



ERAS Journal
ISSN 1445-5218

[About ERAS](#)
[Current edition](#)
[Editions list](#)
[Guidelines for contributors](#)
[Call for papers](#)
[Contact the editors](#)
[Discussion](#)
[Advertisements](#)

About ERAS

ERAS is an on-line journal edited and produced by postgraduate students from the [School of Philosophical Historical and International Studies](#) at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.

Papers published by ERAS are accepted from the following disciplines: History, Archaeology and Ancient History, Religion and Theology, Jewish Civilisation, Philosophy and International Studies. Submissions from other disciplines with significant historical content will also be considered (e.g. Politics, Literature, Economics, Anthropology).

ERAS is a fully refereed journal, with DEST status that provides an international forum for current or recently completed Masters and PhD students to publish original research, comment and reviews in any of the fields listed above. We hope you enjoy reading ERAS and we look forward to your comments and contributions.

[Contents of the current edition](#)

[List of editions](#)

[Skip to the content](#) | [Change text size](#)



[Monash home](#) | [Arts home](#) | [Schools and Centres](#) | [Campuses](#) | [About Arts](#) | [Contact Arts](#)

[Staff Only]

[A-Z index](#) | [Site map](#) | [Search](#) All of Monash

[Staff directory](#)

[Arts Faculty](#) » [Publications](#) » [Erasmus](#) » Current-Edition «

ERAS Journal
ISSN 1445-5218

- About ERAS
- Current edition
- Editions list
- Guidelines for contributors
- Call for papers
- Contact the editors
- Discussion
- Advertisements

Erasmus Journal - Edition Thirteen, Issue 1 - December 2011

Terms of Use: Readers are welcome to save an electronic copy (download) and print copies of the works on this site only for their own personal research and study, and provided the *Erasmus* copyright notice is retained on any copies made. Any further use, adaptation or distribution will require permission from *Erasmus*.

John D'Alton	Edition Thirteen Issue 1 Editorial
--------------	--

Articles

Matthew Bloom	abstract	Cities Large and Small Together: The Subregional Model of Economic Change in the Nineteenth Century
Fang Yu Hu	abstract	Taiwanese Girls' Education, 1897-1945: An Analysis of Policy and Practice in a Gendered Colonial System
Akshaya Kumar	abstract	From Erotics to Poetics of Documentary Remembering: Patricio Guzman's Battle of Chile (1979) and Chile: An Obstinate Memory (1997)
Damian Nemirovsky	abstract	Membership to a Community: A Glimpse into the Jewish-Argentine Experience at Home and Abroad from the 1960s to the 1980s
Joan Stivala	abstract	Death Before Dishonour! Suicide of Christian Victims of Rape

Reviews

John D'Alton	Toner, Jerry, <i>Popular Culture in Ancient Rome</i>. (2009)
John D'Alton	Pollock family, <i>American Letters: 1927-1947</i>. (2011)
Darren Dobson	Smith-Rosenburg, Carroll, <i>This Violent Empire: The Birth of an American National Identity</i> (2011)
Darren Dobson	Kienzle, Robyn, <i>The Architect of Kokoda: Bert Kienzle – The Man Who Made the Kokoda Trail</i> (2011)

Melissa Dunk	Lawrence, Susan and Peter Davies. <i>An Archaeology of Australia since 1788</i>. (2011)
Daniel Fandino	Taylor, Jay. <i>The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China</i>. (2009)
Caroline Hubschmann	David O'Connor. <i>Abydos. Egypt's First Pharaohs and the Cult of Osiris</i> (2011)
Caroline Hubschmann	Naguib Kanawati. <i>Conspiracies in the Egyptian Palace: Unis to Pepy I</i>. (2003)
Stephanie Rocke	Chaim T. Horovitz. <i>A Two Thousand Year History of the Influence of the Song of Songs on Religion, Literature, Music, and Art</i>. (2010)

[Edition Thirteen editors and committee members](#)

Death Before Dishonour!

Suicide of Christian Victims of Rape



Joan Stivala
(ANU, Australia)

Abstract: *Despite the veneration accorded to Lucretia, the young Roman aristocrat who committed suicide after she had been raped by the son of the last king of Rome, pagan women were not inclined to emulate her death. Evidence is lacking, also for an expectation on the part of their families or their wider society that the victim's death was an appropriate response to this crime.*

It was, paradoxically, some Christian leaders who exhorted women to kill themselves after they had been raped, or, better still, to commit suicide rather than submit to rape. This is despite the fact that the same leaders forbade suicide for other reasons. Pagan society, on the other hand, regarded the decision to kill oneself as one that only the individual concerned was able to make. Neither suicide nor attempted suicide infringed Roman law.

St. Augustine was the first to develop a Christian theory of suicide and it was only with Augustine that the full implication of Christian morality on the topic became clear. He was sufficiently troubled by the expectation that a raped woman should commit suicide that he begins his argument against suicide with an admonition that rape victims who did not kill themselves should not be censured. He was opposed to suicide under almost all circumstances, but his view was by no means general amongst Christians at the time, although it was to prevail.

About three years after the invasion of Rome in 410 CE Augustine addressed a problem which resulted from the sack of the city: how were Christians to regard women, including consecrated virgins, who had been raped by soldiers of the invading army?¹ Some of these women had committed suicide, while victims who had not killed themselves were the target of criticism from some of their fellow Christians.² Augustine declared that women who had been raped did not need to kill themselves to prove their virtue. This view contrasts

¹ St. Augustine, *De ciu. Dei* l. xvii. 20 (Augustinus, *De ciuitate Dei*, vol. I, B. Dombart, A. Kalb, J. Divjak eds., [Stuttgart: Teubner, 1981]); Anton J. L van Hooff, *From Autothanasia to Suicide: Self-killing in Classical Antiquity*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 195-197.

² St. Augustine, *De ciu. Dei* l. xvii.

with the writings of other Christian thinkers. Jerome, for example, appealed to classical tradition to support the claim that ideally a Christian woman should kill herself to avoid rape, or if that was not possible she should choose death in preference to living a life of dishonour. The story of Lucretia is frequently quoted in support of this ideal.

