

**The Roman Eagle:
A Symbol and its Evolution**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

This thesis studies the symbolism of the eagle throughout Roman history from the pre-Roman background to A.D. 211. Its aim is to discover whether the popular assumptions made concerning this well-known Roman symbol, i.e. that it represented Jupiter or Rome, were true or whether it has a range of meanings, previously undiscussed in scholarship. Using a combined methodology of semiotics and cognitive science, I examine the eagle in five chronological periods, each of which are divided into themes based on particular areas of the eagle's symbolism. The first of these themes, 'Physical Animal and Reality', examines the ancient thought surrounding the actual eagle and its use in magic and medicine. The second, 'Concepts and Characteristics', examines the particular characteristics of an eagle (i.e. its eyesight and claws) used for symbolic purposes and the particular concepts (i.e. valour and criminality) it is used to express. The third, 'Religion and Myth', examines the divine nature of the eagle and its connection to deities, as well as its position in myth, astrology, and fringe religions. The fourth, 'Martial and State Connections', examines the origin of the eagle standard and its social and religious functions and the ways the eagle is used or connected to the Roman state or empire. Lastly, the fifth, 'Political Aspects', examines the eagle's relationship to the symbolism of power, through either royalty, important republican figures, or emperors. Due to my methodology, which identifies that symbols have multiple and concurrent meanings, my conclusion outlines the many meanings of the eagle and how they relate to each other. These are categorised into macro-symbolism, which appears across the period, and micro-symbolism, that is defined by particular variables (i.e. location or gender). Lastly, the wider implications draw attention to the multivalences of all symbols in ancient culture and that problems of centre/peripheral identity are bound up within these symbolic expressions.

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Abbreviations

All abbreviations follow the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, unless otherwise indicated in the following list:

Ach. Tat. – Achilles Tatius.

Anti. – Antiochus of Syracuse.

Ar. *Pax*. – Aristophanes, *Pax*.

Arist. Ath. *Apol.* – Aristides the Athenian, *Apology*.

August. *De Doc.* – Augustine, *De Doctrina Christina*.

Barn. *Ep.* – Barnabas, *Epistles*.

BCD Euboia – Numismatik Lanz, *Münzen von Euboia: Sammlung B*.

Callim. *Fr.* – Callimachus, *Fragments*.

Celsus, *TW.* – Celsus, *The True Word*.

Cic. *Ad Brut.* – Cicero, *Epistulae ad Brutus*.

Cic. *Vat.* – Cicero, *In Vatinius*.

Clem. *Recog.* – Clement, *Recognitions*.

CNG – *Classical Numismatic Group*.

Dioscor. – Dioscorides, *De Materia Medica*.

Eleg. Maec. – *Elegiae in Maecenatem*.

Epit. De Caes. – *Epitome De Caesaribus*.

Eur. *Ion.* – Euripides, *Ion*.

FD. – *Feriale Duranum*.

FT. – *Fasti Triumphales*.

GA. – *The Greek Anthology*.

IEphesos – Engelmann, H. et al. eds. 1979-84. *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*.

Lucian, *Con.* – Lucian, *Deorum Concilium*.

Lucian, *Icar.* – Lucian, *Icaromenippus*.

Lucian, *Jud.* – Lucian, *Daerum Iudicium*.

Lucian, *Prom.* – Lucian, *Prometheus*.

Lucian, *Reviv.* – Lucian, *Revivescentes sive Piscator*.

Lucian, *Sac.* – Lucian, *De Sacrificiis*.

Manil. – Manilius, *Astronomica*.

Max. *Or.* – Maximus, *Philosophical Orations*.

Not. Dign. Occ. – *Notitia Dignitatum Occidentis*.

OLD – *Oxford Latin Dictionary*.

Pangyr. Lat. – *Panegyricus Latini*.

Para. Jere. – *Parleipomena Jeremiou*.

Phaedr. *Fab.* – Phaedrus, *Fabulae*.
Philo, *Abra.* – Philo, *On Abraham*.
Philo, *Post.* – Philo, *The Posterity of Cain and His Exile*.
Plut. *Vit. Dion.* – Plutarch, *Vitae Dion.*
Porph. *VP.* – Porphyry, *Vita Pythagorae*.
Ps-Aurel. *Vict. Epit.* – Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epitome de Caesaribus*.
Ps-Plut. *Flu.* – Pseudo-Plutarch, *De Fluviiis*.
RG – *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*.
RPC I – Amandry, M., Burnett, A. M. & Ripollés, P. P. 1992. *Roman Provincial Coinage: Volume I, From the Death of Caesar to the Death of Vitellius (44 B.C – A.D. 69)*.
RPC II – Amandry, M., Burnett, A. M. & Ripollés, P. P. 1999. *Roman Provincial Coinage: Volume II, From Vespasian to Domitian (A.D. 69-96)*.
Sen. *Polyb.* – Seneca, *De Consolatione ad Polybium*.
Serv. *Aen. Com.* – Servius, *Vergilii Aeneidem Commentarii*.
Sext. *Emp. Prof.* – Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors*.
Synt. – Syntipas, *Fabulae Romanenses*.
Theophr. *Lap.* – Theophrastus, *De Lapidibus*.
Vd. – *Vendidad*.
Vit. Aes. – *Vita Aesopi*.
Y. – *Yasna*.
Yt. – *Yasht*.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1: A Roman Eagle in Silchester

When walking through the Museum of Reading visitors are greeted with the small bronze statue of an eagle looking, what seems like forlornly, up at them from its pediment in the Silchester Gallery. Known as the ‘Silchester eagle’ (Fig 1.1) the sculpture has inspired many who have viewed it, as it is the starting point for Rosemary Sutcliff’s famous 1954 novel, *The Eagle of the Ninth*. Discovered in either 1866 or 1867 during an excavation of a Roman basilica, it is about 6 inches tall and hollow, with a small gap on top where, presumably, a lid rested (Fig 1.2). It was found buried in a layer of charred wood, with hardly any context with which to identify it, simply that it dated from the late-first or second century A.D. Its lack of context led to it originally being identified as an eagle from the top of a Roman standard (hence it inspiring Sutcliff’s novel),¹ but more recently archaeologists believe it was simply discarded ready for the scrap metal heap.²

Although it is certainly not a Roman eagle-standard and it may well have been deemed scrap metal at the time of its deposition, there is no indication of why it exists and what it meant to the Romans who bought and crafted the eagle. Surely the answer lies in the scholarship surrounding the eagle? Yet, there is not a huge amount of scholarship to be found. Much of the scholarship that deals directly with eagles in Roman culture focuses on a very specific context from which it can examine its meaning. For example, Carter examines eagles in the book of *Matthew*;³ Reckford deals with the eagle in one of Horace’s poems;⁴ Speidel looks at soldiers holding eagle-standards on second-century grave reliefs⁵; Szkolut analyses the use of the eagle in second-century Jewish art;⁶ or Sauvage looks at the eagle within Latin poetry.⁷ Even though there have been examinations of its symbolism in larger contexts, many of these were conducted at the beginning of last century,⁸ with our knowledge of Roman culture and symbolism progressing in the intervening years. So the ‘Silchester eagle’, without a specific context, cannot have its meaning explained from this very specific eagle scholarship.

Instead we could turn to the general scholarship on birds in the ancient world. The main text for looking at birds in Greek and Roman cultures is Thompson’s *A Glossary of Greek Birds*, which deals with the eagle under its Greek name, *ἀετός*. But while Thompson’s entry on the eagle is full of concepts and ideas it is connected to, from the bird of Zeus to its sharp sight, it is mainly just a list of

¹ Hills, 1873.

² Fulford, 1981: 328.

³ Carter, 2003.

⁴ Reckford, 1960.

⁵ Speidel, 1976.

⁶ Szkolut, 2002.

⁷ Sauvage, 1975: 161-175.

⁸ For example, Cumont, 1917’s examination of the eagle in Syrian gravestones or Mylonas, 1946’s analysis of the eagle with Zeus.

(mostly literary) sources where these ideas can be found. It also does not indicate that there is any change in the eagle's symbolism over time, i.e. did the eagle mean the same things to the Greeks of the fifth century B.C. as it did to the Romans of the second century A.D.? It also gives no indication of the contexts in which these meanings are given to the eagle, or whether it can have a variety of interpretation at the same time. Those wanting to find out what the 'Silchester eagle' meant to the, at the latest, second century A.D. Romans would have to pick through Thompson's categories looking for contemporary sources, or decipher the development across time from their own readings of all the sources he lists.

Other general works on birds and animals in the Roman world approach the eagle in a different way, while some are simply concerned with its naming and the attachment of real eagle species to those described in the sources,⁹ many other simply focus on the most popular and well-known meanings that the eagle is given in the sources. This is what we see in Arnott's *Birds in the Ancient World* and Toynbee's *Animals and Roman Life and Art*,¹⁰ as since their studies are concerned with a large number of animals and birds, the eagle's meaning gets condensed into those that are most recognisable or common, i.e. it is the companion of Zeus/Jupiter; it is a royal and Roman imperial symbol; it is the legionary standard; and that it is connected to apotheosis and Ganymede. In fact, this concentration on the most popular meanings of the eagle in Roman culture is possibly what led to the Silchester eagle's mis-identification as a legionary eagle in the first place.¹¹ Simply looking at the number of sources in Thompson, we get a clear idea that the eagle's meaning was far vaster than these popular meanings would have us believe, and so attaching one of them to the 'Silchester eagle' would be to deprive it of numerous other, and just as plausible, interpretations.

This is where this thesis steps in. The central aim of this thesis is to provide a comprehensive account of the eagle's symbolism across Roman history, from the influences on Roman ideas from pre-Roman cultures to the reign of Septimius Severus in A.D. 211. The idea is to concentrate all of the ancient ideas associated with the eagle into one work that will provide a basis of reference not only for Classicists, but historians and scholars of other later periods. Not only will this help with interpreting the 'Silchester eagle', but also any eagle found without a definitive context. However, this is not the sole aim of the thesis. There are large assumptions made about the eagle's meaning in current scholarship, and various mysteries surrounding its symbolic development. Its attachment to Jupiter is usually assumed in scholarship and occasionally the eagle is simply seen to be a direct symbol for Jupiter, so this attachment will need to be examined to determine whether it is as strong as usually assumed. The eagle-standard also holds a large place in the eagle's symbolism, as, although a military institution, the fact that it looks like an eagle intrinsically links it to the actual animal in

⁹ Capponi, 1979: 78-94.

¹⁰ Toynbee, 1973: 240-243; Arnott, 2007: 3. Arnott is also more concerned with identifying the ancient eagle with real species than with its symbolic meaning.

¹¹ Hills, 1873.

Roman thought. Thus, the standard's origin will need to be explored, to determine when this aspect entered Roman culture, as well as its religious association, as previous scholarship has never clearly defined what role they held in Roman religious thought. Alongside these aims is the exploring of all aspects of the eagle's symbolism, so that references to it and depictions of it can be understood in whatever contexts. This process will also help to highlight how the eagle's symbolism altered or changed over the nearly five hundred years that this study will cover. Lastly, some aspects of the 'Silchester eagle' point towards some of the wider implications that a study of the eagle's symbolism can have on other areas of scholarship. Since the 'Silchester eagle' was found in a Roman basilica in southern England, it could therefore have been produced either by 'Roman' or by 'British' hands. The eagle itself has often been connected to the idea of 'Romanness', and is often said to be a symbol of Roman imperialism, but to what extent is this assumption accurate? By examining the eagle's symbolism across the empire I hope to better understand the larger questions about Roman imperialism and influence on the provinces, as well as questions of identity and what exactly 'Romanness' was and how it was expressed.

However, this study does not exist in a vacuum. The two best comparisons to this study are Mazzoni's *She-Wolf: The Story of a Roman Icon* and Engels' *Classical Cats. The Rise and Fall of the Sacred Cat*. While neither are about the eagle, there are also other significant differences between their approaches and mine. Mazzoni focuses on one particular representation of the she-wolf, that of her with the twins, Romulus and Remus, and even more specifically on the bronze statue in the Capitoline museum. Her study is also far more focused on reception of the image, rather than simply its meaning in antiquity. While a large section is devoted to the she-wolf in antiquity, just as much time deals with its symbolism and reception in the medieval period. Arguably closer to this particular study is Engels' book, as he aims to collect all of the sources on cats in the ancient world and present them in a single volume. However, his approach also differs on timescale, as he traverses the history of cats from pre-history to the high Middle Ages. This extended timeframe is accompanied by a narrowing of focus on what about the cats he wishes to discuss, i.e. he concentrates on their religious aspects in each of the cultures he examines (Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Christian). What both of these studies share in common though is their structure, i.e. following the developing of thought surrounding these animals through chronological periods, which I have also chosen for the structure of this thesis for the reasons discussed below.

While the different aspects of the eagle's symbolism share similar themes, if the thesis itself was organised by these themes then certain vital aspects of the eagle's symbolism would be glossed over. The first of these would be that developments and changes in the eagle's symbolism would be lost within each theme, with the reader struggling to identify exactly when a particular shift in its symbolism occurred. Secondly, often when approaching a problem within ancient scholarship all the information is collected together and examined as a whole, even though it may have been gathered from different time periods. This is particularly noticeable in scholarship on the Roman army, which

will often link sources from the second century A.D. to those from the first century B.C. in a cohesive whole. However, the sources I am examining in this thesis have a definable chronological context, and thus the ideas expressed within them can only be said to have certainly existed after it is seen within a source. For example, if an idea is seen in Pliny the Elder, but nowhere previously, it can only be said to have *definitively* existed from the mid-to-late first century A.D., when we see it in Pliny. Although it could be very likely that it existed prior to Pliny, we have no evidence to confirm that fact without doubt. Hence, the chronological structure of this thesis allows me to place the eagle's symbolism within the definitive context within which the sources were found, but allows for speculation on the antiquity or contemporaneous nature of the ideas within those sources.

Many will be aware of the problems of periodization and the study of history on this macro scale, but the chronological periods within this study are an attempt at reflexive periodization, using the important factors in the development of the eagle's symbolism as reference points. These chapters are listed below: -

1. The Pre-Roman background (up to 338 B.C.): This chapter will examine the eagle's symbolism before its appearance in Roman material, i.e. the possibility of its existence prior to that point in Roman thought and its symbolism in Greek and other Mediterranean cultures.
2. The fourth to the second century B.C. (338-107 B.C.): This chapter will examine the eagle from its first appearance on Roman material (an *aes signatum* or bronze currency bar) until its confirmable introduction as the standard of the legions by Marius.
3. The first century B.C. (107-31 B.C.): This chapter will examine the late Republic, until the establishment of the principate.
4. The first century A.D. (31 B.C. – A.D. 96): This chapter will examine the eagle's symbolism up until the end of Flavian dynasty.
5. The second century A.D. (A.D. 96-211): This chapter will follow the eagle's symbolism up until the beginning of the Severan dynasty.

Each of these periods is then divided into thematic areas of the eagle's symbolism. These were determined after an examination of the sources as a whole, from which five major themes presented themselves. These include: -

1. 'The physical animal and reality': This theme deals with those references connected to the eagle's behaviour and biology as well as its uses in medicine and other 'scientific' areas.
2. 'Concepts and characteristics': This theme includes those sources that make references to particular aspects of the eagle and their symbolic value, e.g. its flight, speed, strength, etc.
3. 'Religion and myth': This theme covers the references to the eagle in any of its religious or mythical aspects, i.e. connection to the gods, representations on temples, and appearances in mythical narratives.

4. 'Martial and state connections': This theme deals with all the references connecting the eagle to the military or any ancient 'state'.
5. 'Political aspects': This theme connects all those sources that reference the eagle's use by a particular regime or individual to represent political ideas or as part of that regime's imagery.

Each of these chapters will also include a small conclusion summarising the main aspects of the eagle's symbolism, connecting together the separate themes into a more definable whole and then analysing it based on the previous chapters in order to track the eagle's symbolism across the centuries. Finally, once each period has been analysed the main conclusion will summarise the eagle's symbolism in each theme and then draw broader conclusions about its symbolism as a whole. Lastly, it will discuss the wider implications this study has uncovered. However, before the eagle's symbolism can be examined properly, we need to clearly identify exactly what a symbol is and how it works. Once that is completed, the introduction will end with an in-depth examination of the types of source material used in this investigation of the eagle's symbolism.

1.2: Understanding Symbolism

When dealing with symbolism in a classical context it serves to define the term and separate it from modern conceptions. We will deal with the latter point first: whether to remove the modern conceptions and attitudes towards symbolism from this study. It is usual practice to attempt to separate modern attitudes from the study of historical concepts so as to avoid any anachronistic judgements. For example, in Ovidian studies when dealing with the subject of rape scholars will often dispense with modern ideas in order to try to understand the ancient context within which Ovid is writing.¹² However, approaching the topic of symbolism with an attitude reconstructed from the ancient sources is problematic. Although there are ancient terms close to that of symbolism and possibly ideas that approach the topic, few ancient thinkers either tackle the problem directly or even refer to its existence. Ovid makes a small reference to images having a deeper meaning than simply what you can see, but never devotes more to that idea than a simple sentence.¹³ And, although Augustine does approach the idea directly, it is more of a Christian allegoric approach, giving it an obvious agenda, and only appears in the late fourth century A.D., making it of little use for the earlier centuries.¹⁴ This is compounded by the fact that the study of symbolism itself only really appears at the turn of the twentieth century, with the rise of semiotics,¹⁵ and so a true in depth analysis of the phenomenon is only possible by embracing modern rather than ancient attitudes towards the problem.

¹² Rimell, 2006 is an example. However, sometimes modern attitudes are used or expressed; Richlin, 1992; Curran, 1984.

¹³ *Ov. Her.* 13.155; Goodenough, 1954: 28.

¹⁴ August. *De Doc.*; Cobley & Jansz, 1999: 6.

¹⁵ See below, p.9.

This leads to the problem of terminology. Again, it is often the case that, when studying an ancient idea, the ancient terminology is often the best possible description of the notion. For example, the term *deditio* when translated literally as surrender does not fully encompass either the Roman attitude towards the concept or even the basic nature of the concept itself. This means that any study of *deditio* will use the Latin term rather than the English equivalent.¹⁶ However with the problem of symbolism this notion is reversed. The term in its ancient context has no relation to the modern concept, as Struck adeptly points out; the word has changed significantly from the Greek *συμβόλαιον* meaning a token exchanged between two people to verify their identity.¹⁷ Although the term developed through the classical period with its use in Aristotle¹⁸ and eventually Augustine and the allegorists,¹⁹ none of these definitions match the breadth of the modern concept. Thus, instead of relying on the ancient term the modern one must be used.

If the modern term is going to be used, then it needs to be properly defined. The easiest way to create a definition is with the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which in the case of ‘symbol’ gives two meanings: ‘1. A mark or character used as a conventional representation of an object, function, or process, e.g. the letter or letters standing for a chemical element in the periodic table. 2. A thing that represents or stands for something else, especially a material object representing something abstract.’²⁰ The second definition, in its vagueness, encompasses the first. So it is the second definition that is the pure definition of symbols. But its vagueness is a problem to any academic study on the subject. The other definitions are no less vague, e.g. ‘Symbolism = the use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities/ symbolic meaning attributed to natural objects or facts.’²¹ This definition of symbolism relies on that of a symbol, neither of which explains the why or how a symbol comes to ‘stand for something else’, or the wide range of what a symbol may portray. Struck posits a definition of a modern symbol which is much more detailed, and seems more adaptable to academic study:

‘the concerns of a modern symbol [are] to produce a form of representation that [has]...intimate, ontological connections with its referent and is no mere mechanical replication of the world, [rather, one] that is transformative and opens up a realm beyond rational experience, that exists simultaneously as a concrete thing and as an abstract and perhaps transcendent [idea], and that conveys a unique density of meaning.’²²

Although more detailed than the Oxford definition Struck is still just explaining ‘what’ a symbol is, not ‘why’ or ‘how’ a symbol exists and works. Any examination of symbolism must explore both of these questions.

¹⁶ See Rich, 2008.

¹⁷ Struck, 2004: 77; Andoc. 4.18; Ar. *Av.* 1214; Eur. *Or.* 1130; Herod. 6.86; *Hymn. Hom. Merc.*; Thgn. 1150; Xen. *Cyr.* 6.1.46.

¹⁸ Struck, 2004: 84; Arist. *Int.* 16a3-16a8.

¹⁹ See above, n.14.

²⁰ Soanes & Stevenson, 2005: 1787.

²¹ Soanes & Stevenson, 2005: 1787.

²² Struck, 2004: 2.

Having examined the science of semiotics, or the study of symbols and symbolism, I found that Saussurean, or structural, semiotics, had little to add to this study. It was far too focused on structures of meaning, rather than the meaning itself. Piercean, or American, semiotics, was far more useful, as it focused more on how the mind processes symbols. But, its creation of specific terminology is only useful in Piercean semiotic analysis and its slightly too complex explanation made it less adaptable to a symbolic study like this one. However, one useful element did present itself for Piercean semiotics, the process of *unlimited semiosis*. This is when an individual views a symbol and creates a meaning, but that meaning then creates another meaning, ad infinitum.

The most useful explanation of symbolism and how we process it, I believe, comes from Sperber's *Rethinking Symbolism*. He first adeptly breaks apart the Structural semiotic approach to symbolism by emphasising that symbolism is not based on auditory perception like a language; that symbolic data does not belong to pre-defined sets of data; and by stressing the individualistic nature of symbolism and the constant learning process inherent in symbolism.²³ But once he takes this apart he builds his own definition of symbolism, moving it into a separate category of knowledge within the mind. He states that within the memory it is usually suggested that there are two categories of knowledge, semantic and encyclopaedic.²⁴ He uses the example of the fox to great effect in explaining this process. The fact that the fox is an animal is semantic knowledge; whereas the fact that it is wild and dogs are used to hunt it is encyclopaedic knowledge. Symbolic knowledge lies in the details of this second category, 'what matters symbolically speaking, is neither how foxes are semantically defined nor what foxes actually are, but what is known of them, what is said of them, what is believed about them.'²⁵ So the statement 'as cunning as a fox', instead of being directly related to a fox, takes on a symbolic value. This is where Sperber introduces the idea of 'putting into quotes' certain ideas in our mind. In this case, the idea of the fox has been placed into quotes in our encyclopaedic knowledge and therefore no longer refers to actual foxes but the knowledge of foxes, which can then be used symbolically.²⁶ He therefore states that 'symbolicity is...not a property either of objects, or of acts, or of utterances, but of conceptual representations that describe or interpret them.'²⁷ We can directly attach this method to the study of the eagle, as, just as with the fox, when the viewer is looking at a representation of the eagle, like the Silchester eagle, the symbolic meaning they gain from it is through this process of 'putting into eagles' and is not necessarily related to a real eagle, just what is thought about them.

²³ Sperber, 1975: 1-90.

²⁴ Sperber, 1975: 91-93.

²⁵ Sperber, 1975: 108.

²⁶ Sperber, 1975: 108.

²⁷ Sperber, 1975: 112.

He then goes on to examine how this process occurs in the memory, and determines that symbolic knowledge is the process of evocation over invocation.²⁸ With regular semantic or encyclopaedic knowledge the brain accesses the passive memory for the relevant information and is given it directly. This is invocation. Whereas in symbolic knowledge when accessing the passive memory either the relevant information is not found, or other information that is not directly relevant is given instead. Sperber gives an excellent example of this in the case of smells.²⁹ When an individual encounters a smell the conceptual representation that is formed is never an invocation, as the human brain cannot process smells in this way, instead it goes through a process of evocation. Hence, smells are always identified with an image, i.e. the smell of roses conjures an image of roses in the mind, even when that particular cause is not immediately present. Sperber also states that this process of evocation is non-linear, that evocation will be different for each individual due to their past experience, their learning and memory.³⁰ These evocations may then themselves become the subject of symbolic knowledge and lead ever more into the individual's encyclopaedic knowledge. Smells serve as a good example again, when confronting the smell of roses, the individual would conjure an image of a rose, which may then lead to a memory of Valentine's Day and so on.³¹

Also central to Sperber's definition of symbolism and symbolic knowledge is that symbolism is not perceptually defined, instead it is a purely cognitive aspect. It is also not defined by sets, again linked to its cognitive aspects as it depends on an individual's memory as its basis, which limits it only to an individual's experiences. This means that symbolism is individualistic in nature, i.e. no two symbols will mean the exact same thing to different people and each symbolic conception is based upon individual experience. Adding to this is the fact that symbolism is a constant learning experience since it is a form of knowledge, which means symbolism within an individual is constantly changing. A good example of this last point is that of a tattoo. If an individual chooses to tattoo themselves with some kind of political slogan that has symbolic value at that time in their life, later, after more experiences and a broadening of symbolic knowledge, they may decide that this tattoo symbolises something different and negative and then have it removed.

Sperber's book is not without of its detractors, which are evident in the reviews of *Rethinking*,³² but each seems to focus on his attention to the defects of the other theories of symbolism, stating they have already been pointed out in previous studies. They do not, however, deny these defects exist. In my opinion, Sperber's theories create an excellent model of what symbolism can be, not reducing it to a system or trying to decode it. Other works seem to corroborate this and negate his detractors. In the 1980's/90's Johnson and Lakoff undertook a complete rethinking

²⁸ Sperber, 1975: 119cf.

²⁹ Sperber, 1975: 113-119.

³⁰ Sperber, 1975: 122-123.

³¹ This process is very similar to Pierce's *unlimited semiosis* mentioned above, p.9.

³² Basso, 1976; Bloch, 1976; Segal, 1978.

of philosophy based on the new evidence given by cognitive science.³³ What they found was that at a fundamental level most of our thinking is through metaphor, which can be substituted for symbols, and that huge degrees of our communication are through the same method.³⁴ This is evidenced by those with autism, who lack the necessary cognitive processing to understand metaphors, as they believe when people talk to them in terms of symbolism/metaphors that those people are lying to them.³⁵ Other studies also corroborate Sperber's statement that symbolic knowledge is a learned experience based upon personal experiences, which are constantly changing for individuals.³⁶ An example serves to illustrate these points. Young children who are going through the process of learning about the world are building their symbolic knowledge from the world around them and their experiences,³⁷ which often leads to them using their symbolic knowledge to make connections which are culturally wrong, e.g. a story I was told of a young child when presented with the road sign for a 'U turn' instead interpreted it as a magnet. More interestingly, Sperber's theories have striking parallels to the Peircean model of semiotics. Sperber, with the help of the cognitive science of his own time and of Lakoff and Johnson, has given a more scientific explanation of not only 'how' symbolism occurs, but also the 'why'. Symbolism is an individual experience defined by personal experiences and influences.

One problem, however, does present itself from this combined theory of symbolism when we apply it to the study of the eagle. If symbolism is a purely individual mechanism, defined by the mind and experiences within a person, then cultural symbolism, i.e. all the symbolism connected to the eagle in Roman culture, would be hard to place. Symbolism would be confined purely to the mind of an individual and therefore barred to proper examination. However, this issue can be resolved. If symbolism is based upon an individual's experiences and learning then it is also based upon that individual's culture, at least to some degree.³⁸ All individuals' experiences exist within a culture and it is from this culture that they gain most of their knowledge. Often symbols can retain their meaning over many generations as they are institutionalised in the culture.³⁹ A modern example would be the union flag. Despite individualistic symbolic interpretations that surround the flag, its basic symbolic function, representing the United Kingdom, remains the same. A symbol may also change its meaning within a culture due to a sufficiently significant shared experience within that culture that overrides individual symbolic interpretations. For example, the symbol of the swastika shifted its meaning from a good luck symbol to one of hate and racism over the course of the Second World War, a definition that was formed by the shared experience of that war and those involved. Lastly, the shifting of a

³³ Johnson & Lakoff, 1980; Johnson & Lakoff, 1999; Knowles & Moon, 2006.

³⁴ Additionally, on metaphor, Tourangeau, 1982; Todorov, 1983.

³⁵ Knowles & Moon, 2006: 64.

³⁶ Dubovicky, 1998.

³⁷ Knowles & Moon, 2006: 77

³⁸ Sperber, 1975: 145.

³⁹ Shklovsky, 2011: 4.

culture in successive generations can lead to a shift in the meaning of symbols in individuals. For example, a recognisable modern symbol is the 'save' symbol in a Microsoft Word Document which to those of my generation is recognisable as a floppy disk, however, for those of my brother's generation (eight years my junior) it is instead interpreted as an SD Card. This illustrates that a generational shift in culture (via technology) has changed the symbol's meaning. These examples show that it is indeed possible to study symbolism without delving into the mind of each individual who interprets them and so we can examine the eagle's symbolism within a culture, without having to examine each individual's exact intentions.

The combination of the theory of Sperber with a basis of Peircean semiotics and the information of Johnson and Lakoff leads to a detailed (and dynamic) definition of symbolism and symbols. Symbolism is the cognitive process from which individuals interpret symbols and derive their meaning using their personal experiences and knowledge as defined by their cultural context. Each of these symbols has a meaning which is constantly in flux with cultural and individualistic factors so that multiple meanings appear depending on time, place, and the particular individual. Each meaning is as valid as another and reflects back certain aspects of the culture and individual that is interpreting them.

This definition has certain implications for my thesis and the methodology I will use when approaching the sources. To explain, let's return to the 'Silchester eagle'. Firstly, the idea that there will be one symbolic meaning attached to this eagle can never be true. The inherent properties of a symbol ensure that it has multiple meanings at the same time, usually dependent on time, place, and cultural values. Each meaning is as important as any other and all work in a dynamic relationship and so I must make sure to explore every possible meaning the eagle may have had in this period. Additionally, there is a slight gap between the cultural and individualistic symbolism inherent within any ancient source. While on the one hand each source can be used to shed light on the cultural symbolism of the eagle in that period, they are also an individual's response to the symbolism and reflect their personal symbolism. Also, since cultural symbolism has a possibility to change over time this could mean that the eagle's symbolism shifts and changes throughout the centuries, but may also be bound by location or particular societal boundaries, i.e. gender, language, religion, etc. All of this complexity of meaning must be kept in mind when viewing the 'Silchester eagle' and attempting to derive its meaning, i.e. that it has multiple meanings all dependent on context and the viewer, and that it is the point of this thesis to explore as many of them as possible. This is true for all representations of the eagle throughout this examination.

1.3: The Eagle as an Animal

Any study dealing with an aspect of the natural world must first establish what the reality of that aspect is. In this case, the biology and behaviour of the eagle and which species of eagle are found in Europe, specifying which of these species would have inhabited the Roman Empire.

First, I will outline those features and behaviours common to all eagle species. Every bird of prey has a large hooked beak with the upper mandible longer than the lower so that it curves. Often the bills vary in shape between species, but they all stick to this basic formation.⁴⁰ There is little difference in the structure of a raptor's wing compared to that of any other bird, but the feathers are usually adapted to fit two types of wing, either a soaring wing allowing for long gliding flight or fast flight wings used for stooping and diving manoeuvres.⁴¹ The talons of these birds are also divided into two types, those adapted for purely the killing of prey and those adapted to catching and grasping it. Both, however, include long legs and extremely sharp claws.⁴² Their senses are adapted for the specific purpose of hunting with a vision c.2.2 times stronger than that of a human.⁴³

There is also much behaviourally that these birds of prey share. For example, although specifics vary between species, it is usual for them to produce small broods of eggs and therefore live for long periods to compensate.⁴⁴ This low breeding rate is then exacerbated by the high rate of fratricide in infant eagles. It is quite common for the strongest chick to kill their weaker siblings either by pushing them from the nest or pecking them to death, ensuring there is only one chick per brood. They also usually look after their young for an extended period after hatching, although again the time varies between species.⁴⁵

There are currently eight species of eagle that inhabit Europe, only three of which are present in the Italian region. However, all birds of prey, including the eagle, underwent a period of extreme persecution throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which resulted in not only certain species becoming extinct but also in the significant reduction of the general population and distribution of these birds. Thus, although only three of these species populate Italy in the modern era they all may have done during the Roman period, but there is no way to confirm this.

The first of the three species present in Italy is the Short-toed eagle (Fig 1.3).⁴⁶ Certain characteristics distinguish this species from the others as it nests and hunts mainly in rocky and sandy regions and its diet is primarily snakes.⁴⁷ The second Italian species is the more famous Golden Eagle

⁴⁰ Christie & Ferguson-Lees, 2001: 65-67; Gensbol, 2008: 10.

⁴¹ Gensbol, 2008: 11.

⁴² Gensbol, 2008: 13.

⁴³ Christie & Ferguson-Lees, 2001: 54; Gensbol, 2008: 11.

⁴⁴ Gensbol, 2008: 28

⁴⁵ Gensbol, 2008: 33.

⁴⁶ Fig 1.3.1 shows its distribution across Europe.

⁴⁷ Gensbol, 2008: 89-92.

(Fig 1.4).⁴⁸ These eagles live for an extended period compared to most birds, up to around 20 years, and have a varied diet which again includes reptiles, especially tortoises, but in a much smaller proportion than its Short-toed cousin.⁴⁹ Last of the Italian species is the Spotted Eagle (Fig 1.5);⁵⁰ however, this species only winters in a small area of Italy. There is not much to distinguish this eagle from the other species other than that the smallest of their young often die from starvation rather than fratricide.⁵¹

The other European species, although not currently resident in Italy, are found in the areas of the other provinces of the Roman Empire, and due to heavy persecution there is a possibility they also may have originally populated Italy as their habitat is similar to the Italian species. The first of these species is the White-tailed Eagle (Fig 1.6). Their biology and behaviour matches the generalisations made at the beginning of this section. Their only real distinguishing feature is in their colouration obvious from the name and image.⁵² Verreaux's Eagle (Fig 1.7) is only found in the far eastern provinces of the empire, such as Syria. Its distinguishing features are a change in habitat to the rockier and drier regions and a differentiation in colouring.⁵³ However, since this species only occupies areas in the Middle East it is unlikely it ever inhabited Italy. The Imperial Eagle (Fig 1.8),⁵⁴ on the other hand, is more widely distributed across Europe and is the most likely to have been common in Italy of the Roman period. This species lives for an even longer period than the Golden Eagle, c.40 years. Also, exceptionally, they often hunt in pairs.⁵⁵ The Lesser Spotted Eagle (Fig 1.9)⁵⁶ inhabits a large portion of Eastern Europe. The distribution shows that this bird is only resident in Europe for the summer and winters much further south in the African Savannah.⁵⁷ The Booted Eagle (Fig 1.10)⁵⁸ also populates a large majority of Europe and notably plunders the nests of other birds and has a larger proportion of reptiles in its diet compared to other species (except the Short-toed Eagle).⁵⁹ Last is Bonelli's Eagle (Fig 1.11).⁶⁰ This is another species that has been severely persecuted and, since it populates Spain, North Africa and Greece is it possible it was once also present in Italy.⁶¹

Despite a number of different species being present in Europe one conclusion seems apparent. From the images seen below it is safe to surmise that, unless interested in ornithology, it would be

⁴⁸ Fig 1.4.1 shows its distribution across Europe.

⁴⁹ Gensbol, 2008: 141-146.

⁵⁰ Fig 1.5.1 shows its distribution across Europe.

⁵¹ Gensbol, 2008: 159-161.

⁵² Gensbol, 2008: 63-70.

⁵³ Gensbol, 2008: 147.

⁵⁴ Fig 1.8.1 shows its distribution across Europe.

⁵⁵ Gensbol, 2008: 148-151.

⁵⁶ Fig 1.9.1 shows its distribution across Europe.

⁵⁷ Gensbol, 2008: 162-165.

⁵⁸ Fig 1.10.1 shows its distribution across Europe.

⁵⁹ Gensbol, 2008: 166-168.

⁶⁰ Fig 1.11.1 shows its distribution across Europe.

⁶¹ Gensbol, 2008: 169-172. Pollard, 1977: 79 suggests that the Imperial Eagle, Golden Eagle, White-tailed Eagle, Bonelli's Eagle, Lesser spotted Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, and Booted Eagle inhabited ancient Greece.

difficult to tell apart one species from another. The layman would recognise each species as an eagle but not necessarily be able to distinguish between the species. The birds even share a majority of similar biological and behavioural features, with notable exceptions. Therefore, it is unnecessary to attempt to distinguish between the different eagle species within the sources, unless the sources themselves attempt it, as many will be dealing with the eagle as an abstract concept rather than an actual animal. The material gathered here is also useful as comparative material for determining whether particular ancient ideas about the eagle have some basis in scientific reality.

We also have to determine whether the bird referred to as *aquila* or *ἀετός* in the ancient sources is actually the bird we refer to as an eagle today. Luckily, much work has already been done on this question. Both Capponi's *Ornithologia Latina* and Arnott's *Birds of the Ancient World from A-Z* deal with identifying the bird known as *aquila* or *ἀετός* with real eagles, using both Aristotle's and Pliny's examinations of eagles as a guide.⁶² Both works come to the conclusion that the *aquila* or *ἀετός* in ancient works are usually eagles, although sometimes the species described may be of the *haliaeetos* (sea-eagle) genus or very occasionally a vulture.⁶³

1.4: The Source Material

This thesis gathers together source material from four main areas used in classical research: literature, numismatics, inscriptions and visual material. Each of these headings covers a vast array of material,⁶⁴ especially in the extended period covered in this study. Thus, for each area an approach to both the collection of relevant source material and the interpretation of that source material must first be established. Only once each area has been dealt with individually can a system be created for combining these separate areas for analysis as a group.

When dealing with an idea such as symbolism the usual problem facing historians in relation to literary sources, that of validity, shifts to a minor detail. As, unlike for a historical event, any authors' mention of the eagle is equally as useful in its interpretation as any other author, regardless of the type of work or its perceived 'accuracy'. However, other problems of interpretation do present themselves, the overarching issue being separating the pre-conceived symbolic associations (either deriving from modern symbolic connections or of the popular ancient associations, like Jupiter) from the eagle when reading an ancient text. Each source must be approached with an attempt at viewing the eagle without any pre-conceived notions of its symbolism and to read only the symbolism that can be gleaned directly from the text. Obviously, this is easier in some cases than it is in others. For example, a source mentioning the legionary standard in passing during a battle scene has an obvious symbolism connected with martial themes. However, when dealing with a more obscure Latin poet

⁶² For Aristotle and the eagle see below, p.22 for Pliny and the eagle see below, p.112.

⁶³ Capponi, 1979: 78-94; Arnott, 2007: 3.

⁶⁴ This includes over 500 literary references and coins and nearly 400 pieces of visual material.

who identifies the eagle as an aspect of a particular hero, more thought and detail is needed. From this basic interpretation of the obvious symbolism in the passage the more complex construction is then sought. The complex symbolism present in each text is gleaned through the examination of the source's context and authorship; this is when the usual historical method is applied. The author's personal history, worldview, the purpose behind the text, the inherent messages within it, and its audience must all be taken account of. Additionally, this is coupled with an examination of the culture of the period and how it reflects on that particular text. Each of these factors may influence the symbolism in the passage or may reveal aspects which were previously hidden.

This leads to the problem of the collection and organisation of these passages. To the best of my ability I have gathered together every reference to *aquila* and the associated words⁶⁵ in the Latin texts of the period under study through searchable databases. This process was then repeated in Greek for *ἀετός* and its related words.⁶⁶ Although I cannot guarantee that I have collected every possible reference to the eagle in the literature of these periods, I have attempted to be as comprehensive as possible. These sources were then associated with their appropriate period (both by date of authorship but also the contextual date of the material they are writing about) and then categorised in relation to the themes outlined above.

Moving on to numismatics, this study only takes account of the coinage produced in Rome and the Roman Empire, i.e. the coinage of areas outside of Rome are only included as and when they are added to imperial territory or directly relevant to the Roman coinage. Before any interpretation of coins takes place however, the history of Roman coinage must first be understood. Roman coins first appear in the early third century B.C. as the Roman state expanded into Italy and were originally minted at the behest of and controlled by the state.⁶⁷ This changed in c.130s B.C. as the choice and influence on coinage turned to the moneyers and their respective *gens*.⁶⁸ Up until the appearance of Caesar, only gods had appeared on the coinage, but once Caesar placed himself on coins the imagery opened up from purely religious into a vehicle for personal political imagery. This was developed by Augustus, as the coinage began to display the official imagery of the emperor and through him the state.⁶⁹ This state of affairs continued through much of the first and second centuries A.D.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ E.g.: *aetitis* (eagle-coloured stone), *aetites* (eagle-stone), *aquilifer* (eagle-bearer), *clagalopes* (species of eagle), *flammiger* (synonym), *haliaetos* (sea-eagle), *melanaetos* (black eagle), *morphnos* (lake-eagle), *percnos* (species of eagle), *plancus* (species of eagle), *valeria* (species of eagle), *signifer* (standard-bearer, see below for the reasoning behind its inclusion, p.97).

⁶⁶ E.g.: *ἀγάλοχον* (eagle-wood), *ἀέτειος* (of the eagle), *ἀετιδέυς* (eaglet), *ἀετίτης* (eagle-stone), *ἀετογενής* (bearing a mark in the shape of an eagle), *ἀετοφόρος* (eagle-bearer), *ἀετώδης* (eagle-like), *αἰετηδόν* (like an eagle), *αἰετόεις* (of eagle-kind), *αἰετός* (alternate spelling), *ἀλιάετος* (sea-eagle), *ἄρξιφος* (Persian word for eagle), *βυρσαίετος* (leather-eagle), *κυκνίας* (white eagle), *μελᾶνάετος* (black eagle), *πλάγγος* (species of eagle), *ὑπάετος* (species of eagle), *χάρων* (synonym), *χρῦσάετος* (golden eagle).

⁶⁷ Von Reden, 2010: 48; 51.

⁶⁸ Howgego, 1995: 67.

⁶⁹ Howgego, 1995: 69.

⁷⁰ Von Reden, 2010: 54-55.

As this history shows there are common themes that need to be understood when interpreting the symbolism of coinage. Firstly, that throughout its history the imagery is guided, if not by the state and the imperial family, by powerful individuals seeking recognition. The coinage of the empire presents the official imagery of the state and contrasts well with the individualistic nature of the literary sources.⁷¹ However, just because the coinage is state produced, this does not indicate homogeneity of interpretation. Each regime used its coinage in a specific way and chose its imagery for specific reasons, influenced not only by the context of the history of Roman coinage seen above, but also the inherent cultural aspects of that period.⁷² Secondly, coinage provides a wide geographical view of symbolism, especially in the case of provincial coinage.⁷³ This provides a possible window of interpretation of the symbolism inherent in the eagle for those people who did not participate in the writing of sources.⁷⁴ Lastly, it is worth mentioning the inescapable connection between coinage and the military. Often coins were minted purely to pay the legions and this is often reflected in the choice of imagery and thus reflects on the symbolism inherent in these images.⁷⁵

As for the collection and organisation of the presence of eagles on coinage I used an extensive online database of coins,⁷⁶ which was then supplemented by the *RPC* and *RIC*,⁷⁷ and collected together all those types which contained an eagle. These were then categorised chronologically to fit each chapter. Each coin was interpreted first through the images present on it and then by who produced it and where it was minted, i.e. which emperor and whether it was provincial or imperial. Then by examining this imagery alongside the relevant context of the coins' production and dissemination I attempted to uncover any further symbolism connected with that particular representation of the eagle.

Inscriptions, although technically another literary source, require their own approach when it comes to interpretation. Keppie provides a detailed description of the process of how an inscription comes to be,⁷⁸ but more important to their interpretation are the categories that scholars have divided them into, each with a bearing on how the text must be read. Inscriptions can be divided into five broad categories: laws; treaties and other public documents; building inscriptions, i.e. those commemorating construction etc.; commemorative inscriptions honouring a particular individual; altars and religious dedications; and lastly, funerary inscriptions.⁷⁹ Defining which category a

⁷¹ Grant, 1958: 11; Breglia, 1968: 7.

⁷² Grant, 1958: 17; Howgego, 1995: 72. There is an idea of viewing the imagery of Roman coinage as a 'language', i.e. a structural semiotic approach, but much like the previous discussion of the individual nature of symbolism I believe it benefits the study of these coins to interpret them through their individual context rather than to view the images as a system; Howgego, 1995: 75-77.

⁷³ Breglia, 1968: 7; Howgego, 1995: 62.

⁷⁴ Howgego, 1995: 72-74.

⁷⁵ Von Reden, 2010: 54.

⁷⁶ www.wildwinds.com [Accessed on 04/10/2013].

⁷⁷ Crawford, 1974; Sutherland, 1984.

⁷⁸ Susini, 1967: 2; 50; Keppie, 1991: 12-15.

⁷⁹ Keppie, 1991: 23.

particular inscription fits into shapes the interpretation of that passage within the confines of the information relevant to that particular usage.⁸⁰ Inscriptions cover a wide range of functions within these categories and they touch on every aspect of Roman life.⁸¹ It must be remembered though, that each inscription is always produced for permanent public display and so all the choices leading up to its creation are influenced by this use.⁸² Once again, though, each inscription is subject to its historical context, its purpose, and its intended audience just as any other literary text. However, unlike literary texts, often an inscription's context is narrowly defined and can be clearly placed.⁸³ Just as with the literary sources and coinage an examination of the historical context of any inscription is likely to reveal a deeper symbolism within every statement, the clearest example being the *Res Gestae*.⁸⁴ However, there is an important aspect that differentiates inscriptions from the sources already discussed, that of public display. By their very nature inscriptions were intended to survive beyond the inscriber's death and be read by any individual that happened upon it, in fact inscriptions were a perpetual factor in every Roman's daily visual environment from the moment each of them were erected to the moment they were destroyed.⁸⁵ In regards to interpreting the symbolism in these inscriptions it is worth remembering those of earlier periods were still extant in the later periods and still contributed to the overarching symbolic trends.⁸⁶

The collection and organisation of inscriptions, however, is more difficult than that of the literary or numismatic sources. Although almost all the extant ancient inscriptions are collected in the combined volumes of *CIL* and *ILS*, the indices of the vast majority of these volumes are inadequate for my purposes, as they only list names, gods, places, etc.⁸⁷ So much so that rather than being able to pick up on specific words as was possible in the literary sources, only those relevant to the themes picked out at the formation of the volume will be present in the index. This translates to only being able to find those Latin words that relate to the Roman military system.⁸⁸ Despite this problem with *CIL*, there are a few online databases of inscriptions with the ability to search particular words, such as *aquila*.⁸⁹ The relevant passages on these sites have also been collected together. The passages have

⁸⁰ Keppie, 1991: 24; 131.

⁸¹ McLean, 2011: 1-2.

⁸² Susini, 1967: 64.

⁸³ Susini, 1967: 52; McLean, 2011: 2.

⁸⁴ Keppie, 1991: 131.

⁸⁵ Susini, 1967: 52-54.

⁸⁶ This argument can also be made for literary texts.

⁸⁷ Gordon, 1983: 8-10.

⁸⁸ I.e. *aquilifer*, *signifer*.

⁸⁹ These include www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de/home [Accessed 04/10/2013]; www.edr-edr.it [Accessed 04/10/2013]; www.eda-bea.esm [Accessed 04/10/2013]; www.manfredclaus.de/gb/ [Accessed 04/10/2013]; epidoc.sourceforge.net [Accessed 04/10/2013]; insaph.kcl.ac.uk/ala2004 [Accessed 04/10/2013]; insaph.kcl.ac.uk/iaph2007 [Accessed 04/10/2013]; irt.kcl.ac.uk/irt2009/index [Accessed 04/10/2013]; odur.let.rug.nl [Accessed 04/10/2013]; usepigraphy.brown.edu [Accessed 04/10/2013]; www.currentepigraphy.org [Accessed 04/10/2013]; www.eagle-eagle.it [Accessed 04/10/2013]; and some useful books with indices, Bérard, 1986.

then been treated similarly to the literary sources, firstly picking out the obvious themes and symbolism and then examining each particular context before being they are categorised into the major themes.

The last area of evidence is that of Roman visual material. Like coinage the selection of artwork within this study must be explained as I have largely only included imagery specifically created within the Roman Empire, unless it directly impacts on the study.⁹⁰ Contrary to the previous sources under discussion the subject of the interpretation of visual material has received great debate in the current scholarship. Many, notably Holscher, subscribe to the method of viewing art through the ideas of structural semiotics, identifying the images and motifs present in Roman art as a kind of grammar which allows for the interpretation of all of Roman art through these defined rules.⁹¹ I have stated above the issues that structural semiotics has with the problem of symbolism⁹² and much of the same issues appear when discussing the interpretation of art through a ‘language of images.’ It removes the innate individualistic nature of artwork, in both its conception and its perception. Thus I agree more with Clarke’s method of the interpretation of visual evidence, which is a much more contextual approach.⁹³ He posits that the questions of form and style of the artwork, as well as what it represents, should be coupled with the contextual information such as its patron, maker, viewer and tradition.⁹⁴ He approaches his case studies from the position of different individuals within Roman culture and their individual viewing experience of an artistic representation.⁹⁵ Due to the individualistic nature of symbolism,⁹⁶ it serves to approach the interpretation of eagles in Roman art with a similar method. Not only must the obvious symbolism be noted, those clearly stated by the artist and patron, but this must also be coupled with an understanding of its individual context and also open to alternative interpretations based on the possibility of individualistic symbolism within Roman culture. Seeking this alternate symbolism within artwork has its limits however, as any individual is bound by their cultural conceptions, another aspect of an artwork’s context.⁹⁷ It is also worthy of mention that, just like inscriptions, artwork survives past its original period and thus, if relevant, should be interpreted, or at least considered, in the periods following its creation.

Roman art is the most inconsistent source within this study in the means of its collection. Unlike all the source material previously mentioned there is no full catalogue of every piece of Roman artwork that can be searched to provide a comprehensive list of representations of the eagle.

⁹⁰ The issue of what exactly is ‘Roman’ and what is ‘non-Roman’ is a large and complex one, one which will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 5, once it becomes directly relevant to the source material, see below p.108.

⁹¹ Bryson, 1991; Holscher, 2004; Clarke, 2006: 9-10.

⁹² See above, p.9.

⁹³ Clarke, 2006: 3-4.

⁹⁴ D’Ambra, 1993; Clarke, 2006: 3-4.

⁹⁵ Clarke, 2006: 9-10; 12.

⁹⁶ See above, p.11-12.

⁹⁷ Clarke, 2006: 12.

Therefore, instead of insisting on a comprehensive account of the eagle within Roman artwork it is easier to provide a sample for each of the categories of Roman artwork, i.e.: sculpture; wall painting and stucco; mosaics; decorative metalwork, jewellery and gems; and pottery.⁹⁸ These samples were chosen based on two criteria: firstly, their availability as I only included visual material which I was able to accumulate; and secondly, their notability and significance to my particular themes. Each artwork was interpreted on its basic symbolic level, including any symbolism defined by its specific context and then any alternative interpretations sought by viewing it from its cultural context. Once these symbolic associations have been noted they were organised into the major themes stated above.

Two threads run through this discussion of interpretation and organisation that allows us to combine these distinctly different source materials into a resource for analysis. The first of these is context. Each area of source material depends almost entirely on its contextual interpretation for an analysis of its symbolism. Since contextual interpretation is paramount, then if separate source materials share their context, they become easier to synchronise together into an analytic whole, as much of their symbolism will be based around the same cultural system. Thus, with this study divided into separate periods, each distinguished by certain cultural shifts the source material of each period is combined due to their shared context. Secondly, the major themes I have distinguished in the source material are broad enough so that they can include all four types of evidence within their headings. Although some types of evidence may outweigh others in certain themes, they each share a common symbolic theme which allows them to be combined for analysis.

⁹⁸ A selection of collections I used: *LIMC*; Oswald & Pryce, 1920; Swindler, 1929; Higgins, 1961; Strong, 1966; Richter, 1971; Henig, 1974; 1983; Bailey, 1975; 1980; Kleiner, 1977; Dunbabin, 1978; 1999; Davey, 1982; Harden, 1987; Ogden, 1992; Kuttner, 1995; Blanchard-Lemée, 1996; Huskinson, 1996; Johns, 1996; Ling, 1998; Marazov, 1998; Scott & Webster, 2003; Stewart, 2003; Bayley, 2004; Zanker, 2008; Bragantini & Sampaolo, 2009.

Chapter 2: Pre-Roman Background

2.1: Introduction

This chapter aims to create a symbolic picture of the eagle before the advent of Roman written sources. To achieve this, we have to use a mixture of contemporary non-Roman sources and later written sources to reconstruct something of Roman culture from this period. The sections on the ‘Physical Animal and Reality’, ‘Concepts and Characteristics’, and part of ‘Religion and Myth’ will deal with the use of the eagle in previous Greek thought. The rest of the section on ‘Religion and Myth’ will deal with the eagle’s possible inclusion in Italian foundation myths, and the ‘Martial and State Themes’ section will decipher the origins of the *aquila* standard. However, the nature of the evidence for early Roman History, discussed below, makes this a difficult task. Lastly, the ‘Political Aspects’ section will deal with the eagle’s connection to Roman monarchy.

Since we are examining the pre-Roman period in this chapter there will be more emphasis on the archaeological evidence in Italy than the literary evidence. In fact, the only contemporary evidence of the eagle from Italy in this period comes from archaeological sources.⁹⁹ However, archaeological sources are just as prone to over-interpretation as the literary sources. Although they give us a glimpse into the possible thought about the eagle in the period from which they come, any interpretation must be given with caution. Also, although archaeological evidence may give the only contemporary evidence from Italy it also suffers from certain issues, the largest of these being that most artefacts are found within a funerary context. The possibility of reconstructing an entire society from funerary material is dubious at best.¹⁰⁰ Another issue with the archaeological evidence is with the Greek-produced material. Much of the evidence in Italy, such as vase-paintings, was created in Greece and exported to Italy, both the southern Greek city-states and the Etruscan cities of the north. Although it may seem a problem to use Greek material to report on Roman culture, the fact that this material is being bought by the cultures in Italy shows that they identify with the same symbolic concepts, with some material being produced specifically for this Italian market. Additionally, the fact that these finds appear not just in Grecian southern Italy, but Etruscan northern Italy would imply a large distribution network across the peninsula, including Latium.

⁹⁹ Mainly visual sources like reliefs, etc.

¹⁰⁰ Morris, 1992; Smith, 2000: 20.

2.2: Physical Animal and Reality

2.2.1: Aristotle's Eagle

One of the most interesting, and not easily solvable, problems in the ancient thought about animals is the dichotomy between 'scientific' thought and mythological/religious thought.¹⁰¹ Although there are some earlier attempts, the first text to really deal with the reality of animals is Aristotle's *Historia Animalium*. His text marks a shift into a, at least, 'quasi-scientific' discussion of animals separated from their contemporary/mythological associations.¹⁰² How much of this text, then, can be seen to reflect the reality of the eagle? Apart from the obvious details,¹⁰³ Aristotle does portray certain behaviour of eagles in some places. He states that an eagle lays three eggs and hatches two of them,¹⁰⁴ which corresponds to the common agreed average in eagle species.¹⁰⁵ The amount of time an eagle lays on its eggs, which Aristotle puts at 30 days,¹⁰⁶ also reflects a good average of actual eagles.¹⁰⁷ And his report of the large degree of fratricide among eagles after hatching is accurate.¹⁰⁸ He attributes the name 'fawn-killer' to one species, which also may reflect a reality;¹⁰⁹ eagles can hunt large prey and were persecuted in the nineteenth century due to their threat to livestock.¹¹⁰ A recent photo even shows an eagle attacking a deer (Fig 2.1). He notes that the eagle will sit and wait from dawn till dusk,¹¹¹ which reflects the eagle's hunting technique of sitting on a perch waiting to catch sight of its prey.¹¹² His description of their nesting technique also matches reality.¹¹³ He notes their longevity¹¹⁴ and as certain species can live for up to 50 years this can be considered accurate.¹¹⁵ However, this length is not uncommon for larger birds. He is also right about its sharp sight¹¹⁶ as their vision is twice as effective as a human's.¹¹⁷

But this is not to say that Aristotle does not have his failings.¹¹⁸ His reasoning behind the infanticide is quite different to the reality. He notes a few reasons: one being that the mother finds

¹⁰¹ Lloyd, 1983: 12-14.

¹⁰² Lloyd, 1983: 14-17.

¹⁰³ Its feathers and claws, Arist. *His. An.* 490a; 517b.

¹⁰⁴ Arist. *His. An.* 563a, where he refers to all eagles generally.

¹⁰⁵ Gensbol, 2008: 63-71; 89-92; 141-153; 157-172.

¹⁰⁶ Arist. *His. An.* 563a.

¹⁰⁷ Gensbol, 2008: 63-71; 89-92; 141-153; 157-172.

¹⁰⁸ Gensbol, 2008: 33.

¹⁰⁹ Arist. *His. An.* 618b.

¹¹⁰ Gensbol, 2008: 63-71; 89-92; 141-153; 157-172.

¹¹¹ Arist. *His. An.* 618b.

¹¹² Gensbol, 2008: 63-71; 89-92; 141-153; 157-172.

¹¹³ Arist. *His. An.* 619b; Gensbol, 2008: 63-71; 89-92; 141-153; 157-172.

¹¹⁴ Arist. *His. An.* 619b.

¹¹⁵ Gensbol, 2008: 63-71; 89-92; 141-153; 157-172.

¹¹⁶ Arist. *His. An.* 620a.

¹¹⁷ Christie & Ferguson-Lees, 2001: 54; Gensbol, 2008: 11. Pollard, 1977: 79 agrees that most of Aristotle's information on the eagle is correct.

¹¹⁸ Pollard, 1977: 12-13; 18-19.

more than one chick too troublesome to feed; or that both parents expel them because they are jealous of their ability to eat food; and lastly that when they are young they are tested on their ability to look directly into the sun, with the adult killing those who ‘get tears in their eyes’.¹¹⁹ None of these reflect the truth, which is that, often, the chick will kill its smaller sibling to receive more food.¹²⁰ But although his explanation is faulty,¹²¹ it does reflect a fact. However, in other areas he is just plain wrong. He notes that not just the eagle but all ‘crook-taloned’ birds eject their young from the nest and take no interest in them afterwards, even treating them with hostility.¹²² In fact, once the young leave the nest they are still dependent on their parents for months afterwards.¹²³ He also relates the myth about the eagle, which he treats as fact, that as they grow old their upper beak grows more curved, resulting in starvation.¹²⁴ Although he rejects the popular reasoning behind this, that it was once a man who wronged a guest,¹²⁵ he never questions the story itself.

Most notable in his descriptions is that he associates a range of emotions and characteristics with eagles, especially using them to help in his classification of species. These range through ‘jealous’, ‘bad-tempered’, ‘fierce’, ‘bold’, ‘orderly’, ‘free of jealousy and fear’, ‘pugnacious’, and ‘voracious’.¹²⁶ He even states that the eagle has a natural hatred for the nuthatch.¹²⁷ All of these are human characteristics and reveal a detail in Aristotle’s zoology identified by Lloyd. Although he was attempting to remove popular beliefs about animals from his work,¹²⁸ and certainly does so in some areas,¹²⁹ he does not completely succeed. Inherent in his classification system is the idea that an animal’s character is essential to its being.¹³⁰ He does try to justify this belief in places, explaining that an animal’s physical characteristics reflect its character¹³¹ and he is not going as far as to anthropomorphise them. But essentially he is contaminating his work with the popular beliefs surrounding these animals, like them staring into the sun.¹³² They are based on the circular idea which describes human characteristics through animals which are then imbued with these characteristics.¹³³

¹¹⁹ Arist. *His. An.* 563a; 618b; 620a.

¹²⁰ Gensbol, 2008: 33; see above, p.13.

¹²¹ It is built on his knowledge of animals and based around a reasoning of thought and emotions.

¹²² Arist. *His. An.* 563a; 618b-619b; 620a.

¹²³ Gensbol, 2008: 63-71; 89-92; 141-153; 157-172. Although this varies between species, the minimum seems to be a month.

¹²⁴ Arist. *His. An.* 618b-619b.

¹²⁵ Arist. *His. An.* 618b-619b.

¹²⁶ Arist. *His. An.* 563a; 618b-619b; 620a.

¹²⁷ Arist. *His. An.* 609b.

¹²⁸ Lloyd, 1983: 54.

¹²⁹ Arist. *His. An.* 618b-619b.

¹³⁰ Arist. *His. An.* 488b; Lloyd, 1983: 18-20.

¹³¹ Arist. *His. An.* 490aff; Lloyd, 1983: 23. There is an interesting point to be made about his description of eyes in relation to the eagle. Arist. *His. An.* 492a states that unblinking eyes imply impudence and those that blink are unreliable, this is interesting if it is connected with the importance placed on the eaglets’ eyes reaction to the sun in 620a and may be read as the eagle checking not only the eaglet’s sight but also its character. Interestingly, it is the unblinking impudence which survives.

¹³² Lloyd, 1983: 24-25

¹³³ Lloyd, 1983: 25.

Aristotle does represent a ‘quasi-scientific’ view of the *reality* of the eagle, one upon which all later ones will be based. But, he also reflects some of the symbolic concepts and characteristics that the eagle is already imbued with in his period, and which later Roman writers will use. Aristotle’s thought will therefore play a significant role in the development of thought about the eagle from this point onwards.

2.3: Concepts and Characteristics

2.3.1: *From Homer to Aristophanes*

Certain characteristics attached to the eagle are used symbolically in the pre-Roman tradition. These are: keen eyesight; speed; strength; its ability to fly; and its claws. Its superior eyesight appears in Homer where Menelaus’ eyesight is compared to an eagle’s.¹³⁴ It is clear that this characteristic is picked out because the eagle spots its prey from a long distance away, and that this detail has then been adapted for use symbolically by the literature. The eagle’s speed also appears at various times in Homer to express the speed of heroic characters.¹³⁵ Although the eagle is not the fastest of animals, it is clear where this association comes from as the eagle would be seen hunting swift prey. Homer’s use illustrates this as his eagle similes are usually connected to hunting.¹³⁶ Homer’s use of its eyesight and its strength relate to hunting, and so do these characteristics in the later sources.¹³⁷ The eagle is used for its flight much later than Homer. Some of Aristophanes’ characters wish to be an eagle for this reason, or it is used in some prophecies in *Birds*.¹³⁸ Lastly, the eagle’s claw is used by Aristophanes to make a character threatening.¹³⁹ It is worth pointing out that the majority of these characteristics relate to the eagle as a bird of prey, mostly through hunting imagery. In fact, this imagery makes its way onto the coinage of Greece and Sicily from the fifth century B.C., with the eagle seen hunting a variety of prey on the coinage of various states. Presumably, the symbolism discussed above extended to these early visual representations of the eagle.¹⁴⁰ However, this type of imagery is seen even earlier in Italy, although originating from Attica. A late-sixth century Attic black-figure *hydria* found in Italy

¹³⁴ Hom. *Il.* 17.670-680; Edwards, 1991: 127-128. This comparison also appears in *Hymn. Hom. Merc.* 356-361.

¹³⁵ Hom. *Il.* 15.690-696; 17.670-680; 21.250-255; 22.307-311; *Od.* 24.535-550; Edwards, 1991: 127-128.

¹³⁶ Hom. *Il.* 15.690-696; 21.250-255; 22.307-311.

¹³⁷ Hom. *Il.* 8.247-253; 17.670-680; 21.250-255 and later Pind. *Nem.* 3.80; 5.20-21; *Pyth.* 2.49-50; *Soph. Ant.* 110-115; Griffith, 1999: 146. Menedemus in Diog. Laert. 2.17.133.

¹³⁸ Ar. *Eq.* 1011-1013; *Av.* 976-979; 988-990; Plut. *Vit. Dem.* 19.1.

¹³⁹ Ar. *Eq.* 197-213. The eagle’s scream is used in Aesch. *Aga.* 49-54.

¹⁴⁰ These include the eagle catching hares, serpents, birds, eels, and fish: Elis, c.468-300: BMC 9; c.269-250: Jameson, 1913-1932: no.2510; c.252-208: *SNG Cop.* 426; Agrigentum, c.450-406: Calciati, 1983-1987: nos.10-11; 17; 29; 32; 40; 43; 50; 54; 63-64; 68; 70; 73; 80; 82; 84-85; c.338-317: Calciati, 1983-1987: no.116; c.275-240: Calciati, 1983-1987: no.129; King Amyntas III, c.393-369: BMC 17; Chalkis, c.390-310: BMC 53; c.369-271: BMC 33; 38; 46; 50; 57; 110; Aemeselon, c.357-354: Calciati, 1983-1987: no.6; Croton, c.350-300: *SNG ANS* 369; 432; Herbessos, c.340-335: Calciati, 1983-1987: no.6; Morgantina, c.340: *SNG ANS* 469; Lokroi, c.300-280: Rutter, 2001: no.2324. These hunting imagery could also have been symbolic of abundance, like later images of plenty that rely on natural aspects.

shows hunting scenes involving the eagle (Fig 2.2). This *hydria* is clearly reminiscent of the Homeric hunting scenes,¹⁴¹ so it is reasonable to assume that the characteristics discussed above were widely recognised in southern Italy, and therefore possibly Rome. But, this cannot be proven a certainty.

Behind these surface-level characteristics are symbolic concepts. Both the comparisons of Hector's speed with an eagle are being used to reflect his martial valour¹⁴² and both its connections to Achilles and Menelaus are in a martial context,¹⁴³ which, when combined, symbolises general martial heroism. Eventually, it is just connected purely with the concept of courage.¹⁴⁴ However, in the *Odyssey* it is used quite differently. The eagle's characteristics only appear once in a simile of Odysseus' speed when he attacks the suitors' families.¹⁴⁵ But it is the use of the eagle in the rest of the text which gives this eagle comparison its conceptual symbolism. Moulton shows that the use of the eagle in dreams, visions and portents throughout the *Odyssey* represents not only the return of Odysseus but also the divine justice of this return.¹⁴⁶ The eagle is imbued with this idea throughout the text so that once its characteristic speed is compared to Odysseus' the concept of justice is attached as well.¹⁴⁷

However, not all of the concepts associated with the eagle are connected with Homeric heroism. Later sources, particularly Aristophanes, associate the eagle with those that 'rob and pillage' representing criminals as seizing on the weak with 'hooked claws.'¹⁴⁸ It was also associated with a variety of negative concepts such as jealousy and avarice, mentioned above.¹⁴⁹ These are almost completely opposite to those concepts appearing in Homer, and it creates a dichotomy of symbolism for the eagle. It is both heroic and martial but also rapacious and deceitful. The difference may have something to do with genre, as epic deals with 'high things', and thus presents a heroic eagle, and comedy with 'low things', thus the eagle is rapacious. But these concepts are not unconnected. Both can be attached to the idea of hunting and to the eagle's nature as a bird of prey and link into a higher symbolic concept inherent in these opposing ideas, superiority.¹⁵⁰

The concept of superiority can already be seen in the Homeric texts. It is always connected to semi-divine or Homeric heroes and gods and never normal men. This idea becomes purer in some later texts. Many Greek fables present the eagle as a superior animal, either flying higher or generally being better than other animals in the story, and some sources from this period mention these

¹⁴¹ Hom. *Il.* 17.670-680; 22.307-311.

¹⁴² Hom. *Il.* 15.690-696; 22.307-311; Moulton, 1977: 81-82.

¹⁴³ Hom. *Il.* 17.670-680; 21.250-255; Edwards, 1991: 127-128. Moulton, 1977: 82 n.54 does not believe these last two are martial. Also seen in Soph. *Ant.* 110-115.

¹⁴⁴ Pind. *Pyth.* 5.109-110; Arist. *His. An.* 563a; 618b-619b.

¹⁴⁵ Hom. *Od.* 24.535-550.

¹⁴⁶ Hom. *Od.* 2.141-154; 161-176; 454-462; 15.155-178; 19.546-550; 555-558; 20.235-246; Moulton, 1977: 135-139.

¹⁴⁷ Its possible association with Zeus adds to this, see below p.28-29.

¹⁴⁸ Ar. *Eq.* 197-213.

¹⁴⁹ Arist. *His. An.* 563a; 618b-619b; 620a. See above, p.26.

¹⁵⁰ This is connected to its association with Zeus, see below p.28-29.

fables.¹⁵¹ However, as it is not until the first century A.D. that we get a written corpus of fables, their analysis will be dealt with in Chapter 5.¹⁵² Later sources also use the concept of superiority to great effect.¹⁵³ Additionally, one of Aristophanes' characters wishes to become an eagle so he can 'rule.'¹⁵⁴ These all convey the idea that the eagle is superior to other birds and therefore can symbolise pure power. Whether this power is used for good, as it is in Homer, or bad, as it is later in Aristophanes, is all down to the interpretation of its superiority.

However, not all the concepts the eagle symbolises neatly fit into this overarching concept of superiority. In *Birds* one of the characters wishes he could fly like an eagle.¹⁵⁵ On the surface this seems like another form of superiority symbolism, as he wishes to fly above others in order to become superior. However, later in the play it is revealed that his attraction to the eagle is because of its freedom, not its superiority.¹⁵⁶ Here the eagle, specifically its flight, is being used to symbolise the concept of freedom. Interestingly, though, the character wishes to gain freedom so that he can attack his father,¹⁵⁷ which at the very least links the eagle's symbolism to its martial connections in Homer¹⁵⁸ and at most symbolises the freedom to gain your own power. This is essentially a warped version of the concept discussed above. Also, it is quite possible that the idea of freedom is also connected to superiority, at least in its ancient context. Superiority allowed for a license to act as you wished, essentially freedom.¹⁵⁹

Before the Roman literary tradition begins, then, we can glimpse the basis of the eagle's characteristic and conceptual symbolism on which that tradition will be based. Not only do these texts show the different symbolic attachments within literature, but since they are repeated in the plays of the period, they may reflect the popular symbolic associations given to the eagle throughout the Greek world. As for which of these symbolic uses would have been present at Rome before the advent of written texts, the Attic vase suggests that at least the Homeric elements had arrived in Italy by the sixth century B.C. This means the eagle's speed, eyesight, strength and flight, particularly in the context of hunting, and the associated overriding concepts of superiority and power, may have existed in Italy. The dichotomy of conceptual symbolism connected to the eagle must also be emphasised, as

¹⁵¹ References to fables and general superiority: Aesch. *Fr.* 139 [Plut. *Mor.* 1087]; Ar. *Av.* 651-653; 976-979; 988-990; *Eq.* 1011-1013; *Pax.* 123-130; *Vesp.* 1448; Archil. *Epod.* 1; 87; Pind. *Nem.* 3.80; *Pyth.* 2.49-50; Carey, 1981: 41; Dunbar, 1995: 548; Pfeijffer, 1999: 222-223; Adrados, 2003: 3-5.

¹⁵² See below, p.125.

¹⁵³ Ar. *Av.* 976-979; 988-990; *Eq.* 1011-1013; Pind. *Nem.* 3.80; *Pyth.* 2.49-50; Plut. *Vit. Dem.* 19.1; Carey, 1981: 41; Dunbar, 1995: 548; Pfeijffer, 1999: 222-223.

¹⁵⁴ Ar. *Eq.* 1084-1087.

¹⁵⁵ Ar. *Av.* 1339-1340.

¹⁵⁶ Ar. *Av.* 1347-1252; Dunbar, 1995: 653-654.

¹⁵⁷ This is possibly a play on the infanticide seen in the story of the father eagle killing its eaglets if they cannot stare into the sun, Arist. *HA.* 619b-620a.

¹⁵⁸ Dunbar, 1995: 653-654.

¹⁵⁹ Hes. *Op.* 202-212 talks in a similar manner about the hawk who while holding a nightingale says 'one far superior to you is holding you...I shall make you my dinner if you wish, or I shall let you go. Stupid is he who would wish to contend against those stronger than he.'

many scholars, mostly commentators, focus on either the martial/heroic aspects¹⁶⁰ or the rapacious/criminal aspects¹⁶¹ without acknowledging the alternative.

2.4: Religion and Myth

2.4.1: Egyptian and Near Eastern Religion

Birds can be seen to have had an important role in the religious life of many different ancient cultures. Their importance in Egyptian religion can be clearly seen in the bird-headed gods, e.g. the falcon-headed Horus and ibis-headed Thoth, with the falcon's position in Egyptian culture extending from this position as part of Horus to an expression of other religious and royal notions.¹⁶² However, the eagle did not seem to occupy any important position in Egyptian religion.¹⁶³ Some Near Eastern sources point towards its inclusion in religious ideas in the religions of the area, for example, in a story supposedly from the third millennium B.C., the mythical King Etana is raised into the air and close to heaven by an eagle.¹⁶⁴ The story is even depicted on some cylinders from the same period.¹⁶⁵ The story mentions a close connection between the eagle and Shamash,¹⁶⁶ the supreme god of the region, and some later evidence points to its connection to many supreme gods in the region and to solar deities and symbolism.¹⁶⁷

2.4.1: The Greek Tradition

At some early stage in its development Roman religion was imbued with Greek ideas. The similarities that permeate the two religions are a result of this very early 'contamination' of Roman ideas with Greek ones. Because of a lack of evidence, it is almost impossible to try and identify the point at which these Greek ideas began to seep into Roman religious thought. However, it does provide the opportunity of studying the eagle's symbolism in Greek religious and mythical thought from before the advent of Roman literature to try and establish a basis of thought that would be present in Rome.

The practice of divination¹⁶⁸ is an important part of Greek and Roman religion and it is this aspect in which the eagle features most. Bonnechere's categories help to distinguish between the

¹⁶⁰ Janko, 1992: 303.

¹⁶¹ Dunbar, 1995: 653-654.

¹⁶² Brunner-Traut, 1977: 94-95.

¹⁶³ Brunner-Traut, 1975: 64.

¹⁶⁴ *Myth of Etana*; L'Orange, 1953: 69; Dalley, 1989: 189.

¹⁶⁵ Dalley, 1989: 189.

¹⁶⁶ Later evidence sees the eagle with other supreme gods in the near east, e.g. Bel and Baalshamin, Dirven, 1999: 55-56.

¹⁶⁷ Cumont, 1917, although this evidence seems to come from the much later first century B.C.

¹⁶⁸ Bonnechere, 2007 uses this term as it best encompasses the variety of omen/portents/augury and does not necessarily mean the prediction of the future but just a connection to the divine to impart information.

different types of divination. He splits divination into inductive divination, which is based upon the interpretation of signs which the gods have placed in the mortal world (i.e. bird flights), and inspired divination, which is when the gods speak directly through an individual (i.e. oracles and dreams).¹⁶⁹ Birds are an important part of both these types of divination. In Greek thought they occupied the intermediary space between the earth and heaven (the ether) and so were perfectly suited as messengers for the gods.¹⁷⁰

The most important factor in inductive divination is interpretation; all these signs require an interpreter to identify what message the gods are sending. This then provides a direct interpretation of what the eagle represents to those writing the texts, or at least a context from which to draw the eagle's symbolic (and religious) associations. The eagle appears in several omens in Homer: it confirms a message from Zeus of the Achaeans' victory;¹⁷¹ dropping a snake in its claws, it warns the Trojans not to attack;¹⁷² on two occasions, it flies in from the right to encourage the Achaeans in battle;¹⁷³ it prophesies Odysseus' return in the same manner;¹⁷⁴ and, lastly, its flight from the left prophesies an unfavourable result for the suitors.¹⁷⁵ Already in Homer, then, the way of reading the eagle in signs has certain motifs. It accords with the practice of augury, which becomes well established in the later centuries, that if a bird is seen flying from the right it portends a positive result, and vice versa for the left.¹⁷⁶ However, its interpretation is not completely fixed. It is used to predict victory, to warn of defeat, to encourage during battle, and foretell the return of a hero. Although all these different interpretations seem disparate, there are unifying features that bind them all together. Firstly, in most cases it is the eagle's movements rather than the eagle itself that is being interpreted and secondly the overarching symbolism in (nearly) all of these omens is that it represents the will of the gods. The eagle is being used by the gods as a mode of communication to mortals, through its movements. This gives rise to the question of why the eagle, in particular, was chosen to convey each of the meanings it does in the examples.

The main and obvious reason would be its prominent attachment to Zeus.¹⁷⁷ This idea is well established, but it is worth reinforcing and qualifying. Mylonas points out that this attachment does not seem to exist in Homer or Hesiod,¹⁷⁸ although Zeus is responsible for all bird omens and there is a slight connection made in the simile between Menelaus and the eagle, as he was 'nurtured by Zeus'.

¹⁶⁹ Bonnechere, 2007: 150.

¹⁷⁰ Aesch. *Aga.* 104-159; Plut. *Mor.* 975a-975b.

¹⁷¹ Hom. *Il.* 8.247-253.

¹⁷² Hom. *Il.* 12.200-225.

¹⁷³ Hom. *Il.* 13.821-823; 24.242-247.

¹⁷⁴ Hom. *Od.* 15.160-178.

¹⁷⁵ Hom. *Od.* 20.242-247.

¹⁷⁶ An inscription from Ephesus from the sixth/fifth century B.C. confirms this practice, *IEphesos.* 5.1678; Collins, 2002: 17-41; 118-128; Bonnechere, 2007: 151; Hainsworth, 1993: 340.

¹⁷⁷ Pollard, 1977: 141.

¹⁷⁸ Hom. *Il.* 8.247-253; 12.200-225; 24.315-320; 13.821-823; 17.670-680; Mylonas, 1946: 203-204.

This is merely circumstantial evidence, however, and no real connection exists especially since Hesiod in *Theogony* does not mention one, and instead gives care of Zeus' lightning bolt to the Pegasus.¹⁷⁹ However, by the early fifth century B.C. the connection seems to be strongly entrenched,¹⁸⁰ Bacchylides states that the eagle is the 'messenger of loud-thundering, wide-ruling Zeus'¹⁸¹ and Pindar states that the eagle, because it is 'king of all birds' rests upon the sceptre of Zeus (Fig 2.3).¹⁸² The material evidence confirms this as, at the same time, we start seeing the eagle depicted with Zeus, on both statues and vase paintings,¹⁸³ these include the 'Zeus the Hurler' statues that show Zeus throwing thunder with an eagle in the other hand (Fig. 2.4 & 2.5).¹⁸⁴ The fifth century B.C. also sees the first depiction of the eagle with Zeus on coinage, with an enthroned Zeus with eagle appearing on the coinage of the Arcadian League and in Aetna in Sicily.¹⁸⁵ This connection continues throughout the Hellenistic period up until the advent of the Roman material, not just in Greece, but Sicily also.¹⁸⁶ However, some developments over this period need to be pointed out. While we have seen the eagle, Zeus, and thunder together in statues and while the eagle and a thunderbolt appear with Zeus on various fourth century B.C. coins,¹⁸⁷ the trope of an eagle atop a thunderbolt appears first on a coin from Larissa, interestingly with an obverse of Aleuas and not Zeus.¹⁸⁸ However, although Larissa seems to use the trope first, it is not until Alexander the Great that it becomes widely distributed and the copied by other cities.¹⁸⁹ This image may be a development of the 'Zeus the Hurler' imager,

¹⁷⁹ Hes. *Theog.* 71; 504; 707-708; 853-854; 825-826; Mylonas, 1946: 204.

¹⁸⁰ Mylonas, 1946: 206 seems to think that the connection originates from the Cult of Zeus on Mount Lykaion which was a Mycenaean ritual site taken over by Zeus and, like many Mycenaean cult sites, had two large birds at its entrance. He believes it was the birds at this sanctuary of Zeus that begun the connection.

¹⁸¹ Bacchyl. 5.16-30.

¹⁸² Pind. *Isthm.* 6.44-54; *Pyth.* 1.5-10. Aristophanes says it rests upon his head, *Ar. Av.* 514-517. See also, *Aesch. PV.* 1020-1025; *Supp.* 245-260; *Ar. Av.* 1246; *Lys.* 691-694; *Pax.* 134-135; *Eur. Ion.* 154-165; *Plut. Vit. Dion* 24.3-5; *Soph. Ant.* 1040; *Xen. Cyr.* 2.4.19. It is even used on his temples, *Paus.* 3.17.4; *LIMC Iris I* 100.

¹⁸³ *LIMC Zeus* 68; *Zeus/Tinia* 29; 111.

¹⁸⁴ *LIMC Zeus* 27; 29; 62; 95; *Zeus/Tinia* 102.

¹⁸⁵ Hill, 1905: 74-75; BMC 39, this is also seen in some material evidence, *LIMC Dodekatheoi* 18. There is a small possibility that the eagle, and other symbols on coinage from this period, all represent the wheel of a zodiac centred on Delphi, with the eagle an earlier sign for Scorpio. This is, at least what Richer, 1967 thinks. However, there is no ancient evidence connecting the eagle and Scorpio, just the modern astrological tradition. Additionally, Richer, although an accomplished scholar of French poet Gérard de Nerval (Humphrey, 1961; Kneller, 1964) seems to be in this instance, according to Robertson, 1968, 'completely emancipated from historical reality' and has simply 'invented' the rules, since he has married later Hellenistic astrological thought with this much earlier material and included various modern astrological assumptions. While this does not make any astrological symbolism in these images impossible, it certainly makes Richer theories highly unlikely; Ziolkowski, 1997.

¹⁸⁶ Elis, c.400-300: *SNG Cop.* 420; c.335-348: BMC 85; Leontini, c.357-354: Calciati, 1983-1987: no.7; Syracuse, c.357-354: *SNG ANS* 477; Agyrion, c.357: Calciati, 1983-1987: no.11; Timoleon, c.345-317: *SNG Cop.* 729; Agrigentum, c.338-317: Calciati, 1983-1987: no.116; King Philip III, c.323-317: Price, 1991: no.1569; Alexander the Great, c.325-280: Calciati, 1983-1987: no.103050.

¹⁸⁷ Leontini, c.357-354: Calciati, 1983-1987: no.7; Syracuse, c.357-354: Calciati, 1983-1987: no.72; *SNG ANS* 477; Agyrion, c.357: Calciati, 1983-1987: no.6.

¹⁸⁸ Larissa in Thessaly, c.370-360: Herrmann, 1925: VII, 11.

¹⁸⁹ Interestingly, though, again this trope does not appear with Zeus on the obverse, but Herakles instead, Price, 1991: no.52.

connecting the eagle to the thunderbolt, but this cannot be definitively proven. It seems then, that by the early fifth century B.C. and through the Hellenistic period the eagle had become the ‘messenger’ or ‘armourer’ of Zeus. This means that it occupies a transitional semi-divine position allowing it the ability to move between mortals and gods and serve the will of Zeus and accompany him on Olympus, either passing on his messages to mortals or retrieving his thunderbolt.

This discussion brings us to another element of the eagle’s mythological symbolism, the Prometheus myth. The eagle is an element of the story as early as Hesiod,¹⁹⁰ although not identified as Zeus’ eagle, and becomes a prominent part of all the representations from the seventh century B.C. onwards (Figs 2.6 & 2.7).¹⁹¹ The eagle is a servant of Zeus in this myth, which reinforces its earlier connection and may also be the reason behind the similarities causing confusion on the Laconian cups,¹⁹² but it also represents the idea of divine punishment. When it is killed by Hercules, freeing Prometheus, its death is representing freedom from his fate.¹⁹³

However, it is not completely accurate to limit the eagle to simply an association with Zeus.¹⁹⁴ Other gods also used the eagle in a multitude of ways. In the *Odyssey* Athena transforms herself into an eagle, showing that the use of the eagle for divine purposes is not simply the domain of Zeus.¹⁹⁵ Apollo uses the eagle in divination when he gives an omen at Delphi, since it is his temple.¹⁹⁶ The omen that appears in *Persians* is also being associated with Apollo rather than Zeus,¹⁹⁷ but the eagle here could simply have been chosen for its connection to Persia rather than Zeus. What is particularly useful for showing the eagle’s connection to other deities in this period is the numismatic evidence. At the same time Zeus is appearing with the eagle on coinage (the fifth century B.C.) it also appears with a number of other traditional deities (Nike,¹⁹⁸ Herakles,¹⁹⁹ Hera,²⁰⁰ and Athena²⁰¹) as well as local

¹⁹⁰ Hes. *Theog.* 520-527.

¹⁹¹ Aesch. *PV.* 1020-1025; Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.7.1; 2.5.11; Arr. *Anab.* 5.3.2; Diod. Sic. 1.19.2; 4.15.2; 17.83.1; Hyg. *Poet. Astr.* 2.15; *Fab.* 10; 31; 54; 144; Luc. *Dial. D.* 5; *Prom.*; *Sac.* 6; Paus. 5.11.6; Philostr. *VA.* 2.3; Ps-Plut. *Flu.* 5; Tatianus, *Ad Gr.* 10.2; LIMC Prometheus 24-30; 36; 54-55; 57-58; 67-69; 70-72.

¹⁹² Boardman & Hayes, 1966: 81.

¹⁹³ Dougherty, 2006.

¹⁹⁴ Pollard, 1977: 141 states it is ‘exclusively’ Zeus’, but these pieces of evidence show that it cannot be that clear.

¹⁹⁵ Hom. *Od.* 2.371-375.

¹⁹⁶ Diod. Sic. 16.27.2.

¹⁹⁷ Aesch. *Pers.* 205-214; Podlecki, 1970: 43; Hall, 1997: 125-126.

¹⁹⁸ Elis, c.468-300: BMC 9; Gela in Sicily, c.415-405: SNG ANS 99; SNG Cop. 277; Agrigentum in Sicily, c.409-406: SNG ANS 1000.

¹⁹⁹ King Amyntas III, c.393-369: BMC 17; SNG ANS 94-95; 100; Croton in Italy, c.370-300: SNG ANS 440; c.333-331: SNG ANS 432; Alexander the Great, c.336-323: Price, 1991: no.52; c.323-317: Price, 1991 no.145.

²⁰⁰ Chalkis in Greece, c.369-336: Grose, 1923-1929: no.5681; c.369-294: BMC 46; 50; 110.

²⁰¹ Kyme in Greece, c.300-200: BMC 103.

deities (Akragas,²⁰² Arethusa,²⁰³ Sikelia,²⁰⁴ and Chalkis²⁰⁵) and even some mythical heroes.²⁰⁶ In fact, the graphs below show that,²⁰⁷ although Zeus is predominant, the earlier coinage has, more or less, an equal amount of other deities that the eagle is seen connected to. Other material evidence also connects the eagle to many mythical characters. It is seen with Helen, Oedipus, and Xuthus.²⁰⁸ A statue of Artemis even has an eagle on its head (Fig 2.8).²⁰⁹ Not only this, but the eagle-topped sceptre is definitely not limited to Zeus. Some early depictions show Hera possibly holding one, and this is followed by Hades and many mythical kings (Figs 2.9 & 2.10).²¹⁰ The fact that the eagle is linked with these other deities cannot be simply ignored. Its role as a transitional semi-divine being is not confined to the use of Zeus. It may be that, at least in connection to the other gods, that the eagle is used with that particular god as s/he is the most superior god in that context. This is certainly true for both its attachments to Apollo, as both relate to his power.

It is worth mentioning the eagle's use in inspired divination as well. Here the connection to Zeus is not seen; we have instead the eagle representing powerful empires or individuals; for example, in the dreams of Penelope it represents Odysseus and his return.²¹¹ In Herodotus an oracle states that 'an eagle in the rocks has conceived and will bring forth a lion' referring to Eëtion, father of Cypselus, the first tyrant of Corinth.²¹²

As we have seen, the eagle represents numerous concepts and ideas in the Greek religious tradition, but nearly all are connected to the idea of divination where, as most birds, the eagle is used to convey the will of the gods. However, it is not a simple case of the eagle being the messenger of Zeus, as other gods use it to convey meaning also. Instead, the eagle is a transitional semi-divine figure with the ability to move between heaven and earth, and therefore bear the messages of the gods. On the other hand, it does have strong connections with Zeus from as far back as Homer, which may be related to its association with royalty.²¹³ Its role in the Prometheus myth reinforces this connection and also gives it some lasting symbolic value of divine punishment and escaping fate. What is important to the present study, though, is that the material evidence from Italy suggests that all these

²⁰² A river-god from Agrigentum in Sicily, c.400-380: *SNG ANS* 1098.

²⁰³ Chalkis in Greece, c.390-310: *BMC* 53.

²⁰⁴ The personification of Sicily used in Herbessos, c.340-335: Calciati, 1983-1987: no.6; and Morgantina, c.340: *SNG ANS* 469.

²⁰⁵ The nymph from the city of the same name, Chalkis, c.338-271: *BMC* 33; 38; 57.

²⁰⁶ E.g. Aleuas, founding hero of Larissa in Thessaly, c.370-360: Herrmann, 1925: VII, 11.

²⁰⁷ See Graphs, 1-7.

²⁰⁸ *LIMC* Helene 10; 12; Oidipous 46; Xouthos 4.

²⁰⁹ *LIMC* Artemis 563.

²¹⁰ *LIMC* Hera 149 (c.490); 154 (c.400); Leukon 1 (c.340); Nethuns 11 (c.375); Pentheus 70 (c.330); Phineus I 13 (c.410); Proitos 3 (c.400).

²¹¹ Hom. *Od.* 19.535-550.

²¹² Hdt. 5.92B.3-92C.1.

²¹³ See below, p.50.

ideas were already inherent in the eagle's symbolism in, at least, the southern part of the peninsula by the late-fourth century B.C.

2.4.3: *The Italian Material*

There is not a huge amount of pre-Roman Italian material to discuss, but one example in particular relates to the eagle's position in religious thought and its connection to Zeus and Prometheus. There are a couple of Laconian cups showing a bearded and long-haired figure wrapped in a long himation next to a large eagle, both from Taranto in southern Italy, dated to the early sixth century B.C. (Fig 2.11).²¹⁴ The usual interpretation is that the figure is Zeus due to his beard and long hair, the ornateness of the himation, but most importantly, the eagle.²¹⁵ This appears to me like a possible example of circular reasoning, just because the eagle is connected to Zeus at a later date does not make the connection automatic in these earlier depictions. In fact, the earliest identification of the figure on the cups is as Prometheus.²¹⁶ Pipili discounts this idea based on the fact that the figure is ornately dressed and has long hair and a beard and that the Prometheus iconography had been firmly established as a naked, half-lying, figure.²¹⁷ In fact, there are depictions of Prometheus with long hair and a beard from this period,²¹⁸ and also those showing him bound (Fig 2.7), which since the arms are not visible on this cup it also implies restraints. Although in other depictions the figures arms are beneath the himation, the Swing Painter's for example, usually the outline of the arm can be seen. Here, though, nothing of the arm is seen and hence this implies restraint more than simple clothing. Additionally, the eagle on these cups is extremely reminiscent of nearly all of the Prometheus images,²¹⁹ but has barely anything in common with other eagle depictions with Zeus. One puzzling aspect, though, is the fact that Prometheus would be dressed in this image, unlike every other depiction. Although, another very similar Laconian cup found in Tocra shows a similar image (Fig 2.12), this time definitely depicting Prometheus' torture.²²⁰ I think the Prometheus identification is more convincing but there is not enough evidence to identify the figure either way. What is possible, however, is that, since none of these examples were found in Laconia, these painters were

²¹⁴ *LIMC* Zeus 43; 45.

²¹⁵ Pipili, 1987: 46. There have been other interpretations too, that of a seer studying birds (Rayet, 1888: 85) or simply decorative (Sellers, 1892-93: 3-4). There has also been some discussion as to what Zeus the image is representing, Zeus Lykaios, Olympian Zeus, and Zeus Hypsistos have all been suggested. However, there is no evidence that Zeus Lykaios was important in Sparta, Olympian Zeus also seems slightly removed from the Spartan context, and lastly, the statue of Zeus Hypsistos in Sparta, although a possible model for the image, does not have an eagle (Paus. 3.17.6; 8.14.7), making the choice of depicting it with one strange; Studniczka, 1890: 14-15; Simon, 1976: 58-59; Pipili, 1987: 46-47.

²¹⁶ Puchstein, 1881: 237; Pipili, 1987: 46.

²¹⁷ Pipili, 1987: 46.

²¹⁸ *LIMC* Prometheus 36; 57-58; 70-72; with dates ranging from 610 to 340.

²¹⁹ *LIMC* Prometheus 24-30; 36; 54-55; 57-58; 67-69; 70-72.

²²⁰ Pipili, 1987: 47.

experimenting with the Prometheus trope in order to appeal to foreign markets.²²¹ Although it is not possible to pinpoint exactly when this connection between Zeus and the eagle was transferred over to Jupiter, the fact that the Laconian cups discussed above come from both Taranto in southern Italy (Fig 2.11) and, more importantly, Caere in Etruria (Fig 2.7) means that they were probably exported across most of Italy, including Rome.

However, by the fourth century B.C., a clear connection between Zeus and the eagle can be seen in many places across Italy. The Lokroi start placing Zeus and the eagle on their coinage from c.350²²² and a late-fourth century *cista* from Palestrina shows Jupiter with an eagle, but this is late in the period and again not directly from Rome.²²³ By the advent of the Roman material in the early third century B.C. the eagle and Zeus appear on a number of cities coinage.²²⁴ Additionally, though, the eagle also appears with a number of other deities and heroes from the fourth century B.C. onwards,²²⁵ but most of this material will be discussed in larger details alongside the Roman material.²²⁶

2.5: Martial and State Connections

2.5.1: Military themes in the Greek material

Eagles appear as patterns on Greek hoplite shields from the middle of the sixth century B.C. (Fig 2.13), and whether a depiction of a real pattern or invented by the vase painters it links the eagle to warfare,²²⁷ and particularly to these shields. In fact, around the same period we start to see the same type of eagle appear on the earliest coinage, not just in Greece, but Sicily and Italy also (Fig 2.14).²²⁸ These coins, and their circular nature, are extremely reminiscent of hoplite shields and when we see that other shield patterns, like the tripod (Fig 2.15) also appear on coins of this period (Fig 2.14) it seems that these states are attempting to replicate hoplite shields, and create martial connotations, with their coinage. But why are eagles being chosen as patterns to be placed on shields, and therefore coinage, in the first place? Some of the other early coinage may help with this. We see the eagle

²²¹ Osborne, 1998: 97-99 talks of Laconian potters specifically creating images for export.

²²² *SNG Del* 483.

²²³ Wiseman, 2004: 97-98, Fig 29.

²²⁴ The Lokroi, c.300-268: *SNG ANS* 536; 560; Rubi, c.300-225: *SNG ANS* 724; Brutti, c.282-203: *SNG Cop* 1662.

²²⁵ Neapolis shows a nymph with an eagle in c.380-280: *SNG ANS* 321; Croton shows Herakles with the eagle in c.370-300: *SNG ANS* 440; additionally, various depictions of the eagle with a tripod may hint at a connection to Apollo (c.480: *SNG ANS* 294 and others), but is more likely to be connected to the martial themes discussed on this page.

²²⁶ See below, p.58 & 66.

²²⁷ *LIMC* Deiphobos 13; Diomedes 18; Glaukos V 13; Herakles 2479; 2487; Memnon 10; Polyphamos II 1; Rhesos 2.

²²⁸ Agrigentum, c.510-412: *BMC* 29; 38-39; Agyrion, c.430: *SNG ANS* 1166; Croton, c.500-412: Babelon, 1924-1938: no.710; *SNG ANS* 294; King Archelaus, c.413-399: *BMC* 9; Kyme, c.350-250: *BMC* 16.

frequently in a hunting context on these coins,²²⁹ linked to the concepts discussed above and the Homeric similes,²³⁰ the eagle is seen as the predominant bird of prey and superior to others, particularly in ‘combat’. This is clearly the reason it is then chosen to appear on shields, as they also wish to appear superior to others, particular in combat, just as an eagle. This idea is the transferred to coinage, as they use this popular military shield image, and thus the superior predatory connotations that accompany it, to express the idea of martial prowess either of the city itself or of the hero on the coin.

Lastly, other birds of prey are being used as a way for particular city-states to express their identity in the pre-Roman material. This mainly comes from the Athenian use of the owl, which they place on their coinage from c.500²³¹ up until their incorporation into the Roman empire (and beyond). In this case, another bird with distinct religious connections is purposefully attached to the state via their coinage. However, this case is distinctly different to the eagle, as only Athens places the owl on their coinage, whereas many states place eagles on their coins, as we shall see in Chapter 3.²³²

2.5.2: *Origin of the aquila.*

We have already mentioned that the eagle is used often in a martial context in the Greek tradition, and was often used as a symbol of victory, through divination.²³³ However, one of the most important aspects of the eagle’s use in Rome’s thought is its appearance atop the Roman military standard, the *aquila*.²³⁴ Although the military standard could be seen as separate to the actual bird, the two are intrinsically linked. Despite the numerous other connotations that the *aquila* standard represents and accrues over this period, the undeniable fact that it is a visual representation of an eagle, and therefore permanently linked to the actual bird in Roman thought is inescapable.²³⁵ Thus, attempting to identify when this connection began is an important aspect of studying thought surrounding the eagle in Roman thought. This next section will attempt to establish the possible point where the *aquila* was introduced to the Roman military system, and thus entered into Roman thought.

