

APPARITIONS IN ROMAN IMPERIAL EPIC

by

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(Under the Direction of Charles Platter)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the significance of ghosts in three Roman Imperial epics – Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, Statius' *Thebaid*, and Silius Italicus' *Punica*. By examining apparitions specific to one time period and genre, this project shows how these certain apparitions follow a specific diction pattern and fulfill the role as prophet and, subsequently, how they acquire their literary authority for prophecy. As a result, I will argue that apparitions in Imperial epic are vehicles for socio-political commentary.

INDEX WORDS: Lucan, Statius, Silius Italicus – literature/cultural studies; Epic – literature/cultural studies; Apparitions – literature/cultural studies

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meis carissimis parentibus sororique

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Classical Journal</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>OLD</i>	<i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> (ed. P.G.W. Glare, Oxford, 1982)
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

This study examines the role of apparitions in Roman Imperial epic. There are few projects devoted solely to understanding the role of ghosts in ancient literature, but those that do exist focus primarily on the need for categorization of the types of ghosts found in classical texts.¹ This necessity was seen even in antiquity. Apuleius drew the earliest distinction of Roman ghost-types and defined ghost-types according to their intentions. In *De deo Socratis* 15, Apuleius classifies three types of ghosts: the friendly Manes, the harmful Lemures, and the house-haunting Larvae. Apuleius' classification system provides not only an important look into ancient conceptions about different types of ghosts, but also a point of reference for the proceeding contemporary scholars who attempt to elaborate their own classification system.

One notable effort in modern scholarship comes from L. Collison-Morely in her 1912 *Greek and Roman Ghost Stories*. Her focus, however, is more on the way in which the apparitions appear, but, like Apuleius, also includes consideration for the ghosts' intention. Collison-Morely divides her ghost-types into stories of haunting, apparitions who have been summoned or 'struck' alive, apparitions of the dead, and warning apparitions. Collison-Morely's work focuses on simply recounting stories of ghosts using these designated types, but hardly mentions the unique characteristics or significance of the different categorizations. Because the author does not focus discussion on the specifics of different types of apparitions, she also does little to recognize the cultural influence on the literary characters.

¹Moreover, these discussions tend to be all inclusive. They do not limit included texts to one time period, genre, or even language.

Most recently, D. Felton in her *Haunted Greece and Rome* divides ghosts types into four major categories based on their intentions, but with a contemporary twist: Revenants, Crisis Apparitions and other Portentous Phantoms, Poltergeists, and Continual Apparitions.² Felton classifies ghosts, like Apuleius, by their ‘mission’ in the mortal realm. Felton expends most of her energy explaining the evolution of the haunted house story using the three most prominent stories of haunted houses found in Plautus’ *Mostellaria*, Pliny’s *Epistula* 7, and Lucian *Philopseudes* 30-31. Her brief address in the introductory chapter is where she proposes several categories for understanding the supernatural in ancient literature is really a brief address of terminological problems, not an actual attempt at understanding the purpose or function of these different types.

While both Collison-Morely and Felton have put forth two important efforts at classification, no one has attempted the final step of determining the purpose of apparitional appearances. Both Collison-Morely and Felton have done thorough jobs in designating different terms for ghost-types. This project, however, will narrow the range of these previous scholars and focus on understanding ghosts as they appear in Imperial epic. For the purposes of this project, the term Imperial epic will be limited to include Lucan’s *Bellum Civile*, Statius’ *Thebaid*, and Silius Italicus’ *Punica*. This study will refer to Valerius Flaccus when applicable, but the lack of apparitions makes it impossible to include his *Argonautica* as a primary text.³ What is extant of Statius’ *Achelleid* has also been omitted, as it features no substantial occurrences of apparitions.

² Austin (1999) p. 29

³ Bernstein (2000) pg. xii ff. 1 also discusses the difficulty of including Valerius Flaccus in this group. Perhaps one additional explanation for this omission is Valerius Flaccus’ attempt to accurately imitate both the narrative and diction of his Greek model.

In this study, ghosts in the included texts will be the subjects of three different stages of treatment. After an examination of Roman beliefs in the afterlife and the existence of ghosts via Ovid's *Fasti*, I will first argue that Roman Imperial epics feature a specific type of apparitions, what I will call an "autonomous apparition." Autonomous apparitions are defined as ghosts who function in the text as legitimate characters, directly addressing another character. They are distinguished from other secondary ghost characters in their respective epics by specific diction choices and unique characteristics. Autonomous apparitions are most significant in their roles as agents of prophecy. The first chapter will discuss not only the author's choices in diction for these ghosts, but also discuss the content of their prophecies.