This essay explores the evidence for such a tradition, and offers a more nuanced reading of a change in attitude between pagan and early Christian ideas on whether female virtue is destroyed by rape. In order to avoid widening the scope of the enquiry too far the main focus will be on the Roman tradition rather than the classical tradition as a whole.

It should be noted that there is no direct information from any woman on her decision to commit suicide, or from any woman who did not kill herself after having been raped. We are reliant on sources written by men and so it is the Roman historian Livy who tells us what Lucretia thought and said. We do not know whether he is transmitting a report of her words, or whether he is following the ancient practice of attributing to her the sentiments that he considered to be appropriate under the circumstances.

All the philosophical schools of Greek and Roman antiquity, except that of Pythagoras,³ tolerated and sometimes approved of suicide under certain circumstances. These circumstances varied with the philosophy and the individual concerned. Roman law did not recognise suicide as a crime. Neither did general pagan opinion condemn suicide, as far as that opinion can be established.

Opinions, however, change over time and philosophic opinion is no different. From the middle of the third century, Neoplatonism began to overtake Stoicism as the philosophy of choice of the elite orders.⁴ The schools had much in common but one area of disagreement is important for this

³ Arthur J. Droge and James D. Tabor, *A Noble Death: Suicide and Martyrdom among Christians and Jews in Antiquity*, (San Francisco: Harper, 1992), 20.

⁴ Alexander Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, vol. II, *The Curse on Self-Murder*, (Oxford: University Press, 2000), 143.

discussion. Stoicism found many reasons for a person to kill himself or herself; Neoplatonism on the other hand, found none. On the contrary it argued that suicide could never be justified.⁵ The emperor Julian, that enthusiastic convert to paganism, was opposed to self-killing, as was his contemporary, the pagan historian Ammianus Marcellinus.⁶

Augustine was the first to develop a Christian theory of suicide. He condemned suicide under almost all circumstances with the exception of those who acted on God's direct order.⁷ This approval of a command from God as an acceptable reason to commit suicide, is all-important. By this means Augustine could accept as martyrs those whom he and his community admired, while pagans like the Stoic hero Cato he could label as self-murderers. He could also deny the status of martyr to Christians, like the Donatists, whose beliefs he rejected.⁸ His view, however, was by no means general amongst Christians at the time, although it was to prevail. For example, his contemporary Jerome applauded, even demanded, suicide under certain circumstances. One of those circumstances was the need to escape from the risk of the perceived dishonour caused by rape.

Roman women, rape, and suicide cannot be spoken of in the same breath without mentioning Lucretia.⁹ An aristocratic and virtuous young woman, she was raped by the Tarquin the Younger, son of the last king of Rome. Rejecting the comfort and support offered by her husband and her father, she killed herself. Her death led to one of the defining moments of Roman history, the expulsion of the kings and the institution of the Republic. It is doubtful whether rape was a crime that would have been sufficient to incite her menfolk to rebellion as Roman pagans viewed rape as essentially no different

⁵ Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, 143.

⁶ Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, 144.

⁷ St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, I. xxvi. The reference appears to be to the story of St. Pelagia's mother and sisters.

⁸ 'Augustine is heir to the Cyprianic tradition' (G. W. Clarke trans., *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, vol. III, ancient Christian writers, the works of the Fathers in translation, no. 46, (New York: Newman Press, 1986), 191. For a discussion of Augustine's reaction to the Donatists see Droge and Tabor, *A Noble Death*, 169-173.

⁹ Lucretia's story is told in Livy, I. lvii-lx (Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, Robert Seymour Conway and Charles Seymour Conway eds. [Oxford, 1955]).

from any other serious assault. On the other hand, a dead wife and daughter, whose death could be blamed on the king's son, did provide a powerful motive.¹⁰

For centuries Lucretia's action was admired, certainly, but not necessarily emulated. There is little evidence in pagan Roman society for the expectation that a woman should die rather than suffer rape, or kill herself after the assault. In his discussion of Lucretia's death, Murray's representation that, 'no true Roman woman would tolerate rape', highlights how even today modern scholars consider her behaviour to be a model for other Roman women.¹¹ The following evidence offered in support of this conclusion comes from an epitaph, literature and modern compilations of suicide in the ancient Graeco-Roman world.

The Epitaph for Domitilla

The story of Lucretia belongs partly to legendary history. Domitilla, on the other hand, was undeniably a real person and an inscription honours her memory.¹² Her epitaph proudly records the reason for her death; she preferred to die rather than submit to rape by barbarian invaders.¹³ The fact that she was the only young woman so threatened who chose death, is a further source of mournful pride to her commemorator.¹⁴ It also demonstrates that none of the other women in her community felt the necessity to kill themselves. Implicit in the praise for Domitilla is criticism of the women who submitted to rape instead of dying to avoid it. It should be noted that, despite the heroine's Roman name, the inscription is in Greek and has an Eastern

¹⁰ Ian Donaldson, *The Rapes of Lucretia. A Myth and its Transformations*, (Oxford, 1982), 23-24.

¹¹ Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, 111.

¹² Ismail Kaygusuz, 'Funerary Epigram of Karzene (Paphlagonia): A Girl Raped by the Goths?' *Epigraphica Anatolica* 4 (1984): 61; W. D. Lebek, 'Das Grabepigramm auf Domitilla', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 59 (1985): 7. I have accepted Lebek's restorations of the text. Kaygusuz's conclusion that "... she was still a child, so that the barbarians did not abuse her" seems unlikely.

¹³ Kaygusuz, 'Funerary Epigram of Karzene (Paphlagonia)', 7.

¹⁴ van Hooff writes that she was commemorated by her parents (van Hooff, *From Autothanasia to Suicide*, 24). There is nothing in the inscription to indicate who commemorated her. It seems just as likely, if not more so, that her husband (she had been married for seven months according to the inscription) erected her epitaph.

provenance.¹⁵ It dates from the third century, but it is unclear whether the dead girl herself, or her family, was Christian.

