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Claiming the Right to Rule through Familiarity: The Epic that Evoked Empires

Ever since its conception, the *Iliad*, Homer's celebrated rendition of the Trojan War, has sparked the creation of countless literary and artistic works over a span of several millennia, as crafters have molded the classic tale to reach the societies of their times. Through the persistent adaption and addition of contemporary material to the epic cycle, the *Iliad* and the legends related to it have withstood the rise and fall of many a civilization, becoming fundamental aspects of an educated world. In the resulting culture enthralled by the Homeric universe, such tales provide a potent means through which one could influence an entire population and accomplish his goals. It was through this communicative medium that many of antiquity's most powerful leaders were able to thoroughly convince the masses of their destined right to rule, despite the otherwise impermissible feats that they ultimately accomplished. By fusing his public identity with Achilles, the *Iliad*'s archetypal heroic warrior of old, through ceremonial parallels before the onset of his extensive military campaign, King Alexander III "the Great" of Macedonia was able to unite peoples from both the autonomous city-states of Greece and the easternmost outreaches of the Persian Empire under his sovereignty. In a similar fashion, by using symbolic coinage to emphasize a previous ancestral tie to Aeneas, the carrier of Troy's legacy and Rome's fabled father, Gaius Julius Caesar cushioned his seizure of power during the strife-ridden transition of Rome's political infrastructure from republic to triumvirate to empire. By exploring these two historic power transitions with the aid of archaeological finds pertaining to the Homeric universe, the extensive scope of the *Iliad*'s societal influence is revealed.

To forge an empire, Alexander required a means to unite the numerous independent city-states of ancient Greece, each of which employed its own governing system. At the onset of fourth-century BCE, these ranged from Sparta's oligarchy to Athens' democracy. Initially, even Macedonia was a kingdom whose "nobility did not unduly strain their necks by looking up to their kings at too sharp an angle."[1] However, King Philip II of Macedon, Alexander's militaristically inclined father, had coercively absorbed neighboring city-states within his Hellenic League before his assassination in 336 BCE, a feat unheard of in a much divided Greece. Upon ascending the throne, Alexander faced the revolts of Athens, Thebes, and other

[1] Tsuoras, Peter. *Alexander: Invincible King of Macedonia*. (Washington, D.C.: Brassey, 2004), 6.

city-states who wished to "throw off Macedonian leadership."[2] Although he temporarily restrained them by flaunting his martial strength and razing the unruly Thebes to the ground, Alexander required a more effective means to establish the unswerving foundation of public favor needed to support his lofty intentions in the east.

In order to convince his subjects to abandon their previous political regimes and wholeheartedly accept his right to rule, Alexander the Great appears to have associated his public persona with that of godlike Achilles, the vengeful, swift-footed leader of the Myrmidons and central hero in Homer's *Iliad*. By doing so, Alexander could siphon some of the hero's prestige and gain the approval of those who still doubted his authority to lead. Evidence of the link's early development between legendary conqueror and young prince may be found in the texts of Plutarch, a second-century CE Greek historian. According to these writings, as a child, Alexander favored most Lysimachus of all his pedagogues, as he addressed his student "as Achilles, calling himself Phoenix, and Philip, Peleus," the names of Achilles' mentor and royal father, respectively.[3] Even in this subtle reference, Alexander's captivation with Achilles, and likely that of every other boy of his age, are underscored. In such a scenario, Alexander's later affinity with Achilles' right to rule would then fall upon the ears of a generation equally entranced by the *Iliad*, making such a claim an advantageous endeavor in terms of the Macedonian conqueror's widespread backing.

Alexander's mesmerization with the Homeric text is further expressed in Plutarch's accounts depicting his life on the march, as the great conqueror himself reportedly referred to his copy as "a complete manual of the military art," keeping it under his pillow alongside a dagger every night. In fact, Alexander valued this tome so highly that he ultimately stores it in a golden casket looted from Gaza, "which appeared to be the most valuable of all the treasures taken from Darius," the last Persian king.[4] From these words of Plutarch, ancient Mediterranean art and archaeology professor Andrew Stewart asserts, "The *Iliad* – the wrath of Achilles – was [Alexander's] bible."[5] Thus, from Plutarch's reports alone, it is clear that Alexander, and perhaps much of the society he lived in, treasured the words of the *Iliad*.

