

The Classics and the Broader Public in Philadelphia, 1783-1788:  
Avenues for Engagement

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Thesis submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
In  
History

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April 30, 2014  
Blacksburg, VA

Keywords: classical receptions, Philadelphia, American Early Republic, political culture

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ABSTRACT

In early Philadelphia, 1783-1788, the classics formed a pervasive presence on the city's cultural, political, and physical landscape. As the American nation commenced its republican experiment, references to the classics in Philadelphia especially emerged as a vehicle and vocabulary employed by statesmen for fashioning a people, political culture, and national identity. According to political theories of republicanism, statesmen in Philadelphia had a vested interest in cultivating the virtue of their citizens. As symbols and lessons in patriotism and virtue, classical antiquity was incorporated into civic iconography and national foundation narratives and projected to the broader public.

This thesis examines the classical presence in Philadelphia, 1783-1788. It specifically analyses the public presentation and dissemination of the classics in three cultural avenues beyond the walls of the academy, newspapers, spectacles, and orations, in order to evaluate the barriers and opportunities for engagement with the classics by the broader Philadelphia public. I argue that although the gates to a traditional higher education were shut to many of the Philadelphia public, cultural avenues existed that allowed the classics to disseminate to the wider populace. The broader public was invited to engage with the classics when it served a political purpose and lessons in patriotism and virtue were being transmitted. However, this inclusion was often controlled, mediated, and implemented on the terms of the elite. Further, the classics still served as markers of status, and the two contradictory functions held by the classics placed the wider Philadelphia public on the threshold of inclusion and exclusion.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I feel very fortunate to have had such a supportive and helpful thesis committee throughout this process. Firstly, I would like to thank that most singular of thesis advisors, Trudy Harrington Becker, who believed in me and my project even through the rough patches and also took the time to read and comment on countless pages of drafts and revisions. This project would also not have coalesced as coherently and successfully without the constructive comments and input from my other committee members, Roger Ekirch and Glenn Bugh. I truly appreciate the time they all took out of their busy schedules to help refine this project.

I would also like to thank my parents, friends, and fellow graduate students for their support through this long, arduous process. Lastly, I would like to pass along my thanks to the Virginia Tech Fencing Club for bolstering my morale and cheering me on from the very start.

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## INTRODUCTION

As the sun climbed above the city of Philadelphia on the morning of July 4, 1788, a chorus of bells from Christ Church steeple and a salute of cannon fire from the ship *Rising Sun* rang out to greet it. By eight o'clock in the morning, parade participants congregated at the intersection of South and Third Street, awaiting the start of the Grand Federal Procession, a spectacle that celebrated both the Fourth of July and the ratification of the new American Constitution. At about half past nine, the procession, which stretched approximately one and a half miles, began its triumphal march.<sup>1</sup> It snaked along from Third Street to Callow Hill Street, then through Fourth Street to Market Street, at last coming to a stop at Union Green. Among the ranks of the procession, soldiers, statesmen, craftsmen, artisans, professionals, and farmers all marched, together projecting an air of unity and harmony. As the parade wound through the streets of Philadelphia, spectators, including women and children perched on "fences, scaffolds and roofs," also witnessed the procession's multiple elaborate floats.<sup>2</sup> The highlights included the Grand Federal Edifice, a building that stood eleven feet high and was capped by a "dome supported by thirteen Corinthian columns, raised on pedestals proper to that order," and the *Union*, a war ship fashioned partly from remains of the enemy vessel *Serapis* that had been captured during the Revolutionary War.<sup>3</sup> When the parade at last reached Union Green at half past twelve, James Wilson, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and delegate to the Continental Congress, delivered an oration from the Grand Federal Edifice in honor of the

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Hopkinson, *Account of the grand federal procession, Philadelphia, July 4, 1788. To which is added, a letter on the same subject. (Price 5d. h.)* (Philadelphia: Carey, 1788), Early American Imprints, Series I, no. 21149, 1. Although celebrating a political victory rather than a military one, the Grand Federal Procession exhibits similarities with the Roman triumph. Like its Roman predecessor, the Grand Federal Procession was a spectacle of massive scale that welcomed the populace to share in a celebration of victory. For more information on the Roman triumph, refer to Mary Beard's *The Roman Triumph* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

<sup>2</sup>Hopkinson, *Account of the grand federal procession*, 21.

<sup>3</sup>Hopkinson, *Account of the grand federal procession*, 3.

occasion. Elements from classical antiquity, such as the classical architecture of the Grand Federal Edifice, had appeared visually in the parade, and they also featured in Wilson's oration.

Addressing marchers and spectators alike, Wilson proclaimed:

You have heard of SPARTA, of ATHENS and of ROME; you have heard of their admired constitutions, and of their high-prized freedom... But did they, in all their pomp and pride of liberty, ever furnish, to the astonished world, an exhibition similar to that which we now contemplate? Were their constitutions framed by those, who were appointed for that purpose, by the people? After they were framed, were they submitted to the consideration of the people?<sup>4</sup>

Although in today's society the classics are relegated to the realm of higher culture, in 1780s Philadelphia, educated Americans like Wilson considered the classics as practical and relevant to their contemporary life.<sup>5</sup> References to the classical world scattered the landscape of Philadelphia. Americans like Wilson and Francis Hopkinson, Chairman of the Committee of Arrangement for the Grand Federal Procession, even incorporated classical themes and symbols into American national narratives and civic iconography. This reverence for classical antiquity, however, was not new. The classics had long occupied a significant role in social and political discourse in Colonial and Revolutionary America.<sup>6</sup> The classics – i.e. the study of Greece, Rome, and the classical languages – were considered a necessary element in the cultivation of

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<sup>4</sup> Hopkinson, *Account of the grand federal procession*, 14.

<sup>5</sup> Stanley M. Burstein, "The Classics and the American Republic," *The History Teacher* Vol. 30, No. 1 (November 1996): 32. Carline Winterer traces the shifting roles of the classics in American intellectual life in *The Culture of Classicism: Ancient Greece and Rome in American Intellectual Life, 1780-1910* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002). Levine, writing on Augustan England, terms this perceived relevance an "imagined affinity" between the ancient and contemporary world. Englishmen saw an "imagined affinity" between the conditions and circumstances of life in Rome and Augustan England, leading to a cultural emphasis on classical education for eloquence and appropriate rhetorical and political skills. Even when a real affinity did exist to some extent, Levine stresses that in some form it was still imagined because the classical world that the British, and Americans as well, looked to was one idealized in the writings of the ancients like Cicero or Plutarch: Joseph M. Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 5-6.

<sup>6</sup> By the classics, classical tradition, and the study of its reception(s) in a later period, I refer to the definitions provided by Lorna Hardwick and Christopher Stray in *A Companion to Classical Receptions* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2011), 1. Hardwick and Stray define 'classical' "in its specific sense of reference to Greek and Roman antiquity." By 'reception' or 'receptions,' they mean "the ways in which Greek and Roman material has been transmitted, translated, excerpted, interpreted, rewritten, re-imagined and represented." For more on classical receptions see Hardwick and Stray, eds., *A Companion to Classical Receptions*, 1-3.

the aristocratic gentleman. To receive a higher education was to receive a classical education, and in Colonial America and the early Republic, a classical education also signified an individual's status as an elite member of society.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to viewing the classics as markers of social status in early America, educated Americans and statesmen held the cultural belief that the classics also served practical and useful functions.<sup>8</sup> To these men, the classics themselves, and a classical education especially, provided numerous examples of virtue and vice, a repertoire from which they could draw both positive models for emulation and negative models for avoidance. These figures and events from the pages of classical history provided a toolkit for molding the public character or, in the words of Stanley Burstein, served as "laboratory examples" of virtue, vice, and "applied political theory."<sup>9</sup> As just one example of this reliance on the classics for models, Timothy Matlack claimed the following in a 1780 oration delivered to the American Philosophical Society on the promotion of "useful knowledge": "... the Empire of *Rome* had risen to the Fulness [sic] of its Glory, and produced those great Men, whose Sentiments and Conduct remain to this day as Lessons of Wisdom and Virtue..."<sup>10</sup>

Further, these classical *exempla*, mined from a canonical body of texts and instilled in students in the academy, created a shared body of discourse for educated Americans.<sup>11</sup> They looked back to ancient history for models, warnings, and legitimization, glorifying their nation in the image of the revered classical past: "... we are proud to be distinguished by the name of the

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<sup>7</sup> By "early America" I refer to the continental United States in the Colonial Period, Revolutionary Period, and the Early Republic.

<sup>8</sup> Burstein, "The Classics and the American Republic," 32; Carl Richard, *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 8-11.

<sup>9</sup> Burstein, "The Classics and the American Republic," 36.

<sup>10</sup> Timothy Matlack, *An oration, delivered March 16, 1780, before the patron, vice-presidents and members of the American Philosophical Society, Held at Philadelphia, for Promoting Useful Knowledge. By Timothy Matlack, Esquire, a member of said society and secretary of the Supreme Executive Council of the state of Pennsylvania*, (Philadelphia: Styner and Cist, 1780), 12, AAS Copy, Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 16867.

<sup>11</sup> Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 10.

Country we inhabit, AMERICANS --- a name that shall ere long be more desired, and confer greater honor, than that of ROMAN ever did."<sup>12</sup> Thus, not surprisingly, statesmen and intelligentsia in the new American republic strove to fashion themselves and the nation in the image of and in relation to the classical past.<sup>13</sup>

The republic, however, did not just depend on the virtue of the rulers; it also required an equally virtuous populace who would remain vigilant and elect leaders who would guard their liberties and freedom. In scholarship on the intellectual history of the Revolution and early Republic, Gordon Wood has emphasized the all-encompassing demands and world view of the republican tradition in early America. Republicanism was not simply a way of looking at government, but instead "a set of values, an explanation of history, and a form of life."<sup>14</sup> In fact, as Wood claims, "it was not the force of arms which made the ancient republics great or which ultimately destroyed them. It was rather the character and spirit of their people."<sup>15</sup> As such, statesmen in early republican Philadelphia had a vested interest in cultivating the virtue and character of their citizens.

Educated Americans believed that the classics could help instill this virtue in the populace. With a republican form of government, this task became paramount because the fate of the nation rested on the virtue of its people. A 1782 newspaper editorial addressed to the

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<sup>12</sup> "NEW YORK," *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), November 4, 1789. This trope of American glory conferred in comparison to classical antiquity is also prevalent throughout Wilson's oration. This theme of Americans rising higher than their classical counterparts is discussed more at length in Chapters 1 and 3.

<sup>13</sup> Appeals to the classical tradition can be seen in architecture, nomenclature, society names such as the Society of the Cincinnati, classical pseudonyms, and multiple comparative references in orations, sermons, and newspapers. For more examples see Garry Wills, *Cincinnatus: George Washington and the Enlightenment* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984); Eran Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores: Historical Imagination and the Creation of the American Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009); Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*; and Meyer Reinhold, *Classica Americana: The Greek and Roman Heritage in the United States* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984).

<sup>14</sup> Gordon S. Wood, *The Idea of America: Reflections on the Birth of the United States* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2011), 62.

<sup>15</sup> Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 52.



"Legislature of New Jersey" and printed in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* forcibly emphasized the necessity of this virtuous public:

VIRTUE, or the love of government, is essentially necessary in a Republic, therefore every exertion in your [the New Jersey Legislature] power should be made use of to cultivate and promote it; for there is not in nature a more vain attempt, than that of establishing a Republic without this necessary ingredient. All historians will justify the truth of this observation. The first Brutus drove out the Tarquins, and died generously in the field of honor, fighting for the liberties of his country; but Roman virtue perished not with him, for liberty and the Consulship was established.<sup>16</sup>

Philadelphia statesmen and cultural elite used spectacles like the Grand Federal Procession and public orations like Wilson's Fourth of July speech in an attempt to do just that, "cultivate and promote" virtue. And, in so doing, they incorporated classical references, themes, and symbols.

This thesis examines the classical presence in the city of Philadelphia, 1783-1788. Using Philadelphia as a focused case study, I explore the following two-part question: How and in what forms did classical antiquity move beyond the academy into American cultural life in Philadelphia from 1783 to 1788? And, how did this presentation of classical antiquity serve to include or exclude the wider Philadelphia public's engagement with it? I approach this question through an investigation into the expression and role of the classics in post-Revolution Philadelphia, 1783-1788. Specifically, I focus on the public presentation and dissemination of the classics in cultural avenues beyond the walls of the academy in order to evaluate the broader Philadelphia public's barriers and opportunities for engagement with the classics. While previous scholarship on the classics in early America has focused on the classics' role in higher education or on the reception and reappropriation of certain figures, I examine the dissemination of references to the classics in a specific location, Philadelphia, during the dawning years of the new American republic in order to examine the interplay between political culture, the classics,

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<sup>16</sup> Aristides, "To the Honorable LEGISLATURE of NEW JERSEY," *PG*, December 11, 1782.

and the engagement of the broader populace. As such, I particularly look to the presentation of the classics in the following three public avenues in Philadelphia that involved a broader audience beyond only the educated elite: newspapers, spectacles, and orations.

I argue that the classics formed a pervasive presence in 1780s Philadelphia, and, although the gates to a traditional higher education were shut to many members of the Philadelphia public, cultural avenues existed that allowed classical themes, symbols, ideas, and history to disseminate to the wider populace. According to political theories of republicanism, statesmen in early republican Philadelphia had a vested interest in cultivating the virtue and character of their citizens. Especially as symbols and lessons in patriotism and virtue, classical antiquity was thus incorporated into civic iconography and national foundation narratives and projected to the broader Philadelphia public in spectacles, orations, and even newspaper editorials. As such, the wider public was invited to engage at times with the classics when it served a political purpose and lessons in patriotism, virtue, and republicanism were being transmitted. However, this inclusion was often controlled, mediated, and implemented on the terms of the social and cultural elite.

Further, the classics still served as markers of status, and the two contradictory functions held by the classics in early republican Philadelphia placed the wider public on the shadowed threshold of inclusion and exclusion. A thread of tension ran through the paradoxical use of the classics as both widely disseminated national symbols and political *exempla* and also exclusive markers of social status and gentility. Educated elite Philadelphians on the one hand invited the broader public to engage with the classics when political lessons were transmitted, but on the other hand they excluded this same public in situations where classical knowledge was intended to show off social status.

That the classics exerted a powerful influence among the educated elite in early America has been increasingly recognized and accepted by scholars.<sup>17</sup> Historians such as Meyer Reinhold, Carl Richard, Caroline Winterer, and Eran Shalev have illuminated the substantive and ubiquitous presence of the classical tradition in early America. Their focus, however, has been mostly confined to sweeping surveys of the whole nation and elite uses of the classical tradition. Additionally, although much attention has been given to the use of the classics by the Founding Fathers during the Revolutionary Era, current scholarship has not addressed the nature of the classics in relation to the wider populace in the new American republic.<sup>18</sup> Focus within this field has generally centered either on the Founding generation or skipped forward in time to the antebellum and later periods in which classical knowledge and higher education became more democratized.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> For historians who have written on the classical tradition in Early American cultural and intellectual life see: Reinhold, *Classica Americana*; Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*; Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism*; Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*; Caroline Winterer, *The Mirror of Antiquity: American Women and the Classical Tradition, 1750-1900* (Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 2007); Richard Mott Gummere, *The American Colonial Mind and the Classical Tradition: Essays in Comparative Culture* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1963); Charles F. Mullett, "Classical Influences on the American Revolution," *The Classical Journal* 35, no. 2 (1939): 92-104; Edwin A. Miles, "The Young American Nation and the Classical World," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 35, no. 2 (1974): 259-274; Burstein, "The Classics and the American Republic."

<sup>18</sup> Siobhan McElduff has addressed issues of the reception of classical texts among non-elites, but in Britain rather than America: Siobhan McElduff, "Fractured Understandings: Towards a History of Classical Reception among Non-Elite Groups," in *Classics and the Uses of Reception*, Charles Martindale and Richard F. Thomas, eds., (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2006). Scholars have also begun to focus on an emerging sub-field, termed *Classica Africana*, which examines how African Americans have engaged with the classics. However, preliminary studies in this new sub-field have thus far mostly involved education, African American writers, and later historical periods of study. For more information on *Classica Africana*, see the following: Michele Valerie Ronnick, "Classica Africana: The Influence of Classical Studies on People of African Descent,"

<http://department.monm.edu/classics/cpl/PromotionalMaterials/Africana.htm>; William W. Cook and James Tatum, *African American Writers and Classical Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010); and Margaret Malamud, "Classics as a Weapon: African Americans and the Fight for Inclusion in American Democracy," in *Classics in the Modern World: A 'Democratic Turn'?*, Lorna Hardwick and Stephen Harrison, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>19</sup> For Revolutionary era studies see especially Reinhold, *Classica Americana* and Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*. For the later democratization of the classics see Carl Richard, *The Golden Age of the Classics in America: Greece, Rome, and the Antebellum United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009) and Trudy Harrington Becker, "Broadening Access to a Classical Education: State Universities in Virginia in the Nineteenth Century," *The Classical Journal* 96, no. 3 (2001): 309-322.

For the role of the classics in early America, Meyer Reinhold, Carl Richard, Caroline Winterer, and Eran Shalev provide a general background. In 1984, Reinhold published the first systematic study and overview of the classical heritage in early America in his book, *Classica Americana: The Greek and Roman Heritage in the United States*. He argues that historians should examine how knowledge of the classics *functioned* rather than trying to determine what exact influence it held. Because influence is hard to prove concretely, Reinhold suggests that historians instead focus on "how the classics functioned in early America," and "how Americans used, even misused and abused antiquity."<sup>20</sup> Richard builds on Reinhold's study in *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* (1994) in an effort to more clearly elucidate the American "founders' classical reading."<sup>21</sup> He demonstrates that educated individuals in Colonial and Revolutionary America were socially conditioned to venerate the classics and refer to this canon of classical works for recognizable symbols and models.<sup>22</sup> Yet, Richard claims that this classical knowledge not only served as a status marker, but it also created a shared discourse through its reliance on a set body of classical works.<sup>23</sup> Like Reinhold, Richard situates his study as an ideological or intellectual study of the American founders' debt to the classical tradition. My thesis draws upon this overarching intellectual history regarding the functions of classical antiquity in early America, but grounds it in a cultural history of the classics in three public avenues in Philadelphia.

Shalev's *Rome Reborn on Western Shores: Historical Imagination and the Creation of the American Republic* (2009) also delves into the ideological uses of the classical tradition

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<sup>20</sup> Reinhold, *Classica Americana*, 19.

<sup>21</sup> Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 1.

<sup>22</sup> In response to debates regarding the American founders' intellectual heritage, Richard argues that "the classics exerted a formative influence upon the founders, both directly and through the mediation of Whig and American perspectives": Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 7-8.

<sup>23</sup> Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 10.

during the American Revolution, but Shalev focuses on the founding generation's views on time and history through the lens of the classical tradition. Shalev demonstrates the efforts of many elite Americans to depict themselves and the American Revolution in classical guise and contends that classical antiquity "was as vivid and recognizable" to the founders "as the world in which they were living."<sup>24</sup> He uses the study of classical discourse to demonstrate that certain Americans "frequently stretched and blurred conventional understandings of historical time" and thus saw themselves as carrying on -- and in some cases improving upon -- the legacy of Greece and Rome.<sup>25</sup> This theme of improvement upon a classical past surfaces time and again in 1780s Philadelphia. Educated Americans believed that they were, in the words of Shalev's title, building a new Rome, reborn on America's shores. Shalev's study further provides the intellectual underpinnings for the American obsession with fashioning a new nation that harkened back to a classical past. As with Richard's and Reinhold's intellectual histories, attention is given to the ideological uses of the classics by those statesmen and elites who propagated an American image based on classical antiquity. Again, Shalev does not address, however, whether the wider public was invited to engage with this use of classical antiquity.

Caroline Winterer's book, *The Culture of Classicism: Ancient Greece and Rome in American Intellectual Life, 1780-1910*, (2002), similarly investigates intellectual uses of the classics by educated Americans. She provides an important survey and analysis of the role of the classical tradition in American institutional and intellectual life and the changes it underwent from the American colonial period up to the early twentieth century. Not only does Winterer aptly discuss and demonstrate the influential role held by the classical tradition in Colonial America and the early republic, but she also utilizes the term "culture of classicism" to describe

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<sup>24</sup> Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 2.

<sup>25</sup> Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 5-6.

the role of the classics in early American life.<sup>26</sup> By invoking the term “culture of classicism,” Winterer gives the classics a place in American society beyond simply the intellectual sphere. Although she mainly confines her study to higher education and classical scholars, Winterer demonstrates that antiquity was also a cultural phenomenon.

Reinhold, Richard, Shalev, and Winterer suggest the possibility of a wider appeal of the classics during this period, but this is not the question that drives their studies. These works do not address the classics in America with regards to the wider public. Neither do they adopt regional-specific case studies. While a focus on educated elites and the classics is understandable considering the limitations of primary source material – these elites are generally the ones whose private diaries and letters have been preserved in the archives – this thesis uses cultural history to address the nature of the wider public’s engagement with the classics through an examination of barriers and opportunities. I undertake a focused case study of Philadelphia and examine cultural avenues that allowed elements of classical antiquity to reach a broader public. If, as scholarship on the classics in early America has demonstrated, the classical tradition had a prominent presence in American intellectual, cultural, and political life, other Americans besides the educated elite likely came in contact with some form of classical expression, especially if influential Americans wanted to create a classically-based identity for the new nation.

Each of the three chapters in this thesis corresponds to a different public, cultural avenue in which the classics reached a broader public in Philadelphia. I start with the written word in newspapers, move to visual references in spectacles, and finish with the heard word in public oratory. Chapter One assesses the written expression of the classics through print culture in Philadelphia, using the *Pennsylvania Gazette* as a case study for the years 1783 and 1788. It

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<sup>26</sup> Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism*, 15-16.

provides an aerial view of the landscape of classical references in Philadelphia and establishes the ubiquity and pervasiveness of the classics in this city. Chapters Two and Three zoom in on certain aspects of the classical presence in Philadelphia. Chapter Two examines two spectacles, the triumphal arch peace exhibition from 1784 and the Grand Federal Procession from 1788, and argues for alternative cultural channels for the dissemination of classical themes, symbols, and ideas. In political and patriotic spectacles, the classics were disseminated to the broader public as emblems and symbols mediated through the lens of American political culture. Lastly, Chapter Three turns to the classics in oratory, demonstrating the thread of tension that ran through the functions of the classics in 1780s Philadelphia as both exclusive signifiers of status and broadly projected symbols of republicanism and national identity.

CHAPTER ONE: CLASSICS AND THE WRITTEN WORD IN THE *PENNSYLVANIA*  
*GAZETTE*

In the month leading up to Philadelphia's Fourth of July, 1788 Grand Federal Procession, the organization committee, chaired by Francis Hopkinson, used local newspapers to communicate details and developments to Philadelphians regarding the progress of the arrangements. These local newspapers, such as the daily *Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser* and the weekly *Pennsylvania Gazette*, ran advertisements and notifications which conveyed information to both potential spectators and the groups marching in the procession. The *Pennsylvania Packet*, for example, relayed deadlines by which "the several Occupations and Professions in the City, Liberties and County of Philadelphia will be pleased... to inform the Committee, at the State-House... of the arrangements they have severally taken with respect to their different insignia and decorations for the procession."<sup>27</sup> It also informed militia groups and tradesmen of their respective meeting points prior to the parade and notified the public of the proposed route and schedule for the parade. Although the papers would wait until after the event to publish Francis Hopkinson's detailed account of the procession and oration, the *Independent Gazetteer* and *Pennsylvania Packet* printed a shorter version on the morning of July 4th that outlined the "Order of Procession," rank by rank.<sup>28</sup>

Among the iconographic scenes on display in this parade, spectators could expect to see the Federal Constitution "framed, fixed on a staff, crowned with the Cap of Liberty," and -- a parade highlight -- the classical-style building, "THE GRAND FEDERAL EDIFICE."<sup>29</sup> Although presented in an Americanized, Federal context in the parade, the liberty cap and Grand

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<sup>27</sup> [No Headline], *Pennsylvania Packet, and Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), June 27, 1788.

<sup>28</sup> "Philadelphia, July 4. Order of Procession," *Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser*, July 4, 1788;

"Philadelphia, July 4.," *Independent Gazetteer* (Philadelphia), July 4, 1788, *America's Historical Newspapers*.

<sup>29</sup> "Philadelphia, July 4. Order of Procession," *Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser*, July 4, 1788.



Federal Edifice each harkened back to classical antiquity. Francis Hopkinson's account of the procession, printed in the next issue of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on July 9 and also in several other Philadelphia papers, would contain even more numerous and obvious references to the classical world of Graeco-Roman antiquity.

This chapter examines the written presentation and public dispersal of the classics through newspapers in the city of Philadelphia in 1783 and 1788, using the *Pennsylvania Gazette* as a case study. This chapter serves two main purposes. The first portion surveys the landscape of classical references in Philadelphia, establishing their ubiquity and pervasiveness. The second part builds upon this evidence and makes broader suggestions regarding the wider public's opportunities and limitations for engaging with the classics in their written form in the newspaper. This study looks at two years, 1783 and 1788, that touch upon key moments in the formation of the American republic. The year 1783 saw celebrations of American independence and the formal end to the Revolutionary War with the signing of the Treaty of Paris in September – and the proposition in December by the Pennsylvania Assembly for this peace's visual manifestation in the city through the construction of a triumphal arch.<sup>30</sup> The year 1788 witnessed the ratification of the federal Constitution, with the city of Philadelphia celebrating this victory through the spectacle of the Grand Federal Procession on July Fourth. These two years as seen in the public, written medium of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* serve as touchstones for the topography of the classical presence in city of Philadelphia during the 1780s.