Stories from Valerius Maximus

Valerius Maximus preserves stories of young women who were killed to maintain their honour or to punish them for its loss.¹⁶ It is significant, however, that except for Lucretia, Valerius does not in fact record any tales of Roman women committing suicide in defence of their chastity or after having been raped. The other Roman women whose stories he tells were killed by their own fathers.¹⁷ In the story of Lucretia, Valerius concentrates more on the impact of her death rather than the reason for it.¹⁸ The only woman in this section of Valerius' work who did commit suicide to protect her chastity is a Greek named Hippo,¹⁹ and this story does not appear in any other surviving source.²⁰ All of these women, like Lucretia, seem to belong to the semi-legendary past.

The historical accuracy of accounts such as those of Valerius Maximus is less important than the attitude they reveal of the writers and the assumed attitude of the audience to whom they were directed. This observation is especially pertinent in relation to the *controuersiae*, included in the collections preserved by Seneca the Elder, Pseudo-Quintilian and Calpurnius Flaccus.

Controuersiae are "fictitious courtroom speeches of accusation or defence".²¹

It has not been established whether these works reflect the values of the society in which they were composed, or whether they are intellectual

¹⁵ Kaygusuz, 'Funerary Epigram of Karzene (Paphlagonia)', 61.

¹⁶ Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings* VI. 1. 1-4, 6, ext.1.

¹⁷ Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings* VI. 1. 2, 3.

¹⁸ Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, VI. 1. 1.

¹⁹ Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, VI. 1. ext. 1

²⁰ Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, D. R. Shackleton Bailey ed. and trans., Loeb Classical Library, (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2000), 12, note 16.

²¹ Lewis A. Sussman ed., *The Major Declamations Ascribed to Quintilian: A Translation*, (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1987), i.

exercises with no grounding in reality, however S. F. Bonner believes that they do reflect a basic reality.²²

Declamation

A survey of the cases of rape debated in declamation and *controuersiae* turned up only three cases out of a total of thirty where the victim killed herself or threatened to do so. In the world of the *controuersiae* the law is that a woman who has been raped has the choice (*optio*) of life or death for the rapist. She can demand marriage to him without a dowry, or she can demand his execution.

One debate concerns a rape victim who hanged herself.²³ Her father, determined to exact revenge, substituted the girl's twin sister for the victim. Exercising the victim's *optio* she chose his death and the offender was duly executed.²⁴ This *controuersia* is not about rape at all. The argument centres on the father's action in substituting his other daughter for the dead girl. There must be a living victim to decide the penalty officially, although no doubt her father would have a good deal of unofficial influence on his daughter's decision. This example bears an obvious similarity to Lucretia's story. A victim of rape kills herself, and her father avenges her death. In this instance we are not given her motives for suicide, not even the male perspective that Livy provides for Lucretia's death.

Seneca the Elder recorded a *controuersia* in which the father of a rape victim is accused of unnecessary delay in bringing his daughter to court so that she might exercise her *optio*.²⁵ The father, in righteous indignation, protests that he has been preoccupied since the assault on his daughter. Not only has he

²² S. F. Bonner, *Roman Declamation in the Late Republic and Early Empire*, (Liverpool: University Press of Liverpool, 1959), 36-37, 89-91, 107.

²³ Michael Winterbottom ed., *The Minor Declamations Ascribed to Quintilian*, *Texte und Kommentare*, vol. 13, (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), *Declamatio* 270.

²⁴ Winterbottom *The Minor Declamations Ascribed to Quintilian*, 65f.

²⁵ Seneca the Elder, *Controuersiae* III. 5. This appears to be a longer version of Calpurnius Flaccus, *Declamation* 34 (Lewis A. Sussman ed., *The Declamations of Calpurnius Flaccus*, [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978], 73-74).

had to comfort her, he has also been forced to guard her in case she tried to kill herself.

In the third example the victim wept in court, apparently unable to speak coherently.²⁶ One of the magistrates condemned her attacker to death and the young woman subsequently hanged herself. The magistrate stands accused of responsibility for both deaths. Once again the argument is not about the rape itself, although that crime precipitated the events that are the subject of debate. The supposed victim in this case killed herself only after the execution of the supposed rapist. Here we are invited to see the 'victim' and her 'assailant' as star-crossed lovers whose plot to marry went disastrously wrong. The collection contains two other *controuersiae* which seem to involve collusion between an apparent victim and her assailant in order to overcome paternal opposition to their marriage.²⁷

In the world of the declamation, then, there was no expectation that a raped woman should kill herself. On the contrary, her presence in court was required in the sentencing of the offender. Hence the substitution of the victim's sister in the first case described. The father of the victim in the second example took steps to protect his daughter in case she tried to commit suicide.

As is the case with the stories preserved by Valerius Maximus, the reality of these disputes is not crucial to the argument that in pagan Rome there was no expectation that a woman who had been raped should wipe out the dishonour by killing herself. The importance of the debates lies in the attitude expressed by the writers who discuss them and also in the attitude that these writers ascribe to others. Authors and transmitters in pagan times do acknowledge that the trauma of rape may cause victims to contemplate suicide. There is however no evidence that they were encouraged to do so.²⁸

²⁶ Sussman *The Declamations of Calpurnius Flaccus*, 16.

²⁷ Winterbottom, *The Minor Declamations Ascribed to Quintilian, Declamationes* 259, 368.

²⁸ Domitilla's epitaph provides one possible exception, although there is a mere hint that her suicide was expected as well as applauded.

Within the context of their own history, Roman attitudes to rape are ambivalent.

The heroic story of Lucretia and the contrasting earlier legend of the mass rape of the Sabine women are foundation stories of the Roman Republic.²⁹ If the Sabine girls had not been kidnapped and forced to bear Roman children then the settlement would have perished, while it is Lucretia's death which brings about a dramatic change in the system of government.³⁰

Suicide Lists

This investigation has also used two modern collections of ancient suicides compiled by Anton J. L. van Hooff and by Yolande Gris . ³¹ Van Hooff's collection consists of 960 cases of suicide, both Greek and Roman, historical and fictional, from the time of Homer to the fifth century CE. ³² The collection by Gris  is more restricted than that of van Hooff, being confined to Roman cases from about 753 BCE to about 192 CE. No overtly fictional examples are included.