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[2] Tsuoras. *Alexander: Invincible King of Macedonia*. 33.
[3] Plutarch. Trans. Stewart, Aubrey and Long, George. *Plutarch's Lives*. (London: George Bell & Sons, 1892). http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14140/14140-h/14140-h.htm. (11/25/2013). 304.
[4] Plutarch. *Plutarch's Lives*. 307, 327.
[5] Stewart, Andrew. *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993). 80.

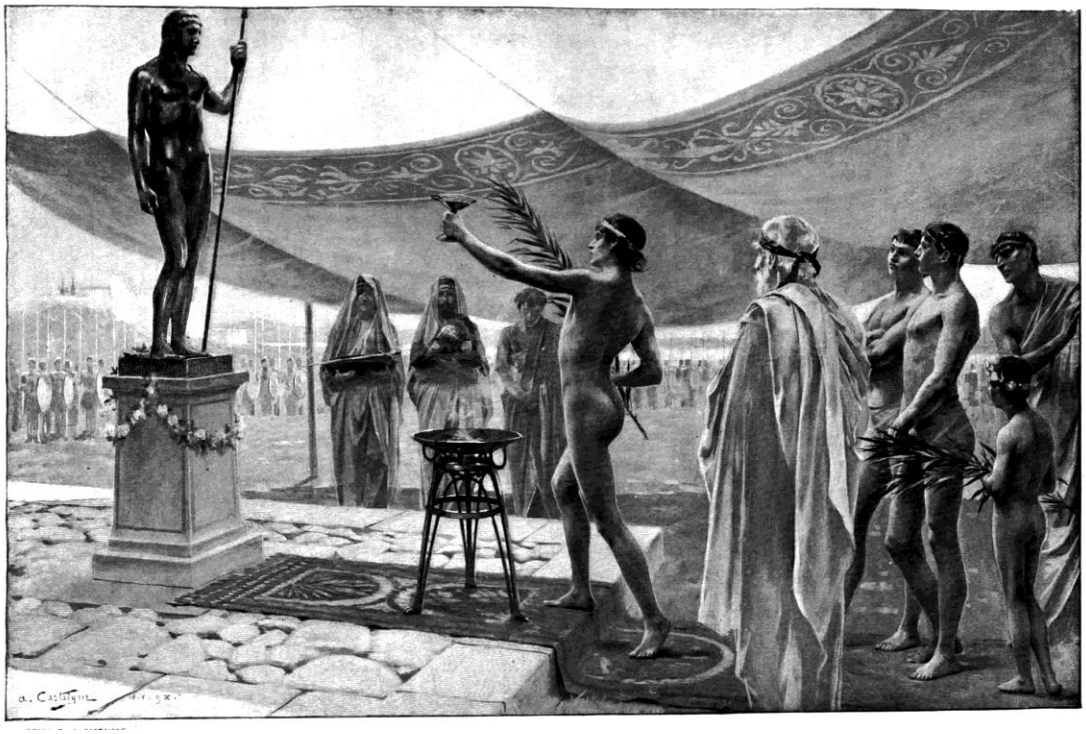

Figure 1: *Alexander at Ilium*, 1898 Engraving by French André Castaigne depicting Alexander the Great performing a sacrifice at the Tomb of Achilles.

However, Alexander the Great's most prominent association with Achilles was not the supposed ancestral tie disclosed by his mother, Olympias, but instead was developed through his conduct at the start of his Anatolian campaign against the Persians.[6] Instead of proceeding directly to combat with the enemy, Alexander postponed wartime strategy and visited the ancient city of Troy. Upon entering the city,

> Alexander arranged to be crowned by his helmsman, a certain Menoitios. Anointing himself with oil, he then ran naked to the tombstone of Achilles and set a garland on it, while Hephaiston, [Alexander's close friend,] did likewise for the tomb of Patroclus. The Menoitios who crowned [Hephaiston] bore the name of Patroclus's father.[7]

Here, Alexander not only paid homage to the hero he aimed to parallel, but he also attempted to fortify this comparison with Hephaiston's participation in the ceremony to reference Achilles' companion, Patroclus. To any audience familiar with the *Iliad*, this analogy is certainly obvious.