Although the *Pennsylvania Gazette* was established in December 1728 by Samuel Keimer, it was through Benjamin Franklin's efforts as printer that the paper gained prominence. In its first printing on December 24, 1728, the paper bore the cumbersome title, *The Universal*

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<sup>30</sup> The proposal for the triumphal arch to be erected in Philadelphia appears in the December 31, 1783 issue of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. [No Headline], *PG*, December 31, 1783.

*Instructor in All Arts and Sciences: and Pennsylvania Gazette*. As the title suggests, Keimer had intended to use the paper to reprint "serially the whole of Ephraim Chambers's *Cyclopaedia; Or, an Universal Dictionary of the Arts and Sciences*."<sup>31</sup> When Franklin purchased the paper in 1729, he shortened the title to simply the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and discarded Keimer's serial encyclopedia aspect. Under Franklin's tenure as printer, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* thrived. The paper successfully attracted advertisements from patrons, and by midcentury, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* received such a quantity of advertisements that it occasionally had to run supplements to insert all these advertisements. The *Pennsylvania Gazette* additionally benefited from Franklin's appointment as postmaster in Philadelphia.<sup>32</sup>

In his formative history of American journalism, Frank Luther Mott lists the *Pennsylvania Gazette* as one of the "three great papers" in Philadelphia during the American Revolution. Although, by the time of the Revolution, Franklin had already sold the paper to David Hall, a printer from London who had been Franklin's partner since 1748, Mott notes that the *Pennsylvania Gazette* "was still associated with his [Franklin's] name and influence."<sup>33</sup> In 1766, Hall formed a partnership with William Sellers. When Hall died in 1772, his sons David and William took over his portion of the partnership, and the paper changed its imprint to solely "Hall & Sellers." Unsurprisingly, considering the paper's connection to Franklin, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* espoused the patriot cause during the American Revolution and even followed the Continental Congress to York, Pennsylvania during the British occupation of Philadelphia from December 1777 to June 1778.<sup>34</sup> In 1783 and 1788, the dates for this study,

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<sup>31</sup> Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism: A History of Newspapers in the United States Through 250 Years, 1690 to 1940* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), 27.

<sup>32</sup> Mott, *American Journalism*, 28.

<sup>33</sup> Mott, *American Journalism*, 87.

<sup>34</sup> Clarence S. Brigham, *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690-1820* Vol. 2 (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1947), 933-934.

David Hall, William Hall, and William Sellers -- "Sellers & Hall" -- published weekly editions of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* from the "new-printing-office, near the Market" in Philadelphia.<sup>35</sup>

The *Pennsylvania Gazette* relayed news in a form typical to late eighteenth, early nineteenth century newspapers. According to Jeffery L. Pasley, most newspapers throughout the nineteenth century "delivered the 'news' in a desultory, haphazard fashion, printing letters written or lent to the editor, material from other newspapers, and raw government documents."<sup>36</sup> Like other papers of the time, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* lacked a clear organizational structure. Rather, it displayed a "haphazard" mélange of advertisements, legal notices, editorial pieces, political tracts, government documents, and foreign and domestic news.

A case study of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* for the years 1783 and 1788 demonstrates the ubiquity, pervasiveness, and frequency of appeals to classical antiquity in Philadelphia during the 1780s. Classical references in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* appeared in a variety of contexts ranging from the everyday to the more spectacular like those associated with the 1788 Grand Federal Procession. Nearly every weekly issue surveyed within these years exhibited at least one reference to the classics.<sup>37</sup> Due to the high volume of classical references, the examples examined in this chapter are representative rather than comprehensive. Classical references in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* occurred within three main contexts, reflecting a range of uses for the classics in early republican Philadelphia. In the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, references to the classics can be classified into the following three main categories: incidental references, erudite references, and political references. The presence of the classics in the public medium of the

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<sup>35</sup> [No Headline], *PG*, January 1, 1788. This caption ended each issue of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* for both 1783 and 1789.

<sup>36</sup> Jeffrey L. Pasley, *"The Tyranny of Printers": Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 2.

<sup>37</sup> The September 17 and September 24, 1788 issues of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* emerge as the only two weeks in 1788 without a blatant reference to the classics. However, each of these issues did include Latin phrases in the form of legal terms. As these Latin phrases such as "*Venditioni Exponas*" constitute actual legal phrases rather than references to classical antiquity, I did not include them as classical references in my analysis.

newspaper demonstrates a cultural avenue in which a broader public beyond the traditionally educated could have encountered the classics.

#### INCIDENTAL REFERENCES

The numerous incidental references to the classics in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* reinforce the impressive breadth and pervasiveness of classical antiquity upon the daily landscape of early republican Philadelphia. While such references as classical ship names and street names do not necessarily connote an understanding of classical knowledge by the individuals who daily encountered them, they do at least foster a familiarity with the referenced classical idea or figure, even if the reference occurred within a different context (i.e. outside its original context). For example, the merchants and sailors who had regular dealings with the brig, *Minerva*, bound for Glasgow, may not have know much -- or anything -- about the figure Minerva from classical antiquity. If the name "Minerva" appeared elsewhere, however, it would likely have been familiar to them, mediated through their engagement with the ship that bore that same name.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, such incidental references demonstrate the ubiquity of the classical presence in the city of Philadelphia.

The brig *Minerva* constitutes only one of several ships that bore classical names about which the *Pennsylvania Gazette* relayed information. Since Philadelphia was a port city, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* frequently published advertisements for ships. For example, the newspaper advertised Captain Rich's brig *Neptune*, which could be chartered and take on freight to either New York, Boston, Charles-Town or along the James River.<sup>39</sup> Also appearing in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* was an "extract of a letter from an officer of the 28th regiment, who was

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<sup>38</sup>“For Glasgow, the Brig Minerva, John Boyde, Master,” *PG*, September 10, 1783.

<sup>39</sup> “To Charter, the Brig Neptune,” *PG*, September 3, 1783.

[a] passenger on board of his Majesty's Ship *Cato*."<sup>40</sup> This excerpt regaled readers of the ship *Cato*'s encounter with a storm at sea. Further, on Wednesday, August 27, 1783, readers of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* were informed, among a hodgepodge of foreign news from London, that the privateer ship *Jupiter* had been lost to a hurricane on its way from New-York to Cork.<sup>41</sup> These examples form only some of the classically-named ships that filled the pages of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Other classical ship names that appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* include *Eurydice*, *Hercules*, *Centaur*, the brig *Venus*, the brig *Neptune*, the sloop *Cato*, *Caesar*, *Achilles*, and the brig *Vulcan*.<sup>42</sup>

Through interacting with classically-named ships either in person or on the pages of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, individuals from a variety of social orders would have encountered a small piece of the classical past in their modern Philadelphia. In fact, the sailors and dock workers who toiled on and around these ships constituted members of the working classes, a group traditionally ignored from examinations of classical reception in America. They were likely not familiar with the classical texts in which figures like Jupiter or Caesar appeared, but instead engaged with figures from classical history and mythology through the mediation of the city's landscape and the incidental references like classically-named ships that littered it.<sup>43</sup>

Certainly, an interaction with the classics through a ship name like *Cato* or *Minerva* is not the same or, likely, as impactful as an engagement with classical texts and ideas. Yet, these ships

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<sup>40</sup>“Liverpool, June 5,” *PG*, August 13, 1783.

<sup>41</sup> “London,” *PG*, August 27, 1783.

<sup>42</sup> These ships appear in the following issues of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*: *Eurydice*, *Hercules*, and *Centaur* in *PG*, August 20, 1783; brig *Venus* in “Philadelphia, August 20,” *PG*, August 20, 1783; the brig *Neptune* in “Naval Office, Philadelphia,” *PG*, August 6, 1783; the sloop *Cato* in “Naval Office, Philadelphia,” *PG*, August 20, 1783; *Caesar* in “Just imported in the Caesar, Captain Miller, from Bristol, and to be Sold by John Clifford,” *PG*, October 1, 1783; *Achilles* in “Naval Office, Philadelphia,” *PG*, June 18, 1783; the brig *Vulcan* in “Samuel Inglis & Co.,” *PG*, May 14, 1783.

<sup>43</sup> It should be noted that I am not arguing that their understanding of the figure of *Minerva* was the same as that held by individuals trained in the classics. Rather, that even members of the working classes encountered and likely developed a familiarity with certain figures or symbols through their interactions with classical symbols and incidental references splayed across the Philadelphia landscape.

with classical names point to alternate channels through which aspects of the classical world could appear and be transmitted to early Philadelphians.

The articles and advertisements in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* include yet other instances of classical nomenclature. Nods to the classics also appeared in street names and slave names. The June 18, 1783 issue of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, for example, printed a run-away slave advertisement from Caroline County, Maryland, in which the subscriber, Thomas Hall, offered a five dollar reward for the capture of the 25 year old Caesar.<sup>44</sup> A similar notice from July 2, 1783 sought the return of the slave Cato. Thomas May advertised a 100 dollar reward for anyone who might "secure him in any gaol" and notify the subscriber. The same advertisement seeking Cato's capture was reprinted sporadically in subsequent weeks.<sup>45</sup> Another classical slave name that appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* was Pompey – on October 8, 1783, Sheriff Philip Kremer announced that a certain Pompey Bell, who claimed to be a free black, had been committed to the gaol in the county of Berks.<sup>46</sup>

Latin words, similarly divorced from a classical context, Americanized, and incorporated into early American daily life, could also be encountered in Philadelphia by the general populace both on the streets of Philadelphia and through the written word in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Laetitia-Court, the street opposite William Prichard's Circulating Library and Book-Store, derives from the Latin first declension noun, "laetitia," which means joy, delight, or exuberance.<sup>47</sup> Latin phrases also appeared on currency in use in early republican America and discussed by the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. In an article warning readers about attempted counterfeit

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<sup>44</sup> "Long Marsh, Caroline county, Maryland, June 2," *PG*, June 18, 1783.

<sup>45</sup> "One Hundred Dollars Reward," *PG*, July 2, 1783. The last printing for this notice regarding the escaped Cato in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* was on September 10, 1783.

<sup>46</sup> "Reading, September 29, 1783," *PG*, October 8, 1783. There is a horrible irony in the Early Americans' practice of naming enslaved individuals after powerful figures from classical mythology or Republican Romans, many of whom like Cato were also popular political pseudonyms. This pattern also been noted by Shalev in *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 28.

<sup>47</sup> P. G. W. Glare, ed., "laetitia ~ae," *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 996.

currency, a writer noted that "the Plus Ultra are not very legible" on the counterfeit dollars.<sup>48</sup> The notice did not indicate whether the "plus ultra" formed part of a larger Latin phrase. Neither did the article specify the type of currency, but it likely referred to counterfeit Spanish milled dollars. The phrase *plus ultra* adorned contemporary Spanish dollars and was associated with the Pillars of Hercules.<sup>49</sup> Non-classically educated Philadelphians may not have been privy to the exact associations between the *plus ultra*, its translation (further beyond), and the pillars of Hercules. Yet, as a modern example, many Americans without classical training are likely familiar with the phrase "novus ordo seclorum," which appears as the national seal on today's one dollar bill, even if they are unaware of its context within classical antiquity. Such uses of the classics demonstrate, at the very least, a familiarity and a pervasiveness to the classics in early republican Philadelphia that spread beyond the walls of the academy and its educated elite.

These incidental references to the classics which appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and in the city itself are, above all, demonstrative of Caroline Winterer's "culture of classicism" at work in Philadelphia. While Winterer's *Culture of Classicism* focuses primarily on the classics in relation to American education and intellectual life in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, she also briefly addresses the diffusion of the classical tradition into other areas of American cultural life besides the academy. She uses the term "culture of classicism" to define this phenomenon and claims the following:

Perhaps the most important feature of classical education in America, especially after the mid-eighteenth century, was that it formed part of a culture of classicism that permeated not only the college curriculum and campus rituals but also numerous areas of American life, blending seamlessly with politics, literature, and

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<sup>48</sup> "Boston, October 23," *PG*, November 5, 1783.

<sup>49</sup> Spanish milled dollars were a common form of currency used in early America: Alvin Rabushka, *Taxation in Colonial America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 154. For examples of the *plus ultra* inscribed within the pillars of the eight reales Spanish coins, see the following Notre Dame Special Collections online exhibit: Notre Dame Special Collections, "Spanish Milled Coinage," <http://www.coins.nd.edu/ColCoin/ColCoinText/Sp-milled.5.html>.

art... Central to the culture of classicism was the mid-eighteenth century proliferation of print, which helped to disseminate the number of classical allusions, images, and motifs available to Americans, whether those Americans had attended college or not.<sup>50</sup>

Winterer's work does not focus on tracing the footprints of classical influence throughout the nation, or in a certain locale like Philadelphia, but her term "culture of classicism" speaks to the role of the classics as part of a wider cultural phenomenon beyond the academy and the power of print to spread it. These incidental references in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* illustrate the workings of a "culture of classicism" in Early America and demonstrate just how prevalent and visible gestures to the classics were in 1780s Philadelphia.<sup>51</sup> The *Pennsylvania Gazette* reported elements of the classics like street and ship names that were already splayed across the city. Furthermore, an examination of the classics expressed through the medium of the written word by the *Pennsylvania Gazette* in the 1780s reveals that these appeals to classical antiquity were not confined to higher education, but even spilled over to areas of daily life, such as ship names, currency, and slave names.

## ERUDITION

Since the classics formed the backbone of a higher education in early America and were thus also associated with genteel knowledge, the appearance of classical antiquity in a learned context in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* is perhaps the most expected classical encounter outside the walls of the academy.<sup>52</sup> This type of classical manifestation in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* occurred most commonly as book sellers' advertisements, but such learned references also

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<sup>50</sup> Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism*, 15-16.

<sup>51</sup> Winterer, *Culture of Classicism*, 15-16.

<sup>52</sup> For more on the classical tradition and higher education, see Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*; Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism*; and Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience, 1783-1876* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1980).



appeared in the paper's reports on collegiate commencement ceremonies, lecture announcements, and other instances one might define as erudite. In these learned contexts, the ancient languages, particularly Latin, were evoked, as well as references to authors of specific classical texts. The connection between higher education and the classical tradition is quite explicit in this category of classical expression. However, the inclusion of these erudite references to the classics in a widely read newspaper like the *Pennsylvania Gazette* also indicates again the pervasiveness of the classics in public avenues beyond the realm of higher education.

In number of advertisements in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Philadelphia booksellers promoted their offerings of classical texts. Bell's Book-Store, for example, located "near St. Paul's Church, in Third-Street, Philadelphia," frequently advertised its wares in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Bell's advertisements tended to highlight a featured item, often followed by a list of other books for sale. On July 2, 1783, after a brief blurb on a new acquisition, Bell's Book-Store added the following: "N.B. A considerable variety of the newest PUBLICATIONS, in History, Travels, Voyages, Novels, Arts, Sciences and Entertainment; with Latin and English Classics; also Books in all Languages: May be had at BELL's Book-Store."<sup>53</sup> The same advertisement was also reprinted in the July 9th and July 16th issues of the paper. On July 30, 1783, Bell's Book-Store changed its featured book, but retained the same *Nota Bene* section that included "Latin and English Classics." Importantly, the author of this advertisement considered the Latin classics an important enough category to merit its own mention, rather than subsuming the classical books under the "Books in all Languages" category or a different humanities label, as one might do today. In this advertisement, the classics were referenced specifically through books that were written in the classical language, Latin.

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<sup>53</sup> "Just Published and now Selling at BELL's Book-Store, near St. Paul's Church, in Third-Street, Philadelphia," *PG*, July 2, 1783.

William Prichard's Circulating Library and Book-Store, "opposite Laetitia- Court, Market-Street," also advertised books related to the Latin language. In one such advertisement on August 6, 1783, William Prichard listed "CLASSICS, and all Kinds of SCHOOL-BOOKS" as a subheading for a portion of offered books. Among the items listed in this section were "Latin Grammars, by Whittenhall and others" and "Cole's and Johnston's Latin and English Dictionary."<sup>54</sup> These books likely targeted traditional students, who studied Latin as part of their collegiate prep curriculum, or possibly even educated gentlemen who continued to read popular Latin texts in the original language. Regardless of their intended audience, the Latin grammars and dictionaries offered by William Prichard's Circulating Library and Book-Store display a close connection between the classical languages and higher education. Further, the advertisement of them in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* suggests an audience in Philadelphia who wanted to buy and read these classics, as well as a wider audience who was being introduced to these books subconsciously through the advertisements by booksellers like Prichard.

Like Prichard and Bell, the bookseller Joseph Crukshank, "on the north side of Market-Street, about midway between Second and Third-Streets," ran multiple advertisements that similarly included books related to the classical language, Latin. On September 24, 1783, for example, Joseph Crukshank offered a variety of Latin dictionaries, as well as a mix of classical translations and works in the original language. These classical works form quite a list, including "Virgil. Horace, Cicero, Caesar and Terence ... Clarke's Homer, Ovid ... Hutchinson's Xenophon... and Cunn's and Stone's Euclid."<sup>55</sup> While translators were noted for the Greek authors, the lack of translators associated with the Latin works suggests that these were in the

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<sup>54</sup> "Books and Stationary, Just imported, and now opening of SALE, at William Prichard's Circulating Library and Book-Store," *PG*, August 6, 1783.

<sup>55</sup> "Just imported in the Kent, Capt. Liege, from London, and to be sold by Joseph Crukshank," *PG*, September 24, 1783.

original language. Presumably, the educated gentleman, or one wishing to present the illusion of such, would need no translation of the Latin works.

A popular British work on Roman history, Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, also made an appearance among the book listings of booksellers like Bell and Prichard. William Prichard included six volumes of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* in his August 6, 1783 advertisement. On October 1, 1783, Bell advertised "GIBBON's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, 6 Vols. Twelve Dollars" as the first item of his newly received publications.<sup>56</sup> The same notice was printed again on October 8, 1783. However, for that same year, Bell's, Prichard's, and other booksellers' advertisements in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* more commonly advertised books related to Latin grammar (i.e. school books) and classical authors like Cicero or Virgil, rather than European retellings of classical history like Gibbon's. W. & D. Hall did not even include Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* in their lengthy catalogue of books, which included several classical authors and translations, that were advertised in the paper from that same year.<sup>57</sup> Books necessary for translating the original language, such as dictionaries and grammars, and classical works that formed part of the traditional classical canon instilled by schools were the most common representations of the classics in these booksellers' advertisements that were presented in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

For the years 1783 and 1788, references to the classical world also appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* in connection to colleges, and these again emphasize the classical languages' central place in institutions of higher education.<sup>58</sup> Once again, these references

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<sup>56</sup> "New Publications, now for sale, at Bell's Book-Store," *PG*, October 1, 1783.

<sup>57</sup> These were likely the same Hall brothers who published the *Pennsylvania Gazette*; their books were advertised to be sold from the same "new printing office" on Market-Street from which the *Pennsylvania Gazette* was published. "Books and Stationary, Just imported in the ship Olive Branch, Captain Falconer, from London, and to be sold by W. & D. Hall," *PG*, November 19, 1783.

<sup>58</sup> For more on classically-based collegiate curricula in Early America, see Cremin, *American Education*; Winterer, *Culture of Classicism*; and Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*.

displayed the exclusionary element associated with the classics; classical knowledge signified education and status. In the 1780s, the gates of the early American college stood barred shut to many members of the Philadelphia public such as women, poor whites, and African Americans.<sup>59</sup> Newspaper reports of collegiate proceedings, however, stood as glass doors through which a wider public not involved in the ceremonies could, in a sense, look in on these ceremonies and rituals. As with the booksellers' advertisements, the Latin language featured prominently in these commencement ceremonies and their printed reports. The *Pennsylvania Gazette's* reports of collegiate commencement ceremonies frequently noted that orations were delivered in Latin, and those commencement speeches that were in English often incorporated classical themes and references. One particularly revealing report of the first commencement proceedings for Washington College, published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on July 16, 1783, demonstrates the primacy of the ancient languages in higher education. According to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, after the students, scholars, faculty, and officials had processed from the school to the local church, Dr. Smith "opened the business of the day with a solemn PRAYER and ADDRESS to the SUPREME BEING; and afterwards a short Latin oration to the learned and collegiate part of the audience, *as custom seems to require*" [emphasis added].<sup>60</sup> The commencement activities began thus not only with prayer but also a Latin oration, which the *Pennsylvania Gazette's* account of the Washington College commencement suggests was the standard procedure for such events.

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<sup>59</sup> In the European tradition, which early American colleges adopted, a classical education was intended for the governing classes and professions like ministers and lawyers: Lee Percy, *The Grammar of Our Civility: Classical Education in America* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2005), 5-10. In early America, higher education similarly displayed aristocratic tendencies. Frederick Rudolph claims that the colonial colleges "were in no sense popular; they were shaped by aristocratic traditions and they served the aristocratic elements of colonial society": Frederick Rudolph, ed. *Essays on Education in the Early Republic* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1965), xvii. Michael David Cohen, *Reconstructing the Campus: Higher Education and the American Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 2-11.

<sup>60</sup> "Baltimore, July 4," *PG*, July 16, 1783.

The Latin oration following the opening prayer would not be the only time Latin surfaced in the *Pennsylvania Gazette's* report on the Washington College commencement. After Dr. Smith's prayer and Latin oration, the first of the "public exercises" performed by the degree candidates consisted of "A Latin SALUTATORY ORATION, by Mr. JOHN SCOTT." Next came an oration in French, followed by yet more Latin oratory in the form of "A Latin SYLLOGISTIC DISPUTE -- 'Num Aeternitas Poenarum contradicit divinis Attributis?'" It was not until the next dispute -- "Whether the state of nature be a state of war?" -- that the candidates presented in the English tongue.<sup>61</sup> That the commencement report specified the language in which each oration was delivered, even when it was presented in English, further suggests that commencement orations in Latin were quite common.

Accounts in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of other commencement proceedings further corroborate the custom of incorporating Latin oratory at these collegiate events. On July 23, 1783, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* ran a report on the University of Pennsylvania's commencement. Again, the exercises for the candidates began with an oration in Latin, as Mr. J. Snodgrass delivered "A Latin salutatory Oration, nervous and classical, particularly adapted to the time; touching on a variety of interesting topics; remarking more of especially, and exemplifying the baneful influence of luxury with respect to national principles and manners."<sup>62</sup> An account of Princeton's commencement ceremony, printed in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on October 8, 1783, also commented that Princeton's salutatory oration was delivered in Latin.<sup>63</sup> Although Princeton's commencement was not local news for Philadelphia, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* noted

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<sup>61</sup> "Baltimore, July 4," *PG*, July 16, 1783.

<sup>62</sup> "Philadelphia," *PG*, July 23, 1783.

<sup>63</sup> "Princeton, September 27," *PG*, October 8, 1783.

that “Mr. Ephraim Ramsay A. B. in Philadelphia was admitted ad eundem in this college.”<sup>64</sup> It was also common for early American newspapers to reprint articles from other newspapers and include news from around the nation. The account in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on Princeton's commencement also reported that an English exercise was performed which featured the graduates' classical knowledge. J. Venable, G. Snowden, and E. Taylor disputed the following question involving classical history: “Was Brutus justifiable in killing Caesar?”<sup>65</sup>

When the classics were used in connection to higher learning, as in the preceding examples from the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, these classical references supplied a marker of status. A close connection existed in early America between classics, education, status, and gentility. This association between the classics, education, and social status is particularly apparent in the classical references related to erudition and education. Classical books, such as those advertised in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, and the commencement exercises, which were usually in Latin and highly dependent on nuanced classical understanding, served to set one apart and denote a higher refinement and status. These manifestations of the classics played on the concept of equating social status with education, notably one steeped in the study of the classics. In his research on book culture in colonial Philadelphia, Edwin Wolfe II claims the following regarding classics, education, and status:

Education became the mark of the gentleman, and in its train came books to create the educated gentleman, or, sometimes, to create an illusion of him. If a knowledge of Greek and Latin was a status symbol, the ownership of a cabinet of the classics, or even translations of them, was its physical manifestation.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> “Princeton, September 27,” *PG*, October 8, 1783. It should be noted, however, that early American newspapers like the *Pennsylvania Gazette* frequently reprinted news from other papers both nationally and internationally: Pasley, “*Tyranny of Printers*,” 2.

<sup>65</sup> “Princeton, September 27,” *PG*, October 8, 1783.

<sup>66</sup> Edwin Wolfe II, *The Book Culture of a Colonial American City: Philadelphia Books, Bookmen, and Booksellers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 2.

An anonymous eighteenth century editorial article reprinted in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* in 1783 from the English paper, *Chester Chronicle*, reflected this same notion. Regarding the importance of the classics and classical knowledge, the author claimed:

All our knowledge in the polite arts is borrowed from those renowned nations the Greeks and Romans: They have taught us to speak; they have instructed us to write; they have shewn us models of patriotism; they have humanized and polished us; every principle of virtue and manners may be learned from their elegant and attick performances.<sup>67</sup>

In short, the author not only connected classical knowledge to the "polite arts," but also laid out reasons for which early Americans perceived the classics as pertinent and relevant to contemporary life. Moreover, in the *Chester Chronicle* author's opinion -- one shared by many educated Americans -- aspects of the classics were deemed useful even for those with non-extensive educational backgrounds. As "models of patriotism," elements from the classical world were widely disseminated as republican and national symbols. (The use of the classics as politicized visual symbols and icons will be further addressed in Chapter 2).

