

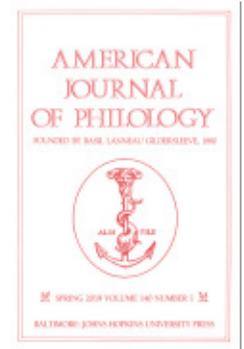


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MAKING SPECIMENS IN THE *PERIPLUS OF HANNO* AND ITS IMPERIAL TRADITION

CLARA BOSAK-SCHROEDER



Abstract: The *Periplus of Hanno* is a short Greek description of Hanno's voyage from Carthage along the west coast of Africa. In this article, I turn attention to Pomponius Mela, Pliny the Elder, and Athenaeus' reception of its final, infamous scene, in which Hanno kills and flays female "Gorillai" and brings their hairy skins back to Carthage. The Gorillai are called human beings (*anthrōpoi*) but also marked as nonhuman. Contrary to modern expectation, Roman writers did not interpret the Gorillai as monkeys or great apes. Rather, Mela, Pliny, and Athenaeus look to myth and other animal species to understand them. They also reinterpret Hanno, first as a marvel-collector and hero and then as a Roman general. Yet even in an age of *poena post mortem* and *summa supplicia*, these writers are hesitant to depict Romans flaying human women. Hanno the barbarian can skin a human being, but Hanno in his Roman guise only skins animals. In the *Periplus of Hanno* and its Imperial receptions, we see the interdependence of ethnicity, humanity, and animality.

How does one reckon the technologies of the human? But there is no such thing as the human. Instead, there is only the dizzying multiplicity of the cut human, the human body as interminably cut, fractured.

—Athena Athanasiou (2003, 125)

INTRODUCTION: SKINNING HAIRY WOMEN

THERE ARE MANY WAYS to make and unmake, or "cut" a human. Humanity, along with sex/gender (Fausto-Sterling 2012), race, sexuality, and ability are such culturally contingent categories that some scholars no longer assume these qualities to be essential or pre-given attributes of bodies (e.g., Neis 2017). Instead, they argue that bodies are marked, both materially and discursively, and that these marks exert power in different systems of meaning (Barad 2007). The UN, for example, accords me human rights because I have been marked as human. In the United States, which does not always recognize or enforce human rights, my human status still protects me from being killed and eaten by other

humans, stuffed and displayed in a natural history museum, or experimented on without my consent.¹ As these examples indicate, bodies are often marked as human or nonhuman through violence or protection from violence, including violence in the service of knowledge. Marking a body as nonhuman authorizes violence against it, and the pursuit of knowledge incentivizes the dehumanization of others; once marked as specimens rather than as humans, bodies are available for collection and experimentation (Agamben 2003; Steel 2011).

In the United States there is a long history both of violently using dehumanized bodies to make knowledge and of unease with this history. Although my remains are protected from display in a museum, I can view the remains of other people who did not consent to being seen. NAGPRA has outlawed the display of Native Americans since 1990, but ancient mummies, unclaimed corpses, and medical “oddities” are still available for visual consumption. Displays of these human remains draw equal parts outrage and fascination, ambivalence that is in many ways a legacy of 18th- and 19th-century debates about the procurement of medical cadavers. A love-hate relationship with human specimens seems thoroughly modern.

The study of ancient Greek and Roman culture would appear to confirm this. Both societies abhorred the post-mortem disturbance of the dead, a taboo that extended even to medical dissection (Longrigg 1988, 457; Hope 2000; Nutton 2013, 131). When the Greek hero Achilles drags the mutilated corpse of Hector around the walls of Troy, he contravenes a deeply held reverence for all the dead, even one’s enemies. It is against this cultural background that the ancient Greek *Periplus of Hanno* and its description of the flaying of hairy women has become infamous.

The *Periplus (Voyage) of Hanno* (hereafter *Periplus*) is an ancient Greek prose text consisting of approximately 100 lines whose provenance²

¹In the 20th century and before, being white would have been enough to protect me. Dodge, the one black astronaut of the 1968 *Planet of the Apes* movie, is stuffed and displayed in the apes’ museum. This scene demonstrates the apes’ supremacist ideology, parallel to human supremacy in much of the audience’s world, and evokes the looting, dissection, and display of African-American corpses in medical contexts well into the 20th century. For images of these displays, see Warner and Edmonson 2009.

²Germain 1957, Mauny 1970, and Jacob 1991 consider the *Periplus* a Greek fiction. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Picard 1971 and Lacroix 1998 assert that it is a Greek translation of a Punic record of a real voyage. Blomqvist 1979 takes a more moderate position, arguing that the *Periplus* has a Punic origin and documents a real voyage, but has been influenced by Greek literature.

and date³ are hotly contested. The text describes a voyage Hanno of Carthage undertook to establish colonies along the west coast of Africa. After founding several colonies and encountering different peoples, Hanno meets the Gorillai, whom he fails to capture alive, but kills and flays (*HP* 18):

Ἐν δὲ τῷ μυχῶ νῆσος ἦν, ἐοικυῖα τῇ πρώτῃ, λίμνην ἔχουσα· καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ νῆσος ἦν ἑτέρα, μεσιτὴ ἀνθρώπων ἀγρίων. Πολὺ δὲ πλείους ἦσαν γυναῖκες, δασεῖαι τοῖς σώμασιν· ἅς οἱ ἔρμηγέες ἐκάλουον Γορίλλας. Διώκοντες δὲ ἄνδρας μὲν συλλαβεῖν οὐκ ἠδυνήθημεν, ἀλλὰ πάντες (μὲν) ἐξέφυγον, κρημνοβάται ὄντες καὶ τοῖς πέτροις ἀμυνόμενοι, γυναῖκας δὲ τρεῖς, αἱ δάκνουσαι τε καὶ σπαράττουσαι τοὺς ἄγοντας οὐκ ἠθελον ἔπεσθαι. Ἀποκτείναντες μέντοι αὐτὰς ἐξεδείραμεν καὶ τὰς δορὰς ἐκομίσαμεν εἰς Καρχηδόνα.⁴

In the bay there was an island similar to the first, having a lake, and in it was another island, full of wild human beings. The majority of these people were women with hairy bodies, whom our interpreters called Gorillai.⁵ Although we pursued the men we were unable to catch them, because they all escaped by climbing the cliffs and defending themselves with rocks; but we caught three women, who bit and tore their pursuers since they did not want to go with them. And so we killed them and flayed them and carried off their skins to Carthage.⁶

³Some scholars date the *Periplus* as early as the 5th century B.C.E. and others as late as the first, although both extremes rely on style and the testimony of later authors. Blomqvist 1979: 5th century B.C.E.; Germain 1957: late 4th to early 3rd century B.C.E.; Aly 1927: 2nd century B.C.E.; Tauxier 1882: 1st century B.C.E. There is an interesting tendency to date the text earlier as time goes on, at least in part because its author's "cacography" is taken less and less as a sign of postclassical "degeneration."

⁴For the ancient genre of travel itineraries, including sailing itineraries (*periploi*), see Dilke 1985, 130–44. See Demerliac and Meirat 1983 for the *Periplus* in the context of Phoenician history and Segert 1969, 514 for the possible Phoenician language background of the text, including one plausible linguistic borrowing—although these are all dismissed by Blomqvist 1979, 15. Hair 1987 describes the history of scholarship on the *Periplus* and Mund-Dopchie 1989 its humanistic reception. For the mss., see Diller 1952.

⁵It is unclear whether "Gorillai" refers to the women only or the community as a whole. The relative pronoun points to the first possibility, but the interpreters may name the community for the women because they are in the majority. Other peoples in the *Periplus* have names ending in -ai, including the interpreters themselves, and these are not identified as all-female groups.

⁶All translations are my own. On the basis of other ancient references to Hanno's voyage, which say it extended around the horn of Africa (e.g., Pliny *NH* 2.67), Oikonomides 1995, 9 deletes the final sentence, "we did not sail further because the food ran out" (18), hypothesizing that it is a later addition. Cf. Lacroix 1998, 380–4.

This scene, with which the *Periplus* abruptly closes, has disturbed modern commentators and inspired creative interpretations. Scholars have often seen the Gorillai as nonhuman primates, especially gorillas, whose name the Gorillai inspired in the 19th century (Savage and Wyman 1847). According to Romer, for example, “that Hanno brought back skins virtually guarantees that these creatures were anthropoid apes and not people” (1998, 127 n. 64).⁷ As this response reveals, the modern category of the human is often opposed to and finely distinguished from the nonhuman primate, especially so-called “anthropoid” apes or great apes. When scholars interpret the Gorillai as nonhuman primates, they can explain why a Greek text, produced within a culture that condemned corpse abuse, would “allow” Hanno to skin human beings and take them home as trophies.

