

0

Lund University

Centre for Languages and Literature

Latin

**Animal Comparisons and Analogies in the Portrayal of
Northern Europeans in Roman Late Republican and
Imperial Literature**

By

Richard Warren

SPVRO2: Magisteruppsats, 2010

Language and Linguistics: Master's Thesis

Supervisor: Professor Arne Jönsson

Abstract

In this paper the characterisation and portrayal of northern europeans in Roman late Republican and Imperial literature is examined. It looks specifically at the employment by Roman authors of animal comparisons and analogies as part of this characterisation and explores the reasons for which they are used, including the choice of vocabulary and imagery. This also involves a broader examination of the attitude of Classical authors towards wild animals and of the historical context of Rome's relations with its northern neighbours, as well as a survey of some of the past scholarship relevant to this topic.

Animal Comparisons and Analogies in the Portrayal of Northern Europeans in Roman Late Republican and Imperial Literature

Contents

Introduction	4
<i>1. Descriptions of Northern Europeans</i>	6
Caesar's Gallic War (6.11-26)	
Tacitus' Germania	
Tacitus' Annals	
Tacitus' Histories	
Caesar's Presentation of the Britons	
Tacitus' Presentation of the Britons in the Agricola	
Tacitus' Presentation of the Britons in the Histories	
Cassius Dio on the Britons	
Lucan's Civil War	
Diodorus on the Britons	
Strabo's Presentation of the Celts	
Livy's Presentation of the Gauls	
Feritas and Ferocia in Velleius	
Florus and Feritas	
Northern Peoples as the Pursued	
Seneca's Use of Northern Peoples	
Pliny and the Ethno-Geographers	
Ovid and the Scythian North	
The North in Virgil and Horace	
<i>2. Literary Usages of Animals</i>	45
Classical Poets on Animals and Early Man	
Animal Characterisations in War and Epic	
Animals in Ovid's Metamorphoses	
Feritas, Ferocia and Furor	
Animals as the Blessed	
Circe and Animal Metamorphosis	
Werewolves	
Literary Usages of Animals	
<i>3. Context</i>	67
Caesar's Motivations	
Tacitus' Motivations	
Early Imperial Britain, Gaul, and Germany, and Roman Attitudes	

Xenophobia and Animal Characterisations of Northern Peoples
Primitivism and Barbarians
City and Country Polarities
Germans at Rome
Vitruvius and the Environmental Theory of Race

Conclusion	85
Bibliography	87

Introduction

This paper will look at the portrayal of Northern European peoples, in particular those most peripheral to the Roman sphere of influence, Germans and Britons considered both individually and collectively, in Imperial Latin literature. Examining specifically the literary characterisation of these peoples by Roman authors, those writing in Latin but also those writing in Greek, it will make the thesis that this presentation can be seen to involve consistent usage of certain animal similes and comparisons, and that this may be explained by long-established ethnographic traditions, Roman but at times with Greek origins, about these peoples.

The principal limitation in relevant research to date has been that a study specifically aimed at this topic in this period has not been undertaken. Much has been written in the context of other broader or allied subjects, touching upon this theme, but here this has often been wanting for its having a very different focus of interest. Furthermore, especially in the case of earlier scholarship pertaining to this subject, but also in the case of some later research, ideological agendas of the period have affected the manner in which the material was approached. In recent decades there has been a marked move towards a greater focus on individual authors' motives in portraying their northern neighbours as they did, and an increasing emphasis on rhetorical analysis of the texts concerned. Recognising this research for the great insight it has provided, but at the same time finding it wanting in explaining the ubiquity of the animal analogy in this context, this paper leans towards the more recent analysis of the underlying causes of Roman views of the outsider through environmentally-based theories of race, and seeks to apply them to this example.

A selection of literary sources from different authors will be considered in this paper. The paper will be structured in three sections, as follows.

Section 1

Taking as its starting point the description by Caesar of the creatures of the Hercynian wood in Germany (Caesar, *Gallic War*, 6.25-28), the first section will constitute a survey and analysis of passages from several authors, where we find descriptions of Germanic and British tribes, their customs, nature or specific actions in relation to Rome, where animal similes, metaphors or descriptions are used either as a direct means of characterisation of these, or else are placed in close alignment with them. It will look at the types of animals being used in these comparisons, and the characteristics that are being attributed to the animals in question, and to the peoples that form the object of their comparison. In addition to considering these passages individually this section will also compare the various passages cited. Another aspect of presentation that will be investigated here is the specific vocabulary of this, what may fairly be deemed, a literary motif in Imperial literature; which specific adjectives, nouns and verbs are being used most commonly. (This will be set in the context of the usage of these words elsewhere in Imperial Latin literature to give a comparative dimension to what is being implied or stated by the authors in question.)

Section 2

The second section of this paper will seek to place this characterisation in the broader context of Latin and Greek Imperial, and Classical literature generally, by looking at the manner in which animals are used to characterise people, both at their use as aids to human characterisation but also at instances of anthropomorphism. A selection of texts will be examined, including those of Virgil, Ovid, and Lucretius, in order to provide this context. In addition to this, this section will also briefly consider how animals were understood *per se* in antiquity, and how this affects our understanding of what Roman authors would have considered to be the implications of their characterisation of Germans and Britons in using animals in Latin literature.

Section 3

The final section of the thesis will attempt to set this literary presentation in a historical context, both to make sense of the historical situation in which this literary motif, and the underlying current of thought it betrays, came into being. The ultimate aim of doing so is to attempt to elucidate the reasons why Latin and Greek authors in the Roman period chose to repeatedly employ animal characteristics and comparisons in their presentation of their Northern neighbours. This will be both a matter of setting the texts themselves in a historical context, and understanding the principal motivations of the authors in writing the texts in general, but also of attempting to better comprehend the underlying thought processes behind these literary presentations. For example, the concepts of race and the environmental theory in antiquity will be cursorily surveyed where it is relevant to our understanding of the literature in question. The aim of both the second and third sections of the thesis is that we may avoid reading these passages in isolation without considering the wider socio-political context in which the texts were produced.

This study does not concern itself with the medieval and modern reception of the literature in question, although as a testament to the long-term historical consequences of this literary presentation, we need look no farther than the events of recent history.

1.

Caesar's Gallic War (6.11-26)

We begin this thesis by an examination of a passage from Caesar's *Gallic War*, which is of interest as much due to its arrangement in his narrative as for its actual content. In book six of his commentaries Caesar makes a digression from the mainstay of his narrative, concerning the Roman forces' encounter with the Suebian tribe, to provide an ethnography of first the Gauls (chap. 11-20), followed by that of the Germans (chap. 21-24), and concluded by a description of the great Hercynian forest and its fauna (chap. 25-28). The exact status and nature of this semi-legendary forest and the putative identity of its dubious creatures has been much discussed,¹ but what chiefly concerns me here is the question of how we may reconcile this somewhat incongruous digression with Caesar's broader narrative. It must be noted that in much previous research these chapters have at times received a bad press, and have at times been considered spurious.² I choose here to treat the passage as genuine.

Caesar's commences his description of the Hercynian forest by giving its approximate location and dimensions, above all stressing its vast magnitude and untold depths. He explains that *latitudo novem dierum iter expedito patet*, and continues by explaining that it is in fact so vast that, not only has its exact size not been measured, but it is in fact not possible to measure it by normal means other than in terms of days required to complete journeys across it:

non enim aliter finiri potest, neque mensuras itinerum noverunt.

This should be a firm signifier for us that we are now entering the realm of the unknown in Caesar's narrative, a world of semi-legendary proportions, but still with an element of truth. The vastness of the Hercynian forest certainly appears to have been an established topos in Roman literature,³ and it is almost certain that Caesar here writes in accordance with a tradition of Roman geography about the endlessly unbounded and wild nature of this forest, and indeed of these regions generally.

After initially stressing the great size of the forest and stating that there is not even any German known to the Romans as having encompassed its boundaries, Caesar moves

¹ Cf. H. Aili, 'Caesar's elks', in M. Asztalos, C. Gejrot (eds.), *Symbolae Septentrioles*, 1995 (Stockholm), with bibliography. Aili is of course concerned with the question of what Caesar actually saw or did not see; a question of limited interest here other than what it may suggest about how he embellished or exaggerated in his ethnography. In any case, establishing affirmatively the veracity of what he saw seems something of a dead end.

² There was extensive debate of the issue by German scholars at the start of the last century. Mensel (1910) and Klotz (1910) treated the passage as spurious, whereas Beckmann (1930) defended the passage's authenticity. For a full discussion of these issues see Aili's article in op. cit. n.1, and bibliography, in particular: A. Klotz, 'Geographie und Ethnographie in Caesars Bellum Gallicum', *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, vol. 83 (1934), pp. 66-96.

³ For the Hercynian forest and its great magnitude, see elsewhere, for example: Tacitus, *Germania*, 36; Diodorus, 5.21.

onto a description of the animals that dwell therein. We ought of course to be suspicious of such knowledge after Caesar has himself stressed general ignorance on this point, though the relative truth of his statements are less important here than the manner in which he chooses to present these animals. Caesar states that it is agreed that many types of wild beast are born in the forest, the like of which are not witnessed elsewhere:

multaque in ea genera ferarum nasci constat, quae reliquis in locis non visa sint.

As a further indication that the portrayal of the animals in the ensuing chapters may have a fabulous nature, we should be aware of Caesar's use of *constat* here, which suggests that we are dealing with collective opinion, not established fact.

In chapter 26 Caesar continues with what he describes as, *bos cervi figura*, an ox with the form of a stag, which has variously been identified, sometimes as a reindeer.⁴ As attributes of this creature he describes its having a single horn on its forehead, *excelsius magisque directum*, taller and straighter, than the horns of those creatures known to the Romans. The first trait of the first physical description of an animal from the forest given by Caesar concerns its greater size. This is not accidental, but chimes in concert with Caesar's description of the forest in general, with his emphasis on its magnitude. A second feature worth noting here, which we shall return to, is what he says about sex differences between the male and female of the species:

Eadem est feminae marisque natura, eadem forma magnitudoque cornuum

There is a like nature of the male and female, a like shape and size of horns. This lack of differentiation may serve as a sign of primitivism. We ought also to bear in mind Caesar's use in the previous chapter of the same *magnitudo* to describe the forest itself.

He now continues in chapter 27 by describing the elk. Once more the first attribute given concerns the greater size of this creature in comparison to those more familiar to the Romans, in this case goats, than whom, *magnitudine paulo antecedunt*. There follows a much discussed description⁵ in which Caesar gives a picture of the elk as rather clumsy in its nature, without knee-joints, leaning against trees to take rest but often falling with them after they have weakened them with their horns. Indeed, if they fall, Caesar tells us, they are unable to erect themselves again. We are thus left with a rather comic picture of a large unwieldy animal, badly coordinated and not intelligent enough to tell when a tree has been undermined leading, presumably, to their inevitable doom, since they are unable to get up again once they have fallen.

In chapter 28, we find the last and, for our purposes, most important animal Caesar chooses to describe, which forms the conclusion of his *discursus* on the Hercynian forest. He labels this creature *uri*, which has likewise been variously identified by scholars,⁶ and

⁴ As in, for example, H. J. Edwards' translation, Harvard 1979, p. 351, n.1.

⁵ See above: n. 1, op. cit.

⁶ Edwards, for example, gives the interesting theory of its being the now-extinct auroch. See n.3 op. cit., p.

as its first attribute again stresses its size, *magnitudine paulo infra elephantos*, a creature almost as large as an elephant yet, *specie et colore et figura tauri*, with the outward appearance of a bull. We are then left with the rather fearsome prospect of a giant bull. It has *magna vis* and *magna velocitas*, great strength and speed. We should note here especially this word *vis* and consider its broader connotations. As well as meaning physical strength, it more often carries the pejorative connotations of violence or any overly headstrong vigour, as for example in its usage in a legal context.⁷ Caesar means us to understand that these are not any ordinary beasts, but wild beasts, wild to the point of being very dangerous to man. This he spells out even more clearly with the line:

neque homini neque ferae quam conspexerunt parcent

They spare neither man nor beast once sighted. There is the inevitable sense here that once caught man has no escape in the presence of such a terrifying beast.

Continuing however, Caesar then tells us that, *hos studiose foveis captos interficiunt*; the Germans most enthusiastically practise the trapping and killing of these animals. Furthermore that this is an indeed a practice by which their youths are trained and hardened, and that it is a source of glory for them to parade the captured animals horns as trophies. There is the unavoidable connotation here that the Germans must themselves be very fierce to be able to actually hunt these animals, as wild as they clearly are. The Germans are themselves then in a sense *feri*, and just as much as the animals Caesar describes, belong to this strange, oversized and violent world.

In sum then, the principal common attribute these animals share are great size, specifically, greater size than that known to the Romans in animals they are familiar with, and we should note especially the repeated use of the noun *magnitudo*. Furthermore, we have a sense, especially with the elks and with the *uri*, that this great size is coupled with a certain lack of intelligence, or at least blind fury, as we see with the elks ramming trees or the headstrong violence of the *uri*. Bearing these traits in mind we may now turn to the four chapters of Caesar's ethnography of the Germans which, crucially, immediately precedes the description of the Hercynian forest and its animals, and immediately succeeds the ethnography of the Gauls.

In chapter 21, after mentioning briefly the religion of the Germans, Caesar sums up the entirety of the German existence and lifestyle as follows:

Vita omnis in venationibus atque in studiis rei militaris consistit.

All their lives, he tells us, are hunting and warfare. That from their youth all their interest is in *labor* and *duritia*. This forms a neat opening, which compositionally ties in with the

353.

⁷ Cf. e.g. Cicero, *For Milo*, 4: *cum vi vis inlata defenditur*.

closure of the *uri* description in chapter 28, with its detailing of the Germans' hunting the animals. He continues by stressing the chastity of the Germans, as related by other authors,⁸ as well as their belief that a longer adolescence increases stature and strength. The chapter concludes with a mention of the mixed bathing habits of the Germans, and that in this as in their dress generally there is no concealment. In this stress on equality of the sexes we can make a comparison to Caesar's description of the physical qualities of his Hercynian *bos* as regards the lack of differentiation between the sexes. Here, as elsewhere we find the picture of the Germans as wearing pelts of animals: *pellibus aut parvis renonum tegumentis utuntur*.

After briefly surveying their dietary and political habits, as well as their abstention from agriculture, in chapter 23 Caesar moves onto their habits in war. There is much of interest here to the military historian, but for our purposes the first sentence is of greatest interest, as it belies a more general facet of Caesar's characterisation of his northern foes, and indeed that of Roman authors generally. As he relates:

*Civitatibus maxima laus est quam latissime circum se vastatis
finibus solitudines habere.*

The greatest honour amongst the German states was to have a desolate area surrounding oneself, formed by devastating the borders. There is the sense here that this vastness and solitude, of this unknown northern landscape generally as well as specifically in the case of the Hercynian forest, is in fact something that, just as for the animals that live therein, is likewise for the Germans an advantage, indeed something that they look upon favourably. This is in marked contrast to the Romans, for whom the northern landscape not an ally, but an enemy, which must be conquered. It is worth remarking upon at this stage as it is a theme that will often recur in this paper, an attitude we will see in many other Roman authors.

This brief ethnography of the Germans is then stylistically arranged to be before the section on the Hercynian forest itself and its creatures, and in length it is similar. If it is doubted that these sections are meant to form a thematic whole, and have not been simply lumbered together haphazardly, it would be worthwhile to examine the first sentence of chapter 29, with which Caesar chooses to end his digression and return to the main thrust of his narrative:

*Caesar, postquam per Vbios exploratores comperit Suebos sese
in silvas recepisse, inopiam frumenti veritus, quod, ut supra
demonstravimus, minime omnes Germani agriculturae student,
constituit non progredi longius.*

Caesar decides to change his course of action, once he has learned that his enemies, the Suebi, have retired into the woods. This forms a neat closure to the whole excursus, as the Suebi draw back into their territory proper, the forest itself. Caesar does not wish to

⁸ Cf. Tacitus, *Germania*, 18.

advance further into this unknown and wild world, where the Germans, just as the animals of the wood, find their refuge but which is fraught with perils for the Romans.

Some scholars, especially historians attempting the very problematic task of reconstructing a real history for Germany in the Roman period, often find Caesar frustrating, as being at times very unreliable and yet more often than not the only authoritative written source available. In specific the Hercynian passage, with its account of elks that have no knee joints has often caused consternation, not to say amusement, and has caused some to reject Caesar outright. For example, Wells, in stating that:⁹

These bits of fanciful natural history should caution against relying too heavily on details in Caesar's account of the Germans.

This is a perfectly valid point for one trying to deduce a real historical picture of ancient Germany. However, for one interested in Roman attitudes towards the Germans, to reject the account outright, other than on the basis of good evidence for its spuriousness, would be a mistake. For it is these very inaccuracies and exaggerations that speak volumes about how the Romans conceived of their northern neighbours. For the Romans, the Germans are in at least some sense fanciful creatures of the forest.

A final point to note about Caesar's ethnographic and geographic digression in Book 6, before we move on, is that of its compositional ordering. As mentioned above, we have the order: Gauls, Germans, animals. This again, as near everything in Caesar's writings, is no accident but the product of careful arrangement. We are moving further and further away from the Roman epicentre and navel, and as we do so things become progressively less differentiated and more wild. As Campbell has stated in his study of unusual fauna in antiquity:¹⁰

Whether positive or negative in its moral weighting, the gaze on the noble savage is always from the centre outwards.

This is an important point to bear in mind and one that we will return to often, and concerns the Roman concept of extremes. As one moves farther afield the normal laws of nature and of civilisation, those which find their apotheosis in Rome itself, increasingly break down, leading to that *feritas* found at the world's extremes, coupled with an increasing lack of differentiation of the environment and its inhabitants.

This is something that we find Caesar stressing in chapter 24, just before his description of the forest, when he states that:

Ac fuit antea tempus, cum Germanos Galli virtute superarent,

Indeed once upon a time the Gauls were the valorous of the two peoples. However, that by acculturation to Roman civilisation and comforts, *provinciarum propinquitas et transmarinarum rerum notitia multa*, the Gauls dwindled and that today they do not even

⁹ P.S. Wells, *The Barbarians Speak*, 1999 (Princeton), p. 103.

¹⁰ G. Campbell, *Strange Creatures*, 2006 (London), p. 93.

compare themselves to the Germans in valour, *ne se quidem ipsi cum illis virtute comparant*. In this sense by proximity to Rome the Gauls have been to some degree out of that wildness they originally lived by, but that in this way the Germans have in turn become yet further removed, just as they are geographically, enjoying a status only just more civilised than wild animals, and hence Caesar's ordering of his material here.

Tacitus' Germania

We may now leave Caesar and move on to look at how the Germans are portrayed elsewhere by Roman authors, and to see what elements may be identified in common and how the animal theme can be seen to be present again. Though at over a century's remove into the future, the next instructive place to look must of course be Tacitus' *Germania*, the well-known monograph by the historian on the tribes and peoples of 'free' Germany and their social customs. The issue of the interpretation and various use and misuse of this text is a history in itself,¹¹ and I do not intend to engage with these issues here. It will suffice for our purposes to analyse the text for its usages of animal characterisations or associations.

From the first few chapters of his work on Germany Tacitus stresses the harsh nature of the landscape and natural environment in which the Germans dwell. On the one side they are separated from the Dacians by *montibus*, as well as through *mutuo metu*, on another by the wide expanse of Ocean and its mighty expanses and islands, *latos sinus et insularum immensa spatia*, then the Rhine, arising in the Alps and eventually lost in marshland.¹² In terms of the German landscape itself, Tacitus' attitude can be expressed concisely by his own succinctly put phrase:¹³

*quis porro...Germaniam peteret, informem terris, asperam
caelo, tristem cultu aspectuque, nisi patria sit;*

Who would seek Germany, an ugly land with harsh weather and no joy either to dwell
9

within or to look upon, unless it were his fatherland? This then is the view Tacitus has of the German climate, which he stresses as something different to that of the Roman homelands, or indeed of other lands the Romans came into earlier contact with.

However, he goes much further than this, and throughout the *Germania* we see the underlying current of thought that it is not only the case that the Germans are suited to such an environment or inured to its hardships, but that they are physically adapted to it as well. This is, for example, quite clear from the concluding sentence of chapter four, in which he gives a physical description of the Germans and of their natural capabilities:

¹¹ A good bibliography with relevant items may be found in B. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, 2004 (Princeton).

¹² n.8 op. cit., 1.1-3.

¹³ n.8 op. cit., 2.2.

*minimeque sitim aestumque tolerare, frigora atque inedia
caelo solove adsueverunt.*

They cannot stand thirst or heat, but can the cold and hunger and this, crucially, is due to their climate, their skies and earth. For Tacitus they are very much the product of their environment. They are not a people covetous of gold or wealth and thus Tacitus is able to express the opinion that he is unsure whether the gods' having denied them gold naturally was an act, *propitiine an irati*, whether with good or ill intent. It is clear from his comments voiced against Roman moral corruption that he leans toward the former, and this too is then an indirect result of their natural environment. Later in the *Germania*, in contrasting individual tribes and in particular the Mattiaci with the Batavi, he states that these are alike the latter save in one respect:¹⁴

nisi quod ipso adhuc terrae suae solo et caelo acrius animantur

By the very soil and climate of their land, according to Tacitus, they are yet more spirited. What seems to matter here most for Tacitus is *solum* and *caelum*. This affects the *animus* of a people, and may make them more *acer* or at least less balanced, more prone to extremes. Bearing this in mind let us now look at what Tacitus has to say about the animals that cohabit (sometimes quite literally) with the Germans. Germany is *pecorum fecunda, sed plerumque improcera*, in other words producing a lot of herds but undersized ones, and concerning the cows,¹⁵

ne armentis quidem suis honor aut gloria frontis,

Even they, with their absence of horns, lack beauty. They too seem somehow conditioned by the harshness, *asperitas*, by the climate within which they dwell.

Domesticated animals appear to enjoy high status, or at least a close relationship with humans, amongst the Germans. In chapter twenty he even goes so far as to say that masters and slaves live together amongst the beasts: *inter eadem pecora, in eadem humo degunt*. Horses especially seem to hold a sacred status. In chapter ten we learn of white horses kept apart in a sacred grove, *nullo mortali opere contacti*, untouched by mortal usage. Indeed, he even goes so far to claim,

se enim ministros deorum, illos conscios putant

They account themselves the gods' servants, but the horses the gods' confidants. There is little comparable to this in any known Roman religions, whereby an animal is accorded a status closer to the gods than any priest (for birds of divination are after all no more than messengers at best), and we may readily imagine how irregular this might have seemed to Tacitus.

¹⁴ n.8 op. cit., 29.3.

¹⁵ n.8 op. cit., 5.2.

How does Tacitus explain this? He gives no direct explanation, but his answer may be found in his attitude towards the Germans. It is not the case that the animals are more divine, but that the humans in this instance are nearer the animal. To make this case we may compare Caesar. His ethno-geographic conception of the world, as explained above, is Romano-centric, with peoples becoming more extreme as we move to the limits of the world, and Tacitus has a similar scheme here. All the Germans are certainly equally outlandish in the sense that they are far removed from Rome, but some more so than others. From what he says of the people of the *decumates*, it is obvious that he buys into that same view we find in Caesar, according to which in this day and age (though it may once have been otherwise), the Gauls are more tame than the Germans. As explanation for why he will not count these peoples amongst the Germans, though they cultivate lands beyond the Rhine and Danube, is that once upon a time,¹⁶

*levissimus quisque Gallorum et inopia audax dubiae
possessionis solum occupavere;*

All the most unsettled of the Gauls, being headstrong in their poverty, seized the land in dubious ownership. Origins are clearly important for Tacitus, as it evidently was for some tribes bordering Germany and Gaul,¹⁷ a truth that cannot be evaded or concealed try as peoples may.

Indeed if Tacitus did follow this same ethnographic scheme, as Caesar had done before him, then like in the Gallic War we should expect to find people and the environment likewise more extreme as we move ever further from the centre. This is clearly the case in the *Germania*, as for example in chapter thirty-seven the semi-legendary Cimbri, followed by the grisly rite of the Semnones of human sacrifice in chapter thirty-nine, the fierce Marcomani in chapter forty-two, and the yet more formidable Harii in chapter in forty-three with their ghost army. From this point on as he deals with tribes on, or sometimes in, the Ocean, Tacitus' monograph becomes increasingly fantastical as Roman knowledge of these peoples becomes increasingly reliant on hearsay and travellers' tales. There is much that might be cited here, but one line is most telling, and that the very last of the work:¹⁸

*cetera iam fabulosa: Hellusios et Oxionas ora hominum
vultusque, corpora atque artus ferarum gerere: quod ego ut
incompertum in medio relinquam.*

Tacitus disclaims to own the truth of the assertion, as it has not yet been ascertained and is the stuff of tales, but reports the apparently current idea that the most outlying tribes, the

¹⁶ n.8 op. cit., 29.4.

¹⁷ For example, n.8 op. cit., 28.4, of the Treveri and Nervii, whom Tacitus describes as attempting to claim Germanic rather than Gallic descent, as if by this means they might detach themselves from their evident connection with and laziness of the Gauls.

¹⁸ n.8 op. cit., 46.6. Here I follow M. Hutton's reading of *Oxionas* (Harvard, 1980), other suggested variants are *Etionas* or *Exionas*.

Hellusii and Oxiones, had the faces of men but the bodies and limbs of wild beasts. It is clear that in this scheme shared by Caesar and by Tacitus so many years later, people literally become more bestial as one moves further and further away from the Roman centre, at first in character but then perhaps at length also physically. This is at least the logical end of such a train of thought.

