

SAPIENS UBIQUE CIVIS

V.



UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED, FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL AND NEO-LATIN STUDIES
&
ELTE EÖTVÖS JÓZSEF COLLEGIUM

SAPIENS UBIQUE CIVIS V.



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Domestic Spaces and Mythical Time: Archetypes of the Cosmic Order in Greek Houses in the 8th century BC

This paper considers the arrangement of domestic space as depicted in the Odyssey. Emphasis is laid on its symbolic aspect: as a place where a range of objects with cosmological significance were concentrated. These objects were integral elements in the arrangement of human dwellings, but they were simultaneously present in mythical space, where they acted as mechanisms supporting the cosmic order. Besides, these artefacts were also connected to the moment in mythical time when the cosmic order was established, and thus they implemented a harmonising and ordering function. With the presence of these architectural elements in domestic space, human dwellings could have been perceived as a kind of “cosmic house”, connected both to mythical space and mythical time.

Key words: domestic spaces, Homer, Hesiod, mythical time, mythical space, mythological thinking, archetypes.

This paper investigates the arrangement of domestic spaces, in terms of ideas and images of space and time, in Greek houses in the 8th century BC. For people of all cultures and historical epochs, their homes are spaces that protect them from external threats and help them to suppress the feeling of apprehension that stems from the realisation of defencelessness in the face of the world beyond, both real and imaginary. In the minds of those people possessed of mythological thinking, their

predisposition to polarise different phenomena is inherent.¹ This tendency, which in the perception of space is evidenced by the dichotomy of “own” and “alien” among Greeks living in the 8th century BC, is reflected in the antagonism between two types of space: profane space, as cultivated and arranged by people, and mythical space, which was considered the habitat of fantastic creatures and the location of the underworld.² The latter, being incomprehensible and unpredictable, was perceived as a source of danger to the human world. This led to aspirations to minimise the potential threat that this space could pose to people. Thus, Tartarus, where the rebellious Titans were imprisoned after Zeus’ victory in the Titanomachy, was surrounded by the bronze wall,³ with the entrance blocked by the bronze door made by Poseidon.⁴ The addition of these elements of human culture into the space of Tartarus performed both ordering, for it made this wild space similar to human communities, and defensive functions, preventing the dissociative force personified in the face of the Titans from intervening in the world order established by Zeus. The indestructibility of bronze may have symbolised the steadfastness and permanence of this cosmic order.

Another element connected with human culture was the threshold at the entrance to Tartarus.⁵ This threshold was endowed with cosmic significance because it not only defined the two levels of the universe, the ground, and the underworld, and therefore demarcated qualitatively different spaces, but also provided a connection with the sun and the natural phenomena based on it, namely as the place where the gods

¹ CASSIRER (1925: 110–113); CLAY (2003: 15); DURKHEIM (1995: 34–38); HERZ (2004: 96); MELETINSKY (1998: 186).

² ANTYPAS (2017: 10); COLE (2004: 7); GERNET (1933: 299–300); VIDAL-NAQUET (1970: 1278–1297).

³ Hes. *Theog.* 726: τὸν πέρι χάλκεον ἔρκος ἐλήλαται; Hes. *Theog.* 733: τεῖχος δὲ περροίχεται ἀμφοτέρωθεν.

⁴ Hes. *Theog.* 732: θύρας δ’ ἐπέθηκε Ποσειδέων χαλκείας.

⁵ Hes. *Theog.* 811–814; Hom. *Il.* 8, 14–15.

personifying day and night met, thereby preserving life and keeping the cosmos in balance.⁶

When investigating the organisation of domestic spaces in ancient Greece, previously published research often refers to the arrangement of the internal and external spaces, whereby the purpose is to determine the involvement of the dwellers within society as well as the moral values and behavioural imperatives within families.⁷ In contrast, we regard another aspect of domestic space as significant, namely its symbolic meaning. This aspect may have been expressed through the endowment of certain architectural elements within houses, whereby the symbolic meaning originated from the arrangement of the mythical space and its connection to mythical time. A house could therefore be considered a specific chronotope that existed in the present, but, through the presence of spatial symbolic elements, it was connected with the mythical past, thereby acquiring cosmic significance.

A Threshold and the Idea of the Border

The first of these symbolic elements in the arrangement of domestic spaces, to which we are referring in this paper, was the threshold. A domestic space, separated from the world outside by a threshold, creates two types of qualitatively different spaces, namely the inner space of the house itself and the outer space.⁸ Whereas house dwellers may freely step over the threshold,⁹ guests must wait for an invitation.¹⁰ A threshold

⁶ About this threshold, see JOHNSON (1999: 25–26); NAKASSIS (2004: 217–218).

⁷ For example, ANTONACCIO (2000); COCOUZELI (2007); JAMESON (1993); LANG (2002); LANGDON (2008); LLEVELLYN-JONES (2007); NEVETT (1995), (2007); SANDERS (1989); STEADMAN (2015).

⁸ For example, in Hom. *Od.* 7, 135: καρπαλίμως ὑπὲρ οὐδὸν ἐβήσετο δῶματος εἴσω – he quickly crossed the threshold and entered the interior of the house.

⁹ For example, Hom. *Od.* 17, 575; 21, 42–44.

¹⁰ Hom. *Il.* 23, 201–203; Hom. *Od.* 1, 103–104; 4, 20; 7, 82–89; 8, 79–81; 17, 339–340; 466–467.

is therefore perceived among people of various cultures as a symbolic barrier that blocks access to a house and separates the inner from the outer space.¹¹ As the first element of the domestic space in terms of the transition from the qualitatively different outer space, the threshold held significant meaning for the whole house. In the Homeric hymn to Pythian Apollo (115–121), the building of a temple in honour of this god starts with the laying of the foundations,¹² the placement of the stone threshold,¹³ and the construction of the walls of the temple around this threshold.¹⁴

Although the main material used for thresholds was stone,¹⁵ Homer gives examples of thresholds made of other materials. The first is the bronze threshold of the house of Alcinous, the king of the mythical people of Phaeacians.¹⁶ The range of symbolic characteristics inherent in this material makes it possible to assume that its use was not accidental. Its qualitative and semantic proximity to the bronze threshold of the abode of the Olympian gods may imply that the king and his people were blessed by the gods.¹⁷ Likewise, the symbolic significance and qualitative similarity to the bronze threshold of Tartarus, which is mentioned by Hesiod as ἀστεμφής, ρίζησι διηνεκέεσσιν ἀρηρώς, αὐτοφνής, suggests that it may have also been perceived as a symbol of indestructibility. In addition to the threshold demarcating the entrance to Tartarus,

¹¹ On the meaning of thresholds and connected to them doors and gates as symbols of transition, see CASSIRER (1925: 126–127); ELIADE (1987: 25).

¹² διέθηκε θεμέλια – 115.

¹³ λαῖνον οὐδὸν ἔθηκε – 117.

¹⁴ ἀμφὶ δὲ νηὸν ἔνασσεν – 119.

¹⁵ A stone threshold in a human dwelling: Hom. *Od.* 16, 41; 17, 30; 22, 269; in the abode of the winds: Hom. *Il.* 23, 201–203; in the temples: Hom. *Od.* 8, 80–81; 22, 269. Stone thresholds in houses in accordance with archaeological sources, see MAZARAKIS AINIAN (1997: 68).

¹⁶ Hom. *Od.* 13, 4: Ὡ Ὀδυσσεῦ, ἐπεὶ ἴκευ ἐμὸν ποτὶ χαλκοβατὲς δῶ.

¹⁷ Hom. *Il.* 1, 426: καὶ τότε ἔπειτά τοι εἶμι Διὸς ποτὶ χαλκοβατὲς δῶ; 14, 173; Hom. *Od.* 8, 321.

which not only defines two spatial levels, Earth and the Underworld, but also functions as the meeting point for Day and Night, reference is also made to the bronze walls surrounding the jail of the Titans, the entrance to which was blocked by bronze doors made by Poseidon. We can therefore assume that bronze, as the metal from which the protective elements in the lower space of Tartarus were made, as well as the cosmic threshold on the border of Tartarus and Earth and the threshold of the house of the Olympian gods, could have been perceived by the Greeks of the 8th century BC as symbolising indestructibility, thereby helping to maintain the cosmic order.

From the further description of the house of Alcinous it follows that:

χάλκεοι μὲν γὰρ τοῖχοι ἐληλέδατ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα,
 ἐς μυχὸν ἐξ οὐδοῦ, περὶ δὲ θριγκὸς κυάνοιο·
 χρύσειαι δὲ θύραι πυκινὸν δόμον ἐντὸς ἔεργον·
 σταθμοὶ δ' ἀργύρεοι ἐν χαλκῷ ἕστασαν οὐδῶ,
 ἀργύρεον δ' ἐφ' ὑπερθύριον, χρυσή δὲ κορώνη.¹⁸

Of bronze were
 the walls that stretched this way and that from the
 threshold to the innermost chamber, and around
 was a cornice of cyanus. Golden were the doors
 that shut in the well-built house, and doorposts
 of silver were set in a threshold of bronze. Of
 silver was the lintel above, and of gold the handle.¹⁹

It is noteworthy that in this description, we can find gold and silver elements in the structure of Alcinous' house. Homer frequently mentions

¹⁸ Hom. *Od.* 7, 85–94.

¹⁹ Transl. by A. T. MURRAY.

gold in connection with the Olympian gods. Various attributes emphasising the power of Zeus and other gods are made of gold.²⁰ The presence of doors made of gold, a metal known to symbolise incorruptibility,²¹ emphasises the reliability of this protective element in the structure of the house of this blessed king. Silver, of which the jambs and lintels were made, has a sacral meaning as well. Reference is made to it once in the description of the space in Tartarus, namely with regards to the columns supporting the house of Styx.²² In turn, this goddess, as the river of the Underworld, was responsible for supporting the world order because her waters were used by the gods, who were the guarantors of cosmic existence, for taking their oaths.²³

Made of bronze, gold, and silver, which were the metals connected to the world of gods, thresholds, doors, jambs, and lintels, as the symbols of the transition from the outer space to the inner space of a house, therefore protected it against the intervention of evil forces from the outside and brought harmony and order into the domestic space.

Another example of the endowment of a threshold with specific characteristics is the ash threshold of the house of Odysseus.²⁴ Here again, we can assume that the use of the material is not accidental. In the *Iliad*, reference is made to a spear shaft being made of this material.²⁵ Hesiod also states that the warlike bronze generation arose from ash trees (ἐκ μελιᾶν).²⁶ The mention of the ash threshold of the house of Od-

²⁰ For example, Hom. *Il.* 1, 195; 4, 1–4; 8, 19; 41–44; 68; 416; 442.

²¹ BROWN (1998: 393–394).

²² Hes. *Theog.* 778–779.

²³ For the cosmic significance of this river, see BLICKMAN (1987); BOLLACK (1958); CLAY (2003: 22); LYE (2009).

²⁴ Hom. *Od.* 17, 339–340.

²⁵ Hom. *Il.* 5, 655; 19, 390; 22, 225.

²⁶ Or from the tree nymphs – Melias. From Greek μελία – ash tree. Hes. *Erga.* 145. Hesiod's depiction of the bronze generation may be correlated with the older heroes mentioned by Homer. Hom. *Il.* 5, 385–388; 6, 132–137; 9, 559–560; *Od.* 11, 308–320. Despite the fact that this generation was marked by *hybris*, which meant unworthy behaviour

ysseus might therefore have been an allusion to his military valour. This example, as in the case of the bronze threshold of the house of Alcinous, may therefore imply that a threshold, as the first fundamental element of a domestic space that divides it from the world outside, represents specific qualities that could act as a general means for depicting a whole house.

Hearths and their central location in houses

Another element with symbolic meaning in the arrangement of domestic spaces was the hearth. This was located in the main room, the so-called megaron,²⁷ and usually occupied a central position in the room.²⁸ Taking into account the sacrality of the centre in the thoughts of people with mythological thinking,²⁹ an artefact situated in the centre could have had the same sacral meaning. Within this context, in the Homeric hymn to Aphrodite, the centre of the house is mentioned in connection with the goddess Hestia (29–32). The same goddess is also mentioned by Hesiod.³⁰

towards the gods, their exceptional warlike qualities might have been appreciated positively, which could have made them a personification of armour.

²⁷ Hom. *Od.* 19, 51–55.

²⁸ MAZARAKIS AINAN (1997: 288; 291); PRENT (2007: 143). PARISINOU (2007: 220) notes that in living rooms in houses of the 9th–8th century BC, it was characteristic for the hearth to have a central position, whereas in kitchens they were positioned off-centre. When describing the living rooms of Minoan Crete, McENROE (2010: 13–15) points to the fact that the hearth was present in neolithic houses, with it also being placed in the centre of the house. Moreover, the space around the hearth was left unoccupied, which could be evidence of the fact that the dwellers used the space for conducting various communal activities inside the house. JAMESON (1993: 98–99) states that archaeological sources provide evidence that in the classical period, hearths did not have a central position in the main room. Instead, they were usually placed in smaller rooms, which were probably used as kitchens, where they had an off-centre position.

²⁹ CAILLOIS (2015: 79–80); ELIADE (1961: 41–43; 51–52); HERTZ (2004: 102).

³⁰ Hes. *Theog.* 454. In the hymn to Aphrodite (30), Zeus honours Hestia by determining that her place is in the centre of the house (μέσση οἴκῳ). The hearth was therefore an

Some passages from the *Odyssey* suggest a possible connection between Zeus and the hearth. After Odysseus' appearance in the Alcinous' house and his plea for help by the hearth, the house dwellers and their guests made a libation to Zeus, „who accompanies all, asking for help.“³¹ The significance of the hearth in domestic spaces in the 8th century BC is also reflected in the existence of an oath to the hearth, which can be found in Homer.³² In this oath, the symbolic nature of the hearth in the organisation of domestic spaces was ascribed to its relation to Zeus. Additionally, a welcoming table as a symbol of hospitality is also present in this oath. Through this relationship, Zeus, as the god supporting hospitality, appears to be connected to the hearth. Due to the role of this god in the establishment of the cosmic order, it is also possible for this artifact to harmonise and bring order into domestic spaces. As follows from Homer, portable braziers were used for heating and lighting homes.³³ As a result, the hearth, which was earlier used for these purposes, eventually lost its sense. The meaning of the hearth in a house was therefore not practical but rather symbolic. It is possible that the hearth was only used for significant events, as indicated, for example, in the fragment of Hom. *Od.* 20, 122–123; 155–156, before the

indicator of the centre in the house. VERNANT (1988: 156–157) notes that, in addition to indicating the centre of the house, a round hearth in the middle of the main room, known as a *megaron*, provided fixity, fixing the house to the ground, symbolising firmness and unbrokenness. VERNANT compares the hearth to an *omphalos*, an important symbol in Greek culture, which in a later period was connected to the representation of the centre and, like the hearth, was round in form. This is also confirmed by iconography, whereby the *omphalos* is often placed near Hestia. VERNANT (1988: 179–181) also emphasises the fact that the *omphalos*, like the hearth, was connected to the earth.

³¹ Hom. *Od.* 7, 159–165: ὅς θ' ἰκέτησιν ἅμ' αἰδοίοισιν ὀπηδεῖ. See also Hom. *Od.* 14, 56–58.

³² Hom. *Od.* 14, 158–159: ἴστω νῦν Ζεὺς πρῶτα θεῶν, ξενίη τε τράπεζα, / ἰστίη τ' Ὀδυσῆος ἀμύμονος, ἦν ἀφικάνω. Other examples of this oath: Hom. *Od.* 17, 155–156; 19, 303–304; 20, 230–231.

³³ Hom. *Od.* 18, 307–308; 19, 63–64.

archery competition in which Penelope's suitors take part.³⁴ Homer also mentions that it was the day when the holiday in honour of Apollo was celebrated.³⁵ The symbolic meaning of the hearth, furthermore, might have been perceived as the house itself and as a symbol of the family's values. It is within this context that Penelope sits by the hearth when she spends her time in *megaron* in passages of the *Odyssey*.³⁶

Next to the hearth, there were also the thrones of Alcinous and his wife Arete. Nausicaa, when speaking to Odysseus, who has asked her for help, gives him the following advice:

ᾠκα μάλα μεγάροιο διελθέμεν, ὄφρ' ἂν ἴκηαι
μητέρ' ἐμήν· ἡ δ' ἦσται ἐπ' ἐσχάρῃ ἐν πυρὸς ἀγῆ,
ἡλάκατα στρωφῶσ' ἀλιπόρφυρα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι,
κίονι κεκλιμένη· δμῳαὶ δέ οἱ εἴατ' ὀπισθεν.
ἔνθα δὲ πατρὸς ἐμοῖο θρόνος ποτικέκλιται αὐτῇ,
τῷ ὃ γε οἶνοποτάζει ἐφήμενος ἀθάνατος ὤς.³⁷

pass quickly through the great hall,
till thou comest to my mother, who sits at the hearth in the
light of the fire,
spinning the purple yarn, a wonder to behold, leaning against a
pillar, and
her handmaids sit behind her. There, too, leaning against
the selfsame pillar, is set the throne of my father,
whereon he sits and quaffs his wine, like unto an immortal.³⁸

³⁴ πᾶσιν ἐορτή.

³⁵ Hom. *Od.* 20, 276–278.

³⁶ Hom. *Od.* 19, 51–55: τῇ παρὰ μὲν κλισίῃν πυρὶ κάτθесαν; Hom. *Od.* 23, 89: ἐν πυρὸς ἀγῆ.

³⁷ Hom. *Od.* 6, 304–309.

³⁸ Transl. by A. T. MURRAY.

In this passage, one thing is of particular interest, namely the close proximity of the hearth to the columns, which is also confirmed by archaeological evidence.³⁹ This leads us to the assumption that this may not be a mere coincidence, as the Greeks of the 8th century BC also considered columns to have symbolic meaning.

Columns and their sacral meaning

Archaeological data indicate that columns were an important element in the arrangement of domestic spaces in the Dark Ages and the Archaic Age.⁴⁰ The presence of wooden colonnades in rulers' dwellings is also evident in Homer.⁴¹ As in the case of images of human culture that include thresholds, walls, doors, and gates, present in the space of Tartarus, where they provide both ordering and protective function, columns are present in the organisation of the mythical space, in which they also have a cosmic meaning. Homer and Hesiod mention columns as a separator between two spatial levels: the Sky and the Earth.⁴² The symbolic meaning of the columns in the organisation of the space in the house of

³⁹ The tradition of such a spatial arrangement of megarons dates back to the Mycenaean period. MAZARAKIS AINIAN (2003: 184) mentions that megarons in Mycenaean palaces, connected with ritual activities, contained a central hearth and four columns around the hearth. Some objects with ritual significance, such as the altar in front of the entrance to the megaron at Tiryns or the libation channel next to the ruler's throne at Pylos, were also present. That could be evidence that Mycenaean palaces could have been the centers of religious life. For example, in the so-called Palace of Nestor at Pylos, a "low circular platform" was found in the main room that could have served as a megaron. GATES (2011: 135) states that this platform, in all likelihood, was a hearth surrounded by four wooden columns.

⁴⁰ At Zagora, one-storied houses with flat roofs supported by wooden columns were found. See GATES (2011: 209). The roof of the Heroon at Lefkandi, which dates back to the 10th century BC, was supported by three rows of wooden columns placed in the centre of the main room and along the walls. See MAZARAKIS AINIAN (1997: 50); GATES (2011: 211).

⁴¹ In the house of Odysseus, the location of various things πρὸς κίονα μακρὸν is mentioned. Hom. *Od.* 1, 126–129; 8, 65–66; 17, 29. From Greek κίων – pillar or column.

⁴² Hes. *Theog.* 522; Hom. *Od.* 1, 53–54.

Odysseus is reflected in Hom. *Od.* 19, 37–39, in which Telemachus turns to Odysseus and says:

ἔμπης μοι τοῖχοι μεγάρων καλαί τε μεσόδμαι,
εἰλάτιναί τε δοκοί, καὶ κίονες ὑψόσ' ἔχοντες
φαίνοντ' ὀφθαλμοῖς ὡς εἰ πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο.⁴³

the walls of the hall and the fair main-beams
of the roof and the cross-beams of pine, and the pillars that run
aloft, are bright as it were with flaming fire.⁴⁴

The material of which these columns are made, namely spruce, is also of interest.⁴⁵ Homer, in one of the fragments of the *Iliad*, mentions a giant spruce that reaches the aether and thus connects three spatial levels, thereby acting as a cosmic tree.⁴⁶ Furthermore, we can assume that the presence of columns endowed with cosmic meaning, as an architectural element in a certain room of the house, might have emphasised the significance of this room for the whole house.⁴⁷ With the crucial role of

⁴³ Hom. *Od.* 19, 37–39.

⁴⁴ Transl. by S. H. BUTCHER–A. LANG.

⁴⁵ ἐλάτινος – made of spruce.

⁴⁶ Hom. *Il.* 14, 287–288. In his research on vegetative symbolism in Greek mythology, BROCKLISS (2019) notes that Homer's arboreal images, as the elements of "stability and permanence", are connected with representations about the cosmic order and its maintenance. <https://chs.harvard.edu/read/brockliss-william-homeric-imagery-and-the-natural-environment/>. See also HAHN (2001: 194).

⁴⁷ Similar examples can be found in the architecture of Minoan Crete. MARINATOS (1993: 87) states that pillared rooms were found in the Palace of Knossos and that these rooms evidently had a sacral character (the "Pillar Crypts"). Another example of the presence of columns in cultic architecture is the round tomb at Apesokari from the period of the old palaces. At the entrance to the tomb, a rectangular building is situated, containing the pillar room, in which an altar was installed. In this room, no burials were found that could indicate that it might have performed a cultic function (see MARINATOS [1993: 88–89]). On the basis of archaeological sources, MARINATOS (1993: 94) argues that the column, as an architectural element, can be connected to the burial

a megaron in the houses of the Dark Ages and the early Archaic Age as the scene for important family events, it is possible that the columns, as well as the hearth, which was connected to the gods, especially Zeus and Hestia, could have introduced some elements of sacredness into the space of human dwellings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to note that basic elements in the structures of houses, such as a threshold, door, hearth, and columns, not only had practical functions but also symbolic significance. These elements, which were also present in the mythical space and connected to mythical time, obtained an archetypal character, thereby performing demarcation and defensive functions in both the domestic and mythical spaces. The inclusion of these artefacts in the mythical space reveals two distinct tendencies. The first one is an aspiration to bring order into it to make this space similar to the space of human communities and thereby minimise its hypothetical danger to the human world. The second tendency is to endow some objects in domestic space with cosmic significance and ordering potential. Houses therefore acquired this character among Greeks living in the 8th century BC, resulting in the incorporation of harmonious elements associated with the establishment of cosmic order into domestic spaces.

Primary sources

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cult because fragments thereof are often present inside the tombs.

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Achaemenid Audience Imagery: An Appraisal of its Aspirational and Subversive Artistic Responses in the Achaemenid Period*

Among the extant symbolic monumental reliefs adorning the royal complex of Persepolis – ceremonial capital of Achaemenid Persia – the royal audience scenes are especially fascinating, compositionally and ideologically. This article explores the powerful ideology behind Achaemenid audience imagery in its original setting in Persepolis, its notable dissemination, and adaptations in various artistic media within and beyond the empire (550–330 BC). Here, we seek to ascertain how and why such adaptations differed from the original contextually, visually, and ideologically; to identify what motivations patrons and artists had for reconfiguring the audience scene, regarding what messages they sought to communicate, chiefly aspirational and subversive, and what attitudes towards Achaemenid rule they reveal. We ultimately demonstrate the diverse flexibility and adaptability of artistic responses to Achaemenid audience imagery, forming an apt template for transmitting particularly polarising socio-political and ideological messages; aspirational ones within the empire strive for assimilation and self-aggrandisement, subversive, beyond, for constructing the “Other”.

Keywords: Achaemenid, Great King, audience scene, ideology, aspirational, subversive, adaptations, empire

* I would like to thank everyone at SUC for this opportunity to publish my paper, which I dedicate to Dr. Shane Wallace, as well as my loving parents & my dearest friends, Emma & Khushi, who have been there for me at every step of the way.

Introduction

Aulic encounters with Persian kings in Greek literature engross all its readers, via colourful descriptions and “Othering”¹; yet through the prism of court art, we can directly discern how the Achaemenids expressed themselves, ideologically. This article thus centres on appraising the striking impact of and attitudes to Achaemenid power imagery, specifically the royal audience scene in Persepolis, within and beyond the empire. To approach this, we first examine what the motif meant for the Achaemenids, then assess how and why it spread and became variously adapted by patrons/artists, aspirationally within the empire and subversively beyond. Using extant depictions of the motif on seals and elite funerary monuments within, and Greek vase-painting and sculpture beyond, we aim to uncover social motivation, stressing contextual, visual, and ideological differences from the original, and argue how the audience scene formed an apt template to artistically convey polarising attitudes to Persian rule.

Achaemenid Audience Imagery

The royal audience scenes in their full scale comprised two large mirror-image limestone reliefs, originally forming the central panels of both the northern and eastern double stairway façades of the so-called Apadana (great columned audience hall) – the largest structure of the royal complex in Persepolis, built in Darius I’s reign (522–486 BC).² Opposite the panel of the northern façade lay Xerxes’ so-called ‘Gate of All Lands’ providing visitors entry to the most visible and accessible part of

¹ See STEVENSON (1997).

² Measuring 65 m². Construction began c. 515 BC, evident from the foundation text DPh and associated coins, see ROOT (1986–1987); (1979: 86–95).



Fig.1 Achaemenid Audience Scene originally on the Apadana, Persepolis. P57121.
Courtesy of the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures of the University of Chicago.

the Persepolis terrace.³ These panels were designed to be seen, impress, and communicate the ideology of Achaemenid empire and kingship.⁴

They (Fig.1) depict a splendidly clad, enthroned, and long-bearded Persian king with staff and lotus flower in hand, who rests his feet on a footstool upon a raised dais supporting the throne with lion paws, elevating visually and hierarchically both himself and a resembling Crown Prince behind. In respectful attendance are the king's servants, courtiers, and guards, where one official⁵, deferentially addresses him (*proskynesis*⁶). Royal appurtenances include the raised dais, two censers, and the baldachin with a winged disk above enclosing the whole scene; together, they define the royal space and visually demarcate ruler from ruled. Further reinforcing the social hierarchy, the royal figures are rendered larger than the humble attendants, denoting their preeminence.

Indeed, great symbolism surrounds the audience scene. As the guards firmly grasp their spears reflecting the empire's strength, discipline, and security, the king himself holds a staff, exerting his power

³ROOT (2015: 36).

⁴They were later moved to the Treasury probably under Artaxerxes I, replaced with a panel of guards – why so remains unclear, see TILIA (1972: 91).

⁵For debate on his identity, see ABDI (2010: 277–278).

⁶E.g. the chiliarch Artabanus instructs Themistocles to perform *proskynesis* before the king in Plut. *Them.* 27, 2–7. See FYRE (1972).

and authority, but also a lotus blossom projecting goodwill and vitality.⁷ The Crown Prince standing assuredly behind the throne, also with a lotus, serves as a harbinger of stability and secure dynastic succession.⁸ The audience scene underlines the empire's attempt in balancing both strength and tranquility.⁹ As Achaemenid art comprises a holistic and eclectic mix of Mesopotamian and Egyptian themes and styles – chief models for visually expressing their empire and monarchy¹⁰ – the Achaemenids drew on the audience motif from earlier Neo-Assyrian examples conveying royal dominance, such as depictions of grand enthroned kings with staff and footstool on a wall relief from Sennacherib's South-West palace (r.704–681) at Nineveh¹¹, and a fresco in the reception room of Tiglath-Pileser III's palace (r.744–727) at Til Barsip.¹²

To fully appreciate the ideology behind the audience scene, we must not view it in isolation. Flanking both sides of the central panel were reliefs, visually and ideologically connected (Fig.2).¹³ On Wing A Persian nobles in alternating courtly and equestrian attire await the ceremony to begin. On Wing B in three registers 23 gift-bearing and ethnically distinguished delegations from the empire's lands move towards the central panel with honorific tribute for the Great King, demonstrating their loyalty, as each leading delegate takes the hand of a Persian usher to be presented before the king – a formal gift-giving ceremony.¹⁴ Significantly, the monarch, being the largest rendered figure, forms the centrepiece of the network of reliefs of Persian nobles and imperial del-

⁷ For an overview of the lotus in Mesopotamian art, see NEUMANN (2023).

⁸ BACHENHEIMER (2017: 105).

⁹ Ibid. 61.

¹⁰ ROOT (1979: 240–262).

¹¹ COLLON (1995: fig. 117).

¹² STRONACH (2002); PORTUESE (2020: fig.29). For royal Assyrian court and ideology, see PORTUESE (2020).

¹³ ROOT (1979: 237).

¹⁴ ALLEN (2005: 43); ROOT (2015: 21).

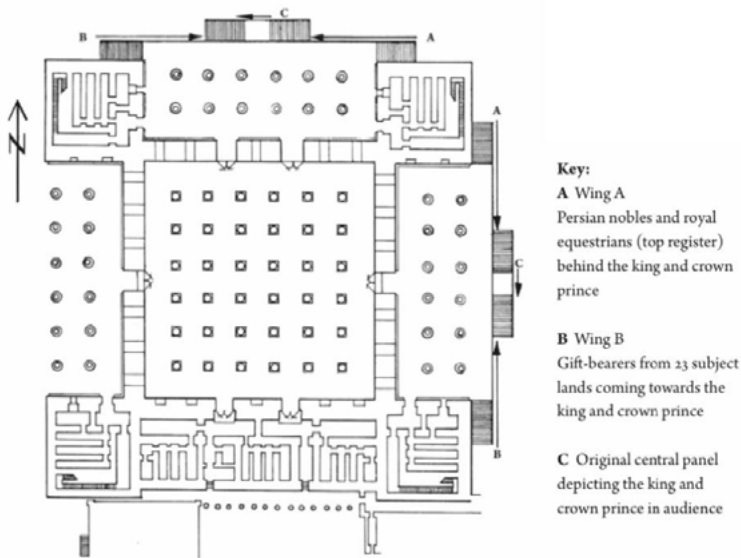


Fig.2 Plan of the Apadana showing relief sculpture programme on the north and east façades.

After Root (2015: fig. 1.13). Courtesy M. C. Root.

egates, where all objects and figures harmoniously coalesce, creating a symbolic imperial entity (Fig.3).¹⁵ The Apadana reliefs together convey a rhetoric of serene integration, unity, and collaboration.¹⁶

Another Persepolitan audience scene occurs on the northern and southern doorjambs of the so-called Hall of 100 Columns built in Artaxerxes I's reign (465–424 BC). More condensed, this specific scene retains

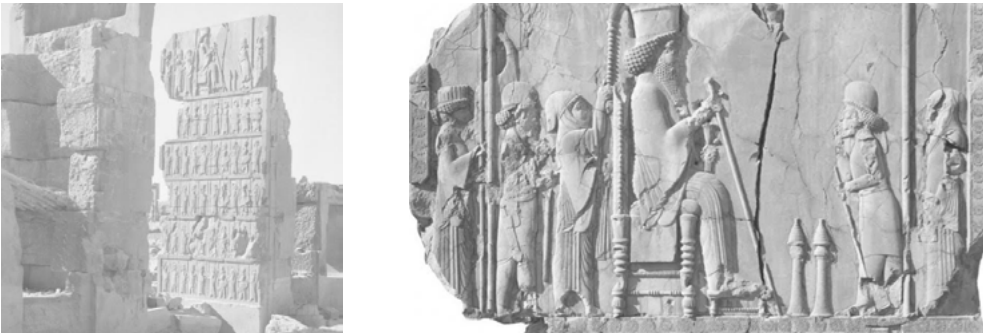


Fig.3 Reconstruction of the staircase façade of the north portico of the Apadana, with the original central panel (After Root (1979: fig.11) Courtesy M. C. Root).

¹⁵ Root (2015: 34).

¹⁶ GUNTER (2020: 139).

most features of the central panel, yet excludes the Crown Prince, gaining a beardless fly-whisk bearer (eunuch) behind the king (Figs.4a–4b). Beyond its monumental setting, the motif appears on Persepolis seals used to ratify transactions and documents via impressions on clay tablets for palace administration,¹⁷ such as PFS 22, featuring a long-bearded seated figure with staff and lotus, receiving a visitor led by a courtier's hand, recalling the delegate scenes on the Apadana (Fig.5).¹⁸



Figs. 4a–b Audience Scene on Hall of 100 Columns, Persepolis. P316 and P-135a. Courtesy of the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures of the University of Chicago.

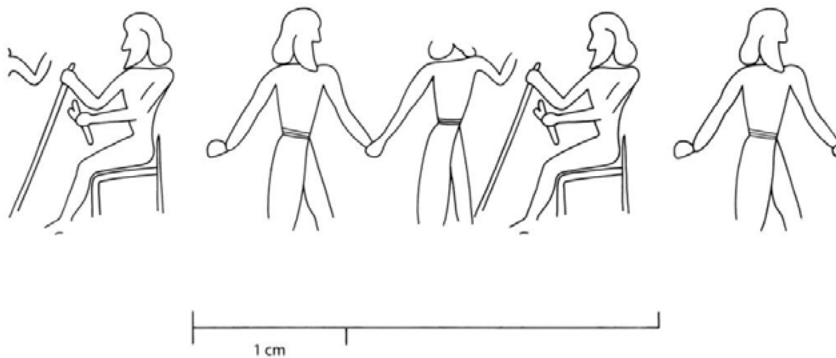


Fig.5 Collated line drawing of PFS 22 from the Persepolis Fortification Archive; after GARRISON (2017: Fig. 2.34a); drawing courtesy M. B. GARRISON, M. C. ROOT, and the Persepolis Seal Project.

¹⁷ GARRISON (2021: 770).

¹⁸ ALLEN (2005: 47). GARRISON–ROOT (Forthcoming). Female audience scenes also occur on Persepolis seals, with Persian elite women enthroned – they too held audiences: e.g. PFS 77, see BROSIUS (2010: figs.13.1; 13.9).

Dissemination

Significantly, the visual formula of the royal audience scene formed an apt template that would spread and become adapted. To demonstrate just how flexible and adaptable this centralised motif became within and beyond the empire, we must outline how artists/patrons could have cognised such Achaemenid imagery. One way in which representations of audience scenes could circulate empire-wide was through their depiction on portable seals for administration, denoting the different functional contexts where such imagery bore meaning.¹⁹

Daskyleion, satrapal capital of Hellespontine Phrygia in north-west Anatolia, has yielded many seals with various local styles, some imitating the Persepolitan court style based on the palace reliefs, such as the king heroically battling or hunting, and holding audiences.²⁰ Strikingly, visible on twelve sealed clay bullae, the audience scene on seal DS4 closely resembles that from the doorjamb of the Hall of 100 Columns, regarding the inclusion and specific placement of the enthroned king, footstool, lotus, censers, guards, and attendants – where one gestures deferentially before the king, and another holds a fly-whisk behind him (Fig.6).²¹ Bearing the royal name of Artaxerxes in Old Persian cuneiform, this seal, produced and used in local satrapal operations, differs slightly in detail, such as the position of the winged disk in the middle rather than above the baldachin (for spatial reasons), and the king appears to raise his hand in greeting than hold a staff. While record-keeping practices were likely exported to Anatolia, the seal owner perhaps cognised such imagery via the circulated seals, visits to Persepolis or other satrapal palaces, or even a copybook.²²

¹⁹ ALLEN (2005: 48).

²⁰ KAPTAN (2002); MILLER (2006: 119).

²¹ KAPTAN (2002: 31–41; for all twelve, see DS 4, 1–12).

²² DUSINBERRE (2013: 66; 249).

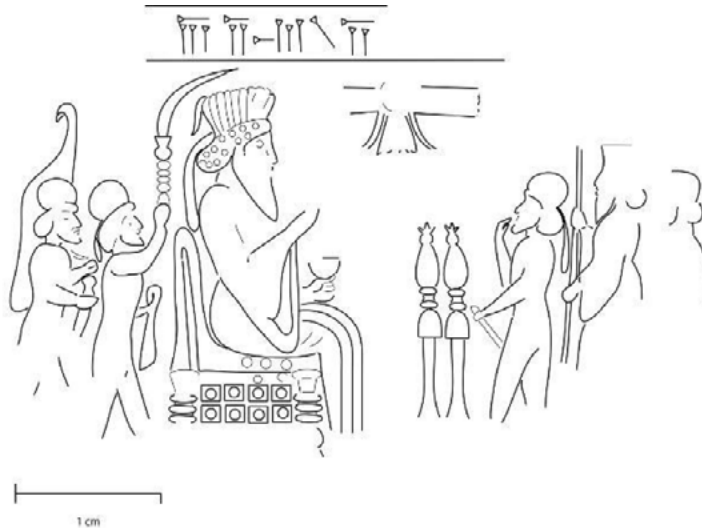


Fig.6 Drawing of Audience Scene on seal from Daskyleion (DS4). After KAPTAN (2002: 65; fig. 45).

By depicting on the seal a Persepolitan audience scene, imagery projecting Achaemenid power and authority, and inscribing Artaxerxes' name in Old Persian, the patron has consciously highlighted their familiarity with the visual language and symbols of imperial authority, significantly articulating their loyalty to the Achaemenids, their assimilation, and perhaps distantly evoking close or aspirational engagement with the king.²³ The seal exemplifies a royal motif conveyed through a different artistic vehicle, carrying great symbolic authority.²⁴ Questions are raised as to whether the influence of this specific rendition reflects the Achaemenid imposition to educate the elite in its imperial ideology²⁵ or, rather, the aspirational assimilation of local elites; we argue for the latter.²⁶

With its dissemination, the Achaemenid audience motif notably transcended its Persepolitan setting, becoming openly interpreted and adapted according to locale within and beyond the empire in different

²³ GARRISON (2021: 770; 777).

²⁴ DUSINBERRE (2013: 250).

²⁵ *Ibid.* 251.

²⁶ JACOBS (2021: 761).

artistic media and contexts, altering in meaning and ideological message transmitted. Despite variations in detail, these adaptations retain some identifiable features, characteristic of those from Persepolis. We will now discuss some fascinating examples of such adaptations and identify who reconfigured the audience scene, the socio-political and ideological motivations behind them, and their attitudes to Achaemenid rule.

Aspirational Responses

Interestingly, most adaptations of the audience motif within the empire's provinces occur in funerary contexts – a striking contrast to Persepolis. Certain local dignitaries, while still living, would commission the construction of their monumental tombs or sarcophagi, selecting imagery and themes (e.g. hunting, combat, banquets, and audience scenes) centrally important to them, in terms of glorifying their exploits, proving themselves honourably legitimate, and memorialising their elite status to the gods, even if idealised.²⁷ As the audience scenes adorning the Apadana ideologically projected the king's grandeur, legitimacy, authority, and secure dynastic succession under a collaborative and diverse imperial whole,²⁸ adaptations of such imagery – utilised by local potentates to enhance the value and performativity of their funerary monuments – were very much aspirational, regarding their self-aggrandisement, great sense of authority, and projection of their assimilation into the Achaemenid court.

Remarkable examples of adapted audience scenes on funerary monuments come from Xanthus in Lycia, Anatolia (see below), Sidon in

²⁷ JACOBS (2021: 759).

²⁸ GUNTER (2020: 139).



Fig.7 Drawing of Djedherbes richly enthroned on stela.

After MATHIESON et.al. (1995: fig.3) Courtesy E. BETTLES.

Phoenicia (e.g. the Satrap Sarcophagus – 440–400 BC²⁹), and Saqqara in Egypt (e.g. the Achaemenid-period stela of Djedherbes, where the bottom register depicts him in a banquet setting, long-bearded, in Persian court-robe on an elaborate throne with lion paws, and footrest, holding a lotus flower and bowl on his fingertips – a Persian drinking affectation³⁰ – served by attendants, projecting his assimilation into Persian court luxury [Fig.7]³¹), denoting its circulation west of the empire.

Here, local aspirational elites would intentionally portray themselves commandingly and splendidly enthroned, evocative of the Great King, with either staff or lotus in hand, feet on a footstool, and attended by courtiers/servants, to signal their importance and affiliated or idealised membership in the Achaemenid court elite.

²⁹ GABELMANN (1984: no. 22, pl. 9).

³⁰ See Xen. *Cyrop.* 1, 3, 8.

³¹ See MATHIESON et al. (1995) and COLBURN (2020: 168–171; 216–218).

Indeed, three known tombs of local dynasts from Xanthus, built in their lifetime, feature an adapted audience scene: the so-called Harpy Tomb (480–470 BC), where the east face shows the large, enthroned, long-bearded ruler holding a staff and lotus flower, with a retinue behind him, receiving a gift from a visitor presented by a servant (Fig. 8)³²; the west face of the Pavaya Sarcophagus³³ (c. 360 BC), belonging to a Xanthian governor (Pavaya), depicts the impressively enthroned Lydian satrap Autophradates clad in the Persian ‘riding habit’³⁴ (tiara³⁵, sleeved cloak and shirt, trousers) before Payava and a delegation – an event worth memorialising (Figs.9a–9b); and lastly, the Nereid Monument, monumentally conveying the ruler’s aspirations (Fig.10).³⁶



Fig.8 Audience Scene on east face of the Harpy Tomb © The Trustees of the British Museum.

This imposing temple tomb, dating stylistically to the early 4th century BC, was constructed for the Xanthian dynast, Erbinna. According

³² See JENKINS (2006: 163–168); BROSIUS (2010: 142–143).

³³ Both here and at Persepolis there is a figure introducing others to the ruler, see JENKINS (2006: 179–184).

³⁴ See MESSERSCHMIDT (2021).

³⁵ On the tiara, see TUPLIN (2007).

³⁶ See JENKINS (2006: Ch. 8).



Figs. 9a–9b Detail of enthroned satrap and audience scene on the Pavaya Sarcophagus
© The Trustees of the British Museum.

to a 4th-century elegy inscribed on a statue base in the sanctuary of Leto in Xanthus, recording his deeds, Erbinna reconquered Xanthus, Telmessus, and Pinara from their annexation.³⁷ The dynast thus reunited Lycia under one great authority, which he reflected and sought to legitimise in his tomb and its iconography. Reconstructed in the British Museum, this sumptuous tomb richly combines Greek and local Lycian craft, taking the form of an ionic Greek temple raised on a podium decorated with two friezes, with Nereids between the column capitals.³⁸ While the podium's lower frieze features Greek heroic combat, with Erbinna linking himself with heroic victory in war,³⁹ the upper notably focuses on his own valorous exploits, mentioned in the statue base inscription, such as his successful siege and storming of the three Lycian cities.⁴⁰ There is also an impressive audience scene (Fig. 11).

Occupying the centre of the relief, the proudly presented Erbinna with short beard wears a soft-felt Persian-style tiara, sitting on a high-

³⁷ Elegy transcription and reconstruction by BOUSQUET (1975: 143–148); English version by BRYCE (1986: 96); JENKINS (2006: 156–157).

³⁸ CURTIS (2004: 45–46).

³⁹ LLEWELLYN-JONES (2023: 85).

⁴⁰ JENKINS (2006: figs. 187–188).



Fig.10 The Nereid Monument © The Trustees of the British Museum.

backed throne terminating in lion paws (just like those supporting the king's throne on the audience reliefs in Persepolis), while resting his feet on a footstool under the shade of a parasol carried by a servant behind him, imitating the Persian king, as seen in a relief from Xerxes' Palace (486–465 BC).⁴¹ In his right hand, though not preserved, he likely held a staff, further exerting his authority. In attendance are three guards behind Erbinna and, before him, two bearded old men in tunics and himatia, who raise their right hands in entreaty, perhaps representing

⁴¹ LLEWELLYN-JONES (2023: fig. 92).



Fig.11 Audience scene on the Nereid Monument © The Trustees of the British Museum.

an embassy from the conquered city negotiating a surrender.⁴² Erbinna has thus ideologically affiliated himself with the power the Great King exudes, utilising the audience motif to further convey and enhance his own grandeur and authority over reunited Lycia. Further evidence of Erbbina's ideological affiliation to the Achaemenid court is found on reliefs from the architrave frieze depicting a procession of tribute-bearers wearing Persian headdresses who carry gifts of *gaunaka* (Fig.12) (a long-sleeved tunic and trousers with built-in feet), the exact same as those brought by the Cappadocians on the Apadana reliefs for the Persian King (Fig.13).⁴³ Erbinna was surely acquainted with such scenes and their symbolic value.

Overall Erbinna in his magnificent self-aggrandising tomb portrays himself as a conquering hero, making aspirational and affiliating links to the Great King by employing meaningful Achaemenid-inspired audience and tribute scenes to further communicate and legitimise the great authority he wielded over Lycia under the Achaemenid Empire.

⁴² JENKINS (2006: 194); ROBINSON (1999: 372).

⁴³ LLEWELLYN-JONES (2023: 86).



Fig.12 Frieze of gift bearers with gaunaka for Erbinna on Nereid Monument
© The Trustees of the British Museum.



Fig.13 Cappadocian delegation bearing gaunaka for the Persian king on Apadana, Persepolis. P29001.
Courtesy of the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures of the University of Chicago.

Subversive Responses

Adaptations of royal audience scenes not only occur within the empire, but, strikingly, also beyond it, in the Greek world, though in an utterly different context, with starkly contrasting ideological intentions and messages conveyed. The following appropriations are not aspirational, but subversive, in motivation, seeking to undermine Achaemenid rule. To contextualise, as a result of the early 5th-century Greco-Persian Wars and creation in 478 BC of the Athenian-led Delian League against potential Persian invasion, Achaemenid Persia then and in the ensuing generations emphatically became a popular subject in Greek drama, literature, and art. Combining literary accounts of perceived Persian aulic



Fig.14 Midas as the Persian King on Attic red-figure stamnos © The Trustees of the British Museum.

life⁴⁴, imagination, and adapted Achaemenid audience motifs,⁴⁵ Greek artists distorted the image of the Great King enthroned in audience through fantastical representations of his opulent court,⁴⁶ derision, and projecting Greek supremacy over the Persian “Other”, in turn moulding Greek (Athenian) self-identity.⁴⁷

Subversive examples include Attic depictions on elite-owned vases of mythical foreign rulers, who fitted the *tyrannos* mould, as proxies for the Persian king, notably Midas of Phrygia⁴⁸ and Bousiris of Egypt.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ E.g. the *Persica* of Ctesias, Deinon, Heracleides, see STEVENSON (1997: 1–3).

⁴⁵ Greeks could be au fait with royal Persian imagery, see MILLER (1997: esp. 56).

⁴⁶ E.g. the enthroned king’s court opulence with female fan-bearer, dancers, musicians on an Attic red-figure bell-krater c.400 Vienna Kunsthistorisches Museum 158, see LLEWELLYN-JONES (2017: fig. 5).

⁴⁷ A Greek account of an audience with the Great King, see Philostr. *Imag.* 2, 31; ALLEN (2005: 56).

⁴⁸ For Midas, see MILLER (1988).

⁴⁹ For Bousiris, see MILLER (2000); MCPHEE (2006: 50).

Indeed, Midas, famed for his fabulous wealth⁵⁰ and avarice in the golden touch parable⁵¹, resembles an approximate Persian king on an Attic red-figure stamnos (440 BC) portraying the presentation of the captured Silenus before him, set in a royal Eastern court (Fig.14).

Attended by a guard in generic Near-Eastern attire (headdress, long-sleeved patterned robes)⁵² and a female fan-bearer, Midas is depicted enthroned with a long beard, feet on a footstool, and holding a staff, like the Great King, but also derisively with donkey ears, to signal his foolishness.⁵³ He is portrayed as a foreign ruler whose love of wealth begets moral decay – as luxury-led-decline is a prominent topos with which Greek authors have polemically associated the Achaemenids.⁵⁴ The female fan-bearer, if not a misinterpretation of the beardless fly-whisk bearer on audience reliefs in Persepolis, may reflect a deliberate distortion, alluding to concubines and slanderous notions of effeminacy and dissipation, to which Greek writers relate the Persian court (e.g. Plato conceptualises the imperial harem producing effeminate boys and royal decadence).⁵⁵ The artist thus aimed to deflate Midas' authority, and by extension, due to his resemblance, that of the Persian king and royal court.⁵⁶ The Darius Vase (c.330), an Apulian volute krater, also undermines Persian rule by combining an adapted audience scene (of Darius richly enthroned with staff and footstool, attended by guards and courtiers), tallying and tribute scenes of the king's wealth, and a gathering of gods predestining Greek victory, as Athena protects Hellas, and Apatē (of deception) guides Asia.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ Aristoph. *Wealth.* 286–287.

⁵¹ Aristot. *Pol.* 1257b16.

⁵² See Persian guard description in Hdt. 7, 61. 6th-century vase depictions of long-sleeved and trousered Scythians could be a model, see MILLER (2006: 109).

⁵³ Aristoph. *Wealth.* 287.

⁵⁴ E.g. Hdt. 9, 82; Xen. *Cyrop.* 8, 1–27; Ath. 12, 539b.

⁵⁵ *Laws* 694b–696a. On Persian decadence, see BRIANT (2002).

⁵⁶ FRASER (2023: 115); for the effeminisation of Attic throne scenes of Persians deflating their authority, see MILLER (2006: 120) with more examples.

⁵⁷ See LLEWELLYN-JONES (2012: 329–340; fig. 17.2).



Fig.15 Polydamas conquers a Persian guard at Darius II's court on statue base. Courtesy Hans R. Goette.

Another subversive example features a scene in relief from a stone base (in the Museum of Olympia) that once supported the bronze statue of the famous pankratiast, Polydamas of Skotoussa, Olympic victor in 408 BC.⁵⁸ The statue and base were set up in the second half of the 4th century. The pankratiast was renowned for his exploits of great strength and wrestling, which, Pausanias notes, are listed in an inscription accompanying the statue, such as conquering a lion without weapons, as he desired to rival Heracles' strength. Hearing of his mighty exploits, the Achaemenid king Darius II invited Polydamas to his court in Susa, promising him gifts.⁵⁹ Pausanias reports the pankratiast's challenge to fight three Persian 'Immortals'⁶⁰ – whom he killed – and how his deeds were later represented on a dedicatory statue base at Olympia. Remarkably, corroborating Pausanias, the statue base, despite its poor weathering, depicts two of these very exploits: on the side, Polydamas' wrestling and defeat of the lion; on the front, his encounter in audience with the Great King (Fig.15).

Polydamas in heroic nude, back facing the king, shows his mighty strength by lifting the body of the Immortal well above his head in between four women and Darius II who, astonished, flail their hands in

⁵⁸ Paus. 6, 5, 1–7.

⁵⁹ Paus. 6, 5, 7.

⁶⁰ The king's royal bodyguard, see Hdt. 7, 40–41; 7, 83.

the air. The enthroned king, clad in his long-sleeved robe and tiara, with his feet on a footrest, holds a staff in his left hand (now lost), as the artist employs royal Achaemenid insignia.⁶¹ Breaking artistic tradition, the king's right hand flails upwards (echoing the women), astounded by Polydamas' sheer strength, who significantly takes centre stage, relegating Darius to the left. No censers nor baldachin define his royal space, now occupied by the victorious Greek, who conquers the Persian Immortal – all underlining Greek supremacy over Persia. The robust and dominant Polydamas violates the tranquil ambiance of the Achaemenid audience scene, as he turns his back on the Great King – utterly inverting the original honouring the king's grandeur, authority, and preeminence.⁶² Achaemenid authority is brutally subverted here.⁶³ If we read the relief as a past moment cast into the late 4th century, via this inversion, it acts as a metaphor for the overthrow of the empire.⁶⁴

This sense of Persian downfall leads us to our final example of a subversive adaptation of the audience motif: the so-called 'Alexander' Sarcophagus.⁶⁵ Dating to the late 4th century BC, notably after the fall of the Achaemenid Empire, this royal sarcophagus from Sidon – featuring Alexander the Great in battle versus the Persians – contains an extraordinary copy of the audience scene. A direct quotation, it appears on the shield interior of a retreating Persian soldier struck down by a heroic nude Greek warrior (Fig.16).

Here, an enthroned Great King holds his staff in his left hand, his right raised to acknowledge or command a visitor in tunic and trousers, who bows respectfully before him, while a servant behind bears

⁶¹ ALLEN (2005: 53–54).

⁶² Ibid. 53.

⁶³ Greek defiance in audience with the Great King: e.g. the Spartans Bulis and Sperchis refused proskynesis before Xerxes – Hdt. 7, 136.

⁶⁴ LLEWELLYN-JONES (2012: 345).

⁶⁵ For publication, see VON GRAEVE (1970).

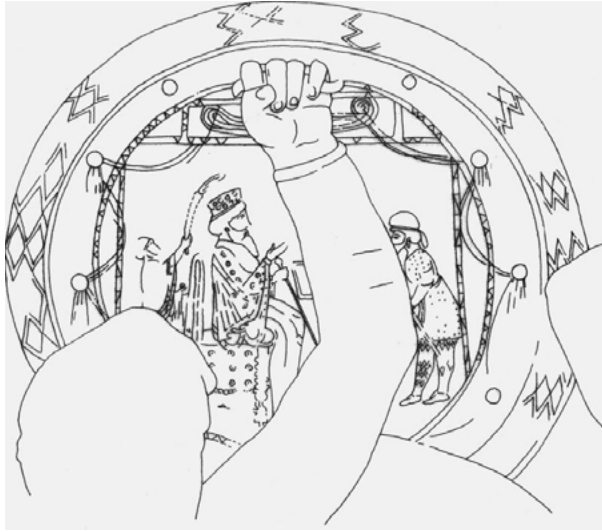


Fig.16 Drawing of audience scene on Persian soldier's shield on Alexander Sarcophagus.

After VON GRAEVE 1987: fig.6; Courtesy V. GRAEVE.

a fly-whisk. Details such as the baldachin and winged disk are also visible, and, though blocked by the soldier's arm, censers presumably separated the king from his courtier – all hallmarks of the royal audience scene.⁶⁶ Since it closely resembles such scenes in Persepolis, denoting great familiarity with the motif and how well-known it must have been, perhaps the artist copied the image from a visit, or its depiction on portable media (e.g. seals) and perishable material like textiles, or even from a painted Persian shield obtained as captured weaponry.⁶⁷ Given the sarcophagus' sculptural and structural grandeur, date, and location, scholars have argued that it had been built for king Abdalonymos of Sidon – installed by Alexander.⁶⁸ The owner utilised Alexander's image and defeat of the Persian army (and by extension, the Achaemenid Empire itself) as a tool to assert affiliation to the new regime and project his elite status and right to rule.⁶⁹ By depicting heroic nude Greek warriors

⁶⁶ BROSIUS (2010: 345).

⁶⁷ ALLEN (2005: 61).

⁶⁸ Curt. 6, 1.15f; ALLEN (2005: 60); VON GRAEVE (1970: 125–27).

⁶⁹ MORGAN (2016: 296).

against the Persians, the artist explicitly conveys Greek/Macedonian cultural, political, and military supremacy over Persia, highlighted by the retreating doomed Persian soldier, who ineffectively holds up his shield revealing the royal audience scene signifying Achaemenid imperial power, authority and kingship; yet such symbols are undermined here. Not simply shield decoration, it metaphorically subverts Achaemenid ideological supportive power, signaling its looming end.⁷⁰

Conclusion

Overall, Achaemenid audience scenes are striking in their wide flexibility and adaptability, since, as shown, the motif offers a highly apt visual template for patrons to utilise and articulate particular ideological messages.⁷¹ For the Achaemenids, such messages centred on projecting the Great King's earthly preeminence, power, authority, legitimacy, goodwill, secure dynastic succession, and when considering the flanking reliefs of Persian nobles and the 23 delegations from the empire's lands who bring tribute, a rhetoric of serene integration, unity, collaboration, coalescing into an imperial Persian entity.

Adaptations within the empire mostly occur in funerary contexts and reflect the aspirations of certain local dynasts who commission to have themselves intentionally depicted commandingly and splendidly enthroned, richly dressed, with staff and footstool, attended by servants and holding audiences on their funerary monuments, similar to representations of the Great King himself. With such aspirational adaptations and other self-aggrandising imagery, these elites sought to highlight their own grandeur, social status, authority, also loyalty and affiliation to the Achaemenid king, court and empire. Although this centralised

⁷⁰ ALLEN (2005: 61).

⁷¹ Ibid. 57.

royal imagery did spread (e.g. on portable seals) mostly to western regions (Asia Minor, the Levant, Egypt) with pre-existing pictorial habits, these responses are not the result of an imposing initiative from the imperial centre to disseminate their representational art.⁷² The desire to adapt came from the provincial dynasts, who understood its ideological benefits and so aspired to reach great heights.⁷³

Starkly contrasting these aspirational adaptations are those from beyond the empire; they contain both basic cognised Achaemenid visual audience motifs (e.g. enthroned kings, staffs, footstools, attendants) and Greek imagination, seeking to conceptualise the inaccessible opulent Persian court, in which they were fascinated, or, as a coping mechanism, deflate Achaemenid authority through derision (e.g. the Attic red-figure stamnos of Midas resembling a Persian king but with donkey ears), and projecting Greek cultural and military supremacy over the inferior Persians (e.g. the Polydamas statue base and the Alexander Sarcophagus) – ideologically distant from the original in Persepolis.

These various artistic responses thus highlight the notable impact the Achaemenids and their court art had on (western) provincial elites within the empire, aspirationally, and on Greek imagination in “Othering” the Persians; they serve as a telling gauge of contrasting socio-political and ideological attitudes to Persian rule: aspirational and subversive. Indeed, the audience scene is just one example of few such Achaemenid power imagery reappropriated so, to reflect both local elite ambition and Greek intrigue in Persia.⁷⁴

⁷²JACOBS (2021: 775).

⁷³Ibid. 761; SOMMER (2005: 145–146).

⁷⁴E.g. hunting scenes exuding Persian prowess, see MILLER (2006: 122); on funerary monuments, see DUSINBERRE (2013: Ch. 5).

Abbreviations

DPh	Darius I's Persepolis Inscription h This system follows LECOQ (1997: 11).
DS	Daskyleion Seal
PFS	Persepolis Fortification Seal

Classical Authors

Aristoph. <i>Wealth</i> .	Aristophanes, <i>Wealth</i> .
Aristot. <i>Pol</i> .	Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> .
Ath.	Athenaeus, <i>The Learned Banqueters</i> .
Curt.	Quintus Curtius Rufus, <i>History of Alexander</i> .
Hdt.	Herodotus, <i>The Histories</i> .
Paus.	Pausanias, <i>Description of Greece</i> .
Philostr. <i>Imag</i> .	Philostratus, <i>Imagines</i> .
Plut. <i>Them</i> .	Plutarch, <i>Themistocles</i> .
Xen. <i>Cyrop</i> .	Xenophon, <i>Cyropaedia</i> .

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The Use of Lists in Curse Practice. Focusing on Greek *Defixiones* on Terracotta

The aim of this paper is to present an overview of the use of lists in Greek defixiones, a term used in epigraphy to indicate curses of a private nature, usually inscribed on lead tablets, that consist in invoking deities to cause harm to one or more enemies. Many of these documents include lists of personal names to be cursed whether in the nominative or accusative, often without any further information. This practice proves to be long-lasting, from the 6th century BC to the 1st century BC, which is attested to by numerous documents found throughout the Greek world. This paper aims to discuss the variegated framework of these documents by means of an updated collection. Attention is also paid to the material used for these texts, which were not only inscribed on lead but also on terracotta.

Keywords: *Defixiones*, magic, lists, lead, pottery, Greece, Magna Graecia.

An overview of *defixiones*

Curse tablets were referred to in Greek as κατάδεσμοι,¹ which is derived from the verb καταδεῖν (“to bind down”), that often appears in the tablets. However, the standard technical term to define these documents in the literature is *defixiones*, a modern word derived from the Latin verb *defigere*,² which is found in some British curse tablets.³ The

¹ Pl. Resp. 364e; Leg. 11, 993a.

² It is only found in a bilingual glossa of the 6th cent. AD attributed to Philoxenus (CGL 2, 40).

³ SÁNCHEZ NATALÍAS (2022: 331–332, nrr. 338–339).

Oxford Latin Dictionary translates this verb with “to attach”, “to fix”,⁴ and it seems to refer either to the implicit action of binding the victim or to the action of piercing of the curse tablets with nails, as was common, or to both. These documents were widespread in many areas of the Greek-Roman world. The oldest Greek curse tablets date back to the end of the 6th century BC and are from Selinous and Himera, in Sicily, while the most recent are dated to the late imperial age.

The most widely accepted definition for *defixiones* is provided by David Jordan:

Defixiones, more commonly known as curse tablets, are inscribed pieces of lead, usually in the form of small, thin sheets, intended to influence, by supernatural means, the actions or the welfare of persons or animals against their will.⁵

This term is used in epigraphy to indicate curses of a private nature that consist in invoking gods to cause harm to one or more enemies. These documents were generally inscribed on lead because it was cheap, easily available and easy to roll. This material was widely used for writing, as shown by the many private lead letters that have survived.⁶ Having become widely used for magic, the material itself acquired ritual significance and was believed to have magical properties.⁷ Its cold heavy qualities were associated with disease or death.⁸ For example, some curse tablets request that their victims become as cold and useless as the

⁴ OLD (1968: 500–501).

⁵ JORDAN (1985: 151).

⁶ For further details see DANA (2021).

⁷ GRAF (1995: 129–130).

⁸ According to Aristotle, the life of someone who had a leaden hue would be short (Plin. *HN* 11, 114, 274).

lead upon which the curse is written,⁹ or they wish their victim's tongue should become lead.¹⁰

Defixiones were written for many reasons; among the most common were judicial issues in a trial (*defixiones iudiciariae*), jealousy in love or the desire to arouse a mutual love in the beloved (*defixiones amatoriae*), rivalry against competitors such as other athletes or playwrights (*defixiones agonisticae*), but also against artisans, tavern keepers or tradesmen (commercial curses).¹¹

These documents were intended to be long-lasting and have an enduring impact. Once the spell was cast during a ritual, they were believed to establish a lasting bond between the spell and the victim. The purpose was to paralyze the *defixi* in every aspect of their lives, for example to render them incapable of thought or movement. As might be expected, the author of the curse, who was not necessarily the person who actually inscribed the text, largely remains anonymous usually to avoid any danger of the curse turning against him or her.

Since the message of the texts had to reach the gods, it was most important to choose the best place in which to lay the *defixiones*. For this reason, curse tablets are generally found in tombs, in chthonic sanctuaries, or by underground bodies of water since these places were believed to be directly related to the underworld.¹²

Magic lists

In some *defixiones* there is much information and elements with which to understand the purpose of the text, such as an appeal to the gods, the presence of a performative verb (e.g. καταδέω, "I bind"; καταδεσμεύω,

⁹ WÜNSCH (1897: 27–28, nrr. 105–107).

¹⁰ WÜNSCH (1897: 24, nrr. 96–97).

¹¹ FARAONE (1991: 10–11); GAGER (1992: 42–174); GRAF (1994: 141–142); OGDEN (1999: 31–44).

¹² GUARDUCCI (1978: 242); OGDEN (1999: 15–25).

“I bind up”; κατέχω, “Immobilize or restrain”), the names of the victims (with patronymics and/or demotics) or other elements that suggest the reason for the curse.

However, there are many other curse tablets with only a few elements which might aid understanding of their specific purpose, such as some that comprise solely lists of personal names to be cursed, both nominative and accusative.

One of the most significant features of these documents, which are named ‘magic lists’, is the fact that they rarely include a performative verb. Its absence signifies that it would have been implied and probably pronounced at the moment of the curse. This assumption leads to consider the existence of a relationship between orality and writing in *defixiones*, that has given rise to many debates over the years. In fact, the magical papyri include spells consisting of an operative part (*praxis*) and a recitative part (*logos*); the latter causing the effects sought by the spell to be actually carried out.¹³ Some scholars have argued that a *defixio* was originally a purely verbal curse consisting only of the reading aloud of the inscribed text.¹⁴ They therefore believe that the practice of writing curses developed from pre-existing oral traditions. In the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus, for example, there seems to be the first known verbal curse, a ὕμνος δέσμιος (“binding song”), pronounced by the Erinyes in hope to bind the verbal and mental faculties of Orestes before his murder trial: ὕμνον δ’ ἀκούσῃ τόνδε δέσμιον σέθεν (“you will hear this hymn of ours that will bind you”).¹⁵

Christopher Faraone has argued that the spoken formula was pronounced at the same time as the writing and the attendant gesture (e.g. distortion of lead or some other pliable material).¹⁶ This hypothesis arises from the singular finding of a group of about 40 blank, lead tablets,

¹³ VALLARINO (2010: 91).

¹⁴ WÜNSCH (1897: II–III); AUDOLLENT (1904: XLII).

¹⁵ Aesch. *Eum.* 306. Cf. FARAONE (1985: 150–154).

¹⁶ FARAONE (1991: 4–5).

rolled up and pierced with nails, which might well suggest that the name of the victim and the cursing formulas were originally pronounced (but not written) at the same time as the act of piercing the tablet.¹⁷

It may be concluded that simply inscribing lists of personal names had *per se* no cursing power. Consequently, oral recitation was the essential requirement for the performance and efficacy of the magic rite. Writing, however, was part of the magical practice because it accompanied the act of reciting the spell. Another clue to the need for oral recitation is the presence of abbreviated names in some *defixiones*.¹⁸ Since the most important factor in a spell is clarity, the use of an abbreviation alone would be insufficient for its efficacy, which would suggest that writing was used to keep a note of the names to be cursed and the clarity would be given by oral means.

Magic lists often do not include elements to better identify the victims, such as patronymics, or demotics. Their omission does not imply that the *defixi* were not citizens, as it has been suggested, but rather that the relationship between the *defigens* and the *defixi* was of greater importance,¹⁹ since the act of cursing usually arose in relation to personal, family, or judicial matters. Hence, it is to be expected that no other elements would be necessary to identify the victims. Moreover, it was certainly not in the *defigens*' interest to emphasise that the *defixus* had a high social status. Helpful in this regard is a *defixio* from Tarentum (IG XIV, 668), on which a long columnar list of anthroponyms in the nominative is inscribed. The only acronyms in the text, probably patronymics, are used to distinguish the only two homonymous victims in the text and not to distinguish citizens from non-citizens.²⁰

¹⁷ Listed together in AUDOLLENT (1904: 164–165, nr. 109). Cf. WÜNSCH (1900: 268–269). These tablets are now missing, cf. FARAONE (1991: 24, note 19).

¹⁸ E.g. a columnar list of 13 abbreviated names in BETTARINI (2005: 138–142, nr. 27).

¹⁹ GORDON (1999: 257).

²⁰ VALLARINO (2017: 191).

The use of lists in magic was carefully studied in 1999 by Richard Gordon, who proposed a classification of the two main types of lists, which he defined as ‘natural’ and ‘columnar’.²¹

On the one hand, natural lists are characterized by a continuous sequence of names from left to right that occupy the entire available space. This type of list may present some additional elements that enrich the text, such as a conjunction between each name in the list, the indication of the patronymic/demotic or the activity carried out by the victim, the presence of a performative verb.

On the other hand, columnar lists contain a list of personal names written vertically that rarely include other information apart from the names. This type, in which each item is separated from the next, was the most used in magical texts and, compared to natural lists, has a strong visual impact since it facilitates reading, comprehension and clarity.

As Gordon points out, lists were used because they contain formal features that made them particularly suited to the communication of magic. For example, the schematic and paratactic layout was intended to catch the eye, and the impersonal style and fragmented language conveyed transparency and anonymity.²²

In order to determine how widespread the phenomenon of Greek magic lists was, it was deemed necessary to collect them from the existing corpora of *defixiones*²³ and the annual epigraphic update volumes,²⁴ since no such collection has been published to date. What follows is the fruit of this research.

²¹ GORDON (1999: 252–257).

²² GORDON (1999: 252–257); CENTRONE (2010: 95–100).

²³ WÜNSCH (1897); AUDOLLENT (1904); JORDAN (1985); JORDAN (2000); BETTARINI (2005) for Selinus; BELOUSOV (2021) for Olbia Pontica; SÁNCHEZ NATALÍAS (2022) for the Roman West; IG II/III³ 8.1 for Attica. It is also worth consulting online the *Thesaurus Defixionum*, a database that aims to collect the *defixiones* of the ancient world.

²⁴ *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (SEG); *Bulletin Épigraphique* (BE).

In geographical terms, Greek magic lists are attested over many areas of the Greek-Roman world, the majority originating from Attica, especially Athens.²⁵ In Greece a small group have also been found in Argolis (Nemea, Kleonai),²⁶ Macedonia (Pydna, Akanthos)²⁷ and the islands (Samothrace and Lesbos)²⁸. Other magic lists are attested in Illyricum (Histria, Siscia)²⁹ and Spain³⁰ and an important group are from Olbia Pontica.³¹ A significant number are from Sicily (Selinus, Kamarina, Himera, Gela, Phintias, Grammichele),³² and a few also come from Magna Graecia (Calabria, Tarentum).³³

²⁵In the recent collection of *defixiones* from Attica made by CURBERA in IG II/III³ 8.1 about 145 magic lists out of 485 *defixiones* can be identified. From Attica (4th–3rd/2nd cent. BC): IG II/III³ 8.1, 1–19; 42; 46–48; 53–54; 56; 58; 61; 64–67; 69–72; 78; 83–86; 88–95; 97–106; 108–115; 117–122; 124–132; 134–146; 149–155; 157–164; 166–170; 173–177; 179–183; 185; 189–201; 274–280; 289; 310; 321; 323; 326–327; 329–330; 332; 340; 369; 371–375; 378; 485.

²⁶From Nemea (undated): JORDAN (1985: 167, nr. 56). From Kleonai (4th–3rd cent. BC): JORDAN (2000: 13, nr. 30).

²⁷From Pydna (4th cent. BC): JORDAN (2000, 14, nrr. 36–37); CURBERA–JORDAN (2003: 109–127, nrr. 1–6). From Akanthos (300 BC): JORDAN (2000: 15, nr. 43).

²⁸From Samothrace (late 4th cent. BC): JORDAN (2000: 16, nr. 47). From Lesbos (4th–3rd cent. BC): JORDAN (2000: 16, nrr. 48–50).

²⁹From Histria (4th cent. BC): AVRAM–CHIRIAC–MATEI (2007: 400–411, nrr. 2–4). From Siscia (undated): JORDAN (1985: 172, nr. 82).

³⁰From Emporion (undated): JORDAN (1985: 184, nr. 135).

³¹From Olbia Pontica (5th–2nd cent. BC): BELOUSOV (2021: 8–10, nr. 2; 10–13, nr. 3; 16–21, nr. 5; 21–24, nr. 6; 25–27, nr. 7; 27–29, nr. 8; 30–31, nr. 9; 31–34, nr. 10; 34–38, nr. 11; 38–42, nr. 12; 48–52, nr. 14; 52–56, nr. 15; 56–60, nr. 16; 60–65, nr. 17; 73–82, nr. 19; 101–104, nr. 22). From Nikonion in the Black Sea (4th cent. BC): BELOUSOV (2017: 55–64).

³²From Selinus (late 6th/early 5th–late 5th cent. BC): BETTARINI (2005: 15–20, nr. 2; 25–27, nr. 4; 91–92, nr. 18; 125–129, nr. 24; 131–134, nr. 25; 135–137, nr. 26; 138–142, nr. 27; 151–152, nr. 30); *I.dial. Sicile* II, nr. 35; ROCCA (2007: 9–12); ROCCA (2009: 8–11, nr. 2; 18–22, nr. 5); BETTARINI (2009: 137–146). From Kamarina (mid-5th–3rd cent. BC): JORDAN (1985: 172–173, nr. 85); JORDAN (2000: 18, nrr. 55–58); *I.dial. Sicile* I, nrr. 118–121; *I.dial. Sicile* II, nrr. 62–63a–b. From Himera (late 6th–early 5th cent. BC): BRUGNONE–CALASCIBETTA–VASALLO (2020: 71–91). From Gela (5th cent. BC): JORDAN (1985: 173, nr. 90). From Phintias (2nd–1st cent. BC): JORDAN (1985: 174, nr. 92). From Grammichele (5th cent. BC): *I.dial. Sicile* II, nr. 98. From Sicily (Selinus?) (mid-5th cent. BC): BETTARINI (2005: 43–45, nr. 10; 46–49, nr. 11; 50–58, nr. 12; 68–73, nr. 14).

³³From Calabria (4th–3rd cent. BC): LAZZARINI–POCCETTI (2017: 237–240, nrr. 5–6). From Tarentum (4th–3rd cent. BC): IG XIV, 668.

Selinus and Himera, in Sicily, are among the places in which the oldest magic list in the Greek world have been discovered, which are dated to the late 6th and early 5th century BC. Although becoming more common from the mid-5th century BC onwards, in Selinus magic lists have been found from the late 6th and early 5th century BC together with other curse tablets characterised by a more discursive style and stereotypical language.³⁴ Recently, 54 new curse tablets have been discovered in the western necropolis of Buonfornello in Himera, which to date is the biggest nucleus of Sicilian *defixiones*.³⁵ The only two published documents from this group are examples of magic lists dated to the late sixth and early 5th century BC.³⁶

The other major Sicilian *polis* in which *defixiones* are attested is Kamarina, where have been found inscriptions characterised by an almost exclusive use of nominal lists among the oldest texts.³⁷ However, these documents date back to a later period than the earliest texts from Selinus and Himera (mid-5th century BC).

Overall, the majority of Greek magic lists are dated to between the fourth and the 3rd century BC, while just a few date to the 2nd – 1st cent.

³⁴ Among the oldest examples in the form of magic lists see BETTARINI (2005: 91–92, nr. 18; 131–134, nr. 25; 135–137, nr. 26; 138–142, nr. 27) and ROCCA (2009: 18–22, nr. 5). Among the oldest examples of *defixiones* in a more discursive style, see BETTARINI (2005: 59–68, nr. 13; 75–80, nr. 15; 81–86, nr. 16; 87–90, nr. 17; 95–103, nr. 20; 104–108, nr. 21; 109–111, nr. 22; 112–124, nr. 23) and KOTANSKY–CURBERA (2004: 684–690, nr. III) in which the formula καταγράφω τὸν δεῖνα καὶ αὐτὸν καὶ τὰν ἀτέλειαν is repeated 28 times with some slight variations. Another example of a formula that occurs in BETTARINI (2005: 95–108, nr. 20 e 21) is τὰς γλώσσας ἀπεστραμμένας ἐγγράφω.

³⁵ BRUGNONE–CALASCIBETTA–VASSALLO (2020: 47–108).

³⁶ BRUGNONE–CALASCIBETTA–VASSALLO (2020: 55–91): an opisthographic tablet (5th cent. BC) which contains a columnar list of personal names; BRUGNONE–CALASCIBETTA–VASSALLO (2020: 71–85): another opisthographic tablet (late 6th/early 5th cent. BC), which depicts a male and a female figure identified by anthroponyms engraved along the upper margin.

³⁷ Among the oldest texts from Kamarina are e.g. *I.dial. Sicile* I, nr. 118 (mid-5th cent. BC), nr. 120 (mid-5th cent. BC), nr. 121 (mid-5th cent. BC). Cf. CURBERA (1999: 165–166).

BC.³⁸ In Athens, where the majority of the magic lists originate, they date from the 4th to the 3rd / 2nd cent. BC.³⁹

The collection of magic lists presented here attests that the most common type of magic text is the columnar list. This aspect is highlighted by Gordon, who recorded numerous curse tablets with columnar lists in Attica dating from up to around 300 BC, compared to a much smaller number (9) from Magna Graecia and Sicily.⁴⁰ However, although the majority of the known magic lists originate from Attica, it is worth noting that the several findings in Sicily over the last two decades bring the number of the latter to around 25 magic columnar lists.

According to Gordon, the plethora of columnar lists in Attica could depend upon a tradition of “democratic literacy”.⁴¹ These were among the most important and typical documents of the democracy, which included public documents comprising inventories, lists of magistrates, winners of sport competitions, deme-lists, lists of public benefactors, and lists of shame against deserters, public debtors or those convicted of murder. Gordon considers columnar lists in *defixiones* as being very similar to the lists of shame since both had enemies as targets, private in the former case and public in the latter.⁴² If one accepts this hypothesis, it may be assumed that in Classical and Hellenistic times private documents, such as *defixiones*, would have been made so that they resembled

³⁸ From Olbia Pontica (2nd cent. BC): BELOUSOV (2021: 38–42, nr. 12); from Phintias (2nd/1st cent. BC): JORDAN (1985: 174, nr. 92).

³⁹ The collection of *defixiones* from Attica in IG II/III³ 8.1 shows that most of the magic lists are dated to the 4th cent. BC; a few are dated to the 3rd / 2nd cent. BC.

⁴⁰ GORDON (1999: 255) had estimated that columnar lists were present in 40 of the 135 texts (30%) collected in WÜNSCH (1897) and in 15 of the 34 texts (44%) collected in JORDAN (1985). GORDON (1999: 255, note 26) had collected just nine columnar lists from Magna Graecia and Sicily.

⁴¹ GORDON (1999: 256).

⁴² GORDON (1999: 256–257).

impressive public documents in order to bestow upon them the same characteristics of efficacy, authority and power.⁴³

However, it might be suggested that one of the principal reasons for the diffusion and popularity of columnar list in *defixiones* is that of clarity. The clear organisation of the columnar list of *defixi* was vital for the person who would need to pronounce each name clearly while casting the spell. Clarity was also paramount for the gods of the underworld to understand exactly who their targets were.

Type of medium: the case of magic lists on terracotta

As indicated above, *defixiones* were generally inscribed on lead tablets, but it is worth noting that alternative materials were also used, such as other metals (gold, silver, copper, bronze), stone, terracotta, selenite, papyrus, wood, linen and parchment.⁴⁴ With regard to magic lists in *defixiones*, although the majority were inscribed on lead, there are also some examples on terracotta, which will be discussed below.

Most of the terracotta inscriptions come from Athens, which has brought to light three terracotta inscriptions identified as magic lists: a black-glazed lamp (mid-4th century BC) on which a list of names in the nominative is inscribed backwards on top of the nozzle and rim;⁴⁵ a *chytra* (early 3rd century BC) on which 55 names in the nominative are inscribed on its exterior and which was pierced with a large iron nail;⁴⁶ and a vessel (late 4th century BC), currently unpublished, on which 40

⁴³ GORDON (1999: 257).

⁴⁴ BEVILACQUA (2010: 21–82) analysed the relationship between writing, media and magic in antiquity considering a wide range of objects (including some curses). SÁNCHEZ-NATALÍAS (2022: 7–14) made a distinction between objects intentionally created for the purpose of writing ('specific media') and those that had originally been made for a different purpose ('non-specific media').

⁴⁵ LANG (1976: 15, nr. C32).

⁴⁶ LAMONT (2021: 87–96).

names alongside their professions are engraved.⁴⁷ Moreover, from the ancient Olbian necropolis comes a black-glazed cup (4th century BC), on whose inner side a list of personal names in the nominative is inscribed in a circle.⁴⁸ From Olbia Pontica two doubtful cases on *ostraka* are also known, which are included in the collection of *defixiones* made by Alexey Belousov, although their identification is uncertain.⁴⁹

These examples attest that the use of inscribing magic lists on pottery was not an isolated practice, especially between the 4th and 3rd century BC.

3.1 A “new” terracotta tile from Tarentum

Another document inscribed on terracotta was recently found in the storerooms of the National Archaeological Museum of Tarentum, in southern Italy, during an epigraphic survey carried out by Roma Tre University related to the new edition of the 14th volume of *Inscriptiones Graecae*⁵⁰. The inscription⁵¹ (see Figures 1-2) was brought to light in 1988 in Via Leonida 52 (Tarentum), although unfortunately this is the only information available regarding its finding. However, an excavation campaign carried out at the time attested that this site was an artisan area which was active from the end of the 5th to around the 4th century BC⁵². In addition to a furnace, some basins and a tomb were also found.

The document is a terracotta tile with some inscribed lines on the two longest sides. The text is as follows:

α Εὐμναστος

⁴⁷ IG II/III³ 8.1, 196.

⁴⁸ BELOUSOV (2021: 21–24, nr. 6).

⁴⁹ BELOUSOV (2021: 3–7, nr. 1; 13–15, nr. 4).

⁵⁰ This work was made possible by Roberta Fabiani’s systematic examination of the inscriptions in the catalogues of the National Archaeological Museum of Tarentum.

⁵¹ DE BLASIO (2023: 1–22).

⁵² DELL’AGLIO–RUSSO (1988: 129–130).

Ταυρίσκος

Δαμόστρατος

Ζώπυρος

5. Εὐμαχος

b [Φ]ιλώτας

Μοσχᾶς

On one side (*a*) there is a columnar list of five names, while on the other

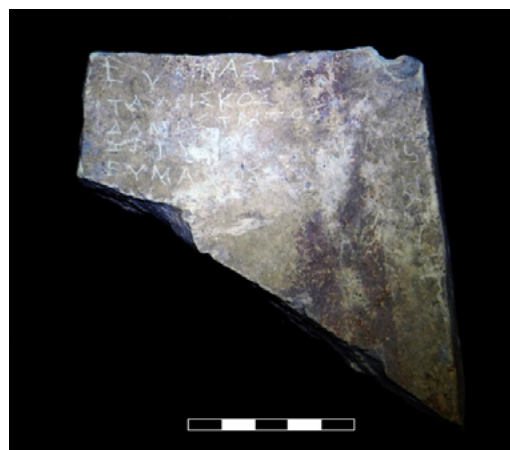


Figure 1. National Archaeological Museum of Tarentum (nr. 220167), terracotta tile.



Figure 2. Apograph of the inscription

side (*b*) there is a list of only two names. The tile is broken at the bottom, but the text is fully preserved because the inscriptions on side *a* break off where the piece is damaged, suggesting that the tile was engraved on a piece which had been damaged before the engraving took place. It is worth noting that the text is very clear in its structure and that the author wanted to preserve the columnar structure of the list. Rather than continue to add other names after Εὐμαχος which have required starting a new column, he decided to add the other two names, Φιλώτας and Μοσχᾶς, by turning the tile and inscribing them on the other side.

On paleographic grounds the text can be dated to the early Hellenistic period, perhaps between the late 4th and early 3rd century BC. This is confirmed by the shapes of the letters, which are almost identical to

those found on a curse tablet on lead, which was also from Tarentum and from the same period (IG XIV, 668). Besides the shape of the letters, this second *defixio* has other elements in common with the new document. Both of them are columnar lists of names dated to the same period and have two personal names in common, Φιλώτας and Ζώπυρος.⁵³ However, it is not possible to claim that they are the same people as those in our text since the two names were very common in Tarentum at that time.⁵⁴

The identity of the people named in the list remains uncertain, but a survey in the *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* and in other corpora has shown that three of the names mentioned on our document appear on some stamps from Tarentum dated to the 4th century BC: Ζώπυρος, Εὔμαχος, and Μοσχᾶς which could be related to another artisan, Μοσχίδας.⁵⁵ The area where the inscription was found was, in fact, an active artisan area in the 4th century BC, hence these people may have been artisans who worked there.

Although the structure of the text seems to refer to magic lists, the

⁵³ According to BURKERT (1972: 105), GASPERINI (1980: 371) and ZHMUD (1989: 273–274) the names mentioned in the lead tablet as members belonging to a Pythagorean association. This hypothesis is based on the homonymy of five names with the characters mentioned in the appendix to Iambl. VP 36, 267.

⁵⁴ Φιλώτας was found in Tarentum five times between the 4th and 3rd cent. BC.: DAUX (1944–1945: 98, nr. 5); IG XIV, 668; DRAGO (1940: 322, nr. 194); RAVEL (1947: nr. 708); BRUNETTI (1960: 49); EVANS (1889: 177, nr. VIII A.5). Ζώπυρος was found six times in BOUSQUET (1946: 38–9); *F. Delphes* III.1, nr. 109; Iambl., VP 36.267; IG XIV, 668; EVANS (1889: 159, nr. VII C.8; 176 nr. VIII A.2–3).

⁵⁵ FERRANDINI TROISI (2012: 86–88, nrr. 29–30): on the two stamps, Ζώπυρος appears abbreviated in ΖΩ and ΖΩΠ (the name Ζωπυρίων is not credible since it was found in Tarentum on a coin dated to 235–228 BC, see EVANS (1889: 194 nr. IX B). FERRANDINI TROISI (2012: 82, nr. 25; 185, nr. 51): on two stamps Εὔμαχος appears abbreviated in ΕΥΜΑ and ΕΥΜΑΧ; on the name Εὔμαχος found in Tarentum as an artisan cf. ROSAMILIA (2017a: 469, nr. 9); *Id.* (2017b: 326). Μοσχίδας is a very rare name that appears in Tarentum in the Doric genitive Μοσχίδα only on two stamps: FERRANDINI TROISI (1992: nrr. 90–91); the rarity of the name suggests that it is somehow related to the anthroponym Μοσχᾶς, of which many attestations are known in the Greek world (about 50), although not in Tarentum.

type of medium, a terracotta tile, is uncommon for this type of document. As mentioned above, terracotta was used for *defixiones*, but as yet no reference has been made to tiles in this paper.

The most interesting comparison, albeit from Roman times, is a terracotta tile from the necropolis of El Jem, in Tunisia, on which three Latin inscriptions are engraved.⁵⁶ The middle inscription, although not a magic list, is an amatory curse: *ho(c) opera retine mihi Patelaria(m) Minor(em) amor piger n(obis)*.

3.2 A terracotta tile from Antium

Another document on a terracotta tile comes from Antium, a town near Rome, and it is dated to the Imperial age.⁵⁷ The text of the inscription is as follows:

[- - -] Ζ Η Θ Ι Κ Λ Μ Ν Ξ Ο Π [- - -]

[- - -] Φ Χ Ψ Ω

[- - -] ης

[- - -] ἀν ης

5. [Ἄ] νόπτ ης

Μέτρη ης

Φλάκος

vertically, from below to above:

Π Ε Λ Ο Μ Ο Σ Ο [- - -] (?)

vertically, from above to below:

Π Ε Λ Α Κ

The first two lines contain part of an alphabetical sequence with some missing letters (*alpha* to *epsilon* and *rho* to *hypsilon*) due to the fragmen-

⁵⁶ FOUCHER (2000: 57–61).

⁵⁷ SOLIN (2019: 148–149, nr. 114).

tary nature of the medium. From line 3 to line 7 there are a few terms, written in a column, which can be reconstructed as four personal names in the nominative. On the other hand, the lines written along the right side remain uncertain.

The editor of this text considers the inscription to be a ‘magic or scholastic exercise’.⁵⁸ This paper would argue that it is in fact a magic text, since there is a clear parallel between the columnar list of names in the nominative inscribed on a terracotta tile this inscription and the one from Tarentum. While writing out letters of the alphabet (ll. 1-2) might suggest a scholastic exercise, it is worth noting that these may also have magical efficacy. Indeed, the alphabet or parts of it are found on some other curse tablets.⁵⁹ For this reason and in the light of the inscription from Tarentum, it seems preferable to consider this tile as a magic text. If this is the case, then it should also be considered a magic list rather than a scholastic exercise.

3.3 Final note regarding the terracotta tile from Tarentum

In conclusion, it might be argued that given the clear structure of the text from Tarentum, one is reminded of the lists of names used in *defixiones*. Although the type of medium may seem uncommon, there are several examples of magic lists on pottery from the 4th century BC. However, the lack of precise information regarding the original whereabouts of the tile, prevents making this claim with any certainty. Were this document a *defixio*, it would probably have been found in one of the basins or in the tomb of the artisan area, and the names inscribed to be cursed might be those of artisans who worked there.

⁵⁸ SOLIN (2019: 148).

⁵⁹ Cf. DORNSEIFF (1925: 69 ss.); OGDEN (1999: 48–49); VELAZA (2019: 123–138); BEVILACQUA (2020: 25–30). E.g. SÁNCHEZ NATALÍAS (2022: 251–252, nr. 173): an amatory curse from Maar (Belgic Gaul, 2nd cent. AD), engraved on a clay pot, contains a complete alphabetical sequence.

Conclusions

It may be concluded that the use of magic lists must have been a widespread magic-ritual practice, especially in the Hellenistic era especially between the 4th and 3rd century BC in many areas of the Greek world. This particular way of writing a *defixio*, comprising a list of personal names to be cursed confirms that simply inscribing lists had no cursing power and that an oral recitation was an integral part of the curse. Moreover, lists were used because they have features suited to the communication of magic, such as a clear, simple layout and an impersonal style.

These documents were inscribed not only on lead tablets, but also on pottery, especially between the 4th and 3rd cent. BC. In this regard, both the text from Tarentum and the one from Antium are inscribed on a terracotta tile and include all of the features found in magic lists. The comparison of the terracotta text from Tarentum with the lead magic list from the same place (*IG XIV*, 668), both dated to the 4th and 3rd century BC., is very significant, because they share many common elements, the most notable being that they contain nominal lists, and have the same clear, columnar layout.

Abbreviations

<i>F.Delphes</i> III.1	É. BOURGUET: <i>Fouilles de Delphes III. Épigraphie. Fasc. 1, Inscriptions de l'entrée du sanctuaire au trésor des Athéniens</i> . Paris 1929.
<i>I.dial. Sicile</i> I	L. DUBOIS: <i>Inscriptions grecques dialectales de Sicile I. Contribution à l'étude du vocabulaire grec colonial</i> . Paris 1989.
<i>I.dial. Sicile</i> II	L. DUBOIS: <i>Inscriptions grecques dialectales de Sicile II</i> . Genève 2008.
<i>IG II/III</i> ³ 8.1	J. CURBERA: <i>Inscriptiones Graecae. Vol. II/III3, fasc. 8.1, Defixiones Atticae</i> . Berlin 2024.
<i>IG XIV</i>	G. KAIBEL: <i>Inscriptiones Graecae. Vol. XIV, Inscriptiones Siciliae et Italiae, additis Galliae, Hispaniae, Britanniae, Germaniae inscriptionibus</i> . Berlin 1890.

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Liberation or Accommodation? Phoenicians, Egyptians and Babylonians in the Twilight of the Achaemenid Empire

Mainly based on the testimony of literary sources, but also on preconceived ideas about the merits of Western civilization and the ills of Oriental despotism, the often peaceful submission of the Persian Great King's subjects to Alexander III of Macedon has been viewed as an undeniable proof of the Achaemenid Empire's fragility and oppressive system of governance. The present paper aims at challenging this view by studying the cases of Phoenicia, Egypt and Babylonia. From the critical study of classical authors, but also of textual sources coming from the empire itself, such as Babylonian cuneiform tablets, emerges a more nuanced picture in regard to the politically complicated relations between the Macedonian conqueror, the Persian authorities and the indigenous elites.

Keywords: Persian Empire, Darius III, Alexander III of Macedon, Phoenicia, Egypt, Babylon, aristocracy, satrap.

Introduction

The conquests of Alexander III of Macedon at the expense of the Persian Empire of the Achaemenid dynasty have long captivated the interest of ancient and modern historiography. Despite the abundance of studies, the history of the conflict is almost exclusively viewed from the Macedonian perspective and especially from that of the Argead monarch himself. Alexander has been praised as a brilliant tactician and an en-

lightened administrator, but also reprimanded as a sanguinary despot and a paranoid plotter.¹ By contrast, the Achaemenid Empire and its Great Kings have been relatively neglected, relegated as passive extras in the Macedonian conqueror's breathtaking performance.² Mentioned only briefly, the Persian Empire is generally described as a decrepit state, whose tyrannical and inefficient administration rendered it particularly vulnerable to centrifugal movements and of course to Alexander's expansionist campaign.³ According to this interpretation, adopted even by Alexander's detractors, the subject peoples of the Levant and Mesopotamia welcomed the Macedonians as liberators, destined to free them from Persian tyranny.

Phoenicia

In chronological order, the first relevant case is that of Phoenicia. In the aftermath of the battle of Issos in Cilicia (333 BC), where the Achaemenid troops under the command of Darius III were routed, the Macedonians continued their advance southwards towards Phoenicia and Egypt. The first to recognise Alexander's suzerainty was Straton, the son of Gerostratos, king of Arados.⁴ Besides Arados, Straton also offered to the Macedonian king a golden crown and the control of Marathos and

¹ For a concise overview of the historiography about Alexander, see BRIANT (2016: 350–414).

² Also visible in Oliver Stone's film *Alexander* (BRIANT [2016: 313–324]) despite the director's less conservative approach in other matters, like the Macedonian monarch's sexuality. For an important exception, see BRIANT (2003a).

³ See, among others, OLMSTEAD (1948: 508; 517), HAMILTON (1973: 74; 85), LANE FOX (1973: 195; 250), SCHACHERMEYR (1973: 56–57; 234–235), GREEN (1974: 268–269; 302–303), BOSWORTH (1988: 12; 86), HAMMOND (1997: 111) and WORTHINGTON (2014: 179; 195). For some more nuanced approaches, mostly limited however to the Achaemenid historiography, see KUHRT-SHERWIN-WHITE (1994: 312–313), BRIANT (1996: 872–884), VAN DER SPEK (2003: 341), CHAUVEAU-THIERS (2006: 379), HECKEL (2009: 36) and BRIANT (2016: 230–243).

⁴ Curt. 4, 1, 5–6 and Arr. *Anab.* 2, 13, 7–8.

Sigon. The surrenders increased exponentially,⁵ as the Macedonians advanced southwards, but the most important capitulation was that of Sidon, one of Phoenicia's major urban communities. Arrian attributes the submission of Sidon to the hatred of its population against the Persians,⁶ something that is also hinted at by Diodorus.⁷ However, Curtius Rufus and Justin remark that king Straton of Sidon (not to be confused with the homonymous prince of Arados) was deposed by Alexander and replaced by Abdalonymos,⁸ because he hesitated about which side he should support, the Persians or the Macedonians. Following the submission of Sidon, most of Phoenicia was annexed to the nascent Argead Empire, but the last remaining major city, Tyre, proved to be a much tougher nut to crack. The Tyrians refused to submit to the Macedonians, holding instead a neutral position in the Persian-Macedonian conflict.⁹ As a result, Alexander encircled the Phoenician port, which he eventually managed to capture following a lengthy and costly siege, largely thanks to the defection of the Phoenician and Cypriot naval squadrons, which deserted the Achaemenid fleet patrolling the Aegean Sea.¹⁰

Overall, the Macedonian conquest of Phoenicia appears to have been relatively quick, with the remarkable exception of Tyre. Inspired from Arrian's comment on the hostility of the Sidonians towards the Persians, the willingness of the Phoenicians to surrender to Alexander is explained in several modern studies as the result of how despicable the Persian domination had become among the Phoenician communities.¹¹

⁵ Just. *Epit.* 11, 10, 6–7.

⁶ Arr. *Anab.* 2, 15, 6.

⁷ Diod. Sic. 17, 40, 2.

⁸ Curt. 4, 1, 15–26 and Just. 11, 10, 8–9. Cf. Diod. 17, 47 and Plut. *De Alex. fort.* 2, 8. On the nomination of Abdalonymos as king of Sidon, see also BRIANT (2003b: 33–47) and MORSTADT-RIEDEL (2020: 191–206).

⁹ Diod. Sic. 17, 40, 2–3, Curt. 4, 2, 1–5, Arr. *Anab.* 2, 16, 7–8, and Just. *Epit.* 11, 10, 10–11.

¹⁰ Curt. 4, 3, 11 and Arr. *Anab.* 2, 20, 1–3.

¹¹ See, for example, LANE FOX (1973: 180), ELAYI (1980: 22), MAIER (1994: 330–331), LANE FOX (2007: 273) and GOUKOWSKY (2022: 134).

Special attention is paid to the impact of the crushing of the Phoenician revolt by Artaxerxes III almost two decades ago (345 BC), which Diodorus describes in a very gloomy manner:¹² The Sidonians perished in a fiery holocaust, as they preferred to die rather than submit to Artaxerxes, while the Great King sold the smoldering remains to speculators. However, Diodorus' account is in fact quite problematic. As the obvious literary hyperboles suggest, the devastation inflicted upon Sidon seems to have been greatly exaggerated:¹³ Certainly, there are indications of military operations in the area (whose dating during the reign of Artaxerxes III is however disputed¹⁴) and a cuneiform tablet mentions the deportation of a part of Sidon's population in Mesopotamia,¹⁵ but, as its wealth and demographic vigour in the time of the Macedonian invasion indicate, Sidon seems to have remained a prosperous commercial hub during the reigns of the last Achaemenid monarchs. Moreover, the geographical extent of the Phoenician revolt against Artaxerxes III appears to have been quite limited. Diodorus speaks about a Phoenician uprising,¹⁶ but, Sidon aside, the other Phoenician communities are conspicuously absent from his narration. It appears therefore that only Sidon rose against the Persians, while the other Phoenician cities, including Arados and Tyre, remained loyal to the Great King.¹⁷

Moreover, even in the case of Sidon, the extent of the population's hostility to the Persians should not be overestimated, given king Straton's unwillingness to openly support Alexander. Straton was not an isolated case either, as the examples of Tyre, but also of Damascus, whose dignitaries displayed a similarly ambivalent attitude in the face

¹² Diod. Sic. 16, 45, 4–6.

¹³ GRAINGER (1991: 28–30) and MILDENBERG (1999: 204–205).

¹⁴ GRAINGER (1991: 25), NITSCHKE (2007: 123) and WIESEHÖFER (2016: 107).

¹⁵ ABC 9.

¹⁶ Diod. Sic. 16, 41.

¹⁷ GRAINGER (1991: 24–31) and BRIANT (1996: 701–703). *Contra* OLMSTEAD (1948: 434–437), DANDAMAEV (1989: 307–309), ELAYI (1989: 182–184) and RUZICKA (2012: 164–176).

of the Macedonian invasion,¹⁸ demonstrate. Considering the aforementioned examples, as well as the absence of any concrete evidence documenting the allegedly widespread hostility of the Phoenicians towards the Achaemenid authorities, besides the (tenuous) case of Sidon, the submission of the Phoenician communities to the Macedonian invaders can be interpreted in more pragmatic terms:¹⁹ In the aftermath of Issos, which sealed the Macedonian military supremacy in the Eastern Mediterranean for the foreseeable future, the allegiance to Alexander appeared politically much more expedient than remaining loyal to Darius III. Of course, the prospects of the Achaemenid Empire were not yet entirely hopeless, which explains the ambivalent attitude of the Tyrians and of Straton of Sidon, but the majority of the local elites preferred the less risky option of collaboration with the Macedonian invaders.

Egypt

Following the submission of Phoenicia and Gaza, Alexander was ready to invade the Persian satrapy of Egypt (332 – 331 BC). The situation there was particularly chaotic in the aftermath of the crushing defeat of the Persians at Issos: The satrap Sabaces had been killed during the battle²⁰ and was then replaced by Mazaces, presumably his deputy. In addition, the satrapy had been destabilised by a group of mercenaries led by the Macedonian Amyntas, who deserted Darius and led his men in a pil-

¹⁸ Curt. 3, 13, 2–17. In summary, the governor of Damascus, whose name is not mentioned by Curtius Rufus, our only available source, betrayed the Persian garrison to the Macedonians, but was then decapitated by one of his subordinates, who remained loyal to Darius III. The Damascus affair illustrates the dilemma faced by the imperial elites in the aftermath of Issos and the risks involved in choosing one or the other side.

¹⁹ CHAUVÉAU–THIERS (2006: 379) and HECKEL (2009: 36). See also GREEN (1974: 246) and BRIANT (2009: 49–53).

²⁰ Diod. Sic. 17, 34, 5, Curt. 3, 11, 10; 4, 1, 28 and Arr. *Anab.* 2, 11, 8.

laging expedition in Egypt.²¹ As Curtius Rufus reports,²² several Egyptians joined the renegades, who then succeeded in defeating Mazaces and isolating the satrapy's garrison at Memphis. However, the Persian governor, having taken advantage of the mercenaries' preoccupation with looting the riches of the countryside, regrouped his troops and counterattacked against the mutineers, annihilating them completely. Despite his decisive victory against Amyntas, Mazaces was apparently incapable of resisting Alexander. Arrian affirms that Mazaces surrendered peacefully to the Argead monarch,²³ but Diodorus and Curtius Rufus add that the Egyptians welcomed the Macedonian occupiers,²⁴ because of the severity, arrogance, avarice and irreverence of the Persian administration. The cordial reception of the invaders is accepted by numerous historical studies about Alexander's conquests,²⁵ while some suggest that there was even a popular uprising against the Persian authorities facilitating the annexation of the Egyptian satrapy to the Macedonian kingdom.²⁶

Indeed, the Persian occupation of Egypt has been regularly portrayed in a rather negative light in ancient sources: Herodotus dedicates several passages to the mistreatment of the Egyptians at the hands of Cambyses II, who supposedly did not even hesitate to slaughter the sacred Apis bull.²⁷ Similar sacrilegious offenses have been attributed to

²¹ Diod. Sic. 17, 48, 2-5, Curt. 4, 1, 27-33 and Arr. *Anab.* 2, 13, 1-3.

²² Curt. 4, 1, 30.

²³ Arr. *Anab.* 3, 1, 2.

²⁴ Diod. Sic. 17, 49, 1-2 and Curt. 4, 7, 3. The warm reception of the Macedonians by the Egyptians is also mentioned in the so-called *Oxyrhynchus Chronicle* [*P. Oxyrhynchus* I 12 (recto) col. iv, l. 32-35].

²⁵ See, among others, OLMSTEAD (1948: 508), WELLES (1970: 507), HAMILTON (1973: 74) LANE FOX (1973: 195), SCHACHERMEYER (1973: 234-235), GREEN (1974: 268-269), LANE FOX (2007: 273) and WORTHINGTON (2014: 179). Cf. BADIAN (1985: 433), who suggests that only the upper classes welcomed Alexander.

²⁶ CAPART (1936: 113), WELLES (1970: 507) and HECKEL (2020: 118-119).

²⁷ Hdt. 3, 27-29. See also Diod. Sic. 1, 46, 4; 49, 5, Str. 17, 1, 27; 46, Plut. *De Is. et de Os.* 11; 44, Ael. NA, 10, 28; VH, 6, 8 and Just. *Epit.* 1, 9, 2.

Artaxerxes III, responsible for reconquering Egypt approximately one decade before Alexander's invasion. The Great King is blamed²⁸ for devastating the country, massacring the sacred ram of Mendes and even for devouring the Apis bull. Furthermore, a few royal inscriptions of the Lagid era²⁹ describe how the Ptolemaic armies managed to recover, during their campaigns against the Seleucid Empire, several statues of Egyptian deities that had been confiscated by the Persians during the occupation of the country. The aforementioned examples give the impression that the Persian rule over Egypt was particularly oppressive, which may explain the cordial welcome of the Macedonians by the Egyptian people. However, the reliability of these statements is strongly contested,³⁰ due to the sources' apparent bias.

For instance, regarding the claims about the recovery of the divine statues stolen by the Persians, the Ptolemaic dynasty had an interest in vilifying the Persian Empire, in order to ameliorate its reputation as the legitimate ruler of Egypt, by presenting itself as the restorer of the country's ancient glory and prosperity.³¹ The credibility of the claims about the sectarian and sanguinary policies of Cambyses II and Artaxerxes III is further undermined by the obvious hyperbole and the repetitive and stereotypical literary motifs used to demonise the Persian rulers.³² Moreover, the archaeological record of the Apis bull burials does not confirm the allegations about the disruption of the religious ceremony

²⁸ Diod. Sic. 16, 51, 2, Plut. *De Is. et de Os.* 11; 44, Ael. NA, 10, 28; VH, 4, 8 and Suda, s.v. Ἀπιδ; Ἀσατο.

²⁹ Cairo CG 31088, Cairo CG 50048, OGIS 54 and TM 129851. For a succinct description of the inscriptions, see AGUT-LABORDÈRE (2017: 150–153).

³⁰ See, for example, OLMSTEAD (1948: 89–91), WIESEHÖFER (1996: 2–3), WATERS (2014: 55–56) and COLBURN (2020: 8–10).

³¹ COLBURN (2015: 177–181) and AGUT-LABORDÈRE (2017: 157–162). Cf. WINNICKI (1994: 177), DEVAUCHELLE (1995: 71–72) and AUFRÈRE (2005: 140–149). For an overview of the question, see BRIANT (2003c: 176–181).

³² SCHWARTZ (1949: 68–70), DANDAMAEV (1989: 311), MILDENBERG (1999: 205), DILLERY (2005: 390–403), HENKELMAN (2011: 129–132) and COLBURN (2020: 248).

during the reign of Cambyses,³³ which indicates that these horror stories were invented by the Egyptian clergy, in order to blacken the reputation of the Persian monarch. The hostility of the Egyptian priesthood to Cambyses is probably explained by Cambyses' fiscal reforms, which drastically curtailed the royal donations to the Egyptian temples, in an effort to reinvigorate the Egyptian economy and to render the temples financially autonomous.³⁴ As a result, a segment of the Egyptian society was doubtlessly not fond of the administrative policies of the Persian authorities, but this implies neither a universal hostility nor that Egypt was a monolithic society with zero conflicting interests between its members and different social classes.

