

**Terror, Trauma, and Crisis:  
The Asiatic Vespers and (Un)making of Memory in the Late Roman Republic**

by

**Theresa Ruoxi Xu**

A graduating essay submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Arts (Honours)  
in  
The Faculty of Arts  
The University of British Columbia

We accept this essay as conforming to the required standard:

Primary Supervisor: Katharine Huemoeller

Second Reader: Leanne Bablitz

Department of Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies

Date: April 19, 2024

## Abstract

In 88 BCE, Mithridates VI Eupator Dionysos, king of Pontus and one of the strongest enemies of the Roman Republic, ordered a mass massacre to kill all residents of Roman birth in Anatolia. Hellenistic *poleis* such as Ephesus, Pergamon, Caunus, Adramyttion, and Tralles were scenes of atrocities. This so-called Asiatic Vespers resulted in the death of between 80,000 and 150,000 Romans. (App. *Mith.* 23; Val. Max. 9.2.3; Memn. 22.9; Plut. *Sull.* 24.4.) In terms of historiography, Appian selects five *poleis* to present specific highly emotional tragic scenes; Cicero, a contemporary of the Asiatic Vespers, calls it a “stain” attached to the tapestry of Rome’s unfolding hegemony. (*Leg. Man.* 2.8) In the century that followed, the social reorganization of the Mediterranean world, escalating political crises, and the partisan effects of civil wars have complicated the traumatic memory of the Asiatic Vespers. Among different social groups that were involved in this incident – the local Anatolians, the Greeks, and the Romans, the dynamics of remembering and forgetting overlapped and competed. In this thesis, I seek to understand what specific roles terror and trauma played in forming the memory space of the Asiatic Vespers according to two of Paul Connerton’s typologies of social forgetting: (1) forgetting as annulment and (2) forgetting in forming new identity. First, the “forgetting as annulment” as an agenda guides Appian’s depiction of the Asiatic Vespers in *The Foreign War* by integrating independent sources and generating rhetorical tension. The “forgetting in forming new identity” as a specifically trauma-derived typology, sheds light on how traumatic feelings such as confusion, embarrassment, and humiliation served as the cornerstone for communities to negotiate the post-massacre collective identity and to respond to new social and political crises. I suggest that memories of the Asiatic Vespers were adjusted, renewed, and appropriated by the Romans to serve their contemporary purposes. These typologies of social forgetting helped them to locate themselves and to deal with during uncertain moments of political transformation.

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	ii
Table of Contents .....	iii
Acknowledgements .....	iv
Introduction .....	1
Terror: Forgetting as Annulment .....	5
Sources .....	6
Rhetorics .....	10
Intertextuality .....	13
Trauma: Forgetting in Forming Identities .....	16
Confusion .....	17
Embarrassment .....	20
Humiliation .....	23
Conclusions: Crises Revisited .....	27
Bibliography .....	31

## Acknowledgements

I conducted research and wrote this thesis while living and working at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver campus, which is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) Nation. I acknowledge my status as a settler on this inspiring landscape which always was and will always be *Indigenous* land.

This thesis would not be possible without the support provided by the Department of Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies (AMNE), the shelter of my past four years of studying. First and foremost, I am deeply grateful to my supervisor Katharine Huemoeller, the best mentor ever, the most incisive and prudent reader, and my model of scholar. She instilled ‘critical fabulation’ into my research and my life. Thanks to Leanne Bablitz, a dream second reader in every way, who took care of this thesis with great humour. The AMNE undergraduate advisor Bronwyn Langley’s encouragement, professionalism and passion are essential to the completion of this thesis.

I would like to extend my thanks to my parents who have unwaveringly supported me in all aspects. Thanks to Ziyang “Carrie” Huang for listening to my chattering ideas. I also would like to mention Sofia Lopez and the Lopez-Castillo family who have been the greatest support network I could ever ask for in the past four years. This thesis comes from unremitting discussions and consuming several litres of coffee with my friends in Vancouver and Kraków.

Ultimately, I would like to dedicate this thesis to the murdered Roman residents of Anatolia of the Asiatic Vespers and all victims of war crimes. With a quote from Walter Benjamin, the study aims to commemorate those nameless, powerless, erased, and absented in history: “It is harder to honour the memory of the nameless than that of the famous; historical construction is dedicated to the memory of the nameless.” (1939, *On the History of Concepts*)

## Introduction

[T]hough of one thing I must speak, how Mithridates gave an order for the massacre on a single day of all the Roman citizens dwelling anywhere in Asia, of whom there were great numbers all minding their own business, and this was done. What a pathetic sight it was when suddenly, where each man was found, in a field, on a road, in a town, at home, in a street, in a marketplace, in a temple, in bed, at a banquet, he was without warning and regard for the gods treacherously killed! What groans there were from the dying, what tears from the witnesses, even perhaps from those who dealt the blow themselves!  
(August. *De civ. D.* 3.22)

Augustine of Hippo, facing the Vandal invasion of North Africa in the early fifth century CE, recalled a massacre that the Romans had suffered in their pagan age.<sup>1</sup> The lurid narrative illustrates that even five centuries after, the memory of terror remained ineluctably fresh. In spring 88 BCE, Mithridates VI Eupator Dionysos, king of Pontus, ordered his Anatolian allies to kill all residents of Italian birth.<sup>2</sup> The command was meticulously synchronized and carried out brutally at the populated Hellenistic *poleis*. At Ephesus, the perpetrators chopped down the Romans who sought refuge at the temple of Artemis. At Pergamon, arrows were shot at those gathered around the healing shrine of Asclepius. At Adramyttion, people followed and drowned the escaped and their children in the sea. At Caunus, victims were butchered in front of the statue of Vesta. At Tralles, the citizens' assembly assigned a third party to do the dirty work.<sup>3</sup> Massacres also occurred in Nysa, Mytilene, Miletus, Apamea, Smyrna, Erythrae, Cos, and Chios.<sup>4</sup> According to ancient sources, between 80,000 and 150,000 Romans were wiped off the map of Anatolia on this single day.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> August. *De civ. D.* 3.22.

<sup>2</sup> App. *Mith.* 22-23, 58, 62; Cic. *Leg. Man.* 2.8; Liv. *Per.* 78; Vell. 2.18.1-2; Val.Max. 9.2e.3; Memn. 22. 9; Plut. *Sull.* 24.7; Plut. *Pomp.* 37. 4; Tac. *Ann.* 4.14; Flor. 1.40.7-8; Dio.Cass. 101.1, 109.8; Oros. 6.2.2-3; August. *De civ. D.* 3.22.

<sup>3</sup> App. *Mith.* 23.

<sup>4</sup> Val.Max. 9.2e.3; Memn. 22. 9; Dio.Cass. 101.1, 109.8.

<sup>5</sup> Val.Max. 9.2e.3; Memn. 22.9; Plut. *Sull.* 24.4. The statistics are not precise and vary between sources.

While collective violence was commonplace in the ancient Mediterranean world, the so-called Asiatic (or Ephesian) Vespers was atypical. According to the conventions of ancient warfare, hostile action might include the mass execution of all adult male inhabitants in a given city and the enslavement of women and children.<sup>6</sup> The Asiatic Vespers did not fit this pattern. Its unconventional features include the attack on a targeted ethnicity, involvement of local civilians, intentional violation of *asylum*, and the terrorist slaughter of women and children. Though the term is typically not used transhistorically, these features recall the modern sociological concept of genocide, which, according to Christopher Powell, entails the community's "social figuration" – a vibrant, breathing cultural entity that has been broken down, crippled or destroyed completely by mass killing.<sup>7</sup> The violent actions of the Asiatic Vespers not only carried out the irrevocable physical destruction of the Roman residents in Anatolia, but also erased their culture, religion, daily practice, ideas, and memories as well.<sup>8</sup>

Beyond the definitional question of ancient genocide, what interests me are the records of genocide, namely the social figuration constructed by the Asiatic Vespers. Research on this topic is riddled with ambiguities due to the limited evidence. What we lack, unlike in modern studies of genocide, is eyewitness accounts or interviews, photographs, film footage, recordings, and government archives. The elliptic rhetoric of Greco-Roman history does not tell the full story, but tends to present genocides in diverse genres. Cicero, a contemporary to the Asiatic Vespers, calls the event a "stain" attached to the tapestry of Rome's unfolding hegemony.<sup>9</sup> Appian contributes geographical and temporal details on the episode, while historians such as Livy, Tacitus, Cassius Dio, and Eutropius minimize it, reducing the massacre to a brief footnote of the First Mithridatic War (89 - 85 BCE). Other

---

<sup>6</sup> Hans van Wees, "Genocide in the Ancient World" in *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, ed. Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010), 240.

<sup>7</sup> Christopher Powell, "What do genocides kill? A relational conception of genocide" *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 9, no. 4 (2007), 538-39.

<sup>8</sup> Powell (2007), 539.

<sup>9</sup> Cic. *Leg. Man.* 2.8.

authors such as Strabo, Plutarch, Valerius Maximus, Velleius Paterculus, Memnon, and Florus provide side depictions to serve their specific agendas. Augustine's sympathetic recalling of the tragedy in the 5th century is the last reference to the event among ancient authors.