²²⁹ These include the eagle catching hares, serpents, birds, eels, and fish: Elis, c.468-300: BMC 9; c.269-250: Jameson, 1913-1932: no.2510; c.252-208: *SNG Cop.* 426; Agrigentum, c.450-406: Calciati, 1983-1987: nos.10-11; 17; 29; 32; 40; 43; 50; 54; 63-64; 68; 70; 73; 80; 82; 84-85; c.338-317: Calciati, 1983-1987: no.116; c.275-240: Calciati, 1983-1987: no.129; King Amyntas III, c.393-369: BMC 17; Chalkis, c.390-310: BMC 53; c.369-271: BMC 33; 38; 46; 50; 57; 110; Aemeselon, c.357-354: Calciati, 1983-1987: no.6; Croton, c.350-300: *SNG ANS* 369; 432; Herbessos, c.340-335: Calciati, 1983-1987: no.6; Morgantina, c.340: *SNG ANS* 469; Lokroi, c.300-280: Rutter, 2001: no.2324. This hunting imagery may be symbolic of abundance, like later images of plenty that rely on natural aspects.

²³⁰ See above, p.24.

²³¹ BMC 25.

²³² See below, p.58 & 66.

²³³ See above, p.27.

²³⁴ I will refer to the eagle standard as the *aquila* to avoid confusion between it and other eagle references.

²³⁵ The fact that by Cicero, the two are almost interchangeable in language, enough for him to make a pun on the name, demonstrates this; Plut. *Vit. Cic.* 38.7; See below, p.92 for a more in depth analysis of this passage.

In order to determine the origins of the *aquila* we must deal with early Roman history, as its possible antiquity may pre-date the dawn of Roman literary sources. So, we have to understand the complexities surrounding the study of early Roman history before delving into the examination of its origins. The scholarship on early Roman history operates on a large spectrum of certainty, some of which stands up to scrutiny better than others. On one end is Carandini, who views the entirety of the Roman tradition to be based upon factual events and people. His idealised view of the sources and their accuracy as well as his unique interpretation of the archaeological evidence is somewhat popular within Italian scholarship but rarely taken seriously by other scholars.²³⁶

At the other end of the spectrum is Wiseman, who takes a very critical view of the sources for early Roman history. He may be right in questioning a large amount of the sources in regards to Roman history beyond the fourth century B.C., but most of these arguments deal with the details of early Roman history, not the structure. The main structural detail which Wiseman does not recognise is the list of annual magistrates.²³⁷ He argues that the sources believe that most of the early records of Rome were destroyed in the Gallic sack and this is why there was a dearth of information for them to draw on.²³⁸ Although it seems the sack itself is a fallacy,²³⁹ and in the sources' account of this gap of knowledge they say there is *little*, not *none*.²⁴⁰ It is quite possible that the lists were counted among the sliver of information the Roman historians were able to draw on for this period. Additionally, the Roman dating system was heavily dependent on the consuls for its chronology. It would seem strange for a city-state not to have a dating system before the introduction of the consuls, especially since it can be shown that it had the fundamentals of city-state structure as far back as the late sixth century B.C.²⁴¹ These points seem, to me, to be good enough to re-establish the possibility of trusting the list and the structure of early Roman history.

However, they are not good enough to provide certainty. And this, arguably, is the most important factor in the study of early Roman history. It is at all points a realm of possibilities rather than certainties. Although Wiseman criticises the fact that just as much importance (if not more) is placed on those wishing to deny a fact in early Roman scholarship as it is to confirm it,²⁴² I think this is how the field should be approached. No matter how unreliable, these sources are the only evidence we have for the study of this period. However, this does not mean stretching the evidence to fit implausible hypotheses or wishful notions of confirming mythology, but instead identifying in the

²³⁶ Carandini, 1997; 2000; 2003; Wiseman, 2011.

²³⁷ The arguments for trusting both these sources are laid out by Cornell, 1995: 13-15; Oakley, 1997: 24-27.

²³⁸ *FGrH* 840 F3; Liv. 6.1.2; Plut. *Vit. Cam.* 22.1; *Vit. Num.* 1; Wiseman, 2008: 14; 235.

²³⁹ Cornell, 1995: 314-318; Wiseman, 2008: 14.

²⁴⁰ 'Nearly all perished', Liv. 6.1.2. There is also no more reason to trust Clodius' instance that these records were forgeries, as he may just be referring to the kings not the magistrates; Plut. *Vit. Num.* 1.

²⁴¹ Most city-states marked their years by the highest magistrate, especially Greek cities; Sherk, 1990a; 1990b; 1991; 1992; 1993. Feeney, 2007: 167-189 is an exhaustive study of the Roman republican calendar and in his discussion on the consular *fasti* he notes some problems, as in matching particular consuls exactly to B.C. dates, but he seems to assume that the consuls' names and order are correct.

²⁴² Wiseman, 2008: 312.

evidence *possibilities* of the confirmation, rejection or re-interpretation of the Roman historical tradition. This approach may lead to multiple answers to a single question but the nature of the evidence leaves each one as valid as another. All that remains after these possibilities have been identified is to find the evidence that proves beyond doubt their impossibility. Nothing short of that will reject them as an idea.

The *aquila* exemplifies some of these major problems of early Roman history. As already stated, the reliability of the sources is sometimes suspect and so to discover the origin of the *aquila* we must trace it back through the sources from a point where its existence can be confirmed by contemporary evidence. This is only possible for the Marian army as this is the point where the *aquila* appears contemporaneously with the authors.²⁴³ This particular question has never been broached by scholars before and has particular ramifications for the thought surrounding the *aquila* in later Roman history. It presents the possibility that the *aquila* was introduced by Marius in 107 and, despite the insistence of the later sources, was not an ancient Roman institution. However, this is not the only possibility: by tracing the references to the *aquila* we can identify others.

Before Marius, however, tracing the standard becomes more difficult. Pliny states that before the Marian reforms the *aquila* was one among five standards, the other four representing a wolf, Minotaur, horse and boar.²⁴⁴ He continues that the *aquila* had become the premier standard by the time of Marius' reforms but that prior to this point each standard had preceded a particular division of the legion (*ordines*).²⁴⁵ However, these other standards never appear in those sources dealing with the earlier history of the Roman military or in any of the contemporary second or first century B.C. sources.²⁴⁶ The antiquarian tradition is just as reliable/unreliable as the annalistic tradition and the encyclopaedic nature of Pliny's work may make it plausible that he included this information whereas other authors thought it unnecessary.²⁴⁷ Some confirmation may come from two references in Festus to the Minotaur standards and the boar standards.²⁴⁸ Although Festus is a second century A.D. source, he and possibly Pliny also, may be getting their information from Verrius Flaccus, a lexicographer writing at the turn of the first century A.D.²⁴⁹ If this is the case, this provides a more certain source for these standards, as Verrius would be far closer to the Marian legion than Pliny.²⁵⁰ However, it has

²⁴³ Cic. *Cat.* 1.9.24 onwards.

²⁴⁴ Von Domaszewski, 1895: 118-121 thinks that each animal represents a god with Jupiter as the eagle; Mars the wolf; Quirinus the boar; Jupiter Feretrius the Minotaur; and Jupiter Stator the horse. However, he has absolutely no evidence for making these connections; Parker, 1928: 37-38.

²⁴⁵ Plin. *HN.* 10.5.

²⁴⁶ Mainly Polybius, Livy, Dionysius, Plautus, Cicero, Sallust, etc.

²⁴⁷ Cornell, 1995: 23-24; Carey, 2003: 17.

²⁴⁸ Festus, 135.21-25; 267.6-8; Dušanic & Petković, 2003: 42; Wheeler, 2009: 253-254. Vegetius also mentions that the Minotaur had once been a standard, but he is far too late a source to add anything, Veg. 3.6.9; Wheeler, 2009: 253-254.

²⁴⁹ Glinister, 2007: 11; Dušanic & Petković, 2003: 42. Although, this is also only a generation before Pliny.

²⁵⁰ It may also be the case that Verrius used Varro as a source, who is even closer to the Marian reforms; Glinister, 2007: 21.

been shown that Festus did not rely purely on Verrius for his information and can be seen quoting various first century A.D. sources.²⁵¹ This makes it quite possible that he obtained the information from Pliny, as the fact that he attaches the boar to the fifth line of battle in the same order as Pliny lists the animals would certainly suggest.²⁵² On the other hand, the writers use different words for ‘boar’,²⁵³ which could indicate that each used a different earlier source. Thus, it is unverifiable whether Pliny (and Festus) used an earlier source for these five standards, and although other sources’ silence on the matter is not grounds enough for a dismissal of Pliny’s standards, it leaves them as only a possibility rather than a certainty.

However, whereas Polybius states that the standards were used in the organisation of the army in the second century B.C. he paints a significantly different picture than the five standards of Pliny. His first mention of standards is that two standard-bearers were appointed to each maniple in the legion, which resulted in a total of 60 standards per legion, two for each of the 10 maniples of *hastati*, *principes* and *triarii*.²⁵⁴ Firstly, this is a huge number of standards. Secondly, the passage in Pliny implies the existence of one of each animal standard²⁵⁵ but the amount given here in Polybius suggests that these standards accompany each maniple. Thus, Polybius seems to be referring to the *signa*, standards that accompanied units, rather than the *aquila*, only one of which accompanied each legion. The problem then becomes whether Pliny’s animal standards can fit the organisation of the manipular legion. One explanation is provided by Dušanic and Petković who, although they are fitting the standards to the hoplite legions in 494 using the same terminology,²⁵⁶ suggest that the last two standards Pliny lists (the horse and boar) are cavalry standards rather than infantry standards.²⁵⁷ This would mean the *aquila*, wolf standard, and Minotaur standard would accompany the *principes*, *hastati*, and *triarii* respectively, with the other standards accompanying the two cavalry *alae*. While the reasoning behind this association is flawed (which will be discussed below)²⁵⁸ the attachment of two standards to the cavalry is an intriguing idea. However, there is a large issue with this

²⁵¹ Notably Luc. 1.449 in Festus, 31.13 and Mart. *Ep.* 1.30.1 in Festus, 506.16. He is also critical of Verrius in other places (Festus, 218.12; 228.25; 236.4; 408.14; 476.36), which implies he was not completely copying his information; Glinister, 2007: 11.

²⁵² Festus, 267.6-8. Also, if Festus is basing his work on Verrius and Glinister, 2007: 21 is right in assuming Verrius is basing his work mainly on Varro, *LL*, the absence of this information in Varro, *LL* would point to Festus using another source for these passages, most likely Pliny.

²⁵³ Pliny uses *aper*, while Festus uses *porci*, Dušanic & Petković, 2003: 42.

²⁵⁴ Polyb. 6.21.6-10; 6.24. Varro, *LL*. 5.88 also states that the maniple was the smallest unit to have its own standard; Wheeler, 2009: 249.

²⁵⁵ Since the word for each animal is in the singular.

²⁵⁶ Dušanic & Petković, 2003: 53-55; Wheeler, 2009: 255.

²⁵⁷ The horse is an obvious symbol for cavalry (Plut. *Mor.* 287B; Verg. *Aen.* 1.441-445; 3.537-543; *G.* 2.145). But Dušanic & Petković, 2003: 45; 51; 55 base this connection and that of the boar to cavalry on them representing Quirinus and Ceres respectively, an extremely tenuous proposition at best. The problems of which are discussed below, p.43. Wheeler, 2009: 255 also admits this interpretation has other major problems (the assumption that the *aquila* was the standard of the *principes* because Jupiter was *princeps* of the gods; that the *principes* were the first battle line; and that the *triarii* were a plebeian unit).

²⁵⁸ See below, p.42.

interpretation which stems from the terminology found in Pliny and Festus. In Pliny he states that the standards accompany each *ordo* which is literally translated as ‘order’ or ‘row’ and fits better as ‘line of battle’ in this context.²⁵⁹ ‘Lines of battle’ is not really a fit description of the cavalry *alae* arranged on the wings. Festus, who may be using Pliny’s order of animals, says that the boar represented the ‘fifth line (*locum*)’,²⁶⁰ which again does not really relate to the cavalry, but more to infantry.

There may be an alternate explanation that fits better with Pliny’s *ordines* and Festus’ *locum*. Both terms fit the Polybian legion as the *hastati*, *principes* and *triarii* can be viewed as ‘lines of battle,’ but this only creates three *ordines* rather than the five needed for the animal standards. Even if they are split by *centuriae* into prior and posterior *ordines*²⁶¹ it creates six rather than five *ordines*.²⁶² A possible way to reconcile the passages is to assume that although the *hastati* and *principes* were divided into two *ordines*, the *triarii*, because their maniples contained half the number of men than the *hastati* and *principes*,²⁶³ were arranged in one line rather than two. This would give the right amount of lines for each to contain one standard and if so, the *aquila* could be placed at the front as it was, as Pliny states, *prima*.²⁶⁴ Another possibly is based on Livy’s view of the *antesignani*, the troops in front of the *signa*, as the first *ordines* of *hastati*, which would create five *ordines* for the animal standards to represent.²⁶⁵ Again, though, the source is much later.²⁶⁶

However, these interpretations have one vital flaw;²⁶⁷ Polybius never mentioned these animal standards. He only ever referred to the standards once more, to state that when making camp the Romans chose a standard and built their camp around it.²⁶⁸ This could be interpreted to mean that they chose a standard that is connected to the whole legion, but it could just as easily be one of the

²⁵⁹ App. *Mith.* 10. From the noun *ordo*, *OLD*: 1266.

²⁶⁰ Festus, 267.6-8.

²⁶¹ Based on the prior and posterior centurions. Liv. 42.34; Sumner, 1970: 68.

²⁶² This was the reason each maniple had two centurions, *optiones* and standard-bearers. However, Polybius states that the reason for this was to replace the commanders if one died (6.24.6-7), noting nothing about splitting each maniple into different *ordines*. Sumner, 1970: 68 would disagree with this interpretation as he believes that the *centuriae* are just fossils from the previous military system, which seems correct, and that the prior and posterior centurions have no relation to actual places within the organisation of the manipular army. But he can no more prove this to be the case than disprove that they were split on the basis of their names.

²⁶³ Polyb. 6.21.8-10.

²⁶⁴ Plin. *HN*. 10.5. There are two coins from 82 and 49 that show the *aquila* between two standards with the letters ‘H’ and ‘P’ that have been interpreted as representing ‘*Hastati*’ and ‘*Principes*’; Keppie, 1998: 67; 224-225; pls.4a &4b; Dušanic & Petković, 2003: 55. However, it is unlikely these coins would refer to units that went obsolete twenty-fifty years previously and much more likely is the interpretation given by Le Bohec, 1998: 35-42 that the letters represent ‘*Honos*’ and ‘*Pietas*’, concepts much more relevant to the coins first century B.C. context.

²⁶⁵ Liv. 8.11.7; 9.3; 9.7; Parker, 1928: 37.

²⁶⁶ Since the word *antesignani* means something else in Caesar, i.e. troops that scout in front of the whole legion, it may mean Livy is reflecting the republican system more accurately as he is not assuming the same system applied. However, the change in terminology also indicates a change in the use of *signa*; *B Afr.* 15.1; *Caes. B Civ.* 1.57.1; 3.75.5; 3.84.3; Parker, 1928: 38-41.

²⁶⁷ It also has others, as to map the standard onto the Polybian legion requires a lot of conjecture.

²⁶⁸ Polyb. 6.27.

standards in a maniple. It could be argued that as Polybius was presenting his work for a Greek audience he focused the study of the army on units rather than as an organisational whole, as this is how the Greek phalanx functioned,²⁶⁹ or that since the Greeks did not use military standards, Polybius thought it unnecessary to describe them or did not fully understand their use. This argument is weak, though, as the Greeks obviously understood what a military standard was, even if they did not use them, as Xenophon mentions the Persian standard 200 years previously.²⁷⁰ Polybius provides no confirmation of the existence of the *aquila* but also, once again, his silence does not exclude the possibility. In fact, his silence conforms to his silence of other aspects of the Roman army, such as the *signifer*'s wolf-pelt headdresses.²⁷¹ This suffers from the same problems as the *aquila*, though, as the only contemporary evidence for it appears in the first century B.C.²⁷² One hint that the *aquila* did exist prior to Marius' reforms is the high esteem it has right from the beginning of the first century B.C., which may hint at a longer tradition of veneration of the object. However, the complete absence of evidence makes the presumption completely unverifiable.

There are a few references in the annalists to the *aquila* and standards in the Punic Wars. Livy says that the legionaries swore to the standards and the *aquila* in 210 and they feature prominently in Silius Italicus.²⁷³ Livy was certainly aware that the Roman army was organised differently before Marius' reforms,²⁷⁴ but he only mentions the *aquila* once in his entire narrative, whereas he mentions the *signa* often.²⁷⁵ However, even these references are mostly within his notoriously unreliable battle scenes and may be a symptom of the Augustan predilection for the standards.²⁷⁶ Additionally, the fact that mostly he only refers to the *signa*, which matches the Polybian depiction of the legion, and the only reference to the *aquila* is within an oath-taking scene similar to the oaths taken in the Marian legion, making the reference suspect. Silius, a later source, may have even relied on Livy for his information, hence the inclusion of the *aquila* in the *Punica*.²⁷⁷ However, the history of the Punic Wars in the annalistic tradition is based on historians (such as Fabius Pictor) who were either present at, or could have interviewed those present at, the events described.²⁷⁸ This allows for the possibility

²⁶⁹ This is doubtful, the Greeks certainly understood the concept of army organisation.

²⁷⁰ Xen. *Anab.* 1.10.12; *Cyr.* 7.1.4. However, Polybius still may not have grasped the importance individual standards may have had in the legion and thus neglected their inclusion.

²⁷¹ Wheeler, 2009: 250; 256 although he does mention the psychological function of the *hastati*'s helmets; Polyb. 6.23.12-13.

²⁷² They might appear on coins from the Sullan era; Wheeler, 2009: 250.

²⁷³ Liv. 26.48.12; Sil. *Pun.* 5.333-343; 427-431; 6.14-40; 7.740-743; 8.635-637; 10.390-392. Wheeler, 2009: 254, n.137 states that the Livy passage 'is not necessarily an anachronism' while admitting that Livy has a well-known tendency to use Caesarian military vocabulary and not giving a possible reason why it should be accepted as true.

²⁷⁴ Liv. 8.8.3

²⁷⁵ Liv. 2.59.9-10; 3.27.8; 3.70.10; 4.29.3; 4.47.2; 5.55.1-2; 6.8.1; 6.24.5-7; 7.13.1-5; 9.13.2; 10.5.1-3; 10.36.10; 22.3.11-13; 25.14.6-8; 26.5.15-17; 27.12.16-17; 27.13.9; 27.14.3; 27.14.7-10.

²⁷⁶ Discussed in more detail below, p.140.

²⁷⁷ Steele, 1922; Nicol, 1936.

²⁷⁸ Bispham & Cornell, 2013: 161-163.

that these mentions of the *aquila* are a reflection of historical truth. Even Silius, who was writing an epic poem, relied heavily on historians for the basis of his narrative.²⁷⁹ Yet again, then, the evidence points to the possibility of the *aquila* and Pliny's other standards existing in the manipular army of the Punic Wars, but this evidence is far from undisputed.

There is some circumstantial evidence from before the Punic Wars which adds to the possibility. In c.280 Rome produced some *aes signatum* (bronze currency bar), one of which shows an eagle carrying a thunderbolt on one side, and a Pegasus with the word ROMANORUM on the other (Fig 2.16). One interpretation of this coin, coupled with another *aes signatum* showing a boar (Fig 2.17), is that it represents the *aquila* standard (with the boar representing another of Pliny's five animal standards). This interpretation makes sense on a few levels, since the general theme of the imagery on the *aes signatum* relates to warfare and they were used to pay the legionaries, making the *aquila* an obvious symbol to use.²⁸⁰ However, there are various other interpretations of the eagle on this coin, discussed in more detail below,²⁸¹ which are just as, if not more, convincing. Thus, once again, although it is possible this currency depicts the *aquila* standard, it cannot be confirmed.

There is another piece of evidence pointing to the existence of the *aquila* even further back than the Punic Wars. A *cista* from Praeneste shows Aeneas holding showing akin to an *aquila* standard (Fig 2.18). The staff is usually interpreted as an eagle-topped sceptre, similar to those seen in images of Zeus (Fig 2.3), to distinguish him as royalty. However, this depiction has some notable differences. Not only is it thicker than most sceptres and the eagle atop it is much larger, it also has a pointed end, presumably for allowing it to stick in the ground. Personally, this seems enough evidence to interpret the object as an *aquila* standard and date its existence to the fourth century B.C. But again, this is far from a certainty. What is certain, however, is that the manipular army did use military *signa*²⁸² and this also allows for, at least, the possibility of the *aquila* and Pliny's animal standards.

It is possible that these standards were introduced with the manipular reforms. There is a debate about when these were introduced but, in my opinion, the few details preserved in the annalistic tradition would place this change in c.407 alongside payment of the legions and an increase in manpower.²⁸³ There is some evidence that the standards (and possibly *aquila*) could have been introduced at this point. The etymology of the word *manipulus* is sometimes read as 'handfuls of hay'²⁸⁴ and a passage of Plutarch²⁸⁵ which credits Romulus with creating the original standards has

²⁷⁹ Steele, 1922; Nicol, 1936. Although, it is quite possible they may be copied from other epic poems also.

²⁸⁰ Nenci, 1955: 391-404. This argument is laid out in more detail below, p.67.

²⁸¹ See below, p.58-60; 67-68.

²⁸² The contemporary evidence of Polybius provides this.

²⁸³ Diod. Sic. 14.16.5; Liv. 4.59.11; 8.8; Ogilvie, 1976: 151-153; Cornell, 1995: 188.

²⁸⁴ Juv. 8.153; Lewis & Short, 1966: 1109; Webster, 1969: 137.

²⁸⁵ Plut. *Vit. Rom.* 8; McCartney, 1912: 77.

them coincidentally as handfuls of hay on poles,²⁸⁶ hence a connection can be made between the name *maniple* and these supposed early standards.²⁸⁷ The standard also lends itself to the organisation of the manipular legion rather than the hoplite legion as the maniples are far more flexible and would require more logistical organisation,²⁸⁸ which was enabled by the use of standards.²⁸⁹ Additionally, Plutarch seemed to credit the use, and adoration, of standards to a peculiarity of Italian military systems.²⁹⁰ And even if the manipular system is not borrowed from the Samnites or a product of the *Ineditum Vaticanum*²⁹¹ it is certainly an indigenous Italian system.²⁹²

But the standards may even be traced back further than the c.407 manipular reforms and into the hoplite legion. The term *manipulus* can also just mean ‘handful’²⁹³ and so could simply be a term for a ‘handful of men’ and have nothing to do with the standard.²⁹⁴ This provides some counter-evidence for the standards’ introduction with the manipular system and means it is also possible that both the standards and the term ‘*manipulus*’ pre-dated these reforms. The sources mention standards prior to these reforms frequently.²⁹⁵ In fact, Dionysius makes specific reference to the *aquila* in a speech given by Dentatus in 453,²⁹⁶ long before the reform. But, this reference suffers from all the same problems Livy did.²⁹⁷ He may also be trying to make the material more understandable for his Greek audience. However, there was a Greek tradition of awareness that the Romans had once had a hoplite legion²⁹⁸ so it is possible that this information is from a legitimate source and not an annalistic invention. In any case, this one reference is not enough. What creates a more plausible possibility is that of the binary system of the Polybian maniples, i.e. two centurions, two *optiones* and two standard-bearers, which serves no function other than an administrative one, relating more to the *centuriae* than the maniples. Thus this system, and the standards that accompany it, is a remnant of

²⁸⁶ It is quite possible that in the c.100 years between these reforms and the Aeneas *cista* that the standards had developed from ‘hay on poles’ into the depiction seen on the *cista*. Wheeler, 2009: 249-250 gives a possible explanation for these ‘handfuls of hay’ positing that they were bunches of sacred herbs, like those used in the ritual of striking a *foedus*; Liv. 1.24.4-5; Ov. *Fast.* 3.115-116.

²⁸⁷ Etymology is not a solid base for any argument but modern Latin etymologies agree with this connection. The connection is also made in Ov. *Fast.* 3.118.

²⁸⁸ Southern, 2007: 89.

²⁸⁹ Cic. *Sull.* 34; Liv. 3.27.8; 4.47.2; 6.8.1; 39.31.9; Plut. *Vit. Mar.* 23.5.

²⁹⁰ Plut. *Vit. Aem.* 20.1.

²⁹¹ This is the Roman tradition of ‘borrowing’ military systems seen in the sources, i.e. they took the hoplites from the Etruscans, the maniples and *scutum* from the Samnites, the gladius from the Spaniards etc.; Diod. Sic. 23.2.

²⁹² Diod. Sic. 23.2. Sumner, 1970: 68-69 believes they were borrowed from the Samnites whereas Salmon, 1967 does not.

²⁹³ Plin. *HN.* 18.28.67; Varro, *Rust.* 1.49; Lewis & Short, 1966: 1109.

²⁹⁴ Plutarch may have been attempting etymology himself to discover what Romulus’ early standards would have looked like.

²⁹⁵ Dion. Hal. 10.36.3-6; Flor. 1.5.2; Frontin. *Str.* 2.8.2; 3; 8; Liv. 2.59.9-10; 3.27.8; 70.10; 4.29.3; 47.2.

²⁹⁶ Dion. Hal. 10.36.3-6.

²⁹⁷ See above, p.39.

²⁹⁸ Diod. Sic. 23.2.

the previous *centuriate* system used to organise the hoplite legion.²⁹⁹ This hypothesis along with the annalistic reference creates the possibility that the standards, even the *aquila*, existed before the manipular reforms.

If this is the case it presents the problem of fitting a military standard into the organisation of a hoplite legion. Dušanic and Petković certainly believe it could. They argue that Pliny's animal standards existed in the pre-manipular legion and that two of them were introduced into the legions alongside the plebs in 494.³⁰⁰ In this interpretation, the *aquila* is a patrician standard of greater antiquity than the introduction of the boar and Minotaur standards with the plebeian units. The main basis of their argument is that each of the animals theriomorphically represent a deity in the Roman pantheon (Jupiter is an eagle; Mars a wolf; Liber a Minotaur; Quirinus a horse; and Ceres a boar) and that two of these deities are traditionally plebeian and were therefore introduced alongside the plebeian soldiers in 494.³⁰¹ However, their argument suffers from many tenuous presumptions that make it untenable. Firstly, there seems to be no evidence that the Romans ever directly represented their deities theriomorphically. If they did, some of the connections between animal and god Dušanic and Petković make are based on small pieces of evidence.³⁰² This is certainly the case with Jupiter, as although we see a possible connection between Jupiter and the eagle in Italy, we have no direct evidence of this connection from Rome.³⁰³ Additionally, we know that the eagle was not used purely by Jupiter, but other deities as well.³⁰⁴ Their interpretation also depends on the *triarii* originally being a plebeian unit, of which there is absolutely no evidence for.³⁰⁵ They also accept everything reported by the sources about the 'conflict of the orders',³⁰⁶ when even its existence is subject to huge debate.³⁰⁷ Their acceptance of the sources for early Roman history even extends to drawing most of their conclusions from speeches in Livy and Dionysius,³⁰⁸ the least reliable of all the evidence concerning this early period. These problems make it extremely difficult to accept their arguments for the existence of the animal standards in this period, let alone the greater antiquity of the *aquila*.

Despite this, the existence of the standards in the hoplite legions is still a possibility and since the hoplite legion was based on the centuriate organisation, then the number of standards would essentially remain the same: 60 standards, one for each *centuria*.³⁰⁹ This is still far too many for them all to be *aquila* or animal standards, but the possibility still remains from the manipular legion that

²⁹⁹ Sumner, 1970: 67-70.

³⁰⁰ Dušanic & Petković, 2003: 48-49; 53-55.

³⁰¹ Dušanic & Petković, 2003: 44-49; 51.

³⁰² Dušanic & Petković, 2003: 44-48.

³⁰³ See above, p.32.

³⁰⁴ See above, p.30.

³⁰⁵ Dušanic & Petković, 2003: 53-54. Wheeler, 2009: 255 agrees with this problem.

³⁰⁶ Dušanic & Petković, 2003: 48-49; 53.

³⁰⁷ Raaflaub: 1986.

³⁰⁸ Dio. Hal. *Ant.* 6.51.1; Liv. 2.30-31; Dušanic & Petković, 2003: 49, n.53; 51.

³⁰⁹ Sumner, 1970: 70.

they may have been attached to the lines of battle, or the legion as a whole. In fact, arguing that the names of each of the manipular units must pre-date their use in this formation, i.e. that the *principes* must have at one point been the front line, the *hastati* must have carried hasta etc.,³¹⁰ Sumner has shown that these units must precede the manipular legion. This would mean that the argument made for the different *ordines* would still apply for the hoplite legion.³¹¹ The second problem is more difficult. The majority of evidence for how the hoplite phalanx works comes from the Greeks,³¹² and they never used military standards.³¹³ So it needs to be determined whether a hoplite phalanx could even accommodate a military standard without a detrimental effect. The Greek phalanx did include the use of the *salpinx*, a musical instrument which ordered charging or retreating during the heat of battle.³¹⁴ It is a long instrument (Fig 2.19) so those carrying it would have had to choose between shield and spear, yet they never compromised the integrity of the phalanx. If this was the case, the phalanx could easily accommodate a military standard in its formation.³¹⁵

Due to the standards being attached to *centuria*, this would bring back the origin of the standard to the introduction of the centuriate hoplite legion. The tradition places the centuriate reforms in the reign of Servius Tullius. It is not that necessary in this argument to delve into the debate on whether or not Servius was a historical figure that introduced these reforms,³¹⁶ but instead to decide whether the reforms themselves could be credible. They seem to have been focused on the reorganisation of the state and, although the details of the tradition are dubious at best, the idea of a change from the original three tribe system of organisation to a new tribal system would make sense for a community that may have grown significantly in manpower since the introduction of that three tribe system.³¹⁷ The end of the sixth century B.C. also makes sense as a date for this reform as it is at this point that Rome had the resources and spare manpower to build a monument such as the Capitoline Temple.³¹⁸

There is only one piece of literary evidence, from Frontinus, which points to the existence of the military standards before the reign of Servius Tullius and that is the mention of Servius himself using them during the wars of Tarquinius Priscus.³¹⁹ This source suffers from serious problems, such

³¹⁰ Sumner, 1970: 68; 70.

³¹¹ See above, p.38.

³¹² It does not seem like the Roman system, at least from the evidence we have, differed much from the Greek system on a basic level; Snodgrass, 1965.

³¹³ Wheeler, 2009: 246.

³¹⁴ Diod. Sic. 11.22.2; 15.55.3; 85.3; 17.11.3; Eur. *Heracl.* 831-2; *Phoen.* 1103; *Rhes.* 988-9; Plut. *Vit. Tim.* 27.10; Thuc. 6.69.1; Xen. *Ana.* 1.2.17; 3.4.4; 4.2.1; 8-9; 5.2.14; 6.5.27; 7.4.16; Krentz, 1991.

³¹⁵ Van Wees, 2004: 169 shows the formation could have accommodated it.

³¹⁶ Thomsen, 1980; Cornell, 1995: 121-127. Other kings have been confirmed in the historical record, e.g. Tarquinius Superbus and Publius Valerius, Dion. Hal. 7.3-11; Alföldi, 1965: 56-72; Colonna, 1980; Momigliano, 1989: 97; Zevi, 1995; Wiseman, 2008: 293; 311.

³¹⁷ Snodgrass, 1965: 119-120; Thomsen, 1980: 143; Cornell, 1995: 176-195.

³¹⁸ The dating of its construction has not been doubted, just the historical figures associated with it.

³¹⁹ Frontin. *Str.* 2.8.1.

as: being almost seven centuries removed; relying on a battle scene trope,³²⁰ and being the only reference to this event. These problems immediately remove it as a viable source. Despite this, the idea that the standards existed prior to these reforms is plausible. As stated these reforms seem to have been organisational in principle, thus the basic panoply of the legions was not dramatically affected. The notion that the reforms introduced hoplite tactics at Rome has long since been disproved.³²¹ Since this is the case the basic panoply of the Roman hoplite legion, including the possibility of military standards, may have existed prior to the reforms. Once again the existence of the standards in the pre-centuriate legions cannot be confirmed but is certainly a possibility.

This would place the standards' origin alongside the introduction of hoplite tactics to Rome. But, how was a non-Greek practice introduced to a Greek military system? Although military standards seem to be missing from most of the Greek tradition Livy mentions that the Romans captured 27 military standards from King Perseus in c.168.³²² This suffers from all the same problems as Livy's other references,³²³ and its inclusion within a casualty list makes it even less reliable. Even if King Perseus' phalanx had standards, they may have adopted them from the Romans, rather than vice versa. But, this does not necessarily exclude a Greek influence. As pointed out in the discussion of the Aeneas *cista*,³²⁴ the *aquila* and Zeus' royal sceptre are remarkably similar. What no one has suggested before is that the original *aquila* was a representation of this royal sceptre, and if introduced in the Regal Period alongside the hoplite reforms this connection would make sense. But, without any direct evidence this is merely another possibility.

One other possibility is that the standard comes from other eastern influences beyond the Greeks.³²⁵ We know that the Persians certainly had some kind of standards as Herodotus notes that each of their army divisions had its own banner³²⁶ and Xenophon states that individual officers also had banners.³²⁷ One of these is even represented on the 'Duris Cup' and they are seen many times on reliefs at Persepolis.³²⁸ However, they may have even had an eagle standard. Xenophon states that the Persians carried an eagle standard into battle with them,³²⁹ which would be a tempting connection. And the Alexander Mosaic, a Roman copy of a Hellenistic painting, shows what seems to be an eagle banner above Darius.³³⁰ It is just as possible, though, that the Greek sources have misinterpreted the

³²⁰ This trope can be seen in Liv. 3.70.10; 4.29.3; 6.8.1; 10.36.10; 25.14.6-8; 26.5.15-17; 27.14.7-10; 34.46.12; 41.4.1; Plut. *Vit. Aem.* 20.1; Val. Max. 3.2.19.

³²¹ Snodgrass, 1965: 119-120; Sumner, 1970; 69-70; Cornell, 1995: 176-195.

³²² Liv. 42.66.10; Wheeler, 2009: 246.

³²³ See above, p.39.

³²⁴ See above, p.40.

³²⁵ Dirven, 2005: 124-125 notes a possible reference to cultic standards in the Seleucid period, but this is dubious.

³²⁶ Hdt. 9.59; Shahbazi, 1994.

³²⁷ Xen. *Cyr.* 8.5.13; 6.3.4; Shahbazi, 1994.

³²⁸ Shahbazi, 1994.

³²⁹ Xen. *An.* 1.10.12; *Cyr.* 7.1.4; Shahbazi, 1994.

³³⁰ Shahbazi, 1994. Though some have identified it as a cock, Nylander, 1983: 26, n.44

symbol of the Persian titular god Ahura-Mazda as an eagle (Fig 2.20 shows the similarity).³³¹ This might not be correct, however, as the Persian royal tradition contains many references to the eagle. The Bible often uses the eagle as a representative of eastern empires in sections written around the fifth century B.C.³³² Also, Persian tradition apparently has Achaemenes raised by eagles, connecting the eagle to Persian royalty.³³³ But this comes from Aelian, not only a Greek source but hundreds of years removed. However, it would be difficult to make the case that the Romans received their standards, particularly the *aquila*, from the Persians. Not only would that mean the Persians had cultural interactions with the Italian peninsula around the time of the Persian Wars, but it would also mean that these interactions completely skipped Greece. Both objections make a Persian influence highly unlikely.

However, these Persian standards are linked to a much older tradition of standards in the Near East. There is a lot of evidence to the existence of cultic standards in the Near East from before the Persian period. We have much evidence of cultic standards being used in the Neo-Assyrian period from the palace reliefs of various kings (dated c.883-627)³³⁴ and even further from references to them in older Indo-Iranian texts³³⁵ and their appearance on Sumerian cylinders dated to the second millennium B.C.³³⁶ Some of this evidence even includes animal standards. Moses places a snake atop a pole in order to create a magical standard that stops poisoning,³³⁷ although written down in the fifth century B.C. the story may hint at an older tradition. At Hazor, a ‘bronze cult standard’ was discovered that represented two snakes with a crescent.³³⁸ The *Yasna* refers to some enemies carrying ‘bull banners’.³³⁹ Even the Sumerian cylinders show standards which appear to have birds atop them, very similar to an *aquila* (Figs 2.21 & 2.22).³⁴⁰ Thus, the idea of standards seems to have an ancient tradition in the Near East, even that of animal standards.

But what is most interesting is the similarities between these cultic standards and the Roman standards, including the *aquila*. We know that in the first century B.C., when there is reliable evidence, that the military standards and *aquila* had strong religious connotations and rituals surrounding them³⁴¹ and so a connection to the cultic nature of these Near Eastern standards is not inconceivable. That fact that the Roman standards and these cultic standards are symbolically linked

³³¹ Head, 1992: 9; Shahbazi, 1994. This applies to the Alexander Mosaic also.

³³² *Dan.* 4:33; *Deut.* 28:49; *Ezek.* 17:3-8; *Jer.* 48:40; Ackroyd, 1988. Discussed in more detail below, p.143.

³³³ *Ael. NA.* 12.21.

³³⁴ These include standards of particular deities (Sin) and other standards on palace reliefs of Assurnasirpal II, Salmanassar III, Sargon II, Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal; Dirven, 2005: 124.

³³⁵ *Vd.* 1.7; *Y.* 57.25; *Yt.* 4.3; 8.56; Shahbazi, 1994.

³³⁶ Seyrig, 1960. Some texts from the Old-Babylonian (1830-1531) period also refer to standards; Dirven, 2005: 131.

³³⁷ *Num.* 21:8-9; Oden, 1977: 137.

³³⁸ Oden, 1977: 137-138.

³³⁹ *Y.* 10.14; Shahbazi, 1994.

³⁴⁰ Seyrig, 1960.

³⁴¹ See below, p.93 & 181.

later in the second century A.D. could hint a common origin.³⁴² In fact, the evidence for the Neo-Assyrian standards show that they were also used in a military and political setting, indicating political and religious domination in treaties³⁴³ and the reliefs clearly show these cultic standards in a warfare context.³⁴⁴ Thus, these Neo-Assyrian standards were both military and religious,³⁴⁵ just as the Roman standards were.

The only problem with positing a Near Eastern (either Neo-Assyrian or older) origin for the Roman standards and the *aquila* would be that of transference. How did Near Eastern cult standards arrive in Roman culture? This may be explained by the migration of Near Eastern peoples to the Italian peninsula and thus the migration of some of their culture, i.e. cultic standards. There seems to be at least some evidence of a possible Near Eastern origin for some of the population of Italy, maybe in the Etruscans.³⁴⁶ However, there does not seem to be any evidence of Etruscans using standards. It may be that these institutions originated from Phoenician migration, which we know affected Corsica, Sardinia, and the north of Italy.³⁴⁷ The Phoenicians (thirteenth-sixth centuries B.C.) and Neo-Assyrians (tenth-seventh centuries B.C.) were contemporaneous and both occasionally used abstract symbols in order to represent deities.³⁴⁸ It is possible the tradition of cultic standards was taken up by some Phoenicians and then taken to Italy; certainly, we know that they had portable shrines within which were divine symbols.³⁴⁹ However, there does not seem to be any evidence for the Phoenicians using military standards.³⁵⁰ Thus, due to the fact that we find animal cultic standards in the Near East and there is a possibility of cultural migration to Italy, a Near Eastern origin of the *aquila* is certainly a possibility.³⁵¹ But since we have no direct evidence of standards in Phoenician or Etruscan cultures, those most closely connected to Near Eastern migration, this origin cannot be a certainty.

If the standards, including the animal standards, did originate from Near Eastern cultures there seem to be two explanations for the introduction of an eagle onto a standard. Either it was also a cultural borrowing, as the eagle had a long tradition of being associated with solar deities in the Near East³⁵² and can be seen in some of the early Mesopotamian texts, such as the *Myth of Etana*,³⁵³

³⁴² Dirven, 2005: 132-133. See below, p.192.

³⁴³ The standard of Sin appears on treaties, Dirven, 1994: 131.

³⁴⁴ Dirven, 2005: 131.

³⁴⁵ Dirven, 2005: 131.

³⁴⁶ There seems to be DNA evidence of a Near-Eastern origins for the Etruscans, but this is highly debated; Cavalli-Sforza, Menozzi, & Piazza, 1994; Achilli, et al, 2007.

³⁴⁷ Moscati, 1988.

³⁴⁸ Oden, 1977: 137; Dirven, 2005: 124.

³⁴⁹ Oden, 1977: 137.

³⁵⁰ McCartney, 1912: 77-78; Moscati, 1988.

³⁵¹ There is a possibility of an Egyptian connection as Dio. Sic. 1.86.4 states that the Egyptians used animal standards in their military. However, the eagle does not feature prominently in Egyptian thought and, while it may be that they could have adopted the tradition and used a native bird, the story Diodorus gives is only one of three options in an aetiological discussion of the Egyptians worship of animals, making it highly dubious; McCartney, 1912: 78; Brunner-Traut, 1975: 64.

³⁵² This connection is discussed in more detail below, p.133.

³⁵³ *Myth of Etana*.

connected with the supreme deity. Thus, the early Romans may have adopted it to represent their own supreme deity. Alternatively, they may have already been using the eagle and other animal symbols as religious or social symbols and adapted them to the use of standards introduced by contact with Near Eastern peoples.

This second interpretation leads to another possibility, that the military standard is an Italian invention. The reference in Plutarch to the adoration of the standard, and its use, being an Italian concern, gives some credence to this possibility.³⁵⁴ The standards may have even developed from the spear (*hasta*), which also had religious qualities.³⁵⁵ There may also be evidence for the idea that a military standard could be spontaneously invented without any outside influence.³⁵⁶ Charlevoix in his journey through the areas of America known as ‘New France’ in A.D. 1721 found a Native American tribe who carved animals into bits of bark, attached them to poles and carried them into battle.³⁵⁷ This is unmistakably a military standard and if they can appear in the isolated communities of North America without outside influence,³⁵⁸ there is no reason the same cannot have happened in prehistoric Italy. If they were a native Italian invention this would discount the idea of any outside influence on their origin and therefore open the possibility of tracing their origin even further back than the adoption of hoplite tactics at Rome.

This leads to the problem of how the idea of carrying a standard into battle developed spontaneously in the Italic communities and Rome. To solve this, the Native American standards seen in Charlevoix need to be examined more closely. It seems they have attached carvings of the particular animals they find sacred and so represent their community, their ‘totem’.³⁵⁹ It would seem, then, that the establishment of the military standard is connected to the idea of ‘totemism’ popular at the turn of the century. Interestingly, since it concerns the worship and use of animals it may directly relate to the *aquila* and could create the possibility of tracing their origin to the invention of the concept of a military standard. Established by Frazer³⁶⁰ the theory of totemism was examined closely by Durkheim³⁶¹ who used sources from Australasia and America and concluded that their worship of animals, totemism, was a way of society worshipping itself; i.e. they placed societal norms onto the animal kingdom and through the totem animal representing their identity worshipped their own

³⁵⁴ Plut. *Vit. Aem.* 20.1.

³⁵⁵ Liv. 26.48.12; Polyb. 3.25.6; Tac. *Ann.* 15.16.2; Wheeler, 2009: 248-249.

³⁵⁶ McCartney, 1912: 77-78 suggests that it was borrowed from the Etruscans due to the reference in Dionysius to the borrowing of various royal insignia. However, not only does this passage not mention anything to do with standards, it was written by a first century B.C. source who was attempting aetiology for the triumphal regalia, Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 3.61.1. Discussed below, p.51.

³⁵⁷ Charlevoix, 1744: 328-329; Durkheim, 1915: 114.

³⁵⁸ It could be possible that these tribes were influenced by European colonists, but would seem strange to adopt only a single part of their military system and place their totem on the pole rather than copying European standards entirely with a flag.

³⁵⁹ Charlevoix, 1744: 328-329.

³⁶⁰ Frazer, 1910.

³⁶¹ Durkheim, 1915.

society.³⁶² However, after the attack on the theory of universal totemism by Levi-Strauss in the 1960s, wherein, through the use of Structural Semiotics, he de-constructed the idea of universal totemism, the term and the ideas associated with it has been discredited and abandoned.³⁶³ This abandonment was so complete that Dumézil calls the idea of totemism complete fantasy.³⁶⁴ But it should not be so readily discarded. In fact, Levi-Strauss' criticism leads to essentially the same conclusion as Durkheim.³⁶⁵ That these animals represent the reflection of the social system in which the culture participates and that they are chosen because they are 'good to think' with, i.e. they lend themselves to society thinking about and representing themselves. In fact, although Levi-Strauss discredited the idea of a universal totemism, the later examinations of totemic animals in individual cultures used many of Durkheim's ideas.³⁶⁶ This idea is supported by the prominence of animals as defining symbols of culture worldwide.

With the idea of totemism re-established it may be possible to trace the origin of the standards to a specific point in Roman prehistory. Durkheim's examination of totemism states that the totemic animal is used mostly to define a group bound by kinship and so develops in a society at a relatively early stage in their growth.³⁶⁷ For Rome this would be in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age as this is the period where small settlements on the hilltops of Rome began to develop their own individual culture.³⁶⁸ The interpretations of the evidence differ but most agree that the Palatine became inhabited at this point, and possibly the Capitol and Quirinal.³⁶⁹ It may be at this point, where communities are beginning to establish their own local identities that a totem animal is introduced and, although pure conjecture, the five animals we have mentioned from Pliny may represent the totem animals of the early communities of Rome, as the most important aspect of self-representation is to an outside community, most notably in war.³⁷⁰ The only animal that might not fit with this totemic theory is the Minotaur, since it is not an actual animal. However, Durkheim states that the totem can sometimes be a mixture between man and animal.³⁷¹

The idea of totemism would also help to explain adoration of the standard repeated throughout the sources from its earliest mention, as the totemic animals always had a degree of

³⁶² Durkheim, 1915: Douglas, 1990: 26; 33. A slight mirror of this process can be seen in Aristotle above, p.22.

³⁶³ Levi-Strauss, 1962.

³⁶⁴ Dumézil, 1966: 18.

³⁶⁵ Poole, 1969: 21.

³⁶⁶ Poole, 1969; Tambiah, 1977; Lloyd, 1983: 7-9

³⁶⁷ Durkheim, 1915: 102.

³⁶⁸ Peroni, 1969; Pallottino, 1972: 202; Cornell, 1995: 53-55; Smith, 1996; Smith, 2000. Wheeler, 2009: 247; 250 agrees with a possible totemic origin, citing also the possibility that the *signifer's* wolf-pelt headdress may also have its origins in these traditions.

³⁶⁹ Peroni, 1969; Holloway, 1994; Cornell, 1995: 74; Smith, 2000: 18-21.

³⁷⁰ Pretzler, 2003: 150.

³⁷¹ Durkheim, 1915: 103-104. Domaszewski, 1895 believed these animals were theriomorphic representations of the main gods of the Roman pantheon (eagle for Jupiter, wolf for Mars, boar for Quirinus), but as stated above, p.42, there is no evidence that the Romans represented their gods this way and no indisputable connection between the eagle and Jupiter prior to the fourth century B.C.; Dušanic & Petković, 2003: 43.

religiosity.³⁷² There is, however, no material evidence that would link these animals with these Early Iron Age cultures; in fact the grave goods do not provide any depictions of animals at all. This could be explained by some of the evidence for totemic animals in Durkheim, as in every example these totems are made from wood and if the same material was used in a Roman context, none would survive. It would be worth identifying the earliest examples of these animals to at least trace their use in Roman art. The horse and, surprisingly, the Minotaur can be traced back to the sixth century B.C. with their frequent occurrence on the terracotta friezes (Fig 2.23).³⁷³ The earliest trace of the eagle³⁷⁴ and wild boar is c.290.³⁷⁵ But silence is not damning, and the possibility of their existence prior to this currency is not far-fetched, especially considering the survival rate of archaic imagery. The evidence is, yet again, far from conclusive, but it is also far from impossible. It leaves open the possibility that the *aquila* and other animal standards were created as totemic standards to represent the Early Iron Age communities in the area of Rome.

In conclusion, the origin of the *aquila* cannot be traced conclusively to any point in Roman history. Instead the sources provide five possible origin points for the introduction of the *aquila* to the Roman military system. Firstly, it may be that the military standard developed from the small Early Iron Age settlements in the area of Rome from a possible ‘totemic’ animal they chose to represent their community, c.1000-830. Secondly, the standard may have been introduced from the Near Eastern tradition of cultic standards via the migration of Near Eastern peoples to the Italian peninsula. Thirdly, the standard may have been introduced at the same point as the hoplite reforms around the seventh century B.C., either from Greek or Eastern influence.³⁷⁶ Fourthly, they may have been introduced alongside the centuriate organisation in the late sixth century B.C. Fifthly, they may have been introduced with the manipular reforms at some point between the centuriate reforms and the late fourth century B.C. But, what is certain is that military standards existed in the manipular legions. However, this cannot be stated conclusively for the *aquila* as no contemporary sources mention its existence in the manipular legion. Therefore, it is possible that Marius introduced it as the legion’s standard in 107. Relating more to the aims of this chapter, although the evidence is problematic in places, all the other five possibilities for the introduction of the *aquila* into the Roman military are before the advent of Roman literature, and so any contemporary understanding of Roman thought. This leaves open the possibility that the *aquila* was already a significant aspect of the eagle’s symbolism within Rome before 338.

³⁷² Durkheim, 1915: 119-122; Wheeler, 2009.

³⁷³ Holloway, 1994: 62.

³⁷⁴ Although there is the fourth century *cista* this is the first time the eagle is seen on its own.

³⁷⁵ See above p.38.

³⁷⁶ Possibly Persian, Phoenician, or an influence we cannot identify.

2.6: Political Aspects

2.6.1: The Hellenistic Eagle

It has been shown in the Homeric poems that the eagle was already intimately connected to royalty, as the majority of characters it is compared to are royalty;³⁷⁷ the later sources continue this tradition, especially when it is used in inspired divination.³⁷⁸ However, once we reach the period of Alexander the Great, we begin to see the eagle appear on the coinage of Hellenistic royalty, in the same period Rome is begin its rise to power.³⁷⁹ Although, as stated above,³⁸⁰ Alexander did not invent the trope of the eagle on thunderbolt or an enthroned Zeus with eagle, it was his coinage that popularised the image as he increased the production of coinage and had so many types.³⁸¹ Thus, as with much of the imagery associated with Alexander, it was taken up and continued (sometimes modified) by his successors. It appeared on the coinage of Ptolemy I,³⁸² Philip III³⁸³ and Antiochus I of Seleucia³⁸⁴ and, in turn, their successors. However, the Ptolemies seem to take this connection to the eagle even further. The eagle appears alone on their coinage and in a distinctive style from the very beginning³⁸⁵ and Theocritus connects the eagle to the birth of Ptolemy I,³⁸⁶ with a later story even relating that, after being abandoned, he was raised by eagles.³⁸⁷ This close connection continues throughout the Ptolemaic dynasty, with the eagle a constant feature on their coinage³⁸⁸ and appearing in connection to various later kings, for example Ptolemy IX places an eagle-scalp on his helmet in one issue.³⁸⁹ Additionally, the eagle does not seem to have any inherent symbolism or hold a special place in native Egyptian culture,³⁹⁰ and thus was reserved purely for this new Greek dynasty in

³⁷⁷ Hom. *Il.* 15.690-696; 17.670-680; 21.250-255; 22.307-311; *Od.* 15.160-178; 19.535-550; 24.535-550.

³⁷⁸ Aesch. *Supp.* 245-260; Diod. Sic. 17.115.3; Her. 5.92B.3-92C.1; Paus. 4.18.5; Pind. *Isthm.* 6.44-45; *Pyth.* 1.5-10; Plut. *Vit. Dion* 24.3-5; Strabo, 17.1.33.

³⁷⁹ There may be an example of the eagle being physically connected to royalty before Alexander, as it is mentioned that Clearchus of Heraclea (401-353) carried a golden eagle in front of him to proclaim his parentage, Just. *Epit.* 16.5.9. However, the source is from the second century A.D. and the idea only appears once, so it is difficult to believe its accuracy.

³⁸⁰ See above, p.30.

³⁸¹ Alexander is connected to the eagle in various later sources, (*Alex. Rom.* 1.33; 3.33; Curt. 4.15.26-28; Just. *Epit.* 12.16.5; Plut. *Vit. Alex.* 33.1-2), but this will be dealt with in-depth at a later point, see below, p.203.

³⁸² BMC 4.

³⁸³ Price, 1991: 1569.

³⁸⁴ Newell, 1978: 508.

³⁸⁵ Svoronos, 1904-1908: 66.

³⁸⁶ Theoc. *Id.* 17.71-75; Fears, 1977: 76.

³⁸⁷ Suda, *Lagos*; Fears, 1977: 76; Smith, 1988: 96.

³⁸⁸ Svoronos, 1904-1908: 74; 78; 80; 182; 197; 200; 204; 210; 248; 253; 254; 255; 256; 259; 263; 265; 1001.

³⁸⁹ Smith, 1988: pl.75.18.

³⁹⁰ Brunner-Traut, 1975: 64; Strabo, 17.1.4 and Dio. Sic. 1.87 thought those in Thebes worship the eagle. But it is more likely that they confused it with the hawk/vulture.

Egypt.³⁹¹ Additionally, as already mentioned, it may be possible that the eagle was used as the royal emblem of the Persian king: at least the Greeks believed it was.³⁹²

2.6.2: *The Roman Kings and Eagle-topped Sceptre*

There may be a possibility of connecting the eagle directly to the Roman kings. There is a story that an eagle placed a cap atop Tarquinius Priscus' head confirming his kingship was divinely sanctioned,³⁹³ but as with much of the details of the Roman kings it is most likely untrue. Although it tells us that the later Romans used the divination of the eagle in a familiar Greek manner it provides no actual connection to the Roman kings. What might, though, is the eagle-topped sceptre used in the regalia of the triumph.³⁹⁴ Beard has pointed out that trying to establish an origin for the triumph is a fool's errand, and in some ways this is correct.³⁹⁵ It seems hopeless to try and make sense of the confused Roman tradition on its origins and the fact that the ritual itself was constantly changing makes determining a point of origin almost impossible.³⁹⁶ However, in this case we are not searching for the origin of a complex religious ritual, simply attempting to discover whether the eagle-topped sceptre was part of the Roman royal regalia.³⁹⁷ The Roman tradition, which is less confused about the sceptre than any other aspect of the triumph, traces it back to Tarquinius Priscus with it being given to him by the Etruscans.³⁹⁸ But later Roman tradition is not enough of a basis to believe that the eagle-topped sceptre was used by Roman kings. Additionally, Cornell deconstructed the idea of an 'Etruscan' phase in early Roman history so well, that it makes an Etruscan borrowing even less likely.³⁹⁹

As discussed above, long eagle/bird-topped sceptres were already seen in the hands of various deities and mythical kings (Figs 2.3; 2.9; & 2.10) as well as possibly in the hands of Aeneas at the end of the fourth century B.C. (Fig 2.18). But there is some earlier evidence of sceptres, even bird-topped sceptres, in the hands of mortal non-mythical kings. One was found in a seventh century B.C. tomb of a nobleman at Duce at Vetulonia,⁴⁰⁰ and an ivory-topped sceptre appears on a sixth century B.C. plaque from Caere (Fig 2.24) most likely depicting Etruscan royalty.⁴⁰¹ It seems the use of a sceptre in

³⁹¹ Brunner-Traut, 1975: 64; Hazzard, 2000: 91-92.

³⁹² Aesch. *Pers.* 205-214; Plut. *Vit. Them.* 26.2. See below for details, p.45.

³⁹³ Apul. *De Deo Soc.* 133-137; Cic. *Leg.* 1.4; Dion. Hal. 3.47.3-4; Liv. 1.34.8-9; Sil. *Pun.* 13.818-820; Ogilvie, 1965: 143-144.

³⁹⁴ App. *Syr.* 66; Dion. Hal. 4.74.1; 5.47.3; Isid. *Etym.* 18.2.5; Juv. 10.43; Liv. 30.15.11; Val. Max. 4.4.5.

³⁹⁵ Beard, 2007: 312-313.

³⁹⁶ Serv. *Aen. Com.* 4.37; Isid. *Etym.* 18.2.3; Beard, 2007: 313.

³⁹⁷ Bonfante-Warren, 1970 and Versnel, 1970 both collect the material together to link the triumph to the Roman kings. Although Beard, 2007: 305-311, deconstructs certain aspects of the material evidence for the triumph existing in its Republican guise, she does not outright reject that any of the regalia used in the later ritual may have existed before the Republic.

³⁹⁸ Dion. Hal. 3.61.1; 4.74.1; 5.47.3. The other elements of the triumphal regalia have multiple origins.

³⁹⁹ Cornell, 1995: 158-172.

⁴⁰⁰ Hencken, 1968: 296; 230; Fig 286; 316; Bonfante-Warren, 1970: 58-59.

⁴⁰¹ Pallottino, 1952: 33; Bonfante-Warren, 1970: 58-59.

royal/noble regalia was already an established concept in the wider Italian world by the Roman regal period. Bird-topped sceptres also appear throughout the Mediterranean at this point, with an eagle/hawk-topped sceptre from c.600 found in Cyprus (Fig 2.25)⁴⁰² and, as discussed,⁴⁰³ eagle-topped sceptres are regularly seen with Zeus and other mythical kings in this period.⁴⁰⁴ This evidence certainly creates a possibility that the Roman kings carried an eagle-topped sceptre in their regalia, which then survived as a remnant of this attire in the later Roman triumph, especially if the king of the gods also carried this type of sceptre.

But, why does it matter? If we take Beard's line of argument, then we must accept that the evidence is so sparse as not to allow a certainty of any origin of even this small part of the triumph. As I stated in the introduction, the nature of early Roman history often only allows for possibilities rather than certainties and at least in this case the possibility cannot be rejected. More importantly, if the sceptre was used by the Roman kings there would be ramifications for its later symbolism. The eagle could be seen to have been directly attached to the Roman idea of royalty from an early point in their history, at least before the advent of the Roman literary tradition.

2.7: Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to establish the basis of the eagle's symbolism upon which the (later) Roman tradition will build. It seems that even prior to the Roman period the eagle is being used to express a multitude of diverse ideas, many dependant on its position as an animal, i.e. its characteristics and actions. In Aristotle's pseudo-scientific examination, we find that lots of factual information is known about the eagle, but that this is accompanied with many myths surrounding its behaviour. Additionally, the eagle is also viewed as slightly personified, which links into its use to express certain characteristics and concepts in Homer, such as mainly its use to express speed, excellent eyesight, its flight, and claws. All of these link into a larger idea of the eagle as a pre-eminent bird of prey, and to a greater idea of superiority over others, although this superiority leads to a dichotomy of expression with it either representing martial prowess or rapaciousness (possibly dependent on genre). However, the eagle also had numerous religious connections, mainly its connection to Zeus as his messenger and armour-bearer but also in connection to solar or supreme deities in the Near East. This also connects to its use in divination and its appearance in the Prometheus myth. But this is not the whole story, as I have shown that the eagle was also connected to numerous other deities and heroes in the Greek tradition, establishing it more as a semi-divine transitional entity that could cross the boundary between the mortal and divine realms, allowing it to serve any god it needed to. But it also had more mortal-based symbolism, seen again expressed

⁴⁰² Dikaios, 1961: 159; Bonfante-Warren, 1970: 58-59. Some state this sceptre may even be Mycenaean, McFadden, 1954: 131-42; Dunbar, 1995: 347-348.

⁴⁰³ See above, p.29 & 31.

⁴⁰⁴ Paus. 5.11.1; Pind. *Pyth.* 1.5-10; Dunbar, 1995: 348. Bird-topped sceptres were used with other gods also, Polykleitos' Hera had a cuckoo-topped sceptre, Paus. 2.17.4; Dunbar, 1995: 348.

through its hunting associations, on the shields and coinage of Greek soldiers and cities, being used to denote their personal martial prowess. The eagle, with and without Zeus, also gets popularised by the coinage of Alexander, which in turn gets taken up by his successors, especially the Ptolemies. This links the eagle strongly to Hellenistic kingship, and royalty in general, especially since it was already linked to the ‘king of the gods’.

But can we confirm any of these ideas were present in Italy prior to the advent of the Roman material? Some of the hunting imagery we know is circulating in Italy, and so, presumably, are those symbolic characteristics and concepts that accompany those hunting images. Additionally, it seems fairly certain that the eagle’s connection to Zeus is also firmly established in Italy prior to the fourth century B.C., and possibly even the Prometheus myth. It is also possible that some of the eagle’s royal symbolism appears in Italy, and possibly even in Rome, through the use of eagle-topped sceptres. However, this possibility cannot be confirmed. We also know, from Croton’s coinage, that the eagle’s martial aspects were also circulating, and since their coins resemble hoplite shields so dramatically, we can probably presume the eagle was being used as a shield pattern in Italy also. This leads to one of the most important aspects of the eagle’s military symbolism: the *aquila* standard. The standard will play an important role in the eagle’s symbolism throughout this study, and since it is a pure image of an eagle it is impossible to separate it from the actual bird, and so necessary to determine when it enters Roman thought. This chapter has identified six different possible origin points for the *aquila*,⁴⁰⁵ most of which make it fairly antiquated prior to the surviving Roman material.⁴⁰⁶

These ideas may even have an impact on our interpretation of the Silchester Eagle. It is quite possible that the eagle was part of a copy of a Hellenistic or Classical Greek statue, making its original production possibly based on Greek ideas of the eagle’s connection to Zeus or Prometheus.⁴⁰⁷ However, the later centuries will considerably alter and increase these possibilities of its meaning and production beyond any of these ideas. We shall see that a simple connection to Zeus will not be its only religious connections,⁴⁰⁸ and that its connection to the Hellenistic monarchs will be adopted and transformed by the later imperial regimes.⁴⁰⁹ So, even though these ideas may have had an impact on the Silchester Eagle’s symbolic meaning, they more importantly provide a glimpse at the basis of many of the later ideas surrounding the eagle that may have resulted in its production.

⁴⁰⁵ See above, p.34.

⁴⁰⁶ The exception being its possible introduction with the Marian reforms, making its appearance much later than the first Roman depiction of an eagle.

⁴⁰⁷ See above, p.29.

⁴⁰⁸ See below, p.58, 81, & 129.

⁴⁰⁹ See below, p.151.

Chapter 3: Fourth to Second Centuries B.C.: The Roman Adoption of the Eagle

3.1: Introduction

This chapter aims to establish the symbolic use of the eagle by the Romans in the third and second centuries B.C. and how much this symbolic picture reflects the Greek tradition and hints at Roman symbolism seen in the previous chapter. The volume of source material has increased from the previous period, as discussed below, and allows for a more detailed and nuanced picture of the Roman use of the eagle, from which Chapter 4 can build. Each section will discuss a different aspect of the eagle's symbolism in these two centuries, but they are set out quite differently from the previous chapter. Since there is a small amount of evidence which simply continues what was discussed in the last chapter, the section 'Physical Animal and Reality' has been removed.⁴¹⁰ But the 'Concepts and Characteristics' of the eagle are shown through the Roman comedies, which dominate this section. The sections on 'Religion and Myth' and 'Martial and State Themes' both focus on the numismatic evidence of the period, with the former discussing the deities and religious aspects of Rome's coinage and the later exploring the possible relation between the eagle, generals, and statehood in this period. Lastly, the 'Political Aspects' section will address the eagle-topped sceptre again. Before this, however, the sources must first be examined.

The sources for the third and second centuries B.C suffer from many of the same issues discussed in the previous chapter, but not to the same degree. Although there is a dearth in source material for the study of this period, sometimes referred to as the 'third century gap',⁴¹¹ the fact remains that Roman literature, at least the surviving record, begins in the late third century B.C. Not only do the plays of Plautus and Terence show the first glimpse at contemporary Roman culture but the works of Fabius Pictor are the basis from which all other Roman historians drew. Despite this, there is still sufficient reason to doubt elements of what these sources tell us and, even though it allows for a clearer picture of this period, they will not at all be comprehensive. It is impossible, for example, to examine all conceptual aspects eagle's symbolism from two near contemporary playwrights (Plautus and Terence) and the problems of relying purely on Livy and Silius Italicus have already been discussed in the previous chapter.⁴¹² However, the small amount of literary evidence for this period is compensated for slightly by a dramatic increase in numismatic evidence, all of which provides a better picture of the use of the eagle in these two centuries.

⁴¹⁰ There are few references in Ael. *NA*. 6.29, reporting a story from Phylarchus' *Histories*; Pos. 41; Theophr. *Hist. Pl.* 9.8.8.

⁴¹¹ Isayev, 2007: 158-159.

⁴¹² See above, p.39.

3.2: Concepts and Characteristics

3.2.1: Plautus and Terence

The use of the eagle to convey concepts and characteristics in this period comes mainly from the plays of Plautus and Terence. Although they provide the earliest surviving Roman literature in complete texts, they occupy a distinctly blurred position between the Greek and Roman literary tradition. On the one hand both playwrights adapted (or translated depending on your opinion)⁴¹³ most or all of their plays from Attic New Comedy,⁴¹⁴ which means all the cultural inferences, jokes and characters were originally made for a Greek audience steeped in Greek ideas and culture. This would mean any references to the eagle are based on Greek ideas rather than Roman ones and therefore not conducive to identifying a purely 'Roman' symbolism. However, much work has been done on both playwrights to try and identify exactly where Roman influences are found within the texts.

These are particularly evident in Plautus. Many of his plays contain references to Roman legal, political, and religious institutions as well as Latin puns, much of which has helped enlighten scholars on various aspects of Roman culture in the late-third/early-second centuries B.C.⁴¹⁵ Plautus references the eagle three times. In *Pseudolus* the cook compares himself to an eagle when he is accused of stealing, or charging too much for his services so that it amounts to stealing.⁴¹⁶ Cooks in ancient comedy are stereotyped as thieves,⁴¹⁷ but there is not sufficient evidence to identify whether this stereotype comes from Greek comedy or was added by Roman playwrights. However, the fact that the eagle here is seen to be representing rapaciousness and this particular association was identified in the earlier comedy of Aristophanes⁴¹⁸ makes it at least compatible with earlier Greek thought and thus more likely to stem from the Greek original. Then, in Plautus' *Menaechmi* a character asks if another has seen the pictures of an eagle carrying off Ganymede.⁴¹⁹ The reference to the eagle and Ganymede is likely to come from the original Greek. Although Ganymede was originally not connected to the eagle, it seems during the fourth century B.C. it begins to play a role in the myth and by this point would most likely be a regular aspect.⁴²⁰ These passages show that certain concepts associated with the eagle in Greek thought were incorporated into Roman thought, so much so that they can by this point be viewed as integral to the Roman symbolism of the eagle. In fact,

⁴¹³ Hunter, 1985: 18; Ludwig, 2001: 205.

⁴¹⁴ Gruen, 2001: 83.

⁴¹⁵ Gruen, 2004: 84; Batstone, 2006: 548.

⁴¹⁶ Plaut. *Pseud.* 847-853.

⁴¹⁷ Plaut. *Cas.* 720; Graupner, 1874: 26; Wortmann, 1883: 40; Duckworth, 1952: 262.

⁴¹⁸ Ar. *Eq.* 197-213.

⁴¹⁹ Plaut. *Men.* 143-146.

⁴²⁰ Vermeule, 1979: 167. The connection between the eagle and Ganymede will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter when it becomes more entwined in Roman culture, see below, p.84. The connection did exist in Italy as the material evidence shows, *LIMC* Catamite 8; 10; Ganymede 187; 203.

Wiseman points out that stories such as the abduction of Ganymede may have part of Roman myth from the earliest period.⁴²¹

One of the references to the eagle, however, must certainly be of Roman origin. In *Rudens* a pun is made when a character accidentally describes a woman's skin as '*subvoltarium*' and quickly corrects himself to say '*subaquilum*'. *Aquilus* means 'dark-skinned' so in trying to say she is a little dark-skinned (*aquilus*) he in fact says her skin is vulture-like (*voltarius*).⁴²² The pun lies in him accidentally mixing up *aquila* (eagle) and *volturius* (vulture).⁴²³ A passage from Aristotle may possibly be connecting these birds earlier, as he describes one species of eagle as 'resembling a vulture.'⁴²⁴ The pun is purely reliant on the Latin language and therefore can only be a Roman addition. Also, the fact that the character, and by extension the audience, can identify the word *aquilus* with *aquila* connects the eagle to a new aspect of symbolism (dark-in-colour) that is purely Roman.⁴²⁵

Terence, in the second century B.C., poses a more difficult problem. The scholarship is divided on how much Terence added to his Greek originals.⁴²⁶ It is clear that he remained more faithful to them than Plautus,⁴²⁷ but it seems he did alter some aspects to either allow better comprehension from a Roman audience or to improve the actual staging in the plays.⁴²⁸ For example, he left out Greek customs which would have confused his audience. But there is also evidence that his stricter adherence to the Greek originals may have slightly alienated his Roman audience, as sometimes they were distracted by other entertainment. The first two performances of *Hecyra* had to be called off as the audience were distracted by rope-dancers and boxers, implying they were not interested in Terence's play.⁴²⁹

There is, however, only one passage relating to the eagle in Terence. A proverb in *Heautontimorumenos* stating the character had reached the old age of an eagle.⁴³⁰ This is almost certainly from the Greek original as it matches up with many of the popular beliefs about eagles in the earlier Greek literature.⁴³¹ This may mean that the proverb did not make a strong connection to the Roman audience, due to its Greek origin, as was the case with some of Terence's plays, hence their

⁴²¹ Wiseman, 2004.

⁴²² Plaut. *Rud.* 421-424.

⁴²³ A detailed examination of this pun and its double-meanings within the play can be found in Fontaine, 2010: 38-46, there is a possibility that the character is in fact mixing up the words *Aquilo* (north-wind) and *Volturnus* (southeast-wind) as there was a storm earlier in the play. However, both interpretations are equally valid and the word *aquilo* meaning dark-coloured appears elsewhere in Plaut. *Poen.* 1112; Fontaine, 2010: 39.

⁴²⁴ Arist. *His. An.* 618b.18-619b.13.

⁴²⁵ Later Latin etymologists, however, connected *aquilo* with *aqua* rather than *aquila*, Festus, *Gloss. Lat.* 20. Even though ancient etymologies are notoriously unreliable and the connection to dark-in-colour and the eagle rather than water makes more sense, the simple fact that the words sound alike is enough to make a connection.

⁴²⁶ Ludwig, 2001: 205-206.

⁴²⁷ Ludwig, 2001: 214.

⁴²⁸ Ludwig, 2001: 210; 214.

⁴²⁹ Ter. *Hec. Pro.*; Beare, 1968: 173

⁴³⁰ Ter. *Haut.* 520. Its proverbial nature seems to be implied by the use of *dici solet*.

⁴³¹ Arist. *His. An.* 619b.

abandonment of *Hecyra*. Interestingly, however, the connection between the eagle and old age used as a proverb does not appear in the previous Greek literature. The connection to old age only appears beforehand in discussions of the animal itself and Terence's reference seems to be the first instance where it is used proverbially. Although argument from silence is rarely convincing, this could be seen as a Roman addition, possibly even a Roman proverb. However, the fact that the connection between the eagle and old age does appear in other Greek sources and that Terence attempted to remain faithful to the Greek original hints more at a Greek proverb, and thus a transfer from Greek thought. This does not necessarily indicate that the Roman audience did not understand the symbolism of the proverb, though. We have no reports of abandonment of *Heautontimorumenos*, implying a better appreciation of it, and the off-handed use of the proverb in the passage implies a generalised knowledge of this expression. Thus, although most likely derived from a Greek original, it seems to have been easily understood by a Roman audience.

Unlike many literary sources these plays give an idea of the eagle's symbolism not just in elite culture, but popular culture. Despite the possibility of reserved seating for senators set up in 194, admissions to the theatre was free and accessible to every class of person. The prologue to *Poenulus*,⁴³² which speaks directly to the audience to prepare them for the play, addresses married women (also mentioned in Terence),⁴³³ nurses, prostitutes, slaves, lackeys and *lictors* (implying the magistrates were also there). It could be possible that Plautus is giving a dramatic account of who his audience was and in reality it was not that diverse, however, the scholarship all agrees that these plays would have been viewed by a cross-section of Roman society.⁴³⁴ The diversity present in the audience that viewed these plays means that the three aspects of symbolism we can identify as present were not only understood by the playwright or noble elite, but the varied cross-section we see listed in that prologue. Additionally, as mentioned, the audiences of these plays could be rowdy and even get distracted by other entertainment.⁴³⁵ In this situation the play had to capture the audience and identify with them throughout the performance, thus the playwrights would never include references which their audiences would find boring, un-relatable, or confusing. This means every reference to the eagle must have been understood by the majority of the eclectic audience. Therefore, we can state that the eagle's rapaciousness, its connection to *aquilus*, and its old age were symbolic characteristics rooted in popular Roman thought. In the case of old age, it had become so familiar that it had become proverbial.

⁴³² Plaut. *Poen.* Pro.

⁴³³ Ter. *Hec.* 35.

⁴³⁴ Beare, 1968: 173-174.

⁴³⁵ Ter. *Hec.* Pro.; Beare, 1968: 173.

3.3: Religion and Myth

3.3.1: *The Religious Eagle on Coinage*

Both this section and the next section will be concentrating on the numismatic evidence for these centuries. As mentioned in the previous chapter, before appearing on Roman currency the eagle was already being used frequently on the coinage of Italy, Sicily and Greece from as early as c.540, with the eagle appearing with Zeus and a number of other deities throughout this period.⁴³⁶

Firstly, before moving on to the Roman coinage, one anomalous coin needs to be discussed. The Roman colony of Alba Fucens produces a coin from c.302-263 with Minerva on the obverse and an eagle on a thunderbolt on the reverse (Fig 3.1). This coin is strange as it precedes any major coinage production of its parent city and also because a colony of Rome, most likely consisting of citizens turned Latins,⁴³⁷ would not usually produce independent coinage. There is no denying that this coin somehow relates to the later Roman coinage, especially since a later Roman type is so similar.⁴³⁸ What should be emphasised is that the first appearance of the eagle on coinage from Latium it is shown alongside Minerva rather than Jupiter. This indicates that even before Rome produced its own coinage, the connection between the eagle and Jupiter was neither obvious nor inevitable in Latium, just like elsewhere in the Mediterranean.⁴³⁹

The first representation of the eagle on Roman currency occurs on the *aes signatum* produced c.280-250 by what we assume is the Roman state, as no moneyer's name appears on them (Fig 2.16). This particular *aes signatum* has been interpreted in many ways⁴⁴⁰ but the standard interpretation given now is that the Eagle and Pegasus both represent Jupiter. Originally this connection was made by Deliperi; however, his reasoning behind it was flawed as he believed all the *aes signatum* were

⁴³⁶ See above, p.27.

⁴³⁷ Sherwin-White, 1973: 77.

⁴³⁸ See below, p.61.

⁴³⁹ See preceding paragraph. Additionally, the presence of the thunderbolt beneath the eagle is not as clear an indicator of Jupiter as is usually thought. This problem is discussed in more detail below, p.60.

⁴⁴⁰ Haeblerlin, 1905: 32 suggested that the eagle represented Rome and the Pegasus Campania, with the word ROMANOM showing Rome's new dominance over Campania. However, there is no evidence that the Pegasus ever represented Campania; Regling, 1906: 500; Comparette, 1918: 36; Thomsen, 1961b: 187-188. Many suggested that, as the horse, both wingless and with wings, appeared on Punic ships, both the eagle and the Pegasus together represented the Romano-Carthaginian treaty of the Pyrrhic War. Although the right dating, it has been shown that the eagle was is not definitively connected to Rome at this point. Also, it seems extremely unlikely that they would attach the word ROMANOM to a Carthaginian symbol; Comparette, 1918: 36-37; 183; Thomsen, 1961b: 188; Sutherland, 1974: 18. In this vein, Herbig, 1956: 5-6 suggested that the eagle actually represented Ptolemaic Egypt and so the *aes signatum* commemorated the triad alliance of Rome, Carthage and Egypt. However, it was produced far too early for the alliance between Rome and Egypt and also, all three were never allied at the same point; Neatby, 1950: 89; Thomsen, 1961b: 23; 129; 189. Lastly, Hill, 1909: 14 and Mattingly, 1940: 542 suggest that the Pegasus is connected to the 'Pegasi' of Corinth and therefore provides no topical, symbolic meaning at all. However, it would seem strange for Rome to assign meaning to some symbols (as we will see below) and not others; Thomsen, 1961b: 188.

used as dedications at temples rather than currency.⁴⁴¹ By Crawford, though, this interpretation is taken as fact.⁴⁴² The obvious and most important piece of evidence for this is that the eagle is carrying a thunderbolt in its claws. The connection between the eagle and Zeus/Jupiter certainly existed by this point, as has been discussed above.⁴⁴³ Strengthening this view, though, is the interpretation of the Pegasus given by Crawford. He notes that the Pegasus was also used as a messenger/‘armour-bearer’ for Zeus/Jupiter as early as Hesiod and so the symbols on both the obverse and reverse of the *aes signatum* relate to Jupiter, and this opinion is reinforced by the appearance of both the eagle and the Pegasus with Jupiter on coinage from Alexander.⁴⁴⁴

However, Crawford presents this as the only interpretation.⁴⁴⁵ His reasoning for this is that the Romans would automatically connect the eagle with Jupiter, especially if Jupiter was the titular god of the Roman triumph.⁴⁴⁶ But there are significant problems with this stance. First, as shown in the last chapter and the variety of deities mentioned above,⁴⁴⁷ the evidence we have from this period does not conclusively indicate that the Romans would automatically connect the eagle with Jupiter. Secondly, Beard’s examination of the triumph identifies the difficulties in trying to examine the ritual at any point where we do not have any contemporary evidence, which is the case for the third century B.C.⁴⁴⁸ Not only do we not know what a third century B.C. triumph would have looked like, we also cannot directly connect the ritual to Jupiter. Thirdly, it seems strange that the Romans would only include one reference to the gods in all the imagery on the *aes signatum*, as; at least as Crawford interprets them, the Eagle/Pegasus is the only example with any sort of religious connotation. However, it is possible to give other examples some type of religious connotation. The Anchor/Tripod (Fig 3.2) type may be referencing Apollo (the tripod is traditionally connected to Apollo) and the Trident/Chicken (Fig 3.3) type could be both a reference to Poseidon and to Roman religious rituals involving the feeding of chickens. These interpretations, however, seem not to have been considered by other scholars.

Most important to Crawford’s interpretation, though, is the fact that the eagle is atop a thunderbolt. This image is usually interpreted as the eagle acting as Jupiter’s ‘armour-bearer’, mentioned above, but the thunderbolt has a far more complex position in Greco-Roman religion than this. McCartney examines all the uses of the thunderbolt in the ancient sources and shows that the thunderbolt was not confined to Jupiter and was instead the weapon of a multitude of deities. Apollo

⁴⁴¹ Deliperi, 1943: 44.

⁴⁴² Crawford, 1974: 716.

⁴⁴³ See above, p.28. There is an Italian *cista* showing Zeus with a lightning bolt with the eagle behind him from this period, Wiseman, 2004: 97, Fig 29.

⁴⁴⁴ Hes. *Theog.* 285-6; Herakles/Zeus type coin produced by Abydos in c.325-323: *SNG Cop.* 891.

⁴⁴⁵ Crawford, 1974: 716, n.2; 718, n.3.

⁴⁴⁶ Crawford, 1974: 716, n.2.

⁴⁴⁷ See above, p.30.

⁴⁴⁸ Beard, 2007.

was said to have used thunderbolts to attack the Persian army and the Gallic army at Delphi⁴⁴⁹ and to kill the Cyclops Glaucus.⁴⁵⁰ Athena also employed them frequently, boasting that she alone knew the location of their storage and uses them to destroy Achaean ships.⁴⁵¹ Both she and Hera are also represented as ‘thundering’ in honour of Agamemnon.⁴⁵² Pliny and Seneca both explain that the Etruscan tradition had nine deities who could throw thunderbolts, but that in the Roman tradition only Jupiter, Saturn and Mars had this ability, more than Jupiter alone.⁴⁵³ There are also some minor examples of it being used by Venus, Diana, and even Poseidon and Hades.⁴⁵⁴ This evidence clearly shows that the thunderbolt was not the limited weapon of Jupiter, but could be used by almost any divine being.⁴⁵⁵ Thus, if the eagle was holding the thunderbolt, but is not specifically shown alongside Jupiter, there is no reason to automatically make that symbolic connection.

Another piece of evidence that dispels this automatic connection between the ‘eagle on thunderbolt’ to Jupiter is a coin from Tarentum in c.281-272 that shows an owl, instead of an eagle, on a thunderbolt (Fig 3.4). This coin shows that not only is the thunderbolt not limited to one deity, it is not limited to the eagle either. Since the obverse shows Athena and the owl is often her signature bird, it implies Athena is using the thunderbolt. This coin also opens the possibility of a completely different interpretation of the significance of the thunderbolt in this image, which other scholars have not noticed. The eagle with the thunderbolt may relate to the eagle’s speed when striking at its prey from above, like a thunderbolt. The owl does much the same action when hunting its prey and thus the appearance of the thunderbolt in its talons makes more sense in this context.⁴⁵⁶ Some early coinage adds to this interpretation as the eagle is often shown hunting either hare or serpents.⁴⁵⁷ In fact, on some early Elisian coinage the hunting eagle is seen with a thunderbolt, again connecting the two (Fig 3.5).⁴⁵⁸ Additionally, since the hunting eagle begins as a heroic Homeric simile⁴⁵⁹ the first appearance of the eagle on thunderbolt, alongside the mythical hero Aleuas,⁴⁶⁰ reinforces this interpretation even

⁴⁴⁹ Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.9.26; Just. *Epit.* 2.12; Mart. *Cap.* 1.7; Paus. 10.23.1; Soph. *OT.* 464-470; McCartney, 1932: 214; Hekster & Rich, 2006: 162.

⁴⁵⁰ Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.10.4; Diod. *Sic.* 4.71.3; McCartney, 1932: 214.

⁴⁵¹ Aesch. *Eum.* 827-8; Eur. *Tro.* 77-81; 92-94; Serv. *Aen.* 1.42; Ver. *Aen.* 1.42-5; McCartney, 1932: 214.

⁴⁵² Serv. *Aen.* 11.45-46; McCartney, 1932: 214. Hera, as Juno, occasionally used the bolt alone in later sources, Mart. *Cap.* 1.67; Stat. *Theb.* 10.67-9.

⁴⁵³ Plin. *HN.* 2.138-139; Sen. *Q Nat.* 2.41; Serv. *Aen.* 8.426; McCartney, 1932: 213-214; Hekster & Rich, 2006: 162.

⁴⁵⁴ Hom. *Il.* 12.17-33; 14.385-386; *Od.* 4.506-507; 5.291-292; McCartney, 1932: 213-214.

⁴⁵⁵ Diod. *Sic.* 11.14 makes this exact statement. However, Serv. *Aen.* 1.42 states that the thunderbolt is Zeus’ alone. This is a much later source and seems contrary, not only to the previous sources, but to Virgil’s *Aeneid* itself.

⁴⁵⁶ Hunting owl, Arist. *Hist. An.* 609a.8-16; 617b.5; 619b.

⁴⁵⁷ Elis, c.468: *SNG* Berry 806; c.468-300: BMC 9; Croton, c.425-375: BMC 110; Chalkis, c.465: BCD Euboia 116; c.390-310: BMC 46; 50; 53; 110; Agrigentum, c.450-406: Calciati, 1983-1987: no.64; c.425-406: Calciati, 1983-1987: no.10-11; 17; 29; 32; 40; 43; 50; 54; 63; 68; 70; 73; 80; 82; 84-85; c.414-413: BMC 61; King Amyntas III, c.393-369: BMC 17.

⁴⁵⁸ Seltman, 1924: no.32.

⁴⁵⁹ See above, p.24.

⁴⁶⁰ On the coinage of Larissa, c.370-360: Herrmann, 1925: VII, 11.

more. If the eagle (and owl) is interpreted in this fashion, it takes on another facet of symbolism. The catching and killing of prey relates far more to the context of war, conquest and battle in which the *aes signatum*, and later coinage, were produced. All of these problems combined show that the standard interpretation of the eagle on the *aes signatum* given by Crawford is by no means a certainty, in fact, a variety of different interpretations of this eagle are just as plausible. Even those interpretations rejected by Crawford, discussed in the next section,⁴⁶¹ may be just as valid as his.

The second time the eagle appears on Roman coins in this period is on a coin from the First Punic War. The Minerva/Eagle type (Fig 3.6) was produced in c.264 from a mint in Messina, which was controlled by the Romans.⁴⁶² The choice to represent Minerva rather than Jupiter is not a surprising one, especially in light of the previous discussion and that Minerva appears with the eagle on the Latin coinage of Alba Fucens (Fig 3.1).⁴⁶³ It has been suggested that the Romans are simply imitating Corinthian coins, which also show Minerva (as Athena) with an eagle (Fig 3.7) on the obverse and a Pegasus on the reverse, which also appears on the Roman *aes signatum* (Fig 2.16) and *aes grave* (heavy bronze coinage).⁴⁶⁴ However, the probability of Rome imitating the coinage of some far away Greek city it had no connection to in this period is quite low. More likely is that the Romans made a conscious decision to present Minerva alongside an eagle, like Alba Fucens. In isolation the religious aspects of this coin are hard to pin-point, but by looking at a later coin they become clearer.

The Mars/Eagle gold coin (Fig 3.8) produced by Rome in the Second Punic War (c.211-207) is similar to the Minerva/Eagle type. The eagle is represented alongside the god of war, Mars, who is, like Minerva, dressed for battle. This imagery coupled with the fact that both these coins were produced during periods of warfare points towards a more martial interpretation of the deities and the eagle. Most coinage was produced in periods of warfare, so this alone is not enough of a connection, but the Mars/Eagle coin, at least, was being produced to specifically pay the legions, which would encourage a prominence of military orientated imagery on the coinage.⁴⁶⁵ Additionally, the other coin types of the period show a focus on victory symbolism (of soon-to-be achieved victories rather than actual victories), e.g. Roma/Victory in the First Punic War and Jupiter/Victory in the Second Punic War.⁴⁶⁶ All this evidence leads to the conclusion that the eagle was included in the standard war imagery Rome was using in this period.⁴⁶⁷ In fact, Crawford's interpretation of this coin, although

⁴⁶¹ See below, p.67.

⁴⁶² Sarstrom, 1940: 42; Crawford, 1974: 40.

⁴⁶³ See above, p.58.

⁴⁶⁴ Sutherland, 1974: 19.

⁴⁶⁵ Even though these coins were produced by different generals at different mints, the imagery remained the same and so must have been mandated by the Roman state; Sutherland, 1974: 47-53.

⁴⁶⁶ Crawford, 1974: 714; Sutherland, 1974: 47-48. Not all the coins of this period contain direct imagery connecting to victory. However, they do reference the state and warfare, e.g. Roma/Dioscuri and Janus/Oath coins; Sutherland, 1974: 47-48.

⁴⁶⁷ Thomsen, 1961a: 318-319 suggests that the eagle was copied from Tarentine coinage (Rutter, 2001: 986) and thus by replacing the inscribed TARENTINON with ROMA the Romans are symbolising their conquest of Tarentum, or their victory in Tarentum's revolt against them. However, this has the same problems as

based on different reasoning, comes to much the same conclusion. Although he states that it is a development of a Mamertine type,⁴⁶⁸ he goes on to say that the eagle had now taken on a Roman 'air' and now symbolised the expected triumph of Roman arms.⁴⁶⁹ But what aspect of war is the eagle representing that other imagery cannot convey and what is its connection to Minerva and Mars?

Both coins show the eagle on a thunderbolt, already much discussed. And, as already stated, this does not simply symbolise Jupiter or invoke Jupiter for a military purpose. The multitude of examples of the eagle's use with other deities as well as the thunderbolt's eclectic use attests to this. If Rome wished to represent Jupiter, they would simply place Jupiter on their coinage as other states did. The eagle also cannot be simply a victory symbol,⁴⁷⁰ as Crawford hints at by relating it to the triumphator,⁴⁷¹ as once again if Rome wished to symbolise victory they would place Victory on their coins, which they did.⁴⁷² If it was possible to say for certain whether the *aquila* standard existed at this point in Roman history, the eagle could be symbolising the legions, via their standard. This is certainly a possibility, and if so, the symbolism would be largely military and would be linking Minerva and Mars directly to the legions. If the *aquila* standard did not exist at this point, however, the eagle, with the thunderbolt emphasising its speed at attacking its prey, may have been emphasising Minerva and Mars as martial deities. Additionally, the eagle, through its guise as 'armour-bearer' of different deities and position as a transitional entity between the divine and mortal realms, may be representing both Minerva's and Mars' intervention in war on behalf of the Romans. The eagle is not only connected to Jupiter, but is representative of the divine aid of any deity it is represented with, in this case Minerva and Mars.

The eagle appears again on a coin from the period of the Second Punic War (c.217-215), but in a significantly different guise. The Roman state produced a coin with a she-wolf and twins on the obverse and an eagle carrying a flower on the reverse (Fig 3.9). There are several interesting points about this coin and the eagle represented on it. Firstly, there are no type parallels of this eagle image found anywhere in Italy, Sicily or Greece.⁴⁷³ There are some that stand facing right with their wings closed but none that have a flower in their beak.⁴⁷⁴ There is also a small possibility that this coin is referencing a coin from Argos, which show a wolf's hindquarters and a small eagle beneath a Lambda

Crawford's Mamertine interpretation as the same type of eagle and name placing is seen produced by the Mamertines (which also includes Mars, *SNG ANS* 401), the Bruttii (*SNG Cop.* 1662), and the Locri (Rutter, 2001: 2400) so why would the viewer automatically make the connection between this coinage and Tarentum?

⁴⁶⁸ The probability of which is discussed below, p.71.

⁴⁶⁹ Crawford, 1974: 720 again attributes this to the sceptre carried by the triumphator. However, this argument is just as tenuous as it was for the *aes signatum*, see above, p.58.

⁴⁷⁰ This is certainly possible as it portended victory in the Greek sources, see above, p.28.

⁴⁷¹ Crawford, 1974: 714.

⁴⁷² Crawford, 1974: 714; Sutherland, 1974: 47-48.

⁴⁷³ There is one coin from Argos produced in c.343 that depicts both a wolf and an eagle, but this is quite different (*SNG Cop.* 31).

⁴⁷⁴ Thomsen, 1957: 169.

(Fig 3.10). However, the images are not exactly the same and Argos lies quite far outside of Rome's sphere of influence in this period, plus it is produced almost 100 years previously in c.343. Secondly, not only does the eagle not match any types produced by other peoples it does not match Rome's own depictions on eagles, either before or afterwards.⁴⁷⁵ Clearly, then, it seems to be representing something quite different to any of the eagle representations we have so far encountered. Thirdly, and most interestingly, is that the eagle accompanies the she-wolf and twins on this coin. This hints at a possible connection between the eagle and Romulus. There is some possible precedent for the eagle's attachment to a particular city's foundation myth or patron gods in the coinage of other states. It is shown with Akragas, Aleuas and Taras, the patron gods of Agrigentum, Larissa and Tarentum, respectively;⁴⁷⁶ the nymph Kyme and Chalkis in the cities of the same names;⁴⁷⁷ as well as the patron god of Sicily, Sikelia.⁴⁷⁸ Interestingly, in all these cases the eagle does not appear in any of the literary sources on these figures, but seems to have been added into the myth via these coins.⁴⁷⁹ This Roman coin may be following in this tradition; however, there is more evidence of a closer connection between the eagle and the Romulus myth.

Some gems show a nondescript bird perching in a tree above the twins (circa third-early first century B.C.);⁴⁸⁰ a mosaic from Marino shows an eagle and a vulture (already included at a later point in the story) with the twins;⁴⁸¹ an altar from Ostia shows an eagle with the twins and Mars in A.D. c.98-117 (Fig 3.11).⁴⁸² There may even be some literary evidence. A corrupted passage from Fronto contains the phrase '*aquilae est*' in an apparent story about Romulus and Remus,⁴⁸³ although the passage also mentions the Persians and may be alluding to the similar Persian story where the Achaemenid kings were raised by eagles.⁴⁸⁴ It seems then, at least in some versions, that the eagle plays a role in the Romulus myth. Although the other examples do not necessarily hint at its exact role, the coin seems to suggest that the eagle is bringing the infants food, as this is the role the woodpecker takes in other versions,⁴⁸⁵ and thus helping the she-wolf in raising the children.⁴⁸⁶ But it seems to be carrying flowers not food so it may instead be crowning the twins, giving them kingship.

⁴⁷⁵ Minerva/Eagle before, Mars/Eagle after.

⁴⁷⁶ Agrigentum: *SNG ANS* 1098; Larissa: Hermann, 1925: VII, 11; Tarentum: Ravel, 1947: no.566; 570; 580.

⁴⁷⁷ Chalkis, *BMC* 33; 38; 57; Kyme, although much later in c.145: Oakley, 1982: no.64.

⁴⁷⁸ On the coinage of Herbessos and Morgantina, Calciati, 1983-1987: no.4; 6.

⁴⁷⁹ There is a minor connection when Aleuas is given the power of augury, *Ael. NA.* 8.11.

⁴⁸⁰ Richter, 1971: no.40; Crawford, 1974: 719 n.5. Richter, 1971: 21 interprets the bird as a woodpecker, as this is the usual bird of Mars, but the gem is far too small to make a definite decision, hence why Crawford, 1974: 719 n.5 calls it 'nondescript'.

⁴⁸¹ Tomasetti, 1886: 3; Crawford, 1974: 719 n.5.

⁴⁸² Crawford, 1974: 719 n.5. It is also possible that the *Ara Pacis* shows an eagle with the twins, however, the relief is fragmentary and so others think it may be a woodpecker, as this is the traditional bird of Mars. But the scene does resemble the Ostia Altar, so I believe either interpretation of this bird could be correct; Crawford, 1974: 719 n.5; Castriota, 1995: 154, Fig 46.

⁴⁸³ Fronto, *Ep. Ad Verum*, 2.1.1.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ael. NA.* 12.21.

⁴⁸⁵ *Plut. Vit. Rom.* 4; Castriota, 1995: 154.

⁴⁸⁶ *Plut. Vit. Rom.* 4; Castriota, 1995: 154.

This is the same position it has in the story of Tarquinius Priscus.⁴⁸⁷ This coin shows that the eagle had become entangled in Roman mythological symbolism by at least the late-third century B.C. and had even become involved in their foundation myth. It must also be noted that this scene bears a striking resemblance to the eagle portent in Dionysius discussed in the last chapter, and may relate to a wider Latin foundation myth as that story does.⁴⁸⁸

The eagle appears again in a couple of coins from the second century B.C. One coin produced by the moneyer M. Carbo in c.122 may show Jupiter holding an eagle-topped sceptre while riding in a quadriga (Fig 3.12). The problems with this coin will be dealt with in detail below.⁴⁸⁹ However, it is worth noting that if Jupiter is holding an eagle-topped sceptre on this coin, this is the first depiction on Roman coinage of Jupiter and the eagle, late in the second century B.C. Another coin produced by the moneyer Cn. Blasio in c.112-111 shows the triad of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva with the eagle in the exergue below them (Fig 3.13). Again, the eagle is separated from Jupiter, this time deliberately, and is shown alongside other deities. Both these examples illustrate that even by the late second century B.C. the link between the eagle and Jupiter, although present, is weaker than generally assumed and the eagle has, instead, wide and varied religious connotations, at least in the imagery of Rome.

In conclusion, although the eagle does have a solid connection to Zeus/Jupiter in much of the coinage of the Mediterranean in this period its religious symbolism is not limited to being a simple stand-in for the god. In the case of Rome's use of the eagle as a religious symbol it does not seem to connect to Jupiter as much as usually assumed. In these cases, it seems to be overshadowed by other deities and possible religious associations, especially through my re-interpretation of the thunderbolt as representing the eagle's speed/predatory aspects rather than Jupiter. This means the eagle is used to either highlight the martial aspects of whichever deity is attached it to, in this case Minerva and Mars, or to indicate their divine intervention on behalf of Rome against their enemies. Even if the eagle is being used to represent the legions rather than the speed of an eagle when hunting, it is still connecting and emphasising both these deities' martial aspects. Additionally, either during this period or earlier the eagle seems to have been inserted into some forms of Rome's foundation myth, connecting it directly to Romulus and Remus and Rome's mythical narrative.

3.3.2: *Aeneas and the Eagle.*

Whereas the eagle's position in the Romulus myth is complicated and discussed above,⁴⁹⁰ it appears on some material evidence in connection to Aeneas in the fourth century B.C. A *cista*, produced in Roman dominated Praeneste,⁴⁹¹ shows Aeneas holding an eagle attached to a long staff

⁴⁸⁷ Liv. 1.34.8-9.

