2023

Ovid's Caeneus as a Queer Hero: Understanding Gender and Gender Variance in the Ancient Mediterranean.

RJ Palmer
University of Kentucky, palmer.rj16@yahoo.com
Digital Object Identifier: https://doi.org/10.13023/etd.2023.208

STUDENT AGREEMENT:

I represent that my thesis or dissertation and abstract are my original work. Proper attribution has been given to all outside sources. I understand that I am solely responsible for obtaining any needed copyright permissions. I have obtained needed written permission statement(s) from the owner(s) of each third-party copyrighted matter to be included in my work, allowing electronic distribution (if such use is not permitted by the fair use doctrine) which will be submitted to UKnowledge as Additional File.

I hereby grant to The University of Kentucky and its agents the irrevocable, non-exclusive, and royalty-free license to archive and make accessible my work in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known. I agree that the document mentioned above may be made available immediately for worldwide access unless an embargo applies.

I retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of my work. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of my work. I understand that I am free to register the copyright to my work.

REVIEW, APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE

The document mentioned above has been reviewed and accepted by the student's advisor, on behalf of the advisory committee, and by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), on behalf of the program; we verify that this is the final, approved version of the student's thesis including all changes required by the advisory committee. The undersigned agree to abide by the statements above.

RJ Palmer, Student

Dr. Leni Ribeiro-Leite, Major Professor

Dr. Milena Minkova, Director of Graduate Studies

Ovid's Caeneus as a Queer Hero: Understanding Gender and Gender Variance in the Ancient Mediterranean.

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By:

RJ Palmer
Lexington, Kentucky.

Director: Dr. Leni Ribeiro-Leite, Associate Professor of Classics

Lexington, Kentucky

2023

[https://orcid.org/0000-0001-2345-6789]

Abstract:

Ovid's Caeneus as a Queer Hero: Understanding Gender and Gender Variance in the Ancient Mediterranean.

Caeneus, as written in Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* is a notable blend of ancient and Hellenistic versions of the myth. Ovid's Caeneus can be understood as a transgender man, since he was assigned female at birth, but asks for his gender to be changed by the god Neptune, and goes on to live the rest of his life with the body, appearance, and social roles of a man. Ovid incorporates Caeneus' trans identity with his use of grammatical gender endings for Caeneus, using masculine gender for Caeneus except when discussing his pre-transition childhood, or when the centaurs address him mockingly while fighting. This paper argues that Caeneus is not an exception to the Greco-Roman world, but rather Ovid is incorporating commonly held views of biology and gender from his own culture. His character can be analyzed, using modern queer theory methodology, in conjunction with research done on traditional third and fourth genders in other cultures. The goal is to better understand and conceptualize the ancient Greco-Roman world and its views on gender through literature and Ovid's writing itself. By using these elements together, a broader model for discussing gender and gender variance in the ancient world can be proposed. Ovid's model of Caeneus shows a functional and respectful way of discussing gender variant people, using literary and grammatical elements created by other authors.

KEYWORDS: [Metamorphoses, Centauromachy, Queer Theory, Transgender, Ovid, Caeneus]

RJ Palmer

Date: [04/26/2023]

OVIDS CAENEUS AS A QUEER HERO: UNDERSTANDING GENDER AND GENDER VARIANCE IN THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN.

By:

RJ Palmer

Dr. Leni Ribiero-Leite
Director of Dissertation

Dr. Milena Minkova
Director of Graduate Studies

April 12th, 2023

Dedication and Acknowledgements:

To Adrienne, to Stevie, to Brianna Ghey, and to all of us on the fringes. This work is another brick to build a more understanding world. We have always existed, and we will always exist.

ΜΝΑΣΕΣΘΑΙ ΤΙΝΑ ΦΑΙΜΙ ΚΑΙ ΕΤΕΡΟΝ ΑΜΜΕΩΝ:
May you live in peace
if that has been taken,
may you rest in power.

Acknowledgements:

This project would not have been completed without the friendship, work, and dedication of so many people. Thank you to everyone who helped, edited, and listened.

Leni: ἐμοί γὰρ σύ θάρσος ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θήκας καὶ ἐκ δέος εἶλες γυίων. This project and the next few years would not have happened without your advice and friendship. I hope we continue to work together in the future, and just know you'll never stop being my advisor.

Dov: This is our success; you have done so much for my work, and I hope to return the favor. I'm proud of the projects that you've done alongside me.
כְּתַפּוּחַ בַּעֲצֵי הַיַּעַר כֵּן דוֹדִי בֵּין הַבָּנִים בְּצִלּוֹ חִמַּדְתִּי וְיָשַׁבְתִּי וּפִרְיוֹ מָתוֹק לְחִכִּי׃

Kate: Thank you for putting up with my translator-ese, and for your editing.

Cammie: Thank you for your guidance, and mentorship. Those late nights at iHop set me up for success and you've been a solid friend throughout our careers. Thank you for editing.

Gawonisgi: Sgi ginali. Gvgev'i nole dagwaduliha nihi udahwahtvhidasdi.

Adrienne: Thank you for your help in editing, and for your friendship throughout the years.

Martin: Our friendship and afternoon tea was the respite I needed while working on this. I wouldn't have been able to do any of this without your gifts and your support.

Mom and Dad: Thank you for always supporting me, especially when it means coming to conferences that you wouldn't normally attend, and being a home when I need to relax. I appreciate how you have been role models in getting an education, and I appreciate how you've inspired me to follow my passions.

Shane: You must have a lot of these dedications by now. Thank you for always believing in my dreams and giving me advice.

Amy: I would not be here without your class, and I am proud to follow in your footsteps. Vere tempus fugit.

Laurel: Thank you for talking to me about Experimental Archaeology, I would not be the scholar I am today without your advice.

Brian: Gratias tibi ago. Thank you for your advice when I was your student, and for friendship these past few years. I hope to continue our lunches, and that we can continue to discuss our woodworking projects.

Family and Friends: For everyone named and unnamed, Thank you for your support over the years. There are not enough words to say what you all have done for me, and what that has meant for my career. I hope I can repay my favors and give back to all of you. My degree and thesis would not have been possible without you.

My students: Thank you for reminding me why I chose this path.

Table of Contents:

1. Introduction:[1]

Caeneus is a mythological character from Greco-Roman mythology, one who undergoes serious transitions throughout time and the retellings of his myth. His origins, both written and pictographic, involve an ending where he single handedly nearly wins the centauromachy, yet is killed by the combined efforts of all of the centaurs.[2] However, his story is much more than his death, and it also covers his childhood and adulthood, which is where this investigation lies. Caeneus is a transgender man by our modern definition, that is, he was born as a girl yet was transformed into a man. This then sets the path for his later heroics, and this myth quickly becomes the basis for many later writers and poets. The poet Ovid retells the myth of Caeneus in the *Metamorphoses*, from his birth as a princess to his final breath as an epic hero. His approach to the myth of Caeneus overall affirms the hero's gender as a man by performing the actions of an epic hero, and this is not an outlier, as there are other mentions in Ovid, as well as in ancient literature about gender variant people.[3] In order to properly analyze Ovid's version of this character, the view of gender and sexuality in the Greco-Roman world must be examined through queer theory and anthropology.

Caeneus and his identity have been discussed by a variety of classical scholars in recent decades, such as Craig M. Russell, Debra Freas, Gottfried Mader and others, yet even modern scholarship inconsistently handles his gender and overall characterization. As Caeneus is a queer character, modern queer theory as well as an anthropological look

[1] A portion of this thesis was first presented at the 2023 Kentucky Philological Association Conference.
[2] Shamugia, *A Bronze Relief with Caeneus and Centaurs from Olympia* (Harvard, 2017) 32. Iliad, (Oxford University Press) 1.264. Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose Der Ovidischen Caenis Und Ihr Hellenistischer Hintergrund* (Latomus 2007) 891.
[3] Notable mentions in Ovid include Tiresias Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (Cavalier Classics, 2015) 4.274-388, Hermaphroditus 3.316-338, and Iphis 9.666-797.

at third genders in non-western or ancient societies, such as various two-spirit identities and the Diné *Nadleehi*, can provide the necessary examples to compare.[4] This will be used alongside classical scholarship so that a more complete picture of Ovid's characterization can be shown.

In cultures without modern western conceptions of biology and sex, gender tends to be much more mutable, and is often perceived as being equally socio-political as biological. Will Roscoes' prior research into Indigenous North American third and fourth genders provides a framework for blending firsthand accounts, mythology, and culture in order to best understand different genders in dozens of Native Nations, primarily in Western North America.[5] He first surveys different third genders from different Native cultures and what that entails, then goes into specific examples of real individuals and what their gender meant in their own society and mythology.[6] The various third genders and two-spirit identities are implicitly compared to the Greco-Roman world by other authors such as Clarke and Roughgarden.[7] This comparison can provide a better

[4] Two-Spirit itself is a Lakota specific word, however it is used somewhat as a broader term by various indigenous communities to refer to their different third genders. When specific genders and nations are being discussed, their terminology will be cited. However, when a survey of Native Nations is used, or the term is used more broadly, two-spirit will be the term used. This precedent is based on Davis' work. Davis, "More than Just Gay Indians' Intersecting Articulations of Two-Spirit Gender, Sexuality, and Indigenousness." *Queer Excursions: Retheorizing Binaries in Language, Gender, and Sexuality (Oxford University Press 2014),*74-75.

[5] A third gender is either a general gender outside of men and women, or if there are more than 3 genders it is often a gender describing a male bodied person who is not a man. The fourth gender (if it is distinct from the third gender) describes a female bodied person who is not a woman. This is not to say there is a Pan-Indigenous view on gender or sexuality, but the nature of Roscoe's work is a survey of many different groups. He primarily focuses on southwestern nations and Plains tribes, although he notes that some version of a third gender does exist in most parts of North America. These genders and gender roles are not analogous to each other.

[6] Roscoe, *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America* (St. Martin's Press 1998), 23-98. This knowledge was taken from first hand accounts as well as secondary tribal sources in order to flesh out the life and social roles of these people.

[7] Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking: Constructions of Sexuality in Roman Art 100 B.C. - A.D. 250* (University of California Press, 2001), 16-17. Roughgarden"Transgender in Historical Europe and the Middle East." In *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People*, 1st ed. (University of California Press, 2013), 356-364.

understanding for what gender variance in the ancient world could have looked like, and the ways of describing them in literary research.

By showing gender within its primarily western historical context, E.D Janssen also expands the broad idea of a gender binary. This includes the various conceptions of gender in the Greco-Roman world, primarily a monomorphic view of gender, or one where there is one human sex, and a spectrum that creates the two primary genders.[8]

Burke narrows this down even further, as he looks at the third gender of eunuchs in the Greco-Roman world. Burke documents the two primary types of surgically altered eunuch, the *gallus* and the court eunuch. These two groups are often conflated, but they had different physical and hormonal effects, as well as different reasons for their bodily transitions. This is added onto further by Jeremy Townsley and R.R. Nauta's research, which shows the way that eunuch and intersex people were conflated and that their main identifier was their overall gender variance or queerness, not the method or physicality.[9] The lives of these people and the ancient views of gender provide context and real world examples for myths like Caeneus, which was not separate or too peculiar to an ancient Greco-Roman audience. Gleason also writes about the specifics of Greco-Roman gender views, specifically within physiognomic texts. These texts try to distinguish character traits and virtues through physical traits and social cues. This focus on gender variance can be seen with other authors, including Ovid, who discuss gender variant characters.[10]

---

[8] Janssen, "Gender in its Historical Situation." In *Phenomenal Gender: What Transgender Experience Discloses*, (Indiana University Press, 2017), 54. Janssen's research continues to document this trend until the enlightenment period, with a variety of Christian sources promoting this view as well as thirty documented transgender saints.

[9]Nauta "Catullus 63 in a Roman Context." *Mnemosyne* (2004), 618-625. Jeramy Townsley, Paul, the Goddess Religions, and Queer Sects: Romans 1:23–28. *Journal of Biblical Literature* (2011), 714.

[10] Ovid *Amores* 2.3.1-12, Ovid *Fasti*, 4.179-187, Ovid. *Met.* 4.375-379. Martial, *M. Valerii Martialis Epigrammaton libri,* ed. by W. Heraeus. (Leipzig, 1976), 14.174. Valerius Maximus' *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, Translated by D.R. Shackelton Bailey. (Harvard University Press, 2000), 7.7.6. Clement, *Paedagogus. Ed. by Otto Stählin* (Hinrich, 1905), 87.3. Philostratus, *Vitae Sophistrarum*, Ed. by Carl

The division between men and women was considered a spectrum; and the physiognomic texts document how one could tell if someone was a man, woman, a third gender, or gender variant. The commonplace of such works show that the divisions between genders were blurred and could be conflated in the ancient world.

Craig M. Russell's article, *The Most Unkindest Cut: Gender, Genre, and Castration in Statius' 'Achilleid' and 'Silvae' 3.4,* argues for a biological essentialist worldview in the ancient mediterranean; or the idea that the Greco-Romans generally saw gender as a rigid binary.[11] His primary case study is the Achilleid and Silvae 3.4, although he does argue that their precedent is based on earlier authors like Ovid. With Caeneus specifically, he uses the invective by Latreus as evidence of Ovid's support of this ideology.[12] The centaur insults Caeneus by calling him a woman, and Russell considers the centaurs' speeches more important than the rest of the narration in showing the world view of the Greco-Romans. Russell did significant scholarship, yet his evidence fundamentally misses the point of the myth; that Caeneus is a literary figure who defends his masculinity in a broader world where gender variance exists.

Debra Freas is another classicist who writes about Ovid and his depiction of Caeneus and Caeneus' main wish. She posits that this wish was not to become a man, but rather to not be assaulted again.[13] The rest of Caeneus' myth in *the Metamorphoses* is viewed through this lens, and with the lens that Caeneus is both a woman and a man,

---

Ludwig Kayser (1871), 8.489, Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum Gestarum*, Ed. by John C. Rolfe, (Harvard University Press, 1935-1940), 18.4. Fredrick, Mapping Penetrability in Late Republican and Early Imperial Rome. *The Roman Gaze: Vision, Power, and the Body* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 242-243. Burke *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch: Strategies of Ambiguity in Acts* (1517 Media, 2013), 120, Townsley, *Paul, The Goddess Religions*, 711.

[11] Russell, "The Most Unkindest Cut: Gender, Genre, and Castration in Statius' 'Achilleid' and 'Silvae' 3.4." *The American Journal of Philology* (2014), 115.

[12] Russell, *The Most Unkindest Cut*, 114-115.

[13] Freas, "*Da Femina Ne Sim*: Gender, Genre and Violence in Ovid's Caenis Episode." *The Classical Journal* (2018), 60, 74.

although he is mostly compared to mythological women within her text.[14] She relates his story to various stories throughout the *Metamorphoses*, creating a deep analysis of his character within Ovid. Gärtner also focuses on the connections between Ovid's Caeneus and other stories of gender transition and the way that the text itself changes with the hero. However, Ovid is not writing this gender transition in a vacuum, and is drawing significantly from an earlier corpus of literature that includes gender transitions. This allusion to earlier literature genre is combined with a genre shift from elegiac theme to epic theme, to show that Caeneus has fully transitioned, and is now an epic hero. Both of these approaches are much more nuanced than other research on the character, and they allow for some queer readings of the character, but they also are not unequivocal in their identification of Caeneus as a transgender character.

The focus of this research will be Ovid and the *Metamorphoses* as well as the way he approaches Caeneus' transition as a serious and respected moment. Ovid does this within the text, as Caeneus defeats his enemies easily, and can only be killed by their combined efforts, as well as within the language of the text. Even the narration only uses masculine pronouns once Caeneus has transformed, and the last lines of his scene specifically call him a man. His transformation into a bird also is a callback to the demigod Cycnus, who is directly compared to Caeneus throughout book 12, as well as Periclymenus, descendent of Neptune, and Memnon who appears afterwards in the text.[15] Ovid's character of Caeneus is transgender, and his character ark constantly reaffirms his status as a transgender man. While there is not clear information about an analog to

[14] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 61, 74-76.
[15] For Memnon, see Ovid *Met.* 13.576-624. For Cycnus Ovid. *Met.* 12.1-145. For Periclymenus see Ovid *Met.* 556-576,

modern queer culture in the Greco-Roman world, there were people and stories that would be called queer today and they need to be recognized.

These stories were not one off phenomena, they were not alien to the audience, and they were not solely treated as aberrations. Caeneus is a transgender character, and the care and affirmation that he is given in the story shows that these ideas and people were not completely foreign to the Greco-Roman world, and that ancient authors can discuss them in a correct way. Ovid, a poet that might have been part of the circle closest to the first Roman emperor, wrote this character's story while respecting his identity and he did it by citing earlier mythology and literature that included Caeneus' transgender status. There is a false proposition that transgender ideas and people are a modern corrupting phenomenon, especially within western culture. Such a mistruth must be amended; archaeological and written records can show that these people did exist within the classical world, and even further, that they are embedded within literature and myth.

2. Sex is a Concept, Gender is a Fever Dream: Modern Queer Theory and Gender Identity in the Ancient World.[16]

2.1 Theory:

Due to his gender identity, a complex analysis of Caeneus' myth can be created, using a blend of methodologies such as modern queer theory, third gender research in other ancient cultures, and finally Greco-Roman writings on gender. This interdisciplinary approach is balanced out with classical scholarship on sexuality, Ovid, and Caeneus' myth itself. The words and concepts of the Ancient Mediterranean world are used when they are available, alongside modern theories, other cultures' gender variance, and modern terminology whenever the Classical elements did not help illuminate the text. His status as a man who was originally born as a woman has left him in a nebulous position within classical scholarship. Many authors use a combination of masculine and feminine terms to describe him such as Debra Freas, and Thomas Gärtner, and other authors argue that he is fundamentally a woman like Alison Keith and Craig M. Russell.[17] Because of this ambiguity, a new approach must be taken in order to better understand Caeneus within the retelling of Ovid's Metamorphoses. While Ovid's version of the Caeneus myth is the focus of this research, that analysis would be incomplete if Caeneus' liminal identity is not contextualized within the culture that surrounded the poet.

[16] Sex as defined by this paper is a biological marker, determined by one's chromosomes and genitalia. There are two primary human sexes, with a variety of biological intersex sexes. Gender as defined by this paper is the way through which a person presents and identifies. Genders often have cultural expectations and defined characteristics that are sometimes tied to biological functions, but not always.

[17] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 61. Russell, *The Most Unkindest Cuts,* 114-115. Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 892-893. Keith, *Versions of Epic Masculinity in Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Cambridge, 1999), 234, 237.

The theory and approach for this investigation comes from a variety of sources on queer theory and alternative genders, with one of the main influences being Will Roscoe's *Changing Ones*. Will Roscoe takes a systemic approach and looks at the various Indigenous two-spirit identities and the ways in which the first accounts describe such genders.[18] The comparison of these two different cultures is important, as neither have the biological essentialist view of gender that was created during the European enlightenment.[19] This view heavily influences our modern western perception of sex and gender. In order to have the best comparison to the Greek and Roman worlds, a comparable culture should not have, or have in a limited capacity, a biological essentialist worldview. Therefore, the Indigenous North American genders are an apt comparison, and modern two-spirit research is aware of this divide between traditional gender expressions and modern biological gender perception.[20]

Joan Roughgarden has researched this further, looking at the Greco-Roman third gender of eunuch in comparison with two-spirit individuals, as well as Indian hijras and early islamic Mukhannathun.[21] Her work is an expansion to this core idea–that these different third genders can and should be compared in order to better understand gender variance in cultures without biological essentialism. David Fredrick has proposed a different third gender of "boy" to be used for the Greco-Roman world; although this is

---

[18] Roscoe, *Changing Ones,* 3-22. Similar comparative work has been done by Joan Roughgarten, *Transgender in Historical Europe,* 356-364.

[19] Gleason, The semiotics of Gender: Physiognomy and Self-Fashioning in the Second Century C.E . *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World,* (Princeton University Press, 1990), 391. Roscoe, *Changing Ones,* 8.

[20] Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 16-17.

[21] Roughgarden, *Transgender in Historical Europe,* 356-364. While these identities share similarities, they are also different. The main point of Roughgarden's work is to show that third or fourth genders are similar and that many ancient cultures have similar perceptions, even if they do not have direct contact. For a comparison between goddess cults of the Ancient Mediterranean and hijras, see Townsley, *Paul, The Goddess Religions*, 724.

conflating sexuality with gender, it does suggest a broader need in the classical community for this third gender category.[22] The comparison between third genders has been an ongoing debate in the classical world for years, and the direct comparison between Native North American genders and the Greco-Roman world has been useful for understanding the Ancient Mediterranean. This is not a one for one comparison, as there are dozens of two-spirit identities, and many Indigenous nations did not have the same patriarchal social structure as the Greco-Roman world, which led to a different social outcome.