In modern scholarship on the Asiatic Vespers, Adrienne Mayor first noted the general silence in ancient writings regarding this incident.<sup>10</sup> Susan E. Alcock attributed this "mild scholarly amnesia" to socio-political transformation in the Roman East but did not include the Asiatic Vespers and its consequences into her discussion of social memory.<sup>11</sup> Since the rise of mnemohistory, memory has increasingly been a tool of study. In the words of Jan Assmann, mnemohistory is not the opposite of history but "[...] reception theory applied to history," that is well suited for the survey of ancient cases.<sup>12</sup> This new wave has resulted in an interdisciplinary exchange between the fields of classical studies, sociology, and cognitive psychology. More recently, ancient historians such as Karl Galinsky, Harriet Flower, and Alain Gowing have turned to memory as the subject of study rather than just a tool.<sup>13</sup>

These studies, however, have not taken account of scholarship centered on the memory of trauma. Scholarship on the Holocaust has demonstrated the overriding forces of trauma and devastation in forming memory. The 'boom' of memory studies since the 1980s is almost trauma-derived. The discipline was dominated by the central question of "how to remember the Holocaust" in discussing the 1985 documentary movie *Shoah*, the design of Holocaust monuments and memorial museums, and in dialogues with victims, survivors and their descendents.<sup>14</sup> In terms of the relationship between the Holocaust and modernity, the sociologist Paul Connerton outlined a model of collective forgetting to take a significant step

---

<sup>10</sup> Adrienne Mayor, *The Poison King* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2011), 46.

<sup>11</sup> Susan E. Alcock, "'Make sure you know whom to kill'" German-American Frontiers of Humanities Symposium, *American Philological Society/Humboldt Foundation* (Berlin: Millenium, 2007), 13-14.

<sup>12</sup> Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Redwood City: Stanford UP, 2011), 8-9. J. Assmann's theory drew upon Maurice Halbwachs' theory on collective memory (1980; 1992) and built up on Jewish mnemohistory.

<sup>13</sup> Galinsky (2014); Flower (2011); Gowing (2005).

<sup>14</sup> Lanzmann (1985); Blight (2009); Hirsch (2012); A. Assmann (2015).

forward towards the role of traumatic memory in understanding modern society.<sup>15</sup> Yet, the specific roles of terror, violence, and collective trauma in the memory space of Rome has not been systematically explored.

This thesis aims to historicize various typologies of modes of memory that acted upon the Asiatic Vespers. The dynamics of memory of the Asiatic Vespers are not restricted to a single, general type of forgetting but go hand-in-hand with a more complex picture of the Romans' perception and manipulation of memory. In the century that followed the Asiatic Vespers, the social reorganization of the Mediterranean world, escalating political crises, and the partisan effects of civil wars have impacted the reconstruction and representation of its memory. Trauma and its effects moved between the individual, familial, and social levels, constantly generating, repressing, and regenerating interpretable imprints. The legacy of violence was remembered and distorted following varied modes of memory, and was increasingly removed from the social context of the late first century BCE. This thesis asks then, what power dynamics drove the competing narratives of this remarkable event? What criteria did the different involved groups apply when choosing what to glorify, what to remember, and what to pass over in silence?

This thesis explores the memory space of the Asiatic Vespers according to two of Connerton's typologies of social forgetting: (1) forgetting as annulment and (2) forgetting in forming new identity.<sup>16</sup> First, I look at Appian's depiction of the Asiatic Vespers in *The Foreign War*, which is the known most comprehensive source on the very event, examining his use of rhetorics, and intertextuality with other accounts to showcase "forgetting as annulment" as an agenda in historical writings. Then, I offer a close examination of the

---

<sup>15</sup> Paul Connerton, "Seven types of forgetting," *Memory Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2008), 60. Connerton wrote of seven types of forgetting in total: (1) repressive erasure, (2) prescriptive forgetting, (3) forgetting as annulment, (4) forgetting that is constitutive in the formation of a new identity, (5) structural amnesia, (6) forgetting as planned obsolescence and (7) forgetting as humiliated silence. Connerton formulated these models in a modern, post-war context in terms of the scope of this thesis, I look at (3) and (4) in particular with simpler wording.

<sup>16</sup> Connerton (2008), 62-65.

reception of the Asiatic Vespers among various ethnic groups – the Anatolians, the Greeks, and the Romans – to clarify the diverse utilities of “forgetting in forming new identity” in the aftermath of traumatic events. I propose that the Romans cultivated, designed, and (ab)used these typologies of memory to deal with crises and uncertainties during their political transformation. The paradigms which are closely associated with the crises of the late Republic – anxiety of tyranny, anarchy, and external invasion – were, in turn, recast throughout Roman history.

Although my methodology proceeds from post-modern sociological theories, this new approach does not connote reading Roman history simply or generally in terms of the twentieth-century totalitarian erasure of memory.<sup>17</sup> Roman memory can only be read in a Roman context. Instead, this thesis aims to introduce the insights gained from the modern studies of social forgetting to make new readings of ancient cases.

### **Terror: Forgetting as Annulment**

A common understanding of the relationship between history and memory is that history serves as the premise for memory, and history is followed by memory. This linear succession, however, is not accurate. History in a narrow sense – a recorded past – is encoded with values and judgements when being arranged into narrative frameworks. Such simultaneous construction of memory rooted in the writing of historiography ensures the occurrence of ‘historical significance.’ Paul Ricœur argues that “a narrative does not resemble the event it recounts” but exhibits the historian’s discretion.<sup>18</sup> In terms of ancient

---

<sup>17</sup> For the ‘twentieth-century totalitarian erasure,’ I refer to the emergence and legalization of punitive memory during the Second World War and Cold War, such as the censorship of the political memory of Leon Trotsky during the Yezhovshchina in 1936 by Joseph Stalin. The Roman *damnatio memoriae* (“condemnation of memory,” or memory sanction) took a similar form, but differed in nature.

<sup>18</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 279-80.

historiography, this synchronous formation is magnified significantly since it is already the product of literary reception, transmission, and potential fraud. We face a hybrid, intertwined zone.

To examine the synchronicity between history and memory, I use Appian of Alexandria's account from *The Roman History* (Ρωμαϊκά) as a case study. We know very little about Appian's personal activity as a historian and this fragmentary work. Fortunately, Book 12 of the Mithridatic Wars, which contains the Asiatic Vespers, survives intact. *Mith.* 23 depicting the Asiatic Vespers stands out. Appian's scheme through *The Roman History* focuses on the deterministic condition of "how these things happened" (ταῦτα ὅπως ἐγένετο). In this section, by contrast, he turns to create a rather novelistic overview of terror.<sup>19</sup> The map of the massacre in *Mith.* 23 moves from Mithridates' headquarters Ephesus, to Pergamon, then to Adramyttium on the northern coast, then to Caunus at the south, and ultimately to the inland *polis*, Tralles.<sup>20</sup> Instead of offering a comprehensive narrative, or condensing the episode into an epitome, he selects these five cities to present five highly emotional tragic scenes. This section looks at Appian's use of sources, rhetorics, and references to other accounts, exploring why he made these textual choices and how these choices affect his depiction of the Asiatic Vespers as a historical event.

## Sources

In terms of sources, *Mith.* 23 is strikingly independent: besides the much later Augustine and Orosius, Appian is our only known historian who mentions the killings in the five *poleis* of Ephesus, Pergamon, Adramyttium, Caunus, and Tralles.<sup>21</sup> Considering the

---

<sup>19</sup> Jonathan J. Price, "Thucydidean *stasis* and the Roman Empire in Appian's Interpretation of History" in *Appian's Roman History*, ed. Kathryn Welch (Bristol: The Classical Press of Wales, 2016), 52. Price points out that Appian followed Thucydides by arranging his narratives in terms of virtues and lusts based on the historical view that human activities are usually constrained by emotions.

<sup>20</sup> App. *Mith.* 23.

<sup>21</sup> Oros. 6.2.2-3; August. *De civ. D.* 3.22. It is also notable that Orosius used Augustine as a source, thus leading to the overlapped information about the Asiatic Vesper in late antiquity.

strong ethnographic colour of Appian's work, modern scholarship on his source suggests that Appian perhaps drew on the memory of the Asiatic Vespers from a wider and indirect corpus of documentation, such as oral traditions, physical carriers, folklore, and testimonies.<sup>22</sup> I propose that he may have examined and incorporated memoirs (*commentarii*), letters and speeches, epigraphic sources, and lost histories to contribute to a comprehensive picture of the Asiatic Vespers.