Seventy-seven cases in van Hooff's data-base involve Roman women, both pagan and Christian, and include individual women, groups of women, and mixed groups of men and women. Of these seventy-seven I can identify only three instances of non-Christian Roman women who killed themselves to avoid being raped or as a response to the assault when they had been unable to escape. These include Lucretia and Domitilla, and also an unnamed Roman woman who was raped by rebellious slaves during the Spartacus uprising. Her story is told by fifth century CE Christian writer Orosius in his *Historiae aduersus paganos*, which is an apologetic work designed to demonstrate that the disasters suffered by the empire in his day were nothing new and not due to contemporary neglect of the gods.

The examination of the instances of self-killing collected by van Hooff reveal only one confirmed pagan Roman woman who committed suicide after having

²⁹ Livy, I. ix-x.

³⁰ Livy, I. ix.

³¹ Yolande Gris , 'De la fr quence du suicide chez les Romains', *Latomus* 39 (1980): 21f.

³² van Hooff, *From Autothanasia to Suicide*, appendix A.

been raped – Lucretia. One hundred and forty-one Greek women who killed themselves are included in the collection. Of these, forty-two (thirty percent) committed suicide for the motive of *pudor*.³³ There are none who are reported as having killed themselves to avoid being raped.

Grisé lists 316 cases, of whom forty-four are women. Only one is recorded as having committed suicide after having been raped and that woman is Lucretia. There are no examples included of women killing themselves to avoid rape.

There is little evidence in these lists to suggest that Roman women felt compelled to wipe out any perception of dishonour caused by rape by taking their own lives, despite the ever-present example of Lucretia. There is equally little evidence to show that they committed suicide rather than submit to rape. The lists do give the impression that Greek women were more inclined to do so and this impression is strengthened by Jerome's examples that are discussed in the following section.

In short, I have found no evidence for a Roman tradition of suicide to avoid rape, or, in spite of Lucretia, because of feelings of shame, despair or any other motive after rape. There appears to have been no expectation among Roman pagans that a woman should kill herself to avoid rape, nor that the suicide of the victim was an appropriate response to the crime. It has already been noted that Roman pagans viewed rape as a serious assault on the person. Christians, however, placed this crime in a special category.

We come now to a consideration of the views of Christian writers and an apparent change in attitude to a belief that a victim of rape is dishonoured by the crime committed against her. The opinion that a woman should choose suicide before rape was destined for a long history in Christian centuries, despite the church's adoption of Augustine's prohibition on suicide.

Jerome's Opinion

³³ *Pudor* is van Hooff's usual, but not invariable term denoting rape.

Jerome writes that a Christian is not permitted to commit suicide during persecution unless her chastity is threatened.³⁴ It is significant that in both *Aduersus Iouinianum* and *Ad Geruchiam*, the only Roman example of suicide following rape is the famous one of Lucretia. Jerome cites no other instances of Roman women killing themselves after having been raped nor to avoid rape, despite his claim at *Aduersus Iouinianum* l. 46 that he will now turn to Roman women. After spending chapter 41 and chapters 43-45 providing examples of both Greek and barbarian women who died in defence of their chastity, and citing famous instances of chaste Roman women, he presents only Lucretia as committing suicide.³⁵ It is difficult to believe that if Jerome knew of Roman stories equal to the dramatic tales of Phidon's virgin daughters or the seven virgins of Miletus or the wife of Niceratus, all of whom committed suicide rather than suffer rape, he would not have used them.³⁶ The examples provided by Jerome, of Roman women who refused to remarry after the death of a husband, pale in comparison.

Jerome believed that it is preferable to die at another's hands rather than to use violence against oneself. He condemned suicide except in one specific circumstance, being rape or the threat of rape.³⁷ Heterosexual rape is implied, if not explicit. Jerome believed that chastity and virginity, especially the latter, were more important than life itself. He also believed that rape destroys a woman's chastity. In *Aduersus Iouinianum* he praises women who killed themselves, and sometimes their children, to escape the possibility of abuse at the hands of the enemy.³⁸ It is ironic that the woman who is held up to Christians as an example of correct behaviour in these extreme circumstances was neither Roman nor Christian. She was the wife of the Carthaginian Hasdrubal.³⁹ Jerome devotes several chapters of his criticism of

³⁴ St. Jerome, *In Ionam* l. 12, in *Opera Omnia Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi*, vol. 5-6, J-P. Migne ed., *Patrologia Latina*, vol. XXV, (Paris, 1845).

³⁵ St. Jerome, *Aduersus Iouinianum* l. 46, in J-P. Migne ed., *Opera Omnia Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi*, vol. 2-3, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. XXII, (Paris, 1845). The examples are Bilia, wife of Duilius; Marcia, the younger daughter of Cato; Porcia, the wife of Brutus; Annai; Marcella; Valeria, wife of Seruius.

³⁶ St. Jerome, *Aduersus Iouinianum* l. 41, 44.

³⁷ St. Jerome, *In Ionam* l. 12.

³⁸ St. Jerome, *Aduersus Iouinianum* l. 43.

³⁹ See also St. Jerome, *Epistulae LXXI-CXX*, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*

lovinianus to other barbarian women, as well as Greek women, who chose death to avoid rape.⁴⁰ He expresses particular admiration for the Theban girl who killed the rapist and then herself with her assailant's own sword.⁴¹ The use of a weapon was considered by Romans to be a 'virtuous', even heroic, method of dying.⁴² That she used the same weapon for both deaths is also worth recording.⁴³

Jerome was not the only Christian leader who approved of suicide when committed by a woman to prevent rape. Both Ambrose and Eusebius believed that suicide was laudable under such circumstances, although they were not as enthusiastic as Jerome, who appears to have felt that death rather than rape was not so much excusable as obligatory.⁴⁴

Ambrose's View

Ambrose, like Jerome, encapsulates some of the early Christian ambivalence towards suicide. In *De uirginibus* III he asserts that Scripture forbids a Christian woman inflicting violence on herself. The argument is presented in response to a question from his sister on how those women who killed themselves by jumping to their deaths or by drowning to escape their persecutors are to be regarded, as Scripture forbids a Christian using violence against herself.⁴⁵ Scripture in fact does nothing of the sort but unlike Augustine, Ambrose does not digress from his theme to present evidence for this statement.