Will Roscoe first gives a broad approach to the ways that Indigenous North American genders differed from their European counterparts, and then he writes specific chapters on known third or fourth gender individuals from history.[23] In viewing specific individuals, we can see the ways that theory and broad trends are practiced, and the way that those known practices are understood by colonial powers. Although this is a literary analysis, this paper will follow a similar model, with broader trends and theories defined initially alongside culturally relevant examples, followed by a look into the text of Caeneus as written by Ovid and, finally, an analysis of this information with the knowledge previously laid out.

Roscoe's book reveals many specific details about individual subcultures, but more broadly it shows the significant gaps of understanding third and fourth genders by colonizers and later historians. He generally uses third gender to indicate a broad category of trans feminine people, and a fourth gender to indicate a trans masculine person. For the purposes of this paper, third gender will be used as a broad category,

[22] Fredrick*, Mapping Penetrability,* 242-243.
[23] Roscoe, *Changing Ones,* 23-98.

meaning someone who is transgender, neither male nor female, or some other form of gender variant. Roscoe also shows on the one hand, how those cultures practiced and perceived their multiple genders, on the other, how the colonizers first encountered and understood them. The original European accounts of third and fourth genders often call these people *berdaches*, a word occasionally meaning intersex and occasionally meaning homosexual man.[24] The Europeans incorrectly used this word to describe third and fourth gender people, even when given a clearer explanation by the community.[25] An example of this is an encounter between American sources and the Diné concerning *Nadleehi*, or the Diné third gender.[26] Colonizers assumed that *Nadleehi* were physically intersex, and in this interaction the Diné people agreed with this idea.[27] This is because third gender individuals, especially *Nadleehi* who are inherently fluid, were seen by the Diné as somewhat intersex, but it is more correct to say *Nadleehi* are considered men, women, and intersex at the same time.[28] This correlation between intersex and trangender or third gender individuals will come up again, especially in cultures where the scientific distinctions between these identities are unclear.[29] Renato and Luciano Pinto write about

[24] Roscoe, *Changing Ones,* 7. Davis, *More than Just Gay Indians,* 72-74. This is seen as a pejorative term today so it will not be used to describe the ways that European colonizers misrepresented and chose a word that was insufficient. To describe Indigenous genders, the terms third/fourth gender, two-spirit, or the nation specific words will be used according to Davis's study on how the Rocky Mountain two-spirit convention is primarily identified.
[25] Roscoe, *Changing Ones,* 7, 10-11. Some Europeans assume that male bodied two-spirit people became two-spirit because they failed at masculinity and were forced into the social role.
[26] Roscoe, *Changing Ones,* 39-45.
[27] Roscoe, *Changing Ones,* 45.
[28] Roscoe, *Changing Ones,* 45.
[29] Zajko, *"Listening With' Ovid: Intersexuality, Queer Theory and the Myth of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis." Helios* (2009), 180. Even in modern western society intersex people are fundamentally seen as queer, especially when considering the surgeries to "correct" their bodies to fit into a straight and cis worldview. Not every intersex person identifies as queer, but some do.

challenging the assumptions of the *galli*, and the reality that some *galli* or eunuchs lived as women and could reasonably be considered transgender in some form.[30]

This is not to say that the Greco-Roman world was the same as pre-colonial North America; the cultures are wildly different but there seems to be a third gender in the Greco-Roman world that many people were aware of. The primary example of this is eunuchs, who lived within the Greco-Roman world, and who existed in a liminal space between men and women.[31] In *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch*, Sean D. Burke categorizes the two main types of eunuchs and the ways that they were perceived in the Ancient Mediterranean. These two types, *galli/gallae* and Court eunuchs, were divided by the age of castration, and both stood in the liminal state, but in different ways.[32] Both types of eunuch show a mixture of masculine and feminine social roles, as *galli/gallae* wore women's clothing and court eunuchs often stood as intermediaries between women

---

[30] Pinto and Pinto, *Transgendered Archaeology: The Galli and the Catterick Transvestite* (Oxbow Books 2013), 176-178. Townsley, *Paul, The Goddess Religions*, 727. The scholars are not suggesting that Roman culture had a modern understanding of trangender identities, but rather that people who we could consider transgender have always existed, and it is not unrealistic to consider the idea that these people would live their lives as women or a third gender. The priestesshood of the *galli/gallae* would be an enticing place as it was a protected status where gender variant people could express themselves.

[31] Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch,* 120, Fredrick*, Mapping Penetrability,* 242-243. Frederick mentions using the third gender of "boy" while talking about the classical world. This gender category will not be used for the paper, but it is indicative of the fact that this third gender is necessary. Townsley, *Paul, The Goddess Religions*, 711. Another example of this is a later Christian source, Clement's Paedagogus in which he speaks out against men having sex with other men, non reproductive sex with women, and sex with *androgynes*: Εντεύθεν συμφανές ήμϊν ομολογουμένως παραιτεΐσθαι δεϊν τάς άρρενομιξίας καί τάς άκαρπους σποράς και τάς κατόπιν εύνάς καί τάς άσυμφυεϊς ανδρογύνους κοινωνίας. Clement Paed. 87.3.

[32] Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch,* 99-107. Roughgarden, *Transgender in Historical Europe,* 353-354. The main difference between these two groups as mentioned was the age of castration. The *galli/gallae* primarily castrate themselves after puberty, and court eunuchs are generally castrated before puberty. This causes different hormonal affects, with *galli/gallae* eunuchs retaining their facial hair and other secondary sex characteristics. Since court eunuchs are castrated before gaining their secondary sex characteristics, they become much more androgynous post puberty, with a mixture of feminine and masculine characteristics. The other primary difference is the reason for castration, with the *galli/gallae* doing this surgery to themselves for some religious or personal reason, while court eunuchs were castrated normally by a master or a slaver. While this difference is unique and important when it comes to personal identity and perception of gender, it does not have the same impact on the cultural perception of either group.

and men.[33] This is confirmed by how eunuchs are described; Greco-Roman sources gender eunuchs as not-men, effeminate men, intersex people, half-men, girls, people made from male to female, a mix of male and female, or neither primary gender.[34] Other people and identities could fit within this third gender category, but eunuchs were a clear example of how Greco-Roman society perceived their third gender.

These descriptions often contradict each other in confusing ways, which indicates that this liminal status complicated the ancient conception of gender and sex.[35] This is further confused in later Roman law, with the legal category of *spadones* being composed

[33] Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch,* 102, 105, 107. Court eunuchs were often made for their liminal purpose, either in their social interactions with women and men or for the androgynous physical appearance which was considered desirable.

[34] Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch,* 107, 108. Stevenson, The Rise of Eunuchs in Greco-Roman Antiquity." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* (1995), 501, 502. Pinto and Pinto, *Transgendered Archaeology: The Galli and the Catterick Transvestite,* 175. Nauta*, Catullus 63,* 603-604. Mentions of eunuchs as described in the order above: not-men: Lucian *Syrian Goddess 25-27;* Martial *Epigrams 11.81*. Eunuchs described as effeminate men: Apuleius *Metamorphoses,* Ed. by Stephen Gaselee (G.P. Putnam's Sons. 1915) *8.26-28*. Dio Chrysostom *Discourses, Ed. by* J. de Arnim (Weidmann 1893), *21.4-5 77, 78.36-37*. Lucian, *Demonax 12*, *Eunuch 6-7, 10*. Martial *Epigrams 5.41*. Ovid *Fasti* Ed. by Sir James George Frazer (Harvard University Press. 1933), *4.243-44*. Statius *Silvae, Ed. by* John Henry Mozley (G.P. Putnam's Sons 1928), *3.4.60-77. Eunuchs as Intersex People:* Mentions of an intersex person as a eunuch include Stevenson*, The Rise of Eunuchs,* 503-504, 507; Favorinus of Arles is a famous example of an intersex person described as a eunuch. Philostratus, *Vitae Sophistrarum* 8.489. Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum Gestarum* 18.4, mentions both born eunuchs and made eunuchs, which further indicates that intersex people could be considered eunuchs. Eunuchs as half men: Ovid *Fasti 4.179-187*. Seneca *Epistles,* Translated by Richard M. Gummere (Loeb Classical Library, 1925), *108.6-7*. Virgil *Aeneid, Ed. by* J. B. Greenough (Ginn & Co, 1900) *12.95-100*. Eunuchs as women: Apuleius *Metamorphoses, 8.26.* Cat. 63, Ed. by Kenneth Quinn (Macmillan, 1973). Eunuchs as people who have changed gender, or been made into another gender, Aristotle's *Generation of Animals, Ed. by* by Jonathan Barnes, (Princeton University Press, 1995)*766a and 787b*. Quintus Curtius Rufus *History of Alexander, Ed. by* Edmund Hedicke, (Teubner, 1908), *10.1.22-26*. Suetonius *Nero, Ed. by* J. C. Rolfe (Loeb Classical Library, 1914), *28.1*. Statius *Silvae, Ed. by* John Henry Mozley (G.P. Putnam's Sons 1928), *3.4.60-77.* Augustinus *De Civ.* Translation by William M. Green (Loeb Classical Library, 1963), *7.24*. Eunuchs as a mix of men and women: Dio Chrysostom *Discourses, 21.4-5 77.* Lucian*, Eunuch*, 10. Terence *Eunuch*, Ed. by Edward St. John Parry (Whitaker and Co, 1857),355-69. Eunuchs as neither gender: Ovid *Amores* Ed. by zr. Ehwald (Teubner 1907) *2.3.1-12*. Valerius Maximus *Memorable Doings and Sayings 7.7.6*. An intersex person as neither male nor female, Ovid. *Met.* 4.375-379. Lucian *Eunuch 47.7,* edited by A.M. Harmon *(Harvard University Press 1913-1936)*.

[35] Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch,* 107. Pinto and Pinto, *Transgendered Archaeology: The Galli and the Catterick Transvestite,* 175-176; while eunuchs are often compared to feminine men or *cinaedi*, there are definite differences and feminine men were not marginalized enough to be socially pressured into becoming a third gender.

of eunuchs who were born as eunuchs and eunuchs who were made.[36] While the idea of men and women existed in Ancient Rome, Gleason and Burke state that the modern concept of dimorphic sex did not exist, and the ancient ideas of gender do not correlate exactly to modern western ideologies.[37] Gender essentialism does exist in certain forms in Ancient Rome, yet the base understanding of sex and gender is a concept that varies significantly based on culture.[38]

Sex is seen as more concrete as compared to gender in the modern world, but this itself is conceptual and not devoid of societal expectations.[39] An example of this is the idea of sexual dimorphism, or the idea that there are two primary human sexes.[40] While this is based on modern western scientific theories, it is still a concept that is influenced by culture.[41] In the Ancient Greco-Roman world, one of the primary theories on sex, which was recorded by Galen in his works *On the Seed* and *On the Use of Parts*, was the idea that male and female bodies are essentially the same, with women having inverted versions of male anatomy.[42] This is primarily a monomorphic view of sex, i.e. that there is one sex that has a few variations but is primarily homologous. Monomorphism is a very mutable concept of sex, with the sex of a fetus changing in the womb in reaction to

---

[36] Stevenson*, The Rise of Eunuchs,* 497-8. Justinian *Digest*, Ed. by Alan Watson *(University of Pennsylvania Press 2011),* 28.2.6.
[37] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 390. Galen *On the Seed*, Ed by Bernhard Zimmerman (Akademie Verl., 1992) 2.1-2, 2.5. Galen *On the Use of the Parts,* Ed. by K. Kuhn (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 14.6.
[38] Gender essentialism, as defined by this paper, is the theory that there are distinct, immutable, and intrinsic qualities to men and women. In the theory, these qualities are innate, biological or psychological in nature, and can be easily observed through behavior.
[39] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 389-391.
[40] Janssen*, Gender in its Historical Situation,* 49. Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 390.
[41] Davis, Zimman, and Raclaw, *"Opposites Attract Retheorizing Binaries in Language, Gender, and Sexuality." Queer Excursions: Retheorizing Binaries in Language, Gender, and Sexuality,* (Oxford University Press 2014), 4. Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 390. For more information about how sexual dimorphism is fundamentally artificial, see Zajko*, Listening With' Ovid,* 177-179.
[42] Janssen*, Gender in its Historical Situation,* 49. Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 390. Galen *On the Seed* 2.1-2, 2.5, *On the Use of the Parts* 14.6.

the mother.[43] The Greco-Roman monomorphic sex is also mutable post-natal, with the aforementioned eunuchs described as changing their sex and seen as gender variant in many of the same ways that intersex people were perceived.[44]

The mutability that is seen in Greco-Roman culture as well as other cultures that have gender variance is also built on the concept that one's gender is one's social role. The pure biological gender essentialism of the modern period does not exist in a pre-enlightenment world, so therefore one's actions are a significant indicator about one's gender.[45] In Ancient Greek philosophical texts, the social and political roles of the genders are more important than biology.[46] People do socially and politically cross gender roles in the Ancient World, and in doing so they take on aspects of the other gender, either in gender non-conformity or being a third or fourth gender entirely.[47] Joan Roughgarden draws the link between transgender identities and eunuchs with a priestess of Cybele, and while some eunuchs identified as women, many were seen as a third separate gender.[48] This variety is also seen in traditional North American genders, where one's occupations and social roles determine one's gender significantly more than biology and sex.[49]

The ideas of gender variance and the importance of social roles in determining gender do not only pertain to the works of Plato, Galen, and other highly regarded

---

[43] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 390-391.
[44] Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch,* 107-8.
[45] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 391. Roscoe, *Changing Ones,* 8.
[46] Janssen*, Gender in its Historical Situation,* 49, 53. Gleason does not say this phrase in quite the same way, but this is clear from the Physiognomical text that is analyzed. The passive or dominant nature of the person supersedes and in many ways informs Physiognomy about that person's gender, sometimes regardless of physical presentation. This shows that the social and political roles have an important place in social perception. Plato *Republic,* Ed. by John Burnet (Oxford University Press, 1903) 451d–457c. Aristotle *Generation of Animals*, 727a25. Aristotle, *Politics*, Ed. by W. D. Ross (Clarendon Press, 1957), 1260b.
[47] Janssen*, Gender in its Historical Situation,* 53.
[48] Roughgarden, *Transgender in Historical Europe,* 356. For more on the idea of *galli*/*gallae* as transgender or gender variant, read Townsley, *Paul, The Goddess Religions*, 722-724.
[49] Roscoe, *Changing Ones,* 8.

authors, but also appear in what one could call lower literature, such as the second century CE physiognomical handbook from Polemo.[50] As a manual dedicated to teaching how to better understand people's intentions by their physical features and mannerisms, a recurrent part of Polemo's work is devoted to telling by sight if a man is really a man.[51] Therefore, while it describes a variety of features and perceived traits, there is a specific section devoted to knowing someone's gender or sex when it is unclear, in which he advises the close study of the subject's traits as more masculine or feminine; these include the way they look at others, movements and voice.[52] Based on that, the reader is supposed to determine the subjects' sex, even though the author notes there are some feminine qualities in masculine people and vice-versa.[53]

The central claim of this document is that masculine and feminine features can exist in both sexes, and that biological sex is not the most important factor in determining someone's sex.[54] Out of the three named traits to look after, only one is influenced significantly by secondary sex characteristics; voice. How someone holds their glance and the way they are is socially ingrained, and even people's voice can be trained to be higher or lower than natural.[55] Polemo goes on to further describe the physical differences between men and women, but he does not mention most of the secondary sex characteristics that are primarily focused on today, such as facial hair, breasts, body hair, or hip proportions.[56] In Polemo and more broadly in the Ancient world, there is a focus

[50] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 389. Polemo *Physiognomy,* Found in R. Förster's *Scriptores Physionomonici Graeci et Latini (*Leipzig, 1893).
[51] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 389-390.
[52] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 390. Polemo *Physiognomy* 2,1.192F.
[53] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 390.
[54] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 413.
[55] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 389-391.
[56] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 392. Polemo *Physiognomy,* 2,1.192-94f. I.e. The secondary sex characteristics created after puberty. There is a theory by a 2nd-3rd century Christian author that rationalized that the hair created by testosterone was correlated to the warmth of the person and their

on a gender binary, but due to the monomorphic view of sex, these are seen as a spectrum of masculine-ness and feminine-ness.[57] These qualities are seen as mutable, and gender in the ancient world does have a sense of fluidity. This can be seen in the classification of eunuch, which is perceived as a changed identity, as well as the overall classification of men and women, with social norms that exist outside physical characteristics.[58]

This does not mean that this mutability was always perceived as good, or that the genders are valued equally. The Greco-Roman world greatly values men and masculinity; people who crossed the gender lines, such as eunuchs, are often pitied as much as they are valued.[59] In Polemo's *Physiognomy,* the main purpose of the text is trying to find people who were expected to be masculine but were seen as gender variant or feminine.[60] For instance, in Polemo's text, a masculine-appearing person who has curved or folded eyelids and wandering pupils is in fact a woman, even if the person is among men.[61] Physiognomical texts and other texts have a wide and confusing list of terminology for gender variant people that often overlaps and contradicts itself, which will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.[62]

Overall, third genders, and gender variance did exist and were understood in the Ancient Mediterranean and it was discussed by a variety of sources.[63] This is similar to the ways that gender variance happens in other regions, such Clarke and Roughgarden's

---

physiology. In this he compares Post-pubescent men with women, eunuchs, and pre-pubescent men. Clement *Paidagogos* 3.19.2.

[57] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 392-393.

[58] Janssen*, Gender in its Historical Situation,* 12.

[59] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 394. Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch,* 98, 107, 120. Cat. 63.

[60] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 392.

[61] Polemo *Physiognomy* 1, 1.158.

[62] Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch,* 107-108. Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 396-7.

[63] Ovid *Amores* 2.3.1-12, Ovid *Fasti*, 4.179-187, Ovid. *Met.* 4.375-379, Martial 14.174, Valerius Maximus' *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 7.7.6, Clement Paed. 87.3, Philostratus, *Vitae Sophistrarum* 8.489, Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum Gestarum* 18.4, Galen *On the Seed* 2.1-2, 2.5, *On the Use of the Parts* 14.6, Fredrick*, Mapping Penetrability,* 242-243. Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch,* 120. Townsley, *Paul, The Goddess Religions*, 711.

comparison of pre-colonial North American genders, primarily *Nadleehi* and other western groups, to Greco-Roman gender variance.[64] Even with these completely different cultures within North America, and on opposite sides of the globe, queer people existed, and lived, and were seen as unique even if they were not equivalent to each others' or our own identities. This is a model of analysis, but it is equally important that this is a case study because these cultures were not affected by our current western biological essentialism. By cross referencing the two cultures, a more accurate view of gender variance can be observed, where people are documented through their own cultural lens. Many of the words used in Latin and Ancient Greek to describe gender variant people or characters, such as Caeneus, document gender variance but can overlap with other categories, creating the need to include modern vocabulary for clarification.

2.2 Terminology: Identity Categories.

The overall experience of Greco-Roman gender is varied and malleable, yet the words used to describe it often overlap and cause confusion. This does not mean that the Greco-Romans did not understand the concepts of gender variance, as a culture can have third genders without a clear vocabulary.[65] This is sometimes due to a lack of knowledge, or intentional destruction of knowledge, and other times it is due to a normalization of concepts. We can see this specifically in traditional North American gender and sexuality as well as modern terminology used by two-spirit people. In Davis' study on two-spirit people, *More than just 'Gay Indians,'* many two-spirit people identify as both LGBT+

[64] Roscoe, *Changing Ones,* 3-6. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 16-17. Roughgarden, *Transgender in Historical Europe,* 356-364. There are dozens of different third genders in North America, and they are known in many different nations. The broad mention of North American genders here is not meant to assume pan-American Indigenous culture, but rather to show a comparable example to the different third genders around the ancient Mediterranean.
[65] Roscoe, *Changing Ones,* 19, 213-222.

and two-spirit.[66] They need to use both terms because they are not synonyms, and in many cases being two-spirit comes with cultural gender expectations and societal roles and responsibilities that are markedly different from those that come with western queer identities.[67] These people note the difference but many choose to use both terms to self-identify anyways, sometimes for the ease of understanding, as two-spirit is not a term that is currently as recognized as the terms Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender.[68] Other times, two-spirit people incorporate these terms into their culture and mythology, calling historical or mythical two-spirit individuals transgender or queer.[69] In his research, Davis uses indigenous terms when they exist or have survived, and modern queer terms when there would be a lack of understanding or to supplement two-spirit or other Indigenous gender concepts.[70] Greco-Roman gender variance could use a similar model, where Roman terminology is used when it is applicable, and modern queer vocabulary is brought in for clarity. This mode of discussion will be used in this paper, and it might benefit classical scholarship to adopt a similar model on a broader scale.

