans besieged cities. It is doubtful that the rite was used in the Imperium. Gabriella Gustafsson, for example, finds no evidence in her survey that the ritual was used during the empire (2000, pp. 42–62).³⁷ Karl Joachim Marquardt, however, is far more willing to make the general statement, "First, it was a religious conviction of the Romans that a city could only be conquered if its patron god had first been persuaded to leave it."³⁸ Kloppenborg (2005) and Musiał and Gillmeister (2018), however, have argued that the rite was used in the Roman siege of Jerusalem. The question is whether there really is any explicit evidence that the ritual existed during the time of Titus and Porphyry. The last apparent historical reference to the spell occurs in an inscription that refers to P. Servilius Vatia's conquest Vetus (Bozkir) in 75 B.C.E. Kloppenborg believes it alludes to *evocatio* (2005, p. 439):

P(ublius?)] Serueilius C(ai) f(ilius) imperator/hostibus victis Isaura vetere/capta captivis venum dateis/sei deus seive deast quouis in/tutela oppidum Vetus Isaura/fruit votum solvit

P(ublius?) Servilius, son of Gaius, imperator, having conquered the enemies when Isaura Vetus was captured, when the prisoners were consigned for sale, whether it was god or goddess in whose protection Vetus Isaura was, fulfilled his vow.³⁹

Instead of building a temple in Rome, however, the temple was apparently built "in the provincial territory" —which implies a changing concept of *evocatio* in the late Republic (Beard et al. 1998, p. 1.133–34; cf. Le Gall 1976, pp. 523–24). For an analysis of the inscription as *evocatio*, see Le Gall 1976; Blomart 1997, p. 101; Ferri 2010, p. 38; Dillon 2020, pp. 68–69. Gustafsson 2000, pp. 60–61 is only willing to conclude that the inscription implies a "ceremony similar to *evocatio*".

Examples of *evocatio* during the Republic comprise well-trodden ground.⁴⁰ There is no clear example of the rite during the Imperium.⁴¹ Titus's siege of Jerusalem is intriguing because it took place during Vespasian's reign, long after the last known use of the rite in Isaura Vetus. What is so problematic about the thesis of Kloppenborg (2005) and others who use *evocatio* to understand the siege is that none of the ancient authors—namely Tacitus and Josephus—use the language of *evocatio* in their descriptions of the event. One important text of Tacitus quotes by Kloppenborg (2005, p. 445) follows below. It describes the plight of the besieged in Jerusalem:

Evenerant prodigia, quae neque hostiis neque votis piare fas habet gens superstitioni obnoxia, religionibus adversa. visae per caelum concurrere acies, rutilantia arma et subito nubium igne conlucere templum. apertae repente delubri fores et audita maior humana vox, excedere deos; simul ingens motus excedentium.

Prodigies had indeed occurred, but to avert either by victims or by vows is held unlawful by a people which, though prone to superstition, is opposed to all propitiatory rites. Contending hosts were seen meeting in the skies, arms flashed, and suddenly the temple was illumined with fire from the clouds. Of a sudden the doors of the shrine opened and a superhuman voice cried: "The gods are departing": at the same moment the mighty stir of their going was heard.⁴²

But Tacitus does not indicate that the gods in the temple were evoked (*evocari*). None of the words from the spell found in Macrobius occur in the text either. The sole potential indication is the historian's use of *excedere* (the same verb Vergil used to describe the de-

parture of Troy's tutelary gods).⁴³ This is slender evidence, and James Rives doubts there is a reference to *evocatio* here: "It is not impossible, although rather unlikely, that Titus employed this ritual in the siege of Jerusalem. Yet it was for practical purposes unnecessary, since a story had apparently gained currency that the Jewish god had already vacated his Temple" (Rives 2005, p. 149). Giorgio Ferri similarly concludes "I can confirm that there is no direct evidence for this [*evocatio*] in the imperial age."⁴⁴ Josephus has a text that includes a tradition close to Tacitus's:

(6.299) κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἑορτήν, ἣ πεντηκοστή καλεῖται, νύκτωρ οἱ ἱερεῖς παρελθόντες εἰς τὸ ἔνδον ἱερόν, ὥσπερ αὐτοῖς ἔθος πρὸς τὰς λειτουργίας, πρῶτον μὲν κινήσεως ἔφασαν ἀντιλαβέσθαι καὶ κτύπου, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα φωνῆς ἀθρόας "μεταβαίνομεν ἐντεῦθεν". (300) τὸ δὲ τούτων φοβερώτερον, Ἰησοῦς γάρ τις υἱὸς Ἀνανίου τῶν ιδιωτῶν ἄγροικος πρὸ τεσσάρων ἐτῶν τοῦ πολέμου τὰ μάλιστα τῆς πόλεως εἰρηνευομένης καὶ εὐθηνούσης, ἔλθων εἰς τὴν ἑορτήν, ἐν ἣ σκηνοποιεῖσθαι πάντας ἔθος τῷ θεῷ, κατὰ τὸ ἱερόν (301) ἐξαπίνης ἀναβοᾶν ἤρξατο "φωνὴ ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς, φωνὴ ἀπὸ δύσεως, φωνὴ ἀπὸ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων, φωνὴ ἐπὶ Ἱεροσόλυμα καὶ τὸν ναόν, φωνὴ ἐπὶ νυμφίους καὶ νύμφας, φωνὴ ἐπὶ τὸν λαὸν πάντα."

Moreover, at the feast, which is called Pentecost, the priests on entering the inner court of the temple by night, as their custom was in the discharge of their ministrations, reported that they were conscious, first of a commotion and a din, and after that of a voice as of a host, "We are departing hence". But a further portent was even more alarming. Four years before the war [ca 62 C.E.], when the city was enjoying profound peace and prosperity, there came to the feast at which it is the custom of all Jews to erect tabernacles to God, one Jesus, son of Ananias, a rude peasant, who, standing in the temple, suddenly began to cry out, "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds; a voice against Jerusalem and the sanctuary, a voice against the bridegroom and the bride, a voice against the people."⁴⁵

The deity (and the heavenly host?) who is departing from the temple departs of its own accord, according to Josephus, and not as a result of any ancient Roman spell (*carmen*).

Titus does not explicitly use the rite, but he does not know of any deity that still dwells in the temple of Jerusalem:

μαρτύρομαι θεοὺς ἐγὼ πατρίους καὶ εἴ τις ἐφεώρα ποτὲ τόνδε τὸν χώρον, νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὐκ οἶομαι, μαρτύρομαι δὲ καὶ στρατιὰν τὴν ἐμὴν καὶ τοὺς παρ' ἐμοὶ Ἰουδαίους καὶ ὑμᾶς αὐτούς, ὡς οὐκ ἐγὼ ταῦθ' ὑμᾶς ἀναγκάζω μιαίνειν.

I call the gods of my fathers to witness and any deity that once watched over this place—for now I believe that there is none [literally, "for now I do not know (of any)"]—I call my army, the Jews within my lines, and you yourselves to witness that it is not I who force you to pollute these precincts.⁴⁶

The crucial difference between this and the ritual of *evocatio* is that Titus never says he called upon the deity who watched over the temple to depart from it—despite the similarity of some of his words to a phrase from the *carmen* of the ritual: "*si deus si dea est cuius in tutela oppidum est* ..." ⁴⁷ However, that Latin phrase itself appears in contexts other than *evocatio* rituals. In one of the acts of the Arval brethren (8 Feb. 183), for example, one finds the phrase *sive deo sive d[e]ae in cuius tutela hic lucus locusve/est oves (duas)* (whether it be to god or goddess in whomever's protection this sacred grove or place is, [two] oxen).⁴⁸ Consequently the formula (*si deus si dea*) occurs in contexts far outside the purview of an *evocatio*.⁴⁹

The phrase's presence in the Isaura Vetus inscription is in a much different context because Servilius Vatia states that he had fulfilled a vow (*votum solvit*)—perhaps the building of a temple for the tutelary deity of the city in its own province (and not in Rome), as discussed above. There is no implication that Titus fulfilled any vow to the tutelary deity of the Jerusalem temple—either in Palestine or in Rome.⁵⁰ In Josephus, Titus's words assume that the deity has left the temple, but not by any ritual Titus himself has invoked. In the larger context, Josephus makes it clear that the god who watched over Jerusalem departed of God's own accord and not because of an invocation. Perhaps Titus knew the tradition mentioned by Josephus, μεταβαίνομεν ἐντεῦθεν (we are leaving hence), if his words are historically accurate and not put into his mouth by Josephus. It is important that Josephus does not use the Greek cognate for *evoco* or *evocatio* (ἐκκαλέω, ἐκκλησις).⁵¹ In Tacitus, at least there is a verb that occurs in Vergil's description of Troy's loss of the gods that upheld its imperium. Josephus includes no other explicit indications of *evocatio* or *evoco*. What is important for the interpretation of Eusebius's fragment of Porphyry is the presence in Tacitus and Josephus of the motif of a tutelary deity deserting a temple and/or city. That motif begins with the earliest examples of *evocatio*, a ritual that probably ended with the republic, and continues on into the Imperium.