It is possible that an historical encounter between Hanno (or someone else) and a great ape inspired the story preserved in the *Periplus*, but the historicity of the account cannot be verified, nor would it necessarily have been known to ancient readers.⁸ It is further possible that readers of the *Periplus* would have associated the Gorillai and other “monstrous” races with monkeys or apes known to them through travel, trade, or other texts (as Augustine did, *De civ. Dei* 16.8), especially since, as we will see, they share several characteristics with dog-heads (*kunokephaloi*) and satyrs (*satyroi*), terms sometimes used to describe nonhuman primates (McDermott 1938). Yet these terms are not applied consistently across authors or even by the same author. Aelian usually uses *kunokephalos* to describe baboons, but also applies the term to a marginally human group (4.46). If the Roman writers who rewrote the *Periplus* are any indication, the *Periplus*’ original readership would have been more likely to see the Gorillai as mythical monsters or another animal species altogether.

We must keep in mind that ancient Greek and Roman writers did not understand humans as one evolutionary end of a primate spectrum (McDermott 1938, 91). Monkeys and apes were eerily similar to humans,

⁷As Rhiannon Evans 1999, 66 says of this scene, “removal of the skin is unheard of, even in the case of the war-conquered.” Cf. Oikonomides 1995, 85. Jacob 1991, 22 is an exception to this trend; he insists the Gorillai are human. See Savage and Wyman 1847 for the first publication that names the gorilla, with a footnoted quote from the *Periplus* on p. 420. I refer throughout to the Gorillai as Gorillai rather than Gorillas, as is more common, both because this is the nominative we would expect from the accusative form in Hanno’s text, and because doing so goes some way towards distinguishing ancient Gorillai from 19th- (or 21st-) century gorillas. I suspect that the persistent naming of the Gorillai as Gorillas, and indeed the homonymy of this accusative form and the plural English “gorillas,” results from reading gorillas into the *Periplus*, and is one of the ways this reading has been sustained.

⁸Hairy people are reported in many different cultural traditions. See Forth 2008.

and shared in their form and nature (Connors 2004; Vespa 2017), but ethnographers did not see barbarian peoples as missing links between humans and other primates. Modern commentators tend to convert animal-like “barbarians” into monkeys and apes because evolutionary theory has made this move almost irresistible.

Nevertheless, the Gorillai are not unambiguously human; they are marked linguistically with the adjective *agrioi*, “wild,” and physically as “hairy all over their bodies” (δασεῖαι τοῖς σώμασιν). It was by these marks, rather than by converting the Gorillai into nonhuman primates, that ancient readers “mitigated the horror” (to quote Maria-Zoe Petropolou) of one human skinning another.⁹

In what follows, I trace these marks and their effects not only on the original Greek readership of the *Periplus*, but also later Roman writers—Pomponius Mela, Pliny the Elder, and Athenaeus—who reworked the flaying scene and disseminated it to a Roman audience.¹⁰ These writers reinterpreted the Gorillai as rebellious women, gorgons, and an animal called a *katōblepōn*. They reinterpreted Hanno as well, first as a marvel collector and hero and finally as a Roman general. Although a slight text, the *Periplus of Hanno* and its multiple Imperial receptions offer a rich and nuanced case study for understanding how Greek and Roman writers made knowledge about humanity, animality, and ethnicity through the violent collection of specimens.¹¹

THE PERIPLUS: MAKING MARKS

Although the *Periplus* does not evaluate the skinning of the Gorillai, it does offer readers several strategies for comprehending Hanno’s actions. First, the Gorillai are physically marked as “hairy all over their bodies,” a description that associates them with animals and characterizes them as exploitable. Bulls (Paus. 9.21.2), pigs, bears, and dogs (Aristot. *Hist. an.* 498b 26) are called hairy all over, while other hairy peoples are linked,

⁹Petropolou 2008.

¹⁰The receptions I consider are all those extant in classical antiquity that rework the flaying scene. These receptions have already been identified as such by scholars of the *Periplus*, who treat them as evidence for or against a particular date or authorship (e.g., ps.-Aristot. *Mir. ausc.* Howe 1954, n. 3). I discuss Solinus’ late antique version of the story in note 40. Other ancient authors refer to Hanno and his voyage but do not discuss this scene: Hdt. 4.196; Aristot. *De mir.* 37; Plin. *NH* 2.169, 5.8; Arr. *Ind.* 43.11–12. The flaying scene also appears in the medieval literature, beginning with Isidore of Seville (*Etym.* 14.6.9).

¹¹This article is also a contribution to “body history.” For similar studies, see Most 1992, Richlin 1999, and Gleason 2009.

often explicitly, with nonhuman animals. In Diodorus Siculus, “wild” (*agrioi*) Libyans “exhibiting what is beast-like” (τὸ θηριώδες ἐμφαίνοντες) are “rough and hairy all over their bodies” (αὐχμηροὶ γὰρ ὄντες τοῖς ὅλοις σώμασι, 3.8.2).

The hairy, beast-like human recurs in Roman ethnography. Pliny the Elder reports that the Choromandae are hairy, speechless, and have dog teeth (*NH* 7.24). Pomponius Mela says that the Carmanii of the Red Sea region are hairy everywhere except their heads (*praeter capita toto corpore hirsuti*) and lack most markers of human culture (3.75), similar to the hairy, fish-skin wearing Turtleaters Pliny reports (*NH* 6.109). As Jacob (1991, 22) notes, some of the Indians Alexander’s army encounters in Arrian’s *Indika* are “hairy in body as well as head” (σώματα δασέες καὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς). They have “beast-like claws” (ὄνυχας θηριώδεις), and like the other “wild people” Hanno meets, wear animal skins (Arr. *Ind.* 24.9). The “dog-faced people” (κυνοπρόσωποι ἄνθρωποι) Aelian describes combine the greatest number of animal features: dog heads and teeth, sharp nails, a howl instead of speech, and hair “all over their bodies, like dogs in this way also” (τὸ δὲ πᾶν σῶμα δασεῖς πεφύκασι, κατὰ τοὺς κύνας καὶ τοῦτο, *NA* 10.25).¹² Although the Gorillai are not described as having animal attributes or lacking human culture, hairiness may work as a shorthand for these traits.

Or perhaps Greek readers perceived the Gorillai as mythical monsters. The Gorillai share much in common with satyrs, man-horse hybrids common in Greek textual and material culture. Pausanias describes inhabitants of the Satyridai islands as *andres agrioi*, “wild men” (1.23.5) and Apollo was widely believed to have once flayed the satyr Marsyas. His and the Gorillai’s shared hairiness, wildness, and fate may have caused readers of the *Periplus* to classify the Gorillai as satyr-like hybrids.¹³

Whether readers associated the Gorillai with nonhuman animals or human-animal hybrids, the captured Gorillai’s sex/gender make them doubly different. Although human men in Greek literature are not usually described as “hairy all over,” they are observed to be generally hairier than women (Dean-Jones 1994, 84–5; Plutarch, *Quaest. conviv.* 651 E51) and women are expected to maintain their relative smoothness by

¹²For more on *kynocephaloi*, see Romm 1996 and Smith 2014, 169–70. The inhabitants of the Island of the Sun (Diod. Sic. 2.56.3) are almost hairless and praised for their beauty; this may associate them with the ideal Greek youth. For speech as a marker of humanity, see Sorabji 1993, 78–96.

¹³For satyrs in Greek and Roman myth and art, see Small 1982, Rawson 1987, Weiss 1992, Surtees 2011, Lissarague 2013, Heinemann 2016, and Newby 2016.

depilating (Bain 1982; Kilmer 1982; Lee 2009; cf. Gleason 1990, 399–402; 1995, 68–70). A woman in Aristophanes’ *Ecclesiazousae* says that she has “thrown the razor out of the house, so that she might become hairy all over (δασυνθειῖν ὅλη) and no longer look like a woman” (65–7).¹⁴ As hairy women, the Gorillai are even further from the standard Greek concept of humanity and its protections.¹⁵

Adding another dimension to their alterity, Hanno calls the Gorillai *anthrōpoi agrioi*, “wild human beings.” This description links them to people he encounters in an earlier part of his journey (*HP* 9) and who, like the Gorillai, respond to the Carthaginians by attacking them with rocks. This behavior is consistent with *anthrōpoi agrioi* described in the earlier literary tradition. In Homer’s *Odyssey*, King Alcinous says that *anthrōpoi agrioi* are harsh (*chalepoi*) and lawless (*adikoi*), and contrasts them with god-fearing *philoxenoi*, those who treat strangers with respect (*Od.* 8.575–6). According to Alcinous, *agrioi* indexes cultural failings that can be used to distinguish kinds of human beings. Yet when Alcinous asks Odysseus to organize the strangers he has met into these two groups, *agrioi* and *philoxenoi*, Odysseus responds by describing the Cyclopes, humanoid monsters, as *agrioi*, thereby connecting “wildness” to the nonhuman.

Later authors explore this connection both in its cultural and physiological aspects. Plato says that human beings are a “tame” (*hēmeros*) sort of animal (*zōon*) if they receive the right sort of training; if not, they are “most wild” (*Leg.* 766a; cf. *Resp.* 589e, *Soph.* 222b; Aristot. [*Pr.*] 895b) and inseparable from “the wildest beasts” (*Leg.* 875a). For Plato, tameness can be learned or acquired through human culture, but wildness appears fixed in the body. In ethnographic writings, peoples described as *agrioi* are often catalogued alongside those with semi-human or nonhuman features. Herodotus reports that the “wild men and women” (οἱ ἄγριοι ἄνδρες καὶ γυναῖκες ἄγριοι) of Libya live next to *kunocephaloi* (dog-heads), and *akephaloi*, those with eyes in their chests instead of heads (*Hdt.* 4.191.6), while Diodorus Siculus describes *agrioi*, also called “dog-milkers” (κυναμολγοί), who hunt with dogs (3.31.1).

