A Habit of Forgetting: The Italian Continuation and Evolution of Condemnations of Memory

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The study of history and the concept of memory are inexorably linked. While it may seem comforting to believe that historic events occurred exactly as we have learned them, this is rarely (if ever) the case. History as we know it is subject to a myriad of factors which can shroud the truth and preclude us from ever truly grasping the full extent of what happened. In addition to many of the other factors, which serve to perplex and stymie the modern scholar, is the crucial and often overlooked practice of *damnatio memoriae*, which sought deliberately to erase certain people or events from memory. The practice, which is extremely varied in its use and is evident in a multiplicity of cultures, both past and present, is one which is both incredibly important to understand and rather difficult to evaluate, for a variety of reasons. Yet the sheer importance of the punishment, as well as the impact it continues to have to this day, requires a closer examination of one of antiquity's oldest and most pervasive retribution.

One cannot truly understand the debilitating effects of the practice without first understanding the extreme importance that was placed on memory by many of the cultures of the past, which sought to be remembered long after their death. Such a desire is reflected in some of the great building projects in human history, such as the pyramids in Egypt or ziggurats in South America. More to the point, an understanding of this extreme desire to be remembered is what gave rise to the practice of *damnatio memoriae*, which so often served to spite despised rulers or cultures, posthumously, thereby either erasing their memory or damaging it considerably. (Examples of this may be seen in Figures 1 and 2).[1] This notion of a fluid collective memory, while not something, which is often considered, is a construct that lives on even today. Such a notion of fluid memory is not entirely dissimilar to the concept of historiography, which similarly exhibits shifts in cultural and societal memory, though certainly most historians are not actively seeking to irrevocably alter or cover up portions of this landscape.

While the considerable emphasis placed by these cultures on memory may seem alien to modern readers, many of the very same factors remain motivators in the modern world. Statues, monuments and buildings are constantly being constructed in the pursuit of a continued memory, even if we do not attribute some of the same religious or philosophical elements to our desire.[2] As such, it is perhaps no surprise that *damnatio memoriae* remains pervasive even to this day, with notable examples such as the infamous 2003 toppling of Saddam Hussein's statue in Baghdad and the far more recent controversy concerning confederate monuments serving as prime examples of contested memory in the modern era.[3] It is also important to note the symbolic significance these and other besieged items had acquired, particularly in cases involving religion, such as the iconoclast movements which sought the destruction of eastern (and purportedly idolatrous) icons, both in the Byzantine period and before.[4]

Though perhaps the most famous instances of *damnatio memoriae* took place in ancient Egypt with numerous defaced stelae or monuments illus-

trating a desire to reform the collective memory, the practice predates even this. *Damnatio memoriae* can be traced even to the earliest periods of Mesopotamia, though irrefutable evidence of the punishment is not as common as in later periods, due largely to difficulties distinguishing between incidental and intentional damage to artifacts (as evidenced in Figures 3 and 4).[5] The incredible longevity and widespread nature of the punishment creates extreme difficulty in sufficiently explaining the global phenomenon. Since its ancient inception, *damnatio memoriae* has been employed by a wide variety of cultures, for a variety of reasons. While religious and political factors certainly seem to be the most frequent motivators for a purge of memory to be invoked, the punishment is far too widespread to be so simply labelled. With each iteration of the age-old punishment, whether employed in a different society or even in a different era in the same society, differs from the next, either in scope, method or purpose.

Yet there are numerous instances wherein it is clear that a culture is adapting elements of another's employment of the practice, which can be found throughout the ancient and early Mediterranean world. This can be seen in the widespread custom of various Mesopotamian conquerors to destroy the royal statues of their newly conquered.[6] This cultural appropriation of the practice is important both in explaining the widespread nature of the punishment and in allowing for comparisons to be reasonably made within the immense scope of the practice. In identifying cultures that serve as pseudo inheritors of *damnatio memoriae*, it is possible to create direct links to those from whom they borrowed, allowing for the massive practice to be better, even if only regionally, understood. Perhaps no better example of such a cultural continuation exists than in the case of Rome and its self-proclaimed successor, the Renaissance capital of Florence. In examining the Italian continuation of these two cultures, it is possible to gain a greater understanding of the evolutionary nature of the punishment, as well as understanding the profound importance given to memory by each.