7. Conclusions

Despite the absence of *evocatio* in the imperial age, one of the major elements of the ritual is present in the fragment of Porphyry—namely, the departure from Rome of Asclepius and the other gods. Of course Porphyry does not state that the Christians “evoked” (*evocavisse* or ἐκκεκλησθαι) their departure, which is a major difference between his statement and the Roman spell used in *evocatio*. However, his claim that the gods, including the god of healing, Asclepius, have departed is a somewhat shocking statement for a deeply spiritual pagan philosopher. It does not present the indications of a merely rhetorical flourish to make an argumentative point. After the brutal years of enduring the plague of Cyprian in Rome, where according to his own admission, Porphyry himself had lived, the charge lay easily at hand—namely, that the gods had deserted the city and that the worship of Jesus was the direct cause of their desertion.⁵²

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Notes

- ¹ The original impetus for this article is a fine investigation by Kloppenborg (2005) of the possible use of *evocatio* in the events preceding the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem.
- ² (Opitz 1934), Urkunde 33 (pp. 67–68) includes Latin and Syriac versions of the decree. Barnes (Barnes 1984, p. 53) believes Constantine “made it a capital offence to possess one [a copy of the C. Christ.] in the future”, however, the letter does not explicitly indicate this.
- ³ An unwarranted inference based on the very vague reference to Sicily in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.19.2.
- ⁴ On Porphyry's demonology, cf. (Brisson 2018; Akcay 2018). See (Cook 2000, p. 383) s.v. “demon” (index).
- ⁵ Porphyry uses this word in his *Vita Plotini* 5.62–64 (at the beginning of which, he remarks that he had been in Rome a little before the tenth year of Gallienus [ca 263 C.E.]) ... μετὰ τῶν πρὸ τῆς ἐπιδημίας ἡμῶν εἴκοσι καὶ ἐνὸς τὰ πάντα γίνεται τεσσαρακονταπέντε (with the twenty-one treatises written before I came to Rome, the total [of Plotinus's writings] comes to forty-five; trans. (Armstrong 1939, p. 23). In *Vita Plot.* 20.22–23, he alludes to his experience of meeting many philosophers when he was young: ... διὰ τὴν ἐκ παιδῶν ἐπὶ πολλοὺς τόπους ἄμα τοῖς γονεῦσιν ἐπιδημίαν (... because from childhood I travelled

to many places with my parents; trans. [Armstrong 1939](#), p. 57). The pagan philosopher Macarius Magnes, whose arguments (but not words) are probably based on those of Porphyry, in *Monogenes* 4.10.1 comments on Jesus' words in Luke 5:31: Περὶ δὲ τῆς οἰκείας ἐπιδημίας ὁ Χριστὸς ταῦτ' ἐρραψώδει τοῖς ὄχλοις (But it is about his own coming that Christ declaimed this to the crowds; trans. of Goulet, Macarius, p. 2.251).

⁶ Porphyry's text is included by Theodoret, *Curatio* 12.96 = ([Edelstein and Edelstein 1946](#), § 506 p. 288).

⁷ Cf. the review of Porphyry's approach to Christ in *De oraculis haurienda* ([Cook 2000](#), pp. 107–17). In one fragment of that work, an oracle of Apollo ([Smith 1993](#), 343F [p. 392]) states, Christ is a "god who died in his illusions" (*fallaciis mortuum deum*). Lactantius, *Div. inst.* 4.13.11 preserves the Greek version of the oracle: *Propterea Milesius Apollo consultus utrumne deus an homo fuerit, hoc modo respondit*: θνητὸς ἦν κατὰ σάρκα σοφὸς τερατώδεσιν ἔργοις, / ἀλλ' ὑπὸ Χαλδαίοισι δικασπολίσαισιν ἀλώσας, / γομφωθεὶς σκολόπεσσι πικρὴν ἀνέπλησε τελευτήν (Consequently, when the Milesian Apollo was consulted concerning whether or not he was god or man, he responded in this manner: he was mortal according to the flesh, a wise man with wondrous works, but after being condemned by Chaldean judges, he was nailed with spikes and accomplished a bitter death). In another fragment of the same work (346F [p. 399], Apollo willingly classified Jesus as one of the wise people of the Hebrews (... *sapientes Hebraeorum [quorum unus iste etiam Iesus fuit, sicut audisti divina Apollinis ...]* the wise people of the Hebrews, among whom one was Jesus, as you have heard from Apollo's inspired words). See Augustine's treatment of the oracles' views of Christ (as transmitted by Porphyry) in *De civitate Dei* 19.23.