¹⁴ τὸ ξυρὸν δέ γ’ ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας
ἔρριψα πρῶτον, ἵνα δασυνθειῖν ὅλη
καὶ μηδὲν εἶην ἔτι γυναῖκα προσφερέης (*Ecc.* 65–7). Quoted by Jacob 1991, 22.

¹⁵The Gorillai are both similar to and critically different from hairy women described in the Hippocratic corpus. Like Phaethousa and Nanno, two women whose bodies “masculinized and became hairy all over” (σῶμα ἡνδρώθη, καὶ ἔδασύνθη πάντα, *Hippoc.* [*Ep.*] 6.8.32), the Gorillai represent aberrant femininity. But their hairiness is not described as an illness, nor is their sex/gender a matter of debate. For Phaethousa and Nanno, see Holmes 2012, 15, King 2013, and King 2015.

Greek writers of the Roman empire continue to connect wildness and physical difference. The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* describes *agrioi* Kirradai with flattened noses as well as cannibalistic horse-faced people (*hippioprosōpoi*, 62.9–10). In a passage of Strabo’s geography attributed to Megasthenes, a lost Hellenistic historian, wild people are found alongside those without noses, others who sleep in their ears, very short people, and “other monstrous things” (*allōn teratōdōn*, 15.1.57 = BNJ 31; cf. Pliny *NH* 7.25). The fact that ethnographers place *anthrōpoi agrioi* in catalogues of peoples with fantastically different bodies implies both that the *anthrōpoi agrioi* are physically “normal” and that they are as culturally monstrous as monsters themselves.

For readers of the *Periplus*, the wild Gorillai would have seemed suspiciously far from human, and the narrative of the *Periplus* reinforces this distance. With the exception of the Troglodytes (7), Hanno characterizes every community he meets as friend or foe. The Carthaginians “became friends” (*philoī*) with the Lixitai, while the Aithiopēs they encounter next are “unfriendly” or “inhospitable” (*axenoi*, 7). The “wild people” (*anthrōpoi agrioi*) who inhabit the mountains overhanging an island in Lake Chretēs “struck us with stones and prevented us from disembarking” (9),¹⁶ while the second group of Aithiopēs they meet “fled from us and could not abide our presence” (11).¹⁷ Following Odysseus’ model, the *Periplus* organizes other peoples by their utility to Hanno and the Carthaginians: the first people they encounter are the friendly Lixitai and the last are the resistant Gorillai. Since the voyage is centered on Carthaginian interests and told from Hanno’s point of view, the mutilation of the Gorillai, although extraordinary, is not entirely surprising; as Hanno explores further into Africa, he meets more and more opposition, and finally strikes back. By organizing the *Periplus* around *xenia* (Jacob 1991, 16), the author has positioned Hanno as a wanderer and potential guest-friend rather than a violent colonist.

On the contrary, calling the Gorillai *agrioi* implies that they are the violent ones. An *anēr agrios* is usually a violent man (or semi-divine hero), e.g., Hector or Achilles in the *Iliad* (8.96, 21.314), or Hannibal in Appian’s history of the Punic Wars (*Hann.* 43). Characterizing an entire people as *agrios* naturalizes this propensity for violence and implies that Greeks who encounter *agrioi* may be justified in striking preemptively. Plato’s *Protagoras*, our main testimony for Pherecrates’ lost play *Agrioi*

¹⁶ οἱ πέτροις βάλλοντες ἀπήραξαν ἡμᾶς, κωλύοντες ἐκβῆναι (*HP* 9).

¹⁷ Αἰθίοπες φεύγοντες ἡμᾶς καὶ οὐχ ὑπομένοντες (*HP* 11).

(Kock 1880, 1.5–18), argues that the worst criminal of a society with laws and education should be considered a just man compared to *agrioi*. The Gorillai are not violent until provoked, but calling them *agrioi* presumes violence and underwrites Hanno's attack.

Although later than the *Periplus*, two stories about *agrioi* indicate how readers of the *Periplus* might have expected Hanno's encounter with the Gorillai to unfold. In Pausanias' description of the satyrs, mentioned above, the Carian sailor Euphemus and his crew are blown off course and forced to approach islands inhabited by red-haired, horse-tailed *andres agrioi* (Paus. 1.23.6). When Euphemus docks, satyrs (*satyroi*) rush his ships and attack the women onboard. The sailors respond by distracting the satyrs with a barbarian woman (*barbaron gunaika*), who is outraged (*hubrizein*) "not only in the usual place, but also in a similar way all over her body" (οὐ μόνον ἢ καθέστηκεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ πᾶν ὁμοίως σῶμα). Euphemus behaves like a proper Greek traveler towards the satyrs, his potential hosts, with terrible results for the women under his care, including the non-Greek woman he hands over to be raped. This barbarian woman complicates any easy division between savage monsters and virtuous (human) Greeks; she is both human and relatively unprotected compared to the Greek women on board. Nevertheless, the satyrs' *hybris*, which they visit over the woman's entire body, sets them apart from the humans in the story. If Greek readers expect the Gorillai to attack Hanno's crew, striking them first and abusing their corpses may seem justified.

As in Pausanias, Achilles Tatius' novel *Leucippe and Clitophon* imperils a woman to demonstrate the savagery of *anthrōpoi agrioi*. Seeking his shipwrecked companions, Clitophon, Leucippe, and their friends are captured by *agrioi* who defend themselves, much as the Gorillai and other *anthrōpoi agrioi* in the *Periplus* do, by throwing rocks embedded in clods of earth (3.13.3). They prepare to sacrifice Leucippe, binding her "as sculptors represent Marsyas fixed to a tree" (οἷον ποιούσιν οἱ κοροπλάθοι τὸν Μαρσύαν ἐκ τοῦ φυτοῦ δεδεμένον, 3.15.4). This remarkable simile further suggests that readers of the *Periplus* may have connected the Gorillai to satyrs, and perhaps implies that Hanno skins the Gorillai as Apollo skins Marsyas because he expects this treatment from wild human beings.¹⁸

Greek readers grappling with the encounter between Hanno and the Gorillai were presented with *anthrōpoi* marked as animal-like, monster-like, sex/gender transgressive, and potentially violent, traits that

¹⁸Contrary to these examples, Lucian's *True History* (2.44) stages an encounter between Greeks and *agrioi* that ends differently.

earned them not only death but mutilation. These marks leverage familiar hierarchies—self over ethnic other, human over nonhuman animal, sex/gender-conforming over non-conforming (DuBois 1982)—to avoid or mitigate the taboo against corpse mutilation. The Gorillai are both *anthrōpoi* and marked as outside the protections of that category.

Paradoxically, it is the violence done to the Gorillai that confirms all these other marks of nonhumanity. Hanno's sovereignty allows him, as the dominant member of each of the above hierarchies and a literal king, to decide the "state of exception," as Schmitt said (1985, 5), to violently remove the Gorillai from the category of the human. In McCracken's words, skinning is a "technology of sovereignty,"¹⁹ not only because flaying the skin involves exercising power over bodies but because, in a Greek context, it also entails exercising power over the categories of human and nonhuman.

As a technology of sovereignty, Hanno's actions are not opposed to his project of founding colonies, but an extension of the same process. In his capacity as sovereign, Hanno marks territory for Carthage and distinguishes members of the Carthaginian community from those outside it. This marking is not a supra-legal but rather, as Dayan says, hyperlegal: "There is no such thing as a legal black hole, as being beyond the law. . . . It is not an absence of law but an abundance of it that allows government to engage in seemingly illegal practices" (2011, 72). Hanno's violence against the Gorillai, which the *Periplus* authorizes by marking them as other (and less) than human, asserts both that human beings are generally protected from skinning and that Hanno, as king and hero of the story, has the power to dehumanize them.

In this role, Hanno's ethnic markers are highly significant. Both Greek and Roman texts associate foreigners, especially foreign kings, with outrageous violence.²⁰ This is an especially strong theme in Herodotus' characterization of the Persians, including a scene in which Cambyses has Sisamnes flayed and his skin made into a chair (5.25).²¹ Herodotus tempers examples of Persian cruelty by recording Darius' respect for human remains (6.30), and commenting that Xerxes contravened Persian custom

¹⁹ McCracken 2017. Cf. Mills 2013 and Rutledge 2012, 194–5.

²⁰ With a few exceptions. Plutarch says that Pherecydes was killed by the Spartans and his skin preserved "in accordance with an oracle" (κατά τι λόγιον, *Pel.* 21.3). This story is told in the context of a debate about human sacrifice which reconfirms the taboo against sacrificing people. While the gods sometimes demand human sacrifice they also must specifically call for flaying. See Bremmer 1993.