Ensuring that his efforts are unmistakable in nature, Alexander incorporates yet another similarity into the ritual. As portrayed in André Castaigne's drawing of the scene above,

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[6] Scheer, Tanja. "The Past in a Hellenistic Present: Myth and Local Tradition." IN: Erksine, Andrew ed. *A Companion to the Hellenistic World*. (Malden: Blackwell, 2003). 218.
[7] Lane Fox, Robin. *The Search for Alexander*. (London: Little Brown & Company, 1980). 138-139.

Alexander stood nude during his sacrifice, juxtaposing Achilles' bare statue (fig. 1).[8] From eighth-century BCE to long after Alexander's time, Greek artists primarily portrayed the heroic as unclothed, which was thought by classical art scholar Jeffrey Hurwit to not only reveal the "ideal, youthful, powerful body as the source of [a hero's] beauty and arête," but also to symbolize the "transcendent fearlessness" associated with completely exposing it to the perils of battle.[9] While the presence of Castaigne's statue in the engraving serves as a helpful explanation of Alexander's nakedness to a modern audience, the message conveyed in Alexander's vulnerable act could lucidly resound with his subjects, as they were well-accustomed to nudity's use as an indicator of heroism. Thus, through Alexander's detour to Troy and overall endeavors to attach his identity to that of the well-regarded Achilles of legend, he earned some newfound respect in the eyes of his conquered Grecian followers, therefore establishing a solid foundation on which to construct an empire.

In order for Alexander's emulation of Achilles to sufficiently sway his subjects' doubt into fervent support of his actions, Achilles himself and the concepts he represented would have to carry high regard in Macedonian society. As described by A.W.H. Adkins, Achilles was Homer's manifestation of Mycenaean culture – an archetypal warrior and noble who sailed to dominate others in battle, demonstrate his *arête* (excellence and heroic values), and acquire *time* (status-affirming wealth).[10] During the Late Helladic period, such a glory-seeking noble was commonplace in Mycenae, as evidenced by uncovered records of loot captured in frequent overseas raids in Western Anatolia.[11] Thus, cultural facets linking Macedonia to Mycenae, a civilization in which the sacking of cities was a respectable notion, may clarify the effectiveness of Alexander's Homeric association, as the idea of a dominating conqueror as ruler would then have been acceptable.

One instance of this societal similarity can be found in the close relationship between Macedonian and Mycenaean artwork as portrayed in the four-color pebble mosaics of Pella, the ancient capital of Alexander's kingdom. Among others dated to mid-fourth-century BCE, two of

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[8] Castaigne, André. *Alexander at Ilium*. Engraving. (Public Domain: Wikimedia Commons). http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/75/The_sacrifices_at_Troy_by_Andre_Castaigne_%281898-1899%29.jpg. (11/26/2013).

[9] Hurwit, Jeffrey. "The Problem with Dexileos: Heroic and Other Nudities in Greek Art." *Archaeological Institute of America*. 111, no. 1 (2007): 46-47.

[10] Adkins, A. W. H. "Values, Goals, and Emotions in the Iliad." *Classical Philology*. 77, no. 4 (1982): 292-326. http://www.jstor.org/stable/269413. (12/3/2013).

[11] Wood, Michael. *In Search of the Trojan War*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). 159-162.

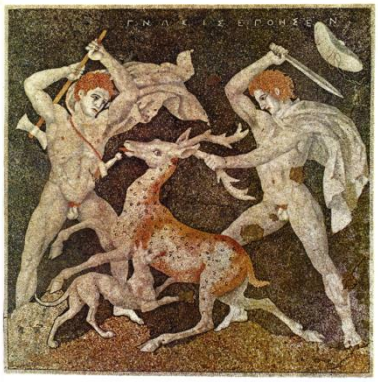

Figure 2: *Lion Hunt*, 350 BCE Pebble mosaic from House 1.1 (Dionysus) in Pella, Macedonia.