⁸ See the references in ([Richardson 1992](#), pp. 3–4). On the island there are "remains of a 1st century embankment wall in the form of a ship" upon which is engraved the pole and serpent of Asclepius, what survives of a bust of the god, and a bull's head. See ([Nash 1961](#), pp. 1.508–509).

⁹ Valerius Maximus 1.8.2. Less extensive versions of the tale: Livy 10.47.6–7, *Epit.* 11, Ovid, *Metam.* 7.622–744, Pliny, *Hist. nat.* 29.16, 29.72, Plutarch, *Quaest. rom.* 94, 286d, [Aurelius Victor], *De viris illustribus* 22. On the cult of Asclepius in Rome, cf. ([Renberg 2006/2007](#)).

¹⁰ ([Richardson 1992](#), p. 4). Cf., e.g., CIL 6 (VI), 7–20. CIL 6, 7 (66–63 B.C.E.) was apparently found near the church of S. Bartolomeo, so it probably refers to the temple of Asclepius. ([Renberg 2006/2007](#)) reviews the Roman inscriptions that mention Asclepius.

¹¹ Cp. Athenagoras, *Legatio* 26.1–5 and his equation of the gods with demons.

¹² See further Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* 3.42.1 Φέρε δὴ οὖν καὶ τοῦτο προσθῶμεν, ὥς ἀπάνθρωποι καὶ μισάνθρωποι δαίμονες εἶεν ὑμῶν οἱ θεοί ... (to all this, let us add this remark: it seems that your gods are inhuman and misanthropic daimones ...; trans. [Mondésert 1949](#), p. 100).

¹³ A young man who wanted to seduce a Christian nun, according to Jerome, went to Memphis. In his *Vita S. Hilarionis* 100, Jerome wrote: ... *doctus ab Aesculapii vatibus, non remediantis animas sed perdentis* (... he was instructed by the seers/priests of Aesculapius who does not heal souls but who destroys them).

¹⁴ Tertullian, *Apol.* 40.1–2; trans. ([Glover 1931](#), p. 183); cp. *Nat.* 1.9.

¹⁵ On the plague, cf. ([Huebner 2021](#)).

¹⁶ See ([Huebner 2021](#), p. 162). Cp. Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 2.7.

¹⁷ Arnobius, *Nat.* 1.3 ([Marchesi 1953](#), p. 4); trans. ([McCracken 1949](#), p. 1.61).

¹⁸ See the text and trans. in ([Edelstein and Edelstein 1946](#), 1 § 423 pp. 221–29). See also ([Herzog 1951](#); [Lidonicci 1995](#)). Cp. also the cure in IG IV2, 1 126 (Epidauros, after 117 C.E.) = ([Edelstein and Edelstein 1946](#), 1 § 432 p. 247–48). A blind man was cured by the god, according to IG XIV, 906 (Rome, 212–217 C.E.?) = ([Edelstein and Edelstein 1946](#), 1 § 438 pp. 250–51)—the cure is said to have taken place while Antoninus was imperator.

¹⁹ Artemidorus, *Onirocriticon* 2.37 (trans. of [Edelstein and Edelstein 1946](#), 1, § 451 [p. 260]).

²⁰ Julian, *Contra Galilaeos*, frag. 57 ([Masaracchia 1990](#), p. 151) = Cyril, *C. Iulianum* 7.235C. Trans. from ([Edelstein and Edelstein 1946](#), 1, § 462 p. 264).

²¹ Justin, 1 *Apol.* 54.10; trans. of ([Falls 1948](#), p. 93). Cp. *Dial.* 69.3 ([Bobichon 2003](#), p. 374) ὅταν δὲ τὸν Ἀσκληπιὸν νεκροὺς ἀνεγείραντα καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάθη θεραπεύσαντα παραφέρῃ [ὁ διάβολος], οὐχὶ τὰς περὶ Χριστοῦ ὁμοίως προφητείας μεμιμηθῇ τοῦτον καὶ ἐπὶ τούτῳ φημί; (And when the devil presents Asclepius as raising the dead to life and curing all diseases, has he not, in this regard, also, emulated the prophecies about Christ?; trans. ([Falls 1948](#), p. 259).