²¹ For Persian acts of violence see Jacobs 2009 and Zimmermann 2009.

when he impaled Leonidas' head (7.238). Yet it is telling that Pausanias, a character within the *Histories*, says that desecrating the dead is something *barbaroi* are known to do (9.79; cf. 1.140) and we can conclude that this was a popular opinion among Greeks of the 5th century B.C.E.²²

Greek writers also attribute this extreme violence to non-Greeks in other regions. Tomyris, the queen of the Massagetae in Herodotus, forces Cyrus' corpse to "drink" human blood (1.214), and Herodotus' Scythians and Taurians are known to decapitate and eat their dead (1.73); Herodotus reports that the Scythians flay their enemies and display (*peripherein*, 4.64) the skins, just as Gauls in Diodorus Siculus display the heads of their enemies (Diod. Sic. 5.29.5).²³ In Aristophanes' *Birds*, the chorus of birds exhort one another to "tear, pluck, strike, and flay" (*deire*) unwanted interlopers (365). Civilized human beings do not flay or dismember other humans; this is the behavior of ethnic others and nonhuman animals.

In particular, Roman readers of the *Periplus* could read Hanno as a "cruel Carthaginian," an ethnic stereotype parallel to the cruel Persians of Herodotus.²⁴ Although Punic "untrustworthiness" is a more famous failing of the stereotyped Carthaginians, Romans also told stories about Carthaginian torture and human sacrifice (Starks 1999). In Appian's *Roman Wars*, for example, Hasdrubal tortures and flays his Roman prisoners (*Pun.* 118) and in Cato's now-fragmentary oration *On the Carthaginian War*, the Carthaginians "buried people half-way down in the ground and encircled them with fire" (*homines defoderunt in terram dimidiatos ignemque circumposuerunt*, 37.3).

A set of late Roman texts and their sculptural counterparts highlight the persistence of the "cruel barbarian" trope. In Hyginus' 1st-century C.E. collection of myths, Apollo defeats the satyr Marsyas in a music contest, as usual (165). But instead of flaying Marsyas himself, he enlists a Scythian to do the deed. A century later, Philostratus the Younger caricatures this wild-haired, craggy-browed Scythian, and depicts him sharpening the knife and "grinning" (*sesēren*) in anticipation of what Apollo has asked him to

²²There is some historical evidence that the Assyrians displayed human remains (Saggs 1963, 149–50; Joannès 2000; Collins 2006, 2–3; Jacobs 2009; Rollinger 2010), and may have provided Herodotus, Ctesias, and other historians with their imagery. As Colburn 2011 has noted, Greek writers, especially Ctesias, provide the majority of our evidence for historical Persian flaying (*FrGrH* 688, F9, F16, F26) and dismemberment (F15, F16).

²³Diodorus comments that the Gauls wear their hair like satyrs (Diod. Sic. 5.28.2), underscoring the "monstrosity" of Gallic violence.

²⁴And as is the case in Herodotus, this stereotype is complicated by positive representations. See Gruen 2011, 119.

do (*Imag.* 2). These texts mirror numerous Roman sculptures and other visual representations of Marsyas bound, sometimes hanging from a tree, often with Apollo and a barbarian nearby (Rawson 1987, 41–66; Weiss 1992). When Apollo outsources Marsyas' flaying to an ethnic other, he reinscribes the stereotype of the cruel barbarian. Apollo enjoys the sight of Marsyas being flayed, but he does not do the flaying himself. Romans who read later iterations of the Gorillai story could, like Apollo, watch Hanno flaying the Gorillai at a safe distance.

THE STATUS OF DEAD BODIES: CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

There are continuous strands of ethnic and ethnographic discourse that bind Greek and Roman texts together,²⁵ as well as differences that reveal change over time. While the story of Apollo skinning Marsyas is common in earlier Greek myth, Hyginus and Philostratus' Apollo delegates this task to a barbarian. The deed is not forbidden, but the anxiety around it must be managed.

Before turning to the Roman Imperial receptions of the *Periplus*, we must first take account of cultural institutions that disrupted the earlier Graeco-Roman taboo against corpse abuse. Under the empire, even Roman citizens could suffer post-mortem if they were convicted of crimes against the state. Such *poenae post mortem* were carried out legally against elites and taken up informally by mobs; a number of the Imperial household suffered corpse-abuse for their alleged crimes.²⁶ Although the mutilation of citizen corpses caused outrage, this lamentable reality of civic strife probably also desensitized Imperial readers to extreme violence like Hanno's. Moreover, the entertainment and judicial bodies of the empire regularly tortured criminal non-citizens and displayed their corpses in the arena and along roads in procedures called *summa supplicia*. The fate of the Gorillai, as marginal humans, aberrant women, and resistant captives, might seem all too normal, as Rome acquired "the damned" (*noxii*), often

²⁵ For example, the Britons under the command of Boudicca, who cuts off the breasts of Roman women and sews the breasts to their mouths (Cass. Dio, 62.7). Witches, like those in the Thrace of Apuleius' *Golden Ass* (2.21–2), were also feared to mutilate corpses.

²⁶ E.g., Galba and Piso (Tac. *Hist.* 1.40–9), discussed in Joseph 2012; for other examples, see Coleman 1990; Kyle 1999, 98; Hope 2000; Varner 2004, 3; and Robinson 2006. On the role of the people in carrying out executions, see Barry 2008. For the proscriptions, see Hinard 1985. For crucifixion in particular, see Cook 2014.

captives of conquest, and saw them as a “surplus commodity, a leisure resource, a byproduct of imperialism” (Kyle 1998, 92).²⁷

It is important to note, however, that the Imperial practices of *poenae post mortem* and *summa supplicia* did not fully erase anxiety about the treatment of a human corpse, even when that corpse was non-Roman or non-conforming; restrictions on medical dissection confirm that the taboo against displaying dead humans remained strong even in the Imperial period. Considering dissection practices in some detail can explain the ambivalence with which Roman readers and writers would have approached the *Periplus*.

Aristotle began the practice of dissecting and vivisectioning animals, which Galen continued in the 2nd century C.E., but it is generally accepted that human beings were not regularly dissected or vivisected in antiquity except in Alexandria in the 3rd century B.C.E.²⁸ Galen performed many animal dissections and vivisections in public, but the Greek taboo against desecrating human remains appears to have extended to dissection as well.²⁹ When human dissections did take place in Rome, they were almost certainly private.

Nevertheless, Galen’s infrequent allusions to human dissection reveal a great deal about who could be dissected and under what circumstances. Galen says there were barbarians whom “doctors in the war against the Germani had permission to dissect,” (*De comp. med.* 13.604; cf. *De anat.* 2.385).³⁰ This indicates both that the bodies of *barbaroi* were less protected from the defilement of dissection (Nutton 2013, 133) and that, nevertheless, permission (*exousia*) to dissect barbarians—even those Galen elsewhere compares to nonhuman animals (*De san.* Kuhn 6.51.8)—was required; the Roman doctors do not dissect at will. Galen says that

²⁷The Rabbis tell stories about Romans flaying R. Ishmael, preserving his flayed face, and using it in Roman ritual (*Ten Martyrs*, II, IV–V; VII.22.65–73; IX.54.1–6; cf. *b. ‘Abod. Zar.* 11b). Abusch 2007, 338 comments, “The ritual is deeply obscure, although it seems to reflect Jewish perceptions of Roman barbarism.” My thanks to Rachel Rafael Neis for this story.

²⁸For an overview of anatomy in antiquity, see Nutton 2013, 130–41. For the evidence of human dissection and vivisection in Alexandria, see Longrigg 1988. For Galen’s anatomical demonstrations, see von Staden 1995 and Gleason 2009.

²⁹For Galen’s animal experiments, see Debru 1998; Rocca 2003, 67–76; and Rocca 2008. Gleason 2009, 111 detects anxiety in Galen about the homologies between humans and nonhuman animals that underwrite his anatomy, which Vespa 2017 elaborates. See in particular *De anat.* 4.1 and 4.423.

³⁰οἱ κατὰ τὸν Γερμανικὸν πόλεμον ἰατροὶ ἔχοντες ἐξουσίαν ἀνατομῆς σωμάτων βαρβαρικῶν (*De comp. med.* 13.604).

much has been learned from the bodies of the outcast: robbers left on the side of the road, those condemned to the beasts, and exposed infants (*De anat.* 2.385–6), but does not himself admit to seeking out these corpses. Instead, he takes advantage of graves opened and exposed by flood (*De anat.* 2.221), casting dissection as a side effect of the flood’s grave-robbing. Elsewhere he says that he obtained the body of a thief who had been repelled and left by those he had attacked. Galen deflects responsibility from himself by emphasizing that the thief’s victims had abandoned his body to the birds, and that the birds had picked it clean “as if for instruction” (ὡς εἰς διδασκαλίαν, *De anat.* 2.222). Galen’s remarks may indicate a clandestine trade in marginalized corpses, but his defensiveness also demonstrates that this practice could be expected to excite the negative judgments of his readers.

Galen’s ambivalent attitude toward dissection is mirrored in Pomponius Mela, Pliny the Elder, and Athenaeus’ reception of the *Periplus*. The *Periplus* ends by saying that Hanno took the Gorillai skins back to Carthage, but Roman texts that rework the flaying scene focus on the skins’ later value as specimens, exemplary models that create new knowledge of the wider world for those at the center of the empire (Murphy 2004; König and Whitmarsh 2007). In the empire, the function of the Gorillai skins as specimens is a further mark that authorizes their violent collection.