⁴⁸⁸ See above, p.64.

⁴⁸⁹ See below, p.74.

⁴⁹⁰ See above, p.62.

⁴⁹¹ Ryberg, 1955: 20.

(Fig 2.18). Ryberg, while not identifying the figure as Aeneas,⁴⁹² interprets the scene as representing an early version of the triumph. He bases this on Festus' description of the *tunica palmata* which is similar to the tunic on the *cista*, that the general (Aeneas) pours a libation into a tripod and that he holds the 'eagle-topped sceptre'.⁴⁹³ However, as discussed above,⁴⁹⁴ it is dangerous to assume these elements of the triumph existed in this period. What seems more likely is that Aeneas is holding the large eagle-topped sceptre to distinguish him as royalty, as we saw above in relation to Zeus and other mythical kings.⁴⁹⁵ This, however, is a tangential connection between the eagle and Aeneas, and one that also has an alternative interpretation, discussed in more detail above.⁴⁹⁶

Another connection is seen in a story of an omen occurring when Lavinium was built.⁴⁹⁷ Lavinium was founded by Aeneas and, although the story is seen in the first century B.C. source Dionysius, he states that statues of the animals in the story 'have been preserved for a very long time'⁴⁹⁸ in the Lavinium forum. This would represent a belief that this story and the statue group were much older than the first century B.C. The story is as follows: when a fire broke out in the forest a wolf came and placed wood on the fire, then an eagle came and helped fan the flames, and despite the attempted mischief of a fox they kept the flame alive. Aeneas himself interprets the story, stating that the fire represents Lavinium and its later greatness. At the time of Dionysius' relating of this omen it was Rome which had received greatness and not Lavinium. Thus, the fire would instead seem to represent Rome. The wolf can be almost immediately equated to Romulus, and therefore Rome,⁴⁹⁹ so what is the eagle symbolising? Either it signifies another aspect of Rome, where all three parts of the omen represent Rome, or, because it comes to help the wolf in building the fire, it represents Lavinium or other Italian allies. There are two coins from c.45, which depict this scene and seem to advocate the latter as the wolf occupies a much more prominent position on the coin compared to the eagle, at least this would be the first century B.C. interpretation. It is also possible that the eagle, through the religious implications discussed above, represented divine help/endorsement of Rome as a messenger of the divine. In fact, this fits with the Romans' self-image as the most pious of peoples.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹² I agree with Wiseman, 2004: 112 who, although Aeneas is not named, recognises the scene as Jupiter coming to collect his tribute of wine from Aeneas, who vowed it to him in his war against the Rutulians.

⁴⁹³ Festus, *Gloss. Lat.* 228 L. Ryberg, 1955: 20 is basing his assumptions on much later evidence, Holliday, 2002: 186-187 agrees with him, but interprets the scene as a representation of a theatrical triumph.

⁴⁹⁴ See above, p.51.

⁴⁹⁵ See above, p.28.

⁴⁹⁶ See below, p.40.

⁴⁹⁷ Dion. Hal. 1.59.4.

⁴⁹⁸ Dion. Hal. 1.59.4.

⁴⁹⁹ This was certainly the case by c.90 as coinage from the rebel states in the Social War produced coinage depicting the Italian bull goring the Roman wolf; BMC 41.

⁵⁰⁰ Cic. *Har. Resp.* 19; *Nat. D.* 2.8; Hor. *Carm.* 3.6.1-8; Verg. *Aen.* 1.278-279; Ando, 2009: 126; Erskine, 2010: 35-36

The Aeneas tradition has been traced back to Greek historians of the fifth century B.C. and relates to the founding of not just Rome, but many of the central Italian cities.⁵⁰¹ If this is an old story, and if those were old statues in the Lavinium forum, it represents an interesting view of the eagle in pre-fourth century B.C. Italy. Lavinium was using both the wolf and the eagle in their own foundation myth, also connected to Aeneas. This may mean that the eagle,⁵⁰² at least in the period before Rome's expansion, was possibly a symbol being used by different central Italian cities for different reasons. In fact, the fourth century B.C. Praenestine *cista*, since it was found in Praeneste and it has no definable features to place it in any other location, may instead be connecting Aeneas to Praeneste rather than Rome since it must have been produced there. Additionally, as discussed above,⁵⁰³ the eagle was a common motif on the coinage of the Italian communities from as early as the sixth century B.C.⁵⁰⁴ This does however rely on quite a number of 'ifs', and so is far from a definitive interpretation.

The eagle's connection to Aeneas is complicated. On the one hand it is not used in connection to Aeneas at all. On the Praenestine *cista* the eagle-topped sceptre would just be identifying him as royalty, with no special connection. On the other hand, through one story a possibility of its early symbolism in Italy is revealed. The eagle may have been important in the symbolism not just of Rome, but in the other central Italian cities. This may become important when reflecting on the eagle's symbolism in later periods, once the Italian cities have become incorporated into the Roman state. The inherent Italian symbolism may reflect on the Roman symbolism, which may make the eagle a more relatable symbol to those not of Roman descent.

3.4: Martial and State Connections

3.4.1: The Eagle as an Image of Warfare

Although dealing with the same numismatic material as the previous section, this section will emphasise a different aspect of their symbolism, focusing on how the eagle fits into the war imagery of the Roman state and whether it reflects some type of larger ideas of statehood in this period.

First, we will deal with the Eagle/Pegasus *aes signatum* (Fig 2.16) and the interpretations contra to Crawford's. The most plausible of these is the interpretation posited by Nenci that the eagle in fact represents Pyrrhus and the Pegasus represents Rome, and thus the *aes signatum* is symbolising, rather than Jupiter, Rome's victory in the Pyrrhic War. Nenci justifies this view in several ways, first, noting the strong connection between the eagle and Pyrrhus.⁵⁰⁵ Many sources point out that his

⁵⁰¹ Anti. 555 F.6; Plut. *Vit. Nic.* 1.3; Thuc. 6.2.3; Cornell, 1995: 64-66.

⁵⁰² Possibly the wolf also.

⁵⁰³ See below, p.28.

⁵⁰⁴ This chapter will show and discuss the wide variety and use of the eagle on Italian coinage, see p.58.

⁵⁰⁵ Nenci, 1955: 391-404.

nickname was ‘The Eagle.’⁵⁰⁶ According to Plutarch, he even used the name to his advantage in a rousing speech to his troops wherein he refers to them as his ‘wings’.⁵⁰⁷ The eagle was also a regular feature in portents connected to Pyrrhus: not only did one supposedly predict his kingship,⁵⁰⁸ but also his death.⁵⁰⁹ However, this connection does have its problems. On the surface the fact that the Eagle is carrying a thunderbolt in its claws would detract from this interpretation, instead connecting the eagle to Jupiter. The last section, though, showed that this connection is not strong enough to be the image’s only meaning.⁵¹⁰ In fact, since the eagle on thunderbolt is popularised by Alexander and then continued by the Hellenistic kings, and Pyrrhus styled himself a Hellenistic king, the eagle on the thunderbolt may in fact be more evidence for a connection to Pyrrhus. Additionally, since the Pegasus accompanied the eagle on some of Alexander’s coinage this provides more evidence towards this royal Hellenistic interpretation.⁵¹¹ Another problem concerns the sources that report the connection between the eagle and Pyrrhus. They are, at the earliest, 400 years removed from the events of Pyrrhus’ life.⁵¹² This almost immediately discounts the eagle portents associated with him as later additions, though the name may be based upon some historical fact. Scholars of Pyrrhus, at least, do not seem to reject or even question the idea.⁵¹³

Crawford disagreed, stating that Nenci’s idea that the Pegasus is instead a horse, representing a legionary standard, was wishful thinking.⁵¹⁴ The criticism is valid; the image is clearly a Pegasus. However, the criticism that for this reason it cannot represent Rome is not valid. This image is one of the only images on the *aes signatum* that is accompanied by script, the word ROMANOM is inscribed below the Pegasus. It could be interpreted that the connection between the Pegasus and Rome was not clear enough to simply place the image on the *aes signatum* and so a word was included in order to make the meaning clear. Adding more weight to this theory are the images of a Pegasus adorning both sides of one of Rome’s *aes grave* produced in the same period.⁵¹⁵ These *aes grave* also provide some circumstantial evidence as, though they depict a variety of gods,⁵¹⁶ Jupiter is nowhere to be seen and neither is the eagle.⁵¹⁷ This may mean that they were not concerned with depicting Jupiter and did not

⁵⁰⁶ Ael. *NA*. 7.45; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 64.22; Plut. *Mor.* 184D; 975A-975B; *Vit. Pyrrh.* 10.1.

⁵⁰⁷ Plut. *Mor.* 184D; *Vit. Pyrrh.* 10.1.

⁵⁰⁸ Just. *Epit.* 23.4.10.

⁵⁰⁹ Plut. *Vit. Pyrrh.* 31.3.

⁵¹⁰ See above, p.60.

⁵¹¹ See above, p.59, n.450.

⁵¹² I.e. Plutarch, who was using a variety of sources (biographies, memoirs, histories, and oral tradition) none of which we know, for certain, to be contemporary to Pyrrhus; Pelling, 2002: 12; 18; 25.

⁵¹³ Garoufalas, 1979: 24-25.

⁵¹⁴ Nenci, 1955: 398-399; 402; Crawford, 1974: 716 n.2.

⁵¹⁵ Sutherland, 1974: 19. However, there is the coinage of Alexander showing an eagle and Pegasus with Zeus, see above, p.59 n.450, which may detract from this interpretation.

⁵¹⁶ Sutherland, 1974: Apollo, 24 no.17-18; 30 no.27; 31 no.37; the Dioscuri, 27; Hercules, 30 no.29; Janus, 15 no.1; 22 no.9; 32 no.39; Mercury, 22 no.10; 32 no.40; Minerva, 29 no.25; Mars, 22 no.11; 29 no.23; 31 no.33; no.35; Roma, 30 no.31; 32 no.41-42; and Venus, 22 no.12.

⁵¹⁷ However, there is one depiction of the thunderbolt; Sutherland, 1974: 23 no.13.

use the eagle in connection with themselves, but with outsiders like Pyrrhus. Nenci's interpretation also fits with the general theme of war images seen on the *aes signatum*. One of the *aes signatum* already mentioned shows an Elephant and a Boar (Fig 2.17) and seems to be a direct reference to the tactic used by the Romans when dealing with Pyrrhus' elephants.⁵¹⁸ The other images include a Sword/Scabbard (Fig 3.15), a Shield/Shield (Fig 3.16), a Spear (Fig 3.17),⁵¹⁹ and as stated above the Anchor/Tripod (Fig 3.2) and the Trident/Chickens (Fig 3.3) which are traditionally interpreted as references to the First Punic War, due to their naval symbols and possible reference to the sacred chickens used before battle.⁵²⁰ In fact, Crawford agrees with the interpretation of the Elephant/Boar type as a reference to the Pyrrhic War and the last two as references to the First Punic War,⁵²¹ but does not allow this possibility for the Eagle/Pegasus type to be connected to warfare. Despite its issues, this interpretation seems just as valid as the traditional Jupiter interpretation, if not more so due to its agreement with much of the coinage of the same period.

There is another, less likely but still plausible, interpretation of the eagle on this *aes signatum*. This version was also suggested by Nenci and is mentioned briefly in the previous chapter: the idea that the Eagle and other images on the *aes signatum* represent the standards of the legions.⁵²² As already mentioned above, the Eagle and the Boar match two of the manipular legion animal standards mentioned by Pliny.⁵²³ It could be possible that the Pliny manuscript was corrupted/misread as '*minotauri*' instead of '*mino tauri*', if so the bull would connect to another *aes signatum* with Bull/Bull imagery (Fig 3.18) and to the legionary standards.⁵²⁴ This is unlikely, in any case, as not only do none of the other animals have a word preceding them, but corruptions tend to shorten rather than lengthen words. Nenci's version, however, does not seem plausible. As already stated he tries to interpret the Pegasus as a horse to fit it to the Pliny passage, which is clearly mistaken. But he also posits that these animals represent different cohorts/maniples/legions who distinguished themselves in the Pyrrhic War.⁵²⁵ Here he seems to have taken the tradition from the later legions of naming legions/cohorts after certain animals and automatically assumed the manipular legion also had this tradition. As seen in the last chapter, though, none of the features of the Marian legion should be assumed to have been present in the manipular legion,⁵²⁶ especially without evidence in contemporary

⁵¹⁸ Ael. *NA*. 1.38; Horapollo. 85; 86; Nenci, 1955: 391-404; Thomsen, 1961b: 146; Crawford, 1974: 718.

⁵¹⁹ Crawford, 1974: 718 believe these three are just arbitrary, but that seems unlikely. It would be strange if the Roman state took an arbitrary approach to some imagery, but placed meaning behind others (the images of gods and reference to particular tactics with the boar imply that there is meaning behind all these images).

⁵²⁰ Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.3, although this reference is to the Battle of Drepana in 249, it can be assumed this was a regular practice.

⁵²¹ Crawford, 1974: 718.

⁵²² Nenci, 1955: 391-404.

⁵²³ Plin. *HN*. 10.5.

⁵²⁴ Crawford, 1979: 718 suggests there may be a connection between *pecus* = 'cattle' and *pecunia* = 'money', but this is just as tenuous as the connection to Pliny.

⁵²⁵ Nenci, 1955: 398-404.

⁵²⁶ See above, p.34.

sources. His version of this interpretation also has trouble justifying the use of the Pegasus and the Elephant on the *aes signatum*, unlike the previous interpretations. However, the idea that these images represent legionary standards is still plausible. They would fit with the warfare themed imagery among the *aes signatum* and also with the most probable cause for producing this currency, paying the legions. We are left with two interpretations just as plausible as Crawford's, that of Pyrrhus and that of the *aquila*.⁵²⁷ If these interpretations are correct the Eagle/Pegasus *aes signatum* has some additional martial and political symbolism associated with it, especially in the period of the Pyrrhic War within which it was produced.

Some more evidence pointing towards the Pyrrhic interpretation of the *aes signatum* is the fact that other Italian states began to put eagles on their coins in this period. Tarentum, the major Italian city allied with Pyrrhus, started placing large eagle images on its coinage from the moment it allied with Pyrrhus.⁵²⁸ Pyrrhus' own coinage, however, never represents an eagle.⁵²⁹ This is not too much of an issue, as this coinage was produced in Epirus and not with Pyrrhus on campaign, and since his soldiers referred to him by that name⁵³⁰ it would make far more sense that Tarentum, closer to the actual campaign and the soldiers that named him, would be representing Pyrrhus with an eagle, and Epirus would not. Other Italian allies of Pyrrhus placed eagles on their coinage in this period as well, both Locri (Fig 3.19)⁵³¹ and the Bruttii (Fig 3.20).⁵³² Counter to the idea that the eagle represented Pyrrhus during the war, however, is the coinage of the colony of Rome, Alba Fucens (Fig 3.1). From its foundation in c.303 right up until the First Punic War in c.263 it was placing an eagle on its coinage, all the time allied with Rome and not Pyrrhus. Tuder (Fig 3.21), also allied with Rome, placed an eagle on its coinage in c.280-240.⁵³³ This would detract from the idea that the eagle had any connection to Pyrrhus.

Confusing the matter even more is the case of Locri and Metapontum. At the beginning of the war both cities were allied with Pyrrhus, and started to produce coins with eagles on them (Figs 3.19 & 3.22). But Locri switched sides to the Romans in the middle of the war and Metapontum was conquered by the Romans in 272. Their coinage, however, did not change. The eagle remained on the coinage of Locri till c.268 and Metapontum till c.250. This could mean one of a few things: either the eagle did represent Pyrrhus on these coins, but the Romans did not view that connection as significant enough to remove it from their coinage; that the Romans (and Metapontines and Locrians) viewed the eagle as fluid enough to represent both Pyrrhus' and Rome's power; or that the eagle was viewed with

⁵²⁷ The *aquila* standard interpretation is slightly less likely, but still plausible.

⁵²⁸ Rutter, 2001: no.986.

⁵²⁹ Kraay, 1966.

⁵³⁰ Plut. *Mor.* 184D; *Vit. Pyrrh.* 10.1.

⁵³¹ Rutter, 2001: no.2400. Kraay, 1966: 313 indicates that the dating of this coinage is based upon it resembling Pyrrhic coinage and therefore must refer to their alliance with Pyrrhus, like the Roman *aes signatum* and Tarentum's coinage, though, the eagle may also refer to Pyrrhus.

⁵³² *SNG Cop.* 1662.

⁵³³ *SNG ANS* 105-107.

no political symbolism whatsoever. Much more plausible, however, is that both Locri and Metapontum retained autonomy and produced these coins independently of Rome (or Pyrrhus). Both the city names next to the eagle on the coinage and how both Pyrrhus and Rome treated their allies in this period reinforce this idea. In fact, the Bruttii and Tuder also place their names next to the eagle, implying that they also were using it independently of Pyrrhus or Rome. Thus, although there is sufficient evidence connecting Pyrrhus to the eagle during this war, and it is possible that Tarentum, at least (and possibly Rome also) were referencing him on their coinage there seems to have been no inseparable relationship between the two. Instead, Italian cities are placing the eagle on their own independent coinage, most of the time also with their name.

This hints at another symbolic expression that the eagle held for these cities, irrespective of alliances or the religious aspects it already contained. These coins are produced in a tumultuous period when these states had to come across as strong, either to fight Rome or to fight Pyrrhus. This is a pattern we see develop over the period as, unless it had always been present,⁵³⁴ the eagle begins to appear on a state's coinage when a sudden change occurs within the state or they are engaged in some type of warfare. In the First Punic War we see the eagle appear on various Roman allied states⁵³⁵ as well as those cities conquered by the Romans,⁵³⁶ Panormos being the most interesting as it also places the Italian god Janus with the eagle slightly after they are conquered by the Romans in 254.⁵³⁷ The Second Punic War lends better evidence towards an independent use of the eagle as, although some allied Roman states adopted it,⁵³⁸ we see it appear on Capua's coinage as soon as it rebels from Rome.⁵³⁹ Other enemies of Rome follow suit.⁵⁴⁰ Then, once the Roman wars in Greece begin we see many of the states that become either allied with or conquered by the Romans start placing eagles on their coins where none had been before.⁵⁴¹ This is especially interesting as they had been 'liberated' from Macedonian rule, but the Macedonian kings had had eagles as a constant feature of their coinage since c.413,⁵⁴² and it had become a prominent symbol of Alexander's successors in Greece.⁵⁴³ An

⁵³⁴ Like on the coinage of Agrigentum, from c.510: BMC 29; to c.212: Calciati, 1983-1987: 145.

⁵³⁵ Venusia, a Roman colony in Italy (Dion. Hal. *Ant Rom.* 17-18), from c.291: *SNG ANS* 759; Orra in Italy, c.250-225: *SNG ANS* 817-819.

⁵³⁶ Alaisa in Sicily, c.241; BMC 2.

⁵³⁷ It places an eagle on its coinage as soon as it is conquered in c.254: *SNG Morcom* 654, but then again with a ram and the head of Janus in c.241, after Rome's victory: *SNG ANS* 569. A case could be made that they are referencing Rome, due to the Italian god which is also present on Roman coinage (Crawford, 1974: no.14/1), but the city name and multiple other states using the eagle would point towards Panormos simply adopting a wider symbolic pattern rather than directly referencing Rome.

⁵³⁸ Teate in Italy: Rutter, 2001: no.703; Tyndaris in Sicily, c.214: *SNG ANS* 1407; 1164; Venusia in Italy, c.210-200: Rutter, 2001 no.720; the Frentani in Italy, c.210-175: *SNG ANS* 135-136; and Brundisium in Italy, Sear 603.

⁵³⁹ *SNG ANS* 204.

⁵⁴⁰ The Bruttii in Italy, c.211-208: *SNG ANS* 3; 44; 56. The Lucani in Italy, the first time the group produces its own coinage in c.207-204: *SNG ANS* 4; Isayev, 2007: 25.

⁵⁴¹ Aphytis, c.168: BMC 4; Megalopolis, c.182-168: BMC 84; and Kyme, c.145: Oakley, 1982: 64.

⁵⁴² BMC 9.

⁵⁴³ As discussed above, p.50.

eagle is even seen on 62 per cent of King Perseus' coinage, the king in control of these cities before the Romans. This would imply that the eagle had a strong connection with the Macedonian kings ruling these cities, yet they choose to place it on their coinage once they become independent of these kings.

The examples of these 'liberated' Greek cities and a revolting Capua placing eagles on their coins at moments of patriotic fervour points towards the eagle symbolising the idea of 'strong statehood'. These states are choosing the eagle in order to make a statement that they are strong, independent, and not to be trifled with. This seems like a development of both its hunting and Hellenistic symbolism. Not only is the state being represented as a swift and powerful eagle hunting its prey in times of warfare,⁵⁴⁴ since all these coins are produced in periods of war, they are also comparing themselves to the most powerful states in the Mediterranean at the time, the Hellenistic kingdoms, projecting an aura of equal power by placing a Hellenistic trope on their coins. I believe that the evidence for this lies in the fact that they place their names next to the eagle, attempting to attach themselves to it and form a link. Nearly every example listed above does this. Additionally, the already discussed trope of attaching the eagle to various foundation myths of the states also seems to fit with this image.⁵⁴⁵

This wider symbolic usage of the eagle in the Mediterranean may allow us to interpret the Roman coinage in a slightly different manner. For example, the Roman Minerva/Eagle coin (Fig 3.6), mentioned above,⁵⁴⁶ was produced in c.264 by a Roman mint in Messina and matched the weight standard of the Mamertine coinage of the same period. It is certainly a Roman coin, however, since the word ROMA-NO appears around the eagle. The traditional interpretation is that this coin is being produced to mark the occasion of Roman assistance of the Mamertines and their intervention in Sicily against Syracuse and the Carthaginians, starting the First Punic War. Thus the eagle, which is facing left and standing on a thunderbolt, matches a reverse type of Mamertine coinage produced at an earlier date (Fig 3.23) as well as its weight standard.⁵⁴⁷ Additionally, the way the word ROMA-NO is depicted closer matches how the word MAMER-TINON is shown on the Mamertine type.

This interpretation has some problems, though. The reasons behind the coin being identified as being produced at the mint in Messina is that it uses the same control marks, weight standards and image types as other Messinian coinage. However, much of this evidence can be applied to the Syracusan coinage. The eagle's type matches a Syracusan eagle (Fig 3.24) from c.287-246 and the word ROMA-NO is arranged in the same manner as SYRAC-OSION. The Romans could just as easily be imitating Syracuse, the most important city in Sicily, as the Mamertines. In fact, the reverse

⁵⁴⁴ The trope discussed above, p.62.

⁵⁴⁵ See above, p.63.

⁵⁴⁶ See above, p.61.

⁵⁴⁷ Crawford, 1974: 40.

type of the eagle is so common in this period that it seems highly unlikely that Rome was choosing one state to imitate, even if it had just allied with that state.⁵⁴⁸ The weight standards and countermarks are a slightly more solid connection with the Roman coinage matching the Mamertine weight standards by within a gram.⁵⁴⁹ However, the large range of four or more grams does not imply a direction connection between the coinages, just a similar minting process. Even if the weight standards between the Mamertine and Roman coins were identical, why would an ordinary ancient citizen be able to make this connection?⁵⁵⁰ If they could tell which city a coin was from by its weight standard, why bother to inscribe the name of the city on the coinage? The countermarks are also a problem. Crawford states that the Romans were using them in the same way as the Mamertines, however; the images they use are not the same⁵⁵¹ and the Mamertines were not the only people using countermarks this way. Agrigentum had countermarks on its coinage as early as c.405.⁵⁵² If all these other cities had similar countermarks and Rome did not directly copy all the Mamertine countermarks, how do they connect the Roman and Mamertine coins? These points make it far less likely that the Minerva/Eagle type coin has any direct connection to the Mamertine alliance at all.⁵⁵³ These arguments also make the suggestion that the later Mars/Eagle gold coin is also based on the Mamertine type untenable,⁵⁵⁴ as not only does it suffer from all these problems, but it is also fifty years removed from the event it is supposed to reflect.

Instead, I believe Rome, with the Minerva/Eagle and Mars/Eagle coins, was making a foray into the larger symbolic landscape of the Mediterranean and expressing itself as another ‘strong state’ attacking its enemies like an eagle hunting its prey and comparing itself to the Hellenistic kingdoms. The many similarities between their coinage and the Mamertine, Syracusan, and Agrigentine coinages as well as other similar tropes like placing their name next to the eagle and including the eagle in their foundation myth points towards this interpretation.⁵⁵⁵ By adapting their symbolism to the rest of the Mediterranean they are making a statement about their new position as a state. They, like many of the

⁵⁴⁸ This eagle reverse type is seen on the coinage of the Bruttii in c.282-203: *SNG Cop.* 1662; Locri in c.300-268: Rutter, 2001: no.2400; and Tarentum in c.280-272: *SNG Cop.* 837; Thomsen, 1957: 147.

⁵⁴⁹ Crawford, 1974: 40 n.5 states that the range of the Minerva/Eagle type is from 15.00g to 19.00g with an average of 16.25g. Compare this to a sample range of the Mamertine issues (13.79g. to 21.26g. with an average of 16.78g.) and the connection appears valid.

⁵⁵⁰ It may not even imply any connection, simply that Romans were using the same mint as the Mamertines during their time in Sicily.

⁵⁵¹ Both use a helmet, but other than that they are completely different; Crawford, 1974: 40, n.4.

⁵⁵² *SNG ANS* 1065-1077.

⁵⁵³ This does present a slight problem in the dating of the Minerva/Eagle coin. Usually it is dated to the First Punic War based upon its similarity to the Mamertine type and thus a connection with their alliance with Rome is made and a date of c.264 is given. However, if we remove this assumption how can the coin be dated? The fact that it is a pre-denarius coin dates it to before the Second Punic War, giving it an *antequem* and that it must have been produced after Rome’s first currency the *aes signatum* gives it a *postquem*. Thus, although it cannot be dated specifically, it must have been produced around the period of the First Punic War.

⁵⁵⁴ Crawford, 1974: 716.

⁵⁵⁵ See above, p.63.

states in this period, are attempting to connect the eagle directly to themselves in order to present themselves as a 'strong state'. While this implies a direct symbolic relationship between Rome and the eagle within Roman minds, the multitude of other states throughout this period attempting to do the same means that, outside of the Roman sphere, there was no direct relationship.

Despite this, as the period continues Rome begins to stop the production of other independent coinage and starts to gain a monopoly over numismatic production. Thus, indirectly, the connection between the eagle and Rome may have increased, as Roman coinage slowly became the major coinage of the region. One coin towards the end of the period may hint at this type of connection. This is the coin produced by Cn. Blasio mentioned above (Fig 3.12)⁵⁵⁶ which sees the eagle separated from the rest of the coin and placed directly next to the word ROM, possibly indicating a direct connection between the two. However, this is not enough to confirm the connection beyond doubt.

Worth noting are two coins from the second century B.C., which depict Roma wearing an eagle-shaped Phrygian helmet. Crawford dismisses the eagle-shaped helmet as unimportant⁵⁵⁷ but it is worth addressing that in a period where Rome is conquering further east they dress their namesake deity in eastern or Greek dress, emphasising the eagle again.⁵⁵⁸ There is a possibility that since the eagle was part of Rome's war imagery, as discussed above, that dressing Roma in eagle-shaped eastern clothing may symbolise Rome's conquests in the east. However, this is just one possible interpretation based on the eagle's symbolism in other areas and not directly connected to the other imagery on these coins. It may also be that the helmet is linking Roma to Aeneas, as the Phrygian helmet was traditional Trojan headwear, and so its eagle-shape could be a reflection of the connection between Aeneas and the eagle.⁵⁵⁹

In conclusion, even though the eagle appears regularly and with varying degrees of evidence as a symbol of Macedonian kings and Pyrrhus, the sheer variety of states that used it independently through this period suggests that no one state claimed a specific connection to the eagle. However, this variety implies another kind of political symbolism which the eagle may represent in this period. A majority of the time it appears in times of struggle or newly granted independence from other states, e.g. the Roman wartime coinage and the 'liberated' cities of Greece. This, plus the position of the eagle as a hunting bird and the placing of city names next to the eagle implies that it may instead be symbolising the abstract idea of 'strong statehood', rather than any specific state. This seems to have been a general symbolic value that was used across the Mediterranean. Rome's coinage seems to be latching onto this wider symbolism from at least its First Punic War (i.e. the Minerva/Eagle coin) but may also be present in its early currency (i.e. the Eagle/Pegasus *aes signatum*). By representing the eagle Rome is representing itself as a strong state hunting its enemies and on par with the

⁵⁵⁶ See above, p.64.

⁵⁵⁷ Crawford, 1974: 303.

⁵⁵⁸ The Phrygian cap may also be being used to express the concepts of liberty or freedom.

⁵⁵⁹ See above, p.64.

Hellenistic powers. As the independent coinage of its allies and enemies starts to dwindle over the period, there is also a slight possibility that the eagle becomes more symbolic specifically of the Roman state.

3.5: Political Aspects

A coin mentioned previously, produced by M. Carbo in 122, hints at other symbolic aspects of the eagle in the period. It shows Jupiter riding in a quadriga holding a sceptre, which is usually interpreted as an eagle-topped sceptre (Fig 3.11).⁵⁶⁰ There are a few minor problems with this interpretation. For example, it is not entirely clear that the person riding in the quadriga is Jupiter. Most point to the fact that he is holding a thunderbolt and carrying a sceptre and so must be Jupiter, but the detail on the examples of this coin (Figs 3.25 & 3.26) do not allow for certainty in this interpretation. The same can be said for the eagle-topped sceptre. The assumption is made that since the figure is Jupiter, the sceptre must be an eagle-topped sceptre. This is perfectly reasonable, as this matches the earlier Greek sources.⁵⁶¹ But, again, the detail of the coin does not show this. It is a deduction from whom we believe the figure to be and therefore not a certainty. However, despite these issues, this seems like the best interpretation of the image and so presents the first possible evidence for the use of the eagle-topped sceptre in the triumph. Clearly, from the depiction of the quadriga, Jupiter is in triumph and so the coin, in order to get the triumphal message across, would be depicting the regalia used in an actual Roman triumph. Hence it may be possible that by 122 the eagle-topped sceptre was now being used in the Roman triumph as a symbol of power, clearly connected to Jupiter and the Greek tradition. Thus, for the coinage produced after 122 it is definitely a possibility that the eagle had gained some of the triumphal symbolism that scholars usually attach to it,⁵⁶² but before this point that assertion is tenuous.

3.6: Conclusion

Despite the relative scarcity of the source material for these two centuries, making any conclusions we draw far from definitive, the evidence presents what appears to be a complex and interesting symbolic picture of the eagle in the Roman material of this period. From the Roman comedies we can see that some of the Greek ideas discussed in the previous chapter,⁵⁶³ such as the eagle's connection to old age and its rapaciousness had appeared in Roman thought by the late third century B.C. These plays also hint at a particular Roman/Latin view of the eagle, connecting it to the things of a dark colour, either through its supposed etymology or the animal's actual colouring. More interesting, however, is the increasingly confusing picture presented of the eagle's religious

⁵⁶⁰ Crawford, 1974: 295.

⁵⁶¹ See above, p.51.

⁵⁶² Such as Crawford, 1974: 720.

⁵⁶³ See above, p.24.

symbolism in this period. While the connection to Jupiter is certainly present, the eagle also seems to be constantly connected to other deities both in Rome and other contemporary cities. In fact, the graphs (1-7) showing the eagle's depiction with various deities on coinage seems to point to a gradual increase in both its association with Jupiter and the amount of new deities it can be attached to. Also, my more nuanced re-interpretation of the possible meanings of the thunderbolt, i.e. that it can be used by various other deities, widens the possible symbolism of the eagle with thunderbolt. In a Roman numismatic context, it means that it is symbolising both Minerva's and Mars' divine intervention through its position as a semi-divine transitional being discussed in the previous chapter.⁵⁶⁴

Additionally, the one coin depicting the she-wolf and eagle hints at its possible inclusion in the Roman foundation myth, in one guise or another. Connecting to this shift in religious symbolism is the idea of the thunderbolt representing the concepts of speed and predation that surround the eagle, also seen in the Greek sources of the last chapter,⁵⁶⁵ and through these concepts the eagle's induction into the war and state imagery of Rome. Here the eagle begins to emphasise the martial aspects of the deities it is depicted with, but also the martial aspects of Rome itself. Since the eagle had been popularised by Alexander and his Hellenistic successors, with an especially strong connection to Pyrrhus, it had become a popular image used by states wanting to promote themselves, either in war or to show their independence, and seems to have come to represent the abstract concept of 'strong statehood'. Rome adopts and adapts this wider Mediterranean symbolism to meet its own needs in order to represent itself as another strong predatory state. However, as already stated above, these conclusions are drawn from fairly scarce evidence, and so are far from definitive.

These last points lead into the problem of the separation of these different uses for the eagle. This chapter has separated the different aspects that the eagle is representing in order to examine them clearly and understandably but all these symbolic associations exist at once. The nature of a symbol is to create multiple, and sometimes contradictory, meanings when viewed. However, this idea is not usually considered when interpreting the eagle and its meaning in Roman material culture. For example, during this chapter I have presented multiple interpretations of the Eagle/Pegasus *aes signatum*, debated by various scholars and evidenced to varying degrees. This implies that the eagle on the *aes signatum* had only one meaning when viewed and we are searching for this meaning. Instead, the eagle can represent all these suggested meanings. When a Roman citizen was handed this *aes signatum* in c.280 they may have viewed two separate but equal symbolic associations, Jupiter's messenger and Rome's (the Pegasus) victory over Pyrrhus (the eagle).⁵⁶⁶ Whether by intention of the

⁵⁶⁴ See above, p.31.

⁵⁶⁵ See above, p.24.

⁵⁶⁶ The *aes signatum* serves as a good example to identify possible changing symbolic associations over time. Presumably the Eagle/Pegasus was still in circulation c.30 years after the end of the Pyrrhic War and thus, when handed to a Roman citizen of this later period the connection between the eagle and Pyrrhus may have receded in favour of the eagle's possible connection to Jupiter. This is mere conjecture, as Pyrrhus occupied a large position in Roman cultural memory, but this malleable symbolism over time is worth acknowledging.

Roman state or pure coincidence, the eagle is given a plurality of meaning to any who viewed it. This argument exists for all the numismatic, and other, evidence presented in this chapter. The eagle was a reflection of all its religious, martial, and state symbolism simultaneously.

Lastly, the evidence of this chapter comes close to reflecting a highly inclusive version of the eagle's symbolism. As discussed, the Roman comedies were performed for a cross-section of Roman society, which implies a large degree of understanding of the eagle's symbolism within them. Numismatic evidence, also, has a wider audience than most ancient texts as, although the images were most likely created by and intended for the educated upper classes, the coins themselves would have been distributed throughout the population regardless of class. Thus, even for an illiterate viewer, some of the same religious and political symbolic connections would have been made.

So can any of these meanings help us with the interpretations of the Silchester Eagle? Despite its production in a much later period, two hundred years removed from the sources discussed in this chapter, many of these meanings persist throughout the later centuries and are discussed in later chapters. For example, the eagle's connection to old age continues throughout this entire study,⁵⁶⁷ and it may be that an elderly Roman viewing the Silchester Eagle conjured these connotations. In fact, since it was likely Terence was still being performed in later periods, he may have received or been reminded of the idea after viewing *Heautontimorumenos*.⁵⁶⁸ There is yet again a large possibility it featured as part of a statue of Jupiter, or another deity, as these connections also continue.⁵⁶⁹ But there is also the rare possibility that it was part of a statue group of Romulus or Aeneas, as we now know the eagle was occasionally linked to both. In fact, through this connection to founders and other aspects, we start to see in this chapter the growing development of the eagle's military, state, and political system that will become especially prominent in the later centuries,⁵⁷⁰ these are the early glimpses at other possible meanings the Silchester Eagle may have had in the first or second century A.D.

⁵⁶⁷ See below, p.118 & 169.

⁵⁶⁸ See above, p.55.

⁵⁶⁹ See below, p.81, 129, & 174.

⁵⁷⁰ See below, p.89, 99, 140, 151, 180, & 197.

Chapter 4: First Century B.C.: The Eagle and Power

4.1: Introduction

This chapter aims to construct a symbolic picture of the eagle in the first century B.C. and for the end of the Republic. Due to an increase in contemporary sources for the period it is likely that a much fuller picture of the facets of the eagle's symbolism can be created, one that may reflect the standard symbolic notions associated with the eagle in Roman culture. Once again the sections have been adapted to the content of the source material in the period. The section on 'Physical Animal and Reality' is not included as, although Varro speaks of protecting livestock against eagles and of their solitary nature,⁵⁷¹ it is not enough to warrant an entire section. The 'Concepts and Characteristics' section will discuss the names *Aquila*, *Aquilius*, and *Aquileia*. The 'Religion and Myth' section again discusses the eagle's attachment to different deities and its use in divination during this period. 'Martial and State Themes', discusses the *aquila* standard in terms of the devotion and loyalty of the legionaries to it and the metaphorical use of the standard-bearer. The section on 'Political Aspects' will examine the eagle's attachment to the generals of the republic and its use in certain symbols of power.

As mentioned, there is a dramatic increase in the amount of source material available for this period. However, a large proportion of it is not contemporary. The approach for this section will focus largely on the contemporary material over that produced later, as I believe this will give a more accurate representation of the eagle's symbolism specifically in the first century B.C.

The numismatic evidence of this period has somewhat changed from that used in the previous chapter. The main change is the appearance of moneyers on the coin types examined. Although moneyers had been a regular feature of Roman numismatics from the third century B.C. the coins so far examined (except for some in the late second century B.C.) show no direct signs of the influence of individual moneyers and instead reflect the chosen imagery of the Roman state. This changes in the coinage of the first century B.C. Thus, the degree to which the chosen coin types reflect an individual's choice and personal symbolism rather than state or wider cultural symbolism must be established. Burnett has shown that the moneyers were appointed by the consul, or the senate, which suggests that the final authority on what went on coinage rested with either, or both, of these.⁵⁷² If the imagery on certain coins was chosen by the consul this presents similar problems to that of the moneyer, in that they may be placing images on their coins that have personal symbolism or to promote a certain symbolic idea connected with them and therefore these images may not be an accurate reflection of a wider symbolic context.⁵⁷³ However, if the coins imagery was decided by the

⁵⁷¹ Varro, *Rust.* 3.11.3; 12.3; 16. 4.

⁵⁷² Burnett, 1977: 44.

⁵⁷³ This is not to say it had no meaning to anyone. There would have been little point to moneyers placing images on their coins which would only have meaning to them.

Senate this may reflect a wider symbolic context. Once again the interpretation of these coins relies mostly on the context, but it is worth pointing out that the issuing authority is now an important factor in the interpretation of the numismatic evidence.

4.2: Concepts and Characteristics

There is not a huge amount of sources that use the eagle's characteristics or use it to express concepts in this period, but it is noted for both its speed and its position as a bird of prey.⁵⁷⁴ Additionally, the sources discussed in the previous chapter,⁵⁷⁵ such as the plays of Plautus, would still be performed in this period, thus the eagle's symbolism within them was still known in this period.

4.2.1: The Cognomen Aquila and the Nomen Aquilius.

This century sees the first mention of the *cognomen* Aquila in the literary sources,⁵⁷⁶ in Cicero's *Philippics* Pontius Aquila, one of Caesar's assassins, is mentioned for the first time.⁵⁷⁷ The name then continues to appear from this point onwards in the sources,⁵⁷⁸ not only as a cognomen of senators but even lower class Jewish 'tentmakers'.⁵⁷⁹ While the name only seems to appear in the first century B.C. it is possible that it had existed from the introduction of the *cognomina* around the third century B.C.⁵⁸⁰ The name Aquila clearly has a relationship with the word *aquila* and therefore eagles. Most *cognomina* were metonymical 'nicknames' attributed to those who shared characteristics with that particular thing, in this case an animal.⁵⁸¹ Thus, those given the name Aquila would either have physical, e.g. a 'beak-like' nose, or mental characteristics, e.g. martial valour,⁵⁸² similar to that of an eagle. Even if the *cognomen* was inherited,⁵⁸³ as it sometimes was to distinguish between different families within a *gens*,⁵⁸⁴ that name was still connected to the individual and its meaning. We see this in Cicero who states that a man's name gives an insight into his character.⁵⁸⁵ The symbolism is also a

⁵⁷⁴ Cic. *Div.* 2.144; Dio. Sic. 1.19.2.

⁵⁷⁵ See above, p.24 & 55.

⁵⁷⁶ There is another *cognomen*, Aquilinus, i.e. 'like an eagle' that appears much later in the Roman sources and outside the remit of this thesis; *AE*, 1967: 78; Groag & Stein, 1933: 193.

⁵⁷⁷ Cic. *Phil.* 11.6.14; See also, Cass. Dio. 46.38.3; 40.2; Cic. *Ad Brut.* 1.15.8; *Fam.* 11.10.5; Suet. *Iul.* 78.2; Dawes, 2010: 215-216.

⁵⁷⁸ *B Afr.* 62.2; 63.1; 67.1; Cass. Dio. 46.38.3; Cic. *Phil.* 13.12.27; Plin. *Ep.* 10.106; 10.107; Tac. *Ann.* 12.21; *Hist.* 2.46; 3.8; *AE*, 1904: no.99; 1967: no.78; *CIL* 3.6178; 6974. This is by no means an exhaustive list, more information can be found in Groag & Stein, 1933: 192-193.

⁵⁷⁹ *Acts* 18:1-2; 18:18; 18:26; *Rom.* 16:3; *I Cor.* 16:19; *II Tim.* 4:19. These are written in Greek as Ἀκύλα. The only group of individuals that may not have taken this *cognomen* would be those slaves freed who then kept their original name as a *cognomen*, since slaves were usually given names that reflected their station it is unlikely their masters would choose *aquila* as a name, due to its superior connotations; Salway, 1994: 128.

⁵⁸⁰ Smith, 2006: 18.

⁵⁸¹ Kajanto, 1982: 20-21; 84.

⁵⁸² Kajanto, 1982: 86. See above, p.24.

⁵⁸³ As was the case with the *cognomen* Cicero, since it was his praenomen Marcus that was the only distinguisher from his brother, Quintus; Salway, 1994: 127.

⁵⁸⁴ Kajanto, 1982: 20; Salway, 1994: 127.

⁵⁸⁵ Cic. *Inv. Rhet.* 2.9; Douglas, 1958: 65.

two-way street: not only does the name *Aquila* allow for a transfer of the eagle's symbolism to that particular individual,⁵⁸⁶ it also means that those with the name, or those who know someone with the name, would think of them when reading or hearing the word *aquila*. In their minds, *aquila* becomes a homograph, meaning both a particular individual and also an eagle. Additionally, through this association is the possibility of the name also conjuring images of the legionary standard, further enhancing the names martial qualities.

The *nomen* *Aquilius*⁵⁸⁷ has a slightly different connection to the eagle than the *cognomen*. *Nomina* were used to identify which *gens* the individual belonged to, in this case the *Aquillii gens*.⁵⁸⁸ While the word does not match *aquila* like the *cognomen*, it does derive from this stem, as every *nomen gentilicium* had to end with the suffix *-ius* in order to denote patrilineal ancestry.⁵⁸⁹ Thus *Aquila* turns into *Aquilius*.⁵⁹⁰ The name may have been introduced with the binominal system in the sixth century B.C.⁵⁹¹ and according to Livy the earliest notable individual with this *nomen* was Gaius *Aquilius Tuscus*, consul in 487, although he mentions some unnamed *Aquillii* brothers in 509.⁵⁹² However, often the first ancestor of these *gentes* were mythical⁵⁹³ and a more confirmable individual would be L. *Aquilius Corvus*, a tribune elected in 338.⁵⁹⁴ Livy gives no information about the origin of the name, but it is interesting that the first two examples are a pair of criminal brothers and a successful military general, matching the eagle's rapacious and military associations.⁵⁹⁵ In any case, the first contemporary, and therefore undisputed, *Aquilius* comes from Varro in the earliest first century B.C.⁵⁹⁶ The name continued throughout the Roman period,⁵⁹⁷ and was used in its female form (the much more homonymous *Aquilia*) for women in the *gens*.⁵⁹⁸ The *nomen* was also not confined to the aristocracy, as freed slaves would take the *nomen* of their masters.⁵⁹⁹ What is important is that the

⁵⁸⁶ Douglas, 1958: 65.

⁵⁸⁷ Also spelt *Aquillius*.

⁵⁸⁸ Smith, 2006: 15.

⁵⁸⁹ Salway, 1994: 125; Smith, 2006: 18.

⁵⁹⁰ In fact, the *cognomen* *Aquila* may have formed from changing the *nomen* *Aquilius* back to its root as many *cognomina* were altered *nomen gentilicium* which had had the *-ius* suffix replaced; Salway, 1994: 128.

⁵⁹¹ Salway, 1994: 125; Smith, 2006: 18.

⁵⁹² Liv. 2.40.14. *Aquillii* brothers: Liv. 2.4.1; 2.7.9.

⁵⁹³ Smith, 2006: 15.

⁵⁹⁴ Liv. 6.4.7.

⁵⁹⁵ The *Aquillii* brothers were part of a group wanting to reinstate the king after 509; Liv. 2.4.1; and Gaius *Aquilius Tuscus* conquered the *Hernici*; Liv. 2.40.14.

⁵⁹⁶ Varro, *LL*. 6.89; 9.71.

⁵⁹⁷ App. *B Civ.* 1.22; 3.93-94; 4.39; *Mith.* 7.19.21; Apul. *Apol.* 66; Gell. *NA.* 3.3; 15.28; Cass. Dio. 59.9; Cic. *Att.* 1.1; 4.12; *Balb.* 45; *Brut.* 52; 131; 154; 222; *Caecin.* 77; 95; *Clu.* 127; 147; *Flac.* 97; *Font.* 38; *Leg. Agr.* 2.83; *Leg. Man.* 5; *Nat. D.* 2.5; 2.14; 3.74; *Off.* 2.14.50; 3.14.60-61; *Orat.* 2.188; 2.195; *Q Fr.* 3.5; *Quinct.*; *Rep.* 1.14; *Tusc.* 5.5.14; *Verr.* 2.5.3; 2.5.5; 2.5.7; Flor. 1.35.7; 2.7.11; 3.1; 3.19; Frontin. *Aq.* 13.1; 102.6; *Str.* 4.1.36; Liv. 2.4.1; 2.7.8; 27.3.9; 41.14.6; 41.15.5; Plin. *HN.* 7.183; 17.2; 33.48; Polyb. 1.24.8; Quint. *Inst.* 2.15.7; Sil. *Pun.* 8.603; Suet. *Div. Aug.* 11; Tac. *Hist.* 4.42; Val. Max. 7.2.5; 8.1.6; 8.2.2; 9.13.1; Vell. Pat. 2.4.1; 2.4.5; 2.18.3; 2.18; Vitruv. *De Arch.* 1.4.11. Again, this is not an exhaustive list, for more details see Groag & Stein, 1933: 193-197.

⁵⁹⁸ Cic. *Att.* 14.13; 14.17; Tac. *Ann.* 12.15.

⁵⁹⁹ Salway, 1994: 128; Smith, 2006: 15-16.

name Aquilius, although not an exact homograph, was still homonymous with the word *aquila* and thus with the eagle.⁶⁰⁰ Once again this creates a dichotomous symbolism as the name Aquilius can be related to ideas about the eagle, but additionally the word *aquila* can be linked with the name, and therefore the wider *gens*, Aquilius (Aquili).

One last name associated with the eagle is that of the city, Aquileia. It first appears in the literature in Cicero's *Pro Fonteio* speech in 69⁶⁰¹ and is repeated often in later sources.⁶⁰² The name is again homonymous with the word *aquila* and therefore related to the eagle but none of the early sources record whether there was any actual connection. We do find one in a much later source, Julian's second oration written c. A.D 357-8. He states that the city was given the name after an eagle omen was seen at its founding.⁶⁰³ Heucke contests this and instead thinks that the name derives from a river called 'Aquilis' mentioned in Zosimus.⁶⁰⁴ But this river does not exist in any other source and, according to Buchanan and Davies, Zosimus' geography for this whole section is wrong.⁶⁰⁵ Considering this, there is no reason to reject Julian's story about its name. The lateness of the source is still a problem as an imperial residence was established in Aquileia after Diocletian⁶⁰⁶ and the city became prominent in the dynastic struggles of the fourth century A.D.,⁶⁰⁷ this is partly why the city is mentioned by Julian and the etymology of its name is given. It may be that the story was invented after the establishment of the imperial palace in the city, but it may be just as possible that the story was locally known and not promoted until the city gained more prominence. We have no coins from the city prior to the fourth century A.D. and none of the earlier sources ever hint at this story, so its existence before Julian cannot be confirmed. However, the simple homonymous nature of the name Aquileia with *aquila* would slightly attach it symbolically to the eagle, even if the story is a later invention.

⁶⁰⁰ Interestingly, certain individuals are given a bird-related *cognomen* alongside Aquilius, possibly expressing their identification of the name with the eagle. These include L. Aquilius Corvus (raven): Liv. 6.4.7; Gaius Aquilius Gallus (rooster): Cic. *Brut.* 154; and Lucius Aquilius Gallus (rooster): Liv. 41.14.6; 41.15.5. However, these last two names may refer to their place of origin rather than the bird.

⁶⁰¹ Cic. *Font.* 2.

⁶⁰² Caes. *B Gall.* 1.10; Cic. *Vat.* 38; Liv. 39.22.6; 39.45.6; 39.55.5; 40.26.1; 40.34.2; 41.1.2; 41.5.1-2; 41.5.9; 41.5.12; 41.10.1; 41.10.10; 43.1.5; 43.1.8; 43.1.12; 43.17.1; Mart. 4.25.1; Plin. *HN.* 2.225; 3.127; 3.129; 3.131; 6.218; Tac. *Ann.* 4.42; *Hist.* 2.85; 3.6-7; 4.15; Vell. *Pat.* 1.15.2; 2.4.1; 2.4.5; 2.18.1; Vitruvius. *De Arch.* 5.1.4.

⁶⁰³ Julian, *Or.* 2.72a; Heucke, 2002: 929. Julian only mentions the omen as he is describing the geography and peoples of northern Italy as details in a story about the heroic deeds of Constantius.

⁶⁰⁴ Zos. 5.29.4; Heucke, 2002: 929.

⁶⁰⁵ Buchanan & Davis, 1967: 224, n.1.

⁶⁰⁶ *Panegyry. Lat.* 7.6.2; *Nov. 29 praef.*

⁶⁰⁷ Amm. Marc. 21.11; 22.8.49. It was also the seat of some higher officials and had a mint, *Not. Dign. Occ.* 11.27; 40; 49; 42.4.

4.3: Religion and Myth

This section is divided into two parts. The first continues the discussion of the eagle's specific relationship with deities in the Roman pantheon from the previous chapter. The second section will discuss the use of the eagle in divination and what it represents in these instances.

4.3.1: The Eagle's Deity

Once again the best evidence for the eagle's connection to particular deities in this period is the numismatic evidence. Of all the coinage that the eagle appears on, the majority show it with Jupiter (Graph 8). In some senses this is unsurprising since there is an increase in the eagle's appearance with Jupiter within Italy over the last two centuries.⁶⁰⁸ However, before this period the Romans had never placed the two together on coins and so this is certainly a turning point in the Roman connection between the two. The first time Jupiter appears with the eagle in this period is on a coin produced in 73 by Pomponius Rufus (Fig 4.1), although strikingly without a thunderbolt and instead holding a spear and wreath. It is clear this coin is connecting the eagle to Jupiter⁶⁰⁹ and this connection seems to grow stronger throughout the century. It then appears with a thunderbolt on a coin of 59,⁶¹⁰ being held by Jupiter on a coin from 49,⁶¹¹ with a sceptre below Jupiter's head on a coin from 46,⁶¹² and with Jupiter's Capitoline temple in 43.⁶¹³ The literature from the period also helps boost this connection, with direct references to the eagle as Jupiter's messenger in divination⁶¹⁴ and also through its appearance in the Prometheus myth.⁶¹⁵ One last coin, from 49, shows the eagle connected with Jupiter in a slightly different manner (Fig 4.2). Here the reverse shows an eagle and dolphin either side of a sceptre. These two animals are used as the quintessential examples of animals of the air and the sea in contemporary thought.⁶¹⁶ By placing the sceptre between them, the moneyer may have been attempting to symbolise Jupiter's rule over the heavens and the seas (with the sceptre symbolising rule in general and possibly specifically earthly rule).⁶¹⁷

However, despite this increase in the eagle's association with Jupiter it still appears frequently with other deities and in other religious contexts. The first deity that the eagle appears with is Vulcan

⁶⁰⁸ See Graphs 6 & 7.

⁶⁰⁹ Crawford, 1974: 410.

⁶¹⁰ Crawford, 1974: 545; no.549/1.

⁶¹¹ Crawford, 1974: no.445/2.

⁶¹² Crawford, 1974: no.460/2.

⁶¹³ Crawford, 1974: no.487/2a & 2b.

⁶¹⁴ Cic. *Div.* 1.106; *Leg.* 1.1.2.

⁶¹⁵ Discussed in Chapter 2, p.30, and seen in Diod. Sic. 1.19.2; 4.15.2; 17.83.1.

⁶¹⁶ Appears in Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.77, but can be seen as early as Pind. *Pyth.* 2.49-50; Walsh, 1997: 164.

⁶¹⁷ These domains were supposed to be divided between Jupiter and Neptune (Hom. *Il.* 187-93) and thus Jupiter would be displacing Neptune as ruler of the seas. However, this distinction of rule seems blurrier than a simple tripartite division between the brothers. The *Aeneid*, though a later source, shows Jupiter ruling over all three domains, Verg. *Aen.* 1.223; Hardie, 1986: 314. However, it also shows Neptune doing the same, Verg. *Aen.* 1.154; 5.820; Hardie, 1986: 299-300.

on a coin from 105 produced by the moneyer Aurelius Cotta (Fig 4.3). Like the coins discussed in the previous chapter it seems that the placing of the eagle with this deity would imply a connection between the two. However, this coin is a perfect example of the change in interpretation that a moneyer brings to this numismatic evidence. Crawford identifies that the obverse type (of Vulcan) matches that of the island of Lipara (Fig 4.4) which was conquered in 252 by an ancestor of Aurelius Cotta.⁶¹⁸ Crawford then implies that the eagle within the wreath refers to the triumph celebrated in consequence.⁶¹⁹ This seems logical, except the eagle has not been used to directly symbolise a triumph before this point. The wreaths lend credence to this idea, and the eagle on a sceptre seems to have certainly been a part of the triumphal ceremony by this point.⁶²⁰ However, this only implies meaning to Aurelius Cotta himself. Why would others viewing this coin attribute the image of Vulcan to a coin produced over 100 years previously? And if they did, why would they not connect the reverse type to the only similar type produced beforehand, those of the Macedonian kings (Fig 4.5)? The more obvious connection between these two images would be to connect the eagle to Vulcan, specifically through the thunderbolt carried in its claws, which was supposedly crafted by this particular god.⁶²¹

The eagle appears with an unidentifiable deity on a coin from 67 (Fig 4.6). The deity has all the attributes of Minerva, Apollo, Diana, Victory and Isis,⁶²² but is not Jupiter. Crawford thinks that if the deity is Isis, the eagle must be the Ptolemaic eagle.⁶²³ But the identification is problematic on both counts, Isis is a strange deity for a moneyer based in Rome to place on their coin and the type of eagle does not resemble the standard Ptolemaic eagle (Fig 4.7). On a coin from 55 the eagle is represented with a jug and *lituus*, with the *Genius Populi Romani* on the obverse (Fig 4.8). Crawford rejects any religious interpretation of the eagle in this case and instead associates it purely with consular *imperium*⁶²⁴ and a reference to the Lex Cassia,⁶²⁵ (which deals with *imperium* and was passed by an ancestor of the moneyer, Q. Cassius). Stewart's alternate interpretation posits that the jug, *lituus*, eagle and thunderbolt instead convey political symbolism through their religious context. Particularly the proper auspices and sacrifices that accompany the start of a consulship, as the *lituus* is the augurs staff, the thunderbolt is the premier auspicial sign,⁶²⁶ and the eagle is the chosen auspicial bird of

⁶¹⁸ Crawford, 1974: 322.

⁶¹⁹ *FT.* 252/1.

⁶²⁰ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 3.61.1, he is talking about the origin of the regalia of the Roman kings. However, by doing this he is also attempting to tell the origin of the triumphal regalia of his time (c.60). Discussed further below, p.74.

⁶²¹ Serv. *Aen.* 1.42; 8.429. Hyg. *Poet. Astr.* 2.15 states that the eagle was created by Vulcan, and given life by Jupiter.

⁶²² Crawford, 1974: 436-437.

⁶²³ Crawford, 1974: 437.

⁶²⁴ He makes this connection through the portent of seven eaglets representing the seven consulships of Marius; App. *BC.* 1.7.61; 1.8.75; Plut. *Vit. Mar.* 36.5-6; Crawford, 1974: 452. The authenticity and symbolism of which will be discussed below, p.99.

⁶²⁵ Asc. *Corn.* 69.1; Crawford, 1974: 452.

⁶²⁶ Cic. *Div.* 2.74; Serv. *Aen.* 2.693; Stewart, 1997: 181.

Jupiter.⁶²⁷ Stewart's interpretation seems more plausible as the moneyer was an adherent of Pompey, whose consulship in 56 suffered from irregularities and challenges,⁶²⁸ and as Stewart points out the jug and *lituus* only appear when a Roman commander's authority was challenged, as both symbols referred to the traditional religious sanctions of political power and thus the issuer's religious right to command.⁶²⁹ Thus, it seems more likely that the eagle is being shown as an auspicial bird here rather than a direct symbol of consular *imperium* (which only appears in a later source).⁶³⁰ A coin produced in 46 shows the eagle with Sol (Fig 4.9), the moneyer is of Tusculan origin but, although there was an altar of Sol found in Tusculum,⁶³¹ the deity does not seem intimately connected with the town and thus the moneyer is not making a reference to him or his ancestor by depicting Sol. The connection between the eagle and Sol seems logical though, as the eagle was already connected to the sun in the Greek sources.⁶³² Lastly, the eagle appears on a coin from 45 (Fig 4.10) which shows the eagle with a wolf fanning a flame, referring to a story about Lavinium seen in Dionysius and discussed in Chapter 3.⁶³³ This image is referring to the moneyer's Lavinine origin⁶³⁴ (as is the depiction of Juno Sospita seen on the obverse, who had a cult in Lavinium)⁶³⁵ and thus the eagle is symbolising that town's foundation myth above anything else.

This period also presents the eagle in much more Roman visual material. The eagle appears on an archaising relief with a figure of Jupiter (Fig 4.11). This is an interesting depiction of both Jupiter and the eagle. There seems to be no context for the relief but it is clear that the commissioner wished to emphasise an archaic style even though the piece was produced in the first century B.C. Though only conjecture, we can postulate that they wished to emphasise the Hellenistic or Greek aspects of Jupiter, and thus his portrayal with the eagle was linked with this Greek context. This makes sense in the context of the Hellenising culture of the period⁶³⁶ and the adoption of Greek models, of which the eagle and Zeus were a part.⁶³⁷ Additionally, since the piece is a relief meant for display it implies that the wider public would understand this connection. Jupiter and the eagle are

⁶²⁷ Although his evidence for this last point is flawed, as he wrongly states that the birds Romulus sees are eagles when they are in fact vultures, the assumption is right as Zeus is shown to send the eagle most of the time in the Greek sources (see above, p.31) and Cic. *Div.* 1.106 attributes the eagle's augural sign to Jupiter; Stewart, 1997: 181.

⁶²⁸ App. *B Civ.* 2.17; Cass. Dio. 39.27; 39.30.3; Cic. *Att.* 4.8a.2; *Fam.* 1.9.8-9; *Q Fr.* 2.7.2; Liv. *Per.* 105; Plut. *Vit. Crass.* 15.2-4; 5; *Vit. Pomp.* 51.4; 52.1-2; 39.31.1-2; Seager, 1979: 127-131; Stewart, 1997: 181-182.

⁶²⁹ As pointed out in the introduction (above, p.77) the consul appointed the moneyer and thus would have final authority on what imagery went on coinage, thus Pompey could easily place imagery relevant to his predicament; Burnett, 1977: 43-44; Stewart, 1997: 181-182.

⁶³⁰ See below, p.99.

⁶³¹ *CIL* 14, 2583; Halsberge, 1972: 123, n.3.

⁶³² Looking into the sun in Arist. *His. An.* 620a. Also, as discussed in the next chapter, p.136, this connection was well established in the East.

⁶³³ Dion. Hal. 1.59.4. See above, p.65.

⁶³⁴ Crawford, 1974: 482.

⁶³⁵ Cic. *Fin.* 2.63; Crawford, 1974: 323.

⁶³⁶ Griffin, 1994.

⁶³⁷ Discussed above, p.28.

also represented in private art. There is a gem showing Jupiter being carried to heaven atop an eagle (Fig 4.12). The eagle here is being depicted in its guise as heavenly messenger, bridging the gaps between the mortal and divine worlds by bringing Jupiter to heaven. The piece seems to be an intaglio gem, usually used as a seal ring.⁶³⁸ Interestingly, the image of the eagle bridging the divine and mortal realms as Jupiter's messenger matches the context of a seal ring, which is used to seal messages from the owner. It may be that the individual who wore the gem was also trying to make a connection to the divine (specifically Jupiter) through this image,⁶³⁹ or providing some divine legitimacy to his personal correspondents.⁶⁴⁰ Another gem (again what seems to be an intaglio gem) shows a much more standard image of Jupiter enthroned with an eagle at his feet (Fig 4.13), which bears such a resemblance to Hellenistic coinage that the association cannot be missed.⁶⁴¹ The individual wearing the gem may be connecting themselves to the 'oriental' styles and again through the eagle as a divine messenger.

Another common visual representation that has connections with Jupiter is Ganymede with the eagle. This connection has been mentioned briefly in previous chapters and appears in earlier material,⁶⁴² but it is worth dealing with in detail here as this period has more literary sources with which to interpret the images. Most of the contexts for the earlier imagery is uncertain,⁶⁴³ but a mosaic from Sicily showing Ganymede and the eagle⁶⁴⁴ and some reliefs that show the Latinised version, Catamitus,⁶⁴⁵ are dated to the third century B.C. Thus, it can be assumed that the imagery begins to appear in Rome from about this point and onwards.⁶⁴⁶ The major tropes of this image can be divided into two categories: Ganymede's abduction by the eagle and Ganymede feeding/with the eagle.⁶⁴⁷ The obvious connection to be made here would be the same as above, that depicting Ganymede's abduction to heaven represents the transition from human to divine, just as Jupiter atop the eagle does. However, the symbolism here is much more complicated than that. The image of Ganymede and the eagle evolved from the pursuit and courtship scenes between Zeus and Ganymede in the fifth century B.C., with these images clearly depicting the standard *erastes/eromenos* relationship.⁶⁴⁸ During the

⁶³⁸ Plaut. *Pseud.* 4.2.40; Plin. *Ep.* 10.74; Sen. *Ben.* 3.15; Tac. *Ann.* 16.19; Richter, 1971: 1.

⁶³⁹ It is clear that these images sometimes meant something to those who wore them, Cass. Dio. 43.43; 51.3.4; Plin. *HN.* 37.4; Plut. *Vit. Pomp.* 53.5; Suet. *Aug.* 50; Richter, 1968: 279-280; 1971: 4.

⁶⁴⁰ There may also be a connection to the concept of apotheosis, discussed below, p.136.

⁶⁴¹ Discussed above, p.50.

⁶⁴² See above, p.55.

⁶⁴³ *LIMC* Ganymede 193; 195; 200-202; 204.

⁶⁴⁴ *LIMC* Ganymede 170.

⁶⁴⁵ *LIMC* Catamite 8-10. I think Ganymede and Catamitus can be seen as synonymous, as their depictions are extremely similar, a view reinforced by the *LIMC* also collecting them together.

⁶⁴⁶ Third century B.C.: *LIMC* Ganymede 187; 194; 198; 204; Second century B.C.: *LIMC* Catamite 10; First century B.C.: *LIMC* Ganymede 145; 199; 218; 219; 263; Catamite 6.

⁶⁴⁷ There is a third, Ganymede face within an eagle (*LIMC* Ganymede 263), which is seen rarely and its symbolism escapes me.

⁶⁴⁸ Bremmer, 1990: 141; Cantarella & Lear, 2008: 141-146; Seen in the Greek sources, Eur. *Or.* 1390-1392; *Tro.* 819-825; Hes. *Theog.* 1345-1348; Hom. *Il.* 5.265-7; 20.231-5; *Hymn. Hom. Ap. Ven.* 202-17; Pind. *Ol.* 1.144; 10.105.

fifth century B.C. these images started depicting the eagle and Ganymede.⁶⁴⁹ The eagle seems to have been chosen due to its role as Zeus' companion, and since Ganymede it being brought to Zeus, the eagle is the obvious choice, especially since it returns his thunderbolts. Thus the eagle came to represent the *erastes* half of this relationship, through this connection to Zeus. The way the eagle is depicted in many of these abduction scenes highlights this symbolism, with the eagle grasping Ganymede from behind and Ganymede tenderly embracing the eagle (Fig 4.14).⁶⁵⁰ Some additional evidence pointing towards the homosexual interpretation of these images is the fact that a heterosexual example also exists, showing the eagle abducting Thaleia in much the same manner (Fig 4.15).⁶⁵¹ Although this Thaleia type does not seem to appear in a Roman context in this century, there is another interesting gem similar to the Ganymede scenes. It shows Venus embracing an eagle in a pseudo-sexual manner (Fig 4.16).⁶⁵² Not only is this more evidence for the eagle with other deities it may be evidence of a little known myth where the eagle takes Venus' sandal to Mercury.⁶⁵³ However, the implied sexual activity on the gem deters this interpretation.

While this is a largely Greco-centric view of the Ganymede symbolism, the Roman sources from this period seem to reflect a similar symbolic interpretation of the myth and iconography. The best evidence is when Cicero states, 'Who has any doubts as to what the poets mean when they speak of the abduction of Ganymede?'⁶⁵⁴ Not only is he making a reference to homosexual relationships, he is also implying that everyone makes this association when thinking of this myth. Cicero also uses the *Catamitus* as an insult,⁶⁵⁵ attempting to imply that the individuals are the passive participants in the relationship. Also, one collection of first century A.D. poems known as the *Priapeia* makes a rather more explicit reference to this relationship.⁶⁵⁶ However, there are significant differences to how this myth relates to these relationships in the Greek and Roman versions. Whereas the Greek depictions show a relationship essentially between equals (apart from it being a god and a mortal)⁶⁵⁷ the Roman

⁶⁴⁹ Arafat, 1990: 66.

⁶⁵⁰ Williams, 1999: 59.

⁶⁵¹ According to Macrobian *Sat.* 5.19.15 she was raped by Zeus in the form of an eagle, this may imply that the eagle in the Ganymede scenes is a transformed Zeus. These scenes appear from c.400-275: *LIMC* Thaleia II 1-5; 7-10. The images, although not directly Roman, come from southern Italy.

⁶⁵² Although the image has no provenance, since it is included with the Venus material rather than Aphrodite I have assumed it is Roman and not Greek material.

⁶⁵³ Hyg. *Poet. Astr.* 2.16.

⁶⁵⁴ Cic. *Tusc.* 4.71; Williams, 1999: 57.

⁶⁵⁵ Cic. *Phil.* 2.77; Williams, 1999: 57.

⁶⁵⁶ *Priapeia*. 3.5-6; Williams, 1999: 57. The imagery of Ganymede/Catamitus, with or without explicit sexual reference, continues well beyond this period: *Eleg. Maec.* 1.87-92; Festus, *Gloss. Lat.* 18.44; Hor. *Carm.* 3.20.15-16; Juv. 5.59; 9.22-3; 9.46-7; 13.42-5; *Laus Pisonis*. 152-4; Macrobian *Sat.* 5.16.11; Mart. 1.6; 2.43.14; 3.39; 5.55; 8.46.5; 9.11; 9.22; 9.36; 9.73; 9.203; 10.66; 10.98; 11.26.6; 11.43.3-4; 11.104.17-20; 12.15; 13.108; Ov. *Fast.* 6.43; Petron. *Sat.* 92.3; Prop. 2.30.27-32; 3.2.3-4; Ps-Aurel. *Vict. Epit.* 1.22; Stat. *Silv.* 1.6.28-34; 3.1.25-7; 4.2.10-2; Verg. *Aen.* 1.28; *CIL* 6.19519.

⁶⁵⁷ Cantarella & Lear, 2008: 141-146.

version emphasises the fact that Ganymede is foreign and a slave.⁶⁵⁸ Iconographically this means that he is almost always wearing a Phrygian cap, although the traditional Trojan headpiece and a possible reference to his heritage it indicates him as a foreigner.⁶⁵⁹ This reflects Roman attitudes towards homosexuality as, although a relationship between a male citizen and his slave was acceptable, a relationship between two citizens was not.⁶⁶⁰ Thus, the Ganymede myth is symbolic of a particular type of homosexual relationship that is compatible with Roman sensibilities,⁶⁶¹ so much so that Horace later compares Augustus' son Drusus to the eagle in this relationship.⁶⁶² With this in mind the eagle not only represents the *erastes* half of a relationship, it also represents the Roman/master half of the master-slave relationship, and, strangely, this seems to be the first instance where a connection can be made between the eagle and 'Romanness' or Roman citizenship. It is worth pointing out that the imagery from this period and of earlier periods seem to be mostly private art (gems, household mosaics, jewellery, small reliefs) and so the myth and its symbolism may have been confined to the private sphere, which, considering its symbolic content, makes perfect sense.⁶⁶³ Additionally, it is always extremely confusing as to whether the eagle appears merely as itself or as a transformed Jupiter in these scenes, there are references to both,⁶⁶⁴ and it seems more dependent on the author's/artist's particular needs as to which interpretation is given, as with most myths.

By the first century B.C. then, although the eagle is still being attached to other deities, the link between it and Jupiter had become stronger and certainly preeminent not just in the visual culture of Rome but the literature as well. However, it must be reiterated that this is not the entire picture of the eagle's religious symbolism. There are hints at its connection to other deities (particularly Vulcan and Sol) and a strong connection with Ganymede that has little to do with Jupiter and instead reflects a conceptual symbolism of a particular type of social relationship. Both of these should be remembered when considering the eagle's symbolism in this period.

⁶⁵⁸ Cic. *Tusc.* 1.65, shows this image was present in the first century B.C. More evidence for this depiction: Hyg. *Poet. Astron.* 2.29; Juv. 13.42-5; *Laus Pisonis.* 152-4; Mart. 3.39; 2.43.13; 7.74; 9.22.11-2; 10.66.7-8; 11.104.19-20; 13.108.2; Ov. *Met.* 10.155-61; Stat. *Silv.* 1.6.28-34; 3.1.25-7; 4.12-5; 4.2.10-2; Williams, 1999: 59.

⁶⁵⁹ Williams, 1999: 59. The Phrygian cap could be a reference to Ganymede's Trojan/ Near Eastern heritage, but Phrygia is more inland than the proposed location of Troy, so this seems unlikely.

⁶⁶⁰ Williams, 1999: 59.

⁶⁶¹ Hyg. *Fab.* 271; Juv. 6.110, but the eagle seems to represent the specifically male lover through its connection to Zeus (Plut. *Mor.* 750F-751B specifically connects the eagle with masculinity in the context of homosexual relationships); Williams, 1999: 59.

⁶⁶² Hor. *Carm.* 4.4.1.

⁶⁶³ Richter, 1968: 280-281; 1971: 5 believes that the images portraying heroic legends on gems have little or no symbolic meaning to them and instead simply reflect a predilection that the Romans had for portraying copies of Classical and Hellenistic Greek art. However, even if this were the original intention the evidence for the connection of this particular myth to homosexual relationships in the Roman mind means that, for this particular myth, a deeper symbolic meaning is inescapable.

⁶⁶⁴ E.g., in the first century A.D., Ov. *Met.* 10.143-219 depicts a transformed Jupiter as eagle (presumably to fit with his theme of metamorphosis), whereas Hor. *Od.* 4.4.1 depicts just the eagle picking up Ganymede (which fits with Augustan political interpretations of the eagle, see below, p.151).

4.3.2: Augury and Divination

The eagle is reported to have conveyed several important portents to some of the major figures of this period. The first is Marius, who in Cicero's biographical poem, interprets an eagle with a snake flying overhead and the eagle eventually killing and dropping the snake, as a victorious omen for the Romans.⁶⁶⁵ Clearly this is a reference to the omen witnessed by the Trojans in Book 12 of the *Iliad*, where an eagle flies across the battle line battling a serpent, which it then drops.⁶⁶⁶ This obvious reference coupled with his evasive discussion of its truthfulness in *De Legibus*⁶⁶⁷ gives the appearance that this omen was invented purely for Cicero's poem. However, despite not being true it does tell us something about how this period viewed the eagle in divination.⁶⁶⁸ Cicero makes some important changes to the omen from the *Iliad* when he presents it in his poem, which completely changes the meaning. Rather than travelling east to west,⁶⁶⁹ as it does in the *Iliad*, it instead travels west to east.⁶⁷⁰ The direction of a bird was an essential part of augury and in this case it changes the message from one of defeat, as in the *Iliad*, to one of Roman victory. To reinforce this Cicero also changes the battle between the eagle and the snake, so that the eagle kills the snake and drops it dead, rather than alive as in the *Iliad*. Interestingly, even though the omen may not have happened Cicero treats it as if it had and follows all the conventions of augury in doing so. Despite these differences, however, the eagle is essentially being interpreted in the same manner as it is in the *Iliad*. Thus, since Cicero would not use divination techniques that were alien to his readers, the interpretation of the eagle in divination seems not to have changed dramatically from when it was discussed in Chapter 2.⁶⁷¹

But this is not the only portent associated with Marius. Both Plutarch and Appian report a story of him saving seven eaglets when he was a boy, portending his eventual seven consulships.⁶⁷² Here, rather than the eagle appearing as an augural bird, it is directly symbolising the consulship. However, since this portent does not appear in any sources close to Marius' contemporary period, as we would expect after his death, but nearly two hundred years after it, it is more likely it was informed by later trends in the eagle's symbolism than those of the first century B.C.⁶⁷³ The same can be said for another figure to whom eagle portents appear, Brutus. These all revolve around the battle

⁶⁶⁵ Cic. *Div.* 1.106; *Leg.* 1.1.1-4.

⁶⁶⁶ Hom. *Il.* 12.200-225. Although Cicero's poem is different to the epic style of the *Iliad*, the omen itself is based around standard augury practice and so the genre should not impact on their usage and interpretation.

⁶⁶⁷ Cic. *Leg.* 1.1.2-4. Considering he dismisses those who believe 'the cap was placed on Tarquinius' head by the eagle' and 'that Numa talked with Egeria' (Cic. *Leg.* 1.1.4) I believe that he created this omen for poetical purposes and it has no truth.

⁶⁶⁸ Despite it being the messenger of Jupiter, as mentioned above, p.31.

⁶⁶⁹ Right to left = East to west, Hom. *Il.* 12.200-225; Hainsworth, 1993: 340.

⁶⁷⁰ This is explicitly stated by Cic. *Div.* 1.106.

⁶⁷¹ See above, p.27.

⁶⁷² App. *B Civ.* 1.7.61; 1.8.75; Plut. *Vit. Mar.* 36.5-6.

⁶⁷³ Additionally, seven eaglets is far too large a clutch size for any species of eagle, see above, p.13.

of Philippi, with eagles accompanying him to the field before fleeing⁶⁷⁴ and two eagles battling before the two armies, with the one on Brutus' side being defeated.⁶⁷⁵ Once again, though, these references are far removed from Brutus' contemporary context and appear long after his betrayal of Caesar, hence his rather positive depiction as an eagle in the portent. It may be that, with time, Brutus is also seen as an important republican figure, worthy also of eagle portents. Both these portents, since they appear almost a hundred years later, actually reflect more of the developments in the eagle's symbolism we see in the next two chapters than it symbolism in the first century B.C., and thus we will return to them later.⁶⁷⁶

There are other examples of the eagle in divination from the period apart from Cicero's *Marius*. These are the portents associated with the Tarquins, discussed in Chapter 2.⁶⁷⁷ The first being the placing of the cap on Tarquinius' head⁶⁷⁸ and the second being the omen of Superbus' death when a pair of eagles was attacked by vultures.⁶⁷⁹ The validity of these stories is addressed in Chapter 2,⁶⁸⁰ but that is not the issue here. The issue is that these stories were clearly circulating in this period and believed to be true by the majority of Romans.⁶⁸¹ This means the interpretation of the eagle in these portents is representative of its meaning in divination of the period. The most striking interpretation these passages present, though, is that the eagle represents royalty, a distinctly un-republican notion. The eagle, as messenger of the gods, confirms Tarquinius *as king* by placing the cap on his head. And the eagles, representing Superbus *as king* are attacked by vultures representing the senators, *as the republic*. In fact, the only other reference we have to the eagle and divination in this period is when Cicero relates a story of the king of Galatia, Deiotarus, avoiding death through observing the flight of an eagle.⁶⁸² This passage once again connects the eagle to royalty. The connection makes a lot of sense. As seen in the previous chapters, the eagle was a common symbol used by the Hellenistic kings for over a hundred years,⁶⁸³ enough time for the two to become synonymous. This may help explain why we only see the eagle appear in portents surrounding these republican figures (i.e. Marius and Brutus) in the later Imperial period, where either the eagle's meaning has developed or the fact that the empire was now an autocracy meant the eagle's symbolism could more easily be accommodated.

⁶⁷⁴ App. *B Civ.* 4.12.101; Plut. *Vit. Brut.* 37.4.

⁶⁷⁵ App. *B Civ.* 4.16.128; Plut. *Vit. Brut.* 48.

⁶⁷⁶ See below, p.202.

⁶⁷⁷ See above, p.51.

⁶⁷⁸ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 3.47.3-4; Cic. *Leg.* 1.1.4.

⁶⁷⁹ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.63.2.

⁶⁸⁰ See above, p.51.

⁶⁸¹ It is worth addressing Cicero's disbelief not just in the Tarquinius portent (Cic. *Leg.* 1.1.2) but of divination in general (Cic. *Div.* specifically concerning the eagle at 2.16; 20; 144). Cicero approaches the subject of divination from a philosophical perspective and argued its idiocy in *De Divinatione*, however, this may have been a philosophical technique as he admits augury, at least, once existed (*Leg.* 2.32-3) and was himself Augur from 53 until his death; Cic. *Att.* 10.8a.1; 2.15.2; *Fam.* 6.6.7; 15.4.13; *Phil.* 2.4; Broughton, 1952: 233; Rawson, 1985: 302; Wardle, 2006: 1-3.

⁶⁸² Cic. *Div.* 1.26; 2.20; Val. Max. 1.4.ex; Wardle, 2006: 164-9; 172.

⁶⁸³ See above, p.50.

Yet, in the late republic the eagle may have been avoided in connection to republican figures due to its possible royal connotations.

The *aquila* standard also appears in divination connected to another of the major figures of the period: Crassus. Before the disastrous battle of Carrhae, it is reported that the standards both did not want to be pulled from the ground and, when they were, turned in the opposite direction of their own accord.⁶⁸⁴ Again, though, these are later sources, although Valerius Maximus is writing only sixty years after the events compared to the nearly two hundred of Plutarch. Once again, it seems strange that none of these portents were related in the sources directly following the defeat and only appear in these later sources. However, this does not mean that the idea of the *aquila* providing portents was not present in this period. In fact, the ones reported about Crassus and Carrhae bear a striking resemblance to those reportedly ignored by Flaminius before the battle of Lake Trasimene, where once again the standard could not be pulled from the ground.⁶⁸⁵ Although this story is from the annalistic sources and its historicity is in question, the fact that the story existed in the first century B.C. is certain. This means the interpretation and symbolism behind these *aquila* divinations can certainly be applied to this period. What these stories imply is that not only could the gods work through the animal but through the standards. It was not common to see inanimate objects as the subject of divination or portents and when it was, for example the Spear of Mars,⁶⁸⁶ it was only the most sacred of objects. Thus, the standard must have been viewed as one of these most sacred of objects, an idea which will be discussed in more depth below.⁶⁸⁷

4.4: Martial and State Connections

This section is also divided into two parts. The first section deals with the *aquila* and the standards in the legion and the notion of legionaries dying for their protection. The second section is an examination of the metaphorical standard-bearer in Cicero's literature.

4.4.1: Dying for the aquila.

As discussed in Chapter 2,⁶⁸⁸ Marius' reforms are the first point where the existence of the *aquila* standard can be confirmed by the contemporary sources of the period. Pliny states that Marius made the *aquila* the legionary standard⁶⁸⁹ and certainly by Catiline⁶⁹⁰ and Caesar⁶⁹¹ this was the case. This section will attempt to identify aspects of the *aquila*'s symbolism that are attached in this first

⁶⁸⁴ Cass. Dio. 40.17.3-18.2; Plut. *Vit. Crass.* 19.3; Val. Max. 1.6.11.

⁶⁸⁵ Cic. *Div.* 1.77; and later in Liv. 22.3.11; Val. Max. 1.6.6.

⁶⁸⁶ Aul. Gell. 4.6.1; Cass. Dio. 44.17.2.

⁶⁸⁷ See below, p.181.

⁶⁸⁸ See above, p.34.

⁶⁸⁹ Plin. *HN.* 10.5.

⁶⁹⁰ Sall. *Cat.* 59.3.

⁶⁹¹ Caes. *B Gall.* 4.25; 3.64.3-4; 3.99.4.

period of its use as the legionary standard. Before addressing this problem, though, an issue with the scholarship of the Roman army must be discussed. Nearly all scholarship that deals with the Roman army, and thus its standards, relies on evidence from a huge range of periods. The standard works on the subject (Keppie, Webster, Watson, and Goldsworthy to name a few)⁶⁹² back up their points with evidence from Caesar in the mid-first century B.C. to Vegetius in the fourth century A.D. While this approach helps build a large and accurate picture of the ‘imperial’ Roman army, it does not allow for change over time. To combat this wider approach to the study of the army this section will concentrate on the sources of the first century B.C. and attempt, whenever possible, to isolate this evidence from the later sources. Hopefully this will present a more accurate picture of the *aquila* in this period.

What is certain is that by early in this century the *aquila* had gained its status as the premier standard of the legions. Various pieces of contemporary evidence point to this conclusion. It appears on coinage for the first time in c.82 (Fig 4.17). This coin, produced by Sulla, shows the *aquila* on the reverse and Victory on the obverse and is associated with Sulla’s war against Sertorius.⁶⁹³ The coin is produced for a military audience and thus implies the legionaries must have been familiar with the standard by this point. This century is also when the first contemporary account of the loyalty that the legionaries had towards the *aquila* is presented. In Caesar’s works one centurion leaps into the sea during the invasion of Britain; also, an *aquilifer* is slain whilst protecting his charge; and another passes his comrade the eagle to save Caesar’s reputation.⁶⁹⁴ Caesar’s commentaries are meant to be accurate reflections of the events; however, there is a probability that these events may be partly Caesarian invention. Even so, they must have been considered plausible by his readers and listeners and so their significance still stands. It is quite possible that this type of loyalty to the *aquila*/standards existed before the Marian reforms,⁶⁹⁵ and these types of incident appear in Livy, Silius, Plutarch, and Appian⁶⁹⁶ but since all these texts are post-Caesar, and these types of events are conspicuously absent from Polybius, it seems likely that this is a battle-scene trope taken from Caesar.⁶⁹⁷ Caesar’s accounts and the *aquila*’s appearance on coinage confirms that by this century it has assumed the role of premier standards of the legion.

But why are legionaries dying to protect it? At first this seems like an obvious question. After centuries of seeing this exact phenomenon within our military culture the idea of dying for a type of

⁶⁹² Watson, 1969; Webster, 1969; Goldsworthy, 1996; Keppie, 1998; Potter, 2004.

⁶⁹³ Crawford, 1974: 381.

⁶⁹⁴ Caes. *B Gall.* 4.25; 5.37; *B Civ.* 3.64.3-4. The ‘brave centurion’ is somewhat of a trope in Caesar but that does not discount it as accurate, Welch, 1998: 90.

⁶⁹⁵ That is, however, if the *aquila* itself existed, see p.34.

⁶⁹⁶ App. *B Civ.* 2.9.61; 14.95; Liv. 10.36.10; 25.14.6-8; 26.5.15-17; 27.14.7-10; 34.46.12; 41.4.1; Plut. *Vit. Aem.* 20.1; Sil. *Pun.* 5.333-343; 6.14-40; 7.740-743, not only are these always part of battle scenes (the details of which are unreliable) they are all very similar. Additionally, the sources for earlier Roman history were unlikely to record this amount of detail (see the discussion above, p.34); Briscoe, 1981: 122.

⁶⁹⁷ It may also be that once this trope is established in Roman thought, it impacted on real events.

standard, or ‘flag’, seems second nature. However, these ideas can be misleading when studying the *aquila*. Not only does it seem that the Romans are the first culture to introduce this idea of ‘dying for the standard’,⁶⁹⁸ but it is worth stating simply that these individuals are going against their basic survival instincts in order to protect an inanimate object that has no real value. Its only value to them can be symbolic and it is worth exploring what symbolic value can lead these individuals to die for the *aquila*.

One possible reason for the legionaries protecting the *aquila* and standards to the death may be revealed by a passage in Dionysius. He relates in the defence speech of Servilius that those who lost a standard in battle would be put to death by their generals.⁶⁹⁹ He is writing about an earlier point in Roman history (c.476) but presumably he is basing his accounts of Roman military practice on the contemporary Roman army (c.60). Discipline was an important aspect in the post-Marian army⁷⁰⁰ and the threat of death is certainly enough of a reason to defend the standards and to follow them into danger.⁷⁰¹ However, Dionysius seems to be the only source that mentions this. No Roman sources, or even later sources, mention incidents where the *aquilifer* or *signifer* are put to death for failing in their duty to protect the standard. It may be that the threat of death was such a deterrent that no legionaries ever abandoned the standard to the enemy or that it was the general who decided the degree of punishment for this infraction. A possible law of Rufus from the early first century B.C. says that those who lost the standard were only ‘reduced to the bottom of the list of their own subordinates’ and not killed.⁷⁰² More important, however, is that simple discipline is not enough to explain the attachment to these standards (particularly why they would be chosen for coinage) and the possibility of this punishment seems symptomatic of the larger symbolic value that these standards had for the military community.

More likely is that the *aquila* and the standards symbolised the community of the legion. Marius’ reforms seem to have brought with them an increased sense of *esprit de corps* within the legions. This was fostered by the introduction of a new training and discipline regime which meant the soldiers now spent every waking moment with their comrades.⁷⁰³ It was reinforced by the new identity given to each of the legions, now individually named and with their own legionary standard, the *aquila*. But what exactly is the *esprit de corps* of the legion? Goldsworthy’s examination of the motivations and morale of the Roman soldier is enlightening on this subject. By using modern

⁶⁹⁸ At least in the western world, and there seems to be no examples of such actions in either Greek or Persian military systems. However, sometimes in Greek warfare the commander or his corpse became a sort of talisman that was fought over, Her. 7.225.1; 9.22-23. This seems to be based on a Homeric model, Hom. *Il.* 16.485-683; 17.1-18.238; Flower, 1998: 375-377; Flower & Marincola, 2002: 143-144.

⁶⁹⁹ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 9.31.3.

⁷⁰⁰ Goldsworthy, 1996: 251; Potter, 2004: 84.

⁷⁰¹ This fear is explained in reference to the pre-Marian army in Polyb. 1.17.12; 6.37.12; Lee, 1996: 203.

⁷⁰² Military law from Rufus, quoted by Hegleland, 1978: 1475, but originally from Brand, 1968: 156.

⁷⁰³ Holmes, 1985: 31-37; Goldsworthy, 1996: 251-252; Potter, 2004: 81.

psychological examinations of the experience of battle he attempts to create a picture of the experience of the average Roman soldier.⁷⁰⁴ What is striking about the motivations of soldiers is that they are, largely, not ideological or even patriotic.⁷⁰⁵ Instead the soldier is motivated by the bond between him and his fellow soldiers, and it is this bond that they are willing to fight and die for.⁷⁰⁶ In fact, there is evidence from this period that points to this type of loyalty, i.e. to comrades above all else. Sulla's, and subsequently Caesar's, legions marched on Rome without hesitation or a patriotic second thought; the seventeenth and eighteenth legion, initially raised by Pompey but which then surrendered to Caesar in 48, were defeated rather than betray their legion;⁷⁰⁷ and generally Caesar's commentaries⁷⁰⁸ reveal the attachment that the legionaries had to their units.⁷⁰⁹ Since the Marian reforms fostered this new communal identity of the legion, and its accompanying emotional bonds, then the new legionary standard, the *aquila*, would have become the focal point for this new *esprit de corps*. This is reflected in two sources which use the term 'eagles' as a synonym for 'legions': the anonymous writer of the *De Bello Hispaniensi*,⁷¹⁰ most likely a legionary officer; and one of the nobles allied with Pompey, reported via Plutarch and likely from a contemporary collection of Cicero's sayings.⁷¹¹ In fact, Cicero's response here emphasises the constant connection between the actual bird and the legionary standard, as his pun is reliant on all those around him thinking of the two synonymously. However, the use of *esprit de corps* seems too simplistic to convey the emotional symbolism of a new legionary community. From this perspective the idea of dying for the *aquila* and standards seems easy to understand: the *aquila* symbolised the legionaries' new 'family'.⁷¹²

However, there may be other reasons that explain this phenomenon. The *aquila* and the standards had a prominent place in the religious institutions of the legions and it may be that these legionaries risked their lives in order to protect a religious artefact. There is much scholarship on the religion of the legion and the place of standards within it.⁷¹³ However, as stated above, most of the scholarship draws on evidence from the long history of the legion. So, before attempting to define what religious symbolism the *aquila* and the standards had in this period, its religious functions in the

⁷⁰⁴ Goldsworthy, 1996; Lee, 199. Despite warnings against the influence of modern perceptions on this issue discussed earlier in this section, Goldsworthy's use of modern evidence seems not to be placing modern views onto the Roman sources but sheds light on the experience of battle that is applicable to all time periods. He does this by choosing sources that focus on the abstract nature of warfare and mainly the psychology of the soldier (Marshall, 1947; Richardson, 1978; Holmes, 1985).

⁷⁰⁵ Richardson, 1978: 12

⁷⁰⁶ Marshall, 1947; Richardson, 1978: 12; Holmes, 1985: 26-28.

⁷⁰⁷ Caes. *B Civ.* 2.28; 34-42; Goldsworthy, 1996: 253.

⁷⁰⁸ Potter, 2004: 82.

⁷⁰⁹ This is by no means a constant; there were still desertions and betrayals etc. App. *B Civ.* 1.117; Goldsworthy, 1996: 251.

⁷¹⁰ *BHisp.* 30.

⁷¹¹ Plut. *Vit. Cic.* 38.7; Quint. *Inst.* 6.3.5; Moles, 1988: 29; 155; Pelling, 2002: 39, n.106; 89, n.50.

⁷¹² Goldsworthy, 1996: 252 points out that Tacitus (*Ann.* 4.4) relates that legionary recruits had failed at civilian life and so would readily accept this new community.

⁷¹³ Watson, 1969: 130; Webster, 1969: 275; Hegleland, 1978.

post-Marian yet pre-Augustan legion must be defined. In Chapter 6, when more evidence concerning the religious nature of the standards is available, this religious nature will be examined in more detail,⁷¹⁴ but here it will be established whether they had this connection in the first century B.C. and what about its nature we can infer from the evidence of this century.

In the traditional description of legionary organisation, the standards play a central role in the religious life of the legion. To strike camp the legion first places down the *aquila* and standards from which the rest of the camp is built outwards.⁷¹⁵ The building in which the standards are housed is traditionally called the *sacellum* by archaeologists. Although there is no direct reference to a *sacellum* in the pre-Augustan sources the structure can be implied by Caesar using the combination of *signa tollere* to denote the striking of camp and Polybius' description of the manipular legions beginning their camp in the same manner.⁷¹⁶ Additionally, when Cicero admonishes Catiline for storing the *aquila* in his home,⁷¹⁷ it is noted that the standard is kept in a '*sacrarium*' implying that this may be the usual way to keep the standard. Dyck's commentary points out that the '*sacrarium*' is a room within which sacred objects are kept, implying that the eagle itself is sacred, but that interestingly is not actually consecrated space.⁷¹⁸ We also find some evidence of religiosity in Dionysius, who likens the standards to 'statues of the gods'⁷¹⁹ and from the phrase *infesta signa*, which indicates religious properties.⁷²⁰ From this evidence it can be implied that the *sacellum* existed in this period, but since no other details are given we must resort to using those from later sources. The *sacellum* is what the religious life of the legion revolved around with every sacrifice and festival taking place outside the *sacellum* in full view of the *aquila* and standards.⁷²¹ Since the legions needed a sacred space to which they could direct their worship, just like a temple, and since every space they move into a set up camp cannot have been identified as sacred beforehand, then it must be reasoned that the sacred objects carried with them and placed down first, i.e. the eagle, create the sacred religious space when planted.⁷²²

⁷¹⁴ See below, p.181.

⁷¹⁵ Watson, 1969: 131; Webster, 1969: 133-134.

⁷¹⁶ Caes. *B Civ.* 2.20; Polyb. 6.2. It is not clear whether these are the same standards, the issue has been explored already in Chapter 2, see above, p.37.

⁷¹⁷ Cic. *Cat.* 1.24; 2.6.13.

⁷¹⁸ Dyck, 2008: 110.

⁷¹⁹ Dion. Hal. *Ant.* 6.45.2; Wheeler, 2009: 256.

⁷²⁰ Caes. *B Gall.* 3.93; 6.8.6; 7.51.3; Cic. *Font.* 16; Sall. *Cat.* 60.2; and in later sources Liv. 2.30.11; 26.13.11; Luc. 3.330; Flor. 1.17.2; Veg. 3.20.1; Wheeler, 2009: 255.

⁷²¹ Herodian, 4.4.5; Joseph. *BJ.* 6.6, the organisation of the camp seems not to have changed in Josephus' period thus this can be presumed to have existed in the pre-Augustan period.

⁷²² It could be said that Catiline moving the eagle into the *sacrarium*, which does not necessarily have to be consecrated space, would indicate that the eagle itself did not create a sacred space. However, the *sacrarium* and the eagle are distinctly different phenomena. Catiline's *sacrarium* may have been in existed prior to moving the eagle there, which may be why Cicero objects to its movement into a private sacred space, rather than a public one. If it did not exist prior to him moving the eagle, then the eagle itself creates the *sacrarium*, and while it might not be consecrated, it was certainly sacred and used for religious ritual.

So if the *aquila* and standards created a temple-like sacred space wherever they are placed, to which deity is this temple dedicated and to which deity are the legionaries sacrificing? The obvious answer would be Jupiter Optimus Maximus. According to many Jupiter is the main deity of the army⁷²³ and many scholars make the usual assumption that the eagle on the *aquila* represents Jupiter.⁷²⁴ There are significant problems with making this assumption, as were pointed out in Chapters 2 and 3.⁷²⁵ However, the last section pointed out the increasing connection between the two in this period.⁷²⁶ Problematically, there does not seem to be any direct evidence from this period that points to Jupiter Optimus Maximus as being the primary deity of the legion. However, there is significant evidence from the later periods. For example, twenty-two examples of altars dedicated to the deity were found in a second century A.D. Roman fort in Britain.⁷²⁷ This is clear evidence of the primacy of Jupiter in the religious life of the legion. However, apart from the tenuous connection between the eagle and Jupiter there is nothing to show that the *aquila* and standards symbolised Jupiter, or created a temple in his honour at the centre of camp.

There is also evidence that they were not just sacrificing to Jupiter in front of the *sacellum* but to numerous other gods. The best evidence we have for the religious rituals of the legion comes from the *Feriale Duranum*, a religious calendar of a detachment of soldiers in Dura-Europos.⁷²⁸ The calendar is dated to the third century A.D.,⁷²⁹ which is problematic. However, Nock has argued convincingly that the origin of this calendar lies in the reforms of Augustus, at least the elements that are not clearly later imperial additions (e.g. honouring Commodus etc.).⁷³⁰ It can also be assumed that Augustus' institution of the legionary religious calendar was a codification of already informal military practice. Thus those rituals which were not connected with the imperial family are most likely republican rituals. There are a few festivals left on the calendar once those dedicated to the imperial family and that of Dea Roma, which seems to have been instituted by Hadrian,⁷³¹ are removed. There are the obvious sacrifices to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, twice in January and once in March,⁷³² however, these are all Jupiter within the Capitoline Triad, with Juno and Minerva. Minerva gets her own festival, the Quinquatria, in April.⁷³³ Unsurprisingly, Mars has five dedications, two in

⁷²³ Webster, 1969: 135; Heglend, 1978: 1473; Fears, 1981 discusses Jupiter as the premier deity of Rome and its connection to 'imperial ideology' and thus the army. But he traces this connection further back in Rome's history than I think possible, as he does not seem to engage with the problems that early Roman history creates, all discussed in Chapter 2, see above, p.34. Viewing Jupiter Optimus Maximus as the main deity of the army is also too simplistic a view of Roman army religion.