²² Origen, *Cels.* 3.3; trans. Chadwick 1953, p. 130.

²³ Origen, *Cels.* 3.24; trans. Chadwick 1953, p. 142.

²⁴ Origen, *Cels.* 3.25; trans. Chadwick 1953, p. 143.

²⁵ Arnobius, *Nat.* 1.49 ([Marchesi 1953](#), p. 44); trans. of ([McCracken 1949](#), p. 96).

²⁶ See ([Capone 2024](#), pp. 104–108).

²⁷ Festus, *Epitome* ([Lindsay 1913](#), p. 268); trans. of ([Rüpke 2014](#), p. 14). Cf. ([Ferri 2010](#), p. 23; [Grandi 2015/2016](#), pp. 22–23).

²⁸ Pliny, *Nat. hist.* 28.18–19; trans. of ([Jones 1963](#), pp. 3–15). On the secret name of name, cf. the texts and analysis of ([Cairns 2010](#)). Cf. ([Ferri 2010](#), pp. 29–30) and ([Grandi 2015/2016](#), 29).

²⁹ Cf. Rives 2005, p. 149 (he notes that *evocatio*'s existence during the "imperial period is very uncertain").

- 30 Vergil, *Aeneid* 2.244–55; trans. of Fairclough and Goold 1999, p. 333.
- 31 Servius Danielis ad Vergil, *Aeneid*, 2.244 (Thilo and Hagen 1881–1884, p. 260); trans. of Robert Kaster (communication of 20 November 2024). Cf. (Gustafsson 2000, p. 44; Ferri 2010, pp. 36–37; Grandi 2015/2016, p. 29).
- 32 Vergil, *Aeneid*, 2.351–52; trans. of (Fairclough and Goold 1999, p. 341). See (Gustafsson 2000, p. 44; Ferri 2010, p. 31).
- 33 Servius and Servius Danielis ad Vergil, *Aeneid* 2.351 (Thilo and Hagen 1881–1884, p. 1.277); trans. of (Cairns 2010, p. 249). Cf. (Ferri 2010, p. 37).
- 34 Vergil, *Aeneid* 12.841–42; trans. of (Fairclough and Goold 2000, p. 2.359).
- 35 Servius ad Vergil, *Aeneid*, 12.841 (Thilo and Hagen 1881–1884, p. 2.645); trans. mod. of (Várhelyi 2007, p. 283). (Beard et al. 1998, p. 1.133) note that “there is no evidence that it [the ritual] resulted in the building of a new temple for the goddess in Rome”. See (Ferri 2010, p. 37) and (Grandi 2015/2016, p. 30).
- 36 Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 3.9.7–8; trans. of (Kaster 2011, pp. 67–69). Cf. (Gustafsson 2000, pp. 45–46, 59–60) (the problematic nature of the claim that Juno was transferred from Carthage to Rome), (Ferri 2010, pp. 37–38) and (Grandi 2015/2016, p. 56; Dillon 2020, pp. 65–68). (Champion 2017, p. 142) writes, “Macrobius (*Sat.* 3.9.13), for what it is worth, says that the Romans performed the ritual at Fregella, Gabii, Veii, and Fidenae in Italy, at Carthage and Corinth, and in many other places in Gaul, Spain, and Africa.” Macrobius (*Sat.* 3.9.13) adds (to cities devoted to destruction—something that happens after *evocatio*—*Maurorum alarumque gentium quas prisci loquuntur annales* (... Moors, and other nations that the old-time annals mention; trans. Kaster 2011, pp. 71–73). See further on the list (Blomart 1997, p. 101).
- 37 See also (DesRosiers 2019, p. 142). In an earlier survey, (Basanoff 1947, pp. 42–68) finds no imperial examples of *evocatio*. (Rüpke 1990, p. 164) also argues that the practice came to an end in the late Republic.
- 38 See (Marquardt 1885, p. 21).
- 39 CIL 1, 2954 = AE 1977, 816 = AE 2010, 1691 (supplementary comments); trans. mod. of (Kloppenborg 2005, p. 439). See Sallust, *Historiarum reliquiae* frag. 5b (Kurfess 1991, p. 167).
- 40 Livy’s description of the ritual used against the Veii in 396 B.C.E. by Camillus is a typical example. In his vow, Camillus promises Juno Regina a new temple: (5.21.3) *te simul, Iuno regina, quae nunc Veios colis, precor, ut nos victores in nostram tuamque mox futuram urbem sequare, ubi te dignum amplitudine tua templum accipiat* (At the same time I beseech you, Queen Juno, that dwells now in Veii, to come with us, when we have gotten the victory, to our City—soon to be yours, too—that a temple meet for your majesty may there receive you; trans. modified of (Foster 