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Achilles and the Roman Aristocrat: The Ambrosian Iliad as a Social Statement in the Late Antique Period

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ACHILLES AND THE ROMAN ARISTOCRAT: THE AMBROSIAN ILLAD AS A SOCIAL STATEMENT IN THE LATE ANTIQUE PERIOD

By

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For my husband.
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ABSTRACT

The *Ambrosian Iliad* is a Late Antique manuscript that depicts Homer’s *Iliad*. Originally written in Greek, much of its text was lost when the pictures were later removed from the original codex and pasted on separate sheets of vellum. Scholars have previously analyzed the *Ambrosian Iliad* using paleographic and stylistic analysis as a means to determine the work’s provenance and date with wide ranging results.

This study takes a different approach to the *Ambrosian Iliad* by applying contextual analysis when taking into account historical, social, and religious influences on the making and viewing of the manuscript. Particular attention is paid to the distinctly Late Antique Roman iconography that pervades the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s imagery. The fifth-century reception of its imagery and how it contributed to the elite’s self-definition of its status and place in a time of great change is the focus of this dissertation. Ultimately, this approach will contribute to the discourse by suggesting the use of the alternative methodology of contextuality to ascertain the dates and provenances for Late Antique manuscripts including the *Ambrosian Iliad*.

Focusing on the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s depictions of pagan sacrifices, circus games, and military battles, I propose that its mixture of antiquarian and contemporary iconography acted as reflections of the viewers’ world view in the fifth century. These particular activities were connected to the *mos maiorum* and were a reminder and confirmation of the elite’s purpose of protecting tradition. Based on primary sources during this period, it is evident that there was no other area of the Roman Empire where the patricians were more driven to preserve the *mos maiorum* than in Rome or the surrounding areas. Moreover, the *Ambrosian Iliad* also spoke to the Christian viewer with its subtle reminders of their own religion with its references to communal banqueting and the role of the Church in such popular public activities as the circus. Finally, this study will propose that the *Ambrosian Iliad* was created sometime during the second through third quarters of the fifth century for a patron in the area of Rome.
INTRODUCTION

Sometime during the Late Antique period, a rich patron commissioned the creation of a codex illustrating Homer’s *Iliad*. The remnants of this manuscript, known today as the *Ambrosian Iliad*, are housed in Milan’s Ambrosian Library. Over the succeeding centuries, many hands tampered with the manuscript as various owners added diacritical marks, punctuation, and *scholia*. Other additions included characters labeled with cursive writing and, in a few cases, faint summaries were written in the background of the pictures. It is generally accepted that at some time, certainly by the thirteenth century, the illustrations were cut out of the original codex and repasted onto sheets of paper. Thus, the majority of the original text has been lost. Today, this fragile and irreplaceable work of art is kept in a dark vault in the Ambrosian Library.

The purpose of this study is to add to the scholarly discourse concerning the *Ambrosian Iliad* by determining the date and patronage of the manuscript based on contextual analysis. My argument will take into account previous scholarship which analyzed the paleographic and formal, that is stylistic, characteristics of the manuscript and placed it in the fifth or early sixth century. By applying contextual analysis, I propose that the *Ambrosian Iliad* was created during the fifth century, specifically between the years 425-476, for a rich aristocratic patron in the city of Rome or from a nearby province. It is my hope that this approach to the study of the *Ambrosian Iliad* will encourage the use of other methodologies, in particular contextual analysis, in the study of Late Antique manuscripts.

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2 The official Ambrosian Library designation is Codex 1019 with a press-mark of F 205 Inf. The *Ambrosian Iliad* is also known as the *Ambrosias Ilias*, the *Milan Homer*, and the *Milan Iliad*. For the purposes of this study, this codex will be referred to as the *Ambrosian Iliad*.

3 All dates are CE unless noted otherwise.
This study of the *Ambrosian Iliad* builds on two areas of art historical scholarship: ancient Trojan War imagery and Late Antique manuscripts. Traditionally, scholars approached Homeric imagery and other types of narrative in predominantly formalistic terms. It was not until Homeric literary studies changed its focus from the “Homeric question” to specific issues surrounding the epic stories themselves that art historical research followed suit by investigating the artists’ translations of Homeric poetry to the visual medium.\(^4\) During the late twentieth century, this interest in mythological and Homeric imagery resulted in the publication entitled *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae (LIMC)*. This important work provides a vital source of information for scholars who wish to concentrate on specific narratives and imagery. With this resource, scholars have begun to reexamine the relationship between classical literature and its imagery. Most notably among those scholars are Anthony Snodgrass, *Homer and the Artists: Text and Picture in Early Greek Art* (1998), Karl Schefold and Luca Giuliani, *Gods and Heroes in Late Archaic Greek Art* (1992), and H. A. Shapiro, *Myth Into Art: Poet and Painter in Classical Greece* (1994). Other very influential works concerning *Iliad* and *Odyssey* imagery have been offered by Jocelyn Penny Small, *The Parallel Worlds of Classical Art and Text* (2003), and Susan Woodford in her two studies, *The Trojan War in Ancient Art* (1993) and *Images of Myths in Classical Antiquity* (2003). While most authors have chosen to concentrate on Trojan imagery in Greek art, a few, like Small and Woodford, have investigated Roman objects in their analyses. Surprisingly, these authors have not included the Late Antique period in their studies. In response to this lacuna, this study of the illustrations in the *Ambrosian Iliad* will expand the discourse that has traditionally concentrated on classical Homeric visual narrative imagery.

For the study of Late Antique manuscripts, definitive research has been hampered by the rarity of extant manuscripts available for comparative analysis. Of the very few extant codices

\(^4\) The “Homeric question” actually consists of several questions, including Did Homer Exist? Were there several authors? Was Homeric poetry originally oral? When were the poems written down? Is the *Iliad* based on historical events? For a discussion on this issue, with historiography and bibliography, see: Robert Fowler, “Homeric Question,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Homer*, ed. Robert Fowler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 220-232.
created between the fourth and seventh centuries, only three exist today that illustrate ancient epic poetry: the *Vatican Vergil*, the *Vergilius Romanus*, and the *Ambrosian Iliad*.\(^5\) Thus far, two methodologies have been prevalent for the study of the *Ambrosian Iliad*: paleographic and stylistic analysis.

The earliest analyses of the *Ambrosian Iliad* were by paleographers who were interested in furthering Homeric studies by ascertaining the manuscript’s date and provenance through the analysis of the manuscript’s Greek uncial script. The first scholar to publish his findings was the future Cardinal Angelo Mai (1782-1854), who discovered the manuscript in Milan’s Ambrosian Library in 1814.\(^6\) As a paleographer, Mai was interested only in deciphering the manuscript’s Greek uncial script and, as a result, damaged its images with chemicals during this effort.\(^7\) The interest in the *Ambrosian Iliad* by paleographers continued unabated through the mid-twentieth century. Such famous paleographers as A. M. Ceriani (1828-1907), Frederic G. Kenyon (1863-1952), M. F. de Mély (1852-1935), and Hans Gerstinger (1885-1971) have all studied the *Ambrosian Iliad* with very different proposals for the origin of the manuscript that range in date from the third century to the early sixth century, and provenances of Alexandria, Rome, or southern Italy.\(^8\)


\(^6\) The historiography of the *Ambrosian Iliad* will be discussed in detail in Chapter One.

\(^7\) Mai published two books on the *Ambrosian Iliad*, both of which included drawings of the images. See Angelo Mai, *Homeri et Vergili picturae antiquae* (Rome: 1835) and Angelo Mai, *Iliadis fragmenta antiquissima cum picturis* (Milan: 1819).

\(^8\) In 1905, the paleographer A. M. Ceriani and the director of the Ambrosian Library, A. Ratti, republished Angelo Mai’s findings along with their own paleographic analysis, placing the *Ambrosian Iliad* at the end of the third century from Rome or southern Italy. See A. M. Ceriani, A. Ratti, and A. Mai, *Homeri Iliadis pictiae fragmenta Ambrosiana* (Milan: Hoepli, 1905). Frederic G. Kenyon dated the *Ambrosian Iliad* to the fifth century, but did not suggest a provenance. See Frederic G. Kenyon, *The Palaeography of Greek Papyri* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899). M. F. de Mély agreed with Kenyon and dated the *Ambrosian Iliad* to the fifth century, but added that he
The publication of Kurt Weitzmann’s 1947 study of the transmission of imagery, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex*, has greatly influenced subsequent manuscript research and discourse. Weitzmann was most concerned about the origin of the full framed picture on a manuscript page. During his research, Weitzmann came to the conclusion that the Late Antique manuscripts’ well-developed and sophisticated illustrations were not a new invention, but were actually inheritors of earlier, now long lost, prototypes whose ancestry could be traced to the Egyptian Book of the Dead. His enquiries into the development of manuscript illustration from earlier prototypes established the method of stylistic analysis as a valid means of attempting to ascertain Late Antique manuscripts’ dates and provenances. As a part of this study, Weitzmann’s formal approach to the *Ambrosian Iliad* resulted in the suggestion of an Alexandrian provenance and a date in the fifth century.

Weitzmann’s studies reenergized interest in Late Antique manuscripts, and as a result, there has been an increase in the production of excellent facsimiles since the mid-twentieth century, including the 1953 edition of the *Ambrosian Iliad* entitled, *Ilias Ambrosiana; Cod. F. 205 P. inf., Bibliothecae Ambrosianae Mediolanensis*. In 1955, Weitzmann’s manuscript scholarship and the publication of the 1953 facsimile led to Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli (1900-1975) publishing his extensive monograph on the *Ambrosian Iliad* entitled, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures of the Iliad (Ilias Ambrosiana)*. Bianchi Bandinelli combined both the paleographic and stylistic analysis of his predecessors with his own studies to propose a new date and provenance for the *Ambrosian Iliad*. While Bianchi Bandinelli deferred to the paleographic studies of other scholars, he added his own detailed formal studies by categorizing the *Ambrosian Iliad’s* imagery into different painting styles reflecting influence from the East and believed it originated from southern Italy. See M. F. de Mély, “Le coffret de Saint-Nazaire de Milan et le inscr. de l’Iliade de l’Ambrosienne,” *Monuments et Mémoires, Fondation E. Piot* (1900): 65-80. Hans Gerstinger suggested the end of the fifth to early sixth centuries for the manuscript. See Hans Gerstinger, *Die Wiener Genesis: Farbenlichtdruckfaksimile der griechischen Bilderbibel aus dem 6. Jahrhundert n. Chr., cod. vindob. theol. grace. 31* (Vienna: Filser, 1931).


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Bianchi Bandinelli also addressed the manuscript’s iconography when he briefly noted its subtle mix of Greek and Roman references. He did not, however, explore the motivations for the prevalence of Roman imagery in this quintessential Greek story. Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, in an argument still accepted today, suggested that the codex reflected an eastern painting style and placed the manuscript in late fifth-century Constantinople.\textsuperscript{12}

**A New Way of Looking at the *Ambrosian Iliad***

None of these methodologies has proven to be particularly helpful. As can be ascertained from this brief review, the suggestions for a date and provenance for the *Ambrosian Iliad* have been widely divergent, with no real consensus among scholars. As a result, I am proposing a different approach to the study of the *Ambrosian Iliad*, based on Jaś Elsner’s contextual methodology. His approach challenges the traditional viewpoint of privileging the artist and, instead, concentrates on the viewer whose reception of art work is influenced by economic, social, religious, and historical viewpoints.\textsuperscript{13}

For me, the *Ambrosian Iliad* represents the two areas of the viewer’s life in the fifth century, the secular and the religious. Its iconography and stories of the Homeric heroes not only resonated with themes of power and war, but also of iconic Christian references that transcended the viewer’s everyday life. While Weitzmann might argue that the Roman references in the *Ambrosian Iliad* occurred as an inheritance from earlier Roman art forms and reflect a transmission of classical styles, I think that his approach may be missing the point.\textsuperscript{15} Instead,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item See Chapter One for a detailed overview of Bianchi Bandinelli’s stylistic theories for the images of the *Ambrosian Iliad*.
\item Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures of the Iliad (Ilias Ambrosiana)* (Olten: Urs Graf, 1955), 33.
\item Kurt Weitzmann, Review of “*Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures of the Iliad,*” by Ranucio Bianchi Bandinelli, *Gnomon* 29 (1957): 615.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Elsner’s methodology helps to bridge the gap in the Ambrosian Iliad between a curious mix of an ancient Greek story written in Greek uncial and its depiction with Roman iconography. This anomaly is what prompted my initial enquiry: why would a patron be interested in a manuscript written in Greek when it was so clearly illustrated with Roman-sourced images?

It has been suggested that manuscripts which depicted ancient epic stories, like the Iliad and Odyssey, may have been used as school textbooks.\(^{16}\) At first glance, this suggestion appears to have merit, since we have ample evidence that young aristocratic pupils spent countless hours copying long Homeric passages on papyri. Scholars today discount this suggestion due to the very nature of these expensive manuscripts. For example, the Ambrosian Iliad in original codex form would have been much too large and cumbersome to be used by schoolboys.\(^ {17}\) Moreover, the Ambrosian Iliad’s extant script does not contain any annotations or comments in the margins as was common in books used for scholarly activity. Finally, the Ambrosian Iliad would have been too expensive and valuable to be used in a schoolroom setting.

While researching current Late Antique manuscript scholarship, I was struck by a comment made by David Wright that the Vatican Virgil may have been made only for display purposes.\(^ {18}\) The idea of exhibiting pagan objects is not new: for example, Ruth Leader suggested that the Kaiseraugst Achilles Plate was probably used to initiate discussion during and after meals.\(^ {19}\) My overriding questions, and ones that are the themes for this study, are these: Was the Ambrosian Iliad commissioned as a display object and, if yes, why? Could the Ambrosian Iliad have been more than just a “coffee table book” as suggested for the Vatican Virgil by David

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17 Bianchi Bandinelli has shown that the manuscript originally contained approximately 372 images and 788 verses from the Iliad. Bianchi Bandinelli, Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures, 40 and 45.

18 “… this book was too big to hold and it was made for display, not for reading. The Ecologues each have an illustration occupying less than half a page but for the Georgics and the Aeneid each book begins with a separate bifolio of parchment, not ruled for text, blank on its outer surfaces, with a pair of framed illustrations inside; that was what was put on display in his home by this extremely wealthy person.” David Wright, “The Persistence of Pagan Art Patronage in Fifth-Century Rome,” in Aetos: Studies in Honour of Cyril Mango Presented to Him on April 14, 1998, ed. Ihor Ševčenko and Irmgard Hutter (Stuttgart and Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1998), 364.

And, lastly, but perhaps most importantly, what did the manuscript represent for the Late Antique owner and what were the self-representation issues at play here? Consequently, this dissertation is not a monograph, which has already been ably written by Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli. Instead, my approach is topic-oriented. Elsner’s theories resonate throughout this study as I explore the meaning of the Ambrosian Iliad to its aristocratic patron and his peers, each of whom saw in the manuscript a reflection of himself and his evolving search for self-identity in a time when old traditions were rapidly adapting to the new Christian world.

Overview of Chapters

This study is organized into chapters that will help to place the Ambrosian Iliad within its historical and cultural contexts. I approached the many extant images from the manuscript by categorizing them into three major groups consisting of battle scenes, sacrifices, and dining. While there are other categories that could be addressed, for the sake of focus and brevity, I decided to concentrate on these topics. There are many images within these topics, and while I considered each one carefully, I chose the paintings that best exemplified the points that are made in this study. As an introduction to this study, Chapter One provides an overview and a description of the Ambrosian Iliad. Also included is a discussion of the rediscovery of Late Antique art and of Late Antique manuscript scholarship, especially in regards to the Ambrosian Iliad. The chapter also outlines the historiography of the study of the Ambrosian Iliad. Of major importance is Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli’s monograph, Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures of the Iliad. This review reveals a wide range of theories concerning the possible date and provenance for the Ambrosian Iliad.

Since only the very rich could afford such an expensive manuscript, it is important to understand what it meant to be an aristocrat in Late Antiquity. Thus, background information in

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20 David Wright, The Vatican Virgil: A Masterpiece of Late Antique Art (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 78.

21 For a summary of Bianchi Bandinelli’s monograph, Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures of the Iliad (Ilias Ambrosiana), see Chapter One of this dissertation.
in Chapter Two is provided to show what it meant to be an aristocrat in Late Antiquity. The Late Antique aristocrat saw himself as nobilitas, which could be thought of in modern terms as “nobility.” The Romans, however, believed that inheriting or earning this elite status was not enough. The nobilitas had the sacred charge of protecting the mos maiorum, or Rome’s sacred traditions, especially during the turbulent fifth century. An essential key to the elite’s process of self-definition and sense of common identity was through education or paideia. Inherited from the Greeks, the process of acquiring paideia trained young aristocrats in ethical and moral behavior through the studying and memorizing of classical writing, most notably Homer. Thus, the Ambrosian Iliad was more than just an enjoyable epic. It provided stories that were used as moral examples by private tutors, most of whom were Greek, and in classrooms across the Roman Empire.

Chapter Three discusses how the Ambrosian Iliad was created and viewed in the atmosphere of a popular antiquarian movement during the fifth century. Its distinctly Roman iconography, images of former traditional aristocratic activities, and its Homeric theme supported the ongoing aristocratic process of strengthening ties to Roman traditions, or mos maiorum in two ways. First, it depicts Homeric heroes dressed in Roman costume and performing duties -- including sacrifice and participating in warfare -- that were no longer current in the fifth century. The fifth-century aristocratic viewer saw his ancestors through this filter of traditional depictions. Second, displaying antiquarian objects and objects depicting themes that referred to the past was a popular activity in the fifth century as a show of antiquarianism. I suggest that as a very large codex with framed pictures, which depicted Homer’s Iliad in antiquarian Roman terms, the Ambrosian Iliad was the perfect object for the display of the owner’s concern for the mos maiorum.

In Chapter Four, the focus shifts from the antiquarian past to the fifth century, a time of great unrest when barbarians were invading the western Empire and threatening the very mos maiorum that the Roman elite were bound to protect. At the same time, the relationship between patron and client had changed due to the emperor’s absence from Rome. The aristocratic patron was now an imperial representative, and there is evidence that his surroundings were now reflecting his new duties with the additions of apses and throne-like rooms in Late Antique villas. The Ambrosian Iliad reflects this historical context in two areas: first, its iconography references
the Roman circus and the banquet, two essential public activities for the Roman elite to display
their command of the *mos maiorum*. Second, the display of the *Ambrosian Iliad* with its central
c character, Achilles, would have worked in concert with other images of Achilles that were
popular in the fifth century. Objects portraying the early life of Achilles acquiring *paideia* were
especially popular during the late fourth and fifth centuries. These images of *paideia*, the system
of education in which the emperor and the aristocrats had been trained, would have confirmed
the knowledge, character, and abilities that were needed to successfully discharge imperial
duties.

Chapter Five investigates the multivalent Christian and secular meanings of the
*Ambrosian Iliad* for a Christian viewer in the fifth century. While there is no obvious Christian
iconography in the manuscript’s images, the aristocrat may have interpreted the banqueting
scenes as a reference to the Last Supper or to other types of Christian banquets that were still
popular during the fifth century. Also, the image of awarding prizes to the winners of a chariot
race was invocative of victory imagery used by the Church. Quite often, Christian art
appropriated such victorious race emblems as the palm to symbolize Christ’s victory over death.
The Late Antique Christian was also accustomed to seeing the stories of mythological heroes,
like Theseus and Odysseus, adapted for use in Christian analogies. In this study, I will show that
Achilles was not attractive to the Early Christians in this way, but instead, continued to represent
the ideals of traditions represented by the *mos maiorum* and *virtus* that were important to the
Roman elite. Achilles’ image as an ideal warrior could have been especially appreciated during
a time when the aristocrats needed a strong and powerful heroic figure.

The *Ambrosian Iliad* was an extensively illustrated manuscript that depicted Homer’s
*Iliad*. At first glance, it appears to contain beautifully painted images that faithfully follow the
Homeric story. Closer examination, however, reveals the anomaly of a Greek story that was
written in Greek uncial script, but illustrated using Roman iconography. By placing the
*Ambrosian Iliad* in its historical, cultural, social, and religious context, the manuscript’s Roman
iconography no longer seems out of place. In order to appreciate the importance of this
manuscript, we must take into account the context within which it was commissioned and
viewed. In this study, I am not as concerned about where the manuscript was created. Instead,
the notion of how the patron and other aristocratic viewers internalized the Roman iconography
of the *Ambrosian Iliad* as a reflection of their world view is far more important. For a fifth-century Christian aristocrat, living either in Rome or a nearby province, the *Ambrosian Iliad* and its images acted as a mirror by which his perception of his world was defined and affirmed. During a time of such great change, it must have provided comfort for the elite of a society whose view of itself was based on the traditions and values that were reflected in its imagery.
CHAPTER ONE

THE AMBROSIAN ILIAD (IIAIS AMBROSIANA, CODEX 1019)

The Ambrosian Iliad (Ilias Ambrosiana; Cod. F. 205 P. inf., Bibliothecae Ambrosianae Mediolanensis (Fonts Ambrosiani XXVIII)) is one of the few extant Late Antique illuminated manuscripts. While the provenance and earliest history of the Ambrosian Iliad are subject to conjecture and debate, we can firmly date the manuscript’s history beginning in the sixteenth century when it surfaced in Genoese collector Giovan Vincenzo Pinelli’s library. Modern scholars believe that the manuscript was already in its current disassembled state when it was added to Pinelli’s collection perhaps as early as 1558. After Pinelli’s death in Padua in 1601, the collection was taken to Naples, where a portion of it was sold on June 14, 1608 to the founder of Milan’s Ambrosian Library, Cardinal Federico Borromeo. As one of the earliest known secular and the only Homeric-themed illuminated codex from the Late Antique period, the Ambrosian Iliad has been an integral part of the ongoing discourse concerning manuscript development. The catalogue of extant Late Antique manuscripts is quite small, and all are of

22 Other extant Late Antique codices include:
Vergilius Vaticanus (Vatican Vergil), ca. 400 (Vatican, Vatican Library, cod. lat. 3225)
Vergilius Romanus (Roman Vergil), 5th c. (Vatican, Vatican Library, cod. lat. 3867)
Quedlinburg Itala, 5th c. (Berlin, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, cod. theol. lat. fol. 485)
Sinope Gospel fragments, 5th c. (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS gr 1286)
Cotton Genesis, 5th-6th c. (London, British Library, MS Cotton Otho B. VI)
Vienna Dioscurides, early 6th c. (Vienna Nationalbibliothek, cod. med. gr. 1)
Vienna Genesis, early 6th c. (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. theol. gr. 31)
Rossano Gospels, 6th c. (Calabria, Cathedral of Rossano)
Rabbula Gospels, 6th c. (Florence, Biblioteca Mediceo Laurenziana, cod. Plut. I, 56)
St. Augustine Gospels, 6th c. (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, cod. 286)
The London Canon Tables, 6th or 7th c. (London, British Library, cod. add. 5111)
Syriac Bible of Paris, 6th or 7th c. (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, cod. syr. 341)
Ashburnham Pentateuch, 6 or 7th c. (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, n. acq. lat. 2334)

23 The earliest information that we have concerning Pinelli’s library places it in Padua. We know that Pinelli’s residence in Padua began in 1558. Bianchi Bandinelli, Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures, 38. See also A. Rivolta, Catalogo dei Codici Pinelliani dell’Ambrosiania. (Milan: Tip. Pontificia Arcivescovile S. Giuseppe, 1933), XVII.

uncertain dates, so comparisons are inconclusive. As a result, *Ambrosian Iliad* scholars have been consumed by the questions of its date and provenance. Studies by Kurt Weitzmann, Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, and others have provided invaluable insights and theories concerning the stylistic and iconographic aspects of this manuscript. As an introduction to the ideas that will be proposed in this dissertation, this chapter explores the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s history and historiography, and includes an overview of the various proposals concerning the manuscript’s date and provenance. Before discussing the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s historiography, it is pertinent to provide a description of the manuscript.

**Description of the *Ambrosian Iliad***

The *Ambrosian Iliad* is thought to have been a fairly large manuscript, 326 mm (12.84 inches) in height and 288 mm (11.34 inches) in width.²⁶ Bianchi Bandinelli suggests that the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s size would have been comparable to other Late Antique luxury codices. This is based upon his comparison of the amount of text per page, margin widths, and illustration sizes to similar manuscripts like the *Vatican Virgil*, the *Roman Virgil* and the *Vienna Genesis*.²⁷ Consisting of fifty-eight illustrations painted on fifty-two loose folios, the *Ambrosian Iliad* appears to follow Homer’s epic poem faithfully, beginning with the argument between Agamemnon and Achilles over Briseis and culminating with Priam begging for the body of his son, Hector.²⁸ For the most part, each of the individual folios contain one image, however, several of the folios have more than one miniature. These multiple images were numbered by Cardinal Mai separately, hence the greater number of pictures compared to folio numbers.²⁹ Because the pictures were cut from the original parchment, we have only fragments of the folios.

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²⁷ Ibid., 40.

²⁸ Ibid., 37.

²⁹ Ibid., 38. It would appear that a numbering system was applied to the manuscript twice during its history. There is evidence of an earlier numbering system, perhaps from the eighth, ninth, and/or tenth centuries. Later, Cardinal Mai, or someone in his library, assigned a Roman numeral to each image, in the story line’s order.
with the illustrations on one side and, in some cases, fragments of the Greek text on the reverse. Unfortunately, forty-five pictures have no text on the other side, so we cannot tell their original order or what might be missing. In his monograph, Bianchi Bandinelli recreated the original manuscript by comparing the existing illustrations to the Homeric poem. His conclusion was that most of the books were represented and that the finished product did refer to the pivotal scenes of the story.

Using this evidence, Bianchi Bandinelli extrapolated the original length of the *Ambrosian Iliad* to approximately 372 images and 788 Homeric verses. Other scholarship also suggests that the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s scribe did not copy the entire *Iliad* but chose specific passages of the epic story. The pictures were enclosed in a framing device of orange and blue bands which further separated them from the adjoining script. Although we can reconstruct portions of the original manuscript based on the existing illuminations, we are still handicapped by the missing text. During the eleventh or twelfth century, an unknown person wrote brief summaries in Greek of the Homeric story in light ink on many of the illustrations. It was probably sometime before the thirteenth century, in a move that privileged the image over the text that the pictures were removed and paper pasted over the text on the reverse of the cut-out pages.

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30 Scholars do not refer to the recto and verso of the fragments, in order to avoid an assumption of the original order. Instead the front and back are labeled as a and b respectively.

31 Ibid., 37.

32 Ibid., 37-39, 40 and 45. Bianchi Bandinelli chose to include only complete or partially complete verses that were clearly evident on the front or back of the existing manuscript pages. He also took into account that Books III, XVIII, XIX and XX are missing.


34 Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 38, fn. 2.

35 Ibid., 38. Miniatures XXIV, XIX, XXX, XXXII, XLIV, XXXXVI, XXXXVII, LIV, XXV, XXIV, XXII. Bianchi Bandinelli’s acceptance of these dates is based on the scholarship of J. de Wit; see Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 15.

36 Ibid. Bianchi Bandinelli maintains that this was not a random act, but was probably designed to save the manuscript from damage. This is an assumption on his part, since there is no record or visible proof of a catastrophic event that would have deemed it necessary to dismantle and cut up the manuscript. It is not known exactly when the pictures were cut out of the folios but, based on physical evidence it must have been after the *scholia* were added since they were damaged during this process. If one accepts de Wit’s dates for the application of the *scholia* as between the ninth and twelfth centuries, then the pictures were cut out sometime after the twelfth century. It seems to be common acceptance that this would have been sometime in the thirteenth century.
It is evident from the high quality of the *Ambrosian Iliad* that it was created in the best scriptoria. Unfortunately, we have no evidence that indicates if the manuscript was created by one or more hands. Scholars in the past have argued for both, however, Bianchi Bandinelli’s argument for a single artist of the *Ambrosian Iliad* has proven to be a thorough and convincing theory. The manuscript is now in very poor condition, but its peeling paint has afforded the rare opportunity to study the creation of a Late Antique illuminated codex. In the *Ambrosian Iliad*, the artist originally used pencil and pen to outline the general narrative and composition of each illustration. Unlike the *Quedlinburg Itala*, no written instructions to the artist have been found underneath the paint. The illustrator’s method was to heavily paint the figures and supporting objects and to either leave the background alone or to use very light washes, especially on the non-battle scenes. The result was that much of the original vellum was left exposed. Consequently, with the large amount of open space that surrounds them, the characters stand out in the composition. The palette was limited with a predominant use of yellow, brown and purple. In some instances, the painter did not always use naturalistic colors; for example, horses are painted blue and purple. As Bianchi Bandinelli has shown, a standard and consistent color scheme was applied to the characters; for example, only Zeus and the heroes wear purple. Bianchi Bandinelli also pointed out that the artist evidently chose his colors for dramatic effect in

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37 Ibid. Although Bianchi Bandinelli argues for one artist, who either slavishly copied a previous version of the *Ambrosian Iliad* or drew from various well-established prototypes, this is not absolutely certain. There can be an argument for more than one artist as well. This was a very large manuscript and it would taken a Herculean effort for one artist to complete it by himself. For the purposes of this study, however, I will follow Bianchi Bandinelli and refer to a singular artist for the *Ambrosian Iliad*. See Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 150-152 for his argument supporting one artist for the manuscript.

38 For a detailed description of the underdrawings in the *Ambrosian Iliad*, see Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 92.

39 According to Middleton, the paints used by the *Ambrosian Iliad* artist would have been derived from lead and vegetable colors (minium or red lead, white lead, yellow, brown, and red ochres) as well as the kermes beetle (coccus) for the rich purple-red color. Middleton has been the only scholar to discuss the organic sources of the paint possibly used in the *Ambrosian Iliad*. While it would be helpful if a scientific study could be performed on material used for this manuscript, it is unlikely that permission would be granted due to its extremely fragile condition. Middleton, *Illuminated Manuscripts*, 35.

40 Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 95. Also, see 93 for a table of the application of colors by subject matter.
the battle scenes. Some of the miniatures in the *Ambrosian Iliad* were retouched at a later date, although it is difficult to say exactly when.\(^{41}\)

**The Rediscovery of Late Roman Art**

To understand the historiography of the *Ambrosian Iliad*, it is important to consider modern scholarship on Late Antique art, especially as it pertains to painting. Today, scholars of Late Antique art, like Jaš Elsner, are investigating the context in which the objects were created and viewed. Their work builds on a complicated discourse surrounding art of this rich and diverse period that began with the advent of modern art-historical scholarship in nineteenth-century Europe. Common concerns of scholarly enquiry at that time were the sources of Late Antique works and manuscripts, including the *Ambrosian Iliad*.

Initially, the art-historical discourse reflected the works of the noted scholars Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) and Johann Winckelmann (1717-1768), both of whom had little use for Late Antiquity. Although Gibbon’s famous work, *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-1789), did not specifically address art, his theories concerning the history of the Late Antique period continue to influence modern scholars. Most importantly for our enquiry, his views on the possible reasons for the decline of the Roman Empire, which emphasized a moral, economic, and social disintegration of society, set the stage for the idea that the style of Late Antique art showed a disintegration of classical forms. Remarkably, there is no evidence that Gibbon interacted with the other contemporary giant of classical studies, Johann Winckelmann.\(^{42}\)

Like Gibbon, Winckelmann viewed history in the framework of an evolution that resulted in an evitable decline. His theories of the cycles of art-historical styles in antiquity led to the

\(^{41}\) Ibid., 89-90. Bianchi Bandinelli documented retouching in 14 of the miniatures. See 89-90 for a complete list of miniatures that were retouched. For Bianchi Bandinelli, the regular care and attention to the clarity and quality of the pictures attests to the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s continued value to its owners.

conclusion that Late Antique art was the result of the decay of the ideal classical Greek style which he viewed as the apex of human creativity. His influential studies laid the foundation for the field of art history and art-historical scholarship regarding Late Antique art. It was not until the late nineteenth century that art historians challenged the notion that Late Antique art represented a degradation of the classical Greek style.

The epicenter of art historical scholarship in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was Central and East Europe: Germany, Austria and Poland. Professors from the great universities in Eastern Europe produced ground-breaking scholarship that, to this day, has contributed a lively and thought-provoking dialogue about the nature of the Late Antique period. These scholars were responsible for the rediscovery and revival of enquiry of the Late Antique period by returning to the study of its art. One of the most influential of these scholars was Franz Wickhoff (1853-1909), a Viennese art historian who countered the prevalent belief in his time that Roman art was a pale imitation of Greek art. In his extensive introduction to the study of another major Late Antique manuscript, the Vienna Genesis, Wickhoff argued that the Romans contributed such distinctive stylistic techniques as continuous narrative and illusionism. Wickhoff thought that the painting style of the Vienna Genesis was inherited from fifth century BCE Greek paintings via the wall murals at Pompeii. Wickhoff’s contemporary and ally, the Austrian art historian Alois Riegl (1858-1905), was also instrumental in the reestablishing of the importance and relevance of Roman art. Riegl suggested that art styles underwent cycles that were driven by Kunstwollen, or the instinctive collective cultural reaction to art. He believed


45 For biographical information on Franz Wickhoff, see Williams, “Wickhoff,” 1192-1193. For a discussion of Wickhoff’s theories, see Brendel, Prolegomena, 40. Wickhoff’s groundbreaking theories about Roman art may be found in the introduction of his study, Die Wiener Genesis.

that the style of Late Antiquity was a natural development from the earlier Roman periods.\footnote{For biographical information on Alois Riegl, see Williams, “Riegl,” 958-959. For a discussion of Riegl’s theories, see Brendel, Prolegomena, 40. For an English translation of Riegl’s major work, Spätrömische Kunstindustrie, see Alois Riegl, Late Roman Art Industry, trans. Rolf Winkes (Rome: G. Bretschneider, 1985).}
The question of the origin of Late Antique style led to scholarship that attempted to divide its elements between the east and the west. On one side of the feud, Wickhoff and Riegl argued for an indigenous Italian source for the unique style of the Late Antique period, whereas Josef Strzygowski looked to the east. A controversial figure, the Polish art historian Josef Strzygowski (1862-1941) proposed an “Oriental” source for Late Antique Roman art, suggesting such ancient artistic centers as Syria, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, and Iran as contributors. As a result, Strzygowski is credited with establishing Islamic, Jewish, and Late Antique Art as valid fields of study. His suggestion of an “Aryan” source for Late Antique art, however, added fuel to the nationalist fire of early twentieth-century Germany. Consequently, he was largely ignored after World War II until recently. Today, in a climate interested in cross-cultural influences, modern scholars continue to revisit the controversial and hotly contested theories of Franz Wickhoff, Alois Riegl, and Josef Strzygowski, in particular, to reevaluate their contributions to the study of Late Antiquity.\footnote{For biographical information on Josef Strzygowski, see Nancy Thomson de Grummond, “Strzygowski, Josef (1872-1942),” in The Encyclopedia of the History of Classical Archaeology, ed. Nancy Thomson de Grummond (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 1061-62. For a discussion of Strzygowski’s theories, see Brendel, Prolegomena, 43. Strzygowski’s written response to Wickhoff’s Die Wiener Genesis, was his study Orient oder Rom. For an excellent discussion on the relationship between these three scholars, see Margaret Olin, “Art History and Ideology. Alois Riegl and Josef Strzygowski,” in Cultural Visions: Essays in the History of Culture, eds. Peny Schine Gold and Benjamin C. Sax (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), 151-170. For recent scholarly interest in these art historians and their theories, see the following: Jaś Elsner, “The Birth of Late Antiquity: Riegl and Strzygowski in 1901,” Art History 25 (2002): 358-79; Jaś Elsner, “The Changing Nature of Roman Art and Art-Historical Problem of Style,” in Late Antique and Medieval Art of the Mediterranean World, ed. Eva R. Hoffman (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 11-18; S. Marchand, “The Rhetoirc of Artifacts,” History and Theory 33 (1994): 106-30; and Talinn Grigor, “Orient Oder Rome? ‘Aryan’ Architecture and Strzygowski’s Art History (Josef Strzygowski),” The Art Bulletin 89, no. 3 (September 2007): 562-90.}

The scholarship of these late nineteenth and early twentieth-century art historians as they addressed the ideas of eastern and western influences on Late Antique art had a direct influence on the study of Late Antique manuscripts. In particular, post-World War II manuscript studies by Weitzmann and Bianchi Bandinelli incorporated their approaches concerning the exchange of...
styles between the east and west when analyzing the complicated and varied artistic styles represented in Late Antique manuscripts like the *Ambrosian Iliad*.

During the past fifty years, an explosion of scholarly works has tackled the problems of the bewildering terminology and time frames assigned to the period between Constantine and the advent of the Middle Ages. In 1971, Peter Brown coined the term “Late Antique,” which has gained popular and academic acceptance. While contemporary scholars have whole-heartedly adapted this term, there is still an ongoing dialogue concerning the time frame that can be assigned to Late Antiquity. For the most part, scholars agree that Late Antiquity began with Constantine and ended sometime in the seventh century. Winckelmann’s and Gibbons’ world view of Late Antiquity as a time of decay continues to be challenged by modern scholars who essentially agree on the complex nature of this multi-layered period. J. H. D. Scourfield suggests that the Late Antique be treated as a time of incredible transformation, when, in spite of historical stresses including barbarian invasions and religious controversy, Roman culture adapted and, indeed, flourished. I maintain that “Late Antiquity” was a single sociopolitical system under the common Roman political umbrella that consisted of different layers of local cultures and belief systems. As such, it is important to place art, like the *Ambrosian Iliad*, in its very Roman context.

**Historiography of the Ambrosian Iliad**

The historiography of the *Ambrosian Iliad* reveals a broad approach in scholarship by paleographers, archaeologists, codicologists, and art historians. The modern scholar who most closely analyzed this manuscript is the Italian art historian and archaeologist Ranuccio Bianchi

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51 “The third through the seventh centuries showed that it was not an empire that fell or went into decline, but an exciting time of change, a period of variety and creativity, which is reflected in its vigorous arts and cultural production.” Cameron, “The ‘Long’ Late Antiquity,” 167.

52 In particular, see Smith, “The Imperial Court,” 158-159. For Elsner’s reaction to the question of the so-called decline of the Rome Empire, see, “The Changing Nature of Roman Art,” 11-18. See also, Cameron, “The ‘Long’ Late Antiquity,” 165-192.

Bandinelli. In *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures of the Iliad (Ilias Ambrosiana)* (1955), he presents a detailed study of the style and iconography of the manuscript. Consequently, any discussion concerning the historiography of the *Ambrosian Iliad* is often couched in terms of its influence and/or relationship to Bianchi Bandinelli’s monograph.

Prior to Bianchi Bandinelli’s study, the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s importance was thought to have centered on its contribution to paleography, as first established by Cardinal Angelo Mai (1782-1854). After it was acquired for the Ambrosian Library in 1609, the manuscript was stored with no mention of its content. It was not until its ‘rediscovery’ in 1814 by the Fellow of the College of the Doctors of the Ambrosian Library, Cardinal Angelo Mai, that we have further historical documentation. Cardinal Mai initiated the first study of the codex during his tenure at the Ambrosian Library.\(^{54}\) During his initial study, Mai removed the paper backing on the manuscripts’ folios and realized that it was the *Iliad* codex that had been bought from Pinelli’s collection.\(^{55}\) In 1813, Mai was appointed custodian of the Ambrosian Library, where he was credited with the restoration of many of its antique holdings, including the *Ambrosian Iliad*.\(^{56}\) As a paleographer, the cardinal was most interested in the text. Consequently, his priority was to remove the paper covering the original Greek writing, which then revealed the previously unknown antiquity of the manuscript. In his eagerness to read the ancient Greek, Mai applied harsh chemicals to make the text more legible. Unfortunately, these chemicals damaged the color and darkened the miniatures on the opposite side of the folios. Additional damage was done to the paintings when, during the same period, Roman numerals were added to the miniatures in order keep count of the loose folios.\(^{57}\) After an extensive study of the manuscript,


\(^{55}\) A. M. A. Ceriani, A. Calderini, and A. Mai *Ilias Ambrosiana; Cod. F. 205 P inf., Bibliothecae Ambrosianae Mediolanensis* (Bern: Urs Graf, 1953), xi. Mai’s paleographic training and talent resulted in the recovery and translation of long-lost manuscripts including the last nine books of the *Antiquities* by Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Cicero’s *Republic*.

\(^{56}\) Murphy, “Mai,” 1125. Cardinal Angelo Mai was born in Bergamo, Italy, of humble origins but rose quickly through the Church ranks. After serving as the Scriptor at the Ambrosian Library from 1813-1819, he was appointed the first Vatican librarian. During his lifetime he discovered 359 classical and Christian texts and catalogued the manuscripts at the Vatican Library.

\(^{57}\) Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 38. To be consistent with previous scholarship, I will continue the tradition of referring to the miniatures by their Roman numerals.
Cardinal Mai published two editions of his findings in which he included drawings of the miniatures.\(^58\) In the first edition of 1819, *Iliadis fragmenta antiquissima cum picturis*, Mai provided paleographic analysis and 58 plates of engraved miniatures by Emanuele Scotti as well as descriptions and a corresponding translation of the *Iliad* in Latin. In 1835, Mai published his second edition, *Homeri et Virgili picturae antiquae*, which also included a discussion of the two Late Antique Virgil manuscripts, the *Vaticanus* (Vatican Library 3225) and the *Romanus* (Vatican Library 3867).

While the *Homeri et Virgili picturae antiquae* did not add anything new to the study of the *Ambrosian Iliad* itself, it did include lithographic plates that were adapted by Carlo Ruspi from the original Scotti drawings with corrections probably made by Cardinal Mai. Although a few outlined drawings are flawed in some details, they provide a valuable record of the painted miniatures, which have suffered much deterioration over the last 172 years. Mai noted the differences in style, particularly between the battle and the non-battle scenes, but his specific interest in the manuscript continued to be paleographic. He believed, as was common during the nineteenth century, that the *Ambrosian Iliad’s* true contribution to manuscript studies was in its Greek text and Homeric scholarship.