Difficulties Inherent to the Study

Yet before undertaking such a venture, there are multiplicities of issues that must be addressed in the hazardous, yet important, study of *damnatio memoriae*, which is fraught with difficulty. Perhaps chief among these difficulties is that acts of *damnatio memoriae* can be inherently difficult to detect, whether it be intentionally subtle (as with the later, domestic Florentine examples of the punishment) or indistinguishable as intentional or incidental damage.[7] Further, incidents of *damnatio memoriae* are rarely identified as such, making it difficult at times to identify the practice in action. Another point of difficulty is the nature of the punishment itself, which tended to be extralegal rather than officially sanctioned, though elements, at least, had legal roots, particularly in Rome. Despite these considerable difficulties, it is imperative that historians understand the practice, lest they unwittingly propagate messages contrived by the authors of the effacing practice.[8]

A final, yet fundamental issue with the study of *damnatio memoriae* comes from the term itself, which is, in its most common usage, at least, a modern construct. There is some debate amongst scholars whether the term originally detailed a specific (and rarely employed) Roman law that was then erroneously expanded or whether it is purely a modern invention, though certainly historians such as Tacitus had used approximations of the term.[9] Yet regardless of the specific origins of the modern terminology, historian Friedrich Vittinghoff has roundly been credited with pointing out its anachronistic nature.[10] Such a discovery is incredibly important and requires consideration as to how to properly address and define such memory-conscious punishments, so as to clearly and credibly articulate the findings of such a study.

One solution, put forth by historian Tracey Robey in the face of this dilemma seems particularly apt, as Robey suggests shifting the focus from the anachronistic '*damnatio memoriae*' to the considerably more open, and perhaps, applicable, term 'condemnation of memory.'[11] While this terminology is far more in keeping with the intended results of *damnatio memoriae*, it is also imperative to note that it also includes a wider range of punitive measures (such as razing houses, exile, or bodily mutilation) than does the former, though each of these newly incorporated punishments is very much in keeping with the goal of destroying or distorting one's memory, whether posthumously or otherwise. It is only after thusly acknowledging the difficulties and potential pitfalls of such an examination that one may credibly examine the varied effects and utilization of condemnation of memory in Rome and its Florentine successor.

Condemnations of Memory in Rome

Rome, which had been similarly influenced in this arena by the Greeks before them, employed a wide range of punishments aimed at condemnation of memory. Such 'memory sanctions,' to borrow Roman historian Harriet Flower's useful phrase, were employed both officially and informally, though usually to devastating effect regardless.[12] A prominent variety of this came in the form of razing enemies' houses to the ground, which served both to symbolically destroy their power while also delivering considerable financial and practical ruin.[13] Numerous instances of such politically motivated razing can be seen throughout Roman history, perhaps most notably in the case of Cicero (who had himself been a practitioner of condemnation of memory), who, on his return from exile, recounted the events, which led to the burning of his house.[14] He bemoaned being "treated like an actual traitor and claimed that he felt the eyes of all of Rome on the lot where his domicile once stood."[15] Such an impassioned and desperate appeal testifies to the effectiveness of such a punishment, seldom used though it was (with only nine officially sanctioned cases documented in the republic).[16]

There is no shortage of other Roman examples of condemnation of memory, as even a legendary account of three early Roman traitors who received memory sanctions came to be canonized into accepted early Roman history, though many scholars dismiss this as simply being a construct of later imperial values.[17] Still, the pervasive nature of the punishment is remarkable, and indicates how intrinsically incorporated into Roman culture such memory sanctions were. So, too, does the relative frequency with which such punitive measures emerge, particularly after the death of those who are being condemned. Despite the success of measures such as razing houses or exiling criminals, condemnation of memory was predominantly a posthumous affair in Rome, as evidenced by the destruction or erasure of numerous imperial statues or stelas.