1924, p. 73); (5.21.5) *Veientes, ignari se ... iam in partem praedae suae vocatos deos, alios votis ex urbe sua evocatos hostium templa novasque sedes spectare seque ultimum illum diem agere* (The Veientes, unconscious ... that some of the gods had already been invited to share in their despoiling, while others having been entreated to quit their city were beginning to look to new homes in the temples of their enemies, and that this was the last day they were themselves to live; trans. of Foster 1924, p. 73). The description is clearly of an *evocatio* (signaled clearly by *evocati*). Dionysius Halicarnassus, *Res roman.* 13.3.2 describes Camillus’s removal of Juno’s statue from the city’s temple to Rome. On Livy, see (Ferri 2010, p. 30). On the *evocatio* at Veii, cf. (Gustafsson 2000, pp. 46–55).
- 41 Wissowa 1907 in a brief, but (one assumes) fairly exhaustive survey, finds no examples from the empire. (Ferri 2010) in a more complete survey finds no examples from the Imperium either.
- 42 Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.13.1; trans. of (Moore 1931, pp. 197–99).
- 43 (Kloppenborg 2005, p. 445) draws attention to the texts of the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism that refer to God’s departure from Solomon’s temple before its destruction by the Babylonians. (Dillon 2020, p. 70) noncommittally (“it has even been argued”) mentions the possibility that Titus may have used *evocatio*.
- 44 Communication of 17 November 2024.
- 45 Josephus, *Bell.* 6.299–301; trans. of (Thackeray 1928, pp. 463–65). In *Bell.* 5.412, Josephus writes, “My belief, therefore, is that the divinity has fled from the holy places and taken its stand on the side of those with whom we are at war” (ὥστε ἐγὼ πεφηνγένοι μὲν ἐκ τῶν ἁγίων οἶμαι τὸ θεῖον, ἐστάναι δὲ παρ’ οἷς πολεμεῖτε νῦν. trans. modified from Thackeray 1928, p. 331).
- 46 Josephus, *Bell.* 6.127; trans. of (Thackeray 1928, p. 413).
- 47 This problem is ignored by (Kloppenborg 2005, p. 443; Musiał and Gillmeister 2018, p. 101).
- 48 CIL 6, 2099 = CIL 6, 3286 = CFA 94 (sanctuary of *dea Dia* ca five miles outside of Rome). See the comments of (Scheid 2010, p. 289; Alvar 1985, pp. 240–42). The phrase occurs twice in the inscription.
- 49 Cf. a number of other uses in the article of (Alvar 1985).
- 50 For a useful analysis of the depiction on the Arch of Titus in Rome of the vessels of the Jerusalem temple as booty for a Roman triumph, cf. (DesRosiers 2019).
- 51 Both occur in Plutarch, *Quaest. rom.* 61, 278F, in his discussion of why it was forbidden to reveal the name of the secret name of the tutelary deity of Rome and the Romans’ fear that their god might be the object of *evocatio*, Plutarch writes: πότερον, ὡς τῶν Ῥωμαϊκῶν τινες ἱστορήκασιν, ἐκκλησίαις εἰσὶ καὶ γοητεῖαι θεῶν, αἷς νομίζοντες καὶ αὐτοὶ θεοὺς τινας ἐκκεκλησθαι παρὰ τῶν πολεμίων καὶ μετρηκέναι πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἐφοβοῦντο τὸ αὐτὸ παθεῖν ὑφ’ ἐτέρων; (Is it because, as certain Roman writers have recorded, there are certain evocations and spells affecting the gods, by which the Romans also believed that certain

gods had been called forth from their enemies, and had come to dwell among themselves, and they were afraid of having this same thing done to them by others?; trans. Babbitt 1931, pp. 95–97). Lydus, *De mens.* 4.73, claims that the secret name was ἔρωγ (*Amor*), but (Cairns 2010, p. 258) argues that Lydus's account is “fanciful”, since it contradicts a number of earlier accounts in a several crucial details.

⁵² Cf. the reference to *Vita Plotini* 5.62–64 above in § 2.

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