Since Cardinal Mai’s publications, early *Ambrosian Iliad* scholars have concentrated on issues of dating and provenance, based on either paleographic or stylistic analysis. As Bianchi Bandinelli noted in his monograph, the conclusions have been wide-ranging and controversial.\(^59\) Following in the footsteps of Cardinal Mai, successive paleographers have attempted to link the *Ambrosian Iliad’s* use of Greek uncial script in its text and added scholia, or comments, with other more securely dateable manuscripts that used the same script.\(^60\) Other manuscript scholars, including J. H. Middleton and G. Thiele, attempted to determine the *Ambrosian Iliad’s* date and

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\(^{58}\) Ibid., 45. According to Bianchi Bandinelli, the 1819 edition still remains the most accurate of the records of the *Ambrosian Iliad*.

\(^{59}\) Ibid., 45-51.

\(^{60}\) A form of majuscule, uncial script is written in all capital letters with a slightly rounded style. Greek uncial script is the application of uncial script to the Greek alphabet. Michele P. Brown and Patricia Lovett, *The Historical Sourcebook for Scribes* (London: The British Library, 1999), 39.
provenance by concentrating on stylistic considerations.\(^6^1\) Perhaps the most famous study of analyzing style originated with the Viennese art historian Franz Wickhoff in his introduction to *Die Weiner Genesis* (1895). In addition, in his study Wickhoff suggested that the extensive narrative cycles in such manuscripts as the *Vienna Genesis, Vatican Virgil*, and *Ambrosian Iliad* were created to illustrate works that were used as textbooks in ancient Roman schoolrooms.\(^6^2\) In general, however, nineteenth-century scholarship dismissed the *Ambrosian Iliad*, calling its art inferior and stale. In spite of this view regarding the manuscript’s quality and at the advent of the twentieth century, scholars continued to use the *Ambrosian Iliad* in their attempts to establish a timeline for the development of antique manuscripts.

At the close of the nineteenth century, new evidence became available. The discovery of Egyptian-Greek papyri at the site of Oxyrhynchus, including the Homer papyri, provided new paleographic comparisons to the *Ambrosian Iliad*.\(^6^3\) In 1899, Frederic G. Kenyon favorably compared the Greek script of the Homeric papyri from Oxyrhynchus to that of the *Ambrosian Iliad* and dated the manuscript to the fifth century.\(^6^4\) Kenyon’s contemporary, the famous collector, M. F. de Mély, agreed and suggested that the style of the *Ambrosian Iliad* was comparable to that of fifth-century Italian ivories. M. F. de Mély also contended that this comparand suggested an origin in southern Italy.\(^6^5\) In a short aside, he mentioned that A. M. Ceriani believed the *Ambrosian Iliad* was created in 410 for a Greek patron in southern Italy.

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\(^6^3\) Discovered in 1895, the central Egyptian site of Oxyrhynchus has yielded over 400,000 fragments which are housed in 800 boxes at Oxford’s Sackler library. This “garbage dump” of government documents and literary sources includes plays by Greek and Roman authors and illustrated fragments of the *Iliad* which have been dated to the fifth century. Oxford University has developed an excellent searchable website for the Oxyrhynchus Papyri at [http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk](http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk). See also the online catalog for the exhibition of the papyri at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford in the summer of 1998, “Oxyrhynchus: A City and Its Texts.” on the same website. Follow the link “Events.”

\(^6^4\) Kenyon, *The Paleography*, 121.

\(^6^5\) de Mély, “Le coffret de Saint-Nazaire,” 65.
But as Weitzmann pointed out, while this theory offers a Roman provenance for the owner of the *Ambrosian Iliad*, it does not necessarily prove that it was made in southern Italy.⁶⁶

Some scholars have approached the *Ambrosian Iliad* using a combination of formal and paleographic analysis. In 1905, A. M. Ceriani and the director of the Ambrosian Library, Achilles Ratti, published a new photographic facsimile of the *Ambrosian Iliad* entitled the *Homeri Iliadis pictae fragmenta Ambrosiana*.⁶⁷ In what Bianchi Bandinelli characterizes as a weak paleographic assessment, Ceriani dated the manuscript to the end of the third century/beginning of the fourth century and placed its origin in Rome or southern Italy.⁶⁸ Ceriani’s argument was based on the use of the Greek uncial style and the similarities of the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s illustrations to the Pompeian painting style.⁶⁹ Although Ceriani’s scholarship has been criticized by Bianchi Bandinelli, who rightly points out that the artist could not have seen the then-buried Pompeian paintings, this publication is valuable in that it was the first to provide a photographic study of the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s illuminations.⁷⁰

Kazimierz Bulas soon followed suit comparing the miniatures of the *Ambrosian Iliad* to Greek and Roman painting. Bulas suggested that the *Ambrosian Iliad* was a clear example of the direct influence of ancient easel and mural painting on manuscript painting.⁷¹ While this may be a valid argument, Bulas had problems supporting his ideas since only a few examples of Greek and Roman painting survive. Bulas’ theories refer to the larger issue of Greek and Roman painting, yet he used Pompeian painting as an example of this genre. There is a methodological danger in Bulas’ use of Pompeian painting as evidence, as it is representative of only one specific area and time in the Roman Empire.

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⁶⁷ Achilles Ratti (1857-1939) later became Pope Pius XI. He was the director of the Ambrosian Library from 1888-1911.

⁶⁸ Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 47.


⁷⁰ Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 47.

Paleographers continued to be fascinated with the extant remains of the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s Greek script. In an effort to date the manuscript, Hans Gerstinger compared the script of the *Ambrosian Iliad* to that of the *Vienna Genesis*. Based on his paleographic analysis, Gerstinger proposed that the *Ambrosian Iliad* was created at the end of the fifth or in the early sixth century. In 1932, Gerstinger’s contemporary, J. de Wit made a valuable contribution to the study of the *Ambrosian Iliad* by attempting to analyze the additional marginal comments and captions. As a result of his research, he placed the manuscript in Constantinople in the fifth century. De Wit compared the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s scholia with scholia that he found in other manuscripts that originated in the East. In particular, he recognized that some of the scholia on the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s folios corresponded exactly with scholia on manuscripts created between the ninth and twelfth centuries in Constantinople. In a complicated argument, de Wit concluded that the *Ambrosian Iliad* scholia were added in stages during the ninth to twelfth centuries. Since the manuscripts with the matching scholia originated in the east, he surmised that the *Ambrosian Iliad* must have come from the same Byzantine scriptorium. De Wit further stated that it was unlikely that the *Ambrosian Iliad* was transported to the East from the West prior to the ninth century, in his effort to support an eastern provenance.

While de Wit’s comparisons provide evidence that purports to prove the *Ambrosian Iliad* was created in Constantinople, his conclusion that the manuscript could not have been transported from the west to the east is not viable. He implies that these very large manuscripts could not have been easily carried from one location to another. We do have ample proof, however, that other much larger works of art, for example, bronze statues, were shipped throughout the Roman Empire. While the *Ambrosian Iliad* would have been a fairly large object, it was still portable and could have been transported. Since we have no documentation about the

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72 Gerstinger, *Die Wiener Genesis*, 54.
73 Ibid., 54.
75 de Wit, “Bilderbeischriften,” 268-270.
76 Ibid., 268-270. See also, Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 50.
Ambrosian Iliad before its appearance in Italy in the sixteenth century, any discussion concerning the manuscript’s possible movements remains at issue.

As noted earlier in the chapter, enquiries concerning the historiography of a Late Antique manuscript must include the work of Kurt Weitzmann, a pioneer in the study of antique manuscripts. One of the recurring themes in Weitzmann’s early research was how images in books were transmitted from roll to codex. The Ambrosian Iliad as an early example of the illustrated codex was thus important for ascertaining the origin of the codex form. Prior to Bianchi Bandinelli’s monograph, Weitzmann’s Illustrations in Roll and Codex analyzed the possible stylistic sources for the Ambrosian Iliad and Late Antique manuscripts. Weitzmann attempted to reconstruct a history of textual illustration from roll to codex form using previous scholarship based on Homeric imagery in other art forms, including the Megarian bowls, the Iliac Tablets, and sarcophagi. In his study, Greek Mythology in Byzantine Art, Weitzmann employed the Ambrosian Iliad as an example in tracing the transmission of style and iconography of classical art into the middle Byzantine period.

In 1953, as a result of Weitzmann’s scholarship, renewed interest in the Ambrosian Iliad led to the publication of the only color facsimile of the manuscript. The facsimile included a reprint of A. M. Ceriani’s text from the 1905 facsimile, Homeri Iliadis pictiae fragmenta Ambrosiana. In addition, A. Mai’s original descriptions of the images accompanied the reproductions. Finally, A. Calderini provided a short bibliography in the Appendix. Because of the poor condition of the paintings and the Ambrosian Library’s reluctance to display the codex, this edition is often our only opportunity to study the manuscript in color. Consequently, the facsimile’s most important contribution to Ambrosian Iliad scholarship is its excellent color reproductions. The authors of the facsimile dated the Ambrosian Iliad between the first and fifth centuries based on paleographic study of its extant Greek uncial script.

77 See Chapter Four of this dissertation for further discussion concerning these objects.

78 Weitzmann, Greek Mythology, xii.

79 Ceriani, Ratti, and Mai, Ilias Ambrosiana.

80 Ibid., x.
As a response to Weitzmann’s investigations into the sources of Late Antique manuscripts, Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli wrote his 1955 monograph on the *Ambrosian Iliad*. The publication of the facsimile was the second factor that led to Bianchi Bandinelli’s interest in creating his major work on the *Ambrosian Iliad*. In *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures of the Iliad*, Bianchi Bandinelli postulated a provenance and date for the manuscript based upon formal and iconographic analysis. But, following in the footsteps of other scholars, including Wickhoff and Weitzmann, he also used the study of manuscripts as a way to apply his art-historical theories to the question of the origin of Roman and Late Antique art. The study of the *Ambrosian Iliad* provided an excellent testing ground for Bianchi Bandinelli’s Marxist ideas, first postulated in the early 1950’s. The author’s approach was based partially on a refutation of the theories of Wickhoff, Riegl, and Strzygowski, which he stated were too theoretical and divorced from Roman history.\(^81\) Instead, the author supported a historical approach in which scholarship considered the influence of Late Antique culture on works of art.\(^82\)

The core of Bianchi Bandinelli’s study of the *Ambrosian Iliad* was to succinctly define the difference between what he termed the “Hellenistic tradition,” by which he meant the Greek tradition and the “Roman tradition,” by which he meant the Etruscan/Italic tradition.\(^83\) By determining the origination and transmission of these traditions, he felt that he could more closely assign a time and provenance to Late Antique codices, including the *Ambrosian Iliad*. His conclusion was that the *Ambrosian Iliad* was created in the late fifth to early sixth centuries (493-566) in Constantinople.\(^84\) Bianchi Bandinelli took issue with Wickhoff’s theory that the painting style of the *Vienna Genesis* and the *Ambrosian Iliad* was inherited from fifth century BCE Greek paintings via the wall murals at Pompeii. He felt that Wickhoff’s view was “absurd,” since he did not take into account further Greek development and Roman interpretation of fifth-century BCE paintings.\(^85\) In his writings, Bianchi Bandinelli credited Riegl with “a more

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\(^81\) Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 20-23.

\(^82\) Ibid., 20-23.

\(^83\) Ibid., 19-21.

\(^84\) Ibid., 33.

\(^85\) Ibid., 9 and 17.
efficient historical method.” However, he maintained that both Wickhoff’s and Riegl’s art-historical methods were not sufficiently linked to “relevant historical facts.” Instead, Bianchi Bandinelli recognized two currents of art in the Roman world, both of which he believed ran parallel to each other during the time of the Early Roman Imperial period (first and second centuries) and the Middle Roman Imperial periods (second and third centuries). The Greek tradition originated in the eastern kingdoms that had originally been settled by Alexander the Great, in particular Alexandria, Rhodes, and Pergamon. Heavily influenced by Greek Classical art of the fourth through third centuries BCE, this style consisted of what Bianchi Bandinelli termed ‘highly intellectual’ characteristics of natural and harmonious compositions and approaches to the human body. In other words, the artist used an organic approach to the visual arts. At the height of its popularity, the ‘Hellenistic tradition’ was perpetuated by eastern artists who were in residence in Rome and Italy in the first and second centuries. As a style that was favored by imperial and aristocratic patrons, it was employed for official public art, especially in places where the patron wished to impress the viewer with his patrician taste. Bianchi Bandinelli cited Trajan’s Column and Pompeian painting as examples of this tradition.

Bianchi Bandinelli did not see the Hellenistic tradition as the only style found in the Roman Empire. Instead, he argued that beginning with the Roman Republican period another style, which he termed the “Italic” or “Roman tradition,” was used by the popular classes or, to be more precise, the middle class. According to Bianchi Bandinelli, the national characteristics of the Roman tradition consisted of contour lines filled with flat color, no detail, and a lack of perspective, loosely arranged compositions, a blank or subtly suggested background and a hierarchical treatment of figures. He argued that while the “Hellenistic tradition” was based on well-established and documented theories inherited from Greece, the “Roman tradition”, which had originated with Etruscan urns, was spontaneous and had no classical Greek influence.

86 Ibid., 21.
87 Ibid., 10. These are Bianchi Bandinelli’s definitions.
88 Ibid., 15.
89 Ibid., 16 and 19-20. See also Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, “La Colonna Traiana: Documento d’arte e documento politico (o della libertà dell’artista),” in Dall’ellenismo al medioevo (Rome: Riuniti, 1978), 123-133.
90 Bianchi Bandinelli, Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures, 15.
Bianchi Bandinelli maintained that prior to the fourth century CE the “Roman tradition” was most often used for small funerary monuments and localized provincial art. By the fourth century, the ruling classes preferred the “Roman tradition” and applied it to their public monuments, beginning most notably, with Constantine’s Arch. Bianchi Bandinelli proposed that since the fourth-century leaders of the Empire originated from the popular class, their natural preference for the indigenous style replaced the foreign Greek-inspired “Hellenistic style”. With the move from Rome to Constantinople, the resulting transmission of the Roman tradition merged with the original “Hellenistic style” and developed into what we recognize now as the “Byzantine style.”

In *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures of the Iliad*, Bianchi Bandinelli applied this earlier theory to the *Ambrosian Iliad*, arguing that the codex demonstrated the move to the new ‘Byzantine style’ with its mixture of ‘Hellenistic’ and ‘Roman’ styles (fig. 1.1 and fig. 1.2). The author based his conclusions on an exhaustive study of the quality and style of the 58 miniatures that are extant. He attempted to identify a common and/or unifying approach among the pictures in order to determine if one hand was at work in their creation. As a result of this study, Bianchi Bandinelli concluded that the images may be divided into five major groupings based on stylistic, compositional and/or iconographical differences. In Group A, the figures are treated in isolation from each other, almost as if they were taken from different sources and placed together with no regard for compositional unity (fig. 1.3). In this group, the images are compared to Pompeian style fresco paintings in which the composition was painted as if there were no background or common ground line. Group B’s compositions are more orderly than those in Group A. In these examples, the figures relate to one another, there is perspective, and a united compositional approach (fig. 1.4). Bianchi Bandinelli suggests that the sources for these scenes may have been Hellenistic decorative painting, or paintings that were strongly influenced

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91 Ibid., 15-16 and 20.
92 Ibid., 111-132. In his monograph, Bianchi Bandinelli devotes an entire chapter to this approach.
93 Miniatures I (A, B), XIX, XXIII, XXXII, XXXIV.
94 Miniatures I (C, D, E), II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII (in part), IX, X XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XXI, XXXIII, XXXV, XXXXVII, LII, LIII, LIV, LVII, LVIII.
by the Hellenistic style, in particular, decorative friezes. The next group, Group C, is comprised of battle scenes that, while at first glance may appear unorganized and disjointed, actually have a common pattern that consists of the protagonists being defined by clothing and armor, with armed combatants often shown in defined registers, and a clearing in the melee where the main characters can be picked out from the overall composition (fig. 1.5).\(^95\) As with Group B, Bianchi Bandinelli assigns a Hellenistic source to this method of composition and narrative. The next grouping, Group D, is a clear example of the Hellenistic-Alexandrian tradition in which the figures are arranged in clearly defined groups that point the viewer to the narrative of the composition (fig. 1.6).\(^96\) In Bianchi Bandinelli’s last group, Group EC, he suggests that there are hints of excellence in the original approach to the composition and iconography of the images (fig. 1.7).\(^97\)

The last category best illustrates Bianchi Bandinelli’s conclusions concerning the authorship of the *Ambrosian Iliad*. He suggests that the different styles represented in the manuscript were the result of an artist copying previous illustrations from other books that had been transmitted over generations, each artist having added his or her touches to the illustrations. In spite of the differing formal characteristics of the works, Bianchi Bandinelli’s close examination of the paintings revealed a technique that was consistent from one image to the other.\(^98\) Bianchi Bandinelli’s argument is compelling. When one views all of the images side by side, a definite similarity in the quality and technical approach emerges. However, there can be other explanations for the similarities. What needs to be taken into account is a consideration of Late Antique workshop practices. Manuscripts were not created by one artist working in isolation.\(^100\) It is just as possible that the consistency in the manuscript’s treatment is the result of numerous artists who were copying from the same models, pattern books, and/or works of art.

\(^{95}\) Miniatures XVI, XVII, XVIII, XXI, XXII, XXXVI, XXXVIII, XLII.

\(^{96}\) Miniatures XXXVII, XLIV, LV, LVI.

\(^{97}\) Miniatures XXXXI, XXXXIII, XLV, XXXXVI, XLVIII, XLIX, L, LI.

\(^{98}\) Ibid., 151 and 162.

\(^{100}\) Wright, *The Vatican Virgil*, 2.
Bianchi Bandinelli’s work was based directly on Weitzmann’s groundbreaking ideas concerning the practice of copying prototypes. For Bianchi Bandinelli, his study of the *Ambrosian Iliad* was the means by which he could prove Weitzmann’s theories of transmission. Bianchi Bandinelli believed that the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s artist did not see the original paintings which likely served as the ultimate models for his illustrations. Like Weitzmann, the author theorized that the artist knew the originals through their transmission in the form of intermediate miniatures. As a result, the artist had access to several “illustrated editions” of Homeric illustrations culled from very different ages and origins dating from the second through the beginning of the fifth centuries. Bianchi Bandinelli argued that the motivation and means for bringing together these diverse sources could only have coalesced in a Byzantine scriptorium because of the Greek interest in Homer. Thus, the application of Weitzmann’s theories to his study of the *Ambrosian Iliad* supported Bianchi Bandinelli suggestion of Constantinople as the provenance for the manuscript. He also argued for a possible Byzantine source based on the artist’s use of a rich deep tonal palette that, to Bianchi Bandinelli, was evidence of the transition from a naturalistic Hellenistic style to that of a decorative Byzantine style. As a result, Bianchi Bandinelli proposed that the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s greatest contribution to Roman art is its inheritance from the excellent paintings that must have existed in the Roman world between the second and third centuries.

After its publication, reaction to *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures of the Iliad* was mixed. D. Talbot Rice found no fault with the monograph, calling it, “an admirable blend of sound scholarship, profound and wide knowledge, and brilliant reasoning.” Other reviewers, most

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101 Weitzmann, *Illustrations*.

102 Ibid., 161.

103 In fact, Bianchi Bandinelli suggested that there were earlier versions of some of the paintings of the *Iliad* produced beginning in the second century, echoes of which can be found in the *Ambrosian Iliad*. Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 160.

104 Ibid., 161.

105 Ibid., 23 and 32-33.

notably, John Beckwith and Lillian Randall, were not as effusive as Rice. Beckwith was concerned that Bianchi Bandinelli based his findings on objects with questionable provenances and dates. In spite of his reservations, Beckwith lauded Bianchi Bandinelli’s efforts and acknowledged that his ideas would encourage scholarly dialogue concerning Late Antique codices.¹⁰⁷

Lillian Randall did not accept Bianchi Bandinelli’s argument for the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s eastern origins.¹⁰⁸ She maintained that the homogeneity of Roman art throughout the Empire undermined his comparisons. In other words, scholars could just as easily argue for a western provenance based on similar western examples. Randall’s review is, perhaps, most valuable for recognizing three pressing questions posed by the work of Bianchi Bandinelli. First, how do scholars determine the transmission of specific styles when there is a lack of concrete evidence? Second, exactly what role do manuscripts play in the transmission of style and iconography? And, last, Randall recognized the need for more precise terminology in regard to art-historical styles and how they pertain to Late Antique manuscripts.¹⁰⁹

While Bianchi Bandinelli’s theories were not always clearly presented, and he tended to impart information in excruciating detail, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures of the Iliad* is an invaluable source for the study of the *Ambrosian Iliad*. It provides detailed descriptions of the illustrations that are essential, considering the present poor condition of the manuscript and its unavailability for first-hand viewing. Bianchi Bandinelli provides a good background for further investigation and study of the *Ambrosian Iliad* and Late Antique manuscripts in general. Bianchi Bandinelli’s legacy has been the development of a methodological foundation on which future scholarship could build when dealing with issues of provenance and date. The questions that he poses, and our answers to those questions, reveal the still tenuous footing for any scholar who wishes to revisit the creation of the *Ambrosian Iliad*. While researching the historiography


¹⁰⁹ Ibid.
of the *Ambrosian Iliad*, it is evident that these questions are still relevant today and we can learn from previous scholars’ attempts to grapple with these issues.

Soon after the publication of his monograph, Bianchi Bandinelli conducted a graduate seminar dedicated to the *Ambrosian Iliad* at the Università di Roma. The course focused on the origin and transmission of the iconographic and stylistic issues surrounding this manuscript. Papers from the seminar were published in *Studi Miscellanei I* in 1961. Included in this publication was an essay by Filippo Coarelli who uses Bianchi Bandinelli’s analysis of the style of the *Ambrosian Iliad* to determine the dates of ancient Roman painted glass.\(^\text{110}\) Essays by both Gabriella D’Henry and Fernanda Bertocchi considered depiction of landscapes in the *Ambrosian Iliad*.\(^\text{111}\) Another graduate student, Giacomo Manganaro, referred to the *Ambrosian Iliad* in his contribution dedicated to Achilles’ education.\(^\text{112}\) Bianchi Bandinelli’s introduction to these essays is in reality a response to the book reviews of his monograph. In particular, he responds to Weitzmann’s article, “Observations on the Milan Iliad,” in which Bianchi Bandinelli defends his position that the *Ambrosian Iliad* originated in Constantinople.\(^\text{113}\)

Both Bianchi Bandinelli and Weitzmann used the *Ambrosian Iliad* as a platform from which to support larger issues: their theories of the origin and development of Late Antique art. Bianchi Bandinelli saw the transmission of Greek classical art through the images of the *Ambrosian Iliad*. As a Marxist, Bianchi Bandinelli saw distinct differences in artistic output as a result of the conflict between different classes in society. His theories of Roman art included the

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112 Giacomo Manganaro, “Infanzia di Achille e sua educazione presso Chirone,” in *Studi Miscellanei I* (*Seminario di archeologia e storia dell’arte greca e romana dell’Università di Roma*) (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1961), 43-54. This subject will be examined in more detail in Chapter Three of this dissertation.

idea that the more classically Greek grounded ‘Hellenistic style’ was favored by the higher classes of Roman society, something that would be reflected in an expensive codex like the *Ambrosian Iliad*. Weitzmann responded to Bianchi Bandinelli in an attempt to ascertain the provenance and date of the *Ambrosian Iliad*, most notably in the essays published in *Classical Heritage in Byzantine and Near Eastern Art* and *Ancient Book Illumination*. Weitzmann argued for the Alexandrian influence on Late Antique art, especially manuscripts. Weitzmann proposed that the narrative style in Late Antique codices was derived partly from the Egyptian papyrus style in which the pictures were placed on a scroll, as needed, to illustrate the accompanying text.

While he agreed with Bianchi Bandinelli that the manuscript is partially ‘Byzantine’ in character, Weitzmann disagreed that it was created in Constantinople. Instead, based on a stylistic analysis of the renderings of the human figure, Weitzmann concluded that the manuscript actually originated in Alexandria. He also suggested an earlier date for the manuscript as compared to Bianchi Bandinelli who theorized the end of the fifth to early sixth centuries.\(^{114}\) Instead, Weitzmann proposed that the manuscript was created during the fifth century.\(^ {115}\) In his later work, *Late Antique and Early Christian Book Illumination* (1977), Weitzmann maintained his earlier position that the *Ambrosian Iliad* was created in Alexandria. In a very brief mention of the *Ambrosian Iliad*, he compared its figures to those of the *Cotton Genesis*. Weitzmann bases his conclusion on the treatment of the figures, particularly of Achilles in miniature XXXXVII (figs. 1.1 and 1.2). He believed the figure did not have the solid presence which indicated the “classical norm” but, instead, displayed a “swaying pose.” Moreover, the artist defined the figure with straight thick contour lines which served to flatten the figure, characteristics that, in Weitzmann’s view, indicated a return to an Egyptian style.\(^ {116}\)

For the most part Weitzmann was complementary of Bianchi Bandinelli’s efforts; however, in both “Observations on the Milan Iliad” and the review for the journal, *Gnomon*, he consistently disagreed with Bianchi Bandinelli’s conclusions concerning the *Ambrosian Iliad’s* provenance and date. In his analysis of the *Ambrosian Iliad’s* imagery, Weitzmann saw in the

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\(^{114}\) Ibid., 164.

\(^{115}\) Weitzmann, *Ancient Book*, 32 and 50.

\(^{116}\) Wietzmann, *Late Antique*, 47.
treatment of the figures in the Homeric codex a style similar to the *Alexandrian World Chronicle*, which he believed originated in Alexandria in the fifth century.\(^{117}\) As a result, Weitzmann did not agree with Bianchi Bandinelli’s conclusion concerning the classical treatment of the human figures in the *Ambrosian Iliad*. Instead, he suggested that the figures had a peculiar flatness and rectangularity that was found in the Late Antique Egyptian style.\(^{118}\) He also compared the miniatures from the codex to images on Late Antique terracotta fragments from Egypt. As a result of his analysis, Weitzmann believed that the manuscript’s high quality and Greek aspects indicated creation in an Alexandrian scriptorium during the fifth century. But even Weitzmann was reticent about his findings, and stated that any conclusion in this regard must take into account the transmission of styles and iconography throughout the Roman Empire. He recommended that future study should continue to investigate the transmission of stylistic characteristics as they influenced the *Ambrosian Iliad* and other contemporary manuscripts.\(^{119}\)

Another response to Bianchi Bandinelli’s work on the *Ambrosian Iliad* is reflected in the 1973 article, “Considerazioni di un paleografo per la data e l’origine della ‘Iliade Ambrosiana’,” by Guglielmo Cavallo. Cavallo addressed the proposals of both Bianchi Bandinelli and Weitzmann. His paleographical analysis supports Bianchi Bandinelli’s date of the end of the fifth to the early sixth century, but Cavallo also agrees with Weitzmann’s provenance of Alexandria.\(^{120}\) Cavallo’s approach to the study of the *Ambrosian Iliad* is a good example of the influence of both of these major scholars of Late Antique manuscripts.

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\(^{119}\) Ibid., 260-261.

\(^{120}\) Guglielmo Cavallo, “Considerazioni di un paleografo per la data e l’origine della ‘Iliade Ambrosiana’,” *Dialoghi di archeologia* 7 (1973): 75 and 85.
Although Bianchi Bandinelli’s monograph, for the most part, concentrated on stylistic issues, he did break new ground by studying the iconography of the specific characters displayed in the illustrations. In spite of his insightful research in the area of iconography, subsequent scholars have not pursued this line of enquiry, instead choosing to adopt the more traditional approach of stylistic analysis.

Despite the rarity of antique manuscripts and the importance of the *Ambrosian Iliad* in early codex history, late-twentieth-century scholars have virtually ignored the manuscript. Recent scholarship has been a restatement of, or reaction to, Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli’s research, and there has not been an original approach to this manuscript since his publication of *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures of the Iliad* (1955). Since that publication, late twentieth-century scholars have referred to the *Ambrosian Iliad* primarily in overviews of Late Antique manuscripts. Others have used it in comparison to other manuscripts in order to ascertain their provenances and dates. While these works have provided invaluable information concerning the field of Late Antique manuscripts, none has added to the earlier dialogue concerning the *Ambrosian Iliad*.

Exemplifying this approach is David Robb, whose *Art of the Illuminated Manuscript* (1973) cites Bianchi Bandinelli’s monograph only once, when it first introduces the *Ambrosian Iliad*. Instead Robb turns to Weitzmann’s work when describing the codex and the issues surrounding its provenance and date. Robb agrees with Weitzmann’s assessment that the *Ambrosian Iliad* is from the first half of the fifth century and originated in Alexandria. He also bases his conclusions on a comparison to the style of the *Vatican Virgil*, which he refers to as Late Classical realism, concluding that they were both created around the same time.

Today, Late Antique manuscript scholarship continues to address ongoing issues of provenances and dates. Two of the most prominent studies in this area are Inabelle Levin’s work

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121 For a complete discussion of *Ambrosian Iliad* historiography before the publication of Bianchi Bandinelli’s monograph, see *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 45-51.


124 Robb, *The Art of the Illuminated*, 30 and 44.
on the *Quedlinburg Italica* and David Wright’s investigation of the *Vatican Virgil*. Both monographs have added much to the study of Late Antique codices. Levin and Wright analyze the style of the *Ambrosian Iliad’s* images as a means of identifying sources for their manuscripts. Although their investigations have not added directly to *Ambrosian Iliad* scholarship, both authors have contributed to the advancement of Late Antique studies by continuing to challenge Weitzmann’s and Bianchi Bandinelli’s dialogue concerning the possible origin and transmission of imagery via manuscript prototypes.

**Conclusion**

As I have shown in this chapter, most scholars have analyzed the *Ambrosian Iliad* using paleographic and stylistic methods. A few have used other methodologies, most notably Bianchi Bandinelli who contributed an excellent study on the *Ambrosian Iliad’s* iconography. As a result, there has been a long history of scholarly debate concerning the *Ambrosian Iliad’s* provenance and date based on formal and iconographical analysis. Modern scholars, however, are beginning to recognize the advantages of approaching Late Antique manuscripts from a different line of enquiry. Two scholars, in particular, have influenced the course of my study of Late Antique manuscripts through their investigations of historical and sociological contexts. In his study of the *Vatican Virgil*, David Wright suggested that Late Antique manuscripts may have been displayed as proof of their owner’s high status in society. This idea led to my initial enquiry as to a possible contextual study of the *Ambrosian Iliad*. The most profound influence on my approach to this study of the *Ambrosian Iliad*, however, has been the work of Jaś Elsner. Elsner’s approach to art has been from the viewer’s perspective rather than from the artist’s. In *Art and the Roman Viewer*, Elsner states the relationship between art and the viewer changes

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126 “… this book was too big to hold and it was made for display, not for reading. The *Eclogues* each have an illustration occupying less than half a page but for the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid* each book begins with a separate bifolio of parchment, not ruled for text, blank on its outer surfaces, with a pair of framed illustrations inside; that was what was put on display in his home by this extremely wealthy person.” Wright, “The Persistence,” 364.
based on historical and societal influences. In other words, the viewers’ perception of their own world can be confirmed or altered by the way they interact with the visual imagery around them. Following Wright’s and Elsner’s methodologies, I propose that the imagery of the illustrated manuscripts of the Late Antique, like the *Ambrosian Iliad*, confirmed the Late Antique aristocrat’s view of his world, and his place in that world. I argue that this contextual approach may be a better way to determine date and provenance than are style and iconography. J. H. D. Scourfield put it very well in his recent essay concerning “textual inheritances” in Late Antiquity: “Late-Antique culture, indeed, might well be said to derive its special character from the multiplicity of ways in which attempts are made to integrate the past, particularly as represented by a text which possessed special authority, into the present.” I will show that, for the aristocratic viewer, the iconography of the images of the *Ambrosian Iliad* reflected a present that was defined by a gloried past and a hopeful future.

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127 Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer*, 1, 4-6, and 10.

128 Scourfield, “Textual Inheritances,” 4 and 6. Scourfield emphasizes his point further, “…texts could be at the same time a mechanism for the expression of continuities and an instrument of adaptive change, in pursuit, one might say, of steady state.”
CHAPTER TWO

THE ARISTOCRAT IN LATE ANTIQUITY

Previously, scholarship concentrated on this manuscript from the viewpoint of the maker or makers. I argue that it is instructive, instead, to apply a different line of enquiry concerning the *Ambrosian Iliad* and address it from the viewer’s perspective, as did the aristocratic patron and his peers. This approach to the manuscript will investigate two aspects of the *Ambrosian Iliad*, its iconography and the manuscript as a display object. Consequently, this study will shed new light on the possible date and patronage of this Late Antique manuscript. In order to speak to these issues, however, we need to define what constituted an aristocrat in the Late Antique Roman Empire and the basis on which he defined his status in society. The concepts important in this process of self-definition were *nobilitas*, *mos maiorum*, and *virtus*, all instilled through a system of education known as *paideia*.

*Nobilitas, the Roman Aristocrats*

The idea of a common Roman identity existed since the time of the Early Roman Empire, a concept evidenced in the writings of Pliny the Elder (23-79): “I am well aware that I may with justice be considered ungrateful and lazy if I describe in this casual and cursory manner a land which is at once the nursling and the mother of all lands, chosen by the providence of the gods to make heaven itself more glorious, to unite scattered empires, to make manners gentle, to draw together in converse by community of language the jarring and uncouth languages of so many nations, to give mankind civilization, and in a word, to become throughout the world the single fatherland of all races.”\(^\text{129}\) The Romans believed that the fatherland could only flourish under the

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direction of the very best of their society. During their history, the elite of Rome wholeheartedly adapted this concept of representing the best of their society by referring to themselves in similar terms. For the Romans of the Republic and Early Empire, the virtues of excellence and honor were associated with the elite class known as the nobilitas, or what could be translated today as nobility or aristocracy. To be nobilitas was determined by a person’s birth into a well-established wealthy family whose ancestry included a consulship. During the Republican period, the nobility had special privileges: permission to house images of their ancestors in their homes, exemption from most taxation, and the right to an honorable and speedy execution if convicted of a crime. Roman Republican authors set the standard for aristocratic behavior that would be emulated by the elite throughout the history of the Roman Empire. They believed that it was the aristocrats’ duty to exemplify the ideal Roman for the lower classes of society. Cicero (106-43 BCE) explains: “a transformation takes places in a nation’s character when the habits and mode of living of its aristocracy are changed…. For a few men — very few, in fact, on account of their high official position and great reputation, have the power either to corrupt the morals of the nation or to reform them.” By Late Antiquity, a superlative of nobilitas was used as an imperial title. When the emperor and his family were not satisfied with just being noble, they were known as nobilissimus.

131 Although the Romans did not refer to themselves as aristocracy, for purposes of each of use, the elite of Rome will be referred to as aristocrats or nobility in this study. For information concerning the origin of the word aristocracy, see Jo-Ann Shelton, As the Romans Did: A Sourcebook in Roman Social History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 8, fn. 25. Corresponding word = arête (cognate with aristoi – most excellent men). Aristocracy (kratos = “power rule”) = rule by best men. 


133 Ibid., 195.


135 Alföldy, The Social History, 195. See also The Theodosian Code, esp. 10,25,1.
During the Late Antique period, the Roman elite experienced a dramatic growth in its social and political hierarchy. Under Constantine, the Roman Senate was greatly expanded with the addition of new members. Although the ancient Senate lost its political clout over time, the senatorial families of Rome continued to be honored and respected as keepers of Roman traditions and history. In the new capital of the Roman Empire, Constantinople, Constantine installed a new senate comprised of many of the nouveau riche. This dramatic increase in the ranks of the elite and the need for an extensive bureaucracy to run a huge empire resulted in an expanded system of social levels based on wealth, family connections, imperial service, and civic or military service. Titles were split into two basic groups: the imperial aristocracy and the civic aristocracy.

No matter his aristocratic ranking or where he lived in the Roman Empire, however, every Late Antique Roman aristocrat shared a common view of his place in Roman society. In spite of a new world that was moving towards a Christian-based society, the old ways based on Republican customs and pagan memories were still very much in evidence in the fifth century. Driven by the need to respond to political and societal pressures to constantly redefine themselves the nobilities at least had one constant in their lives: the belief in their role as the keepers of the mos maiorum, or the traditions of ancient Rome.

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136 Ibid., 101.


Loosely translated, *mos maiorum* can be thought of as traditions or customs “as determined not by the laws, but by men’s will and pleasure.” Early Roman authors were fond of using the *mos maiorum* as a way to connect with an audience that believed the traditions of family and state were of the utmost importance.

*Mos maiorum* was more complicated, however, than the simple idea of following your father’s orders. Romans believed that their forefathers had also bequeathed the very code of morals that were the underpinnings of a sound Roman family and, consequently, a sound Roman State. Thus, *mos maiorum* also came to mean the ultimate code of *mores*, or morals, and was seen as the mark of good character. Roman aristocrats were obsessed with the idea of following the correct moral path. Catharine Edwards points out that, as early as the Republican period, the idea of *mos maiorum* was intricately connected with antiquity and the concept of *Romanitas* and *virtus*. Later, Virgil (70-19 BCE) when penning *The Aeneid*, his

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141 For example, the late third-early second century BCE playwright, Plautus (ca. 254-ca. 184 BCE), spoke of the importance of obeying the family’s patriarch in *The Two Bacchises*, trans. Paul Nixon (London: William Heinemann, 1916), 3.3.456-459. “Ah yes, here is a son to rejoice a father’s heart: goes to sea, attends to family affairs, is the bulwark of the home, observes and obeys his father’s every wish and word.” [Hic enim rite productus patri: in mare it, rem familiarum curat, custodit domum, obsequens obediensque est mori atque imperiis patris.]


143 As Cicero explained in *De re publica*, trans. Clinton Walker Keyes (London: W. Heinemann, 1928), 5.1. (Taken from the earlier second century BCE poem by Ennius (239-169 BCE). “The commonwealth of Rome is founded firm on ancient customs and on men of might.” [Moribus antiquis res stat Romana virisque.]

ultimate epic to Roman tradition and values, would use the term *mores* to refer to the laws of the Roman forefathers, “shall set up *mores* and city walls.”

Augustus (63 BCE–14 CE) was well-known for using literary and artistic references to Roman traditions as a way to unite the Roman people under a new world order, the *pax Augustus*. His program of reconstruction was intimately connected to *mos maiorum* as a return to the heroic past when Rome’s founders created its sacred laws. As Paul Zanker stated, “Simplicity and self-sufficiency, a strict upbringing and moral code, order and subservience within the family, diligence, bravery and self-sacrifice; these were the virtues that had continually been evoked in Rome with the slogan, ‘*mos maiorum,*’ ever since the process of Hellenization began.” Thus, from the time of the Republic, *mos maiorum* was an interrelated concept involving personal familial obligations, Roman traditions, and inviolable ancient laws.

Much of Late Antique aristocratic self-identity was centered on the idea of *mos maiorum*, or the ancestral traditions of the Roman people, the protection of which guaranteed the continuation of aristocratic status. For a society whose conservatism and traditionalism started early in its history, clinging to an archaic notion of what it meant to be a Roman was comforting when its people were experiencing great changes and upheavals. During the crises of the third century CE, the Roman senate urged the return to *mos maiorum*, perhaps as a way of attempting to revive the disintegrating empire. By the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century, the Late Antique aristocrat continued the call to revive and protect the Roman past. A mid-fifth century work by Macrobius (fl. early fifth century), *The Saturnalia*, explains that, “if we would be wise, we must always revere *vetustas*, or antiquity.”

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147 Alföldy, *The Social History*, 36.


for Late Antique aristocrats extended beyond the protection of traditional values to their connection with aristocratic ancestors – even if they had to stretch the truth concerning their lineage. According to Ammianus Marcellinus (ca. 330-395), aristocrats in Late Antiquity took great pride when their names suggested that they were descended from such fine ancient Roman families as the Reburri and Flavonii. Thus the Roman elite believed that they were best qualified for their role as protector of the mos maiorum by their possession and display of virtus, the cornerstone of the mos maiorum.

**Virtus**

*Virtus*, in the strictest sense of the word, can be translated as the modern concept of virtue. Its root comes from the Latin word *vir* which expressed the affirmative qualities of a man who was politically active. To the Romans, *virtus* was a loaded term that included a multitude of distinctly idealistic aristocratic qualities: manliness, virility, strength, valor, excellence, worth, perfection, good quality, and morals. *Virtus*, however, meant more than just the inherent possession of these personal qualities. The display of the characteristics of

illa virtutum abundantia vitis quoque aetas illa non caruit, e quibus nonnulla nostro seculo morum sobrietas correcta sunt.]


**virtus** as it supported the aristocratic owner’s protection and nurturing of Rome’s *mos maiorum* was equally important.\textcolor{red}{154} As M. A. McDonnell pointed out, **virtus** was inextricably linked with the idea of the greatness of Rome itself.\textcolor{red}{155}

The subject of **virtus** was popular in Roman literature during the Republican period when authors were consumed with defining what it meant to be truly Roman. Literary sources suggest that very early in Roman history, the concept of **virtus** developed into a sophisticated and complicated philosophical and political ideal. Unlike the Greeks, who admired the sacrifice of the group, the Romans understood the show of **virtus** to be by the individual who gave everything for the protection of the *mos maiorum*.\textcolor{red}{156} The Roman historian Sallust (ca. 86-ca. 35 BCE), who was widely read in Late Antiquity, maintained that **virtus** was a person’s most valuable possession: “For the renown which riches or beauty confer is fleeting and frail; **virtus** is a splendid and lasting possession.”\textcolor{red}{157}

Cicero believed that **virtus** was part of a natural order that led to the governing of the ideal State.\textcolor{red}{158} He maintained that only those who possessed **virtus** were the “best men,” when he wrote, “But if a free people chooses the best men, then certainly the safety of the State depends upon the wisdom of its best men, especially since Nature has provided not only that those men who are superior in virtue and in spirit should rule the weaker, but also that the

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\textcolor{red}{155} McDonnell, *Roman Manliness*, 2.


\textcolor{red}{158} Cicero, *De re publica*, 1.1.19-23 (trans. Clinton Walker Keyes). “I will content myself with asserting that Nature has implanted in the human race so great a need of **virtus** and so great a desire to defend the common safety that the strength thereof has conquered all the allurements of pleasure and ease.” [Unum hoc definio, tantam esse necessitatem virtutis generi hominum a natura tantumque amorem ad communem salutem defendendam datum, ut ea vis omnia blandimenta voluptatis otique vicerit.]