In this regard, there are quite a few cases of close cooperation between Egyptians and Persians. The so-called Elephantine, Arshama and Pherendates archives reveal the frequent interactions between Persians and Egyptians, while Thucydides mentions³⁵ the Egyptian allies of the Persian garrison during the rebellion of Inaros (463 – 454 BC) against Artaxerxes I. However, the most iconic example is the inscription of Udjahorresnet,³⁶ an Egyptian dignitary with a very distinguished career under the last Egyptian pharaohs, but also during the reigns of Cambyses II and Darius I. Udjahorresnet was not an isolated example either. Another case is that of Petosiris, priest of Thoth in Hermopolis. Petosiris' career reached its peak during the second half of the 4th century BC. In his autobiography Petosirs underlines the lamentable state in which Egypt was found under an unnamed 'sovereign of the foreign

³³ POSENER (1936: 168–171), KIENITZ (1953: 58–59), DILLERY (2005: 400) and COLBURN (2020: 9). Cf. DEVAUCHELLE (1995: 66–70), DEPUYDT (1995: 124–126) and AUFRÈRE (2005: 123–132).

³⁴ On the so-called *Cambyses Decree*, see AGUT-LABORDÈRE (2005: 12–16) and LIPPERT (2019: 147–162).

³⁵ Thuc. 1, 104, 2.

³⁶ *Vatican* 22690. On the inscription of Udjahorresnet and his career, see respectively POSENER (1936: 1–29) and CRUZ-URIBE (2003: 10–15).

lands', when Petosiris began his illustrious career. This is a common literary motif, designed to emphasise the magnitude of the dignitary's subsequent achievements.³⁷ In fact, not only did Petosiris succeed in surviving the transition from Egypt's last indigenous pharaohs to the Persian Great Kings and then to the Macedonian dynasties, but the Persian themes of the iconographic decoration of his tomb might indicate his close association with the Achaemenid authorities.³⁸ Contemporary with Petosiris was Somtutefnakht.³⁹ Somtutefnakht not only managed to survive the tumultuous period between the reconquest of Artaxerxes III and the invasion of Alexander, similarly to Petosiris, but the inscription also mentions his participation in a battle against the Greeks (Issos?), where Somtutefnakht presumably fought in the side of the Persians.⁴⁰

The cases of Petosiris and Somtutefnakht indicate the flexibility of the local elites, who were ready to accommodate themselves with Egypt's new rulers, in order to maintain their privileged position. This conclusion is corroborated by the behaviour of several members of the imperial administration. Starting from the lower echelons of the hierarchy, Arrian mentions⁴¹ the nomination of two Egyptians, Petisas and Doloaspis, as nomarchs (civilian governors of a territorial subdivision of the satrapy), who may have also been administrative officials under the Persians.⁴² In fact, despite being described as an Egyptian, the name Doloaspis is actually of Iranian etymology.⁴³ In addition, Amminapis, an Iranian official that surrendered to Alexander in Egypt, was later

³⁷ Cf. LADYNIN (2005: 108–109), KUHRT (2007: 120) and COLBURN (2015: 185–186).

³⁸ COLBURN (2015: 186–194).

³⁹ *Naples* 1035. On Somtutefnakht's inscription, see TRESSON (1930: 382–391), LICHTHEIM (1980: 41–44), PERDU (1985: 92–113) and MENU (1995: 86–90).

⁴⁰ TRESSON (1930: 390–391), PERDU (1985: 108), DANDAMAEV (1989: 324), BURSTEIN (1994: 382), BRIANT (1996: 879), RUZICKA (2012: 278) and WOJCIECHOWSKA (2016: 61). *Contra* WELLES (1970: 509).

⁴¹ *Arr. Anab.* 3, 5, 2.

⁴² BURSTEIN (2000: 154).

⁴³ BRIANT (1996: 739).

given the satrapy of Parthia and Hyrcania,⁴⁴ in north-eastern Iran. As for Mazaces, Arrian and Curtius Rufus mention that he submitted to Alexander in an amicable manner,⁴⁵ which indicates that the last Persian satrap of Egypt also tried to gain the goodwill of the Macedonian conqueror. As he then disappears from the available narrative sources, Mazaces' subsequent career remains unknown, but a few silver tetradrachms discovered in modern-day Iraq may indicate that he was later appointed governor of a Mesopotamian district (Assyria?).⁴⁶

Overall, the cases of Petosirs, Somtutefnakht, Petisas, Doloaspis, Amminapis and even Mazaces provide us with a more nuanced image of the circumstances of Egypt's surrender to the Macedonians than Curtius Rufus' and Diodorus' one-dimensional narrative of the Egyptians enthusiastically welcoming the Macedonian invaders. There is no reason to doubt the frustration caused by the fiscal demands of the Persian administration or that the Egyptian society was relieved by the restauration of order, following the anarchy caused by the death of Sabaces and the subsequent invasion of Amyntas (despite Curtius Rufus' surprising and unconvincing remark that some Egyptians had joined the pillaging bands of mercenaries), but the warm reception of the conquerors is more indicative of the elite's pragmatism and willingness to integrate itself into the new *status quo*⁴⁷ than of their supposed visceral hatred against the Persians. A few months later, Babylon will submit to Alexander in remarkably similar conditions.

⁴⁴ Curt. 6, 4, 25 and Arr. *Anab.* 3, 22, 1.

⁴⁵ Curt. 4, 7, 4 and Arr. *Anab.* 3, 1, 2.

⁴⁶ NICOLET-PIERRE (1979: 229), HARRISON (1982: 386–387), VAN ALFEN (2000: 31–41) and especially LE RIDER (2003: 284–290).

⁴⁷ BURSTEIN (1994: 382–383), BRIANT (1996: 878–881), BRIANT (2003a: 84) and SCHÄFER (2009: 150).

Babylon

Following the Persian defeat at Gaugamela (331 BC), Darius retreated eastwards, towards Media, which meant that no standing army could oppose the march of Alexander southwards, towards the prosperous cities of Babylonia. The first major strategic obstacle for Alexander was Babylon itself, the satrapy's capital. The satrap Mazaeus, described as an illustrious dignitary and a friend of Darius,⁴⁸ was the *de facto* governor of the city,⁴⁹ whose defenses were bolstered by its imposing fortifications,⁵⁰ as well as by its irrigation system, whose manipulation could flood the surrounding plains, thus sabotaging any attempt to encircle the Mesopotamian metropolis. However, despite Mazaeus' close association with Darius and Babylon's formidable defenses, the city surrendered without a fight to Alexander. Arrian mentions⁵¹ that, as he approached Babylon, Alexander deployed his troops in battle formation, but the Babylonians, the local administration and clergy included, welcomed the conquerors, also offering them precious gifts. The narration of Curtius Rufus is more detailed, but, in general, it confirms Arrian's account.⁵² Mazaeus, having marched outside Babylon and accompanied by his adult sons, submitted to Alexander, to whom he surrendered Babylon and its citadel. After enumerating the strategic advantages of the city's peaceful surrender for the Argead monarch, Curtius Rufus proceeds to describe the magnificent reception the Babylonians organ-

⁴⁸ Diod. Sic. 17, 55, 1 and Curt. 5, 1, 18.

⁴⁹ During Alexander's invasion, Mazaeus initially administered the satrapy of Syria/Transeuphratene (Arr. *Anab.* 3, 8, 6), but he took over the governorship of Babylon following the Persian defeat at Gaugamela, perhaps because the previous satrap (Boupare? [Arr. *Anab.* 3, 8, 5]) had been killed during the hostilities (BRIANT [1996: 868], cf. BOSWORTH [1980: 291]).

⁵⁰ Curt. 5, 1, 17. See also HEINSCH-KUNTNER (2011: 525–526).

⁵¹ Arr. *Anab.* 3, 16, 3–4.

⁵² Curt. 6, 1, 3–44.

ised for the new masters of the city: The Macedonians entered the city in square formation. Alexander paraded on top of a chariot, from where he inspected the riches of the city and the luxurious decorations, arranged by Bagophanes,⁵³ the phrourarch and treasurer of Babylon,⁵⁴ in an effort to compete with Mazaeus. Present in the ceremony were the Chaldeans (the Babylonian priesthood) and the Babylonian cavalry, donned in splendid uniforms and doubtlessly representing the urban aristocracy of Babylon. Finally, Diodorus' account is much more concise, but the Sicilian historian confirms the willing submission of the Babylonians.⁵⁵

Given Mazaeus' illustrious career under Darius and especially Babylon's near-impregnable defenses, how can we explain the peaceful surrender of the city that most likely constituted the most important urban center of the Achaemenid Empire in economic and demographic terms? Traditionally, the sudden and without resistance fall of Babylon has been attributed to the supposed hostility of the Babylonian society to the foreign and presumably despised administration of the Persian authorities.⁵⁶ This interpretation is mainly based on Arrian's remark⁵⁷ that Alexander decreed that the Babylonians should repair their temples and especially that of Belos (the Ésagila, the temple of Marduk, Babylon's protector god), which Xerxes I had destroyed. In combination with some

⁵³ Bagophanes' name has been very heavily hellenised, but it most likely corresponds to the Iranian name Bagapâna (DANDAMAEV [1992: 58–59]), which implies that Bagophanes, similarly to Mazaeus, was of Iranian origins.

⁵⁴ In this context, the term phrourach (originating from the Greek word φρούραρχος) corresponds to the commander of the citadel's garrison. The treasurer (*ganzabara* in Old Persian) was responsible for the financial administration of the province under his jurisdiction.

⁵⁵ Diod. Sic. 17, 64, 4–5.

⁵⁶ See, *inter alia*, OLMSTEAD (1948: 517), HAMILTON (1973: 85), LANE FOX (1973: 250), GREEN (1974: 302–303), BOSWORTH (1988: 86), HAMMOND (1997: 111) and WORTHINGTON (2014: 195). SCHACHERMEYR (1970: 56–57) suggests that Babylon was impossible to defend, because of the outbreak of a popular anti-Achaemenid uprising.

⁵⁷ Arr. *Anab.* 3, 16, 4.

other circumstantial evidence,⁵⁸ it is thus argued that Xerxes quelled the Babylonian revolts of Šamaš-eriba and Bêl-šimânni (484 BC) in a particularly harsh and sectarian manner,⁵⁹ which caused an irreparable rift between Persians and Babylonians. However, this hypothesis has been strongly contested by a reexamination of the available evidence,⁶⁰ which led to a more nuanced understanding of Xerxes' policy in the aftermath of the Babylonian uprisings. Regarding the archaeological evidence, there are signs of damage and abandonment in a Babylonian neighborhood and in Etemenanki, the city's great ziggurat dedicated to Marduk,⁶¹ but their interpretation has divided the scientific community. Not only is the dating of the damage disputed, but it might also be attributed to military operations, instead of a coordinated campaign of sectarian vandalism.⁶²

In any case, even if the Ésaġila was indeed damaged during the restauration of Achaemenid rule over Babylonia, neither was the prosperity of the sanctuary irreparably condemned, as the continuation of its activities in the later period shows,⁶³ nor was said damage the result

⁵⁸ In summary, it has been alleged that Xerxes abolished the Babylonian kingship, divided the satrapy of Mesopotamia, persecuted the Babylonian cults out of religious intolerance and even confiscated the statue of Marduk from the Ésaġila. The last two points are based respectively on the so-called *Daivâ Inscription* (XPh), whose content is however very generic and stereotypical and, therefore, of limited historical value, and on a passage of Herodotus' *Histories* (1, 183, 3), which has been however misinterpreted (KUHRT-SHERWIN-WHITE [1987: 71–72] and ROLLINGER [1998: 350–355]).

⁵⁹ See, for example, NYBERG (1938: 364–367), OLMSTEAD (1948: 236–237), DUCHESNE-GUILLEMIN (1962: 156), SCHMIDT (1970: 117–118) and DANDAMAEV (1989: 183–187).

⁶⁰ KUHRT-SHERWIN-WHITE (1987: 69–78). See also ROLLINGER (1998: 339–373).

⁶¹ MALLWITZ et al. (1957: 29–33).

⁶² On the various interpretations of the archaeological evidence regarding Xerxes' policy towards Babylon, see, among others, SCHMID (1995: 92–94), ROLLINGER (1998: 350–355), BAKER (2008: 113–115), GEORGE (2010: 474–480), ALLINGER-CSOLLIICH (2011: 533–555), HEINSCH et al. (2011: 489–490), HENKELMAN et al. (2011: 458–461) and BRIANT (2016: 239–240).

⁶³ KUHRT-SHERWIN-WHITE (1987: 75–76), STOLPER (1989: 295) and HELLER (2010: 298). HACKL (2018: 16–185) summarises the Ésaġila archive of the later Achaemenid and early Hellenistic periods, also describing the changes implemented in the temple's administration following the victory of Xerxes over the Babylonian insurgents.

of Xerxes' alleged sectarianism, as his policy appears to have been purely pragmatic. For instance, the decline in the beginning of Xerxes' reign of the old aristocratic families of Babylon, which used to dominate the city's economy and politics since the Neo-Babylonian period and which cooperated with the Babylonian rebels, is clearly visible through the cuneiform archives. However, the same sources also attest the rise of a new Babylonian elite, closely attached to the Persian administration,⁶⁴ whose uninterrupted prosperity indicates Babylon's blossoming economy during the middle and late Achaemenid periods.

So, if Babylonian and Persian elites continued to coexist and cooperate with mutual profit even after Xerxes' reign, how to explain the cordial reception of the Macedonians? A glimpse of the answer can be provided by a cuneiform astronomical tablet, which seemingly corroborates Arrian's testimony: In Sippar, a city situated to the north of Babylon, Alexander promised to abstain from harming the inhabitants of Babylon: He would not enter inside their houses and he would renovate the Ésaġila.⁶⁵ The remark about the renovation of the temple does not however confirm Arrian's allegations. Even if it is not just a generic and stereotypical comment designed to underline the Macedonian ruler's piety and generosity, Babylonian buildings, composed mainly of fragile mudbricks, were in constant need of maintenance and repair.⁶⁶ Moreover, the promises of Alexander in Sippar, made before the Macedonians even reached Babylon, reveal the conditional and contractual nature of the city's surrender, which is also implied by the welcoming committee headed by Mazaeus and mentioned by Curtius Rufus: In ex-

⁶⁴ On the socio-economic dynamics of the Babylonian revolts as well as on the impact of Xerxes' pacification policy, see especially WAERZEGGERS (2003/2004: 150–163) and SEIRE-WAERZEGGERS ed. (2018).

⁶⁵ ADART 1. On the tablet in question, see BERNARD (1990: 525–528) and VAN DER SPEK (2003: 297–299).

⁶⁶ KUHRT (1990: 187–188), COLLINS (2013: 137–138) and BRIANT (2016: 239–240).

change for respecting the properties and privileged social positions of the Babylonian elites, Alexander would be recognised as the legitimate ruler of Babylon. This agreement also concerned the Persian officials of the imperial administration. Bagophanes did not keep his office as the city's garrison commander and treasurer, but he was instead incorporated into Alexander's circle.⁶⁷ On the other hand, Mazaeus was not only confirmed as satrap of Babylonia, one of the empire's wealthiest regions, perhaps the first Iranian to enjoy such an honour,⁶⁸ but was even authorised to mint his own coins.⁶⁹ The aforementioned rewards, as well as the reference of the astronomical tablet to the agreement between the Macedonians and the local elites preceding the official surrender of the city, highlight the conditional submission of Babylon, thus contradicting its interpretation as a spontaneous and enthusiastic initiative.

How then to explain Arrian's remark about the alleged cruelty and intolerance of Xerxes? It could be a rhetorical invention of the classical literature, inspired from Xerxes' tarnished reputation in Greece as the arsonist of Athens.⁷⁰ Alternatively, the stark contrast between the piety and popularity of Babylon's new masters and the supposed irreverence and blasphemous policies of their predecessors is a common motif in Babylonian history. For instance, the Babylonian sources underline the warm welcome the Assyrian king Sargon II received, when

⁶⁷ Curt. 5, 1, 44.

⁶⁸ Unless we take into consideration the appointment of Sabictas/Abistamenes as governor of Cappadocia by Alexander (Curt. 3, 4, 1 and Arr. *Anab.* 2, 4, 2). However, neither his ethnic origins nor his earlier position in the Achaemenid society and bureaucratic hierarchy are clear (LEROUGE-COHEN [2022: 198–201]).

⁶⁹ Curt. 5, 1, 44 and Arr. *Anab.* 3, 16, 4. His sons also joined the elite cavalry regiment of the Macedonian army (Arr. *Anab.* 7, 6, 4).

⁷⁰ SANCISI-WEERDENBURG (2002: 580–588) and KUHRT (2007: 248). Cf. VAN DER SPEK (2003: 341). *Contra* LANE FOX (2007: 300). TOLINI (2012: 276–277) suggests that Xerxes was chosen as the convenient scapegoat, because he was responsible for reforming the administration and economy of the Babylonian temples, thus undermining the revenues of the clergy.

he captured Babylon from the local ruler Marduk-apla-iddina II.⁷¹ The most iconic example, however, is that of the so-called *Cyrus Cylinder*, concerning, ironically enough, the Persian conquest of Babylon. In the cuneiform text in question, Cyrus II is praised as a generous and pious leader, while his adversary, the Babylonian Nabonidus, is consistently denigrated as an irresponsible, incompetent and blasphemous despot.⁷² The examples of Sargon, Cyrus and Alexander demonstrate the political and ideological intricacies behind the various dynastic transitions in Babylon.⁷³ On one hand, the submission of Babylon was the product of a prearranged agreement, whose terms were mutually beneficial to the signatories (the foreign invaders and the indigenous elites), at the expense of the deposed dynasty. On the other hand, for propaganda and legitimacy purposes, the surrender was publicly presented in a less cynical manner as the fortunate result of the conqueror's generosity and piety, in direct contrast to the previous regime's supposedly arbitrary and impious policies.

Conclusion

To recapitulate, in all three cases, the classical sources refer, albeit in a usually brief and generic manner, to how warmly the indigenous communities received the Macedonian conquerors.⁷⁴ This is generally attributed by the modern historiography to Alexander's enlightened policies and to the political oppression and economic stagnation of the Achaemenid Empire.⁷⁵ However, the details about the communi-

⁷¹ KUHRT (1990: 122–123) and DEL MONTE (2001: 141).

⁷² WAERZEGGERS (2015: 95–119). On the parallels between the idealised representations of Cyrus and Alexander in the cuneiform documents, see TOLINI (2012: 279–289).

⁷³ SHERWIN-WHITE (1987: 8–9), VAN DER SPEK (2003: 341) and BRIANT (2009: 49–53).

⁷⁴ Diod. 17, 40, 2; 49, 1–2; 64, 4–5, Curt. 4, 7, 3; 5, 1, 3–4 and Arr. *Anab.* 2, 15, 6; 3, 16, 3–4.

⁷⁵ For a concise overview of the relevant historiography, BRIANT (2016: 230–255).

ties' submissions, often included in the narrations of these very same sources, provide us with a more nuanced explanation of the local elites' motivations. Cases like these of Tyre and Straton of Sidon, who hesitated over the course to follow, and especially those of Amminapis and Mazaeus, who were amply rewarded by Alexander for their new allegiance, indicate the political dilemmas faced by the implicated dignitaries, as well as their principally pragmatic motivations. This interpretation is further reinforced by the testimony of cuneiform and hieroglyphic sources, which, unlike Curtius Rufus, Arrian and Diodorus Siculus, directly echo the perspectives of the communities involved, although they are not impartial either. The socio-political survival of the Babylonian and Egyptian aristocracies (see especially Petosiris and Somtutefnakht) during the transition from local to Persian and then to Macedonian domination, as well as their successful integration into the new *status quo*, demonstrate the political flexibility and adaptability of the elites in question. So, if the answer to the question posed in the title is accommodation, how to explain the frequent allusions to liberation?

The solution to this puzzle can be more clearly detected in the Babylonian example, where the relative abundance of the cuneiform documentation allows us to examine the legitimisation tactics employed by the local elites in a rather long period, beginning even before the establishment of the Persian Empire. The new masters of Babylon are consistently glorified as benevolent and pious administrators, while the previous regime is condemned for its alleged irreverence and authoritarianism. Can the Babylonian example be generalised to include Phoenicia and Egypt as well? The answer to this question is most probably positive. The situation in Phoenicia is generally opaque, due to the scarcity of sources, but in Ptolemaic Egypt we can notice the same legitimisation schema in the systematic denigration of the Persian domination, rhetorically contrasted with the prosperity and glory the country sup-

posedly achieved under the Ptolemies.⁷⁶ In conclusion, the elites of the invaded satrapies, represented not only by the indigenous aristocracy, but also by the (mostly Persian) officials of the upper echelons of the imperial bureaucracy, chose accommodation over resistance, especially when the prospects of Darius III collapsed after Gaugamela. However, the narrative of liberation was used to politically justify their rapprochement with Alexander, in a double effort to facilitate their rupture with the Persian authorities and their subsequent incorporation into Alexander's administration, but also to consolidate the legitimacy of the rising Macedonian dynasties, like the Argeads and the Lagids.

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⁷⁶ COLBURN (2015: 168–181).

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Two Modes of Dying in Attic Tragedy: Suicide and Self-Sacrifice as an Act of Heroism or Cowardice

This paper deals with the surviving plays of Greek tragedy, in which suicide and self-sacrifice take place during the plot: Ajax, Antigone, Oedipus Rex, Trachiniae, Phoenissae, Hippolytus, The Suppliants Eur., Hecuba, Heracleidae. It primarily focuses on the motivations of the heroes and heroines and the way they choose to end their lives. It also examines the way that suicide is presented to the audience (visually or aurally), the vocabulary used in each case and its meaning and the portrayal of the dead bodies on stage. Through the analysis of the heroes' and heroines' inner conflicts, societal pressures, and the cultural backdrop against which these actions occur, this paper aims to elucidate the complex interplay of heroism and cowardice within the framework of ancient Greek tragedy.

Keywords: suicide, self-sacrifice, heroism, cowardice, Sophocles, Euripides, extant plays

The issue of suicide, as a social phenomenon,¹ concerned the ancient Greek society and inspired the ancient Greek art. Taking into account that passion is a sort of a leitmotif in Attic tragedy, death by suicide features prominently, because it intensifies the tragic plot.² As Garrison notes, “the tragedians use the suicide motif in almost every conceiv-

¹ S. E. DURKHEIM, *Suicide: a Study in sociology*; translated by John A. Spaulding and George Simson. London 1966. About different attitudes towards suicide from antiquity to 19th-century Germany, s. also R. HIRTZEL *Der Selbstmord*. Leipzig 1908.

² According to Hoof (1990: 78), suicide in antiquity was “deliberate, direct and solute”.

able way to portray the complicated and painful nature of human existence".³

The theme of self-destruction is not handled alike by the three tragic poets. In Aeschylean drama, heroes and heroines do not go further than the point of threatening to end their lives (*The Suppliants*)⁴ or pleading for an end to their lives to escape their suffering (*Prometheus Bound*, *The Persians*).⁵ Many of Sophocles' heroes and heroines find in suicide an ideal end to the despair and the impasse of their experience (Ajax, Antigone, Haemon, Eurydice, Jocasta, Deianeira). In Euripides, some heroes take their own lives (Phaedra, Jocasta, Evadne), but in most cases suicide either emerges as self-sacrifice (Menoeceus, Polyxena, Macaria) or is eventually overturned or avoided (Alcestis, Iphigeneia, Heracles).⁶

The term "suicide" is applied to any death that occurs as a direct or indirect result of an act, whether positive or negative, that the victim performs on his or her own self.⁷ Self-sacrifice is related to the military, patriotic or religious duty of each hero or heroine to his or her city or family, often fulfilling a prophecy. In Attic tragedy, self-sacrifice often takes on suicidal dimensions as the heroes and heroines defend their intention to sacrifice themselves to such an extent that it seems as if they

³ GARRISON (1995: 179).

⁴ *Sup.* 465: ἐκ τῶνδ' ὅπως τάχιστα ἀπάγξασθαι θεῶν.

⁵ *P.B.* 151–153: εἰ γάρ μ' ὑπὸ γῆν νέρθεν θ' Αἶδον / τοῦ νεκροδέγμονος εἰς ἀπέραντον / Τάρταρον ἦκεν, 580–583: οἰστρηλάτῳ δὲ δείματι δειλαίαν / παράκοπον ᾧδε τείρεις; πυρί <με> φλέξον, ἥ χθονὶ κάλυψον, ἥ / ποντίοις δάκεσι δὸς βοράν; *Pers.* 915–917: εἴθ' ὄφελεν, Ζεῦ, καὶ μετ' ἀνδρῶν / τῶν οἰχομένων / θανάτου κατὰ μοῖρα καλύψαι.

⁶ *Alc.* 1123–1126: ὦ θεοί, τί λέξω — θαῦμ' ἀνέλπιστον τόδε — / γυναιῖκα λεύσσω τήνδ'; — ἐμὴν ἐτητύμω; / ἥ κέρτομός με θεοῦ τις ἐκπλήσσει χαρά; / *Her.* οὐκ ἔστιν, ἀλλὰ τήνδ' ὀράς δάμαρτα σὴν; *IA* 1581–1589: θαῦμα δ' ἦν αἴφνης ὀράν. / πληγῆς κτύπον γὰρ πᾶς τις ἥσθετ' ἂν σαφῶς, / τὴν παρθένον δ' οὐκ οἶδεν οὗ γῆς εἰσέδν. [...] ἔλαφος γὰρ ἀσπαίρουσ' ἔκειτ' ἐπὶ χθονὶ / ἰδεῖν μεγίστη διαπρεπής τε τὴν θεάν, / ἥς αἵματι βωμὸς ἐραίνεται ἄρδην τῆς θεοῦ.; *HF* 1347–1352: ἐσκεψάμην δὲ καίπερ ἐν κακοῖσιν ὧν / μὴ δειλίαν ὀφλῶ τιν' ἐκλιπὼν φάος.

⁷ αἱ συμφοραῖς γὰρ ὅσους οὐχ ὑφίσταται / οὐδ' ἀνδρὸς ἂν δύνασθαι ὑποστῆναι βέλος. / ἐγκαρτερήσω βίον· εἴμι δ' ἐς πόλιν / τὴν σὴν, χάριν τε μυρίαν δῶρων ἔχω.

⁷ COOPER (1999: 516); cf. DURKHEIM (1966: 42).

themselves seek to do so.⁸ This may be why the philosophers of antiquity, in their attempt to address the issue of suicide, included self-sacrifice in the broader group of intentional self-killings.⁹ Both Plato and Aristotle, based on legal principles, reject suicide.¹⁰ Plato only recognizes some exceptions, which are related to unavoidable misfortune and irreversible disgrace. In *Phaedo* 873c7, he characterizes suicide under any other circumstances as cowardice.¹¹ Accordingly, Aristotle considers suicide an offense against oneself and against the city, perceiving it as an act of abdication of responsibility (Arist. *Nic. Eth.* 5, 11). It seems, therefore, that the ancient Greeks, in the context of the rightness or wrongness of suicide, distinguished between honorable and dishonorable suicide, depending on the motives of the suicide, both personal and societal.¹²

Consequently, the question arises as to whether suicide in Attic tragedy can be described as an act of heroism or cowardice or it involves both, depending on the way one approaches it. This is the question this paper will seek to answer, including the cases of self-sacrifice. We will examine surviving plays in which suicide and self-sacrifice take place during the plot: *Ajax*, *Antigone*, *Oedipus Rex*, *Trachiniae*, *Phoenissae*, *Hippolytus*, *The Suppliants* Eur., *Hecuba*, *Heracleidae*.¹³

Through the study of the motivations and the way of death, it will be attempted to determine whether such an act can be considered hero-

⁸ GARRISON (1995: 121) considers self-sacrifices a type of suicide that she calls “noble suicide” because of the “altruistic tendencies” and their “social motivations.” Cf. LORAUX (1981: 31-40) who argues that the difference between suicide and self-sacrifice is that sacrificial victims merely accept their death rather than seeking it.

⁹ COOPER (1999: 516); cf. LORAUX (1987: 31-42) on the distinction between suicide and self-sacrifice.

¹⁰ AS COOPER (1999: 531) observes, their approach is related to the treatments of the law in Greek city-states.

¹¹ s. also Pl. *Laws* 9.873 c-d.

¹² s. GARRISON (1995: 23-31).

¹³ For Sophocles' text I follow PEARSON ed. (1975); for Euripides' text I follow MURRAY ed. (1902) and MURRAY ed. (1913).

ic, a sign of cowardice or both. Furthermore, we will examine the way in which suicide is presented to the audience (visually or aurally),¹⁴ the vocabulary used in each case and its meaning and the presentation of the dead bodies on stage. What is particularly interesting is that both self-sacrificers and suicides of Attic dramas are portrayed in a manner that rather evokes sympathy from the audience, despite living in a society where suicide was condemnable;¹⁵ this, at least, could be indicative of the understanding and justification of such an act.¹⁶

A. MOTIVATION

I. Suicide

With respect to the motives that drive heroes and heroines to suicide, they can be classified into two broad categories, which relate to the context of ancient society and its values of self-sacrifice: when a dignified life cannot be ensured, the person seeks death—preferably a glorious death. The first category relates to avoiding the notoriety that comes with continuing to live.¹⁷ The second category relates to the pain the he-

¹⁴ In this context, depictions of suicide scenes in ancient art, which probably relate to these plays, could also be considered. However, this could not be a reliable criterion, for two reasons. Firstly, “the stage never becomes a regular resource of any painter”, as OSBORNE (2008: 409) notes. Secondly, in classical art, as HOOF (1990: 176) observes, the moment before the decisive act is chosen. In addition, any depictions of suicide scenes relate to the influence that Sophocles and Euripides had on the artists of the period. It is widely known that Euripidean tragedies inspired vase painters in lower Italy and Sicily. So, scenes from Sophocles’ dramas are rarely depicted, unlike those of Euripides. In particular, none of the suicide scenes quoted by Sophocles are depicted on any vase. Rather, vases with the suicide of Jocasta over her dead children in *Phoenissae*, Phaedra contemplating her suicide, and the sacrifice of Polyxena are attributed by some researchers to scenes inspired by the corresponding Euripidean tragedies. About Jocasta, s. KRAUSKOPF (1990: 685–686); about Phaedra, s. LINANT DE BELLEFONDS (1994: 358–359); about Polyxena, s. TOUCHEPHEU-MEYNIER (1994: 433–434).

¹⁵ COOPER (1999: 531) notes that “The Greek city-states had laws against suicide”.

¹⁶ s. also GARRISON (1995: 33), who argues that “Suicide is a social phenomenon, steeped in ethical ramifications, for the dramatists of the 5th century and their audiences, then and now”.

¹⁷ This view is expressed either by minor characters in Attic tragedy, such as the cho-

roes feel after the loss of a loved one. It is love which intensifies the pain and this unbearable pain leads to suicide.¹⁸

Those who commit suicide to avoid a life of disgrace for themselves and their descendants were usually involved in an act that has led to disaster or trouble. Helpless, therefore, to cope with the reality that has been shaped by their actions, overwhelmed by shame, they see suicide as a salvation from a dishonorable life. Past experiences drive them to take their own lives, and as a sort of *catharsis*, their death is the inevitable result of their deeds.¹⁹ In fact, most of the heroes and heroines who commit suicide argue in favor of their act and bid farewell to their loved ones and the earthly world. For example, Ajax is a hero who, after wiping out a flock of sheep instead of the Achaean army (*Aj.* 42–45), cannot bear the *laughter* (γέλωτα)²⁰; after bidding farewell to his loved ones, he ends his life. His act has isolated him from society.²¹ Consequently, his suicide aligns with his belief that a man of noble lineage benefits from living and dying in a noble way (*Aj.* 477–480), and the play never portrays the suicide as cowardly or deserving of punishment, as Ajax is ultimately given a proper burial.²²

Furthermore, when Deianeira realizes that she has harmed her husband instead of winning him back, blinded by her love for him, she ad-

rus, in the form of a gnomic (*O.R.* 1368: κρείσσων γὰρ ἦσθα μηκέτ' ὦν ἢ ζῶν τυφλός), or by the suicides themselves (*Hip.* 687–688: τοιγὰρ οὐκέτ' εὐκλεεῖς / θανούμεθ'; *Trach.* 721: ζῆν γὰρ κακῶς κλύουσιν οὐκ ἀνασχετόν; *Aj.* 479–480: ἀλλ' ἢ καλῶς ζῆν ἢ καλῶς τεθνηκέναι/ τὸν εὐγενῆ χρή); cf. Eur. *Sup.* 1006–1007: ἥδιοςτος γὰρ τοι θάνατος/ συνθνήσκειν θνήσκουσι φίλοις, 1015–1017: εὐκλεῖας χάριν ἔνθεν ὄρ-/ μάσω τᾶσδ' ἀπὸ πέτρας πη-/ δῆσασα πυρὸς ἔσω.

¹⁸ Κατσούρης (1975: 211).

¹⁹ ASOMATOU et al. (2016: 74) relates suicide to past events and self-sacrifice to the avoidance of future catastrophe.

²⁰ *Aj.* 367, 369–382, 416–417, 426–427, 440, 466, 690–692.

²¹ GARRISON (1995: 47), SICHERL (1977: 67–98).

²² GARRISON (1995: 53). Cf. Plato's position about acceptable suicide and burial of suicide victims (Pl. *Laws* 9.873c-d).

mits that she has no choice but to die (*Trach.* 719–721) and silently leaves the scene (*Trach.* 813).²³ According to Hoof, it is her guilt over her act rather than the shame that it entails that drives her to commit suicide, since she takes her own life after her son accuses her of the harm that she has caused.²⁴

Phaedra, who has previously announced her suicide (*Hip.* 723), also leaves the scene in silence; she has no choice since her husband's son, whom she loves, has rejected her (*Hip.* 599–600). Her reputation can only be salvaged through her suicide. Even her suicide note is due to her dread of disgrace rather than a sense of revenge against Hippolytus. Phaedra's attention has shifted from her personal desires to societal concerns.²⁵

Even in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Jocasta silently exits upon learning of her incestuous affair with her son (*O.T.* 1073–1075). She kills herself with haste and determination. It is the shame, the disgrace that such a relationship entails that drives her to suicide. From a societal perspective, Jocasta's suicide makes sense in light of her personal tragedy and is not implied to be a substitute for that of Oedipus'.²⁶

Antigone commits suicide since, after the punishment imposed on her by Creon, she sees her confinement in the underground chamber as the end of her life. An end that she herself will put as a final manifestation of her unconventional character. Excluded from the city because of her decision to bury her brother and devoted to her familial bounds, death is the only way to return to her family.²⁷ Suicide ends her pain from what she suffered after the death of her brothers, and at the same time enhances her glory.²⁸

²³ S. GARRISON (1995: 63) who connects Deianeira's "secretive nature" to her suicide.

²⁴ HOOF (1990: 115–116); cf. GARRISON (1995: 55, 65) who discusses Deianeira's "disintegrated role" as Heracles' wife and her suicide as an act to be restored in society.

²⁵ GARRISON (1995: 70).

²⁶ GARRISON (1995: 112–113).

²⁷ GARRISON (1995: 132–133).

²⁸ For the importance of Antigone's glory through her suicide, s. LORAUX (1987: 47–48).

In the same play, two more characters take their own lives. Haemon, at the sight of his dead beloved, turns against his father and, failing to kill him, ends his own life (*Ant.* 1231–1240).²⁹ Then his mother, Eurydice, hearing about her son's suicide, silently leaves the scene (*Ant.* 1244–1245) to end her life. These two suicides are impulsive, and stem from the hero's and heroine's powerlessness to cope with the loss of their loved ones. This is the main reason why Jocasta ends her life in Euripides' *Phoenissae*. Unlike Jocasta in Sophocles, what she cannot bear as a mother is the loss of her sons who killed each other; as a result, she stabs herself over their corpses (*Phoen.* 1455–1459). Both mothers commit suicide to reconcile with their children.³⁰

In Euripides' *Suppliants*, Evadne's suicide, which takes the dimension of a self-sacrifice and a glorious death,³¹ is linked to the unbearable pain of losing a beloved husband.³² This heroine, unwilling to live without her husband (*Sup.* 1002–1005, 1040),³³ falls into his funeral pyre despite her father's pleas (*Sup.* 1034–1071). A life without her husband is tantamount to death, a sweet (*Sup.* 1006–1008) and glorious (*Sup.* 1015–

²⁹ It is also anger that drives Haemon to suicide. Anger against his father, whom he fails to murder. GARRISON (1995: 115) observes that a suicide only because of anger is considered cowardly by Aristoteles, but the messenger's speech (*Ant.* 1242–1243) "articulates the effect Haemon's suicide has" introducing the "intellectual process" as "worse *kakon* than anger."

³⁰ Cf. GARRISON (1995: 115) who discusses Eurydice's and Antigone's suicide as an act to reintegrate with their families' members.

³¹ The scene of her husband's funeral pyre and her fall into it suggests a sacrificial ritual. Also, her decision to die together with her husband as a sign of a good and loyal wife relates to the concept of her good reputation which in turn is associated with cases of self-sacrifice. However, because death is her own decision and not a decision made by an oracle or another hero in the play which she willingly accepts and defends, it is difficult to categorize it as a self-sacrifice.

³² McLURE (2017: 155) notes that she is dressed as a bride (*Sup.* 1048) before her death leap.

³³ After all, Evadne's last word before she dies is "husband", as STOREY (2008: 76) notes.

1021) death,³⁴ like that of her warrior husband.³⁵ The most interesting element about Evadne is that the chorus does not seem to understand the necessity of her death and consequently her suicide is not commendable for her “social group”.³⁶ However, the lamentation of her father after her death (*Sup.*1094-1103) comes to justify her suicide among the internal and external audience.³⁷

II. Self-sacrifice

All cases of self-sacrifice belong to the same category of motives: that of heroes and heroines defending their choice to sacrifice themselves either for the sake of the prosperity of their country or family, i.e. for the common good, or to avoid a dishonorable life, i.e. for the individual maintenance of their nobility.

Thus, Menoeceus in *Phoenissae* and Macaria in *Heracleidae* justify their decision to sacrifice themselves for the salvation of their country.³⁸ Both have to fulfil the oracle to save their country and family. Menoeceus’ motives are “pure and noble”³⁹ and stem from his love for his country (*Phoen.* 1013–1014). Even his dignity through his sacrifice is due to his patriotism.⁴⁰

Macaria defends her sacrifice motivated both by personal and societal concerns.⁴¹ Life is meaningless when there are dead relatives (*Her.*

³⁴ S. GARRISON (1995: 125) about Evadne’s false belief about reality and glory that moves her actions.

³⁵ DEE (2015: 266).

³⁶ GARRISON (1995: 123); cf. DEE (2015: 267) about Evadne’s heroic status among ancient Greek society and the audience.

³⁷ DEE (2015: 273–277).

³⁸ According to LORAUX (1987: 46), self-sacrifice takes the dimension of suicide because of the hero’s or heroine’s willingness and persistence to be sacrificed.

³⁹ GARRISON (1995: 139) characterizes Menoeceus’ sacrifice as “institutional suicide”, too. Cf. LORAUX (1987: 31–42) who argues that suicide cannot be an altruistic and heroic act and classifies Menoeceus under “virgin sacrifice.”

⁴⁰ GARRISON (1995: 144).

⁴¹ S. GARRISON (1995: 131, 145, 147).

520-1), especially if she is to fall into the enemy's hands (*Her.* 512–514). Consequently, she claims that her death (i.e. her sacrifice) is fortunate for her and gives her glory (*Her.* 525–526: οὐκουν θανεῖν ἄμεινον ἢ τούτων τυχεῖν/ἀναξίαν; 534: κάλλιστον ἡΐρηκ', εὐκλεῶς λιπεῖν βίον.).

Polyxena, in *Hecuba*, willingly accepts the decision for her sacrifice and refuses not to be sacrificed, since what awaits her is a life of servitude. The happiness of death in the face of a disgraced life is expressed by Polyxena in *Hecuba* (v. 213–215, 377–378: θανῶν δ' ἂν εἴη μᾶλλον εὐτυχέστερος/ ἢ ζῶν· τὸ γὰρ ζῆν μὴ καλῶς μέγας πόνος). Her motives are basically personal; there is no mention to a greater good for the community.⁴²

In all cases, voluntary sacrifice is associated with a glorious death and aims at posthumous good reputation, which in turn is linked to the concept of heroism. The phrases in v. 554–555 (τόλμηι τε τόλμαν) and v. 569 (τῆς τε σῆς εὐψυχίας) in *Heracleidae* about the courage of the sacrificed exemplify this association. On the contrary, refusal to sacrifice oneself is either an act of cowardice and implies a life of dishonor for oneself and their descendants, as mentioned above. The words of Menoeceus in *Phoenissae* (v. 993–994, 998–1005)⁴³ and those of Polyxena in *Hecuba* (v. 347–348: εἰ δὲ μὴ βουλήσομαι, / κακῇ φανοῦμαι καὶ φιλόψυχος γυνή) reveal that the denial of self-sacrifice is a sign of cowardice.

As far as motives are concerned, one may conclude that suicide is presented as a heroic act or at least a justified one, both at the individual and the societal level, for those who want to avoid a life of notoriety and social outcry.⁴⁴ Yet, such behavior could be considered cowardice and re-

⁴² GARRISON (1995: 159) classifies Polyxena's death to "noble suicides" because of her "fatalistic" motives and the absence of an oracle.

⁴³ These verses show that even Menoeceus' decision is not just driven by altruism; rather, it is based on upholding his personal honor.

⁴⁴ Cf. Evadne's speech (*Eur. Sup.* 1067) about her death. She wants all the Argives to know that she will fall into the fire with her husband, because she believes that in this way, she will be a proper wife in their eyes.

lated to the heroes' and heroines' failure to break the social rules according to which one should live in a society where they would be integrated. Thus, heroes and heroines commit suicide, unable to live in a society where they are disintegrated and even their descendants would suffer from it.⁴⁵ This applies to Ajax, Phaedra, Deianeira, Sophocles' Jocasta, but also to heroes and heroines who willingly accept to be sacrificed, since the refusal of sacrifice is tantamount to dishonor. At this point, it should be noted that among ancient Greeks "suicide out of shame or guilt or fear for dishonor is commendable."⁴⁶ On the other hand, there is not a distinct sign of heroism in those who commit suicide because they cannot bear the death of their loved ones. However, it can be argued that a hero's or heroine's refusal to live after the loss of a loved one, choosing instead to end their own life, is more heroic. It can be seen as a heroic self-sacrifice, as a sacrifice on the altar of love for the deceased. After all, Evadne falls onto the funeral pyre⁴⁷ and Eurydice commits suicide on the altar. Furthermore, all of them (Haemon, Eurydice, Jocasta in *Phoenissae*) kill themselves with knife or sword, weapons associated with heroic warriors. In addition, the loss of their loved ones made their social position unsustainable⁴⁸ and thus their suicide might be a way to acknowledge and validate their desire for the lost individual.

⁴⁵ Cf. GARRISON (1995: 32), who argues that the commitment of suicide does not question but rather confirms the social rules.

⁴⁶ GARRISON (1995: 3); s. also Aristotle's position in *Nichomachean Ethics* 5, 11.

⁴⁷ Evadne's loyalty and marital fidelity, which drive her to suicide, are valid aspects of heroism.

⁴⁸ According to GARRISON (1995: 103), they commit suicide because they cannot "reintegrate themselves into their cultures."

B. COMMON WAYS OF DYING

In terms of the way heroes and heroines choose to end their lives, things are concrete with respect to motivation. In cases of self-sacrifice, a ritual of sacrifice is followed. Sometimes it is described in detail and sometimes it is implied. Thus, Menoeceus cuts his throat with a sword at the top of the turret (*Phoen.* 1091–1092). The fact that Menoeceus is both the sacrificer and the victim in combination with his insistence to die for his country modulates his sacrifice into suicide, according to some researchers.⁴⁹ Polyxena stands bravely at Achilles' tomb, thrusts out her chest and lets her throat be cut with a golden sword (*Hec.* 563–567, 543). Although the sacrifice of Macaria is not recounted by a messenger, it can be inferred from other references in the text that it was carried out in a similar manner (*Her.* 583, 601, 821–822).⁵⁰

In cases of suicide, women who end their lives because they cannot bear the shame and social outcry retire silently and commit suicide by hanging. In *Oedipus*, Jocasta hangs herself by a rope on the bridal bed (*O.T.* 1241–1243, 1263–1264), while Phaedra enters the palace and is found with the rope around her neck (*Hip.* 777).

The exception is Deianeira, who is wounded in the ribs with a sword on the bridal bed (*Trach.* 913, 924–926, 930–931). The chorus represents the sword as *hybris* (*Trach.* 888) while referring to Deianeira's weapon, implying that it is unconventional and therefore against social norms for a woman to use a weapon against herself.⁵¹ Of course, in this particular case her motives include the pain of Heracles' death, which she has caused.

As mentioned above, those who commit suicide because of the

⁴⁹ GARRISON (1995: 143–144).

⁵⁰ GARRISON (1995: 147, n. 45) refers to an Apulian volute-crater that depicts a maiden being carried from an altar with a wound and blood on her neck. Cf. GARRISON (1995: 147, n. 45) who argues that Macaria may have killed herself because she “dies among women (*Her.* 566) who do not usually perform blood sacrifices”.

⁵¹ GARRISON (1995: 63).

pain of losing a loved one stab themselves next to their beloved. So does Haemon (*Ant.* 1236, 1240) and Jocasta in Euripides (*Phoen.* 1458–1459). Eurydice stabs herself on an altar (*Ant.* 1301). The altar may not have sacrificial dimensions, but it is preferred to intensify Eurydice's curse on Creon.⁵² It depends on the needs of the plot.

Evadne chooses an unusual way to take her life as she combines the act of leaping from a height and self-immolation (*Eur. Sup.* 1070). While jumping from a height was a desperate act, especially for women,⁵³ self-immolation was an extremely rare way of suicide and it was considered barbaric.⁵⁴ However, Evadne predominately jumps into the funeral pyre to join her deceased husband.

A special case is Antigone, who, although she acts against her feminine nature throughout the play, hangs herself by her apron in her cell (*Ant.* 1221–1223), as the conventions of her gender dictate.⁵⁵ If one even considers that hanging, as a way of death, is linked to newly married women (*nymphē*), then she becomes a woman through her suicide.⁵⁶ In any case, the motif of *Bride of Hades* pervades the play, gradually connecting marriage to death and to suicide.⁵⁷ Besides, it would be absurd for Antigone to carry a sword with her in the cell.

Ajax may be an exception to the whole extant Attic tragedy. As a rule, in tragedy, men do not commit suicide,⁵⁸ and the way Sophocles chooses to present the suicide of a man emphasizes this "deviation".⁵⁹ He probably falls in front of the audience on the sword he has placed on

⁵² GARRISON (1995: 120) also adds that the vocabulary does not refer to sacrificial ritual.

⁵³ HOOF (1990: 73).

⁵⁴ DEE (2015: 270–272).

⁵⁵ LORAUX (1987: 31) characterizes Antigone's death as a "mixture of a female suicide and something like sacrifice outside the norm".

⁵⁶ LORAUX (1987: 15, 32).

⁵⁷ GARRISON (1995: 136–138).

⁵⁸ Haemon commits suicide after the loss of his loved one (Antigone) and Menoeceus sacrifices himself for his country.

⁵⁹ LORAUX (1987: 20).

the ground. It happens in the countryside, perhaps beyond his hut. Ajax himself talks to his sword and describes his future death (*Aj.* 815–841) and the chorus calls out to pay attention to the sound of Ajax falling on the sword (*Aj.* 870–871: ἰδὸν ἰδοῦ, / δοῦπον αὖ κλύω τινά). Scholars have expressed many different opinions about the way this particular suicide was played out.⁶⁰ This is because, apart from other practical issues such as a presentation on stage entails, there is also the issue of replacing the actor playing Ajax with a dummy after his death.⁶¹ The dead Ajax remains on stage as the second part of the tragedy unfolds, which focuses on the process of his burial.⁶²

It is also worth mentioning that, when committing suicide with a sword, a vocabulary associated with sacrifice, such as the word σφαγή (=slaughter) and its derivatives, is often used,⁶³ reinforcing the heroic nature of the act. This linguistic choice is particularly evident in the case of Ajax,⁶⁴ as well as in the cases of Deianeira,⁶⁵ Eurydice⁶⁶ and Jocasta in *Phoenissae*.⁶⁷

Consequently, based only on the way the suicides choose to die, and taking into account that death by sword is considered heroic, as opposed to hanging, one can characterize the act of each hero or heroine

⁶⁰ Opinions are divided regarding the need for a change of scene and especially on the possibility of a visible suicide on stage. LIAPIS (2013: 140–153) argues that both the sword was visible and the suicide was performed in front of the audience through an elevated stage, ensuring that the chorus could not witness Ajax's suicide. In contrast, FINGLASS (2013: 193–210), arguing based on earlier pottery and discussing the views of other scholars, concludes that the sword need not be visible and suicide is not enacted in front of the spectators. BATTEZZATO (2013: 238–243) and MOST (2013: 291–292) discuss partial visibility, while ZANNETTO (2013: 276–277) accepts that the sword is visible, but suicide is not.

⁶¹ *Aj.* 915: The dead body has to be covered.

⁶² About dead Ajax on stage s. SOMMERSTEIN (2013: 245–246), BATTEZZATO (2013: 227–234).

⁶³ LORAUX (1987: 13–14).

⁶⁴ *Aj.* 815: σφαγὲνς, 841: αὐτοσφαγῇ πίπτοντα· τῶς αὐτοσφαγεῖς.

⁶⁵ *Trach.* 1130: τέθνηκεν ἀρτίως νεοσφαγής.

⁶⁶ *Ant.* 1291: σφάγιον ἐπ' ὀλέθρῳ.

⁶⁷ Cf. *Phoen.* 1431: ἰδοῦσα καιρίους σφαγὰς.

as heroic or cowardly.

C. DEAD BODIES ON STAGE

In Attic tragedy, scenes of violence and death are not played out on stage. They are usually either conveyed by a messenger or heard through the heroes' cries. But the result of such a scene, usually dead heroes or dying heroes, was often presented before the spectators with the help of a wheeled platform, called "eccyclema".

Not all suicides are shown on stage after their deaths. Antigone's corpse never appears, unlike those of Haemon's and Eurydice's. Creon holds his dead son and at the same time faces his dead wife (*Ant.* 1298–1299). But it is only in this way that Creon's tragic figure is emphasized at the end of the play. The dead Jocasta in *Oedipus* and the dead Deianira in the *Trachiniae* also remain in obscurity. But in *Phoenissae*, Jocasta appears on stage with the corpses of her dead sons (*Phoen.* 1502–1503).

As for Phaedra's corpse, it appears on stage and, in conjunction with her letter, intensifies Theseus' anger towards his son Hippolytus. After all, Phaedra causes more harm with her death than when she was alive.

Menoceus, of course, who is sacrificed for his country in the same play, remains in obscurity. The same is true of the other two sacrificial victims, Polyxena and Macaria. However, in the case of Menoeceus and Polyxena, their relatives mourn them.⁶⁸ Evadne alone seems to disappear from the scene in a way that resembles her falling into the funeral pyre⁶⁹ and then follows her father's lament.

The dead Ajax, as mentioned above, remains on the stage. Ajax falls on his sword and his corpse needs to be covered. Despite the horrific

⁶⁸ In *Phoenissae*, both Jocasta (v. 1205–1207) and Creon (v. 1310–1321) mourn the dead Menoeceus. Also, Hecuba mourns Polyxena (*Hec.* 585–603).

⁶⁹ MORWOOD (2007: 219) notes "Evadne will, thus, be able to perform her Tosca-like leap off the back of the roof onto a pile of soft materials, becoming invisible to the audience at once"; cf. STOREY (2008: 117) that the pyre "not have to have been visible to the spectators".

spectacle, this also happens for the actor to be replaced by a dummy.⁷⁰ Then it is unveiled (*Aj.* 1003) and its presence on stage is undeniable. Both Tecmessa's lament⁷¹ and the discussion of his burial revolve around his corpse. The corpse could not have been moved, most likely until v. 1409, and the sword was still attached to his body.⁷² Sommerstein highlights a few novelties involving Ajax's corpse, including its use as the focal point of a suppliant tableau, its ability to bleed like a living body (*Aj.* 918–919), and its unwavering hostility against former foes, even after they have demonstrated that they are now true friends.⁷³ Certainly, the corpse of Ajax on stage is a unique case, since the entire second part of the play is performed around it.

The presence of dead bodies on the stage does not seem to follow a rule. It's only in the case of self-sacrifice that they do not appear, but some of them are mourned by their relatives. In other cases, the corpses appear and remain on stage, depending on the needs dictated by the plot of each play.

D. CONCLUSION

To sum up, most of the self-slayers in Greek tragedy look upon suicide rather as a choice of glorious death in the face of a life in dishonor and social outcry.⁷⁴ Glorious death is also a key motivation of those who sacrifice themselves for the homeland. Beyond the final social decrual, tragic heroes and heroines experience a series of events which lead them to an impasse. Because of these *peripeteies*, they experience intense feelings of mourning and sadness, especially after the loss of a relative (*Antigone*,

⁷⁰ LIAPIS (2013: 147–149).

⁷¹ FINGLASS (2013: 207) cites various scholars' views on the purpose of covering the dead body and links unveiling to a standard pattern in tragedy before mourning the dead.

⁷² BATTEZZATO (2013: 229–232).

⁷³ SOMMERSTEIN (2013: 252).

⁷⁴ s. ΚΑΤΣΟΥΡΗΣ (1975: 206, 208–209), who refers to “δύσκληια” and the “γέλως” as reasons for suicide.

Evadne, Jocasta in *Phoenissae*). Moreover, αἰδώς, in the sense of shame, that women often feel either after the revelation of an incestuous relationship (Jocasta), the murder of a husband (Deianeira) or because of an unfulfilled love (Phaedra) drives them to suicide.⁷⁵ In addition, αἰδώς, in the sense of honor, is also associated with social outcry (Ajax). It should be noted that madness or mental disorder, although considered a basic cause of suicide according to psychiatry,⁷⁶ in Greek Drama is the result of great sadness, pain and despair and is not a basic motivation.⁷⁷ As Ruffel notes, “we should see in Greek tragedy an interplay between emotional engagement and social, ideological and/or ethical reflection”.⁷⁸

Moreover, the way in which heroes and heroines commit suicide, as well as the part of the body that is hurt, varies and characterizes the quality of the act. Women hurt their throat either when they are sacrificed or when they are hanged.⁷⁹ Even when they kill themselves with a sword, they often hurt their throats.⁸⁰ And it is the neck and the throat which are mainly mentioned as a sign of feminine beauty and sensitivity.⁸¹ However, Eurydice wounds her liver (*Ant.* 1315: παῖσας ὕφ’ ἥπαρ) and Deianeira sticks the sword into her left side (*Trach.* 926: πλευρὰν ἄπασαν).⁸² They seem to commit suicide like most of the male characters. Men always stick the sword on the right side of their body (Hæmon and Ajax),⁸³ as a warrior would have done. The exception is Men-

⁷⁵ LAIOS et al. (2014: 202).

⁷⁶ LAIOS et al. (2014: 200).

⁷⁷ HOOF (1990: 99, 145) also mentions the case of God-given madness.

⁷⁸ RUFFEL (2008: 45); cf. GARRISON (1995:178) who argues that one’s status in society has a direct impact on suicide rates.

⁷⁹ *Her.* 821–822: ἔσφαζον...λαϊμῶν; *Hec.* 549: παρέξω γὰρ δέρην; *Ant.* 221: κρεμαστήν ἀνχένο; *Hip.* 781: λύσομεν δέρης.

⁸⁰ *Phoen.* 1457.

⁸¹ LORAUX (1987: 50–52).

⁸² s. LORAUX (1987: 54–55) who mentions that Deianeira deviates from the norm that heroes follow, as she wounds her left side.

⁸³ *Ant.* 1236: ἤρεισε πλευραῖς μέσσον ἔγχο; *Aj.* 834: πλευρὰν διαρρήξαντα τῷδε φασγάνῳ.

oeceus, who, precisely because he is being sacrificed, sticks the sword in his neck (*Phoen.* 1092: *λαίμῳν διήκε*). In addition, a death by sword or blade and immolation as a kind of sacrifice (Heracles) is admirable, while hanging is chosen always by a desperate heroine and is often characterized as dishonor or *miasma*.⁸⁴

In principle, suicides do not take place “on stage”, in front of the eyes of the audience (perhaps *Ajax* is an exception). For that reason, the focus is on the way they are conveyed to the viewer: either by a messenger’s speech⁸⁵ (Jocasta in *Oedipus Tyrannus* and in *Phoenissae*, Phaedra, Antigone, Haemon, Eurydice, Deianeira, Macaria, Polyxena, Menoeceus), by the cries of the chorus (*Ajax*) or by the suicide himself/herself (*Ajax*, *Evadne*).⁸⁶ The range of words and phrases used to denote the act of suicide—words that often refer to sacrificial ritual—⁸⁷and the way in which some future suicides leave the scene before the act, lead to a different perception of the act for the viewer.⁸⁸

In conclusion, self-sacrifice can be considered a heroic act in terms of the values that governed ancient Greek society. This is confirmed by the motives and the way it is done, but it is also confirmed by the fact that scenes of self-sacrifice in Attic tragedy appear in ancient art (s. the sacrifice of Polyxena).⁸⁹ In Attic tragedy the majority of suicides is committed

⁸⁴ LORAU (1987: 70, n. 8).

⁸⁵ Such a speech can be uttered either by a messenger or by a secondary hero of the play such as the nurse. Cf. Κατσούρης (1975: 220) who correlates the messenger’s speech with the announcement of her suicide to the previous silent departure of the heroines (Jocasta in *O.R.*, Deianeira, Eurydice, Phaedra).

⁸⁶ Evadne announces her fall into the fire (*Sup.* 1070). Similarly, Ajax describes his fall onto his sword (*Aj.* 841) and then the chorus confirms it with the phrase in v. 870–871.

⁸⁷ LORAU (1987: 14).

⁸⁸ s. Κατσούρης (1975: 210–211) for the silent departure from the stage as a sign of suicide. This connection underscores how the anticipation and foreshadowing of the impending suicide are built up through the actions and emotions of the characters before the actual event is narrated by the messenger.

⁸⁹ TOUCHEPHEU-MEYNIER (1994: 433–434). Apart from self-sacrifice, according to KRAUSKOPF (1990: 685–686), Jocasta’s suicide with a sword is depicted, too. It reinforces

by women; it could be argued that the women are the most “powerless” when dealing with dead-end situations, at least in ancient Greek society, and, therefore, they choose a “timid” suicide.⁹⁰ However, suicide is a heroic act for the person who commits it, because it takes courage to decide and carry out such an act; always provided that it is done consciously and not on the impulse and desperation of the moment.⁹¹ Consequently, suicide can be characterized as heroic or cowardly depending on the way one chooses to view it. Even if some women’s suicides seem to belong to the realm of cowardice, either because they stem from their inability to face reality or because they choose to hang themselves (Phaedra, Jocasta in *O.T.*), this is not the norm. There are heroines whose motives seem heroic but whose way of committing suicide is cowardly, such as Antigone. There are also heroines who escape an embarrassing life through suicide, but they do so using a heroic weapon, such as Deianeira. Ajax, is also helpless to face the reality that has arisen, but the way he commits suicide and the motives he puts forward place him in the realm of heroism. In the same realm we should include Haemon, Evadne, Eurydice and the Euripidean Jocasta, who die after the loss of their loved ones in a heroic way. In any case, it is never implied in the plays that the suicides act cowardly. It is due to the fact that Greek tragedy gives Athenians a glimpse into the suffering of those who choose suicide, by focusing not on the act of self-destruction itself but rather on the inner world, thoughts, and mental state of such individuals.

the heroic element of her act.

⁹⁰ s. Hoof (1990: 21) according to whom, the woman who commits suicide confirms the values that pervade her life, while the life of the man is “less problematic”. That explains why there aren’t as many male suicides in the myth. Cf. Κατσούρης (1975: 205–234) who considers suicide to be a solution for desperate heroines but not a heroic act.

⁹¹ Cf. COOPER (1999: 532–537) about Stoics’ and Epicourians’ attitude to suicide. They recognize the supreme value of the human person, whose freedom is based on the ability to decide his or her own life and death. According to this view, life is worth only if it is in harmony with human dignity, if it brings more pleasures and less suffering.

APPENDIX

Tragedy	Suicide	Motivation	Way of suicide	Place of suicide	Dead body on stage
<i>Ajax</i>	Ajax	Αἰδώς in the sense of honor	Sword	Countryside	Yes
<i>Antigone</i>	Antigone	a) Αἰδώς in the sense of honor b) End to her sufferings	Hanging	Cave	No
	Haemon	Unbearable pain from the loss of his beloved	Sword	Cave	Yes
	Eurydice	Unbearable pain from the loss of her son	Sword	Altar	Yes
<i>Oedipus Rex</i>	Jocasta	Αἰδώς in the sense of shame	Hanging	Bridal bed	No
<i>Trachiniae</i>	Deianeira	Αἰδώς in the sense of shame	Sword	Heracles' bedroom	No
<i>Hippolytus</i>	Phaedra	Αἰδώς in the sense of shame	Hanging	Palace	Yes
<i>Suppliants Eur.</i>	Evadne	a) Αἰδώς in the sense of honor b) Unbearable pain from the loss of her husband	Fall into the fire	Her husband's funeral pyre	No
<i>Phoenissae</i>	Jocasta (suicide)	Unbearable pain from the loss of her sons	Sword	Over her dead sons	Yes
	Menoceus (self-sacrifice)	Αἰδώς in the sense of honor	Slaughter-sacrifice	At the top of the turret	No
<i>Hecuba</i>	Polyxena (self-sacrifice)	Αἰδώς in the sense of honor	Slaughter-sacrifice	Achilleus' tomb	Yes
<i>Heracleidae</i>	Macaria (self-sacrifice)	Αἰδώς in the sense of honor	Slaughter-sacrifice	Altar? (Not mentioned)	No

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Treasures for the God

Viewing Votive Offerings in the Temples of Asklepios¹

This paper aims to draw attention to the significant contribution of the display of dedications of past worshippers in a sanctuary to the creation of a space where direct contact with the divine was possible. Focusing primarily, but not exclusively, on the cult of Asklepios, it draws together strands of thought from new materialism and the study of visuality in religion to outline an understanding of viewing votives as an active, reciprocal activity. In doing so, it highlights three major functions of the votive display in Asklepieia: the votives anchor the power of Asklepios; create a sense of the (diachronic) presence of worshippers; and prompt reflection on the nature of the interaction between human and god. Together, these examples demonstrate that the votive display, approached with ritual-centred visuality and recognised as an active agent, was a key factor in making Asklepios accessible to his supplicants.

Keywords: Asklepios; votives; sanctuaries; new materialism; visuality.

The Doric columns, wrought from fairest stone,
Severe but graceful, round the *cella* thrown,
The lofty front, the frieze where sculptures shine,
The long, long architrave's majestic line,
Dazzle the eye with Beauty's rich excess,
O'erpower the mind by too much loveliness.
– Nicholas Mitchell, *Ruins of Many Lands*²

Despite its loftiness, this fragment of *Ruins of Many Lands* – in which Mitchell guides us across the ancient world like a Victorian Pausanias –

¹ This paper has its roots in my M. Phil dissertation and I thank Dr. Christine Morris for her valued guidance in writing it. My thanks also go to Prof. Katharina Waldner for her comments on a later draft of this paper.

² From the second edition: London, 1850, p. 160.

probably comes rather close to how most people imagine Greek temples: shining marble, soaring columns, serene majesty.³ How different is the impression left by this 3rd century BC decree from the Asklepieion of Rhodes:

No one is permitted to request that an image be raised or some other votive offering set up in the lower part of the sanctuary [...] or in any other spot where votive offerings prevent people walking past.⁴

This was a sanctuary so full of objects and offerings that they were beginning to form a hazard. It was not serene or stately, but crowded, chaotic, *alive*. Although the votive display was a central part of this, it has not yet received its due attention.⁵ Using the cult of Asklepios as a case study and drawing together theoretical threads based on the agency of material objects and on the importance of visibility in Greco-Roman religion, this paper aims to sketch an understanding of viewing votives as a reciprocal activity – in which the viewer did not only look at the votive, but the votive also *acted on* the viewer – which helped establish the sanctuary as a place where direct contact with the divine was possible.

Materialising Religion

The first of the two theoretical concepts that have shaped the approach to votives in this article is that of *new materialism*. New materialism is an umbrella term under which scholars have developed a wide variety of new approaches to material culture, all of which aim to put objects more firmly in relation to the rest of the world.⁶ The line of argument taken up

³ See also VAN STRATEN (1981: 78).

⁴ Quoted in VAN STRATEN (1981: 78).

⁵ As emphasised by PETSALIS-DIOMDIS (2016: 53), this display was in a constant state of becoming.

⁶ GRAHAM (2020a: 32); DOBRES-ROBB (2005: 161–163). Helpful discussions of agency and materiality can be found in JONES-BOIVIN (2010); GRAHAM (2020a: 18–40), and OLSEN

in this article focuses particularly on the *agency* of objects, their ability to make a difference to the world and to actively co-create rather than simply inhabit it.⁷ This agency is not inherent in objects (or in humans), but emerges when they are *brought into relation* with other things – with no hierarchical distinction between human and non-human things.⁸ In the terms of this article, this means that in the encounter between viewer and votive offering, the votive acquires agency and emerges as a significant factor in shaping the viewer's experience of the sanctuary. Emma-Jayne Graham has demonstrated the value of such an approach in studying the material culture of Graeco-Roman religion.⁹

This emphasis on the relational character of material agency leads directly to another important concept, that of the material assemblage. Contrary to the standard archaeological assemblage, a material assemblage contains not only objects, but also people, ideas, actions, and more in a constellation that is always in motion.¹⁰ Through these interconnections, an agentive power emerges that is greater than the sum of its parts.¹¹ Treating the sanctuary as such an assemblage, whose components include but are not limited to votives, buildings, prayers, beliefs, and divinities, is very helpful in clarifying how votives operated within this whole.¹²

(2010: 1–17), and of their place in material culture studies in general in HICKS (2010), especially 74–79.

⁷ The concept of materiality employed in this paper is grounded primarily in JONES–BOIVIN (2010: 335–337); DOBRES–ROBB (2005: 161–163).

⁸ This emphasis on relationality is especially taken from GRAHAM 2020a, 29–30 and KNAPPETT 2004, 46, see also HAMILAKIS–JONES (2017: 79); JONES–BOIVIN (2010: 340; 351); BOIVIN (2008: 166–168). Compare TANNER (2006: 84–85) who describes the process by which aniconic cult images are recognised as deities as 'co-action'.

⁹ GRAHAM (2020a); (2020b); (2017).

¹⁰ These material assemblages are extensively discussed in the CArchJ 17.1, and this paper draws especially on HAMILAKIS (2017: 171–177), see also FOWLER (2017: 96); HAMILAKIS–JONES (2017); HARRIS (2014: 90).

¹¹ HAMILAKIS' focus on affectivity (2017, 173) is of particular note here. See also HARRIS (2014: 90–91); GRAHAM (2020a: 33–34).

¹² Compare GRAHAM's treatment of the fountain of Anna Perenna (2020a).

Viewing Religion

The second theoretical thread concerns the visual dimension of ancient religion, which has recently come to the fore in the work of, for example, Jaś Elsner, Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis, and Verity Platt.¹³ They draw an important distinction between vision and visuality: whereas vision is a straightforward, sensory experience, visuality describes the way in which this sensory experience is mediated by any number of cultural constructs and individual experiences.¹⁴ Elsner has defined a particular type of visuality that he terms ritual-centred visuality, which ‘constructs a ritual barrier to the identifications and objectifications of the screen of discourse and posits a sacred possibility for vision, which is by definition more significant since it opens the viewer to confronting his or her god’.¹⁵ It is a kind of viewing that allows the viewer to see *more* than what is in front of them, and thus come into contact with the divine.



Figure 1. Attic votive relief (350–300 BC) with Hygieia leaning against a votive. © 2006 Musée du Louvre/ Daniel Lebée/Carine Deambrosis, <https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010279053>.

¹³ Including: PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2017); (2006); (2005); PLATT (2011); ELSNER (2007); RUTHERFORD (2000).

¹⁴ PETRIDOU (2013: 311–312), ELSNER (2007: 24–25).

¹⁵ ELSNER (2007: 25).

Although this concept has added much to our understanding of the mechanisms of Greco-Roman religion, it has so far focused primarily on direct encounters with deities – in the form of images or costumed cult personnel – with little attention for the other sights of the sanctuary.¹⁶ This paper sets out to explore how a similar mode of viewing might be employed in the encounter with one of those sights, the votive display.

The Sights of the Asklepieion

The importance of the votive display is not only attested to by the hundreds of votives that have been found in excavations, but also by pictorial, epigraphic, and literary sources. This includes votive reliefs with images of earlier dedications in the background, usually other votive reliefs placed on a pillar (*figs. 1, 4*).¹⁷ Such a votive serves as a marker of the sanctuary setting, but also ‘declares its own contribution to the numinous qualities of the sanctuary it adorns and its influence upon subsequent pilgrim-worshippers’.¹⁸ There was an explicit awareness of the agency of these objects in shaping the assemblage – the sanctuary – that they were a part of. Similar depictions of votive offerings, usually pinakes but sometimes also anatomical votives, can be found on vase paintings (*fig. 2*).¹⁹ It is, in many ways, the presence of these votives and their relational ties to the people and the space that created the sanctuary.²⁰

Viewing these votives was part of an established, self-conscious tradition in the Asklepieion.²¹ Such viewing is included in Herodas’ 3rd

¹⁶ For example: ELSNER (2007: 228–246); PETRIDOU (2013: 327–330); GORDON (1979). Notable exceptions that do focus on the encounter between worshipper and votive are PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2017); (2006) and VAN STRATEN (1992: 254–274).

¹⁷ HUGHES (2017: 46–48); VAN STRATEN (2006: 26); (1992: 255–261).

¹⁸ PLATT (2011: 45). See also VAN STRATEN (2006: 26); (1992: 261–262).

¹⁹ HUGHES (2017: 39–40); VAN STRATEN (1992: 262–265).

²⁰ EIDINOW (2024: 150); GAIFMAN (2008: 99); VAN STRATEN (1992: 268).

²¹ VAN STRATEN (1992: 269).



Figure 2. Athenian oenochoe (c.410 BC) showing pinakes suspended from a tree. © 2008 RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre)/Hervé Lewandowski, <https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010274889>.

century description of the visit of Kyno and Phiale to the Asklepieion of Kos:

What works are here! You would say that Athena carved these lovely things—greetings, Lady. This naked boy, if I scratch him, won't he have a wound, Cynno? [...] And the ox, and the man leading it, and the woman following, and this hook-nosed man and the one with his hair sticking up, don't they all have the look of life and day? If I did not think I was acting too boldly for a woman, I should have cried out, in case the ox might do me some harm.²²

²² Herod. 4, 57–71. Translated by I. C. CUNNINGHAM.

Although Kynno and Phile are awe-struck, the source of their amazement is the statues' life-like beauty, not their connection to Asklepios.²³ Nevertheless, their references to Athena and to the ox come to life do suggest that they experienced a certain sense of the more-than-natural in their encounter with these objects.

A very different attitude is described in the first of the Epidaurian *iamata*. Inscribed on several stelai set up around the Asklepieion, the *iamata* are a collection of stories of divine healings.²⁴ Beyond attesting to the paramount importance of a *vision* of Asklepios as a source of the cure,²⁵ these stories reveal much about the behaviour of visitors to the sanctuary. One of them was Kleo, who sought Asklepios' help after a five-year pregnancy:

After this success, she inscribed upon an offering: 'The wonder is not the size of the pinax, but the act of the god: Kleo bore a burden in her stomach for five years, until she slept here, and he made her well.'²⁶

This entry directly references the votive and quotes the inscription attached to it. It is remarkable for the way it speaks in Kleo's voice, shaping the encounter with the viewer by redirecting their presumed awe towards its proper recipient.²⁷ Kleo was clearly aware of the interactive nature of votive viewing: without a responsive viewer interacting with agentive objects, this inscription makes no sense.

²³ See also PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2006: 214).

²⁴ LiDONNICI (1995: 40–44). That that *iamata* themselves were also an impressive object of ritual viewing, is suggested by Paus. 2, 27, 3.

²⁵ RENBERG (2017: 215); PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2006: 206).

²⁶ LiDONNICI (1995: A1).

²⁷ PRÊTRE (2019: 178).

Not all viewers, however, responded with wonder.²⁸ The *iamata* contain multiple tales of more sceptic viewers, including Ambrosia, blind in one eye:²⁹

Walking about the sanctuary, she ridiculed some of the cures as being unlikely and impossible, the lame and the blind becoming well from only seeing a dream.³⁰

Another concerns an unnamed man, known only as Unbeliever:

When he was looking at the plaques in the sanctuary, he didn't believe in the cures and was somewhat disparaging of the inscriptions.³¹

Both Ambrosia and Unbeliever are punished for their cynicism, but these entries make clear that walking around the sanctuary to examine the votives was a normal part of a visit, and even that visitors could engage with this display on different terms.³²

Together with Herodas' poem, these entries allude to two important facets of the votive-viewing experience: the reciprocity of the action, and the materiality of the votive. Although studies of votives often give a prominent role to dedicatory inscriptions and epigrams,³³ the above demonstrates that a votive does not need such an inscription to 'talk back'. Even Kleo's inscription suggests that she expects the viewer to

²⁸ PRÊTRE (2019: 183–184).

²⁹ The nature of the ailment is not, of course, a coincidence. For the dynamics of (not-) seeing, see PETRIDOU (2013: 316–323).

³⁰ LIDONNICI (1995: A4).

³¹ LIDONNICI (1995: A3).

³² PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2006: 213–214).

³³ For example: PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2018: 421–431); (2005: 212–217); DAY (1994); VAN STRATEN (1982: 69–77).

be struck by the materiality of her dedication more than anything else.³⁴ Through their active evaluation of the sight before them,³⁵ the viewers are brought into a responsive relationship with the votive, and it is in the charged space between them that both the ability of the object to co-create the sanctuary and the possibility for the viewer to take on a ritual-centred visuality emerge. Simultaneously, the stories of Ambrosia and Unbeliever emphasise that these potentials may not be realised when the viewer is not willing to take up the challenge. Even when viewers do take on this visuality, it does not preclude them from seeing what the object actually *is*:³⁶ Kleo's inscription and the conversation between Phile and Kynno vibrate with an awareness of the material dimension of the offerings, which shape their experience by prompting amazement, surprise, and even fear.

A Note on the Viewer

We must now first make a brief comment on the identity of the viewer, as they are not only a viewer of the dedications of others, but also the (potential) dedicant of a dedication of their own. Within their experience of viewing, memories of previous dedications they had made and observed, knowledge about the rituals, and personal concerns about the events that had prompted this visit to the sanctuary, and much more came together, profoundly influencing the experiences of both viewing and dedicating.³⁷ Elsner speaks of the 'viewer-pilgrim',³⁸ but in an attempt to emphasise that material engagement with the dedications, I shall call them the dedicant-viewer.

³⁴ The manner in which a viewer might approach an inscribed offering is discussed in DAY (1994: 39–40).

³⁵ On active viewing, compare GOLDHILL (2006: 5–6); RUTHERFORD (2000: 137–139).

³⁶ GORDON (1978: 7–17) and PLATT (2011: 31–50) discuss this tension.

³⁷ GRAHAM describes these different types of religious knowledge as distal and proximal knowledge (2020a, 22–25).

³⁸ ELSNER (2007: 24).

Asklepios Present

So what did these dedicant-viewers see? First of all, they saw divine power: the sight of the votive display confirmed that Asklepios was actively present in his sanctuary.³⁹ This experience may be characterised in two slightly different, but complementary ways. From a perspective centred on visibility, a dedicant-viewer employing a ritual mode of viewing may look at a statue or figurine, but *see* Asklepios.⁴⁰ This process is the focus of much of the work on visibility in Graeco-Roman religion.⁴¹ If on the other hand, we take on a material perspective, we recognise how votives serve to make the supposed presence of the divine at a particular site into a material, tangible reality, so that it can be confronted and experienced by the worshippers.⁴² These processes work in tandem: it is only because the dedicant-viewer is open to a ritual-centred mode of visibility that an object can be used to substantiate the presence of the divine, and vice versa, it is only because objects are recognised as active co-contributors to the experience of the sanctuary that the dedicant-viewer is able to see something more than the object.

This process functions on both a direct and an indirect level. The direct sense concerns images of Asklepios himself, in the form of statues, figurines, plaques, and more, which immediately evoked a sense of the presence of Asklepios within the sanctuary, and, as Eidinow emphasises, prompted the recounting of narratives that established both the presence of Asklepios and his relationship with mortals.⁴³ Petsalis-Dio-

³⁹ PLATT (2011: 38; 47); PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2006: 209); (2005: 187–188; 208).

⁴⁰ Platt (2011: 12–13); ELSNER (2007: 11).

⁴¹ For example PETRIDOU (2013: 330–331); ELSNER (2007: 23–26).

⁴² GAIFMAN (2008: 99). Compare RAPPAPORT's comments that objects can be used within religion to substantiate the insubstantial (1999: 141) or MEYER's definition of religion as mediation (2020: paragraphs 6–7). See also EIDINOW (2020: 193–194, 200), where votives are described as markers of the relationship between human and divine which grants the divine its existence.

⁴³ VAN STRATEN (1981: 81); EIDINOW (2020: 193–194).

midis, in her article *Amphiaraos Present*, from which the title of this section was taken, has outlined this phenomenon in great detail for images of the healing hero Amphiaraos at his sanctuary in Oropos. She notes that the various images of Amphiaraos that could be found around the sanctuary did not necessarily conjure the presence of the god in the same manner: a simple coin with a head of Amphiaraos is likely to provoke a different response than a relief showing the god at work.⁴⁴ Additionally, these ‘minor’ images, through their location, iconography, and sense of divine nearness, served as signposts towards the most prominent image of the god: the cult statue.⁴⁵ This is where the god was felt to be absolutely present, and therefore it was treated like a real person: it was fed, dressed, washed, and carried around in processions.⁴⁶ The sanctuary is an *assemblage*, in which different elements – votives, statues, rituals – acted together to firmly anchor the presence of the god in a manner more convincing than any one element could have achieved on its own.⁴⁷ This made him accessible to worshippers seeking help, but these worshippers’ encounter with Asklepios through his images was not uni-directional – to a dedicant employing a ritual-centred mode of viewing, the image was capable of responding.⁴⁸

To be able to evoke the presence of Asklepios it was not necessary, however, that a votive actually depicted the god. In their most basic sense, votive dedications are prayers made physical, material manifestations of past healings.⁴⁹ Any votive thus attests to the power of Asklepios and his presence in the sanctuary, simply by recalling these healings, although

⁴⁴ PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2006: 214–215; 218).

⁴⁵ PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2006: 216). See also TANNER (2006: 88).

⁴⁶ PLATT describes a statue of Artemis as ‘activated as a material agent’ (2011: 19; also ch. 2). See also ELSNER (2007: 11–12); PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2006: 215–216); GLADIGOW (1985–6: 114–119).

⁴⁷ PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2016: 58); PLATT (2011: 107–108).

⁴⁸ BREMMER (2013: 15); ELSNER (2007: 24); TANNER (2006: 45).

⁴⁹ SZABÓ (2021: 110); PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2006: 213); DAY (1994: 43); VAN STRATEN (1981: 74–75). The stelai with *iamata* acted similarly, PRÊTRE (2019: 178).

perhaps in a manner somewhat different from directly encountering him in a statue.⁵⁰ This does require, however, a dedicant-viewer who is *will-ing* to see these miracles.⁵¹ An example of the opposite is Cicero's tale of Diagoras the Atheist who, when a friend tries to show him the mass of votives displayed in the temple of the Great Gods of Samothrace as proof of the gods' care for humans, replies that things would have looked different if those who were not helped could also dedicate votives.⁵² Like Ambrosia and Unbeliever, Diagoras knows he is expected to recognise the power of the gods here, but he refuses to employ this ritual-centred mode of viewing. Or, in terms of materiality, this passage emphasises that the agency of these votives is not an inherent quality, but can only come into effect once they enter into a *responsive* relationship with something else.⁵³ Such responsive viewers, by entering the assemblage of the sanctuary, allowed the votive display to actively shape their experience by establishing it as a place where the divine is present.⁵⁴

The Dedicant Present

If a votive is a prayer made physical, it is an anchor for the presence of its dedicator as much as for that of the deity, who asserts their identity in the giving of the gift.⁵⁵ This sentiment is poignantly expressed in a 3rd century BC inscription attached to a votive image of a priestess of Aphrodite from Argos:

⁵⁰ TANNER (2006: 88); PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2005: 187–188); VAN STRATEN (1981: 77). See also PLATT (2011: 83–85).

⁵¹ PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2006: 213). Note RENBERG's emphasis on distinguishing between solicited and spontaneous dreams, (2017: 3–7).

⁵² Cic. *Nat. D.* 3, 89.

⁵³ See also PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS 2006, 213–214 and the discussion of Pentheus in PETRIDOU (2013: 314–315).

⁵⁴ SZABÓ (2021: 101); PLATT (2011: 74); ELSNER (2007: 24).

⁵⁵ EIDINOW (2024: 149); (2020: 180); PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2006: 211; 214); VAN STRATEN (1981: 76). On memorialising dedicants, see also PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2017: 114); (2016: 53).

Blessed Kypris, look after Timanthis; with/on account of a prayer for her sake Timanthes sets up this image so that later too, oh goddess, when this sanctuary on the promontory is visited, a thought be given to this servant of yours.⁵⁶

The statue ensures that Timanthis will remain present within the sanctuary assemblage in perpetuity,⁵⁷ and the inscription calls out to later – willing – viewers to step into this interaction of votive, dedicant, and deity.

Although this individual memorialising function is well-recognised, the effect of the sheer mass of dedications visible in the sanctuary is considered less often.⁵⁸ If each votive is thoroughly entangled with its dedicant, then the assemblage of votives can only represent a *communitas*, made tangible within the space of the sanctuary.⁵⁹ *Communitas* is an anthropological concept denoting a spontaneous experience of communication and unity among pilgrims, which transcends the daily boundaries of class, nationality, and more.⁶⁰ Petsalis-Diomidis has used the idea to explore the fellow-feeling created among pilgrims to the Pergamene Asklepieion by the rules set out in the *lex sacra*.⁶¹ She only briefly mentions the votive dedications left behind, and presents them primarily as an opportunity for pilgrims to highlight their individual narrative.⁶²

⁵⁶ Quoted in VAN STRATEN (1981: 103). Compare also KLÖCKNER (2008: 139) and the story of the Orneatai told in Paus. 10, 18.5.

⁵⁷ PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2017: 117; 121); VAN STRATEN (1981: 103–104).

⁵⁸ For example: PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2017: 116–121); (2005: 208–217); VAN STRATEN (1992: 284). Compare, however, PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2017: 54), which emphasises the collective dimension of inventory inscriptions.

⁵⁹ PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2016: 54–55); (2005: 217). See also HARRIS' discussion of communities as assemblages (2014: 90–91) and PRÊTRE's description of the *iamata* as a polyphony of individual voices drawn together by an editor (2016: 184).

⁶⁰ TURNER-TURNER (1978: 250–255); HIGGINS-HAMILTON (2020: 2–3); DI GIOVINE (2011: 250–251). The concept is not without critiques, some of which are summarised in DI GIOVINE (2011: 248, 254–255).

⁶¹ PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2005: 204–206).

⁶² PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2005: 206; 212–217).

But this does not do justice to the potential for the collection of votives to evoke a sense of tangible *communitas* based in the material.⁶³ They facilitated a telescoping of past, present, and future, gathering all these pilgrims in a single place through their dedications, incorporating them into the sanctuary assemblage, and thus giving a voice to both the sanctuary and its community.⁶⁴ It told the ritually-oriented dedicant-viewer that this was a place where Asklepios interacted with his worshippers, and provided them an opportunity to join that interaction through dedicating their own votive.⁶⁵

A final opportunity for identification with past worshippers presented by the votive display is imitation. Returning to the stories of Ambrosia and Unbeliever, we can imagine a dedicant-viewer arriving at the sanctuary, reading these entries on the stele, and then walking around the sanctuaries themselves, only too aware that they were now *doing the exact same thing*.⁶⁶ This created a deeply responsive connection between the past and present visitor, emphasising to the dedicant-viewer that their own activities within the sanctuary were part of a continuous cycle of worship and dedication.⁶⁷ Through the votive display, the sense of diachronic *communitas* within the sanctuary is thus made not only material but also experiential. The confrontation between the material votive and the dedicant-viewer employing a ritual-centred visuality makes the experiences of past pilgrims accessible and emphasises the possibility of direct contact with Asklepios in his sanctuary.

⁶³ Tangible *communitas* was first developed by Cox in her study of the Los Angeles Wisdom Tree (2018).

⁶⁴ PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2017: 113–114); (2016: 54–55); (2005: 217). See also EIDINOW (2020: 190). For the idea of material objects giving a place a voice, see COX (2008: 36). HARRIS emphasises the diachronic nature of a community (2014: 90).

⁶⁵ PLATT (2011: 38).

⁶⁶ DAY (1994: 72). Cf. GAIFMAN (2008: 90); PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2005: 198–207).

⁶⁷ PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2005: 205–206).

Between Dedicator and Asklepios

Finally, this experiential, imitation-based element of the votive display provided the dedicant-viewer with a model.⁶⁸ Sometimes, the lesson is clear: anyone reading the *iamata* of Ambrosia or Unbeliever would understand that this was not the right behaviour in the sanctuary.⁶⁹ Similarly clear instructions are contained within the Pergamene *lex sacra*.⁷⁰ More interesting are the votive reliefs, which do not necessarily tell the dedicant-viewer what to do, but rather condition them on how to interpret what they will see in the sanctuary.⁷¹ Many of these reliefs feature ritual scenes and, even when they are not ‘photographic’ images of what happened in the sanctuary,⁷² the consistency of their iconography indicates that there was a shared understanding of how these events should be *understood* and communicated. A common theme, for example, shows one or more worshippers approaching the god, often seated behind an altar. After seeing this image, the dedicant viewer would understand that, when they prayed at the altar, Asklepios would be there to hear it, even if they could not see him (*fig. 3*).⁷³ Or, alternatively, a relief with an image of Asklepios visiting a patient in their dreams would tell the dedicant-viewer that when they had confusing dreams that night, this was actually a visit by the god (*fig. 4*). In short, by giving them the language and images they needed to interpret it, the viewing of dedications had a significant influence on how the dedicant-viewer understood their experience in the sanctuary.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ RUTHERFORD (2000: 139–140).

⁶⁹ PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2016: 54); (2006: 214).

⁷⁰ PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2005: 199–204).

⁷¹ PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2016: 59–60); PLATT (2011: 31–33).

⁷² RENBERG (2017: 221–226); GAIFMAN (2008: 87; 99); KLÖCKNER (2006: 149); VAN STRATEN (1992: 283–284); also PETRIDOU (2013: 325). *Pace* VAN STRATEN (1981: 85).

⁷³ Reliefs often maintain a careful ambiguity as to whether they depict a cult statue or a living deity: PLATT (2011: 12); TANNER (2006: 87–88).

⁷⁴ PETRIDOU (2013: 231); PLATT (2011: 39–42; 74).



Figure 3. Athenian relief (c.400 BC) showing a worshipper approaching Asklepios, Hygieia, and a hero.

© 1993 RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre)/Hervé Lewandowski,

<https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010279051>.

This immediate type of knowledge is related to a broader understanding of religion that is also communicated by these votives. In her discussion of reliefs dedicated to the Nymphs, Milette Gaifman has shown that they could be used to communicate complex messages about the relationship between the human and the divine.⁷⁵ The interplay between the relief and the inscription takes centre stage here, emphasising

⁷⁵ GAIFMAN (2008: 99–100). See also PLATT's discussion of a relief to Amphiaraos (2011: 44–47) and PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2005: 209–210).

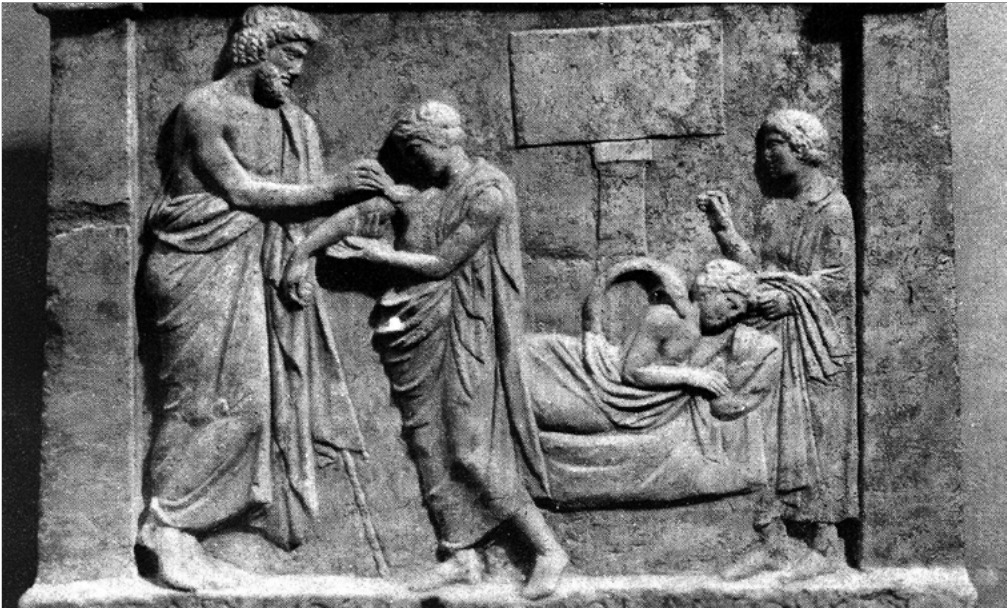


Figure 4. Attic relief (400–350 BC) to Amphiaraos showing incubation scene, with votive pillar in the background. Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0). Source: Wellcome Collection.

that the potential agency of material objects is only fully realised when they are brought into connection with other elements in an assemblage.⁷⁶

The many reliefs dedicated to Asklepios feature similarly diverse representations of the relationship between the god and his worshippers, and through the carving of a relief, these notions are made material, tangible, and long-lasting.⁷⁷ When they are subsequently encountered by a dedicant-viewer employing a ritual-centred mode of viewing, they actively prompt the viewer to reflect on the experience of supplication and dedication, contribute to shaping how that viewer conceived their own interactions with the divine, and thus prepare them for their own encounter with Asklepios.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ GAIFMAN (2008: 86–87), see also PETSALIS-DIOMDIS (2005: 213).

⁷⁷ GAIFMAN (2008: 97–99). See also TANNER (2006: 85–87); VAN STRATEN (1992: 283–284); and PETRIDOU (2013: 325–326).

⁷⁸ PETRIDOU (2013: 317–318); PLATT (2011: 32–39); PETSALIS-DIOMDIS (2006: 213); (2005: 207). See also RENBERG's comment on the possible 'autosuggestion' of cures, (2017: 229).

Conclusion

So what did a visitor to the Asklepieion see? Certainly, they saw statues, plaques, figurines, and any other type of votive imaginable. But in looking at them, they would *see* much more: they saw Asklepios executing miracles, a community of worshippers being healed, a commentary on the relationship between the human and the divine, and a model for their own behaviour within it. In short, they saw far more than just objects and were prompted to do so by these objects' active role in co-creating the world of the sanctuary. This was a cyclical process: the double role of the dedicant-viewer and their inclinations towards ritual-centred visuality left more room for the votives to become active co-constituents of that world, but it was also precisely the agency of those votives that encouraged the dedicant-viewer to employ such ritual-centred vision. Although they draw from different strands of scholarship, concepts from new materialism and from the study of visuality in Graeco-Roman religion clearly work in tandem here.

This paper has outlined three major primary experiences growing out of this encounter between dedicant-viewer and votive display. It does not pretend at completeness – an endless number of other experiences could be imagined, nuances added to the experiences already described, and other senses considered. Nor is a strict division into three types tenable: an awareness of the activities of past pilgrims, for example, automatically implies an awareness of the divine presence towards which these activities are geared. Nevertheless, it has become clear that the votive display was a more powerful factor in giving shape to the experience of the Asklepieion than has so far been recognised, and that it actively collaborated with the dedicant-viewer's ritual-centred visuality and the other constituents of the sanctuary assemblage to create a space where direct contact with Asklepios was not only possible, but to be expected.

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Sex and Dice: Approaching Girls with Games in Ancient Greece and Rome

This paper describes how dice, knucklebones and board games could have romantic or sexual implications among ancient Greeks and Romans. It analyzes a series of literary sources taken from Greek and Latin literatures, and a few archaeological findings. Some of those pieces of literature are fictional and tell invented stories, but grounded on realistic facts, while others report real historical events related to famous figures, or to anonymous people. Based on these historical sources, this paper explains how ancients used games to approach new people and create the kind of atmosphere that preludes to romance, or sexual intercourse. It presents the different shades of this topic and, when possible, sheds light on its evolutionary process throughout Greek and Roman history.

Keywords: board games, knucklebones, dice, sex, seduction.

Introduction¹

Playing is a consistent and essential part of human and animal life, and playfulness is deeply connected with happiness and sociability. Playing helps us to shape our view of the world, express our imagination and release pressure and tensions, but can also enhance our social relations and foster our interpersonal skills. It is an activity in which we humans indulge when we are in good spirit, and in the company of people with whom we want to share our feelings, interests, and passions.

¹I thank Kathleen Burns, Fatih Parlak and Summer Courts for reviewing this paper.

Even if we don't know as much as we would about ancient gaming practices, Greek and Latin literatures provide us with a lot of details about the social, cultural, economic, political or juridical implications of play. Unexpectedly, ancient authors provided us plenty of information also on the private life of their peers, telling us how games were connected with their sexual lives. Adding a little bit of playfulness could be of help to soften some situations, and to make some others more intense... or harder, we might say.

This contribution, based on literary and archaeological sources, will shed a light on the connection between games and romance, sensuality, seduction, and sex in antiquity, presenting it in all its shades and proving that, even in antiquity, being a good player was a true asset for interpersonal relations.

Play to enjoy life

In ancient Greece and Rome play was considered a pleasurable activity like eating and drinking, studying and learning, relaxing at the shade of a portico or attending parties with friends. Ancient authors suggest that all those activities often occurred concurrently, like discussing of philosophy and literature at a banquet² or breaking the rhythm of studying with games that can help to keep the learner's mind active.³

Taking advantage of all the pleasures of life, in different combinations, would have led to a very joyful and meaningful life that, even if ephemeral, was worth being lived. This concept has been very well expressed in the 4th century by the Greek comedian Amphis:

² As widely remarked by several sources. As an example, we report the famous Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistai*.

³ Pl., *Resp.* 7, 536e–537a; Arist. *Pol.* 7, 1336a.

Drink and play, our mortal life
 On earth can but a brief space last;
 Death alone will last for ever,
 When once our too brief term is past.⁴

This passage shows how, in the common imagination of ancient Greeks, enjoying the pleasures of life was counterposed to death. The same idea was expressed a century before by Telecleides, another Athenian comedian, in a passage where he described how the gods originally arranged life for humans, presenting those things that ancient Greeks considered as ideal or stereotypes of pleasure:

I will, then, tell of the life of old which I provided for mortals.
 First, there was peace over all, like water over hands. The earth produced no terror and no disease; on the other hand, things needful came of their own accord. Every torrent flowed with wine, barley-cakes strove with wheat-loaves for men's lips, beseeching that they be swallowed if men loved the whitest. Fishes would come to the house and bake themselves, then serve themselves on the tables. A river of broth, whirling hot slices of meat, would flow by the couches; conduits full of piquant sauces for the meat were close at hand for the asking, so that there was plenty for moistening a mouthful and swallowing it tender.
 On dishes there would be honey-cakes all sprinkled with spices, and roast thrushes served up with milk-cakes were flying into the gullet. The flat-cakes jostled each other at the jaws and set up a racket, the

⁴ Amphis, Fr. II 238 K, in Ath. 7, 14: πῖνε, παῖζε: θνητὸς ὁ βίος, ὀλίγος οὐπὶ γῇ χρόνος: ὁ θάνατος δ' ἀθάνατός ἐστιν, ἅν' ἅπαξ τις ἀποθάνῃ.

slaves would shoot knucklebones with slices of paunch and tid-bits.
Men were fat in those days and every bit mighty giants.⁵

This is how an ancient Greek imagined the ‘perfect’ life: no war, no diseases, and no concerns about quantity, quality, or variety of food. The abundance of food was so overwhelming that even youngsters, playing knucklebones, could put at stake exquisite (and also expensive) meat preparations.

Knucklebones, love, play, and a drink... please

Telecleides fits knucklebones into this convivial picture. Those gaming instruments appear often associated with banquets and festive events in both the Greek and Latin literature, as attested by Plautus in the 2nd century BC:

PHILEMATIUM: Come, take your place, then. Boy, bring some water for the hands; put a little table here. See where are the knucklebones. Would you like some perfumes?⁶

⁵ Telecleides, fr. 1, 8–15 K.–A. in Ath. 6, 95 (268a–d): λέξω τοίνυν βίον ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὃν ἐγὼ θνητοῖσι παρῆχον. εἰρήνη μὲν πρῶτον ἀπάντων ἦν ὥσπερ ὕδωρ κατὰ χειρός. ἡ γῆ δ’ ἔφερ’ οὐ δέος οὐδὲ νόσους, ἀλλ’ αὐτόματ’ ἦν τὰ δέοντα· οἶνω γὰρ ἅπασ’ ἔρρει χαράδρα, μάζαι δ’ ἄρτοις ἐμάχοντο περὶ τοῖς στόμασιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἰκετεύουσai καταπίνειν, εἴ τι φιλοῖεν, τὰς λευκοτάτας. οἱ δ’ ἰχθύες οἰκαδ’ ἰόντες ἐξοπτῶντες σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἂν παρέκειντ’ ἐπὶ ταῖσι τραπέζαις. ζωμοῦ δ’ ἔρρει παρὰ τὰς κλῖνας ποταμὸς κρέα θερμὰ κυλίνδων, ὑποτριμματίων δ’ ὀχετοὶ τούτων τοῖς βουλομένοισι παρῆσαν, ὥστ’ ἀφθονία τὴν ἐνθεσιν ἦν ἄρδονθ’ ἀπαλὴν καταπίνειν. λεκανίσκαισιν δ’ ἑ ἀνάπαιστα ἑ παρῆν ἡδυσματίοις κατάπαστα. ὅπται δὲ κίχλαι μετ’ ἀμητίσκων εἰς τὸν φάρυγ’ εἰσεπέτοντο· τῶν δὲ πλακούντων ὥστιζομένων περὶ τὴν γνάθον ἦν ἀλαλητός. μήτρας δὲ τόμοις καὶ χναυματίοις οἱ παῖδες ἂν ἡστραγάλιζον. οἱ δ’ ἀνθρώποι πίονες ἦσαν τότε καὶ μέγα χρῆμα γιγάντων. (translated by Burton GULICK, lightly modified).

⁶ Plaut. *Mostell.* 1, 3, 150–151: *Philematio: Age accumbe igitur. cedo aquam manibus, puere, appone hic mensulam. Vide, tali ubi sint. vin unguenta?*

The same concept was expressed by the Latin author Sextus Turpilius about a century later. He describes a very similar situation, but differently from Plautus he includes romance too in the picture:

A garland, a set table, knucklebones, and wine: things of this kind, of which the Life is accustomed to invite lovers.⁷

Even in this fragment of Turpilius where explicit mention of death is omitted, we can easily figure out that those pleasures to which 'Life' (lt. *Vita*) which invite the lovers, are implicitly opposed to death, which may separate them. A century later, Horace juxtaposes death and pleasures again in his Odes:

Pale death knocks with impartial foot, at the door of the poor man's cottage, and at the prince's gate. O Sestus, my friend, the span of brief life prevents us from ever depending on distant hope.

Soon the night will crush you, the fabled spirits, and Pluto's bodiless halls: where once you've passed inside you'll no longer be allotted the lordship of wine by knucklebones, or marvel at Lycidas, so tender, for whom, already, the boys are burning, and soon the girls will grow hotter.⁸

The recursive presence of knucklebones in banquet scenes didn't happen randomly. They were used to play during a symposium, but also to

⁷ Sextus Turpilius, Fr. Thrasyleon, 201–202: *Corónam mensam tálos uinum, haec huius modi, Quibus rébus uita amántum inuitari solet.*

⁸ Hor. *Carm.* 1, 4: *Pallida Mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas regumque turris. O beate Sesti, vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat inchoare longam; iam te premet nox fabulaeque Manes et domus exilis Plutonia; quo simul mearis, nec regna vini sortiere talis nec tenerum Lycidan mirabere, quo calet iuventus nunc omnis et mox virgines tepebunt.*

gamify some aspects of it like appointing the ‘lordship of wine’, which means to choose the one who would have led the cheering during the party.

The Venus’s Throw

In one of his Odes, Horace tells that the one appointed as ‘King of Wine’ in a banquet was he who casts the knucklebones and gets the ‘highest’ score, which had a significative name:

Who will twine the hasty wreath from myrtle-tree or parsley? Whom
will Venus seat Chairman of cups? Are Bacchants sane? Then I’ll be
sober. O, ‘tis sweet
To fool, when friends come home again!⁹

Knucklebones could be used to play a great variety of games, and one of them consisted of casting four knucklebones and getting a special role called ‘Venus’, in reference to the goddess of love. This resulted when all knucklebones landed with a different one the four possible faces revealed.

We don’t know exactly if this was a Roman tradition, or if it was derived from Greece. It’s first mention in Latin occurs in Plautus (2nd century BC),¹⁰ while the first mention in the Greek language occurs in Roman times (2nd century, attested in Lucian¹¹). But it’s interesting however, to know that games, love, drinks, and banquets were intertwined.

In visual art, knucklebones might also be a symbol of love, pleasure, and good luck. Four knucklebones, representing the cast of Venus,

⁹ Hor. *Carm.*, 2, 7: *quis udo deproperare apio coronas curatve myrto? quem Venus arbitrum dicet bibendi? non ego sanius bacchabor Edonis: recepto dulce mihi furere est amico.*

¹⁰ Plaut. *Asin.* 5, 2, 55.

¹¹ Lucian, *Erotes (Amores)* 15–16.

are carved in different ancient gems. On one they surround the name or Eros,¹² while on another, a cornucopia and the words ‘Memento Po’ (*remember about Po*).¹³ This last gem must have been a gift and ‘Po’ may have been the initials of the giver.

On another gem, knucklebones surround a skull crowned by a diadem, and aside the skull there are a bread and an amphora of wine.¹⁴ The meaning of these symbols is clear: death is ruling the world and can’t be escaped, but in the meantime you can eat, drink and love to enjoy life as much as possible.



¹² Akademisches Kunstmuseum Bonn, Gerhard Nr. 28.2023.

¹³ Akademisches Kunstmuseum Bonn, Gerhard Nr. 28.2011.

¹⁴ ROHLFS (1964). fig.2.

Knucklebones, Venus, Eros, and Love

We can't determine exactly where and when this connection between knucklebones and the goddess Venus originated, but we know that ancient Greeks linked knucklebones to her son Eros.

Since the 5th century BC, he is represented as a child playing knucklebones¹⁵ or on vases in the shape of knucklebones.¹⁶ The reason might be that in the common imagination Eros was a child and knucklebones were among the most appreciated toys by Greek children. But this connection between Eros and knucklebones might rely on another, deeper bond: Eros and Venus were finally anthropomorphic representations of the concept of 'love' and knucklebones were already connected with this emotion via a quite complicated and articulated symbolism.

Plato says that already in the 4th century BC knucklebones could be considered as metaphors of Love, in a passage of the *Symposium* where he tells the Aristophanes' myth of the androgyne, a creature with one male and one female half, who was split in two parts by Zeus. The passage about the androgyne is entirely devoted to the concept of 'love' and 'eros':

The cause of it all is this, that our original form was as I have described, and we were entire; and the craving and pursuit of that entirety is called Love. Formerly, as I have said, we were one; but now for our sins we are all dispersed by God, as the Arcadians were by the Lacedaemonians; and we may well be afraid that if we are disorderly towards Heaven we may once more be cloven asunder and may go about in the shape of those outline-carvings on the tombs, with our

¹⁵ British Museum Inventory number: 1856,1226.8; Musée Romaine de Avenches, inv 88/6564; MFA, Boston, inventory number 27.700.

¹⁶ Metropolitan Museum of New York, Accession Number: 40.11.22.

noses sawn down the middle, and may thus become like tokens of split knucklebones. Wherefore we ought all to exhort our neighbors to a pious observance of the gods, in order that we may escape harm and attain to bliss under the gallant leadership of Love.¹⁷

In fact, archaeologists found knucklebones cut in two halves in several religious sites.¹⁸ They were cut so to split the concave and the convex side (in game, corresponded to 3 and 4), and the real meaning of this practice is still debatable. We don't know exactly if they were offered by ancients as love tokens, just as actual teenagers attach lockers on bridges. Knucklebones were polysemic objects and their meanings and values might have varied from region to region. In most cases, the lack of literary sources forces us to adopt a speculative attitude, but this passage of Plato allow us to say that at least part of those cut knucklebones must have had a romantic meaning.