These imperial examples are extremely pervasive, though never fully effective, and also often indicative of the battle for memory that was being waged between one emperor and the next. As one emperor, particularly one from a new family, ascended to the throne, it often proved beneficial to cast him in a benevolent and capable light, which was often accomplished by denigrating him who had come before.[18] Thus, the denunciation of several emperors as tyrants was either initiated or encouraged by their successors, representing a very real application and understanding of the contested memory, which so defined Rome (though certainly other factors helped to shape the images of these so-called tyrants). Among the most prominent examples of such dismissal as tyrants were those of emperors Nero and Domitian, whose names were erased from a number of monuments throughout the empire, though neither was entirely expunged from the record, due largely to the very same diligent and pervasive nature of Roman writing which had made such an expulsion from the record so appealing in the first place. These variously erased plaques perfectly embody the widely held notions of *damnatio memoriae*, and thus certainly are also indicative of condemnation of memory. (Erased inscriptions such as those in Figures 5 and 6 illustrate such condemnation).[19] Interestingly, there are also numerous instances of lesser-known emperors who seem to have been more effectively condemned than were these two, as evidenced by emperors Galbo, Otho and Vitellius. (This is particularly evident in the Vitellius examples of Figures 7 and 8).[20]

Fortunately, various accounts of these imperial denunciations survive today, including a notably vivid excerpt by Roman biographer Seutonius, who thus recalled the reactions to Domitian's assassination:

> The people received the news of his death with indifference, but the soldiers were greatly grieved and at once attempted to call him the Deified Domitian…The senators on the contrary were so overjoyed… they did not refrain from assailing the dead emperor with the most insulting and stinging kind of outcries… Finally they passed a decree that his inscriptions should everywhere be erased, and all record of him should be obliterated.[21]

Such a clear incident of condemnation of memory is striking and was clearly carried out by the masses (as shown by Figure 9), even if some traces remain.[22] The Domitian example is mirrored in many ways by the plight of Nero, whose senatorial designation of *hostis* (loosely, 'an enemy of the state') necessitated similar posthumous sanctions against his inscriptions and monuments.[23] The impact of these dramatic condemnations of memory could be seen in a multiplicity of ways, from the immediate mutilation of their statues

and stelas to even the manner in which they were referenced by biographers such as the aforementioned Suetonius. As noted by prominent Roman art historian Eric Varner, "like his unflattering portrayal of Caligula, Suetonius' physical depiction of Nero was profoundly affected by Nero's *damnatio* and the ensuing defamation of his memory."[24] Thus, these tyrants serve as reminders of both the immediacy and far-reaching nature of any such memory sanctions, which manifested themselves in a wide variety of ways, in both material and textual culture.

Despite the profound significance that was attributed to such textual erasures, similar, if not greater, significance could be found in the veneration or destruction of Roman portraits, particularly imperial portraiture. For the Romans, these imperial portraits served as the foremost and most prevalent means of continued veneration, which explains their tendency to be mutilated or destroyed upon the subject's posthumous fall from grace, however long after death that fall should occur. Such was the tremendous symbolic significance of these portraits that strict laws were enacted regarding the deference they be shown, and destruction or mutilation of these portraits came to substitute in many cases for physical corpse abuse, which also, though far more rarely occurred. As such, portrait mutilations (such as those exhibited in Figures 10 and 11 of Domitian) were particularly profound.[25]

Yet not all instances of Roman condemnation were quite so destructive as to completely destroy the portrait, and in fact, most were not. Rather than completely destroying some of these imperial portraits of tyrants, there are several incidents of sculptors simply 'recycling' such portraits and crafting them into the likeness of someone else. (This is wonderfully evidenced by Figure 12, a reworked Caligula portrait).[26] This tendency to reuse previous material was one which was born largely out of a desire to preserve the costly marble of a statue while also refashioning it into a more 'useful' image (which was similarly exhibited in private portraits). So prevalent, in fact, were such 'recycled figures,' that more recycled portraits of Caligula have survived than those, which were not altered. Similarly is this the case for many of the tyrants who followed him, as unmolested or slightly altered instances of portraits of Nero (as in Figure 13) or Domitian are less evident than their recycled likenesses (as in Figures 14 and 15). Once again, these posthumous changes are highly reflective of the changing societal perceptions upon which they were based, as the emperors in question would not be able to be thusly attacked had they not originally been viewed favorably, resulting in the proliferation of the portraits which were ultimately to be maimed. As such, these recycled portraits allow insight into three distinct points of societal reflection; the era in which the original emperors were revered (as with Nero in Figure 13), the time they fell out of favor, and the veneration of new emperors (Domitian, in the aforementioned example).[27]