Also Cicero, *De re publica*, 1.34.52-53 (trans. Clinton Walker Keyes). “But what can be nobler than the government of the State by virtue?” [Virtute vero gubernante rem publicam quid potest esse praeclarius?]
weaker should be willing to obey the stronger." In other words, since aristocrats inherently have *virtus*, they are the born and natural leaders of the weaker, or lower, classes. Of course, this passage has to be placed in the context of Cicero’s intent for this work, in which he is arguing for a utopia of sorts, or the perfect Republic. But even readers four centuries later understood that Cicero was outlining what was, in his view, the perfect government run by aristocrats.

By the Imperial Period, *virtus* had become such a part of the Roman psyche that it was believed to have permeated all of Roman society. The early first-century philosopher and author, Seneca (ca. 4 BCE/1 CE-65 CE), saw it everywhere: “Virtue is something lofty, exalted and regal, unconquered, indefatigable: pleasure something low, servile, weak, unstable, whose station and dwelling place are the brothels and taverns. Virtue you will find in the temple, in the forum, in the senate house, defending the city walls, dusty and sunburnt, her hands rough; pleasure you will find most often lurking around the baths and sweating rooms, and places that fear the magistrates, in search of darkness, soft, effete, reeking of wine and perfume, pallid or else painted and made up like a corpse.”

Beginning in the Augustan age, the idea of *virtus* had become a firmly entrenched moral and ethical concept associated with the ruling class. Augustus himself took great pride when he was awarded a golden shield by the Senate (in the year 27) with inscriptions of heroic behavior that lauded him as the very best of *virtus*. While the original golden shield has been lost, a

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159 Cicero *De re publica*, 1.34.52-53 (trans. Clinton Walker Keyes).

[Quodsi liber populus deliget, quigus se comittat, deligetque, si modo salvus esse vult, optimum quemque, certe in optimorum onsiliis posta est civitatum salus, praesertim cum hoc natura tulerit, non solum ut summi virtute et animo praeessent inbevillioribus, sed ut hi etiam parere summis vellent.]


[Altum quiddam est virtus, excelsum et regale, invictum, infatigabile; voluptas humile, servile, imbecillum, caducum, cuius station ac domicilium fornices et popinae sunt. Virtutem in templo convenies, in foro, in curia, pro muris stantem, pulverulentam, coloratum, callosas habentem manus; voluptatem latitantem saepius ac tenebras captantem circa balinea ac sudatoria ac loca aedile metuentia, mollem, enervem, mero atque uguento madentem, pallidam, aut fucatam et medicamentis pollinctam.]


“In my sixth and seventh consulships, when I had extinguished the flames of civil war, after receiving by universal consent the absolute control of affairs, I transferred the republic from my own control to the will of the senate and the Roman people. For this service on my part I was given the title of Augustus by decree of the senate, and the doorposts of my house were covered with laurels by public act, and a civic crown was fixed above my door, and gold shield was placed in the Curia Julia whose inscription testified that the senate and the Roman people gave me this in recognition of my valor, my clemency, my justice, and my piety.” [In consulate sexto et septimo b(ella ubi civil)ia extinxeram per consénum úniversórum (potitus rerum omn)ium, rem publicam ex méa potestáte in senát
marble copy was found in Arles, which suggests that there must have been copies of the shield distributed throughout the Roman world. On the Arles shield are inscribed the words: “(clupeus) virtutis L. clementiae iustitiae pietatisque erga deos patriamque.” All four characteristics, virtue, clemency, justice and piety were those desired of the first citizen of Rome, but especially virtus, for which the shield was subsequently called the clipeus virtutes, or the “shield of virtue.” As Paul Zanker has pointed out, the shield and its reference to virtus was a propaganda tool used to illustrate the importance of traditions, especially as they pertained to antique Rome.

In Late Antiquity, the formal educational system included the required reading of Roman literature, including Virgil and Cicero. Young aristocratic students studied the theories and ideas of the early philosophers and politicians, which served to solidify and justify their position in the Late Antique Roman Empire. In fifth-century Roman terms, their high place in society was a God-given right of the elite of the Empire, since it was the belief that the Late Antique aristocrats still displayed virtus as an important characteristic of their identity.

The concept of virtus consisted of many interlocking ideas and concepts. The Ambrosian Iliad, in its iconography and as an object of value, referenced three of the most important characteristics: auctoritas, dignitas, and pietas. Auctoritas, which can be loosely translated as “authority,” was used by the Romans for different types of authority. It originated with the idea


162 Zanker, The Power of Images, 95. “virtue, clemency, justice and piety towards the fatherland.”

163 Ibid., 97.

164 The characteristics of virtus are: auctoritas (authority), comitas (humor), clementia (mercy), dignitas (dignity), firmitas (mercy), frugalitas (frugality), gravitas (gravity), honestas (respectability), humanitas (humanity), industria (industriousness), pietas (dutifulness), prudentia (prudence), salubritas (wholesomeness), severitas (sternness), and veritas (truthfulness).
of the authority of the Roman Senate, which was termed *auctoritas partum*.\textsuperscript{165} In its ideal state, Cicero described *auctoritas* as the “supreme power...granted to the people and actual *auctoritas* to the Senate.”\textsuperscript{166} When a senator rose to speak in the Senate, he spoke with *auctoritas*. The Roman historian Cassius Dio (ca. 164-after 229) explained that if the aristocrat was not shown proper respect by others, the result was the loss of *auctoritas* which could have serious consequences for that person’s self image.\textsuperscript{167} Eventually, the term was also used in a more general sense as one of the characteristics of *virtus*, to mean the presence of authority in an aristocratic male through the acquisition of the other values embedded in *virtus* including *pietas* and *dignitas*.\textsuperscript{168}

The term *dignitas* was a concept that indicated a person’s exalted status based on his wealth, political position, and way of life.\textsuperscript{169} *Dignitas* could be strictly translated as the modern idea of dignity and honor; its meaning, however, was more profound to the ancient Roman. An aristocrat’s view of himself and of his peers was partially based on the acquisition and display of *dignitas*, which also meant worthiness, authority, reputation, and distinction. In fact, this concept was so important to the aristocrat’s image that, as Julius Caesar (100-44 BCE) declared


\textsuperscript{166} Cicero, *De legibus*, 3.12.28 (trans. Clinton Walker Keyes). [Cum potestas in populo, auctoritas in senatu sit.] In this context, *auctoritas* is related to the word *auctor*. When used in connection with the law, *lex*, or Senate, *senatus consultum*, *auctor* was defined as the individual who made a proposal and realized it to completion. After a measure was adopted by the Senate and before it was approved by the people, it was referred to as the *senatus auctoritas*. Smith, *Dictionary*, 172.

\textsuperscript{167} Cassius Dio, *Dio’s Roman History*, trans. Earnest Cary (London: W. Heinemann, 1914), 7.58.3. “As necessary to make their *dignitas* complete; and if they are not accorded them, they resent it as if they had been ill spoken of, and are angry at the slight. Thus people are more careful toward such men than to the emperors themselves, you might say. To the latter it is a virtue to forgive an offense, while, in the former, that would be taken as an indication of weakness, and attacks and vengeance are thought to provide the validation of their great power.” Cassius Dio, who wrote in Greek, used the Greek word, *axiomatos*, which loosely translates to the Roman concept of *auctoritas*. It can be taken as a quantifiable concept representing someone’s rank or position, especially in an aristocracy. It can also be taken in a more abstract way, meaning someone’s honor or reputation. Both encapsulate the meaning and spirit of *auctoritas* for the Romans.

\textsuperscript{168} Balsdon, “Auctoritas, Dignitas, Otium,” 43-44.

to Pompey’s representatives, he would give his life for it, “The essential thing was honor, which was more important than life.”  

The third most important aspect of _virtus, pietas_, can be literally translated as religious respect for the gods. In ancient Rome, where the line between the sacred and the secular was blurred, however, _pietas_ applied to the Roman’s entire life. The good Roman was expected to be faithful and devoted to his family, friends, and country, as well as his gods. In fact, _pietas_ was more important in the secular context than the religious one and could be thought of, in a modern sense, as patriotism. To display _pietas_ was to display the ultimate loyalty and devotion to the Roman way of life. For the aristocrat, this meant loyalty and devotion to the natural order of things, with his elite class naturally dominating society. In his treatise on the nature of the gods, _De natura deorum_, Cicero discusses the term _pietas_ as it had been used in literature concerning religion: “Yes, but Epicurus actually wrote books about holiness and piety. But, what is the language of these books?” Cicero suggests that the true nature of _pietas_ is not in relation to the gods but, instead, relates to the respect and duty to one’s family and _patria_. Cicero voiced the prevalent belief that the idea of _pietas_ was closely interrelated with _virtus_, in particularly, when it came to the preservation of the State.

Until the very end of the Roman Empire, young aristocratic students studied Greek and Roman philosophy, history, and literature to learn the precedents for the proper use and display

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171 Shelton, _As the Romans Did_, 4 and 315, fn. 231.


173 Cicero, _De natura deorum_, trans. H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann, 1951), 1.41.115. [At etiam de sanctitate, de pietate adversus deos libros scripsit Epicurus. At quo modo in his loquitur?]

174 Cicero, _De natura deorum_, 6.15.15 (trans. H. Rackham). “But, Scipio, imitate your grandfather here; imitate me, your father; love justice and duty, which are indeed strictly due to parents and kinsmen, but most of all to the fatherland.” [Sed sic, Scipio, ut avus hic tuus, ut ego, qui te genui, iustitiam cole et pietatem, quae cum magna in parentibus et propinquis, tum in patria maxima est.]

175 Cicero, _De re publica_, 1.7.12 (trans. Clinton Walker Keyes). “For there is really no other occupation in which human virtue approaches more closely the august function of the gods than that of founding new States or preserving those already in existence.” [Neque enim ulla res, in qua propius ad deorum numen virtus accedat humana, quam civitatis aut condere novas aut conservare iam conditas.]
of *virtus* and all its component parts. During the Republican and Early Imperial periods, *virtus* was seen as an individual quality that actively defined the relationship between the *nobilitas* and the State. Each aristocrat was expected to portray the very best of *virtus* as a part of a healthy and growing Empire. By Late Antiquity, students were still studying the early authors, but their context for the value of *virtus* had shifted.176 During the fourth and fifth centuries, the political and social makeup of the Roman Empire altered dramatically. The Late Antique aristocrat looked fondly back at the heroes of the past who had lived during a time when individual efforts in support of the fatherland were expected and appreciated as embodiments of *virtus*.177 But in the age of massive bureaucracy and greatly inflated Senates and aristocratic families that ensued, the idea of “fatherland” had changed from the Republican ideals of the past to the eastern-influenced Imperial reality of the present. The Emperor, who was no longer one of the people, was an iconic being who, in one person, embodied the Republican ideals of the Roman State, including *virtus* and the personal sanctity of closeness to the new Christian God. Thus, the Late Antique aristocrats’ notion of *virtus*, operated on two levels - as an antiquarian ideal and as a contemporary imperial sacredness.178

*Paideia*

No matter where the aristocrats lived in the Late Antique Roman Empire, they were all bound by the same code of moral ethics and social behavior exemplified by the show of *virtus*. The homogeneous and exclusive nature of the Roman aristocratic class was due, in large part, to their shared educational system, or *paideia*.179

176 See later in this chapter for a discussion of Late Antique education.

177 See Chapter Three of this study for a further discussion concerning the role of *virtus* and antiquarian aristocratic identity.

178 See Chapter Four of this study for a further discussion of the relationship between the Late Antique aristocrat and his emperor as it related to *virtus*.

179 The evidence for the practice of *paideia* during the fifth century in the West is slim, especially on the Italian peninsula. The homogeneous nature of the acquisition and application of *paideia* throughout the Empire, however, lends itself to the use of evidence from different areas of the Mediterranean. Thus, in this study, examples of the use of *paideia* will be drawn from such places as Egypt, Constantinople, and Gaul.
The training for the Roman elite remained remarkably constant throughout the generations and geographical areas. All Roman aristocratic children underwent extensive training to learn the lessons of ancient heroes and their own forefathers as defined by such literary classics as the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Aeneid*. *Paideia* was far more than just memorizing lines from Homeric epics. It was rooted in the very ancient Greek practice of training young men in the skills of hunting, athletics, and warfare. This method of training was part of a belief system that included the molding of a young boy’s strength and moral character based upon ancestral athletic and warrior models. By the fifth century BCE, *paideia* included formal literary study in which Greek students were expected to memorize long Homeric passages. The ability to cite Homer and, even more importantly, to understand and discuss the moral lessons exemplified in his epic poems was considered a vital part of the acquisition of *paideia*. But, while the Greeks used *paideia* to achieve personal perfection, the Romans adapted the concept for their own public social construct, as a means to achieve and display *virtus*, especially with its connection to *mos maiorum*.

Centered on Homeric studies, Roman education was administered in phases. The very youngest students copied Homeric passages as a way to learn Greek and to polish their Greek grammatical skills. During this primary stage, young boys were taught the basics of reading and writing by slavishly copying Homeric verse, particularly the *Iliad*. Based on the tremendous

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181 The earliest evidence of *paideia* is from the Greek Archaic period (750-480 BCE). Jäger, *Paideia*, 57.


183 Nanette R. Pascal, “The Legacy of Roman Education,” *The Classical Journal* 79, no. 4 (April-May 1984): 352. The earliest evidence of the adaption of the system of *paideia* by the Romans comes from the third century BCE, when the conquering Roman generals imported *paideia* from Greece along with their Greek sculptures and paintings.

184 Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 71. For an excellent overview of the historiography of the Greek and Roman education system, see Morgan, *Literate*, 8. Based on her study of papyri writings, Raffaella Cribiore has determined that 80% of the
number of Homeric papyri found in Egypt from the early third century BCE to the late sixth or early seventh century, it appears that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were the most popular school subjects.\(^{185}\) Inscriptions that appear to be school exercises suggest that the most popular passages came from Books 1 and 2 of the *Iliad*.\(^{186}\)

Once the basics were mastered, the students progressed to the second stage of their education, including studies in philosophy, geometry, astronomy, and music. Included was the memorization and recitation of Homeric passages. Instructors provided feedback in the form of correcting grammatical errors and refining rhetorical skills. Students were required to master specific passages from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, especially those imparting moral lessons, as described by Quintilian (ca. 35-90/99). In his instructions for assignments, the Roman author stated, “I should like to suggest that the lines set for copying should not be meaningless sentences, but should convey some moral lesson.”\(^{187}\) The instructors especially liked Homeric verses that dealt with similes. In an example from Oxyrhynchus, a student copied lines from Homer’s *Iliad* which referenced an exchange between Glaucus, a prince of Lycia and a Trojan ally, and Diomedes, the Greek hero from Argos. In the passage, Glaucus compares the passing of generations to the life cycles of leaves.\(^{188}\) At this stage of education, students were expected

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\(^{186}\) J. A. Davison, “The Study of Homer in Graeco-Roman Egypt,” *Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung der Oesterreischen Nationalbibliothek* 1 (1955): 52-53. For more information on the *Hawara Papyri* see: [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/GrandLat/hawara/index.html](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/GrandLat/hawara/index.html). Fortunately, we have one of the most complete examples of Homeric school writing exercises, *The Hawara Homer*, which comes from a cache of first and second century papyri called the *Hawara Papyri*. Found in an Egyptian tomb in Hawara, this papyrus roll from ca. 150 contains parts of Books 1 and 2 of the *Iliad*. Each passage on the *Hawara Papyri* has been carefully copied in beautiful Greek uncial script. The issue of students and their works is a complicated one. Often, it is not clear if the extant work is the product of a student or a copyist. For more information concerning students, classrooms, and classroom practices in the Roman world, see Rafaella Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Atlanta: Scholars Press 1996); Robin Barrow, *Greek and Roman Education* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1976); and William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).


\(^{188}\) The exercise is comprised of portions of the Homeric lines, perhaps as the result of a writing exercise. See Cribiore, “A Homeric Writing Exercise,” 1-8. See p. 2 for the exact lines from the papyrus.
to explain the significance and meaning of the verses to their instructors. In addition to Homeric poetry, young pupils had access to other ancient and contemporary literature which supplemented the Homeric themes with commentaries and *scholia*.189 Roman writers published numerous guides to help students in their studies of Greek literature. Greek authors were also popular and one of the more popular guides was one written by Plutarch (before 50-after 120), who included moral and ethical comments concerning the study of the *Iliad* in his work, *How a Young Person Should Study Poetry*.190

If a student wished to continue with post-secondary education, he was sent to study with a private teacher, or a Grammaticus, who specialized in either rhetoric or philosophy.191 The young men were expected to give oral recitations of Homeric passages, discuss their meanings, and most importantly, debate the moral and ethical issues of the stories. These early versions of the modern-day university produced a highly educated upper class who returned to their homelands to pursue careers in their chosen fields.192

By Late Antiquity, the need for a common education and an investment in *paideia* had been reinforced by great changes in the makeup of the aristocracy during the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine. The new aristocrats who, quite often, did not have old family ties to bolster their claims to elite status, depended on this important tool to delineate the division of classes. Late Antique writers referred to this aspect of their social standing, as did Sidonius Apollinaris (ca. 430-ca. 480), who wrote: “Therefore contemporaries and posterity alike should universally, amid a chorus of fervent vows, consecrate you as a second Demosthenes or a second Cicero, now with statues (if so allowed), now with portraits; for they have been so molded and trained by your teaching that, though now in the very midst of an unconquerable and alien race, they will preserve the signs of their ancient birthright; for now that the old degrees of official rank are swept away, those degrees by which the highest in the land used to be distinguished from the


191 A few post-secondary graduates travelled abroad to study law, philosophy, and medicine.

lowest, the only token of nobility will henceforth be a knowledge of letters."

It did not hurt, however, that limited access to this education and the associated tradition of demonstrating *paideia* reinforced elite status.

A common education was especially important during the Late Antique period since it provided a unifying vocabulary among the elite in an extremely stratified and far-flung society. Whether the aristocrats were from Gaul, Carthage, Alexandria, Rome, or Constantinople, a Homeric education and its code of ethics provided a cohesive bond. Thus, it was very important that the education associated with *paideia* continued from generation to generation. In the fifth century, Sidonius Apollinaris describes a study session with his son: “The other day I and the son to all of us were browsing on the wit of Terence’s *Mother-in-Law*. I was seated beside him as he studied, following my natural inclination and forgetful of my sacred calling, and in order to spur his perceptive mind and enable him to follow the comic measures more perfectly, I had in my own hands a play of similar content, the *Epitrepontes* of Menander. We were reading, praising, and jesting together and, such are the desires we share, he was charmed with the reading, and I with him.

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195 From the *Historia Augusta*, “Maximinus Thrax,” 30.4

The importance of Homer in Late Antiquity is well attested by the fourth-century historian Julius Capitolinus who tells of a kinswoman giving a manuscript of Homer’s poems written in gold letters on purple vellum to Maximinus the Younger. From the *Historia Augusta*, “Maximinus Thrax,” 30.4. [Filio autem haec fuerunt: cum grammatico daretur, quaedam parens sua libros Homericos omnes purpureos dedit aureis litteris scriptos.]

During Late Antiquity, aristocratic children were taught the idea of *virtus* from the stories of Homer and from the teachings of early Roman authors, such as Plutarch. Plutarch’s treatise, *How To Study Poetry*, is replete with references to Homer, and other Greek and Roman authors, combined with explanations of how the contemporary Roman could learn from them. In his *Moralia*, Plutarch refers to *virtus* (as defined by such ancient Greek poets as Hesiod, Homer and Nauck) as a necessary aristocratic quality:

> Particular attention must be paid to the other words also, when their signification is shifted about and changed by the poets according to various circumstances. An example is the word ‘virtue.’ For inasmuch as virtue not only renders men sensible, honest, and upright in actions and words, but also often enough secures for them repute and influence, the poets following this notion, make good repute and influence to be virtue, giving them this name in exactly the same way that the products of the olive and the chestnut are called ‘olives’ and ‘chestnuts,’ the same names as the trees that bear them.¹⁹⁷

From at least the early Roman Imperial period, patrons used art to publicize their educational backgrounds and *paideia*. In an example from the second century, an aristocratic student holds a papyrus in his right hand while gesturing in the traditional speaking pose with his left (fig. 2.1). The iconography speaks directly to his *paideia*. The papyrus represents his formal education while his gesture shows his ability to speak in public using references culled from his readings. Another example is a third-century relief from Gaul showing a messenger interrupting a reading session (fig. 2.2). Two students are seated with scrolls in their hands while their teacher sits between them, possibly listening to their pronunciations of the Greek and Latin languages, an important component of their schooling. Epitaphs also announced the deceased’s education, as in the second-century inscription dedicated to a ten-year old boy, “I had mastered the doctrines of Pythagoras, and the study of the ancient sages, and I read the lyrics of the poets, I read the pious songs of Homer.”¹⁹⁸ In this example one sees the pride of tradition and continuation of *mos maiorum* by the deceased and the proud parents who commissioned it.


The importance of education in works of art in Late Antiquity is evident in an image of the personification of *paideia* in a fifth-century mosaic (fig. 2.3). Part of a series of floor mosaics, the narrative follows the story of the young aristocratic boy, Kimbros, from his birth through his boyhood. Kimbros’ education is especially emphasized with images of his interactions with his teachers and schools. In this episode, Kimbros is shown as an older student in the company of his instructor, other students, servants, and personifications.

The figures, while part of the overall narrative, are, nevertheless, split into smaller groups based on a subtext of activities. On the far left, two servants enter the scene carrying platters, evidently for the row of seated men on the left, who are labeled as *priskoi*, or elder students. The elder student who is dressed in yellow with a bluish robe over his shoulder, just to the right of the servants, is gesturing to the group of three figures closest to him. The furthest figure appears to be reaching for the bluish robe. Marinescu, Cox and Wachter suggest that the robe might be a *tribon*, which was the accepted dress for scholars in Late Antiquity. There are two more elder students seated to the right. The one on the left wearing a brown robe has the label *priskoi* over his head, while the figure to his right is labeled ‘Kimbros’, the aristocratic student and subject of these mosaics. These two seem to be in discussion, since the brown robed figure gestures with his right hand. Perhaps as a way to emphasize his relationship to *paideia*, the subject of these mosaics, Kimbros, has been placed nearest the center of the composition and closest to the personification, *paideia*. *Paideia*, or *Pedia* as she was known in Late Antiquity, appears to be gesturing to the teacher, Alexandros who is seated (fig. 2.4). It almost appears as if she is either pointing to his mouth as the source of the words that will bring *paideia* to life, or as Marinescu, Cox, and Wachter propose, drawing out the information from the tutor. Besides his label, the

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199 Constantin A. Marinescu, Sarah E. Cox, and Rudolf Wachter, “*Paideia*’s Children: Childhood Education On a Group of Late Antique Mosaics,” in *Constructions of Childhood in Ancient Greece and Italy*, ed. Ada Cohen and Jeremy B. Rutter (Princeton, NJ: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2007), 101 and 111, fn. 29. As these authors have pointed out, the Kimbros mosaics are split between private owners and had not previously been studied. The mosaic’s original provenance is unknown.

200 Ibid., 111.

201 Marinescu, Cox, and Wachter believe that some of these students have tablets on their laps. The mosaic is not detailed enough to tell for sure. Ibid., 111.

importance of the instructor’s position is underscored as he is seated on a throne-like chair and holds a tablet.

One of the remarkable aspects of this image is the liberal use of personifications to tell the story. In addition to Paideia, two pairs to the right of Paideia and Alexandros represent the calendar; the male is the month while the female is the day, as represented in the Macedonian calendar. Directly to the right of Alexandros is the monthly personification ‘Loios’ who is wearing a short brown tunic and holding a blue cloth filled with fruits, an appropriate attribute for his month of October. The other month, labeled Desios, dressed in a blue tunic and wearing a hat, carries a sickle and wheat, both associated with his month of August. If these dates are in the same year, they represent the passage of nine months, perhaps the cycle of Kimbros’ school year. On the far right, the student “Dios” gesticulates to his right while a very small person, perhaps a young boy, gestures to him with both hands.

Conclusion

Throughout Roman history and certainly into the Late Antique period, the Roman aristocrats, or nobilitas, knew their place in society, especially as related to the lower classes. From the time of the early Republic, politicians and historians, like Cicero, exhorted the elite to live an exemplary life dedicated to service to the fatherland. It was their unyielding belief that the ideal State could only survive if it was governed by the very best men of society, who represented the model of the ‘perfect Romans.’ In an age of exclusivity and strict class division, the elite of the Roman Empire felt that this was the natural order and, thus, their duty to protect


206 Peter Garnsey and Caroline Humfree, The Evolution of the Late Antique World (Cambridge: Orchard Academic, 2001), 84.
the Empire. By Late Antiquity, political and societal changes had produced a complicated and rigid hierarchy of aristocratic titles that were defined not only by birthright, but also by service to the emperor and/or the State. In this constantly evolving process of self-definition, upholding traditional values and customs, or the *mos maiorum*, through the appearance of *virtus* was the one constant that could be shared by aristocrats throughout the Roman Empire.

The means by which aristocrats throughout the Empire could be given the tools they needed to protect and nurture their elite status was through the process of acquiring *paideia*. While some may translate *paideia* as education, it actually was a sophisticated and highly developed system that trained aristocratic men to learn the skills needed to prove their worth as the keepers of the Empire. These skills were acquired through the moral and ethical lessons from the stories of the ancient Homeric Greek heroes taught to elite youths, including *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.

In this study, I will show that the Late Antique aristocratic viewer created his own identity through the protection of the values and ideals of his ancestors as illustrated in the iconography of the *Ambrosian Iliad*. In his study, *The Psychology of Time*, Fraisse explains that the construction of a people’s present is often based on the shared memory of a past whose “significance has been acquired by conditioning.” He proposes that a common “stimulus” invigorates and solidifies the present by providing a means to remember the past. I would suggest that the images in Late Antique manuscripts, including the *Ambrosian Iliad*, provided a stimulus for the aristocratic viewers to relive a past that, in turn, justified and confirmed their present. One of the issues that I will investigate is how a manuscript and, in particular, the *Ambrosian Iliad*, was viewed in the Late Antique aristocrat’s quest for preserving an identity that was based on traditional aristocratic values. The next chapter explores the images of the *Ambrosian Iliad* and how its Roman iconography actually reflected the Late Antique aristocratic viewer’s idealistic view of his role in Roman society, especially as it related to a sense of uniqueness, entitlement, and position in an extremely status-conscious world.

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CHAPTER THREE
THE AMBROSIAN ILIAD AND ANTIQUARIAN ARISTOCRATIC IDENTITY

The Roman aristocrat lived a life based on conservative values that were steeped in tradition, or the *mos maiorum*. Roman authors, from the Republican period through Late Antiquity, voiced a consistent theme: that survival of the Roman people depended on the elite protecting the traditions on which Rome had been built. By Late Antiquity, the concept of *mos maiorum* had evolved into an ideal based on the traditions and rituals of the aristocrats’ forefathers. These rituals, even those no longer current in the fifth century, continued to define the aristocrats’ place and sense of value in their society. The significance of their Roman heritage was manifested through the antiquarian movement of the fifth century which included a keen study of Greek and Latin authors and the collection of Greek and Roman antiquities.

I argue that it was in this climate of antiquarianism and due to the need to protect the *mos maiorum* that the *Ambrosian Iliad* was created and viewed. There were two specific traditional aspects of the *Ambrosian Iliad* that contributed to the fifth-century aristocratic self-image: the theme reflected the *paideia* of its owner and the imagery referenced antiquarian Roman aristocratic activities. In Chapter Two, we saw that the Roman aristocrats’ early training, or *paideia*, involved the mastery of Homeric literature, including the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. In Late Roman society, the display of this knowledge was an important means by which the aristocrats defined and protected their unique social status. Antiquarianism was present in some form during all of Roman history, although it ran in cycles, and in the fifth century it was very strong. During the fifth century, the institution and display of *paideia* provided the intellectual and social support that enabled the movement to flourish.

The fifth-century aristocrats’ need to demonstrate connections with tradition through the ownership and display of antique literature is exemplified by the *Ambrosian Iliad*, as an expensive codex depicting Homer’s *Iliad*. In addition, as the ultimate model of the Greek idealism and ethical conduct on which the Roman *mos maiorum* was based, the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s imagery provided a consummate platform for references to ancient Roman traditions. In spite of its Greek narrative, the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s iconography is thoroughly Roman. The Greek
kings and aristocrats sacrifice in the Roman fashion, wear Roman armor, and fight in a distinctly Roman manner. The Roman aristocratic viewer saw his present through the antiquarian filter of the past, as represented in the *Ambrosian Iliad*. After discussing the *Ambrosian Iliad* and antiquarianism, I will demonstrate how the fifth-century viewer recognized references to antique Roman practices as they supported the *mos maiorum* in scenes of battle and of sacrifice.

**The Ambrosian Iliad and the Antiquarian Movement**

Scholars have cited various reasons for the rise in antiquarianism during the fourth and fifth centuries, including the desire to cling to paganism, fascination with Latin literature, or a renewed interest in *paideia*. By the end of the fourth century, paganism was waning and, by the dawn of the fifth century was officially banned throughout the Empire. In spite of its impending demise, there were Roman senators who remained vocal proponents of paganism, most notably the high ranking senator, Symmachus (ca. 340–402). His letters and speeches give no clear evidence that he, or his contemporaries, were seeking to protect paganism as the preferred religious belief system. Instead, aristocratic references to paganism had more to do with old Roman traditions rather than strictly religious concerns. One of the most famous examples of Symmachus’s effort to protect traditional values concerned the removal of the *Altar of Victory* from the floor of the Senate in Rome. While Symmachus’s attempt to protect paganism was short-lived, the antiquarian movement lasted through the end of the fifth century.

Scholars have also cited the intense fascination with ancient literature in both the fourth and fifth centuries as the reason for the rise of antiquarianism. There was an increased interest in Homeric literature and the *Iliad*, in particular. The Late Antique fascination with ancient Greek

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208 See Levin, *Quedlinburg Itala*, 45.


epics and mythology was fueled by the immense popularity of the fifth-century mythological tome, the *Dionysiaca*, by Nonnus of Panopolis (fl. 450-470). This massive work, consisting of a 48-book poem, detailed Greek mythology from the standpoint of a ‘biography’ of the god Dionysius. Recast for a contemporary Roman audience, the *Dionysiaca* provided additional narrative to fill in the missing gaps in the original mythological stories. The popular poem followed the meter and story line of Homer’s epic poems; the first part of the *Dionysiaca* covered the god’s victories in India, while the last half chronicled his epic journey through the East. The work was mined for school lessons on rhetoric and provided a source for moral education.

Increased attention to the practice of *paideia* has also been cited by scholars as contributions to the rise of antiquarianism in the fifth century. During the Late Antique period, Christian leaders came from the aristocratic class and received a formal education, which included the memorization/study of Homeric passages. They continued to collect objects displaying mythological subjects. The idea of *paideia* was not anathema to the Christians, but an accepted

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212 Wolfgang Liebeschuetz suggests that Nonnus’ literary approach was proof of his antiquarian interests. “Nonnus was also concerned to give readers the pleasure of recognizing as many as possible of the vast number of allusions embodied in the text, not only to specific authors but also to antiquarian topography, mythology and divination. If the poet has a message it is to celebrate the ancient literary culture which he has gathered together in his own way into a kind of encyclopedia.” Wolfgang Liebeschuetz, “The Use of Pagan Mythology in the Christian Empire,” in *The Sixth Century: End or Beginning?*, ed. Pauline Allen and Elizabeth Jeffreys (Brisbane: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1996), 83. For the relationship between Nonnus and antiquarianism, see 84-89. For a different view of Nonnus’ *Dionysiaca*, see Bowersock, who argues that Nonnus referenced Homeric literary tradition in order to show a Christianized paganism, where Dionysus is a “polytheist Christ.” G. W. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 41-42.

213 Cameron, “Poetry,” 329. Along with Homer, the *Dionysiaca* gave Late Antique students, ample opportunity to further their Greek studies. For a description of the works as well as a bibliography of his most recent and thorough essays on the subject, see the website by R. F. Newbold, [http://www.nonnu.adelaide.edu.au/](http://www.nonnu.adelaide.edu.au/). For the English translation of the *Dionysiaca*, see Nonnus of Panopolis, *Dionysiaca*, trans. W. H. D. Rouse (London: Heinemann, 1940).


215 Averil Cameron refers to the proliferation of mythological themes on art objects such as silver, paintings, and mosaics as late as the seventh century when the patrons most certainly would have been Christian, as a contributor to antiquarianism. Cameron, “Poetry,” 342-343.

An obvious example of the combination of Christian and pagan iconography in one object is the *Project Casket* from circa 380, where a married couple, Secundus and Projecta, are indicated by the inscription, “Secundus and Projecta, may you live in Christ” (fig. 3.1). Based on the portrait of the couple and the decidedly female iconography of Projecta at her toilette, it is believed that the *Projecta Casket* may have been a wedding present. Scholars believe that Projecta was the daughter of the prominent Christian family, while Secundus may have been
way to express and explain their ideas concerning their religion. The continued presence of *paideia* does not explain why there was a surge in antiquarianism in Late Antiquity. Throughout Roman history, *paideia* had been an all-pervasive influence on the Roman aristocrats’ life. The acquisition and practice of *paideia* provided a guiding measure of self-identity and a framework in which the elite connected to its past, defined its present and informed its future. If *paideia* was a contributing factor to antiquarianism, then it could be argued that the entire Roman history was one of antiquarianism.

None of these proposals has provided an adequate explanation for the intense interest that Roman antiquity held for the fifth-century aristocrats. All of these possible contributing factors to antiquarianism in the fifth century do, however, share a common theme: an interest in ancestral traditions as they supported the concept of the *mos maiorum*. Late Antique aristocrats protected

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Tercius Secundus, a member of an aristocratic pagan family. The iconography of this object centers on the contemporary actions of an Late Antique aristocratic woman: bathing, performing her toilette, and adorning herself. Projecta’s images are intertwined with the pagan figures of the Erotes, the Nereids, and Venus. In its conflation of Christian and pagan themes, the *Projecta Casket* illustrates the fluidity between paganism and Christianity during this period. Regardless of its religious connotations, as Elsner has pointed out, the important function of the *Projecta Casket* was for display. Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer*, 251-255.


their status through ancient rituals, reading early Latin and Greek literature or referencing pagan mythological subjects in their writings. For the Late Antique elite, the idea of antiquarianism as an isolated construct would have been a foreign concept. In other words, the fifth-century aristocratic mania for antiquity was not inspired by an isolated and objective sense of viewing the past, but by the subjective need to participate in the act of self-definition. The very nature of self-definition depends on a public forum, where the participants judge each other in their ability to follow their own self-imposed social rules. To the fifth-century Late Antique aristocrats, these rules depended on antiquarianism and ancestral traditions.

The display and ownership of the *Ambrosian Iliad* reflected the antiquarian movement of the fifth century in several ways: the manuscript represented an increased interest in Homeric literature, it was prized as a luxury object kept in its patron’s private library, and, with its heroic and mythological theme and iconography, it was a part of the mania for collecting antiquities and antique themed objects. By virtue of its author, the *Ambrosian Iliad* represented the fascination and increased interest in Homeric epic poetry during this period of Late Antiquity. The *Ambrosian Iliad* was a direct reference to the ancient epic poetry that so fascinated and inspired the Late Antique reader. Moreover, by the fifth century, aristocrats were actively interacting with the ancient poet through the use of textual exegesis by means of writing *centos* and *scholia minora* which enhanced and emphasized their knowledge and connection to a heroic past.\(^{216}\) The word *cento* was a Latin derivative of the Greek word, κέντρον, which translated as “prick” or “needle”, and was later extended to encompass the notion of a “patchwork” of literary ideas.\(^{217}\) *Centos* were deconstructions of epic poetry, in particular Virgil and Homer, that were reordered to form new poems. Writing *centos* was a popular pastime in Late Antiquity, especially among Christians. There is evidence that Christian aristocrats especially enjoyed the challenge of deconstructing and rearranging familiar passages into new poetic forms that referenced the Biblical concepts that supported their religion.

\(^{216}\) Margaret Lea Stirling, *The Learned Collector* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 230. I would suggest that the practice of literary exegesis, combined with the ancient Jewish tradition of exegesis, likely led to the Christian tradition of exegesis.

Several examples of this practice are extant, including the most famous and extensive cento by the Empress Eudocia (401-460), wife of Emperor Theodosius II (401-450). Not only did she create her own centos, but she also worked on an incomplete cento begun by Patricius, the late fourth-century Christian author and father of Augustine of Hippo (354-430). During antiquity, much literature was read aloud and this oral aspect was of particular concern in the creation of centos; the author needed to be sure that they sounded right when read out loud, especially because the original had been sung. Eudocia mentions this as one of her reasons for finishing Patricius’s poem, “nor in singing did he remember only those verses sung by the brazen heart of blameless Homer.”

M. D. Usher suggests that writing centos may have been popular among the Christians because it legitimized Christian themes by connecting them to traditional Homeric verse. Jerome (ca. 347-420) took issue with this practice in one of his letters when he wrote that cento authors “fit to their own private meaning passages that have nothing to do with that meaning, as if it were some great feat (and not a depraved method of exposition) to have an author’s intention violated, and to make scripture conform to their own will, though in fact that same scripture flies in their face.”

In spite of such opposition, creating centos flourished in the fifth century, as evidenced by Eudocia’s enthusiastic involvement in the practice.

Since the source of many of the centos was the works of Homer, the text of the Ambrosian Iliad would have provided the genesis for a cento. Moreover, the appropriation of Roman iconography to illustrate a Greek story worked much like a cento. Through the use of Roman iconography, the artist took his visual interpretation of the well-known Homeric verse, and similar to a cento, deconstructed and reworked it so that it had a new, modern aspect. The aristocratic viewer, who was not only well-versed in Homeric poetry but also in the art of creating centos, would have recognized this approach to Greek and Roman imagery. Like his or

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218 [οὐδὲ μόνον ἐπίων ἐμνήσατο κείνος ἀείδων ὀπόσα χάλκεων ἦτορ ἀμεμφέσος εἶπεν Ὄμήρον.] From Usher, Homeric Stitchings, 21.

219 Ibid., 11. Although he also concedes that the “clash” between the two disparate sources, “disturbs the integrity, and hence the authority, of both.”


221 For a very interesting comparison by Eudocia between the Trojan women and Eve, see Usher, Homeric Stitchings, 13-15.
her own literary exercises for recasting the Homeric stories, the *Ambrosian Iliad’s* imagery visually recast the Homeric stories for a contemporary audience.222

Late Antique readers had another means through which they interacted with Homeric poetry, the practice of applying *scholia minora*. *Scholia minora* consisted of the listing of words or phrases from an ancient source with accompanying glosses. These glosses were comprised of translations, explanations, and transliterations in the contemporary Latin or Greek language.223 *Scholia minora* may have been the result of school exercises; however, much of the *scholia minora* found in manuscripts and papyri were not used in schools but were found in private contexts. By the fifth century, the practice was so popular that entire books were published consisting of just *scholia minora*, especially of Homeric passages.224

In spite of the advent and eventual supremacy of Christianity, the practice of glossing the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* continued well into the Early Medieval period. We see this during the life of the *Ambrosian Iliad* itself. On several occasions after its production, unknown authors applied *scholia minora* to the pages of the manuscript. The first set of *scholia*, which was written in the margins, was mostly lost when the illustrations were cut out of the original pages. De Wit, who studied the *scholia* of the *Ambrosian Iliad* specifically as a means to determine the date and provenance of the manuscript, dated the original *scholia* to the ninth or tenth century.225 Based on the partial remains of these *scholia*, Bianchi Bandinelli argues that they must have existed before the pictures were cut out of the original vellum, sometime before the thirteenth century.226

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222 In his study of the *Arch of Constantine*, Jaš Elsner compared the reuse of its *spolia* to a *cento*. See Jaš Elsner, “From the Culture of *Spolia* in the Cult of Relics: The Arch of Constantine and the Genesis of Late Antique Form,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 68 (2000): 176.


225 de Wit, “Bilderbeischriften.” See Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 50 for a synopsis of de Wit’s conclusions concerning the *Ambrosian Iliad’s scholia minora*. See Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 38, fn. 1 for a detailed description of the location and nature of the *scholia* and other notes that were applied after the creation of the manuscript. It is commonly believed that the second set of *scholia* was later applied in dark ink possibly in the twelfth to thirteenth century.

226 Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 38. For a discussion of the *Ambrosian Iliad’s scholia*, see Chapter One.
Owning and housing collections of books of the ancient Greek and Roman literary masters in private libraries was considered a mark of high status. The *Ambrosian Iliad* and other expensively produced manuscripts like it that were kept in libraries were of great value to their patrons.\(^{227}\) Given the overriding influence of *paideia* and its connection to Homeric stories, the value that Romans placed on their books is not surprising. From his earliest years as a schoolboy, the Roman aristocrat was taught the importance of books, especially the antique works that represented a reverence for tradition. As Suetonius (ca. 70-ca. 130) explained in his treatise, *A Book about Schoolteachers*, “Marcus Verrius Flaccus, a freedman, was renowned for his methods of teaching. He used to make his students compete against each other in contests in order to stimulate their minds and encourage them to study. He gave them a topic on which to write an essay and then awarded a prize to the author of the best essay. The prize was always an old book, valuable for its beauty or its rareness.”\(^{228}\)

It was not long until this reverence for books had developed into a mania for collection. In Habinek’s study, *The Politics of Roman Literature*, the author introduces the term “prestige object” to describe the ownership of a book of poems by Catullus (ca. 84-54 BCE), “Viewed one way, the poem partakes of the characteristics of dedication of a prestige object, with the resultant display of author, patron, and text.”\(^{229}\) I would add that several other factors contributed to Habinek’s concept of a prestige object: high cost, limited and exclusive access, and the intended impression on the viewer. The *Ambrosian Iliad* meets all three of these criteria. Extensively illustrated manuscripts were very expensive objects, thus accessibility to codices seems to have been reserved for a small sector of society.\(^{230}\) Guglielmo Cavallo noted that, during the third and fourth centuries, the codex

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\(^{230}\) The price of the manuscript was based on a price listed on Diocletian’s Edict. F. R. Cowell’s calculations were based on 1,080 denarii for parchment and 2,500 denarii for the scribe’s services. Compare this figure to the 150 denarii earned per day by a painter. F. R. Cowell, “Book Production in Ancient Rome,” *History Today* 24, no. 11 (November 1974): 294-298.
form became the most popular format for reading material. But, at the same time, there is evidence that there were fewer literate people. This trend continued in the fifth and sixth centuries throughout the Roman Empire. Cavallo concluded that, as a result, the codex became the property of a privileged few. The limited access to codices would have emphasized their value as objects of exclusivity. Thus, just by virtue of owning and displaying an expensive manuscript, like the Ambrosian Iliad, the owner’s elite status would have been acknowledged.