Unexpected feelings...

This symbolic association between knucklebones and love might be determined by the unknown origin of this feeling, and the little control that the human mind has on it. For this reason love, it was considered as a having and origin of 'divine influence' similar to the way that the unexpected or random results of a throw of knucklebones were con-

¹⁷ Pl. *Symp.* 192e–193b: τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τὸ αἴτιον, ὅτι ἡ ἀρχαία φύσις ἡμῶν ἦν αὕτη καὶ ἤμεν ὅλοι· τοῦ ὅλου οὖν τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ καὶ διώξει ἔρως ὄνομα. καὶ πρὸ τοῦ, ὥσπερ λέγω, ἐν ἡμεν, νυνὶ δὲ διὰ τὴν ἀδικίαν διωκίσθημεν ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, καθάπερ Ἀρκάδες ὑπὸ Λακεδαιμονίων· φόβος οὖν ἔστιν, ἐὰν μὴ κόσμιοι ὦμεν πρὸς τοὺς θεούς, ὅπως μὴ καὶ αὐθις διασχισθῶμεθα, καὶ περίμεν ἔχοντες ὥσπερ οἱ ἐν ταῖς στήλαις καταγραφὴν ἐκτετυπωμένοι, διαπεπρισμένοι κατὰ τὰς ῥῖνας, γεγονότες ὥσπερ λίσπαι. ἀλλὰ τούτων ἕνεκα πάντ' ἄνδρα χρὴ ἅπαντα παρακελεύεσθαι εὐσεβεῖν περὶ θεούς, ἵνα τὰ μὲν ἐκφύγωμεν, τῶν δὲ τύχωμεν, ὡς ὁ Ἑρως ἡμῖν ἡγεμὼν καὶ στρατηγός.

¹⁸ AMANDRY (1984: 347–380).

cieved. This seems to be the meaning of the Anacreon fragment, dated to 6th century BC:

Knucklebones of Eros are madness and mellays.¹⁹

Interestingly, in this fragment, the word ‘knucklebones’ is written as a feminine noun, while generally it is rendered in the masculine.

The image of Eros as a child who plays with human feelings remained for centuries in the common imagination of ancient Greeks and Romans. In this way Asclepiades of Samos in the 4th century BC described his tormented personal life, connecting game, pleasure and love to the inner will to live:

I am not yet two and twenty, and life is a burden to me. Ye Loves, why thus maltreat me; why set me afire? For if I perish, what will you do? Clearly, Loves, you will play, silly children, at your knucklebones as before.²⁰

Meleager makes a similar point between the 2nd and 1st century BC:

Love, the baby still in his mother’s lap, playing at knucklebones in the morning, played my soul away.²¹

And Phylodemus, a few decades later, as collected in the same Anthology again makes the connection:

¹⁹ Anac. fr. 47 (398 PMG) in Scholia in Homerum, Iliadem, 23,88: “ἀστραγάλαι δ’ Ἐρωτός εἰσιν μανίαι τε καὶ κυδοιμοί

²⁰ Asclepiades, *Anth. Pal.* 12, 46: οὐκ εἴμ’ οὐδ’ ἐτέων δύο κεῖκοσι, καὶ κοπιῶ ζῶν. / ὦρωτες, τί κακὸν τοῦτο; τί με φλέγετε; / ἦν γὰρ ἐγὼ τι πάθω, τί ποιήσετε; δηλον, Ἐρωτες, / ὥς τὸ πάρος παίξεσθ’ ἄφρονες ἀστραγάλοις.

²¹ Meleager, *Anth. Pal.* 12, 47: ματρός ἔτ’ ἐν κόλποισιν ὁ νήπιος ὀρθρινὰ παίζων / ἀστραγάλοις τοῦμὸν πνεῦμ’ ἐκύβευσεν Ἐρως.

As often as I come to Cydilla's embrace, whether I come in the day-time, or more venturesome still in the evening, I know that I hold my path on the edge of a precipice, I know that each time I throw all the dice on my heag. But what advantage is it to me to know that? My heart is bold, and when Love ever leads it, it knows not at all even the shadow of fear.²²

While the Greek poets seemed to have felt uncomfortable at the idea that Eros, with his wind of passion, could suddenly and unexpectedly beat upon them, the Latin writer Ovid is willing to abandon himself to Love and so exhort the young son of Venus:

A child you are, and like a child You should play.²³

The Latin poet Propertius relies on the same symbolism, and pushing things further alludes to sexual and physical implications of this warm feeling, and describes a situation which may still looks very actual (at least to those of us who celebrate their birthdays at bed):

Let us play at fortunes with a cast of knucklebones to reveal which of us two the winged god beats the harder with his wings. When the hours have been spent in many cups, and Venus prepares the sacred ceremonies of the night, let us perform anniversary rites on our couch and so complete the course of your birthday.²⁴

²² *Anth. Pal.* 5, 25: ὅσσάκι Κυδίλλης ὑποκόλπιος, εἴτε κατ' ἡμαρ, / εἴτ' ἀποτολμήσας ἤλυθον ἐσπέριος, / οἶδ' ὅτι παρ κρημνὸν τέμνω πόρον, οἶδ' ὅτι ῥιπτῶ / πάντα κύβον κεφαλῆς αἰὲν ὕπερθεν ἐμῆς. / ἀλλὰ τί μοι πλεον ἐστί; † γὰρ θρασύς, ἡδ' ὅταν ἔλκη / πάντοτ' ἔρω, ἀρχὴν οὐδ' ὄναρ οἶδε φόβου.

²³ *Ov. Rem. Am.* 23–24: *Et puer es, nec te quicquam nisi ludere oportet; Lude*

²⁴ *Prop.* 3, 10, 27–32: *Sit sors et nobis talorum interprete iactu, / quem gravibus pennis verberet ille puer. / Cum fuerit multis exacta trientibus hora, / noctis et instituet sacra ministra Venus, / annua solvamus thalamo sollemnia nostro, / natalisque tui sic peragamus iter.*

Before to play, learn the rules

The Greek authors quoted in the previous paragraphs seem to have been caught by surprise by Love.

The only one who, according to what he wrote, knew how to play the game of love was Propertius. In fact, just as a board game, relational life requires the knowledge of a few rules, a little bit of experience and practice. And the one who wrote the best manual about love and seduction in antiquity was Ovid. In his book, he made sure to include a series of gaming suggestion for girls:

A few things shameful to mention, she must know how to call the throws at knucklebones, and your values, you rolled dice: sometimes throwing three, sometimes thinking, closely, how to advance craftily, how to challenge.

She should play the battle of the *Latrunculi*;²⁵ match warily not rashly, where one piece can be lost to two opponents, and a warrior wars without his companion who's been taken, and a rival often has to retrace the journey he began.

Light spills should be poured from the open bag, nor should a spill be disturbed unless she can raise it.

There's a kind of game, the board squared-off by as many lines, with precise calculation, as the fleeting year has months: a smaller board presents three stones each on either side where the winner will have made his line up together.

²⁵ *Latrunculi* was a strategy game, very popular at the time of Ovid. The game consisted in a battle between two groups of counters, eventually made of glass. It was possible to kill an enemy piece by surrounding it with two pieces on the two opposite sides. For this reason, the pieces that remained isolated on the board must be retreated towards other allied counters, so to avoid to be surrounded.

There's a thousand games to be had: it's shameful for a girl not to know how to play: playing often brings on love.

But there's not much labour in knowing all the moves: there's much more work in keeping to your rules.

We're reckless, and revealed by eagerness itself, and in a game the naked heart's exposed:

Anger enters, ugly mischief, desire for gain, quarrels and fights and anxious pain:

accusations fly, the air echoes with shouts, and each calls on their outraged deities:

there's no honour, they seek to cancel their debts at whim: and often I've seen cheeks wet with tears.

Jupiter keep you free from all such vile reproaches, you who have any anxiety to please men.²⁶

In his work, Ovid also includes a few suggestions for his male readers:

Yield to opposition: by yielding you'll end as victor: Only play the part she commands you to.

²⁶ OY. *Ars am.* 3, 353–384: *Parva monere pudet, talorum dicere iactus Ut sciat, et vires, tes-sera missa, tuas: Et modo tres iactet numeros, modo cogitet, apte quam subeat partem callida, quamque vocet. Cautaque non stulte latronum proelia ludat, Unus cum gemino calculus hoste perit, Bellatorque sua prensus sine compare bellat, Aemulus et coeptum saepe recurrit iter. Reticuloque pilae leves fundantur aperto, Nec, nisi quam tolles, ulla movenda pila est. Est genus, in totidem tenui ratione redactum Scriptula, quot menses lubricus annus habet: Parva tabella capit ternos utrimque lapillos, In qua vicisse est continuasse suos. Mille facesse iocos; turpe est nescire puellam Ludere: ludendo saepe paratur amor. Sed minimus labor est sapienter iactibus uti: Maius opus mores composuisse suos. Tum sumus incauti, studioque aperimur in ipso, Nudaque per lusus pectora nostra patent; Ira subit, deforme malum, lucrique cupido, Iurgiaque et rixae sollicitusque dolor: Crimina dicuntur, resonat clamoribus aether, Invocat iratos et sibi quisque deos: Nulla fides, tabulaeque novae per vota petuntur; Et lacrimis vidi saepe madere genas. Iuppiter a vobis tam turpia crimina pellat, In quibus est ulli cura placere viro.*

Condemn what she condemns, what she approves, approve, say what she says, deny what she denies.

She laughs, you laugh: remember to cry, if she cries. She'll set the rules according to your expression. If she plays, tossing the ivory dice in her hand, throw them wrong, and concede on your bad throw: If you play knucklebones, no prize if you win, make out that often the ruinous low Dogs fell to you.

And if it's draughts, the draughtsmen mercenaries, let your champion be swept away by your glass foe.²⁷

Today Ovid would have been a successful blogger, but at his time he was exiled for it, even if his chapters about games and seduction must have been useful to many people.

Who were players? Gender gap in ancient gaming practices

Ancient authors were essentially men and reported mostly about male gaming activities. This heavily gendered perspective generated a relevant bias in our knowledge that could easily induce the thought that board games were mostly of male domain.

Like other aspects of ancient everyday life, toys and games could be gendered and some effectively were. But a few inscriptions and quotations and some iconographic sources attest that girls and women played board games too.

²⁷ OY. *Ars Am.* 2, 197–208: *Cede repugnanti: cedendo victor abibis: Fac modo, quas partes illa iubebit, agas. Arguet, arguito; quicquid probat illa, probato; Quod dicet, dicas; quod negat illa, neges. Riserit, adride; si flebit, flere memento; Imponat leges vultibus illa tuis. Seu ludet, numerosque manu iactabit eburnos, Tu male iactato, tu male iacta dato: Seu iacies talos, victam ne poena sequatur, Damnosi facito stent tibi saepe canes: Sive latrocinii sub imagine calculus ibit, Fac pereat vitreo miles ab hoste tuus.*

Two passages of the Palatine Anthology, quoted also by the Byzantine Suda²⁸, report that when children grew and prepared for adult life, they offered their games and toys to the temple. This tradition is attested for males and females, and in both cases, knucklebones are included in the list:

To Hermes Philocles here hangs up these toys of his boyhood: his noiseless ball, this lively boxwood rattle, his knucklebones he had such a mania for, and his spinning top.²⁹

Hippe, the maiden, has put up her abundant curly hair, brushing it from her perfumed temples, for the solemn time when she must wed has come, and I the snood that used to rest there require in my wearer the grace of virginity. But, Artemis, in thy loving kindness grant to Lycomedes' child, who has bidden farewell to her knucklebones, both a husband and children.³⁰

Knucklebones were indeed considered as toys and gaming instruments by both males and females, and it seems that the games played with them changed according to the age of the player. Children considered knuck-

²⁸ Suda λ 810: Λυκομήδειος. τῇ Λυκομηδείου παιδί φιλαστραγάλη. "Lycomedeios: To / for the daughter of Lykomedeios, who loves to play with knucklebones." Suda ι 425: Ἰότητι: βουλῇσει, γνώμη. Ἄρτεμι, σῇ δ' ἰότητι γάμος θ' ἅμα καὶ γένος εἴη τῇ Λυκομηδείου παιδί φιλαστραγάλη. Iotiti: [Meaning] by desire, by decision: "Artemis, by your will may the knucklebone-loving daughter of Lykomedeios have marriage and offspring."

²⁹ *Anth. Pal.* 6, 309: εὐφημόν τοι σφαῖραν, ἐυκρόταλόν τε Φιλοκλῆς Ἑρμείη ταύτην πυξινέην πλατάγην, ἀστραγάλας θ' αἷς πόλλ' ἐπεμήνατο, καὶ τὸν ἑλικτὸν ῥόμβον, κουροσύνης παίγνι' ἀνεκρέμασεν.

³⁰ *Anth. Pal.* 6, 276: ἡ πολὺθριξ οὐλας ἀνεδήσατο παρθένος Ἴππη χαίτας, εὐώδη σμηχομένα κρόταφον ἥδη γάρ οἱ ἐπῆλθε γάμου τέλος: αἱ δ' ἐπὶ κόρσῃ μίτραι παρθενίας αἰτέομεν χάριτας. Ἄρτεμι, σῇ δ' ἰότητι γάμος θ' ἅμα καὶ γένος εἴη τῇ Λυκομηδείου παιδί λιπαστραγάλη.

lebones more as toys,³¹ while adults might have been more interested in their use as casting or divining objects valued for their random results.

A famous terracotta group handcrafted in Campania in the late IV century BC, and now in the British Museum,³² represents two women playing with knucklebones. They might be playing *Pleistobolinda*.³³ This aim of this game was getting the highest score, and play consisted of throwing several knucklebones in sequence, and aiming, at every throw, to hit the bones already on the ground, thereby changing their scores in order to accrue more points.

During the Hellenic times female players became a recurrent subject in visual art, attested by further sculptures³⁴ and paintings,³⁵ and we might assume that many others have since been lost. The existence of other frescoes with the same subject is reported by Pausanias:

Polygnotus has painted them as girls crowned with flowers and playing with knucklebones and gives them the names of Cameiro and Clytie.³⁶

Those artistic representations, on one hand attest to women's attitude towards play, but on the other, convey an artistic topos and might not be always representative of real life. Unfortunately, ancient authors paid little attention to female habits and provided us with just a few descriptions of women playing games. We however assume that females played much more than what is represented by ancient art and literature.

³¹ Pl. *Lys.* 206e; Plut. *Quaest. Conv.* 9, 12 (741c); Poll. *Onom.* 9, 103; Hsch. *Lexicon*, entry τρόπα; Phot. *Lexicon*, entry τρόπα.

³² BM inventory n° 1867,0510.1

³³ Poll. *Onom.* 9, 116; Hsch. *Lexicon*, π 2517; Phot. *Lexicon*, π 934, π 935; Suda, π 1738.

³⁴ Just two samples: Altes Museum Berlin, Sk 494; British Museum, 1805,0703.13.

³⁵ Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. 9562.

³⁶ Paus. 10, 30, 2: Πολύγνωτος δὲ κόρας τε ἐστεφανωμένας ἄνθεσι καὶ παιζούσας ἔγραφεν ἀστραγάλοις, ὄνομα δὲ αὐταῖς Καμειρῶ τε καὶ Κλυτίῃ.

Plutarch reports that during the 4th century BC Persian women, at least those of the upper class, used to play,³⁷ and Suetonius copied a letter that Augustus wrote to his daughter Julia, where it seems that she was accustomed to playing knucklebones with friends (and gambling too):

I send you two hundred and fifty denarii, the sum which I gave each of my guests, in case they wished to play knucklebones or at odd and even during the dinner.³⁸

Games and seduction

The most interesting literary passage, that implicitly attests to how males and females considered games as instruments of seduction, is from Plautus' *Asinaria*.

In this comedy *Parasite*, a male character, helps *Diabolus*, another male character, to write a letter for a lady with some instructions about how to behave during a banquet.

Reading between the lines, we can figure out that many of the strategies mentioned by the comedian were taken from real life situations that occurred in Rome during the 2nd century BC:

PARASITE: [...] Then she is to drink cup by cup equally with yourself. She is to receive it from you; she is to hand it to you for you to drink. She is not to have a relish for less or for more than yourself."

DIABOLUS: Oh! That's quite to my taste.

PARASITE: (reading) "She is to remove all causes of suspicion from her, nor is she to tread on any man's foot with her foot; when she rises she

³⁷ Plut. *Artax.* 17, 1–6.

³⁸ Suet. *Aug.* 71: *Misi tibi denarios ducentos quinquaginta, quos singulis convivis dederam, si vellent inter se inter cenam vel talis vel par impar ludere.*

is neither to step upon the next couch, nor when she gets down from the couch is she thence to extend her hand to any one; she is not to give to nor ask of any one a ring for her to look at; she is not to present knucklebones to any man whatever except to yourself; when she throws them, she is not to say, You I call upon,' she is to mention your name. She may call on any Goddess that she pleases as propitious to her, but on no God: if she should chance to be very full of devotion, she is to tell you, and you are to pray to him that he may be propitious. She is neither to nod at any man, wink, or make a sign. In fine, if the lamp goes out, she is not to move a single joint of herself in the dark." DIABOLUS: That's very good; so, in fact, she must do: but expunge that about the chamber; for my part, I prefer that she should move. I don't wish her to have an excuse, and to say that it is forbidden her by her vow.³⁹

Since the highest score was entitled to Venus, or to the concept of 'Love', when a Roman cast knucklebones, they often invoked the name of Venus, or the name of a beloved one. This could also reveal erotic, sexual, romantic orientation or preferences.

We can imagine that calling someone's name while throwing knucklebones could sound like a declaration, expressing romantic feelings or sexual desire. This is what Plautus again tells in further comedies. In the *Curculio*, Phaedro is astonished to know that another man invoked the name of his beloved while playing knucklebones:

³⁹ Plaut. *Asin.* 4, 771–791: PAR. *Tecum una potet, aequè pocla potitet: abs ted accipiat, tibi propinet, tu bibas, ne illa minus aut plus quam tu sapiat.* DIAB. *Satis placet.* PAR. *Suspiciones omnes ab se segreget. Neque illaec ulli pede pedem homini premat, cum surgat, neque <cum> in lectum inscendat proximum, neque cum descendat inde, det cuiquam manum: spectandum ne cui anulum det neque roget. Talos ne cuiquam homini admoueat nisi tibi. Cum iaciat, 'te' ne dicat: nomen nominet. deam inuocet sibi quam libebit propitiam, deum nullum; si magis religiosa fuerit, tibi dicat: tu pro illa ores ut sit propitius. neque illa ulli homini nutet, nictet, annuat. Post, si lucerna exstincta sit, ne quid sui membri commoueat quicquam in tenebris.* DIAB. *optumest. Ita scilicet facturam. Verum in cubiculodeme istuc—equidem illam moueri gestio. Nolo illam habere causam et uotitam dicere.*

CURCULIO: [...] After we had dined and well drunk, he asked for the dice to be fetched him. He challenged me to play with him a game of hazard. I staked my cloak, he staked his ring against it; he called on the name of Planesium.

PHAEDRO: What, my mistress?

CURCULIO: Be silent a while. He threw a most losing cast. I took up the dice, and invoked Hercules as my genial patron; I threw a first-rate cast, and pledged him in a bumping cup; in return he drank it off, reclined his head, and fell fast asleep. I slyly took away from him the ring, and took my legs quietly from off the couch, so that the captain mightn't perceive it.⁴⁰

And Plautus' comedy *Captivi* starts with a monologue of Ergasilus. This character, always hungry and willing to take advantage of a free lunch, having been excluded from a banquet, pretends to enter since he is invoked by young men playing knucklebones:

ERGASILUS: The young men have given me the name of "the mistress," for this reason, because invocated I am wont to attend at the banquet. I know that buffoons say that this is absurdly said, but I affirm that it is rightly said. For at the banquet the lover, when he throws the knucklebones, invokes his mistress. Is she then invocated, or is she not? She is, most clearly.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Plaut. *Curc.* 2, 3, 354–361: *Curc.* [...] *postquam cenati atque appoti, talos poscit sibi in manum, provocat me in aleam, ut ego ludam: pono pallium; ille suum amiculum opposivit, invocat Planesium. Phaed.* Meosne amores? *Curc.* Tace parumper. *iacit volturios quattuor. talos arripio, invoco almam meam nutricem Hérculem, iacto basilicum; propino magnum poculum: ille ebibit, caput deponit, condormiscit. Ego ei subduco anulum deduco pedes de lecto clam, ne miles sentiat*

⁴¹ Plaut. *Capt.* 1, 1, 1–5: *Erg.* *Iuventus nomen indidit Scorto mihi, eo quia invocatus soleo esse in convivio. scio absúrde dictum hoc derisores dicere, at ego aio recte. nam scortum in convivio sibi amator, talos quom iacit, scortum invocat. Estne invocatum an non est? Est planissime!*

Games, gifts and seduction

Since they were so appreciated, games could also be suitable gifts to attract someone's attention. But according to what Glaucus of Nicopolis says, it worked just until a certain age:

There was a time long, long ago, when boys who like presents were won by a quail, or a sewn ball, or knucklebones, but now they want rich dishes or money, and those playthings have no power. Search for something else, ye lovers of boys.⁴²

Another author remarks an interesting fact. Since games were often used to gamble, to win meant also to gain enough money that could be used to buy a better and more expensive gift for the beloved one. In the following text, Aristaenetus represents the point of view of an unlucky player opposed to a luckier one. The names he chooses are respectively *Monochoros*, or 'he who plays on a single square', and *Philokubos*, or 'he who is beloved by the dice'.

He probably alluded to the *Tabula* or *Alea* game, predecessor of Backgammon, where the winner is the first player to exit the path with all their counters. So, *Monochoros* is the player who can't move and remains stuck in the same place, while *Philokubos* always gets good scores and makes progress:

A dice player in love (the double misfortune). *Monochoros* to *Philokybos*

I fell victim to two dreadful things at once, dear friend, and though

⁴² Glaucus of Nicopolis, *Anth. Pal.* 12, 44: ἦν ὅτε παῖδας ἔπειθε πάλαι ποτὲ δῶρα φιλεῦντας / ὄρνυξ, καὶ ῥαπτὴ σφαῖρα, καὶ ἀστράγαλοι: / νῦν δὲ λοπὰς καὶ κέρμα: τὰ παίγνια δ' οὐδὲν ἐκεῖνα / ἰσχύει. ζητεῖτ' ἄλλο τι, παιδοφίλαι.

I can just about cope with one of these at a time, the addition of the second tips the scales and I end up suffering a double misfortune. The one is bad, the other no better.

I've been wrecked by an insatiable hetaira and by unlucky throws of the dice, unlucky for me but beneficial to my adversaries: when I play knucklebones or dice with rivals in love, my brain gets befuddled in the frenzy of desire; as a result I confuse the various moves of the gaming pieces and am beaten by players who are less competent than I.

For often, in a transport of desire, I throw the dice but move their pieces, not my own. And then, when I go off to my beloved, I suffer a second defeat there, worse than the first.

For my rivals, lucky in the winnings they extract from my pocket, are able to give more precious gifts to my darling, and she prefers them for those gifts. Fighting me with my own resources, they prevent me from ever getting lucky in the game of love. And so each of the two misfortunes magnifies the other.⁴³

Clearly, the point of the composition is that the one beloved by both players would have elected the richest one, which implies that she was a prostitute.

⁴³ Aristaenetus, *Ep. Eroticae*, I, 23: Ἐρωτικός κυβευτῆς περὶ ἀμφοτέρωτα δυστυχῆς Μονόχωρος φιλοκύβω. Δύο δεινοῖς ἅμα περιπέπτωκα, φίλε, καὶ πρὸς ἓν τούτων μόλις ὀποτερονοῦν διακρῶν ἐξ ἐπιμέτρου θάτερον ἔχω, καὶ διπλάσια δυστυχῶ. Καὶ τὸ μὲν κακόν, τὸ δὲ οὐκ ἄμεινον. Ἐμὲ γὰρ κατανάλωσαν ἅπληστος ἐταῖρα καὶ πεσσοὶ πίπτοντες ἀτυχῶς μὲν ἐμοί, εὐβολώτερον δὲ τοῖς ἐναντίοις. Ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἀντερῶσιν ἀστραγαλίζων ἢ κυβεύων συγχέομαι τὸν νοῦν, τοῦ ἔρωτος μεμνηνός, κἀντεῦθεν περὶ τὰς ποικίλας μεταστάσεις τῶν ψῆφων πολλὰ παραλογιζόμενος ἑμαυτὸν καὶ τῶν καταδεεστέρων τὴν παιδιὰν ἡττῶμαι. Πολλάκις γὰρ μετέωρος ἐκ τοῦ τόθου ταῖς ἡμετέραις βολαῖς ἀντὶ τῶν ἐμῶν τὰς ἐκείνων διατίθηναι ψήφους. Εἴτα πρὸς τὴν ἐρωμένην ἀπιὼν ἐκεῖ δευτέραν ἡτταν ὑπομένω καὶ χείρονα τῆς προτέρας. Οἱ γὰρ εὐτυχεῖς ἀντερασταί, ἅτε δή με τὰ τοσαῦτα νενικηκότες, φιλοτιμότερον δωροῦνται τῇ ποθουμένη, καὶ προκρίνονται μοι τοῖς δώροις, κἄτα τῶν ἐμῶν ἐμὲ πολεμοῦντες μεταπεττεύουσίν μοι τῆς φιλίας κύβον. Οὕτω τοίνυν ἐκάτερον τῶν κακῶν διὰ θάτερον γέγονε δυστυχέστερον.

Unpleasant implications

The connection between games and sex also hides some issues. The connection between games and prostitution is underlined by literary sources of every kind and gambling houses were associated with brothels at least since the V century BC:

Then if I went to a fool's house, he would throw beside dice and prostitutes, and very soon I should be completely stripped and pitched out of doors.⁴⁴

Often, in antiquity, playing meant gambling, even for huge amounts of money, and this seems to have been a peculiar male habit.

Unfortunately, sex workers rarely consented and most of them were forced to become prostitutes. Taken into slavery, they were considered as objects and instruments to make money by their pimps, and could be bought and sold, won or lost on a cast of dice.

Mandres sold off Cretinas very quickly. The Ephesians conquered Cretinas in the land of Magnesia: she was sold by Mandres, son of Mandrolitos, for some wine, and drink, and a game of dice.⁴⁵

The same unpleasant habit is reported also in Latin literature:

The dice player who gambled on sexual intercourses.

You play the dice but do not win, Ultor, and you put nothing at stake

⁴⁴ Ar. *Plut.* 242–244: ἦν δ' ὡς παραπλήγ' ἄνθρωπον εἰσελθὼν τύχῳ, / πόρναισι καὶ κύβοις παραβεβλημένος / γυμνὸς θύραζ' ἐξέπεσον ἐν ἀκαρεῖ χρόνου.

⁴⁵ Plut. *Proverbia quibus alexandrini usi sunt*, 57: Ταχύτερον ὁ Μάνδρης κρητίνας † ἀπεπέρασε· Ἐφέσιοι κρητίνας ἐκτήσαντο τὰς / Μαγνήτων· ἀπεπέρασε δέ σφιν Μάνδρης ὁ Μανδρολύτου παρ' οἶνον καὶ μέθην καὶ κύβην.

but girls, promising caresses and intercourse at the same time.

Why do you offer to others what you could keep for yourself? Perhaps that the battles on the board please you more? Or the vice you offer brings you gain?

If you win, I do not think you will keep the girl for your own pleasure, but you'll rather sell her.⁴⁶

And finally, Athenaeus reports a terrible series of abuse perpetrated in Rhodes by Hegesilochus, who felt above his fellow citizens:

[...]And they violated a great number of nobly-born women, wives of the first men in the state; and they corrupted no small number of boys and young men; and they carried their profligacy to such a height that they even ventured to play with one another at dice for the free-born women, and they made a bargain which of the nobly-born matrons he who threw the lowest number on knucklebones should bring to the winner for the purpose of being ravished; allowing no exception at all; but the loser was bound to bring her to the place appointed, in whatever way he could, using persuasion, or even force if that was necessary.

And some of the other Rhodians also played at dice in this fashion; but the most frequent and open of all the players in this way was Hegesilochus, who aspired to become the governor of the city."⁴⁷

⁴⁶Luxorius, *Anth. Lat.* 323R: *De aleatore in pretio lenocinii ludente:ludis, nec superas, Ultor, ad aleam, nec quicquam in tabula das, nisi virginem, spondens blanditias et coitus simul. Hoc cur das aliis, quod poteras tibi? An tali malius praemia grata sunt? Aut prodest vitium tale quod impetras? Si vincas, ego te non puto virginem in luxum cupere, sed mage vendere.*

⁴⁷Ath. 10, 63: εἰθ' ἐξῆς λέγων περὶ τῆς ὀλιγαρχίας ἣν κατεστήσατο μετὰ τῶν φίλων ἐπιφέρει· καὶ πολλὰς μὲν γυναῖκας εὐγενεῖς καὶ τῶν πρῶτων ἀνδρῶν ἥσυχναν, οὐκ ὀλίγους δὲ παῖδας καὶ νεανίσκους διέφθειραν· εἰς τοῦτο δὲ προέβησαν ἀσελγείας, ὥστε καὶ κυβεύειν ἤξιωσαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους περὶ τῶν γυναικῶν τῶν ἐλευθέρων καὶ διωμολογοῦντο τοὺς ἐλάττω τοῖς ἀστραγάλοις βάλλοντας ἦντινα χρὴ τῶν πολιτῶν τῷ νικῶντι εἰς συνουσίαν ἀγαγεῖν, οὐδεμίαν ὑπεξαίρουμένοι

Game, wine, sex and common moral sense

The combination of playing, drinking and sex could also have unpleasant and reprehensible implications. Behaviors like those reported in the previous paragraphs were condemned also in the past and considered as symptoms of a perverted personality.

The moral condemnation of this sequence of vices is attested by several literary sources, both Greek and Latin, of different periods. In the 4th century BC Aeschines accused Timarchus of being morally corrupt since he started to prostitute himself in gambling houses.⁴⁸

The same condemnation of moral vices was also reported by Plautus.⁴⁹

But even if it was part of real life, it is interesting to see how the condemnation of vices became recursive in political speeches in both the Athenian democracy and the Roman republic. In those political systems, based on the public debate, personal habits of public figures could be exposed for political reasons.

Like Aeschines, Sallust point at the immorality of Catiline without directly mentioning the vicious activities (gambling, sex exploitation, drinking), but the body parts involved in them:

For all those shameless, libertine, and profligate characters, who had dissipated their patrimonies by their hand, penis, or stomach.⁵⁰

πρόφασιν, ἀλλ' ὅπως ἂν ἕκαστος εἴη δυνατὸς πείθων ἢ βιαζόμενος, οὕτω προστάττοντες ἄγειν. καὶ ταύτην τὴν κυβείαν ἔπαιζον μὲν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων Ῥοδίων τινές, ἐπιφανέστατα δὲ καὶ πλειστάκις αὐτὸς ὁ Ἡγησίλοχος ὁ προστατεῖν τῆς πόλεως ἄξιων.

⁴⁸ Aeschin. *In Tim.* 54, 58–59.

⁴⁹ Plaut. *Bacch.* 65–73.

⁵⁰ Sall. *Cat.* 14, 2: *nam quicumque inpudicus adulter ganeo manu uentre pene bona patria lacerauerat...ei Catilinae proximi familiaresque erant.*

In the same years, Cicero seized every occasion to report at the Senate the vices of Anthony and his friends:

But it is the bitterest thing of all that you, O Aulus Hirtius, who have been distinguished by Cæsar's kindness, and who have been left by him in a condition which you yourself marvel at. I cannot indeed deny that Aulus Hirtius was distinguished by Cæsar, but such distinctions are only of value when conferred on virtue and industry. But you, who cannot deny that you also were distinguished by Cæsar, what would you have been if he had not showered so many kindnesses on you? Where would your own good qualities have borne you? Where would your birth have conducted you? You would have spent the whole period of your manhood in brothels, and cookshops, and in gambling and drinking, as you used to do when you were always burying your brains and your beard in the laps of actresses.⁵¹

And about Anthony himself:

He protected actors, gamblers, and pimps.⁵²

You know the insolence of Antonius; you know his friends; you know his whole household. To be slaves to lustful, wanton, debauched, profligate, drunken gamblers, is the extremity of misery combined with the extremity of infamy.⁵³

⁵¹ Cic. Phil. 13, 11 (113–119): *acerbissimum vero est te, A. Hirti, ornatum beneficiis Caesaris et talem ab eo relictum qualem ipse miraris. equidem negare non possum a Caesare Hirtium ornatum, sed illa ornamenta in virtute et in industria posita lucent tu vero qui te ab eodem. Caesare ornatum negare non potes, quid esses, si tibi ille non tam multa tribuisset? ecquo te tua virtus provexisset, ecquo genus? in lustris, popinis, alea, vino tempus aetatis omne consumpsisses, ut faciebas, cum in gremiis mimarum mentum mentemque deponeres.*

⁵² Cic. Phil. 8, 10: *cavet mimis, aleatoribus, lenonibus*

⁵³ Cic. Phil. 3, 35: *Nostis insolentiam Antoni, nostis amicos, nostis totam domum. Libidinosus, petulantibus, impuris, impudicis, aleatoribus, ebriis servire, ea summa miseria est summo dedecore coniuncta.*

And when he occupied the abandoned house of Pompey:

Whole storehouses were abandoned to the most worthless of men. Actors seized on this, actresses on that; the house was crowded with gamblers, and full of drunken men; people were drinking all day, and that too in many places; there were added to all this expense (for this fellow was not invariably fortunate) heavy gambling losses. You might see in the cellars of the slaves, couches covered with the most richly embroidered counterpanes of Cnæus Pompeius. Wonder not, then, that all these things were so soon consumed. Such profligacy as that could have devoured not only the patrimony of one individual, however ample it might have been, (as indeed his was,) but whole cities and kingdoms.⁵⁴

Play to create a safe space

Anthony was clearly a gambler, and his passion for dice was also noticed by Cleopatra. Interpersonal relations are always complex, and after thousands of years it's difficult to say which of those, that ancient historians reported as 'great love stories', were really grounded on a genuine feeling, and which were merely depicted like that by external observers.

However, according to what Plutarch reports about the life of Anthony, it seems that he and Cleopatra established a genuine connection and also had a lot of fun together, playing board games too. The follow-

⁵⁴ Cic. *Phil.* 2, 27, 303–304: *Apothecae totae nequissimis hominibus condonabantur; alia mimi rapiebant, alia mimae; domus erat aleatoribus referta, plena ebriorum; totos dies potabatur, atque id locis pluribus; suggerabantur etiam saepe (non enim semper iste felix) damna aleatoria; conchyliatis Cn. Pompei peristromatis servorum in cellis lectos stratos videres. Quam ob rem desinite mirari haec tam celeriter esse consumpta. Non modo unius patrimonium quamvis amplum, ut illud fuit, sed urbis et regna celeriter tanta nequitia devorare potuisset.*

ing passage of Plutarch's *Life of Anthony* tells the story of two lovers that sometimes must have needed to find relief from the weight of their political life and, despite their public role, wandered in the streets of Alexandria behaving like teenagers in love:

But Cleopatra, distributing her flattery, not into the four forms of which Plato speaks, but into many, and ever contributing some fresh delight and charm to Antony's hours of seriousness or mirth, kept him in constant tutelage, and released him neither night nor day. She played at dice with him, drank with him, hunted with him, and watched him as he exercised himself in arms; and when by night he would station himself at the doors or windows of the common folk and scoff at those within, she would go with him on his round of mad follies, wearing the garb of a serving maiden. For Antony also would try to array himself like a servant.

Therefore he always reaped a harvest of abuse, and often of blows, before coming back home; though most people suspected who he was. However, the Alexandrians took delight in his coarse wit, and joined in his amusements in their graceful and cultivated way; they liked him, and said that he used the tragic mask with the Romans, but the comic mask with them.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Plut. *Ant.* 29, 1–2: ἡ δὲ Κλεοπάτρα τὴν κολακείαν οὐχ, ὥσπερ ὁ Πλάτων φησί, τετραχῇ, πολλαχῇ δὲ διελούσα, καὶ σπουδῆς ἀπτομένῳ καὶ παιδιᾷς ἀεί τινα καινὴν ἡδονὴν ἐπιφέρουσα καὶ χάριν, διεπαιδαγωγεῖ τὸν Ἀντώνιον οὔτε νυκτὸς οὔτε ἡμέρας ἀνιῆσα. καὶ γὰρ συνεκύβευε καὶ συνέπινε καὶ συνεθήρρευε καὶ γυμναζόμενον ἐν ὅπλοις ἐθεᾶτο, καὶ νύκτωρ προσισταμένῳ θύραις καὶ θυρίσι δημοτῶν καὶ σκώπτοντι τοὺς ἔνδον συνεπλανᾶτο καὶ συνήλυε θεραπαινίδιου στολὴν λαμβάνουσα καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνος οὕτως ἐπειρᾶτο σκευάζειν ἑαυτόν. ὅθεν αἰεὶ σκωμμάτων, πολλάκις δὲ καὶ πληγῶν ἀπολαύσας ἐπανήρχετο: τοῖς δὲ πλείστοις ἦν δι' ὑπονοίας. οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ προσέχαιρον αὐτοῦ τῇ βωμολοχίᾳ καὶ συνέπαιζον οὐκ ἀρρῦθμως οὐδὲ ἀμούσως οἱ Ἀλεξανδρεῖς ἀγαπῶντες καὶ λέγοντες ὡς τῷ τραγικῷ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους χρηταὶ προσώπῳ, τῷ δὲ κωμικῷ πρὸς αὐτούς.

Board games were very popular among the legionaries and during the several military campaigns he undertook, Anthony must have had a lot of fun playing with his comrades.⁵⁶ Just like him, legionaries had a lot of free time, but were also exposed to risks, threats, and dangers. Life in legionary camps must have also been very stressful because of the strict discipline and it's easy to understand why soldiers took advantage of their free time to play, party, and eventually have some sex or romance. Or perhaps all of that at the same time...

A wooden tablet, found in the legionary camp of Vindonissa and dated to the 1st century AD, was inscribed on both sides with a message sent by a legionary to a comrade. The message says:

(External side) Keep in mind she that host you at the XII

(Internal side) So you will know where I prepare for the banquet, with various games and great revelries. Tomorrow, beside the most powerful god of games, I'll grab the dice-shaker like a gladium. Dear brother, be well.⁵⁷

We can assume that the XII mentioned in the letter is the civic number of the party's venue, but we don't know if the woman who waited the legionaries was the owner of a tavern or a public house, a private citizen involved in the party, or a prostitute, and the XII was the number of her *cubiculum*.

In any case, at least in the soldier's eyes, it must have been a very relaxing and joyful day with games, wine, food, laughter and eventually some intercourse.

⁵⁶ The attitude of Anthony and his fellows towards gambling is reported by different authors, but the one who insisted most on it was Cicero, in his *Philippics*, II, 23, 27, 39, 41; III, 35; VIII, 10; XIII, 11.

⁵⁷ 30-101 d.C., Vindonissa Museum, inv. – Nr. V.03.50/0.10. AE 1996, 1133. CEL add. p. 74, Nr. 1. (B). in M.A. SPEIDEL (1996: 188–191): *Im(!) mentem habe / hospitam tuam in / XII / Itaque scias ubi convivium orno / ludos varios quoque ac comisation- / em mundam cras per genios potis- / simos ludi crispo orcam sicut gladi- / um frater care vale / [---] frat[er] care vale*

Conclusion

In antiquity, connections between games and seduction, dice and sex, knucklebones and love were very complicated and articulate. This paper presented a selection of historical sources to show how deeply they were intertwined on a real and symbolic level, and how varied the outcomes of their combinations could be.

Clearly, these connections evolved along the centuries, but most of this process wasn't reported by ancient authors who weren't really interested in it, maybe except Ovid. What we know about romantic outcomes of ancient gaming practices is derived from accidental quotations occurring in texts whose aims were varied, or by rare archaeological findings. We don't have all the information we would like to have, but the evidence compiled here can however give an idea of how ancient Greeks and Romans used board games to reduce the interpersonal distance and create a safe, relaxed, and comfortable atmosphere among peers.

Reading those texts, we can feel on one hand the distance between us and the ancients, but on the other we can feel them very closely and witness how their interpersonal relations evolved more or less in the same way and towards the same aims as ours. They played and laughed, seduced and loved, enjoying life and mutual company, just as we do, simply according to different cultural habits.

A suitable end for this paper is a sentence written on a roman gaming board found in Timgrad. It expresses the attitude of the ancients towards life and resonates as a reminder for us too. It invites players to hunt each other, eventually in a romantic way, to bath, play and laugh, and it concludes, this means living! *Venari, lavari, ludere, ridere: occest vivere!*⁵⁸

⁵⁸ CIL VIII 17938. In: FERRUA 1964.

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How to Feel Again: Tibullus 1.5 and the Emotionalisation of Recipients

As early as 1979, Cairns described one of the most important characteristics of elegies of Tibullus: they play with the recipients' expectations, as they only pass on information to the recipients in a gradual manner. This essay attempts to apply this concept not only to Tibullus' elegy 1.5, but above all to the transition from Elegy 1.4 to 1.5. The focus will be on the 'confusing' and religious structures of the text, as these are clearly used to influence the emotional state of the recipients. A brief insight into the field of Emotion Studies together with Cairns' concept of "delayed information" will help to focus on the first 36 verses of the elegy and their attempts to create a 'confusing relationship' with the recipients.

Keywords: Roman Poetry, Tibullus, Elegy 1.5, Emotion Studies, "delayed information", ritual scenes

Introduction

In his book 'Tibullus. A Hellenistic Poet in Rome', Cairns points to a central aspect of Tibullus' poetry: Tibullus often only gradually grants his recipients access to key information about the situation of the speaking 'I' and the central characters of the respective elegy; Cairns describes this as „delayed information" and uses this characterisation to analyse Elegies 1.1 and 1.8 in particular. Among other important findings, this analysis seems to do justice to the artistry and structure of the elegies,

which focus directly on one of the great strengths of Tibullus' poetry, which still seems to be an untouched topic: its ability to evoke responses, especially emotional ones, from its recipients.¹ The present paper will analyse one elegy of the collection that is literally at the centre of Tibullus' first book, namely Elegy 1.5, but in addition to the 'confusing structures' of this elegy, the use of ritual and religious themes as 'emotional catalysts' to convey certain emotions and moods will also be considered. After this introduction, Cairns's concept is given more theoretical support by linking it to the broad field of emotion studies; in a third chapter, the transition from Elegy 1.4 to 1.5 and the opening passages of the elegy will be looked at in order to explain the beginning of this elegy through the marker of „delayed information“; a final chapter gives an outlook on the rest of the verses and summarises the findings.

Cairns' "delayed information" and Emotion Studies

In addition to the important finding that Tibullus was indeed influenced by Hellenistic literature, Cairns provides an important clue to the analysis of the elegies, namely that the poetic I of the elegies often provides little information about the situation and *personae* of the piece, and that additional information is revealed only gradually and slowly. Cairns thus analyses central elegies in Tibullus's works and is able to bring about a new approach to the elegies and their evaluation. More than 40 years after the book's publication, its ideas are still relevant today, but one level of analysis seems to have been forgotten: how does a text of a certain structure and content affect the recipients of a certain period? Cairns seems to be raising an important point, which I would like to

¹In what follows, we speak of an implicit offer of emotionalisation. This means that the text makes an offer to the recipients – but whether they accept it is again in the hands of the subject and is determined by their subjective and socio-cultural disposition.

incorporate into the larger field of Emotion Studies, to which at least parts of his analyses ultimately belong. The history of Emotion Studies is already long and too detailed to cover all the important works. The following considerations will focus on Simone Winko (2003), who has offered easy-to-use grids and important considerations for the analysis of poetry; however, her approach is too comprehensive to be applied to all the elements discussed here. We will therefore focus on three elements in particular: the role of ritual/religious scenes, the 'confusing structures', and the juxtaposition of positive and negative elements of certain scenes of the 'life of the I', focusing on the implicit 'offers' of the structures on their recipients. Such a selection must seem arbitrary; however, a focus on these three elements can be justified by their relevance to previous analyses of the elegy, together with the novelty of the focus on the religious/ritual themes and the method.

Before we begin to analyse the elegy, we need to clarify whether and how language or literature can 'encode' certain emotions, and whether we can therefore speak scientifically about the generation of emotions through texts.² One might say that emotions and feelings are always in the subject and therefore cannot be analysed; Winko counters critics who claim that any research into the generation of emotions can only fail because it is defined purely by the reading subject by pointing to empirical research which shows that the spectrum of possible effects is not as wide and differentiated as one might think, but the analysis has to remain at the level of the object and its structures.³ I would add that language is a means of communication between people within a given society and culture, which (also) aims to convey our ways of thinking and our desires.⁴ In the course of this discussion, it seems to be extreme-

² WINKO speaks of "coding", see e.g. WINKO (2003: 109).

³ WINKO (2003: 14).

⁴ For a discussion of the connection between emotion, society and culture, see WINKO (2003: 81–90).

ly fruitful to deal with the explicit and, above all, implicit structures that generate emotions and to introduce a new level of discourse into the 'rationalised' analysis of literature.⁵ When we read texts, the recipients must enter into a process of interaction with the literature in order to understand and 'assimilate' it. Language and, above all, literature can therefore - within certain cultures and societies that understand certain social and societal 'codes' - actualise certain moments in the recipients and thus also generate or at least 'trigger' emotions. Winko distinguishes two areas here, namely 'thematisation' and 'presentation'; while 'thematisation' deals with the explicit statements about emotions, 'presentation' is concerned with the implicit way in which emotions are presented, which includes both content-related and formal criteria.⁶ Certain elements of literature are thus capable of 'actualising' emotions in the recipients - especially with regard to the previous treatment of the theory of the „act of reading“; emotion-generating structures can thus be included to some extent in Iser's large area of „blanks“,⁷ especially in the area of 'presentation', since here we are dealing with implicitly emotion-generating structures that can only be actualised by certain persons belonging to a certain group. As discussed above, the religious/ritual themes, the 'confusing structures' and the striking juxtapositions of lifestyles and realities are analysed here, which are not just important topics for ancient texts as a whole but especially for Tibullus' elegies.

⁵ See SCHWARZ-FRIESEL (2013: 22–23).

⁶ WINKO (2003: for 'Thematisation' 111–114; for 'Presentation' 114–119). It is not possible to present all of WINKO's thoughts here; on pages 132–150, however, WINKO discusses explicitly lexically presented emotions, implicitly lexically presented emotions and the decisive cultural contextualisation.

⁷ In ISER's theories on the concepts of reception aesthetics (implicit reader and act of reading), the 'blanks' („Leerstellen“) are central elements that enable interaction between text and recipient. These empty spaces must be filled by the recipients in order to activate the full potential of the text in the act of reading; see ISER (1994: 59).

Who is it, that I love? Elegy 1.5, emotions, and a confused readerThe end of elegy 1.4⁸

In Elegy 1.4, the I presents what appears to be the beginning of a dialogue with the god Priapus; the I addresses him and asks for advice and help in winning over boys (v. 3). Priapus then delivers a speech of 64 verses in four blocks, a rather comical, didactic speech on the subject of winning over boys. At the end of the elegy, however, we learn that the dialogue was fictional and that Priapus' speech was a quotation from the poetic I (*Haec mihi, quae canerem Titio, deus edidit ore*, v. 73). The I gave this speech to a certain Titius, who will play no further role except in this poem; he nevertheless remained with his beloved (v. 75a), whereupon the I wishes to be celebrated as a teacher in the things of love (v. 75b). However, the importance of this activity as a teacher of love is strongly deconstructed at the end of the elegy, when the I tells us that he himself is enslaved by a boy (v. 81), and he himself admits in the last two verses that - if Marathus does not take pity on the I - he will probably be ridiculed as a teacher.

The elegy is noteworthy for two reasons: first, Elegy 1.4 as a whole seems to play with the recipients' expectations, especially in terms of form; at the beginning of the elegy, the recipients think that a kind of dialogue between the I and Priapus is being presented, but in the end they find an elegy in monologue form, just like all the others before it. Secondly, the content of this elegy revolves around the theme of love for young boys, which has not yet been addressed in Tibullus' elegies; the elegy thus also plays with the recipients' expectations in terms of

⁸ The excellent studies on the structure of the first book (LITTLEWOOD [1970] and MUTSCHLER [1985]) have shown that book 1 was probably structured following a logic; whether the book was already known in this form in antiquity cannot be proven, but the clear structure and the separation of books 1 and 2 (*Delia* and *Nemesis*; Ov. Am. 3, 9, 31–32: *sic Nemesis longum, sic Delia nomen habebunt, / altera cura recens, altera primus amor*) suggest an ancient arrangement of the book.

content. These two points seem to be central to the transition to Elegy 1.5 and should be considered below with regard to the generation of emotions in the recipients.

Prologue (vv. 1-8)

Elegy 1.5 begins – in the style of elegy 1.3 – with a dramatic introduction to the situation. The poetic I thought that it could survive the separation (*Asper eram et bene discidium me ferre loquebar*, v. 1), which – indicated by the imperfect tense⁹ – has probably been attempted for some time; however, the reality and the present time depict the I as desperate and ‘without glory’ (*at mihi nunc longe gloria fortis abest*, v. 2).¹⁰ It is striking that the I uses military language to describe his situation; just as the I presented his emotional state in elegy 1.3 by presenting itself as a classical *miles* and the alienation that this creates, it does the same here – *gloria fortis*, a classical military phrase, is used to describe the situation.¹¹ Elegy 1.5 without the previously read elegy 1.4 seems to offer us a desperate situation of the Roman love elegy and of Tibullus in particular, but with elegy 1.4 in the background, some questions arise: did not the I at the end of the elegy present itself as a teacher of love in order to acquire fame (*gloria cuique sua est*, 1.4,77), which now seems far away?¹² And who exactly is meant by this separation, Delia or Marathus, who is introduced in elegy 1.4?¹³ In addition, it should be mentioned that we cannot find any ‘evidence’

⁹ See also VRETSKA (1970: 301).

¹⁰ The Latin text is from POSTGATE (1905/15).

¹¹ For *gloria fortis* as a term of ‘military language’ see MURGARTROYD (1980: 162) and MALTBY (2002: 242).

¹² Even though he describes his teachings as *vana magisteria* (v. 84), we find a certain pride in the last verses; if Marathus spared him, the I would not be ridiculed.

¹³ This question has also been raised by PUTNAM (1973: 100), MUTSCHLER (1985: 86) and MALTBY (2002: 241), especially with regard to the terms *puer* and *gloria*. In addition, the possible damage of the Marathus episode to the relationship of the I with Delia should be mentioned; this may play a role in this situation. See BRIGHT (1971: 158 and MUTSCHLER (1985: 87).

for the I's relationship with Delia – or with any person for that matter;¹⁴ apart from elegy 1.3, there is no evidence of a 'real' relationship between Delia and the I. The I is depicted as completely alienated in its relationship with its beloved; the opening verses set up not only a confusing and question-raising picture, but also a desperate situation.

This confusion and despair is now presented to us in verses 3-4 in the form of a simile, when the I compares itself to a spinning top that is skilfully „beaten“ by a boy, which could show lines of connection with the punishment of slaves and thus with the *servitium amoris* (*Namque agor ut per plana citus sola verberare turben, / quem celer adsueta versat ab arte puer*, v. 3-4).¹⁵ At first sight, this is a parable, the fate of the I seems to be presented through an image. The state of confusion and despair is thus reinforced, while at the same time a new question arises – could the *puer* of the parable perhaps be Marathus, known from elegy 1.4, or the god Cupid?¹⁶ So the first four verses not only create an emotionally charged picture of the situation, but could also create tension and confusion in the recipient: Who and what is this about? From whom is the I being separated?¹⁷

The situation does not seem to improve in the following verses of this opening. We find a male object - again it is not clear who is being addressed here - who is to be 'burnt' and 'tormented' (v.5) so that he cannot say anything arrogant (vv.5-6); terrible words are to hold the person

¹⁴ See LEE-STECUM (1998: 158).

¹⁵ MURGATRYOD (1980: 162) emphasises the word *verberare*, which carries the connotation of punishment. LEE-STECUM (1998: 158) emphasises the "lack of control". Many scholars – e.g. SMITH (1913/64: 290–291), BULLOCH (1973: 76), PUTNAM (1973: 100), BRIGHT (1978: 155), BALL (1983: 82), and MALBY (2002: 242) – have drawn connecting lines to Kallimachos (*Epigr.* 1.9–10 Pf. /54, 9–10 Asper) and Virgil (*Aen.* 7, 378–384), which may reinforce the effect of this opening passage; the gyration seems to be an image of an extreme movement in general or of a strong love mania.

¹⁶ See LEE-STECUM (1998: 159). Contrary to the opinion of LEE (1982: 127, „one can hardly help thinking of Cupid here“), the text clearly plays with the previous poem and the term *puer*.

¹⁷ Initial reflections on the important connection between these first 4 verses and the previous poem were briefly considered by MUTSCHLER (1985: 86).

back. These verses could now be addressed to the *puer*, but they could also - more likely - be a form of self-address: the I, as we saw in elegy 1.4, has probably been a little too haughty and is admonishing himself to exercise restraint.¹⁸ Looking at the situation of the I, these 'punishments' are classic slave punishments, which confirms the *servitium amoris*.¹⁹ Verse 6 continues in a similar vein; an imperative addressing the lover is used to ask to be spared; he/she should do this in memory of the past nights of love (vv. 7-8). The last verses thus refer to the secret and already lived love relationship of the I with the beloved; at the same time, they take up the uncertainty of the previous verses - the poetic I's nights with other people don't seem clear anymore.²⁰ The first verses depict the I's desperate situation in various artistic ways: first, exclamations and a pictorial narrative style that draw the recipient into the situation; second, emotional text structures such as desperate love and separation; third, an exciting game with the expectations of the recipient, who is probably deliberately left in the dark at the beginning about the exact situation and the *personae* involved, which could reinforce the emotional structures from earlier.²¹ If we compare this opening passage with the structure of the elegy as a whole, we notice at least a hint of a temporal division; in verses 1-2 we seem to find the 'past' influencing the 'now' (vv. 3-4); in verses 5-8 we find entreaties and imperatives to the future. Elegy 1.5 thus also seems to play with different temporal structures from the outset and to use them as emotional reinforcements:

¹⁸ MALTBY (2002: 243) suggests here that the loss of 'language' is also a form of punishment for slaves. In addition, it should be mentioned that at the end of the elegy the I spoke quite haughtily about his existence as a teacher of love; compare Mutschler's formulation "self-confident announcement of being a teacher of love" (my English, MUTSCHLER [1985: 86]) in relation to elegy 1.4.

¹⁹ SMITH (1913/64: 291), PUTNAM (1973: 100), MURGATROYD (1980: 162-163), LEE (1982: 127) and MALTBY (2002: 243).

²⁰ Compare LEE-STECUM (1998: 160).

²¹ See MUTSCHLER (1985: 96-98).

the 'now' is provided with a backstory, this 'now' is simultaneously used as a terrible starting point for the appeals to the future.

The ritual: the healing of a girl (vv. 9-18)

Beginning in verse 9, the recipients receive some answers to their questions. The I mentions that a woman has been cured of a serious illness through his efforts (vv. 9-10: *Ille ego, cum tristi morbo defessa iaceres, / te dicor votis eripuisse meis*), which seems to answer at least one question: the elegy is about a female lover, not Marathus, but the name is still not mentioned; the suspense is likely to be maintained by this gradual revelation of information. The beginning emphasises the personal action of the I, *dicor* in conjunction with *eripuisse* takes the recipients back to the past and at the same time, like *dicitur* in Elegy 1.3, expresses an uncertainty for the recipient - is this really the truth?²² Or is the I inventing a story in order to emotionalise the situation for itself and the recipients?²³ The I – with the help of an old woman, probably a form of priestess or witch – has purified Delia with an atonement and sulphur (vv. 11-12).²⁴ A ritual seems to be used to create a certain emotional setting, here past attachment, fidelity and devotion are to be depicted; however, if one includes the doubtfulness through the *dicor*, this scene could also be a narrative created by the I itself in order to create precisely this emotional state in the recipients. Here we can again refer to the temporal structure of the elegy; Vrestka showed the actual story in comparison to the plot

²² See MURGATROYD (1980: 164), LEE (1982: 127), LEE-STECUM (1998: 161) and MALTBY (2002: 244).

²³ The emphasis on the action of the I in this scene has already been recognised by many researchers; see, for example, MALTBY (2002: 245). The purification ritual described here (*lustratio*) seems to be associated with the help of a witch; she seems to be the one who supports the I, but the I performs the ritual itself – at least in the self-narrative. For *lustratio*, see SMITH (1913/64: 293), DELLA CORTE (1980: 178), MURGATROYD (1980: 164–165), MALTBY (2002: 245) and PERRELLI (2002: 167).

²⁴ For the function of the *anus* in such rituals, see MURGATROYD (1980: 164–165) and MALTBY (2002: 244–245).

presented: the I helps the woman, then comes the *lena* and the lover, followed by a separation, the attempt to overcome the separation, and finally the resumption of the courtship of the beloved.²⁵ As in elegy 1.3, a 'back story' of ritual actions is told or perhaps even invented in order to reinforce the emotions conveyed by the I's current situation and to give the characters more depth.²⁶ This flashback is dominated by rituals: the I cured or freed the lover from bad dreams with salted sacrificial shot (vv. 13-14), even sacrificing to Hecate in a hidden and veiled way in an attempt to redeem her (vv. 15-16).²⁷ Not only are the scenes once again very vividly depicted (the lens is focused on the I in the action; clear depiction of a scene [healing]; exclamatory character of the verses [*ipse ... ipse ... ipse*]), but the devotion to the beloved reaches its climax through the sacrificial acts; the I tries everything to cure her illness. These rituals, their parts and the associated attempt to communicate with the gods are deeply rooted in Roman culture, reinforce the current emotional mood of the text ('emotional catalysts') and are therefore likely to provide a potential for identification for the recipients.²⁸

In the last verses of this retrospective passage, the I tells us that, despite the devotion, someone else now enjoys the woman's love; this person now uses the I's prayers in the same way (vv. 17-18: *Omnia persolvi: fruitur nunc alter amore, / et precibus felix utitur ille meis*).²⁹ This break

²⁵ VRETSKA (1970: 317–318); see MUSURILLO (1967 and 1970).

²⁶ Contrary to KRIEL (1977: 1), who sees this scene as 'reality' in contrast to the dream in the countryside.

²⁷ *Filum* normally means thread; in religious/ritual contexts, however, the term is also used to refer to the headband of priests, usually that of the *flamines* or *fetiales*. The tunica must be open during such ritual acts. For this and further information, see SMITH (1913/64: 294–295), DELLA CORTE (1980: 178), MURGATROYD (1980: 166) and PERRELLI (2002: 168).

²⁸ The turning to the deity Hecate can be interpreted here as an extreme – the I tries everything and seeks help from every deity, even from a dark witch goddess like Hecate. In addition, the possible function of Hecate as 'guardian of the liminal' can be emphasised here, see JOHNSTON (2006); the beloved Delia should not die and thus cross this threshold.

²⁹ MURGATROYD (1980: 166) and MALTBY (2002: 244, 246), emphasise that the asyndeton

is highly significant in terms of emotion studies. Firstly, the emotional sphere established in the opening verses is now reinforced: despite the loving and pious actions of the I, she has abandoned it. Worse still, she already has another lover, which reinforces the drastic nature of the initial situation. In the first eight verses, the I finds itself in an estranged relationship with its beloved, with love in general and with all the relationships it has built up in its life; the general form together with looks into the past and future life of the I allows the recipients to experience the emotional moments and thus to give an offer of an emotional response through this affective moment. At the same time, there is an uncertainty about the situation and the 'truthfulness' of the narrative, so that the recipients seem to receive an overall 'emotional cocktail'.

Just a Dream (vv. 19-36)

This situation is followed by a break from verse 19 onwards. Here, the I presents us with his wish, namely a happy life, if only his beloved were healthy – but a deity would not allow this (vv. 19-20: *At mihi felicem vitam, si salva fuisses, / fingebam demens, sed renuente deo*). *Fingebam demens* now seems to emphasise this part as imagination and the previous part as 'reality', although the recipients still cannot be sure of the 'reality' presented.³⁰ What's crucial for our purposes is that again a god seems to confront the desires of the I, emphasising the alienation of the previous verses in relation to the sphere of the gods, through the contrast between *felicem vitam* and *renuente deo*. Scioli points out that the revelation about the new lover in the verses before means that the wish of the I must be classified as completely unrealistic, and the scene is therefore

and the contrast between *ipse ego* and *alter* make the desperate situation evident in the design of the verses.

³⁰ The meaning of *fingebam* has already been recognised by many, see for example MALTBY (2002: 247) and SCIOLI (2015: 67). For a metapoetic reading of the verb, see SCIOLI (2015: 68–73).

emotionally charged for the recipients – the despair of the I is clearly evident in this imagination.³¹

As in the previous elegies, rural life is now presented to us as the counter-world or ideal world of the I; the scene is introduced by *rura col-am* in verse 21, where we finally learn the name of the woman of whom the I has been speaking all along: it is Delia, the beloved we know from elegy 1.3. Of course, love is not absent, and Delia enters the scene immediately after the vision of this dream in the countryside (v. 21: *mea Delia custos*), with a change from the second to the third person. The fact that Delia's name is revealed in precisely this context does not seem to be a coincidence: it is here – in this fiction of an ideal life on the countryside – that Delia appears, she is the guardian and head of the house. This time, however, the I's ideal of life is transformed; it is not the I who works in the country (as in elegy 1.1), but Delia who is the active person in this rural dream. The I is only a spectator in this dream; the recipients see this scene almost through the eyes of the I, emphasising the emotional immersion into the character.³² She enters the scene and takes care of grain and wine (vv. 22-24). This is followed by other tasks, such as counting the cattle (v. 25), playing with a slave boy (v. 26), offering grapes, ears of corn and a sacrificial meal to a peasant god (v. 27-28). Exactly which rural god this is has been the subject of much scholarly debate, but for our purposes and the creation of a rural setting, however, this question is unimportant – it is a rural god who fits into the setting of this rural dream perfectly.³³ The ritual creates a religious setting, which we already know from elegy 1.1, and thus increases the emotional power on

³¹ SCIOLI (2015: 60). MALTBY (2002: 247) refers to elegy 1,3 and in particular *prohibente deo* (1,3,21).

³² SCIOLI (2015: 63).

³³ See for a discussion of which god it could be: Silvanus (MURGATROYD [1980: 169] and MALTBY [2002: 248]), Bacchus, Ceres and Pales (DELLA CORTE [1990: 180]) are brought into the discussion.

the I and the recipients of the elegy. The aforementioned passivity of the I is emphasised once again in the last two verses of this passage about Delia's rural tasks; the I isn't just passive, this is done entirely according to the I's wishes (v. 30: *at iuvet in tota me nihil esse domo*).³⁴ The recipients see small scenes of Delia and the I in the countryside, the images focus on simple movements and on 'key features'.³⁵ If we think back to the desired ideal of life in elegy 1.1, we could speak here of the fulfilment of a *vita iners* that the I has wished for. These verses could therefore convey a positive emotional situation for the recipients through their rural and desirable ambience, looking back to the wishes of the I in elegy 1.1, especially in contrast to the I's desperate situation in the first verses.

Two elements seem particularly noteworthy here: first the comparison with the I in elegy 1.1, and second the contrast represented by the rituals. The tasks that Delia undertakes in this passage are almost identical to those in elegy 1.1, where we also find the harvesting of grain and the making of wine from grapes (v. 6), the preparation of must in bulk (v. 10), work with livestock (v. 29-32) and sacrifices to rural deities (Ceres, Priapus and Lares, verses 15, 18 and 20).³⁶ The ideal life is thus embodied by Delia in perfect harmony with the actions of the I in elegy 1.1, which further emphasises their close connection: the I and Delia want a similar life, namely one in the countryside and in piety. Secondly, the contrast between the emotions and feelings to be evoked is attached to the description of the rituals. This second sacrificial ritual of Delia to a rural god creates a calm, happy and gentle mood, especially in view of elegy 1.1, and serves as a conclusion to this portrayal of work in the country; Delia is also depicted as particularly pious by the verb *sciet*, as she is very

³⁴ Compare MUTSCHLER (1985: 88–89) and also LEE-STECUM (1998: 166), who emphasises the power structure; the I becomes the dominant through passivity, although we have so far seen the exact opposite of this.

³⁵ Compare SCIOLI (2015: 63).

³⁶ For a comparison, see also MUTSCHLER (1985: 89, n. 9).

adept at performing these tasks. This is in stark contrast to the cleansing ritual of the opening passage, which is not just about saving someone from fatal illness and does not address any rural gods, which would be the ideal gods of the poetic I, but the deity of witches and generally an underworld goddess, namely Hecate. As in Tibullus' earlier elegies, the ritual scenes act as 'mood catalysers', either generating or at least intensifying the feelings, emotions and ultimately moods themselves.

Messalla now enters this ideal life of the two of them; Delia takes care of Messalla, who not only appears as if in an epiphany, but is also entertained by Delia like a deity (vv. 31-32: *Huc veniet Messalla meus, cui dulcia poma / Delia selectis detrahat arboribus*). Vretska is right to emphasise the 'breaking in' of the future tense; future fantasy becomes „Zukunftsgewissheit”.³⁷ Although we have already found future forms before and therefore should not speak of a 'breaking in' of the future tense, the appearance of Messalla is intensified by the future tense; Delia actually worships Messalla and prepares a sacrificial feast for him as a 'servant' (vv. 33-34: *Et, tantum venerata virum, hunc sedula curet, / huic paret atque epulas ipsa ministra gerat*). The language now has clear religious connotations (*venerata ... curet ... paret ... epulas ... ipsa ministra*), Messalla actually enters this dream as a god-like figure; we continue to view this scene through the eyes of the I and experience the epiphany first-hand.³⁸ Just as in elegy 1.1, Delia and the I wish for rurality and religiosity as a breeding ground for love, here we find this dream portrayed again as a stark contrast to the unhappy scene at the beginning.³⁹ In addition to the general descriptive factors that contrast the mood of the scenes, the socio-religious action should again be mentioned as an emotional cat-

³⁷ VRETSKA (1970: 306–307).

³⁸ See SCIOLI (2015: 65).

³⁹ SCIOLI (2015: 62) mentions here that this rural ideal is divided into 3 parts of 4 verses each (verses 21–24, 25–28, 31–34), which creates a certain “snapshot” aesthetic of the individual scenes.

alyst; the darkness of the beginning contrasts here with the light/green of the dream; the illness or purification ritual of the active self contrasts with the joyful sacrificial ritual and feast with Delia in the active role, the 'witch' Hecate of the beginning contrasts with the rural deity and Messalla. The general conception of Messalla also seems worth noting again here: whereas in elegy 1.1 and 1.3 Messalla was a prime example of the rich Roman *miles* whose way of life was to be rejected, here the I has him appear as a true friend and almost as a god.⁴⁰

At the end, all this is presented to us as recipients once again as a dream; the I has only dreamed about this (vv. 35-36), the winds carry these wishes away. *Nunc* now breaks into the scene in a deictic manner and thus ends the imagination abruptly; *fingebam* recalls the *fingebam* of verse 19 and thus ends this section.⁴¹ The concept of *vota* deserves additional emphasis here; the *vota* previously uttered in ritual acts are thus resumed and once again precisely demonstrate the impossible realisation of the fiction of the I. Despite the rituals (purification ritual, offerings to Hecate) and the turning of the I in general, the relationship between Delia and the I can no longer be healed. This passage can thus be interpreted as a futile 'prayer', which on the one hand shows the focus on the attempt to 'heal' the situation of the I, and on the other hand seems to increase the emotional value for the recipients.⁴²

Conclusion and outlook

Unfortunately, there is not enough space here to analyse the elegy in its entirety in terms of the themes discussed; the analyses are therefore intended to provide a new approach to interpreting the structures of

⁴⁰ See MOSSBRUCKER (1983: 67) and MUTSCHLER (1985: 90).

⁴¹ MURGATROYD (1980: 171), MUTSCHLER (1985: 90) and MALTBY (2002: 249).

⁴² SCIOLI (2015: 61–62) interprets this scene as a prayer spoken aloud at the door of the beloved.

the elegy's effect in terms of the relationship between recipient and text, rather than a new overall interpretation.

After the serene excursion to Priapus in elegy 1.4, elegy 1.5 brings the recipients back to the sad realms of elegy 1.3 and Delia. Right at the beginning, the I laments the separation from a loved one, which already sets the recipients' confusion in motion: what separation? And the separation from which person, Marathus or Delia? This feeling of confusion is immediately presented to the recipients with the simile of a playing *puer*. Could this *puer* be referring to Marathus? Or rather the god Cupid? After accusations against herself, a look back at a healing ritual, that further emotionalises the separation even more, a female form finally makes it clear who this separation is about, namely Delia. The flashback leads to a dreamlike fantasy in which the terrifying image of the sick Delia is reversed. She takes care of everything in the house and in the fields, the I only watches; the gloomy healing ritual is contrasted with the bright image of sacrifices in the countryside, as in the ideal of the I in elegy 1.1. After the passages we have discussed, however, we return to the sad beginning of the elegy: all of this is only fiction, the I still has strong love pains and tries to banish them with wine and other lovers (vv. 37-46). Now another antagonist to the 'tragedy' of the I is introduced, a *lena*. She is cursed by the I; the curse again seems to serve as an emotional catalyst for the I's desperate situation, while at the same time the recipients nearly curse the *lena* themselves through their reading in the sense of a performative act (vv. 47-58). After this curse, the I shows itself in his *servitium amoris*, represented by the advantages of a poor man (vv. 59-74). The last two verses show us that the I is in a state of complete uncertainty.

Elegy 1.5 and the other elegies seem to play with the feelings of the recipients: the I stands before us as the main character, whose emotional state is centred in front of the eyes of the recipients; however, it often

only allows the recipients to slowly gain central knowledge about the situation of the I, the *personae* involved – especially who the lover in this elegy is – and the story itself. This ‘game’ of riddles and the resulting offers of emotions are reinforced and intensified by the use of ritual scenes that implicitly contain certain emotions and moods (‘emotional catalysers’), as well as the depiction of desires in contrast to the reality of the I. Tibullus’ elegies are thus not just skillful plays on various intertexts with other texts, but emotionally evocative texts that make the recipient experience the emotional state of the I and attempt to transfer it to the recipient.

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BRIGITTA IZING-GOMBOS

The Economic Strategy of the Roman Empire in the Provinces – with Particular Regard to the Administrative Conditions

In my research, I examine the financial economy of the Roman Empire, with particular regard to the economic strategies used in the case of occupied provinces and the construction of the necessary administrative system. I am looking for an answer to the question of how the empire built its own economic scheme in the occupied territories, and how the local economic and political leadership adapted. For this, I analyze the construction of the administrative system of the two important provinces of the Roman Empire, Judea, and Egypt, and then compare them based on the criteria I have set up. In the case of some provinces, the motivation of the Romans was the economic exploitation of the territory, with maximum efficiency and minimum investment of power. Thus, after minor modifications, the existing legal order was accepted, respecting the governance structures that had existed before in the occupied territory, as long as the legal order was effective and its members were willing to cooperate with the Roman Empire. In general, there was little similarity between the administrations of the provinces, since Rome mostly respected the local political-economic structure established decades or centuries before the arrival of the Romans. At the same time, a methodological pattern can be observed, which emerges both in the case of Judea and Egypt; on the one hand, before the adoption of the new laws, the natural resources and wealth of the area were assessed, the applicable legal system was indicated, and taxes were determined, and on the other hand, negotiations were conducted with the local elite. In my research, I intend to present the different effects of the Roman mechanism on the local economies.

Keywords: Roman Empire, administration, economy, provinces, Egypt, Middle East, taxes

This research presents an economic analysis of the role played by Judaea and Egypt in the Roman Empire. To understand the economic system of the Roman Empire, it is worth examining its political system.¹ Until 27 BC, the Roman Republic was based on political elements such as the magistracy system, which was a collection of various leadership positions. This included secular and religious leaders. Although positions could be won through elections, due to the free structure of the political system, it was coded that certain social groups and people would acquire excessive power. It was no different in the Republic either. The state was led by oligarchs, who later split into two large groups due to the expansion of the empire and its land policy; the chivalric and senatorial orders were formed. Since political power was basically determined by wealth and family background, it happened that individuals who did not particularly understand it seized power. With the rise of Augustus, the political system changed, with which economic stability emerged.² Although the emperorship did not mean that power was exercised by people with the appropriate skills, it was able to minimize political rivalry and social tensions. At first, this resulted in fewer rebellions and periods of civil war, as a result of which an economic mechanism based on stable foundations could develop.³ This mechanism also extended to the provinces, albeit in different ways.

The provinces can be divided into three groups based on imperial interest: defensive, economic and central. Provinces with limes, such as Dacia and Pannonia, had a protective function. While Hispania, Gaul, Egypt and the Middle Eastern provinces were among the areas that supplemented – and sometimes compensated for – the taxes to be paid to the state with the various income from trade.⁴ The land of Italia had

¹DUNCAN-JONES (1974: 1–13).

²MADDISON (2007: 13–15).

³MADDISON (2007: 16).

⁴HOPKINS (1980: 101) see further: MACMULLEN (1987: 737–754); TEMIN (2006: 130–151);

the only central function, from which the state was managed from a political–economic point of view until the reforms of Diocletian who reformed the monetary administration of the Empire as well as the final division of the empire in 395, decreed by Theodosius.⁵ The Roman economy between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD, was not controlled by the state. Instead, the trade was determined by free competition, which encouraged individual provinces to take advantage of their natural resources and develop product-specific export policies.⁶ Another motivating factor for the provinces was none other than to fulfill of the requirement of taxation itself.

Tax forms were developed under the Roman Republic. *Tributum* was paid directly to the state by all taxpayers, regardless of whether they were Roman citizens or residents of conquered territories.⁷⁸

Vectigalia, on the other hand, were required to be paid after the use of some service.⁹ The tax system of the Roman Empire was extremely diverse, differing not only by province but also by areas within a province. The types of indirect taxes varied from area to area.¹⁰

In order for the state to be able to collect an adequate amount of taxes, it had to be aware of the number of taxpayers. This information

KISER–KANE (2007: 197–212); FRIESEN (2009: 61–91).

⁵ BRUNT (1979: 129–132), HOPKINS (1980: 101).

⁶ OPDEBEECK (2005: 44).

⁷ Cic. *pro Leg. Manil.* 6, 17. *Etenim si vectigalia nervos esse rei publicae semper duximus, eum certe ordinem, qui exercet illa, firmamentum ceterorum ordinum recte esse dicemus.*

⁸ Liv. 5, 12, 8–13: “The victorious tribunes, in order that the commons might reap an immediate advantage from their effort, published a proposal of an agrarian law, and forbade the tax to be paid, since pay was required for such a number of troops, while the success of their arms in any of the wars, had been no more than sufficed to keep their hopes in suspense”. Transl. BAKER.

⁹ Cic. *Or.* 1, 35. “Those documents remain at Miletus, and will remain as long as that city lasts. For the Milesian people had built ten ships by command of Lucius Marcus out of the taxes imposed by the Roman people, as the other cities of Asia had done, each in proportion to its amount of taxation.” Transl. YONGE.

¹⁰ BLANTON–CHOI–LIU (2022: 73).

allowed accurate taxation. The Roman Empire inherited a tax system based on the *census* from the Roman Republic. The *census* data recorded and clearly reflected the owners, how much movable and immovable property they had. This information was used to determine the amount of tax that can be imposed on them based on each tax category.¹¹

The censorship office facilitated the supervision of tax collection, which was carried out according to the shared power between the imperial (or senatorial) institutions and the local administration. Therefore, local governments were responsible for collecting taxes within their own territory. Although specific provisions varied from province to province, censors oversaw tax collection throughout the empire and sent a portion of the levies to the *aerarium* or to the *fiscus*.¹²

There were few similarities between the administrations of the provinces, as Rome mostly respected the local political and economic structures that had been established decades or centuries before the arrival of the Romans. Accordingly, local residents continued to fill the available positions in these governments. The only commonality was that they were all subject to the Roman governors.¹³ As a result, most of the wealth of a given province was concentrated in the hands of the emerging elite.

Prior to Roman occupation, both provinces had a rich history, developed political and economic systems, and underwent significant Hellenisation. During the following of the Roman conquest of the aforementioned areas, a correlation can be observed. However, different segments demonstrate that the Roman Empire applied a distinct administrative and economic strategy in certain areas, adapting to their heritage.

¹¹ GOODMAN (1987: 35).

¹² BLANTON-CHOI-LIU (2022: 73).

¹³ GOODMAN (1987: 35–36).

Judaea

To comprehend this phase of diplomatic history, it is worth examining the political activities of the Hasmoneans before the arrival of the Romans.¹⁴

The Empire and the Maccabean rulers established diplomatic relations before the occupation of the territory due to their common enemy, the Seleucids. Although the Romans were unable to prevent the Seleucid victory over the Jews, the alliance was later renewed.¹⁵

In addition to the covenant, the highly heterogeneous religious situation of the Jews during this period and the Maccabees' attitude towards it were equally significant. The contradictions between the various Jewish sects primarily arose from different interpretations of the Torah and the desire to assimilate into foreign powers.

This often gave rise to internal political contradictions, a similar dispute arose when the Romans arrived. Aristobulus incited a rebellion against his brother, who had to leave the country for a short time.¹⁶ Hyrcanos retaliated with a revenge campaign, forcing his brother and his followers behind the walls of Jerusalem with his 50 000 Arabian army. When the Romans arrived in the region, Pompey's envoy, Scaurus, was approached by both Hyrcanus II and his brother, Aristobulus, to offer an alliance in exchange for political support.¹⁷

¹⁴ 1Macc 8, 1 „Judas had heard of the reputation of the Romans. They were valiant fighters and acted amiably to all who took their side. They established a friendly alliance with all who applied to them.”

¹⁵ 1Macc 8, 19–20; 29: „After making a very long journey to Rome, the envoys entered the senate chamber and spoke as follows: -Judas, called Maccabeus, and his brothers, with the Jewish people, have sent us to you to establish alliance and peace with you, and to be enrolled among your allies and friends. (...) On these terms the Romans have made an agreement with the Jewish people.”

¹⁶ ATKINSON (2016: 146–149).

¹⁷ GOODMAN (1987: 15–20); J. BJ 6, 3: “As soon, therefore, as he [Scaurus] was come into the country, there came ambassadors from both the brothers, each of them desiring his

At first, it seemed that Aristobulus had gained the favour of the Romans. Upon Pompey's arrival in Syria in 63 BC, the general recognized that an alliance with Hyrcanus II, who possessed greater political talent and power, would be more advantageous for the Romans.¹⁸¹⁹

Consequently, Hyrcanus II took over. He held both a political position and a sacred role as a high priest. Furthermore, the Sanhedrin was dissolved. It is believed that the Sanhedrin was not an official and independent organization of the Judaeian government, but rather a self-organized advisory body that was subordinate to either the king, the high priest, or the patriarch depending on the time period.²⁰ The first reference to a Sanhedrin in Palestine under this title dates back to the reforms of Gabinius. After Caesar came to power, these five councils were established as a permanent political and economic organization tasked with regulating direct taxation. In 47 BC, a decree was passed revoking the economic and political power of the Senate.²¹ The previous

assistance; but Aristobulus's three hundred talents had more weight with him than the justice of the cause; which sum, when Scaurus had received, he sent a herald to Hyrcanus and the Arabians, and threatened them with the resentment of the Romans." Transl. WHISTON.

¹⁸ GRÜLL (2016: 94–95).

¹⁹ J. BJ 8, 4–5: "When Hyrcanus and Antipater were thus deprived of their hopes from the Arabians, they transferred the same to their adversaries; and because Pompey had passed through Syria, and was come to Damascus, they fled to him for assistance; and, without any bribes, they made the same equitable pleas that they had used to Aretas, and besought him to hate the violent behavior of Aristobulus, and to bestow the kingdom on him to whom it justly belonged, both on account of his good character and on account of his superiority in age. However, neither was Aristobulus wanting to himself in this case, as relying on the bribes that Scaurus had received: he was also there himself, and adorned himself after a manner the most agreeable to royalty that he was able. But he soon thought it beneath him to come in such a servile manner, and could not endure to serve his own ends in a way so much more abject than he was used to; so he departed from Diospolis. At this his behavior Pompey had great indignation; Hyrcanus also and his friends made great intercessions to Pompey; so he took not only his Roman forces, but many of his Syrian auxiliaries, and marched against Aristobulus." Transl. WHISTON.

²⁰ ATKINSON (2016: 148).

²¹ ATKINSON (2016: 150).

chaotic system was reorganized and regulated, and some concessions were made to the Jews.²² Among other things, it was confirmed that Judaea had to pay tithes to „Hyrkanus and his sons“ every year, except in the *Shmita*, the Sabbatical year.²³

The port city of Sidon, known for its thriving commerce, was required to pay a crop tax equivalent to 10.7% of its agricultural production every other year. The equally significant port city of Joppa had to pay an annual grain tax of 20,675 modii, as well as port and export taxes, with the exception of every seventh year.²⁴ The decree stated that the head of the Jewish state in Jerusalem should raise and pay both the tax of the Jewish state and the tax due after Joppa. This eliminated the basis of the arbitrary demands that the Jews had endured until now.²⁵

Antipater, Herod's father, was responsible for organizing the tax collection process as a financial deputy. The local elite continued to par-

²²J. AJ 14, 194–195: “For these reasons I will that Hyrcanus, the son of Alexander, and his children, be ethnarchs of the Jews, and have the high priesthood of the Jews for ever, according to the customs of their forefathers, and that he and his sons be our confederates; and that besides this, everyone of them be reckoned among our particular friends. [195] I also ordain that he and his children retain whatsoever privileges belong to the office of high priest, or whatsoever favors have been hitherto granted them; and if at any time hereafter there arise any questions about the Jewish customs, I will that he determine the same. And I think it not proper that they should be obliged to find us winter quarters, or that any money should be required of them.” Transl. Whiston.

²³1Macc 6, 3 “The Jewish people abstained from cultivating the land every seventh year, which exempted them from paying taxes. This exemption was highly valued as it kept the sabbatical years tax-free. However, during the seventh year, the pantries were depleted, and the remaining reserves were claimed by those seeking refuge in Jerusalem from the pagans.” Transl. SCHWARTZ.

²⁴J. AJ 14, 206: “and that Hyrcanus, the son of Alexander, and his sons, have as tribute of that city from those that occupy the land for the country, and for what they export every year to Sidon, twenty thousand six hundred and seventy-five modii every year, the seventh year, which they call the Sabbatic year, excepted, whereon they neither plough, nor receive the product of their trees.”

1 modius equals 6.7 kg of grain, which means that 20 675 modii of grain equals 138 522 kg.

²⁵УДОХ (2006: 32).

ticipate during the restructuring of the tax collection system used by the Hasmoneans and their predecessors.²⁶

Following the end of the reign of the last Hasmonean king and the election of Herod as the client king, there were changes in the types of taxes. It is worth noting that although the position of client king was typically given to a lineal descendant, in the absence of a Hasmonean successor, both the ruler and the senate believed that Herod could help maintain Rome's absolute power in the region. Unfortunately, little is known about the Herodian tax system. However, various forms of taxation can be attributed to Herod based on theories created by researchers who have studied the taxation conditions of the surrounding areas.²⁷ It is claimed that Herod's kingdom, while reflecting the Roman imperial administration, also served as a model for Hellenistic kingdoms.²⁸ The Roman Empire had the authority to impose any tax on the Jews that was also present in Seleucid Syria, Ptolemaic Egypt, and the Roman Empire.²⁹ However, the tenants of state-owned lands paid a rent to the king, which was effectively equivalent to a land tax. This tax did not go to Rome but instead enriched the province's coffers. Additionally, it is evident that Herod collected head taxes from his subjects. However, sources indicate that he waived indirect taxes during years of drought.³⁰ This was a relief for taxpayers who owned or leased private land because based on the Tanach

²⁶ KEDDIE (2019: 116–118).

²⁷ see further: GOODMAN (1997); RICHARDSON (1996).

²⁸ UDOH (2006: 113–114).

²⁹ J. AJ 7, 218: "He [Vespasianus] also laid a tribute upon the Jews wheresoever they were, and enjoined every one of them to bring two drachmae every year into the Capitol, as they used to pay the same to the temple at Jerusalem. And this was the state of the Jewish affairs at this time." Transl. WHISTON.

³⁰ J. AJ 14, 200: "Caius Caesar, consul the fifth time, hath decreed, That the Jews shall possess Jerusalem, and may encompass that city with walls; and that Hyrcanus, the son of Alexander, the high priest and ethnarch of the Jews, retain it in the manner he himself pleases; and that the Jews be allowed to deduct out of their tribute, every second year the land is let [in the Sabbatic period], a corus of that tribute; and that the tribute they pay be not let to farm, nor that they pay always the same tribute." Transl. WHISTON.

on every seventh years Judeans must let their land rest.^{31 32} In order for Herod to implement this large-scale remission of land taxes, Rome had to grant him control over the regulation of direct taxes. This would have had a symbolic rather than a strictly financial effect on the middle class. To understand the consequences of the change, we must thoroughly examine the evidence of the censuses' execution in relation to tax collection. However, this is challenging due to the incomplete sources of the entire Herodian taxation system, and the exact amounts are unknown.³³

Based on the available data, it is assumed that the following tax types existed in the discussed period:

Income	Description
Tributum Capitis	It was a form of head tax, in the case of married person was also supplemented with „wife tax“ as well.
Tributum Soli	It is based on the total value of the property or the percentage of the property's agricultural yield, collected at imperial provinces.
Portoria	Customs that was paid at harbors and ports.
Vectigalia	Tithe paid to the state
Stipendium	It is unknown, it was probably based on the phoros, i.e. it could have been a protection money, paid in the senatorial province.
Purchase and Sales tax	It was paid in cash at city gates, ports, markets, village fairs and customs which posted along trade routes. Also it had to be paid for slaves, oils, clothes, skins, furs and other valuable products.

³¹ KEDDIE (2019: 119).

³² *Exodus* 23, 10–11: “Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield; but in the seventh you shall let it rest and lie fallow. Let the needy among your people eat of it, and what they leave let the wild beasts eat. You shall do the same with your vineyards and your olive groves.” Transl. ROSENBERG.

³³ KEDDIE (2019: 121).

Income	Description
Trade tax, taxes on certain professions	It had to be paid in case of practicing certain professions, like butchery, prostitution etc.
Religious duties	This type of tax was also called a „tax of revenge“. After the Jewish war, it had to be paid by Jews who lived in the territory of the Empire.
Crown tax	Its definition is disputed, it is believed to have been modeled on the Egyptian and Seleucid crown tax, a type of annual tax that was collected in cash.
Toll on roads	It had to be paid on certain roads and mostly trading routes
Salt tax	It was one of the most important types of taxes which was used not only for flavouring, but also for preservation and for carrying out certain phases of industrial work.

Source: HAR-EL (1978: 554), UDOH (2006), KEDDIE (2019: 114)

During the Roman Empire's provincial aspirations, Judaea was subject to the disproportionate power of Herod and the local elite, both in local and regional finances. The local elite managed to save their wealth and positions of power by integrating themselves into the new political era when Pompey introduced the imperial administrative system.³⁴ Herod's large-scale constructions and investments heavily burdened the taxpayers. The reasons for such constructions are multifaceted. In addition to symbolising his own power, Herod likely employed Hellenization as a cultural tool to maintain his political and economic power against the Roman Empire, even if only in appearance. Herod's political acumen is evident in his ability to implement a flexible policy that appeased the Roman ruler while also withholding a significant portion of Judaeian revenues for personal gain. Although these infrastructure investments had the potential to bring relative prosperity to his empire,

³⁴KEDDIE (2019: 16).

Herod's debt endangered the economic stability of the province.³⁵ While Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus were attempting to build their social base, Herod focused on strengthening his alliance with the Romans. This was condemned by the majority of Jewish society.³⁶

In general, the new Roman taxation system was not significantly more drastic than previous systems. This is because overtaxation was typical under the Seleucid rule, the Hasmoneans, and even Herod, which the new system did not prevent but only reduced.³⁷ Under imperial control, the tax system underwent transformation, but the level of tax burdens did not decrease, and income was unequally demanded from the poorer sections of society. The state entrusted the local elite with positions related to the determination and collection of taxes and the census. This was due to the economic interest of Rome meeting the principle of the sacred power of the current high priest. It was believed that the people had a duty to support the divine messengers.³⁸

Egypt

In 30 BC, when Octavian conquered Egypt, a significant economic change occurred in the Roman Empire. Rome gained unrestricted access to high-quality Alexandrian wheat, and navigation on the Red Sea opened up a water route for long-distance trade, resulting in a more efficient and faster pace of trade. The swift expansion of trade not only led to an influx of luxury goods, which proved to be financially detrimental to the Roman Empire, but the fees, tariffs, and taxes associated with them accounted for over a third of the empire's revenue.³⁹ As is

³⁵ UDOH (2006: 115–116).

³⁶ KEDDIE (2019: 121).

³⁷ KEDDIE (2019: 16).

³⁸ KEDDIE (2019: 112).

³⁹ CAPPONI (2005: 25).

typical with the conquest of new territories, the establishment of the administrative system commenced in Egypt. Although the administrative system was primarily constructed during the reign of Octavian and underwent only minor changes until Diocletian, the sources used to study it mostly date back to the 2nd and 3rd centuries.⁴⁰

At the beginning of the last century, historians believed that, based on the sources, it can be concluded that Egypt, which became a Roman province, was the legal continuity of the Ptolemaic, Hellenized administrative policy, and therefore it is not worth comparing an area with attributes different from other provinces. This argument can be supported by the fact that, in addition to Latin, Greek also remained the official language due to the vast majority of papyri from Egypt are in Greek.⁴¹ At the same time, in my opinion, this does not yet support the above argument, since a significant part of the population was a Greek native speaker, it is easy to theorize that Greek remained as the official language purely for practical reasons.⁴²

However, this statement is only partially true. When Rome conquered each new territory, it developed a different administrative structure. The development of this structure depended largely on the local economic and political conditions. In most cases, the empire had an interest in settling with the local leaders and partially retaining the previous legal system. This was statistically more likely to enjoy the support of the locals. Rome aimed to establish or endorse self-sufficient communities, constructed as Greco-Roman cities and governed by their own elite. This approach allowed Rome to efficiently utilize the economic resources of the area with minimal effort. If the aristocracy cooperated with Rome and assumed the responsibility of civil administration, the

⁴⁰ CAPPONI (2005: 25).

⁴¹ CAPPONI (2005: 26).

⁴² CAPPONI (2005: 26–27).

state could grant legal privileges and ensure protection against other peoples. Rome's protection and broad tolerance imposed a significant burden on the province, including the extraction of natural resources, high taxes, and constant military occupation. While Roman legislation did reintroduce the legal situation of the Ptolemaic era, several measures were also introduced that unequivocally represented the unlimited power of the Romans, including that of the emperor.

Although assimilation between different cultures and families can be observed in the Hellenistic age, the Augustan administration made strict rules, primarily to preserve Roman civil rights.⁴³ By law, Roman–Egyptian families were automatically considered Egyptian and did not receive Roman citizenship. The Greeks had an advantage over the Egyptians, but only those who lived in designated cities such as Alexandria, Naukratis, and Ptolemais were counted. These cities, except for Alexandria, followed the Greek political system and had their own party. The *demos* managed the legal community. In smaller towns and villages, self-government mirroring the old system was typical.⁴⁴ However, a person with Roman citizenship could hold the main management positions in the province. While certain official positions from the Ptolemaic era remained, most were transformed. The *Praefectus* of Egypt, like in other provinces, had military, administrative, and judicial powers, and was assisted by military and administrative officials.⁴⁵ It can be concluded that individuals with Roman citizenship held the primary positions in the provincial administration, while Greeks or Egyptians held the smaller, local-level official positions. This demonstrates continuity of law in Egypt, while also showing the development of Romanization tendencies observed in other provinces.

⁴³ RITNER (1998: 6–8).

⁴⁴ CAPPONI (2005: 26–30).

⁴⁵ CAPPONI (2005: 48).

In this study, the focus is on the privileges associated with Roman civil law. The law granted certain concessions and exemptions from specific taxes, revealing the economic interests of the empire behind the strict legislation.

The Augustan tax reform eliminated the previously confusing and often ad hoc tax types of local management. With the evaluation of fee items, the collection of repayment details, and the detailed administration of receipts proving that the method of tax collection has undergone a significant change.⁴⁶

The Augustan tax reform was able to collect taxes more efficiently and in larger quantities. This was achieved by reducing various tax burdens. Although many receipts do not specify the types of taxes, it is inferred that the Ptolemaic taxes were also included in the new system. Prior to tax collection, a census was conducted, which involved a comprehensive cadastral survey of all movable and immovable property.⁴⁷ All male individuals aged between 14 and 60 were required to pay the tax.⁴⁸ The available sources indicate the following types of tax in Egypt:

Poll tax or laography	Similar to the Judeaean poll tax but it varied on nomoses.
Dam tax	It had to be paid 6 2/3 drachmas after every dam.
Pork tax	It's unknown whether to refer to eating or keeping pork but 2 drachmas had to be paid.
Crop tax	It was collected by tax farmers, often with a high profit margin.
Eiskritikon	Similar to Judaea, this tax was paid on certain professions, like butchers etc.

⁴⁶ MONSON (2014: 129).

⁴⁷ MONSON (2014: 137).

⁴⁸ BAGNALL-FRIER-COALE (1994: 15–20).

Sales tax	It was paid primarily on wine, oil, and livestock–
Penalty tax	Tax on Jews for rebellion after 70 AD.
Annona	A type of tax used to supply the Roman army.
Toll fee	Toll on the route through Koptos.
Toll fee toll on the water route	On the water route through the Red Sea.
Enkyklion.	It was paid after certain properties
Vicesima libertatis	Slave tax, 5%
Vicesima hereditatum	Inheritance tax

RITNER (2008: 6-10)

In addition to burdensome taxes, extra burdens appeared that obliged taxpayers to work for free or pay additional expenses. The burdens imposed on farmers not only made their lives difficult but also affected local, particularly religious, life.⁴⁹ During the reign of the pharaohs, temples served not only as sacred buildings but also as economic centres. The former Edfu temple walls and Demotic language papyri provide information about the donations.⁵⁰

Areas donated to temples	temples	Amount of area donated	Other information
Apollinopolis nomos, Upper Egypt	Edfu	9181 arura (~33 327ha)	This represented 18% of the area

⁴⁹ RITNER (2008: 10–11).

⁵⁰ LLOYD (2010: 278).

Pathyris and Latopolis	Edfu	4000 arura (~ 14 520 ha)	–
Memphis nomos	Ptah and Apis	1680 arura (~463 ha)	This belonged to Ptah and Apis temples
Memphis nomos	Apis	10 arura (~36 ha)	It belonged to Apis
Kerkeosiris	Tebtunis	1000 arura (~3630 ha)	The data is from 100 BC
Kerkeosiris	Tebtunis	130 arura (~ 472 ha)	It was a private donation from the clergy of Kerkeosiris.
Kerkeosiris	Souchos and Soknebtynis	292 arura (~ 1060 ha)	This represented 6% of the area.

LLOYD (2010: 279)

The temples often operated a self-sustaining economy, engaging in trades such as weaving, oil and papyrus production. They had multiple production plants for these goods. Additionally, due to the frequent interactions between gods and humans, they offered consultations with the gods for a fee, similar to indulgences in medieval Europe. The temples also generated income through various secretarial jobs. In addition, pharaohs could earn a significant amount of money from funeral customs, particularly mummification and associated rituals.⁵¹ They also paid tribute to temples, with Ptolemy donating 2,500 talents in the 21st year of his reign, equivalent to his monthly income (at that time, he had

⁵¹ LLOYD (2010: 281).

an annual income of 30,000 talents).⁵² In addition, temples also received concessions such as partial or total tax exemptions. In some cases, they could also receive a share of individual taxes.⁵³ Starting from the 2nd century BC, churches received *syntaxis*, an allowance given by the ruler for the services of the priests. It is assumed that the state wanted to compensate the churches, in whose economic life the state interfered.⁵⁴

During the reign of Augustus, a law was introduced that prohibited the high priesthood from engaging in any financial transactions outside of the church. Legal and social changes also impacted the local high priestly elite. During the Ptolemaic period, the wealthy Memphite high priestly family dominated the church bureaucracy and the economy, and maintained close ties with the royal court. Like medieval popes, the Egyptian high priests wielded significant political and economic power. They crowned the following rulers and supervised the collection of revenues from a vast area connected to religious institutions.⁵⁵

Upon Octavian's arrival, the Memphite priesthood was replaced by IV. Petubas was filled by him. Petubas died suddenly at the age of sixteen, and the circumstances of his death are rather suspicious. It is noteworthy that an official funeral was delayed for six years. His successor, II. Psenamoun, took over in 23 BC. Petubas disappeared, ending the dynasty of Memphite priests. In the absence of a high priest, church affairs were under the emperor's 'private account', that is, secular authority. During Hadrian's reign, religious power was centralized under a civilian bureaucrat of knightly rank, known as the 'High Priest of Alexandria and all Egypt'.⁵⁶

⁵² LLOYD (2010: 281).

⁵³ LLOYD (2010: 282).

⁵⁴ LLOYD (2010: 282–283).

⁵⁵ RITNER (2008: 6–9).

⁵⁶ RITNER (2008: 8–10).

This phenomenon is noteworthy, as ecclesiastics held significant political and economic positions in other provinces as well. In Judaea, the diplomatic relationship established with the Hasmoneans allowed the priestly aristocracy to partially retain its political and economic power. In contrast, the high priesthood in Egypt was politically and economically incapacitated, and in some cases, eliminated. It is believed that this was due to the fact that while secular and ecclesiastical positions were concentrated in a narrow circle in Judaea, in Egypt, the secular leadership, particularly the nomos and the life of some settlements, was separated. Although religion had a significant influence on the daily life of Egyptians, official positions were separate from it. Therefore, after regulating the political-economic life by law, the Roman Empire primarily entrusted the local Roman and Greek leaders with the administration's management. The empire did not have an interest in reconciling with the priestly aristocracy. Instead, it profited more from the confiscation of church property and assets.

Conclusion

In general, when the Roman Empire occupied a new territory, it would assess its natural and economic resources. In search of potential and loyal allies, the empire would enter into diplomatic relations with the local elites. Then, using census data, various taxes were levied to extract revenue from the province as efficiently as possible. This same strategy was employed during the conquest of Judaea and shortly thereafter, Egypt. In Judaea, the Hasmoneans were supported by the majority of society and Rome. In Hellenized Egypt, a law was established to benefit the mainly Roman and secondly Greek population living in the area, while suppressing and preventing the economic power of the clergy, which had previously been dominant.

The Roman Empire did not exhibit a clear systematic approach, but rather applied effective patterns to shape the history of each province in their own image.

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Two Family Plots and the Reader of Livy (Liv. 1–2; 23–26)

*Two family plots are present at narrative junctions in Livy's *ab urbe condita*: the story of Tarquinius Collatinus' revenge in the section on the Tarquinii in Rome (Liv. 1–2) and the story of Appius Claudius Pulcher's care for his family in the section on the defection and reconquest of Capua (Liv. 23–26). Both family plots can only be recognized by a reader who is particularly awake to family constellations in texts, both tell stories that run alongside the main plots of the narrative and provide contrast and accentuation. In the paper I am arguing that the two family plots are an expression of Livy's polyphonous narrative technique and may have been part of a strategy to adapt to the preferences of readers of Republican gentilician historiography and shape their ideas of historiography towards the ideals of early principate historiography.*

Keywords: Titus Livius, Livy, Tarquinius Collatinus, Appius Claudius Pulcher, family, plot, historiography, Lucretia

Introduction

What readers find in texts depends largely on their expectations and cultural dispositions. Reading ancient Roman historiographical texts in modernity, modern readers bring their own expectations and dispositions to the texts, and understand them starting from these. A scholarly perspective on ancient texts is different from an everyday perspective only in so far that scholars strive to adapt their scholarly expectations

and dispositions to those of the (ancient) ideal reader, so that they will be ultimately able to grasp not only what comes to them depending on their personal disposition, but what the text has to offer in its own potential. Scholarly work with ancient texts is, thus, mainly a work of adapting one's expectations and dispositions to the offers of the texts while reading, meaning that scholarly expectations and dispositions of classicist readers are not a given but have to change during the process.

In this paper, I will address a cultural-structural phenomenon in Livy's histories that calls for an adaptation of the scholarly expectations in meeting the text: Livy, as I will argue, is addressing a reader who is very apt to understand family relationships as a motivating force. Even more than that, Livy's ideal reader seems to understand actions motivated by a logic of family that I call family plots as structuring markers in the polyphonous narrative of *ab urbe condita*. These insights help to gain a clearer picture of Livy's ideal reader and, consequently, may shine a light on the special importance family plots may have played in early principate historiography.

Using the new perspective on family plots, I will show narrative structures in *ab urbe condita* that have not been treated in this light up to now. I will present two examples: Tarquinius Collatinus in the story of Lucretia (Liv. 1–2) and Appius Claudius Pulcher and his clemency towards the senators of Capua (Liv. 23–26). Drawing on these examples, I will point out the importance of family in the eyes of Livy's reader and discuss two different literary strategies that might be connected to the use of family plots in the two example cases: accentuation through contrast, and rooting of the new historical narratives of the principate in Republican gentilician historiography.

The Involved Reader of Ab Urbe Condita and the Creation of Suspense by Polyphonous Narration

While historical scholarship of Livy is aiming to elucidate the veracity of Livy's account of the times he wrote about, literary scholarship has, for a while, been mainly interested in Livy's language, style and composition, in short in his literary art, in the context of early Augustan literature.¹ Recently, the rise of narratology and its application to all genres, including historiography, has led to a multiplication and specification of this line of research. Livy's readers have thus come in the focus:² they must be able and willing to deal with a polyphonous narrative, that includes conflicting, and also non-Roman, perspectives on the history of the Roman empire.³ They are involved readers, who have to do their own share of interpretative work and are meant to be drawn into a text that is rather exciting than reassuring.⁴ This suspense is created by ambiguities⁵ and counterfactual conditionals,⁶ by empathy through vivid narration of human-interest-stories,⁷ or through the

¹ FORSYTHE (1999: 8).

² Dennis PAUSCH uses the readers as a tool to study Livy's narrative techniques, PAUSCH (2011), cf. PAUSCH (2021: 60).

³ PAUSCH (2011: 189–190), cf. TENNYSON (2022: 19) on Livy's characterisation of Romulus, Liv. 1, 14.

⁴ PAUSCH (2011: 191–192; 253; cf. 2).

⁵ E.g. the unclear allocation of the narrator's sympathy, when the brutality of Roman soldiers and their dishonourable motivation during the massacre of the civilians of Iliturgi during Scipio's Spanish campaign is shown (Liv. 28, 20, 6–7, cf. PAUSCH [2011: 137]) or when the reader is presented with the difficulty of Hannibal's crossing of the Alps through the eyes of the Carthaginians (Liv. 21, 32–33, cf. TSITSIOU-CHELIDONI [2009: 533], LEVENE [2010: 259], PAUSCH [2011: 132–152]).

⁶ E.g. when the readers are offered alternative versions of history that did not take place, like in the case of M. Porcius Cato's successful intervention during the battle at the Thermopylae, when the reader is first told about the potential losses of the Romans if Cato had not intervened (Liv. 36, 18, 8, cf. WALSH [1990: 10], PAUSCH [2011: 200–202]).

⁷ E.g. in the episode of Publius Aebutius and Faecenia Hispala, with whom the reader is likely to feel compassion independently from the grand political narrative of the *de Bacchanalibus* (Liv. 39, 9–14, cf. PAUSCH [2011: 216–222]).

explicit anticipation of future events.⁸ These various stories are told in a multifarious structure that can be perceived and evaluated differently by different readers.

Plotlines and episodes of varying sizes that represent distinct units of historical or anecdotal content exist alongside the annalistic grid of consular years and thus allow to follow the narrative on different roads.⁹ As the text simulates a continuous flow of time, the ratio of narrated time to narrative time varies,¹⁰ even though certain structural markers of time, like consular years and election cycles, keep reoccurring.¹¹ This variety in a simulated regularity follows the needs of the plot.¹² But even beyond the consular years and the necessary connecting elements, the structure of *ab urbe condita* is multifarious: the single books usually begin and end at meaningful points in the history.¹³ On top of this, groups of books have thematic subjects, and can be ordered in pentads, decades, or pentekaidecades.¹⁴ These different structures are not excluding each

⁸ E.g. the repeated announcements of the war with Perseus (Liv. 39–42, cf. PAUSCH [2011: 225–237]).

⁹ LEVENE (2010: 1–33) on the third decade, PAUSCH (2011: 75–123) on the annalistic schema, (225–237) on the extended plot leading towards the war with Perseus. Livy's *ab urbe condita* is an annalistic text. The story unfolds in consular years, PAUSCH (2011: 75–85).

