

Doing Justice to Plautus, a Master of Comedy, a Master of Wordplay

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Review essay

Michael Fontaine, *Funny Words in Plautine Comedy*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. xvi+311 pages. ISBN 978-0-19-534144-7.

Abstract. Fontaine's book, while clearly not the first study in Plautus' wordplay, is a breakthrough for a fuller appreciation of Plautus' artistry. The fine points of the interplay of wordplay and comic effect in its theatrical setting had been obscured, Fontaine shows, as early as when Plautus' comedies were copied in modernised Latin spelling one century after Plautus' times.

Keywords: Wordplay; puns; ancient Roman comedy; Plautus. Appendix: U.S. history (Gilded Age).

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1. Introduction

"Readers of Plautus are often struck by the Roman comedian's penchant for making words up" (4). Supported by meticulous attentiveness to detail and nuance, Fontaine's cogent analysis of humour in the lexicon and onomasticon in Plautus' comedies is a very important contribution to modern understanding of Plautus (ca. 254–184 B.C.E.) and Roman comedy.

Plautus' *opus* is replete with wordplay, and Fontaine's aim is to show how closely connected Plautine comedy's "wordplay, style, and characterization" are (ix). "This book was written to argue that early readers of Plautus' text, when facing a verbal ambiguity, sometimes opted for the wrong resolution of it. These early choices, few but important, have governed when and which other ambiguities we notice in Plautus today" (ix). Interpretations have tended "to determine and reinforce those prior opinions" (ix), and Fontaine's book "offers readers interested in Plautus' Latin a mixture of literary and textual criticism that attempts to break the cycle and offer some new perspectives on his comedy" (ix).

All Latin and Greek appears in the book under review in both the original and translation, quite appealingly so. Inevitably, it is not an easy read — because the subject is a difficult one — even though technical terms are often explained. Nevertheless, for readers with some familiarity with the classics, this is a most rewarding book, one into which to delve again and again. This is a book for classicists, but not only for them.

It is an important book for humour studies, too, though a demanding one. The subject requires it. Would a student enrol for a degree in mathematics, yet try to avoid difficult subjects? At the same time, the book under review makes its subject matter admirably accessible, within the limits of the possible. I would go as far as saying that any satisfactory research into wordplay, in texts in whatever language, would not be using a toolbox sophisticated enough, if the depths attained by Fontaine in *Funny Words in Plautine Comedy* were not acknowledged. This book sets a higher standard.

Let the titles of the first two chapters not deter the non-classicist. They are “*Verba Perplexabilia*” and “Parapraxis and Parachesis”. (Parapraxes are Freudian slips; parecheses are specious repetitions.) “In chapter 2, stylistic comparisons often led us to conclude that parecheses had been misinterpreted as repetitions” (147).

The three indices following the 13 pages of bibliography are the 12-page “Index Locorum” (of the citations from the classics), and then, before the “General Index”, the “Index Jocorum: A Pundex” (the latter coinage is a portmanteau, a blend, of *pun* and *index*) — “intended to help readers locate all of the jokes, ambiguities, puns, equivocations, double entendre, and other forms of *ars pun-ica*¹ discussed in the text. These are divided among English Greek, Latin, and Punic [i.e., Carthaginian]² lists, but in general worlds in puns forming a pair are doubly listed. Larger catalogues of Plautus’ puns can be found in Mendelsohn (1907), Brinkhoff (1935, in Dutch), and Schmidt (1960, in German; typescript only); of these, Schmidt is largest, Brinkhoff best” (283).

2. Situations Involving Equivocation

Early in Ch. 3, “Equivocation and Other Ambiguities”, Fontaine explains (97):

In chapter 2 I noted that Plautus’ ‘funny’ words are broadly of two types. Of the first type are those that involve a specious repetition, or parechesis, of two different words; most of our attention so far has been spent on these. Of the second type are single words that, without the aid of parechesis to make it explicit, ironically evoke *other* words or meanings by their context or setup. [...] they will naturally be more difficult to detect.

A male character, Scepharnio, a man who is molesting the woman Ampelisca in a scene in the comedy *Rudens*, while she carries a hydria, a clay vessel holding water, describes her body with what Fontaine renders with “It’s *subvolturium* — no, no, it’s *subaquilum*, I mean!” (39). By *subaquilum*, “a little swarthy” is meant. The substitution is between two birds of prey (*aquila* ‘eagle’ and *voltur* or *volturius* ‘vulture’) or two winds (*Aquilo* and *Volturnus*), but Fontaine, who uses photographs of painted vessels for illustration, further points out that *subaquilum* suggests that Ampelisca is “under the water”, as — which “will have been obvious to the Roman audience all along” (43) — “From her entrance onstage in v. 331, Ampelisca has not been holding the hydria in her hand, as the commentators and translators tell us, but on her head” (43–44). “The explanation, in my view, is that the word *subaquilum* is a ‘rimshot’ pun calculated to elicit a groan from the audience, a pun whose double meaning is activated by visual cues: *-aqu-ilum* is a facetious calque, or loan translation, of [the Greek name for a hydria:] ὕδρ-ία, [...] Scepharnio is saying simultaneously (i) ‘her complexion is a bit swarthy’ and (ii) ‘her body is beneath-the-hydria’” (44–45).

¹ Intending by *ars pun-ica* ‘the art of punning’, rather than ‘Carthaginian art’ (*ars Punica*). As a further twist on the same pun, may I point out that the inventory in the “Index Jocorum” can be likened to the seeds of a pomegranate: there are plenty of them, and there is a high density. A pomegranate was called a *malum Punicum* in Latin, literally ‘a Carthaginian apple/fruit’.

² Punic utterances as being transcribed in Plautus’ comedy *Poenulus* were discussed in a book by Maurice Sznycer (1967), *Les passages puniques en transcription latine dans le Poenulus de Plaute*.

In Ch. 3, “Equivocation and Other Ambiguities” in the book under review, before beginning the section “Equivocation in *Pseudylus*”, Fontaine writes: “We begin with an interrogation scene in *Pseudylus*, in which Plautus combines the paratragic tones of Delphic oracles with the sly wit of Socratic irony for one of his greatest linguistic tricks, a trick that passes unnoticed in our commentaries and translations today” (128). The slave Pseudylus overhears a conversation, and “[o]ut of earshot”, he “plays the *ieron*, punctuating the two old men’s dialogue with asides” (129). He is eventually spotted, and as the two men prepare to question him, one of them warns the other “of the slave’s crafty wordsmithery” (129). The slave tells his older master: “If you want anything, ask. Consider my reply your response from Delphi”, i.e., the gospel truth, but oracles could be ambiguous. He then answers Latin questions in Greek.

Fontaine remarks: “Since we are watching a comedy, however, we should also ask what *dramatic* function, if any, is performed by a switching of codes” (131). The play is set in Athens, but the Greek of the answers is Hellenistic, not Attic, and by Plautus’ times, the Greek diphthong αἰ was already pronounced [ē] (131). Therefore, when the slave says ναὶ γάρ (“Why, yes!”), he is equivocating with Latin *negar* “No” (132) for *negare* ‘to deny’ or *negatur* ‘this is denied’. The slave said the truth in Greek, but he is protecting his young master by having the latter’s father understand the contrary. Fontaine further remarks: “We could perhaps in translation replace Plautus’ pun with a pun on Modern Greek ὄχι ‘no’ and English *okay*” (132), even though it is not as good as Plautus’ pun.

This also affects characterisation. Fontaine points out (132):

Moreover, this pun may change how we interpret the slave’s character overall. For if we ask what purpose the equivocation serves and why Pseudylus does not simply lie in reply to Simo’s interrogation, we realize that Pseudylus’ dilemma is that of all Plautine clever slaves (*servi callidi*): dual loyalty. He himself explains a moment later that he is in a double bind; as the proverbial slave who serves two masters, the younger Calidorus and the older Simo, Pseudylus must guard against offending either one (vv. 490–503). This is why, as he explains, he did not reveal his young master’s affair to Simo [...]

3. “When We Think We Have Understood a Passage in Plautus, We Have Really Understood Only Half of It — and Not Necessarily the Better Half”

Near the beginning of Ch. 1, “*Verba Perplexabilia*”, Fontaine states (4):

In this book I argue from comparative evidence that Plautus makes a number of puns like these. Because these puns often involve a strange, unattested, or improper use of a word, however, readers easily overlook them. One reason we miss them is that his characters [...] often *misdirect* us: They lead us to expect *x*, but they give us *y*. [...] At other times, characters who equivocate in the hopes of deceiving their opponents onstage appear so successful and persuasive that they end up deceiving us, too. I hope to show, then, that sometimes when we think we have understood a passage in Plautus, we have really understood only half of it — and not necessarily the better half, either.

In fact, emendations by scholars old and new made things worse (4). Emendations were as early as the Latin spelling being modernised one century after Plautus (250). And then we also get scholarly emendations from the modern period. Of course, modern proponents of emendations sometimes end up with a reputational risk actualised: how many emendations were proposed for the Hebrew Bible because of what turned out to be a cavalier attitude, only to be belied by later discoveries of comparative linguistics? *Mutatis mutandis*, in Plautus’ case things are complicated by his pervasive humour. Fontaine really shows us how clever Plautus was. And it took somebody absolutely first rate to be able to do so.

Oftentimes, Plautus deformed familiar words, invented portmanteau coinages (blends), or had his characters “*misuse* the familiar meaning of words to make puns. Terms of abuse offer an especially fertile source of these comical misusages” (5). One of the examples is of Plautus having an extant noun unusually express the sense of a delocutive action noun (6):

[A]fter Trachalio has rapidly repeated the word *licet* ‘okay, all right’, ad nauseam in [the comedy] *Rud[ens]* 1212–1224, Daemones cries out in frustration (v. 1225), “*Hercules istum infelīcet cum sua licentia!*” (aside) May Hercules make that fellow **all wrong** with his “**all right**”-ing’ Context requires that *licentia* ‘permission, license’ here have the improper meaning ‘his saying *licet(s)*’. In this instance, the facetious misuse escapes the [*Oxford Latin Dictionary* ...]

Moreover, “with *infelīcet* Daemones means not only ‘make (him) unfortunate’ [...] but also ‘un-*licet* him’, ‘put an end to his saying *licet*’. [If Daemones intentionally mispronounces it *infelīcet* here, he bungles the meter but makes the pun obvious;” ...] (6, Fontaine’s brackets). Linguistically, what we have here is a combination of the delocutive verbal aspect (when a verb expresses the saying of a formula, from which the verb itself was derived), and negation, which in Latin is by means of a prefix (something that would have not been possible in Semitic languages, because of their so-called “nonconcatenative” morphology;³ still, in Hebrew and Arabic delocutive verbs⁴ do occur).

I am reminded of a reduplicatively formed verb neologised in Maltese (the Arabic dialect spoken by the Catholic population of Malta, and much influenced by Sicilian, Italian and English, with departures from the Semitic morphology of verbs to an extent not found in any other Semitic language), by a teacher irked by a too deferential pupil. The following is quoted from Manwel Mifsud’s *Loan Verbs in Maltese* (1995, p. 77):

³ See for example in Nissan (2014) a computational linguistic treatment of nonconcatenative word-formation.

⁴ The delocutive verbal aspect conveys the semantic pattern ‘to say some formula, e.g., a prayer, which contains <root> or is named by <derivative_of_root>’, as in the Hebrew intransitive verb /hibdil/ [hiv’dil] for ‘to say Havdalah’, the brief prayer that marks the end of the Sabbath. The Hebrew verb /hibdil/ may indicate either a causal meaning (‘to discern’, ‘to separate’), or a delocutive one: ‘to say Havdalah’, i.e., ‘to say the /ha-mabdil/ [hamav’dil] prayer’. As being delocutive, the verb /hibdil/ is always intransitive. The prayer (for the end of the Sabbath) is named /ha-mabdil/, since it contains that word, meaning “Who separateth” (in a blessing for the Almighty, who separates the day from the night, the holiday from the weekday, and so forth).

The delocutive verbal aspect is close to, but not identical to the declarative verbal aspect. The declarative aspect conveys the semantic pattern ‘to affirm that somebody is...’, as in the Hebrew verb /hišdiq/ [hits’dik], i.e., ‘to justify’, as if declaring that the direct object is just (/šaddiq/). On occasion, it is not obvious (other than by comparative linguistics) that the aspect is declarative. Such is the case of the Hebrew verb /hokih/ [ho’xiak] for ‘to reproach’ and ‘to prove’. The root is √*wkḥ*. Whereas for an Israeli mathematician, the first sense of that verb that would come to one’s mind is that of proving a theorem, the ancient sense was ‘to reproach’ (it is still an extant acceptance of that verb). Once you know that in Arabic, *wakīḥ* denotes ‘wicked’, you may realise that possibly the protosememe (the original sense) was an instance of the declarative verbal aspect, namely, ‘to declare wicked’, hence ‘to reproach’. Similarly, as in Hebrew *rašá* ‘is the term for ‘wicked’, the verb *hiršia* ‘, literally denotes ‘to declare wicked’, and as a technical term in law, it denotes ‘to find guilty’.

Delocutives in Arabic are the subject of Larcher (1983). In present-day English, it is possible to transform fragments of utterances into adjectives (delocutive adjectives) or nouns (delocutive nouns). Such is the English noun *whodunit*, for a “detective narrative or film or play”, after the question *Who done it?* As for adjectives, the following example (which I underline) occurs in a passage (Rogers 1986) concerning the nuclear accident in Chernobyl, Ukraine:

Post-Chernobyl, more radical proposals may find favor. The Swedish PIUS (Process Inherent Ultimately Safe), for example, is designed so that if the cooling system fails, the plant automatically shuts itself down through natural convection, rather than depending on valves and motors. This and similar proposals are called walk-away reactors. Skeptics raise efficiency and maintenance questions about them, but ‘walkaway’ has a nice ring to it — just in case engineers someday need a better word than ‘redundancy’ to communicate their can-do confidence to an increasingly let’s-not public.

/ˈsɜrsɜ/ <sr̥sr> a sporadic onomatopoeic [not so! *recte*: delocutive] formation coined on the spur of the moment by a school teacher while correcting a student's invading manners: “*Int se ddum isserser?*”⁵ ‘How long will you call out: *Sir! Sir!* ?’ This verb is used by using the E[nglish] vocative *Sir!* as a repeated base [...] thereby conveying an iterative sense.

I wonder whether a double sense was intended (or at the very least consciously tolerated) by the teacher who coined the verb as a nonce word (a word used only for a single occasion), even though Mifsud does not mention this. At least in the East, from the vernacular Arabic noun *sársarī* for ‘cad’, ‘rascal’, an intransitive verb *sársar* was formed, with the sense ‘to behave promiscuously’.

In Ch. 1 in his book under review, Fontaine notes that context is indispensable in order to make sense of a word in a Latin sentence (or then in order to separate words in the continuous text of manuscripts that did not use spaces for separation). Perceptual sets — in terminology drawn from psychology — enable onlookers to make sense of an ambiguous image or word, based on situational contexts. Fontaine states (7):

And yet however helpful this means of disambiguation is for editing works of a serious nature, comedy is the natural enemy of the perceptual set. Comedians love to set up patterns that seemingly build toward a logical end, only to *reverse* and disappoint our expectations at the final moment. Ancient theorists call this facetious and sudden reversal of expectations a *para prosdokian* (Greek *παρὰ προσδοκίαν*, Latin *praeter expectationem* ‘contrary to expectation, surprise turn, switcheroo’).

“When a performer utters a manifest absurdity or an outlandish double entendre in perfect deadpan, an audience rarely fails to understand that more meaning is being conveyed than the words alone suggest” (7). Our disadvantage is that “Plautine comedy is for us a textual experience, and we lack the benefit of original punctuation or independent stage directions to indicate what the playwright intended” (7). Fontaine illustrates this by naming a claim concerning a passage in a particular play in whose protagonists are twins. That passage is the declaration that even though the subject *graecissat* (i.e., is about things Greek), it does not *atticissat* (Atticise, like in Athens), but rather *sicilicissat* (Sicilianises).⁶

Fontaine argues that there is a portmanteau formation here with *sicilicus*, the name of “a small diacritical mark above a letter to show that it counted double” (10). May I add that this is like a *dagesh forte* dot in the Hebrew script, which in the last dozen centuries has been used to indicate that the consonant inside which it is written, is to be pronounced double. Likewise, the Arabic script has the *shadda* (‘tying’) diacritical mark ّ above a letter for gemination, i.e., it indicates that that consonant is to be pronounced double. Plautus’ double sense is then not only that the protagonists were born in Sicily (which they were), but also that it is a comedy of twins (*gemini*, just as the *sicilicus* is a *geminatiois nota*, an ‘indication of twining’).

4. Translating Punning Exchanges, and Having the Punning Come Across in Translation

On occasion, Fontaine tries to generate English puns that would translate Plautus’ Latin ones. For example, Fontaine discusses (22) how in the comedy *Amphitryo*, Mercury reminisces to his own fists the time when they “stripped bare four men and laid them away in slumber”, The slave Sosia overhears him, and cries out in fright that Mercury is going to change his name, from *Sosia* to *Quintus*. The latter literally means ‘fifth’ in Latin, so Fontaine has Sosia say

⁵ I understand the literal sense as: “Thou now shalt-persist calls-out-Sir!-Sir! ?”

⁶ In Sicily, Greek was spoken.

“this guy’s going to change my name, and I’ll turn from ‘Sosia’ into ‘Feivel’”. This is for the sake of punning on the English word *five*, but as *Feivel* is a Yiddish name, this stage direction is added: “(aside, Yiddish accent)”.

A character offered soles (*lingualacas*) to eat, retorts that his wife is far too active nagging him with her tongue (*lingua*): she is a *lingualaca*. Fontaine translates this with “Want some **carp**?” “What for, when my wife’s at home? She’s *carp* enough for us — because she never shuts up” (23). She is always carping. (Whereas in ancient Rome’s Latin, it was soles whose name was semantically motivated by the concept ‘tongue’ — presumably because not only soles are flat, they also go about their life horizontally just as a human tongue is horizontal, with both eyes on the same side of their body — in other languages the semantic motivation from ‘tongue’ for a fish name occurs for some different fish taxon.)⁷

I have been thinking of any possible examples in a couple of other languages, and I must recognise I have been unsuccessful, not for want of trying. Clearly, the English fish-name *carp*, and the double entendre associated with it, is especially felicitous for rendering Plautus’ pun. In contrast, *boccadoro* (literally ‘golden mouth’, thus with potential for a pun involving the opposite view concerning somebody talkative) is another Italian name of the fish *ombrina leccia* (*Argyrosomus regius*), whose English names include: *meagre*, *shade-fish*, *salmon-basse*, and *stone basse*.

That species belongs to of the family *Sciaenidae*, which also comprises the genus *Umbrina*, Italian *ombrina*). The flesh of both the *ombrina* and the *boccadoro* is much appreciated, but the name *boccadoro* is little known. The etymology of the genus name *Umbrina* is from Latin *umbra*, *-ae* ‘shadow’, in the sense of ‘phantom’. That semantic

⁷ The fish *Scomberoides lysan* (Dor 1965, p. 179) — but Giovanni Oman (1992, §179, pp. 75–76) calls it *Chorinemus lysan* or *Scomberomoides lysan*, the English names being *queenfish* or *leatherskin* — is called by several local Arabic names in the Gulf, along the southern coasts of Arabia, and along the coasts of the Red Sea. In Aqaba, Jordan, it is called *sēfeh* (Oman, *ibid.*).

On Saudi Arabia’s Red Sea coasts, as well as in Yemen and Eritrea, the Arabic name is *līsān*, literally ‘tongue’. This is a lexical cognate of Hebrew לָשׁוֹן *lašón* ‘tongue’. The fish *Scomberoides lysan* is called by Israeli zoologists (Dor 1965, p. 179) by the halfway nativised name לִישָׁן *lišán*, keeping the vowel sequence as in Arabic, but with *š* as per the rules of Arabic/Hebrew phonological correspondence, yet arguably in order to make the name evocative of the etymological meaning ‘tongue’, while keeping the fish name different from לָשׁוֹן *lašón* ‘tongue’. Had Dor felt that the Israeli Hebrew fish name לִישָׁן *lišán* was fully naturalised into (Israeli) Hebrew derivation, then the diacritical marks for the vowels would have been as in לִישָׁן *lišán*.

This is somewhat confusing. The fish *Chirocentrus dorab* is called *līsān* in Standard Modern Arabic, as well as by other Arabic names (e.g., *dorab*) in various areas, and these are listed by Giovanni Oman (1992, p. 44, §98), who also supplies the English names “Silkfish, Wolf Herring, Dorab”. In Israeli Hebrew, Dor (1965, p. 85) calls the species *Chilocentrus dorab* by a loanword: דּוֹרָאב *dorab*, with no phonological adaptation, as final [b] is not grammatical in Hebrew.

As though this was not enough, there is a fish — a sole, *Dollfusichthys sinus-arabici* — which is called by Israeli zoologists by the natively derived name לִשְׁוֹנִית *leşonit* (<לָשׁוֹן *lašón* ‘tongue’). These are the fishes known in English as the *tongue soles* of the genus *Cynoglossus* (see Menon 1977, and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cynoglossus>). It is also said that *Cynoglossus* is a genus of tonguefish. In fact, *Dollfusichthys sinus-arabici* is a synonym for *Cynoglossus sinusarabici* (defined by Chabanaud in 1931), and for *Aseraggodes sinusarabici* (it, too, defined by Chabanaud in 1931). *Cynoglossus sinusarabici* is called in French *Sole-Langue de la Mer Rouge*. There also exist a species *C. dollfusi*. ‘Bengal tongue sole’ is a name given to *Cynoglossus cynoglossus* and *C. semifasciatus*.

But לִשְׁוֹנִית *leşonit* also exists in Israeli Hebrew as an adjective for ‘linguistic’ (f.), and as an adverb for ‘linguistically’. The systematic family of that fish, *Cynoglossidae* (this is a family of flatfish, i.e., it belongs to the order *Pleuronectiformes*), is called in Israel by the name לִשְׁוֹנִיִּיִּים *leşonitiyyim* after the locally present fish *leşonit*, rather than after the locally absent type genus *Cynoglossus*. Actually however the genus *Dollfusichthys* is often included inside the genus *Cynoglossus*, whose members are known in English as *tongue soles*. In Portuguese, the tongue fish of the species *Symphurus plagiusa* is called *língua-de-mulata*, or *tapa*, the latter name also denoting a small flatfish of the genus *Achirus* that is also called *linguado-lixá* (Taylor 1970, s.vv.).

motivation is due to the quick movements of that fish. Species of that genus of food fishes, especially the Mediterranean species *Umbrina cirrosa*, are known in English by the name *umbrine*. Nevertheless, in North America the species *Umbrina roncadore* is known by the name *yellowfin croaker*. That species occurs in the Pacific from the Gulf of California, Mexico, to Point Conception, California.

Another fish (the species *Lithognathus mormyrus*) is called *mormora* (*mórmora*) or *mormoro* (*mórmoro*) in Italian, and here the double sense is with respectively ‘s/he whispers’ and ‘I whisper’. There is some potential for humour of the kind of Fontaine’s translation, but with in Italian with *mormora* it would take us too far from Plautus’ original: “Gradiresti del pesce? Una mormora” “No, per carità, sapessi che soprassalti ho per il vizio che ha mia moglie di mormorarmi quando mi è alle spalle.” (“Would you like some fish?” “Not at all, really! You have no idea how many times I am startled because of my wife’s habit of addressing me by whispering, when she is behind me.”)

The species *Lithognathus mormyrus* occurs in the Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, Bay of Biscay and off various islands in the northeast Atlantic. The genus *Lithognathus* belongs to the *Sparidae* family. Other than the Mediterranean species, fish of that genus is found in coastal regions in Southern Africa (South Africa, Namibia and Angola). The English names for the various species of this genus include: *sand steenbras* (*Lithognathus mormyrus*), *west coast seabream* (*L. aureti*); *white steenbras* (*L. lithognathus*), and *steenbras* (*L. olivieri*).

It would be different if we were to relax constraints about the kind of pun, provided it involves a wife and fish being served. The shark *Galeorhinus galeus* — the school shark, a houndshark of the family *Triakidae* — is called *cagnesca* in Italian, literally ‘doggish (f.)’. “Mi basta una cagnesca che ho ha casa” (“The one at home, she is doggish enough”) would be a possible reply if a dish of that fish was offered, but shark meat is not so widespread among Italian-speakers. English names of that species include *school shark*, *tope shark*, *soupsfin shark*, and *snapper shark*.