## POLITICS

While the classics denoted status and were a sign of higher culture, they also functioned as so much more. As the eighteenth century author in the *Chester Chronicle* alluded to with his mention of patriotism, statesmen and educated American considered the classics directly relevant for contemporary life, especially in regards to politics. The classical past offered important *exempla* for conduct, virtue, and political affairs; it provided powerful guides for both personal conduct and the nation's path. Moreover, Shalev has argued that in addition to providing "instructive models," the classical discourse also "gave expression to views suggesting that history consisted of processes that brought about reoccurrences of events and episodes from the

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<sup>67</sup> "To the Sovereigns of Europe," *PG*, August 13, 1783.

past.”<sup>68</sup> Essentially, unlike the modern interpretation of history as a discipline, early Americans believed in a cyclical view of history and time, wherein events unfolded in timeless patterns that were repeatable and thus discernible by the study of history. As such, classical history also became a template for interpreting Americans' -- and America's -- own present.<sup>69</sup> The situating of America's own political state of affairs in a classical past is ultimately one of the most intriguing and complex uses of the classics in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

Entries in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* relating to politics (local and national), patriotism, and legacies of the American Revolution reveal another context in which early Americans in Philadelphia frequently turned to the classics. Employed in regards to political matters, appeals to classical antiquity primarily served two functions. They conferred glory and praise upon an individual's character and actions or, conversely, demonized them through a comparison with a virtuous or villainous figure from the classical past. The classics also bestowed ideological weight and legitimacy to the argument or statement they furnished. These political uses of the classics appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* with more frequency in 1788 than in 1783, most likely due to the ratification debates that captured Philadelphians' and the wider nation's attention in 1788. Classical references employed in a politicized context are present in both years, but, for the year 1788, harnessing the classics for political and argumentative purposes was the dominant mode of classical expression in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. In 1788, the issue of ratification did not concern only American statesmen, but rather a "popular excitement" engulfed everyday

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<sup>68</sup> Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 38-39.

<sup>69</sup> For more on this concept see Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 38-39, 74-75 and Winterer, *Culture of Classicism*, 18-19.



Americans as they followed the arguments and debates in newspapers like the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and discussed the subject in homes and taverns.<sup>70</sup>

In the 1783 *Pennsylvania Gazette*, the American Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army and hero of the American Revolution, George Washington, was an obvious candidate for praiseworthy comparison with ancient heroes. On September 3, 1783, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* published an effusively praiseworthy article of General George Washington that made the favorable comparison between Washington and the Roman general, Fabius.<sup>71</sup> Among a litany of the American general's "talents and merits," the article's author, most likely Abbe Robin who was a Chaplain in Count De Rochambeau's army, claimed that Washington was "like Fabius, but with fewer resources and more difficulty, he has conquered without frequent battles, and served his country."<sup>72</sup> In this example, not only was Washington complimented through such a comparison, but he also outshone his ancient counterpart. Another entry from December 17, 1783 similarly employed classical references. A reprint of an address "presented to his Excellency General Washington" by the Clergy, Gentlemen of the Law, and Physicians of Philadelphia conferred the following praise upon the commander-in-chief:

Let others, Sir, recount your military achievements, and draw the honorable comparison between them and the deeds of those other heroes whose names adorn the records of time. It is ours to view you in another light, and to see your character surrounded with a glorious splendor, before which the star of a Caesar or an Alexander must hide its diminished head. The mad ambition of unlimited conquests was not your incentive to action -- your aim was not to exalt yourself upon the ruins of your fellow citizens. It was the voice of your country that called -- it was the genius of freedom that led you to the field.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Pauline Maier, *Ratification: The People Debate the Constitution, 1787-1788* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2010), xi. Maier emphasizes the popular nature of the Constitutional ratification debates and considers these debates as the "beginning of American national politics."

<sup>71</sup> Fabius Maximus was the Roman general known for his cautious tactics in the Second Punic War, wherein he wore down Hannibal's army by keeping the Roman army just out of Hannibal's reach, rather than engaging his forces in battles they were unlikely to win against Hannibal. For more on the Fabius Maximus, see Bernadotte Perrin, trans., *Plutarch's Lives* (London: W. Heinemann, 1914).

<sup>72</sup> I. H., "To the Printers of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*," *PG*, September 3, 1783.

<sup>73</sup> I. H., "To the Printers of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*," *PG*, December 17, 1783.

Although Caesar and Alexander were sometimes classical antimodels, the authors of the address executed a clever maneuver in distinguishing Washington's motivations from the "mad ambition" of Caesar and Alexander.<sup>74</sup> Washington could thus be presented as surpassing these great generals both in deeds and virtue without having his reputation tarnished by such an association.

Comparisons with classical figures also served to attack an individual's character and motivations. On April 2, 1788, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* published an editorial addressed to "G. B----N, Esquire." The article, signed only by "A Citizen," harshly denounced "G. B----N's" actions of opposing the Constitution and, a more grievous offense, labeling the Constitutional Convention's members as "a band of Conspirators."<sup>75</sup> As part of the "A Citizen's" attack on this "G. B----N, Esquire," the author accused him of sacrificing the well-being of the nation for his own selfish desire for fame. "A Citizen" claimed, "You have long aimed at acquiring fame, though, like the fellow that fired the temple of Diana, you can only do it by kindling the flames of civil dissension in the bowels of your country."<sup>76</sup> "A Citizen" referred to the figure Herostratus, who, according to the Greek historian Theopompus, burned down the temple of Artemis at Ephesus in order to gain fame. Essentially, he sought destruction only for the purpose of creating his own fame.

While the recipient of "A Citizen's" attack was not fully identified, this verbal onslaught was most likely directed at Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice George Bryan. Not only does George Bryan's name fit the initials provided in the article's appellation, but he was also believed by his contemporaries to be the author of the series of essays that bore the pseudonym "Centinel." "Centinel" published some of the most "outspoken attacks" against the Constitution

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<sup>74</sup> For more on classical antimodels in America see Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 85-122.

<sup>75</sup> A Citizen, "To B. B----N, Esquire," *PG*, April 2, 1788.

<sup>76</sup> A Citizen, "To B. B----N, Esquire," *PG*, April 2, 1788.

and even dared to attack the Constitution's revered supporters like Washington and Franklin, a point which incensed the author of the Herostratus reference.<sup>77</sup> This was also not the first time that Supreme Court Justice George Bryan was denounced in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* through the use of classical history. On October 8, 1783, an editorial addressed to "GEORGE BRYAN, Esq; one of the Assistant Justices of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania" similarly blatantly attacked Bryan's actions and character: "I know not how to address you... if *Honorable*, the honest part of the world would suppose I dealt in irony."<sup>78</sup> This letter's author, again pseudonymous, continued his attack and mustered classical references to conduct his barrage of denouncements against Bryan. The author quoted Latin at multiple junctures, ending the editorial with the phrase "Hic niger est, hunc tu Romane caveto!"<sup>79</sup> Referencing the Roman poet Horace, this translates to essentially "this fellow has a dark heart; be careful of him, Roman."<sup>80</sup>

Like the 1788 article that compared George Bryan to Herostratus, the deployment of Latin in the 1783 editorial against Bryan marshaled the authority and legitimacy associated with the classics to the author's argument. Classical references, such as a quote from Horace or the citation of the figure of Herostratus, could thus imbue an argument or statement with added ideological weight. Regarding the employment of classical references and symbols, Carl Richard claims that they "served a powerful legitimating function" and "to use them aptly was also to claim the endorsement of ancient sages."<sup>81</sup> It should be noted, however, that such a use of the classics also held an element of exclusion. One had to be familiar and knowledgeable with

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<sup>77</sup> Maier, *Ratification*, 75-76.

<sup>78</sup> Z., "To George Bryan, Esq; one of the Assistant Justices of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania," *PG*, October 8, 1783.

<sup>79</sup> Z., "To George Bryan, Esq; one of the Assistant Justices of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania," *PG*, October 8, 1783.

<sup>80</sup> The author here referenced Horace, *Satires* I.iv.85. Translation by author.

<sup>81</sup> Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 39.

enough of the classical discourse to fully participate and deploy the references, especially those which incorporated specific classical authors and quotes in Latin.

An unattributed report from the July 9, 1783 issue of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* provides an illustrative example of a classical reference that served the dual functions of conferring praise and supporting a position; the report praised the peaceful resolution of the soldiers' mutiny in Philadelphia and also suggested that the actions taken to preserve harmony were proper. The piece's author, identified simply as a "spectator of the late confusion in Philadelphia," compared the handling of the dispute between soldiers and Congress to unnamed similar situations in republican Rome. The author first "begs leave to congratulate every friend to humanity upon the peaceable mode of settling the late dispute between the Council and the soldiers."<sup>82</sup> Immediately following this statement, the "spectator" asserted the following: "It has been remarked, that during the republican ages of Rome, which lasted several hundred years, there never was a single life lost in all the riots, mobs, revolts and mutinies, that were so frequent in that country."<sup>83</sup> This statement presented a more idealized portrayal of republican Rome than is necessarily accurate. Instead, the author invoked the positive reputation of Rome as a republic. High praise indeed, the Council and soldiers acted in a manner befitting the ancient, virtuous Romans of Rome's republican period.

Additionally, this comparison to Rome emerged in a politically-charged moment, wherein the fragility of America's republic surfaced. The formal peace treaty with Britain had not yet been signed, and already soldiers were mutinying outside the Pennsylvania State House, the then seat of the Continental Congress. Not only had the crises been averted peaceably, as the writer stressed in his article, but perhaps the mention of the Roman republic's "so frequent"

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<sup>82</sup> "Philadelphia, July 9," *PG*, July 9, 1783.

<sup>83</sup> "Philadelphia, July 9," *PG*, July 9, 1783.

"riots, mobs, revolts and mutinies" was meant to comfort readers.<sup>84</sup> Rome may have been plagued by such upheavals, but, in the spectator's account, the lives of its citizens were preserved, as in the case also of the Philadelphia mutiny. The writer also filled the rest of his article with additional references that exemplified a devotion to preventing bloodshed, thereby suggesting the mutiny was handled properly.

Importantly, classical references often appeared in persuasive pieces in which the writer was making an argument. Edicts issued from the Philadelphia General Assembly or United States Congress, already carrying the voice of authority, tended not to invoke the classical tradition for justification. While the members of such legislative bodies may have incorporated the classics in their debates, not one of the printed acts and resolves of these congresses that appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* in the years 1783 and 1788 employed classical antiquity as evidence to support a certain position. The only time that they referenced the classics was to specify the classical design of an authorized artistic work, such as the equestrian statue of Washington.<sup>85</sup> (The theme of the classics in visual culture will be further addressed in chapter 2).

On the other hand, published opinion pieces and reports of ratification debates in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* frequently incorporated classical examples, phrases, history, and pseudonyms. On August 27, 1783, for example, "A Citizen" submitted an editorial to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. It identified and criticized the sanitary conditions of the city and exhorted the police and officials to take action in remedying the situation. At the conclusion of the article, the author urged Philadelphia officials to "Imitate the example of the Roman Consuls, who, from

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<sup>84</sup> "Philadelphia, July 9," *PG*, July 9, 1783.

<sup>85</sup> For the congressional act regarding the equestrian statue of Washington, see "By the UNITED STATES in CONGRESS Assembled, August 7, 1783," *PG*, September 3, 1783. This resolve specified "that the statue be of bronze: the general to be represented in Roman dress, holding a truncheon in his right hand and his head encircled with a laurel wreath."

their tenderness of the lives of their fellow-citizens, acquired the honorable title of the fathers of the people."<sup>86</sup> Like the editorial from a "spectator" who claimed that no citizen ever lost his life in the riots and mobs in Republican Rome, this use of classical history is again more an ideal than an accurate portrayal of classical history. However, it again played off the reputation of the Roman republic in order to strengthen "A Citizen's" argument. In 1788, many of the reports in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of the ratification debates from other states also employed classical history and references. The reports showcased debaters who incorporated the classics into their arguments. For example, in a report published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on February 6, 1788 of a debate that occurred on January 15, 1788, Mr. Ames of the Massachusetts convention used the Greek democracies as a warning from ancient history. He claimed "It would be a government not by laws, but by men. Such were the paltry democracies of Greece and Asia Minor, so much extolled, and so often proposed as a model for our imitation. I desire to be thankful that our people are not under any temptation to follow their advice."<sup>87</sup> While the debates would have been oral, the reports in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* provided a written account of these ratification proceedings. This allowed the debate content, including the references made to classical antiquity, to reach out to a wider audience more national in scope that encompassed a range of classes who had access to the newspaper.

Classical pseudonyms emerge as an off-shoot of the use of the classics for supporting an argument. These pseudonyms tended to be closely associated with the piece they enhanced. Eran Shalev describes the pseudonym as an "act of communication" that functions like a *Sprachspiel*, or language game.<sup>88</sup> Essentially, classical pseudonyms, especially those pertaining

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<sup>86</sup> A Citizen, "For the Pennsylvania Gazette," *PG*, August 27, 1783.

<sup>87</sup> "Massachusetts Convention," *PG*, February 6, 1788.

<sup>88</sup> Shalev, "Ancient Masks, American Fathers: Classical Pseudonyms during the American Revolution and Early Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic* Vol. 23, No. 2 (Summer, 2003): 152, 161.

to classical figures, "had to be cracked in order to understand the essay's inner meaning."<sup>89</sup> Like a *Sprachspiel*, these pseudonyms had to be deciphered by the reader in relation to the content of the text. Once deciphered, they often added additional meaning and weight to the text through their invocation of the ancients. Not all readers of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* may have possessed the classical knowledge in order to do so. However, like street names and the other incidental references, the frequent appearance of classical pseudonyms likely conveyed to the layperson at least a passing familiarity with certain classical figures, even if those without classical training failed to "crack" the "essay's inner meaning."<sup>90</sup> Additionally, the Americanization of certain figures like Cincinnatus, to whom Washington was frequently compared, or Cato, who was the central figure in a popular English play entitled *Cato, A Tragedy*, may have allowed another avenue for non-classically-educated individuals to at least recognize the desired symbolism attributed to such figures from classical history.

As one example of classical pseudonyms at work in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, an opponent of the Society of the Cincinnati took the pseudonym of "Cassius" in his pamphlet's criticism of the organization, an organization only open to officers of the American Revolution, not enlisted men. On November 5, 1783, Bell's Book-Store advertised a pamphlet signed by "Cassius," "supposed to be written by Aedanus Burke, Esquire, one of the Chief Justices of the State of South-Carolina."<sup>91</sup> The pamphlet bore the lengthy title, *CONSIDERATIONS on the Society of the Order of CINCINNATI; lately instituted by the Major Generals, Brigadier-Generals, and other Officers of the American Army; Proving, that it creates a Race of Hereditary Patricians, or Nobility: Interspersed with Remarks on its Consequences to the Freedom and Happiness of the Republic*. This pamphlet formed part of an ongoing debate in

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<sup>89</sup> Shalev, "Ancient Masks, American Fathers," 154.

<sup>90</sup> Shalev, "Ancient Masks, American Fathers," 154.

<sup>91</sup> "Just Published, and now Selling, At Bell's Book-Store," *PG*, November 5, 1783.

America over the role of the Society of the Cincinnati. With its inclusion of only officers and the suggestion that membership might be passed on to the eldest sons of officers, critics claimed that the organization was not in agreement with the Revolutionary legacy. Rather, opponents felt this organization would, in fact, foster the creation of a hereditary aristocracy.<sup>92</sup> The Society of the Cincinnati had used a classical figure, Cincinnatus, to perpetuate the republican Roman image of soldiers abandoning the sword and returning to the plow with their allegiance transferred from their general to the republican government. Opponents of this society proved that they too could muster classical antiquity to support their position. Like Cincinnatus, the Roman figure of Cassius, who along with Brutus had assassinated the tyrant Julius Caesar, was also revered by Americans, especially during the Revolutionary conflict.<sup>93</sup> Taking on the pseudonym "Cassius," a figure who also represented virtue and patriotism, in order to contend against the symbol of Cincinnatus was, according to Shalev, a calculated effort to "destabilize the connection between the name of the society and its perceived essence."<sup>94</sup> As such, the pseudonym "Cassius" strengthened the pamphlet's overall argument.

"Publius," adopted by the *Federalist Papers*'s triumvirate of authors, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, forms another example of classical antiquity disseminated as pseudonyms through the newspapers. In 1788, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* serially reprinted "Publius" from the *New York Packet*. Starting off the year, on January 2, 1788, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* published "The Foederalist, No. X," signed by "Publius." By "Publius," the authors likely made reference to Publius Valerius Publicola, a Roman who was influential in

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<sup>92</sup> Maier, *Ratification*, 2.

<sup>93</sup> For more on Cassius as a revered figure in Revolutionary America, see Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 65-66.

<sup>94</sup> Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 169. For a more detailed discussion on the wider debates involving the Society of Cincinnati and its use of classics, see Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 168-169.



building the Roman republic after the expulsion of the last king of Rome.<sup>95</sup> For those reading the *Pennsylvania Gazette* who knew their Roman history, a nice parallel existed between the historic Publius and the efforts at nation building of the *Federalist Papers's* authors.

In addition to figures from classical history taken as pseudonyms, Latin or Greek terms were also employed as pseudonyms. For example, on June 11, 1788 and October 22, 1788, an individual adopted the pseudonym "Agricola" for his articles on farming advice and the state of agriculture in America.<sup>96</sup> Agricola, the Latin word for farmer, constituted a fitting pseudonym for someone who wished to give advice to other farmers and speak with authority on the subject.

In early America, two main types of classical pseudonyms have been identified by historians: those that borrow "the names of ancient historical figures," such as "Cassius" or "Publius," and those that employ "abstract Latin augural terms" like "Agricola."<sup>97</sup> Both types appeared within pieces in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. More classical pseudonyms surfaced during 1788 than in 1783 likely due to the fact that 1788 showcased more editorials and political debates because of the Constitutional ratification drama that gripped the nation. Other classical language-derived names that were used in articles published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* include "Minimus" (Dec. 10, 1783), "Philanthropos" (Jan. 16, 1788), "Modestus" (March 5, 1788), and "Philadelphus" (March 12, 1788). Along with "Cassius" and "Publius," "Aristides" (May 14, 1783, and also December 31, 1783), and "Lucius" (November 26, 1783) comprised some other classical figures taken as pseudonyms in the paper. The fairly regular appearance of classical pseudonyms like the aforementioned in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* in 1783 and, especially, in 1788 again underscores the pervasiveness of the classics outside of the academic realm in

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<sup>95</sup> Shalev, "Ancient Masks, American Fathers," 167.

<sup>96</sup> Agricola, "American Manufactures," *PG*, June 11, 1788; and Agricola, "For the PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE," *PG*, October 22, 1788.

<sup>97</sup> Shalev, "Ancient Masks, American Fathers," 154.

Philadelphia. It also emphasizes the role of the classics as a form of discourse that Americans, particularly statesmen and educated ones, frequently incorporated into political discussions and debates.

### CLASSICS, THE *PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE*, AND THE PUBLIC

The numerous references to the classics in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, whether incidental, learned, or political, point to the pervasiveness and ubiquity of the classical tradition in early Philadelphia. With a classically-based higher education system and a new country espousing these values, the overwhelming presence of the classics in the newspaper seems hardly surprising, especially in contexts wherein educated, elite individuals were involved, as in politics and education. Yet, there were opportunities for the wider public in Philadelphia to encounter and engage with the classics in the city of Philadelphia through the written medium of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

In evaluating the reach of manifestations of the classics in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, literacy emerges as a major filter. Those who could not read would be less likely to engage with the classics through this avenue. Likely, these literate individuals would be white and male, although advertisements placed by women in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* suggest that some women had interactions with the paper.<sup>98</sup> The number of individuals with basic literacy in Philadelphia, however, would include a greater number than those who could receive a traditional higher education.<sup>99</sup> Along with literacy, an individual's income also served as a filter; one needed to possess enough income in order to afford a subscription to the paper.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Pasley, *"The Tyranny of Printers,"* 7. For advertisements involving women in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, see, for example, "Wet Nurse," *PG*, November 5, 1788 and "Wants a Place as a Housekeeper," *PG*, Sept. 3, 1783.

<sup>99</sup> In colonial and revolutionary America, colleges catered to middle class and elite white males and taught erudition, not practical skills. Even by the start of the American Civil War, Cohen estimates that only about 1 percent of the

In his examination of newspaper politics in the Early Republic, Pasley, however, offers several alternatives through which newspapers could "breach these limits and reach a relatively broad sector of the population."<sup>101</sup> Taverns, coffeehouses, and hotels often had subscriptions and circulated copies among their patrons. Thus, even if one did not have a subscription, there was still an opportunity to access newspapers. Additionally, in such public meeting places as taverns and coffeehouses, people often read the papers aloud in groups.<sup>102</sup> The very practice of turning the written word into speech provided another way in which information could pass beyond just those individuals who were literate and had a subscription. While we cannot know exactly which articles might have been read aloud, ones relating to politics, which form one arena in which classical references appear, are likely candidates. This is especially the case in 1788 when the ratification debates were raging across the nation and through newspapers like the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. As such an ingrained moment in America's national history, one may be tempted to look back today with hindsight and view the ratification of the Constitution as an inevitable conclusion. However, in 1787 and early 1788 this was by no means the case; the fate of the federal Constitution was uncertain. As such, there was a real "popular excitement" and intensity to the ratification debates.<sup>103</sup> Maier has likened this popular excitement to the modern American obsession with sporting event finals like the World Series, "but with greater intensity because everyone understood that the results would last far longer than a season."<sup>104</sup> The entanglement of classical references and politics in the "war of printed words" during the

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American male population received a traditional higher education at a college: Cohen, *Reconstructing the Campus*, 2-11. In Philadelphia of the 1780s, however, schools and female seminaries did exist that taught English and practical, vocational skills: Louis B. Wright, *The Cultural Life of the American Colonies, 1607-1763* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 107-109. Therefore, the number of literate people in Philadelphia likely comprised a greater amount than the number of Philadelphians who could receive a higher education in the classics.

<sup>100</sup> Pasley, "The Tyranny of Printers," 7.

<sup>101</sup> Pasley, "The Tyranny of Printers," 7.

<sup>102</sup> Pasley, "The Tyranny of Printers," 7.

<sup>103</sup> Maier, *Ratification*, xi.

<sup>104</sup> Maier, *Ratification*, xi.

ratification debates also placed the classics in a more popular forum. These debates were not confined to statesmen in institutional venues, but carried over to cultural and social outlets like newspaper editorials, tavern debates, and even dinner table conversations.<sup>105</sup>

For those who could read the newspaper, some classical references were likely intended to have a broader impact and appeal than others. For example, the Washington references, wherein the general was depicted as outshining his classical counterparts, did not require additional classical knowledge to divine their intended meaning. The editorial that exhorted the police and leaders in Philadelphia to improve the city's sanitary condition likewise made more of a general reference to classical history that did not necessitate extended knowledge of the classics. The author even mixed classical and biblical imagery, following the classical example of Roman consuls with a reference to the "Jewish Legislator" from the Bible. Even if the reader was unfamiliar with classical history, contextual clues and the matching biblical reference would aid the reader in understanding its meaning. Conversely, the force behind "A Citizen's" comparison between Supreme Court Justice George Bryan and Herostratus would be completely lost if the reader and recipient had no background classical knowledge. "A Citizen" did not even mention Herostratus by name, only as "the fellow that fired the temple of Diana."<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, the earlier 1783 editorial attack against Bryan quoted Latin without its corresponding English translation in an attack on Bryan.<sup>107</sup> Assumedly, Bryan and other intended readers would be familiar enough with the Latin phrase and the figure of Herostratus to understand the intent within these editorials. Considering the outright, forceful attack against Bryan's character in both pieces, neither was meant as an oblique insult. For example,

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<sup>105</sup> Maier, *Ratification*, xi.

<sup>106</sup> A Citizen, "To B. B----N, *Esquire*," *PG*, April 2, 1788.

<sup>107</sup> Z., "To George Bryan, Esq; one of the Assistant Justices of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania," *PG*, October 8, 1783.

throughout his article, "A Citizen" did not hold back his outrage: "I know of no language too strong to express the malevolence of your disposition..."<sup>108</sup> For the classical references to pack the same punch, their recipient needed to have background knowledge of the classics. Here, an inherent tension in the use of the classics in Philadelphia clearly emerges. While classical references were seen by a wide public reading the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, the active deployment of classical references in this paper was limited to certain Philadelphians -- those that had the knowledge, familiarity, and training to participate in the discourse. Moreover, not all references to the classics, as in the Herostratus example, were presented in a manner comprehensible to those without background classical knowledge.

Pseudonyms also required various depths of classical knowledge. Figures like Cincinnatus and Cassius might have been familiar for their frequent symbolic use during the Revolution and after; they appear among popular classical heroes that Americans drew upon during the Revolutionary struggle.<sup>109</sup> However, other less common figures like Aristides or Lucius -- there were multiple Lucii in Roman history and one would have to guess the intended Lucius based on the corresponding textual content -- were likely less well-known. Furthermore, Shalev claims that a tripartite correspondence existed between "the pseudonym (the "text"), the words it signed (the "context"), and the classical history it suggested, allegorized, and metaphorized ("hypertext")."<sup>110</sup> With such coded discourse, one needed to have a certain degree of classical understanding to fully comprehend and participate in this classical pseudonym conversation. Again, much like a glass door, these classical pseudonyms served as a transparent barrier; they would necessarily close the door to participation and full comprehension for certain

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<sup>108</sup> A Citizen, "To B. B----N, *Esquire*," *PG*, April 2, 1788.

<sup>109</sup> Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 168-169; Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 57, 65.

<sup>110</sup> Shalev, "Ancient Masks, American Fathers," 167.

readers, while still allowing these readers to view these classical references and thus encouraging a familiarity with certain classical figures through contemporary American political culture.

The appearance of the classics in regard to erudition and education similarly demonstrated a sense of exclusion. Latin dictionaries and grammars were directed toward students who could afford to follow a traditional, classical educational path at private schools and colleges in the city. The classical folios in English, such as the multivolume set of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* advertised at 12 dollars, were expensive. Not only was admission to college far more exclusive than it is today, but the reports of collegiate commencements suggest that these too were closed events. The report from the University of Pennsylvania described the audience as "a great concourse of the most respectable citizens."<sup>111</sup> Additionally, those involved in the procession and oratory exercises were white males, either students, professors, or officials. And yet, while the ceremonies themselves exhibited exclusion, on the other hand, reports of these ceremonies circulated in the papers, which did allow for the broader public to read about the ceremony. The readers, although they may not have participated in the event, could encounter the classical presence in these ceremonies through the reports in the paper. Much like encountering the classics through a glass door, the wider public could see and read about the event from the outside, but were not included as participants. Again, this tension resurfaces between the inclusion and exclusion of the wider public with the use of classics.