Galen’s writing also shows us that Romans managed their ambivalence to corpse abuse by carefully aligning the status of dissector and dissected—or in Hanno’s story, flayer and flayed. Birds and rivers can prepare a corpse for dissection, but Galen cannot. Doctors may dissect barbarians, but only with permission, presumably the permission of a ruler. As we will see in the Roman receptions of the *Periplus*, a barbarian can skin a human being, but a Roman skins only nonhumans. When a Roman takes Hanno’s place in Athenaeus’ version of the story, the Gorillai become animals. Skinning is a vehicle for the performance of ethnicity as well as humanity or animality.

POMPONIUS MELA: SKINS AS PROOF

In his 1st-century C.E. *Description of the World*, Pomponius Mela tells Hanno’s story in a section on Africa (3.93):

Super eos grandis litoris flexus grandem insulam includit, in qua tantum feminas esse narrant toto corpore hirsutas et sine coitu marum sua sponte fecundas, adeo asperis efferisque moribus, ut quaedam contineri ne reluc-

tentur vix vinculis possint. Hoc Hanno rettulit et quia detracta occisis coria pertulerat, fides habita est.

The bend of a long shore encloses a large island, on which they say that only women live, hairy all over their bodies and able to bear children on their own, without sex with men. They have such rough, savage customs that it is scarcely possible to hold some of them with chains and prevent them from resisting. Hanno brought back this [report], and because he had taken the skins, removed from those who had been killed, it was given credence.

While the phrase *sine coitu*, “without sex,” is elsewhere used only of animals (Plin. *NH* 9.178; Columella *Rust.* 6.27.7), Mela includes the *feminae hirsutae* in a catalogue of *homines* (1.11). Mela’s idea of the *hominum genus* (1.65) and its varieties (3.62) includes people with extremely different customs and bodies, including the headless Blemmyes, who he says are “scarcely human” (*vix iam homines* 1.23, 1.48); only the satyrs “have nothing human except their appearance” (*praeter effigiem nihil humani*, 1.48; cf. Plin. *NH* 5.8). Mela excludes animal-human hybrids from humanity but not people with non-standard anatomy, like the *feminae hirsutae*.

Despite this capacious understanding of *homines*, Mela’s hairy women are marked for death. Whereas the *Periplus* represented the female Gorillai in the majority, Mela casts the *feminae hirsutae* as a single-sex society (Müller 1855, xxx, sec. 42), evoking the terrors of gynaeocracy (Zeitlin 1984, 163) and predicting Hanno’s violent response. Mela also gives the skins a purpose: they lend credibility (*fides*) to Hanno’s report. Instead of being dispatched to found colonies, as the *Periplus* claims, Mela says that Hanno has been sent “for exploration” (*exploratum*, 3.89). The skins, if not taken in order to prove the women’s existence, become a proof in retrospect: “because he had taken the skins, [his report] was given credence.”

The skins lend *fides* to Hanno’s report because they demonstrate that the *feminae hirsutae* are real beings rather than the creations of myth or the tall tales of unscrupulous travelers. They are also a doorway into the experience of the voyage itself. By bringing back the skins as a proof, Hanno allows Carthaginians in the story (and Mela’s Roman readers) to meet the women without any danger to themselves. This is the miracle of specimen collection, which allows others to discover the wonders of the world at a comfortable distance (Haraway 1989; Parrish 2006, 123). Skins are to some degree metonymic of living bodies,³¹ but the skins

³¹ Colley 2014, 65–6. Widdows 2006, 81–95 describes the process of preserving skins in antiquity.

also strategically fail to represent what the living women were like. They replicate the extreme difference of the women by preserving their most unusual characteristic, but do not capture their movement, speech, or resistance. If the skins allow spectators a vicarious experience of travel, it is a fully sanitized experience. When Mela's Carthaginians see the skins, they can encounter the women as they wish, both other and benign.

Mela employs several other rhetorical strategies to convert the women into specimens. Instead of narrating their capture by the Carthaginians, he subordinates this event to an ethnographic description: "they have such rough, savage (*efferis*) customs that they are scarcely able to be contained with chains and prevented from resisting." Hanno's capture of the Gorillai, in the *Periplus* a one-time event, is here transformed into a permanent characteristic underwritten by the passive voice. When the women are habitually captured, Mela instructs, this is how it happens. The adjective *efferis*, "savage," a cognate of *ferus*, "wild animal," marks the Gorillai not only as like animals but also targets for hunt and capture. In a parallel scene in Aelian, "dog-faced" (*kunoprosōpoi*) people are "difficult to capture" (*dusalōtoi*, 10.25.14), a word that naturalizes the Greek desire to capture them.

Mela also subordinates the flaying of the Gorillai to Hanno's report: "Hanno brought back this [report], and because he had taken the skins, removed from those who had been killed, it was given credence." In Mela's version, we do not see Hanno kill and flay the women, we learn that he has done so by way of the skins and their ability to prove the event. In the logic of Mela's account, Hanno's report of the voyage generates the need for the skins and the violence used to obtain them. Yet Mela does not describe the flaying in detail, further emphasizing the outcome of the encounter. Hanno's violence is both authorized and obscured.

Mela may cloak Hanno's actions to differentiate them from the aberrant acts of other "barbarians." Although Mela does not usually denigrate non-Romans,³² his description of some customs, like human sacrifice (2.11, 3.18) as *immanis*, "outrageously savage," does place certain peoples in a liminally civilized category.³³ Hanno and the Carthaginians are not treated as ethnographic subjects, but Hanno skins the *feminae hirsutae* in a geography that pays attention to other instances of post-

³² Romer 1998, 42, n. 30 notes a rare expression of ethnocentrism at 1.28.

³³ Mela uses the word *immanis* to describe non-Romans, nonhuman animals, and forces of nature: a lake (1.51), snakes (1.99, 3.62), land (2.8), Taurians' customs (2.11), people in Gaul and Germania (3.18, 3.26), and the mouth of the Euphrates (3.77). Like *agrius* in Greek, *immanis* associates certain peoples with ferocious nonhumans.

mortem desecration by non-Romans. These include the Essedones and their neighbors, who repurpose the skulls of the dead (2.9), and the Geloni, who wear the skins of their enemies (2.13). In these passages, Mela lingers over the act of slaughter and corpse abuse. The Essedones “consume the very bodies [of their parents] in a feast after they have been ripped up (*laniata*) and mixed with the entrails of sacrificed cattle. When they have skillfully (*fabre*) polished the skulls, they bind them with gold and use them as cups” (*De sit.* 2.9).³⁴ Although Mela uses a number of passive forms here, as in his description of the *feminae hirsutae*, the Essedones remain agents of violence. The adverb *fabre*, “skillfully,” contains a note of admiration, but also highlights the horror of bodies being “ripped up” (*laniata*). Mela’s description of Essedonian customs, unlike his version of Hanno’s story, paints a vivid, specific picture.

Mela further differentiates Hanno from these *immanes* by linking him to a Roman emperor. Earlier in book 3, Mela celebrates the emperor Claudius’ “opening” of Britain: “as the conqueror of till then unvanquished and unknown peoples, he brings back the proof (*fides*) of his particular accomplishments” (*nec indomitarum modo ante se verum ignotarum quoque gentium victor, propriarum rerum fidem. . . portat, De sit.* 3.49). The language of *fides* ties Hanno’s “accomplishment” to Claudius’, a connection reinforced by the image of the *feminae hirsutae* in chains, subdued as if they were rebellious Imperial subjects. While Hanno skins the women for the noble purpose of knowledge, the Geloni flay people for mere clothing (2.14).

PLINY THE ELDER: HEROIC DEDICATIONS

When Pliny the Elder reports Hanno’s voyage in his 1st-century C.E. *Natural History*, he calls the people Hanno encounters Gorgades, inhabitants of the Gorgades islands, “once the home of the gorgons,” (*gorgonum quondam domus, NH* 6.200):³⁵

Hanno, the commander of the Carthaginians, entered into [the Gorgades islands] and reported that the bodies of the women were hairy, but that because of their agility the men had escaped. He dedicated the skins of

³⁴Corpora ipsa laniata et caesis pecorum visceribus inmixta epulando consumunt. Capita ubi fabre expolivere, auro vincta pro poculis gerunt. (*De sit.* 2.9).

³⁵penetravit in eas Hanno Poenorum imperator prodiditque hirta feminarum corpora, viros pernicitate evasisse; duarum Gorgadam cutes argumenti et miraculi gratia in Iunonis templo posuit, spectatas usque ad Carthaginem captam (*NH* 6.200).

two of the Gorgades for the sake of proof and wonder in the temple of Juno, where they were seen until Carthage was captured.

“Gorgades” is usually translated as “gorgons” in this passage (e.g., Rackham 1938), but I have kept the original term to reflect the text’s ambivalence about whether the women who live on these islands are gorgons or have taken up residence in their place; the fact that the gorgons “once” lived there does not make clear whether Hanno’s voyage preceded or postdated their extinction. This equivocation gives Pliny plausible deniability if he is accused of testifying to the existence of mythical creatures and at the same time allows him to tie his Gorgades to the gorgons and the myths about them.