⁷²⁴ Webster, 1969: 135; Heglend, 1978: 1473.

⁷²⁵ See above p.28 and 59-60.

⁷²⁶ See above p.81.

⁷²⁷ *RIB*: 815-817; 819; 822; 824-828; 830-831; 838-842; 843; Webster, 1969: 277.

⁷²⁸ Heglend, 1978 includes the text and a translation.

⁷²⁹ Fink, Hoey & Synder, 1940; Nock, 1952; Gilliam, 1954; Heglend, 1978.

⁷³⁰ Nock, 1952; the argument is reinforced by Gilliam, 1954.

⁷³¹ Fink, Hoey, & Synder, 1940: 102-112; 120-128; Heglend, 1978: 1493.

⁷³² *FD*. 1.1-9; 23-26.

⁷³³ *FD*. 2.1-2. This festival was certainly around in the Republic, Ovid. *Fast.* 3.809; 849; Varro. *Ling.* 6.14.

January (alongside the Capitoline Triad), two in March, and one in May.⁷³⁴ Neptune also gets a dedication in August⁷³⁵ and Vesta gets a festival in June.⁷³⁶ Additionally, the abstract deity Salus (Safety) gets a dedication alongside the Capitoline Triad and Mars in January and on its own in August.⁷³⁷ The last festival on the *Feriale Duranum* which impacts on the *aquila* and standards is the two *Rosaliae Signorum* festivals in May.⁷³⁸ These festivals seem to be worshipping the standards themselves, but, since the first evidence for Rose festivals is from the time of Domitian and there is only circumstantial evidence for flower celebrations in May in Ovid,⁷³⁹ it is better to discuss these festivals in a later chapter.⁷⁴⁰ All these festivals and sacrifices will have been performed in front of the *aquila* and standards, and, essentially, *to* them. Thus, not only are they representing Jupiter, but the rest of the Capitoline Triad, Mars, Neptune, Vesta, and even Salus.

There is also another option. That the *aquila* and the standards either represented the *genius legionis* or their own *genius*. Speidel defines the *genii* as ‘the multitude of the more shapeless powers and spirits that held in their care every action and event, every person and every place’.⁷⁴¹ Thus, not only did the legion have its own *genius*,⁷⁴² so did the standards,⁷⁴³ standard-bearers,⁷⁴⁴ centuries,⁷⁴⁵ centurions,⁷⁴⁶ *optiones*,⁷⁴⁷ and myriad other delineations of the legions. Most of the evidence for these *genii* comes from inscriptions of the second-third centuries A.D. However, we know that the concept of the *genius* existed from as early as the third century B.C.⁷⁴⁸ From this perspective it seems that the soldiers were worshipping the deity of the *aquila* and standards themselves, and in the case of some of the inscriptions this seems obvious. In fact, Tertullian, although a second century A.D. and Christian source, believes exactly that: ‘a religion of the camp, venerates the standards...sets the standards before all the gods.’⁷⁴⁹ There are a couple of problems with this interpretation. One is that the usual

⁷³⁴ *FD*. 1.1-9; 19; 23-26; 2.9; The first one in march is the *Feriae Marti*, which was originally the Roman new year and thus must have existed in the Republic.

⁷³⁵ *FD*. 2.23; the festival, *Neptunalia*, is mentioned by Varro, *Ling.* 6.19 but is dated in July rather than August, however, it was celebrated in summer thus may have moved in the intervening centuries. It is also mentioned in Hor. *Carm.* 3.28.1.

⁷³⁶ *FD*. 2.15; Mentioned in Liv. 1.20; *Ov. Fast.* 6.249-468 also in June.

⁷³⁷ *FD*. 1.9; 2.25; also mentioned in *Ov. Fast.* 3.882.

⁷³⁸ *FD*. 2.9; 14.

⁷³⁹ *Ov. Fast.* 5.421.

⁷⁴⁰ See below, p.189.

⁷⁴¹ Speidel, 1978: 1542.

⁷⁴² *AE*, 1957, 83; 1962, 391; 1973, 471; *CIL* 3.13443; 7.103; *ILAlg* I, 2044; Hegleland, 1978: 1477; Speidel, 1978: 1546.

⁷⁴³ *CIL* 3.3526; 7591; 7.1031; Rostovtzeff, 1943: 214; Nock, 1952: 239-240; Hegleland, 1978: 1477; 1491; Speidel, 1978: 1547; *CIL* 2.6183 is dedicated to Jupiter but in celebration of the *natalem aquilae*; Watson, 1969: 130; Hegleland, 1978: 1477.

⁷⁴⁴ *RIB* 451; *AE*, 1927, 89; 1958, 303; Hegleland, 1978: 1499; Goldsworthy, 1996: 256.

⁷⁴⁵ *CIL* 7.166; Hegleland, 1978: 1499.

⁷⁴⁶ *CIL* 3.7631; 9.1324; Goldsworthy, 1996: 256.

⁷⁴⁷ *CIL* 13.6566; Goldsworthy, 1996: 256.

⁷⁴⁸ Plaut. *Capt.* 290-292.

⁷⁴⁹ Tert. *Apol.* 16.8; *Ad Nat.* 1.12; Hoey, 1937: 16; Nock, 1952: 239; Webster, 1969: 133-134; Hegleland, 1978: 1477. However, he may be exaggerating this point for one of two reasons, either he might interpret their

representations of the *genii* were anthropomorphic like the Olympian gods,⁷⁵⁰ whereas the standards are never depicted in an anthropomorphised form but only in the form they are seen. If these *genii* were being worshipped there would surely be a personification. Secondly, the inscriptions often look honorific (i.e. they are being thanked for their help) rather than dedicatory (i.e. praying directly to them), implying that they were not worshipped directly but instead pleaded with in a time of need.⁷⁵¹ This might not be too much of an issue, though, as we have shown above that sacrifices were never made directly to the standards but to other gods, it would be the standards' *genii* that provide their religious nature and make these sacrifices possible. Additionally, the omens that saw the standards acting of their own accord specifically the story of Flaminius,⁷⁵² discussed above,⁷⁵³ which fits with this interpretation of their divine nature because it would be these divine beings inherent within the standards that allows them to act independently. Thus, although it is a conjecture that the standards are linked to *genii* in the first century B.C., there seems to be enough circumstantial evidence and similarities to at least make it a working possibility.

This interpretation of the *aquila* and standards having their own specific divine beings (*genii*) not only seems like a religious expression of the notion of *esprit de corps* mentioned above, showing yet another example of Roman religion permeating every aspect of their culture,⁷⁵⁴ but it also fits with previously discussed notions of the religious nature of the eagle. The *genii* are not quite as high on the hierarchical scale of deities as Jupiter or Mars, in fact, as Speidel describes them they seem to occupy the transitional space between divine and mortal.⁷⁵⁵ In Chapter 2's examination of the Greek sources it was concluded that this was essentially the position that the eagle had within religious thought.⁷⁵⁶ It too occupied a transitional semi-divine place as messenger/armour-bearer to the gods. It would appear from the evidence that the *aquila* and standards occupied the same type of role within the religious ideology of the legion. Hence why it did not matter that they sacrificed to a variety of deities via the standards, as the standards were not only divine themselves but they were the channel through which the legionaries communicated with other gods.⁷⁵⁷ The best way to define them would be as the second rung on a ladder to the divine. The mortal legionaries direct their worship to the semi-divine entities within the standards that, in turn, cross the boundary between the mortal and immortal and convey that message to the appropriate god. Some inscriptions point towards this view as when dedicating to

sacrifice to the standards as direct worship or he may be deliberately exaggerating to imply they are accidentally worshipping the cross within the *vexillum* standard; Hoey, 1937: 16 n.3.

⁷⁵⁰ Speidel, 1978: 1547.

⁷⁵¹ Nock, 1952: 240-241.

⁷⁵² Cic. *Div.* 1.77; and later in Liv. 22.3.11; Val. Max. 1.6.6.

⁷⁵³ See above, p.89.

⁷⁵⁴ Heglend, 1978: 1471.

⁷⁵⁵ Rose, 1948; 1951; Speidel, 1978.

⁷⁵⁶ See above, p.31.

⁷⁵⁷ Or that the gods communicated with them, like in the Flaminius passage, Cic. *Div.* 1.77; Liv. 22.3.11; Val. Max. 1.6.6.

the standards the legionaries they sometimes included an additional deity alongside them, also it is not uncommon for multiple deities to be worshipped at the same time (the Capitoline Triad being a prime example as well as the festivals of the *Feriale Duranum* discussed above).⁷⁵⁸

This opens up the religious symbolism of the *aquila* and the standards dramatically. Not only could they represent their own divine nature, but any god the legionaries wished them to represent. Additionally, their ability to move meant that the legions had a direct method of communication with the divine, via this portable temple.⁷⁵⁹ Also, since outside of the officially prescribed cults the legion was made up of hugely diverse religious practices,⁷⁶⁰ the *aquila* and standards also provided a symbol for religious unification, as every individual saw them as their own method of communication with the divine. This creates another view for why the legionaries are willing to die for its protection. Not only are they protecting the *genii* of the *aquila* and standards,⁷⁶¹ they are protecting their main connection with the divine. Without it they have lost their primary and communal method of communication with the gods and are thus more isolated from the divine. The notion of their connection with the divine was extremely important, as Cicero points out;⁷⁶² it was thought that Rome had achieved its victories due them being more pious than any other people. If they lost this connection, they would lose their advantage.

It seems that there is a composite symbolism within the *aquila* and the standards that leads to the state of mind that makes men die for its protection. Not only do the *aquila* and the standards represent numerous religious associations, from the titular gods Jupiter and Mars, through their own lower ranking individual divinity, to the symbol for the legions connection to everything divine. But it also represents all the emotional symbolism inherent to the idea of *esprit de corps*, yet again expressed religiously through the *genii legionis*. The combination of all of these notions creates a powerful symbol of the entirety of life as a legionary and so its protection becomes paramount in their personal outlook.

Lastly, the evidence from this period seems to indicate that the *aquila* and standards gradually increased in importance through this century. Not only is there a gradually increase in its appearance on coinage, first Sulla in 82,⁷⁶³ then Cn. Nerius in 49,⁷⁶⁴ and culminating with Antony in 32-31

⁷⁵⁸ *CIL* 2.6183; Watson, 1969: 130; Heglend, 1978: 1477; Scheid, 2003. See above, p.93.

⁷⁵⁹ The placing of the *sacellum* also mimics the position of a hearth in a household, the point of all religious worship in the household, Beard, North, & Price, 1998b: 51-53; The camp was also seen as a miniature city, which also had their version of a 'hearth', Heglend, 1978: 1493.

⁷⁶⁰ Richmond, 1943 shows the huge diversity in religious practice in only a small fort in Corbridge. Although, again, this evidence is much later.

⁷⁶¹ The tradition of *evocatio* implies that deities could switch loyalty between people, this could mean that they were worried that losing the eagle would make the *genii* switch loyalty to the enemy. Liv. 5.21.1-7; Macrob. *Sat.* 3.9.2; 7-9; Ov. *Fast.* 3.843; 5.52.8; Plin. *HN.* 28.18; Prop. 4.2.2-4; *AE*, 1977: 819; Dumézil, 1966: 424-431; Hall, 1973: 570-571; Beard, North, & Price, 1998a: 34-35; 132-134; 1998b; 41; 248.

⁷⁶² Cic. *Hars.* 16; Heglend, 1978: 1471.

⁷⁶³ Crawford, 1974: 80; 381; no.365/1b

⁷⁶⁴ Crawford, 1974: 461; no.441/1.

producing coins for each legion, essentially indicating that each coin was representing the specific *aquila* of that legion.⁷⁶⁵ There also appears to be a change in the appearance of the *aquila*, which at the beginning of this period was silver,⁷⁶⁶ then was given golden thunderbolts by the time of Pompey,⁷⁶⁷ and was changed to gold at some point in the early principate.⁷⁶⁸ Even their loss seems to have increased in importance, as although their capture by Spartacus⁷⁶⁹ is mentioned it does not compare to the attention their loss by Crassus receives.⁷⁷⁰ Also, although both these incidents receive attention from the later sources, neither of these losses is reported in the contemporary sources. The only mention of the loss of standards is to emphasise a particular legion's losses in battle, not the loss of the actual standards.⁷⁷¹ Additionally, the religious nature of the *aquila* may have also increased during this period. As already mentioned,⁷⁷² in the 60s Catiline brings home an *aquila* and sets it up as a shrine in his house.⁷⁷³ Cicero admonishes him for this behaviour, as presumably once the legion was disbanded the *aquila* should have been kept in a public shrine, however, despite Cicero's disapproval, Catiline was allowed to take this public religious artefact and place it in his house. Although Catiline seems to have been allowed to do this, after him it never occurs again. From this point the *aquila* was always kept in public religious spaces.⁷⁷⁴ This evidence all seems to point to a gradual increase in importance, but certainly by the mid-century in Caesar's campaigns it had acquired all the previously discussed symbolism.

4.4.2: Metaphorical Standard-bearers.

Another aspect of martial symbolism which needs to be discussed is the use of the standard-bearer as a rhetorical device. It must be noted that despite the fact that the word standard-bearer (*signifer*) does not directly imply the *aquila*, I am working from the assumption that, since the *aquila* was the primary standard of the legion, it would be the first standard an individual would think of when presented with the idea of a standard-bearer.⁷⁷⁵ Cicero calls Catiline the 'standard-bearer of the unfortunate';⁷⁷⁶ he calls Lucius Torquatus the 'standard-bearer of the youth';⁷⁷⁷ he says he made

⁷⁶⁵ Crawford, 1974: no.544/14-38.

⁷⁶⁶ App. *B Civ.* 4.12.101; Cic. *Cat.* 1.9.24; 2.6.13; Watson, 1969: 129.

⁷⁶⁷ Cass. Dio. 43.35; Webster, 1969: 137

⁷⁶⁸ Cass. Dio. 40.17.3; Watson, 1969: 129; Hegleland, 1978: 1473; Farnum, 2005: 112.

⁷⁶⁹ Frontin. *Str.* 2.5.34, their loss and recapture is not mentioned at all in Plutarch or Appian.

⁷⁷⁰ Cass. Dio. 40.17.3-18.2; Plut. *Vit. Crass.* 19.3; Val. Max, 1.6.11. However, this may be a case of Augustan influence. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, see below, p.141.

⁷⁷¹ *BHisp.* 31; Caes. *B Civ.* 3.99.4; Cic. *Fam.* 10.30.5; All of these cases are during the civil war, and are used to emphasise the degree by which the victors won.

⁷⁷² See above, p.93

⁷⁷³ Cic. *Cat.* 1.9.24; 2.6.13; Dyck, 2008: 109-110; 144-145.

⁷⁷⁴ Augustus places Crassus' standards in the Temple of Mars Ultor, Cass. Dio. 54.8.

⁷⁷⁵ Since an Augustan coin (*RIC* Augustus 85a) has the legend SIGNIS RECEPTIS but shows the image of an *aquila*, this seems a safe assumption.

⁷⁷⁶ Cic. *Mur.* 50.

⁷⁷⁷ Cic. *Sull.* 34; Berry, 1996: 207.

Atticus the standard-bearer of the *equites*;⁷⁷⁸ he calls Clodius the ‘standard-bearer for civil strife’;⁷⁷⁹ he mentions the ‘standard-bearers in my cause’;⁷⁸⁰ and he warns the people that if Clodius dared to burn down the curia for a dead man what would he dare do as ‘standard-bearer of [a] living man?’⁷⁸¹ Cicero is using the standard-bearer as a symbolic image of a representative of a certain individual or cause. This fits with the standard-bearers’ position both as an intermediary figure between the generals and ordinary legionaries, but also their possible position as spokesperson for the legion. What is interesting about these examples is that it gives a glimpse into the symbolic view of a standard-bearer outside of the military system. Most of these examples are from Cicero’s speeches, given to large crowds and therefore understood by them. To these crowds a standard-bearer is a representative of something larger; many of them will be devoid of any of the military symbolism discussed above and instead think of the standard-bearer only in these terms. Although never mentioned in Cicero, this is a similar idea to the standard representing the state-ideology of Rome through the notion of leading the community and may be the first glimpse at this possible aspect of its symbolism.

4.5: Political Aspects

4.5.1: The Eagle and Republican Power

Various individuals throughout the first century B.C. connect themselves to either the *aquila* or eagles to varying degrees and for what seems like quite different reasons: the aim of this section is to examine how these individuals are using both these symbols to their advantage (or disadvantage). However, there is an issue with many of the individuals discussed in this section. Most of them provide no direct evidence, thus the motivations behind their connection to the eagle has to be built upon a combination of ancient opinion and conjecture.

The first individual that is linked to the eagle is Marius. The most obvious of these connections is that his reforms turned the *aquila* into the primary legionary standard, removing the possible other standards and focusing the legion’s loyalty onto this one standard.⁷⁸² The simple act of instituting this reform would have bound his name to the eagle in some manner. However, Pliny points out that, although Marius made the decision, the *aquila* was already the most loved of the legionary standards.⁷⁸³ But even if Marius was codifying an already common practice it still links him

⁷⁷⁸ Cic. *Att.* 2.1.

⁷⁷⁹ Cic. *Dom.* 13.

⁷⁸⁰ Cic. *Planc.* 74.

⁷⁸¹ Cic. *Mil.* 90.

⁷⁸² Plin. *HN.* 10.5.

⁷⁸³ Plin. *HN.* 10.5; he does not explicitly state this but says that by the time of Marius it was customary only to carry the eagle in battle.

to the change.⁷⁸⁴ Additionally, though, Sallust reports that not only did Marius introduce it as the primary standard; in the Cimbrian war (and presumably in most of his wars following this) he took up position directly next to the standard.⁷⁸⁵ Although Sallust is not exactly contemporary, there is no reason to mistrust this statement. The symbolic statement that Marius is making here is quite clear. The complex system of religious devotion and loyalty that the legions had with the *aquila*⁷⁸⁶ meant that, by placing himself next to it, he would encourage the attachment of these same feelings to him.

Counter to this concrete attachment to the eagle, however, is the other instance where Marius is connected to the eagle. Although the later portents were discounted as inventions, Cicero's poem makes a clear connection between the eagle and Marius through augury.⁷⁸⁷ However, not only is this not Marius' personal connection but a fictional connection made by Cicero, it is also mostly a reference to the *Iliad* rather than a direct connection between Marius and the eagle.⁷⁸⁸ Despite this, Cicero, and the later examples,⁷⁸⁹ show that there is a continued attachment between Marius and the eagle after his death.

The next individual to attach himself to the eagle is Marius' nemesis Sulla. Although this connection is never made in the literary sources, a coin produced by the allies of Sulla in 82 is the first Roman coin to ever depict the *aquila* standard (Fig 4.17). Although not a direct issue by Sulla, the moneyer, C. Valerius Flaccus, was proconsul in Gaul and an ally of Sulla. Thus, Crawford links the production of this coin with the beginning of Sulla's campaign against Sertorius.⁷⁹⁰ Whether the image was chosen by Flaccus or by Sulla himself, it marks a significant point of growth in the individual's attachment to the *aquila*. By placing the legion's standard on the coins he is fostering a connection between himself and the legion's focus of loyalty, then by placing his name next to them he reinforces this connection. Not only is this connection fostered in the legions themselves, who are paid with the coins, but also third-parties who receive the coins in circulation. A secondary use of the *aquila* here seems to be to symbolise Flaccus' proconsular *imperium*. Placing the word next to the standards is a good indication of this. Additionally, another coin produced by Postumius Albinus in 81 seems to be using the *aquila* to make the same symbolic statement (Fig 4.18).⁷⁹¹ This second coin appears in such quick succession to Sulla's that it is possible there is a connection between them. Albinus' coin seems to be making a reference to the Spanish command of his ancestor through his depiction of Hispania, using the *aquila* as a reference to that military *imperium*. However, the date

⁷⁸⁴ The fact that Pliny mentions Marius in connection to this change seems to be evidence of this.

⁷⁸⁵ Sall. *Cat.* 59.3.

⁷⁸⁶ See above, p.89.

⁷⁸⁷ Cic. *Div.* 1.26; *Leg.* 1.1.2.

⁷⁸⁸ See above, p.24.

⁷⁸⁹ App. *B Civ.* 1.7.61; 1.8.75; Plut. *Vit. Mar.* 36.5-6.

⁷⁹⁰ Crawford, 1974: 80; 381.

⁷⁹¹ The coin is using the *aquila* to represent military *imperium* whereas the *fasces* are representing civilian *imperium*. The whole coin seems to be a reference to the Spanish command of L. Postumius Albinus in 180. Crawford, 1974: 389.

that it was produced is so close to Sulla's campaigns in Spain that it is hard to try and deny the possibility that Albinus is also referencing this. Additionally, it is worth noting that the first time the *aquila* appears on coinage it is connected to Sulla and reflects the growing importance of the army as a political tool.

Catiline is the next individual who connects himself to the *aquila*. As with most discussions about Catiline, the picture presented by this connection is a complicated one. On the one hand, Cicero portrays this connection negatively. We've already mentioned twice his distaste for Catiline bringing the *aquila* into his home.⁷⁹² The main issue Cicero seems to have with this is not the religious implications, but that fact that Catiline has taken the standard into *his* home, rather than depositing it in a public temple. Catiline is clearly attempting to thoroughly intertwine himself with the legion's eagle to the extent that the legionaries will always connect him with it. This is what Cicero seems to be objecting to, the personalisation of a military (and therefore public) symbol.

On the other hand, Sallust portrays Catiline's connection with the *aquila* as noble and honourable. At the point in his text where his characterisation of Catiline changes from underhanded conspirator to honourable general Catiline takes up position next to the *aquila* (just as Marius did) for the oncoming battle with his enemies,⁷⁹³ where he presumably dies protecting the standard (another example of the trope later seen in Caesar).⁷⁹⁴ Here Catiline's attempt at attaching himself to the *aquila* is presented as honourable. His previous speeches in Sallust attest that he already had the loyalty of his troops and the position next to the *aquila*, as with Marius, increased this loyalty.⁷⁹⁵ These sources represent a kind of dichotomy in the use of the *aquila* by individuals. It seems fine for them to attach themselves to the *aquila* slightly, through their position as general or on coinage, but there seems to be a line that could be crossed, at least at this point, where the personal attachment of this symbol becomes too much for the public (or at least, apparently, Cicero and his audience) to tolerate.

The next connection an individual makes to the eagle is not through the *aquila* but simply as a bird. Pompey places both an eagle and a sceptre on a coin from 49 (Fig 4.2). The coin mainly seems to be using the eagle, along with the sceptre and dolphin, to symbolise Jupiter's power over the sky, land, and sea.⁷⁹⁶ Despite this, it is still connected to Pompey, but rather through a connection to Jupiter rather than the eagle itself. The eagle and the sceptre do hint at a possible connection to the triumph and also to royalty. Another coin from 46 showing both the eagle and a sceptre adds to this

⁷⁹² Cic. *Cat.* 1.9.24; 2.6.13. Some state that the *aquila* is one of Marius'. However, this seems to only be based on that fact that Sall. *Cat.* 59.3, mentions them in the same sentence, nothing more; McGushin, 1977: 284; Ramsey, 1984: 224; Dyck, 2008: 110. Already mentioned above, p.93 & 98.

⁷⁹³ Wilkins, 1994: 51; Sall. *Cat.* 59.3.

⁷⁹⁴ See above, p.90.

⁷⁹⁵ Sall. *Cat.* 58; Wilkins, 1994: 53-54, obviously, Sallust was not present at the battle. However, there is no reason to doubt his sources for the event, even if he is making a point about the characterisation of Catiline; Rolfe, 1921: xiii; Wilkins, 1994: 51.

⁷⁹⁶ See above, p.102.

interpretation.⁷⁹⁷ Strangely, though, neither of these sceptres is an actual eagle-topped sceptre, like that possibly seen on the triumphal Jupiter coin in the previous chapter.⁷⁹⁸ Thus, although there is certainly a direct link with Jupiter here, there is not an obvious connection to the triumph or to royalty. Additionally, both these coins seem to depict an archaising Jupiter (due to the style of his hair) which suggests that they may be depicting an actual statue of Jupiter.⁷⁹⁹

There are various ways in which Caesar was connected with the eagle. The first comes from the later sources. Supposedly in a battle in Africa, Caesar grabbed a retreating *aquilifer* by the throat and turned him round and on another occasion took and carried the *aquila* himself.⁸⁰⁰ Yet again we have a similar case to Marius and Catiline, of Caesar (possibly unintentionally) attaching himself to the *aquila*. However, there are some issues with these incidents. They only appear in the later sources (Suetonius onwards) and not in the account of the African wars,⁸⁰¹ which would be the obvious place it would be recorded. Additionally, it does not appear in any other contemporary source.⁸⁰² If an incident like this occurred it would be of benefit to Caesar to promote it in some way. In fact, there is another example of a general's connection to the *aquila* from around this time that is promoted, albeit slightly. When Cicero reports that Hirtius took up the *aquila* during one of the battles against Antony he is emphasising this event to Hirtius' advantage.⁸⁰³ If a similar event occurred to Caesar we would assume there would be mention of it in the contemporary sources. There are also no examples of Caesar either standing near the *aquila* or protecting it in either the *Gallic Wars* or the *Civil Wars*, implying that the attempt at personalisation of the *aquila* was not of great importance to him. Caesar seems to be an exception to a general trend of commanders attaching themselves to the *aquila*.

There is another connection between Caesar and the eagle, though. In 42 Octavian produced a coin showing his portrait on the obverse and a curule chair on the reverse (Fig 4.19). The image of the curule chair is an interesting one as it depicts eagles at the top of the legs, one of the only depictions of this type of chair. Clearly marked on the chair are the words CAESAR DIC[TATOR] PER[PETUA] and a wreath is placed on it. It is my own interpretation that due to the differences compared to other curule chairs depicted and the clear direct reference to Caesar it seems that Octavian is depicting the gilded curule chair that Caesar was carried in prior to his assassination. Each curule chair was individually decorated by whoever commissioned it⁸⁰⁴ and thus Caesar decided to

⁷⁹⁷ Crawford, 1074: no.460/2.

⁷⁹⁸ See above, p.74.

⁷⁹⁹ The fact that the coin shows his shoulders possibly implies that it was a particular bust of Jupiter.

⁸⁰⁰ App. *B Civ.* 2.95; Plut. *Vit. Caes.* 52.3; Suet. *Iul.* 62; Val. Max. 3.2.19; Butler & Cary, 1927: 126.

⁸⁰¹ The author seems to have been a soldier of Caesar and therefore partial to portraying him in as positive a light as possible, Way, 1955: 141-142.

⁸⁰² It is possible that Appian and Plutarch are using Caesar's contemporary Asinius Pollio as a source but this still begs the question of why the incident was not mentioned in *Bellum Africanum*.

⁸⁰³ Cic. *Phil.* 14.10.27; Hall, 2002: 279-280, this source is also an example of generals having the same loyalty to the *aquila* as the regular legionaries. Hirtius is just as willing to lay down his life for the *aquila* as any regular soldier.

⁸⁰⁴ Schafer, 1989; Davies, 1992: 155-156.

place eagles on his golden curule chair. The reaction to this chair in the sources is overwhelmingly negative. They unanimously decide that this ‘golden throne’ along with other regalia was a sign to many of his ambition to be king.⁸⁰⁵ Although the eagles are never directly referenced, and rather emphasis is placed on the fact that it was gold, they will not have detracted from this impression. The eagle’s connection to royalty in the Roman mind has already been pointed out and this is a prime example of this assumption,⁸⁰⁶ their idea of a ‘golden throne’ comes complete with eagle decoration. This gives a completely new interpretation to this particular coin.

Curiously, though, Octavian chooses to place this image on his coin. If this chair, and thus its image, had such negative royal connotations why would Octavian choose to portray it on this coin? Even stranger than this is a coin produced by the Senate the year before, only a year after Caesar’s death, which seems to depict the same chair (Fig 4.20). There are some notable differences, the eagles only adorn one side of either chair leg, there is no direct reference to Caesar, and a helmet sits atop it instead of a wreath. Even if they are attempting to depict a different chair, as each curule chair was unique,⁸⁰⁷ this cannot have been successful. The Octavian coin most likely depicts Caesar’s golden chair and the similarity between this image and the senatorial one is so great that even if it was supposed to be a different chair the connection between it and Caesar’s is unavoidable. Crawford interprets this image, and consequently the image on Octavian’s coin, as a simple reference to *imperium*.⁸⁰⁸ This is accurate to some degree but I think it may be more complicated than this. I am much more inclined to agree with Alföldi’s interpretation of the coin: that it was produced by the Senate to pay the African legions that were mustered to defend them against Octavian in 43, and with them being Caesarian veterans choose to place a Caesarian image on the coin (alongside the personification of Africa).⁸⁰⁹ Plus, the chair is empty, hinting at Caesar’s recent death. Thus, both this coin and Octavian’s are using this curule chair to symbolise Caesar and in doing so the image has lost all of the negative royal connotations it had when Caesar was alive.⁸¹⁰ Instead it refers to the (soon to be deified) dictator. A minor note on this chair is that Octavian seems to have used it in his campaign for Caesar’s deification.⁸¹¹ If so, the fact that Caesar sat atop four eagles, as Jupiter does in some depictions of his ascent to heaven (Fig 4.12), should not be completely glossed over. It is clear that the

⁸⁰⁵ App. *B Civ.* 3.28; Cass. Dio. 44.6.1-3; 11.2; 17.3; 45.6.5; Cic. *Div.* 1.52.119; *Phil.* 2.34.85; Sue. *Iul.* 76.1; Schafer, 1989: 114-115.

⁸⁰⁶ See above, p.51.

⁸⁰⁷ Schafer, 1989; Davies, 1992: 155-156.

⁸⁰⁸ Crawford, 1974: 500-501.

⁸⁰⁹ Alföldi, 1958: 480-483; Crawford, 1974: 500 states that the nature of this issue remains uncertain, but gives no evidence as to why Alföldi’s theory should be rejected. The dates and iconography agree with this event enough to make it plausible and I see no reason to discount it as Crawford does.

⁸¹⁰ Interestingly, Caesar must have thought that there was enough popular support to begin to depict himself in a royal context, which eventually backfired by agitating the senators. However, once Octavian uses the imagery it still has these royal connotations but has more immediate Caesarian ones.

⁸¹¹ Schafer, 1989; Davies, 1992: 155-156.

chair, if it did not before, had a certain degree of apotheosis imagery which Octavian used to strengthen his *divus filius* claim.⁸¹²

Octavian not only used this chair to connect him to the eagle, but he also produced a series of coins in 40 with both his and Caesar's face on the obverse and the *aquila* standard on the reverse (Fig 4.21).⁸¹³ Placing the *aquila* on coins was now almost commonplace, but the general leap in obverse imagery that Caesar makes and Octavian follows was placing his image on the coins. Unlike the previous coinage depicting the *aquila*, the connection here on the coin from 40 is obvious and un-subtle. Both Caesar and Octavian are being directly connected to the standard just as deities are connected to the eagle. Additionally, with Octavian placing both their faces next to the *aquila* it almost creates the effect that they are standing by the standard, as if they were in battle, drawing from both Marius' and Sulla's use of the *aquila* over forty years previously. Driving this point home is that these coins were an allusion by Octavian to the settlement of veteran colonies after the Perusine War,⁸¹⁴ making the military symbolism obvious.

Around the same time the *aquila* appears on a coin produced by Sextus Pompeius in c.42-40.⁸¹⁵ The coin depicts a ship with an *aquila* standard on the prow. Once again it seems the *aquila* standard is being used to reflect the individual's military *imperium*, in this case attempting to highlight that this *imperium* is official. Sextus was officially given the position of Prefect of the fleet by the Senate⁸¹⁶ and so his *imperium* was legitimate. However, what is interesting about this issue is the use of the *aquila* standard with reference to the navy. As far as we can tell from the sources the Roman navy did not use this standard,⁸¹⁷ thus, Sextus has chosen to use the legionary standard to represent his maritime *imperium*. Not only does this highlight the perceived importance of the legions over the navy but also shows that the *aquila* was now so synonymous with the idea of military *imperium* that it could be used to represent the concept in a non-legionary environment.

Lastly, Antony also attempts to attach himself to the *aquila*, but too late to make an impact. Although he does not put his face on the coins he attempts to create an attachment with each of his legions as an individual entity. He places the *aquila* on the coins, but each coin has a different legionary number (Fig 4.22).⁸¹⁸ Although this may have been done for practical reasons (i.e. for paying different legions), it has the effect of creating a type of legionary coinage, personalised for each of them and sent directly from Antony. Not only is he reinforcing their identity through his

⁸¹² The eagle's use in apotheosis imagery is discussed in more detail below, p.136.

⁸¹³ Crawford, 1974: no.525/2; 4a.

⁸¹⁴ Crawford, 1974: 530.

⁸¹⁵ Crawford, 1974: no.511/4a.

⁸¹⁶ App. *B Civ.* 4.84-85; Cic. *Phil.* 13.50; Cass. Dio. 46.40.3; Crawford, 1974: 521.

⁸¹⁷ At least there is no reference connecting the two, Sextus seems to have crewed his ships purely with sailors (mostly it seems slaves, freedmen, and 'many seafaring men from Africa and Spain' App. *B Civ.* 4.85).

However, both Octavian and Antony seemed to have used legionaries on their ships at Actium, CIL 5.2502; 11.4654; Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 64.

⁸¹⁸ Crawford, no.544/9; 11; 14-16; 18-21; 23; 25-27; 31; 38; no.546/1.

coinage, by placing the legionary number on the reverse with the *aquila* he is almost referring directly to their personal standard and attaching himself to its individual loyalty.

4.6: Conclusion

This chapter has presented a more rounded and detailed picture of the eagle's symbolism in Roman culture. It has also confirmed some of the assumptions usually made about the eagle. The eagle itself can finally be seen as having the strong connection with Jupiter that is usually assumed, but it also represents a myriad of other things. There are minor connections to other deities (Vulcan and Sol); a representation of the dominant half of a homosexual relationship between a citizen and his slave through the Ganymede myth; and representing victory or defeat in augury. Another quite strong connection is to royalty. This can be seen in divination stories and the reaction to Caesar's curule chair. It may also explain why generals are seen to connect to the *aquila* rather than actual eagles (stories of which only appear in later sources). This concept seems to be building on what was discussed in the previous chapters, as the Hellenistic kings were seen to attach themselves to the eagle,⁸¹⁹ possibly providing the basis for this royal connection. This last aspect of its symbolism, however, seems to be changing towards the end of the period as Octavian deftly alters the symbolism of the curule chair from royalty to a symbol of Caesarian support (and possible a divine connection).

Since the Marian reforms provide the first contemporary evidence of the *aquila* this chapter also attempted to define its symbolism in the period. The result is what can only be described as a religious artefact functioning as the symbol of a closed community. The *aquila* was not only considered religious in itself, either as the *genius legionis* or *genius signiferis*, but also the conduit through which the legion would communicate with whichever deity they wished: essentially a portable temple or altar. Alongside this the *aquila* also represented the legionary community as its symbol and thus enjoyed the emotional connection that this engendered in the legionaries. The hugely important position of the *aquila* within the legions led to its use as a political symbol, either representing legitimate military *imperium* or having successive generals throughout the period attempt to personally attach themselves to its symbolism. In fact, the importance of this symbol can be seen to increase gradually over the period, alongside the increasing importance of the army in Roman politics, with the greatest evidence of this being its transformation from silver to gold. Despite this though, although some of the aspects are translatable, the symbolism discussed here is mostly confined to the community of active legionaries and veterans. Although this was a large proportion of the male citizenry (and nearly all of the upper class politicians)⁸²⁰ it is not the entirety of the Roman people. Some of the religious symbolism and loyalty may have been lost on the Roman people at large;

⁸¹⁹ See above, p.50.

⁸²⁰ Politicians were required to spend 10 years in the army before attempting the *cursus honorum*; Polyb. 6.19.4.

instead, the standards and their standard-bearers may have simply been a symbol of those representing larger concepts or as a spokesperson.

Once again, we have to bind all this symbolism into a larger whole. Although the symbolism of the eagle and the *aquila* have been separated for ease of comprehension these two aspects were interchangeable. Cicero's witty remark reported to us by Plutarch serves as evidence for this interchangeability, stating the number of *aquilae* they had (referring to the legions) would only be useful if the army were fighting jackdaws.⁸²¹ Thus, even though the legionaries had developed their own symbolism they would still transfer the image of the eagle inherent in cultural symbolism from before their enrolment. Conversely, a legionary veteran would carry over his specifically military symbolism into his later viewings of the eagle in distinctly non-military contexts. Additionally, it is worth reinforcing that the symbolism discussed in previous chapters has not disappeared. Roman comedy is still alive and well in this period and so is their conceptual symbolism of the eagle as rapacious, dark-coloured, and representative of old age.⁸²² The connection between the eagle and Hellenistic kings has already been seen to have a possible influence on its symbolism in this period and although not represented with the myriad other deities of the previous centuries (Minerva and Mars, etc.) these associations have not completely disappeared. Even the idea of the eagle representing 'strong statehood' will not have been replaced, as choosing to place the eagle on coins would still have this effect. Also, its connection to both Aeneas (which was represented in the sources of this period)⁸²³ and Romulus are still present. Additionally, the Greek symbolism is still active, with Aristotle's examination of the physical animal no doubt being read by Varro⁸²⁴ and we see a clear example of its symbolism in the *Iliad* being used by Cicero.⁸²⁵ Thus the concepts of speed,⁸²⁶ strength, and eyesight alongside notions of eastern kingship and the Prometheus myth⁸²⁷ are still prevalent.

What is important is that no one representation can be said to symbolise only one of these myriad different meanings. Through the ideas of symbolism presented above, especially Pierce's idea of '*unlimited semiosis*', any representation can have multiple meanings, either at once or produced via a longer cognitive process. This idea is best expressed by once again using the Silchester Eagle. If we imagine a Roman legate looking at the Silchester Eagle, with its possible outstretched wings, in the mid-first century A.D., he would receive much of the symbolism discussed in this chapter. He would think of the standard military-orientated religious and communal symbolism examined above,⁸²⁸ but, additionally, since he was present at a performance of Terence, is reminded of his

⁸²¹ Plut. *Vit. Cic.* 38.7. Discussed above, p.104.

⁸²² See above, p.55.

⁸²³ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.59.4.

⁸²⁴ Varro, *Rust.* 3.11.3; 12.3; 16. 4, treats the eagle as a physical animal unconnected to myth, as Aristotle does.

⁸²⁵ Cic. *Div.* 1.77.

⁸²⁶ Cic. *Div.* 2.144.

⁸²⁷ See above, p.29.

⁸²⁸ See above, p.89.

advancing years and,⁸²⁹ since he saw an image of Ganymede earlier in the day, is reminded of his position in the relationship he has with his male slave back home.⁸³⁰ Viewing the Silchester Eagle would create a varied number of meanings within the mind of the viewer, all based on their individual experiences and knowledge, as well as all the aspects we have seen within Roman thought thus far, just as described in the introduction.⁸³¹ Again, and also in accordance with ideas of multiple symbolism, there is a certain hierarchy to these meanings. Some of the meanings expressed would be inaccessible to those on a lower stratum of society, whereas the Roman legate can access most of these meanings; it is possible that a normal legionary would not recognise the meanings given by the literary sources.

But what does this mean for the interpretation of the Silchester Eagle and other out-of-context eagles? Firstly, we always have to remember that it will have multiple meanings based on the viewer, so any of the meanings discussed in the previous chapters or later chapters could have been applied to the Silchester Eagle by its viewer, its meaning is always in flux. But examining all these meanings also gives us tangible possibilities for its actual context and the reason for its production, as have already been discussed.⁸³² This chapter enlightens us to even more of these possibilities and, once again, although seen in an earlier period, much of this symbolism, such as that connected to Ganymede or the legions, continue throughout the next centuries. So it is quite possible that the Silchester Eagle was part of a Ganymede statue⁸³³ or produced by someone with strong legionary connections.⁸³⁴ In fact, we know in later periods that the *aquila*'s religious connotations prompted the production of eagles in forts that did not retain the actual standard,⁸³⁵ so this may be the origin of the Silchester Eagle. The connection between the standard and the simple image of the eagle is ever-present, and it is again worth pointing out the Silchester Eagle's original mis-identification as a military standard.⁸³⁶ If this connection was made by modern scholars, it would be even easier for those steeped in Roman culture to make it. Other possibilities are also created in this chapter, most notably another increase in the other deities it may be depicted with (e.g. Vulcan and Sol).⁸³⁷ Thus, the Silchester Eagle's possible interpretations grow even more.

⁸²⁹ See above, p.55.

⁸³⁰ See above, p.87.

⁸³¹ See above, p.12.

⁸³² See above, p.74.

⁸³³ See above, p.87.

⁸³⁴ See above, p.89.

⁸³⁵ See below, p.181.

⁸³⁶ See above, p.1.

⁸³⁷ See above, p.81.

Chapter 5: First Century A.D.: Augustus' Eagle

5.1: Introduction

This chapter will aim to build on the symbolic picture presented in the previous chapter and establish the eagle's symbolism in the Roman Imperial period, of which this century is the formative period. This century once again dramatically increases the contemporary source material compared to the previous chapters and therefore allows for a more detailed picture of the eagle's symbolism. The chapter is once again divided into sections, which have each been adapted to the symbolic ideas present in this period. The 'Physical Animal and Reality' section will focus first on the natural history of Pliny in comparison to Aristotle. It will then explore the use and ideas associated with the eagle in ancient medical thought. The section on 'Concepts and Characteristics' will identify the continuity and change in the symbolic concepts associated with the eagle in this period compared to the previous chapters before examining in detail the eagle's use in love elegiac poetry and its allegorical use in fables. 'Religion and Myth' will first examine the eagle's relationship with Jupiter and other deities to see any developments in this century. Then, it will explore the eagle in myth and astrology as well as the use of the eagle in ideas and images of apotheosis and its appearance on tympanums of temples. The section on 'Martial and State Themes' will explore the development of the *aquila*'s symbolism, especially in connection to the loss and recovery of standards (starting with the Parthian standards). The section will also try to answer whether the eagle was directly symbolic of Rome by examining sources from the periphery and outside of the empire. Lastly, 'Political Self-fashioning' will focus on the Augustan adoption of the eagle and the different messages his regime used it for before determining which of these symbolic associations were adopted or disregarded with the following Julio-Claudian and Flavian emperors.

Again, to explore the eagle's symbolism in this period it is necessary to examine the historical events which create the context of this century. The defining feature of Roman history from 31 B.C. to 96⁸³⁸ is the creation and establishment of the principate as the governing body of the empire by Augustus⁸³⁹ and its stabilisation first by the Julio-Claudian and then, following a period of disruption, the Flavians.⁸⁴⁰ The systems put in place by Augustus during his 45-year reign provided a foundation upon which the later emperors could build, successfully or unsuccessfully, to slowly solidify the institution of the principate. Accompanying these political developments was the slow pacification of the empire (i.e. half-conquered provinces like Spain)⁸⁴¹ and the incorporation of new territories (either

⁸³⁸ All dates in this chapter are A.D. unless otherwise indicated.

⁸³⁹ Crook, 1996a; 1996b.

⁸⁴⁰ Wiedemann, 1996a; 1996b.

⁸⁴¹ Flor. 33, Magie, 1920; Alföldy, 1996.

through conquest, e.g. Britain,⁸⁴² or through annexation, e.g. Cappadocia).⁸⁴³ These provinces also start to become more politically unified through a tighter control of the governors and monitoring of the taxation and people (through census) from the time of Augustus.⁸⁴⁴ These last two issues lead to a question, long debated, about this period in Roman history; how ‘Roman’, exactly, were the provinces?

But why is this question only being asked now? While the previous chapters have shown a long and complicated relationship between Rome and the other cultures of the Mediterranean, which it has been conquering, incorporating, and annexing from as early as the fourth century B.C., it is the first century A.D. within which the largest cultural change occurs. It is this century that sees the beginning of census and more tightly controlled taxation and administration⁸⁴⁵ and the simultaneous spread of ‘Roman’ material culture (e.g. baths, *fora*, temples, etc.) across the territories of the empire, whatever the date of that particular territory’s conquest.⁸⁴⁶ For example, both Gaul and the Punic areas of Spain, although conquered nearly 200 years apart, both start to show these developments at the same time.⁸⁴⁷ Both of these political and cultural developments point to the fact that in this century Rome is not interacting with peripheral cultures, but instead all these areas are moving towards a more ‘unified culture’ simultaneously. But do either of these changes actually make those in the provinces into ‘Romans’? A good example of this problem is seen in the provincial coinage of this period. Whereas all the coinage bears the face of the current emperor, their reverses often show differing and localised imagery, often a continuation of that province’s existing coinage imagery. So do these coins represent Roman culture? Or localised imperial culture?

The old model used to answer this question of the extension of ‘Roman’ culture into the provinces was that of ‘Romanisation’. This was Haverfield’s model of Rome actively encouraging the adoption of their culture in the provinces. In reaction, later studies proposed a model known as ‘nativism’, which switched the initiative to the ‘natives’ in the provinces. This was the model of the ‘less civilised’ cultures emulating and copying the ‘more civilised’ culture of Rome until they eventually became Roman themselves.⁸⁴⁸ Both these models were long ago shown to be overly simplistic under close scrutiny of the evidence, and have been deconstructed by scholars such as Webster.⁸⁴⁹ Despite abandonment of ‘Romanisation’, however, the fact remains that during this century a (relatively) sudden and large cultural change took place across the empire. In ‘Romanisation’s’ wake numerous new models and explanations have been provided for this

⁸⁴² Cass. Dio. 60.19-22; 77.16; Suet. *Claud.* 17; *Vesp.* 4; Tac. *Agr.* 98.362-380; Wachter, 1996.

⁸⁴³ Tac. *Ann.* 2.42; Gruen, 1996.

⁸⁴⁴ Nicolet, 1991: 123-170; Bowman, 1996; Revell, 2009.

⁸⁴⁵ Nicolet, 1991: 123-170; Revell, 2009: 24.

⁸⁴⁶ Hopkins, 1978: 1-98; Wallace-Hadrill, 1989; Millet, 1990; Woolf, 1994; 1995; 1997: 346.

⁸⁴⁷ Woolf, 1997: 346.

⁸⁴⁸ All based on Haverfield, 1912.

⁸⁴⁹ Webster, 2001.

phenomenon. Woolf focused his study on the interaction between the provincial elites and Roman culture which led him to the conclusion that both Republican Roman and Native provincial cultures began to combine first in the Augustan age and throughout the first century A.D. to create a new 'Imperial Roman' culture that was a mixture of the two.⁸⁵⁰ Webster, approaching the problem from the view of the lower strata of society, used the process of creolisation, seen in the African-American cultures of the American South and in the Caribbean, to explain how the lower classes in Roman society picked and chose and mixed their own culture with certain elements of Roman culture that appealed to them.⁸⁵¹ Both Hingley and Revell turned to the ideas of globalisation, with Revell positing (drawing on the ideas of Hobsbawm) that there was a shared 'globalised' 'Roman' culture but that it contained individual localised cultures within it⁸⁵² and Hingley comes to a similar conclusion, that 'Roman' culture was a 'globalised' set of cultural structures from which the local elite could draw, but that rarely affected those of lower status.⁸⁵³ These are just a few of the approaches taken to this problem, of which there are many, each with their supporters and detractors.

But all of these approaches seem to have common threads that bind them all together into an (albeit extremely complex) model of 'Roman imperial culture.' None of these studies debate that the first century A.D. sees the start of the development of a new 'Roman' culture, not just in the provinces, but in Rome itself. The century sees the formation of a new culture that is a constellation/bricolage/amalgamation of combined individual cultures which are constantly interacting and changing. A good example of this is comparing the approaches taken by Woolf and Webster. They both state that a new amalgamated culture of either local elite or local lower classes produced a new cultural expression, either through individualised conscious adoption of Roman culture or by the creolisation of Roman ideas.⁸⁵⁴ This creates both empire-wide ideas and expressions of 'Romanness' as well as localised ideas and expressions of 'Romanness', including their reaction to the larger empire-wide concepts. Additionally, both these shifts occur simultaneously. Using both Webster's model of creolisation⁸⁵⁵ and Woolf's ideas of elite responses,⁸⁵⁶ since they create models for different classes, we can also address how each social stratum dealt with these ideas in their local contexts, assessing the broad spectrum of what 'Roman culture' actually was. This leads to a workable, but complex, definition of 'Roman culture' in this formative period. Not only was there a broad 'Roman Imperial Culture' that could be read and understood by all in the empire (yet focused on those in the elite classes), we also have defined sub-cultures within this system. These sub-cultures

⁸⁵⁰ Woolf, 1993; 1994; 1995; 1997; 1998; 2000; 2001a; 2001b.

⁸⁵¹ Webster, 2001 basing her study on the creolisation theories seen in Abrahams, 1983; Ferguson, 1992; Brandon, 1997.

⁸⁵² Revell, 2009: 2-3; 191-193; Hobsbawm, 1999.

⁸⁵³ Hingley, 2005: 117-118.

⁸⁵⁴ Webster, 2001; Woolf, 2001a.

⁸⁵⁵ Webster, 2001.

⁸⁵⁶ Woolf, 1997; 1998.

could be expressed by region (e.g. Gallo-Roman, Hispano-Roman, Greco-Roman) but also through social status (e.g. Romano-Celtic creolised culture or Grecian elite responses) and even further down the scale to individual responses based on city or gender.⁸⁵⁷

Obviously, this creates a complex model of identity and expression and an extremely nuanced idea of what exactly ‘Roman Imperial Culture’ was. It was both an empire-wide and a localised culture at the same time and, just like the model of symbolism that I explore in Chapter 1,⁸⁵⁸ the idea of what it was to be ‘Roman’ or what ‘Roman culture’ was depended on time, place, age, gender, social status, and numerous other factors; but, at least on certain scales, could be understood by a wide variety of individuals. Returning to the example of provincial coinage helps explain this complex system. All the coinage shares a defining ‘Roman’ attribute, the face of the emperor, which was a cultural cornerstone for all the individuals of the empire. Yet, on the reverse of these coins the images present are myriad and localised; each represents, at least to some degree, the culture of the town/region that produced it.⁸⁵⁹ Yet this second image is no less ‘Roman’ than the image of the emperor. These images were chosen in relation to the emperor’s image, they are a response to what it meant for these local communities to express ‘Romanness’, and the coinage express both empire-wide ‘Roman imperial culture’ and ‘localised Roman culture’ simultaneously.

How does this affect the study of the Roman symbolism of the eagle? As the placing of ‘Roman’ in inverted commas in the previous chapters has shown, even up until now the idea of what was ‘purely’ Roman symbolism compared to Rome interacting with, blending, or plain stealing symbolism from other cultures has been blurry. However, also up until this point Rome has had more of a definable ‘separate’ culture. Although we have seen Rome interact with other cultures before and during this century, what is known and encompassed within the term ‘Roman culture’ becomes much broader. Thus, this expands what we think of as ‘Roman symbolism’. This new definition includes the eagle in the material culture of the provinces (coinage, statues, etc.) as ‘Roman’ rather than non-Roman. Additionally, using the model of Roman culture discussed above there is the possibility of two types of symbolism occurring within this new ‘Roman’ culture. Not only will there be empire-wide common symbolic associations attached to the eagle there will also be localised symbolic associations, expressed in one region or city. These localised symbolic expressions are no less ‘Roman’ than those seen across the empire but they are also smaller in scope and limited to whichever region/city they are found in, and these symbolic sub-cultures also need to be addressed and identified. Due to the context within which the eagle is found it is more likely that the provincial

⁸⁵⁷ Keay & Terrenato, 2001: ix-x; Webster, 2001; Woolf, 2001a; Hingley, 2005; Revell, 2009; Mattingly, 2011; Gardner, 2013.

⁸⁵⁸ See above, p.7.

⁸⁵⁹ Howgego, 2005: 14-15 helpfully divides these provincial coins into three subcategories, imperial/imperial, imperial/local, and local/local. But, as he points out, even the local/local types interact with Roman power systems to some extent and the imperial/imperial types are also dependant on local cultural concepts. Thus, the coinage is always both local and ‘Roman’ at the same time, an example of this new amalgamated ‘Roman imperial culture’.

symbolism is provided by the elite of that society, rather than the lower classes. Therefore, often Woolf's model of elite interaction with Rome will be used over Webster's model of creolisation. Lastly, due to the amount of material culture that is spread across the empire, it will not be possible for this thesis to include every localised symbolic sub-culture, but as many as possible will be included.

5.2: Physical Animal and Reality.

This section will first deal with the relationship between the 'pseudo-scientific' study of the eagle and the classification of species in both Aristotle and Pliny, identifying the intertextuality and new information in Pliny. It will then move on to talk about the other uses of the eagle identified in Pliny, that of their connection to 'magical' amulets and the use of the eagle in medical treatment. It is worth pointing out before starting that the practical advice given by Varro to defend livestock against eagles⁸⁶⁰ seen in the previous chapter continues in the agricultural texts of this century, namely Columella.⁸⁶¹

5.2.1: Aristotle and Pliny.

Pliny freely admits that he bases much of his zoological material directly on the works of Aristotle⁸⁶² and this can be clearly seen in his exposition and classification of species of the eagle. Much of this information about the eagle is accurate information passed on from Aristotle, i.e. that eagles have small broods;⁸⁶³ where each species nests;⁸⁶⁴ that they have good eyesight;⁸⁶⁵ the rate of infanticide.⁸⁶⁶ He even sticks fairly close to Aristotle's classification system,⁸⁶⁷ attributing the same traits to the same species of eagle.⁸⁶⁸ He also expands on some of this information, though, as he describes the method of how the 'fawn-killer' eagle hunts deer.⁸⁶⁹ Although the method he provides is mildly inaccurate, it does represent some degree of truth, as recent pictures have shown that the eagle does attack deer by falling on them near the head (Fig 2.1).⁸⁷⁰ However, alongside this transfer of accurate information about the bird from Aristotle comes the transfer of inaccurate information. He relates the fantastic stories told of the eagle, i.e. making their chicks stare into the sun;⁸⁷¹ being jealous

⁸⁶⁰ See above, p.77.

⁸⁶¹ Columella. *Rust.* 8.4.6; 15.1; 9.14.7.

⁸⁶² Plin. *HN.* 1.10; 8.17.43; Bodson, 1986: 100; Healy, 1999: 72.

⁸⁶³ Arist. *His. An.* 563a; Plin. *HN.* 10.4; 79. See above, p.22 for Aristotle's accuracy.

⁸⁶⁴ Arist. *His. An.* 563a; Plin. *HN.* 10.3-4.

⁸⁶⁵ Arist. *His. An.* 620a; Plin. *HN.* 10.88.

⁸⁶⁶ Arist. *His. An.* 563a; Plin. *HN.* 10.3.

⁸⁶⁷ Arist. *His. An.* 618b-619b; Plin. *HN.* 10.3.

⁸⁶⁸ Particularly the 'black eagle'.

⁸⁶⁹ Arist. *His. An.* 618b; Plin. *HN.* 10.5.

⁸⁷⁰ The eagle shown is a Golden Eagle, but the image points to the possibility.

⁸⁷¹ Arist. *His. An.* 619b; Plin. *HN.* 10.3.

of their young for eating too much;⁸⁷² and only being able to die when their beak grows too long for them to eat.⁸⁷³ Additionally, he also continues the same Aristotelian habit of imbuing these animals with human characteristics, calling certain species ‘noble’, ‘timid’, ‘degenerative’, and ‘spurious’.⁸⁷⁴

But Pliny does not confine himself simply to relating the information he receives from Aristotle. He also adds to the ancient knowledge of the eagle. He relates some more accurate information about the eagle: that it is defensive of its particular territory⁸⁷⁵ and also of the fight between eagle and snake.⁸⁷⁶ Although this latter point is not new to the literature⁸⁷⁷ it is the first ‘scientific’ mention, and does relate to reality in the fact that the Short-toed Eagle’s main diet is snakes.⁸⁷⁸ Pliny also relates the method that the eagle uses to hunt waterfowl wherein the eagle attempts to tire the waterfowl as it continues to keep diving under the water or attempts to scare them from beds of reeds with its wings,⁸⁷⁹ which may or may not be accurate, but at least, at first reading, seems drawn from direct observation. But, just like Aristotle, Pliny also relates much of the fantastical information about the eagle, which presumably stems from popular thinking about the bird. He states that the eagle, as it is Jupiter’s favoured bird, cannot be struck by lightning,⁸⁸⁰ and that one particular species has teeth but no tongue or voice.⁸⁸¹ He also states that eagle feathers will disintegrate those of other birds⁸⁸² and that the eagle and the swan are always at odds.⁸⁸³ Pliny, however, is not the only writer to convey misinformation about the eagle. While he states that there are no eagles on Rhodes,⁸⁸⁴ Strabo relates that they cannot be found in Scythia or Sarmatia, either.⁸⁸⁵ The maps of the distribution of eagle species seen in Chapter 1 show both these statements to be untrue: although these are contemporary maps, the persecution of the eagle in the nineteenth century means that, rather than being an overestimation of the population in antiquity, the ancient world may have had an even larger distribution.⁸⁸⁶

But these inaccuracies are still relevant to the conception of the eagle, as an actual animal, in Roman thought. Pliny’s work was an attempt to collect together all the information on whichever subject was being dealt with,⁸⁸⁷ thus, the information he relates about the eagle is as close as we can

⁸⁷² Arist. *His. An.* 619b; Plin. *HN.* 10.4.

⁸⁷³ Arist. *His. An.* 618b; Plin. *HN.* 10.4.

⁸⁷⁴ Arist. *His. An.* 563a; 618b-619b; 620a; Plin. *HN.* 10.3; Fögen, 2007: 189.

⁸⁷⁵ Plin. *HN.* 10.4.

⁸⁷⁶ Plin. *HN.* 10.5; Plut. *Mor.* 537B.

⁸⁷⁷ Starting with Hom. *Il.* 12.200-225.

⁸⁷⁸ Gensbol, 2008: 89. It is also resident in Italy, see Fig 1.1.1.

⁸⁷⁹ Plin. *HN.* 10.3.

⁸⁸⁰ Plin. *HN.* 2.56; 10.4.

⁸⁸¹ He attributes this information to Phemonoe, a Pythian priestess, and also to Boethus, Plin. *HN.* 10.3.

⁸⁸² Plin. *HN.* 10.4; Plut. *Mor.* 680E.

⁸⁸³ Plin. *HN.* 10.95.

⁸⁸⁴ Plin. *HN.* 10.41.

⁸⁸⁵ Strabo. 7.4.8.

⁸⁸⁶ See above, Fig 1.1.1; 1.2.1; 1.3.1; 1.6.1; 1.8.1; Also see Akriotis & Handrinos, 1997: 139-142; 133 129-130; Blair & Hagemeyer, 1997: 168-175 who also shows their distribution.

⁸⁸⁷ Beagon, 1992: 11; 13; Carey, 2003: 17.

probably get to opinions about the actual animal in Roman thought of this period, particularly that of the educated elite.⁸⁸⁸ The fantastical stories and ideas were just as integral to the Roman ideas about the actual bird as its hunting technique and brood size. The interesting points that come out of this information is that the connection with Jupiter had, by this point, become so strong that it related strongly to the actual animal, hence its ‘resistance’ to lightning. But also that much of the ‘pseudo-scientific’ information had not changed much since Aristotle, since he is relied upon so much by Pliny. Essentially, Pliny gives us a distilled version of the vast array of Roman thought about the actual eagle, one that is not only informed by Greek pseudo-scientific study, but also the mythical and religious thought about the eagle.

5.2.2: Amulets and Medicine.

Pliny connects the eagle to an amulet made of *smaragdus*,⁸⁸⁹ which when engraved with an eagle would ‘ensure the presence of kings’.⁸⁹⁰ Although Pliny dismisses the belief as one produced by untrustworthy ‘magicians’,⁸⁹¹ the fact that he reports it must indicate that this was a belief amongst the Roman population.⁸⁹² The connection between the eagle and the intended result can be easily made as the eagle’s attachment to royalty has already been well documented.⁸⁹³ What is interesting though is that when forming a magical amulet such as this, it is not the gemstone itself which seems to imbue the amulet with supernatural forces, but the actual engraving of the image, and the ritual surrounding it.⁸⁹⁴ Thus, the image of the eagle is what gives the amulet its magical properties, rather than the *smaragdus*. The *smaragdus* was also said to be good for your eyesight,⁸⁹⁵ being used to clear the vision of artisans when worn, and, in an interesting coincidence, the eagle is also known for its good eyesight, as discussed.⁸⁹⁶ Pliny also states, however, that it was forbidden to engrave *smaragdus*⁸⁹⁷ due to their positive effects on the eyes, presumably because it impaired their power. But, according to this account, they were being engraved by some and thus the ability to ‘ensure the presence of kings’ must have overridden this taboo.⁸⁹⁸

⁸⁸⁸ Beagon, 1992: 15.

⁸⁸⁹ This is the ‘green-stone’ usually identified with the emerald but can also mean numerous other green coloured gemstones (green quartz for example); Caley & Richards, 1956: 97-98.

⁸⁹⁰ Plin. *HN*. 37.40.124.

⁸⁹¹ Plin. *HN*. 37.40.124.

⁸⁹² Again Pliny’s attempt at collecting all knowledge is a valuable source for Roman beliefs, Carey, 2003: 17.

⁸⁹³ See above, p.51 & 66.

⁸⁹⁴ Sometimes simply the carving itself was enough of a ritual; Luck, 1985: 219.

⁸⁹⁵ Plin. *HN*. 37.16.63; See also, Theophr. *Lap.* 23-24; Caley & Richards, 1956: 99, believe he is talking definitively about actual emeralds at this point.

⁸⁹⁶ See above, p.24, 55, and 78.

⁸⁹⁷ Plin. *HN*. 37.16.64.

⁸⁹⁸ However, I have not found any physical examples of this practice on Roman gemstones thus far, which is unsurprising, due to the preciousness of the gemstone.

The second magical amulet connected to the eagle is the *aetite* or ‘eagle-stone’.⁸⁹⁹ This is a stone containing a geode which is filled with other smaller stones, as if pregnant, and worn as amulets by pregnant women to ward off miscarriages or malicious attempts to cause abortion (presumably from dark magic).⁹⁰⁰ They were also certainly used, as some examples have been found.⁹⁰¹ The connection to the eagle comes from the myth that these stones were found in the nests of eagles, and that eagles could not reproduce without their assistance.⁹⁰² Although this is repeated in numerous sources,⁹⁰³ the idea is completely fictional and so begs the question, why is the eagle attached to this particular stone at all?

The idea that this stone assists in pregnancy is certainly not a purely Roman one, the idea goes all the way back, through the Greek sources,⁹⁰⁴ to the ideas of the Assyrians. In Assyrian folklore the stones were known as ‘Eri’ or ‘pregnant-stones’ and performed the same function in the protection of pregnant women.⁹⁰⁵ Barb thought that it was a mistranslation of this word as its homophone ‘Eru’,⁹⁰⁶ which means eagle, which caused the stone to be known as the ‘eagle-stone’ in Greek, and then Roman, tradition. However, although dismissed by Barb as he favours the mistranslation theory, Thompson points out that in the ancient Mesopotamian story of Etana,⁹⁰⁷ a king goes in search of the eagle in order to acquire the ‘birth-plant’.⁹⁰⁸ Although not exactly a ‘pregnancy-stone’ the story certainly attaches the eagle to the idea of birth and pregnancy as far back as 2150 B.C.⁹⁰⁹ I am more inclined to think, due to this text, that this connection already existed between the stone and the eagle at this point, either created or reinforced by the fact that the words were homophones, rather than the western sources mistranslating the original word. Interestingly, the connection between the eagle and this stone does not appear in early Greek texts. Neither Theophrastus, who mentions the stone,⁹¹⁰ nor

⁸⁹⁹ Plin. *HN*. 36.39 describes all the types of *aetite*; Bromehead, 1947; Barb, 1950.

⁹⁰⁰ Ael. *NA*. 1.35; Dioscor. 5.161; Plin. *HN*. 30.44.130; 36.39.151; Bonner, 1950: 2. All amulets were in some way connected to the supernatural and this seems no exception, although what supernatural power it is connecting to is never explained, Janowitz, 2001: 57; Luck, 1985: 219. According to Dioscor. 5.161, *aetites* were also apparently used to detect thieves when boiled with meat and, when ground up, good for epilepsy.

⁹⁰¹ Bromehead, 1947.

⁹⁰² Plin. *HN*. 10.4.12; 30.44.130; 36.39.149, this may have developed from the fact that some birds do decorate their nests.

⁹⁰³ Ael. *NA*. 1.35; Philostr. *VA*. 2.14.

⁹⁰⁴ The ‘pregnant-stone’ is mentioned in Theophr. *Lap*. 11.

⁹⁰⁵ Thompson, 1933: 886-887; Barb, 1950: 317.

⁹⁰⁶ She picks up on it from a casual remark in Thompson, 1933: 887, n.1; Barb, 1950: 317.

⁹⁰⁷ Thompson, 1933: 887, n.1.

⁹⁰⁸ *Myth of Etana*, II.LV; Dalley, 1989: 189, this story also includes the oldest reference to the eagle carrying someone (Etana) to heaven, *Myth of Etana*, III, which was mentioned above, p.27 & 47, and will be discussed below, p.147.

⁹⁰⁹ Dalley, 1989: 189.

⁹¹⁰ Theophr. *Lap*. 11.

Aristotle mention it. This could mean that the association did not exist in these earlier sources and was, in fact, a provincial influence on Roman culture from the eastern provinces.⁹¹¹

This stone is the first example of the eagle being specifically connected to women and possibly gives us an insight into a female perspective on its symbolism. The administering of amulets and the care of pregnant women seems to have been the domain of midwives and older women in this period,⁹¹² and thus this stone, its effects, and proper administration would have been mostly controlled by women. However, this is not to say the knowledge and associations of the amulet and concerns of miscarriage were ignored by men; Pliny is a clear indication of the opposite. Thus, the idea that the eagle was somehow connected to pregnancy, and, more importantly, the protection of their unborn children, would have been a source of strong symbolism for Roman women who were wearing/had worn this amulet. Additionally, these stones were not rare and therefore available to a large proportion of the population.⁹¹³ Thus, not only would they have been worn by the Roman elite, but the lower classes as well. This is also indicated by the fact that these stones are still sought after by modern women in rural southern Italy.⁹¹⁴

The eagle was also being used for other medical treatments, at least according to Pliny. In his descriptions of eye remedies he notes that the gall of the eagle, with Attic honey, can be used as an ointment for film on the eyes, dimness of vision, cataracts, and to restore the clearness of vision.⁹¹⁵ This later ailment can also be cured by the brain of the eagle, again with honey.⁹¹⁶ These brains can also help cure jaundice,⁹¹⁷ and the feet of an eagle, attached to the corresponding human foot, will help cure pain.⁹¹⁸ There may be some explanation as to why the eagle was being attached to these specific ailments. One of the main characteristics about the eagle often mentioned in the sources are its claws⁹¹⁹ and it may be this that led to them being used to cure leg pains. Its connection to jaundice seems mostly inexplicable, although the connection of the eagle to the adjective *aquilus* ‘dark-coloured’, seen in Plautus,⁹²⁰ could provide some kind of connection, although this is quite a leap. However, the eagle’s renowned eyesight may be why it was being included in the remedies for eye diseases.⁹²¹ Despite these possible connections, though, Roman folk medicine does not always rely on

⁹¹¹ However, these stones have been found in some Early Bronze Age graves in Britain, way before the Roman influence, but whether these stones have the same significance in this context cannot be determined; Grinsell, 1953: 275.

⁹¹² Diod. Sic. 5.64.6-7; 31.43.1; Plut. *Mor.* 178D; Dickie, 2001: 108-109; Cruse, 2004: 58.

⁹¹³ Grinsell’s implication that they are readily available to modern Italian peasant women seems to indicate the relative obtainability of these stones, Grinsell, 1953: 275.

⁹¹⁴ Grinsell, 1953: 275.

⁹¹⁵ Plin. *HN.* 29.38.118; 123.

⁹¹⁶ Plin. *HN.* 29.38.118.

⁹¹⁷ Plin. *HN.* 30.28.94.

⁹¹⁸ Plin. *HN.* 30.18.54.

⁹¹⁹ Aesch. *Aga.* 105-120; Ar. *Eq.* 197-213; German. *Arat.* 688; Ov. *Met.* 12.536-579; Plaut. *Ps.* 847-853; Vir. *Aen.* 11.725; 12.238.

⁹²⁰ Plaut. *Poen.* 1112.

⁹²¹ Arist. *His. An.* 620a; Hom. *Il.* 17.670-680; Philo, *Abra.* 266; *Post.* 161; Plin. *HN.* 10.88.

logical connections as its basis. In fact, the variety of other animals used in eye remedies other than the eagle attests to the randomness of the connection between disease and remedy.⁹²² However, Pliny, when talking about the eagle as a remedy, actually points specifically to the ‘fact’ that eagle’s test their young for good eyesight.⁹²³ This seems to indicate that he, at least, is making the connection between the eagle’s reputation for keen eyesight to the fact it is being included in these remedies.

But were these remedies, and parts of the eagle, actually used in medical treatments? And were they part of folk medicine or ‘scientific’ medical treatment? It seems to be a cross between the two. This section of Pliny seems to mix the traditional Roman folk remedies with those prescribed by Greek doctors and so it is impossible to distinguish which tradition each remedy originates from.⁹²⁴ However, in the case of eye remedies there is a rare opportunity to find out whether it is likely that these materials were being used to treat these ailments. The archaeological record has collected many items known as ‘oculist stamps’ which were used to stamp *collyria*, waxy sticks of dried eye salves sold by oculists, with the name of the doctor, the type of salve, and the ailment it was for.⁹²⁵ Occasionally also, the *collyria* themselves have been recovered. From examining these sources, it seems that dimness of vision was a common ailment.⁹²⁶ Additionally, one oculist stamp makes reference to a salve made from gall,⁹²⁷ one of the parts of the eagle used for this treatment. Additionally, chemical analyses of the *collyria* found have shown that they contain some traces of biological elements⁹²⁸ and, although far from conclusive, these points allow for the possibility that parts of the eagle were being used as eye remedies. In fact, due to the technique of ancient medicine, including as many ingredients as possible to see if anything would help,⁹²⁹ it seems likely that, due to the huge variety of different oculist remedies, some may have included eagle parts.

This leads to two further conclusions. Firstly, although the ingredients mentioned in Pliny’s remedies, including the eagle, seem exotic and possibly unavailable to the vast majority of the population, the frequency of oculist stamps (over 300 have been found)⁹³⁰ and the fact that one stamp would have stamped many *collyria* would point to their use by a large number of people. Thus, these remedies, and possibly the eagle parts, would have been used by far more people than simply the Roman elite. Additionally, the majority of these oculist stamps have been found in Gaul and

⁹²² Plin. *HN*. 29.38 lists many other types of birds used for the same purpose, such as: chickens, chicks, doves, ducks, geese, hawks, kites, owls, partridges, pigeons, storks, swallows, and vultures, as well as a multitude of non-avian animals, such as: beetles, dogs, lizards, mice, sheep, snails, snakes, spiders, and weasels.

⁹²³ Plin. *HN*. 29.38.123.

⁹²⁴ Scarborough, 1969: 19; Nutton, 2004: 166

⁹²⁵ Jackson, 1996: 2240; Cruse, 2004: 66.

⁹²⁶ Clear sight: *RIB*, 2446.2(d); 2446.7; 2446.10(a); (d); 2446.11(a); 2446.13; 2446.20(a); 2446.29; 2446.30; Dimness: *RIB*, 2446.2(b); 2446.20(b); Celsus, *Med.* 7.7.14, also mentions that for cataracts an operation was the last resort, presumably indicating that many of these remedies would be tried first; Cruse, 2004: 165.

⁹²⁷ *RIB*, 2446.21. Gall seems to be a common remedy, Jones, 1957: 463.

⁹²⁸ Boyer, et al, 1990; Jackson, 1996: 2242-2243.

⁹²⁹ Celsus, *Med.* 6.6.2; Jackson, 1996: 2239-2240.

⁹³⁰ Cruse, 2004: 166.

Britain,⁹³¹ so these conclusions about them are confined to this geographical area as the treatment of eye ailments in the wider empire cannot be as well documented. This makes the connection between the remedies in Pliny and the *collyria* slightly less secure, since he was from Italy. Secondly, the fact that Pliny records the use of eagle parts as remedies would imply that the eagle would have to be killed to obtain what was necessary. While the agricultural texts of this period state how to protect livestock against eagles, this is the first hint at the killing of the eagle. This means that despite its religious significance, killing the actual eagle does not seem to be sacrilege in any way and it was just as disposable as other animals in the ancient world.

5.3: Concepts and Characteristics

Most of the characteristics that the eagle is known for in the previous centuries are repeated again in the first century A.D. sources. Its keen eyesight,⁹³² speed,⁹³³ strength,⁹³⁴ flight,⁹³⁵ claws,⁹³⁶ and harsh cry⁹³⁷ are all noted and used in poetry, natural history, and philosophy in this century. Additionally, the first century A.D. sources also continue to attach all these characteristics to the holistic idea of the eagle as a bird of prey and often within a hunting context.⁹³⁸ The eagle is also seen representing many of the same concepts as it did in previous centuries. Its connection to martial valour seen in Homer continues in the poets of this century⁹³⁹ as does its symbolic connection to the idea of superiority in general.⁹⁴⁰ The eagle also retains its connection to rapaciousness and criminality, seen in Aristophanes and Plautus and now even present in the Christian writer Barnabas.⁹⁴¹ The connection to old age seen in Terence also continues, as it appears in Ovid.⁹⁴² Although the majority of these concepts and characteristics are continuations, one story in Pliny relating a tamed eagle alighting itself on the funeral pyre of its owner seems to indicate the animal is also connected with the idea of loyalty, at least in some capacity.⁹⁴³ Further, the sources from the previous centuries that originally provided these concepts and characteristics have not ceased to exist in this century, Homer was still being read and Plautus (presumably) performed, and so were still disseminating the same

⁹³¹ Jackson, 1996: 2241.

⁹³² Hor. *Ars P.* 1.3; Philo. *Post.* 161; Plin. *HN.* 10.88; Sen. *Ben.* 2.29.1. See above for the eagle's concepts and characteristics in the previous centuries, p.27, 54, and 77.

⁹³³ Phaedr. *Fab.* 1.9.

⁹³⁴ Philo. *Abr.* 266; Phaedr. *Fab.* 3.18.

⁹³⁵ Muson. 9.2.

⁹³⁶ Vir. *Aen.* 9.564; 11.751-756; Ov. *Met.* 4.271-372.

⁹³⁷ Sen. *Ep.* 76.9; Strabo, .317.2.4.

⁹³⁸ These ideas begin with Homer, see above, p.27, and is still present in Phaedr. *Fab.* 1.9; Ov. *Ars Am.* 1.115; 3.419-422; *Met.* 1.504-507; 4.271-372; 6.511-518; Sil. *Pun.* 5.279-284; Vir. *Aen.* 9.564; 11.751-756; *Dirae* 1-7.

⁹³⁹ Hor. *Carm.* 4.4; Manil. 5.486-503; Sil. *Pun.* 5.279-284; Vir. *Aen.* 11.751-756; *Dirae* 1-7.

⁹⁴⁰ Hor. *Carm.* 4.4; Phaedr. *Fab.* 1.28; 2.4.

⁹⁴¹ Barn. *Ep.* 10; Manil. 5.486-503; Ov. *Met.* 6.511-518.

⁹⁴² Ov. *Met.* 6.717-721.

⁹⁴³ Plin. *HN.* 10.6.

symbolic connections I have previously examined. Despite this overall picture of continuation in the conceptual symbolism of the eagle there are two authors in this period who introduce innovative ideas and methods of employing the eagle as a symbol. Both Ovid and Phaedrus either twist or re-invent the conceptual symbolism of the eagle and thus must be dealt with in more detail.

5.3.1: Ovid and the Amatory Eagle

One of the constant features of not just Ovidian but all amatory poetry of this period is the constant use of the extended comparison to the soldier and military life, usually dubbed ‘*militia amoris*’.⁹⁴⁴ Within this comparison the role of the military *signa* are included from the very beginning. Tibullus uses them to recall the heat of battle and to describe deserters from the army of Amor,⁹⁴⁵ both of which seem extensions of the idea of Amor as a general who thus has his own standards.⁹⁴⁶ Ovid also continues the idea within his own poetry.⁹⁴⁷ However, these references are too vague to be applied specifically to the *aquila* standard.

Ovid, though, also uses the idea of the standard-bearer (*signifer*) of Amor. In Ovid the standard-bearer is either the representative of Cupid in his amatory campaigns or the representative of his enemy/lover.⁹⁴⁸ Additionally, Horace implies the standard-bearer of Amor, although he does not use the word *signifer*, when he suggests to his *puella* that Paullus Maximus would be better suited to carry her standards.⁹⁴⁹ The concept of the *signifer* is also more closely linked to the *aquila* standard, as this was the most notable of the legionary standards. In fact, when Horace says that Paullus should carry ‘the banner of your army’⁹⁵⁰ this seems to immediately conjure up the *aquila*, since it was the banner of the entire legion. This is not the first time that the standard-bearer has been used to represent something outside of its original context. Previously, Cicero had been using the standard-bearer in his works to identify leadership of a certain group or of an ideal.⁹⁵¹ But in Ovid we see a slight change in the nature of what the standard-bearer represents. Instead of symbolising leadership in a certain cause the standard-bearer is now relegated to being a representative (or spokesperson) of a higher power, either Cupid or the enemy/lover. This idea could possibly mean that the conceptual idea of a standard-bearer had changed in the intervening period between Cicero and Ovid. It must also be remembered that there is always an inherent connection between the *aquila* and actual eagles, since the standard is topped with the image of an eagle. This was certainly present in Ovid’s imagination, as

⁹⁴⁴ Murgatroyd, 1975; Booth, 2009.

⁹⁴⁵ Tib. 1.1.75; 2.6.5, also seen in Verg. *Aen.* 7.628; Maltby, 2002: 149; 468.

⁹⁴⁶ Murgatroyd, 1975: 68.

⁹⁴⁷ Ov. *Am.* 1.11.11-12; 3.15.15; *Ars Am.* 2.234; *Fast.* 4.7; *Rem. Am.* 4; Murgatroyd, 1075: 68 n.23.

⁹⁴⁸ Ov. *Am.* 2.3.10; 2.9A.1-6; 2.12.11-16; 25-28; Booth, 1991: 53-54; 64-65; 113.

⁹⁴⁹ Hor. *Carm.* 4.1.9-16; Quinn, 1980: 299.

⁹⁵⁰ Hor. *Carm.* 4.1.16.

⁹⁵¹ See above, p.98.

later references to the eagle as a bird linked to the recovery of the Parthian standards point to such a connection.⁹⁵²

There could be some explanation to this development in the contemporary events of Ovid. During the Augustan period the military began to run not under the control of individual generals but instead always under the auspices of Augustus.⁹⁵³ Essentially, the legions were now always under the guidance and representatives of a higher power, the *princeps*, just as the standard-bearers in Ovid poetry are now representatives of a higher power. This shift in the conceptual idea of a standard-bearer may reflect this new change in the ideas of military command. However, it may be no indication of change at all. Ovid may just be showing us an alternative approach to the standard-bearer that Cicero did not choose to adhere to; the authors' prerogative may have impacted on their interpretation of the position of a standard-bearer rather than the historical context.

Ovid is also the only poet to include the eagle in his erotic works, not just the *Amores* and *Ars Amatoria*, but also the erotically-infused epic *Metamorphoses*. One of the more significant references to the eagle in his erotic poetry comes at *Ars* 1.117: here the *praeceptor amoris* is recounting the myth of the Rape of the Sabine Women, and at the moment that Romulus and his men spring from the theatre and seize the women Ovid uses the double simile of, 'as doves...flee from the eagles, and the weaning lamb when it spies the wolf, so fled they helter-skelter in panic from the men'.⁹⁵⁴ While Richlin believes that Ovid (and the reader) are taking perverse pleasure in watching the rape,⁹⁵⁵ and Sharrock believes that the Sabine myth, along with the others myths in the book (Pasiphae, Ariadne, and Achilles), promote the 'romanticisation' of force,⁹⁵⁶ I follow Labate's interpretation of the myth.⁹⁵⁷ He states that Ovid, rather than providing a mythological exemplum for lovers to follow, is instead providing a counter-example of how not to behave when wooing a woman.⁹⁵⁸ He does this by showing the focus on the barbarian qualities of Romulus and his men and their lustful nature, i.e. *amor* without *ars*.⁹⁵⁹ *Ars* 1.109-110 shows the men lustfully picking out their desired woman (like the youths that the *praeceptor* is teaching). *Ars* 1.115-116 describes an ambush by barbarian-like warriors that have hands 'full of desire' (116) and at 1.129 when a Roman and a Sabine woman speak it is reminiscent of an elegiac lover's address to his mistress, especially when compared to *Am.* 3.6.57.⁹⁶⁰

⁹⁵² See below, p.140.

⁹⁵³ *RG* 4; Suet. *Aug.* 21.1.

⁹⁵⁴ *Ov. Ars Am.* 1.117.

⁹⁵⁵ Richlin, 1992: 166, this is based on Ovid using the same narratorial voice he does in *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*.

⁹⁵⁶ Sharrock, 2006: 27.

⁹⁵⁷ Labate, 2006; Gibson, 2009: 91.

⁹⁵⁸ Labate, 2006.

⁹⁵⁹ A *scaena sine arte*, as Labate, 2006: 197 refers to it. Davis, 2006: 103-104 disagrees with the interpretation of the criminality of Romulus and his men.

⁹⁶⁰ Eidinow, 1993:413; Watson, 2002: 153; Armstrong, 2005: 129-130; Labate, 2006: 199-200; 209-212; Rimell, 2006: 13.

All these qualities, as well as the possible implication here of actual sexual assault from their hands ‘full of desire’ and other instances,⁹⁶¹ are missing from the other re-tellings of this particular myth.⁹⁶²

Thus, the eagle simile is being used to highlight the predatory and lustful capture of the Sabines by the Romans in this instance. This is quite a novel use of the eagle within poetry and simile, as usually, in epic and other instances, when a hero is compared with the eagle the association is always positive, i.e. heroic and martial.⁹⁶³ In fact, this pair of similes is a common feature and seems to be based on *Il.* 22.139-40 (where it is a hawk rather than an eagle) and Theocritus 11.24 (which only contains the wolf half of the double simile).⁹⁶⁴ In both of these cases, though, the association is heroic and un-barbaric. However, although these similes are almost always heroic, here Ovid has placed them in an obviously barbaric and rapacious context and thus the symbolism of the eagle in this particular simile also becomes barbarous and rapacious. Ovid may be playing with this ambiguity of the eagle, turning its traditional symbolism on its head in order to reflect the moral ambiguity of the Sabine myth through its alternative symbolism. Additionally, it seems quite likely that these particular similes may have been chosen to serve a subversive purpose. The eagle and the wolf were quite prominent images in the Augustan regime,⁹⁶⁵ particularly in 2 B.C., when not only were the recaptured Parthian standards placed in the temple of Mars Ultor,⁹⁶⁶ but Gaius Caesar was set to return to Parthia with an expedition in the next year,⁹⁶⁷ hence his appearance next to an *aquila* on coinage of the era.⁹⁶⁸ Since the *Ars* was published in c.2-1 B.C.⁹⁶⁹ it seems too coincidental that Ovid would choose these two prominent images of the Augustan regime, within a story based around the prominent Augustan figure of Romulus,⁹⁷⁰ simply to echo the previous epic heroic similes.⁹⁷¹ Not only

⁹⁶¹ *Ov. Ars Am.* 1.109-110; 115-116; 129; Armstrong, 2005: 129-130 and Davis, 2006: 104 both agree with this interpretation; Richlin, 1992: 168, while agreeing, also believes Ovid is not looking on the actions of Romulus negatively but instead condones the rape, based on his descriptions of the Sabines fear as attractive (*Ov. Ars Am.* 1.121-6). However, Watson, 2002: 153-154 disagrees with this and sees the Sabine’s resistance as ‘half-hearted’, but he seems to be the only detractor.

⁹⁶² Dio. Hal. 2.30; Liv. 1.9-13; Watson, 2002: 152; Armstrong, 2005: 129. The story provokes slight embarrassment in Cic. *Rep.* 2.12; Labate, 2006: 209. Vandiver, 1999 argues, convincingly, that sexual assault is not part of Livy’s version of this myth; Watson, 2002: 154.

⁹⁶³ Hom. *Il.* 15.690-696; 17.670-680; 21.250-255; 22.307-311; *Od.* 24.535-550; Theoc. *Id.* 13.24; Verg. *Aen.* 1.34.

⁹⁶⁴ Hollis, 1977: 55; Richlin, 1992: 167; Eidinow, 1993: 413; Davis, 2006: 104.

⁹⁶⁵ Eidinow, 1993: 413-414.

⁹⁶⁶ *RG* 29; Suet. *Aug.* 29.2; Eidinow, 1993: 414. Discussed below, p.141.

⁹⁶⁷ *Ov. Ars Am.* 1.179-81; Eidinow, 1993: 414

⁹⁶⁸ This coin and Augustus’ use of the eagle are discussed below, p.156.

⁹⁶⁹ This is dated via the reference to the naumachy (*Ov. Ars Am.* 1.171) in dedication of the Temple of Mars Ultor as having taken place recently and by the propempticon for Gaius, Eidinow, 1993: 415.

⁹⁷⁰ The connection between the two is hinted at by *Ars Am.* 1.131-32; Eidinow, 1993: 413; Armstrong, 2005: 130-131; Labate, 2006: 199-200; 209-212, this connection may also refer to Augustus’ reputation as a womaniser, Suet. *Aug.* 69; Eidinow, 1993: 413.

⁹⁷¹ Eidinow, 1993: 415-416.

is Ovid claiming Romulus and the eagle to be uncouth barbarians, but he is also, intentionally or unintentionally,⁹⁷² shifting some of this symbolism to the Augustan regime.⁹⁷³

The barbarous and rapacious associations of the eagle seen in this passage is continued in Ovid's other works.⁹⁷⁴ Apollo, in his lustful pursuit of Daphne, is also compared to an eagle in pursuit of its prey.⁹⁷⁵ Later in the *Metamorphoses* when Tereus has captured Philomela he gloats as an eagle over its prey,⁹⁷⁶ in this case the bird-imagery is carried through into the actual act of sexual assault.⁹⁷⁷ In this second example the eagle is once again used to characterise a barbarian,⁹⁷⁸ just as Ovid's barbarous Romulus in the *Ars*. These references also tie into the few other references in Ovid to the eagle as Jupiter's bird, as each of these references implies the connection between the eagle and the rape of Ganymede.⁹⁷⁹ In fact, in the case of the Tereus simile he is compared to Jupiter's bird rather than directly to the eagle,⁹⁸⁰ again to emphasise the connection to the rape of Ganymede. Combined, these references, with their either implicit or explicit reference to sexual assault, lead to the interpretation of the eagle as symbolic of a rapist. Ovid has turned the traditional heroic and Roman eagle simile into a barbarous, uncontrolled rapist.⁹⁸¹

However, this symbolic interpretation of the eagle by Ovid is not innovative. This idea of the eagle as rapist is certainly linked to other concepts that have been applied to the eagle prior to this point. Not only does its inclusion in the Ganymede myth lend credence to this interpretation but, as already explained above, the eagle has been linked to rapaciousness and criminality from Aristophanes, through Plautus, and now in Ovid.⁹⁸² In fact, in Aristophanes and Plautus the eagle is connected directly to the act of thievery, and it may even be this concept which Ovid draws his rapist interpretation from.⁹⁸³ Ovid uses this alternative symbolic association of the eagle, i.e. as a stealer of

⁹⁷² The Augustan or anti-Augustan nature of Ovid is a problem much discussed. However, whether or not the symbolism is intentional is irrelevant, what matters is that the simile can be read in this manner; Kennedy, 1992; Armstrong, 2005: 138-139; Booth, 2009: 71. It may also be an example of *dissimulatio* where the surface statement seems innocent, but all will recognise its underlying meaning; Cic. *Orat.* 2.156.

⁹⁷³ This twisting and re-interpretation of myth is also a source of humour in Ovid's poetry, Watson, 2002: 152.

⁹⁷⁴ Many other elements of Ovid's erotic poetry are seen in his other works, Griffin, 1977; Jacobsen, 1984: 45.

⁹⁷⁵ Ov. *Met.* 1.504-507. The link between *Ars Am.* 1.117 and *Met.* 1.504-507 is pointed out by Hollis, 1977: 55.

⁹⁷⁶ Ov. *Met.* 6.511-518; Richlin, 1992: 163; Segal, 1994: 261.

⁹⁷⁷ Ov. *Met.* 6.527-29; 559; Richlin, 1992: 163. Philomela is also compared to a snake, the traditional captive of the eagle, Ov. *Met.* 6.522-530; Richlin, 1992: 163-164. The bird-imagery is also a precursor to the actual metamorphosis of Tereus, Philomela, and Procne, Ov. *Met.* 6.666-674; Segal, 1994: 268; Kaufhold, 1997: 71. The Apollo passage and the Tereus passage have been compared and the parallels pointed out numerous times, Jacobsen, 1984; Rimell, 2006: 13 n.36.

⁹⁷⁸ Ov. *Met.* 6.412-424; 515; 533; Anderson, 1972: 219; Segal, 1994: 259; 268; Hardie, 2002: 42; Sharrock, 2002a: 101.

⁹⁷⁹ Ov. *Am.* 1.10.1-8; *Met.* 10.143-219; 12.536-579; 15.335-449; or Asteria in Ov. *Met.* 6.108-109; Anderson, 1972: 165; Barsby, 1973: 116-117.

⁹⁸⁰ Ov. *Met.* 6.511-518; Anderson, 1972: 219.

⁹⁸¹ Curran, 1984 highlights the negativity with which Ovid presents these rapes. Although, the sadistic nature of some of Roman culture (gladiatorial games etc.) would suggest that there was no sympathy here, Segal, 1994: 257.

⁹⁸² Ar. *Eq.* 197-213; Plaut. *Ps.* 847-853. See above p.24 & 55.

⁹⁸³ Ar. *Eq.* 197-213; Plaut. *Ps.* 847-853.

property, and adapts it to the image of the rapist, whose main crime is also the stealing of property, i.e. the woman.⁹⁸⁴ While this symbolic interpretation of the eagle is not new, its use in amatory and epic poetry in such a manner is. Ovid skews the traditional eagle simile and instead creates a darker conceptual symbolism for the eagle.⁹⁸⁵

But it is not only barbarous rapists who are compared to eagles in Ovid's poetry. At *Ars* 3.419-422 he is giving advice for women to seek out crowds because: 'the wolf draws nigh to many sheep that she may prey on one, and the eagle of Jove swoops down on many birds. Let the beautiful woman also offer herself to the people to be seen; out of many there will be one, perchance, whom she may attract.'⁹⁸⁶ The passage is an interesting one, as there is debate over exactly who the women are meant to be in the simile. Armstrong believes that Ovid is comparing the women to the sheep and birds, the natural assumption as women are usually the prey rather than the predator.⁹⁸⁷ At the beginning of the passage the *praeceptor amoris* is offering the advice that crowds (*turba*) are useful to women,⁹⁸⁸ thus encouraging the view that they are the sheep or birds in the simile.

However, while most of the genders of the animals in the simile are undefined, Ovid specifically chose to use the feminine *lupa* to describe the wolf.⁹⁸⁹ While it fits the meter, this is hardly a reason for the choice, as another simile with a masculine word would have made just as much sense. Thus, choosing the feminine *lupa* must be deliberate. Gibson's alternative interpretation of the passage may give an explanation for this choice. He posits that the women are actually the eagle and the wolf in the passage. Thus, crowds are useful to the woman to pick and choose one man out of many at which to direct her attentions. If this interpretation is taken, not only is it the first time that a woman has been directly compared to an eagle, it also seems that the *praeceptor amoris* is encouraging the women to take an active, and predatory, role in courtship.⁹⁹⁰ Again, if true, this seems to be another subversive comment against Augustan culture, specifically the division of women in the *lex Julia* into either respectable matrons or prostitutes, by encouraging matronly women to actively participate like prostitutes.⁹⁹¹ Even if Gibson's interpretation is not correct, the feminine *lupa* slightly alters and confuses Armstrong's interpretation. While the *praeceptor amoris* might be encouraging women to go out in crowds so they can be preyed on, the similes' altered gender implies that they are

⁹⁸⁴ Gai. *Inst.* 1.48; Curran, 1984: 279.

⁹⁸⁵ It must be noted that there are a couple of instances in *Metamorphoses* where the eagle is not barbarous or rapacious, at *Met.* 7.350-403 and 12.536-579, Periphas and Periclymenus (respectively) transform into eagles. However, these eagles are part of their myths and the heroes themselves are not directly compared to eagles. Additionally, this darker symbolism leads, subversively, to Jupiter.

⁹⁸⁶ *Ov. Ars Am.* 3.419-422; Armstrong, 2005: 88.

⁹⁸⁷ Armstrong, 2005: 88.

⁹⁸⁸ *Ov. Ars Am.* 3.417.

⁹⁸⁹ *Ov. Ars Am.* 3.419.

⁹⁹⁰ Gibson, 2003: 271. It is the same type of advice, that of aggressive passivity, that Ovid gives to men in Books 1 and 2; 1.140; 495-6; 199; 503; 2.197-202; Rimell, 2006: 77; 80-81. This inversion also occurs in other elegists, Hallet, 1973: 109.

⁹⁹¹ Little, 1982: 330-331; Gibson, 2006; 2009: 96.

also taking the predatory role. They are actively seeking out men who they wish to prey on them, a kind of passive predation.

Both interpretations seem equally likely, with the reviewers of Armstrong and Gibson remaining positive about both their analyses of Ovidian texts.⁹⁹² But perhaps this confused interpretation is what Ovid was aiming for in the passage. His use of words of indistinguishable gender for all the animals (*ovis*, *ales*, and *avis*), except the wolf, points towards a confusion of the gender roles in the advice. Both Armstrong's and Gibson's interpretations create an altered or confused gender role for women. But this ambiguity over what role women should take, predator or prey, or more likely, passive predation, and the distinction between reputable and disreputable women, is inherent within Book 3 of the *Ars Amatoria*.⁹⁹³

However, the passage may be even more complicated than it first appears. While the wolf appears a number of times in the *Ars*⁹⁹⁴ this is the only other time that the eagle is mentioned. The fact that it is paired once again with the wolf and the similes are quite similar must mean that Ovid would like the reader to attach this comparison to the previous pair of similes at *Ars* 1.117.⁹⁹⁵ This would also imply that, despite the encouragement of the *praeceptor amoris*, the women who do act in this manner are being compared to the lustful barbarian Romulus and his men. Thus, these barbarous aspects may also transfer to the women. Additionally, since Ovid includes the feminine *lupa*, there is another association with an un-matronly interpretation of these women (i.e. that they are prostitutes).⁹⁹⁶ Interestingly, there is an erotic *spintria* (a metal token given to prostitutes) with an eagle on it (Fig 5.1) which provides some circumstantial evidence for its erotic connections.⁹⁹⁷ Once again, while on the surface the similes seem heroic and encouraging, the underlining symbolism highlights the barbarous and uncivilised interpretation. In this interpretation, instead of arguing against the *lex Julia*, Ovid may be subtly reinforcing the negative associations of promiscuous women.⁹⁹⁸ However, he may again be playing with the strict divisions of women in the *lex Julia* into prostitutes and non-prostitutes by providing another simile which straddles the line between reputable and disreputable.⁹⁹⁹

Interestingly, the eagle is seen again in association with a woman and also in the context of role-reversal. In the *Metamorphoses* Book 4 when Salmacis lustfully throws herself onto Hermaphroditus she is compared to the snake attacking the eagle, entwining itself around the bird and

⁹⁹² Volk, 2004; Holzberg, 2005; Holzberg, 2007.

⁹⁹³ McGinn, 1998; Barchiesi, 2006: 119; Gibson, 2006; 2009: 98

⁹⁹⁴ *Ov. Ars Am.* 1.118; 2.8; 148; 364; Barchiesi, 2006: 110-111.