**Memoirs (*commentarii*).** One significant document that Appian cites is the memoir of P. Rutilius Rufus. Rufus was the consul of 105 BCE who introduced military reforms on which Marius later built his system.<sup>23</sup> As the legate in Anatolia during the Asiatic Vespers he luckily survived the massacre, spent the rest of his life in Smyrna and wrote a memoir about the Mithridatic War.<sup>24</sup> His writing is the closest to an eyewitness account of which we hear. Although Rufus' memoir is not extant, Plutarch includes some direct quotes in his own work, which suggests that Appian, who uses Plutarch's work extensively and follows common sources together with Plutarch, likely also had access to some versions of Rufus' memoir.<sup>25</sup> Appian's trust in memoirs as primary sources is also demonstrated by his interest in and use of Sulla's lost memoir.<sup>26</sup>

**Letters and speeches.** Appian also relied heavily on correspondences and speeches. The details of Mithridates' well-established intelligence network in Anatolia in *Mith.* 23 may come from two Greek inscriptions which bear the king's letters to the satrap of Nysa in Caria.<sup>27</sup> Letters mention Mithridates' orders of killings in Tralles and Ephesus, while he saw

---

<sup>22</sup> Richard Westall, "The source for *The Civil Wars* of Appian of Alexandria" in *Appian's Roman History*, ed. Kathryn Welch (Bristol: The Classical Press of Wales, 2016), 126. Westall only talks about Appian's source in *The Civil Wars*. I suggest that he utilized a similar corpus to write the *Foreign Wars*.

<sup>23</sup> "Rutilius Rufus, Publius", *Oxford Reference*. Rufus was born into the distinguished *Rutilia* gen, who was also the great uncle of Julius Caesar through his sister Rutilia, the maternal grandmother of Caesar.

<sup>24</sup> *Plut. Mar.* 7. Plutarch recorded Rufus as the legate and a close friend of Marius.

<sup>25</sup> Mayor (2011), 39; Flower (2015), 218; Hendrickson (1933).

<sup>26</sup> In *The Foreign Wars*, Appian frequently refers to Sulla's speeches (*Mith.* 58, 62) that are presumably recollected by Sulla himself in his lost memoir.

<sup>27</sup> *Syll. Graec.* 741 I and 741III; Sheldon (2005), 219-20.

any Roman allies/collaborators a threat as dangerous as the Romans themselves.<sup>28</sup> Details of the violation of *asylum* and killing of mothers and children appear in Sulla's speeches in Athens and Ephesus as the reason to declare war and implement punishment, showing that Appian has consulted it for this specific information, despite the actual words having been lost.<sup>29</sup>

**Epigraphic sources.** A marble stele found at Aptera in Crete preserves its treaty with Miletus, restating the substantial *asylum* of Miletus by referring to the oracles of Apollo Didyma.<sup>30</sup> The content of the decree directly concerns the Milesians' collaboration with Mithridates in 88: as one measure of Rome's collective punishments, the temple of Didyma in Miletus lost its *asylum*.<sup>31</sup> Appian does not incorporate Miletus into *Mith.* 23, but this marble stele indirectly alludes to the existence of similar inscriptions all over the Mediterranean world which Appian may have consulted. Epigraphic monuments allow the construction of a shared past at the public level, revealing a communal experience of losing the *asylum* among the Anatolian *poleis*, which is central to Appian's narrative.

**Lost histories.** Another certain source of the Asiatic Vespers is the chronicle by L. Cornelius Sisenna, a Roman soldier-historian who survived the Mithridatic Wars. Appian used this lost history extensively for citing speeches and dialogues in particular.<sup>32</sup> He may also have had access to local histories from Pontus and Greek libraries that were made available through translation or transmission to Rome.<sup>33</sup>

In general, Appian's use of these sources is sophisticated. He interweaves all types of direct and collateral evidence to provide an ideal account. It is hard, however, to imagine that

Appian had done in-person ethnographic surveys to each site or had direct access to each

---

<sup>28</sup> *Syll. Graec.* 741 I bears Mithridates' letter to Leonippos, a Pontian satrap of Nysa and Caria, found at Atça, mentions the killings in Tralles; 741 III, also to Leonippos, mentions the killings in Ephesus.

<sup>29</sup> *App. Mith.* 58, 62.

<sup>30</sup> Kent J. Rigsby, *Asylia: Territorial Inviolability in the Hellenistic World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 173-74.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 173, 177; Rigsby (1988), 149-52.

<sup>32</sup> Westall (2016), 137.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 144-45.

original source. His acquaintance with the Republican history and Hellenic scholarly traditions resolves the problem of building a narrative framework, but his heavy reliance upon a compilation of contemporary historiographical accounts by other authors and the possible intermediary of source has resulted in divergences.<sup>34</sup> *Mith.* 23 omits Mytilene, Apamea, Smyrna, Erythrae, Cos, and Chios. Another historian Cassius Dio brings up that the Thracians have violated the Temple of Zeus in Dodona, while in the same paragraph, there was no mention of Theophilus who executed the murder in Tralles.<sup>35</sup>

What Appian includes and what he leaves out, alongside remarkable omissions and imperceptible distortions, demonstrates his definable authorial agency – as an interpreter of history rather than merely a copyist. His selection of sources resembles the strategy which Paul Connerton coined “forgetting as annulment” in historical writing. Connerton points out that forgetting ‘superfluous’ information is necessary and inevitable especially in generating narratives.<sup>36</sup> In other words, to produce a coherent and acceptable discourse requires the action of ‘forgetting’ – to generalize, make abstractions, and erase incompatible plots. This notion aligns with the historian’s professional competence since history is not an all-encompassing discipline. The historian is not bound to report anything and everything. The source of one historical event, depiction, interpretation, and criticism can be flexibly invoked or abandoned in the encounter with the author’s agenda and vision.

The phenomenon of forgetting in historiography sheds light on Appian’s source selection criteria. Yet, it does not sufficiently explain the departure of *Mith.* 23 from his holistic scheme. Given the fact that *Mith.* 23 is already the earliest and most comprehensive source of the Asiatic Vespers, we must rely on the analysis of the structure and rhetoric of the narrative *per se* to understand that narrative. According to what principles did Appian choose, avoid and even invent material to produce a coherent account?

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 145.

<sup>35</sup> Dio. 101.1, 109.8.

<sup>36</sup> Connerton (2008), 66.

## Rhetoric

*Mith.* 23 is somehow slightly incompatible with its context. Appian inserts the depiction of the Asiatic Vespers into a monographic narrative of Mithridates' tyranny. The king dramatically executed the captured Roman general Manius Aquillius by pouring molten gold down his throat, then declared war onto the Romans. Even during the course of the massacre, Mithridates was focused on confiscating the properties of the deceased and continuing his sexual adventures.<sup>37</sup> Then, *Mith.* 23 adds another dimension. It speaks not only to Mithridates' lack of moral qualm and capricious personality but also the scope of his political power: the Asiatic Vespers is an act of 'conspicuous destruction', a more evident display of his overwhelming power in Anatolia.<sup>38</sup> In this account, the killings of the five *poleis* – Ephesus, Pergamon, Adramyttium, Cannus, and Tralles – is organized around the central theme of connecting violence and ritual and natural pollution. Let us examine this episode following Appian's arrangement.

In *Mith.* 23, first, when the Ephesians started searching and arresting each Roman family in town, the Romans naturally fled to the Temple of Artemis. All temples in antiquity were sacred, inviolable spaces under the *asylum* of the gods. Anyone – citizens, slaves, outsiders, even criminals – was granted refuge within the boundary of the temple.<sup>39</sup> The atrocities inside the Temple of Artemis were therefore explicitly profane: the frightened Romans grabbed the statue and attempted to climb upon it but were pulled off and killed. Similar highly graphic violence took place in the Temple of Asclepius in Pergamon. By shooting arrows at people climbing on the sacred statue, the killing became more efficient and more atrocious. Local residents then killed Romans and their children as they escaped not

---

<sup>37</sup> App. *Mith.* 21-22.

<sup>38</sup> van Wees (2012), 256. van Wees proposed that genocide in antiquity is usually an act of 'conspicuous destruction' to show off the power and status of the perpetrator in the face of a perceived challenge. Regarding the warfare background of the Asiatic Vespers, Mithridates here defiantly asserted his hegemony over Rome.

<sup>39</sup> Rigsby (1996), 2.

only on lands but also those who ran into the sea in Adramyttium; the townspeople of Caunus ruthlessly dragged victims away in front of the statue of Vesta and killed children in front of their mothers. And in Tralles, the citizens' assembly hired "a fierce Paphlagonian man called Theophilus" to execute the butchery in the Temple of Concord, cutting off the victims' arms which were holding onto the statues.<sup>40</sup>

Appian's narrative of terror shows a striking pattern of how cultural taboos were pushed to the margin and eventually shattered. The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus was the sole cult centre for Ephesian Artemis, the syncretistic goddess worshiped in Anatolia outside from the Olympian pantheon. Likewise, Asclepius, Vesta and Concord are all atypical Hellenic deities, especially Vesta and Concord considering their central positions in Roman religion. The violation of *asylum* was hence provocative and symbolic. He aims to convey the intention of expelling or exterminating the Romans and their religion, culture, and daily practices. Such an intention went beyond just hate or contempt but created a 'Disgusting Other' that was embedded into the idea of ethnic 'cleanliness' or 'purification.'<sup>41</sup> Another notable feature of impurity is the mutilation and killing of Romans in the sea. Marine pollution crosses the boundaries of landscape and material state – from land to water, from solid to liquid.<sup>42</sup> In such a way, Appian frames the act of violation as a form of pollution, representing the overt hegemony of the perpetrators that goes beyond the established religious order and ultimately the natural order.