Figure 3: *Stag Hunt*, 350 BCE Pebble mosaic by Gnosis from House 1.5 in Pella, Macedonia.

these mosaics once decorated the floors of *androne*s, formal Macedonian dining halls (fig. 2,3).[12] As shown in the figures above, these works depict hunting scenes with the naked attackers rendered sizably larger in comparison to their wild prey. Between their inclusion of the hunters' heroic nudity and enlarged physical forms, the artists' intentions to glorify hunting, and therefore supremacy, are apparent. Even the rightmost hunter's assertive grip shown in the stag hunt exudes mastery. In fact, this symbolic stance can be traced back to a Bronze Age Minoan ceiling painting, which contains a similar hunting posture.[13] Presented in countless pieces of artwork across Mycenae's sphere of influence, hunting itself was an integral component of the civilization's *koine*, since the domination over such an unruly force as nature was regarded as an honorable feat.[14] Because Macedonian society resembled that of Mycenae in its conceptual veneration of hunting, Alexander's attempts to assert his authority upon his subjects would have been comprehended by his subjects.

Another expression of the cultural resemblance that fortified Alexander's overall claim to power can be found in the shared material culture uncovered in both Mycenae and Aigai, a principal Macedonian metropolis. Unearthed in the 1978 excavation of the Great Necropolis at Vergina, named after the small Greek town in which it now resides, three tombs contained the luxurious treasures of fourth-to-third-century BCE Macedonian royalty .[15] These extravagant valuables ranged from delicate golden jewelry to iron armor to intricately carved silver drinking

[12] Cohen, Ada. "Alexander and Achilles – Macedonians and 'Mycenaeans'". IN Carter, J.B. & Morris, S.P. eds. *The Ages of Homer: A Tribute to Emily Townsend Vermeule* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995). 491-492.
[13] Cohen. "Alexander and Achilles – Macedonians and 'Mycenaeans'." 493.
[14] Crowley, J. L. "Mycenaean Art and Architecture". IN Shelmerdine, C. W. ed. *The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). 266-281.
[15] Burn, Lucilla. *Hellenistic Art: From Alexander the Great to Augustus*. (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2004), 29, 37-39.

vessels.[16] Here, the presence of gilded iron arms near the *larnax* (a decorated container for cremated remains) in the most elaborate of the royal graves further implies the Macedonian value of domination and therefore an environment in which Alexander's quest for favor would be successful. More notably, in a more general sense, the lavish findings at Vergina strongly echo those discovered within the grave circles of a developing Mycenae. As indicated by the affluence found in these Mycenaean graves, there was indeed a class of the "royal warrior elite with a wide gulf separating it from the common people."[17] If such an economic hierarchy also distanced Macedonian rulers from their people, as implied by their vast funerary expenditures superseding those of the Mycenaeans, perhaps the conception of a supreme ruler would not have been farfetched in the minds of Alexander's followers. Hence, the effectiveness of Alexander's efforts to gain public favor through a correlation with Achilles may have been influenced by the Macedonian society's parallels with that of Mycenae, a community in which the revered act of dominance was accentuated in the form of a prominent hunting motif within a hierarchical, wealthy material culture.

The effectual employment of cultural familiarity with the Homeric universe did not end with Alexander the Great. To combat the similarly unstable political atmosphere of first-century BCE Rome, this propaganda technique was manipulated by another superpower from antiquity – Gaius Julius Caesar. In fact, Caesar's odyssey for sovereign control was wrought with obstacles even before its discernable commencement. At the time of Caesar's ascent to the head of his household after his father's unexpected death in 85 BCE, the Roman republic's infrastructure was in disarray, as the current dictator, Lucius Cornelius Sulla, reduced the likelihood of any Tribunal opposition to a Senatorial magistrate such as himself by increasing the political institution's membership and diffusing any votes cast against him.[18] As authoritative power within the republic changed hands, individuals seeking to further themselves acted swiftly, eradicating any opposition before others could eliminate them. Perceived as a possible contender for authority after Julius's marriage into an influential family, the noteworthy Julii clan was momentarily stripped of its merits and displaced by threats of murder.[19] In such an unsteady

[16] Borza, Eugene and Palagia, Olga. "The Chronology of the Macedonian Royal Tombs at Vergina." *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*. 122 (2007): 81-118. https://www.academia.edu/843548/The_chronology_of_the_Macedonian_royal_tombs_at_Vergina. (12/4/2013).
[17] Wood, Michael. *In Search of the Trojan War*. 157-158.
[18] Abbott, Frank. *A History and Description of Roman Political Institutions*. (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1902). 106.
[19] Plutarch. *Plutarch's Lives*. 380.

political setting, a convincing claim would be necessary to acquire any power within the republic.