¹⁰ Not every (consular) year is given equal attention. The number of years treated in a book of Livy (excluding the quasi-mythological first book) varies between 42 and only one quarter of a year and can, thus, be narrated in minute detail or in an overview fashion, STADTER (2009: 111–114), cf. PAUSCH (2011: 75).

¹¹ E.g. the election-cycle of the Roman magistrates structures the longer or shorter narration of history and regularly breaks up otherwise unified plotlines in the story, cf. PAUSCH (2011: 82).

¹² This may have been generally the case with so called annalistic texts, cf. MARINCOLA (1999: 314). John William RICH has shown that, as Livy is usually telling relatively unified thematic stories that span several consular years, he has to make connections beyond the annalistic grid, which necessitate prolepses and analepses, RICH (2009: 121–123), cf. LEVENE (2010: 45, 63, 74–81), PAUSCH (2011: 89–101).

¹³ Like the first book ending with the turn from the monarchy to the republic, cf. PAUSCH (2011: 111).

¹⁴ Like the pentad of the first five books from the foundation of Rome until the rebuilding after the sack of Rome by the Gauls, or the pentekaidecade of the first 15 books

other, but stand alongside each other.¹⁵ Livy's readers have therefore various structures at their disposal when they want to orient themselves in the history: consular years, books, pentads, pentekaidecades. Different structural elements may highlight different elements of the plot or the story and thus contribute to the polyphonous, multifarious nature of the text. Usually, at every point in Livy's narrative, the readers find themselves in an overlap of different structures. If one picks any specific portion of the text, the portion has to be understood from the point of view of its belonging to various structural units in the narrative.¹⁶

Another layer of structure and interconnection is added to the text by the exemplary nature of many episodes and characters. Characters or whole scenes appear as variations of the same exemplary types and invite readers to judge them comparatively,¹⁷ inviting comparison with each other at least as much as contextualization in their direct textual surroundings.¹⁸ The involved readers have to or are free to take up some structural offers of the text and leave others aside, as they make their way through the many layered narrative. The family plots I will intro-

ending with the Romans taking control of all of Italy, followed by another pentekaidecade comprising the Punic Wars, LUCE (1977: 7), cf. PAUSCH (2011: 114–115).

¹⁵ In this light, earlier discussions that would posit different structural patterns as exclusive against each other, can be refuted, cf. PAUSCH (2011: 115–116) with the older scholarship.

¹⁶ For instance, in the case of Liv. 23, 32, 4–9, the story of the adventurous journey of the Macedonian embassy to Hannibal: a) in book 23, b) during the consulate of Ti. Sempronius Gracchus and Q. Fabius Maximus, this is the year 215/14 BC, c) in the decade of books that covers the second Punic War (21–30), d) in the pentekaidecade that covers the Punic Wars (16–30). Additional, more irregular, thematic structures could be found, like episodes or thematic blocks, cf. LEVENE (2010: 27).

¹⁷ Like interactions of older men/leaders/fathers with younger men/subordinates/sons as the recurring centre of many episodes, e.g., Liv. 2, 3–5 (Iunius Brutus and his sons), 8, 7 (Titus Manlius), 8, 30–35 (Papirius Cursor and Fabius Maximus Rullianus), cf. LEVENE (2010: 81), PAUSCH (2011: 242–246), ALBRECHT (2016: 211–218), SCHLIP (2020: 23–25).

¹⁸ Cf. LEVENE (2010: 29). Referring back to the Macedonian embassy in Liv. 23, 32, 4–9, one might have to see this portion of the text as part of an entire plotline about fraudulent Macedonian embassies or as an exemplary case for fraudulent foreign embassies recurring in *ab urbe condita*.

duce are one structure that offers itself to Livy's involved reader. This offer is facultative like most structures and plotlines in Livy's narrative.

Family Plots in the Undergrowth

The optional structures in Livy's histories are usually introduced by specific markers. This is obvious in the consular years of the annalistic grid with the explicit mention of the new magistrates, or in the books with their marked beginnings and ends. The less regular structures have markers of their own that are often related to specific plotlines. In this paper, I will explore two cases where a specific optional structure, a section of the text that could be given a meaningful headline and could stand alone to a certain degree, an episode, are each framed with a family plot. These two family-plots are embedded in the introductory and end sections of the episodes. For the reader, who will spot these markers, the family plots change the meaning of the episodes they frame. Their inclusion opens alternative interpretations or adds colour. Before I will elaborate on this, I will explain the family plots and episodes in question.

Tarquinius Collatinus, the Rape of Lucretia and the Story of the Tarquinii in Rome (Liv. 1–2)

In the story of the rape of Lucretia (Liv. 1, 57–60), her husband Tarquinius Collatinus plays a minor role and is outshone by Brutus, who becomes the champion of the emerging republic. Collatinus follows a plot of his own, though, justice in the Tarquin family, independently from the change in the political conditions for which Lucretia's suicide and Brutus' revolution have become the prominent myths.

When Rome is at war with the Rutulian city of Ardea, the Romans besiege the city for a long time and a group of young male aristocrats, who are members of the besieging army in attendance, attend a symposium.

sium at the house of Sextus Tarquinius, the son of the king. At this event, Sextus Tarquinius, Tarquinius Collatinus, his cousin, and their friends discuss the virtue of their wives and decide to ride to their different homes at night to check what their wives are doing in their absence. While all the other wives of the young Roman aristocrats are passing time idly at symposia, Lucretia, the wife of Collatinus, displays special virtue, as she is busy during the night spinning and guiding her maids.¹⁹ At this encounter, Sextus Tarquinius falls madly in love with Lucretia.²⁰ A few days later he pays her a visit alone and abuses the hospitality of his relatives to rape Lucretia while threatening to kill her.²¹ The next day, Lucretia calls for her father, Spurius Lucretius, and her husband, who bring along their friends Iunius Brutus and Publius Valerius. Lucretia reveals the rape, makes the four men swear to revenge her and ends her life with a dagger.²² The four men, led by Iunius Brutus, incite a revolution by making the crime of Sextus Tarquinius public.²³ Tarquinius Superbus and his family are exiled²⁴ and Iunius Brutus and Tarquinius Collatinus are elected the first consuls of the Roman Republic.²⁵ The story of the rape of Lucretia is a distinct episode of its own. In Livy's composition, it is also part of a wider narrative about the Tarquini in Rome,²⁶ more precisely its culmination.

To place the story in its immediate surroundings, it is necessary to remember the lines of episodes that form the greater story of the Tarquini in Rome.²⁷ They are related to each other by recurring themes

¹⁹ Liv. 1, 57, 4–10.

²⁰ Liv. 1, 57, 10.

²¹ Liv. 1, 58, 1–5.

²² Liv. 1, 58, 5–12.

²³ Liv. 1, 59, 1–10.

²⁴ Liv. 1, 59, 11–60, 2.

²⁵ Liv. 1, 60, 4.

²⁶ Liv. 1, 34–60.

²⁷ Liv. 1, 34–38 (Tarquinius Priscus and Tanaquil, his Becoming King and his Deeds), 39–45 (Servius Tullius and Tanaquil and his Deeds), 46–48 (Tarquinius Superbus, Tullia

and similar characters. The Tarquinii are usually reaching their goals through ruses.²⁸ On four occasions, the rule over Rome is narrated as the outcome of men being encouraged to change the flow of government by a female advisor.²⁹ In all of these stories the *superbia* of the Tarquins – in the negative and in the positive sense – is a recurring element.³⁰ The story of the rape of Lucretia brings all of the above mentioned themes to their conclusions: the last ruse of Sextus Tarquinius and his last act of *superbia* – the rape – are punished and with it also the effects of the earlier ruses of the Tarquinii are undone by the toppling of the dynasty. The characters that represent Tarquin rule at the time – the king, Tullia and Sextus have to leave Rome. Sextus dies in Gabii. The narrative about the Tarquinii in Rome is composed artfully and forms a discernible narrative subsection in *ab urbe condita* by its unique topic and many intrastructural links that give a strong coherency to the different episodes. Apart from the elements named above, this subsection is marked at its begin-

and his Becoming King through the Killing of Servius), 49–52 (Tarquinius Superbus, Turnus and the Ruse against the Latini), 53–54 (Sextus Tarquinius and the Conquest of Gabii), 55–56 (Tarquinius Superbus sacrilegious building activity and the oracle to Brutus), 57–60 (The Rape of Lucretia and the End of the Reign of the Tarquinii).

²⁸ Tarquinius Priscus becomes king by sending the sons of his predecessor Ancus away on the day of the election (Liv. 1, 35, 2). Tanaquil hides the death of Tarquinius Priscus to sneak Servius Tullius on the throne (Liv. 1, 41, 5–6). Tullia and Tarquinius Superbus kill their partners to become more powerful together (Liv. 1, 46, 4–9). Tarquinius Superbus' intrigues to gain the support of the senate against Servius Tullius (Liv. 1, 47, 7–12). Tarquinius Superbus frames Turnus and has him killed to crush his opposition (Liv. 1, 51). Sextus Tarquinius infiltrates Gabii to subdue the city under his father's command (Liv. 1, 53, 5–54, 10). Sextus Tarquinius abuses the trust of Lucretia to rape her (Liv. 1, 58, 1–5).

²⁹ Tanaquil – Tarquinius Priscus, Tanaquil – Servius Tullius, Tullia – Tarquinius Superbus, Lucretia – Tarquinius Collatinus/Iunius Brutus. Cf. KOWALEWSKI (2002: 58–85, 121–123). KOWALEWSKI groups Lucretia in a different set of women exempla than Tanaquil and Tullia, but acknowledges the political impact of the story. Cf. CAILLEUX (2016) on the type of the officious counsellor, also including Tanaquil and Tullia, and excluding Lucretia.

³⁰ It is mentioned five times (Liv. 1, 34–60), always in relationship to Tarquinius Superbus: his (feigned) cruelty against his son (53, 6) and his people (54, 1; 57, 2; 59, 9), his apparent inclemency in conversation (54, 7).

ning and end with references to a family conflict in the Tarquin family, at the core of which lies the opposition between Sextus Tarquinius and Tarquinius Collatinus, which the Lucretia episode resolves.

When introduced in book 1, 57, 6 Tarquinius Collatinus is not a blank page but somebody with a particular history within the family. Lucretia's husband is introduced as *Egerii filius* (Liv. 1, 57, 6) – 'son of Egerius'. This attribute refers back to the story of Tarquinius Priscus at the beginning of the Tarquinii subsection. The progenitor of the Tarquinii, according to Livy, is a refugee from Corinth to Tarquinii with the name Demaratus (1, 34, 2). This man had two sons: Lucumo, the later fifth king of Rome Tarquinius Priscus, and Arruns. Arruns had a son, of whom he did not know, as he died while his wife was pregnant; this son would later be called Egerius (1, 34, 3) and is the father of Tarquinius Collatinus. As Arruns, the father, did not know of his son, neither did Demaratus, the grandfather, when he died shortly after Arruns, still before Egerius was born. For this reason, Lucumo, the remaining son of Arruns and apparently the only heir, inherited all of Demaratus's inheritance, including the part which, had Egerius been known to Demaratus, would have been the share of his brother Arruns and his offspring (1, 34, 3). Egerius, according to Livy, was given his name because he had been born too late to inherit any of his grandfather's wealth and, therefore, had grown up in a condition of great lack (*egere*) (Liv. 1, 34, 3). Lucumo, the later Tarquinius Priscus, had used his inheritance, greater by the loss of his nephew, to marry a wealthy woman of good standing, Tanaquil (1, 34, 4), and become king of Rome with her help. In Egerius and his son Tarquinius Collatinus, we are meeting the disinherited, disenfranchised branch of the Tarquinii family. Thus, when the text reminds its readers at the introduction of Tarquinius Collatinus at the banquet of Sextus that he is a 'son of Egerius', it reminds them that Sextus Tarquinius and Tarquinius Collatinus are two Tarquinii, whose

contrasting stations in life have been predestined by the injustice two generations earlier. Sextus Tarquinius, the current heir to the throne of Rome, is the grandson of Lucumo, and Tarquinius Collatinus, the kinsman in his following, is the grandson of Arruns.

The allusion to Tarquinius Collatinus' family background with the attribute *Egerii filius* is very brief. Only a reader, who has the family story of the two branches of the Tarquinii in mind, could understand the rape of Lucretia in the light of a family conflict within the Tarquin family, especially as more than 20 chapters separate Livy's account of Lucumo's lucky inheritance and its brief mention in the introduction of Collatinus.³¹ This understanding might also be impeded by the more compelling Republican plot of Lucretia and Iunius Brutus. However, the opposition between Sextus and Collatinus is marked clearly on other occasions in the episode, taking up the initial hint to the family conflict.

At the symposium, Tarquinius Collatinus brags about the virtue of his wife (1, 57, 7) and initiates the chain of visits that ends with the proof of Lucretia's superiority (1, 57, 10).

*inde certamine accenso Collatinus negat verbis opus esse, paucis id quidem horis posse sciri quantum ceteris praestet Lucretia sua.*³²

Then Collatinus, burning with the spirit of competition, denied that there was need of further talk, because within a few hours they could know how much his Lucretia was superior to the other wives. (Liv. 1, 57, 7)

In the initial conversation, the text states expressly that Collatinus was 'burning with the spirit of competition' and reference to Collatinus'

³¹ Liv. 1, 34, 2–3; 57, 6.

³² Text of Liv. 1–5 after OGILVIE (1974).

wife is made with the possessive pronoun *sua*, emphasizing Lucretia's belonging to her husband. Collatinus is looking for competition with his cousin and his friends; Lucretia is clearly intended to be his means to triumph over the others. The text performs the scene particularly vividly by giving Collatinus' words in indirect speech – we can hear the eager young man ourselves. The triumph of Lucretia over the other men's wives is consequently described as a triumph of the husband.

Muliebris certaminis laus penes Lucretiam fuit. Adveniens vir Tarquiniique excepti benigne; victor maritus comiter invitat regios iuvenes.

The crown for the competition of the wives was with Lucretia. When the man and the Tarquinius had been gladly received upon their arrival, the winning husband cheerfully invited the kingly young men. (Liv. 1, 57, 10)

Collatinus is ultimately described as *victor maritus* – a winning husband – underscoring again that the competition is between him and the other men. In the scene, Collatinus' joy about his triumph results in his cordially inviting the other men for dinner, which is expressed with the adverb *comiter*. According to the story, it was then that Sextus is taken over by the urge to rape Lucretia.

Ibi Sex. Tarquinius mala libido Lucretiae per vim stuprandae capit; cum forma tum spectata castitas incitat.

There, an evil urge to commit adultery with Lucretia by force took a hold of Sextus Tarquinius; as he was attracted as much by her beautiful body as by the chastity he had just witnessed. (Liv. 1, 57, 10)

Next to Lucretia's physical beauty (*forma*) the text mentions expressly the fact that Sextus had witnessed Lucretia's chastity (*spectata castitas*)

as instigators of the rape. While one might attribute this attraction to the particular challenge posed by the chastity of the woman, the timing in the story would suggest otherwise. Following the logic of a rivalry, it happens at this particular moment of Collatinus' triumph that Sextus decides to rape Lucretia. He wants to take the price away from his inferior kinsman to prove his superiority in the end. A son of Egerius must not own what a grandson of Lucumo does not have! Sextus and Collatinus act according to a logic of competition, that is in accordance with the unresolved feud of the two branches of the Tarquinii.

The opposition between Collatinus and Sextus is present yet at another level. At the culmination of the contest of the wives, when Lucretia has been proven the most virtuous, Collatinus is twice separated from Sextus and his friends in the text. The text goes: *Adveniens vir Tarquiniique excepti benigne; victor maritus comiter invitat regios iuvenes*.³³ Two times Collatinus, Sextus and their group are described; both times Sextus and his friends are given an attribute that appears to separate them from Collatinus. In the first instance, *adveniens vir Tarquiniique*, 'the man upon his arrival and the Tarquinii', Tarquinius Collatinus is separated from the other Tarquinii and his true belonging to the group of Tarquins is put into question. In the second instance, *victor maritus comiter invitat regios iuvenes*, 'the winning husband cheerfully invited the kingly young men,' the other Tarquins are given the attribute 'kingly' (*regius*), underscoring that they belong to the king's family or following, while Collatinus, it seems, does not. In both instances, Collatinus is marked as Lucretia's husband, the owner of the price in the contest of the wives. The description mirrors the psychological state of Tarquinius Collatinus that is also otherwise displayed in the contest of the wives and seems to suggest itself in the opposition of the two family-branches: Collatinus' true belonging to the *gens Tarquinia* and to the dynasty of the king is doubtful. Even though he is a Tarquin, he is

³³ Liv. 1, 57, 10. Translation above.

none of the Tarquins who matter. To counter this perceived inferiority, Collatinus needs the victory in the contest of the wives, pushes for it and savours it in front of the other Tarquinii.

When Lucretius, Valerius and Iunius swear to revenge the rape of Lucretia, Collatinus does so, too,³⁴ but, in accordance with the plot of the two branches of the Tarquinii, he has an additional motivation to do so. By joining the rebellion, he revenges two injustices: 1. the one that has been committed against him personally by his cousin Sextus, the rape of Lucretia his wife; 2. the one committed by Lucumo against the Arruns-Tarquins. By toppling the dynasty of the Lucumo-Tarquins and becoming ruler of Rome in the guise of consul, he corrects the suppression of the Arruns-Tarquins by the Lucumo-Tarquins two generations earlier. Putting a focus on this plot of the two family-branches is relevant for the composition of the Tarquinii-subsection in Livy's narrative.

The episodes of Lucumo stealing Egerius' inheritance³⁵ and of Collatinus helping to end the rule of the Lucumo-Tarquins in Rome³⁶ give a frame to the story of the Tarquins in Rome in *ab urbe condita*. The brief but explicit reference to Collatinus' family background serves to build this frame. Once the reader is made aware of the family context, the symmetry, exact contrast and inner connection of the two stories becomes apparent and rounds off the narrative subsection. In both stories, a Lucumo Tarquin takes what belongs rightfully to an Arruns-Tarquin, the inheritance of Egerius and the wife of Collatinus.³⁷ In the first story,

³⁴ Liv. 1, 59, 1–2.

³⁵ Liv. 1, 34, 3–4.

³⁶ Liv. 1, 59–60.

³⁷ The parallel between the lucky inheritance and the virtuous (and economically desirable) wife might be reflected also in Lucretia's potentially speaking name (*Lucretia* – *lucrum*). She is a boon to any household. Neither speaking name nor the parallel could have been the product of Livy's literary genius alone but would have to have been present in the earlier tradition. Lucretia's name is documented by Cicero and among other instances in a fragment from Accius, cf. Acc. *praetext.* 1 *Brutus* (RIBBECK) = Cic. *div.* 1, 44; Cic. *rep.* 2, 46, 1; 10; *leg.* 2, 10, 10; *fin.* 2, 66, 1; 5, 64, 8.

the injustice goes unpunished and leads to the Lucumo-Tarquins becoming rulers over Rome.³⁸ In the second story, the injustice is revenged in the political sphere. Sextus and the Lucumo-Tarquins are driven into exile and the Arruns-Tarquin Collatinus becomes consul, reversing also the outcome of the first story and the original injustice. In this light, it is possible to understand the story of the Tarquinii in Rome and the rape of Lucretia as a story about justice in the Tarquin family.

Ultimately, this is not very likely, though. The story of the rape of Lucretia is not a story about the restoration of justice within the Tarquin family, but, as we are used to think, about the birth of the Republic. Livy takes no chances that we understand it correctly. At the beginning of the second book, Tarquinius Collatinus, the consul, the quasi king of Rome³⁹ has to step down again, because of his belonging to the hated *gens Tarquinia*.⁴⁰ The results of the family plot, justice in the Tarquin family, are not only immediately removed again, but even corrected in favour of the Republican narrative. All of this had to happen to end the reign of external Tarquin rulers, even though Livy's narrator distances himself from the rash acts of the Roman senate and people and calls the necessity of the consul's removal into question.⁴¹

³⁸ Livy's text emphasizes the effect that the important inheritance had on Lucumo's prospect of marrying Tanaquil and, thus, acquire all the benefits that this union opened up to him, Liv. 1, 34, 4: *Lucumoni contra, omnium heredi bonorum, cum diuitiae iam animos facerent, auxit ducta in matrimonium Tanaquil, summo loco nata et quae haud facile iis in quibus nata erat humiliora sineret ea quo innupsisset*. – 'But for Lucumo, the heir of all the goods, as the riches already raised his spirits, the marriage with Tanaquil, who had been born at the highest position and who would not easily let pass that the position she had married into would be lowlier than the position she had been born into, the prospects became brighter.'

³⁹ Liv. 2, 1, 7–8: *Libertatis autem originem inde magis quia annum imperium consulare factum est quam quod deminutum quicquam sit ex regia potestate numeres*. – 'The origin of liberty lay rather in the fact, that the dominion of the consuls was limited to one year rather than there being any reduction from the power of the kings'.

⁴⁰ Liv. 2, 2, 3–11.

⁴¹ Liv. 2, 2, 2: *Ac nescio an nimium undique eam minimisque rebus muniendo modum excesserint*. – 'I do not know whether they exceeded their measure by defending liberty at all sides and against even the smallest things.'

To give a brief summary, there is a distinct family plot about justice in the *gens Tarquinia* inscribed into the story of the Tarquinii in Rome in Livy's *ab urbe condita*, given prominence by its inclusion in the structure, junctions and plotline of the narrative subsection. Although it is there and can be traced into Livy's narration of the story of the rape of Lucretia, it is not meant to overrule the more prominent plotline of the birth of the Republic by Lucretia's self-sacrifice and Iunius Brutus' particular heroism. In a later section of this paper, we will have to ask, what effects the inclusion of this additional plotline has on the text and what strategy it might serve. First, a second example of family plot in *ab urbe condita* shall be presented for comparison.

Appius Claudius Pulcher and his futile clemency towards the senators of Capua (Liv. 23–26)

In the second Punic War, Capua defects from Rome and is reconquered. After the reconquest, the two commanders of the Roman army are divided on the punishment of the Capuan senators. While Q. Fulvius Flaccus wants to execute the senators right away, App. Claudius Pulcher opts to wait for a decision from the senate in Rome and save the Capuans for interrogation. Fulvius has the Capuans secretly executed in neighbouring towns before a verdict from Rome can reach him.⁴² Appius Claudius Pulcher's attempt to save the Capuans can be understood as part of a family plot inscribed in the text.

Like the section on the Tarquinii in Rome and the episode of the rape of Lucretia, the defection of the Capuans has to be seen as one narrative section within the greater narrative of the Hannibalic War in the third decade consisting of a number of smaller episodes that stand alongside the story arc of the entire section and support its unity at the

⁴²Liv. 26, 15, 1–10. Cf. UNGERN-STERNBERG (1975: 77–122); LEVENE (2010: 354–375); PAUSCH (2011: 182–185).

same time.⁴³ One recurring plotline that spans over four books and is one of the playing fields for the turn from Carthaginian to Roman success in the decade is the defection and reconquest of Capua. The story of Capua's defection begins with Pacuvius Calavius. After the battle of Lake Trasimene in 217 BC, the ambitious and populist nobleman saves the Capuan senate from a bloody revolution of the people, making himself its leader and forcing the senators to follow popular opinion.⁴⁴ This release in optimate leadership is identified by Livy as the decisive cause for Capua's opportunist turn towards Hannibal after the battle of Cannae.⁴⁵ Under this condition, Vibius Virrius, the emerging leader of the anti-Roman party, having learned the details of Rome's defeat at an au-

⁴³ The story of the Hannibalic Wars in *ab urbe condita* consists broadly of two halves, the first (21–25) focussing on the successful warfare of Hannibal in Italy, the second (26–30) on the comeback of the Romans centring on the victories in Spain, the reconquest of Sicily and the Italian cities and, finally, the decisive battle of Zama in Africa leading to a crippling peace treaty for the Carthaginians. Below this structure, each single book has a thematic focus and a story arc of its own, cf. LEVENE (2010: 25–30), while also forming symmetries or contrasts with other books in the decade and, thus, supporting its greater structure: speeches of Hannibal and the older Scipio at Ticinus (21) – speeches of Hannibal and the younger Scipio at Zama (30), Carthaginian victory at Cannae (22) – Roman victory at Metaurus (27), moral decline of the Carthaginian soldiers in Capua (23) – the same of the Roman soldiers during a winter of peace in Spain (28), and more pairings of this nature. Cf. LEVENE (2010: 16–19; 78).

⁴⁴ Liv. 23, 2, 2–4, 3, cf. UNGERN-STERMBERG (1975: 26–28).

⁴⁵ Liv. 23, 4, 4–6: *iam vero nihil in senatu agi aliter quam si plebis ibi esset concilium. Pro-na semper civitas in luxuriam non ingeniorum modo vitio sed affluentia copia voluptatum et illecebris omnis amoenitatis maritimae terrestisque*, (5) *tum vero ita obsequio principum et licentia plebei lascivire ut nec libidini nec sumptibus modus esset*. (6) *Ad contemptum legum magistratuum senatus accessit tum, post Cannensem cladem, ut cuius aliqua verecundia erat, Romanum quoque spernerent imperium.* 'And indeed already nothing was handled differently by the senate than if it had been an assembly of the people. A state that had always been bent on luxury, which was not only due to the defects of the locals, but to the great affluence of desirables and to the charms of every kind of maritime or inland amenity, (5) would now, with the consent of the leaders and the unrestraint of the people, run wild, so that there was no limit neither on indulgence nor on the costs. (6) To the contempt of the laws of the senatorial magistrates was then, after the defeat of Cannae, added that they now also despised, what had been of a somewhat high regard before, the power of Rome.'

dience with the consul, negotiates a treaty with Hannibal and brings Capua's defection into effect.⁴⁶ The Capuans, who celebrate Hannibal when he first enters the city, are contrasted with the critic Decius Magius, who advises against the treaty with the Carthaginians and is, eventually, removed from Capua by Hannibal, whereby the treaty is broken,⁴⁷ and the son of Pacuvius Calavius, who plans to assassinate Hannibal and abstains only out of filial piety.⁴⁸ Carthaginian-ruled Capua seems not to bring luck to its new masters: already in the first winter, the Carthaginian troops stationed in the city are said to be corrupted by luxury.⁴⁹ In the following year, the Capuans, trying to trick the Cumaeans, fall themselves prey to a ruse of the loyal Cumaeans and lose 2000 men to a Roman attack during a public sacrifice outside of the city.⁵⁰ In the year 212, four years after the defection, the Capuans cause a delay in transport and give occasion to Hanno's defeat and the destruction of the Carthaginian camp near Beneventum,⁵¹ which leads to the siege of Capua by the Roman army.⁵²

The battle of Capua begins with a loss of the Romans followed by a duel between a Roman and a Capuan knight who had been *hospites* before the war, eventually won by the Roman.⁵³ Since Hannibal, while destroying Roman armies in Lucania and Apulia, cannot disperse the Roman armies from Capua,⁵⁴ the siege begins with the Romans manning entrenchments, storing provisions and encircling the city.⁵⁵ The Capuans send an embassy to Hannibal, asking for relief, and refuse a

⁴⁶ Liv. 23, 5, 1–7, 2. Cf. UNGERN-STERNBERG (1975: 29–31).

⁴⁷ Liv. 23, 7, 4–12; 10.

⁴⁸ Liv. 23, 8–9.

⁴⁹ Liv. 23, 18, 10–16.

⁵⁰ Liv. 23, 35, 1–36, 4.

⁵¹ Liv. 25, 13, 3–14, 14.

⁵² Cf. Liv. 25, 15, 18–19.

⁵³ Liv. 25, 18. Cf. TODARO (2022).

⁵⁴ Liv. 25, 19–21.

⁵⁵ Liv. 25, 20, 1–3; 22, 5–9.

last Roman offer of amnesty.⁵⁶ In the next year, after having implemented a new tactics of using light infantry brought into battle by horsemen,⁵⁷ the Romans have the upper hand in Capua. Hannibal fails again to trap the besieging Roman armies between the Capuans and himself,⁵⁸ and turns towards Rome to force the Roman armies to leave.⁵⁹ Rome withstanding Hannibal's attack, Hannibal leaves Rome and Capua for southern Italy.⁶⁰ Having seen a last secret message to Hannibal intercepted and the messengers mutilated,⁶¹ the despairing Capuan senators hold a meeting within which Vibius Virrius, the leader of the anti-Roman party, convinces his followers to commit suicide,⁶² while the other Capuans hand over the city to the Romans.⁶³

The last act of the Capuan story concerns the punishment of the Capuan senate. The two former consuls in command, proconsuls at the time of the reconquest in 211, Appius Claudius Pulcher and Quintus Fulvius Flaccus, differ on how to proceed. While Fulvius Flaccus wants to execute the Capuan senators immediately, Claudius insists that they should be spared for interrogations, as he thinks they might share information on the possible cooperation of other Italian cities with Capua during the war:

De supplicio Campani senatus haudquaquam inter Fulvium Claudiumque conveniebat. Facilis impetrandae veniae Claudius, Fulvi durior sententia erat. (2) Itaque Appius Romam ad senatum arbitrium eius rei totum reiciebat: (3) percontandi etiam aequum esse potestatem fieri patribus, num com-

⁵⁶ Liv. 25, 22, 10–16.

⁵⁷ Liv. 26, 4.

⁵⁸ Liv. 26, 5, 1–6, 13.

⁵⁹ Liv. 26, 7.

⁶⁰ Liv. 26, 8–11.

⁶¹ Liv. 26, 12.

⁶² Liv. 26, 13, 1–14, 5.

⁶³ Liv. 26, 14, 6–9.

*municassent consilia cum aliquis sociorum Latini nominis <aut> municipiorum et num ope eorum in bello forent [et ad municipiorum] adiuti.*⁶⁴

Concerning the punishment of the Campanian senate there was no agreement at all between Fulvius and Claudius. Claudius wanted to grant an easily obtainable mercy while Fulvius' judgement was harsher. Therefore, Appius wanted to defer the entire decision in this case to the senate, saying it would also be just that the senators be given the opportunity to interrogate [the Campanian senators], whether they had shared their plans with anybody from the allied towns of Latin origin and whether they had been assisted in war with their means. (Liv. 26, 15, 1–3)

While Claudius expects his colleague to wait until a decision from the senate can reach them, Fulvius orders troops to move to the neighbouring towns, Teanum and Cales, where the Capuan senators are held in custody and has them all whipped and beheaded. He continues this procedure even when a letter from Rome with orders to delay the executions reaches him in the second town, Cales, pretending not to have received the message in time.⁶⁵ Livy speculates about the authenticity of his first report of the events, bringing a second version according to which Claudius, who had been injured during the battle with the Capuans and Hannibal,⁶⁶ had already died at the time of the reconquest. The narrator, thus, calls into question the exact circumstances of the executions, before giving his report on the fate of Campania under Roman rule.⁶⁷

The final act of the Capuan story is meaningful for the structure of the narrative as it stands in a close relationship to the beginning of the

⁶⁴Text of Liv. 26 after JAL (1991).

⁶⁵Liv. 26, 15, 4–15. Cf. UNGERN-STERNBERG (1975: 77–78).

⁶⁶Liv. 26, 6, 5; 8, 9.

⁶⁷Liv. 26, 16. Cf. UNGERN-STERNBERG (1975: 77–89).

section, giving a frame to the narrative. It all begins with the indulgence of the immoral Capuan populace by the populist noblemen. When all is over, in an act of apparent universal justice, the remaining populist noblemen are executed, and the populace is punished.⁶⁸ This symmetry of beginning and end in the story of the defection of Capua is an obvious feature of Livy's literary technique. One element of the story remains mysterious, though: the disagreement between the two proconsuls.

Appius Claudius Pulcher's attempt at leniency towards the Capuan senators must come as a surprise for an ancient reader, as the text takes various steps to make the Capuans appear undeserving of this clemency, even in their own eyes. The Capuans defect from Rome at her darkest hour, just after the battle of *Cannae*, with the clear intention of taking over Italy under the supreme rule of Carthage, once Hannibal will have finished off the Romans.⁶⁹ This intention appears to be particularly dark, as it follows an address of the Roman consul to the Campanian legates, within which the consul admits openly that the situation of the Roman state is dire and that the Romans have to ask the Campanians to support them in return for earlier protection.⁷⁰ The defection is, thus, narrated as a breach of personal trust and an act of extreme ingratitude. At the moment of the defection, the Campanians do not simply expel the Roman garrison, as the Carthaginians had demanded, but also murder the Roman local commanders brutally by suffocating them in the bathhouse.⁷¹ In accordance with the moralist frame of the section, Capua is presented as a rotten counter-image to Rome, whose immorality is contagious and effects both Roman and Carthaginian troops

⁶⁸ Cf. LEVENE (2010: 354–375; especially 359–360; 365–367; 374–375). On the justice of the punishment cf. BELTRAMINI (2022: 191).

⁶⁹ Liv. 23, 6, 1–5.

⁷⁰ Liv. 23, 5.

⁷¹ Liv. 23, 7, 3.

whenever they are stationed there.⁷² This moral weakness is mirrored in the low social status of the last Capuan leader Seppius Loesius.⁷³ As if to give even more weight to the moral argument, the text has the leader of the anti-Roman party, Vibius Virrius, spell out the reasons for Rome's wrath to his compatriots, ending on the admission of Roman justice, before he invites them to commit suicide:⁷⁴

Romanos, Roma circumsessa, coniuges, liberi, quorum ploratus hinc prope exaudiebantur, arae, foci, deum delubra, sepulcra maiorum, temerata ac violata a Capua non averterunt; tanta aviditas supplicii expetendi, tanta sanguinis nostri hauriendi est sitis. Nec iniuria; forsitan nos quoque idem fecissemus, si data fortuna esset.

Not the besieged Rome, not their wives and children, whose cries could almost be heard until here, not the altars, sacred fires, the temples of their gods and the graves of their forefathers, which had been desecrated and violated, turned the Romans away from Capua. So powerful is their greed to exact vengeance on us; so great is their thirst to drink our blood. And rightfully so! Probably we too had done the same, had we been given the opportunity. (Liv. 26, 13, 13–14)

Appius Claudius Pulcher's clemency, especially in comparison with the just wrath that even Vibius Virrius expects, may raise suspicion in Livy's Roman readers. What could Claudius' intentions have been? Did he really believe that the treacherous Capuan senators could be of any use to the state? As so often in *ab urbe condita*, whenever a story appears

⁷² Liv. 7, 38, 5–10; 23, 18, 11–16; 35, 1. Cf. LEVENE (2010: 362), KENTY (2017).

⁷³ Liv. 26, 6, 13–17.

⁷⁴ Liv. 26, 13, 4–19. Cf. Liv. 26, 33, 2, where the justice of the punishment is reaffirmed. On the suicide and the topos of Campanian luxury in the meal that impedes a swift death, see LEVENE (2010: 366), cf. BELTRAMINI (2020: 191–193).

to be worth the telling but is hard to believe, Livy offers an alternative version, within which Claudius died before the reconquest, making Fulvius the only commander at the time. But also staying with the first version, there are hints in the text to satisfy a suspicious and scrupulous reader. It might occur to them that Appius Claudius is entangled in family business with the Capuan senate.

At the beginning of the section, the Campanian senator Pacuvius Calavius, ‘the head of the party that had effected the defection to the Carthaginians’ according to Livy’s narrator,⁷⁵ shares a delicate detail about his family life in the introduction to the very address to the Campanian senate that stands at the beginning of the defection:

*Vocato senatu cum sibi defectionis ab Romanis consilium placitum nullo modo, nisi necessarium fuisset, praefatus esset, (6) quippe qui liberos ex Ap. Claudi filia haberet filiamque Romam nuptum <M.> Livio dedisset [...] (9) inquit [...].*⁷⁶

After the senate had been called together, after he had said that he would under no condition agree to the plan about the defection from Rome, if it was not necessary, (6) as he had children from the daughter of an Appius Claudius and had married his daughter to a Marcus Livius in Rome [...], (9) he said [...]. (Liv. 23, 2, 5–9)

Pacuvius Calavius, who must have been among the Capuan senators who would be executed by Quintus Fulvius Flaccus after the reconquest, unless he committed suicide with Vibius Virrius, of which we do not learn, is a relative of the Appii Claudii. No matter how close or how distant a relative of Appius Claudius Pulcher he is, the proconsul might,

⁷⁵ Liv. 23, 8, 2: *princeps factionis eius quae traxerat rem ad Poenos.*

⁷⁶ Text of Liv. 21–25 after BRISCOE (2016).

according to the most basic principles of family loyalty, intend to spare his relatives when he opts for leniency with the Capuans.⁷⁷ Familial ties between Roman and Capuan nobles are mentioned earlier as a delaying factor in the final break-up between the two states.⁷⁸ Besides the possible historicity or credibility of Claudius family ties to the Calavii, the additional family plot is a strong compositional force in this section of *ab urbe condita*.

The information that allows the reader to conceptualize Appius Claudius Pulcher's family ties to the Capuan nobility is given at the exact beginning and end of the story of the defection and reconquest of Capua.⁷⁹ It thus duplicates the frame already present by the first moral failure of the Capuan nobles and their final punishment. A reader who recognizes this pattern might be likely to also connect the otherwise inconspicuously brief mention of Pacuvius Calavius' Roman relatives and Claudius' peculiar clemency more than three books later. On a closer look, the narration of Claudius' clemency itself seems to guide the reader to be suspicious of the proconsul's intentions. When the alternative of the two ways of dealing with the Campanians is presented, Claudius' clemency is tagged as *facilis impetranda venia* – 'a clemency easy to be obtained'. In the light of the injustice and deception committed by the Capuans against the Romans, which is summarized two chapters earlier by Vibius Virrius, clemency of the Romans towards the Capuans is not to be granted easily or lightly. Fulvius' 'harsher judgement' (*durior sententia*) appears to be more just, because of the implicit inappropriateness attached to Claudius' clemency by the text.⁸⁰ The inappropriateness

⁷⁷ Cf. UNGERN-STERNBERG (1975: 78) with the older scholarship.

⁷⁸ Liv. 23, 4, 7. Cf. also Liv. 26, 33, 3, where the Capuan legates remind the Romans of their close familial ties.

⁷⁹ Liv. 23, 2, 6.

⁸⁰ Luca BELTRAMINI has argued to the contrary that the justice of the harsh punishment of the Capuans by Fulvius is questionable in the text pointing to Claudius' resistance, the executions without consent from the senate and the discussion of the question

of Claudius' proposals and the texts implicit distancing from Claudius continue. When Claudius explains that he wants to spare the Campanian senators for interrogations, the text gives his argument in indirect speech, giving no indication whether or not these were Claudius' true intentions. Claudius' speech begins with a word that is given an ironic second meaning in the context of the text: He says 'it would be just to give the senators the opportunity to interrogate' using the word *aequum*, which means 'just', in the literal sense of 'appropriate' or 'well measured to the circumstances.' Claudius' earlier suggestion of clemency in the wording of the text (*facilis impetrandae veniae*) appears particularly inappropriate. The text therefore creates a mildly comic effect when he who seems to have just proven his lack of good measure, talks about the right thing to do in terms of good measure (*aequum*).

If Appius Claudius Pulcher is discredited here, what picture are we to make of him, according to the text? Sparing the Capuan senators, although it is clearly not appropriate to do so, the proconsul puts his apparent family interests before the interests of the state. This selfish action appears to be particularly grave, as Claudius has been leading Roman troops for the last four years against Capua. This breach of trust weighs also on the reader as they have suffered with the Roman army (and trusted Claudius' leadership) for three books. A reader, who reflects on the character of Appius Claudius Pulcher in the way that has been outlined, might find that his character is conspicuously well in tune with the characterisations of other Appii Claudii in *ab urbe condita*.

In literature, Roman politicians of the same family often show the same character over generations. Every Cato is an ascetic, conserva-

later in the book, Liv. 26, 33–34, BELTRAMINI (2022: 191–194). In contrast to BELTRAMINI, I would argue that, in the eyes of the text, Fulvius is morally right to punish the Capuans swiftly, even though he is not following the law – this is reaffirmed by the later decisions of the people and of the senate.

tive Republican, and also other families have typical attributes.⁸¹ Appii Claudii generally rank their interests and those of their class and family higher than those of the Roman state and of the people. Appius Claudius Regillensis, the consul at the beginning of the conflict of the orders, is characterized as a strict patrician and enemy of the people: when the people, impatient because of their unjust treatment as debtors, refuse to go to war,⁸² he repeatedly argues for an uncompromising stance of the Patricians and even demands the institution of a dictatorship.⁸³ Appius Claudius, the decemvir of the Verginia story,⁸⁴ is characterised similarly as an enemy of the plebs. Having installed himself as the leader of the perpetual *decemviri*,⁸⁵ he forces Verginia, the attractive daughter of a simple citizen, into his power by the means of a contrived judgement.⁸⁶ In the mock-trial Verginia's father can only save the virginity of his daughter by taking her life, which leads to the abolition of the illegitimate decemvirate, the reinstitution of the Republican institutions⁸⁷ and the death of Appius Claudius the decemvir.⁸⁸ The characterisations of the Appii Claudii in Livy's first decade have therefore been described as "a symbol of self-interest, party politics and discordia" by the scholarship.⁸⁹

In the light of his family plot, Appius Claudius Pulcher appears to be an extreme version of his ancestors. Earlier Appii Claudii acted out of *superbia* against the interest of the people for the interest of their own class and family. Appius Claudius Pulcher does the same thing but extends his

⁸¹ Cf. WALTER (2004a), RICHARDSON (2015: 180–181).

⁸² Liv. 2, 23–30.

⁸³ Liv. 2, 23, 15; 27, 1; 11–12; 29, 9–12.

⁸⁴ Liv. 3, 33, 1–58, 11.

⁸⁵ Liv. 3, 38, 1–2.

⁸⁶ Liv. 3, 44, 4–5.

⁸⁷ Liv. 3, 48, 7–49, 5; 3, 53, 6–55, 1.

⁸⁸ Liv. 3, 58, 6.

⁸⁹ VASALY (1987: 225); cf. WALTER (2004b: 121–130).

loyalty even to the members of his own class in the hostile state of Capua at the time of war. This extremeness can have a comic effect, as the contextualization of Claudius' indirect speech shows. In the Capua-section, Claudius' family plot strengthens the frame of the moralist narrative via its co-presence at beginning and end. At the same time, Claudius' actions may themselves be understood in close relationship to the moralist plot. The family plot characterises him: the commander cares more for the enemies than for his own compatriots while, paradoxically, leading troops in war. A rotten Roman conquered rotten Capua. Fulvius' treatment of the Campanians appears more justified: he might only make sure that the family loyalties of his colleague cannot save the enemies of Rome. The moral focus of the Capua section is given another layer by the inclusion of Appius Claudius family plot: Did the Appii Claudii infect themselves with Capuan immorality when they intermarried with the Campanians? Or if Roman nobles act so immorally out of their own accord, are they so much better than the Capuan senate? The effect of this additional complexity shall be the focus of the end of this paper.

Keeping up with Livy for the family-minded reader

David Levene has pointed out that it is ,bewilderingly difficult [to merely keep track of the story'] in Livy's third decade because of the large amount of information that readers need to stay aware of over vast stretches of text.⁹⁰ This is true for the entire *ab urbe condita* and especially for the two family plots that have been outlined above. In both cases, the reader needs to connect pieces of information that are given one half or even three books apart from each other. It is therefore the weakest link in the chain of argument for these family plots that they might well have gone undetected by most readers. Readers might not have remembered the necessary

⁹⁰ LEVENE (2010: 63–64).

information from earlier when they would have needed it to recognize the conspicuous intergenerational symmetry between Lucumo & Egerius and Sextus & Collatinus, or the suspicious family ties of Claudius and Calavius. The most important point to counter this valid criticism is purely theoretical: I am not interested in or dare to make statements about the average historical readers of *ab urbe condita*. A study that would want to do this would need to have entirely different means and could not be only text-based. Talking about Livy's reader, I mean the ideal reader who can be constructed out of the text and who has the knowledge, the patience and the cultural capacities to take up all of its offers.⁹¹ The construction of ideal readers is, of course, like most tasks in the humanities, an imperfect hermeneutic circle: it is only by constructing such ideal readers that we can learn, what knowledge, patience and cultural capacities some historic readers of Roman historiography might have had. Whether or not this ideal reader would be often approximated by Livy's historical readers, is beyond the reach of literary studies. Classicists have to be aware, though, that ideal readers might be modern scholars' best shot to form a qualitatively distinct picture of the interests and mental capacities of historical ancient Romans at all, whose average mindsets are even more unavailable to us than ideal constructions out of the texts that we have.

What speaks for the intended presence of the family plots is their conspicuous relationship to the text's structure. Granted their presence, the problem of the bewildering difficulty can be turned around for epistemic gain: if Livy's reader could be expected to notice and remember the information about Tarquinius Collatinus' and Appius Claudius Pulcher's family ties, they would have to be much more likely to do so than most modern readers would be. Is this probable? In the light of the importance of family-belonging in almost all spheres of Roman (elite)

⁹¹ Iser (1980: 27). Iser himself points at the practical limitations of this model, (28–29).

life,⁹² one would have to admit this possibility. Being well informed about the exact family relationships of one's acquaintances would be a practical life skill for freeborn Romans, decisive in making good matches on the marital market or in forming alliances in economy and politics. It would always matter to know exactly whose cousin the other person was. It would therefore be only natural to assume that Roman readers would bring this practical skill also to their reading. They might actually be likely to catch hints on family relationships of protagonists on the fly and memorise them without much effort. Therefore, we can expect Livy's reader to keep up with the family plots laid out above. Even more than that, one might take these family plots present in *ab urbe condita* as an indication to search more closely for similar plots in Livy and in other Roman historiographical texts.⁹³

Second Voices and Accentuation through Contrast

With a view to the episodes or sections in *ab urbe condita*, one has to ask how the presence of the family plots changes the respective parts of the text. In both cases, a different story with a meaning of its own is added to the main story. In both cases the priority of the main story over the family story is clear from the fleeting nature of the family plots. In the case of the Tarquinii, the Republican perspective on the Tarquinii, which emphasizes the (over-)ambition of the Tarquinii and the heroism of Lucretia and Iunius Brutus, is expanded by a perspective from inside the Tarquinii, which focuses on justice inside of the ruling dynasty. This perspective is ultimately in tune with the frame of (over-)ambition that leads to the destruction of the dynasty. The inferiority of the second

⁹² Cf. DIXON (1991: 28).

⁹³ Family as a frame of reference in Roman culture and cultural products has been scrutinized in Roman art, archaeology and history, cf. KAMPEN (2009), TERRENATO (2019), VAN OYEN (2020).

perspective is asserted, when Iunius Brutus has Tarquinius Collatinus expelled from Rome,⁹⁴ undoing the family plot's logical conclusion.

In the Capuan story, we find a similar constellation of plots. It evolves around the moral failure of the Capuan elite that is juxtaposed to the general moral superiority of the Romans in war after the battle of Cannae. Morality is a recurring topic in the surroundings of this section.⁹⁵ The family plot of Appius Claudius Pulcher forms a contrast to these stories of morally superior Romans, as Claudius lets his loyalty to foreign family members come before the one to his troops and to the state. In both cases, Collatinus and Claudius, the family plots, form a contrast or even an exact opposite to the main plot. Is this a Second Voice offering a true alternative to the Republican or Roman narratives? It can hardly be, as the main plots are overly dominant in both sections. It seems rather that the additional family plots serve to accentuate the main plots or specific characters in the main stories. Brutus and Lucretia appear more exceptional in contrast to the common revenge plot of Collatinus. Collatinus works for his family-branch, Brutus and Lucretia work for justice and Rome. Similarly, Claudius selfish family-mindedness accentuates the harsh justice of his colleague Fulvius. At the same time, it allows for another reflection on moral behaviour: what is a leader supposed to do when an unjust colleague uses the institutions of the state to further his selfish ends?

Moreover, the two family-plots do not only accentuate the other plots, but add to the general polyphony of *ab urbe condita*. The narrative of Livy's histories is multi-layered and aims to make the impression of opening different routes for the reader to pursue. This strategy allows the text to recreate the experience of meeting history as an undetermined field ready to be freshly discovered, and to divert.⁹⁶ The rape

⁹⁴ Liv. 2, 2, 2–11.

⁹⁵ Cf. JAL (1991: XLII) on moral behaviour in Liv. 26, cf. Ducos (2022) on the exemplary elections for 210 BC, cf. SCHLIP (2020: 404).

⁹⁶ Cf. PAUSCH (2011: 253).

of Lucretia led to the Roman Republic, but there were also people like Collatinus, who had different ideas. After Cannae, the Roman leaders really pulled themselves together and saved the Roman state, but there were also black sheep like Appius Claudius. The family plots work like a pinch of salt in a sweet desert. They add to the realism of the entire story and thus round off Livy's narrative.

Taking up Republican Memorial Culture

It is maybe not coincidental that the additional and contrasting plots described above are family plots. Republican memorial culture and historiography focusses on the exploits of single Roman *gentes*, the patrons or kinsmen of the artists and historiographers, who produce artefacts or write history. The memorial culture and historiography of the early principate breaks with this tradition and replaces the single *gentes* with the *gens Iulia*, including its mythological forbears, and new forms of public history focussed on the Roman state.⁹⁷ *Ab urbe condita* stands at the beginning of the new historiography of the early principate.⁹⁸ Livy's reader, used to Republican memorial culture, might have expected to find a narrative focussing on or including family stories. The additional family plots may serve a dual purpose. On the one hand, they meet the reader's expectation. On the other hand, they perform their own marginality and, thus, refer the reader to the central contents of Livy's early principate historiography.

In the case of Tarquinius Collatinus, the presence of the revenge and justice plot within the *gens Tarquinia* runs very little risk of being mistaken for the main plot, as Tarquinius Collatinus is removed from the consulate, the price of his revenge, very quickly. The presence of this plot,

⁹⁷ WALTER (2004b: 408–426).

⁹⁸ WALTER (2004b: 422–426).

alongside the main plot, serves rather to show what Livy's story of the Tarquini in Rome does not focus on. It does not focus on the inner justice within the *gens Tarquinia*, like Republican gentilician historiography maybe would, but on those people who advanced Roman society with their exceptional acts, Brutus and Lucretia. In the section about the defection and reconquest of Capua, the presence of Claudius' family plot works differently but to the same effect. At a time when the individual virtue of Roman leaders and the coherency of the Roman state decides the fate of Rome, the protagonist who acts the most according to the logic of gentilician belonging, Claudius saving his Capuan relatives, is the least virtuous Roman.

In both sections, the family plots may take up the reader's expectation to find stories about Roman *gentes* in historiographical writing. But they then guide them away from themselves, as they merely form the contrast to the main plots. The family plots, thus, may play a role that is closely connected with the aims of Livy's historiographical writing. As a new history for a new time, early principate historiography developing itself against the tradition of Republican historiography, *ab urbe condita* needs to appeal to readers and at the same time change their ideas on how to read history.⁹⁹ In this endeavour, the additional family plots may be part of a strategy to attract the attention of the reader, who is used to gentilician historiography, and lead them to a point where the family plots dissolve and only contrast the more vital main plots. Following well-trodden roads of gentilician historiography, the reader is ultimately left with the new individual, state-centred plots of principate historiography.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ *Ab urbe condita* would, thus, do to Republican historiography what the building projects of Augustus did to the public spaces of Republican Rome. Cf. WALTER (2004b: 416–419).

¹⁰⁰ In this respect, I would see Livy, like Vergil, as a close cultural collaborator of the principate, cf. WALTER (2004b: 423).

Conclusion

The two family-plots described in this paper are entwined with the narrative structures of Livy's *ab urbe condita* to the extent that they are only recognisable for a reader who is aware of these structures. If discovered, they open two additional plot perspectives, by which the story of the Tarquini in Rome (1–2) and the story of the defection of Capua (23–26) can be perceived. They, thus, add an additional voice to the polyphonous narrative that has been recognized as one of the principal literary features of Livy's histories. Their relationship to the surrounding plotlines is such that they clarify adjoining plotlines by contrast and ultimately delegitimize themselves as main plots in the narrative, adding depth and variety to the whole of the text. Their presence points to the special interest that Livy's reader takes in matters of family, as it takes a reader who can easily perceive and remember family constellations to recognize them. Furthermore, the family plots point to the normality of family stories in Republican gentilician historiography. In Livy's polyphonous narrative the family plots accentuate other major plots about exemplary individuals and the state and, thus, serve to lead readers with gentilician-historiographical interests to the plots that represent principate-historiography best. Due to the presence of these minor plots among others, however, also readers with Republican preferences can experience relative freedom in following their own way through the histories.

Primary Sources

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ALBERTO BARRÓN RUIZ DE LA CUESTA

Renaming the *Augustalitas*: Evolution and New Terminology in the 1st Century AD

*The goal of this study is the analysis of the new terms created within the *seviratus Augustalis* during the 1st century AD, in an attempt to link the *Augustalitas* to the name of the following emperors and dynasties after the decease of Augustus. In accordance with that tendency, there are preserved examples of *seviri Iuliales*, *seviri Tiberiales*, *seviri Claudiales*, *seviri Neronienses*, *seviri Flaviales*, *seviri Titiales* and *seviri Nerviales*. They are essentially located in the Italian Peninsula, but their number is scarce in comparison with the better known titles *sevir Augustalis*, *Augustalis*, *magister Augustalis* and *sevir*. We will observe the epigraphic evidence of these terms, their territorial presence and duration and the main characteristics of their members. Through this inquiry it will be shown how the institution evolved in time and how it was partially transformed before its normalisation in the 2nd century.*

Keywords: Latin epigraphy, *seviri Augustales*, Roman freedmen, Early Roman Empire, Roman Italy.

I. Introduction to the *seviri Augustalis*

This study is focused on a particular kind of terminological isolation, referred to the limited geographic and temporal existence of some institutional terms, whose truncated expansion made them to become unusual and distant to the main tendencies. Specifically, the aim of the current analysis is the restricted presence of the less frequent terminology within the *seviratus Augustalis* or *Augustalitas*, together with the main reasons of this particular evolution.

The *seviratus Augustalis* was a Roman institution of semi-official nature, which flourished in many towns with the status of *coloniae* and *municipia*. It appeared in Italy in the end of the 1st century BC and spread along the Empire between the 1st and the 3rd century AD, becoming a typical institution of the provincial towns, mainly in the western and Latin part of the Roman Empire.

It was a collegial position, with six annual members and an association of former members with its own building and treasury. Its first term *sevir* refers to the number of members, meaning literally “six men”, in parallel with many other Roman bodies (*duumvir*, *quattuorvir*, *septemvir*, *decemvir*, *quindecimvir*, etc.). The term *Augustalis*, which derives from the title *Augustus*, shows a clear link with the emperor, and also with the Imperial Worship in the consensual opinion of researchers. As we will see, there were some attempts to substitute the second word of this title in accordance with the names of some emperors.

The *seviri Augustales* were appointed by the local ruling class of the *decuriones* and assumed some religious and civic functions, whose nature is under discussion.¹ They had a higher status than common citizens and were also known as the group of the *sevirales* or *Augustales*. One of the main features of this position was that its members were mostly wealthy freedmen whose wealth came from commercial and craft businesses in urban areas. This was their way to acquire official recognition, since the magistracies and priesthoods were forbidden for freedmen. In return, they had to fund many public donations, even more than other local magistracies reserved to freeborn persons or *ingenui*.²

¹The theories regarding the function played by the *seviri Augustales* are summarised by BARRÓN RUIZ DE LA CUESTA (2020: 189–212).

²This is a selection of the main general and recent studies about the Augustality: VON PREMERSTEIN (1895: 824–877); MOURLOT (1895); TAYLOR (1914: 231–253); NOCK (1934: 627–638); DUTHOY (1970: 88–98); *Id.* (1974: 134–154); *Id.* (1976: 143–214); *Id.* (1978: 1254–1309); OSTROW (1990: 364–379); ABRAMENKO (1993); MOURITSEN (2006: 237–248); LAIRD (2015); VANDEVOORDE (2015: 2–24); *Id.* (2017: 81–108); VAN HAEPEREN (2016: 127–155);

The sources about the *seviri Augustales* are basically epigraphic. Within the vast Roman literature, the sevirate is only mentioned in the story of the *Cena Trimalchionis* of Petronius and in two brief allusions of two scholiasts of Horatius.³ The passage of Petronius contains rich and detailed information, but the parodic purpose of his work complicates the interpretation of the real characteristics of our institution. In contrast, there are about three thousand inscriptions related to the *seviri Augustales*. Around two thousands of them are located in Italy, and the other thousand belongs to the territories of the Roman provinces.

The chronological evolution of the *seviratus Augustalis* corresponds to the so-called “epigraphic habit”, an expression that defines the evolution of the whole production of inscriptions during the Roman Empire.⁴ The epigraphic habit shows a rising tendency in the 1st century AD, a peak in the 2nd century and a sharp decline in the 3rd century, due to transformations in the civic conscience and in the ways of public representation. Those changes were also related with a strong decrease in the number of freedmen, undermining the social basis of the institution, which happened to disappear in the same period when epigraphy declined. The *seviratus Augustalis* has a similar evolution, with a sudden decrease in the middle of the 3rd century, which led to its disappearance.⁵

About the variations of this institution, there were four writing forms for the numeric element of the word *sevir* (*IIIIIIvir*, *VIvir*, *sevir*, *sexvir*), and there were abbreviated and non-abbreviated ways to write

CORAZZA (2016); BEKAVAC – MILETIC (2019); BARRÓN RUIZ DE LA CUESTA (2020).

³ Petron. 27–78; Porph. *Hor. sat.* 2, 3, 281. Ps.-Acro *Hor. sat.* 2, 3, 281.

⁴ There are different classic studies on the epigraphic habit: MACMULLEN (1982: 233–246); MROZEK (1973: 113–118); MROZEK (1988: 61–64); MEYER (1990: 74–96). The general aspects of the so-called epigraphic habit have been questioned by later studies that propose a bigger variety and a fragmentation in regional tendencies: WOOLF (1996: 22–39); MOURITSEN (2005: 38–63).

⁵ For the debate about the decline of the *seviratus Augustalis* and its reasons, *vid.* BARRÓN RUIZ DE LA CUESTA (2020: 23–24).

the term *Augustalis* (*Aug/August/Augustal, Augustalis*), but they did not have any meaning in the content of the institution.

There is a bigger variety within the terminology of the Augustality, whose main forms *sevir Augustalis*, *Augustalis* and *sevir* comprise 95% of the cases.⁶ The related expressions *seviralis*, *ob honorem sevirus*, *seviratus* and *Augustalitas* are much less common, as well as the title *magister Augustalis*, with just fifty-four cases. Nevertheless, the focus of this study is on other infrequent terms, which consisted of different adaptations to emperors' names of the 1st century: *Tiberialis*, *Iulialis*, *Claudialis*, *Neroniensis*, *Flavialis*, *Titialis* and *Nervialis*. They were even fewer, and never replaced the title *Augustalis*, which prevailed in the 2nd century.

The reason of these customised titles may be related to the short tradition of the title *Augustus* in the 1st century and the wish of some emperors to adapt the institutions to themselves with personalised titles, or to a similar tendency promoted by local elites and institutions in order to please the new rulers. Moreover, we will see that a similar evolution can be observed with other positions like the *sodales Augustales*, which developed variants like *sodales Claudiales* or *sodales Flaviales Titiales*. Anyway, it may be argued that the creation of these new terms was unnecessarily chaotic and redundant, which supports the idea of a decentralised initiative instead of a suggestion of the imperial government.

⁶ The term *sevir*, when it is written without the complement *Augustalis*, can be confusing due to the existence of a position with similar name but not related to the Augustality, the so-called municipal *seviri*, especially numerous in northern Italy. Nonetheless, the distinction between both kinds of *seviri* is difficult to establish from the epigraphic evidences in a general way.

II. Distribution of the *seviri Augustales* and their minor variants

The presence of the evidences of *seviri Augustales* along the provinces and Italian regions of the Roman Empire is irregular. Their original area is Italy, which has the highest concentration of inscriptions. Each one of its eleven regions (Latium et Campania, Apulia et Calabria, Bruttium et Lucania, Samnium, Picenum, Umbria, Etruria, Aemilia, Liguria, Venetia et Histria and Transpadana) has hundreds of inscriptions about the Augustality. The institution spread from Italy to the imperial provinces, mainly to the European Latin-speaking ones, whereas there are only scarce examples of these epigraphs in the Eastern Greek-speaking part of the Empire.⁷ The majority of the provincial testimonies are located in the western Mediterranean area (Gallia Narbonensis, Hispania Citerior, Baetica, Lusitania, Africa Proconsularis) and the Illyrian and Balkan territories (Dalmatia, Pannoniae, Dacia, Moesiae, Macedonia), while other western provinces with important fluvial routes (Lugdunensis, Belgica, Germaniae) have a smaller amount of inscriptions but much bigger than in the eastern regions of the Roman Empire.

When we reduce the amount of inscriptions to those ones with the minor term *magister Augustalis*, we can appreciate huge differences in the number of cases and in their distribution. The imperial provinces are almost absent, with forty-eight out of fifty-four cases in the Italian Peninsula, concentrated in the centre and south of Italy.⁸ Nevertheless,

⁷ The testimonies located in the eastern part of the Roman Empire belong to Roman *coloniae* and *municipia*. This confirms the Latin character of the institution and its absence in the Greek speaking area of the Empire. It does not seem to have been a Greek term to express a similar role. OLIVER (1958: 472–496) proposed the *Gerusiae* as a social and economic equivalent to the *Augustales* in the Greek towns of the Roman Empire, but his inquiries have not been continued by later researchers.

⁸ In central Italy, there are ten testimonies of *magistri Augustales* in Etruria, eight in Latium et Campania, seven in Samnium and single cases in Picenum and Umbria. The southern regions include eight inscriptions in Apulia et Calabria and five in Bruttium et Lucania. The northern evidences are fewer, with three cases in Liguria, three in Ae-

the *magistri Augustales* are not the aim of this analysis, but they provide material enough for a richer study, due to the parallelisms with different Roman priesthoods that apparently inspired this new title, like the *magistri Mercuriales* or the *magistri Apollinares*. Despite appearing in some of the first cases of the *Augustalitas*, this title lost importance fast and finally disappeared in the 2nd century AD.

The rest of the minor variants of the *Augustalitas* have an even smaller presence, with only forty-one cases in total.⁹ More than half of them are located in northern Italy, and have been dated to the 1st century AD. Keeping in mind that we are including in this category seven different terms (*Tiberialis*, *Iulialis*, *Claudialis*, *Neroniensis*, *Flavialis*, *Titialis* and *Nervialis*), it seems clear that the implementation of each one of them was almost anecdotic. Nevertheless, a study of their variety and concrete locations must be done.

III. Analysis of the different minor terms

There is only one *sevir Iulialis* preserved, which is located in the Dalmatian town of Iader (n^o 1 of the corpus). In this inscription the word *Iulialis* takes the usual place of *Augustalis* as a complement of *sevir*. The early dating of this evidence has opened the option of a reference to Julius Caesar,¹⁰ but it could most likely allude to the ruling *gens Iulia* or to the

milvia, one in Transpadana and another one in Venetia et Histria. Outside Italy, there are three inscriptions in Sardinia, one in Dalmatia and two in Dacia.

⁹The distribution of these mentions to the minor terminologies is focused on northern Italy, which preserves nine inscriptions in Venetia et Histria, eight in Aemilia, four in Liguria and three in Transpadana. The centre of the peninsula has three testimonies in Picenum and one in Umbria, while the southern territories contain seven inscriptions in Apulia et Calabria. Finally, there are five provincial evidences in Dalmatia and one in Gallia Narbonensis.

¹⁰GIUNIO (2013: 173–193). This paper emphasises the relation of Iader with Julius Caesar and its support to him in the Civil War in order to propose the *seviri Iuliales* as a local *collegium* dedicated to the worship of *Divus Iulius*, which would have preceded

emperor Caligula.¹¹ Iader attests other nine epigraphic cases in relation to the *Augustalitas* dated from the 1st to the 3rd century AD, proving the short life of the particular denomination *sevir Iulialis*.¹² The brief reign of Caligula and his horrible posthumous reputation could explain the fast extinction of this title. Instead, a *collegium* devoted to Julius Caesar may have lasted longer, besides the complicated issue to accept its creation before the appearance of the *Augustalitas*.

There are three epigraphic cases of *seviri Tiberiales*, all of them in the town Asculum Picenum (n° 2–4). Such a concrete location of this term suggests a very short life of this variant, without further influence besides the local level. In two of these inscriptions the term *Tiberialis* appears together with *Augustalis*, proving the coexistence of both denominations. There are ten more testimonies of the *seviratus Augustalis* in the town.¹³ Therefore, the *seviri Tiberiales* appear as a temporary trend that was not imposed over the *seviri Augustales*. Anyway, the more common title in this location is *sevir*. The dating of the epigraphic proofs of Augustality basically belongs to the 1st century AD, so it is not possible to state if the epithet *Augustalis* endured longer than *Tiberialis* in Asculum Picenum or if both disappeared in favour of bared *seviri*. The presence of the epithet *Tiberialis* in a single town of the Roman Empire seems to indicate that its implementation was due to a local initiative. The elites from Asculum Picenum probably found the way to show their loyalty to the new emperor Tiberius modifying the term *Augustalis*, which was

the *seviri Augustales*.

¹¹ BEKAVAC–MILETIC (2019: 85–87). The authors propose that the *seviri Iuliales* referred to Tiberius or Caligula.

¹² The ten mentions to the sevirate and the Augustality in Iader are the following ones: AE 1953, 104 (*VIvir Iulialis*); AE 2014, 1027 (*IIIIIVir et Flavialis*); CIL III, 2921 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 2923 (*Augustalis*), 2925 (*VIvir? Augustalis*), 2928 (*sexvir*), 2929 (*IIIIIVir*), 15047 (*IIIIIVir*); ILJug II, 890 (*VIvir*); Lupa, 23131 (*Augustalis*).

¹³ The additional ten inscriptions related to the *Augustalitas* in Asculum Picenum are: AE 1946, 186 (*VIvir*); AE 1997, 475 (*VIvir*); CIL IX, 5188 (*sexvir*), 5190 (*sexvir*), 5192 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 5193 (*sexvir*), 5199 (*sexvir*), 5231 (*sexvir*), 5278 (*VIvir*); EE VIII, 216 (*sexvir*).

being used in other cities. In any case, this idea was not followed by other towns and the name *Augustalis* remained in most places after the decease of Augustus.

The *seviri Claudiales* are the most numerous of the alternative versions of the *seviri Augustales*, with twenty-three testimonies (nº 5–27). However, a first analysis of their distribution points out an extreme concentration due to their presence in just five Italian locations: Beneventum in Apulia (nº 5–11), Bononia (nº 12–15) and Regium Lepidum (nº 16–19) in Aemilia, Carreum Potentia (nº 20–21) in Liguria and Verona (nº 22–27) in Venetia. It can be concluded that the term *Claudialis* is mainly sited in northern Italy, apart from the inscriptions of Beneventum.

Beneventum comprises thirty-one inscriptions about the *Augustalitas*, including twenty-nine mentions to bare *Augustales*, seven mentions to *Augustales Claudiales* and an uncertain *sevir*.¹⁴ The local habit shows the predominance of the term *Augustalis*, which endured throughout the early imperial period. Conversely, the title *sevir* is nearly missing. Our catalogue of inscriptions (nº 5–11) proves that the term *Augustalis* was combined with the epithet *Claudialis* in a significant number of cases during the second half of the 1st century AD. Anyway, it must be pointed out that *Claudialis* never substituted the word *Augustalis* in Beneventum. Despite this temporary tendency from Claudius' reign, *Augustalis* always persisted as the main local terminology.

There are twenty epigraphic mentions to the sevirate and the Augustality in Bononia. Most of these cases refer to bare *seviri*. Apart from the four mentions to *seviri Claudiales* (nº 12–15), only two inscriptions

¹⁴The remaining twenty-four mentions to the Augustality in Beneventum are: AE 1968, 127 (*Augustalis*); AE 2013, 361 (*Augustalis*); CIL IX, 1618 (*Augustalis*), 1651 (*Augustalis*), 1662 (*Augustalis*) 1690 (*Augustalis*), 1691 (three *Augustales*), 1692 (*Augustalis*), 1693 (*Augustalis*), 1694 (two *Augustales*), 1695 (*Augustalis*), 1696 (*Augustalis*), 1697 (*Augustalis*), 1699 (*Augustalis*), 1700 (*Augustalis*), 1702 (*Augustalis*), 1703 (*Augustalis*), 1704 (two *Augustales*), 1706 (*sevir*), 1711 (*Augustalis*), 2128 (*Augustalis*), 2129 (*Augustalis*); RIGI 1924, 148a (*Augustalis*); *Samnium* 1960, 228 (*Augustalis*).

contain the word *Augustalis*,¹⁵ from which one (AE 1976, 207) probably belongs to Aminternum¹⁶. The second one (CIL XI, 6831) is recorded together with a bared *sevir* and could come from another town, even when it does not specify it. Therefore, the word *Augustalis* is practically absent in this locality. From the four evidences of *Claudiales*, three are recorded as *sevir et Claudalis* (n° 12–13 and 15), indicating the different nature of both titles, while only one is documented as *sevir Claudialis* (n° 14). Moreover, in one of the analysed inscriptions the *sevir et Claudialis* appears together with two bared *sevir* (n° 12), showing the coexistence of both terminologies. The late chronology of one of the inscriptions (n° 13) suggests that the designation *Claudialis* could have survived in Bononia as long as the term *sevir*, in spite of the dynastic changes in the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

Regium Lepidum preserves eight inscriptions concerning the Augustality. Thus, the word *Claudialis* appears in half of the local cases, either alone (n° 17–18), as the title *sevir Claudialis* (n° 19) or in the form *sevir Augustalis Claudialis* (n° 16). The other four inscriptions mention two *sevir*, a *seviralis* and an *Augustalis* (from Cremona).¹⁷ Furthermore, one of those *Claudiales* (n° 18) is *amicus* of an alluded *sevir Augustalis*, showing that both versions were coetaneous. This is a surprising terminological variety considering the small amount of local inscriptions. Most of the epigraphic testimonies belong to the 1st century AD and the beginning of the 2nd, without any clear chronologic division according to the termi-

¹⁵ Bononia has other sixteen inscriptions linked to the *sevir Augustales*: AE 1945, 49 (IIIIIIvir); AE 1976, 203 (VIvir), 207 (IIIvir Augustalis); CIL XI, 717 (VIvir), 719 (VIvir), 740a (VIvir), 6825 (IIIIIIvir), 6826 (VIvir), 6827 (*sexvir*), 6828 (a VIvir and a IIIIIIIvir), 6830 (IIIIIIvir), 6831 (a IIIIIIIvir and a IIIIIIIvir Augustalis), 6832 (VIvir), 6833 (IIIIIIvir), 6834 (VIvir), 6839 (VIvir).

¹⁶ It includes the peculiar title *IIIvir Augustalis*. Out of sixteen global mentions to the position *IIIvir Augustalis*, thirteen are attested in Aminternum.

¹⁷ The other four inscriptions from Regium Lepidum are: AE 1985, 408 (*Augustalis Cremonae*); AE 1990, 354 (VIvir); CIL XI, 960 (IIIIIIvir), 972 (VIviralis).

nology. Thus, it is possible that these different titles lasted during both centuries contemporarily in Regium Lepidum, keeping a varied nomenclature for the *Augustalitas* even during the Antonine dynasty.

Carreum Potentia has five inscriptions related to the *seviri Augustales*.¹⁸ Besides the two analysed cases of *Augustalis Claudialis* (nº 20–21), which mix the original and the new epithet and skip the word *sevir*, there is a *sevir et Augustalis* and two mentions to *seviri Augustales*, one of whom has the position of *Minervalis* as well. The small amount of inscriptions and its heterogeneity complicate the understanding of how the terminology evolved, but the combination of the words *Augustalis* and *Claudialis* suggests that the second title could have been added to the nomenclature of the *Augustalitas* only during the rule of Claudius and Nero.

One of the most documented cities of the empire regarding the *seviratus Augustalis* is Verona. Its seventy-three inscriptions include forty-two *seviri Augustales*, twenty-nine *seviri*, six *Claudiales* (nº 22–27), a *sevir Augustalis et Neroniensis* (nº 28) and a *IIIvir Augustalis*.¹⁹ Within the

¹⁸ The other three inscriptions from Carreum Potentia are: CIL V, 7496 (*VIvir et Augustalis*), 7497 (*sexvir Augustalis, Minervalis*), 7498 (*VIvir Augustalis*).

¹⁹ Apart from the studied ones, Verona has sixty-six inscriptions mentioning the *seviri Augustales*: AE 1946, 166 (two *VIviri*); AE 1993, 785 (*IIIIIVir*); AE 2006, 478 (*VIvir*); AE 2007, 638 (*IIIIIVir*), 639 (*VIvir*), 640 (*VIvir Augustalis*); AE 2010, 569 (*VIvir Augustalis*); AE 2018, 736 (*VIvir Augustalis*); CIL V, 3233 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3272 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3281 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3292 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3295 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3299 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3312 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3229 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3239 (*VIvir*), 3305 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3352 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3354 (*IIIIIVir Augustalis*), 3380 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3383 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3384 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3385 (*IIIvir Augustalis*), 3386 (*VIvir*), 3389 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3390 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3392 (*IIIIIVir*), 3393 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3394 (*IIIIIVir*), 3395 (*VIvir*), 3397 (*IIIIIVir*), 3398 (*sexvir*), 3399 (*VIvir*), 3404 (*sexvir*), 3405 (two *VIviri Augustales*), 3406 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3407 (*sexvir*), 3409 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3410 (*VIvir*), 3414 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3415 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3421 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3422 (*IIIIIVir*), 3424 (*VIvir*), 3425 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3426 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3428 (*VIvir*), 3431 (*IIIIIVir*), 3435 (*VIvir*), 3436 (*VIvir*), 3437 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3439 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3440 (two *VIviri Augustales*), 3442 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 3443 (*IIIIIVir*), 3444 (*VIvir*), 4009 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 8847 (*IIIIIVir*), 8849 (*VIvir*); EpAnt 2019, 31 (*VIvir Augustalis*); Pais, 631 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 1254 (*VIvir Augustalis*); NSA 1965, 45 (*VIviri*); StudVer 2021, 125 (*VIvir Augustalis*); VitaVeronese

Claudiales there are three cases of *sevir Claudialis* (n° 22 and 24–25), two of *sevir Claudialis maior* (n° 23 and 26) and one of *sevir Claudialis et Augustalis* (n° 27). It indicates the synchronicity of *seviri Claudiales* and *seviri Augustales* as well as the development of a local hierarchy for the institution of the *seviri Claudiales*, even when they were a minority within the local Augustality. The forms *sevir* and *sevir Augustalis* have a common chronologic frame centred in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, while the *seviri Claudiales* are mainly focused on the second half of the 1st century AD. It seems that this terminology spread during the rule of Claudius or Nero and the following decades but without substituting the forms *sevir* and *sevir Augustalis*, which were more frequent and persisted much longer.

In general terms, we have observed the concentration of the version *Claudialis* in concrete towns of a well-defined geographic area (northern Italy). Its creation depended on the will of the ruling class from certain places, which had the aim to display its devotion to the emperor Claudius during his reign or after his deification by Nero. However, the majority of the towns did not follow this example and just kept the previous terminology. Within those exceptional places, the *seviri Claudiales* spread mainly during the second half of the 1st century AD, but in some cases (Bononia, Regium Lepidum) they remained longer as a local characteristic of the Augustality naming.

The form *Neroniensis* has only one inscription placed in Verona (n° 28). It shows a *sevir Augustalis et Neroniensis*, relating the title *Neroniensis* to the more common term *Augustalis*. As it has been already seen, this is a typical element of the analysed minor terminologies. In fact, half of them include the title *Augustalis*, together with the minority version, probably due to the previous tradition of this word and to make the new version more recognisable. In the case of the variant *Neroniensis*, its short survival can be explained by the sudden demise of Nero and

the subsequent dynastic change. Besides, the recently created version *Claudialis* was already appropriate during the rule of Nero as a sign of respect towards him and his deified predecessor. Finally, the word *Augustalis* was valid for every emperor as a reference to his official name *Augustus* and that is probably the main reason of its prevalence.

There are ten inscriptions with the title *sevir Flavialis* (nº 29–38). Their distribution is wider, with two cases outside Italy and a smaller concentration of the Italian testimonies. These attestations belong to eight different towns, from which only two are repeated: Aquae Statiellae (nº 30–31) and Laus Pompeia (nº 35–36). The remaining places are Tudur (nº 29), Brixia (nº 32), Camunni (nº 33), Augusta Taurinorum (nº 34), Iader (nº 37) and Carpenterate (nº 38). Despite the variety of locations, the proofs of the title *Flavialis* show a geographic homogeneity, considering that all these places are located in northern Italy and its surrounding provinces.

The Umbrian town of Tudur has three inscriptions related to the *Augustalitas*, without a preponderant terminology. Besides a *sexvir et Augustalis et Flavialis* (nº 29), there are a *sevir* and a reference to the *Augustales*.²⁰ Consequently, there are three coetaneous denominations, but it is not possible to establish their evolution with such a scarce number of evidences.

Aquae Statiellae comprises five inscriptions with chronologies between the end of 1st century BC and the 2nd century AD and without a clear dominance of the epithet *Augustalis* in comparison to *Flavialis*. Both inscriptions included in the current corpus (nº 30–31) combine these two terms in the form *sevir Augustalis Flavialis*. The remaining ones include two *seviri* and a *sevir et Augustalis*.²¹ The early dating of the *sevir et Augus-*

²⁰ These are the other two inscriptions in Tudur: CIL XI, 4658 (*VIvir*), 4663 (*Augustales*).

²¹ The other three inscriptions from Aquae Statiellae are: AE 2018, 718 (*VIvir et Augustalis*); CIL V, 7510 (*VIvir*); Pais, 967 (*VIvir*).

talis hints at the later addition of the epithet *Flavialis* to the local nomenclature of the Augustality in the last decades of the 1st century AD.

The abundantly attested city of Brixia preserves ninety inscriptions regarding the *Augustalitas*, with eighty mentions to *seviri Augustales* and twenty mentions to bared *seviri*.²² Consequently, the inscription mentioning a *sevir Flavialis* (n° 32) is an exceptional case, which has to be studied in the context of Cremona, the town where the *sevir Flavialis* held his position. Cremona preserves two inscriptions showing a *sevir* and two *seviri Augustales*.²³ These scarce testimonies evidence a terminological variety that cannot lead to any conclusion about the evolution of the term *Flavialis*.

²² Besides the analysed inscription, there are eighty-nine additional testimonies of the sevirate and the Augustality in Brixia: AE 1908, 221 (*VIvir Augustalis*); AE 1952, 135 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 136 (*VIvir Augustalis*); AE 1975, 435 (*VIvir Augustalis*); AE 1976, 257 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 258 (*VIvir Augustalis*); AE 1977, 302 (*VIvir*), 303 (*IIIIIVir Augustalis*); AE 1991, 823 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 824 (*VIvir*); AE 1995, 603 (*sevir?*); AE 1998, 594 (*IIIIIVir*); AE 1999, 734 (*sexvir Augustalis*); CIL V, 4130 (*VIvir*), 4193 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4203 (*VIviri* and *VIviri Augustales*), 4204 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4212 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4236 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4282 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4283 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4294 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4295 (*VIviri Augustales*), 4383 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4389 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4390 (*IIIIIVir Augustalis*), 4393 (*IIIIIVir Augustalis*), 4394 (*sexvir*), 4398 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4401 (*sexvir Augustalis*), 4403 (*IIIIIVir Augustalis*), 4405 (two *VIviri Augustales*), 4409 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4410 (*VIviri*), 4414 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4416 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4418 (*VIvir*), 4423 (*IIIIIVir Augustalis*), 4424 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4425 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4428 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4429 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4431 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4434 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4435 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4436 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4437 (*sexvir Augustalis*), 4438 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4439 (*sexvir Augustalis*), 4445 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4446 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4449 (three *VIviri Augustales*), 4453 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4457 (*IIIIIVir Augustalis*), 4461 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4463 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4464 (*VIvir*), 4465 (*IIIIIVir Augustalis*), 4467 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4473 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4474 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4477 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4479 (*IIIIIVir Augustalis*), 4480 (two *VIviri Augustales*), 4482 (*VIvir*), 4490 (three *VIviri Augustales*), 4491 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4492 (*VIvir*), 4496 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4497 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4685 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4834 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4876 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4877 (*VIvir*), 4887 (*VIvir*), 4896 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 4989 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 8885 (*IIIIIVir*); ILS, 6721 (*VIvir Augustalis*); InscrIt 10-5, 245 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 248 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 281 (*IIIIIVir*), 286 (*VIvir*), 544 (*VIvir*), 808 (two *VIviri Augustales*), 990 (*VIvir*), 1281 (*VIvir Augustalis*); Pais, 685 = 1271 (*IIIIIVir Augustalis?*), 1277 (*VIvir Augustalis*).

²³ The other two mentions concerning the *Augustalitas* in Cremona are: CIL V, 4096 (*sexvir*), 4122 (two *VIviri Augustales*).

Camunni has only one inscription (n° 33) in relation to the Augustality, which mentions a *sevir Flavialis*. The closest city attesting *seviri Augustales* is Brixia, where we have seen that the minor terminologies are almost absent, so there are not clues to investigate how this title evolved.

Apart from a reference to a *sevir et Flavialis* (n° 34), Augusta Taurinorum has twenty-six inscriptions related to the Augustality, including twelve mentions to *seviri*, six to *Augustales* and eight to *seviri Augustales*.²⁴ As in the previous towns, the title *Flavialis* seems to have been a brief local tendency during the Flavian dynasty that did not last long.

Laus Pompeia has sixteen inscriptions connected to the *Augustalitas*, containing seventeen mentions to *seviri* and a mention to a *sevir et Augustalis*, apart from the two analysed *seviri Flaviales* (n° 35–36). The local terminology of the sevirate and the Augustality attests the full predominance of the term *sevir*,²⁵ including two cases of *sevir iunior* and a *sevir senior* by influence of the neighbour city of Mediolanum. *Flavialis* was maybe added as a complement of *sevir* during the last third of the 1st century AD. This change did not prevail but even with that it has a bigger presence in Laus Pompeia than the title *Augustalis*.

In Iader there are ten evidences of the Augustality, containing a *sevir et Flavialis* (n° 37), a *sevir Iulialis* (n° 1), four *seviri*, two *Augustales* and two *seviri Augustales*.²⁶ As in the case of the *sevir Iulialis*, the form *Flavialis* does

²⁴ Augusta Taurinorum has other twenty-six inscriptions concerning the *Augustalitas*: AE 1988, 609 (*VIvir*); CIL V, 6905 = 7172 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 6917 (*VIvir*), 6952 (*Augustalis*), 7013 (*Augustalis*), 7014 (*Augustalis*), 7019 (*VIvir*), 7020 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 7023 (*Augustalis*), 7024 (*VIvir*), 7025 (*Augustalis*), 7026 (*sevir iunior*), 7027 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 7029 (*Augustalis*), 7030 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 7031 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 7033 (*VIvir*), 7035 (*VIvir*), 7036 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 7164 (*VIvir*), 7166 (*VIvir*), 7167 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 7168 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 7169 (*IIIIIVir*), 7170 (*VIvir*); ILS, 7614 (*VIvir Augustalis*).

²⁵ These are the remaining fourteen cases from Laus Pompeia: CIL V, 6347 (*VIvir*), 6348 (*VIvir*), 6349 (a *VIvir senior et Augustalis* and a *VIvir iunior*), 6351 (*VIvir iunior item VIvir Vercellae*), 6356 (*VIvir senior*), 6361 (*VIvir*), 6362 (*VIvir*), 6363 (*VIvir*), 6363 (two *VIviri*), 6367 (two *VIviri*), 6368 (*VIvir*), 6370 (*VIvir*), 6371 (*VIvir*), 6372 (*VIvir*).

²⁶ For the testimonies of the *seviratus Augustalis* in Iader, *vid.* footnote 12.

not seem to have lasted for a long time in comparison to the term *Augustalis*. The contemporary presence of very different titles shows the variability of the denominations for the *Augustalitas* in this Dalmatian town.

The *sevir Augustalis et Flavialis*²⁷ located in Carpentorate (n° 38) is the only testimony of the Augustality from this Roman *colonia* placed in Gallia Narbonensis. Besides, the inscription is dedicated to the *Genius* of the *seviri* from the town. The absence of other local cases impedes any terminological comparison. This epigraphic proof stands out as the only case of our catalogue situated outside Italy and Dalmatia.

Lastly, there are three inscriptions in the Dalmatian town of Narona with the form (*sevir*) *Augustalis Flavialis Titialis Nervialis* (n° 39–41), relating this title with three of the last emperors of the 1st century. Narona preserves thirty-seven inscriptions about the Augustality, with a strong predominance of bared *seviri*.²⁸ There are thirty-two cases of the term *sevir*, nine of them in the form *seviri MM*, usually read as *seviri magistri Mercuriales*²⁹. The *seviri Augustalis* have two mentions and there is an isolated testimony of *magister Augustalis*. Within the three inscriptions of our corpus, the nomenclature *Augustalis Flavialis Titialis Nervialis* is preceded by the word *sevir* in two of them (n° 39–40) but not in the last

²⁷ In our opinion, the interpretation *Flavia(lis)* seems more likely than reading *Flavia* as the *nomen* of a second offeror of the inscription.

²⁸ This are the mentions to the sevirate and the Augustality included in the remaining thirty-four inscriptions from Narona: AE 1932, 82 (*IIIIIIvir MM*); CIL III, 1770 (six *IIIIIIviri MM*), 1775 (four *IIIIIIviri MM*), 1792 (five *IIIIIIviri MM*), 1793 (*IIIIIIvir*), 1797 (*IIIIIIvir*), 1798 (*IIIIIIvir MM*), 1799 (*IIIIIIvir MM*), 1800 (four *IIIIIIviri MM*), 1801 (five *IIIIIIviri MM*), 1808 (*IIIIIIvir*), 1824 (*IIIIIIvir*), 1825 (*IIIIIIvir*), 1826 (*IIIIIIvir*), 1828 (*IIIIIIvir*), 1830 (*IIIIIIvir*), 1831 (*IIIIIIvir*), 1832 (*IIIIIIvir Augustalis*), 1833 (*IIIIIIvir*), 1834 (*IIIIIIvir*), 1836 (*IIIIIIvir Augustalis?*), 1837 (*IIIIIIvir*), 1851 (*magister Augustalis*), 1769 (*IIIIIIvir MM*), 8442 (a *IIIIIIvir* and a *VIvir*), 8443 (*IIIIIIvir*), 14223,1 (*IIIIIIvir*), 14625,1 (*IIIIIIvir*); CINar II, 117 (*IIIIIIvir Augustalis*); ILJug II, 654 (*IIIIIIvir*); ILJug III, 1887 (*IIIIIIvir*), 1888 (*IIIIIIvir*), 1889 (*IIIIIIvir*), 1890 (*IIIIIIvir*).

²⁹ The traditional interpretation *magister Mercurialis* is accepted by RODÀ DE LLANZA (2011: 191), but recently it has been suggested to read it as *municipibus municipii* in BEKAVAC–MILETIĆ (2019: 131).

one (nº 41), which includes a mention to the *collegium Augustalium*. Besides the strong majority of the bared *seviri*, there is a huge variability in relation to the term *Augustalis*. The two *seviri Augustales* and the three *Augustalis Flavialis Titialis Nervialis* are dated between the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, while the chronology of the *magister Augustalis* surprisingly belongs to the 2nd or even the 3rd one. The combination of four imperial epithets in the three cases of *Augustalis Flavialis Titialis Nervialis* is a particular characteristic only found in Narona.

The evidences of *Flaviales* respond to a process of terminological renovation similar to that one of the *Claudiales* and with a comparable extension and length. These testimonies are mainly in northern Italy and Dalmatia. Their appearance can be explained by local initiatives from different towns in an attempt to prove the adherence of the civic elites to the new Flavian dynasty. The inscriptions of *Flaviales* are dispersed in diverse towns with one or two cases each one. In consequence, it is not possible to analyse the evolution of this term within the local epigraphy, but the *Flaviales* most likely lasted approximately the same time that the Flavian emperors, from 69 to 96 AD. The isolated appearance of the terms *Titialis* and *Nervialis* possibly responds to similar factors that those ones for the *Claudiales* and *Flaviales*. The deification of Titus was promoted by his brother Domitianus, who even created a *collegium* of *sodales Flaviales Titiales*.³⁰ Nerva was also divinised after his death by the Senate under the rule of Traianus, but apparently the arrival of the Antonine dynasty with this emperor finished the evolution of all the analysed minor terminologies, which did not endure.

Before dealing with the common elements of these terminologies, it is pertinent to point out the exceptional case of an *Augustalis Ulpia*, in reference to the emperor Traianus (nº 42). It does not belong to those previously studied terms replacing the word *Augustalis*, but it coincides

³⁰ ESCÁMEZ DE VERA (2016); ESCÁMEZ DE VERA (2019: 326–343).

with them in the explicit allusion to a concrete emperor besides the general epithet *Augustus*. The inscription is located in Pisaurum, an Umbrian town with sixteen inscriptions in relation to the *seviri Augustales*, from which eleven mention *seviri Augustales*, six refer to *seviri* and three contain *Augustales*, including this *Augustalis Ulpia*.³¹

Anyway, this inscription, far from creating a new tendency adding the name of the emperor after the epithet *Augustalis*, is the only attested case of this type.³² During the 2nd century there was a drastic reduction in the terminological variety of the Augustality, deleting all the studied minor variants referred to concrete emperors and mostly the *magistri Augustales* as well.

IV. Common elements

The analysis of these forty-two inscriptions provides interesting data and common elements about the minor terminology of the *Augustalitas*. Firstly, most of these terms are dated to the 1st century AD, despite some cases lasting into the 2nd century. Their geographic frame is basically Italy, with some exceptions in Dalmatia (n° 1 and 38–41) and one case

³¹ Pisaurum contains fifteen more inscriptions about the *seviratus Augustalis*: AE 2005, 482 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 484 (*VIvir Augustalis*); CIL XI, 6306 (*VIviri et VIviri Augustales*), 6355 (*sexvir*), 6358 (*IIIIIVir Augustalis et Augustalis*), 6360 (*Augustales*), 6361 (*VIvir et VIvir Augustalis*), 6362 (*VIviri Augustales*), 6364 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 6368 (*sexvir*), 6369 (*VIviri Augustales*), 6373 (*VIvir et VIvir Augustalis*), 6379 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 6380 (*VIvir Augustalis*), 6381 (*sexvir*).

³² There is a second possible case in Aquileia from an inscription dated to the 3rd century AD, currently not preserved (CIL V, 1012): *C(ai) Valer(io) C(ai) f(ilio) / Vel(ina) Eusebeti / IIIIVir(o) i(ure) d(icundo) IIIIVir(o) i(ure) d(icundo) q(uin)q(uennali) / patron(o) Sept(imia) Aureli(ae) / Aug(ustae) IIIIVir(or)um patron(o) / coll(egii) cent(onariorum) et dend(rophorum) Aquil(eae) / ob insignem eius erga se / largition(em) et liberalita(tem) / suffrag(iis) univers(is) ex aere / coll(egii) fab(rum) / patron(o) dignissim(o) l(ocus) d(at)us d(ecreto) d(ecurionum)*. Its mention to the *seviratus* could be read *Sept(imiani) Aureli(ani) Aug(ustales) IIIIVir(i)*, relating the *Augustalitas* to the emperor Septimius Severus and his dynasty. Considering the uncommon nature of this title and the strange order of its words, it seems more adequate the interpretation *patron(o) Sept(imia) Aureli(ae) / Aug(ustae) IIIIVir(or)um*.

in Gallia Narbonensis (nº 37). Furthermore, they are in very concrete locations, with such a small territorial presence that is not possible to think about a general promotion of any of the studied terminologies by the imperial government. Their creation had to be the result of single initiatives in different towns without a further coordination. This fact confirms the prevailing theories about a decentralised promotion and spread of the *seviratus Augustalis* in all its versions, which helps to explain its numerous alternative titles.³³

We cannot talk about a spread of these terminologies, but better about local titles without any repercussion outside of these towns. They appear in only fifteen different towns, a very small presence even in comparison with the scarce *magistri Augustales*, which are preserved in thirty-four cities.

This phenomenon can be considered basically Italian, with some cases in neighbour provinces like Gallia Narbonensis and especially in Dalmatia, which contains all the inscriptions of *Iuliales*, *Titiales* and *Nerviales*.

Anyway, some external patterns can be recognised. There are plenty of testimonies about the imperial promotion of higher institutions with similar names. The emperors Nero and Titus created the *sodales Claudiales*³⁴ and the *sodales Flaviales*,³⁵ emulating the senatorial priesthood of the *sodales Augustales* but associating them to their respective dynasties with the new designation. This most probably inspired some local magistrates to change the name of the *Augustales* in their towns, so we can consider the new terminologies of the *Augustalitas* indirectly linked to the imperial promotion of *sodales Claudiales* and *sodales Flaviales* by Nero, Titus and Domitianus. Actually, 88% of these analysed minor terms correspond to *seviri Claudiales* and *Flaviales* (thirty-six cases out of forty-one). Neverthe-

³³ MOURITSEN (2006: 237–248).

³⁴ The creation of the *sodales Claudiales* must be related to the deification of Claudius in the beginning of Nero's reign: Tac. *Ann.* 12, 69, 4.

³⁵ ESCÁMEZ DE VERA (2019: 326–327).

less, the early case of the *seviri Tiberiales* shows that the local authorities could have the initiative without any example from the imperial government, so several cases of *seviri Claudiales* and *seviri Flaviales* may have appeared even before their homonymous *collegia* of *sodales*.

Therefore, it seems clear that there was a bigger variability of terminology during the first hundred years of the *Augustalitas*. The institution evolved in the 2nd century, consolidating its major terminologies (*sevir Augustalis*, *Augustalis*, *sevir*) from the reign of Traianus or Hadrianus, in spite of some late cases of *magistri Augustales*, *seviri Claudiales* and *seviri Flaviales*, which seem to confirm Mouritsen's theory about the decentralised organisation of the Augustality. Its homogenisation happened without a central order from the imperial house, but as a result of the progressive prevalence of the forms *Augustalis*, *sevir Augustalis* and *sevir*. Actually, during this century there were new high priesthoods named after emperors, like the *sodales Hadrianales* and the *sodales Antoniniani Veriani*, but we do not have any epigraphic or literary record about *seviri* with these imperial adjectives. Instead, the last exceptional case is that one of an *Augustalis Ulpia* (n° 42).

There are several reasons to explain why these minor terminologies did not succeed. An important factor was the popularity of Augustus and the term *Augustalis* or *sevir Augustalis*, together with the advantage of being the founding name of the institution, which preserved this epithet in an overwhelming majority of its testimonies. Every emperor adopted the title *Augustus*, so *Augustalis* was a very proper name for an institution related to the imperial figure. Moreover, the sharp end of the emperors Nero and Domitianus, as well as their subsequent bad reputation recorded in the literary sources, did not help to consolidate new titles linked to their families. Their reigns were the main beneficiaries of this minor terminology, but the actions against their memory after their death avoided the strengthening of these innovations. Instead, epigra-

phy makes clear that titles like *Claudialis* and *Flavialis* did not use to last long time, even when the *seviri Claudiales* spread more than the other analysed titles. *Augustalis* always prevailed as the main graphic symbol of the institution, and in fact many of the minor titles studied here appear in the inscriptions linked to the word *Augustalis* (twenty-one inscriptions, exactly half of the studied cases).

As a summary, I consider that the *seviri Augustales* and their different designations give an illustrative example of terminological isolation, as the epigraphic remains demonstrate. The terminology of *Augustalitas* was especially varied in the 1st century AD, when the arrival of new emperors to the throne stimulated spontaneous actions to change the titles of the *seviri Augustales* in some towns, creating the versions *Tiberialis*, *Iulialis*, *Claudialis*, *Neroniensis*, *Flavialis*, *Titialis* and *Nervialis* after the names of the emperors. This process was influenced by the new high priesthoods that the emperors Nero, Titus and Domitianus created after their respective predecessors Claudius, Vespasianus and Titus. Nonetheless, this tendency did not endure. Despite the creation of new customised titles for the Augustality in the 1st century, they coexisted with the original *seviri Augustales*. Eventually, the use of those new terms became clearly minor and redundant, leading to certain homogenisation of the terminology under the prevalence of the epithet *Augustalis*. Therefore, after a short existence in a small territory, these minor titles suffered their stagnation and disappearance during the 2nd century.

V. Epigraphic corpus

sevir Iulialis

1.- AE 1953, 104 (Iader, Dalmatia). Dating: 30 BC – 41 AD. Text: *L(ucio) Tettio / Epidiano ann(or)um / VII L(ucius) Tet[t]ius Sper/ches pater VIvir / Iul(i)alis vivos(!) posu(it) l(ocus) d(at)us d(ecreto) d(ecurionum)*.

sevir Tiberialis

2.- AE 1998, 418 (Asculum Picenum, Regio V: Picenum). Dating: 14–50 AD. Text: *Telonia Atala[n]te* / *L(ucio) Telonio Dicae[o]* / *Aug(ustali) V[ir](o) et Tibe[r(iali)] viro* / *Teloniae L(uci) f(iliae) Sabina[e]* / *filiae* / *L(ucio) Telonio Meleagro* / *Aug(ustali) V[ir](o) et Tibe[r(iali)] / fratri*.

3.- CIL IX, 6415 (Asculum Picenum, Regio V: Picenum). Dating: 14–37 AD. Text: *P(ublius) Caetrenus* | *(mulieris) l(ibertus) Faustus* / *sexvir Tib[e]rialis creatus a [---]* / *arbitratu* / *T(iti) Appusu[l]leni [---]*.

4.- EE VIII, 217 (Asculum Picenum, Regio V: Picenum). Dating: 50–100 AD. Text: *D(is) M(anibus)* / *M(arco) Valerio col(oniae) l(iberto)* / *Vernae sexvir(o)* / *Aug(ustali) et Tib(eriali)* / *Ianuarius [c]ol(oniae) di[sp(ensator)]* / *qui fuerat [arc]arius(?)* / *ei[u]s i[tem]* / *Vibia Primil[l]a ux[o]r* / *[s]ib[i]e t[em]p[or]e po[st]e[re]ris eorum*.

sevir Claudialis

5.- CIL IX, 1648 (Beneventum, Regio II: Apulia et Calabria). Dating: 41–80 AD. Text: *L(ucio) Lollio L(uci) f(ilio) Suavi* / *aedili praeffecto fabr(um)* / *L(ucius) Lollius Orio pat(er)* / *Aug(ustalis) Claud(ialis) sibi et* / *Hirriae Tertullae* / *uxori*.

6.- CIL IX, 1689 (Beneventum, Regio II: Apulia et Calabria). Dating: 41–80 AD. Text: *D(is) M(anibus)* / *N(umerio) Afinio Tacito* / *Clau(diali) Aug(ustali) AFIN* / [---].

7.- CIL IX, 1698 (Beneventum, Regio II: Apulia et Calabria). Dating: 41–80 AD. Text: *D(is) M(anibus) s(acrum)* / *M(arci) Serveni* / *Alexandri* / *Aug(ustalis) Claud(ialis)* / *Beneventi* / *vix(it) ann(os) XCVII* / *m(enses) II d(ies) XII Iunia* / *Capreola con[i]ugi bene merenti*.

8.- CIL IX, 1701 (Beneventum, Regio II: Apulia et Calabria). Dating: 100–150 AD. Text: *D(is) M(anibus) / L(ucio) Valerio Ti/cho Claud(iali) / Aug(ustali) Bene/venti Acili/a Thallia ma/rito karissimo / bene mer(enti) fec(it).*

9.- CIL IX, 1705 (Beneventum, Regio II: Apulia et Calabria). Dating: 70–130 AD. Text: *D(is) M(anibus) s(acrum) / A(ulo) Vibbio Ianurio / Claudiali Augustali / cur(atori) muneris diei un(i)/us Aulis Vibbis / Iustinus / Iustianus / Ianuarius / filis patri bene m(erenti) p(osuerunt).*

10.- ILS, 6500 (Beneventum, Regio II: Apulia et Calabria). Dating: 41–80 AD. Text: *C(aio) Iulio Cypaero / Aug(ustali) Claud(iali) / honorato bisellio / M(arcus) Rutilius Lupus / amico optimo.*

11.- NSA 1929, p. 221 (Beneventum, Regio II: Apulia et Calabria). Dating: 41–80 AD. Text: *C(aius) Canellius C(ai) l(ibertus) Ianuarius / August(a-lis) Claud(ialis) sibi et / Pomponiae L(uci) l(ibertae) Feliculae / contubernali et / C(aio) Canellio Alcimo lib(erto).*

12.- AE 1922, 82 (Bononia, Regio VIII: Aemilia). Dating: 41–100 AD. Text: *M(arco) Papuleio / M(arci) l(iberto) Pudenti IIIII/vir(o) et Claudiali / M(arco) Papuleio M(arci) l(iberto) / Primo IIIIIvir(o) / negotiatoribus / ferrariis / Faustus l(ibertus) IIIIIvir / in f(ronte) p(edes) XVI in a(gro) p(edes) XVI.*

13.- CIL XI, 696 (Bononia, Regio VIII: Aemilia). Dating: 100–230 AD. Text: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) Dol(icheno) / Q(uintus) Poplicius Modestinus / [Vlvi]r et Claud(ialis) cenatorium p(ecunia) s(ua) f(ecit) / [l(ocus)] d(a-tus) d(ecreto) d(ecurionum).*

14.- CIL XI, 714 (Bononia, Regio VIII: Aemilia). Dating: 41–130 AD. Text:

*M(arcus) Clodius / M(arci) l(ibertus) Sabinus / VIvir Claudial(is) / sibi et / Co-
erane lib(ertae) / Tyche / q(uo)q(uo)v(ersus) p(edes) XXII.*

15.- *CIL XI, 718 (Bononia, Regio VIII: Aemilia). Dating: 41–100 AD. Text:
[---]us / [---]don / [vestia]rius(?) / [Bononi]ensis(?) / [sex]vir / [et Clau]dial(is)
/ [sibi] v(ivus) p(osuit).*

16.- *AE 1946, 210 (Regium Lepidum, Regio VIII: Aemilia). Dating: 54–
130 AD. Text: C(aio) Pomponio / Rufi lib(erto) / Felici / VIvir(o) Aug(ustali) /
Claud(iali) / lanari(i) pect(inarii) / et carmin(atores) / ob merita eius / quod te-
stamento / suo legaverit / eius non sufficientib(us) / sibi dationes et / vestiarius
quoq(ue) / et si qui(s) defunctus / esset certa summa / funeraretur.*

17.- *CIL XI, 959 (Regium Lepidum, Regio VIII: Aemilia). Dating: 100–
150 AD. Text: D(is) M(anibus) / C(ai) Funda/ni Eucha/risti / Claudiali/s /
v(ivus) f(ecit).*

18.- *CIL XI, 971 (Regium Lepidum, Regio VIII: Aemilia). Dating: 54–100
AD. Text: T(ito) [A]tilio T(iti) l(iberto) Ni[---] lib(erto) ILO[---]I Clau/diali
L(ucius) Herennius / Ianuarius / VIvir Aug(ustalis) / amico opti/mo / [---].*

19.- *CIL XI, 974 (Regium Lepidum, Regio VIII: Aemilia). Dating: 54–
100 AD. Text: Satriae / \ (mulieris) l(ibertae) / Graphe // C(aius) Olniu[s] /
Priscu[s] / IIIIIvi[r] / [C]l[audialis?].*

20.- *CIL V, 7493 (Carreum Potentia, Regio IX: Liguria). Dating: 54–70
AD. Text: [Fon]ti(?) [Dia]nae Victoriae / T(itus) Sextius [---] f(ilius) B[asilis]-
cus Aug(ustalis) Claudialis / nomine suo et / Sextiae T(iti) l(ibertae) Irenes
uxoris et / T(iti) Sexti Fausti fili(i) et / Sextiae Marcellae filiae / solo suo inter
quattuor terminos / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) l(aetus) m(erito).*

21.- CIL V, 7494 (Carreum Potentia, Regio IX: Liguria). Dating: 54–70 AD. Text: *Fonti(?) Dia[nae Victoriae] / T(itus) [Se]xtius T(iti) f(ilius) [Basili-
scus Aug(ustalis) Claudialis] / nomin[e suo et] / [Sex]tiae T(iti) l(ibertae) [Ire-
nes uxoris et] / T(iti) Sexti Marcellae filiae] / [solo suo inter quattuor terminos]
/ [v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) l(aetus) m(erito)]*.

22.- AE 1994, 714 (Verona, Regio X: Venetia et Histria). Dating: 41–100 AD. Text: *[L(ucio) Sergio ---] / [---] / [V]ir(o) Cl[aud]ial(i) / [gratui]to d(e-
creto) d(ecurionum) / [et Max]imai(?) f(iliae) / [Sergia S]evera / [et] / L(ucius)
Sergius [S]everus / filii / fece[r]unt*.