⁹⁹⁵ Gibson, 2003: 271 makes the link but does not comment on it.

⁹⁹⁶ *Catull.* 99.10; *Cic. Mil.* 21.55; *Juv.* 3.66; *Liv.* 1.4.7; *Mart.* 1.34.8; *OLD* 1051; Barchiesi, 2006: 110-111. The actual social strata which the women of the *Ars* occupy is indefinable, this seems to be another instance of this vagueness; Rudd, 1976: 3-4; Little, 1982; Gibson, 2009: 95-96.

⁹⁹⁷ Simonetta & Riva, 1981: Scene 15/VII.

⁹⁹⁸ Little, 1982: 330-331. Ovid even professes that he is 'not encouraging promiscuous conduct' at *Ars Am.* 3.97.

⁹⁹⁹ McGinn, 1998; Barchiesi, 2006: 119; Gibson, 2006; 2009: 98.

holding it down.¹⁰⁰⁰ Once again this is an Ovidian inversion of traditional eagle symbolism/simile. He is using the common Homeric image of the eagle and the snake¹⁰⁰¹ and subverting it by reversing the power struggle and having the snake attack the eagle.¹⁰⁰² This seems to be a reflection of the scene itself, as the woman, instead of the man, is now taking the powerful and predatory role.¹⁰⁰³ Additionally, Ovid is playing with his own established symbolism as, once again, the eagle is included within a rape scene but this time it is on the receiving end of the incident.

Throughout his works Ovid plays with the traditional and standard interpretations of the eagle within poetry and Roman culture. Although he draws on common ideas of the eagle he applies them in novel and interesting ways in order to twist the reader's ideas of the eagle and draw them into new symbolic interpretations. Ovid's eagle, rather than being the symbol of predatory Homeric heroes fighting their enemy, instead becomes a barbarous rapist in search of lustful sexual conquest. This is a symbolism he then transfers to his other eagle similes, both of which involve women in some capacity, and complicates the argument on whether Ovid is or is not sympathetic to women.¹⁰⁰⁴ It must be pointed out, however, that this twist in the eagle's symbolism is confined to Ovid and his readers. Although, interestingly, the ideas of the eagle's rapaciousness is mostly seen in plays¹⁰⁰⁵ and in relation to lower classes so it may be the case that Ovid is transferring the symbolism recognisable to the lower classes into the traditional realm of the upper class, poetry (and specifically epic).

5.3.2: *Fables and Phaedrus*

Although Fables have been in existence since the Greek period I have chosen to deal with them here because this is when the first published work of fables appears in the Roman period, with Phaedrus' *Fabularum Libri*. What is interesting about Phaedrus' collection, though, is that he did not just collect together all known fables, but instead choose particular ones he wished to include and significantly altered some, while seemingly inventing others.¹⁰⁰⁶ Thus, it is worth examining the position that the eagle held in fables prior to Phaedrus' collection. Before listing these fables, it must be noted what exactly fables were used for prior to Phaedrus. Their most common function seems to be as exempla in rhetorical argument;¹⁰⁰⁷ one of the earliest known fables in Archilochus is used exactly for this purpose.¹⁰⁰⁸ The rhetorician uses the fable to drive home a particular point without

¹⁰⁰⁰ Ov. *Met.* 4.271-372.

¹⁰⁰¹ Hom. *Il.* 12.200-225.

¹⁰⁰² Anderson, 1997: 451.

¹⁰⁰³ Her gaze at Hermaphroditus (4.340-55) is comparable to Tereus' at Philomela, Richlin, 1992: 165. At the end of the episode, however, only Hermaphroditus remains (although metamorphosed) and thus the eagle is the victor at the end, Keith, 1999: 219-220.

¹⁰⁰⁴ The gendered dynamics of Ovid is another well discussed issue, Leach, 1964; Curran, 1984: 263; Myerowitz, 1985; Sharrock, 2002a; 2002b; Gibson, 2009.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Ar. *Eq.* 197-213; Plaut. *Ps.* 847-853.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Adrados, 2000: 124.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Adrados, 1999: 19.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Archil. *Epod.* 1; Arist. *Rh.* 2.20; Adrados, 1999: 19; 23.

using real life examples, thus, each Fable has a hidden moral or message within the story (sometimes directly expressed through an *epimythium*).¹⁰⁰⁹

The list below is of Fables involving the eagle that were known prior to Phaedrus or altered significantly by him in his *Fabularum*:

- ‘The Eagle and the Fox’ – An eagle devours the cubs of a fox and boasts about it. The fox then prays to Zeus for punishment of the eagle. Zeus obliges and allows his chicks to be set alight. The moral seems to be the divine punishment of the wicked (i.e. the eagle) and also the perils of boasting.¹⁰¹⁰
- ‘The Eagle, the Rook, and the Shepherd’ – A rook wants to imitate an eagle but becomes entangled in wool and is then eaten by the shepherd. The moral seems to be not attempting to contradict your nature.¹⁰¹¹
- ‘The Eagle and the Beetle’ – A hare begs the beetle for help against the eagle. Thus, the beetle flies to the eagle’s nest in Zeus’ arms and throws his ball of dung there. Zeus shifts in his sleep and breaks the eagle’s eggs. The theme is of the weak versus the strong (and the weak’s ingenuity) as well as not disregarding a small enemy.¹⁰¹²
- ‘The Tortoise and the Eagle’ – A tortoise wanted to fly and asked the eagle for help. The eagle takes the tortoise into the air then drops it on a rock, killing it. The moral is again not to attempt to contradict your nature.¹⁰¹³
- ‘The Eagle’ – An eagle gets an arrow fired at him and complains that his wonderful feathers caused him to be shot. The moral is suffering damage due to your nature.¹⁰¹⁴

The eagle also appears in a few other fables: ‘The Hares and the Foxes’;¹⁰¹⁵ ‘The Two Cocks and the Eagle’;¹⁰¹⁶ and ‘The Mouse and the Frog’¹⁰¹⁷ where it simply serves as the required natural predator of these animals and a representative of those stronger. If we examine what the eagle represents in all these fables there seem to be some common, and not unrecognisable, features to its representation. Not only is it always seen as stronger and superior, it is also seen as rapacious and criminal (with a connection to the divine).¹⁰¹⁸ All these concepts have already been present in previous sources, but it is within the context of fables that these concepts take on another aspect of symbolism. Since these

¹⁰⁰⁹ Adrados, 1999: 23.

¹⁰¹⁰ Archil. *Epod.* 1; Ar. *Av.* 651-653; Synt. 24; Adrados, 2003: 3-5. This story is similar to and may even be based on that of Etana and the eagle discussed below, p.136; Adrados, 1999: 305.

¹⁰¹¹ Synt. 9; Adrados, 2003: 5-6.

¹⁰¹² Ar. *V.* 1448; Pax. 123-130; *Vit. Aes.* 135-139; Adrados, 2003: 6-8.

¹⁰¹³ Val. Max. 9.12; Adrados, 2003: 325-326.

¹⁰¹⁴ Aesch. *Fr.* 139; Adrados, 2003: 339-341.

¹⁰¹⁵ Synt. 22; Adrados, 2003: 226-227.

¹⁰¹⁶ Synt. 7; Adrados, 2003: 332-333.

¹⁰¹⁷ *Vit. Aes.* 133; Adrados, 2003: 367-368.

¹⁰¹⁸ There seems to be a direct link between fables and similes, Adrados, 1999: 196. This superiority is also connected to other birds of prey in fable (i.e. the hawk) as far back as Hesiod; Hes. *Op.* 202-212.

fables exist as exemplum and allegory of society, the eagle then becomes a symbol for the type of person that embodies these concepts, i.e. the superior and sometimes rapacious upper classes.

Moving on to Phaedrus, we can examine the role of the fabulous eagle in a Roman context. A recent article by Champlin challenged the traditional dating of Phaedrus to the Tiberian period¹⁰¹⁹ and instead placed his work into the later Claudian period. While I agree with this interpretation, as the evidence he provides for both the *terminus post quem* and *terminus ante quem* seems solidly based in the texts,¹⁰²⁰ I do not agree with his re-interpretation of the author as a Roman of senatorial class instead of a Greek freedman.¹⁰²¹ It seems purely based on the fact that the author has intimate knowledge of Roman literature and therefore must be Roman; however, a Greek freedman living in Rome would just as easily have access to this knowledge. This question impacts on the interpretation of the eagle within Phaedrus' fables, as it is likely that his intention for writing the *Fabularum* was in order to make comments on contemporary society under the guise of the fable.¹⁰²² While the date of this commentary does not impact the conclusion too much, whether he was free Roman or a Greek freedman might.

Below is the list of either altered fables or new fables, including the eagle, that are within Phaedrus' corpus:¹⁰²³

- 'The Eagle and the Fox' – Phaedrus' version follows essentially the same plot except without any divine intervention. Instead the fox takes its own revenge on the eagle's cubs.¹⁰²⁴
- 'The Eagle, the Carrion Crow, and the Tortoise' – This tale is similar to the eagle and the tortoise, but the tortoise is not an active participant. Instead, the crow advises the eagle on how to get into the tortoise's shell by dropping it on a rock. This completely alters the theme to that of making good allies (i.e. the crow) that can turn the strong (i.e. the tortoise) into the weak.¹⁰²⁵
- 'The Eagle, the Cat, and the Boar' – This story is a Phaedrian addition and tells of a cat that sows distrust between the eagle and the boar so both are too afraid to leave their home and then starve. The theme is of the wicked (i.e. the cat) introducing discord among allies.¹⁰²⁶

¹⁰¹⁹ Adrados, 1999: 122; Champlin, 2005.

¹⁰²⁰ The *terminus post quem* is that at Sen. *Polyb.* 8.3 (written c.41-49) he suggests that Polybius, the emperor's freedman, take up writing fables, the presumption being no-one had thus far; Champlin, 2005: 101. The *terminus ante quem* is in Mart. 1.5 where a jurist, Cassius Longinus (c.65) is known to call an unequal partnership a 'leonine partnership' taking the metaphor from a Phaedrian fable; Champlin, 2005: 102.

¹⁰²¹ Champlin, 2005: 102-115.

¹⁰²² Adrados, 2000: 121.

¹⁰²³ Adrados, 2000: 124.

¹⁰²⁴ Phaedr. 1.28; Adrados, 2003: 5-6.

¹⁰²⁵ Phaedr. 2.6; Adrados, 2003: 325-326.

¹⁰²⁶ Phaedr. 2.4; Adrados, 2003: 406.

The eagle also acts as the required predator in another of the purely Phaedrian fables ('The Sparrow advisor to the Hare').¹⁰²⁷

Phaedrus' version of the eagle, sculpted not only through his additions to fables but also through the fables he chooses to leave out of the corpus,¹⁰²⁸ produces a slightly altered picture to that seen in the previously known fables. Gone is most of its wickedness/rapaciousness, but its superiority remains. It is also interesting that many of its stories include 'advisors'. While Phaedrus' fables in general present a picture of the abuse of power, the strong versus the weak, and punishment,¹⁰²⁹ it is unusual that the eagle (usually included as a powerful/wicked character) is not included or used for these themes more. It may be that the contemporary symbolism of the eagle had an impact on Phaedrus' symbolic use of the eagle, and since he may have been aiming at some sort of political as well as social commentary this seems likely.¹⁰³⁰ By the Claudian period the eagle has become a strong symbol in imperial iconography,¹⁰³¹ often connected directly to the emperor. This means that those reading the fables could not help but associate the two together. This interpretation of the eagle representing imperial authority in the fables may be validated by the morals of two of the stories, that of having good advisors and avoiding bad ones¹⁰³² (i.e. the crow and cat respectively). Additionally, Phaedrus is usually considered to be disapproving of monarchy, since he states that the original purpose of Fables were for Aesop to speak out against the tyrant Pisistratus,¹⁰³³ hence Phaedrus is following in this tradition. Despite this apparent disapproval Phaedrus' eagle comes across as a complicated superior figure that is occasionally wicked and must be cautious of advice. Instead of being generally disapproving of monarchy he may just disapprove of a certain type of monarch; the tyrant that takes bad advice.

Lastly, one other element missing from Phaedrus' version of the eagle is that of those attempting to beat their nature by being like an eagle. This is mildly confusing as Phaedrus is usually seen as encouraging acceptance of the social order, despite his disapproval of it,¹⁰³⁴ and so including fables that teach the lesson to not go against your nature would surely fit this world view. However, by not including them he seems to avoid stating his opinion either way.¹⁰³⁵

In conclusion, what we see in the fables and in Phaedrus in particular, is an extension of the idea of the eagle as a superior animal to the extent that it becomes an allegory for the upper classes,

¹⁰²⁷ Phaedr. 1.9; Adrados, 2003: 540-541.

¹⁰²⁸ Adrados, 2000: 167.

¹⁰²⁹ Adrados, 2000: 143; 151; 163.

¹⁰³⁰ Phaedr. 2. *Prol.*1-7. Phaedrus notes that it was tyranny that forced Aesop to begin speaking in fables to veil his criticism, Phaedr. 3 *Prol.*33; Adrados, 1999: 24; 2000: 168; 172.

¹⁰³¹ See below, p.160.

¹⁰³² I.e. usually imperial freedmen.

¹⁰³³ Phaedr. 1.2; 3 *Prol.*33; Adrados, 1999: 24; 121.

¹⁰³⁴ Holzberg, 2002: 48-50; Champlin, 2005: 115.

¹⁰³⁵ The only eagle fable in Phaedrus that does advocate the weak against the strong is 'The Eagle and the Fox' (1.28), however, this is a common fable that was already widely known and therefore may not be the most representative of Phaedrus' individual opinions and methods.

and occasionally the emperor. The fables, under the guise of exemplum, use the eagle to either criticise the wickedness of those higher in the social strata or, with Phaedrus, to comment on what a good emperor should do (i.e. choose careful advisors). Additionally, Phaedrus states in his prologue to Book 3 that these fables began as a way slaves could tell stories or criticise their masters without being punished for it.¹⁰³⁶ Whether or not this statement is accurate is debatable,¹⁰³⁷ but it allows us the possibility to see the eagle in these fables as not only representative of the upper classes but of one half of a slave/master relationship. This is a possible glimpse into the eagle's symbolism to Roman slaves. Not only that, but since fables as a genre seem to appeal more to those in the free lower classes,¹⁰³⁸ it also provides a view into the eagle's symbolism lower down the social spectrum.¹⁰³⁹

5.4: Religion and Myth

This century sees a continuation of the close connection between the eagle and Jupiter, not just in the Roman west, but also the Greek east.¹⁰⁴⁰ Additionally, the eagle features highly in myths associated with Jupiter, i.e. Ganymede and Prometheus.¹⁰⁴¹ However, although this association has increased it is still not the entirety of the picture concerning the eagle's attachment to specific deities. The eagle is also included in the iconography of other supreme gods across the empire, such as Bel and Baalshamin in Palmyra (Figs 5.2 & 5.3). Both these deities were equated with Zeus in the Greek Pantheon and therefore the eagle is considered an aspect of this iconography of the 'supreme god' of each pantheon, whatever its particular regional name.¹⁰⁴² With Bel and Baalshamin, though, the symbolism of the eagle performs a slightly different task than when it is seen with Zeus. Dirven

¹⁰³⁶ Phaedr. 3 *Prol.*33; Adrados, 1999: 24. Phaedrus himself, as a freedman, would have previously been a slave so this heightens the possibility that the statement is accurate, Adrados, 1999: 123. However, as Champlin, 2005: 99 points out other than this suggestion we only have the title of the work, *Phaedri Augusti liberti fabularum Aesopiarum*, as evidence, a title which may have been added at any point.

¹⁰³⁷ Daube, 1972: 54; De Ste Croix, 1981: 444-445. The idea would be *contra* to Champlin, 2005's interpretation.

¹⁰³⁸ Livy makes a point of this by having the plebeians won over by a fable during their struggle with the patricians; Liv. 2.21; Daube, 1972: 130-131.

¹⁰³⁹ Daube, 1972: 130-139.

¹⁰⁴⁰ *Eleg. Maec.* 1.87; German. *Arat.* 315-320; 688; Manilius, 1.343; 5.486-503; Mart. *Ep.* 10.19; Ov. *Am.* 1.10; *Ars Am.* 3.419-422; *Met.* 6.511-518; Plin. *HN.* 2.56; 10.4; 6; Stat. *Theb.* 3.532; Val. Flacc. 1.149-164; 2.409-417; Verg. *Aen.* 1.28; 394; 5.255; 9.564; 12.238-255; *LIMC* Dodekathēoi 23; Jupiter 74; 99; 105-107; 132; 166; 168; 204; 216; 220; 234; 278; 409; 412-413; 526; *RIC*, Anon. II.5; *RPC* I, 408; 410-411; 2430; 2565; 2893; 2901; 3052; 3062; 3068; 3073; 3525; *RPC* II, 1329; 1801; Henig, 1974: No.5; Bailey, 1980: Nos.1026-1028; 1056; 1210; 1224-5; 1229; 1232; 1250-1; 1523; Bragantini & Sampaolo, 2009: Nos.37; 134.

¹⁰⁴¹ Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.7.1; 2.5.11; 3.12.2; Hyg. *Fab.* 31; 54; 144; *Poet. Astr.* 2.8; 15-16; Manilius, 5.486-503; Mart. *Ep.* 1.6; 10.19; Ov. *Am.* 1.10; *Met.* 6.108-109; 7.399-400; 10.155-161; 12.536-579; 15.335-449; Petron. *Sat.* 64; Plin. *HN.* 34.19; Sil. *Pun.* 17.419-432; Val. Flacc. 2.409-417; Verg. *Aen.* 1.28; 5.255; *LIMC* Ganymede 95-99; 103-4; 106; 111-113; 121-122; 125-126; 129; 133-136; 139; 140-144; 148-149; 150-153; 160; 166-168a; 176-180; 185-185a; 190-192; 206-210; 216; 220-222; 224; 229-230; 233; 236-240; 243; 245; 250; 252; 255; 258; 261; 263-265; 267; Leda 61; Prometheus 59. Bailey, 1988: No.1930.

¹⁰⁴² Dirven, 1999: 54-55; 76. Both Bel and Baalshamin are known as Zeus in Greek inscriptions; Hillers, 1995: Nos.0305; 0197.

argues that in both their temples the eagle represents their rule and control over the heavens,¹⁰⁴³ but is never seen as their acolyte, the most common image when concerning Zeus.¹⁰⁴⁴ Additionally, although these three gods are equated with each other and supposedly represent the same deity, the reality may have been slightly more complex and malleable. In Palmyra, at least, both Bel and Baalshamin were worshipped as separate entities,¹⁰⁴⁵ even though they represented the same ‘supreme god’ position. This may indicate that although these gods were equated with each other, to a certain degree they were also separate, meaning that the eagle’s association with both of them spreads its possible religious connection between several deities.¹⁰⁴⁶

Additionally, although the eagle had been attached to solar deities before this period,¹⁰⁴⁷ as it is seen with Apollo on coins¹⁰⁴⁸ and through its apparent ability to stare at the sun,¹⁰⁴⁹ this attachment increases in this century.¹⁰⁵⁰ There is an altar to Sol (and the Palmyrian solar god Malakbal, again an eastern connection), which depicts Sol atop an eagle (Fig 5.4), similar to the Jupiter lamps and the apotheosis of Titus.¹⁰⁵¹ Additionally, there are a few pediment fragments near the Temple of Apollo Sosianus in Rome that, although it cannot be confirmed, seem to be from the temple.¹⁰⁵² Two of these show an eagle, one explicitly on a sceptre (Fig 5.5) and another with the body and head of the bird missing (Fig 5.6). Interestingly, these fragments, if they are from the temple, would belong to its restoration by Augustus and thus the eagle would have been on, and associated with, the Temple of Apollo from the beginning of this period.¹⁰⁵³ Not only does the eagle seem to be connected to these solar deities, but Sol sees a gradual increase in worship throughout this century¹⁰⁵⁴ until he receives a colossal statue from Vespasian.¹⁰⁵⁵ It seems quite possible that with the gradual increase of importance of Sol, the eagle’s attachment to the solar deity also increased.¹⁰⁵⁶

¹⁰⁴³ Dirven, 1999: 55-56.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Dirven, 1999: 117.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Dirven, 1999: 77. An inscription from the temple of Allat has nobles present gifts to both Bel and Baalshamin separately. It may be possible that both are the same deity but being worshipped by different sectors of society.

¹⁰⁴⁶ The eagle is also associated with ‘The Most High God’ in the Bosphoran kingdom, again, another Jupiter-like figure that is directly equitable with Jupiter; Ustinova, 1999: 183-184; 195; 244.

¹⁰⁴⁷ It may have been connected to Ahura-Mazda in the mind of the Greeks, through the misinterpretation of the god’s symbol (see above, p.45 and Fig 2.20).

¹⁰⁴⁸ See Graphs 1-7; Crawford, 1974: 445/2; SNG Cop. 6; 837.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Mentioned above, p. Arist. *Hist. An.* 619b; Plin. *HN.* 10.3.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Davies, 2000: 86.

¹⁰⁵¹ Tac. *Hist.* 3.24 also states that Syrian sun worship was popular in the legions; Davies, 2000: 86.

¹⁰⁵² Claridge, 1998: 245.

¹⁰⁵³ Claridge, 1998: 245. The connection between Augustus and Apollo is well known, Ferguson, 1970: 45-46; Davies, 2000: 86. Sol also receives some Augustan monuments as two obelisks were dedicated to him, *CIL*, 4.702; 6.701; Halsberghe, 1972: 29-30. An altar showing the priests of Apollo also shows an eagle, Zanker, 1988: Fig 99.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Halsberghe, 1972: 35-49; Davies, 2000: 86.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Cass. Dio. 65.15; Plin. *HN.* 34.45; Suet. *Vesp.* 18; Halsberghe, 1972: 35; there was also a temple to Sol on the Quirinal, Quint. 1.7.12; Halsberghe, 1972: 31.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Davies, 2000: 86 states that slowly Jupiter and Apollo/Sol became almost interchangeable.

Further to this, the eagle is also mentioned connected to Mars,¹⁰⁵⁷ Cupid,¹⁰⁵⁸ and Neptune.¹⁰⁵⁹ The provinces see more connections, with some personifications having an eagle as companion¹⁰⁶⁰ as well as other gods, such as Men,¹⁰⁶¹ Tyche,¹⁰⁶² the Dioscuri,¹⁰⁶³ Asclepius,¹⁰⁶⁴ and Minerva.¹⁰⁶⁵ Lastly, on the ‘Sword of Tiberius’ the temple at the bottom of the scabbard shows an eagle within a temple. Zanker identifies the temple as a sanctuary of the Lares¹⁰⁶⁶ and, since the sword is from the Tiberian period, it may be that it is a sanctuary to the Lares Augusti.¹⁰⁶⁷ This could be a hint at a connection between the eagle and the deified emperor. Still, then, even in this century the eagle cannot always be seen as simply Jupiter’s acolyte but also, although not often, connected to other deities as well.

5.4.1: Myths and Astrology.

The sources from this period bring to light several myths which involve the eagle and produce a fuller picture of its role in Greco-Roman myth. A large proportion of these are transformation myths with heroes or gods being turned into or choosing to become eagles. Two of these myths seem to be extensions of the heroic martial eagle similes we see from Homer onwards.¹⁰⁶⁸ Periclymenus, the hero gifted with shape shifting powers by Neptune, transforms himself into an eagle during the battle in order to attack Hercules.¹⁰⁶⁹ The ploy fails; however, as Hercules shoots him down as he did the eagle that assailed Prometheus. Nisus, king of the Megarians is transformed into a sea-eagle in order tovengefully chase after his traitorous daughter, Scylla, herself transformed into a *ciris* (sea-bird).¹⁰⁷⁰ Others seem to be extensions of other aspects of the eagle, like its connection with Jupiter. Apollo changes Periphas, king of Athens, into an eagle so that he would be protected from Jupiter’s wrath, since Jupiter would not harm his favourite bird.¹⁰⁷¹ And Jupiter himself even transforms into the eagle, as in Ovid’s version of the Ganymede myth it is an avian Jupiter that captures the boy.¹⁰⁷²

¹⁰⁵⁷ Stat. *Silv.* 2.5.178-180; *RIC* Vespasian 6. Also see below, p.140.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Bailey, 1988: No.3729.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Hyg. *Fab.* 10.

¹⁰⁶⁰ *LIMC* Arkadia 1; Palmyra 3.

¹⁰⁶¹ *RPC* I, 2907.

¹⁰⁶² *RPC* I, 1808-1809; 1811; 1813; 1815; from Tomi in Moesia.

¹⁰⁶³ *RPC* I, 1808.

¹⁰⁶⁴ *RPC* II, 1777; Also, *LIMC* Jupiter 26 could also be Asclepius instead of Jupiter as the figure has a staff wrapped with a snake.

¹⁰⁶⁵ *RPC* I, 1643, from Amphipolis in Macedonia.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Zanker, 1988: 232, Fig 183.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Lott, 2004: 101.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Hom. *Il.* 17.670-680; 21.250-255; Pind. *Pyth.* 5.109-110; Sil. *Pun.* 5.279-284; Soph. *Ant.* 110-115; Verg. *Aen.* 9.564; 11.751-756; *Dirae*, 1-7, see above, p.24.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Hyg. *Fab.* 10; Ov. *Met.* 12.536-579; Fantham, 1993: 27. In Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.9.9 he does not become an eagle.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Hyg. *Fab.* 198; Ov. *Met.* 8.145-147; Verg. *Ciris*, 520-529; Lyne, 1978: 317, this is clearly an older myth but the eagle is only mentioned in this period, Aesch. *Cho.* 612-22; and some other versions do not mention it either, Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.15.5-8; Paus. 1.5.4; 1.19.4; 1.39.4-6; 2.34.7; Prop. 3.19.21-28.

¹⁰⁷¹ Ant. Lib. 6; Ov. *Met.* 7.399-400; Anderson, 1972: 286; Hill, 1992: 207.

¹⁰⁷² Ov. *Met.* 10.155-161; Anderson, 1972: 488.

Additionally, a passing reference in Ovid to the abduction of Asteria by an eagle seems to be the female counterpart of the Ganymede myth.¹⁰⁷³ The only transformation myth that does not seem to fit into the already established symbolism is that of Juno transforming Meropes, the king of Cos, into an eagle and placing him among the stars in order to relieve him of human suffering after the death of his wife.¹⁰⁷⁴ This myth seems to focus on the eagle's animality in relation to man, a theme not seen previously. Interestingly, and connecting the eagle to other aspects of its symbolism,¹⁰⁷⁵ all those that are transformed into an eagle (Periclymenus, Periphas, and Meropes) are either royalty or an actual king. There is also the story of Rhodopis, an early version of the Cinderella fairy-tale, told by Strabo,¹⁰⁷⁶ where an eagle takes her sandal and gives to the king, who then scourges the kingdom for the owner. The story is previously seen in Herodotus, but missing the eagle, which has presumably been added as a type of portent or divine aid.¹⁰⁷⁷ The story also has similar elements of royalty attached to it (i.e. the eagle bringing the sandal to the king).

It is in this period also that we get more detail concerning the eagle that eats Prometheus' liver, Jupiter's eagle. Both Hyginus and Ps.-Apollodorus state that the eagle was the offspring of Echidna and Typhon,¹⁰⁷⁸ with Hyginus also giving Terra and Tartarus as possible parents as well.¹⁰⁷⁹ Echidna is a snake-like monster whose union with Typhon, the monstrous son of Hera who challenged Zeus, was said to have produced many monsters of Greek myth including the Hydra and Cerberus.¹⁰⁸⁰ This would imply that the eagle in the Prometheus myth and other myths is not 'an eagle' but 'the Eagle', that is, a monster equal to the Hydra or Cerberus. This would explain a few points in connection with Jupiter's Eagle. Firstly, in almost every mythological reference to the Eagle it is referred to in the singular, implying there is one eagle and not many.¹⁰⁸¹ Secondly, it would explain the size of the eagle in some of the portrayals of the Prometheus and Ganymede myths as it is shown as being as large as a man.¹⁰⁸² Additionally, this eagle is fought by Hercules on his journeys, much like the other Echidnian monsters.¹⁰⁸³ In my opinion, the inclusion of this Eagle as a mythical monster, which has not been identified in previous scholarship, also generates a disassociation

¹⁰⁷³ Ov. *Met.* 6.108-109. It is not certain which Asteria this is, but it may be the Titan daughter of Coeus and Phoebe, who in other versions transformed herself into a quail and formed Delos in order to escape Zeus; Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.2.2; 4; 4.1; Hes. *Theog.* 404-411; Hyg. *Fab.* 53; Plin. *HN.* 4.66; Anderson, 1972: 165 states that both versions of the story must have been well known for Ovid to make such a casual allusion.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Hyg. *Poet. Astr.* 2.16. Castasterism was a trope of Hellenistic literature, Grant, 1960: 12.

¹⁰⁷⁵ See above, p.24.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Strabo, 17.1.33.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Hdt. 2.134; Anderson, 2000: 27-28.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.5.11; Hyg. *Poet. Astr.* 2.15.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Hyg. *Poet. Astr.* 2.15.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Hes. *Theog.* 295-332; Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.1.2; 3.1; 5.1; 11; 3.5.8; Paus. 3.18.10. The pair were sometimes also the parents of Orthus, watchdog of Geryon; the Chimaera; the Sphinx; the Nemean lion; Ladon, a gigantic snake; March, 1998: 276; 776-777.

¹⁰⁸¹ For example, Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.7.1; 2.5.11; Hyg. *Fab.* 31; 54; 144; *Poet. Astr.* 2.15-16; Ov. *Met.* 6.108-109.

¹⁰⁸² LIMC Ganymede 103; 160; 178-180; 185a; 190; 216; 220; 222; 236; 239; Prometheus 30; 41; 67; 69.

¹⁰⁸³ He also fights the Hydra and Nemean Lion, both offspring of Echidna and Typhon; Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.4.12-2.5.12; March, 1998: 446-447.

between *the* ‘Eagle of Jupiter’ and eagles in general. Although all eagles were favoured and used by Jupiter, there was only ever presumably one Eagle that served him in the heavens. If this is the case, this Eagle was slain by Hercules when he freed Prometheus, which is odd since it was his father’s favourite bird.¹⁰⁸⁴ Despite this, it may be this Eagle that is often depicted with Jupiter. Lastly, though, Hyginus reports another version of the origin of this Eagle. He states that the Eagle, along with the thunderbolt it carries, was forged by Vulcan and then given life by Jupiter.¹⁰⁸⁵ Although not a monstrous Eagle, this version still presents Jupiter’s Eagle as unique and separate from other eagles.

However, Jupiter’s Eagle may not have been killed by Hercules as one source states that it is this Eagle that forms the constellation Aquila¹⁰⁸⁶ and that Hercules’ arrow that killed it forms the constellation Sagitta.¹⁰⁸⁷ But this is not the only story for the genesis of the Aquila constellation. Just like the various stories of the Eagle’s origin the constellation has a number of stories associated with its creation. Some have already been mentioned, that of Meropes¹⁰⁸⁸ and Nisus, who according to Ps.-Vergil was placed alongside his daughter in the stars.¹⁰⁸⁹ Aquila was also said to be the Eagle that carried away Ganymede¹⁰⁹⁰ or was simply chosen by Jupiter either because it was the only bird that could stare into the sun¹⁰⁹¹ or that he had seen one while sacrificing on the eve of his battle with the Titans.¹⁰⁹² Jupiter, in the form of a swan, is said to have seduced Nemesis after being chased by Venus in the form of an eagle, for which he then put the two birds in the sky.¹⁰⁹³ Additionally, Mercury is also said to have placed Aquila in the stars for the eagle’s help in seducing Venus.¹⁰⁹⁴ Even though some of these myths only appear in one source (usually only Hyginus) this does not indicate that they were mostly unknown to people in this period. In fact, since Hyginus is collecting all the various myths associated with the constellations in his *Poetica Astronomica* it seems that all these stories were circulating in this period. However, none of these versions of Aquila’s formation can be said to be the ‘original’ or ‘true’ mythical story. Myths exist as a complex web of often-contradictory stories, which are chosen and told according to whatever that particular context demands.¹⁰⁹⁵ This applies to the Aquila myths as well. If the author wished to talk about grief through Aquila, they would relate the

¹⁰⁸⁴ Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.7.1; 2.5.11; Hyg. *Fab.* 31; 54; 144; *Poet. Astr.* 2.15.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Hyg. *Poet. Astr.* 2.15.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.113; Columella, *Rust.* 2.10.17; 11.2.53; German. *Arat.* 507; 688; Manilius, 1.343; 626; 685-690; 5.710-715; Plin. *HN.* 8.72; 16.41-42; 17.30; 35; 18.44-45; 47-49; 64; 67-69; Varro, *Rust.* 2.1.18; 1.1.13; Vitruvius, *De arch.* 9.4.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Hyg. *Poet. Astr.* 2.15; German. *Arat.* 315-320, does not connect Sagitta with Hercules’ arrow.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Hyg. *Poet. Astr.* 2.16.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Verg. *Ciris*, 520-529.

¹⁰⁹⁰ German. *Arat.* 315-320; Hyg. *Poet. Astr.* 2.16; Manilius, 5.486. Ganymede was also often identified with the constellation Aquarius, also near Aquila, Condos, 1997: 35.

¹⁰⁹¹ Hyg. *Poet. Astr.* 2.16, a common myth about actual eagles, also seen in Arist. *His. An.* 619b; Plin. *HN.* 10.3.

¹⁰⁹² Hyg. *Poet. Astr.* 2.16.

¹⁰⁹³ Hyg. *Poet. Astr.* 2.8, the constellation Cygnus is also near Aquila.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Hyg. *Poet. Astr.* 2.16.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Hansen, 2004: 3.

story of Merope, however, if he wished to explain why Jupiter chose the eagle as his bird, they would tell the story of his pre-war sacrifice.

It is worth noting that most of this information comes from Hyginus or Ps.-Apollodorus, both of which are surrounded by debate around their exact date.¹⁰⁹⁶ I have included them within this period as the earliest they have been dated to is the first century A.D., however, it could be argued just as well that they belong to the second century A.D. It seemed more appropriate to deal with them here, the earliest possible point, rather than later, as, with Hyginus at least, there is a link between this mythological thought and the eagle's astrological symbolism, discussed below. Additionally, although these two authors appear in this (or a later) period the ideas they contain about the eagle may stretch much further back. Both authors are mythographers collecting together and summarising numerous myths to provide handy reference works and both also seem to rely heavily on Hellenistic sources, as Grant and Van Der Valk have identified.¹⁰⁹⁷ Thus, these ideas about the eagle may have existed in the cultural consciousness in Rome as far back as its first contact with Greece but it is only through these texts that some of these details are now revealed.

The eagle's representation in the stars as the constellation Aquila links its symbolism with another area within Roman religion, that of astrology. Astrology was mainly the prediction of future events from the reading of the stars, either in connection to an individual (horoscopic astrology) or sometimes to predict the weather (meteorological astrology).¹⁰⁹⁸ The art was mostly on the fringes of Roman society up until the first century A.D.,¹⁰⁹⁹ presumably encouraged by the way it was embraced by Augustus. Not only did he turn his zodiacal sign, the Capricorn, into a common imperial symbol he also published his personal horoscope via an edict.¹¹⁰⁰ Although occasionally astrologers were banned from Rome in tumultuous periods,¹¹⁰¹ the art of astrology remained a central part of Roman religious life.¹¹⁰² However, Aquila was not traditionally part of the signs of the zodiac and so is instead seen as

¹⁰⁹⁶ Schmit, 2005: 606-607, dates Hyginus to the first century B.C./first century A.D. whereas Grant, 1960, based on references to deities, dates him to the second century A.D. Van Der Valk, 1958, dates Ps.-Apollodorus to the first century A.D., if not earlier, against the consensus that he was writing in the second century A.D.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Van Der Valk, 1958: 114; 116-117; Grant, 1960: 2; 5-6.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Barton, 1994: 95; 2002: 32.

¹⁰⁹⁹ This began with the personal astrologers of the Republican era, Cic. *Div.* 2.47.99; Plut. *Sull.* 37.1; Barton, 2002: 36-37. Manilius' poem *Astronomica* is also evidence for astrology's new popularity, Barton, 1994: 42.

¹¹⁰⁰ Cass. Dio. 56.25.5; Suet. *Aug.* 94-12; Barton, 1994: 40-41; 2002: 40; 44-45. Augustus' *horologium* is also an example of the increased position of astrology, the monument had the names and signs of the zodiac and references to the seasons along it.

¹¹⁰¹ Agrippa banned them in 33 B.C., as did, strangely, Augustus in 11, followed by Claudius in 51, after Scribonianus had used astrological predictions in his revolt. Vitellius did the same in 69, as did Vespasian and Domitian, all at points when their legitimacy was threatened; Cass. Dio. 29.43.4; 63.1.4; 65.9.2; Jerome, *Chronicle*, 89-90; 93-94; Plin. *Ep.* 3.11; Suet. *Dom.* 10.3; *Tib.* 36; *Vit.* 14.4; Tac. *Ann.* 12.52; *Hist.* 2.62; Barton, 1994: 50.

¹¹⁰² Pliny records it as equal to medicine and religion, Plin. *HN.* 30.1.1-2; Barton, 2002: 31. Papyri reveal strong belief in horoscopes up until the fifth century A.D., but this is much later; Barton, 1994: 52.

an extra-zodiacal, and therefore less important, constellation in astrology. Even though it is only an extra-zodiacal sign some of the common representations of the eagle may have some astrological/astronomical symbolism.¹¹⁰³ For example, Aquila is situated very close to the constellation Serpens (the snake), which means that the common motif of the eagle holding a snake may have some astrological symbolism inherent within it or that these two constellations could appropriate the symbolism already attached to this motif.¹¹⁰⁴ Also, Aquila is above Delphinus, which could give another interpretation as to why an eagle is atop a dolphin on a coin from the Black Sea.¹¹⁰⁵ Despite some astrological undertones, though, it seems that other religious symbolism may overshadow this aspect when necessary. A relief supposedly from the *Forum Romanum* shows the twelve zodiac signs with the accompanying animals/symbols.¹¹⁰⁶ On this relief, the sign Leo is accompanied by an eagle (Fig 5.7), because Jupiter is associated with that zodiac sign. In this case, any astrological symbolism is trumped by the eagle's connection to Jupiter.

One aspect of astrology where Aquila does have an impact, though, is in its position as *paranatellonta*, i.e. the rising star at the hour of someone's birth.¹¹⁰⁷ According to Manilius, these stars have an impact on the personality of those who are born under it, thus those born under the rising of Aquila have particular qualities inherent within them. Manilius states that a man born under Aquila will be a natural 'plunderer', essentially warmongering and violent and will become a brigand.¹¹⁰⁸ That is, unless he is enlisted into a righteous cause, then he will 'succeed in bringing wars to a conclusion and enriching his country with glorious triumphs'.¹¹⁰⁹ Interestingly, he also says that these men will never be leaders and instead will only aide kings and generals.¹¹¹⁰ He bases this last fact explicitly on the eagle's role as Jupiter's messenger and armour-bearer:¹¹¹¹ thus astrology is once again connected to the other religious roles of the eagle. In fact, the qualities associated with those born under Aquila are reminiscent of the dichotomy seen earlier in this chapter,¹¹¹² that of the eagle being at once both heroic and rapacious. In Manilius this dichotomy is even clearer. However, Manilius' account of the *paranatellonta* may not be entirely accurate. His astronomical calculations

¹¹⁰³ This astrological symbolism may have been greater in the lower classes, as they seemed to be more receptive to astrologers/astrology, Cic. *Div.* 1.132; Juv. *Sat.* 6.582; Barton, 1994: 33.

¹¹⁰⁴ Wittkower, 1939 examines this image across cultures and time.

¹¹⁰⁵ *RPC* I, 489-492. They could also just be representing the heavens and the sea, as on the coin of Pompey, see above, p.81 & 102.

¹¹⁰⁶ *LIMC* Menses 29.

¹¹⁰⁷ Barton, 1994: 42.

¹¹⁰⁸ Manilius, 5.491-496.

¹¹⁰⁹ Manilius, 5.496-499.

¹¹¹⁰ Manilius, 5.501-503.

¹¹¹¹ Manilius, 5.501. According to the many dates for the rising of Aquila from the ancient sources, given by Lehoux, 2007: 521, none of them match any contemporary or famous political figures from Manilius' period.

¹¹¹² See above, p.24, especially the section on Ovid, p.119.

are often inaccurate¹¹¹³ and so, possibly, is his astrological information. Without another source on the *paranatellonta* it is impossible to know for sure.

5.4.2: Apotheosis.

It is in this period that we see the first representation of the eagle in imperial apotheosis imagery. Late in the century we see Vespasian ascending to heaven atop an eagle on a tetradrachma from Syria (Fig 5.8), which is then followed almost simultaneously by the image of Titus atop an eagle on his eponymous arch (Fig 5.9). The inclusion of the eagle in the apotheosis imagery of the emperors seems to originate from a number of sources, which begin to synthesise towards the end of this century, but from the evidence its exact origin cannot be deduced.

The earliest connection of the eagle to any kind of funerary rights comes from Syria, interestingly where the Vespasianic coin also originates. There (especially in Palmyra) the eagle seems to have had a long tradition as part of funerary reliefs from even before Roman influence. Cumont identifies the various funerary monuments in Syria with eagles on them from the third century B.C. until third century A.D.¹¹¹⁴ Some of these dates have been revised, but at least one tomb, in Maresha, dates to the pre-Augustan first century B.C. (Fig 5.10).¹¹¹⁵ Also, the first literary example of the eagle taking someone to heaven appears in the East, as mentioned above,¹¹¹⁶ the story of Etana, a legendary Mesopotamian king, includes an eagle carrying him towards heaven, and so this tradition may originate in the ancient Eastern cultures.¹¹¹⁷ What is interesting about the Syrian funerary depictions is that many have inscriptions dedicated to the Sun god,¹¹¹⁸ Sol or Apollo in the Roman pantheon. Although these funerary monuments cannot be confirmed to represent apotheosis, what is interesting is that the eagle's first depiction in funerary/apotheotic contexts appears with the Flavians, emperors who had spent a significant time in these eastern provinces and among these funerary eagles. It may be then that the eagle's connection with apotheosis is also linked to its attachment to solar deities.

However, some evidence from the Augustan age may hint at the eagle's partial inclusion in apotheosis imagery from A.D. 14. Although an eagle's inclusion in Augustus' funerary rites is an interpolation by Cassius Dio from the imperial apotheosis rituals of the second century A.D.,¹¹¹⁹ one of the coins that Tiberius produces may be using the eagle in exactly this manner. The coin shows Divus Augustus on the obverse and an eagle atop a sphere on the reverse (Fig 5.11). This may be a

¹¹¹³ Goold, 1977: xciii-xciv; he was unlikely to actually be an astrologer, just simply adapting popular and difficult material into poetry, Barton, 1994: 41.

¹¹¹⁴ Cumont, 1917: 52-54.

¹¹¹⁵ Berlin, 2002: 139-140.

¹¹¹⁶ See above, p.114.

¹¹¹⁷ *Myth of Etana*; L'Orange, 1953: 69; Dalley, 1989; as mentioned, this story originates in c.2390-2249 B.C.

¹¹¹⁸ Cumont, 1917 collects many of them.

¹¹¹⁹ Cass. Dio. 56.46.2; Price, 1987: 94-95; Davies, 2000: 10.

reference to Augustus ascending to heaven as the coin represents a now divine Augustus¹¹²⁰ and the letters S-C with the eagle may refer to the senate's granting of his apotheosis (although Augustus is not depicted atop the eagle, the obverse-reverse relationship may imply this). The sphere as well seems to feature in apotheosis imagery. A cameo, also from Tiberius' reign, shows Augustus ascending to the divine realm atop a *genius*¹¹²¹ also carrying a sphere (Fig 5.12).¹¹²² The sphere itself has much cosmic symbolism, often representing the divine or mortal realms, but a sphere may also be representative of the soul, at least according to Plato.¹¹²³ Additionally, the fact that in this cameo Augustus is being taken to heaven atop a *genius* and that in the previous chapter I identified the legionary eagle as also possibly being a *genius*¹¹²⁴ provides some more circumstantial evidence for this image relating to Augustus' apotheosis.

Another possibility is that Augustus *is* the eagle on this coin. An epigram from the Greek anthology about the grave of Plato asks why there is an eagle atop the grave; the eagle replies that it is the 'image of the soul of Plato' ready to soar to heaven, although not to become a god.¹¹²⁵ This implies that the eagle may even be representative of Augustus' soul in the action of apotheosis. Although the epigram is undated, it is most likely from the first or second century A.D., and therefore closer to this Augustan depiction than to Plato. The imagery within it, i.e. of an eagle as a soul, lends weight to the *sae* interpretation of the eagle on this Augustan coin. However, since it is undated, and Greek, this is only a possible interpretation. As a result, although much of the evidence points towards this Tiberian coin representing Augustus' apotheosis, since there is no other evidence indicating the eagle's inclusion in apotheosis imagery until Vespasian, we must accept the Titian coin as the eagle's first certain apotheotic depiction.

However, there is more evidence from Italy and in the Roman sources that the eagle was already connected to apotheotic contexts. Most of this comes from the eagle's connection to Jupiter and the Ganymede myth, itself a type of apotheosis myth. Some depictions of Ganymede (showing an eagle whose torso is composed of Ganymede's head)¹¹²⁶ seem reminiscent of the apotheosis imagery and these depictions had already been included in funerary (and possibly apotheotic) contexts.¹¹²⁷ Additionally, a particular type of lamp relief begins to appear in the mid-first century A.D. showing Jupiter atop an eagle (Fig 5.14),¹¹²⁸ exactly like the apotheosis of Titus on his arch. Both of these seem

¹¹²⁰ Sutherland, 1951: 103; Hannestad, 1986: 94.

¹¹²¹ This is identified by Zanker, 2008: 87, Fig 56.

¹¹²² Jucker, 1976 interprets this figure as Aion or Eternity instead, which we see with the apotheosis of Antoninus Pius, Davies, 2000: 97.

¹¹²³ Pl. *Ti.* 69c; Nicolet, 1991: 35-37. The sphere could also be representing Aion, or 'life/eternity', a similar concept. It is also identified with imperial rule. *RIC* Nerva 131; Davies, 2000: 97-98; Cumont, 1942 also thinks that the eagle represents the soul in many funerary contexts, Beazley & Nock, 1946: 140.

¹¹²⁴ See above, p.95.

¹¹²⁵ *GA* 7.62.

¹¹²⁶ *LIMC* Ganymede 263.

¹¹²⁷ Cumont, 1942: 97-98, n.3; L'Orange, 1953: 70.

¹¹²⁸ Bailey, 1980: 8-9; Nos. 1026-1028; 1056; 1210; 1224; 1229; 1232; 1250-1251.

to point towards the eagle being associated with apotheosis through its connection to Jupiter, and its place as a semi-divine transitional being between the mortal and divine realms, hence its ability to take the newly divine emperor into the heavens. It would also imply that the newly divine emperor is now equal to Jupiter, as he sits atop the eagle as Jupiter does, rather than below it as Ganymede would.¹¹²⁹

The eagle's inclusion in the apotheosis imagery of the late first century A.D. seems to be a synthesis between the traditional Roman ideas of Jupiter and Ganymede (and possibly Augustus) and the Syrian influences of Sol/Apollo, whose worship as we have seen was increasing in this period,¹¹³⁰ and the funerary imagery of the near East, possibly influenced by Vespasian's time there. This synthesis is nicely shown in the altar to Sol mentioned above, which is honouring a Syrian god using an image also found on Italian lamps (Fig 5.13).¹¹³¹ Once again though, much of these connections are based on the viewer. A Roman senator may see the emperor as Jupiter being carried to heaven as a new god, whereas a Syrian legionary may see Sol's messenger bringing up the emperor. Additionally, though, not only does apotheosis have a possible connection with these deities but also with the imperial deities it is now creating.¹¹³² Many deified emperors remained in the Roman pantheon and so the eagle would also become associated with these new deities.¹¹³³ Lastly, the apotheotic imagery of the eagle did not remain confined to just imperial imagery. By the Flavian era the eagle begins to appear on funerary monuments of not only imperial freedmen (Fig 5.14), but simply notable individuals (Fig 5.15) until, by the beginning of the second century A.D., it had become a funerary trope, applicable even to young children (Fig 5.16).¹¹³⁴ The eagle, on these monuments, not only symbolises imperial imagery, but also the soul's ascendance into heaven (although not to become a god as in the imperial contexts). Additionally, some other eagle imagery may have developed some funerary symbolism, e.g. the eagle and the snake may be symbolising the eagle carrying the soul (represented as a snake) to the divine realm.¹¹³⁵

5.4.3: *Eagle's in Tympana.*

This century also sees the first example of a decorative architectural motif, the placing of an eagle in the tympanum (the decorative relief above an entrance) of a temple. It first appears with its

¹¹²⁹ There are some of Ganymede atop the eagle, but not many; *LIMC* Ganymede 258.

¹¹³⁰ See above, p.130.

¹¹³¹ See above, p.130.

¹¹³² Davies, 2000: 93.

¹¹³³ The *FD* records festivals to Augustus and Claudius.

¹¹³⁴ Bruun, 1992: 101 states that the eagle is seen on funerary altars 14 times in the Museo Nazionale Romano, only two of which have a military context. There are some earlier examples of eagles on funerary altars; Simon, 1986: 173-174, Fig 230-231 shows an eagle on a funerary altar of a freedman of Livia, dated to c.42, this change also accompanies an increase in the belief of life after death, hence these non-imperial people could also be seen as ascending to the heavens after death, *Lucretius* 3.83; *Propertius* 4.7; *CIL* 11.3771; Hopkins, 1983: 227; 229

¹¹³⁵ The snake as the soul, Beazley & Nock, 1946: 159.

wings folded on a coin from Tralleis in Lydia (c.31 B.C. – A.D. 14) in the tympanum of an unknown temple.¹¹³⁶ It also appears on the tympanum of the Temple of Apollo Sosianus, already discussed above (Fig 5.6),¹¹³⁷ which was restored in the Augustan period. There is a possibility that it appears on the pediment of a temple in Jerusalem under Herod, discussed in detail below.¹¹³⁸ After the Augustan period, however, the trope begins to appear more frequently. Another Temple of Apollo, this time at Side in Lydia, has an eagle with its wings outstretched standing on what looks like war booty (Fig 5.17).¹¹³⁹ The trope then receives a huge explosion in popularity in the second century A.D. It appears on numerous coins from Pamphylia which depict the Temple of Artemis Pergaia, which shows simply an eagle with outstretched wings in the pediment.¹¹⁴⁰ The frequency of this depiction would imply it was certainly present on the actual temple. But it also appears in the pediments of other temples in this century: an imperial temple on Pisidian coinage;¹¹⁴¹ Hadrian's restoration of the Pantheon seems to have included an eagle with a large wreath;¹¹⁴² a Temple of Roma on coinage from Caesarea;¹¹⁴³ and an eagle appears in the pediment of a Roman temple at Kedesh;¹¹⁴⁴ and also flanking Syrian gods on temples in Palmyra.¹¹⁴⁵ Interestingly also, the trope seems to be fully embraced by Judaism as it appears frequently on their synagogues in the late second century A.D.¹¹⁴⁶ There must certainly be more examples, but it is impossible to list them all here.

Despite the first example coming from the Greek east and that the Greek word for gable is a homonym for eagle (*ἀετός*),¹¹⁴⁷ there seem to be no examples of the eagle appearing in the tympanum of a Greek temple before the Roman period. Thus, it does not seem to have been developed from any Greek forms. The identities of the deities involved give no indication as to why the eagle is used as decoration on their temples, although it seems to confirm that the eagle was certainly not confined to a connection to Jupiter. The best interpretation for the earliest 'eagles in tympanums' seems to be its role as a transitional entity. The eagle's ability to traverse the boundary between mortal and divine

¹¹³⁶ *RPC I*, 2633.

¹¹³⁷ See above, p.130.

¹¹³⁸ The problems of this eagle and the debates surrounding it are all discussed below, p.145.

¹¹³⁹ The image seems unpublished in an academic context. The city went under major development in the Claudian era and so the temple was most likely built then: Martini, 2008: 434.

¹¹⁴⁰ The image appears from 98-161 and again in 193-211; *SNG Aulock* 4671; *SNG Cop.* 315; 322; *SNG France* 406.

¹¹⁴¹ *SNG France* 1357.

¹¹⁴² Barry, 2014, this is based on Cozza's reconstruction from the holes in the tympanum which plot out a large bronze eagle and wreath.

¹¹⁴³ Metcalf, 1996: 139.

¹¹⁴⁴ Szkolut, 2002: 5. The identification of the temple is unknown, just that it is Roman.

¹¹⁴⁵ Szkolut, 2002: 5.

¹¹⁴⁶ It appears in synagogues in Capernaum, Dabura, El Al, Gush Halav, Japhia, Judaea, Korazim, Meroth, Qusayyibe, and Safed; Goodenough, 1953: 184; 188; 195; 205; 207; 216-217; Szkolut, 2002: 4-5; Hachlili, 2013: 63; 69; 72; 114; 116-117; 124; 159; 585; 600; 605; 607. The meaning and appearance of these is discussed in more detail below, p.176.

¹¹⁴⁷ *Ar. Av.* 1110; *Eur. Fr.* 764; *Hippoc. Art.* 43; *Joseph. AJ.* 3.6.4; *Pind. Fr.* 53; *Ol.* 13.21; Barry, 2014: 99.

could possibly indicate why it is depicted at the top of an entrance to a temple,¹¹⁴⁸ as those performing rituals in front of the temple wished for the same motion of divine transmission for their rituals that the eagle could perform.

But the ‘eagle in tympanum’ seems to acquire another meaning in later centuries which could be linked back to this period. Barry recently argued that the eagle and wreath on the restored tympanum of the Pantheon symbolises the apotheosis of the emperors, particularly associated with the Pantheon as it represented ‘all the gods’ and included statues of dead emperors.¹¹⁴⁹ The fact that its relationship with the wreath in the image parallels that of an eagle entering a zodiac, which definitely symbolises apotheosis, adds weight to this interpretation.¹¹⁵⁰ The fact that eagles appear in other temples connected to the imperial cult, like at Pisidia, and the Temple of Roma at Caesarea (often connected to the imperial cult), and perhaps most importantly that Antoninus Pius is riding an eagle in the tympanum of a temple in Dougga, reinforce this interpretation.¹¹⁵¹ Clearly then, at least on temples connected to the imperial cult, the eagle carried over its apotheotic symbolism from other images into its appearance in tympanums. This interpretation is also directly linked to its other symbolism described in the preceding paragraph, as it could only be involved in apotheosis through its position as a transitional divine entity. What is interesting, though, is the unknown temple on the coinage of Tralleis. The legend simply refers to ‘Caesar’ and the name of the provincial magistrate with no indication of who the temple was dedicated to. However, we know that Tralleis became a centre for the imperial cult and was certainly favoured by Augustus,¹¹⁵² so it may even be possible that this temple was one of the imperial cult and thus the eagle there may have also had apotheotic resonances.¹¹⁵³ But this cannot be confirmed.

One last interesting aspect about the ‘eagles in tympanums’ is their geographical diversity. The trope seems to appear in Tralleis and Rome almost simultaneously (as it is difficult to discover which came first due to the dating of the coin) and then appears across the empire in slightly different contexts but with essentially the same meaning. Thus, it represents another element of the homogenisation of culture during this early Imperial period.

5.5: Martial and State Connections

5.5.1: Developments in the aquila’s symbolism.

¹¹⁴⁸ See above, p.31.

¹¹⁴⁹ Barry, 2014: 99-102.

¹¹⁵⁰ Werde, 1986; Barry, 2014: 100-102.

¹¹⁵¹ Barry, 2014: 99-100, Fig 9.

¹¹⁵² The city was reconstructed by Augustus after an earthquake, after which it renamed itself Caesarea; Strabo, 12.7.18; Suet. *Tib.* 8; Kaletsch, 2009: 842.

¹¹⁵³ However, the eagle has its wings closed which does not match other apotheotic eagles in this period and the city’s patron god was Zeus Larasios, which the temple may be to; Kaletsch, 2009: 842.

During this period, we see a continuation of many of the ideas seen in the previous chapter. Not only do contemporary sources record that legionaries were still fighting and dying for the *aquila* and other standards,¹¹⁵⁴ the historians of the period projected this protectiveness back into Roman history¹¹⁵⁵ (the accuracy of this projection is discussed in Chapter 2).¹¹⁵⁶ The sources also frequently report similar omens surrounding the standards,¹¹⁵⁷ as we saw in the previous chapter,¹¹⁵⁸ as well the standards' use as a practical logistic device.¹¹⁵⁹ One increase that can be seen is in the use of *aquila/aquilae* as a synonym for the legions themselves, an extension of its symbolism of the community.¹¹⁶⁰ But the first century A.D. also shows various changes in the *aquila*'s use and symbolism.¹¹⁶¹

In the Augustan period the army was made both professional and year-round.¹¹⁶² This increases all the symbolic aspects we discussed about the *aquila* and standards in the previous chapter, as the legionaries now spent on average sixteen years in constant contact with their fellow soldiers and thus formed much stronger bonds.¹¹⁶³ It also increased the role that the *aquila* played in the religious life of these individuals. Rather than just having the *aquila* as their religious focus in times of war, their entire religious life now revolved around it. Additionally, another type of standard was introduced in the early Imperial period, the *imagines*, which was an image of the current reigning emperor carried by the *imaginifer*.¹¹⁶⁴ The first direct reference to it is in Caligula's reign; however, there seem to have been statues of the emperor in the *sacellum* in Tiberius' reign.¹¹⁶⁵ The introduction of this standard alongside the *aquila* and other standards further established the emperors' connection and attachment to the *aquila* and the legions, as well as centring him in their religious ceremonies.¹¹⁶⁶ In fact, during the civil wars (69-70) a legion's allegiance was determined by whose bust was on their *imagines*.¹¹⁶⁷ This attachment of the emperor and the *aquila* is discussed more below.¹¹⁶⁸ Some more evidence is provided for the *aquilifer* in this period: Tacitus identifies him as the mouthpiece of the

¹¹⁵⁴ Prop. 4.1.89-97; Vell. Pat. 2.80.3; Tac. *Ann.* 15.11; *Hist.* 2.30; 2.43.1; 3.22; 4.77. Although Tacitus is writing in the second century A.D., his information and facts seem fairly reliable for this earlier period, but some of the details of the battles may be literary tropes; Mellor, 1993: 31-32; 34; 40; 44-45; Woodman, 1998: 80; Levene, 2009: 237.

¹¹⁵⁵ Frontin. *Str.* 2.8.1-5; Liv. 3.70.10; 4.29.3; 6.8.1; 9.13.2; 10.36.10; 25.14.6-8; 26.5.15-17; 27.14.7; 34.46.12; 39.31.9; 41.4.1; 8; Sil. *Pun.* 5.333-343; 5.427-432; 6.14-40; 7.740-743.

¹¹⁵⁶ See above, p.34.

¹¹⁵⁷ Liv. 5.55.1-2; 22.3.11-13; Sil. *Pun.* 8.635-637; Suet. *Claud.* 13; Tac. *Ann.* 2.17; *Hist.* 1.62.3; Val. Max. 1.5.1; 1.6.6; 1.6.11.

¹¹⁵⁸ See above, p.89.

¹¹⁵⁹ Liv. 3.27.8; 6.24.5-7; 10.5.1-3; 39.31.9; 41.3.8; Plin. *HN.* 14.3; Tac. *Hist.* 3.21.

¹¹⁶⁰ Juv. 8.51-53; Luc. 1.1-7; 244-247; 336-340; 473-478; 3.329-332; 5.237-240; 385-389; 6.138-139; Sen. *Ben.* 5.15.6; Val. Flacc. 6.402-409.

¹¹⁶¹ One minor note is that by c.90 the Praetorians had eagles sculpted into their *pila*, Thomas, 2004: 450.

¹¹⁶² Suet. *Aug.* 49; Raaflaub, 1980: 203-204.

¹¹⁶³ See above, p.90.

¹¹⁶⁴ Tac. *Hist.* 1.41.1; Watson, 1969: 131; Webster, 1969: 136; Campbell, 1984: 96-97.

¹¹⁶⁵ Tac. *Hist.* 1.36; Suet. *Tib.* 48; Watson, 1969: 131.

¹¹⁶⁶ Suet. *Cal.* 14.3; Tac. *Ann.* 15.24; 29; Campbell, 1984: 97-98.

¹¹⁶⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 4.62; *Hist.* 1.36.1; 41.1; 55.2; 2.85.1; 3.12; 13; Campbell, 1984: 98-99.

¹¹⁶⁸ See below, p.151.

legion¹¹⁶⁹ and the position is also well-regarded and honoured by those in the legion.¹¹⁷⁰ It may be that Tacitus is simply in need of a literary spokesperson for the ordinary legionaries, however, why not choose the highest ranking ordinary soldier, the *primus pilus*? Also, Tacitus was quite familiar with the military system and the metaphorical standard-bearers seen in Cicero perform the same function.¹¹⁷¹

The sources also provide a little more information about the religious/divine nature of the *aquila* and standards. In addition to omens, the standards are attached to other deities, mainly Mars Ultor¹¹⁷² and Vesta,¹¹⁷³ and there is a general tendency to describe the standards as sacred.¹¹⁷⁴ Both Valerius Maximus and Ps.-Quintilian describe the standards and eagles as ‘*sacrae*’¹¹⁷⁵ and additionally, even the non-Roman Josephus calls them *τά ἱερά* (‘divine things’).¹¹⁷⁶ Pliny also illuminates possible parts of the rituals surrounding the standards by stating that the eagles are anointed with perfume,¹¹⁷⁷ presumably only during religious ceremonies.

The *aquila* also comes to represent revenge against Rome’s enemies and a return of Roman honour in this period. This begins in the Augustan period when Augustus retrieved Crassus’ standards from the Parthians in 20 B.C.¹¹⁷⁸ Previous scholarship has not acknowledged that the promotion of the return of standards only begins in the Augustan period. Although there are stories that the Romans had recovered standards from their enemies before this period,¹¹⁷⁹ they appear only in Augustan sources, like Horace, or post-Augustan sources, like Frontinus, and so they might be retrojecting Augustan attitudes of the importance of the standards into the past, or, if they did recovering the standards it was not deemed important enough.¹¹⁸⁰ In lieu of an actual military victory over the Parthians, Augustus promotes the diplomatic return of the *aquila* and standards, prominent military symbols, as a victory over the Parthians and revenge for Carrhae.¹¹⁸¹ Augustus promotes the return

¹¹⁶⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 1.48; 2.81; *Hist.* 1.56.2; 4.25.

¹¹⁷⁰ Juv. 14-194-198; Tac. *Ann.* 1.37; *CIL* 2.00288; 3.14995; 13.06888; 06901; 07009.

¹¹⁷¹ See above, p.98.

¹¹⁷² Ov. *Fast.* 5.579-594. Mars owns them in Stat. *Silv.* 5.2.178-180.

¹¹⁷³ Ov. *Fast.* 6.461-468. Vesta is linked to Mars Ultor here through the theme of vengeance, Littlewood, 2006: 143-144.

¹¹⁷⁴ Or as religious in general, Liv. 26.48.12; Luc. 7.160-165.

¹¹⁷⁵ Ps.-Quint. 3.2; Val. Max. 6.11.11. Ps.-Quintilian also says they will pursue their prey to the underworld.

¹¹⁷⁶ Joseph. *BJ.* 3.123.

¹¹⁷⁷ Plin. *HN.* 13.4.

¹¹⁷⁸ Augustus apparently also retrieved the standards lost by Decidius in 40 B.C. and Statianus in 36 B.C.; Cass. Dio. 48.25; Plut. *Ant.* 38.5-6; Cooley, 2009: 242-243.

¹¹⁷⁹ Crassus recovered five eagles from Spartacus but nothing seems to have been made of the incident in contemporary sources; Frontin. *Str.* 2.5.34; Hor. *Carm.* 3.5.23 also hints at a tradition of the Carthaginians stealing Roman standards in the Punic Wars, again their loss and return does not feature much in the histories.

¹¹⁸⁰ It is possible that the Punic standards are invented by Horace as *Carm.* 3.5 is about the return of Crassus standards.

¹¹⁸¹ Ov. *Fast.* 5.579-594; 6.461-468; *RG* 29.

through coins, showing the *aquila* and standards and stating SIGNIS RECEPTIS.¹¹⁸² Incidentally, this provides some evidence that the *aquila* was associated with the word *signa* as I postulated in a previous chapter.¹¹⁸³ The return was also publicised through art (seen on the Prima Porta statue, Fig 5.18) and even architecture, as Augustus built the ‘Parthian’ arch in the forum to celebrate their return.¹¹⁸⁴ The symbolic value of the standards and their return can be seen in the context of how Crassus’ defeat is seen in the sources.¹¹⁸⁵ They emphasise the shame of the defeat and thus the recovery’s eradication of that shame and redemption of Roman honour.¹¹⁸⁶ The standards were also dedicated to Mars Ultor ‘the Avenger’ and placed in his temple in Augustus’ Forum in 2 B.C.,¹¹⁸⁷ emphasising their symbolic revenge against the Parthians.¹¹⁸⁸ However, Augustus did not just recover these standards. In his *Res Gestae* he notes that he also recovered standards from Spain and Germany.¹¹⁸⁹ These may have been from the defeat in Spain in 39 B.C.,¹¹⁹⁰ those lost to the Eburones in 54 B.C.,¹¹⁹¹ and those lost by Gabinius to the Dalmatians in 48 B.C.¹¹⁹² and displayed in the *porticus Octavia*.¹¹⁹³ Although none of these were celebrated as much as the Parthian standards, they were worthy enough incidents to be mentioned in the *Res Gestae*. Most importantly, the symbolic context of these recoveries is the same, revenge and redemption of Roman honour.

This emphasis on the standards as the symbol of Roman revenge and redemption is repeated in Tiberius’ reign after the just-as-disastrous defeat of Varus by the Germans in 9. Although not achieved by the same peaceful means, a similar formula is followed in the wake of this defeat as we see in the recovery of the Parthian standards, although on a much shorter timescale. Germanicus fights a long war with the Germans that, according to Tacitus, only ends with Germanicus’ recovery of two

¹¹⁸² *RIC* Augustus 85a; Sutherland, 1987: 14-15. Other coins proclaim the standards recovered or show a kneeling Parthian presenting them, *RIC* Augustus 62; 83 and some in the provinces that show standards seem to be referring to this event also, *RIC* Augustus 41; 44; 46-50; 82; Sherwin-White, 1984: 324; Cooley, 2009: 243-244.

¹¹⁸³ See above, p.98.

¹¹⁸⁴ Zanker, 1988: 186-192; Galinsky, 1996: 155-164; Rich, 1998; Rose, 2005.

¹¹⁸⁵ Cic. *Div.* 2.9.22; Hor. *Carm.* 3.5; Luc. 9.65; 8.356-358; Ov. *Fast.* 5.580-594; Prop. 4.6.69; Val. Max. 1.6.11; Mattern-Parkes, 2003: 393.

¹¹⁸⁶ Ov. *Fast.* 6.461-468; Ovid uses the Crassus disaster and the return of the standards to talk of Augustus’ vengeance against the Parthians (5.468) and link Vesta to the festival of Mars Ultor (5.595); Mattern-Parkes, 2003: 393; Littlewood, 2006: 143-144.

¹¹⁸⁷ *RIC* Augustus 43; Cooley, 2009: 245. They may have been housed in the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius before Mars Ultor’s consecration; Hor. *Carm.* 4.15.6; Sherwin-White, 1984: 324; Cooley, 2009: 245. There was a theory that a smaller temple was built on the Capitol but this has been successfully refuted by Simpson, 1977 and Rich, 1998: 79-97.

¹¹⁸⁸ The link to Caesar, through his proposed Parthian campaign and vengeance for his assassination, is also inherent in this Augustan narrative; Cass. Dio. 44.15.3-4; Suet. *Jul.* 79.3-80.1; Cooley, 2009: 242-243.

¹¹⁸⁹ *RG.* 29.

¹¹⁹⁰ Cass. Dio. 48.42.1; Ridley, 2003: 130; Cooley, 2009: 241-242.

¹¹⁹¹ Caes. *B Gall.* 5.37.4-7. Possibly also *RIC* Augustus 416, showing a long haired barbarian on his knees holding a standard.

¹¹⁹² App. *Ill.* 3.12; 5.25; 5.28; *RG.* 19.1.

¹¹⁹³ It is possible that Licinius Crassus retrieved some standards from the Bastarnae, lost in 62 B.C. (Cass. Dio. 38.10.3; 51.26.5) but this is not mentioned by Augustus or promoted in the same fashion, presumably since it was not Augustus who accomplished it; Cooley, 2009: 241.

of the eagles lost by Varus.¹¹⁹⁴ Just like Augustus, an arch was erected in Rome to commemorate the return of the standards,¹¹⁹⁵ which were presumably also held in the Temple of Mars Ultor since this war was also one of revenge. Caligula also produced a coin celebrating their return by Germanicus.¹¹⁹⁶ Through the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, then, the *aquila* and standards recovery has a very specific symbolic purpose of avenging lost Roman honour and seems to be developing into a tradition of sorts.

However, by the end of the period either the tradition has changed or disappeared entirely. This may be because Rome suffered no defeats on the scale of Carrhae or Teutoburg and no *aquillae* were lost. Although Suetonius suggests that a legion lost its eagle to the Jews at the start of the Jewish revolt,¹¹⁹⁷ he is contradicted by Josephus.¹¹⁹⁸ However, there is some possible evidence of them retaining this aspect of their symbolism at the end of the century. In c.86 the Dacians defeated a legion and, presumably, took their *aquila* and standards.¹¹⁹⁹ The details of the event are unclear but Trajan's later war against the Dacians may have been a response to the incident as Cassius Dio states that he had 'considered the things they had done'¹²⁰⁰ and decided to attack them. Although Trajan did not set up an arch after his victory a small detail about his victory column may link it to the tradition of the standards representing Roman revenge and redemption. A coin from the period shows a column similar to Trajan's, with two eagles at the base, and what is said by the *RIC* to be an owl on top of it.¹²⁰¹ However, Platner and Ashby thought this to be an eagle instead of an owl.¹²⁰² They also believe the coin to be an earlier idea for what the column would look like before Trajan's death, and if so, the column itself would resemble a much larger version of the *aquila* standard and possibly represent their recapture by Trajan in the Dacian Wars. Some circumstantial evidence to fit this interpretation is that Trajan dedicated a war memorial in Moesia to Mars Ultor, fitting with the Augustan tradition seen above.¹²⁰³

Thus, the *aquila* and standards take on a new symbolic meaning early in the century, that of revenge and redemption of Roman honour, specifically linked to the defeats of Crassus and Varus. It

¹¹⁹⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 1.60-61; 2.25.1-2. The third was recovered in 41, Cass. Dio. 60.8.7; Goodyear, 1981: 93; 255; Woodman, 1998: 80. However, the actual scenes of their recovery in Tacitus may have been re-used from the *Histories*, Mellor, 1993: 31-32; 34; 40; 44-45; Woodman, 1998: 80.

¹¹⁹⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 2.41. It was positioned between the Rostra and the Basilica Julia, which is somewhat similar to the placement of Augustus' Parthian arch. Additionally, an inscription was found in that area with the letters RECIP, possibly from SIGNIS RECIPERATIS; *CIL* 6.906; 31422; 31575; Goodyear, 1981: 312; Richardson, 1992: 29-30.

¹¹⁹⁶ *RIC* Gaius 57; Mattern-Parkes, 2003: 394, n.44.

¹¹⁹⁷ Suet. *Vesp.* 4.

¹¹⁹⁸ Joseph. *BJ.* 2.277-8; 500; 531-56; 531; 5.41; 7.18. The commander was not killed and the legion was still active afterwards; Jones & Milns, 2002: 51.

¹¹⁹⁹ Cass. Dio. 68.9.3; Eutr. 7.23.4; Suet. *Dom.* 6.1; Mattern-Parkes, 2003: 394-395.

¹²⁰⁰ Cass. Dio. 68.6.1; Mattern-Parkes, 2003: 395.

¹²⁰¹ *RIC* Trajan 475.

¹²⁰² Platner & Ashby, 1929: 242, n.5.

¹²⁰³ Mattern-Parkes, 2003: 393 discusses these three incidents as examples of 'just' wars of revenge.

is possible that this symbolic attachment still exists at the end of the century with Trajan's Dacian wars, but the evidence is not conclusive, and after this period it completely disappears, with later recovery of standards not being honoured in the same manner.

5.5.2: *A Roman Eagle?*

Occasionally, the eagle is seen as directly symbolic of Rome itself, but did this relationship exist in this period? There seems to be some possible evidence for this connection from the client kings outside the empire in this period which may indicate the eagle symbolising Rome, or at least the empire. However, all this evidence comes from those either actually outside of the empire or at least culturally external to it, the implications of which will be discussed at the end of this section.

The first example comes from Judaea, when in 4 B.C. a rumour started that King Herod was dying. Taking this as an opportunity, a group of students, encouraged by two rabbis, tore down a golden eagle above one of the entrances to Herod's Temple.¹²⁰⁴ When it turned out that Herod was not dying, he rounded up these students and rabbis and had them executed. The eagle seems to have been on the Temple since its construction and it was only the report of Herod's poor health that encouraged these individuals to tear it down. The account presents two questions: why was it there and why did they destroy it?

Firstly, was an eagle even present on Herod's Temple? There are many stories that circulate about Herod during the later years of his life that we know to be false tyrant-myths created after his death in response to his reign, the massacre of the innocents being a good example.¹²⁰⁵ Additionally, Josephus, the only source from which we receive the story, has an overarching iconoclastic theme throughout his narrative within which this incident fits nicely.¹²⁰⁶ Since Jewish tendencies in the times in which Josephus lived were very iconoclastic, with a complete ban on images passed in 70, Josephus' writings reflect this view.¹²⁰⁷ He occasionally discussed past events in light of these views, especially expressing his own distaste of the images of eagles and lions that apparently adorned Solomon's throne.¹²⁰⁸ The archaeological evidence shows that no synagogues of Herodian date or earlier depict animal life of any kind and so Herod may have taken quite a step by placing the eagle on his new Temple. Although, in the late second century A.D. eagles do begin to appear on synagogues, so it is clear that eventually they become completely acceptable in Jewish thought, but

¹²⁰⁴ Joseph. *AJ.* 17.149-164; 206; *BJ.* 1.648; 651.

¹²⁰⁵ Joseph. *AJ.* 17.174-179; 193; *BJ.* 1.659-60; 666; *Matt.* 2:1-16; *Testament of Moses*, 6.3-6; Smallwood, 2001: 103-104. Josephus also gives Herod all the characteristic emotions of a tyrant (anger, bitterness, and cruelty); Joseph. *AJ.* 17.148; 164; Van Henten, 2006: 264; 266-267.

¹²⁰⁶ These tendencies are also seen at Joseph. *Ant.* 3.91; 113; 126; 137; 8.194-195; 18.257-309; *Ap.* 2.74; 190; Roth, 1956: 176-177; Fine, 2005: 75; 79-80. Josephus also engaged in iconoclastic actions by attempting to remove the images from Antipas' palace, Joseph. *BJ.* 5.262-4; *Vit.* 12.65-7; Fine, 2005: 77.

¹²⁰⁷ Joseph. *Vit.* 62; 65; 74-75; Roth, 1956: 169; 173-175; 177.

¹²⁰⁸ Joseph. *AJ.* 8.81; Goodenough, 1958: 136.

this is quite removed from this incident.¹²⁰⁹ However, evidence from Herod's coinage, one of which depicts an eagle,¹²¹⁰ and the nature of Herod himself, only half Jewish and raised amongst Hellenistic and Roman culture, point to accepting the incident as real.

Herod may not have been too innovative in placing an eagle on his new Temple, and we know from other incidents that he at least tried to placate Jewish beliefs as best he could.¹²¹¹ The eagle already had a symbolic place in the Jewish tradition; however, it is a rather dichotomous one. It simultaneously represents both Yahweh's divine power/protection¹²¹² and the many evil empires (mostly Babylon) that come and destroy the Jews.¹²¹³ It may be that Herod was using the eagle in its first manner, representative of Yahweh and his divine power.¹²¹⁴ This is not completely implausible as later in the second century A.D. eagles regularly appeared on Jewish synagogues to depict the same idea,¹²¹⁵ although this is quite removed from the time of Herod. The eagle had also had a long tradition of being connected to religious contexts in the Near East, including its connection to supreme gods like Shamash in the *Myth of Etana* and some other solar deities.¹²¹⁶ This may have had some influence on its connection to Yahweh in the Jewish tradition. Additionally, Judaea did not exist in isolation. We have already seen how the eagle was used by many of the Hellenistic kingdoms surrounding Judaea as a symbol of royal power¹²¹⁷ and it may be that Herod was emulating this idea of the eagle, trying himself to be a Hellenistic king.¹²¹⁸ The eagle featured on his coins does resemble

¹²⁰⁹ Goodenough, 1953a: 184; 188; 195; 205; 206; 207; 216-217; 1958: 121-122 discusses eagles on synagogues alongside this incident, however, he does not date them. Later works date all these eagle to late-second century A.D. or later. Goodenough, 1953b: 244-245; 248 discusses Jewish amulets with eagles on, but these are undated. Goodenough, 1958: 122-123 mentions some Jewish religious inscriptions with eagles in the Bosphorus kingdom from the mid-first century A.D., which would be closer to Herod's eagle, but later examination has shown that they have no Jewish connection, Ustinova, 1999: 177; 179-181; 183-184; 195; 223; 239; 244. Despite this, some other animals have been found: a stag in a tomb and a table top decorated with a bird have been found from around this period, Fine, 2005: 77. See also below, p.176.

¹²¹⁰ Hendin, 2010: 501; Chancey & Porter, 2001: 174; Fine, 2005: 74.

¹²¹¹ Chancey & Porter, 2001: 174.

¹²¹² *Exod.* 19:4; *Deut.* 32:10-11; *Jer.* 48:40; Goodenough, 1958: 135-136; Thompson, 1981: 713; Christensen, 2002: 797; Propp, 2006: 156; Dozeman, 2009: 443. An eagle is one of the four faces of cherubim in *Ezek.* 1:5-10; 10:14; Block, 1997: 96; Brownlee, 1986: 12; Joyce, 2007: 70.

¹²¹³ *Deut.* 28:49; *Hos.* 8:1; *Hab.* 1:8; *Prov.* 30:17; *Lam.* 4:19; *Dan.* 4:33; 7:2-4; Mayes, 1979: 356-357; Roberts, 1991: 96-97; Collins, 1993: 297; Macintosh, 1997: 291-292; Redditt, 1999: 120; Christensen, 2002: 694; Fox, 2009: 871-872. The eagle represents two empires in *Ezek.* 17:3-7; Brownlee, 1986: 265-266; Joyce, 2007. They are also not to be eaten by Jews due to their rapacious nature, *Deut.* 14:12; *Lev.* 11:13; Mayes, 1979: 241; Milgrom, 1991: 661; Douglas, 1999: 168.

¹²¹⁴ Goodenough, 1958: 125; 129 reinforces this idea by pointing out the golden eagle is connected to solar/divine power.

¹²¹⁵ See Goodenough in previous note, n.1209; These are all accurately dated from the late-second century to the fourth century A.D. in Hachlili, 2013: 63; 69; 114; 116-117; 124; 159; 217; 276; 282; 447-448; 451-455; 585; 600; 605; 607. However, Hachlili thinks these eagles are 'purely decorative', but the amount with which the eagle appears in Jewish tradition makes this seem unlikely to me.

¹²¹⁶ *Myth of Etana*; Dalley, 1989: 189; Cumont, 1917; See above, p.47.

¹²¹⁷ See above, p.50.

¹²¹⁸ This idea was also slightly older in the eastern parts of the empire, Goodenough, 1958: 127-128. Although, Goodenough rejects that any Jewish eagles are royal.

those of other Hellenistic kingdoms (Figs 5.19 & 5.20).¹²¹⁹ This and Herod's other Hellenistic tendencies¹²²⁰ point towards a royal/Hellenistic interpretation of this eagle.¹²²¹ In fact, this could be an example of the merging of symbolic expression, like creolisation discussed in the introduction of this chapter,¹²²² that Herod's is merging Hellenistic and Jewish interpretation of the eagle into a new expression.

But why did these students decide to tear it down? In the accounts and analysis of the event there seem to be two opinions, either they saw the eagle as a symbol of Roman power and control in Judaea,¹²²³ through Herod, or they saw it as a violation of the Second Commandment,¹²²⁴ i.e. a false idol being worshipped.¹²²⁵ The question then, is whether it is possible that a group of Jews in 4 B.C. saw the eagle as directly symbolic of Roman power? Most of the in depth analysis of the incident point to the violation of the Second Commandment as the reason, nothing to do with Roman power. Josephus presents this as the reason,¹²²⁶ but he may be interpreting the event through his iconoclastic lens. The dichotomous symbolism it has in the Torah possibly increases their objection to its use. Additionally, Herod came close to making a similar mistake when he placed trophies in the theatre, which the Jews believed to be representations of actual people, again breaking Jewish law.¹²²⁷ Interestingly, though, it does not seem that the eagle was on the Temple itself, but rather on the outside of one of the gates leading into the sacred precinct of the Temple,¹²²⁸ making this religious objection a little harder to understand. Also, there does not seem to have been any general objection to Herod's use of the eagle on the Temple¹²²⁹ and of it and other pagan symbols on his coinage.¹²³⁰ The obvious explanation to this is that, as stated in Josephus, it was a small group of traditionalist radicals that tore down the eagle, and that the majority of the Jewish population had no real objection to the

¹²¹⁹ Fine, 2005: 74.

¹²²⁰ Jacobson, 2001: 100-101, shows many 'Hellenistic' tendencies on his coins, including the trophies and the eagle.

¹²²¹ Van Henten, 2006: 273-274.

¹²²² See above, p.108.

¹²²³ This opinion is expressed by Roth, 1956: 173; Loftus, 1977: 86; Horsley, 1979: 448; Smallwood, 2001: 99.

¹²²⁴ *Exod.* 20:4-5; The First Commandment in Christian tradition.

¹²²⁵ This is expressed by Goodenough, 1958: 123-125; Applebaum, 1971: 164, n.110; Fine, 2005: 74; Van Henten, 2006: 277-278.

¹²²⁶ Joseph. *AJ.* 17.149; *BJ.* 1.648. Just as he does with Solomon, Joseph. *AJ.* 8.81.

¹²²⁷ Joseph. *AJ.* 15.268; 272-279; Fine, 2005: 74-75.

¹²²⁸ Joseph. *BJ.* 1.416 says it was 'Agrippa's Gate' and it is not known whether this referred to Augustus' lieutenant; Richards, 1996: 16. Richards, 1996: 17 explains the argument of placing the eagle on a gate outside the Temple. He states that it would be this gate that any visitors came through and that, normally, symbolic decoration was placed on the outside of these gates. Additionally, that the students would have had access to this gate, but not the temple, from above (also in Joseph. *AJ.* 17.259; *BJ.* 2.48), which Josephus states in the story; Joseph. *BJ.* 1.651.

¹²²⁹ Although Josephus says that the crowds in Jerusalem objected to the execution of the rabbis and students, it was not because they agreed with the crime but disagreed with the mode of execution (i.e. burning alive); Joseph. *AJ.* 17.206; *BJ.* 2.4.

¹²³⁰ Chancey & Porter, 2001: 174; Jacobson, 2001: 100-101. Meshorer, 1982: 2:29 believes the eagle on Herod's coin refers to the eagle on the temple, but this seems unlikely as it does not match the description in Josephus; Van Henten, 2006: 275.

eagle's presence, on the Temple or on coins.¹²³¹ In fact, one of the rabbis shares a name with a radical who destroyed a pagan altar at Modi'in, possibly for similar reasons, although this connection could be merely coincidental.¹²³²

As stated, this is what most in depth analyses of the incident conclude about the eagle and that it was not an anti-Roman act. Goodenough even goes as far as to state that the interpretation that the eagle represents Rome in some way 'has no foundation whatsoever'.¹²³³ However, I think that the evidence surrounding the incident is not quite this conclusive. Herod had spent much time both in Rome and amongst Romans and thus absorbing Roman culture in his formative years before becoming king.¹²³⁴ Thus, he may have been influenced just as much by the Roman use of the eagle, especially in the Augustan period where it becomes more frequent, as the Hellenistic one. Additionally, the Romans had a constant military presence in Judaea right from the beginning of Herod's reign, who was brought to power with the help of a number of Roman legions, led by the *aquila*.¹²³⁵ The trophies in the theatre, already mentioned, were set up in a Roman manner.¹²³⁶ None of this evidence can be used to state conclusively that the eagle on Herod's temple was representative of Rome or Roman power, or even that Herod intended this connection, but it points to the possibility of the eagle being seen in this manner.¹²³⁷ Most of the population, as already stated, seemed fine with the eagle's inclusion on the Temple, however, a minority decided that this symbol in particular was offensive and must be destroyed. They either blamed the Romans for Herod's reign, so took an opportunity to destroy a symbol associated with Herod's Roman allies, or they saw its inclusion on the gate of the Temple as a direct violation of the Second Commandment and tore it down in a religious fervour.¹²³⁸ Either of these explanations, or, more importantly, both, are plausible. However, this is not a conclusive answer to whether the eagle was directly connected to Rome; it is only a possibility, so we need to move further into the century. It also needs to be emphasised again that if the eagle does represent Rome in this context, it is from an external/provincial perspective.

We see the eagle appearing on the coinage of the Celtic kings in Britain beginning with Tasciovanus in c.10 B.C. until just before the Roman invasion (Figs 5.21, 5.22, & 5.23).¹²³⁹ At first

¹²³¹ Fine, 2005: 74.

¹²³² Joseph. *Vit.* 66; Loftus, 1977: 86. The latter incident of the population objecting to Pontius Pilate's moving of the standards into the Temple seems not to be iconoclastic but brought about by the standards divine nature, Joseph. *AJ.* 18.55-59; *BJ.* 2.169-74; Kraeling, 1942; Fine, 2005: 75.

¹²³³ Goodenough, 1958: 123.

¹²³⁴ White, 2005: 361-364

¹²³⁵ Cass. Dio. 48.41; Joseph. *AJ.* 14.390-98; 439-90; 15-5-10; *BJ.* 1.357; White, 2005: 365.

¹²³⁶ Joseph. *AJ.* 14.477-86; *BJ.* 1.351-6; Fine, 2005: 75.

¹²³⁷ Schalit, 2001: 734 agrees with this interpretation, at least when viewed by emperors and soldiers; Van Henten, 2006: 275-276.

¹²³⁸ Van Henten, 2006: 276 emphasises that no anti-Roman sentiment is detailed in Josephus' text, but his iconoclastic tendencies may have warped his opinion on the incident.

¹²³⁹ Tasciovanus (c.10 B.C. – A.D. 10): Hobbs, 1996: No.1691; Tincommius (20 B.C. – A.D. 5): Nash, 1987: 194; Epaticcus (A.D. 35-43): Van Arsdell, 1989: 580; Epillus (Late 1st century B.C.): BMC 1016-1060.

glance these coins would be evidence against the eagle representing Rome or the Roman Empire in this period, as these Celtic kings are using it as self-representation on their own coinage. This would support a similar interpretation to that seen with the eagles on coins of the third and second century B.C., that the eagle was a malleable symbol of strong statehood picked up and used by different 'states' with no strong connection to any one state.

However, it seems that the eagle did not really hold any symbolic value within Celtic culture prior to their interaction with, and later invasion by, the Romans.¹²⁴⁰ All Celtic depictions of the eagle, and most Celtic material culture, was created after the invasion and while their culture is being creolised with Roman culture; hence the most popular depiction is their sky god with an eagle.¹²⁴¹ Additionally, all of the coins mentioned above seem to come directly from Roman antecedents or are direct copies of Roman coins.¹²⁴² Creighton points out that many of the kings producing these coins were likely to have been Roman hostages during their formative years.¹²⁴³ Although there is no direct evidence for these exact kings being in Rome, there are some references in the sources to Celts being kept as hostages during their teenage years.¹²⁴⁴ Thus, these kings are absorbing Augustan culture in their most formative period and then reproducing it once they are in power. This means that although these coins are produced in Celtic kingdoms, sometimes slightly celticised (Fig 5.23),¹²⁴⁵ they are trying to emulate and 'be' Rome by producing these eagles. Therefore, stating that the eagle is as malleable as it was in the third and second century B.C. is not entirely accurate. While the Celtic kings are using the eagle on their own coins and in connection to their kingdom, they are doing it both to emulate and connect themselves to Rome or the empire. Once again, though, the evidence is not completely conclusive either way. Therefore, the eagle could be interpreted in either fashion, as a new Celtic symbol of self-representation or symbolic of Rome/ their empire and the Celtic kings' connection to it.

Later in the century, however, there is some evidence that gives a much clearer picture. An apocryphal apocalypse text, *4 Ezra*,¹²⁴⁶ written c.80, depicts the fourth kingdom of Daniel¹²⁴⁷ as a giant eagle with three heads and twenty feathers, which fight each other to become ruler of a kingdom that spans the world.¹²⁴⁸ This is until the eagle is judged by Yahweh and the kingdom collapses. Through the interpretation of the vision that follows most scholars agree that the eagle and its heads

¹²⁴⁰ Green, 1986: 50; 188. Although it appears in Gaelic folklore, there is no way this tradition can be authenticated to originate prior to the Roman conquest, MacKillop, 1998: 146-147.

¹²⁴¹ Green, 1986: 50; 188.

¹²⁴² Allen, 1980: 144; Creighton, 2000: 121-122.

¹²⁴³ Creighton, 2000.

¹²⁴⁴ Cass. Dio. 53.22; 25; 60.19; *RG*. 32; Suet. *Cal.* 44.1; Strabo, 4.5.2-3; Creighton, 2000: 90-91.

¹²⁴⁵ Some of the later coins show an influence from Celtic art, e.g. that of Epaticeus from c.35-43, Van Arsdell, 1989: 580-581.

¹²⁴⁶ *4 Ezra*, 11:1-12:3.

¹²⁴⁷ *4 Ezra*, 12:11; *Dan.* 7:7; 23; Stone, 1990: 361; 366.

¹²⁴⁸ Stone, 1990.

represent the Roman Empire and three emperors and due to other references within the text, the emperors are identified as Vespasian, Titus and Domitian.¹²⁴⁹ The text was written after the Jewish Revolt and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans,¹²⁵⁰ but the most interesting feature is that the Roman Empire is directly depicted as an eagle.¹²⁵¹ In fact, when the eagle speaks in the vision the voice emanates from the centre of the eagle rather than its head, showing that it is the empire (or Rome itself) rather than the emperor who is speaking.¹²⁵² There is a possibility that the eagle was chosen, not because it was symbolic of Rome, but that it was the fourth apocalyptic animal from the prophecy of Ezekiel,¹²⁵³ and therefore representative of the fourth kingdom in the prophecy of Daniel.¹²⁵⁴ Personally, I think that the author chose the eagle because it represents both at the same time. Not only is it the empire represented by the eagle in Jewish minds, the constant feature of *aquila* standards throughout the Jewish Revolt would have reinforced this connection, but the eagle also fits perfectly into the apocalyptic tradition the author is emulating.

However, although this is quite convincing evidence for a direct symbolic association of the eagle to Rome, or the Roman Empire, once again it is from the viewpoint of those culturally outside of the empire. Additionally, even these Jewish and Christian texts still use the eagle in many other ways, as can be seen in *Revelations*¹²⁵⁵ and some other first century A.D. texts.¹²⁵⁶ Also, *Matthew* 24:28 where he states, ‘For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together’,¹²⁵⁷ is, according to Carter,¹²⁵⁸ representing the legions circling a destroyed Jerusalem. Although still connected to Rome, the eagle is symbolising the legions and not the abstract concept of empire.

The clearest and obvious connection between the eagle and Rome, or the Empire, comes from Josephus’ *Jewish War* in c.75. Here he states that the eagle that leads every legion, ‘the king and strongest of birds’, is seen by the Romans as ‘ὁ δὴ και της ἡγεμονίας τεκμήριον αὐτοῖς’/‘the sign/symbol (τεκμήριον) of their hegemony (ἡγεμονίας)’.¹²⁵⁹ Here we get more of an insight into the symbolic association the Romans give the relationship between the bird and Rome itself. The choice of words is very revealing, they do not see it as symbolic of Rome but of their ‘hegemony’, i.e. the

¹²⁴⁹ They have also been variously identified as Pompey, Sulla, and Caesar or Septimius Severus, Geta, and Caracalla, but the consensus lies with the Flavians due to contemporary references in the text; Stone, 1990: 361-365.

¹²⁵⁰ This may be directly referenced at *4 Ezra*, 11:42; Stone, 1990: 347.

¹²⁵¹ Stone, 1990: 347; 366. Esau is identified as Rome in *4 Ezra*, 6:8-10 and Babylon represents Rome throughout the text; Stone, 1990: 366.

¹²⁵² *4 Ezra*, 11:10; Coggins & Knibb, 1979; Stone, 1990: 349.

¹²⁵³ *Ezek.* 1:5-10; 10:14; Block, 1997: 96; Brownlee, 1986: 12; Joyce, 2007: 70.

¹²⁵⁴ The text is also littered with references to other uses of the eagle in the Torah and other apocryphal texts, *Testament of Moses*, 10:8; *Exod.* 19:4; *Deut.* 32:11; *Jer.* 48:40; 49:22; *Ezek.* 17:3; 17:7; *Prov.* 23:5; *Hos.* 8:1; *Job.* 9:26; Stone, 1990: 348.

¹²⁵⁵ *Rev.* 4:7; 8:13; 12:14 most of these involve the four beasts of the apocalypse.

¹²⁵⁶ Angels are borne by chariots drawn by eagles in *Life of Adam and Eve*, 33.

¹²⁵⁷ *Matt.* 24:28. Also seen in *Luke.* 17:37. Hagner, 1995: 707 gives the traditional interpretation that it is the coming of Christ.

¹²⁵⁸ Carter, 2003.

¹²⁵⁹ Joseph. *BJ.* 3.123.

empire not the city itself. This feels like a development of the eagle's symbolism seen in the third and second centuries B.C. where it represented an abstract idea of 'strong statehood'. By the first century A.D. the strongest state in most regions was Rome, or at least its empire. The idea that the eagle represents empire might stretch further back than this century. We saw previously how it represented the Babylonian empire in the Torah¹²⁶⁰ and it was connected to the Persian Empire in Xenophon.¹²⁶¹ What we seem to see over this century is a change from the previous malleable nature of the eagle and a stronger symbolic connection made between it and the Roman Empire. Although it is used by those outside of the empire at the beginning and mid-way through the century, by the end, after over a hundred years of Rome constantly using the eagle on its coinage and standards across the empire, the association between the two becomes solidified. So much so that Josephus believes the Romans make this symbolic connection and even those culturally outside of the empire, i.e. the author of *4 Ezra*, make this association. It is important to point out, though, that the eagle is being associated with the abstract concept of 'the Roman empire' rather than the city itself.

What is interesting to note, however, is that none of this symbolic connection is present within the Roman sources. Although Josephus' life amongst Roman culture would indicate that his expression of this symbolic connection is trustworthy, he is still a foreigner observing Roman culture. Additionally, although he spent time in Rome, the passage cited may be just a reflection of the symbolism within the legions, which, as discussed previously,¹²⁶² may differ from the rest of Roman culture. The closest we get to this idea in Roman sources is the reference in Pliny where he describes the *aquila* being doused with perfume, which he then goes on to say (possibly humorously) was the bribe that caused the eagles to conquer the world.¹²⁶³ Although he is making a slight connection between eagles and empire, it is tangential and concerns the standards (possibly as allegorical legions) rather than eagles in general. Thus, it may be that although Roman sources use the eagle to symbolise many things possibly connected with the state, which have been mentioned,¹²⁶⁴ it is only from an external perspective, at least in this century, that the eagle merges these concepts together into a direct symbolic relationship with the Roman Empire.

¹²⁶⁰ See above, p.146.

¹²⁶¹ Xen. *An.* 1.10.12; *Cyr.* 7.1.4. See above, p.49. The histories were aware of this connection in the first century A.D.; Curt. 3.3.15-16. The walls of Seleucia, the capital of the Seleucid Empire, were apparently shaped in the form of an eagle; Plin. *HN.* 6.30.

¹²⁶² See above, p.89.

¹²⁶³ Plin. *HN.* 13.4.

¹²⁶⁴ The legions, emperors, gods, etc. See above and below, pp.33; 58; 81; 89; and 152.