This compact thematic structure focuses on the strong association between violence and desecration, thus making *Mith.* 23 a model of brevity and intensity in the book.

Meanwhile, this seemingly independent paragraph connects the storytelling between two distinct leading characters in Appian's account. After showing the bloodshed, Appian concludes the Asiatic Vespers by foreshadowing: "[The inhabitants of Anatolia] were

---

<sup>40</sup> App. *Mith.* 23.

<sup>41</sup> Allan Cooper, *The Geography of Genocide* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 31.

<sup>42</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purify and Danger* (London: Routledge, 2002), 47.

punished twice over, first by Mithridates himself when he treated them with treacherous violence shortly after, and then by L. Cornelius Sulla.”<sup>43</sup> Rather than a digression, such a comment enables a smooth transition between Mithridates’ tyranny (*Mith.* 22) and the naval battle in Rhodes in 87 and Sulla’s leadership that was established based on his military prestige (24-29). The narrative scheme he produced lays a foundation of the Asiatic Vespers that is picked up by later ancient writers as most of whom arranged the Rhodian naval battle after the Asiatic Vespers, a chronological order which is, in fact, historically controversial.<sup>44</sup>

Appian’s omission of excluded details and the strong connection among themes are two literary accomplishments. Such brevity and intensity in *Mith.* 23 adds a readable and even ‘entertaining’ level to his historiography. Images of twisted postures and bloodstains on statues are novelistic, and the involved parties of the massacre – victims, perpetrators, collaborators, and spectators – become ‘characters’ that Appian employs. Distinguished from the omissions caused by source selection, the interweaving of non-fiction and fiction creates a powerful rhetoric tension and facilitates the intelligibility of historiography. Hence, *Mith.* 23 suggests the relationship between memory and history, in which the narrative oscillates between authenticity and imagination.<sup>45</sup> Yet, this interchangeability would make some who believe historicity as a faithful reflection of the ‘real’ past uneasy, even questioning Appian’s obsession with the graphic depiction of the bloody scenes. This ‘fictional’ feature of ancient historiography also appears in one of Appian’s major sources, Plutarch’s depiction of another relevant case of violence in Rome. Now, we shall turn to Plutarch’s record of Sulla’s proscription in 82, investigating its intertextuality with *Mith.* 23 and relationship between ‘truth’ and ‘fiction’ in historical writings.

---

<sup>43</sup> App. *Mith.* 23.

<sup>44</sup> For instance, Cassius Dio, Livy, Florus, and Velleius Paterculus all placed the Rhodian naval battle after the Asiatic Vespers. Memnon was the only historian who explicitly claimed that the battle happened before.

<sup>45</sup> Gowing (2015), 12.

## Intertextuality

Another remarkable figure in *Mith.* 23, Sulla, was actually in the middle of one of Rome's worst internal conflicts during the First Mithridatic War. In 87 when he was in the East, his rival Marius joined forces with the consul Cinna to purge Sulla's remaining supporters back in the city. Being announced as an enemy of the state (*hostis*), Sulla's civic rights were stripped, his property was confiscated, and all monuments and inscriptions dedicated to him were destroyed.<sup>46</sup> Despite the struggle for command in Anatolia being one of the main causes of the turbulent 80s of the Republic, he signed a peace with Mithridates and announced Pontus the ally of Rome in 85 in order to return to Rome and rebuild his authority. After the open confrontation at Porta Collina and his ultimate victory over the Marian faction in 82, Sulla immediately initiated a large-scale proscription against his political opponents.<sup>47</sup> The 80s was built upon the disregard of law, intimidation, and escalating factional jostling, and ultimately, the proscriptions brought everything to a climax.

In *The Parallel Lives* (Βίοι Παράλληλοι), Plutarch provides the most comprehensive depiction of the atrocities committed during Sulla's proscription. A large-scale search broke out in Rome with slaves and urban mobs being involved. Victims were slaughtered in gardens, on streets, during baths, inside the temples, and "[...] husbands were butchered in the embraces of their wedded wives, and sons in the arms of their mothers."<sup>48</sup> Plutarch deliberately visualizes the violence: he included disturbing symbols of dead bodies in temples, the heads of the proscribed being left to rot on the *rostra*, and the Tiber full of blood.<sup>49</sup> This lurid depiction of terror strikingly echoes Appian's depiction of the Asiatic Vespers. The two accounts are similar in their themes of (1) graphic killings, (2) violation of *asylum*, (3) ruthless execution of victims in front of their families and (4) involvement of

---

<sup>46</sup> Flower (2011), 90.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 91-92; Flower (2009), 94.

<sup>48</sup> Plut. *Sull.* 31.5.

<sup>49</sup> Plut. *Sull.* 31.6; Flower (2011), 91.

local civilians. What led these two writers to use such similar language to render distinct these events?

Both Plutarch and Appian wrote decades after the 80s. *The Parallel Lives* was a major source for Appian, but as discussed earlier, he rarely copied other texts word by word.<sup>50</sup> I argue that this evident intertextuality of violence happens to embody one feature of ancient historiography, that is, the novelistic narrative could be a source and a form of history. In her article comparing the writings of Lucan and Sallust, Elizabeth Rawson noted a narrative scheme which she called the “horrific *exempla*.”<sup>51</sup> She found that Latin historians tended to list atrocities committed against individuals when depicting violence, and that this catalogue is usually highly repetitive in rhetorical form.<sup>52</sup> Although Plutarch and Appian wrote in Greek, they were immersed within the literary competition of first-century CE Rome and would be familiar with Sallust’s tradition. Such an alarming overlap between the two accounts of the Asiatic Vespers and the proscription may suggest Appian’s imitation of Plutarch’s narrative mode from hindsight. Moreover, if we take both accounts as accurate recordings of the past, Sulla was likely inspired by the mechanism of the Asiatic Vespers.<sup>53</sup> Yet, both depictions of the bloody violence are perhaps a ‘literary invention’: it did not aim to accurately or ‘faithfully’ record the past; it is a product of memory and imagination.<sup>54</sup>

In such a way, Plutarch and Appian adopted their strikingly similar horrific *exempla* from a broader corpus. Perhaps none of the details mentioned above had happened during the Asiatic Vespers or Sulla’s proscription, instead the horrific *exempla* were used to amplify

---

<sup>50</sup> Westall (2016), 145.

<sup>51</sup> Elizabeth Rawson, “Sallust on the Eighties?” *The Classical Quarterly*, vol. 37, no.1 (1987), 179-80.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 180. Meanwhile, Rawson points out that the ‘horrific *exempla*’ was not present in Thucydides’ historiography and the Greek tradition.

<sup>53</sup> Mayor (2011), 217. Mayor draws connection between Appian’s depiction of the Asiatic Vespers and Sallust’s account of the Vaga massacre during the the Jugurthine War (112-106 BCE): in 108, the Roman soldiers garrisoned in the town Vaga and their families were slaughtered in a single day with involvement of local civilians. (*Jug.* 66.3-67.3) Mayor suggests that Mithridates was inspired by this massacre, which I do not fully agree with, but the similar narrative mode shared by Sallust, Appian and Plutarch reveals the significance of the ‘horrific *exempla*’ in depicting comparable events of violence for ancient authors.

<sup>54</sup> Gowing (2015), 12.

their acute destructiveness and the power of the manipulator behind them. In other words, the fierceness of violence parallels the writer's expressive capability, which integrates the narrative effect rather than 'facts' into the interpretation of the past. Nevertheless, as Rawson suggested, although the depiction of violence is a literary invention, violence itself is not.<sup>55</sup> We should not take the terror for granted. The highly rhetorical nature of violence in ancient historiography revealed its 'indescribability': it was so chaotic, disturbing and inconsistent that it could only be approached in rhetorical ways. Hence, the intertwined account of literary tradition and imagination creates a space of annulment. As a narrative device, the horrific *exempla* incorporates forgetting to sort out complex and indescribable details of terror to produce an understandable catalogue; meanwhile, it links the present terror with previous historical writings to bring a historicity inherent in repetitive themes.

In all, taking Appian's depiction of the Asiatic Vespers as an example, *Mith.* 23 exemplifies that forgetting is a functional and frequently used measure in constructing narratives. The author's source selection, manipulation of rhetoric, and correspondence with the contemporary literary tradition all define the mnemonic nature of historiography, that is, it engages not with the past as such but only with the past as it is remembered or saved from being forgotten.<sup>56</sup> Historical writing is the pre-effect of memory, it witnesses how memory was textually adduced, abandoned, invented, and reconstructed. Yet, the post-effect of memory – chronologically speaking, the marks left on the community who endured the memory – is also crucial to untangling the relationship between history and memory.<sup>57</sup> Those marks, or the concept of trauma, whether on the individual or social levels, opens a way to explore different modes of remembering an identical past.

---

<sup>55</sup> Rawson (1987), 180.

<sup>56</sup> Ricœur (2004), 305; Beiner (2018), 14.

<sup>57</sup> By 'pre' and 'post', I refer to the chronological order of generating and impacting memory, yet both the pre- and post-effect of memory can be produced and reconstructed simultaneously.