23.- CAVeneto 2, p. 215 (Verona, Regio X: Venetia et Histria). Dating: 100–150 AD. Text: *Turrania / Stratonis si/bi et C(aio) Samici/o Firmo marit(o) /
optimo V]ir(o) Cl[aud]ial(i) maior(i) coll(egii) / dendr(ophorum) coll(egii) cen-
t(onariorum) / nutritori et Sami/ci Viria[e ---]*.

24.- CIL V, 3430 (Verona, Regio X: Venetia et Histria). Dating: 41–100 AD. Text: *[---]sis[---] / [--- St]lani]o Polyclito / [patri sex]vir(o) Claud(iali) /
[---]riae Iucundae / matri / L(ucio) Stlanio Crescenti / fratri*.

25.- CIL V, 3433 (Verona, Regio X: Venetia et Histria). Dating: 41–100 AD. Text: *D(is) M(anibus) / Q(uinti) Tuticani Q(uinti) f(ili) Erotis / gram-
matici [L]atini / V]ir(i) Cl[aud]ialis ornam(entis) decu[r]ionalibus] honorato
Veron(ae) / et Variai(!) [Q(uinti)] Tuticani Feliciani / et suis*.

26.- CIL V, 3438 (Verona, Regio X: Venetia et Histria). Dating: 100–150 AD. Text: *C(aius) Veronius / Carpus / V]ir Cl[aud]ialis mai(or) / Veroniae /
Trofim(a)e sacer(doti) / Matris deum / Matri / Sanctissimae / et Veronio Primo*.

27.- CIL V, 4008 (Verona, Regio X: Venetia et Histria). Dating: 41–100 AD. Text: *L(ucius) Aufillenus / Ascanius / VIvir II / Cla(udialis) et Aug(ustalis) / sibi et / Catiae T(iti) f(iliae) / Rhodae / uxori.*

sevir Neroniensis

28.- CIL V 3429 (Verona, Regio X: Venetia et Histria). Dating: 54–68 AD. Text: *L(ucio) Stlanio / Homuncioni / IIIIIvir(o) Aug(ustali) et Neronien(si) // v(iva) f(ecit) / Stlania L(uci) l(iberta) / Cytheris / sibi et / [L(ucio)] Stlanio Homuncioni / [---]o sexviro p[atrono].*

sevir Flavialis

29.- CIL XI, 4639 (Tuder, Regio VI: Umbria). Dating: 70–100 AD. Text: *Pro salute / coloniae et ordinis / decurionum et populi / Tudertis Iovi Opt(imo) Max(imo) / Custodi Conservatori / quod is sceleratissimi servi / publici infando latrocinio / defixa monumentis ordinis / decurionum nomina / Numine suo eruit ac vindicavit et metu periculorum / coloniam civesque liberavit / L(ucius) Cancrui Clementis lib(ertus) / Primigenius / sexvir et Augustalis et Flavialis / primus omnium his honoribus / ab ordine donatus / votum solvit // C(aio) Vibio [---] / Iulio [---] co(n)ss(ulibus).*

30.- CIL V, 7509 (Aquae Statiellae, Regio IX: Liguria). Dating: 79–150 AD. Text: *Pollia M(arci) f(ilia) Marcella / M(arco) Pollio M(arci) l(iberto) Certo patri / Aufidiae T(iti) f(iliae) Titullae matri / L(ucio) et L(ucio) et T(ito) et Proculae Vibullis fili(i)s / L(ucio) Vibullio Montano viro / VIvir(o) Aug(ustali) Flaviali v(iva) f(ecit).*

31.- CIL V, 7511 (Aquae Statiellae, Regio IX: Liguria). Dating: 79–150 AD. Text: *C(aius) Valerius l(mulieris) l(ibertus) / Sceptus / VIvir Aug(ustalis) Flavialis / sibi et / Vettiae L(uci) f(iliae) Romulae uxori / v(ivus) f(ecit).*

32.- CIL V, 4399 (Brixia, Regio X: Venetia et Histria). Dating: 70–120 AD. Text: *Q(uinto) Caecilio / Telesphor(o) VI/vir(o) Flaviali / Cremon(ae) et munerar(io) / Calventia / Corneliana / marito optimo / et / sibi.*

33.- CIL V, 4968 (Camunni, Regio X: Venetia et Histria). Dating: 70–120 AD. Text: *P(ublius) Valerius / Crispinus / [I]IIIIvir Flavia[l(is)] / sibi et / Sextiae / Sexti fil(iae) / Secundae uxori et / P(ublio) Valerio Numisio f(ilio).*

34.- CIL V, 7018 (Augusta Taurinorum, Regio XI: Transpadana). Dating: 70–100 AD. Text: *V(ivus) f(ecit) / C(aius) Baburius / Melissus / VIvir et / [Fl]avialis / [sibi e]t suis.*

35.- CIL V, 6353 (Laus Pompeia, Regio XI: Transpadana). Dating: 70–100 AD. Text: *Mefiti / L(ucius) Caesius / Asiaticus / VIvir Flavialis / aram et mensas IIII / dedit l(ocus) d(atus) d(ecreto) d(ecurionum).*

36.- CIL V, 6369 (Laus Pompeia, Regio XI: Transpadana). Dating: 70–100 AD. Text: *M(arci) Minici Faustini / M(arcus) Minicius Euth[y]cus / VIvi[r] Flaviali[s] / et Minicia Dynamis / filio / et M(arco) Minicio Eu[c]haristo / et Miniciae Thaidi matri.*

37.- CIL XII, 1159 (Carpentorate, Gallia Narbonensis). Dating: 70–120 AD. Text: *Genio / coloniae / IIIIIviri / L(ucius) Iulius Ianuarius / IIIIIvir Aug(ustalis) et Flavia(lis) / in hoc opus IIIIIviris / HS n(ummum) IIII mil(ibus) / d(e) s(ua) p(ecunia) d(edit).*

38.- AE 2014, 1027 (Iader, Dalmatia). Dating: 70–120 AD. Text: *C(aius) Albucius C(ai) l(ibertus) Restitutus / IIIIIvir et Flavialis / dis Syris templum ampliavit et / a solo sua impensa fecit.*

sevir Flavialis Titialis Nervialis

39.- CIL III, 1768 (Narona, Dalmatia). Dating: 96–117 AD. Text: *Aesculapio / Aug(usto) sacr(um) / P(ublius) Servilius [---] / IIIIIvir [August(alis) Flav]/ialis [Titialis] / Nervialis testam[ento] / pon(i) iussit ex [HS ---] / et ob dedicationem / [---]*.

40.- CIL III, 1835 (Narona, Dalmatia). Dating: 96–117 AD. Text: *C(aio) Vibio Severo / IIIIIvir(o) annor(um) XXV / C(aius) Vibius Ingenus pater / IIIII(vir) Augustalis / Flavialis Titialis / Nervialis vivos fecit / et sibi et Vibiae Rhodope / uxori libertae vivae et / C(aio) Vibio Primigenio / IIIIIvir(o) liberto optimo*.

41.- CIL III, 14624,1 (Narona, Dalmatia). Dating: 96–117 AD. Text: *Iovi Au[g(usto)] / sacr(um) / colle[g(ium) Aug(ustalium)?] / L(ucius) Pub[licius] 3 / Diadu[menus] / Aug(ustalis) / F(lavialis) T(itialis) [N(ervialis) ---]*.

Augustalis Ulpii

42.- CIL XI, 6310 (Pisaurum, Regio VI: Umbria). Dating: 98–161 AD. Text: *Cultores Iovis Latii // M(arcus) Fremedius Severus et Blassia Vera patroni / in dedicatione dederunt pane(m) et vinu(m) et \ (denarios) s(emisses) / P(ublius) Seneka(!) Cornelius patronus aream d(onum) d(edit) / M(arcus) Fremedius Iustus et Iustinus / T(itus) Lurius Clemens / T(itus) Cossonius Severus / C(a- ius) Tedi- us Salutaris / L(ucius) [---] / L(ucius) Lurius [---] / C(aius) Geminus Bassus / C(aius) Vicrius Geminus / L(ucius) Suedius Sabinus / T(itus) Vibennius Severus / L(ucius) Manilius Severus / C(aius) Septimius Dexter / Vibia Carite / C(aius) Refr[iu]s [C]eler / Vicria Capria / C(aius) Septimius Verus / T(itus) Caesennius Clemens / Suedia Lea / L(ucius) [---] ius Dexter / [---]rius [---] / C(aius) [Fl]ami[nius(?) // [---] Secundus Mursi(us?) / P(ublius) Claren- nius Leo / M(arcus) Insteius Pudens Augustalis Ulpi(i) / T(itus) Suedius Proculus / C(aius) Insteius [---]s / C(aius) [---] / C(aius) V[---] / S[ex(tus?) ---] / S[ex(tus?) ---] / T(itus) [---] / C(aius) [---] / L(ucius) [---] / L(ucius) [---]*.

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Corpora abbreviations

AE	<i>L'Année Epigraphique. Revue des publications épigraphiques relatives à l'Antiquité romaine</i> . Paris 1888–.
CAVeneto	<i>Carta Archeologica del Veneto</i> . Modena 1988–.
CIL III	T. MOMMSEN: <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum III: Inscriptiones Asiae, provinciarum Europae Graecarum, Illyrici Latinae</i> . Berlin 1873.
CIL V	T. MOMMSEN: <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum V: Inscriptiones Gal-liae Cisalpinae Latinae</i> . Berlin 1872–1877.
CIL IX	T. MOMMSEN: <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum IX: Inscriptiones Ca-labriae, Apuliae, Samnii, Piceni Latinae</i> . Berlin 1883.
CIL XI	E. BORMANN: <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum XI: Inscriptiones Ae-miliae, Etruriae, Umbriae Latinae</i> . Berlin 1888–1926.
CIL XII	O. HIRSCHFELD: <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum XII. Inscriptiones Galliae Narbonensis Latinae</i> . Berlin 1888.
EE VIII	W. HENZEN: <i>Ephemeris Epigraphica. Corporis Inscriptionum Lati-narum Supplementum, VIII</i> . Berlin 1899.
ILS	H. DESSAU: <i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> (3 vols.). Berlin 1892–1916.
NSA	<i>Notizie degli Scavi di Antichità</i> . Roma 1876–.

ANNA-MARIA MILIARA

Alexander's Philosophical παιδεία and θυμός: the Case of Plutarch

Plutarch wrote two works that refer to Alexander: The Life of Alexander and the two treatises On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander I–II. Specifically, the treatises describe Alexander positively: through the antithesis between ἔργον and λόγος, Alexander is idealized prima facie and presented as a philosopher in arms (328a), and via the distinction between ἀρετή and τύχη, he is introduced as a virtuous general. On the contrary, Life depicts Alexander as an ἀνὴρ θυμοειδής, both in good (φιλότιμος) and bad sense (rageful). At first, he is praised for his kindness and generosity (12, 1; 15, 5; 24, 6; 27, 7). However, after the account of Persepolis (38), Alexander succumbs to his anger (62, 3). The question that arises, and we aspire to answer is to what extent the presentation of Alexander is disparate between these two works. Are there two different portraits of Alexander?

Keywords: Philosophical education, anger, Plutarch, Alexander the Great, *Life of Alexander*, *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander I–II*, paradoxical encomium

1. Introduction

Since antiquity, Alexander the Great has been a beacon of inspiration for many writers. The sources on Alexander fall into two categories: primary and secondary. Primary sources are those that were written in Alexander's era or shortly thereafter and have survived today only in fragments.¹ In particular, Alexander's campaign was first recorded in

¹For a detailed presentation of the historians of Alexander the Great, see ZAMBRINI (2007: 210–220).

the *Royal Ephemerides*, an official journal, which is now lost. Ptolemy, the general of Alexander, relied on the *Royal Ephemerides* and on his personal experience. Also, Aristobulus, Alexander's engineer, wrote about the course of the great general. Other authors, whose work has been lost, are Callisthenes, Cleitarchus, Onesicritus, and Nearchus.²

Secondary sources are those that were written centuries after Alexander's death (specifically in the Roman period) and provide more comprehensive narratives of his reign. The historians of the Roman period relied on the primary sources to narrate the achievements of Alexander. Particularly, Plutarch, Quintus Curtius Rufus, and Arrian provide us with the most detailed description of the course and ethos of Alexander, while scattered information can be found in the works of Strabo, Josephus, Diodorus, and Dio Cassius.

In this paper, I will focus on Plutarch's presentation of Alexander's philosophical education and anger. I would like to shed some light on the way he constructs the image of Alexander in two of his works (*Life of Alexander* and *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander I-II*) in relation to the aforementioned parameters: παιδεία and θυμός. As we will see below, the portrait of Alexander differs between these two works: both positive and negative in the *Life* and ideal in the treatises. However, a more thorough look at the texts will reveal that this is not the case.

2. Plutarch

Plutarch, born in Chaeronia of Boeotia, lived in the 1st century AD and was a Greek biographer and historian. The works that refer to Alexander are the *Life of Alexander*, which describes the life of the great general from his birth to his death, and the two treatises *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander I-II*, where Plutarch tries to convince his readers that

²BOSWORTH (2000: 2–3).

Alexander was a philosopher, and his success was a consequence of his virtue and not of luck.³

*Life of Alexander*⁴

In the *Life*, Alexander is presented as an ἀνὴρ θυμοειδής, both in good (φιλότιμος) and bad sense (rageful). At first, he is praised for his respect of women (12, 1), his generosity towards prisoners, his prudence (27, 7), his magnanimity (15, 5), and his piety (24, 6). However, after the account of Persepolis (38), Alexander becomes harsh and vindictive (57, 2: φοβερός καὶ ἀπαράιτητος κολαστὴς τῶν πλημμελούντων) and acts sullen and angry (62, 3: ὑπὸ δυσθυμίας καὶ ὀργῆς).⁵

Τύχη (fortune) is defined as an unexpected or uncontrollable situation: it gave the advantage of terrain in the battle of Issus (20, 4) and assisted Alexander in the Malli town (63, 2). Furthermore, the murder of Cleitus was attributed to misfortune (50, 2: δυστυχία).⁶

*On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander I–II*⁶

The portrait of Alexander in the treatises is positive *prima facie*. Plutarch presents Alexander as a man of action, who conquered territories, suffered a lot of wounds, founded many cities, and tried to spread Greek culture by uniting the races. Through the antithesis between ἔργον (event) and λόγος (speech), Alexander is idealized and presented as a philosopher in arms, who puts into practice what others have expressed simply by word (328a).⁷

Another distinction is being made between ἀρετή (virtue) and τύχη (fortune). Plutarch argues that Alexander's exploits derive from his vir-

³DUFF (1999: 1–2).

⁴Text edition: PERRIN (1919).

⁵WARDMAN (1955: 96–102).

⁶Text edition: BABBITT (1936).

⁷HAMILTON (1999: xxxvi–xxxvii).

tue, not from fortune. Fate is unpredictable. It can elevate anyone and then lead them to destruction. However, this is not the case for Alexander (326f). Alexander's wounds prove that fortune was always opposed to him (327a, 344c). Τύχη can be the personal fortune, like δαίμων, maybe a power that controls everything or τά ἐκτὸς ἀγαθὰ, namely the means someone has to achieve something.

3. Θυμός

Alexander is presented as a spirited man (θυμοειδής) both in positive and negative light. Particularly, on some occasions he tries not to be consumed by his anger and to act with composure and wisdom, and on others, θυμός is the driving force of his ambition (φιλοτιμία). However, there are also incidents where Alexander succumbs to his anger and acts impulsively.

Life of Alexander

Being still a fetus, Alexander is presented as a bold son with lion-like nature (2, 5: θυμοειδῆ καὶ λεοντώδη τὴν φύσιν). Also, in 4, 3–4, Plutarch describes the appearance of Alexander and his pleasant smell in order to draw a conclusion about his character, namely that he was prone to drink and choleric (ἢ θερμότης τοῦ σώματος ὡς ἔοικε καὶ ποτικὸν καὶ θυμοειδῆ παρείχεν). After the destruction of Thebes, Alexander's anger is satiated (13, 2: μεστὸς ὦν ἤδη τὸν θυμὸν) and after the murder of Cleitus, his anger subsides (51, 10: εὐθὺς ἀφῆκεν ὁ θυμός). Apart from Alexander, many Macedonians are affected by anger. Olympias appears as a jealous and hot-tempered woman (9, 5: δύσζηλος καὶ βαρύθυμος) and encourages Pausanias to oppose Philip (10, 5: ὡς θυμουμένῳ τῷ νεανίσκῳ προσεγγελευσαμένην). Philip, during his argument with Alexander about the succession, falls unconscious because of his anger and wine (9, 10: δ' ἐκατέρου διὰ τὸν θυμὸν καὶ τὸν οἶνον ἔπεσε σφαλείς). Anger,

in a good sense, strengthens Alexander's ambition (26, 14: τὸ θυμοειδὲς ἄχρι τῶν πραγμάτων ὑπεξέφερε τὴν φιλονικίαν ἀήττητον).⁸

On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander I–II

In 332d, it is mentioned that Alexander's temper was resilient (τὸ δὲ θυμικὸν εὐδιάλλακτον). Later in 335a, Alexander's soul was ignited by the melody (διεφλέχθη τὸν θυμόν), which describes the influence of music on martial eagerness. Afterwards, Plutarch asserts that for seven years, Alexander did not reveal his suspicions about Philotas' conspiracy, neither under the influence of alcohol nor because of his anger (339f: οὐκ ἐν οἴνῳ ποτὲ τὴν ὑπόνοιαν ταύτην ἐξέφηνεν ὁ μεθύων, οὐ δι' ὀργὴν ὁ θυμοειδής). The Macedonians, too, rush with courage and impetuosity (327b: θυμῷ καὶ βίᾳ Μακεδόνες) to protect Alexander in the Malli country.⁹

In the treatise *On the Control of Anger*, Plutarch argues that anger is neither noble nor manly, nor possessing any quality of pride or greatness. It is a mark not of energetic activity, confidence, boldness, high ideals, or any other virtue, but rather of asperity, weakness, and often toughness (456f):

ἡ φύσις τοῦ θυμοῦ ἰς οὐκ εὐγενὴς οὐδ' ἀνδρώδης οὐδ' ἔχουσα φρόνημα καὶ μέγεθος ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ δοκεῖ τοῖς πολλοῖς τὸ ταρακτικὸν αὐτοῦ πρακτικὸν καὶ τὸ ἀπειλητικὸν εὐθαρσὲς εἶναι καὶ τὸ ἀπειθὲς ἰσχυρόν.

Genuine courage is sustained by reason (λόγον) and virtue does not need vice's guidance (458e). Additionally, the emotions are integral to virtue, which itself reflects a correct balance between the emotions and

⁸WARDMAN (1955: 101).

⁹WARDMAN (1955: 103).

reason –μετριοπάθεια (moderation) and not ἀπάθεια (apathy) (*On mor. virt.* 443c–444c).¹⁰ Bearing these facts in mind, Alexander in the *Life* has completely failed, whereas in the treatises is pretty much ideal.¹¹

4. Philosophical παιδεία

As we will see below, philosophical education plays an important role in Alexander's presentation and his "double" portrait. Plutarch emphasizes Alexander's love of philosophy both in the *Life* and in the treatises. In the *Life*, the gradual decay of his philosophical education leads to the corruption of his character, while in the treatises there is a hidden message behind the praise.

Life of Alexander

Alexander is presented as a studious and avid reader (8, 2: ως φύσει φιλόλογος καὶ φιλομαθῆς καὶ φιλαναγνώστης), having philosophy rooted in his soul (8, 5: πρὸς φιλοσοφίαν ἐμπεφυκὼς καὶ συντεθραμμένος ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτῷ ζῆλος καὶ πόθος).

It is worth mentioning that there is an inverse ratio between the education of Bucephalus and that of Alexander.¹² Plutarch presents Bucephalus as a savage, untamed, and disobedient horse, which does not accept any riders (6, 1–2):

ἐδόκει τε χαλεπὸς εἶναι καὶ κομιδῇ δύσχρηστος, οὐτ' ἀναβάτην προσιέμενος οὔτε φωνὴν ὑπομένων τινὸς τῶν περὶ τὸν Φίλιππον, ἀλλ' ἀπάντων κατεξανιστάμενος, δυσχεραίνοντος δὲ τοῦ Φιλίππου καὶ κελεύοντος ἀπάγειν ὡς παντάπασιν ἄγριον καὶ ἀκόλαστον.

¹⁰ TSOUNA (2011: 205–206).

¹¹ KARAMANOLIS (2009: 119–123).

¹² WHITMARSH (2002: 180–181).

Alexander, seeing the horse filled with anger and spirit (πληρούμενον θυμοῦ καὶ πνεύματος), quietly climbed onto its back and gently pulled the bridles (6, 7: περιλαβὼν ταῖς ἡνίαις τὸν χαλινόν, ἄνευ πληγῆς καὶ σπαραγμοῦ προσανέστειλεν). This reminds us of the chariot of the soul and the struggle of its parts with the charioteer in Plato's *Phaedrus* (244a–257b), where the θυμοειδὲς is ultimately being tamed through education.

Bucephalus is depicted as an intractable and angry horse, just as Alexander was a tough and spirited man (42, 4: θυμοειδής, χαλεπὸς καὶ ἀπαραίτητος). The adjective δύσχρηστος (intractable) refers to Philip's characterization of Alexander as δυσκίνητος (unwieldy) (7, 1). Furthermore, the adjective ἄγριος (wild) refers to uncivilized–tyrannical behavior (Plat. *Polit.* 571c), while ἄκολαστος is the uneducated. Finally, Alexander's education is characterized by Plutarch as a task πολλῶν χαλινῶν ἔργον οἰάκων θ' ἅμα (7, 2: for many bits and rudder–sweeps as well).

Bucephalus, once disobedient and wild, is finally tamed by Alexander, while the latter, although he has been tamed by philosophical discourse, became tyrannical. Plutarch characterizes Cleitus' death as ἀγριώτερα (50, 1), which indicates that Alexander's philosophical education began to decline. At this point, it is worth mentioning that Callisthenes, who resisted the prostration, is described walking around boasting of his deed as ὡς ἐπὶ καταλύσει τυραννίδος (55, 2: as if he had overthrown tyranny).

Vocabulary

Bucephalus	Alexander
χαλεπὸς εἶναι (6, 1)	χαλεπὸς καὶ ἀπαραίτητος (42, 4)
δύσχρηστος (6, 1)	δυσκίνητος (7, 1)

πληρούμενον θυμοῦ (6, 6)	θυμοειδής (42, 4)
ἄγριον καὶ ἀκόλαστον (6, 2)	Cleitus' death: ἀγριώτερα (50, 1)
περιλαβὼν ταῖς ἡνίαῖς τὸν χαλινόν [...] προσανέστειλεν (6, 7)	πολλῶν χαλινῶν ἔργον οἰάκων θ' ἄμα (7, 2)

On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander I–II

The λόγος – ἔργον antithesis appears already in Thucydides (1, 22) who explained his methods in terms of ἔργα (events) and λόγοι (speeches) and the study of this antithetic pair as well as its relation to philosophy seems to have been an old debate. There were those who considered philosophy to be a theoretical (λόγος) pursuit rather than a practical (ἔργον) one, and *vice versa*.¹³

Pythagoras, Socrates, Arcesilaus, and Carneades left no writings behind, and neither did Alexander (328A). Therefore, the Macedonian king is a philosopher. Plutarch, here, takes the literal meaning of λόγος rather than the abstract so that he can construct a persuasive argument.¹⁴ He methodically omits the fact that the aforementioned philosophers practiced the virtue that they preached, so that the comparison between Alexander and these men was feasible.

In these treatises, Plutarch's interest seems to focus more on the nature of philosophy than on Alexander. Right from the beginning of the work (328a), he poses before his audience the issue he will examine: τούτοις γὰρ ὀρίζουσι φιλοσοφίαν οἱ λόγον αὐτὴν οὐκ ἔργον νομίζοντες (these are the definitions of philosophy used by those who think that it is a theoretical rather than a practical activity). Thus, the main subject of the treatises is to be the meaning of philosophy.

The students of Plato and Socrates betrayed their philosophical training, but Alexander's students did not (328c–d). More important-

¹³ HADOT (2002: 55).

¹⁴ WARDMAN (1955: 97).

ly, Plato and Socrates didn't persuade many people to follow them (πολλοὺς οὐκ ἔπεισαν), whereas Alexander supposedly convinced the Hyrcanians, Arachosians, Sogdians, Persians, Indians, and Scythians to adopt Greek customs (328c–d).

Moreover, Plato created a πολιτεία which no one followed, but Alexander founded more than seventy cities, which changed the barbarians' way of life (328d–e).¹⁵ Additionally, Plato wrote the *Nόμους* that no one obeyed (328e). Yet Alexander implemented many laws, which thousands of people continued to use (χρῶνται). Plutarch then proceeds to justify Alexander's conquest by suggesting that those who were conquered by Alexander are more blessed (μακαριώτεροι) than they were before, supposedly because of the king's teachings (328e–f).

For Plutarch, even Alexander's sayings reveal his philosophical spirit. For instance, when Alexander remembered Diogenes, he said, 'If I were not Alexander, I would be Diogenes,'¹⁶ which Plutarch interprets to mean that if Alexander didn't practice philosophy through actions, he would have done it through words (theoretically): ἡσυχολούμην ἂν περὶ λόγους, εἰ μὴ δι' ἔργων ἐφιλοσόφουν, 331f. Plutarch again uses the word λόγος strictly in its literal sense, as in 328a–b.¹⁷

5. Different portraits?

Considering all the facts above, one could deduce that Plutarch creates a negative portrait of Alexander in the *Life* and an ideal one in the treatises, but this is not the case. It has been argued that since the treatises are encomia,¹⁸ their commendatory nature and Plutarch's silence on specific

¹⁵ For the foundation of Alexander's cities, see FRASER (1996: 1–46; 188) and TARN (1948b: 232–248).

¹⁶ εἰ μὴ Ἀλέξανδρος ἦμην, Διογένης ἂν ἦμην.

¹⁷ GILLEY (2009: 81–82).

¹⁸ GILLEY (2009: 57).

aspects of Alexander's kingship render the work inadequate as a historical source for his reign.

Similarly with the *Life*, the two treatises peruse Alexander's character, but Plutarch has chosen one specific aspect of it: his virtue and how it is revealed via philosophy. Through comparison with great philosophers such as Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, Alexander is legitimized as a man of action, or as Onesicritus put it, a philosopher in arms (*FGrH* 134 F 17). Plutarch uses Alexander as a vehicle to criticize common philosophical beliefs and tries to clarify whether philosophy consists of deeds or words. The answer to that question is that philosophy was as much a theoretical as a practical pursuit.

The laudatory nature of the two treatises does create problems of historical validity. However, if we consider that the work is a paradoxical encomium and a certain degree of historical accuracy is required to construct the argument, it should be treated seriously.

Paradoxical encomium¹⁹

Rhetoric was distinguished into three subcategories by the ancient Greek scholars: forensic (δικανικόν), deliberative (συμβουλευτικόν), and epideictic (ἐπιδεικτικόν).²⁰ Forensic speeches enclosed any argumentation of past actions subject to a legal framework and were delivered in court.²¹ Deliberative speeches concerned future actions and were delivered in

¹⁹ Anaximenes outlined the features of encomia in his *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* (225,6): προοίμιον (introduction), γένος (genealogy), γένεσις (genesis), ἀνατροφή (growing up or youth), ἐπιτηδεύματα (deeds of choice), πράξεις (deeds), σύγκρισις (comparison), and ἐπίλογος (epilogue). It seems that these features are found in the treatises. GILLEY (2009: 67–71) divides the treatises based on the aforementioned categories. For the nature of encomia, see BURGESS (1987: 120–126).

²⁰ Arist. *Rhet.* 1358b and Men. *Rhet.* 331, 1–9.

²¹ COOPER (2007: 203–219).

the Assembly.²² Epideictic oratory, however, encompassed discussions about the present with no practical purpose. It was used for praise or blame.²³

According to Menander Rhetor, ἐπίδειξις (demonstration or display) consisted of encomia (ἐγκωμιαστικούς) and criticism (ψεκτικούς).²⁴ Encomia are divided into four subcategories (346, 9–23). Ἐνδοξα deal with the gods while ἄδοξα with demons and evils. Ἀμφίδοξα enclose issues of praise and blame and παρόδοξα address paradoxical themes.²⁵

Both as a rhetorical figure and as a genre, a paradox is:

- A statement contrary to popular belief (*contraque opinionem omnium*, Cic. *Para. Stoic.* 4).
- An argument with ironic–satirical but also serious moral content.²⁶
- The commendation of qualities or people that did not often receive praise (Arist. *Rhet.* 160–165).
- The criticism of an absolute and consolidated judgment or opinion.

Thus, in *de Alexandri magna fortuna aut virtute*, Plutarch seems to be praising an individual who had previously been treated as an authoritarian despot (mainly by the Romans)²⁷ and was therefore considered

²² USHER (2007: 220–235).

²³ CAREY (2007: 236–252).

²⁴ Men. *Rhet.* 331, 8–10.

²⁵ GILLEY (2009: 62).

²⁶ GIBBS and IZETT (2005: 146).

²⁷ For instance, Cicero's derogatory remarks against Alexander were written during Julius Caesar's dictatorship (*Att.* 13, 28: *posteaquam rex appellatus sit, superbum, crudelem, immoderatum fuisse*). Furthermore, Seneca's and Lucan's comments were an attack on Nero, who was also an imitator of Alexander. In particular, Seneca argued that Alexander was an insatiable tyrant (*Epist.* 94, 60–67; 113, 2; *Suas.* 1, 5–6). Lucan presented the Macedonian king as a corrupt general who razed everything in his path (*Phars.* 10, 20–52). Additionally, Livy presents Alexander as a drunkard and vicious man who degenerated from the eastern customs (9, 18).

unworthy.²⁸ Hence, Plutarch's purpose is to urge his audience to reassess the parameters that make one a philosopher. Alexander's lifestyle and behavior provide the best example that the traits that make someone a philosopher do not necessarily make him a virtuous person, and *vice versa*. So, he poses one more question to his audience: is philosophy a theoretical or a practical activity?²⁹

In 328b, Plutarch sets three parameters by which Alexander will be judged, namely his words, his actions, and his teachings: Ἀπὸ τούτων κρινέσθω καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος· ὁφθήσεται γὰρ οἷς εἶπεν οἷς ἔπραξεν οἷς ἐπαίδενσε φιλόσοφος. He reverses his standards and begins with Alexander's teachings, which are introduced by the sentence καὶ πρῶτον τὸ παραδοξότατον, εἰ βούλει, σκόπει, with which he invites his reader to consider a matter entirely contrary to the general belief.

He does not wish to convince his audience that Alexander was a philosopher, hence the paradox. In fact, he also acknowledges the negative aspects of Alexander's character in 332c, when he asks whether the king's actions reveal the violence of war (βίαν πολεμικήν) and the might of conquest (χειροκρατίαν), and in 332d, when he states that Alexander's character is full of contradictory elements. Introducing Alexander as a philosopher, Plutarch suggests that philosophers should exhibit their principles in every aspect of their lives, so that there is a balance between theory and practice.

The question that arises is why Plutarch creates a covert negative portrait in the treatises. The answer may be found in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and in Plutarch's *Life of Cimon*. According to Aristotle, a well-structured and persuasive argument directs the reader to the truth on its own (*Rhet.* 1355a1–2). Thus, by incorporating several historical facts, Plutarch made his thesis appear credible. However, once the narrative begins

²⁸ SPENCER (2002: 198–201).

²⁹ GILLEY (2009: 66).

about Alexander's life, his behavior, and his teachings, the audience is left to compare its own knowledge to Plutarch's presentation. It is worth noting that there would be many educated people in the audience.³⁰ As a result, they would have been able to discern Plutarch's actual purpose: philosophy is both practical as well as theoretical.

Additionally, Plutarch doesn't follow other writers of the period, such as Seneca and Lucan, who described Alexander as a tyrant or as a depraved king.³¹ Both in the treatises and in the *Life*, he depicts an image of a flawed man and as he states at the *Life of Cimon*, it is profitable to examine a great man's flaws without over emphasizing them (2, 5):

τὰς δ' ἐκ πάθους τινὸς ἢ πολιτικῆς ἀνάγκης ἐπιτρεχούσας ταῖς
 πράξεσιν ἀμαρτίας καὶ κῆρας ἐλλείμματα μᾶλλον ἀρετῆς τινος
 ἢ κακίας πονηρεύματα νομίζοντας οὐ δεῖ πάνυ προθύμως
 ἐναποσημαίνειν τῇ ἱστορίᾳ καὶ περιττῶς, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ αἰδουμένους
 ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως, εἰ καλὸν οὐδὲν εἰλικρινὲς οὐδ'
 ἀναμφισβήτητον εἰς ἀρετὴν ἥθος γεγονὸς ἀποδίδωσιν.

6. Conclusion

Plutarch saw Alexander as a successful warrior and king who was ultimately corrupted by his own success. In the *Life*, he is shown to be prone to drink (23, 7), rageful (49, 7; 50, 2; 51, 1; 51, 10; 70, 4; 74, 3), and cruel (42, 4; 57, 3). At the same time, however, he is praised for his frugality (5, 6; 22, 7; 23, 9–10), his military skills (20, 7; 40, 4), and for being

³⁰ MORGAN (2009: 309–311).

³¹ We should keep in mind that Plutarch lived during the period of the Second Sophistic. The term first appears in Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists*, to denote a group of orators who specialized in epideictic rhetoric and to distinguish them from the sophists of the 5th century BC. For more information about the period of the Second Sophistic, see WHITMARSH (2005: 3–22) and BOWIE (1970: 3–41).

sagacious (5, 1–3; 42, 10). Nevertheless, Alexander's character seems to deteriorate after *proskynesis* (prostration) in 327, showing a lack of self-restraint and pretensions to divinity.

Similarly, in the treatises, the surface argument is the depiction of Alexander as a philosopher, but the underlying meaning is the negative image of a king. Plutarch hints at Alexander's audacity and extremeness when he discusses the king's wounds (327a–b; 331c), the civilization of barbarians (328c–d; 328f–329a), his orientalism (329c–d; 329f–330a), the lavish wedding ceremonies at Susa (329e–f), and his pretensions to divinity (330f–331a). He even incorporates similes and metaphors such as hunter/prey (330b) and robber/robbed (330d), which undermine the argument that Alexander was a philosopher (330b, 330d). Furthermore, Alexander's excessive rage against Fortune, which tries to appropriate his successes (326a), demonstrates a lack of self-control (Arist. *Rhet.* 1378a30–32).

Thus, Plutarch is not inconsistent, and he doesn't construct two different portraits of the same man just to puzzle his audience or because his impression of Alexander was altered. We should keep in mind that the *Life* and the treatises belong to a different literary genre with disparate purposes, aimed at a different readership.

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Votive Inscriptions in Mitrovica and Its Surroundings

The study of votive epigraphic monuments is significant in archaeology, providing valuable insights into a particular period or region's social structure. During the Roman era, monuments like ceramics and coins were crucial communication markers between cultures. The votive inscriptions found in Kosovo's territory offer evidence on the worship of local, Roman, Greek, and Eastern deities. Mitrovica, a region with a rich history of cultural exchange, flourished as a center of civilization even during the Roman period. The abundance of votive epigraphic monuments in Mitrovica sheds light on the revered deities. It offers valuable glimpses into the region's Roman-era history, including insights into the specific deities venerated during that time.

Keywords: votive inscriptions, Mitrovica, Roman period, legions, Kosovo

Mitrovica and archaeological artifacts during centuries

People have inhabited the territory of Mitrovica for centuries, with evidence of settlements dating back to prehistoric times. The discovery of various archaeological sites spanning up to the Middle Ages underscores the historical significance of this region. The abundant minerals and the existence of the Ibër River alongside Mitrovica made it an ideal location for human habitation and settling. These factors underscore the lasting presence of diverse cultures in the area, as evidenced by various archaeological artifacts.

Evidence suggests that human habitation around Mitrovica predates the city's founding and even the Roman exploitation of mineral resources. Extensive research conducted in and around Mitrovica indicates that the settlements in the area date back more than seven thousand years. Notably, the settlement of Zhitkovc, located on the banks of the Ibër River, is recognized as one of the oldest known settlements in the region.¹

The Roman era significantly influenced the significance of this region, primarily due to the abundance of ore from mining and the advancements made in agriculture and livestock. Throughout the centuries, traditional cattle herding routes from Vermion, through Sharr mountains, Kopaonik, and Homole, to the Carpathians, have crossed Mitrovica's hilly and mountainous terrain.²

The Roman province of Moesia contains 4976 inscriptions.³ Dardania, a region within Moesia, encompasses the city of Mitrovica. According to the Epigraphic Database Heidelberg (EDH), 100 epigraphic monuments have been documented near Mitrovica. The existence of these monuments and settlements provides a reliable source, offering a fundamental understanding of the lifestyle and events during this historical period.⁴

During the Roman period, the people built a well-constructed road network that enabled easier access, the exploitation of ores, and the utilization of the region's goods. Within the network of Roman roads in Kosovo, two routes stood out: the northeast-southwest route, connecting Naissus (Nish) to Lissus (Lezhë), and the northwest-southeast route, linking Central Bosnia through Vicianum to Scup (Skopje).⁵ The second

¹ TASIQ (1979: 25).

² TASIQ (1979: 25).

³ BELTRÁN-LLORENS (2015: 138).

⁴ ÇERŠKOV (1973: 26).

⁵ TASIQ (1979: 42).

Roman road, that ran close to Mitrovica, was of particular importance as it connected the provinces around Novi Pazar with the central parts of Kosovo and Macedonia.⁶

One of the prominent settlements was Municipium DD, which underwent two distinct construction phases, each characterized by its unique features. The first period is associated with the reign of Hadrian and involves the construction of temples. In contrast, the second period, during the reign of Diocletian, focused on the city's infrastructure and layout.⁷

Furthermore, during the Roman era, various cults dedicated to local deities were observed in the interior of the Balkan Peninsula, showcasing the ancient world's adaptation to the customs and traditions of the Illyrian population.⁸

Mitrovica and its surrounding areas also provide evidence of epigraphic monuments, which refer to the area and the *beneficial stations* that played a significant role in the development of roadways.

Votive epigraphic monuments in Mitrovica and its surroundings

Mitrovica's region and surroundings are home to many epigraphic monuments, which have been thoroughly documented in academic papers, online sources, catalogs, and other publications. The artifacts have sparked interest among researchers from Kosovo and other regions. The Epigraphic Database Heidelberg (EDH), Clauss Slaby, CIL, and ILJug provide valuable online research resources. Certain artifacts have survived, while others have been lost over time. Most artifacts are

⁶ TASIĆ (1979: 42).

⁷ TASIĆ (1979: 46).

⁸ ÇEŞNEKOV (1973: 69).

crafted from limestone, although examples are made from marble and dacite. All aspects of life underwent significant and dynamic changes during the early imperial era. An epigraphic ‘explosion’ from the late 1st century BC was quantitative and qualitative since many inscriptions and monument types were developed or adopted.⁹

These inscriptions included a variety of Roman and Greek deities, with mentions of Roman gods such as Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, and Neptune, as well as the Greek deity Nemesis.

Epigraphic monuments dedicated to the Roman god Jupiter and the Capitoline triad

One inscription in Mitrovica mentions the Capitoline Triad (see Fig. 1). It is made of limestone and dates from the late 2nd century. It measures 88 x 34 x 32 cm.



*I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / Iun(oni) Reg(inae) / Min-
er(vae) s(acrum) Au[r(elius)] / Sa[e]vin(us) / Procul(us)
/ b(ene)f(iciarius) co(n)s(ularis) / v(otum) l(ibens) p(o-
suit).*¹⁰

Interpretation:

This monument was as an offering to Jupiter, the Best and Greatest, Juno Regina, and the sacred Minerva, by Aurelius Saevinus Proculus, *beneficiarius consularis*, who willingly set up this offering.

Fig. 1. Epigraphic monument dedicated to Jupiter and Minerva (E.Dobruna 2005:1191)

⁹ WITSCHER (2014: 105).

¹⁰ DOBRUNA-SALIHU (2005: 827); FERAUDI-GRUÉNAIS: EDH, <https://edh.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/edh/inschrift/HD033641>. 2024.05.30.

Another inscription dedicated to Jupiter, also discovered in Mitrovica (see Fig. 2), is made of limestone, with dimensions 84 x 27 x 30 cm, and dates from the early 3rd century.

*Iovi / Op(t)imo / sacr(um) / ex viso / M(arcus) Ulp(i-
us) / Viator / b(ene)f(iciarius) co(n)s(ularis) / ex fru-
mentario).*¹¹

Interpretation:

Monument was an offering to sacred Jupiter by M. Ulpus Viator, *beneficiarius consularis*, and a corn-merchant.¹²

Jupiter was attributed to various epithets, one of which was Propulsator, discovered in Banjska in Vushtrri (see Fig. 3). This marble monument, with unknown dimensions, is estimated to originate from the 2nd to 3rd century.

*I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / propulsatori / et ceter-
is(qve) dis / deabusque / C. Varius / Martialiss / c(la-
rissimo) v(ir).*¹³

Interpretation:

The monument is dedicated to Jupiter, the Best and Greatest, with *propulsator* (to ward off, to remove, to avert)¹⁴ local epithet. It was dedicat-



Fig. 2 Epigraphic monument dedicated to Jupiter (E.Dobruna 2005:1191)



Fig. 3 Epigraphic monument dedicated to Jupiter (N.Ferri 2013:106)

¹¹ FERAUDI-GRUÉNAIS: EDH, <https://edh.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/edh/inschrift/HD033640>. 2024.05.30.

¹² GOODWIN (1874: 97).

¹³ FERRI (2013: 100); MEHMETAJ (2011: 380).

¹⁴ GOODWIN (1874: 187).



Fig.4 Epigraphic monument dedicated to Jupiter (N.Ferri 2013:106)

ed to other gods and goddesses, and the entire dedication was carried out by C. Varius Martialis, the most notable man.

An inscription dedicated to Jupiter (see Fig. 4) was discovered in the Valli—Shala of Bajgora. It measures 64 x 44 x 40 and dates to the 2nd–3rd century.

*I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) Coh(ortali) Avrel(ius)
v(e)n(erabilis) c v(otum) l(ibens).*¹⁵

Interpretation:

The monument, dedicated to Jupiter, the Best and Greatest, was built by Aurelius with the epithet Cohortali. The dedication of the monument was carried out with venerable and willingly.

A monument dedicated to Jupiter was found in Kostërc of Skënderaj but was unfortunately lost. The monument's dimensions are unknown, but according to its inscription, it was dedicated to Jupiter.

*I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo). C. (=Capitolino) or (Cohortali) / T. Ael(ius) Avitus (?) / dec(urio) m(unicipii) Ulp(ianae) v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito).*¹⁶

Interpretation:

Monument dedicated to Jupiter, the Best and Greatest, Capitoline or Cohortali. It was dedicated by T. Aelius Avitus, decurion of Ulpiana Municipium, who willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

¹⁵ FERRI (2012: 105).

¹⁶ MIRDITA (1981: 267).

Epigraphic monument dedicated to Minerva

Minerva was one of the goddesses to whom an altar was found in Laushë, dating back to the 1st century; regrettably, the monument lacks any mention of its dimensions.

*Minerva Auc (=Augusta?).*¹⁷

Interpretation:

Monument dedicated to Minerva.



Fig. 5 Epigraphic monument dedicated to gods and goddesses (E.Dobruna-Salihi 2005:1195)

Epigraphic monument dedicated to gods and goddesses

The monument dedicated to all gods and goddesses (see Fig.5) was found in Vushtrri. It is crafted from white marble and dates to the 3rd century (year 230). It is 101 x 33 x 22 cm in dimensions.

*D(is) d(eabusque) / M(arcus) Aurelius / Marcianus / b(ene)f(iciarius) co(n)s(ularis) leg(ionis) / VII Cl(audiae) / [[Sever(ianae)]] / [[Alexan(drianae)]] v(otum) l(ibens) p(ersolvit) / Agricola et Clement(ino) / co(n)s(ulibus).*¹⁸

Interpretation:

This monument was dedicated to the gods and goddesses by M.Aurelius Marianus, *beneficiarius consularis*, of VII Claudia legion; he willingly paid the vow during the consulship of Agricola and Clement.

¹⁷ KALAJA-HAJDARI (2017: 373).

¹⁸ FERAUDI-GRUÉNAIS: EDH, <https://edh.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/edh/inschrift/HD033652>. 2024.05.30.

Epigraphic monuments dedicated to Nemesis



Fig. 6 Epigraphic monument dedicated to Nemesis (E.Dobruna-Salihi 2005:1190)

Greek deities were also present in Kosovo. In Mitrovica, inscriptions in the Greek language mention deities such as Nemesis, the goddess of divine justice.¹⁹

A monument dedicated to Nemesis (see Fig. 6) was discovered in Mitrovica. It is made from limestone and dates back to the end of the 2nd century. It measures 80 x 33 x 31 cm.

Nemesi reg(inae) / sac(rum) pro/salute(!) / dominor(um) nn(ostrorum) Augg(ustorum) / C(aius) Val(erius) Valens / b(ene)f(iciarius) co(n)s(ularis) leg(ionis) IIII Fl(aviae) / v(otum) l(ibens) l(aetus) me[r]ito] po[s]uit)²⁰.

Interpretation:

Monument dedicated to holy Nemesis queen for the welfare of our lord Augustinians, C. Valerius Valens, *beneficiarius consularis* of IV Flavia legion, willingly, gladly, deservedly made the vow.

Another limestone monument dedicated to Nemesis was discovered in Mitrovica. It is 88 x 32 x 28 cm and dates from the end of the 2nd century.

Nemesi Reg(inae) / sac(rum) / Martia/lis b(ene)f(iciarius) co(n)s(ularis) / leg(ionis) IIII Fl(aviae) / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito).²¹

¹⁹ PAYMENT (2006: 42).

²⁰ FERAUDI-GRUÉNAIS: EDH <https://edh.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/edh/inschrift/HD033642>, 2024.06.10; EDCs, <http://www.manfredclauss.de/>, 2024.06.10.

²¹ KALAJA-HAJDARI (2017: 375).

Interpretation:

Monument dedicated to holy Nemesis queen, by Martialis *beneficiarius consularis* of IV Flavia Legion, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

One of the monuments that mention the genii of the stations, Jupiter and Nemesis, was discovered in the region of Mitrovica, specifically in Sočanica. According to this inscription, a Roman settlement was found in Sočanica, which could be called Municipium Dardanorum. The inscription dimensions are 36 x 39 cm and dates back to the 3rd century.

*I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) et Nemesi / Reg(inae), Genio / stat(ionis) M()
Dard(anorum) / Sept(imius) Vitalis / b(ene)f(iciarius) co(n)s(ularis) leg(io-
nis) / VII Cl(audiae) v(otum) l(ibens) s(olvit).*²²

Interpretation:

Monument dedicated to Jupiter, the Best and Greatest, and Nemesis Queen, Genius of Dardania station, by Septimius Vitalis *beneficiarius consularis* of VII Claudia Legion, willingly fulfilled his vow.

IV Flavia and VII Claudia Legions

The Roman legions had a dominant role all over where Rome took control. Cassius Dio mentioned the VII Claudia and IV Flavia legions as part of Upper Moesia.²³ The VII Claudia was a Dalmatian legion; its honor was reflected in the emperor's name through the title 'Claudia,' known as the VII Claudia Pia Fidelis, which means 'Claudius' Loyal and Patriotic.' This title was given to honor their loyalty during the re-

²² MIRDITA (1981: 270).

²³ CARY trans. (1917: 457).

volt of Scribonianus.²⁴ Legion VII remained at the same camp until it was relocated to Moesia, likely in 58 AD (but no later than 62 AD).²⁵ Their emblem was a bull.²⁶

After Civilis's revolt, the four German legions that had either surrendered or lost their *aquilae* were cashiered, and consequently, I *Germanica*, IV *Macedonia*, XV *Primigenia*, and XVI disappeared.²⁷

In the summer of 70, Vespasian recruited two new legions, IV *Flavia Felix* and XVI *Flavia Firma*, to replace them.²⁸

Vespasian gave the unit his family name, Flavia, and the emblem of a lion, a symbol associated with Vespasian's favorite deity, Hercules.²⁹ The title 'Felix,' symbolizing imperial favor, was also granted by emperors to various military colonies established by them.³⁰ By 85 AD, the legion had been relocated to Moesia.³¹

Roman military preparations intensified throughout 100 A.D.; weapons and ammunition were produced and stockpiled in Moesia, where the resident I *Italica*, IV *Flavia*, V *Macedonia*, and VII *Claudia* legions would have been training crossing rivers.³²

Importance of votive inscription in Mitrovica and its surroundings

The votive inscriptions found in the region provide detailed information. Compared with other cities in Kosovo, Mitrovica has a higher

²⁴ PARKER (1971: 176).

²⁵ PARKER (1971: 176).

²⁶ DANDO-COLLINS (2010: 143).

²⁷ PARKER (1971: 107).

²⁸ PARKER (1971: 107).

²⁹ DANDO-COLLINS (2010: 130).

³⁰ DANDO-COLLINS (2010: 130).

³¹ DANDO-COLLINS (2010: 130).

³² DANDO-COLLINS (2010: 379).

number of inscriptions that mention *beneficiarii*. This suggests that in the territory of Mitrovica, the votive inscriptions dating back to the 1st–3rd centuries indicate the existence of *beneficiarii*, who typically held authority over roads and other economic and strategic locations during their active duty in the Roman provinces where they were assigned as beneficiaries. The military, especially beneficiaries appointed by the governor on seconded duty throughout this mining sector, maintained control over exploiting the region's natural resources and the personnel engaged in this work, among whom could be found prisoners or *damnati ad metalla*.³³ This fact demonstrates the importance of this territory during the Roman period and its connections with other provinces. However, there are a couple of inscriptions dedicated to the god Nemesis, dedicated by beneficiary consuls of the IV Flavia Legion dating back to the 2nd century, also two others, one of which is a monument dedicated to Jupiter, the Greek god Nemesis, the genius of a station in Dardani and another dedicated to the goddesses. Two of the inscriptions were dedicated by beneficiary consuls and members of the VII Claudia Legion from the 3rd century. When examining these monuments, we observe the movement of Roman legions such as the VII Claudia, believed to have been stationed in Moesia until the 4th century, and that of IV Flavia believed to have been stationed until the early 5th century. The evolving circumstances, ranging from the migration of diverse populations, including economic and social crises, forced these beneficiaries to cross rivers, travel across the Danube, or gradually fade away. This pertains to the period from the 4th century onwards, also known as late antiquity.

³³NELIS-CLÉMENT (2000: 260).

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The Social Category of Courtesans in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans*

This article examines the relationship between the individual experiences of literary courtesans and their social category as courtesans in Lucian's Dialogues of the Courtesans. The relatively limited research that has been done on this dialogue collection has been based on the presupposition that the characters are first and foremost courtesans; the impact of individuality and agency on the experience of the limitations and expectations associated with the social category of courtesans remains unacknowledged. By employing the interpretative model of social dynamics, which offers a way of studying the relationships between individuals and groups, this article demonstrates how Lucian's Dialogues of the Courtesans depicts these figures as more complex than what has been assumed thus far, by acknowledging the impact of their social category on their daily lives whilst also highlighting how these courtesans negotiate, experience, reinterpret, confirm, undermine, and reinvent these limitations, expectations, and advantages in their social interactions.

Keywords: Lucian, *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, Social Dynamics, Social Category, Courtesan, Agency

According to Glazebrook–Henry research into sex work has been rescued ‘from the literature of deviancy and crime’ in the past three decades.¹ In the study of prostitution in the ancient Greek world, the courtesan, a high-class Greek sex worker, has received a great deal of interest. The most comprehensive accounts on courtesans have come

¹ GLAZEBROOK–HENRY (2011: 3) AND GILFOYLE (1999: 120).

to us from the 2nd century AD, more than half a millennium after the heyday of courtesans in classical Athens, and within the context of the Second Sophistic (50–250). One of these works is Lucian of Samosata's *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, a collection of fifteen humorous and entertaining dialogues between courtesans (and their maids, mothers, and clients), which has thus far received relatively little scholarly attention. The collection of dialogues has mainly been examined for its reproduction and transformation of the Greek literary tradition or to corroborate historical analyses of courtesans in the classical period.² This latter approach however is not unproblematic as it is based on the presupposition that the characters are first and foremost courtesans; the impact of individuality and different intersections of identity on the character's principles, behaviors, and relationships remains unexamined. This presupposition proves to be unstable in general, but in particular for Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans* since, as Shreve-Price concludes about the collection: 'Lucian achieves something his predecessors could not: he presents a complex picture of courtesan life in which a reader cannot assume to know everything about the courtesans simply because they are courtesans'.³ This article aims to tackle this gap in the research by investigating the relationship between the literary courtesans and their social category as courtesans in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans* – such an analysis is called social dynamics.

The interpretive model of social dynamics, more commonly used in economics and psychology, offers a way of studying the relationships between individuals and groups.⁴ The behavior and social meaning of a group, here of courtesans, is understood as the sum of countless small-

² LEGRAND (1907), GILHULY (2007), COHEN (2008), SHREVE-PRICE (2014), ROISMAN (2015), and MAURITSCH (2018).

³ SHREVE-PRICE (2014: 116).

⁴ For an example in economics, see DURLAUF-YOUNG (2001: 1–14) and in psychology, see BROWN (2000).

scale interactions between individuals.⁵ The group's individual interactions, in turn, are shaped by the limitations, possibilities, and expectations that their social category imposes on them. Based on that idea, social dynamics investigates how individuals interpret, reinterpret, confirm, undermine, and reinvent their social category, and how their social category, in turn, influences that process.⁶ This interpretative model provides a methodology in line with gender studies' recent interests in recovering not solely gender ideology (gendered limitations, expectations, codes of conduct, etc.) but also gender experience: how the given script played out and was negotiated in everyday existence.

As an analysis of the entire dialogue collection is beyond the scope of this article, I will focus on the second dialogue of the collection. Since the text is relatively unknown, I will first offer the Greek text and my translation before diving into the analysis.⁷ I have chosen to include my translation instead of the one offered by MacLeod as its representation of the textual specificities is not always satisfactory for a textual analysis such as this one.⁸

- 1 **Μυρτίον:** Γαμεῖς, ὦ Πάμφιλε, τὴν Φίλωνος τοῦ ναυκλήρου
θυγατέρα καὶ ἤδη σε γεγαμηκέναι
φασίν; οἱ τοσοῦτοι δὲ ὄρκοι οὐς ὤμοσας καὶ τὰ δάκρυα ἐν

⁵ HELLSTRÖM-RUSSEL (2020: 3).

⁶ HELLSTRÖM-RUSSEL (2020: 4).

⁷ Edition of the Greek text found in MACLEOD (1961: 358-365) which is, as MACLEOD (1961: ix) states, largely based on the critical edition made by MRAS (1930).

⁸ MACLEOD (196: 361), for example, translates 'τοῦτο γοῦν καὶ μόνον ἐπρίαμην τοῦ σοῦ ἔρωτος', Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 6 as 'all the good I've had from your love'. This translation, however, does not represent the textual specificity of the Greek verb 'πρίαμαι', meaning 'to buy' (LSJ ad πρίαμαι). In my translation, I have attempted to depict this verb more literally: 'that is the only thing I bought with your love' (Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 6). This is not to say that I have not taken any freedoms to make the translation more readable, but that my translation has attempted to stay closer to the Greek text where its nuance is important to the textual analysis.

- ἀκαρεῖ πάντα οἴχεται, καὶ ἐπιλέλῃσαι Μυρτίου νῦν, καὶ
 5 ταῦτα, ὦ Πάμφιλε, ὅποτε κύω μῆνα ὄγδοον ἤδη; τοῦτο γοῦν
 καὶ μόνον ἐπριάμην τοῦ σου ἔρωτος, ὅτι μου τηλικαύτην
 πεποίηκας τὴν γαστέρα καὶ μετὰ μικρὸν παιδοτροφεῖν
 δεήσει, πρᾶγμα ἑταίρα βαρύντατον· οὐ γὰρ ἐκθήσω τὸ τεχθέν,
 καὶ μάλιστα εἰ ἄρρεν γένοιτο, ἀλλὰ Πάμφιλον ὀνομάσασα
 10 ἐγὼ μὲν ἔξω παραμύθιον τοῦ ἔρωτος, σοὶ δὲ ὀνειδιεῖ ποτε
 ἐκεῖνος, ὡς ἄπιστος γεγένησαι περὶ τὴν ἀθλίαν αὐτοῦ
 μητέρα. γαμεῖς δ' οὐ καλὴν παρθένον· εἶδον γὰρ αὐτὴν
 ἔναγχος ἐν τοῖς Θεσμοφορίοις μετὰ τῆς μητρός, οὐδέπω
 εἰδυῖα ὅτι δι' αὐτὴν οὐκέτι ὄψομαι Πάμφιλον. καὶ σὺ δ' οὖν
 15 πρότερον ἰδοῦ αὐτὴν καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς
 ἰδέ· μή σε ἀνιάτω, εἰ πάνυ γλαυκοὺς ἔχει αὐτοὺς μηδὲ ὅτι
 διάστροφοί εἰσι καὶ ἐς ἀλλήλους ὀρῶσι· μᾶλλον δὲ τὸν
 Φίλωνα ἐώρακας τὸν πατέρα τῆς νύμφης, τὸ πρόσωπον
 αὐτοῦ οἶσθα, ὥστε οὐδὲν ἔτι δεήσει τὴν θυγατέρα ἰδεῖν.
- 20 **Πάμφιλος:** Ἔτι σου ληρούσης, ὦ Μύρτιον, ἀκούσομαι παρθένους
 καὶ
 γάμους ναυκληρικοὺς διεξιούσης; ἐγὼ δὲ ἢ σιμὴν τινα ἢ
 καλὴν νύμφην οἶδα; ἢ ὅτι Φίλων ὁ Ἀλωπεκῆθεν—οἶμαι γὰρ
 ἐκεῖνον λέγειν σε—θυγατέρα ὅλως εἶχεν ὠραίαν ἤδη γάμου;
 ἀλλ' οὐδὲ φίλος ἐστὶν οὗτος τῷ πατρὶ μέμνημαι γὰρ ὡς
 25 πρῶην ἐδικάσατο περὶ συμβολαίου· τάλαντον, οἶμαι, ὀφείλων
 γὰρ τῷ πατρὶ οὐκ ἠθέλεν ἐκτίνειν, ὁ
 δὲ παρὰ τοὺς ναυτοδίκας ἀπήγαγεν αὐτόν, καὶ μόλις ἐξέτισεν
 αὐτό, οὐδ' ὅλον, ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ἔφασκεν. εἰ δὲ καὶ γαμεῖν
 ἐδέδοκτό μοι, τὴν Δημέου θυγατέρα τὴν τοῦ πέρυσιν
 30 ἐστρατηγηκότος ἀφείς, καὶ ταῦτα πρὸς μητρός ἀνεψιὰν

οὔσαν, τὴν Φίλωνος ἐγάμουν ἄν; σὺ δὲ πόθεν ταῦτα
ἤκουσας; ἢ τίνας σεαυτῇ, ὦ Μύρτιον, κενὰς ζηλοτυπίας
σκιαμαχοῦσα ἐξεῦρες;

Μυρτίον: Οὐκοῦν οὐ γαμείς, ὦ Πάμφιλε;

- 35 **Πάμφιλος:** Μέμνηνας, ὦ Μύρτιον, ἣ κραιπαλᾶς; καίτοι χθές οὐ πάνυ
ἐμεθύσθημεν.

- Μυρτίον:** Ἡ Δωρίς αὕτη ἐλύπησέ με· πεμφθεῖσα γὰρ ὡς ἔρια
ὠνήσαιτό μοι ἐπὶ τὴν γαστέρα καὶ εὐξαιτο τῇ Λοχείᾳ ὡς
ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ, Λεσβίαν ἔφη ἐντυχοῦσαν αὐτῇ—μᾶλλον δὲ σὺ
40 αὐτῷ, ὦ Δωρί, λέγε ἅπερ ἀκήκοας, εἴ γε μὴ ἐπλάσω ταῦτα.

- Δωρίς:** Ἄλλ' ἐπιτριβεῖν, ὦ δέσποινα, εἴ τι ἐψευσάμην· ἐπεὶ γὰρ
κατὰ τὸ πρυτανεῖον ἐγενόμην, ἐνέτυχέ μοι ἡ Λεσβία
μειδιῶσα καὶ φησίν, Ὁ ἐραστὴς ὑμῶν ὁ Πάμφιλος γαμεῖ τὴν
Φίλωνος θυγατέρα· εἰ δὲ ἀπιστοῖν, ἡξίου με παρακύψασαν
45 ἐς τὸν στενωπὸν ὑμῶν ἰδεῖν πάντα κατεστεφανωμένα καὶ
αὐλητρίδας καὶ θόρυβον καὶ ὑμέναιον ἄδοντάς τινας.

Πάμφιλος: Τί οὖν; παρέκυψας, ὦ Δωρί;

Δωρίς: Καὶ μάλα, καὶ εἶδον ἅπαντα ὡς ἔφη.

- Πάμφιλος:** Μανθάνω τὴν ἀπάτην· οὐ γὰρ πάντα ἡ Λεσβία, ὦ Δωρί,
50 πρὸς σὲ ἐψεύσατο καὶ σὺ τάληθῇ ἀπήγγελκας Μυρτίῳ. πλὴν
μάτην γε ἐταράχθητε· οὔτε γὰρ παρ' ἡμῖν οἱ γάμοι, ἀλλὰ
νῦν ἀνεμνήσθην ἀκούσας τῆς μητρός, ὅποτε χθές ἀνέστρεψα
παρ' ὑμῶν· ἔφη γὰρ, ὦ Πάμφιλε, ὁ μὲν ἡλικιώτης σοι Χαρομίδης

τοῦ γείτονος Ἀρισταίνετου υἱὸς γαμεῖ ἤδη καὶ
 55 σωφρονεῖ, σὺ δὲ μέχρι τίνος ἑταίρα σύνει; τοιαῦτα
 παρακούων αὐτῆς ἐς ὕπνον κατηνέχθην· εἶτα ἔωθεν προῆλθον
 ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκίας, ὥστε οὐδὲν εἶδον ὧν ἡ Δωρὶς ὕστερον εἶδεν.
 εἰ δὲ ἀπιστεῖς, αὐθις ἀπελθοῦσα, ὦ Δωρί, ἀκριβῶς ἰδὲ μὴ
 τὸν στενωπὸν, ἀλλὰ τὴν θύραν, ποτέρα ἐστὶν ἡ
 60 κατεστεφανωμένη· εὐρήσεις γὰρ τὴν τῶν γειτόνων.

Μυρτίον: Ἀπέσωσας, ὦ Πάμφιλε· ἀπηγξάμην γὰρ ἄν, εἴ τι τοιοῦτο ἐγένετο.

Πάμφιλος: Ἄλλ' οὐκ ἂν ἐγένετο, μηδ' οὕτω μανείην, ὥς ἐκλαθέσθαι Μυρτίου, καὶ ταῦτα ἤδη μοι κυούσης παιδίον.

Myrtion: You are going to marry the daughter of Philo, the shipowner, Pamphilos, and you are already married, so they say. Have all those oaths you swore and all those tears disappeared in an instant? And have you forgotten Myrtion now, Pamphilos, when I am already in my eighth month of pregnancy? That is the only thing I bought with your love: that you made my belly so big and that I will soon have to raise a child. That is a very difficult situation for a courtesan. Because I am not going to abandon the child, especially if it is a boy. Then I'm going to call him Pamphilos. Then he can be a consolation for me and my heartbreak, and one day he will then scold you for your unfaithfulness to his unhappy mother. You're not even going to marry a beautiful girl. I recently saw her at the Thesmophoria with her mother, but I didn't know then that she would be the reason that I would no longer be able to see Pamphilos. You should look at her yourself before you marry, look at her face and her eyes. I don't want

you to be shocked when you see her incredibly grey eyes and how they are distorted and cross-eyed. Or even better, you have seen Philo, the father of your bride, if you know what his face looks like, then you don't even need to look at his daughter.

Pamphilos: How much longer am I going to have to listen to your nonsense about girls, Myrtion, and your chatter about marriages to shipowners? Do I even know nubile girls with flat noses or beautiful ones? Or did I know that Philo of Alopeke – I think you are talking about him – has a daughter who is already of marriageable age? He's not even friends with my father because I remember that he recently had to go to court because of a contract with him. Because he owed my father a talent, I think, and he wouldn't pay, and my father took him to the nautical court, and in the end, he did pay, but not the full amount, or so my father said. And even if I had decided to get married, would I reject Demeas' daughter, who was a strategist last year, when she is also a cousin on my mother's side, and marry Philo's daughter instead? Where did you hear that? Or what empty jealous ideas have you convinced yourself of, Myrtion, that you're getting so riled up?

Myrtion: So you're not getting married, Pamphilos?

Pamphilos: Are you crazy, Myrtion, or do you have a hangover? Although, we didn't even drink that much yesterday.

Myrtion: It was Doris here that upset me so much. Because when she was sent to buy wool for my baby and to pray for a smooth delivery for me, she met Lesbia, who said – but it is better that you tell him, Doris, what you have heard, at least if you didn't make this all up.

Doris: You may destroy me, mistress, if I have lied at all. For when I was at the Prytaneion, I met the smiling Lesbia and she said: 'Your beloved, Pamphilos, is going to marry the daughter of Philo.' If I ever didn't believe her, it would seem to me to be a good idea to step aside and look down your alley at all the crowned people and the flute girls and the commotion and the people singing a wedding hymn.

Pamphilos: And? Did you step aside, Doris?

Doris: Yes, and I saw everything as she said.

Pamphilos: I understand everything now. Not everything Lesbia, Doris, said to you was a lie and what you told Myrtion was true. But you are upset for no reason because the wedding was not at our house. After all, now I remember what I heard from my mother when I returned from your place yesterday. For she said: 'Pamphilos, Charmides, the boy about your age, the son of our neighbor Aristainetos, is about to be married. He is sensible. How long are you going to stay with a courtesan?' While I was listening to those things she said, I fell asleep. And then this morning I left home early, so I didn't see anything of what Doris saw later. If you don't believe me, go outside again, Doris, and look carefully not only at the street but also at the door and at the one who is crowned. Because you will see that it is the neighbor's door.

Myrtion: You saved me, Pamphilos. For I would have hanged myself if such a thing had happened.

Pamphilos: But that wouldn't have happened. May I never be so crazy that I completely forget Myrtion, especially now that she is pregnant with my child.

1. Myrtion, Pamphilos and Doris

In the coming analysis, I will explore the dynamic in the second dialogue of Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans* between the individual interactions of the literary courtesans and their social category as courtesans.

1.1 Confrontation by Myrtion (Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 1–19)

The beginning of the dialogue centers the perspective of the courtesan and emphasizes, through intertextual parallels, the limitations that courtesans face in their daily lives. Myrtion, the courtesan, delivers the longest uninterrupted speech of this dialogue to confront her client and lover Pamphilos with his alleged marriage. The name Pamphilos (ὁ Πάμφιλε, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 1) combined with an unwanted marriage as the main conflict in the dialogue, calls to mind Menander's *The Maiden of Perinthus* and/or *The Maiden of Andros* (4th or early 3rd century BC).⁹ These comedies have only survived fragmentarily, but the Latin adaptation, Terence's *The Girl of Andros* (166), luckily gives us a good indication of their content.¹⁰ In the comedy of Terence, Pamphilus, a young Athenian, has entered, without his father's knowledge, into a romantic relationship with Glycerium, a girl he cannot marry since she is not of Attic descent. The main conflict arises when Pamphilus' father arranges a marriage for his son to Chremes' daughter (the girl a certain Charinus wants to marry). Pamphilus does not want to marry Chremes' daughter, so he says to Charinus: 'I am keener to avoid this marriage than you are to achieve it. [...] Do whatever you can [...] plot, scheme, contrive to have her given to you. I'll do the same to have her not given to me' (Ter. *An.* 332–335).¹¹ At the end of the comedy, it is revealed that Glycerium,

⁹ BARTELINK (1971: 69) and SHREVE-PRICE (2014: 118).

¹⁰ BARTELINK (1971: 170).

¹¹ This is BARSBY'S (2001) translation.

contrary to what everyone thought, is of Attic descent, which makes a happy ending through marriage possible for Pamphilus, Glycerium, and the baby that is born to them during the comedy.

The many similarities between the second dialogue and the comedies of Menander and Terence provide us with sufficient arguments to label this an explicit intertextual reference that an educated reader would have picked up on; among the most important parallels: the name Pamphilus/Pamphilos, the presence of a courtesan (the sister of Glycerium), the unsustainable relationship (because of legal and social regulations), the pregnancy, and the social pressure from family to marry. The places where the dialogue diverts from the comedies (and the readers' expectations) thus become all the more productive in generating meaning and emphasis. Although Glycerium and Myrtion experience a similar social exclusion (they can not marry [Attic men]), the basis of their exclusion is different: Glycerium is not a sex worker like Myrtion, but a free non-Attic woman. This difference proves to be critical at the end of the comedy: Glycerium's exclusion can be resolved through a revelation of information (she is of Attic origin); Pamphilus and Glycerium's relationship can thus be legitimized through marriage, which shifts Glycerium from the social margin to the center (Ter. *An.* 904–951). Myrtion's exclusion, on the other hand, as it stems from the irreparable staining of her social identity by her profession/actions, can never be resolved.¹² The unfulfillment of the reader's expectations of a happy ending through marriage thus emphasizes the impact of the social category on Myrtion's life and relationship with Pamphilos: Myrtion will never be able to marry Pamphilos, the relationship is thus necessarily temporary and Pamphilos and Myrtion will have to be separated once he gets married.

¹² GILHULY (2007: 65).

It is thus under the influence of this limitation (exclusion of marriage) imposed on her by her social category, that Myrtion confronts Pamphilos with the rumor that he is getting married (γαμεῖς, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 1) or that he has already married (ἤδη σε γεγαμηκέναι, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 2). The denotation of this limitation in and of itself, however, tells us little about how this was experienced as it fails to take into account how these social codes could be negotiated, how individual agency could come into play, and if (and how) these limitations could be turned into potential sites of power – this is where social dynamics can offer a potentially fruitful approach.¹³

Myrtion, as the example in this article, does not fold to her exclusion but negotiates it. Through rhetorical persuasion, she attempts to postpone the abandonment and secure a dependable source of income for her future. She starts by exploiting the formulaic discourse of love, loyalty, and affection, typical of relationships between courtesans and their clients: οἱ τοσούτοι δὲ ὅρκοι οὓς ὥμοσας καὶ τὰ δάκρυα ἐν ἀκαρεῖ πάντα οἴχεται καὶ ἐπιλέλῃσαι Μυρτίου νῦν [...], Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 3–4 ('have all those oaths you swore and all those tears disappeared in an instant? And have you forgotten Myrtion now [...]?').¹⁴ Later on, once again in line with a discourse of love, she states: καὶ μόνον ἐπιορίαμην τοῦ σοῦ ἔρωτος, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 6 ('the only thing I bought with your love') and ἄπιστος, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 11 ('unfaithful'). Myrtion thus uses this discourse specific to her social category (and contrary mainly to other types of sex work) as a potential site of power to play into Pamphilos' value of virtues such as sincerity, honesty, and loyalty.

Secondly, she appeals to her biggest asset in maintaining the connection with Pamphilos: her pregnancy. She emphasizes this asset rhetorically when she states:

¹³ ARNOLD (2009: 176).

¹⁴ DAVIDSON (1977: 120–121; 125–126).

καὶ ἐπιλέλῃσαι Μυρτίου νῦν, καὶ
ταῦτα, ὦ Πάμφιλε, ὅποτε κύω μῆνα ὄγδοον ἤδη;

And have you forgotten Myrtion now, Pamphilos, when I am already
in my eighth month of pregnancy? (Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 4–5).

‘Now’ (νῦν, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 4) is emphasized by ‘καὶ ταῦτα’, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 4–5, and the tension is built up by making ‘ὦ Πάμφιλε’, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 5, postpone the reveal of why now is such poor timing: ὅποτε κύω μῆνα ὄγδοον ἤδη, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 5 (‘when I am already in my eighth month of pregnancy?’). If that isn’t bad enough on its own, she then adds:

τοῦτο γοῦν καὶ μόνον ἐπριάμην τοῦ σοῦ ἔρωτος, ὅτι μου τηλικαύτην
πεποίηκας τὴν γαστέρα καὶ μετὰ μικρὸν παιδοτροφεῖν δεήσει,
πρᾶγμα ἐταίρα βαρύντατον·

That is the only thing I bought with your love: that you made my
belly so big and that I will soon have to raise a child. That is a very
difficult situation for a courtesan. (Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 6–8).

Myrtion tries to invoke both a feeling of guilt and pity in Pamphilos by blaming him for being ungenerous and putting her in a tough situation: she loses her lover/customer from whom she hasn’t gotten anything financially and, as a consequence of her work for him, she’ll be put in a situation where she can’t earn money as a courtesan for some time. Myrtion once again utilizes the specificities and vulnerabilities of courtesan life (dependence on a client for income, the possibility of becoming pregnant as a result of work, and then temporarily losing your ability to work) as potential sites of persuasion in her negotiation of the courtesans’ exclusion of the social domain of marriage.

A similar situation (an ungenerous client) can be found in dialogue 7. Mousarion, the courtesan, is lectured by her mother for keeping Chaireas as a client even though he never 'pays' her. Mousarion explains to her mom that Chaireas promised he would marry her. Unlike Mousarion and Chaireas, Pamphilos never promises Myrtion that he will marry her and Myrtion never asks for marriage. Thus, although both courtesans' interactions with their clients are determined by their social category (the exclusion results in the relationships (almost) necessarily becoming temporary and unsustainable in the long run), the way they approach this limitation is very different. Mousarion does not seem to experience the exclusion as absolute and resists the social and legal regulations. It is unlikely, however, that this approach will have worked out in her favor, as her mother also remarks in Luc. *DMeretr.* 7, 59–65. Myrtion, on the other hand, does not resist the exclusion, but negotiates the specificities of their relationship to try and delay or eliminate the effects it has on their relationship: postponing its end (e.g. through rhetorical persuasion) and investing in its durability (e.g. by carrying his child).

This persuasion and investment are simultaneously present in the continuation of her speech:

οὐ γὰρ ἐκθήσω τὸ τεχθέν, καὶ μάλιστα εἰ ἄρρεν γένοιτο, ἀλλὰ Πάμφιλον ὀνομάσασα ἐγὼ μὲν ἔξω παραμύθιον τοῦ ἔρωτος, σοὶ δὲ ὄνειδιεῖ ποτε ἐκεῖνος, ὥς ἄπιστος γεγένησαι περὶ τὴν ἀθλίαν αὐτοῦ μητέρα.

Because I am not going to abandon the child, especially if it is a boy. Then I'm going to call him Pamphilos. Then he can be a consolation for me and my heartbreak, and one day he will then scold you for your unfaithfulness to his unhappy mother. (Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 8–12)

This imagined future shows striking parallels with Dido's plea to Aeneas in book four of Vergil's *Aeneid* (1st century BC):

At least, if before your flight a child of yours had been born to me, if in my hall a baby Aeneas were playing, whose face, in spite of all, would bring back yours, I should not think myself utterly vanquished and forlorn. (Verg. *A.* 4, 327–330).^{15, 16}

Both Dido and Myrtion emphasize in their pleas that they will be in danger when their loved one leaves them (Verg. *A.* 4, 322–326) and imagine that a son of their loved one could comfort their heartbreak. This parallel brings to light another commonality: Aeneas and Dido's relationship, similarly to Pamphilos and Myrtion's, is characterized as only a temporary delay on the way to the man's ultimate goal (for Pamphilos marriage, for Aeneas Italy and marriage [Lavinia]). This intertextual parallel, which an educated reader might have picked up on but is hard to prove as definitively intentional, emphasizes the temporary character of the client-courtesan relationship that Myrtion tries to extend and the liminality of courtesans, as they function in the social world but are not allowed to ever truly become a part of it.

Myrtion, lastly, attempts to change his course of action: not by convincing him to stay with her or not to marry, but by specifically convincing him not to marry Philo's daughter. Myrtion employs the only assets she has here: the invisibility of a 'potential wife' and her visibility as a courtesan; as Davidson argued, the degree of visibility ancient Greek women are exposed to is complacent in determining their status:

¹⁵ This translation is FAIRCLOUGH'S (2001).

¹⁶ DNP (*ad* Vergil).

The sight of a woman [...] has a charge, a specific symbolic value. All but the most invisible women are revealing something. All but the most completely naked and exposed have something more to reveal. [...] The extreme exposure of the brothel prostitute and the complete invisibility of the decent lady force all other women to dance a striptease on points in between.¹⁷

Thus, when Myrtion states: γαμεῖς δ' οὐ καλὴν παρθένον, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 10–11 ('you're not even going to marry a beautiful girl'), she cleverly employs a characteristic of Philo's daughter that overall makes her a good match (her invisibility correlates to her status as a free Attic woman of certain wealth) to induce anxiety and aversion in Pamphilos' mind. Pamphilos might not know what his future wife looks like. Myrtion creates this anxiety about the unknown (and in turn, highlights the ease of the known) by repeatedly emphasizing seeing/not seeing (and the corresponding knowing/not knowing) in Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 12–19: εἶδον ('I [...] saw'), οὐδέπεω εἰδυῖα ('I didn't know then'), οὐκέτι ὄψομαι ('I will no longer be able to see'), σὺ δ' οὖν [...] ἰδοῦ ('you should look at her yourself'), τὸ πρόσωπον ('her face'), τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ('her eyes'), ἰδέ ('look'), ὀρῶσι ('look'), ἑώρακας ('you have seen'), τὸ πρόσωπον ('his face'), οἶσθα ('you know') and ἰδεῖν ('to look'). Although Myrtion tries to use her rival's invisibility to her advantage, it is precisely that (in)visibility that ensures that she can never really compete with her rival, or at least not in any sustainable or legal way.

1.2 Pamphilos' response (Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 20–36)

In his answer to her speech, Pamphilos emphatically denies the accusation that he is married to or will be marrying Filo of Alopeke's daughter. He does this by first dismissing the girl in question: she would not be

¹⁷ DAVIDSON (1997: 128).

a good marriage candidate because her father is in a legal dispute with his father, and he continues by attempting to deny the accusation that he has decided to get married:

εἰ δὲ καὶ γαμεῖν ἐδέδοκτό μοι, τὴν Δημέου θυγατέρα τὴν τοῦ
πέρουσιν ἐστρατηγηκότος ἀφείς, καὶ ταῦτα πρὸς μητρὸς ἀνεψιὰν
οὔσαν, τὴν Φίλωνος ἐγάμουν ἄν;

And even if I had decided to get married, would I reject Demeas' daughter, who was a strategist last year, when she is also a cousin on my mother's side, and marry Philo's daughter instead? (Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 28–31).

He hides his denial in the conditional clause of a rhetorical question. In this, he claims that it is 'evident' that he would choose Demeas' daughter as a bride rather than Philo's daughter if he had decided to marry. To emphasize that he has not decided to get married, he uses a conditional, concessive clause introduced by 'εἰ (...) καί' which expresses that the condition (that he would be married) is 'exceptional or unlikely'.¹⁸ Although he emphasizes that it would be 'exceptional or unlikely', he frames that emphasized negated answer in a rhetorical question, which means that the answer remains ambiguous. His words are anything but reassuring, as Gilhuly notes: 'In denying his intention to marry Philon's daughter, he emphasizes the compelling attributes of Demeas' daughter'.¹⁹ She is an excellent marriage candidate because of her father's high status (τὴν τοῦ πέρουσιν ἐστρατηγηκότος, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 29–30 ('who was a strategist last year')) and their family connections (πρὸς μητρὸς ἀνεψιὰν οὔσαν, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 30–31 ('when she is also a cousin on

¹⁸ CGCG (49.19–21).

¹⁹ GILHULY (2007: 65).

my mother's side')); she is, as Gilhuly notes: 'prestigious and socially connected in spheres from which the courtesan is excluded'.²⁰ The same goes for his rejection of Philo's daughter: by explaining that he could not marry her because of the legal dispute between their fathers, he ends up painting her father as a 'worthy legal opponent' and 'an antagonistic equal'.²¹ Thus, in Pamphilos' attempt to reassure Myrtion that he is not getting married, he ends up highlighting how the girls he 'rejects' are worthy candidates, and thus, in contrast, how Myrtion, as a courtesan, is not and could never be. Marriage to clients with whom she has romantic, sexual, and in this case also parental relationships is strictly impossible for a courtesan. This restriction guides the conversation: Myrtion wants Pamphilos not to leave her but knows that she cannot ask him to give her that security (by marriage), and Pamphilos in turn wants to reassure Myrtion, without claiming that he will never leave her to marry a potential wife.

Finally, in the way that Pamphilos addresses Myrtion, we can discern the unequal power dynamics of their relationships: particularly in ἔτι [...] ἀκούσομαι, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 20 ('how much longer am I going to have to listen'), σου ληρούσης, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 21 ('your nonsense'), and his accusations of irrationality (Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 21–22; 2, 32–33; 2, 35). These accusations are not unique to courtesans, but are, as Sweet argues, a consequence of an unequal power relationship (legal, economic, gender, and social inequality).²²

1.3 I'll believe it when I see it (Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 37–48)

After enduring these accusations of irrationality, Myrtion diverts the blame onto someone else: ἡ Δωρὶς αὕτη ἐλύπησέ με, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2,

²⁰ GILHULY (2007: 65).

²¹ GILHULY (2007: 65).

²² SWEET (2019: 852).

37, ('It was Doris here that upset me so much'). Doris is a common name in Attic inscriptions for women of the lower social class and in comedies for female slaves.²³ Other indications of her status are that Myrtion gives Doris orders (πεμφθεῖσα, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 37 ('when she was sent')), does not address her directly, but instead speaks about her to Pamphilos, and that Doris calls Myrtion ὧ δέσποινα, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 41 ('mistress'). From this, I argue, we can conclude that the relationship has an unequal power dynamic. This enables Myrtion to blame Doris without expecting her to resist that accusation.²⁴ Additionally, when Myrtion calls on Doris to recount how she heard the rumor, she explicitly diverts the burden of responsibility for the correctness of the story to Doris: Λεσβίαν ἔφη ἐντυχοῦσαν αὐτῇ—μᾶλλον δὲ σὺ αὐτῷ, ὦ Δωρί, λέγε ἅπερ ἀκήκοας, εἴ γε μὴ ἐπλάσω ταῦτα, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 39–40 ('she met Lesbia, who said – but it is better that you tell him, Doris, what you have heard, at least if you didn't make this all up'). By doing this, she avoids being reproached for irrationality and a lack of common sense by Pamphilos by making use of her power over Doris. This is particularly striking when Myrtion directs the same reproach she received from Pamphilos, (that what she says is nonsense that she has made up herself) (Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 20; 2, 32–33) to Doris (Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 40). Myrtion's ability to be in a position of power in relation to Doris, indicates, contrary to what she implied before (Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 5–8) that she is financially prosperous or accommodated by financially prosperous people.

Myrtion can thus, despite her social and legal marginalization due to her social category, gain power through her social category over others such as Doris, who are marginalized not only socially and legally,

²³ MRAS (1954: 336).

²⁴ However, due to the limited information in this text and the limited knowledge about the lives of slaves in antiquity, it cannot be definitively concluded whether or not Doris was a slave or a free maid or in some other way associated with Myrtion (FORSYKE 2021: 7).

but economically as well. This economic prosperity, moreover, can raise her social status by enabling her to distinguish herself even further from lower types of sex work, particularly the πόρνη ('prostitute'): through conspicuous consumption (e.g. clothing and jewelry), by decreasing her visibility by sending out Doris to run her errands, and by allowing her to be more selective about her customers which can, in turn, increase her social opportunities (by climbing her way into the higher elite through careful selection).²⁵ Myrtion's social category can thus become a site of potential power.

However, the denotations of these advantages only give us a part of the picture, when we look, using social dynamics, at how these advantages play out in daily life, we can see that they are not unambiguously positive. As a result of her financial situation, Myrtion can increase her social status by decreasing her visibility (she sends out Doris to run her errands). This, however, also limits her freedom of movement as she has to stay secluded inside to decrease her visibility. In this dialogue then, Myrtion not only gives Doris the floor to shift the blame and responsibility for the correctness of the rumor away from herself but also because she cannot act as an epistemic agent; she is dependent on Doris to hear what is going on 'outside'.

This results in Myrtion becoming noticeably less present in the remainder of the dialogue. Myrtion is spoken about as if she is not there (Μυρτίῳ, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 50), only Doris is addressed (ὦ Δωρί, ὦ Δωρί, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 49; 2, 58), and it is no longer about the concerns she expressed in the beginning. This, however, must also be nuanced because Pamphilos does address them together (ἐταράχθητε, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 51 ('you are [...] upset'), παρ' ὑμῶν, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 53 ('from your place')) and Doris is also spoken of (directed at Myrtion) as if she is not there (ὧν ἡ Δωρίς ὕστερον εἶδεν, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 57 ('what Do-

²⁵ DAVIDSON (1997: 125–128) and KURKE (1999: 178; 184–185).

ris saw later')). Myrtion will also respond spontaneously to Pamphilos' speech, unlike Doris who in this dialogue only speaks when she is addressed. So, although we see Doris coming more into the foreground and Myrtion sliding more into the background, a complete inversion cannot take place here due to the legal and hierarchical differences between Doris and Myrtion.

By looking at how Myrtion's economic prosperity, an advantage of her social category, plays out in her social interactions we can thus see that it is not unambiguously positive and it affects the interaction on multiple levels (e.g. Myrtion needs to rely on Doris since she prevents herself from being an epistemic agent to gain a higher social status). Additionally, it shows us that identifying solely how Myrtion as a courtesan is limited, disregards how she is benefitting or, more neutrally, affected in her daily life by the specificities of courtesan life.

1.4 Social Expectations (Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 49–64)

Pamphilos responds confidently to Doris' 'verification' of the rumor and reveals what he learned from his mother: οὐτε γὰρ παρ' ἡμῖν οἱ γάμοι, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 51 ('because the wedding was not at our house'). This interaction is the only other reference in *Dialogues of the Courtesans* (apart from Myrtion and her imagined son) to a mother-son relationship. Pamphilos' mother is directly involved in his life, especially in his future marriage. This was also evident earlier in the dialogue, viz. Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 30–31. This mother-son relationship emphasizes through contrast how Myrtion's social category estranges her from the social role of a mother: she will not be able to marry 'her son' off to potential wives, despite his father's social status and origin.

Although his mother's words acquit him of the accusation that he is married, they are not reassuring. Pamphilos' mother emphasizes the similarities between Charmides, the boy who got married, and her son:

particularly ἡλικιώτης σοι, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 53 ('the boy about your age') and τοῦ γείτονος Ἀρισταινέτου υἱός, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 54 ('the son of our neighbor Aristainetos'). They differ in one crucial respect from each other, however: Charmides γαμεῖ ἤδη, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 54 ('is about to be married') and therefore Charmides, unlike Pamphilos, σωφρονεῖ, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 55 ('is sensible'). The social expectation for Pamphilos is thus that he, like Charmides, marries a potential wife. This is so obvious to his mother that she does not ask whether he will stay with a courtesan, but μέχρι, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 55 ('how long'). Myrtion can only temporarily enter Pamphilos' life. Gilhuly concludes:

Taken together with his earlier statement to the effect that, if he were to get married, he has an excellent match in mind, it seems that the prospects of Myrtion and her baby-to-be are not good. Myrtion is blind to these implications. She is reassured by the knowledge that Pamphilos is not getting married today. Her comprehension does not seem to extend beyond that.²⁶

Myrtion, however, I argue, never seems illusioned in the dialogue that she will be able to stay with Pamphilos forever. She attempts to extend the temporary nature of their relationship by investing in their relationship by carrying his child and by arousing pity, guilt, and anxiety about his potential wife in her speech. At the end of the dialogue, Myrtion indeed seems reassured by Pamphilos: not because she lives under the illusion that he will never get married, but because she knows that he has to get married but shows no interest in it yet: ἐς ὕπνον κατηνέχθη, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 56 ('I fell asleep'). In the meantime, she can try to strengthen her bond with Pamphilos so that he will also protect and support her and their 'son' in the future. Her response at the end of the dialogue

²⁶ GILHULY (2007: 66).

is in line with these tactics to bind him to her: although she responds relieved (ἀπέσωσας, ὦ Πάμφιλε, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 61 ('you saved me, Pamphilos')) she also includes a threat for the future: ἀπηγξάμην γὰρ ἄν, εἴ τι τοιοῦτο ἐγένετο, Luc. *DMeretr.* 2, 61–62 ('for I would have hanged myself if such a thing had happened').

2. Conclusion

This article aimed to tackle the gap in the existing research on Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans* by investigating the relationship between the literary courtesans and their social category as courtesans. The second dialogue of this collection illustrates how acknowledging the limitations, advantages, and expectations of a social category, only uncovers part of the story. A look at how those characteristics play out in more concrete situations, reveals a broader complexity and potential sites of agency and power for figures who are so often considered to be victims of their social category.

This article illustrates how the use of the social dynamics methodology, or comparable methodologies that focus on the relationship between an individual and the cohesion of the group(s) to which they belong, can contribute to a richer interpretation of literary texts, and particularly of characters belonging to marginalized groups. It is these characters par excellence who are in danger of being reduced to their marginalization. This transformative approach thus allows us not to define the marginalized characters exclusively in terms of their object status (how they are or are not limited by institutions and systems), but to approach them as possible subjects in their own right. In more concrete terms, in this article, courtesans are not subjects who were defined in advance based on their social category and whose 'status' and 'position' were therefore already determined in advance, but as characters in unique, local, and

concrete contexts within which they are socially shaped by the structures and relationships in which they function. In this way, a distinction is made between the representation of the social category and the possible individual reality and experience of persons belonging to it.

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The Baetylus – from Greek Mythology to Early Islam

The concept of sacred stones and their worship is found in various cultures and religions around the world. Different stones may hold religious or spiritual significance for many reasons, often related to their shape, colour, rarity, or perceived connection to a deity or natural force and it is a captivating embodiment of the intricate interplay between nature, spirituality, and human creativity. Depending on a multitude of global sacred stone traditions, this study navigates through the origins, significance, and contemporary relevance of this age-old ritual. Through a multidisciplinary approach, we unveil the deep-rooted connections between geology, anthropology, and theology, offering a comprehensive perspective on the origin of Sacred Stones. As we explore the mystical elements of this practice, this abstract invites reader to immerse themselves in the captivating world of sacred stones and the harmonious fusion of ancient and modern beliefs.

Keywords: *Baetylus, Omphalos, Elagabalus, Dushara, Meteorite, al-Ka'ba*

I The Roots of the Stone Worship in the Greek Mythology

The holy stone or *Baetylus* was sometimes a natural rock, of striking form or position, in situ; sometimes a prehistoric megalith; more frequently a rude block set up for the purpose. It was most commonly of oblong shape, roughly circular or rectangular in section, rounded or pointed at the top.¹ The tapering rectangular block was often fashioned

¹MOORE (1903: 198).

to an obelisk or a pyramid; the round one, to a cone 'meta' or *omphalos*. In some places the steps of the further development to rudely iconic forms, and finally to the statue as a work of art, can be traced. On the other hand, the holy stone may grow into an altar on which offerings are made.²

Stone worship, or Litholatry³, is not a prominent feature in Greek mythology when compared to other elements of ancient Greek religious practices. However, there are some references to stones and rocks being venerated or associated with deities and myths in Greek culture. There is an example for this kind of practices in the Greek tradition which is the story of omphalos of Delphi.⁴

The Omphalos was a roughly oval-shaped stone, often interpreted as a type of altar or offering table. It was typically adorned with intricate carvings and inscriptions, pilgrims and visitors to Delphi would come to see this stone, which was situated in the sanctuary of Apollo, one of the most important Greek gods.⁵ Legend has it that this omphalos signified that Delphi actually occupied the physical centre of the earth, certainly it was in many ways the spiritual centre of the ancient world. Zeus was said to have released two eagles who flew from opposite ends of the earth and met exactly at the site of Apollo's sanctuary—a spot marked out for all to see by the stone omphalos with two birds perched on either side.⁶ The second stone at Delphi was said to have been the one that Cronus, the Titan, swallowed, it was thought to be Zeus himself in his symbolic, or *baetylic*, form.⁷ According to *Eusebius*, (*Eusebius. Praep Evan. I, 37*) *baetyli* were believed to be stones endowed with souls and

²MOORE (1903: 198).

³The noun Litholatry is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as: *stone-worship* see OED (1933: 345).

⁴DONIGER ed. (1999: 106).

⁵DONIGER ed. (1999: 106).

⁶MORFORD—LENARDON (2003: 231).

⁷DONIGER ed. (1999: 106).



Figure 1: The omphalos in the museum of Delphi.

created by Uranus, hence, *Baetylus*, when personified, is called a son of Uranus and Ge, and a brother of Ilus and Cronus. Traces of the veneration paid to such stones are found among the Hebrews and Phoenicians, no less than among the Greeks.⁸

⁸SMITH ed. (1867: 453).



Figure 2: Temple of Apollo in Delphi

II Stones Worship in the Early Judaism

The Jewish narrative is not far from the Greek myth but it is more dramatic. The story of Jacob's Ladder in Judaism is that ladder leading to heaven that Jacob saw in his dream when he was travelling from *Beer-Shaba* in south of Palestine to *Haran* in the north of Syria. He found a place to stay all night, and he took one of the stones in the place and put it under his head to prepare himself for sleep, then he saw the following dream:

A ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the lord stood above it, and said, I am the lord, the God of Abra-



Figure 3: Jacob's Dream, oil on canvas painting by the Spanish painter José de Ribera. 1639.

ham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee,⁹ and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.¹⁰

Jacob woke up from his sleep and said: God is here, how dreadful is this place, here is the house of God and the gate of heaven. Later he took the stone that he had put under his head, and set it up for a pillar and poured oil upon the top of it and called that place a *Beit-El* 'House of God'. This dream was explained in many ways by the Jewish believers

⁹ RYLE (1921: 292–294).

¹⁰ RYLE (1921: 292–294).

in the later time, one of these explanations says that the ladder represented the expulsions which the Jewish people would suffer before the coming of the Jewish messiah 'Exile of Babylonia'.

Another interpretation is that the place at which Jacob stopped for the night was Mount of Moriah, the future home of the Temple in Jerusalem, which was supposed to be the bridge between heaven and earth. A hilltop towering over the Israeli territory of *Beit-El* in the north of Jerusalem that is believed by some to be the site of Jacob's dream is a tourist destination during the holiday of *Sukkot*.

Another story related to this stone has been found in north-western of Europe, the Stone of Scone or the Stone of Destiny is an oval fragment of red sandstone that was used in the coronation of the monarchs of Scotland then the coronation of the monarchs of England and Great Britain, this stone also known as Jacob's Pillow Stone.¹¹ Numerous theories about the stone history but one of them placed the origin of stone in the Bible time and identified it as the Stone of Jacob taken by the prophet Jeremiah¹² to Ireland in the ancient time. There is an inscribed cross on one surface of the stone, and an iron ring on each end. The monarchs used to sit on the stone itself until a wooden platform was added to the coronation chair in the 17th century AD. On 3rd July 1996 the British Prime Minister, John Major, announced in the House of Commons that the coronation stone, also called the Stone of Destiny, the oldest symbol of the Scottish kingdom, was to return to Scotland.¹³

¹¹ GLOVER (1881: 43).

¹² Jeremiah 650–570 BC: Known as the weeping prophet, was one of the major prophets of the Hebrew Bible, he prophesied the siege of Jerusalem and Babylonian exile as consequences for disobedience.

¹³ ROGGE (2014: 226).



Figure 4: The Stone of Scone or Stone of Destiny

III – The Cult of Elagabalus ‘*Sol Invictus*’

The cult of Elagabalus, also known as the *Elagabalium*, was a short-lived but fascinating religious and political phenomenon that emerged during the reign of the Roman Emperor Elagabalus 204 – 222 AD, who was one of the most controversial and enigmatic figures in Roman history, and his attempt to impose the worship of *Elagabal* on the Roman people marked a dramatic departure from traditional Roman religious practices. This cult centred around the worship of the Syrian sun god *Elagabal*, and it had a profound impact on Roman society and politics during the early 3rd century AD.

The origins of the cult of Elagabalus can be traced to the city of *Emesa*¹⁴ in the Roman province of Syria. *Elagabal* was a local deity wor-

¹⁴ *Emesa*: known as Homs city, it is in western Syria and 501 metres above sea level and



Figure 5: Elagabalus Statue in Palazzo Nuovo Museum, Rome, Italy.

shipped there and was associated with the sun. *Elagabal's* worship was under the form of the conical black stone, which, as it was universally believed, had fallen from heaven on that sacred place.¹⁵

When Elagabalus became a Roman Emperor in 218 AD at the age of 14, he was already a high priest of the cult of *Elagabal*, and he brought the worship of this Syrian god to Rome.

It may therefore be assumed that the term *Gabal* in Aramaic and *Syriac* was used to indicate high places. Thus, the god *Gabal* may have been the god of high places, of the heights. His cult and his principal symbol, a conical black stone are in complete agreement with those of

is located 162 kilometres north of Damascus. The city is located on the Orontes river, and also it is the central link between the interior cities and the Mediterranean coast.

¹⁵ GIBBON (1845: 186).



Figure 6: Coin from the time of Caracalla, a hexa-style temple of Emesa containing baetyl of Elagabal flanked by two parasols and surrounded by balustrade, dated 216 – 217 AD.



Figure 7: Coin of Elagabalus dates: 218 – 219 AD. the black stone 'baetyl' of Elagabal on a magnificent chariot drawn by four horses to Rome.

the high places mentioned in the Old Testament. The sun god *Elagabal* must therefore have had his places of worship in the mountains before he was worshipped at *Emesa*, in the valley of the Orontes.¹⁶

¹⁶ HALSBERGHE (1972: 624).



Figure 8: A relief from Palmyra stand in the entrance of Ba'al temple.



Figure 9: A coloured relief from Palmyra stand in the entrance of Ba'al temple.

Whatever the origin of *Sol Invictus Elagabal* may have been, as the paramount god of Syria he was worshipped in the form of a black, conical meteorite bearing mysterious signs symbolizing the sun. This stone belonged to the meteorites that occupied an important place in the Syro-Phoenician religion.¹⁷

In Emesa, on the Orontes, Sol Invictus Elagabal had a six-pillared temple which, as was often the case in Eastern countries, was ornamented with gold and jewels. This beautiful temple, the eagle-the bird of the sun-on or beside the sacred stone, or the handsome altar on which the priests performed sacrifices to him, were frequently represented on the coins of Emesa.¹⁸

The future Roman Emperor Elagabalus had the name *Varius*, but later he was called Elagabalus because he was priest of this god whom he afterwards brought with him from Syria to Rome, founding a temple for him on the site of an earlier shrine of Orcus. Finally, when he received the imperial power, he took the name *Antoninus* and was the last of the *Antonines* to rule the Roman Empire. Magie. *His Aug.* II, 107.

The triumph of the god of *Emesa* over all the religions of the earth, was the great object of his zeal and vanity; and the appellation of Elagabalus 'for he presumed as pontiff and favourite to adopt that sacred name' was dearer to him than all the titles of Imperial greatness.¹⁹

When Elagabalus had to depart *Emesa* to Rome, he could not resist taking his beloved god with him to the capital of the Empire. The voyage was undertaken without delay, but progress was difficult and slow. Not only the requirements of the sumptuous imperial court had to be taken into consideration, but also those of the divine dignity of *Sol Invictus*, who, in the form of the celebrated con-

¹⁷ HALSBERGHE (1972: 64).

¹⁸ HALSBERGHE (1972: 64).

¹⁹ GIBBON (1845: 186).

ical black stone, accompanied the cortege on a magnificent chariot.²⁰ He brought the sacred stone of Elagabalus to Rome with him and built two temples for the god, one on the Palatine, the so-called *Eliogabalium* and the other in the suburb known as *Ad Spem Veterem* east of the city, near the modern *Porta Maggiore*.²¹

The *Elagabalium* temple was only of medium size but its ornamentation was exceptional. With the Eastern carpets and precious stones of every kind and colour, this building rivalled that of *Emesa*.²²

For the emperor, its location near the palace was the most suitable and convenient possible, since as the high priest of *Sol Invictus Elagabal*, he had to sacrifice to the sun god every morning.²³ He scarified there hecatombs of bulls and a vast number of sheep. These he places upon the altars and heaped up spices of every kind, he also set before the altars many jars of the oldest and finest wines, so that the streams of blood mingled with streams of wine. Elagabalus dances around the altars to music played on every kind of instrument, women from his own country accompanied him in these dances, carrying cymbals and drums as they circled the altars. The entire senate and all the knights stood watching, like spectators at the theatre. The spices and entrails of the sacrificial animals were not carried by servants or men of low birth, rather, they were borne along in gold vessels held on high by the praetorian prefects and the most important magistrates, who wore long-sleeved robes with a broad purple stripe in the centre, robes which hung to their feet in the Phoenician style. On their feet were linen shoes customarily worn by the Eastern prophets. It was obvious that Elagabalus was paying the highest honor to those associated with him in the performance of the sacred rites.²⁴

²⁰ HALSBERGHE (1972: 65).

²¹ MAGIE ed. (1924: 110).

²² HALSBERGHE (1972: 74).

²³ HALSBERGHE (1972: 74).

²⁴ ECHOLS ed. (1961: 145–146).

In the suburbs of Rome, the emperor built a very large and magnificent temple to which every year in mid-summer he brought his god. He staged lavish shows and built race tracks and theatres, believing that chariot races, shows, and countless recitals would please the people, who held night-long feasts and celebrations. He placed the sun god in a chariot adorned with gold and jewels and brought him out from the city to the suburbs. A six-horse chariot bore the sun god, the horses huge and flawlessly white, with expensive gold fittings and rich ornaments. No one held the reins, and no one rode in the chariot; the vehicle was escorted as if the sun god himself were the charioteer. Elagabalus ran backward in front of the chariot, facing the god and holding the horses' reins. He made the whole journey in this reverse fashion, looking up into the face of his god. Since he was unable to see where he was going, his route was paved with gold dust to keep him from stumbling and falling, and bodyguards supported him on each side to protect him from injury. The people ran parallel to him, carrying torches and tossing wreaths and flowers. The statues of all the gods, the costly or sacred offerings in the temples, the imperial ornaments, and valuable heirlooms were carried by the cavalry and the entire Praetorian Guard in honor of the sun god.²⁵

This ritual acted out in the unbelieving environment of Rome, was presumably the standard ritual at the Temple of *Emesene Ba'al* in Syria. One can assume that the other great temples of the East demanded similar ritual processions. An inscription on the Temple of Zeus at *al-Dumāir* northeast of Damascus also makes a reference to a religious procession. Of course, religions elsewhere in the Greek and Roman worlds held sacred processions and even had processional ways—the concept is hardly exclusive to the East. But in the East, it was accorded greater importance and was expressed elaborately in architecture.²⁶

²⁵ ECHOLS ed. (1961: 147–148).

²⁶ BALL (2000: 260).



Figure 10: Nabataean betyl depicting a goddess, possibly al-'Uzza.

After the death of Emperor Elagabalus, the measures taken against the cult of *Sol Invictus* continued existence. The return of the cult symbol to *Emesa* guaranteed its survival, and its influence and attraction would continue to radiate from its original source. The black stone might equally well have been destroyed or defaced, as was the fate of so many distinguished monuments, as a testimony against *Sol Invictus Elagabal* and his *sacerdos amplissimus*, but this was not done. Under the protection of *Alexander Severus*, the usurpers *Uranius Antoninus* and *Sulpicius Antoninus* settled in *Emesa* and, as they were distant relatives of Elagabalus, assumed the hereditary function of the priesthood. The city of *Emesa* remained the celebrated place in which *Sol Invictus* continued to



Figure 11: Votive niches with four baetyles inside, Petra.



Figure 12: A gabled votive niche formed by pilasters.

be worshipped well into a much later period where the priestly family maintained the *sacerdotium* and held a certain amount of political power. The tenacity of the influence of the cult is shown by the fact that, fifty years later, Aurelian attributed his brilliant victory over queen Zenobia of Palmyra to the special intervention of *Sol Invictus Elagabal*.²⁷

The *Sol Invictus* continued to be worshipped in *Emesa* and the black stone was placed back from Rome to one of *Emesa's* temples at that time, there is evidence of practising this worshipped in *Ba'al* temple of Palmyra, the relief in the entrance of the temple tell the story of the holy stone before the Roman invasion. The carving described a farewell of the covered black stone placed on the top of the camel, surrounded by several women and some soldiers trying to protect the stone until they arrived at the destination, which probably was in the south of Palmyra and far from the Roman in the north and out of their control, it's the Nabatean kingdom where the same kind of worship was practising.