The essential point is that, whether Tacitus himself fully believes it or not, in his monograph we can witness the presence of what is at times less an anthropological, but more an almost zoological, view of outlying peoples. Conceptually, this is more than just a people who imitate animals, for example by the wearing of animal skins,¹⁹ but a people who to a certain degree are animals. As Campbell has commented in reference to a similar description by Herodotus²⁰ of the Scythians:²¹

The wearing of skins, animal skins at least, of course may be seen as symbolic of a noble primitive nature, or as a sign of a bestial nature... the putting on of animal skins seems to suggest the putting on of animality: the exterior matches the interior.

Tacitus' Annals

It is not only such direct comparisons to animals that are important though, but especially in Tacitus and also in many other Roman authors, the characterisation of the Germanic and northern temperament is very important as a facet of this animalian presentation. Aside from in the *Germania*, this is something we can see also in other works of Tacitus, in the case of the Germans most particularly in the first book of the *Annales*, where he writes of the German campaigns of Germanicus. Here likewise we have the stock picture of a grim unfriendly landscape, a land of *praematura hiems imbribus continuis adeoque saevis*, wherein the grievances of the legionaries may easily be nursed. Throughout his relation of these wars, Tacitus employs a standard characterisation of the impetuous nature of the Germans, which is shown furthermore to be their perennial tactical weakness, since naturally they have the advantage in strength. As explanation for why the Germans had lately preferred the bellicose Arminius to the peaceful Segestes, he states that:²²

nam barbaris, quanto quis audacia promptus, tanto magis fidus rebusque motis potior habetur.

The Germans are more trusting of a headstrong leader, and here we have this very important noun, *audacia*. They are daring, but daring to the point of folly. Later in the

¹⁹ n.8 op. cit., 17: *gerunt et ferarum pelles, proximi ripae neglegenter, ultiores exquisitius*. Note here how tribes further removed follow this custom more assiduously than those closer to Rome. Also, Tacitus, *Germania*, of the Aestii, who as part of their worship of what Tacitus calls *matrem deum, insigne superstitionis formas aprorum gestant*.

²⁰ Herodotus, *Histories*, 4.62.

²¹ n.9 op. cit., p. 101.

²² Tacitus, *Annals*, 1.57. *Lipsius* reads: *rebusque commotis*.

conflict however, the chieftain Inguiomerus' counsel prevails over Arminius' more prudent plan because he proposed things, *atrociora... et laeta barbaris*.²³ Once again there seems to be some sense in which these peoples by their nature incline to more drastic actions and what is *atrox*. Their chief motivations, as Tacitus spells out here, are *spes, cupido*, and the *diversae sententiae* of their leaders; there is none of the *ratio* of man in their actions, and at many points in this narrative there is the idea that Arminius is different from his countrymen, perhaps different because of his partial Romanisation.²⁴ Unlike the Romans, their actions are unplanned and driven by basic instincts.

Tacitus' Histories

Though the extant *Histories* do not deal with the German wars in such detail as the *Annals*, there are two important references here which should be noted. The first is from the fourth book of the work, in which during the Gallic rebellion a delegation of the Tencteri is received at Cologne, with the aim of persuading its people to rebel. In encouraging them to rejoin the peoples of free Germany, various arguments are marshalled and arranged in Tacitus' wonted fashion as part of a rhetorical construction. As part of their demands and as token of alliance it is demanded that the city walls be taken down, which are described as *munimenta servitii*, the bulwarks of servitude. There follows an animal analogy:²⁵

etiam fera animalia, si clausa teneas, virtutis obliviscuntur

Even enclosed wild animals forget their natural valour. Here Tacitus has Germans comparing other Germans favourably with wild animals which, importantly, are greater in their wild than their domesticated state. We should also take careful account of the use of the word *virtus* here in its equation with instinctual animal bravery; there is the definite sense here that the Germans' *virtus* is likewise animalian and inborn. Despite its etymological connection with *vir*, it is clear that this part of manliness draws its strength from animalian instinct. The second reference we ought note is also taken from this speech, where later the delegation uses another analogy by way of justification of the Germans' inalienable right to live on both banks of the Rhine:

*quo modo lucem diemque omnibus hominibus, ita omnis terras
fortibus viris natura aperuit.*

For the Tencteri, the right of the brave to rule and have by might is as much a human right as the right to sunlight. Again, there is nothing to distinguish such a way of life from that of an animal; it is not the way of civilisation with its laws to safeguard rights of ownership.

At least in Roman and Greek philosophy, the sense of reason attributed to man

²³ n.22 op. cit., 1.68.

²⁴ For this particular issue cf. Tacitus, *Annals*, 2.9ff, where Arminius debates with his brother who is fighting for the Romans.

²⁵ Tacitus, *Histories*, 4.64.

was what overridingly differentiated him from animals. This however is a point we shall return to at greater length later in this thesis in regard to the context of these texts. Now we shall briefly leave the Germans and turn to another people very much peripheral to Roman power, the Britons, a people perhaps equally remote and misunderstood, despite their being directly ruled in a much more literal sense than the Germans.

Caesar's Presentation of the Britons

It may be instructive again to begin with Caesar, although it must be stressed that unlike with the Germans he had minimal real contact with the island and its inhabitants, and what he does state must be taken with a pinch of salt, bearing in mind also that by Caesar's time there were already many fantastical ethnographic traditions about the island of Britain, some of them centuries old. One reference alone is of any real interest here, and that is what he says about the Kentish people of the interior of the coastal regions and their habits. We learn that:²⁶

*Interiores plerique frumenta non serunt, sed lacte et carne
vivunt pellibusque sunt vestiti.*

Just as the Germans, they do not practise agriculture and instead live of milk and meat. True or not, this is a stock motif of Roman and Greek aetiologies, in which agriculture is often the mark of civilisation's beginning.²⁷ Additionally they wear animal skins, and Caesar goes on to relate their habit of painting themselves with woad:

*Omnes vero se Britanni vitro inficiunt, quod caeruleum efficit
colorem, atque hoc horribus sunt in pugna aspectu.*

They are certainly outlandish and, to the Roman observer, rough in their outward appearance. It is perhaps worth noting the usage of *caeruleus* here, a fairly uncommon word in extant Latin prose, and the fact that this is the especial characteristic of the maritime world and of the climate of this part of the Roman world. While I do not wish to press the point too far, it should be borne in mind that for a Roman this donning of such colours may have further stressed the literal association between people and climate found so extensively elsewhere.

Tacitus' Presentation of the Britons in the Agricola

To return again to Tacitus and his text *Agricola*. I refrain from referring to this outright as an ethnographic monograph in the sense that the *Germania* is, because it certainly has many other literary and rhetorical agendas, but on one level it is just that, in the sense of

²⁶ Caesar, *Gallic War*, 5.14.

²⁷ For example, Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 115, and how originally during the first age of men the earth bore fruit of its own accord.

giving a detailed treatment of the inhabitants of Britain and their customs.²⁸ To begin by looking at what Tacitus says about the Britons and their character - and in doing so we must again be aware of the fact that Tacitus writes at a later stage than Caesar when Rome had for several decades ruled Britain. After describing the varying physique of the peoples in different parts of Britain, he highlights the general similarities between the Britons and their neighbours in Gaul, and once again the explanation for this is based, if not upon kinship, upon climate.²⁹

seu procurrentibus in diversa terris positio caeli corporibus habitum dedit.

They have been given a similar disposition from their similar climates. Likewise their speech and superstitions are similar and, he goes on to relate,

in deposcendis periculis eadem audacia et, ubi advenere, in detrectandis eadem formido

The same recklessness in seeking danger but fear in misadventure. Here we find the same *audacia* again. The difference however, according to Tacitus, is that the Britons, being less emasculated by peace than the Gauls, show more *ferocia*. This all important characteristic and noun should be noted, as we will see its consistent application to northern peoples elsewhere, and we shall later discuss Roman etymological tradition concerning this word.

In chapter twelve we may understand that Tacitus makes many implicit comparisons to the Germans. For example, concerning the climate of Britain he tells us that:³⁰

caelum crebris imbribus ac nebulis foedum; asperitas frigorum abest.

There is the sense here that bitterness of frosts goes hand-in-hand with climates that are often clouded and rainy, and that he must go out of his way to state that in this case they do not. This is of course true,³¹ as in all other northern climates in Europe the winters are harsher, and to a Roman reader the reading would have meant greater free Germany. We see a further association between northern peoples, this time as a collective grouping, in the same chapter, when Tacitus makes an aside about the realities of Roman foreign policy in the north.³²

²⁸ For issues concerning the nature and genre of the *Agricola* as a text, see K. Clarke, 'An Island Nation: Re-Reading Tacitus' "Agricola", *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 91, (2001), pp. 94-112.

²⁹ Tacitus, *Agricola*, 11.

³⁰ n.29 op. cit., 12.3.

³¹ Since Britain, as an island and under the direct influence of the Gulf stream, has much more temperate winters and summers than its neighbours.

³² n.29 op. cit., 12.2.

nec aliud adversus validissimas gentes pro nobis utilius quam quod in commune non consulunt.

He relates that there is no greater boon for the Romans in dealing with the strongest peoples than the fact that they don't make common cause. The strongest peoples presumably here indicates all those peoples north of the Roman empire still living in a state of semi-barbarism from the Roman point-of-view, as dictated by Roman racial environmental theory.

It is also worthwhile noting here what Tacitus says about the crops in Britain and how they grow. The *solum* is *patiens frugum pecudumque fecundum*; that the soil will suffer crops to grow in it and that it harbours many cattle. He then goes on to say, presumably in reference to both,³³ *tarde mitescunt, cito proveniunt*. I do not consider it far-fetched to relate this to what Tacitus says in the *Germania*, a tradition reported elsewhere,³⁴ of the Germans' slow adolescence and thereby increased vigour:³⁵

sera iuvenum venus, eoque inexhausta pubertas.

We should note also the adverb *cito*, for again it relates that same sense of headstrong haste and vigour which, as we shall see, so many authors relate of the battle-habits of northern tribes.³⁶ The animals and crops of the island then have characteristics in common with the peoples in this part of the world. Agricola himself is shown to have a sense of the Britons' adaptation to their environment when he chooses native auxiliaries for their swimming abilities in chapter eighteen.

Apart from incidental information though, the most significant parts of the monograph are the two pre-battle speeches given by, firstly, Calgacus the pre-eminent British chieftain (chapters 30-32), and then by Agricola himself (33). Much has been written about these speeches,³⁷ but since they contain an extensive construction by Tacitus of each side's attitude towards the other we shall look closely at each of these characterisations in turn. For all the virtue of Agricola, Calgacus is the archetype of primordial *libertas* for Tacitus, and in his person more than any of the Britons or perhaps even than any other figure from any northern tribe, is made to embody their free virtue. This is perfectly clear from Calgacus' scathing indictment of Rome. Roman rule is variously described by him as *dominatio* (twice), and the Romans as *infestiores* (than the sea), *raptores*, *avari*, *ambitiosi*, as being driven by *superbia*, *libido*, and *lascivia*, who

³³ As M. Hutton's translation (revised by M. Ogilvie, Harvard 1980, p. 49) has it. Either way I fail to see how the ensuing line could not at least refer back to *pecudumque fecundum*, since this is mentioned last. Some MSS omit *fecundum* in the main text, but this does not affect the issue here.

³⁴ As for example by Caesar, *Gallic War*, 6.21, for which see above discussion.

³⁵ Tacitus, *Germania*, 20.3.

³⁶ Cf., for example, in the battle narrative of the *Agricola* at chapter 37, where the defeated Britons rush headlong to their deaths even unarmed: *quidam inermes ultro ruere ac se morti offerre*.

³⁷ See, for example: K. Clarke, 'An Island Nation: Re-Reading Tacitus' "Agricola"', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 91, (2001), pp. 94-112.

concupiscunt and *polluuntur*. The Britons, making their last stand, are *nobilissimi totius Britanniae, universi servitutis expertes, inviolati, indomiti* (which we might well compare to animals), dwelling in *sinus famae*, and perhaps most interestingly of all, embodying those traits in truth most loathsome to Roman tyranny, *virtus porro ac ferocia*. *Ferocia* again, a trait which in this case is definitely being put in a positive light, for which the most apt English translation here would probably be 'fierceness' or something akin to this. The rhetorical question and challenge which opens chapter 32, immediately following on from these descriptions of innate British virtues, pointedly contrasts Roman degeneracy and immorality:

*An eandem Romanis in bello virtutem quam in pace lasciviam
adesse creditis?*

The Romans, on the other hand, are fiercer in licentiousness than in war, which perfectly chimes with Tacitus's consistent characterisation of the virtue of the northern tribes.

Furthermore, aside from these obvious rhetorical devices and direct condemnations, and emotive adjectives, there is a subtle undertone running through Calpurnius' speech, whereby the landscape and environment itself are closely associated with, and to some degree are made to embody, the pristine liberty and purity of these people. Until now, Calpurnius tells his men, the natural landscape has been their best protection, but no more:

ne mare quidem securum imminente nobis classe Romana

Even the sea is no protection to them anymore.³⁸ In Caledonia, in the last stronghold of British freedom, the British are *in ipsis penetralibus*. By using the terminology of religious spatial conceptions, Tacitus has this wild Scottish landscape become something naturally sacred and hallowed, the very inner sanctum of liberty. Caledonia is the *terrarum ac libertatis extremos recessus*, and here land and liberty are made to be practically equivalent. By contrast the Roman empire is geographically embodied by *servientium litora*, presumably a reference to the north Gallic coastline. As is clear from this speech, but also from the battle narrative which follows Agricola's speech, the landscape and natural environment are without any doubt on the Britons side and their ally, and even after the Britons have been defeated the landscape is conceived of as a foe; the first place where the Britons attempt to rally and which must be scrutinised by Agricola in his mistrust: *simul rariores silvas equitem perscrutari iussisset*.³⁹

Calpurnius' picture of the Romans in an alien landscape stresses their isolation, and fear of all and sundry around them, as if the trees themselves were enemies:⁴⁰

paucos numero, trepidos ignorantia, caelum ipsum ac mare et

³⁸ Cf. the concept of the seafaring as the start of all woes in aetiological literature. For a discussion of this theme see: B. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, 2004 (Princeton), p. 243 and chap. 5.

³⁹ Tacitus, *Agricola*, 37.

⁴⁰ n.39 op. cit., 32.2.

*silvas, ignota omnia circum spectantes, clausos quodam modo
ac victos di nobis tradiderunt.*

Indeed it is the gods of Britain that have delivered the Romans up to them. From the Britons' point of view conceived through Roman eyes, the Roman presence in Britain then could arguably said to be *nefas* according to this, since it is contrary to the gods' and nature's will. We must wonder whether Tacitus himself inclines towards such a view when in the aftermath of the battle at chapter 38 he presents us with a somewhat eerie picture of the silent unpopulated landscape that Agricola is confronted with upon his advance:

*vastum ubique silentium, deserti colles, fumantia procul tecta,
nemo exploratoribus obuius.*

Whether freedom's death or the last stand of the Celts, there is a definite sense of some transgression here, contrasting harshly with Domitian's phoney triumph in the following chapter.

We should now look at Agricola's pre-battle speech to his soldiers too which, though comparatively shorter, has significant material for the subject at hand. Once more we find the stress on fighting against nature, as well as the Britons. In the opening of his speech Agricola says in reference to battles and expeditions to date that they have been undertaken,⁴¹

*seu fortitudine adversus hostes seu patientia ac labore paene
adversus ipsam rerum naturam.*

As Borca has commented in an interesting note to this passage, the landscape characterisation itself is *fundamentally hostile*, and that for the Romans,⁴²

most of all, it is necessary to prevail over that bond which the Britons, like the Gauls and the Germans, hold with a natural milieu well-known to them and, conversely, unknown and hostile to the Romans.

Even by Agricola's own admission then, the landscape is their enemy.

Replying to his soldiers' apparent complaint that the enemy was ever retreating and did not face battle, Agricola says of the Britons now: *veniunt, e latebris suis extrusi*.⁴³ Dragged from their coverts they now come to battle. A metaphor of the Britons as animals is definitely present here, since the word *latebrae* is used. The Romans are literally hunting wild animals. Furthermore, as if this was not already clear enough, he then makes a yet more direct comparison to a hunt when Tacitus has Agricola compare these last of the

⁴¹ n.39 op. cit., 33.2

⁴² Dr. Borca, 'Adversus ipsam rerum naturam: Note on Tac. Agr. 33', *Britannia*, Vol. 27, (1996), pp. 337-340, p. 338.

⁴³ n.39 op. cit., 33.4

Britains to the animals that were put to flight on their northward march:⁴⁴

*quo modo silvas saltusque penetrantibus fortissimum quodque
animal contra ruere, pavida et inertia ipso agminis sono
pellebantur, sic acerrimi Britannorum pridem ceciderunt,
reliquus est numerus ignavorum et timentium.*

In Agricola's view there is no difference between the wild fauna of Britain that they have encountered and the Britons they have already fought and now again fight with. His men are encouraged to think in this way; that these beasts are the less fierce ones who initially fled when disturbed but now have no more escape. In both of the pre-battle speeches of the *Agricola* then we can see how animal metaphors and a close association with the natural environment are used to characterise the Britons, both in a positive light and a negative.

Tacitus' Presentation of the Britons in the Histories

Aside from the *Agricola*, the other notable point in Tacitus' writings concerning the Britons is in his *Annals*, where he writes of the uprising of the Iceni under Boudicca.⁴⁵ Here again we have a pre-battle speech delivered by the leader of the Britons in this instance, followed by one given by her opposite number on the Roman side, in this case the Roman general Suetonius Paulinus. There are no direct animal comparisons given here in the very brief speeches Tacitus has his protagonists deliver, merely the *strepitus* and *clamor* usually associated with barbarians before battle.⁴⁶ What we should note here however is the stress placed on *pudicitia*, something we are familiar with as a northern characteristic from the *Germania*. Indeed this seems to form the entire basis for Boudicca's indignation and for the battle itself. She is bound to avenge her daughters' stolen chastity, *contrectatam filiarum pudicitiam ulcisci*, since Roman corruption has gone so far that neither maidenhood nor old age is safe:

*Eo propectas Romanorum cupidines, ut non corpora, ne
senectam quidem aut virginitatem inpollutam relinquunt.*

For Tacitus the Romans have again in their greed transgressed upon something sacred.

Cassius Dio on the Britons

The second-third century statesman and historian Cassius Dio, in his *Histories*, writing of course at a time less recent to these events than Tacitus, gives a more elaborated and extensive version of Boudicca's speech to her soldiers. Scholars have in recent years taken

⁴⁴ n.39 op. cit., 34.2. Hersfeld archetype reads, *dementium*, for *timentium* here, and a corrector has suggested *metuentium* in the margin.

⁴⁵ Tacitus, *Annals*, 14.35.

⁴⁶ Tacitus, *Histories*, 35.

an increasingly critical view of his history, and his style is very much more inflated and elaborate than Tacitus, which should give us pause for doubt over the truth of what he reports. However, perhaps for the very fact that he lacks the usual concision and, like many other inferior Roman historians, will gleefully include as much material as he cares to, there is more of interest to us in detecting underlying Roman attitudes and it is worthwhile for us to examine this speech carefully. Comparably to Tacitus' speech of Calpurnius, Dio has Boudicca compare the Roman character to that of the Britons:⁴⁷

tosañth|gar periousia|andriaj xrwmeqa w#te kai\ta} skhna}
 a\$fal esteraj th} ekeihwn panopl ia} nomizein.

According to Boudicca the Britons' superior bravery is evident to see, indeed so much so that by its presence their tents are more safe than any walls could be to the Romans, their shields more protection than the Romans' suits of armour. This gives a very similar picture to that of Tacitus' Calpurnius, with the Britons trusting to their own hardihood to overcome the Romans.

Boudicca continues by telling her men that the Romans are unable to bear hardships, and that to survive they need such comforts as oil and wine. By contrast the Britons are so hardy, we learn, that they are able to survive with merely the grass and roots as their bread, the juice of any plant as their oil, any water as wine and any tree as a house:

hñi# de\dh\pasa meñ po# kai\ (ca si#oj e}sti, pa} de\umo}
 e#aion, pa# de\dw#wr oi}oj , pa# de\deñdron oi}ia.

This is of course a very unrealistic and exaggerated picture, and the historical reality of this conflict and the habits of the Britons certainly do not square with the picture Dio's Boudicca gives us here. This is a rhetorical and narrative device on the part of Dio, or his sources, and is clearly meant to appeal to Roman stereotypes both about people in the north and, since Dio writes at a time when Britain had long been under Roman rule, perhaps also to a historical tradition about these wars and the early subjugation of Rome's most northern province. Hence we find again the same notion as in the *Agricola* of the Britons on the one hand being in a close symbiosis with the landscape, while on the other hand the Romans being quite out of their depth, remote from their wonted comforts.

Boudicca stresses this conception of their symbiotic relationship with the landscape even more by spelling out that this region of the world is their ally and the Romans' enemy:

kai\mhñ kai\ta\wria tau#a hñi# meñ sunh}qh kai\summaxa,
 ekei}oj de\dh\kai\}gnwsta kai\pol emia.

Dio also has Boudicca pick up on a point, made by other writers also,⁴⁸ concerning the

⁴⁷ Cassius Dio, *Histories*, 62.5, as for following citations.

⁴⁸ For example, in Tacitus, *Agricola*, 18, when Suetonius uses native auxiliary swimmers, as mentioned

ability of the Britons at swimming:

kai\ touj potamouj hñeij meñ gumnoi\ dianebmen, ekeiñoi de\ oude
plouibij rãdiwuj peraiouñtai

According to Boudicca, while the Britons swim the rivers naked, the Romans struggle to cross them even in boats. The Britons are adapted to their natural environment, whereas the Romans blunder clumsily in one that is alien.

Of all of Boudicca's speech however, most interesting is the very last line of the speech. Boudicca exhorts her men to teach the Romans a lesson, and she uses a metaphor to express this:

deicwmen autouij oñi lagwsi\ kai\ a)wpekej wñtej kunwñ kai\
lukwn a)rxein epixeipousin.

The Romans are hares and foxes trying to rule over dogs and wolves. This is a powerful image with which to conclude her speech, and the implication is of course that, like wolves and dogs, the Britons are in some way naturally more fierce than the Romans. Especially in the case of the wolf, there is the added sense that his fierceness cannot be tamed, and we shall find that this particular animal comparison shall recur repeatedly in other Roman texts in such a context.

The latest consensus on the import of these passages and those from the *Agricola* seems to tend towards a view according to which their authors use them as a narrative foil to criticise Roman imperialism. For example Adler, in an article comparing the speeches of Boudicca in Tacitus and Dio, seems to concur in large part with other studies of recent years,⁴⁹ when he states of Tacitus' Boudicca:⁵⁰

It is a picture partly aimed at criticising Roman imperial misconduct yet also seemingly tied up in highlighting the disenchanting foreignness of the Britons.

He discusses the early twentieth-century traditions of 'hard primitivism' according to Lovejoy and Boas, and at length settles for the following view:⁵¹

The criticism of Roman society both dramatically calls into question the potentially decadent nature of the Roman world, and also casts the Britons as primitive, and by extension, inferior.

I would take issue with two points here, issues which we will return to later. Firstly, I don't think there is much potentiality about Roman decadence; it is obviously clear from

above.

⁴⁹ Cf. K. Clarke in above n. 28.

⁵⁰ E. Adler, 'Boudica's speeches in Tacitus and Dio', *Classical World*, vol. 101,2 (Winter, 2008), p. 195.

⁵¹ n.50 op. cit., p. 193.

the very motivations for the war itself. Furthermore, Roman decadence as against northern barbarian virtue seems to have been an established topos by this time. Secondly, I do not think there is sufficient evidence for the statement that, in the Roman conception, the sort of primitivism we see here logically entails inferiority, indeed there is much evidence to the contrary.

Without entering too extensively into the hard primitivism debate at this stage we will now survey other instances in Roman literature in which northern peoples are described as or by analogy to animals, or else in close association with their natural environment for, whatever position we may take on the question just broached, what is remarkable from Tacitus and Dio alone is the consistency of such conceptions over time. Questions of sources, imitation and historiographical traditions must be accounted for, but even so in this instance at least the later author adds extra material not in the original authors' account of the same event but easily found⁵² in the latter's other works.

Lucan's Civil War

An early imperial author of interest for our purposes, writing during the reign of Nero, is Lucan and his epic the *Civil War*. While by no means a particularly notable epic for its poetry or ancient literary impact, and concerned of course principally with an internal Roman conflict, it has several interesting descriptions of northern peoples. In the first book of his epic he makes a digression of about forty lines in his account of the beginnings of Caesar and Pompey's conflict by describing the Gallic tribes. Although the Gauls are not our primary interest it is worth noting because, despite writing several decades subsequently to the pacification of Gaul, he seeks to portray these collective peoples in a more barbarian light, as he perceives them as having been at the time of the civil war. Moreover he makes little distinction in his work between Gauls and Germans, and what we have in these forty lines seem to be, if we may put it so, a catalogue of stock types of northern peoples.

Again, as with Tacitus' *strepitus*, we have the Batavians roused by their bronze trumpets.⁵³

*Batavique truces, quos aere recurvo
Stridentes acuere tubae*

This German tribe are *truces*, presumably by their nature.⁵⁴ The Cebennae are identified with and defined by the harsh landscape they inhabit:⁵⁵

qua montibus ardua summis

⁵² Lucan, *Civil War*, 1. 420-462

⁵³ n.52 op. cit., 1.431-432.

⁵⁴ A very interesting comparison that might be made with this passage is: Virgil, *Aeneid*, 8.1ff. Here the characterisation of Turnus is similarly linked to the blare of trumpets, perhaps suggesting that he is being portrayed as a similar type by a stock motif of epic.

⁵⁵ n.52 op. cit., 1.434-435.