However, Julius Caesar had just that – a long-standing right to rule backed by his supposed divine ancestry. As portrayed in Caesar's own words at his aunt's funeral in 69 BCE according to Suetonius Tranquillus, a second-century Roman historian,

> The Julii – the clan of which our family is part – [goes] back to Venus. Therefore, our blood has both the sanctity of kings, who wield the greatest power amongst men, and an association with the reverence owed to the gods, who in turn hold power even over kings.[20]

Caesar's kin possessed roots into antiquity, since the son of Homeric Aeneas, Iulus, founded the family name. In legend, Aeneas was not only the son of Venus, the goddess of love, but also the embodiment of Troy's legacy in the Latin world. It is important to note that at this point, this ancestral tale had not yet been manifested into a text like the *Aeneid*, but was believed to be "widely acknowledged" by British historian Adrian Goldsworthy.[21] Despite this common knowledge, Caesar couldn't immediately profess his claim to supremacy without first ensuring the removal of his opposition first, else they make a similar assertion. Through countless martial successes, Julius reclaimed his lost authority by rising office by office in the republic, perhaps inspired after reading of how Alexander had already conquered the known world before he had reached Caesar's age.[22] Upon attaining the office of consul, Caesar organized a triumvirate between two rivaling consuls and himself to avert a civil war. After one of it member's death, the triumvirate dissolved and the remaining two consuls, Julius and Pompey, fought for dictatorship over all of Rome, each plotting to justify his victory with Venus's favor.[23] With military triumph over Pompey in 48 BCE, Caesar could then assert his natural right to rule unchallenged, claiming the triumvirate's power for himself instead of redistributing it to between the Senate and Tribune.

In order to establish a sturdy foundation of public support that could resist the Senate's efforts to terminate his extended term as dictator, Julius utilized Roman coinage, a far-reaching

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[20] Goldsworthy, Adrian. *Caesar: Life of a Colossus*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006). 33.
[21] Goldsworthy. *Caesar: Life of a Colossus.* 32.
[22] Plutarch. *Plutarch's Lives*. 392.
[23] Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies. Macquarie University. "Caesar's Divine Heritage and the Battle for Venus." Last modified July 2008. (12/5/2013). http://humanities.mq.edu.au/acans/caesar/Career_Venus.htm.

emblematic medium, to swiftly publicize his supposed deific lineage to the masses. A year after Pompey's demise, in African territory, Caesar began minting a silver denarius emblazoned with Venus's profile on its obverse and the flight of Aeneas juxtaposed with Caesar's own name on its reverse, as depicted below (fig. 4).[24] In this rendition of Aeneas's escape from Troy, the prince carries his father, Anchises, in one arm and the fabled Trojan Palladium in the other. By placing his name adjacent to this recognizable scene, Caesar associated his persona with that of dutiful Aeneas, who carried his aging father through a hazardous burning city to safety. Also, with the inclusion of the Palladium, a mythical idol which represented the welfare of the Trojan culture, Caesar could portray himself as the next Palladium bearer – the symbolic future of Roman society.[25] Thus, to inhabitants of the Roman republic handling this coin in everyday transactions, a reminder of Julius's divine ancestry, and therefore his inherent right to rule, was constantly within sight.

Figure 4: 47-46 BCE, Roman denarius from Africa struck with Venus's profile on the obverse and Caesar's name on left and Aeneas carrying Anchises and the Trojan Palladium on right on the inverse.

With a venture which dwarfed the societal impressions of his evocative mintage, Caesar further amplified his ancestral claim to power by renovating the fabled city of Troy. In a visit to the immense Macedonian Temple of Athena atop Ilium's acropolis in 48 BCE, Julius found a community ransacked by Cilician pirates and heavily indebted to neighboring lands. According to Strabo, a Greek historian from Caesar's time, motivated by his familial link with godlike Aeneas, "Caesar… allotted territory to [Ilion's inhabitants] to preserve their freedom and their