Lastly, advertisements suggest that a range of people and organizations in general engaged with the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Notifications for learned society meetings like the American Philosophical Society were mixed in with, for example, shipping reports and advertisements from a variety of businesses and individuals. These ranged from an advertisement seeking "good workmen" for the ironworks, to a woman who sought a position as

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<sup>111</sup> "PHILADELPHIA," *PG*, July 23, 1783.

a wet nurse, to a fancy plantation home ornamented with Doric entablature "for sale by public vendue"; these suggest that a range of groups had access to and read the *Pennsylvania Gazette*.<sup>112</sup> Additionally, the advertisements also involved women as both recipients and initiators. On August 20, 1783, for example, a subscriber published the following announcement: "WANTED IMMEDIATELY, a MIDDLE aged WOMAN for a house-keeper, that can be well recommended, and understands plantation affairs, dairy, etc."<sup>113</sup> The advertiser presumably would not invest either time or money advertising in a paper with which the desired recipient would never come into contact. A notice in the September 3, 1783 issue of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* demonstrates that women also placed advertisements. In this notice, a middle-aged woman sought a "place as a housekeeper."<sup>114</sup>

Although advertisements testify to the interaction of women with the paper, no one, unfortunately, self identified as either a woman or African American in the pieces which made use of the classics in some form in the years 1783 and 1788. Additionally, grammatical errors or rough prose which might suggest authorship by a non-educated individual were similarly lacking for the pieces in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* in 1783 and 1788 that employed classical references and history. Rather, many of these articles displayed artful and clever prose, especially the political editorials. While no evidence definitively indicates that a non-traditional audience for the classics was authoring articles that incorporated classical references and history in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, these individuals like women and middle and working class men were, at the very least, reading and advertising in this paper which radiated a classical presence.

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<sup>112</sup> For the advertisement for forge men see "Forge-Men," *PG*, September 10, 1788. The woman's advertisement for her services as a wet nurse can be found in "Wet Nurse," *PG*, November 5, 1788. And, the plantation home with Doric entablature was advertised in *Pennsylvania Gazette* on Oct. 29, 1783; "For sale, by public Vendue," *PG*, October 29, 1783.

<sup>113</sup> "Wanted Immediately," *PG*, August 20, 1783.

<sup>114</sup> "Wants a Place as a Housekeeper," *PG*, Sept. 3, 1783.

The prevalence of the classics in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* suggests that a wider Philadelphia public that went beyond those traditionally educated within the academy engaged with the classics. Limitations, however, served to lessen the extent of this engagement. Most notably, many items in the paper used the classics in such a way as to suggest a learned, educated author and oftentimes a learned audience. At least in the years 1783 and 1788, no evidence through self-identification conclusively demonstrates that women, African Americans, or individuals of the lower classes were actively employing classical references through the public avenue of the newspaper, the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. As such, while individuals of these groups may have encountered the classics in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, it would have been a passive engagement. And yet, the classics were present. The wider Philadelphian populace would have encountered resonances of the classical tradition even in mundane circumstances, such as through classically named ships and Latinate phrases on currency, demonstrating the pervasiveness and ubiquity of the classics. Vernacular political uses, such as comparing General Washington to Fabius, were similarly both inclusive and exclusive. Much like looking through a glass door, non-traditionally educated individuals could encounter and see references to the classical past, though they might not have had the background knowledge to fully understand and actively engage with such references. They could look but not touch, and their interaction was dependant on what elements of the classical tradition those with classical knowledge and cultural power placed before them, what figures and references those in control deemed most relevant for the American present. Therefore, at least in regard to the presence of the classics in



the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, the phenomenon appears to be a top-down transmission of culture, propagated and filtered down by those educated and likely elite members of Philadelphia.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> This is not to say that non-classically educated individuals were powerless. Certainly, they could probably choose not to buy into the elite use of the classical tradition, as may have happened in the opposition to the Society of the Cincinnati. Even the appeal to Cincinnatus did not succeed enough to quell criticism about the aristocratic nature of the institution.

## CHAPTER TWO: CLASSICS AND THE VISUAL IN TWO PHILADELPHIA SPECTACLES

On the morning of July 4, 1788, spectators crowded "the footways, the windows, and the roofs of houses," to watch the Grand Federal Procession.<sup>116</sup> They gathered not only to celebrate the day of America's independence, but also the ratification of the federal Constitution by the requisite two-thirds of the states. In fact, federalist organizers like Francis Hopkinson intended the parade to be "altogether foederal [sic]" and to celebrate the Constitution as part of the legacy of the Fourth of July and the American Revolution.<sup>117</sup>

Spectators would observe an American foundation myth reenacted through the Grand Federal Procession, filled with allegory and symbolism. "Twelve ax-men" led the procession, representing the clearing of the continent for settlement.<sup>118</sup> After the ax-men, groups paraded that represented the following significant events in the life of the American republic as chosen by federalist organizers: Independence, French Alliance, Definitive Treaty of Peace, Convention of the States, and the Constitution.<sup>119</sup> Following this visual representation of the republic's foundation and history, various trades and professions marched down the streets, each bearing insignia of their trade, professing support for the Constitution, and fitting themselves into the national story. Perched on fences and roofs, spectators would have seen the goldsmiths, silversmiths, and jewelers, for example, marching together and bearing a flag with the goldsmith's arms and traditional motto -- "*justitia vertutum regina*" -- on one side. The flag's

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<sup>116</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>117</sup> [No Heading], *PG*, July 2, 1788. For more on the Federalist Appropriation of festive rites and the Fourth of July, see David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 90-103.

<sup>118</sup> These twelve ax-men who marched at the head of the parade also bear resemblance to the Roman lictors, attendants "who carried the fasces for magistrates with imperium" and announced and cleared the pathway for these officials in Rome. At the highest office in the Roman Republic, a consul had twelve lictors: Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth, eds., "lictores," *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Third Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 860.

<sup>119</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

reverse depicted "the genius of America, holding in her hand a silver urn, with the following motto: *the purity, brightness and solidity of this metal are emblematic of that liberty which we expect from the new constitution...*"<sup>120</sup>

As the public of Philadelphia witnessed the one and a half mile long procession progress through the city, spectators would see multiple classically based icons, themes, and symbols. Some, like the Latin mottos for trades and professions, were tied to trades tradition, others, like the liberty caps and classical architectural elements, were presented in a profoundly American context. The most visible classical manifestation in the parade took the form of the Grand Federal Edifice, a tangible metaphor for the federal Constitution. This extended metaphor had circulated through the written medium of newspapers like the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, wherein writers allegorized the process of ratification as the erection of a new building, termed the "New Roof," or "[Grand] Federal Edifice." On the morning of July 4, 1788, spectators in Philadelphia would see a textual metaphor become visual reality as a building composed of a "dome supported by thirteen Corinthian columns, raised on pedestals proper to that order; the frieze decorated with thirteen stars; ten of the columns complete, and three left unfinished" rolled through the streets of Philadelphia "on a carriage drawn by ten white horses."<sup>121</sup> In the Federalists' spectacle, the metaphor of the [grand] federal edifice had achieved a physical presence as an American, federal, "temple to liberty" garbed in the architecture and symbolism of the classical past.<sup>122</sup> Composed of pillars, or columns, each representing a state, and with its dome, pedestals, and frieze, the Grand Federal Edifice resembled a classical temple. Its portrayal

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<sup>120</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>121</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>122</sup> The American nation personified also as a "temple to liberty" appears in Rhodiensis, "Extract from a piece signed "RHODIENSIS" in the New Port Herald of October 23," *PG*, November 19, 1788.

and presentation, however, were American, specifically, federal. In the visual medium of the procession, the classical became federal.

Although the use of the classics in the Grand Federal Procession is particularly interesting because of the blend of allegory, metaphor, tradition, and innovation, this was not the first time that Americans had employed classical architecture and symbols in spectacle and celebration in Philadelphia. The Philadelphia Assembly had also chosen in 1784 to commemorate the peace treaty with Britain through the construction of a triumphal arch as part of the "public demonstrations of joy, by authority of the state, on the definitive treaty."<sup>123</sup>

This chapter examines the visual expression of the classics in architecture and spectacle in Philadelphia in order to further analyze the public's engagement with the classics. Using two events which prominently featured the classics, the 1784 triumphal arch exhibition and the 1788 Grand Federal Procession, this chapter offers another avenue, spectacle and the visual, in which a non-traditional audience encountered the classical past outside the academic classroom. In these moments where Americans were attempting to create an identity for their republic and mold a political culture, the classics took on an American identity. Although the triumphal arch and Grand Federal Procession were classical in origin -- a legacy of which their creators were aware -- they assumed an American context and presentation, contributing to an American foundation myth. Additionally, these events that featured a strong classical presence were open to a wide range of spectators, not simply the educated elite.

In Philadelphia of the 1780s, monuments and spectacles like the 1784 triumphal arch and 1788 Grand Federal Procession were designed to incite more than just feelings of aesthetic

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<sup>123</sup> [No Headline], *PG*, December 31, 1783.

pleasure and entertainment. Visual culture was also intended by its creators - in both these cases Philadelphia statesmen - to perform a didactic function.

As organized, controlled events, the 1784 peace celebration and 1788 Grand Federal Procession were politicized and didactic in nature. They were, according to David Waldstreicher's characterization of early American nationalist celebrations, "an important venue for a system of visible virtue."<sup>124</sup> Additionally, these didactic public spectacles also constituted an avenue for the broader public to access classical symbols and themes. Such events as Philadelphia's triumphal arch peace celebration and the Grand Federal Procession drew upon a widespread belief that spectacle and the visual arts had the ability to influence and shape a person's character and virtue. This cultivation of virtue through public events like spectacle would be especially important for the fledgling American republic because, according to one of the guiding republican theories for early Americans, the health and stability of a republic depended on the virtue and character of its citizens.<sup>125</sup> Therefore, political celebrations like those in Philadelphia employed visual symbols and performances as *exempla* to transform, instruct, and mold a people's character and virtue.

In research on punishment and penal transformations in Philadelphia in the late eighteenth-early nineteenth century, Michael Meranze highlights the importance of example. He employs the term "mimetic corruption," which he defines as the process wherein "the very presence of embodied criminality overwhelmed spectators' virtue and led them to identify with and replicate criminality," to describe the deleterious effect that leading Philadelphia reformers

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<sup>124</sup> Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, 84.

<sup>125</sup> See Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, 72-77; Michael Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue: Punishment, Revolution, and Authority in Philadelphia, 1760-1835* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 8-9; and Dietmar Schloss, "The Nation as Spectacle: The Grand Federal Procession in Philadelphia, 1788" in *Celebrating Ethnicity and Nation: American Festive Culture from the Revolution to the Early 20th Century*, eds. Genevieve Fabre, Jurgen Heideking, and Kai Dreisbach (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 50-51.

and officials believed public punishments had on a society's virtue.<sup>126</sup> They worried that these spectacles of public punishment could be dangerous if misunderstood -- the public might fail to interpret the signs properly and instead identify with the criminal -- and "had the capacity to disrupt the orderly dissemination of virtue."<sup>127</sup> The public punishments risked generating "mimetic corruption," but, conversely, politicized spectacles like the triumphal arch celebration and the Grand Federal Procession, furnished with positive examples, strove to foster virtue.<sup>128</sup> This obsession with fostering virtue in the public realm through a variety of avenues including spectacle was not confined solely to criminal punishment. It formed part of a wider phenomenon where, as Meranze explains,

reformers and officials believed that social problems could best be contained through the transformation of individual character, that individual character could best be transformed through the careful supervision of individual regimen, and that the supervision of individual regimen could best take place within an environment where time and space were carefully regulated.<sup>129</sup>

Situated within such an environment, politicized spectacles like the triumphal arch celebration and the Grand Federal Procession provided carefully selected and presented positive examples for the assembled Philadelphia public.<sup>130</sup>

Classical visual culture and symbols formed one of the items in the toolkit for constructing virtue. The study of classics, the backbone of higher education in early America,

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<sup>126</sup> Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue*, 8.

<sup>127</sup> Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue*, 8.

<sup>128</sup> Meranze argues in *Laboratories of Virtue* that this fear of "mimetic corruption" ultimately led the state to remove punishment from the public view and turn to private incarceration. Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue*, 2-9.

<sup>129</sup> Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue*, 4.

<sup>130</sup> Wilson's oration, which followed immediately after the parade, noted the calculated effort behind the arrangement of spectacles like the Grand Federal Procession: "Public processions may be so planned and executed as to join *both* the properties of nature's rule. They may *instruct* and *improve*, while they *entertain* and *please*..." Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

had long been associated, after all, with instilling virtue and patriotism in its students.<sup>131</sup> John Adams, in a letter to his son, alluded to the perceived connection and causal relationship between studying the classics and becoming virtuous:

In company with Sallust, Cicero, Tacitus, and Livy, you will learn Wisdom and Virtue. You will see them represented with all the Charms which Language and Imagination can exhibit, and Vice and Folly painted in all their Deformity and Horror. You will ever remember that all the End of study is to make you a good Man and a useful Citizen.<sup>132</sup>

The classics supplied *exempla* from which individuals could find models for emulation and avoidance. For students in the academy, this classical knowledge was transmitted through reading works from the classical canon. Outside the academy, classical themes and symbols, however, were also projected visually in Philadelphia towards a similar goal.

Spectacles like the peace celebration and Grand Federal Procession consciously incorporated appeals to the classics, drawing upon the dual power of both visual culture and the classics to instill civic virtue and mold character. Architects of these spectacles drew upon the symbolic qualities associated with the classics. In fact, contemporary descriptions of both the 1784 triumphal arch and 1788 Grand Federal Edifice reveal a conscious decision to mirror a classical architecture style.<sup>133</sup> This use of the classics in visual culture was both didactic and legitimizing; classically inspired art and iconography projected certain virtues or qualities that its creators wished the public to emulate, but it also was also seen as representative of virtues already held. Not much later, in an 1811 oration in Philadelphia, architect Benjamin Latrobe

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<sup>131</sup> Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 12-38. Richard provides the following quote by Richard Henry Lee which also exemplifies the perceived relationship between classics and virtue: "Their father had given them all excellent classical educations, and they were all virtuous men": Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 37.

<sup>132</sup> John Adams, cited in Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 37.

<sup>133</sup>For example, the Pennsylvania General Assembly broadside specified that "the whole Edifice is finished in the Style of Architecture proper for such a Building, and used by the *Romans*" [emphasis in original]: Pennsylvania General Assembly, *In Assembly, Tuesday, December 2nd, 1783 [Celebration of Peace]*, (Philadelphia, 1783), Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 18092. The *Pennsylvania Gazette* reports on the triumphal arch and Grand Federal Procession also noted an architectural indebtedness to the classics. [No Headline], *PG*, December 31, 1783; and Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

articulated this sentiment that not only could art be didactic, but also that the quality of art was reflective of the liberty, character, and virtue of a nation and its people:

The Apollo of Phidias, the Venus of Praxiteles, the group of Laocoon, are in fact monuments not more of the arts, than of the freedom of Greece; monuments which are not more perfect as examples to artists, than as lessons to statesmen, and as warnings to every republic to guard well the liberty that alone can produce such wonders... in Greece, perfection in the fine arts, freedom in government, and virtue in private life were contemporaneous.<sup>134</sup>

As such, spectacle, in conjunction with appeals to the classics, formed an important avenue for attempts by the State Assembly and statesmen like Hopkinson to mold, control, and transform the character and virtue of the public in Philadelphia through the power of example.

#### THE TRIUMPHAL ARCH EXHIBITION

On December 31, 1783, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* announced that "the public demonstrations of joy, by authority of the state, on the definitive treaty," would occur around January 20, 1784, following the meeting of the state's General Assembly.<sup>135</sup> The state sponsored "demonstrations of joy" celebrated the peace treaty between the United States and Great Britain which officially ended the Revolutionary War. The Pennsylvania General Assembly chose to commemorate this event through an exhibition that would:

consist of a triumphal arch, 50 feet wide and 40 feet high, exactly in the stile [sic] of the triumphal arches among the *Romans*... It will also be enriched with a number of emblems and inscriptions suitable to the occasion, disposed in the frieze [sic], pannels [sic], ballustrade [sic] and pedestals -- the parts usually thus ornamented in the antient [sic] arches before mentioned.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Benjamin Henry Latrobe, *Anniversary oration, pronounced before the Society of Artists of the United States, by appointment of the Society, on the eighth of May, 1811. By B. Henry Latrobe, fellow of the Am. Ph. Soc. of the Acad. of Arts, and one of the vice-presidents of the Society of Artists of the United States* (Philadelphia: 1811), Early American Imprints, Series 2, no. 23189, 10-11.

<sup>135</sup> [No Headline], *PG*, December 31, 1783.

<sup>136</sup> [No Headline], *PG*, December 31, 1783.



The state called upon Philadelphia painter Charles Willson Peale to prepare the paintings and illuminations that would adorn the arch.

The Philadelphia public, unfortunately, never got the chance to fully view this arch. Alas, an "unfortunate accident" disrupted the organized January 22, 1784 event and prevented the public from viewing Peale's original arch and illuminations.<sup>137</sup> By "unfortunate accident," the newspapers refer to the accidental conflagration that transpired when the fireworks accompanying the celebration exploded into the crowd and consumed the arch and its "highly combustible" illuminations in flames.<sup>138</sup> The original arch was thus lost.

Several Philadelphia citizens, however, raised money "by subscription" so that Peale could recreate the triumphal arch with its corresponding images and inscriptions.<sup>139</sup> The reprise of the original exhibition took place with much greater success on the evening of May 12, 1784. This time, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* noted, "no display of rockets or fireworks" would be included.<sup>140</sup> Reports from the *Freeman's Journal* and *Pennsylvania Gazette* on May 12 reveal that "many thousands of spectators" ventured out to witness Peale's exhibition. This second arch was likely a close replica of the ill-fated original. The broadside from the State Assembly detailing the original arch and the report in the *Freeman's Journal* from the May 12 celebration both provide the exact same description of the "triumphal arch and its ornaments."<sup>141</sup>

The focal point for the "public demonstrations of peace" -- and deemed important enough that moneyed Philadelphia citizens donated funds for its recreation -- was Peale's triumphal arch, adorned with images and inscriptions. The concept of the triumphal arch is itself classical in

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<sup>137</sup> [No Headline], *PG*, January 28, 1784.

<sup>138</sup> Kenneth Silverman, *A Cultural History of the American Revolution: Painting, Music, Literature, and the Theater in the Colonies and the United States from the Treaty of Paris to the Inauguration of George Washington, 1763-1789* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1976), 426.

<sup>139</sup> [No Headline], *PG*, January 28, 1784.

<sup>140</sup> [No Headline], *PG*, January 28, 1784.

<sup>141</sup> Pennsylvania General Assembly, "In Assembly," and "Philadelphia, May 12," *Freeman's Journal* (Philadelphia), May 12, 1784.

origin. In the ancient world, the triumphal arch stood as "a familiar sight on the Roman landscape."<sup>142</sup> Embodying Roman power and prestige, these arches have come to be associated with military victory and the Roman triumph. Mary Beard has noted, however, that these Roman arches also historically served to "commemorate particular events, to honor individual members of the imperial family, or, earlier, to vaunt the prestige of republican aristocrats."<sup>143</sup> Even when they did not directly celebrate a triumph, these Roman arches still incorporated the imagery of the Roman triumph into their "rhetoric of power."<sup>144</sup> In the case of Philadelphia's triumphal arch, the State Assembly and Peale designed it to celebrate "the Definitive Treaty of Peace between the United States and Great Britain."<sup>145</sup> Commemorating this momentous peace, however, also implied celebrating American victory in the nation's war for independence.

Peale's triumphal arch invoked the ancient Romans through more than just its occasion and concept. The State Assembly specified, and Peale carried out, a design that architecturally emulated a Roman form. Moreover, Peale also incorporated Latin inscriptions and classical imagery, such as the Temple to Janus, which featured prominently over the central arch. As such, Peale's triumphal arch exhibited in Philadelphia was classical in form, classical in imagery, and classical in language.

Descriptions of the triumphal arch reveal that the Philadelphia designers were aware of the arch's Roman origins and sought to consciously style their American arch after the Romans.<sup>146</sup> In addition to the previously mentioned description in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*,

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<sup>142</sup> Beard, *The Roman Triumph*, 45.

<sup>143</sup> Beard, *The Roman Triumph*, 46.

<sup>144</sup> Beard, *The Roman Triumph*, 46.

<sup>145</sup> Pennsylvania General Assembly, "In Assembly."

<sup>146</sup> [No Headline], *PG*, December 31, 1783; Pennsylvania General Assembly, "In Assembly,"; and "Philadelphia, May 12," *Freeman's Journal*, May 12, 1784.

both a State Assembly broadside and a May 12, 1784 *Freeman's Journal* report noted the arch's indebtedness to classical forms, describing the arch as follows:

The Arch is fifty Feet and six Inches wide, and thirty-five Feet and six Inches high, exclusive of the Ballustrade [sic], which is three Feet and nine Inches in Height. The Arch is fourteen Feet wide in the clear, and each of the smaller Arches nine Feet. The Pillars are of the *Ionic* Order. The Entablature, all the other Parts, and the Proportions, correspond with that Order; and the whole Edifice is finished in the Style of Architecture proper for such a Building, and used by the *Romans* [emphasis in original].<sup>147</sup>

Along with its classical form, Philadelphia's triumphal arch displayed a mix of classical and American imagery. Further, each of these thirteen emblems on the arch was accompanied by a corresponding explanatory inscription in both Latin and English.<sup>148</sup> According to the broadside and the *Freeman's Journal* report, the first image, "over the centre Arch," depicted the "Temple of *Janus* shut."<sup>149</sup> This made direct reference to the Roman temple that stood in Forum and was dedicated to Janus, the two-faced god of doorways and beginnings. Counter-intuitively, when the doors to the Temple of Janus were shut, it meant Rome was at peace. Open doors to the Temple of Janus signified a Rome at war.<sup>150</sup> The Temple of Janus with closed doors not only made reference to Rome's peace and power, but also symbolized the peace Philadelphians were celebrating. As such, the representation of this temple on the arch constituted appropriate and meaningful imagery. Additionally, this image was accompanied by the following Latin phrase and its English translation in order to make it more widely accessible: "NUMINE FAVENTE MAGNUS AB INTEGRO SAECULORUM NASCITUR ORDO. *By the Divine Favor A great and new Order of Ages commences.*"<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Pennsylvania General Assembly, "In Assembly," and "Philadelphia, May 12," *Freeman's Journal*, May 12, 1784.

<sup>148</sup> For a full list of all thirteen images and inscriptions, see Pennsylvania General Assembly, "In Assembly," and "Philadelphia, May 12," *Freeman's Journal*, May 12, 1784.

<sup>149</sup> Pennsylvania General Assembly, "In Assembly," and "Philadelphia, May 12," *Freeman's Journal*, May 12, 1784.

<sup>150</sup> For more on the Roman Temple to Janus see Hornblower and Spawforth, eds., "Janus," *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 793.

<sup>151</sup> Pennsylvania General Assembly, "In Assembly," and "Philadelphia, May 12," *Freeman's Journal*, May 12, 1784.

Of the thirteen emblems on the arch, the seventh and twelfth also drew upon Roman iconography, in addition to the Latin inscriptions. The seventh, which Peale incorporated into the frieze section of the arch, consisted of "two Hands joined holding Branches of Olive and the Caduceus of Commerce" with the inscription "CONCORDIA GENTIUM. *The Concord of the Nations*."<sup>152</sup> Here, the caduceus, which was the staff carried by the god Mercury, symbolized the trade and commerce now possible since peace (the olive branch) had been obtained.<sup>153</sup> Since Mercury was the patron god of shopkeepers and trades, his symbol of the caduceus again formed fitting and meaningful imagery to symbolize the nation's opportunities for trade and commerce.

The twelfth emblem displayed "*Cincinnatus*, crowned with Laurel, returning to his Plough." The phrase "VICTRIX VIRTUS," or "*Victorious Virtue*" accompanied the image.<sup>154</sup> Moreover, the broadside and *Freeman's Journal* reported that "the Countenance of *Cincinnatus* is a striking Resemblance of General *Washington*."<sup>155</sup> Following the Revolutionary War, George Washington emerged as the ultimate American *Cincinnatus*.<sup>156</sup> Having heeded his country's call to arms, Washington led the Continental Army in America's time of crisis, but, rather than retain command, he retired his commission and returned to Mount Vernon as a private citizen once again. Contemporaries frequently compared Washington to *Cincinnatus*, and Washington also arguably sought to foster this association.<sup>157</sup> Spectators viewing the iconography of this twelfth emblem on Philadelphia's triumphal arch connected with the classical *Cincinnatus* through an American context, Washington's embodiment of civic virtue and duty as the American *Cincinnatus*.

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<sup>152</sup> Pennsylvania General Assembly, "In Assembly," and "Philadelphia, May 12," *Freeman's Journal*, May 12, 1784.

<sup>153</sup> For more interpretation of the devices on the triumphal arch, also see Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue*, 75-77.

<sup>154</sup> Pennsylvania General Assembly, "In Assembly," and "Philadelphia, May 12," *Freeman's Journal*, May 12, 1784.

<sup>155</sup> Pennsylvania General Assembly, "In Assembly," and "Philadelphia, May 12," *Freeman's Journal*, May 12, 1784.

<sup>156</sup> For more on *Cincinnatus* see Chapter 1, pp 35-36.