After a discussion of ghosts as agents of prophecies, I will then explore how apparitions become the designated vehicles for foretelling the future in Imperial epics. These texts also feature customary agents of prophecy who have the traditional ties to the ultimate source of authority – divinity. Consequently, I will argue that though the dead do not have a direct relationship with the gods, the epic authors construct them in the text to parallel or mimic the more traditional givers of prophecies. In some cases, like when ghosts visit characters in their sleep, the dead will act like the gods directly. In others, during necromantic ritual, for example, ghosts will need an outside agent with that link to the divine to facilitate their prophetic abilities.

Finally, I will then argue that the use of apparitions as prophetic agents in Imperial epic allows the author to invoke a connection to contemporary Roman society through a collapse of the past and present. Thus, he allows the apparition to function as a mouthpiece for political commentary. This understanding accounts for both the historical

and portentous content of the apparitions' prophecies. The allusion to previous historical events functions as a reminder of the negative events of the past and a warning of what could happen in the future, which is the present for the reader. Because of the notoriously oppressive nature of Imperial Rome, its authors required subtlety in making any political reference.

CHAPTER TWO DEFINING APPARITIONS IN IMPERIAL EPIC

Greek and Roman beliefs about the afterlife “ranged from the completely nihilistic denial of after-life, through a vague sense of souls’ ghostly existence, to a concept of the soul’s survival and of personal survival in recognizable form.”⁴ Certainly, the personal attitude of each Greek or Roman citizen towards death, the after-life, and the existence of ghosts is impossible to determine. Latin literature shows a clear indication that some Romans questioned the existence of an afterlife, especially the occurrence of ghosts. Evidence also exists, however, that the Roman culture as a whole acknowledged early on that an afterlife existed and that its inhabitants could manifest as apparitions.⁵ This chapter will briefly explore skeptical attitudes towards ghosts and apparitions, but, subsequently, argue that they are not the typical views held by Roman society based on cultural practices and standards. Accordingly, this will allow a removal of skeptical bias in order to proceed with a successive discussion of ghosts as legitimate characters in Roman literature of the Imperial age and the diction employed by each author in ghost narratives.

Though the presence of ghostly characters frequents Roman literature, the ancients themselves questioned whether or not ghosts existed outside of the literary realm in reality. Pliny the Younger, in his letter 7.27 to Sura, writes some of the most famous ghost stories from antiquity - the story of the ghost woman who foretells to Curtius Rufus his future as governor of an African province,⁶ a tale of a haunted house at Athens, and also how two of his servants had visions of apparitions who cut their hair off, only to awake with their own hair cut off, as had occurred in the dream. Pliny’s treatment of each of these stories is meant to provide the letter’s addressee evidence that he can use to respond to Pliny’s reason for writing the letter. Letter 7.27 opens,

Igitur perquam velim scire, esse phantasmata et habere propriam figuram
numenque aliquod putes an inania et vana ex metu nostro imaginem
accipere.

⁴ Hopkins (1983)

⁵ Because this study focuses on Roman literature of the Imperial age, Greek cultural attitudes towards the after-life and ghosts will not be discussed except as necessary to illuminate Imperial cultural attitudes.

⁶ This story is also told by Tacitus in *Annales* 11.21, signifying, to some extent, a circulation throughout society.

Therefore, I would very much like to know whether you think ghosts exist and Have their own form and some sort of divinity or are the false impressions of our terrified imagination.⁷

(7.27.1)

Because Pliny asks his friend, Sura, to make certain determinations about ghosts, one can infer that Pliny is unable to come to this conclusion on his own. His personal opinion about the existence of ghosts is not entirely solidified, or, at the very least, rests upon some uncertain foundation.⁸ The end of letter 7.27 confirms this argument for Pliny's skepticism,

licet etiam utramque in partem (ut soles) disputes, ex altera tamen fortius, ne me suspensum incertumque dimittas, cum mihi consulendi causa fuerit, ut dubitare desinerem.

Let it be permitted that you argue each side (as you are accustomed to do), however, chose more forcefully one side over the other so that you won't leave me in suspense and uncertainty, since the reason for me asking your opinion was because I wished you to end my doubts.