[24] Trustees of the British Museum. The British Museum. "Roman Republican Coins in the British Museum: R.8922." Last modified 2001. (12/6/13). http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/publications/online_research_catalogues/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=1146304&partid=1&searchText=CGR158748+OR+CGR158818+OR+CGR218888+OR+CGR158823+OR+CGR158852+OR+CGR159190+OR+CGR159282+OR+CGR219050+OR+CGR159296+OR+CGR159293+OR+CGR160243+OR+CGR160245&numpages=12&output=bibliography/!!/OR/!!/6738/!//!/A+catalogue+of+the+Roman+Republican+Coins+in+the+British+Museum,+with+descriptions+and+chronology+based+on+M.H.+Crawford,+Roman+Republican+Coinage+(1974)/!//!!//!!!/&sortBy=catNumber&orig=/research/online_research_catalogues/russian_icons/catalogue_of_russian_icons.aspx&catalogueOnly=True&catparentPageId=29126&catalogueName=Roman%20Republican%20Coins%20in%20the%20British%20Museum&displayEssayResults=True&currentPage=1.

[25] Gheorghe, A.D. and McBeath, Alistar. "Meteor Beliefs Project: The Palladium in ancient and early Medieval sources." *WGN, Journal of the International Meteor Organization*. 32, no. 4 (2004): 117-121. http://articles.adsabs.harvard.edu/full/2004JIMO...32..117M. (12/6/2013).

immunity from taxation."[26] In addition to these respects, Julius completely overhauled the city's arrangement with the assistance of Rome's engineers, clearing away much of the preexisting acropolis in order to assemble an earthworks system while also freeing space that eventually allowed his successors to complete further restorations.[27] The product of this renovation, referred to as Ilium Novum, coincides with Dörpfeld's Troy IX. Perhaps these efforts were elements of Caesar's contemplation over relocating the Roman capital to Ilium Novum, as mentioned by Suetonius.[28] However, while there are no further references to this plot, these notions indicate Julius's profound commitment to his alleged superior lineage, whether he actually believed in it or was only using it as political propaganda. Regardless of his initial motives, by renovating Troy into Ilium Novum, Caesar replaced a dilapidated ruin with a gleaming city that his followers could look upon with awe as their legendary homeland. If the Roman republic's populace recognized and appreciated Troy, the home of Aeneas, perhaps it was more likely to place importance in Julius's divine ancestry as his inherent right to authority, instead of advocating for his downfall and the return to a balanced, democratic republic.

While Caesar was ultimately assassinated by senators leery of his extensive power, archaeological findings indicate that Romans respected their supposed Trojan roots, and therefore, his efforts to influence the masses through a familiarity with the Homeric universe may have been successful. One such prominent discovery pertains to a bronze ceremonial utensil dubbed the "casserole," which now resides at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. As depicted on the following page (fig. 5), an assortment of second-century CE coins minted within various eastern territories of the then Roman empire were mounted on the utensil's outer surface with the reverses open to an onlooker. Because of their meticulous positioning, ancient art scholar Cornelius Vermeule III proposed that, like Renaissance collectors who covered furniture with coinage from their travel destinations, the owner of this "casserole" likely toured Asia Minor and displayed his souvenirs upon this dish as a catalyst for conversation.[29]

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[26] Strabo. Jones, Horace trans. *Geography: Books 10-12*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928). http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Strabo/13A1*.html. (12/7/2013). 594-595.
[27] Vermeule, C. "Neon Ilion and Ilium Novum: Kings Soldiers, Citizens, and Tourists at Classical Troy." IN Carter, J.B. & Morris, S.P. eds. *The Ages of Homer: A Tribute to Emily Townsend Vermeule*. (Austin: University of Texas Press 1995). 470-471.
[28] Suetonius. Rolfe, J. C. trans. *Suetonius, Volume 1: The Lives of the Caesars*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914). http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Suetonius/12Caesars/Julius*.html. (12/7/2013). 105.
[29] Vermeule. "Neon Ilion and Ilium Novum: Kings Soldiers, Citizens, and Tourists at Classical Troy." 474-476.