<sup>157</sup> For more on Washington as *Cincinnatus*, see Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 70-72; and Wills, *Cincinnatus*. Wills argues that Washington also actively stylized himself as *Cincinnatus*.

The "spandrels of the Centre Arch" bore the inscription S.P.Q.P., further connecting the Philadelphia arch to the Roman past. The broadside and *Freeman's Journal* account report that the letters S.P.Q.P. were accompanied by the phrase, "*The Senate and People of Pennsylvania.*"<sup>158</sup> This construction was ideologically modeled after the Roman phrase S.P.Q.R., which stood for *Senatus Populusque Romanus*, or, The Senate and People of Rome, the symbol of the Roman state as a republic of both the people and the senate of Rome.<sup>159</sup> The symbolic S.P.Q.P. employed by Peale and the State Assembly on Philadelphia's arch emerges as yet another example of Philadelphians drawing upon the example of the past, especially a revered classical republican one, to furnish symbols and iconography for the American present. The three classical emblems -- the Temple of Janus, Mercury's sign of the caduceus, and the figure of Cincinnatus who had been made to resemble Washington -- and the symbolic S.P.Q.P. ultimately derived from the classical world, but spectators witnessed them tied to a significance related to the American present that Philadelphians chose to commemorate.

The prevalent use of classical symbols and icons on Philadelphia's triumphal arch suggests that the exhibition's creators rendered Philadelphia's arch consciously classical. In addition to directly stating that the form and architecture of the arch followed a Roman style, the State Assembly and Peale employed carefully selected iconographic representations that referenced the Roman past but also nicely fit into the American present situation. Having just defeated Great Britain in the Revolutionary War, the victory made official by the 1783 treaty that the Philadelphia triumphal arch celebrated, Americans were commencing their republican experiment. As such, incorporating the temple of Janus, the god of beginnings and transitions, in

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<sup>158</sup> Pennsylvania General Assembly, "In Assembly," and "Philadelphia, May 12," *Freeman's Journal*, May 12, 1784.

<sup>159</sup> The Arch of Titus is a well-known example of *Senatus Populusque Romanus* displayed prominently over a Roman triumphal arch. L. Richardson, Jr., *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 30.

the arch was fitting to symbolize America's transition to republican rule.<sup>160</sup> Further, the doors to Janus's temple were closed, representing a nation at peace. The figure of Cincinnatus likewise related to the transformations the American nation was undergoing. A model of civic virtue, Cincinnatus could also symbolize the transition of a country at war to one at peace in which soldiers trade in the sword for the plow, transferring allegiance from their generals to the republican government. Additionally, the anacronym S.P.Q.P., recalling the Roman S.P.Q.R., again emphasizes a republican form of government where authority rests in the people and senate of Pennsylvania. The use of Roman iconography in Philadelphia's triumphal arch demonstrated more than a superficial connection between the classical references deployed and the contemporary American context.

Moreover, and most importantly, the classical emblems in the triumphal arch exhibition were presented by Peale and the State Assembly in a manner that facilitated the general public's - both the traditionally educated and the non-traditionally educated -- engagement with them. Spectators encountered the classical references in the arch rendered visually, taking the form of icons. Many of the representations additionally drew from "well-know cultural symbols."<sup>161</sup> While not all Philadelphians may have possessed background knowledge of, for example, Roman triumphal arches or the figure of Cincinnatus, both the arch and Cincinnatus appeared in other contexts and the symbolic qualities for which they stood were likely familiar.<sup>162</sup> Cincinnatus, whose countenance on the Philadelphia triumphal arch recalled that of the American General Washington, stood as one of the classical heroes to whom Washington was

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<sup>160</sup> Although he does not discuss the connection with the Temple of Janus, Meranze claims that the arch symbolized "the passage to a republican form of government" and "in both its form and content, indicated the hopes and anxieties accompanying the republican experiment": Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue*, 75.

<sup>161</sup> Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue*, 76.

<sup>162</sup> For more on the wider pattern of comparisons between Washington and Cincinnatus in early America see Wills, *Cincinnatus* and also Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 70-72.

frequently compared by contemporaries.<sup>163</sup> Philadelphians could likely deduce the desired virtues and themes from the image of Cincinnatus by substituting the American example of George Washington. The placement of these classical emblems into the larger context of American contemporary events likely also aided comprehension.

Further, inscriptions in English explained the imagery on Peale's triumphal arch. Unlike the collegiate commencement ceremonies where orations and dialogues were presented in the exclusionary Latin language, Philadelphia's triumphal arch contained corresponding English translations for the Latin inscriptions. Although the triumphal arch drew upon the authority and legitimacy attributed to the classical languages, the message was also rendered in plain English so that the wider public could comprehend the intended interpretation.

Although appealing to the wider Philadelphia public, both the original triumphal arch celebration and its second attempt in May exhibited the classics in a highly scripted and controlled manner. In fact, the whole event itself was carefully regulated.<sup>164</sup> Firstly, the exhibition was sponsored by the state. At the outset, a broadside issued from the State Assembly on December 2, 1783 proclaimed that

as these Demonstrations of Joy are prescribed and regulated by the Directions and at the Expense of the State, it is expected, that no Person or Persons whatever will presume, in Defiance of the Authority of the Commonwealth, to require or to make any other Demonstrations of Joy upon the Occasion, than those directed and authorized as aforesaid.<sup>165</sup>

Additionally, the Pennsylvania State Assembly made attempts to regulate space on the day of the event, specifying from which directions people ought to view the triumphal arch. Further, they also sought to make sure the interpretation presented by the images was controlled. Lest the

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<sup>163</sup> See footnote 157.

<sup>164</sup> Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue*, 74-78.

<sup>165</sup> Pennsylvania General Assembly, "In Assembly."

public draw their own interpretations from the images, Peale included accompanying explanations in Latin and English on the arch.

Scholarship has demonstrated that the triumphal arch was a highly controlled public spectacle aimed at teaching specific lessons and instilling virtue into the wider populace.<sup>166</sup> Through the power of example, the triumphal arch would thus mold the character and virtue of the Philadelphia public through carefully selected and controlled images.<sup>167</sup> It is telling that the classics were employed in an exhibition aimed toward the public, not solely a classically-trained audience. That references to the classics were used in a celebration directed at the greater Philadelphia public suggests that the event's creators believed the classical emblems and related inscriptions would be familiar enough and presented in such a manner that those without classical training might still arrive at the desired interpretation. Incorporated into this spectacle aimed at the Philadelphia public, the classics assumed a visual form, accompanied by explanatory inscriptions in both English and Latin. Further, in their depiction on the triumphal arch, the classics had been tailored to fit an American present, creating an additional, American context through which spectators engaged with the classical past. In Philadelphia's triumphal arch, the Philadelphia public likely reached the Roman past through the lens of the American present.

#### PHILADELPHIA'S GRAND FEDERAL PROCESSION

Four years after the triumphal arch exhibition, on the morning of July 4, 1788, the people of Philadelphia and visitors from the nearby countryside witnessed a grand spectacle orchestrated by Philadelphia federalists to celebrate the ratification of the federal Constitution by ten of the

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<sup>166</sup> Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue*, 72-78.

<sup>167</sup> Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue*, 72-78.



thirteen states (nine were needed to make the Constitution official). This "Grand Federal Procession," as the organizers referred to it, was modeled after a spontaneous procession in Boston arranged by farmers and mechanics to show their support for their state's ratification of the Constitution.<sup>168</sup> Federalists from other states adopted this model and staged their own processions, which became increasingly elaborate and much like a competition.<sup>169</sup> While Boston's federal procession may have been spontaneous, Philadelphia's parade and festivities were deliberately organized by federalist elite in Philadelphia.

Federalist Francis Hopkinson chaired the committee of arrangement for the procession, with Charles Wilson Peale, the same artist and who had designed Philadelphia's triumphal arch in 1784, contributing to several floats and exhibits for the parade.<sup>170</sup> Participation included a range of groups and social classes; the military, farmers, trades, and professions from Philadelphia received representation in this parade.<sup>171</sup> According to Hopkinson's account published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, about 5,000 people marched "in the line of procession," and about 17,000 people assembled on Union Green, the ending point for the procession.<sup>172</sup> The parade commenced at approximately half past nine on the morning, traversing from "the intersection of South and Third street -- thence along Third street to Callowhill-street -- thence up Callowhill street to Fourth-street -- thence along Fourth street to Market-street -- and thence

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<sup>168</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>169</sup> In "Celebrating the Constitution," Jurgen Heideking states that, after Boston's spontaneous federal procession, other states were "unwilling to be outdone by Boston" and began competing to put on the most elaborate procession: Jurgen Heideking, "Celebrating the Constitution: The Federal Processions of 1788 and the Emergence of a Republican Festive Culture in the United States," in *Celebrating Ethnicity and Nation*, 26-29. Philadelphians had, in a sense, missed their opportunity to celebrate their own state's ratification through a parade, since they adopted the Constitution early on in the ratification process and had not put on a celebratory procession. Hence, the Grand Federal Procession celebrated, not their own state's adoption, but the ninth state's ratification which was enough for the Constitution to go into effect as the Federal Government.

<sup>170</sup> Schloss, "The Nation as Spectacle," 45.

<sup>171</sup> Schloss notes, however, that only those capable of living an independent existence were represented. Jobless poor and children did not march. Schloss, "The Nation as Spectacle," 59.

<sup>172</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

to UNION GREEN."<sup>173</sup> Altogether, the procession spanned 1.5 miles long and traveled a distance of three miles through the city. By twelve thirty, the beginning of the line reached Union Green, where a light meal had been set up and the oration delivered once the full line of the procession had arrived.

Regarding the organization of the procession itself, historians have identified at least two main sections. First appeared an allegorical section that presented the highlights of the nation's founding. The second main section was comprised of the various trades and professions with their floats. Some historians have delineated a third and final section, which consisted of city officials, professionals, students, and the clergy.<sup>174</sup> The procession, especially its first section, reenacted and celebrated an American foundation myth and the triumph of the Constitution's ratification. The craftsmen and tradesmen asserted their support of the new government and their place in this story and the nation under the federal Constitution.<sup>175</sup>

Spectators observed a procession filled with allegory and symbolism. The numbers ten, representing the states that had ratified, and thirteen, the number of states comprising the nation, were symbolically repeated throughout the procession. Even the choice of the fourth of July as the event's date fit into a larger campaign mounted by the Federalists to designate everything positive and patriotic as federal.<sup>176</sup> This included the classical past. American beer and cider constituted "Federal Drinks," "justice and patriotism" were "Federal virtues," gold and silver

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<sup>173</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>174</sup> Schloss, "The Nation as Spectacle," 47-48; Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>175</sup> Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, 1-2.

<sup>176</sup> For more on the Federalist appropriation of the fourth of July see Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, 1-2, 90-103.

were "Federal money," and a classical-style building became the [Grand] Federal Edifice, a metaphor for the federal Constitution.<sup>177</sup>

The Federalists often spoke in allegory, and the [Grand] Federal Edifice was the Federalists' allegorical construction for the nation under the federal Constitution. As one of the parade highlights and the site from which James Wilson later delivered his oration, the Grand Federal Edifice constitutes one of the most visually noticeable uses of classical allegory in the procession.

Circulated through the written medium of newspapers like the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, this construct of the "New Roof" or "[Grand] Federal Edifice" emerged time and again as an extended metaphor employed by federalists in debates and reports on the process of ratification. As states began to ratify the Constitution, reports and editorials in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* celebrated each "PILLAR added to the glorious fabric."<sup>178</sup> Writers employed similar language when speaking of those states who had yet to ratify. For example, in March 1788, an anonymous writer "venture[d] to assert" regarding New Hampshire that "their pillar of the Foederal [sic] Edifice, *though it now resteth, will most assuredly rise.*"<sup>179</sup> Some writers, in fact, even referred to the allegorized federal edifice as a temple. Regarding his state of Rhode Island's failure to ratify, "Rhodiensis" claimed the following in an article reprinted in the November 19, 1788 issue of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*: "That pillar on which the anti-federalists intended to lean [likely New York], has instead become a glorious column in the Temple of Liberty, and this state, if it be wise, may yet be admitted to increase and adorn the colonade [sic]."<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> [No Headline], *PG*, June 25, 1788; Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788; "Observations on the Foederal Procession, on the fourth of July, 1788, in the city of PHILADELPHIA; in a letter from a gentleman in this city to his friend in a neighboring state," *PG*, July 23, 1788.

<sup>178</sup> From the report announcing Georgia as the "Fifth Pillar": "Philadelphia, January 30," *PG*, January 30, 1788.

<sup>179</sup> "Further Particulars of the New Hampshire Convention, from the Massachusetts Centinel," *PG*, March 12, 1788.

<sup>180</sup> Rhodiensis, "Extract from a piece signed "RHODIENSIS" in the New Port Herald of October 23," *PG*, November 19, 1788.

On July 4, 1788, this metaphor crossed over from the newspaper (written) to the spectacle (visual) in Philadelphia. This representation of the Grand Federal Edifice participated in a wider, national trend. Not only had the metaphor circulated nationally through newspapers -- the *Massachusetts Centinel* ran a series of cartoons depicting the procession of ratification as the erection of pillars to form "the GREAT PALLADIUM" -- but Baltimore had also incorporated a classical-style "Federal Edifice" into their procession.<sup>181</sup> Composed of pillars, each representing one of the thirteen states, Philadelphia's grand federal edifice building was classical in its physical manifestation. In his description of the procession, Francis Hopkinson described the Grand Federal Edifice as follows:

On a carriage drawn by ten white horses, the dome supported by thirteen Corinthian columns raised on pedestals proper to that order; the frieze decorated with thirteen stars; ten of the columns complete, and three left unfinished; on the pedestals of the columns were inscribed, in ornamented cyphers, the initials of the Thirteen American states; on the top of the dome a handsome cupola, surmounted by a figure of Plenty, bearing her cornucopia, and other emblems of her character; the dimensions were as follows -- 10 feet diameter, 11 feet to the top of the cornice... the whole 36 feet in height; round the pedestal of the edifice these words, -- '*In Union the Fabric stands firm.*'<sup>182</sup>

Philadelphia's Grand Federal Edifice resembled a classical temple in its classical architectural style, but the building was presented in a profoundly American context. Spectators who witnessed the classically-inspired building pass through the streets of Philadelphia, especially those with little or no classical training, likely engaged with this visual manifestation of the classics through the lens of American political culture. Within the context of the procession, the classical temple had been rendered federal and thus likely more meaningful to its American audience in Philadelphia. Even the name of Grand *Federal* Edifice that was given to the building designated it as American and federal. Further, the Corinthian columns, again a

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<sup>181</sup> For more on the national phenomenon of the federal procession, see Heideking, "Celebrating the Constitution," 25-43.

<sup>182</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

classical architectural element, each bore the cypher of an *American* state. Thus, classical architectural forms were refitted to serve an American, specifically federal, cause.

While the first section of the procession has been characterized as the most allegorical, with its recreation of the nation's founding and metaphorical grand federal edifice, a degree of symbolism persisted throughout the parade.<sup>183</sup> The procession exhibited a repetition of the numbers ten and thirteen, often with three unfinished works or idle tradesmen to represent the three states that had yet to ratify. Furthermore, a symbolic use of classical imagery such as the laurel wreath, liberty cap, and columns spanned the whole procession, not just the first section. These classical iconographic images that spectators witnessed in the Grand Federal Procession were imbued with American symbolism and were portrayed in connection to the federal union.

The liberty cap, for example, was an Americanized symbol that had been used during the American Revolutionary protest, but was classical in origin. It referred to the *pileus*, or felt cap, given to Roman slaves who had been manumitted. As such, it came to symbolize freedom from slavery, tyranny, and oppression. Historians have credited the first appearance of the liberty cap in American Revolutionary iconography to Paul Revere's engraving on an obelisk in 1766 that celebrated the repeal of the Stamp Act.<sup>184</sup> The use of the liberty cap carried on into the iconography of the Grand Federal Procession. For example, John Nixon carried a "silk flag with the words '*fourth of July, 1776*'" that was surmounted by a liberty cap.<sup>185</sup> The Constitution, which was affixed to a staff, was also "crowned by a cap of liberty."<sup>186</sup> Additionally, In the

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<sup>183</sup> For the especially allegorical nature of this first section of the procession, see Schloss, "The Nation as Spectacle," and Laura Rigal, "Raising the Roof: Authors, Spectators and Artisans in the Grand Federal Procession of 1788," *Theatre Journal* Vol. 48, No 3 (1996): 253-277.

<sup>184</sup> Laura Auricchio, "Two Versions of General Washington's Resignation: Politics, Commerce, and Visual Culture in 1790s Philadelphia," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* Vol. 44 No. 3 (Spring 2011): 383-400, 386. For more on the symbolic use of the liberty cap see Yvonne Korshak, "The Liberty Cap as a Revolutionary Symbol in American and France," *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* Vol. 1, No 2 (Autumn 1987): 52-69.

<sup>185</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>186</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

trades and professions section of the Grand Federal Procession, the Peruke-makers (wig-makers) and barber-surgeons also displayed the emblem of the liberty cap.

The laurel forms another symbol derived originally from the classical world that Philadelphians incorporated into their procession. Like the liberty cap, wreaths or branches of laurel spanned the sections of the procession. In the first section of the parade that commemorated major events in the nation's history, George Claymore carried a staff and pendant decorated with laurel and olive that celebrated the "*third of September, 1783*," or the date of the "definitive treaty of peace."<sup>187</sup> Col. John Shee followed "on horseback" carrying a flag "with a laurel and an olive wreath over the words -- '*Washington, the friend of his country*,' in silver letters."<sup>188</sup> The staff of this flag likewise was covered with laurel and olive. In the trades and professions section of the parade, though still exhibiting a connection to Washington, the carvers and guilders "placed a bust of general Washington crowned with a wreath of laurel" onto a central ten foot high column on their float.<sup>189</sup> That column had also been adorned with laurel. Although mixed with the emblems of peace (the olive) in the Grand Federal Procession, the use of the laurel in connection with the victorious General George Washington bears a striking resemblance to the ancient Roman use of the laurel, or *laurea*. According to the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, one of the main uses for the *laurea* was "as a token of military victory, carried in a triumphal procession and dedicated to Jupiter."<sup>190</sup> The Grand Federal Procession did celebrate victory, but the political, peaceful victory of the Constitution. As the victorious general from the American Revolution and the all but inevitable new nation's leader, Washington's association with the laurel was likely deliberate.

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<sup>187</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>188</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>189</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>190</sup> Glare, ed., "Laurea," *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 1010.

To those educated observers, the spectacle of the Grand Federal Procession must have borne enough resemblance to a Roman Triumph that some felt the need to make a distinction between Philadelphia's Grand Federal Procession and its Roman predecessor. In his observations on the procession, an "unnamed gentlemen from the city," whom historians have identified as Benjamin Rush, described the motives of Philadelphia's procession as thus:

The first thing that struck me in viewing the procession, was, the *occasion* of it. It was not to celebrate a victory obtained in blood over any part of our fellow creatures.-- No city reduced to ashes -- no army conquered by capitulation -- no news of slaughtered thousands brought the citizens of Philadelphia together. It was to celebrate a triumph of knowledge over ignorance, of virtue over vice, of liberty over slavery...<sup>191</sup>

While the author of this editorial did not explicitly name the Roman triumph as his point of comparison for the Grand Federal Procession, his words and the martial imagery clearly depicted the Roman triumph. These lavish parades through Rome gathered the Roman populace of all classes together to share in a celebration of a Roman general's victory, or, as Mary Beard notes, Rome's "biggest massacres depending on whose side you were on."<sup>192</sup> The Grand Federal Procession, however, brought the Philadelphia public of all classes together to celebrate a political rather than a military victory.

Despite the careful delineation of "occasion" by American commentators, certain elements in Philadelphia's procession conjured images of a Roman triumph.<sup>193</sup> Not only did the laurel wreath, worn by Roman generals in their triumphs, persist as a symbol throughout the

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<sup>191</sup> These observations from a "gentleman in the city," attributed to Benjamin Rush, circulated in multiple formats. This piece appeared in the July 23, 1788 issue of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and in pamphlet form with Hopkinson's account of the procession. "Observations on the Foederal Procession, on the fourth of July, 1788, in the city of PHILADELPHIA; in a letter from a gentleman in this city to his friend in a neighboring state," *PG*, July 23, 1788.

<sup>192</sup> Beard, *The Roman Triumph*, 1. This is only a brief description of the Roman Triumph. For more on the triumph, see Mary Beard's *The Roman Triumph*.

<sup>193</sup> Schloss also makes a connection between the spectacle of the federal processions and the Roman triumph, but in a more general manner related to the grandeur and use of the spectacle, comparing it to "the triumphal marches of Imperial Rome and of the coronation celebrations and royal pageants of monarchial Europe": Schloss, "The Nation as Spectacle," 50.

parade, but other components likewise shared a similarity with those found in a Roman triumph. For example, although the Grand Federal Procession did not celebrate a military victory, it still exhibited martial elements and brought the public together to celebrate the a major victory, albeit the federalists' political one. Victorious militia members and officers from the Revolutionary War were included and featured prominently at the beginning of the procession. Additionally, the ship, *Union*, which was paraded through the streets, had been fashioned in part from the captured *Serapis* from the Battle of Flamborough Head.<sup>194</sup> (It had been the custom of the Romans to include captured vessels in their triumphs, and, indeed, the Rostra -- the main platform for Roman oratory -- was decorated with the prows of these captured enemy ships.)<sup>195</sup> In his letter published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Rush remarked on this blending of peace and war in Philadelphia's parade, claiming

"She was a ship of war. I wish the procession could have been conducted without blending the emblems of Peace and War together; but this was impossible, while armies and navies are considered as necessary appendages of the sovereignty of independent states. The United States have taught the nations of the world, that it is possible to terminate disputes by appeals to reason instead of the sword."<sup>196</sup>

Again, the implication emerges that, despite the emblems of war, Americans celebrated the peaceful victory of the Constitution, rather than appealing "to the sword" over the issue.

In Philadelphia's Grand Federal Procession, the classics also appeared in connection with the craftsmen and tradesmen companies. The guilders and carvers, for example, displayed "the head of Phidias, the most eminent of ancient carvers," amongst thirteen Corinthian columns arranged on a "federal plan" -- thirteen feet by ten -- on their ornamental car.<sup>197</sup> Another trades group, the coach makers, bore a yellow standard "emblazoned with the arms of the profession...

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<sup>194</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>195</sup> Hornblower and Spawforth, "rostra," *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Third Edition, 1336.

<sup>196</sup> "Observations on the Foederal Procession, on the fourth of July, 1788, in the city of PHILADELPHIA; in a letter from a gentleman in this city to his friend in a neighboring state," *PG*, July 23, 1788.

<sup>197</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.



Three coaches in a blue field, the chariot of the sun appearing through the clouds.”<sup>198</sup> This “chariot of the sun” likely refers to either the god Helios or the god Apollo, both of whom are associated with the chariot of the sun in classical mythology. The printers also incorporated classical mythology. They costumed a man by the name of Mr. Durant as Mercury, “the god of intelligence.” Mr. Durant dressed “in the character of Mercury, in a white dress” with “wings affixed to his head and feet,” carried a caduceus, and distributed to the Philadelphia spectators an ode written by Francis Hopkinson.<sup>199</sup> Two of the trades groups even incorporated Latin through their company motto. The gold-smiths carried a flag that contained the gold-smiths’ arms and their Latin motto, “*Justitia Virtutum Regina* [Justice, the queen of virtues], while the carriers bore a flag “with the company’s arms – motto – *spes nostra Deus* [God is our hope].”<sup>200</sup>

The inclusion of various trades showcasing their respective crafts in the Grand Federal Procession, while innovative in its projected theme of building a new republic under the aegis of the Constitution, was also connected to an established British tradition. Historians have noted that the exhibition of craftsmen and their accoutrements, as occurred in the federal processions, grew out of “British craft processions” like the London Lord Mayor’s shows.<sup>201</sup> These too incorporated aspects of classical mythology, but tended to adopt a more allegorical and moralizing framework.

In the context of Philadelphia’s Grand Federal Procession, however, the mottos and traditional insignia were harnessed to a new, federal context.<sup>202</sup> Although the classical

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<sup>198</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>199</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>200</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>201</sup> For more on the Grand Federal Procession and its resemblance to "British craft processions" and the London Lord Mayor shows see Rigal, "Raising the Roof," 254; and Schloss, "The Nation as Spectacle," 54-58.

<sup>202</sup> In his analysis of the “aesthetic assumptions” and “iconographic traditions” in the grand federal procession, Schloss claims that “The American craftsmen thus blended the traditional trade insignia with American constitutional symbolism and gave them a new, political meaning. But this form of politicizing is not what ultimately accounts for the novelty of the American tradesmen’s and artisans’ displays... the American artisans did

knowledge projected by the various trades was likely transmitted and familiar via crafts and trades tradition, the traditional classical symbols and mottos associated with the companies were Americanized and employed for a federal purpose on display in the Grand Federal Procession. For example, Mercury, traditionally associated with printers and tradesmen, handed out to spectators an ode “written for the occasion” that celebrated the nation’s glory and bright future.<sup>203</sup> This same impersonation of Mercury also had pigeons which flew “at intervals” from his cap and carried “ten small packages, containing the English ode and the list of toasts for the day... addressed to the ten states in union respectively.”<sup>204</sup> The company of silversmiths, goldsmiths, and jewelers also exhibited tradition marshaled for a new, politicized purpose. They carried a silk flag that displayed the goldsmiths’ arms and motto – “*Justitia Virtutum Regina*” – on one side, with “the Genius of America, holding in her hand a silver urn, with the following Motto, ‘*The Purity, Brightness and Solidity of this Metal is emblematic of that Liberty which we expect from the New Constitution*’” adorning the reverse side.<sup>205</sup>

The symbolic use of Phidias by the carvers and guilders was also incorporated into the American ratification and foundation story presented to the public in the Grand Federal Procession. With Phidias’s reputation as one of the “most eminent of ancient carvers,” it is not surprising to see him associated with the carvers and guilders.<sup>206</sup> The float that displayed “the head of Phidias,” though, was not a tribute to ancient Greek culture, but to the federal American

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nothing less than revolutionize the aesthetics of the parade”: Schloss, “The Nation as Spectacle,” 56. Since this thesis deals specifically with the transformation, presentation, and dissemination of the classics in 1780s Philadelphia, the focus is not on aesthetics, but instead the merging of traditional craft insignia, especially that which references the classics, within a politicized federal context. For the purposes of this thesis, the use of traditional classical and craft iconography for new, politicized purposes in this American republican spectacle is considered a form of innovation when compared to a traditional use of classical and trade insignia and symbolism.