IV – The Nabatean Stones Worship

The Nabataeans observed what is called 'aniconism' in the veneration and representation of their deities. Aniconism means that rather than using figural images as objects of worship, symbolic forms such as standing stones are taken as representations of the deity.²⁸ The most common aniconic representations of deities are 'standing stones'. These can be categorized according to their function as memorial, legal, commemorative, and cultic stelae *betyls*. The Nabataeans used two main types of stelae: the *betyl* meaning the representation of a deity, and the *nephesh*, memorial mark for the dead. The features described point to round or spherical, red or black meteorites that were especially venerated as sa-

²⁷ HALSBERGHE (1972: 106–107).

²⁸ WENNING (2001: 79).



Figure 13: A small wall niches designed to hold figures or representations
baetylus of the main Nabataean god, Dushara.

cred stones in the Roman East. The most famous *betyl* is the meteor of the *omphalos Elagabal-Ammudates* from *Emesa*, which were transferred to Rome.

The Nabataean *betyl*s rather than round, black stones, are stelae or shaped slabs raised in relief. But since they too are aniconic sacred stones, in modern research the term *betyl* is associated with these types of monuments. Nabataean inscriptions include two terms for *betyl*s: *nsyb* and *msb'*. Both terms are related to the Semitic root *ysb* and describe an erected/standing stone/stela. *Betyl* types and shapes do not indicate any difference between the two terms.²⁹

The first systematic classification of the Nabataean *betyl*s was published by Dalman 1908.

²⁹ WENNING (2001: 80).

These classifications were based on the shapes of the *betyls*, plain *betyls* can be subdivided into the following types: rectangular slab, high rectangular slab with a rounded top, semi-circular or hemispherical slab and dome-shaped spherical *betyl*. In addition, there are the Eye *betyls* and the Face stelae.³⁰

Betyls are found in groups of two, three, four, six, and ten in various combinations, they appear of the same size, or different sizes, in different arrangements, set above each other, or set into each other; one *betyl* can be raised in relief, the other shaped as a negative space; a rectangular slab can be paired with an eye *betyl*, and these are the most common combinations.

Besides all of these shaped stones, there are hundreds of votive niches at Petra, they are cut into the rock as simple or framed recesses and are characterized by an upright rectangular outline. Besides the rectangular shape, we also find simple arched or gabled recesses. In some cases, the recess represents the *betyl* as a negative space. An even more simple type is created when the niche is cut into a sloping rock. The recess is hewn at a right angle so that the niche is deeper at the base. The frames of the niches show great variety, usually, the frame is raised in relief. However, in some cases, frames were added in materials such as stucco. The simplest frame is shaped by strips all around, indicating beams or battens. Generally, the lower strip is missing, and the base of the niche is used as its lower boundary.

Most frames are shaped by pilasters. In a few cases, we can also find engaged columns, pillars, and/or standards with the crescent moon instead of the capital.³¹

In two petroglyphs the *betyl* is framed by palms depicting a sanctuary. The place of the Niches and the interpretation of the *betyls* as well

³⁰ WENNING (2001: 85).

³¹ WENNING (2001: 88).



Figure 14: The clan leaders and Muhammad in the middle, placed the black stone into Ka'ba.

involve the question of where the niches were placed. The votive niches at Petra are cut into the rock faces of steep cliffs, sloping and dome-shaped rocks, fallen rocks and into the walls of quarries. They are also found in the walls of rock-cut *cellae*, triclinia, and tomb facades. They belong either to places of assembly of worshippers or to funeral complexes '*marzh*'. Niches are found along the paths to sanctuaries and high place on the top of the mountains, as in the case of those associated with the Great High Place.³²

V – The Black Stone of *Ka'ba* in Mecca

When we move to the south of Petra in the Arabian Peninsula, there is a small city called Mecca, the holy city of all Muslims around the world since the *al-Haram* Mosque and the *Ka'ba* in the centre of the Mosque, *al-Ka'ba* holds the Black Stone in the north-eastern corner, which is probably the most respected rock in the entire world, but its lithological nature remains unknown.

³² WENNING (2001: 90).

In pre-Islamic times, Mecca was *Haram* or sanctuary area, it was the object of an annual pilgrimage centre and marketplace. On the other hand, it was inviolable, no bloodshed being permitted within it. It was thus apt to attract settlers and visitors all the year round.³³ Mecca became the repository of the various idols and tribal gods of the peninsula and the destination of an annual pilgrimage. The pilgrimage also entailed a period of truce, which served not only for religious worship but also for the arbitration of disputes, the settlement of claims and debts, and, of course, trade. The Meccan fairs gave the Arabian tribes a common identity and gave Mecca moral primacy in much of Western and Central Arabia. These fairs were the origin of Mecca's commercial interests. The people called the *Quraysh*, who took control of Mecca in the 5th century AD, became a skilled retailing population. In the 6th century AD, they found a place in the spice trade as well, as difficulties with other international trade routes diverted traffic to the overland Arabian route.³⁴ Traditional Muslim sources have told the story of the black stone as a stone dropped from heaven in the time of Adam. Afterwards, Abraham, the father of Isaac and Ismail, got a command from God to build a house in Mecca. Abraham built the house, then appointed it as the house of God and placed the black stone in it. Since then, the people in Arabia have venerated this stone and the *Ka'ba* itself as the house of God since they used to visit Mecca to practice their worship every year. The story of Muhammad's involvement with the Black Stone is connected to the reconstruction of the *Ka'ba* which had fallen into disrepair over time and required rebuilding during Muhammad's lifetime. As the tale goes when it was time to reconstruct the *Ka'ba*, various tribes, in Mecca eagerly sought to partake in placing the Black Stone at its designated spot. To prevent disputes and potential conflicts it is said that Prophet Muhammad devised a solution. He suggested that

³³ CRONE (2004: 168).

³⁴ LAPIDUS (1988: 16–17).



Figure 15: The fragments of black stone of Ka'ba covered by a bracelet of silver.

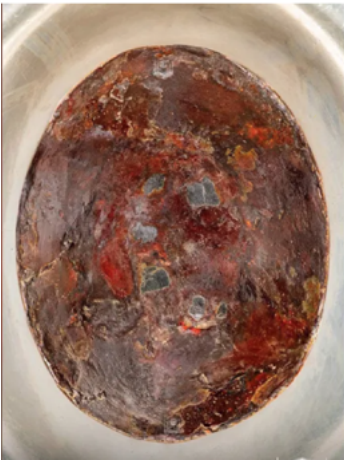


Figure 16: High resolution photos have been revealed for the first time of the black stone 2021

each tribe select a representative who would collectively lift and position the Black Stone where it belonged, Ibn Hishām. *Al-Sirah*. 1, 209–210.

Admittedly, God or 'Allah' is associated with a black stone, and some traditions (Ibn Hishām. *Al-Sirah*. 1, 209–210) hold that originally this stone was sacrificial, this suggests that it was stone rather than the

building around it, which was *Bayt-Allah*, the house of god, and this gives us a perfect parallel with the old Testament bethel. The cult of the Arab god *Dusares* '*Dhu-Shara*' also seems to have centred on a black sacrificial stone. A similar arrangement is met in a Nabataean inscription from Petra that speaks of sacrificial stones *nsyb* 'belonging to 'the lord of this house' and *al-* '*Uzza*'. If we assume that *bayt* and *Ka'ba* alike originally referred to the Meccan house as a pagan God or *Allah* worshipped in conjunction with a female consort such as *al-* '*Uzza* and/or other 'daughter of god'. This would give a genuinely pagan deity for *Quraysh* and at the same time explain their devotion to goddesses.³⁵

The black stone originally was one rock placed in the north-eastern corner of *Ka'ba* and is 1.5 meters above the ground but over time and because of the many conflicts in Mecca between the Muslims, it has transformed into multiple pieces that are now held together by cement. The fragments are themselves made up of smaller pieces which have been combined to form the seven or eight fragments visible today. These pieces are enclosed within a frame and secured to the outer wall of the *Ka'ba* using silver nails.

In the 10th century, the historian Muslim *Muhammad ibn Nafi* '*al-Khuzai*' saw the stone completely exposed during the rebuilding of the *Ka'ba* and stated that the portion of the stone covered by the wall is white and the length of the stone is one cubit.

Another writer, *Muhammad Alī ibn Muhammad ibn 'Allān al-Bakrī* saw it during the remodelling of the *Ka'ba* at the time of the *Ottoman Sultan Murad* in 1630. He said that the black stone measures 1.5 x 1 x 0.33 yards with an inch or two being missing in various spots, he mentioned a bracelet of silver.³⁶

³⁵ CRONE (2004: 198).

³⁶ DIETZ-MCHONE (1974: 177–178).

One of the first orientalist the Swiss traveller Johann Ludwig Burckhardt visited Mecca in 1814, and provided a detailed description of the stone as an irregular oval, about seven inches in diameter, with an undulated surface, composed of about a dozen smaller stones of different sizes and shapes, well joined together with a small quantity of cement, and perfectly well smoothed; it looks as if the whole had been broken into as many pieces by a violent blow, and then united again. It appeared to me like a lava, containing several small extraneous particles of a whitish and of a yellow substance. Its colour is now a deep reddish brown approaching to black.³⁷

In the second half of the 19th century Sir William Muir has described the stone that is semi-circular, measures some six inches in height and eight in breadth; it is of a reddish-black colour, and notwithstanding the polish imparted by myriads of kisses, bears to the present day in its undulating surface marks of a volcanic origin.³⁸

The colour of the stone has been related in many religious and history books that this stone is white. In some stories it is described as whiter than snow, in another white as though it was silver, and in another, as whiter as yoghurt. So why it was named a black stone? The answer is that the Prophet Muhammad explained that the sins of man are what blackened it.

Some historians and religious scholars who went on the *Hajj* 'pilgrimage' to Mecca said they saw traces of whiteness. One saw a white dot visible to all, another saw three white spots, the largest being the size of a grain seed, and a third said that the amount of white was decreasing.

The origin of black stone has been described variously as a basalt stone, an agate, a piece of natural glass or a meteorite. However, the first analysis was published in 1857 by Paul Partsch³⁹, the curator of the Aus-

³⁷ BURCKHARDT (1829: 250).

³⁸ MUIR (1894: 27).

³⁹ PARTSCH (1856: 1–5).

tro-Hungarian imperial collection of minerals, who corresponded with Anton Ritter von Laurin, Austrian General Consul in Cairo, who was a friend of Egyptian viceroy Muhammad Ali. Ali showed Von Laurin what he claimed was the only fragment of the stone outside of Mecca, wrested from the fanatical *Wahābis* who had attacked the *Ka'ba* believing its contents to be idolatrous. Von Laurin noted the stone's black surface and finely grained silver-grey interior embedded with bottle-green cubes, a description consistent with some meteorites.⁴⁰

The second proposal was published in 1974 by Robert Dietz and John McHone, who said that the Black Stone was actually an agate, judging from its physical attributes and a report by an Arab geologist that the stone contained clearly discernible diffusion banding characteristic of agates.⁴¹

Elisabeth Thomsen of the University of Copenhagen proposed a different theory in 1980. She suggested that the Black Stone may be a meteorite glass fragment.⁴² Nevertheless, the black stone has never been analysed with modern scientific techniques and its origins remain the subject of speculation. But on the 4th of May 2021, the Saudi government agency announced a high-resolution photo had been revealed for the first time of black stone. The images are up to 49,000 megapixels in size and took more than 50 hours to photograph and develop.⁴³

Conclusion

The practice of stone worship holds a profound significance in various cultures worldwide, spanning millennia of human history till now. From ancient civilizations to contemporary societies, stones served as

⁴⁰ GOLIA (2015: 80).

⁴¹ DIETZ-McHONE (1974: 175).

⁴² THOMSEN (1980: 89).

⁴³ MCSWEENEY (2021).

symbols of divinity, protection, and reverence. Through their enduring presence and timeless allure, stones have woven themselves into the fabric of human spirituality, offering a tangible connection to the natural world and the mysteries of the universe. As we reflect on the diverse manifestations of stone worship across cultures, we are reminded of the universal human impulse to seek meaning and transcendence in the tangible and the sacred. In honouring the ancient tradition of stone worship, we not only pay homage to our ancestors' beliefs but also embrace a deeper understanding of our own spiritual journey and the enduring power of the natural world.

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Bezoar Stones: the Antidote to All Poisons

*Bezoars, which have played an important role in medicine since their discovery until the development of modern treatments, have been the subject of many questions and mysteries. According to some reports, bezoars were thought to be found in the head, stomach, or even the liver of some animals, as well as in their faeces. Other sources claimed that bezoars originated from deer eyes. Regardless of their origin, it is undeniable that for centuries, medicine has relied on these animal stones to treat poisoning symptoms and cure rabies. In my paper, I will lay out the origin and history of these mysterious materials with poison-absorbing properties. I will present the terms used to refer to items later known as bezoars in Sextus Placitus's work *De medicamentis ex animalibus libri*. In addition, I will describe some intriguing characteristics of the many types of bezoars.*

Keywords: Placitus, Pliny, medicine, bezoar, gastrolith, historical overview

1. Introduction

My PhD research centres on *De medicamentis ex animalibus libri*, the only surviving work by Sextus Placitus Papyriensis, an ancient Roman physician who lived and worked in the 4th century AD. The main objective of the text, which was primarily influenced by *Naturalis Historia*, written by Gaius Plinius Secundus, is the description of the remedies derived from various living organisms. While Plinius, commonly known as Pliny the Elder, focuses on medicines made from plants, devoting only four books of his monumental work to medicines from animals

and humans, Placitus discusses solely the latter. In terms of length, *De medicamentis ex animalibus libri* is considerably shorter than *Naturalis Historia*, making it much easier to navigate and comprehend. This could explain why the work has survived, despite the fact that its authorship is frequently disputed. Although we know almost nothing about the author of the work, based on the content and accuracy with respect to contemporary circumstances, it appears that Sextus Placitus was either a physician himself or someone who was familiar with and understood the medical literature of his time.

Placitus takes *Naturalis Historia* as a basis for his book's structure and organisation, grouping the descriptions of the remedies according to their origin. This arrangement closely follows Pliny's division, namely the books VIII–XI on zoology and the books XXVIII–XXXII on remedies derived from animals. An interesting distinction is that Placitus only discusses medicines derived from terrestrial animals and birds, paying no attention to those derived from aquatic or amphibious animals, as is the case with the medicinal sections of *Naturalis Historia*.

Placitus writes about a total of thirty animal species, some of which he examines separately by the male and the female variants, such as the rooster and the hen, which are discussed as *De gallo* and *De gallina*, respectively. However, in most cases, the male and the female forms of an animal are treated as one, such as the bear (*De urso et ursa*) or the donkey (*De asino et asina*). The goat is also unique in terms of classification, since it is divided into two types: wild goat (*De capra sylvatica*) and domestic goat (*De capro*). In contrast to Pliny, who was the period's leading author, Placitus enumerates the remedies rather than placing them in a literary narrative. In the absence of a narrative, it is difficult to determine the author's point of view, as he merely employs repetitive particles to demonstrate the efficacy of the medicines and provides no personal opinion.

The description of the remedies is typically brief, ranging from half a sentence to two or three sentences. The author only describes information he considers essential, usually in half sentences, making the meaning of text somewhat difficult to decipher. However, this is also a feature of the book that foreshadows the style of subsequent recipe books. The fact that in some cases the lists of ingredients for the preparation of medicines are provided in precise units of measurement lends credibility to the assumption that the descriptions for the preparation of medicines in the book were actually employed in practice.

Reading the text from a modern perspective reveals several astonishing remedies that, in the light of today's medical advances, appear worthless. In addition to prescriptions for medicines, Sextus Placitus' *De medicamentis ex animalibus libri* records the names of the special objects used to prepare, administer, and presumably store these medicines, without providing further information about them.

The main object of my PhD research, rather than determining the efficacy of these specific remedies or uncovering the history of their survival, is the linguistic analysis of the text. My research also aims to identify the various substances used to prepare them, which may be unfamiliar to today's readers. This latter may aid in gaining a better understanding of the daily lives of people in the 4th century AD Roman Empire.

In the present paper I would like to discuss a theme that I came across while analysing the various passages of the above-mentioned work of Sextus Placitus. In between accounts of remedies derived from deer, rabbits, and eagles, the author mentions a few stones that possess unusual qualities from a modern scientific standpoint. While identifying these stones, I came across the so-called bezoars, which bear a striking resemblance to the stones featured in Placitus' treatments and had been known for centuries for their healing and detoxifying properties. Given that this research will be a part of my future PhD thesis, where

I intend to delve much deeper into every aspect of this subject matter, my goal here is to provide a brief summary of the main questions, challenges, and potential answers regarding the stones referenced by Sextus Placitus as well as the topic of bezoars.

Bezoars, which have played an important role in the history of medicine, have been surrounded by many questions and mysteries since their emergence until the advent of modern medicine. In this paper, I will present a concise history of this mysterious animal-derived stone that has the power to treat poisoning, as well as some of the unique characteristics of some of its varieties. Furthermore, in the last section of my paper, I will explain why I believe the stones referenced by Placitus could be categorised as early bezoars. To substantiate this assertion, we must first define the concept of bezoar, which requires the examination of the gastroliths that serve as their foundation.

2. From gastroliths to bezoars

Gastroliths are smaller or larger stones or compacts of organic matter resembling stones found in the digestive system of mammals.¹ In ruminants, a buildup of hard mass resembling a gastrolith is most commonly created from small undigested organic debris, and rarely from actual stones caught in the digestive system. In humans, hair knots are the most common source of gastroliths, although bone fragments can also create them. In modern medicine, however, gastroliths refer exclusively to dinosaur stomach stones and human hair knot based accumulations.² Since it is very difficult to determine if the stones discovered amid dinosaur remains are actual gastroliths or simply stones mixed in with the bones, it can take years before such a stone is classified as a stomach stone.

¹ WINGS (2004).

² BALOGH (1919).

Bezoars are a special type of gastrolith that had never been precisely defined by scientific research until they disappeared from medical practice. According to some of the historical sources, bezoars are to be found in a specific animal's head (as in the case of snakes and toads), stomach, or liver, or even in their droppings (as in the case of deer and goats or mountain goats), while others claim that bezoars are derived from deer eyes.³

However, for a stone to be called a bezoar, particularly in the Middle Ages, it had to fit specific criteria, such as being derived from an animal and having a detoxifying property. The stone gained its detoxifying property if the animal from which it originated ate a venomous snake, whose venom was absorbed by the stone, allowing it to neutralise other poisons.⁴ According to this, neither dinosaur stomach stones nor human gastroliths can be classified as bezoars.

3. The rise and fall of bezoars

The bezoar, also known in Hebrew as *Bel Zaard*, or 'The Master', was well-known in ancient Arabic regions, and it is possible that Westerners were aware of these healing stones prior to the spread of Islam, albeit there is no particular mention of them.⁵ Even if they were aware of the existence of bezoars, they did not refer to them by this name. However, because there are a few sources that reference stones with similar characteristics to bezoars, and there was no precise definition of bezoars in antiquity, we cannot draw a firm conclusion in this regard.

Yuhannā Māsawayh, an Arabic author who lived in the eighth century AD, provided the first precise description of bezoars and was the

³ BARROSSO (2013); LECOUEUX (2012).

⁴ BARROSSO (2014: 79–80).

⁵ ELGOOD (1935: 73–74).

first to connect them to the ability to remove poison.⁶ Considering that nearly all Arabic doctors have written about bezoars,⁷ it is not surprising that it was first referenced in European scientific literature by another Arabic physician named Aevenzoar around 1140.⁸ The most notable treatise on these stones, however, was produced by Abu Rejhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Biruni around the millennium.⁹ His work stands out for being the first to compile all available Greek, Roman, Syriac, Indian, and Islamic literature on bezoars. He was also the first to describe how to discern genuine bezoars from imitations and forgeries. He also provided a detailed physical description of what he called ‘animal bezoars’.¹⁰ At the time, bezoars were typically administered as a tincture: a little piece of the stone was cut off and given to the patient dissolved in a liquid, generally water or wine, a method that quickly depleted the stone.¹¹ On the other hand, documents dating back to the thirteenth century claim that bezoars possessed the same healing powers when applied directly to wounds, a method that allowed them to be used repeatedly.¹²

Bezoars spread during the Age of Discovery, courtesy to Portuguese sailors, and were traded for gold due to their scarcity and therapeutic properties. The fact that bezoars from India were thought to provide long, healthy lives and good luck in love illustrates that the definition of the term bezoar was interpreted more broadly at the time. Because bezoars were in high demand among the European elite, many fakes appeared, yet demand for them did not decline. Furthermore, their possession became a status symbol. When they arrived in Europe, these

⁶ BARROSO (2014: 78).

⁷ BARROSO (2014: 79).

⁸ ELGOOD (1935: 74).

⁹ BARROSO (2014: 79).

¹⁰ BARROSO (2014: 79–80).

¹¹ DiMARCO (2014: 73–75).

¹² DiMARCO (2014: 73–75).

unique stones were typically inlaid in jewellery, but there were also examples of them being inlaid in cutlery and decorative holders. This trend resulted in the embedding of bezoars in objects becoming nearly an art form, as evidenced by the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II's extensive collection of bezoars.¹³

As far as we know, Caspar Bauhin was the first to dispute the medical efficacy of bezoars. He wrote a treatise based on his observations, in which he states that, while most doctors are aware that bezoars are not a cure-all, they are compelled to prescribe them since their clients, the nobility, believe in their effectiveness. The idea that bezoars were a cure for all maladies was so ingrained in people's minds that they were actively used until the nineteenth century, when medicine itself entered a new era. After that, except for a few tribal applications, bezoars have almost completely fallen out of favour.¹⁴

However, scientific research has not fully abandoned this extremely complex subject, even if it can sometimes offer dubious results regarding the effectiveness of the bezoars. There is ongoing research into the chemistry of gastroliths and bezoars, as well their role in early medicine and literature. Medically, it is still debated whether they contain poison-removal properties or if their success is due to a trick of the human mind. In the context of literary research, it is critical to distinguish between the three most well-known types of bezoars, as these stones of miraculous power are referred to by different names in the relevant sources.

A person with only a basic understanding of the subject will most likely associate bezoars with the so-called goatstones. These stones from the Arabic regions are the most prevalent type of bezoar. Goatstones, or bezoars in the classical sense, derive from the stomachs of mountain goats native to the Arabic regions, though the way in which these

¹³ BARROSO (2013: 12–13).

¹⁴ BARROSO (2013: 13–15).

stones gained their poison-absorbing properties is still up for debate. As previously mentioned, most of our sources claim that bezoars can only originate from a mountain goat that ate a venomous snake, absorbing its venom and therefore forming the healing stone.¹⁵ Another popular sort of bezoar is the so-called snakestone, which is referenced in sources all throughout the world, with the best variant said to originate from India. The third most prevalent type of bezoar is the so-called madstone, which is found in the United States of America, or deerstone, as one of its local variety is known.¹⁶

4. Snakestone for snakebites¹⁷

The so-called snakestone holds a unique place among bezoars because we have information about it dating back to antiquity, specifically from Pliny. The *Naturalis Historia* merely states the existence of such stones, claiming they are in fact bones, and that they are found in snake heads, without any mention regarding their healing properties. Due to the widespread distribution and popularity of *Naturalis Historia*, later generations relied on Pliny's work to identify these stones, and only healing stones that matched his specific description were referred to as snakestones.¹⁸

Snakestones have gained popularity primarily because they were considered to have the most potent poison-absorbing properties of any bezoars; so much so that even the *Encyclopedia Americana* referred to

¹⁵ BAROSSO (2013: 8).

¹⁶ DiMARCO (2014: 55–89).

¹⁷ DiMARCO (2014: 55–89). The following section will contain merely a summary of the research and findings on snakestones. For further reading, see DiMARCO's book chapter titled 'Mysteries of the Madstone', as it goes into much greater detail about both snakestones and toadstones. It also delves further into the history and literature of madstones in America.

¹⁸ DiMARCO (2014: 61–62).

them as such in the early 1990s.¹⁹ In terms of its use, we know that the snakestone had to be placed directly on the snakebite and left on the wound. If the poison was absorbed by the stone, it would naturally fall off. If the stone could not absorb any more poison, it was soaked in water or milk, depending on the source, causing the fluid to become greenish in hue and removing the poison from the snakestone. After the first application, the stone was placed back on the snakebite; if the stone remained on the wound, it indicated that there was still poison there, and it was left on the wound until it fell off again. This procedure had to be repeated until the stone, when placed on the wound, instantly fell off. If this occurred, it was assumed that the poison had been completely emptied from the wound and the patient had been cured.²⁰ Pliny also mentions the so-called toadstone, whose history is even more unclear than that of most bezoars. In *Naturalis Historia*, the author discusses not only the procurement of this stone, but also its medicinal properties.

The snakestone, which appears in early European literature alongside the toadstone, is also known as blackstone due to its colour.²¹ We have a source from Peru in the early 2000s that uses the name Piedra Negra²² to refer to a stone that, similarly to other snakestones, is considered to be an antidote for snakebites. The account from Peru shows that, while in modern scientific and medical terms, a snakestone is merely a piece of burnt bone with no healing properties, in areas of the world where modern antidotes to poisons and antibiotics are scarce and ancient religion is still part of people's daily lives, the very belief in the stone's ability to heal has the potential of healing.

In North America, snakestones are also sometimes referred to as madstones. We know this because the most well-known madstones,

¹⁹ ENCYCLOPEDIA AMERICANA XXV. (1920: 178).

²⁰ DiMARCO (2014: 65; 76).

²¹ DiMARCO (2014: 72).

²² SIZE (2001: 7–8).

which appear in the *Encyclopedia Americana*,²³ were later determined to be merely snakestones imported from Europe or the Middle East. The name 'madstone' refers to the fact that in America these stones were used to treat rabies caused by so-called mad dog bites rather than snake bites, but in scientific literature written in Latin, they were explicitly referred to as snakestones.²⁴ The two madstones mentioned in the *Encyclopedia Americana* can still be found today, one in Arizona²⁵ and the other in Missouri.²⁶

The majority of the madstones were given to the American settlers by local indigenous people in exchange for their good deeds. In addition to gifts from natives, some madstones have been discovered on beaches and even in shipwrecks, implying that they were sourced from Europe or India.²⁷ Another theory suggests that these madstones originated in the East and derived from deer eyes²⁸ or perhaps were found in deer droppings, and were effective not only against snakebites but also against other poisons.²⁹ In America, a local variant of the madstone is known as the deerstone. Because madstone, which we previously identified is essentially a snakestone, was thought to have originated from a deer, the terms madstone and deerstone are often used interchangeably.

5. The bezoars of Placitus?

As my final unit of study, I would like to focus on deerstones while returning to 4th century AD Rome. Unlike Pliny, who does not mention any stones derived from deer in his *Naturalis Historia*, Sextus Placitus

²³ ENCYCLOPEDIA AMERICANA XVIII. (1918: 109–110).

²⁴ DiMARCO (2014: 76).

²⁵ HANCHETTE (2002: 384).

²⁶ RANDOLF (1933: 1–12).

²⁷ DiMARCO (2014: 79–81).

²⁸ LECOUEUX (2012: 76–77).

²⁹ BARROSO (2013: 8).

cites a specific stone in his *De Medicamentis ex animalibus libri*, in the section on medicines derived from deer.

16. Ut mulier cito concipiat. Lapis qui vulva, aut in ventriculo cervicalae invenitur, philacterium est. Praegnanti vero efficit, ut partum liberaliter proferat, quod ratio collegit velocissimum esse illud animal, nec tamen abortum facere: simul ratio esse potest, si ossicula, quae in vulva, aut in corde eius reperiuntur, secum habuerit, nam eundem effectum praestant.³⁰

To make it easier for women to conceive. *The stone found in the vagina or stomach of a doe has magical powers.* It helps the pregnant woman to easily carry the foetus to term because, as we all know, this animal is very fast and yet does not abort: it is also well known that if a woman carries a bone found in the vagina or stomach of a doe, the same effect occurs.³¹

Despite the fact that the author does not give the stone a specific name and its location does not correspond exactly to that of the bezoars—because it can be found both in the animal’s stomach and vagina—and that its use has nothing to do with poisons, what we have here is a stone found in a mammal, which suggests that this might be a reference to an early European bezoar or medicinal stone. The term *ventriculo*, as it appears in the Latin text, refers to the abdominal cavity. This could indicate that the magical stone mentioned, which was used to help pregnant women, is not a bezoar. At the same time, in medical writings, *ventriculo* was also used to refer to the stomach itself, in which case the stone could be a bezoar.

Even if this stone is not a bezoar, it is definitely a gastrolith, since it is a stone found in the digestive system. In terms of application, this

³⁰ PLACITUS (1538: 5).

³¹ Citations from Placitus throughout the study are in my own translation (K.B.).

stone, similarly to the other healing stones of Placitus, is unique in that bezoars were typically used to treat poisoning or snakebite, but in this case, it is believed that the stone aids pregnancy. Further research is needed to determine whether such healing stones used during pregnancy appear in other authors' works. We cannot tell from this segment alone how the stone was intended to be utilised, but based on the second half of the recipe, it was most likely carried in a pouch or worn as a bracelet. The latter possibility would imply that the stone needed to come into contact with the body to be effective, just as later snakestones needed to be placed on wounds to heal them.

In another segment of *De Medicamentis ex animalibus libri*, Placitus mentions another stone similar to a bezoar. Specifically, on the list of remedies that can be prepared from rabbits, he describes the following treatment for kidney stones:

11. Aliter ad calculos pellendos. Leporis sanguinem, et pellem totam in latere crudo comburis, ut in cinerem convertatur, et in aqua calida potui dabis cochlearium unum ieiuno, mox lapidem defrangit et eiicit. Experimentum huius perfectius habere si volueris, mittis in aquam cochlearium pulveris, et lapidem qualem volueris, et lapis liquescit, ut mireris virtutem.³²

11. Another recipe, for passing kidney stones. Burn the rabbit's blood and skin all over its body while it is still fresh, then grind it to ashes, add a spoonful to a cup of warm water [and drink it] on an empty stomach, this will break down the kidney stones and help them pass. If you want to achieve an even more perfect effect, *put a spoonful of powder and a stone of your choice in the water; when the stone dissolves, it will have a marvellous effect.*

³² PLACITUS (1538: 6–7).

The author does not clarify the type of stone he is referring to, but it is undeniable that it is a water-soluble stone with medical properties. As previously stated in this study, bezoars were exclusively utilised as tinctures until the thirteenth century. However, it should be emphasised that typically only a portion of the stone was needed, whereas Placitus recommends using the entire stone, which would result in a particularly potent treatment. It is also worth noting that, unlike early bezoars, this stone is employed in combination with a liquid-based medicine rather than as a tincture in and of itself. Water solubility is a rare and unique quality of a stone, and because Placitus does not define the type of stone he is referring to, there is a possibility that this stone is an animal-based gastrolith. In light of this, it is conceivable that what Placitus is referring to in this section of his book is one of the early bezoars, similar to the stone previously mentioned in the section regarding the remedies derived from deer.

Later in the text, there is a mention of a stone similar to a bezoar in the section on medicines derived from eagles:

3. Mulier quae concepit ut pariat. Lapis qui in ventre, aut in nido eius invenitur, quem aetos vocant, (cuius vim et nomen etiam aetites habet) prodesse praegnantibus, ut facile pariant ferunt.³³

3. For a pregnant woman to have an easy birth. *The stone found in the stomach or nest [of an eagle],* known as aetos (and aetites, which has the same name and effect) is said to be beneficial to pregnant women: it makes childbirth easier.

As we can see, Placitus recommends using a stone from an eagle's stomach or nest to aid in childbirth. Placitus does not indicate how the stone is used in this recipe, making it impossible to determine if it was utilised

³³ PLACITUS (1538: 25).

the same way that a traditional bezoar would have been. It could have been utilised as the stone mentioned in the segment regarding the remedies derived from deer, as both cases relate to facilitating childbirth. It is also conceivable that it was employed as a tincture, perhaps as a primitive painkiller. However, given the length of this recipe and the fact that it is the only mention of this treatment, we are unable to determine what exactly it was referring to.

Of all the stones that Placitus mentions, this is the only one that he identifies and names. He refers to it as *aetos* (ἄετός) or *aetites* (ἀετίτης). Both words are of Greek origin, yet their meanings are difficult to decipher, the only certainty being that they are somehow related to eagles. It is noteworthy that this so-called *aetos* (ἄετός) or *aetites* (ἀετίτης) is the only example of a stone with healing properties coming from a bird, with later referenced medical stones originating from either a mammal (typically goat or deer) or a reptile (usually snake or toad). Although Placitus never mentions a stone by this name again in subsequent works, Pliny describes a healing stone called *aetites* when discussing the eagle. It is crucial to note that, while the term used for the stone is the same, Pliny only uses it for the stone found in the eagle's nest and does not specify its origin.³⁴

It should be observed that, although regularly discussing snakebite remedies in his work, Placitus never mentions the existence of a stone derived from any animal that might be used to neutralise snake poison. All of this raises the question of whether he is actually talking about bezoars, considering our knowledge regarding the later use of bezoar stones. Another interesting point is that both Pliny and Placitus write about goats, the animal from which the most common variety of bezoar originates and from which the first stones known in literature as bezoars derive. Regardless, neither of them mention stones in relation to these animals.

³⁴ Pliny *Nat. Hist.* 10, 3, 4; 30, 130.

So, the logical question is whether the Roman authors were aware of bezoars derived from goats. We are unable to provide a definite answer to this question due to the lack of sources. It is equally possible that they were aware of it but did not believe it was effective, or that they were unaware of its existence. What is known, however, is that Pliny was aware of snakestones and toadstones, and Placitus mentions deerstones, as well as stones that seem to resemble bezoars of some kind, though their origin is unknown. Although this would show that they were aware of medicinal stones, but it is then unclear why they did not write about specific types. Perhaps they were not considered effective, or they were too difficult to obtain. Perhaps they were so commonplace that they were overlooked because everyone knew how to utilise them. Unfortunately, to the best of our knowledge, we are unable to answer these questions.

In the light of what has been addressed in this paper, we are able to conclude that Placitus' healing stones do not have a poison-removing function, as subsequent bezoars apparently do. Bezoars were not necessarily considered poison-removing stones at the time of the writing of *De medicamentis ex animalibus libri*, around the 4th century AD, because there was no precise definition of bezoars at the time; the first text referring to a bezoar as a poison-removing stone dates back about 400 years later than the afore-mentioned text. However, Placitus' stones bear significant resemblance to bezoars in terms of origin and use, therefore, similarly to other stones used for a variety of maladies until the nineteenth century, they may be classified as bezoars.

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NICCOLÒ PETRONIO

Death and Rebirth of Dionysos in the New Sinai Hexameters

The paper deals with four poetic fragments with Orphic content published in 2021 by Giulia Rossetto. The first two fragments (Ar–Av) depict a hitherto unattested encounter between Aphrodite and Persephone regarding the infant Dionysos; the others (Br–Bv) report the Orphic tale of Dionysos being lured by the Titans but with a variation involving the Giants. Based on the observations of various scholars, the paper draws attention to the similarities between the new fragments and the story of Dionysos Liknites, which frequently involves the death and rebirth of the god. Proposing to reverse the order of the fragments, it is suggested that the Sinai fragments also report this narrative and that the reunion between Dionysos and Aphrodite in Hades represents the god's rebirth. To conclude, the paper addresses the dating proposed for the fragments (4th century BC), arguing that it might challenge previous beliefs about the earliest known account of Dionysos' death and rebirth.

Keywords: Orphism, Dionysos, Adonis, Giants, Titans, dismemberment, Greek fragmentary poetry, Sinai hexameters

Introduction

In 2021, Giulia Rossetto published the *editio princeps* of four poetic fragments, containing about 90 hexameters, which once again stimulate debate regarding Orphic poetry.¹ The hexameters were discovered on

¹ The first mention of these fragments came with a speech held by Giulia Rossetto at an International Conference on palimpsest studies (Vienna 2018); cf. ROSSETTO (2018). For the details about the manuscript, cf. ROSSETTO (2023: 58; 74). The repertoire of Orphic literature and evidence relating to ancient Orphism has continued to expand since the

sheets of a palimpsest codex in the monastery of St. Catherine on Sinai (*Sinaiticus arabicus* NF 66). Even if many verses are difficult to read since the Greek text has been overwritten with Arabic ones, the discovery of these fragments has been exceptional in that it makes it possible to delve into mythological tales previously unknown in Greek literature, constituting a significant element of interest. Furthermore, we find familiar characters and motifs employed in hitherto unexpected and poorly witnessed contexts and ways, once again testifying to the richness of the mythological heritage of Greek religion and Orphic movement.

After the *editio princeps*, some textual enhancements have been provided. Giulia Rossetto herself held a workshop with other prominent scholars, which resulted, in 2022, in the publication of a revised text.² In the same year another excellent edition was published by D'Alessio,³ together with two other contributions by Kayachev⁴ and Edmonds⁵ respectively. Thus, despite the recent discovery of the text, there are valuable ecdothical contributions, which allow for further interpretive work. I will then focus on some exegetical points, trying to expand scholars' remarks proposed so far to a certain extent. In doing so, I will refer to D'Alessio's edition.

second half of the last century, especially following the discovery of the Derveni Papyrus, new gold tablets, and the Olbia bone tablets. The bibliography on these topics is huge: on the Derveni Papyrus cf. BETEGH (2004) and most recently MOST (2022); on the gold tablets the most complete work, also for the bibliography, is still BERNABÉ-JIMÉNEZ (2008), while for a variety of topics and approaches cf. EDMONDS (2011); for the Olbia bone tablets cf. the introduction to OF 463–465 in BERNABÉ (2004). On Orphism in general, also in relation to other philosophical-religious currents cf. BURKERT (1985: 290–304) and BREMMER (2014: 55–80) On how the new discoveries can enhance our knowledge of ancient Orphism cf. TRZCIONKOWSKI (2017).

² ROSSETTO et al. (2022).

³ D'ALESSIO (2022).

⁴ KAYACHEV (2022).

⁵ EDMONDS (2022).

The fragments

On the basis of the narrative told in the verses, it is possible to divide the fragments into two pairs. Indeed, the first two fragments show a hitherto unattested encounter between Aphrodite and Persephone. In the incomplete beginning of the *A-recto* (Ar) fragment, we find Persephone telling Aphrodite about a prophecy that Night allegedly addressed to Zeus in Crete concerning privileges probably intended for Dionysos.⁶ At this point, Persephone goes inside her palace and returns holding the baby Dionysos,⁷ which is placed on the knees of Aphrodite.⁸ From the final verses, we can only infer that there was to be a second speech of Persephone to Aphrodite.⁹

The second part of the scene, the *A-verso* (Av) fragment, consists of a speech by Aphrodite, as is evident from verse 14.¹⁰ She tells about when she had raised Dionysos in Nysa¹¹ and his disappearance,¹² after which the goddess had left on a journey in search of him. Aphrodite, in pain, travels through the earth, sea, and aether until she reaches Hades, where precisely the reunion with Dionysos takes place.¹³ So, out of joy at finding the god again, she caresses him affectionately, holding him

⁶ Ar 8–10: Νυκτὸς τ' ἀμβ[ροσίης· τ]ά ῥά οἱ γέ[α] θεσπεσίη Νύξ / Ζηνὶ κελαϊνεφ[εῖ] Κρήτ]ηι ἐνι π[αιπαλο]έσσηι / ἔχρησ' Ἰδαίοισιν ἐν [οὔρεσι] ±3 δ[ι] ±7[ροις].

⁷ Ar 13–14: ρεύατό τ' εἰς ἄδυτον [±6 κ]ρυφίοιο μελ[ά]θρου, / ἐκ δ' εἶλεν Διόνυσον ἐρίβρομον Εἰραφιώτην, 17 παῖδ' ἐν χερσὶ[ν] ἔ[χ]οντα νέον περικαλλὲς ἀγαλμα.

⁸ Ar 19: καὶ ῥ' ἐπὶ γούνασι θῆκε φιλοῦμ' μειδοῦς Ἀφρο[δίτης].

⁹ Ar 20–21: καὶ μιν φωνήσ[ας] / ἀφρογενὲς Κυθέ[ρεια]; 24 ὥς φάτο Φερσεφόνη.

¹⁰ Av 14: ὥς φάτο Κύπρις ἄνασσα.

¹¹ Av 1–2: ὅν ποτε κισσοφ[ό]ρου Νύκ[ης] ἐνὶ δασκίῳ ἄντρωι / ἔτρεφον, ἀμβ[ροσί]οις δ' ἐπεκόσμεον εἴμα[σι] καλοῖς.

¹² Av 6–7: ὥστε τις εὐ[]φος ὄρνις ἀγα[λλ]όμενος λίπες εὐνή(ν) / πάμπαν ἄϊστος ἄπ[υ]τος εμο[]. [±7] . τεθνεώς.

¹³ Av 11–13: ἔτλην δ' εἰς Αἴδαο δόμους σκοτ[ί]ους καταβῆναι / Ἥελίου προλιποῦσα ἄφαός' λαμπράν τε Σελήνην / οὐράνιον τε πόλον διὰ σὸν πόθον, ἄμβροτε κούρε.

on her lap.¹⁴ The last understandable part of this fragment informs us of Aphrodite's decision to remain in Hades alongside Dionysos, who is called τρίγωνος, πολυώνυμος and Ἡρικεπαῖος.¹⁵

The other two fragments, B-*recto* (Br) and B-*verso* (Bv), bear the episode of the Titans trying to lure Dionysos to kill him; despite that, here the Giants are on stage. In the former, we see them failing an initial attempt to lure Dionysos,¹⁶ after which they perform a strange ritual dance around the god.¹⁷ Then, in fragment Bv, the Giants reveal their intent and openly attack Dionysos;¹⁸ thus, we witness the fight between Akmon, a character who in Nonnus appears as one of the Corybantes,¹⁹ and the mysterious Kyrbas. Here, the text breaks off.

The Locrian *pinakes* and the child in the chest

Scholars have focused on the syncretism between Dionysos and Adonis in the Sinai fragments, mainly drawing on the collection of the *Orphic Hymns*.²⁰ While the myth of Adonis portrays a struggle between Aphrodite and Persephone for the love of the infant,²¹ the Sinai hexameters

¹⁴ Av 15–16: ἀσπαρίως ἀγάπαζε χέρας περὶ γυῖα [β]αλοῦσα / καὶ τρέφεν ἡδ' ἀτίταλλεν ἐν ἀγκαλίδεσσιν ἔχουσα.

¹⁵ Av 17–18: μίμ[ν]ε δ' ἄρ' εἰν Αἰδαο δόμοις ὑπὸ κεύθει γαίης / ±4] .[.]ρωι τρίγόνωι πολυωνύμωι Ἡρικεπαῖωι. τρίγωνος: Hymn. Orph. 30, 2; πολυώνυμος: Hymn. Orph. 42, 2; 45, 2; Ἡρικεπαῖος: Hymn. Orph. 52, 6.

¹⁶ Br 5–8: ὥς δ' οὐ πειθον παῖδα Διὸς καὶ Φερσεφονείης / δώροισι παντοίοις ὁπόσα τρέφει εὐ[ρ]εῖα χθών / οὐδ' ἀπάτη(ι)ς δολίησι παρὰ[.]φασίησι τε μύθων / ἐκ θρόνου ἀνστήναι βασιλῆιου, αὐτίκ' ἄρ' οἱ γέ.

¹⁷ Br 11: κύκλωι δ' ἐστιχώντο.

¹⁸ Bv 7–8: καὶ τότε δὴ τομὸν ἦλ[θεν] ἐὼν πέλεκυν τολυπεύ(ν) / Ἄκμων παιδ[ὶ]ος δ' ἔναντα κατεστάθη.

¹⁹ Nonn. D. 13.143.

²⁰ D'ALESSIO (2022: 33–36); EDMONDS (2022: 532–536).

²¹ E.g. Bion. *Adon. Epitaph*. 54–57: λάμβανε, Περσεφόνα, τὸν ἐμὸν πόσιν· ἐσσι γὰρ αὐτά / πολλὸν ἐμεῦ κρέσσω, τὸ δὲ πᾶν καλὸν ἐς σέ καταρρεῖ. / ἐμμί δ' ἐγὼ πανάποτμος, ἔχω δ' ἀκόρεστον ἀνίαν / καὶ κλαίω τὸν Ἀδωνιν, ὃ μοι θάνε, καὶ σε φοβεῦμαι, with FANTUZZI (1985 *ad loc.*) and REED (1997 *ad loc.*).

depict them in agreement. An iconographical tradition pointed out by D'Alessio,²² in which the two deities also appear to agree is particularly interesting to our purpose.

It is the case of the *pinakes* from Locri Epizephyrii in southern Italy, a group of relief tablets dedicated by devotees in the local shrine of Aphrodite on the wedding occasion. Within the collection, the so-called type with *cista mystica*, which features a chest in which a child is kept, representing the offspring of the couple who made the offering, is remarkable. This type occurs in two subgroups:²³ i) the *cista* rests on a κιβοτός facing a female figure who opens it; ii) the *cista* rests on the knees of a seated goddess who opens it facing a female figure. Regarding the similarities between the second type and the A fragments, it is worth noting that the deity who opens the chest is identified as Persephone, while the goddess to whom the child is presented is Aphrodite. Within the symbolic structure of the *pinakes*, Aphrodite represents the bride, despite the child likely being Adonis.²⁴ It is striking how this iconography resembles the situation of A fragments: some *pinakes* show architectural details that can be compared to the palace of Hades in fr. Ar.,²⁵ additionally, we see Aphrodite placing a crown on the head of the child, just as Dionysos appears crowned in the same fragment.²⁶

Although there are some slight variations between the *pinakes* and the Sinai hexameters, mainly that in the latter Persephone does not show the baby to Aphrodite directly from the chest, but instead goes inside

²² D'ALESSIO (2022: 34).

²³ MARRONI-TORELLI (2016: 74–75).

²⁴ MARRONI-TORELLI (2016: 101). Scholars have long debated about the identification of the child; for example, PRÜCKNER (1968: 32–36) and SIMON (1977: 19) thought that it should be interpreted as Dionysos. Even though this seems improbable since in the *pinakes* Dionysos is often represented as adult and bearded, the discovery of the Sinai fragments can shed new light on this matter.

²⁵ Ar 13: $\epsilon\epsilon\upsilon\alpha\tau\acute{o}\ \tau'\ \epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \alpha\delta\upsilon\tau\omicron\nu\ \left[\pm 6\ \kappa\right]\rho\upsilon\phi\acute{\iota}\omicron\iota\omicron\ \mu\epsilon\lambda[\acute{\alpha}]\theta\rho\omicron\upsilon.$

²⁶ Ar 16 $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\alpha\varsigma\ \tau\epsilon\ \varsigma\tau[\acute{\iota}\lambda\beta]\omicron\nu\tau\alpha\ \kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}\ \acute{\iota}\mu\epsilon\rho\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma\ \varsigma\tau\epsilon\phi\acute{\alpha}\nu\omicron\iota\varsigma\iota\nu.$

the palace and brings him outside to put him on Aphrodite's knees,²⁷ it is plausible to suggest that here the goddess has just retrieved Dionysos outside a chest, according to a well-known Dionysiac motif which we will explore shortly. Indeed, this becomes even more likely if, as D'Alessio suggests, one compares the use of ἐξαίρειω in Ar 14 ἐκ δ' εἶλεν²⁸ Διόνυσον ἐρίβρομον Εἰραφιώτην with Il. 24, 228–229 ἧ καὶ φωριαμῶν ἐπιθήματα κάλ' ἀνέωγεν / ἔνθεν δώδεκα μὲν περικαλλέας ἔξελε πέπλους, where we see Priamus pulling peplums out of a crate.

It is probable then that the narrative of the Sinai hexameters, which implies the little Dionysos closed inside a chest and held by Persephone, was also favoured by the fact that in the traditional story of Adonis, the infant god is put inside a box (λάβρα) by Aphrodite and delivered to Persephone;²⁹ already Càssola suggested that Dionysos and Adonis were united by their connection to the mythological pattern of the child enclosed in a box.³⁰

Dionysos Liknites

What is more striking is that the overall pattern of the A fragments, along with the detail of Dionysos kept inside a chest, is so close to the *Orphic Hymn* 46 to Dionysos Liknites, where the god is said to be the off-

²⁷ As noted by EDMONDS (2022: 533), this scene resembles the mythological figure of the kourotrophic goddess, i.e. a female deity who takes care of a child, mortal or immortal. Cf. also PRICE (1978) and BEAUMONT (2012: 64–67).

²⁸ The reading ἐκ δ' εἶλεν by D'ALESSIO (2022: 22) seems to fit better both the paleographical evidence and the sense of the verse. ROSSETTO et al. (2022: 4) provide ἔκκλησεν (i.e. ἔκκλησεν) and interpret it as *invocavit*, but since a few verses later we find Persephone holding the baby in her hands (Ar 17 παῖδ' ἐν χειρὶ[v] ἔ[χ]ουσα), it is preferable to think about a verb which implies the sense of 'taking out'. For the same reason, KAYACHEV'S (2022: 4) interpretation {ἐ}κλήϊσεν doesn't seem likely.

²⁹ [Apollocl.] *Bibl.* 3.14.4. In a mirror from Praeneste, we have the visual representation of Aphrodite and Persephone with Zeus in front of a chest, which contains the baby Adonis; cf. VAN DER MEER (2016: 74–75).

³⁰ CÀSSOLA (1975: 7).

shoot of the Nymphs and Aphrodite but led to Persephone according to the will of Zeus.³¹ While the figure of Dionysos Liknites does not seem so attested in the literature, his connection with the λίκνον appears in several passages.³² It is now time to briefly examine the stories concerning this divine figure to provide a tentative interpretation of the overall narrative of the Sinai hexameters.

The epithet Liknites, which also occurs in *Orphic Hymn* 52 to Dionysos Trieteric,³³ derives from the stories in which the little god is hidden inside a chest (λίκνον) to be kept safe from the enemies who want to kill him. For example, in the Dionysiac excursus of the fourth book of Oppianus' *Cynegetica*,³⁴ Ino, Autonoe, and Agave hide the baby Dionysos inside a chest to protect him from the rage of Hera and Pentheus.³⁵ In the text, the box is usually referred to as χηλός,³⁶ but in one case, it is defined as λάρναξ,³⁷ and so it is in the paraphrase of the *Cynegetica*³⁸ — which brings us very close to the story of the baby Adonis.

Interestingly enough, in some mythological traditions concerning Dionysos, the chest is linked with the story of his dismemberment at the hands of the Titans, which we glimpse in the B fragments with the variation of the Giants. The Cristian apologist Firmicus Maternus, in his work *De errore profanarum religionum*, reports a euhemeristic version of

³¹ RICCIARDELLI (2000: 413–417).

³² E.g. Dem. *De cor.* 260, where he says that Aeschines, during dionysiac rituals, was called ἑξαρχος καὶ προηγεμένων καὶ κιττοφόρος καὶ λικνοφόρος, on which cf. WANKEL (1976) *ad loc.* and PARKER (1996) 159sq. Cf. also AP. 6, 165, 5–7: ἡδὲ φορηθὲν / πολλαὶ μιτροδέτου λίκνον ὑπερθε κόμης / Εὐάνθη Βάκχω.

³³ *Hymn. Orph.* 52, 3: μηροτρεφής, Λικνίτης, † πυριπόλε καὶ [QUANDT (1955): μυστιπόλων RICCIARDELLI (2000)] τελετάρχα.

³⁴ Opp. C. 4, 230–319.

³⁵ For the connotation of the god as Liknites cf. also ZUMBO (2000: 716sq.).

³⁶ Opp. C. 4, 244: εἰλατίνη χηλῶ διὸν γένος ἐγκατέθεντο; 4, 255 χηλὸν δ' ἀρρήτην; 4, 274 δεδεγμένος ἐκ χηλοῖο.

³⁷ Opp. C. 249: περὶ λάρνακι.

³⁸ PΑΡΑΘΟΜΟΡΟΥΛΟΣ (2003: 221).

the tale, in which Zeus is interpreted as the king of Crete.³⁹ The plot is familiar: Hera, out of jealousy toward Zeus' adulterous loves, orders the Titans to kill the baby Dionysos, who is thus dismembered and eaten after being boiled. Only the heart remains intact, kept by Athena inside a chest and delivered to Zeus; the latter places it inside a chalk statue and erects a temple in honor of Dionysos. This is the aetiology—says Firmicus—of a Cretan cult where, along with other features peculiar to Dionysiac ritual, *praefertur cista in qua cor soror latenter absconderat*.⁴⁰

Even if in the rationalizing story told by Firmicus this detail is omitted, in various versions of the myth the preservation of the heart in the *cista*/λίκνον represents the stage before his resurrection: this is the case, for example, in Proclus' *Hymn to Athena*, where it is said that thanks to the saving action of Athena, the cosmos could see a 'new Dionysos'.⁴¹

In a famous passage of Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*, the characterization of Dionysos as Liknites is expressly linked with his rebirth. Plutarch draws a parallel between the cults of Dionysos and Osiris, highlighting how the Delphians, like the Egyptians in many other places for Osiris, showcase the tomb of Dionysos Liknites, which the Thyads awaken.⁴² Elsewhere, the story of Dionysos' death and burying at Delphi is linked with the Titans.⁴³ If it seems agreeable that the divine figure of Dionysos

³⁹ Firm. Mat. Err. prof. rel. 6, 2–5.

⁴⁰ Firm. Mat. Err. prof. rel. 6, 5 (= OF 332). On the sources of Firmicus' tale cf. HERRERO (2010: 158–159).

⁴¹ Procl. H. 7, 11–15 (= OF 327 II): ἡ (sc. Πάλλας) κραδίην ἐσάωσας ἀμιστύλλευτον ἄνακτος / αἰθέρος ἐν γυάλοισι μεριζομένου ποτὲ Βάκχου / Τιτῆνων ὑπὸ χειρὶ, πόρες δὲ ἐπατρὶ φέρουσα, / ὅφρα νέος βουλήσιν ὑπ' ἀρρήτοις τοκῆος / ἐκ Σεμέλης περὶ κόσμον ἀναβῆσθαι Διόνυσος. Cf. VAN DEN BERG (2001: 288–293).

⁴² Plut. Mor. 365a: καὶ Δελφοὶ τὰ τοῦ Διονύσου λείψανα παρ' αὐτοῖς παρὰ τὸ χρηστήριον ἀποκεῖσθαι νομίζουσι, καὶ θύουσιν οἱ ὅσοι θυσίαν ἀπόρρητον ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος, ὅταν αἱ Θυιάδες ἐγείρωσι τὸν Λικνίτην. The burying of Dionysos at Delphi is reported also by Philochoros (F 7a–7b FGrHist. 328); cf. COSTA (2007: 86–95).

⁴³ Tz. In Lyc. Alex. 208 (= OF 36): ἐτιμᾶτο δὲ καὶ Διόνυσος ἐν Δελφοῖς σὺν Ἀπόλλωνι οὕτως· οἱ Τιτᾶνες τὰ Διονύσου μέλη σπαράξαντες Ἀπόλλωνι ἀδελφῷ ὄντι αὐτοῦ

Liknites is in deep connection with the story of the dismemberment and the consequent rebirth of the god,⁴⁴ it is now the time to argue that the overall narrative of the Sinai hexameters also fits into this pattern.

The rebirth of Dionysos

Through the comparison with the Locrian *pinakes* and the *Orphic Hymns*, we have observed that the representation of Dionysos in the Sinai hexameters closely resembles the figure of the Liknites, which often implies the death and rebirth of the god. Interestingly, this aligns with the B fragments where we witness the Giants attempting to lure Dionysos with toys,⁴⁵ a detail that is also present in the stories of the *σπαραγμός* of the god,⁴⁶ before ultimately attacking him.

Unfortunately, our fragments do not include the account of the dismemberment of the god. However, this was likely the intended outcome of the story given that in fr. Bv Dionysos is referred to as *Oinos*,⁴⁷ according to an allegory also witnessed in the Orphic milieu, where the god is seen as a personification of wine, and his dismemberment is interpreted as the harvest.⁴⁸ Indeed, it would be consistent to think that Dionysos can no longer be found by Aphrodite in his ‘nest’⁴⁹ precisely because he has been lured away by the Giants who presumably also proceed to kill

παρέθεντο ἐμβάλοντες λέβητι, ὁ δὲ παρὰ τῷ τρίποδι ἀπέθετο, ὡς φησι Καλλίμαχος (fr. 643 Pfeiffer) καὶ Εὐφορίων (fr. 14 van Groningen = fr. 13 De Cuenca) λέγων ‘ἐν πυρὶ Βάκχον διόν υπερφίαλοι ἐβάλοντο’.

⁴⁴ JIMÉNEZ (2023: 34sqq.). This connection was already pointed out by NILSSON (1975: 38–45). Cf. also KERÉNYI (1976: 204–237).

⁴⁵ Br 12: μειλίχι(ι)ς καὶ πᾶσιν ἀθύρμασι νηπιάχοις.

⁴⁶ The most famous account is in Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2, 17, 2 (= OF 588), on which cf. LEVANIUK (2007) and TORTORELLI GHIDINI (2016).

⁴⁷ Bv 4: ἦχι περ Οἶνος ἐφῆστο τετιμένος ἐκ Διὸς αἵτης.

⁴⁸ The only poetic witnesses are three verses quoted by Procl. in *Cra.* 108, 13 (= OF 303, 321, 331) and attributed to the *Orphic Rhapsodies*.

⁴⁹ Av 6–7: ὥστε τις εὐ[±5]φος ὄρνις ἀγα[λλ]όμενος λίπες εὐνή(ν) / πάμπαν ἄϊστος ἄπ[υ]τος εμο[.] [±7] . τεθνεώς.

him, and perhaps the *τεθνεώς* of Ar 7 shows that Aphrodite herself had this very suspicion. Moreover, after wandering through the aether, the sea and the earth, the goddess can find the young god only once she arrives in the underworld,⁵⁰ where the god has been stored after his death at the hands of the Giants.

At this point, we can infer that the Sinai hexameters also imply the tale of the rebirth of Dionysos. Indeed, it can be suggested that this part of the narrative consists precisely of the fragment Ar. Firstly, even though it is only a detail, it may be worth noting that in Ar 15 *ἐ(ῖ)κελον ἀϋγῆ[τι]ν μηνὸς περιτελλομένοιο* Dionysos is compared to the rays of a moon at his rising, which seems entirely appropriate to describe a god who has just been reborn.⁵¹ Moreover, the same symbolism of the child seen at Locri Epyzephyrii is likely entailed in the Sinai fragments: just as the child in the *cista mystica* represents the birth of the offerers' offspring, the permanence of the little Dionysos in the underworld under Persephone's care could be interpreted as the rebirth of the god. It could be not by chance that, at this very moment, the poet refers to Dionysos as *τρίγονος*,⁵² probably alluding to the fact that this one would be his final birth, which is marked with the inclusion of some elements that recall hymnodic formulaicity such as the epithets *πολυώνυμος* and *Ἡοικεπαῖος*.⁵³ Therefore, referring to the young Dionysos as *ἄμβροτος κούρος*⁵⁴ seems a fitting description as he is brought back to life after his

⁵⁰ Av 8–9 *ἄνω δὲ πόθωι χ[±4]ως ἀν[±7]ν αἰθέρα θ' ἀγνόν / πόντον τ' ἡδ['] Ἀχ['] ἐροντος [ὑπὸ χ]θονὶ χεῦμα κελαινό(ν).*

⁵¹ The nearest expression seems to be Arat. 739: *εἴρει ὅποστασίη μηνὸς περιτέλλεται ἡώς*; cf. KIDD (1997: 261), according to which the verb *περιτέλλομαι* 'describes the observed movement from east to west above the horizon of stars'.

⁵² It is remarkable that this epithet is referred to Dionysos in the *Orphic Hymns*; cf. MACEDO et al. (2021: 177).

⁵³ Av 18: *±4] .[.ρωι τρίγόνωι πολωνύμωι Ἡοικεπαίωι*. The beginning of the verse has been, quite persuasively, integrated as *παρ κού]ρωι* both by D'ALESSIO (2022: 27) and Lefteratou in ROSSETTO et al. (2022: 6).

⁵⁴ Av 13: *ἄμβροτε κούρε*.

death. Remarkably, the same adjective ἄμβροτος is used in the *Orphic Hymn* 55,⁵⁵ to describe Adonis, who is widely known as a god who dies and is reborn.⁵⁶

Furthermore, due to the uncertainty of the original placement of the folia in the manuscript,⁵⁷ it is possible to consider reversing the order of the fragments: this could reveal that the Oinos threatened by the Giants in B fragments and the little Dionysos cuddled by Aphrodite in the A fragments represent two distinct stages of the same narrative.

Final remarks

To conclude, I would like to briefly consider the question of the dating of the verses to draw attention to possible implications. As already mentioned, the *scriptio inferior* of the palimpsest can be dated between the 5th and the 6th century AD, even though the verses must surely be earlier, as they do not adhere to the metrical norms followed by the Nonnian poets.⁵⁸ However, since the metrical *facies* does not seem compatible with Hellenistic versification, it has been suggested that the date of composition should be placed no later than the 4th century AD.⁵⁹ Although it should be kept in mind that this date is still hypothetical, it is interesting to note that it can fit well with some features of the Sinai hexameters.

In fr. Bv 4 Dionysos is called Oinos, based on the allegory recalled above. In addition to the Orphic verses quoted by Proclus, this interpretation is attested in a famous passage by Diodorus Siculus, who, after saying that Dionysus was dismembered and boiled ὑπὸ τῶν γηγενῶν,

⁵⁵ *Hymn. Orph.* 55, 26 ἄμβροτον ἀγνὸν Ἀδωνιν.

⁵⁶ E.g. Theoc. *Id.* 15, 102–103; 136–137; 144.

⁵⁷ Rossetto (2021: 41).

⁵⁸ Rossetto (2021: 42).

⁵⁹ Magnelli in Rossetto et al. (2022: 1–2).

traces the process back to the grape harvest and the boiling of wine.⁶⁰ In his account, the γηγενεῖς ('earthborns') are obviously the farmers, given their connection to the earth and the paraetymological pun γεωργοί-γγεγενεῖς. Based on the Sinai hexameters, where we see both Oinos and the Giants, it cannot be ruled out that in Diodorus' allegorical tale too, the γηγενεῖς represent these mythical figures rather than the Titans.⁶¹ Indeed, according to Hesiod, the Giants are sons of Earth,⁶² and their link with the earth was an obvious notion in Greek culture.⁶³ Bernabé interprets Diodorus' γηγενῶν as Τιτάνων,⁶⁴ probably both because the same historian, in another passage,⁶⁵ refers Dionysos' dismemberment to the Titans and in Cornutus' treatise this allegory is linked with the Titans too.⁶⁶ However, it is possible that the two passages of Diodorus should not be related: when he speaks of the Titans, he says that Dionysos is the son of Zeus and Persephone and born in Crete, according to the 'standard' Orphic version of the story, while in the allegorical account, the god is said to be the son of Demeter. In other words, Diodorus likely draws on two different sources: of these, the allegorical one could be the same as Cornutus', who may well have interpreted the

⁶⁰ Diod. Sic. 3, 62, 6–8 (= OF 59 III+399 III+58).

⁶¹ On the overlap between the Titans and the Giants cf. VIAN (1952: 169–174) and D'ALESSIO (2015: 208–209). In a Servius' scholium to Verg. G. 1, 166 (= OF 59 V), the killing of Dionysos is attributed to the Giants but without any allegorical interpretation. It is remarkable that the same 'mythological variant' is likely to be found in the prologue of the Orphic Argonautica, if the ἔργ' αἰδήλα / Γιγάντων of vv. 17–18 is to be referred to the killing of Dionysos; cf. VIAN (1987: 5–11). For a later witness of the Giants within this allegorical pattern, cf. *Myth. Vat.* 3, 12, 5 (= OF 311 IV+326 I+333 I+672 II).

⁶² Hes. *Theog.* 183–185.

⁶³ WEST (1978: 220). The adjective γηγενής occurs in reference to the Giants e.g. in Soph. *Trach.* 1058 ὁ γηγενὴς στρατὸς Γιγάντων, while in Eur. *Phoen.* 1131 the adjective is juxtaposed with γίγας. In Eur. *Bacch.* 994–995 Pentheus is defined as Ἐχίονος / γόνον γηγενῆ; for the representation of Pentheus as a 'Giant' cf. DI BENEDETTO (2004: 445–446; 455–456).

⁶⁴ BERNABÉ (2004–2005) (*ad* OF 59 III).

⁶⁵ Diod. Sic. 5, 75, 4 (= OF 283 I).

⁶⁶ Cornutus. *Theol.* 30 (= OF 59 IV).

γηγενεῖς as Titans according to the better-known version of the myth. However, since Diodorus refers to some mythographers who transmitted the story, it is sure that it circulated in the Hellenistic age (or even before),⁶⁷ which goes well with the dating proposed for the Sinai hexameters—whether one accepts the interpretation of the γηγενεῖς as Giants or not.

In summary, until now scholars believed that the oldest certain account of Dionysos' death and rebirth dates back to the second half of the 3rd century BC, based on Philodemus' mention, in his work *De pietate*, of the *Mopsopia* of Euphorion of Chalcis⁶⁸ as a source for this myth.⁶⁹ Although it is essential to keep in mind that this is a hypothetical reconstruction, the recent discovery of the Sinai hexameters may allow us to push this timeline back to at least the 4th century BC; in other words, we may face the earliest (and above all, direct) evidence of the myth of Dionysos' death and rebirth.

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⁶⁷ Diod. Sic. 3, 62, 6: παραδεδωκότων δὲ τῶν μυθογράφων. That this account could be quite ancient is suggested by the hint of a real παράδοσις, i.e. transmission (perhaps in the form of a ἱερὸς λόγος?).

⁶⁸ Fr. 39 Van Groningen; cf. VAN GRONINGEN (1977: 102–104).

⁶⁹ HENRICHS (2011).

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The Wrath of Theodosius as a Stormy Sea

Images of the Sea and Sailing in Claudian (*carm. min.* 30, 134–139)

The focus of the paper is an episode of the Laus Serenae (carm. min. 30, 134–139) in which Claudian pictures the wrath of the emperor Theodosius, which is calmed by his niece Serena. The aim is to demonstrate that the way Claudian depicts Theodosius evokes the image of the stormy sea, whereas Serena represents the only rock capable of withstanding him. This produces a strong image, frequently used in literature, which can seriously impact the audience and communicate the propagandistic message hidden in these verses more powerfully. This proposal is based on some characteristic features of Claudian poetry, such as his descriptions rich in evidentia, the allusions he made exploiting words with wide semantic fields, and especially his penchant for aquatic imagery, exploited with different purposes. Indeed, these aquatic images, whatever their primary role, often achieve the result of making the narrative more vivid.

Keywords: Ambiguitas, Evidentia, Images, Poetry, Propaganda, Sea, Similes, Water

1. Introduction

Although Claudian has been defined as ‘the last great pagan poet’¹, his poetry has been neglected by scholars for years. He has long been considered more an overly rhetorical author, or a historical source, than a

¹ CHRISTIANSEN (2009).

poet to be appreciated for poetic value. His role as a propagandist in the Western imperial court might have played a part in these prejudices.² However, as has been recognized in more recent years, together with the revaluation of late Latin poetry, the poetical value of Claudian's poems and their ideological function are not mutually exclusive.³

Some characteristic features can be identified in Claudian poetic production, which often are balanced between the political and the poetical.

First of all, the poet is well known for creating vivid images, rich in *evidentia*, which often make up isolated pictures, full of colours and minute details,⁴ to the extent that the influence of iconography has often been identified behind his descriptions.

In addition, certain themes, semantic fields, or *iuncturae* are recurrent in Claudian verses. Several reasons might be identified behind these repetitions, from propagandistic intentions, to adherence to established epic or rhetorical *topoi*, to mere preference by the poet. Among the most frequent images, as will be seen, are the aquatic ones.

Finally, Claudian verses are rich in wordplays and allusions, which often contain hidden political messages.⁵ He often plays with terms having wide semantic fields to engage the audience emotionally, to stimulate attention and intelligence by creating subtle allusions. Indeed, one of the strategies the poet employs in his verses to add meaning to the text is that of exploiting ambiguous words or sentences.⁶

² Claudian's role as a propagandist in the Western court (working for emperor Honorius and his regent Stilico) was explicated by CAMERON (1970).

³ See especially WARE (2012). Among the studies on Claudian poetry in terms of style, see GUALANDRI (1969), Fo (1982), GUALANDRI (1989), PRIVITERA (2003), MICOZZI (2013: XV–XXIII). On the revaluation of late Latin poetry see ROBERTS (1989).

⁴ About this aspect of Claudian poetry, see e. g. GUALANDRI (1969: 8–9; 36); GALAND (1987).

⁵ Claudian's allusive plays were constructed to convey precise ideological motives that would be received by the audience listening to the recitation of his panegyrics and by the educated public who would later read them: see GUALANDRI (2013: 115–116).

⁶ For instance, he uses lexical ambiguity, which involves the individual word and aris-

By considering these features of Claudian poetry, this paper intends to analyse an episode of *Laus Serenae* in which they might overlap, producing a strong impact on the audience with both poetical and ideological purposes.

2. The theme of water in Claudian

One of the most common subjects in literature is water, which has always interested poets and authors, for scientific, philosophical, or merely literary purposes.⁷

However, the presence of water in Claudian's verses is so pervasive as to show the author's predilection for the subject, a penchant that reveals more than mere adherence to rhetorical conventions. Indeed, the theme of water, and aquatic imagery in general, is constant in Claudian's poetry, and he exploits it even more frequently than we might expect in an author as cultured as he, having studied in schools of rhetoric, employed established *topoi* to write encomiastic poetry, and who was interested in *progymnasmata* and literary exercises of various kinds.⁸

In Claudian's production, we can find many metaphors and allegories that involve the sea or sailing, many references to rivers (see for example *carm. min.* 28) that appear for different reasons, personified or not; similarly, descriptions of harbours can be found (*carm. min.* 2; 5), or of thermal baths (*carm. min.* 12), or of *aquarium mirabilia* (*carm. min.* 26;

es from homonymy: if a word has two or more meanings it does not allow a univocal reading (on ambiguity, which can arise from homonymy, or from a morphological uncertainty, or from a dubious sentence structure, see LAUSBERG 1998: 96). See FORMISANO (2021) on Claudian's use of ambiguity in the *praefatio* of *Rapt. Pros.* 1.

⁷ Literary images involving water, or ships, are widespread in Greek and Latin literature in general: let us think about personifications (of rivers or of the sea), which are frequent, especially in epic poems, since the *Odyssey*, or descriptions of *loci amoeni*, or ships allegories, or symbols of poetic activity.

⁸ On Claudian biography, see e. g. CAMERON (1970: 1–29).

33–38), or of sources, shown as natural phenomena (*carm. min.* 26), or as mythological symbols of poetic initiation (*carm. min.* 30, 8). Finally, water is often used to create contrasts, for instance in figures of speech such as antitheses or oxymora, or to produce aquatic periphrases or lists of aquatic terms. In this extensive material, a categorization might be proposed, based on the function the water image assumes in every specific context, although some of these uses may sometimes overlap in the same passage or may not be so easily identifiable.

First, the political and ideological function is very common, as we can expect from an official court poet who was the propagandist of Emperor Honorius, and especially of his regent Stilico. The main example of aquatic images exploited with this function in Claudian poetry is that of the ship-state allegory, a literary *topos* since archaic lyricism.⁹ The ship in the stormy sea in Claudian often symbolizes the Empire in difficulty, while the only sailor capable of leading it to safety is compared to Stilico: see *Stil.* 1, 281–290; *IV Cons.* 419–427; *Ruf.* 1, 70–73; *Ruf.* 1, 275–277; *Gild.* 215–222; *Get.* 1–14. This allegory sometimes occupies only a few verses, while others are much longer, as in the case of *Laus Serenae*, vv. 30, 202–206, in which the pilot able to steer the ship when the storm rages is compared to Stilico's ability to hold the Empire together and save it from ruin. Besides, there is also an example where the motif is exploited for Manlius Theodorus; see *Theod.* 42–46: Manlius at the head of the Empire is compared to a sailor who takes control of everything thanks to his experience.

Moreover, the metapoetic function is also extremely frequent. Claudian usually inserts programmatic or metapoetic allusions in the *praefationes* to his poems. The image of sailing occurs as a symbol of literature

⁹ Alc. fr. 208a Voigt; on this *topos* see especially the commentary of NISBET–HUBBARD (1970: 179–182) on Hor. 1, 14. For Claudian's use of this long-standing image, see e. g. CHRISTIANSEN (1969: 111–112); TARIGO (2012).

in the famous *praefatio* to the first book of *De raptu Proserpinae*, in which the poet alludes to his own poetry by describing ships and sailing.¹⁰ Also, the *topos* of the source as a symbol of poetic initiation can be appreciated in *carm. min.* 30, 8.

The paradoxographical interest appears especially in some short poems that describe *aquarum mirabilia* and must be connected to the general interest in *mirabilia* shown by cultured people between the 4th and 5th centuries AD. Claudian appears to be interested in every property of the water,¹¹ as is proven by the six short poems he dedicated to the rock crystal to describe its dual nature, liquid and solid.¹² In this way, he made his public curious, and tested his own skills in using different synonyms and expressions for designating water. Among these poems, see especially *carm. min.* 34, where the names *lymphā*, *aqua*, *unda*, and *glacies* recur.¹³

The fourth function might be called the stylistic function, because it is related to antithetical figures of speech (numerous antitheses involve, for example, water and fire), or to the variations Claudian plays on the same aquatic subject in the same passage, showing his indulgence in varying the way he refers to water, through very elaborate periphrases or synonyms.¹⁴ See, for example, the passage quoted above from

¹⁰ *Rapt. Pros.* 1 *praef.* 1–12 : *inventa primus secuit qui naue profundum / et rudibus remis sollicitavit aquas, / qui dubiis ausus committere flatibus alnum / quas natura negat praebuit arte vias, / tranquillis primum trepidus se credidit undis / litora securo tramite summa legens; / mox longos temptare sinus et linquere terras / et leni coepit pandere vela Noto; / ast ubi paulatim praeceps audacia crevit / cordaque languentem dedidicere metum, / iam vagus inrumpit pelago caelumque secutus / Aegaeas hiemes Ioniumque domat.* On this preface see MINISALE 1975–1976.

¹¹ See e. g. *carm. min.* 26, *Aponus*.

¹² *Carm. min.* 33–38.

¹³ *Lymphae, quae tegitis cognato carcere lymphas, / Et, quae nunc estis quaeque fuistis aquae, / quod vos ingenium iunxit? Qua frigoris arte / Torpuit et maduit prodigiosa silex? / Quis tepor inclusus securas vindicat undas? / Interior glacies quo liquefacta Noto? / Gemma quibus claustris arcano mobilis aestu / Vel concreta fuit vel resoluta gelu?*

¹⁴ Fuoco (2008: 48).

carm. min. 30, 8, in which almost every term is aquatic, and the complex periphrasis simply refers to source Aganippe: *fons Aganippea Permessius educat unda*.

The last function is perhaps the most common one as it falls within the poet's interest in vivid descriptions and narratives, rich in *evidentia*. Indeed, the text may be reinforced by water images or metaphors involving the stormy sea, which gives it greater pathos. Many of these aquatic images, whatever their primary role, achieve the result of making the narrative more vivid, and some of them seem only to have this function. It happens, for instance, in the first book of *In Rufinum*, in which the disagreement of the assembly is compared to waves,¹⁵ or the escape of Rufinus is compared to a river facing an obstacle.¹⁶ Elsewhere, Eutropius' army is compared to an unmanned ship,¹⁷ or Stilico, who is finally in peace after being in the midst of dangers, is compared to a sailor having arrived in port after the storm;¹⁸ in the *Laus Serenae*, a passage depicts the arriving of Serena and her sister at the court of their uncle Theodosius, comparing it to the sea procession that welcomes Diana and Minerva when visiting uncle Neptune.¹⁹

From these few examples (but there would be more), it is possible to deduce the general interest of Claudian for aquatic imagery. Some scholars, noticing the frequent references to sea travel and sailing in Claudian poems, argued that the poet must have travelled extensively by sea. However, every image could be traced back to a well-known literary *topos*, and many of these themes occur elsewhere in Greek or Latin literature. What is remarkable, apart from the different variations with which the poet presents them, is that aquatic imagery recurs obsessively

¹⁵ *Ruf.* 1, 70–73

¹⁶ *Ruf.* 1, 269–272. On this image, see next paragraphs.

¹⁷ *Eutr.* 2, 423–421.

¹⁸ *Get.* 209–210.

¹⁹ *Carm. min.* 30, 122–131.

in his poems, which shows he had a particular fondness for this natural element.²⁰

3. The image of stormy sea

One of the topical aquatic images that Claudian exploited several times in his poetry is that of the stormy sea.

The comparison with waters – of sea or of rivers – swollen by rain or storms has its origin in Homer and it is frequent in epic poetry, often referring to a force that finds no obstacle and drags with it whatever it encounters in its passage.²¹ In Homer, see, for example, *Il.* 11, 492–497.

Ὡς δ' ὅποτε πλήθων ποταμὸς πεδῖον δὲ κάτεισι
 χειμάρρους κατ' ὄρεσφιν ὀπαζόμενος Διὸς ὄμβρῳ,
 πολλὰς δὲ δρυὺς ἀζαλέας, πολλὰς δέ τε πεύκας
 ἐσφέρεται, πολλὸν δέ τ' ἀφυσγετὸν εἰς ἄλα βάλλει,
 ὥς ἔφεπε κλονέων πεδῖον τότε φαίδιμος Αἴας,
 δαΐζων ἵππους τε καὶ ἀνέρας.²²

In Latin literature, the simile had greater fortune and can be found, for instance, in *Lucr.* 1, 281–289; *Verg. Aen.* 2, 304–307; 7, 586–590 e 10, 693–696; *Lucan.* 6, 265–266; *Stat. Theb.* 3, 671–676. Some of these passages show the fortunate motif of the rock that remains immobile and withstands the waves of the sea crashing violently on her: see, for example, *Verg. Aen.* 7, 586–590.

²⁰ On these topics see e. g. FUOCO (2008: 38–50); LUCERI (2020: 41–46).

²¹ CHARLET (2000: 202); MEUNIER (2019: 122).

²² 'And as when a river in flood cometh down upon a plain, a winter torrent from the mountains, driven on by the rain of Zeus, and many a dry oak and many a pine it beareth in its course, and much drift it casteth into the sea; even so glorious Aias charged tumultuously over the plain on that day, slaying horses and men' (translated by A. T. MURRAY).

Ille velut pelago rupes immota resistit,
 ut pelagi rupes magno veniente fragore,
 quae sese multis circum latrantibus undis
 mole tenet; scopuli nequiquam et spumea circum
 saxa fremunt laterique illisa refunditur alga.²³

Claudian often employs Homeric similes²⁴ and explicitly recovers the idea of the resisting rock in a simile, comparing Rufinus to the rough waters of a stream that break against a rock, probably representing Stilico.²⁵

Haud secus hiberno tumidus cum vertice torrens
 saxa rotat volvitque nemus pontesque revellit,
 frangitur obiectu scopuli quaerensque meatum
 spumat et illisa montem circumsonat unda.²⁶

Similarly common in the poetic tradition is the image of rushing water to represent destructive wrath, or the assimilation of violent feeling subsiding to the stormy sea calming.²⁷ See, for example, Sil. 7, 253–259:

his dictis fractus furor et rabida arma quierunt,
 ut, cum turbatis placidum caput extulit undis

²³ ‘He’s like a crag as it stands unmoved against battering high seas, he’s like a crag in the high seas, as breakers crash down upon it, self-maintained by its own sheer mass while, relentlessly, rollers bark all around, and around it the rocks and the reefs rumble endless protests. The kelp that is washed up its flanks slips away in the backwash’ (translated by F. AHL).

²⁴ The topic is studied by MEUNIER (2019: 93–129).

²⁵ MEUNIER (2019: 122).

²⁶ Claud. *Ruf.* 1, 271–274. The text quoted is that of HALL (1985). ‘Likewise a torrent swollen with snowmelt whirls boulders, overturns the forest, and tears down bridges. Boulders block it and break its impetus, until it foams, seeking its way forward, and its wave resounds as it strikes the mountain’; translated by BERNSTEIN (2023).

²⁷ MEUNIER (2019: 126).

Neptunus totumque videt [...]

tum sensim infusa tranquilla per aequora pace

languentes tacito lucent in litore fluctus.²⁸

On the other hand, for the opposite idea, see Stat. *silv.* 2, 2, 28–29: *nullo-que tumultu / stagna modesta iacent dominique imitantia mores.*

On both sides, these examples show how pervasive these images were in Latin literature. In the panegyric for the sixth consulship of Honorius, Claudian himself proposed a similar idea, suggesting that water can display human moods and emotions, such as anger or calm.²⁹

...cumque omnibus una

sit natura vadis, similes ut corporis undas

ostendant, haec sola novam iactantia sortem

humanos properant imitari flumina mores.³⁰

4. Proposal: an interpretation of *Laus Serenae*, 134–139

Before applying these premises to the episode to be analysed, it is necessary to introduce Claudian's main intentions in composing the *Laus Serenae*.

Serena was the niece of Emperor Theodosius, who adopted her after the death of his brother Honorius. Together with her husband Stilicho, she reached an enormous power in the Western part of the Empire,

²⁸ 'His words tamed their frenzy and calmed their angry weapons. So, when Neptune, the ruler of the sea, raises his serene brow above the stormy waves, and sees the whole ocean [...] then peace and quiet spread gradually over the deep, and gentle waves reflect the light along the silent shore' (translated by J. D. DUFF).

²⁹ NEWBOLD (2001: 169).

³⁰ Claud. *VI Cons.* 511–514. 'While it is the common nature of water to mirror the exact image of the body, it alone boasts the strange power that it mimics not human forms but human characters'; translated by PLATNAUER (1922).

which increased even more after the death of Theodosius himself. Being their official propagandist, Claudian was interested in communicating their political ideology. In particular, in order to justify the power that they had reached, the poet felt the necessity to emphasize the kinship between Serena and the Imperial family.³¹ Indeed, it was only by reminding the audience that Serena was a princess, beloved by her adoptive father Theodosius, that Stilico could find the justification for his power.

In the *Laus Serenae* (*carm. min.* 30), the unfinished panegyric that the poet dedicated to her in around 404 AD,³² a positive image of Serena is painted from various perspectives. Among the numerous themes that the poet proposed in the panegyric, there is one that recurs several times throughout the poem. It is the theme of the sincere affection that bound Theodosius to Serena (presented as his daughter, as she appears elsewhere in Claudian poetry)³³. The theme recurs especially in vv. 97–114, 134–139 and 159–161, and it is of essential importance for the propaganda project of Serena and Stilico. For this reason, the motif is always proposed by Claudian through expedients that allow him to create a strong impact on the audience and a consequent greater assimilation of this fundamental idea.³⁴

In its second occurrence in the panegyric, the theme is presented through an everyday scene of the young *laudanda*, who, in her uncle's Court, is shown to be the only one able to temper the wrath of Theodosius, every time he returns home irate; see *carm. min.* 30, 134–139.

³¹ The importance and frequency of themes involving kinship in Claudian's diffusion of Stilico's ideology is studied by GUALANDRI (2010).

³² On this poem see CONSOLINO (1986) and CHARLET (2018:159–174).

³³ See e. g. *Stil.* 1, 80–82: *comitata parentibus exit / purpureis virgo. stabat pater inde tropaeis / inclitus*.

³⁴ See also the vivid scenes of Serena who, still a child, complains that her uncle Theodosius wants to take her home with him whenever he visits his brother (vv. 97–114).

Et quotiens, rerum moles ut publica cogit,
 tristior aut ira tumidus flagrante redibat,
 cum patrem nati fugerent atque ipsa timeret
 commotum Flaccilla virum, tu sola frementem
 frangere, tu blando poteras sermone mederi!
 adloquiis haerere tuis, secreta fideli...³⁵

Often the burden of public affairs constrained Theodosius, and he came home saddened or swollen with burning anger. Then his son would run from their father, or Flaccilla would fear her disturbed husband. But you alone could blunt his rage, and your gentle speech could soothe him. He clung to your conversation, loyally...secrets...³⁶

The hidden propagandistic message is that Serena is regarded by the emperor as a daughter, and more. Since the emperor trusted her, even more than his own children and wife, she was worthy of being regarded as a true *Augusta*, even though she was not. Claudian achieved his purpose of stressing this theme in different ways, for example by presenting the whole episode in an epical way. The motif of *ira* itself recalls epic sceneries,³⁷ and the adjective *solus* attributed to Serena, to contrast her with Theodosius' sons and wife and enshrine her superiority, constitutes a variation (in the feminine) of the *unus / omnes* dichotomy, still

³⁵ There is a textual problem in the final verse, see the apparatus of HALL (1985): some editors suggested a lacuna, others an emendation, such as *fateri* instead of *fideli*.

³⁶ Translated by BERNSTEIN (2023).

³⁷ The *ira* is a constant motif in epic and often is its driving force (see the wrath of Achilles in Hom. *Il.*; of Poseidon in Hom. *Od.*; of Juno in Verg. *Aen.*), see e. g. LAURENTI (1987) and STOCKS (2018) about Barca's *ira* in Silius' *Punica*. Claudian exploits the motif in *De raptu Proserpinae*, his most properly epic poem, in which Pluto's wrath begins the narrative (*rapt. Pros.* 1, 32–34), and in *Ruf.* 1, 44, in which the same role is played by the wrath of the Furies. Apart from these instances, however, wrath is, in Claudian's work, often employed as a literary reminiscence, to raise the tone of the scene and without an actual narrative role: see MEUNIER (2019: 254–261).

a typical epic motif.³⁸ In this epic setting, the mention of Flaccilla and the legitimate sons of the emperor is even more significant. Indeed, the former was the beloved wife of Theodosius, commonly seen as his confidante and power sharer.³⁹ Depicting her while running away in front of the husband emphasises the essential role of Serena, the only one who can calm him. Similarly, the presence of the sons of Theodosius, who had the same escape reaction, focuses the attention on the fact that Serena should also be considered as a true daughter of the emperor. These elements show the intention of the poet in conveying his political message in an incisive way, but among these clear strategies, another one might be detected in these verses.

Indeed, the lexemes that transmit the idea of wrath also belong to the semantic field of stormy waters, suggesting the possibility of interpreting the entire passage as an image that would represent Theodosius as the sea, made stormy by public concerns, and Serena as the only safe ship or rock capable of breaking against its waves, which would then be calmed after her passage. This would produce a strong image, well established in literary tradition, that could impact the audience and communicate the propagandistic message more powerfully.

As can be seen, in a few verses there is a constellation of terms – *tristior*, *ira*, *tumidus*, *commotum*, *fremmentem*, *frangere*, *haerere* – that belong both to the semantic sphere of human passions, especially human wrath, and to that of stormy water. Indeed, *tristis* can be used not just for human passion, as here, but also in reference to natural forces, to express the idea of something gloomy and savage, as the stormy sea or water in general.⁴⁰ Lucretius had employed the adjective for the waves

³⁸ On this opposition, which is typical of epic, see e. g. HARDIE (1993: 3–10); it was among the most exploited in Claudian, who generally employed it to glorify Stilico.

³⁹ On the influence over her husband that was usually attributed to Flaccilla see Greg. *OrFl.* 479, 488.

⁴⁰ OLD (1968: 1977, 7): '(of natural forces, etc.) Harsh, grim, savage'. Examples of this

of the sea to indicate, in a metaphorical sense, the passions of those upset by worries, as Theodosius is in our passage: *et genus humanum frustra plerumque probavit / volvere curarum tristis in pectore fluctus*, Lucr. 6, 33–34. Also in Claudian's verses, *tristis* appears in association with natural elements (see, for example, *carm. min.* 28, 25: *cum tristis hiemps alias produxerit undas*). The term *ira*, too, can convey not only the image of an angry man, but also that of the stormy sea:⁴¹ Claudian himself attaches the term *ira* to the sea in *Stil.* 1, 285: *pelagi caelique obnitiur irae*. The adjective *tumidus* literally means swollen, thus it can signify 'inflamed with fury or passion', but it is also frequently used to refer to a 'body of water, increased in height or swollen',⁴² such as a stormy watercourse; again, also Claudian uses it in describing Rufinus as a *tumidus...torrens* to obtain an icastic image and convey ideas about his personality.⁴³ The verb *commoveo* can refer to human passions as well as to a liquid, and particularly to the sea, which can be stirred or agitated.⁴⁴ The verb *fremo*, 'to utter a deep dull continuous sound, to rumble...',⁴⁵ is very often used in connection with natural elements and is the Latin equivalent of the Greek βρέμω, 'to roar', similarly used in expressions related to water;⁴⁶ Claudian frequently exploits *fremo* in connection with natural elements (see, for example, *Stil.* 1, 281–282: *tales utrimque procellae / cum fremere-*

use of the adjective can be found in Ov. *epist.* 18, 143: *per freta tristia*; Val. Fl. 1, 631: *tristius an miseris superest mare*; Mart. 9, 40, 6: *dispersa rate tristibus procellis*.

⁴¹ OLD (1968: 965, 3): '(of natural forces, etc.) Violence, rage'. See e. g. Ov. *met.* 14, 471: *iram caelique marisque*; Mart. 7, 19, 4: *Scythici tristior ira freti*.

⁴² OLD (1968: 1987, 3): '(of bodies of water) Increased in height, swollen (esp. after rain or storms)'; see e. g. Verg. *Aen.* 1, 142: *tumida aequora*; Hor. *carm.* 3, 3, 48: *tumidus... Nilus*; Stat. *Theb.* 4, 387: *tumidum Gangen*.

⁴³ *Ruf.* 1, 269.

⁴⁴ OLD (1968: 368, 2): 'to stir up, agitate (a liquid, esp. the sea)'; see e. g. Var. *lin.* 7, 23: *aequor mare appellatum, quod aequatum cum commotum vento non est*; Lucr. 2, 766: *magnum commoverunt aequora venti*.

⁴⁵ OLD (1968: 732, 1); see e. g. Enn. *Ann.* 497: *fremeat imber Neptuni*; Stat. *Theb.* 4, 817: *fremunt undae*.

⁴⁶ Cf. e. g. Hom. *Il.* 4, 425: [κῦμα] ὀγγνύμενον μέγала βρέμει; Soph. *Ant.* 592.

ent; *carm. min.* 30, 208: *fremuit.../ tempestas*). The verb *frango* normally means ‘breaking against a barrier’ and it is often used to refer to the ship against the waves or to the sea against a rock;⁴⁷ in Claudian, see, for example, *Ruf.* 1, 270–271: *torrens...frangitur*. In the description of Theodosius offered in *Laus Serenae*, this primary meaning is overshadowed by the figurative one of ‘taming’, ‘calming’. Finally, also the verb *haereo* could refer to the calming of water: in Claudian, see *Stil.* 1, 186: *haesit et Alpheus*; *IV Cons.* 348: *fluvios...haerentes glacie*; *carm. min.* 26, 51: *haerent stagna lacu*.

What Claudian might do here is to use a procedure opposite to the one he employed in the passage of *In Rufinus* quoted above. In that passage, the image of the raging river breaking against the rock was intended to evoke the moral sphere of Rufinus, in addition to the rock evoking Stilico. The same role is played here by Serena, allusively recalling the rock capable of opposing the wrath of ‘swollen’ forces. Moreover, in the passage of the *In Rufinum*, which was a clear simile with stormy water, Claudian places the same lexical items as our episode: *tumidus [...]* *frangitur*.

The constellation of ambiguous terms, together with the background of epic tradition and of Claudian’s own poetry related to stormy water comparisons, might suggest here the allusion to the sea, which, moreover, would be placed in an epic-inspired context. Although the problem of intentionality is always relevant while speaking about allusions and ambiguity, the poet was probably aware of the aquatic image he evoked, and he created it with the precise intention of describing a vivid scene in order to communicate his message in a more emphatic way⁴⁸.

⁴⁷ OLD (1968: 730, 1c–d): ‘*navem frangere* (and sim.), to wreck a ship (usu. pass.) ... to break (waves)’; see e. g. Verg. *Aen.* 1, 161: *insula portum efficit obiectu laterum, quibus omnis ab alto frangitur...unda*.

⁴⁸ In addition to the examples mentioned, one can also consider the semantic range of the name Serena, which might suggest this interpretation: Serena is the only one

5. Conclusions

Many elements suggest that in the episode narrated in *Laus Serenae*, 134–139, Claudian is depicting the wrath of Theodosius as if he were the stormy sea, and Serena as the only rock capable of opposing him. The image finds a strong background in poetic tradition (especially epic), where similes involving stormy waters were widespread, and human passions were very often compared to the sea, whether calm or tempestuous. Claudian knew this tradition and this kind of Homeric comparison, and he had exploited it elsewhere. In addition, the poet had a general interest for aquatic imagery that drove him to choose this natural element on many occasions and with different purposes. Significant is his own statement that water can display human moods and emotions.

Moreover, Claudian's interest in creating vivid images is well known, especially if he had something important to communicate; the image of the stormy sea perfectly fitted this purpose.

Finally, his frequent use of lexical *ambiguitas* and his ability in exploiting words which offer a wide semantic field allow him to exploit, in this passage, both the semantic field of sea and sailing, and that of human wrath.

Claudian might have done it with a mere pathetic purpose, but considering the context in which the *Laus Serenae* was written, it appears that the ideological purpose is also present. Indeed, Claudian aims at communicating more powerfully the strong relationship between Serena and the emperor, in order to legitimize her power and the power of her husband. In the *Laus Serenae*, the poet always shows similar care in conveying the same concept with the greatest possible *evidentia*.

capable of making Theodosius (or the sea) *serenus* (I thank the anonymous reviewer for the suggestion).

To summarise, the necessity to convey this ideological message – essential in the Serena and Stilico political project – is reinforced by Claudian's penchant for aquatic imagery, for vivid narratives, and for allusions. In this episode, his role as propagandist and his value as a poet coexist in a perfect balance.

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Remarks on the Role of Women in Byzantium through the Epigrams on the Cross by Nicholas Kallikles

Scholarly poetry and epigrams in particular, have been a literary means of expression for the scholars in Byzantium. On the one hand, they helped express ideas and attitudes towards life and on the other hand, conveyed their religious feelings and deep religious beliefs. A plethora of engraved Byzantine epigrams were used on exceptional works of Byzantine micro-art, such as crosses and staurothékes, so as to emphasize the religiosity of the person who ordered the making of such a complicated and grand piece. Among those people were noble women and specifically, the wives of Byzantine emperors held an exceptional position. Some cases include Irene Doukaina and her second daughter Maria Komnene during the 11th-12th century, who assigned the composition of such epigrams to their contemporary scholar of the royal court Nicholas Kallikles. These epigrams are going to be examined in this article emphasizing the most important information they provide, including the motivational factors for these orders.

Keywords: Byzantine epigram, cross, crucifixion, *staurothékes*, noble women, 11th-12th century, Nicholas Kallikles

Prologue

Ancient Athens, the capital city of Attica, was under the protection of the goddess Athena, hence the name of the city. A special myth is associated to this city-naming. One day, a dispute arose between two gods: a woman—Athena—and a man—Poseidon. More precisely, during the

reign of Cecrops, king of the city later called Athens, two wondrous things happened: an olive tree sprouted on the dry earth one day and at the same time, a spring of water gushed forth a little further away. The king then turned to the Oracle of Delphi to ask what it all meant and what he should do. The oracle replied that the olive tree represented Athena and the water represented Poseidon and that the inhabitants themselves had to decide which of the two gods they would choose as their patron. Cecrops then called the people to an assembly, in which the women also took part, because at that time they were still involved in the decision-making process. The men voted for Poseidon, the women for Athena. But because there was one woman more in the assembly, Athena won, which angered Poseidon so much that he covered the land of the Athenians with sea water. In order to appease him, the latter were forced to impose three penalties on their women: they took away their right to vote, the right to name their children after their own names (which from then on were called by their maiden name) and, finally, they took away their right to call themselves Athenian, as had been done up to that time in honor of the goddess Athena. What is the deeper meaning of the myth? Undoubtedly, this myth shows that ancient Athens, during an early phase of its history, before it became a patriarchal society that excluded women from any public space, went through a period of gynecocracy (or political supremacy of women).¹

Although the above incident belongs to the realm of myth, one cannot ignore the question it raises about the place and role of women in human societies throughout the centuries. Can we, then, speak of a continuous degradation of the position of women in the course of human

¹ It is noted that women in ancient Greece played an important role in the religious life of a community as priestesses. We recall the three-day autumn festival of Thesmophoria, a festival that remained untainted by the patriarchal stratification of the Olympian pantheon, in the absence of the male population, and which reaffirmed the fertility of the earth and female fertility in the sowing season. See HARRISON (1996: 167–179); MOSSE (2002).

societies? Is there historically a pivotal moment when we can claim that a change is foreseen? And if so, when is this moment and what is the event that triggers it? Are changes, whatever they are, coming rapidly or are there difficulties in their occurrence? Also, can we talk about changes of universal significance, i.e. applying the same to all women regardless of age and especially economic and social status? These are some of the questions that this article attempts to answer, focusing historically on society in the Byzantine period, after a brief historical overview of the subject has been attempted. The sources that will help us to outline the status of Byzantine women come from the field of Byzantine poetry, and in particular from the Byzantine epigrams of a renowned scholar and physician of the court of Komnenoi, Nicholas Kallikles.²

Introduction

It is without a doubt that the role of women in society is inextricably linked with family as a social institution. In Roman times, marriage was a social relation between a man and a woman validated by law so that the couple could live together and have children according to standard moral codes.³ The husband held authority over the members of the Roman family thus determining their fate and life.⁴ Still, it is worth noting that women of that era enjoyed freedom in matters regarding religion

² It is worth noting that, in general, there are few written testimonies of the simple and everyday life of women in Byzantium, which generally concern members of the middle and upper social classes. Our knowledge of the life of women belonging to lower classes is more limited, as it comes mainly from indirect information, in which, at the same time, it is often difficult to distinguish between elements that correspond to reality and those that could be interpreted as literary sources. Even more striking is the lack of evidence concerning women's domestic tasks (e.g. spinning, preparing food, kneading bread, cleaning and decorating the house), which were apparently taken for granted, with the result that no Byzantine author refers to them in detail. See Μαντάς (2012: 55).

³ KAZDAN (1989:196); JONAITIS – KOSAITĖ-ČYPIENĖ (2009: 295–316).

⁴ SALLER (1986).

given that women from all social classes (even slaves or prostitutes) could participate in religious events and affairs.⁵ Towards the end of the roman period, the power of women had started to grow in the familial environment at first and then in society. As a matter of fact, women coming from rich families could pursue an education and accompany their husbands in social events.

As we move forward, Christianity made its debut and started influencing the established social face of marriage giving it new features. This began to formulate the new religious aspect of marriage thus improving the position of women in society.⁶ These changes can be seen in texts by the Great Fathers and in law documents of the Byzantine period which validate the position of women and allow them certain rights.⁷

The role of women in the Old and New Testament

In the book of Genesis, the woman was made by God by taking a piece from Adam⁸ and, from that moment on, all men would leave their father and mother in order to match with a woman resulting in a marriage.⁹ It

⁵ FRIER – MCGINN – LIDOV (2004: 31–32).

⁶ Κουκουλές (1955c: 163–218); Κουκουλές (1981); ΛΑΙΟΥ (1981); Βακαλούδη (1998); Λάμπρος (1923); Μέντζου (1982); Νικολάου (1986); HUTTER (1984: 163–170). It should also be noted that women could practice medicine in Byzantium mostly in their capacity as a midwife or as a doctor for diseases of the female body. See Μπουρδάρα (1998); KISLINGER (1955); Κουκουλές (1955b: 14); BULLOUGH (1973). Women doctors who tended to the human body also had the arduous task of abortions, which were morally deplorable. For abortions in the Byzantine world and the way this issue was dealt with by the State and the Church see CUPANE – KISLINGER (1985); Τρωιάνος (1987).

⁷ See e.g. Κιουσοπούλου – Μπενβενίστε (1991).

⁸ Gen. 2, 21–22: καὶ ἐπέβαλεν ὁ Θεὸς ἔκστασιν ἐπὶ τὸν Ἀδὰμ, καὶ ὑπνώσε· καὶ ἔλαβε μίαν τῶν πλευρῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεπλήρωσε σάρκα ἀντ’ αὐτῆς. / καὶ ὠκοδόμησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὴν πλευράν, ἣν ἔλαβεν ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ, εἰς γυναῖκα καὶ ἤγαγεν αὐτὴν πρὸς τὸν Ἀδὰμ (= And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon man, and he slept, and He took one of his sides, and He closed the flesh in its place. And the Lord God built the side that He had taken from man into a woman, and He brought her to man).

⁹ Gen. 2, 24: ἔνεκεν τούτου καταλείψει ἄνθρωπος τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα

should be noted that the woman is characterized as a helper and not as a slave to men,¹⁰ and it is a fact that after the original sin (that is, after the disobedience of Adam and Eve to God's command not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil),¹¹ the woman took on the role of a helper with a more soteriological concept.¹² Women were now helpers, supporters and comrades to men in their tough course to uniting with God.¹³ The same was also true for men who ought to be helpers of women towards their salvation.¹⁴

However, in the Old Testament we do not see any indication of the God-given equivalency of men and women,¹⁵ since women were mostly described as unholy and second-grade humans.¹⁶ Certainly, in the patriarchal society of the Old Testament¹⁷ we see a lot of women with powerful positions in the Israeli society, namely Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Deborah, Ruth, Esther, and many others, reminding us of what we later read in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians that οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἑλλήν, οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ· πάντες γὰρ

καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν (= Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh).

¹⁰ Gen. 2, 20: τῷ δὲ Ἀδὰμ οὐχ εὗρέθη βοηθὸς ὅμοιος αὐτῷ (= but for man, he did not find a helpmate opposite him).

¹¹ Gen. 2, 16-17: Καὶ ἐνετείλατο Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς τῷ Ἀδὰμ λέγων· ἀπὸ παντὸς ξύλου τοῦ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ βρώσει φαγῇ, / ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ ξύλου τοῦ γινώσκειν καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν, οὐ φάγεσθε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ· ἢ δ' ἂν ἡμέρα φάγητε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, θανάτῳ ἀποθανεῖσθε (= And the Lord God commanded man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat. But of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it, for on the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die").

¹² Πατρῶνος (1992: 27); Τρεμπέλας (1981: 324).

¹³ John Chrysostom, *Περὶ τοῦ τὰς κανονικὰς μὴ συνοικεῖν ἀνδράσι*, PG 47, 514: Κατὰ πάντα [ἢ γυναῖκα] τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ [τῷ Ἀδάμ] ὅμοιον, δυνάμενον, ἐν τοῖς καιροῖς αὐτῷ καὶ τοῖς ἀναγκαίοις τὴν ζωὴν τὰ τῆς βοηθείας εἰσφέρει.

¹⁴ 1 Cor. 7, 14: ἡγίασται γὰρ ὁ ἀνὴρ ὁ ἄπιστος ἐν τῇ γυναικί, καὶ ἡγίασται ἡ γυνὴ ἡ ἄπιστος ἐν τῷ ἀνδρί.

¹⁵ Num. 27, 1-11; Ex. 20, 17.

¹⁶ Deut. 21, 10-17; Lev. 11, 1-5.

¹⁷ GOODMAN – GOODMAN (1975: 22-37); BORNEMAN (1988: 70-74; 160-168).

ὕμεῖς εἷς ἔστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.¹⁸ A pious and good wife standing by her husband's side was commended and the husband was seen as a happy man¹⁹ with a God-sent wife.²⁰

The great divide comes with the establishment of Christianity as a religion. Christ Himself was the one who praised women with His attitude and teachings and put them in the same social status as men. Therefore, He didn't hesitate to socialize with prostitutes,²¹ discuss with the Samaritan woman²² and forgive the adulteress.²³ Certainly, we should be aware of the fact that within His circle there were not only men but women too and it is to women that He revealed Himself for the first time²⁴ and not to men.²⁵ It is then observable that women are not just standing in the limelight but they are active participants with a primary role in God's plan for the salvation of the human kind.

Such a concept, meaning the role of women in the New Testament, can be seen in the decisive role that Virgin Mary played as God's mother. The Great Fathers call her the new Eve since she was the reason why the second face of the Holy Trinity, Christ -the new Adam-, took on a human face in order to save humanity from the original sin of Adam and Eve.

Finally, it should not be left out that the books of the New Testament mention a lot of female names corresponding to women who played a great role within the Church. Therefore, in Acts of the Apostles we see the names of Priscilla,²⁶ Lydia,²⁷ Saint Thekla and many others,²⁸ while

¹⁸ Gal. 3, 28.

¹⁹ Sir. 16, 1.

²⁰ Prov. 31, 10–31.

²¹ Luke 7, 36–50.

²² John 4, 5–42.

²³ John 8, 1–11.

²⁴ Luke 24, 1–10; Mark 16, 9–11; John 20, 11–18.

²⁵ Αγουρίδης (1999: 286).

²⁶ Act. 18, 2–3; Rom. 16, 3.

²⁷ Act. 16, 14.

²⁸ Act. 1, 14; 9, 36; 41; 12, 12; 16, 14.

in the epistles by Paul²⁹ we see the names of *Apfá*, Eunice, Claudia, Lois, Maria, *Syntýchi*, *Eodía* and Phoebe.