Gens habitat cana pedentes rupe Cebennas

The Teutates in turn are defined in their dread savagery by their religion and compared in this fashion to another northern people in their religion, the Scythians, the long-established Greek archetype of barbarity.⁵⁶

*Teutates horrensque feris altaribus Esus
Et Taranis Scythicae non mitior ara Dianae*

He continues by describing the druids in their dark groves, *nemora alta remotis* (453), with their dark religion, and the people of the north's complete lack of fear of death.⁵⁷

*certe populi, quos despicit Arctos,
Felices errore suo, quos ille timorum,
Maximus haud urguet, leti metus*

Somehow in their primitivism the people of the north seem to lack a very basic piece of human knowledge, hence their easy *ferocia*, contented in their ignorance.

The Teutates' altars are *feri*, just as the people themselves are, and even the landscape has the same characteristics as the people. For example the Rhine itself is for Lucan fierce: *Rhenique feroces... ripas* (464). Elsewhere in Lucan's poem we find the same consistent sense of a fierce north, somehow a terrible threat to Rome, louring down over the Alps, and this fierceness is dangerous because it is free, untamed. In the fourth book in the narrator's desultory invocation that the gods may destroy Rome to save it from civil war, the very landscape and natural features of the north are made the culmination of Rome's purgers:⁵⁸

*Riphaes huc solve nives, huc stagna lacusque
Et pigras, ubicumque iacent, effunde paludes,
Et miseris bellis civilibus eripe terras.*

The Riphaen mountains fulfil here their standard function of signifying all the north, combined with swamps and marshland. As in Tacitus and Dio, the northern landscape itself is a foe to the Romans.

Diodorus on the Britons

Returning to Britain and free Gaul, a good early example of a writer representative of the traditions that existed about it before its conquest is the first century BC writer Diodorus from Sicily, who has much to tell us and of a fanciful nature about the island and the customs of its inhabitants. In the fifth book of his extant work, after providing (a rather

⁵⁶ n.52 op. cit., 1.445-446.

⁵⁷ n.52 op. cit., 1.458-460.

⁵⁸ n.52 op. cit., 4.118-120.

useless) sense of orientation by means of the Hercynian forest, he tells us that the tribes of Britain are autochthonous and that to date they preserve their ancient way of life.⁵⁹

katoikei# de/ fasi th# brettanikh# au#toxqona gehh kai\ton
pal aion bibn tai# agwgai# diathpou#ta.

They use chariots after the fashion of the Greeks of older days, and their dwellings are constructed from logs and reeds. In fact, unlike the men of today, by which he seems to understand the present Britons as almost existing in a past golden age state, the Britons' lifestyle and habits are simple and pure:⁶⁰

toi# d' h#esin apl ou# ei#hai kai\pol u#kexwrismenouj th# tw# nu#
a#qrw#pwn a#yxinoi#aj kai\ponhri#aj .

For Diodorus the outlying Britons clearly still exist in a pristine age unsullied by decline. He continues in his account by describing the Gauls too, whom writing as Diodorus does in the first century BC before its conquest, had also not been fully subjugated. Of its climate he tells us that the wind that blows from the north is so fierce that it can lift rocks as large as a man's hand:⁶¹

apo... a#ktou pnei# ei#wqasin a#hmoi thl ikau#thn e#xontej
sfodro#thta kai\duhamin, w#te a#yarpazein apo th# gh# l iqouj
xeirop#l hqiaibuj .

Of the inhabitants themselves he relates that they are a tall, strong-muscled, fair, and blonde-haired people, but that they also make their hair yet blonder by washing it with lime.⁶² Diodorus dehumanises what would already be an outlandish appearance for a Roman by further comparing them to satyrs because of the way they pull back their hair. There is certainly the connotation that these people are not quite ordinary humans as one would expect. In fact, because their hair becomes coarse due to its treatment, he says, it is actually indistinguishable from that of horses:

paxuhontai ga# ai(trikej apo\th# katergasi#aj , w#te mhde# th# tw#
i#ppwn xai#thj diafe#rein.

The free Gauls literally have a partly animalian appearance as Diodorus would have it, perhaps not as explicitly as in the rumours Tacitus reports of the outlying German tribes, the Helusii and Oxiones, but we can see the same underlying conception. We also find a close association with dogs and wolves, as in Dio, when Diodorus informs his reader that these animals' skins are used as cushions by the Gauls:⁶³

⁵⁹ Diodorus, 5.21.5.

⁶⁰ n.59 op. cit., 5.21.6.

⁶¹ n.59 op. cit., 5.26.1.

⁶² n.59 op. cit., 5.28.2.

⁶³ n.59 op. cit., 5.28.4.

u(ρostrw)masi xpw)menoi l ukwn h)kunw# de)pmasi.

They eat great pieces of meat, the biggest cut apportioned to the bravest warrior, and Diodorus compares this to Ajax in the Iliad (7.321). These feeding habits might easily be compared to those of any large carnivorous pack animal, and we must wonder whether such a comparison is intended at some level.

In describing the war customs of the Gauls, Diodorus details the decorated armour they are accustomed to wear. On their long shields, we learn, are depicted figures of animals, which are placed there both for beauty and protection.⁶⁴ Having such an apotropaic function, animals are clearly viewed as protective deities of some sort, whose spirit attends to the Gallic warriors in battle. Likewise the helmets themselves sometimes have horns, with the fore-parts of birds or four-footed animals attached to them. Again, as with Diodorus' description of their hair, in their dress these Gauls are being attributed with semi-animalian characteristics. Finally, as many Roman commentators in detailing Gallic or British culture, Diodorus is keen to stress the omnipotence of the druids in these societies. This is nothing worth remarking upon per se for our concerns, but the manner in which he does so here is. The druids are so powerful that, even just before a battle, they may step between the two armies and command them to cease.⁶⁵

paubusin autouj , w)sp#er tina)qhria katapasantej

The druids stop them as if casting a spell over wild beasts. In this analogy the Gauls are nothing more than mindless brutes, but whom formidable, almost unnatural, power is required to tame. This carries similar connotations to those of the mythological figure of Circe, whom we shall return to.

Strabo's Presentation of the Celts

Indeed of all the ways in which their northern neighbours intrigue Roman writers' interests, perhaps none is so great as their habits in war, which of course was initially, and for the most part of Roman imperial history, the main contact Rome had with northern tribes. In his *Geography* the Augustan geographer and philosopher Strabo has much to say about the Celts, and speaking of the Iberian tribes he states the following:⁶⁶

proj de)th(a) hqeia)th)toiau)th pol l a)kai)memu)getai peri\
 pa)htwn koinh)tw# l)phrikw# e)gnw#, dia)fero)h)toj de)tw#
 pros)bo)krwn, ou)mo)hon ta)proj a)ndrei)an a) l a)kai)ta)proj
 w)mo)thta kai)a)po)hoian qhriw)dh.

Of greatest interest for Strabo are the traits held in common by all the Iberian races, but

⁶⁴ n.59 op. cit., 5.30.2.

⁶⁵ n.59 op. cit., 5.31.5.

⁶⁶ Strabo, *Geography*, 3.4.17

especially those towards the north, of bravery, ferocity, and something which equates to beastlike insensibility (presumably towards pain in such a context). The Greek vocabulary here is equivalent to the Latin *virtus* and *ferocia*, which we have already encountered. Especially the later, in both the Greek and Latin, carries heavy animal connotations, and the last trait given is explicitly 'beastlike'. Strabo's description is almost exactly equivalent with, for example Caesar, when he says: *homines feros magnaue virtutis*.⁶⁷

Livy's Presentation of the Gauls

What Strabo's contemporary, the famous Augustan historian, Livy says of the Gauls may go a long way to helping us understand the foundation of such thoughts as we may find of Germans, Britons and Gauls in imperial literature. Most informative in Livy's extant histories is a speech he has the consul Manilius deliver to his troops before engaging in battle with the descendants of a group of Gauls in Phrygia. He tells his men that these Gauls have, for the last two hundred years, fled the Romans in conflict:⁶⁸

*ex eo tempore per ducentos iam annos pecorum in modum
consternatos caedunt fugantque.*

They have been put to flight 'in the fashion of beasts' by the Romans. Just as Tacitus' Agricola encourages his men to think of their enemies as mere wild beasts, and we must not rule out Livy as Tacitus' model, so Livy's Manilius encourages his men.

Indeed Manilius goes even further than this, and provides a reason for the weakness of this particular enemy based upon the Roman environmental racial theory, by comparing these Gallo-Greeks to transplanted flora or migrated animals:⁶⁹

*sicut in frugibus pecudibusque non tantum semina ad
servandum indolem valent, quantum terrae proprietatis caelique
sub quo aluntur mutat.*

The local climate has over time enfeebled this people, just as can be witnessed when plants and animals are moved to a softer climate, in turn implying that the original climate of the north made them stronger, and that Gauls naturally have greater vigour and battle-courage than Greeks.

This were sufficiently clear alone to show the underlying conception, but Livy has Manilius go yet further and compare the Gallo-Greeks directly to captured beasts who have become tame with time:⁷⁰

*Nolite existimare beluas tantum recens captas feritatem illam
silvestrem primo servare, dein, cum diu manibus humanis*

⁶⁷ Caesar, *Gallic War*, 2.15.15

⁶⁸ Livy, *Histories*, 38.17.6

⁶⁹ n.68 op. cit., 38.17.9-10. Codex Bambergensis reads *mutant* for *mutat* here.

⁷⁰ n.68 op. cit., 38.17.15. Codex Bambergensis reads *recentis* for *recens* here, *hostes* for *hos*.

aluntur, mitescere, in hominum feritate mulcenda non eadem naturam esse. Eosdem hos creditis esse, qui patres eorum avique fuerunt?

The original Gauls, this people's ancestors, were *beluae*, which is a very strong word for a beast, with almost monstrous connotations. Their initial *silvestrem... feritatem* has been tamed with time, and it is worth noting the close association made between a specific type of landscape common to the north (perhaps entirely representing the north if we take the Hercynian descriptions literally) and the trait of wildness. As we shall see *feritas*, as well as *ferocia*, is a noun commonly associated with northern peoples.

Feritas and Ferocia in Velleius

This notion of *ferocia* and *feritas* as characteristic of northern peoples, and especially of the Germans, carried into the early imperial period, perhaps gaining strength due to the increasing contact involved with the campaigns of Drusus and Tiberius, then of their sons, and of the propaganda associated with this. It is abundantly evident from this period onwards. While his works are often rightly neglected in favour of other more reliable historians by scholars, Velleius, historian and encomiast of Tiberius during his lifetime, has the rare advantage of us of writing close to the time of the campaigns of Augustus and the Drusi against the Germans. Speaking of the defeat of the Langobardi tribe, relates that:⁷¹

Fracti Langobardi, gens etiam Germana feritate ferocior.

As ever it is what is implied here that is of most interest. It is incredible, *etiam*, but there is a race yet more ferocious than the Germans, implying that this was the latter's special characteristic, given extra weight by the alliteration here. Most of all though, we should note here the effective equivalence of *feritas* and *ferocia* for Velleius. Their meanings are different, 'wildness' and 'fierceness' respectively, but in practice here the difference is hardly detectable. For *ferocior* is made comparative, and we would therefore expect a meaning something akin to, 'than the Germans are fierce', but instead we have wild. We shall meet this equivalence again, and for many Roman authors it seems that their fierceness was their wildness, for the latter logically entailed the former.

Florus and Feritas

The connection between the Germans' unsettledness and their natural environment is clear in the works of Florus, the historian and panegyricist, who lived during the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian in the early second century. As part of his history of Rome, he describes the victory of Drusus the Elder in Germany, and the changes that ensued in its

⁷¹ Velleius Paterculus, 2.101.2.

wake. He informs us that:⁷²

*Ea denique in Germania pax erat, ut mutati homines, alia terra,
caelum ipsum mitius molliusque solito videretur.*

Florus chooses to describe the transient peace that came at that time through the landscape and environment itself. It were as if the very sky and land had somehow become more tame and gentle than its wont, just as the men themselves were changed. There is the implication that, just as the men were wild because of their environment, that environment would have to change too before they could grow softer. The adjectives *mitis* and *mollis* are also descriptions that might easily be applied to wild animals which have been tamed.

The same sense of wildness and tameness in relation to the Germans had been in Hirtius' mind when writing about Gaul. In the eighth book of the *Gallic War*, he chooses to attribute the relative insubordination of the Treviri as against other Gauls to their proximity to the Germans:⁷³

*quorum civitas propter Germaniae vicinitatem cotidianis
exercitata bellis cultu et feritate non multum a Germanis
differebat neque imperata umquam nisi exercitu coacta
faciebat.*

In their appearance and, again, *feritas*, the Treviri were almost the same as the Germans, yielding to no orders unless under military coercion, and Hirtius ascribes this entirely to their being near the Germans and hence exercised by daily wars. Apparently then *feritas*, and the inability to be governed that goes with this, was so much a German characteristic that just being near them was enough to make one alike them in these respects.

This notion of the landscape itself making people wild may again be found in Livy when he speaks of the Raetians and their origins. Apparently they were originally related to the Alpine tribes and even the Tuscans, but their environment worked a change in them.⁷⁴

*maxime Raetis, quos loca ipsa efferarunt ne quid ex antiquo
praeter sonum linguae, nec eum incorruptum, retinerent.*

Indeed, the effect worked by the environment, *ipsa loca*, was so great that nothing remained from ancient days save their language, and even that was affected to some degree. Livy here actually uses the very rare verb, *efferare*, presumably in the sense of making something wild, and we should note the connection with the adjective *ferus*.

Elsewhere Caesar also characterises the Germans as wild due to their feeding habits and associated lifestyle, specifically that they do not eat corn:⁷⁵

⁷² Florus, 2.30.27.

⁷³ Caesar, *Gallic War*, 8.25.

⁷⁴ Livy, 5.33.2.

⁷⁵ Caesar, *Gallic War*, 4.1

Neque multum frumento, sed maximum partem lacte atque pecore vivunt multumque sunt in venationibus.

Corn requires agriculture, and agriculture is the hallmark of civilisation that sets man aside from beast, and this is exactly the civilisation that they lack. Hence, as Caesar tells us here, their diet is mainly milk and meat, and consequently they spend most of the time in hunting. In Caesar's eyes this is clearly a feral lifestyle to lead, and far from the Roman.

Returning again to Florus, in his first book he goes further than the strong associations made between northern peoples and animals in many authors, saying that to some degree the Insubrian Gauls and the Alpine peoples were animals:⁷⁶

Gallis Insubribus, et his accolis Alpium, animi ferarum, corpora plus quam humana erant.

They had the very souls of wild animals, according to Florus, as well as bodies larger than human size. Considered alone, it might seem quite a strange claim to make literally. It seems fairly clear that for most Roman writers, though they may have had beastlike habits, the northern tribes were still actually human, just different. Whereas here we have a writer claiming that the actual souls of these peoples were those of wild animals and that consequently, in some fashion alike to centaurs, they were only half-human, though not in such a manifest physical fashion. However even their bodies, while human in form, still seem *plus quam humana*. How may we seek to explain the presence of such ideas? There is no simple answer, as we shall find, but such a claim as Florus makes certainly belies how powerful an association had come to exist for Romans between wild animals and the northern tribes.

Northern Peoples as the Pursued

Wildness of landscape, wildness of people, their *ferocia*, and animal spirit or lifestyle, are things which turn up incidentally in many places in Roman literature and in many different written genres and media. One such context we have not yet looked at is the portrayal of northern peoples as the hunted. For example, during the reign of Trajan, the statesman Pliny the Younger in his published letters mentions the subjugation of Dacia, characterised in like terms to other northern parts of the Roman world, and of the courage of its king Decebalus in defeat. Describing Dacia after the Roman conquest, advising his correspondent on how best to record these events, he writes:⁷⁷

Dices inmissa terris nova flumina, novos pontes fluminibus iniectos, insessa castris montium abrupta, pulsum regia pulsum etiam vita regem nihil desperantem.

⁷⁶ Florus, 1.20.1.

⁷⁷ Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 8.4.2.

The very landscape itself has changed, with new rivers, bridges and the mountain strongholds broken. Comparably to what Florus says of Germany after Drusus' conquests, the attrition of the proverbially obstinate Dacians must occur together with the attrition of the obstinacy of the Dacian landscape too. What follows in the second half of the sentence, however, constitutes a powerful foil to this picture of forced submission. Decebalus himself is *nihil desperantem*, driven forth from his palace and even from life, yet defiant until the end. Again, that peculiarly northern characteristic which fascinates so many Roman writers is in evidence, their stoical bravery, even to the point of folly and their own death. Pliny is advising someone on how to make a record of these happenings, and writes during Trajan's reign at a time just subsequent to these events. Furthermore, writing, as he ever does, in a very self-consciously literary fashion, it is wholly possible that by this stage we have, firstly, a literary topos of the untameable northern king and, secondly, of the need to subjugate the natural landscape itself.

Pliny's contemporary and correspondent Tacitus also has an interesting picture of a defeated northern people in flight. In the first book of his *Histories* he describes the defeated Helvetians, put to flight by Roman mercenary auxiliaries:⁷⁸

*Ac statim immissa cohorte Thraecum depulsi et consectantibus
Germanis Raetisque per silvas atque in ipsis latebris trucidati.*

There are two things of note in this passage, both related to word choice. Tacitus has the Helvetians fleeing through the woods, which seem to be their last recourse and place of hiding, as if their natural environment, and he uses the word *latebrae*, as we have seen above in his description of Agricola's defeat of the Caledonians. Directly taken from hunting, this word compares them to hunted wild animals, and they are moreover being hunted by Germans, for whom as we have learnt it is a favourite activity. The second word to note is Tacitus' choice of the verb *trucidare*. This is very strong, more alike 'to slaughter' than 'to kill', and stresses their defencelessness and the inevitability of their deaths. There is perhaps even a note of pity here, as we may also detect in his account of the Britons' defeat in the *Agricola*. That is not the issue here, but this verb does denote less an equal conflict or resistance than an outright destruction, rather as would be the case between humans and animals.

Seneca's Use of Northern Peoples

The nature and customs of northern peoples is evidently something which interested Roman philosophers for their purposes too, and the stereotype of their hardy northern neighbours, free from Roman influence, proved convenient for more than just historians such as Tacitus, but also Stoics such as the philosopher and patron Seneca, writing during the first century in Nero's reign. In his discussion of virtue in his moral essay *De Providentia*, Seneca uses the Germans and the Trans-Danubians as an illustration of his

⁷⁸ Tacitus, *Histories*, 1.68.

tenet that men are only made virtuous by trials and travails. I quote the passage in full:⁷⁹

Omnes considera gentes in quibus Romana pax desint, Germanos dico et quidquid circa Histrum vagarum gentium occursat. Perpetua illos hiems, triste caelum premit, maligne solum sterile sustentat; imbrem culmo aut fronde defendunt, super durata glacie stagna persultant, in alimentum feras captant. Miseri tibi videntur? Nihil miserum est quod in naturam consuetudo perduxit; paulatim enim voluptati sunt quae necessitate coeperunt. Nulla illis domicilia nullaque sedes sunt nisi quas lassitudo in diem posuit; vilis et hic quaerendus manu victus, horrenda iniquitas caeli, intecta corpora; hoc quod tibi calamitas videtur tot gentium vita est! Quid miraris bonos viros, ut confirmentur, concuti? Non est arbor solida nec fortis nisi in quam frequens ventus incursat.

Seneca describes the harsh climate and landscape in which the Germans and the trans-Danubian tribes dwell, and how they trap wild beasts for food. Posing the question of whether their life seems a miserable one, he answers that what began by necessity has become a pleasure and that it is only their hard conditions of life that make them good. Seneca uses the Germans as a means to prove the Stoic belief that a hard life is conducive to true virtue. There are many things to note about both the assumptions made and the word choice in this passage. Stoic beliefs aside, the base of Seneca's proof here requires that we accept that the Germans are *boni viri*, and Seneca feels no obligation to prove this by any examples of their deeds or customs, other than providing his explanation for its being the case. Apparently he assumes it as a given, which implies that at the time of his writing during Nero's reign, at least for the educated aristocratic milieu for which he wrote, the stereotype of the Germans was of their being virtuous, perhaps more so than the Romans. Bearing this in mind we may better understand Tacitus' attitudes writing a few decades later. We should also note that in Seneca's view these peoples are the only ones truly free of *Romana pax*.

It must be owned that Seneca's personal views and standpoint on philosophical questions are often difficult to precisely pinpoint, and he frequently seeks to overturn conventional Roman viewpoints. However this is neither of paramount importance nor the aim of this paper to determine. The sole point of real significance for us here is the fact that, as the basis for a rhetorical proof, whether he himself believes it or is otherwise presenting an alternative view, he assumes as premise the veracity of the assertion that the Germans are *boni*, and expects his reader to agree with this with no proof cited to support the premise itself.

Philosophical arguments aside we should also consider the manner in which Seneca chooses to describe the northern climate. The winter is *perpetua*, the climate *triste*, the soil *maligne* and *sterile*, and the ices are *durata*. There is almost the feeling here that the climate here is somehow almost deliberately against them, or at least against their living

⁷⁹ Seneca (the Younger), *On Providence*, 4.14-16.

easily. *Tristis* is a word also used of a dour personality,⁸⁰ and *malignis* certainly implies a conscious baleful intent, spelled out more clearly when he speaks of the climate's *horrenda iniquitas*. Seneca's response to all of this is that nothing is a real evil which has been conditioned to one's nature, and the word he uses is *miserum*. Germany and neighbouring lands, for all their hardships, are never this. Indeed he goes so far as to suggest that they even enjoy them.

He also describes the Germans themselves briefly. They have no homes except what exhaustion at the end of the day provides them with, nor do they wear any clothes, and their food is *vilis* and has to be sought by them, indeed this is most often *ferae*. Seneca's picture of their lifestyle is certainly very mean and certainly exaggerated greatly (by this stage the Romans certainly had much more real information about them, as is shown by other writers), but for our purposes stereotypes are more interesting and it shows how greatly these notions, which we can find one hundred years before and earlier, persisted. Again their manner of living is close to nature, almost beastlike, and indeed they live in close communion with wild animals, which are their main source of food. Indeed his final metaphor about the tree, although generalising the case of all mankind, is also making a direct comparison between the northern tribesman and his natural environment.

Elsewhere in his writings we find Seneca using the same example of the northern tribes to support his philosophical position, in this case in what he has to say about anger in his treatise, *On Anger*. Making a case about the nature of anger, in the context of analysing the argument of another philosopher on anger, he has him argue as follows:⁸¹

*"Ut scias", inquit, "iram habere in se generosi aliquid, liberos
videbis gentes, quae iracundissimae sunt, ut Germanos et
Scythas.*

Three things are worth noting here. Firstly the Germans and the Scythians are classed together as the fiercest northern peoples, thus uniting the wild northern neighbours of the Greeks and those of the Romans. Secondly, it is assumed that these are indeed the most angry races, which implies that it must be an inborn trait. Finally, something of which we find an echo in Tacitus, these peoples, by inference from their being angry, have *generosi aliquid*, something of the noble, in them. Once again, since this premise must be accepted to accept his main point, Seneca is assuming his readership will agree with this point, as if it were self-evident.

Seneca makes the like comparison as in his *On Providence* to trees and their strength, thus again reinforcing the connection between these peoples and their landscape:

*sicut valida arbusta laeta quamvis neglecta tellus creat, et alta
fecundi soli silva est.*

Then, most tellingly of the conceptions about northerners that still operated in this period,

⁸⁰ Cf., for example, Tacitus' use of it to describe Tiberius at *Annals* 1.

⁸¹ Seneca (the Younger), *On Anger*, 2.15, here and following.

he states:

*Deinde omnes istae feritate liberae gentes leonum luporum ritu
ut servire non possunt, ita nec imperare; non enim humani vim
ingenii, sed feri et intractabilis.*

These peoples are free in their *feritas*, and if we should doubt that the animal connotation is intended he then compares them to lions and, as with Dio's Boudicca, wolves. They can neither rule nor be ruled, and the reason for this, Seneca tells us, is quite simply that their *vis* - probably best understood here as 'violence' or 'rage' - is in fact not of a human nature, but that of a wild beast. He may not state that so explicitly as Florus that their souls are actually those of beasts, but he states the same of their *ingenium*, which is almost as strong as *animus*. It is moreover clear that throughout this passage the reader is intended to think about animals, as is clear by his insertion later that:

*"Animalia", inquit, "generossima habentur, quibus multum inest
irae".*

He continues by spelling out that he ascribes such an *ingenium* to the environmental theory of race as applied to northern peoples:

*In frigora septentrionemque vergentibus immansueta ingenia
sunt, ut ait poeta: "Suoque simillima caelo".*

Furthermore, his quotation here of what was apparently a well-known adage from a famous poet to prove his point belies the fact that such ideas about the northern tribes and about race generally were current in Rome at the time. Likewise he concludes his usage of the northern peoples as example by questioning:

*Germanis quid est animosius? Quid ad incursum acrius? Quid
armorum cupidius, quibus innascuntur innutriunturque, quorum
unica illis cura est in alia neglegentibus.*

The Germans are *animosus*, *acer*, and *armorum cupidus*. The assumption that these suggestions will be accepted belies the attitudes of the audience for whom he writes.

Pliny and the Ethno-Geographers

In his *Natural History*, the first century statesman and polymath Pliny the Elder has much to say about northern peoples and their nature and customs. In the sixteenth book of his work he writes of the peoples that dwell on the borders of Ocean. Speaking of one such tribe, the Chauci, he relates that,⁸²

⁸² Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 16.3.