Yet it must be noted that condemnations of memory were not reserved for emperors, as is evidenced by the posthumous sanctions imposed upon the treasonous senator Piso, who is described as "cheating justice by taking his own life before the formal condemnation that awaited him." Yet even this did not dissuade the senate from posthumously imposing six penalties upon him, including prohibiting public mourning by the women of his family and mandating all statues or portraits of him be taken down, though interestingly Tacitus only recounts two of the six penalties in his account. It is certainly unsurprising, given the importance which memory had in Roman culture, particularly for the ruling class, that such a punitive measure would appeal to so many in the battle for Rome's collective memory. It is similarly unsurprising then, that such a punishment would be employed nearly exclusively upon said ruling class, be they emperors or would-be usurpers or enemies.[28]

Condemnations of Memory in Florence

Having acquired what will have to pass for a suitable understanding of the varied Roman examples of condemnation of memory, it is now possible to look to the Florentines for a comparison. It is perhaps of little surprise that the Renaissance culture of Florence was similarly obsessed with the idea of memory, particularly given their recovery of classic sources that gave the era its name. Similarly unsurprising is the fact that the people who saw themselves as the heir to the Roman legacy would, at times, consciously model their actions after the Romans, as seems to have been the case during points of Florence's similarly long and varied use of condemnation of memory. Intriguingly, Florence's history of condemnation of memory seems to evolve over time, and be very specialized in terms of which punishments tended to result from which crimes.[29]

Among the earliest examples of Florentine condemnations of memory are repeated instances of political enemies' houses being razed to the ground, had been exhibited in both Greece and Rome before them.[30] In the Florentine example, such violent acts were the results of bitter factionalized rifts which emerged in the city, first between the Papal Guelfs and the Imperial Ghibellines, who "levelled 103 Guelf palaces, 580 houses, and 85 defensive towers, among many other shops and castles outside the city."[31] Just as was the case in Rome, such a demolition would be economically crippling to the Guelfs, though the persecution of an entire group is somewhat different than the typical Roman example. Despite this critical setback, the Guelfs would ultimately regain power in Florence in 1289, enacting posthumous retribution on many of their persecutors in the process.[32] The Guelfs themselves similarly became factionalized between the papal supporting Black Guelfs and the White Guelfs, ultimately leading to the 1302 creation of Florence's most famous exile, Dante Alighieri.[33] (Figure 16 is a picture of Dante's sentence).[34] While it is unclear whether Dante's house was immediately razed during this initial expulsion (as the poet was offered numerous opportunities to return, provided he forfeit his honor), exile, such as that which Dante received, clearly falls into the category of condemnation of memory, as it was implemented for many of the same reasons, namely to curtail one's influence, and tended to be implemented concurrently with more traditionally accepted means of *damnatio memoriae*.[35] While Dante served his lifetime ban away from the city which he so loved, he was uniquely able to enact revenge on Boniface VIII, the pope he blamed for his misfortune, by immortalizing him as a wicked figure in hell at various points in his *Divine Comedy*, thereby enacting his own, and arguably more effective, condemnation of memory of the man who he felt had wronged him.[36]

Despite the rather unique nature of Dante's literary retribution, the fate of exile was rather common in Florence, and throughout Renaissance Italy, with towns such as Pisa and Lucca in particular serving as harbors for such forced emigres.[37] The Florentine employment of the practice was particularly debilitating due to the intense emphasis placed on community and Florentine identity by its citizens.[38] The loss of this community and identity was strongly felt and bemoaned by exiles, particularly Dante in his most enduring work.[39] The punishment, typically reserved for those who had somehow endeavored to tilt the political or social balance of the city, also served to diminish a family or faction's presence or power in the city. This is particularly true in the rare but debilitating instances wherein an entire family, or all the men in the family, were exiled, thereby eliminating the traditional familial footholds through which a city presence could be retained.[40] As such, the practice was one, which was extremely effective, particularly at eliminating a transgressor's political, economic and social standing in Florence, which was rarely recovered. So common were the exiles of this period that emblematic pictures began to emerge of their wandering class as, evidenced by Figure 17.[41] Indeed, exiles seemed to become something of sympathetic figures for many of their Renaissance counterparts, as evidenced by Franciabigio's "The Triumph of Cicero," which provided a Roman example of the redemption so many Florentines craved (Figure 18).[42]