Like Mela, Pliny considers many different kinds of people. Although he qualifies the satyrs as “animals” (*animal*, 7.24) having “nothing of human character except their shape” (*praeter figuram nihil moris humani*) and the Goat-pans (*Aegipanae*) as “half-animal” (*semiferus*), he does not downgrade the headless Blemmyes or the crawling Strapfoots (5.8). On the other hand, Pliny uses the word *monstrificus* to cast certain peoples, plants, and nonhuman animals as stranger than others, including those without expected body parts (6.187). The Gorgades’ bodies are odd enough that Pliny might call them *monstrificae*. But the fact that Pliny applies the adjective *monstrificus* to all human, menstruating women (7.64) must mean that he uses the word to express amazement rather than to differentiate human from nonhuman (or else Pliny really believes women are not in fact human).³⁶

That Pliny identifies the Gorillai as gorgons or their heirs requires some explanation.³⁷ Hesiod places the gorgons in an imaginary geography, beyond Ocean, near the Hesperides and Night (*Th.* 270–83), but writers beginning with Herodotus tend to locate the gorgons in Libya or greater Africa (Ogden 2008, 48) and rationalizing mythographers like Palaephatus (c. 4th century B.C.E., Hawes 2014) convert them into Ethiopian women. Kernē, where Palaephatus places the gorgons, appears in the *Periplus* as well (*HP* 8–10), although the Gorillai inhabit a nearby island.³⁸ It is pos-

³⁶Whether Pliny’s conception of the human is primarily biological or cultural is a matter of opinion; see Benabou 1975, 151. For more on human-animal hybrids in Pliny and other Roman writers, see Cuny-Le Callet 2005, especially 165–85. Lowe 2015 surveys the changing meanings of *monstr-* words in Augustan Rome. For more on Pliny’s monsters, see Gevaert and Laes 2013.

³⁷See Ogden 2008 and Wilk 2000.

³⁸This accords with other texts that use islands to create a “sacred extreme” (Clay and Purvis 1999, 15–24).

sible that Palaephatus wrote under the influence of the *Periplus*; the dating of each is too uncertain to tell. The fact that both Palaephatus' gorgons and the *Periplus*' Gorillai live in Africa at or near Kernē indicates that the association between Gorillai and gorgons long preceded Pliny, and that this association was complicated by the gradual reinterpretation of the gorgons in writers like Palaephatus.³⁹

Two later rationalizing accounts of the gorgons shed more light on the Gorillai-Gorgades type. Diodorus Siculus' 1st-century B.C.E. *Library* describes the gorgons as a human race of women living in Africa (3.52.1–3.55.3), much like the Amazons. This episode is thought to originate with Dionysius Skytobrachion's (now lost) 3rd-century B.C.E. *Libyan Stories* (as Rusten 1982, calls it). We cannot know the degree to which Diodorus has adapted Dionysius or added information from other sources, but the Dionysius–Diodorus account appears strongly related to Palaephatus'. The plot of the gorgon episode in Diodorus so resembles the conclusion of the *Periplus* that the two texts must be in some sort of dialogue, although the direction of influence is uncertain because of the difficulty of determining Diodorus' effect on Dionysius as well as the date of the *Periplus* itself.

Pausanias gives an account of the gorgons similar to Palaephatus', then adds a variation he heard from Procles, the son of the (otherwise unknown) Carthaginian Eucrates (2.21.6):

Λιβύης ἡ ἔρημος καὶ ἄλλα παρέχεται θηρία ἀκούσασιν οὐ πιστὰ καὶ ἄνδρες ἐνταῦθα ἄγριοι καὶ ἄγρια γίνονται γυναῖκες· ἔλεγε τε ὁ Προκλῆς ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἄνδρα ἰδεῖν κομισθέντα ἐς Ῥώμην· εἴκαζεν οὖν πλανηθεῖσαν γυναῖκα ἐκ τούτων καὶ ἀφικομένην ἐπὶ τὴν λίμνην τὴν Τριτωνίδα λυμαίνεσθαι τοὺς προσοίκους, ἐς ὃ Περσεὺς ἀπέκτεινε αὐτήν·

The Libyan desert produces other incredible animals as well as wild men and women. Procles said that he saw one of the men who had been carried off to Rome. So he guessed that a woman wandered away from them, arrived at Lake Triton, and mistreated the surrounding people until Perseus killed her.

This story may draw on Pliny's account of the Gorgades, but also seems connected to the *Periplus* itself; the *agrius* man is "carried off"

³⁹Palaephatus says that the (human) gorgons' father Phorcys was an Aithiopian who lived on the island of Kernē beyond the pillars of Heracles (31). In Hopman's (2012, 181; cf. 187–8) taxonomy of rationalizations, this is a "long-term rationalization," "which tie[s] myth to the long-term realities of topography or ethnography." For the problematic term "rationalization," see Hawes 2014, 3, n. 2.

(*kosmithenta*) to Rome just like the Gorillai skins, which Hanno “carried off” to Carthage (*ekomisamen*, *HP* 18). Since the word Gorillai appears nowhere else in Greek literature, some scholars have wondered whether it represents a scribal error for gorgons.⁴⁰ Whether or not this is the case, we can say that the Gorillai of the *Periplus* and the rationalized gorgons of Palaephatus, Diodorus Siculus, and Pausanias share a tradition.

As “Gorgades,” Pliny’s hairy women are tied to myth and he uses them to recast Hanno as a mythological hero.⁴¹ Like Perseus or Athena, who slayed a gorgon to keep her powerful head, Hanno has accomplished a heroic labor and brought back the Gorgades’ skin for the honor of his city (cf. Eur. *Ion* 989). As in Mela, where the defeat of the single-sex *feminae hirsutae* evoked Greek and Roman fears of gynaeocracy, Pliny has Hanno fulfill the fantasy of men conquering female monsters (Zeitlin 1984; Hopman 2012; Lowe 2015; cf. Jacob 1991, 23). Readers who know Diodorus Siculus’ gorgons are especially likely see Hanno’s actions as triumphs of the patriarchal order. In Diodorus Siculus’ account, Heracles exterminates both Amazons and gorgons, “thinking it would be an awful thing if he suffered any people (*ethnos*) to be ruled by women, given that he had decided to be the equal benefactor of the whole race (*genos*) of human beings” (Diod. Sic. 3.55.3).⁴²

But Pliny intervenes in Hanno’s story by locating the Gorgades skins in a temple of Juno, where Hanno has “dedicated” them (*posuit*) “for the sake of proof and wonder” (*argumenti et miraculi gratia*).⁴³ While

⁴⁰Mund-Dopchie 1989, 332. Craig Williams suggested to me that there may be a real or imagined etymological connection between Gorillai and gorgons.

⁴¹Solinus’ late third or early 4th-century C.E. reception of Hanno’s story (6.10.10–12) provides a helpful contrast to Pliny’s. Although this version closely tracks Pliny’s *Natural History*, Solinus calls the gorgons “monsters” (*monstra*) and a “monstrous race” (*monstruosa gens*) “really, even now” (*sane usque adhuc*), emphatically distancing his gorgons from the human women in the *Periplus*, Diodorus, Mela, and Pliny. Although Solinus uses *monstrificus* and *monstruosus* much as Pliny does, his use of *monstrum* elsewhere is confined to nonhuman animals (27.26, 27.33, 27.34, 30.20, 32.27, 34.2, 40.11, 52.39, 61.19). Describing the gorgons as both *monstra* and a *monstruosa gens* designates them as human-animal hybrids. Solinus’ departure from Pliny demonstrates the continuing debate about the humanity of the hairy women Hanno encounters, as well as the gorgons at large. See Hillard (2014) for a full consideration of Solinus and his sources.

⁴²δεινὸν ἡγοούμενος, εἰ προελόμενος τὸ γένος κοινῆι τῶν ἀνθρώπων εὐεργετεῖν περίοψεται τινα τῶν ἐθνῶν γυναικοκρατούμενα (Diod. Sic. 3.55.3). See Ní Mheallaigh 2015, 263 n.9 for Roman reports of wild people and their capture. For Heracles and the Amazons see DuBois 1982. For other monstrous women and their connection to the gorgons, see Ogden 2008, 56–60.

⁴³Perhaps a hendiadys for “proof of the wonder.” Carey 2003, 43 notes Pliny’s interest, here and elsewhere, in “the power of a physical object to testify to a reality.”

Mela noted the ability of the skins to lend credibility (*fides*) to his report, Pliny makes this the explicit purpose of the dedication: Hanno dedicates the skins “for the sake of” (*gratia*) proof and wonder. Like Mela, Pliny intertextually reinforces Hanno’s role as a benefactor. Referring in book 7 to the amazing range of humanity in the world, Pliny says: “Nature in her ingenuity has made these and similar kinds of the human race as playthings for herself, and wonders (*miracula*) for us” (7.32).⁴⁴ Hanno, like Nature herself, furnishes wonders for Pliny’s readers.