(7.27.16)

Here, Pliny asks Sura to come down with more conviction (*fortius*) on one side over another so that he is not left suspenseful (*suspensum*) and, more revealingly, uncertain (*incertum*). Pliny concludes this letter, the majority of which he devotes to a painstakingly detailed retelling of three individual ghost stories, by briefly revealing his ultimate goal in seeking Sura's opinion, to end his doubts about the very existence of ghosts (*ut dubitare desinerem*). The author has elected to dedicate a good deal of the body of the letter to providing explicit details for each story, evidence needed to solve what he considers a straightforward problem which one can answer with a logical and scientific approach. Though Pliny, particularly in his third story, seems persuaded by his own personal ghostly experiences, he clearly seeks a second opinion.

⁷ All Latin texts are from the Loeb and English translations are my own.

⁸ Sherwin-White (1969) characterizes Pliny's ghost stories as 'scientific...clear and sober.' Pliny's logical approach to the ghost phenomena is the same taken with other natural phenomena featured in his letters. This reinforces the idea that Pliny, due to skepticism, considers the question of whether or not ghosts exists one with an obtainable answer which he himself does not know, but feels that Sura can answer. For more, see p. 139-140.

Other ancient authors also reveal their own uncertainty concerning apparitions.⁹ These attitudes, however, are not indicative of the typical convictions held by Roman citizens. Belief in apparitions was inextricably tied to a belief in an afterlife and, for the Romans, a belief in the afterlife was likewise associated with religion. Religious festivals and holidays most clearly demonstrate the tie between Roman belief in apparitions, as well as the afterlife and religion. Because they were state sanctioned and thus all citizens celebrated them indiscriminately, religious festivals honoring the dead and appeasing those who have passed demonstrate the common belief in the afterlife and the ability of those in the afterlife to manifest as apparitions. A closer look at these festivals will reveal the extent to which the Romans accepted that there was not only an afterlife, but also how they considered apparitions in cultural context.

Festivals for the Dead

Festivals for the dead provide abundant evidence for Roman beliefs about the afterlife. The majority of what is known about these festivals comes mostly from Ovid's *Fasti*.¹⁰ The two main festivals for the dead were Parentalia and Lemuria. Each of these festivals exposes a certain body of beliefs about the afterlife held by the Romans. These tenets demonstrate a strong belief in the necessity for proper burials and the execution of burial rites.¹¹ Moreover, they most importantly exhibit a fundamental belief in a life after death which becomes important for the later consideration of ghosts as literary characters.

⁹ See Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* 2.146 -148, especially. Greek authors Theophrastus, Aristotle, et al. also held similar beliefs

¹⁰ A few modern scholars have composed notable sourcebooks and commentaries on Roman festivals, mostly derived from Ovid's *Fasti*. Though the oldest chronologically, Fowler (1908) is still the most useful. More recently, Scullard (1981) is also helpful and considers more recent scholarship on Roman festivals and religion.

¹¹ The execution of proper burial and burial rites becomes increasingly significant later in this study when the literary ghosts of Lucan, particularly Erichtho's necromancy in Book 6, and Statius are considered.

Literary ghosts, unlike the folkloric ghosts of Pliny the Younger¹² and some historians,¹³ are a curious blend of cultural beliefs and literary necessity. That is, literary ghosts, unlike the accounts found in the aforementioned authors and others, fulfill some other function in the narrative besides just being a featured story. Letter 7.27 of Pliny, for example, discusses three unique instances of apparitions, but these ghosts do not function as literary characters. Pliny recounts these stories for their own sake, as interesting anecdotes for the letter's recipient to consider and as evidence on the basis of which Sura can make a decision. The ghosts of Pliny are better examples of Roman belief about ghosts, their appearance, and mannerisms than other ghosts who function as distinct characters in literature. The latter characters must also answer to their literary obligation.

The Parentalia and Lemuria exemplify the cultural belief in the afterlife, and in ghosts themselves, which forms the necessary foundation for literary and folkloric ghost alike. These festivals share some features in common, but also have distinct differences. Most basically, each festival commemorated dead ancestors and citizens had to perform certain ritualistic acts to appease the deceased. In addition to these private rites, some parts of these festivals were also public celebrations, holidays observed by Roman society as a whole. On these days, some but not all of which were *nefasti* or unlucky days, the temples were shut, magistrates did not wear the *toga praetexta*, no fires were burned, and no marriages were contracted. The celebrations and ceremonial dedications to the dead took place not only in the private life of the Roman, but also in the public proceedings of the state.¹⁴ Because the ceremony took place in the public sector and

¹² Particularly those just discussed from letter 7.27

¹³ Some of the more notable ghost stories are found in Livy 1, 5, 21, and 24; Suetonius *Nero* 34, *Otho* 7 and Tacitus *Annales* 11.21, among others.