Menola (pronounced *mènola*) is the Italian name of the widespread, consumed fish *Spicara maena* (synonym: *Maena maena*), but the same fish-name could also be understood — other than by Tuscans, who distinguish in pronunciation between the open *è* and the closed *é* — as an archaising verbal form *ménola* equivalent for *la méno*, for either “I beat her” or “we are intimate”: both options are off limits in polite discourse, or socially unacceptable. That fish species is called *blotched picarel* in English, and is a ray-finned fish native to the eastern Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Black Sea.

Phoxinus phoxinus is a small freshwater fish in the carp family, *Cyprinidae*: that species is common in freshwater in northern Italy, and its flesh is consumed. That fish is called *minnow*, or *common minnow*, or *Eurasian minnow* in English. Also the Italian fish-name *fregarolo* of the species *Phoxinus phoxinus* — because of vulgar acceptations of the verb *fregare*, which in its primary sense is about friction (hence the semantic motivation for the particular fish-name lends itself to an indecent interpretation, as well as to word-senses related to cheating (somebody) or stealing (something from somebody)). I recall that not aged eleven yet, and new to an Italian school (on the previous year, I had been schooled privately at home in the language and the entire Italian primary school curriculum), early in the year on the very day I had learned the verb *fregare* in the sense ‘to misappropriate’ from classmates who had been using it, I complained publicly to the teacher that So-and-So “mi ha fregato l’astuccio”, “has nabbed my [pens] case”. The class erupted in laughter, as that verb does not belong in polite discourse. As for the old teacher, she calmly explained to me that much.

The metre-long seabird called in English *frigatebird* and in Italian *fregata* happens to be aptly (though not etymologically) named in Italian after the verb *fregare* in the sense ‘to nab’, and in fact, it is called *iwa* (literally ‘thief’) in Hawaiian. It is a bird that cannot waterproof its feathers, and yet, it feeds on fish. Such prey either are flying fish, or fish captured by some other seabird, from which the frigatebird grabs it. *New Scientist* magazine pointed out the

Hawaiian name of the frigatebird (Hodson 2015, p. 23) while explaining the circumstances in which a photograph shot by Michael Poliza and which the newspaper reproduced, was taken.

The fish *Oblada melanura*, which is also consumed — it belongs to the family *Sparidae*, and its English names include *saddled seabream*, *saddle bream*, and *oblade* — is called *occhiata* in Italian, but *occhiata* also means ‘stare’, ‘glance’. A possible reply to “Un piatto di magro: ti va un’occhiata?” (“A meatless dish: would you like an *occhiata*?”) could be: “Mi bastano le occhiatacce che mi dà mia moglie a casa”, i.e., “I am more than fed up with the glaring stares my wife gives me at home”.

The much appreciated fish *Dicentrarchus labrax*, called *European seabass* and sometimes *sea dace* in English, is an ocean-going fish that sometimes enters brackish and fresh waters. It is called *spigola* (pronounced *spígola*) or *branzino* in different parts of Italy. The Italian noun *spigolo* (*spígolo*) denotes ‘corner’, whereas the adjective *spigoloso* denotes both ‘with sharp corners’ and ‘cantankerous’. “Vuoi una spigola?” (“Do you want a *spigola*?”) could jokingly elicit the reply: “Basta il nome a ricordarmi quant’è *spigolosa* mia moglie. Mi toglie l’appetito” (“Its very name reminds me of how *cantankerous* my wife is. I’m no longer hungry”).

Or then, “Il tonno ti piacerà di sicuro” (“You’ll surely appreciate some *tuna*”), may elicit, from a cantankerous interlocutor, this despondent reply: “Alludi, eh, alludi? A mia moglie che pesa una tonnellata, eh?” (“You are alluding, aren’t you? To my wife weighing a ton, it’s this you mean”).

5. Mondegreens

In Ch. 1 in Fontaine’s book, a section entitled “Mondegreens and Misunderstandings” is included. The following is the definition provided by Fontaine (57):

A mondegreen is defined as the mishearing of a word or phrase that leads to misinterpretation based on it.; misheard song lyrics, such as *There’s a bathroom on the right* for *There’s a bad moon on the rise* or *Excuse me, while I kiss this guy* for ...*kiss the sky* are probably the most familiar case of mondegreens. Indeed, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* (s.v. “mondegreen”) notes, the term itself is an example of the phenomenon since it comes from the phrase *laid him on the green* misheard as *Lady Mondegreen* in the ballad “The Bonny Earl of Murray”.

If psychologists are correct, errors based on mishearing function essentially as the linguistic converse of slips of the tongue. Certainly from the punster’s point of view, these two types of error are inherently and *qualitatively* similar, and that makes them very valuable for our study.

The first example of mondegreens from the classics that Fontaine makes is from a Greek fragment by Epicharmus: “At the very dawn of comedy, Epicharmus makes an interlocutor in one of his fragments mishear γ’ ἔρανον ‘picnic, pitch-in’ as γέρανον ‘crane’ (the bird, here translated ‘pigeon’) (fr. 76)” (57): Fontaine chose *pigeon* because of its sounding rather like *pitch-in* in English. “As we will see, this is probably one of the comedic techniques that prompted some critics in Horace’s time to enthuse that Plautus, as the virtual *Epicharmus Romanus*, ‘strives to cultivate the style of Epicharmus’” (57).

As a child in the early 1960s, I once watched a stage performance in Hebrew, near home, of an adaptation of *Don Quixote* by Cervantes. Two characters discuss the protagonist’s delusional behaviour. One says he now calls himself *Don key-shot* (only as it was in Hebrew, this English segmentation was lost on me in the audience: I am just reproducing the pronunciation for English-language readers). Another character wonders: “Don kiššút?”, as *kiššút* in Hebrew means ‘ornament’ (in Modern Hebrew, under the influence of Yiddish, it also used to mean ‘a good-for-nothing’).

Mondegreens occurs in real life, too. An atrociously grotesque situation was related by Prof. Vatikiotis of London,⁸ in a lecture to Orientalists at Tel-Aviv University that found its way into a booklet of that university's Moshe Dayan Center (Vatikiotis 1997). On p. 50 in his paper,⁹ Vatikiotis related what happened to a friend of his, a prominent Egyptian journalist who was in prison under Gamal Abdul Nasser's dictatorial rule. At one point, a medical officer had begun the roll call of inmates waiting for a medical examination. The partially deaf man misheard his name, "Muḥammad 'Abbās!", as though it was the order "Fikk al-libās!" ("Drop the underpants!"), because of the similarly sounding ending. The inmate complied, and as a consequence was subjected to a beating that left him almost completely deaf.¹⁰

⁸ A political scientist and historian of the Middle East, profound in his analysis, with a special focus on the modern history of Egypt (particularly since the 1952 revolution), P.J. (Taki) Vatikiotis, in full Panayiotis Jerasimof Vatikiotis, was born in Jerusalem in 1928, and died in December 1997. He studied at the American University in Cairo and Johns Hopkins University, and was a naturalised American, but in 1964 he moved to the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, where he was Professor of Politics until his early retirement in 1989. "He had a mischievous, self-deprecating and often caustic sense of humour" ("P.J. Vatikiotis: an appreciation", <http://ismaili.net/Source/0722c.html>). Cf. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P._J._Vatikiotis

⁹ I am grateful for identifying for me the exact citation, and for sending me a scan of the two facing pages from that booklet, which I had read many years ago, Marion Gliksberg, the Librarian of the Library of Tel-Aviv University's Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies.

¹⁰ I am quoting from Vatikiotis (1997, pp. 50–51, my brackets); concerning *pasha* as a honorific, this used to be applied to notables under the Egyptian monarchy, and in republican times was viewed negatively, but *super-pasha* was a polemic coinage in a book to which Vatikiotis was referring:

One of the best comparisons [of pre- and post-1952 situations] that I have seen, first published in 1984, and which went through several printings, has been the book of Husayn Mu'nis, *Bashawat wa suber-bashawat* (Pashas and Super-Pashas). The definition of pasha was the chap before 1952 who, in order to become a pasha, had to produce something. But the super-pashas were Nasser's creatures. They produced nothing, they were just influence-peddling middlemen, and overnight they became millionnaires.

The harsh autocratic — really arbitrary authoritarian — nature of the so-called republics or non-hereditary monarchies after the British withdrawal, can be illustrated by incidents involving some of my friends and acquaintances. A friend of over forty years, the late critic Louis Awad, was arrested in 1959 along with several others and put in a crowded prison cell pending interrogation. A graduate of Cambridge and Princeton universities, Louis told his fellow-inmates in English: "We must seek to get a writ of habeas corpus." But the officer on duty understood English, grabbed Louis, and began to beat him up rather badly, muttering and screaming: "What habeas corpus? This is how it is here."

Another one, Muhammad Sid Ahmad, a leading journalist and prominent member of the Egyptian Left, was also the nephew of the notorious strongman politician of the 1930s, Isma'il Sidqi Pasha. He was himself the son and grandson of pashas, so he could also be identified as coming from the privileged class of Egypt. He was partially deaf when he was arrested. Along with the other inmates of that prison cell, Sid Ahmad was due to undergo a routine physical examination one morning. The medical officer arrived and began the roll call for that purpose. Sid Ahmad's full name was Muhammad Abbas Sid Ahmad. So when the medical officer read out loud "Muhammad Abbas", he thought he heard the order "fik el-libas!" and so he promptly dropped his pants in preparation for the imminent medical examination. Needless to say, after they were finished with Muhammad, he was almost completely deaf.

The third case is that of Isma'il Sabri Abdallah, who was a member of the Communist Party in Egypt, and who later was director of the National Institute of Planning and at one time minister of planning. His torture at the hands of the military regime left his face badly disfigured. This is what the autocrat Nasser, the great hero of many politicians and [p. 51:] social scientists in the West in the 1950s and 1960s, did to his own people.

If one were to stop and look at the way some Egyptians reacted to this kind of regime terror, one will find that the late playwright and short-story writer Dr. Yusuf Idris protested against the system in a brilliant play he wrote and staged in the National Theater in 1962–63. Called *Al-Farafir* [*The China Ware*], the play ran for two years before a packed house. It was a subtle attack on the system. Then in 1971 or 1973 Yusuf attended the opening of the circus in Cairo — the

It has even happened that a group of persons (speakers of language L_1 but ignorant of language L_2) were instructed to utter U_1 in L_1 , so that another person would misinterpret this as utterance U_2 in L_2 , because she spoke L_2 but was ignorant of L_1 . The two utterances are nearly homophonous. In a popularistic article in a French magazine, Castelot (1973) related that, once the French general Jean-Baptiste-Jules Bernadotte (1763–1844) had become the King of Sweden (as Charles XIV) in 1818, and Désirée Clary, his wife, was convinced to leave Paris to reach her new country, after some contacts she realised that just a minority of the Swedish upper class were able to converse with her in French; instead, on parading in the streets, she concluded that unlike the aristocrats, the masses of her subjects were able to communicate with her in French, as they greeted her in the street. She related this contrast to her niece in a letter. However, the masses had just greeted her with what she heard as French *Vive la reine!* (*Long live the Queen!*). What she ignored, is that they had been instructed to shout, in dialectal Swedish, *Vi vill ha rein!* (*We want rain!*). This is an example of the importance of quantity, in recognition.

In very special circumstances, a longer text can be concocted that makes sense in two languages. In 1584, thirteen years old Leone da Modena wrote an elegy (reproduced in Roth 1964, p. 307) after his teacher's death. Its eight verses are in Italian, but they yield a similar meaning, though through metaphors, when taken to be in Hebrew. That poem is homophonous. The Hebrew sounds a bit differently; the discrepancy is small, were we to adhere to the pronunciation of both languages the way it was at those times in that region (Nissan 2012, Sec. 29; I first remarked on Desiree Clary and Leone da Modena examples in Sec. 9, "The General Risk of Too Favourable Odds", pp. 576–577 in Nissan 1992).¹¹

About fifteen years ago, upon the introduction of a linguist from Tel-Aviv University, I received at home in London the visit of a former student of hers, at the time completing a PhD in Oxford with a brilliant thesis about how punning has been used in the modernisation of various languages in order to "nativise" loanwords (Zuckermann 2000, 2003a), a technique he is now applying to revived Australian Aboriginal languages. He arrived with two friends, one

opening performance of the season — where he witnessed one of the lions, named Sultan, kill the lion tamer. Yusuf returned immediately to his desk at [the daily newspaper] *Al-Ahram* and wrote one of the most moving and poignant pieces, *Ana Sultan, qanun al-wujud* (I am Sultan, the Law of Being). In symbolic terms, the state, the government was the sultan, the lion, while the Egyptians were the sheep it devoured.

But in my view the most subtle attempt to get back at the regime, to protest against the way it conducted itself with its own people, to highlight the autocracy and what it did, was made by Naguib Mahfouz in his short novel with the ancient pharaonic title *Al-Karnak* (The Temple of Karnak). It is the story of a group of friends who met regularly in a coffee house, when every do often one of them would disappear for months. Before his disappearance the friend was talkative and voluble, but when he reappeared he was totally silent, a minion; in other words, someone who had been to one of the regime's prisons and silenced.

¹¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macaronic_language rather improperly describes as "macaronic" the intelligibility of an utterance in two different languages, conveying a different meaning in each:

Occasionally language is unintentionally macaronic. A Greek-French example, well-known among French schoolchildren, is attributed to Xénophon by Alfred de Vigny in *Pluton ciel que Janus Proserpine*:

Ouk élabon polin, alla gar elpis éphè kaka.

This means

They did not take the city, as they hadn't a hope [of taking it].

but if read in French sounds like:

Où qu'est la bonne Pauline? A la gare. Elle pisse et fait caca.

meaning

Where is the maid Pauline? At the station. She's pissing and pooing.

Xenophon (if it was him) did not intend the double sense, but those quoting this in French certainly intend it.

Italian and the other an Israeli, and had me read aloud, first in Hebrew and then in Italian, a few homophonous poems he had written: the selfsame poem meant things different altogether in Hebrew and Italian, so I also provided a translation from Hebrew into Italian. The Italian visitor burst in laughter when, having read in Italian the last poem (its meaning was innocent) and then in Hebrew, I refused to translate it from the latter, as the sense was less than decent.

I concluded Ch. 29 in Nissan (2012)¹² by remarking:

Ghil'ad Zuckermann has written experimental verse which can be read in both Italian and Hebrew, to mean quite different things (see Zuckermann 2003b). Producing such poetry involves displaying considerable skills, as a text is selectively generated so as to yield meaning in two languages (Hebrew and Italian). The feasibility of this suggests that it is not impossible to come across random occurrences as well. It would only seldom happen, and may require some tweaking in the form of a nontrivial interpretive effort [...]

Mondegreens have a role in theatre also when a character misremembers and struggles to get a word or a name right. For example, in the 1835 Spanish Romanticist tragedy by Ángel de Saavedra, *Don Álvaro, o la fuerza del sino: Drama en 5 jornadas* (it inspired Giuseppe Verdi's opera of 1862, *La forza del destino*) some characters are debating rumours about the undesirable past (Tío Paco has recently heard some gentlemen discuss Don Álvaro's past, and one of them has claimed that Don Álvaro enriched himself by means of piracy); then the racial background of Don Álvaro, ("And another one that Don Álvaro was the bastard son of a member of the Spanish high nobility, and a Morrish queen", "Y otro que don Álvaro era hijo bastardo de un grande de España y de una reina mora..."). And then the same character (Tío Paco) says he heard that it was something from "la otra banda", i.e., from across the pond (as they say it now here in Britain), i.e., from across the Atlantic, from the Americas. Tío Paco struggles for the right word, offering "finca" and "brinca":

- Y luego dijeron que no... que era... no lo puedo [other version: podré] declarar... finca... o brinca... Una cosa así... así como... una cosa [muy] grande allá en la otra banda. [Other version: finca... o brinca... Una cosa así... como... una cosa muy grande, allá de la otra banda.]
- ¿Inca? [Other version: — ¿otra?]
- Sí, señor; eso: inca... inca. [Other version: — Cabal, sí señor, Inca, inca.]
- And then they said that it was not so, that he was... I don't know how to say it... finca... or brinca... Something like... like... something quite big there, across the pond.
- Inca?
- Yes, Sir; that is it: inca... inca.

Tío Paco's interlocutors realise with horror, and react with incredulity also to this information: an Inca! The protagonist supposedly has Native American ancestry! (The version I gave in brackets is from a manuscript by a copyist, of 1839.)

6. Mishearing, Misreading, and Assumed Knowledge

In scholarship about Plautus, there are competing approaches which either privilege Plautus' Greek models, or privilege autoctonous models from Italy. It is paramount to realise what Plautus' original audience could be expected to have understood, when his wordplay relied on some knowledge of the Greek language or of Greek culture.

Generally speaking, mishearing, because of pattern-matching processes, is affected by the lexicon available to the listener. The size of that lexicon, as well as the technical sublexicons, are affected by the level and type of education. Consider for example the following fictional

¹² Ch. 29 is on pp. 312–313 in Nissan (2012). The latter study is replete with examples relevant to phonosemantic matching: puns, as well as what Zuckermann calls "etymythologies" (tongue-in-cheek etymologies).

exchange, set in the 1950s or 1960s, when owning a Tv set had spread. A husband, coming home, asks his wife (here, in Italian):

È venuto il tecnico per il televisore?
[Did the technician come, for the telly?]

She replies:

Ha detto che bisogna cambiare il tubo cattolico.
[He said it's necessary to replace the Catholic tube.]

Whereas correctly this should have rather been:

Ha detto che bisogna cambiare il tubo catodico.
[He said it's necessary to replace the cathode-ray tube.]

In this example, the second utterer present in the exchange between husband and wife is the wife, and she is reporting what she (thinks she) heard from the technician. She replaces a technical term she did not possess (*catodico*) with one she does (*cattolico*), however incongruously. What makes this humorous is that not only is she ignorant, she does not even balk at the possibility that what she (mis)heard can be the name of a piece of machinery.

Elsewhere, I have defined and exemplified factors that delimit the estimated spread of knowledge of lexical terms or lexical concepts among demographic sectors, as *epistemic properties* or *socio-epistemic metaproperties* (Nissan 1987; 1995, Sec. 3). Also see Sec.13, “Who (Is Likely to) Know What? Epistemic Metaproperties”, in Nissan (2012, pp. 246–249).

In Nissan (2002), in mathematical formulae intended to capture epistemic states of characters involved in Luigi Pirandello's 1922 drama *Enrico IV* (*Henry IV*), I introduced in the formalism (which is from my own method called *episodic formulae*) a manner to convey that a piece of knowledge may be expected to be possessed by members of a particular social class. The protagonist of that drama is a modern man who after falling off a horse at a historical pageant, believes he in the medieval emperor of the Holy Roman Empire he was impersonating at the pageant. As he is affluent, servants comply with his delusion at a villa in the countryside. In due course, unknown to anybody else, he comes back to his old self, but feigns he is still deluded. During a visit by old friends, he kills the man whom he believes cause his horse fall out of jealousy. This crime in turn forces him to persist in feigning he is still deluded, as long as he lives. The servants at the villa are familiar with the details of the emperor Henry IV (something that members of the upper or upper middle class in Pirandello's own days can be expected to have schooled in). The following is excerpted from Nissan (2002):

In particular, we need to explicitly deal with generally expected knowledge, to represent this:

$\exp \square_{\mathcal{H}}^{-1} \text{SOC}_{\text{Pir}}^{+}$ stands for: As much knowledge as could be expected to have been held, concerning \mathcal{H} , by a person from the upper classes of Italian society in Pirandello's own days (in which the play is set).

By default, a person from the lower classes of Italian society of Pirandello's own days is not expected to know anything whatsoever about Henry IV, the Emperor of Germany. (See on the right.)

$$\exp \square_{\mathcal{H}}^{-1} \text{SOC}_{\text{Pir}}^{-} = \emptyset$$

The servants at the villa try to comply with the madman's request that his wife (from Henry IV's biography), Bertha of Susa, come and visit him, and be intimate with him. The servants hire women to satisfy him. They instruct each such woman to introduce herself to the

madman as Bertha of Susa. As they only half-understand the request, such a woman would come in, and state: “My name is Bertha, and I am from Susa”, and then could not refrain from laughing. In Nissan (2002), I stated: “In particular, such a person would not be expected to know that there was any time, at which \mathcal{H} existed.” The formula for this is as follows:

$$\neg \left(\exp \square_{\mathcal{H}}^{-1} \text{soc}_{\text{Pir}}^{-} \ni \text{“} [\exists t, \text{ at } t : \exists \mathcal{H}] \text{”} \right)$$

Nissan (2002) then continued as follows:

Arguably, this is one factor involved in motivating the amused attitude (see below on this) allegedly displayed by the female mercenary visitors who (as reported by one of the vassal-impersonators in the play) used to pay visit to \mathcal{P}_H and to each announce herself as being Berta

and being from Susa. (To them, these are two separate, though concomitant assertions, as they don’t identify the historical character named by the fixed phrase “Berta of Susa”.) An educated reception of that detail from the play will promptly recognize that the vassal-impersonators are servants, thus from the lower classes, and that in turn the social status of the impersonators of \mathcal{H} ’s wife was considerably lower than even the servants’, according to their basically belonging (respectively) inside or outside the realm of a decent way of life. Yet, out of professional reasons (stable for the servants, but sporadic for the hired women), they have been each made to acquire some subset of as per his standard historiographical image: $\square_{\mathcal{H}}^{-1} \Upsilon$ (i.e., the standard

historiographical image of Henry IV, Emperor of Germany), so that they could cater to the needs of \mathcal{P}_H : In fact, the first scene in the play has a new member of staff being taught about \mathcal{H} and about \mathcal{P}_H by his fellow vassal-impersonators V , so that in practice, what both he and the hired women learned about \mathcal{H} , is $\square_{\mathcal{H}}^{-1} V$, or a subset thereof.

Sometimes, instead of mishearing we come across some typo which is such that we would rather ascribe it to ignorance on the part of a typesetter. Either the author or (more likely) the typesetter used once twice “typography” mistakenly, instead of “topography”, on the first page, and even twice “typography” instead of “topography” in the last paragraph, of a paper of two pages, “Landscape in Persian Miniatures”, by Alvan [sic] C. Eastman, published in January 1937 in *Parnassus*, a journal of the College Art Association. Eastman began his paper by pointing out: “In so many Persian miniatures one finds domed hills of salmon or pink color, or lilac-colored crags of rock rising from the plain, often tipping to the right or left”, and modern Western viewers would typically assume that such depictions are fanciful.¹³ Eastman was able to show that the contour of the mountains in some region of Persia justify the way mountains are drawn in miniatures.

¹³ “In so many Persian miniatures one finds domed hills of salmon or pink color, or lilac-colored crags of rock rising from the plain, often tipping to the right or left”, and modern Western viewers would typically assume that such depictions are fanciful. “Never for a moment does it cross his mind that the Persian painter is rendering the actual facts of Nature and rendering them accurately, if not directly from Nature herself at least from careful and accurate observation of Nature. In the first place, there are few countries in the West, with the exception of Spain, where there is the clarity of atmosphere or the brilliant sunlight that exists in Persia or Mesopotamia; and in the second place, and the vital point is here, there are few countries which have the peculiarities of color and formation of the hills and rocks that are found in Persia.” (Eastman 1937).

The author of that paper was able to cope with technical terminology more difficult than the word *topography*. It is likely, I reckon, that it was the typesetter who, based on terminology as known to typesetters, decided on his own that for sure the author had intended *typography* instead. This is no different from what used to be a well-established reporter from a local newspaper from southeast London who published a report about her interview with another lady, an astronomer from the Greenwich Observatory, and wrote that the subject was astrology.¹⁴ Presumably Eastman was as irked, at reading “typography” where he had written (in his longhand?) “topography”, as the Greenwich Observatory astronomer must have been at seeing her field referred to as being astrology. The erroneous “typography” turned up a second and third time in the very last paragraph of the paper:

To be sure, the above descriptions refer to a different locale in Persia than the region where some of the best known schools of painting flourished and we have no photographs that show whether the typography was the same. But the painter, we contend must have at least seen landscapes having such rock formations and colors and having observed them stated them in his paintings, conventionalizing to some extent as he was bound to do, but indicating nevertheless the essential truth of the typography with which he was familiar.