## Trauma: Forgetting in Forming Identities

How does generational change affect traumatic memory? Connerton argues that each generation tends to discard some memories, whether positive or negative, and what they allow to be forgotten provides living space for present, necessary projects.<sup>58</sup> From those details that are not passed on, the generation's new identity comes to the fore. To address the specific impact of trauma on people, Holocaust scholar Marianne Hirsch introduces the term "postmemory" to describe the relationship between the 'generation after' and the trauma that they never experienced but has already effected, dominated, and even replaced their own life stories.<sup>59</sup> Forgetting does not entail a complete loss or amnesia. It alludes to the consensus built around those 'forgetful' things at both collective and personal levels, which points to various invisible, indirect and discrete communications. Thus, studying individual or collective identity as a vehicle of memory sheds light upon the ecology and order of its forming process.

This section considers three parties involved in the Asiatic Vespers – the native Anatolians, the Greeks, and the Romans – investigating how the massacre affected their 'post-generations' respectively, and what social and political dynamics have driven the forming of their memories.<sup>60</sup> These dynamics can only be observed through close inspection over a long period of memory overlapping, competing, and transmitting, thus discerning their allies, enemies, and actions and understanding their sense of community. In what follows, I analyze the writing of Strabo, Memnon, and Cicero, and take Ephesus as an example to examine the relationship between material culture and memorial space in Anatolia. I suggest that the Asiatic Vespers caused a trauma which informed the identity-building process of each

---

<sup>58</sup> Connerton (2008), 62-63.

<sup>59</sup> Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory* (New York: Columbia UP, 2012), 4.

<sup>60</sup> I use the term 'Anatolia' instead 'Asia Minor' to avoid replicating the Greek-centric geographical and cultural view.

group in the late first century CE, and even over a longer time span. Their varied perceptions of confusion, embarrassment, and humiliation were fashioned by distinct participating roles in the massacre; yet significantly, these traumatic feelings were driven by the impulse to update or re-establish a new identity in the context of the post-destruction eastern Mediterranean.

## **Confusion**

The life story of Strabo, a native Pontian geographer, showcases the complicated political situation in the eastern Mediterranean world. He was born in the year of Mithridates' death, twenty-five years after the Asiatic Vespers.<sup>61</sup> Growing up in a pile of rubble left by Sulla and Pompey, he wrote nostalgically of his hometown Amaseia in *The Geographie*.<sup>62</sup> Strabo's own family was torn apart by war. His mother was the great-granddaughter of Dorylaeus, accordingly the best friend of Mithridates' father and his military advisor, and Strabo's great-uncle Moaphernes was the governor of Colchis and a close friend of Mithridates himself.<sup>63</sup> The family's Roman connection traced back to his grandfather Lagetas, who defected to Rome for citizenship.<sup>64</sup> Strabo first studied at Nysa, then moved to Rome to follow the Pontian grammarian Tyrannio of Amisus, a war captive who formed a life-long friendship with Cicero.<sup>65</sup> Thus we see how Strabo negotiated his multi-layered identity within the coexistence of Greek and Roman ideologies of the East. The Greek aristocratic education cultivated and maintained the shared mentality of philhellenism among Anatolian elites in the first century BCE. Rome's growing hegemony, moreover, grounded citizenship as a political premise of engaging in this communal space of acculturation.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> Sarah Pothecary, "Strabo the Geographer: His Name and Its Meaning" *Mnemosyne*, vol. 52 (1999), 692.

<sup>62</sup> Str. 12.3.38-40; Prontera (2015), 239.

<sup>63</sup> Str. 10.4.10.

<sup>64</sup> Pothecary (1999), 694.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, 695.

<sup>66</sup> Gruen (1984), 1:273; Balsdon (1979), 215-16.

Yet on the Black Sea coastal region, the local Anatolian tradition predominated, which Mikhail Rostovtzeff calls “a thin Greek shell around a hard native kernel.”<sup>67</sup> Strabo’s great-uncle’s name Moaphernes was of Scythian origin; the Pontic royal family had a mixed Persian and Macedonian ancestry marked by Iranian, Ptolemaic, Attalid and Seleucid influences.<sup>68</sup> The geographical division of Anatolia also reflected a cultural boundary between coastal Greeks and the natives. Greek *poleis* were coastal, while the interior communities such as Cappadocia and Paphlagonia referred to themselves by Persian names.<sup>69</sup> When taking into account the multi-ethnic heritage of centuries, adopting terms like ‘native’ or ‘indigenous’ to dissociate a local Anatolian culture from the Hellenistic influence seems to arbitrarily wipe off the evolution and competition among non-Greek populations. This puzzling circumstance adds another dimension to the Asiatic Vespers: it was not a zero-sum game between the Greeks and the Romans but a regional catastrophe with all ethnicities involved. In other words, there was a hybrid culture in first century BCE Anatolia which, as Alcock points out, did not sway between the polarity of ‘Greek’ and ‘Roman’.<sup>70</sup>

Pressure to locate the source of identity within a culturally pluralistic context emerged central for Strabo in the post-massacre world. His reception of the Asiatic Vespers was shaped by a more fragmented political landscape – Sulla’s collective punishment of *poleis*, Pompey’s takeover of the East, and tension between descendants of perpetrators and victims.<sup>71</sup> To respond to this confusion of identity, Strabo did not forthrightly acknowledge his family’s cumulative loyalty to Mithridates. In his writing, Strabo cautiously traced his family through the maternal line by describing family members in terms of their relationships to his mother. For example, Strabo describes his own great great-grandfather Dorylaus, the

---

<sup>67</sup> Mikhail Rostovtzeff, “South Russia in the Prehistoric and Classical Period” *American Historical Review*, 26 (1921), 2:214.

<sup>68</sup> McGing (1986), 58; Mitchell (1995), 2:14-30.

<sup>69</sup> Mitchell (1995), 1:11-35.

<sup>70</sup> Alcock (2007), 18.

<sup>71</sup> Sulla responded to the war and collectively punished the Greek *poleis* in 86 and Pompey began his campaign in the East by 67, both before Strabo’s birth.

Pontic general as the “great-grandfather of my mother” (12.3.33); his maternal grandmother as the “mother of my other” (10.4.10); and his great-uncle, Moaphernes, a close friend of Mithridates as the “uncle of my other on her father’s side” (11.2.18).<sup>72</sup> His maternal genealogy was more prestigious, thus more reliable for talking about the family’s adherence to an ancestral Pontic elite tradition. In the absence of a definite consensus on how to encounter a sensitive or inconvenient past, Strabo locates his discourse in a milder, relatable but borderline space rather than balancing between the polarities of Greece and Rome. This choice marked a common feeling hung over the post-massacre generation of Anatolia: confusion. They inherited, either directly from the familial trauma and dissociation or from the generally disintegrating social climate, an unknowable past.<sup>73</sup>

I suggest that confusion, instead of attachment to a particular ethnic or political entity, is itself an identity position, modifying the post-generation’s relationship to the past. Although terms like ‘confusion’ and ‘trauma’ may seem to be overly psychological, the case of Strabo shows the feasibility of historicizing them. The Mithridatic Wars saw the end of a politically specific ‘Anatolian’ identity, while later imperial annexation, expulsion, and assimilation reinforced this undefinable and often contradictory space of self-identification. At the same time, Strabo’s almost utopian portrayal of his stable and tight family reveals a hope of anchoring his identity in this confused reality. His family memory, even in its most intimate moments – of his mother, childhood, and folklore – was embedded in the Anatolian elite’s attempt of impression management of the community.<sup>74</sup> The post-generation of the Asiatic Vespers in Anatolia failed to produce a unified, approved version of the past but they

---

<sup>72</sup> Pothecary (1999), 701, also points out this new expression of genealogy in Strabo’s Greek origin. Hirsch (2012) explores this special way of depicting family trees from the maternal side as a means to deliver a sense of stability, but her context is not in ancient cases.

<sup>73</sup> Hirsch (2012), 34.

<sup>74</sup> By ‘impression management’, I refer to a holistic and collective measure of a community to regulate and control their social, political and cultural image in interactions with other entities.

activated a range of commemorative stances on which individuals could view and measure themselves.

Therefore, confusion is both the performance and crux of trauma, revealing a hesitant process of redefining Anatolia's ethnic, political, and cultural boundaries. I now turn to the subtle but enduring interaction between two cultures that were traditionally considered separate – the post-generations of Greek perpetrators and their Roman neighbors. As the traumatic history quietly transmitted into 'myth,' a series of memorial practices and memorial spaces were conceived between the two.