¹⁴ In 304 BCE, Gnaeus Flavius, a pontifical secretary, introduced the custom of publishing in the Forum tables containing information besides brief references to victories, triumphs, prodigies, etc. This list was the origin of the public Roman calendar, in which the days were divided into weeks of eight days each, and indicated by the letters A-H. Each day was marked by a certain letter to show its nature. During the Parentalia, Lemuralia, and other festivals commemorating the dead, the days are marked to show that they are considered to be various degrees of *dies fasti* and *nefasti* by the letters F., N., N.P., F.P., Q. Rex C.F., C., EN. These letters stood for *fastus*, *nefastus*, *nefastus priore* ("unlawful before noon"), *fastus priore* ("lawful before noon"), *quando rex (sacrorum) comitiavit fastus* ("lawful after the rex sacrorum has appeared in the assembly"), *comitalis* ("assembly day") and *intercisis* ("divided" --- having an unlawful time sometime within that day). The *dies intercisi* were partly *fasti* and partly *nefasti*. The cessations described above occurred on those days considered to any degree to be *nefasti*. These actions are all associated with business and government activities and a hiatus from them demonstrates how the Romans

widely observed by all Roman citizens, a general acceptance of afterlife and ghosts is a more likely norm than the skeptical attitudes exhibited in the literature of some ancients.

Parentalia, Feralia, and Caristia

The Parentalia festival began on February 13 and typically lasted until February 21. The last of these days was called the Feralia. This last day of the festival was not only the main commemorative celebration for the dead, but also the day of the public ceremony. The majority of Parentalia consisted of privately-celebrated rituals, and on the concluding day, the Feralia, there was a ritualistic feast. Family members would leave small votive offerings – garlands, a sprinkling of corn or salt, bread soaked in wine, or a small bouquet of violets. Larger offerings were not discouraged, at least according to Ovid, but for the ancestral ghosts, small offerings as a demonstration of dedication and piety were most important. Ovid is careful to point out that the private rituals and offerings were important not for material reasons, but because they acted as a physical representation for the pious respect each individual ought to have for his family.¹⁵ Ovid also enumerates the reason for the necessity of public observance of these ritualistic days,

di quoque templorum foribus celentur opertis,
ture vacant arae stentque sine igne foci.
nunc animae tenues et corpora functa sepulcris
errant, nunc posito pascitur umbra cibo.

let the gods also be concealed by closing the doors of the temples
let the altars be free from incense and let them the hearths stand without fire.
now the light souls and bodies charged with tombs
wander around, now the shade feeds on the food placed for him.

(*Fasti* 2.563-566)

All of the actions described here, the closing of the temples, the cessation of the burning incense, and the extinguishing of the fires, took place publicly as matters of the state on behalf of the Roman community, not only in private households for the individual. These

considered these days to be unfavorable in the eyes of the gods. For more on calendars demarcation of festivals, see Fowler (1908).

¹⁵*Fasti* 2.537-540

actions were also the duties of government officials and were a physical manifestation of ghost belief in the public sector. As Ovid has explained, the ghosts do not ask for much by the way of material things, but prefer an outward display of respect (*parva petunt manes, pietas pro divite grata est munere* 535-536). This charge fell not only on the individual, but Roman society as an institution and whole upheld these beliefs.¹⁶

Ovid also gives evidence that these beliefs existed some time before his time,

hunc morem Aeneas, pietatis idoneus auctor,
attulit in terras, iuste Latine, tuas;
ille patris Genio sollemnia dona ferebat:
hinc populi ritus edidicere pios.

Aeneas, the fitting founder of piety
brought this custom into your lands, just Latinus;
that man was bearing ceremonial gifts for the spirit of his father:
from this man the people learnt proper rites.

(*Fasti* 2.543-546)

While the validity of the Aeneas myth and many of the explanations found in Ovid's *Fasti* are open to question, others note that because those found in Ovid are less absolute and less reliable than, for example, explanations found in Lucretius, they were consequently less disruptive of traditional religious observance.¹⁷ If this is, in fact, the case, Ovid gives good evidence that belief in the necessity of funeral rites largely existed throughout history and indicates by extension a cultural belief in the ability of the deceased to manifest as apparitions in the afterlife.