*non pecudem his habere, non lacte ali ut finitimis, ne cum feris
quidem dimicare contingit omni procul abacto frutice.*

They are so remote that they do not even live on milk like their neighbours, to say nothing of the keeping of flocks and agriculture. They are yet more feral, but so remote that they do not even compete with the wild beasts, as it is implied that other northern peoples regularly do. The Chauci then, are for Pliny so remote that they are something beyond the usual wildness of the Germans.

Interestingly also, this account and the specific book itself in which it is contained, are prefaced by a description of how early man found his sustenance from the trees and their acorns:⁸³

*glandiferas, quae primae victum mortalibus aluerunt nutrices
inopis ac ferae sortis.*

Pliny then states that, due to the fact that experience has demonstrated that some people still live in this manner, he must turn to an examination of these peoples. The description of the Chauci follows briefly thereafter, and hence the Chauci are effectively an example of a people living in a past age. They are then an example of a people, *ferae sortis*, of an existence somehow foreordained as wild, and here we find the adjective *ferus* again.

It is worthwhile noting briefly what Pliny has to say about the forests and, in particular, the Hercynian forest in this book, as it reflects the sort of description we have seen in Tacitus. Pliny's description is, to say the least, interesting. In many ways it is conventional of such descriptions of the northern landscape, with the great forests increasing the cold with their shadows, *adduntque frigori umbras*.⁸⁴ The Hercynian forest is *roborum vastitas intacta aevis*, a mass of oaks untouched by the ages, whose destiny he describes as *prope immortalis*. Pliny conceives of the forest as in some way sacred. Sallmann has made an interesting discussion of these passages and in particular the perplexing line: *multis fortuna parcat in poenam*,⁸⁵ which in his opinion may possibly have the sense of the Germans' being perpetually punished by fate. However, more remarkable than any of this is how far Pliny carries the notion of the northern landscape as being hostile to the Romans. He relates how the winds have in the past been so strong as to uproot the trees, which then float in the lakes and are rammed against Roman ships, such that they had to engage in battle with trees: *illae proelium navale adversus arbores inirent*. The country can be very literally an enemy to the Romans. In his discussion Sallmann detects a deep Roman fear of such landscapes in this passage:⁸⁶

Now the function of the dark forests and the chilly shadows becomes clearly

⁸³ n.82 op. cit., 16.1.

⁸⁴ n.82 op. cit., 16.5ff.

⁸⁵ K. Sallmann, 'Reserved for eternal punishment: The elder Pliny's view of Free Germania', *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 108, No. 1 (Spring, 1987), pp. 108-128.

⁸⁶ n.85 op. cit., p. 127.

significant: elements of Hades, features of a divine theatre serving as a deterrent warning to everybody.

Elsewhere in the *Natural History* in his second book, Pliny describes the Germans in the context of a comparison with the Ethiopians. He contrasts their individual traits, both similar and different and relates this to environmental factors, and we shall return to this passage and the underlying theory later. For now, we will just look at what Pliny has to say here about northern peoples and their environment. He gives the well-known description of their having *glaciali cute*, as well as *flavis promissis crinibus*.⁸⁷ The adjective *glacialis* in itself encapsulates the Roman environmental theory of race, since it is both a description of a physical tone, and likewise an association with a typical feature of that landscape, the *glacies*. They are *trucis vero ex caeli rigore*, and we should note again the adjective *trux*, and have their *proceritas* in common with the Ethiopians, for which an explanation is provided. Very interesting here though is an inserted comment Pliny makes in the midst of this passage, concerning the fauna of each region:

hic graves feras, illic varias effigies animalium provenire.

In the north are very wild beasts, and in the south animals of various appearance. In the next line he returns immediately to a physical description of the peoples, neither prefacing nor subsequently relating this comment to the general topic. Pliny takes it as given that we will understand and relate the wildness of the beasts (again, *ferus*) to the climate and the context of the description of its inhabitants, without explicitly stating this. This is further evidence for the fact that there was a close conceptual association between northern peoples and the wild beasts with whom they cohabited.

Pliny the Elder's work in its extensiveness seems to have crossed Roman concepts of genre. For it is at times a scientific treaty, at other times a history, but also an ethnography/geography. However, we have other extant works which more strictly fit the description of a Roman ethno-geography. Pomponius Mela the first century geographer, in his work *On Mapmaking*, provides a brief but interesting description of Germania and the Germans. I quote this passage in full:⁸⁸

Qui habitant immanes sunt animis atque corporibus, et ad insitam feritatem vaste utraque exercent, bellando animos, corpora adsuetudine laborum maxime frigoris. nudi agunt antequam puberes sint, et longissima apud eos pueritia est. viri sagis velantur aut libris arborum, quamvis saeva hieme. nandi non patientia tantum illis, studium etiam est... ius in viribus habent, adeo ut ne latrocinii quidem pudeat, tantum hospitibus boni, mitesque supplicibus. victu ita asperi incultique ut cruda etiam vescantur aut recenti, aut cum rigentem in ipsis pecudum ferarumque coriis, manibus pedibusque subigendo renovarunt.

⁸⁷ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 2.189-190, here and following.

⁸⁸ Pomponius Mela, *On Mapmaking*, 3.26-28.

Here we find many of the standard elements found in ethnographies of the Germans, first developed by Caesar based upon earlier writings then subsequently standardised by imperial authors, and Mela is just such a one of these early imperial writers. Their bodies are *immanes*, massive, and for Mela this evidently goes hand in hand with the like characteristic of their spirit, given as *animus* here. We might compare this usage of the notion of *immanitas* to one given by Pliny the Elder of the Germans, from the end of the above cited passage,⁸⁹ at which point comparing the temperate climate and characteristics of the intermediate races with those of outlying peoples he provides the explanation that, for the latter:

*sicut ne illae quidem his paruerint avolsae ac pro immanitate
naturae urgentis illas solitariae.*

It were as if their detachedness were due to the *immanitas* of those regions in which they dwelled. It is difficult to find a suitable direct translation in English for the exact meaning of this word in the context, but as an approximation I would suggest something such as 'excess proportions'. For Pliny there is no distinction between this specific character of the natural environment and the northern character, and Mela seems to be hinting at something of the same train of thought here.

Mela tells us that they exercise these traits of body and mind *ad insitam feritatem*. Here again the same racial characteristic and noun to express this, however Mela stresses this yet further than other authors by describing it as being innate. This further compounds the sense that we are dealing with something inborn and conditioned by the environment. Moreover this they do *vaste*, in coarse harshness. There is a roughness about them that should suggest to us that they are a different less civilised breed of men, apart from all of the obvious indications of this. They sharpen their spirits by war and bodies by the harshness of the cold. As in other authors⁹⁰ there is the sense that, despite the seemingly impossible and crushing harshness of their lifestyle, the Germans somehow revel in it and gain from it. As is clear from Tacitus' *Germania*, war for the Germans was less often occasioned by necessity as by a sort of need to keep in shape, and Mela's combination of, *exercent, bellando animos*, certainly suggests something of the same.

We learn furthermore that even during winter they only clothe themselves with rough mantles or the leaves of trees, and as children go naked. As we have already found, this lack of clothing, or limited clothing taken from the immediate environment, is often placed together in close association with descriptions of the beastlike habits of northern peoples. Another example of this in Mela's description is what he says about their eating habits: their food is *asperis* and they even eat raw meat. The adjective *crudus* is somewhat more graphic than the English 'raw', more akin to 'dripping with blood'.⁹¹ Though it may not be explicitly stated that they are animals or have their souls, as we have found in other

⁸⁹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 2.190.

⁹⁰ As for example in the passage of Seneca the Younger cited above, n.69.

⁹¹ Cf. the dictionary definition of: 'bloody, bleeding, trickling with blood' (Lewis, Charlton, *An Elementary Latin Dictionary*, New York, Cincinnati, and Chicago, 1890).

writers, the geographer implies strong animal connotations by describing their lifestyle in such terms and such language.

Strabo is another Roman geographer whom we have mentioned in passing, and we shall later return to him in discussing Greek and Roman ethnographic traditions about Scythians, Hyperboreans and other semi-fictional northern peoples. However, at this stage it would be worthwhile to highlight a passage in his *Geography* which shows how closely he associates Germans and Celts with their landscape. Speaking of how the Romans were deceived by the Germans and Celts, he explains their tactics as follows:⁹²

ω[δ'α]τω] τη] επι\Germanou] και\Κελ του] , εν] ε] ε]σι και\δρμου]]
 α]πα]τοι] ε]ρ]η]μ]ια]ι] τε] το]πο]μα]χου]τ]ω]ν] τ]ω]ν] βα]ρβα]ρων] και\τα\
 ε]γγ]υ] πο]τ]ρω] πο]ιου]τ]ω]ν] το]ι]σ] α]γ]νο]σο]σι] και\τα\ ο]δ]ου]]
 ε]πι]κ]ρ]υ]π]το]με]ων] και\τα\ ευ]πο]ρια]ι] τ]ρο]φ]η] τε] και\τ]ω]ν] α]] ω]ν].

Strabo tells his reader that their success against the Romans lay in their tactics of guerrilla warfare and intelligent utilisation of the natural landscape, with which they were familiar and the Romans were not. Hence they used the swamps and pathless forests to their advantage, making the Romans believe that the perils that faced them were further away than they actually were, cutting them off from their provisions. This is again reminiscent of the sort of picture Tacitus paints of the Romans in Caledonia, lost in an entirely foreign landscape, a landscape which is on the contrary a friend to northern tribes, a notion we have found severally elsewhere. For Strabo there is the same symbiosis between natural environment and inhabitants for Rome's northern neighbours.

We now leave ethno-geography for the time being and turn to the last genre of texts we shall look at here: poetry. We shall return to an examination of Latin poetry in greater detail in the context of looking at how animal imagery was used more broadly in imperial Latin literature, but for now we shall confine ourselves to the few and scattered references to the natural environment of the north and its inhabitants in some of the famous poets.

Ovid and the Scythian North

A good starting point is Ovid's *Tristia*, the Augustan love poet's last poems written from his exile in Tomis on the Black Sea, for here we may find a very literary and typecast portrayal of the north. The extensive debate about the exact nature and causes of Ovid's exile do not concern us here, but a major consideration worth bearing in mind is that it is highly likely that Tomis as it really was in Ovid's time probably bore little relation to the harshness of the picture he provides us with, but that his picture is most likely more a literary construction than anything else.⁹³ In book three of the collection he describes his location as follows:⁹⁴

⁹² Strabo, *Geography*, I.I.17.

⁹³ For a discussion of some of the questions associated with this debate, cf. Z. Yavetz, 'Latin Authors on Jews and Dacians', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (1st Qtr., 1998), pp. 77-107.

⁹⁴ Ovid, *Tristia*, 3.4.47-51.

*Proxima sideribus tellus Erymanthidos Ursae
me tenet, adstricto terra perusta gelu.
Bosphoros et Tanais superant Scythiaeque paludes
vix satis et noti nomina pauca loci.
ulterius nihil est nisi non habitabile frigus.*

The land is conceived of as in a certain sense nearer to the northern constellations, the Erymanthian bear. This would have automatically evoked the sense of the cold northern clime, though this is something Ovid spells out more clearly when he speaks of the frozen earth in the following line. A comparable and contemporary example of such a use of geographical orientation may be seen in the *Aratea* of Germanicus, when he speaks of the lands under the north wind: *pars celsa sub horrifero Aquilone*.⁹⁵ It is a landscape not well known according to Ovid, with the Danube and Scythian marshes above. Both of these names would have powerful literary associations; the Danube generally symbolising Germany and the very name Scythian evoking all manner of dreadful associations from Greek literature. Everything beyond for Ovid is quite literally nothing but frost.

Later in the same book he speaks of the barrenness of the landscape and uses a literary reference to do this:⁹⁶

*poma negat regio, nec haberet Acontius in quo
scriberet hic dominae verba legenda suae.
aspiceres nudos sine fronde, sine arbore, campos
heu loca felici non adeunda viro!*

Ovid's description is hyperbolic to say the least, and certainly squared little with the truth. However, the landscape is used as the projection of his own (or his narrator's) melancholy, a place unfit for any fortune-blessed man. The lands are barren and infertile, and, Ovid says, Acontius would not have any apples in which to write his love letters to his fair. Here he makes a powerful contrast between the happy Italian associations of a story from the *Metamorphoses* with the northern landscape, utterly bereft of joy. Of course there is much artifice in this opposition, but it certainly plays on underlying conceptions of the Saturnian *Temperies* and the harsh north.⁹⁷

The barbarism of the place, or at least of the place to which he is neighbour, is made very clear in the fourth book also, when again Ovid details his location, once more in indirect and poetic fashion:⁹⁸

*sunt circa gentes, quae praedam sanguine quaerunt;
nec minus infida terra timetur aqua.*

⁹⁵ Germanicus, *Aratea*, 23.

⁹⁶ Ovid, *Tristia*, 3.10.73-76.

⁹⁷ Cf. Pliny, *Natural History*, 2.190; Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, 6.3-9 (for the latter see the end of this paper).

⁹⁸ Ovid, *Tristia*, 4.4.59-64.

*illi, quos audis hominum gaudere cruore,
 paene sub eiusdem sideris axe iacent,
 nec procul a nobis locus est, ubi Taurica dira
 caede pharetratae spargitur ara deae.*

Perhaps this of all the citations given makes it most obvious that Ovid does not so much deal with realities here but with poetic fictions, when he says that he 'almost' (*paene*) lies under the same star as the Scythian altar of Diana, which is something of a stretch of the imagination, and of course being under the same star can mean being at a great remove from other places under the same constellation. These appear to be established poetic fictions, as is clear from Ovid's direct addressal of his reader on this point: 'Those whom *you* hear to rejoice in human blood'. There was clearly a tradition about this place and its barbaric religion, as those about the Druids and the Germanic religions.⁹⁹ As Yavetz has commented about such texts:¹⁰⁰

Latin authors, when writing about foreign nations, did not always do their homework properly, and rarely scrutinized meticulously the history and mores of nations whom they considered barbarians...

Indeed following on from the cited passage¹⁰¹ Ovid seeks to locate the place where the Fury-maddened Orestes came in his wanderings. It is significant that Ovid seeks to place this northern location within Greco-Roman mythological topography, thus attributing to this place and the north generally all the associations of a site beyond the laws of *ratio* and *logos* as drawn from Greco-Roman myth, a place without the Roman *imperium*.

The North in Virgil and Horace

In his *Georgics* Ovid's predecessor and near contemporary Virgil, in one of his scant references to the peoples of the north, also has something to say about the Scythians who live beyond the Danube, whom he seems to conflate with the mythological Hyperboreans and trans-Danubians collectively:¹⁰²

*ipsi in defossis specubus secreta sub alta
 otia agunt terra, congestaque robora, totasque
 advolvere focis ulmos, ignique dedere.
 hic noctem ludo ducunt, et pocula laeti
 fermento atque acidis imitantur vitea sorbis.
 talis Hyperboreo septem subiecta trioni
 gens effrena virum Riphaeo tunditur Euro
 et pecudum fulvis velatur corpora saetis.*

⁹⁹ Cf. Caesar, *Gallic War*, 6.16; Tacitus, *Annals*, 1.61, on the sacrifice of the Varian leaders in AD 9.

¹⁰⁰ Above n.93 op. cit. p. 101.

¹⁰¹ Ovid, *Tristia*, 4.4.69ff.

¹⁰² Virgil, *Georgics*, 3.376-384.

These peculiar people, very different from the Italians, spend much of their lives deep underground in their caves playing games, drinking sour berries instead of wine. The fact that they must live underground, and that they put whole elms on their fires reinforce the sense of the sense of bitter cold as we have likewise found in Ovid. It is a curious portrayal in many ways, for despite otherwise being a *gens effrena*, they are yet somehow blessed in their lives of leisure, being after all *laeti*. Virgil seems to be trying to reconcile two traditions, one of the Greek legendary precursor of the Hyperboreans who after all, just as the Ethiopians,¹⁰³ lived in a state nearer to the gods, and that of their real-world geographical equivalents the Scythians and trans-Danubians both historical and poetic.

Significant here for us is also the last line of the cited passage, where Virgil tells us that the bodies of these peoples are girt with the tawny hides of beasts. As in other examples we have already examined, this stresses the putting-on of the animal character of those creatures they dwell in such close proximity to. We should also note the colour that is used here, *fulvus*, which in English is something like a deep or reddish yellow, and it worth bearing in mind that this seems to have been the dominant hair colour of the peoples north of the Danube in the Roman period.¹⁰⁴ We can see how this was a Roman stereotype in, for example, the satirist Persius' anecdote about Caligula's phoney German triumph, in which the captives in the procession were made to wear blond wigs.¹⁰⁵ Or for an earlier example, Virgil's description as part of the ephrasis on the shield of Aeneas of the golden hair and vestment of the Gauls who sacked the Capitol in 390BC: *aurea caesaries ollis atque aurea vestis*.¹⁰⁶ For a Roman reader then, *fulvus* to a certain degree would have signified northern peoples, and this connection with the animals of their natural environment, who had the same colour fur, would most probably have seemed a logical one.

The picture of the north in the *Eclogues* is very similar too. In the tenth *Eclogue* we have Gallus lamenting the fact that Lycoris follows her husband through the harsh north and its military installations:¹⁰⁷

perque nives alium perque horrida castra secuta est.

The snows are given as the chief characteristic of the north, and this in Gallus' lament this is in pointed contrast to the Mediterranean semi-mythical Arcadia in which Virgil places his Gallus. Again a few lines later in the same poem he laments:¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Cf. Pliny the Elder's similar opposition of the Germans and Ethiopians as polar and yet alike: above n.77 op. cit.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Tacitus, *Germania*, 4, of the Germans, and *Agricola*, 11, of the Caledonians; Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, 6.3. This hair colour is today less frequent in northern Europe outside of Scandinavia and certain of the Slavic and Baltic countries, being as it is usually a recessive genetic trait.

¹⁰⁵ Persius, *Satires*, 6.46.

¹⁰⁶ Virgil, *Aeneid*, 8.659.

¹⁰⁷ Virgil, *Eclogues*, 10.23.

¹⁰⁸ n.107 op. cit., 10.47-49.

*Alpinas, a! dura, nives et frigora Rheni
me sine sola vides. a, te ne frigora laedant!
a, tibi ne teneras glacies secet aspera plantas!*

Virgil employs the type of the grisly north to full effect with its snows as frosts. Just as in Ovid, there is the assumption that it is not a place that any fortunate person would go, and that she must be in some sense insane to go there intentionally as she has. The geographic specification of the Alps and Rhine signifies the edge of the Roman world, since this signified the boundaries of conquest during Augustus' reign.

Horace also has a few passing comments to make about northern peoples, in which we can see echoes of many of the topical aspects of their description of an ilk we have already encountered. In the fourth book of his *Odes* as part of a poem praising Augustus and the Caesarian house generally, praising Tiberius' military exploits against the Danubians, he says that he has destroyed the formidable Raetians: *immanisque Raetos*.¹⁰⁹ Here we have again this same idea of *immanitas* which here, as elsewhere as we have already found, is difficult to render into English in the exact sense, but roughly connoting something such as 'immensity' or 'excessive proportions'.¹¹⁰ The encomiastic implication is that Tiberius himself (here referred to by his other name 'Nero') must be of a certain greatness himself to have been able to have overcome this tribe between the Rhine and Danube, who are assumed to carry the implication of a like formidableness.

In this poem he continues by praising Tiberius for other military achievements, describing how he broke the ranks of the barbarians:¹¹¹

*ut barbarorum Claudius agmina
ferrata vasto diruit impetu.*

The barbarian lines here are *ferrata*, derived from *feritas*, a wild and terrifying prospect. Tiberius' own valour however was able to overcome this, indeed to vanquish them utterly. Later in the poem Horace describes how so many peoples are subject to a fear of Augustus himself due to his stepsons' military successes:¹¹²

*te beluosus qui remotis
obstrepit Oceanus Britannis,
te non paventis funera Galliae.*

In the case of Britain the most prominent feature of the natural environment for the Romans is used to symbolise the territory, Ocean itself. Ocean is furthermore described as *beluosus*, 'harbouring monsters', which gives a more dreadful and wild sense to the whole place, but of course fits perfectly with the general sense of the north as a place of dreadful

¹⁰⁹ Horace, *Odes*, 4.14.15.

¹¹⁰ Especially telling is perhaps the fact that in modern English the only situation in which the derived noun *immanence* and adjective *immanent* may be encountered is as an attribute of the Christian god.

¹¹¹ Horace, *Odes*, 4.14.29-30.

¹¹² n.109. op. cit., 4.14.47-49.

beasts of all sorts. The primary fascination of the great north seas, so capitalised upon by Caesar, can be seen to be still operating a generation later. In the case of Gaul, as we have found before, their disdain of death, that fascinating characteristic implying above all the absence of *ratio*, is given as primary and representative characteristic.

2.

Having examined, as we now have, a wide variety of instances in which animal imagery and associations are used as a means to characterise northern peoples in Roman literature, we will now take a look at some of the ways animals are used to characterise people more generally in other Roman literature, and in so doing attempt to better understand what it meant for Roman authors to portray their northern neighbours in the fashion that they did and what this implies about the underlying implications involved in the literature we have already come across.

Classical Poets on Animals and Early Man

A good starting point to answering these questions would be to look for instances where Roman authors have something to say about the differences between humans and animals, and often this involves aetiologies about origins. A popular genre from the earliest Greek literature, Roman writers make many passing references to early man and animals. A good example may be found in Horace's *Satires*. In the third poem of his first book he describes the first animal forms upon the earth, and the gradual progression to modern man:¹¹³

*Cum prorepserunt primis animalia terris,
mutum et turpe pecus, glandem atque cubila propter
unguibus et pugnibus, dein fustibus, atque ita porro
pugnabant armis, quae post fabricaverat usus,
donec verba, quibus voces sensusque notarent,
nominaque invenere; dehinc absistere bello,
oppida coeperunt munire et ponere leges,
ne quis fur esset, neu latro, neu quis adulter.*

Perhaps of greatest interest in this passage is that Horace's conception is in some ways surprisingly modern in that he clearly attributes animal origins to humans, which is certainly a very rare view to find in this period.¹¹⁴ The first *animalia*, animal forms, had no language and fought for their acorns with their claws and fists. The food of these early peoples then, acorns, is just as we have seen in Pliny in his description of the Chauci tribe and others who live in a primitive state.¹¹⁵ The acorn as the first food of man seems to have been a literary topos. We should also note here the juxtaposition of fighting with claws, *unguibus*, which clearly denotes animals, and fists, *pugnibus*, which clearly denotes humans. However no distinction is being made here, carrying the implication that there was no effective difference at this stage in human history, until the following words, *dein fustibus*, which clearly implies man, followed by his use of weapons, language, laws and so on. Thus in lines 101-102 we experience a transition from animals to human forms, which is very subtly made, after which point we are certainly dealing only with humans, but up to

¹¹³ Horace, *Satires*, 1.3.99-106.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, 5.780ff.

¹¹⁵ See above, n.82 op. cit.

which point the picture is far more ambiguous and certainly includes animals which were not human at all.

For Horace then what distinguishes man is his use of weapons and his formulation of language. However, what distinguishes civilisation is his desisting from war, building cities, and making laws to protect property and to safeguard sexual relationships. He continues with this latter theme a few lines later by citing the early example of Helen and the days leading up to it, in which mating habits were uncertain as with animals:¹¹⁶

*nam fuit ante Helenam cunnus taeterrima belli
causa, sed ignotis perierunt mortibus illi,
quos venerum incertam rapiensis more ferarum
viribus editior caedebat ut in grege taurus.*

Of course it must be borne in mind that Horace's purposes were satirical and that this satire in particular deals with the theme of restraint, using several examples taken from the field of the *amator*. However, he certainly seems to be employing an established aetiological scheme for man's development in which the move away from arbitrary rape was another marker of early civilisation.¹¹⁷ Such actions constituted the foremost cause of war, Horace tells us, and such action he attributes to being a characteristic of wild animals, *more ferarum*, such as a bull in the flock.

Bearing these principles in mind, it is interesting to briefly review what we have found Roman writers to say about the Germans. Tacitus stresses the fact that the Germans do not live in cities at all:¹¹⁸

Nullas Germanorum populis urbes habitari satis notum est.

Of course they have language, but as we have found their primary activity is war, which they actively seek out if none comes to them. Nor do they have the same conception of land rights as the Romans: *arva per annos mutant*.¹¹⁹ They are a far less settled people, not quite nomadic and yet not fully civilised. Yet as we have seen a major peculiarity of their culture is their chastity and respect for women.¹²⁰ In this way then we can see that according to Horace's scheme of man's development and civilisation, the Germans would be men, but only partially civilised.

Most of what Roman authors have to say about the nature of animals and humans certainly borrows in large part or wholly from Greek predecessors. Many examples could be given from Homer and other early poets, but an instructive passage for our purposes is

¹¹⁶ Horace, *Satires*, 1.3.107-110.

¹¹⁷ We might compare the opening of Herodotus' *Histories* and how he chooses to begin his history of the Greek world with the kidnapping of princesses by the Phoenicians and the Greeks. For a Roman example, the rape of the Sabine women is of course a telling example of how the Romans viewed their earlier past.

¹¹⁸ Tacitus, *Germania*, 16.1.

¹¹⁹ n.118 op. cit., 26.2.

¹²⁰ n.118 op. cit., 18, 19.

one in Hesiod, the early Greek poet's, *Works and Days*:¹²¹

toñde gaκ a)qrw/poisi nomon dieftace kroni/wn i)qu)si meñ kai\
oi)w)noi)j petehnoi)j e)sqemen a)l h) ouj , epei'ou)dikh e)sti'met'
au)toi)j: a)qrw/poisi d' e)l)wkw dikhn, h)pol lon a)ri)sth gignetai...