5.6: Political Aspects

5.6.1: Augustan Adoption

Whereas in previous chapters this section has dealt with material we know is produced with the consent and possible coordination with the political figure it is attached to, this period provides a slightly different challenge. While all the material discussed below is connected to Augustus in some way, the question of whether or how involved he was in the actual choosing of ideas or symbols, in all cases, is up for debate.¹²⁶⁵ Wallace-Hadrill explains what seems to be the general consensus in numismatics, that Augustus himself did not choose the types but that a lower official would choose an image that matched the themes and was closely linked to Augustan iconography.¹²⁶⁶ However, whether or not Augustus was directly involved in the production of this material is essentially irrelevant, as the connection between him and his regime and these uses of the eagle still existed, with or without his consent. In terms of coinage, the public did not seem to make the distinction of authorship and simply assumed the coinage was produced by whichever emperor was on the obverse.¹²⁶⁷ For the sake of convenience, though, I will be stating that ‘Augustus’ was responsible for the decisions behind this material, even though I am referring to the regime rather than him personally.

The Augustan period sees the introduction of the recognisable image of the eagle holding the *corona civica* (often with laurel wreaths behind). It is the earliest new image of the eagle and appears on a coin from Ephesus in 27 B.C. (Fig 5.24),¹²⁶⁸ after Augustus is granted the honours of the *corona* and laurel branches, and also on a cameo in Rome from around the same time (Fig 5.25). Both the *corona* and the laurels were traditional Roman honours given to Augustus by the Senate¹²⁶⁹ but with the addition of the eagle comes the addition of both Hellenistic and further martial symbolism. The martial symbolism comes from the eagle’s attachment to the legions, already shown in the previous chapter and above,¹²⁷⁰ and is reinforced by the type of honours Augustus is receiving, which are related to the successful conclusion of war.¹²⁷¹ Thus, the eagle may be seen as representative of the legions. However, although apparent to the general populace this symbolism would be much stronger for those who had served in the legions.

¹²⁶⁵ This is especially apparent in the numismatics: Sutherland, 1951; 1976; Wallace-Hadrill, 1986; Bruun, 1999; Burnett, 2011.

¹²⁶⁶ Either the *triumviri monetales*, the secretary *a rationibus*, or *procurator monetae*; Levick, 1982: 107; Wallace-Hadrill, 1986: 67.

¹²⁶⁷ Suet. *Aug.* 94.12; *Nero.* 25.2; Price, 1979: 277-278; Wallace-Hadrill, 1986: 68.

¹²⁶⁸ The image is seen once before on the coinage of king Achaeus of Seleucia in 220-214 B.C. (Hoover, Houghton, & Lorber, 2002-2008: Ad204), but it is unlikely that this coin had any influence on the development of the Augustan image due to the amount of time and distance that separates them. The Ephesus mint was apparently set up by Augustus in c.30-29 B.C., Sutherland, 1951: 29.

¹²⁶⁹ *RG.* 6.16.21; Sutherland, 1951: 32-33.

¹²⁷⁰ See above, p.89.

¹²⁷¹ The *corona* for saving his fellow citizens and the laurel for bringing peace.

The Hellenistic influence comes from the idea of the divine favour and election of Augustus by Jupiter, which was a popular feature of the iconography of Hellenistic kings,¹²⁷² which is then expressed through the use of the eagle, and reinforced by the laurel, which Augustus tried to emphasise was connected to Jupiter.¹²⁷³ This notion of divine election symbolised by the eagle is reinforced by the suggestion that the eagle is placing the *corona civica* on Augustus' head, implied by the fact that this is where the *corona civica* is normally placed and Augustus is without it on the obverse, and that Victory performs the same task on other representations.¹²⁷⁴ This also hints that this idea is not a purely Hellenistic reference as it is very reminiscent of the story of the eagle taking and returning Tarquinius Priscus' hat in Livy.¹²⁷⁵ Reinforcing this connection is the later development of the *corona*, which essentially becomes a crown/diadem.¹²⁷⁶ Thus, not only is Augustus being connected to ideas of Hellenistic kingship but Roman kingship also. However, the eagle itself might not be symbolic of Jupiter but representative of Augustus as the intermediary between divine and mortal. This makes sense when the eagle is viewed as bringing the *corona civica* and laurel wreath, the *corona* symbolising Augustus rescuing his fellow citizens from civil war and the laurel a traditional symbol of peace.¹²⁷⁷ Augustus was the 'bringer' of these two concepts, not Jupiter. Additionally, his place as the representative of Jupiter in the mortal realm is strikingly similar to the place the eagle occupies as Jupiter's messenger.¹²⁷⁸ It may be that Augustus *is* the eagle. The idea of the eagle as armour-bearer of Jupiter,¹²⁷⁹ essentially fighting on Jupiter's behalf, may reinforce this interpretation as Augustus also fought on Jupiter's behalf.

This interpretation may go some way to explaining the use of the eagle on another of Augustus' coins produced at Rome in 27 B.C. The reverse of this coin simply depicts an eagle with the legend AUGUSTUS (Fig 5.26). Again, this coin may be directly connecting Augustus to the eagle, especially when depicting simply his name with the eagle.¹²⁸⁰ Problematically, though, when the eagle is used in a similar manner on the coinage of the provinces the provincial governors put their own name next to it, instead of Augustus'.¹²⁸¹ However, this may be explained if the eagle's symbolism is broadened out slightly. As it was being used to denote Augustus as the representative of

¹²⁷² See below, p.158.

¹²⁷³ Liv. 5.28.13; Plin. *HN*. 2.146; 15.133-134; 136; Hünemörder, 2005: 301-302.

¹²⁷⁴ *RIC* Augustus 144; and seen on Fig 5.15.

¹²⁷⁵ Liv. 1.34.8-9; also in Cic. *Leg*. 1.1.4, discussed in detail above, p.88.

¹²⁷⁶ Zanker, 1988: 94.

¹²⁷⁷ Liv. 5.28.13; Plin. *HN*. 15.133; Fears, 1977: 211; Zanker, 1988: 93-94; Hünemörder, 2005: 301.

¹²⁷⁸ Already discussed, see above, p.31.

¹²⁷⁹ This phrase appears in Ov. *Met*. 15.335-449; Verg. *Aen*. 5.244 and later sources, Apul. *Met*. 3.23; Plin. *HN*. 10.4; Val. Flacc. 1.149-164; 2.409-417.

¹²⁸⁰ His name also appears on the previous coin (Fig 5.4).

¹²⁸¹ This is seen in Sparta: *RPC* I, 1104; Amorium: *RPC* I, 3232; Laodicea: *RPC* I, 2899; and Caesarea: *RPC* I, 3049.

Jupiter in the previous coin, so with these other coins it may be denoting these governors as the representative of Augustus. They are now the ‘eagles’ to Augustus’ ‘Jupiter’.¹²⁸²

This connection between Augustus and the eagle and the idea of those under him are his ‘eagles’ is reinforced by one of Horace’s *Odes* dedicated to Drusus.¹²⁸³ The ode is celebrating Drusus’ victory over the Rhaeti and Vindelici in 15 B.C.¹²⁸⁴ and within it Drusus is compared to a young eagle hunting and killing its prey.¹²⁸⁵ Through numerous poetic means Horace makes it obvious that he is comparing the relationship between Jupiter and the eagle to that of Augustus and Drusus.¹²⁸⁶ The link of Augustus to Jupiter was familiar to Horace, but it is notable that he compares Drusus to the eagle, especially in light of the previous discussion. Drusus is shown as the ‘messenger’ and ‘armour-bearer’ of Augustus. This idea reinforces the interpretation both of the provincial governors as Augustus’ ‘eagles’ but also of Augustus fulfilling the same role for Jupiter. However, Horace also uses the eagle and its symbolism to make wider political statements within this ode.¹²⁸⁷ He compares Drusus not just to an eagle but focuses on the rapacious and predatory traits of the eagle eventually intimating that without the guidance and restraint of Augustus Drusus might fall into the aggressive and destructive manner of an untamed wild animal, essentially a warmonger.¹²⁸⁸ Additionally, he uses the eagle (and the story of Carthage) to warn against the expansion of the empire, and by comparing the young Roman Republic to an eagle attacking the once-great Carthage¹²⁸⁹ he warns against underestimating the Gauls/Germans, as they may also be a young and fierce eagle.¹²⁹⁰ Or, more appropriately, considering his comparison of the Republic to an eagle, calls them ‘snakes with teeth’, which is a common motif in the zeitgeist already.¹²⁹¹

There are other references which connect Augustus to the eagle in literature: numerous portents involving the eagle are reported by Suetonius and Cassius Dio. One portending his death,¹²⁹² another portending the discord between him and the other triumvirs,¹²⁹³ but the striking one is when

¹²⁸² Essentially the eagle becomes a symbol of Augustan authority, Wallace-Hadrill, 1986: 85.

¹²⁸³ Hor. *Carm.* 4.4.

¹²⁸⁴ Benario, 1960: 344; Reckford, 1960: 23; Quinn, 1980: 304.

¹²⁸⁵ Hor. *Carm.* 4.4.1-20; Commager, 1962: 237; Ambrose, 1973: 26. It is similar to the eagle’s use in Verg. *Aen.* 5.255; 9.530; Quinn, 1980: 305.

¹²⁸⁶ Hor. *Carm.* 1.12; Reckford, 1960: 23, he is also emphasising the downward connection between Jupiter-Augustus-Drusus.

¹²⁸⁷ Johnson, 1969: 171-181 questions Horace’s sincerity when praises both Drusus and the princeps in this ode; Ambrose, 1973: 26, n.l.

¹²⁸⁸ Benario, 1960: 349; Reckford, 1960: 24-27; Ambrose, 1973: 26-28; 30; Reckford, 1960: 25 states that the reference to Ganymede (4.4.1) points to this dark side of success.

¹²⁸⁹ Ambrose, 1973: 29-30, he does this by comparing it to the youth of Drusus and thus the young eagle, Hor. *Carm.* 4.4.45-48.

¹²⁹⁰ Hor. *Carm.* 4.4.11; Ambrose, 1973: 27; 30.

¹²⁹¹ Hor. *Carm.* 4.4.11. The image of eagle fighting snake is seen in many earlier and contemporary sources, Aesch. *Cho.* 247; Cic. *Div.* 1.106; Hom. *Il.* 12.200; Soph. *Ant.* 125; Verg. *Aen.* 11.725.

¹²⁹² Suet. *Aug.* 97.

¹²⁹³ Suet. *Aug.* 96.

an eagle reportedly took a loaf of bread from the infant Augustus and returned it to him.¹²⁹⁴ Usually, as with previous republican figures,¹²⁹⁵ I would dismiss these portents as later invention, especially since they are only reported in the later sources. However, Wildfang argues (although for dreams and not portents) that the degree to which these stories fit into the Augustan programme and attachment to prominent, republican, figures makes their legitimacy, not as factual incidents, but as stories circulated in the period at least worth considering.¹²⁹⁶ In light of the examination of the connection between Augustus and the eagle it is easily possible that some of these stories were circulated in this period, especially that of Augustus as an infant, as we know of many legends surrounding major figures when they were young.¹²⁹⁷ If the story is contemporary it adds weight to some of the previous interpretations. The way that the eagle takes and replaces the bread is reminiscent of Tarquinius Priscus once again,¹²⁹⁸ linking it to the idea of divine election. It also introduces the idea of a return of fertility and prosperity (through the return of bread) another prominent Augustan theme.¹²⁹⁹

Augustus also continued the tradition that he and other republican figures, began,¹³⁰⁰ of attaching himself to the *aquila* standard. Mostly this seems incidental as it is purely through his appearance on the obverse of coins which show the *aquila* on the reverse that connect him to the standard.¹³⁰¹ These appear mostly in the western empire and exclusively on the coinage of Roman colonies.¹³⁰² When they do appear in the east it is only at Roman colonies.¹³⁰³ Thus, the *aquila* on coins takes on another aspect of symbolism, denoting a Roman colony, since these colonies were founded by veteran legions. The coupling of the *aquila* with the plough reinforces this symbolic association,¹³⁰⁴ i.e. when given a coin with this image the recipient would recognise that it comes from a Roman colony. However, there may be other ways that Augustus directly connected himself to the *aquila*. There is a story, directly following on from the republican tradition, of Augustus carrying the *aquila* after the *aquilifer* dies in the Battle of Mutina.¹³⁰⁵ However, the story is reported to us by Suetonius and is inexplicably absent from Galba's account of the battle to Cicero.¹³⁰⁶ Although it is possible Galba never noticed the incident, the fact that it does not appear in any contemporary account

¹²⁹⁴ Suet. *Aug.* 94; Cass. Dio. 45.2.1.

¹²⁹⁵ See above, p.87.

¹²⁹⁶ Wildfang, 2000.

¹²⁹⁷ Ptolemy discussed below, p.155, is a good example, but also Marius in the later tradition, App. *BCiv.* 1.7.61; 8.75; Plut. *Mar.* 36.5-6.

¹²⁹⁸ See above, p.88.

¹²⁹⁹ The obvious example being the Ara Pacis, Castriota, 1995.

¹³⁰⁰ Octavian and the *aquila*, Crawford, 1974: 525/2. See above, p.98.

¹³⁰¹ *RPC I*, 14-18, 128, 134, 135, 189-191; Amandy, Burnett, & Ripollès, 1992: 69; 86; 88; 97.

¹³⁰² They were also most likely connected to and produced to pay the legions involved in the Spanish campaigns; Sutherland, 1951: 34-35.

¹³⁰³ Pisidia: *RPC I*, 5412; Antioch: *RPC I*, 3530; Berytus: *RPC I*, 4535; Amandy, Burnett, & Ripollès, 1992: 540; 648.

¹³⁰⁴ *RPC I*, 3531; 5412.

¹³⁰⁵ Suet. *Aug.* 10.

¹³⁰⁶ Cic. *Ad Fam.* 10.30; Adams, 1963: 87.

casts doubt on its authenticity. Velleius Paterculus also mentions a similar incident,¹³⁰⁷ which is even more unbelievable,¹³⁰⁸ of an unarmed Augustus sneaking into the camp of Lepidus and stealing his eagle in 36 B.C., shortly before that army mutinied. Its likelihood is questioned even further when its similarity to the night raid in Book 10 of *The Iliad* is pointed out,¹³⁰⁹ as a technique of Velleius' declamatory training was to insert characters into heroic Homeric situations.¹³¹⁰ However, one connection that seems certain is that Augustus tried to attach his heirs to the *aquila*, as is shown by a coin from c.9-8 B.C. depicting a mounted Gaius with the *aquila* (Fig 5.27).¹³¹¹ He also focuses much of his attention on the recovery of the Parthian standards, as discussed above.¹³¹² We also see the first distinctly identifiable depiction of the eagle-topped sceptre being used in the triumph in the form of an Augustan coin depicting Tiberius in triumph from c.13-14 A.D. (Fig 5.28), but also with Augustus on a cameo gem (Fig 5.29).

Another use of the eagle in Augustan material culture appears to be an anomaly. The head of an eagle appears on the pommel of a personification on the left side of the Prima Porta statue's cuirass (Fig 5.30). There is a debate on whether this personification is representing either the recently subdued Spanish provinces or bowing down of the eastern provinces.¹³¹³ The literary sources seem to point to an interpretation of the figure as Spain since Agrippa subdued the Cantabrians in the same year that the Parthian standards were recovered,¹³¹⁴ making the representation of Gaul on the opposite side a reference to Caesar's Gallic wars. Additionally, the *Res Gestae* states that Augustus recovered standards not only from Parthia but from Spain and Gaul,¹³¹⁵ which point to the whole centre of the cuirass being thematically linked if the left side personifies Spain.

However, this type of pommel is not seen in any of the material culture from Spain and this type of raptor-/eagle-headed swords only appears in the east. Raptor-headed pommels start to appear from the ninth century B.C. (e.g. in Assyrian and Hittite culture),¹³¹⁶ but specifically eagle-headed swords only start to appear in Greece during the fifth century B.C. One is seen in the hands of Ares/Athena on a red-figure plaque and another being handed to Dionysus on a calyx crater (Fig

¹³⁰⁷ Vell. Pat. 2.80.3; Woodman, 1983: 204.

¹³⁰⁸ He seems to be making a point of contrast between the brave Octavian and the cowardly Lepidus and drawing from several examples of heroic actions told of other leaders, Woodman, 1983: 204, possibly likening Octavian to Scipio Africanus (Liv. 22.53), Mucius Scaevola (Vell. Pat. 2.12.3), or some Greek generals (Plut. *Ages.* 32.4; Polyaeus, *Strat.* 2.1.14).

¹³⁰⁹ Hom. *Il.* 10, where Odysseus and Diomedes sneak into the Trojan camp.

¹³¹⁰ Bonner, 1969: 158-160.

¹³¹¹ This dynastic continuity was a central theme on his gold and silver coinage, Sutherland, 1976: 105.

¹³¹² See above, p.140.

¹³¹³ Spain: Simon, 1986: 55; Hannestad, 1986: 55. The East: Zanker, 1988: 189; Edmondson, 2009: 304.

¹³¹⁴ Hor. *Ep.* 1.12.25-29; Simon, 1986: 55. Although Zanker, 1988: 189 interprets Horace's words to refer to the conquests in West and East.

¹³¹⁵ *RG.* 29.

¹³¹⁶ Barnett, 1983 provides a great overview of the development of these types of pommels in material culture from the ninth century B.C. to the fourth century A.D.

5.31).¹³¹⁷ These types of pommels also appear in a depiction of Galatian booty on the temple of Athena Polias in Pergamon, from the second century B.C. (Fig 5.32).¹³¹⁸ Some points present themselves from this brief overview of eagle-headed pommels. First, that most of these examples connect this type of sword to some divine individual (Ares, Dionysus, etc.) and thus must itself be connected to the divine in some way.¹³¹⁹ Secondly, as already stated, the only examples of this type of weapon come from the east and so the personification on the Prima Porta statue must be a representation of the eastern provinces bowing to Augustus.¹³²⁰ However, the eagle-headed sword is the only distinguishing feature of the personification, which implies this type of sword was intimately connected to the Roman conception of the east, possibly due to its divine associations (which may also be why it is placed with a personification as these also are seen as divine).

Interestingly, though, the Prima Porta statue is not the only example of this type of sword seen in this period. On the funerary altar of Publius Lucilius Gamala, who seems to have provided money to Ostia for the naval war against Sextus Pompeius in 38-36 B.C.,¹³²¹ is a *rostra* ending in a trident of three swords, two of which have eagle-headed pommels (Fig 5.33).¹³²² Since the types of swords on the *rostrum* of the monument resemble the swords seen in Pergamon, it may indicate some type of Galatian influence on these or Publius himself. It may be that these swords are being used in the same manner as on the Prima Porta statue, i.e. as a short-hand reference to the east.

Returning to the Hellenistic symbolism of the eagle, it appears often on the Augustan provincial coinage of the east. The eagle appears alone on the Augustan era coins of Sicily, Achaea, Sarmatia, Mysia, Lydia, Caria, Phrygia, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Egypt.¹³²³ It also appears with Zeus on a coin from Laodicea.¹³²⁴ All these coins obviously have Augustus' portrait on the obverse. Most of these eagle types represent a continuation between the Hellenistic coinage types and the Augustan coinage types, mentioned in more detail below.¹³²⁵ It seems logical that the eagle is being used in the same manner on these Augustan coins as it was in Hellenistic iconography, i.e. indicating Augustus' position as *cosmocrator* and representative of Jupiter / Zeus on earth. Certainly the literature of the period points to the interpretation of Augustus being selected by, and the intermediary between,

¹³¹⁷ Barnett, 1983: 69-70.

¹³¹⁸ Barnett, 1983: 70, there is also an example on an altar from Ormana in Pisidia.

¹³¹⁹ Barnett, 1983: 67. Ashurnasirpal II also seems an exception to this. However, the sword may be a direct reference to the god Ninurta; Barnett, 1983: 69. Barnett, 1983: 69-70 even implies that this sword is some sort of mysterious divine weapon reminiscent of Arthur's Excalibur but I do not think the current evidence can suggest this conclusively, especially due to its absence in literary sources.

¹³²⁰ Barnett, 1983: 71; Zanker, 1988: 189.

¹³²¹ *CIL* 14.375; Van der Meer, Stevens, & Stöger, 2005: 101-102

¹³²² Van der Meer, Stevens, & Stöger, 2005: 105.

¹³²³ Sicily: *RPC* I, 640; Achaea: *RPC* I, 1104; Sarmatia: *RPC* I, 1947B; Mysia: *RPC* I, 2285; Lydia: *RPC* I, 2557; 3047; Caria: *RPC* I, 2773; 2899; Galatia: *RPC* I, 3516; Cappadocia: *RPC* I, 2652; 3049; Egypt: *RPC* I, 5002.

¹³²⁴ *RPC* I, 2893.

¹³²⁵ Amandy, Burnett, & Ripollès, 1992: 171-172; 247; 389; 439; 476; 495.

Jupiter and the mortal world. It is mostly an aspect of the poetry, found in Vergil, Horace, and Ovid.¹³²⁶ Additionally, though, the eagle on these coins also symbolises continuation and succession from the Hellenistic kings. These provincial communities are using the eagle in the same manner as the previous kings and therefore representing Augustus as their successor. However, this may be problematic to his image as ‘first citizen’ and his avoidance of monarchical tendencies.

This symbolism of continuity and succession from the Hellenistic kings becomes especially problematic when looking at the coinage from Egypt. Here, Augustus is shown with the same eagle type (Fig 5.34) seen on the coinage of Cleopatra (Fig 5.20). This type of eagle is very specific, and recognisable, to Egypt and thus to the Ptolemaic dynasty, and Cleopatra. In fact, as stated,¹³²⁷ the eagle seems to have been connected to the Ptolemies more than any other Hellenistic dynasty. What is interesting, however, is that the eagle appears in stories connected to Ptolemy I Soter¹³²⁸ and Ptolemy IX Soter decides to place himself with an eagle-scalp on his coinage,¹³²⁹ this may indicate a general symbolic link between the eagle and the name ‘Soter’ as these two kings seem more connected to the eagle than other Ptolemies.¹³³⁰ Additionally, and as already mentioned,¹³³¹ the eagle does not seem to have any inherent symbolism or hold a special place in native Egyptian culture¹³³² and so is reserved purely for the Greek dynasts.¹³³³ The Augustan type begins in c.30 B.C., when Augustus is present in Egypt, and thus it is possible that he was directly involved in the choice of types.¹³³⁴ It seems strange, then, that Augustus is continuing an image so closely associated with the Ptolemaic dynasty after decrying Cleopatra and the Ptolemies for the years leading up to Actium¹³³⁵ and trying his best, when there, to both disassociate himself from the Ptolemies and adapt his image to suit Egyptian needs.¹³³⁶ There is a good example of this dichotomy at play from Cassius Dio. The instance where Augustus visited the tomb of Alexander, attempting to connect himself to the Hellenistic tradition, yet, at the same time, he also refused to visit the tomb of the Ptolemies, trying to distance himself from their reign. It may be that Augustus was hoping the other aspects of the eagle’s symbolism overshadowed this idea of continuation from the Ptolemies, i.e. the Hellenistic ideas of divine election and him as

¹³²⁶ Hor. *Carm.* 1.2.29-30; 41-52; 1.12.49-60; 3.5.1-4; 4.2.36-40; *Epist.* 1.16.27-29; Ov. *Met.* 15.858-70; *Tr.* 5.2.47-48; Prop. 3.11.49-50; Verg. *Aen.* 1.257-296; 6.791-807; Fears, 1977: 123-129.

¹³²⁷ See above. p.50.

¹³²⁸ Theoc. *Id.* 17.71-75; Suda, *Lagos*; Fears, 1977: 76; Smith, 1988: 96.

¹³²⁹ Smith, 1988: pl.75.18.

¹³³⁰ Smith, 1988: 43; 96.

¹³³¹ See above, p.50.

¹³³² Brunner-Traut, 1975: 64; Strabo, 17.1.4 and Dio. Sic. 1.87 thought those in Thebes worship the eagle. But it is more likely that they confused it with the hawk/vulture.

¹³³³ Brunner-Traut, 1975: 64; Hazzard, 2000: 91-92.

¹³³⁴ Bruun, 1999: 29.

¹³³⁵ Cass. Dio. 51.16.5; Zanker, 1988: 33-78; Orlin, 2008: 234.

¹³³⁶ Although he seemed to embrace native Egyptian representation, he seemed to mostly abandon Ptolemaic concepts, Huzar, 1995: 3120-3121; Dundas, 2002.

representative of, in this specific case, Zeus-Sarapis on earth.¹³³⁷ Interestingly, Cassius Dio indicates that one of the reasons Augustus spared the Egyptian populace after Actium was his favour of Sarapis.¹³³⁸ He may also have approved of the possible connection to the name ‘Soter’, or ‘saviour’,¹³³⁹ promoting the idea that he ‘saved’ Egypt from the Ptolemies.¹³⁴⁰ This emphasis of disassociating the eagle from the Ptolemies is also expressed by the only difference on the two coins, the identification of Augustus as *autokrator* rather than *basileus*. It is clear that he is using images and ideas that would be familiar to the primary audience of these coins, the Egyptians themselves. To them the hint at continuation and all the concepts connected to Hellenistic kingship were inherent in the continuation of these types. In fact, this is an excellent example of the type of cultural interactions described at the beginning of the chapter, i.e. creolisation etc., as both Roman and Greco-Egyptian ideas have merged into one single expression and created a new symbolism for the eagle in this context.

Additionally, many of the types of eagle seen on these provincial coins are specific to the city that produced them. For example, Laodicea has the image of Zeus-Laodicea holding an eagle which is a specific reference to that city.¹³⁴¹ Panormus, Abydos, and Tripolis continue previous coin types specific to those cities.¹³⁴² The Spartan coinage may be referring to the cults of the city.¹³⁴³ Thus, not only is Augustus being linked to the continuation of Hellenistic kingship through the eagle, he is also, through the use of local eagle-types, being linked to the local context and history. He, or the provincial governor, or the provincials themselves were using the eagle in order to attach and associate the new *princeps* of the new imperial regime to their own local ideas and institutions.

This continuation of Hellenistic eagle symbolism and the representation of Augustus as divine-elected by Jupiter also appears later in his reign on the Gemma Augustea, where the eagle sits beneath Augustus on his ‘throne’ (Fig 5.35). Here, again, Augustus is presented as *cosmocrator*, the divinely elected ruler of the world.¹³⁴⁴ The image is also reminiscent of portrayals of Jupiter, and it seems that the eagle may be referencing Jupiter as the divine appointee of Augustus to this position. Another aspect of this interpretation of Augustus as *cosmocrator* and intermediary between the mortal and divine realms is the fact that he holds a *lituus*, instrument of the augurs, in his hands.¹³⁴⁵ Along with the *lituus*, the eagle is helping to identify Augustus as the divinely-elected ruler and intermediary

¹³³⁷ Ptolemy had also used this idea of him as the representative of Zeus frequently, Callim. *Hymn 1*. 58-66; 69.77; Theoc. 17.64-73; Huzar, 1988: 380; Huzar, 1995: 3122; Hazzard, 2000: 91-92.

¹³³⁸ Cass. Dio. 51.16.4; Orlin, 2008: 234.

¹³³⁹ This is the meaning given in the *LSJ*.

¹³⁴⁰ This epithet was later applied to Nero, *OGI*, 668.

¹³⁴¹ *RPC I*, 2893cf.; Amandy, Burnett, & Ripollès, 1992: 476; Howgego, 2005: 3.

¹³⁴² *RPC I*, 640; Amandy, Burnett, & Ripollès, 1992: 171-172.

¹³⁴³ *RPC I*, 1104; Amandy, Burnett, & Ripollès, 1992: 247; Howgego, 2005: 3.

¹³⁴⁴ Fears, 1977: 123-129; Hannestad, 1986: 78; Zanker, 1988: 234.

¹³⁴⁵ Zanker, 1988: 234; this aspect of Augustus also appears on official inscriptions from later in his reign, *CIL* 10.1421. Adding to this, the eagle is an important bird in Roman augury.

with the gods. The gem shows that what was originally a Hellenistic idea and implementation of the eagle had now become acceptable and official in Rome itself, at least in the private art of the elite.¹³⁴⁶

Overall, the Augustan political symbolism of the eagle can be summarised into some major aspects. The most frequent of these is the concept of divine election by Jupiter and Augustus as the vicegerent of Jupiter on earth, thus occupying a similar position in the divine hierarchy as the eagle. Most of the examples discussed relate to this concept in one way or another. This concept also connects to the ideas of Hellenistic and Roman monarchy and creates new 'Roman' symbols that are connected to the one-man rule of the principate, mainly the eagle holding the *corona civica*. But these also link to the eagle's larger symbolism as a messenger of the divine, or representative of a higher power, which is seen not just in its connection to Augustus as vicegerent of Jupiter, but also to Drusus, and possibly the provincial governors as vicegerents of Augustus. Secondly, the *aquila* is used in a familiar way to symbolise the connection of the *princeps* and his heirs to the legions and the veteran colonies. Despite all this, however, there are still other uses for the eagle in this period, either to express other political ideas, i.e. in Horace, or as a racial character trait, i.e. the personification of the East.

5.6.2: Continuity and Change Post-Augustus

A large majority of this symbolism continues in the eagle's use by the Julio-Claudians and the Flavians. The idea of the emperor as both divinely elected representative of Jupiter on earth as well as the successor of the Hellenistic kings in the east continues in both the coinage and art of the later emperors.¹³⁴⁷ Two good examples show the continuation of this theme, both of Claudius: one a cameo with Claudius as Jupiter and his family as other Olympian gods with the eagle looking towards Jupiter/Claudius (Fig 5.36);¹³⁴⁸ and another a statue of Claudius as Jupiter with the eagle by his side (Fig 5.37).¹³⁴⁹ The eagle holding the *corona civica* also continues¹³⁵⁰ and, as Zanker states,¹³⁵¹ becomes more of an imperial symbol throughout the century. Eagle portents also appear in connection to the later emperors, again mostly attested in Suetonius, but the tradition is certainly in place.¹³⁵² The coinages of the later emperors also connect them to local contexts, just as Augustus', although

¹³⁴⁶ Hammond, 1940: 5; Fears, 1977: 45-83; Hannestad, 1986: 82.

¹³⁴⁷ Tiberius: *RPC* I, 832; 2901; 2907; 3068; 3133; 5077. Caligula: *RPC* I, 1808; 3073; 3235-3236; 4453. Claudius: *RPC* I, 2430; 3052; 3062; 3237-3238; 5193. Nero: *RPC* I, 1592; 2019; 2565; 2658; 3138; 3240-3241; 3525; 4180-4186; 5261. Galba: *RPC* I, 4193-4196. Otho: *RPC* I, 4200. Vespasian: *RPC* II, 692; 1329; 1349; 1423-1425; 1511-1512; 1518; 1615; 1801; 1953; Moushmov, 1912: 6713. Titus: *RIC* Titus 464; *RPC* II, 321; 1967. Domitian: *RIC* Domitian 144; 269-270; *RPC* II, 29-32; 494; 1976-1979; 2484.

¹³⁴⁸ Simon, 1986: 82-83.

¹³⁴⁹ Hannestad, 1986: 104-105.

¹³⁵⁰ Caligula: *RPC* I, 1726; Nero: *RPC* I, 3136; Domitian: *RIC* Domitian 807-808.

¹³⁵¹ Zanker, 1988: 93-94.

¹³⁵² Suet. *Claud.* 7; *Dom.* 6; *Gal.* 4; *Tib.* 14; *Vesp.* 5; *Vit.* 9; *Tac. Ann.* 2.17; *Hist.* 1.62.3; Goodyear, 1981: 232; Shotter, 1993: 175; Jones & Milns, 2002: 55; 137; Damon, 2003: 228.

sometimes in different cities.¹³⁵³ The later emperors also continue the tradition of attaching themselves to the *aquila* and the Roman colonies on their coinage.¹³⁵⁴ One minor change in this use of the eagle is that with Nero this trope begins to appear on coinage produced in Rome.¹³⁵⁵ This may be linked with a need to appear strongly connected to the legions within Rome itself as it only begins to happen in the period of the civil wars.¹³⁵⁶ The trope of connecting leaders to the *aquila* (either throwing them into the enemy ranks or fighting with them) was also extended back into the regal and republican period, for example Servius Tullius and Flaminius.¹³⁵⁷ Presumably this is a trope copied from Livy, who has many famous Roman figures using or carrying the standards in some manner.¹³⁵⁸ Even the idea of the Parthian connection to the standards seems to remain as they are said to bow to the emperor and the *aquila* on a couple of occasions in this period.¹³⁵⁹ Lastly, the use of the eagle-sceptre in triumphal imagery also continues regularly. Not only does Tiberius directly carry on the Augustan image of him holding the sceptre in the triumphal chariot (Fig 5.38)¹³⁶⁰ the trope gets taken up by the later emperors.¹³⁶¹

There are, however, some new uses for the eagle that appear in this century. In c.50 a new image of the eagle standing on an object appears on the provincial coinage of the Claudian era. The image first appears on the reverse of a coin from Perinthus (c.41-68) depicting Dionysius on the obverse (Fig 5.39) and then on a coin from Laodicea (c.50-59) with Agrippina on the obverse (Fig 5.40). This latter coin continues into the reign of Nero, and eventually a coin from Cibyra (c.54) and Laodicea again (c.62) show the image with the obverse of Marcellus (Fig 5.41). In the reign of Vespasian, though, it moves from the east and into Rome itself with a coin he produces in c.69-79 (Fig 5.42), as well as the east in Antioch (Fig 5.43).

It is uncertain whether the eagle is standing on a *cippus* or an altar in some of these images, but due to the fact that the coins with the most detail seem to clearly depict an altar rather than *cippus*

¹³⁵³ Tiberius: *RPC* I, 2901, 3068; 5077. Caligula: *RPC* I, 1808; 3073. Claudius: *RPC* I, 3052; 5193. Nero: *RPC* I, 5261. Vespasian: *RPC* II, 1801.

¹³⁵⁴ Tiberius: *RPC* I, 37; 70; 139; 194-195; 352-356; 364; 4544; 4547. Caligula: *RPC* I, 143-144; 368-369. Claudius: *RPC* I, 1256; 4547. Nero: *RPC* I, 1257; 4172; 4177. Galba: *RPC* I, 1282. Vespasian: *RPC* II, 1603. Titus: *RPC* II, 861. Domitian: *RIC* Domitian 843-844; *RPC* II, 865; 868. It is also connected to emperors in Tac. *Hist.* 1.44.2; 2.29.3; 2.89.1; Chilver, 1979: 102; Ash, 2007: 156; 349.

¹³⁵⁵ *RIC* Nero 68.

¹³⁵⁶ *RIC* Galba 150; 509; *RIC* Vitellius 153; *RIC* Vespasian 136; *RIC* Titus 516.

¹³⁵⁷ Servius Tullius: Frontin. *Str.* 2.8.1. Flaminius: Sil. *Pun.* 5.427-431. Fabius: Sil. *Pun.* 7.740-743.

¹³⁵⁸ Agrippa (446 B.C.): Liv. 3.70.10. Camillus: Liv. 6.8.1. Gaius Atinius: Liv. 34.46.12. Gaius Decimus Flavius: Liv. 27.14.7. Navius: Liv. 26.5.15-17. Titus Pedanius: Liv. 25.14.6-8.

¹³⁵⁹ Suet. *Cal.* 14; Tac. *Ann.* 15.29 (although this is Tiridates, the Armenian king, the eastern 'client-king' trope is the same); Hurley, 1993: 44.

¹³⁶⁰ *RIC* Tiberius 1.

¹³⁶¹ Claudius: *RPC* I, 1639-40. Vespasian: *RIC* Vespasian 1370; 1563 (Titus). Domitian: *RPC* II, 1666.

Interestingly, Caligula places the sceptre in the hands of his father Germanicus on one coin, presumably referencing the victories he never received the credit for, *RIC* Caligula 57.

it would point to favouring this interpretation.¹³⁶² There may be some precedent for this type of image on coinage as similar images appear on the coinage of Croton (Fig 5.44),¹³⁶³ Eryx (Fig 5.45), and Agrigentum (Fig 5.46).¹³⁶⁴ However, all these images are not only iconographically different to these coins (they seem to clearly display the column-type *cippus* rather than an altar), they were also produced in the fourth century B.C. at the latest, significantly removed from this coinage. So what does the eagle on an altar symbolise? It is possible that it is related to the local cults of the eastern cities that the image appears in; they may have possibly had an eagle statue on an altar related to Dionysius or Men.¹³⁶⁵ Another small possibility is that the image relates to a story in Pliny who relates that in the city of Sestos, further down the Hellespont than Perinthus, there was a shrine set up to honour both Jupiter and a young girl that had died, the eagle referring to her pet that alighted itself on her funeral pyre.¹³⁶⁶ However, Sestos is quite a distance not only from Perinthus but all the other cities that use this image. If the eagle is connected to these local cults, then it is this imagery that Vespasian then brings back to Rome. There is also a possibility that it has some astrological symbolism, as the constellation Ara is quite close to Aquila. However, there is a better interpretation provided by some mid-first century intaglio gems. These were found in Britain and dated to the mid-first century A.D. and show the eagle on an altar surrounded by legionary standards (Fig 5.47).¹³⁶⁷ These gems coupled with the finds of images of eagles in Roman forts,¹³⁶⁸ one of which was found in the *principia* (possibly in the *sacellum*),¹³⁶⁹ which means the image may have a military interpretation. In fact, the coin from Perinthus (Fig 5.39) does seem to show something which resembles a legionary standard next to the eagle. The fact that the image is adopted by Vespasian, who was intimately connected to the legions, also provides some circumstantial evidence for this interpretation. If so, this image becomes yet another symbol which helps attach the emperor to the *aquila* and the legions, and the *aquila*'s religious identity (hence the altar). Another use of the eagle that appears post-Augustus is its use in apotheosis imagery after Augustus' death, but this is discussed in detail above.¹³⁷⁰

5.7: Conclusion

The large amount of source material available for this period has allowed for an extremely detailed picture of the eagle's symbolism. We see a continuation of many of the ideas discussed in the previous chapters. Pliny regurgitates and adds to the knowledge of the physical eagle, entwining it

¹³⁶² Höcker & Prayon, 2002; Neudecker, 2003. The Neronian coin from Laodicea seems to be an exception as the eagle is shown definitely on a *cippus*.

¹³⁶³ Also, *SNG ANS* 336.

¹³⁶⁴ Also, *SNG ANS*, 898var.; 1098; *SNG Cop.* 93; *SNG Fitz* 913.

¹³⁶⁵ The depiction of the eagle on a *cippus* on this latter coin makes it more likely that it is a local cult, as it distinguishes it from the larger trope.

¹³⁶⁶ Plin. *HN.* 10.6.

¹³⁶⁷ Henig, 1974: Nos.705; 708.

¹³⁶⁸ One at Corbridge, Richmond, 1943: 153-154.

¹³⁶⁹ Richmond, 1943: 153-154.

¹³⁷⁰ See above, p.136.

with its religious symbolism. This religious symbolism, especially its connection with Jupiter, is reinforced as well as the religious (and communal) nature of the *aquila* standard. But, once again, this religious symbolism is not bound only to Jupiter. A large number of other deities, some seen before and some utterly new, are also attached to the eagle in one form or another. The eagle, and *aquila* standard, continue to consistently be used in portents and omens, mainly surrounding important individuals. Not only this, but we also see the continuation of local symbolism regarding the eagle. Much provincial coinage retains the eagle and relates it to its own regional context, just as it did before the Roman period.

But this period also sees a huge amount of innovation regarding the eagle's symbolism. Not only do we find it being used on magical amulets, to both ensure the presence of kings and ward off miscarriages during pregnancy, but parts of the eagle seem to be used in various eye remedies. This latter use shows us that, although favoured of Jupiter, the eagle was still hunted and killed despite its religious associations. Many new religious aspects of the eagle are also introduced. Not only do we see it used for a different purpose in connection with the gods of the East (Bel, Baalshamin, etc.), we also see a significant rise in its use in connection with the solar deities of the empire (Sol, Apollo, etc.). This also links to the eagle's new appearance in the imagery of apotheosis, starting with the emperor, and eventually permeating into every level of society. But its religious aspects broaden out even further, with its connection to the Aquila constellation allowing for its use in astrology (both personal and political) as well as forming the portal through which the myths of the eagle are told. In fact, a large proportion of new eagle myths are told in this period, and details that point to Jupiter's Eagle being a separate and monstrous entity to regular eagles. Ovid uses the eagle in many of his myths but to new effect, using its dichotomous nature to produce a barbarous rapist or comment on the sexual nature of women. Simultaneously, he and other writers (Horace and Phaedrus) are using the eagle to make subtle political statements, hidden behind its symbolism. They are only capable of doing this due to Augustus', and the later imperial regime's, total adoption of the eagle into their political imagery. It represents the hierarchy of the whole regime through its religious symbolism. Augustus is Jupiter's eagle, and thus all under him are his eagle. By using the eagle Augustus, and the later emperors, deftly attach their imagery to the legions with the *aquila*'s symbolism broadening to encompass wars of revenge and Roman colonies. Lastly, this consistent and prolific use of the eagle by the empire leads to, by the end of the century, a direct symbolic relationship between the eagle and the empire.

From this brief summary it is clear that the eagle symbolism has become a larger and much more complex web of meanings and interactions between meanings. But, there are some overarching points that present themselves when the material is looked at as a whole. Firstly, the fact that many of the new aspects of the eagle's symbolism seen in this century have a basis in many of the symbolic ideas I have already discussed in the previous chapters, although sometimes not obviously. For example, the eagle's use in eye medicine seems to have a basis in its conceptual symbolism as the bird

with the best eyesight, seen from Homer onwards. The sexually rapacious eagles found in Ovid's amatory poetry have their basis in the simply rapacious eagle of Aristophanes and Plautus. Augustus uses the eagle in a Hellenistic manner to convey monarchical ideas, based in the use of the eagle as a royal symbol we saw in the third and second centuries B.C. Even some of the new aspects of the eagle's religious symbolism have their basis in previous thought. The eagle is still not confined to one deity, but many of those it is attached to are the equivalent 'supreme' god, equal to Jupiter. Thus, even though much of this symbolism is innovative and new, much of it is linked to previously discussed symbolic ideas surrounding the eagle.

Secondly, the eagle's symbolism in this period provides good examples of the ideas discussed in the introduction to this chapter, e.g. creolisation, etc. Through the century we see that 'Roman' symbolic conceptions of the eagle intertwine with those of the provinces in various ways to create a new, sometimes unified, 'Imperial Roman' symbolism. Some examples are the eagle-stone, which seems to have merged into Roman magical thought from Mesopotamia, missing Greece in the process. Phaedrus' fabulous eagle uses what was originally a Greek form, the fable, written in Greek, but to comment on the Roman imperial system. Many of the deities from the periphery are now being merged with Roman religious life, with the eagle as a linking point, i.e. eastern solar deities, Bel, and Baalshamin. Even those technically on the outside of Roman imperial culture start to blend the eagle's symbolism into their own cultural symbolism. *4 Ezra* is a good example of this, as not only is the eagle being used in a traditional Jewish way, it is also representative of the new Roman Imperial regime.

Thirdly, this period also gives some examples of separated and possibly localised symbolism dependant on place, time, and gender. The continuation of local coin types with the eagle point to a very local conception of the eagle's symbolism in those communities, which does not change throughout the century. Additionally, even though the peripheral deities (e.g. Bel and the Celtic sky god) start to be incorporated, they are still isolated to the regions of the empire that worshipped them. We also seem to see some possible change in the eagle's symbolism over time. Although it is possible that Trajan is using the eagle in the same way, it seems like the *aquila's* use as a symbol of revenge and redemption of Roman honour, introduced at the beginning of the period, may have disappeared by the end. This would lock that aspect of its symbolism into the first half of the century. Additionally, through Pliny we get to see an aspect of the eagle's symbolism that is gender defined. Although men knew of the eagle-stone and its magical protection, it is unlikely that it would be a strong association. However, the pregnant woman wearing the amulet, having been told the story involving its origin in an eagle's nest, would most likely look at other eagles and think of the magical protection they provided to her unborn child through the stone.

Lastly, it is also likely that some of the symbolism discussed in this period can be retrojected into the previous centuries. For example, the monstrous Eagle in myth could be said to have existed in the prior centuries as the myths it is involved in (Prometheus, Ganymede, etc.) also existed in the

previous centuries. Additionally, since ideas such as astrology, *paranatellonta*, eye medicine, and magical amulets all existed in the periods prior to this one the eagle's symbolic associations within these may also have existed. Although this is all possible, and in some cases highly probable, it is not confirmable. But, once again, it must be emphasised that many of the symbolic associations discussed in the previous chapters were still active in this period. In fact, as we saw with Ovid, much of the new symbolic aspects of the eagle use these older ideas and either build from them or react to them in order to create their own symbolic associations.

So what does this mean for the interpretation of the Silchester Eagle, that may have been produced in this period? All the previous possibilities from earlier chapters still apply, but there is now an even greater list of possibilities for its meaning. Since it may have had a lid, it is possible it was used to store materials, possibly even *aetites* for a mid-wife or *collyria*, containing eagle parts, for a renowned oculist.¹³⁷¹ Maybe it was even part of a larger statue group depicting a metamorphosis into an eagle,¹³⁷² or as a representation of a fable,¹³⁷³ possibly even holding something in its claws. In fact, it may have even rested atop a sphere or snake, linked to apotheosis, maybe even, since something was removed from the top, an image of emperor was placed there. It may have even had a greater link to the emperor, appearing with a statue of the emperor as Jupiter and *cosmocrator*, or in another aspect. Since it was discovered in Britain, it may be a prime example of the creolisation discussed at the beginning of this chapter, being made for a representation of the Celtic sky god, or another local cult. Or, alternatively, it may have been brought to Britain by an individual from another province and be linked to Eastern deities such as Bel or Baalshamin, a reminder of the religion of their homeland. It may have had even more personal connotations, representing the constellation that was the *paranatellonta* of the individual that commissioned it. Even if it was produced as a military symbol, it may have had a broader context, being made to commemorate Roman redemption in returning a standard, or wider religious associations of the eagle in the legions, those that are hinted at in this chapter, but are discussed in depth during the next chapter. All of these can be applied to the Silchester Eagle, even devoid of specific context it has numerous interpretations based purely on the polyvalent nature of the eagle's symbolism.

¹³⁷¹ See above, p.114.

¹³⁷² See above, p.119 & 131.

¹³⁷³ See above, p.125.

Chapter 6: Second Century A.D.: A Developing Eagle

6.1: Introduction

This chapter will focus mainly on the continuity and change within the symbolic picture of the eagle presented in the previous chapters, as well as exploring in more depth not only new symbolism produced in this period but also how these sources impact on previously explored notions surrounding the eagle. The source material has slightly decreased compared to the previous century but there is still a large array to be drawn from. The chapter is divided into the same familiar sections. The ‘Physical Animal and Reality’ section will deal with the continuity and change in ancient thought about not just the actual bird but also its relation to medicine and the eagle-stone. Most of the new information provided comes from Aelian, so the section will focus on his work. ‘Concepts and Characteristics’ will discuss continuity and change in this aspect of the eagle’s symbolism, highlighting its connection to new concepts, such as tyranny and wildness. It will also discuss the interpretation of the eagle in dreams in Artemidorus’ *Oneirocritica*. ‘Religion and Myth’ will continue the ongoing discussion of the eagle’s attachment to different deities, its appearance in myth, and use in both augury and apotheosis. Additionally, though, it will also discuss the rise of alternative beliefs in the second century A.D. and the eagle’s symbolic place within them, particularly focusing on demonology and henotheism. Following on from this discussion the ‘Martial and State Connections’ section will examine the developing religious nature of the standards, building on the ideas seen in Chapter 4 to answer what they actually were and how they worked within in Roman religious thought. Additionally, it will explore the possibility of the eagle becoming a direct symbol of Rome in this period, based on a passage of Tacitus.¹³⁷⁴ Lastly, the ‘Political Aspects’ section will deal purely with the continuity and change in the eagle’s use by the imperial regimes of this century compared with the Julio-Claudians and Flavians.

6.2: Physical Animal and Reality

6.2.1: Aelian’s Eagle

The sources of this period repeat a lot of the information about eagles we saw in the previous sources, both the accurate and inaccurate information. The accurate information includes references to the eagle’s good eyesight,¹³⁷⁵ the fact that they have small broods,¹³⁷⁶ and Aelian relates the story from Pliny of the eagle hunting fawns,¹³⁷⁷ as well as waterfowl.¹³⁷⁸ He also repeats that they are

¹³⁷⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 2.17.

¹³⁷⁵ Apul. *Flor.* 125-180; Arist. *His. An.* 620a; Lucian, *Icar.* 13-14; Plin. *HN.* 10.88.

¹³⁷⁶ Arist. *His. An.* 563a; Plin. *HN.* 10.4; 79; Plut. *Vit. Mar.* 36.5-6.

¹³⁷⁷ Ael. *NA.* 2.39; Arist. *His. An.* 618b; Plin. *HN.* 10.5.

¹³⁷⁸ Ael. *NA.* 5.33; Plin. *HN.* 10.3.

defensive of their territory¹³⁷⁹ and their penchant for hunting both snakes and tortoises¹³⁸⁰ and borrows, like Pliny, Aristotelian classifications.¹³⁸¹ Alongside this accurate information is the continuation of the popular misinformation about the eagle. The stories of it testing its young by getting them to stare into the sun¹³⁸² and of its war with the swan are also seen in the sources of this period.¹³⁸³ Additionally, Aelian repeats the information about the eagle-stone¹³⁸⁴ and Lucian, through discussing how Menippus can improve his eyesight with eagle wings, hints at their inclusion in eye medicine.¹³⁸⁵

But this period also provides some new information and stories surrounding the eagle as a physical bird. Most of this information comes from a single author who I've already mentioned, Aelian, who was writing in the Severan period. Heavily submerged in the 'Second Sophistic', Aelian's *De Natura Animalium* was a collection of facts and stories about the natural world, written to be used as a guidebook of examples for intellectuals of the period.¹³⁸⁶ These examples were then employed in conversation and declamation. As we can see from some examples in his contemporaries, Achilles Tatius and Philostratus, in this period the use of knowledge of the natural world implies refinement and education on the part of the individual expressing it. Kleitophon uses it to seduce Leukippe, and Apollonios takes every possibility to share it.¹³⁸⁷ The difference between Aelian's collection and that of Pliny, or Aristotle, before him, was that there was not as much of a focus on 'truth' but rather on the collection and repetition of stories. Therefore, the new information about the eagle found in Aelian, although it may be commonly believed and thought to be about the actual animal, could also include moralistic exemplars or fables interwoven with these 'facts'. In fact, Smith points out that particular stories and ideas in Aelian are used as an allegory for the various issues that Aelian believed plagued his contemporary society, such as tyranny and immorality.¹³⁸⁸ Thus, when approaching the stories found in Aelian we must be wary of what may be common information known about the eagle as an animal and what may be moralistic fable surrounding the eagle, which is better discussed in the next section.¹³⁸⁹

¹³⁷⁹ Ael. *NA*. 2.39; Plin. *HN*. 10.4.

¹³⁸⁰ Ael. *NA*. 2.26; 7.16; Plin. *HN*. 10.5; Plut. *Mor.* 547B; 980B.

¹³⁸¹ Ael. *NA*. 2.39; Arist. *His. An.* 618b-619b; Plin. *HN*. 10.5. Ant. Lib. 20.6 mentions another species not seen before, the *ὑπαιετος* or 'under-eagle', it may be that it is a *ὑπαιετος* which Arist. *His. An.* 618b equates with several vultures; Celoria, 1992: 162.

¹³⁸² Ael. *NA*. 2.26; 9.3; Arist. *His. An.* 619b; Plin. *HN*. 10.3.

¹³⁸³ Ael. *NA*. 5.34; *VH*. 1.14; Plin. *HN*. 10.95.

¹³⁸⁴ Ael. *NA*. 1.42; Celsus, *TW*. 3.86.

¹³⁸⁵ Ael. *NA*. 1.42; Lucian, *Icar*. 13-14, since Lucian is writing a satire he may not actually believe in this remedy. For the previous sources, see above, p.114.

¹³⁸⁶ Scholfield, 1958: xiii; Smith, 2014: 4-5.

¹³⁸⁷ Ach. Tat. 1.15-19; 2.21-22; Philostr. *Imag.* 1.3; *VA*. 2.2.1-2; 2.6; 2.11.1-14.2; 2.15.1; 16; 3.1.2; 2.6-9; 3.46-49; 6.10.6; 6.25; Smith, 2014: 5-6.

¹³⁸⁸ Smith, 2014: 70; 179; 215.

¹³⁸⁹ See below, p.169.

Once the obvious fables and moralistic allegory are removed from Aelian's eagle information we are again left with information that seems to have some basis in fact and the misinformation that appeared in previous periods. The new information that appears includes the fact that the eagle is extremely defensive of its young,¹³⁹⁰ clawing at any intruders that approach its nest. In fact, this accurate information contradicts some earlier information that the eagle was jealous of its young and abandoned it.¹³⁹¹ Another surprising piece of seemingly accurate information is Aelian's report that in 'India' certain tribes use the eagle for hunting (along with other birds of prey).¹³⁹² Although Aelian's 'India' seems to be an imagined landscape for reporting the unbelievable¹³⁹³ there is a long tradition of certain tribes in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan actually using Golden Eagles for hunting purposes, a tradition which may date back as far as Aelian's period.¹³⁹⁴

The misinformation that Aelian relates includes the suggestion that the eagle never drinks or even gets thirsty, which is clearly not possible.¹³⁹⁵ He also claims that it always flies higher than other bird.¹³⁹⁶ However, this may be part of a larger allegorical story.¹³⁹⁷ He states that the herb comfrey is fatal to eagles.¹³⁹⁸ However, there does not seem to be any evidence that it is poisonous to anything. In fact, it may have some medicinal qualities.¹³⁹⁹ Interestingly, he also contradicts himself. In one passage he states that the eagle will only eat carrion, or steal prey off other birds,¹⁴⁰⁰ but in another passage he states that the eagle will only ever eat prey it has hunted itself.¹⁴⁰¹ Clearly, both stories serve his purposes in each passage and so the 'truth' gives way to his argument/allegory. But he also repeats a story seen in Plutarch, that the feathers of eagles, when rubbed together with those of other birds, destroy the other birds' feathers but they remain intact.¹⁴⁰² Although the information is wrong, some of it may have been believed about the actual eagle. These stories, apart from the confusion over the eagle's relationship to carrion, must have been collected from somewhere by Aelian and, if they were to be used as exemplar in conversation or declamation, must have been familiar to his (or their) audience. Thus, although untrue, they reflect popular opinion about the bird, just as in previous periods.

¹³⁹⁰ Ael. *NA*. 2.40.

¹³⁹¹ Arist. *Hist. An.* 619b; Plin. *HN*. 10.4. This information might not necessarily be contradictory as eagles do eventually leave their young, but by that stage the eaglets would appear fully-grown and Aelian would not describe them as 'young'.

¹³⁹² Ael. *NA*. 4.26.

¹³⁹³ Smith, 2014: 165.

¹³⁹⁴ The practice is also found in Bayan-Ölgii, Mongolia, and the Xinjiang province in China, Schultz, 2005 discusses the tradition of eagle hunting in Xinjiang in the modern era but it is clear that the tradition is an ancient one on the Asian steppe.

¹³⁹⁵ Ael. *NA*. 2.26.

¹³⁹⁶ Ael. *NA*. 15.22.

¹³⁹⁷ Smith, 2014: 245-246. See below, p.167.

¹³⁹⁸ Ael. *NA*. 6.46.

¹³⁹⁹ Staiger, 2013.

¹⁴⁰⁰ Ael. *NA*. 9.10.

¹⁴⁰¹ Ael. *NA*. 2.39.

¹⁴⁰² Ael. *NA*. 9.20; Plut. *Mor.* 680E.

Aelian also makes a distinction between eagles and the species known as ‘Zeus’ eagle’, detailing that regular eagles are predatory whereas ‘Zeus’ eagle’ only eats grass.¹⁴⁰³ This is interesting, as it shows, at least to Aelian and possibly others, there was a distinction between the eagle as an animal and the eagle that was Zeus’ (possibly the monstrous eagle discussed in the previous chapter).¹⁴⁰⁴ Clearly ‘Zeus’ eagle’ does not exist in reality though, as no eagle eats grass and this is the only defining feature Aelian gives.

6.3: Concepts and Characteristics

6.3.1: Continuity and Change.

Once again we find that many of the characteristics of the eagle that are used symbolically in the previous centuries are repeated again in this period. The eagle’s keen eyesight,¹⁴⁰⁵ the height of its flying,¹⁴⁰⁶ the sharpness of its claws¹⁴⁰⁷ and the harshness of its cry¹⁴⁰⁸ are all picked out and used in various sources. The speed of the eagle is focused on in written sources,¹⁴⁰⁹ but it is also seen in some visual material. Pausanias describes a mechanism used to begin a chariot race in Elis which sent a bronze eagle flying upwards and a dolphin downwards.¹⁴¹⁰ Clearly both animals were picked due to their relationship to speed. Additionally, some vehicle mounts that were found in Gaul and Britain are shaped in the form of eagles (Fig 6.1).¹⁴¹¹ Again the speed of the eagle relates to the movement of the vehicle. The eagle is also used to convey familiar concepts in this period. Not only is it used mostly in its predatory guise,¹⁴¹² to express the falling upon prey, but also in the contexts of martial valour,¹⁴¹³ general superiority,¹⁴¹⁴ rapaciousness,¹⁴¹⁵ and possibly loyalty.¹⁴¹⁶

But the authors of this period are not content with simply repeating the concepts and characteristics of the previous period, they also build upon them by using them in novel ways. Pliny the Younger uses the idea of the eagle flying higher than other birds to self-deprecate his own poetry by calling it doves among Mamilianus’ eagles (i.e. his far better poetry).¹⁴¹⁷ Fronto continues this

¹⁴⁰³ Ael. *NA*. 9.10.

¹⁴⁰⁴ See above, p.129.

¹⁴⁰⁵ Ael. *NA*. 1.42; Apul. *Flor.* 2; Lucian, *Icar.* 13-14; Sext. Emp. *Prof.* 5.81.

¹⁴⁰⁶ Apul. *Flor.* 2; Plut. *Vit. Dem.* 19.1; *Mor.* 806E-806F; 962D.

¹⁴⁰⁷ Apul. *Flor.* 2; *GA.* 12.67; Plut. *Mor.* 520F.

¹⁴⁰⁸ Max. *Or.* 25.3.

¹⁴⁰⁹ App. *Pun.* 14.100; Apul. *Flor.* 2.

¹⁴¹⁰ Paus. 6.20.12.

¹⁴¹¹ Toynbee & Wilkins, 1982: 249-250.

¹⁴¹² Ael. *NA*. 15.1; App. *Pun.* 14.100; Apul. *Flor.* 2; *Met.* 6.6; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 9.16; 66.24; Fronto, *Ep.* 4.1; Max. *Or.* 3.4; Plut. *Vit. Rom.* 9.6; *Mor.* 286B.

¹⁴¹³ Artem. 2.20; Plut. *Mor.* 223F.

¹⁴¹⁴ Artem. 2.20; Max. *Or.* 36.1; Plut. *Vit. Arist.* 6.20.

¹⁴¹⁵ Plut. *Vit. Arist.* 6.20.

¹⁴¹⁶ Plut. *Mor.* 970C.

¹⁴¹⁷ Plin. *Ep.* 9.25.

depiction of eagles as good literature by comparing Plato and Xenophon's writing to eagles, whereas the writings of Diodorus and Alexinus are merely quails.¹⁴¹⁸ These expressions, although the eagle is directly symbolising good literature, seems a natural extension of its use as a symbol of superiority in general and of the conceptional metaphor that higher is better. Some new uses that do not seem a natural progression, though, are Plutarch's use of the sharpness of the eagle's claws to remind his readers that they must always keep their mind sharp by learning constantly;¹⁴¹⁹ and Apuleius, who uses the renowned quality of the eagle's eyes to express the handsomeness of Lucius in *Metamorphoses*.¹⁴²⁰

Another new development is the use of stories surrounding the eagle in order to express the concepts of disease, love, and greed. Plutarch uses the 'fact' that eagle's feathers, when rubbed with others, destroy them, to teach his readers that contact with people that are infected with diseases is dangerous.¹⁴²¹ He also uses the different species of eagle to differentiate and explain his judgements on different types of love. Homosexual love he compares to 'Homer's' black eagle, a bird of prey that is 'generous and true bred' whereas the love of women is like the 'bastard' eagle, lazy and slow.¹⁴²² Lucian uses the familiar story of the eagle testing its chicks by having them stare into the sun to let his reader know to avoid those men whose hearts are filled with greed, as they will stare at gold in the same manner as those eaglets at the sun.¹⁴²³

One major new development in the eagle's symbolic concepts is a continuation of its attachment to the idea of kingship in the previous centuries, especially in Phaedrus. But, in this century the eagle is often used to express a specific type of kingship, tyranny. Through its position as bird of prey the concept is expressed explicitly by Dio Chrysostom at the beginning of the century, stating that the eagle is a 'model (*παράδειγμα*) of tyranny rather than kingship'.¹⁴²⁴ Plutarch continues this trend by stating that only tyrants like Pyrrhus would take a name like 'eagle'.¹⁴²⁵

But, interestingly, we seem to find this concept expressed most frequently in Aelian. According to Smith, Aelian uses stories of animals to give political advice and commentary on the current regime in Severan Rome. Much like Phaedrus used fables to comment on the best type of kingship, Aelian uses fabulous stories to express various opinions about tyrannical regimes and how to handle them. His story of the geese escaping the eagle by placing stones in their mouths may be

¹⁴¹⁸ Fronto, *Ep.* 1.14.

¹⁴¹⁹ Plut. *Mor.* 520F.

¹⁴²⁰ Apul. *Met.* 2.2; Frangoulidis, 2008: 62-63. His comparison to an animal may even foreshadow his metamorphosis into one.

¹⁴²¹ Plut. *Mor.* 680E.

¹⁴²² Plut. *Mor.* 750F-751B.

¹⁴²³ Lucian, *Reviv.* 46.

¹⁴²⁴ Dio Chrys. *Or.* 2.67.

¹⁴²⁵ Plut. *Vit. Arist.* 6.20.

advice for intellectuals (the geese) to stay silent to avoid the wrath of a tyrant (the eagle).¹⁴²⁶ Aelian's description of the geese as 'hot and fiery by nature' matches his description of intellectuals.¹⁴²⁷ Another example depicts the eagle attacking the swan, a familiar dichotomy, but here the swan may represent arts and literature, i.e. a literary artist such as Aelian, which the tyrant, as an eagle, can never defeat.¹⁴²⁸ The octopus also defeats the eagle, as the octopus can adapt its behaviour to those attacking it (similar to its camouflage), in the same way that Aelian is adapting his political commentary and hiding it within another work.¹⁴²⁹ In fact, during this passage he makes a reference to a famous line from Callimachus that has its origins in a discourse on kingship in Hesiod, directly connecting the passage to the discussion of kingship.¹⁴³⁰ Lastly, and slightly more specific to his contemporary period, when Aelian is describing the eagle testing the legitimacy of its young he makes several allusions to the possible illegitimacy of Severus in the eyes of the Roman people.¹⁴³¹ Most obvious is a reference to Severus having been 'registered' when he was adopted into the imperial line when Aelian states that the eagle's test is 'registration without writing', a possible subtle insult at the emperor's means of adoption.¹⁴³² All these examples seem a natural development of the eagle's symbolic connection to kingship seen in, amongst other things, Phaedrus' fables of the previous period. It is possible that Smith is slightly over-interpreting these stories in Aelian as commentary on kingship/tyranny. However, the use of the eagle to symbolise these notions prior to Aelian seems to at least make his interpretation possible. It is possible that those examples that contain specific contemporary allusions or those that have not appeared in previous sources, i.e. the test of legitimacy and the octopus, are more likely to be political commentary than those stories mentioned many times in previous sources, i.e. the geese and swan.

However, whereas in most of Phaedrus the eagle is plagued by bad advisors,¹⁴³³ by this period the eagle has itself become a tyrant. This development may even reflect the political changes between the two periods. Whereas advisors were the main concern of Phaedrus' contemporaries, the more

¹⁴²⁶ Ael. *NA*. 5.29; Smith, 2014: 239-240. Plut. *Mor.* 510A also mentions this story, but it is not clear if he has any possible ulterior motive in telling it. There may also be a link between this metaphor and Penelope's dream in *The Odyssey*, as there the eagle slays the geese, representing the king slaying the suitors; Hom. *Od.* 20.242-247.

¹⁴²⁷ Ael. *NA*. 5.29.

¹⁴²⁸ Ael. *NA*. 5.34; 17.24; Smith, 2014: 242-243.

¹⁴²⁹ Ael. *NA*. 7.11; Smith, 2014: 243-245. The octopus using camouflage goes back to Thgn. 213-218.

¹⁴³⁰ Callim. *Fr.* 2.5; Hes. *Op.* 265; Smith, 2014: 243-245, the line translates as 'someone fashioning harm for another, fashions harm for his own heart'. Aelian also makes another allusion in his description of the eagle allowing crows to fly beneath it, saying they do so as they know the strength of the eagle, perhaps advising no resistance against tyrants who allow you to go about your business. Aelian may also be the eagle in this story, his works flying above the rest, a similar allusion that we saw in Pliny the Younger above, p.166; Ael. *NA*. 15.22; Smith, 2014: 245-246.

¹⁴³¹ Ael. *NA*. 2.26.; Smith, 2014: 239-240.

¹⁴³² Aelian uses the same verb, ἐγγραφῆ, which Cassius Dio uses when describing Severus' adoption, Ael. *NA*. 2.26; Cass. Dio. 77.9.4; Smith, 2014: 239-240.

¹⁴³³ See above, p.125.

autocratic system in place by the end of the second century A.D. makes tyrants both a more possible and a more frequent concern.

There are also a couple of completely new concepts that the eagle symbolises in this period, although they are slightly related to its use in other areas. One of these is the concept of ‘wildness’ seen in the myths of Pythagoras,¹⁴³⁴ Orpheus (Fig 6.2), and elsewhere.¹⁴³⁵ In these myths the extraordinariness of either the characters or the place is expressed through their ability to completely tame wild creatures.¹⁴³⁶ The eagle is always mentioned amongst these creatures as an emphasis on the wilderness they represent. While an extension of its symbolic position as the pre-eminent bird of prey, this symbolic concept is newly attached to the eagle.¹⁴³⁷ Additionally, Maximus links the eagle to the abstract concept of masculinity.¹⁴³⁸ He calls it and the lion ‘masculine’ creatures and, while this is a connection to the concepts of martial valour and its predatory nature, the eagle has never directly been used to previously convey masculinity. This may also possibly explain why Plutarch uses it in his explanation of the types of love, as his emphasis is on masculine love.¹⁴³⁹

6.3.2: Artemidorus’ Dream Eagle.

One of the most detailed sources for the eagle’s conceptual symbolism in this period comes from Artemidorus’ *Oneirocritica*, which provides an examination of the eagle’s meaning in dreams. What is interesting is not only does it provide new conceptual symbolism for the eagle, but it gives us a view into its symbolism across different classes of society. He gives some general meanings of the eagle in dreams, many based on its position as bird of prey, such as: a threatening eagle representing a powerful enemy; a tame or talking eagle, as it is no longer wild, is a good sign; if the eagle is on your head it predicts your death, as it carries prey in its talons; and if it is flying leisurely and calmly this also predicts something good will happen.¹⁴⁴⁰ There is also some completely unheard-of symbolism in his analysis, such as when the eagle is sitting on a rock, tree, or high place, it is good sign for future business ventures and that, due to a pun on its Greek name (*ἀετός*), it can represent the current year (*ἄετος*).¹⁴⁴¹

¹⁴³⁴ Plut. *Vit. Num.* 8.5.

¹⁴³⁵ Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.51; Lucian, *Syr. D.* 41.

¹⁴³⁶ Pythagoras taming animals: Plut. *Vit. Num.* 8.5; Porph. *VP.* 23-24; Iambl. *VP.* 60; Kahn, 2001: 5-6. Orpheus taming the wild with his music: Aesch. *Ag.* 1629; Eur. *Bacch.* 560-564; Ov. *Met.* 10.86. Syrian sanctuary taming animals: Lucian, *Syr. D.* 41.

¹⁴³⁷ This idea of the eagle as a wild animal is also mirrored when Apuleius uses it as an example of poverty, Apul. *Apol.* 21.

¹⁴³⁸ Max. *Or.* 25.3.

¹⁴³⁹ Plut. *Mor.* 750F-751B.

¹⁴⁴⁰ Most of the eagle discussion evidenced in this chapter comes from Artem. 2.20. Most of these meanings also seem adapted from the position of the eagle in real life omens, although presented slightly differently, see above, p.27 & 86.

¹⁴⁴¹ Artem. 2.20.

But the interesting part of Artemidorus is his exploration of the eagle's different meanings across class boundaries. But, how much can we trust Artemidorus as a source for this wider cross-section of society? It is certain that his work does not represent a consensus in the symbolic interpretation of dreams¹⁴⁴² and, in fact, he recognises in his prologue that there will be critics of his work.¹⁴⁴³ However, the criticism he imagines comes from those who do not believe in divination or divine intervention, not alternative dream interpreters. In my opinion, those that would take this sceptical view were most likely amongst the intellectual elite rather than the lower classes. In fact, Artemidorus seems to have taken great pains to include the lower classes in his theories of interpretation. Again in his prologue he states that not only has he read every book on the subject but consulted diviners in fora across the empire, from Italy to Asia.¹⁴⁴⁴ Although not confirmable, it is most likely that the interpretations of the dreams of the slaves and poor come from these sources rather than the previous oneirocritic tradition.

He gives a few examples of difference in meaning across class. If a woman dreams of giving birth to an eagle the meaning is dependent on the class of the woman. If she is poor, her son will go into military service or command, if she is middle class he will become an athlete, and if she is rich he will become a ruler.¹⁴⁴⁵ Another example is dreaming of a dead eagle. Whereas this is negative to most (seemingly representing unemployment), to a slave it represents the death of their master, and thus possible freedom. Dreaming of riding an eagle also provides a similar dichotomy. If you are a king or rich man, it means your death, as the imperial family used this as apotheosis imagery, but, if you are a poor man, it represents a rich patron taking you under his 'wing'. All these passages give an insight into usually invisible aspects of the eagle's symbolism, through a lens of gender and class. Although possibly confined to the realm of dream interpretation, it may speak of a larger aspect of the eagle's conceptual symbolism. And, although all these examples relate to the conceptual symbolism of superiority the eagle already possessed, it confirms that these aspects spread down from the elite and into wider Roman society.

Additionally, central to Artemidorus' dream interpretation theory was the nature of the individual.¹⁴⁴⁶ I.e., that the gender, class, occupation, habits, and attitude of the dreamers had an impact on the symbolic meaning of their dreams. Essentially, he has a similar outlook on meaning as I lay out in my methodology, i.e. that the meanings of symbols are subjective and dependent on context.¹⁴⁴⁷ Another interpretation of the eagle in his work is a great example of the individualistic nature of dreams. A childless man dreamt that an eagle ripped out his intestines and then displayed

¹⁴⁴² Harris, 2003: 20.

¹⁴⁴³ Artem. 1.*proem.*

¹⁴⁴⁴ Artem. 1.*proem.*

¹⁴⁴⁵ Again all these examples come from Artem. 2.20.

¹⁴⁴⁶ White, 1975: 7.

¹⁴⁴⁷ See above, p.7.

them in the theatre.¹⁴⁴⁸ This man, although the eagle was violent and the dream seemed a bad omen, had a child (symbolised by the intestines, as those in his country used a similar word) who then had a famous career in the theatre. The eagle here, although seen as a violent bird of prey, in fact signifies the later greatness of the child.

6.4: Religion and Myth

6.4.1: Continuity and Change.

Once again, as in the previous centuries, we continue to see a strong attachment between the eagle and Jupiter, or the namesakes of Jupiter, Zeus, Zeus Sarapis, and Zeus Ammon. This connection appears in a wide array of media, from literature,¹⁴⁴⁹ to numismatics,¹⁴⁵⁰ and visual material.¹⁴⁵¹ The myths which Jupiter is attached to, those of Ganymede and Prometheus, also continue to flourish.¹⁴⁵² However, these myths are by no means static. This century sees the first appearance of Ganymede and the eagle on coins, mainly from Ilion.¹⁴⁵³ In this case, the use of the myth seems to be an expression of local identity, since Ganymede was a ‘Trojan boy’. Although the eagle’s connection with Jupiter and other preeminent deities dominate the eagle’s religious symbolism, there are still numerous other deities that the eagle is attached to. Its connection to solar deities, such as Sol and increasingly Elagabal, continues in this period,¹⁴⁵⁴ which is essentially another aspect of its connection to the most preeminent deities. But it is also seen again with both the Dioscuri and Hercules.¹⁴⁵⁵ Most of these examples come from provincial contexts, again expressing local religious ideas concerning the eagle.

But the eagle’s religious symbolism is not merely confined to continuity, as the eagle appears with various new deities in this period. We see the eagle with some regular Graeco-Roman deities

¹⁴⁴⁸ Artem. 5.57.

¹⁴⁴⁹ Ach. Tat. 2.12.2-3; 2.18.1; Apul. *Met.* 3.23; 6.15; Arr. *Anab.* 2.3.3-7; Ath. 13.566d; Clem. *Recog.* 10.22; Lucian, *Dial. D.* 6; *Icar.* 1; 22; *Sac.* 5; Paus. 3.17.4; 5.11.1; 5.22.5; 5.22.7; 8.30.2; 8.31.4; 8.38.7.

¹⁴⁵⁰ BMC 6; 9; 19; 26; 40-41; 78; 165; *CNG* 67; 126; 169; 1109; *RIC* Hadrian 495; 497; Antoninus 711; Commodus 187; 525; Pescennius 41; Septimius 196; *SNG* Aulock 786; 786; 3601; 3868; 8392; *SNG* Br. 660; *SNG* Cop. 45; 106; *SNG* Fitz 4945; *SNG* Lev. 573; *SNG* Righetti 6201; Moushmov, 1912: 376; 698; 891; 947; Milne, 1933: 1370; 1676; 1907; 1955; 2639; Kovacs & Lindgren, 1985: 1058; Emmett, 2001: No.1069; Varbanov, 2005-2007: 61; 4380; 4844; Additionally, the mountain deity seen in *LIMC* Argaios 2, although at first glance an independent deity is, according to Cook, 1925: 978-979, also Zeus.

¹⁴⁵¹ *LIMC* Ammon 143; Castores 79; Dioskouroi 163; Fortuna 161; Jupiter 36-37; 54-55; 75; 77; 117a-117b; 158; 173; 196; 236; 359; 482; 504; Minerva 283; Sarapis 104; Zeus 292; 351; 355; 393; 400; Zeus (in periphéria orientali) 141; 212; Henig, 1974: 4; 7-8; 14-15; 17; 357.

¹⁴⁵² Arist. Ath. *Apol.* 9; Arr. *Anab.* 5.3.2; *GA* 12.221; Lucian, *Dial. D.* 5; 8; 10.2; *Icar.* 2; *Judg.* 6; *Prom.* 2; 4; 9; 20-21; *Sac.* 6; Paus. 5.11.6; Tatianus, *Ad Gr.* 10.1-10.2; *LIMC* Ganymede 102; 107-109; 124; 127-128; 131; 154; 161-163; 183-184; 188; 214; 225; 228; 231-232; 234; 242; 244; 248-249; 251; 266; Prometheus 37; 45; 47; 50; 64-66; Henig, 1974: 473-474; Bailey, 1988: 3255; Kondoleon, 1994: Fig 88.

¹⁴⁵³ *SNG* Aulock 7612; *SNG* Cop. 411; Bellinger, 1940: T187v. Another city, Hadrianopolis in Thrace, also puts Ganymede and the eagle on their coinage during the reign of Commodus, although the intention behind this choice escapes me, Varbanov, 2005-2007: 3324.

¹⁴⁵⁴ BMC 1; 4; *LIMC* Elagabalos 2; 3a; Babelon, 1897-1898: 32.

¹⁴⁵⁵ BMC 21; 34-37.

such as Victory,¹⁴⁵⁶ although this is more of a victory symbolism context, but also new *genii*.¹⁴⁵⁷ The most interesting of these new depictions is the eagle with the Egyptian gods Isis and Osiris. It is seen on a lamp carrying Isis¹⁴⁵⁸ and a coin carrying Isis and Osiris.¹⁴⁵⁹ This is not surprising. The nature of the Isis cult made her the most preeminent deity to her worshippers, with the ability to absorb and integrate the symbols and iconography of other prominent deities, hence her use of Jupiter's eagle.¹⁴⁶⁰ As discussed in the previous chapter,¹⁴⁶¹ we see the eagle become more frequently used as a symbol within Judaism. Not only is it Yahweh's messenger speaking to his disciplines and raising men from the dead in the apocrypha *4 Baruch*,¹⁴⁶² it is also seen on numerous synagogue lintels and on decorative motifs within the temples.¹⁴⁶³ This seems another adaption of a symbol used by the most preeminent deity, in this case Yahweh, as the eagle can be seen not only as Yahweh's messenger but also as a symbol of his divine protection.¹⁴⁶⁴ These last two examples particularly show the merging of provincial and Graeco-Roman religious ideas into a singular expression, here the use of the eagle to represent and accompany the most important deity to these particular individuals.

We also see a continuation in the eagle's use in other religious areas of society. Not only does it continue to appear in portents, both as a bird and as the *aquila* standard,¹⁴⁶⁵ but it is also seen in its guise as a constellation in astrology throughout this period.¹⁴⁶⁶ Apotheotic eagles continue to occur throughout the century, the iconography of which is discussed in more detail below.¹⁴⁶⁷ The eagle also continues to be used in various myths in this period. We see it appear in myths already mentioned in the previous centuries, such as Periphas¹⁴⁶⁸ and Aegina.¹⁴⁶⁹ We also see a continuity in its themes within myth. That of the hero's metamorphosis appears in myths not previously mentioned, as both

¹⁴⁵⁶ *RIC* Hadrian 284a; Moushmov, 1912: 1815.

¹⁴⁵⁷ *RIC* Clodius 23c.

¹⁴⁵⁸ Bailey, 1988: 2036.

¹⁴⁵⁹ *LIMC* Osiris Kanopos 63. The Isis hymn in Apul. *Met.* 11 connects her to mostly female deities, this could mean that the eagle in these depictions could also be female.

¹⁴⁶⁰ Witt, 1971: 129 and as discussed above, p.50, the eagle did not feature prominently in native Egyptian culture prior to the Greeks and Romans.

¹⁴⁶¹ See above, p.145.

¹⁴⁶² *4 Baruch* 7; Goodenough, 1958: 137; 139; 141.

¹⁴⁶³ Goodenough, 1953a: 184; 188; 195; 205-207; 216-217; 1958: 121-122. Szkolut, 2002: 4-5 gives a list of eagles on lintels, Torah shrines, friezes, and mosaics of synagogues in this period. There is also some graffiti of an eagle at the synagogue in Dura-Europos, Goodenough, 1964a: 38; 41, and an amulet with a figure label 'Iαω', the name sometimes used for Yahweh (Diod. Sic. 1.94) who is accompanied by an eagle, Goodenough, 1953b: 244-245.

¹⁴⁶⁴ See above, p.145. Also, Szkolut, 2002.

¹⁴⁶⁵ Ael. *NA.* 17.37; Artem. 2.20; 5.57; Cass. Dio. 75.6.3; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 34.4; Flor. 1.22.14; Lucian, *Salt.* 38; Plut. *Brut.* 48; *Mor.* 314C-314D; 409E; Tac. *Ann.* 2.17; *Hist.* 1.62.3. The eagle portents connected to historical figures or prominent figures of this century are discussed in more detail below, p.202.

¹⁴⁶⁶ Ptol. *Alm.* 7.5.16.H72-74; Vett. Val. 1.2. The eagle and the snake can be seen as an astrological symbol, as discussed above, p.135; BMC 36; Moushmov, 1912: 3178; Varbanov, 2005-2007: 3269.

¹⁴⁶⁷ See below, p.197.

¹⁴⁶⁸ Ant. Lib. 6.

¹⁴⁶⁹ Clem. *Recog.* 10.22.

Pandareos¹⁴⁷⁰ and Clinis¹⁴⁷¹ transform into eagles. Lastly, a curious gem found in Castlesteads shows an eagle head with Silenus, the tutor of Dionysius.¹⁴⁷² There is no connection found between the two in any other media and it seems likely that, since it is found on a gem, the mythological symbolism is confined to the individual who wore it.

But we also see completely new entries into the eagle's mythological catalogue. Apuleius uses an eagle in the tale of Cupid and Psyche in his *Metamorphoses*.¹⁴⁷³ There, a talking eagle aids Psyche in her fourth task, set by Venus, who treats Psyche as her servant, by collecting the dangerous water from the river Styx and handing it to Psyche. A few details must be considered about this particular myth. Firstly, the eagle talks. At no point in previous Graeco-Roman myths did any eagle speak,¹⁴⁷⁴ so is this an indication of an element of Jupiter's monstrous Eagle that had not appeared previously in the sources? It seems unlikely, as Apuleius has many objects talk during the course of this myth which do not usually have a voice, such as reeds and a tower.¹⁴⁷⁵ Thus, instead, this talking eagle seems to be a purely Apuleian phenomenon. In fact, a talking eagle seems another example of Apuleius blurring the lines between animal and man, a prominent theme running throughout the *Metamorphoses*.¹⁴⁷⁶ Secondly, the myth of Cupid and Psyche also seems to be purely Apuleian in origin.¹⁴⁷⁷ The story seems untold anywhere else and thus the eagle's inclusion in the myth may be confined to Apuleius and his audience. But Apuleius' eagle is certainly linked to its role in the mythological tradition, as it is seen helping other heroes and gods in other myths (i.e. collecting Ganymede and its role in portents) and, since it moves down from 'heaven's high summit',¹⁴⁷⁸ it must have some divine aspect to it, which is present in most of its other depictions. In fact, since it is a unique eagle (due to it being in the underworld and speaking) it may even be Zeus' monstrous Eagle. A couple of other moments seem to confirm this supposition as at the beginning of the passage it is named as Jupiter's royal bird and there is a reference to it carrying away Ganymede.¹⁴⁷⁹ Interestingly, though, he claims in this case that he is working for Venus, in order to obtain the Stygian water. Thus, although he is not actually working for Venus, the statement is a believable one, and it is another example of the monstrous Eagle serving multiple deities.¹⁴⁸⁰ Additionally, this Eagle collects the water that he states even Jupiter is afraid of,¹⁴⁸¹ hinting slightly at his power.

¹⁴⁷⁰ Ant. Lib. 11.9.

¹⁴⁷¹ Ant. Lib. 20.6.

¹⁴⁷² Henig, 1974: 382.

¹⁴⁷³ Apul. *Met.* 6.15.

¹⁴⁷⁴ Although it does speak in both the Mesopotamian *Myth of Etana* and in the Jewish *4 Baruch* 7.

¹⁴⁷⁵ Apul. *Met.* 6.12; 6.17.

¹⁴⁷⁶ Smith, 2014: 333.

¹⁴⁷⁷ The sources for the story are discussed by Kenney, 1990: 17-22.

¹⁴⁷⁸ Apul. *Met.* 6.15.2, '*alti culminis diales*'.

¹⁴⁷⁹ Apul. *Met.* 6.15.1; 2.

¹⁴⁸⁰ Apul. *Met.* 6.15.6.

¹⁴⁸¹ Apul. *Met.* 6.15.4.

6.4.2: Apuleius, Daimones, and Henotheism.

One minor reference in Apuleius creates an entirely new interpretation of the eagle's role in the divine not expressed before. In his *De Deo Socratis* he explores the nature and role of *daimones*, intermediate deities between mortal and divine. He divides these entities, using Platonic theory,¹⁴⁸² into three types: the human soul,¹⁴⁸³ souls which have left the body (which encompasses both good and bad),¹⁴⁸⁴ and, lastly, *daimones* that never enter a body but instead serve as the intermediary messengers between the gods and mortals and as the gods of abstract concepts, such as Eros and Hypnos.¹⁴⁸⁵ He equates this last type to the Roman concept of *genii*.¹⁴⁸⁶ It is in the course of discussing this last type that he mentions that *daimones* are the instigators of all omens and gives the example of the eagle placing a cap atop Tarquinius' head.¹⁴⁸⁷ This small reference creates an entirely alternate belief system regarding the role of the eagle in Roman religion. No longer the actual messenger of Jupiter and an animal that traverses the boundary between the mortal and divine realms, it is now merely guided by other entities sent from the higher gods.¹⁴⁸⁸ Although Apuleius uses only one example concerning the eagle, his methodology applies across all the portents we have discussed previously. Additionally, he states explicitly the limits of the eagle in *Florida* when he mentions that it can reach the highest limits of the sky, just below the *aer*.¹⁴⁸⁹ The *aer* was the boundary space between the sky and the divine realm, able to be crossed by *daimones*,¹⁴⁹⁰ but, according to Apuleius, unable to be traversed by the eagle. This essentially robs the eagle of its position as armour-bearer, unable to collect the thunderbolt, and also of any special relationship with the gods.

There is one explanation for this type of discrepancy, though. The eagle that carries the thunderbolt and traverses the boundaries between realms could simply be Jupiter's monstrous Eagle and no other eagles. However, the fact that real eagles are pointed to when appearing as a portent and named as 'Jupiter's' or 'Zeus'' would indicate that these real eagles also had the ability to bring messages from Jupiter and therefore traverse the boundary between realms.¹⁴⁹¹ While these eagles are not the monstrous Eagle that carries the thunderbolt, they may be taking on the aspect of this bird or it

¹⁴⁸² Pl. *Symp.* 202d-203a; Fletcher, 2014: 148-149; 172.

¹⁴⁸³ Apul. *De Deo Soc.* 150-152; Dillon, 1977: 319-320.

¹⁴⁸⁴ Apul. *De Deo Soc.* 152-154; Dillon, 1977: 319-320.

¹⁴⁸⁵ Apul. *De Deo Soc.* 154-157; Dillon, 1977: 319-320. Eros is also mentioned as a *daimon* by Plato, Pl. *Symp.* 202e. Additionally, guardian spirits (either *eudaimonia* or *genii*) are also included in this category, Dillon, 1977: 319-320.

¹⁴⁸⁶ Apul. *De Deo Soc.* 150-151; Brenk, 1986: 2134.

¹⁴⁸⁷ Apul. *De Deo Soc.* 135. This example seems to be a product of Apuleius' emphasis of Roman culture, in order to connect with his audience, Sandy, 1997: 191-192; Harrison, 2000: 151; 173. Plato gives *daimones* complete control of all forms of foretelling, Pl. *Symp.* 202e; Harrison, 2000: 151.

¹⁴⁸⁸ Apuleius states that *daimones* direct bird-flights, they are not in the form of birds themselves, Apul. *De Deo Soc.* 133-137.

¹⁴⁸⁹ Apul. *Flor.* 2.

¹⁴⁹⁰ Apul. *De Deo Soc.* 137.

¹⁴⁹¹ Ael. *NA.* 9.10; Bacchyl. 5.16-30; Cic. *Div.* 1.106; Dio. Sic. 1.87.9; Eur. *Ion.* 154-155; Hom. *Il.* 8.247-253; *Od.* 2.146; Ov. *Ars Am.* 3.419-422; Philostr. *Her.* 35.6; Plin. *HN.* 10.4; Plut. *Dion.* 24.3-5; Theoc. *Id.* 17.70; Verg. *Aen.* 1.387; 9.530; 12.238; Xen. *Cyr.* 2.4.19.

may be that all eagles are somehow connected to / descended from this one monstrous Eagle in traditional thought. Additionally, in Lucian's *Icaromenippus*, Menippus attaches an eagle's wing and a vulture's wing to his back in order to fly to the heavens and speak with Zeus.¹⁴⁹² This would also imply that a regular eagle has the ability to traverse between the mortal and divine, as Menippus uses a regular eagle's wing.¹⁴⁹³ While Lucian's dialogues have a general satirical or parodic element to them,¹⁴⁹⁴ pointing out the inherent silliness in the Olympian myths or contrasting philosophies,¹⁴⁹⁵ they are based thoroughly in the traditional religion of the 'Second Sophistic',¹⁴⁹⁶ as it is this basis from which Lucian draws his comedy. Thus, *Icaromenippus* must slightly reflect popular belief.

Thus, if all eagles were usually thought to possess this ability, why does Apuleius remove it from them? We know Apuleius was not divorced from traditional religion since he certainly served as a priest of Asclepius and possibly as high priest of Carthage.¹⁴⁹⁷ But, Apuleius is a proponent of a different understanding of the divine, dependent on a transcendent supreme divine entity unable to influence the mortal realm and transitional semi-divine entities, *daimones*, which communicate information from that higher entity.¹⁴⁹⁸ While it is not monotheism, since it allows for the existence of other divine entities, it is a shift towards henotheism, the belief that there is one supreme god more powerful than all others. But, how prevalent was this belief?

De Deo Socratis, and many other Apuleian works, was intended as a philosophical lecture given to the public, hence its Latin-leanings in order to allow the Platonic theories to make sense to a Roman North African audience.¹⁴⁹⁹ A philosophic lecture would still usually imply a learned elite audience. However, the explanation of Plato's theories given by Apuleius in *De Deo Socratis* would imply the audience had no prior knowledge of Platonic theory, thus they had not read his works, which could even imply a degree of Greek illiteracy and a lower status. Also, Cynic preachers and oracles of Apollo,¹⁵⁰⁰ were spreading a Platonic philosophy to the wider population, possibly making Apuleius' public lectures more appealing to a wider, less-educated, population.

The ideas expressed in Apuleius were certainly not new, since they were dependent on Plato, but the larger popularity of them certainly was. The ideas expressed in *De Deo Socratis* were indicative of a wider theological trend that went beyond Apuleius and his North African context. There seems to be larger shift towards henotheism in the second century A.D., with various supreme

¹⁴⁹² Lucian, *Icar.* 1-3; 10; 13-14; 22.

¹⁴⁹³ Granted, Menippus' journey is that of comedic fantasy, but the ideas within it are based within traditional myth and represent popular belief, Branham, 1989: 16.

¹⁴⁹⁴ Based in the satyr plays and 'Old Comedy', Branham, 1989: 160-162.

¹⁴⁹⁵ Macleod, 1991: 10-12.

¹⁴⁹⁶ Jones, 1986: 45.

¹⁴⁹⁷ *Apul. Flor.* 16.38; 18.38; *August. Ep.* 138.19. Most writers seem to be believers of some kind, MacMullen, 1981: 67.

¹⁴⁹⁸ Sandy, 1997: 197.

¹⁴⁹⁹ *Apul. De Deo Soc.* 125; 129; 150; 166; Sandy, 1997: 191-192; Harrison, 2000: 151; 173; 2001: 186.

¹⁵⁰⁰ Lewy, 1978: 259-359; Liebeschuetz, 2000: 1001-1002. Discussed again below, p.176.

gods taking a larger and much more important role and taking on the aspect of a singular transcendent divine being rather than an anthropomorphised Olympian god.¹⁵⁰¹ This is slightly evidenced in the material we have already discussed regarding the eagle's religious symbolism in this period. Isis begins to absorb the names, duties, and aspects (such as the eagle) of multiple other deities and, at least in her growing cult, she was the supreme deity.¹⁵⁰² In fact, Book 11 of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* focuses on the Isis cult and, although within the particular literary context of the ancient novel,¹⁵⁰³ he refers to Isis by multiple and supreme names, with the whole book influenced by his own henotheistic tendencies.¹⁵⁰⁴ There is also a tendency to begin combining the names of supreme gods into a singular concept, such as Zeus Helios Sarapis,¹⁵⁰⁵ and, concerning the eagle, it is attached to supreme gods more than any others in this century.¹⁵⁰⁶ Additionally, the rise of a transcendent concept of the divine meant an increase in the belief of intermediate divine entities, *daimones*, between the transcendent divine and the mortal realm.¹⁵⁰⁷ These ideas were certainly not confined to Apuleius, as both Plutarch and Maximus have essays on the subject.¹⁵⁰⁸ In fact, the platonising theology expressed by these authors and others was also not confined to their works and audience, as both Cynic preachers and oracles of Apollo spread these ideas to a wider, and less-educated, population.¹⁵⁰⁹ In fact, the rise in the number of *genii* in the military religious inscriptions towards the end of this century may hint again at the growing popularity of these ideas.¹⁵¹⁰ This is not to say that the traditional Graeco-Roman religions suffered a decline,¹⁵¹¹ merely that alongside the traditional religions of the empire a new theological system was running parallel and growing. This new system completely altered the eagle's traditional relationship to the gods for those that adhered to it, removing its semi-divine abilities and developing its symbolic connection to the divine, a process that was also a subconscious consequence of their altered theology, as the references to the eagle in Apuleius are a side-note to the larger theological discussion.

Does this mean that the eagle is devoid of any religious symbolism to this growing proportion of society? Not necessarily. What is striking throughout the discussion of the *daimones* in Apuleius

¹⁵⁰¹ Liebeschuetz, 2000: 1001-1002.

¹⁵⁰² Dio. Sic. 1.15; Witt, 1971: 129; Liebeschuetz, 2000: 994; 1001-1002.

¹⁵⁰³ Graverini, *et al*, 2015: 2-3.

¹⁵⁰⁴ Apul. *Met.* 1.5.1; Drews, 2015: 517; 519.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Solmsen, 1979: 8-25; Liebeschuetz, 2000: 994; 1002. This syncretistic tendency is even seen in small countryside communities, Liebeschuetz, 2000: 1002. It is a general trend that happens with many other 'supreme' gods also, like Apollo and Sol; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 31.11; Plut. *Mor.* 413c; Sext. Emp. *Pyr.* 3.219. The phenomenon is given a good examination by MacMullen, 1981: 87-94.

¹⁵⁰⁶ See above, p.174.

¹⁵⁰⁷ Brenk, 1986; Liebeschuetz, 2000: 1005.

¹⁵⁰⁸ Max. *Orat.* 8-9; Plut. *Mor.* 575a-599a; Sandy, 1997: 198-201; Fletcher, 2014: 147.

¹⁵⁰⁹ Lewy, 1978: 259-359; Liebeschuetz, 2000: 1001-1002.

¹⁵¹⁰ *AE*, 1927, 89; 1957, 83; 1958, 303; 1962, 391; 1973, 471; *CIL* 3.3526; 7591; 7631; 13443; 7.103; 166; 1031; 9.1324; 13.6566; *ILAlg* I, 2044; *RIB*, 451; Barkóczi & Mócsy, 1972: 2.390; Hoffiller & Saria, 1970: no.267.

¹⁵¹¹ Liebeschuetz, 2000: 1007-1008.

and others, is the number of similarities between them and the eagle. *Daimones* are the intermediary deities that carry messages from the gods and enact their will on earth.¹⁵¹² The eagle is the armour-bearer and messenger of Jupiter (or other supreme deities) and moves between the heavens and the earth,¹⁵¹³ but also, as discussed in more depth below, represents and enacts the divine will of deities (*numina*).¹⁵¹⁴ *Daimones* also represent the guardian spirits, or *genii*, of individuals and places.¹⁵¹⁵ In some apothotic iconography the eagle seems to be performing the same role, when carrying the emperors atop its back into the divine realm.¹⁵¹⁶ Not only is it a transitional entity, but also that particular emperor's guardian. Lastly, *daimones* are also the disembodied souls of the living. It has already been suggested that in some Augustan apotheosis imagery that the eagle represents the soul of the emperor¹⁵¹⁷ and it seems to be the same in the cases of funerary altars with eagle decoration, that they represent the deceased soul as it departs the earthly realm.¹⁵¹⁸ It is certainly the case by the apotheosis ritual of Pertinax in c.193, within which an eagle is released at the end in an explicit representation of the emperor's soul.¹⁵¹⁹ Perhaps most interesting is the undated reference in the *Greek Anthology* to Plato's soul, again represented as an eagle.¹⁵²⁰ Apuleius' assertion that the human soul is a *daimon* is based on Platonic theory, which is seemingly explicitly stated in *Timaeus*,¹⁵²¹ and, although the epitaph was not written by Plato it presumably represents some aspect of platonic thought. Thus, the writer, presumably acquainted with Platonic theory, chose to represent his *daimon* as an eagle. Although never interpreted as such by scholars, the similarities between the two are inescapable, especially in 'Plato's epitaph'. It gives rise to a possibility not considered before, that the eagle could be interpreted as a *daimon*, or that a *daimon*, given that it has no definitive iconographical mode, could be represented as an eagle. This may be especially true on a funerary altar of an individual that held these beliefs (i.e. a Platonic philosopher), who decided to represent their departed soul as an eagle.

6.5: Martial and State Connections

There is a lot of continuation of the symbolic concepts associated with the *aquila* in the previous chapters, as well as some slight developments and clarification from the sources of this

¹⁵¹² Dillon, 1977: 319-320.