It is specifically female Christians (*Christianae*) who are the subject of the enquiry rather than Christians in general and the threat of rape is clearly implied. Two methods of suicide are specified: jumping to their deaths or

LV, *Ep.* CXXIII. 7.

⁴⁰ St. Jerome, *Aduersus Iouinianum*. I. 41-45.

⁴¹ St. Jerome, *Aduersus Iouinianum* I. 41.

⁴² Apuleius, *Golden Ass* VIII. 14; van Hooff, *From Autothanasia to Suicide*, 47-54.

⁴³ St. Jerome, *Aduersus Iouinianum* I. 42, 43.

⁴⁴ St. Ambrose, *Ep.* 37, in *Opera*, part X, *Epistulae et Actae*, vol. III, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* LXXXII, (Vienna, 1982); *De uirginibus* III. vii. 32-39, Ignatius Cazzaniga ed., (Torino: Paravia, 1948); Eusebius, *H. E.* VIII. xiv. 14, 17, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1953).

⁴⁵ St. Ambrose, *De uirginibus* III. vii. 32.

drowning. This could be no more than a literary device to lead Ambrose into the story of Pelagia's mother and sisters who drowned themselves in a river rather than allow themselves to be captured. It is possible however that Ambrose is making a case to demonstrate that to die by drowning is not the same as the use of violence to kill oneself. This is similar to believing that to cause another to starve to death means that there is, metaphorically as well as literally, no blood on the killer's hands.

The words placed in Pelagia's mouth appear to contradict Ambrose's claim that Scripture prohibits suicide. "God is not offended by a remedy against evil", muses Pelagia, "and faith permits the deed".⁴⁶ She claims that if the act is voluntary then it cannot be termed violence; violence is to want to die and to be unable to do so.⁴⁷ She considers the methods available to her: "... there are so many easy ways to death... I am not afraid that my right hand may fail to deliver the blow, or that my breast may shrink from the pain... I shall not be afraid if there is no sword. I can die by my own weapons..."⁴⁸ We are not told how Pelagia died. She was alone in the house which was surrounded by a mob and she was contemplating suicide rather than suffer pack rape.⁴⁹ It is clear that she was dead when her persecutors found her but how she died remains obscure.⁵⁰ The story then turns to Pelagia's mother and sisters who were trapped between the mob and a fast-flowing river.

The women regarded the river that cut off their escape as baptismal water that would protect them as well as opening the route to heaven.⁵¹ Whether these are Ambrose's own sentiments ascribed to the women, or whether he is recording a tradition of the martyrs' last words, there can be little doubt that he agreed with them. The river did not separate mother and daughters, nor did it

⁴⁶ St. Ambrose, *De uirginibus* III. vii. 32.

⁴⁷ St. Ambrose, *De uirginibus* III. vii. 32.

⁴⁸ St. Ambrose, *De uirginibus* III. vii. 33. The words are more likely to be Ambrose's rather than Pelagia's but the sentiments could well be hers.

⁴⁹ St. Ambrose, *De uirginibus* III. vii. 33.

⁵⁰ St. Ambrose, *De uirginibus* III. vii. 34.

⁵¹ St. Ambrose, *De uirginibus* III. vii. 34.

expose their bodies to the mob, thus seeming to indicate divine approval of their actions.⁵²

This story demonstrates two methods of suicide and a difference in sentiment. Pelagia contemplated a violent death that involved a weapon, and although she was not concerned if none was available she was confident that she would find a way to die. There is little that is overtly Christian in Pelagia's reflections.⁵³ There is no reference to being with Christ, and she only wanted to die in her mother's arms.⁵⁴

Her mother and sisters, on the other hand, are provided with a speech that is Christian in tone as they speak of the river as baptismal water, washing away sin and creating martyrs.⁵⁵ They sought a passive rather than an active death by allowing themselves to drown, but there can be no doubt that her mother and sisters committed suicide. Although the cause of Pelagia's death is left a mystery, a violent and self-inflicted end is probable. Ambrose does not differentiate between the women's methods of dying. He does not criticise Pelagia's speech nor express greater admiration for the manner of death of her mother and sisters. The fact that Pelagia is 'Saint Pelagia' and her mother and sisters are not even named, let alone beatified, indicates that the early church regarded her with greater reverence despite, or perhaps because of, her mode of death.

F. Homes Dudden maintains that Ambrose did not state a clear position on women who kill themselves to avoid rape, despite the clear approval of the women's choice.⁵⁶ He suggests that the Pelagia story expresses neither commendation nor condemnation. He then contrasts these examples with that of another unnamed virgin, also from Antioch, who was condemned to a brothel. Dudden claims that Ambrose's admiration for this woman is "unqualified" because she did not commit suicide to avoid the penalty

⁵² St. Ambrose, *De uirginibus* III. vii. 34-36.

⁵³ St. Ambrose, *De uirginibus* III. vii. 33.

⁵⁴ St. Ambrose, *De uirginibus* III. vii. 33.

⁵⁵ St. Ambrose, *De uirginibus* III. vii. 34.

⁵⁶ F. Homes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, vol. I, (Oxford, 1935), 157.

imposed. Ambrose describes how the woman was rescued by a Christian soldier posing as a client.⁵⁷ The man exchanged clothes with her, and, muffled in his cloak, she escaped unchallenged and unmolested. The soldier was condemned to death but the woman appeared at the place of execution, demanding that she die with her rescuer, even asking to be executed first.⁵⁸

Ambrose asserts that this woman, like Pelagia and her mother and sisters, also preferred death to the danger of rape. She gave herself up because she feared that if she did not die with her rescuer she would be recaptured and the original sentence would be carried out.⁵⁹ She could, plausibly, have committed suicide during her period of freedom, but apparently preferred that someone else kill her.