Only by Zeus's teaching did men learn to stop eating each other and to learn justice and civilisation. As it has been in almost all cultures with few exceptions, cannibalism is conceived of as being well outside the pale of ordinary human civilisation and society, yet man was once so primitive as not to know instinctively that such things were wrong and had to be taught by the gods. This squares with the functions of many Greco-Roman gods as teachers of various characteristic arts to mankind, as well as of symbols of natural forces. Hesiod's conception of the five ages of man of course stresses this sense of mutual and internecine conflict and destruction in the ages that succeeded the golden age itself.¹²² As we have seen, though the Germans are not themselves cannibals one of their major traits is their tendency to fight one another, and for Tacitus this is Rome's greatest boon with these races.¹²³

It appears that the conception of animals in the Classical world, as is still held in large part today, was one of a fundamentally non-rational creature, driven only by its instincts. In an article on this theme and about the misconceptions of animals that are still harboured today, Clark has commented as follows:¹²⁴

After all those years of David Attenborough they (the general public) ought to know better: very few other species behave as badly as humans. But they are invoking the ancient belief that animals have neither reason nor justice. Consequently, 'animal passion' is fierce and overpowering. Animals are beasts. They are savage and unsocial. They cannot control their passions by reason and are unrestrained by respect for others, by a sense of fairness or by social order.

This view of animals is certainly very much a widespread one, both in ancient and in modern thought. We must ask ourselves to what degree the same attributes as Clark gives of the Classical view of animals could also be transferred to the Classical view of their northern neighbours. After all, as we have found in some instances, these peoples are occasionally pictured as in some respects actually *being* animals.

Animal Characterisations in War and Epic

A favourite context for the usage of animal similes and metaphors to describe people in Roman authors is war and situations involving frenzy and madness, and of course here it is the epic poets who must come foremost in any examination of this

¹²¹ Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 276-279.

¹²² See above, n.27 op. cit.

¹²³ See above, n.32 op. cit.; Tacitus, *Germania*, 22.2, on the Germans' tendency to brawl amongst themselves.

¹²⁴ G. Clark, 'Animal Passions', *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 47, No. 1 (Apr., 2000), pp. 88-93.

subject. To take the *Aeneid* as example, it can be seen to be the case that, while animal or insect analogies are occasionally used to portray people in a sympathetic light or one emphasising their beauty or grace,¹²⁵ their predominant purpose throughout the text is to stress something equating to that *ferocia* we have so often found in relation to northerners. Here we shall examine a few examples from the epic to see how Virgil uses animals as an aid to the characterisation of his protagonists.

The primal figure of war in Roman legend, aside from the war god himself, was of course his son Romulus, who is conventionally attributed the inceptive force of Rome's later bellicose glory, with Numa the lawgiver as his foil. In Virgil's ecphrasis of the shield of Aeneas in the eighth book of the *Aeneid*, we find such a conventional portrayal of Rome's progenitor and his brother as children, and their feral upbringing is stressed through their nurse the she-wolf:¹²⁶

*fecerat et viridi fetam Mavortis in antro
procubuisse lupam, geminos huic ubera circum
ludere pendentis pueros et lambere matrem
impavidos...*

In a strange commutation, a very domestic situation - we should not that the wolf is actually called their 'mother' - is transposed to that of the most wild situation possible. The wolf, as we have seen in descriptions of the north, is often a symbol of *feritas* and *ferocia*. Yet paradoxically this is in turn the source of Rome's *ferocia* and hence *virtus*. The words *ludere* and *procubuisse* suggest relaxation, which makes a peculiar tension with the presence of the wolf, who should suggest alertness and defensiveness. In this we might compare Caesar's description of how, far from fleeing the fearful *uri*, the Germans actually make a sport of hunting them.¹²⁷

Elsewhere in book eight, Virgil describes the death of the Trojan Helenor, and compares the valour of the fashion of his end to that of a wild beast girt with spears:¹²⁸

*ut fera, quae densa venantum saepta corona
contra tela furit seseque haud nescia morti
inicit et saltu supra venabula fertur.*

Again we find the attributes of a wild beast being used to cast a human figure in a positive light. The action of the wild beast does in a sense constitute *virtus* because, importantly, it is *haud nescia* of its fate, and knowingly meets its end. This is the same attribute of battle courage we have found many Roman authors praise as a special characteristic of the northern tribes. Similarly in the battle narrative of the tenth book, while he is otherwise

¹²⁵ For example, Virgil, *Aeneid*: 1.430, the industrious Carthaginians as bees; 4.254, Mercury's descent from heaven as like a bird; 6.706, the souls of future peoples in the underworld as bees swarming about the flowers.

¹²⁶ Virgil, *Aeneid*, 8.630.

¹²⁷ Caesar, *Gallic War*, 7.28.

¹²⁸ n.126 op. cit., 8.551.

painted in a negative light as *impius*, the king Mezentius is portrayed in his battle-fury as alike to a hungry lion.¹²⁹

*impastus stabula alta leo ceu saepe peragrans,
(suadet enim vesana fames) si forte fugacem
conspexit capream aut surgentem in cornua cervum,
gaudet, hians immane, comasque arrexit et haeret
visceribus super incumbens, lavit improba taeter
ora cruor...*

This metaphor is certainly more ambiguous than that used of Helenor, and it certainly cannot be said outright that this portrayal is entirely positive. The *ora* of the lion are after all *improba* in some sense. However it certainly attributes *ferocia* and perhaps *feritas* to Mezentius, which in a battle context would usually be positive traits.

This brings us onto the other, perhaps more important, usage of animal analogies in Virgil. This is in the description of *furor*, which is consistently a negative attribute in the *Aeneid*, suggesting either a loss of control or impiety, or sometimes both. As a form of inversion of the Romulean episode we have already looked at, earlier in the epic in the fourth book in Dido's accusation of Aeneas, she chooses to insult him by describing him as suckled by tigers:¹³⁰

*perfide, sed duris genuit te cautibus horrens
Caucasus, Hyrcanaeque admorunt ubera tigres.*

To be nurtured by a wild animal is here a definitively pejorative accusation, and this illustrates well the ambiguities of the function of association with wild animals in Roman literature, for the example above given of the she-wolf is certainly intended to have positive connotations. This helps us understand how ambiguous the portrayal of northern peoples is, as we have found it. As far as myth and geography are concerned, we should also note the association with the Caucasus, which carries the notion of impiety (the antithesis of Aeneas' primary characterisation) due to the location's connection with the figure of Prometheus. We might compare Ovid's association of this region with being beyond the order of the Roman world and of civilisation.¹³¹

Various female figures throughout the *Aeneid* are conceived of in their *furor* as being like wild animals. Amata is a good example in book seven. The Fury Allecto's enraging of Amata is symbolised as Allecto's having cast a snake into her:¹³²

*ille inter vestis et levia pectora lapsus
volvitur attractu nullo fallitque furem,
vipeream inspirans animam; fit tortile collo*

¹²⁹ n.126 op. cit., 10.723.

¹³⁰ n.126 op. cit., 4.365.

¹³¹ Cf. above n.85, op. cit. See also: Martial, *De Spectaculis*, 7, where he locates Prometheus in Scythia.

¹³² n.126 op. cit., 7.349-353.

*aurum ingens coluber, fit longae taenia vittae,
innectitque comas et membris lubricus errat.*

Snakes themselves have a complicated religious symbolism, much different from that in the Judaic traditions, at times connoting good as in the case of Aesculapius, although here the implication is certainly negative. Though the snake is something naturally fearful to humans,¹³³ here the principal sense is one of the insidious, which creeps in imperceptibly. The physical proximity of the snake is emphasised, being amidst her clothes and breast, which *innectit*, and even *fallit*, deceives her, breathing its malice into her, *inspirans*. There is certainly a potent sense of danger and foreboding here, which is then shown a little later when Amata is pictured as running wildly through the forest like a Bacchant:¹³⁴

*talem inter silvas, inter deserta ferarum
reginam Allecto stimulis agit undique Bacchi.*

Just as the Classical Greek playwright Euripides' Agave had been maddened by Dionysus in the *Bacchae*, a literary reference certainly being picked up on by Virgil here, Amata leaves the city and the confines of *ratio* and order. Interesting for our purposes then is the fact that the location that Virgil chooses as opposed to the ordered world of the city (Euripides' Thebes), is that of the woods, *silvas*, and the empty lairs of wild beasts, *deserta ferarum*. This is an almost identical characterisation as that we have seen consistently used of northern peoples, and in this we begin to see something of the underlying theory about wildness and woodlands in Roman thought.

Early in the last century in a discussion of a similar instance of a comparison to a wild beast given of Dido in a speech of her own, that she longs to be free of cares *more ferae*,¹³⁵ Dewitt has commented as follows:¹³⁶

It is her broken vow that hurts and the shattered ideal of proud virginity. This cult of virginity, if we may so name it, we think is expressed by the word *fera*, Italian *fiera*.

Furthermore, that:

Thus *feritas*, even in Virgil, seems to denote not only the life in the wild but also pride of the outlaw who sets up that standard of living.

Dewitt has an interesting theory about the adjective *fera* and its religious connotations, a discussion which I shall not enter into here, but it is worth noting that a strong connection is being made here between chastity, purity and wild animals in their natural state. This is strongly reminiscent of what we have seen Tacitus and other authors have to say about the

¹³³ Cf. for example, this view as demonstrated by the zoologist and anthropologist Desmond Morris, see: D. Morris, 'Peopewatching', 2002 (London), pp. 390-403 (chap. 'Animal Contacts').

¹³⁴ n.126 op. cit., 7.404-405.

¹³⁵ n.126 op. cit., 4.551, here and following.

¹³⁶ N. W. Dewitt, 'Aeneid IV, 551: More Ferae', *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (1924), pp. 176-178, p.177 here and following.

Germans and their chaste way of life. There seems to be evidence here that wildness and chastity, a *sine crimine vitam*, were part and parcel of the same characterisation in Roman literature aside from the context of northern peoples.

Before we leave Virgil, it is worth noting some further points about the portrayal of woodland and the primitive peoples of Italy a little later in book seven. In his relation of the origins of the Latin-Trojan conflict in Italy, and how this was first roused by the anger of the country folk over Ascanius' hunting of a sacred stag, Virgil describes how anger swelled up gradually but incessantly, explaining that: *pestis enim tacitis latet aspera silvis*.¹³⁷ The ire of the Italian country people is described as *pestis*, and actually characterised as hiding in the silent woods. This is an incredibly baleful and foreboding picture, the lull before the storm, but the real implication lies in the word *latet*. The very madness itself lies in wait in the woods, just as a wild beast or feral man for its prey, and in this line we can see all the same Roman fear of silent woodlands, harbouring perils, as we have seen in narratives describing Roman military expeditions in the north. Indeed Virgil's description of the hardy Nersae and their chief Ufens comes incredibly close to the sort of descriptions we have seen of Germans, Gauls or Britons:¹³⁸

*horrida praecipue cui gens adsuetaque multo
venatu nemorum, duris Aequicula glaebis.
armati terram exercent semperque recentis
convectare iuvat praedas et vivere rapto.*

In their harsh existence they are a *horrida...gens*, who are much accustomed to *venatu nemorum*, hunting in the woodlands, just as the Germans. Again there is the connotation that people who spend much of their time hunting are prone to wildness themselves. Furthermore they are a people who live off plunder and marauding, likewise a favourite activity of the Germans and other outlying peoples.

An added dimension worth bearing in mind which is very much in evidence in Virgil is the sense of the divine attached to groves and woodlands. As we have seen above, this is something Pliny stresses in his discussion of the outlying areas of the north, where the woodland seems to have some force and impetus of its own, even going so far as to harbour enemies and conspire against the Romans.¹³⁹ A very good example of where such underlying thinking is in evidence is in the portrayal of the woods that Aeneas must pass through in order to obtain the golden bough for his entry through Avernus to the underworld:¹⁴⁰

*...latet arbore opaca
aureus et foliis et lento vimine ramus,
Iunoni infernae dictus sacer; hunc tegit omnis
lucus et obscuris claudunt covallibus umbrae.*

¹³⁷ Virgil, *Aeneid*, 7.504.

¹³⁸ n.137 op. cit., 7.746-749.

¹³⁹ See above n.77 op. cit.

¹⁴⁰ n.137. op. cit., 6.136-139.

This sense of reverence for forests and their ancient arcane power is something we can find in many other Roman writers and contexts, and hence we may begin to understand the great fascination we have also seen in these writers for the Hercynian and other northern forests, and likewise for the religious significance attached to these places by the Druids.¹⁴¹ Virgil's portrayal of forests clearly made an impact on the collective imagination of Italians and others for long afterwards, so much so that we see Dante employing a similar formula at the beginning of the *Divine Comedy* so many years later for Dante's initial descent to hell.

Returning to the theme of war and wild animals, the first century BC epic poet and philosopher Lucretius also has something to say, although in his case this is quite literal. In his didactic epic, *On the Nature of the Universe*, Lucretius explains how originally man had attempted to employ wild animals in battle.¹⁴²

*sed facere id non tam vincendi spe voluerunt...
quam dare quod gement hostes, ipsique perire,
qui numero diffidebant armisque vacabant.*

As Lucretius explains, men soon learnt that this was perilous, that they were just as likely as their enemies to be slain by the creatures, for they could not be brought to heel. For Lucretius the characteristic of *feritas* could not be bred out of wild animals, and only domesticated animals were able to be employed for such purposes. There is the implication that the native *ferocia* of such creatures was too great to be controlled, and that in such a situation as battle this force would inevitably out to devastating effect. We must wonder whether Tacitus hints at a like possible danger in the Romans' use of Chauci auxiliaries against Arminius and the Cherusci in the *Annals*.¹⁴³ Perhaps the Germans were not to be trusted in any context, just as wild animals in battle.

Animals in Ovid's Metamorphoses

We have already encountered Ovid in an examination of a very different work from the one which we must now look at, the *Metamorphoses*. As with all of Ovid's work we must be wary of placing too fine a judgement upon the exact genre of his poetry, because it is different at all times and never what it claims to be. We analyse this text then as a mythological epic, but bearing in mind that this means very different things for Ovid than it does for Virgil or Homer. What he does have in common though is his use of animal analogies in the characterisation of people, but what is very interesting and perhaps fitting

¹⁴¹ Cf., for example, Lucan, *Civil War*, 3.400-401, of the Masillian grove: *Obscurum cingens connexis aera ramis/ Et gelidas alte summotis solibus umbras*. Compare also 3.407-408 to the suggested etymology of *Avernus*, where Lucan states of the Masillian grove: *Illis et volucres metuant insistere ramis/ Et lustris recubare ferae*.

¹⁴² Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, 1345, 1335-1336.

¹⁴³ Tacitus, *Annals*, 2.17: Tacitus reports the rumour that the Chauci detachments amongst the auxiliary may have recognised Arminius when he broke through the Roman line in battle, and let him escape.

for a love poet, is that a large majority of these analogies aim to portray the hunted, the victim, rather than the hunter or the pursuing beast. Thus the Thracian women in book ten, punished by Lyaeus, are compared to trapped birds:¹⁴⁴

*utque suum laqueis, quos callidus abdidit auceps,
crus ubi commisit volucris sensitque teneri,
plangitur ac trepidus adstringit vincula motu*

Likewise Daedalion, after his daughter Chione has been killed by Diana, is compared to bulls stung by hornets in book eleven:¹⁴⁵

*concita membra fugae mandat similisque iuvenco
spicula crabronum pressa cervice gerenti,
qua via nulla, ruit...*

Or again, in the Trojan books at the end of the epic, Hecuba is compared to a lioness deprived of her cub:¹⁴⁶

*utque furit catulo lactente orbata leaena
sequitur, quem non videt, hostem*

What all of these and other examples have in common is the usage of an animal comparison to emphasise the plight of the victim, the helplessness and inevitability of their doom, and their irrational but pitiable struggle against the goad. This is worth bearing in mind when we look at how northern peoples are portrayed by Roman authors, and in particular at the sympathy that we oftentimes find expressed for them in defeat.¹⁴⁷

However Ovid does also use animals as a means to connote human savagery, in line with the conception of animals as brutal that we have discussed above. For example, Achaemenides' description of the cyclops Polyphemus in book fourteen:¹⁴⁸

*cum super ipse iaciens hirsuti more leonis
visceraque et carnes cumque albis ossa medullis*

Polyphemus' portrayal in Ovid is of course very much a comic one, but we must also see him through the eyes of Galatea, the pursued, as an innately rough and therefore dangerous creature, try as he may to curb his savagery. An analogy to a shaggy lion, feasting on raw flesh, is therefore apposite to stress these characteristics. The lion, as the unkempt Polyphemus himself, is *hirsutus*, which is usually a sign of the uncivilised and

¹⁴⁴ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 11.73-75.

¹⁴⁵ n.144 op. cit., 11.334-336.

¹⁴⁶ n.144 op. cit., 12.547-548.

¹⁴⁷ Cf., Tacitus on the Helvetians as discussed above, n.78 op. cit. Also compare the sympathetic portrayal of victims on the Aurelian column.

¹⁴⁸ n.144 op. cit., 14.207-208.

outcast.¹⁴⁹

In the *Metamorphoses* the presence of animals themselves in the narrative is often used to mark danger and the whim and threat of nature. We may see this for example in Venus' avoidance of dangerous beasts in the Venus and Adonis episode in book ten:¹⁵⁰

*...a fortibus abstinet apris
raptoresque lupos armatosque unguibus ursos
vitat et armenti saturatos caede leones*

Boar, wolves, bears, and lions form a list of the most dangerous beasts and threats to human life. It is perhaps a trivial point, but it may be worth remarking that three of these four were predominant north of the Alps in the great unexplored forests of northern Europe, some of which the Romans were just beginning to explore at the time Ovid was writing. All of these have their natural habitats in woodland and forests, particularly in mountainous regions, so it is little wonder that forests were such a source of foreboding.

In the following book as part of the Peleus-Phocus episode, we find a description of one of these animals in a monstrous form, a great and terrifying wolf:¹⁵¹

*belua vasta, lupus! iuncisque palustribus exit
oblitus, et spumis et sparsus sanguine rictus
fulmineos, rubra suffusus lumina flamma.*

There is almost something supernatural about the wolf as it is described here, sent as it had been by the sea-nymph Psamathe. Again we meet this word *belua*, connoting the monstrous,¹⁵² which is of enormous proportions, *vasta*. The image of a wolf with blazing red eyes certainly has something of a supernatural terror about it, and it is clear that in this episode it is as much an omen and portent of ill as it is a dangerous wolf per se.

In the last book of the epic, in his lengthy speech on the merits of vegetarianism, Ovid's Pythagoras also has something to say about wild beasts:¹⁵³

*at quibus ingenium est immansuetumque ferumque,
Armeniae tigres iracundique leones
cumque lupis ursi, dapibus cum sanguine gaudent*

A very similar list as we saw above in the Venus and Adonis episode, the most dangerous animals to man are conceived of as being lions, wolves and bears, as well as tigers in this case. Pythagoras is trying to make the case that humans should endeavour to be more like the herbivorous tamer creatures in their eating habits than those that delight in the eating

¹⁴⁹ Cf., for an example of the outcast, Tacitus' portrayal of the returned exile at Tacitus, *Annals*, 4.28. It is worth bearing in mind the title of the Gallic province *Gallia Comata* before its name was changed.

¹⁵⁰ n.144 op. cit., 10.541-543.

¹⁵¹ n.144 op. cit., 11.366-368.

¹⁵² Cf. above n.70 op. cit.

¹⁵³ n.144 op. cit., 15.85-87.

of flesh. There is the implication that these animals are savage because of their diet, because it is meat based. Bearing this in mind, it may seem less surprising that the Germans and Britons, whatever the actual truth of this may have been, are so consistently described as living mainly off meat and cheese, animal products.¹⁵⁴ The more humans live off such a diet, the more savage they themselves become, like wolves and big cats.

A comment made by Pliny in the eighth book of his *Natural History* may provide an instructive comparison to Ovid's description of wolves. Describing this species he states the following:¹⁵⁵

*inertes hos parvosque Africa et Aegyptus gignunt,
asperos trucesque frigidior plaga*

There are two important things to note about Pliny's description of wolves here. Firstly, his choice of words is interesting, in particular the word *truces* to describe wolves from colder climates, who are somehow savage because of its being colder, as we have seen with Lucan's Batavians and Pliny's Germans for the same reason.¹⁵⁶ The second point to note is that the general environmental theory being applied here to explain the various size and fierceness of these animals is identical to that used to explain the characteristics of northern peoples, which is very telling.¹⁵⁷

Returning to epic poetry, in the case of lions and similarly to Virgil's Mezentius and Ovid's Polyphemus, we find another lion analogy in a battle context in Lucan's *Civil War*, in his description of Pompey:¹⁵⁸

*Utque ferae tigres nunquam posuere furorem,
Quas nemore Hyrcano, matrum dum lustra secuntur,
Altus caesorum pavit cruor armentorum,
Sic et Sullanum solito tibi lambere ferrum
Durat, Magne, sitis.*

As we have seen above in Dido's accusation of Aeneas, being portrayed as a tiger is used as a means to stress the characteristic of ruthlessness and harshness, and we should note how this is coupled with the word *durat*, which carries precisely the connotation of hardness. Pompey, like the tiger, is unable to lay aside his *furor*, which in his case as the tiger's is framed as something innate, or at least having the strength of a natural conditioned and therefore unchangeable force. For the tiger this is yet again placed in a woodland environment, *nemore*, which comes as little surprise considering the characterisation of woodlands as wild we have thus far encountered.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. n.26 op. cit. and n.82 op. cit., of the Britons and Germans' diet.

¹⁵⁵ Pliny, *Natural History*, 8.34.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. above n.53 op. cit. for Lucan's description of the Batavians, and n.82 op. cit. for Pliny the Elder on the Germans.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. above n.89 op. cit.

¹⁵⁸ Lucan, *Civil War*, 1.327-331.

Feritas, Ferocia and Furor

This brings us to an important question about ancient traditions about the etymology of some of the words we have thus far encountered: namely, the relationship between *feritas*, *ferocia*, and *furor*. There may be some evidence that Roman authors at least considered these three to be in some way interrelated, and an example that has often been pointed to is from Catullus' sixty-third poem, in which a line may be found containing all three, which may be playing upon this purported etymology:¹⁵⁹

*"agedum" inquit "age ferox i, fac ut hunc furor agitet,
fac uti furoris ictu reditum in nemora ferat."*

In these lines Cybele, in her wrath against the unfaithful Attis, goads here lions on against him. The lion itself addressed is *ferox*, fierce, while Attis is under the influence of *furor*, madness/rage, and will therefore *ferat*, wildly rage, back to the forest. Of course it is

55
notable for the same reasons outlined in above examples that again the proper place for someone in this state and subject to these forces seems to be in the woods, *nemora*. However, on the etymological question it seems apparent that *furor* and *feritas* are being treated in an almost equivalent fashion here, both describing Attis' current state, and indeed the *ferocia* of the lions is certainly supposed to closely mimic the state Attis is in too. Between the former two at least, it seems difficult to find a difference in the meaning in this context.

A similar instance may be found in the Silver poet Valerius Flaccus, who wrote in the first century during the reign of Vespasian, also appears to play upon this same connection between *feritas* and *furor*. In the sixth book of his *Argonautica* we find the following:¹⁶⁰

*Quis tales obitus dederit, quis talia facta,
dic age, tuque feri reminiscere, Musa, furoris.*

Ferus is coupled together with the noun *furor* as an adjective, and is probably best understood as something like 'furious'. However, this is to forget the fact that the adjective does carry a strong connotation of wildness, being animal-like, and it is then unsurprising that this example is again taken from a battle-context.

A genre of writing in which the function of *ferocia* and connected concepts of wildness have been better discussed is in historical writing, where as in poetry we find ample instances of humans being compared to animals as a means to characterisation, aside from the extensive instances of this we have already seen in such authors used of northern tribes. In the third book of Livy we find an instance where Verginius accuses

¹⁵⁹ Catullus, *Poems*, 63.78-79.

¹⁶⁰ Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*, 6.515-516.

Appius of beastlike behaviour for his having tried to take his daughter by force:¹⁶¹

*Appi, non tibi filiam despondi et ad nuptias, non ad stuprum educari.
Placet pecudum ferarumque ritu promiscue in concubitus ruere?*

In this case Appius is arraigned for his wanton behaviour for its being *like* the promiscuity of wild beasts. Here then we have an example of the opposite to that seen above in the case of Virgil's Dido, and DeWitt's views of this. Although we should note that random mating is given as an overall characteristic of all animals, rather than just that of wild beasts, *pecudum ferarumque*. In this case then one instance of man's *ratio* and how it separates him from animals is that it enables him to be chaste. However it seems to be more the characteristic of rage and frenzy that is being noted here by Verginius than anything else, the key word being *ruere*, which is something we have consistently witnessed as a trait attributed to animals, the *furor* which man can and must learn to tame. There is certainly that association between *ferocia* and *feritas* here which we have seen severally elsewhere. Yet it is worth bearing in mind that animals may be versatile and made to fit any agenda and need as they may arise pursuant on context, but that this does not preclude the fact that in the case of northern peoples there is a consistent singular usage of one view of animals.

In a discussion of *ferocia* and similar words, and their connotations in Livy, Penella has made some insightful comments about the precise implications of *ferocia*. Demonstrating the wide potential range of meanings that could be attributed to this word he states that: "The connotations of *ferocia* range from "boldness" or "spiritedness" to "savagery" or "arrogance".¹⁶² At least all of the first three could be said to form a central part of the usage of this word of Germans and Britons in the most part of the sources we have already looked at. For Livy's purposes as Penella discusses them here, quite a different context dealing with early Roman history, *ferocia* forms a central part of the characterisation of Rome's third king. In Penella's view this word is the key to the distinct characterisation of the bellicose Tullius Hostius, as against the ostensibly similar first king of Rome. Explaining this difference, Penella comments as follows:¹⁶³

Livy's Tullus differs from his Romulus as *ferox*, in the manner suggested by *ferocia*'s difference from *vires*, *robur*, and *opes*. *Ferocia* can be an overripe might, a physical force untempered and potentially excessive. In response to Romulus, Numa had shown how *vires* should be tempered. Tullus' reign points to the danger of untempered *vires*, to *vires* as *ferocia* in its negative as well as positive sense.