¹⁵¹³ Mentioned numerous times throughout the thesis, starting above at p.31.

¹⁵¹⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 2.17. Discussed in depth below, p.187.

¹⁵¹⁵ Dillon, 1977: 319-320.

¹⁵¹⁶ See above, p.133.

¹⁵¹⁷ See above, p.134.

¹⁵¹⁸ See above, p.135.

¹⁵¹⁹ Cass. Dio. 75.4.5.

¹⁵²⁰ *GA.* 7.62. See above, p.134.

¹⁵²¹ Pl. *Ti.* 90c. He also states in *Phd.* 81e, when discussing reincarnation, that gluttonous souls are transformed into asses. This might imply that the quality of the soul is represented by the quality of the animal it transforms into, or is viewed as, hence the perfect soul (that of Plato) is represented as the king of birds.

period. We continue to see the eagle used as a direct metaphor for legions¹⁵²² but also as a way authors express the logistical movements of legions to their audience,¹⁵²³ and their loss as a benchmark for how badly a legion was defeated.¹⁵²⁴ Their loss and recovery seen in Tacitus, and other authors,¹⁵²⁵ was covered in the previous chapter. Additionally, Tacitus and some other sources give us a more detailed picture of the *aquilifer* as a spokesperson or leader of the legions,¹⁵²⁶ as we saw in Cicero and Ovid.¹⁵²⁷ Tacitus blames Hordeonius for first instituting the practice of handing dispatches to the *aquilifer*¹⁵²⁸ but by the time of Apuleius, the *signifer* had become so entwined with leadership that he uses it as a metaphor to describe the leader of a group of bandits.¹⁵²⁹ We also have the continued tradition of heroic acts connected to the standards, both from famous historical generals (this century is where most of these stories originate) and from ordinary soldiers.¹⁵³⁰ We also see some more evidence of the *aquila*'s communal symbolism when Tacitus relates the story of three legions who were to be merged into one, with one eagle, but refused on the basis that they wished the honour to go to their own legion, and thus kept three eagles.¹⁵³¹ A second story from Suetonius tells of a group of marines made into a legion that wished for an eagle as recognition, but were instead decimated for insubordination by Galba.¹⁵³² Both examples show the importance of the *aquila* in these military communities, not just generally, but that each eagle held a central place in each legion's sense of identity. The standards were also connected directly to Rome, with one relief of the wolf and twins on the Danube showing an accompanying inscription of, *signum originis*.¹⁵³³

6.5.1: The Religious Nature of the Standards

Although the religious aspects of the *aquila* and the standards were covered briefly in Chapter 4 the subject was not entirely dealt with.¹⁵³⁴ Until this point the sources have hinted at various religious thought surrounding the standards, but it is only in this century that they produced more detail of where exactly the *aquila* and standards stand in Roman theological thought.¹⁵³⁵ Additionally,

¹⁵²² Flor. 2.5.4-5; Plut. *Vit. Cic.* 38.7; *Vit. Fab.* 13.3; *Vit. Luc.* 27.7; Suet. *Gal.* 12; Tac. *Ann.* 15.11; 17; *His.* 3.21; 52.

¹⁵²³ Plut. *Vit. Fab.* 13.3; *Vit. Luc.* 27.7; *Vit. Otho.* 12.4; Tac. *Ann.* 13.38; 15.17; *Hist.* 1.61.2; 2.30; 43.1; 44.3; 3.31; 50; 60; 4.33-34; 77.

¹⁵²⁴ Tac. *His.* 2.44.3; 4.33-34.

¹⁵²⁵ Flor. 2.30.35; Suet. *Vesp.* 4; Tac. *Ann.* 1.60; 65; 2.25; 41.

¹⁵²⁶ Flor. 2.11.6; Tac. *Ann.* 1.48; 2.81; 3.45; *His.* 1.56.2.

¹⁵²⁷ See above, p.98 and 119.

¹⁵²⁸ Tac. *His.* 4.25.

¹⁵²⁹ Apul. *Met.* 3.6.

¹⁵³⁰ App. *BCiv.* 2.9.61; 14.95; Calp. Flacc. 26; Flor. 1.5.2; 2.13.16; 15.5; Plut. *Vit. Aem.* 20.1; *Vit. Mar.* 23.5; Suet. *Cal.* 14; *Div. Iul.* 62; Tac. *Ann.* 3.20; 15.29; *His.* 2.29.3; 89.1; 3.22.

¹⁵³¹ Tac. *Ann.* 1.18.

¹⁵³² Suet. *Gal.* 12.

¹⁵³³ AE, 1982: 849; Beard, North, & Price, 1998a: 326.

¹⁵³⁴ See above, p.93.

¹⁵³⁵ Some reject the divine nature of the standards altogether, or have them as a mere appendage to the imperial cult (Rüpke, 1990: 185; Stäcker, 2003: 207-208), but the weight of evidence in favour of their divine nature,

many of these sources, such as Tacitus, retroject these ideas into the thought of the previous century. Thus, although only expressed in the second century A.D. these ideas may date back to the beginning of the previous century. Along with this possible traditional religious thought surrounding the *aquila* and standards comes various new additions as well, including festivals centred on the standards such as the *aquiliae natalis* and *Rosalia Signorum*.

In order to explore the religious nature of the standards it is necessary to re-iterate and examine in more detail the standard's position and use within the religious life of the legions. The building described as the *sacellum* in Chapter 4¹⁵³⁶ is given a more official name in a second century A.D. inscription, the *aedes principiorum*.¹⁵³⁷ A brief survey of the forts of Roman Britain shows that the *aedes* has a standardised form in every legionary fort or camp, a form also seen at Dura-Europos in Syria.¹⁵³⁸ At the back of the *principia* were three to five rooms with the central room as the *aedes principiorum*.¹⁵³⁹ This uniformity of planning and structures also implies a uniformity of ritual involving the standards, whatever the location of the legion within the empire. The standards were kept in the *aedes* and taken out when any religious ritual was taking place within the camp,¹⁵⁴⁰ and in this century we can see a visual representation of one of these rituals taking place on Trajan's column (Fig 6.3)¹⁵⁴¹ and from a smaller garrison from the Antonine Wall (Fig 6.4), although this depiction just involves the unit's standards rather than the *aquila*, which would be housed at the legion's main fort.¹⁵⁴²

The fact that the inscription refers to the building housing the standards as an *aedes* serves as a clue to the possible position of the standards in Roman thought. Whereas a *templum* had various different meanings depending on the context¹⁵⁴³ the *aedes* was simply the 'temple-building', i.e. the structure that housed the statue of the deity.¹⁵⁴⁴ The rituals are then conducted in front of the *aedes* without opening or going within it.¹⁵⁴⁵ This seems to fit with most of the practices surrounding the

seen in Chapter 4 and here, as well as their distinct separation from the imperial cult, makes these hypotheses untenable. Wheeler, 2009 does a good job of countering their claims using much of the evidence I lay out below.

¹⁵³⁶ See above, p.93.

¹⁵³⁷ Wright, 1961: 191, no.1; Birley, 1978: 1476; 1539. Another inscription, though, calls it a *Capitolium*, *AE*, 1989: 581; Beard, North, & Price, 1998a: 326-327; and an Egyptian legionary papyrus refers to it as the *aedem aquilae*, Wheeler, 2009: 260.

¹⁵³⁸ Radford, 1936: 11; Birley, 1936: 16; 1960: 22; Richmond, 1953: 5-6; Robertson, 1964: 90; 118; Hegleland, 1978: 1491; Dore & Gillam, 1979; Johnson, 1983 shows this uniformity across Britain and Gaul.

¹⁵³⁹ Johnson, 1983: 111.

¹⁵⁴⁰ Beard, North, & Price, 1998a: 326-327. This matches the ritual practice of the Near Eastern cultic standards, the *semeia*, discussed in more detail below, p.192, Lucian, *Syr. D.* 33; Dirven, 2005: 120.

¹⁵⁴¹ Beard, North, & Price, 1998a: 327.

¹⁵⁴² Henig, 1984: 86-7.

¹⁵⁴³ Beard, North, & Price, 1998b: 86.

¹⁵⁴⁴ Beard, North, & Price, 1998b: 78.

¹⁵⁴⁵ Barton, 1989: 68; Beard, North, & Price, 1998b: 78. This was because the altar was usually housed outside of the *aedes*. Additionally, although a *templum* can exist without an *aedes*, an *aedes* cannot exist without a *templum*; Barton, 1989: 67-68. In this case it seems that the camp itself is the *templum*, as it was sacred

standards and would imply, by the use of *aedes*, that the standards are synonymous with the cultic objects within other *aedes*, i.e. they are the equivalent to the statue of a deity. This also matches with the passage of Dionysius discussed previously, who says they are ‘like a shrine of the gods’ (*ἴδρυματα θεῶν*).¹⁵⁴⁶ However, it may be that the building was referred to as an *aedes* because it also housed actual cultic statues. It is possible that the busts of emperor were housed there,¹⁵⁴⁷ but Wheeler suggests that these statues usually appear in the *basilica* of the *principia* rather than the *aedes*. Wheeler bases this on a papyrus that mentions guards posted simply to the ‘*aquilam et signa*’ and does not include the *imagines*.¹⁵⁴⁸ However, different forts have produced various other cultic objects from within the *aedes*, such as a figure of Jupiter,¹⁵⁴⁹ one of a *genius*,¹⁵⁵⁰ and some part of a Hercules sculpture, so it may be that cultic statues were found in the *aedes*.¹⁵⁵¹ Thus, the terminology *aedes* may be used due to these statues rather than the standards.¹⁵⁵²

A passage from Tacitus might enlighten us on whether the standards were cultic objects or not. But before discussing it, the reliance on Tacitus as a source needs to be pointed out. Much of the discussion that follows stems from evidence presented in Tacitus, thus although it is possible that Tacitus is relying on information from the wider thought of his period, there is the possibility that his information is both more closely representative of the elite rather than the lower strata of society and that it may reflect some of his personal views and opinions. Whereas most of the evidence cited in this discussion is from fairly innocuous passages with no apparent agenda, it is worth remembering the author’s intention, which was certainly not to write a religious treatise, but rather to relate history. Thus the passages must be read in this context. However, one redeeming feature of Tacitus is his service in the legions,¹⁵⁵³ wherein he would have had personal experience of the formalised religious life they conducted.

During his description of the Germanic Wars he relates the story of an envoy of the Roman Senate being set upon by mutinous legionaries. The ambassador, to shield himself, runs into the *aedes principiorum* and grabs hold of the standards in order to ‘protect himself under their sanctity (*religione*)’. His plan succeeds, but Tacitus posits that if it had not then ‘the blood of an envoy of the

space (Beard, North, & Price, 1998b: 86), thus, when the camp was mobile it was again the standards that imparted this sacredness to the space, which then became a *templum*.

¹⁵⁴⁶ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 6.45.2; Wheeler, 2009: 256.

¹⁵⁴⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 4.23; *Hist.* 3.13.2; Johnson, 1983: 112.

¹⁵⁴⁸ Wheeler, 2009: 260; Papyrus: *PSI XIII* 1307.ii.11; 17; Davies, 1973.

¹⁵⁴⁹ From a cellar beneath the *aedes* in Murrhardt; Johnson, 1983: 113.

¹⁵⁵⁰ From the fort at Kapersburg; Johnson, 1983: 113.

¹⁵⁵¹ From the fort at Kögen; Johnson, 1983: 113.

¹⁵⁵² Stoll, 2001: 262 thinks all the terminology for the sanctuary of the standards in literary sources is unreliable, but he provides no viable alternative, and thus we must deal with the evidence we have; Wheeler, 2009: 260. Additionally, Tacitus’ time in the legions would give some reliability to his terminology.

¹⁵⁵³ Although not known for certain, it is likely, as he disappears from Rome for at least four years after his praetorship in 88 as he was away for Agricola’s death in 93 and we know that most ex-praetors became legionary commanders; Tac. *Agr.* 45.5; *Ann.* 11.11; Birley, 2000: 234-235.

Roman people...would...have stained the altars of the gods (*altaria deum*)'.¹⁵⁵⁴ Since the ambassador had clasped himself around the standards Tacitus must be referring to them as the '*altaria*'.¹⁵⁵⁵ Although the translation simply uses the word altar, the word *altaria* is slightly more complex. It is not merely a synonym for *ara*, as Pliny, and Tacitus himself, distinguish them against each other.¹⁵⁵⁶ The *OLD* gives the definition of *altaria* as 'an altar-fitting for burnt offerings...[and sometimes] as a detachable object'.¹⁵⁵⁷ Although this seems closer than just 'altar' and most of the time it does involve some kind of flame,¹⁵⁵⁸ this definition does not seem to encompass all the elements of the word. Often the word is used in order to distinguish one altar from the others,¹⁵⁵⁹ with there also being an element of oath taking¹⁵⁶⁰, and, strangely, it is used quite frequently when relating the religious practices of non-Romans.¹⁵⁶¹ Another supplementary definition, then, might be 'high altar at which oaths can be taken'.¹⁵⁶² If this is the case, then Tacitus may be trying to distinguish that the standards, since it is to/ in front of them that the legionaries take their oath, were a 'high altar' of the legions. There are another couple of possibilities, though. Tacitus may have chosen *altaria* as it also seems to denote portability,¹⁵⁶³ rather than *ara*, which seems inherently static.¹⁵⁶⁴ Or, he may even be describing the eagle atop the *aquila* standard. As seen in the previous chapter (Fig 5.47),¹⁵⁶⁵ the image of an eagle on an altar between two standards seems to have been a military symbol and may reflect the physical reality of the eagle being detached from the *aquila* and placed on an altar within the *aedes principiorum*. The fact that the eagle is detachable is shown when Catiline removes it and places it in his house,¹⁵⁶⁶ and this may also explain why images of eagles are found in the *principia* in various forts (replacing the actual eagle of the legion, housed in the main fort).¹⁵⁶⁷ It may, then, be the actual metal eagle that is the *altaria* Tacitus refers to.

However, the visual depictions of military sacrifices (Figs 6.3 & 6.4) complicate matters slightly. Both show the leader sacrificing to an altar that looks no different to a standard Roman *ara*,

¹⁵⁵⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 1.39.

¹⁵⁵⁵ *Altaria* is a *plurale tantum*, so even though it is plural I will refer to it in the singular.

¹⁵⁵⁶ Liv. 10.38.9-11; Plin. *HN.* 10.17; Tac. *Ann.* 16.31.

¹⁵⁵⁷ *OLD*: 106. It also offers a second definition of the actual 'burnt offerings placed on an altar' based on, mainly, Luc. 3.404 and Tib. 3.12.17. However, from the context this is clearly not what Tacitus meant.

¹⁵⁵⁸ Curt. 5.1.20; Lucr. 4.1233-1239; 6.751; Petr. *Sat.* 135; Tac. *Hist.* 2.2-3; Verg. *Ecl.* 1.43; *OLD*: 106.

¹⁵⁵⁹ In Liv. 10.38.9-11 the Samnites have a grove with many *arae* but the soldiers are led to the *altaria* to swear their oath. In Juv. 8.156 he seems to be distinguishing Jupiter *altaria* against other *ara*. In Tac. *Ann.* 16.31 Servilia places her hand on both the *altaria* and the *aram* to swear an oath.

¹⁵⁶⁰ Liv. 10.38.9-11; 21.1.4; Tac. *Ann.* 11.9; 16.31.

¹⁵⁶¹ The Carthaginians: Liv. 21.1.4. The Parthians: Tac. *Ann.* 11.9. The Persians: Curt. 3.3.9. The Samnites: Liv. 10.38.9-11. The Syrians: Apul. *Met.* 11.10.

¹⁵⁶² 'High altar' is what the translation gives for Juv. 8.156. Griffiths, 1975: 196 thinks the same meaning is present in Apul. *Met.* 11.10.

¹⁵⁶³ Apul. *Met.* 11.10; Curt. 3.3.9; 5.1.20; Tac. *Hist.* 2.70 all seem to imply portability.

¹⁵⁶⁴ Höcker & Prayon, 2002: 544.

¹⁵⁶⁵ See above, p.162.

¹⁵⁶⁶ Cic. *Cat.* 1.9.24; 2.6.13.

¹⁵⁶⁷ There is one at Corbridge, Richmond, 1943: 153-154.

not to/on the standards themselves. These altars are burning, like some descriptions of the *altaria*,¹⁵⁶⁸ and it may be that Tacitus is referring to these altars as the *altaria deum*. However, since they look so much like the static Roman *ara*, which always remained outside of the *aedes* why would Tacitus state that they were inside of the *aedes principiorum* with the standards? And also indicate that the ambassador's blood would fall upon it if he was clinging to the standards themselves? Instead, what seems more likely is that while the standards were *altaria*, a high-altar that could be moved, and an actual *ara* was used for the burnt-offerings and sacrifices. In fact, a passage from Tacitus states that a sacrificial bull 'escaped from the altars (*altaribus*)',¹⁵⁶⁹ which seems to imply an area of altars rather than one, i.e. the area by the standards. But the standards do not seem to fit the normal form of an *altaria*, mainly because no rituals were actually performed on them. But, they also do not seem to fit with the standard idea of cultic objects either (if that is what *aedes* is referring to) as they can be removed from the *aedes* and brought to the *ara*. Instead, they seem to be unique in their religious nature, a combination of both *altaria* and cultic statue. Additionally, it must be pointed out that Tacitus refers to them as an altar 'of all the gods' and while some altars are dedicated to multiple deities¹⁵⁷⁰ they never seem to be dedicated to all at once.

What, then, gives the standards this unique position in Roman theological thought? It is possible that it lies within the religious aspects already discussed in Chapter 4,¹⁵⁷¹ i.e. the *genius* of the standards. The *genius*, being a sort of 'guardian spirit'¹⁵⁷² and intermediary deity between mortals and the higher, Olympian, gods, it may impart sacredness to the standards, which also allow them to move, since the *genius* is attached to them and not a static location. Additionally, as discussed above,¹⁵⁷³ in Apuleius' philosophy the cause of prodigies and the movement of physical objects are the result of intermediary spirits (*daimones* that he equates to *genii*).¹⁵⁷⁴ Thus, the *genius* may be what allows the standards to turnabout of their own accord or to not be moved if they do not wish it.¹⁵⁷⁵ However, the *genius* is not a unique quality in Roman religion. Every place,¹⁵⁷⁶ every person,¹⁵⁷⁷ and every object, had its own personal *genius*. Thus, why would the standard's *genius* provide any unique qualities that other *genii* do not? Even if they are the method by which the legions communicate with

¹⁵⁶⁸ Curt. 5.1.20; Lucr. 4.1233-1239; 6.751; Petr. *Sat.* 135; Tac. *Hist.* 2.2-3; Verg. *Ecl.* 1.43; *OLD*: 106.

¹⁵⁶⁹ Tac. *Hist.* 3.56.

¹⁵⁷⁰ Paus. 1.34.3; Höcker & Prayon, 2002: 544. Even within the legion, there is an altar to the *genius* of the emperor and the standards; Hegleland, 1978: 1491.

¹⁵⁷¹ See above, p.93.

¹⁵⁷² Le Bohec, 1989: 245.

¹⁵⁷³ See above, p.177.

¹⁵⁷⁴ Apul. *De Deo Soc.* 133-137; 150-151.

¹⁵⁷⁵ Cass. Dio. 40.17.3-18.2; Cic. *Div.* 1.77; Liv. 22.3.11; Plut. *Vit. Crass.* 19.3; Suet. *Claud.* 13; Val. Max. 1.6.6; 11.

¹⁵⁷⁶ The legionary camp, *CIL* 6.230; and other civilian buildings, *CIL* 2.2634; 3.1019.

¹⁵⁷⁷ Each emperor had his own *genius*, *CIL* 11.3303; Fishwick, 2007: 249-250. Also groups of people, like the soldiers themselves, *CIL* 2.5083; 3.1646; 15208; 6.227; 234; 7.103; 1031; *ILS* 2180; Le Bohec, 1989: 245.

higher divine beings, as discussed in Chapter 4,¹⁵⁷⁸ it is certainly not the only method of communication. If it was, each legionary inscription to the gods would most likely make reference to the *genius*. While this is seen on some inscriptions,¹⁵⁷⁹ it is certainly not present on all.¹⁵⁸⁰

If it is not their *genius*, then, that provides the standards with their unique position, it must be attributed to something else. Another passage from Tacitus might shed light on their exact religious nature. He reports an omen, again in the German Wars, where Germanicus sees eight eagles fly in the direction that his eight legions must attack. He states that the legions must follow them as they are the ‘*propria numina legionum*’.¹⁵⁸¹ This passage has been used in nearly every examination of the cult of the standards and is most often translated as ‘true deities of our legions’.¹⁵⁸² This is a simple enough idea and would indicate that eagles, and thus the *aquila* (and possibly the other standards) were deities themselves, worshipped alongside other legionary deities at the sacrifices and rituals described above. This is certainly the opinion of the Christian writer Tertullian.¹⁵⁸³ Possibly, Tacitus may even be referring to the *genii* just discussed. However, the word *numen* is a slightly more complicated concept than this translation allows for. In fact, there has been a long debate about what exactly the term *numen* is used for or is describing. While the original assumption posited mainly by Rose,¹⁵⁸⁴ that *numen* referred to some kind of ‘diffused sacredness’ has been rejected by most scholars,¹⁵⁸⁵ it is still quite difficult to pin down exactly what the word is referring to. One definite feature of the word that seems common in all interpretations is that it is not a purely divine concept. Seemingly in every mention of the word, especially when it appears in Tacitus,¹⁵⁸⁶ it always has some sort of physical connection with the mortal plane.¹⁵⁸⁷ I.e., it seems to be a manifestation of the divine on the physical

¹⁵⁷⁸ See above, p.95.

¹⁵⁷⁹ *CIL* 7.203; Hegleland, 1978: 1477.

¹⁵⁸⁰ *RIB*, 815-817; 819; 822; 824-828; 830-831; 838-842; 843 were all altars dedicated just to Jupiter Optimus Maximus; Webster, 1969: 277.

¹⁵⁸¹ *Tac. Ann.* 2.17.

¹⁵⁸² Nock, 1952: 239-240; Watson, 1969: 128; Speidel, 1976: 142-143; Hegleland, 1978: 1474. However, Henig, 1984: 90 goes against this opinion that they were actual deities.

¹⁵⁸³ *Tert. Ad Nat.* 1.12.

¹⁵⁸⁴ Warde-Fowler, 1911: 118; Rose, 1948: 13; Weinstock, 1949; Dumézil, 1966.

¹⁵⁸⁵ Scheid, 2003: 153.

¹⁵⁸⁶ *Tac. Ann.* 1.10; 1.73; 3.71; 4.37; 14.14 and 15.45 refer to statues of the gods; 13.41; 13.57; and 15.34 refer to divine miracles; 15.36 and 16.25 refers to divine inspiration; 15.74 refers to divine revelation; 16.16 refers to the gods wrath against Rome; *Hist.* 2.61 refers to Mariccus pretending at divine inspiration; 3.33 refers to the Temple of Mephitis remaining standing; 4.57 refers to divine vengeance enacted on the mortal plane; 4.65 refers to the mortal messenger of the divine; 4.84 refers to the anger of a god as a physical threat and doing the bidding of a god in the physical plane; 5.5 refers to thought about gods.

¹⁵⁸⁷ Other references to *numen* also seem to involve objects on the physical plane: poets can have *numen*, *Ov. Am.* 3.9.18; as well as springs, *Ov. Fast.* 5.674; *Her.* 15.150; *Met.* 1.545; virtuous men, *Luc.* 6.253-254; Rome, *Luc.* 1.199-200; the Roman people, *Cic. Red. Pop.* 18; the senate, *Cic. Phil.* 3.32; deceased loved ones, *CIL* 6.37965; *AE*, 1976, 243; and trees, *Stat. Theb.* 6.93-94; 9.586-588; the best expression of this concept is the *numen* within a physical emperor, he is not a god but has divine qualities within his mortal form, Fishwick, 2007; Hunt, 2014.

plane, hence why it is attached only to physical objects (like the eagles in the omen, statues of gods, and the emperor himself).

There are two possible interpretations of the *numina legionum* in this passage. The first would be as ‘the divine will/action/power of the legions’. This idea of the *numen* as the ‘divine will of a deity’ is the standard definition given by Scheid¹⁵⁸⁸ and this seems reflected in Tacitus’ use of the word throughout both the *Annals* and the *Histories*.¹⁵⁸⁹ His *numen* mostly seems to be the physical manifestation of a deity’s will or power. Since he uses *legionum*, he must mean the *numen* ‘of the legions’, and while it may be that he is referring to the *genius* of the legions,¹⁵⁹⁰ it is much more likely that he is using *numen* in the same context as the *numen* of Augustus, which is the divine power that allows the emperor to be worshipped while alive, and allows him to become a god after death.¹⁵⁹¹ However, since Tacitus is using the plural, it is more likely this *numen* refers to a group of deities,¹⁵⁹² rather than one like with the emperor, the most likely group being the Di Legionum, legionary deities, or the actually attested Di Militares.¹⁵⁹³ The second interpretation is that *numen* is being used as a direct synonym for a deity, i.e. ‘deities of the legions’, as the original translations would have us believe. There are examples of the word being used in this context, with references to ‘*numini Augusti*’,¹⁵⁹⁴ *numen Idaeum*,¹⁵⁹⁵ and the especially relevant *numina castrorum*.¹⁵⁹⁶ In this interpretation again, and as Fishwick points out with the *numini Augusti*,¹⁵⁹⁷ it is a reference to a group of deities that protect the legion as a whole, i.e. the Di Legionum, or more accurately the Di Militares.

What we find then is that both interpretations, although semantically different, essentially come to the same conclusion. Either the passage refers to the group of deities that constitutes the Di Militares or Di Legionum, or the eagles are physical manifestations of divine power. But these concepts are not necessarily incompatible. The eagles, and thus the *aquila* as well, may be the physical representation of the abstract group of deities connected to the legions. This interpretation explains some of the religious aspects of the standards explored above. Just as Jupiter has a statue

¹⁵⁸⁸ Scheid, 2003: 153; 157.

¹⁵⁸⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 1.10; 73; 3.71; 4.37; 13.41; 57; 14.14; 15.34; 36; 45; 74; 16.16; 25; *Hist.* 2.61; 3.33; 4.57; 65; 84.

¹⁵⁹⁰ He seems to be using *numen* as a synonym for *genius* when he speaks of Otho, Tac. *Hist.* 2.33; Ash, 2007: 168.

¹⁵⁹¹ Fishwick, 1991: 387; 2007; Scheid, 2003. Gradel, 2002 thinks that the *numen* of the emperor was simply a synonym for the direct worship of the emperor as a god. While this seems mostly correct, he fails to account for the physical aspect of *numen*, i.e. in the examples he gives (Hor. *Carm.* 4.5.31-6; Plin. *Pan.* 52.6; Suet. *Cal.* 22.3) the emperor the *numen* refers to was alive at the time. Thus, the worship was direct as the divine power within a mortal man rather than a traditional god.

¹⁵⁹² Like the Di Conservatores, *CIL* 8.10178; 17620; Fishwick, 1991: 451; 2007: 254; or the Di Iuvantes, *CIL* 98.2226.

¹⁵⁹³ *AE*, 1966: 355; Fishwick, 2007: 254

¹⁵⁹⁴ Abascal & Alföldy, 2002; Fishwick, 2007: 254. There is a military inscription which refers to the *numinibus Augustorum* this way also, *CIL* 7.103; Heglend, 1978: 1477.

¹⁵⁹⁵ *Juv.* 3.138; Fishwick, 2007: 254.

¹⁵⁹⁶ *CIL* 13.6749; Fishwick, 2007: 254.

¹⁵⁹⁷ Fishwick, 2007: 251-254

representing him inside his *aedes*, the Di Militares as a whole are represented by the eagle in the *aedes principiorum*. Hence, Tacitus calls them an *altaria* to all the (presumably relevant) gods and refers to them either as representative of those deities divine will, i.e. their physical representation like a statue, or as representative of the actual deities in the form of an eagle, i.e. their usual mode of representation on earth. In fact, on an inscription of the second century A.D., the Di Militares are listed against the *genius* of the eagle and *sancti signa*.¹⁵⁹⁸ And in another passage of Tacitus, Antoninus Primus prays through the *signa* to the *belli di*,¹⁵⁹⁹ what seems like a synonym for the Di Militares. Additionally, outside the main prescribed cults, each legion seemed to worship a variety of other deities, e.g. communal worship of Elagabalus in Pannonia,¹⁶⁰⁰ and each legion had its own personal set of *genii*. Thus, each set of Di Legionum would represent a slightly different set of deities. This also explains how the standards are able to represent the myriad of different deities seen on the *Feriale Duranum*, which in the second century A.D. was an even longer list.¹⁶⁰¹

There is also more evidence for the synonymy of the eagle, and *aquila*, to the Di Legionis, or religious thought about the legion. One is the celebration seen on various inscriptions of the ‘birthday of the legion’, celebrated most likely as a religious day and recorded in some inscriptions simply as *natalia aquilae*, ‘the birthday of the eagle’.¹⁶⁰² So synonymous were the legion and eagle that they could be used interchangeably in a religious context. Another example is an offering to the *honos aquilae*,¹⁶⁰³ which again seems to be a synonym for the worship of the deified abstraction, ‘Honour of the legions’. Both these examples further intertwine the eagle and the legion in Roman theological thought and seem a logical progression of the *esprit de corps* symbolism seen attached to the *aquila* in Chapter 4. Although evidence for both the *natalis aquilae* and *honos aquilae* only appear in the second century A.D., it is possible they stem from an earlier period. Especially since Tacitus is retrojecting most of his religious terminology about the *aquila* and eagle into the early first century A.D., it would imply that he, at least, thinks the thought surrounding the *aquila* has not altered since then. This intention coupled with the evidence of the religiosity of the standards in the first century B.C. would imply that much of these religious aspects was part of a long tradition going back to the legions of the late Republic. Although some aspects surrounding the religious nature of the standards will have changed (like the introduction of the ‘*Rosalia Signorum*’ discussed below) much else will

¹⁵⁹⁸ *CIL* 3.7591.

¹⁵⁹⁹ Tac. Hist. 3.10. Wheeler, 2009: 257 does not pick up on Antonius turning towards the standards to pray and instead believes he is praying to both.

¹⁶⁰⁰ *ILS* 4349; Beard, North, & Price, 1998a: 327-328.

¹⁶⁰¹ See above, p.94. Many of the festivals honouring emperors and the imperial family would have appeared on the *Feriale Duranum* by this point, as well as Dea Roma added by Hadrian; Fink, Hoey, & Synder, 1940: 102-112; 120-128; Nock, 1952; Gilliam, 1954; Heglend, 1978: 1493.

¹⁶⁰² *AE*, 1967, 229-230; *CIL* 2.2553; 6183. It could also be expressed as *natalia legionis*, *CIL* 2.2552; or *natalis signorum*, *CIL* 2.2554-6; Hoey, 1937: 19; Heglend, 1978: 1477.

¹⁶⁰³ Le Bohec, 1989: 245.

have been retained from this earlier period. Thus these ideas can be, tentatively, said to have existed at least from the late Republic in some form or another.

There is another festival connected to the *aquila* and the standards that also appears in this period, the '*Rosalia Signorum*'.¹⁶⁰⁴ This particular festival only appears written down in the *Feriale Duranum*, c.240,¹⁶⁰⁵ but rose festivals themselves start appearing around the time of Domitian.¹⁶⁰⁶ Also, one relief from the Roman fort at Corbridge seems to also be making reference to this festival in the mid-second century A.D.¹⁶⁰⁷ Thus, it seems likely that the festival appeared in the religious life of the legions at some point during this period. It seems very likely that these festivals have some sort of connection to the dead or the cult of the dead, as roses and the dead, or death, seem to be intimately linked.¹⁶⁰⁸ Roses were one of the most frequent offerings to the dead at tombs; painted roses appeared frequently on tomb walls; and private *rosalia* festivals seem to have occurred near the tombs of the dead.¹⁶⁰⁹ Roses are often linked with death in poetry,¹⁶¹⁰ and were renowned for their brief life.¹⁶¹¹ They were said to have covered the fields of Elysium in some authors¹⁶¹² and in the myth of Adonis, when he dies, roses spring from his blood, hence their colour.¹⁶¹³ Additionally, the dates for the *Rosalia Signorum*, on the 9th and 31st of May,¹⁶¹⁴ occur in Flora's month, who, while connected to flowers in general, also makes flowers from the blood of the dead.¹⁶¹⁵ Also, the 9th of May was one of the feast days for the Roman festival of the Lemuria, where the Romans performed rites to exorcise malevolent spirits of the dead.¹⁶¹⁶ Not only this, but, the Parentalia, the traditional Roman festival for honouring the dead,¹⁶¹⁷ is missing from the *Feriale Duranum*. It would seem strange that in such a dangerous profession as the legions that there would be no communal festival to the dead.

¹⁶⁰⁴ The festival appears as *Rosalias Signorum* in the inscription and has been changed to its nominative form here.

¹⁶⁰⁵ *FD*. 2.8; 15; The dates are different in the non-military festival, 12th May, *CIL* 10.3792; 19th of May, *CIL* 6.10239; 18th of June, *CIL* 10.444; 15th of July, *CIL* 11.132. In one inscription it is described as *tempore deducerent*, *CIL* 5.7906; Lattimore, 1942: 138.

¹⁶⁰⁶ *ILS* 3546; Phillips, 2008: 735.

¹⁶⁰⁷ Richmond, 1943: 163-164; Beard, North, & Price, 1998a: 326; Brenk, 1999: 88; Phillips, 2008: 734.

¹⁶⁰⁸ Toynbee, 1971: 63; Phillips, 2008: 734.

¹⁶⁰⁹ Auson. *Epit.* 31; *CIL* 5.2090; 2176; 2315; 4015; 4017; 4448; 4990; 7906; 6.10234; 10248; 10.3792; 11.1436. Roses as gifts to the dead appear as early as the second century B.C., *ILLRP*, 99. Toynbee & Ward-Parkins, 1953: 76-80 note all the rose murals within tombs; Lattimore, 1942: 137-138; Toynbee, 1971: 63; Phillips, 2008: 734.

¹⁶¹⁰ Prop. 1.17.21.

¹⁶¹¹ Hor. *Carm.* 3.4; 14-15; Brenk, 1999: 88.

¹⁶¹² Pind. *Fr.* 129; Prop. 4.7.59; Tib. 1.3.61-2; Brenk, 1999: 102.

¹⁶¹³ Bion, *Lament for Adonis*, 35; 65; 79; Brenk, 1999: 91; Claud. *De Rap. Pros.* 2.92-93 also links it to blood.

¹⁶¹⁴ 6 days before the Ides of May and 1 day before the Kalends of June; *FD*. 2.8; 14.

¹⁶¹⁵ Ov. *Fast.* 5.195-274; Hersch, 2010: 91.

¹⁶¹⁶ Ov. *Fast.* 5.421.

¹⁶¹⁷ Ov. *Fast.* 2.537-539; Beard, North, & Price, 1998a: 50.

However, despite these links Hoey in his article on the subject rejects any connection with the dead or cult of the dead in favour of an interpretation of the *Rosalia* as simply a ‘spring festival’.¹⁶¹⁸ Thus, in order to build the interpretation of these festivals being connected to the dead it is necessary to respond to each of his arguments. The first of these is that there were two types of *rosalia*, private festivals of the dead and public spring festivals.¹⁶¹⁹ But denying a connection to the dead simply from the context of the inscription does not seem like a strong enough argument. There are many *rosalia* held for larger communities and no evidence to suggest they were any different to the private *rosalia*.¹⁶²⁰ He also states that, since the standards themselves were deities (*numina*),¹⁶²¹ and since all other deities were kept away and their temples closed during festivals of the dead,¹⁶²² that this *Rosalia* could not be a festival to the dead. However, as discussed at length above,¹⁶²³ the standards did not represent a typical deity. Not only could the word *numen* apply to higher gods, it could also apply to the spirits of the underworld.¹⁶²⁴ Additionally, the concept of the *Di Militares* could easily incorporate the spirits of those that had died for the legion. His next argument is that the rite of *supplicatio*, given as the ritual associated with the *Rosalias* in the *Feriale Duranum*, could not be performed to the dead, as they were reserved for the higher gods.¹⁶²⁵ While this may have been true in the Republic, *supplicatio* seems to have taken on a more generic meaning in the later centuries as simply an offering to the gods or an expression of loyalty.¹⁶²⁶ Something that seems like a *supplicatio* takes places when Trajan sets up a legionary cult of the dead.¹⁶²⁷ We also know that in the Lemuria, offerings were certainly made to the spirits of the dead.¹⁶²⁸ Even the example Hoey gives, of robbers pouring wine in memory of their dead comrades, fits with this more general interpretation of *supplicatio*.¹⁶²⁹ And additionally, oaths, which also seem to have usually been reserved for gods or emperors, could be sworn to the legionary dead by the soldiers.¹⁶³⁰ Lastly, most of Hoey’s evidence that the *Rosalia* was a

¹⁶¹⁸ Hoey, 1937. Webster, 1969: 150 accepts his interpretation. Seston, 1980 rejects Hoey’s interpretation and instead sees them as lustrations after the first battles of the campaigning season, coordinated with the Tubilustrum. However, the manner of the festival he describes is much the same as Hoey’s.

¹⁶¹⁹ Hoey, 1937: 22-24.

¹⁶²⁰ *Collegia* held *rosalia* festivals, *CIL* 6.444; 10234. Although Hoey, 1937: 23-24; n.39 denies the possibility that these were connected to the dead, nothing in the inscriptions indicates that they were any different to the private festivals. Pergamon had its own *rosalia*, *IPergamon*, No.374 (although this festival may have been connected to the ruler cult) and in some cities the amphitheatre may have been occasionally decked with roses, although this was in c.387; *ILS* 4918; Beard, North, & Price, 1998a: 326. Phillips, 2008: 734 describes them as purely private affairs but lists the possible large ones. However, he has no doubt that they were festivals to the dead.

¹⁶²¹ Hoey, 1937: 24 using Tac. *Ann.* 2.17.

¹⁶²² Ov. *Fast.* 2.563; 5.485.

¹⁶²³ See above, p.182.

¹⁶²⁴ *Numinibus infernis* in Tac. *Ann.* 2.69.

¹⁶²⁵ Cic. *Phil.* 1.6.13; 2.43.110; Hoey, 1937: 24.

¹⁶²⁶ Jonker, 1955: 73-74; Beard, North, & Price, 1998a: 325; Hahn, 2007: 247; Siebert, 2008: 955.

¹⁶²⁷ Cass. Dio. 68.8.2; Hoey, 1937: 23.

¹⁶²⁸ Ov. *Fast.* 5.425.

¹⁶²⁹ Apul. *Met.* 4.22; Hoey, 1937: 24.

¹⁶³⁰ Sil. *Pun.* 6.113-116; King, 2009: 112.

spring festival talks about using flowers in general,¹⁶³¹ rather than specifically roses. If roses are used they are listed with other items in order to indicate the extravagance of the event.¹⁶³² If the festival was simply a spring festival, why was it not called a Floralia and have all flowers included?¹⁶³³ Instead, the roses were singled out and attached to the standards, i.e. a flower with intimate connections with death was attached to the symbol for the legionary community. With all this evidence it seems impossible to completely reject any connection between the dead and this festival.

Thus, even if you accept Hoey's argument for the *Rosalia* being a simple spring festival and not a direct cult of the dead, the volume of evidence connecting the rose to the dead would mean that, even if just a spring festival, thoughts of the dead must have entered into the festival in some capacity. And it is worth re-emphasising that the festival was focused on the standards, the communal symbol of the legion, and that the legionaries, living in a persistently dangerous environment, seemingly had no other festival of the dead in the *Feriale Duranum*. If this is the case and the *Rosalia Signorum* was a festival to the dead, then not only did the *aquila* and standards represent the higher deities within the *Di Militares* but also the legions' dead, ancestors, and spirits.

The use of the standard as a cultic object and its use within religious ritual also seems to extend into civilian life in this century. Henig points out several interesting gems, one showing a Menorah with three candlesticks replaced by standards (Fig 6.5),¹⁶³⁴ one shows Zeus Sarapis with an eagle and standard (Fig 6.6) and one Jupiter Dolichenus with an eagle and standards (Fig 6.7).¹⁶³⁵ Speidel adds to this evidence several more depictions of Jupiter Dolichenus with an eagle and standards (Fig 6.8) on some silver votive offerings on the Danube frontier,¹⁶³⁶ but he also makes the connection between these standards and the *semeion*.¹⁶³⁷ The *semeion* is the cult standard seen in religious depictions across the Near East,¹⁶³⁸ found in Dura Europos and Hatra but also mentioned by Lucian in Hierapolis, which is where the name originates.¹⁶³⁹ Lightfoot gives a good summary of the visual evidence for the *semeion*,¹⁶⁴⁰ which also seem to appear in this period, showing a coin of Caracalla from Hierapolis (Fig 6.9),¹⁶⁴¹ a relief from the temple of Atargatis in Dura,¹⁶⁴² a relief from

¹⁶³¹ Cass. Dio. 75.1.4; Hdn. 1.7.3; 5.6.8; Ov. *Fast.* 4.346; Plut. *Vit. Marc.* 22; *Vit. Pomp.* 57; Suet. *Claud.* 13; *Vit.* 9; Tac. *Hist.* 2.55; Hoey, 1937: 25-26.

¹⁶³² Lucr. 1.264-8; Mart. 10.19; SHA, *Heliogab.* 19.7; *Gall.* 16.2; Suet. *Nero.* 27; Hoey, 1937: 25-26.

¹⁶³³ Hoey, 1937: 28-29 actually compares the festival to the Floralia, stating that the calendar did not include one so the *Rosalias* must be one. But the same argument can be made for the festival of the dead.

¹⁶³⁴ This example is especially strange, and will be dealt with in more detail below, p.194.

¹⁶³⁵ Henig, 1983b: 110-111, Figs A-C; Dirven, 2005: 121.

¹⁶³⁶ Speidel, 1978b: 55-57, Figs 8-11. Some of these tablets just show standards without any eagles, Figs 8 & 9. Dirven, 2005: 121.

¹⁶³⁷ Speidel, 1978b: 58-59. *LSJ* s.v. *σημεία*.

¹⁶³⁸ Kessler, 2008: 480.

¹⁶³⁹ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 33. Although he describes the bird atop the *semeion* as a dove, which does not seem to appear in any of the depictions.

¹⁶⁴⁰ Lightfoot, 2003: 540-542. As does Dirven, 2005: 120-124.

¹⁶⁴¹ *LIMC* Dea Syria 11a-11b; Dirven, 2005: 120.

¹⁶⁴² *LIMC* Dea Syria 19; Dirven, 2005: 120-121.

northern Mesopotamia,¹⁶⁴³ an intaglio gem,¹⁶⁴⁴ as well as a relief from Edessa (Fig 6.10).¹⁶⁴⁵ Even more evidence comes from Hatra, with Downey giving a corpus of all the standards seen throughout the city and dated between 160 and 240,¹⁶⁴⁶ many of which either have an eagle atop them or are depicted with one.¹⁶⁴⁷

The easiest interpretation, especially since these standards look very reminiscent of Roman standards and include those topped with eagles, would be that some sort of adoption of Roman legionary religious practices had occurred. Even though most of the eagles have their wings closed,¹⁶⁴⁸ at least one has them spread,¹⁶⁴⁹ and it may be that these standards are not complete copies. A brief overview of the evidence listed above also points in this direction. Most of the Jupiter Dolichenus and Dura-Europos material comes either from or near legionary outposts on the border of the empire.¹⁶⁵⁰ Jupiter Dolichenus, although not an official military deity, had a close link with the legions.¹⁶⁵¹ And at least one relief from Dura-Europos seems very ‘Roman-esque’ with what looks like a *vexilla* (Fig 6.11).¹⁶⁵² It may be that the civilian population in close proximity to the legions started to adopt some of their religious practice for their own ends.¹⁶⁵³

However, there are some serious problems with this interpretation. The first is the amount of material depicting these *semeia*,¹⁶⁵⁴ especially with eagles, in Hatra. Hatra was both outside of the empire and an actual enemy of Rome,¹⁶⁵⁵ so why would they be emulating Roman standards? This fact is used often to discredit the possibility of a connection between the Roman standards and the *semeion*.¹⁶⁵⁶ However, there may be some sort of explanation. Hatra was located only c.60 km from the city of Dura-Europos. Dura-Europos, as we have already seen, also seems to have a high proportion of visual representations of the *semeion* but it also had a legionary garrison stationed

¹⁶⁴³ *LIMC* Dea Syria 12.

¹⁶⁴⁴ Cabinet des Medailles, Paris, No.4920; Lightfoot, 2003: 541.

¹⁶⁴⁵ *LIMC* Dea Syria 15; Lightfoot, 2003: 540-542.

¹⁶⁴⁶ Downey, 1970; Dirven, 2005: 122.

¹⁶⁴⁷ Downey, 1970: 199. There is a Greek-Palmyrene relief from Rome that has an inscription talking of a dedication of a ‘silver standard’ (*σίγνον ἀργυροῦν / smyt’ dy ksp’*), but it is dated to 236, outside of this period; *CISem.* 3902; Dirven, 2005: 123-124.

¹⁶⁴⁸ Downey, 1970: 199.

¹⁶⁴⁹ Downey, 1970: 199, no.9.

¹⁶⁵⁰ Both the Danube and Syrian borders had a significant legionary presence during the second century A.D., Hassall, 2000: 322-323.

¹⁶⁵¹ Speidel, 1978b explores this connection in detail.

¹⁶⁵² Lightfoot, 2003: 543, the relief also seems to show a Roman military tribune and his cohort. Some graffiti from Dura-Europos also shows what looks like a *vexilla* in this context, Speidel, 1978b: 59-60, Fig 17.

¹⁶⁵³ This is similar to Roztovtzeff, 1942: 100-101’s argument, although he states that it was a purposeful decision in order to curry favour with the Romans (but this would not fit with the problems of Hatra); Lightfoot, 2003: 545.

¹⁶⁵⁴ Occasionally seen with the spelling *semaia*, *LSJ* s.v. *σημαία*.

¹⁶⁵⁵ It was attacked by Trajan in 116 and Septimius in 196 and 198; Cass. Dio. 68.31.1; 75.11.2; Speidel, 1978b: 60; Hauser, 2005: 2.

¹⁶⁵⁶ Speidel, 1978: 60; Lightfoot, 2003: 545.

there.¹⁶⁵⁷ We know that Rome used auxiliaries from across the empire, including the regions around Dura-Europos, and we know that these auxiliaries followed the same religious practices, since the *Feriale Duranum* from Dura-Europos comes from an auxiliary outpost. Thus, these native soldiers would have joined the legion and led a life governed by the religious rituals of the legion, all of which involved the standards. Once they returned to civilian life, either returning home to the east or creating one there, they may have adapted their legionary religious practices to those of their native religion, including the standards in the worship of native gods such as Atargatis and Hadad. Hatra was founded only in the mid-first century A.D.¹⁶⁵⁸ and auxiliaries from Syria had been entering much longer, so it may be the case that, through immigration outside of the empire to Hatra, religious rituals involving standards were spread from a veteran community to the wider civilian population outside of the empire, and once there, became a completely new and non-Roman tradition.

This sort of interpretation may go some way to explaining the depiction of the standards on a Menorah seen on an intaglio gem in Henig.¹⁶⁵⁹ Schoenfeld has shown that Jews had been a part of the Roman army, although not consistently, since the time of Tiberius.¹⁶⁶⁰ This inclusion increases after the Jewish rebellions come to a halt in the mid-second century A.D., and eventually Jewish men formed a cadre within the Imperial army by the time of Caracalla.¹⁶⁶¹ Although some Jews were forcibly conscripted, others volunteered. Since Judaism in the Roman period has been shown to be far more flexible than previously thought,¹⁶⁶² occupying a spectrum from strict orthodoxy to the adoption of pagan motifs,¹⁶⁶³ the idea that Jewish men volunteered to join the legions is not implausible. Thus, the Standards Menorah on the gem may be an expression of a particular Jewish soldier's altered religious belief from his time in the legions.¹⁶⁶⁴ However, since the gem was found in Italy and has no date, it could just as likely be a Roman soldier's expression of victory over the Jews, like the Menorah on the arch of Titus. Though, we know some Jewish soldiers served in Sardinia,¹⁶⁶⁵ close to Italy, so both interpretations may be just as likely.

Dirven, however, gives an alternate explanation for why the Hatrene standards resemble Roman standards. She posits that since the standards can be dated to after the Roman siege of the city

¹⁶⁵⁷ Leisten, 2004: 744.

¹⁶⁵⁸ Hauser, 2005: 2.

¹⁶⁵⁹ Henig, 1983b: Fig A.

¹⁶⁶⁰ Tiberius forcibly conscripted 4,000 Jews in 19, Joseph. *AJ.* 18.84. Joseph. *AJ.* 17.2 refers to Jewish military colonists. A Jew from Syrian served in the *Legio I Adiutrix* under Nero, *CIL* 16.8; and other inscriptions do the same, *CIL* 2.920; Schoenfeld, 2006: 117-118; 120-122.

¹⁶⁶¹ Schoenfeld, 2006: 120-121.

¹⁶⁶² Schwartz, 2001; Levine, 2003; Schoenfeld, 2006: 117.

¹⁶⁶³ As has already been discussed, see above, p.176.

¹⁶⁶⁴ The Jews may have already been familiar with the concept of a cultic standard, since Josephus uses the same word (*σημαία*) as Lucian when describing the Roman military standards, Joseph. *AJ.* 18.55; *BJ.* 2.169; Lucian, *Syr. D.* 33; 49.

¹⁶⁶⁵ This is wear Tiberius sent his conscripts, Joseph. *AJ.* 18.84; Schoenfeld, 2006: 118.

in 117 by Trajan,¹⁶⁶⁶ that it must be from this event that the Hatrene people assimilated the Roman form of standard to their cultic standards.¹⁶⁶⁷ The possibility does seem plausible, especially if we consider that the city may have already used some sort of cultic standard and saw representations of their own central gods, one of whom was connected to the eagle, in the Roman standards. It may be that, since the Roman siege was unsuccessful, the Hatrene people saw their own gods in the Roman standards and chose to adopt that form due to their victory. Cassius Dio notes that Hatra's main deity was a 'sun-god'¹⁶⁶⁸ and the close connection between the eagle and solar deities in the Near East has already been discussed.¹⁶⁶⁹ There are some problems with this interpretation though. Dirven bases it mostly on the similarities between the Hatrene standards and the praetorian standards, mainly the busts within rings.¹⁶⁷⁰ Thus, she argues, the Hatrene people must have drawn on the praetorian standards as inspiration, and those standards only accompanied the emperor, hence adopting them from Trajan's siege. However, busts are not confined to praetorian standards, they are also present on any legionary *imagines* standard,¹⁶⁷¹ which Dirven has forgotten to mention. She has also failed to account for the similarity between the eagle on the Hatrene standards and the *aquila*. Nearly all of the standards from Hatra have an eagle atop them,¹⁶⁷² which is incongruous with an adoption of form from either the *imagines* or praetorian standards. Thus, although an enticing possibility, it contains as many problems as my own explanation above.

But Hatra is not the only problem with this interpretation. The relief from Edessa, although extremely weather-worn, apparently shows Atargatis and Hadad with a sacred stone and two *semeia*. It was originally dated to the second or first century B.C.¹⁶⁷³ but has since been shown to be from the third millennium B.C.¹⁶⁷⁴ This links it with some Syrian cylinder seals from the second millennium B.C.¹⁶⁷⁵ What is interesting about these seals is that they definitely seem to show *semeia*, or some kind of sacred standard, and although many are very different in form to those seen in the second century A.D. or to Roman standards, a couple clearly show a bird atop the standard (Figs 2.21 & 2.22). Another text from this period hints at cultic standards that acted like cult statues.¹⁶⁷⁶ The evidence for a much older cult continues in the later periods through the neo-Assyrian period (911-

¹⁶⁶⁶ Cass. Dio. 68.31.

¹⁶⁶⁷ Dirven, 2005: 128.

¹⁶⁶⁸ Cass. Dio. 68.31.2. This god was probably Maren, Dirven, 2005: 130, n.72.

¹⁶⁶⁹ See above, p.136. One inscription from Hatra evens mentions the god 'Lord the Eagle'; H79 in Dirven, 2005: 129, n.61. Dirven, 2005: 128, n.22 notes that inscriptions from Hatra are numbered according to their sequence of publication, the main texts for which are Aggoula, 1991; Vattioni, 1981; 1994; and Beyer, 1998.

¹⁶⁷⁰ Dirven, 2005: 126-127, and Fig 7 shows Trajan's praetorian standards he is comparing them to.

¹⁶⁷¹ Webster, 1979: 136.

¹⁶⁷² Downey, 1970.

¹⁶⁷³ Drijvers, 1980: 82; Lightfoot, 2003: 542.

¹⁶⁷⁴ Seidl, 1989: 455-459; Lightfoot, 2003: 542.

¹⁶⁷⁵ Seyrig, 1960; Oden, 1977: 137; Drijvers, 1980: 81.

¹⁶⁷⁶ Dirven, 2005: 131.

609 B.C.)¹⁶⁷⁷ and a possible reference to their existence in the Seleucid period.¹⁶⁷⁸ There may even be a reference to Moses making something resembling a *semeion* in *Num.* 21:8-9, this *semeion* even has an animal atop it (a snake).¹⁶⁷⁹ In fact, as discussed above,¹⁶⁸⁰ these ancient *semeia* may even be where the Roman standards originated. Thus cultic standards seem to be a long tradition in Near Eastern cultures. However, apart from the vague Seleucid reference,¹⁶⁸¹ there is a large gap in the literary and visual evidence for the *semeia*, between the neo-Assyrian period and their appearance in the second century A.D. Although the Persians may have had military standards, most likely in the form of a Faravahar and so possibly connected to cultic practice,¹⁶⁸² there is no evidence for any standards existing in the Parthian empire.¹⁶⁸³ Therefore, although it is likely that these eastern cultic *semeia* continued in the region throughout the later periods, it is not confirmable.

It would seem then that the second century A.D. *semeia* are possibly the continuation of a traditional Near Eastern cultic standard. However, if this is the case how do we account for the similarity in form between these *semeia* and the Roman standards? Many have lots of similar elements, such as discs and busts.¹⁶⁸⁴ Perhaps most importantly for this study, none of the previous *semeia*, apart from possibly the Sumerian second millennium B.C. standards, are ever represented with an eagle atop them until the second century A.D.

Dirven may have an explanation for this. Based on the form of the standards she divides them into three distinct categories: the traditional Semitic standard, a ‘Romanised’ version of this standard, and the Hatrene standards.¹⁶⁸⁵ The traditional Semitic standards encompass all the representations that contain no ‘Roman’ elements and date from before the second century A.D.¹⁶⁸⁶ The ‘Romanised’¹⁶⁸⁷ standards include those with Roman elements, discs mainly, but I believe the inclusion of an eagle also points in this direction, which includes those seen with Jupiter Dolichenus, those in Dura-Europos, from Lucian, and on Roman coins.¹⁶⁸⁸ What this second category has in common is

¹⁶⁷⁷ Dirven, 2005: 124 discusses all this evidence from at least 883 B.C. to 627 B.C. and Oden, 1977: 137, n.147 notes that the evidence for standards in Mesopotamia is ‘overwhelming’.

¹⁶⁷⁸ This is based on the Semitic word *urigallu* being used, which was known as a term for standard; Lackenbacher, 1977: 40; Dirven, 2005: 124-125.

¹⁶⁷⁹ Oden, 1977: 137, *Numbers* was most likely written down in the fifth century B.C.

¹⁶⁸⁰ See above, p.45.

¹⁶⁸¹ Speidel, 1978b: 60 posits that there are some, yet unknown, Hellenistic standards, but this is also an argument with no evidence as they only begin to appear again in the Imperial period, Millar, 1993: 12; Lightfoot, 2003: 540.

¹⁶⁸² Xen. *Anab.* 1.10.12; *Cyr.* 7.1.4. Discussed above, p.44.

¹⁶⁸³ Dirven, 2005: 131 posits that the Parthian’s must certainly have been aware of the cultic nature of standards due to their placement of Crassus’ standards in their temples. However, not only is this information only from Roman sources (*Hor. Carm.* 4.15.6-8; *Ep.* 1.18.56-57) the standards also counted as war booty, which was traditionally placed in temples alongside other captured arms.

¹⁶⁸⁴ Dirven, 2005: 125; 127 notes all these similar characteristics in certain standards.

¹⁶⁸⁵ Dirven, 2005: 124.

¹⁶⁸⁶ Dirven, 2005: 124-125.

¹⁶⁸⁷ This is what Dirven, 2005 labels it, it seems to me more of a process of creolisation or just simply acculturation.

¹⁶⁸⁸ Dirven, 2005: 125; 127.

geographical location, as all of them appear within the confines of the Roman Empire. Lastly, she places the Hatrene standards in their own category as they provide the largest problem and seem to combine both Near Eastern and Roman elements, the possible explanations for which are discussed above.¹⁶⁸⁹ In this interpretation the second century A.D. *semeia* represent the latest in a long tradition of cultic standards, but those within the empire have begun to adopt certain aspects of the Roman standards and assign them to their cultic standards. Dirven also points out that in all cases these standards are connected both to the supreme deities of the location (be it the Syrian goddess in Lucian's text, Atargatis and Hadad in Dura-Europos, or Maren in Hatra) and the highest political authority.¹⁶⁹⁰ This second point is illustrative for the adoption of Roman elements, as in these areas Rome was now the highest authority.¹⁶⁹¹

But the adoption of certain Roman elements proves a symbolic link had developed between the cultic *semeia* and the Roman legionary standards. Either the standards were influenced by cross-cultural interaction or were seen as somewhat synonymous due to their inherent similarities. Thus a sort of transferable symbolism occurred both ways. The Roman legionaries would see their standards in the cultic depictions of eastern gods, which may partly explain why the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus appealed to them and spread,¹⁶⁹² and the civilian population may have seen representations of the cultic standards in the Roman legionary standards. The similarities in the religious properties of both standards must have encouraged this process. Both seemingly represented multiple deities (sometimes all at once),¹⁶⁹³ both were the only cultic objects to be removed from their place of worship,¹⁶⁹⁴ and both represented certain social groups, as those seen in Hatra seem connected to particular kinship groups and Lucian speaks of particular towns bringing their own individual standards to festival in Heliopolis.¹⁶⁹⁵ Another piece of evidence for this interlinked symbolism is that the Greek word Lucian uses for the eastern cultic standard, *σημαία* (transliterated to *semeia* previously),¹⁶⁹⁶ is used by Josephus to describe the Roman standards.¹⁶⁹⁷ Since Josephus was from the Near East he may have been familiar with the cultic standards and therefore attached the Roman ensigns to this tradition.

¹⁶⁸⁹ Dirven, 2005: 126-128.

¹⁶⁹⁰ Dirven, 2005: 129; 131.

¹⁶⁹¹ Dirven, 2005: 133.

¹⁶⁹² Other syncretised gods were honoured with the standards also, such as Jupiter Sabastos, *CIL* 13.6708; Speidel, 1978b: 62.

¹⁶⁹³ *BMC Mesopotamia* 82; Lucian, *Syr. D.* 33; Downey, 1970: 206; 214; Lightfoot, 2003: 544. Within Hatra the standards even represented multiple different deities, Dirven, 2005: 130, n.72; 131. That the Roman standards represented many deities was discussed above, p.95.

¹⁶⁹⁴ Stated for the *semeia* in Lucian, *Syr. D.* 33 and for the Roman standards above, p.179.

¹⁶⁹⁵ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 49; Downey, 1970: 214; Dirven, 2005: 129-130. The communal symbolism of the Roman military standards has been discussed in detail above, p.92.

¹⁶⁹⁶ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 33; 49.

¹⁶⁹⁷ Joseph. *AJ.* 18.55; *BJ.* 2.169; Dirven, 2005: 132.

6.5.2: Romanus Avis

Tacitus' *Annals* 2.17 provides us with another interesting identification of the eagles alongside their position as *numina*. In the same speech of Germanicus he calls the eagles *Romanus avis* (Roman birds).¹⁶⁹⁸ This expression is the closest to a direct symbolic link between Rome and the eagle seen so far. However, Tacitus is not explicitly saying that eagles themselves symbolise Rome or the empire, just that they are 'Roman'. In this casual expression he places Rome in ownership of all eagles, expressing, at least in his mind, some sort of special relationship between the two. It is clear that, by the early second century A.D., the constant use of the eagle by Roman authorities and the eagle's persistent appearance in culture discussed over the last few chapters have allowed the Romans to think of the bird as particularly theirs. At least this is what Tacitus, a Roman senator, believes. Since he expresses the belief in such a casual and undebated manner it may reveal ingrained thought concerning the eagle, rather than just Tacitus' elite view. Or, since the expression is directed at the legionaries, a purely military perspective. Despite this expression, and as clearly seen in Hatra in the previous discussion,¹⁶⁹⁹ although Romans may have thought of themselves having a special connection or ownership over the eagle, others outside of the empire may not have viewed it in the same manner and may instead have claimed that ownership themselves.

6.6: Political Aspects

6.6.1: The Eagle and Imperial Power

The eagle was used in this period to convey many of the same political ideas established by Augustus and the Julio-Claudians, although occasionally these ideas are expressed in novel and interesting ways. One of the very Augustan uses of the eagle, to identify the emperor as *cosmocrator* and Jupiter's vicegerent on earth is seen on a variety of coins with the eagle involved.¹⁷⁰⁰ An interesting issue of Hadrian's, however, shows the eagle's role more clearly than ever before (Fig 6.12).¹⁷⁰¹ It flies down to hand Hadrian a sceptre, making it clear he has been divinely elected with the legend PROVIDENTIA DEORUM.¹⁷⁰² This is an important emphasis due to the confused succession following Trajan's death. The eagle-topped sceptre in triumphal imagery also remains a common image, used by most of the emperors of this period¹⁷⁰³ in a similar way to that of previous

¹⁶⁹⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 2.17.

¹⁶⁹⁹ See above, p.193.

¹⁷⁰⁰ Paus. 3.17.4 also links some eagle statues at the Temple of Zeus Cometas to the Hellenistic king Lysander.

¹⁷⁰¹ *RIC* Hadrian 589b; 602; Fears, 1977: 244.

¹⁷⁰² The message is given again on another coin where Jupiter hands Hadrian a sphere, BMC 242; Fears, 1977: 244.

¹⁷⁰³ Trajan: Milne, 1933: 689; Hadrian: Milne, 1933: 1314; Antoninus: *RIC* Antoninus 767; Commodus: *RIC* Commodus 157; 194; Septimius: Varbanov, 2005-2007: 2670.

emperors.¹⁷⁰⁴ The only difference in this imagery is that it starts to appear on coins minted in the provinces. It appears in Alexandria in 113-114 and then again under Hadrian in 130-131.¹⁷⁰⁵ The trope then appears in Nikopolis ad Istrum under Septimius Severus.¹⁷⁰⁶ This is another example, as seen in the previous century, of imperial imagery from Rome spreading and acquiring value in a provincial setting. We may also see some expressions of the emperor *as* an eagle, as with Augustus,¹⁷⁰⁷ One Hadrianic coin shows an eagle on the obverse, with Hadrian's name and a thunderbolt on the reverse (Fig 6.13) connecting them both via the obverse/reverse relationship.¹⁷⁰⁸ Another, on a coin from the reign of Septimius, shows the bust of Septimius between his sons Caracalla and Geta, while below is an eagle in the centre with stars either side of it (Fig 6.14).¹⁷⁰⁹ Possibly this implies Septimius is the eagle, as the Augustus, while his sons are the stars, as Caesars.¹⁷¹⁰ Once again, a provincial city is adapting and playing off imperial themes. To them at least, the emperor seems, explicitly, to be an eagle. We even see a continuation of the provincial commanders as the emperors 'eagles' as coins of Septimius show eagles alongside the regional legate's name.¹⁷¹¹

But we also see the eagle most commonly being used to express imperial continuation and it seems to become a standardised imperial image. Not only do some emperors, such as Nerva, re-issue some Augustan coin types with eagles on,¹⁷¹² plainly attempting to establish a connection to the previous imperial regime through these eagles. Other standard types now become widespread across the empire: such as the eagle with the *corona civica* (although now sometimes in its beak or around it)¹⁷¹³ and holding a thunderbolt.¹⁷¹⁴ It retained much of the symbolism connected to these images discussed in the previous chapters,¹⁷¹⁵ but additionally gained a sense of continuation. In fact, we also see this idea on a local scale, as many of the cities, such as Alexandria and Antioch, continue to use the same eagle types they had since the Hellenistic period, simply with new emperors.¹⁷¹⁶

¹⁷⁰⁴ See above, p.152.

¹⁷⁰⁵ Milne, 1933: 689; 1314.

¹⁷⁰⁶ Varbanov, 2005-2007: 2670.

¹⁷⁰⁷ See above, p.153.

¹⁷⁰⁸ *RIC* Hadrian 624-625. This seems to certainly refer to Hadrian as on another coin of the same series (*RIC* Hadrian 619) Hadrian's bust is on the obverse and a thunderbolt is on the reverse.

¹⁷⁰⁹ The coin is unpublished but appears in Aufhauser 11, no.277.

¹⁷¹⁰ Interestingly, a star is intimately connected with Caesar.

¹⁷¹¹ Moushmov, 1912: 389-390; 984.

¹⁷¹² *RIC* Nerva 128-129; Trajan 177. There are other re-issues of Nerva to try and identify him with the Julio-Claudians, and according to the *Epit. De Caes.* 12.12. He was buried in the Mausoleum of Augustus; Griffin, 2000: 85.

¹⁷¹³ BMC 84; 324; 347; *SNG* Cop. 434; 776; *SNG* Stancomb 911-912; Moushmov, 1912: 4149; 5222; Prieur & Prieur, 2000: 1140; 1149; 1163; Varbanov, 2005-2007: 2295; Hendin, 2010: 837.

¹⁷¹⁴ BMC 23; *RIC* Hadrian 190-191; 516; Trajan 144; *SNG* Cop. 182; *SNG* Lev. 1000; Moushmov, 1912: 895; 3021; 5219; Milne, 1933: 2696; or just a plain eagle, BMC 87; *SNG* Lev. 471; Milne, 1933: 2239; Zograph, 1977: 49; Kovacs & Lindgren, 1985: I; Jurukova, 1987: 166; Varbanov, 2005-2007: 2309; 2338.

¹⁷¹⁵ The symbolism of the 'eagle on thunderbolt' representing the speed by which it falls on its prey, discussed in Chapter 3, see above, p.60, may still exist in this century, as it is mentioned in *Apul. Flor.* 2.

¹⁷¹⁶ BMC 7; *SNG* Lev. 1718; Wruck, 1931: 1358; Milne, 1933: 541; 560; 566; 901; 960; 1027; Prieur & Prieur, 2000: 156-157; 177; 184; 200; 1506; 1508.

But the period also sees a process of combination and adaption of these imperial eagles and, although expressing the same concepts, are new iconographically. We see a slight evolution in its victory symbolism, as Victory holds an eagle on occasional coins.¹⁷¹⁷ An eagle above a flaming altar is seen on a coin of Antoninus Pius,¹⁷¹⁸ rather than the regular altar seen with Vespasian.¹⁷¹⁹ Commodus also uses the eagle-topped sceptre to indicate his power on coins referencing the Senate.¹⁷²⁰ We also see the *corona civica* being added to other eagle images, such as when it has a thunderbolt or when it is on a sphere.¹⁷²¹ Interestingly, we also see a local combination in Alexandria when they place their traditional Egyptianising eagle with a *corona civica* (Fig 6.15).¹⁷²² The *corona* is not obvious but it does bring up an interesting point of acculturation. This style of eagle had graced the Alexandrian coinage from the Ptolemies, but by this century it had become so interlaced with imperial ‘Roman’ images that they felt placing the *corona* in its mouth was not contradictory to their local identity.

The eagle’s use in apotheosis imagery, although undergoing no change in religious meaning, does shift slightly in iconography and use in connection to the deification of emperors. Mostly we see a continuation of the imagery seen in the previous period,¹⁷²³ and it may be, since Cassius Dio notes that an eagle was released at the end of the apotheosis ritual of Pertinax to represent his soul,¹⁷²⁴ that the eagle is added to the ritual at some point during this period (either with Pertinax or previously). However, we also see other eagle images being used to express apotheosis. An eagle on an altar; with a thunderbolt; with a *corona*; and just alone, appear on deification issues of certain emperors.¹⁷²⁵ Other possible apotheosis images that appear are the large eagle within a wreath, seen on the SS. Apostoli relief (likely from Trajan’s forum) and possibly on the tympanum of Hadrian’s pantheon (Fig 6.16).¹⁷²⁶ The composition of the images is similar to a, now lost, relief, showing the eagle moving through the zodiac and thus into heaven.¹⁷²⁷ We see apotheotic eagles on other imperial monuments too. Both the plinths of Trajan’s and Marcus Aurelius’ columns have eagles on the corners,¹⁷²⁸ much like the funerary altars described in the last chapter.¹⁷²⁹ Their apotheotic value is

¹⁷¹⁷ *RIC* Hadrian 284a; Moushmov, 1912: 1815.

¹⁷¹⁸ *SNG* Lev. 1334.

¹⁷¹⁹ See above, p.162.

¹⁷²⁰ *RIC* Commodus 157; 194.

¹⁷²¹ Moushmov, 1912: 276; 389-390; 984; 2832; 3021; 5277; Bellinger, 1940: 295; Varbanov, 2005-2007: 1936; 2156. These mostly appear in the Severan period. A coin from Commodus’ reign shows two eagles with a *corona*, Moushmov, 1912: 5195.

¹⁷²² Milne, 1933: 2084.

¹⁷²³ *RIC* Trajan 743; 748; Hadrian 421; 751-756; 1052; Antoninus 387; Marcus 429; 596; 1509; Commodus 263; 266-267; 273-274; 654; 656; 659-660; Septimius 24a; 72a.

¹⁷²⁴ Cass. Dio. 75.4.5. Mentioned above, p.181.

¹⁷²⁵ *RIC* Marcus Aurelius 429-432; Commodus 266-267; 269-272; 600; 657.

¹⁷²⁶ De Fine Licht, 1968: 45-46; Bober & Rubenstein, 2010: 237-238; Barry, 1914: 100-102.

¹⁷²⁷ The lost relief can be seen in the *Codex Coburgensis* (c.1550/55); Wrede, 1986; Barry, 2014: 100-102.

¹⁷²⁸ *RIC* Trajan 292-293; 307; 356; 603; 678-679; Davies, 2000: 46; Barry, 2014: 100-102.

¹⁷²⁹ See above, p.137.

increased by the fact that Trajan was buried in the plinth of his column.¹⁷³⁰ Additionally, the eagle is not the central aspect of the apotheosis imagery of Antoninus Pius and Faustina on Antoninus' column (Fig 6.17).¹⁷³¹ Here the eagles are just accompanying Aion, who is the vehicle of apotheosis.¹⁷³² This relief also brings up two more points of the evolution of this imagery. Firstly, Faustina, his wife, is included. And secondly, the eagle-topped sceptre has been included in Antoninus' apotheosis portrait.

The use of apotheotic eagle imagery in connection with imperial women begins with Trajan's deification of his sister Marciana, where she appears as Diva on the obverse of coins and traditional apotheotic eagles appear on the reverse (Fig 6.18).¹⁷³³ Whatever the reasons behind Trajan's innovation here,¹⁷³⁴ the tradition then gets taken up by the later emperors, with Matidia,¹⁷³⁵ Sabina,¹⁷³⁶ and Faustina the Elder¹⁷³⁷ all being apotheosised by eagles on coinage. Although not changing the religious symbolism of the eagle in its apotheotic context, its use with imperial women does remove any gendered ideas concerning this context. The eagle itself, although having been gendered as female in a few contexts¹⁷³⁸ and the word *aquila* is both feminine and masculine,¹⁷³⁹ it has generally been used in masculine contexts and attached to masculine concepts (e.g. war and politics). Hence Maximus using it to symbolise masculinity and Plutarch for male love.¹⁷⁴⁰ In the same vein, up until this point, although previous imperial women had been deified,¹⁷⁴¹ none had been presented with an apotheotic eagle. Thus, any eagle within an imperial apotheotic context (even without an individual present) would have had inherently masculine connotations. But with the advent of Diva Marciana all apotheotic eagles gain possible feminine connotations, with the ability to represent female members of the imperial household, as well as male. However, this new development seems to have been following a trend set in the private sphere. As shown in the previous chapter, apotheotic eagles began to be used in the Flavian period on private funerary monuments.¹⁷⁴² Some of these included females

¹⁷³⁰ Eutr. 8.5.2; Claridge, 1993.

¹⁷³¹ Davies, 2000: 41. There is also another image of Antoninus atop an eagle in a tympanum of the Capitolium at Dougga; Barry, 2014: 99, Fig 9.

¹⁷³² The eagles may even represent the individual *genii* of Antoninus and Faustina, a possibility discussed above, p.140.

¹⁷³³ *RIC* Trajan 743; 748.

¹⁷³⁴ Roche, 2002: 55 believes it a shrewd political move, whereas Bennett, 2001: 190 believes it is motivated by grief.

¹⁷³⁵ *RIC* Hadrian 751-756.

¹⁷³⁶ *RIC* Hadrian 421; 1052.

¹⁷³⁷ *RIC* Antoninus 387.

¹⁷³⁸ Athena turns into a, presumably, female eagle in Hom. *Od.* 3.371-375; the eagle is female in Cicero's Marius portent, Cic. *Div.* 1.106; and the eagle in 4 *Ezra.* 11 is female, presumably because it represents the Roman Empire, and Roma was female. Additionally, we have already discussed the specifically feminine symbolism associated with pregnancy and the eagle-stone above, p.114.

¹⁷³⁹ Var. *LL.* 8.7. The Greek word *ἀετός* is similar, Sext. *Emp. Prof.* 1.151-152.

¹⁷⁴⁰ Max. *Or.* 25.3; Plut. *Mor.* 750F-751B. See above, p.171.

¹⁷⁴¹ Diva (Livia) Augusta for example, *RIC* Claudius 101; Mattingly, 1948: 149.

¹⁷⁴² See above, p.138.

(Fig 5.16) or were dedicated only to a female (Fig 5.17) and so, once again,¹⁷⁴³ imperial iconography is following a private trend.

Later in the century the eagle begins to appear with living imperial women. A coin from Apollonia in Thrace shows Faustina the Younger with an eagle and serpent on the reverse,¹⁷⁴⁴ possibly indicating one of its meanings discussed in the previous chapters.¹⁷⁴⁵ In fact, the use of apotheosis imagery with living individuals is also a significant change in this period, with it appearing in the coinage of Trajan and Marcus carrying them although they were still alive,¹⁷⁴⁶ possibly indicating their inherent divinity even before death. It is worth reiterating that all these images, including the ones already described, not only retain their previously discussed symbolic values but gain that of imperial legitimisation and continuation, connecting new emperors to a common imperial tradition.

The tradition of attaching the emperor to the *aquila* also continues both on coinage and in other visual material.¹⁷⁴⁷ We have already seen Trajan's military sacrifice on his column (Fig 6.3) and this also appears with other emperors, such as Marcus Aurelius.¹⁷⁴⁸ This is also the period where the stories of previous prominent Roman figures' attachment to the *aquila* appear in the literary sources.¹⁷⁴⁹ But, just as with the previous images, this attachment undergoes some degree of change and innovation. The first of which is its use by Nerva to express CONCORDIA EXERCITUM as it is held between two clasped hands (Fig 6.19).¹⁷⁵⁰ The issue was a hope by Nerva to encourage support from the army but also an acknowledgement that there were divisive rivalries within it.¹⁷⁵¹ Thus the choice of the *aquila* seems quite deliberate, as it was the common symbol across the legions and appealed to them all and possibly symbolised this cross-legion *concordia*. The trope was taken up often by the later emperors.¹⁷⁵² Additionally, Trajan depicts the personification of Dacia as holding an

¹⁷⁴³ As seems to be the case of the emperor on an eagle from Jupiter lamps or the 'eagle on altar' from intaglio gems, see above, pp.138 and 162.

¹⁷⁴⁴ Moushmov, 1912: 3178.

¹⁷⁴⁵ See above, p.132. I have found no connection between Faustina and the city.

¹⁷⁴⁶ BMC 11-12; 14; 18; 30; 109. Although, these are provincial coins and may be just adapting known imperial motifs, unaware of the apotheotic resonances. However, since some originate from eastern cities, a region steeped in apotheotic eagles (as seen in the previous chapter, above, p.136), this seems unlikely.

¹⁷⁴⁷ BMC 2; Paris, 1276; *RIC* Nerva 119; Trajan 718; 294-296; 719; Hadrian 539; 546b; 977; Septimius 2-17; 262; 652; 397; *SNG* Cop. 23; Sear, 1982: 1242; Kovacs & Lindgren, 1985: 2262. Hadrian uses a slightly different image, of him speaking to the army on horseback, but the *aquila* still represent the legions; *RIC* Hadrian 915; 919a; 929; 932.

¹⁷⁴⁸ Ryberg, 1967: Figs 27-28; 30a; 31; 37a; 44.

¹⁷⁴⁹ App. *BCiv.* 2.14.95; Flor. 2.15.5; Suet. *Aug.* 10; *Jul.* 62.

¹⁷⁵⁰ *RIC* Nerva 3; 55; 80; 96-97.

¹⁷⁵¹ Nerva had a strained relationship with the army, Cass. Dio. 68.3.3; Plin. *Pan.* 6-10; Chilver, 1957: 29; Shotter, 1983: 223-224.

¹⁷⁵² *RIC* Marcus 1123; Clodius 20b. The image evolves slightly, with personifications like Concordia, the Genius Exercitus and Fides holding the aquila to represent the same idea; *RIC* Antoninus 678; Marcus 453; 458; 461; Didius 1; 11; Septimius 349. The image seems popular with those emperors that either need legitimisation, i.e. Nerva and the usurpers, or those heavily involved with the army, i.e. Marcus and Septimius. Also, the language seems to alter slightly throughout the century from CONCORDIA to FIDES.

aquila (Fig 6.20).¹⁷⁵³ Clearly, the *aquila* here is implying Dacia's subjugation by the Romans, almost like a conquering flag. However, since the personification is holding the *aquila*, it also conveys a certain amount of dignity.

What is missing from this period, however, are portents related to the emperors or imperial family. They only appear after the reign of Commodus, with eagles first prophesying his death then Clodius Albinus' imperial prospects (in a similar story to Marius) and the death of Septimius Severus.¹⁷⁵⁴ The absence of eagle-portents for the previous emperors may be due to a dearth of literary source material for their reigns, or it may be due to the inherent antiquarianism of the sources during this 'Second Sophistic'. This is especially evident as it is this period in which eagle-portents are reported for other historical figures. They are connected to the oriental tradition through Gilgamesh and the Persian king Achaemenes.¹⁷⁵⁵ They are connected to famous Greeks such as Theseus, Themistocles, and Alexander.¹⁷⁵⁶ But this is the period we also see those eagle portents connected to prominent Roman figures, like the already discussed portents in Suetonius, but also Marius' seven eaglets and Brutus.¹⁷⁵⁷

The stories are problematic. The connection of eagle-portents to prominent Greek generals or kings hints at a greater antiquity to this connection than has previously been discussed. However, considering that these stories do not appear in contemporary or near-contemporary sources they could just as easily have been interpolated in the intervening centuries. We know that eagle portents existed from at least the first century B.C. (Tarquinius and others in Cicero)¹⁷⁵⁸ and many can be derived or connected to the eagle and snake portent seen in the *Iliad*.¹⁷⁵⁹ Additionally, we know that the eagle was a prominent symbol for the Hellenistic kings¹⁷⁶⁰ and even directly connected to Ptolemy I by a contemporary source, Theocritus.¹⁷⁶¹ All this would lend weight to the belief that these portents existed as contemporary or near-contemporary stories (at least from Alexander onwards) circulated in the period, much like those in Suetonius.¹⁷⁶² To take one example, Plutarch's eagle portent in

¹⁷⁵³ *RIC* Trajan 622.

¹⁷⁵⁴ Cass. Dio. 73.24; SHA. *Clod.* 5.8; *Sev.* 22.1.

¹⁷⁵⁵ Ael. *NA.* 12.21.

¹⁷⁵⁶ Arr. *Anab.* 1.18.6-20.1; Plut. *Alex.* 33.1-2; *Them.* 36.1; *Thes.* 36.1. Also: Aegon, Amphiaras, Aristomenes, Aristotimus, Dionysius, Gordias, Pyrrhus, and Timoleon; Arr. *Anab.* 2.3.3-7; Paus. 4.18.5; Plut. *Dion.* 24.3-5; *Mor.* 252E-252F; 307B; 340C; *Pyrrh.* 31.3; *Tim.* 26.3; Podlecki, 1971: 142; Davie, 1982: 26; Marr, 1998: 148; McCauley, 1998: 232.

¹⁷⁵⁷ App. *BCiv.* 1.7.61; 1.8.75; 4.16.128; Plut. *Mar.* 36.5-6; *Brut.* 37.4; 48; Suet. *Aug.* 94; 96-97; *Claud.* 7; *Dom.* 6; *Gal.* 1; 4; *Tib.* 14; *Vesp.* 5; *Vit.* 9. A few also appear in Tacitus, Tac. *Ann.* 2.17; *Hist.* 1.62.3.

¹⁷⁵⁸ Marius in Cic. *Div.* 1.106; *Leg.* 1.1.1-4; Tarquinius in Cic. *Leg.* 1.1.4; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 3.47.3-4; Superbus in Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.63.2. Portents were also discussed in Chapter 4, see above, p.88.

¹⁷⁵⁹ Hom. *Il.* 12.200-225.

¹⁷⁶⁰ As discussed above, p.50.

¹⁷⁶¹ Theoc. *Id.* 17.70-72.

¹⁷⁶² See above, p.155. Based on the arguments seen in Wildfang, 2000.

Alexander may have originated from a Hellenistic source,¹⁷⁶³ Cleitarchus, who, although not known for his accuracy,¹⁷⁶⁴ was certainly near-contemporaneous with Alexander.¹⁷⁶⁵

On the other hand, as explored in Chapter 4 with the portents surrounding Marius and Brutus,¹⁷⁶⁶ it may be that these stories are absent from the contemporary or near-contemporary sources and instead invented at some time between the life of the individual and the writing of the source. As we have seen the eagle has become increasingly attached to the most powerful individuals in the empire, including the use of portents in connection to the emperors, over the course of the last century.¹⁷⁶⁷ Thus, one of the same means of portraying greatness of divine selection, i.e. through eagle portents, could have been attached to prominent historical figures in order to point out their greatness. Thus the sources attach eagle portents to prominent Roman republican figures such as Marius and Brutus, either because these stories were invented alongside the development of the eagle's attachment to the emperor, or because eagle portents were a clearer expression of importance for the reader. Thus, the same process may have occurred for prominent Greek, or earlier, individuals. For example, although Aelian connects the eagle to Gilgamesh,¹⁷⁶⁸ at no point in the surviving texts is an eagle mentioned.¹⁷⁶⁹ Additionally, although Plutarch may be drawing on Cleitarchus or another contemporary source for Alexander's eagle portent he may just as easily have drawn it from another, much later source. Or, he may even be attempting to use an eagle portent to point out further similarities in the stories of Greek and Roman generals. The point being, although it is possible that these stories originated from the period in which these figures lived, it is just as plausible that they are later inventions, dependent on the increasing popularisation and use of eagle portents in connection with the emperors in the Julio-Claudian and Flavian period. This plausibility must always be remembered when examining these portents in detail.

To conclude, not only do we see a continuity of symbolic concepts connected to the eagle in the political sphere, we also see continuity in the processes occurring within the symbolism. Just as in the previous chapter, we are still seeing syncretism between the local eagle symbolism and the wider 'imperial' eagle symbolism, e.g. when Alexandria merges their traditional Egyptianising eagle with the *corona civica*. Clearly the process of forming new wider 'Roman' political symbolism across the empire, both locally and on the larger scale, is still ongoing. This process can also be seen in the gradual evolution of certain aspects of the eagle's political uses in this period, the merging of different symbols (i.e. using different eagles to express apotheosis, or, again, attaching *coronae civicae* to eagles that never had them), while not representing a significant change in meaning, does show that

¹⁷⁶³ Plutarch was using many Hellenistic sources for his *Alexander*; Hamilton, 1969: lv.

¹⁷⁶⁴ Quint. *Instit.* 1.1.74; Hammond, 1993: 154.

¹⁷⁶⁵ Plut. *Alex.* 33.1-2; Hammond, 1993: 40.

¹⁷⁶⁶ See above, p.87.

¹⁷⁶⁷ See above, p.152.

¹⁷⁶⁸ Ael. *NA.* 12.21.

¹⁷⁶⁹ George, 2003.

the eagle's symbolism is far from static in this area and is still subject to dynamism and gradual acculturation across the empire. In fact, as seen in the previous discussion of portents, this syncretism may even be occurring in relation with the past, with sources possibly adapting historical material to their new imperial context.

6.7: Conclusion

This period is essentially defined by continuity and change, and while this slightly over-used and innocuous phrase can be applied to most of the periods in this study (and most periods in general), it is in this period where this phrase defines eagle's symbolism across the empire in the second century A.D. Aelian is continuing the tradition of information surrounding the eagle seen in Aristotle and Pliny, while also introducing similar new stories about its thirst etc. But he is also changing certain stories and possibly adapting them to symbolise the political situation of his contemporary context. However, by doing this he is continuing the aspects of the eagle seen in Phaedrus' fables. In fact, most of the conceptual symbolism of the eagle in this period continues a long tradition, i.e. martial valour, kingship, etc. yet often similar aspects of the eagle, eyesight, claws, etc. are being changed in order to represent new concepts by different authors. For example, Plutarch's claws of learning and Lucian's greedy eaglets. This trend also extends into the religious sphere as, not only do we have clear continuation of the eagle's attachment to Jupiter and other supreme gods, it also extends this symbolism to even more supreme deities, while appearing in new myths, yet in a role that is congruent to its previous appearances. Even in other aspects of its religious symbolism continuity and change are the overriding processes. If it represents a *daimon* in the growing new theological thought, it is dependent on its previous roles and apotheotic symbolism. Its religious nature within the legions as the *aquila* and representative of the Di Militares is based on its position as the symbol of the legions *esprit de corps* and the religious associations discussed in Chapter 4. Even its existence and link to the *semeia* standards of the Near East is dependent on cross-cultural interactions introducing new elements to already established cultic iconography and rituals. Lastly, its political aspects are marked by continuity of symbolic concepts from the previous period, i.e. emperor as cosmocrator, local and 'Roman' identities merging, apotheosis, and portents. Yet each of these aspects undergoes a degree of change, with various new iconographical concepts, but also greater shifts, such as the extension of the eagle's apotheotic capacities into the female sphere. Perhaps the best example of this dichotomy is found in its use in portents in this century. While the appearance of eagle portents in the literature represents a continuity with the previous century, their attachment to famous historical figures, because they may or may not be invented, represents both continuity and change simultaneously.

But this is not the only feature of the eagle's symbolism during this period. We also see some entirely new aspects of its symbolism never glimpsed before. One of these is the cross-class conceptual symbolism seen in Artemidorus. While hinted at in previous authors (Phaedrus), the

eagle's symbolism in the lower social strata has never been explicitly stated before this point.¹⁷⁷⁰ And, while most of its meaning is based upon its superiority and martial connections, the confirmation that these exist in the lower sections of society allows for the ability to posit their existence in these strata prior to this period. In fact, this period sees the revelation of various other aspects of the eagle's symbolism previously hidden. For example, its exclusion from certain theological systems that rise in this period (seen in Apuleius) but its possible inclusion as symbolic of elements within that theology. Additionally, while the religious nature of the standards certainly existed prior to this period the sources had never illuminated them enough in order to define their exact position. Alongside this revelation, is the increasing importance of this religious role, in the expression of the *natalia aquilae* and *Rosalia Signorum*.

We also see a continuation in the cultural processes seen in the previous centuries, of a merging and 'creolising' of Roman and local cultures to create new or adapted symbolism. Thus the possible legionary influence on the Near Eastern *semeia*; the slow and steady use of more central 'Roman' aspects in the political symbolism of the provinces alongside their local eagles, i.e. Alexandria's Egyptian eagle carrying a *corona*; the eagle's gradual acceptance and use in Judaism; and the possible adaptation of imperial eagle prodigies to a Greek and Oriental context, i.e. to Gilgamesh and Theseus. This links in to Tacitus' 'Roman birds', as, at least in his mind, the eagle is 'Roman' from the beginning of this period. And, while its adaptation to and integration with local forms of the eagle would seem to counteract this statement, it in fact reinforces it. As the empire continues, its culture becomes more homogenous and its identity becomes gradually solidified, so that most cultural expressions, regardless of location, gender, or social class, become 'Roman'. Thus, Tacitus can identify the eagle as 'Roman', yet so would a citizen of Alexandria viewing the Egyptianising eagle. Possibly even a worshipper of Jupiter Dolichenus would see the *semeia* as 'Roman' due to its resemblance to the legionary *aquila*. While we may see Tacitus' legionary eagles as more quintessentially 'Roman', what exactly 'Romanness' was by this period had grown beyond these quintessential characteristics. The extension of Roman citizenship to everyone in the empire just after this period evidences this growth.¹⁷⁷¹ Thus, a citizen of Alexandria may identify himself a 'Roman' just as much as he does 'Alexandrian'. The eagle reflects this, making its local expressions, like those on Alexandrian coinage, just as 'Roman' as those expressed by Tacitus.

Yet, this is not the whole story. While within the empire's borders there were many that viewed the eagle as 'Roman' or viewed its symbolism in their own local contexts as gradually more 'Roman', those outside the empire, specifically the citizens of Hatra mentioned in this chapter,¹⁷⁷² also

¹⁷⁷⁰ Although, some of its symbolism has either been directed at or involved the legionaries, which are lower on the social scale than the Roman elites.

¹⁷⁷¹ Cass. Dio. 77.9.5.

¹⁷⁷² See above, p.193.

claimed similar ownership and had their own specific symbolism associated with the eagle. Thus, while 'Roman' to some, it was definitively not 'Roman' to others.

While much of these symbolic notions do not help us with our interpretation of the Silchester Eagle, many of the other ideas in this chapter do. Not only can it now be linked to even more religious notions, possibly as a representation of a *daimon*, or connected to Eastern *semeia*, its apothecic connections now spread to the possibility it held an imperial woman on its back. Even if it was created for a military context, its possible interpretations broaden. Since it may have been connected to the worship of the legionary dead through the *Rosalia Signorum*, or created especially for the birthday of the *aquila*. Or perhaps it was once again linked to the emperors of this period, or their wives, or possibly even created for a new statue of a historical figure. Even if the eagle was previously not connected to them, its imperial, powerful and religious notions would have made it the obvious choice for a companion. But these interpretations merely add to the myriad already discussed, broadening the possible reasons for its creation much beyond any previously discussed, and nearly as myriad as those associated with the eagle itself.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1: Summary of Findings

Before answering any of the questions I set out in my introduction or making any broader conclusions about the eagle's symbolism and how it relates to wider Roman culture, the general findings of the thesis need to be summarised and the particular themes I have examined viewed in their wider chronological context. To this end, the symbolic progression of each theme across this time period will be discussed briefly.

The 'Physical Animal and Reality' theme began by introducing all the accurate and inaccurate information provided by Aristotle, which included various false beliefs about eagle behaviour (e.g. testing eaglets in the sun) as well as a tendency to anthropomorphise their attitudes. All this information was then repeated and added to by Pliny in the first century A.D., as he built on Aristotle's knowledge but gathered his own information, again both accurate and inaccurate, about the birds. All this information was then used by Aelian in his descriptions of eagles and their behaviour, but once again he included new, factual and false, information about the bird. Alongside these beliefs, evidence from Pliny shows that eagle-stones (*aetites*) were being used to prevent miscarriages and eagle parts used in various eye remedies. Although the evidence is only seen in the first century A.D., these practices may have extended to the beginning of the period of the thesis.

The main characteristics of the eagle (its eyesight, speed, strength, flight, and claws) as well as the main concepts associated with it (martial valour, criminality, and superiority) were seen in both Greek epic poems and Greek comedy and tragedy. These were then continued in Roman comedy, added to with concepts of old age and a pun on *aquilus* (dark-skinned). They are continued into the first century A.D., where they presented quite differently in Ovid, who represented the eagle as a rapist. The concept of superiority is seen throughout in fables and linked directly to royalty in Phaedrus. Many of these concepts and characteristics also continue in the second century A.D., but their use in novel contexts increases and the characteristics of the eagle are used in innovative ways. But what we see throughout the entire period is a dichotomy in its conceptual symbolism based on its superiority, which either produces heroic or rapacious notions. Beginning in the first century B.C. we also see the eagle homonymically connected to the *cognomen* Aquila, *nomen* Aquilius, and region of Aquileia. This homonymic connection persists for as long as these names existed.

We see the eagle connected to Zeus from early in the Greek texts. It is seen as his 'armour-bearer' and messenger, a semi-divine entity with the ability to transition between the mortal and divine realms. But it also appears with other gods. This is reinforced by the numismatic evidence of the third and second century B.C., where we see the eagle with many different gods. Even when the eagle is seen atop a thunderbolt it might relate more to the context of warfare, through its image as a bird of prey, rather than Jupiter. But an attachment to Jupiter grows over the period and is especially

seen in its use in the myths of Prometheus and Ganymede. This second aspect leads to its representation of the elder, citizen-half of a Roman homosexual relationship. Through an examination of its role in myth there seems to also be a distinction between the eagle of Jupiter, a monstrous Eagle born from Echidna and Typhon, and other eagles. But even this does not shake its constant attachment to other deities, especially those seen as the supreme deities in their context (e.g. Bel and Baalshamin in the East, solar deities such as Sol, and Isis in her own cult). It seems the eagle is the companion of the supreme deity, whichever the viewer chooses that deity to be. But the eagle is also attached to many other aspects of pagan religion. It has a strong role in divination, often connected to royalty and the prediction of power, leading to a strong connection to the divinity of emperors. It also serves as their mode of apotheosis from the late first century A.D., a mode that then trickles down into popular belief. This is also linked to its connection to the constellation of Aquila and its role in astrology, often determining the destiny of those born under it. Lastly, in the late second century A.D. the empire sees a rising minority of henotheism with an emphasis on platonic theology, within which the eagle loses its traditional aspect of divine messenger and instead possibly gains the capacity to represent the intermediary spirits known as *daimones*.

In the ‘Martial and State Connections’ I identified six possible origin points for the *aquila* standard: (1) a spontaneous development from totemism in the Iron Age; (2) cultural borrowing of cultic standards from Near Eastern migrants; (3) introduction in the hoplite reforms from Greek/Eastern influence; (4) introduced with centuriate organisation; (5) introduced with the manipular reforms; (6) introduced with Marius’ reforms. Whatever the case, by the first century B.C. legionaries are dying for its protection. This seems based on its symbolic representation of the *esprit de corps* of the legions coupled with its strong religious nature. This nature is explored fully in the second century A.D. sources, and is shown to represent, at least in that period, the *Di Militares*. They even seem to symbolise, through the *Rosalia Signorum* festival, the honoured dead of the legion. All this gives the *aquila* a large importance to the legions. It also comes to represent vengeance and the return of Roman honour with Augustus’ recovery of the standards from the Parthians possibly up until the reign of Trajan, after which these ideas seem to dissipate. The standards were then also symbolically linked to the Near Eastern cultic standards,¹⁷⁷³ or *semeia*, where a cross-cultural two-way symbolism occurred. Legionary standards were seen in the *semeia*, and *semeia* were seen in the legionary standards. But it also must be emphasised that there is no distinction between the *aquila* and eagles, and their symbolism is interchangeable, as the image of an eagle is always present on the *aquila* and the sources even make this connection explicit, Cicero’s jackdaw remark being the prime example.¹⁷⁷⁴

¹⁷⁷³ Possibly linked back to them, if they originated from Near Eastern standards.

¹⁷⁷⁴ Plut. *Vit. Cic.* 38.7. See above, p.106.

In terms of the state the early Roman numismatic evidence shows that it was using the eagle to represent certain victories, showing the state as a predatory bird striking at its enemies like a thunderbolt. But this was echoed across the Mediterranean by many different states so that the eagle came to represent the idea of 'strong statehood'. Possibly a connection to Rome sprang up in the first century A.D. with its use by Herod, Celtic kings, and in *4 Ezra*. However, all of these are presented by those outside of the empire and not the Romans themselves. Until Tacitus that is, who calls them 'Roman birds'. Thus, while not representative of Rome, Tacitus claims Roman ownership of them.