This widespread method of identifying gender variant individuals applies very well to the texts of Ovid, who has multiple stories of people changing gender such as Iphis, Hermaphroditus, and Caeneus. The myth of Caeneus as told by Ovid is one of these stories; his version of Caeneus was born as a woman but is changed into a man by his request and lives as a man until his death. Because of Caeneus's gender transition he is a gender variant character, whose gender is pivotal to the way the other characters in

---

[66] Davis, *More than Just Gay Indians,* 78.
[67] Davis, *More than Just Gay Indians,* 74-75.
[68] Davis, *More than Just Gay Indians,* 74-75.
[69] Davis, *More than Just Gay Indians,* 73.
[70] Davis, *More than Just Gay Indians,* 6, 77. Davis specifically uses the term Two-Spirit as a more general term when the specific tribal word is not in common usage, or does not exist. The study was conducted with people from a variety of tribes in the Rocky Mountain Two-Spirit group, including Lakhota, Navajo, Jicarilla and Chiricahua Apache, Pueblo, Osage, Eastern Band Cherokee, and Chickasaw.

the story deal with him. Therefore, Caeneus's story cannot be fully discussed without using queer theory; specifically theory that focuses on ancient or non western terminology. The use of the word queer here is deliberate, as part of the effort to reclaim the use of the word. Queer in this paper is defined in the summation of Rusty Barrett in *The Emergence of the Unmarked*,

> The reclaimed use of the term queer was intended to group together a wide range of groups that exist in the margins of social normativity, although, as with the original derogatory meaning of this term, the primary focus was on individuals who challenge forms of gender and sexual normativity.[71]

Queer theory therefore, is the theory and study of people and characters who fundamentally are considered not normal, and are marginalized because of it.[72] The marginalization and normativity does not have to be done through the original culture or people; it can also be done through the part played by academics and research traditions, and it seeks to break ideas of essentialism.[73] An example of this is the Catterick archaeological site, where a grave was found belonging to a *gallus/galla* priestess. This was a correction from the initial excavation; which assumed that the grave belonged to a cisgender woman because the grave goods were entirely feminine.[74] The correction of this mistake made its own broad assumptions, and it did not properly evaluate the way that modern groups are marginalized.[75]

---

[71] Barrett, *"The Emergence of the Unmarked"* in Queer Excursion, (Oxford University Press, 2014), 199.
[72] Zajko*, Listening With' Ovid,* 179-180.
[73] Barrett, *The Emergence of the Unmarked,* 196, 199. Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love, (*Random House 2007), 151, 179. An older example of this issue is the classification of homosexuality in the ancient world. Some authors thought that saying that there wasn't hetero or homosexuality was a compromise, instead of realizing that this could continue to erase queer identities.
[74] Pinto and Pinto, *Transgendered Archaeology: The Galli and the Catterick Transvestite,* 170-173.
[75] Pinto and Pinto, *Transgendered Archaeology: The Galli and the Catterick Transvestite,* 171-178. The headlines based off of the archaeological corrections often focus on the castration of the person, speculating that they died from this with no evidence given. Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love,* 179, these issues have major consequences, and updating language/worldview is important to people who currently exist. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 8-9. Phillips, *Roman Religion and Literary Studies of Ovid's 'Fasti*,

Therefore, words such as queerphobia will be used not to specifically refer to homophobia, as men having relations with men was normalized within Greco-Roman society; rather it will refer to people or identities who challenge or bend gender expectations within the ancient world.[76] In Latin and Ancient Greek, there are words such as *cinaedi*, *androgyne, tribas*, *galli/gallae*, *Hermaphroditus*, γύννις and *eunuch* that will be briefly looked at to show why they are insufficient. These terms both overlap in many ways, and have internal contradictions, that cause them to be insufficient in subscribing to some of the concepts that arise.[77] Then some modern terminology will be introduced in order to bring clarity to the investigation and in order to be respectful to modern marginalized groups. This modern terminology does not imply that there was a queer culture or conscience like in the modern age; but it and the myriad of classical examples imply that there were identities that we would now label as queer using the above definition.

The term *cinaedus* can generally be summed up as a feminine man, although the ways that are used often stretch this meaning.[78] Court eunuchs and *galli/gallae* were described as *cinaedus* or the *κίναιδος* even though they are also often described as not being men at all.[79] A *γύννις* is another word for a feminine man; used very similarly to

---

(Arethusa 1992) 59. This mentions the broader trend with religious studies, as colonial empires have very skewed comparisons of cultural and religious mores.

[76] Fredrick*, Mapping Penetrability,* 239, Fredrick defines this as, "Queer sexuality lacks expression in traditional architecture, producing a constant, physical sense of not fitting in–even in the private space of the home."

[77] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 396-7.

[78] Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love,* 58-60. He shows examples of how this term has changed over time. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 82-83, there might have been a "gay" *cinaedi* subculture in the ancient world, but it is hard to quantify since most authors were not (publically) queer and we have vague references to their subculture, if there is any.

[79] Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch,* 107, 112. Nauta*, Catullus 63,* 610-612. Cat. 63 uses the feminine form of the word, *gallae*, where other places use the masculine, *galli*, Cat. 63.12. Pinto and Pinto, *Transgendered Archaeology: The Galli and the Catterick Transvestite,* 174 mentions that *galli* were often conflated with *cinaedi*.

cinaedus.[80] *Cinaedus* can also be conflated with *androgyne/androgynos*, even though the latter does not specifically refer to feminine men but rather someone who is in between genders.[81] *Androgyne'*s traditional meaning is someone who is of questionable gender, summed up with the Latin phrase "*qui inter virum est et feminam*".[82] In fact, the Greek term *androgyne* retains this meaning and is adopted into the six traditional Jewish genders mentioned in Midrash, starting in the 200s CE.[83]

Next are the terms eunuch and *galli/gallae*, which is a specific subtype of eunuch who underwent castration after puberty and joined a religious order worshiping Cybele.[84] However, the idea of third gender people participating as priests in the ancient Mediterranean is not limited to the *galli*, as there are mentions of Artemisian eunuch priestesses, priestly orders who were all third gender or gender variant.[85] Within the scope of this investigation the *galli/gallae* will be the main focus, as they are the main group discussed and commonly visible within the Roman world.[86] Both forms of eunuch, *galli/gallae* and court eunuch, are often considered somewhere in between men and women, but eunuchs have some of the widest descriptor ranges, as mentioned earlier.[87]

---

[80] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 397.
[81] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 395-396.
[82] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 396. *Anon. Lat*. 98, 2.123F, in Förster's work.
[83] Schleicher, Constructions of Sex and Gender: Attending to Androgynes and 'Tumtumim' Through Jewish Scriptural Use." *Literature and Theology* 25, no. 4 (2011), 426. Roughgarden, *Transgender in Historical Europe,* 358. This is not the first mention of an accepted third gender in the Torah, as there are references to eunuchs, in the Tanakh.
[84] Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch,* 99-107.
[85] Townsley, *Paul, The Goddess Religions*, 719-720.
[86] Townsley, *Paul, The Goddess Religions*, 727. *Galli/gallae* were eventually given protected status within Rome and they were quite common by varying degrees during the Roman Empire. Nauta*, Catullus 63,* 618-625, the galli/gallae are often revered as priests and their goddess is revered as a rounder of Rome, and they are also seen as lesser people whose actions have betrayed their nation and parents.
[87] Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch,* 107. For a better diagram of the ways that eunuchs are described, see footnote 17.

Hermaphroditus is the name of a mythological figure and the first intersex person in Greco-Roman Mythology.[88] The name became associated with other intersex people, and it became a generic description for any intersex person.[89] But intersex individuals were described using very similar language to eunuchs, to the point that Ovid and Valerius Maximus use almost the exact same phrase (*nec vir nec femina* and *neque virorum nec mulierum*) to describe a eunuch and a statue of Hermaphroditus.[90] *Tribas* is the word for a masculine woman, which is seen as equal and opposite yet linked to the *cinaedus*.[91] During the Roman imperial period, *tribades* were known for being able to grow a phallic-like clitoris and being able to be the penetrative partner during sex.[92] The main issue with these descriptive words is that they can all refer to multiple identities that are wildly different.

A *cinaedus* can be a feminine presenting man, a eunuch, a male sex worker, a man who is privately feminine, an *androgyne*, or a sexually passive man.[93] This could be

---

[88] Phillips, *Roman Religion and Literary Studies of Ovid's 'Fasti,* 72-76 mentions that Greco-Roman religion is not always synchronized, and certainly not always Greek focused with Roman history. However, these myths and religious practices do have notable overlap, and Ovid specifically blends them in unique ways both in the *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses*.

[89] Ovid *Met.* 4.346-388. The term intersex will be used to describe the general biological state, as words like Hermaphrodite are now considered pejorative. Hermaphroditus will only be brought up in this paper to refer to the specific mythological character, for clarity and compassion. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 49-50. Similarly, the pronouns They/Them/Theirs will be used in order to best represent a marginalized community in English; based on Katherine Von Stackelberg, "Garden Hybrids: Hermaphrodite Images in the Roman House." *Classical Antiquity* 33, no. 2 (2014): 395–426, 395-296.

[90] Ovid *Amores* 2.3.1-12 and Martial 14.174. Valerius Maximus' *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 7.7.6 is also quite close to this construction when he describes a eunuch; *neque virorum neque mulierorum.* Sharrock, *Babylonians in Thebes,* in *Identities, Ethnicities and Gender in Antiquity* (De Gruyter, 2021), 200. Ovid even mentions a spring which was supposed to make anyone who entered it intersex; his myth of Hermaphroditus is the origin of this spring, but it still suggests that the line between intersex people and eunuchs is very blurry as both can be born or made.

[91] Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture,* (Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 252-253. Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 398.

[92] Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture,* 252-253. Both Seneca *Ep*. 95.20-21, and Martial 1.90.8 mention this biological ability. Lucian seems to allude to it in his story of Megillus, *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 5.4. Townsley, *Paul, The Goddess Religions*, 726. Women were also mentioned to sometimes wear a dildo as a phallus, although their gender variant status is not clear.

[93] For mentions of cinaedus as either type of eunuch see Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch,* 107, 112. Pinto and Pinto, *Transgendered Archaeology: The Galli and the Catterick Transvestite,* 174. Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love,* 59-60. For mentions of *cinaedus* as an *androgyne* see Gleason, *The semiotics of*

considered an innate quality or a mutable quality that men could become.[94] A eunuch could be perceived as a feminine man, a woman, or a variety of identities in between, including *androgyne*, intersex, and neither a man nor a woman.[95] A *tribas* could be an unfeminine woman, a sexually dominant woman, something close to intersex or *androgyne*, or they could be a female bodied person identifying as a man.[96] Terms like hermaphroditic and *androgyne* can refer to the spectrum of biological intersex sexes or eunuchs, although *androgyne* can also refer to a feminine man.[97] Even on a biological level these terms can describe people with completely different physiology, not to mention presentation, identity, and social roles. The only thing that these words can tell us is that the person is perceived to be gender variant, but they cannot accurately or consistently tell us how.

So when there are no clear Latin or Greek words for the forms of gender variance that we see in the myth of Caeneus, this is not an issue of lacking concepts. Caeneus is called *semimas*, or half man, once in the story as an insult by the centaurs.[98] This is a term often used for male bodied eunuchs, and Ovid even uses it to describe a eunuch in the

---

Gender, 395-399, 407. For mentions of *cinaedus* as a feminine man, see Mathesis, edited by W. Kroll and F. Skutsch, Stuttgart (Teubner, 1968) 7.25.7, 9, 12, 18, 21, 23. Anon. Lat. 11, 2.20F, where a masculine presenting person was discovered to be a *cinaedus* by a physiognomist.

[94] A man could be made into a *cinaedus* through a curse. *Kyranides, Ed. by D. Kaimakis, (*Meisenheim am Glan, 1976), 1.10.49-67. Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love,* 61.

[95] Ovid. *Amores* 2.3.1-12 and Martial 14.174. Valerius Maximus' *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 7.7.6. For a list of different ways eunuchs are identified see Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch,* 107. Stevenson*, The Rise of Eunuchs*, 503-504, 507; Favorinus of Arles is a famous example of an intersex person described as a eunuch, Philostratus, *Vitae Sophistrarum* 8.489. Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum Gestarum* 18.4.

[96] This is highlighted in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans 5.4*, where the character Leaena assumes Megillus is a crossdressing man, then an intersex person, then a man divinely transitioned into a woman. Megillus clarifies that he has the mind and all the important features of a man in a woman's body, and then offers to have sex with Leaena, stating he has a replacement for a phallus.

[97] Ovid. *Amores* 2.3.1-12 and Martial 14.174. Valerius Maximus' *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 7.7.6. The terminology here is interchangeable between an intersex person and a eunuch. Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 396. For the use of *androgyne* as a feminine man, Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 394-5.

[98] Ovid *Met.* 12.506

Fasti.[99] It is clear that while many of these words describe gender variance, the specific type of gender variance, or a person's specific presentation or identity are often not clear. The concepts of gender variance abound in Greco-Roman society, and modern terminology must be used in order to get the context and specifics of the story. Words like *transgender*, *trans man/masculine*, *pre-transition*, *misgendering*, *queer* and *queerphobic* will be used to bring these concepts to the forefront and make the ideas more accessible. *Transgender*, as defined by the Merriam-Webster, is an adjective, "of, relating to, or being a person whose gender identity differs from the sex that the person had or was identified as having at birth."[100] Caeneus fits this definition even if the Ancient Roman world did not have a singular word for it or if their conceptions of gender do not map perfectly to ours. He was born a woman, he transitioned and lived as a man, and he is also referred to with masculine pronouns, which will be covered more in the next section. A *trans man* is a transgender person who was assigned female at birth, but became a man.[101] Caeneus also fits this description, and both of these terms will be used interchangeably for him within this paper. Pre-transition is a term referring to a transgender person before they have physically or socially transitioned into their gender. In the case of Caeneus this physical transition is divinely granted, but in the modern world a physical transition refers to medicine such as HRT and a variety of other medical procedures. As Caeneus changed identity and body rather quickly, pre-transition is used in both the social and physical context. *Misgendering* is a term that will have broader connotations in this paper, and it will be used to mean "to identify the gender of a person

[99] Ovid *Fasti*, 4.179-187, Seneca *Epistles* 108.6-7, Vergil *Aeneid* 12.95-100.
[100] "Transgender," Merriam-Webster (2023), https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transgender.
[101] "Trans Man" Merriam-Webster (2023), https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trans%20man.

incorrectly".[102] *Queer* and *queerphobic* were defined above, as broad definitions of gender variance and vitriol against such people or concepts. Queer has been used to describe other gender identities in the ancient world, and it is especially fitting for discussions because the definition is vague yet equally concrete.[103] Ovid and the *Metamorphoses* themselves were surrounded by a culture that did have gender variance, and avoiding modern terminology, such as queer and the others mentioned above, because the terms themselves did not exist, would provide less clarity.

2.3 Material Culture and Gender Variance:

While the broad view of literary history suggests an overall acknowledgement of gender variance in the ancient world, literary sources only provide part of the view of the Greco-Roman world. Material culture can fill in this gap; providing an understanding of daily life that is much more mundane. This material culture was more accessible than literature because many Romans were illiterate or not fully literate, and gender variance and queer individuals also occur in this ancient material culture and art.[104] This does not show specific modern understanding of queer theory, or necessarily modern acceptance of these people, but rather that the Ancient Greco-Romans were aware of gender variant people and were interested enough to depict them.[105] Both archaeology and literature together can provide the best understanding of the overall culture that the story of Caeneus was written in.

---

[102] "Misgender" Merriam Webster (2023), https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/misgender. Epic poetry in the Greco-Roman often has misgendering as a type of insult, see Segal, "Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies: Art, Gender, and Violence in the 'Metamorphoses.'" *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 5, no. 3 (1998): 9–41.25.

[103] For the use of queer to describe Greco-Roman gender variance, see Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch,* 107-115.

[104] Clarke, , *Looking at Lovemaking, 5*4-55.

[105] Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 54-55. Nauta*, Catullus 63,* 610-612. In literature this interest continues, as a variety of authors discuss them.

Statuary and visual art was a much more accessible medium for the majority of the public, both because not everyone was literate and because these pieces of art were displayed in the public parts of peoples homes and towns.[106] These pieces reflect popular culture; and depictions or copies of gender variant people were famous during the Hellenistic and Late Republic/Early empire. One very common piece of gender variant art that was replicated often was the variety of statues of Hermaphroditus.[107] There are three main forms, a standing statue, a sleeping statue, and a statue or painting struggling against a satyr.[108] The Standing and Sleeping Hermaphroditus both show their gender variance, with the Standing Hermaphroditus being the oldest and most prominent version displayed.[109] In contrast, the Sleeping Hermaphroditus is lying down, with the back profile seeming to be a woman's or a feminine man's.[110] The front profile of this statue reveals that the person is intersex; and then the audience's understanding is complete after their reassessment.[111] The point of the statue was not that intersex people were unheard of or disgusting, but rather the reassessment that the audience must make between two primarily gender categories.[112]

---

[106] Myerowitz, *The domestication of Desire: Ovid's Parva Tabella and the theatre of Love. (Oxford University Press 1992),* 131-133. Fredrick*, Mapping Penetrability,* 257. The excavated house of the Vettii is a great example of this, where a number of erotic paintings and decorations have been recovered. These could be a mixture of heterosexual and homosexual themes, purely erotic or partially mythological. The house of the Vettii and Dioscuri have a painting of Pan and Hermaphroditus. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 177.

[107] Boardman, *Greek Art, Fourth Edition*. (Thames and Hudson, 1996), 230. Garrison, *Sexual Culture in Ancient Greece.* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), 208. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 50. Smith, *Hellenistic Sculpture*. (Thames and Hudson, 1991) 134, 151. Smith mentions that this statue is most likely referenced in Pliny's *Natural History*, Edited by Karl Friedrich Theodor Mayhoff (Teubner, 1906), 34.80.

[108] Von Stackelberg*, Garden Hybrids,* 399.

[109] Von Stackelberg, *Garden Hybrids,* 399-400.

[110] Garrison, *Sexual Culture in Ancient Greece,* 208. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 50. Von Stackelberg, *Garden Hybrids,* 400.

[111] Smith, *Hellenistic Sculpture*, 133. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 50. Von Stackelberg*, Garden Hybrids,* 400.

[112] Garrison, *Sexual Culture in Ancient Greece,* 208. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 50.

Hermaphroditus was a well known literary figure, and the mythology surrounding them was centuries old before Ovid wrote his *Metamorphoses*.[113] There is some scholarship to indicate that the story of Hermaphroditus predates the Hellenistic, Classical, and Archaic periods; and this could be as ancient as Hyacinth and other Mycenean myths.[114] However, the popular relevance of Hermaphroditus does spring primarily from the Hellenistic era, which Ovid heavily draws from.[115] This indicates that the cultural ideas behind gender variance are ancient and widespread throughout the culture, and are a part of the culture that did not fade from at least the Hellenistic period to Ovid's time period. The statues of Sleeping Hermaphroditus are an excellent example of the increasing popularity of gender variant individuals, as indicated by the number of copies and the other forms of intersex art.[116]

There is another artistic motif that depicts Hermaphroditus and a satyr, typically Pan or Silenus, as he chases the feminine Hermaphroditus.[117] This motif is primarily seen in sculpture and wall art, with images found mainly in Italy and occasionally in Greece.[118] A specific example of this is wall paintings of Hermaphroditus in the House of the Dioscuri and the House of the Vettii in Pompeii, which has the gods Pan and Silenus surprised as each sees Hermaphroditus' penis.[119] The statues that depict this scene are

---

[113] Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 49.
[114] Smith, *Hellenistic Sculpture*, 133. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 49. Hermaphroditus had a minor religious role in the 4th century BCE. Von Stackelberg*, Garden Hybrids,* 401. There are two Etruscan mirrors showing Hermaphroditus, from the 4th and 3rd century BCE. These have no Grecian equivalent, and show a more indigenous Italian interest in intersex figures. Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love,* 627-8, Garrison, *Sexual Culture in Ancient Greece,* 13-16. There are examples of Ancient Greek Neolithic art with androgynous or liminal features.
[115] Segal, Ovid's 'Metamorphoses': Greek Myth in Augustan Rome." *Studies in Philology* 68, no. 4 (1971): 371–94. 373.
[116] Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 50, all extant copies of Sleeping Hermaphroditus are from the 1st-2nd century CE, but the original statue is most likely late Hellenistic.
[117] Fredrick*, Mapping Penetrability,* 257. Von Stackelberg*, Garden Hybrids,* 399-401.
[118] Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 50-51.Von Stackelberg*, Garden Hybrids,* 399-401.
[119] Fredrick*, Mapping Penetrability,* 257. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 52-3, 177. The house of the Vettii had two images of Hermaphroditus. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 53. Von Stackelberg*, Garden Hybrids,*

very similar to the painting, following the same overall pattern in a different medium and different poses. The statues and paintings of a satyr and Hermaphroditus serve the same function as the Sleeping Hermaphroditus, to surprise the audience and make them reconsider the image.[120] These images and the statues of Sleeping Hermaphroditus all work with this concept of second glances and the beautiful ideal of gender variant people during the late Hellenistic and early imperial period.[121] The statues and paintings are also almost entirely seen within gardens, or alongside garden or natural imagery.[122] Overall, this shows a strong interest in the liminality between men and women, natural and cultivated during Ovid's time period; in which he was able to expand on in his depiction of Caeneus.