While we have examples of owners using their books for scholarly activities, it was not unusual for patrons to collect books just for the sheer fact of owning them. Teresa Morgan suggested that, if texts were collected as a way to qualify identity, many of the Homeric texts may not have been read. She proposed that extensive libraries existed purely for show. Throughout Roman history, ancient authors complained about this form of book snobbery. For example, in the early first century, Seneca criticized rich men who bought thousands of books for their libraries but never read them. Instead, “There was no ‘good taste’ or ‘solicitude’ about it, but only learned luxury – nay, not even ‘learned,’ since they had collected the books, not for the sake of learning, but to make a show, just as many who lack even a child’s knowledge of letters use books, not as the tools of learning, but as decorations for the dining room.” He also wrote, “But as it is, these collections of the works of sacred genius with all the portraits that adorn them are bought for show and a decoration of their walls.” Later, Lucian (ca. 120–after 180) questioned the vogue for buying so many books by patrons who had absolutely no interest in reading them. His conclusion was that they were bought for show.


232 Morgan, Literate Education, 112.

233 Seneca, de Tranquillitate Animi, trans. John William Basore (London: W. Heinemann, 1928), 9.5. [Non fuit elegantia illud aut cura, sed studiosa luxuria, immo ne studiosa quidem, quoniam non in stadium sed in spectaculum comparaverant, sicut plerisque ignaris etiam puerilium litterarum libri non studiorum instrumenta sed cenationum ornamenta sunt.]

234 Ibid., 9.5. [Nunc ista conquisita, cum imaginibus suis discrita sacrorum opera ingeniorum in speciem et cultum parietum comparantur.]

235 Lucian, The Ignorant Book-Collector, trans. A. M. Harmon (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913), 19. “Though I am continually asking myself the question, I have never yet been able to discover why you have shown so much zeal in the purchase of books. Nobody who knows you in the least would think that you do it on account of
By the time of Late Antiquity, authors still criticized this kind of book collecting. In the later fourth century, Ammianus Marcellinus complained of aristocrats who were more interested in the appearance of leisure, like reading, in which only the very wealthy could indulge. For these patrons, a book like the *Ambrosian Iliad* would have acted as a prop that suggested its owner’s *paideia* in a house where entertainment was of the primary importance: “In short, in place of the philosopher the singer is called in, and in place of the orator the teacher of stagecraft, and while the libraries are shut up forever like tombs, water-organs are manufactured and lyres as large as carriages, and flutes and instruments heavy for gesticulating actors.” Ammianus Marcellinus was quick to condemn those aristocrats who collected books for status, as well as the practice of owning private libraries solely for display.

**The Roman Villa, Books, and *Paideia***

Since the Roman Republic, we have literary evidence of book collections in aristocratic villas. The first Roman credited with creating a private library was the Roman general Aemilius Paulus (229-160 BCE). The nucleus of his collection were the books taken from Perseus, the Macedonian king, during the Third Macedonian War. The first-century architect and writer Vitruvius (ca. 80-70-after ca. 15 BCE) explained that the ideal private home should contain a library and gave detailed instructions as to its placement in the house: “Private rooms and libraries should look to the east, for their purpose demands the morning light. Further, the books in libraries will not decay. For in apartments which look to the south and west books are damaged by the bookworm their helpfulness or use, any more than a bald man would buy a comb, or a blind man a mirror, or a deaf-mute a flute-player, or a eunuch a concubine, or a landsman an oar, or a seaman a plough. But perhaps you regard the matter as a display of wealth and wish to show everyone that out of your vast surplus you spend money even for things of no use to you?”

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237 Plutarch, *Plutarch’s Lives – Aemilius Paulus*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), 6.28.6. “It was only the books of the king that he allowed his sons, who were devoted to learning, to choose out for themselves.”

and by damp, which are caused by the moist winds on their approach, and they make the papyrus rolls moldy by diffusing moist air.”

One of the most famous extant private libraries, and the most complete that has been found to date, was located in Herculaneum at the Villa of the Papyri. Owned by Julius Caesar’s father-in-law, Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus (mid-1st c. BCE), the collection included works by Greek Epicurean philosophers, most notably Philodemus of Gadara (ca. 100–ca. 40 or 35 BCE). The texts were stored in a small room on shelves or in traveling boxes. The area next to this room has yet to be excavated, and, because of the Romans’ fondness for splitting their collections between Roman and Greek authors, Sider suggests that there may have been an adjoining library with Roman papyri. This would explain the few tantalizing papyri scraps with passages from Roman authors that have been found there.

Literary evidence indicates that the Late Antique elite continued the practice of collecting books. Sidonius Apollinaris (ca. 430-ca. 480), a wealthy aristocrat of Gaul in the fifth century, writes of his good friend’s villa: “Then, besides a well-stocked larder and abundant furniture, it is liberally filled with stores of books, amid which you expend much energy on the pen as you give to

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238 Vitruvius, On Architecture, trans. Frank Granger (London: W. Heinemann, 1931), 6.4.1. [Cubicula et bybliothecae ad orientem spectare debent; usus enim matutinum postulat lumen, item in bybliothecis libri non putrescent. Nam quaecumque ad meridiem et occidentem spectant, ab tiniis et umore libri vitiantur, quod venti umidi advenientes procreant eas et alunt infundentesque umidos spiritus pallore volumina conrumpunt.]

http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/classics/philodemus/philhome.htm
This effort is part of the Philodemus Project which hopes to reconstruct the works of Philodemus by reconstructing the texts found at the Villa of the Papyri.

240 Sider, The Library, 4, 9, 43, and 62. So far over 1,100 papyri have been found. Since most of the library’s holdings were destroyed during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE, the number could have been much higher. Also, a section of the villa that is adjacent to the library remains unexcavated. It could yield even more rolls. For bibliography and historiography on the ownership of the Villa of the Papyri, see John H. D’Arms, Romans on the Bay of Naples (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 173-174. For discussion of possible ownership of the library and its literary contents, see Mario Capasso, Manuale di papirologia ercolanese (Galatina: Congedo, 1991), 43-64 and 152-226.
the ploughshare, so that it is hard to decide whether the owner’s land or his mind has been the better cultivated.”

Having a library with a collection of books, including illustrated manuscripts, was clearly the mark of an educated person and contributed to his appearance of paideia.

In addition to its status as a Homeric manuscript, the Ambrosian Iliad also likely functioned in concert with other Homeric and mythological objects in a villa setting as a show of paideia in the contemporary atmosphere of antiquarianism. Since early in their history, Roman aristocrats had filled their urban and country villas with Greek and Roman art as a means of establishing their wealth, education, and taste. This practice was especially important during the Late Antique period when the ostentatious display of the aristocrat’s command of paideia was expected by his peers and clients. In order to fully demonstrate his acquisition of paideia, a codex, like the Ambrosian Iliad, could have been displayed as an expensive and important object along with other mythological-themed objects in the villa. These collections supported the owner’s self-image and projected the correct and appropriate message as defined and supported by the ideas of paideia. Pollitt suggests that the Roman idea of “decoration” was based on the Vitruvian model of “appropriateness.” That is, the belief that all objects should have an appropriate purpose, such as the display of mythological subjects. Nicholas Horsfall suggests

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241 Sidonius Apollinaris, Poems and Letters, 7.4 (trans. W. B. Anderson). [Iam super penum vel supelletilem copiosam thesauris bibliothecalibus large refertus, ubi ipse dum non minus stilo quam vomeri incumbis, difficile discernitur domini plusne sit cultum rus an ingenium.]

242 Pollitt, The Art of Rome, xiv, xv and xvi. He cites Vitruvius who explains that the ‘decor theory’ meant that art and architecture should be appropriate to what nature intended. For example, architecture should be sited appropriately to its surroundings which will be pleasing to the deities. Sculpture should be created proportionately to scale to its temple. See Vitruvius, On Architecture, 1.2.5 (trans. Frank Granger). In this passage Vitruvius gives multiple examples of the types of buildings that would be appropriate for each deity. For example, “Temples designed in the Corinthian style will seem to have details assigned to Venus, Flora, Proserpine, Fountains, Nymphs; for to these goddesses, on account of their gentleness, works constructed with slighter proportions and adorned with flowers, foliage, spirals and volutes will seem to gain in a just decor.” [Veneri, Florae, Proserpinae, Fonti Lumphis corinthio genere constitutae apatas videbuntur habere proingenere constitutae apatas videbuntur habere proprietates, quod his diis propter teneritatem graciliora et florida foliisque et volutis ornate opera facta augere videbuntur iustum decorum.]

243 Elizabeth Bartman, on the other hand, argues that focusing on one specific purpose for a collection is ignoring its “eclecticism.” She explains that the idea of eclecticism “was a virtue, rife with connotations of wealth, power and tradition.” Elizabeth Bartmann, “Sculptural Collecting and Display in the Private Realm,” in Roman Art in the Private Sphere, ed. Elaine Gazda (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1991), 73. Roger Ling, however, thinks that private collections in the Roman villa “were somewhat arbitrarily compiled and arranged.” Roger Ling, “Arts of Living,” in The Oxford History of the Roman World, ed. John Boardman, Jasper Griffin, and Oswyn Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 373.
that objects with Homeric text and imagery may have been in the villa as a way to jog the forgetful viewer’s mind when displaying his knowledge of the epic poet’s works.\textsuperscript{244}

I suggest that since the Republican period, Romans demonstrated an interest in visually connecting themselves to the traditions of \textit{paideia}. Sculptures and other works of art depicting Homer and his stories were often kept in libraries, side-by-side with the books. A prime example of the Late Antique passion for collecting antiquities comes from the mid-fifth century aristocrat, Lausos.\textsuperscript{245} Contemporary records indicate his collection was comprised of ancient Greek mythological statuary including the original sculpture (350 BCE) of Aphrodite by Praxiteles.\textsuperscript{246} Although there has been much debate concerning the context of his sculptural collection, modern scholars agree that the statuary was prominently displayed in Lausos’ palace, perhaps in his vast and lavish library among expensive copies of Latin and Greek literature, including Homeric poetry. Bassett suggests that Lausos’ extensive collection of mythological-themed sculpture may have been connected to the idea of prestige and the show of \textit{paideia}.\textsuperscript{247} It is not hard to imagine a beautifully illustrated manuscript, like the \textit{Ambrosian Iliad}, in a Late Antique library surrounded by other art objects that referenced the owner’s \textit{paideia}.

In addition to evidence of large collections of statuary, we also see a rise in the production of Homeric-themed metal objects during the Late Antique period. Many of these objects favored the story of Achilles and Briseis from Book I of the \textit{Iliad}. One example, the fifth-century Doria bucket, or \textit{situla}, currently housed in the Doria Pamphilj Gallery in Rome, contains two narratives from this particular story (fig. 3.2 and fig. 3.3).\textsuperscript{248} On one side, Achilles

\textsuperscript{244} Nicholas Horsfall, “Stesichorus at Bovillae?” \textit{Journal of Hellenic Studies} 99 (1979): 34-35. Horsfall uses the \textit{Tabulae Iliacae} as his example.


\textsuperscript{246} Bassett, “Excellent Offerings,” 8-9.

\textsuperscript{247} Bassett, \textit{The Urban Image}, 100. For an excellent survey of Lausos’ collection, see Bassett, “Excellent Offerings,” 8-11.

sits playing his lyre while Briseis is taken away by the heralds, Talthybius and Eurybates. A figure, who is probably Patroclus, stands behind him. Next to this scene, Agamemnon gestures to the heralds. On the other side of the situla, Achilles is again shown playing his lyre while Briseis, being led by a servant, approaches a sleeping Priam. Kurt Weitzmann points out that these scenes are not entirely faithful to the story as told in the Iliad. Thus, the artist must have been referring to romanticized narratives from the lost, early first-century poem by Statius, titled Achilleis. The Doria situla is one of many objects from Late Antiquity, especially from the fourth and fifth centuries, that contained Achilles imagery. The Ambrosian Iliad, whose story revolved around this popular hero, would have been an important component of a collection based on Homeric stories and heroes.

The Ambrosian Iliad, Mos Maiorum, and Antiquarian Interest

The mos maiorum and all that it encompassed permeated all aspects of the Late Antique Roman’s life. It was an essential part of what it meant to be Roman, or Romanatis. As Shelley Hales explains in The Roman House and Social Identity, individual and collective public displays, such as the sacrifice and military service, were key ingredients during the Republican period for the establishment of Romanatis.

While the concept of Romanatis and the mos maiorum remained strong throughout Roman history, by Late Antiquity some of its rituals and traditions were relegated to the heroic past. First, during the late fourth century, for instance, pagan sacrifice was outlawed, although

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249 Carandini suggests that these two figures may be a herald and a soldier. Carandini, La secchia Doria, 16.

250 Bell, “The Doria Bucket,” 219-220, no. 196. This opinion is echoed by Carandini, La secchia Doria, 20-21. The situla has been dated to the fifth century, which would make it approximately contemporary to the Ambrosian Iliad. Carandini compared the Ambrosian Iliad’s miniatures V, VI and VII to the Briseis scenes on the Doria situla as a reference to stylistic influences from Constantinople. Carandini, La secchia Doria, 18-19.

251 Hales, The Roman House, 14.
there is evidence that it did continue sporadically through the fifth century. Second, another aristocratic tradition of military service was obsolete by Late Antiquity. The story of the *Iliad* required that the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s images depict an elite actively involved both in the sacrifice and warfare. The precedence for imposing antiquarian imagery on monuments was not new to the fifth century. Perhaps the most famous example of this practice was the use of the Hadrianic roundels on the *Arch of Constantine.* Jaś Elsner echoes one of the most popularly held arguments, that Constantine commissioned the incorporation of *spolia* in order to align himself with his most esteemed predecessors. As Elsner explains, “The effect is to compress time, so that the past – the eras of Trajan, Hadrian and Marcus – becomes assimilated with the present.” This association with the storied past would not have been lost on Late Antique viewers.

The practice of referencing the past for the purpose of imparting a message for present viewers can be, in many ways, compared to images in the *Ambrosian Iliad*. The antiquarian

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253 According to its inscription, the *Arch of Constantine* was installed by the senate of Rome to honor Constantine’s victory over Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. However, scholars disagree as to other meanings that the arch may have had for Constantine, the Senate, and the people of Rome. Since the Renaissance, the impetus behind the use of *spolia* on this monument has been a subject of much discussion and contention by scholars. Marlowe proposes that the true patrons of this arch were the Senate of Rome, who commissioned it in honor of Constantine. Moreover, she contends that the arch and *spolia* sent a message to the people of Rome regarding the Senate’s desire for the continued “preservation of the mos maiorum.” See Diana E. E. Kleiner, “Arch of Constantine,” in *The Encyclopedia of the History of Classical Archaeology*, ed. Nancy Thomson de Grummond (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 66; Diana E. E. Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 432; and Elizabeth Marlowe, “‘That Customary Magnificence which is your due:’ Constantine and the Symbolic Capital of Rome,” Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2004: 203-205, 231-232. For an overview on the debate concerning the date of the monument, based on recent archaeological excavations, see: Kleiner’s review of Curran’s work, *Pagan City*, at the following: [http://cccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmcr/2001/2001-07-17.html](http://cccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmcr/2001/2001-07-17.html)

The roundels appear to have been applied to the monument in pairs, with each unique sacrifice associated with its appropriate hunting scene. On the north side: Sacrifice to Apollo with the hunt of a boar and sacrifice to Hercules with the hunt of a lion. On the south side: Sacrifice to Silvanus with a scene of the departure for the hunt and sacrifice to Diana with a hunt of a bear. For detailed descriptions and discussions of the possible meanings of these pairs, see Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture*, 446; R. Ross Holloway, *Constantine and Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 19-53, esp. 20-23; Sandro de Maria, *Gli archi onorari di Roma dell’Italia romana* (Rome: “L’Erma” di Bretschneider, 1988), 209; and Curran, *Pagan City*, 86-90, esp. 88.


254 Elsner, “From the Culture of *Spolia*,” 163.
Roman iconography placed on a manuscript page can be likened to the application of *spolia* to a contemporary monument. One cannot discount how the juxtaposition of antique Roman images with the Greek story may have informed viewing of the *Ambrosian Iliad*. Thus, for the fifth-century aristocrat, the antiquarian sacrificial and battle scenes referred to a heroic past that played a part in the fifth-century aristocrat’s perspective of his present.

**Antiquarian Military Iconography in the *Ambrosian Iliad***

Given the subject matter of Homer’s *Iliad*, it is not surprising that twenty of the fifty-eight paintings in the *Ambrosian Iliad* are battle scenes. Bianchi Bandinelli referred to the battle scenes in the *Ambrosian Iliad* as hackneyed copies of traditional Roman iconography (fig. 1.5). As he pointed out, the compositions are very similar to those found on third-century sarcophagi, like the *Ludovisi Sarcophagus* (ca. 250) on which the figures are lined up in defined registers with one army arrayed against the other in a crowded field (fig. 3.4). There are many examples of consistency in the battle scenes of the *Ambrosian Iliad*. The Greek soldiers are shown with round shields that have a depression in the middle, while the Trojans occasionally carry rectangular ones. The colors of the shields represent different material, orange-yellow for leather and blue for bronze. Cardinal Mai, in his early study of the clothing and armor in the *Ambrosian Iliad*, noted that the artist depicted the Greek soldiers in Roman armor while the Trojans were shown as the foreigners who, in spite of wearing similar armor, wore Phrygian caps.

I suggest that this attention to detail and consistency in the depictions of each army was intentionally designed so that viewers could recognize specific aspects of each battle scene, especially in regard to the pivotal moments of the story. The artist differentiated between martial scenes by applying the same device as the author of the *Iliad*. Homer used several formulaic themes in the epic poem that can best be seen in the battle sequence. In order to differentiate between battle scenes, he varied the details, such as the descriptions of shields and religious

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257 Ibid., 102.

ceremonies. Consequently, Homer used the fairly homogenous nature of the battle sequences as a backdrop to highlight the pivotal moments in the story, like the deaths of Hector and Patroclus. Once the audience heard the description of the first battle, when they heard it again, they recognized the words and cadence. Thus, the imagery did not distract from the central point of the narrative. The Ambrosian Iliad’s artist may have been driven by the same motivations. Like Homer, the artist’s prime objective was to use the battle scenes as backdrops for the main story lines, much in the same manner as stage scenery. It is likely that pattern books and other familiar precedents were used by the painter to provide the basics of the scene. When applied in this way, the artist could concentrate on the pivotal moments that each battle represents. For example, Miniature XLII depicts the Greeks, on the right side of the picture, meeting the Trojans in hand-to-hand combat (fig. 3.5 and fig. 3.6). In the very center of the composition, the Greek soldier Idomeneus, who carries an oval purple shield, kills the Trojan Othryoneus and drags him off the battlefield by his foot. The fact that a Greek drags his dead foe off of battlefield foreshadows the ultimate Greek victory at the end of the war. There is no question that this scene is a very dramatic one and makes specific an otherwise generic battle image.

Battle scenes had long been a mainstay of Roman art; this is not surprising given that the success of Rome depended on the strength of its armies. In its very earliest history, the Roman army was led by aristocratic officers who, like their Greek counterparts, temporarily left their civilian lives to fight whenever they were called. One of Rome’s earliest legends, and a popular one during Late Antiquity, concerned Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, a mid-fifth century BCE

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260 Woodford, The Trojan War, 67.

261 This scene was chosen based on the following criteria: it is representative of the Late Antique and Ambrosian Iliad’s style of representing a battle, it refers to a specific and identifiable narrative in the Iliad, and the painting is in the best condition.

262 Homer, Iliad, trans. Rodney Merrill (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 13.369-373. “…So old Priam to him made promise and nodded agreement, giving the girl, he, trusting his promises, entered the battle. It was at him that Idómeneus aimed with his glittering spear and threw it and hit him as he strode haughtily, nor did the brazen breastplate he wore protect him – the spear stuck square in his belly.”
aristocratic landowner who was called from his beloved farm to serve as dictator when Rome was threatened by invading barbarians, the Aequi. Cincinnatus reluctantly put down his plough, gathered an army, defeated the enemy, and after fifteen days as dictator, resigned his title and returned to his farm. In the succeeding centuries, Cincinnatus served as a role model of the selfless aristocrat who fought for honor, pride, and civic duty. Early Roman history was replete with stories of aristocratic families who responded to adversity with dignitas and pietas. A popular story was told of the Fabii family who fought against the Etruscans of Veii during a cattle run across the Roman border in 479 BCE. The Romans fought valiantly and were all killed save for one. It was not unusual for the Romans to recast their historical accounts to mirror those of the Greeks, and in this example, the Fabii were compared to the Spartans at Thermopylae.

As Adrian Goldsworthy has pointed out, many of these revisionist history lessons by Roman authors like Livy (59–17 BCE) may have originated as epic tales documenting the heroic deeds of the ancient aristocratic families. By the time of the Late Republic and Early Empire, Roman armies had become more organized and proved to be an excellent training ground for the young aristocrat. The upheavals of the third century, however, led to drastic reforms of the Roman government and army, which resulted in a standing army staffed by professional soldiers. Consequently, the elite were rarely directly involved with the military. By the fifth century, the Roman army was mostly comprised of foreign mercenaries and recruits who were often forced to enlist. The army was no longer the preferred career path for up-and-coming Roman aristocrats; instead, they were imperial bureaucrats who worked their way up the elite ladder through civic service to their emperor.

264 Ibid., 33. Goldsworthy suggests that the Roman story may have been invented.
265 Ibid., 30.
In spite of the fact that few Late Antique aristocrats used the army for career advancement, they were still surrounded by archaistic reminders of their ancestors’ proud service in the military. Beginning in the fourth century, the earlier tradition of military service was so important that military “jargon” permeated many aspects of civil bureaucracy. Ancient authors described elite bureaucrats as *militate oficilias* versus *militate armata*. They were paid with *annonae* and *capitum*, which were also the terms for military pay. The analogy between elite workers’ and military service even went so far as to describe their official garb as *vestis*, or a uniform. Like military officers, these government officials were fond of wearing badges of rank, called *segmenta*. The Late Antique aristocrats’ fascination with the military and its strict hierarchy emphasized the importance of outer appearance as it related to status. As the fifth-century writer Salvian (ca. 400/405-429) noted, “When a man changes his garment he changes his rank.”

Thus, when viewing the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s battle scenes, the Late Antique viewer participated in the ongoing dialogue with the traditions of his past as supported by the devotion of the present to the *mos maiorum*.

I suggest that the imagery in the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s battle scenes depicted more than the narratives in the Homeric story. It contained iconography traditionally used in Roman battle art, and more importantly, represented moral characteristics that exemplified the *mos maiorum*, including *dignitas* and *virtus*. During the Republican period, the equestrian section of a legion, on average 300 cavalry and 4,200 infantry, was comprised of members from the aristocratic or wealthiest level of society. Equestrians were often volunteers who entered the military as a way to further their careers and personal coffers. These high ranking officers fought on horseback wearing a helmet, cuirass, and circular shield. While the Greeks depicted the nude heroic

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soldier, the Roman heroes were always shown in full armor, which was a means of indicating their *dignitas*. The images of the cavalry soldier charging into battle to protect his fellow Romans evoked the heroic characteristics inherent in the concept of *virtus*. The pose of the horseman holding a spear aloft in his hand during the charge was especially evocative for the Romans. The battle scenes in the *Ambrosian Iliad* consistently include this pose, as shown in miniature XLII, where a mounted soldier in the background on the right charges his enemy while holding a spear in his right hand (fig. 3.5 and fig. 3.6). This type was especially popular on second- and third- century sarcophagi, like the *Battle Sarcophagus* from Concordia University (160-170) (fig. 3.7). To the left of the central figure, the cavalryman attacks the enemy in this same pose. Another example can be seen on the *Ludovisi Sarcophagus* from ca. 250 (fig. 3.4). Two combatants fight each other on horseback in the upper register on the left of the sarcophagus, a type also found in the *Ambrosian Iliad*. In the right upper register of the sarcophagus, a mounted soldier charges the enemy while holding a spear in his raised right hand.

The connection between the charging mounted horseman and *virtus* was so powerful that the emperors of Late Antiquity exploited the type on coins. During the crisis of the third century, many of the emperors were drawn from the military ranks. Their coins reflect this background and their need to justify their rule through the use of this pose and its connection to *virtus*. The emperors Probus (ca. 232-282), Severus II (d. 307), Galerius (250-311), and Constans (ca. 320-350) all struck coins using the charging mounted horseman pose (fig. 3.8). During the fourth century, the emperor’s image evolved to a mounted soldier-emperor waving an empty hand as he trampled over the enemy. By the end of the fourth century, imperial

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272 Ibid., 336. Francis suggests that the sarcophagus’ central figure on horseback may have been a portrait of a very young aristocratic soldier who may have died in battle. Another option is that the motif represented the family’s dashed hopes for a young life that had been destined for military career.


iconography had completely erased any reference to an enemy. It was enough to show an isolated mounted emperor with a raised hand who protected the state and the *Gloria romanorum* (fig. 3.9).

The battle scenes in the *Ambrosian Iliad*, and in particular the images of the mounted cavalryman, were especially relevant to the fifth-century aristocrat. During the fifth and sixth centuries, the cavalry became more prevalent due to the need to fight nomadic invaders, like the Huns, who fought on horseback. While aristocrats rarely participated in military campaigns, these current events were evocative of a gloried past when their own aristocratic ancestors rode against the enemy to protect and secure the *mos maiorum*. This display of *virtus* and its antiquarian connection influenced imperial political iconography as evidenced by the development of coin imagery. What began as iconography of the pose of the horseman holding a spear aloft in his hand during the charge, originally used by the aristocrats, transferred and evolved to a codified iconic image of an emperor who, like the elite, exemplified *virtus* and the *mos maiorum* while protecting the well-being of the Empire.

**Pagan Sacrifice and Antiquarianism**

In the most pronounced of the archaized references in *The Ambrosian Iliad*, Greek heroes and kings performed pagan sacrifices in a distinctly Roman manner. The images of a banned pagan custom would have been a recent memory for Late Antique Christians in the mid-fifth century. It was merely during the late fourth and early fifth century that a series of laws and edicts were passed prohibiting pagan activity, and, in particular pagan sacrifice. In 391, the *Codex Theodosius* gave bishops the authority to enforce the destruction of pagan altars. In early 399, Arcadius (383-408) and Honorius (384-423) passed laws to tear down pagan temples throughout the Roman Empire, hoping that it would end belief in pagan religion. For fifth-century aristocrats, the memory and traditions of their ancestors’ pagan sacrifices were very recent. Until the end of the fourth century, senators continued to participate in the College of

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277 *Codex Theodosianus*, 16.10.19.

278 Ibid., 16.10.16.
Pontiffs, *Collegium Pontificum*, as high-ranking priests. 279 Throughout the fifth and sixth centuries, emperors continued to create legislation banning pagan sacrifice, probably in response to its continued use. A writer from Rome describes witnessing a pagan festival in honor of Osiris during a trip through Italy in the early fifth century. 280

The Romans believed that sacrifices made by aristocrats on behalf of Rome were to protect her. Even in the late fourth century, when Christians and pagans debated whether sacrifices should be maintained, some authors thought that it might not be a bad idea to hold on to the pagan traditions, just in case they were needed for the welfare of the Roman Empire. For example, the pagan author and rhetorician, Libanius (314-ca. 393) explained:

> And the most crucial point of all – those who appear to have been our chief opponents in this particular have honored the gods even against their will. And who might these be? Why, those who have not dared rob Rome of its sacrifices. Yet, if all this business of sacrifice is nonsense, then why has not the nonsense been stopped? If it is harmful, then isn’t this all the more reason? But if the stability of empire depends on the sacrifices performed there, we must consider that sacrifice is everywhere to our advantage; the gods in Rome grant greater blessings, those in the countryside and the other cities, lesser ones, but any sensible man would welcome even such as these. 281

As noted in Chapter Two, one of the last known pagan senators and one of the most vociferous in his defense of the sacrifice was the Roman senator Symmachus. In 384, Symmachus’ wrote several letters to the emperor concerning the removal of the *Altar of Victory* from the Senate. Originally established by Augustus in 33 BCE, the altar was traditionally the place where senators gave oaths of honor before each Senate meeting. In 382, the Emperor

279 Male members from powerful and wealthy families could be elected to this college as a pontiff, or high priest. In addition to their participation in the state religion, we even see an expansion of aristocratic participation in the mystery cults, including the cult of Mithras. Mary Beard attributes this increase in aristocratic pagan activity to a reaction against the emperor’s support of Christianity as a way “to redefine (and expand) their ancestral heritage.” Beard, North and Price, *Religions of Rome*, 383.


Gratian removed the altar and refused the title of Pontifex Maximus. Symmachus’ letters concerning what would later be dubbed “The Affair of the Altar of Victory” reveal his real fear concerning this very public break between the state of Rome and its traditions. In his letter to Gratian’s successor, Valentinian II, Symmachus begs the emperor for the return of the Altar, which he felt was vital for the continued health of the empire: “Grant, I beg you, that what in our youth we took over from our fathers, we may in our old age hand on to posterity. The love of established practice is a powerful sentiment.”

As we can see from Symmachus’ reaction to the removal of the Altar of Victory, his interest in preserving pagan worship had as much to do with mos maiorum as it did with the ramifications of turning away from the old gods: “To this line of thought must be added the argument derived from ‘benefits conferred,’ for herein rests the most emphatic proof to man of the existence of the gods. Man’s reason moves entirely in the dark; his knowledge of divine influences can be drawn from no better source than from the recollection and the evidences of good fortune received from them. If long passage of time lends validity to religious observances, we ought to keep faith with so many centuries we ought to follow our forefathers and were blessed in so doing.”

Evidently, pagan practice did not die easily, since legislation as late as 423 changed the penalty for paganism from death to “exile and confiscation.” We know from literary and archaeological evidence that these practices and the memory of them took longer to die. Even after the official demise of paganism, Symmachus’ son listed the religious title of “pontificate” on his own epitaph. The persistence of paganism into the fifth century shows that the

282 Beard, North and Price, Religions of Rome, 374-375.

283 Symmachus, Prefect and Emperor: The Relationes of Symmachus A.D. 384, trans. R. H. Barrow (Translated by R. H. Barrow). [Praestate, or vos, ut ea quae pueri suscepimus, sense posteris relinquamus. Consuetudinis amor magnus est…] 3.4.2

284 Ibid., 3.8-9. [accedit utilitas, quae maxime homini deos adserit. nam cum ratio omnis in operto sit, unde rectius quam de memoria atque documentis rerum secundarum cognitio venit numinum? iam si longa aetas auctoritatem religionibus faciat, servanda est tot saeculis fides et sequendi sunt nobis parentes, qui securi sunt feliciter suos.]

285 Bianchi Bandinelli, Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures, 106.

antiquarian movement did not have to reach too far in the past for its references. Memories of family members participating in these pagan religious activities would have been relatively fresh for the fifth-century viewers of the *Ambrosian Iliad*.

By extension, if the sacrifice assured the “security of the empire,” then the person performing that sacrifice was responsible for the well-being of the Roman Empire. Historically, the elite were responsible for the proper performance of sacrifices as needed to protect the State. The fourth-century historian Ammianus Marcellinus made a reference to the direct relationship between a prefect sacrificing at a pagan altar and the desired positive result: “And presently by the will of the divine power that gave increase to Rome from its cradle and promised that it should last forever, while Tertullus was sacrificing in the temple of Castor and Pollux at Ostia, a calm smoothed the sea the wind changed to a gentle southern breeze, and the ships entered the harbour under full sail and again crammed the storehouses with grain.”

Thus, for the Roman aristocrat, performing a sacrifice was his way of confirming his Romanitas, as the keeper of the sacred trust between the Roman people and their deities.

There are five extant scenes in the *Ambrosian Iliad* that depict sacrifices. The *Ambrosian Iliad*’s iconography consistently references not only the Roman method of sacrificing, but also the aristocrat’s involvement and responsibilities surrounding this activity. Among the extant miniatures of the *Ambrosian Iliad*, two scenes involve sacrifice by the aristocratic Greek ruler, Agamemnon. It was quite common in the *Iliad* for the kings and chieftains to offer up sacrifices, especially after an unpleasant event. In the first example, Miniature IV refers to a sacrifice made by Agamemnon as a result of offending the god Phoebus Apollo (fig. 3.10 and fig. 3.11). During a raid on the towns surrounding Troy, the Greeks captured two beautiful girls, Briseis and Chryseis. Chryseis was given to Agamemnon and Briseis was awarded to Achilles as their war


prizes. When Chryseis’ father prayed to Phoebus Apollo for her safe return, the god sent a plague to the Greek camp. In desperation, Agamemnon made a sacrifice of hecatombs of bulls and goats in an attempt to appease Apollo.  

Agamemnon is shown as the second figure from the left on the front row of the painting. According to Bianchi Bandinelli’s study of types, Agamemnon is shown in the *Ambrosian Iliad* as a “regal type,” who normally wears a diadem.  

While it is hard to tell in this miniature if the figure is wearing a diadem, the body position, centrally located in the composition and wearing the color purple, does suggest that this is, indeed Agamemnon. Although we cannot identify his three companions, they must be aristocrats too since they are wearing the color purple which was reserved for the elite. The artist has chosen to portray the scene as the lustral sacrifice which was specific to the Romans. Also known as the *suovetaurilia*, it was a multiple sacrifice of a pig, sheep, and bull. The ceremony involved driving the three animals around a designated sacred precinct. At the end of each circuit, one of the animals was killed and prayers were offered up for Mars to bless the Romans and curse their enemies. The *suovetaurilia* served to purify the army before a battle or a campaign.  

Consequently, this specific sacrifice was a stock scene on many public imperial monuments, such as Trajan’s Column (fig. 3.12). Evidently, when the artist was called upon

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290 A hecatomb is a sacrifice of 100 animals. Homer, *Iliad*, 1.314-317 (trans. Rodney Merrill). “They thus having embarked out on the watery pathway; Atreus’ son then ordered the host to wash off the pollution. So they washed it away, the defilements throw in the sea-brine, then for Apollo they offered up hecatombs full and effective, bulls and mature goats, there on the shore of the desolate sea-brine; eddying round in the smoke their savor ascended to heaven.”  


292 The color purple had been designated as the color of the elite perhaps as early as ca. 1500 BCE, when we have evidence of trade of the red-purple dye. We have literary evidence of its value as a symbol of status from the fourteenth century BCE. The Greeks and Romans also adopted the color for its elite as well. For a study on the color purple in ancient societies, see Meyer Reinhold, *History of Purple as a Status Symbol in Antiquity* (Brussels: Latomus, 1970).  


294 In this scene from Trajan’s column, the purification of the newly constructed Roman camp can be seen. In the center Trajan, in his priestly garb, is making a sacrifice with a patera in his right hand. To the right, attendants lead a bull, sheep, and cow around the walls of the camp.
to paint a scene of a sacrifice, and, in particular, one that involved an army, he drew on what he knew best, the suovetaurilia.

The second scene from the Ambrosian Iliad involving the sacrifice by the elite is in Miniature XIII, which again features Agamemnon as the religious official. In this scene, the Iliad mentions that Agamemnon makes a sacrifice of a bull to the god Zeus (fig. 3.13 and fig. 3.14). The sacrifice of the bull was a prominent subject in Roman art, as exemplified in the Augustan period’s Altar of Manlius (fig. 3.15). The altar’s inscription refers to Manlius the censer, most probably the figure on the right. In this relief, Manlius officiates as a sacerdos, or priest. On the left, in a pose very similar to the axe-wielding figure in the Ambrosian Iliad, the assistant, called the popa, wields a double-headed ax above the lowered head of the sacrificial victim. When compared to the sacrificial scene in the Ambrosian Iliad, it is evident that the sculptor references the same motif.

295 Homer, Iliad, 2.402-418 (trans. Rodney Merrill). “But a fat bull of five years Agamemnon, lord of the people, offered as a victim to Zeus, the all-powerful scion of Kronos, after he summoned the elders and noblest of all the Achaians, Nestor the first of them all, and the lord Idomeneus also, then right after, the two Ajaxes and Tydeus’ scion; sixth among them was Odysseus, the equal of Zeus in devices. But of himself came there the great crier of war Menelaos, for in his heart he knew his own brother and how he was busied. Circling the bull they stood, and the barley meal lifted above it; raising a prayer, thus spoke out among them strong Agamemnon: ‘Zeus most honored prominence in the composition and the fact that the attention of all the other participants is directed at him. φιλείαν την θεον ἥν περιπεσανταν, ύπερβαλείς Κρονία νος, κλείσαντες δὲ γεροντας ἄριστας Παναγαιών, Νέστορα μὲν προτέτας καὶ Δοῦκα μὲν ἄνακτα, αὐτοὶ ἔσται Δαναοὶ δύο καὶ Τυδεὸς υἱόν, ἔκτον δὲ αὐτῷ Ὀμηρία Δίῳ σφαίραυν ἄπαυντον, αὐτοματος δὲ οἱ πολλοί βοῦν ὁμαθός Μενέλαως: ἦδεκ γὰρ κατὰ θημοὶ ἄγαλαν ὡς ἐκονώτο βοῦν δὲ περιστασαντο καὶ ὀλοκληρον οὐκέταντο: τότιν δὲ εὐθυμος μετέφη κράτων Ἀγαμέμνων: Ζεὺς κύ̄ματε μέγιστα κελάκιντας ἀλλάς νικῆν μὴ πρὶν ἐκ ἀνδρομένα δαίμονα καὶ ἐπὶ κνέρας ἐλθὼν πρὶν μὲ κατὰ προνές βαλέων Πρᾶμον μελαθρόν ἀθαλῶν, πραγμα δὲ πυρὸς ὑποῦ θυρετρα. Ἐκτέρεον δὲ χιτῶνα περὶ στῆθος διάζει γαλακῆ ἰογαλέων: πολες δ᾽ ὁμοῖο, αὐτῶν ἑταίρου προνές ἐν κονῆσιν ὄδης λαξοίῳ γαῖαν.’


297 Brilliant, Gesture, 84. Richard Brilliant suggests that Manlius must be the figure on the right based on his prominence in the composition and the fact that the attention of all the other participants is directed at him.

298 Ibid., 84.

299 This image was a popular one in the early Imperial period. Zanker suggests that it was a way for Augustus “to show the return of pietas, how the people would now be protected.” He also suggests that showing the moment of the raising of the axe heightens the suspense and emotion of the scene. Zanker, Power of Images, 114 and 129.
In the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s version of the bull sacrifice, a round Greek shield leans against the altar. I believe that this, combined with Zeus floating over the sacrifice, refers to the future success of the Greeks in the war. The full beard, crown, and halo are consistent with other images of Zeus in the *Ambrosian Iliad* with his full beard, crown, and halo.\(^{300}\) The participants are lined up to the right in the same order as described in the poem. Agamemnon, who stands in the front of the line, makes a sacrifice from a *patera* held in his right hand. He is identifiable not only by his prominence in the composition, but also by his purple cloak and diadem.\(^{301}\)

The clothing worn by the heroes in this miniature is of particular interest because Idomeneus, Aias Oileus, and Diomedes have the uniquely Late Antique decoration of the *segmenta*, or small squares, sewn onto their clothing. The *segmenta* were symbols of rank worn by aristocrats and their servants between the third through sixth centuries.\(^{302}\) Occasionally, they included extensive decorations that imitated jewels or paintings.\(^{303}\) In the fifth century, Sidonius Apollinaris mentions *segmenta* when he describes a friend’s daughter weaving her father’s consular robe with scenes of mythological weddings, “But on a high strip of embroidery upon the consular robe she had playfully fashioned all the famous tales of old-time marriages.”\(^{304}\) Although Bianchi Bandinelli claims that use of *segmenta* on the garments of the *Ambrosian Iliad* is inconsistent and indicates a sixth-century date, this is not conclusive.\(^{305}\)


\(^{301}\) Ibid., 59 and 136.

\(^{302}\) See Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 97-102.


\(^{305}\) According to Bianchi Bandinelli, the application of the *segmenta* in the *Ambrosian Iliad* was not consistent since it was used indiscriminately on clothing worn by servants, Greeks, and Trojans. He concludes that the inconsistent application of the *segmenta* implied that the artist did not fully understand the meaning of the symbol, thus proving that he was far removed from the time of its use which ended during the sixth century. Thus, Bianchi Bandinelli uses this analysis to date the *Ambrosian Iliad* in the early sixth century. See Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 97-102 for an extensive discussion concerning *segmentum* and their significance, as well as comparandi.

Bianchi Bandinelli’s argument is not well-founded. First, the *segmenta* was used consistently throughout the *Ambrosian Iliad* on aristocrats and their servants. Second, the *segmenta* was worn over a long time period, third through the sixth century.
without any other supporting evidence, it is impossible to date an image to a specific century based on the use of *segmenta* alone. The only thing that is certain with this very important sartorial detail is that the *Ambrosian Iliad* was certainly painted during the Late Antique Period no earlier than third century when the *segmenta* first became popular and, no later than the sixth century when it went out of style.

Another reference to pagan sacrifice occurs in Miniature XII (fig. 3.16 and fig. 3.17).

According to the *Iliad*, Calchas saw in a vision a very large snake climbing a tree to eat a mother sparrow and her eight chicks. The sparrow and her progeny represented the nine years that the Greeks would be at war with Troy. A round shield rests against the altar to the left of Calchas, as if to emphasize the prophecy’s prediction that the Greeks will eventually be triumphant.