The last day of the Parentalia celebration was the Feralia which, according also to Ovid, derives its name from the traditional carrying (from the verb *ferre*) of the rites and sacrifices to the dead.¹⁸ Fowler combines the opinions of both Latin scholars and contemporary authors to make the claim that the Feralia was the oldest and best known of all the days of Parentalia.¹⁹ During this last day of celebration, Roman citizens performed their duties and rites under supervision of the State and Pontifices. Where the

¹⁶ For more on how public displays of religious belief functions on both a broad and individual symbolic level, see King (2003), especially p. 283.

¹⁷ See Schiesaro's essay "Ovid and the Professional Discourses of Scholarship, Religion and Rhetoric" in the *Cambridge Companion to Ovid* (2002) where he points also to Feeney (1991). For the hermeneutic risks of reconstructing Roman religion based entirely off literary sources, see Feeney (1998).

¹⁸ *Fasti* 2.569; Varro *Linguae Latinae* 6.13

¹⁹ (1908), 307

Parentalia consisted of private proceedings, the Feralia was a publicly sanctioned ceremony. For both celebrations, however, as long as the ancestral ghosts had been duly propitiated, there was nothing for the citizens to fear. The ghosts did not show themselves as particularly hostile or spiteful and did not interfere with the living because a *ius sacrum* regulated all relationships between the ghosts and their familial counterparts.²⁰

The accounts of the Parentalia and the Feralia found in Ovid demonstrate two important points about cultural beliefs concerning the dead. First, the Ovidian account of the Parentalia festival as a whole supports the argument that a belief in the afterlife was a cultural norm, privileged over the skeptical attitudes of authors like Pliny. The Parentalia was publicly celebrated in a ceremony sponsored by the state. The festival was not a private matter, left open to optional participation. State recognition and enforcement required a city-wide participation in the ceremony; hypothetically, even if the family did not participate by observing the private rituals, they were still subject to the ramifications of the state's participation because law dictated that even private business must be interrupted on these days. Additionally, Ovid's description of the Parentalia includes distinct reference to the idea that the dead transcended the line between the dead and the living by entering the mortal realm. Twice, Ovid refers to the physical manifestations of the dead in the mortal realm.²¹ The latter of these two points show that the Romans clearly held the belief that the dead could rise up and participate in the mortal realm, not as just a figment of one's imagination or an abstract memory, but as a tangible, physical being.

Ovid further provides evidence for the argument that the dead can materialize in his introduction to the Caristia, the day immediately following the day of Feralia. The Caristia was a feast of the family that took place on the 22nd of the month and was not a part of the Parentalia festival. It is relevant to the immediate discussion, however, because Ovid's explanation of the underlying reason for the feast demonstrates how the Romans culturally viewed the ancestral dead as sharing fundamental characteristics with

²⁰ Ibid. especially ff. 3 and 4

²¹ First at *Fasti* 2.551-554, the ghosts of the living wander around the city, angered because they have not received their rites, and again at 2.565-566. Here Ovid has listed the steps which must be taking to shut up the city because the ghosts are wandering about to receive their offerings.

the living and that they peacefully join the living during this time period.²² The dead were not simply memories, but still active family members, even after they had passed away. The Caristia refocused attention to the living family and worship of the familial gods away from the ancestral dead. Ovid demonstrates the occurrence of this shift in attention,

scilicet a tumulis et, qui periere, propinquis
protinus ad vivos ora referre iuvat
postque tot amissos, quicquid de sanguine restat,
aspicere et generis dinumerare gradus.

certainly it is pleasing to return straightaway our visages
to the living from the tombs and the relatives who have died
afterwards to look upon so many who have died and each one who
remains from our blood and count the steps of our kin.

(*Fasti* 2.619-622)

The passage focuses on the immediate need (*protinus*) to return attention to those who are now present (*ad vivos...quicquid restat*). The adverb “*protinus*” sets a temporal boundary for this and all proceeding actions to take place within. Words of motion distinctly highlight the passage, drawing attention to the ability of both the living and the dead to possess this physical capability. Ovid has adopted himself into the narrative by using the present tense and, with this as a focal point, there is a strong sense of directionality for those living in the present and the dead.