These depictions did not just exist with explicitly third gender characters like Hermaphroditus, but it also includes depictions of cisgender people acting in gender variant ways. There are a number of pieces of pottery, labeled Anacreontic, depicting a variety of men in a combination of men's and women's clothing.[123] There is much debate about whether the primary purpose was to show more eastern influence or to show gender variance.[124] Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux and François Lissarrague suggest a combination

---

407, occasionally the satyr is excited to see Hermaphroditus, so this surprise overall should not be taken as disgust. De Caro, *The Secret Cabinet in the National archaeological museum of Naples.* Edited by Stefano De Caro, (Soprintendenza 2000), 21-23. shows an example of a disgusted satyr and an excited satyr. Von Stackelberg*, Garden Hybrids,* 399-401 discusses the way that Greek and Roman copies of this differ, but in both cases the second glance is the primary point.

[120] Boardman, *Greek Art, Fourth Edition*, 231. Smith, *Hellenistic Sculpture*, 133. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 52-53.

[121] Smith, *Hellenistic Sculpture*, 133-134. Von Stackelberg*, Garden Hybrids,* 402.

[122] Von Stackelberg*, Garden Hybrids,* 396-398, 411-412. For visual depictions of these various statues found in Italy, Greece, and specifically Pompeii, see Von Stackelberg*, Garden Hybrids*.

[123] Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love,* 518. Frontisi-Ducroux and Lissarrague, *From Ambiguity to Ambivalence: A Dionysiac Excursion Through the "Anacreontic" Vases.* Translated by Robert Lamberton (Princeton University Press, 1990), 217-218.

[124] Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love,* 518. Frontisi-Ducroux andLissarrague, *From Ambiguity to Ambivalence,* 219.

of the two, as Eastern men were perceived to be feminine by a Greek audience.[125] The large amount of these images recovered suggests that this was a popular motif, and that the liminality between men and women, Grecian and foreigner was interesting to the people producing and using these pieces.[126] Around Ovid's own time, the myth of Achilles in Skyros became increasingly popular. There are many surviving paintings and depictions from the early Roman empire of the defining scene; when Achilles casts away his feminine disguise and grabs a weapon.[127] The popularity and sheer number of these scenes is directly tied to the other gender variant art described; the Greco-Roman world liked to see liminality.[128] There were examples of this art well before Ovid, and there was an expansion of this during the Hellenistic, Late Republic and Early Imperial world.

Artistic interpretations of androgyny and gender variance have different forms, just as the literary traditions. Some artistic depictions feature third gender or intersex individuals, some depict feminine men or men wearing a combination of male and female clothing. The clear emphasis in all of this art is that the liminality of gender was the focus, and that overall the Greco-Romans were well aware of the spectrum between man and woman.[129] To best understand what a culture values or thinks overall, one must turn to popular culture to see if the literature and mythology are being consumed by the

---

[125] Frontisi-Ducroux andLissarrague, *From Ambiguity to Ambivalence,* 229-232. Bessone, The Indiscreet Charm of the Exotic: *Amores Peregrini* as Explorations of Identity in Roman Poetry. *Identities,* in *Ethnicities and Gender in Antiquity,* (De Gruyter, 2021), 162. Paris is described as *semivir* for just being eastern; *semivir* is equivalent to *seminari* or a "half man". Sharrock, *Babylonians in Thebes,* 213-214.
[126] Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love,* 518.
[127] Heslin, *The Transvestite Achilles: Gender and Genre in Statius' Achilleid.* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 235. Cameron, "Young Achilles in the Roman World." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 99 (2009): 1–22, 9. Bessone, *Visions of a Hero: Optical Illusions and Multifocal Epic in Statius's Achilleid. Helios* (Lubbock), Vol.45 (2), (2018):169-194.188-189.
[128] Heslin, *The Transvestite Achilles,* 235. Cameron*, Young Achilles,* 11. In the context of Achilles in Skyros, some of the audience did seem to be affirmed by Achilles rejecting this liminal status, but the fact that this aspect of his story becomes popular during this time is a testament to the fact that androgyny and gender variance were popular themes.
[129] Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 54-55.

overall society. If the overall society is aware of gender variance, then there will be a record of it in art and other artifacts. In the Greco-Roman world we have material culture depicting the literature and mythology of gender variant characters, which shows that the Greco-Romans had an understanding and interest in gender variance and third gender individuals.[130] Ovid lived and wrote within this culture, both his depiction of Caeneus and his overall works show an understanding of the gender variance that existed around him.

[130] Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 54-55.

3. Back in my Day Men were Women and Women were Trees; Ovid's subversion of genre and Nestor's account of Caeneus to the Achaeans in Book 12 of the Metamorphosis:

3.1 Ovid and Genre:

The Greco-Roman world had significant examples of gender variance, with many groups of people writing and depicting examples of these individuals. This is not just a broad theme, but this view of gender is used by Ovid to talk about Caeneus specifically as well as gender variant individuals. Therefore, his approach to literature must first be outlined, as he often subverts genre and expectations in order to create the *Metamorphoses* and his version of Caeneus. Then, a quick survey of gender variant myths in Ovid will contextualize Caeneus, as well as an analysis of Ovid's use of pronouns with Caeneus himself. Finally, the initial introduction of Caeneus by Nestor shows that within the text the Lapiths and Achaeans treat Caeneus as a man, and Caeneus' transformation shows a turning point in the text. His transition shifts the scene and language of the poem from elegy into epic, while Ovid blends the original myths of Caeneus with his transgender status and his affirmed identity as a man.

Ovid himself lived in a time of social and political change; he was a poet under the first emperor Augustus and he was exiled by him. During the new regime he attached himself to Maecenas, a close friend of Augustus and he was in an elite circle of artists. These poets worked to blend Hellenistic and Ancient Greek myth to Roman narratives and history.[131] Ovid does this differently from many in Maecenas' circle; he does not use a structure or moral framework to blend the two cultures, but rather focuses on hybridity

[131] Segal, *Ovid's 'Metamorphoses'*, 377.

and variation in a usually rigid genre.[132] His style overall is characterized by breaking expectations, and his attention to the world around him; the author, politics, religion, and culture.[133] He is an unique author as his text, the *Metamorphoses* specifically, often calls the reader into the story, either directly or through scenes where a character tells the story to an in text audience.[134] Politically Ovid can be seen as quite subversive, with lines that can call into question imperial power or Rome itself.[135] Although much of this reading is debated subtext, much has been written on the subject.[136]

The *Metamorphoses*, *Ars Amatoria,* and the *Heroides* deal heavily with mythological themes and a variety of gender variant characters. Some of his works, the *Fasti* and the *Tristia* occasionally deal with these themes, but are primarily about the Roman religious calendar and Ovid's time in exile.[137] *The Ars Amatoria* is a guidebook to romance, with more discussions on identity, mytho-religious allusions, and more scandalous romantic topics.[138] Similarly, the *Heroides* are a compilation of imaginary love letters from famous Heroines in Greek mythology. The *Metamorphoses* is a compilation of myths and a chronology of the various mythologies, mixing elegiac, bucolic, and epic in order to create a retelling of most of the major Greco-Roman

---

[132] Segal, *Ovid's 'Metamorphoses'*, 375-378.
[133] Ginsberg, "Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' and the Politics of Interpretation." *The Classical Journal* 84, no. 3 (1989): 222–31, 225. Von Stackelberg, *Garden Hybrids,* 421.
[134] Ginsberg, *Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' and the Politics of Interpretation,* 222-226. Curran, "Transformation and Anti-Augustanism in Ovid's 'Metamorphoses.'" *Arethusa* 5, no. 1 (1972): 71–91, 76-77. Ovid has identity and the mask of the poet central to his work.
[135] Ginsberg, *Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' and the Politics of Interpretation,* 227-231. Much of the scenes depicting Apollo and Daphne, Jupiter and Lycaon have some very unique overtones of imperial power. Olympus is even based on Rome, and not the other way around. Segal*, Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 14. Phillips, *Roman Religion and Literary Studies of Ovid's 'Fasti,* 58.
[136] Curran*, Transformation and Anti-Augustanism in Ovid's 'Metamorphoses,* 71-72, 82-90. Ginsberg, *Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' and the Politics of Interpretation,* 227-231. Segal, *Ovid's 'Metamorphoses'*, 391-394.
[137] The Fasti does have some information concerning eunuchs, namely Ovid *Fasti 4.179-187* and *4.243-44*. For more information on the Fasti see Phillips, *Roman Religion and Literary Studies of Ovid's 'Fasti.*
[138] Curran*, Transformation and Anti-Augustanism in Ovid's 'Metamorphoses,* 77.

myths.[139] In this poem, mythological figures change from their original states, undergoing a metamorphosis into a variety of animals, plants, or other states. These metamorphoses can reveal the true nature of the figure, or they can be pure divine intervention, a form of punishment, a way out of a situation, or have an aetiological reason.[140] The main aspects that bind the entirety of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* together are a blending of the world around Ovid and the narrative, a humanization of the myth, and a humanization of the heroic experience.[141] In the words of Charles Segal,

> "The pervading trope of the *Metamorphoses* rests on the premise that its world of myth and art can convert into physical form some underlying quality of mind, character, or emotion, whether these are a lasting feature of personality or a transient mood or emotion."[142]

The *Metamorphoses* does not stick to a singular theme, blending elements of elegiac and epic within hexameter, it does not have a singular cause for metamorphoses, it blends real myths and religion and literature, natural and unnatural and the definitions of identity and form themselves are questioned.[143] In most Greco-Roman literature, a level of gender variance can be expected, just due to the fact that those people existed in the Greco-Roman world and mythology. However, the themes of the *Metamorphoses* and Ovid's writings overall highlight liminal statuses, a state which gender variant and third gender people often embody.

---

[139] Curran*, Transformation and Anti-Augustanism in Ovid's 'Metamorphoses,* 77-78. Segal*, Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 35. Segal, *Ovid's 'Metamorphoses'*, 379. The blending of Greek and Roman mythology itself is somewhat a product of Ovid, specifically the way that the Fasti and Metamorphoses mix Roman and Greek myths. Phillips, *Roman Religion and Literary Studies of Ovid's 'Fasti,* 67-71. This does not mean that these myths and religious practices were not synchronized before Ovid, but rather that he is one of the authors blending them in literature.

[140] Curran*, Transformation and Anti-Augustanism in Ovid's 'Metamorphoses,* 74-5. Segal*, Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 14. Segal, *Ovid's 'Metamorphoses'*, 378.

[141] Segal*, Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 11-12. Segal, *Ovid's 'Metamorphoses'*, 390-392.

[142] Segal*, Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 12.

[143] Segal*, Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 16.

The main gender-bending myths in the *Metamorphoses* are Iphis, Tiresias, Hermaphroditus, and Caeneus. Ovid's story of Iphis and Ianthe is based on the mythology and religious practices of Leukippos on the island of Phaistos.[144] Leukippos's statue had both male and female characteristics, and such a statue was not a local oddity as the later writer Macrobius mentions that Aphrodite's first statue in Rome was intersex.[145] This also corresponds to an Etruscan and early Roman belief in gender mutable or dual sexed gods, showing an old connection between gender variance and religious rites.[146] The myth that goes alongside the religion of Leukippos is this: Iphis was a young female bodied person born into a family too poor to afford a daughter. His mother lied to her husband instead of exposing Iphis, and raised him as a boy. This worked well until he hit puberty and was engaged to his love Ianthe. Both Iphis and his mother pray to the gods, Ovid has these gods as Egyptian whereas older versions have Greek gods that fit the setting of Phaistos.[147] The gods grant his prayer, and make him into a biological man as he is getting married. Iphis and Caeneus are two of the very few characters in the *Metamorphoses* to want their metamorphoses.[148] In both of these cases, the character has a vested desire to become another gender, and they are granted that wish through divine magic. These two myths are closer to gender variant people, female bodied youths desiring and living their lives as another gender and fully embracing that gender when their divine transition is complete. This is not the only reason for gender

[144] Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love,* 376-377.
[145] Townsley, *Paul, The Goddess Religions,* 719. Macrobius, *The Saturnalia.* trans. Percival Vaughan Davies (Columbia University Press, 214. 1969), 3.8.2-3.
[146] Von Stackelberg*, Garden Hybrids,* 407-409.
[147] Sharrock, *Babylonians in Thebes,* 199. Ovid. *Met.* 9.666-797. Even though Ovid changes the gods to the Egyptian pantheon, the result is the same and there is no gender ambiguity of the story.
[148] Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 892. Ovid *Met.* 9.741-748.

transitions in Ovid, as he has several other gender transition stories; but as mentioned reason is not always behind the choices in the *Metamorphoses*.

While the first two transition stories are examples of a person wishing to change their gender and receiving their gender transition, the next two stories are more aetiological. Tiresias is an example of more aetiological or explanatory gender transition within Ovid. He is an ancient seer throughout Ancient Greek mythology who had many adventures including several where he changes gender.[149] Ovid's description of Tiresias involves a popular myth where Tiresias sees two snakes twisted together, then turns into a woman.[150] He lives as a woman for years before turning back into a man; his transition is the only non-permanent transition among these gender stories.[151] There is an attested secondary version of myth based on Sostratus' depiction of Tiresias. This poem has the seer change gender seven times throughout his life, and Ovid does use Sostratus' poem within the *Metamorphoses*.[152] In both cases, these myths serve to inform the audience about the origins of Tiresias' powers.

Tiresias' gender transition then goes on to solve a debate between the gods, years after his transformation. Zeus and Hera are debating whether men or women enjoy sex more, and they ask Tiresias as a person who has experienced being both a man and a woman. Tiresias then answers that women enjoy sex more, angering Hera who blinds him and in retaliation Zeus gives him the gift of prophecy.[153] In the case of Tiresias, this gender transition is temporary, one of the rare examples of a temporary physical

[149] Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 49.
[150] Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 49.
[151] Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 49. Ovid *Met.* 4.274-388.
[152] Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 899.
[153] Ovid *Met.* 4.274-388.

transition, and aetiological rather than an example of true gender variance, as Tiresias did not want his transition and is only temporarily cursed to be a woman.[154]

The last of these transitions is another aetiological myth, explaining the creation of the first intersex person. Hermaphroditus goes from being male bodied to becoming intersex. They were the child of Hermes and Aphrodite, a beautiful young man who was wandering the country when he caught the eye of the Nymph Salmacis. She then captures him in an inverse of the traditional formula of a man seizing a woman, and then she forcibly merges with Hermaphroditus, and then the two of them become a singular entity.[155] The transition is permanent, and the newly made Hermaphroditus has both male and female features.[156] Like Tiresias, Ovid's approach to this is also aetiological; the spring of Salmacis was known to create intersex people by dipping a person into the spring.[157] This aetiology also highlights an earlier theme, the mutability of gender in the period and the Greco-Roman idea that intersex people and eunuchs overlapped.[158] Ovid ends the scene by telling the audience that Hermaphroditus, and intersex people in general, are truly neither men nor women, *nec femina dici, nec puer ut possit, neutrumque et utrumque videntur* ([Hermaphroditus]could neither be called a woman nor a man, but seemed to be neither and both).[159] This scene shows that gender and gender

[154] Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 892. Ovid *Met.* 4.274-388.
[155] Sharrock, *Babylonians in Thebes,* 213. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 49. Ovid. *Met.* 3.316-338.
[156] Ovid. *Met.* 3.316-338.
[157] Von Stackelberg, *Garden Hybrids,* 414. Keith, *Versions of Epic Masculinity in Ovid's Metamorphoses,* 219.
[158] Von Stackelberg*, Garden Hybrids,* 414. Ovid *Amores* 2.3.1-12 and Martial 14.174). Valerius Maximus' *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 7.7.6. Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 396. Stevenson, *The Rise of Eunuchs*, 503-504, 507. Philostratus, *Vitae Sophistrarum* 8.489. Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum Gestarum* 18.4.
[159] Von Stackelberg*, Garden Hybrids,* 416. Ovid. *Met.* 4.378-9.

roles are not rigid by reversing the roles of pursuer and pursued, divisions between man and woman, dominant and submissive, and permanence versus impermanence.[160]

Ovid and his works are often hard to define, blending genre and Greek and Roman culture, internalizing the voice of the author, and humanizing these ancient stories. However, he is still a member of the time that he lived in, and he uses the culture around him to contextualize his book of mythology. Material culture, literary culture, and religion all shape a variety of his myths, especially his myths involving gender variant individuals. These myths are written by Ovid with the cultural ideas of sex and gender in mind; sex, gender, and shape were mutable, especially by divine intervention. Outside of the general ideology in the Greco-Roman world, Ovid does specifically treat Caeneus as a man, using masculine pronouns for Caeneus alongside the convention created by Catullus. Ovid's personal opinions on gender variance and third gender people cannot be known, but it is clear that he can accurately describe and discuss ideas of gender and gender transition.

3.2 Paleo-pronouns

The naming convention and pronoun usage of Ovid regarding Caeneus should be addressed, as previous classical scholarship is very inconsistent or inadequate regarding this core part of this character's identity.[161] For examples of this, see Russell and Freas, who are contemporary scholars exemplifying many of the issues with the Classical

[160] Segal, *Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 21-22. Von Stackelberg, *Garden Hybrids,* 412-414, there are alternate origins for the spring, with the inscription found in Kaplan Kalesi and Diodorus Siculus describing Hermaphroditus as an already intersex person who was raised by Salmacis.

[161] Russell*, The Most Unkindest Cut,* and Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim.* These sources will still be used by the author, as they do discuss various aspects of the story. This should not be taken as an endorsement of their approach or treatment of this character. Such gender transitions should not be discussed without some basis in or relation to queer theory. While older scholarship might not have had access to all of this theory, these articles are recent and written after or alongside much of the queer theory used in this paper.

scholarship concerning Caeneus.[162] Russell uses the invective against Caeneus by Latreus as evidence of Ovid's ideology, and Freas considers the claims that Ovid's Caeneus is a man and a woman.[163] These two examples show that this is a recent and contemporary issue with the analysis of the text. Much of the debate concerning Caeneus is over the "true" gender of Ovid's character, or looking at the ancient world with a modern gender essentialist worldview that is anachronistic.

While Caeneus' identity in the entire mythological canon is an interesting point of research that can still be debated, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* the matter is settled. Caeneus is a man, specifically a trans man, as this is affirmed directly by Nestor in his speech to the Achaeans in Book 12,

> [...] Cycnus. at ipse olim patientem vulnera mille
> corpore non laeso Perrhaebum Caenea vidi,
> Caenea Perrhaebum, qui factis inclitus Othryn
> incoluit, quoque id mirum magis esset in **illo**,
> femina **natus** erat.' monstri novitate moventur
> quisquis adest, narretque rogant: quos inter Achilles:
> 'dic age! nam cunctis eadem est audire voluntas,
> o facunde senex, aevi prudentia nostri,
> quis fuerit Caeneus, cur in contraria versus,
> qua tibi militia, cuius certamine pugnae
> cognitus, a quo sit victus, si victus ab ullo est.
>
> But once upon a time I myself saw Caeneus of Perrheaebus
> who suffered a thousand wounds with his body unharmed,
> Caeneus of Perrhaebus, Who was famous for his deeds,
> lived on Othrys, also the most miraculous part about **him**,
> was that ***he*** was born a woman." everyone there
> was moved by this strange wonder, and they asked him to tell the story,
> Achilles among the others, "Well talk! For all of us also want to hear,
> Oh eloquent elder, the wisdom of your age,
> who this Caeneus was, why he was changed into the opposite,

[162] Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love,* 151. This is not unique to trans issues, and many of the issues documented in this paper were rehashed from older homophobia. Believing in the theory that neither category exists (whether gay/straight or cis/trans) primarily helps the identity with power and further erases the marginalized.
[163] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 61. Russell*, The Most Unkindest Cut,* 110. Russell's ideology is overall more regressive than Freas, and this paper does not consider them to be equivalent.

in which war he met you, in a fight against who,
by whom he was defeated, if he was defeated by any."[164]

Nestor introduces Caeneus as a man, and he uses the masculine pronouns for the hero any time he refers to him post-transition. The use of the Greek accusative is quite common in Ovid, and *Caenea* is in fact a masculine Greek accusative.[165] Furthermore, the pronouns and adjectives in the first few lines of this section, *ille*, *qui*, *inclitus*, *illo* build and reinforce his gender before we find out about his birth. Then the beginning of line 175, *femina natus erat*, also reinforces Caeneus' gender, by choosing to use *natus* instead of *nata*, which would also be a possibility. Caeneus was born as a woman, but the *natus erat* reinforces the present reality; Caeneus is a trans man. And this is not exclusive of Ovid, as Catullus also does this when talking about characters who undergo gender transition.[166] While Attis' transition and castration, narrated in poem 63 of Catullus' book, is tragic, it is specifically based on other Greek women within the genre of tragedy.[167] Attis and the language around her also sets the stage for Ovid and the precedent for describing gender variant individuals. Before Attis' castration she is referred to with masculine pronouns/endings in Cat. 63.1 and 4 and afterwards she is treated as a woman with feminine pronouns/endings for the majority of the text.[168] Attis' name itself could be a

---

[164] Ovid *Met.* 12.171-81. All the masculine nouns, pronouns and adjectives in the original Latin have been underlined for clarity. The word monstri, as used in 175 does not always correlate to the English word *monster. Monstrum* often has the connotation of a wonder, a miraculous thing, an omen, or an awe-inspiring thing, Oxford Latin Dictionary, 1131 (Oxford Latin Dictionary, Fascicle IV. 1973.). Because the overall mood of the text is more respectful to the hero, the author has chosen to use a more positive definition of *monstri* to reflect this.