<sup>203</sup> Hopkinson, “Grand Federal Procession,” *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>204</sup> Hopkinson, “Grand Federal Procession,” *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>205</sup> Hopkinson, “Grand Federal Procession,” *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>206</sup> Hopkinson, “Grand Federal Procession,” *PG*, July 9, 1788. Phidias was the Greek sculptor who created the colossal statue of Athena that stood in the Athenian Parthenon and the statue of Zeus, considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, for the Temple at Olympia. For more on Phidias's work see Hornblower and Spawforth, eds., “Phidias,” *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1158.

republic. Accompanying the representation of Phidias on the front of the float were thirteen pillars,

richly ornamented with carved work, the heads of ten gilt and labelled [sic] with the names of the several states as they came into the federal union; the remaining three left partly finished," and a column in the center, twined with laurel and capped with "a bust of the general Washington, crowned with a wreath of laurel."<sup>207</sup>

The laurel and the columns on this float, symbols like the liberty cap that reappeared throughout the procession, present yet another instance of the intertwining of craft production, classical iconography, and American nationalistic purposes.

Philadelphia's spectacle of the Grand Federal Procession thus gave the broader public an avenue for engaging with the classics, but this engagement was mediated through the lens of American "nationalist practices."<sup>208</sup> In scholarship on American festive culture and nationalism, Waldstreicher considers American spectacles and their associated newspaper reports and orations as "nationalist practices" that spread American nationalism and also "constituted a national popular political culture."<sup>209</sup> The deployment of multiple classical emblems and iconography, such as the liberty cap and Grand Federal Edifice, in the Grand Federal Procession was not unique to Philadelphia. Rather, this phenomenon formed part of a national appropriation of the classics to serve as symbols of republicanism and the new nation.<sup>210</sup>

## SPECTACLE, THE CLASSICS, AND THE PHILADELPHIA PUBLIC

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<sup>207</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>208</sup> Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, 12.

<sup>209</sup> Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, 12.

<sup>210</sup> For more on this wider phenomenon of the classics appropriated for American national symbols see *Brill's New Pauly Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World: Classical Tradition*, eds Manfred Landfester in cooperation with Hubert Cancik and Halmuth Schneider (Boston: Brill, 2010), s.v. "United States and Canada."

Political spectacles like the triumphal arch peace exhibition and Grand Federal Procession served as important spaces for providing an informal education in republicanism and virtue for the populace.<sup>211</sup> Recent scholarship has demonstrated how and to what extent political spectacles like the federal processions of 1788 functioned as instruments of nationalism and identity formation.<sup>212</sup> Since a virtuous and vigilant citizenry was considered crucial for the success of a republic, these events projected to the public "lessons in republican virtue and patriotism."<sup>213</sup> Accordingly, in Philadelphia's triumphal arch and the Grand Federal Procession, spectators witnessed elements and symbols from classical antiquity incorporated and "disseminated" as "republican icons" in an American national story.<sup>214</sup> More than merely superficial, the classical references in the triumphal arch and Grand Federal Procession demonstrate a symbolic relationship between classical antiquity and contemporary America, and the instigators of these references understood the classical context. In the public presentation, however, the classics emerged in an American context.

Spectacles like the 1784 peace celebration and 1788 Grand Federal Procession form a significant avenue in which a broader non-classically trained public encountered the classics in Philadelphia. Moreover, these events that prominently featured classical iconography and visual references functioned as important political spectacles marking major events in the nation's foundation; 1784 commemorated peace with Great Britain and, by association, America's freedom as a new republican state, while 1788 celebrated the ratification of the federal

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<sup>211</sup> Schloss, "The Nation as Spectacle," 50-51.

<sup>212</sup> Schloss provides a nice background on scholarship for this subject in Schloss, "The Nation as Spectacle." For more on the subject, also see Heideking, "Celebrating the Constitution," and Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*.

<sup>213</sup> Schloss, "The Nation as Spectacle," 50. For more on theories of republicanism in this time period, see Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic*, 46-90.

<sup>214</sup> Caroline Winterer discusses the general use of the classics as "republican icons" in Caroline Winterer, "From Royal to Republican: The Classical Image in Early America," *The Journal of American History* Vol. 91, No. 4 (March 2005): 1264-1290.

Constitution. The triumphal arch and Grand Federal Procession drew upon certain classical icons, such as the laurel, the liberty cap, Cincinnatus, classical architectural forms, among many others, and harnessed them to an American context, imbuing them with republican symbolism. The repetition of these symbols visually in parades, exhibitions, and architectural adornments would likely have rendered them familiar so that even those without classical academic training might have inferred the desired qualities from the Americanized use of figures like Cincinnatus or emblems like the liberty cap.

Further, these classical images were included in spectacles that were designed to be popular and involve the wider public. In the proposed plans for the original January 22, 1784 peace celebration, the State Assembly gave directions for viewing the arch to both those traveling by carriage and those arriving by foot. Both groups were allowed to "pass and return as often as they chuse."<sup>215</sup> The *Freeman's Journal* account did not explicitly describe the composition of the crowd that turned out on May 12 for the second attempt at exhibiting Peale's triumphal arch. It did, however, note that Peale's arch and its "transparent paintings" -- presumably the thirteen images -- "afforded great satisfaction to many thousands of spectators."<sup>216</sup>

Hopkinson's report and Rush's account of the 1788 Grand Federal Procession were much more specific regarding the celebration's crowd. Hopkinson reported that "averaging several opinions, there were about five thousand in the line of procession, and about seventeen thousand on Union Green."<sup>217</sup> In addition to those figures, Hopkinson also noted that along the processional route, "the footways, the windows and roofs of the houses were crowded with

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<sup>215</sup> Pennsylvania General Assembly, "In Assembly."

<sup>216</sup> "Philadelphia, May 12," *Freeman's Journal*, May 12, 1784.

<sup>217</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

spectators."<sup>218</sup> According to Rush's account, these spectators also included women and children who "were assembled on fences, scaffolds and roofs of houses."<sup>219</sup> His observations also suggest that multiple social classes were represented in the crowd. He claimed that the "order of the procession was regular, and begat correspondent order in all classes of spectators."<sup>220</sup> He did not refer to the crowd as only those of the respectable orders. Moreover, Rush seems to have emphasized that the procession's intent was to encompass the wider social spectrum. After all, the federalists had endeavored to demonstrate that the ratification of the Constitution had been the will of the people.<sup>221</sup> Making a comparison to processions in Europe where "the military alone partake of the splendor of such exhibitions," Rush claimed that "Rank for a while forgot all its claims" as farmers, tradesmen, "tradesman's boys," and members of the learned and mechanical professions all marched together, with neither group presented more respectfully than the other.<sup>222</sup>

The parade, however, did exhibit a gender bias. Only six women were listed in Hopkinson's account of the procession, and only one, Mrs. Hewson, was identified by name. These women all appeared in connection with the Manufacturing Society. One woman, described only as "a native of and instructed [in spinning] in this city," worked a spinning machine.<sup>223</sup> The other women, "Mrs. Hewson and her four daughters," worked at "penciling a

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<sup>218</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>219</sup> "Observations on the Foederal Procession, on the fourth of July, 1788, in the city of PHILADELPHIA; in a letter from a gentleman in this city to his friend in a neighboring state," *PG*, July 23, 1788.

<sup>220</sup> "Observations on the Foederal Procession, on the fourth of July, 1788, in the city of PHILADELPHIA; in a letter from a gentleman in this city to his friend in a neighboring state," *PG*, July 23, 1788.

<sup>221</sup> Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, 90; Silverman, *A Cultural History of the American Revolution*, 578-580.

<sup>222</sup> "Observations on the Foederal Procession, on the fourth of July, 1788, in the city of PHILADELPHIA; in a letter from a gentleman in this city to his friend in a neighboring state," *PG*, July 23, 1788.

<sup>223</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

piece of very neat sprigg'd chintz of Mr. Hewson's printing."<sup>224</sup> These women were not represented among the trades that incorporated classical symbols or references.

Although the craftsmen, tradesmen, and farmers who appeared in the procession constitute groups not traditionally considered elite, Schloss observes that the parade was not completely democratic. The men within the individual trade companies still marched in hierarchical order, and the individuals represented within the parade were only those capable of contributing to the nation.<sup>225</sup> No poor, unemployed Philadelphians marched -- though they were given meat from the oxen slaughtered at the occasion -- and, with the exception of Mrs. Hewson and her daughters, women and children were relegated to watching from the sidelines.<sup>226</sup>

Although not all groups and orders of society were represented as marchers in the procession, the appearance of women, children, and numerous other individuals as spectators for the Grand Federal Procession, and likely the triumphal arch peace celebration as well, is significant. While these people may not have actively been employing the classical references, they were present and involved in a spectacle that transmitted classical icons, references, and images through the mediation of American political culture. They comprised the public for whom these spectacles were devised and the lessons in patriotism and republicanism intended. A spectacle, after all, requires spectators to bear witness to it. The very root of the word spectacle comes from the Latin verb *spectare*, which translates as "to see." The triumphal arch and Grand Federal Procession required those who would see and bear witness, i.e. the spectators. The word spectator itself is actually a Latin word, *spectator, spectatoris*. Although women, children, and much of the Philadelphia public may have watched and observed rather than marched in the procession or built the triumphal arch, as a group they were still involved in the

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<sup>224</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>225</sup> Schloss, "The Nation as Spectacle," 59.

<sup>226</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788; Schloss, "The Nation as Spectacle," 59.

events by virtue of their role as spectators. Moreover, Laura Rigal has claimed that spectators for republican festivals were especially necessary because, according to political theory, the "virtuous republic" needed to "see itself assembled" to create feelings of virtuous love and patriotism in its people collectively.<sup>227</sup> Accordingly, the visible presence of the assembled public and citizens thus conceptually formed an important component in the republican festivals like the triumphal arch exhibition and Grand Federal Procession.

## CONCLUSION

The use of classical symbols disseminated to the public in Philadelphia's political spectacles speaks to the existence of less formal channels for the transmission of and engagement with classical knowledge. Importantly, Siobhan McElduff, writing on non-elites and classical reception in Britain, recently has urged classicists to consider the reception of classical texts amongst "those traditionally excluded from studies of reception: non-professional readers, the non-elite, all those who have limited (or no) access to traditional channels of education and transmission."<sup>228</sup> While this thesis does not focus specifically on the non-elite and their relationship with classical texts in Philadelphia, it does investigate the public's opportunity for engaging with classical themes, symbols, and history in public, non-academic avenues like spectacle. Since public spectacles like the triumphal arch and Grand Federal Procession functioned as non-traditional, informal arenas for republican education and cultivating virtue, their incorporations of the classics formed an avenue in which those who were non-traditionally trained in the classics might encounter the classics.

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<sup>227</sup> Rigal, "Raising the Roof," 256, 259-260.

<sup>228</sup> McElduff, "Fractured Understandings," 180-181.



As one non-traditional avenue for the dissemination of classical knowledge, craftsmen actively used and incorporated the classics into their displays in the Grand Federal Procession through their respective trades companies. These references to the classics in the parade took the form of classical mottos, symbols from classical history and mythology related to the profession, or Americanized republican icons like the liberty cap. Certainly, the craftsmen's and their apprentice's use of the classics formed a different type of understanding than that exhibited by a classically-educated gentleman reading classical texts in his personal library. Yet, this provides evidence of some sort of classical engagement by a different group - the craft and trade professions - not traditionally associated with the classics in America. Further, it points to other less traditional channels through which classical themes, symbols, and ideas could be transmitted and encountered.

The classics were disseminated to the Philadelphia people visually as American republican symbols.<sup>229</sup> Both the 1783 peace celebration and 1788 Grand Federal Procession incorporated classical symbols and icons. In fact, the triumphal arch and the Grand Federal Edifice, both highlights of their respective events, were classical architecturally but American in context and representation. The triumphal arch, noted by newspapers and the broadside as specifically in the Roman style, commemorated American peace, victory, and republicanism. The Grand Federal Edifice, likewise noted as conforming to classical architectural standards, stood as an allegorical representation for the American federal Constitution. While its architecture was classical, its context was completely American and federal, evidenced by its name alone, Grand *Federal* Edifice. Many of the symbols incorporated into these celebrations

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<sup>229</sup> For the use of the classics as American political iconography on a national scale, see *Brill's New Pauly Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World: Classical Tradition*, s.v. "United States and Canada: 2.3 Political Iconography."

were common American appropriations of the classics for political and republican purposes.<sup>230</sup> As such, their use was likely familiar to spectators, even if they had not had classical training.

These spectacles, however, still exhibit an element of control. An authority was ultimately controlling the images presented to the Philadelphia spectators.<sup>231</sup> The 1784 triumphal arch, for example, was sponsored by the State Assembly as part of the "formal demonstrations of joy," and Francis Hopkinson and his federalist Committee of Arrangement organized the 1788 Grand Federal Procession. Further, organizers incorporated classical symbols and references through visual medium and artistic representation, but attempted to control and instruct the public in how to read and interpret the visual signs.<sup>232</sup> For example, newspapers, orations, and broadsides accompanied these events, in which the authors like Hopkinson described and interpreted various aspects of the event. The triumphal arch even contained inscriptions that explained each symbolic image adorning the arch so that spectators were further instructed on each image's intended meaning. Thus, the presentation of the classics as republican icons in Philadelphia was arguably controlled by those with classical training.

Despite this control of symbols and messages, the use of the classics in Philadelphia spectacle emerges as more inclusive of the public than the those classical references employed by the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. In the written medium of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, a non-traditional audience had opportunities to encounter the classics, but they likely did not actively employ classical references, nor were they likely the intended audience for such references. Unlike newspapers, however, the wider public, including those without traditional classical

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<sup>230</sup> Brill's *New Pauly Encyclopaedia* on classical traditions lists several iconographic constructions from classical antiquity, such as the liberty cap and classical architecture, which appeared commonly in America as republican and national symbols: *Brill's New Pauly Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World: Classical Tradition*, s.v. "United States and Canada: 2.3 Political Iconography."

<sup>231</sup> Meranze analyzes the triumphal arch from this aspect of control: Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue*, 72-78.

<sup>232</sup> Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue*, 72-78 and Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, 85.

training, were the intended audience for Philadelphia spectacles like the triumphal arch exhibition and Grand Federal Procession. While the public still adopted a relatively passive role in regards to employing the classical references in these spectacles, this time they formed part of the intended audience for the classical references displayed visually as republican, national, and American symbols. By taking the role of spectator, the Philadelphia public at least adopted an involved role, for the spectacle exists to be witnessed and observed. As spectators, the Philadelphia public engaged with classical symbols, themes, and iconography that were rendered Americanized and harnessed to the nation's identity as a republic.

## CHAPTER THREE: CLASSICS AND THE HEARD WORD IN PHILADELPHIA ORATIONS

Around “half past twelve” the front of the one and a half mile long Grand Federal Procession reached its terminal point at Union Green. The Committee of Provision had arranged on Union Green a large circle of tables filled with a “cold collation.” Placed in the center of this circle upon their arrival were the Grand Federal Edifice and the “Foederal Ship *Union*,” two floats symbolic of the Constitution and its union of American states.<sup>233</sup> Once the last of the procession arrived at Union Green, federalist James Wilson mounted the Grand Federal Edifice to deliver an oration suitable for the occasion.

As with the other aspects of Philadelphia’s July 4, 1788 Grand Federal Procession – the written newspaper reports and the visual iconography – the classics figured in Wilson’s oration. Addressing the estimated 17,000 spectators on Union Green and the trades and professions who had marched in the parade, Wilson congratulated his “Friends and Fellow Citizens” on the remarkable “spectacle which [they were] assembled to celebrate.”<sup>234</sup> The American Constitution, Wilson reminded his listeners, was “unexampled as well as magnificent” because it was formed by “*A people, free and enlightened, ESTABLISHING and RATIFYING a system of government, which they have previously CONSIDERED, EXAMINED, and APPROVED!*”<sup>235</sup> In his estimation, not only did this render the new American government vastly superior to those governments born as “the deformed offspring of force and fear,” but, Wilson professed to his audience, the establishment of America’s new government even surpassed those revered republics of antiquity:

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<sup>233</sup> Hopkinson, “Grand Federal Procession,” *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>234</sup> Wilson, “ORATION,” Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

<sup>235</sup> Wilson, “ORATION,” Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

You have heard of SPARTA, of ATHENS and of ROME. You have heard of their admired constitutions, and of their high prized freedom... but did they, in all their pomp and pride of liberty, ever furnish to the astonished world an exhibition similar to that, which we now contemplate. Were their constitutions framed by those, who were appointed, for that purpose, by the people?<sup>236</sup>

This chapter investigates the role and function of the classics in orations in 1780s Philadelphia, with a focus on the years 1783 and 1788.<sup>237</sup> It investigates an oral component of the classical presence in Philadelphia, thus contributing to my previous examinations of the classics in the public avenues of newspapers (written word) and spectacles (visual culture). As such, the chapter focuses primarily on Wilson's 1788 public oration, but also includes other political orations that were printed in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, a vehicle that allowed the content to reach a broader audience. While Wilson's oration involved the Philadelphia public through its association with the larger spectacle of the Grand Federal Procession and circulation in newspapers like the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, not all orations in 1780s Philadelphia were so inclusive. The Society of the Cincinnati, for example, advertised its meetings and Fourth of July orations in the paper but did not reprint the content. Even more exclusive, the American Philosophical Society published its orations privately as well, but these additionally employed especially erudite, academic language and classical references suited for members of the learned society and prominent government officials. The general public thus occupied a liminal position; they stood on the threshold of being invited to engage with the classics when it served an event's purpose or when republican and patriotic lessons were being projected, but they were excluded from events reserved for the city's social and cultural elite.

As part of the larger spectacle of Philadelphia's Grand Federal Procession on July 4, 1788, James Wilson delivered an oration after the last of the procession had reached Union

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<sup>236</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

<sup>237</sup> These two years, 1783 and 1788, correspond to the two years examined in detail in Chapter One's investigation of classical references in the written medium of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

Green. Not only had the Grand Federal Procession strongly espoused the federalist cause, but James Wilson's speech was also by no means apolitical. Wilson had been a delegate to the federal convention in Philadelphia and was a staunch, vocal supporter of the Constitution in the verbal and written debates over ratification that ensued.<sup>238</sup> Hardly surprising, Wilson's oration championed the new government and the process through which its ratification was achieved. Didactic as well as celebratory, Wilson's oration, like the visual spectacle that preceded it, also served as a vehicle to instruct his broad audience on civics and republicanism. Infused throughout Wilson's oration were multiple references to classical history, rendered in plain English. Although Wilson himself was traditionally educated and by no means a man of the people -- indeed, his political opponents criticized his "aristocratic" bearing and mannerisms -- he created the appearance in his oration of embracing the public, "the people."<sup>239</sup> Reflecting this sentiment, Wilson refrained from quotations in Latin and contextually explained his references to the classics.

Because it was associated with the public spectacle of the Grand Federal Procession, Wilson's oration provides some of the better evidence that the general public in Philadelphia encountered the classics through oral speeches. Through this well-documented event, Philadelphia federalists endeavored to demonstrate that the Constitution's ratification was the will of the people at large, and, as such, they necessarily attempted to include at the event as wide an array of social classes and diverse groups as possible.<sup>240</sup> Francis Hopkinson's report on the procession estimated that about 17,000 spectators assembled on Union Green. It is unclear

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<sup>238</sup> Maier, *Ratification*, 77.

<sup>239</sup> For more on James Wilson and his role in the ratification debates see Maier, *Ratification*, 77-82.

<sup>240</sup> Indeed, Benjamin Rush's remarks, which were published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* as an unnamed gentleman's observations on the Federal Procession, emphasized that "the order of the procession was regular, and begat correspondent order in all classes of spectators": "Observations on the Foederal Procession, on the fourth of July, 1788, in the city of PHILADELPHIA; in a letter from a gentleman in this city to his friend in a neighboring state," *PG*, July 23, 1788. Also see Silverman, *A Cultural History of the American Revolution*, 578-580.

from the report whether Hopkinson included in this number the trades, crafts, and professions who marched in the parade, but these individuals were likely in attendance for Wilson's speech, since he commenced his oration "as soon as the rear of the line had arrived."<sup>241</sup> Hopkinson's remarks gave no indication what portion of these 17,000 spectators included women, but, as mentioned earlier in Chapter 2, he did note that at least six women marched with the Manufacturing Society in the trades section. Neither did Rush's observations refer to the gender composition of the audience, apart from noting that several women and children lined roofs, scaffolds, and fences to observe the parade. He followed this observation with the remark that fortunately "no one accident happened to any body."<sup>242</sup> Nevertheless, women likely were present at Union Green as part of these 17,000 spectators.<sup>243</sup> Importantly, the oration was delivered at a public venue, rather than a closed one. Moreover, the content of Wilson's oration was printed in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and other newspapers both within and outside the state, such as *New York Journal*, and *Daily Patriotic Register*, thus allowing countless more people to read the oration than had been present at the spectacle.<sup>244</sup>

Wilson's oration emphasized the overarching rhetoric of inclusion and ratification by the public. Philadelphia federalists sought to demonstrate through written accounts, the nature of the spectacle itself, and Wilson's oration that the Constitution was the product of a "whole people"

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<sup>241</sup> Hopkinson, "Grand Federal Procession," *PG*, July 9, 1788.

<sup>242</sup> "Observations on the Foederal Procession," *PG*, July 23, 1788.

<sup>243</sup> In *Celebrating the Fourth*, Len Travers notes that although women "were generally excluded from direct participation in processions and other public ceremonies," they frequently attended orations and parades as spectators, allowing them a "not insignificant," albeit passive, role in the events: Len Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth: Independence Day and the Rites of Nationalism in the Early Republic* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 134-141. Since women attended other parades and orations during the early Republic examined by Travers, it seems likely that they also formed part of the 17,000 spectators on Union Green. Additionally, although Hopkinson's report does not specify the crowd composition, historian Susan Branson also includes women among the spectators on Union Green for Wilson's oration: Susan Branson, *Those Fiery Frenchified Dames: Women and Political Culture in Early National Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 16.

<sup>244</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788; "Miscellany. Mr. Greenleaf, Please to Publish the Oration, Spoken by James Wilson, Esq. at Philadelphia, on the 4th Instant, and Oblige," *New York Journal, and Daily Patriotic Register* (New York), July 18, 1788.

rather than "only a part of society."<sup>245</sup> On this point, Wilson was quite clear: "What is the object exhibited to our contemplation? A WHOLE PEOPLE exercising its *first and greatest power* -- performing an act of SOVEREIGNTY, ORIGINAL and UNLIMITED."<sup>246</sup> A political maneuver it may have been, but in keeping with the spirit of the day, the Philadelphia public, not just a small oligarchy, formed an important conceptual and actual part of Wilson's audience for this oration.

Wilson's use of the classics in his oration also attests to a wider audience. Wilson certainly had the background to make obscure, and therefore exclusive, classical references if he desired. Wilson, born in Scotland, had studied for four years at the University of St. Andrews. Common for the time, his curriculum there included both Latin and Greek. Wilson also held the position of Latin instructor at the College of Philadelphia once he immigrated to America.<sup>247</sup> As such, Wilson's background provided him with the sort of classical foundation that would have enabled him to make complex references that only those with classical training could decipher.<sup>248</sup> In fact, were his audience composed primarily of educated gentlemen, he might even simply quote Latin authors with no need to provide a translation as Dr. Benjamin Rush did when addressing members of the American Philosophical Society in 1786.<sup>249</sup> Wilson, however, did not employ the classics in such a manner in his July 4, 1788 oration. Wilson's oration was

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<sup>245</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788; Silverman, *A Cultural History of the American Revolution*, 578-580.

<sup>246</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

<sup>247</sup> Maier, *Ratification*, 77-78.

<sup>248</sup> Wilson's contemporaries also commented on his strong knowledge of governments and the history of political institutions, a subject which would have required a solid understanding of classical history on Wilson's part: Maier, *Ratification*, 78.

<sup>249</sup> Benjamin Rush, *An oration, delivered before the American Philosophical Society, held in Philadelphia on the 27th of February, 1786; containing an enquiry into the influence of physical causes upon the moral faculty. By Benjamin Rush, M.D. and professor of chemistry in the University of Pennsylvania. [Four lines from Locke]* (Philadelphia: Cist, 1786), AAS Copy, Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 19972.



intended for a broader audience, which employed necessarily a less exclusive presentation of the classics.