Yet even despite the vicious nature of the factionary conflicts between Guelfs and Ghibellines (or even between Guelfs and other Guelfs), this pervasive early form of condemnation of memory was not the most vitriolic, as would be proved by the cruel fate of some of the supporters of the Duke of Athens in a singularly violent incident in 1343. This duke, Walter of Brienne, had been asked by leading Florentines to restore order in 1342, before being proclaimed *signore* for life by members of the Florentine lower class.[43] Soon thereafter, the duke boldly initiated a *damnatio memoriae* against symbols associated with the Florentine republic, which he replaced with images of his own house, inciting widespread public rage that would lead to his deposition in 1343, which he was fortunate to escape with his life.[44] Some of his supporters were considerably less fortunate in this regard, as tragically evidenced by Guglielmo d'Asciesi and his son Gabriello, who were murdered along with 'a number of other [ducal] assistants.' Both were offered by the duke in feeble attempts to placate the crowd, and each was brutally dismembered before some amongst the frenzied crowd "ate their flesh raw."[45] While this flirtation with cannibalism was the only documented account of such an extreme posthumous condemnation in Florence, both it and the corpse mutilation, which preceded it have roots in the Roman practice, where each was exhibited (although rarely) in the Empire.[46] In fact, some later

Florentine corpse mutilations, or *poena post mortem*, to use the technical term, so closely mirrored accounts of infamous Roman bodily mutilations that it has been suggested they may have been consciously reflecting their cultural predecessors.[47] It has also been suggested that violence such as this was mirrored by Florence's later tendency to execute rather than exile political dissidents, though certainly both punishments served as effective condemnations of memory.[48]

One final note on this vicious and unprecedented (in Florence, at least) exhibit on the condemnation of the duke's memory in Florence is that a year after this event the Florentine government commissioned a defamatory painting, a *pittura infamante* (an example of which is shown in Figure 19) of the duke and his supporters.[49] Interestingly, even the *pittura infamante* in the Duke of Athens example was later changed, as the portrayal of the mobs' brutal actions were later painted out, suggesting Florentine shame about the events of that day, as well as showing the multiplicity of alterations that could be made to such a legacy-cementing painting.[50] While creating such a reminder of the hated duke may seem contrary to the goals of condemning memory, it was not atypical and suggests a possible emphasis on the revulsion or distortion of one's memory rather than a complete erasure.[51] Another example of this conflict between continuing to proliferate and shame one's memory or the desire to expunge someone altogether comes in the fate of Niccolo Piccinino, whose Luccan War exploits were originally commemorated with a *pittura infamante* before being 'depainted', suggesting a shift in condemnatory practice over time.[52]

While this gruesome incident and the similarly violent (though not cannibalistic) cases of treason-based *poena post mortem* which were to follow represented a fundamental shift in the condemnation of memory in Florence, they were not indicative of the final form which would emerge under the Medici dukes. This final form shifted the condemnation from a contentious and public ordeal to a far quieter, less perceptible condemnation, which tended to be launched in protection of princely honor rather than to suppress political rivals.[53] Such quiet offensives have been frequently suspected, and at times identified by art historians, who have been perplexed by the complete absence of portraiture for important figures, most frequently Medici daughters who were accused of bringing shame to the family.[54] These have typically manifested themselves either by repainting these women into other figures (much like the re-appropriated Roman statues) or by painting them out of portraits entirely. The recycling, or at times, renaming, of these paintings is highly reminiscent of the practice in Rome, even if it was being employed for vastly different purposes.[55] The quieter nature of this final wave of Florentine condemnation represents a fundamental shift in the tone of the practice, likely due to a fear of attracting attention to any perceived familial dishonor, though it is possible that a growing public distaste for such condemnation played a role as well.[56]