Ambrose's version of her story is not entirely logical. How could the heroine be confident of execution when she surrendered? It seems just as likely that the original sentence would be insisted on. The message, however, is clear and unambiguous. It is better that a woman die than submit to rape and it is preferable to be executed by the authorities rather than to kill oneself. Ambrose's audience is expected to revere this anonymous woman as a virtuous martyr. Although the beginning of this incident supports Dudden's contention that Ambrose praised the woman for accepting the sentence rather than committing suicide to avoid it, the ending does not. As with other evidence cited in this study the important factor is the attitude of the writer and the assumed attitude of the audience for whom he wrote, rather than historical accuracy.

The preoccupation with the preservation at all costs of a woman's chastity, and especially of an unmarried woman's virginity, was not confined to Christian leaders, but it does appear to have acquired a greater emphasis than previously in Latin literature. Despite the Lucretia story there is little evidence of non-Christian Roman women committing suicide after rape.

⁵⁷ St. Ambrose, *De uirginibus* II. iv. 29-30.

⁵⁸ St. Ambrose, *De uirginibus* II. iv. 32.

⁵⁹ St. Ambrose, *De uirginibus* II. iv. 32.

Evidence for such women preferring to kill themselves rather than submit to rape is also lacking.

Augustine was sufficiently troubled by the expectation that a raped woman should commit suicide that he admonished critics who censured rape victims who did not kill themselves.⁶⁰ The implication is that these women, or at least some of them, *were* the objects of criticism.

Augustine's Opinion

While other Christian thinkers had discussed the problem of suicide, it is only with Augustine that the full implication of Christian morality on the topic becomes clear. Several factors were involved in his decision to tackle this problem. One was the necessity of dealing with the beliefs of the heretical sect of the Donatists.⁶¹ Some of the adherents of this sect were so enthusiastic for martyrdom that they would deliberately provoke the authorities in the hope of being executed, even to the extent of using violence or inciting rebellion.⁶² Darrel W. Amundsen has suggested that the encouragement by some Christians of suicide to protect a woman's, and especially a virgin's, chastity was also a motivating factor.⁶³ It is possible that the suicide of some of the Christian women raped during the sack of Rome forced Augustine to confront the question earlier than he had perhaps intended. It is significant that he begins the discussion of suicide with the plight of these women.⁶⁴ Their personal tragedies made the controversy an urgent problem and the Christian community required guidance on how to respond to the survivors. Were they to be regarded as unchaste? And were consecrated virgins still to be honoured as such? Augustine maintains that the women were innocent and had done nothing that should affect their status.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ St. Augustine, *De ciu. Dei* I. xvii.

⁶¹ Darrel W. Amundsen, *Medicine, Society and Faith in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 109-114, 119.

⁶² Amundsen, *Medicine, Society and Faith in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, 110.

⁶³ Amundsen, *Medicine, Society and Faith in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, 101, 119.

⁶⁴ St. Augustine, *De ciu. Dei* I. xvi.

⁶⁵ St. Augustine, *De ciu. Dei* I. xvi, xviii.

Augustine is prepared to admit that suicide could seem to be a solution to the tragedies of life. As a young man he had contemplated killing himself after the death of the close friend he describes as "half my soul", but the prospect of death offered him no refuge from the pain of life as it had for Pliny.⁶⁶

The inheritance from the classical past was not the only influence on early Christianity. The Hebrew Scriptures were also of major importance, although Jewish tradition offers little guidance on the matter of suicide. There are at least seven individuals in the Old Testament who are noted as having killed themselves, with no hint of editorial disapproval.⁶⁷ The defenders of Masada committed suicide rather than surrender to the Roman conquerors, were admired by Josephus for doing so, and are still admired in modern Israel.⁶⁸ It has already been noted that some Christian authorities also condoned self-killing under certain circumstances. With such a background of ambivalence of viewpoints, Augustine faced a daunting prospect in changing attitudes. He was successful, and in a surprisingly short time, which is testament to his authority and to his powers of persuasion.⁶⁹ It was helpful that the climate of opinion was changing among Christians, as is demonstrated by the decreased admiration for voluntary martyrdom among the orthodox. Pagan sentiment also had turned away from suicide as Neoplatonism became influential. The moral background of both communities was now more sympathetic to Augustine's views than it had been in earlier times and this helped his effort to have suicide declared an offence against God.

Augustine was not the first Christian thinker to condemn suicide as both Ambrose and Jerome disapproved, with certain exceptions. Lactantius held that death ought to be despised, but not deliberately sought.⁷⁰ To kill oneself

⁶⁶ St. Augustine, *Confessions* IV. vi. 11, trans. Henry Chadwick, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); *dimidius animae suae* (St. Augustine, *Confessions*, vol. I, introduction and text, James J. O'Donnell, (Oxford, 1992); Pliny the Elder, *N. H.* XXV. xxiv.

⁶⁷ Droge, and Tabor, *A Noble Death*, xi.

⁶⁸ L. D. Hankoff, 'The Theme of Suicide in the Works of Flavius Josephus', *Clio Medica* II. 1 (1976), 15-24.

⁶⁹ In 452 CE the council of Arles declared suicide a crime (Emile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, trans. John A. Spalding and George Simpson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952), 327.

⁷⁰ Lactantius, *Diu. Inst.* VI. xvii. 25, translated with an introduction and notes by Anthony

is an act that is both infamous and criminal.⁷¹ By the time Ambrose and Jerome were considering the question, the Eastern Fathers had already issued their condemnation, but with little rationale to support their argument.⁷² Augustine was the first thinker to provide evidence and a compelling argument forbidding suicide. Lactantius, Ambrose and Jerome merely stated the prohibition as if it were self-evident. Ambrose and Jerome then undermined their stance by advocating suicide under certain circumstances.