[165] Allen and Greenough, *Allen and Greenough's New Latin Grammar.* Updated by Annr Mahoney (Focus Publishing, 2000), 81-83. They comment that Ovid's *Metomorphoses* even takes the genitive plural *Metomorphoseon*.

[166] Russell*, The Most Unkindest Cut,* 114. Catullus 63.

[167] Nauta*, Catullus 63,* 596.

[168] Cat. 63.1.4, 63.11-90. There is some ambiguity on Attis' gender and what pronouns we should use for them. The author has decided to use she/her as this is what the text itself suggests, especially the *ego mulier* in line 63. In the ancient world eunuchs exist in a liminal space which is expanded on in S.D. Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch.* Townsley, *Paul, The Goddess Religions*, 711, Nauta*, Catullus 63,* 606.

pun, as Catullus' Attis comes from Greece, and therefore the name would sound just like *Atthis* or a woman from Athens.[169] There are lines that mention the ambiguity of her situation, but the pronouns, feminine name, and adjective endings never change after the first few lines.[170] Catullus is not the only individual to do this, but rather an extended case study.[171] Caeneus' pronouns similarly stay consistent throughout Nestor's description, which will be investigated further in a later section. The only time Nestor uses feminine pronouns is when Caeneus is pre-transition, just like in Catullus' Attis.[172] After Attis is castrated, the pronouns and adjectives immediately switch over to feminine endings, showing the recognition of the changed state and gender of Attis. Nestor, and Ovid by proxy, also immediately switches back to masculine pronouns/endings the line after Caeneus receives his divine transition.[173]

While modern transgender discourse would consider this a form of misgendering, the internal logic of the period is maintained. The fact that two authors maintain this continuity of form is also important; Ovid is not inventing a way to talk about gender variant individuals, but using pre-established cultural and literary norms. So in this case, describing Caeneus as feminine before he has changed is not reflective of how Caeneus is treated by the narrator and the protagonists. Neither Nestor nor any of the Lapiths or Achaeans misgender Caeneus post-transition, and his masculinity is never questioned by

---

[169] Nauta*, Catullus 63,* 600.
[170] Catullus 63.27 calls Attis a *notha mulie*r, but uses feminine pronouns for the term. Notha also has a variety of meanings, in this case meaning something like spurious, illegitimate or a woman not by her hown power, Oxford Latin Dictionary, 1192. Line 63-64 does include a variety of identities for Attis; but the other identities are reflective of Attis' beginnings. Line 68, *ego nunc deum ministra et Cybeles famula ferar,* brings Attis' present reality back to focus. Nauta*, Catullus 63,* 606. The sequence of tenses for Lines 63-64 is very important and it ultimately ends with Attis as more of a feminine figure. Nauta*, Catullus 63,* 601-602, the companions of Attis are also referred to with feminine pronouns.
[171] Pinto and Pinto, *Transgendered Archaeology: The Galli and the Catterick Transvestite,* 173. *Il.* 2.235, 7.96; Cicero *De Or,* Ed. by A. S. Wilkins. (1902), 2.277. Vergil *Aeneid* 9.617.
[172] Catullus 63.1-4. Ovid *Met.* 12.189-203.
[173] Ovid *Met.* 12.208-209.

these groups. This is reinforced with the final address to Caeneus after his second metamorphosis, *"O salve,"[Mopsus] dixit "Lapithaeae gloria gentis, maxime vir quondam, sed nunc avis unica, Caeneu!"*.[174] His allies see him as fundamentally a *vir*, the circumstances of his birth are mostly just an interesting fact to them.

The only group who questions Caeneus' gender in the story are the Centaurs, who are the aggressors and the antagonists within the narrative. This antagonistic misgendering will be investigated in a later section, but it should not be seen as the opinion of the text overall. The Centaurs' role as the enemies should paint all of their interactions. Russell asserts that their taunts indicate Ovid's endorsement of gender essentialism, which goes against the narration and the main character Nestor.[175] This paper will assume that the point of view of Nestor, as the narrator and therefore the author within the story, and the primary way Ovid as narrator treats Caeneus are more important than the smaller amount of lines written in the perspective of his enemy.[176] Ovid in general shows throughout the *Metamorphoses* that gender is something that can be easily changed by the gods, in both permanent and semi-permanent ways. [177] This most likely reflects the ideas of the society that he comes from, in which gender and sex have some real life mutability.[178]

Latin has a clear grammatical system, and while these grammatical genders do not always follow English gendered pronouns, when discussing people they do correlate.[179]

---

[174] Ovid *Met.* 12.530-531. Fredrick*, Mapping Penetrability,* 258-259. *Vir* is a category of person who is unpenetrated as much as it is a signifier of gender and age.
[175] Russell, *The Most Unkindest Cut,* 115.
[176] Mader, "The Be(a)st of the Achaeans: Turning Tables / Overturning Tables in Ovid's Centauromachy (*Metamorphoses* 12.210–535)." *Arethusa* 46, no. 1 (2013): 87–116, 88.
[177] For the story of Iphis, Ovid *Met.* 9.666-797. For the story of Tiresias Ovid *Met.* 3.316-338; Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 895-897. For the story of Hermaphroditus, Ovid *Met.* 4.274-388.
[178] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 392-393. This mutability has been documented in other footnotes throughout this paper.
[179] Allen and Greenough, *Allen and Greenough's New Latin Grammar,* 280-283.

So with Caeneus, I will follow the grammatical rules established by Ovid and Catullus, and gender these people according to their grammatical gender endings. When discussing Caeneus, this paper has and will continue to use he/him/his pronouns as that is what Ovid's text shows. For the specific instances of gender and pronouns mentioned, the analysis of Caeneus should start with his introduction in the story by Nestor.

3.3 Nestor and Caeneus:

With the broader Greco-Roman world and the popularity of gender deviance contextualized, Ovid and the *Metamorphoses* themselves must be considered. Caeneus is referred to by the Achaeans and Nestor in an affirming way and it is clear that the later queerphobic interactions with the Centaurs are an exception in Ovid, not the rule.

Book 12 starts off at the beginning of the Trojan war, with the Achaeans landing on the shore and being attacked by Hector and the other Trojans. The initial beachhead was a costly skirmish, with both the Trojans and Greeks both taking casualties. Achilles finds another demigod called Cycnus, who has killed a thousand Greek soldiers, and tries to kill him with his famous Pelion spear. This spear bounces off of Cycnus, and a fight ensues where Achilles finds out that Cycnus is immune to being stabbed or injured by weapons. Achilles eventually defeats Cycnus by bashing his head with his shield, then strangling him with the straps of his helmet.[180] However, before Achilles can take the armor off of the corpse, Neptune has changed his son into a bird.[181]

Then a truce was made and the Achaeans celebrated, Achilles especially is celebrated for killing this nearly invincible enemy. During this party Nestor tells the young men that he knew someone with similar powers when he was young, and that this

[180] Mader, *The Be(a)st of the Achaeans,* 88. Ovid *Met.* 12.1-145. Segal, *Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 23-24.
[181] Ovid *Met.* 12.144-145. Segal, *Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 23-24.

supernatural power was more common. This section has been briefly investigated in the chapter above, but Caeneus' initial introduction has more important information than just the pronoun usage,

> *cum sic Nestor ait: 'vestro fuit unicus aevo*
> *contemptor ferri nulloque forabilis ictu*
> *Cycnus. at ipse olim patientem vulnera mille*
> *corpore non laeso Perrhaebum Caenea vidi,*
> *Caenea Perrhaebum, qui factis inclitus Othryn*
> *incoluit, quoque id mirum magis esset in illo,*
> *femina natus erat.' monstri novitate moventur*
> *quisquis adest, narretque rogant: quos inter Achilles:*
> *'dic age! nam cunctis eadem est audire voluntas,*
> *o facunde senex, aevi prudentia nostri,*
> *quis fuerit Caeneus, cur in contraria versus,*
> *qua tibi militia, cuius certamine pugnae*
> *cognitus, a quo sit victus, si victus ab ullo est.'*
>
> When so Nestor said, "Cycnus was the only one in your generation
> who scorned iron and was vulnerable to no wound.
> But once upon a time I myself saw Caeneus of Perrheabus
> who suffered a thousand wounds with his body unharmed,
> Caeneus of Perrhaebus, who was famous for his deeds,
> lived on Othrys, also the most miraculous part about him,
> was that he was born a woman." everyone there
> was moved by this strange wonder, and they asked him to tell the story,
> Achilles among the others, "Well talk! For all of us also want to hear,
> oh eloquent elder, wisdom of your age,
> who was Caeneus, why was he changed in the opposite,
> in which war did he meet you, in a battle of that war,
> by whom was he defeated, if he was defeated by any?"[182]

The initial context of this section is a direct comparison to Cycnus; they both have a similar ability but Nestor informs the young men that there was another who had the same powers.[183] Then we get the first description of Caeneus, *at ipse olim patientem*

[182] Ovid *Met.* 12.169-181
[183] Segal*, Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 24.

vulnera mille [vidi], which immediately relates him to Cycnus and it describes Caeneus with the masculine pronoun *ipse*.[184] Then we get Caeneus' name, but it takes several lines for Nestor to tell the crowd that Caeneus is transgender. By burying the lead, Ovid is starting with the core identity of the myth; Caeneus is first known for his invulnerability and his divine powers.[185] This invulnerable aspect of the myth goes back at least to the 7th century BCE, and it seemed to be the primary aspect of the original myth. After acknowledging the origins of Caeneus and the comparison to Cycnus, Ovid then goes to a unique aspect that makes Caeneus stand out; he is a transgender man.[186] Cycnus and Caeneus will continue to be compared throughout this part of book 12, as they both receive the same gift from the same god, and they both gain a metamorphosis into a bird instead of dying.[187]

As mentioned in the prior chapter, the plethora of masculine pronouns in this section sets the tone for the rest of the text; giving a concise and uncomplicated way to discuss the hero.[188] Especially since this is the first time Ovid has described the character within the *Metamorphoses*, this is an noteworthy fact. In some versions of this myth Caeneus is a cisgender man, in others he is a trans man, and in others he is a trans man that turns back into a woman to some degree.[189] Those ambiguities exist for the audience as Caeneus' name is first revealed; which Caeneus did Ovid write, what form of the myth is most important? By delaying the reveal Ovid builds tension, then he both releases it

[184] Ovid *Met.* 12.171-172. Mader*, The Be(a)st of the Achaeans,* 88-90.
[185] Mader*, The Be(a)st of the Achaeans,* 88-90. Segal*, Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 24 mentions more of this suspense, primarily with the introduction of Caeneus, then over 200 lines that do not mention him.
[186] Ovid *Met.* 12.175. Ovid's word choice, *femina natus erat*, is a succinct and very clear way to discuss a transgender identity.
[187] Mader*, The Be(a)st of the Achaeans,* 88. Segal*, Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 25. Ovid *Met*. 12.1-145.
[188] Allen and Greenough, *Allen and Greenough's New Latin Grammar,* 280-283, 286.
[189] Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 899. Gärtner mentions that Ovid is basing much of his Tiresias and Caeneus scenes from Sostratus' poem on Tiresias. This poem includes a sevenfold gender transition, where Tiresias rapidly flips between genders and identities.

and guides the reader to the correct interpretation for the *Metamorphoses*; Caeneus is a trans man here. Furthermore, this part of his identity is not seriously up for debate, there are no ambiguous pronouns or adjective endings, the masculine form of his name is the only one used in this section, and the past tense *erat* shows that his birth gender is part of his past, not part of his present reality.[190] Nestor's voice also helps facilitate this; as he is not just a general narrator, but a comrade to Caeneus and a figure that the Achaeans look up too within the text.[191] Even after Caeneus' death, Nestor respects his gender and Ovid does not write any ambiguity into these lines, which set a baseline when later insults break this norm.

Nestor overall treats the circumstances of Caeneus' birth as an odd and unique fact about him, but he does not treat Caeneus' gender as a negative or lesser factor. Rather, it is part of his divine fame, and another reason that his heroic exploits should be recited. Achilles asks about Caeneus' gender, and then he asks about the heroes' exploits, and in doing so he continues to use masculine pronouns.[192] Achilles has already learned that Caeneus is born a woman, and yet he still continues to use the correct pronouns. This indicates that within the story, being transgender is notable, but it is not so strange that the Achaeans do not know how to gender Caeneus. Another indicator of this are the questions that Achilles asks; he asks how Caeneus became transgender, and then he pivots and asks about how Nestor knew the hero, and how good of a warrior Caeneus was. The two specific questions, in which war did Nestor and Caeneus meet, and who

[190] Allen and Greenough, *Allen and Greenough's New Latin Grammar,* 160. The imperfect tense shows a past tense, but not finished action. In this case, Caeneus' birth is still a part of his life, but his birth gender is different from his present gender.
[191] Ovid *Met.* 12.178. Nestor is a complicated character within Ovid, and is oftentime humorous as many other Ovidian characters are. However, in this passage there is not one of those scenes; and Nestor is generally seen as the traditional aged veteran.
[192] Ovid *Met.* 12. 189-191.

was able to defeat such a powerful warrior if anyone was able to, both deal with one thing. These are both martial questions, in the Greco-Roman world these are the domain of men.[193] By associating Caeneus with martial pursuits, Achilles aligns the hero with typical heroic men and manly pursuits. Achilles' fascination with the hero is continued when Nestor introduces Caeneus as a distant relative of Achilles as he then continues to tell the Achaeans about this unique hero.[194]

In Caeneus' first introduction within the *Metamorphoses*, he is directly compared to another male demigod (on top of Achilles) and then those discussing his story treat his transgender status as an interesting fact, but they do not treat him differently from other men. After this, Nestor then describes Caeneus' transition after Neptune raped him,

> "sint tua vota licet" dixit "secura repulsae:
> elige, quid voveas!" (eadem hoc quoque fama ferebat)
> "magnum" Caenis ait "facit haec iniuria votum,
> tale pati iam posse nihil; da, femina ne sim:
> omnia praestiteris." graviore novissima dixit
> verba sono poteratque viri vox illa videri,
> sicut erat; nam iam voto deus aequoris alti
> adnuerat dederatque super, nec saucius ullis
> vulneribus fieri ferrove occumbere posset.
> munere laetus abit studiisque virilibus aevum
> exigit Atracides Peneiaque arva pererrat.
>
> He said, "You can make your wish now, safe from rejection:
> choose what you want!" (the same rumor repeats this)
> and Caenis said, "this injury makes for a great wish,
> that I should never be able to suffer this again; make me not a woman:
> you would make good on everything." she spoke the most recent words
> with a deeper voice, such that it might be seen as the voice of a man,
> and so it was, for just then the God of the deep ocean
> granted the wish, and gave beyond, neither from wounds nor

[193] Janssen, *Gender in its Historical Situation,* 49-53. For Ovid's use of epic masculinity, see Alison Keith, *Versions of Epic Masculinity in Ovid's Metamorphoses.*
[194] Ovid *Met.* 12.191.

> other injuries nor iron would be able to kill him.
> he, the Atracides, left happy with the gift and spent his life
> in manly studies, wandering the Peneian plains.[195]

His request is important; he is one of the only people in the Metamorphoses who asks for his transition.[196] Not only does it stand out in the general Ovidian texts; it is a very specific act that shows Caeneus wants to become a man.[197] Caeneus also shows this in his pre-transition voice; in lines 12.203-304 Ovid writes that his voice becomes deeper just before Neptune changes his gender.[198] Then Neptune not only gives Caeneus his gender transition, but also gives him an addition to this gift: invulnerability. The gift of invulnerable skin is a power known to Neptune's demigod children, namely Cycnus and the giant Antaeus.[199] These gifts are not just divine favors; in the context of a trans man, with this invulnerability, Neptune is affirming his masculine status. In the Greco-Roman world masculinity was defined by a person's sexual penetrative abilities, or lack thereof.[200] So therefore Caeneus gains invulnerability to fully affirm his new masculine status and ensure he is the divine ideal of impenetrable, both sexually and on the battlefield.[201] This request firmly shifts the entire expected scene, what was originally had elegiac elements of a woman taken by a god changes into a more standard epic tone, matching the tone, meter, and homeric themes of the *Metamorphoses* and Book XII specifically.

---

[195] Ovid *Met.* 12.199-209.
[196] Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 892.
[197] Gartner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 892.
[198] Ovid *Met.* 12.203-4.
[199] Mader*, The Be(a)st of the Achaeans,* 88. For mentions of Antaios and his invulnerability, see Hyginus Fabulae, Trans. By R. Scott Smith and Stephen M. Trzaskoma (Hackett Publishing Company Inc, 2007), 31 and 157. Pindar, *Od.* by Sir John Sandys (Harvard University Press, 1937), 1.4.52. Ovid *Met*. 9.183, 12.1-145.
[200] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 70, 74-5. Fredrick*, Mapping Penetrability,* 237. This model of penetrative-ness is based on power dynamics.
[201] Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 892.

The assault itself is not notable in Greco-Roman myths, it is nearly a formulaic response similar to many other gods. This scene is even repeated from older Greek and Roman myths, where women are assaulted at the banks of the river. Notable versions of this trope include Ennius' Ilia myth as well as the Homeric myth of Tyro; Ilia was assaulted by Mars at the riverside and Tyro was assaulted by Poseidon.[202] By further receiving the same power as Neptune's child Cycnus, there is a link where Caeneus' transition into a male hero replaces any biological offspring.[203] The main difference is the outcome after the event; Caeneus does not become pregnant with a demigod, but rather asks to be transformed and receives the powers of one.[204] Thomas Gärtner comments on the importance of Caeneus' choice,

> Das, was als elegische Schilderung einer typischen Liebe eines Gotts zu einer sterblichen Frau begann, mutiert durch die selbstgewählte Metamorphose der Hauptperson zu einer rein-epischen Erzählung ohne erotische Züge…
>
> Then, what began as an elegiac narration of a godly typical love for a mortal woman changed into a pure one through the self-chosen metamorphosis of the main character of an Epic, without erotic traits…[205]

This shift from the established elegiac language and lexical usage changes the entire narrative through Caeneus; his willing shift into a man changes the genre into more of an epic text going forward.[206] The shift is also notable because this is where Ovid is blending the traditional myths around Caeneus; the oldest textual version of Caeneus

---

[202]Connors, "Ennius, Ovid and Representations of Ilia." *Materiali e Discussioni per l'analisi Dei Testi Classici*, no. 32, Fabrizio Serra editore, 1994, pp. 99–112, 102-103. *Od.* Ed. by A.T. Murray (Harvard University Press, 1919), 11.235-59. Ennius *Ann*. Ethel Mary Steuart (The University press, 1925), 1 Fragment 17 1-17. Connors notes that Mars himself is a deviation from the original Tyro myth. Mars is in his agricultural form and therefore fits within the natural scene.
[203] Mader*, The Be(a)st of the Achaeans,* 88. Ovid *Met*. 12.1-145.
[204] Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 892.
[205] Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 893.
[206] Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 893.

does not mention this gender shift, although that does not necessarily mean that it didn't exist, as the older versions of Caeneus's myth rarely discuss his birth or early life. In the Iliad, Nestor describes the centauromachy and mentions Caeneus's famous death scene.[207] Caeneus as a transgender hero dates at least to the 5th century BCE, based on the passages from Heraclitus and fragments of Acusilaus, although it could be older.[208] Not only will Ovid shift the tone of the *Metamorphoses*, he is also shifting the tropes of traditional epic and elegiac scenes all with the single moment of transition.