### **Embarrassment**

Scholarly interpretation of the socio-political transformation in the first-century BCE eastern Mediterranean focuses on Rome's hegemony, yet the 'Greek past' was never monolithic.<sup>75</sup> Despite the vitality and autonomy of individual *poleis* being weakened by conquest and annexation, the Greek local historiography traced their varied dispositions. One example is the local history written by Memnon of Herakleia Pontica, a 1st century CE Greek historian and a native of Herakleia Pontica. This Megara-colonized *polis* on the Black Sea coast betrayed Rome in 88. Memnon apologizes for Herakleia's collusion, claiming it was a temporary expedient of being caught between two superpowers. He described how the supplies and money were demanded from the Herakleians by both sides:

[When] Mithridates' navy sailed past Herakleia, [...] the Heracleians provided supplies when they were asked for them. While the sailors and inhabitants were mingling together, as was natural, Archelaus, the commander of the navy, seized two distinguished Herakleians, and did not release them until he had persuaded them to provide supplies to assist in the war against the Romans. Thus, as Archelaus had contrived, the people of Herakleia were regarded as Rome's enemies [...] When the Romans demanded contributions

---

<sup>75</sup> Woolf (1994) regards the Hellenistic East under Romanization as a single entity, which needs further reconsideration. Terms like 'the East,' 'the Greek East' and 'the Roman East' are too generalized for studying the socio-political dynamics in 1st century CE Greece.

from Herakleia as well, [...] their demands for money distressed the citizens, who regarded this as the beginning of slavery.<sup>76</sup>

The local history also describes the community's hesitation and continuous negotiation during the actual execution of the massacre. For instance, the Herakleians sent a delegation to Rome to ask for relief from the requisitions, but meanwhile they were shaken by Mithridates' successes in other *poleis*.<sup>77</sup> Surprisingly, Memnon reports that the slaughter was the fault of only one "the most audacious" powerbroker in town.<sup>78</sup> Memnon's recollection of their reaction was derived from the communication of shared memories. Such memories may be generated from personal testimonies or public representations that took place in civic events, much then, in turn, transformed into a constitutive narrative.<sup>79</sup> Conceptualization of the community's past speaks to a regional self-awareness. To Memnon, Mithridates' threat and the innocence of major Herakleians manifested the *polis*' autonomy, which in particular confronted the mainstream perception of the Greek *poleis* in Anatolia as a 'society of collective guilt.'<sup>80</sup>

In a politically dissected landscape marked by disintegrated old orders, reasserting a community's autonomy is a means to control the local past. Herakleia is not an isolated case. By the time Memnon wrote, the appeal to control and forge discourses of one *polis*' past was not limited to only written texts, it also extended to the continuous construction of the physical environment in the eastern Mediterranean. Ephesus, for example, had become an imperial centre of the 'Roman East' with numerous monuments and sanctuaries in the 1st century CE.<sup>81</sup> Vibius Salutaris, a local equestrian, dedicated to the Temple of Artemis in 104

---

<sup>76</sup> Memn. 27.5-6. This idea of 'slavery' as the metaphor of Rome also appears in Appian's account (*Mith.* 24.7).

<sup>77</sup> Memn. 27.6.

<sup>78</sup> Memn. 27.6-7.

<sup>79</sup> Daniel Tober, "'Herakles is stronger, Seleucus': Local History and Local Resistance in Pontic Herakleia" in *Cultures of Resistance in the Hellenistic East*, ed. by Paul J. Kosmin and Ian S. Moyer (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2022), 208.

<sup>80</sup> By 'society of collective guilt,' I refer to the German word *Kollektivschuld* which was created in the postwar period to depict the guilt the Germans had suffered from the atrocities committed by their fellow countrymen. Here I use it to describe the holistic feeling of embarrassment and humiliation shared by the Greek *poleis*. For more on the definitional question of *Kollektivschuld*, see A. Assmann (2015), 157.

<sup>81</sup> Alcock (2007), 16.

CE. A ritual procession occurred every two weeks as citizens marched through landmarks, bearing statues of the goddess, the *polis*' mythic founder, and the emperor Trajan.<sup>82</sup> The monumental and ritual landscape commemorated and reinforced the *polis*' cultural boundary by evoking a separate 'Ephesian' past. The image of Rome was recognized and coded into the ritual and the political identity it exemplified. Alcock reads the juxtaposition of images of Artemis and Trajan not necessarily as an "act of gross sycophancy" but as showing a determination to reshape discourse.<sup>83</sup> It employed the imperial cult to recontextualize and thus disguise the inconvenient past. The traumatic memory of the Asiatic Vespers had gone underground though the slaughter took place at the same location less than two hundred years earlier.

Herakleia and Ephesus represent two modes of survival for post-massacre Greek *poleis*. One community's autonomy was respectively manifested through the memory of cautious defiance against one power or alliance with another. Both Herakleia and Ephesus, in other words, created alternative discourses of self-identification rather choosing between confrontation and submission. As media, local history and monuments cultivated a new memorial space which encouraged the ongoing cultural distinction among different *poleis*. As the eastern Mediterranean underwent drastic reconfiguration in cultural, political, and daily practice, the once sharp and stinging memory could not find its place within a broader range of memorial stances. This attitude was not escapism. According to Connerton, the perfect remembrance of the past is often disturbing, while to forget some unpleasant details is "a form of survival, and the desire to forget may be an essential ingredient in that process of survival."<sup>84</sup> The embarrassing legacy of murder was found across the Greek *poleis*, and was accepted and internalized as a traceable, structural silence among the post-generations of Greek perpetrators. Silence, or to put it critically, an intentional omission of ambivalent

---

<sup>82</sup> Rogers (1991), 16; Alcock (2002), 94-95.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 95.

<sup>84</sup> Connerton (2008), 63.

discourse, preserved the *poleis*' survival by harmonizing local interest and imperial pressures.<sup>85</sup>

Such a stance responds to the question above: how does generational change affect traumatic memory? Notably, the structure of postmemory sometimes does not go down to the next generation, the commemoration of the very trauma can only spread and communicate within the same generation.<sup>86</sup> With rapid political changes, discrete ethnic composition, and high demographic mobility in post-massacre Anatolia, memories of a massacre embedded in the frequent violence during Rome's annexation of the East were no longer vital, but the identity fostered in new social alliances became crucial. Forgetting the traumatic past can be structural, gradual, and implicit, but it is nonetheless necessary. As we saw, in the two centuries following the Asiatic Vespers, renewed Italian settlements in the Roman East did not segregate from the Greeks but formed an even more closely integrated community.<sup>87</sup> The new and shared identity, which evolved from negotiation and assimilation between domains of 'Greek' and 'Roman', led its post-generation to a pleasant, active reconciliation.

This mobility of memory, alongside the varied positions and the extensive memorial practices, grew directly out of the trend and pressures of Rome as an empire. When the descendents of the perpetrators refused to retain the traumatic memory, what would the re-empowered victims do? Let us now consider Rome's victimhood as shaped by the complex politics in the first century BCE. From the cracks of peacemaking, a once hidden but intense paranoid feeling seemed to torment the Roman Republic.

## Humiliation

---

<sup>85</sup> Alcock (2002), 96.

<sup>86</sup> Connerton (2008), 63. The horizontal structure of commemoration is common in cognatic societies of South East Asia, such as Indonesia. Within this social structure, siblings or family members of similar age who belong to the same generation tend to share relatively identical remembrance of contemporary events they experienced together. They neither inherit these practices from the generation-before (usually, parents) nor pass them down to their descendants. It is horizontal in genealogical structure. For more, see Carsten (1996).

<sup>87</sup> The imperial cult dedicated to the Temple of Ephesian Artemis is a good example.

The Mithridatic Wars (88 - 63) was one of the longest external conflicts the Roman Republic ever experienced. After the pyrrhic victory in Armenia and the attempted mutiny instigated by Pompey and Clodius Pulcher in 68, Lucullus had largely lost the command over the East. Mithridates and Tigranes, the King of Armenia, took advantage of this and invaded Pontus and Cappadocia.<sup>88</sup> Hence in 66, the *lex Manilia* was proposed to grant Pompey the command of the eastern war.<sup>89</sup> In his speech supporting this appointment, Cicero tried to elucidate the crucial role a military strongman could play in fragile moments of power transition. To persuade his opponents, Cicero constantly brought up the Asiatic Vespers, a ‘[...] stain incurred in the First Mithridatic War which is now so deeply ingrained and has so long been left upon the honour of Rome.’<sup>90</sup> He then dramatically queried, “What ought to be your feelings when so many thousand Roman citizens have been put to death by one order and at one time?”<sup>91</sup>

Cicero was contemporary to the Asiatic Vespers and a witness of its aftermath. He received early education from exilic Greek scholars from the East.<sup>92</sup> His impression of the massacre thus came from a first-hand reaction to the shocking news and the recollection of the surroundings’ testimonies of pain and melancholy. A common belief of postmemory is that the credibility of memory increases with the generation’s proximity to the very event; linear time authorizes the accounts of witnesses. Such a perception misunderstands postmemory. The vitality of remembrance is not dependent on proximity to the very event but is subjected to the repeated constructions and creation in the present.<sup>93</sup> In the same speech advocating for *lex Manilia*, Cicero skillfully evoked a feeling intertwined with exasperation and humiliation that stemmed from his current political purpose rather than due his own

---

<sup>88</sup> App. *Mith.* 62.

<sup>89</sup> For more on the historical background of the *lex Manilia*, see Wiseman (1994) 335-39; Gruen (1995) 394-95.

<sup>90</sup> Cic. *Leg. Man.* 2.8.

<sup>91</sup> Cic. *Leg. Man.* 5.1.