Centered in the composition, and raising his right hand in the traditional ancient gesture of explaining a prophecy, the Greek seer, Calchas, makes a prediction at a Roman altar (fig. 3.16 and fig. 3.17). He wears the ubiquitous Roman toga which, as a common article of clothing,
fallen out of favor by the fifth century. It was worn only on official occasions by consuls, magistrates, or high priests as an antiquarian nod to Roman traditions. For the fifth-century viewer, the toga would have emphasized Calchas’ importance in this scene.

In the next pagan sacrifice in the Ambrosian Iliad, the artist depicts Achilles making a sacrifice to protect his friend, Patroclus, before he goes into battle (Miniature XXXXVII) (fig. 1.1 and fig. 1.2). The Roman iconography, and the heroic aristocratic iconography, in this

Homer’s account of this incident does not specifically tell us who made the sacrifice. In the context of this part of the story, however, and with his history in the Iliad of being the one responsible for performing many of the sacrifices, it was most likely Agamemnon. Evidently the artist thought so as well, since the most prominent Greek onlooker is Agamemnon, who stands a step in front of the entire group on the left. The artist further emphasizes his importance by dressing him in a purple robe and framing his head with a brightly colored orange shield. Standing next to Agamemnon on his far right is Odysseus, who wears his trademark pileus. Agamemnon and Odysseus were the figures in the Iliad who most often consulted with Chalchas and assisted in the translation of his prophecies


The central figure fits Bianchi Bandinelli’s typology for Achilles, with his Apollo-like appearance and short curly hair, although there is a slight deviation with his short beard. Bianchi Bandinelli, Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures, 136.

Homer, Iliad, 16.226-248 (trans. Rodney Merrill). “Inside there was a well-made goblet, and neither did any other man drink from it glistening wine, nor did he to another god pour libations, but only to Zeus the great father. This cup then he took from the coffers and cleansed it with sulfur first, then carefully washed it in beautiful currents of water, also washing the hands, and the glistening wine he drew off. Standing in mid-court then he prayed, and he looked at the sky and poured out the wine; nor did Zeus the great thunderbolt-hurler ignore him: ‘Great Zeus, Lord of Dodona, Pelasgian, dwelling afar off, you who rule over wintry Dodona – about you the Selli dwell, your prophets with feet unwashed who sleep on the ground there – just as before one time you listened to what I was praying, honoring me when strongly you struck at the host of Achaians, so once more for me now do you grant this boon that I pray for, seeing that I will myself stay here where the galleys are gathered, but a companion with numerous Myrmidons now I am sending forth do battle; with him, wide-thundering Zeus, send glory, making the
depiction is inescapable. Achilles is shown wearing a chlamys, a long cloak associated with the Roman military. The artist has painted the chlamys in a purple plum color denoting the figure’s high status. It is pulled over his head in the traditional pious act of a person making a sacrifice. He also is barefooted - another sign of ritualistic piety. Achilles leans on a staff held in his left hand and makes his libation with a patera from his right hand. Homer’s account states that the hero, “poured shining wine into the goblet and stood in his middle forecourt and prayed, and poured the wine…” The image deviates from the Homeric description of a goblet, and instead depicts the patera, which was a common object used in Roman sacrifice.

Another detail that indicates aristocratic iconography is the tent that frames Achilles. Bianchi Bandinelli dismisses the tent in this scene as “nothing more than a backcloth.” I disagree; I propose that the tent, which has been painted purple, is used as a framing device, an iconography typical of Late Antique aristocratic portraiture as evidenced by fifth-century ivory diptychs. Attaining office was often celebrated in the fifth century by distributing gifts of ivory diptychs with the patron’s portrait on them, an example of which is the diptych of the consul Felix created in 428 to celebrate his consulship. The subject is dressed in a chlamys and mantle heart inside of his breast bold, so even Hektor might find out whether even alone my huntsman in fact is skilled in battle, or whether his hands rampage unvanquished only when I let myself go into the turmoil of Ares. Finally, when fro the ships he has driven the battle and clamber, quite unscathed may he then come back to me here at the swift ships, still with the armor entire and his comrades, hand-to-hand fighters.” [Ενθα δε οι δεκας έσσε τετυγμένον, ουδε της άλλου ουτ’ άνδρων πίνεσεν απ’ αυτου άθοπα οθεν, ουτε τεσ’ σπένδεσε θεων, οτε μη Δι ιπατρι. το ηα τοι’ έκ χηλιο λαμβαν εκθερει θειρ πρωτον, έπειτα δ’ ένυ’ άμος και και βοσι, νιγατο δ’ αυτος χειρας, άμύησατο δ’ άθοπα οθεν. ευζεπε έπειτα σταες μεσω έρεκε, λεβε δε οθεν ονυραν εισανων: δια δ’ ου λατε τερπικεραινον: Ζευ άνα Δαυδουσιε Παλαιστικε τηλαθη ναιον Δυδουνης μεδενον δυσχειμερου, έμφη δε Σελλο οι ναιος’ υποψηθαι δυατοποδες χαμαιναιναι, ημεν δη ποτ’ έμοι έπος έκλινες ευχαμενοι, τιμησας μεν εμε, μεγα δ’ ίγαι λαον Αχιλων, έδ’ έτε και εναι μοι τοι’ επικρηθηνον έζλοφωρ: αευτος μεν γηρ έγω μενεον νηθην έν άγων, άλλ’ έταυρον πεμπων πολέσαν μετα Μυριωνδονσι ματρανοσι: το κάδος άμα προδε ευρησα Ζευ, οδρονουν δε οι ήτορ ένι φρεσι, όφη και έκτωρ εδεσαι ή πα και ολος έπιστημεν πολεμιζειν ήμετερος θερψον, ή οι τοτε χειρες άστοι μανωνθ’, όπποτ’ έγω περ ια μετα μηλον Άρης. αυταρ έπαι κ’ άπο ναφη μαχην ένοπη τι οηται, έσκηθης μοι έπειτα θοας έπι νηθα ίκοιον τευχειον τε ζην πασι και δυχεμαξος έταροσιν.]

310 Croom, Roman Clothing, 51.
311 Bianchi Bandinelli, Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures, 95. Bianchi Bandinelli refers to the chlamys as the “heroic” fashion.
312 Ibid., 95.
313 Ibid.
314 Bianchi Bandinelli, Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures, 120.
and holding his scepter (fig. 3.18).\textsuperscript{315} He is framed by a pair of drawn curtains. Above the figure is the inscription FL(avii) FELICIS V(iri) C(larissimi) COM(it is) AC MAG(istri). The designation of V(iri) C(larissimi) refers to Felix as a member of the aristocratic class (clarissimi), and one who is a male and heroic V(iri).\textsuperscript{316} Another example from the year 425, depicts a portrait of a patrician (fig. 3.19).\textsuperscript{317} On both sides of the diptych, he wears the chlamys and mantle and is framed by the drawn curtain motif. The figure on the left lifts his right hand in the traditional ancient gesture of speaking, while the right figure holds a codicil. Since there is no overt imperial imagery such as an orb or diadem, it is most likely an aristocrat who held a high position who is being portrayed. In the Ambrosian Iliad, Achilles is framed in a similar manner to the diptychs, with shields used in place of the knots in the curtains to hold back the fabric of the tent. The tent acts as a delineation of heroic and aristocratic space that separates Achilles from the area around him.

Both the sacrificial and battle motifs played an essential part in the narrative structure of the Iliad. Some of the turning points in the narrative were couched through the words and images of these activities. The Ambrosian Iliad’s artist responded by unifying the military and battle depictions through the use of compositional devices, the consistent handling of the details in the scenes, and emphasizing the aspects of the scenes that related most closely to the text. The aristocratic viewers, with their extensive training in paideia, would have easily recognized these images as illustrations that emphasized the moral and ethical lessons learned as youths. Most importantly, however, the Ambrosian Iliad’s Roman iconography would have reminded the viewers of the glory of their past, when their forefathers protected the mos maiorum through service to the state, whether through the ritual of sacrifice or military duty. For the fifth-century aristocrats, the tent motif represented the connection between their ancestors’ heroic past and the aristocrats’ present.

\textsuperscript{315} Anderson, “Leaf from the Diptych of the Consul Felix,” 46, no. 45. Also Delbrück, Die Consulardiptychen, no. 3.

\textsuperscript{316} We will explore the heroic aspects of the aristocratic self-image and how it relates to the Ambrosian Iliad in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{317} Breckenridge, “Diptych of a Patrician,” 56-68, no. 54. Also Duelbrück, Die Consulardiptychen, no. 65.
Conclusion

Antiquarianism provided a means for aristocrats to enhance the appearance of being elite and demonstrate their social superiority over others in the Roman Empire. Only the people who had received a Homeric education through the practice of paideia could truly participate in this revival. As Peter Brown states, “Paideia was a means of expressing social distance. Its skills were difficult to acquire and, once acquired, could only be displayed within rigid, traditional conventions.” In this context, collecting, displaying, and interacting with Homeric objects as an expression of paideia provided reassuring confirmation of the aristocratic patron’s place in society during a time of great historical, religious, and social upheaval. When the *Ambrosian Iliad* is viewed as a display object used to announce the owner’s wealth and education, and as an interactive tool to prompt discussion and debate in the spirit of displaying their command of paideia, we see the *Ambrosian Iliad* in an entirely different light. The *Ambrosian Iliad*, as a prestige object, transcended the traditional view of the written word, and became an object of pride, tradition, and, most importantly, a vehicle for defining and protecting the self-image of the Late Antique aristocrat.

The ownership and display of the *Ambrosian Iliad* represented a connection to the past as part of a fifth-century revival of antiquarianism. This increased interest in mythological and Homeric subjects was realized through the practice and display of paideia, or Homeric education. Beginning in the fifth century, antiquarian output occurred in two areas: literary and visual. In literature, aristocrats wrote centos, the deconstruction of Homeric poetry to form new poems, and scholia minora, or Homeric translations, explanations, and transliterations. At the same time, these Late Antique patrons also surrounded themselves with collections of objects that displayed Homeric subjects. While Homeric cult objects in the Roman home already had a long history, in Late Antiquity there was a rise in the practice of collecting objects with themes connected to the *Iliad*. Recent scholarship has connected the display of Homeric and

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mythological sculpture and silver in Late Antiquity to *paideia*.

Thus far, however, no one has included the display of the *Ambrosian Iliad* in conjunction with the concept of *paideia* as it relates to the antiquarian movement of the fifth century.

The contemporary viewers’ reception of the *Ambrosian Iliad* was conditioned by their cultural and educational backgrounds. Their traditions, as exemplified by *virtus* and *dignitas*, pervade the visual narratives. While the artist may have depicted Homer’s *Iliad*, the elite viewers saw *Romanatis*. Specific scenes in the *Ambrosian Iliad* show that the manuscript’s iconography followed prior and contemporary images; the artist used standard patterns for such narratives as sacrifice and warfare; the iconographic formulas in the manuscript interacted with similar formulas on other objects in the aristocratic villa forming a cohesive program of antiquarian and heroic themes. As such, the *Ambrosian Iliad* helped to provide a link to the historic, the mythological and the legendary legacy that served as the basis for contemporary aristocratic self-identity in Late Antiquity. I argue that the *Ambrosian Iliad* represented an antiquarian past for the fifth-century viewer, but this same viewer lived much in the present. In the next chapter, I will explore issues of self-definition through the ownership and iconography of the *Ambrosian Iliad* in the historical, social, and cultural context of the fifth century.

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319 Two main references for the connection between the display of objects and *paideia* in Late Antiquity: Basset, “Excellent Offerings,” and Ruth Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity: Functions and Meanings of Silver Plate in the Fourth to Seventh Centuries* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate 2004).
CHAPTER FOUR

THE AMBROSIAN ILIAD AND ARISTOCRATIC IDENTITY – CONFIRMING THE PRESENT

The fifth century was a period of several profound historical changes that contributed to the elite’s process of self-definition in Late Antique Rome. In 410, the Visigoths, under the leadership of King Alaric, invaded Rome, where their influence culminated in 476 with consistent barbarian rule. This event had an intense effect on the Roman psyche, as evidenced by the writings of the time. For a conservative society whose identity depended upon the traditions of the past, the barbarian invasion was difficult to accept. Consequently, the local aristocracy redoubled the demonstration of their connections to the *mos maiorum*.320

At the same time, the interaction between Late Antique Roman social classes in the west had experienced a shift. During the fourth century, the move of the center of power to Constantinople altered the image of the emperor to one of remoteness, both physically and geographically.321 For the most part, by the fifth century, the emperors in the West ruled from outside of Rome in Milan or Ravenna. Originally, while the emperor had resided in Rome, his interaction with the aristocrats in the West was of a more personal nature. As a result, the classes participated in a delicate symbiotic relationship of exchanging favors between the emperor and aristocrats and, in turn, the aristocrats and their clients. By the fifth century, however, the distant emperor depended on local magistrates of Rome to dispense justice and to run the bureaucracy of his vast empire. During this time, in many instances the clients became supplicants whose interaction with their patrons changed from a partnership based on mutual favors to one that privileged the patron as the imperial representative.322


The aristocrats’ visual surroundings of heroic and imperial imagery, including luxury manuscripts such as the *Ambrosian Iliad*, reflected these historical events by confirming their unique status in Late Antique society as protectors of the Roman way and representatives of the emperor. First, the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s figures can be understood in Late Antique terms as participating in such distinctly aristocratic activities as holding banquets and sponsoring circus games. These images, which imitated traditional public rituals used by the Roman elite to demonstrate status, reflected their own social construct, defined by unwavering support of the *mos maiorum* and Romanitas. Second, the addition of imperial responsibilities was reflected in the collection and display of Homeric-themed objects that referenced the acquisition of *paideia*, which demonstrated the essential background needed for the aristocrats’ new role. I will demonstrate that the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s imperially-charged imagery reflected the aristocratic viewer’s connection to the emperor. In other words, the manuscript’s iconography conditioned the reception of its aristocratic audience by continually reaffirming their sense of self-worth as defined by their imperial duties.

### The *Ambrosian Iliad*’s Iconography – Defining the Present

In previous studies of the *Ambrosian Iliad*, scholars often analyzed the liberal use of Roman iconography as a means of determining a Late Antique date and source for the manuscript.\(^{323}\) I suggest that consideration of how the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s images were likely perceived by the Late Antique elite audience could also contribute to the dialogue surrounding the date and provenance of the manuscript.

During a time of upheaval and uncertainty, the *Ambrosian Iliad* was viewed through a lens forged by the aristocratic viewers’ belief that they were the protectors of the *mos maiorum*.

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\(^{323}\) Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 95. See 95-110 for Bianchi Bandinelli’s analysis, in which he discusses specific types of images that he compares to contemporary Late Antique examples, such as clothing, furniture, temples and ships. These examples are labeled “Antiquarian observations”. In his “Iconography” chapter (111-138), Bianchi Bandinelli uses formal analysis to categorize the images according to their possible stylistic sources. Cardinal Mai’s used iconography to compare the deities between the *Ambrosian Iliad* and Late Antique depictions and ancient mythological descriptions. Like Bianchi Bandinelli, the purpose of his iconographic analysis was to ascertain the date of the *Ambrosian Iliad*.  

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The Roman aristocrats’ participation in such social and public events as the circus and the banquet, as depicted in the *Ambrosian Iliad*, played an important part in the sociological relationship between the classes. For the aristocratic viewers, the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s iconography reflected their view of the world which, by the fifth century, had them firmly entrenched as the protectors of Roman tradition. Homeric figures in the manuscript imitate Late Antique behavior, including obeying strict social conventions at banquets and performing civic duties at the circus. These references reflected real life to the aristocrat where, in an interchange between text, image and the viewer, the manuscript’s paintings acted as a two-way mirror. While the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s Roman iconography informed and instructed the aristocrat as to the expected and proper way to present himself, the viewer also saw his own reflection and, more importantly, his projected image as it pertained to his status in fifth-century Rome.

**The Circus**

Homer’s story of funeral games held in honor of the hero Patroclus is included in Miniature LV as a Roman chariot race (fig. 4.1 and fig. 4.2).\(^{324}\) Five charioteers are depicted in Homer’s description of the scene. They are identified in the *Ambrosian Iliad* by their Late Antique striped charioteers’ costumes and accompanying chariots and squires. Since the earliest history of the Roman circus, there had always been four teams, or factions, that were represented by colors - red, white, blue and/or green. The *Ambrosian Iliad*’s artist reconciled Homer’s account of five teams with the Roman practice by painting two of the charioteers’ uniforms in green and light green.\(^{325}\) The five charioteers can be identified by comparing their depictions in the manuscripts to the description in the *Iliad*.\(^{326}\) Diomedes, who placed first and was given a handmaiden as his prize, is depicted wearing his green costume in the center of the composition. Second place was awarded to Antilochus, who is wearing a red uniform and is placed at the top of the picture just to the right of the Greek gathering. Antilochus holds the reins of his prize, a pregnant white mare. Menalaus, located on the left side of the picture and wearing a blue outfit, has been given the third prize of a cauldron, which the Late Antique painter interpreted as a bell.

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\(^{324}\) See Homer, *Iliad*, 23.257-650 for the complete narrative of the chariot race portion of Patroclus’ funerary games.

\(^{325}\) Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions: Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 45. My sincere gratitude to David Stone for making this observation when discussing this image with me.

\(^{326}\) Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 82.
krater. The fourth prize of two talents was given to Merion who, dressed in white, is standing with his back to the viewer.

Identifying the fifth charioteer is a bit more problematic. According to Homer, the fifth place winner, Eumelus, was awarded a cuirass by Achilles. The prize shown in the *Ambrosian Iliad*, however, is much too small to be a cuirass, and looks more like a two-handled urn. Bianchi Bandinelli suggested that the charioteer is actually Nestor, who, in the same passage, received the urn from Achilles in honor of his reputation and great age. Nestor accepted the prize and stated that he, in a younger age, was “then outstanding among all the heroes.” If, as Bianchi Bandinelli suggests, the fifth charioteer accepting the urn from Achilles is Nestor, then the artist deviated from Homer’s account. I believe that the difference between text and image is intentional so that the emphasis has been placed on the connection between the present and the past, an important component of the *mos maiorum*. First, Eumelus was a minor player in the *Iliad*. He is only mentioned in the chariot race and in Book II’s “catalogue of ships.” In contrast, Nestor was one of the major characters of the *Iliad*. Second, the heart of the *Iliad* revolved around the stories of the heroes of this epic poem, and Nestor was considered by the Greeks and the Romans to be one of the *Iliad*’s great heroes. Nestor’s role in the *Iliad*, quite often, was to play the wise old counsel to the younger characters. I believe that the artist conflated the two Homeric scenes, the chariot race awards and Nestor receiving the urn, as a way to reference the importance of *mos maiorum*. Achilles, as the young aristocrat of the present, defers to Nestor, the representative of a heroic past.

This scene had special meaning for the fifth-century viewer. The idea of staging a chariot race in a funerary context was not foreign to the Romans, who probably inherited the practice

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327 Homer, *Iliad*, 23.643-645 (trans. Rodney Merrill). “Thus was I once; now it is for men who are younger to face such labors as these, while I to the prompting of odious old age must give way, who was then outstanding among all the heroes.”

328 Ibid., 2.711-715. “Those who inhabited Phérai and close to the lake Boibéïs, Boibè and Gláphyrai, and Iólkos of noble foundation, leading eleven of their ships came the dear son of Admétos, the Lord Eumélos, whom to Admétos the splendor of women bore, Alkéstis, the noblest in beauty of Pélias’ daughters.”

from the Etruscans. By the Late Republic, races were held primarily to celebrate specific events and religious festivals. From the beginning, the circus games, or *ludi circenses*, were extremely popular in Rome and the practice quickly spread throughout the Roman Empire. Before long, the circus became an integral part of the fabric of Roman life and society.

During Late Antiquity, Roman aristocratic identity was heavily dependent on public displays that confirmed status and rank, especially as a way of distancing themselves from the masses. The circus was a highly visible place where aristocrats, as the protectors of the *mos maiorum*, were given many opportunities to display themselves as the elite of the Roman Empire. The more an aristocrat was acclaimed by others, the higher his stock rose in society. Thus, it was vital that members of the elite were visible to each other and to the masses in the hippodrome. The aristocrats exploited the games for this purpose in several ways: through privileged seating, sponsorship of the circus, and receiving lauds at the hippodrome. Every aspect of the aristocrat’s life could be carefully choreographed to maximize public exposure and demonstrate his support of *romanitas* in this ideal public forum.

Since the early second century BCE, an audience member’s status determined his seating in the hippodrome. For instance, in the Circus Maximus in Rome, the first row was reserved for senators and others of high rank. In fact, the strict hierarchy of seating was taken so seriously that it was a punishable crime to lose one’s seat or take another person’s place. Cassius Dio (ca. 164-after 229) describes the special seating in this narrative: “The populace began massed shouts that they needed a leader and Jupiter it should be; whereupon the senators and equestrians from their reserved sections in the Circus took up loyal counter shouts, praising

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331 Hope, “Status,” 126. For further discussion concerning Late Antique aristocrats and their pursuit of status see, Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 529 and, Cameron and Garnsey, “Imperial Court,” 157-232.


333 Humphrey, *Roman Circuses*, 101. It was under Claudius’ reign, in 41 CE that assigned seating in a specific section was instituted for the elite. The assigned seating was probably near the finish line.

emperor and prince together and inviting the crowds to join in.\textsuperscript{335} Special seating remained in existence throughout the Late Antique period, as evidenced by a letter from the fifth-century aristocrat Sidonius Apollinaris (ca. 430-ca. 480) to his friend the charioteer Consentius, which mentions the special area reserved in the Circus Maximus for the consuls.\textsuperscript{336} Archaeological evidence also supports the literary references to reserved seating for the elite. As late as the fifth century in Rome, rich aristocrats were given reserved marble benches inscribed with their names in the Flavian Amphitheatre.\textsuperscript{337}

Circuses were often sponsored by aristocratic patrons to celebrate the traditional founding date of the city or the obtaining of an office, such as the \textit{praetura} (praetorship). Senators and other aristocrats would spend great sums to sponsor such circuses.\textsuperscript{338} By the fifth century, the money expended on the games had risen to such a level that an edict restricting the amount of money spent on the games was decried: “We advise all provincial governors to attend the festivities of the traditional games and take pleasure in winning the approval of the people, but not to exceed in expenditure the disbursement of two solidi, and not to let the thoughtless craze for citizens ruin the power of the magistrates, the wealth of the citizens, the houses of the wealthy, the riches of the affluent, and the strength of the province.”\textsuperscript{339} It is evident from this passage that, in spite of limiting their spending, the emperors still recognized the value of preserving the aristocrats’ elevated place in society. Of the five concerns listed in this edict, three had to do with wealth and the fourth with the power of the elite, all of which contributed to the “strength of the province.” In addition, the edict confirms that the patrons were expected to

\textsuperscript{335} Cassius Dio, \textit{Dio’s Roman History}, 79.20.1-3 (trans. Earnest Cary).

\textsuperscript{336} Sidonius Apollinaris, \textit{Poems}, 23.317-318 (trans. W. B. Anderson). “Thereupon, in the part where the door is and the seat of the consuls....” [\textit{Tum qua est ianua consulumque sedes}...]


\textsuperscript{338} Bertrand Lançon, \textit{Rome in Late Antiquity: Everyday Life and Urban Change, A.D. 312-609} (New York: Routledge, 2000), 142. The games were very popular and were held quite often during the Roman year. In festival calendars from the Late Antique period, most notably the \textit{Calendar of 354}, 177 days were devoted to games and circuses. M. R. Salzman, \textit{On Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 120.

enjoy the “approval of the people” while attending the games. Here we see an imperial stamp of approval for the show of *virtus* in which the aristocratic patron is given the opportunity to display his *auctoritas*, *gravitas*, and *pietas*. All were believed to be for the good of the Empire, and thus, for the good of society as a whole.

As Jill Harries has shown, however, the protection of the *mos maiorum* and the desire for personal glory were not the only driving forces behind aristocratic sponsorship of the games. Competition in the “survival of the fittest” atmosphere of a highly stratified society resulted in many of the aristocrats nearly losing their fortunes.\(^{340}\) For example, in the year 400, Symmachus (ca. 340-402) paid what was a huge sum at that time, 200 gold *librae*, to import good horses from Spain for his son’s praetorship games.\(^{341}\) But, in spite of the high cost of circus displays, the fifth-century elite felt that the chance to secure their place in history was worth it, as indicated in the writings of the Late Antique senator, Asterius (fl. late 5\(^{th}\) century). When Asterius sponsored the consular games in 495, his primary concern was that his name live on: “And may it be ordered to always remember your Asterium, by whose wealth and concern (these words) have been sent out to the people. May they, no matter how great, honor him throughout the ages. However it is more deserved, if he thrives because of your mouth.”\(^{342}\) Clearly for Asterius, who nearly lost his fortune paying for the games, his reputation and image was of utmost importance.

The hippodrome also provided the stage for the aristocrat to be publicly recognized. The circus factions hired choruses to give public acclamations supporting the emperor and other

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notables. As one of the most powerful voices in urban Roman society, the factions were considered to be political bodies and, as such, were cultivated and patronized. Their acclamation in the hippodrome could greatly elevate a recipient’s standing. Thus, aristocrats were known to seek the approval of factions with bribes. We see proof of this in papyri found at the Late Antique Egyptian city of Oxyrhynchus. Here the aristocratic family of Apion provided money and wine to the workers of the Blue and the Green factions. As the recipient of lauds and acclimations, the aristocrat, like the emperor, could experience his own private triumph in the hippodrome.

The pointed Roman iconography of the circus scene in the *Ambrosian Iliad* would have reminded the aristocratic viewer of the scene of his greatest public triumphs. In the hippodrome he was seated in the reserved section for the elite, seen as a patron of the games, and lauded by the masses of the Roman Empire.

The Banquet

In the illustration of the Banquet of the Gods from the *Ambrosian Iliad*, the artist depicted the narrative from the *Iliad* that takes place after Thetis begs for Zeus’ help for her son Achilles (Miniature X) (fig. 4.3 and fig. 4.4). The figures are readily recognizable from their attributes,

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“Acclamations took a distinctive ritualized form, although their wording was naturally appropriate for the particular occasion that they celebrated. They began with an invocation to God, and followed this immediately with good wishes for the emperor’s health and long life, for his continued rule and for his victories. These then normally led to acclamations on behalf of the Senate, of the great state officeholders, and of imperial officials. A Law of 380 explicitly indicated that a group of senior civilian officials, namely the *quaestores sacri palatii*, the *magistri officiorum*, and the *comites urbis aevi aerarii*, were entitled to be hailed by acclamations, as were the praetorian prefects (Codex Theodosianus, 6.9.2) Mitchell, *History*, 157.


345 Homer, *Iliad*, 1.595-604 (trans. Rodney Merrill). “So he spoke, and the goddess white-armed Hera was smiling; then with a smile, from the hand of her son she accepted the goblet. Straightway for all of the rest of the gods from the left to the right he started to pour sweet nectar that he dipped up from the wine bowl. Then in the fortunate gods there arose unquenchable laughter, as they observed how Hephaistos was bustling about the palace. So it was that for that whole day till the hour of the sunset they dined, nor of the well-shared meal were their hearts at all wanting, nor of the sounds of the beautiful lyre that Apollo was holding, nor of the Muses, who sang in lovely antiphonal voices.” [ ὃς φάτο, μεῖσθεν δὲ θεά λευκόλευνος Ἡρη, μεῖσθαι δὲ παιός ἔδέμεντο χειρὶ κύπελλον: αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖς ἄλλοις θεοῖς ἔνδέμεν πάσιν οἶνογείει γλυκὰ νέκταρ ἀπὸ κρυπήριος θέους: ἄφθερος δ’ ἄρ’ ἐνῷρτο γέλους μακάρεσσι θεοῖς ὡς ἵδων Ἡφαιστον διὰ δῶματα ποινύοντα. ὃς τότε μὲν πρόπην ἕμαρ ἐς ἔνειον καταθύματα δαίνοντ’, οὐδὲ τι θυμὸς ἔδεμεντο διατός ἔδεσε, οὐ μὲν φόρμυγος περικαλλός ἂν ἔχ’ Ἀπόλλων, Μουσάων θ’ αἰ δείδον ἄμεμνεναι ὅπλο καλῆ.]
dress, and demeanor as follows (from left to right): the Muses are in a group on the far left, Apollo plays his lyre, Ares wears his helmet, Zeus carries his scepter, Hera sits next to her husband, Athena wears her war helmet, and a beautifully dressed Aphrodite sits at the far right. Below them, a faithful Hephaistos busily serves the guests. In a slight departure from the Homeric text, Hephaistos offers his mother a cup rather than a two-handled goblet.  

Any social interaction, no matter how large or small, was an opportunity for the Roman aristocrat to reinforce his exalted position. The fifth-century viewer would have readily recognized the contemporary social and political significance of the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s banquet scenes. Since the earliest days of the Roman Republic, aristocrats used the banquet to cement relationships with their peers, subordinates, and patrons. Dunbabin proposed that banqueting images provided a way of projecting a deeper sociological meaning of self-identity for the aristocrats. In other words, the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s banqueting scenes worked within a cohesive iconographic program that helped aristocratic viewers define their elite status through the viewing of contemporary Roman aristocratic elite activities. The subject of gods and goddesses participating in a contemporary banquet scene was especially prevalent in fifth-century decorative arts. The banqueting scene was also a popular subject in other Late Antique manuscripts, as shown in the late fifth-century manuscript the *Vergilius Romanus* with its illustration of Dido’s feast (fig. 4.5). Like the *Ambrosian Iliad*, the artist of the *Vergilius Romanus*  

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346 Ibid., 1.584-589. “So did he say, then sprang to his feet, and he put a two-handled cup in the hands of his much loved mother, and thus he addressed her: “Be of good heart, dear mother, endure, although you are grieving, lest with my own eyes I should behold you, as much as I love you, smitten, and then in spite of my sorrowing I could not give you succor, for terrible is the Olympian faced as a rival.” [ ὥς ἂρ᾽ ἔφη καὶ ἄναξάς δέπας ἀμφικύππελλον μητρὶ φίλῃ ἐν χειρὶ τίθη καὶ μὴν προσέχεις: τέτλαθη μὴπερ ἐμῇ, καὶ ἄνασχεο κηδομένη περ, μὴ σε φίλῃν περ ἐοῦσαν ἐν ὀφθαλμῶισιν ἴδωμαι θειομένην, τότε δ᾽ οὐ τι δυνήσομαι ἄχυρμενός περ χραισμεῖν: ἀργαλέος γάρ Ὁλύμπιος ἄντιφέρεσθαι.]  

Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 57.


348 Ibid., 7.

349 Ibid., 196.

350 *The Vergilius Romanus* (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica, Cod. Vat. lat. 3867). Bell, “The Vergilius Romanus: *Aeneid,*” 227-228, no. 204.
Romanus placed a banquet scene from a heroic tale in a fifth-century setting. The participants, Aeneas, Dido, and Ascanius, lounge on a sigma in their distinctly Late Roman dress and are surrounded by luxurious decorations in the triclinium, where they eat and drink from expensive silver tableware.

The contemporary nature of the banquet imagery in the Ambrosian Iliad is especially evidenced through specific fifth-century Late Antique references. First, the clothing of the banquet participants is specific to the time period. For instance, in the Ambrosian Iliad, Apollo is almost always depicted in heroic fashion wearing a chlamys, the military cloak worn by Roman aristocracy in the fifth century. Second, the furniture used in the scene is distinctly Roman, in particular, the dining couches. Prior to the fifth century, separate couches were used in large dining rooms, which discouraged a close sense of conviviality among the diners. By the fifth century, smaller, more personal dining rooms were popular, as attested by Sidonius Apollinaris who, when describing his country villa at Avitacum, wrote of multiple dining rooms - each of which had a particular function. Included in his villa were a “woman’s dining room,” a “winter dining room,” and a “small dining room.” In fifth-century dining rooms, the host and guests would recline on a sigma or stabadium. The sigma was a semi-circular permanent structure, often made of masonry or wood. It was stacked with cushions and bolsters for the participants to lean on while eating and socializing. The close quarters of these fifth-century dining rooms provided the ideal environment for intense social interaction among the elite, their peers, and their clients, all under the tight control of the aristocratic host.

351 In the most recent study of the manuscript, David Wright suggests a date of ca. 480s based on paleographic evidence. David Wright, The Roman Vergil and the Origins of Medieval Book Design (London: The British Library, 2001), 62. Also David Wright, Codicological notes on the Vergilius Romanus (Vat. lat 3867) (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1992), 11.
352 Wright, The Roman Vergil, 26. See also, Weitzmann, Late Antique, 11 and 52-59.
353 Croom, Roman Clothing, 51.
356 Sarah Scott, “The Power of Images in the Late-Roman House,” in Domestic Space in the Roman World: Pompeii and Beyond, eds. Ray Laurence and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1997), 60. As Sarah Scott has indicated, the rooms of the Late Antique domus were more specialized than those of their predecessors. Large banqueting halls were used for the most special of guests, while the smaller dining rooms were reserved for more private gatherings with social equals.
Another important Late Antique feature of the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s banqueting iconography highlights the social code by which the Roman aristocrat’s sense of place and importance was reinforced.\(^{357}\) Strict rules of social interaction defined a hierarchical seating arrangement for the host and his guests. As at the circus, each person’s seating was determined by his place in society. At the banquet, the most important person sat in the middle and status determined the proximity of the other individuals to the center seat. The higher on the social ladder an individual ranked, the closer he was placed to the center. This arrangement encouraged political and social interaction between guests that was such an integral part of aristocratic life.\(^{358}\)

Sidonius Apollinaris wrote with great pride about attending a banquet in Rome that was held by the emperor in honor of a circus. He was seated next to the emperor.\(^{359}\) In the *Ambrosian Iliad*, the deities sit in rank order flanking the god Zeus who, as the most senior deity, sits in the place of honor at the center of the *sigma*.

Once they were seated, the banquet provided many opportunities for the host and his guests to confirm their status. The meal was an orchestrated series of thoughtfully prepared and expensive courses served on the host’s best tableware. During the meal, the host and his guests were treated to entertainment that included poetry readings and music.\(^{360}\) The evening was filled with clear and pointed demonstrations of the participants’ *paideia*. Stimulating conversations revolved around the Greek classics, like the *Iliad*, and the participants might debate such moral issues as Achilles’ anger or the definition of heroic characteristics. Sidonius wrote of spending the day at a friend’s house where they enjoyed a lunch and, “As we sat over our wine there were


\(^{358}\) Ibid., 39-41 and 43.

\(^{359}\) Sidonius Apollinaris, *Poems*, 1.11.10 (trans. W. B. Anderson). Sidonius writes in great detail regarding the attendees and their seating arrangements. Among this august gathering, he was seated just to the left of the emperor. [ultimus ego iacebam, qua purpurati latus laevum margine in dextro porrigebatur.]

\(^{360}\) The Greeks actually divided the banquet into two parts. The first part was the *deipnon*, when the meal was served. The after dinner activities, or *symposia*, was the social part of the evening. Greek art most frequently depicted the *symposion*.

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short stories, for amusement and instruction; they were started in two sets, bringing mirth and edification respectively. To sum up, our entertainment was moral, elegant, and profuse.”

These conversations could have been spurred by the Homeric imagery on the luxurious furnishings, paintings, sculptural collections, and illustrated manuscripts that surrounded the participants. From the moment that guests entered the villa, they would have been shown through room after room filled with objects that could have been used as a means to prompt the viewers for the upcoming intellectual conversations carried out during the banquet itself. The owner’s collections would have reminded the banqueteers of the very education that fueled their sense of identity.

I propose that as part of this intellectual visual program, large illustrated manuscripts, like the *Ambrosian Iliad*, were simply not used as books in the literal sense to be read from cover to cover. Instead, they were employed as memory aids that encouraged the viewers’ interaction with the morals and ideals represented by the stories. The *Ambrosian Iliad* facilitated this reception in two ways: first, by its cumbersome size which caused the viewers to linger on one page and, second, through its detailed depictions of well-known scenes of the Iliad that encouraged interaction between the educated viewers and the image.

One must take into account the physicality of the original manuscript and how it would have influenced the relationship between viewer and object. The *Ambrosian Iliad* was a large codex, likely 12.83 inches (32.59 cm) in width and 11.34 inches (28.80 cm) in height, with its numerous illustrations and text, it would have been awkward to hold in one’s lap. According to Cavallo, this simple change in the mechanics and approach to the size and weight of the codex changed the “physiology” of reading. Theoretically, smaller codices could be read using just one hand to flip the pages. Larger tomes, like the *Ambrosian Iliad*, proved to have an entirely different effect on the act of reading. In other words, the reader would not have been able to flip

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361 Ibid., 2. 9.6. [Inter bibendum narratiunculae, quorum cognitu hilararemur institueremur, quia eas bifarium orditas laetitia peritiaeque comitabantur. quid multa? sancte pulchre abundanter accipiebamur.]


363 Scott, “Power,” 63.

through the pages quickly, but would have to move slowly through the manuscript page by page. According to Cavallo, the physical difficulty of dealing with the larger and heavier codices influenced the interaction between the patron and the object. If the codex was very large, the manuscript would have been placed on a table or stand for viewing, and the reader would have to stand to view the manuscript. The size of the *Ambrosian Iliad* suggests, then, that it may have been displayed in the villa in a manner similar to other precious works of art. As the patron proudly led his visitors through his rooms of statuary and paintings on the way to the banqueting room, they could have stopped at a stand and viewed the open pages of an extensively illustrated manuscript. If the villa’s owner wished to guide the ensuing dinner discussion toward a specific topic, he could have the page already turned to a related image. The visiting banqueters could very well have interacted with the manuscript’s images in the same way as they interacted with the other Homeric works of art, as a means to show off their command of their *paideia*. The format of the illustrations in the *Ambrosian Iliad* lend themselves nicely to this type of interaction and use of the manuscript as a display object. Because it was displayed on a stand, the manuscript’s large framed images would have been presented in the same manner as a painting and pages could be easily turned. This is in striking contrast to the interaction of readers with earlier classical rolls in which illustrations imbedded in the text were revealed as the object was unrolled.

The Book

This leads to a related question: If the book was used as a display object, did viewers actually read the text that was associated with the image? In his study, *Imperial Rome and*

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365 Cavallo, “Between,” 87 and 89.

366 The use of *ekphrasis*, or describing a work of art was a popular device used by writers to recreate the scene in the mind’s eye. The Romans inherited a fondness for *ekphrasis* from the Greeks and it was a popular device in Latin literature. With their experience in the use of *ekphrasis*, the visitors in the Roman villa would have had no problem with the idea of expounding on the image later at dinner as a way to facilitate discussion. For a discussion of the Romans and *ekphrasis*, see Elsner, *Roman Eyes*, 67-112.

367 The images are of varying sizes with the largest approximately 8.50 x 7.34 inches and the smallest approximately 8.50 x 2.75 inches.

368 Wright, *Vatican Virgil*, 2.
Christian Triumph, Jaś Elsner argues that ownership of luxurious objects, like illustrated manuscripts, was connected to the patron’s education and that these provided the ideal platform for indicating status and paideia. Elsner also proposes that the mythological and iconic imagery and themes from the manuscript, The Vatican Vergil, provide the best examples of this use. The author suggests that in antiquity, manuscript illustrations were subordinate to text, especially in the case of standard works like Virgil’s Aeneid. I do not agree with this assessment of antique pagan manuscript imagery, especially when dealing with issues of paideia. For example, the Ambrosian Iliad’s illustrations depicted well-known scenes from the Homeric poem. The viewer, as an aristocratic patron who had had an extensive Homeric education, would have instantly recognized the story line of each illustration, even without reading the associated text. Moreover, the basic nature of the Roman educational system of paideia dealt with memorizing and analyzing specific passages from Homer. Thus, when the educated viewer looked at any of the images in the Ambrosian Iliad, he would have equated it to the appropriate corresponding passages in Homer’s Iliad as he had been taught. Instead of playing a supporting role in the manuscript, I believe that the images in the Ambrosian Iliad actually took precedence over the text. The educated viewer and elite guest would have been, immediately upon viewing the Ambrosian Iliad in the contemporary context we have established for its use, prepared to participate in dinner discussions based upon his extensive knowledge of Homeric poetry and prompted by the manuscript’s images.

In much the same way, the images conditioned the aristocratic activity of concentrating on the deeper meanings of the stories from the Iliad as a means to learn morals and ethics, two components of virtus. In his analysis of Homeric text and images on Megarian Bowls (3rd-1st c. BCE) and Italic Tablets (1st c. BCE-mid-1st c. CE), Zanker terms this method as “reader or

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369 Jaś Elsner, Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 112-113. Elsner argues that this approach to word and image foreshadowed the future of illustrated manuscripts in the medieval Christian world, when the words held power over the corresponding illustrations.


371 Elsner, Imperial, 108.
viewer supplementation.” He suggests that for art objects that depict epic poetry, in particular, the viewer uses his/her background and education to “contextualize” the complete narrative. In a similar argument, Nicholas Horsfall proposes that the *Italic Tablets* could have been placed on display in an aristocratic house as a way of jogging the viewer’s memory of the


*Beglian Bowls* were mass produced between the third-first centuries BCE. These footless and handleless hemispherical vessels were decorated with relief patterns and figural scenes. The subtype of the Megarian bowls, known as ‘Homeric bowls’ contained extensive narrative cycles derived from the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*; and other sources that related stories connected to the Trojan War, including the *Little Iliad*. Approximately sixty of these bowls are extant; with over half illustrating stories from the *Iliad*, many of the images are accompanied with extensive inscriptions referring to the *Iliad* as well. Similar in nature to the *Iliac Tablets*, the Homeric bowls combined Homeric imagery with text that labeled figures, quotations from epic poetry, and sometimes a brief explanation of the scenes.


The *Iliac Tablets*, which were created between the first century BCE. and the mid-1st century CE are twenty rectangular marble relief tablets that illustrate the Homeric epic poems, Trojan War literature, mythological themes, and historical events. While found in different locations, those with secure provenances were found in Rome or just outside of Rome, and share a common style and narrative approach. These tablets exhibit a complicated narrative series with extensive inscriptions depicting the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Iliupersis*, the *Parva Ilias*, the *Aithiopis*, the Apotheosis of Hercules and, possibly, Alexander’s victory at Arbela. One of the most compelling aspects of these tablets is their extensive inscriptions that included labels, quotations, and passages from their Homeric sources. Because of the close relationship between text and image, many scholars have attempted to connect them to the development of illustrated manuscripts.