Wilson incorporated into his oration classical history and personages rather than specific quotations in the ancient languages. With the exception of the figure Sesostris, whom Wilson only mentioned in passing, he contextually explained most of his references; Wilson told his audience exactly how they should interpret the reference and provided context clues.<sup>250</sup> For example, Wilson introduced Lycurgus in his section on the lawgivers of antiquity as follows:

The far-famed establishment of LYCURGUS was introduced by deception and fraud. Under the specious pretense of consulting the oracle concerning his laws, he prevailed on the SPARTANS to make a temporary experiment of them during his absence, and to swear that they would suffer no alteration of them till his return. Taking a disingenuous advantage of their scrupulous regard for their oaths, he prevented his return by a voluntary death; and in this manner endeavored to secure a proud immortality to his system.<sup>251</sup>

Indeed, the reference may have made more of an impact on those trained in the classics, but it was not rendered incomprehensible to the uninitiated. At the outset, Wilson's choice of the word "far-famed" indicated to his audience that Lycurgus's system of laws was well-known and regarded. Yet, Wilson juxtaposed "far-famed" with the negative connotations of the system's inception, "deception and fraud." Wilson did not stop at this point, however, which would have left an audience unfamiliar with classical history wondering about the circumstances of this "deception and fraud." Instead, Wilson elaborated on the subject, providing a basic summary and explanation. One should, however, be aware that this was Wilson's interpretation of this event from classical history that was specifically appropriated for the arguments within his

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<sup>250</sup> Sesostris was an amalgamation of several Twelfth Dynasty Egyptian kings. According to the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, he was a "legendary Egyptian king to whom were ascribed great conquests in African and Asia... he ultimately became an embodiment of the ideal of Egyptian kingship." The figure of Sesostris can be found in the ancient authors Herodotus and Diodorus: "Sesostris," *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1396.

<sup>251</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

oration, rather than a non-biased rendering of that history. Here, classical history served a greater political purpose, legitimating and glorifying the American nation and government.

Like the visual republican icons examined in Chapter 2, the classics in Wilson's oration also participated in the creation of an American identity. Wilson held up ancient lawgivers and institutions from classical history as esteemed models to which he compared the American nation and the triumph of its new government. He also incorporated lessons from classical history as examples in the later part of his speech, when he moved on to present his audience with didactic lessons on civics and citizenship.

Drawing upon examples from classical history, Wilson made the argument not simply that America with its new Constitution was legitimate and fit to be placed in comparison to the admired institutions of antiquity, but also that the American nation actually surpassed them. In making this argument, Wilson projected a strong sense of American exceptionalism in his oration. His references to the classical past helped foster this impression, marking the American federal Constitution as all the more estimable in comparison:

The greatest part of governments have been the deformed offspring of force and fear. With these we deign not comparison. But there have been others which have formed bold pretensions to higher regard. You have heard of SPARTA, of ATHENS and of ROME; you have heard of their admired constitutions, and of their high-prized freedom... But did they, in all their pomp and pride of liberty, ever furnish to the astonished world, an exhibition similar to that which we now contemplate? Were their constitutions framed by those, who were appointed for that purpose, by the people? After they were framed, were they submitted to the consideration of the people? Had the people an opportunity of expressing their sentiments concerning them? Were they to *stand* or *fall* by the people's *approving* or *rejecting* vote?<sup>252</sup>

And, if the everyday Philadelphian in the audience was not familiar enough with ancient history to answer these rhetorical questions, Wilson was clear to inform them of the answer: "To all

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<sup>252</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

these questions, attentive and impartial history obliges us to answer in the negative."<sup>253</sup> Within this framework, Wilson conferred high praise upon the United States and its new government, suggesting that America had excelled where respected civilizations from antiquity had failed. Wilson reiterated this same sentiment a few paragraphs down, reminding his audience "what a *flattering* contrast arises from a *retrospect* of the scenes which we now *commemorate*? Delegates were *appointed* to deliberate and propose... The *result* of their deliberations was *laid before the people*..."<sup>254</sup>

Moreover, throughout the oration, Wilson emphasized that this "flattering contrast" arose because the American ratification process had involved the people. To illustrate this point, Wilson relied on selected examples from ancient history. First, Wilson brought up the Roman Senate, remarking:

the Senators of Rome, seated on their curule chairs, and surrounded with all their official lustre, were an object much more respectable; and we view, without displeasure, the admiration of those untutored savages, who considered them as so many gods upon earth. But who were those senators? They were only a *part* of a society: they were vested with only *inferior* powers.<sup>255</sup>

The implication was that the American Constitution, ratified by "a WHOLE PEOPLE," was thus vested with superior powers than even the respected Senate of the Roman Republic.<sup>256</sup>

Wilson continued on to present his audience with further evidence from classical history that similarly placed the American system above respected ancient models. He cited classical lawgivers and the methods by which they had instituted their law systems, incorporating a figure from each of the classical civilizations that were revered by contemporary Americans for their

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<sup>253</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

<sup>254</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

<sup>255</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

<sup>256</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

political institutions and virtues: Sparta, Athens, and Rome.<sup>257</sup> Following this appeal to classical antiquity, Wilson referred to the specific individuals associated with lawgiving from each of these civilizations, Lycurgus from Sparta, Solon from Athens, and Numa Pompilius from Rome.

As with the figure of Lycurgus, Wilson gave his audience a brief summary on how each classical figure had arrived at and implemented his law system. While these examples constituted, according to Wilson, "the most splendid establishments that [had] been hitherto known," the origin and "arts of their introduction and success" left much to be desired when compared with the American Constitution.<sup>258</sup> Wilson, however, did not assume that his audience already knew these "origins" and "arts." Instead, he provided explanations for each. Solon, "the mild and moderating Solon" of Athens,

far from considering himself as employed only to *propose* such regulations as he should think best calculated for promoting the happiness of the commonwealth, *made* and *promulgated* his laws with all the haughty airs of absolute power. On more occasions than one, we find him boasting, with much self-complacency, of his extreme forbearance and condescension, because he did not reduce his equals to the humiliating condition of his slaves.<sup>259</sup>

In a similar vein, Wilson then asked his audience, "did NUMA submit his *institutions* to the good sense and free investigation of ROME?"<sup>260</sup> Wilson reminded his audience that no, Numa's institutions instead "were received in precious communications from the goddess EGERIA, with whose presence and regard he was supremely favored; and they [the institutions] were imposed on the easy faith of the citizens, as the *dictates* of an inspiration that was divine."<sup>261</sup> In contrast, Wilson emphasized that the American Constitution was not the design of one man, but "the people," to whom the document was also submitted for discussion, scrutiny, and, ultimately,

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<sup>257</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788. For more on early Americans and their admiration of Athens, Sparta, and Rome see Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 53-84.

<sup>258</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

<sup>259</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

<sup>260</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

<sup>261</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

ratification.<sup>262</sup> The popular nature of the oration -- its public venue and circulation in the newspaper -- required Wilson to contextually make known for his audience in detail the important references, rather than simply allude to ancient authors, quotations, or unexplained figures. The federalists were, after all, striving to make the Constitution's ratification appear as the will of the American people at large.<sup>263</sup> As such, Wilson highlighted the role of "the people" within the ratification process, addressed his oration to a large spectrum of the Philadelphia populace, and employed references in a manner comprehensible to this broad audience.<sup>264</sup>

Wilson included classical history in the latter part of his oration, as well, when he provided his listeners with lessons on civics and citizenship. He stressed how members of this broad audience might become virtuous and which virtues they ought to cultivate. Here, classical history furnished didactic examples, and Wilson even incorporated cautionary tales from Rome's history.<sup>265</sup> On the one hand, Wilson highlighted the virtue of early Rome and its reputation for liberty, yet he also acknowledged the ultimate corruption and decay of virtue of the late Roman Republic and Roman Empire.<sup>266</sup> Regarding the virtues of frugality and temperance, opposites to

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<sup>262</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

<sup>263</sup> Silverman, *A Cultural History of the American Revolution*, 578-580.

<sup>264</sup> The 17,000 spectators on Union Green present for Wilson's address and the earlier parade would have constituted around half the population of Philadelphia. In his travel journal, Francisco de Miranda places the population of Philadelphia at about 30,00 in 1784: Francisco de Miranda, *The New Democracy in America: Travels of Francisco de Miranda in the United States, 1783-1784*, Judson P Wood, trans., John S. Ezell, ed. (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 64. Susan Branson claims that in 1790 the population of Philadelphia was about 44,000 people: Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 7.

<sup>265</sup> Barbara Melton discusses the use of Roman figures as didactic models for civic foundation in early America, but notes a general distinction that the American founders made "between the corruption and undesirable government of Rome on the one hand, and the virtues of a select group of model Romans on the other": Barbara Lawatsch Melton, "Appropriations of Cicero and Cato in the Making of American Civic Identity," in *Classics in the Modern World: A Democratic Turn?*, eds. Lorna Hardwick and Stephen Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 79-80. In Wilson's oration, this distinction is not so clearly defined or exhibited. Wilson relied on model founders from both Greek and Roman history, and even these heroes' reputations are slightly tarnished by Wilson in order to allow the American nation and its Constitution to rise higher than the classical model. Additionally, the distinction Wilson makes is not necessarily between the Roman government and virtuous Romans, but between the virtues exhibited by the Roman republic and the vices of Rome in its downfall and empire period. In Wilson's oration, the Roman government offered an example that was both worthy of emulation and cautionary at the same time.

<sup>266</sup> This corruption and decay of virtue and morals that leads to a the loss of liberty and, ultimately, tyranny is a common trope in classical republicanism. This theoretical framework can be found in the work of classical authors

the vice of luxury that was so pernicious to the health of republics, Wilson counseled his audience:

They [frugality and temperance] were the virtues, which nursed and educated *infant* ROME, and prepared her for all her greatness. But in the giddy hour of her prosperity, she spurned from her the obscure instruments by which it was procured: and, in their place, substituted *luxury* and *dissipation*. The consequence was such as might have been expected. She preserved, for some time, a gay and flourishing appearance; but the internal health and soundness of her foundation were gone. At last, she fell a victim to the poisonous draughts, which were administered by her perfidious favourites.<sup>267</sup>

As a warning for the American nation, Wilson admonished the assembled Philadelphians that "the fate of ROME, both in her *rising* and in her *falling* state, will be the fate of every other nation that shall follow *both* parts of her example."<sup>268</sup> The implication was that, should Americans adopt frugality and temperance, thereby following the first part of Rome's example, they too could rise to the greatness that Rome had. Yet the American people needed to be careful not to abandon these virtues or they would likewise suffer the fate of Rome "in her *falling* state."<sup>269</sup>

Wilson continually referred to his audience as "citizens," counseled his listeners on how to be a good and virtuous citizens, and, hardly surprising for this period, employed masculine rhetoric: "we wish to be accomplished *men* and *citizens*."<sup>270</sup> Despite the fact that Wilson did not explicitly address women in his oration, this does not mean that they were excluded from attending the oration, nor would they have been barred from reading and engaging with his

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like Sallust. A variation on this formulation is also expressed by Wilson in his oration: "*where* TYRANNY reigns, *there is the* COUNTRY of IGNORANCE and VICE -- *where* GOOD GOVERNMENT prevails, *there is the* COUNTRY of SCIENCE and VIRTUE." Wilson's statement actually appears as an interesting inversion, that good government like, presumably, the Constitution can itself actually incite virtue and the progress of science. For more on conceptions of classical republicanism see Wood, *The Idea of America*, 57-79.

<sup>267</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

<sup>268</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

<sup>269</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

<sup>270</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

oration once it circulated in newspapers like the *Pennsylvania Gazette*.<sup>271</sup> While women at this time could not serve as citizens in the same way that white men could, scholarship on women and political culture in the Early Republic, including a case study specifically on Philadelphian women, has shown that women found a "civic role" within this primarily masculine rhetoric of republicanism as "wives and mothers" who were "responsible for inculcating civic virtue in husbands and sons"<sup>272</sup> Although the oration did not specifically address Philadelphian women, they were very likely present as spectators at the oration, as they had been for the earlier parade.<sup>273</sup>

In instructing his audience, Wilson used references to classical history in his efforts to mold a citizenry and help create a civic identity for the new nation.<sup>274</sup> Like the spectacles and visual art examined in Chapter 2, public orations formed another arena for shaping public character and virtue. Wilson's oration even worked hand in hand with the spectacle of the Grand Federal Procession, projecting similar messages and themes. As Wilson explained in his oration, both attempted to "*instruct and improve*."<sup>275</sup> They also pointed out "*the elegance or usefulness of the sciences and the arts*" and "*preserve[d] the memory, and engrave[d] the importance of great political truths*."<sup>276</sup> The values in Wilson's oration like frugality, temperance, and industry that were designed "*to instruct and improve*" the assembled Philadelphia public were lessons that were directed toward, not just the elite and educated, but all citizens, and arguably, the women

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<sup>271</sup> Wilson's oration appeared in the supplement to the July 9, 1788 edition of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, the one issued following the July Fourth festivities and Grand Federal Procession. Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

<sup>272</sup> Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 8, 20. For more on women and political culture in the early Republic see especially Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1986).

<sup>273</sup> Susan Branson includes women in her discussion of the spectators assembled at Union Green. Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, 16.

<sup>274</sup> Melton, "Appropriations of Cicero and Cato in the Making of American Civic Identity," 79-88.

<sup>275</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

<sup>276</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788.

who would raise citizens. Gordon Wood has noted that classical republicanism was an all-encompassing world view, "a set of values, an explanation of history, and a form of life."<sup>277</sup> By Wood's definition, republicanism thus "necessarily involved the character and culture of the society" and "required a special kind of people, a people who possessed virtue, who were willing to surrender their private interests for the sake of the whole."<sup>278</sup> It required virtuous citizens, and America's educated elite like Wilson turned to classical history to help shape the nation's civic identity and civic character.<sup>279</sup> The classics, as evidenced by Wilson's oration, were thus transmitted to the public for engagement as political, national, and republican symbols, and as *exempla* for civic virtue and character.

Newspapers like the *Pennsylvania Gazette* reprinted the content of some orations, thereby disseminating orations like Wilson's to a wider audience. They provided another public avenue through which certain oration content could reach a broader audience, albeit in a textual form. In fact, scholarship on newspapers in early America has shown that some political events were orchestrated partly for the sheer purpose of later being circulated through the papers.<sup>280</sup> A vehicle for spreading information, these early American newspapers permitted the content of some orations to reach beyond their local area.<sup>281</sup> The *Pennsylvania Gazette*, for example, reprinted pertinent news and orations from cities and counties outside of Philadelphia.

In both 1783, when America signed its formal peace treaty with Britain and thus commenced its republican experiment, and 1788, when America's new form of government, the

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<sup>277</sup> Wood, *The Idea of America*, 62.

<sup>278</sup> Wood, *The Idea of America*, 323.

<sup>279</sup> Melton, "Appropriations of Cicero and Cato in the Making of American Civic Identity," 79-88.

<sup>280</sup> Pasley, "*The Tyranny of Printers*," 6-7.

<sup>281</sup> For more on newspapers and political culture see Pasley, "*The Tyranny of Printers*" and also Chapter 1 of this thesis.



Constitution, achieved ratification, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* published the content of timely themed orations that featured references to the classics.<sup>282</sup> This chapter now turns to two examples, one from 1783 and another from 1788, that demonstrate the tension in Americans' use of the classics as a cultural discourse that at certain times included and other times excluded the wider public, depending on the situation. Like Wilson's public Fourth of July oration in 1788, the oration from 1788, delivered originally in York, Pennsylvania, celebrated the Constitution's ratification and employed classical references for a patriotic purpose. The oration reprinted in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* from 1783, conversely, had originally been given as a commencement oration and thus displayed slightly more erudition in its use of classical references. The *Pennsylvania Gazette*, however, served as a vehicle allowing wider access to the content of both orations, which many Philadelphians had likely not been able to attend in person.

On August 13, 1788, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* included a report of a politically pertinent oration that, like Wilson's oration earlier that same month, celebrated the Constitution's ratification. This oration, however, had originally been delivered in York, Pennsylvania on July 28, 1788. The headline in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* read, "*An ORATION, delivered by Mr. CHARLES W. HARTLEY, at Union Green (York, Pennsylvania) on Monday, the 28th of July, in consequence of the adoption of the New Constitution.*"<sup>283</sup> Like Wilson's Fourth of July oration, the subject matter of Hartley's speech espoused a patriotic and political cause and also championed the virtues and benefits of the new Constitution. If the circumstances of Hartley's oration were anything like Wilson's, then it too was probably delivered to a wide range of spectators. The *Pennsylvania Gazette*, however, did not relate much detail regarding the event,

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<sup>282</sup> "BALTIMORE, July 4.," *PG*, July 16, 1783; Charles Hartley, "An ORATION, delivered by Mr. CHARLES W. HARTLEY, at Union Green (York, Pennsylvania) on Monday the 28th of July, in consequence of the adoption of the New Constitution," *PG*, August 13, 1788.

<sup>283</sup> Hartley, "An ORATION," *PG*, August 13, 1788.

apart from noting that it was delivered on a public space designated as Union Green in York, Pennsylvania, in celebration of the Constitution's ratification. Regardless of the original audience, circulation in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* placed the oration's content in the public arena and allowed an audience outside York to access its timely political themes.

Reminiscent of Wilson's use of the classics in his oration, Hartley drew upon elements of the classical world to glorify the American Constitution and its people. Although the specific classical references in Wilson's and Hartley's oration differed, in essence, the classics provided both American orators with a symbolic vocabulary to speak of their republican government and their nation's place in history. In Hartley's oration, America emerged as a successor to classical civilization. In this case, he drew comparisons between the city of ancient Rome and modern York, Pennsylvania.

According to Hartley, America not only followed in the footsteps of the celebrated civilizations of antiquity, but the American nation, and the city of York specifically, surpassed it. Hartley mapped Rome onto York's landscape, drawing upon similarities in the visual landscapes and tying the conceptual to the physical:

*Rome*, from being a *post* on the *Palatium*, a small *height* on the banks of the Tiber, arose to the Zenith of Empire, to the dominion of the world, to be the seat of arts and sciences, and the universal theater of elegance and grandure. Yet did not *Rome*, in point of the original beauties of her situation, excel this place; for we are now surrounded by *hills*, equal in natural magnitude to those on which *Rome* was originally built.<sup>284</sup>

Hartley suggested to his audience that, like Rome, York too might rise to become a powerful seat of culture and government. According to Hartley, York, however, offered even more natural advantages than Rome: "Rome could not originally have boasted a *vicinity*, superior to that of York, for which ever way we turn our eyes, are displayed the most beautiful diversifications of

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<sup>284</sup> Hartley, "An ORATION," PG, August 13, 1788.

mountains and plains, replenished with useful materials..."<sup>285</sup> Hartley compared Rome's Tiber River to the Cordonus stream in York, commenting that the celebrated Tiber could not surpass in elegance and simplicity York's Cordonus. Within Hartley's formulation, America, specifically York, was thus depicted as spiritually and physically a successor to Rome, a successor that had the potential even to outshine the original.<sup>286</sup>

In Hartley's oration, classical history and geography were Americanized, but this transformation also allowed a wider contemporary audience who may have not have been trained in the classics to connect with Hartley's symbolic use of ancient Rome. Like Wilson, Hartley explained his references within the context of his oration and did not even bring up specific figures from classical history. Instead, he focused on the geography of Rome and detailed how each aspect of Rome resembled York's physical landscape, something which should have been familiar territory for his local audience. In this way, the landscape of classical Rome was mediated both to Hartley's audience and to readers of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* through the modern American landscape of York, Pennsylvania.

An oration printed earlier in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* in 1783 had similarly used classical references to frame republican America's glorious potential for the future, though the oration exhibited more exclusivity in its original delivery and use of the classics. This speech thus illuminates the thread of tension that ran through early American uses of the classics. The classics served both as exclusive signifiers of status through education and as widely disseminated symbols and models of civic virtue and republicanism. In 1783, the *Pennsylvania*

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<sup>285</sup> Hartley, "An ORATION," PG, August 13, 1788.

<sup>286</sup> Shalev analyses this formulation under the framework of typology, suggesting that these references functioned "in accordance with typological exegesis, in which American surpassed and exceeded its classical precursors": Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 94. For more on Shalev's interpretation of typology as a context for American "appeals to antiquity," see Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 90-98.

*Gazette* reprinted the Valedictory oration delivered by Charles Smith, B.A at Washington College's first commencement. The report allowed Philadelphians access to the substance of the oration. The *Pennsylvania Gazette* reported on July 16, 1783 that "by some delay or mistake in the water conveyance, the following did not come to our hands till two days ago, viz."<sup>287</sup> The paper then presented readers with news from Baltimore, Maryland on the first commencement ceremony of Washington College. It was fairly common for the *Pennsylvania Gazette* to include notices of collegiate commencements. The paper frequently noted some of the individuals involved in the ceremony, the topics of orations, dialogues, and disputes, and the language in which these exercises were performed.<sup>288</sup> In general, though, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* tended not to include the content and text of these commencement orations.<sup>289</sup>

The text of Smith's oration, however, was included in the commencement report, perhaps because the subject matter was particularly suitable for current political events. Washington College's first commencement coincided with the first year of peace between America and Britain, and, by extension, America's freedom from British rule. Smith opened his oration by celebrating "this triumphant period in the annals of AMERICA, while those SOVEREIGN and INDEPENDENT STATES look back to the *past* and forward to the *future*."<sup>290</sup> Later in the oration, the classical past would help Smith frame his gaze "into the future" for the new United States. Additionally, as he noted in his oration, Washington College had been "dedicated to the illustrious name of WASHINGTON," hero of the American Revolution.<sup>291</sup> These patriotic

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<sup>287</sup> "BALTIMORE, July 4.," *PG*, July 16, 1783.

<sup>288</sup> See Chapter 1 for more on collegiate commencement ceremonies reported on in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

<sup>289</sup> This observation is based on the two years, 1783 and 1788, that were surveyed for this study and used as a case study in the first chapter.

<sup>290</sup> "BALTIMORE, July 4.," *PG*, July 16, 1783.

<sup>291</sup> "BALTIMORE, July 4.," *PG*, July 16, 1783.

overtones that began the oration and continued throughout also constituted fitting material for circulation around July Fourth for the celebration of American independence.

The final part of Smith's oration celebrated the new American nation's potential place in history, and here, Smith employed the classics to help provide a vocabulary to express this point. Smith conceptually depicted America as a successor to the legacy of Rome and Athens. The former was renowned for its republic, the latter for its democracy. Smith referenced statesmen, authors, poets, and philosophers from classical antiquity and insinuated that each classical figure had or would have an American successor who, in many cases, had or would surpass his classical counterpart.<sup>292</sup> For example, Smith claimed "On WORTHIES, WORTHIES croud [sic] before mine eyes!/To every ancient HERO, lo, a son!/For CINCINNATUS, see a WASHINGTON!"<sup>293</sup> Smith continued further, bringing up other figures associated with texts read and studied as part of the classical canon: "And others PLATOS, EUCLIDS, TULLIES, near!"<sup>294</sup> A few lines down, Smith added "Hark! other HOMERS, VIRGILS touch the string," and, later, "other TIBERS in each sylvan stood!"<sup>295</sup>

Compared to Wilson's and Hartley's orations, Smith's valedictory oration contained a more erudite presentation of the classics, with less contextual explanation and a reliance on figures who authored texts within the classical canon. This created more potential barriers or filters for popular engagement. This kind of presentation, however, is quite understandable considering the type and purpose of Smith's oration. It was the valedictory oration from a collegiate commencement, an event associated with education and learning that was likely not open to the wider public in the first place. Wilson's oration, on the other hand, was associated

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<sup>292</sup> See footnote 286.

<sup>293</sup> "BALTIMORE, July 4.," *PG*, July 16, 1783.

<sup>294</sup> "BALTIMORE, July 4.," *PG*, July 16, 1783.

<sup>295</sup> "BALTIMORE, July 4.," *PG*, July 16, 1783.

with a public spectacle that aimed to present the appearance of the Constitution's popular and widespread support.<sup>296</sup> Further, many of those in Smith's audience were students, faculty, and educated individuals who ought to have been well-acquainted with figures like Tully (Cicero), Euclid, and Virgil. Through the course of his oration, Smith specifically addressed his "dear fellow students," the "FATHERS and LAWGIVERS of the State," "noble BENEFACTORS," the "honoured [sic] body of VISTIORS and GOVERNORS," "Professors and Masters," the "hopeful youth of this seminary," and his "dear Fellow Graduates." These groups constituted the intellectual and cultural elite, most of whom would have received classical training. Aside from these groups identified by Smith in this oration, the *Pennsylvania Gazette's* report of the commencement ceremony did not specify the overall composition of the audience, but it was likely not open to all orders of society. Another commencement report, listed the next week in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, noted an audience composed of "most respectable citizens, politely countenancing and giving elegance to the literary exhibition of the day."<sup>297</sup>

The *Pennsylvania Gazette's* inclusion of this oration in 1783, however, rendered at least the text of the oration public, and the general theme of Smith's oration was likely at least generally comprehensible for those who read the oration in the newspaper. Despite its reference to specific texts, authors, and philosophers, Smith's oration did employ certain formulations that were common and widespread for the period. The comparison between Washington and Cincinnatus forms one such example. As discussed in Chapter 2, later that same year in Philadelphia, Charles Willson Peale would include on his triumphal arch a representation of Cincinnatus that closely resembled George Washington in countenance. Additionally, some classical texts such as, for example, Homer's works were also available in translation and

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<sup>296</sup> Silverman, *A Cultural History of the American Revolution*, 578-580.

<sup>297</sup> "PHILADELPHIA.," *PG*, July 23, 1783.

advertised by Philadelphia booksellers. Even if the reader of Smith's oration in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* had not studied or read Homer in the original language, he or she might still have enough familiarity with the poet Homer to get at the essence of Smith's point.<sup>298</sup> Likely, though, the classical references in Smith's oration did probably resonate more with educated Philadelphians who were quite familiar with, for example, the works of the philosopher Plato or the poet Virgil. Thus, the learned nature of the oration and its association with a commencement ceremony places Smith's oration slightly more exclusive of the wider populace than Wilson's and Hartley's patriotic orations.