TWENTY-FIVE

It is somewhat funny that after the gaffe in the last paragraph, the page number was, for the sake of elegant affectation as per the style of that journal, spelled out in English. So we have the erudition of the author and the elegance of the journal style on one style, and on the other the spark of recognition we may imagine on the typesetter’s face, when in the author’s scribbled word

topography

he recognised a term he knew well:

typography

Mishearing and misreading are not the same thing, but consider the following two examples of misreading, in which thematic affinity in the context was a factor. While I was reading, on 24 August 2011, a brief professional biography (of Shevach Friedler, whose relation to humour studies is because he is an expert on medical clowning: see Friedler et al. (2011)), when I came to this sentence:

In 1987 Dr. Friedler completed a subspecialization in clinical andrology, at the Male Infertility Institute, Hakirya Hospital, Tel-Aviv, under Prof. Homonai.

I misread *Hormonai* for *Homonai*, evidently because the modification would have made it into a most apt personal name: the suffix *-ay* or *-ai* forms agents names in Israeli Hebrew, either names for professions, or names for specialists. A specialist in infertility must be a specialist concerning hormones indeed.

The bulky *Birds Britannica* by Mark Cocker and Richard Mabey (2005) was open on my kitchen table, on 25 August 2011, on pp. 376–377. On p. 377 there is a photograph of a wood warbler perched on a branch in a tree. In the first column on p. 376, I thought I had spotted the name “Euphorbia” (of a shrub), but I was wrong. The sentence was actually about British

¹⁴ For years I had resented an occasion when that reporter had used not too veiled language showing her impatience with my own ethnic identity, but when she eventually presented an astronomer as an astrologer my grudge vanished, made needless by the realisation of the sheer extent of her ignorance. In recent years that newspaper laid off most of their journalists, both competent and incompetent, and makes do with two newly hired apparently very young ones.

widespread condemnation for the Mediterranean trapping of songbirds, and ended this way: “although mingled with the indignation in our island pronouncements may be a touch of good old Europhobia.”

When we are talking about Plautus, it is quite important, as Fontaine points out indeed, to realise that he could expect his audience to appreciate at least some bilingual wordplay, because of Greek being a language of culture understood by many educated Romans. Let us consider the role of the part of the English lexicon that has a Latinate or Greek etymon. Those members of the public who read Latin at school are likely to be much less appreciative than others, of the mixing of English and Latinate word-formation. But then there may be a playful or humorous intent involved: if we were to playfully interpret *diabetes* as “die a bit”-is, as though the suffix forming the names for illnesses was applied to an English phrase, *die a bit*, then clearly this involves phonetic matching (not matching of the spelling), and the semantic remotivation is on the face of it cogent if one is game to the convention of a playful reception, because diabetes is a severe disease indeed, with possibly devastating consequences, and is therefore amenable to being thought of as involving dying a bit at a time.

A passage in the *Babylonian Talmud*, tractate *Erubin*, 53b, conflates dialectal variation, phonetic distortion, and a slip-of-the-tongue that looks like a slip-in-the-pen. The following is quoted from the so-called Soncino English translation of the *Babylonian Talmud* (Epstein 1935–1948). Brackets are mine, using their notes and relevant entries from Jastrow (1903, s.v. *shlukhta*, *labba*, and the first lexeme of *kiri*).

‘The Judeans were exact in their language’. For instance? — A Judean once announced that he had a cloak to sell. ‘What’, he was asked: ‘is the colour of your cloak?’ ‘Like that of beet on the ground’, he replied. ‘The Galileans who were not exact in their language’. For instance? —

[in current editions: “For it was taught”] A certain Galilean once went about enquiring, ‘who has *amar*?’ ‘Foolish Galilean’, they said to him, ‘do you mean an “ass” [*h̄amor*] for riding, “wine” [*h̄amar*] to drink, “wool” [Aramaic *amar*] for clothing or a “lamb” [Aramaic *imar*] for killing?’ A woman [from the Galilee whose speech was indistinct] once wished to say to her friend, ‘Come, I would give you some fat to eat’ but that what she actually said to her was, ‘My cast-away, [*shlukhti* instead of *shlvti* ‘my friend’] may a lioness devour you’ [wanting to say, in Aramaic, *de’okhlikh h̄alba* ‘as I’ll have you eat cream’, she said either *tokhlikh lab̄ya* ‘let a lioness devour you’, or, as per Jastrow’s reading (1903, pp. 686–687, s.v. *labba*), in accordance with the Munich MS, *tokhlikh lab̄ba* ‘let a flame consume you’]. A certain woman once appeared before a judge and addressed him as follows: ‘My master slave, [she said in Greek χεῖρτε ‘o captive!’, instead of κύρτε ‘o lord!’. Jastrow (1903, p. 636, s.v. *kiri*) remarks that the text has Hebrew glosses interpolated] I had a child [Aramaic *tafla*, or *tafla* ‘log’, ‘beam’, but she meant *tabla* ‘board’] and they stole you from me, [*genabukh mimmenni*, instead of *genabuh mimmenni*, ‘they stole it from me’] and it is of such a size that if they had hanged you upon it, your feet would not have reached to the ground’. [Note in the Soncino edition: “What she wished to say was that the board was so big that if it had been suspended from the judge it would have reached to the ground.”]

In Aramaic, *shlubti* (*shlvti*) vs. *shlukhti* (cf. Jastrow 1903, Vol. 2, p. 1579) would we a possible slip in writing or in reading, because the letters for [v] /b/ and for *kh* [x] /k/ look similar, but in the MS Munich it is apparently written with the letter for /w/, and then it may be that it was a dialectal phonetic exchange.

שְׁלוּכְתָּא f. (a fictitious word, as if fr. שְׁלָךְ) *cast away*.
 Erub. 53^b a Galilean woman (that wanted to say *sh'lubti*,
 my attached friend, v. שְׁלֵב) said 'שְׁלוּכְתָּי וּכְ' (Ms. M. שְׁלוּכְתָּי וּכְ)
 my cast-away &c., v. לְבָא.

The entry for *shlukhta* in Jastrow (1903, Vol. 2, p. 1579).

7. Plautus' Comedies, and the Role of the Audience

Chapter 4 is concerned with “the role of the audience in a Plautine performance” (147). It is entitled “Innuendo and the Audience” (149). “A striking feature of Plautine drama is the extent to which the characters try to draw us into the play, competing with each other for our sympathies” (149). “Who was in Plautus’ audience, and how can we tell?” (149). “I hope to break some fresh ground here by reorienting discussion around what Plautus does *not* say; that is, I propose to enlarge the data set by examining the style, the quality, and the content of his innuendo” (149).

For example, the greedy character of Lycus (Wolf) in the comedy *Poenulus* (*The Little Carthaginian*) is from a town in Acarnania, thus suggesting ἄκαρνάν, one of the names of “the predacious *wolf*-fish (probably the bass)” (151), called *lupus* ‘wolf’ in Latin, and reputed in Rome to be a fish feeding on sewage — aptly for the given character, because of his dishonourable occupation (151–152). The plot is about his being entrapped by a bailiff and witnesses. Reference is made to the money involved in the entrapment: “aurum [...] comicum”, i.e., ‘stage-money’ (152–153). Fontaine explains (153):

Since we are supposed to be able to see what they are holding, the witnesses do not bother to tell us what it is. Nevertheless, from other sources we are able to piece together the conclusion that their stage money consists of the golden yellow beans of the lupine, a plant that in Latin is called *lupinus* or *lupinum*. This is the missing connection that we need.

There is a pun, and it is conveyed visually, because the plant is not mentioned verbally, but can be assumed to have been shown by the witnesses to the audience of Plautus’ play. As an adjective, *lupinus* means ‘wolfish’. “This is essentially the same ironic procedure that we saw in chapter 2 on Sceparnio’s words *corpus subaquilinum*, where the convergence of the visual cue of Ampelisca’s hydria, prominently displayed upon her head, and the repeated verbal cues of *aqua* [‘water’] invited us to make the translation connection for ourselves” (153). Fontaine analyses how this technique works also elsewhere, in Plautus’ comedies, to “draw some inferences about the nature of his audience” (153).

One of the sections in Ch. 4 is “Two-Solution Riddles and Two-Interpretation Passages”. Others are “βομολόχοι [i.e., ‘buffoons’, but also ‘altar lurkers’ and ‘jackdaws’] in Plautus”, “Garden Path Sentences and βομολοχία in *Rudens* and *Stichus*”, “Plautus’ Audience and Its Knowledge of Greek”, and “Nondramatic Literary Parody in Plautus?” The book continues with Ch. 5, “Double Entendre” (not only among young men and women, but also of parasites), Ch. 6, “Conclusion”, the bibliography, and three indices.

8. Charmides and the Impostor: “A Brilliant Travesty of Socratic Maieusis”

I have found no typos in the book. Nevertheless, in the section entitled “Charmides’ Ironic Revenge” — while, still in Ch. 3, “Equivocation and Other Ambiguities”, an episode from the comedy *Trinummus* is discussed — one comes across the following on p. 142. In a dialogue in which a father has unmasked a frau (unknown to the latter) and is playing with him like a cat with the mouse, the character identifier “CH.” (for “Charmides”) is missing in the line “iam recommentatu’s nomen?...” (this is line 912, translated as “Have you referred out that name yet...” on p. 143).

After that dialogue, Fontaine remarks: “In a brilliant travesty of Socratic maieusis, [i.e., playing the role of a midwife in getting one’s interlocutor to provide answers] Charmides takes the Impostor’s words hyperliterally. This forms the basis for several ironic jokes that the commentaries do not notice as adequately as they might, and that can be usefully elucidated

here” (143). Which he proceeds to do “with an exceptionally fine grasp”, a quality a back cover endorsement quite deservedly ascribes to Fontaine. It really does justice to Plautus, who was able to combine several humorous devices even in the selfsame item.

For example, once the Impostor (who has to supply the name of the father of a youngster, while ignoring he is talking to that father) at the long last manages to recollect *Char...* and Charmides tentatively suggests *Charmides*, the completion *-mides* sounds like Latin *mi[hi] des* ‘give me!’ This is an implicit request that Charmides has fulfilled, as he provided the Impostor with the answer. Forms of the verb *dare* ‘to give’ abound “with surprising frequency” (145) earlier in the conversation, thus paving the way for what is to follow. “The point is that the Impostor — and we, who already know Charmides’ true identity — sense that any moment this stranger [Charmides] will say ‘give me’ and demand the forged letters or the gold that the Impostor claims to be carrying” (145). The Impostor had falsely claimed that the father of a youngster had given him the two letters, one of them containing money; and in stating that much, he had not realised he was talking to that very father, Charmides.

When eventually Charmides reveals his own identity, the Impostor has just asked him: “quis tu homo es?” (“So who are you?”), and the real father replies: “qui mille nummum **tibi dedi**: ego sum Charmides” (“The one who **gave you** the thousand dollars. I’m Charmides!”, in Fontaine’s translation). Fontaine suggests that Plautus intended the delivery to be: “ego sum *Char...*” (“I am *Char...*”), with this stage direction Fontaine interpolates: “(pausing, then making a grab at the letters)”, before exclaiming: “mi des!” (“Give me!”, which completes the name *Charmides* (146). As “the characters snatch the letters back and forth from each other” (146), “Plautus goes on to milk the joke for a few more laughs” (146), and the pun occurs again and again in the exchanges.

“Give it to me” is involved in a different punning situation, evocative of a surreal universe in the context of a mock-aetiology, in the following Italian riddle I have made up:

Domanda:	Perché i bambini piccoli, coi loro vocalizzi, non lasciano dormire i genitori?
Risposta:	Colpa dei genitori. Entrambi, prima di prendere in braccio il neonato, hanno detto all’infermiera: “Me lo dia!” Così il bambino cerca di accontentarli, essendo il più melodico possibile.

Q. Why do little children, with their vocal outpouring, not let their parents sleep?
 A. It’s the parents’ fault. Both of them, before taking the newborn baby in their arms, told the nurse: “Me lo día!” (“Give it to me!”, cf. *melodía*, ‘melody’). Therefore the child tries to comply, by being as melodic (≠ melodious) as possible.

9. The Toll Taken by the Tradents/Copyists: “*ars latet abecedario suo*”

Fontaine’s book abounds with such realisations as Charmides’ dialogue with the Impostor. This is what makes the book under review absolutely fabulous. And yet, Fontaine is modest enough to concede that he may not have uncovered everything there is to uncover: “Some of Plautus’ ‘funny’ words involve calques, or loan translations, of Greek words known from comedy [...], and more of these no doubt await future discovery” (252). An important reason for Plautus’ wordplay eluding notice or being misunderstood is that Plautus’ Latin spelling was modernised by later Roman authors (250):

There is also a historical component that explains why we overlook some of Plautus’ linguistic ingenuities, and it bears repeating here. In antiquity, problems first arose in the interpretation of Plautus’ puns not only because their *ars latet arte sua* — the cry of Renaissance scholars that supreme artistry conceals itself — but also (we might say) *ars latet abecedario suo*: The artistry was concealed by its alphabet. Plautus’ archaic Latin alphabet, and above all its conventions for transliterating Greek letters, did not permit the comedian to distinguish certain homographs from homophones. This was an advantage to him, because it encouraged him to see similarities between

similar-sounding words. However, a century later, when Plautine comedy became increasingly textual rather than performed and when the Latin alphabet began writing *y* instead of *u* for Greek *upsilon* and *h* to transliterate aspirated consonants, some of his very best and most original puns, in all their various species — equivocations, paretheses, mondegreens, other distortions of sound or meaning, analogically coined nonce words, and so on — fell victim to his spelling: To later scholars, who were more interested in grammar and etymology than in drama, these “funny” words looked like nothing more than the pedestrian mistakes of some misguided scribe. As these scholars began to “correct” their texts, inadvertently banalizing and adulterating the originals, they changed the fundamental nature of his comedy.

For the puns were more than simply entertaining wordplay, and when they disappeared under the scholar’s stylus, some of Plautus’ dramatic motives vanished with them. It was no longer clear, for instance, why a character might make a certain statement or take a particular action, so characterization began to fragment; scholars relying on “corrected” texts then had to explain the inconsistencies they had unwittingly introduced. Thus it came to be assumed, to take one example, that because Plautus is often clearly interested in buffoonery, he was also less interested in psychological coherence than in cartoonish surrealism overall.

“Furthermore, because Plautus’ three most ingenious puns — those on the parasites’ names Gorgylio [later Latinised into *Curculio*], Penicylus [retained as *Peniculus*] and Satyrio [retained as *Saturio*] — are *bilingual*, the nature of Plautine comedy began to come unmoored from its origins” (251). It was so because “ancient scholars interested in etymology elevated and transformed ephemeral puns into identities” (251). Fontaine explains the effects of such denaturation. “Plautus’s characters ceased to be characters as such, and became cartoons” (251).¹⁵

10. Evidence in Plautus of Lexicon or Lore Otherwise Only Known from Much Later Sources

“Also of note is that Plautus’ characters sometimes employ words in puns that are known to us only from the vocabulary of vulgar Latin or Romance or from very late sources of Latin” (252). There is evidence in Plautus of lore (*bibit arcus*, “the [rain]bow drinks”, in *Curculio* 131) associated with the rainbow and its names in various European vernaculars, as shown in work by Mario Alinei (1992) which Fontaine did not cite — but he cited Alinei (1980).

It must be said that Plautus has celestial phenomena imbibe, as though, elsewhere as well, in his *opus*, but this other time he is being creatively exuberant; it occurs in *Amphitruo* 282–283:

*credo edepol equidem dormire Solem, adque adpotum probe:
mira sunt nisi inuitavit sese in cena plusculum*

which Rolando Ferri translates as follows (Ferri 2014, p. 770):

¹⁵ A somewhat different phenomenon is instantiated by the following. In medieval Hebrew dirges about the Babylonians’ destruction of Jerusalem, sometimes Babylon is personified as a woman, Adinah. The feminine adjective ‘*ādinā* ‘delicate’ (the latter is the sense in which the word is used in Israeli Hebrew) means ‘spoilt one’ in the only textual *locus* where the word appears in the Hebrew Bible, namely, in *Isaiah* 47:8. In the only textual *locus* where the word appears in the Hebrew Bible, namely, in *Isaiah* 47:8, the word is not intended as a personal name rather than a descriptor; it is probably the latter. The context is: “Hearest thou this, o ‘*ādinā* (spoilt one), who sittest securely”. Sporadically in medieval dirges *אֲדִינָה* ‘*ādinā* is the personification of Babylon; the word is unquestionably used as a proper name. It would be misleading to think of the appearance of that word as being the personal name of Babylon’s personification in relation to the Israeli Hebrew sense (e.g., as though ‘delicate’ > ‘beautiful’ > personal name, such as in Spanish *delgada* > *Delgadina*, the name of a character from Spanish and Judaeo-Spanish folktales). Note however that in a dirge for the Tenth of Teveth, the Hebrew phrase *עֲדָה אֲדִינָה* ‘*edā ‘ādinā* ‘delicate congregation’ is a vocative addressing Jewry as a whole.

I really think the sun is asleep, and full of wine to the brim: he really must have indulged himself a bit last night over dinner.

Fontaine also traces the occurrence of mockery for a physician who isn't one, or wought not to call himself such. Before we consider how, I digress. Mani, the founder of Manichaeism,¹⁶ was imprisoned and executed in the year 274 C.E. The order was given by a drunken King of Persia, who among the other things taunted Mani for being useless in war as well as useless as a physician. Hormizd I had treated Mani well, but was succeeded by an elder brother, Wahram I (271–274 C.E.). “In 274 CE Mani was sent from the east to present himself to Wahram, and we have a Manichaean text which describes the harsh treatment of the prophet. He was scolded as not being a good doctor nor having any benefit, and Wahram ordered his arrest and imprisonment” (Daryaee 2009, p. 10). Mani had claimed to an earlier king, the great Shabuhr I, that he was a physician (*ibid.*, p. 72).

Daryaee explains that the senior Mazdean, i.e., Zoroastrian cleric “Kerdir and company made sure that Mani was stopped and later met an early death and that the King of Kings remained *mazdēsn* and that the Zoroastrian religion was spread at any cost to the empire” (*ibid.*, p. 14).¹⁷ Daryaee states (*ibid.*, p. 75):

From the episode told in a Manichaean text, it appears that Wahram I was angry with Mani, perhaps due to the instigation of Kerdir and others who had precipitated this anger. He may also have been drunk, since the same fragment states that after feasting, he had one hand on the shoulder of the Saka queen [i.e., a vassal, who rules the Sakas or *sagān* of Sakastān] and the other over the shoulders of Kerdir, the son of Ardawān, when coming towards the prophet.

Clearly, the Persian king's drunkenness made the situation all the more dramatic and unmanageable for his victim. I mentioned earlier that Mani had claimed to Shabuhr I that he was a physician (Daryaee 2009, p. 72). Incidentally, note that interchangeability in some particular respect has sometimes affected religious founders, e.g. in the ascription to them of medical competence (Klimkeit 1996).

A Manichaean source quoted from by Daryaee (2009, p. 75) claims that the King scorned Mani with the following words: “Eh, what are you good for since you go neither fighting / nor hunting? But perhaps you are needed for this / doctoring and this physicking? And you don't do even that!”

King Wahram scorns Mani as being unmartial — he is useless for fighting (even though that was never claimed to be Mani's cup of tea) — and moreover, whereas he could have been useful as a physician or a healer, he is not proficient at that, either. The angry King sees no

¹⁶ “The religion of Mani and the Gnostic tradition, I believe, is [*sic*] of great importance in the history of Iranian tradition. It has impacted upon Iran in ways that we are still trying to identify, even in the Islamic period. But there are no Manicheans here today to push their case and cause. Manichaeism died out in the fourteenth century in Central Asia. Still, Manichaeans lived in and around the Sasanian Empire and influenced the religious tradition of the empire” (Daryaee 2009, p. xx).

Having emerged in Mesopotamia, “Mani was able to propagate his religion during Shabuhr I's rule and that of his son” (*ibid.*, p. 9). That successor king was Hormizd I (270–271 C.E.). “Manichaean sources state that during the last years of Ardashir's reign Mani had crossed the empire and had gone to India. During Shabuhr I's reign he had come back to the Sasanian Empire, appeared before the king and was honored, stayed with the king for sometime and was given permission to preach throughout the empire” (*ibid.*).

¹⁷ Soon after Mani's execution, “Wahram II came to the throne in 274 CE and may have needed [the senior Zoroastrian cleric] Kerdir's support in bypassing Narseh, who was now the Great King of Armenia, and it is in this period that Kerdir begins his real ascent to power. Kerdir also began the persecution of the non-Zoroastrians in the empire, such as the Jews, Christians, Manichaeans, Mandeans and Buddhists” (Daryaee 2009, pp. 10–11). Daryaee also remarks: “During the rule of Wahram II (274–293 CE) Kerdir achieved higher rank and status, and it is during this period that the Sasanian kings lost much of their religious power as caretakers of the Anahid fire temple to Kerdir, making him the judge of the whole empire. This meant that from now on, the priests acted as judges throughout the empire and probably court cases were now based on Zoroastrian law except when members of other religious minorities had disputes with each other” (*ibid.*, p. 11).

point in Mani remaining free. Of course, for his nemesis Kerdir, it is Mani's being the leader of another religion seeking converts that is reason enough for getting him out of the way.

Let us consider the charge about a physician being worthless. Fontaine discusses (155) wordplay from Plautus' comedy *Rudens*: "How are you?" (*ut vales?*) "What's that? You aren't a *medicus* (doctor), are you?" (*quid tu? num medicus, quaeso, es?*) "Lord, no! I'm one letter more than a *medicus* (doctor)" (*immo edepol una littera plus sum quam medicus*) "Then you're a *mendicus* (beggar)?" (*tum tu mendicus es?*) "Touche" (*tetigisti acu* — "You have touched with a needle").

Then Fontaine explores (155–156) instances of occurrences of another pun, *merdicus* 'shitty' as opposed to *medicus* 'physician'. This only occurs in texts not earlier than the Humanist period, 15th century and later. In an epigram by Jacopo Sannazzaro (Naples, 1457–1530), *In Picentem medicum* (*Against Picente, the Physician*), Sannazzaro taunted his victim: "But, because you wish to be called *cynicus* and *clinicus* at one and the same time, you can be *merdicus* and *medicus* wrapped in one" (*sed quia tu Cynicus vis dici, et Clinicus idem, Esse idem poteris Merdicus, et Medicus*).¹⁸

Something similar is found in an epigram by Johan van der Does (Janus Dousa the Elder). Fontaine also quotes from *Pulcinella medico a forza* (*Pulcinella/Punch, forced to be a physician*), a *Commedia dell'Arte canovaccio* (script summary) found in Placido Adriani's *Zibaldone* of 1739. The protagonist, the buffoon Pulcinella, is dressed as a doctor, and cries: *Ego sum merdicus!* ("I am...") uttering an adjective for 'shitty', while intending *Ego sum medicus!* ("I am a doctor!").

11. Concluding Remarks

Of course, Fontaine cited some study about wordplay in authors other than Plautus: he cites Frederick Ahl's book (1985) about soundplay and wordplay especially in Ovid. In contrast, Lara Nicolini's studies (2011, 2012) about wordplay in Apuleius appeared after Fontaine's book was published.

Fontaine's book is of lasting value, and one to which the reader will want to go back time and again. Both classicists and scholars in humour research have much to learn from it. It is also valuable for theatre studies, because of its attention to the text in relation to stage performance, and to the audience of that performance. The book under review is more than a valuable addition to the bookshelf. I consider this book an eye-opener, a masterpiece.

¹⁸ Fritz Spiegel (1926–2003), a British journalist BBC broadcaster, once remarked (in a popularistic book on language) that some colleagues of his pronounce *Nicaragua* as though it was "Nick, a rag you are". It is quite possible that his own foreign birth (in Austria: he reached England with his sister in 1939, whereas his Jewish parents, in the wake of the Anschluss of 1938, escaped to Bolivia) made him sensitive about British pronunciation. But then, as well as a musician, he was a historian of his home-town of Liverpool, and the otherness of working-class Liverpudlians inside Britain is associated with their pronunciation. Spiegel's being a humorist is reason enough for his interest in puns. There is playfulness in interpreting *Nicaragua* as though it was "Nick, a rag you are", but this is a case in which he rendered fellow broadcasters' pronunciation. The propositional attitude is such that neither he, nor his audience believe, claim, or are made to believe that "Nick, a rag you are" is an etymology of *Nicaragua*, or that the broadcaster whose pronunciation is such, were intentionally implying such an interpretation (let alone etymology). If however one is after some playful aetiological tale, then some narrative trajectory would have to be invented to bridge the semantic gap between Nicaragua the country and a situation (underlying a foundation mock-myth) where the utterance "Nick, a rag you are" is pronounced "for the first time", thus motivating the name for the place.