About 413 CE Augustine formulated what would become the law of the Christian church on suicide.⁷³ The fact that he devotes twelve, admittedly brief, chapters of *De ciuitate Dei* to supporting his view on the immorality of suicide is an indication of the difficulty he faced in his effort to have self-killing declared a sin. He begins with the Christian women raped during the recent sack of Rome.⁷⁴ He maintains that those who committed suicide in order to escape such a fate were deserving of pardon.⁷⁵ But note that it is pardon rather than approval. More importantly, those who refused to kill themselves must not be censured.⁷⁶ There is then the implication that some, perhaps many, Christians shared the view of Ambrose and Jerome that a woman should commit suicide rather than submit to rape, and that those who did not were objects of reproach. Augustine had a different opinion, which was that virtue is in the mind and so rape cannot destroy the victim's chastity, unless she enjoyed the act.⁷⁷ The body of a rape victim can be violated but her mind can remain chaste, and thus to kill oneself was, in Augustine's opinion, a sin that imperilled the immortal soul.⁷⁸

Bowen and Peter Garnsey, translated texts for historians, vol. 40, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003).

⁷¹ Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* VI. xvii. 25.

⁷² Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, 100.

⁷³ St. Augustine, *De ciu. Dei* I. xvii. 20; Anton J. L. van Hooff, *From Autothanasia to Suicide*, 195-197.

⁷⁴ St. Augustine, *De ciu. Dei* I. xvi.

⁷⁵ St. Augustine, *De ciu. Dei* I. xvii.

⁷⁶ St. Augustine, *De ciu. Dei* I. xvii.

⁷⁷ St. Augustine, *De ciu. Dei* I. xvi.

⁷⁸ St. Augustine, *De ciu. Dei* I. xviii. The Roman Stoic philosopher Seneca also had argued that although one's body can be in peril of injury or slavery the soul remains whole and free (Seneca, *Ep.* LXV. 21 [Seneca, *Epistulae Morales* I, books I-LXV, trans. R. M. Gummere, Loeb Classical Library, [Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1917, reprinted 1979]; *De ben.* III. xx. 1 [Seneca, *Moral Essays*, vol. III, trans. John W. Basore, Loeb Classical

Augustine has several tasks here. He must convince those women who did not commit suicide to avoid the trauma of rape, that they had behaved correctly and according to Christian moral principles. He has also to convince their detractors that it would have been morally wrong for the women to have killed themselves.

In order to strengthen his argument, Augustine reviews and re-interprets famous suicides from Rome's long history.⁷⁹ He begins with the tale of Lucretia, who killed herself from shame after having been raped.⁸⁰ All the shame, claims Augustine, belonged to her attacker. She had done nothing shameful, or had she? What if she had secretly enjoyed the violence done to her?⁸¹ If that were the case, she had added murder to adultery.⁸² If she had been an innocent victim, then she had no reason to feel shame and no need to kill herself.⁸³ By doing so she had made herself an even worse criminal than the rapist. He was guilty of rape, but she was guilty of murder. Some three centuries before Augustine's time, Quintilian had pondered the question of whether suicide is a form of murder. In his opinion the killing of self is in no way equivalent to the killing of another, which is the opposite of Augustine's conclusion.⁸⁴

There is no hint in Livy's version of the story of any doubt of Lucretia's innocence. Both her husband and her father assured her that no blame could attach to her.⁸⁵ Indeed, when she killed herself despite all their efforts to dissuade her, she became an example to be admired for almost a millennium.

Library, [Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1935, reprinted 2006]); van Hooff, *From Autothanasia to Suicide*, 196.

⁷⁹ Whether these examples are historical or mythical is immaterial. It matters that they were thought to be historical.

⁸⁰ St. Augustine, *De ciu. Dei* I. xix.

⁸¹ St. Augustine, *De ciu. Dei* I. xix.

⁸² St. Augustine, *De ciu. Dei* I. xix.

⁸³ St. Augustine, *De ciu. Dei* I. xix. Despite Augustine's opinion that an innocent Lucretia should not have felt shamed, Le Saint, writing in 1951, could claim that Lucretia was 'dishonoured by Sextus Tarquinius' (Tertullian, *An Exhortation to Chastity*, trans. William P. Le Saint, ancient Christian writers, the lives of the Fathers in translation, [Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press 1951]), 149, note 114).

⁸⁴ Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* VII. iii. 7.

⁸⁵ Livy I. lviii. 9-10.

Even a Christian writer like Tertullian could hold her up as an admirable example of monogamy.⁸⁶ No one, it seems, until Augustine, had the slightest reservation concerning either her chastity or her right to end her own life if she believed that its continuation would be unbearable.⁸⁷ Lucretia's suicide might have been admired, but it was not necessarily emulated. Neither Suetonius nor Tacitus reports the suicide of any aristocratic woman who was the sexual prey of one of the 'wicked' emperors.

There was more to Lucretia's death than Augustine acknowledges. Her self-sacrifice was the immediate cause of one of the defining events of Roman history, the expulsion of the kings.⁸⁸ It has already been noted that the rape alone would probably not have been sufficient to incite her menfolk to rebellion.

There appears to have been no expectation among Roman pagans that a woman should kill herself to avoid rape, nor that the suicide of the victim was an appropriate response to the crime. Rome placed a high value on a woman's chastity, (and on that of a young man as well), but death rather than rape seems to have been a Christian innovation.⁸⁹ This was perhaps a notion that developed in conjunction with the idea of perpetual virginity for Christian women. In contrast, Roman women traditionally were expected to marry. Augustan legislation encouraged widows to remarry, despite the contradiction remarriage posed to the ideal of the woman who marries once only. Even Vestal Virgins were permitted to marry at the completion of their thirty years of service, although it appears that few did so.⁹⁰

Reasons for Preferring Death before Dishonour

Part of this change in attitude towards rape could be due to an outraged reaction against what Christians perceived as the immorality of pagan life.⁹¹ It could also be due to the strand of misogyny in Christianity that is evident from

⁸⁶ Tertullian, *An Exhortation to Chastity* 13, *Monogamy* 17, trans. William P. Le Saint.

⁸⁷ Livy, I. lviii. 10.

⁸⁸ Livy, I. lix. 9-60.

⁸⁹ Valerius Maximus *Memorable Doings and Sayings* VI.1.5, 7, 9, 10, - 13

⁹⁰ Plutarch, *Numa* 10.