For Penella then, in line with other recent interpretations of this word, there is a marked difference between *ferocia* as a character trait and other nouns denoting physical force, strength or might. Indeed the distinction is so great in his opinion as to mark a pointed

¹⁶¹ Livy, 3.47.7.

¹⁶² R. J. Penella, 'Vires/Robur/Opes and Ferocia in Livy's Account of Romulus and Tullus Hostilius', *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 40, No. 1 (1990), pp. 207-213, p. 211.

¹⁶³ As above n.162 op. cit., p. 212.

difference between the characterisation of Tullus and Romulus, who might otherwise seem fairly similar in their actions as Livy relates them. What Penella is effectively stating here is that *ferocia* is *vires* gone too far; that there is always a sense in the word of excess. In this we might compare *immanitas* as we have found it used in Pliny of outlying peoples. Yet Penella also highlights the fact that *ferocia* is always an ambiguous trait, and therefore has a positive side too of course. This fits well with the general ambiguity in the portrayal of northern peoples as we have found it thus far.

Penella was not the first to discuss the use of the noun *ferocia* in historical writing, and for an earlier examination of its usage in Tacitus we may look at what Traub had to say. His discussion is extensive and details many uses of the term, and for him its primary connotation relates to political recalcitrance against the *princeps*.¹⁶⁴

Ferocia also very often denotes political rebelliousness or active opposition to the *princeps*. Sometimes both these ideas are present in Tacitus' use of the word. *Ferocia*, however, generally refers to rebellious actions, and thus in a derived sense to insolence of speech, since such insolence of expression is clearly a form of political rebelliousness... It is also interesting to note that in the case of certain recalcitrant personages Tacitus seems to indicate that they acted in the tradition of an earlier member of their family... *Ferocia* is otherwise used by Tacitus to describe the savage tribe, the defiant youth, the reckless bravery of the soldier, or the insolence of a public enemy.

Traub cites many examples from all of Tacitus' works to prove his point, and I would concur that Tacitus' principal usage of the word is indeed to express the will of those who did not wish to toe the official line in the early principate. Furthermore, for Traub the root of the meaning of Tacitus' *ferocia* is in the Greek *parrhesia*, which in his opinion is treated in the equivalent sense by Tacitus. Traub defines the sense of the Greek word in its original context as follows:¹⁶⁵

Among the Athenians *parrhesia* was claimed as one of their special privileges. It was also thought of as the mark that distinguishes the free-born citizen from the slave. It was considered by the Athenians to be freedom of speech not only as evidenced in the utterance of unpopular sentiments, but also in speaking ill or insultingly of another.

If Traub is correct in his choice of word, it would cast Tacitus' treatment of the northern tribes in an interesting light. It is readily apparent that they represent liberty for Tacitus in all of his writings, but we ought bear in mind that their *ferocia* is also considered by him to be an innate trait. Thus in Traub's reading, their liberty must itself also be somehow inborn, which in turn raises the question, which we will come onto, of whether animals are themselves somehow in this blessed state.¹⁶⁶

Indeed, Traub does make a direct judgement about Tacitus' use of *ferocia* of

¹⁶⁴ H. W. Traub, 'Tacitus' Use of *Ferocia*', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 84, (1953), pp. 250-261, p. 261.

¹⁶⁵ n.164 op. cit., p.251. In his footnotes Traub provides as Greek examples of the usage he details here: Euripides, *Hippolytus* 422, *Ion* 672, *Phoenician Women* 391,

¹⁶⁶ Cf. the above discussed instance of Dido's praise of the free virtuous life of an animal, n.126 op. cit.

northern peoples, which for him is indisputably a positive characteristic:¹⁶⁷

Ferocia is very often applied to the "noble savage" who has not yet been enervated by Roman culture or refining influences. Tacitus seems clearly to admire their defiant and dauntless nature.

The results of our survey thus far certainly square with Traub's analysis here. Particularly apt is Traub's word-choice of 'enervating', which sums up very well Tacitus' view of modern Roman civilisation. It brings benefits, granted, but it very literally drains the energy out of those who live under it, mitigates that primal force so in evidence with the northern tribes who live beyond Roman borders. However, from what we have seen it is also worth bearing in mind that it would be perilous to generalise this case to every instance in Latin literature since their *ferocia*, as we have seen in some other authors, can also be the cause of their defeat in battle.¹⁶⁸ In general however, Traub's analysis is in concurrence with what we have ourselves found here in our analysis of the sources.

Animals as the Blessed

The question then of animals' primordial blessedness must now be addressed, as this pattern of thought can also be seen in many of the ancient sources. For this we must turn in large part to philosophical writings from antiquity, and also look at some earlier Greek sources which undoubtedly came to inform Roman authors' ideas about animals. It would be instructive to turn first to Clark in the above cited article,¹⁶⁹ the originality of whose approach to this question highlights that not all ancient attitudes towards animals were as simple as might thus far have seemed to be the case, or might seem to have been from earlier scholarship.¹⁷⁰ Discussing the Stoic view of animals and reason, Clark explains:¹⁷¹

According to the Stoics, it is not possible for a non-human animal. The non-human animal is without *logos*, so has impressions without *logos*. These impressions do not involve a proposition to be accepted or rejected, and the animal does not have the option of allowing or stopping a passion. So if passion is assenting to a bad judgement, animals do not have passions: it only looks as if they do. The roaring lion is quasi-angry, the trembling deer is quasi-afraid.

If this is true then the fundamental difference between animals and humans is that animals cannot be held accountable for their actions, because they cannot control them, whereas humans can be, because they can. Certainly this view can be used to describe animals, or humans by means of animals, in both positive and negative ways. Seneca, who often

¹⁶⁷ n.164 op. cit., p. 252. Traub is here discussing the Britons at *Agricola* 11.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. above n.72 op. cit., where Florus continues from the quoted by relating how fast the Gauls burn out in battle: *quum mox caluere pugna, statim in sudorem eunt et levi motu quasi sole laxantur*.

¹⁶⁹ n.124 op. cit.

¹⁷⁰ As, for example, Taylor's attitude towards animals in the context of his examination of primitivism in Virgil: M. E. Taylor, 'Primitivism in Virgil', *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 76, No. 3 (1955), pp. 261-278.

¹⁷¹ n.124 op. cit., p. 90.

expresses Stoic tendencies in his works, can at least in one of his letters be seen to apply this view of animals in a negative way, as an exhortation to humans to be above simply yielding to their passions:¹⁷²

*Voluptas humilis res et pusilla et in nullo habenda pretio,
communis cum multis animalibus, ad quam minima et
contemptissima advolant.*

For Seneca here, pleasure is not to be valued highly *because* it is something held in common with even the lowest animals, and man *ought* to seek to raise himself above such a way of living. This view of animal passions we have encountered many times already but, that we may not fall into the trap of generalising this way of thinking to all Classical theorists and writers, the second century biographer and essayist Plutarch provides an instructive and fascinating counter-example. In his *Moralia* we find a defence of the life of animals, delivered by one Gryllus, one of Odysseus' men who has been transformed into a pig by Circe. While still a pig he explains to Odysseus why he prefers the life of an animal, why it is more virtuous, and why he would therefore prefer not to be transformed back and to continue his adventures with the errant Odysseus:¹⁷³

ταδε\qhria pantapasin apaitouj kai\anepimiktouj e\konta toi=j
epeisaktoij paqesi taj yuxaj kai\toij bibij potrw th=j kenhj=
docij w\sjper qal abshj apw\kismeha

Fascinatingly, in Gryllus' view animals are more virtuous than humans but, even more intriguingly, this is not because of any moral choice of behaviour. Animals are more virtuous for the very fact that their souls are not open to the more superfluous passions. In this sense their virtue is an inborn fact of their make-up. We might easily contrast Tacitus' views of the Germans' virtue,¹⁷⁴ where as we have seen there is certainly a sense of their being naturally virtuous and consequently not drawn to the (in the Stoic view) base passions. A further point to note about the cited passage is its mention of the sea and the association of moral decline with seafaring. Animals' natural virtue is compared to the state of being far from the sea, which is assumed to be more virtuous than dwelling near it. This picks up an ancient philosophical and literary topos we have already seen, which connects decline in virtue to the quest overseas for wealth and riches.¹⁷⁵ Of course in this specific context it also denotes Gryllus' unwillingness to return to Odysseus' endless sea voyage.

Circe and Animal Metamorphosis

Having discussed the broader conception of animals in Roman literature and thought, we

¹⁷² Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, 123.16.

¹⁷³ Plutarch, *Moralia*, 989C.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. above n.8 op. cit.

¹⁷⁵ n.38 op. cit.

will close this section by turning briefly to a more marginal manifestation of this thinking, and the less common extreme example of animal metamorphosis. We have already encountered Ovid, and of course countless examples might be looked at from the *Metamorphoses* where transformation into an animal connotes human character traits, and as this topic has already been treated extensively I do not wish to enter it here. However, while we are concerned with the figure of Circe we must mention her briefly.

Circe, recorded at such an early stage in Classical literature, makes clear the close association between animal metamorphosis and magic and witchcraft, which was of course something which would persist long in the Western imagination. Circe is the archetypal witch, living in utter seclusion, her status not obviously divine nor mortal either, able by her powers to render defenceless some of the greatest Greek warriors of all time. Aside from in the tenth book of Homer's *Odyssey*, Virgil makes use of Homer's Circe briefly in the seventh book of the *Aeneid*, as does Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*, and other authors use her and the animal metamorphosis episode for other purposes in their writings, as we have seen in the case of Plutarch. She certainly formed a great fixation for Classical writers, whether we choose to read her as an allegory for female power or something else.

What is notable for our purposes is what animals symbolise in the Circe scenario. There is both the sense that animals are fierce, in that Circe's great power is illustrated by the fact that she is surrounded by the wildest beasts, all of whom are yet strangely tame in her presence, but also that they are a symbol of weakness once in this context, as Odysseus' men are reduced by Circe's magic to the more mean status of animals. It is likewise a testament to Odysseus' virtue and strength that, just as in the case of the Sirens, he is able to resist Circe's magic and thus maintain his status as a human. Hence his position of counter-argument in Plutarch's dialogue between him and Gryllus. Again we see how animals were manipulated to mean different things in different contexts, but in this case animal metamorphosis certainly means a reduction in the power of self-determination and ability to be tamed. In addition to this we should also note where Circe's home is located, in what we have found to be the proper home of wild beasts and the savage in Classical literature: the forest. This should indicate for us that by being placed in a forest lair, for the Classical reader or audience, Circe necessarily carries the connotation of the unpredictable and perhaps dangerously powerful or threatening.

In the 1960s Segal made an interesting discussion of the figure of Circe in Classical literature containing some pertinent points for our purposes here.¹⁷⁶ Examining the *Odyssey* version of the episode, he drew attention to how Odysseus' men are portrayed after their transformation back to human form.¹⁷⁷ Segal points out that Homer describes them as being younger, handsomer and taller in appearance than they were *before* they were transformed into animals by Circe and indeed before they met her. Circe's magic and their animal metamorphosis seems to have improved them physically and, in the ancient Greek conception, therefore they are morally improved as well in some way. Segal does not seek to explain this in terms of ancient views of animals, but it is possible that we are seeing here something of the tradition attributing natural virtue to animals and the animal

¹⁷⁶ C. Segal, 'Circean Temptations: Homer, Virgil, Ovid', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 99, (1968), pp. 419-442.

¹⁷⁷ Homer, *Odyssey*, 10.573-574.

state, which in this case has been partially transferred to humans. Plutarch may have picked up on this connotation of the Odyssean story in his *Moralia*.

Segal also mentions, as we have done here, Circe's home. In his examination of Virgil's passing mention of Circe,¹⁷⁸ he states that:¹⁷⁹

the phrase *inaccessos lucos* stresses the savagery of her forest home and her affinities with the wild

Forests mean savagery in Roman literature, as we have stated several times above and those that dwell in them, in Virgil's case Circe and in Tacitus and Caesar's case the Germans and Britons, are by nature *feri*. And as we have seen above, at least in the case of the northern peoples these 'affinities' could be very literal, involving close relation to the beasts and natural environment around them.

Indeed Segal goes further than this, detecting a difference between the Virgilian account and the Homeric upon which it is based. Describing Virgil's portrayal of the scene and the animals of Circe's domain he argues that:¹⁸⁰

Virgil's scene is mysterious, but the mystery is of a deeper and more somber cast than Homer's. His animals have thus lost all traces of humanity and are simply dangerous wild beasts.

Whether we choose to agree with Segal's analysis of the Homeric and Virgilian versions of the Circe episode it is undoubtedly true that Circe does symbolise danger and little else in the *Aeneid* and that the animals here also connote the same. We must bear in mind though that Circe in Homer and Virgil serves very different narrative purposes. Circe is simply much more significant in Homer, forming a whole part of the narrative of Odysseus' wanderings, whereas in Virgil it is little more than an aside of a few lines, which relies almost entirely upon knowledge of the prior version in Homer. The greater simplicity of the animal portrayal, or of the seeming distance and mystery of Circe in Segal's reading, might simply be put down to narrative intention: it did not serve Virgil's purposes or suit his wonted concision to include a more detailed account of Circe and the transformation of Odysseus' men. Yet, for all of this, Segal has perhaps picked up on something very important we have already witnessed with Roman authors: that deep-seated fear of forests and what dwell within them.

Werewolves

Before we can consider our survey of the function of animal metamorphosis well-balanced, we must also look at an extreme example of what we have already noted to be an unusual phenomenon anyway, and a very rare one at that. This is the case of werewolves. There are scattered references to werewolves in Roman literature, for

¹⁷⁸ Virgil, *Aeneid*, 7.11-12.

¹⁷⁹ n.176 op. cit., p. 432.

¹⁸⁰ n.176 op. cit., p. 433.

example in poetry in the *Eclogues*, and in prose writing in the *Natural History* and there is even an anecdote about such a transformation in the Neronian novelist Petronius' *Satyricon* with all its other marvels.¹⁸¹ However, these references are very few in number, and not nearly as frequent as in the literature of the Middle Ages, which probably has much to do with the already noted fact that wolves were clearly in far greater prominence in northern than southern Europe in this period.

In all of the cited examples from Roman literature the specific transformation into a wolf is closely connected with magic, as we have found with Circe.¹⁸² Magic is often characterised as being something unnatural and inhuman, and almost always as something dangerously unpredictable, as for example in Roman love poetry.¹⁸³ However in the case of the werewolf metamorphosis, it is always portrayed as something very much unnatural, contrary to divine law and at times painful for, or against the will of, the one transforming. Nor is it something invented in Roman literature, but we have earlier examples of werewolves from Classical Greek authors. It is reported as early as Plato, who in his *Republic* states that:¹⁸⁴

W(a)ra o(geusamenoj tou a)qrwpihou spl agxnou, e) a) loij
a) lwn i(ereiwn e)no) egkatatetmhmehou, a)agkh dh\tou/tw lukw|
genesqai.

Plato reports the tradition that those that eat the remains of humans mixed with those of animals must necessarily be transformed, apparently by some supernatural process, into a wolf. How may we understand such a belief? Perhaps the most important point to note about this old wives' tale is the fact that we have the wolf metamorphosis closely associated with cannibalism. Cannibalism is of course a fundamentally inhuman activity, indeed possibly *the* archetypal inhuman activity, and is elsewhere associated with the savage lifestyle and savages themselves.¹⁸⁵ It represents in brutally clear fashion the world beyond the Greek *Oikoumene*, or in Roman literature *Imperium Romanum*. Wolves, as one of the foremost predatory animals of ancient Europe, were as we have seen catalogued by ancient writers as one of the most threatening and savage beasts,¹⁸⁶ and it is then no surprise that the conflation between them and savagery was an easy one to make. In writers as early as Plato then we are able to witness the use of the werewolf metamorphosis as a means to denote human savagery in its most extreme and depraved form, and perhaps even more than in the case of Circe magic here is certainly something unnatural, something *nefas*.

In his *Histories* Herodotus had also reported a tale of werewolf metamorphosis,

¹⁸¹ Virgil, *Eclogues*, 8.97; Pliny, *Natural History*, 8.34; Petronius, *Satyricon*, 61-62.

¹⁸² For comic examples of the association of magic with animal metamorphosis, see Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*.

¹⁸³ Propertius and Ovid often employ this motif, though this is not the only genre in which we find it used. We might also compare the portrayal of Dido as a witch in her enraged state in Virgil, *Aeneid*, 4.468-473, and Greek tragic prototypes for this.

¹⁸⁴ Plato, *Republic*, 565D.

¹⁸⁵ As for example Herodotus or Ovid on the Scythians elsewhere discussed in this paper.

¹⁸⁶ Compare chapter below on werewolves.

and he makes yet clearer for us the connection between this and savagery, in this case literally savage peoples living to the north of the Greek world. Though he himself disclaims credence in it, in his fourth book Herodotus sees fit to include the following information concerning the Neuri tribe:¹⁸⁷

kinduneusi de\oi(a)qrwpoi ou\ei e)h)ai. I egonta gak upo\Skuge\wn
kai\EI l)h)wn twa e) th\Skuqikh|katoikhme)wn wj e)teoj e)kastou
apac twa Neurwa ekastoj I ukoj gi)hetai h)epaj o) igaj kai\
a)ltij op)isw e) tw)uto katistatai.

Stating that the Neuri people, who live after the fashion of the Scythians, are probably wizards, he then says that they are believed to be transformed into wolves for a few days. What is absolutely crucial that we register here is the fact that almost in one breath we are told by Herodotus that they are effectively Scythians in fashion, whom we already know from Herodotus himself to be archetypal northern barbarians,¹⁸⁸ then that they are believed to be transformed into wolves. The originators of this story certainly considered the barbarity of these people to be so extreme as to emulate the savagery of that beast with whom they dwelled, and by process of exaggeration and poetic fancy this came to mean their literally becoming wolves. This is closely parallel to the phenomenon we have seen above of northern tribes in Roman literature being described, for example by Florus, as actually having the souls of wild animals.¹⁸⁹

In a discussion of the role of wolves as vehicles of human characterisation in the Greek romantic novel of the second century Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe*, Epstein has made some salient points about the emblematic meanings of wolves in Classical literature. As he argues,¹⁹⁰

In Theocritus and his poetic heirs, the wolf generally functions as a potential threat and reminds us of the fragility of the bucolic world.

Theocritus' bucolic world, that inherited by Virgil in the Eclogues and his other works and by Statius and many other Roman writers, is by nature an ideal. It is an ideal beautiful for its very fragility, and it is the conventions of this which the Greek romantic authors of the Second Sophistic, such as Longus or Achilles Tatius, both work within and deliberately play havoc with. As Epstein makes clear, the wolf was clearly a conventional symbol for savagery, perhaps the savagery that existed without and occasionally strayed into this world, both in this genre and in the earlier bucolic poets of Classical Greece and golden Latin poetry. It is important for us to realise that this motif was established long before Roman conquests north of the Alps began to reveal more and more dark forests full of larger and more fearsome wolves than had been yet seen. In typical fashion the Romans sought to accommodate these new peoples and places to their existing scheme of the

¹⁸⁷ Herodotus, *Histories*, 4.105.

¹⁸⁸ On the ethnicity, savagery and the Scythians in Herodotus, see for example: C. P. Jones, 'Ethnos and Genos in Herodotus', *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 46, No. 2 (1996), pp. 315-320.

¹⁸⁹ See above n.76 op. cit.

¹⁹⁰ S. J. Epstein, 'Longus' Werewolves', *Classical Philology*, Vol. 90, No. 1 (Jan., 1995), pp. 58-73, pp.58.

world, as is evident in such writings.

However, as we have noted before, it must be remembered that it is very unusual that animals mean only one thing in Classical literature, in line with the tradition of rhetoric whereby motifs may be presented in different lights pursuant upon argumentative purpose. Hence Epstein rightly highlights that even in these heavily typecast Greek novels, even wolves can be portrayed in a completely different light, in this case as intelligent and caring.¹⁹¹ To ignore this fact about the wolf's portrayal would be to ignore the story of Romulus and Remus' upbringing and the connotations this carries. We might compare Longus' characterisation of the she-wolf here to that of Boudicca in Dio, as discussed above.¹⁹² Nonetheless, the predominant character attributed to wolves is that of savagery in Classical literature, and humans who are either beyond the pale of civilisation geographically, or unruly by their nature, may be characterised as being like wolves, or in some exceptional instances as actually being wolves. In the case of Longus' 'werewolves', Epstein concludes as follows:¹⁹³

The novel's lupine beings force us to re-examine our assumptions not only about human assessment of nature but about human nature itself. Is the wolf malignant? Or benign? Are humans civilised? Or wild?

Although he has conceded that the wolf is 'pastoral's conventional agent of natural violence', yet Segal acknowledges the complexity of using an animal to characterise a human here.

Literary Usages of Animals

In this survey of the uses of animals as aids to the characterisation of humans in Roman literature, we have seen that their uses are multifarious and may be put to any purpose required, and not exclusively for the portrayal of barbarity or savagery. We have seen, for example, that Ovid is able to use animals as a means to evoke pity in the *Metamorphoses*. However, it is hard to deny that in the case of wild animals at least, the most frequent usage is to attribute to humans the traits of *feritas*, *furor*, and *ferocia*, of strength but strength untempered, of courage to the point of blind rage. Underlying the use of these metaphors and similes are many assumptions about the nature of animals themselves, debates about Classical views upon which we cannot enter into more fully here. However, if anything is certain it is that the Classical view of animals was ambivalent, and on this point I quote from a study made by Lonsdale in the 1970s about ancient Greek attitudes towards animals. Speaking of the ambivalent view of dogs in particular, but also of animals in general, he states they are:¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe*, 1.11.1,2.

¹⁹² Cf. n.47 op. cit.

¹⁹³ See above n. 190 op. cit., p. 73.

¹⁹⁴ S. H. Lonsdale, 'Attitudes Towards Animals in Ancient Greece', *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Oct., 1979), pp. 146-159, p. 152.

conceived as independent entities incorporating, as their names suggest, some abstract force. Avoidance, mistrust, awe, and fear are further emotions associated with dogs... The ambivalence felt for animals stems from the recognition that animals possess qualities, especially the power of non-verbal communication, which humans do not; these may arouse hostility and envy in man.

Man may work with animals, but they still in some part remain wild, and their wild relatives remain ever as testament to this danger. Interestingly, as Lonsdale also stresses here, man recognises that animals have some more formidable abilities than himself, respects this, but may even envy them for these. This attitude should be borne in mind when looking at the Roman characterisation of northern peoples, both the evident awe of them in which we have seen many Roman authors to have been, and the apparent sense of mistrust we have found, for example, in attitudes towards the use of Gallic and Germanic auxiliaries in the imperial armies.

3.

The best starting point for this last section of our examination of Roman views of northern Europe, in which we will look at some of the historical and literary-contextual aspects of the material already examined, would be to return to our initial point of departure in Caesar and his ethnographies in the *Gallic War*.

Caesar's Motivations

Traditionally the ethnographies which may be found in Caesar's war commentaries, as in the case of other authors' monographs, were largely taken at face value as regards the information provided about the peoples' in question. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries this was in large part due to the important role these texts, and the later writings and art they inspired, played in the rise of national European identities in this period, and as we shall see, this view affected academic approaches to the study of these texts and did not even completely expire with the end of the second world war. In Caesar's case however, recent decades have seen a shift towards an approach to studying his commentaries based upon a premise that, far from being an artless narrator, his simplicity is on the contrary a rhetorical technique of great artifice. Particularly in the last decade this revisionist approach has yielded some intriguing research on Caesar's presentation of northern Europe and its inhabitants.

In a landmark study of these questions Shake, for example, has commented as follows:¹⁹⁵

...using a series of stereotypes, contrasts and parallels, changing definitions and narrative modes, Caesar puts northern Europe on the map, in a way that justifies his chosen fields of action and magnifies his achievements by suggesting the novelty and completion of his campaigns.

The crux of Shake's argument is that Caesar needed to create a defined type of the German and, subsequently, of the Briton, as a means to justify his conquests and his holding of the Gallic armies in the 50sBC. Shake then conforms to the recent view of Caesar's commentaries as careful pieces of political propaganda, and seeks to explain his construction of northern peoples within this framework. Caesar's strong contrasts and stereotypes, as an example of which we may include the Hercynian episode and German commentaries in the sixth book, are then merely a vehicle to reinforce the typecast characterisation of his enemies. In Shake's opinion however, in at least the case of the purported Gallic-Germanic distinction, the archaeological reality squares little with Caesar's presentation of the inhabitants:¹⁹⁶

In actual fact, the abundant archaeological evidence shows great similarity on both sides of the Rhine, place names on either side are Celtic, and of Caesar's own

¹⁹⁵ H. Shake, 'Caesar's Construction of Northern Europe', *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 58, No. 1 (May, 2008), pp. 158-180, p. 159.

¹⁹⁶ n.195 op. cit., p. 162.

Germani only the Suebi have an undisputed Germanic name.