Homeric stories and, as a reminder to his guests that he was a man of culture. The Megarian Bowls and Iliac Tablets provide a precedent for combining Homeric passages with corresponding imagery on objects used for display in a manner similar to that proposed here for the Ambrosian Iliad. With the viewer’s extensive knowledge of the Iliad, he would only have had to see the picture on these objects to be reminded of the specific passages and corresponding ethical lessons. The Ambrosian Iliad, however, added a new dimension to this viewing experience. In contrast to the Megarian Bowls and Iliac Tablets, the viewer could take in the entire image at once. With a Megarian Bowl, the patron had to turn the object slightly to view the entire scene. For the Iliac Tablets, the multiple scenes and dense compositions made it virtually impossible to easily discern its narratives unless the viewer stood very close to the object. The Ambrosian Iliad facilitated interaction between the viewer and the image through large framed pictures that, for the most part, stood alone on a single page above the text.

The acquisition of a Homeric education was considered wasted unless the Late Antique aristocratic student could apply it in his interaction with his peers. In a society where ceremony and strict rules of conduct were paramount, paideia provided the means by which the aristocrat could relate to others in his level of society. An aristocratic display of paideia included clear, distinct, and intellectual writing. The appearance of the cultivation of paideia was equally as important as its mastery. Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430) mentions this in his Confessions when discussing his own early education: “But yet this father of mine never troubled himself with any thought of how I might improve myself towards thee [God], or how chaste I were; so that I proved cultivated, though I were left withal undressed by thy tillage, O God, which art the only, true, and good landlord of the field of my heart.”

In order to display an education that was available only to the very elite of Roman society, aristocrats commonly included Homeric quotes in their conversations and

375 Brown, Power and Persuasion, 39.
correspondence. Knowing the implied references from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* developed as a secret language reserved for their class. Only someone with a similar education or background could have deciphered the cryptic use of such Homeric references. Homeric references are liberally sprinkled throughout Late Antique writings as demonstrated by Ausonius (ca. 310-ca. 394) who, when thanking the Emperor Gratian (359-383) for his consulship, acknowledges the Emperor’s skill in Homeric terms. In this passage, Ausonius tells the emperor that, although there were other candidates that may have been more qualified, he appreciates Gratian’s generosity and support, reciprocating favors Ausonius did for the emperor in the past. Ausonius compares the quality of the emperor’s written explanation for his support to the legendary words spoken by Homeric heroes: “Let those famous spokesmen of old, those orators of Homer – Menelaus, with his subdued but subtle mode of speech, the chieftain of Ithaca, so like a heavy storm of hail, Nestor, the survivor of three generations, whose lips were steeped in honey – let those seek to rival such a sentence!” And then still comparing his emperor with the Homeric heroes, Ausonius wishes Gratian even greater success than that shown by the emperor’s writing skill: “My young sovereign, may He who is the Ruler of heaven and of mankind grant that you may excel those ancients, even above whom the choiceness of that one sentence has placed you, and outstrip each one of them in his peculiar quality – Menelaus in kingly majesty, Ulysses in discretion, and Nestor in length of days.”

Primary sources from the Late Antique period leave no doubt those aristocrats were very concerned with protecting their exalted and privileged places in society. In fact, during the Late Antique period, a public show of aristocratic identity and the ideals that it represented had become just as important as the ideals themselves. This was a marked departure from the early idealistic days of Cicero (106-43 BCE) and Livy (59-17 BCE), who wrote about the noble aristocrat whose purpose was to live a humble life dedicated to Rome.

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378 Ibid., 2.20.4. [Auguste iuvenis, caeli tibi et humani generic rector hoc tribuat, ut praelatus antiques, quos etiam elegantia sententiae istius antecessisti, vincas propria singulorum: in Menelao regiam dignationem, in Ulixe prudentiam, in Nestore senectutem.]
When approached in this manner, the images in the *Ambrosian Iliad* can be seen as an integral tool in the connection between its viewers and their previously acquired knowledge of text associated with those illustrations. During the Late Antique period, the links between image and viewer would have been mediated by the constant interaction, discussion, and reinvention of the meanings of the Homeric images as they related to the contemporary aristocratic patron and his peers.

**The Aristocrat and the Emperor**

Throughout the *Ambrosian Iliad*, Greek and Trojan royalty and heroes alike don imperial Roman dress, display the royal purple, and pose in iconic Roman imperial stances. Achilles, in particular, is treated in a similar manner by the artist. I propose that the elite patrons translated the imperial iconography into something that was relevant to their own role in Late Antique society: representatives of the distant emperor.

By the fifth century, the changing political landscape had dramatically influenced the aristocrat’s role. The traditional idea of service to the state had evolved to that of a civil servant who acted on behalf of a largely absent and sheltered emperor. Consequently, the aristocrat’s

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379 During the fifth century the emperors were rarely in Rome. For the most part they were either in Ravenna or in the field on military campaigns. It appears that only a handful of emperors (Libius Severus, Olybrius, Glycerius), during their brief reigns were ever in Rome. Fik Meijer, *Emperors Don’t Die in Bed* (London: Routledge, 2001), 146-161.

Roman Emperors in the West in the fifth century (dates of reign):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emperor</th>
<th>(r.)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honorius</td>
<td>395-423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constantine III</td>
<td>ca. 406-411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavius Constantius</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valentinian III</td>
<td>425-455</td>
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<tr>
<td>Petronius Maximus</td>
<td>455</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avitus</td>
<td>455-456</td>
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<tr>
<td>Majorian</td>
<td>457-461</td>
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<tr>
<td>Libius Severus</td>
<td>461-465</td>
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<td>Anthemius</td>
<td>467-472</td>
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<tr>
<td>Olybrius</td>
<td>472</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glycerius</td>
<td>473-474</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julius Nepos</td>
<td>474-475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romulus Augustulus</td>
<td>475-476</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
private and public environment emphasized his ability and right to act as the emperor’s representative. Exemplifying this, the floor plans of villas were expanded so that the patrons could receive their supplicants in apses that acted as throne rooms. Further, fifth-century patrons avidly collected objects with references to Achilles’ youth, the time in which Achilles acquired his *paideia*. This is the same training that contributed to the processes of self-definition for both elite and emperors alike. The *Ambrosian Iliad*, with its emphasis on the aristocratic hero Achilles, worked in concert with the visual program of Homeric objects that supported and reflected the owner’s acquisition and demonstration of *paideia*. In the *Ambrosian Iliad*, the connection between aristocrat and emperor coalesced in the figure of Achilles. Throughout the manuscript, the Homeric hero is consistently shown in a manner recalling Roman imperial depictions including his clothing, his furnishings, and the discharge of his duties.

**An Imperial Environment**

The fifth-century Late Antique aristocrat surrounded himself with imperial signifiers, including architecture and furnishings, as a way to reinforce his new responsibilities. While aristocratic villas had generally been palatial in size, the fifth-century addition of throne-like rooms with apses furthered the impression of imperial connections. Before this time, the Roman patron met with his clients in reception rooms in the mornings: that was where favors were exchanged and promised.\(^{380}\) By the fifth century, with the retreat of the emperor to a distant god-like figure, the relationship between patron and client changed. Instead of mingling with his clients as an imperial representative, many patrons began to receive their clients in much more formal situations.\(^{381}\) The reaction of the clients to this throne-like space was of paramount importance to the villa’s owner, for the subtle imperial appearance of the patron only worked if his viewers believed it.\(^{382}\) Thus, Late Antique villa architecture was altered to more closely

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*Emperors in italics means that they were not recognized in the East.* Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 481-482.


\(^{381}\) Scott, “Power,” 60.

\(^{382}\) Hales, *Roman House*, 239.
resemble imperial residences as a way to intimidate the visitor. The placement of the patron in the house when receiving clients was carefully calculated for maximum effect. The patron would sit or stand at the end of a hall so that the client had to approach him from a distance.

By the fifth century, this imperially charged space was completed with the addition of an apse as a way of defining the audience area of the villa. The apse already had a long history in Roman architecture. Originally a part of a basilica floor plan, the apse found its way into later Roman imperial architecture. By Late Antiquity, prominent apses were added to palaces, as evidenced by the late fourth-century “porticus villa” type in Contionacum (Konz), Germany (fig. 4.6 and fig. 4.7). As can be seen in the reconstruction and floor plan, this large building featured apses on the right side of the palace. The close proximity of Konz to Trier suggests that there may have been a connection to Constantine’s audience hall which featured a large apse.

At the same time, rooms with apses in an audience-like setting became very popular in aristocratic villas throughout the Empire. For example, in the fourth century, small villas in

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383 Ibid., 53 and 122.
387 Konz is approximately 8 kilometers southwest of Trier. This particular building is a good example of the influence this type of floor plan had on ecclesiastical architecture of the fourth century. Richard Krautheimer, Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965), 20.
Britain were remodeled specifically to include great halls and apses. This trend continued to the fifth century with villas in Roman North Africa remodeled to include apses. Known today as The House of the Mosaics, villa number 3 in Bulla Regia, in modern-day Tunisia, is a prime example (fig. 4.8). This villa’s floor plan included a long hall that ends in an apsidal structure. Combined with a peristyled entrance, the arrangement certainly conveyed a grandiose impression to a visitor.

The Late Antique aristocrat took the imperial analogy one step further by installing throne-like structures in these domestic apses. The image of the aristocrat in an imperial pose is beautifully illustrated on an ivory diptych of Rufius Probianus dated ca. 400 (fig. 4.9). Seated on a throne, he indicates with his gesture that he is speaking in such a way that, as Brown describes it, “he has the right to speak, while others only have the right to listen.” Below Probianus, his two secretaries record the proceedings. Two lawyers petition the aristocrat, just as they would have petitioned the Emperor previously in the apse of a basilica.

Once an aristocrat began receiving clients in his own imperially-charged, apsidal throne room, it was important that he be seen as having the credentials to reside there. How others perceived the Late Antique aristocrat’s capabilities to act on the emperor’s behalf was partially based on his appearance and demonstration of the virtus needed to accomplish his duties. As Wallace-Hadrill explains, “the virtues provided a charismatic justification of the emperor’s power, representing him as in possession of qualities regarded by his subjects as a necessary qualification for his position.” During Late Antiquity, the display of these same heroic characteristics justified the aristocrat’s ability to operate in the name of the emperor. Based on their own early training, aristocratic patrons did not have to look far to find a model demonstrating the desired paideia and its characteristics: The Homeric hero, Achilles.

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388 Scott, “Power”, 55. See footnotes 17 and 18 for bibliography. A notable example is in Bignor (Sussex).


The Cult of Achilles

The fifth-century aristocrats’ view of Achilles was shaped by numerous Roman authors who added to the *Iliad*’s narrative over the years. During the Early Imperial Roman period, Achilles had been viewed as a poor excuse for a hero. Roman authors and philosophers viewed his flaws as weaknesses that would shame any good Roman citizen.\(^393\) For example, in his Roman epic tale, the *Aeneid*, Virgil (70-19 BCE) portrayed Achilles as the ruthless killer of Rome’s heroic Trojan ancestors.\(^394\) This pejorative opinion of Achilles and the anger he displayed in the *Iliad* continued well into the Late Antique period. But, in spite of his poor reputation, Romans were still fascinated by Achilles’ heroic characteristics.\(^395\) By the fifth century, during a time of upheaval and uncertainty, ancient heroes represented ideas for which Late Antique Romans longed.\(^396\) Achilles was often referred to in glowing terms. Ausonius wrote such an epigram when he compared his emperor, Gratian, to the epic hero: “Rejoice, thou son of Aeacus! Thou art sung once more by a lofty bard and thou art blessed with a Roman Homer.”\(^397\)

By the fifth century, the Romans’ relationship with Achilles developed into an obsession with the hero’s childhood and formative years which were defined by the acquisition of

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\(^{393}\) Catherine Callen King, *Achilles: Paradigms of the War Hero from Homer to the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), xvii. For an extensive discussion concerning the early Romans’ attitude towards Achilles, including Cicero, Catullus and Ovid, see King, *Achilles*, 112-127.

\(^{394}\) Ibid., 122-124

\(^{395}\) Ibid., 128.

\(^{396}\) Ibid., 138.

\(^{397}\) Ausonius. *Ausonius*, vol 1, 2.26.16-17 (trans. Hugh G. Evelyn White). [Exulta, Aeacide: celebraris vate superbo rursurn Romanusque tibi contigit Homerus.] Ausonius also wrote extensive epitaphs for the heroes of the Trojan War, like Achilles, “Not one the land which holds the son of Aeacus: his bones are buried on the Sigean shore, and at Larissa were his tresses burned. Part of him lies hidden in the tomb, part was borne home by the fleet; but in the whole world Homer shall show him living once again.” [Non una Aeaciden tellus habet: ossa teguntur litore Sigeo, crinem Larisa cremavit. pars tumulis (secreta iacet, pars) classe (relata est;) orbe set in toto (redivivum ostendet Homerus.)] Ausonius. *Ausonius*, vol. 1, 6.4.7-10 (trans. Hugh G. Evelyn White).

In his writings, Ausonius continued this theme when he compared the typical aristocratic bridegroom to a god, “In face and shoulders like a god was he, and in his youthful eyes. As Lucifer when, bedrenched with Ocean’s waves, he lifts his sacred head in heaven, so seemed this youth in feature and in glance, as in wild haste he hastens to the threshold.” [Os umerosque deo similes lumenque iuentiae. quails, ubi oceani perfusus Lucifer unda extulit ossacrum caelo: sic ora ferebat, sic ofulos cursusque amens ad limina tendit.] Ausonius. *Ausonius*, vol. 1, 12.4.51-52 (trans. Hugh G. Evelyn White).
paideia. Late Antique aristocrats spent many hours studying and discussing Homeric references about Achilles’ growth from a flawed young warrior to a seasoned veteran who, by the end of the *Iliad*, had realized his heroic potential. Throughout the *Iliad*, Homer explored Achilles’ transformation, especially as it pertained to his education and his relationship with his earliest teacher, Cheiron, and his mentor, Phoenix. Consequently, the idea of *paideia* was subtly mentioned when Achilles’ teacher described him as “… a speaker of words and a doer of actions.”

The importance of early training and the relationship between student and teacher as described in the *Iliad* was not lost on the Late Antique aristocrat. Ausonius, when discussing his tenure as imperial tutor to the future emperor, Gratian, wrote: “Yet I confess that there have been tutors of greater fame, so but ‘tis granted that there has been to none a nobler pupil. Alcaeus’ offspring was taught by Atlas, and the son of Aeacus by Chiron – the first Jove’s son [Hercules] and the other well-night sprung from Jove [Achilles] – and these had Thebes and Thessaly for their homes. But this, my pupil, reigns over the whole world, which is his own.”

The following earlier texts expanded the *Iliad* with stories from Achilles’ early life. They were widely read and included in the early training of fifth-century students. The *Excidium Troiae* (1st century - with extant Latin copies as late as the 6th century), author unknown, was a compilation of passages in Latin from the *Iliad*. It also included other stories of the Trojan War that probably came from other, now lost, ancient texts. Used as a school text, it was in the question and answer format used in Roman education, especially in the fifth century. Margaret R. Scherer, *The Legends of Troy in Art and Literature* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1963), 100.

The most influential post-Homeric Roman revisionist text was by Statius. *The Achilleid* (45-96) concentrated on Achilles youth, especially his relationship with his teacher, the centaur, Cheiron. According to King, Statius connected Achilles’ anger to the idea of justice. King, *Achilles*, xvii.

Taken into the court of his father Peleus, Phoenix served as a mentor and teacher to a grown Achilles during the Trojan War. He was like a surrogate father to Achilles.

Homer, *Iliad*, 9.442-443 (trans. Rodney Merrill). “Therefore did he send me to instruct you in all of these matters; you were to be both a speaker of words and a doer of actions.”

Ausonius. *Ausonius*, 1.1.27-34 (trans. Hugh G. Evelyn White). [Nec enem fiducia nobis vana aut non solidi gloria iudicii. cedo tamen fuerint fama potiorem magistri, dum nulli fuerit discipulus melior. Alcides Atlantis et Aeacides Chironis, paene Iove iste satus, filius ille Iovis, Thessaliam Thebasque suos habuere penates: at meus hic toto regnat in orbe suo.] Ausonius in a letter to his grandson, written to discuss the merit of school and education, tells him not to fear his teacher, that teachers have much to offer to him, “So Thessalian Chiron did not affright Achilles, Peleus’ son, though he was quite half a horse, nor pine-bearing Atlas scare Amphitryyo’s youthful son, but both coaxingly used to soothe their young pupils with gentle words.”

In the *Ambrosian Iliad*, and other Late Antique Homeric-themed objects, we see the relationship between the aristocracy and the emperor merge in the figure of Achilles. This superhero represented the acquisition and display of the heroic characteristics of *paideia*. In Late Antiquity, Achilles was used as a yardstick by which the emperor’s virtues were measured, as evidenced by Cyrus (fl. 426-441), who wrote to Theodosius II (401-450): “All the famous deeds of Achilles are yours, except for his wrath and his love; you draw the bow like Teucer, but are no bastard; you have the great beauty of Agamemnon, but wine does not disturb your mind; in prudence I liken you to the cunning Odysseus, but without wicked deceit; and O King, you distill honey-sweet speech equal to the old man of Pylos before you see Time touching the third generation.”

Later, in the early sixth century, Procopius would describe a colossal bronze statue of Justinian as “a figure habited like Achilles, that is, the costume he wears is known by that name. He wears half-boots and his legs are not covered by greaves. Also he wears a breastplate in the heroic fashion, and a helmet covers his head gives the impression that it moves up and down, and a dazzling light flashes forth from it.”

The statue surmounted a column that was raised in honor of Justinian’s battle successes in 543. Located between the Great Palace and *Hagia Sophia* in Constantinople, the prominence of the statue dressed in triumphal military success emphasizes the importance of military victory as underscored by the connection of the great Homeric war hero, Achilles, and the emperor.

I suggest that the aristocrat, such as the one who commissioned the *Ambrosian Iliad*, surrounded himself with Achilles imagery as a way of visually aligning himself with the imperial family. This extensive and complicated visual program contributed to solidifying his role as the emperor’s representative. In particular, the emphasis on images of heroic education conveyed the importance of *paideia* as the proper training for the emperor and the elite who acted in his

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place throughout the empire. As Ruth Leader-Newby has shown in her work on Late Antique silver services, Achilles appeared on many objects in Late Antique aristocratic villas, including silver services, furniture, and mosaics. I would like to add illustrated manuscripts to this list of Late Antique collections that reference Achilles as a connection to the acquisition and display of paideia. In fact, the following examples used by Leader-Newby can also be applied to the connection of paideia with the perceived heroic characteristics needed in order to represent the emperor.

Based on archaeological and literary evidence, the Late Antique elite were fond of collecting massive silver services. The vogue for collecting silver continued unabated at least through the end of the sixth century and, as several scholars have suggested, these were likely used for display purposes and as signs of status. These silver services often included large silver platters called missoria. Popular narrative scenes on missoria included the story of Achilles’ early life; this can be seen on a mid-fourth century example from Kaiseraugst in modern-day Switzerland (fig. 4.10 and fig. 4.11).

Ten scenes are arranged around the plate’s rim, with a tondo in the center depicting an eleventh scene. The corners display heads in eight pairs, with Thetis and Achilles alternating with Diomedes and Odysseus. As one follows the narrative in a counterclockwise fashion starting at the bottom of the plate, one sees that the artist has illustrated Achilles’ early biography in order of major events.


407 For extensive bibliography concerning the iconography for this plate, see Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society*, 162, foonotes 23 and 24.
1. Thetis reclines on her birth couch, flanked by her nurse, and the baby Achilles.

2. Thetis dips her son in the river Styx to protect him, in the presence of a pair of river nymphs who personify the rivers Styx and Kokytos (Homer, *Od* 10, 514). At the right, a nurse stands by with bowl and towel.

3. Thetis presents Achilles to the centaur Cheiron to be educated. In Greek mythology, centaurs always acted as tutors of young heroes, teaching them the necessary skills of Greek *paideia* such as hunting, fighting, and athletics. On the left: A nurse with a basket waits with Achilles’ belongings.

4. Achilles and Cheiron have eaten dinner in a cave. Achilles sits above the remains of a boar and lion; Cheiron holds a leopard.

5. A scene of hunting a boar and leopard. Achilles is about to throw a javelin.

6. Achilles studies the alphabet in the presence of a nurse and Cheiron. Wax tablets are inscribed with the Greek letters, alpha, beta, gamma, delta and epsilon.

7. Achilles practices with a discus. A lyre, propped against a column, shows that he is also studying music.

8. The leave-taking - Thetis and a nurse have come for Achilles.

9. Thetis takes Achilles, disguised as a girl, to the island of Skyros to be brought up among the daughters of King Lykomedes. She thought to protect him from warfare, which his fate foretold would cause his demise. Achilles, or Pyrrha, as he was called on Skyros, greets the king.

10. The king’s daughters are spinning while Achilles plays the lyre. One daughter, Achilles’ lover Deidamia, listens intently to his music. A woman enters at the left.

11. In the tondo, Achilles is tricked into revealing his identity. Diomedes and Odysseus have come to take him to Troy. The trumpeter sounds the call to arms, while Achilles impetuously seizes the weapons set out for him. Deidamia clutches at him to try to prevent his departure.

The first eight scenes on this *missorium* specifically depict the essential heroic *paideia* characteristics of hunting, formal education, playing music, athletics, and warfare.\(^{408}\) Achilles’ interaction with his tutor, the centaur Cheiron, is a dominant theme of the narratives on the rim.

The images of *paideia* circle the pivotal image in the center of the *missorium*, of the moment when Achilles accepts his true destiny and steps into manhood.\(^{409}\) Thus, the placement of the scenes of Achilles’ early training literally encircle and support the moment when the hero will begin his new responsibilities, much like the same *paideia* which supported the Roman aristocratic elite when discharging their imperial duties.

The imperial family was fond of commissioning silver services, including large plates, or *missoria*, to honor important milestones.\(^{410}\) At the same time, the elite also collected silver *missoria*, which may have been created in the same imperial workshops. Thus, the display of *missoria* in the aristocratic home represented a subtle connection to power.\(^{411}\)

There is also evidence that the narratives of Achilles’ *paideia* also appeared on furniture in the aristocratic household, as with the very large marble and mosaic table rim from fourth-century Roman Egypt, which is known as the “Capitoline Puteal” (fig. 4.12).\(^{412}\) The only extant part of the object, the rim, is enclosed within a large marble slab. Cosmati mosaics were added in the thirteenth century, when the marble disc was incorporated into the ambo of the Roman church of Sta. Maria in Aracoeli. Counterclockwise are scenes similar to the Kaiseraugst silver plate of Achilles’ boyhood.\(^{413}\) In this example, the artist has combined Achilles’ childhood with

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409 This particular scene was very popular in Roman art. It could have represented the events leading up to Achilles’ discovery on the island of Skyros as a way to illustrate the time in his life before he became a hero. The discovery itself represents a crucial point when Achilles chooses his fate by becoming the central hero in the Trojan War. Brilliant, *Visual*, 136.


411 Ruth Leader-Newby has compared the Kaiseraugst Achilles Plate with the David Plates by citing *paideia* as they related to Achilles’ youth and training. Leader-Newby, “The David Plates,” 423.


413 1) Thetis and Achilles at childbirth. Thetis sits on her bed, at the right the newborn, Achilles, is washed in a fluted bowl by the nurse.
2) Thetis dipping Achilles into the river Styx. To her right is a river nymph.
3) Thetis hands over Achilles to the centaur, Cheiron.
4) Achilles hunts a lion.
several popular scenes from the *Iliad*. Each scene represents a major event in Achilles’ life: his birth, his education with his tutor, his display of *paideia*, the crucial decision to go to war, and the consequences of that decision. Although the famous scene of Achilles’ dragging Hector’s body is missing from the manuscript, this depiction gives a hint of what the now lost scene may have looked.

Late Antique aristocrats often depicted Achilles on the mosaic floors of their villas. An excellent example is found in the reception hall of a large fifth-century domus in Cyprus (fig. 4.13). Achilles’ mother, the nymph Thetis, reclines on her couch and is surrounded by witnesses of the birth of her heroic baby. On the left, one of the Hyades nymphs who brings rain, Ambrosia, holds a pitcher of water. On the other side of Thetis, Achilles’ father, Peleus, is seated holding a scepter. In reference to Achilles’ future, the three Fates flank the scene on the right, starting with Clotho, who holds a spindle and distaff with the thread of life, Lachesis, who displays a tablet on which is inscribed Achilles’ life story, and Atropos who holds the scroll of eternity. The most striking aspect of this composition, however, is that the personification Anatrophe or “Education” holds baby Achilles. Thus, the importance of education, or *paideia*, is stressed in the composition and in the area of the house where the patron met his clients and associates. In other words, the aristocrat not only associated himself with the heroic characteristics of Achilles, but also the *paideia* that they both shared.

The many visual images of Achilles throughout the Late Antique villa, as represented by these works of art, worked in concert to impart a message to viewers that their owner/patron

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5) Skyros: the moment of discovery. Right: Odysseus grasps a sword while a trumpeter sounds an alarm. Achilles, tricked into revealing his identity, picks up the arms. On the left, flanked by her sisters, Deidamia implores him not to leave. On the far right, a figure of a river god leans against a hydria.

6) Achilles and Hector fight before the Skaian Gate at Troy. We are not sure about the identity of the fallen warrior.

7) Achilles drags Hector’s body from his chariot while preceded by Victory holding a palm branch and wreath. Priam looks down in horror from the city walls.


415 Scott, “Power,” 58. According to Sarah Scott, the mythological subject matter of many of the mosaics in Roman villas show a connection to education and *paideia*, especially as a way of indicating social status in the Late Antique period.
shared the same virtues and *paideia* as the Homeric hero. Just by virtue of its topic and focus on Achilles, the *Ambrosian Iliad* took its place with the other Achilles’ narratives in the villa in a cohesive program that contributed to an identity connecting the aristocratic owner to the emperor. Thus, the fifth-century aristocrat constructed an imperial space for himself in which he sat on a throne in an audience hall with an apse surrounded by images of Achilles, an iconographic program supporting his right to wield imperial-like power.

**Imperial Iconography in the *Ambrosian Iliad***

In addition to a visual program in the villa, the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s iconography also contained imperial references to which the fifth-century aristocrat could relate. Hellenic and Trojan kings are shown throughout the manuscript making sacrifices and fighting in battles. But, more importantly for the elite viewer, the aristocratic hero, Achilles, was shown in an imperial light as he awarded prizes and poured libations at an altar. As with the other Achilles imagery throughout the villa, the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s iconography reflected, confirmed, and supported the imperial aspects of aristocratic self-identity in the fifth-century Roman Empire.

The *Ambrosian Iliad*’s illustration of the chariot race refers to one of the most public of imperial duties performed by the Late Antique aristocrat as the representative of the emperor: the awarding of prizes at the hippodrome immediately after the running of the race (fig. 4.1 and fig. 4.2). This particular aspect of the race is connected especially to the aristocratic patron and his show of identity and status. In the hippodrome, the elite would have had ample opportunity to show their imperial associations in a very public place.

Both the aristocrats and the emperor understood and valued the public relations aspect of this important social activity. By the Late Antique period, the hippodrome was one of the few places where the emperor interacted personally with the masses, albeit from a safe distance and in his own box. The importance of the circus games is reflected in Rome and Constantinople, especially, where hippodromes were important components in the palace floor plans.416 The celebration in the circus included several imperial celebrations, such as the emperor’s birthday.417

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417 Curran, *Pagan City*, 221, 223-227. John Curran suggests that the emperor kept in contact with his subjects partially through the calendar of festivities as they were celebrated at the circus. Using the fourth century *Filocalian*
Traditionally, when the emperor attended the circus, he ordered the awarding of the prizes. Sidonius Apollinaris, in a letter to his friend Consentius the charioteer, proudly recounts this aspect of the games in Rome: “Next, the just emperor ordered silken ribands to be added to the victors’ palms and crowns to the necklets of gold, and true merit to have its reward; while to the vanquished in their sore disgrace he bade rugs of many-couloured hair to be awarded.”\textsuperscript{418} It was unseemly, however, for the emperor to descend to the circus floor to personally award the charioteers’ prizes himself. Instead, he would watch as the aristocratic magistrates distributed the prizes to the victors.\textsuperscript{419} When the emperor could not be in attendance, which was true throughout most of the Roman Empire, his portrait was displayed at the circus to emphasize the imperial involvement in the games.\textsuperscript{420} There is literary evidence of this practice from the Praetorian Prefect of Oriens in 425: “If at any time, whether on festal days, as is usual, or on ordinary days, statues or images of us are erected, the judge (\textit{iudex}) shall be present without employing the vainglorious heights of adoration…. Likewise if our images (\textit{simulacra}) are shown at \textit{ludi}, they shall demonstrate that our divinity and glory live only in the hearts and the secret places of the minds of those who attend.”\textsuperscript{421} By the fifth century, as the emperor became a distant figure, the elite were depended upon to perform his imperial duty in the circus more frequently.\textsuperscript{422}

I propose that the popularity of the image of the circus in the elite villas was not only a show of status, but also a subtle reminder of the aristocrats’ connections to the emperor. Many

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\textsuperscript{418} Sidonious Apollinaris, \textit{Poems}, 23.422-427 (trans. W. B. Anderson). In his letter to Consentius: [hic mox praecipit aequus imperator palmis serica, torquibus coronas coniungi et meritum remunerari, victis ire iubens satis pudendis villis versicoloribus tapetas.]

\textsuperscript{419} Alan Cameron, \textit{Porphyrius the Charioteer} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 44.

\textsuperscript{420} Cameron, \textit{Circus}, 7.

\textsuperscript{421} Curran, \textit{Pagan City}, 256, footnote 204. From: \textit{Codex Theodosianus}, 15,4,1: [Si quando nostrae statuae vel imagineis eriguntur seu diebus, ut adsolet, festis sive communibus, adsit iudex sine adorationis ambitioso fastigio, ut ornamentum diei vel loco et nostrae recordationi sui probet accessisse praesentiam. Ludis quoque simulacra proposita tantum in animis concurrentum mentisque seretis nostrum numen et laudes vigere demonstrent; excedens cultura hominum dignitatem superno numini reservetur.]

\textsuperscript{422} Liebeschultz, \textit{Administration}, 225.
of these images feature the popular charioteers and horses, as well as the race itself. Scenes of victory were abundant and were normally depicted by palm fronds scattered throughout the composition or with the victorious charioteers triumphantly carrying their prizes (fig. 4.14). The awarding of the prize itself, however, was not a common theme in Roman art. Although it was a rare depiction, the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s image of the circus was a reflection of real life for the aristocratic viewer. In a society obsessed with *mos maiorum* and *virtus*, the aristocrat represented the marriage of the traditions of the emperor and the elite class of the Roman Empire. What better way to represent the emperor’s *virtus*, as well as your own, than to stand in the emperor’s place on the circus floor awarding the prizes to victorious charioteers?

Another traditional aristocratic duty set in an imperial context is expressed by the image of Achilles making a sacrifice, in miniature XXXVII of the *Ambrosian Iliad* (fig. 1.1 and 1.2). In this scene from the *Ambrosian Iliad*, the heroic aristocrat, Achilles, makes an offering to the gods asking for the protection of his friend, Patroclus, on the eve of battle. As we have seen in Chapter Three, the sacrifice had been a traditional aristocratic duty for the Roman elite until the end of the fourth century. The Roman iconography in this depiction of Achilles is inescapable with the hero making his sacrifice with a *patera* rather than a goblet as mentioned in Homer’s account.

There is more to this image, however, than the use of well-known Roman iconography. This approach to Achilles is a layered one that emphasizes his piety and elite status within an imperial context. First, the important characteristic of *pietas* is emphasized through Achilles’ physical appearance. He is shown wearing a chlamys, a long cloak connected with the military, drawn over his head in the traditional act of a person making a sacrifice. Also, as Bianchi

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Bianchi Bandinelli has identified the iconographic type of the classical Apollo which is used to portray Achilles. Also, Bianchi Bandinelli refers to the chlamys as the “heroic” fashion. Bianchi Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures*, 95.
Bandinelli points out, Achilles is barefooted, which is another sign of ritualistic piety. These references are all framed in a well-established imperial sacrificial pose that had been used on everything from coins to marble reliefs. For example, the third-century emperor, Postumus (r. 260-268), can be seen making a sacrifice to Herculi Comiti on a coin (fig. 4.15). Like Achilles, the Emperor wears priestly robes which are pulled over his head in a display of piety. He pours his sacrifice from his *patera* using the same gesture as our Homeric hero.

Achilles is literally framed with a device commonly used in imperial imagery. Again, as discussed in Chapter Three, the drawn curtain was often referenced in fifth-century aristocratic imagery. This iconography was often used in imperial imagery as well, as can be seen in the diptych of the Empress Ariadne (fig. 4.16). Three round objects hang on the front of the tent. There are several possible sources for this image. The objects could be referencing the Roman practice of hanging shields on their tents between battles. Another possibility is that the round objects are missoria, or large silver plates. These large silver platters were exchanged as gifts between the imperial family and the elite in the fourth and fifth centuries. The missoria were collected and displayed as representations of power and status in Late Antiquity.

**Conclusion**

The Late Antique aristocrat lived his life knowing that he was responsible for the protection of the *mos maiorum*. We have seen examples of this in the *Ambrosian Iliad* with its references to the role the hippodrome played in the social and public life of the elite. The illustration of the Olympian banquet imitated the human banquet held in many of the Late

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427 Ibid., 95.


429 See Chapter Three.


431 My gratitude to Lynn Jones for this observation.

Antique villas, in which the participants played their preordained roles as the self-described “best men” of the Roman world. The *Ambrosian Iliad* also reflected past responsibilities, including pagan sacrifice and military service, both of which represented service to the State. The aristocratic heroes in the *Ambrosian Iliad* represented the best ideals of *virtus* for the Late Antique viewer. Even Achilles, who spent much of the *Iliad* acting in a decidedly unheroic manner, came around by the end of the poem and fulfilled his heroic destiny. As has also been discussed, stories of the legendary hero’s childhood, when he learned the qualities of heroic leadership through *paideia*, were widely popular during the fifth century. The display of these stories of acquiring *paideia* was one of the primary vehicles by which the aristocrat could publicly prove his abilities to discharge his new responsibilities as the emperor’s representative.

Only those who received a Homeric education through the practice of *paideia* could truly participate in this revival. As Peter Brown states, “*Paideia* was a means of expressing social distance. Its skills were difficult to acquire and, once acquired, could only be displayed within rigid, traditional conventions.” In this context, the collection, display, and interaction with Homeric objects as an expression of *paideia* provided reassuring confirmation of the aristocratic patron’s place in society during a time of great historical, religious, and social upheaval. Ones sees the *Ambrosian Iliad* and its illustrations in an entirely different light when we view it as a display object used both to demonstrate and proclaim the owner’s wealth and education, and as an interactive tool for showing their command of *paideia*. As a prestige object, the *Ambrosian Iliad* transcended the traditional view of the written word, functioned as an object of pride, tradition, and, most importantly, as a vehicle for defining and protecting the self-image of the Late Antique aristocrat.

Extensively illustrated manuscripts provided ample material for the show of *paideia*. Recitations had always been a popular activity of the aristocrats in Roman culture. The banquet provided ample opportunity to confirm their elite status. The host could prove his *auctoritas* and *dignitas* by exhibiting his wealth and status through his impressive villa, luxurious

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434 Shelton, *As the Romans Did*, 318. In elite dining, “items with mythological iconography, could be used to spark themes in conversation, to display the learning of both hosts and guests.” Elsner, *Imperial*, 108.
furnishings, and expensive decorations. On mosaics, silver, and bronze objects, the aristocrat was surrounded by images of the young Achilles being taught the essentials of paideia. The display of Homeric-themed objects such as the Ambrosian Iliad referred to the moral lessons that the patron learned as a result of studying the Iliad.

Most importantly to the fifth-century aristocrat, perhaps, were the imperial references connected with the Ambrosian Iliad. Historical and societal changes led to the dependence of the emperor on local aristocrats to act on his behalf. Thus, we see a change in villa architecture to accommodate this new relationship between the elite and their clients. The Ambrosian Iliad played a part in the construction of this new identity, with its imperial iconography, especially in connection with the hero Achilles. Also, references to aristocratic status and imperial connections were reflected in the Ambrosian Iliad’s banqueting and circus scenes. It is not hard to imagine a fifth-century aristocrat, sitting in his throne room dispensing imperial edicts and favors to his clients while surrounded by images of the hero that he was emulating. His paideia and that of Achilles had become one. For the Roman aristocrat, the appearance of mos maiorum and virtus was essential for continued success as an elite member of the Roman Empire. The Ambrosian Iliad’s imperial and heroic references played its part in proclaiming the aristocrat’s place in an uncertain future. The fifth century was complex; the world was neither fully pagan nor fully Christian, and its imagery often reflected the dichotomy of the period. The popularity of Achilles in the fifth century indicated that the viewers appreciated a multivalent hero who could be flawed, yet at the same time, represent the essence of their society, the mos maiorum. In the next chapter, I examine this complicated hero to see if his image lent itself to contemporary Christian theology.

Dunbabin, Roman Banquet, 43.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE AMBROSIAN ILIAD AND ARISTOCRATIC IDENTITY - ACHILLES’ FUTURE

During the fifth century, most of the elite of the Roman Empire were followers of the mandated religion, Christianity. Thus far, this study has concentrated on the impact the Ambrosian Iliad’s images had on the aristocrats’ concept of their place in society, but we must not forget that those same viewers also looked at their world through a Christian lens. The purpose of this chapter is to determine what Christian message the Ambrosian Iliad and its images may have conveyed to the fifth-century aristocratic viewer.

Since the mid-twentieth century, there has been an intense interest in the investigation of pagan mythology as it was incorporated into Christian imagery. In Greek Mythology in Byzantine Art (1951), Kurt Weitzmann explored the adaptation of ancient Greek themes in a variety of objects, including manuscripts and ivory caskets in the ninth and tenth centuries. Weitzmann’s work has contributed much to the understanding of the survival and transmission of classical themes. One of the foundational studies of this type was Andre Grabar’s Christian Iconography: A Study of Its Origins (1968); the work is still considered the standard resource for study of the development of Christian Art from ca. 200-500. By the time of Grabar’s study, the general concept that Christians adapted imagery from Jewish and pagan sources was an accepted idea. Grabar expanded that discourse with thought-provoking scholarly discussions that illustrated the Christian propensity for exegetic interpretation of pagan images. Interest in the topic continued throughout the last century, exemplified by a museum exhibition at Brown University devoted to the theme, Survival of the Gods (1984). Many of the mythological heroes who were converted from paganism to Christianity, including Hercules, were highlighted at this influential show.436 Scholars also explored the subject in such works as Janet Huskinson’s article, “Some Pagan Mythological Figures and Their Significance in Early Christian Art” (1974), the study by Thomas Mathews, The Clash of the Gods (1999), and Robin Margaret Jenson’s Understanding Christian Art (2000). While all these publications contributed to the

436 The Greeks referred to this hero as Herakles. The Romans, however, referred to him as Hercules. Since this study will be investigating this mythological hero during the Late Antique period, I will refer to him as Hercules.
study of the transference of pagan imagery to Christian iconography, they have not addressed the two topics that will be explored in this chapter: the multivalent religious and secular nature of Late Antique Homeric manuscripts and the possibility of Achilles as a Christian hero.

While there are no overt Christian symbols evident in the *Ambrosian Iliad’s* images, its narratives may still have contained religious references. According to Robin Margaret Jensen, the earliest Christian art of the second and third centuries was based upon the Christian viewer’s assignment of religious meaning to seemingly decorative and secular imagery. By the fourth and fifth centuries, Christian art had evolved to the point where its iconography was specific and recognizable, including the cross and images of an imperial and/or spiritual Christ. However, Christians in Late Antiquity continued to understand the multivalent quality of their imagery. I will explore the Christian ideas conveyed by the manuscript’s circus depiction, which referenced the connections between Church and hippodrome. In addition to its iconography, the idea of accepting a Homeric hero in a Christian context will be explored by determining if the *Ambrosian Iliad’s* Christian viewer saw in Achilles a prototype for the Christian hero. As I will explain in this chapter, unlike Odysseus and Theseus, who were certainly seen as the forerunners of Christ, the situation with Achilles is more complex and not straight-forward. We have no clearly defined literary or visual proof of Achilles as a moral or ethical example for Christian followers during this early period. While there has been a suggestion that this quintessential epic hero may have represented the idea of immortality, there is no literary or visual proof that he was seen in this way. This is in contrast to Odysseus and Theseus who, because of their visits to the Underworld and return to earth, were accepted by Early Christians as prime symbols of eternal life. During the third century when the Early Christian Fathers were referencing their classical education for examples of mythological heroes who could be used in Christian allegories, they were not interested in Achilles. This study will show that Achilles was too integrated into the Roman psyche as the ideal Homeric hero intimately connected to a pagan

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438 Ibid., 11-13.

funerary cult of the third century to be considered an appropriate model. Instead, during the fifth century, Achilles was more suited as a secular hero, as a model of Romanatis, a representative of the mos maioorum, and the ideal warrior.