It is important to realise however that reanalysis of words is not necessarily driven by playful intent. Sometimes bona fide attitudes, indeed keen beliefs, motivate or result from such endeavours. Or then, the process can be found in folktales without humour being intended. For example, in Elswit (2014, p. 31), tale 40 is an aetiological tale from Japan about why the Japanese word *kumo* means both 'spider' and 'cloud'.



This is Fig. 3 in a paper on the history of modern Japanese cartoons by Peter Duus (2001, p. 970). His caption follows: “*Edo meisho hanjimon*, 1858. By Utagawa Hiroshige II. The rebuses stand for the following place names (roughly in order from upper right to lower left): Shitaya, Komagome, Edobashi, Dangozaka, Yamaya, Negishi, Senjū, Akabane, Fukagawa, Shirogane, Ryōgoku, Susaki, Hanakawado, Koume, Imado, Kuramae, and Nihonbashi”.

Appendix: The Progeny of Jean-Léon Gérôme's 1861 Painting *Phryne before the Areopagus*: Bernhard Gillam's and Joseph Keppler's Tattooed Man 1884 Cartoons

The cover illustration of Fontaine's book under review in this article is a detail from a painting which appears in full in greyscale, along with a caption, facing the front page. The caption identifies it as "Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Phryné devant l'Aréopage* (*Phryne before the Areopagus*). 1861. Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany." In Athens, a woman, Phryne, is defended in court from the charge of sacrilege because she had been the model for a statue of Aphrodite (Praxiteles' Aphrodite of Knidos). Her defence lawyer, Hyperides, displays her naked, and the jury acquits her, apparently because they accept his argument that she was fit for purpose, as a model for such a sculpture. Phryne is mentioned in Fontaine's book more than once: the general index refers to pp. 24–27, 33–34, 187–190, and 254.



Phryné devant l'Aréopage (*Phryne before the Areopagus*), a painting from around 1861 by Jean-Léon Gérôme.

The episode of Phryne in the courtroom is mentioned at the beginning of the introduction to a treatise by Francesco Berardi (n.d. but 2012) about the primacy of visual evidence in Graeco-Roman rhetoric. Within a discussion of Menelaus' attitude towards his estranged wife Helen in Troy, and how she deflects his anger according to various accounts, Lowell Edmunds (2016) has a subsection "§10.4 Helen Bares Her Breasts?" in which, among the other things, the following paragraph is included (*ibid.*, p. 149):

Another question concerning this version of the reunion of Helen and Menelaus concerns the intent of such a gesture. In all but one of the other examples it is a matter of a mother's or a nurse's appealing, unsuccessfully, to the child or children she had nursed. In the exceptional example, Hyperides, in his defense of Phrynē, exposed his client's breasts to the jury and so got their pity. It is likely, then, that even without a close parallel, that Helen was seeking forgiveness. If so, Menelaus has overreacted to the gesture.¹⁹

¹⁹ "In Aristophanes, Lampito, in confirmation of Lysistrata's assertion of the power of sex over husbands, says that Menelaus dropped his sword when he caught sight of Helen's 'apples' (*Lys.* 155–56). The scholiast on these

Edmunds (2016, pp. 349–350, note 246) enumerates occurrences involving Hecuba, Clytemnestra, and Iocasta, and also refers Myrrha's old nurse in Ovid's tragedy. He cites the extensive discussion in Sabina Castellaneta's book (2013) *Il seno svelato ad misericordiam: Esegesi e fortuna di un'immagine omerica*. Edmunds also remarks: "Art historians have tended to misunderstand the significance of the gesture, taking it as erotic" (*ibid.*, p. 350, note 246). But then it must be said that the ancient Greek artists themselves, at least sometimes, saw it that way. Such is the case of a depiction by Macron (on an Attic red-figure vase), described by Martin Kilmer (1993, p.154) in a passage that Edmunds reproduces (*ibid.*, p. 350, note 250). That passage concludes: "Helen uses her body to advantage; Makron wants his public perfectly to understand how". As for the episode with Hyperides and Phryne, the reference is to Hyperides fr. 178 Kenyon, from Athenaeus 13.590e–591a (as cited by Edmunds 2016, p. 350, note 247).

The best known event in Phryne's life is her trial. Athenaeus writes that she was prosecuted for a capital charge and defended by the orator Hypereides, who was one of her lovers [Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 590–591]. Athenaeus does not specify the nature of the charge, but Pseudo-Plutarch [*Lives of the Ten Orators*, 9] writes that she was accused of impiety. The speech for the prosecution was written by Anaximenes of Lampsacus according to Diodorus Periegetes. When it seemed as if the verdict would be unfavourable, Hypereides removed Phryne's robe and bared her breasts before the judges to arouse their pity. Her beauty instilled the judges with a superstitious fear, who could not bring themselves to condemn "a prophetess and priestess of Aphrodite" to death. They decided to acquit her out of pity [Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 590–591].

However, Athenaeus also provides a different account of the trial given in the *Ephesia* of Posidippus of Cassandreia. He simply describes Phryne as clasping the hand of each juror, pleading for her life with tears, without her disrobing being mentioned. Craig Cooper [(1995)] argues that the account of Posidippus is the authentic version and that Phryne never bared her breasts before the court during her trial.

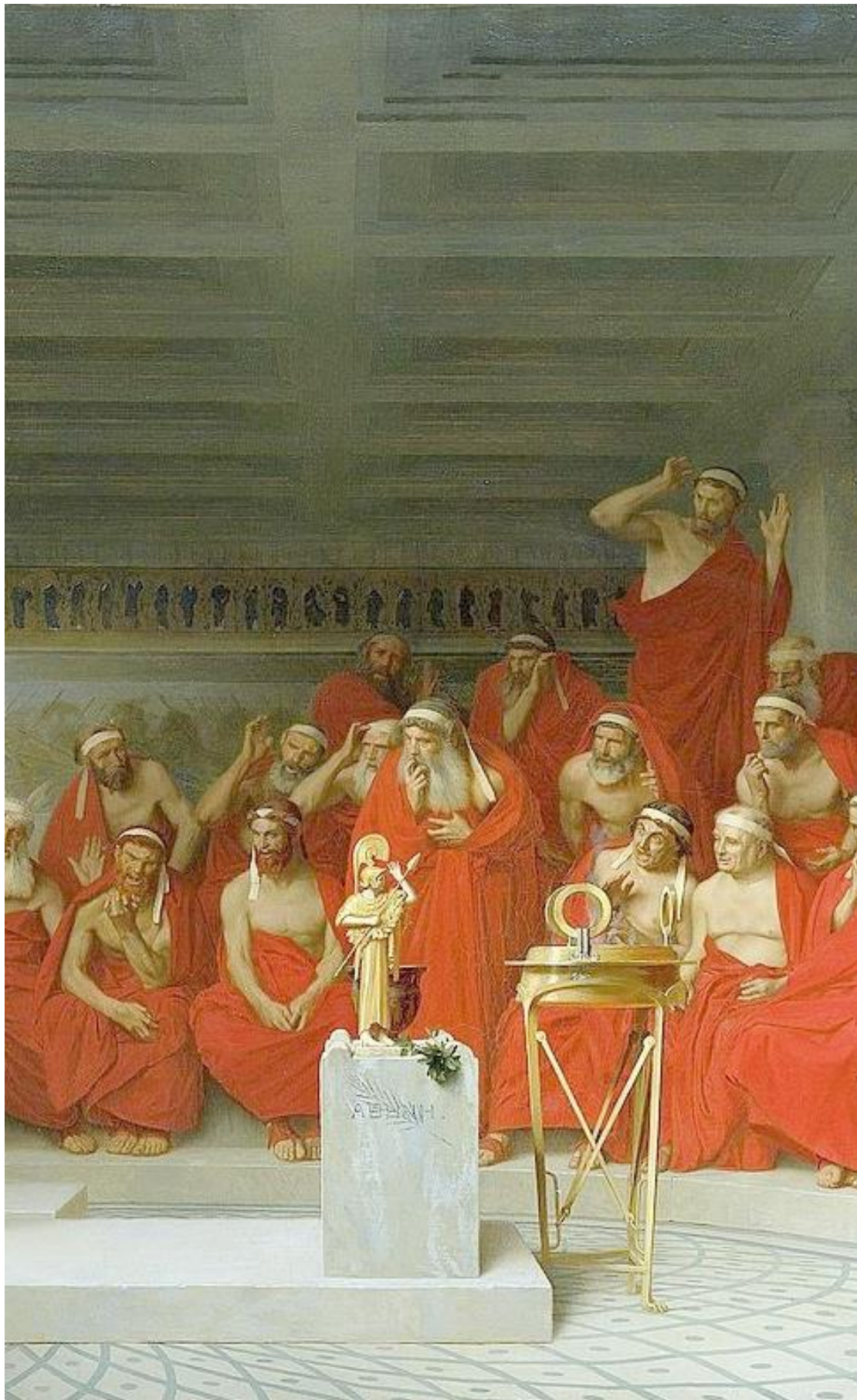
The first description of the trial given by Athenaeus and the shorter account of Pseudo-Plutarch ultimately derive from the work of the biographer Hermippus of Smyrna (c. 200 BC) who adapted the story from Idomeneus of Lampsacus (c. 300 BC). The account of Posidippus is the earliest known version. If the disrobing did happen, Posidippus would most likely have mentioned it because he was a comic poet. Therefore it is likely that the disrobing of Phryne was a later invention, dating to some time after 290 BC, when Posidippus was active as a poet. Idomeneus was writing around that time [(Cooper 1995)].

The evidence suggests that Idomeneus invented the more salacious version of the story, possibly in his desire to parody and ridicule the courtroom displays of Athenian demagogues. Considering his preference for attributing sexual excess to these demagogues the provocative act of disrobing Phryne fits the character Hypereides had acquired in Idomeneus' work. As is not uncommon in the biographical tradition, later biographers failed to notice that earlier biographers did not give an accurate representation of events. The later biographer Hermippus incorporated the account of Idomeneus in his own biography. An extract from Hermippus' biography is preserved in the work of Athenaeus and Pseudo-Plutarch [(Cooper 1995)].

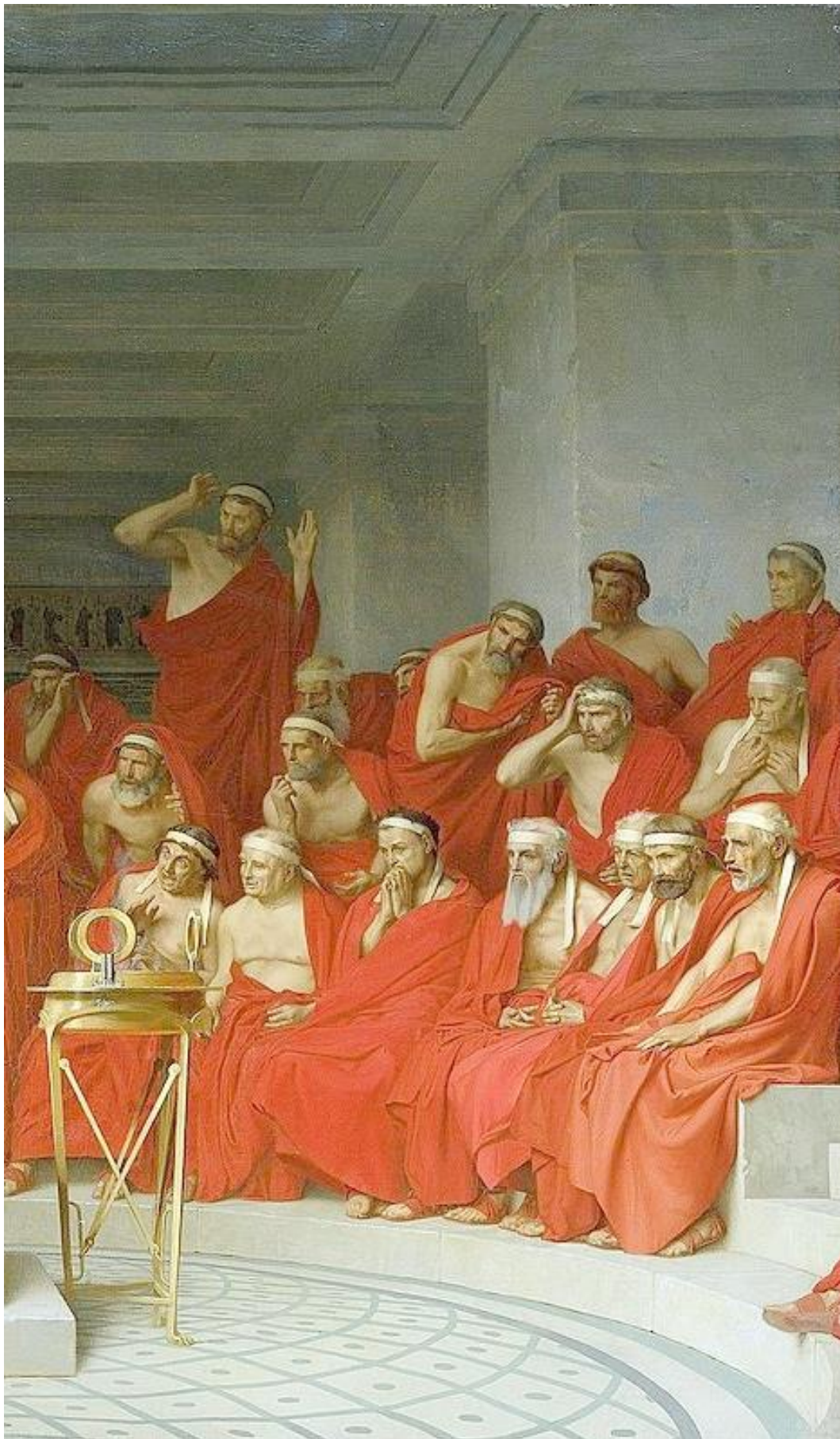
There are also arguments for the veracity of the disrobing. The words "a prophetess and priestess of Aphrodite" might have indicated that Phryne participated in the Aphrodisia on Aegina. If true, this would have showed the jurors that she was favored by the goddess and deserving of pity [(Nalden 2006, p. 102)]. Also, it was accepted at the time that women were especially capable of evoking the sympathy of the judges. Mothers and children could be brought to courts for such purposes. The baring of breasts was not restricted or atypical for prostitutes or courtesans, and could be used to arouse compassion as well [(Havelock 2010, p. 45)].²⁰

lines in *Lysistrata* says that the story of Menelaus's reaction to Helen's breasts is found in Ibycus (presumably as part of the story about her fleeing to the temple of Aphrodite) and in *Ilias Parva*. The scholiast on *Andromache*, however, gives the summary of Ibycus paraphrased above (i.e., without the baring of breasts), and editors of Ibycus have preferred this version" (Edmunds 2016, pp. 148–149).

²⁰ Quoted from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phryne> "[N]one of our sources mentions the court to have been the Areopagus (both Athenaeus and Pseudo-Plutarch tell us only about 'dicasts', i.e. judges or jurors, so the court could have been a regular dikasterion)" (*ibid.*).



Detail from Gérôme's painting (oil on canvas, 80 × 128 cm).



Another detail from Gérôme's painting.

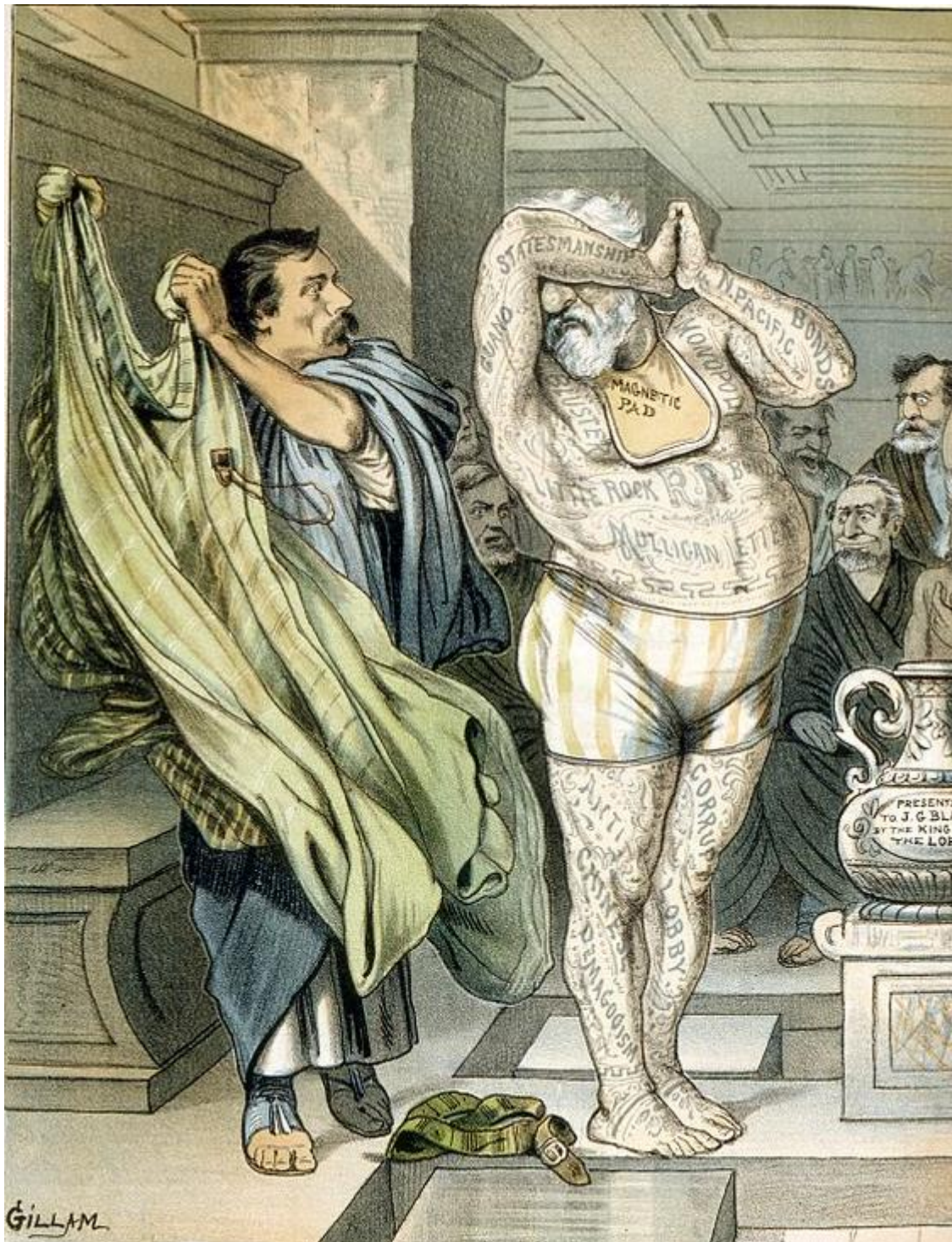


Hyperides in Gérôme's painting.

Gérôme's painting was parodied in a notorious, atrociously humorous American political cartoon, from the 1884 presidential campaign. Cartoons about the 1884 presidential campaign appear on pp. 92–94 in Donald Dewey's book *The Art of Ill Will* (2007), which I reviewed in this journal, in a review essay (Nissan 2013), from which the following quotation is taken (*ibid.*, pp. 192–193):

A notorious cartoon (92) against the Republican candidate James Blaine (James Gillespie Blaine, 1830–1893) was inspired by an anecdote about the Athenian Phryne, who had been the model for a sculpture representing Aphrodite; this was considered sacrilege, but a court was appeased when she was displayed to it naked. Bernhard Gillam's 1884 cartoon "Phryne before the Chicago Tribunal" showed characters wearing garments from antiquity: all those men, except Blaine, who upon having had a veil taken off him by the man standing behind him, covers his face with his forearm, and stands barefoot and naked, except his wearing striped drawers and, under his chin, a "magnetic towel" (it is so inscribed), under the lecherous glances of the adjudicating assembly. Blaine's body is inscribed with a multitude of names intended to be evocative of scandals in which he was involved. A vase in front of him has this inscription: "Presented to J. G. Blaine by the King of the Lobby". Dewey explains (34–35):

The first big attack came from [Joseph] Keppler's *Puck* on June 4, 1884, with Bernhard Gillam portraying the Republican candidate as the Tattooed Man in "Phryne before the Chicago Tribunal". The color illustration was a takeoff on a French painting by Jean-L[é]on Ger[ô]me that had caused a stir in Paris some years earlier. Its subject was the way the Greek orator Hyperides, defending the prostitute Phryne against charges of profanity for posing for a statue of Aphrodite, got her acquitted by

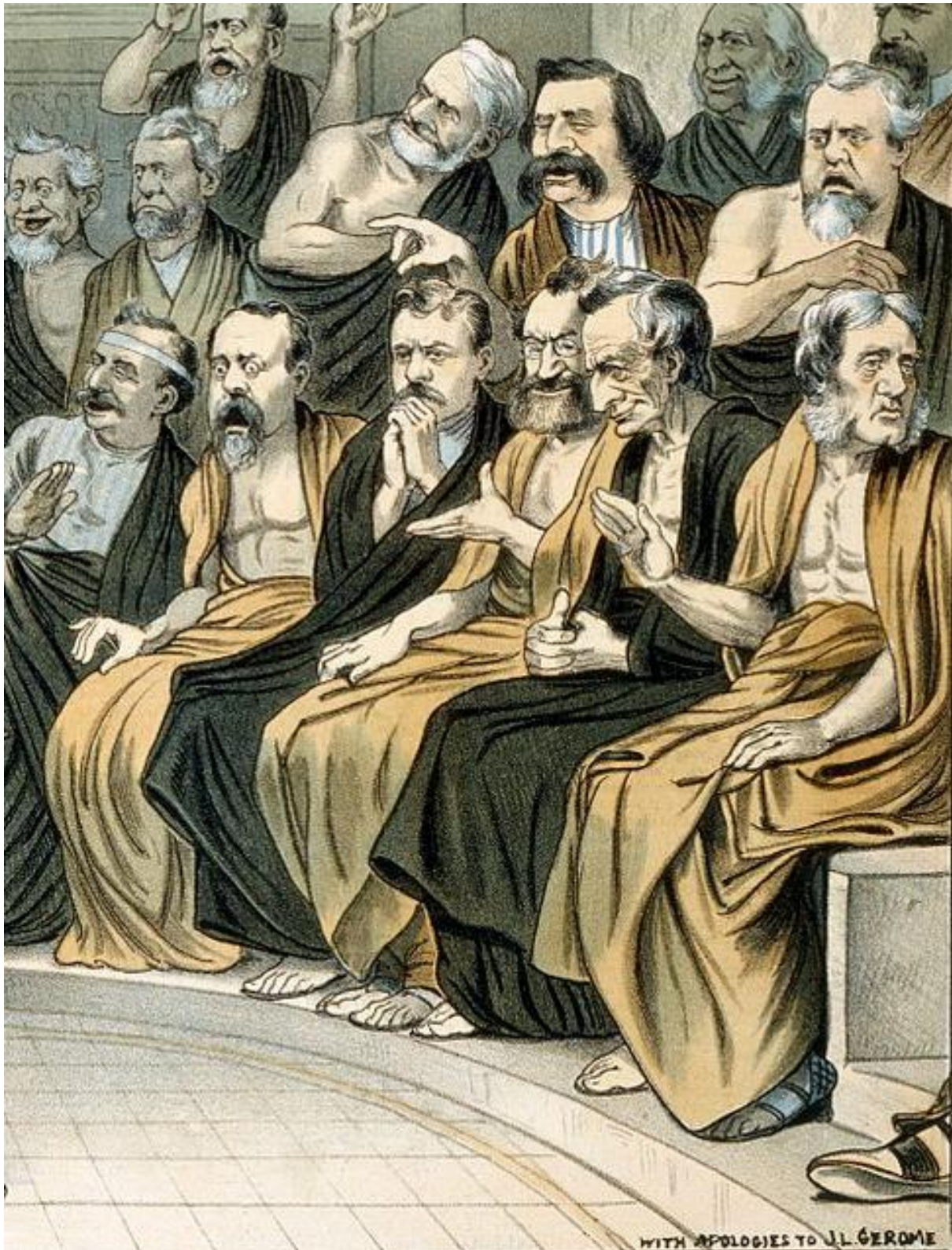


The candidate for Vice President displays the presidential candidate, in Bernhard Gillam's 1884 cartoon.

throwing off her robe and daring her judges to dispute her naked loveliness. In the role of Phryne, a decidedly unaesthetic-looking Blaine, his body covered with tattooed references to the various scandals of his past, has to hide [p. 35] his face in shame before his judges. A contemporary observer cited by Hess and Kaplan said the illustration made him “feel a certain irresistible thrill of loathing”. The candidate had to be talked out of suing *Puck* for libel and obscenity when the Gillam cartoon proved as much of a sensation in the United States as the Gerome original had been in France. Keppler didn't have to be talked out of — or into — anything. His penchant for tagging politicians with a fixed image, particularly during election contexts, led him to depict Blaine relentlessly as the Tattooed Man for the rest of the campaign.