Considerations of Italian Societies Outside of Florence

Due to the unique nature of Rome's splitting into various Italian polities upon its fall, rather than giving rise to one specific 'heir,' it is useful, where possible, to examine the Renaissance Florentine condemnation of memory in relation to those of its rival city-states. It seems Florence tended to be somewhat more subdued in its employment of memory sanctions than did the other city-states claiming to be heirs to (and continuations of) Rome. While the early practice of razing rivals' buildings is mirrored by the Venetians, the later, more violent condemnations were seen more commonly in other, non-republican portions of Italy. Finally, the decline of public condemnations in favor of the more quiet and complete variety under the Medici dukes did not see a similar decline in other regions, such as the kingdom of Naples. While most Renaissance Florentines would likely attribute these differences to the validity of the Florentine claim as cultural heirs of Rome, it is in fact far more illustrative of a crucial point that has already been expressed. By its very nature, the practice of condemnation of memory is highly various, both between disparate cultures and even during various points in a single culture's history, as is particularly evident in Florence.[57]

Conclusions and Analysis

As such, any comparison of the practice between cultures must be conducted with extreme caution, even in linked examples such as that of Florence and Rome. Yet despite these difficulties, the evaluation of the divergent and similar means through which Florence and Rome enacted condemnation of memory is not without merit. Many of the Florentine practices are reflective of their predecessor, likely at times

even consciously so. Just as these echoes are reminiscent of Rome's earlier continuation and tweaks to the Greek precedent, so too do the Florentine echoes shift at times away from their predecessor. While key similarities emerge between the non-contemporary Italian cultural hubs, a plethora of factors, from geographic shifts to the sheer amount of time involved in such a study, as well as the inherent tendency of the practice to change over time to suit the highly various desires of those calling for a purge in memory, prevent there from being any clear and irrefutable sense of kindred or continuity between the founders of the Renaissance and the classical civilization they so sought to emulate (at least, not beyond those which have already been explained). While such a result may not be entirely satisfactory, it is eminently understandable, given the wide variety of factors involved.

Therein lies one of the most fundamental difficulties in the analysis of the condemnation of memory, or *damnatio memoriae*, as it has been colloquially named. The incredible breadth of the subject defies any quick or simple characterizations, requiring instead a level of alertness and insight into the confluence of ways in which it has been variously employed over time. A continued point of scholarly intrigue in the study of *damnatio memoriae* is whether or not the practice is somewhat paradoxical, that by so deliberately (and often, obviously) seeking someone's removal from collective memory that instead the opposite occurs, and people are reminded of the person whose absence has been so emphasized.[58] According to memory historian Charles Hedrick, there is a fundamental distinction which must be made between *damnatio memoriae* and *abolitio memoriae*, which would seek to completely eliminate a person's memory rather than distorting or damning it, as tends to be the case in such Roman affairs. For Hedrick, "the *damnatio memoriae* did not negate historical traces, but created gestures that served to *dishonor* the record of the person and so, in an oblique way, to confirm memory."[59] Certainly these and other seemingly paradoxical events would seem to support such a claim, such as the ancient Greek habit of razing homes, presumably to destroy the memory or authority of the owner, tended to be commemorated by inscribed stelae, which explained what had precipitated this violence and the aforementioned creation of *pittura infamante* to discredit the duke of Athens rather than seek to destroy his memory entirely.[60]

Yet even here the answer is not quite so simple, as once again the vast scope and utility of condemnation of memory defies a simple blanket definition. While certainly the aforementioned examples could serve to remind people of the transgressors who had earned the condemnation of memory, often this was done deliberately; in order for these unfortunate victims to serve as grim examples of criminals who violated whichever laws they had, while simultaneously shaming their memory.[61] Further, while these instances leave clear traces of evidence behind, many other examples have been far more carefully concealed, as is the case with the subtle later 'depaintings' that were characteristic of the late period of condemnation of memory in Florence. In instances such as this, complete abolition of memory was indeed sought, for a variety of reasons. Thus, condemnation of memory has been employed in order to both preserve and damn memories, and at times to obliterate them altogether. Which of these methods was employed was dependent entirely on the desires of those seeking the condemnation, and what their goals were for the long-term effects of such a subversive action.