**Christian Iconography in the *Ambrosian Iliad***

As demonstrated previously, the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s patron/viewer understood Homer’s *Iliad* in specifically Late Antique Roman terms. The fifth-century viewer saw himself in many of the images as Homer’s heroes participated in activities that were an essential part of Late Antique aristocratic society. The majority of the aristocrats in the fifth-century were Christian, however, and their self-identity was also shaped by their religious beliefs. Thus, the fifth-century elite viewer’s reception of imagery was conditioned by both secular and religious influences. Examples of this are seen in two narratives in the *Ambrosian Iliad*, the banquet and the circus.440

The *Ambrosian Iliad* depicts the chariot race during Patroclus’ funerary games in Miniature LV (fig. 4.1 and fig. 4.2). As discussed in Chapter Four, this image of the circus is replete with Roman iconography, most notably through references to the four circus factions. In the west, the circus’ popularity reached its height during the fifth century, concurrent with the banning of paganism and the triumph of Christianity.441 The Early Christian Fathers rarely addressed the circus specifically, which is astonishing considering that it played a major part in Roman life. Initially, they seemed more concerned about pagan activities involved in public entertainment, such as the gladiatorial games. For instance, in his treatise entitled, *De

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441 Barbara Schrodt, “Sports of the Byzantine Empire,” *Journal of Sport History* 8, no. 3 (Winter 1981): 41. Without direct imperial connections and through pressure from the Christian church, the circus slowly died out during the sixth and seventh centuries in the west. See also David S. Potter, “Entertainers in the Roman Empire,” in *Life, Death, and Entertainment in the Roman Empire*, eds. David Stone Potter and D. Mattingly (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 303. Cameron suggests that because of the barbarian threats and problems with its frontiers, the State could no longer afford to subsidize the games. Cameron, *Porphyrius*, 252-58. In the East, where the emperor resided, and the games became an integral part of court ritual, the popularity of the circus games lasted until well into the twelfth century. Schrodt, “Sports,” 41. Also Cameron, *Circus*, 308.
spectaculis, the second-century Christian author, Tertullian (ca. 160–ca. 240), instructed his readers to avoid the games since they were hotbeds of pagan idolatry.\footnote{Tertullian, De spectaculis, trans. T. R. Glover (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), chap. 3. Although Tertullian concedes that the Bible does not specifically state as law that “Thou shalt not enter circus or theatre, thou shalt not look on combat or show,” he does point out that the Ten Commandments “plainly” refer to the prohibition that, “Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not worship an idol, thou shalt not commit adultery or fraud.” [Hac conscientia instructi adversus opinionem ethnicorum convertamur magis ad nostrorum detractatus. Quorum enim fides aut simplicior aut scrupulosior ad hanc abdicationem spectaculorum de scripturis auctoritatem exposcit et se in incertum constituit, quod non significanter neque nominatim denuntietur servis dei abstinentia eiusmodi. Plane nusquam invenimus, quemadmodum aperte posuitm est: ‘non occides, non idolum coles, non adulterium, non fraudem admittes,’ ita exerxe definitum: non ibis in circum, non in theatrum, agonem, munus non spectabis.]

After the second century, Christian writers virtually ignored the chariot races, preferring, instead, to continue arguing against blood sports, in particular, the gladiatorial games. Since the chariot race was not a blood sport, Christians seem to have been less concerned by the games in the hippodromes.\footnote{Potter, “Entertainers,” 302.} Instead, as Roman citizens, they were well aware of the victory symbolism that pervaded the games and adopted one of its most visually prominent icons, the palm branch, to represent Christ’s victory over death. To the Christians, the symbol was a reference to the palm fronds waved at Jesus as he entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.\footnote{Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq, Dictionnaire d’archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1907-1953), vol. 13, col. 947-962. Jesus was sometimes flanked by palm trees as a reference to his triumph over death, for example, the apse of SS. Cosmas and Damian (ca. 526-530) in Rome. Jensen, Understanding Early Christian Art, 100 and 109.} As the “palm of martyrs,” it was mentioned in hagiographies of early saints as a symbol of martyrdom, and martyrs were often shown holding palm branches in Early Christian churches.\footnote{See Cabrol and Leclercq, Dictionnaire, vol. 13, col. 947-948 for the palm frond as a martyr’s symbol. The mosaic of the north wall of S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna (ca. 500 and ca 561), depicts twenty two female saints flanked by palm trees to identify them as martyrs. John Lowden, Early Christian and Byzantine Art (London: Phaidon, 1998), 71-72.} The circus and, in particular, the victory scene was a popular one on mosaics in private villas until at least the sixth century.\footnote{Katherine Dunbabin, “The Victorious Charioteer on Mosaics and Related Monuments,” American Journal of Archaeology 86 (1982): 86. For examples of mosaics that show palms used in victory see the Silin Mosaic (late second-early third century) in Humphrey, Roman Circuses, fig. 107; the mosaic of Greek charioteers from Carthage (late fourth century) in Humphrey, Roman Circuses, fig. 111; The Piazza Armerina mosaic (fourth century) in Humphrey, Roman Circuses, fig. 114; and the circus mosaic from Gafsa (late fifth or early sixth century) in Humphrey, Roman Circuses, fig. 72. Other works of art that depicted victorious circus imagery include a fourth century-terracotta mould from the British Museum (now lost) Humphrey, Roman Circuses, fig. 125.}

Although the circus imagery in the Ambrosian Iliad does not include palm fronds, it still
could have conveyed the concept of victory to Christian viewers. In the *Ambrosian Iliad’s* depiction of the circus, the artist chose to show all of the victorious charioteers with their prizes instead of one winner receiving a palm. The image of the victorious charioteer was a popular one on mosaics and other objects in the aristocratic home. Often, circus imagery depicted all victorious charioteers from the four factions in the same space. This type of composition, where no one charioteer is favored over the other, emphasizes the larger concept of the auspicious character of victory. The hippodrome was a popular public venue used by the Church to impress the attendees of Christianity’s victory over paganism, as well as to underscore the emperor’s god-given right to rule. For example, in the hippodrome in Constantinople, the emperor made the sign of the Cross, the crowd sang hymns, and the victorious charioteers gave thanks to their churches. As Peter Brown explains, Late Antique victory imagery was a way for the Christians to participate “in a greater, more exuberant order” where “church and circus were joined through common imaginative structures.”

The second possibly Christian theme in the *Ambrosian Iliad* is the Banquet Scene of the Gods (Miniature X) (fig. 4.3 and fig. 4.4). In a scene reminiscent of Last Supper depictions, the highest figure is seated in the place of honor in the center and a chalice is being offered to the participants. The deities are pictured in such a way that viewers would have been reminded of their Christian traditions and the very foundation on which their church rested, the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. It was at this communal meal that Christ instructed his followers to “eat and drink in remembrance of me.” Other shared meals which were popular subjects in Early Christian art included the heavenly banquet (celestial *convivium*), funerary meal

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447 Cameron, *Circus*, 152.

448 See Chapter Four for a description of each charioteer and his prize.


450 Ibid.,” 83.


452 Corinthians 11:23-26. “For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me. For whenever you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.’” See also Mark 14, Matthew 26, Luke 22, and John 13.
(refrigeria), or the fraternal meal (agape). The communal meal was such an integral part of Christian ideology that Jesus spoke of it as taking place in the afterlife as a heavenly banquet, or celestial convivium, “And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

An example of the convivium in Early Christian art can be seen in the fourth-century Roman tomb of Vibia, in the Roman catacombs of Domitilla (fig. 5.1). Here the deceased, Vibia, is led by an angel to the heavenly banquet where participants sit around a sigma in a Late Antique dining format. Often, the banqueting scenes in the catacombs referred to funerary banquets, or refrigeria, that were celebrated by Christians at the burial sites. The funerary meal to commemorate the deceased was inherited from traditional ancient practices and was popular through the Late Antique period. The depictions of refrigeria are not as easy to discern as the convivium, which include references to the afterlife, as seen in the painting of Vibia. The banquet images in the catacombs are most often depicted as communal meals that could have been held in anyone’s home. There is no overt Christian iconography or inscriptions to identify the specific nature of the banqueting scenes. Because of the funerary context, scholars often suggest that the banquets are refrigeria. These images, however, could have also depicted the communal meal that was often given as charity to widows and orphans, the agape.

In the first and second centuries, the agape was a popular fraternal meal that occurred after the worship service. Agape contained a dual meaning to Christians: as a translation from

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456 In a letter to Trajan (98-117), Pliny the Younger (ca. 61-ca. 112) describes this Christian custom. Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, trans. Betty Radice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 10.96.7. “After this ceremony it had been their custom to disperse and reassemble later to take food of an ordinary, harmless kind.” [Quibus peractis morem sibi discedendi fuisse rursusque coeundi ad capiendum cibum, promiscuum tamen et innoxium.]
the Greek, it represented a spiritual love and it was also used in conjunction with a communal meal, in which it was believed that through the act of charity, love was present as it emanated from Jesus and/or God. Since its inception, Christian authors complained about the occasional abuse of the *agape*, when diners would overindulge and get drunk. In the late fourth century, Augustine of Hippo (354-430) objected to these meals pointing out that they were not a proper celebration as compared to the Eucharist: “Are we to put up with it in the disgraceful debauchery of private life and of those festivities that are confined to private houses, and receive the Body of Christ in the company of those with whom we are forbidden to eat bread? At least let such a disgraceful practice be removed from the cemeteries where the bodies of saints are laid, and from the place where the sacraments are celebrated, and from the house of prayer.” Possibly due to the concerns voiced by the Christian fathers, after the fourth century the *agape* was rarely practiced. The Church was still concerned enough about possible abuses, however, that synods in the fifth and sixth centuries discouraged its use.

An example of a banqueting scene (end of 3rd–early 4th c.) from the Catacomb of Peter and Marcellinus may reference a *refrigeria* or an *agape* (fig. 5.2). Here, the inscription above the banqueteers instructs the female servant, who is named Agape, to “mix the wine.” Other banqueting scenes in this catacomb refer to two females named Irene and Agape, or peace and love respectively. There has been much discussion concerning the nature of these inscriptions, with some thought that the female figures may be allegorical. Since the owners of this catacomb were Christian, it has been assumed that the banqueting images in their catacomb have Christian meaning.

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460 For a discussion of the Irene and Agape inscriptions, see Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet*, 180-182.

461 There are seventeen banqueting scenes in the Catacomb of Peter and Marcellinus. For a discussion of the overall banqueting theme as represented in this catacomb, see Dunbabin, *Roman Banquet*, 177-187.
By the fifth and sixth centuries, the images of banqueting as they related to Christianity were much less ambiguous. In place of depictions of the *agape* and the *refrigeria*, the Last Supper is clearly shown as the image in the *St. Augustine Gospels*.\(^{462}\) Originating in Italy, it is generally accepted that the manuscript was sent to England by Pope Gregory I (590-604) at the end of the sixth century as a gift to King Ethelbert of Kent (552-616). The messenger, Augustine of Canterbury (d. 604), is credited with leading the missionary effort in England at the time.\(^{463}\) The manuscript depicts various scenes from the life of Christ within rectangular frames bordered in red. Instead of a generalized group of banqueteers, the participants are clearly Jesus and his disciples. The halo identifies Christ, who offers bread in his left hand and holds his right hand in the gesture of blessing. A chalice sits in front of him, as well as the Passover lamb, as if to underscore the subject of the Eucharistic table. Above the image is inscribed: *Cena Domini*.

During the fifth century, the viewing of the banquet scene in the *Ambrosian Iliad* would have had multivalence, with both pagan and Christian resonance referencing Homer and the New Testament. An example of the Early Christians’ ease with combining both worlds can be found in Early Christian texts in which authors would display their *paideia* while exploring Christian theology. For instance, the fourth-century Christian author Methodius of Olympus (d. 311) used a passage from the *Iliad’s* Banquet of the Gods when recounting a conversation with a friend about a banquet that he had attended. Methodius’ friend asks him to describe what he ate and

\(^{462}\) *St. Augustine Gospels*, 6th c. (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, cod. 286), fol. x. For this image of the “Last Supper” see Lowden, “The Beginnings,” color plate IV.

For a complete description of the manuscript and an extensive bibliography see, the *Index of Christian Art*, http://p8991-icadb.princeton.edu.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/F/XPUGQAH1UMMEHLC5ML4NUBE82A6TJXH6J8MUKB67L5MYIGEULJ-02483?func=full-set-set&set_number=281919&set_entry=000001&format=999

how he served the wine by quoting from the *Iliad*: “They in golden goblets each other pledged, gazing upon the broad heavens.” The remainder of the treatise describes in great detail the exegetical discussions during the banquet on such subjects as Christian celibacy, freedom of will, and the divinity of Christ. In Methodius’ description of a banquet, we have an example of the melding of Roman traditions of *paideia*, as represented by his reference to a Homeric passage, with Christian exegetical discussions, as the characters explored the meaning of their religious beliefs. I propose that, like Methodius’ narrative, the fifth-century viewers of the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s banquet scenes would have had the same comfort level in applying their skills, acquired through *paideia*, to a Christian subject. The similarity of the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s Homeric Banquet of the Gods scene to established scenes of the Christian communal meal could have prompted an exegetical discussion of the Last Supper. Thus, the *Ambrosian Iliad* imagery provided a platform for the weaving of Church doctrine and Roman traditions through the display of *paideia*.

In his passage from the *Hexameron*, Ambrose (ca. 340-397) encapsulates the duality of living in the late fourth and fifth centuries. In this one passage, he uses the circus as an analogy for the Christian Church and displays his *paideia* by referring to Vergil. Ambrose begins the exegetical exercise by using a passage from the *Aeneid* to compare ships at sea to the chariots at the circus. This opening sets up an exegetical exercise that compares the voyage of cargo ships to salvation through Christ. He explains that a cargo ship with nothing in its hold “has no purpose.” Just as a person who does not believe in Christ is empty without purpose, belief in salvation will fill the soul and provide a purpose. As a symbol of victory over death, the boat protected its occupants from the deadly sea and returned them safely to port. Ambrose continues his analogy by comparing a fleet of cargo boats to chariots in the circus. As one of the few Early Fathers who comments negatively about the circus, Ambrose claims that, unlike the ships who receive “the palm waves in token of a prosperous journey” the victors of the chariot race receive

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*Methodius, The Symposium*, trans. Herbert Musurillo (New York: Newman Press, 1958), Prelude, 4. Methodius’ reference is the passage from the *Iliad*, 4.1-3 (trans. Rodney Merrill). “Now the gods, seated by the side of Zeus, were holding assembly on the golden floor, and in their midst the queenly Hebe poured them nectar, and they with golden goblets pledged one the other as they looked forth upon the city of the Trojans.” [οἱ δὲ θεοί πάρ Ζηνὶ καθήμενοι ήγορόντων χρυσῷ ἐν δαπέδῳ, μετὰ δὲ σφυῖ πότνια Ἡβῃ νέκταρ ἐφιοιχθείς τοῖ δὲ χρυσοῖς δεπάσσει δειδέχιτω ἄλλοις, Τρώων πόλιν εἰςορόντες.]
only empty praise. This passage encapsulates the concepts concerning the Late Antique Christian viewer that have been introduced in this chapter: the use of contemporary image (the circus) with *paideia* (the quote from the *Aeneid*) to further Christian exegetical discourse.\(^{465}\)

**Achilles in the Fifth Century – Prototype for the Christian Hero?**

I have established that the ongoing process of self-definition for Late Antique aristocrats included the protection of the *mos maiorum* and the continuation of their forefathers’ Roman Empire. These same viewers, however, also perceived their world in Christian terms. Perhaps in no other time period do we see the extent of the interrelation of these two aspects of their lives as we do in the fifth century. It is not surprising, then, that their art reflects the assimilation of religious and secular ideas and imagery. In this part of the chapter, I will investigate whether or not the fifth-century viewer interpreted the heroic imagery of the *Ambrosian Iliad* in the same

\(^{465}\) Ambrose (ca. 340-397), *Hexameron*, trans. John J. Savage (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1961), 5.11.34-35. “Moreover, there is additional delight in the roar of the resounding billows, in the sight of ships flitting to shore or sailing out to sea. ‘Even as when from the barriers the chariots stream forth.’ (Virgil, *Georgics* 1.512) – what an occasion for delight and enthusiasm on the part of the spectators! Yet, in contrast to the ships of commerce, the steed runs to no purpose. The latter, because devoid of cargo, runs in vain. The other has its hold filled with sustenance for men. What more splendid thing can there be than a ship? If it does but make port, then there are no defeated. There are only wreaths for ships that make a landfall in safety. Then the palm waves in token of a prosperous journey. Victory is no more than the harbinger of return. One shows a cautious pace. The other is affected by the urge to make the goal. Add to this the sight of the shore with its line of boats awaiting a breeze from the skies as a signal for the start. Whereas the charioteer at the conclusion of his race is granted mere empty applause, the boat man take part in giving thanks for their safe return. How shall I adequately speak of Jonas, whom the whale swallowed to grant him life and to return him to his activity as a prophet? The water restored to him the understanding which the earth had taken away. He who grieved when on land began to sing psalms in the belly of the whale. Again, the redemption of both elements is not lost sight of. The salvation of the earth had its forerunner in the sea, because the marvelous act of Jonas stands for that of the Son of Man. As Jesus lay ‘in the heart of the earth,’ (Matt. 12.39) so was Jonas in the whale’ belly. There is salvation in both elements.” [Adde pisces salientes et delphins ludentes, ade rauco sonantes fluctus murmure, adice currentes naues ad litora uel de litoribus exeuntes. Et cum e carceribus emittuntur quadriae, quanto studio spectantum et amore certatur! Equus tamen in uanum currit, non in uanum nauiga: ille in uanum, quia uacuus, ista ad utilitatem quasi plena frumenti. Quid his gratius quae non uerbere aguntur, sed uentorum spiramine, ubi nemo refragator, sed omnes fautores sunt, ubi nemo uincit quicumque peruenerit sed omnes puppes, quae peruectae fuerint, coronantur, ubi palm ameres salutis, victoria pretium regressionis est. Quantum enim distat inter directos cursus ac reflexos! Iste perpetuantur, hi resoluntur. Adiunge remigiis contexta litora, quibus uexillum exeundi arua de caelo est. Itaque aurigae plausum inanem referent, hi soluunt uota seruati. Quid de Iona dignum loquant, quem cetus exceptit ad uitam, reddid ad prophetandi gratiam? Emendauit aqua quem terrene deflexerant. Psallebat in uerbo et quia maerebat in terres et, ut utuisque redemption non praeterenatur elementi, terrarum salus in mari ante praecessit quia signum filii hominis signum Ionaec. Sicut iste in uero ceti, sic Iesus in corde terrae. In utroque remedium, maius tamen in mari pietatis exemplu, quoniam exceperunt pisces quem homines refutarunt et quem homines crucifixerunt pisces seruauerunt.]
way, in both Christian and secular terms. Based on literary and visual evidence, I will show that the image of Achilles in the *Ambrosian Iliad* did not have multivalent meaning to the Christian fifth-century viewer, but that he was viewed only as a secular hero. I will propose that Achilles was not considered suitable as an exemplar of Christian ideas. In the earliest patristic literature of the second through third centuries, when the Early Christian Fathers were referencing the classical world for models, they did not use mythological heroes, like Achilles, who had strong cultic connections. Instead, as shown previously in this study, Achilles was intimately associated with the Roman values of *virtus* and *mos maierorum* as demonstrated by the practice of *paideia*.

The fifth-century elite actively collected and surrounded themselves with imagery depicting the early life of Achilles, especially regarding the acquisition of skills needed to be a great warrior. During a time of upheaval and uncertainty, the fifth-century viewer of the *Ambrosian Iliad* would have related to Achilles as a strong military hero who represented the best of their civilized world as they faced the barbarians who were attempting to destroy it.

When reviewing extant Late Antique art, there is no concrete evidence that Achilles was viewed in a Christian manner. In spite of this, there have been a few attempts to identify Achilles as a Christian hero by analyzing two objects that may link the Homeric hero to Christianity. The first is a gold-glass disc from the fourth century with an inscription on the upper band of a diagonal S and a CILLIS (fig. 5.3). Here, in a very popular narrative, Achilles is shown with the daughters of Lycomedes. On his right, one daughter, Deidamia, crowns him with a wreath, a popular Roman symbol for victory, while another daughter grasps his left arm. The discovery of Achilles at Skyros represents the crucial point when Achilles

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466 Achilles had long been a popular hero on the Italian peninsula, including his prevalence in Etruscan art. The precedents for Achilles imagery in Italy is a valid one, but not in the purvue of this study.


Since many of these objects have unfinished edges, there has much disagreement concerning the origin of these objects. Explanations have included: the movement of bodies in Late Antiquity through the narrow passageways resulted in breaking off bottles that were embedded in the mortar; the bottles were broken off during the eighteenth-century excavations; and, since they were to be imbedded in the mortar, it didn’t matter if their edges were finished. For further information on these theories, many of which are from the eighteenth century, see Donald B. Harden, David Whitehouse, K. S. Painter, and Hansgerd Hellenkemper, *Glass of the Caesars* (Milan: Olivetti, 1987), 265-266.
chooses his fate by going to Troy. Thus, we see the moment when a hero is born; this is recognized by the daughters of King Lycomedes whose actions foretell of Achilles’ victorious and tragic future in which he will achieve immortality. Since other gold-glass discs were often found in connection with Christian burial sites, Malcolm Bell has suggested a Christian context for this piece. He reasons that since the theme of Achilles on Skyros represented immortality on second and third century pagan sarcophagi, this example of the popular subject must follow as a reference to the afterlife. The evidence here is not conclusive. The gold-glass disc of Achilles does not contain any specific Christian iconography or references. Also, we do not have proof that the image of Achilles on Skyros was a popular one for Christians. The sarcophagi that Bell refers to do not have any Christian symbols or inscriptions on them. Since they were created in the second through third centuries, they may very well have been pagan burials. In the final analysis, these discs may have been no more than tokens of wealth buried with their aristocratic Christian owners.

Another example of Late Antique Achilles imagery that has been studied for possible Christian connotations of rebirth is a fourth-century textile of Thetis and Achilles at the forge of Hephaestus (fig. 5.4). Since many of these extant Coptic textiles have been found in a funerary context, it has been suggested that the narratives embroidered on them contain references to the afterlife. As Malcolm Bell suggests, “like Achilles the dead person will achieve immortality.” Susanne Lewis argues for the afterlife based on the clipeus in the tree in the background which was a symbol for both pagans and Christians of the afterlife. She also suggests that the purpose of this scene was to show Thetis granting immortality to Achilles. Like


470 Bell, “Textile with Thetis at the Forge of Hephaestus,” 221-222, no. 198.

the gold-glass disc of Achilles, the fourth-century textile of Thetis and Achilles at the forge of Hephaestus contains no obvious Christian references. In fact, there is some doubt that these figures even represent Thetis and Achilles. Moreover, there is no patristic literature that refers to this story.

The lack of visual evidence that connects Achilles to Christianity supports the fact that third-century Early Christian Fathers did not establish Achilles as a suitable exemplar for Christian ideas. I propose that Achilles’ prevalent image on third-century pagan funerary sarcophagi made it difficult to easily include him in Early Christian exegetical discourse.

In previous chapters, I have shown that since the early days of the Republic, the Iliad was a very popular story. In fact, it was so popular that the Romans translated the Iliad into Latin and supplemented it with other stories about Achilles childhood. Achilles’ image and depictions of his stories were popular in Roman art throughout the Republican and Imperial periods. I have also discussed the Roman aristocrats’ adoption of the Greek system of paideia, in which Achilles was an integral part of lessons learned during their education. We must not forget that the Early Christian Fathers were, for the most part, aristocrats who had received this education, and we can

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472 Susanne Lewis, “A Coptic Representation of Thetis at the Forge of Hephaistos,” American Journal of Archaeology 77, no 3 (July 1973): 309-318, esp. 317. In his response to this article, E. J. Dwyer disputes Lewis’ argument by pointing out that the iconography in this scene actually points to Attis, Hephaistos, and Aphrodite. E. J. Dwyer, “Narrative and Allegory in a Coptic Textile,” American Journal of Archaeology 78 (1974): 295-297. It is hard to tell the right conclusion since there are no obvious attributes that could conclusively identify the characters in this image.


Other cultic sites included Kroton in southern Italy, Lakonia and Elis in the Peloponnese, Astypalaia in the Cyclades, and Erythrai in Asia Minor. Dobiat and Leidorf, The Cult of Achilles, 313.

As late as the fourth century, the aristocrat Ausonius (ca. 310-ca. 394) wrote an epitaph for Achilles that mentions this cultic location, “Not one the land which holds the son of Aeacus: his bones are buried on the Sigean shore, and at Larissa were his tresses burned. Part of him lies hidden in the tomb, part was born home by the fleet; but in the whole world Homer shall show him living once again.” [Non una Aeaciden tellus habet: ossa teguntur liore Sigeo, crinem Larisa cremavit. pars tumulis (secreta iacet, pars) classe (relata est;) orbe set in toto (redivivum ostendet Homerus.] Ausonius, Ausonius, 6.4.7-10 (trans. Hugh G. Evelyn White).
see in their writings the impulse to continue to use Homer as evidence of their *paideia*. As a result, the patristic authors approach Achilles in a way that illustrates the dichotomy of this heroic figure for the Christians. On one hand, Achilles represented the evils of following paganism and is held as a bad moral example. For instance, the first-century apologist Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165) included Achilles in a long list of mythological figures and deities who represented paganism. Later, during the late fourth into the early fifth centuries, Christian writers referred to Achilles as a poor hero. John Chrysostom (ca. 354-407) used Achilles as an exemplar of how children should not act, noting, “For theirs is an age full of folly; and to this folly are superadded the bad examples derived from heathen tales, where they are made acquainted with those heroes so admired amongst them, slaves of their passions, and cowards with regard to death; as, for example, Achilles, when he relents, when he dies for his concubine, when another gets drunk, and many other things of the sort.” Conversely, he represented the best of the elite as representatives of the *mos maiorum* and the Homeric stories were often used in patristic writing. Christian authors often referred to the *Iliad* as a display of *paideia* when exploring Christian theology. The fourth-century Christian author, Methodius of Olympus (d. 311), used a reference to the *Iliad’s* Banquet of the Gods when recounting a conversation with a friend. As a result, the Early Christian Fathers must have felt that Achilles was a secular figure who was much too pagan and violent to make the transition to Christianity. During this

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474 Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165), *The First Apology*, trans. Leslie William Barnard (New York: Christian Heritage, 1949), chapt. 25. “And, secondly, because we – who, out of every race of men, used to worship Bacchus the son of Semele, and Apollo the son of Latona (who in their loves with men did such things as it is shameful even to mention), and Proserpine and Venus (who were maddened with love of Adonis, and whose mysteries also you celebrate, or Aesculapius, or someone or other of those who are called gods – have now, through Jesus Christ, learned to despise these, though we be threatened with death for it, and have dedicated ourselves to the unbegotten and impossible God; of whom we are persuaded that never was he goaded by lust of Antiope, or such other women, or of Ganymede, nor was rescued by that hundred-handed giant whose aid was obtained through Thetis, nor was anxious on this account that her son Achilles should destroy man of the Greeks because of his concubine Briseis. Those who believe these things we pity, and those we invented them we know to be devils.”


477 See Chapter Five.
same time, Achilles’ image as a pagan figure was intensified through the predominant use of his image on funerary sarcophagi.

Heroic imagery was a very popular subject in Roman art throughout its history, but it was during the second and third centuries that it was used in a funerary context. During this time period, Roman funerary practice had changed dramatically as Romans began inhuming their deceased. It is possible that this practice may have come about from an increased interest in the afterlife and salvation as a result of mystery cults and Christianity. At the same time, marble from the East became abundantly available. Thus was born, over the course of just one hundred years, a mania among the elite for inhumation in expensively carved marble sarcophagi. During the mid-second to mid-third centuries, in particular, stories of mythological heroes were the preferred subjects of the sarcophagi’s elaborate decorations. Achilles, in particular, was an overwhelming choice for subject matter during this time period. The most popular subjects were Achilles and the Daughters of Lycomedes and Achilles and Penthesileia. Richard Brilliant suggests that the images of Achilles on sarcophagi provided a means for their occupants to be honored in the same way as the Homeric hero. Moreover, he maintains that Achilles represented a “hope for life after death” since his divine mother, Thetis, took him to the afterlife. As a result,

478 Anna Marguerite McCann, Roman Sarcophagi in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York: The Museum, 1978), 20. McCann proposes that the mythological scenes carved on Roman sarcophagi may have been references to the afterlife since their stories often dealt with life and death. McCann, Roman Sarcophagi, 21. Paul Zanker and Björn Christian Ewald’s in their 2004 work, Mit Mythen leben: die Bilderwelt der römischen Sarkophage, suggest that the scenes may have been selected to reference specific aspects of the deceased’s life, much like a funerary oration. Jean-Paul Vernant suggests a sarcophagus decorated with the image of a mythological hero who dies young, “embodies” the hero’s the virtues of “beauty, youth, virility and courage. Jean-Pierre Vernant, “Death with Two Faces,” in Mortality and Immortality: The Anthropology and Archaeology of Death, eds. S. C. Humphreys and H. King, trans. J. Lloyd (London: Academic Press, 1981), 286.

479 Stories of Achilles and the daughters of Lycomedes and of Achilles and Penthesilea were the most popular. The following analysis of the examples from the LIMC shows the breakdown of subjects with corresponding LIMC entries:

| 27 Sarcophagi: | Achilles and Penthesilea (LIMC 1:757-783) |
| 20 Sarcophagi: | Achilles Dragging Hector’s Body (LIMC 1:618-631) |
| 18 Sarcophagi: | Priam Begging for Hector’s Body (LIMC 1:690-709) |
| 4 Sarcophagi: | Achilles Childhood with Chiron (LIMC 1:61-62; LIMC 1:78; LIMC 1:82) |
| 2 Sarcophagi: | Thetis Dipping Achilles into the Styx (LIMC 1:8-9) |
| 2 Sarcophagi: | Duel between Achilles and Hector (LIMC 1:576-577) |
| 1 Sarcophagus: | Death of Achilles (LIMC 1:858) |
| 1 Sarcophagus: | Thetis Gives Weapons to Achilles (LIMC 1:541) |
Brilliant argues that Achilles, “appears in the guise of a hero of romance who is analogous to the mythical Messiah or deliverer who comes from an upper world, and his enemy is analogous to the demonic powers of the lower world.”

I do not see how Achilles can be associated with a Messianic figure since there is nothing in his stories that suggest that he represented salvation or the afterlife. Instead, Achilles chooses a short life with glory, so he actually embraces death. Unlike other mythological heroes, like Hercules, Odysseus, and Theseus, he never goes to the Underworld and returns. Calling Achilles a Messiah-type figure overstates his role in the Roman belief system. I would suggest that Achilles’ image in a funerary context relates more to choices that he makes that will fulfill his ultimate destiny: to die a young glorified death. It is in this way that he represents immortality, but not the Afterlife.

Achilles was not the only mythological hero who did not make the transition from a pagan hero to a Christian one: Hercules was not chosen either. At first glance, it is unexpected

\[\text{Brilliant}, \text{Visual, 135. For his entire argument, see 134-145.}\]

\[\text{I will be discussing this point later in this chapter.}\]

\[\text{An argument has been made that Hercules was, indeed, a hero who had been adopted by the Christians. Like the evidence for Achilles as a Christian hero, the evidence is not conclusive. For the Christian viewpoint, see Huskinson, “Some Pagan Mythological,” 68-97; Goodenough, “Catacomb Art,” esp. 125-126. For Hercules, see André Grabar, \text{The Beginnings of Christian Art, 200-395}, trans. Stuart Gilbert and James Emmons (London: Thames and Hudson, 1966), 225-236 and Grabar, \text{Christian Iconography}, 15. For a viewpoint that discounts the Christian theory, see Marcel Simon, \text{Hercule et le christianisme} (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1955), 333-335 and Antonio Ferrua, \text{Le Piture della nuova catacomba di Via Latina} (Vatican City, 1960), 94. Following is a brief review of two the objects dated before the fifth century, that have been used to argue for Hercules in a Christian context.}\]

\text{Hercules Leading Alcetis from the Underworld, in the Via Latina Catacomb.} This multi-roomed catacomb contained biblical iconography in all the rooms save one, Room N, which displays only images of Hercules. Of particular interest is a depiction of Hercules leading Alcestis from the Underworld to her husband Admetus. Although this theme was not an unusual one in mythological stories, it is notable that this purely pagan reference to rebirth appears in a tomb that has Christian iconography, especially considering that there are no patristic texts that refer to this story. Since it was not unusual during this period to have mixed burials in one family, it is possible that Chamber N was intended for a pagan burial. \text{LIMC} 6:24, s.v. “Hercules.” See also, Ferrua, \text{Le Piture}, 78; William Tronzo, \text{The Via Latina Catacomb: Imitation and Discontinuity in Fourth-Century Roman Painting} (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986); Elsner, \text{Art and the Roman Viewer}, 278; Bell, “Hercules,” Age of Spirituality. Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century: Catalogue of the Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, November 19, 1977 through February 12, 1978, ed. Kurt Weitzmann (New York: The Museum, 1979), 242-243, no. 219; Simon, \text{Hercule}; Grabar, \text{Christian Iconography}, 15; Huskinson, “Some Pagan Mythological,” 68-97; Goodenough, “Catacomb Art,” 113-142, esp. 125-126 for Hercules; Berg, “Alcestis,” 219-234, esp. 219.

\text{Gold-Glass Disc} (fourth century), from the British Museum. A fourth-century aristocratic couple flanks a small image of Hercules carrying the apples of Hesperides. The inscription reads: \text{ORFITVS.ET CONSTANTIA.IN NOMINE HERCVLIS}” (In the double border)

\text{“ACERENTINO FELICES BIBATIS”}” (in the field)
that Hercules was not an appropriate candidate for representing Christian ideas. Unlike Achilles, Hercules’ stories contained specific references that could have been easily read by the Christian Fathers as references to the Afterlife and redemption. Hercules had two successful trips to the Underworld: to rescue Alcestis and, as his Twelfth Labor, to bring back Cerberus, the guardian of the Underworld.

I would propose, however, that like Achilles, Hercules was too intimately connected to paganism to make the successful transition to Christianity. First, Hercules was entrenched in Roman culture as a very popular hero. He enjoyed a cultic following that began in the sixth century BCE when the Romans conflated Hercules with their foundation stories. Romans continued to honor Hercules throughout their history by dedicating temples and celebrating festivals in his honor. Roman aristocratic families, including the Sulpicii and the Pinarii, claimed descent from this great hero. Second, like Achilles, Hercules was a popular subject on third-century marble sarcophagi, especially scenes of his Labors. Because of its connection to immortality, the twelfth labor of Hercules and Cerberus are often shown individually on strigillated sarcophagi. The most common image is of Hercules approaching Cerberus, who is shown near his cave at the entrance to Hades. The open entrance has multiple meanings as

The argument for a Christian attribution concerns the format of the inscription which mirrors the traditional Christian phrase, “in nomine Jesu.” For a complete bibliography, see Buckton, Byzantium, 31-32. For supporting views, see Buckton, Byzantium, 31-32: “The most convincing reading of the inscription is” Orfus et Constantia. In nomine Herculis Acretini felices vivatis” Also O. M. Dalton, Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities in the British Museum (London: British Museum, 1901), 119, no. 608 and pl. XXIX; Ernst Kitzinger, Early Medieval Art in the British Museum (London: British Museum, 1955), 4 and pl. V; and Morey, The Gold-Glass Collection, vol. 3, 54 for text; vol. 4, Plate XXIX. For a dissenting view, see Cabrol and Leclercq, Dictionnaire, vol. 16, col. 2250 and fig. 5666 who calls this theory “pure fantasy.”

483 The Romans believed that Hercules defeated the monster Cacus in a cave under the Palatine Hill. (Vergil, Aeneid 8.19). Roman legend told of how the monster Cacus was a menace in the area around the Palatine Hill. Hercules encountered the Cacus while driving a herd of cattle from the far west. After the monster stole two of his cows, Hercules killed him in under the Palatine Hill. This area became known as the Cattlemarket (Forum Boarium) and, sometime around 530 BCE, a terracotta statue group of Hercules and Athena was installed in the temple at its north side. T. P. Wiseman, The Myths of Rome (Exeter, University of Exeter Press, 2004), 28-29.

484 For his twelfth labor, Hercules was sent to the entrance of the Underworld to deliver its guardian, the multi-headed canine Cerberus, to Eurystheus. For a discussion of the ancient sources and bibliography for this story, see LIMC 85-87, s.v. “Hercules.” See also, McCann, Roman Sarcophagi, 70.

485 Smallwood, “Hercules,” 99. For examples of the twelfth labor, see LIMC 6:1714 and 2648-2652, s.v. “Hercules.”
the door to the tomb and the door through which the soul must go to reach salvation.\footnote{McCann, Roman Sarcophagi, 136.}

If the Early Christians were not attracted to Achilles, it would help to know why by turning our attention to those mythological heroes who did garner their attention, Odysseus and Theseus. In this part of my investigation I will show that, for the Christians, these two heroes were the antithesis of Achilles. They did not have cultic followings, nor were they used extensively on third-century funerary sarcophagi. Also, unlike Achilles, both Odysseus and Theseus brought with them established stories of renewal and salvation. As a result, their stories can be found in patristic literature and on Early Christian objects.\footnote{Many mythological characters could have been addressed in this study, including Aeneas and Orpheus. In this chapter I have chosen to concentrate on those mythological heroes who appeared in Christian theological treatises as compared to Achilles, who was not.}

Late Antique Christian aristocrats admired Homer and his works, especially the \textit{Odyssey}.\footnote{The Christian writer, Cassiodorus (ca. 490-ca. 585) referred to the epic poem as “Homer’s noble song” [Homeri nobile carmen]. Cassiodorus, PL 69 535 A (my translation).} Like many mythological heroes, Odysseus’ traditional stories included a successful visit to the Underworld. Following Circe’s advice, the Homeric hero journeys to Hades to consult with the blind seer, Tiresias, about his future. After making sacrifices which would allow the spirits to speak through the drinking of sacrificial blood, Odysseus interacts with a number of souls, including Agamemnon and Achilles. Odysseus then reemerges from the Underworld and resumes his attempt to return home.\footnote{The story of Odysseus’ trip to the Underworld is extensive. See Homer, \textit{Odyssey}, chap. 11.} After his return from Hades, Odysseus and his men sailed past the island of the Sirens, whose song would lure sailors to their death on the island’s rocky beach. So that he would be immune to their sound, Odysseus had his men lash him to the mast of his ship while they put wax in their ears.\footnote{See Homer, \textit{Odyssey}, chap. 12.}

Only three third-century sarcophagi are listed in the \textit{Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (LIMC)} with Odysseus’ image.\footnote{For examples of these sarcophagi, see \textit{LIMC} 13:175-179, s.v. “Odysseus.”} Each example displays Odysseus’ encounter with the deadly Sirens on their front panels. Since we do not have evidence of
extensive pagan funerary connections, this Homeric figure may have been a safe choice for the Early Christian Fathers. Also, his adventures as he braved the perils of the ocean and the deadly calls of the Sirens provided ample material for Christian exegetical discussion. The perils faced by Odysseus and his crew during their dangerous sea voyage held special meaning for Christians as Early Christian fathers interpreted ships, in general, as symbols of withstanding the strong and stormy seas of sin and temptation. The ship was such a profound symbol that it came to represent the Church as the vehicle by which the Christian could achieve salvation through its helmsman, Jesus Christ. Moreover, Late Antique Christians saw in the story of Odysseus and the Sirens multiple references to Christian theology. The mast of his ship resembled a cross shape, and with Odysseus bound to it, the crucifix. His companions, who stopped up their ears with wax so as not to hear the Sirens, were compared to Christians who were deaf to earthly desires during their spiritual journey to the afterlife. A small fourth-century bronze sculpture from Asia Minor of Odysseus and his ship best exemplifies these ideas (fig. 5.5). In this work, the elements described in the Christian teachings can be seen: the mast is in the shape of a cross; Odysseus is bound to the mast in an image reminiscent of the crucifix; and the helmsman at the back of the ship steers the vessel to safety. Moreover, the addition of a dove at the top of the mast is believed to represent the Holy Spirit guiding the ship and its occupants to its heavenly home.

Stories of renewal and salvation continue with Theseus, King of Athens, whose

492 Paulinus of Nola’s (ca. 353/54-431) analogy compared a successful sea voyage to Christ bringing the soul safely to salvation: “May Christ bring them like vessels laden with his riches into the port of salvation, may he also joyfully place green garlands on these prows that have proved victors over the waves.” [Christus quasi naves suarum onerarias opum deducat in portum salutis, victricibus fluctuum puppibus virides laetus imponat coronas.] Paulinus of Nola, Epistola, 23.30. (trans. Rahner in Greek Myths, 349).

493 Rahner, Greek Myths, 349. See also Yves Bonnefoy, Roman and European Mythologies, trans. under the direction of Wendy Doniger (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 166-168.

494 Jerome (ca. 347 – 420), Apologia adversus libros Rufini, 22.

495 Bell, “Sculpture with Odysseus Bound to the Mast,” 222-223, no. 199 and Huskinson, “Some Pagan Mythological,” 68-97. This object is the only known with Odysseus that includes a specific Christian symbol. Huskinson suggests that, as with much of Early Christian art, pagan art was recycled for a Christian purpose. Thus, the Christian viewers brought their own interpretation to the pagan story. For a list of representations of Odysseus in Early Christian art, see Huskinson, 90.

adventures include a successful visit to Hades where he attempted to help his friend Perithous kidnap Persephone. While in Hades, the two heroes were wined and dined by her husband, Hades. During the course of the meal, they were tied to the chairs of forgetfulness. Theseus was finally rescued by Hercules who was in the Underworld performing his twelfth labor. Unfortunately, poor Perithous was left to spend eternity in Hades. Theseus was most known, however, for destroying the Minotaur in the Cretan labyrinth and saving the Athenian youths left there to be sacrificed. The story of Theseus and the Minotaur have been found on a few extant second- to third-century marble sarcophagi. But based on surviving examples, Theseus, the Minotaur, and the labyrinth seemed to have been more popular in a secular setting in paintings and mosaics.

Theseus did not enjoy a strong cult in the Western Roman Empire, nor was his image used extensively in a funerary context. As a result, like Odysseus, the Early Christian Fathers must have found him a safe source for explaining Christian beliefs. The Christians were especially taken with the story of Theseus and the Minotaur. Theseus becomes a type for Christ when he successfully slays the half bull/half man and leads the youths out of the labyrinth. His accomplishment was compared to Christ’s Harrowing of Hell. Like Theseus entering the labyrinth to slay the monster, Christ descended under the earth to slay the devil through his righteousness. Ariadne’s thread was thought to represent Christ’s Godliness which led the way from original sin to salvation. There is evidence of labyrinths being incorporated into early Christian churches as early as 324 in the Basilica of Saint Reparata in modern-day Algiers (fig.

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498 There were no sarcophagi with this theme listed in the LIMC. However, I know of two extant examples, the Sarcophagus of Gaius Severinus Vitealis (1st half of 2nd c.) in Cologne and the Garland Sarcophagus (140-150) at the Metropolitan Museum in New York.