The role of Apostle Paul

In the years of the Apostle Paul, the presence of women is distinct, since during his missionary activity, we see women apostles, such as Junia, who together with Andronikos is referred to as ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις.³⁰ In fact, John Chrysostom,³¹ in his interpretation of the letter to the Romans, refers to Junia with admiration, considering her a worthy apostle. In fact, she is one of Paul's female associates who were able to use their gifts and offer their services to the then newly founded Christian Church, perhaps the only place in the long later Byzantine period, where women could enjoy some form of freedom. It is important to note, however, that, on the one hand, these cases of women do not represent the norm, but rather the exception, and, on the other hand, any activity of some women during this early period of the Christian Church is inextricably linked to the social conditions prevailing. In particular, while the Church belonged to the private sphere, being persecuted and marginalized, various roles were developed by its early members, regardless of gender, as the participation of everyone was essential and useful. But once the Christian Church is officially recognized (in 313 AD), it becomes part of the public sphere and begins to identify with it,

²⁹ 2 Tim. 1, 5; 4, 21; Rom. 16, 3; 6, 12-13, 15; Phil. 4, 2. It is worth mentioning the excerpt of Apostle Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 7, 4: ἡ γυνὴ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει, ἀλλ' ὁ ἀνὴρ ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει, ἀλλ' ἡ γυνή), in which there is an attempt to distinguish the roles of each gender within a marriage, showing clearly how one gender succumbs to the other.

³⁰ Rom. 16, 7.

³¹ PG 60, 669: Βαβαί, πόση τῆς γυναικὸς ταύτης ἡ φιλοσοφία, ὡς καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀποστόλων ἀξιοθῆναι προσηγορίας.

accepting the distinction of social roles of the time and reproducing the prevailing social hierarchy.³²

The example of Saint Helena

The first woman, and in particular the first express, who, according to tradition, acquired a more direct and active role in ecclesiastical matters, building churches,³³ was the mother of Constantine the Great, Saint Helena. She was indeed a model for other empresses and brilliant aristocrats (as we shall see below), as her name is associated with the most powerful symbol of Christianity, the Cross, and its discovery. In summary, the story of the finding of the Cross is as follows.³⁴ In the year 326, the Empress Helena visits the Holy Land and *τὴν τότε Ιερουσαλὴμ ἔρημον ὡς ὁπωροφυλάκιον κατὰ τὸν προφήτην*³⁵ and finds the Cross. With the help of the Bishop of Jerusalem and the inhabitants of the area she manages to locate the position of the Cross and after excavation, she extracts three crosses, as well as the inscription of Pilate (J. N. R. J.).³⁶ The cross of Christ is miraculously recognized, as Macarius of Jerusalem places it on a dying woman, who is healed. Thus, the finding of the Holy Cross by Saint Hel-

³² Παπαγεωργίου (2016: 163); Αδαμτζιλογλου (2003: 32). It is important to note that in many cases women themselves agree with the stereotype of being labelled as the weaker sex. See GARLAND (1988: 386).

³³ These are the basilicas of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives in the Holy Land.

³⁴ On the history and legends of the finding of the Holy Cross see BERJEAU (1863); HALUSA (1926); LECLERCQ (1948); COMBES (1907); MUSSAFIA (1869); PRIME (1877); STRAUBINGER (1913); NESTLE (1895); VELDENER (1863); MERCURI (2014: 14–24); BORGEHAMMAR (1991); DRIJVERS (1992); NESBITT (2003); WORTLEY (2009); HEID (2001: On the role of Saint Helena in the finding of the Cross and especially on the avoidance of recording the event from early sources); KRETZENBACHER (1995: On the legends of the wood of the Cross in Byzantium and the West).

³⁵ Sokrates Scholasticus, Ἐκκλησιαστική ἱστορία PG 67, 120A; Ps. 78, 1.

³⁶ She also took out of the earth the spear, the sponge, the crown of thorns and the nails, that is, all the relics relating to the Divine Passion of Jesus Christ.

ena, the first trekker and pilgrim to the Holy Sepulcher on Golgotha,³⁷ becomes an important historical event, which is the subject of realization by Orthodox Christian writers,³⁸ and by Latin writers,³⁹ thus indicating the enormous impact of this event in the centuries that followed, both for the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christian world, sealing the worship of the Holy Cross. Through this historical event, therefore, the crucial position that a woman now occupies in the field of religion is underlined, initiating a tradition of church donations and sponsorships.⁴⁰

The role of women during the Byzantine era

During the first years of Christianity, the teachings of the Great Fathers played a determining role in the improvement of women's role as being equal to men in society.⁴¹ This was primarily shown through the face of the Virgin Mary, however, not excluding other women, like Mary Magdalene.⁴² These teachings also criticized the unfairness towards women in the laws (especially true given that lawmakers were men!),⁴³ high-

³⁷ GRUNDT (1878: III); ROBINSON (2011: 14–19).

³⁸ Sokrates Scholasticus, Ἑκκλησιαστική ἱστορία, PG 67, 117–121; Sozomenus, Ἑκκλησιαστική ἱστορία (Περὶ τῆς εὐρέσεως τοῦ ζωηφόρου σταυροῦ καὶ τῶν ἁγίων ἡλῶν), PG 67, 929–933; Theodoret of Kyros, Ἑκκλησιαστική ἱστορία, PG 82, 357–961 and 1064–1217; Alezander the monk, Ἱστορικόν ἐγκώμιον περὶ εὐρέσεως τοῦ τιμίου καὶ ζωοποιοῦ σταυροῦ, PG 87, 4016–4076 and 4080–4088 (summary).

³⁹ Paulinus Nolensis, «Epistolae», PL 61, 326–330; HALM (1866. Vol. I: 108–110); BERNAYS (1885. Vol. II: 84–86). For the Latin texts of the legend of the finding of the Holy Cross see Κορακίδης (1983: 73–74, 76–79), while the existence of a section of Holy Wood in Rome from the 6th century see KLEIN (2004: 69–76).

⁴⁰ Σαράντη (2012); Δημητροπούλου (2012); Αγγελίδη (2012); Παπαμαστοράκης (2012); Καλοπίση-Βέρτη (2012).

⁴¹ For the woman in late antiquity and the first years of Byzantium through the theology of Cyril of Alexandria see Δελλόπουλος (2016).

⁴² John Chrysostom calls Mary Magdalene ἡ τέτραθλος καὶ ἀνδρεία γυνή: John Chrysostom, *Εἰς Ματθαῖον*, 40, PG 58, 823AB.

⁴³ Ἄνδρες ἦσαν οἱ νομοθετοῦντες, διὰ τοῦτο κατὰ γυναικῶν ἡ νομοθεσία: Gregory of Nazianzos, *Λόγος* 37, PG 36, 289AB.

lighting that men and women are equal before God.⁴⁴ The Great Fathers and church writers were admirable proponents of the equality between men and women before the law and within the society, noting that both sexes were punished equally for their disobedience and were given the same objective potential for salvation through the incarnation of God, His Passion, His Crucifixion and His Resurrection. Consequently, men and women are one entity before God. In reality, though, the early years of the Byzantine period witness the withdrawal of women and their isolation in the house, caring solely for that and their family. However, over the centuries things started to change gradually.

Reaching mid-Byzantine years, women held a different position in society, among other things that were changing over time. These changes regarded new borders and other modifications in political, administrative, financial and military structures⁴⁵ that -undoubtedly- influenced the

⁴⁴ See e.g.: Gregory of Nazianzos, *Λόγος* 37, PG 36 281-308; Basil of Caesarea, *Εἰς τὴν μάρτυρα Ἰουλίτταν*, PG 31, col. 241AB; Gregory of Nyssa, *Περὶ τῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου γενέσεως καὶ εἰς τὸ κατ' εἰκόνα καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν*, PG 44, 233C; Clement of Alexandria, *Παιδαγωγός*, PG 8, 260C; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Κατηχήσεις*, 20, PG 33, 480C. It was John Chrysostom who gave speeches about women and their position in society and marriage (praising them and advising both genders). See John Chrysostom, *Εἰς Κολοσσαεῖς*, 12, PG 62, 386B; John Chrysostom, *Εἰς τὸν Γάμον*, PG 51, 213-215, 219A). For more information see ARTEMI (2015).

⁴⁵ During the 12th century for example, the unit of thematic (military) administration is abolished and the defense of the Byzantine Empire is not supported by mercenaries. The state mechanism is based on a new social class of prestigious officers and it is a fact that a new policy of aristocracy is established (much relying on the Komnenos family). As for the economy, we see the stabilization of the gold coin and there is an upward trend with the creation of art manufacturing facilities (such as ceramics and textiles) in urban centers which are experiencing an urban sprawl. Finally, let's not forget that there were ongoing war operations towards the east and west by emperor Alexios I Komnenos, and his plans were interrupted by crusades and in particular by the threat of the 4th crusade in 1204.

For a brief overview of the history in the 12th century see KAZHDAN – FRANKLIN (2007: 59-67; 72-75; 116-119; KAZHDAN – EPSTEIN (2004); Καρπόζηλος (2009: III 30-32). For the economy in the Byzantine state see LAIOU – MORRISON (2011: 135-233); Λαϊῶν (2006: II). For the commerce in Byzantium see e.g. MAGDALINO (2008); MORRISON (2012: 125-218). For the vision of emperor Manuel I Komnenos to restore a new ecumenical empire see MAGDALINO (2008: 685-779).

role of women in the Byzantine society. This is the point where it should be noted that the imperial laws, the texts by historians and chronologists and the hagiological texts of the time were all drafted by men. The scarcity of texts written by women at least up until the 11th century was substantial⁴⁶ and does not allow us to have a clear image of women's role. At the same time, the men writers who came from important families of the Byzantine bourgeoisie, described women who were either part of the same social class or with higher social status such as Theodora -wife of Justinian-, Irene of Athens, Theophano, Zoe Porphyrogenete, Anna Dalassene, Anna Komnene and others.⁴⁷ This necessarily meant that the majority of the female lower-class population (that is of the average Byzantine woman, the woman of the city or the rural society) was left unaccounted for.

After the end of the 11th century, the Byzantine society witnessed important changes compared to the past.⁴⁸ As a result, there was grow-

⁴⁶ In regard to epistolography, there are a number of saved letters written by women during the later period, such as the letters by Irene Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina (1291–approx. 1355) (CONSTANTINIDES-HERRO [1986]), while very few are saved that date back to the middle Byzantine period (see ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ [1993: 169–180]). The letters saved are usually the ones making references to women who used this means of communication to achieve their purpose. So, in the correspondence by Theodore of Stoudios (KAZHDAN – TALBOT [1991/1992: Appendix B, 406]) we often see female names, belonging to women of the aristocracy, nuns, and mother superiors, still of noble descent though. (see GOUILLARD [1982]).

In hymnography, we see just four female names (Theodosia, Thekla, Kassia and Palaiologina), who all came from monastical environments and lived and composed their hymns within a nunnery (CATAFYGIOTOU-TOPPING [1982–3]; CATAFYGIOTOU-TOPPING [1980]; CATAFYGIOTOU-TOPPING [1986–8]; ΠΕΤΡΙΔΕΣ [1902]; ROCHOW [1967]). Such a limited number of women Hymnographers can be explained partially due to rules against women's voices being heard in church (HERRIN [1992: 97]), and partially due to their educational level given how hymnography needs certain educational standards that only few women held.

⁴⁷ DIEHL (1939); HERRIN (2002); GARLAND (1999); GARLAND (1988); HILL (1996a); HILL (1996b); ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ (2009²). Also see JAMES (1997); JAMES (2001); NICOL (2004); HERRIN (1983a).

⁴⁸ For women of the later Byzantine period we find information from legal and historical sources and the rich files of that time. See e.g. LAIOU (1985); LAIOU (1992a); LAIOU (1992b); HILL (1999).

ing interest for the education of women and a change in the societal norms for that issue;⁴⁹ this is observed even further during the time of the Palaiologos family. Still, the education of women concerned almost exclusively women of the aristocracy⁵⁰ rather than women of lower social classes, who often found themselves unable to sign documents regarding themselves.⁵¹ However, some of them may have had the ability to read simple texts given the evidence we have for the different levels of literacy.⁵²

Women, religion, and monasticism

In the previous sections, we saw that the education of Byzantine women and the level of their literacy had been hard to pinpoint since their activities were limited. Still, these activities included all related tasks to the religious and the Church. Such tasks were so closely connected to women that it was considered the norm for women to be involved in church-related activities. Therefore, what we can conclude is that the

⁴⁹ A prime example of an educated woman is that of Anna Komnene who in the preface of her work *Alexiad* (REINCH – KAMBYLIS [2001: Πρόλογος, I, lines 10–17]) does not just take pride in her royal descent and education but explicitly mentions how women should have a high educational level and take pride in it without being considered arrogant.

⁵⁰ It is a fact that in the Byzantine Empire, education and climbing the social ladder worked hand in hand. This was true because education was the only means and prerequisite for having a position in a state that was so rigidly organized and so bureaucratic that it necessarily needed educated clerks. Women, expectedly, were not allowed in such positions (SCHELTEMA - VAN DER WAL [1955-1988: 2.3.2.]: Αἱ γυναῖκες πάντων τῶν πολιτικῶν καὶ τῶν δημοσίων ὀφφικίων κωλύονται, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὐ δικάζουσιν, οὐκ ἀρχοῦσιν, οὐ συνηγοροῦσιν, οὐ παρεμβάλλουσιν ὑπὲρ ἄλλων, οὐ γίνονται φροντισταί. Καὶ οἱ ἄνηβοι πάντων τῶν πολιτικῶν ὀφφικίων ἀπέχονται.), so that meant that their educational level was simply a matter of their family. As a result, women of noble descent had more opportunities to be educated. See e.g. Νικολάου (2009²: 185–213); HERRIN (1995) for the education of Byzantine princesses.

⁵¹ LAIOU (1981: 255–257).

⁵² BROWNING (1978).

cosmical education of women is unaccounted for but on the other hand, the clerical world was open to them.⁵³

We also need to make note of the fact that church tasks gave the opportunity to Byzantine women to be out of the house. As a result, whenever there was an event like a litany, the welcoming of a new bishop or the ecclesiastical festivals, women were among the main audience. In all relevant events, their presence was to be expected and it was considered the norm since they were members of the Church too and had an ethical obligation to participate in all church-related events.⁵⁴ It was also expected that women would participate in all charity events regardless of their social and financial status.⁵⁵ All of them (rich or poor, noble or peasant) followed faithfully and avidly the charity command, as expressed and framed in Christianity.⁵⁶

The role of women in religious and ecclesiastical affairs reaches its absolute expression during the iconoclastic era and specifically, the events of *Chalké Gate* in 726.⁵⁷ It was a group of women who attacked bravely and fiercely the officials who took down the icon of Christ from *Chalké Gate* of the palace. The officials were killed and this marked the beginning of the iconoclastic era. These women even came close to the πατριαρχικὸν οἶκον and began stoning Patriarch Anastasios.⁵⁸ In general, we could say that during the iconoclastic era, women showed a ferocity unknown to the public till that time, actively saving the lives

⁵³ It is worth mentioning the action of some women within the affairs of the Church, with the most characteristic example being the possibility of women exercising deaconry. For more information see Παπαδημητρίου (2019).

⁵⁴ Νικολάου (2009²: 215–228).

⁵⁵ Νικολάου (2009²: 236–239).

⁵⁶ Κωνσταντέλος (1986).

⁵⁷ The bibliography for the iconoclastic period is particularly extensive. See e.g.: BRUBAKER (2014); BRUBAKER – HALDON (2001); BRUBAKER – HALDON (2010); BRYER – HERRIN (1977); GERO (1977); GERO (1974); GRABAR (1957 = 1984); HALDON (1977); HENRY (1977); SPECK (1998); STEIN (1980); WORTLEY (1982).

⁵⁸ ΑΥΖΕΨΥ (1997: 100–101 [kap. 10]).

of iconoclastic fighters. This would often bring them against their husbands' will and, more often than not, they too were persecuted and punished with exile and imprisonment by iconoclastic supporters such as Leo III and Constantine V.⁵⁹ These persecutions were sometimes savage and were frowned upon by the general public, who -though- were unable to grasp the deeper theological meaning of iconoclasm.⁶⁰

Following the iconoclastic era, we notice a further elevation of the role of women. Byzantine texts now make references to new types of women's sanctity such as the Mother Superior or the "married martyr".⁶¹ In the cases of Mother Superiors, we are dealing with an innovative change for that time, according to which discipline and organization are no longer exclusive to men.⁶² What follows next are the cases of noble women during the period of Komnenoi, who founded nunneries among other things. We are also going to delve into the construction and donation of valuable sacred objects to these nunneries. A distinctive case is the one of Irene Doukaina. To accomplish this venture, we are going to investigate Byzantine epigrams on the Cross and the Crucifixion drafted by an important doctor and poet of that era.

Nicholas Kallikles: Life and Works

Nicholas Kallikles was a prominent figure of the Komnenian Period. He was an excellent doctor according to statements.⁶³ However, facts

⁵⁹ For the women during iconoclasm and their faith see KAZHDAN - TALBOT (1991/1992); HERRIN (1983b); Ευθυμιάδης (2019: 33–37).

⁶⁰ For the role of women in the clash between church and state see Νικολάου (2009²: 229–236).

⁶¹ For some examples see Ευθυμιάδης (2019: 37–48).

⁶² For the position of women in hagiography of the middle and later Byzantine period see CONSTANTINOU (2005); Νικολάου (2009²); DELIERNEUX (2014); TALBOT (1996); TALBOT (2011); Μεργιάλη-Σάχα (2014: 85–88).

⁶³ It is characteristic that Anna Komnene includes him among the leading doctors (REINCH – KAMBYLIS [2001. 15.11.13.91–94: 499]), Theodore Prodromos characterizes him

about his life are extremely limited and we only have information coming from his correspondence with Theophylaktos of Ohrid.⁶⁴ In these letters, we can observe how Kallikles played a pivotal role in treating the ailments of Theophylaktos and how the latter wished good health for Kallikles and imperial grace.⁶⁵ It was, after all, known that Kallikles was in the emperor's good graces and benefited greatly from that. This is evident in his role as a member of the medical council set to find a cure for Alexios Komnenos, who suffered from a severe case of rheumatism in his legs. Although Kallikles was the only one who predicted that his arthritis would deteriorate over time and suggested suitable treatment,⁶⁶ his prognosis was not taken into consideration resulting in the emperor's bad health and later his death.⁶⁷

What interests us in this article are the poetic works of Kallikles, a total of thirty-six poems-epigrams,⁶⁸ which were mostly written in order to be engraved on artefacts such as icons, *staurothékes*, chalices etc. According to some scholars,⁶⁹ Nicholas Kallikles also composed Τιμαρίων ἢ περὶ τῶν κατ' αὐτὸν παθημάτων on account of his medical expertise.

as an intelligent and scientific soul (PODESTÀ [1945]), while Theophylaktos of Ohrid will not hesitate to describe him as his Asclepios (GAUTIER [1986. Letter no. 111, 7–8: 535]. Even Kallikles himself in the title of an epigram characterizes himself as διδάσκαλος τῶν ἰατρῶν (ROMANO [1980. Poem no. 9: τοῦ σοφωτάτου διδασκάλου τῶν ἰατρῶν κυροῦ Νικολάου τοῦ Καλικλέως]).

⁶⁴ The letters are 93, 94, 111 and 112. See GAUTIER (1986. Letters 477, 479, 535 and 536).

⁶⁵ GAUTIER (1986. Letter no. 93: 477: ὑγιαίνοις οὖν, καὶ ἀπολαύοις τῆς τε φιλανθρωπῶν ἰατρικῆς, καὶ τῶν βασιλείων ...).

⁶⁶ REINCH – KAMBYLIS (2001. 15.11.3.49–52: 494).

⁶⁷ REINCH – KAMBYLIS (2001. 15.11.3.55–15.11.19.95: 495–503).

⁶⁸ Thirty-one poems are attributed to Kallikles and they are saved in manuscripts while the remaining five are again attributed to him on the basis of certain linguistic patters but with a bit of speculation. This division of his poems is made based on Romano (see ROMANO [1980]), on which this paper was also based.

⁶⁹ See ROMANO (1974: 309–315). A different opinion about the name of the author is given by BALDWIN (1984) and HUNGER (1968: 61–63).

The status of women in the epigrams on the Cross and the Crucifixion by Nicholas Kallikles

The epigrams by Nicholas Kallikles that deal with the Cross and the Crucifixion are six in total. Let's explore the information they can give us.

Epigrams

Epigram n.1

Εἰς τὸ καλὸν ξύλον τὸ κοσμηθὲν ὑπὸ τῆς Δεσποίνης.

Οὐ ταῦτα δρυμός οὐδὲ κρανίου τόπος,

ἐν οἷς ἐπάγη τοῦτο τὸ ξύλον πάλαι,

ἀλλ' ἔστι λιθόστρωτος ἢ χρυσοῦς τόπος,

ἀνθεῖ δὲ λευκὸν ἄνθος ἐκ τῶν μαργάρων.

- 5 Τούτοις φυτεύει σέ, ξύλον ζωηφόρον,
Δουκῶν ὁ λαμπτήρ, ἡ βασιλὶς Εἰρήνη,
καρπὸν γλυκὺν τρυγῶσα τὴν σωτηρίαν.⁷⁰

*Translation*⁷¹

For the beautiful wood decorated by the empress (Irene Doukaina)

It is neither a forest nor Golgotha

where this wood once stood,

but it is a place laid with stones or a golden field,

and white flowers blossom from pearls.

- 5 With these, life-giving wood, you are planted by
the lamp of the clan of Doukai, queen Irene,
harvesting salvation like it's a sweet fruit.

⁷⁰ ROMANO (1980: 81 [no. 6]; 135 [Italian translation]; 168 [comments]); FROLOW (1961: 281 [no. 241]).

⁷¹ All translations have been written by the author of this article. They aim to help the reader and by no means serve as a literary recreation of epigrams.

Remarks

The epigram refers to a *staurothéke* ordered by Irene Doukaina, wife of Alexios I Komnenos.⁷² Going through this epigram, it is pretty evident how the poem is grounded on chain metaphors and puns from the Old and New Testament addressing the reader to trace their meaning, all the while describing the *staurothéke* in an intricate way. Specifically, the poem is constructed with the pattern κατ' ἄρσιν καὶ θέσιν, meaning that the first two lines refer to what the *staurothéke* is not and then, the subsequent lines reveal what it actually is.

Regarding the content of the epigram, it begins by informing us that the *staurothéke* does not depict a forest or Golgotha,⁷³ the Crucifixion Hills (lines 1–2). Instead, it talks about a *staurothéke* embossed with gold, precious stones and pearls (lines 3–4). Using lexical items like λιθόστρωτος⁷⁴ and χρυσοῦς τόπος (line 3), there is an allusion to New Jerusalem,⁷⁵ as this is presented in John's Revelation.⁷⁶ Furthermore, attributing life-giving abilities to the wood (ξύλον ζωηφόρον – line 5),

⁷² See ODB (II: 1009); POLEMIS (1968: 70–74).

⁷³ Matt. 27: 33; Mark 15: 22; Luke 23:33.

⁷⁴ The cobblestoned place near the praetorium was called Gabbathah in Hebrew, as we read in John's Gospel (John 19: 13: ὁ οὖν Πιλάτος ἀκούσας τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ἤγαγεν ἔξω τὸν Ἰησοῦν, καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος εἰς τόπον λεγόμενον Λιθόστρωτον, Ἑβραϊστὶ δὲ Γαββαθᾶ). Still, quite often there was confusion between his place and Golgotha.

⁷⁵ ROMANO (1980: 168). A prime example is the excerpt in John's Revelation which describes the walls of the celestial Jerusalem as covered with precious stones (Rev. 19–20). In ODB (II: 1035) we read: In art, biblical exegesis, and theology a celestial Jerusalem paralleled and sometimes reflected the terrestrial city. Conforming to biblical prophecies about Jerusalem, this conception became an archetype of the human soul, of the Christian church, and of individual church buildings. It provided an image of paradise, [...], where the heavenly city with golden streets and a place could equally be Constantinople, sometimes called by the Byzantines the New Jerusalem.

⁷⁶ Rev. 21, 18 (καὶ ἦν ἡ ἐνδόμησις τοῦ τείχους αὐτῆς ἱάσπις, καὶ ἡ πόλις χρυσίον καθαρὸν, ὅμοιον ὑάλῳ καθαρῷ); Rev. 21, 21 (καὶ οἱ δώδεκα πυλῶνες δώδεκα μαργαρίται· ἀνὰ εἷς ἕκαστος τῶν πυλῶνων ἦν ἐξ ἐνὸς μαργαρίτου. καὶ ἡ πλατεῖα τῆς πόλεως χρυσίον καθαρὸν ὡς ὑαλὸς διαυγής).

implying its concept as a tree giving life, alludes to the tree growing in the heavenly city of God.⁷⁷ In this heavenly setting, we see the positioning of the Cross in the *staurothéke*⁷⁸ (line 5) by queen Irene, light of the family of Doukai (line 6), aiming at harvesting the sweet fruit⁷⁹ of salvation (line 7).

The content of the lines allows us to observe a unique form in their composition. The first four lines refer to the *staurothéke* while the remaining ones (lines 5–7) clearly indicate the name of the donor and the purpose of the engraving. It is worth mentioning that the use of the third person singular does not allow us to understand in a clear and sustainable manner who is really describing the *staurothéke*. Most likely, this is done by the donor but it is an opaque point given that anyone would be able to do it.

Epigram n. 2

Εἰς τὸν Χριστὸν κρεμáμενον ἐπὶ ξύλου καὶ τεθνηκότα.

Ζητοῦσα τὴν σὴν ὄψιν, ἀγνὲ νυμφίε,
καὶ ψηλαφῶσα, ποῦ νέμεις καὶ ποῦ μένεις
καὶ ποῦ καθυπνοῖς ἐν μέσῃ μεσεμβρία,
ἔγνω·ν ἐφυπνῶττοντα τῇ τριδενδρία·

⁷⁷ Rev. 22, 2 (ἐν μέσῳ τῆς πλατείας αὐτῆς καὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ξύλον ζωῆς, ποιοῦν καρποὺς δώδεκα, κατὰ μῆνα ἕκαστον ἀποδίδουν τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὰ φύλλα τοῦ ξύλου εἰς θεραπείαν τῶν ἐθνῶν). See also HOSTETLER (2016: 113).

⁷⁸ This *staurothéke* depicted the tree of life, which was a common topic for *staurothékes* of that kind (HOSTETLER [2016: 113]).

⁷⁹ Enjoying the sweet fruits from a forest tree evokes the Song of Songs 2, 3: ὡς μῆλον ἐν τοῖς ξύλοις τοῦ δρυμοῦ, οὕτως ἀδελφιδός μου ἀνὰ μέσον τῶν υἱῶν· ἐν τῇ σκιᾷ αὐτοῦ ἐπεθύμησα καὶ ἐκάθισα, καὶ καρπὸς αὐτοῦ γλυκὺς ἐν λάρυγγί μου (= As an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the sons; in his shade I delighted and sat, and his fruit was sweet to my palate). According to Gregory of Nyssa the forest symbolizes earthly life, while the fruit tree in the middle of the forest symbolizes Christ (LANGERBECK [1960, VI: 116–117]).

- 5 πεύκη τὰ δένδρα, κυπάρισσος καὶ κέδρος·
 αἶ, αἶ! γλυκὺν τὸν ὕπνον ὑπνοῖς, ἀλλ' ὅμως
 φθάσας πρὸς ἀντίληψιν ἀνάστηθί μοι.⁸⁰

Translation

For the dead Christ, hanged on the Cross

Looking for your form, Oh pure bridegroom,
 and trying to find where you herd (your sheep), where you live
 and where you lay down to sleep at noon,
 I saw that you sleep on three trees.

- 5 Pine, cypress and cedar are those trees.
 Alas, you sleep sweetly, but
 wake up and come help me.

Remarks

Much like the previous one (epigram no.1) this epigram brims with allegories since it explicitly alludes to the Song of Songs, book of the Old Testament with a majorly allegorical content. Specifically, in the first three lines, the donor – through the poet – addresses Christ by calling Him ἀγνὲ νυμφίε (line 1), and employs possessive pronouns of the second person singular (τὴν σὴν ὄψιν – line 1) and verbs of the same person (νέμεις – μένεις: line 2; καθυπνοῖς: line 3). The choice of verbs is intentional alluding to the corresponding excerpt from the Song of Songs and to the dialogue between the nymph and the bridegroom.⁸¹ Evident-

⁸⁰ ROMANO (1980: 82 [no. 7]; 135 [Italian translation]; 168–169 [comments]); FROLOW (1961: 330 [no. 338]).

⁸¹ Song of Songs 1, 7: ἀπάγγελόν μοι ὅν ἡγάπησεν ἡ ψυχὴ μου, ποῦ ποιμαίνεις, ποῦ κοιτάζεις ἐν μεσημβρίᾳ (= “Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where do you feed, where do you rest [the flocks] at noon, for why should I be like one who veils herself beside the flocks of your companions?”). The similarities between the two texts are visible, since the epigram contains phrases from the biblical text in light modification. So

ly though, the poet does not simply quote the excerpt but adjusts it and extends its meaning to the relationship between the donor and Christ.

Looking at the form of Christ (line 1) and ψηλαφῶσα (indicative verb of the act of slight touching) to find where exactly He is (line 2), she finds Him sleeping on three trees -pine, cypress, cedar- (lines 4-5). These trees -according to tradition- are known to have been used to make the holy cross.⁸² This is otherwise called τριδενδρία, which we also meet in epigram no.6 (lines 1 and 5) later on. We should also note that the crucifixion is presented not as death but as a state of sleep (line 3). This means that the death of Christ is an event that shares the same attributes as sleep, i.e. not definitive but reversible and expected to reach a state of wake, thus alluding to His upcoming Resurrection (line 7).⁸³

The last two lines clearly show the donor's request to Christ. After she wishes Him sweet sleep (γλυκὺν τὸν ὕπνον ὑπνοῖς - line 6), she encourages Him to resurrect in order to help her (line 7). It should be noted that the moods used are the optative (ὑπνοῖς - line 6), and the imperative (ἀνάστηθι - line 7), which in combination with the exclamations αἶ, αἶ! in the beginning of the sixth line, assign a theatrical attribute to the poem. This seems to appeal to the audience, who interestingly

ποιμαίνεις becomes νέμεις (line 2), while κοιτάζεις is replaced by καθυπνοῖς (line 3).

⁸² Isa. 60, 13: καὶ ἡ δόξα τοῦ Λιβάνου πρὸς σὲ ἥξει ἐν κυπαρίσσῳ καὶ πεύκῃ καὶ κέδρῳ ἅμα, δοξάσαι τὸν τόπον τὸν ἅγιόν μου καὶ τὸν τόπον τῶν ποδῶν μου δοξάσω (= The glory of the Lebanon shall come to you, box trees, firs, and cypresses together, to glorify the place of My sanctuary, and the place of My feet I will honor).

⁸³ The metaphor of death as sleep is seen in other epigrams about the cross and the crucifixion. See e.g. 11th century, John Mauropous, line 1: Κάνταῦθα Χριστός ἐστὶν ὑπνῶν ἐν ξύλῳ (De LAGARDE – BOLLIG [1882 = 1979: 17–18. no. 32]). See also KANTARAS (2021: 174–175); 12th–13th century, Nicholas of Otranto, line 1: Οὐχ ὕπνον ἔξεις οὐδὲ νυστάξεις πάλιν (LONGO – JACOB [1980-1982: 197. no. 19.7, f. 36^r]). We see that in the holy texts too when we consider how the Old Testament uses the verb κοιμῶμαι in order to show the state in which death is experienced as the eternal sleep. For instance, in Job (Job 21, 13), we read: συνετέλεσαν δὲ ἐν ἀγαθοῖς τὸν βίον αὐτῶν, ἐν δὲ ἀναπαύσει ἄδου ἐκοιμήθησαν (= They end their days in prosperity, and in a moment they descend to the grave).

engages with the poem.⁸⁴ Generally, we need to highlight the imagery of the epigram stemming from the use of extended metaphors and allegories so as to state the donor's request.

As for the donor herself, it is safe to assume that it is the same person as epigram no.1 i.e. Irene Doukaina although this is not explicitly stated anywhere. Still, this epigram was found in writing right after epigram no.1 in a manuscript used for the first publication of Theodore Prodromos in 1536.⁸⁵ Consequently, not explicitly mentioning the donor might be a sensible choice since Irene Doukaina is mentioned in the previous epigram on that same manuscript.

Finally, we can only assume where this epigram was engraved given that the artefact is not saved. The content of the epigram might reveal an object like an icon of crucifixion,⁸⁶ a cross or a *staurotheke*.⁸⁷ The options of either a cross or a *staurothéke* may be a little more grounded compared to the icon since -again- the epigram was found in a manuscript together with another epigram engraved on a *staurothéke*.

Epigram n. 3

Τοῦ Καλλικλέους στίχοι εἰς τὸν καλὸν σταυρὸν

τὸν κοσμηθέντα παρὰ τῆς πορφυρογεννήτου κυρᾶς Εὐδοκίας
Ἐκ τοῦ ξύλου τρυγῶ σε τὴν ζωὴν, Λόγε,
καὶν Εὐὰ τρυγᾷ τὴν φθορὰν ἀπὸ ξύλου,
καὶ προσκυνοῦσα σῶν παθῶν τὴν εἰκόνα
εἰς ἀπαθῶν αἰτῶ σε λιμένα φθάσαι,

⁸⁴ For the dramatic character of epigrams about the cross and the crucifixion see KANTARAS (2019: 79–95).

⁸⁵ ROMANO (1980; 44).

⁸⁶ HOSTETLER (2016: 109).

⁸⁷ FROLOW (1961: 330); ROMANO (1980; 21).

- 5 σὺν συζύγῳ τὲ καὶ τέκνοις τηρουμένη.
Ἐξ Εὐδοκίας ταῦτα, πορφύρας κλάδου.⁸⁸

Translation

Lines by Kallikles about the beautiful cross decorated by “purple-born”
Eudokia (Komnene)

From the wood I harvest Thee, that is life, Logos,
even if Eve harvested damage from wood,
I am bowing in front of the icon of your Passions
and I am asking to reach the harbor of those relieved from their
passions

- 5 safe and sound together with my husband and children.
Those words are from Eudokia, the branch of porphýra.

Remarks

This is an epigram engraved on a *staurothéke* decorated with the Crucifixion.⁸⁹ As we are informed by its title, it is an epigram written by Nicholas Kallikles for a cross ordered and decorated by Eudokia Komnene, third daughter of Alexios I Komnenos and wife to Constantine Iasites.⁹⁰

As for its content, in the first line, Eudokia addresses directly Christ as evidenced by the use of the second person singular personal pronoun (σε) and the term of endearment Λόγε. This creates an antithesis between the past and the present because it compares Eve of the past harvesting the damage from the wood of Heaven to herself in the present

⁸⁸ ROMANO (1980: 105 [no. 27]; 147 [Italian translation]; 181 [comments]; FROLOW (1961: 317-318 [no. 312]).

⁸⁹ FROLOW (1961: 317).

⁹⁰ Consequently, the epigram precedes the death of Alexios I Komnenos given that Constantine Iasites died before Alexios. See ODB (II: 969); FROLOW (1961: 317 [no. 312]); ROMANO (1980: 181 [no.27]).

harvesting life from the wood of the crucifixion cross (lines 1–2). In other words, while Eve managed to lose the eternal life by eating from the forbidden fruit,⁹¹ Eudokia earns it by showing her devotion to the cross. After all, the assonance between the two names - Εὐα and Εὐδοκία - is substantial and adds to the analogy between the two women. At the same time, though, it is a comparison between two types of wood;⁹² the wood of heaven that led humans to sin and the wood of the crucifixion cross that leads humans to their salvation.

Moving on, Eudokia, bowing in front of the icon of the Passions (line 3), makes her request to reach the harbor of those relieved from their passions safe and sound (line 4). It is an appeal that does not involve just herself but also her husband and children (line 5), highlighting her love towards her family and the status she enjoys within her family given how she is able to order and decorate a *staurothéke*.

The epigram is completed with a straightforward declaration that all the above words come from Eudokia, the branch of *porphýra* (line 6), leaving no room for doubt about who the donor of the *staurothéke* is. At this point, we should note the use of the term πορφύρα, in order to show the donor's royal descent. It is not uncommon to see that word used in other epigrams by Nicholas Kallikles to indicate royal heritage, as we shall see in epigrams no.4 and no.5.

⁹¹ The presence of Eve is intense in epigrams about the cross and the crucifixion in the 12th century because she is seen as responsible for the original sin and thus, she is attributed negative terms (e.g. 12th century, Theodore Prodromos, tit., line 1: Εἰς τὴν ἀπάτην Ἀδάμ. / Δαίμων, φθόνος, γύναιον, ἡδονῆς ξύλον. See PAPAGIANNIS (1997: 12–13 [no. 9a]). It should be noted that she is compared to the Virgin Mary who as a new Eve bearing the new Adam (i.e. Christ) 'dresses' Him with the new tree, the wood of the cross, opening up the Garden of Eden.

⁹² By offering Himself (1 Tim. 2, 6: ὁ δοὺς ἑαυτὸν ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων) and dying for all humans (2 Cor. 5, 15: ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν), Christ changes the meaning and symbolic value of the wood of the cross from a curse to salvation. The wood of the cross that kills Christ is life-giving wood since He died on it and broke its curse. This is how we go from ἡδονῆς ξύλον to ἔντιμον ξύλον.

Epigram n. 4

Τὸ τῆς Ἑδὲμ βλάστημα, τὸ ζωῆς ξύλον,
 τὸ πορφύρας γέννημα σεμνὴ Μαρία
 ἀφιεροῖ σοὶ τῇ πανυμνήτῳ κόρη.⁹³

Translation

The sprout of Eden, the wood of life
 purple-born, humble Maria,
 is devoted to you the Virgin who is praised by all.

Remarks

This epigram written in all stressed caps is comprised of three lines engraved at the back side of a cross. This cross was placed in the central compartment of a gold-plated *staurothéke* decorated with precious stones. It is now being kept at the church of St. Eloi in Eine, Belgium.⁹⁴ The first two lines are engraved on the vertical part of the cross while the third is divided on each side of the horizontal axle of the cross.⁹⁵

Its first reading is very informative: Τὸ τῆς Ἑδὲμ βλάστημα, τὸ ζωῆς ξύλον (line 1), meaning the cross, is gifted by Maria, τὸ πορφύρας γέννημα (line 2), meaning a woman of royal descent, to πανυμνήτῳ κόρη (line 3), meaning the Virgin Mary.

⁹³ Epigram on enamel. A. Frolov marks the date of the epigram in the 11th century (1085). See FROLOW (1961: 283 [no. 249]); RHOBY (2010: 152–154 [no. Me3]); 496 [im. 20]); ROMANO (1980: 119 [no. 33], 155 [Italian translation], 187 [comments]; VOORDECKERS – MILIS (1969: 461, tab. II; Βαρχός (1984: I, 203; note 30); PAUL (2007: 251 [no. 24]); LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE (1982: 152 [no. O.21]; 154 [im.]).

⁹⁴ VOORDECKERS – MILIS (1969: 461; taf. I–II); LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE (1982: 152 [no. O.21]); 154 [im.]).

⁹⁵ The beginning of the epigram is distinct by the engraved cross sign. The end of lines 1 and 2 is seen from the two semi-colons, and the end of the third line is seen from the four semi colons. See e.g. RHOBY (2010: 152).

In more detail, the first line references Eden alluding to ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς ἐν μέσῳ τῷ παραδείσῳ,⁹⁶ so as to refer to the new wood of life (τὸ ζωῆς ξύλον), i.e. the wood of the crucifixion cross. The second line informs us of the person who orders the specific cross and the composition of the epigram. This person is, of course, Maria Komnene, second daughter of Alexios I Komnenos and Irene Doukaina,⁹⁷ who we meet in our next epigram (epigram no.5), and sister of Eudokia, whom we met in the previous epigram (epigram no. 3). Maria Komnene lived from 1085 to 1136 and was married to Nikephoros Euphorbenos Katakalon, son of Constantine Euphorbenos Katakalon,⁹⁸ one of the most important Generals of Alexios I Komnenos.⁹⁹ Her royal descent is stated, as in the case of Eudokia, with the use of the word πορφύρα accompanied by the word γέννημα and not κλάδος as in epigram no.3.¹⁰⁰ The second line gives us some extra information about Maria, since she is characterized as humble. We are thus prompted to consider her possible positioning within a nunnery which may have been the case after her husband died some time between 1118 and 1130.

As for the nunnery she may have joined till the end of her life, we get some information from the third and final line. Maria donates the cross to the παννυμνίτῳ κόρῃ, implying the Virgin Mary. Considering that Maria's mother, Irene Doukaina, is the one who founded the nun-

⁹⁶ Gen. 2, 9.

⁹⁷ The first daughter was Anna, and in total Irene Doukaina had nine children, five girls and four boys (see ODB [II: 1009]).

⁹⁸ Βαρζός (1984: I, 198 [no. 33]).

⁹⁹ The family of Katakalon was a byzantine noble family of the 10th century to the 12th century. The first confirmed member was Leo Katakalon, who was a *doméstikos* of the *scholaié* in 900. In the 11th century, military officials such as Demetrios Katakalon, or the commander and military author Katakalon Kekaumenos were prominent figures of the time. The family was particularly known during the reign of Komnenoi and their descendants held prestigious positions. After the 12th century, the family is not seen as much.

¹⁰⁰ This is an expression used by Anna Komnene in her work *Alexiad*, where we read πορφύρας τινθήμα τε καὶ γέννημα (REINCH – KAMBYLIS [2001: 5,10]).

nery of the Virgin Mary (Theotokos *Kecharitoméne*) in Constantinople,¹⁰¹ and that the nunnery was assigned to Maria after the death of her sister Anna, we can safely assume that this is the same nunnery. Such events only serve to highlight the close relationship between the women of the family and the nunnery.

Epigram n. 5

Καὶ τοῦτο γοῦν σοι προσφέρω πανυστάτως
 ἤδη προσεγγίσασα ταῖς Ἄιδου πύλαις,
 τὸ θεῖον ἀνάθημα, τὸ ζωῆς ξύλον,
 ἐν ᾧ τὸ πν(εῦμ)α τῷ τεκόντι παρέθου
 5 καὶ τῶν πόνων ἔληξας, οὓς ἐκαρτέρεις·
 οἷς τοὺς πόνους ἔλυσας, οὓς κατεκρίθην,
 καὶ καρ<ερ>εῖν ἔπεισας ἡμᾶς ἐν πόνοις·
 ταύτην δίδωμι σοὶ τελευταίαν δόσιν
 θνήσκουσα καὶ λήγουσα καὶ γὰρ τῶν πόνων,
 10 ἡ βασιλὶς Δούκαινα, λάτρεις Εἰρήνη,
 Χρυσενδύτις πρὶν, ἀλλὰ νῦν ῥακενδύτις,
 ἐν τρυχίνοις νῦν, ἢ τὸ πρὶν ἐν βυσσίνοις,
 τὰ ῥάκια στέργουσα πορφύρας πλέον
 πορφυρίδ<α> κρίνουσα τὴν ἐπωμίδα {(καί)}
 15 μελεμβαφῇ ἔχουσα, ὥς δέδοκτό σοι·
 σὺ δ' ἀντιδοίης λῆξιν ἐ<ν> μακαρίοις
 καὶ χαρμονὴν ἄληκτον ἐν σεσωσμένοις.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ GAUTHIER (1985); VOORDECKERS – MILIS (1969: 467–470).

¹⁰² RHOBY (2010: 268–272 [no. Me90]; 516 [im. 71–74]); ROMANO (1980: 120–121 [no. 35]; 155–156 [Italian translation]; 187 [comments]; FROLOW (1961: 315–316 [no. 308]); HAHNLOSER (1965: 35f [no. 25]; tab. XXVIII; HAHNLOSER (1971: 35–7 [no. 25]); PASINI (1885–1886: 29 [no. 5]); 28 [sketch]); GUILLOU (1996: 91[f]–93 [no. 90], tab. 94–98 [im. 90a–e]); PAUL (2007: 250f [no. 23]); HÖRANDNER (1998: 311 [no. 90]).

Translation

And this I give you towards the end of my life,
 I am closing in to the gates of Hades,
 the sacred devotion, the wood of life,
 on which you have given your spirit to Father
 5 and stopped the pains you were suffering.
 With these you stopped the pains, to which I am condemned,
 and persuaded us to suffer those pains.
 This last gift I give you
 as I am dying in pains,
 10 queen Doukaina, your slave Irene,
 who once used to wear gold, but now I am dressed with the
 monastical rag,
 with this thread garment, I who was once dressed in por phýra,
 I now prefer the rags more than porphýra
 choosing the rag over the purple garment,
 15 wearing black, since you wanted it that way.
 May you give me an end among the blessed in return
 and endless joy among those who are saved.

Remarks

This titleless long epigram is engraved on a cross comprised by two shards of the crucifixion wood. Its four edges are covered with protective casings made with gold-plated silver. On these casings we find the engraved lines in a partially stressed all caps font.¹⁰³ Its seventeen lines are divided as follows: the first five lines are on the top casing marked

¹⁰³ The artifact is now kept in a kind of box in the shape of a cross, made with crystal and gold-plated silver, which is a later work by a Venetian workshop in the 16th century. The *staurothéke* is kept in the church of Saint Marcus in Venice, Italy. See Rhoby (2010: 268); Romano (1980: 48).

with a cross -pretty standard for such artefacts-, lines 6–9 are on the left casing, lines 10–13 are on the right, and lines 14–17 are on the bottom casing.¹⁰⁴

As for its content, the epigram can be divided into two separate contextual entities. The first and largest part comprises of lines 1–15 and the second is only made by the final two lines (lines 16–17). The first part (lines 1–15) gives enough information about who offers this cross to Christ and why.

In more detail, in the central part of the epigram, we see pretty clearly the name of the donor which is none other than a woman, Irene Doukaina (ἡ βασιλὶς Δούκαινα, λάτρις Εἰρήνη – line 10),¹⁰⁵ wife to Alexios I Komnenos¹⁰⁶ who died in 1118, and mother to successor John II. Therefore, this is a woman of royal descent, high social and financial status -if not the highest since she is the emperor's wife- who orders this valuable artefact to be constructed.

In this epigram, she is the narrator,¹⁰⁷ and addresses directly Christ, to whom she is dedicating the cross (Καὶ τοῦτο γοῦν σοι προσφέρω παννυστάτως – line 1).¹⁰⁸ This happens towards the end of her life (ἤδη προσεγγίσασα ταῖς Ἰδου πύλαις, / ... / ταύτην δίδωμι σοὶ τελευταίαν δόσιν / θνήσκουσα καὶ λήγουσα κἀγὼ τῶν πόνων – lines 2, 8 and 9), since after the death of her husband Alexios I Komnenos (in 1118) and the ascension of her son John II to power, she decides to become a mem-

¹⁰⁴ Of course, such an order of reading lines is supported by their content and the grammatical and syntactical rules.

¹⁰⁵ ODB (II: 1009); POLEMIS (1968: 70–74); SKOULATOS (1980: 119–124).

¹⁰⁶ ODB (I: 63); CHALANDON (1912); ANGOLD (1984: 102–149).

¹⁰⁷ Let us note that the use of the first-person singular helps in the efficiency of prayer towards God (see TALBOT [1999: 81]).

¹⁰⁸ We should really note the second position of the deictic pronoun τοῦτο in the first line of the epigram since this makes it clear that the epigram wants to present the *staurothéke* to the audience. Finally, this deictic pronoun leaves no doubt that this is an epigram meant to be engraved. See HOSTETLER (2016: 89).

ber of a nunnery.¹⁰⁹ There she dies, as shown to us in lines 10–15 of the epigram. The nunnery must be the one in Constantinople dedicated to the Virgin Mary (Theotokos *Kecharitoméne*), which is the one she founded earlier in her life.¹¹⁰ It is very likely that this is the same nunnery as epigram no.4, in which, τὸ πορφύρεας γέννημα σεμνὴ Μαρία Komnene, daughter of Irene Doukaina, dedicated her cross to the Virgin Mary. What we can see here is a pattern¹¹¹ of women offering crosses to that nunnery, creating something like a tradition on behalf of the women of this particular family (given that the same happened with mother and daughter).¹¹²

It is also worth noting that lines 11–15 give us a comparison between the luxury of purple (πορφύρεα) and the simplicity of the black rags. This comparison serves to highlight one of the advantages of the latter towards the salvation of the soul.¹¹³ The antonymous pairs of that comparison are indicative of it such as χρυσευδύτις – ῥακενδύτις (line

¹⁰⁹ Irene Doukaina retired to the *Kecharitoméne* nunnery, in 1118, a date that can be used as *terminus post quem* if we are to date the epigram.

¹¹⁰ ODB (II: 1118); GAUTHIER (1985); JANIN (1969²: 188–191).

¹¹¹ Let us note that in Byzantium offering artefacts to a monastery or a church in an effort to save the souls of the donors took many forms. Aside from crosses and other holy items, we also see books of fine workmanship, oftentimes decorated, which were gifted to the libraries of monasteries and churches. Mostly we see that in the 11th century and in the reign of Palaiologoi (see CAVALLLO [2008: 134]; Ευαγγέλατου-Νοταρά [2000: 171–270]; Ευαγγέλου-Νοταρά [2003]).

¹¹² Women of the family of Komnenoi were involved in several small-scale charities such as the creation of valuable artefacts accompanied by epigrams for the churches of Constantinople. Irene Doukaina is a prime example since she offered to the *Kecharitoméne* nunnery at least twenty icons and six crosses, as seen in the monastic *typikón* (see GAUTHIER [1985: 152–155]). The creation of precious icons to be gifted to God by both men and women of the Byzantine empire served as a token of wealth and power and it was not uncommon for that time (see NORDHAGEN [1987]) particularly during the 12th century (see ΠΑΠΑΜΑΣΤΟΡΑΚΗΣ [2002]).

¹¹³ For the production and use of *porphýra* in Byzantium generally see CARILE (1998); for its symbolic value see DAGRON (1994), in particular for the period of the reign of Komnenoi see STANKOVIĆ (2008). For the Byzantine monastical attire see FAURO (2003). For the detailed description of the Byzantine attire (according to social class, construction materials and colors) see ΚΟΥΚΟΥΛΕΣ (1955a: II/2; 5–59).

11) and ἐν τρυχίνοις – ἐν βυσσίνοις (line 12), which show the transition from the cosmic, rich and royal life to the simple, humble and monastical life. We should also note the use of the word ἐπωμίδα (line 14), which is another important component of the byzantine monastical attire, i.e. the black vestments (μελεμβαφῇ - line 15) of byzantine monks and nuns.

The second part of the epigram (lines 16-17) clarifies the purpose of creating a particular artefact since the donor Irene asks Christ in exchange (ἀντιδοίης – line 16) that she may be gifted the blissful end to her life thus joining those who are already saved. It is worth noting that the use of the optative mood (ἀντιδοίης – line 16), instead of the more usual imperative (ἀνάστηθι: epigram no.2 – line 7; δέχου, σκέπε: epigram no 6 – line 8) or the indicative (αἰτῶ: epigram no.3 - line 4), renders the statement of the request milder.

Epigram n. 6

Βραχὺν ὑπνώσας ὕπνον ἐν τριδενδ[ρί]α
 ὁ παμβασιλεὺς καὶ θεάν(θρωπ)ος Λόγος
 πολλὴν ἐπεβράβευσε τῷ δένδρῳ χάριν·
 ἐμψύχεται γὰρ πᾶς πυρρὸς νόσος
 5 ὁ προσπεφυγὼς τοῖς τριδενδρίας κλάδοις·
 ἀλλὰ φλογθεὶς ἐν μέσῃ μεσεμβρία
 ἔδραμον, ἦλθον, τοῖς κλάδοις ὑπείσεδυν·
 καὶ σῇ σκιᾷ δέχου με καὶ καλῶς σκέπε,
 ὦ συσκιάζον δένδρον ἅπασαν χθόνα,
 10 καὶ τὴν Ἀερμών ἐνστάλαξόν μοι δρόσον
 ἐκ Δουκι(κ)ῆς φυέντι καλλιδενδρίας,
 ἧς ῥιζόπρεμνον ἡ βασιλὶς Εἰρήνη,
 ἡ μητρομάμμη, τῶν ἀνάκτων τὸ κλέος,
 Ἀλεξίου κρατοῦντος Αὐσόνων δάμαρ·

- 15 ναί, ναί, δυσωπῶ τὸν μόν(ον) φύλακά μου
 σὸς δοῦλος Ἀλέξιος ἐ[κ] γένους Δούκας.¹¹⁴

Translation

- After He was asleep for a while on wood made of three trees
 the king of all and the God-man Logos
 He gave great grace to the tree,
 because anyone who is burning with disease, is cooled off
 5 if he seeks refuge to the branches of these three trees;
 but I was burning at noon
 and ran, got into the branches.
 Take me in your shadow and protect me,
 Oh you, tree that casts a shadow all over the earth,
 10 and drop the coolness of Aërmon on me
 coming from the noble tree of Doukai,
 its roots are queen Irene,
 grandmother on the side of her mother, the glory of the palaces,
 wife to Alexios, king of Ausones.
 15 Yes, yes, I beg my sole guardian
 I, your slave Alexios, of Doukas descent.

¹¹⁴ RHOBY (2010: 174–178 [no. Me15]); ROMANO (1980: 121 [no. 36]; 156 [Italian translation]; 187–188 [comments]); FROLOW (1961: 320–322 [no. 319]); KLEIN (2004; 220; note 196); PAUL (2007: 251–252).

Remarks

The second extensive epigram of 16 lines was engraved on a *staurothéke* (lost after the French revolution)¹¹⁵ by Alexios Doukas,¹¹⁶ as we are informed in the last line (σὸς δοῦλος Ἀλέξιος ἐ[κ] γένους Δούκας). Specifically, this is the son of Anna Komnene and Nikephoros Bryennios and grandson of Alexios I Komnenos and Irene Doukaina (lines 11–14).

The epigram can be divided into two sections. In the first section, lines 1–5, Alexios refers to παμβασιλεὺ καὶ θεάν(θρωπ)ο Λόγο (line 2), i.e. Christ, who after a brief sleep on the cross made of three woods (Βραχὺν ὑπνώσας ὕπνον ἐν τριδενδ[ρί]α - line 1), gave to it such grace (πολλὴν ἐπεβράβευσε τῷ δένδρῳ χάριν - line 3) that it could cure any sick man seeking refuge in its shadow (lines 4–5). We observe the use of similar patterns as previous epigrams, such as the metaphorization of the death of Christ as sleep (epigram no.2. - line 6: γλυκὺν τὸν ὕπνον ὑπνοῖς) and the three-tree analogy (epigram no.2 - lines 4–5: τριδενδρία), where the wood of the cross¹¹⁷ is metaphorized as a tree¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Although the traces of the *staurothéke* are lost after the French Revolution, possibly because it was destroyed, we still have the descriptions and its design from the time it was placed in the Abbey of Grandmont. According to these designs, the *staurothéke* shows the crucifixion, with Christ being in the center, the Virgin Mary on the left and John on the right while two angels were placed above the cross. The particularity of such a depiction is that there was a picture of the donor Alexios at the base of the cross holding his hands in prayer. The inside of the cross-shape *staurothéke* was decorated with precious stones. See OGIER (1658); HOSTETLER (2017: 180–181).

¹¹⁶ RHOBY (2010: 175); ROMANO (1980: 187–188); HOSTETLER (2017: 182–183); Βαζός (1084: I; 308–317 [no. 65]). It is surely worth noting that Alexios I had five grandsons with the same name so we cannot know who is who exactly.

¹¹⁷ The majority of the epigrams of the middle Byzantine period use the words σταυρὸς and ξύλον in order to refer to *staurothékes* (HOSTETLER [2016: 178–186]).

¹¹⁸ The tree as a symbol is seen in many religious texts (e.g. Ps. 96, 12: τότε ἀγαλλιᾶσονται πάντα τὰ ξύλα τοῦ δρυμοῦ [= The field and all that is therein will jubilate; then all the forest trees will sing praises]; Ezek. 34, 27: καὶ τὰ ξύλα τὰ ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ δώσει τὸν καρπὸν αὐτῶν, καὶ ἡ γῆ δώσει τὴν ἰσχὺν αὐτῆς, καὶ κατοικήσουσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς αὐτῶν ἐν ἐλπίδι εἰρήνης, καὶ γνώσονται ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι Κύριος ἐν τῷ συντρίψαι με τὸν ζυγὸν αὐτῶν [= And the tree of the field will give forth its fruit and the land will

whose shadow can cool off the sick sinful souls of humans.¹¹⁹ In the second section, lines 6-16, Alexios is requesting that Christ accepts him under the shadow of the cooling branches of the cross-tree and protects him (lines 6-10). Still, the lines which interest us the most and are relevant to our topic, are lines 11-14 in which Alexios Doukas makes a note

give forth its produce, and they will know that I am the Lord when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from those who enslave them]), oftentimes as a linking chain, as a bridge between God and human, between the divine and earthly world (see Τσιρέλη [2014: 117]), a bridge that collapses after the original sin and is given a new chance with the cross of the crucifixion. Christ, then, as the new Adam, with His victory against death gives humans the chance to return to their former heavenly state; a chance in the form of a promise, as we are informed by John in the Revelation (Rev. 2, 7: Τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ φαγεῖν ἐκ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ μου.; Rev. 22, 2: ἐν μέσῳ τῆς πλατείας αὐτῆς καὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ξύλον ζωῆς, ...; Rev. 22, 19: καὶ ἐάν τις ἀφέλῃ ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων τοῦ βιβλίου τῆς προφητείας ταύτης, ἀφελεῖ ὁ Θεὸς τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς καὶ ἐκ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἁγίας, τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ), highlighting the prominent position of the tree since this is the one that ‘opens’ (Genesis) and ‘closes’ (Revelation) the biblical text. As a symbol, finally, the tree makes its appearance in the Proverbs of Solomon, where it offers security (Prov. 3, 18: ξύλον ζωῆς ἐστὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἀντεχομένοις αὐτῆς, καὶ τοῖς ἐπερειδομένοις ἐπ’ αὐτὴν ὡς ἐπὶ Κύριον ἀσφαλῆς [= It is a tree of life for those who grasp it, and those who draw near it are fortunate]), justice (Prov. 11, 30: ἐκ καρποῦ δικαιοσύνης φύεται δένδρον ζωῆς [= The fruit of a righteous man is the tree of life, and the wise man acquires souls]) and spiritual healing (Prov. 15, 4: ἴασις γλώσσης δένδρον ζωῆς, ὁ δὲ συντηρῶν αὐτὴν πλησθήσεται πνεύματος [= A healing tongue is a tree of life, but if there is perverseness in it, it causes destruction by wind]).

¹¹⁹ It is a fact that Byzantine poets throughout times (from 8th to 14th century) use the metaphor of the cross of the crucifixion as a plant and actually a tree planted at just the right moment (11th century, anonymous: Οὗτος φυτευθεὶς εἰς κ(αι)ρὸν εὐκ(αι)ρίας. See RHOBY (2014: 752–753 [no. UK3]; 971 [im. CXIV]) in the θεόδροσον Golgotha (13th–14th century, Manuel Philes, line 1: Δένδρον φυτευθὲν εἰς θεόδροσον τόπον. See MILLER (1855–57 = 1967: I; 89 [no. CLXXXIV]) and blossomed in a prayer land (12th century, anonymous, line 1: Τόπου προσευχῆς ἐκφυὲν φέρω ξύλον. See FROLOW (1961: 362 [no. 405]), so as an admirable sprout (8th–9th century, Theodore of Stoudios, line 1: Θαυμαστὸν ἔργον, ὡς Θεῷ πλακέν, σύ με. See Theod. Stud, *Refutatio poem. Iconoclastici*, PG 99, 440 B–C) to water the world with the coolness of his wonders giving strength (8th–9th century, Theodore of Stoudios, lines 4–6: Δρόσους ὕω γὰρ θαυματουργίας μάλα. / Ὡς κόσμον ἄρδει ταῖς ἀπορροαῖς ἅπαξ. / Πῶσεις παρέχων, καὶ τί τῶν οὐκ εὖ βίω; See Theod. Stud, *Refutatio poem. Iconoclastici*, PG 99, 440 B–C), shadowing the earth (epigram no. 6 – line 9) and dripping τὴν Ἀερῶν δρόσον (epigram no. 6 – line 10) onto the souls of all the faithful people who needs it.

of his descent for which he is very proud, highlighting his origins in his mother's family. He uses significant and complicated terms and phrases so as to make it clear that he is of noble descent. As such, he mentions that he is the offspring of noble generations (φυνέντι καλλιιδενδρίας – line 11), whose root is queen Irene Doukaina (ρίζοπρεμνον ή βασιλῖς Εἰρήνη – line 12), the glory of all the palaces (τῶν ἀνάκτων τὸ κλέος – line 13) and the grandmother of his mother (ή μητρομάμη – line 13), Anna Komnene. The tree metaphor then serves to give sense to the concept of family and it is used to show the close relation between its members, the wood of the holy cross and the *staurothékes*.¹²⁰

Briefly, we should make note of the fact that a male member of the royal family self-identifies through his noble descent on his mother's side and not on his father's. This serves to show the important status of women at the time, his grandmother in particular, not just for him alone but in the conscience of all the members of the family. His clear and straightforward declaration of respect towards her in the epigram is a daring statement.

Summary

In the Byzantine epigrams regarding the cross and the crucifixion composed by Nicholas Kallikles we see prominent female figures. These are women of noble descent, members of the royal Byzantine Empire of Komnenoi, who ordered holy artefacts, such as crosses and *staurothékes*, engraved with epigrams by Nicholas Kallikles. This allows us to claim that Kallikles¹²¹ must have had close relations with the royal Byzantine

¹²⁰ We have to mention the six crosses and five *staurothékes* ordered by Irene Doukaina (GAUTHIER [1985: 152–155]), and also the reliquaries of the holy cross used by Alexios I to negotiate with the Normans (HOSTETLER [2017: 182–183]).

¹²¹ It is reminded that Nicholas Kallikles was the chief doctor of the imperial court during the reign of Alexios I Komnenos, and he was his personal physician. This, on

women of the time, possibly through philological meetings that took place in the imperial court,¹²² which reflects their high educational status and their literary concerns¹²³

It is worth noting that some of these works of art, created following the order of royal Byzantine women, were connected in one way or

its own, could explain why these epigrams were assigned to Kallikles on behalf of the two women, the wife and daughter of Alexios.

¹²² It has been stated that in Byzantium the literary texts were narrated in front of an audience of cultured people. There is also use of the word θέατρον, wanting to show how a concept known from the antiquities is now blooming again during the reign of Komnenoi and Palaiologoi (see HUNGER [1978; trans. 2008⁴: I; 131; 138]; for Byzantine theatres see MARCINIAK [2007]; PUCHNER [2002]; for on-stage reading see CAVALLO [2008: 85-99]). In the 12th century, there were some scholar circles consisting of women such as Anna Dalassene, Irene Doukaina, Anna Komnene (mother, wife, and daughter of Alexios I Komnenos, respectively), queen Maria (wife to Michael VII Doukas first and Nikephoros Botaneiates later) and Sebastokratorissa Irene (wife to Andronikos Komnenos, second son of John II). For the relationship of Byzantine women with literature, the education they received and some examples see CAVALLO (2008: 63-70); MALTESE (1991); ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ (2009²: 185-213). For Sebastokratorissa Irene (JEFFREYS - JEFFREYS [1994]) and her literary circle comprised by the most notable writers of the time such as Manganeios Prodromos, Constantine Manasses, John Tzetzes and Jacob the Monk, see RHOBY (2009); JEFFREYS (1982); JEFFREYS (2011/12) and CHALANDON (1912: II; 213), where we read: 'Irènea été le centre d'une petite cour littéraire dont les membres l'ont célébrée en vers et en prose'. Finally, let us mention the concept of muscle memory practices (movements and gestures), which helped to memorize lines (since their memorization was easier than that of prose) and present them lively to the audience (see e.g. PAPALEXANDROU [2007: 165], on the easiness of memorizing lines and the characteristics of their formality; CARRUTHERS [1990: 170], for the nature of the easily memorized texts; JEFFREYS - JEFFREYS [1986]; CONNERTON [1989]; GEARY [2002], for the relationship of formality and textuality in the Medieval west; THOMAS [1992], for ancient Greece).

¹²³ For Irene Doukaina, several scholars have said that she indeed had a small literary circle and its members read prose and lines (see MULLETT [1984: 177-179]). In this framework, we may accept an out-loud reading of epigrams engraved or drawn on artefacts (see CAVALLO [2008: 82-83]; SPINGOU [2013: 142-143]; BERNARD [2014: 64]).

In any case, the position of an engraved line was crucial for its audience and the reading. We need to consider the definitive role of the distance between the audience and the line which may have inhibited its reading (JAMES [2007: 188-203]), and also the degree to which it was legible (SPINGOU [2013: 150-159]). Finally, there may have been mediators who had the role of explaining the epigrams to those who couldn't read them.

another with nunneries.¹²⁴ Prime examples of this are the two epigrams no.4 and no.5 by Irene Doukaina and her daughter Maria, respectively, which are dedicated to the nunnery of the Virgin Mary (Theotokos *Kecharitoméne*) in Constantinople.

In conclusion, what we should make note of is the prominent female donorship during the reign of Komnenoi as a token of noble women's powerful position in the Byzantine empire given how they were able to order such precious artefacts. These orders serve to show the craftsmanship in Byzantine micro-art, Byzantine women's deep religious faith and honest feelings towards God, as well as their right to make such expensive and high-profile orders. Undoubtedly, these Byzantine ladies had high social and financial status,¹²⁵ but also a sophisticated level of scholarly knowledge rendering them capable of being remembered by other members of their families (epigram no.6) in their request to join Christ in the Garden of Eden¹²⁶. It is actually a kind of

¹²⁴ For a list of women founders of monasteries in Constantinople see KOUBENA (1991) and TALBOT (2001), while for women as founders of double monasteries (for men and women): HILPISCH (1928: 5–24); PARGOIRE (1906); BECK (1959: 138) in Byzantium see MITSIOU (2014). For the relation between some families of the Byzantine Empire and monasteries see e.g. TALBOT (1990) and THOMAS (1987).

¹²⁵ Their social status and financial activities involved founding nunneries like in the case of Irene Doukaina, and sponsoring the renovation of churches in prominent parts of Constantinople, relaying a political message to the citizens and essentially showcasing their wealth and power through richly renovating prominent churches and monasteries around the city (see DIMITROPOULOU [2007: 102–103] and DIMITROPOULOU [2010: 165–166]). For the founding of convents by women as an act of ideological power and social recognition see JAMES (2001: 159); WEINGROD (1977: 43); HILL (1999: 178); DIMITROPOULOU (2010: 167). In Cappadocia we see the founding of churches mostly by women in the 13th century. It is worth noting that they were significantly decorated on the inside (see KARAMAOUNA – PEKER – UYAR [2014]).

¹²⁶ Let's note those cases in Byzantine history where the empress works together with the emperor – and in some cases, as the emperor or against him – (Theodora, Irene of Athens [see RUNCIMAN (1978)], Theophano, Anna Dalassene – mother of Komnenoi – and others). This power, or better yet the influence to power, of the Byzantine empress has been characterized as “the power behind the throne” which in fact, is directly linked with the personal power of each empress over her husband (for the term “power behind the throne” and its importance in early Byzantine years see JAMES

investment of wealth for the eternal life,¹²⁷ hoping that Christ would mediate for a place in Heaven.¹²⁸ And there is no better way to do that than founding or renovating monasteries and churches and also gifting expensive and valuable artefacts to the church.¹²⁹ So, the benefit is on behalf of religious donors -men and women- given that both had the same target,¹³⁰ with a double meaning: saving their souls in celestial life and being socially acknowledged in earthly life.¹³¹ We could thus claim,

[2001: 84-88], while it is interesting to see the articles in the volume GARLICK – DIXON – ALLEN [1992], which focus on particular Byzantine empresses). See also DELBRÜCK (1913); MISSIOU (1982); RUNCIMAN (1972). It is worth noting the case of the daughter of Alexios I Komnenos, Anna Komnene, who aspired in the 12th century to succeed her father together with her husband Nikephoros Bryennios (see HILL [1996a: 45–53]; HILL [1996b]), but didn't manage to do so and became a really good author writing the story of her father in *Alexiad*. It is also powerful proof of the strong presence of women empresses on coins (see GARLAND [1999: 229–231]; GKANTZIOS [2016]; BRUBAKER – TOBLER [2000] and JAMES [2001: 101–132] for the presence of the Byzantine empress on coins of the 4th and 8th century and examples of such coins and their manufacturing dates) and their presence in art (see JAMES [2001: 26–49]). Finally, the Byzantine rituals show us how the empress was treated in Byzantium (see JAMES [2001: 50–58] for the early period, while for the title of empress and its importance see BENSAMMER [1976]).

¹²⁷ See Δημητρουπούλου (2006: 144); WHARTON (1981).

¹²⁸ The monasteries' *typiká* show the expectations of the founders for Christ and the Virgin Mary and other Saints to mediate in order to save their souls and the souls of their families (GAUTHIER [1985: 19–29]). See also GALATARIOTOU (1987: 91–95); DIMITROPOULOU (2010: 162–163; 167) and GALATARIOTOU (1998). After all, it was a popular belief that the worthy good souls could cross the gates of heaven (see EVERY [1976: 142–148]; MORRIS [1995: 128] and DIMITROPOULOU [2010: 162]).

¹²⁹ CUTLER (1994: 302). Let's note that there was a hierarchy in the different forms of female donorship since mostly empresses could found monasteries while the remaining women of the royal family could support them financially and dedicate artefacts, acts which reflected their financial means (see Δημητρουπούλου [2006: 144]; JAMES [2001: 148–163], for the empresses as donors during the early Byzantine period). Let's note that the construction of a church by an empress follows the example of Saint Helena, particularly during the 4th and 5th century (see BRUBAKER [1999]). Finally, we should note the two women of noble descent of the 14th century, Maria Aggelina Doukaina Palaiologina of Ioannina and Helena Uglješa of Serres, who dedicated a considerable number of artefacts to Byzantine monasteries, for example in Meteora and Mount Athos (see VASSILAKI [2012]).

¹³⁰ DIMITROPOULOU (2007: 105).

¹³¹ Δημητρουπούλου (2006: 145).

rounding this paper, that in Byzantium the best way to spend money was to order the construction of holy artefacts, the founding or renovation of monasteries and churches, all in an effort to persuade God for a spot in His eternal kingdom all the while showcasing their social and financial superiority.¹³²

Epilogue

How would the Byzantines themselves have answered the question, what was the place of women in their society? From the 4th century to the end of the Byzantine Empire, the answer would be broadly the same, with some exceptions. Generally speaking, then, a Byzantine would answer that the place of women is exhausted within the family. Her destination is marriage and motherhood, and her place is the home, from which she must not leave except to go to church, and even then, she will not be unaccompanied.¹³³ However, the extent to which a Byzantine woman could move freely outside the home was something that was directly related to the social status of her family. For example, the women of aristocratic and wealthy families were much more engaged in domestic life, where they had the help of servants and slaves for their various activities, unlike the wives of the poorer citizens, who were often obliged to earn their living outside, either as workers in the

¹³² DIMITROPOULOU (2010: 169). During the 10th to 15th centuries these donations-gifts were substantial in churches and monasteries (see GIROS [2012: 97–98]). We should not forget that monasteries such as the ones in Mount Athos were given prominence due to their large donations and gifts even from people of other religions. Naturally, politics played its role in such cases, since there was balance and conflicts were avoided for the people and for the monks (see Μανιάτη-Κοκκίνη [2003: 62–66], particularly for the period between 12th and 14th century).

¹³³ The contribution of Kekaumenos in *Στρατηγικόν*, written in the 11th century, is characteristic: *Τὰς θυγατέρας σου ὡς καταδίκους ἔχε ἐγκεκλεισμένας καὶ ἀπροόπτους*. See Τσουγκαράκης (1993: 173).

harvest, or as vendors in the market.¹³⁴ The latter had absolutely no access to political power, as did their husbands, and were illiterate, as poverty contributed even more to these negative and unpleasant living conditions.

But what happened to the women of the aristocracy? They, on the contrary, had access to education as well as economic power and political power, up to a point. In terms of education, we recall that Anna Komnene was one of the most learned people of her time, while her mother, Irene Doukaina, was also a woman of knowledge, especially theological knowledge. It is worth noting that the position of women of the aristocracy was strengthened in the 11th and 12th centuries due to the strategy pursued by the new aristocracy, mainly through intermarriage. The multiple concordances between the Komnenoi and the Doukai in the late 11th century bound these two families with strong ties and resulted in the accession of two of their representatives, Alexios Komnenos and Irene Doukaina, to the throne. As a result, the aristocracy of the 12th century consisted largely of the Doukas, the Komnenoi and their families with whom they were related through arranged marriages.

The era of Komnenoi has, therefore, several women who played an important role in imperial political life, mainly influencing a man, husband, or son. Thus, we see the women of Alexios Komnenos' immediate entourage founding monasteries from his property and even owning relics of the Holy Cross, which in previous historical periods were inextricably linked to the power of men, a symbol of power, mainly in connection with campaign and battles (for the protection of troops). At this point, it should not escape our attention that the finding of the Holy Cross is due to a woman, namely the empress Saint Helena. Irene Doukaina is the first known empress to possess part of the most important relic of the Byzantines, the Holy Cross, and in this way, she emerges as a

¹³⁴ LAIOU (2001).

new Helena. She even places these parts of the Holy Wood of the Cross in crucifixes made with luxurious raw materials (e.g. gold, pearls, enamel, etc.) and commissions for the creation of metrical inscriptions to notable scholars of her time in order to be engraved on them (epigram no.1, 2 and 5). Her two porphyrogenites daughters, Maria (epigram no.4) and Eudokia (epigram no.3), had similar engraved *staurothekes*, following the example of their mother. Finally, the Komnenoi era, which is the focus of this article with the epigrams of Nicholas Kallikles, men and women determine their genealogy independently of the biological sex of their ennobled ancestors. Thus, the importance of a woman's social origin as a factor in promoting a husband or any other offspring, such as a grandchild (epigram no.6), is clearly emphasized.

Abbreviations

A	Αρχαιολογία
Ae	Aevum. Rassegna di scienze storiche, linguistiche e filologiche
B	Byzantion. Revue internationale des études byzantines
BF	Byzantinische Forschungen. Internationale Zeitschrift für Byzantinistik
BMGS	Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies
Bsl	Byzantinoslavica. Revue internationale des études byzantines
BZ	Byzantinische Zeitschrift
CCha	Continuity and Change
ChH	Church History
DACL	Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie
DOP	Dumbarton Oaks Papers
ΔEBMM	Δίπτυχα Εταιρείας Βυζαντινών και Μεταβυζαντινών Μελετών
ECR	Eastern Churches Review
EO	Échos d'Orient
GHi	Gender and History
GLB	Graeco-Latina Brunensia
GOTR	Greek Orthodox Theological Review
JEH	Journal of Ecclesiastical History

JMRU	Jurisprudencija/Jurisprudence of Mykolo Romerio universitetas
JÖB	Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik
M	Μνήμων
MEMIPCH	Medieval and Early Modern Iberian Peninsula Cultural History: Mirabilia
MDAI.RA	Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung
NE	Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων
NRh	Nea Rhōmē/Νέα Ῥώμη
ODB	Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium
OT	Oral Tradition
PG	Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca, acc. J. P. Migne, vol. 1–161 (Parisiis, 1857–1866)
PL	Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina, acc. J. P. Migne, vol. 1–221 (Parisiis, 1844–1864)
REB	Revue des Études Byzantines
ROC	Revue de l'Orient Chrétien
RSBN	Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici
SUC	Sapiens Ubique Civis
TM	Travaux et Mémoires du Centre de recherches d'histoire et civilisation byzantines
V	Viator: Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies
WJK	Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte
ZRVI	Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta

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The Odyssey of the Ravenna Manuscript: Urbino Time

The aim of this paper is to define the chronology of the Ravenna manuscript (R 429), which is the oldest and qualitatively best witness of Aristophanes' plays. The manuscript was held at the Court of the Dukes of Urbino between the end of the 15th and 16th centuries. As it is well known, the Ravenna manuscript was in Florence in 1516, but how and when the Ms. came into the Library of Urbino are questions as obscure as how and when it was carried away. Over the centuries, scholars have tried to investigate such issues, but they still disagree to this day. After summarizing the bibliography concerning such chronology, I focus on the ancient indices of the Library of Urbino. Special attention will be given to the so-called "Old Index" and the "Index of Veterani". By studying these indices and their marginal annotations and also the prefaces of two printed editions of Aristophanes (the 1515 and 1516 Giunta editions), it is possible to suggest that the Ravenna manuscript arrived in Urbino at Federico da Montefeltro's time (that is to say before 1482) and that it left the library in 1515–1516.

Keywords: Aristophanes, Ravenna manuscript, Library of Urbino, Giunta's editions.

As it is well known since the study of Von Velsen, the Ravenna manuscript was part of the volumes of Greek poetry at the Library of the Dukes of Urbino.¹ By the will of Pope Alexander VII, in 1657 the manuscripts of this library were transferred to the Vatican Library, forming the

¹ VON VELSEN (1871: 4).

section of *Urbinales Graeci*.² But not all the manuscripts reached Rome. Considering only the Greek poetic manuscripts, it can be observed that three of them are not today in the Vatican Library. Among these three, there is the codex known as R 429 since it is preserved in Ravenna.³ It is the oldest and qualitatively best witness of Aristophanes' text since it is dated on a palaeographic basis to the mid-10th century circa and it is the only one that bears all the eleven plays of Aristophanes.⁴

The quaestio of the Ravenna manuscript concerns its troubled history, still unknown in many parts. The milestones in the tradition of this codex can be summarized as follows.⁵ The manuscripts survived the Fourth Crusade in 1204; it was brought by Giovanni Aurispa in 1423 in Italy;⁶ it was taken to Florence by Niccolò Niccoli; it became the property of Angelo Vadio da Rimini;⁷ then it arrived in Urbino. Later, R 429 reached Tuscany. As pointed out by Von Velsen and Zacher, the codex was in Florence in 1516.⁸ Here it was read and annotated by Eufrosino Bonini and thanks to his work in collaboration with the Giunta's press it was possible for the latter to print in 1516 the appendix – including the *Thesmophoriazusae* and the *Lysistrata*, never printed before – of the edition published in 1515, containing nine plays just as the Aldine already printed on the 15th July 1498.⁹ Finally, there was no more news of

² About this transfer see MORANTI–MORANTI (1981).

³ These are the data resulting from a comparison between the *Index Vetus* (on which see infra p. 469) and the current *Urbinali Graeci*. The other two poetic codices missing at the Vatican Library are numbers 114 and 116 of the *Index Vetus*. Both these codices include Homer and are today stored in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan.

⁴ Among the conspicuous bibliography of R 429, see most recently ORSINI (2011: 321).

⁵ A short brief can be found in PRATO (2001: XXXI–XXXV).

⁶ He was traveling in Greece and he brought 238 other codices. For the list see *Epistulae* 38, 53 and 61 del XXIV book in TRAVERSARI (1759) For the role of Aurispa see MIONI (1964: 364).

⁷ See STEFEC (2012: 146, n. 193).

⁸ VON VELSEN (1871); ZACHER (1888).

⁹ On Giunta's edition see infra p. 471–472. Aldine is printed by the Cretan scholar Marco Musuro in Venice. On Giunta and Manuzio see NORTON (1958).

the Ravenna manuscript until 1712, when Pietro Canneti bought it and brought it to Ravenna to the library of the Camaldolese monastery in Classe, where it is still stored today.¹⁰

As Clark pointed out ‘how and when the Ms. came into the Library of Urbino are questions as obscure as how and when it was carried away’.¹¹ Over the years scholarly perspectives have tried to investigate this aspect but critics still disagree to this day.

Before adding new elements to the analysis of this topic, I intend to carry out a summary of the bibliography concerning such chronology.

Clark believes that the codex arrived in Urbino surely after 1498, most probably in 1503.¹² According to the English scholar, this date can be proved by reflecting on the following arguments. The Ravenna manuscript is not mentioned in the list given by Vespasiano da Bisticci in his *Life of Federico da Montefeltro*, which according to Clark was written around 1463.¹³ Francesco Maria I (Duke of Urbino between 1508 and 1538) had neither the financial resources nor the interest for making additions to the library. So, the codex must have been purchased from either Federico or Guidubaldo, that is to say not after 1508. Another terminus can be found in 1498, the date of the Aldine edition. If the manuscript had already been part of the library before 1498, Aldus himself could not have failed to be aware of this codex. So according to Clark, the Ravenna manuscript was acquired by Guidubaldo between 1498 and 1508, probably around 1503, i.e. after his restoration to his dukedom.¹⁴ The Ravenna manuscript had a brief stay in Urbino since it

¹⁰ On Pietro Canneti see PETRUCCI (1975: 125–129).

¹¹ CLARK (1871: 158).

¹² CLARK (1871: 159).

¹³ Vespasiano da Bisticci was the most known Florentine bookseller of the XVth century A.D. He had played a leading role in the establishment of Federico’s Library and he was the first to outline a description of the Library of Federico. His text was edited by GRECO (1970: 355–416). On Vespasiano’s work see also *infra* p. 4468–4469.

¹⁴ In 1502–1503 the duchy of Urbino and the Ducal Library suffered because of the war

was used in Florence by Giunta's brothers in 1516 to print the appendix including *Thesmophoriazusae* and *Lysistrata*. After this use, Clark asserts that the manuscript in all probability never returned to Urbino.

According to Martin, the Ravenna manuscript reached the Library of Urbino before 1482.¹⁵ This can be proved by considering firstly that the most significant acquisitions occurred during Federico's reign. Secondly, the terminus post quem of 1498 is not a valid argument, since Aldus may have known Duke Guidubaldo and may not have known that there was a manuscript bearing all the eleven plays of Aristophanes in Urbino. Thirdly, Vespasiano's catalogue has not to be read with strict historical accuracy and so the fact that Aristophanes is absent from his list is not probative.¹⁶ By these considerations, Martin asserts that the Ravenna Manuscript was purchased by Federico, so before 1482.¹⁷ As for when the codex left Urbino, Martin believes it happened in 1503, since between the years 1502–1503 Guidubaldo was assaulted by Cesare Borgia and was forced to leave the city. Cesare Borgia had the library moved to Forlì, where Guidubaldo found it again in 1504. As pointed out by Le Grelle, there were indeed losses among the manuscripts, but these affected the Latin and not the Greek section.¹⁸ Moreover, as argued by Zacher, if the manuscript had left the Urbino library in 1502–1503, one could not explain Bernardo Giunta's words in the edition of 1516. There he spoke of the 'antiquissimus exemplar ex Urbinatē bibliotheca' which

with Cesare Borgia. On this event see CLOUGH (1966: 103), VOLPE (2005: 105–148) and MORANTI (2023: 53–78).

¹⁵ MARTIN (1882: IX).

¹⁶ On the accuracy of Vespasiano's catalog see *infra*, p. 469.

¹⁷ The same opinion is also expressed by VAN LEEUWEN (1904: VI): 'Quem ex bibliotheca *Urbinatē*, ut vidimus, habebat Euphrosynus, quomodo cunque acceptum. Quam bibliothecam Urbini condidit dux Federicus; ante annum 1482 igitur, quo anno Federicus mortuus est, illuc pervenisse videtur. In Euphrosyni autem Iuntaeque manus postquam pervenit, non rediit in bibliothecam *Urbinatē*'.

¹⁸ LE GRELLE (1921: XXI). On these losses see also PERUZZI (2014: 353).

is described as damaged in the initial folios.¹⁹ Such a description is well suited to the first pages of codex R, as it is preserved today, which is difficult to read in its first pages.²⁰ Therefore, it is impossible to assume that Giunta owned the codex with initial guard sheets bearing information about an Urbino provenance. According to Zacher, most probably Giunta's brother received the Ravenna manuscripts shortly before 1516.²¹

The most recent work concerning the study of the chronology of R429 is the *Lysistrata* edited by Perusino. As for when the Ravenna Manuscript reached the Urbino Library, Perusino believes that the manuscript has been purchased by Guidubaldo, citing as evidence on the one hand the latter's knowledge of Greek and on the other hand the fact that Aldo Manuzio's editio princeps of 1498 does not present the *Lysistrata* and the *Thesmophoriazusae*.²² Along the lines of Clark and Zacher, Perusino suggests that the Ravenna manuscript had left the Urbino library around 1515. By considering the two Giunta's editions, she proposes the period between September 1515 and January 1516, assuming these dates as terminus post quem and terminus ante quem respectively.

To understand this problematic issue, I will consider three aspects. Firstly, according to Stefec's study concerning the figure of Angelo Vadio da Rimini, we deduce that he owned the Ravenna manuscript.²³ An analysis of all the codices in the *Urbinales Graeci* has shown that almost half of the ancient core, acquired during Federico's lifetime, was annotated by Angelo Vadio and must therefore have come from his private

¹⁹ GIUNTA (1516: a II; 54): '[...] ex codice adeo vetusto excerpsimus ut altera interdum dictionis pars ibi desideretur'.

²⁰ VON VELSEN (1871: 6).

²¹ ZACHER (1888: 529, n. 1).

²² PERUSINO-BETA (2020: LXXXIX).

²³ STEFEC (2012: 146, n. 193). Angelo Vadio was born in Rimini. Since his youth, he must have developed an excellent knowledge of Greek and shown a keen interest in Greek manuscripts, as is proved firstly by his letters and secondly by the acquisitions made during his travels around Greece and the Orient, on which see ivi.

library.²⁴ Some of Vadio's manuscripts became part of the library during Federico's duchy as it is evidenced by the decorations.²⁵ These show allegorical and symbolic allusions derived from figurative elements, which are combined with coats of arms celebrating the virtues of the lord of Urbino. Because of such decorations, we can conclude that these manuscripts were acquired before Federico's death, in 1482. The initial folios of the Ravenna manuscript do not bear any trace of this coat of arms, but since the codex had belonged to Angelo Vadio and since almost all the manuscripts of this humanist's personal library were included in the Urbino library before 1482, we may assume the same *terminus ante quem* for the Aristophanes' codex as well.

Secondly the Ravenna manuscript appears in the *Index Vetus*, the first index of the Urbino library that has come down to us, compiled in his first part in 1487 and in his second one between 1496 and 1498.²⁶ At number 123 we read *Aristophanis comoedi insignis comoediae XI. Codex pulcherrimus in croceo*.²⁷ Another list of the works kept in the Urbino library can be found in a passage of Vespasiano da Bisticci, included in the *Life of Federico da Montefeltro*, composed shortly after Federico's death – that is to say, soon after 1482.²⁸ This passage of Vespasiano da Bisticci, written before the *Index Vetus*, thus testifies to the existence of an earlier index of the Urbino library, which must have been compiled while Federico was still alive, but which has not come down to us.²⁹ To understand the re-

²⁴ This is not surprising, since the acquisition of private collections was one of the methods to make additions to the Urbino library (just as in the case of Palla Strozzi's collection). On the ways of increasing codices in the Ducal Library see PERUZZI (2010: 265–304), PERUZZI (2004: 27 sqq.) and MORANTI (1986: 19–49).

²⁵ See *Urb. Gr.* 44; 146; 148; 159.

²⁶ This *Index* is contained in ff. 1r–126r of the current *Urb. lat.* 1761. It is edited in its entirety by STORNAJOLO (1895: LIX–CLXXV). The Greek section of the *Index Vetus* is edited also by STEFEC (2012: 155–162). On this index see MICHELINI TOCCI (1962: 250 sqq.).

²⁷ See *Urb. Lat.* 1761, f. 99v.

²⁸ For this text see GRECO (1970: 386–399).

²⁹ GRECO (1970: 398–399): 'avendo (*scil.* Federico) gl'inventari di tutte le librerie d'Ita-

relationships between these 3 lists – the lost index, the Vespasiano's catalogue and the *Index Vetus* – we can focus on the contrast between the first and second parts of the *Index Vetus* itself. The first part presents more accurate descriptions compared to the second one. But this difference can be simply explained. The first part of the *Index Vetus* is a copy of the first index, lost to us, which is quoted implicitly but not in its entirety in Vespasiano's work. In this way, the *Index Vetus* turns out to be a copy of the first lost index.³⁰ Since the Ravenna manuscript is written in the first part of the *Index Vetus* we can probably assume that it was also listed in the inventory lost to us and so that it was acquired before 1482, i.e. while Federico was still alive. An argument against this hypothesis may be the absence of Aristophanes' works in Vespasiano's list. But it is necessary to consider some aspects of Vespasiano's description to understand firstly its peculiarities and secondly its objective value. Because of the genre of the work, the author's purpose is mainly celebratory. Moreover, his passage presents some critical points. Considering only the Greek list, out of 35 names expressly mentioned by Vespasiano, 14 turn out to be problematic. By this consideration and according to Stornajolo's study,³¹ it seems to me that the description of the Ducal Library in the work of Vespasiano is not a faithful reproduction of the Library.³² So, since the codex is listed in the *Index Vetus* – which directly retraces the first index lost to us – we can conclude that the Ravenna manuscript reached the Urbino library during Federico's duchy.

lia, cominciando a quella del papa, di Firenze di Santo Marco, di Pavia, infino a avere mandato in Inghilterra per lo inventario della libreria dello studio Ausoniense, riscontrando di poi con quello del duca, tutti pecano in una cosa'.

³⁰ See STORNAJOLO (1895: LVI).

³¹ STORNAJOLO (1895: XXIII).

³² After all, drawing up an accurate inventory of the Urbino library was not the Florentine bookseller's purpose. He just wanted to celebrate his most important client. After celebrating Federico as a victorious ruler, Vespasiano glorified him as a patron of arts. For this purpose, Vespasiano described briefly the Library.

Finally, the Ravenna manuscript is listed in *Veterani's Inventory*.³³ This index is compiled by Federico Veterani, a copyist and then librarian at the Library of Urbino. It is dated between 1508 and 1521³⁴ and it retraces the *Index Vetus* but it records 56 fewer codices.³⁵ Moreover, it presents minimal bibliographical descriptions, since neither the materials of the codices nor the bindings are described, and the codex indication is often not precise. In the *Veterani's Inventory* the codices of Aristophanes' plays are listed after those including the works of Sophocles and Euripides. *Veterani's Inventory* is arranged as follows:

690 Sophoclis Tragediae; bis

691 Euripidis Tragediae

692 Aristophanis Comedie; bis.

According to the *Index Vetus*, the Urbino library owned three codices with plays by Aristophanes.³⁶ Among these three, one is a miscellaneous codex as it includes Sophocles and Aristophanes' works together (nr. 120), the other two contain only Aristophanes' works (nr. 123 and 124). Only two of these three codices seem to be listed in *Veterani's inventory* (item 692),³⁷ but if we look carefully there is also the third codex. It is necessary to analyse how Veterani lists miscellaneous codices. For those manuscripts Veterani usually indicates the first author and then he mentions either the other authors included, or he simply writes *cum*

³³ For the edition of this inventory see GUASTI (1862).

³⁴ PERUZZI (2014: 355).

³⁵ 38 *libri graeci ex armario* and 18 codices out of the 130 placed on the shelves are missing. The 15 codices are 15; 20; 29; 30; 36; 45; 47; 50; 51; 74; 79; 80; 81; 91; 103; 105; 114; 116.

³⁶ These are the numbers 120, 123 and 124 corresponding to the current *Urb. Grr.* 141, 143 and R 429 of Ravenna Library.

³⁷ Item 692 corresponds to two codices as evidenced by the presence of 'bis'.

reliquis.³⁸ But in other cases, he just mentions the first author.³⁹ By writing ‘Sophoclis Tragoedie bis’ (item 690) Veterani means the numbers 120 and 121 of the *Index Vetus*, the only 2 miscellaneous codices of the *Index Vetus* including Sophocles. Since one of the two codices listed under item 690 of the *Veterani’s Inventory* corresponds to number 120 of the *Index Vetus* (Sophocles and Aristophanes) and since there were 3 codices of Aristophanes, item 692 in the list must necessarily correspond to the numbers 123 and 124 of the *Index Vetus*. So, we can conclude that the Ravenna Manuscript is listed in the *Veterani’s Inventory*.⁴⁰ Due to this conclusion, we deduce that the codex was still part of the Urbino Library in 1508, the terminus post quem of the *Veterani’s Inventory*.

By these considerations, we may conclude that the Ravenna manuscript arrived in Urbino at Federico da Montefeltro’s time, i.e. before 1482, and that it left the library surely after 1508. But as for when the codex left the Ducal library, there is another certain terminus ante quem. It is the 28th of January 1516, when the Giunta’s appendix is printed. As already demonstrated by Von Velsen and Zacher, this edition is directly based on the Ravenna manuscript.⁴¹ Moreover, this relationship is also evidenced by the marginal annotation at the number 123 of the *Index Vetus*. Here it is written *Habuit Petrus Florentinus Cartularius stampandum*.⁴² This marginal annotation clearly attests firstly to the presence of

³⁸ See the following miscellaneous manuscripts of Veterani 62; 624; 637 bis; 648; 655, 656; 663; 664; 665; 666. For the *Index Vetus* see STORNAJOLO (1895), for the index of Veterani see GUASTI (1862).

³⁹ 640 Veterani; 670 Veterani; 677 Veterani on which see GUASTI (1862: 150–151).

⁴⁰ According to MARTIN (1882: viii): ‘Il semble qu’il y ait là un ensemble de faits entraînant, non la preuve certaine, mais au moins une présomption assez forte que le manuscrit de Ravenne est un des deux qui sont portés dans l’inventaire de Veterano’. But along the line of GUASTI (1862: 127) Martin dated this catalogue to the 15th century and so he used this argument to conclude that the Ravenna manuscript had reached Urbino before 1482.

⁴¹ See VON VELSEN (1871: 1–53) and ZACHER (1888: 529–543).

⁴² See *Urb. lat.* 1761 f. 99v.

the Ravenna manuscript in the Urbino Library; secondly, it testifies that the manuscript at a certain point arrives in Florence to print the Aristophanes' texts. In the preface of the Giunta's edition of 1515 addressed to the bishop Francesco Accolti, Bernardo Giunta expresses his disappointment at being unable to publish two other plays in addition to the nine already printed by Aldo Manuzio.

Putabam vir doctissime duas quoque notioribus his addere posse nondum ab aliis impressas, quae cito forsitan abs te nostra ope his novem comitatae legi poterunt, ni forsitan Euphrosyni Bonini praeceptoris tui et aliorum tuorum pariterque nostrum amicorum promissa irrita quod credere nequeo in leves abibunt auras.⁴³

From this sentence, we deduce that Giunta believed he was close to printing two new Aristophanes' plays. Since *Thesmophoriazusae* can only be found in the Ravenna manuscript and in the Monacensis Augustanus 494, a direct copy of R from the 15th century, it is therefore clear that Giunta is aware of the existence of R 429, although at that time he did not yet own it.⁴⁴ Shortly afterward the *expectata dies* comes and Giunta can print the last two plays. It is the 28th of January 1516 and the Ravenna manuscript is in Florence.⁴⁵ Overall, therefore I suggest that the Ravenna manuscript has been borrowed between September 1515 and the 28th of January 1516.

⁴³ GIUNTA (1515: 1).

⁴⁴ We can assume that if Giunta had received the Ravenna manuscript in 1515, close to the publication of the edition, he would probably have waited to print the volume to include the *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae*.

⁴⁵ See GIUNTA (1516: a II): 'Venit mi Francisce expectata dies illa in qua ex urbinatæ bibliotheca antiquissimum Aristophanis exemplar nacti sumus ibique inter alias *Λυσιστράτην* και *Θεσμοφορίαζουσας*, idest *Lysistratem* et *Cereri* sacrificantes feminas non alias visas comedias invenimus hasque et tuo nomine cudere tibi que dicare amicorum optime visum est'.

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***Vita divi Pauli Primi Eremitae* by Valentin Eck, Shortly Introduced and Poetically Translated**

*Valentin Eck (1494–1556) also known as Valentinus Ecchius is one of the most prolific humanist authors associated with the territory of current Slovakia. Though born in the Bavarian city of Lindau, he spent the majority of his life in the eastern Slovak city of Bardejov serving, at first, as the principal of the local school until he finally reached the position of the city judge (der Richter). Behind his rise to prominence stood the patronage of Alexius Thurzo, one of the most influential royal dignitaries of Louis II. and Ferdinand I., to whom he dedicated most of his works including the epyllion *Vita divi Pauli Primi Eremitae*, a poetic adaptation of the legend about the anchorite Paul of Thebes written by Jerome more than a thousand years ago. Our paper contains a short introduction both into the life and works of the poet trying to describe his political and literary activities in the then Kingdom of Hungary in connection with other eminent humanist scholars of those times such as Rudolf Agricola Junior and Leonard Cox. Then it compares the Eck's versified version of Paul's life to its prosaic original briefly trying to identify the main changes which the Hieronymian work underwent. Neither the aesthetic appraisal of the poem is neglected. The heart of the paper is, however, represented by the commented translation of the aforementioned Pauline epyllion into English hexameter the purpose of which is to popularize the literary production of this humanist scholar abroad.*

Keywords: Christian humanism, Valentin Eck, Alexius Thurzo, Paul the First Hermit, epyllion, hexametric translation

A Very Short Introduction into the Life and Works of Valentin Eck

Valentin Eck or *Valentinus Ecchius* (1494–1556) was born in the Bavarian city of Lindau. He studied at Leipzig and Cracow, and in 1518, with the help of a Hungarian aristocrat, Alexius Thurzo, he settled down in the city of Bardejov (currently eastern Slovakia). There he served as the school principal gradually advancing to the offices of the city scribe, notary and mayor.¹ During the internal power struggles which followed the Hungarian defeat at Mohács in 1526, he supported the claims of archduke Ferdinand Habsburg serving as an envoy of eastern Slovak cities.²

The beginning of his political career is, however, closely associated with literature. He was one of those humanist scholars who tried to use their literary skills to be accepted as teachers, courtiers or clerks, dedicating their writings to the mighty in order to gain their support.³ Together with his contemporaries Rudolf Agricola Junior and Leonard Cox who found patronage in Poland, he managed to connect himself to the most influential dignitaries of the then Jagiellonian realm acting as a representative of classical learning and Christian morality.⁴ His attitude to the Reformation seems to match Erasmus' Christian humanism⁵, which tried to improve the state of the Church from within, focusing not only on the ecclesiastical but also on the pedagogical aspect of the crisis it was going through.⁶

The list of his prosaic works includes a manual for writing poetry known as *Ars versificatoria* and philosophical dialogues *De mundi con-*

¹ ŠKOVIERA (2008: 125).

² ŠKOVIERA (2002: 24–25).

³ BERNSTEIN (1998: 45–64).

⁴ GLOMSKI (2007: 185).

⁵ ŠKOVIERA (2008: 126).

⁶ FRIMMOVÁ (1998: 28).

temptu et virtute amplectenda and *De rei publicae administratione*. His poetry is, however, of no less importance including both the versified lives of the saints *Vita divi Pauli Primi Eremitae*, *De divo Alexio, patricio Romano* or the reflections on friendship and marriage *De amicitiae et concordiae utilitate* and *Utrum prudentissimo viro sit ducenda uxor* and many others. Apart from that, he produced several editions of classical and patristic authors such as Horace, Prudentius and Augustine.⁷

As for the *Vita divi Pauli*, it is a 300-verses-long epyllion introduced by the poetic recommendations by his acquaintances Leonard Cox, Johannes Rullus and Matthias Pyrser⁸, and author's prosaic dedication to Alexius Thurzo whose designation to the office of the royal treasurer by king Louis II the whole work celebrates. The narrative itself closely follows Jerome's *Vita sancti Pauli Eremitae*⁹ with a few exceptions. Whereas about the half of the original is devoted to Saint Anthony who comes to visit Paul in his seclusion¹⁰, Eck focuses upon Paul himself, omitting the passages where Anthony contemplates his own primacy as a hermit, speaks to his disciples or takes Paul's tunic. The supernatural is reduced, the mention of a centaur, the speech of a satyr and the lions' pleading for Anthony's blessing being entirely omitted. Finally, Jerome's comments are reduced too as there is no discussion on Paul's hermitic priority over Anthony, evidence that satyrs really exist or explanation of Paul's asking for the tunic of Athanasius. In general, we can say that Eck tries to make the original narrative more rational, fluent and 'Paul-centered'.¹¹

When it comes to the aesthetics of the poem, its hexameter is smooth and elegant with rare occurrence of elision, synizesis and *correptio iam-*

⁷ ŠKOVIERA (2006: 12–15).

⁸ Johannes Rullus and Matthias Pyrser belonged to the group of the young Erasmians, mostly of Silesian origin, who had gathered around Leonard Cox in Cracow. GŁOMSKI (2007: 44).

⁹ ŠKOVIERA (2007: 122).

¹⁰ ŠUBRT (2002: 35).

¹¹ ŠKOVIERA (2007: 121–129).

bica. It is rich in the poetic figures of all kinds and golden verses are also present. The poem is visibly inspired by the classical poets Virgil, Horace and Ovid. It contains many elements typical of the ancient epic such as invocation, catalogue, speeches, digressions and ancient deities also appear, at least, symbolically – *Eois campis* (60), *dona Cereris* (156) or *Mavortis ira* (282).¹² The choice of Paul as a protagonist of a new epyllion was influenced by the strong tradition of worshipping this hermit by the Hungarian monastic order of Paulines, the fondness of Thurzos's family for him and also by the author's personal piety.¹³

Considering our translation, we try to imitate the rhythm of dactylic hexameter, the original metric form of the poem similarly to the way Rodney Merrill and Frederick Ahl successfully did in their translations of Homer¹⁴ and Virgil.¹⁵ Our hexameter consists of six feet, each of which starts with the stressed syllable. Spondees and trochees are treated as equals. Every verse ends with heroic clausula with the exception of the elegiac couplets at the beginning. With respect to the 'non-native English speakers' (one of whom is the author of this text himself), the correct pronunciation of the most tricky names is provided in explanatory notes. We take the liberty of poetic licence when it comes to the occasional elision of a definite article followed by a vowel and use the old-fashioned contractions such as 'Twas or 'Twill in some places.

Yet, we hope that this attempt for the hexametric adaptation of *Vita divi Pauli* will help to make Valentin Eck better known among foreign scholars, attracting their attention to the other works of his, whether written in verse or in prose.

¹² ŠKOVIERA (2007: 129–140).

¹³ ŠKOVIERA (2007: 113–114).

¹⁴ MERRILL (2009).

¹⁵ AHL (2008).

The Life of Saint Paul, the First Hermit¹⁶

To the industrious reader from Johannes Rullus

Grasp this booklet at once, dear reader, with both of your hands if
it is the new and divine your heart does truly desire,
for it speaks of Saint Paul of Thebes, of his life and his death, since
he, as the first of all men, decided to live in the wild.
Is there anyone who is still willing to take the same path, the
path of the holy? If so, then he is true Cato the Third.
Therefore, I hope that nobody doubts what the poet deserves – our
genuine prayers that he lives a long and fortunate life.

From the same author

Small is this poem, indeed. Despite its smallness, however,
it is the proof that the heart and soul of its author are great.

To the kind reader: An ornament of the Ecchian Muses and verses by Matthias Pyrser, Yours forever

Nature made sure that there is a place for all her creations.
Thus the things that are small in size are great in their use.
So a beryl and carbuncle¹⁷ – both are tiny; however,
masses of gold they adorn and look how their beauty stands out!
There is no doubt that this poem inspired by the Muses of Lindau
will be a great delight and proper amusement for all,

¹⁶ We follow the first edition of this work: *Vita divi Pauli Eremitae Valentino Ecchio Lendano autore*. Crachoviae 1522. URL: https://www.google.hu/books/edition/Vita_divi_Pauli_primi_eremita/Hr5eAAAACAAJ?gbpv=1. A hexametric translation into Slovak by professor Daniel ŠKOVIERA, whose work we wish to continue in, is included in the aforementioned anthology ŠKOVIERA (2008: 150–160). Our translation into English was checked by associate professor Petra MUTLOVÁ from the Department of Classical Studies, Masaryk University, Brno.

¹⁷ Precious stones.

as Calliope¹⁸ on her own it is who retells the
 story of Reverend Paul, the man who rejected all wealth
 following Jesus and hid in the distant wastelands of Egypt
 where he spoke to no man, but him who buried his corpse.

A premature poem from the same author

There are no jokes and feasts and games in the verses below for
 they are extolling the saint whose bones Pannonia¹⁹ keeps.

Recommendation by Leonard Cox²⁰

You, amazed by the glorious deeds of Homer's Achilles²¹
 and astonished by what Odysseus²² had to come through,
 you, who admire Aeneas's²³ sense of duty and strength while
 singing of Hannibal, who so often went back on his words;
 do not devote yourself to old stories, unreal and unworthy. 5
 There is much more to be sought and found in the works of our times.
 Hear, o Reader, about the hero who did not destroy the
 city of Troy but the realm of darkness where Erebus²⁴ ruled.
 Hear of the man who conquered the sea of sinfulness after
 fighting its violent storms and terrible billows for long. 10
 There is no castaway any more who was sailing rough seas and

¹⁸ \ kə-'lī-ə-(,)pē \ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/calliope>. A muse regarded as the patron of epic poetry.