Regardless of the individual factors, which have motivated people to condemn memory, it cannot be argued the indelible effect that such condemnations have had over time. As was noted as early as the fourth century by a Roman Imperial biographer:

> It is uncommon and difficult to give an unbiased account of those men who have come to be characterized as tyrants because of the victory of others, and furthermore, scarcely anything about these men is accurately preserved in monuments or histories. For indeed, in the first place, great events which accrued to their honor are misrepresented by historians, and then other events are suppressed, and finally no great diligence is given to recounting their ancestry or life.[62]

While this author is clearly speaking specifically to the plight of Roman tyrants, the same sentiments could be applied to all the victims of condemnations of memory, and it is for just such a reason that the study is important. In attempting to identify and correct as many historic falsehoods as we can, it is possible to finally shed light on those who have for so long been denounced,

and in so doing provide a rehabilitation of sorts for those condemned.

While there have been numerous (and variously successful) such attempts to rehabilitate the memories of those afflicted, many remain, at least to a degree, under the influence of the punitive measures which were taken against them so long ago. Caligula, Nero and Domitian continue to be viewed as tyrants, emperors such as Galbo, Otho and Vitellius remain lesser known (no doubt in part due to the pejorative measures taken against them), and an unknown host remains either undetected or completely forgotten due to condemnations of memory. This is the exact reason for which such a study of these condemning practices is critical, as without being properly informed of the highly various and at times difficult to detect means which have been employed to alter collective memory it would be all too easy to continue to propagate such condemnatory narratives. While it is incredibly unlikely that all, or even most, of these attempted subversions may be uncovered, it is imperative to at least be aware of such potential dangers in historic inquiry. In so doing, it may be possible to more clearly discern the hazy line between memory and history.

Appendix

Figure 1 (May, 114) Akkadian Statue From Ninevah.

Figure 2 (Ibid) Side view.

Figure 3 (May, 112) Victory Stela of Sargon, difficulty assessing intentional or natural damage.

Figure 4 (May, 113) Headless statue at Assur, same premise, though more likely deliberate.

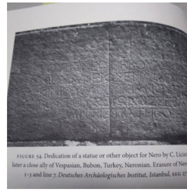

Figure 5 (Flower, 218) Repeated Erasure of Nero's Name.

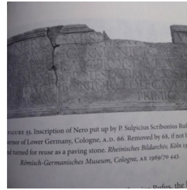

Figure 6 (Flower, 219) Nero Inscription as Paving Stone.

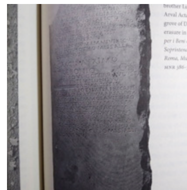

Figure 7 (Flower, 227) Erasure of Vitellius' Name (seen in blank box midway through writing).

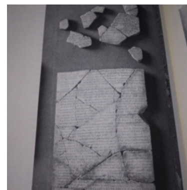

Figure 8 (Flower, 226) Destruction of Vittelius tablet

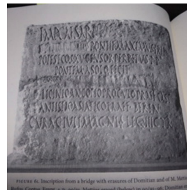

Figure 9 (Flower, 238) Inscription Erasure of Domitian (above) and M. Mettius Rufus (below)

Figure 10 (Varner, 163) Mutilated Body of Domitian Portrait (Front)

Figure 11 (Varner, 163) Mutilated Body of Domitian Portrait (Side)

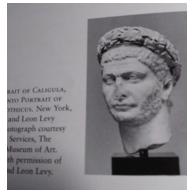

Figure 12 (Varner, 12) Caligula Portrait Reworked into Claudius Gothicus

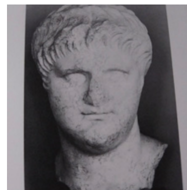

Figure 13 (Varner, 17) Rare unmolested Nero portrait

Figure 14 (Varner, 141) Nero Portrait Reworked into Domitian

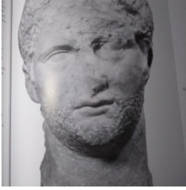

Figure 15 (Varner, 147) Nero Portrait Reworked into Gallienus

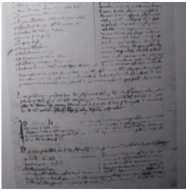

Figure 16 (Starn, Fig. 9) Picture of Dante's sentence

Figure 17 (Starn, Fig. 1) Figure of Exile. Inscription Reads "Driven into exile, I leave sweet home and hearth behind."

Figure 18 (Starn, Fig. 10) "Triumph of Cicero." Roman example of redemption from exile.

Figure 19 (Web) Pittura Infamante Example. Indicative of defamatory nature of such images.

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