Shake's point here is perfectly valid and of course the logical conclusion of the argument which he and others follow about Caesar's method in writing his commentaries. It would be wise though to refrain from ruling out everything that Caesar writes as fictitious or mere hyperbole. Indeed Shake and others do not take this position, but it is worth bearing in mind that Caesar's points may be exaggerated but, unlike so many of his Greek predecessors, they are likely to have been significantly based upon personal observation. Furthermore, it is frustratingly unusual that archaeological and written evidence may corroborate or disprove each other in a straightforward manner. In this case, though archaeological evidence may well show similarities between peoples east and west of the Rhine, as Shake rightly points out, the very restricted nature of these non-perishable artefacts can by definition go very little way to corroborating or disproving the sort of ethnographic details Caesar and other authors give, such as how different peoples tied their hair, in large part the specific variations of their diets, or the battle formations and tactics used by different tribes.

Shake makes a further salient point about Caesar's specific portrayal of the Belgae, or rather, his very lack of specificity:¹⁹⁷

Nothing is said about the Belgae that a classical ethnographer could not say, *mutatis mutandis*, about any northern tribe and its fierceness.

This is a very important issue in looking at all of the texts we have thus far examined. We must ask ourselves to what extent any of the authors we have encountered actually diverge radically from the standard view of the Germans, the Britons and the Scythians. Indeed if anything what is remarkable is the great homogeneity across all of these texts. And, yet more remarkably, the great homogeneity across time. For example, how much can we really say that Herodotus or Ovid's presentation of the Scythians differ, separated as they are by so many centuries? The Scythians, at least, remained ultimately beyond the Greek and Roman spheres of influence, right through the many centuries of the apexes of both their military dominions. In the case of the Britons however, we have a people who began as something like a myth in the Classical Greek sources, but end up under direct and complete Roman rule for several centuries, and yet even through this period managed to retain some kind of semi-mythic awe, to the point that even many centuries later the English historian Bede may report these same factors at work on the emperor Gregory.¹⁹⁸ Yet without looking so far ahead, the third century *Histories* of Cassius Dio belie this attitude well enough, as we have found, or even simply Tacitus several decades subsequent to Britain's subjugation.

It seems fairly clear then that many of these authors chose to maintain the stereotype. This raises the question then of why so many authors for so long wished to maintain this picture of their northern neighbours as semi-mythical, even semi-animalian.

¹⁹⁷ n.195 op. cit., p. 164.

¹⁹⁸ Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 132-135: The emperor Gregory is so fascinated by the slaves of the *Anguli* people that he resolves upon the people's conversion to Christianity.

In the case of Caesar's analysis of the Belgae at least Shake is fairly sure:¹⁹⁹

Why then this fiction of inquiry?... if remoteness enhances the Belgae as enemies, it also enhances Caesar as innovative campaigner: here, for the first time, Caesar is seen to cross the boundaries of known Gaul.

For Shake then, Caesar's presentation of the Belgae is a rhetorical technique with the ultimate aim of enhancing his personal glory, and this answer is very much in accordance with those expressed in recent years by revisionist historians of the *Gallic War*. Goldsworthy, for example, concurs with the significance of the Belgae tribe for Caesar:²⁰⁰

The Belgae were more warlike than the Celtic tribes, in part because they were further away from Roman influence. Ancient authors believed that access to the luxuries of civilisation softened a people, while a simple life preserved natural virtue and courage.

This is certainly an attitude we have found in many authors, both specifically in the case of northern Europeans, but also in general philosophical conceptions, as we have seen with Seneca, and literary topoi, as with Virgil's Latins, about hard primitivism. However, Britain seems to have also claimed a special place in the imagination, something evident early on in Greek writers, but which evidently still held such a place for Caesar and his contemporaries. As Goldsworthy comments:²⁰¹

No Greek or Roman knew much about Britain and its peoples, and in the absence of facts wild stories of strange creatures and weird customs flourished, resembling in many ways the tales of the New World in the age of European exploration.

Goldsworthy cites various examples of this fascination with Britain as the distant outlying province quite literally, in the Roman view, on the edge of the world.²⁰² A very late but particularly instructive example is provided by that of the sixth century Byzantine scholar Procopius in his *Gothic War*,²⁰³ which shows that even after the three centuries of Roman rule in Britain strange rumours about fantastical islands in the northern Ocean could still do the rounds. Procopius relates that there is an island named 'Brittia', and it is uncertain whether by this he actually means Britain or not, all the length of which is divided by a great wall:

proÿ dubnta de\pax touhantion, w\ste amel ei anqrw\pw|men oude
hniw\p rion dunaton e\stin e\ntauqa biwna, ekij kai\ofej
anarimoi kai\alwn qhri\wn pantodapa\geh\h diakekl h\rtwai
ton xw\fon ekieion.

¹⁹⁹ n.195 op. cit., p. 164.

²⁰⁰ A. Goldsworthy, *Caesar*, 2006 (Yale), p. 238.

²⁰¹ n.120 op. cit., p. 270.

²⁰² Caesar, *Gallic War*, 4.20; Suetonius, *Caesar*, 47; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 23.

²⁰³ Procopius, *Gothic War*, 8.20.46. For a full discussion of this subject see: E. A. Thompson, 'Procopius on Brittia and Britannia', *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1980), pp. 498-507.

Everything to one side of this wall, Procopius relates, is full and plentiful, but to its other side all is death and decay, and man cannot survive there more than very briefly. Furthermore that on this side great serpents dwell and that only wild beasts are able to survive. It is a completely ridiculous, mythical portrayal, which many of Procopius' contemporaries who knew anything about Britain and the North Sea must certainly have found risible. However, it is clear that even in this late period Britain and the northern seas still held a fascination, and again we see the powerful connection between this part of the world and dangerous beasts of great size.

Returning to Caesar, two things are clear from the revisionist analysis of his writings. Firstly, that Caesar had a vested interest in enforcing and preserving the bellicose and animal-like type of the northern tribes which, though he may not have himself created, inherited he undoubtedly embellished, for the very reason that this reflected upon his own greatness. In the case of Britain, for Caesar at least this meant in large part an inherited mythical geography placing Britain on the very limits of the world,²⁰⁴ which his being the first to assail would have elevated his grandeur yet more. Secondly, what is also clear is that Caesar's construction of northern Europe, as Shake and others would have it, profoundly affected the way later Roman authors, even those with better knowledge, chose to present their subject. We will now look again at some of these successors.

Tacitus' Motivations

The works of Tacitus have formed a central part of this paper and we must now come to the great question of why Tacitus chose to portray his Germans and his Britons as he did. An enormous amount of scholarship has been produced in the last century and earlier, principally centring around the questions of: whether Tacitus' view of the Germans is positive or negative; the purpose of such a portrayal, in whatever light we choose to view it. We cannot include a comprehensive examination of this scholarship here, but in sum it may be noted that approaches to these questions have approximately followed a similar trajectory to that given of scholarship on Caesar above. Initially texts, principally the *Germania*, but also the *Agricola*, were taken very much at face value as reliable indications of the historical tribes concerned.²⁰⁵ Later, attempts were made to assess the accuracy of his reports by setting them against alternative forms of evidence,²⁰⁶ but even

²⁰⁴ For the best, and a groundbreaking, study of conceptions of geographic boundaries and cosmographies in the Roman world, see: C. Nicolet, *Space, Geography and Politics in the Early Roman Empire*, 1991 (Michigan).

²⁰⁵ See, for example: A. Gudeman, 'The sources of the *Germania* of Tacitus', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 31, (1900), pp. 93-111; C. H. Moore, 'The decay of nationalism under the Roman Empire', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 48, (1917), pp. 27-36. For a comparable view of Caesar's treatment of northern Europeans in his work, see: H. Howorth, 'The Germans of Caesar', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 23, No. 91 (Jul., 1908), pp. 417-433; J. Ross, 'In behalf of Caesar's enemies', *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 8 (May, 1939), pp. 449-460.

²⁰⁶ A very good early example is the study of Olwen Brogan: O. Brogan, 'Trade between the Roman Empire and the Free Germans', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 26, Part 2 (1936), pp. 195-222.. By

into the 1960s the older favourable literal reading can be seen to persist,²⁰⁷ by which scholars were for the most part little interested in doing other than embellishing the information given by Tacitus. However, by this stage it is evident that the emphasis had begun shifting towards a re-analysis of Tacitus' intended foci. As one such scholar comments in his article's conclusion:²⁰⁸

When Tacitus speaks of the virtues of the Germans, he is thinking not only of the imperfect Rome which he knew, but of the ideal Rome of past ages which he imagined.

In the ensuing decades scholars became less interested in questions of Tacitus' reliability, as the cynosure shifted from attempting to reconstruct a historical reality for the northern tribes themselves, to an increasing preoccupation with the notion that Tacitus' comments are more Romano-centric than would at first appear, or than had been formerly understood to be the case. This remains the widespread consensus today, however it has not been until relatively recent years that any in-depth studies of these issues have been conducted. On Britain and the *Agricola*, two studies by Clarke at the start of the last decade aim at a more nuanced approach to Tacitus' Romano-centric context. As Clarke comments:²⁰⁹

The geographical view which underpinned much Roman ideology was one which focused on the city of Rome as the climatologically privileged centre of the world.

As Clarke points out, and as we have seen in our analysis of the sources, it was standard practice to portray outlying peoples as wild, ready to be civilised. However, Clarke continues by arguing that the *Agricola* at least actually seeks to reverse that model, that

highlighting the archaeological and numismatic evidence for extensive trade across the Rhine even before Augustus' time, Brogan sought to debunk some of the imperial views of a completely uncivilised and isolated Germany. See also Work's study on the same issue, which took a like revisionist approach to such issues: I. Work, 'Britain and the Britons', *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 6 (Mar., 1954), pp. 255-259+272. Note however that even in recent years there have been some significant studies of the evidence on the ground for reconstructing a historical picture of northern Europe in the Roman imperial period, most notably: P. S. Wells, *The Barbarians Speak*, 1999 (Princeton). For an outside perspective from the anthropological discipline, see Mercer's entry: R. J. Mercer, 'The inception of farming in the British Isles', in T. L. Markey, J. A. C. Greppin (eds.), *When worlds collide*, 1990 (California).

²⁰⁷ Most notably in: W. Beare, 'Tacitus on the Germans', *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Mar., 1964), pp. 64-76. Beare does, however, have some insightful comments to make, for example on woodlands in the Roman imagination, and on Tacitus' sources (p. 64).

²⁰⁸ n.207 op. cit., p. 73.

²⁰⁹ K. Clarke, 'In arto et inglorius labor: Tacitus' Anti-History', in A. K. Bowman (ed.), *Representations of Empire, Rome and the Mediterranean world*, 2002 (Oxford).

the characterisation of Britain and the Britons in the text, as well as the Germans in the *Annals*, is intended to glorify the respective Roman generals by setting them in the context of a Republican ideal:²¹⁰

Agricola and Germanicus both operate in landscapes evocative of the heroic republican context and the historiography which described its aggressive imperialism.

In this context then we may also view Agricola's enemies themselves, who must necessarily then be worthy Republican foes, like Livy's Hannibal or Sallust's Mithridates, as in many ways embodiments of Roman virtues. In an analysis of Calpurnius' speech Clarke argues as follows:²¹¹

...his entire speech is a masterpiece of Roman oratory: full of *sententiae*; rhetorical questions; balanced antitheses; and forming a grand rhetorical *crescendo*... Calpurnius and his men are the repositories of Roman *virtus* and uncorrupt Latin usage.

In Britain however Clarke sees something of significance for Tacitus' purposes:²¹²

Britain's isolation, and specifically its insularity, underpins Tacitus' exploration of other themes within the work... the conquest of Britain... not only enhanced empirical knowledge of the island, but actually altered its location on the mental map of the Romans.

In large part this agrees with what we have said before about the mystery of Britain for Caesar and his intended readership. However, as we argued before, it is important not to overlook the fact that even after the period of Claudius and his successors Britain still retained much of its mystery, something which Tacitus too is able to employ as a means to enhance the drama of his narrative even several decades subsequent to her submission.

Early Imperial Britain, Gaul, and Germany, and Roman Attitudes

It is clear then that we can draw out some common elements in their portrayal of the north, and their motivations for doing so, between authors so chronologically far apart as Caesar and Tacitus. Yet it is necessary also to ask the question of what had changed between the time when Caesar was writing his commentaries and the Trajanic age in which Tacitus wrote his works? The two most important historical events are the conquest and subjugation of Gaul, just beginning with Caesar but utterly reduced to functional provincial government by Tacitus' time,²¹³ and of course the conquest and like reduction

²¹⁰ n.209 op. cit.

²¹¹ n.209 op. cit.

²¹² K. Clarke, 'An Island Nation: Re-Reading Tacitus' "Agricola", *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 91, (2001), pp. 94-112.

²¹³ Aside from an occasional uprising, such as that related by Tacitus (*Historiae* 4) of the Gauls in the late first century, it seems clear that by Tacitus' time the Gallic provinces were not seen as a source of threat. From the reign of Claudius after all, Gallic senators sat in the senate in Rome, and thus it is apparent that

to provincial status of Britain. As Clarke argues in the above citation, this changed the mental geography of the world for the Romans, and this part of the northwest must at least have seemed less threatening, even if, as has been argued, the original stereotypes evident in Caesar and his predecessors were still fully operative in Tacitus' time. However, other than for the province of Raetia and the lands between the source of the Rhine and the Danube, as well as occasionally some lands across the Rhine and Danube, Germany remained in almost all of its entirety unconquered. The year AD9, which saw the catastrophic defeat of Quinctilius Varus and his three legions, seems severely to have dented the pride of both Augustus himself and the imperial expansionist project, nor did the renewed more successful campaigns against Arminius and his death, shortly subsequent to Augustus' own, do much to restore damage done.²¹⁴ If in anything this is most apparent from the will of Augustus, in which he purportedly gave the advice to his successor that the empire should be kept within the bounds he had set, nor extended further.²¹⁵ Not that, in the case of Britain at least, this was enough to bridle Caligula's ambition or to halt Claudius' invasion, but Germany remained free, and remained free for the ensuing centuries, as can be seen from the frustration of Marcus Aurelius' attempts here more than a century later. Trajan may have turned his attentions elsewhere with success in Tacitus' time, but this did not alter the fact that free Germany, and all that lay beyond it, was still there.

Bearing this in mind then, it may be little surprising to find the same tales about Germany in the late first-century Pliny the Elder as we may find in the Greek sources. The underlying environmentally-based view of race at least, attributing a beastlike nature to those living at the extremes, seems to have hardly changed at all. We have seen above how Pliny analysed and explained the similarities and differences between northern peoples and Ethiopians by means of this theory,²¹⁶ and we must ask ourselves how at all this differs from that expressed by a pseudo-Aristotelian text four centuries earlier:

Dia\`ti/qhiwdeij ta\`e)h kai\`ta)k o\`yeij oi(e)h taij= u)perbol ai]j= o)h)tej h)yyukouj h)kaumatoj ;... Dia\`ti/oi(meh e)h toi] qermoi] to)poi] deil oi/ei]sin, oi(de\`e)h toi] yuxpoi] a)ndrei]i;

The writer's question explicitly assumes that people living at the extremes act in a beastlike fashion, and that moreover they are physically animalian in some sense too. Furthermore it is also assumed that those living in a cold climate are brave. There is no detectable difference in the attitude of this text and that of Pliny and so many other authors we have looked at, despite the temporal remove of so many centuries. Even if we choose to accept that this text is corrupt and in addition of a much later date, Herodotus, as we have seen, demonstrates similar views in his portrayal of the Scythians. Given that contact between northern Europeans and those from the Mediterranean was so minimal in the earlier period

many Gauls had a vested interest in Roman government.

²¹⁴ For the campaigns of AD14, and reflections upon the disaster of AD9, see: Tacitus, *Annals*, 1.

²¹⁵ As reported by for example Tacitus at Tacitus, *Annals*, 1.11.

²¹⁶ Pliny, *Natural History*, 2.189.

and so extensive in Pliny's time after the conquest of both Gaul, Britain, and Raetia, and after so many and ongoing conflicts with the Germans, why does the underlying theory remain so profoundly unchanged and unelaborated?

Many answers have been directly or indirectly suggested for this question, a question that gets right to the heart of why we have seen northern peoples portrayed so consistently as we have. As already remarked, for many early scholars it was enough to accept this information at face value as actually true, and according to this position the Roman view did not change because this is what they actually found.²¹⁷ Reception of these topics is a history in itself, and we must remember that such a position has deep roots in the Middle Ages.²¹⁸ More recently, those taking a more rhetorical approach to authors like Caesar and Tacitus have, as we have shown above, viewed the Germans of these authors as more a construct than a reality. For example, in his already cited study, Campbell describes Tacitus' description of the Fenni tribe²¹⁹ as follows:²²⁰

We are not really looking at the Fenni at all here but at a construct of Roman ethnocentrism, so when we see through their eyes we are still looking from a Roman point of view.

Just as we have seen in Clarke's analysis of the Britons' presentation in Tacitus, for Campbell the reason behind this is a retrospective projection of their own history:²²¹

Their enemies are more Roman than they are themselves... So, if the Romans are confused about their own cultural development it is not surprising to find this confusion projected onto the backdrop of Gaul and Germany.

According to this school of thought then, we might find our answer to the above question something as follows: The cultures and peoples these authors and their texts present are rhetorical set-pieces designed to replay Roman republican history and virtue, thereby reflecting on the Roman protagonists' glory in an age when Rome itself provides no opportunity for such exploits, and therefore it is no surprise that the picture remains so one-dimensional over time, since the political model at Rome which required such a rhetorical portrayal did not essentially change through the centuries. Battling with animals, or people who are almost animals, is after all a topos of virtue in Greco-Roman culture.²²²

²¹⁷ For example: C. Kingsley, *The Roman and the Teuton*, 1864 (Oxford). The first chapter, 'The Forest Children', makes it abundantly clear that Kingsley and, we may assume, a good number of his contemporaries, took it as given that the Romans' racial views about the Germans were self-evidently true. Although, as noted (n.207), this view proved persistent.

²¹⁸ Isidore of Seville and Bede, for example, evidently both took much from the ideas and sources we have examined in this paper.

²¹⁹ Tacitus, *Germania*, 46.

²²⁰ G. Campbell, *Strange Creatures*, 2006 (London), p. 111.

²²¹ n.220 op. cit., p. 108.

²²² Hercules wrestling with the Nemean lion being of course the prototype. The tale of Theseus and the Minotaur, perhaps especially relevant considering the man-beast nature of Theseus' adversary, or the centaurs and the Lapiths, had served similar purposes for the Athenians in their aetiological myth-histories (Note the prominence of the latter story on the Parthenon metopes). Under the empire, the

There is much convincing in this position, supported as it may be by the artistic and monumental evidence,²²³ but it still does not quite capture the full subtlety of the portrayal of northern peoples we are dealing with here.

Xenophobia and Animal Characterisations of Northern Peoples

For a more nuanced view we may turn to Isaac and his recent studies of racism in the Classical world. Isaac's is a broad analysis of attitudes towards foreign peoples in Greek and Roman culture, and he has some insightful remarks to make about the Roman attitude towards their northern neighbours. In my opinion Isaac comes closest the truth of all who have written upon this subject, when he describes Tacitus' attitude to the Germans as follows:²²⁴

His attitude is not easy to sum up, but obviously there is a good deal of both admiration and apprehension in his work. There is nothing petty about the Germans, they have enormous failings and great merit. This is not to deny that he also saw them in terms of traditional stereotypes.

Firstly, Isaac acknowledges the largely overlooked fact that the *Germania* is in fact a miscellany of positive and negative ethnic traits. It was a weakness of the earliest scholarship and to some degree even of those who have taken a rhetorical approach to studying Tacitus and others, that they placed too much emphasis on analysis of the positive characteristics given of Rome's northern neighbours, the debate rather focusing on the author's cause for doing so, not duly recognising as Isaac does here that there is as much criticism as praise. As we have seen, the former tend to focus on inertia outside of wartime, lack of cleanliness, lack of social order, lack of agriculture, inhuman religious practices, and headstrong foolishness. Yet Isaac makes the interesting comment that even between strengths and weaknesses we may find a common characteristic being attributed to them. This he describes as their having 'nothing petty' about them; I would equate this is Pliny the Elder's *immanitas*,²²⁵ as discussed above.

In his book Isaac also includes a section on the characterisation of people as animals as concerning the outsider. He makes the argument that across Greco-Roman characterisation of the foreigner as animals, there are consistently two methods by which this may be done:²²⁶

First... whereby people are called animals in order to deny their humanity. Second, there is the manner in which fables look at people, describing animals as if they were humans, whereby those people in turn are given the presumed characteristics of the

popular beast hunts in the arena across the empire provided regular displays of battles with animals and a chance to show such virtue in a theatrical setting.

²²³ The presentation of captive northern tribesman differs little between that on, for example, the *Gemma Augustea*, and that over a century later on the Trajanic and Aurelian columns.

²²⁴ B. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, 2004 (Princeton), p. 138.

²²⁵ See above, n.89 op. cit.

²²⁶ n.224 op. cit., p. 198.

relevant animal.

How may we apply Isaac's scheme here to northern peoples as we have found them portrayed in the sources we have looked at thus far? It seems clear that we are in fact witnessing a bit of both of these phenomena. It is certainly true that in some of the instances we have looked at, where Germans or Britons are referred to as or being like animals, this is intended to either deny, or at least to detract from, their humanity. The above discussed example from Florus, in which he describes the Insubrian Gauls and Alpine peoples as having had the souls of wild animals,²²⁷ must count as one such example. Likewise the following example from the first century encomiast-historian of Tiberius, Velleius Paterculus, when he comments of the Germans under the general Varus:²²⁸

is cum exercitui, qui erat in Germania, praesent, concepit esse homines, qui nihil praeter vocem membraque haberent hominum, quique gladiis domari non poterant, posse iure mulceri.

As in Florus' case Velleius seems to be implying that the Germans only seem outwardly to be men in voice and limb but, it is implied, that are in fact little other than animals. The passive infinitive of *mulcere*, to tame, makes this especially clear. In both of these examples, they may not overtly be being called animals, but the effect is the same as Isaac implies: their humanity is denied. This is not to pass any judgement upon whether this is intended to be pejorative or laudatory, which would depend upon context, but it does reduce their humanity.

Where may we detect the second of Isaac's phenomena at work, whereby animals are described as like humans, and humans are in turn attributed these characteristics? We have of course not looked at any actual animal fables in this paper, as none involve presentation of northern Europeans, but this was obviously an established literary genre in the ancient world.²²⁹ However, the close juxtaposition of animal and human descriptions, such as we saw in Caesar's comments on the Hercynian wood at the beginning of this paper, have the same intent: to attribute to the Germans (and outlying Gauls) the beastly nature of their cohabitant fauna and environment. As previously discussed, the same is at work in the case of Pliny the Elder in his placing together of descriptions of animals and their natural environment with character traits of peoples living at the extremes of the world.²³⁰ Livy does likewise when he has his Manilius exhort his men with an analogy of relocated beasts losing their ferocity.²³¹ Again however such analogies are not inherently positive or negative, depending upon what purpose the author in question makes the analogy serve.

²²⁷ n.72 op. cit.

²²⁸ Velleius Paterculus, 2.117.3.

²²⁹ Aesop's fables are of course the exemplum of the genre. For a Roman example, see the Augustan fabulist Phaedrus' version of the Aesopic fables.

²³⁰ n.87 op. cit.

²³¹ n.70 op. cit.

Isaac himself settles with the judgement that this was however a predominantly negative attribution to be made in the case of race, based upon the origins of such thought in Greek philosophy.²³²

People were considered bestial if controlled by feelings and passions rather than rational processes... This is thought typical of distant foreigners and of pathological Greeks.

To the extent that such animalian attributions are obviously considered incompatible with Roman *imperium* and world-order, this would definitely be a negative trait. However, as we have seen, animals were also viewed in a blessed state at other times, and this standpoint undoubtedly came to inform some authors' views of their northern neighbours while still grounded in the prejudice that they were indeed like animals.

Primitivism and Barbarians

Themes which we have touched upon variously in this paper, this conclusion returns us to issues of Roman attitudes towards primitivism and progress, barbarity and civilisation. From the post-war period onwards there has been much scholarship on Roman attitudes to primitivism which has attempted to debunk the idea that all schemes must adhere to that of the golden age followed by inevitable decline. Here a natural focus is and has been Lucretius, who deals extensively with ideas of progress, and whom we have already seen to describe the past as an age of untamed ferocity.²³³ Taylor described Lucretius' Epicureanism and his positive attitude to progress as follows:²³⁴

Man was not searching for what had once been his and then lost in a long retrogression. The physical security and enlightenment which were essential for the attainment of the good life could only have come with the process of civilisation, and despite the new problems which that process entailed, the door was still open to further knowledge and enlightenment. There is, we repeat, nothing inevitable about it and Lucretius himself frequently dwells on the darker side of the picture.

A few years later, in a similar article examining primitivism in Virgil, she expressed a similar view, stating this yet more explicitly:²³⁵

There is no golden age in Lucretius. It is true that he tells of a period after savagery in which the more intelligent, handsome, and physically strong dominated the early community (V, 1105-12). This last quality scarcely suggests an era of peace and moral enlightenment.

²³² n.224 op. cit., p.200.

²³³ n.142 op. cit.

²³⁴ M. E. Taylor, 'Progress and Primitivism in Lucretius', *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 68, No. 2 (1947), pp. 180-194, p. 194.

²³⁵ M. E. Taylor, 'Primitivism in Virgil', *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 76, No. 3 (1955), pp. 261-278, p. 263.

A caveat to what Taylor says, in the last sentence quoted here, would be that yes of course domination by the strong does not imply an enlightened era but, whatever the truth of such from a Roman perspective, to approach the issue thus is to judge by our own post-Enlightenment view of progress. While Taylor is most probably correct here, it is worthwhile remembering the elementary observation that almost everyone today shares the consensus on scientific progress, but that this may not have been the norm two millennia ago.