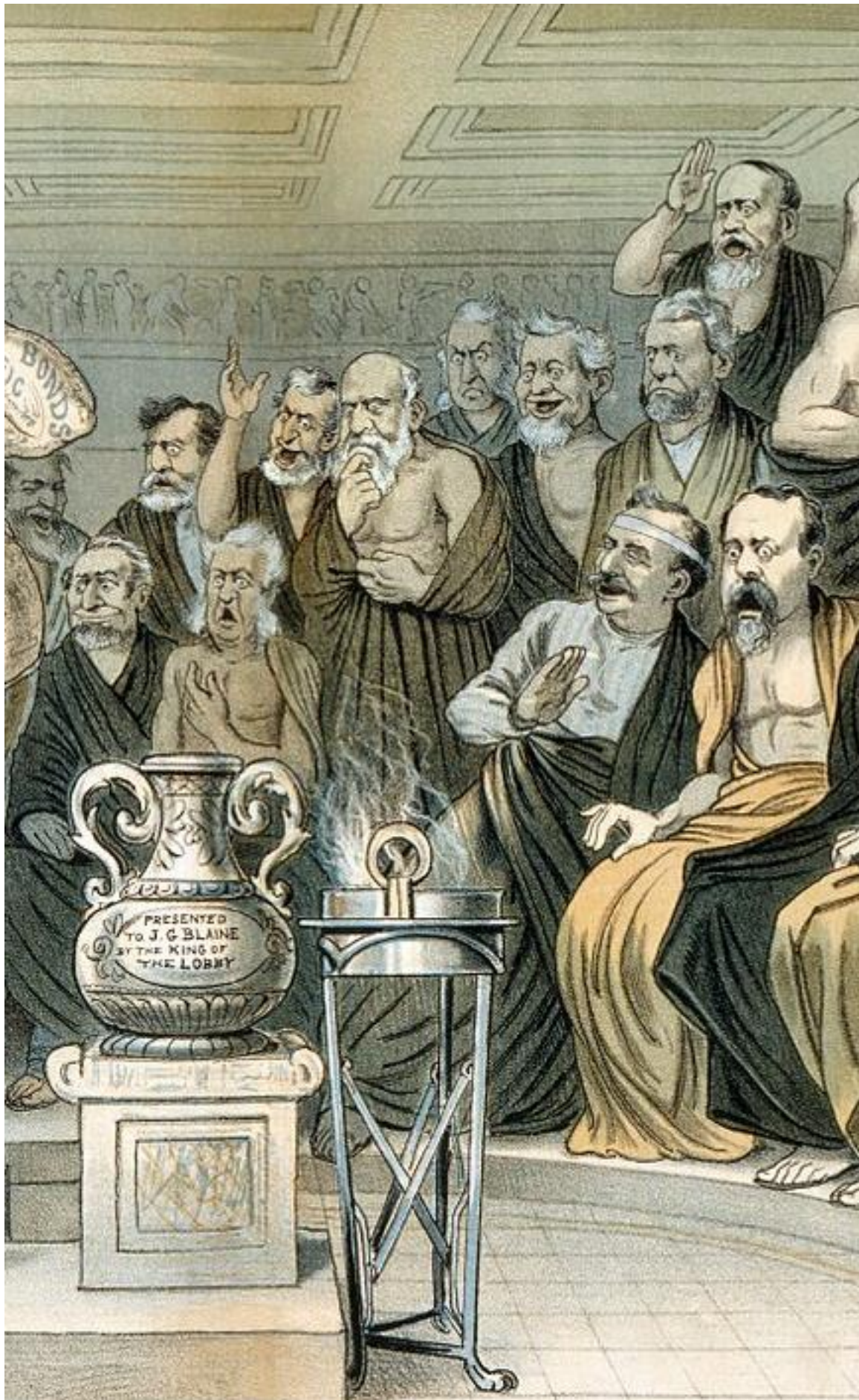


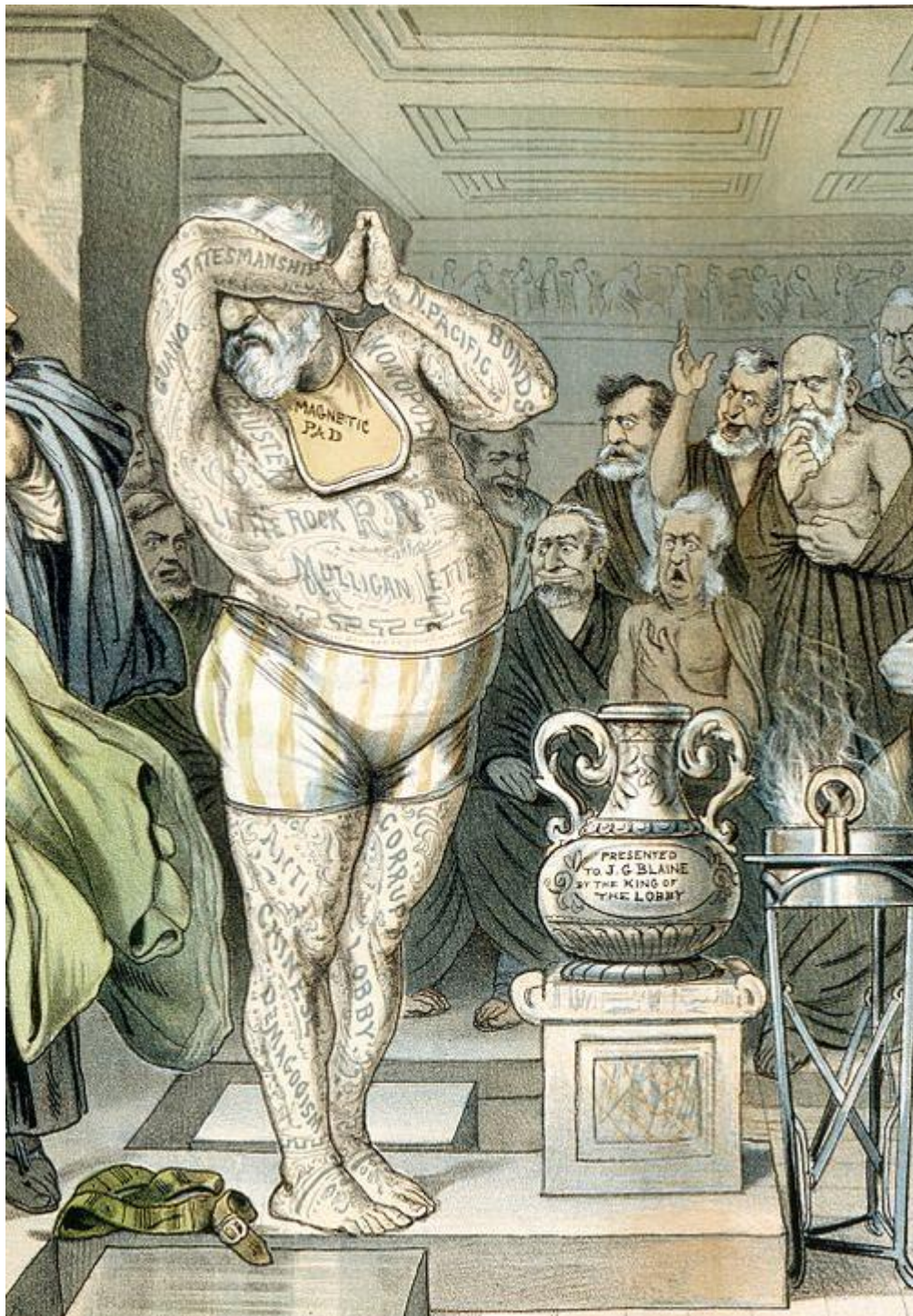
Bernhard Gillam's cartoon in full.



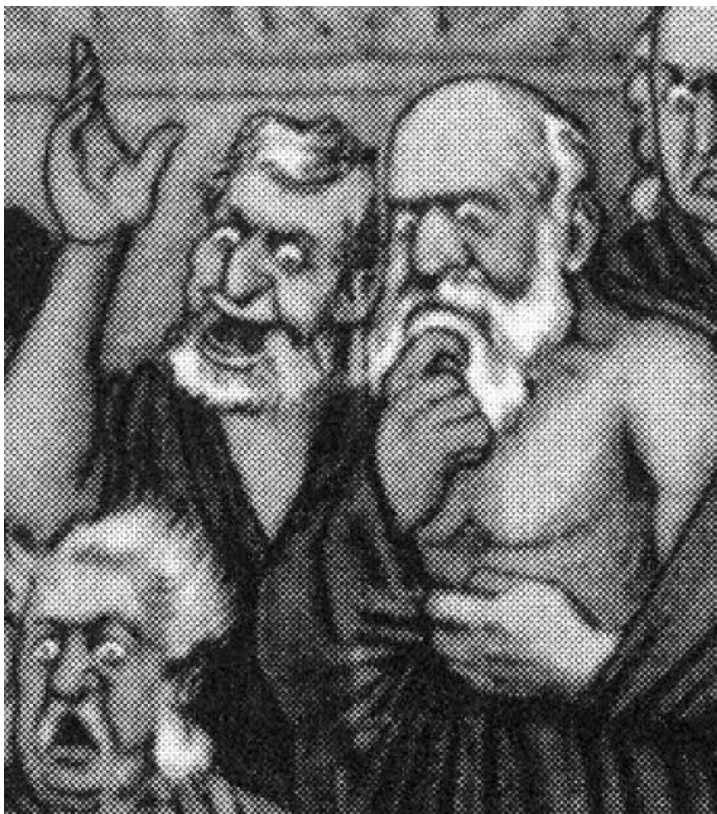
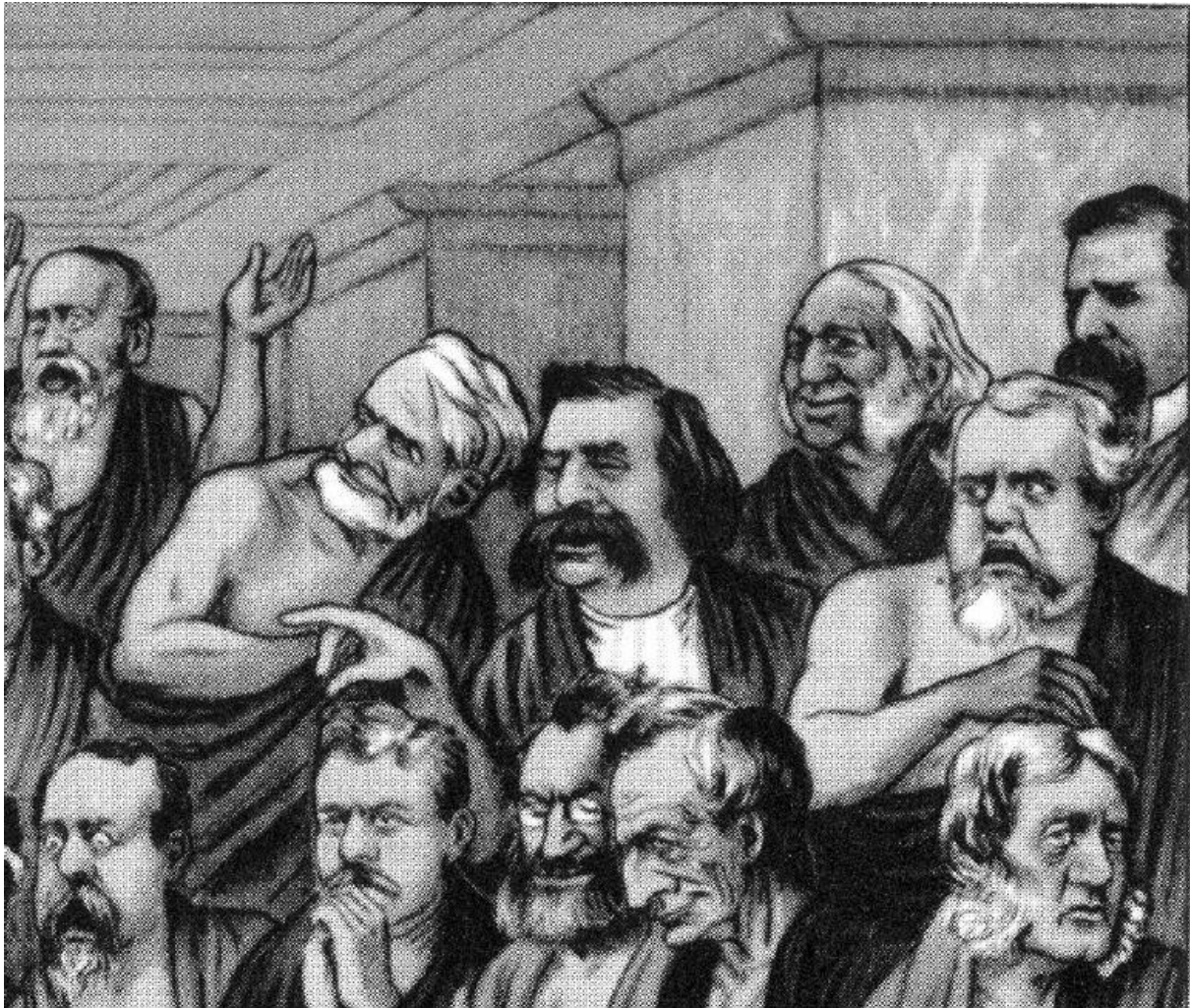
Detail from *Phryne before the Chicago Tribunal*, Bernhard Gillam's cartoon of 1884. In the bottom right corner, credit was given for the inspiration: "WITH APOLOGIES TO J.L. GEROME". The setting is the United States in the Gilded Age (the last third of the 19th century), clad as though this was Antiquity. The caption is:

PHRYNE BEFORE THE CHICAGO TRIBUNAL. / ARDENT ADVOCATE. — "Now, Gentlemen, don't make any mistake in your decision! Here's Purity and magnetism for you — can't be beat!"

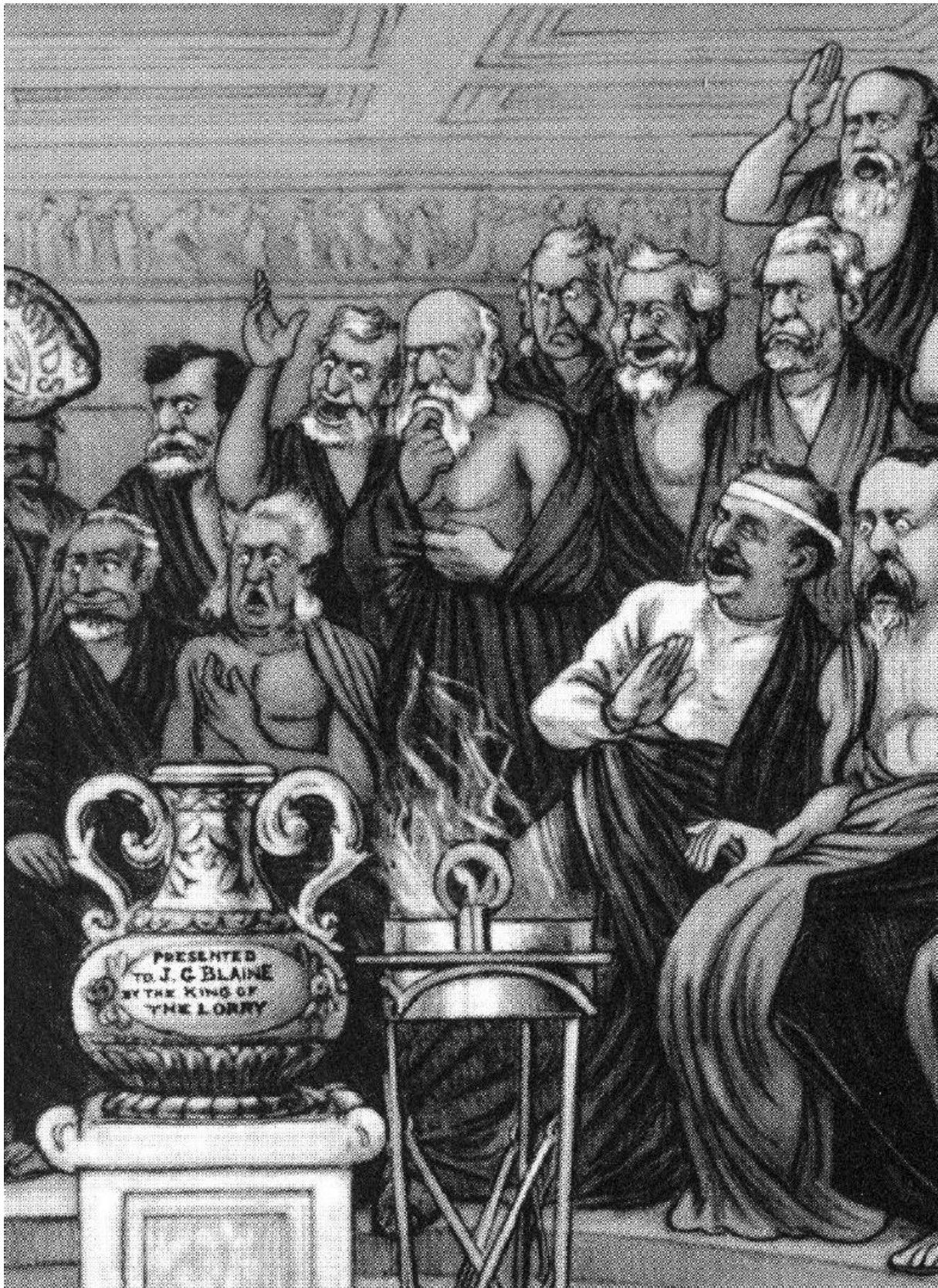




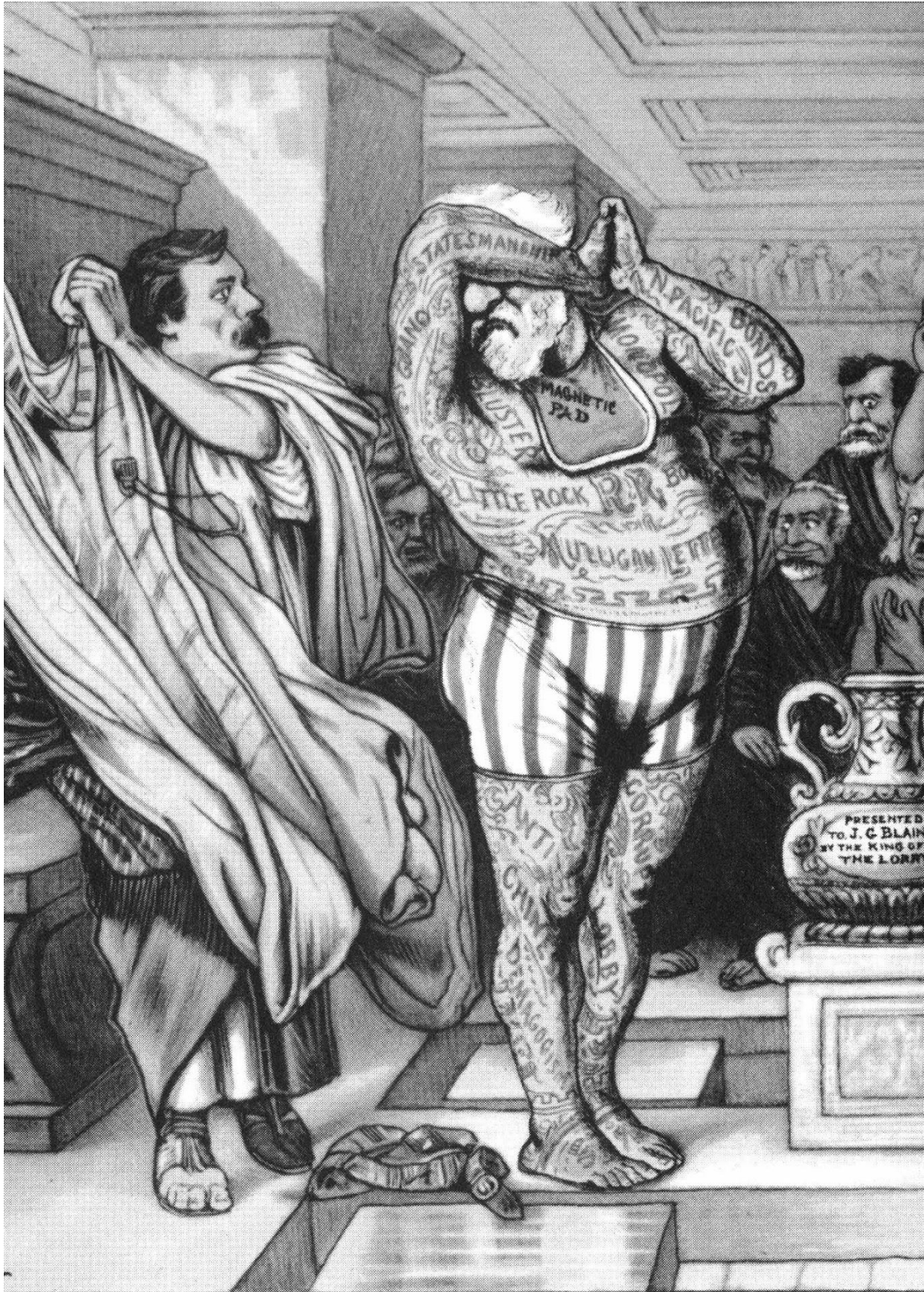
Clearly, the cartoonist was inviting from the public an attitude towards the 1884 presidential candidate that would ideally resemble the one expressed by the faces he drew, and which unlike in Gérôme's painting, are mocking, or disapprovingly astonished at, rather than admiring the person at whom they are staring. In Phryne's case, which inspired Gérôme's painting, a notorious celebrity woman was put on trial for sacrilege because she dared pose as a model for the statue of a Aphrodite, and her defence was that because of her good looks, she was quite suitable for being the model for that statue. The transition in attitudes obtained from the Areopagus sitting in judgement was from ire motivated by the defendant's disrepute, to admiration. The cartoonist instead has the goal of producing in the public the opposite transition.



Such are the facial displays, and emotions underlying them, that the cartoonist was trying to elicit from the public towards Blaine.



Well, one thing we know for sure is that Blaine never became President of the United States of America. Pay attention to the contrast between elements pointing to antiquity (such as the burning fire) and modern elements, such as one of the judges wearing glasses, or “the king of the lobby” on the vase, or the text of Blaine’s tattoos.



Another detail from Gillam's 1884 cartoon *Phryne before the Chicago Tribunal*. Note the label "Anti Chinese demagogism" on the candidate's right leg: on the East Coast, almost not affected by Far East immigrants, cartoonists found it easier to castigate pandering to anti-Chinese sentiment in California.

Choy et al. (1994) discussed 19th-century American cartoons about immigrants from China. The Chinese Exclusion Act was passed into law in 1882. The 1884 presidential nominee for the Democrats was Grover Cleveland, the governor of New York, whose moral uprightness was trumpeted (until a scandal was unearthed in July 1884). Grover Cleveland's opponent was James Blaine, the one tarnished with the Tattooed Man cartoons. Another cartoon by Bernhard Gillam from *Puck* (this one of 17 May 1882) is "A Sop to Cerberus", criticises Chester Alan Arthur (1829–1886), who was U.S. president of the United States in 1881–1885, and is anti-Irish (as usual in *Puck*) and subserviently pro-Chinese:

Gillam, Bernhard, 1856–1896 – A Sop to Cerberus. – May 17, 1882 – [*Puck*] 11:271 – President Chester Arthur dressed in white robes offering a three-headed dog, representing the Western Vote (Hoodlum, Demagogue and Irish) the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The three-headed dog blocks the pathway to the White House, glowing with the number 1884. President Chester Arthur with political aspirations for a second term in office, offers a sop to pacify the three-headed dog of mythology (Cerberus) the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 in order to tame the wild beast, which will allow Arthur to claim victory in the 1884 presidential elections.²¹



At the presidential campaign of 1884, memories were fresh of politicians' attitudes concerning the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Bernhard Gillam was not new to this topic. Along with other features of the candidate he lampooned as the Tattooed Man, there were his anti-Chinese attitudes, which Gillam considered to be a liability. The Tattooed Man is not as undressed as Phryne in Jean-Léon Gérôme's painting of 1861, *Phryné devant l'Aréopage* (*Phryne before the Areopagus*), which provided acknowledged inspiration to this cartoon by Gillam. Nevertheless, in Gérôme's painting, Phryne wears shoes, which the Tattooed Man does not. Nevertheless, his feet resemble quite closely Phryne's feet in the painting. Interestingly, cartoons published on the East Coast and berating anti-Chinese attitudes (in California), often were anti-Irish. (Both Thomas Nast and his rivals at *Puck* were anti-Irish indeed.) *Puck* was not always averse to anti-Chinese attitudes. A cartoon by J.S. Pughe published in *Puck* in 1905, and entitled *How John may dodge the Exclusion Act*, was quite vicious. Pughe's cartoon was a composite, and — as Michael Pickering remarks (2014, p. 738) — "played on stereotypes not only about Chinese but other ethnic groups as well".