⁹¹ Amundsen, *Medicine, Society and Faith in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, 101.

its earliest writings. It appears in St. Paul's advice to women that they must dress and behave modestly, not speak in Christian meetings, and defer to their husbands.⁹² Tertullian is even more repressive.⁹³ Cyprian also condemns women who adorn themselves, although his criticism is aimed more narrowly at those who had chosen the life of consecrated virgins, rather than women in general.⁹⁴ All appear to be following Jewish tradition. Paul and Tertullian base their argument on the story of the criminal behaviour of Eve in breaking God's law and persuading Adam to be her accomplice. According to this view all women have inherited the guilt consequent on Eve's wrongdoing.⁹⁵ Cyprian's appeal to Scripture is more general and less damning. It includes an exhortation to continence aimed at men.⁹⁶ Tertullian also blames women for attracting fallen angels who shared with them secrets that should have remained hidden.⁹⁷ It is probable that all of these factors played their part in changing attitudes about the desirability of women committing suicide to avoid rape, and about guilt at their inability to prevent the crime.

The attitude expressed by both Paul and Tertullian leads easily to a belief that the victim is to blame for the rapist's crime and must therefore expiate her supposed guilt. Augustine's clear prohibition was designed to end any confusion about Christian attitudes on the question of taking one's own life.

Conclusion

During the fourth century a section of Christian opinion held that a woman's virtue was destroyed by rape and that she should therefore commit suicide rather than submit. If death to prevent the crime was impossible then she

⁹² Ephesians 5. 22; 1 Timothy 2. 9-14.

⁹³ Tertullian, *De cultu feminarum*, http://www.tertullian.org/latin/de_cultu_feminarum_2.htm. See also Marcia L. Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, vol. II, *Stoicism in Christian Latin Thought through the Sixth Century*, studies in the history of Christian thought, vol. XXXV, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 27f.

⁹⁴ St. Cyprian, *De habitu uirginum*, trans. Sister Angela Elizabeth Keenan in Saint Cyprian, *Treatises*, trans. and ed. Roy J. Deferrari, *The Fathers of the Church*, a new translation, (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 1958, reprinted 1981). See also Colish, *The Stoic Tradition II*, 34.

⁹⁵ Tertullian, *De cultu feminarum* II. 1.

⁹⁶ St. Cyprian, *De habitu uirginum* 4.

⁹⁷ Tertullian, *De cultu feminarum* II. 1.

should kill herself after the assault rather than survive as a dishonoured woman. Although pagan philosophy had in the past approved of suicide for many reasons, the prevention of rape was not one of them. There is little evidence to suggest that Roman pagans expected a woman to commit suicide to prevent rape, or to kill herself after the assault if she was unable to prevent it. Lucretia's husband and her father tried to convince her that she bore no blame for Tarquin's crime. As part of his argument against suicide, Augustine makes the same point. As an innocent victim there was no need for Lucretia to commit suicide. Pagan Rome did recognise that a woman who has been raped may feel such despair that she might contemplate suicide, as shown by the father in Seneca's collection of *controversiae* who is worried that his daughter might kill herself, and hence ensures that she has no opportunity to do so. An expectation of death before dishonour, or of suicide after rape as proof of the woman's virtue, was a Christian innovation.

Bibliography

Ancient Sources

- Saint Ambrose, *De uirginibus*, Egnatius Cazzaniga (ed.), Torino, G. B. Paravia, 1948.
- Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, P. G. Walsh (trans.), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Saint Augustine, *De ciuitate Dei*, B. Dombart, A. Kalb, J. Divjak (eds), Stuttgart, Teubner, 1981.
- Calpurnius Flaccus, *The Declamations*, Lewis A. Sussman (ed.), Mnemosyne, Bibliotheca Classica Batava supplement 133, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1994.
- Saint Cyprian, *The Dress of Virgins*, Sister Angela Elizabeth Keenan (trans), in Saint Cyprian, *Treatises*, Roy J. Deferrari (ed.), The Fathers of the Church, a new translation, the Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C, 1958, reprinted 1981, pp. 31-52.
- Saint Jerome, *Aduersus Iouinianum*, in J-P. Migne (ed.), *Opera Omnia Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi*, Vols 2-3, *Patrologia Latina*, Vol. XXIII, Paris. 1845.
- Lactantius, *Diuinae institutiones, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, Vol. XIX, Pars I, sectio I, 1890, reprinted 1965.
- Livy. *Ab urbe condita*. B. O. Foster (trans.), Vol. I, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass. 1919, reprinted 1976.
- Plutarch. *Life of Numa*. Bernadotte Perrin (trans), Vol. I, Loeb Classical Library, London, W. Heinemann, 1914.
- Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, M. Winterbottom (ed.). Oxford, 1970.
- Seneca (Rhetor), *Declamations*, Vol. I, *Controuersiae*, Books I to VI. M. Winterbottom (trans.), Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press, 1974.
- Tertullian, *De cultu feminarum*, Book II,
http://www.tertullian.org/latin/de_cultu_feminarum_2.htm, Accessed 25 June, 2010.
- Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, D. R. Shackleton Bailey (ed. and trans.), Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass. and London, Harvard University Press, 2000.

Modern Sources

- S. F. Bonner, *Roman Declamation in the Late Republic and Early Empire*,

Liverpool, University Press of Liverpool, 1959.

Ian Donaldson, *The Rapes of Lucretia. A Myth and its Transformations*, Oxford, 1982.

F. Homes, Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, in two volumes, Oxford, 1935.

Emile Durkheim, *Suicide. A Study in Sociology*, John A. Spalding and George Simpson (trans.), London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952.

Yolande Gris , 'De la fr quence du suicide chez les Romains,' *Latomus* Vol. 39, 1980, pp. 17-46.

Ismail Kaygusuz, 'Funerary Epigram of Karzene (Paphlagonia): A Girl Raped by the Goths?' *Epigraphica Anatolica* Vol. 4, 1984, pp. 61-62.

Lewis A. Sussman (ed.), *The Major Declamations Ascribed to Quintilian. A Translation*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 1987.

Anton J. L. van Hooff, *From Autothanasia to Suicide. Self-killing in Classical Antiquity*, London and New York, Routledge, 1990.

Michael Winterbottom (ed.), *The Minor Declamations Ascribed to Quintilian, Texte und Kommentare*, Vol. 13, Berlin and New York, Walter de Gruyter, 1984.