Figure 5: "Casserole," 160-200 CE. Bronze ceremonial utensil covered with imperial coinage from Asia Minor, possible souvenirs from an excursion that either began or concluded in Ilium.
Diameter with handle: 0.43 meters
Currently located at the
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

By this reasoning, the relevance of the specimen lies in its inclusion of a specific bronze sesterius at one end of the utensil's coin sequence, as it was struck in second-century CE Ilium. If the "casserole's" adornments represented the tourist's route of travel with each coin collected at the site of its striking, as Vermeule advocated, then his visit to Ilium was either the trip's commencement or culmination. In either case, the notion that Troy was either the essential onset or ending of the tourist's journey implies that he thought highly of this location. Alone, this idea exposes nothing of the public view during Julius's time, as the coin was minted nearly three hundred years after him. However, this sesterius in particular, which was minted during the reign of Emperor Lucius Verus, one of Caesar's distant successors, depicted a rendition of the recognizable "flight of Aeneas" upon its reverse. By using this imagery in such a manner, Verus employed an identical method of asserting his right to rule as Julius. Thus, Caesar's initial efforts to sway the Roman public opinion in his direction must have been at least partly successful. Otherwise, Verus would not have emulated him. More notably, through the same reasoning, perhaps societal sentiments concerning Ilium during the reigns of both Caesar and Verus were comparable, as they attempted to influence their people with the same propaganda. Therefore, because this imagery from the Homeric universe was conveyed to populations that valued Ilium as a significant location, as the analysis of the "casserole" suggests, perhaps Verus and Caesar's followers may have been more inclined to accept their assertion for power through a connection to divine Trojan ancestry.

The effectiveness of Caesar's approach to political propaganda through a public familiarity with the Homeric universe is further underscored by its repeated employment by many of his imperial successors. For instance, the circulation of Homeric monetary iconography as a means of conveying the emperor's inherent and divine right to rule was a common practice for many a Roman ruler, such as Marcus Aurelius and Gallienus with their respective mints

depicting the gods' construction of Troy's walls and Hector charging to battle on horseback.[30] Another example of such repetition can be found in the enactment of the "Troy Game" throughout the Judio-Claudian dynasty. The game itself, which involved a chaotic horse race reminiscent of that described by Homer in the *Iliad*'s funerary games for Patroclus, first gained popularity during Julius's climb to power.[31] By limiting admittance to the competition to the youthful nobility, the game's orchestrators created a gap between the wealthy and the insignificant. If integrated into societal norms over years of performing the "Troy Game," this regulation could have led to an expectation for such separation – an environment in which the concept of a superior ruler is feasible. As portrayed through the repeated usage of Caesar's style of asserting power, its initial effectiveness was potent enough to reverberate through the political strategies of his successors for roughly three hundred years.

Through the exploration of two of the ancient world's most prominent power transitions with the aid of archaeological artifacts related to the Homeric universe, the shocking reach of the *Iliad*'s societal influence is divulged. By harnessing the Macedonian culture's veneration for domination, as represented in its opulent material culture and artistic hunting motif, Alexander the Great utilized a reputational association with renowned Achilles to gain public favor and unite the independent Grecian city-states under his rule to conquer the vast Persian Empire and its neighboring lands. In a similar manner, by building on the Roman fascination with its mythical ties to legendary Troy, as exposed in an analysis of the "casserole," Gaius Julius Caesar exploited the communicative medium of coinage and his own renovations to Ilium Novum in order to publicize his family's supposed ancestral ties to the demigod, Aeneas, and assert his inherent right to rule over all of the Roman republic. In the words of sixteenth-century CE Valencian humanist Juan Luis Vives, "the name of Achilles enflamed Alexander, Alexander Caesar, [and] Caesar many others."[32] However, it is not the "name of Achilles" alone that permitted these rulers to shatter the political infrastructures of their times, but instead the societal familiarity with "the name of Achilles" and the rest of the Homeric universe that provided them with a medium through which to spread their influence, gain public favor, and claim the right to rule.

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[30] Vermeule. "Neon Ilion and Ilium Novum: Kings Soldiers, Citizens, and Tourists at Classical Troy." 473, 479.
[31] Burgersdijk, Diederik. "The Troy Game: The Trojan Heritage in the Julio-Claudian House." IN Kelder, Jorrit; Şerifoğlu, Ömer; & Uslu, Günay. eds. *Troy: City, Homer, Turkey*. (Amsterdam: Wbooks 2012). 90.
[32] Quint, David. *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). 5.

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