The Society of the Cincinnati's Fourth of July orations exhibit yet another layer of exclusion of the wider public in Philadelphia.<sup>299</sup> In 1786 and 1787, Major William Jackson and James Campbell, Esq. delivered, respectively, orations for the Society of the Cincinnati that included references to the classics.<sup>300</sup> The Pennsylvania Society of the Cincinnati had the content of these orations published by printers in Philadelphia, and these printers ran advertisements in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* for the sale of these orations. On July 19, 1786, for example, Eleazer Oswald advertised in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* the sale of Jackson's oration, "published at the request of the *Pennsylvania Society of the Cincinnati*," for the price of "one quarter of a dollar."<sup>301</sup> Similarly, Prichard and Hall ran an advertisement the next year, on July 11, 1787, for Campbell's oration, again "published at the request of the Pennsylvania Society of

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<sup>298</sup> Caroline Winterer claims that many educated, elite American women accessed the classical authors through English translations, in what she terms a "vernacular classical tradition." She notes that Alexander Pope's translations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were among the favorites in the "female world of classicism": Winterer, *The Mirror of Antiquity*, 26-39. As such, although women and others might not have known the classical languages, it does not necessarily mean that they lacked a familiarity with certain authors and their work.

<sup>299</sup> For more on the Society of the Cincinnati and controversies regarding its nature see Chapter 1, pp 35-36.

<sup>300</sup> William Jackson, *An Oration, to Commemorate the Independence of the United States* (Philadelphia: Oswald, 1786), LCP Copy, Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 19733; James Campbell, *An Oration, in commemoration of the independence of the United States of North-America, delivered July 4, 1787, at the Reformed Calvinist Church in Philadelphia, by James Campbell, Esquire. To which is prefixed, an introductory prayer, delivered on the same occasion, by the Rev. William Rogers, A.M. Published at the request of the Pennsylvania Society of the Cincinnati* (Philadelphia: Prichard & Hall, 1787), AAS Copy, Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 20259.

<sup>301</sup> "Just Published, and to be Sold by Eleazer Oswald," *PG*, July 19, 1786.

the CINCINNATI."<sup>302</sup> However, in the case of both Jackson's and Campbell's oration, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* only advertised them for purchase. The paper did not include the content of these orations.

The inaccessibility of both Jackson's and Campbell's orations through the *Pennsylvania Gazette* served as a obstacle to the wider public's engagement with these Fourth of July orations and the classical references contained within them. Whereas Wilson's, Smith's, and Hartley's orations could be accessed by presumably anyone who picked up the right issue of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Jackson's and Campbell's Society of the Cincinnati orations were only available to those who passed an extra barrier. Since the *Pennsylvania Gazette* did not freely circulate these orations, only those who were able to purchase the advertised publication could access the content.

Moreover, the original ceremony in which the two Society of the Cincinnati orations were delivered does not appear to have been geared toward the inclusion of a broad public audience. The audience for both Jackson's and Campbell's orations likely consisted mainly of the Society of Cincinnati members themselves. In 1786, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* included a report on the proceedings for the Society of the Cincinnati's Fourth of July celebrations, of which Major Jackson's oration formed a part. The paper noted that:

the Vice President and State Society of the Cincinnati convened by appointment at the City Tavern, and thence proceeded to the Reformed Calvinist Church, in Race-street; where ... a very spirited and elegant Oration in memory of the principal, political and military occurrences of the late revolution, and of those heroes who fell in defending the liberty of their country and the rights of mankind, was delivered to a very large and polite audience, by Major William Jackson, Secretary of the Institution.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> "This Day is published, price 1/6.," *PG*, July 11, 1787.

<sup>303</sup> "PHILADELPHIA, July 12," *PG*, July 12, 1786.



The only people specifically identified in this report were members of the Society of the Cincinnati. Because the oration took place at a church, other individuals may possibly have been present at the Reformed Calvinist Church when the Society of the Cincinnati members processed in for the oration from their society's earlier meeting at the "City Tavern."<sup>304</sup> However, if others besides the Society of the Cincinnati members did attend this oration, they were likely of the genteel sort. The *Pennsylvania Gazette's* report on the event referred to a "large and polite audience," not the "whole part of society" that Wilson emphasized in his oration.<sup>305</sup> The language in Campbell's 1787 oration also suggests an audience composed of the genteel sort. He referred to his audience, not as the inclusive "citizens," "friends," or "the people," of Wilson's speech, but as "gentlemen" and, more specifically, "gentlemen of the society."<sup>306</sup>

Additionally, the fact that the Pennsylvania Society of the Cincinnati sponsored and attended these orations carries in itself a designation of class. The Society of the Cincinnati was only open to officers of the Revolution, not enlisted men. The non-democratic nature of this institution did not escape public notice. In the 1780s, public accusations had been leveled against perceived aristocratic and therefore non-republican intentions of the Society of the Cincinnati.<sup>307</sup> In Philadelphia, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* had even carried advertisements for some of these pamphlet criticisms of the society.<sup>308</sup>

Like the previous orators examined in this chapter, both Jackson and Campbell incorporated the classics for a patriotic end, using classical history and figures as a sort of

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<sup>304</sup> "PHILADELPHIA, July 12," *PG*, July 12, 1786.

<sup>305</sup> "PHILADELPHIA, July 12," *PG*, July 12, 1786.

<sup>306</sup> Wilson, "ORATION," Supplement to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 3032, July 9, 1788; Campbell, *An Oration, in commemoration of the independence of the United States of North-America*, 10, 19.

<sup>307</sup> Maier, *Ratification*, 1-2. For the use of the Classics in contestations over the Society of the Cincinnati, see Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 168-169.

<sup>308</sup> "Just Published, and now Selling, At Bell's Book-Store," *PG*, November 5, 1783. The printers of the PA Gazette do not appear to have themselves passed judgment on the society, however. The paper also printed notices of Society of the Cincinnati meetings, lists of officer appointments, and reports on the society's events.

cultural script for discussing virtue, republicanism, and the glories of the American Revolution and its heroes. In the Society of the Cincinnati Fourth of July orations, classical history again furnished a didactic vocabulary, at the same time teaching, legitimizing, and praising Americans and their new nation. As just one example, Campbell told his listeners the following:

To comprehend the dignity of a republican, turn to the page of history and contemplate the freemen of Greece and Rome, and the slaves of the Egyptian and Persian empires -- or compare the speeches of a Cicero and a Cato with the servile addresses of the parasites who surrounded the thrones of the Roman emperors.<sup>309</sup>

Campbell then added,

but why should we travel back to antiquity for examples of the dignity and conduct and sentiment inspired by a republican form of government -- we have beheld the citizens of the United States raised by their personal interest in the government of their country to a pitch of glory which has excited the admiration of half the globe.<sup>310</sup>

Interestingly, here, Campbell made reference to ancient Greece and the Roman Republic to frame his argument that the world, in fact, no longer needed to look back to the "page of history" to find examples of republican character. Instead, Campbell claimed that the republican spirit embodied by the free Greeks and Romans now resided in the citizens of the new United States. At the same time that Campbell's reference to classical history glorified the American people, it also proved instructive for the audience as it provided *exempla* that demonstrated republican dignity and its opposite. The audience could compare the oratory of Cicero and Cato, both considered republican models in early America, with that of the so-termed sycophants from Rome's empire period. In Campbell's oration, the message was contextually clear as to whose speeches were superior and thus worthy of emulation.

Further, Jackson's and Campbell's orations drew upon conventional classical themes and figures that either had surfaced or would resurface in other contemporary contexts in the 1780s.

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<sup>309</sup> Campbell, *An Oration, in commemoration of the independence of the United States of North-America*, 11.

<sup>310</sup> Campbell, *An Oration, in commemoration of the independence of the United States of North-America*, 11.

For example, in one section of his oration, Jackson referred to Washington the general as simply the "American Fabius."<sup>311</sup> It was not only clear from the surrounding context about whom Jackson spoke -- Jackson was recounting a narrative of war events from the summer and fall of 1776 -- but Washington as the Roman general Fabius was also a construction that had appeared in other sources, such as contemporary newspaper editorials, discussed in Chapter 1.<sup>312</sup> Jackson also incorporated a reference to the Temple of Janus, an icon that had appeared over the central arch of Peale's 1783 triumphal arch in Philadelphia, and impressed upon his audience the oft-repeated theme of the necessity of virtue to the nation as a republic. "How far our national character shall be established on the basis of virtue," Jackson told his listeners (and, later, readers of the printed version), "will depend on ourselves, and can only be chargeable upon our own neglect if unattained."<sup>313</sup> Jackson looked to standards and models from classical history to measure Americans' success in exhibiting the civic virtue and patriotic spirit of a free people: "An ardor of public spirit, which Rome in the purest period of her commonwealth, would have boasted, is diffused through every class of citizens..."<sup>314</sup> As with the previous classical references, the incorporation of Rome in connection with the "ardor of public spirit" was not an oblique reference that would have shown off Jackson's knowledge of the classics, while at the same time testing his audience's understanding of the same.<sup>315</sup> Instead, this was a patriotic and commemorative oration, which referenced the classics in a generally inclusive manner.

As such, it was not so much the use of the classics that created a barrier for engagement with the Society of the Cincinnati orations, as the fact that these orations were delivered in

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<sup>311</sup> Jackson, *An Oration, to commemorate the Independence of the United States*, 13.

<sup>312</sup> For more on the Roman general Fabius, see Chapter 1, p 29 and also Footnote 71.

<sup>313</sup> Jackson, *An Oration, to commemorate the Independence of the United States*, 28.

<sup>314</sup> Jackson, *An Oration, to commemorate the Independence of the United States*, 7.

<sup>315</sup> Certainly, that Jackson could make convincing references to the Classics throughout his speech was testament enough that he was familiar enough with the subject to actively deploy these references. However, compared to Dr. Benjamin Rush's oration and certain newspaper editorials examined in Chapter 1, Jackson did not employ complex, obscure references that would thus also test his audience's knowledge.

closed venues and only advertised, not circulated, in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Similar to the glass door metaphor discussed in Chapter One, readers of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* could encounter the advertisements for these orations, but not all of these readers constituted those who were invited to the actual delivery of the orations or could afford the later publications. Thus, for many readers it would have been much akin to looking through a glass door onto an event of which they themselves were not welcome to be a part.

Orations from learned societies in Philadelphia rank even higher on the continuum of exclusivity. Philadelphia learned societies did not even regularly advertise their oration publications in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Their orations like Dr. Benjamin Rush's address to the American Philosophical Society, for example, were published by printers in Philadelphia, but they were not as readily accessible to the layperson as Wilson's, Hartley's, and Smith's orations, which circulated through the vehicle of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

Rush's oration, entitled "An Enquiry into the Influence of Physical Causes upon the Moral Faculty," provides a counterpoint to the patriotic publically disseminated orations in both its inaccessibility and its use of the Latin language.<sup>316</sup> Evidenced by the title alone, Rush's oration could be categorized as chiefly a subject of academic inquiry. Further, delivered "at a meeting of the American Philosophical Society" held on February 27, 1786, Rush's oration spoke to an audience also composed of educated individuals, something to which the language and use of classical references attests.<sup>317</sup> Throughout the oration, Rush addressed his audience as "gentlemen," "VENERABLE SAGES, and FELLOW CITIZENS in the REPUBLIC of LETTERS," and "ILLUSTRIOUS COUNCILLORS and SENATORS of Pennsylvania."<sup>318</sup> The published oration noted in a footnote that, in addition to members of the society, "His excellency

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<sup>316</sup> Rush, *An oration, delivered before the American Philosophical Society*.

<sup>317</sup> Rush, *An oration, delivered before the American Philosophical Society*, 1, 38, 39.

<sup>318</sup> Rush, *An oration, delivered before the American Philosophical Society*, 1, 38, 39.

the president, and supreme executive council, and the members of the general assembly of Pennsylvania, attended the delivery of the oration, in the hall of the university, by invitation from the philosophical society."<sup>319</sup> This would imply that non-society members needed an invitation to attend. Rush's audience was thus not the open group addressed by Wilson in his 1788 July Fourth oration, but was instead a restricted group composed of the intellectual and political elite, those for whom a classical education was intended.<sup>320</sup>

Additionally, Rush's use of the classics assumed an audience of peers who possessed classical knowledge. More than simply leaving a few references contextually unexplained, Rush actually quoted the ancient language Latin without providing a corresponding English translation. For example, Rush introduced the Roman figure of Cicero with little preamble. Aside from noting that St. Paul and Cicero provided the "most perfect account" of moral faculty that could "be found in modern or ancient authors," Rush told his audience nothing about Cicero's role as orator, lawyer, philosopher, and statesman of republican Rome.<sup>321</sup> Instead, Rush simply quoted Cicero in the original language: "The words of Cicero are as follow --- 'Est igitur haec, iudices, non scripta, sed nata lex, quam non didicimus, accepimus, legimus, verum ex natura ipsa arripuimus, hausimus, expressimus, ad quam non docti, sed facti, non instituti, sed imbuti sumus."<sup>322</sup> The published version of the oration cited these words as from Cicero's *Oratio pro Milone*. Notably, however, no English translation was provided by either Rush on the day of the oration's delivery or the printer upon the oration's publication. The reference to Cicero in the original language displayed an erudite use of the classics; it allowed Rush to show off his

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<sup>319</sup> Rush, *An oration, delivered before the American Philosophical Society*, 39.

<sup>320</sup> Percy, *The Grammar of Our Civility*, 2, 10-11.

<sup>321</sup> Rush, *An oration, delivered before the American Philosophical Society*, 1.

<sup>322</sup> Rush, *An oration, delivered before the American Philosophical Society*, 2. This roughly translates to the following: "There is, therefore, this law, judges, not written but born, which we have not learned, received, read, but from nature itself we have snatched it, drawn it, squeezed it out, toward which (law) we have not been taught, but made, not been instructed but steeped." From Cicero, *Pro Milone*, IV.10. Translation by author.

classical learning, and his audience, if they were truly gentlemen worth their caliber, would have been familiar with the Latin and the reference. Rush's incorporation of Latin phrases without a corresponding English translation thus provides strong evidence for an intended audience composed of educated individuals. Unlike Wilson's Fourth of July oration and the other patriotic orations circulated in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Rush's oration did not reach out to the wider public in either its use of the classics or its physical accessibility.

These different types of orations, with their varying accessibility to a broader audience, highlight the inherent tension in the use of the classics in 1780s Philadelphia as both an exclusive signifier of status and refinement as well as a publicly disseminated instrument for fashioning a people and cultivating a public's virtue. The classics as a whole thus straddled two contradictory roles. On the one hand, orators like Wilson incorporated classical references into their political and patriotic speeches to transmit lessons and models of virtue intended to shape a republican citizenry. Classical history provided speakers like Wilson, Hartley, and Smith with a vocabulary for discussing the new republic, situating their new nation in history, and measuring America's current and potential success culturally and politically. As such, even though Wilson addressed a broad public audience, he still incorporated classical references, but rendered them in such a way that allowed the non-classically trained to still comprehend his points and references.

On the other hand, however, the classics, as the backbone of the higher education system, at the same time denoted status and gentility. Displays of classical knowledge reflected one's education and helped set apart the gentleman.<sup>323</sup> Rush's oration exhibits this more exclusive use of the classics and provides a counterpoint to publically disseminated orations such as Wilson's and the others circulated by the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Rush's oration was not intended to teach

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<sup>323</sup> Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 9-11.

the wider public lessons in republicanism and civic virtue. Instead, it employed the classics for an erudite, more academic purpose. Thus, Rush's oration for the American Philosophical Society displayed Rush's classical learning and, by extension, demonstrated both the speaker's and the comprehending listener's social and cultural status.

These contradictory functions of the classics as both a broadly disseminated tool for fashioning a desired political culture and, at the same time, an exclusive signifier of cultural and social status thus placed the general public in a liminal position. In Philadelphia, the general public stood on a threshold between inclusion and exclusion with regards to engaging with the classics as a whole. When classical references and themes were deployed for a political purpose such as encouraging virtue through classical *exempla*, the wider public formed part of the desired audience. After all, as Wood explains, republicanism "involved the character and culture of a society," not just the elite governing class.<sup>324</sup> Thus, statesmen like Wilson, who gave a public oration and emphasized "the people" throughout it, tailored their presentation of classical references so that the wider public might engage and reach the intended interpretation, often mediated through the lens of American contemporary events. However, the counterexample of Rush's oration for the American Philosophical Society also speaks to the exclusivity of certain aspects of classical knowledge, like the Latin language, which created one of the avenues through which certain individuals could set themselves apart from the wider society. Thus, the classics, as seen in oratory, occupied a precarious dual role in 1780s Philadelphia, inviting the general public to engage with certain themes while, at the same time, pushing out this same public in other contexts.

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<sup>324</sup> Wood, *The Idea of America*, 323.

CONCLUSION: THROUGH A GLASS DOOR, DARKLY: TENSION AND LIMINALITY IN  
THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH THE CLASSICS IN 1780s PHILADELPHIA

At about nine o'clock, the first ranks of the estimated 20,000 participants in a grand patriotic parade commenced their march from the corner of Third and Chestnut in the city of Philadelphia. These marchers participated in a national spectacle that celebrated the American Constitution. Spectators in Philadelphia on this early September morning in 1987, two hundred years to the date after the signing of the Constitution, witnessed a celebration of the American nation and the anniversary of its Constitution enacted through spectacle and pageantry. Philadelphia organizers, with the help of local historical institutions, looked back in time for guidance and inspiration in framing their bicentennial celebration of the Constitution.<sup>325</sup> Divided into ten different segments, the parade was carefully designed to recall overall the original parade from 200 years earlier, the 1788 Grand Federal Procession. The first portion of the 1987 parade even replicated the major floats from the 1788 Grand Federal Procession, in accordance with Francis Hopkinson's account. Once again, the Carpenters' Company created a centerpiece for the parade. On September 17, 1987, spectators in Philadelphia, and those who watched around the nation through the national television broadcast of the event, observed the classically-inspired Grand Federal Edifice pass through the streets of Philadelphia, once again, as a metaphor for the American Constitution.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> Walter F. Naedele, "A Bicentennial Blowout: The Big Parade is Set to Burst on the City," *The Inquirer* (Philadelphia), September 13, 1987; Renee V. Lucas, "They Won't Float Alone the Parade: 21,000 Marchers, 30 Extravagant Displays," *Daily News* (Philadelphia), September 11, 1987.

<sup>326</sup> John C. Van Horne, "The Federal Procession of 1788," (talk delivered to the quarterly meeting of the Carpenters' Company, Philadelphia, July 20, 1987), <http://www.ushistory.org/carpentershall/history/procession.htm>; Naedele, "A Bicentennial Blowout"; Lucas, "They Won't Float Alone the Parade."



Modern Philadelphia organizers in 1987 turned to a historic celebration in the nation's civic history, the 1788 Grand Federal Procession, to reaffirm their identity and furnish models and symbols in the very way that early Philadelphians had looked back to Graeco-Roman antiquity for inspiration, symbols, and emblems to represent the new American nation in the 1780s. As part of their reinterpretation of this event from 1788, event organizers in 1987 imported classical emblems and themes -- so prevalent in the early republic -- embedded within American foundation narratives and icons like the Grand Federal Edifice. Like an intertextual narrative, the 1987 recreation of Philadelphia's 1788 Grand Federal Procession added another Americanized layer of meaning to the representation of the Grand Federal Edifice.

This continuing nod to classical antiquity in the architecture of the Grand Federal Edifice that Philadelphia bicentennial celebration organizers re-appropriated stands as a remnant of a larger cultural phenomenon of classicism in early Philadelphia.<sup>327</sup> In the post-Revolutionary War years of the 1780s, references to the classics were ubiquitous throughout the social, cultural, political, and visual landscape of the city of Philadelphia. As seen in Chapter 1, from booksellers who advertised Latin grammars and classical texts in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, to ships with classical names like *Neptune* and *Minerva* that regularly frequented Philadelphia's docks, the classics came alive as part of the everyday landscape of Philadelphia. References to the classical world surrounded the city's people, from the classical temple called the Grand Federal Edifice carried through the streets of Philadelphia in a prominent spectacle, to the cities of Athens, Sparta, and Rome invoked in Wilson's Fourth of July oration. The classics thus formed a pervasive presence outside the realm of higher education, crossing over into all three of the public avenues examined in this thesis: the written word in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*

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<sup>327</sup> For more on the wider phenomenon of the classicism in early America see Winterer, *Culture of Classicism*, 15-29.

(Chapter 1), the visual in Philadelphia spectacles and associated iconography (Chapter 2), and the oral/aural in political orations (Chapter 3). Each of these avenues presented the wider populace in Philadelphia with opportunities to encounter the classics beyond the walls of the academy.

References to the classics in 1780s Philadelphia especially emerged as a vehicle and vocabulary employed by statesmen for fashioning a republican people, political culture, and national identity. In this political context, the classics most notably appeared as visual emblems and symbols in spectacles like the 1784 triumphal arch and 1788 Grand Federal Procession. As discussed at length in Chapter 2, these were events in which the wider Philadelphia public was invited to attend and engage. In fact, event organizers not only invited the public to see these spectacles, which incorporated classical symbolism and icons, but the wider populace actually formed part of the desired audience, the ones for whom the lessons in patriotism and republicanism were intended. In this case study of the classics in Philadelphia, spectacles like the ones examined in Chapter 2 offer the best example for the wider public engaging with classical themes, symbols, and references.

Especially as emblems displayed in spectacles and visual culture, the classics were frequently presented in a mediated, Americanized form and experienced through the lens of American political culture. Like the Grand Federal Edifice, which adopted the form of a classical temple, but was profoundly American in name and appropriation - each pillar which composed the temple even displayed the cypher of an American state - so too did other classical symbols such as the Temple of Janus and the figure of Cincinnatus, both of which surfaced in orations (Chapter 3) as well as visual iconography (Chapter 2), take up additional layers of meaning related to the American present. Even the symbol of the Roman state, S.P.Q.R., was

absorbed and then presented on Peale's triumphal arch as an American symbol of Pennsylvania's republican intentions with the inscription S.P.Q.P., The Senate and People of Pennsylvania.

In the written, visual, and oral/aural examples examined in this thesis, a pattern of educated elite control and deployment of classical references emerges. Statesmen and the cultural elite often appear as the ones pulling the strings and creating classical emblems and references transmitted to the wider public through such public avenues as newspaper editorials, spectacles like the Grand Federal Procession, and oratory like Wilson's Fourth of July oration. The wider populace thus appears to have occupied more of a passive role regarding the actual deployment of classical references in 1780s Philadelphia.<sup>328</sup> They could certainly encounter the classics throughout their daily life and in public patriotic spectacles and oratory, but, in general, they did not control the presence and presentation of the classics in Philadelphia. Like looking through a glass door, the everyday Philadelphian could see classically-based emblems and references such as printed pseudonyms, but he or she could not always open the door and pass through to be included among those who possessed enough classical knowledge to craft, deploy, and sometimes comprehend such references.

As such, a thread of tension ran through the myriad avenues of American classical appropriation in Philadelphia. The classics simultaneously served contradictory functions of offering broadly disseminated national, republican, and patriotic symbols, as well as providing exclusive markers of status, gentility, and education. This tension thus, in turn, placed the public on the threshold of inclusion and exclusion.

At the same time as the wider Philadelphia populace was encouraged to interact with the classics as national and republican symbols, the deployment of classical references also held

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<sup>328</sup> By this, I certainly do not mean to imply that there were no exceptions to this rule. Rather, in the examination of these three public avenues and the presentation of the classics within them, the general pattern does emerge of deployment and control by statesmen, the elite, and the educated. See also footnote 115 in Chapter 1.

another contradictory role that served to exclude this same public. Classical knowledge stood as a marker of social status and gentility. In a time when the gates to higher education were not open to all orders of society, the display of classical knowledge, especially the ancient languages like Latin, served as one way to distinguish the true gentlemen from the social imposter.<sup>329</sup> The dissemination and use of the classics in 1780s Philadelphia was thus a precarious balancing act; certain aspects of classical knowledge like language had to be carefully guarded as they signified status, yet, at the same time, other aspects of the classics like didactic figures, narratives, and symbols were widely projected as exempla in the work of fashioning a republican people and political culture.

Thus, the classics in 1780s Philadelphia could serve as a social weapon for exclusion at the same time as they furnished national republican symbols. Those without some degree of classical training could not fully participate and translate certain aspects of the discourse if the Latin language or certain obscure figures were invoked.<sup>330</sup> The rhetorical power ascribed to the classics in social, political, and cultural contexts endured into the nineteenth century. Looking ahead in American history, one sees this exclusionary device turned into a weapon for inclusion by such groups as African Americans who, in the mid to late nineteenth century, used classical knowledge and classical history to fight for their place in American democracy.<sup>331</sup> In 1780s Philadelphia, however, the doors to a classical education, and, by extension, its social and cultural power, were closed to much of the wider public beyond the elite and wealthy middle classes. Yet, this does not mean that Philadelphians did not encounter the classical presence in their city. The classics were accessible, but through cultural streams like visual iconography and

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<sup>329</sup> For more on education and the classics as social signifiers see, Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 10; Wood, *The Idea of America*, 158; and Rudolph, *Essays on Education in the Early Republic*, xvii-xviii.

<sup>330</sup> For a discussion on the exclusionary, educated use of certain references, see the Chapter 1 Conclusion and Chapter 3 Conclusion.

<sup>331</sup> Malamud, "Classics as a Weapon," 89-103.

even trades and crafts companies, rather than through traditional pathways of knowledge dissemination in the academy. As such, the classics in Philadelphia were presented in arenas like spectacle and oratory as themes, emblems, mottos, and symbols rather than references to specific texts, authors, and philosophers. This inherent tension in the uses and presentation of the classics in 1780s Philadelphia placed the wider public in an uncertain, undefined, and liminal position regarding engagement with the classics; they stood caught on the threshold of inclusion and exclusion depending on the situation and context in which references to the classical antiquity were deployed. The story of the classics in 1780s Philadelphia is thus one of control, access, and tension between inclusion and exclusion. Like looking through a glass door, references to the classics in 1780s Philadelphia were present and ubiquitous, but not always accessible.

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