Placing the skins in a temple associates Hanno with other heroes who dedicated the remains of animals and monsters they had slain. In Hyginus’ *Fables*, Phrixus sacrifices the ram with the golden fleece and dedicates (*posuit*) its skin (*pellem*) in the temple of Mars (Hyg. *Fab.* 3.2.4–5). Similarly, Apollo dedicates (*posuit*) the bones (*ossa*) of the Python in his own temple (Hyg. *Fab.* 140.5.4–5; cf. Diod. Sic. 4.47.1). The skin of the satyr Marsyas is often said to hang in Celaenae, in Phrygia, at or near the Marsyas river (Hdt. 7.26), sometimes in the town square (Xen. *An.* 1.2.8), sometimes in a cave, where the skin moves when flute music is played (Ael. *VH* 13.21).

Heroes were known to have dedicated natural wonders in temples, but Pliny and other writers, like Pausanias and Phlegon of Tralles, tell us that historical figures did so as well. Regulus, for example, is said to have dedicated the bones of an African snake he killed in the course of the Punic wars (*NH* 8.37), while Marcus Scaurus, aedile in 58 B.C.E., displayed the bones of the sea monster (*belua*) he had killed in Judaea along with other marvels (*miracula*, 9.10). Sources also report that elites exchanged wonders across the Mediterranean. Phlegon says that a centaur originally sent to Egypt was regifted by the Egyptian prefect (*Mir.* 34–5) and Pliny relates how a centaur embalmed in honey was sent from Egypt to the emperor Claudius (7.35).

Marvels were common enough in Rome in both sacred and nonsacred spaces for Plutarch to claim that Rome boasted a marketplace for the buying and selling of monsters (*agora teratōn*, *De cur.* 520c).⁴⁵ Augustus is supposed to have been a great participant in this trade. Pausanias says

⁴⁴*Haec atque talia ex hominum genere ludibria sibi, nobis miracula, ingeniosa fecit natura* (*NH* 7.32).

⁴⁵See Beagon 2005 on *NH* 7.35, Beagon 2007, and Garland 2010, 45–58 for these and other examples of imperial marvel collecting. As has been noted, Roman emperors emulated Hellenistic kings in this regard (Dench 2005, 279–92). See further Christ 1994 and Alonso Troncoso 2013. For wonders in the Augustan age in general, see Hardie 2009. For wonders in imperial poetry and a recent bibliography of wonder literature, see Guichard 2014. Rutledge 2012 comprehensively discusses Roman collecting and display.

that he looted the sanctuary of Athena Alea at Tegea in Arcadia and took the skin and tusks of the immense Caledonian Boar. Augustus left the rotting skin (*derma*), which, according to Pausanias, could still be seen in Tegea (8.47.2), but kept the tusks in a sanctuary of Dionysus in his own garden, under the watch of “those who have charge of the marvels” (οἱ ἐπὶ τοῖς θαύμασιν, 8.46.1–5). Suetonius says that Augustus displayed wonders at the games as well as “wherever happened to be convenient” (*quolibet loco*); the Saepta and Comitium are given as examples (*Aug.* 43.4). Suetonius also says that Augustus chose to adorn his home with objects of notable “rarity and antiquity” (*vetustas ac raritas*, 72), including the bones of amazing animals. Like Phlegon, Pliny testifies to Tiberius’ interest in marvels and implies that both Tiberius and Augustus were kept apprised of new finds, including nereids and tritons from the far west (*NH* 9.9–10).

By connecting the Gorgades skins to these dedications Pliny further marks the Gorgades as monstrous. Nevertheless, their display is unusual. In Rome, the remains of amazing humans, animals, and human-animal hybrids were accorded differing levels of respect; while it was appropriate to kill a hybrid in order to display it, humans and humanoids were not available for this purpose. In Phlegon of Tralles, Tiberius decides not to disturb a find of giant bones and risk “sacrilege in despoiling the grave of the dead” (τό τε ἀνόσιον τῆς νεκροσυλίας, *Mir.* 14.3).⁴⁶ Phlegon’s story about Tiberius reveals the emperor’s passion for knowledge and his struggle to express this desire within traditional bounds. When Herodotus says that the Persian king Cambyses “even” (*kai*) opened tombs and examined corpses (3.37), readers are told that this behavior is part of his madness and are shown the perverted form of the historian’s task (Munson 1991; Christ 1994). Tiberius is a much saner, wiser *histor* and ruler than Cambyses, but both are governed by a dangerous desire to know.

A story in Pliny maps out the furthest boundary of these post-mortem taboos. In the Gardens of Sallust, Pliny says, Augustus displayed the bodies of two people, Pusio and Secundilla, both 10'3" high, “for the sake of wonder” (7.75), the phrase he repeats in his version of Hanno’s story. Funeral gardens, including the Gardens of Sallust, were common in Imperial Rome (Toynbee 1971, 95; Hartswick 2004, 19), although corpses were not usually visible. In Pliny, Pusio and Secundilla’s height justifies their display, but their dignity is secured by the “tomb” (*conditorium*), in which they reside, a tomb that offers burial without obscuring sight.

⁴⁶For more on bone finds in antiquity, see Mayor 2000.

Pliny tells us that he has also seen (*vidimus*), the bodies of two knights, Manius Maximus and Marcus Tullius, who were three feet high. Alexander the Great, Suetonius tells us, was displayed in a similar fashion (*Aug.* 18; cf. *Calig.* 52). Extraordinary bodies, whether very tall, very short, or very famous are marked as marginal to the general rules that govern treatment of the dead; it is possible, although tricky, to exhibit a human corpse with respect. Neither Hanno nor Mela says that the Gorgades are encased in *conditoria* or another tomb, and displaying only a part of their bodies would have posed a ritual risk, since even damned, cast-out criminals required disposal “in a way that precluded any further threats or contamination” (Kyle 1998, 13). When Pliny has Hanno dedicate the skins to Juno, he mitigates this risk.

ATHENAEUS: WHEN A ROMAN SKINS A GORGON

Athenaeus’ 3rd-century C.E. intervention in Hanno’s story is the most surprising and significant. Inspired by a passing comment on gorgons, Ulpian, a character in Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophists*, cites Alexander of Myndus’ description of the gorgons (*Ath.* 5.221).⁴⁷ According to Alexander, the gorgons are animals (*zōa*), which he identifies with the *katōblepōn* or “down-looker,” a wild animal (*fera*) also described by Mela (3.98) and Pliny (8.32); *katōblepōn* is the nomadic Libyan name for the animal, Ulpian says. Like the catoblepas in Mela and Pliny, this animal gorgon has a long mane that usually covers its eyes. When threatened, it shakes the hair aside to cast a killing glance. Athenaeus’ gorgons have deadly breath as well, which Beagon (2014, 426) has suggested derives from the basilisk, another wondrous animal of ancient historiography. Ulpian adds that some people compare the gorgon to a calf; most “by interpreting its skin” (ἐκ τῆς δαρᾶς σημειούμενοι) to a wild sheep (*Ath.* 5.221b).

In Athenaeus, the gorgon is rationalized into an animal, the *katōblepōn*. This transformation has precedence. In her study of visual representations of the gorgon, Tsiafakis has argued that “the fifth century B.C. was the boundary that separated the bestial aspect emphasized during the Archaic period . . . from the almost civilized form these creatures

⁴⁷As Jared Secord pointed out to me, it is probably no coincidence that Ulpian, a Syro-Phoenician, introduces a story that alludes to a Punic king. Athenaeus himself was very interested in Syro-Phoenician history and authored a now-lost *Kings of Syria*. See Paolucci 2004 and Braund 2000. Athenaeus alludes to the *planai* (wanderings) of Hanno earlier in his work (3.25.24), but Marius appears nowhere else.

assumed in the following centuries” (2003, 90). Instead of associating the Gorillai with mythic monsters, Athenaeus reinterprets the gorgons as nonhuman animals, not identical to any known species but resembling those that were known: the sheep, the calf, and the horse or lion.⁴⁸ In associating the *katōblepōn* with gorgons, Athenaeus follows Mela (3.98), who says that the gorgons used to inhabit islands off the coast of Africa where the catoblepas now dwells. Perhaps as authors reinterpreted the gorgons as a human community, they gave the *katōblepōn/catoblepas* the gorgons’ incredible killing power.

When Athenaeus’ gorgons become nonhuman animals, the person who kills and skins them changes as well, from a Carthaginian king into a Roman general. According to Ulpian, perhaps still quoting Alexander of Myndus, the gorgon came to Roman attention when Marius’ men saw one and tried to kill it in the course of the Jugurthine war. The gorgon responded by killing a great number of them with its eyes. At Marius’ behest, the Numidians ambushed the gorgon and brought its body to Marius. “That [the animal] was thus,” Ulpian concludes, “both the skin and the expedition of Marius confirm” (5.221c).