Then when he fully transitioned into a man, Nestor tells us about the new Caeneus and what he spends his time doing. Caeneus's original request was just to not be a woman, *da femina ne sim*, which does not quite indicate that he wants to be a man.[209] As previously mentioned, there are third gender options here, but Neptune seems to properly understand the request and accurately turn Caeneus into a man instead of a eunuch or some type of flora or fauna. In Freas' article she mentions that Caeneus' request is vague, and that he does not specifically ask to become a man.[210] Yet this interpretation ignores the lines that happen afterwards, where Caeneus fully embraces his new identity as a man and enjoys doing masculine activities.[211] If Caeneus did not explicitly want to become a man, why would he be happy in his new identity and why would he enjoy masculine pursuits? His request seems to be more than a desire to escape sexual assault, and he actively enjoys the identity that he requested. Lines 12.208-209 state that Caeneus *studiisque virilibus aevum exigit/*Spent his time in manly studies, after mentioning that he

[207] Il. 1.264. Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 891. Pindar also mentions the invulnerability of Caeneus, and this aspect of the myth is quite old and archaic, Pindar *Od.* 1.4.52.
[208] Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 891. Pàmias*, Incorruptible Socrates?,* 369-371.
[209] Ovid *Met.* 12.202.
[210] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 60-61.
[211] Ovid *Met.* 208-209.

left the situation happy.[212] Gärtner summarizes this idea well, discussing Caeneus' personal character and the larger meaning within the poem,

> Caenis bestimmt durch ihre neue Geschlechtswahl aktiv ihr weiteres Leben, und diese freie Entscheidung ist nicht nur konstitutiv für die weitere mythische Biographie dieser Person, sondern auch poetologisch bedeutsam für den Fortgang der ovidischen Erzählung.
>
> Caenis determined, actively lived the rest of her life through her new gender choice, and this willing choice is not only essential for the further mythical biography of this person, but also poetically important for the progress of the Ovidian story.[213]

This choice for transition should stand out because it not only changes the trajectory of Caeneus's personal story, but the overall change of the tone into epic, and away from the *topos* of elegiac. With all of the strange gender shifts going on, Caeneus never rejects his masculinity and he never acts in a non-masculine way; he acts like a traditional epic hero.[214] Within the Greco-Roman world there were gender non conforming men, yet Caeneus is not described as an androgynous or feminine man, only as this masculine paragon.[215] The overall narration, Nestor himself, and the Achaeans never question or doubt this basic fact.

Furthermore, this transition sequence gives another example of Ovid's use of pronouns. As mentioned previously, Ovid is very deliberate with his use of pronouns, especially with Caeneus and the narration. There are very few gendered endings describing Caeneus in this passage; once the feminine form of his name is mentioned in

---

[212] Ovid, *Met*. 12.208-9. Keith, *Versions of Epic Masculinity in Ovid's Metamorphoses,* 234.
[213] Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 892. Gärtner chose feminine pronouns and naming conventions for Caeneus in this description, so the translation reflects this. As previously mentioned, Caeneus should be regarded as a man in this paper.
[214] Keith, *Versions of Epic Masculinity in Ovid's Metamorphoses,* 234-237.
[215] Keith, *Versions of Epic Masculinity in Ovid's Metamorphoses,* 234, 237. Keith does propose a tension throughout the narrative, where Caeneus could be seen as less than a man, however, the centaurs are unable to convincingly refute Caeneus' gender or his allies' support.

line 12.201, then he is called *illa* right before he transitions in line 12.204, and then at the end of the passage there are two indications of his new masculine identity.[216] He is called *laetus* in line 12.208, and there are three lines that discuss the hero without referring to him directly. Those three lines directly cover his new abilities, but they let the anticipation build for how he will be seen as they don't directly refer to him.

Then the second word of the next line has a masculine pronoun, showing that his transition is completed and final. In the next line there is another word that confirms Caeneus' new identity when he is called *Atracides* or son of Atrax, in the method of male heroes with a Greek masculine patronymic name.[217] Gaining a patronymic name means that he has the cultural acceptance associated with epic heroes. This term is right below *laetus*, in the same position as *laetus*, and the repetition of these masculine adjectives after a space of very few gendered endings shows that Caeneus has not only personally embraced his identity, but also that he is perceived as a man by the narrator.

The Lapiths treat Caeneus with respect as a man during the story, and the Achaeans do the same generations afterward. Nestor is the bridge between both of these; he lived and adventured with Caeneus, then told his story respectfully generations after his death. Metatextually Nestor is the link between the original textual myth and the Ovidian twists, and this scene itself is the pivotal point of the *Metamorphoses*. The elegiac scenes that are the focus of many of the earlier books of the *Metamorphoses* are changed alongside Caeneus into a much more epic format for the remainder of the Trojan War section of the text.[218] This identity is tested when the centaurs attack, as the centaurs

---

[216] Ovid *Met.* 12.208-209. Allen and Greenough, *Allen and Greenough's New Latin Grammar,* 286.
[217] Allen and Greenough, *Allen and Greenough's New Latin Grammar,* 244. The ides ending in particular, corresponding to the Greek patronym, means "son of…" There is a unique and separate ending for the "daughter of…".
[218] Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 893.

attempt to deny Caeneus' identity and treat him like a woman. Caeneus' actions and the narration again affirm his identity as a man, despite the centaurs best efforts, even until his final acts.

4. Transphobes don't deserve…Torsos? A Look at Caeneus' Combat and Gender in Metamorphoses 12.470-523:

As we have seen, Caeneus in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is not the only hero who changes gender, but his story is one of the most affirming. Caeneus is a transgender man; he was born as a woman yet transitions through divine intervention.[219] Ovid himself reinforces this identity over and over throughout this part of Book 12, through Nestor's description, and in the fighting itself. This identity is primarily reinforced through traditionally masculine activities, with Caeneus outmanning his enemies and even his allies.

The main story in which Caeneus is mentioned is the Centaur-Lapith war episode, where the Centaur Eurytus steals Hippodamia during her wedding ceremony to Pirithous. This causes an all out brawl, with quite a few notable human heroes including Nestor, Peleus, Theseus, Pirithous, and Dryas. However, Caeneus appears in the fray, matching them all and killing six named centaurs. After slaying five in rapid succession, the sixth centaur approaches and taunts Caeneus before attacking him. Notably, this is the first time in the story that anyone has questioned Caeneus' gender, and the first time that any character has voiced any queerphobic sentiments:

> "et te, Caeni, feram? nam tu mihi femina semper,
> tu mihi Caenis eris. nec te natalis origo
> commonuit, mentemque subit, quo praemia facto
> quaque viri falsam speciem mercede pararis?
> quid sis nata, vide, vel quid sis passa, columque,
> i, cape cum calathis et stamina pollice torque;
> bella relinque viris." [...]
>
> Do I have to suffer you, Oh Caenis? For you will always be a woman to me,
> you will always be Caenis. Doesn't your birth remind

[219] Ovid *Met.* 12.175.

> you? Doesn't it bring to mind the way in which your prize was given,
> and from which you got this false look from your bribe?
> Consider what you were born as, or how you were raised,
> go to your distaff and wool basket, and twist the thread with your thumb;
> and leave war to men. [...] [220]

Latreus is the first character in the story to maliciously call Caeneus by the feminine form of his name, and Latreus' speech is part of his physical attack. His entire dialogue is a queerphobic invective: first he misgenders Caenees' name, using the feminine form, then with his second comment he denies the reality that Caeneus is a man.[221] Insulting your opponent by calling him a woman is a standard part of epic poetry, but this has a double meaning because Caeneus is a trans man.[222] Vergil in the Aeneid even uses a very similar formulae, where Turnus calls the Trojans women/gallae who should "*sinite arma viris et cedite ferro/*leave arms to men and surrender to iron." in a way remarkably similar to Latreus' speech[223] Latreus is claiming that Caeneus' birth and nothing else determines his present reality; in spite of the reality of the story. In the context of Ovid's story this statement is ridiculous, as Caeneus was divinely changed into a man by a god.[224] In both cases, this is refuted by killing the insulting enemy and restoring the person's masculine identity.[225] The fabric of the entire book is predicated on the idea that deities can change the very nature of something or someone, so to have a character deny that makes them look ridiculous. This gender essentialist idea is made even more anachronistic because this is after eleven other books of the *Metamorphoses*, the audience has seen countless

---

[220] Ovid *Met*. 12:470-475.
[221] Mader*, The Be(a)st of the Achaeans,* 110-111.
[222] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 73. Segal*, Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 25. Nauta*, Catullus 63,* 602-603. In Roman genres this is specifically used as an invective against gender variant people.
[223] Nauta*, Catullus 63,* 621-622. Vergil *Aen.* 9.617-620.
[224] Ovid *Met.* 12.175.
[225] Nauta*, Catullus 63,* 621.

transitions from humans to animals, nymphs to plants, but a mythical creature doesn't even believe in divine power?

In the final lines of this invective, Latreus refers to repeated feminine actions to affirm misgendering, *i, cape cum calathis et stamina pollice torque*.[226] This is an unique aspect of Greco-Roman perceptions of genders that should be expanded on. A variety of philosophers starting with Plato and Aristotle consider the significant difference between men and women to be socio-political and metaphysical.[227] This is compounded by the idea that women are imperfect versions of men. This does not mean that gender essentialism isn't a factor in the Greco-Roman world; or that this is the only opinion, but rather that gender essentialism in this period tends to focus on social roles more so than observable biological differences.[228] Latreus's speech reflects some of that, and his final insult is that Caeneus should go back to doing "women's work" and leave the traditionally masculine realm of war to men. This view of gender is the central opinion of the entire narrative, and Caeneus proves himself a man not through intangible genetics but through his masculine actions. After being insulted, Caeneus proves Latreus' rant incorrect, as he immediately gets the better of the centaur by hitting him with a javelin. The narration still follows this approach to gender; Caeneus acts and is more masculine than his enemy and therefore is a man. Based on views of gender in antiquity, these actions have significant weight in Caeneus' gender and perception.[229]

Craig M. Russell in his paper, *The Most Unkindest Cut: Gender, Genre, and Castration in Statius' Achilleid and Silvae 3.4*, does propose an alternate theory. Russell

[226] Ovid *Met.* 12. 475.
[227] Janssen*, Gender in its Historical Situation,* 49-53.
[228] Janssen*, Gender in its Historical Situation,* 50.
[229] Janssen*, Gender in its Historical Situation,* 49-53.

states that Latreus' opinion is the opinion of the narrative overall, and he uses this to reinforce the idea that a variety of authors including Ovid do believe in gender essentialism.[230] He qualifies this by saying that Caeneus does beat Latreus, and perhaps the audience is not supposed to agree with the centaur.[231] However, the main thrust of his paper is that true gender transition is not seen in Ancient Greco-Roman literature, and that the only thing that is accomplished is ambiguity and destabilization.[232] This take fails to see destabilization as fundamentally queer, and it holds smaller quotes of the metamorphoses as more important than the larger text. The significant amount of masculine pronouns used for Caeneus, alongside the repeated way that the text refers to him as a man, weighs more heavily than smaller invectives and some words with double meanings.[233] This opinion does not fully account for the narration and the voice of Nestor within the story, either, measuring Latreus' few lines as equal to the rest of the story.[234] As mentioned above, it also does not take into account the introduction to this story, where Nestor respects Caeneus' gender post-mortem, and all of the Achaeans follow this model of masculine pronouns and the masculine form of his name.[235] After this quote, the reality of Caeneus' gender is reestablished by Nestor and the narration as a whole. In the same line that Latreus tells Caeneus *"bella relinque viris.",* Nestor immediately reinforces Caeneus' gender by using the correct form of his name at the end of that

[230] Russell, *The Most Unkindest Cut,* 115.
[231] Russell, *The Most Unkindest Cut,* 108-110.
[232] Russell*, The Most Unkindest Cut,* 114-115.
[233] Russell*, The Most Unkindest Cut,* 110. Russell uses the term *ambigui sexus*, which is accurate for Statius' *Thebeid* but not for Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and these terms and ideas do not show up in Ovid's Caeneus scene. The use of *monstrum* in 12.175 does not always have a negative connotation, as the noun primarily refers to "An unnatural thing or event regarded as an omen, a porten, prodigy, sign." Oxford Latin Dictionary, 1131.
[234] Mader*, The Be(a)st of the Achaeans,* 88-89.
[235] Ovid *Met.* 12.171-181.

line.[236] Ovid placed this name in an already cramped line instead of putting it in the next line; forcing the audience to see the juxtaposition between a queerphobic rant and then the reality of Caeneus' gender.

Caeneus then attacks Latreus, injuring him, and is in turn attacked. Because of Caeneus' other gift, these attacks bounce off of him, and the language that surrounds this encounter reinforces the overwhelming masculinity of Caeneus and Latreus' relative failings:

> nudaque Phyllei iuvenis ferit ora sarisa:
> non secus haec resilit, quam tecti a culmine grando,
> aut siquis parvo feriat cava tympana saxo.
> comminus adgreditur laterique recondere duro
> luctatur gladium: gladio loca pervia non sunt.
>
> And he struck the unprotected face of that Phyllean boy [Caeneus] with his spear:
> it recoiled as expected, like he threw hail against a roof,
> or someone struck a hollow drum with a small pebble.
> In melee combat he went up to Caeneus, struggling to slide
> his sword into that durable side: but that place wasn't penetrable by a sword.[237]

Caeneus' divine gift is brought back to the forefront; he is not injured by any weapons. While obviously useful for a warrior, this power is also related to his masculinity and the initial reason for his transformation. The first notable thing is the ridiculousness of this scene: a strong Centaur's attacks are diminished by the language, bouncing off of Caeneus insubstantially. The extremeness of this scene reminds the reader that Caeneus's gift and gender transformation are divine in origin; he was made into a man and given this hyperbolic extension of manhood by a god. His masculinity and his impenetrability are super-human, so he can perform the masculine gender role of a warrior beyond

[236] Ovid *Met.* 12.475.
[237] Ovid *Met.* 12.479-483.

normal means.[238] These two gifts are more closely linked, and the sexual imagery of this passage reveals that they are part of the same.

His initial transition happens because Neptune rapes him, then offers him a gift. He wishes to not be a woman; but as mentioned in the ancient world this is equally biological and social. A man and the concept of masculinity in the ancient Greco-Roman world is someone who is not penetrable in a sexual context.[239] Therefore Neptune fulfills both the biological and social roles with his divine metamorphosis; he transitions Caeneus' gender and he ensures that Caeneus would be the manliest and therefore the least penetrable man.[240] The Latin in the lines above confirm this with their sexual innuendos: swords are often a metaphor for male genitalia and their use is likewise a metaphor for sex or sexual assault.[241] But Latreus' sword, and his metaphorical manhood, doesn't work against Caeneus, he boasts about his masculinity without substance. Line 12.483 contains much of this metaphorical language, and again the reaffirming language waits and draws out the audience's expectations.[242] In the middle of the line, *gladium,* then it appears again for extra emphasis, and *pervia* continues this sexual language and reminds the audience of Caeneus' origin.[243] Then finally, the *non* comes after *pervia,* and repeats this idea that Caeneus is now fully divinely transformed, impenetrable and a man. He has been completely changed in an undeniable way, fulfilling the social and physical

[238] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 70, 74-5. Janssen*, Gender in its Historical Situation,* 49-53. Fredrick*, Mapping Penetrability,* 237. Segal*, Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 23. Cycnus and Caeneus are the ideal male form. Segal*, Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 26.
[239] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 71. Stevenson*, The Rise of Eunuchs,* 32.
[240] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 70-71. Fredrick*, Mapping Penetrability,* 237.
[241] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 71. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, (Duckworth Press, 1982), 21. Cat. 67.21, Petron. *Satyricon,* Ed. by Sandra Braga Bianchet (Crisálida, 2004), 9.5, 130.4. Ovid *Amores.* 1.9.26, Mart. 6.73.6.
[242] Russell*, The Most Unkindest Cut,* 110.
[243] Ovid. *Met.* 12.189-192. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, 21.

role ascribed to men.[244] Latreus mentions that Caeneus will always be a girl and then is proven wrong in such an extreme way that he looks foolish. His hypersexual language is shown to be machismo and bravado, which is then contrasted by the curt and effective response by Caeneus.

After these sections, Caeneus kills Latreus by stabbing him, *nunc age" ait Caeneus "nostro tua corpora ferro/ temptemus!*[245] While Caeneus does not use the same amount of phallic language as Latreus, he does succeed in doing the masculine act of stabbing Latreus.[246] Caeneus doesn't need to boast about his prowess and masculinity, he defends his manliness without the hypersexual language because he is showing the audience he is a man with his actions. Caeneus killed 5 centaurs before Latreus, and through these victories he had already proven his masculinity and he is already considered similar to the other heroes by the narrator Nestor.[247] The centaurs consider Latreus' murder a disgrace, and they all go against one lone man, and continue to try to deny his manhood while he continues to best them.[248] The passage about Caeneus facing all of the centaurs continues the theme; he outmans his opponents and eventually they must resort to trickery in order to kill him. First the rest of the centaurs try to beat Caeneus by normal warfare and another speech,

> ecce ruunt vasto rabidi clamore bimembres
> telaque in hunc omnes unum mittuntque feruntque. 495

[244] Segal*, Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 25.

[245] Ovid *Met*. 12.490-1. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, 46, 70. *Ferrum* is used several times in phrases indicating a loss of manhood. Ovid uses corpora in a sexual context to mean penis in *Am.* 3.7.28. These phrases do not hinge entirely on *ferrum*. These together do have some sexual language, but they are much more subtle and less overtly phallic than Latreus' speech. Segal*, Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies.* The fact that Latreus fails in stabbing Caeneus, yet Caeneus succeeds is noteworthy in the text.

[246] Ovid *Met.* 12.491-3. Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 71-72. Ferrum can be a sexually charged word in Latin, however, Latreus focus on his spear and sword are significantly more phallic than Caeneus' one off mention.

[247] Met. 12.459-461.

[248] Mader*, The Be(a)st of the Achaeans,* 110-111.

tela retusa cadunt: manet inperfossus ab omni
inque cruentatus Caeneus Elateius ictu.
fecerat attonitos nova res. "heu dedecus ingens!"
Monychus exclamat. "populus superamur ab uno
vixque viro; quamquam ille vir est, nos segnibus actis,
quod fuit ille, sumus. quid membra inmania prosunt?

Oh! The centaurs fell upon him in a frenzy with a great shout they yelled,
they threw all of their spears against one man as they spoke.
The spears fell, blunted: Caeneus Elatus' son remained
unpenetrated and unbloodied from every wound.
This new thing made them awestruck. "What a shame!"
Monychus cried out, "Our entire force is beaten by
barely a man; but he is all man, and we with our half-assed actions,
are what he used to be. What are our monstrous limbs for?[249]

The first thing that all of the Centaurs do is the exact same move as Latreus originally did; throwing their spears against Caeneus. As with Latreus, this attack is shown to be impotent as Caeneus is so powerfully masculine that he is completely unhurt.[250] They need to attack Caeneus in order to regain any sense of honor or restore their masculinity.[251] The Centaurs in their speech recognize that this untouchable nature of Caeneus is related to his masculinity by using masculine pronouns. All of the masculine pronouns or endings related to Caeneus have been underlined above, and it is also clear that the narration continues to exclusively use masculine pronouns to describe Caeneus, even after Latreus broke this trend. Then with the second speech, the centaurs do call into question Caeneus' gender, but more cautiously.

They call him *uno vixque viro*, but there are two interesting things to note with this insult that weaken its effects. First, this is a softer insult than Latreus', as he used feminine pronouns and the word femina to describe Caeneus. After Caeneus' victory and

[249] Ovid *Met.* 494-501.
[250] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 74.
[251] Mader*, The Be(a)st of the Achaeans,* 111.

his display of masculine power, the centaurs must admit that he is a man, even if just barely. They also use the masculine *ille* to refer to Caeneus twice, with *ille vir* and *fuit ille* being one line apart.[252] As with Catullus, the pronouns and endings used in Latin are the primary indicator of identification and the text has settled the very minor uncertainty that Latreus created.[253] Caeneus is firmly a man, he has outmanned the Centaurs and this made them admit that he is a man, to the point that they feel ashamed of how much he emasculated them.