²¹ http://www.delart.org/collections/HFS_library/finding_aids/PuckMagazine.htm#Description



A realistic portrait of the actual James G. Blaine.²²

Puck, the magazine that attacked Blaine by portraying him as the Tattooed Man, published a series of such cartoons. Of these, some retained some setting in antiquity. For example, even though in the original Tattooed Man cartoon, in which he was likened to the Athenian courtesan Phryne, Blaine was drawn barefoot, whereas the man who was baring the Tattooed Man's body was wearing ancient shoes leaving part of his foot bare (curiously, there is some inconsistency between the two shoes he is wearing), in another *Puck* cartoon, a centre-spread drawn by Keppler himself, the editor of *Puck*, Blaine was wearing ancient sandals, this being an indicator of the setting in antiquity. That other cartoon is *The Writing on the Wall*,²³ a clear reference to the banquet of Belshazzar²⁴ in the biblical Book of Daniel. There is a banquet in the cartoon, but it is a banquet with men dressed as they men of some standing would be in the United States at the time the cartoon was published. A man is sitting on the ground close to where the Tattooed Man — who is trying to cover himself with a newspaper (the *New York Tribune*) — is standing, and that man sitting on the ground wears a kind of trousers associated with the Frontier. Almost everybody is staring at the writing on the wall, not the one which in the Bible, Daniel is able to interpret, but rather something relevant after Blaine's Republican nomination: REPUBLICAN REVOLT.

²² <http://bioguide.congress.gov/bioguide/photo/B/B000519.jpg>
<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:JamesGBlaine.jpg>

²³ The cartoon *The Writing on the Wall* about James Blaines as the Tattooed Man appeared in *Puck* of 18 June 1884. <http://superitch.com/images/2012/07/Puck18840618cntspread.jpg>

²⁴ Evilmerodach succeeded Nebuchadnezzar (i.e., Nebuchadnezzar II) as King of Babylon, according to Jewish tradition, and was himself succeeded by Belshazzar, before Babylon fell to the Median army.



Detail from Keppler's *The Writing on the Wall*. The man sitting on the floor, and identified as Black Jack on a belt or sash, has the facial features of the candidate for Vice President, John A. Logan, Blaine's running mate at the presidential elections. He wears a mantle, perhaps an indicator of antiquity the way the sandals of James Blaine as the Tattooed Man are. Black Jack's trousers and shoe identify him as a man of the Frontier.

Next page: The cartoon *The Writing on the Wall* is shown in full.

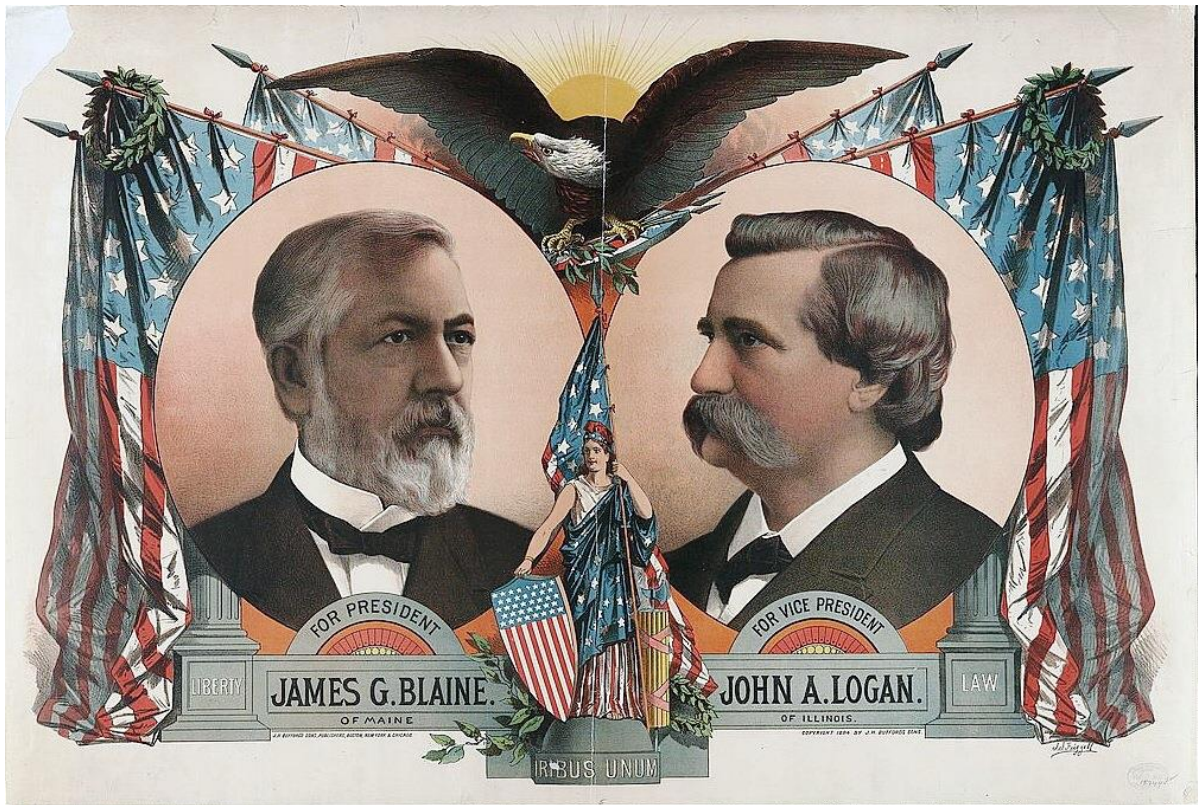




The men at the banquet are panicking. One of them is literally scared to death: his dead body holds the knife he used when eating, vertically, because his body has fallen back. Another man has his hands in his hair, in despair. The man in the forefront is running away, in fear: quite inelegantly, he was wearing a napkin around his neck while eating (the napkin identifies him as the Illinois orator Robert G. Ingersoll, who in a famous speech at the 1876 Republican convention called Blaine a “plumed knight”). What he was eating has no longer flesh on it. The bone he still holds in both hands is labelled “STAR ROUTE SPOILS”. Is it humorous? It is, but terribly so.



Belshazzar's feast from the Book of Daniel, as represented in Gustave Doré's Bible. Daniel is the man pointing to the writing on the wall. He is able to interpret it. Actually the Aramaic inscription in the Hebrew script is somewhat mangled, and its final part (תקל ופרסין *tql wfrsyn*) appears in the first row, but is otherwise almost entirely correctly reproduced, unlike the second row, which miscopies the beginning of the writing the way it appears at *Daniel* 5:25 (מנא מנא *mn' mn'*). "The late story of the handwriting on the wall (Dan 5:25) both presupposes a commercial approach to literacy and a critique of commerce. The reader or hearer is expected to visualize the unvocalized text, מנא מנא תקל ופרסין, and to see that it would be most naturally interpreted as a money-changer's rhyme, 'a mina, a mina, a sheqel, half-minas'. The riddle is what sense this could convey. Daniel solves the riddle by providing a vocalization which stretches the Aramaic language, 'numbered, numbered, weighed, divided'" (Brown 1981, p. 187).



A Blaine/Logan campaign poster.²⁵



James G. Blaine. Library of Congress description: "Blaine, Hon. James G. of Maine, Secty of State". Date between 1870 and 1880. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. Brady-Handy Photograph Collection.



President Grover Cleveland. Oil painting by Anders Zorn, 1899. Cleveland defeated Blaine in 1884.

²⁵ http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/94/James_G._Blaine_-_John_A._Logan.jpg



Another manner of placing Blaine as the Tattooed Man in antiquity, was for *Puck* magazine setting him in Greek mythology. Shown here is the cartoon *Narcissus: or, the man who was mashed on himself*.²⁶ Narcissus is admiring his reflected image, forever.

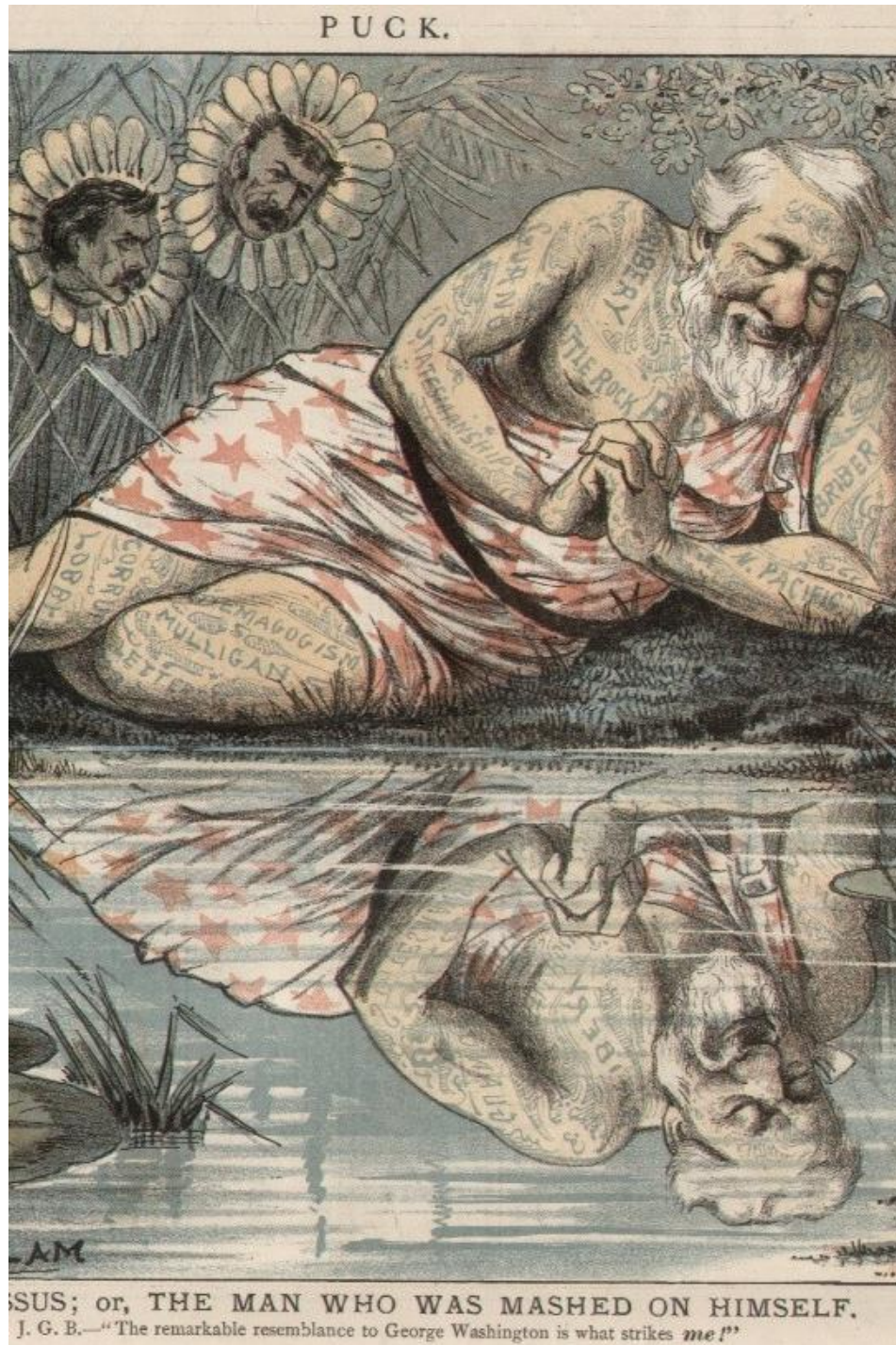
The caption of the cartoon *Narcissus* has the tattooed Blaine claim that his likeness resembles George Washington. For that matter, also George Washington was subjected to character attacks, in 1795, “calling Washington arrogant, self-loving, aloof, and selfish” (Smart and Shiraev 2014, p. 222). Blaine was considered very arrogant. There is no mention of Blaine in Martijn Icks and Eric Shiraev’s edited volume (2014) *Character Assassination throughout the Ages*, perhaps because that book adopted a rigid schema allocating a fixed number of chapters to each historical period.

Whereas *Puck* could represent Blaine as the Tattooed Man not only in historical ancient Athens, but also in Greek mythology, as Narcissus, another manner of placing the tattooed Man is in ancient Egypt, whose antiquities turned out in 19th-century imagery because of the rise of Egyptology. Gillam cruelly drew the Tattooed Man, with a horrified stare yet no longer alive but rather embalmed, while men, among them Logan, the candidate for Vice-President, were about to entomb him forever among mummies. This was supposed to be a prophecy, as the Tattooed Man is labelled “nominated June, 6 / embalmed Nov. 1884” (presidential elections in the United States are held in November), whereas *Puck* published the cartoon in its issue of 11 June 1884.²⁷ The title of that centre-spread from *Puck* is *The Receiving-Vault of the Republican Politicians Who Defied Public Morality*. Notwithstanding the ancient Egyptian setting, modern Western custom intrudes when we are made to see REST[-in-peace] wreaths. The label “REST” can be read on one of the white wreaths. Logan’s moustache, too, is foreign to the ancient Near East (and ancient Egyptian priests were entirely shaven).

²⁶ http://thumbs2.picclick.com/d/400/pict/360785348605_/Tattooed-Blaine-Narcissus-Sense-of-Grandeur-1884-antique.jpg

²⁷ *The Vault of Republican Morality*, as this cartoon is also known, appeared in James Blaine’s “The Tattooed Man” series, on 11 June 1884, whereas *The Writing on the Wall* about James Blaine as the Tattooed Man appeared in *Puck* of 18 June 1884, that is in the issue of the following week.

As can be seen, Blaine was subjected to quite vicious character assassination. Martijn Icks and Eric Shiraev are the editors of a recent book (2014), *Character Assassination Throughout the Ages*. I have pointed out earlier that there is no mention at all of James Blaine in that book's index, but Ch. 11 is "Character Attacks and American Presidents" by Jason Smart and Eric Shiraev (2014). As U.S. politics was restricted to that chapter, Blaine did not qualify for coverage, as he never became president, even though he was the favoured candidate in the 1884 presidential elections, in which he was narrowly defeated by the Democrat Grover Cleveland.



Detail of the cartoon *Narcissus: or, the man who was mashed on himself* (*Puck*, 17 September 1884).



Blaine as Narcissus is made to say: “The remarkable resemblance to George Washington is what strikes *me!*” Note supporters’ faces in the flowers.



A fanciful ancient Egyptian ceremony lies to rest the horrified, still alive Tattooed Man, “nominated June, 6 / embalmed Nov. 1884”. The second man from left is Logan, in this detail from Gillam’s Egyptian cartoon about the Tattooed Man. *Puck*, 11 June 1884.

Next four pages: The same cartoon in full; a detail with modern wreaths under a few of the mummies; a detail with other mummies; and a closer view of the Tattooed Man: dead rather than horrified eyes: he is embalmed.









In this detail of *The Vault of Republican Morality*, one can see that Blaine's portrayal combines two situations: the horrified stare of a man who, to be horrified, must have still been alive (presumably when losing the November elections: the cartoon was still in June), and the dead eyes of an embalmed man. He preserves the horrified state of his last moments when alive, but in context, he looks as though he is primarily horrified at being placed in the vault with the other mummies. This is an example of how a cartoonist may be very clever, and yet, at the same time, repulsively vicious. Cartooning cannot be exempt from human morality. We cannot but admire the skill involved, but we pass moral judgement harshly.

"P.T. Barnum's museum in New York City was a popular attraction in the mid-1800s, and cartoonists used its distinctive surroundings to depict politicians as members of Barnum's freak show. Today, a cartoon's setting is much simpler and certainly less sensational. Many cartoons take place around the family television set where most Americans get their news" (Hess and Northrop 2011, p. 14). Sarah Burns (1999) has pointed out, among the other things, the impact of Barnum's menagerie on the appearance of animals (rather than politicians in their human form) in American cartoons.



A cartoon against Blaine by Gillam, published in *Puck* on 16 April 1884: *The National Dime Museum — Will be run during the presidential campaign.*



Detail of a Gillam cartoon about Blaine at the freak show. It inaugurated, on 16 April 1884, the Tattooed Man series of cartoons. The title of this cartoon is *The National Dime Museum — Will be run during the presidential campaign*. Several *Puck* cartoonists drew the Tattooed Man cartoons in 1884.



Another detail of the cartoon about Blaine at the freak show. Earlier cartoons by *Puck*'s editor, Joseph Keppler, had already resorted to the device of tattooing a politician with his sins. In 1884, he pummelled Blaine using it



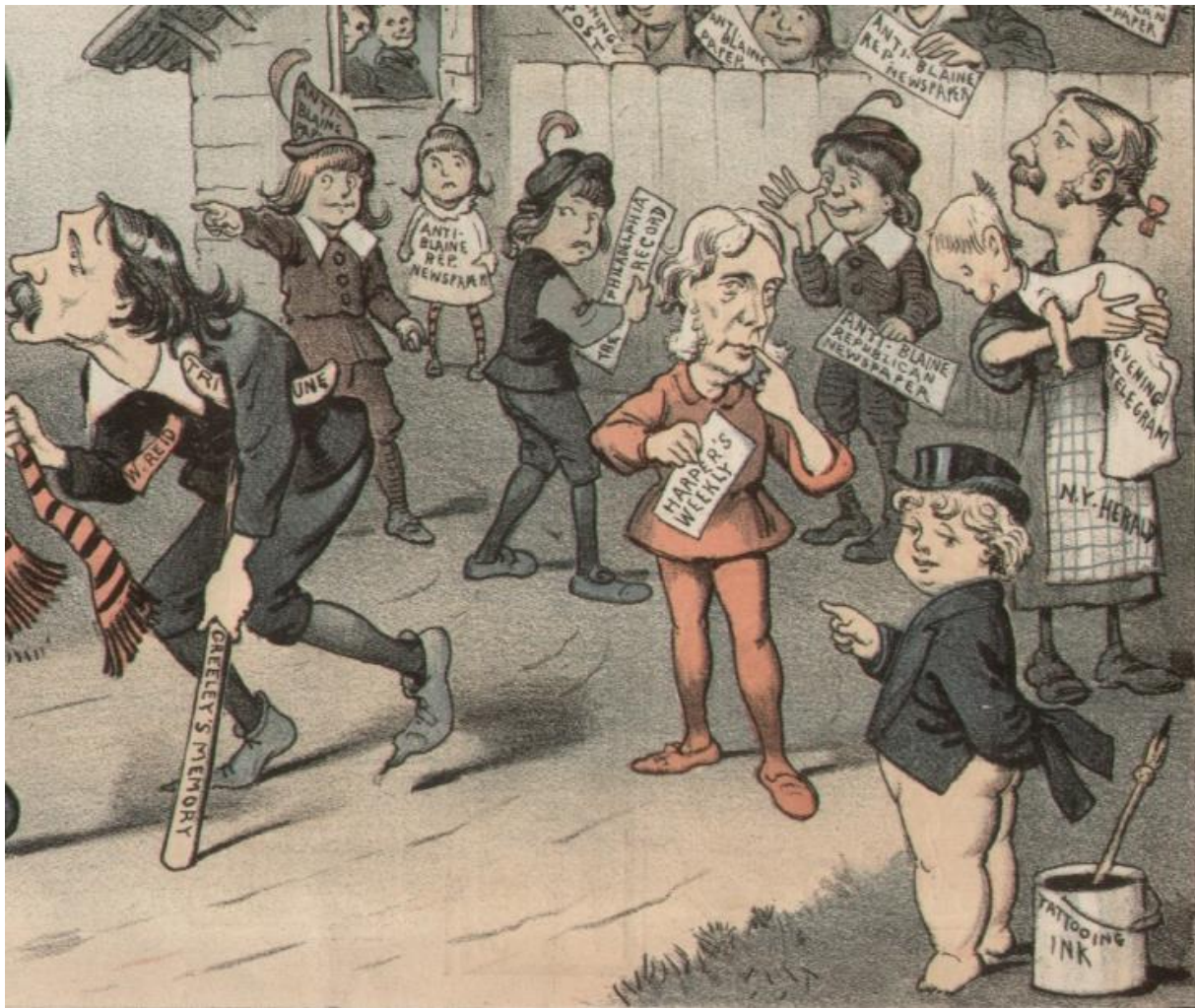
Another detail from the same cartoon. This is its left-hand side.



A Tattooed Man cartoon by Oppen: *A new version of the Pied Piper of Hamelin.* — *The children refuse to be charmed.* The toddler bottom right is Puck.



Details of Oppen's *Pied Piper* cartoon. It was published in the *Puck* issue of 21 May 1884. Further details are shown here on the next page.





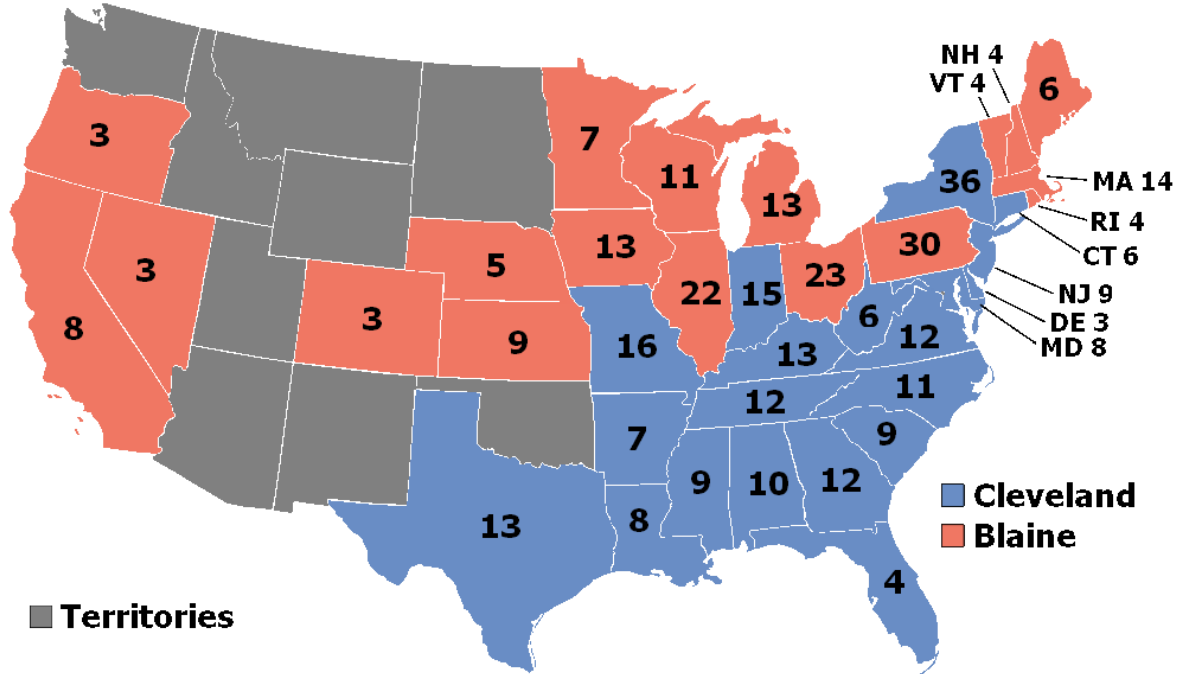
Opper was making the point that even some Republican newspapers were against Blaine.

James Gillespie Blaine (January 31, 1830 – January 27, 1893) was an American statesman and Republican politician who represented Maine in the United States House of Representatives from 1863 to 1876, serving as Speaker of the House from 1869 to 1875, and then in the United States Senate from 1876 to 1881. He twice served as United States Secretary of State (1881, 1889–1892) and unsuccessfully sought the Republican nomination for President in 1876 and 1880 before being nominated in 1884. In the general election, he was narrowly defeated by Democrat Grover Cleveland. Blaine was one of the late 19th century's leading Republicans and champion of the moderate reformist faction of the party known as the "Half-Breeds".