Those still in the physical present with Ovid must turn back (*referre*) their attention from the dead to the immediate time and the phrase “*quicquid ...restat*” also demonstrates an emphasis on directional movement back and towards the present. If the living have remained behind, the dead must have left the present and indeed they have (*periere*). Where the living and those present must move away from the dead and back towards the living (*referre, restat*), the dead have literally passed through. They have departed and are no longer tangible in the mortal realm outside of honored memories;

²² Fowler explains how ghosts were not typically feared during the Parentalia. As for the occasional instance in which they stereotypically joined the living to “haunt” them, Ovid tells in *Fasti* 2.547- 556 how once the souls rose up, howling, and wandered the streets once when they had not been duly honored because the city was at war. Consequently, rites were paid and the ghouls disappeared and went back to a peaceful co-existence.

those present are literally those who have “stayed behind.”²³ Ovid draws a directional distinction between the dead and the living, but both possess this characteristic of movement. By recognizing the ability of the dead to move between the realm of the afterlife and that of the living the dead, the dead can be more readily considered as legitimate characters in literature when texts feature ghosts that appear in the mortal realm,²⁴ rather than dismissing them as figments of the imagination.

Lemuralia

Additionally, the Lemuralia festival which Ovid also describes in the *Fasti* features the same idea that ghosts can enter and exit the mortal realm and were not considered to be static entities. Lemuralia took place over three days in May, the 9th, 11th, and 13th and, like the Parentalia, featured offerings to appease the dead. The generally accepted differences, however, are that Lemuralia took place in the home instead of at the tomb and that the spirits subject of the Lemuralia were malicious whereas those celebrated in the Parentalia were not.²⁵

Ovid is the sole source for the proceedings of the Lemuralia festival and his description features the same idea that ghosts can voluntarily enter and exit the mortal realm as found in the description of the Caristia. In the *Fasti*, Ovid describes the rites which the head of the household performed in the home; he would make the sign of the evil eye with his hand, thrown down black beans behind him, and ask the ghosts for redemption. The ghosts were thought to collect the beans and follow behind him unseen.²⁶ Following this procedure, the one performing the rites concludes the ceremony and issues a ritual declamation,

rursus aquam tangit Temesaeaque concrepat aera
et rogat, ut tectis exeat umbra suis.
cum dixit novies “Manes exite paterni,”
respicit et pure sacra peracta putat.

again he touches the water and crashes the Temesan bronze,
and asks that the shade exit his home.

²³ The verb “*restat*” also interestingly precedes the tendencies of Lucan, et al., who often use forms of the verb *stare* to describe the physical presence of apparitions in their introduction to the narrative.

²⁴ As opposed to the underworld

²⁵ Felton (1999). Fowler (1908) believes due to the notations found on ancient calendars that at one time the Lemuria must have been a public festival much like the Feralia.

²⁶ *Fasti* 5.435-443

When he has said nine times, “Spirits of my fathers, leave,”
he looks back and believes the sacred rites have been duly performed.
(*Fasti* 5.441-444)

The spirit is asked to leave the house (*rogat ut...exeat umbra*), implying that the ghost can come and go at its own volition. The shade must be satisfactorily appeased before it will depart; all parts of the ritual must be executed. The phrase “*Manes exite paterni*” in line 443 also echoes this sentiment. The *manes paterni* will only exit the household after the ritual and after the phrase is uttered exactly nine times. The ghost is the subject of both *exeat* and *exite* and these verbs both demonstrate the apparition’s ability to not only exit the immediate mortal environment, the house (*exeat*), but also to leave the mortal realm (*exite*).

These examples from Ovid show a clear widely spread, cultural belief not only in the afterlife, but also in the ability of ghosts in the afterlife to manifest in the mortal realm. Primarily, the city-wide festivals which were celebrated both publicly and at home show that citizens observed the rites of the dead in both the civic and private sectors. These texts demonstrate a strong belief that the dead could cross the line into the mortal realm to receive sacrifices and ritual offerings. Moreover, Ovid’s particular use of verbs of motion supports the idea that the dead could enter and exit the world of the living. In Ovid, both amiable and malignant spirits are seen coming and going, remaining and departing, from the earth. Accordingly, not only does the text demonstrate a fundamental belief in an afterlife, but also an important belief that ghosts can materialize and enter the world of the living.

Describing Ghosts

Ovid’s description of the Lemuralia also highlights another important issue which one must consider when examining cultural beliefs in apparitions, diction. Firstly, Ovid’s use of *Manes* at 5.443 is certainly curious if one accepts the argument that the Lemuralia was to appease malignant ghosts whereas the Parentalia was in honor of ghosts who were not threatening. In modern scholarship, a study of the word *manes* has lead many to conclude that this word is reserved primarily for the use of goodly, familial ghosts and distinguished from its evil counter part, *lemur*.²⁷ Secondly, then, the phrase “*manes exite*

²⁷ In addition to Fowler, see modern scholarship by Rose (1930), Dumezil (1970), and Knight (1970).