500 The role of labyrinths in Early Christian philosophy is a complicated one. For an excellent overview of the labyrinth in Early Christianity, see Penelope Reed Doob, *The Idea of the Labyrinth from Classical Antiquity through the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 64-91.

5.6. In a black and white mosaic, the labyrinth is divided into four quadrants with an inscription in the middle that repeats the words SANCTA ECLESIA, or sacred church.

The result of the comparisons between Achilles and other mythological heroes in a Late Antique Christian context confirms that Achilles was not thought of by Early Christian Fathers as a hero who was conducive for Christian allegories. Achilles does not appear as a Christian prototype, nor are there precedents for the image of Achilles in a Christian context. Instead, he continued to be accepted as a strong secular hero who, instead of representing the afterlife, chose a short life of military glory versus a long life without any glory. In fact, the Romans were so fascinated with Achilles and his early life leading up to his fateful decision that they wrote their own version of the Iliad in the first century CE known as the Ilias Latina. As the first known Latin translation of the Iliad, this condensed version left out much of the original story, but added other stories that concentrated on Achilles’ life before Troy, including his time on Skyros. The idea of a short warrior’s life lived in glory resulting in a kind of legendary immortality as espoused in the Iliad is not the same as the resurrection and rebirth in Christian ideology.

Instead, Achilles represented earthly virtus as the ideal of mos maiorum. As suggested in Chapters Three and Four, the Ambrosian Iliad played an important part in reaffirming conservative Roman ideals and traditions. Thus, instead of conveying Christian ideas, I would suggest that Achilles and his stories from the Iliad appealed to aristocratic Christians as

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503 Kern, Through the Labyrinth, 88, nos. 117-118.

504 Homer, Iliad, 9.410-4.16 (trans. by Rodney Merrill). “For my own mother, the goddess Thetis of silvery feet, has told me that twofold fates to my death’s finality bear me; should I remain here fighting against this city of Trojans, lost is my homeward return, but never will perish my glory; should I return back home to the much-loved land of my fathers, lost is my excellent glory, but then long years of a lifetime I will enjoy, nor will death’s finality come to me quickly.” [μὴ ἔχειν γὰρ τῆς ἐμῆς θεᾶς Θήτεις ἀτερόπέτρας ὑγείας κῆρυξ τερέμον θανάτου τέλος δέ. εἰ μὲν θ’ αὐτή μένον Τρόιον πόλιν ᾽Ωμοσκόμοι, ώλετο μέν μοί νόστος. οὐτὶ κλέος ὁφθήνον ἔσται; εἰ δέ κ’ ἐγὼ ὅκωσ᾽ ἰκώμι ϕίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν, ώλετο μοι κλέος ἑσθολον. ἐπὶ δὴ ὡρὸν δέ μοι αἰῶν ἔσταιται, σὺν τε μὲ ὅκα τέλος θανάτου κυρίτη.]

505 Howard W. Clarke, Homer’s Readers – A Historical Introduction to the Iliad and the Odyssey (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1981), 21-23. We do not know the name of the translator. It was also known as the Homerus. Because of its condensed nature, it may have been used as a textbook in the classroom during the Middle Ages.
examples of traditional secular values, especially in the fifth century and the popularity of the stories from Achilles’ early life and education. The images produced in the fifth century of his education would prove to be so powerful that they would later serve as visual prototypes for Christian scenes that were adapted to tell Biblical stories. In a plate from North Africa (ca. 400-430), a surviving fragment suggests that the original dish featured the early life of Achilles (fig. 5.7). Of particular note is the specific scene of Thetis presenting her child Achilles to the centaur Chiron. Achilles is shown as a very young boy who is being led by the hand to his first tutor and mentor. In a similar image from the same time period, Achilles is shown being presented to Chiron on a marble relief from Egypt (fig. 5.8). In a later seventh- or eighth-century bronze plate from North Africa, Achilles is again presented to the centaur by his mother (fig. 5.9). Kurt Weitzmann argued that the topos of the giving over of a youth to a teacher from the Life of Achilles’ images provided a visual prototype for the presentation of Samuel by his mother Hannah in an eleventh-century Book of Kings in the Vatican Library (cod. gr. 333).

The fifth-century viewer of the Ambrosian Iliad recognized in Achilles a strong and powerful secular hero who was far removed from his Christian teachings. Instead, the Homeric hero would have been admired for his strength and courage, both traits proven during his training in paideia during his youth. This training, which was illustrated in detail on many of the objects and decorations that surrounded an aristocrat in the fifth-century, would have provided the needed skills for the ideal warrior. During this time period, when the barbarians were invading the West and the elite were depending on their army to protect them, an image of a highly trained warrior would have carried great resonance for the aristocratic viewer.


The fifth-century aristocrat lived in two worlds. In his secular world, he was bound by tradition. But as a Christian, he was also bound to his faith. Consequently, I propose that his viewpoint was a mutable one in which imagery could have single or multiple significances associated with it. Moreover, when taking into account the context within which an object was viewed, it could be received as having a secular or religious subject, or a combination of both.

The *Ambrosian Iliad* is an excellent example of the constant mediation of meaning and relevance between the Christian viewer and imagery during the fifth century. In other words, the images of the *Ambrosian Iliad* played an important part in the fifth-century aristocrats’ ongoing process of self-definition in a society where their secular and religious worlds were interconnected. The purpose of this chapter has been to establish if the *Ambrosian Iliad* could have had Christian connotations for the fifth-century viewer. To answer this question, I investigated two aspects of the *Ambrosian Iliad* for possible religious meanings: its iconography and the hero Achilles.

When analyzing the iconography of the *Ambrosian Iliad*, there is no clear evidence of Christian symbols or any other specific references to Christianity. One can identify two specific types of narratives, however, that would have resonated with the Christian viewer: the banquet and the circus. For the banqueting scenes, the viewer could have identified with the Last Supper through the application of exegesis. The image of the victory scene at the funerary games for Patroclus was invocative of the hippodrome where, in the fifth century, the Church was ever-present with processions and prayers at the circus games. The victory images that were an integral part of the circus were appropriated by the Church to reference victory over death. As Robin Margaret Jenson has pointed out in discussing earlier Early Christian images, the use of a small variety of images and the consistent reading of their allegories suggest that viewers’ interpretation of the narratives was based on a construct that was a result of shared background and training. I propose that the banquet and circus imagery in the *Ambrosian Iliad* are prime examples of two such constructs that could be read in terms of Christian theology.

The other aspect of the *Ambrosian Iliad* that could have been received as Christian was

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the hero Achilles. By the fifth century, other mythological heroes, such as Odysseus and Theseus, were adapted by the Early Christian Fathers as prototypes for Jesus. Their stories were seen as allegories of rebirth and salvation that were suited to Christian interpretation. In this study, I have shown that Achilles was not viewed in this way but, instead, remained a secular hero who was admired for his strength and military skill.

The fifth century was a time of tremendous change. The Church and its followers were experiencing the final shift from paganism to Christianity. The waves of foreigners who invaded the West throughout this period reinforced the differences between Romans and barbarians. Achilles represented the qualities of *virtus* that shaped the viewers’ self-identity as an aristocrat of the Roman Empire. In the aristocrat’s spiritual world, however, Jesus and his disciples fulfilled a greater role than that of a traditional hero. As figures who were larger than life, they represented the future in which Christian virtues led to an everlasting life. As Hook and Reno explain, the Christian in Late Antiquity no longer needed the Homeric heroes as exemplars for living a Christian life. The Messiah began to take the place of the quintessential classical hero as a being who transcended the earthly constraints of *virtus*. As the divine and the human, he “is both above and below the range of honor and glory that defines the great men of antiquity.”

The life story of Achilles did not lend itself to Christian interpretation. Instead, in the fifth century he represented the ideal warrior who, in spite of his moral weaknesses, represented the best of the elite through *paideia* and traditions, all qualities which would help the elite classes survive the influences of the barbarians, who threatened the *mos maiorum*. Thus, the *Ambrosian Iliad* represented the duality of existence for the fifth-century aristocrat. The heroic figures in the *Ambrosian Iliad* idealized the aristocrat’s earthly obligations and duties during this time which were ingrained in his Roman past while, concurrently, they pointed to a future where, ironically, they would have no place.

Late Antiquity was a time of great upheaval. Constantine’s move to Constantinople in the early fourth century was emblematic of cultural, historical, economic, and religious changes that were yet to come over the succeeding one hundred and fifty years. By the end of the fifth century, the western Empire’s inhabitants had seen the center of power moved permanently away from Rome, watched the decline of the prestige of the senate in Rome, survived successive waves of invaders, participated in the death of paganism and the permanent ascendency of Christianity, and shifted their allegiance to barbarian rule. Perhaps in no other century had the Western Roman Empire seen such a confluence of events and ideas that would continue to resonate throughout the succeeding centuries. It is within this context that the *Ambrosian Iliad* was created and viewed.

The main goal of this research has been to determine the date and patronage of the *Ambrosian Iliad* based on contextual evidence. After taking into account previous paleographic and stylistic analyses, which suggested a fifth- to sixth-century date, and overlaying it with contextual analysis, I concluded that the *Ambrosian Iliad* was created during the second through third quarters of the fifth century for a patron in Rome or the nearby provinces. I came to this conclusion based on analyses of the codex itself and on historical, social, cultural, and religious influences on the manuscript’s imagery that were unique to this time period. In other words, the impulse and need to protect the *mos maiorum*, as referenced in the *Ambrosian Iliad*, was strongest in the western Empire, particularly in Rome itself and its nearest provinces. Rome is where rich aristocrats and land owners would have had the means and the motivation to commission such an expensive work of art.

Paleographic analysis shows that the Greek uncial script, as employed in the *Ambrosian Iliad*, first became popular in the fifth century. It was during this time period, specifically during the second and third quarters, that the social and economic structure of Rome remained relatively intact. Even after each of the barbarian invasions in 410 and 425, the Romans were able to rebuild. It is also during this era that there is still evidence of villas being built and remodeled. Although the Senate in Rome was no longer a decision-making body, it was still a respected symbol of the Roman Empire. Senators were treated with respect and considered symbols of the
Roman elite, as evidenced by the famous aristocratic representative Symmachus. In spite of the invasions and subsequent settling of barbarians throughout Italy, the economic base for the elite of Rome remained sound. In general, the Roman aristocrats’ main source of income came from their farms, and evidence shows they were still thriving until the end of the fifth century. I argue this is the only period when a patron of such an expensive codex as the *Ambrosian Iliad* would have had such a strong sense of *mos maiorum* and the need for protecting his traditions and his status. During the fifth century, Rome was still considered to be the heart of the Roman Empire, and as such, its elite took their responsibilities as keepers of their traditions very seriously. This responsibility grew in importance because they were increasingly surrounded by barbarians who neither understood nor cared about the *mos maiorum*. An aristocratic citizen from a noble Roman family in Gaul, Sidonius Apollinaris (ca. 430 - ca. 480), complained about this issue when he wrote: “Why, even supposing I had the skill, do you bid me compose a song dedicated to Venus the lover of Fescennine mirth, placed as I am among long-haired hordes, having to endure German speech, praising oft with wry face the song of the gluttonous Burgundian who spreads rancid butter on his hair?”

The *Ambrosian Iliad*’s imagery was a reflection of the importance of protecting the *mos maiorum* for the Late Antique aristocrat. Moreover, its iconography specifically references a fifth-century date when it is placed in the historical, social, cultural, and religious context of that century. From an historical standpoint, the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s scenes include Roman officers fighting on horseback, which invoked a commonly used image of the charging cavalryman who represented *virtus* – that integral part of *mos maiorum*. The fifth-century aristocrat no longer used the military as a means of advancement, but his forefathers did and were very active in the military. For the Late Antique elite, battle imagery invoked memories of their own ancestors who fought in this way to protect Rome. Moreover, during the fifth century, fighting on horseback was an especially important military tool since the Roman army was fighting against mounted barbarians.

The social and cultural references to the *mos maiorum* in the iconography of the *Ambrosian Iliad* include sacrificial scenes and circus games. As shown in this study, oftentimes

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antiquarian and contemporary images combined to reinforce the aristocratic patron’s view of his duties to protect the Roman way of life. Antiquarian references to aristocrats sacrificing were not too far in the past during the fifth century since paganism and its rites were not officially banned until the end of the fourth century. The fifth-century aristocrats’ fathers and grandfathers sacrificing for the good of the fatherland would have been recent family lore. The *Ambrosian Iliad*’s Roman iconography underscores this connection with antiquarian references including Romans wearing antiquarian clothing like the toga and military clothing and aristocrats performing banned pagan sacrifices in the Roman manner. One of the more provocative images is of an antiquarian sacrificial scene set in a fifth-century context. A subtle fifth-century device used for framing aristocratic portraits was used in the image of the sacrifice of Achilles, who is framed by a tent with drawn-back front flaps (fig. 1.1 and fig. 1.2). In this image, the reference to an aristocrat sacrificing at a Roman altar crosses temporal boundaries whereby the fifth-century viewer is joined with his ancestors in a traditional act of protecting the *mos maiorum*.

An extremely important social and cultural venue for the elite as the protectors of the *mos maiorum* was the hippodrome. The *Ambrosian Iliad*’s image of the circus games held for Patroclus was a direct reference to contemporary Roman practice. The hippodrome was the most visual of all public places, and it was here that the elite could show their status as the defenders of Rome through their privileged seating, sponsoring the games, and receiving acclimations from the spectators. In fact, the competition for sponsoring the games was so intense that legislation was passed in the fifth century to limit spending.

Although the fifth-century viewer was most likely Christian, the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s multivalent iconography enabled the aristocratic viewer to reconcile the *mos maiorum* with his religion. Thus, the multiple secular and religious significances that could have been read in the *Ambrosian Iliad*’s images would not have bothered the fifth-century aristocrat. For example, the banqueting scene, which represented an integral part of the display of status in society, could also be viewed as a reference to the Last Supper. The circus scene, which is shown as the moment of victory when the prizes were awarded, reflected the victory of *mos maiorum* as the continuation of the traditions of the Roman people, but also could be construed as Christ’s victory over death.
The evolving process of self-definition, which always centered on the aristocrat’s duty to protect the *mos maiorum*, comes together in the fifth century as a result of his responsibilities as a representative of the emperor. The reception of the *Ambrosian Iliad* was part of a visual program in which the aristocrat surrounded himself with references to Achilles as a way to align himself with the emperor. Again, by this time, objects containing references to Achilles were visual reminders of the abilities acquired through early training in order to successfully discharge duties as the emperor’s representative. Other imperial references in the *Ambrosian Iliad’s* images include aristocratic magistrates awarding prizes to victorious charioteers in the name of the emperor, and the use of standard imperial iconography in the image of Achilles sacrificing on the battle’s eve.

The *Ambrosian Iliad* distinctly represented the realities of the fifth century, when protecting the *mos maiorum* was of utmost importance. But, this powerful common goal among the elite would not have been possible without their shared training, or *paideia*, that all Roman aristocrats received as young boys. *Paideia* was a part of their history since the Republican period, and generations of aristocrats mostly received the same training that emphasized Homeric studies. Even Christian authors were not adverse to referring to Homer in their writings to prove a point and to possibly displaying their education. Projecting an image that the elite had the training and ability to protect the *mos maiorum* would not have been possible without the acquisition and display of *paideia*. This shared social construct was a common thread that ran through the visual programs that surrounded the aristocrats. As an expensive and large Homeric codex, the *Ambrosian Iliad* played an integral part in the display of *paideia* for its patron and peers. As a way to prove they had mastered *paideia* during the late fourth through fifth centuries, aristocrats avidly collected objects with Homeric and mythological themes. The images from this manuscript could have been used as a memory aid in the show of *paideia* during discussions at the patron’s banquets. Evidence indicates that the fifth-century aristocrat was fond of surrounding himself with images of Achilles acquiring *paideia*, as possible support for his new role as the emperor’s representative.

The Roman aristocrat from Gaul, Sidonius Apollinaris, is an ideal example of the type of mid-fifth-century aristocratic patron who could have commissioned a work like the *Ambrosian Iliad*. He lived within the time frame that has been suggested for the manuscript, ca. 430-480.
Raised as a Christian in a respected aristocratic family in Gaul, Sidonius Apollinaris was proud of his traditional education. In fact, he was not averse to displaying *paideia* in letters in which he would quote the classics that included Vergil and Homer. He had a brilliant career in politics, holding court offices and commuting from his farm in Gaul to Rome where he interacted with the elite of the city. His writings are replete with references of his pride in his family and Roman traditions. In 470, this leading political and literary figure was consecrated the Bishop of Clermont and spent the remainder of his life in the service of the Church.\(^{511}\)

I also argued that the patron of the *Ambrosian Iliad* resided in Italy or a closeby province. Unlike the two other possible sources for patronage, Constantinople or Alexandria, because of the upheaval and uncertainty in this area during the fifth century, the *Ambrosian Iliad* reflected a yearning for the past and the urgent need to protect the *mos maiorum*. Unlike Rome, in Constantinople, aristocratic life revolved around the nearby emperor. Rather than a powerless Senate, the Senate in Constantinople provided counsel to the head of the Roman Empire.\(^{512}\) As a part of their affirmation of their elite identity, the aristocrats in Constantinople participated in rituals of the court in a way that ensured that they would see and be seen. They were required to attend state banquets, participate in court processions, attend the circus games, and join the emperor when he left the city for vacation.\(^{513}\) Unlike Rome, which had a long and rich history that supported its *mos maiorum* in the fifth century, Constantinople was a relatively new city. Its aristocracy was not tied to traditions as a way of defining itself. Instead, its identity centered on the emperor. But, they were citizens of a city that had been built as “the” Christian capital. The elite would not have related to such antiquarian references in the *Ambrosian Iliad* as the pagan sacrifice.

It is not likely that the patron came from Alexandria either. Unlike Rome and Constantinople, Alexandria never was dependent on the Emperor and his court. Instead, it was a thriving city whose wealth was based on trade, especially from grain provided to Rome and for other wealthy goods like glass and silks. Like other provincial cities in the empire, Alexandria’s

\(^{512}\) McCormick, “Emperor,” 156.
\(^{513}\) McCormick, “Emperor,” 140-141.
social history and makeup was comprised of indigenous tradition and Roman customs. The elite of Alexandria, for the most part, were descended from Macedonian ancestors. Because of these diverse influences, Alexandria’s social structure was very hierarchical with the elite comprised of Hellenic families and the masses below them of the Egyptian descent. The Romans took advantage of this political situation and were happy to use the elite as their local governing class. Unlike the aristocrats in Rome and Constantinople, the Alexandrian aristocratic status did not revolve around a Senate or a court system. Until the fourth century, the elite of Alexandria often served on city councils, or boulē, which were governing bodies analogous to the ordo decuionum in other cities in the Western Roman Empire. By the fourth century, there was a movement in the political makeup of Alexandria from the Greek tradition of local councils to imperial-driven administrative posts, or curiales. Many of the rich patrons of Alexandria served as curiales, or high administrative officers who were responsible for tax collection, food distribution, and administration of the city. While this membership offered a certain cache, albeit not as much as the Senate in Rome or Constantinople, it still served as a tangible marker of status in Alexandrian society. But, like their counterparts in the Roman Empire, they did not achieve their wealth from political services, but from agriculture. Thus, like their contemporaries in Constantinople, the aristocrats in Alexandria did not share the same common memories or antiquarian nostalgia for a past steeped in Roman traditions or mos maiorum. Besides, the elite of Alexandria were busy with their own problems in the late fourth and early fifth centuries with the prevalence of religious riots by Christians and pagans alike.

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514 Bell. Egypt, 74.
515 Bagnall, Egypt, 55.
516 Haas, Alexandria, 52. See Haas, Alexandria, 52-56 for a discussion concerning the political position of the “bouleutic clas” or bouleutai and the switch to curiales in Alexandria.
517 For an excellent overview of the political situation in the cities of Roman North Africa during the Late Antique period, see Bagnall, Egypt, 54-62.
518 See Bagnall, Egypt, 68-69 for detailed description and numerical analysis of the elite in Roman North Africa by city based on Hermopolis and Antinoopolis.
If the aristocrat from Gaul, Sidonius Apollinaris had lived much longer after 480, he may not have had the will or the ability to patronize the secular arts. The patricians of the time had other things on their minds. In 476, the Western Roman Empire had officially fallen with the ascension of the first barbarian king, Odoacer, to the throne in Ravenna. This started a slow and steady disintegration of Rome as the center of the known world. Because of the steady breakdown of traditional Roman society due to barbarian rule, villas were no longer built or furnished, and the patronage of secular work declined. The new barbarian king was not concerned with protecting Roman tradition, thus the Senate was ignored and no longer commanded the respect it formerly enjoyed. There was no western court to continue Roman traditions: the barbarians had their own customs. The Christian church began to fill the religious and economic void that was left when the traditional Roman infrastructure began to collapse.

Through the above contextual analyses, I argued the *Ambrosian Iliad* was commissioned by a Roman or western provincial patron during the second through third quarters of the fifth century. Also, this manuscript represented the aristocrat’s duty to protect the *mos maiorum* as supported by his training, or *paideia*. In this study, I chose a few iconographic types in the *Ambrosian Iliad* to explain how its Roman iconography would have been interpreted by a fifth-century audience. There are other areas of interest in the images of this manuscript that could be studied using this contextual method. One topic that could be pursued, for example, is that of gestures. Gestures were very important in Roman society, particularly the raised arm in a speaking gesture. With the importance of the display of *paideia* in Roman society, this gesture could indicate not only the command of others, but also the command of *paideia*. Richard Brilliant wrote a compelling essay on the role of gestures, entitled *Gesture and Rank in Roman Art*, but he did not include images from manuscripts in his analyses. I believe that, using Brilliant’s essay as a guide, an investigation into the possible meaning to fifth-century viewers of gestures in the *Ambrosian Iliad* could further the understanding of the interaction between image and viewer. I would also recommend that a closer examination of other depictions in the *Ambrosian Iliad*, including its ships, architecture, and fighting methods might prove instructive.

The use of contextual methodology as a means for establishing details has broader implications that go beyond this study. This approach could also be used to analyze other Late Antique manuscripts. An example is the *Vergilus Romanus*, which has distinctive Late Antique
iconography in its banquet image of Aeneas and Dido (fig. 4.5). A contextual analysis of this scene might reveal an additional layer of meaning for its viewer, particularly when one notes that the meal served is a very large fish. Considering the proposed fifth century date for this codex, this choice of a meal could have had several layers of meaning for a Christian viewer. The same methodology could be applied to Late Antique manuscripts that were devoted to religious themes during the fifth century like the *Quedinburg Itala*. This manuscript depicts scenes from the Bible, and like the *Ambrosian Iliad*, uses Roman iconography to tell its story. A close contextual analysis of its iconography may help to explain the relationship of a Roman/Christian viewer and the image and what that perspective might bring to the interaction between text and image.

The ultimate goal of this work has been to broaden the scholarship of Late Antique manuscripts by proposing a different way of approaching them. As Peter Brown pointed out, Late Antiquity was a time of multiplicity, when diverse cultures coincided and, in many cases, intermingled with each other. At the same time, there was not always a distinct line drawn between the secular and the religious. The aristocrat in Late Antiquity did not see his world as just “Roman” or as just “Christian.” He saw it as a combination of both worlds. I propose that it is time to view their manuscripts in the same way.
Figure 1.1: *The Ambrosian Iliad*, “Achilles offers an augural sacrifice” (Milan, Ambrosiana Library, F. 205 Inf.), 5th c., min. XXXXVII (Photo: *Ilias Ambrosiana; Cod. F. 205 P. inf.*, *Bibliothecae Ambrosianae Mediolanensis* [Berna: U. Graf, 1953], XXXXVII).

Figure 1.3: *The Ambrosian Iliad*, “The wounded Aphrodite returns to Olympus.” (Milan, Ambrosiana Library, F. 205 Inf.), 5th c., min. XIX (Photo: *Ilias Ambrosiana; Cod. F. 205 P. inf.*, Bibliothecae Ambrosianae Mediolanensis [Berna: U. Graf, 1953], XIX).

Figure 1.4: *The Ambrosian Iliad*, “Priam sets out for the Greek camp.” (Milan, Ambrosiana Library, F. 205 Inf.), 5th c., min. LVII (Photo: *Ilias Ambrosiana; Cod. F. 205 P. inf.*, Bibliothecae Ambrosianae Mediolanensis [Berna: U. Graf, 1953], LVII).
Figure 1.5: *The Ambrosian Iliad*, “Athena gives courage to Diomedes and Phegeus killed by Diomedes” and “Pandarus draws his bow against Diomedes.” (Milan, Ambrosiana Library, F. 205 Inf.), 5th c., mins. XVI and XVII (Photo: *Ilias Ambrosiana; Cod. F. 205 P. inf.*, *Bibliothecae Ambrosianae Mediolanensis* [Berna: U. Graf, 1953], XVI and XVII).

Figure 1.6: *The Ambrosian Iliad*, “Hector speaks to the Trojan troops and The feast in the Trojan camp.” (Milan, Ambrosiana Library, F. 205 Inf.), 5th c., min. XXX (Photo: *Ilias Ambrosiana; Cod. F. 205 P. inf.*, *Bibliothecae Ambrosianae Mediolanensis* [Berna: U. Graf, 1953], XXX).
Figure 1.7: *The Ambrosian Iliad*, “Hector breaks open the gate of the wall.” (Milan, Ambrosiana Library, F. 205 Inf.), 5th c., min. XXXXI (Photo: *Ilias Ambrosiana; Cod. F. 205 P. inf., Bibliothece Ambrosianae Mediolanensis* [Berna: U. Graf, 1953], XXXXI).
Figure 2.1: A Roman boy, with papyrus roll and book box (Petworth Collection, London, England), 2nd c. (Photo: Bonner, Education in Ancient Rome [Berkeley: University of California Press (1977)], frontispiece).

Figure 2.2: A teacher and his students (Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Trier Germany), 3rd c. (Photo: Bonner, Education in Ancient Rome [Berkeley: University of California Press (1977)], fig. 9).
Figure 2.3: Mosaic Panel with Kimbros and Paideia (Private collection, West Palm Beach, Fla.), 5th c. (Photo: Marinescu, Cox, and Wachter. “Paedeia’s Children: Childhood Education on a Group of Late Antique Mosaics.” In Constructions of Childhood in Ancient Greece and Italy. Ed. Ada Cohen and Jeremy B. Rutter [Princeton, NJ: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens (2007)], p.104, fig. 5.5).

Figure 2.4: Mosaic Panel with Kimbros and Paideia, det. (Private collection, West Palm Beach, Fla.), 5th c. (Photo: Marinescu, Cox and Wachter. “Walking and Talking Among Us: Personifications in a Group of Late Antique Mosaics.” In Actes du IXe Colloque international pour mosaïque antique et medievale Ed. H. Morlier [Rome: École Française de Rome (2005)], p. 1275, fig. 7).
Figure 3.1: The Projecta Casket (Doria Pamphilj, Rome, Italy), ca. 380 (Photo: Shelton, The Esquiline Treasure [London: British Museum Publications (1981)], plate 4).
Figure 3.2: *The Doria Bucket* (British Museum, London), fifth c. (Photo: Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality* [New York: The Museum (1979)], p. 219, #196.)

Figure 3.3 *The Doria Bucket*, det. (Doria Pamphilj, Rome, Italy), fifth c. (Photo: Carandini, *La secchia Doria: una ‘Storia di Achille’ tardo-antica* [Rome: De Luca (1965)], Table 1.)
Figure 3.4: *Ludovisi Sarcophagus*, lid (Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Mainz), ca. 250 (Photo: Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* [New Haven: Yale University Press (1992)], p. 388, #358).
Figure 3.5: The Ambrosian Iliad, “Idomeneus drags away the body of Othryoneus.” (Milan, Ambrosiana Library, F. 205 Inf.), 5th c., min. XLII (Photo: Ilias Ambrosiana; Cod. F. 205 P. inf., Bibliothecae Ambrosianae Mediolanensis [Berna: U. Graf, 1953], XLII).

Figure 3.6: The Ambrosian Iliad, “Idomeneus drags away the body of Othryoneus,” (drawing) (Milan, Ambrosiana Library, F. 205 Inf.), 5th c., min. XLII (Drawing: A. Mai, Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures of the Iliad (Ilias Ambrosiana [Olten: U. Graf, 1955], p. 75, fig. 78) [Labels: C. Bare].
Figure 3.7: Roman Battle Sarcophagus (Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University), 160-170 CE (Photo: Francis, “A Roman Battle Sarcophagus at Concordia University, Montreal.” [Phoenix. Vol. 54, No. ¾ (2000)], Plate 1).

Figure 3.8: AE of Constans with charging horseman pose (Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University), ca. 320-350. [Photo: Brilliant, Gesture and Rank in Roman Art: The Use of Gestures to Denote Status in Roman Sculpture and Coinage [New Haven: The Academy (1963)], fig. 4.54).
Figure 3.9: AE of Constans with raised arm pose (Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University), end of 4th c. [Photo: Brilliant, Gesture and Rank in Roman Art: The Use of Gestures to Denote Status in Roman Sculpture and Coinage [New Haven: The Academy (1963)], fig. 4.60).
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Figure 3.12: *Trajan’s Column*, “Suovetaurilia” (Trajan’s Forum, Rome.), 113 CE, Scene viii, (Photo: Cichorius, from Lepper, *Trajan’s Column* [Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1988], plate X).
Figure 3.13: *The Ambrosian Iliad*, “Agamemnon Offers a Sacrifice” (Milan, Ambrosiana Library, F. 205 Inf.), 5th c., min. XIII (Photo: *Ilias Ambrosiana; Cod. F. 205 P. inf., Bibliothecae Ambrosianae Mediolanensis* [Berna: U. Graf, 1953], XIII).

Figure 3.14: *The Ambrosian Iliad*, “Agamemnon offers a sacrifice,” (drawing) (Milan, Ambrosiana Library, F. 205 Inf.), 5th c., min. XIII (Drawing: A. Mai, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures of the Iliad* [Ilias Ambrosiana [Olten: U. Graf, 1955], p. 59, fig. 49] [Labels: C. Bare].

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Figure 3.15: Altar of Manlius (Lateran, Rome), early 1st c. CE (Photo: Brilliant, Gesture and Rank in Roman Art: The Use of Gestures to Denote Status in Roman Sculpture and Coinage [New Haven: The Academy (1963)], fig. 2.79).
Figure 3.16: *The Ambrosian Iliad*, “The portent of Aulis” (Milan, Ambrosiana Library, F. 205 Inf.), 5th c., min. XII (Photo: *Ilias Ambrosiana*; *Cod. F. 205 P. inf.*, *Bibliothecae Ambrosianae Mediolanensis* [Bern: U. Graf, 1953], XII).

Figure 3.17: *The Ambrosian Iliad*, “The portent at Aulis,” (drawing) (Milan, Ambrosiana Library, F. 205 Inf.), 5th c., min. XII (Drawing: A. Mai, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures of the Iliad* [*Ilias Ambrosiana* [Olten: U. Graf, 1955], p. 58, fig. 48] [Labels: C. Bare].)
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Figure 4.2: *The Ambrosian Iliad*, “The prize-giving for the chariot race,” (drawing) (Milan, Ambrosiana Library, F. 205 Inf.), 5th c., min. LV (Drawing: A. Mai, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures of the Iliad (Ilias Ambrosiana)* [Olten: U. Graf, 1955], p. 82, fig. 91) [Labels: C. Bare].
Figure 4.3: *The Ambrosian Iliad*, “The banquet of the gods” (Milan, Ambrosiana Library, F. 205 Inf.), 5th c., min. X (Photo: *Ilias Ambrosiana; Cod. F. 205 P. inf., Bibliothecase Ambrosianae Mediolanensis* [Berna: U. Graf, 1953], X).

Figure 4.4: *The Ambrosian Iliad*, “The banquet of the gods,” (drawing) (Milan, Ambrosiana Library, F. 205 Inf.), 5th c., min. X (Drawing: A. Mai, *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures of the Iliad (Ilias Ambrosiana* [Olten: U. Graf, 1955], p. 57, fig. 45) [Labels: C. Bare].
Figure 4.5: The *Vergilius Romanus*, “The Roman banquet” (Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Vat. Lat. 3867.), probably late 5th c., fol. 100v (Photo: Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003], plate XVI).
Figure 4.6: Reconstruction Drawing of the Villa at Contionacum, late 4th c. (Drawing: *Age of Spirituality* [New York: The Museum, 1979], p. 119, no. 106). [Label: C. Bare].

Figure 4.7: Floor Plan of the Villa at Contionacum, late 4th c. (Drawing: Wightman, *Roman Trier and the Treveri* [London: Hart-Davis, 1971], p. 166, figure 119). [Label: C. Bare].
Figure 4.8: Floor Plan of the Villa at Bulla Regia, 5th c. (Drawing: Besaouch, *Les Ruines de Bulla Regia* [Rome: École française de Rome, 1977], p. 40, figure 28, room B). [Labels: C. Bare].
Figure 4.9: Consular Diptych of Rufius Probianus (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek), ca. 400 CE (Photo: Wright, *The Roman Vergil and the Origins of Medieval Book Design* [London: The British Library, 2001], p. 8)
Figure 4.10: Kaiseraugst Missorium (Basel, Römermuseum Augst) mid-4th c. (Photo: Manacorda, La paideia di Achille [Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1971], fig. 112a).
Figure 4.11: *Kaiseraugst Missorium* (drawing) (Basel, Römermuseum Augst), mid-4th c. (Photo: Brilliant, *Visual Narratives: Storytelling in Etruscan and Roman Art* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984], page 144, fig. 4-3).
Figure 4.12: “Capitoline Puteal” (Rome, Capitoline Museum), 4th c. (Photo: Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity* [Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2004], p. 128, fig. 3.2.)
Figure 4.13: Mosaic Depicting the Birth of Achilles, (Nea Paphos, Cyprus) 5th c. (Photo: Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity* [Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2004], p. 134, fig. 3.5). [Labels: C. Bare].

Figure 4.15: AE medallion of Emperor Postumus with sacrifice, (Toynbee, *Rom. Med.*, pl. XLVI.8), 3rd c. (Photo: *Gesture and Rank in Roman Art* [New Haven: The Academy, 1963]), p. 199, fig. 4.97).
Figure 4.16: Diptych Leaf with Ariadne (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Antikensammlung, X39), ca. 500-520 CE (Photo: *Age of Spirituality*, [New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979], p. 31, no. 25).
Figure 5.1: “Vibia led by the good angel to the heavenly banquet”, from the pagan tomb of Vibia, Rome, 4th c. (Photo: Brown, World of Late Antiquity [New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich], fig. 41).

Figure 5.2: Depiction of a banquet (refrigeria or agape?), from the Catacomb of Peter and Marcellinus, cubiculum 78, Rome, probably end of third to early fourth c. (Photo: Dunbabin, The Roman Banquet: Images of Conviviality [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003], fig. 108).
Figure 5.3: Gold-Glass Medallion of Achilles and the Daughters of Lycomedes, 4th c. (Pesaro, Biblioteca e Musei Oliveriani), 4th c. CE (Photo: Age of Spirituality, [New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979], p. 237, no. 212).

Figure 5.4: Textile with Thetis at the Forge of Hephaestus (London, Victoria and Albert Museum), late 6th – early 7th c. CE (Photo: Age of Spirituality, [New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979], p. 222, no. 198).
Figure 5.5: Sculpture with Odysseus bound to the Mast, bronze, Asia Minor(?), 4th c. (Richmond Virginia Museum of Fine Arts) (Photo: *Age of Spirituality*. Edited by Kurt Weitzmann, [New York: The Museum, 1979], no. 209).
Figure 5.6: Labyrinth black and white mosaic, Basilica of Reparata, Al-Asnam, Algiers, 4th c. Photo: Kern, *Through the Labyrinth: Designs and Meanings Over 5,000 Years* [Munich: Prestel, 2000], p. 88, fig. 117).
Figure 5.7: Fragment of plate with scenes from the life of Achilles, North Africa, ca. 400-430, Athens Benaki Museum (Photo: *Age of Spirituality*. Edited by Kurt Weitzmann [New York: The Museum, 1979], no. 209).

Figure 5.8: Marble Disk, det., 4th c. (Capitoline Museum, Rome), Egypt (Photo: Weitzmann, “The Survival of Mythological Representations in Early Christian and Byzantine Art and their Impact on Christian Iconography [Dumbarton Oaks Papers 1960], fig. 20).
Figure 5.9: Fragment of Bronze Plate, det., 7 or 8th c., Cairo (Photo: Weitzmann, “The Survival of Mythological Representations in Early Christian and Byzantine Art and their Impact on Christian Iconography [Dumbarton Oaks Papers 1960], fig. 19).
APPENDIX B

COMPLETE LIST OF THE MINIATURES IN THE *AMBROSIAN ILIAD*
**Complete List of Miniatures in the *Ambrosian Iliad***

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<th>Description of the Scene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Chryses prays to Apollo. The Plague and Apollo shooting arrows. Achilles calls together the assembly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Achilles restrained by Athena in his dispute with Agamemnon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Athena returns to Olympus. Nestor speaks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Lustral sacrifice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>The heralds meet Achilles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Briseis led away by the heralds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Thetis consoles her son.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Arrival of Chryseis. Odysseus gives Chryseis back to her father.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>Thetis before Zeus. Hera challenges Zeus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>The banquet of the gods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>The attempt to put the ships out to sea.</td>
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<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>The portent at Aulis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>XIII</td>
<td>Agamemnon offers a sacrifice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>XIV</td>
<td>The array of the Trojan chieftains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV</td>
<td>Pandarus shoots the arrow against Menelaus. Menelaus tended by Machaon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>Athena gives courage to Diomedes. Phegeus killed by Domedes.</td>
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<td>XVII</td>
<td>Pandarus draws his bow against Diomedes.</td>
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<td>XVIII</td>
<td>Aeneas saved by Apollo.</td>
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<td>XIX</td>
<td>The wounded Aphrodite returns to Olympus.</td>
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<td>XX</td>
<td>Ajax draws the spear from the body of Amphius (?). Menesthes and Anchialus killed by Hector (?)</td>
</tr>
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<td>XXI</td>
<td>Tlepolemus killed by Sarpedon. Odysseus rages against the Lycians. Sarpedon placed under a tree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXII</td>
<td>Athena in Domedés’s chariot. Ares is wounded by Diomedes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIII</td>
<td>Ares returned wounded to Olympus.</td>
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<td>XXIV</td>
<td>The meeting of Hector with Hecuba and Laodike.</td>
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<td>XXV</td>
<td>The offering of the Trojan women to Athena. The meeting of Hector and Paris.</td>
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<tr>
<td>XXVI</td>
<td>The farewell of Hector to Andromache.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVII</td>
<td>The building of the wall. The feast in the Greek camp.</td>
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</tbody>
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*Source: Bianchi Bandinelli, *Ambrosian Iliad*, pp. 85-87.*
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<td>The apparition of the eagle.</td>
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<td>XXIX</td>
<td>The heartened Greeks attack.</td>
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<td>XXX</td>
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<td>XXXI</td>
<td>The night council of the Greeks.</td>
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<td>XXXII</td>
<td>Nestor and Diomedes in conversation.</td>
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<td>XXXIV</td>
<td>Dolon captured. Dolon killed.</td>
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<td>XXXV</td>
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<td>XXXVI</td>
<td>Euryplus wounded by Paris. Nestor quits the field, wounded.</td>
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<tr>
<td>XXXVII</td>
<td>Achilles looks at the field from the ship.</td>
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<td>XXXVIII</td>
<td>The attack of the Trojans against the walled camp.</td>
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<td>XLV</td>
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<td>XXXXVI</td>
<td>Nestor seeks to stay the flight of the Greeks.</td>
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<td>XXXXVII</td>
<td>Achilles offers an augural sacrifice.</td>
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<td>XLVIII</td>
<td>Patroclus killed by Hector. Automedon leaves the field.</td>
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<td>L</td>
<td>Euphorbus killed by Menelaus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>L I</td>
<td>Menelaus takes Euphorbus’ arms. Apollo urges on Hector against Menelaus.</td>
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<td>L II</td>
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<td>Hephaestus burns the waters of the Scamander.</td>
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<td>L IV</td>
<td>The Greeks beneath the walls of Troy. Hector begged by his family not to fight leaves by the city gate.</td>
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<td>L V</td>
<td>The prize-giving for the chariot race.</td>
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<td>L VI</td>
<td>The foot race. The prize-giving for the foot race.</td>
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<tr>
<td>L VII</td>
<td>Priam sets out for the Greek camp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>L VIII</td>
<td>Priam on his way with the carriage full of gifts. Priam meets Hermes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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APPENDIX C

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<td>drawing</td>
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Date: ______________________

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<td>XXXXI</td>
<td>“Hector breaks open the gate of the wall”</td>
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<td>XLII</td>
<td>“Idomeneus drags away the body of Othryoneus”</td>
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<td>IV</td>
<td>“Lustral sacrifice.”</td>
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<td>XIII</td>
<td>“Agamemnon offers a sacrifice”</td>
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<td>“The portent at Aulis”</td>
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<td>XXXXVII</td>
<td>“Achilles offers an augural sacrifice”</td>
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<td>LV</td>
<td>“The prize-giving for the chariot race”</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>“The banquet of the Gods”</td>
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<td>219</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>“The Doria Bucket”</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>“Leaf from the diptych of the consul Felix”</td>
<td>Ivory</td>
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<td>“Diptych of a Patrician”</td>
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<td>“Reconstruction Drawing of the Villa at Contionacum”</td>
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<td>“Bottom of bowl with Achilles on Skyros”</td>
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<td>234</td>
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<td>“Fragments of plates with scenes from the life of Achilles”</td>
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<td>“Textile with Thetis at the forge of Hephaestus”</td>
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<td>“Diptych Leaf with Ariadne”</td>
<td>Ivory</td>
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<td>222</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>“Sculpture with Odysseus Bound to the Mast”</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>AE of Constans with charging horseman pose</td>
<td>Coin</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>AE of Constans with raised arm pose</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>Altar of Manlius</td>
<td>Stone</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>AE medallion of Emperor Postumus with sacrifice</td>
<td>Coin</td>
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---. *Orient oder Rom.* Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs’she Buchhandlung, 1901.


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Golden Key National Honor Society
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