He began his political career as an early supporter of Abraham Lincoln and the Union war effort in the American Civil War. In Reconstruction, Blaine was a supporter of black suffrage, but opposed some of the more coercive measures of the Radical Republicans. Initially a protectionist, he later worked for a reduction in the tariff and an expansion of American trade with foreign countries. Railroad promotion and construction were important issues in his time, and as a result of his interest and support Blaine was widely suspected of corruption in the awarding of railroad charters; these allegations plagued his 1884 presidential candidacy.

As Secretary of State, Blaine was a transitional figure, marking the end of an isolationist era in foreign policy and foreshadowing the rise of the American Century that would begin with the

Spanish-American War. His efforts at expanding the United States' trade and influence began the shift to a more active American foreign policy. Blaine was a pioneer of tariff reciprocity and urged greater involvement in Latin American affairs. An expansionist, Blaine's policies would lead in less than a decade to the establishment of the United States' acquisition of Pacific colonies and dominance of the Caribbean.²⁸



1884 presidential election results map. Red denotes states won by Blaine/Logan, Blue denotes those won by Cleveland/Hendricks. Numbers indicate the number of electoral votes allotted to each state.²⁹ Blaine's was a narrow defeat.

Already in the 1870s, when James Blaine was Speaker of the House, there were suspicions of wrongdoing, in which however some other Republicans were more demonstrably implicated. At any rate, that was the period when he was at the apex of his popularity:

Republicans remained in control of the House in the 42nd and 43rd Congresses, and Blaine was reelected as Speaker at the start of both of them, for a total term of six years in the Speaker's chair. His popularity continued to grow, and Republicans dissatisfied with Grant mentioned Blaine as a potential candidate for president in 1872. Instead, Blaine worked steadfastly for Grant's reelection, which was a success. Blaine's growing fame brought growing opposition from the Democrats, as well, and during the 1872 campaign he was accused of receiving bribes in the *Crédit Mobilier* scandal. Blaine denied any part in the scandal, which involved railroad companies bribing federal officials to turn a blind eye to fraudulent railroad contracts that overcharged the government by millions of dollars. No one was able to satisfactorily prove Blaine's involvement (and the law that made the fraud possible had been written before he was elected to Congress) but other Republicans were exposed by the accusations, including Vice President Colfax, who was dropped from the ticket at the 1872 Republican National Convention.

Although he supported a general amnesty for former Confederates, Blaine opposed extending it to include Jefferson Davis, and he cooperated with Grant in helping to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1875 in response to increased violence and disenfranchisement of blacks in the South. He

²⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_G._Blaine

²⁹ <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ad/ElectoralCollege1884.svg>

refrained from voting on the anti-third term resolution that overwhelmingly passed the House that same year, believing that to vote for it would look self-interested. Blaine was loyal to Grant, but the scandals of the Grant administration³⁰ did not taint how the public perceived him; according to his biographer, Blaine was never more popular than when he was Speaker of the House. Liberal Republicans saw him as an alternative to what they saw the corruption of other Republican leaders, and some even urged him to form a new, reformist party. Although he remained a Republican, this base of moderate reformers remained loyal to Blaine and became known as the Half Breed faction of the party.³¹

Perhaps the most lasting aspect of U.S. home politics associated with Blaine's name is the Blaine Amendment,³² which he proposed in December 1875, and which resulted from a policy he promoted together with President Ulysses Grant. It codified church-state separation. "The bill passed the House but failed in the Senate. Although it never passed Congress, and left Blaine open to charges of anti-Catholicism,³³ the proposed amendment served Blaine's purpose of rallying Protestants to the Republican party and promoting himself as one of the party's foremost leaders." Church-state separation is still in force in the United States, even though it wasn't the Blaine Amendment that managed to make this the law of the land. Blaine was a candidate for the Presidency already in 1872, and at that time he became implicated in a scandal that was still used against him in the 1884 Tattooed Man cartoons:

Blaine entered the 1876 presidential campaign as the favorite, but his chances were almost immediately harmed by the emergence of a scandal. Rumors had begun to spread in February of that year that Blaine had been involved in a transaction with the Union Pacific Railroad in which the railroad had paid Blaine \$64,000 for some Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad bonds he owned, even though the bonds were nearly worthless; in essence, the alleged transaction was a sham designed to bribe Blaine. Blaine denied the charges, as did the Union Pacific's directors. Blaine claimed he never had any dealings with the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad except to purchase bonds at market price, and that he had lost money on the transaction. Democrats in the House of Representatives nevertheless demanded a Congressional investigation. The testimony appeared to favor Blaine's version of events until May 31, when James Mulligan, a Boston clerk formerly employed by Blaine's brother-in-law, testified that the allegations were true, that he had arranged the transaction, and that he had letters to prove it. The letters ended with the damning phrase, "Kindly burn this letter." When the investigating committee recessed, Blaine met with Mulligan in his hotel room; what transpired between the men is unknown, but Blaine left with the letters and refused to turn them over to the committee.

Blaine took his case to the House floor, proclaiming his innocence and calling the investigation a partisan attack by Southern Democrats, revenge for his exclusion of Jefferson Davis from the amnesty bill of the previous year. By now the pressure had begun to affect Blaine's health, and he collapsed while leaving church services on June 14. Blaine's ill health combined with the lack of evidence against him garnered him sympathy among Republicans, and when the Republican convention began in Cincinnati later that month, he was again seen as the front-runner.³⁴

³⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulysses_S._Grant_presidential_administration_scandals

³¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_G._Blaine

³² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blaine_Amendment Cf. Green (1992).

³³ Because "no money raised by taxation in any State for the support of public schools, or derived from any public fund therefor, nor any public lands devoted thereto, shall ever be under the control of any religious sect". At taxpayer-funded schools the climate was one that in practice promoted the worldview of the socially dominant demographic sector. More importantly, the campaign against faith schools (and Catholic schools in New York City in particular) turned ugly, as can be seen in Thomas Nast's 1871 cartoon *The American River Ganges*, which I analysed in Nissan (2008). James Blaine was a Presbyterian like his father, but his mother was Catholic, and his parents were married with a Catholic ceremony.

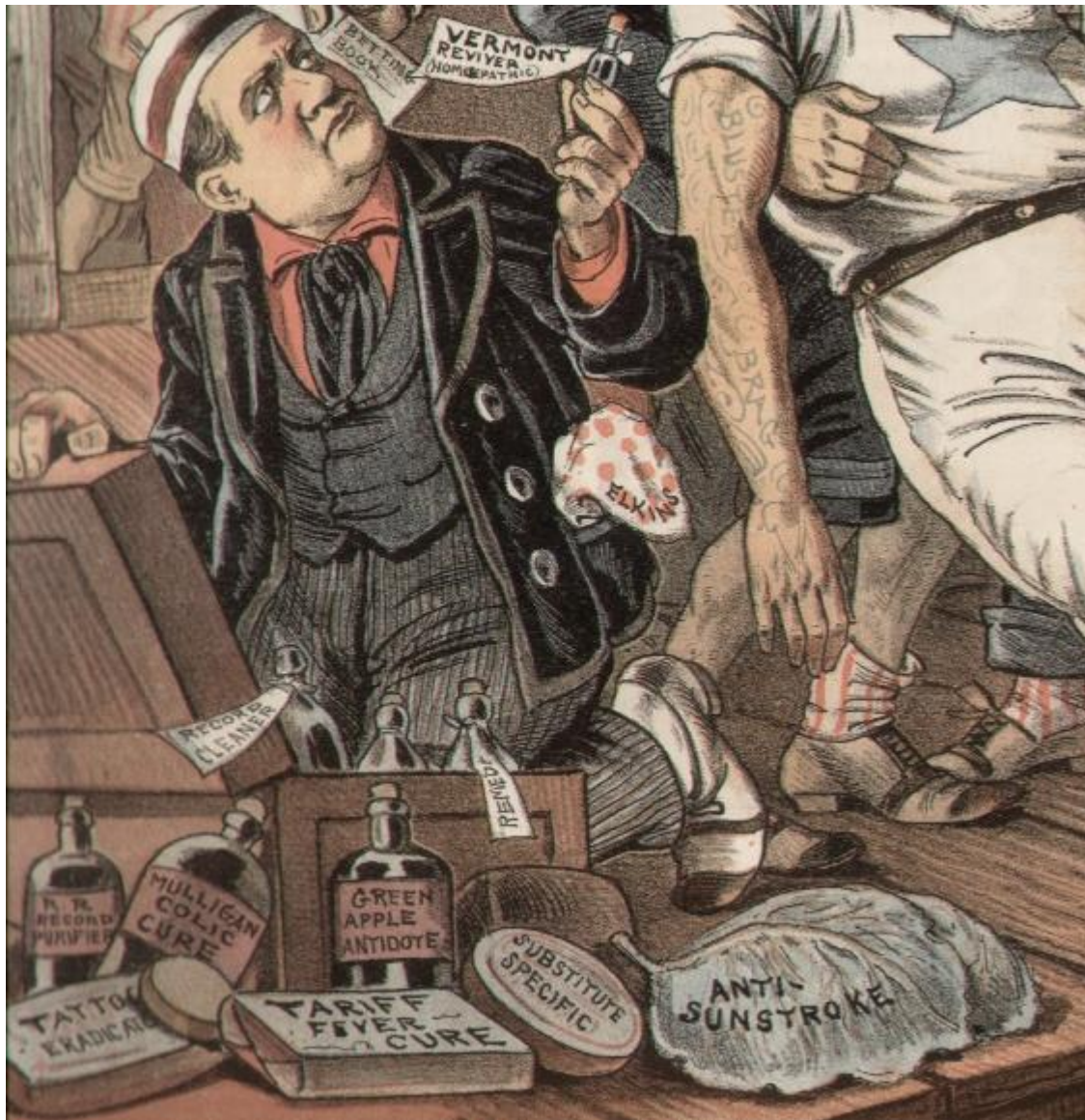
³⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_G._Blaine



Blaine is in quite bad conditions, owing to sunstroke, according to the cartoon *The political Courtney* by Gillam (*Puck*, 10 September 1884).







Cures Blaine needs, Gillam's cartoon *The political courtney* suggests, "anti-sunstroke", "green apple antidote", but also a "tattoo eradicator", a "record cleaner", and a "record purifier", along with "Mulligan colic cure".





The facial display of the man with the dollar-ornamented fan suggests he does not believe Blaine could make it.



Gout is one of Blaine's ailments, according to this cartoon. It was caused by the guano scandal.



In this detail edited for brightness, we can see that Logan is trying to get Blaine to enter this tiny boat. Its name is “aggressive campaign”. The oar is labelled “soap”, like Blaine’s glove in the boxers cartoon. The boat is in “monopoly mud”, and a duck, bottom right in the cartoon, is staring at the unedifying scene.



Notice the betting book, the oars labelled “soap”, and the “Vermont reviver (homeopathic)”.



This 1884 cartoon by Gillam, “*Me and Jack*”, shows Blaine (the Tattooed Man) together with the candidate for Vice President running on the same ticket, represented as a Black dog. It has the flowing black hair of the real man. As he was a Southerner, a tin can is tied to the dog’s tail, and its label proclaims him to be pro-slavery.



Detail of the former: “Hurrah soap to remove tattoo”. This cartoon appeared in the *Puck* issue of 2 July 1884.



In this Gillam cartoon (*Puck*, 19 November 1884), whose title is an exclamation mark, James Blaine the bather (the 1884 presidential candidate) and his dog (Jack Logan, the vice presidential candidate) are observed as they are falling into the water (they lost the elections), as the wooden plank on which they were sitting is broken. Note on the right side, the “Hurrah soap to remove tattoo”.



As this detail shows, in this cartoon, too, Blaine is the Tattooed Man: his legs are tattooed.



In this other Gillam cartoon, entitled *"Waiting"* (*Puck*, 10 June 1885) Blaine has fallen into the water (a shoe of his is floating on the water, and is inscribed inside with his initials), but the vice presidential candidate, Jack Logan, is sitting again, but this time on a life-buoy inscribed "Re-election to U.S. Senate": the acronym "U.S." is so split as to make room for the dog's tail. Under the title of this cartoon, the caption states: "Mr. Logan's Enthusiastic Friends have Already Nominated Him for the Presidency — in 1888." The eyes of the toad are closed: even he is not impressed. The tin can floating in the water is intended to remind readers of the previous cartoon, and of the label "PRO-SLAVERY" inscribed on it.

Blaine was not selected as the Republicans candidate for the presidency in 1876. His nomination came from an Illinois orator, Robert G. Ingersoll,³⁵ who in a famous speech claimed that "the people call for the man who has torn from the throat of treason the tongue of slander, the man who has snatched the mask of Democracy from the hideous face of rebellion", and likened Blaine to "a plumed knight". This became a nickname for Blaine.

James Blaine was a senator from 1876, when his nomination rival Rutherford B. Hayes³⁶ became President (Early in his presidency, Hayes had indicated he would not seek a second term). "The Senate in the 45th Congress was controlled by a narrow Republican majority, but

³⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_G._Ingersoll

³⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rutherford_B._Hayes

it was a majority often divided against itself and against the Hayes administration. Blaine did not number himself among the administration's defenders, but neither could he join the Republicans led by Conkling — later known as the Stalwarts — who opposed Hayes, because of the deep personal enmity between Blaine and Conkling.”³⁷ The Stalwarts were going to be Blaine’s nemesis in 1884. Blaine opposed Hayes withdrawing troops from the former states of the Confederation, a withdrawal which ended the “Reconstruction of the South” and the enforcement of Afro-American political rights. (The reason the occupation of Iraq in the early 21st century was called “the reconstruction of Iraq” is that historical precedent, not some novel item of Newspeak.) Blaine “opposed Hayes’s withdrawal of federal troops from Southern capitals, which effectively ended the Reconstruction of the South, but to no avail. Blaine continued to antagonize Southern Democrats, voting against bills passed in the Democrat-controlled House that would reduce the Army’s appropriation and repeal the post-war Force Acts he had helped pass. By 1879, there were only 1155 soldiers stationed in the former Confederacy, and Blaine believed that this small force could never guarantee the civil and political rights of black Southerners — which would mean an end to the Republican party in the South.”³⁸ As for foreign policy, “Blaine’s Anglophobia combined with his support of high tariffs when he initially opposed a reciprocity treaty with Canada that would have reduced tariffs between the two nations, but by the end of his time in the Senate he changed his mind, believing that Americans had more to gain by increasing exports than they would lose by the risk of cheap imports.”³⁹

Hayes was succeeded, as President, by James A. Garfield,⁴⁰ who “placated the Stalwarts by endorsing Chester A. Arthur⁴¹ of New York, a Conkling loyalist, as nominee for vice president, but it was to Blaine and his delegates that Garfield owed his nomination.”⁴² Blaine was made Secretary of State. As such, he advocated free trade, especially with Latin America, and thought this would counteract what British interference in the Americas. On 2 July 1881, President Garfield was shot and mortally wounded by a deranged man who did that in order to ingratiate himself with Vice President Arthur, who succeeded Garfield as President. “Garfield’s death was not just a personal tragedy for Blaine; it also meant the end of his dominance of the cabinet and the end of his foreign policy initiatives. With Arthur’s ascent to the presidency, the Stalwart faction now held sway and Blaine’s days at the State Department were numbered.”⁴³ There was an alleged scandal after he resigned his position and had retired to private life: “Blaine appeared before Congress in 1882 during an investigation into his War of the Pacific diplomacy, defending himself against allegations that he owned an interest in the Peruvian guano deposits being occupied by Chile, but otherwise stayed away from the Capitol.”⁴⁴ The guano, too, would eventually find its way into the Tattooed Man’s tattoos.

In 1884, Blaine (who initially had been reluctant to run for the Republican nomination) defeated President Arthur at the Republican convention, and became the Republican presidential nominee, after other candidates withdrew their candidacy in Blaine’s favour. Among these, John A. Logan of Illinois, who became Blaine’s running mate, as candidate for Vice President.

The Democrats held their convention in Chicago the following month and nominated Governor Grover Cleveland of New York. Cleveland’s time on the national scene was brief, but Democrats hoped that his reputation as a reformer and an opponent of corruption would attract Republicans

³⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_G._Blaine

³⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_G._Blaine

³⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_G._Blaine

⁴⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_A._Garfield

⁴¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chester_A._Arthur

⁴² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_G._Blaine

⁴³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_G._Blaine

⁴⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_G._Blaine

dissatisfied with Blaine and his reputation for scandal. They were correct, as reform-minded Republicans (called “Mugwumps”)⁴⁵ denounced Blaine as corrupt and flocked to Cleveland. The Mugwumps, including such men as Carl Schurz and Henry Ward Beecher, were more concerned with morality than with party, and felt Cleveland was a kindred soul who would promote civil service reform and fight for efficiency in government. However, even as the Democrats gained support from the Mugwumps, they lost some blue-collar workers to the Greenback-Labor party,⁴⁶ led by Benjamin F. Butler, Blaine’s antagonist from their early days in the House.⁴⁷

One of the things that were Blaine’s undoing at the 1884 presidential elections was the attitude of the so-called. New York Mugwumps. Gerald McFarland (1963) has discussed their position in 1884. The following is quoted from McFarland (1963, p. 40):

In an era when party regularity was regarded with more than ordinary reverence, the Mugwumps displayed remarkable political independence. Between 1870 and 1896, the Mugwumps, most of whom were members of the Republican party’s reform faction, frequently engaged in protests against “unsuitable” party candidates. Their only attempt to organize a reform party was the abortive Liberal Republican party of 1872, and after its failure they resorted to temporary associations for particular campaigns such as the anti-Grant movements of 1876 and 1880 and the anti- Blaine bolt of 1884. Believing it their duty to educate the public to its civic responsibilities, they filled such Mugwump journals as the *Nation* and *Harper’s Weekly* with scathing denunciations of the laxity in public morals which permitted the Boss Tweeds, Jay Goulds and Roscoe Conklings to flourish in post-Civil War America.

Aside from their efforts as bolters and critics, the Mugwumps seem most improbable reformers. Well-educated men of comfortable circumstances, their intellectual protest against the spoils politics of the Gilded Age had little appeal for the majority of their contemporaries. Gentlemen reformers, they denied that labor unions should serve as vehicles for social reform, and they resisted every effort to expand the government’s economic and social functions on behalf of farmers. The Mugwumps’ program was limited to economy in government, civil service reform, tariff reduction, the gold standard and honesty in politics. Their political hero was Grover Cleveland, an honest man although somewhat less than an ardent reformer, and the high point of their reform crusade came in 1884 when they bolted the Re-publican party and its nominee, James G. Blaine, to support Cleveland’s successful campaign for the presidency. In 1896, even those Mugwumps who were nominally Democrats shrank from the “free silver mania” and voted for the thoroughly conservative Republican candidate, William McKinley.

Concerning the 1884 presidential campaign, McFarland set his goals as follows (1963, p. 43): “The basis for my analysis of the Mugwumps’ socio-economic characteristics will be a close study of the membership of the New York Mugwump bolt of 1884.”⁴⁸ Concerning the anti-Blaine Mugwump campaign, McFarland remarks: “My chief source of Mugwump names was the *New York Times* for 1884. The *Times* published lists of Republican bolters from all over the state. Mention of a man in its columns meant that he had actively supported the bolt by signing protests, walking in anti-Blaine demonstrations, or attending Mugwump gatherings” (*ibid.*). On p. 46, McFarland points out:

The experience which distinguished the men over forty from the young Mugwumps was their service to the party. Not only could they remember the party of Lincoln, but they could recall their

⁴⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mugwump>

⁴⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Greenback_Party

⁴⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_G._Blaine

⁴⁸ “The Mugwumps were a minority within a minority; most of the members of their class did not support the Mugwump movement. The validity of a social interpretation, however, is demonstrated by reversing the case. The point is not that all men of a certain class were Mugwumps — such class solidarity not being characteristic of American political life — but that nearly all the Mugwumps were members of one class” (*ibid.*, p. 44). “Undoubtedly many of the ninety-six businessmen were not as wealthy as Beals or Childs, but they were owners of their business establishments, and, as such, largely independent, if not completely self-employed. Along with the moderately well-to-do majority of the Mug-wumps were a few men of great wealth. Twenty-six of the sample were millionaires. [...] Eleven of the Mugwump millionaires inherited their fortunes. Twelve of the other fifteen appear to have reached the millionaire level well before the 1880’s” (*ibid.*, p. 48).

efforts in its behalf. Francis Barlow had been a Lincoln elector in 1860. Edward Salomon, a refugee from the German revolution of 1848, had been wartime governor of Wisconsin. Daniel Chamberlain had been Governor of South Carolina during reconstruction. Benjamin Bristow had served as one of Grant's secretaries of the Treasury. Carl Schurz was another ex-cabinet member. These men felt that the Republican party had "sprung from a moral sentiment. It was the party of political morality and of personal liberty." This idealism was no longer present in the Republican organization of 1884. The nomination of Blaine, whose public record was marred by his involvement in a questionable railroad bond deal, seemed intolerable to the Mugwumps. Their efforts had been betrayed, and, they felt, "We have not left the party; it is fairer to say that the party has left us."

During the 1884 presidential campaign, and advantage for the Democrat nominee, Cleveland, was that he was relatively new to the political scene, whereas Blaine's career had seen various allegation of corruption. Damaging allegations were also made about both Cleveland and Blaine fathering a child out of wedlock:

The campaign focused on the candidates' personalities, as each candidate's supporters cast aspersions on their opponents. Cleveland's supporters rehashed the old allegations from the Mulligan letters that Blaine had corruptly influenced legislation in favor of railroads, later profiting on the sale of bonds he owned in both companies. Although the stories of Blaine's favors to the railroads had made the rounds eight years earlier, this time more of his correspondence was discovered, making his earlier denials less plausible. Blaine acknowledged that the letters were genuine, but denied that anything in them impugned his integrity or contradicted his earlier explanations. Nevertheless, what Blaine described as "stale slander" served to focus the public's attention negatively on his character. On some of the most damaging correspondence, Blaine had written "Burn this letter", giving Democrats the last line to their rallying cry: "Blaine, Blaine, James G. Blaine, the continental liar from the state of Maine, 'Burn this letter!'"

To counter Cleveland's image of superior morality, Republicans discovered reports that Cleveland had fathered an illegitimate child while he was a lawyer in Buffalo, New York, and chanted "Ma, Ma, where's my Pa?". (To which the Democrats, after Cleveland had been elected, appended: "Gone to the White House, Ha! Ha! Ha!") Cleveland admitted to paying child support in 1874 to Maria Crofts Halpin, the woman who claimed he fathered her child named Oscar Folsom Cleveland. Halpin was involved with several men at the time, including Cleveland's friend and law partner, Oscar Folsom, for whom the child was also named. Cleveland did not know which man was the father, and is believed to have assumed responsibility because he was the only bachelor among them. At the same time, Democratic operatives accused Blaine and his wife of not having been married when their eldest son, Stanwood, was born in 1851; this rumor was false, however, and caused little excitement in the campaign.⁴⁹

As Blaine had Republican rivals in New York, he was weaker in New York than a Republican presidential nominee after the Civil War would have usually been. His hopes for Irish Catholic support because of his mother's background and because of his anti-British policies were dashed because of another Republican's anti-Irish statements. In the event, Cleveland won the election by just one-quarter of a percent of votes cast:

Both candidates believed that the states of New York, New Jersey, Indiana, and Connecticut would determine the election. In New York, Blaine received less support than he anticipated when Arthur and Conkling, still powerful in the New York Republican party, failed to actively campaign for him. Blaine hoped that he would have more support from Irish Americans than Republicans typically did; while the Irish were mainly a Democratic constituency in the 19th century, Blaine's mother was Irish Catholic, and he believed his career-long opposition to the British government would resonate with the Irish. Blaine's hope for Irish defections to the Republican standard were dashed late in the campaign when one of his supporters, Samuel D. Burchard, gave a speech denouncing the Democrats as the party of "Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion". The Democrats spread the word of this insult in the days before the election, and Cleveland narrowly won all four of the swing states, including New York by just over one thousand votes. While the popular vote

⁴⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_G._Blaine

total was close, with Cleveland winning by just one-quarter of a percent, the electoral votes gave Cleveland a majority of 219–182.⁵⁰



A speech by Rev. Burchard, a Blaine supporter, damaged Blaine.