In the second section of this thesis we looked at Virgil's presentation of the native Italians in the second half of the *Aeneid*. Taylor also discussed this in the latter of the above-cited papers, and argued that this presentation owed much to the old tradition of the environmental theory of race.²³⁶

The long line of these works had from the start stressed the relation of a people's character to physical surroundings and conditions. These treatises were many of them deeply imbued with a primitivistic strain in the criticism, direct or indirect, of the author's more effete society in contrast with the hardy virtue of simpler, more "natural" peoples.

Indeed in this context Taylor continues with a brief discussion of the barbarian, the Roman view of whom she describes as: 'crude children of nature who bring their own destruction upon themselves', which is a result of their lack of 'self-control' and 'moral obligations'.²³⁷ For Taylor then this Roman attitude towards primitivism was ever present and closely tied up with the environmental theory.

As we have seen in the case of scholarship on Caesar and Tacitus, the trend has subsequently tended ever the more towards an approach stressing the Romano-centric foundation of such views. The scholarship on Greco-Roman attitudes towards primitivism has also tended in a similar direction. In a book on the subject, *Inventing the Barbarian*, Hall traced the origins of characterisation of the barbarians as primitive to Classical Greek tragedy.²³⁸

In fifth-century tragedy the Greeks are insistently demarcated from the rest of the world by the conceptual polarity of which all other distinctions in culture and psychology are corollaries, the polarity labelled as the gulf between Hellene and barbarian.

However notably for Hall this characterisation of the barbarian has little to do with the barbarians themselves as determinant factors but rather internal Greek attitudes:²³⁹

The idea of the barbarian as the generic opponent to Greek civilisation was a result of this heightening in Hellenic self-consciousness caused by the rise of Persia.

²³⁶ n.235 op. cit., p. 270.

²³⁷ n.235 op. cit., p. 272.

²³⁸ E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian*, 1989 (Oxford), pp. 3-4.

²³⁹ n.238 op. cit., p. 9.

According to Hall's position then, likewise for Romans characterisation of the barbarian and outsider was a matter of self-definition, as we have seen in many recent views of this subject.

However the schemata of authors such as Lucretius and Virgil, positing a providential rise of man's fortunes coupled with civil and technological progress, are not exhaustively representative of extant Roman views on the subject, and as often Seneca provides a counterweight to this position. In his above mentioned study of Pliny's view of the free Germans, Sallmann has remarked upon Seneca's more cynical attitude towards progress as follows:²⁴⁰

...the inventions of men have become unnatural, more *sagax* than *sapiens*, while nature herself is *sapiens*, not *sagax*: she provided the simple means necessary for a solid and safe life, not the refinements of an advanced technology of egoism.

It would certainly be an intriguing question to know what Sallmann's Seneca would have made of the modern age, and of course this strain of thinking has recurred through the ages side by side with the positive attitude towards progress represented by Lucretius and Virgil. We have seen already how Seneca presented the Germans as somehow morally improved by nature,²⁴¹ something Sallmann likewise draws attention to. There is certainly a recognition then in Roman authors, perhaps not always explicitly stated but nonetheless often governing their thinking, that there is a virtue in primitivism the loss of which may be the inevitable price of progress. This primitivism is characterised through the natural environment, its flora and fauna. Abundantly evident in Tacitus' works, in whose case it is carried to such a degree that it is at times tinged with melancholy,²⁴² it can be felt to a lesser degree in Caesar's commentaries and in other historians and poets too.

City and Country Polarities

Before we leave this topic of the natural environment and conclude with a final re-examination of the environmental theory of race, we must note another important opposition we have mentioned above in the context of Amata as bacchant in the *Aeneid* and the connotations of the *Bacchae*:²⁴³ that of the city-countryside opposition. We have seen how many Roman authors noted the fact that the Germans did not live in cities but in the forests in loose communities. Similarly the Scythians had from Herodotus onwards been the archetypal nomads. By contrast Rome's whole empire was centred on the *Urbs*, just as Greek civilisation had been founded on a series of city-states and their alliances. By association agriculture became the defining marker of civilisation, something the barbarians are often noted as lacking. As Woolf noted in his study of Romanisation:

²⁴⁰ n.85 op. cit., p. 114.

²⁴¹ n.79 op. cit.

²⁴² As for example in the earlier discussed episode subsequent to Agricola's defeat of the Caledonians (Tacitus, *Agricola*, 38), where the tone is certainly one of pity.

²⁴³ See above, n.128 op. cit.

The association of settled agriculture with civilisation and the attribution to barbarians of a nomadic existence, depending on hunting or livestock alone, was a classical trope.

By the time Caesar and his successors came to write about the north as they did, these motifs were clearly well-established, having operated for several centuries. Such an untamed forested landscape was quite the opposite of this model of civilisation. In his analysis of Caesar's view of the north, Shake describes pointedly how the Hercynian forest would have fitted into this world view:²⁴⁴

Forests can be seen as the antithesis of civilisation: they are primeval landscapes, untouched by human activities such as agriculture or the building of towns. The length of the digression on the Hercynian forest suggests that such uncultured lands constitute a significant aspect of Germania, and indeed Caesar claims the forest covers an immense area... The Hercynian forest thus resists knowledge and even rumour. These characteristics of Germania's nature agree with what we have learned about its inhabitants: both the Suebi and the Hercynian forest defy definition.

Shake furthermore agrees with our analysis that the animals of the Hercynian wood form an integral part of the characterisation of the environment itself; being 'not within the realm of the ordinary', they 'therefore mark the forest as a unique and extreme part of the world'.²⁴⁵

In recent years research on the Greek novel has also made it clearer that these conventional schemes of the city-country motif for order-savagery were being employed also in genres outside the conventional literary canon. In the second section of this paper we looked at how Longus characterised the wolf in his novel. These same underlying conceptions of the world are also apparent in other of the Greek novels, for example in Achilles Tatius' (*Clitophon and Leucothoe*), as well as in Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*. What these novels have in common is the characterisation of the countryside as the scene for brigandage, or wild changes in the protagonists' fortunes. In a study of the Greek novel Said comments as follows:²⁴⁶

In the Greek novel as much as in reality towns were safe and civilised places opposed to a countryside which formed a zone of insecurity and savagery. Letters by contemporary writers, from Seneca down to Symmachus, attest the urban population's reluctance to venture outside the city walls because of its fear of brigands.

As Said points out, we must bear in mind the fact that there was little security in most of the world outside the towns right through the period of the empire. In such a situation military escort might be the highest guarantor of strength, and thus in such novels falling into the hands of either a military unit or a band of brigands might spell danger. Interestingly for our purposes Said also comments, concerning the labelling of brigands in

²⁴⁴ n.195 op. cit., p. 178.

²⁴⁵ n.195 op. cit., p. 179.

²⁴⁶ S. Said in: S. Swain (ed.), *Oxford Readings in the Greek Novel*, 1999 (Oxford), p.86.

the third century novelist Heliodorus and his *Aethiopica*,²⁴⁷ that the descriptions reveal:²⁴⁸

...an ideological structure which changes all enemies of the Roman order into savage and inhuman beings and assimilates them to "most dangerous beasts", thus legitimating campaigns against them.

Ultimately the reasoning here, as Said extracts it, differs in no way from the imperial attitude as applied to northern peoples: outside the Roman order, savage, in fact more animal than human, and therefore justifiably conquerable. The presence of this consistent polar opposition between countryside and city in the Greek novels of the second century, as equating to dangerous disorder and safe order respectively, attest how widespread and fundamental this conception of the world had become by the era of many of the authors whose works we have looked at in this paper. It comes as no surprise then that, even with increasing real knowledge and even direct rule of the north, Roman writers continued to apply these same conceptualisations to the people and environment they found there, as perfectly fitting the type of the untamed wild as we have seen it from the *Bacchae* onwards. It may additionally be worth remarking upon the fact, although bearing in mind that many of their authors themselves came from the eastern provinces, that many of the Greek novels locate their action far from the centre of Roman influence in outlying regions.²⁴⁹

Germans at Rome

A further historical event we should note in this context is the purported expulsion of the Germans from Rome shortly after the disastrous events of AD9. The evidence for this is scant,²⁵⁰ but it appears that in the panic ensuing upon Varus' defeat those Germans who were resident at Rome were expelled from the city. This does however prove that there were Germans at Rome, which was in any case fairly likely, and of significant numbers for such a political gesture not to be utterly inane. In his book on immigrant peoples in the empire's capital Noy has collated some of the evidence for the German presence at Rome, scant as it is.²⁵¹ Other than this anecdote, and others about Mark Anthony's German bodyguard and of Dio about gladiators and an embassy of the Semnones received by Domitian, he points to epigraphic evidence for their use as bodyguards,²⁵² as well as their prominence in military units, particularly the 'equites singulares'.

From Noy's study it is clear that the German presence at Rome was predominantly a military and security one. It is little wonder then that, vastly overblown as the fear may have been, many Romans felt insecure at the Germans' presence in the wake of the Varian defeat, in whatever capacity. Politically astute as Augustus was, we may infer that his

²⁴⁷ Heliodorus, 2.24.1.

²⁴⁸ n.246 op. cit., p. 86-87.

²⁴⁹ As for example the dramatic twists in Achilles Tatius, which lead the characters to be lost in the Egyptian wilderness, a land of brigands and general lawlessness.

²⁵⁰ Our sources for this are: Cassius Dio, *Histories*, 56.23; Suetonius, *Augustus*, 49.

²⁵¹ D. Noy, *Foreigners at Rome: citizens at Rome*, 2000 (Michigan).

²⁵² CIL vi 6221, 6229-37.

gesture was based upon a knowledge that many were concerned about this. We have already seen in some authors certain fears about the apparent inability of the Germans to be tamed.²⁵³ Nonetheless this must not be overestimated, and the numbers of Germans at Rome certainly remained very low in this period; what matters is the evident widespread fear. Comparing the Germans to the Thracians, and earlier scholarship on this, Noy comments as follows:²⁵⁴

Ricci (1993c, 223) believes that the Germans always remained on the margins of Roman society, and were seen as more foreign than other geographically remoter peoples such as the Thracians. Germans were both admired and feared as 'fierce barbarians', valuable as fighters as long as they were kept on the right side but viewed with suspicion in other circumstances. The people from the Danube region seem, on the whole, to have attracted less admiration and more contempt, being seen as pure barbarians.

If Ricci and Noy's views here are correct, this would furnish a further very good reason for why Roman authors maintained the stereotypes they inherited about northern peoples for so long. Perhaps it was simply the case that the Romans on the whole had very little real contact with them at all. In his discussion of epigraphy for the Germans at Rome, Noy provides another piece of evidence which we might use to reinforce the case for this yet more.²⁵⁵

The designation German, or a reference to Germany, was very rarely used by regular soldiers at Rome, although it was the normal designation for the Julio-Claudian *corporis custodes* and for private bodyguards. The concept of *Germanus/Germania* appears to have been of considerably less importance than *Gallus/Gallia*, and still less that *Hispanus/Hispania*. Most Germans were recorded by their tribe. Very few referred to a city; nearly all those who did came from Cologne. This is a very significant difference from almost every other area.

From Noy's analysis of epigraphic inscriptions left by Germans in Rome it seems clear that the concept of 'German' was not something Germans themselves regularly employed. This is perhaps a little surprising fact when we consider how extensively in this paper we have been looking at these peoples through the eyes of the Romans. Of course we are not here concerned with the historical realities of northern peoples at all, only in so much as they have a bearing upon Roman views of them. Such evidence however is a check to not conflating these two very different subjects.²⁵⁶

Vitruvius and the Environmental Theory of Race

²⁵³ Compare the above discussed indomitableness of Pliny the Younger's Decebalus (n.71), and how Velleius describes the Germans (n.223). The latter is especially interesting for his contemporaneity with the events of AD9.

²⁵⁴ n. 251 op. cit., p.213.

²⁵⁵ n.251 op. cit., p. 217.

²⁵⁶ See the volume of Wells (n.8), cited at the beginning of this paper, for a very different view of the northern tribes based largely upon the traces they themselves left.

We conclude this thesis by returning to the environmental theory of race. This is something we have mentioned many times in this paper, and have seen explicitly spelled out in Pliny the Elder and earlier in a pseudo-Aristotelian text. However, it is nowhere more clearly spelt out than in the preface to the sixth book of the late first century and early Augustan architect and engineer Vitruvius' treatise, *On Architecture*. What Vitruvius tells us is almost identical to what we have already seen elsewhere. The taller bodies and deeper voices of the people of the north may be explained by the climate:²⁵⁷

refrigeratis regionibus, quod absunt a meridie longe, non exhaustis a coloribus umor, sed ex caelo roscidus aer in corpora fundens umorem efficit ampliores corporaturas vocisque sonitus graviore.

Vitruvius explains the physical characteristics of the people of the north by direct reference to the environment and the greater humidity of the air, the *roscidus aer*, and the effects of *umor*. He again repeats the same explanation a few lines after the above cited. Southern peoples' physical traits are likewise explained by the effects of the sun. In the next chapter he continues by providing a like explanation for the greater courage of northerners compared to their southern counterparts.

In these respects there might seem nothing remarkable about what we find in Vitruvius, differing little as it does from what we have seen in the historians, commentators and poets. However, Vitruvius is not a poet, a writer of fiction or even a historian, he is an architect, and his treatise presents itself as a scientific treatise on architecture. Nor is his inclusion of the discussion of racial differences superfluous but is provided in the context as a proof of why different rooms are better suited to the different seasons. It is clear then that Vitruvius expects these chapters to be treated with a like scientific spirit of enquiry as his other chapters.

Indeed if we doubt this, Vitruvius makes the empirical nature of his investigation abundantly clear when, a few chapters later, he proposes an experiment designed to prove the veracity of his statements.²⁵⁸ Making the case that the reason for difference in voice pitch between peoples in the north and south is due to the distance from earth to heaven, he suggests to his readers an experiment using cups of water to prove this fact. Of course all of this is patently ridiculous, but goes to show to what extent even intelligent Romans such as Vitruvius did believe in the environmental theory of race to such an extent that they would even attempt to apply to it a, what we would refer to as, scientific method. In such an intellectual climate it is little wonder that we have seen the northern tribes so closely associated with animals and their natural environment.²⁵⁹ It is this which underlay the political view of the barbarians. As Shake succinctly puts it:²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, 6.3.

²⁵⁸ n.257 op. cit., 6.6-8.

²⁵⁹ We might note also that in explaining the differences between peoples in the north and south Vitruvius himself chooses to use an animal analogy, in this case the snake as it is affected by the different seasons of the year.

²⁶⁰ n.195 op. cit., p. 163

These stereotypes took on political consequence: the 'weak' barbarians, located south or east, were seen as fit to be governed by despots, while the 'tough' barbarian from the north or west treasured their liberty, but, as a result, were unable to organise themselves into a state.

For, as Vitruvius concludes, it is only Italy, in its perfect balance, that is ultimately fit for empire:²⁶¹

Namque temperatissimae ad utramque partem et corporum membris animorumque vigoribus pro fortitudine sunt in Italia gentes.

Environmentally-based views of race had, by the Augustan period, become not just a model for looking at the world and the racial differences within it, but also a justification for Roman *imperium*. This much might have been clear enough from much previous research on Roman attitudes to empire, but it is hoped that this paper has helped to elucidate the question of how the peoples of the north were seen to fit into this scheme of the cosmos.

²⁶¹ n.257 op. cit., 6.11

Conclusion

I conclude this paper by recapitulating some of the conclusions that our investigation of the presentation of northern peoples in Roman literature has reached.

It is first and foremost apparent that there is a remarkable consistency across time and place in the manner in which Rome's neighbours to the north are portrayed. In particular, we have found frequent usage of animal similes, metaphors, analogies, and comparisons, to describe these peoples. This seems to have little relation to mode of writing, since it can be seen to be employed by commentators like Caesar, historians such as Tacitus and Dio, both by epic poets such as Lucan or Virgil and love poets such as Ovid, by philosophers like Seneca, as well as by encyclopaedists like Pliny the Elder. In a word, we have seen such references, at times hardly differentiable at all, scattered across the centuries by writers of different genres.

Our study has also made it clear that a certain idiolect is often associated with this subject. In particular the noun *feritas* and its derivatives, which we have seen in many instances to be closely allied with *ferocia* in turn. These traits are frequently ascribed to the peoples beyond the Alps, and the connotation seems always to be that these are traits inborn, not acquired. We have looked at other usages of these nouns as a means to characterisation elsewhere in Roman literature, and have found that here too they are often conceived as inborn traits. *Feritas/Ferocia* as applied to humans assumes the fundamentally hostile and untameable nature of wild animals themselves.

We have to some degree examined the understanding of wild animals in the Roman world and some of the relevant scholarship on this topic. It is apparent that, as today, there is often a clear distinction made between domesticated and wild animals, and it is almost always the latter that are used for the characterisation of the peoples of the north, save in the case of such animals as the dog in situations where its feral ancestry is being emphasised for a rhetorical purpose. However, we have seen that elsewhere in Roman literature, and in its Greek predecessors, that animals function as a rhetorical device, whose exact nature and portrayal may be changed to fit a specific purpose and circumstance. In light of this it is therefore notable how consistently animals are used to stress solely the *feritas* of northern peoples in this specific context.

Furthermore, specifically concerning the portrayal of Germans and Britons, we cannot say that this presentation was a Roman invention. We have seen from certain earlier Greek texts that this was at least partially inherited from Greek authors by whom the Roman authors in question were heavily influenced. It is apparent from Herodotus, for example, that the Scythian type was already to a large degree set by his time, and this certainly informed later notions of the savagery of Rome's own northern neighbours. In any case, it is clear that Caesar and the ethno-geographers of his period did much to solidify and transmit these stereotypes to their literary successors. As far as specific differences between Germans and Britons may be highlighted, the scholarship already produced explains these differences based upon two factors. Firstly, that Britain, under direct rule

for three centuries, was at least in later periods simply better understood. Secondly, the function of Britain as the island in Ocean in the Greek and Roman imagination. These seem two sufficiently exhaustive categories, however this is in no way to imply that the characterisation of Britain as we have seen it is in any way more realistic or historically accurate than that of Germany.

Finally, while these conclusions are sufficiently proven, we have seen that the matter of explaining why the animal characterisation was used, and used so consistently, is a far more vexed question. Throughout the last century and before, solutions were suggested to this question, and a broad trend may be traced moving from an acceptance of the literal truth of the portrayal as based upon observation, through a more individually oriented focus on authors' rhetorical agendas, towards, most recently, a greater emphasis on Roman views of race and environment. While recognising that there is a great amount to be gained from the rhetorical approach, it is deficient in providing a comprehensive explanation for the reason that, while explaining the motivations of authors in rhetorical set pieces such as the *Agricola* or *Germania*, it does little to elucidate the same ideas as found in, for example, the *Natural History*, or the *Tristia*. A greater understanding of the environmental theory of race in antiquity gives a more universal explanation for all the scattered instances as we have found them. However, further work in this field, setting its usage more clearly against those of other peoples, and of the Italians themselves, as well as the Greek foundations for this and its transmission to Rome, would be the next desirable direction for such research.

Bibliography

- C. Adams, R. Lawrence (eds.), *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire*, 2001 (London).
- E. Adler, 'Boudica's speeches in Tacitus and Dio', *Classical World*, vol. 101,2 (Winter, 2008).
- H. Aili, 'Caesar's elks', in M. Asztalos, C. Gejrot (eds.), *Symbolae Septentrioles*, 1995 (Stockholm).
- J. Barlow in K. Welch and A. Powell (eds.), *Julius Caesar as Artful Reporter*, 1998 (Swansea, London).
- W. Beare, 'Tacitus on the Germans', *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Mar., 1964), pp. 64-76.
- Dr. Borca, 'Adversus ipsam rerum naturam: Note on Tac. Agr. 33', *Britannia*, Vol. 27, (1996), pp. 337-340.
- O. Brogan, 'Trade between the Roman Empire and the Free Germans', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 26, Part 2 (1936), pp. 195-222.
- G. Campbell, *Strange Creatures*, 2006 (London).
- G. Clark, 'Animal Passions', *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 47, No. 1 (Apr., 2000), pp. 88-93.
- K. Clarke, 'An Island Nation: Re-Reading Tacitus' "Agricola"', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 91, (2001), pp. 94-112.
- K. Clarke, 'In arto et inglorius labor: Tacitus' Anti-History', in A. K. Bowman (ed.), *Representations of Empire, Rome and the Mediterranean world*, 2002 (Oxford).
- J. H. Dee, 'Black Odysseus, White Caesar: When did "White People" become "White"?', *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 99, No. 2 (Dec., 2003 - Jan., 2004), pp. 157-167.
- N. W. Dewitt, 'Aeneid IV, 551: More Ferae', *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (1924), pp. 176-178.
- S. J. Epstein, 'Longus' Werewolves', *Classical Philology*, Vol. 90, No. 1 (Jan., 1995), pp. 58-73.
- B. Erickson, 'Falling Masts, Rising Masters: The Ethnography of Virtue in Caesar's Account of the Veneti', *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 123, No. 4 (Winter,

2002), pp. 601-622.

J. F. Gardner, 'The "Gallic Menace" in Caesar's Propaganda', *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Oct., 1983), pp. 181-189.

C. Gill, 'The Question of Character-Development: Plutarch and Tacitus', *e Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 33, No. 2 (1983), pp. 469-487.

A. Goldsworthy, *Caesar*, 2006 (Yale).

A. Gudeman, 'The Sources of the Germania of Tacitus', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 31, (1900), pp. 93-111.

E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian*, 1989 (Oxford).

P. Hardie, *The Epic Successors of Virgil*, 1993 (Cambridge).

P. Hardie, *Virgil*, 1998 (Oxford).

H. Homeyer, 'Zum Keltenexkurs in Livius' 5. Buch (33.4-35.3)', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Jul., 1960), pp. 345-361.

H. Howorth, 'The Germans of Caesar', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 23, No. 91 (Jul., 1908), pp. 417-433.

M. Hutton, *Tacitus, Germania*, 1980 (Harvard).

B. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, 2004 (Princeton).

B. Isaac, 'Proto-Racism in Greco-Roman Antiquity', *World Archaeology*, Vol. 38, No. 1, Race, Racism and Archaeology (Mar., 2006), pp. 32-47.

C. P. Jones, 'Ethnos and Genos in Herodotus', *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 46, No. 2 (1996), pp. 315-320.

C. Kingsley, *The Roman and the Teuton*, 1864 (Cambridge).

A. Klotz, 'Geographie und Ethnographie in Caesars Bellum Gallicum', *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, Vol. 83 (1934).

P. E. Knox (ed.), *Ovid: Oxford Readings in Classical Studies*, 2006 (Oxford).

W. Liebeschütz, 'The Theme of Liberty in the Agricola of Tacitus', *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 16, No. 1 (May, 1966), pp. 126-139.

S. H. Lonsdale, 'Attitudes Towards Animals in Ancient Greece', *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Oct., 1979), pp. 146-159.

J. C. Mann, B. Dobson (eds.), 'The Roman Army in Britain and Britons in the Roman Army', *Britannia*, Vol. 4, (1973), pp. 191-205.

R. J. Mercer, 'The inception of farming in the British Isles', in T. L. Markey, J. A. C. Greppin (eds.), *When worlds collide*, 1990 (California).

C. H. Moore, 'The decay of nationalism under the Roman Empire', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 48, (1917), pp. 27-36.

D. Morris, 'Peopewatching', 2002 (London), pp.390-403.

P. R. Murphy, 'Themes of Caesar's Gallic War', *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (Feb. - Mar., 1977), pp. 234-243.

D. Nash, 'Reconstructing Poseidonios' Celtic Ethnography: Some Considerations', *Britannia*, Vol. 7, (1976), pp. 111-126.

C. Nicolet, *Space, Geography and Politics in the Early Roman Empire*, 1991 (Michigan).

D. Noy, *Foreigners at Rome: citizens at Rome*, 2000 (Michigan).

C. Pelling (ed.), *Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature*, 1990 (Oxford).

R. J. Penella, 'Vires/Robur/Opes and Ferocia in Livy's Account of Romulus and Tullus Hostilius', *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 40, No. 1 (1990), pp. 207-213.

K. Sallmann, 'Reserved for eternal punishment: The elder Pliny's view of Free Germania', *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 108, No. 1 (Spring, 1987), pp. 108-128.

C. Segal, 'Circean Temptations: Homer, Virgil, Ovid', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 99, (1968), pp. 419-442.

C. Segal, *Lucretius on death and anxiety: poetry and philosophy in De rerum natura*, 1990 (Princeton).

H. Shake, 'Caesar's Construction of Northern Europe', *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 58, No. 1 (May, 2008), pp. 158-180.

R. Syme, *Tacitus*, 1958 (Oxford).

S. Swain (ed.), *Oxford Readings in the Greek Novel*, 1999 (Oxford).

M. E. Taylor, 'Progress and Primitivism in Lucretius', *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 68, No. 2 (1947), pp. 180-194.

M. E. Taylor, 'Primitivism in Virgil', *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 76, No. 3 (1955), pp. 261-278.

E. A. Thompson, 'Procopius on Britia and Britannia', *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1980), pp. 498-507.

J. Toynbee, 'Britannia on Roman Coins of the Second Century AD', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 14, (1924), pp. 142-157.

H. W. Traub, 'Tacitus' Use of Ferocia', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 84, (1953), pp. 250-261.

P. S. Wells, *The Barbarians Speak*, 1999 (Princeton).

D. Williams, *The Reach of Rome*, 1996 (London).

G. Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, 1998 (Cambridge).

I. Work, 'Britain and the Britons', *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 6 (Mar., 1954), pp. 255-259+272.

Z. Yavetz, 'Latin Authors on Jews and Dacians', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (1st Qtr., 1998), pp. 77-107.