Secondly, this speech is coming from the centaurs, all of whom are quite literally barely men.[254] The text continues to reference this fact over and over within this section, being described as *semifer* in 12.406 and as *bimembris* in 12.494. Then they self identify with the term *membra inmania* in 12.501, then *geminae vires* and *natura duplex animalia* in 12.502-3. The text, specifically in this section, is highlighting the fact that centaurs aren't human and juxtaposing their inhumanity with this idea that they can police Caeneus' liminal nature.[255] The inhumanity of the centaurs is not only contrasted against Caeneus' gender, but also against his superhuman masculine powers. So far, his invulnerability and impenetrable nature have given him an unfair advantage in the brawl. After realizing that they could not beat Caeneus with normal fighting tactics, the Centaurs use their inhuman abilities to try to defeat this single man,

> spem caperet: nos semimari superamur ab hoste!
> saxa trabesque super totosque involvite montes
> vivacemque animam missis elidite silvis!
> massa premat fauces, et erit pro vulnere pondus."

---

[252] Mader, *The Be(a)st of the Achaeans,* 112. Ovid *Met.* 12.500-501.
[253] Mader, *The Be(a)st of the Achaeans,* 112. The final farewell for Caeneus further confirms this, where he gets a traditional heroic goodbye.
[254] Keith, *Versions of Epic Masculinity in Ovid's Metamorphoses,* 237.
[255] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 80.

> We are overcome by an enemy who is a eunuch!
> Throw down rocks and tree trunks and whole mountains
> crush his powerful will with a forest of missiles!
> The weight will close his throat, and weight will work rather than wounds!"[256]

The word *semimas* here is unique; like many of the other Latin words for describing gender deviant individuals, it is rather vague. It can mean someone who is emmasculated, intersex, or a eunuch. As mentioned above, Ovid does use it to describe a eunuch as does his close contemporary Vergil.[257] The sense of the insult can be understood as queerphobic; it is used derogatorily against a person because of their gender deviance, but the specific meaning is not important, as it is clear; the centaurs feel that Caeneus is less of a man than they are, even as this is proven wrong by his actions. After Monuchys' speech the Centaurs strip the mountain of logs and trees as he commands and throw them onto the hero.[258] The way that they beat him, by suffocation instead of the more honorable fighting, was a common visual motif in the Archaic period.

Caeneus shows up early in Greek mythological art, and this art can help provide the consistent aspects of the character more broadly. During the Archaic era, Caeneus and the fight was a very popular subject for painters and sculptors, with over thirty examples recovered to date.[259] The majority of these early depictions focus only on this one scene; with no visual mention of his gender transition or the other aspects of the story.[260] That does not mean that these mythological traditions did not did not exist in the Archaic era, but it means that those aspects (if they existed then) were originally considered less

---

[256] Ovid *Met.* 12.506-509.
[257] Ovid *Fasti*, 4.179-187, Seneca *Epistles* 108.6-7, Vergil *Aeneid* 12.95-100.
[258] Ovid *Met.*12.510-516.
[259] Shamugia, *A Bronze Relief with Caeneus,* 32. *Il.* 1.264, Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 891. Caeneus is also mentioned in the Homeric texts, which indicates an overall knowledge and broader acceptance of the hero as a Greek hero.
[260] Shamugia, *A Bronze Relief with Caeneus,* 34.

important than this part of the myth.[261] An example of this Archaic art comes in the form of a bronze sheet from circa 630 BCE, it shows two Centaurs on either side of Caeneus, as they strike him with clubs.[262] Recovered from Olympia, the piece confirms Caeneus' invulnerable status, as the Centaurs must use the logs to bury him into the ground because he cannot be killed otherwise. That seems core to these archaic depictions, and on the Olympia sheet the background places the scene in a forest; with olive trees in the background.[263] The forest is always traditionally the home of the centaurs, and this bronze sheet gives some reason as to why the story focuses on Caeneus being destroyed by logs.[264] In this period, the centauromachy took place after the wedding feast; the centaurs ran away to their forest and then were confronted by the Lapiths there.[265] In Greek mythology they often fought with natural weapons that were found in their habitat, so the use of logs was originally due to the original location of the centauromachy and the mythological canon of centaurs.[266]

This sheet and the other representations of Caeneus are some of the earliest mythological accounts of the Caeneus story, so what they represent and focus on have an impact on the later retellings of the myth. Early mythological examples like this are particularly important when discussing Ovid; because he did research in mythology and there are clear mentions of obscure mythological scenes. An example of this is another divine transformation, Ovid's myth of Iphis in Book 9. Ovid clearly modeled his version of Iphis on the myth of Leukippos; both myths take place on the island of Phaistos, both

---

[261] Pàmias*, Incorruptible Socrates?,* 369-371. This aspect does exist in the 5th century BCE, so the transgender aspect of the myth is not far removed from the original.
[262] Shamugia, *A Bronze Relief with Caeneus,* 33.
[263] Shamugia, *A Bronze Relief with Caeneus,* 34.
[264] *Il.* 1.264. Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 891. Shamugia, *A Bronze Relief with Caeneus,* 34.
[265] Shamugia, *A Bronze Relief with Caeneus,* 34.
[266] Shamugia, *A Bronze Relief with Caeneus,* 34-35.

involve a female god transforming a girl into a boy, and both myths involve a wedding.[267] Ovid's version is based off of this myth that is confined only to the island that it is based in, which shows that he is using scholarship and historical sources in his own time.[268] It is not unreasonable to assume that he knows some portion of this Archaic myth and its focus on Caeneus' death scene and the original focus on the logs used to kill the invulnerable hero.

Some of the details are rearranged like in Ovid's treatment of Leukippos, but Ovid's treatment of Caeneus mostly follows these ancient myths or other recorded authors.[269] Ovid's centauromachy does take place during Pirithous' wedding, but the setting is not that of a wedding held within a building. The wedding is held in a tree lined cave, blending the two original scenes of the centauromachy into one scene where the centaurs fit the more rustic wedding location.[270] In their natural environment, the centaurs grab the readily available detritus from Orthys and use it against Caeneus. In Freas' article, she argues that this scene with the fallen trees is primarily phallic in nature, mirroring the initial rape by Neptune[271]. While it is true that many tree, club, or related words in Latin can have a phallic nature, Ovid's specific language becomes less phallic during this scene, and the scene itself is part of an older tradition that does not focus on sexual violence.

---

[267] Heslin, *The Transvestite Achilles,* 209. Wheeler, "Changing Names: The Miracle of Iphis in Ovid 'Metamorphoses' 9." *Phoenix* 51, no. 2 (1997): 190–202. 190-191. Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love,* 376-377. The names are changed from the actual myth to Ovid's telling of it, which seems to be the greatest deviation.
[268] Heslin, *The Transvestite Achilles,* 207-209. Both Antonius Liberalis and Ovid take this story most likely from Nicander's *Heteroeumena.* Ovid. *Met.* 9.666-797.
[269] Wheeler, *Changing Names,* 190-191, discusses the way that Ovid used early versions of Leukippos in his Iphis myth.
[270] Ovid *Met.* 12.211-212. Shamugia *A Bronze Relief with Caeneus,* 34. Mader*, The Be(a)st of the Achaeans,* 94-96.
[271] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 74.

Ovid does use some phallic language when the Centaurs describe the trees, primarily the word *trabes* in line 12.507 and 12.511.[272] but as seen in many cases throughout the Caeneus scene, this sexual language is kept to the centaurs, and not followed through with the narration. After the Centaurs speak, the language used to describe their attack changes and the words used for the tree trunks and logs becomes much more mundane. Nestor's narration avoids the sexually charged words for wood, primarily switching between forms of *arbor* and *silva* or just words referring to the weight of the piles itself .[273] The emphasis of the text seems to be on the crushing weight being the only thing that could kill him rather than the phallic nature of logs. Furthermore, if the logs and the Centaur's assault are meant to be a metaphor for rape, what is the importance of the log that he uses to try to free himself?[274]

> obrutus inmani cumulo sub pondere Caeneus
> aestuat arboreo congestaque robora duris 515
> fert umeris…
>
> Caeneus was buried under the weight of the huge pile.
> He seethed against the wooden pile, then he placed a strong tree
> trunk on his shoulders…[275]

These lines would change the meaning of the rape metaphore, as using a phallus to remove oneself from an assault would be nonsensical. Freas also claims that Caeneus is

[272] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 75, the second instance of *trabem* in line 12.511 does also seem more mundane than the first, as it is more literally describing a trunk blown over by the wind. This is not saying that there is no sexual innuendo with the term, but it is certainly less charged than the centaurs' use of the word. Adams , *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, 23, *trabem* has some phallic language in Catullus primarily, but he is the only author to consistently use it in this way.
[273] Ovid *Met.* 12.513-15, 517, 519-24. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, 29. There is one use of the term *arbor* as a sexual innuendo in Medieval Latin, but this is an exception to the rules and it is centuries after Ovid. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, 71, weight, or the lack thereof, can be used to describe testicles, but this is context specific and not used in this type of situation.
[274] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 75.
[275] Ovid *Met.* 12.514-516.

fixed in place, similar to the situation that women were placed within the text.[276] However, his move is much closer to the myth of the Titan Atlas.[277] Once he takes this oak tree on his shoulders, he uses it to heave upward, trying to lift the entire mass of trees enough to breathe. This is described not in the language of a struggling victim, but in the language of a natural disaster, "*veluti, quam cernimus, ecce ardua si terrae quatiatur motibus Ide/*[The thrown logs], just as steep Ida, which we can see here, shook during an earthquake."[278] This situation is quite a bit different than a sexual assault scene, Caeneus is not fleeing and the way that he tries to fight out of this situation mirrors heroic exploits and superhuman feats of strength.[279] Caeneus' actions are still that of a manly warrior, he is even able to move an entire mountain of tree trunks in a display of pure strength.[280] Coupled with his initial impenetrability, he is exemplifying the masculine ideals and embodying the Roman monomorphic view of masculinity.[281]

The other factor that is unaccounted for in Freas' argument is the historical importance of this scene. As mentioned, the centaurs beating Caeneus with logs and trapping him under the mound is one of the oldest confirmed parts of this myth. It is also the part of this myth that seemed to have the most circulation and importance; this scene highlights his invulnerability because this method is the only way they can successfully kill him. The demigod Cycnus and Caeneus are both killed by direct strangulation,

---

[276] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 75.
[277] Hesiod, *Theogony,* Ed. by Evelyn-White (Harvard University Press, 1914), 517-520.
[278] Ovid *Met.* 12.520-521.
[279] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 76. She states that the log scene is an approximation of phallic violence, and cites various scenes where women run away from a rapist, or are engulfed, trapped, enclosed by their rapist. This analysis seems to ignore that Caeneus does not run away or flee, that there are other male analogies to being crushed, as well as the origins of the Caeneus myth.
[280] Ovid *Met.* 12.520-521.
[281] Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 390-391. Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch,* 107-108.

because the heroes that kill them are stronger than the invulnerable beings.[282] Cycnus' death is more relevant to his death for two reasons. Cycnus' death is the direct cause for the Achaeans celebrating and asking for this story, in which Nestor mentions that the two heroes have the same abilities.[283] While Ovid could add whatever twist he wished to this original source material, the scene itself must involve tree trunks and logs suffocating Caeneus. Merely following the traditions of the myth itself does not constitute phallic imagery, and the way that Ovid writes this scene is not overtly phallic. Overall, Ovid's treatment of the entire battle scene continues to show Caeneus outmanning his opponents and the end of the battle shows Ovid's attention to the original myth that he is drawing from. Caeneus is stronger than the centaurs, so they cannot suffocate him in this way.

Secondly, Cycnus and Caeneus both have a nearly identical last minute metamorphosis in order to escape their death. Both turn into birds right before their last breath, and they are able to escape their fates because of the god Neptune.[284] Freas mentions that this final transformation could be considered a feminine transition and escape from sexual assault, because the word *avis*, a Latin feminine noun, describes Caeneus.[285] This analysis fails to consider the closer connection with Cycnus, and that many people often become birds in the *Metamorphoses* in a variety of situations.[286]

---

[282] For a reference to Cycnus' death, see Mader*, The Be(a)st of the Achaeans,* 88. Cycnus is compared to Caeneus multiple times, although this idea of invulnerable beings being strangled is a common motif Ovid *Met*. 12.1-145.
[283] Mader*, The Be(a)st of the Achaeans,* 88.
[284] Mader*, The Be(a)st of the Achaeans,* 88. Segal*, Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 25. Ovid *Met.* 12.144-45, 12.524-525.
[285] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 76.
[286] Segal*, Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 25. Caeneus and Cycnus are supposed to be completely analogous. Anderson, "Multiple Change in the Metamorphoses." *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 94 (1963): 1–27, 15, people turning into birds throughout the Metamorphoses due to situations outside of sexual assault include Daedalion, Ovid *Met.* 11.318, Ceyx and Halcyone Ovid *Met.* 11.728-750, Scylla 8.141-149, and Cycnus Ovid. *Met*. 12.144-145. Generally what seems to bind these and the metamorphoses into birds relating to sexual assault is that these metamoprhoses tend to happen when a person is at their lowest point, and is saved.

Cycnus is also described by the feminine words *alba* and *volucris* when he transforms into a bird, but Freas only mentioned Ovid's feminine noun usage when describing Caeneus, and does not mention that Ovid does the same thing with cisgender heroes.[287] Many of the Latin words describing birds are feminine, but this does not indicate that the people who turn into birds are inherently feminine. In Latin grammar, nouns in apposition with another noun should agree in case, number, and gender when possible, but this is often not possible.[288] Using an appositive noun in this way does not have any bearing on natural gender, and is not the best way to analyze the gender of this scene.

Furthermore, Freas does mention the connection between Cycnus and Caeneus, but still considers Caeneus' shift to be primarily related to women escaping from sexual assault; the myths of Cornix and the Muses.[289] While these myths also end in people becoming birds, the situations around them are quite a bit different than Caeneus. Caeneus is in the middle of his epic battle, struggling to fight against an entire army, whereas Cornix and the Muses were trapped in a dangerous situation.[290] Transformations into birds within Ovid seem to have no cohesive meaning, and can sometimes be random, like Picus'.[291] Since the overall genre of the Caeneus scene is epic after his transition, this idea of an extended sexual assault scene is not supported.[292] There are three much clearer analogies to Caeneus's transformation into a bird, Cycnus, Periclymenus, and Memnon, who are featured close to Caeneus in Book 12.[293] Caeneus' combat scene focuses more on

---

[287] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 76. Met. 12.144-145.
[288] Allen and Greenough, *Allen and Greenough's New Latin Grammar,* 32, 282. Grammatical gender has no bearing on the natural gender of Latin nouns.
[289] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 76, Both Cornix and the Muses are mentioned in this passage. As mentioned above, there is very little correlation between the various bird transformations.
[290] For Cornix, Ovid *Met.* 2.569-88. For the Muses, Ovid *Met.* 5.269-293.
[291] Ovid *Met.* 14.386-396.
[292] Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 891.
[293] Segal*, Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 25. For Cycnus, see Ovid. *Met.* 12.144-145, for Periclymenus see Ovid *Met.* 556-576, for Memnon 13.576-624.

epic traditions and earlier versions of Caeneus' mythology, which has an emphasis on the heroic male exploits of Caeneus and the earliest scene of his death.

With the traditional scenes, Ovid incorporates Caeneus' trans identity by showing that he can outman his semi-human opponents, performing masculinity better than even his peers. In the duel against Latreus, Ovid writes some invective insults against Caeneus' gender, but then he has Caeneus defeat Latreus so spectacularly that the other Centaurs must take drastic measures and change the way that they speak about Caeneus. Caeneus is consistently called a man and referred to with masculine pronouns and endings by Nestor and the other Lapiths, even at his death.

5. Conclusion:

The Greco-Roman world during the Hellenistic and then Roman Imperial period was a place in which older myths and stories were revitalized and studied. This included a focus on gender variance and androgyny, found in eunuchs as well as intersex and gender non-conforming cisgender people[294] This focus did not appear out of nowhere; and it draws upon older examples of gender variance, although references in material culture and literary references did increase during the later time period. This can be best understood through an application of queer theory, as well as a comparison to third genders in other ancient/non western cultures.

These cultures are all unique and different, but they do not prescribe to the western enlightenment idea of sexual dimorphism, or that there are two immutable primary sexes. The ideology in the Greco Roman and in many non-western communities is that gender and sexuality is mutable; and there is a scale between masculine and feminine/male and female.[295] This makes the comparison between Native North American third genders and Greco-Roman gender variance very useful; as these various cultures have third genders embedded into their cultural identity and they often conflate intersex and third gender/gender variant people.[296] In both fields, later western scholars and accounts have often misunderstood these identities as simply homosexual or "deviant", which has led to an incomplete view of these people and the broader culture.

---

[294] Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking,* 54-55. Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch,* 120. Fredrick*, Mapping Penetrability,* 242-243. Townsley, *Paul, The Goddess Religions*, 711.

[295] For mentions of the fluidity of ancient Mediterranean sexuality, Townsley, *Paul, The Goddess Religions*, 714.

[296] Ovid *Amores* 2.3.1-12 and Martial 14.174. Valerius Maximus' *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 7.7.6. Gleason, *The semiotics of Gender,* 396. Stevenson*, The Rise of Eunuchs,* 503-504, 507. Philostratus, *Vitae Sophistrarum* 8.489, Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum Gestarum* 18.4.

With a more complete view of Greco-Roman gender variance, the myth of Caeneus as written by Ovid can be investigated as a myth of a transgender man. Ovid is well aware of this gender variance, and the history of various myths and their changes throughout time.[297] He uses allusions to the oldest versions of the myth of Caeneus that were written in the Homeric tradition, as well as archaic, classical, and Hellenistic variations on this myth and others to create his version of Caeneus.[298] Nestor acts as the bridge between these myths; within the narration he bridges the time of the myth to the Achaeans several generations later, and outside the narration Nestor is the hero who introduces Caeneus in the Iliad.[299] Caeneus and his gender transition are not only the mixture of myths and time period, they are also a mixture of elegiac and epic genre.[300] Caeneus' upbringing as a woman has some elegiac themes, then as he embraces and wants his new identity the *Metamorphoses* switches into a more epic theme, matching Caeneus' masculine identity and his embrace of it.

Alongside this blending of tradition and genre, throughout the scene in the *Metamorphoses,* Caeneus is treated primarily as a man with an interesting origin story by his allies and family. During his life and well after his death Caeneus's identity and gendered endings are respected by Nestor, the Achaeans, and the Lapiths. In all of these scenes, Ovid is very careful with his use of pronouns, sometimes delaying Caeneus' pronouns for emphasis, but never treating Caeneus' transition or identity as fake or dubious. The use of myths, genre, and grammar was employed in order to affirm Caeneus' gender not only in the text itself, but also to the audience reading the text. This

---

[297] Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love,* 76-377, Ovid. *Met.* 4.274-388, 3.316-338, 9.4-206, 12.146-535.
[298] Shamugia, *A Bronze Relief with Caeneus,* 32. *Il.* 1.264. Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 891. Pàmias*, Incorruptible Socrates?,* 369-371.
[299] Shamugia, *A Bronze Relief with Caeneus,* 32. *Il.* 1.264, Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 891.
[300] Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 893.

theme overall continues into the next section as Caeneus and his identity are challenged by a centaur who questions his manliness.

The centaur Latreus then attacks Caeneus, insulting his masculinity and stating that he is a woman since he was born a woman. While Ovid had Latreus misgender Caeneus, the narration never continues this trend, and then Caeneus proves his masculinity by easily defeating the centaur and showing his divine masculine power of invulnerability.[301] The masculinity of a transgender man is such a threat that the rest of the centaurs then attack Caeneus all at once, burying him under a mountain of logs in order to smother him. This scene again corresponds to the Iliad's description of the character as well as archaic bronze depictions of Caeneus. Ovid's description of Caeneus' final act, the most visually depicted scene for this hero, affirms his status as a man as he displays superhuman strength and exemplifies Roman masculinity. At his death, he is turned into a bird, just like the Cycnus who was given the same powers by the same god, the descendent of Neptune Periclymenus, and the demigod Memnon, all of whom are described in the Metamorphoses in close proximity to Caeneus.[302] The Lapiths then mourn Caeneus and one of them gives his final address, calling Caeneus one of the best men.

As transgender people continue to come under scrutiny and persecution, an accurate and updated understanding of our past must be recorded. The modern western idea of queerness might not have existed in antiquity or other cultures, but queer people and queer stories did exist and were noticed by the larger society. Even as a literary and

[301] Freas, *Da Femina Ne Sim,* 70, 74-5. Janssen*, Gender in its Historical Situation,* 49-53. Fredrick*, Mapping Penetrability,* 237. Segal*, Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies,* 23, 26.
[302] For Memnon, see Ovid *Met*. 13.576-624. For Cycnus Ovid. *Met.* 12.1-145. For Periclymenus see Ovid *Met.* 556-576.

mythological character, the way that Caeneus is portrayed and depicted matters because one of the most recurring lies of queerphobia is that queer identities are a new and corrupted form of traditional genders. However, if an author like Ovid who was not gender variant, can accurately write, discuss, and defend the gender of a trangender character two thousand years ago, then trans people and trans bodies are not so outlandish, unnatural, and unexplainable.