At the 1888 presidential elections, there was strong support within the Republican Party for renominating Blaine, but he eventually announced that he would not be a candidate. Another Republican, Benjamin Harrison, defeated Cleveland and, as President, made Blaine his Secretary of State (1889–1892). Harrison however was jealous of Blaine’s popularity within the party. The coup in the Kingdom of Hawaii by Americans was during Blaine’s tenure, but the petition for annexation came when Blaine was no longer in office.⁵¹ Blaine’s own documented role rather was (also during his previous tenure) in opposing close relations between the Kingdom of Hawaii and Britain (Rigby 1988).

Harrison and Blaine were at odds during some incidents, such as a crisis with Chile, and an episode that stands apart in the collective memory of Italo-Americans: the 1891 New Orleans massacre of Italians that almost caused the Kingdom of Italy to declare war on the United States of America.⁵² “A towering figure in the Republican party of his day, Blaine fell

⁵⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_G._Blaine

⁵¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_G._Blaine

⁵² Somewhat reductively, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_G._Blaine puts it as follows: “At the same time as the Pribilof Islands dispute, an outbreak of mob violence in New Orleans became an international incident. After New Orleans police chief David Hennessy led a crackdown against local mafiosi, he was assassinated on October 14, 1890. After the alleged murderers were found not guilty in March 1891, a mob stormed the jail and

into obscurity fairly soon after his death [...] perhaps because of the nine men the Republican Party nominated for the Presidency from 1860 to 1912, Blaine is the only one who never became President.”⁵³ Historians however recognise his importance, e.g. in foreign policy (Langley 1974; Crapol 2000; Healy 2001; Peskin 1979; Sewell 1990).

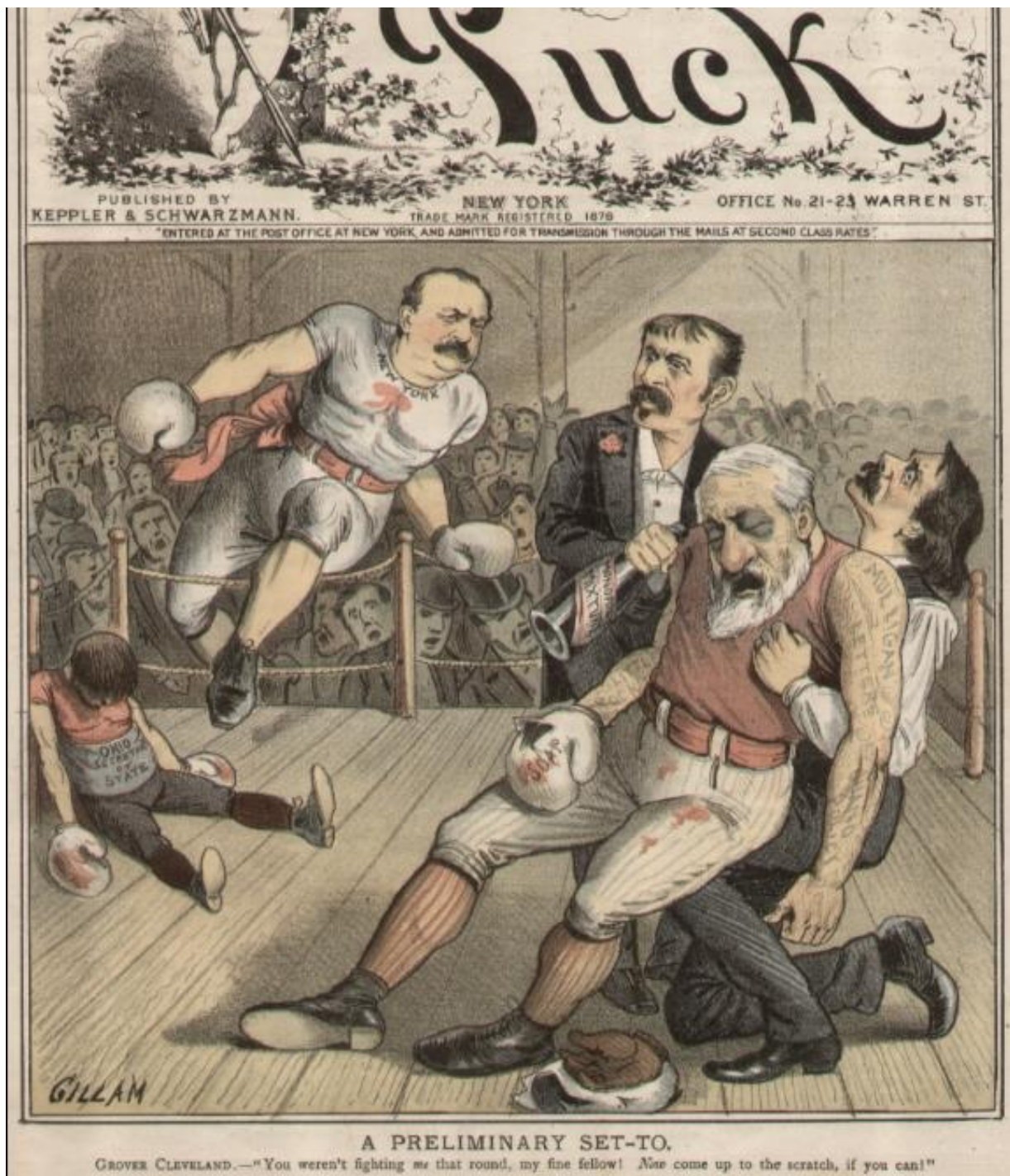
Blaine’s character assassination in political cartoons has been researched by Samuel Thomas (1987), in a study entitled “The Tattooed Man Caricatures and the Presidential Campaign of 1884”, as well as by Harlen Makemson (2004–2005), whose study in a media history journal is entitled “One Misdeed Evokes Another: How Political Cartoonists Used ‘Scandal Intertextuality’ Against Presidential Candidate James G. Blaine”. Intertextuality is reference in a text to other texts; in this case, the campaign narrative was referring to narratives of past scandals.



This poster for Blaine from the 1884 presidential elections claims that protectionism under Blaine’s presidency will bring about well-being, whereas that same family would be poor under Cleveland’s free trade policy.

lynched eleven of them. Since many of those killed were Italian citizens the Italian minister, Saverio Fava, protested to Blaine. Blaine explained that federal officials could not control how state officials deal with criminal matters, and Fava announced that he would withdraw the legation back to Italy. Blaine and Harrison believed the Italians’ response to be an overreaction, and did nothing. Tensions slowly cooled, and after nearly a year, the Italian minister returned to the United States to negotiate an indemnity. After some internal dispute — Blaine wanted conciliation with Italy, Harrison was reluctant to admit fault — the United States agreed to pay an indemnity of \$25,000, and normal diplomatic relations resumed.”

⁵³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_G._Blaine



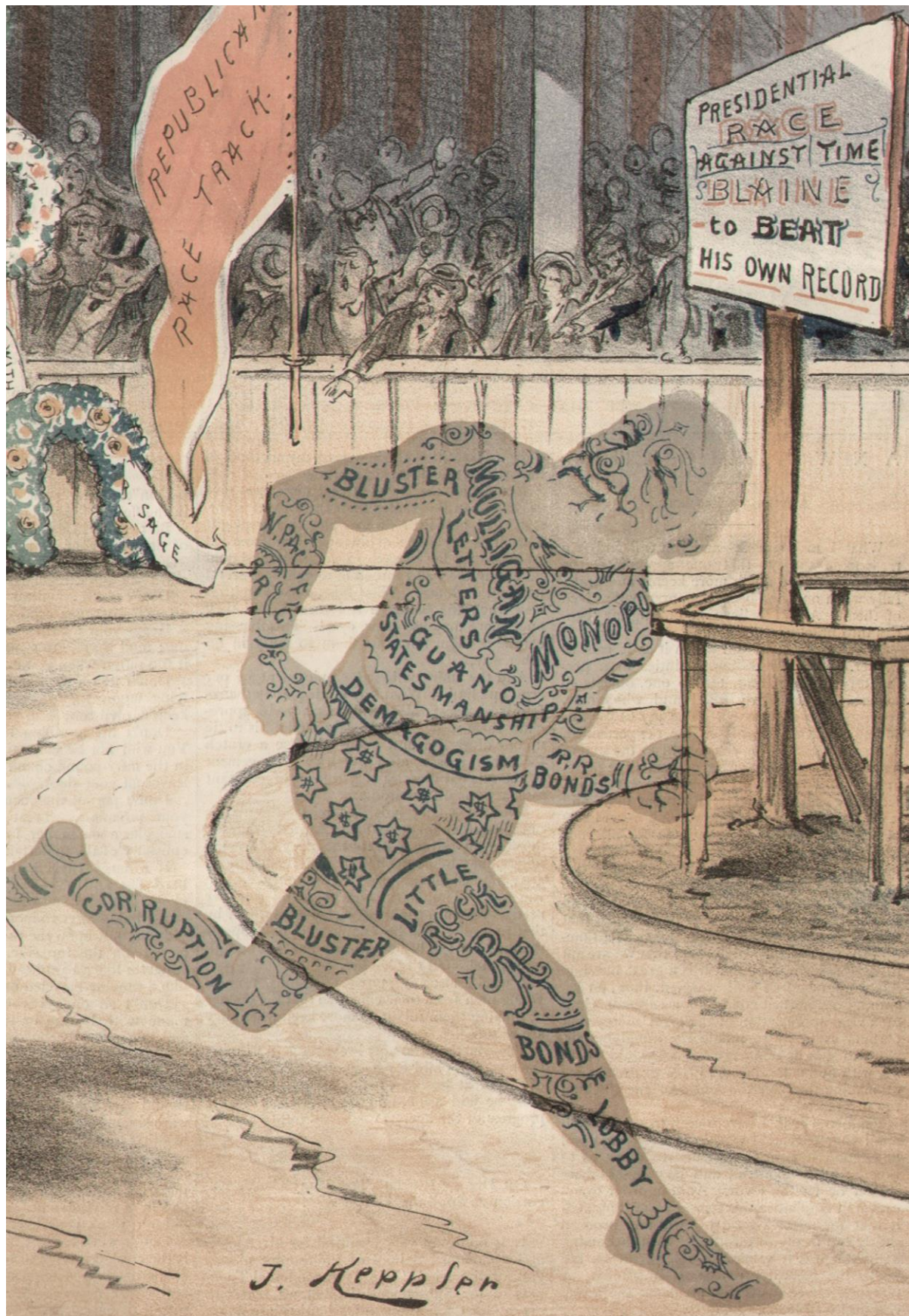
A Gillam cartoon, *A preliminary set-to*, showing Blaine, the Tattooed Man, as a boxer on the ring, in a bad state after fighting the Ohio Secretary of State. Blaine is about to be beaten by a stronger contender, Grover Cleveland, who is telling Blaine: "You weren't fighting *me* that round, my fine fellow! *Now* come up to the scratch, if you can!" This cartoon appeared in *Puck* on 22 October 1884. All in all, *Puck* published 22 cartoons in the Tattooed Man series. An unsigned article in *Puck*, entitled "Cartoons and Comments", claimed after the Republican convention: "What is this that the leaders of the Republican Party have done? Assembled in convention at Chicago, to choose their candidate for the Presidency of the United States, they have, amid the howling of hirelings and the clamor of hot-headed fools, made choice of the one man whose very name stands for all that is wholly bad in their organization. [...] There were some few among them [especially the "Mugwumps"] who fought, earnestly and bravely, against the crime which the majority have committed. [...] For is not this brave struggle of theirs the sign of the coming of the Independent New Party? [...] We will fight by vote, by argument, by speech and by writing, by all fair and honest means[!!!], against the consummation of the wrong that is proposed by those who would put James Blaine into the chair of Abraham Lincoln. And if the great Party must die, let it die under the daggers of its own sons, who kill it to save it from the worst dishonor".



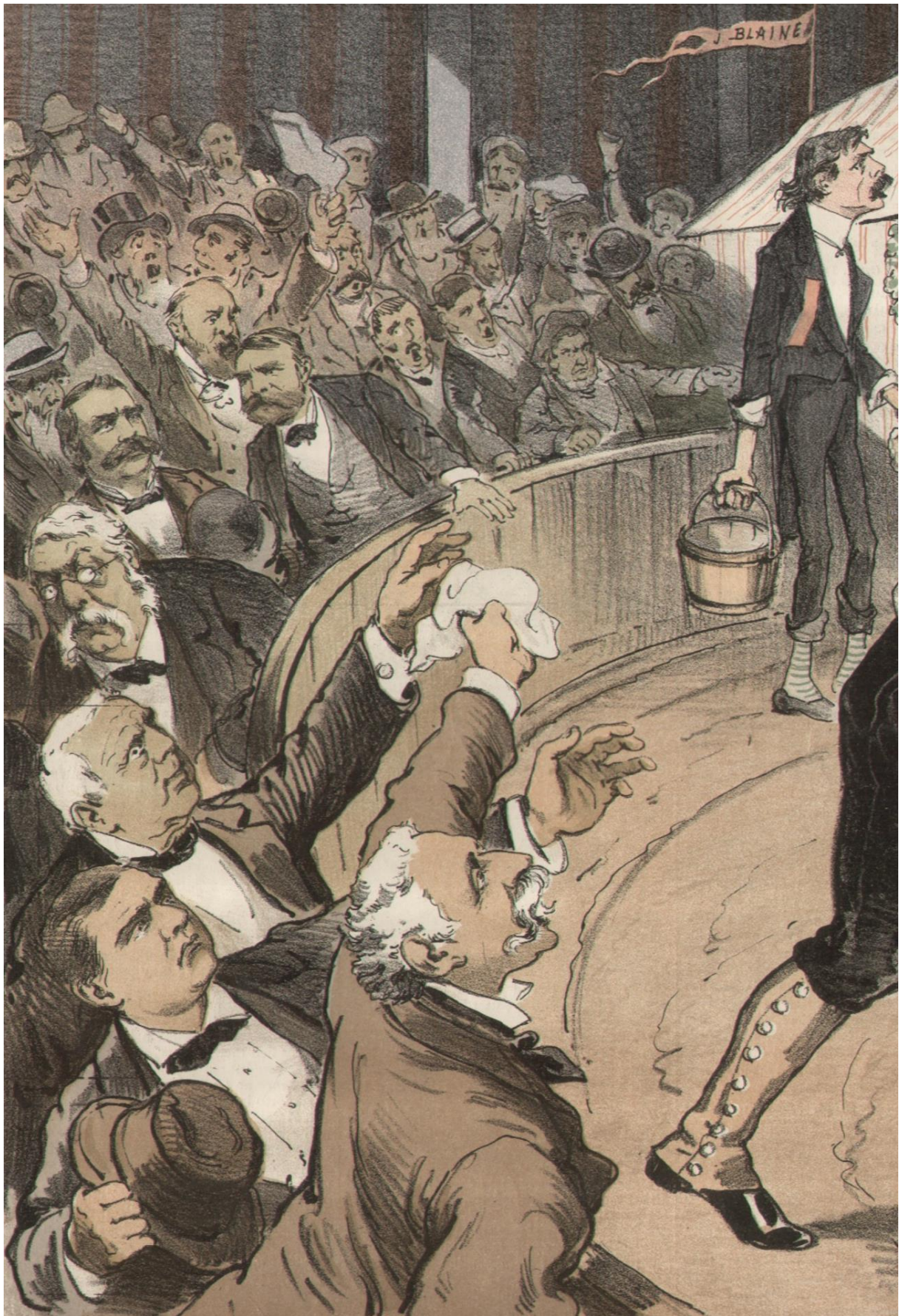
Keppler's cartoon (Puck, 30 July 1884), entitled *He can't beat his own record*. Here, it is Blaine's shadow that s the Tattooed Man



Blaine realises with consternation that he cannot reach the tattooed shadow of himself that is running ahead.



The shadow of Blaine is the Tattooed Man. It is translucent. Its facial features are like Blaine's.

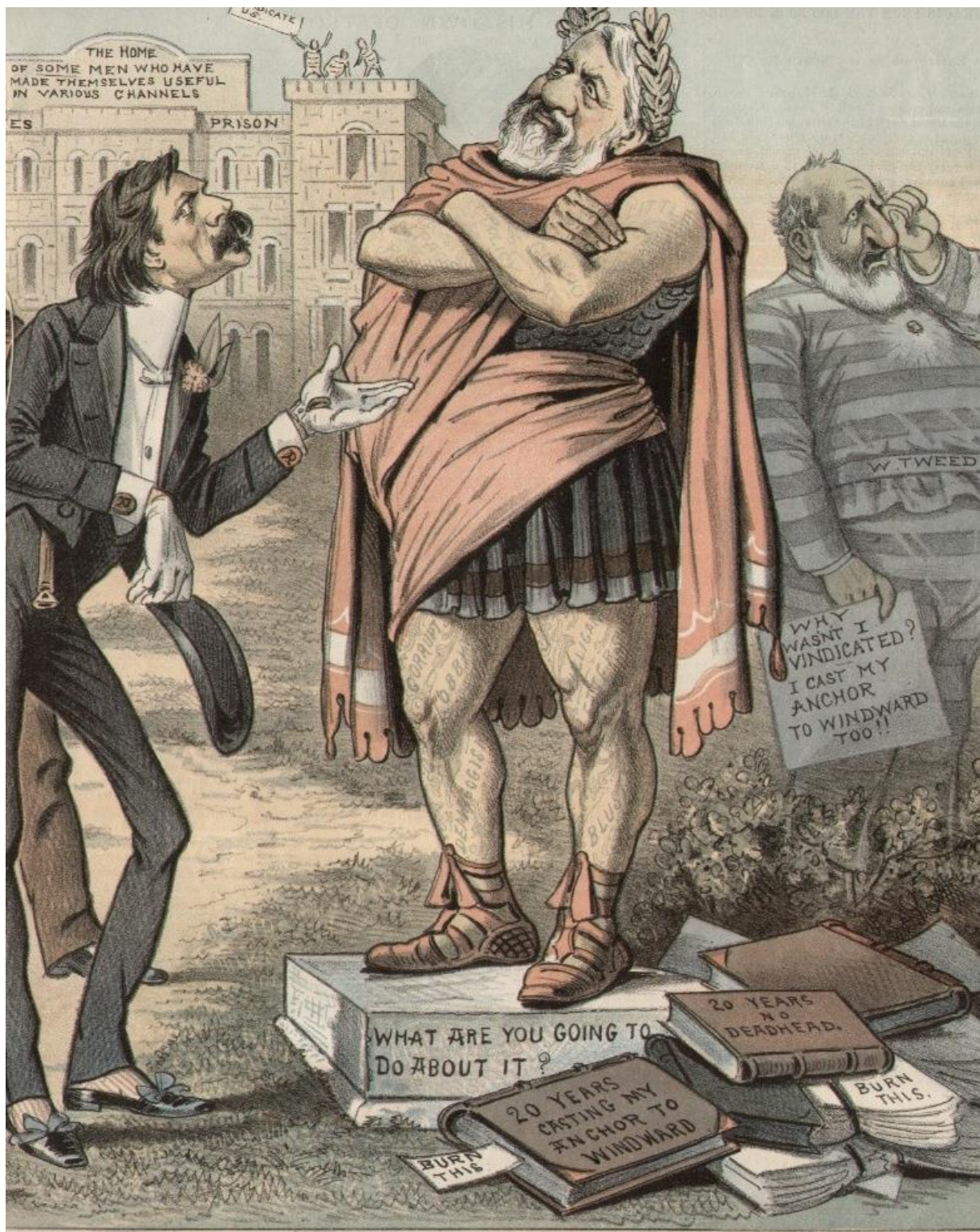


The public at the circus, and Logan, too, watch as Blaine is failing to beat the shadow that stands for his record.

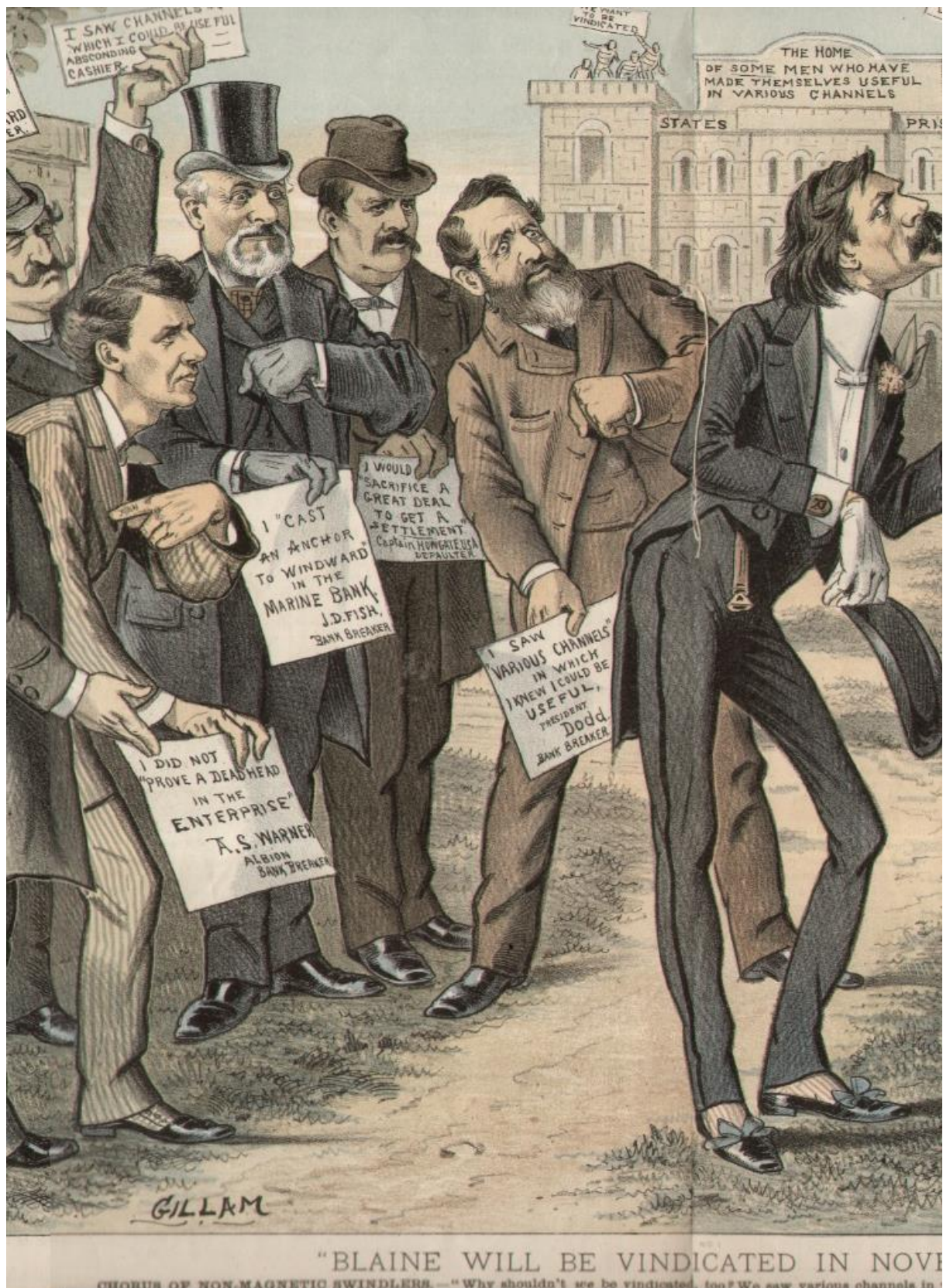


A cartoon published as a central spread in *Puck* of 24 September 1884. It responds to the *New York Times* having claimed: “Blaine will be vindicated in November”. The caption states: “CHORUS OF NON-MAGNETIC SWINDLERS. — ‘Why shouldn’t we be vindicated, too? We saw various channels in which we could be useful. We were no deadheads.’” Blaine stands on a pedestal, and his vice presidential candidate on the same ticket, Logan, stands facing Blaine but looks behind his back.





Detail from the same cartoon. Tammany Hall's boss Tweed is weeping behind Blaine's back.



Another detail from the same cartoon.



In this cartoon by Keppler, published on the cover of the *Puck* issue of 8 October 1884, Blaine is not the Tattooed Man, but is represented as Tantalus, from Greek mythology. He stands on a rock inscribed “Northern Pacific R.R. [Rail Roads]”, and is fettered to a vertical slab inscribed “Milligan letters”. He is extremely hungry, and craves food and drink he cannot reach: the presidential bid for 1884, the presidential cake, a pineapple labelled “spoils”, a pitcher labelled “patronage”. Sheets of paper with dates, on the floor, are elections he lost.





Puck, 2 July 1884: "He goes up like a rocket, and he will come down like a stick!" This anti-Blaine cartoon was not part of the Tattooed Man series.

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A bust claimed to be of Titus Maccius Plautus.



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