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**The Game of Troy and Augustus**

The Game of Troy has, up to now, received very little attention, and the meagre amount of scholarship that has been written about it has been almost exclusively philological. It seems, however, that the game was an important socio-political phenomenon as well, and it is this aspect of it that my paper treats. I will argue that prior to Augustus, the game was, on occasion, a part of circus events, but was not performed regularly and, most importantly, was not restricted to sons of senators, the way it came to be in the Augustan period. The game first acquired an explicit Trojan association under Augustus, as part of his new official mythology. For this purpose, Vergil describes the game as part of the funeral games for Anchises in *Aeneid* V, and notes that Iulus later brought the game to Alba Longa, from where it passed on to Rome (*Aeneid* V.596-601). Thus the game acquired special significance under Augustus, as it became a mythological reenactment of an episode in the epic about the origins of Rome.

Yet I believe that the interest of Augustus in the game would have been much more than to reenact parts of Vergil. As his social reforms show, Augustus was greatly interested in promoting the senatorial class and its identity as a separate class. I argue that he restricted the game of Troy to sons of senators alone, and used it for honouring senatorial families, as well as for promoting his own sons: Gaius and Lucius, as well as the future emperor Tiberius, have all served as leaders of their “turma” in the game. Thus the game was, for Augustus, a playful recreation of his own hopeful vision of Rome’s future: senatorial sons serving under the leadership of his own sons. To make this vision familiar to all, Augustus had the Troy game performed often when Gaius, Lucius, and Tiberius were of a fitting age to participate. Once they were grown up, there was no point to continue to the game, and for this reason it ceased to be performed. There is a paradox, however, in that the restriction of participation in the game to senators’ sons meant requiring members of the senatorial class to perform in the circus, a practice normally condemned. I believe that Augustus thought of this as well, and intended the game and the license that it gave to its participants, to satisfy the urges of these members of the senatorial class to perform on stage, but to do so without the usual acquisition of *infamia*.