<sup>92</sup> Plut. *Cic.* 4.5-6. Cicero has followed Apollonius of Tyana, Xenocles of Adramyttium, Dionysius of Magnesia, and Menippus the Carian, who were all from Anatolia. Also, Rome in the late 80s was in fact a shelter for Greek academics who fled from the First Mithridatic War.

<sup>93</sup> Hirsch (2012), 34; Beiner (2018), 248.

perception of the Asiatic Vespers. Cicero states that Mithridates' repeated offenses and the escalating situation in Anatolia sparked exasperation. Humiliation, however, has two folds. The massacre was a pricking allusion; Cicero urges the senate to wash off the "stain" (*macula*) attached to Rome's unfolding tapestry of hegemony in the East. At the same time, it was a hard lesson, a reminder of Rome's exorbitant taxation and corruption in Anatolia.<sup>94</sup> Cicero's bitter irony reveals the dual shame of military and policy failures: when two Luciuses (Sulla and Lucullus) were celebrating their triumphs with Mithridates "yet still upon his throne!"<sup>95</sup>

This speech neither downplayed the negative consequences of the Asiatic Vespers nor presented a proper memorial space for public mourning. In a society that did not tend to celebrate or idealize the culture of defeat, Cicero's focus on humiliation was practical and active: Rome should remove it rather than remember that defeat.<sup>96</sup> The metaphor of a stain indicates the empire's abnormal state, alluding to the expectation to bring the Republic back on track through appropriate crisis management. Instead of emphasizing Rome's victimhood, from the victimhood Cicero distilled an abstract feeling of humiliation to mobilize a vision of vengeance and outright conquest. Such an appeal to wash off the stain and to fill the crisis-ridden power vacuum in the East was so urgent that Pompey was granted with an unusual, almost illicit *imperium* throughout the eastern Mediterranean. Cicero states it as a "wartime expediency", while his political opponent Catulus calls a new and dangerous precedent.<sup>97</sup> The discussion of the ongoing war turned to Rome's own political conflict. The Asiatic Vespers and its casualties, details and aftermath have been nonetheless left to a remote past. This anti-Mithridatic identity comprised the politics of retrospective witnessing, which took forms of appropriating and recontextualizing traumatic memories.

---

<sup>94</sup> Cic. *Leg. Man.* 3.6-7.

<sup>95</sup> Cic. *Leg. Man.* 3.8.

<sup>96</sup> Jessica H. Clark, "Defeat and the Roman Republic" in Brill's *Companion to Military Defeat in Ancient Mediterranean Society*, ed. Jessica H. Clark and Brian Turner (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 195.

<sup>97</sup> Cic. *Leg. Man.* 60; Gruen (1995), 535.

Nevertheless, Cicero did intentionally conceal an important piece of background information regarding the Asiatic Vespers – Sulla had in fact already avenged the 80,000 Romans killed. In 86, Sulla severely punished Athens alongside other Greek *poleis* who had collaborated with Mithridates.<sup>98</sup> In his speech against the Cappadocian king Archelaus, Sulla claimed that the massacre was the main reason for Rome’s war.<sup>99</sup> Yet, this recollection later became somewhat awkward when Sulla signed a peace with Mithridates and announced Pontus the ally of Rome in 85.<sup>100</sup> This rather premature settlement was a result of his declaration as *hostis* (“public enemy”) by his political enemies.<sup>101</sup> The Asiatic Vespers, as a price of the compromise, was inconvenient to bring up. Cicero’s concern of mentioning Sulla was twofold. To advocate for Pompey and highlight his potential contribution, Cicero needs to downplay Sulla’s previous role. Meanwhile, Sulla’s image was already very negative in 66 although he has not yet suffered from *damnatio memoriae*.<sup>102</sup> Cicero was certainly cautious about fashioning Pompey as the successor of Sulla, or even the second Sulla.<sup>103</sup> Therefore, Cicero let Sulla’s revenge for the Asiatic Vespers alongside with the memory of Sulla himself, pass to silence as part of his advocacy for Pompey.

Pompey did not disappoint Cicero. He defeated Mithridates in the winter of 66, washing off the shame.<sup>104</sup> His third triumph in 61 was of legendary scale. It was extended to two days due to the lavish display of booty. The Roman triumph exhibited wonders and reperformed the conqueror’s military highlights. Pompey displayed captured ships and

---

<sup>98</sup> Plut. *Sull.* 14.6. This event in the summer of 86 is known as the siege of Athens.

<sup>99</sup> App. *Mith.* 62.

<sup>100</sup> Plut. *Sull.* 15.1.

<sup>101</sup> In fact, Sulla was the first person to declare his political rivals (in this case, Marius and P. Sulpicius Rufus) as *hostes*, a term traditionally used to refer to foreign enemies. Beard (2015), 244 points out that this title reveals a continuation of the dynamics of the Social War: as the scope of being a citizen expanded, the distinction between Romans and foreign enemies was increasingly blurred. For more on the status of *hostis*, see Flower (2011), 87.

<sup>102</sup> Flower (2011), 99. In fact, Sulla never suffered from any official forms of memory sanctions after his death.

<sup>103</sup> Pompey belonged to the beneficiary class of Sulla’s civil war, while he also received his nickname the ‘teenager butcher’ for his part in Sulla’s campaign.

<sup>104</sup> Plut. *Pomp.* 32.1-2.

captives dressed up in local costumes to recreate crucial turning points.<sup>105</sup> Yet, our major source for this triumph, Plutarch, does not refer to the murdered 80,000 Romans in his account of the triumph; not one single moment or a clear image was dedicated to them.<sup>106</sup> The injured feeling was rapidly erased and replaced by a projection of strength and pride. “Forgetting in forming a new identity” here varies from the previous two cases. Distinct from the more turbulent emotional politics that Strabo’s family and Greek *poleis* experienced, the humiliation of the Romans became the ground for a patriotic declaration of supremacy.<sup>107</sup> Through a collective shame, Rome – or more specifically, the Roman state in transition – gained a unified and coherent pride that ‘transcended the past.’<sup>108</sup> This identity required the alignment between the humiliated Rome and the renewed Rome. Hence, the disenfranchised and oppressed past was forced to give way to Pompey’s reconstructed Republic, where the Asiatic Vespers as a moment of dissonance, could not find its place.

## Conclusions: Crises Revisited

“Tell me, has it occurred to you that all that time you may have been torturing us? Has it occurred to you that the students you forced to remember were yearning to forget?”

Dubravka Ugrešić, *The Ministry of Pain: A Novel*

This quote, from the Yugoslav Croatian-Dutch writer Dubravka Ugrešić, offers an alternate way of thinking about memory. Ugrešić yearned to forget; the overloaded remembrance had caused a painful burden to the character in her novel.<sup>109</sup> Here, forgetting is

---

<sup>105</sup> Mary Beard, *The Roman Triumph* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2007), 8-11.

<sup>106</sup> Plut. *Pomp.* 45.1-5.

<sup>107</sup> Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2004), 113.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>109</sup> Dubravka Ugrešić, *The Ministry of Pain* (New York: Ecco, 2006), 271. In her novel, Ugrešić talks about the miserable feeling of displacement and the impulse to forget traumas as a female refugee. The gendered perspective of memory and trauma, which demands further consideration, is not discussed in this thesis.

a means of dissolving bitter memories that threaten to perpetuate crises. These two powerful questions above haunted me while writing this thesis. Because of the genocidal nature of the Asiatic Vespers, we lack any direct representation of the events from the victims. Through the course of writing this thesis, I have tried to look for traces of the “absent presence” of victims to restore a memorial space. But what if the victims in fact yearn to forget? How do we regard what Susan Sontag called the “pain of others”?<sup>110</sup> How can we tell their stories without appropriating them, without directing attention to ourselves, and without being captivated by violence again? What is left of their story when we strip away the rhetoric, distortion, and the contemporary resonance of the ongoing violence and genocide?

These reflections ran like a thread through this thesis, highlighting that my goal is not to discover and resurrect memory, but rather to read the present embodied in memory. The interplay between the present and the past is key to understanding the dynamics of social memory. In other words, memory is not a given but a projection of the present onto the remote past; it naturally comprises current anxieties and crises. In terms of the Asiatic Vespers, the impulse to control and construct memory for the sake of historical writing, identity building, and ideological correction remained productive in the centuries following the tragedy. The politics of the present – of turbulent moments of the Roman Mediterranean in transition – were expressed in the retellings of the massacre by those who owned or claimed the authority to shape or pass on the narrative. During this process, forgetting as both a tool and vehicle became more decisive than remembrance.

In this thesis, I have shown that memory and history, or to be more specific, historiography and historical writing, share an interdependent relationship in Appian’s depiction of the Asiatic Vespers in *Mith.* 23. To produce a coherent account of terror, Appian examined and selected his sources from a wider scope of evidence and mobilized a thematic

---

<sup>110</sup> Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Picador/Farrar, 2003), 126. Sontag points out the inability to understand and imagine the human experience of pain, horror, and atrocity; images and narratives are frameworks that confer them meanings, but also undermine intelligibility.

structure by connecting violence and religious desecration to enhance the narrative effect. Both choices showcase Appian's capability as a historian in integrating independent sources and generating rhetorical tension. Meanwhile, the 'fictionalized' and excessively vivid depictions interspersed in *Mith.* 23 reveal a more generalized definition of history in which 'historical facts' or 'truths' are blurred. Literary inventions in ancient historiography can be recognized in the striking intertextuality between *Mith.* 23 and Plutarch's narrative on Sulla's proscription. Historical writing is an imaginative process that simultaneously leads to the creation and the annulment of memory, while the latter makes the recorded past stand out and enlivens it.