Lastly, the section on 'Political Aspects' started with a strong link to royalty in the Greek sources, especially through bird-topped sceptres. This is possibly seen briefly in a Roman context on a coin of M. Carbo in 122 but certainly appears with the stories of Roman kings in the first century B.C. These royal aspects are possibly seen on Caesar's curule chair, but Augustus deftly changes its meaning to that of avenging his adoptive father. Augustus then institutes a large amount of change in the eagle's political symbolism. He follows a long tradition by attaching himself to the *aquila* and then borrows many Hellenistic tropes of divine election and the position of *cosmocrator*, marrying them to Roman portents and symbols (like the *corona civica*). This new position possibly means that Augustus himself is represented as an eagle, since it is he who is Jupiter's messenger on earth, just as the eagle is. Thus those under him (provincial governors, Drusus, etc.) also become eagles to Augustus' Jupiter. The provinces also begin to adapt their eagles to Augustan culture as the emperor appears alongside local eagle expressions and, through this, the emperors are linked to Hellenistic royal continuity. Egyptian coinage is a good example of this process. All of these political aspects are then continued through the Imperial period by all the emperors. But the eagle's political symbolism does not remain static: Vespasian introduces the eagle-on-altar, likely from the legions; many of the second century A.D. emperors modify these concepts and present the eagle in a way to suit their particular needs; and the apotheotic eagle extends to female members of the imperial family. What also continues is a slow merging of these central Augustan ideas with local ideas of the eagle, gradually moving towards a more homogenous conception of its political symbolism. Lastly, we see many eagle portents connected with important historical figures, a trend that most likely began with Augustus but may have existed prior to his reign.

As can be seen in this brief summary, I have managed to answer all of the questions posed about the eagle in my introduction. It is clearly not confined to its connection to Jupiter, as throughout the period we see it with many other deities. However, it does seem to indicate the supreme nature of whatever deity it is allied with in a particular context. I have established the six possible origin points of the *aquila* standard, but also defined its particular religious dimensions. Additionally, while the eagle never seems to directly symbolise Rome, the empire is sometimes represented with an eagle, and by the end of the period the Romans have certainly taken ownership of the eagle, but what exactly

is 'Roman' by this point is debatable.¹⁷⁷⁵ What is immediately evident when we look at the findings within this thesis is that the eagle is by no means an obvious symbol, as is often thought. It does not simply represent Jupiter; victory; or the emperor, but has myriad other meanings. This fact must always be remembered when approaching eagle symbolism in any context.

7.2: The Symbolism of the Eagle

It is worth now reiterating the definition of symbolism I reached in my introduction: that symbolism is the process which individuals derive meaning using their personal experiences and knowledge as defined by their cultural context. These meanings are in constant flux with cultural and individualistic factors so that multiple meanings appear depending on time, place, and the particular individual. The eagle has been shown to be an excellent example of my methodological approach to symbolism, as throughout the thesis its symbolic meanings have been plentiful, but also based securely in an individual context, informed by, while also informing, cultural expression.

However, while each of the symbolic meanings connected to the eagle are valid there have been lots of overarching symbolic trends seen with the eagle that extend across the entire period of this thesis. On the other hand, we see some aspects of the eagle's symbolism confined to a very specific context or group of individuals. Thus, there seems to be a sort of division in the scale of the eagle's symbolism, with the larger, cross-period, and overarching/underlying symbolism on one hand (best described as macro-symbolism), and the more specific, contextual symbolism based on time period, religious background, social class, location, gender, or other definable variables on the other (best described as micro-symbolism).

7.2.1: Macro-symbolism.

This type of symbolism includes the meanings associated with the eagle that remain constant and almost unchanging throughout the entire period of this thesis. They are notions that are almost engrained in thought surrounding the eagle and underlie most of its other symbolic meanings throughout the period. The most obvious of these symbolic connotations are those explored in the theme of 'Concepts and Characteristics'. Throughout the thesis I have shown the eagle's relationship to ideas such as good eyesight, high flight, speed, and strength, as well as concepts such as martial valour and criminality. The dichotomy of these latter two ideas seem to be another aspect of its continuing role as the definitive 'bird of prey' and its natural role as a predator attacking its prey. All of these ideas are seen consistently and repeatedly throughout the entire period and they all seem to relate to the idea of the eagle as superior to other birds. Another important symbolic aspect of the

¹⁷⁷⁵ See below, p.218.

eagle seen consistently is its connection to the representation of power, as it is used persistently with royal, or imperial, and divine rulers. Its divine nature is another constant symbolic aspect, as even in Apuleius' new theology,¹⁷⁷⁶ it still retains some sort of connection to divinity.

What is interesting about all these underlying macro-symbolic conceptions of the eagle is that they all seem linked in a clear logical thought process. The links in this symbolic chain remind us of the process of *unlimited semiosis* described in the introduction,¹⁷⁷⁷ where one symbol evokes a meaning which then evokes another meaning and so on. This process is mirrored in that of the thought surrounding the eagle. First, it is observed as a large and predatory bird. These observations lead to the conclusion that it has better senses and abilities (eyesight, etc.). This makes it superior to all other predatory birds. These aspects are then applied to individuals or things that appear to possess the same qualities (e.g. the speed of Achilles in Homer).¹⁷⁷⁸ But its predatory nature also creates a dichotomy, being both respected for its powerful ability, but also morally condemned for its rapacious nature. But its sense of superiority means that it is naturally linked to the most superior men and women (kings, emperors, etc.) or supreme deities. Lastly, its connection to these deities naturally leads to a conception of the bird itself as divine in some way.

All of these elements are almost omnipresent throughout this examination of the eagle. Either they are directly observable or they inform other aspects of its symbolism indirectly (e.g. its duelling, martial and rapacious, behaviour informing Ovid's presentation of the eagle as rapist).¹⁷⁷⁹ In fact, these elements seem so engrained in symbolic conceptions of the eagle that they persist beyond the ancient sources to the present day. For example, the phrase 'eagle-eyed', meaning good eyesight, is commonly used in English. Even the eagle's royal and divine connections remain, as in 1952 an eagle was seen flying over the head of Princess Elizabeth at the apparent moment of King George VI's death, either portending his death or Elizabeth's new reign, a scene very similar to many of the eagle portents discussed in this thesis.¹⁷⁸⁰ However, these persistent aspects are based, either consciously or subconsciously, on the western world's inheritance of Classical culture. When we move beyond those countries with a Classical tradition, the eagle's meaning changes, sometimes within the exact same context. For example, in Chinese the phrase 'eagle-eyed' means a sharp expression rather than superior eyesight.¹⁷⁸¹ While it uses the same characteristic and relies on observation of the animal, the meaning is completely different and thus dependent on cultural background, as I posited in my methodology. Thus, these macro-symbolic aspects, although persisting to the present day, are dependent on the sources and culture examined in this thesis.

¹⁷⁷⁶ See above, p.177.

¹⁷⁷⁷ See above, p.7.

¹⁷⁷⁸ Hom. *Il.* 21.250-255.

¹⁷⁷⁹ See above, p.119.

¹⁷⁸⁰ Vickers, 2012. The closest parallel is the eagle portending the death of Commodus, Cass. Dio. 73.24. We even see eagle parts being used, illegally, as medicine in some parts of the world, BirdGuides, 2015.

¹⁷⁸¹ Hsieh & Lu, 2014: 128.

7.2.2: *Micro-symbolism.*

This type of symbolism is defined by a much smaller context, where the particular aspect of the eagle's symbolism is confined to a particular group. As I discussed in the introduction and have just previously mentioned,¹⁷⁸² symbolism is defined by the individual and his/her own knowledge, which in turn is dependent on their own cultural context. Thus, particular symbols can be defined by variables that affect this cultural context such as: the particular time period; religious background; social class; location; and gender. While it is not possible to discuss every example of this micro-symbolism it is worth giving some prime examples of certain micro-symbolic conceptions about the eagle relevant to the specific variables just mentioned. However, it is important to point out that even though these meanings are labelled as 'micro-symbolism' it does not imply that they are any less relevant or important than those labelled 'macro-symbolism'. In fact, some of these micro-symbolic aspects may have played a much larger role in the symbolic associations of those individuals within these groups than some macro-symbolic aspects.

The first of these variables is symbolism confined by a particular time period. One example of this type of symbolism is the use of the *aquila* to symbolise Roman redemption and vengeance against their enemies through its recovery. Although this is a strong symbolic value during the reign of Augustus, with the standards' recovery from the Parthians a defining event of his reign, this meaning persists through the first century A.D., but disappears after the reign of Trajan (and the writings of Tacitus).¹⁷⁸³ Similarly, before Augustus not much is made of their loss or recovery and these symbolic meanings are absent. Thus these symbolic ideas are locked in a specific period of history, only relevant to those present within or directly aware of the culture of the early Imperial period. This is particularly surprising as the intensity of scholarly interest in the standards recovery, thanks to Augustus in particular, creates the impression that these symbolic values were a persistent aspect throughout the period, but this is not the case.

A good example of symbolism defined by religious background would be the use of the eagle in Jewish contexts, specifically its appearance in a 'Greco-Roman' form on synagogues in the later second century A.D.¹⁷⁸⁴ Here, although iconographically similar to many other eagles were, its symbolism is altered based on the individual's religious background. Their particular belief structure informs the symbolism of the eagle so that, through its appearance in the Torah, it represents Yahweh and his protection. Although similar to other aspects of the eagle's symbolism it is very specific to this religious context and thus is confined to those with a particular religious background, i.e. Judaism.

¹⁷⁸² See above, p.12.

¹⁷⁸³ See above, p.144.

¹⁷⁸⁴ See above, p.176.

Another specific group could be defined by social class. A good example of this comes from the exposition on the meanings of the dream eagle in Artemidorus.¹⁷⁸⁵ Here, he clearly explains that the death of an eagle in dreams has a very different meaning to slaves compared to anyone else. For them it means the death of their master, and therefore freedom, for others it may be their own death or unemployment. Here, the eagle's symbolism is defined by the social class of the individual viewing it and thus the meaning is confined to that particular strata of society.

We also see some clear examples of symbolism defined by location. One good illustration of this would be the use of the *aquila* as a symbol of a Roman colony on coins.¹⁷⁸⁶ While the *aquila* had various meanings to different groups, it was only in the context of a Roman colony that it became a symbol of their foundation and communal origins. While they broadcast this symbolism through their coinage, the meaning itself was confined to those particular colonies and, therefore, to those particular locations.

Lastly, we also saw symbolism confined by gender. The best example of this was through the eagle-stone amulet.¹⁷⁸⁷ While the protective qualities of these amulets were certainly known to men and they shared concern, as we get the information from Pliny, they were only ever really important to the pregnant women that wore them to protect their unborn children. Thus the stones, and therefore the eagle that was associated with them, gained a sort of protective symbolism to these women. This symbolism would have only existed in this group of women that wore the amulet and is therefore restricted in its existence and importance outside of this social group.

However, as we can see from many of these examples, they are narrowly defined and dependent on one or two pieces of evidence for their extrapolation into the symbolic whole of the eagle in Roman culture. Thus, due to the paucity of evidence available to us from the ancient world, there will be significant aspects of the eagle's 'micro-symbolism' that have been lost and are unrecoverable.

7.2.3: *The Many Meanings of the Eagle.*

What all of the myriad symbolic meanings of the eagle have in common is that they are all dependent on their cultural context for their particular meaning, including even the macro-symbolic elements discussed above. This is linked directly to my own definition of symbolism as a mode of knowledge and therefore a learnt behaviour dependent on cultural input to define its outcome. Thus, the culture surrounding an individual defines what the eagle represents to them and how it represents it. This means we can identify shifts in the eagle's symbolism based on shifts in the cultural paradigm of Roman society. For example, when Rome begins to enter the wider Mediterranean world in the

¹⁷⁸⁵ See above, p.172.

¹⁷⁸⁶ See above, p.156.

¹⁷⁸⁷ See above, p.114.

third and second centuries B.C., the eagle becomes a more prominent element in its cultural expression.¹⁷⁸⁸ This mirrors the growth of Roman society and its intermingling with other Mediterranean cultures. It is taking on and adapting wider cultural trends in order to define itself in this wider cultural community. We see another change when the principate is introduced, wherein the eagle gains new meanings based on this new political situation and the establishment of dynasties.¹⁷⁸⁹ It becomes closely connected with this new imperial system and reflects the new political order. Lastly, in the second century A.D. the slow rise in henotheism sees the eagle's divine characteristics change within this context, its meanings adapted to fit this new theology.¹⁷⁹⁰

But this implies that this is a one-sided interaction of cultural change affecting the eagle, whereas this process instead seems to be more of a cycle. While cultural inputs decide on how the eagle is represented and the meanings behind it, so do these new meanings alter the eagle's representation and influence a new generation, who then create altered or completely new meanings from the eagle's new form. For example, the eagle becomes entwined in the process of imperial apotheosis from the late-first century A.D. at the latest, but then these ideas and representations connected to the eagle spread outwards and downwards so that the non-elite see the eagle as their own transportation to the afterlife, and eventually imperial women, not just emperors, gain the ability to ride the eagle to divinity.¹⁷⁹¹ Thus, the eagle's attachment to apotheosis is dependent on the cultural inputs of the previous generation (i.e. its role as a transitional being between mortal and divine) but once the association is created and cemented into the culture, it then influences the culture and meanings of the eagle in the next generation. Meaning is dependent not just on the initiator(s) of the image, but on the audience as well.

This model of constantly changing and adapting symbolic associations within culture brings up an important point about the study of 'Greco-Roman' culture as a whole. Often in scholarship, particularly that which is concerned with the army,¹⁷⁹² scholars will bring together multiple sources from large swathes of history and present them as a coherent cultural system. Throughout this thesis it has become clear that there were dramatic changes in 'Roman' culture, reflected in the eagle's symbolism, which make it, at least in some aspects, almost unrecognisable at the end of the period compared to the beginning. Pretending that there is one homogenous 'Greco-Roman' culture that spreads across the breadth of these centuries obscures the constantly changing nature of culture, and the layers of meaning within it, and, often, important cultural shifts.

Additionally, although the macro-symbolic meanings can be seen throughout numerous sources those discussed within micro-symbolism hinge on only a few pieces of evidence, particular when concerning underrepresented social groups. For example, the eagle's symbolism for lower

¹⁷⁸⁸ See above, pp.58 and 66.

¹⁷⁸⁹ See above, p.152.

¹⁷⁹⁰ See above, p.177.

¹⁷⁹¹ See above, p.201.

¹⁷⁹² E.g. Watson, 1969; Webster, 1969; Keppie, 1998.

classes revolves around Artemidorus and Phaedrus and its meaning for pregnant women can only be seen from Pliny and Aelian. This means, due to the nature of the transmission of source material, there may be many aspects of the eagle's symbolism that have since been lost in the intervening centuries. Thus, as this thesis has shown, whenever approaching the eagle in a particular context, it may be tempting to assign the popular and more obvious macro-symbolic meanings. However, we must also be keenly aware of the likelihood that there might have been other micro-symbolic meanings, due to location, religious background, etc., that have since been lost, but may have been more immediate to the context that eagle is found within.

So we return to the Silchester Eagle and its complete lack of context. Throughout this thesis I have shown the numerous different interpretations the Silchester Eagle can have based on a thorough examination of the symbolism of the eagle, from the standard interpretations as Jupiter's companion or the symbol of the legionary community, to lesser known possibilities, like the storage of eagle-stones or representing the *daimon* of the deceased. Exploring the eagle's symbolism allows for a detailed and in-depth discussion as to why the Silchester Eagle was made and what it was used for. But, more importantly, it gives us a glimpse into the mind of the Roman that was viewing it. As looking at the eagle may have produced any number of the myriad meanings discussed, and many more we may no longer have the evidence for.

7.3: Wider Implications

This study also has a number of wider implications other than establishing the many aspects of the eagle's symbolism in Roman culture. One of these wider implications relates to the study of symbolism itself. Often when scholars come across a particular symbol, like the eagle, a singular meaning is assigned quickly and its interpretation easily established. In the case of the eagle this usually means it is said to symbolise Jupiter or another of its more popular associations. But what I have found through both my methodological approach and an in-depth analysis of the eagle's symbolism is that a symbol never has simply one meaning, but a number of meanings based on the individual viewing it and its cultural context. Not only that, but these meanings alter and change over time, so that often, a symbol's meaning is completely different to what was originally intended. A good example of this is the 'Eagle/Pegasus' *aes signatum* from the third century B.C.¹⁷⁹³ The eagle on this currency can be interpreted both as a reference to Jupiter, but also a possible reference to Pyrrhus and Rome's victory in the Pyrrhic War. Rather than arguing the merits of either interpretation, the nature of the multiplicity of symbolism makes it possible for both interpretations to exist at once. There is certainly enough evidence for both. Its symbolism becomes dependent on whatever viewer is interpreting the *aes signatum*, for example a proud Roman veteran of the war may be more inclined to see a reference to a Roman victory. But, after the immediate context of the Pyrrhic war the second

¹⁷⁹³ See above, pp.58 and 67.

meaning would gradually disappear. Although the eagle is the example being used in this thesis, the methodology applies beyond the scope of this thesis to the study of symbols in ancient culture as a whole. Symbols can never be said to have a singular meaning, but have multiple, varied, and sometimes contradictory or unintended, meanings that all need to be examined when approaching symbolism in ancient media.

Additionally, as discussed with the eagle, although it may be tempting to apply the more obvious and macro-symbolic meanings to a particular symbol, often other micro-symbolic meanings are more relevant to the particular context. Since micro-symbolic concepts usually hinge on only a few pieces of source material it is likely many of these meanings have been lost in the intervening centuries, but we must remain aware that any symbol, not just the eagle, may have had more relevant micro-symbolic meanings to whichever context it is found in than those more overarching macro-symbolic elements. For example, while a dolphin may mean something across the empire, to one particular city it may have a specific and different symbolic meaning that motivates them to place it on their coinage. Thus, although the larger symbolism may be partially correct, it is by no means the entire picture. This awareness must always be remembered when studying any symbol in the ancient world.

However, this is not the only wider implication of this thesis. It also provides a good example of the transfer of knowledge over time. Although certainly not a new observation, i.e. that later writers relied on the information of earlier writers,¹⁷⁹⁴ the study of the eagle provides a clear and traceable example of this process occurring. The best example is within the ‘Physical Animal and Reality’ theme, wherein we see Pliny using Aristotelian theories and information in his examination of the eagle. Then this information is used by Aelian in his examination of the bird. We can clearly see specific ideas established by Aristotle, e.g. the eaglets staring into the sun,¹⁷⁹⁵ repeated in Pliny¹⁷⁹⁶ and then in Aelian¹⁷⁹⁷ as a clear example of this process. The story becomes almost ‘fossilised’ in the literature, with each successive author taking it as truth and none of them checking its reliability.

This thesis also provides some examples that go against some assumptions of cultural change. Often it is assumed that popular iconography was disseminated to the wider population as a result of a top-down process, i.e. that certain aspects of iconography were popularised by the imperial regime and then copied by the wider public in emulation of their social superiors.¹⁷⁹⁸ This process has been shown to be true in some cases, notably the use of apotheotic eagles in imperial art from Vespasian onwards leading to an increase in their use in the funerary art of the general population.¹⁷⁹⁹ However,

¹⁷⁹⁴ A good example of the scholarship on this subject is Totelin, 2009, which focuses on the transmission of Hippocratic recipes.

¹⁷⁹⁵ Arist. *His. An.* 619b.23-620a.12.

¹⁷⁹⁶ Plin. *HN.* 10.3.

¹⁷⁹⁷ Ael. *NA.* 2.26.

¹⁷⁹⁸ For example, in Zanker, 1988: 265-297.

¹⁷⁹⁹ See above, p.138.

in other cases it seems that the opposite is the case. Even in the case of Vespasian riding an apotheotic eagle, the image seems to have derived from Jupiter atop an eagle popular on lamps in the mid-first century A.D. and the tradition of the eagle being used apotheotically in the Near East.¹⁸⁰⁰ Another example, also from Vespasian, is the sudden appearance of the ‘eagle-on-altar’ image on Vespasian’s coinage. The image seems borrowed from a popular one seen on private gems, usually found in a military context.¹⁸⁰¹ Instead of imperial iconography informing changes in the symbolism of wider society we see that the imperial regime adopted popular modes of representation and adapted them to their own needs, and this adoption then led to further popularisation of the image. This is a slightly different model for the dissemination of iconography, but can be seen clearly by the examples within this thesis.

Lastly, one large and over-arching theme seen within this thesis has been the cultural relationship between the centre (i.e. Rome) and the provinces. The complex ideas of identity inherent within these distinctions have been seen, and sometimes changed, through the symbolism of the eagle. At the beginning of the study we see Rome using and adapting the eagle in order to form its own state identity. It borrows and changes the eagle, and the ideas expressed with it, from other Mediterranean cultures and fits them to its own cultural norm to express its own individual identity. For example, the possible use of the eagle to promote its victory in the Pyrrhic war, even though the eagle itself may have been connected more to Pyrrhus than Rome.¹⁸⁰² By the first century A.D. and the expansion of the Roman Empire to include myriad different cultures, we begin to see the development of an entirely new culture. Through the processes of creolisation and conscious cultural adoption the ‘traditional’ ‘Roman’ images start to be informed by local eagles and local eagles begin to take on ‘Roman’ aspects. For example, Augustus borrows the Hellenistic meanings of the eagle linked with the concept of *cosmocrator*¹⁸⁰³ and the Egyptian eagle gets coupled with a Roman emperor on Alexandrian coinage.¹⁸⁰⁴ As we move forward into the second century A.D., the culture of the empire becomes even more homogenised and a new idea of what ‘Romanness’ means presents itself. By the end date of this period, no matter where an individual lived they had at least some claim to call themselves ‘Roman’, hence Caracalla’s edict made them all ‘Roman’ just after the end of this study.¹⁸⁰⁵ This change presents itself in the symbolism of the eagle, which simultaneously retains its local symbolism while taking on more traditionally ‘Roman’ aspects and begins to look similar regardless of locale. The best example is the Egyptian eagle holding a *corona civica*.¹⁸⁰⁶ The symbolism of the eagle is part of a wide array of expressions of identity and thus reflects the complex

¹⁸⁰⁰ See above, p.136.

¹⁸⁰¹ See above, p.162.

¹⁸⁰² See above, p.66.

¹⁸⁰³ See above, p.158.

¹⁸⁰⁴ See above, p.158.

¹⁸⁰⁵ Cass. Dio. 77.9.5.

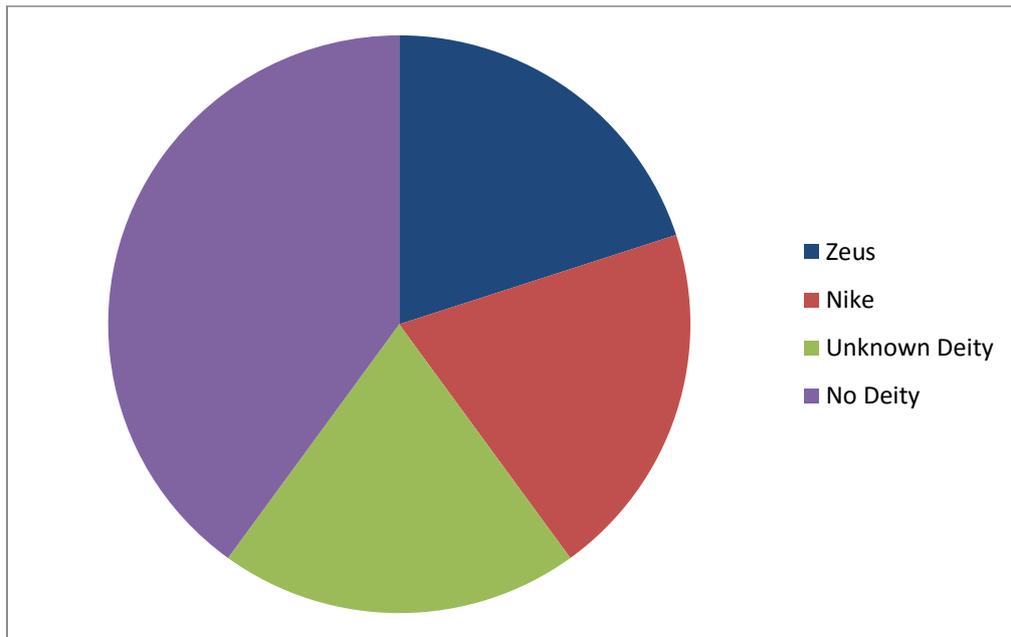
¹⁸⁰⁶ See above, p.199.

and shifting ideas of personal and group identities within its representations and meanings. Its changes mirror those within individuals and groups. Additionally, as we saw in Tacitus, Rome and Romans seem to have taken ownership of the eagle, believing it to be 'their' bird, and since it is being used across the empire it hints at, to them at least but possibly to others, Rome's cultural hegemony over the empire. Thus, by the end of this study the eagle could indeed be said to 'be Rome', or, more accurately, 'be Roman'. However, what is 'Roman' is just as changeable and adaptable in meaning as the eagle has been shown to be.

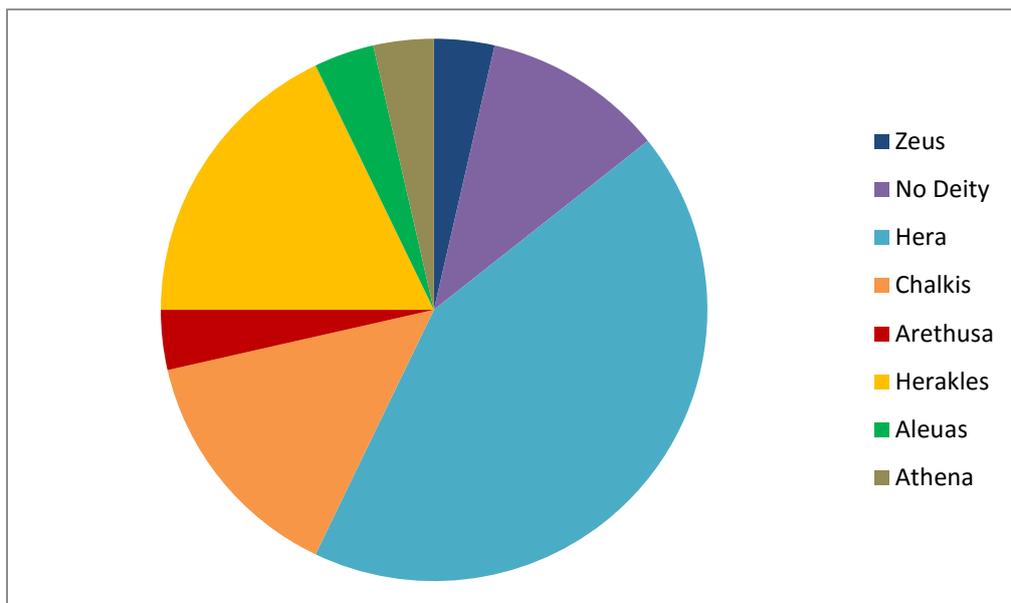
Graphs

These graphs chart the frequency (number of types) that the eagle is used with a particular deity on the coinage of Greece, Sicily and Italy from the fifth to the second centuries B.C. The graphs chart the change in the eagle's attachment to different deities in these areas over time. The names of the deities change when moving from Greece to Sicily and Italy, but the colouring remains the same.

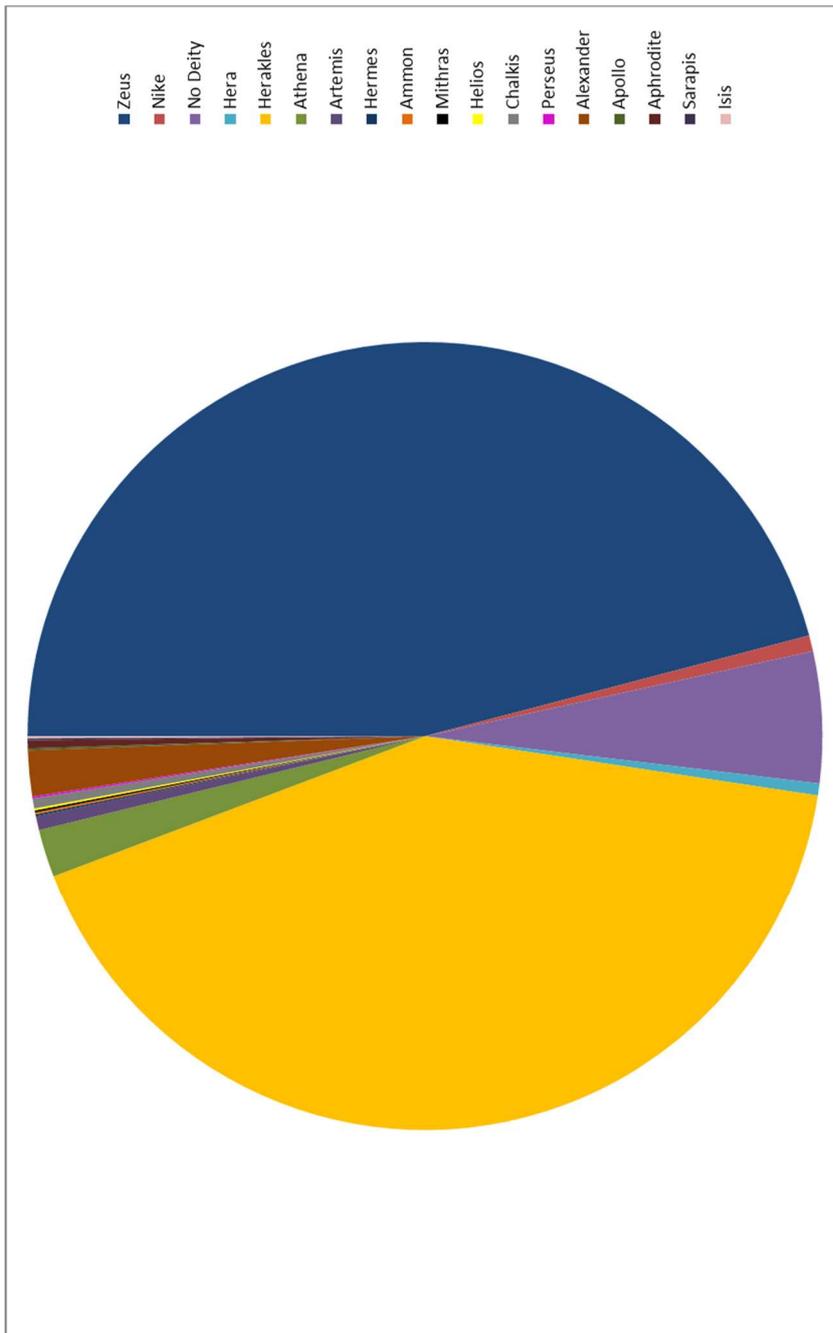
Graph 1: Mainland Greece in the Fifth Century



Graph 2: Mainland Greece in the Fourth Century until 336 B.C.

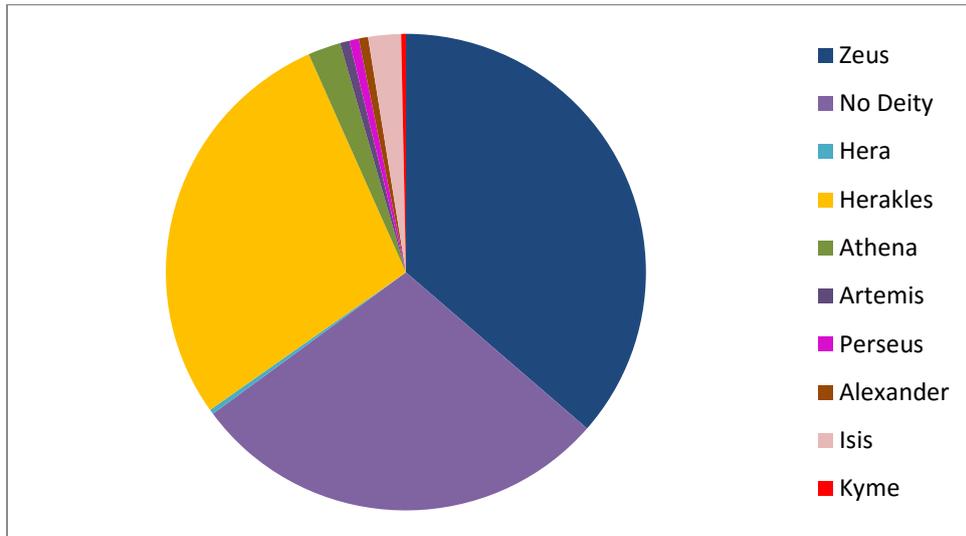


Graph 3: Mainland Greece in the Fourth and Third Centuries, post 336 B.C



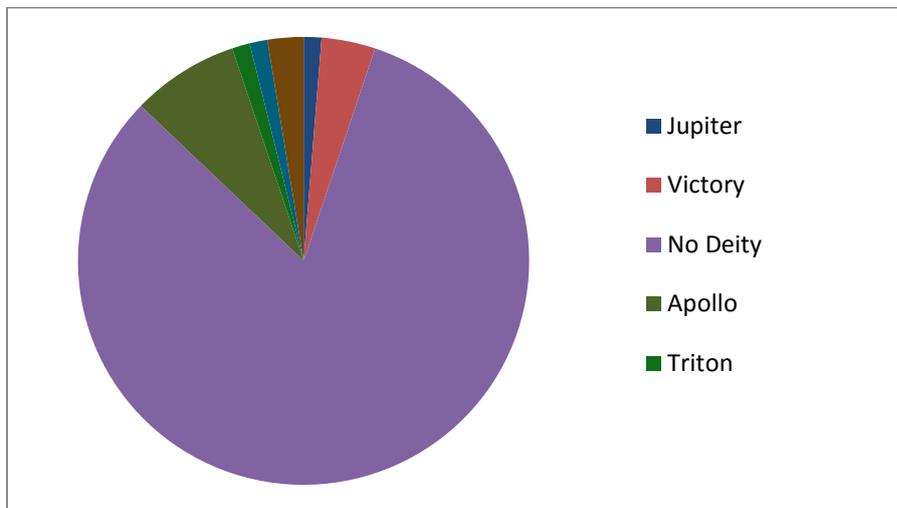
There is a dramatic increase in the amount of eagle coinage produced in this period as Alexander and his successors produced far more than their predecessors. Additionally, there is a sharp increase in the eagle's association with Jupiter and Hercules as this was the image that Alexander, and therefore his successors, chose to propagate. Although Hercules is shown as almost equally represented as Jupiter often Heracles was on the obverse of a coin which showed Jupiter with the eagle on the reverse, which implies a greater connection to Jupiter. Thus, although they seem equal Jupiter was certainly predominant in this period.

Graph 4: Mainland Greece in the Second Century B.C.

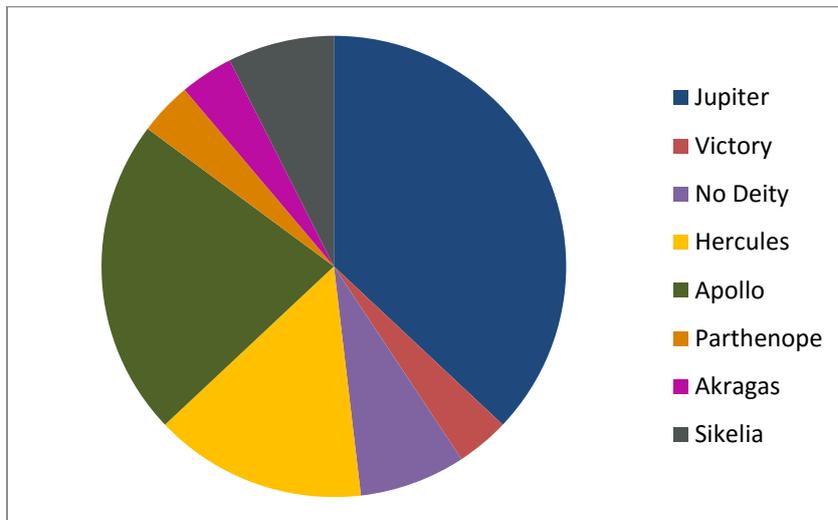


Although Jupiter and Herakles are still predominant, this century saw a large increase of the eagle being associated with living or dead Hellenistic kings rather than deities. Thus the category of 'No Deity' has increased.

Graph 5: Italy and Sicily in the Fifth Century

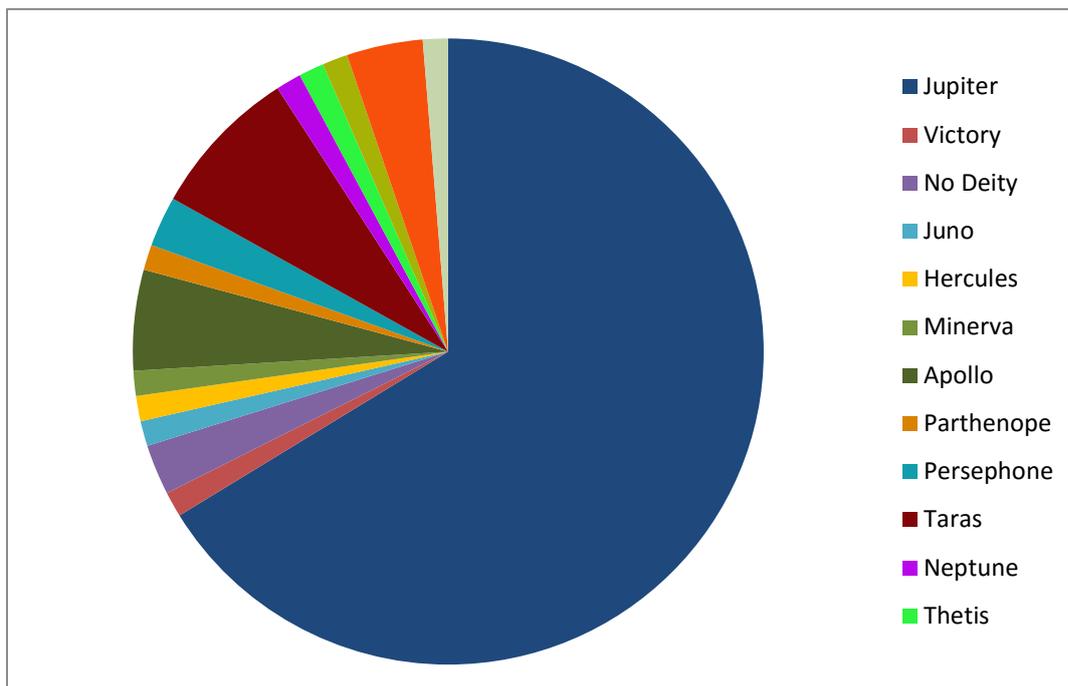


Graph 6: Italy and Sicily in the Fourth Century



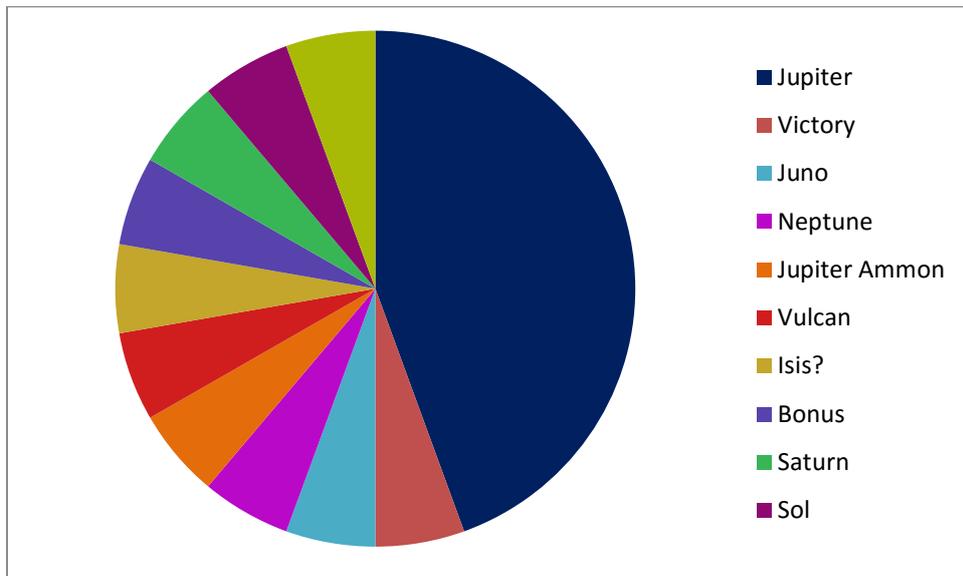
The Fourth Century sees a slow increase in the eagle’s association with Jupiter, with the majority of these instances being post 336 B.C. and the Alexandrian coinage. But Jupiter has not yet become predominant.

Graph 7: Italy and Sicily in the Third Century



Post-Alexander Jupiter has become nearly as popular a connection to the eagle as he was in mainland Greece. However, although he is predominant the other deities seen here take up a significant proportion of the coinage with large percentages for Taras, Apollo and Mars. There is no graph for Italy and Sicily in the Second Century as most of their coin production was stopped once they were conquered by the Romans, and the Roman second century B.C. coinage has been discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Graph 8: Deities associated with the eagle on Roman coinage in the 1st century B.C.



Images



Fig 1.1: The Silchester Eagle. Dated to the first or second century A.D. Reading Museum, Object No. 1995.4.1. Image from Reading Museum website, <file:///C:/Users/Ben/Downloads/sileagle-38.pdf> [Accessed on 20/02/2016].



Fig 1.2: The Silchester Eagle, alternate view showing the hole in the top where some sort of lid may have been placed. Image from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Eagle_of_the_Ninth#/media/File:Silchester_eagle.JPG [Accessed on 20/02/2016].



Fig 1.3: Short-toed Eagle feeding its chick with a lizard. Photo by Alfred Limbrunner. From Gensbol, 2008: 91.

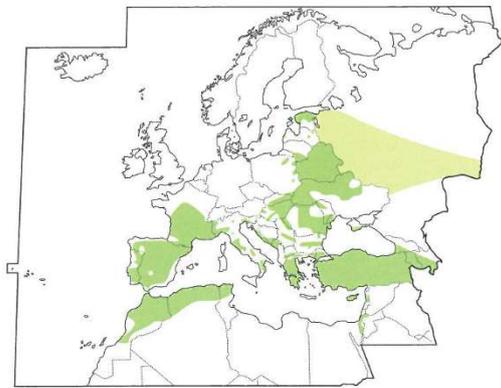


Fig 1.3.1: Distribution of the Short-toed Eagle population across Europe c.2008. From Gensbol, 2008: 89.



Fig 1.4: Adult Golden Eagle. Photo by Ulf Risberg. From Gensbol, 2008: 143.

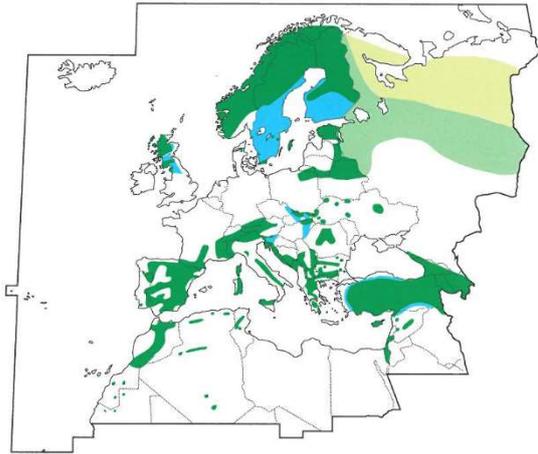


Fig 1.4.1: Distribution of the Golden Eagle population across Europe c.2008. From Gensbol, 2008: 141.



Fig 1.5: Juvenile Spotted Eagle. Photo by Benny Gensbol, From Gensbol, 2008: 160.

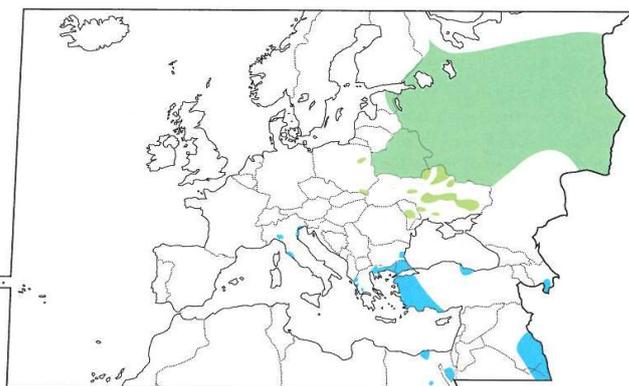


Fig 1.5.1: Distribution of the Spotted Eagle throughout Europe c.2008, the light green indicates summer residence and blue indicates winter residence. From Gensbol, 2008: 159.



Fig 1.6: Adult White-tailed Eagle with fish. Photo by Samfoto. From Gensbol, 2008: 66.



Fig 1.7: Verreaux's Eagle, adults in flight. Photo by A. S. Weaving. From Gensbol, 2008: 147.



Fig 1.8: Older immature/sub adult Imperial Eagle. Photo by Benny Gensbol. From Gensbol, 2008: 151.

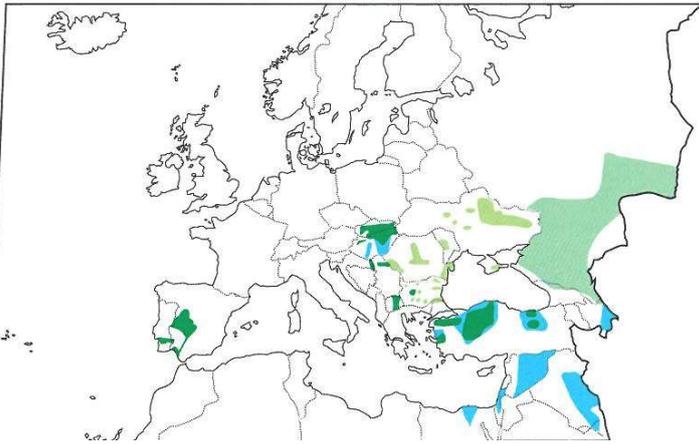


Fig 1.8.1: Shows the distribution of the Imperial Eagle across Europe, green represents summer residents, blue winter residence. From Gensbol, 2008: 148.



Fig 1.9: Adult Lesser Spotted Eagle. Photo by Hadoram Shirihai. From Gensbol, 2008: 163.

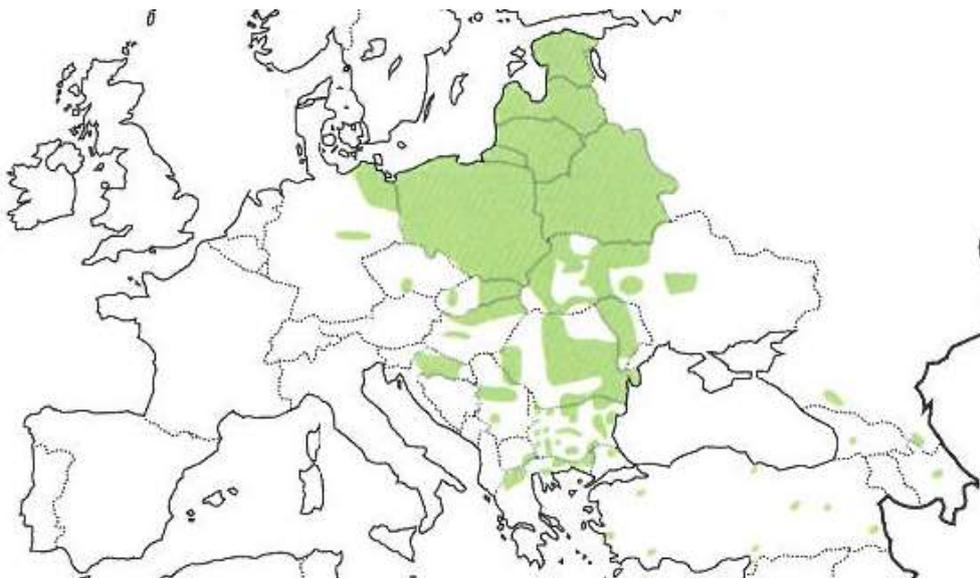


Fig 1.9.1: The distribution of the Lesser Spotted Eagle c.2008 in their summer residence. From Gensbol, 2008: 162.



Fig 1.10: Adult Booted Eagle, dark morphology. Photo by Eduardo Barrachina. From Gensbol, 2008: 168.

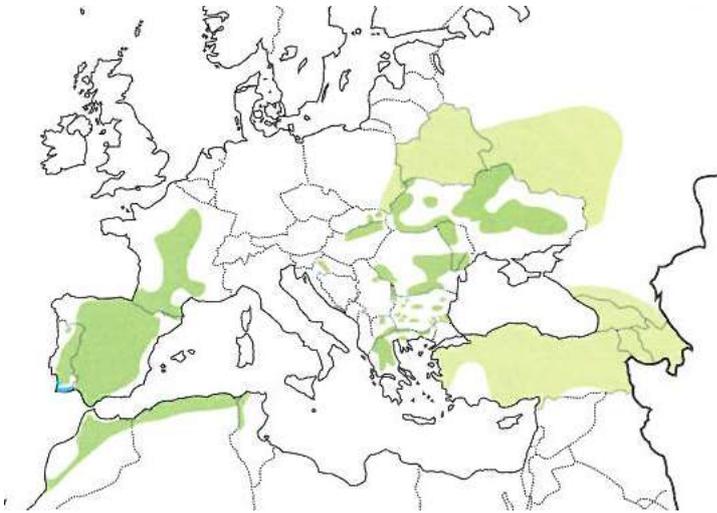


Fig 1.10.1: Distribution of the Booted Eagle across Europe. From Gensbol, 2008: 167.



Fig 1.11: Bonelli's Eagle with nesting material. Photo by Benny Gensbol. From Gensbol, 2008: 171.

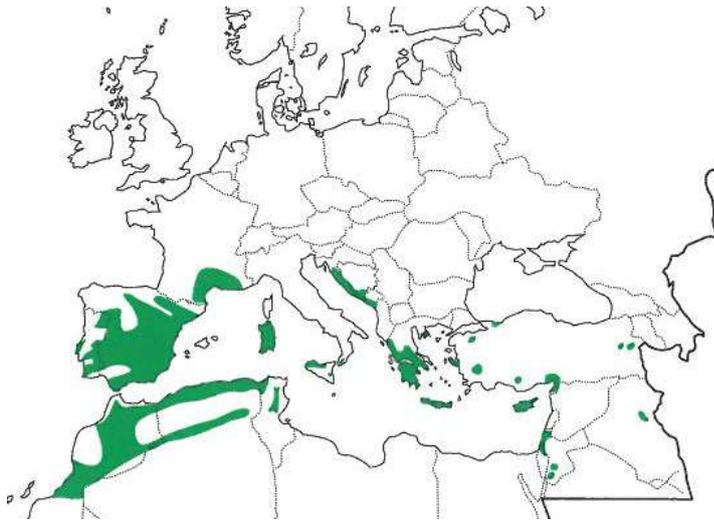


Fig 1.11.1: Distribution of Bonelli's Eagle across Europe c.2008. From Gensbol, 2008: 170.



Fig 2.1: Golden eagle attacks deer in Siberia. Gannon, M. 2013. Photo by Linda Kerley, Zoological Society of London.



Fig 2.2: Attic black-figured hydria from Italy. Front: Eagles and hare. Back: Eagle and gazelle. c.540-530 B.C. From Pollard, 1977: Figs 22 & 23.



Fig 2.3: Vase painting showing an enthroned Zeus holding a bird-topped (most likely an eagle) sceptre. Produced c.330-320 B.C. *LIMC* Iris I 100.



Fig 2.4: Bronze statuette of Zeus 'the Hurler' from Lykaios holding a thunderbolt in one hand and an eagle in the other. Produced c.470 B.C. *LIMC* Zeus 29.

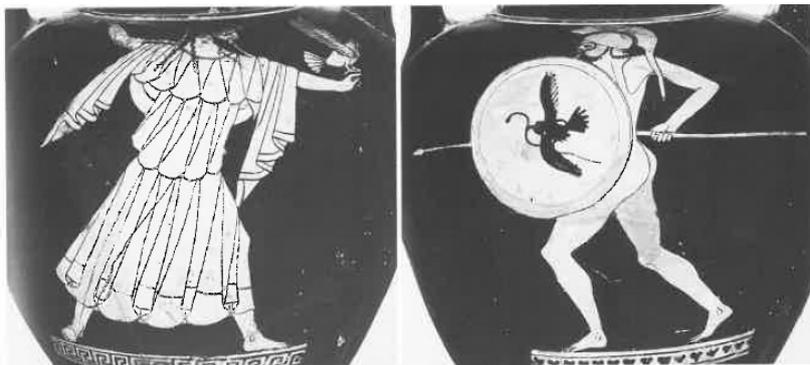


Fig 2.5: Nolan attic amphora from Vulci showing a bearded and long-haired Zeus holding both a thunderbolt and an eagle. Produced c.480-470 B.C. *LIMC* Zeus 68.



Fig 2.6: Ivory relief from Sparta showing Prometheus with the eagle eating his liver. Produced c.650 B.C. *LIMC* Prometheus 30.



Fig 2.7: Prometheus and the Eagle alongside Atlas holding up the world. Laconian black-figured *cyclix* from Caere, c.550 B.C. From Pollard, 1977: Fig 25; *LIMC* Prometheus 54.



Fig 2.8: Statuette of Artemis from Taranto with an eagle standing on her head. Produced in third-quarter of the sixth century B.C. *LIMC* Artemis 563.



Fig 2.9: Volute krater showing Hades Palace, Hades holds an eagle-topped sceptre. Produced in c.330 B.C. *LIMC* Pentheus 70.



Fig 2.10: Vase painting showing the mythical king Proitos with an eagle-topped sceptre. Produced in c.400 B.C. *LIMC* Proitos 3.



Fig 2.11: Laconian cup from Taranto showing bearded enthroned Zeus or Prometheus opposite large eagle. Produced c.570 B.C. *LIMC* Zeus 43.



Fig 2.12: Laconian black figure cup found at Tocra, produced c.570-560 B.C. Shows what is, presumably, Prometheus in a long himation and sitting on a stool being attacked by both an eagle and a snake. Although listed as Zeus in the *LIMC*, Pipili states that the artist seems to be depicting Prometheus' torture using the style depicted in the previous image (Pipili, 1987: 47). *LIMC* Zeus 44.



Fig 2.13: Belly amphora from Vulci, produced c.550-530 B.C. Depicts Eurytion, but the important aspect is the eagle pattern on the hoplite's shield. *LIMC* Eurytion 18.



Fig 2.14: Tripod/Eagle type coin produced in Croton in c.540-412 B.C. Obverses: A tripod with lion's feet with the word KROTON. Reverse: An eagle in flight. Babelon, 1924-1936: no.710. Image is from http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/greece/bruttium/kroton/DeLuynes_710.jpg [Accessed 14/10/2013].

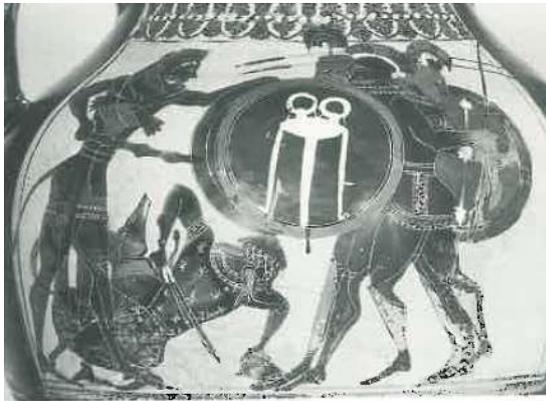


Fig 2.15: Belly Amphora of unknown provenance, produced c.550 B.C. Showing Herakles and Geryon. Geryon is carrying a hoplite shield with the pattern of the tripod on it. *LIMC* Herakles 2484.



Fig 2.16: Eagle/Pegasus *aes signatum* produced by Rome in c.280-250 B.C. Stored in the British Museum. Image is from http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1171049&partId=1&object=23144&matcult=15620&page=1 [Accessed 01/10/2013].



Fig 2.17: Elephant/Boar *aes signatum* produced by Rome in c.280-250 B.C. Stored in the British Museum. Image is from http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1171050&partId=1&object=23144&matcult=15620&page=1 [Accessed 01/10/2013].



Fig 2.18: Jupiter and Aeneas, narrative frieze on a *cista* produced in the fourth century B.C. and in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin. From Wiseman, 2004: 112, Fig 48.

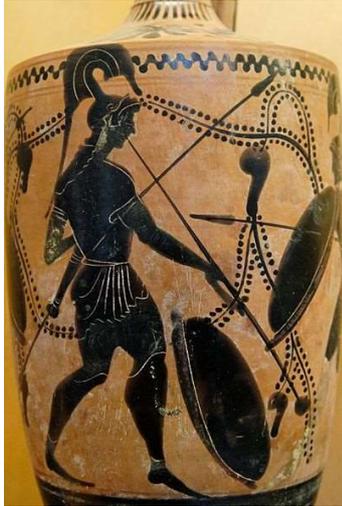


Fig 2.19: Warrior playing the salpinx. Attic black-figure lekythos, late sixth/early fifth century B.C. in the Museo Archeologico Regionale, Palermo. Photo by Nguyen, M.-L. 2008. Image is from http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Salpinx_player_MAR_Palermo_NI1853.jpg. [Accessed 01/10/2013]



Fig 2.20: The Faravahar or Frawahr is one of the symbols of Zoroastrianism, and thus Ahura Mazda. It was also the symbol of the Persian royal court. Drawn by Shaahin, 2008. Image is from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Faravahar-Gold.svg> [Accessed 01/10/2013].



Fig 2.21: Syrian cylinder seal from the second millennium B.C. Shows what appears to be two sacred standards topped with birds (possibly eagles). Image from Seyrig, 1960: No.3.



Fig 2.22: Syrian cylinder seal from the second millennium B.C. Shows what appears to be a sacred standard on the far left, possibly topped by a bird, but this is unclear. Image from Seyrig, 1960: No.8.



Fig 2.23: Terracotta frieze found in Rome dating to the sixth century B.C. Minotaur seen on the left hand side. Image is from Gjerstad, 1953: 474, Fig 141.



Fig 2.24: Royal person with sceptre on a late sixth century plaque from Caere. Image is from Bonfante-Warren, 1970: Pl. VI, 1.



Fig 2.25: Gold and enamel sceptre with eagles/hawks on top, originally mounted on an ivory or wooden staff found in Kourion, Cyprus and now in the Cyprus Museum. Image is from Bonfante-Warren, 1970: Pl. VII, 1.



Fig 3.1: Minerva/Eagle type coin produced by Alba Fucens in c.303-263 B.C. Obverse: Helmeted head of Minerva. Reverse: An eagle on a thunderbolt. *SNG ANS* 112. Image is from http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/greece/latium/alba_fucens/SNGANS_112.jpg [Accessed 02/01/2013]



Fig 3.2: Anchor/Tripod *aes signatum* produced by Rome in c.280-250 B.C. Stored in the British Museum. Image is from http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1171043&partId=1&object=23144&matcult=15620&page=1 [Accessed 01/10/2013].



Fig 3.3: Trident/Chickens *aes signatum* produced by Rome in c.280-250 B.C. Stored in the British Museum. Image is from

http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1171047&partId=1&object=23144&matcult=15620&page=1 [Accessed 01/10/2013].



Fig 3.4: Athena/Owl type coin produced by Tarentum in c.281-272 B.C. Obverse: Helmeted head of Athena decorated with *skylla*. Reverse: An owl on a thunderbolt. Ravel, 1947: no.1068ff. Image is from http://wildwinds.com/coins/greece/calabria/taras/Vlasto_1068ff.jpg [Accessed 14/10/2013].



Fig 3.5: Eagle/Thunderbolt type coin produced by Olympia in c.469-450 B.C. Obverse: An eagle clutching a hare in its talons. Reverse: A winged thunderbolt and the letters F-A. Seltman, 1924: no.32; Image is from http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/greece/elis/olympia/Seltman_032.jpg [Accessed 14/10/2013].



Fig 3.6: Minerva/Eagle type coin produced c.264 in the Messana mint. Obverse: Helmeted head of Minerva. Reverse: An eagle standing on a thunderbolt, head facing right with a short sword to the left. Crawford, 1974: 23/1. Image is from http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s0599.html#Syd_0030 [Accessed 14/10/2013].



Fig 3.7: Pegasus/Athena type coin produced in Corinth in c.345-307 B.C. Obverse: Pegasus. Reverse: Laureate and helmeted head of Athena with an eagle. Ravel, 1947: no.1008; Calciati, 1983-1987: Pegasi I 426. Image is from http://wildwinds.com/coins/greece/corinth/Ravel_1008.jpg [Accessed 14/10/2013].



Fig 3.8: Mars/Eagle type gold coin produced in c.211-207 B.C. by Rome, minted in several places. Obverse: Bearded and helmeted head of Mars. Reverse: An eagle standing on a thunderbolt with the word ROMA below. Crawford, 1974: 44/2. Image is from http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s0003.html#Syd_0226 [Accessed 02/01/2013].



Fig 3.9: She-Wolf/Eagle type sextans produced c.217-215 B.C. by Rome. Obverse: The wolf and twins. Reverse: An eagle with the flower in its beak and the word ROMA below. Crawford, 1974: 39/3. Image is from http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s0609.html#Syd_0095 [Accessed 02/01/2013]



Fig 3.10: Wolf/Lambda type coin produced by Argos in c.343 B.C. Obverse: Hindquarters of a wolf. Reverse: A large Lambda with an eagle. *SNG Cop.* 31. Image is from http://wildwinds.com/coins/greece/argolis/argos/SNGCop_031.jpg [Accessed 14/10/2013].

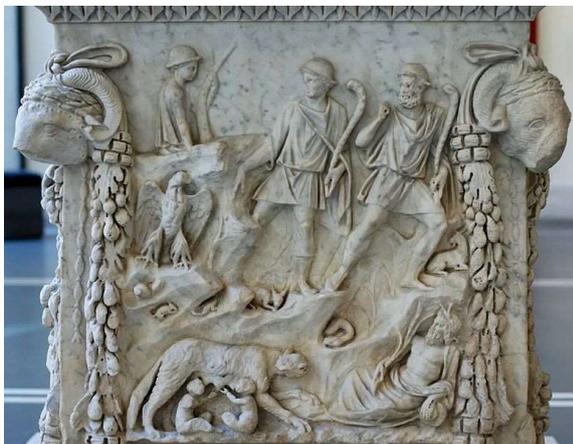


Fig 3.11: Altar from Ostia from the reign of Trajan, c.98-117 A.D., with a relief representing the *lupercal*. Romulus and Remus with the she-wolf are accompanied by a representation of the Tiber. The eagle stands above the she-wolf, with the shepherds looking on in awe. Image is from http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Altar_Mars_Venus_Massimo.jpg [Accessed 14/10/2013].



Fig 3.12: Roma/Jupiter type denarius produced in 122 B.C. by the moneyer M. Carbo. Obverse: Helmeted head of Roma with a laurel branch behind. Reverse: Jupiter driving a quadriga and holding a thunderbolt and eagle-topped sceptre, at least traditionally. This example does not seem to show a thunderbolt, and does not include the top of the sceptre. Crawford, 1974: 276/1. Image is from <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s0151.html#papiria6> [Accessed 02/01/2013].



Fig 3.13: Mars/Jupiter, Juno, Minerva type coin produced in c.112-111 B.C. by the moneyer Cn. Blasio. Obverse: Helmeted head of young Mars with a tripod and grain ear behind. Reverse: The triad of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva with a palm behind and an eagle and the word ROM in exergue. Crawford, 1974: 296/1i. Image is from <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s0173.html#cornelia20> [Accessed 02/01/2013].



Fig 3.15: Sword/Scabbard *aes signatum* produced by Rome in c.280-250 B.C. Stored in the British Museum. Image is from http://www.britishmuseum.org/system_pages/beta_collection_introduction/beta_collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1171044&partId=1&object=23144&matcult=15620&page=1 [Accessed 14/10/2013].



Fig 3.16: Shield/Shield *aes signatum* produced by Rome in c.280-250 B.C. Stored in the British Museum. Image is from

http://www.britishmuseum.org/system_pages/beta_collection_introduction/beta_collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1171045&partId=1&object=23144&matcult=15620&page=1 [Accessed 14/10/2013].



Fig 3.17: Spear/Amphora *aes signatum* produced by Rome in c.280-250 B.C. Stored in the British Museum. Image is from

http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1171058&partId=1&object=23144&matcult=15620&page=1 [Accessed 14/10/2013].



Fig 3.18: Bull/Bull *aes signatum* produced by Rome in c.280-250 B.C. Stored in the British Museum. Image is from

http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1171046&partId=1&object=23144&matcult=15620&page=1 [Accessed 14/10/2013].



Fig 3.19: Zeus/Eagle type coin produced by Locri in c.300-268 B.C. Obverse: Laureate head of Zeus. Reverse: Eagle on a thunderbolt with cornucopia and the word LOKRON. Rutter, 2001: no.2400. Image is from http://wildwinds.com/coins/greece/bruttium/lokroi/HN_2400.jpg [Accessed 14/10/2013].



Fig 3.20: Zeus/Eagle type coin produced by the Bruttii in c.282-203 B.C. Obverse: Zeus. Reverse: Eagle. *SNG Cop.* 1662. Image is from http://wildwinds.com/coins/greece/bruttium/brettii/SNGCop_1662.jpg [Accessed 14/10/2013].



Fig 3.21: Selinos/Eagle type coin produced by Tuder in c.280-240 B.C. Obverse: The bearded and wreathed head of Selinos. Reverse: An eagle with the word TUDERE. *SNG Cop.* 75. Image is from http://wildwinds.com/coins/greece/umbria/tuder/SNGCop_75.jpg [Accessed 14/10/2013].



Fig 3.22: Eagle/Grain type coin produced by Metapontum in c.275-250 B.C. Obverse: Eagle with wreath. Reverse: Grain and thunderbolt with the word MET. *SNG ANS* 603. Image is from http://wildwinds.com/coins/greece/lucania/metapontion/Johnston_39.jpg [Accessed 14/10/2013]



Fig 3.23: Ares/Eagle type coin produced by the Mamertines in c.288-278 B.C. Obverse: The laureate head of Ares with spear and the word ARES. Reverse: An eagle on a thunderbolt with the word MAME-R-TINON. *SNG ANS 401*. Image is from

http://wildwinds.com/coins/greece/sicily/messana/mamertini/Calciati_02.jpg [Accessed 14/10/2013].



Fig 3.24: Zeus/Eagle type coin produced by King Hiketas of in c.287-278 B.C. Obverse: Laureate head of Zeus Hellanios with the word SURAKOSION. Reverse: Eagle on thunderbolt with the word SURAKOSION. Calciati, 1983-1987: no.157cf. Image is from

http://wildwinds.com/coins/greece/sicily/syracuse/hiketas/Calciati_157cf.jpg [Accessed 14/10/2013].



Fig 3.25: Second example of the Roma/Jupiter type denarius seen in Fig 25. Once again it is difficult to identify a thunderbolt or the top of the sceptre the supposed Jupiter is carrying. Image is from

<http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/rsc/papiria/papiria6.1.jpg> [Accessed 02/01/2013]



Fig 3.26: Third example of the Roma/Jupiter type denarius from Fig 25. This example gives a clearer image of Jupiter, in his right hand does seem to be shape that may resemble a thunderbolt, although small. The sceptre is certainly topped by something, which could also be winged, so an eagle-topped sceptre is not out of the question. Image is from

<http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/rsc/papiria/papiria6.2.jpg> [Accessed 02/01/2013].



Fig 4.1: Jupiter/Eagle type coin produced by moneyer Q. Pomponius Rufus in c.73 B.C. Obverse: Laureate head of Jupiter with word RUFUS. Reverse: Eagle on sceptre holding a wreath with the words Q POMPONI. Crawford, 1974: 398/1. Image is from

<http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s0334.html#pomponia23> [Accessed 03/01/2013].



Fig 4.2: Jupiter/Eagle and Dolphin type coin produced by Gnaeus Pompey Magnus in c.49 B.C. Obverse: Jupiter wearing a diadem with the words VARRO PRO Q. Reverse: Dolphin, sceptre and eagle with the words MAGN. PRO. COS. Crawford, 1974: 447/1a. Image is from

<http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s1374.html#pompeia7> [Accessed 03/01/2013].



Fig 4.3: Vulcan/Eagle type coin produced by the moneyer Lucius Aurelius Cotta in c.105 B.C. Obverse: Draped bust of Vulcan with laureate pileus, tongs and star. Reverse: Eagle on thunderbolt surrounded by wreath with word L. COT. below. Crawford, 1974: 314/1b. Image is from <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s0191.html#aurelia21> [Accessed 02/01/2013].



Fig 4.4: Hephaistos/LIP type coin produced by Lipara in c.425 B.C. Obverse: Bearded head of Hephaistos wearing a *pilos*. Reverse: The word LIP between two pellets. Calciati, 1983-1987: no.6. Image is from http://wildwinds.com/coins/greece/sicily/lipara/Calciati_06.jpg [Accessed 14/10/2013].



Fig 4.5: Perseus/Eagle type Tetradrachm produced by 178-168 B.C. by king Perseus of Macedon. Obverse: The diademed head of Perseus. Reverse: Eagle standing on a thunderbolt within a laurel wreath. Image is from <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/greece/macedonia/kings/perseus/i.html> [Accessed 14/10/2013].



Fig 4.6: Unknown/Eagle type coin produced by moneyer M. Plaetorius Cestianus in c.67 B.C. Obverse: Unknown deity wearing wreathed and crested helmet with bow and quiver on shoulder and cornucopia. Reverse: Eagle on thunderbolt. Crawford, 1974: 409/1. Image is from <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s0349.html#plaetoria4> [Accessed 02/01/2013].



Fig 4.7: Ptolemy/Eagle type coin produced by Ptolemy XII in c.80-51 B.C. Obverse: Diademed head of Ptolemy I. Reverse: Eagle standing on thunderbolt. *SNG Cop.* 376. Image is from http://wildwinds.com/coins/greece/egypt/ptolemy_XII/i.html [Accessed 14/10/2013].



Fig 4.8: Genius/Eagle type coin produced by moneyer Q. Cassius in c.55 B.C. Obverse shows head of Genius Populi Romani with sceptre; Reverse on thunderbolt between jug and lituus with the words Q CASSIUS. Cr. 428/3. Syd. 916. Image is from <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s0391.html#cassia7> [Accessed 02/01/2013].



Fig 4.9: Sol/Eagle type coin produced by the moneyer Quinarius in c.46 B.C. Obverse: Head of Sol with crown of rays and words MN CORDIUS. Reverse: Eagle with the words RUFUS. Image from Crawford, 1974: 463/4a-b.



Fig 4.10: Juno/Eagle and wolf type produced by moneyer L. Papius in c.45 B.C. Obverse: Head of Juno Sospita. Reverse: Wolf and eagle fanning flames with the words CELSVS III VIR and PAPIVS. Crawford, 1974: 472/1. Image is from <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s0461.html#papia2>. [Accessed 02/01/2013].



Fig 4.11: Archaizing relief of Jupiter holding a staff and (presumably) an eagle. *LIMC* Iuppiter 246a.



Fig 4.12: Gem showing Jupiter riding atop an eagle. *LIMC* Iuppiter 53.



Fig 4.13: Gem showing Jupiter, seated, holding a staff and Victory with an eagle standing at his feet. *LIMC* Iuppiter 187.



Fig 4.14: Relief showing Ganymede and the eagle, as described the eagle grasps Ganymede from behind and Ganymede holds onto it tenderly. This is a good example of the trope from the first century B.C. *LIMC* Ganymede 199.



Fig 4.15: Statue of Thaleia from Tarento produced c.300 B.C. Only a fragment remains but from this it can clearly be seen that the eagle appears in much the same manner as it is depicted in the Ganymede images. *LIMC* Thaleia II 6.



Fig 4.16: Intaglio gem produced in the first century B.C. Shows Venus in three-quarter view with the eagle between her legs. There is a cornucopia in the background. *LIMC* Venus 220.



Fig 4.17: Victory/Standards type coin produced by moneyer C. Valerius Flaccus (allied with Sulla) in 82 B.C. Obverse: Winged bust of Victory. Reverse: *Aquila* between two standards and the words, VAL. FLA. IMPERAT. EX. S. C. Crawford, 1074: 365/1b. Image is from <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s0288.html#valeria12b> [Accessed 03/01/2013].



Fig 4.18: Hispania/Togate figure type coin produced by moneyer Postumius Albinus in c.81 B.C. Obverse: Veiled head of Hispania with word HISPAN. Reverse: Togate figure with *aquila* and fasces and the words POST A F Crawford, 1974: 372/2. Image is from <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s0297.html#postumia8> [Accessed 03/01/2013].



Fig 4.19: Octavian/Curule chair type coin produced by Octavian in c.42 B.C. Obverse: Portrait of Octavian with the words CAESAR VIR. Reverse: Curule chair with legs decorated with eagle and wreath resting on it. The words CAESAR DIC PER are inscribed on it. Crawford, 1974: 497/2a. Image is from http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s1536.html#RSC_0055 [Accessed 03/01/2013].



Fig 4.20: Africa/Curule chair type coin produced by Praetors L. Cestius and C. Norba in c.43 B.C. Obverse: Bust of Africa draped in elephant's skin. Reverse: Curule chair with legs decorated with eagles with helmet resting on it and the words L CESTIUS and C NORBA. Crawford, 1974: 491/1a. Image is from Crawford, 1974: 491/1a.



Fig 4.21: Caesar/Standards type coin produced by Octavian in c.40 B.C. Obverse: Wreathed portrait of Caesar. Reverse: *Aquila* between standards along with a plough and sceptre. Crawford, 1974: 525/4a. Image is from http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s1427.html#RSC_0047 [Accessed 03/01/2013].



Fig 4.22: Ship/Standards type produced by Antony in c.32-31 B.C. Obverse: Praetorian galley with the words ANT[ONIUS] AUG III VIR R P C. Reverse: *Aquila* between two standards and the words LEG[ION] VIII (eighth legion). Image is from http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/imp/marc_antony/RSC_0035.jpg [Accessed 03/01/2013].



Fig 5.1: Erotic *spintria* with eagle stamped in top left corner. Simonetta & Riva, 1981: Scene 15/VII.

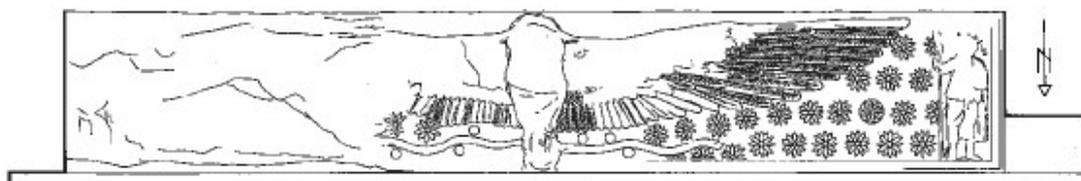


Fig 5.2: Lintel and ceiling of the northern *thalamus* of the temple of Bel in Palmyra. An eagle is at the top of the lintel and four surround the centre piece. Dirven, 1999: Fig 15.



Fig 5.3: Limestone lintel niche from the temple of Baalshamin in Palmyra. Eagle in centre and on either side representing Baalshamin's control over the cosmos. *LIMC* Aglibol 10.



Fig 5.4: Altar of Sol in the Capitoline museum, Rome. Relief shows a radiate bust of Sol atop an eagle. Side of the altar contains an inscription and relief dedicated to Malakbal, a Palmyrian solar god. Photo by author.



Fig 5.5: Travertine fragment near the temple of Apollo Sosianus. Relief shows eagle on a sceptre within a wall. Photo by author.



Fig 5.6: Travertine fragment near the temple of Apollo Sosianus, Rome. Relief shows seems like a partially destroyed eagle. Photo by author.

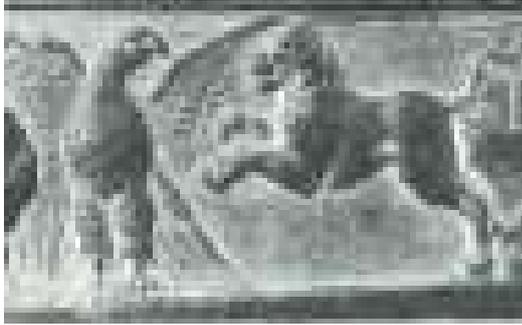


Fig 5.7: Altar from Gabii shows sign of the zodiac accompanied by symbols of their associated deities. Here Leo is accompanied by an eagle, associated with Jupiter. *LIMC* Menses 29.



Fig 5.8: Tetrachm from Syria produced in 79 A.D. Obverse: Bust of Titus. Reverse: Bust of Vespasian atop an eagle. *RPC* II, 1943-1944. Image is from <http://wildwinds.com/coins/ric/vespasian/i.html>



Fig 5.9: Titus atop an eagle. The scene of Titus' apotheosis on the inside of the central arch on the Arch of Titus. Image is from <http://ancientrome.ru/art/artwork/sculp/rom/relief/arcus-titi/002.jpg>



Fig 5.10: View of the decorations of Tomb I (the 'Sidonian' Tomb) in Maresha, Palestine. Dated to around the first century B.C. Two eagles adorn the corners of the tomb painting. Berlin, 2002: 139.



Fig 5.11: Augustus/Eagle coin from Rome produced A.D. c.31-37. Obverse shows Divus Augustus with DIVVS AVGVSTVS PATER / Reverse shows eagle on sphere with S-C. *RIC* Tiberius 82.

Image from [http://wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s1790.html#RIC_0082\[tib\]](http://wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s1790.html#RIC_0082[tib])



Fig 5.12: The Grand Camee de France is of the Tiberian era. It depicts the members of the emperor's family and the dynasty in an idealised composition. At the top Augustus is central atop a flying *genius* holding a sphere. Zanker, 1988: 87, Fig 56.



Fig 5.13: Jupiter Lamp. Lamp with Jupiter atop an eagle on the discus. Bailey, 1980: No.1026.



Fig 5.14: The urn of Servandus Agathopodanus, the Emperor Vespasian's slave, Rome. Photo by author.



Fig 5.15: Urn in Rome of the imperial freedman T. Claudius Chryseros and two female personages, Iulia Theonoes and Claudia Dorcas, probably his wife and daughter. Dated to the Flavian period. Two eagles adorn the base of the monument. Photo by author.



Fig 5.16: Funerary altar in Rome of Minicia Marcella, daughter of Caius Minicius Fundanus, who died at the age of twelve years, eleven months and seven days. Dated to A.D. 105-106. Photo by author.



Fig 5.7: Tympanum showing eagle with wings outstretched standing on war booty. Near, and presumably from, the remains of the Temple of Apollo at Side. Image taken by John R. in January 2015 and can be accessed at http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g297968-d555187-i119746296-Temple_of_Apollo-Side_Manavgat_Turkish_Mediterranean_Coast.html. [Accessed 27/08/2015].



Fig 5.18: Cuirass of the Prima Porta statue depicting the return of Crassus' *aquila*.



Fig 5.19: Coin of Herod the Great produced c.40-4 B.C. Obverse: Cornucopia. Reverse: Eagle with folded wings. Hendin, 2010: no.501. Image is from http://wildwinds.com/coins/greece/judaea/herod_I/i.html [Accessed 19/05/2015].



Fig 5.20: Cleopatra/Eagle coin from Alexandria produced in c.51-29 B.C. Obverse: Cleopatra. Reverse: Eagle with closed wings with KLEOPATRAS BASILIS[SHS]. *SNG Cop.* 419. Image is from <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/imp/cleopatra/i.html> [Accessed 19/05/2015].



Fig 5.21: Coin of Celtic king Tasciovanus produced c.10 B.C. – A.D. 10. Obverse: Lion. Reverse: Eagle with spread wings. Hobbs, 1996: no.1691. Image is from <http://wildwinds.com/coins/celtic/britain/catuveillauni/tasciovanus/i.html> [Accessed 19/05/2015].



Fig 5.22: Coin of Celtic king Tincommius (c.20 B.C. – A.D. 5). Obverse: Bust of Tincommius. Reverse: Eagle with snake in its beak. Van Arsdell, 1989: no.397-1. Image is from <http://wildwinds.com/coins/SE/SE0083.html> [Accessed 19/05/2015].



Fig 5.23: Coin of Celtic king Epaticcus produced A.D. 35-43. Obverse: Bust of Hercules. Reverse: Eagle holding a snake. Van Arsdell, 1989: no.580-1 Image is from <http://wildwinds.com/coins/SE/SE0356.3.txt> [Accessed 19/05/2015].



Fig 5.24: Augustus/Eagle coin from Ephesus produced in c.27 B.C. Obverse: Augustus with CAESAR COS VII. Reverse: Eagle holding *corona civica* and laurel branches behind with AUGUSTUS S-C. *RIC* Augustus 277. Image is from <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/ric/augustus/i.html> [Accessed 07/01/2013].



Fig 5.25: Cameo showing eagle holding *corona civica* and laurel branch produced c.27 B.C. Image from Simon, 1986: 155-156; Tafel 13. Also see Zanker, 1988: 93-94, Fig 77.



Fig 5.26: Augustus/Eagle coin from Rome produced in c.27 B.C. – A.D. 14. Obverse: Augustus with IMP CAESAR. Reverse: Eagle with AUGUSTUS. *RIC* Augustus 227. Image is from http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s1707.html#RIC_0227 [Accessed 07/01/2013].



Fig 5.27: Augustus/Gaius coin from Lyons produced in c.9-8 B.C. Obverse: Augustus with AUGUSTUS DIVI F. Reverse: Mounted Gaius Caesar with eagle and standards and AUGUS F. *RIC* Augustus 198. Image from <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/ric/augustus/i.html> [Accessed 07/01/2013].



Fig 5.28: Augustus/Tiberius coin from Rome produced in A.D. c.13-14. Obverse: Augustus with CAESAR AVGVSTVS DIVI F PATER PATRIAE. Reverse: Tiberius in triumphal chariot with eagle sceptre and AUG F TR POT XV, TI CAESAR. *RIC* Augustus 221. Image is from <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/ric/augustus/i.html> [Accessed 07/01/2013].



Fig 5.29: Augustus cameo produced c.20 B.C. Augustus holding eagle-topped sceptre. Image is from Simon, 1986: 155, Fig 205.



Fig 5.30: Personification on the Prima Porta statue. She holds a sword with eagle-headed haft in her hand. Image is from Simon, 1986: 55, Fig 55



Fig 5.31: Fifth century calyx-crater by the Altamura painter shows Dionysos being presented with an eagle-headed sword. Image is from Barnett, 1983: Taf. 16.

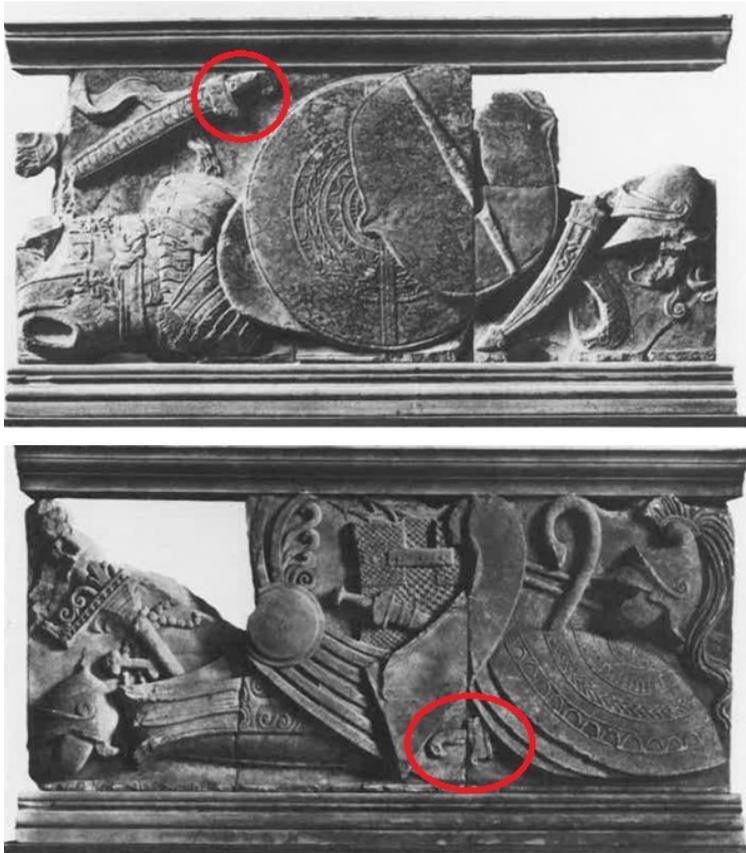


Fig 5.32: The Galatian booty depicted on the carved balustrade of the *stoa* in the sanctuary of the Athena Polias temple at Pergamon. Two eagle-headed swords are seen amongst the panoply. Image is from Barnett, 1983: Taf. 17.1-2.

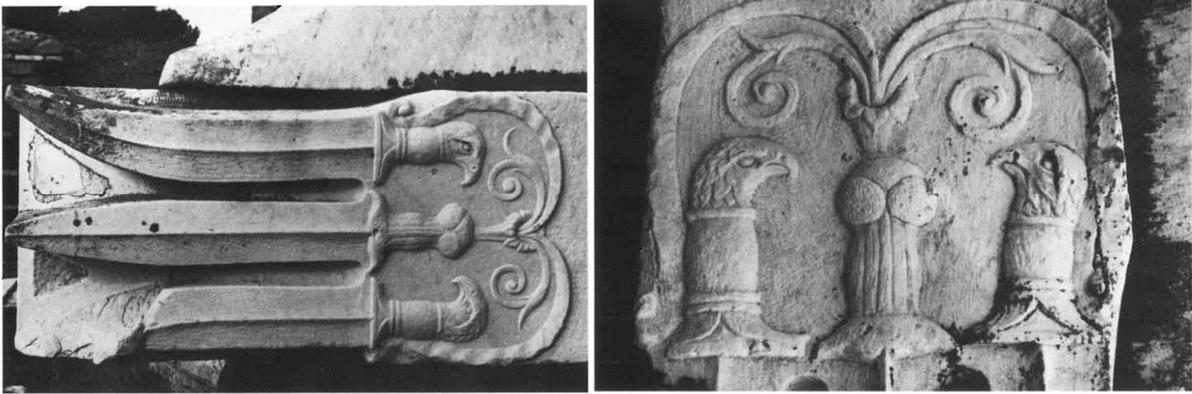


Fig 5.33: Detail of the ships prow on the funerary monument to Publius Lucilius Gamala at Ostia. The prow is a trident composed of three swords, two of which have eagle-headed pommels. Image is from Barnett, 1983: Taf. 18.1-2.



Fig 5.34: Augustus/Eagle coin from Alexandria produced in c.30-28 B.C. Obverse: Augustus with ΘΕΟΥ ΥΙΟΥ. Reverse: Eagle with wings closed with ΚΑΙΣΑΡΟΣ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ. *RPC* I, 5001. Image from <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/ric/augustus/i.html> [Accessed 08/01/2013].



Fig 5.35: The *Gemma Augustea*. Augustus as the *cosmocrator* with eagle underneath his throne. *LIMC* Kairoi Tempora Anni 38.



Fig 5.36: Claudius, Germanicus, and Agrippina the Elder and Younger. Claudius as Jupiter, Agrippina the Younger as Cybele, Agrippina the Elder as Minerva and Germanicus as Honos. Eagle below looking up at Claudius. Image is from Simon, 1986: 82-83, Fig 106.



Iuppiter 412

Fig 5.37: Claudius as Jupiter with eagle. *LIMC* Iuppiter 412.



Fig 5.38: Triumphal Tiberius on a silver cup, he holds an eagle-topped sceptre. Beard, 2007: 48, Fig 11. *LIMC* Victoria 47.



Fig 5.39: Dionysius/Eagle on altar coin from Perinthus produced in A.D. c.41-68. Obverse: Dionysius
Reverse: Eagle on altar with PERINTHION. *RPC I*, 1765.



Fig 5.40: Agrippina/Eagle on altar coin from Laodicea produced in A.D. c.50-59. Obverse: Agrippina the younger with ΑΓΡΙΠΠΙΝΑ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΗ Reverse: Eagle on altar with ΓΑΙΟΥ ΠΟΣΤΟΜΟΥ ΛΑΟΔΙΚΕΩΝ. *RPC I*, 2918. Image is from http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/ric/agrippina_II/i.html [Accessed 07/01/2013].



Fig 5.41: Marcellus/Eagle on altar coin from Cibyra produced A.D. c.54. Obverse shows Marcellus with MARKELLOS / Reverse shows eagle on altar with KIBYRATION. *RPC I*, 2890.



Fig 5.42: Vespasian/Eagle on altar coin from Rome produced in A.D. c.76. Obverse: Vespasian with IMP CAESAR VESPASIANUS AUG Reverse: Eagle on altar with COS VII. *RIC Vespasian* 847. Image from http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s2287.html#RIC_0847 [Accessed 23/03/2013].



Fig 5.43: Vespasian/Eagle on altar coin from Antioch produced in A.D 71-72. Obverse: Vespasian. Reverse: Eagle on altar with caduceus and palm. Image is from <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/ric/vespasian/i.html> [Accessed 23/03/2013].



Fig 5.44: Eagle on column/Tripod coin from Croton produced c.425-350 B.C. Obverse: Eagle on column. Reverse: Tripod. *SNG ANS 336*. Image is from http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/greece/bruttium/kroton/SNGANS_336.jpg [Accessed 19/05/2015].



Fig 5.45: Eagle on column/Crab coin from Eryx produced c.500-480 B.C. Obverse: Eagle on column and ERYX. Reverse: Crab. *SNG ANS 1340*. Image is from http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/greece/sicily/eryx/SNGANS_1340.1.jpg [Accessed 19/05/2015].



Fig 5.46: Eagle on column/Akragas coin from Agrigentum produced c.406-380 B.C. Obverse: Eagle on column with crab. Reverse: River-god Akragas. *SNG Cop. 93*. Image is from http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/greece/sicily/akragas/Calciati_089v.jpg [Accessed 19/05/2015].



Fig 5.47: Eagle Intaglio gem. Shows eagle standing on altar surrounded by legionary standards. Image is from Henig, 1974: No.705.



Fig 6.1: Eagle-shaped vehicle mounts from Eisenberg; Trier area; and Little Cressingham, Norfolk. Image is from Toynbee & Wilkins, 1982: 249.



Fig 6.2: Orpheus mosaic from Leptis Magna. Orpheus, holding his lyre, is surrounded by wildlife. There is an eagle to the left of him. Image is from *LIMC* Orpheus 97.



Fig 6.3: Scene 8 from Trajan's Column. Scene shows Trajan sacrificing at an altar in front of the military standards, including the *aquila*. Image is from http://www.dartmouth.edu/~trajan/wp-content/flagallery/scenes6-21/img_2069-8-web.jpg. [Accessed 19/05/2015].



Fig 6.4: Sacrifice scene on relief from the Antonine Wall. Scene shows the military leader performing a sacrifice on an altar, with the regimental standards behind. Glasgow Museum. Image is from <http://vindolanda.csad.ox.ac.uk/exhibition/images/bridgeness.jpg>. [Accessed 19/05/2015].



Fig 6.5: Intaglio gem showing Menorah with middle three candlesticks replaced with standards. Image is from Henig, 1983: Fig A.



Fig 6.6: Intaglio gem showing Zeus Sarapis with an eagle and standards. Image is from Henig, 1983: Fig B.



Fig 6.7: Intaglio gem showing a bust of Jupiter Dolichenus with an eagle and standards beneath. Image is from Henig, 1983: Fig C.



Fig 6.8: Silver votive tablet with various scenes. At the top is an eagle and at the base Jupiter Dolichenus between two standards topped by eagles. Image is from Speidel, 1978: Fig 10.



Fig 6.9: Coin from Hierapolis from the reign of Caracalla, A.D. c.198-217. Reverse: Atargatis and Hadad seated with a standard between them above an eagle with wings spread. Image is from Lightfoot, 2003: Fig 47.

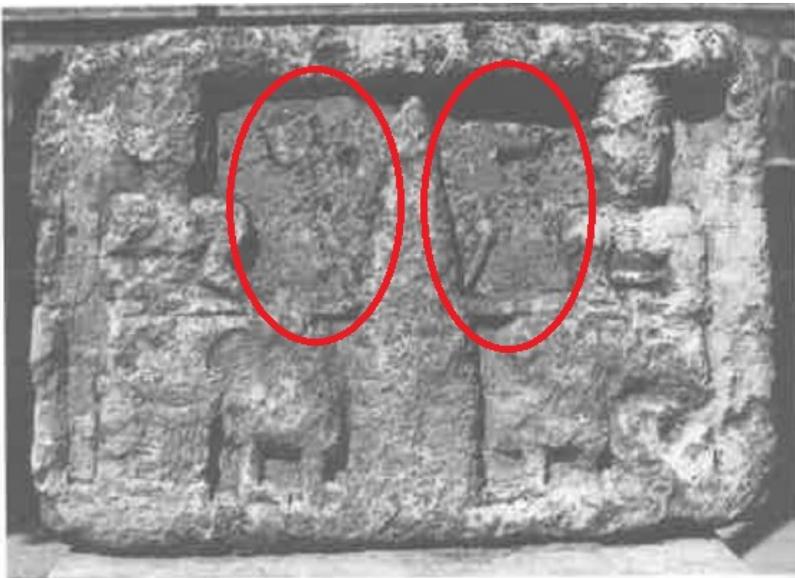


Fig 6.10: Heavily worn relief from Edessa showing what appears to be Atargatis and Hadad with a *baetyl* (sacred stone) and two standards between them. The possible standards are circled in red. Image is from Lightfoot, 2003: Fig 48.



Fig 6.11: A fresco from Dura-Europos depicting a Roman military tribune and his cohort apparently sacrificing to Palmyrene deities with a sacred standard that looks reminiscent of a Roman *vexilla*.

Image is from Lightfoot, 2003: Fig 49.



Fig 6.12: Coin produced in Rome in A.D. c.117-138. Obverse: Bust of Hadrian. Reverse: Hadrian looking towards an eagle who is handing him a sceptre, legend reads *PROVIDENTIA DEORVM*.

RIC Hadrian 589b. Image is from <http://wildwinds.com/coins/ric/hadrian/i.html> [Accessed 13/02/2013].



Fig 6.13 Coin of Hadrian produced at Rome in c.121-122 A.D. Obverse: Eagle with legend *IMP CAESAR TRAIAN HADRIANUS AUG*. Reverse: Winged thunderbolt. *RIC* Hadrian 624. Image is from <http://wildwinds.com/coins/ric/hadrian/i.html> [Accessed 13/02/2013].



Fig 6.14: Coin from Thyateira produced in A.D. c.193-211. Obverse: Bust of Septimius Severus. Reverse: Bust of Caracalla on the left, Geta on the right, and Septimius in the centre. Below Septimius is an eagle with a star either side, highlighted in red. Aufhauser 11, 277. Image from http://wildwinds.com/coins/ric/septimius_severus/i.html [Accessed 14/03/2013].



Fig 6.15: Coin produced in Alexandria produced in c.150-151 A.D. Obverse: Bust of Antoninus Pius. Reverse: Egyptian style eagle with a *corona civica* in its beak. Milne, 1933: 2084. Image is from http://wildwinds.com/coins/ric/antoninus_pius/i.html [Accessed 07/01/2013].



Fig 6.16: Eagle relief from the portico of the SS Apostoli church in Rome. Most likely recovered from the ruins of Trajan's Forum. Image is from <http://www.romeartlover.it/Vasi63f4.jpg> [Accessed 19/05/2015].



Fig 6.17: Apotheosis of Antoninus Pius and Faustina from the Antonine Column. Shows Antoninus, with eagle-topped sceptre, and Faustina rising to heaven atop Aion. They are flanked by two eagles. From the Vatican Museums in Rome. Image is from <http://ancientrome.ru/art/artworken/img.htm?id=2053> [Accessed 06/08/2015].



Fig 6.18: Coin from Rome produced in A.D. c.112. Obverse: Bust of Marciana with the legend of DIVA AUGUSTA MARCIANA. Reverse: Eagle with the legend CONSECRATIO. *RIC* Trajan 743. Image is from http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s3328.html#RIC_0743 [Accessed 22/02/2013].



Fig 6.19: Coin from Rome produced in A.D. 97. Obverse: Bust of Nerva. Reverse: *Aquila* beneath clasped hands and the legend CONCORDIA EXERCITVM. *RIC* Nerva 80. Image is from http://wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s3042.html#RIC_0080,Sestertius [Accessed 02/03/2013].



Fig 6.20: Coin from Rome produced in A.D. c.113. Obverse: Bust of Trajan. Reverse: Dacia seated on a rock, holding an *aquila*, with the legend DACIA AUGUSTI PROVINCIA. *RIC* Trajan 622. Image is from <http://wildwinds.com/coins/ric/trajan/i.html> [Accessed 14/03/2013].

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