Point towards future developments:

In any large investigation, there are many rabbit holes of related research that do not fit within the theme of the paper. Articles, books, and many other sources must be read to get a complete view of the topic, but their inclusion would take away from the core ideas. As a more recent proverb goes, "A good thesis is a done thesis." but here are some directions and thoughts for further developments or alternative related research.

Ovid's treatment of Caeneus is only one aspect of both Ovid's approach to gender variant characters and Caeneus' treatment as a transgender hero by other ancient authors. While Ovid's treatment of characters like Iphis, Tiresias, and Hermaphroditus have briefly been described in the context of Greco-Roman gender variance, there is room for further analysis of these myths and their adaptation by Ovid. Hermaphroditus and Tiresias should be considered for further study, especially in the context of a monomorphic view of sexuality. This view generally has a masculine and feminine spectrum of a single gender, and analyzing more Greco-Roman myths through this lens of queer theory and an added third gender category would provide a more complete view of the Greco-Roman world.

Specifically a deeper discussion of Iphis would be a useful comparison, as Iphis is one of the only other characters in the *Metamorphoses* who wanted his transition. Iphis is a likely comparison to Caeneus as both are gender variant and happy with their transition, both have prior religious and mythological canon, and both act traditionally masculine in the Greco-Roman world, i.e. taking a wife or participating in warfare.[303] Not only should Iphis be further studied in his own right, but a comparison between Ovid's interpretation of both characters could provide a better understanding of not only the poet's view of gender variance in myth, but also the wider understanding of gender variance as both Iphis and Caeneus have preexisting mythology involving their gender transition.

Ovid was not the only author to write and do adaptations of these characters, and an investigation of these other authors would prove beneficial. Vergil, Apollodorus, and Hygnius all have brief mentions of these characters, and their interpretations show some unique views of gender variance. Vergil has Caeneus regain his feminine body in the underworld, yet he still keeps the masculine form of his name.[304] This shows that even in the more "clear cut" examples of Caeneus' feminine nature there is some room for interpretation. Likewise, Hyginus' *Fabulae* and Apollodorus' *Library* have several references to Caeneus, as a, Argonaut, a father begetting children, and as a girl.[305] Caeneus does change gender in the *Fabulae*, and his death as written by Hyginus represents a variation in the death scene.[306] There are other instances of Caeneus starting

[303] Keith, *Versions of Epic Masculinity in Ovid's Metamorphoses,* 217-219.
[304] Vergil *Aeneid* 6.448.
[305] Trzaskoma, Some Observations on the Text of Hyginus' Catalogue of Argonauts ('Fab'. 14)." *The Classical Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2008): 256–63. 256. Apollodorus' *Library*, Trans. By R. Scott Smith and Stephen M. Trzaskoma. (Hackett Publishing Company Inc, 2007), 1.111, Hyginus 14.3-4, 19, 173, 242. There are different parentages in some of these, but Caeneus is in the list of Argonauts in both cases.
[306] Trzaskoma*, Some Observations on the Text of Hyginus' Catalogue of Argonauts,* 257.

from the Iliad, and while some of these were used in this investigation, they should be investigated in their own right.[307]

Greco-Roman gender variance and their third gender has been looked at, but this is not the only culture in the Ancient Mediterranean. Briefly mentioned in reference to queer identity in the Classics, ancient Midrash and rabbinic texts have dozens of references to gender variant and intersex people.[308] Midrash adopted the Greek term *androgyne*, as well as described a variety of Hebrew terminology for five other genders.[309] These cultures had significant overlap and influenced each other significantly, so a deeper investigation would provide more understanding of ancient Jewish studies as well as classical studies.

Similarly, an investigation of the modern reception of these myths would be important. Both the comparison between two-spirit identities, Jewish genders and the Greco-Roman third gender was made, but those two identities have modern versions. Two-spirit individuals, modern Tumtum and *androgyne* people exist, and draw from their past in order to better express their identity. There is not a similar continual cultural existence of Caeneus and other gender variant people, but these myths do have reception throughout Europe and they can be accessed now. Within this paper there were many different avenues that could continue this research because there were so many different fields of study that were required.

---

[307] Shamugia, *A Bronze Relief with Caeneus,* 32. *Il.* 1.264, Gärtner, *Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose,* 891

[308] Schleicher*, Constructions of Sex and Gender,* 426. Roughgarden, *Transgender in Historical Europe,* 358.

[309] Schleicher*, Constructions of Sex and Gender,* 426.

Bibliography Used:

Adams, J. N. *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, London: Duckworth Press, 1982.

Anderson, William S. "Multiple Change in the Metamorphoses." *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 94 (1963): 1–27. https://doi.org/10.2307/283631.

Barrett, Rusty. "The Emergence of the Unmarked" Queer Theory, Language Ideology, and Formal Linguistics." *Queer Excursions: Retheorizing Binaries in Language, Gender, and Sexuality.* Edited by Lal zimman, Jenny L. Davis, Joshua Raclaw. Oxford University Press 2014. 195-223.

Bessone, Federica. Visions of a Hero: Optical Illusions and Multifocal Epic in Statius's Achilleid. *Helios* (Lubbock), Vol.45 (2), (2018):169-194.

Bessone, Federica. The Indiscreet Charm of the Exotic: *Amores Peregrini* as Explorations of Identity in Roman Poetry. *Identities, Ethnicities and Gender in Antiquity,* Edited by Jaqueline Fabre-Serris, Alison Keith and Florence Klein. De Gruyter, 2021.

Boardman, John. *Greek Art, Fourth Edition*. Thames and Hudson, 1996.

Burke, Sean D. *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch: Strategies of Ambiguity in Acts*. 1517 Media, 2013. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt22h6s0c.

Cameron, Alan. "Young Achilles in the Roman World." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 99 (2009): 1–22. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40599737.

Roscoe, Will. Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America. St. Martin's Press, 1998.

Clarke, John R. *Looking at Lovemaking: Constructions of Sexuality in Roman Art 100 B.C. - A.D. 250*. University of California Press, 2001.

Connors, Catherine. "Ennius, Ovid and Representations of Ilia." *Materiali e Discussioni per l'analisi Dei Testi Classici*, no. 32, Fabrizio Serra editore, 1994, pp. 99–112, https://doi.org/10.2307/40236026.

Curran, Leo C. "Transformation and Anti-Augustanism in Ovid's 'Metamorphoses.'" *Arethusa* 5, no. 1 (1972): 71–91. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26307007.

Davidson, James. *The Greeks and Greek Love.* Random House 2007.

Davis, Jenny L. "More than Just Gay Indians' Intersecting Articulations of Two-Spirit Gender, Sexuality, and Indigenousness." *Queer Excursions: Retheorizing Binaries in Language, Gender, and Sexuality.* Edited by Lal zimman, Jenny L. Davis, Joshua Raclaw. Oxford University Press 2014. 62-80.

Davis, Jenny L, Lal Zimman, and Joshua Raclaw. "Opposites Attract: Retheorizing Binaries in Language, Gender, and Sexuality." *Queer Excursions: Retheorizing Binaries in Language, Gender, and Sexuality.* Edited by Lal zimman, Jenny L. Davis, Joshua Raclaw. Oxford University Press 2014. 1-12.

Freas, Debra. "*Da Femina Ne Sim*: Gender, Genre and Violence in Ovid's Caenis Episode." *The Classical Journal* 114, no. 1 (2018): 60–84. https://doi.org/10.5184/classicalj.114.1.0060.

Fredrick, David. Mapping Penetrability in Late Republican and Early Imperial Rome. *The Roman Gaze: Vision, Power, and the Body.* Edited by David Fredrick. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.

Frontisi-Ducroux, Françoise and François Lissarrague. "From Ambiguity to Ambivalence: A Dionysiac Excursion Through the "Anacreontic" Vases." Translated by Robert Lamberton. *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World,* Edited by David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin. Princeton University Press, 1990.

Garrison, Daniel H. *Sexual Culture in Ancient Greece.* University of Oklahoma Press 2000.

Gärtner, Thomas. "Die Geschlechtsmetamorphose Der Ovidischen Caenis Und Ihr Hellenistischer Hintergrund." *Latomus* 66, no. 4 (2007): 891–99. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41545801.

Ginsberg, Warren. "Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' and the Politics of Interpretation." *The Classical Journal* 84, no. 3 (1989): 222–31. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3297514.

Gleason, Maud W. The semiotics of Gender: Physiognomy and Self-Fashioning in the Second Century C.E . *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World,* Edited by David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin. Princeton University Press, 1990.

Greenough, J.B., and J.H. Allen. *Allen and Greenough's New Latin Grammar.* Edited by J.B. Greenough, G.L. Kittredge, A.A. Howard, and Benj. L. D'Ooge. Updated by Annr Mahoney. Focus Publishing, Indianapolis, 2000.

Heslin, P. J. *The Transvestite Achilles Gender and Genre in Statius' Achilleid.* Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Janssen, Ephraim Das. "Gender in its Historical Situation." In *Phenomenal Gender: What Transgender Experience Discloses*, 43–66. Indiana University Press, 2017. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt2005zzv.6.

Keith, *A. Versions of Epic Masculinity in Ovid's Metamorphoses.* In Hardie, Barchiesi, and Hinds, eds., 214–39. Cambridge, 1999.

Mader, Gottfried. "The Be(a)st of the Achaeans: Turning Tables / Overturning Tables in Ovid's Centauromachy (*Metamorphoses* 12.210–535)." *Arethusa* 46, no. 1 (2013): 87–116. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26322738.

Merriam-Webster, s.v. "Misgender (*Verb*)," accessed March 18, 2023. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/misgender.

Merriam-Webster, s.v. "Trans man (*Noun*)," accessed March 18, 2023. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trans%20man.

Merriam-Webster, s.v. "Transgender (*Adjective*)," accessed March 18, 2023. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/misgender.

Myerowitz, Molly. *The domestication of Desire: Ovid's Parva Tabella and the theatre of Love.* Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome. Edited by Amy Richlin. Oxford University Press, 1992.

Nauta, R. R. "Catullus 63 in a Roman Context." *Mnemosyne* 57: 596–628, 2004.

Oxford Latin Dictionary. Fascicle I-VIII. Oxford at the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1968-1982.

Pàmias, J. (2012). Incorruptible Socrates? (Pl. Smp. 219e and Acus. frag. 22). *Hermes*, *140*(3), 369–374. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23251913

Phillips, C. Robert. "Roman Religion and Literary Studies of Ovid's 'Fasti.'" *Arethusa* 25, no. 1 (1992): 55–80. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26308560.

Pinto, Renato, and Luciano C. G. Pinto. "Transgendered Archaeology: The Galli and the Catterick Transvestite." In *TRAC 2012: Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference, Frankfurt 2012*, edited by Annabel Bokern, Marion Bolder-Boos, Stefan Krmnicek, Dominik Maschek, and Sven Page, 169–82. Oxbow Books, 2013. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvh1dhxh.15.

Roughgarden, Joan. "Transgender in Historical Europe and the Middle East." In *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People*, 1st ed., 352–66. University of California Press, 2013. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt7zw3js.24.

Russell, Craig M. "The Most Unkindest Cut: Gender, Genre, and Castration in Statius' 'Achilleid' and 'Silvae' 3.4." *The American Journal of Philology* 135, no. 1 (2014): 87–121. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24559852.

Schleicher, Marianne. "Constructions of Sex and Gender: Attending to Androgynes and 'Tumtumim' Through Jewish Scriptural Use." *Literature and Theology* 25, no. 4 (2011): 422–35. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23927105.

Segal, Charles. "Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies: Art, Gender, and Violence in the 'Metamorphoses.'" *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 5, no. 3 (1998): 9–41. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20163686.

Segal, Charles. "Ovid's 'Metamorphoses': Greek Myth in Augustan Rome." *Studies in Philology* 68, no. 4 (1971): 371–94. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4173734.

Sharrock, Alison. Babylonians in Thebes: Some Ovidian Stories of Barbarians and Foreigners. *Identities, Ethnicities and Gender in Antiquity,* Edited by Jaqueline Fabre-Serris, Alison Keith and Florence Klein. De Gruyter, 2021.

Shamugia, Nikoloz. "A Bronze Relief with Caeneus and Centaurs from Olympia." *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 109 (2017): 31–61. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44863952.

Skinner, Marilyn B. *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*. Blackwell Publishing, 2010.

Smith, R.R.R. *Hellenistic Sculpture*. Thames and Hudson, 1991.

Stevenson, Walter. "The Rise of Eunuchs in Greco-Roman Antiquity." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, no. 4 (1995): 495–511. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4617200.

The Secret Cabinet in the National archaeological museum of Naples. Edited by Stefano De Caro. Electa Napoli. Soprintendenza archeologica di napoli e caserta, 2000.

Townsley, Jeramy. Paul, the Goddess Religions, and Queer Sects: Romans 1:23–28. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 1 January 2011; 130 (4): 707–728. doi: https://doi.org/10.2307/23488275

Trzaskoma, Stephen M. "Some Observations on the Text of Hyginus' Catalogue of Argonauts ('Fab'. 14)." *The Classical Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2008): 256–63. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27564138.

Von Stackelberg, Katharine T. "Garden Hybrids: Hermaphrodite Images in the Roman House." *Classical Antiquity* 33, no. 2 (2014): 395–426. https://doi.org/10.1525/ca.2014.33.2.395.

Wheeler, Stephen M. "Changing Names: The Miracle of Iphis in Ovid 'Metamorphoses' 9." *Phoenix* 51, no. 2 (1997): 190–202. https://doi.org/10.2307/1088494.

Zajko, V. " 'Listening With' Ovid: Intersexuality, Queer Theory and the Myth of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis." *Helios* 36: 175–202. 2009.

Ancient Sources:

Ammianus Marcellinus. With An English Translation. John C. Rolfe, Ph.D., Litt.D. Cambridge. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann, Ltd. 1935-1940.

Apollodorus' Library and Hyginus' Fabulae, Two Handbooks of Greek Mythology. Trans. By R. Scott Smith and Stephen M. Trzaskoma. Hackett Publishing Company Inc, 2007.

Apuleius. *The Golden Ass, being the Metamorphoses of Lucius Apuleius.* Stephen Gaselee. London: William Heinemann; New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons. 1915. Keyboarding.

Aristotle. ed. W. D. Ross, Aristotle's Politica. Oxford, Clarendon Press. 1957.

Aristotle. 'Generation of Animals'. In *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, edited by Jonathan Barnes, translated by A. Platt, 6. print., with Corr., 1:pp. 1111–1218. Bollingen Series, 71,2. Princeton, N.J: Princeton Univ. Pr, 1995.

Augustine. *The City of God: Volumes II* Translation by William M. Green. Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge MA, 412, 1963.

Curtius Rufus, Quintus. *Historiarum Alexandri Magni Macedonis libri qui supersunt.* Edmund Hedicke. in aedibus B.G. Teubneri. Lipsiae. 1908. Keyboarding.

De usu partium corporls humani lib. XIV. In K. Kühn (Ed.), *Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia* (Cambridge Library Collection - Classics, pp. 142-210). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2011.

Dionis Prusaensis quem vocant Chrysostomum quae exstant omnia, Vols I and II. Dio Chrysostom. J. de Arnim. Weidmann. Berlin. 1893. Keyboarding.

Ennius, Quintus, and Ethel Mary Steuart. "The Annals of Quintus Ennius." Cambridge [Eng.]: The University press, 1925. Pdf.

Flavii Philostrati Opera, Vol 2. Philostratus the Athenian. Carl Ludwig Kayser. in aedibus B. G. Teubneri. Lipsiae. 1871. Keyboarding.

Förster, R. ed. *Scriptores Physionomonici Graeci et Latini.* 2 vols. Leipzig, 1893.

Homer. Homeri Opera in five volumes. Oxford, Oxford University Press. 1920.

Homer. *The Odyssey with an English Translation.* by A.T. Murray, PH.D. in two volumes. Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann, Ltd. 1919.

Evelyn-White. *Theogony.* Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1914.

J. C. Rolfe, ed., Suetonius, 2 Vols., The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, and New York: The MacMillan Co.), II.87-187. 1914.

Kaimakis, D. *Die Kyraniden.* Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie, 76. Meisenheim am Glan, 1976.

Lucian. Works. with an English Translation by. A. M. Harmon. Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press. London. William Heinemann Ltd. 1913. 1.

Lucian. Works. with an English Translation by. A. M. Harmon. Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press. London. William Heinemann Ltd. 1925. 4.

Lucian. Works. with an English Translation by. A. M. Harmon. Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press. London. William Heinemann Ltd. 1936. 5.

Macrobius. *The Saturnalia.* trans. Percival Vaughan Davies; New York: Columbia University Press, 214. 1969.

Matheseos libri VIII, 2 vols, edited by W. Kroll and F. Skutsch, Stuttgart, Teubner, 1968.

Maximus, Valerius. *Memorable Doings and Sayings: Books VI-IX.* Translated by D.R. Shackelton Bailey. Loeb Classical Library 493. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

M. Valerii Martialis Epigrammaton libri / recognovit W. Heraeus. Martial. Wilhelm Heraeus. Jacobus Borovskij. Leipzig. 1925/1976.

M. Tulli Ciceronis Rhetorica. M. Tullius Cicero. A. S. Wilkins. 1902.

Naso, Publius Ovidius. *Metamorphoses (Latin Text) By Ovid.* Cavalier Classics, 2015.

Plato. *Platonis Opera*, ed. John Burnet. Oxford University Press. 1903.

Petronius, Arbiter. *Satyricon, Edição Bilíngüe*. Translated and edited by Sandra Braga Bianchet. Crisálida, 2004.

Pindar. *The Odes of Pindar including the Principal Fragments with an Introduction and an English Translation,* by Sir John Sandys, Litt.D., FBA. Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1937.

Pliny the Elder. *Naturalis Historia.* Edited by Karl Friedrich Theodor Mayhoff. Lipsiae. Teubner. 1906.

Publii Terentii Comoediae VI. P. Terentius Afer. Edward St. John Parry, M.A. London. Whitaker and Co., Ave Maria Lane; George Bell, Fleet Street. 1857.

P. Ovidius Naso. *Amores, Epistulae, Medicamina faciei femineae, Ars amatoria, Remedia amoris.* R. Ehwald. edidit ex Rudolphi Merkelii recognitione. Leipzig. B. G. Teubner. 1907.

P. Ovidius Naso. *Ovid's Fasti*. Sir James George Frazer. London; Cambridge, MA. William Heinemann Ltd.; Harvard University Press. 1933. Keyboarding.

Quinn, Kenneth. *Catullus: The Poems* (2nd ed.). London: Macmillan, 1973.

Seneca. *Epistles, Volume III: Epistles 93-124.* Translated by Richard M. Gummere. Loeb Classical Library 77. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925.

Statius, P. Papinius. Statius, Vol I. John Henry Mozley. London: William Heinemann; New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons. 1928. Keyboarding.

Stählin, Otto. Clemens Alexandrinus.: Volume 1: *Protrepticus and Paedagogus.* Hinrichs, Leipzig 1905.

Stern, J.. "Heraclitus the Paradoxographer: Flepi 'Amcrutov, On Unbelievable Tales." TAPhA 133: 51-97. 2003.

Toye, D. L. *Akousilaos of Argos.* Brill 's New Jacoby. I. Worthington. London, 2009.

Vergil. *Bucolics, Aeneid, and Georgics Of Vergil*. J. B. Greenough. Boston. Ginn & Co. 1900.

Watson, Alan. *The Digest of Justinian, Volume 2.* Revised Edition ed., Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.

Zimmermann, Bernhard. *Galen, On Semen/ De semine.* Edition, translation and commentary by Philipp de Lacy. Berlin, Akademie Verl., 1992. 291 S. (Corpus medicorum Graecorum V3,1). DM 220,-. ISBN 3-05-001863-1; ISSN 0070-0347.", *Gesnerus* 51, 1-2. 1994: doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/22977953-0510102020

Vita:

RJ Palmer was born in Aurora Colorado, and grew up in North Carolina. He attended the University of North Carolina at Asheville and received a Bachelors of Arts, majoring in Classical Studies and Minoring in Indigenous Studies. He is currently enrolled at the University of Kentucky, and is expected to receive a Master of Arts in Classics this May, 2023. He was a Tutor and Peer Mentor of Latin and Ancient Greek for 3 years, and he is currently a TA and Graduate student at the University of Kentucky. RJ's professional work primarily discusses textile archaeology, Greek and Latin poetry, and gender and the role of the other in Classical antiquity.