The second case study focused on trauma, that caused by both physical injury to specific people and abstract injury to a community. The native Anatolian post-generation of the Asiatic Vespers, such as Strabo, faced a significant identity crisis which urged them to redefine themselves among a variety of confused stances of commemoration. What drove the descendants of the Greek perpetrators to refashion their images was embarrassment – an acute sensation exposed under Rome's hegemony over the East. Greek *poleis* did not use a single mode to hide their inconvenient past. Instead they created alternative discourses to negotiate the memory foundation of their collective identity. For the Romans, the memory of the Asiatic Vespers was demonstrated in a politicized way, serving as a footnote for Cicero's speech, a myth for building an anti-Sullan identity, and a cornerstone of Rome's strength and pride. Such a mode shows how humiliation is deeply ambivalent in forming identity: the Romans were not used to talking about trauma, but they appropriated and recontextualized trauma to suit their own particular needs and purposes.

This thesis has shown that using social memory and trauma to interpret ancient cases is not anachronistic. Practices of forgetting offer a framework through which we can move beyond the dominant narrative, recognizing subtle, lost, and repressed memories. Scholars of

ancient history have much to gain from adopting social memory to search for the personal, intimate, and vernacular voices that are conventionally regarded as ‘untraceable.’ Hence, I suggest that the framework of memory politics is not an historiographical alternative; it existed in the ancient Mediterranean world and recognizing this enduring tradition can broaden the scope of the concept of history.

I would like to conclude with the etymology of the ‘Asiatic Vespers’. On Easter of 1282, 13,000 of Palermo’s French-speaking residents were killed by the local Sicilians when all church bells began to ring for Vespers under the Angevin rule.<sup>111</sup> This so-called ‘Sicilian Vespers’ and its slogan *morte alla Francia Italia anelia* (“death to the French is Italy’s cry”) were later fashioned by the Sicilian Mafia as a separatist myth of the local resistance against foreign forces during the unification of Italy as a modern state in 1861.<sup>112</sup> In the aftermath of the revolution, historian Théodore Reinach retroactively named the Roman case *vêpres éphésiennes* (“Ephesian Vespers”) in his 1890 work.<sup>113</sup> In this cross-centuries retelling, the memory of the Asiatic Vespers was appropriated to do work for the present. Narratives of violence – though cruel, can only be expressed in a religious euphemism – engendered social memory and oblivion through echoing with each other. Crises and the manipulation of crises offered opportunities to set up an intertextuality of traumatic memory between different historical periods.

---

<sup>111</sup> Steven Runciman, *The Sicilian Vespers* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1958), 16. In 1282, Sicily was under the control of Charles of Anjou of the Kingdom of Naples, who was in conflict with the local Sicilian elites.

<sup>112</sup> Roberto M. Dainotto, *The Mafia: A Cultural History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 215.

<sup>113</sup> Théodore Reinach, *Mithridate Eupator, roi de Pont* (in French) (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1890), 131-32.

## Bibliography

### Primary source

- Augustine. *City of Gods*.  
Appian. *Mithridatic War*.  
Cassius Dio. *Roman History*.  
Cicero. *De Imperio Cn. Pompei*.  
Eutropius. *Abridgement of Roman History*.  
Florus. *Epitome*.  
Livy. *Periochae*.  
Memnon. *History of Heracleia*.  
Orosius. *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*.  
Plutarch. *Life of Sulla*.  
- . *Life of Pompey*.  
- . *Life of Marius*.  
- . *Life of Cicero*.  
Sallust. *The Jugurthine War*.  
Strabo. *Geography*.  
Tacitus. *Annals*.  
Valerius Maximus. *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*.  
Velleius Paterculus. *Roman History*.

### Secondary source

- Ahmed, Sara. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2004.
- Alcock, Susan E. *Archeologies of the Greek Past: Landscapes, Monuments, and Memories*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002.
- . "Make sure you know whom to kill: spatial strategies and strategic boundaries in the Eastern Roman Empire." German-American Frontiers of Humanities Symposium, *American Philological Society/Humboldt Foundation*. Berlin: Millenium, 2007: 13-20.
- Assmann, Aleida. *Shadows of Trauma: Memory and Politics of Post-war Identity*. Translated by Sarah Clift. New York: Fordham UP, 2015.
- Assmann, Jan. *Religion and Cultural Memory*. Translated by Rodney Livingstone. Redwood City: Stanford UP, 2011.
- Balsdon, J.P.V.D. *Romans and Aliens*. London: Duckworth, 1979.
- Beard, Mary. *The Roman Triumph*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2007.
- . *SPQR*. New York: Liveright, 2015.
- Beiner, Guy. *Forgetful Remembrance: Social Forgetting and Vernacular Historiography of a Rebellion in Ulster*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2018.
- Bianchetti, Serena, Michele R. Cataudella and Hans-Joachim Gehrke, editors. *Brill's Companion to Ancient Geography*. Leiden: Brill, 2015.
- Blight, David W. "The Memory Boom: Why and Why Now?" In *Memory in Mind and Culture*. Edited by Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch. New York: Cambridge UP, 2009, 237-49.

- Bloxham, Donald and Moses, A. Drik, editors. *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010.
- Carsten, Janet. "The Politics of Forgetting: Migration, Kinship and Memory on the Periphery of the Southeast Asian State," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 1 (1996): 317-35.
- Clark, Jessica Homan and Turner, Brain, editors. *Brill's Military Companion to Military Defeat in Ancient Mediterranean Society*. Leiden: Brill, 2018.
- Connerton, Paul. *How Modernity Forgets?* New York: Cambridge UP, 2009.
- . "Seven types of forgetting." *Memory Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2008): 59 - 71.
- Cooper, Allan. *The Geography of Genocide*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009.
- Crook, J. A., Andrew Lintott, and Elizabeth Rawson, editors. *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 9: The Last Age of the Roman Republic, 146-43 BC, 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008.
- Dainotto, Roberto M. *The Mafia: A Cultural History*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2015.
- Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Flower, Harriet I. *Roman Republics*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009.
- . *The Art of Forgetting: Disgrace and Oblivion in Roman Political Culture*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.
- . "The Rupture and Sorrow: Characterization in Sulla's Memoir" in *Fame and Infamy: Essays on Characterization in Greek and Roman Historiography and Biography*, edited by Rhiannon Ash. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2015.
- Gowing, Alain M. *Empire and Memory: The Representation of the Roman Republic in Imperial Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005.
- Gruen, Erich S. *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*. 2 vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.
- . *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Hendrickson, G.L. "The Memoirs of Rutilius Rufus" in *Classical Philology*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (1933): 153-75.
- Hirsch, Marianne. *The Generation of Postmemory*. New York: Columbia UP, 2012.
- Mayor, Adrienne. *The Poison King: The Life and Legend of Mithradates, Rome's Deadliest Enemy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.
- McGing, B.C. *The Foreign Policy of Mithridates VI Eupator, King of Pontus*. Leiden: Brill, 1986.
- Mitchell, Stephen. *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1993.
- Powell, Christopher. "What do genocides kill? A relational conception of genocide." *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (2007): 527-547.
- Rawson, Elizabeth. "Sallust on the Eighties?" *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (1987): 163-180.
- Reinach, Théodore. *Mithridate Eupator, roi de Pont*. Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1890.
- Ricœur, Paul. *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Translated by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

- Rigsby, Kent J. *Asyilia: Territorial Inviolability in the Hellenistic World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.
- "Provincia Asia." *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 118 (1988): 123-53.
- Rogers, Guy. *The Sacred Identity of Ephesus: Foundation Myths of a Roman City*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Rosenstein, Nathan and Morstein-Marx, Robert, editors. *A Companion to the Roman Republic*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006.
- Rostovtzeff, Mikhail. "South Russia in the Prehistoric and Classical Period." *American Historical Review*, 26 (1921): 2:203-24.
- Runciman, Steven. *The Sicilian Vespers*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985.
- Sheldon, Rose M. *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome: Trust in the Gods, but Verify*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Taylor, Tristan S., editor. *A Cultural History of Genocide in the Ancient World*. London: Bloomsbury, 2023.
- Thapar, Romila. "Imagined Religious Communities? Ancient History and the Modern Search for a Hindu Identity." *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (1989): 209-231.
- Tober, Daniel. "'Herakles is stronger, Seleucus:': Local History and Local Resistance in Pontic Herakleia." In *Cultures of Resistance in the Hellenistic East*, edited by Paul J. Kosmin and Ian S. Moyer, 203-30. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2022.
- Welsh, Kathryn, editor. *Appian's Roman History: Empire and Civil War*. Bristol: The Classical Press of Wales, 2015.
- Woolf, Greg. "Becoming Roman, Staying Greek: Culture, Identity and the Civilizing Process in the Roman East." *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, No. 40 (1994): 116-143.