Despite the transformation of both flayer and flayed in Athenaeus’ story, the structure of the narrative parallels those we have seen so far: the gorgon is more difficult to defeat than expected, but killed in the end, its skin brought home as proof. Marius is not motivated by inquiry when he kills and skins the gorgon, but Ulpian evaluates the truth of Marius’ account by using the skin, which helps confirm (*mēnuein*) the story and explicates the nature of the gorgon to those who interpret it (ἐκ τῆς δορᾶς σημειούμενοι). Ulpian makes further use of the skin to distinguish between the true and false reports of his source, Alexander of Myndus. After describing the gorgon and its death, he criticizes Alexander’s description of backward-grazing cows, an account that is “unbelievable” (*apiston*), particularly because “no other inquiry bears witness” (οὐδενὸς ἑτέρου ἐπιμαρτυροῦντος ἱστορικοῦ, Ath. 5.221e). The deadly gorgon is not more incredible than backward-grazing cattle; the difference between these two phenomena is Marius’ confirming report, backed up by the skin he sent to Rome.

⁴⁸The particular animal characteristics of the *katōblepōn*-gorgon in Athenaeus can be understood partly by reference to the animal elements of gorgons in the visual record. While gorgons are best known for their snaky hair, some gorgons were depicted as horses, and the calf or sheep shape of the catoblepas may reflect this four-footedness (Tsiafakis 2003, 85, 87–8). Like the catoblepas, equine and leonine gorgons also have manes.

Like Pliny's Hanno, Marius dedicates the skins in a temple where they inspire wonder. After Ulpian speaks, Larensius adds (Ath. 5.221f):

τὸν Μάριον τῶν ζῴων τούτων δωρὰς εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην ἀναλεπομφένας, ἃς μηδένα εἰκάσαι δεδυνῆσθαι τίνας εἰσὶ διὰ τὸ παράδοξον τῆς ὄψεως· ἀνατεθεῖσθαι τε τὰς δωρὰς ταύτας ἐν τῷ τοῦ Ἡρακλέους ἱερῷ, ἐν ᾧ οἱ τοὺς θριάμβους κατὰγοντες στρατηγοὶ ἐστιῶσι τοὺς πολίτας.

Marius had sent back skins of these animals to Rome, and no one had been able to guess what they were because of the marvelous strangeness of their appearance. The skins hang as dedications in the temple of Heracles, where generals celebrating triumphs feast the citizens.

When Marius kills and skins the animal gorgons for display in Rome, he fits perfectly into the heroic mode of Perseus and Heracles, as well as mortal Romans, like Regulus, who brought back wonders for public consumption. Skinning the gorgons not only expresses imperial might, it is a positive social good, since the flow of foreign objects into Rome is what diffuses knowledge about them (Murphy 2004, 154–64). When Athenaeus says that “no one had been able to guess what [the skins] were,” he imagines spectators theorizing in the presence of this marvel (cf. Munson 2001, 234). Marius generates not only skins, but specific knowledge of a new species and the hope of greater knowledge about the world.⁴⁹

It is no coincidence that Marius, a Roman, kills and skins animal gorgons. Whereas a barbarian like Hanno can be expected to abuse the remains of human beings, Marius cannot; for him to take Hanno's place in the story, the gorgons must become animals. This does not mean that Pliny, Mela, or their readers necessarily saw Hanno as a cruel barbarian. Rather, Hanno's transformation into Marius reveals that Hanno's ethnicity is important to the dynamic of the earlier story. A foreign king like Hanno can kill and flay an extraordinary human being without damaging his image—indeed, as a barbarian, even an admirable one, he is expected to behave with excessive violence. Marius' *Romanitas* is not consistent with the same behavior.

Another story parallels this correlation of humanity and animality with ethnicity. In the myth of the golden fleece, Phrixus escapes on a golden ram, which he slaughters and skins at the end of his journey. Like the gorgons, who are reinterpreted as human beings, rationalizers of the Phrixus myth convert the ram into Ram, a human attendant killed for

⁴⁹In doing so, he anticipates the classificatory system that animal skins generated in the Victorian period (Colley 2014, 13).

preventing Phrixus from being raped by Aietes, the king of the Colchians. While Palaephatos (30) omits the skinning of Ram in his version, Heraclitus (24) retains it, saying that Ram was flayed for interfering “and his skin nailed up” (τὸ δέρμα αὐτοῦ προσπασσαλευθῆναι). In Diodorus, Heraclitus’ source (Stern 2003, 84), Ram was killed when Phrixus had been given to the love-sick Scythian king, Aietes’ brother-in-law. After Phrixus had been handed over to the Scythian king, “Ram was sacrificed to the gods, his skin stripped from his body, and the skin nailed up in the temple, as was customary,” (4.47.5–6).⁵⁰ Like the gorgons, who are skinned and their skins dedicated in temples whether they are interpreted as *feminae* or *ferae*, the ram suffers the same fate whether he is a man or animal. But in both cases, the ethnicity of the flayer tracks with the humanity or animality of the flayed. When the ram is a ram, the Greek Phrixus kills and flays him. When he is Ram, it is the Scythian or Colchian king who desecrates his remains “as customary” in other places.

CONCLUSION: NATURAL HISTORY AS SOVEREIGN

The categories of human and animal were not stable in antiquity. In Hanno’s story we can see both the idea of the human/animal divide and the constant maintenance this divide required. Ancient humanity was more a process than an essence (Cohen 2003, 41, paraphrasing Deleuze and Guattari 1980), visible on the body but also defined through the post-mortem treatment of the body (Steel 2011). Although Greek writers theorized the differences between humans and animals (Dierauer 1977; Sorabji 1993; Gilhus 2006; Osborne 2007; Newmyer 2006 and 2017), “slaughter, by which both animal and human death could occur . . . cause[d] the blurring of boundaries” (Petropoulou 2008, 114). When violence disrupted these boundaries, new creatures could be generated, including the Gorgades and *katōblepōn*.

The reception of the *Periplus of Hanno* demonstrates how rhetoric and display, as much as marks of nonhumanity, produced the ancient Roman specimen. The temple is one ideal context for this display, because it allows the killer to style himself a pious dedicator and hero, a provider

⁵⁰ τυθῆναι τοῖς θεοῖς καὶ τοῦ σώματος ἐκδαρέντος προσηλωθῆναι τῷ νεῶι τὸ δέρμα κατὰ τὴν νόμον (BNJ 32 Dionysius F14 = Diod. Sic. 4.47.5–6). Fragments 2a–c of Dionysius, various scholia to Apollonius Rhodius, indicate that Diodorus has drawn on Dionysius for the reinterpretation of Ram as a human attendant. The flaying of Ram, however, may be Diodorus’ extrapolation; fragments 2b and 2c retain the nonhuman ram, and in 2b the nonhuman ram is even said to have been sacrificed.

of wonders. The learned text is another ideal context for the production of specimens, because authors can emphasize what dead bodies do instead of what has been done to them. Corpses become specimens when the frame around the body is different enough from the violent encounter that the spectator forgets the encounter entirely. Seeing must be accompanied by forgetting.

For natural history writers, humanity is a much more capacious category and allows for a much greater variation in bodily appearance and cultural practice than in other genres. Classical ethnographies that highlight the animal features of others (physical attributes, lack of speech, etc.) are often said to “dehumanize” them. For example, Benjamin Isaacs has said that “in calling people animals we deny them humanity in every respect and place them in a category apart” (2004, 213). This is true now and may have been true in the ancient world, but ancient writers who compare non-Greeks and non-Romans to animals or represent them with animal features are not placing humans in the category of the animal so much as theorizing a fuzzy border.

Yet because ethnographies theorize the human through marginal cases, it is easy for readers to remake those margins. Pliny and Mela include the hairy women in their catalogues of human beings, but readers can set these unusual human bodies outside the human, and Hanno’s treatment of them enables this. Although ethnographers are often radically inclusive of others, readers may not be, and this is one reason these texts are so problematic for us to interpret.

Whatever the humanity, animality, or ethnicity of the flayers or flayed in these stories, we are reminded that flaying is a “technology of sovereignty,” to return to McCracken’s words. Violence, especially skinning and the post-mortem display of the skin, demonstrates the flayer’s complete power over the flayed, the flayer’s ability to deny the flayed the “dignity” of burial (in a Greek and Roman worldview) and to further transform their skins into vehicles for proof and wonder. Flaying is also a “technology of sovereignty” for the historians who tell stories about flaying, since the proof of the skins allows them to distinguish their own projects from the unverified accounts of their competitors. Beagon notes that the organic material of amazing bodies, being transitory, posed problems for ancient viewers: given the limited preservatives available in antiquity, “lack of a controlled environment must have condemned to a fairly short shelf-life even the toughest of organic displays” (2007, 37).⁵¹

⁵¹ Colley 2014, 50 and 70 confirms that when Victorians began collecting natural history specimens in earnest, they had to confront the messiness of transport and decay.

The historian's description of a decaying specimen stands the test of time much better than the specimen itself, the historian's verification of the object acting like an eternal pickle.⁵² Natural history demonstrates the mastery that texts achieve over bodies by obscuring the disorder and violence of real collecting.⁵³

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⁵²As Carey 2003, 85–6 says, "If not all the *mirabilia* which Pliny records have been physically preserved in Rome, his written collection preserves them, preventing their obliteration." See Ní Mheallaigh 2015, 262–5 for the "crisis of belief" in Imperial wonder culture.

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