¹⁹ \ pə-'nō-nē-ə \ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Pannonia>.

²⁰ An English humanist who studied in Tübingen under Philipp Melanchthon, taught at the university of Kraków and led the grammar schools in Levoča and Košice (currently, Eastern Slovakia). After his return to Kraków in 1525 he published his pedagogical works *Libellus de erudienda iuventute* and *Methodus humaniorum studiorum*. Kuzmík (1976: 153–154).

²¹ \ ə-'ki-lēz \ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Achilles>.

²² \ ō-'di-sē-əs, -'dis-yəs \ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Odysseus>.

²³ \ i-'nē-əs \ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Aeneas>.

²⁴ \ 'er-ə-bəs \ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Erebus>. The personification of darkness.

whom its ponderous waves were pushing down to its depths.
 Since he finally climbed the towering mountains of virtue
 he has been living up there among the gods of the sky.
 Hear, then, about the deeds of this man which, Valentin Eck, a 15
 poet of consummate skill, like Virgil is going to sing.

Tetrastich for great and noble Alexius Thurzo by the same author

Please, accept these verses, most noble Alexius²⁵ Thurzo –
 after all, you are the man for whom each one was composed –
 and remember that if they delight you, just let us be told and
 there will be more to be read and praise your house to the skies.

**To the great and noble lord Alexius Thurzo of Betlanovce²⁶, the Royal
 Treasurer and Master of Royal Chamberlains, our most honourable lord
 and patron, Valentin Eck recommends himself.**

As soon as we received the news that on the advice of all royal dignitaries you,
 most noble lord, were unanimously trusted with the administration of the roy-
 al treasury, we had to congratulate ourselves both in our mind. We congratu-
 late you, your Lordship, for being promoted to the position distinguished and
 eminent like no other. We congratulate ourselves too, however, because it is
 our lord, the success of whom we wished, who attained this honour and who,
 as we hope, will administrate our kingdom so that we all can live as wealthy
 and abundant lives as possible.

We had noticed long ago how diligently and industriously you care for
 your own possessions and we became convinced that you would care for the
 possessions of our kingdom equally. You always genuinely wanted them to
 prosper and to produce more and so most people used to say about you the

²⁵ \ ə-ˈlek-sē-əs \ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Alexius%20I%20Comnenus>.

²⁶ Betlanovce, Betlenfalva or Betlensdorf is a village in the Košice region of eastern Slovakia.

same thing as the famous commander of the Greek army used to say about his comrade Nestor: 'If only our Pannonia had more men like Thurzo.'²⁷

Now, when all tyrants are gone, we should not nourish our mutual disagreements but instead, cemented by our Christian faith, we should make an attempt, at least, to avoid our destiny which seems to be insidiously instigating us day after day to begin war against each other. No one wants to be remembered as the one who did not contribute to the greatness of our kingdom and even less as the one who shamefully lost what our ancestors had gained thanks to their courage and strength. Yet, we all have to live with fear that, if we do not come to our senses quickly, all we have will be looted and plundered by the enemies of Christianity.

At last, however, our desperate hope has been brought back to life thanks to you, the man who is watching over the interests of our country without thinking about the ones of his own. It is you, after all, who is trying to earn it fame, increasing its wealth and refining its morals every day, because you know that a good country has to be built upon the blossom of virtue the same as upon the growth of possession. And, in fact, virtue is above everything else for, as the comedian put it aptly, it has the power to protect liberty, welfare, life, property, parents, homeland and relatives.²⁸

Therefore, no one will persuade me that wealth alone, however great it can be, will keep this kingdom safe, for it is virtue, faith, piety and reverence for our greatest divine protectors which ensure our safety. At first, it is the immaculate mother of God, Mary, a venerable patron of our country, and then many other patrons of our own, among whom Paul the First Hermit is surely not the last one. It is he who can repel the ferocious attacks of Muslims even alone if worshipped properly, for as long as he lived, he was able to do the same with savage beasts.

²⁷ Cf. Hom. *Il.* 2, 371–374.

²⁸ Plaut. *Amph.* 2, 19–21.

As we heard that he is loved and worshipped by your Lordship and many others, we thought that it would not be improper to make his life better-known by this hastily written poem of ours. Bearing in mind that it is you whom we owe everything we have, we earnestly ask your Lordship to accept this humble gift with the same kindness with which it was composed. We wish you a long and happy life.

Bardejov, the day before St. Elisabeth day, 1522

To the great and noble lord, Lord Alexius Thurzo of Betlanovce, the Royal Treasurer and Master of Royal Chamberlains etc, The Life of Saint Paul the First Hermit by Valentin Eck of Lindau in Rhaetia, the scribe of the city of Bardejov.

What was the reason why Paul, the first eremite, chose to give up the
splendor of home? What power inscrutable urged him to leave and
spend the rest of his life in the depths and darkness of caves? When
I am thinking of this, my heart is filled with unspoken
warmth and is happy to go to the distant country of Sita, 5
seeing the homes of the Thebans and Nitria with its recesses²⁹
where the fathers of old used to silently live in their caves. The
Muses will not accompany me, nor Phoebus Apollo³⁰
do I ask for his help. 'Twill be the Son of the mighty
Thunderer, Christ, who will helpfully show me the way through th'Egyptian 10
flourishing plains, through the hundred-gated City and through the
Nile, the rich currents of which are spilling over its bed. Then
I will reach the forsaken abode of the hermit and see his

²⁹ Nitria – a mountain range to the south of Alexandria, a former center of hermitic life in Egypt. Šubrť (2002: 18) The poet describes the three toponyms in the margin simply as *Antiquorum patrum solitudines*. ECCHIUS (1522).

³⁰ \ ə-'pä-(.)lō \ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Apollo>.

shelter, the sacred place to which he, though an innocent man, was
 forced to resort because of the Emperor Decius³¹, during 15
 whose tyrannical reign a storm was raging with fire,
 persecuting the people of Christ and showing no mercy.
 Such was the hatred that Decius felt down deep in his heart that
 he desired to remove the name of God from the earth and
 so he threatened all worshippers of the Trinity with a 20
 rack and a wheel, with iron and fire, scourges and swords. O,
 terrible was the suffering caused to numberless Christians
 both the young and the old becoming the martyrs of Christ. When
 Agnes³² escaped the danger of flames, a furious headsman
 put the blade of his sword to her neck, which was whiter than snow. A 25
 maid of Catania³³, Agatha³⁴, also was tortured, her body
 being rolled over the burning shards from the right to the left and
 so the virgin whose name was derived from noble Apollo³⁵;
 losing her teeth, she happily jumped right into the fire.

³¹ In order to ensure the ideological unification of the Roman empire, Decius (ruling in 249–251) decreed that all citizens had to perform a religious sacrifice demonstrating their loyalty to the empire. Given that the second commandment prohibited the worship of the other gods, it resulted in the first organized persecution of Christians. ŠUBRT (2002: 44).

³² Saint Agnes – a patron saint of girls who, when 12 or 13 years old, refused to be married to anyone else than Jesus Christ, for which she was exposed in a brothel and later, refusing to renounce her faith, sentenced to die by fire. However, she remained unharmed in the flames, and so finally was decapitated. GULLEY (2001: 5–6).

³³ \ kə'tanjə \ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Catania>.

³⁴ Saint Agatha – a virgin of noble birth, whose beauty reportedly attracted the Roman consul Quintinian. When she refused his offer of marriage because of her dedication to Christ, she was accused of being a Christian and then brutally tortured, among other ways, by being rolled over burning coals and broken potsherds. It is this punishment to which Eck, probably, refers when saying: *Nymphe Catanea coruscis subiicitur testis Agathe*. GULLEY (2001: 4).

³⁵ Saint Apollonia – a patron saint of dentists who, upon being threatened to be burnt alive if she did not deny Christ, answered by jumping into the flames on her own. GULLEY (2001: 32).

Horses were dragging Hippolytus³⁶ till he died while his nurse, whose 30
 name was Concordia³⁷, had to go through the flogging by leaden
 whips and Lawrence³⁸ was roasted alive. This murderous plague, this
 thirst for the blood of the Christians was everywhere. Even the bold felt
 terrible fear in their hearts and therefore the seven young men from
 Ephesus³⁹ fled to the hills where some cave provided them shelter. 35
 In the face of this imminent danger, Paul did not know what he
 was to do next and given the greed of his own son-in-law, who
 tried to denounce him to get to his wealth, he worried the more, so
 he decided to leave his town and his property with it,
 trying to find some refuge where he would wait out this storm – the 40
 same a helmsman does when the sea is becoming so rough that
 he, at the stern, is quivering just like his boat in the winds. Young
 Paul was treading and treading ahead. His vigilant eyes were
 studying the country around and oftentimes looking behind, for
 big and deep was the fear that troubled his innocent soul. A 45
 sheep, a defenceless sheep, which luckily fled the ferocious
 wolves and which is now trying to soothe its quivering soul, still
 scared of those bloodthirsty mouths of theirs and their terrible teeth – this
 lamb that was him still dreading the beasts can attack from behind. But

³⁶ \ hi- 'pä-lə-təs \ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Hippolytus>. Saint Hippolytus – sometimes confused with the theologian Hippolytus of Rome, a soldier and jailer of saint Lawrence who, under his influence, converted. RULÍŠEK (2006: 151–152).

³⁷ \ kòn- 'kòr-dē-ä \ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/concordia%20discors#f>. Saint Concordia – a nurse in the house of Hippolytus and patron saint of nurses. GULLEY (2001: 224).

³⁸ Saint Lawrence – due to his decision to give the church's treasures to the needy and alleged execution on a gridiron, known as a patron saint of the poor and of cooks. GULLEY (2001: 204–205).

³⁹ Seven Sleepers of Ephesus – legendary Christian soldiers who tried to escape the Decian persecution of Christians by hiding themselves in a cave near Ephesus where they fell into a miraculous sleep. During the reign of emperor Theodosius II. (408–450) they woke up and explained the meaning of their experience affirming the resurrection of the dead. GULLEY (2001: 304).

there was a place in the country of Isis beyond the town walls of 50
 famous Canopus⁴⁰, the place which was hid in the tangle of vales and
 masses of sand where Paul the young Theban was heading his footsteps
 being the only one far and wide. There under one peak he
 managed to find a cave surrounded by sun-baked crags. The
 cave had a spring of its own, a few orderly cells and apart from 55
 that, some anvils worn out by the passing of time since this hollow
 used to serve as a hideout for those who were making false coins. As
 somebody said, it was during the times when Caesar Augustus⁴¹
 sank the fleet of his rivals at Actium, conquered the East and
 brought such spoils to the city of Rome as no one before him. 60
 When he entered the cave its homeliness pleased him so much that
 he decided at once to leave the sins of this world and
 start a new life, devoid of sinfulness living alone. O,
 wise is the young man whose will is so strong that he boldly resists the
 whims and wishes arising out of worldly possessions. 65
 He exchanged the wealth of this world for the blessing of heaven
 fully aware of the darkness his heart had to win through if he was
 really so eager to follow the path which leads to the skies. The
 kingdom of heaven is whiter than snow and not even the gold of
 Lydia matches its brightness. No sin can sully its gates, so 70
 only the one who is pure in his heart is allowed to get in while
 those of black souls will be carried away by Stygian waters.
 Thinking of all of this deeply inside his heart he resolved to
 leave the world of the sinful, expelling all wicked affections
 out of his heart. And just as a snake he acted, the snake which 75
 crawls among the sharp rocks and stones in order to slough – so
 Paul got rid of the languor which vexed his body and soul. His

⁴⁰ \ kə-'nō-pəs \ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Canopus>.

⁴¹ \ ɔ-'gə-stəs \ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Augustus>.

mind did not get corrupted by pride, by the terrible poison
 which arose from the Phlegethon's subterranean streams and
 which the Gorgons themselves disgorge from their infamous mouths, nor 80
 was his stomach polluted by gluttony. Burnt in the sun, his
 body was dressed in the leaves of a palm, a fruitful tree which was
 giving him nourishing food but only so much as to keep his
 limbs so exhausted alive. Yet he was deriding the rich with
 all of their feasts as he did know well they feed their diseases. 85
 There was just one and only food that he really cared for and
 that was the bread immortal - the Son who descended from heav'n to
 enter the womb of the Virgin thus saving the world from the sin, its
 terrible prison. So day and night he was pushing the other
 thoughts aside as down deep in his mind he truly desired to 90
 suffer the same as the King of Olympus⁴², the Maker almighty
 contemplating His merciless torture again and again. Since
 it is for us, for our pitiful souls that he willingly took the
 weight of the cross and as soon as His mother gave birth to Him in the
 poverty of a stable, His innocent blood had to trickle 95
 down His delicate limbs because an old custom required it.⁴³
 Afterwards, due to the terrible fury of Herod the king, His
 parents were urged to take Him to Egypt, the land of rich crops where
 seven long years of His life he was forced to spend till the time had
 come to return. Then, reaching the age of thirty and having 100
 Mary, his mother, always beside Him, He, led by His faith, set
 out to spread the good news of salvation which everyone longed for.
 He was doing what doctors do - healing the festering wounds of
 those in need – and just out of His piety, He did expose his
 heart to th'abasement of spit and the torments of fists, whips and wedges. 105

⁴² \ ə-'lim-pəs \ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Olympus>.

⁴³ An allusion to the custom of circumcision.

Having carefully thought of these things, Paul made up his mind to
 cast away all the haughtiness that was kept in his chest and
 bearing the kingdom of heaven in mind, he finally chose the
 life of a hermit contented with all that nature provides. While
 he was living his self-denying life bless'd by the Lord a 110
 man called Anthony⁴⁴, urged by the silent call of his soul, set
 off to find the Paul's cave, a poor place he had made his new home, though
 weak was his body and each of his steps was slowed by his age. While
 walking through desert he, all of a sudden, encountered a Satyr⁴⁵.
 Wondering at th' appearance and voice of this savage, the pilgrim 115
 burst into tears and these were the words he cried out aloud: 'O
 land of Memphis, how foolish you are! Forgetting your Lord, you
 worship your powerless idols in vain while even this stupid
 animal knows the Messiah and so it celebrates Jesus.'
 Then he went onwards but far and wide the only thing he could 120
 see were the sands of the desert – a place unknown to the feet of
 men where only the prints of the beasts which strayed could be found – but
 finally, led by a she-wolf, he spotted the cave he was seeking
 where the hermit of old was living in secret seclusion.
 Standing in front of its entrance, at first, he carefully listened. 125
 When, however, he noticed a beam of light in the darkness
 trying to get to its source too fast, he stumbled and all the
 walls of the eremite's cave, then, started to echo this sound. The
 moment he heard that noise, Paul hastily came to his door and
 latched it at once to make sure that the stranger would not get inside. But 130
 strong was the zeal that his visitor Anthony felt in his chest. He
 lay in front of the door in the voice of friendship exclaiming:

⁴⁴ Anthony of Egypt (died in 356), the first-known anchorite. His life, *Vita Antonii*, was depicted by his contemporary, Athanasius, the bishop of Alexandria (died in 373). ŠUBRT (2002: 42–43).

⁴⁵ \ 'sā-tər \ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/satyr>.

'Father, you know who I am, the same as you know where I came from.
 Nor is my reason for travelling here unknown to your heart and
 I am not worthy to look at your face, I know that for sure, but 135
 there is one thing, o holy father, you have to remember:
 I will not leave this cave, this shelter of yours (and I mean it!)
 sooner than you allow me to see you and you should know too that
 I am willing to give up my life in front of this door and
 when the time comes 'twill be you who will have to bury my body.' 140
 Then he fell silent calmly awaiting the eremite's answer.
 After those words a smile appeared on Paul's elderly face and
 oping the door, he finally let his visitor in. The
 host, at first, embraced his new guest, who had dreamt of this moment.
 Then he offered a seat to him as exhausted he seemed to 145
 be and at last in a voice of kindness the hermit addressed him:
 'Look at me stranger! I am the poor old man you are seeking!
 These are my legs distorted by ageing, my quivering hands – my
 pitiful body, the fate of which is to turn into dust. But
 you, my dear guest, relate about the world of these days, please! 150
 What is the life of the people outside? What laws do they follow?
 Is there someone who still believes in the gods of the gentiles?
 Someone who worships them still attending their infamous temples?'
 This and even much more Paul wanted to hear from his guest but
 all of a sudden a bird of Phoebus Apollo⁴⁶ flew down from 155
 heaven and carried a gift of Ceres, the same as he used to
 do whenever he saw the lights of the stars in the East. He
 put it in front of the starving hermits, in front of their eyes and
 spreading his feathery wings, he flew up into the air. As
 soon as it happened the face of the older one brightened and so he 160

⁴⁶ Jerome speaks explicitly about a raven: *Inter sermocitationes suspiciunt alitem corvum in ramo arbotis concedisse...* MIGNE (1845: 25–26, 10).

spoke: 'Be assured, my friend, that it was our Lord the Provider,
 who was so good and kind that he sent us this food as a gift. As
 long as I have been living there (which is for sixty years now) this
 bird has been flying down from the skies and day after day one
 loaf of bread he has brought me but never so big as today. It 165
 has to be you, my guest, for whom the One who is feeding
 all the birds in the sky and all the fish in the ocean
 doubled my usual share as a generous shepherd he is. So
 let us express our gratitude now for that is becoming.'
 After these words they both gave thanks to the Lord for his mercy. 170
 Then, however, a struggle of decency broke out between them,
 both the hermits unwilling to help themselves to the food. The
 younger one claimed that the elder should start because of his age. The
 elder, in turn, responded the young man should start as a guest. For
 hours and hours this pious dispute continued but neither 175
 felt that he was the one who was worthy of such a great honor.
 Hence they agreed that they both would reach for the bread at one time and
 tear it apart. Their hunger relieved and bodies refreshed, they
 quenched their thirst with a drink from a spring which was lying nearby and
 sending the word of praise to the Lord for His generous gift they 180
 spent the rest of the day and night conversing devoutly.
 When, however, Apollo repelled the darkness of night so
 that the sun could return, Paul sensed his life was about to
 end. Desiring to die alone he spoke to his guest: 'O
 dearest friend, Anthony, I must confess I knew that before: I 185
 knew that you had been living for long in this country deserted
 all the time devoting your life to the deeds of a saint. The
 Lord of Olympus, the Ruler of all did send you, my friend, to
 do me a favour. The time has come when the spirit of mine shall
 leave the withering flesh of my body and out this prison; 190

it shall move from the earth and enter the kingdom of heav'n, where proper rewards are waiting for those who truly deserve them.

This is the reason why He led you there right into this cave that you might burry my elderly body, though poor be its grave.' Much more he wanted to say but Anthony, moved by his sorrow, 195 cut in on him and with tears in his eyes he weepingly begged that Paul would permit him to go where he went enduring what he did.

This is, however, what Paul replied to his pitiful prayers:
'Anthony, curb those cries of your heart, those mighty affections vexing your soul, for this sorrow of yours, though painful for now, will 200 turn into overwhelming delight when the proper time comes. So bear this grief and stay calm in your mind, for after this pain, when all the dark clouds are carried away, the merciful sky will show you the brightest light of her stars and those will thereafter drive away all the darkness of death and gloom of despair. Go 205 forward, my friend, persist and go forward to face all the grief. Your soul, however, is not the only thing you should care for. If it is the path that leads to salvation you want to discover, know that you should look after the others much more than you do. I see that your soul would like to depart from your body at once and 210 zealously follow the lead of the Lamb of God if it could, but verily, there is much greater commitment awaiting you here – your brothers, those numerous crowds of your mates, for them you must stay that your example, your sacred knowledge and life-giving care might lead and protect them against the dire contagion of morals 215 vexing our times, for, as everyone knows, the hearts of the young do seek the path of the good if one cares about their upbringing. You, however, will see to their needs when the proper time comes. Now open your heart, my reverend guest, that I can reveal my wish which, as I believe, you will not reject to fulfill. I 220

beg you, my friend, I beg you to go as fast as you can and
 fetch me the tunic which Athanasius⁴⁷ himself gave you once, for
 it is the will of the Lord Almighty that when the time comes – the
 time when my spirit escapes from this elderly body – my bones be
 wrapped up into its fabric and buried thus under the ground. Poor 225
 Anthony being unable to say a word for his sorrow
 took the hands of the eremite into his own and then kissed his
 cheeks after which he left and went back to the wasteland where he spent
 all the long years of his life as a man untouched by the stain of
 sin together with many distinguished young lads to assist him. 230
 In the meantime, however, Paul's spirit was freed from his body.
 Leaving this prison terrestrial, up it fled to the skies and
 there, accompanied by the angels of heaven, it settled.
 Anthony, seeing this miracle on his way back to the cave, fell
 down on his knees and scattering sand right over his head cried 235
 out: 'Paul, why did you leave me alone? Why did you forsake me?
 Why did you leave so soon after we had encountered each other?
 Where can I now when the most pre-eminent part of yourself to
 heaven ascended which I am for now forbidden to enter?
 Well, if nothing remains to be done, then I will go back right 240
 into your cave and for the last time, I will look at your face.' When
 he got inside the eremite's shelter – now silent – again, at
 once he noticed Paul's body. His head, however, was raised, his
 arms held out and the same as his face directed to heaven.
 One might suppose that this kneeling figure was, even when dead, still 245
 sending its humble prayers to God and giving Him thanks, but
 Anthony, seeing that Paul is not breathing, broke into tears and
 wasting no time he covered his pitiful corpse with the tunic
 he had been asked to provide. Then taking Paul's body outside, he

⁴⁷ \ ,a-thə-'nā-zh(ē)-əs \ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Athanasius>.

paid his last respects to the saint and started to sing a 250
 funeral hymn by which he bewailed his sudden decease. But
 when he wanted to bury the eremite's body, he noticed
 there was no mattock nor hoe in the cave to dig into sand so
 he was completely unsure about what he should do next. At
 first he thought that the best would be just to leave the corpse yonder. 255
 This, however, was too inhuman for him to be done. As
 he was standing in front of the eremite's cavern for hours he
 started to think that he too would give up his ghost on this place, but
 all of a sudden a couple of furry lions came close. Their
 necks were festooned with a mane, but no teeth stuck out of their mouths.
 They 260
 gently approached the dead body and laying down next to Paul's head, they
 started to roar, but tearfully as if expressing their sadness.
 Then they began to dig into sand with their powerful claws and
 even though hard to believe it is, these magnanimous beasts were
 able to dig such a grave that it perfectly suited Paul's corpse. Then 265
 Anthony nodded his head to imply that the lions can leave and
 when those two diggers were gone he put the eremite's body
 into the grave. Then bitterly weeping he also departed.
 There on this place these sacred remains had been hidden for many
 centuries, always protected by heavenly powers until the 270
 emperor Manuel⁴⁸, who decided to leave the large plains of
 Thrace, called out by his piety, brought them to Constantinople⁴⁹
 and, accompanied by the triumphant procession of prelates,
 placed them into the temple of Mary, the mother of God. From
 there an Italian Jacob transferred them to Venice, his home town, 275

⁴⁸ Manuel I. Comnenus, Byzantine emperor in 1143–1180. ŠKOVIERA (2008: 560).

⁴⁹ \ ,kän-,stan-tə-'nō-pəl \ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/constantinople>.

whence, in turn, they were taken by Louis of Hungary⁵⁰, who then placed them up on the mountain nearby the city of Buda, where the remains of the saint had been peacefully resting till now, still lending an ear to the worries of man and averting all dangers.

Father of hermits, be merciful, please, be merciful to your 280
servants and set your eyes on the lands of Pannonia now. Please, let the terrible fury of Mars diffused by the mouths of Cerberus angrily barking on us from the depths of inferno fade that we may extoll your grace in these times of despair. Please, push the enemies of our religion out of this land and 285
do not allow their barbarian frenzy to ravage this kingdom. Make our commanders virile enough to expel the invading Ottoman Turks beyond the strait of the Hellespont that the flags announcing our victory might be carried throughout our homeland with pride proclaiming that peace has finally come. But 290
I, o merciful father, would like to ask you for more: Please, let my generous patron live long and fortunate life and let him enjoy your paternal protection whenever he needs. Please, may his house be abundant in properties, honours and titles. May it be also blessed with glorious children and let his 295
grandsons become, one day, the equals of angels in heaven. Finally, when he attains the peaceful age of an old man, let him ascend to the kingdom celestial under your guidance. This I implore you to do for him and also for me, o virtuous Paul. Please see that this prayer of mine will be answered. 300

⁵⁰ Louis I. also called Louis the Great, king of Hungary (1342–1382) and of Poland (1370–1382). ŠKOVIERA (2008: 560).

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Bastian Dahl: Academic Networking Outside Academia

Since the foundation of Norway's first university in 1811, classics has been an important part of Norwegian academia. The history of Norwegian classical scholarship, however, has received relatively little attention from researchers, and minimal literature exists on Norway's first classical scholars. One such scholar was Bastian Anastasius Dahl (1851–1895), a gifted Latinist who was expelled from academia on apparently dubious grounds and died at the age of just 43. Dahl produced several highly regarded works and, as recent archival research has revealed, created a vast international network of classical scholars, in stark contrast to his Norwegian contemporaries. In this article, I use my archival findings to shed light on this overlooked, yet illustrative chapter of Norwegian academic history, employing Dahl as a case study from a less canonical area of classical scholarship.

Keywords: history of classical scholarship; 19th-century philology; Norwegian classical scholarship; transnationality; archival research

In modern academia, scholars are constantly reminded of the importance of developing international networks and reaching out to international audiences. While this phenomenon might seem particular to the modern context, this article explores the academic life of a 19th-century scholar whose career was characterised by his active use of networking¹ and in-

¹ In this article, I adhere to the Oxford English Dictionary's definition of 'networking' as 'the action or process of making use of a network of people for the exchange of information, etc., or for professional or other advantage.' OED (2023).

ternational outreach. This scholar was Bastian Dahl, a relatively young classicist on the periphery of late-19th-century academia who nevertheless created a network of well-established classicists from across Europe and the United States and whose academic works received international attention and acclaim.

I wish to use Dahl as a case study to examine not only the history of Norwegian classical scholarship but also the relationship that could exist between a scholar from a small university and international, established academia in the late 19th century. To do so, I focus here on three elements of Dahl's international career: his correspondence with foreign academics, his distribution of his academic publications to foreign scholars and the reception these publications received abroad. The material presented is the result of ongoing archival research and has not been previously published. Before presenting and analysing this archival material, however, I will first seek to provide some key historical context regarding both Norwegian history, in general, and Dahl's life, in particular.

In the latter half of the 19th century, Norway had only one university, *Det Kongelige Frederiks Universitet* (now the University of Oslo), established in 1811. The second Norwegian university, the University of Bergen, would not be founded until 1946. This rather sparse academic landscape must be placed against the backdrop of Norway's political situation at this point. Having been, since 1537, in a real union with Denmark, during which time Copenhagen had been the seat of power, Norway was forced in 1814 into a personal union with Sweden as a result of the Napoleonic Wars. This union would last until 1905. Consequently, Norway's political, economic, cultural, and academic standing was far lower than those of its Scandinavian neighbours during Dahl's lifetime. Humanist fields not directly related to Norwegian culture, including classics, in particular, were increasingly regarded as being of lower importance, and classical philology had no more than two profes-

sors and a handful of students at any point in the century. The university's classical scholars, moreover, wrote almost exclusively in Norwegian or Latin (if they published at all) and rarely travelled abroad – at least before Dahl entered the picture.

Bastian Anastasius Dahl was born in 1851 in Molde, a small town in the northwest of Norway. He studied classical philology at *Det Kongelige Frederiks Universitet* from 1868 to 1874, during which time he also attended lectures at the University of Copenhagen from 1870 to 1871. In 1875, he became a teacher at *Aars og Voss' latin- og realskole*, one of Christiania's most highly regarded secondary schools. While teaching, he received travel scholarships from the university to attend lectures at several European universities: first in Leipzig, Bonn, Rome, and Naples in 1877–78; then in Berlin, at the Sorbonne and *Collège de France* and in Leiden in 1881–82. While Norwegian students in general were encouraged to study abroad in this period, Norwegian classicists had, up until this point, largely remained at home.

In the same period, Dahl wrote a 300-page thesis in German titled *Die lateinische Partikel VT* ['The Latin Particle *ut*'], which was awarded His Royal Highness the Crown Prince's gold medal for an excellent academic thesis in 1880. The exact context of this work is rather nebulous, as Dahl was not working at the university at the time, nor was it a doctoral thesis. In 1885, Dahl published another academic work, *Zur Handschriftenkunde und Kritik des ciceronischen Cato major* ['On Manuscript Studies and Critique of the Ciceronian Cato the Elder'], based on his studies and archival research in Paris and Leiden.

In the same year, Dahl was appointed to a research fellowship at *Det Kongelige Frederiks Universitet*, a position intended to develop promising young scholars and prepare them for careers as academics. After only one year, however, in 1886, he left this position, without having written a PhD thesis or achieved a doctorate by other means. For the remaining

nine years of his life, he worked as an archivist and private tutor of classical languages.

For the time being, I cannot verify the reason for Dahl's premature departure from the university. According to one article written 30 years after his death, he was let go because of 'a vice not unknown in antiquity',² most likely a euphemism for homosexuality. I have not, however, been able to locate any earlier sources, primary or secondary, to corroborate this claim. On the other hand, professor of economics and statistics Ebbe Hertzberg was forced to leave his position at the same university for this exact reason, also in 1886:³ it is not implausible that Dahl suffered the same fate.

Although Dahl had – whether of his own volition or not – left academia, he subsequently published several more works, including two books in Norwegian on the history of Latin literature: in 1889, *Latinsk litteraturhistorie for gymnasier og filologiske studerende. På grundlag av Onorato Occioni: Storia della letteratura latina* ['Latin literary history for secondary schools and students of philology. Based on Onorato Occioni: Storia della letteratura latina'], a 500-page outline directed at students; and in 1891, *Tabellarisk oversigt over den latinske litteraturs historie* ['Tabular overview of the history of Latin literature'], a shorter overview of the same topic. The writing of both of these in Norwegian, rather than German, is a strong indication that Dahl was no longer targeting an international audience, a decision which could be connected to his departure from the university. As will be seen below, however, this did not prevent his works from being read abroad. In 1895, Dahl died after suffering a stroke at his desk at the National Archives, aged 43.⁴

² SMITH (1925: 126).

³ SVENDSEN (2009).

⁴ Dahl's biography is treated more extensively (in Norwegian) in PARELIUS (1952) and THOMLE (1919: 69–74). For Dahl's full bibliography, including works not discussed in this article, see THOMLE (1919: 72–74).

Even without examining Dahl's publications and the relevant archival material in depth, we can begin to sketch out the image of a Latinist with interests ranging from literary history to linguistics. We can also see that, at least at the beginning of his career, he targeted an international audience by writing in an 'international' language – a choice possibly influenced by his studies abroad. To acquire a better understanding, however, of the three elements of interest named above, namely Dahl's correspondence with foreign academics, his distribution of his academic publications to foreign scholars and the reception these publications received abroad, it is necessary to investigate his archives.

All of the archival material treated in this article is held by the *Romsdalsmuseet* in Molde, Norway. This archive includes a total of 31 boxes of material from Dahl's life, ranging from his old schoolbooks, photo albums and diplomas to book manuscripts, letters, and newspaper clippings. A substantial part of this material consists of letters, which clearly show that Dahl communicated with peers in both Europe and the US and that not only was he a well-known and respected figure in academic circles, but his work was read and reviewed by numerous prominent philologists in the international research community. Furthermore, while I do not wish to speculate extensively regarding Dahl's thoughts and motivations, there are several aspects which indicate that he actively worked to maintain and expand this network.

The letters in Dahl's archive were written in Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, English, German, French, Italian and Latin between 1875 and 1892, and they came from Norway, elsewhere in Europe and the US. Their linguistic range may offer another indication that Dahl sought to create a wide international network. The letters also span a broad range of tone and content, from the formal to the private. An important subcategory is that of correspondence between Dahl and his peers, several of whom were fellow students from his travels abroad in the 1870s. While

Whether Dahl consciously created this network in order to gain something from it – such as positive reviews in international journals – or whether it was simply a result of having spent time abroad and wishing to maintain contact with friends and colleagues is not a point on which I wish to speculate.⁵ There is, however, another subcategory of letters which more clearly indicates Dahl's active efforts to make connections with foreign colleagues and academic institutions, namely the many letters of thanks he received from scholars and institutions who had received copies of his publications. It is clear from the letters that these were copies which Dahl himself had distributed.

For example, after the publication of his thesis on *ut*, Dahl received letters from several classical scholars thanking him for sending them copies of the thesis. These included two of his former lecturers, Eugène Benoist, professor at the Sorbonne, and Hermann Usener, professor at the University of Bonn, both highly respected and influential philologists. Usener, in particular, is highly complimentary of Dahl's work, remarking that he has made great progress from his student days in Bonn.⁶

Dahl was, notably, rather tactical in his choice of which publications to send to which scholars. This becomes clear when comparing the recipients of his *ut* thesis and his *Latinsk litteraturhistorie*. The former work was sent to Norwegian and foreign academics, often those with tenured positions at prominent European universities. The latter,

⁵ It is also important to note that only one side of the correspondence, that received by Dahl, is stored in this archive. Therefore, at least some degree of speculation is necessary to piece together the various conversations reflected.

⁶ 'Geehrter herr, heute ist mir Ihre grosse untersuchung über ut zugekommen, und ich greife unter dem eindruck, den mir die durchsicht einer anzahl theils allgemeinerer theils spezieller kapitel gegeben, unwillkürlich zur feder, um Ihnen glück zu wünschen, zu der lichtvollen klarheit, mit der Sie einen so massenhaften stoff zu beherrschen und einen verwickelten knäuel von fragen zu entwirren verstanden haben. (...) Das Sie, seit Sie von uns geschieden, nicht gefeiert haben sondern in angestrengter arbeit gewachsen und erstarkt sind, das lehrt freilich Ihr buch selbst.' (USENER 1881: 1f.).

a literary history written in Norwegian, as noted above, and intended for students, was mainly distributed to Scandinavian headteachers and schoolteachers.

Although the majority of the letters of thanks among Dahl's papers are fairly informal and personal, some are more formal. For example, the archive includes two letters from the *Regia Università di Roma*, dating from 1889 and 1891, both signed by the university's rector, Valentino Cerruti, who thanks Dahl for sending the university his *Latinsk litteraturhistorie* and *Tabellarisk oversikt*, respectively. What benefit an Italian institution would derive from two books in Norwegian is uncertain. As its subtitle shows, however, the *Latinsk litteraturhistorie* was 'based on' Onorato Occioni's *Storia della letteratura latina compendiata ad uso dei licei* (1883). In 1889, Occioni was a professor of Latin at the *Regia Università di Roma*, so in that sense, Dahl's own volume is perhaps not such a surprising gift, especially given that the two scholars had, by this time, corresponded with one another for several years, as noted above. Nevertheless, this point does not explain why Dahl also sent the second book, the *Tabellarisk oversikt*, beyond the possibility that it may have felt only natural, having already sent his previous book on the history of Latin literature.

In all of these cases, it is not unlikely that Dahl distributed the copies of his books of his own accord. In the case of the university in Rome, this could suggest that he retained a desire for an academic career even after leaving his position at the university in Oslo in 1886. There is, however, at least one instance where Dahl had another reason for sharing his work in this manner, namely an explicit request.

In 1885, a student of letters in Paris named Alix wrote to the Grøndahl publishing house to enquire about Dahl's *ut* thesis.⁷ The publisher presumably forwarded the letter to Dahl – as it can now be found in his

⁷ ALIX (1885b).

archive – and Dahl must subsequently have sent the student a signed copy of his book. This can be inferred from a second letter from Alix, sent to Dahl directly, in which he expresses his gratitude. This second letter is particularly significant in that it provides a unique insight into interest in Dahl's work abroad: Alix describes how Dahl's work is not only read but also praised by his lecturers.⁸ It is, of course, possible that some polite flattery is involved, but Alix's words must contain at least some truth; otherwise, he would hardly have sought to obtain a copy in the first place. Not only, then, was Dahl interested in promoting his work internationally, but his work was indeed read and valued abroad, even within academic institutions as reputable as the Sorbonne.

A more tangible representation of Dahl's international reception is the array of reviews he received in foreign journals. An industrious archivist, Dahl compiled several scrapbooks in which he kept a full record of all of the responses his publications received, both in journals and in private letters. The photograph in Figure 1 shows the table of contents in the scrapbook containing the reviews of his *ut* thesis. The sources listed consist of a mixture of Scandinavian newspapers and journals, in addition to German, Austrian, American, French, and Belgian journals. There are, in total, 15 reviews in six different languages, all of which praise Dahl's skill and diligence. *Zur Handschriftenkunde und Kritik des ciceronischen Cato major* similarly received attention in several foreign, mainly German, journals (Figure 2). As in the case of the *ut* thesis, these reviews were decidedly positive.

One might imagine that Dahl's other publications, which were all written in Norwegian, were not read outside of Scandinavia. From yet another scrapbook in his archive, however, it is clear that the *Latinsk*

⁸ 'J'avais souvent entendu nos professeurs citer avec de grands éloges ce remarquable travail et je l'avais le moi-même avec un véritable intérêt. Je désirais beaucoup l'avoir eu la possession, mais je n'aurais jamais osé espérer le tenir de votre main.' ALIX (1885a: 1f.).

B. Anmædelser og Kritik af mine skrifter 1879-91 a-e.	
a Den latinske udtale 1879.	
1. J. Færevlandet 1879, af P. Aubert.	23
b. Zur Handschriftenkunde u. Kritik des ciceronischen Cato major I, 1885, II, 1886.	
1. J. Deutsche Literaturzeitung 1886, nr. 13, af H. Stangl. (I)	25
2. — — — 1887, nr. 11, — — — (II)	26
3. Berliner Philol. Wochenschrift 1887, nr. 10, af H. Deiters (I)	27
4. Neue Philol. Rundschau 1887, nr. 5, af F. Zengeler (I-II)	27
5. Raurians Jahresbericht af P. Schwanke (I-II)	28
6. Wochenschr. f. klass. Philologie 1887, nr. 28, af W. Friedrich (I-II)	29
7. Rivista di filologia IV (1887) 5-5, af F. Ramorino (I-II)	30, a
8. Revue critique 1888, nr. 19, af L. Duval (I-II)	30, b
9. — — — 1890, 7 (6-15), af E. Thomas (I-II)	30, c
10. Nordiskt Tidskrift f. Filologi. N. R. VII (1886-87), s. 255-56, af G. Jørgensen (I)	
c. Udgave af Weisses Populære Forelesninger II, 1886.	
1. J. Dagbladet 1886, 446, af Jørgen Jørgensen	31
2. Aftenposten 1886, 753, af Monstjerne	32
3. Dagen 1886, 307, af Jørgen	33
4. Skilling. Magasin 1886, 51, af E. E. E.	34
5. Hørmø. Tidende 1886, af K. Petersen	34
6. Smøstenes Tidende 1886, 153, af K. Røll	35
7. Christ. Intelligensblad 1886, af n.	36
8. Stockholms Dagblad 1886, af n.	37
9. Bergens Aftenblad 1887, 2132, af Bauergaap	37
10. Bergens Tidende 1887, af J. Schneider	38

Figure 2. Table of contents in Bastian Dahl's scrapbook of responses to *Zur Handschriftenkunde und Kritik des ciceronischen Cato major* (i.a.) (DAHL 1894a: 2). Courtesy of Romsdalsmuseet; photograph by Victoria Mostue.

litteraturhistorie did indeed receive some attention in Finland, Germany, the UK, and France (Figure 3). Curiously, these reviews do not mention that the book is written in Norwegian. On the contrary, an anonymous writer in *The Classical Review* states that the *Latinsk litteraturhistorie* 'is worth the attention of English schoolmasters' – without mentioning the obvious language barrier.⁹ The same reviewer also suggests that Dahl is too modest when describing his book as based on Occioni's, pointing

⁹ CR (1889: 415).

Indhold.

A. Anmeldelser og kritik 1889- . a - c

a. Latinsk Litteraturhistorie. 1889: 1. Trykte i aviser og tidsskr.

1	"Hjæp" 1889, (7/4) -	H. B. Morgenstjerne	3
2	"Dagbl." 1889, (2/5) -	A. Chr. Bang	5
3	"Intellig." 1889, (3/6) -	Gilboansen	6
4	"Kjøbenhavn" 1889, (7/4) -
5	"Verd. Gang" 1889, (2/4) -	Trygve Hansen	7
6a	"Bergenspost" 1889, 16 (2/5) -
6b	2 ^{de} gengivet i: "Kongl. Brevst." 1889, 41 (25/5) -
7	"Tijds. Aftebl." 1889, (7/4) -	H. J. Richter	8
8a	"Politikern" 1889, (gæng. i: "Hjæp" 1889, 604) -	9
8b	"Vor Dagblom" 1889, s. 174-78. -	H. L. Rommestrop
9	"Litteratursk. tidskr." 18 . . . s. 371-44. -	H. J. Bentzen	10
10a	"Tidskr. tidskr." XXX (1890), 151-52 -	F. Gustafsson
10b	"Tidskr. udg. af Pöytäkirj. för i Söndra 1891, 188, 34, 44 -	C. Spinnberg. (Gjengivet i: "Hjæp" 1892, 27) -	11
11	"Wechschr. f. klass. Phil." 1890, nr. 13. -	H. B. Drachmann	11
12	"Deutsche Literaturzeitung" 1891, nr. 10 -	H. Bl. Gertz	12-13
13	"Neue philol. Rundschau" 1889, nr. 24. -	H. F. Schröder (Gj. Berl. Phil. Wochenb. 1889, nr. 50) -	14
14a	"Centralorg. f. d. Inter. des Klassikerns" XVIII (1890), 150-51. -	af E. v. Leuck	15
14b	2 ^{de} gengivet i: "Hjæp" 1890, 541, i: "Dagbl." 1890,
14c	"Berliner Philologische Wochenschr." 1890, nr. 4, 1266-67. -	H. J.
15	"Classical Review" III (1889), 9, 415.	16
16	"Italisch
17a	"Revue critique" 1889, nr. 32, s. 88-99.	17
17b	2 ^{de}, gæng. i: "Hjæp" 1889, (1-10), i: "Berliner Phil. Wochenschr." 1889, nr. 39 (25/5) -
17c	"Revue de philologie" XIV, 1, s. 127-28 (18)

Figure 3. Table of contents in Bastian Dahl's scrapbook of responses to the Latinsk litteraturhistorie (i.a.) (DAHL 1884b: 1). Courtesy of Romsdalsmuseet; photograph by Victoria Mostue.

out, for example, that Dahl's version is 200 pages longer.¹⁰ One of the French reviewers asserts, more explicitly, that Dahl's book is 'infinitely superior' to its Italian precursor.¹¹

One aspect of these reviews also highlights Dahl's propensity for networking: while there are several examples of reviewers who knew

¹⁰ Dahl himself underlines his independence from Occioni in the book's introduction. DAHL (1889: XI f.).

¹¹ Dosson (1889: 99).

Dahl before reviewing his work, the archive also includes material from correspondence initiated by Dahl after having been reviewed. In 1883, for instance, Dr Johannes Segebade gave Dahl's *ut* thesis a positive review in the *Philologische Rundschau* (see Figure 1, No. XI). Later that same year, Dahl received a letter from Segebade, thanking him for getting in touch and for suggesting the possibility of a personal acquaintance.¹² This may offer another indication that Dahl was eager to forge new connections in foreign academic circles and that he used reviews of his work as a means of accomplishing that goal.

Among his international contemporaries, all of Dahl's academic publications received relatively wide and decidedly positive attention. It is also clear that some academics regarded them not only as commendable but as useful tools for students, even abroad. It is remarkable that a young academic from an almost equally young university, lacking any particular initial reputation, received so much attention outside of Norway – even when writing in Norwegian – especially given that he held neither a doctorate nor a university position. This profile becomes still more extraordinary when we compare Dahl to other classical philologists in Norway in this period, as he appears to have enjoyed a far more international academic life than his Norwegian peers in terms of studies, publications, reception, and network.

I stated above my intention to use Dahl as a case study to examine the relationship between a small university and international and established academia in the late 19th century. What this case study shows is that it was indeed possible for a classicist from a peripheral nation such as Norway to create a name for himself outside his native country. We may also infer that it was desirable for a philologist to have such an international reputation, as it was something which Dahl appears to

¹² 'Die Aussicht auf eine persönliche Bekanntschaft, die Sie mir eröffnen'. SEGEBADE (1883: 1).

have strived to achieve. As this archival research is ongoing, however, there remain some unanswered questions surrounding the interaction between Dahl and international academia.

For example, considering his wide reach in contemporary academia, did Dahl have a lasting academic influence, either in Norway or abroad? There are some potential indications to this effect, including statements from later scholars¹³ and non-Norwegian academic publications which cite Dahl's work, even as late as the 21st century.¹⁴ To take another perspective, it is also currently unclear whether (or how far) Dahl's research was influenced by his many foreign trips and connections and consequently deviated from contemporary Norwegian scholarship. As we have seen, he appears to have deviated from his Norwegian peers in terms of his international connections and reception, but it is not equally clear how his research methods and interests coincided with those of Norwegian classicists.

Despite these unanswered questions, it is evident that Bastian Dahl's life and work shed valuable light on the history of classical scholarship from a geographically peripheral and institutionally marginalised perspective. While it is important to emphasise that Dahl is not, in several ways, a typical representative of Norwegian classical philology, it is nevertheless inescapable that he and his archive offer unique insights into how a classicist from the academic outskirts worked in the late 19th century. His case forms, therefore, an important chapter in the history of both Norwegian and international classical philology.

¹³ E.g. PARELIUS (1952: 55).

¹⁴ E.g. KREBS (2023: 182); PINKSTER (2021: 299, n. 112); CABAÑEROS (2010: 514); FLECK (2008: 437); BODELOT (2003: 337; 340; 341 *inter alia*).

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One Myth, Three Genres: The Development and Transformation of the Myth of Orpheus in Tennessee Williams's Oeuvre

*Tennessee Williams (1911–1983) often found inspiration in mythology, from his first short story to numerous poems that allude to Greco-Roman myths. Notably, his first professionally produced play, *Battle of Angels* (1940) is based on the story of Orpheus and Euridice, a myth that consistently resurfaces in Williams's works. This paper traces the development of this myth across Williams's oeuvre in three different genres, from the play *Battle of Angels* to the poem "Orpheus Descending" (1952), the revised theatrical version titled *Orpheus Descending* (1957), and finally the movie *The Fugitive Kind* (1960). A comparative analysis of the nuances of the myth of Orpheus in these works reveals that Williams utilizes the universal recognizability of the myth, and gradually employs it with a philosophical perspective, transposing Orpheus' journey to the Underworld to a modern context to depict the condition of man in modern times.*

Keywords: Orpheus and Eurydice, Tennessee Williams, adaptation, modern theatre.

Introduction

American playwright Tennessee Williams (1911–1983) made his debut into the literary scene with the short story "The Vengeance of Nitocris" (1928), a retelling of an Egyptian legend documented by Herodotus. Greco-Roman sources and mythology would keep informing Wil-

liams's prolific body of work in the years to come. His oeuvre alludes to mythical figures in poems such as "Sonnet for Pygmalion," "Testa Dell'Effebo" and "Androgyne, Mon Amour," where the latter becomes the title of Williams's poetry collection of 1977, the last published in his lifetime.

This inspiration and reliance on mythological characters and motifs seems to stem from Williams's belief in a common fund of images and shared understanding. In his preface to *Camino Real* he states that 'we all have in our conscious and unconscious minds a great vocabulary of images, and I think all human communication is based on these images.'¹ Critic Agnès Roche-Lajtha connects this notion to Jungian archetypes, claiming that 'the whole of mythology could in fact be taken as a sort of projection of the collective unconscious.'² This explanation serves Williams's intention to reach the widest audience possible, particularly through his drama. Indeed, he further claims that archetypes, not referring solely to characters, serve as symbols, that have 'only one legitimate purpose which is to say a thing more directly and simply and beautifully that it could be said in words.'³ The influence of Sartrean ideas is felt as well at this point. In "Forgers of Myth," Sartre states:

We believe our theater would betray its mission if it portrayed individual personalities, even if they were as universal types as a miser, a misanthrope, a deceived husband, because, if it is to address the masses, the theater must speak in terms of their most general preoccupations, dispelling their anxieties in the form of myths which anyone can understand and feel deeply.⁴

¹ WILLIAMS (1953: xxxiii).

² ROCHE-LAJTHA (2011: 59).

³ WILLIAMS (1953: xxxiii).

⁴ SARTRE (1976: 38–39). This lecture was originally published in 1946.

Hence, Williams relies on the wide recognizability of myths and timelessness of mythical situations, as they 'comprise all of the most fundamental of man's experiences.'⁵ He reinforces their effect by 'integrating them into a personal symbolic world, ... becoming the backbone of his dramas.'⁶ This way, besides drawing inspiration from mythological characters, motifs and situations, Williams utilizes them as symbolic mediators for his intended messages.

No myth has been as everlasting in Williams's oeuvre as that of Orpheus. It first emerges in the form of *Battle of Angels* (1940), his first professional theatrical production. The myth reappears in the poem "Orpheus Descending," originally written in 1952 and published in the collection *In the Winter of Cities* (1956), which would give the title to the revised version of *Battle of Angels*. The play *Orpheus Descending* (1957) would then be adapted for a last time for the big screen into the movie *The Fugitive Kind* (1960). Traces of the myth are present even in later plays, such as *Something Cloudy, Something Clear* (1981), where the main character is depicted working on a play about Orpheus.⁷

This obsession with the myth of Orpheus is not surprising when one considers the recurrent themes and motifs of Williams's drama. The descent into an underworld of sorts, the human struggle to live and find meaning in life, artistic effort as a response and solution to this struggle, and ultimately the purpose and reception of art, are as integral to Williams's work as they are present in the myth of Orpheus. Therefore, the story of Orpheus and Eurydice becomes for Williams a suitable and fertile source.

⁵ BARNES (1955: 121).

⁶ BARBERA (2018: 116).

⁷ KAPLAN (2010: 152).

Adapting a myth

A note should be made here regarding the phrasing used in this paper in relation to Williams's works as adaptations of the classical myth. Terminology on adaptation is already complicated and loose, even more so in reference to myths.⁸ An additional problem stems from myths not having a certain original source. In this case, the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is reported to have been first formulated around the late 6th or early 5th century BC; however, the earliest surviving text that delineates this story appears in book four of Virgil's *Georgics*, dated 29 BC.⁹ Yet, it is not definitely known whether this rendering of the story was ever part of the Greek mythos, and if it were so, the intersections with the myth remain unclear. Another famous version of the story appears in books 10 and 11 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Terence Dawson claims that all subsequent adaptations take these two works as points of reference.¹⁰

With the myth being of unknown origin and source, it is difficult to establish whether any version is an adaptation or not. In Dawson's terminology, the myth is considered a 'pre-text,' that becomes an adaptation as soon as it is written or reproduced.¹¹ He suggests that instead of defining the entire story as a myth, it is more accurate to define as such the textual reproduction of a certain sequence of events that informs the story as a whole.¹² Consequently, any later version of the myth becomes an adaptation of a series of adaptations, where only certain events remain unchanged. In the myth of Orpheus there are four such events: the death of Eurydice and her descent into the underworld, Orpheus' grief, Orpheus'

⁸ HUTCHEON (2006). The use of terms such as adaptation, (re-)interpretation, (re-)creation, appropriation, or salvaging varies according to critical perspective and authorial intention.

⁹ DAWSON (2000: 247).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid (246).

¹² Ibid.

journey to the underworld, and finally his attempt to retrieve Eurydice back to the world of the living.¹³

The categorization of Williams's works as adaptations in this paper is based on Dawson's suggestion, for Williams preserves the necessary events of the myth of Orpheus. Although he takes liberties in their depiction and modifies their order, the 'spirit, meaning, and importance' of the original story is preserved.¹⁴ With no definitive original text claims about the original source of the myth or Williams's fidelity towards any particular version would be futile. Instead, the focus of this analysis is to trace Williams's treatment of the myth across various genres, not only as an interpretation of the myth itself, but also as consecutive reinterpretations of his own preceding adaptations, that create a sense of intertextual and intermedial communication between his works.

Common features in Williams's adaptations

Williams's cinematic and theatrical variations of the myth intersect at several points. Their most notable quality is the reordering of the classical sequence of events. Val, Williams's Orpheus, appears in a quest to save his own self by moving into a new setting. It is during this relocation that he meets the symbolic Eurydice, with whom he eventually falls in love. As a direct consequence of this relationship, Orpheus' initial goal of saving himself transforms into the goal of saving Eurydice as well in the process.

Another common aspect of these variants is the presence of multiple "Eurydices." Myra in *Battle of Angels*, renamed as Lady in the subsequent adaptations, holds the role of the central Eurydice as Val's main point of interest and eventual lover. This is further emphasized by dialogues that

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ YACOWAR (1977: 7).

imply her symbolic death following her past tragedies and the isolation of her present marriage. However, secondary characters like Vee Talbot and Cassandra/Carol¹⁵ can be read as Eurydices, too. They are both revived upon contact with Val/Orpheus. Vee experiences her own artistic and philosophical renaissance after her conversations with Val. Likewise, upon his impact, Cassandra/Carol's philosophy of death changes into one of life.

Moreover, Williams's adaptations preserve Orpheus' reluctance in approaching women, as Val rejects the advances of Carol, or even Myra/Lady in the initial scenes of the story. However, Val's death does not come from the hands of these rejected women, as happens in the earlier renditions of the myth, but by their husbands and other townsmen instead. While his rejection is hurtful most notably to Cassandra/Carol, but also to Myra/Lady in the beginning, it is diametrically misunderstood by the townsmen as a perverse attraction to the females of the community. As a result, threatened by Val's influence on their women, the men ultimately execute him.

Lastly, Williams's adaptations include confusing details in reference to the Orphic myth. While in the story, a snake becomes the reason for Eurydice's death, in Williams's works it becomes an identifier of Val himself. He is nicknamed "Snakeskin" because of the jacket he wears, the only remnant of his existence in the end. This association of Eurydice's saviour to her cause of death increases the ambiguity of Williams's choices of characterization in reinterpreting Orpheus.

The convoluted adaptation: *Battle of Angels*

Battle of Angels is Williams's first attempt in adapting the myth of Orpheus. It is nevertheless a cluttered adaptation for several reasons. The

¹⁵ The character of Cassandra in *Battle of Angels* is renamed Carol in Williams's subsequent works.

allusion to the original myth is obscured not only by the fact that it is never explicitly mentioned, but even more so by the convoluted nature of the play, where several references coexist and intersect to create a heavily multi-referential work. The story is set in the Deep South of America against a social backdrop that echoes major topical problems, including displacement, immigration, racism, and cruel punishments to those who challenge social conventions.

The mythical pattern of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, apart from being reordered, is mixed with other mythical references. Most notably, the character of Cassandra, a young woman disowned by her community, is an obvious allusion to the mythical prophetess of the same name. In fact, she is the sole explicit reference to a mythical figure, where besides the name, most of her lines have striking nuances of prophecies. She randomly fires a gun at 'a bird of ill omen' in one of her first scenes in the play.¹⁶ She claims to wear dark glasses to hide the 'secrets' in her eyes.¹⁷ Near the end, in what is the most explicit reference to the mythical character, Cassandra exclaims that "[her] lips have been touched by prophetic fire," to follow up with her last prophecy of "a battle in heaven. A battle of *angels* above us! And *thunder*! And *storm*!"¹⁸

The combination of two different myths becomes even more complicated with the addition of religious references. The title of the play, mentioned in Cassandra's prophecy, is drawn from "The Legend," an older poem by Williams, that alludes to the Apocalypse in the Old Testament. The poem implies the hopelessness of humans in a world where even angels are fighting each other in heaven. However, this heavenly battle seems to have reached earth, as Jabe, Myra's patronizing husband, is depicted in the play 'like the very Prince of Darkness.'¹⁹ Yet, he

¹⁶ WILLIAMS (1958: 137).

¹⁷ Ibid (161).

¹⁸ Ibid (216).

¹⁹ Ibid (229).

is also portrayed as a Hades-like character. Myra calls him 'Mr. Death,'²⁰ not only because he is almost dying, but also because he brings death wherever he appears, his movements sounding 'like bones, like death.'²¹ As such, Jabe's satanic depiction is simultaneously imbued with nuances of Hades.

Val is even less free of the intermingling of mythical and religious connotations. Apart from Orpheus, he is also represented as a Christ-like figure. Although the poetic nature of Orpheus is preserved in Val's depiction as a writer, the book that he is writing is described as a book of life, a book that teaches the truth and frightens those who read it.²² Thus, the biblical connotations are inescapable. Moreover, Vee paints Val as Christ on the cross, not only depicting him as a Christ-like saviour, but also foreshadowing his death on Good Friday. In fact, the Easter symbolism throughout *Battle* also contributes majorly to its Christian allusions.

In addition, *Battle of Angels* is overcrowded with biographical and social references as well. The setting of a shoe store as a version of hell is closely related to the author, whose own experience in Continental Shoemakers in his youth would be a tedious and hellish period that frequently resurfaces in his works.²³ Moreover, the southern setting, the depiction of Myra as an immigrant, racism, derogatory speech against outsiders, as well as instances of southern superstitions and beliefs, make the references of the play so intermingled that the allusion to the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice gets almost entirely lost. This illustrates Williams's inclination towards 'a kind of modern myth' that 'is not an organic form,' but instead 'synthetic.'²⁴ His vision is not unicentric, but instead combines several points of reference to display the complicated circumstances of

²⁰ Ibid (231).

²¹ Ibid (226).

²² Ibid (194).

²³ Notable examples are *The Glass Menagerie* and *Stairs to the Roof*.

²⁴ JACKSON (1966: 54).

man and his aim to reconcile them. While Williams's initial experiments in displaying this vision do not prove very successful, as in *Battle of Angels*, his intention gets more polished in subsequent works.

A poetic intermezzo

Amongst a flow of new dramatic material, a little poem became crucial in redirecting Williams's focus toward a more refined adaptation of the myth of Orpheus. The poem "Orpheus Descending" (1952) is Williams's first and sole explicit allusion to the myth. The poem is divided into two parts, where the first describes a version of the underworld with a 'suffocatingly weighted' atmosphere that 'can never be lifted.'²⁵ Although there are occasional glimpses of a 'lesser dark,'²⁶ escape is impossible. The poetic persona addresses Orpheus directly by asking 'Orpheus, how could her wounded foot move through it,' implying the presence of Eurydice and the snake bite that caused her death.²⁷ In this sense, Williams's poem seems to preserve the typical pattern of the myth and is perhaps its closest adaptation.

However, the second part presents a new diversion, not in terms of backstory, but in Williams's treatment of the myth with a more philosophical approach that points to characteristics of the human nature. Continuing to address Orpheus, the poetic persona comments on desires and goals that are 'only longed for and sought for a while and abandoned.'²⁸ The poem then points to man's 'passion ... for declivity' and 'the impulse to fall,' despite the desire to rise up.²⁹ Lastly, the speaker condemns Orpheus, the 'shamefaced fugitive' to 'crawl back

²⁵ WILLIAMS (2002: 14).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid (15).

²⁹ Ibid.

under the crumbling broken wall of [himself].'³⁰ The complexity of this second part of the poem, therefore, depicts a twofold conflict of man in the world: on one hand, he has to fight a useless battle against external deterministic forces that rule his life and the world at large, whereas on the other, man has to battle his own often paradoxical impulses and face their consequences.

It is exactly this depiction of man between two worlds, the external and internal, that marks an important shift in Williams's use of the myth. First of all, he seems to have detected that the myth suffices to convey a universal message without being intermingled with other references. Secondly, it sheds light on the relevance of myths across time. As in Williams's poem, the myth remains pertinent because it depicts a universal truth, that of human nature. The appeal of myths according to Hazel Barnes stands exactly in their insights to 'intrinsically human' experiences and emotions; however, the solutions to these universal situations are given 'by way of suggestion only and never with clearly delineated solution.'³¹ It is the ambiguity of myths and their proposed solutions that gives way to the opportunity of further reinterpretations.

A further reason why myths are adapted is because the writer 'wants to reinterpret these for his own time,'³² setting the myth in circumstances that can be recognizable to the audience, rather than merely symbolical. Barnes argues that myths hold a particular appeal for 20th century existentialist writers, who, despite their paradoxical outlook as an antithesis of Hellenic ideals,³³ subvert the old solutions to present the hopeless position of man in modern times.³⁴ Leaving their characters with no ideal or value compass, existentialists put mythological charac-

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ BARNES (1955: 122).

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid (127).

ters like Sisyphus or Orestes in situations where only their actions and individual choices matter. Williams's interest in existentialist literature and the new direction of the poem "Orpheus Descending" informs his subsequent adaptation as well.

A second attempt on stage: *Orpheus Descending*

The title of the poem survived in Williams's second theatrical adaptation of the myth. The playwright admits to have worked 'stubbornly'³⁵ for seventeen years to revise *Battle of Angels* into *Orpheus Descending*, a version with 'seventy-five per cent' new material.³⁶ Although the cluttered nature of *Battle* is not entirely polished, Williams seems to have refined and strengthened his allusions in this new version. There are obvious changes, such as the modification of character names, where Myra completely loses her name and becomes Lady, whereas Cassandra becomes Carol. Hence, the ties to additional mythological sources are lost, and the focus is primarily set into the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice.

An added allusion is Val's portrayal as a musician, never letting go of his guitar, his 'life's companion.'³⁷ This modern version of Orpheus' lyre holds the function of revival and purification, as 'it washes [Val] clean like water when anything unclean has touched [him].'³⁸ Moreover, engraved with the autograph of Woody Guthrie, a famous American singer of the time, the guitar symbolizes the role of art in Val's life as a tool that gives meaning and purpose to his existence.

Val's poetic speech is not Christ-like; instead of spirituality, it focuses on earthly life and the ways that humans cope with the burden of existence. This is evident in his conversations with the three Eury-

³⁵ WILLIAMS (1958: vi).

³⁶ Cf. PHILLIPS (1980: 202).

³⁷ WILLIAMS (1958: 37).

³⁸ Ibid (37).

dice-like characters. As he visits the cemetery with Carol, this setting of the underworld inspires her to echo the advice of the dead to 'live, live, live, live, live,'³⁹ emphasizing the necessary determination to keep on living, without drawing any implications to what happens after death. This conclusion aligns with Carol's earlier question, 'what on earth can you do but catch at whatever comes near you with both your hands until your fingers are broken.'⁴⁰ In her case, the solution is to keep living, sometimes even wildly, to look for closure in people, to attempt to create relationships no matter how temporary, and to move away from places that make life impossible.

Vee, on the other hand, finds a different solution. While she continues to paint religious imagery as she did on *Battle*, the focus of her exchanges with Val shifts from his nature as a savior to the purpose of art instead. In her most significant dialogue with Val, Vee comes into the conclusion that 'existence didn't make sense' before she started to paint.⁴¹ As such, she finds purpose in her painting, in a similar way to Val's attachment to his guitar. Art becomes a distraction from the circumstances of life, but in doing so, it also becomes a return to the essence of individual existence, a deliberate choice and a tool that ensures authenticity to one's life.

Val's conversations with Lady are more complicated, as they revolve around numerous notions. Val expresses his ideas on the importance of constant movement like a legless bird that has to fly incessantly in order to keep living. Later on, he formulates his version of true existence as 'a lifelong sentence to solitary confinement inside our own lonely skins for as long as we live on this earth.'⁴² At this point, Val seems to have lost all belief towards any kind of interpersonal rapport. Indeed, when

³⁹ Ibid (28).

⁴⁰ Ibid (21).

⁴¹ Ibid (66).

⁴² Ibid (47).

Lady proposes the notion of love as a solution to loneliness, he rejects it as 'the make-believe answer.'⁴³ Love is to him a form of bad faith, a way of jeopardizing authentic existence and lying to one's self, a distraction from the ultimate truth of loneliness.

Lady's revival becomes a major turning point for Val's beliefs. His presence causes Lady to gradually open up. She confesses her past and claims that she 'wanted death' after the loss of her child, but instead chose another version of death, that of lovelessly marrying a much older man.⁴⁴ Now, Val's presence has infused her with a new desire for life. While she is aware that 'Death's knocking for [her],' she resolutely exclaims '*I won't wither in dark!*'⁴⁵ Her pregnancy with Val's child becomes the utmost manifestation of her revival, even more so considering that she had thought of herself to be barren. Hence, Lady confesses that 'I have life in my body, this dead tree, my body, has burst in flower! You've given me life, you can go!'⁴⁶ While she has found a new purpose and a refreshed desire to keep on living, she has also revived Val in the process. Their interactions have gradually caused Val to see life with new eyes. This fits the reimagined mythical pattern of the play. Val had come to town to save himself, and he succeeds, although temporarily. However, interpersonal relationships have been crucial in this process. While he gives new life to the three "Eurydices," interacting with them has transformed him and his outlook on life as well.

From stage to big screen: *The Fugitive Kind*

Orpheus Descending was set to have a grand cinematic adaptation in 1960 under the title *The Fugitive Kind*, directed by Sidney Lumet, star-

⁴³ Ibid (48).

⁴⁴ Ibid (61).

⁴⁵ Ibid (109).

⁴⁶ Ibid (113).

ring Marlon Brando and Anna Magnani. Although the screenplay was a collaboration of Williams and Meade Roberts, the latter would state that Williams's involvement was of major importance. Roberts states that from the first meetings in 1958, everybody involved in the cinematic adaptation intended 'to do [the film] strictly on the terms set forth by the playwright,' and that this was the goal of the director and all the actors.⁴⁷ While Williams was dissatisfied with the outcome, many consider the film to be 'the best version of the basic material.'⁴⁸

The shift towards realism in *Orpheus Descending* is even more pronounced in *The Fugitive Kind*, where 'the element of allegorical abstraction ... is subordinated to the physical realism of the film.'⁴⁹ The movie portrays Val as a man with faults, rather than a symbolic savior figure. Yet, the ties to the myth of Orpheus are stronger, as cinematic techniques effectively produce visual allusions to the mythical references. An obvious example is the change in Lady's appearance throughout the movie to visually complement her gradual revival, where she shifts from a disheveled look with uncombed hair and black clothes, to lighter costumes, until she appears in her last scene looking much younger, wearing Christmas ornaments on her hair and wearing a sensual dress that reveals more of her lively body.

The camera shots play a significant role as well. While in both theatrical versions, Val and Lady are oblivious to the fact that Jabe has been watching their secret encounters in the confectionery, the movie draws more attention to his presence. Apart from two scenes taking place in his room (something that does not happen in the plays), the camera repeatedly focuses on a little window upon the confectionery, where Jabe peeks every time. These shots put him in the position of an all-seeing

⁴⁷ Cf. PHILLIPS (1980: 206).

⁴⁸ YACOWAR (1977: 60).

⁴⁹ Ibid (62).

god, observing the two humans that are trying to trick him, awaiting in patience to execute his final punishment. Thus, the allusion to Jabe as a Hades-like figure is more pronounced compared to the plays.

Another crucial scene is Lady's death, where the camera shots again draw stronger allusions to the myth. Lady dies while climbing up the stairway, as a final depiction of her attempt to get out of the shoe store, her version of the underworld. As her husband shoots her, she falls down the stairs, illustrating Eurydice's final fall. Moreover, the condition of not looking back, a critical moment in the myth of Orpheus, is uttered only in the movie, as opposed to the plays. Sheriff Talbot warns Val to leave the town before sunrise, but he disobeys. The camera again emphasizes this precise moment. As soon as Val hears the gunshot while trying to extinguish the fire in the confectionery, the camera captures Val staring back towards the sound. In the same instance, Carol desperately begs him not to go back, reiterating the condition of the gaze. Val fails, and that becomes the demise of him and Lady, where Lady drops dead in the same hell she was trying to escape from, whereas Val is forcefully pushed into the fire by the angry townsmen.

Hence, despite the realism of the film, the allusions to the myth are presented in a much stronger and impactful way, where textual references are complemented with visual ones. In addition to the camera shots, the composition of certain scenes also contributes to this effect. To further emphasize Val's resurrective effect upon the three ladies, he is shown touching them whenever he says something profound. He strokes Carol's hair as he utters 'Fly away, little bird,' encouraging her to leave the city in order to live the life she wants. Similarly, he caresses Vee's cheek as he compliments her outlook on life, saying 'you've made some beauty, Miss Talbot, out of this Dark River country,' implying that her artistic endeavor is the solution to cope with her circumstances, while at the same time giving meaning to her existence. In another

scene, during his speech on absolute solitude, he holds Lady's hands in his own.

The movie follows the same path as *Orpheus Descending* in portraying philosophical, rather than spiritual notions, including the search for belonging, man's effort to escape solitude, existential angst and the attempts to cope with the burden of life, as well as art as the artist's solution to this anxiety. The movie emphasizes this latter point in greater detail. Apart from the aforementioned role of painting in Vee's quest to find meaning to her existence, Val's creative efforts are shown, too, as he sings "Blanket Roll Blues," a song written by Williams – in fact, the only lyrics he ever wrote in his life. Moreover, Lady's process of reconstructing and decorating the confectionary are portrayed as an artistic effort as well. Indeed, the first reaction that she gets from the nurse, the first person seeing the new confectionary besides Val, is that it is quite 'artistic.'

Conclusion

Tennessee Williams, in all his versions of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, strongly alludes to the myth, by offering however a new interpretation. While the mythical pattern is reordered in the plays and the cinematic adaptation, the main events are preserved. The myth gets a progressively greater attention with each version, while at the same time integrating with the modern setting in a more refined way. *Battle of Angels* unsuccessfully combines the myth with several other mythical, religious, biographical and social references, resulting in a cluttered outcome. The poem "Orpheus Descending" redirects the focus of Williams's reinterpretation into the myth and its universal qualities, a focus that is preserved in the play *Orpheus Descending* as well. The film *The Fugitive Kind* provides a better visual representation of the myth, where

despite the realistic setting, cinematic techniques bring Williams's version closer to the original story.

The discussion whether Williams's versions of the myth can actually be considered faithful adaptations is somewhat futile, considering that not only is the terminology of adaptation vague, but also because a myth is not a fixed literary source. What is important to consider is that Williams takes advantage of the universality and recognizability of the myth, and further imbues it with a modern outlook, while also preserving the critical moments and the spirit of the story. Hence, in an age where classical solutions and ideals may not be valid anymore, Williams puts the myth in a modern context to display the circumstances and condition of the modern man.

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A Japanese Story: The Domestication of *Thermae Romae*

The 2012 Japanese movie Thermae Romae looks at the story of Lucius, an ancient Roman bath architect who through twists of fate time travelled to modern Japan on multiple occasions. Inspired by the bath technology of the modern Japanese people, Lucius would build many innovative bathhouses in ancient Rome, and his bath-building would eventually rope him into the political intrigue between Ceionius and Antoninus Pius, possible heirs of Hadrian. Thermae Romae is a peculiar case of Classical reception, as it was produced and found success in the Japanese society, where Classics is relatively unfamiliar to the general public. This paper discusses the incorporation of ancient Rome in the movie from the perspective of Domestication, and argues that the success of the movie can be attributed to its Japанизation of ancient Roman elements, which catered to the emotional and social needs of the Japanese society at the time of its release.

Keywords: *Thermae Romae* (manga), Reception, Mari Yamazaki, *Thermae Romae* (2012 movie), Japanese Cinema, Live Action Manga Adaptations

When the Japanese film *Thermae Romae* directed by Hideki Takeuchi came out in 2012, it achieved both domestic and international success. It came second place in the 2012 Japanese box office,¹ and premiered in North America at the Toronto International Film Festival. However, in comparison to other successful Japanese films of 2012, *Thermae Romae* stands somewhat as a peculiarity. Both *Brave Hearts: Umizaru* and *Bay-*

¹ MOTION PICTURE PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION OF JAPAN (2012).

side Shakedown The Final: A New Hope, the first and third most grossing Japanese film in 2012, are the last instalment in their respective series. Both of them have been in the public eye far longer than *Thermae Romae*, and their stories all focus exclusively on Japanese people.

By contrast, the story of *Thermae Romae*, which is based on the manga (2008–2013) of the same name by Mari Yamazaki,² focuses not only on a foreigner, but an ancient foreigner. The comedic story follows the ancient Roman bath architect Lucius, who is suffering from lack of inspiration at the beginning of the story, but then randomly time travels to modern Japan whenever he is submerged in water. Inspired by the wondrous bath technology he sees in Japan, Lucius reconstructs them in ancient Rome in his own bath houses. His designs attract the eye of Emperor Hadrian, as Lucius' bath building eventually influences the politics of the Roman Empire, and even history itself.

Yamazaki herself admits that she is surprised by the success of her work, which she originally expected to only have 500 fans in the whole of Japan (2008–2013, 17).³ An example from a Japanese world history textbook given by Kawana in her 2018 article on *Thermae Romae* (manga) corroborates this (p. 263):

The emperor Hadrian (76–138 AD; reign 117–38 AD), who ruled over the empire at a critical time in its history and who was the most illustrious client served by Lucius in *Thermae Romae*, receives just a one-line mention in a footnote.

² The Japanese names here are arranged as name first, surname second.

³ YAMAZAKI (2008–2013: 17). The manga collection of *Thermae Romae* has a section named "Rome & Bath, the Loves of My Life" following each manga episode where Yamazaki discusses her inspirations and opinions. These have their individual numbering system, so 17 here refers to the 17th "Rome & Bath, the Loves of My Life".

Therefore, it is fair to say that the success of *Thermae Romae* is an atypical case. This makes its use and construction of ancient Rome particularly interesting, as it offers insight on how a film produced in a society that is relatively unfamiliar with ancient Rome makes use of this ancient empire. The aspect of this subject matter, which this essay will look at, is the different ways which *Thermae Romae* Japanises Roman elements and give power to Japan as participant in ancient history. This will be done through the lens of ‘domestication’, which refers to the process of foreign culture/practices etc. being Japanised when they come into contact with each other. I will do so by first evaluating how *Thermae Romae* bears Western influence. Then, I will introduce the concept of “domestication”, and why *Thermae Romae* should be viewed within such a lens. With these as my basis, I will then examine the various ways *Thermae Romae* uses ‘domestication’ to present ancient Rome, which will explain why its success in 2012 is after all not so out of place.

Thermae Romae and Western tradition of ancient Rome



Figure 1 *Thermae Romae* opening scene

Prima facie, the film seems to resemble the ancient Rome constructed by Western cinema greatly. It opens with a sonorous male voice briefly

Figure 2 *Thermae Romae* Title SceneFigure 3 *Ben-Hur* Title Scene

introducing the Roman Empire. The imagery accompanying this voice is a yellowed map showing the territory of the Roman Empire, together with the narration being written in Latin (Figure 1). All of these are backdropped by a grand and suspenseful music, which slowly elevates to operatic singing. This should immediately remind one of the many Hollywood epic films that are produced around the 60s. Films like *Ben-Hur* (1959) and *Spartacus* (1960) all open in such a manner, which Sobchack dubs as the 'Voice of God' narration.⁴ In fact, even the specific design of *Thermae Romae's* title (Figure 2) calls back to *Ben-Hur's* (Figure 3), going as far as to reduplicate the specific font used by *Ben-Hur*, together with its luscious golden colour.

Of course, the premise of *Ben-Hur* could not be further away from *Thermae Romae*, in that while Ben-Hur stands in opposition to Rome, Lucius is a staunch supporter of Hadrian and the Empire. The title never-

⁴ SOBCHACK (1990: 25).

theless indirectly acknowledges the influence of *Ben-Hur* on the original manga work. Although not included in the movie, in the manga, Lucius is given a chariot-race scene while in modern Japan by Yamazaki. She further reveals in her commentary that that she ‘dreamed of having a ridiculous *Ben-Hur* chariot scene...’.⁵ The resemblance to Hollywood epic is reinforced through the marketing of *Thermae Romae*, that makes use of typical Hollywood epic marketing strategies, which is to advertise the film itself as a sort of historical event that, to use Sobchack’s words: ‘formally repeats the surge, splendor, and extravagance, the human labor and capital cost entailed by its narrative’s historical content in both its production process and its modes of representation’.⁶ *Thermae Romae* has been variously described in its marketing as: 驚天動地 (literally Heaven shocking, Earth shaking), 大作 (great work, sometimes translated as ‘epic’),⁷ 今世紀最大の入浴スペクタクルコメディ (The Greatest Bathing Spectacle Comedy of the Century) (*Thermae Romae*, 2022).⁸ Notably, the ‘spectacle’ and ‘comedy’ here are rendered in katakana, which is a transliteration of the English words, rather than Japanese translation, which gives the film a stronger association with its western counterpart.

Following the line of surge, splendour, and extravagance, one of the film’s greatest selling points is the use of the Cinecittà studio, and the sets of HBO *Rome* (2005–2007). This ‘puts *Thermae Romae* squarely on the visual tradition trajectory for the screening of Roman antiquity’.⁹ Moreover, beyond simply having the HBO *Rome* landscape in the movie, the original manga itself is actually heavily inspired by *Rome*, which Yamazaki watched with great enthusiasm, as indicated by the multi-

⁵ YAMAZAKI (2008–2013: 17).

⁶ SOBCHACK (1990: 29).

⁷ This translation is provided by DENISON (2022: 595).

⁸ THERMAE ROMAE (2022).

⁹ CYRINO (2022: 89).

ple entries related to it on her personal blog.¹⁰ Yamazaki particularly favours the focus on everyday life and normal people in *Rome*.¹¹ Her sentiment echoes that of Lockett, who points out that *Rome* renders the Great Men in history secondary to peripheral and invisible actants and helpless to accidental progressions.¹² The same statement can also be applied to *Thermae Romae*: Lucius goes to the bathhouse that will eventually take him to Japan because he is fired. The various times when he is submerged in water and time travels to Japan are all happenstances. And instead of waging wars or making oratories to persuade the crowd, he builds bathhouses, which are part of Rome's everyday life and culture. Even at the end of the movie, when Lucius' achievements are recognised by the Emperor, the film still reminds us that written accounts of him rarely exists, again pushing him back into the periphery of history. Therefore, *Thermae Romae* is definitely an heir to the Roman world constructed by Western cinema, and in Kawana's words, a good example of 'an excellent visual representation giving rise to another excellent visual representation.'¹³

Domestication

So far, these details of the production and promotion of *Thermae Romae* indicate that it is a film that takes on many of Western cinema's practices and patterns in depicting Rome. However, it would be simplistic to view it just as a Japanese ensemble of these Western traditions. Denison points out that although *Thermae Romae* is 'an inherently transnational blockbuster text', its interaction with the international (e.g., use of the

¹⁰ KAWANA (2018: 280).

¹¹ YAMAZAKI (2008–2013: 22).

¹² LOCKETT (2010: 111).

¹³ KAWANA (2018: 281).

Cinecittà studio) is ultimately done for a domestic audience.¹⁴ It means that *Thermae Romae* is not a movie produced to fulfil the demands of the West, but rather to cater the Japanese market. Such a trend is not rare in Japanese cinema. The *Nodame Cantabile* films (2009–2010), which is also directed by Takeuchi, similarly makes use of European locations and actors, but these are imported back to Japan for a domestic market.¹⁵ Therefore, we must look deeper into the Rome of *Thermae Romae*, and treat it as a product of Japanese consumption.

A vital concept in understanding Japanese consumption of foreign culture/practices/goods, is what Tobin calls ‘domestication’:¹⁶ ‘to indicate a process that is active...morally neutral (unlike imitation or parasitism), and demystifying (there is nothing inherently strange, exotic, or uniquely Japanese going on here).’¹⁷ It also ‘suggests that Western goods, practices and ideas are changed (Japanised) in their encounter with Japan’. Creighton’s study on how Japanese department stores import foreign festivals makes a particularly good example for ‘domestication’: Valentine’s Day is imported into Japan as a commercial device from 1958, when an executive of a chocolate company mistakenly understood it as a day reserved for women to send chocolates to men. This mistake, though, actually works in favour of Valentine’s Day’s popularity in Japan, as it gives Japanese women a chance to be forthcoming and expressive about their romantic feelings.¹⁸ Thus, we see here a process that satisfies all three criteria set out by Tobin: Firstly, it is not pure imitation, and is done on Japanese people’s own terms and their own initiative. Secondly, it is not strange, because it is actually adapted to fulfil

¹⁴ DENISON (2022: 607).

¹⁵ DENISON (2016: 87).

¹⁶ TOBIN (1992: 4).

¹⁷ Tobin here means that there is nothing strange in Japanese’s domestication of foreign products.

¹⁸ CREIGHTON (1991: 687).

a societal need. Thirdly, the conception and practice of Valentine's Day is changed through its contact with Japanese society, so much so that Japan eventually made a White Day to correspond to Valentine's Day (where men gift women chocolates). The success of Valentine's Day also shows that in order for an import to be successful, it should be 'symbolically in accord with Japanese ideology', or 'serve a particular function in contemporary Japanese society.'¹⁹ With these in mind, I argue that *Thermae Romae's* success can also be explored in such a manner, in that it reflects the Japanese society at the time of its showing by fulfilling certain emotional needs of the people.

Historical Authority

To start with, although the Latin text in the opening scene has the obvious effect of giving the film historical validity and authenticity, its exoticism would have been significantly weakened by the Japanese narration that is a direct translation of the text. It legitimises the use of spoken Japanese throughout the film, even when characters should be speaking Latin, since the audience would already be under the impression that Latin can be materialised in Japanese. Another effect of this, is that for an audience who has limited contact with Latin,²⁰ the spoken language of ancient Rome is subtly linked with Japanese from the beginning of the film. This connection is further strengthened by the qualities of the 'Voice of God' narration, which not only verifies the content for the audience, but also establishes the Japanese voice as a valid spokesperson in relation to antiquity.

¹⁹ CREIGHTON (1991: 682–683).

²⁰ TAIDA (2018) shows in his article 'History and Reception of Greek and Latin Studies in Japan' that while the progression of Classical Studies in Japan is optimistic, it is still being developed.

In manga, this Japanese spokesperson of antiquity is manifested in the form of Satsuki Odate, an ancient Rome history researcher from modern Japan, who is also Lucius' love interest. She is qualified by her impressive academic achievements, and ultimately, she is able to uncover the archaeological remnants of the baths Lucius built in Baiae, thus giving voice to his achievement. In the movie, the heroine Mami Yamakoshi likewise becomes the spokesperson of ancient Rome, but in a wholly different manner. Bearing a name remarkably similar to Mari Yamazaki the manga artist,²¹ Mami enters the film as a manga artist struggling to find inspiration. In the end, she is able to turn her adventure with Lucius in ancient Rome into a manga named *Thermae Romae*. It is not atypical to find intertextual references here, as *Thermae Romae* is produced as a pre-planned transmedia franchise involving manga, anime, and film concurrently.²² Therefore, this specific plot, invented solely for the movie, can be seen from a financial point of view as advertising for the manga that was still ongoing at that time. The director Takeuchi himself has also had plenty of experience in such multimedia production, such as the *Nodame Cantabile* movies which are interconnected with its original manga and TV series, and are also box-office successes. However, that the movie chooses to advertise the manga by disrupting the causality speaks volume: Instead of the manga being a work that came about as reception of Western Classical culture, the film has redefined it as a historically authentic work due to it being based on Mami's lived experience in ancient Rome. Interestingly, when the film makes use of the 'Voice of God' narration scene again (38:58 & 55:34), Mami becomes the narrator, which further affirms her authority within the setting of the film. We thus see here the fascinating interaction with-

²¹ Another interesting detail: Mami's name is rendered as 真実 in Kanji, which means Truth.

²² DENISON (2022: 606).

in Japanese franchises – besides using the film to advertise the manga, it also revamps the nature of the manga by placing historical authority within the hands of the Japanese people, thus domesticating the Western influences on the story.

After Japan's defeat in World War II, it has habitually looked to the West for confirmation of its identity. However, just as the country rebuilt its national pride around the 80s, the economic recession in the 90s quickly cast the shadow back onto Japanese people's self-conception.²³ Placing *Thermae Romae* in such a context, Kawana argues that the success of the manga is likely due to its affirmation of Japanese everyday culture through Lucius, who is the 'ultimate foreigner',²⁴ and a respected artisan with enough credentials to produce trustworthy affirmation.²⁵ To add onto Kawana's point, I argue that the film's conferring of historical authority upon Mami, and by extension, Yamazaki the manga artist, has achieved a similar effect. Although here it works in reverse to the manga: the Lucius in the film suffers from huge guilt for copying the Japanese, but it is Mami who tells him that he should not be ashamed for it. She is also the one who reveals the 'correct' Roman history to Lucius, which then inspires him to propose the battlefield bathhouse project that secures Antoninus as the successor of Hadrian. Thus, on top of confirming the value of Japanese culture, the film further empowers Japanese people by affirming the validity of their voice within world history. Therefore, the domestication of ancient Roman history in the film counters the cultural anxiety of the Japanese people.

²³ KAWANA (2018: 274).

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ KAWANA (2018: 275).

Power to the Japanese People



Figure 4 Mami's friends in Rome

I have already mentioned above, how, under the influence of HBO's *Rome*, *Thermae Romae* builds a plot that is pushed by many inconspicuous characters and chance. However, *Thermae Romae* takes this theme a step further, by introducing Mami's old men friends into ancient Rome. These people are not just inconspicuous, but are the bottom of the Roman social hierarchy. When Lucius first time travels to Japan, he instinctively assumes the Japanese people around him as subjects and slaves of the Roman Empire. Similarly, when Mami first reunites with her friends in ancient Rome, they are depicted as chained and being carted like slaves and criminals (Figure 4). As one of the few sombre moments in the movie, this scene features no soundtrack. Instead, the audience only hear the diegetic sound of the old men groaning and the wheels turning. The dreadful treatment of these old men is exacerbated as the camera cuts closer to them, showing their hapless expressions distorted by the heatwave. Later on, when they reunite with Mami, one of them even declares that they have come to hell. Before this point, the film's engagement with slavery in ancient Rome has been comedic, mainly used to highlight the technological discrepancy between Japan and ancient Rome, where the former's technology can only be achieved

through overworked slaves, or in Kawana's words: 'hilarious misunderstandings.'²⁶ The sudden change of tone here thus highlights slavery as one of ancient Rome's biggest taint in film.

However, the film does not stick with this depressive mood for long, nor do the old men express bitterness towards the Romans who mistreated them. After Mami conveys the idea of building a bath near the battlefield for the soldiers, they snap into action to help. What follows is the climax of the entire film, featuring Japanese and ancient Romans working side by side to create a bath hub for the Roman soldiers to rest and heal in. Lucius looks at these altruistic actions with bewilderment but still shows admiration for their team spirit. This sort of spirit is typically Japanese, as shown by Atkins, who cites an instance of a Japanese, in revisionist fashion, redefining American Old West's popularity as based on their teamwork instead of individualism.²⁷ Likewise, Nishimura lists 'Friendship' as one of the ideals commonly uphold in Japanese manga.²⁸ Lucius' attitude here is in stark contrast to the Lucius before, who wilfully defies the Emperor's order based on personal principle, and even demeans Mami when she tries to persuade him to think about everyone. After this, however, he actually acquires this teamwork mindset, as he accepts Hadrian's commendation on behalf of everyone, instead of himself. When the war is finally won, Japanese and Romans alike are shown celebrating together, presenting an ancient Rome where class boundaries have disappeared. In this instance of domestication, there are two effects at work here. Firstly, Japanese people imparts their dedication to teamwork to the ancient Romans. Lucius represents this change of ideology, when he acknowledges the good outcome as the effort of the collective. Secondly, *Thermae Romae*

²⁶ KAWANA (2018: 270).

²⁷ ATKINS (2017: 205).

²⁸ NISHIMURA (1997: 31), cited in KAWANA (2018: 262).

empowers Japanese people by depicting them as able to break through the abusive slavery system of ancient Rome. The Japanese ideology of teamwork triumphs over Roman slavery and their belief of superiority. Mirroring Mami's role within the movie, this part of the film renders Japanese people as vital participant in an important juncture of ancient Roman history. Both of these fit very well with the third aspect of domestication in Tobin's definition: Through their encounter with the Japanese, not only are the Romans changed by them, Roman history itself now needs to be viewed through a different lens, as it is made possible through the intervention of Japanese people.

Power, slavery, clash of cultures - these are all themes much grander than those featured in the manga or the 2012 anime adaptation. This is very likely influenced by the genre of the film itself, as Cyrino already notes that the shift from manga and anime to 'the conservative Hollywood epic cinematic style effects an essential shift in overall tone, in that the epic film genre inevitably compels a greater focus on the traditional narrative of power and empire.'²⁹ Similarly, Hiroshi Tamaki, who acted in the TV series of *Nodame Cantabile*, describes himself making use of greater physical gestures when filming the movie,³⁰ which hints at the subtle demand from the film genre to expand the narrative and the setting.

However, in my opinion, the bigger influence that made *Thermae Romae* focus on these themes, is the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, which happened merely a year before the film came out. At the time of the disaster, contrary to previous habits of blocking foreign rescue teams, the Japanese government accepted almost all offers of help.³¹ The April 2011 issue of *Highlighting Japan*, a monthly magazine published by

²⁹ CYRINO (2022: 90).

³⁰ DENISON (2016: 76).

³¹ KATAYAMA (2015: 71).

Public Relations Office of the Japanese government, testifies the strong impression left by international aids at that time. An article titled *World Rushes to Japan's Aid* details the various aids provided to Japan in the month since the disaster struck.³² We also find a letter issued by the then Prime Minister Naoto Kan, expressing appreciation for the global community on behalf of all Japanese people, and promising to repay these acts of kindness.³³ *Thermae Romae* corresponds to this atmosphere with its ideal, unified message, as discussed above, where different people let go of their boundaries and work for a common goal. It is indeed also the underpinning guideline of Yamazaki's manga, as she comments: 'The way that all of these people could mingle in the nude while bathing was doubtlessly a democratic sight...' and 'Perhaps shared nakedness in the presence of hot water is a basic principle for peace'.³⁴ Consequently, this democratic and boundary-less imagery ensures the film to be well received by the audience, who would likewise still be conscious of the abundant foreign help they have received.

Placing the film within the post-earthquake context, the success of *Thermae Romae* can also be viewed from the perspective of *iyashi* (healing). The *iyashi* products are wide ranging, but all of them promise to deliver calm for the consumer. According to Roquet, the *iyashi* trend began after two largest traumas of the late twentieth-century Japan: the Kobe earthquake and the Aum Shinrikyo sarin gas attacks.³⁵ The trauma left behind by these events made 'calmness' a marketable feeling, hence the rise of *iyashi* products. We can speculate that Japan was in similar circumstances in 2012, as the earthquake made people in need of such calmness again. Although *Thermae Romae* is not exactly *iyashi* due to its multiple moments of suspension and conflict, but it contains two ele-

³² PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN (2011: 4–7).

³³ PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN (2011: 11).

³⁴ YAMAZAKI (2008–2013: 1).

³⁵ ROQUET (2009: 89).

ments that can fulfil *iyashi*: Its focus on the everyday object of Japanese life, which is a salient feature of *iyashikei* films.³⁶ The idealistic scenes of different people finding relief in a bath – in fact, one of Lucius' central goal is to create a relaxing bathing space. Adding these to the constant affirmation of Japanese culture, *Thermae Romae* produces a mood-regulating effect that is at once calming but also encouraging, two emotions needed by the Japanese people in 2012.

Therefore, the story and the success of *Thermae Romae* are also clearly a reflection of the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake. The disaster's aftermath changed Japanese people's perception of their own position within a globalised world, and produced the adequate emotional context to work with *Thermae Romae*'s democratic message.

Roman or Japanese?

Lastly, following the interpretation of *Thermae Romae* as conveying message of unity and empowerment, I would like to turn to the casting of the film, which echo points I have made so far in its execution. *Thermae Romae* makes use of a sizable foreign cast, ranging from the normal Roman inhabitants filling the background, to Lucius' wife Livia. These foreign actors, interestingly, also 'speak' Japanese throughout the film. Amongst them, there are those who are familiar with Japanese, such as Ananda Jacobs (Livia), who has been in the Japanese entertainment industry since at least 2009. But the film still employed a sizeable group of voice actors who dubbed over the foreign actors. This again reinforces the idea of Japanese people being the spokesperson of ancient Rome. Along the foreign westerners speaking Japanese, there is the main cast, which are made up of Japanese actors playing Romans. This in itself conveys an important message. As Frey points out, 'Characters' faces

³⁶ REN (2020: 27).

and bodies must correspond to viewers' imaginations, in order to manufacture a believable historical world.³⁷ By choosing Japanese actors to be the 'main players' of the history as it is presented in *Thermae Romae*, the film indicates its target audience, and further affirms Japanese people's validity in telling an ancient Roman story.

Another effect of this cast is to strengthen the message of unity. Both Hiroshi Abe and Kazuki Kitamura (Ceionius) are already famous for their 濃い顔, a type of facial structure considered to resemble Europeans because of its deep-set eyes and aquiline noses.³⁸ Thus, we see here a blurring of boundary between Japanese and Roman across language and appearance, which makes it difficult to measure just how Roman, or how Japanese a character is. Nevertheless, I do not believe that the Japanese actors are chosen merely for the sake of looking 'Roman'. After all, the



Figure 5 Yamazaki, 2008–2013, Episode 1



Figure 6 Lucius played by Hiroshi Abe

³⁷ FREY (2018: 9).

³⁸ See Eiga (2023) '実写版「テルマエ・ロマエ」キャスト、あらすじ、トリビア一紹介! 結局、誰が一番濃い顔'. This news article, which focuses entirely on which member of the cast looks more *Roman*, illustrates how the casting of *Thermae Romae* is influenced as much by the Japanese conception of the foreign, as it is by the West.

Lucius in the manga has blonde hair, which is usually conveyed as white in most Japanese manga. Together with manga's tradition of leaving character's skin as white, he looks in multiple instances very much like a Greek Statue (Figure 5). In contrast, Abe does have striking facial features, but his dark hair and tanned skin are markedly different from Lucius (Figure 6). In this regard, I disagree with Lee, who claims that 'The Lucius of the manga is already drawn to resemble Abe.'³⁹ Additionally, when Mami first encounters Lucius, she instinctively compares him to Kenshiro, a famous Japanese manga character. Tetsuo Hara, the creator of Kenshiro, named Bruce Lee and Yusaku Matsuda as the main source of his inspiration.⁴⁰ On top of this, Abe himself was once the voice actor for Kenshiro in the movie franchise *Fist of the North Star: The Legends of the True Savior* (2006–2008), which adds another layer to this association. Thus, while the Lucius in manga calls back to antiquity, the Lucius in film is arguably more closely related to East Asian cultural memories.



Figure 7 Lucius enjoying a bath at the end of the credits scene

The multifaceted and paradoxical nature of Lucius, however, is resolved at the end of the movie. His duality allows him to become the

³⁹ LEE (2014: 147).

⁴⁰ HARA (2019).

embodiment of the amalgamation between Japan and ancient Rome. After showing various characters from the movie enjoying their respective baths, the credit of the movie ends with Lucius sitting in an ancient Roman bath contently (Figure 7). The camera work here is of particular interest. Though set within a Roman bath, the audience would of course notice how different this bath looks now in comparison to before - it is dotted with Japanese-bath inspired objects, such as the wooden buckets, the mirrors, and the painting of Vesuvius in the style of the Fuji mountain painting found in Japanese bathhouse. The set of *Rome*, and by extension, the vision of Rome as imagined by the West, have been domesticated by the Japanese, but the Romans themselves seem to thoroughly enjoy these Japanese imports. The mixing of these two cultures is embodied even more physically, as the camera closes up on Lucius. Here is supposedly a Roman sitting in a Roman bath. Yet beside him, stand a wooden bucket and fruit milk, while a towel sits on his head, all in true Japanese fashion. He seems to have been cast into the middle zone of Rome and Japan. Is this a Japanese taking a Roman bath? Or a Roman taking a Japanese bath? The answer is "Both". As the casting of Lucius, and the character's development within the movie have shown, *Thermae Romae* is a movie that utilises domestication to empower the Japanese people within and without the movie, which in turn fulfils the emotional and social needs of its Japanese audience. At the end of the movie, this domestication creates an ideal union between Japan and ancient Rome, which is actualised through the protagonist Lucius.

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MERCÉDESZ STOCKER

The Role of Mythology in the World of Comics

Just as in antiquity, mythology is also an integral part of the everyday life of the modern man. Myths of the past have been reshaped, leading to the creation of new myths and new mythologies. This is demonstrated by the reappearance of some mythological figures. I will examine the way in which the Heracles myths have been adapted through popular culture, with a particular emphasis on the world of comic books. Among the comic book publications, I would like to highlight The Incredible Hercules, in which, in addition to the heroisation of Hercules in the modern age, I will examine the relationship between comics and mythology.

Keywords: Hercules, superhero, comic books, popular culture, classical reception

Popular culture

Popular culture is an integral part of the everyday life of the modern man. The concept can be approached from several angles, but according to Storey: “popular culture is simply culture that is widely favoured or well-liked by many people.” Based on this perspective, I would thus define the term of “popular culture” as a set of practices, beliefs and objects that are prevalent among a large segment of society, embodying the tastes and values of the common populace.¹ The popular culture research maps out the relevance of this content in the everyday life of today’s society.²

¹ STOREY (2009: 5).

² SZIGETI (2014).

The study of popular culture can provide very useful insights. Heracles, or also known as Hercules is well known in popular culture due to the exposure the audience have to movies or television series as opposed to classical sources. They will witness Hercules for example in *Hercules: The Thracian Wars* by Brett Ratner, *The Legend of Hercules* by Renny Harlin or *Hercules* by Ron Clements and John Musker. Mapping these appearances can help us understand how mythological adaptations are perceived and useful in contemporary society. Those who consider modern myth-making in any form, must take into account the world in which we live. We must not only adapt to contemporary social norms but also find a place for the necessity of mythology. The use and study of mythology is no longer required for our society since it is no longer holds the religious significance like in the antiquity, although we still have many links with classical culture.³

The adaptation of classical texts has been greatly influenced by the role of the contemporary media. The great epics and tragedies were disseminated and subsequently went through transformations from commentaries to illustrations, and even musical settings. This process of adaptation was followed by sequels, and with this development the trajectory has extended to encompass film versions, sound recordings, re-translations and then finally the emergence of fan fiction on dedicated websites.⁴

As is the case today, there was no sharp dividing line between 'high' and popular culture in Roman society either. Due to the ambiguous nature, it became possible to expand myths and create new myths by shifting the parameters of the *interpretatio Romana*⁵ so that content from other cultures could be woven into the stories. This mechanism

³ WALDE (2016: 362).

⁴ WALDE (2016: 365).

⁵ *Interpretatio Romana* is a term used by Tacitus in *Germanium*, cap. 43, which means Roman interpretation.

and approach laid the foundations for later national literature and is a fundamental part of our culture.⁶

Comic book representations

It is indisputable that ‘high’ culture in western society is inextricably linked to classical antiquity, or at least to its ideas, an era about which every age has developed certain expectations for cultural or social reasons. Comic books are one of those forms in which our ideas about classical antiquity can be preserved nowadays. The superhero genre is undoubtedly one of popular culture’s most internationally influential medium.⁷ Modern comic books have a particular mythological significance, and as official myths no longer fit into modern values, we are witnessing the reformation of old myths. In different media, ancient heroes are being revived in a modern guise, different and yet similar to their classical predecessors.⁸

Comics is a medium, not a genre, and this medium is defined by the formal artistic elements (the combination of word and image), not by its often printed format.⁹ The most distinctive feature of modern American comic literature is that it is not purely text-centered literature, but shown as being episodic in appearance.¹⁰ Magazines with adventure stories are so widespread that they are now being adapted for film. It’s no wonder, as it’s hard to find a person these days who has not heard of at least one iconic character, such as Superman or Spider-Man.¹¹

⁶ WALDE (2016: 367).

⁷ GÓMEZ (2020).

⁸ CARUTH (1966).

⁹ KOVACS (2011).

¹⁰ LATHAM (2012).

¹¹ KONING (2020).

The classical reception in comic books

Classical motifs, characters, and storylines have always played an important role in comics, especially in the superhero genre.¹² The superhero genre has begun in 1938 with the appearance of Superman¹³ in *Action Comics* #1.¹⁴ The heroes of the early comics were largely copies of mythological figures. For example, if firstly we look at the most popular hero, Superman, we can see many similarities with mythological figures. He is close to Apollo in appearance and beauty, Hercules in strength and Hermes in speed, thus embodying many of the traditional qualities of mythological heroes and gods. Therefore, it is not surprising that Superman is so popular.¹⁵ Another hero, Captain Marvel is also worth mentioning, who was renamed as Shazam later on. This character was also portrayed as a mythological hero. The name of the reincarnated hero is a mosaic word containing the names of the heroes and gods that inspired him, namely Solomon, Hercules, Atlas, Zeus, Achilles, and Mercury, and each character possesses a different trait for the modern hero.¹⁶ In addition to all this, other characteristics of superheroes can be found in myths, such as the presence of a uniform or mask (like Heracles' iconic lion's coat and his wooden club) or a younger companion (the Achilles–Patroclus) such as the Batman and Robin duo or Superman and Supergirl duo, bringing today's man closer to ancient iconography.¹⁷ The similarity between the superheroes of comic books and the heroes of Greek mythology makes for an interesting literary genre through which it is possible to examine the way modern writers interpret the classical texts of Greek mythology.¹⁸

¹² KONING (2020).

¹³ GREENBERGER–WALLACE (2008).

¹⁴ GÓMEZ (2020).

¹⁵ CARUTH (1966).

¹⁶ KONING (2020).

¹⁷ GÓMEZ (2020).

¹⁸ LATHAM (2012).

The ancient world is represented in various ways in the world of comics. The first example is the use of classical elements in comics or passing references that do not require extensive knowledge of mythology, such as Daredevil's¹⁹ fight with a gladiator or Lois Lane's²⁰ transformation into a centaur. A second characteristic category is stories that take on locations or characters in addition to classical motifs, as in the case of Wonder Woman²¹. The third category, on the other hand, includes those that are one-to-one adaptations of ancient stories in comic book form, or that take place in ancient times, such as 300²². This triple division is extremely useful in the ever-widening range of comic books.²³

There are some more elements which are used in these stories too. First of all, one of the most important element, is the origin story. This is useful in mythology, not only as a plot device but also to show the origin of the hero, to understand their motivation, and to allow the audience to like the character. It is also a method that comic books use to explain the motivation of the superhero and to show his moral code. By showing similar use of origin stories, it can be inferred that mythological heroes and comic superheroes find similar motivations for their heroism. This similarity allows classical scholars to see how myths and their archetypes have been reshaped by the development of Western civilization.²⁴

The hero's comic book appearances

Heracles' first individual appearance in the Marvel Universe was in *Journey into Mystery Annual #1* (1965), the work of Stan Lee and Jack Kirby

¹⁹ DEFALCO-FORBECK (2006).

²⁰ GREENBERGER-WALLACE (2008).

²¹ JIMINEZ (2008).

²² MILLER (1998).

²³ KONING (2020).

²⁴ LATHAM (2012).

after which he became integral part of the Marvel Universe. He is often portrayed as the eternal rival and competitor of Thor, one of the Avengers. Between 2008 and 2010, Marvel Comics ran a comic book series called *The Incredible Hercules*, which exemplifies the similarities between ancient gods and modern heroes, as the booklets are interspersed with flashbacks that give us a better understanding of the hero's mythology.²⁵

Hercules's previous appearances in Marvel Comics before, as Thor's adversary, as an Avenger, as the leader of a super-team, or in future comic books, where he travelled in a space chariot in the Andromeda galaxy. His individual series, *The Incredible Hercules* is unique, since this series was the longest run-in which Hercules' was the main protagonist and has a separate storyline from the hero's other appearances in the Marvel universe, with mythological monsters interspersed with Greek gods. In addition to the mythological treatment, the comic book series also features humor, which seems to confirm the ambivalent place Hercules occupied in the public consciousness of fifth-century Athens, where his characteristics included heroism, drunkenness, and gluttony, which are also abundantly present in the countless stories in the ancient times about him.²⁶ Comic book writers turned to ancient stories for inspiration to give the character more depth, and above all they found Euripides' Heracles, the world's most fearsome hero, with a "massive guilt complex", riddled with human flaws, and so it was this impulsive character, forced to control his powers, that Marvel began to develop.²⁷

The world of *The Incredible Hercules* is set in the modern age, where the gods no longer live on Olympus or in the celestial spheres, but on Earth, among humans, where the mythologies of all cultures are intermingled. In the struggle for power between the gods, Hercules' primary

²⁵ KONING (2020).

²⁶ MARSHALL (2016).

²⁷ MARSHALL (2016).

goal is to restore Zeus to his former reign, even though the arch-god is not there anymore, so the hero attempts to bring him back from Hadés. The superhero Hercules is multi-layered and complex at the same time, and the comics' creators attempt to incorporate classic mythological stories into the Marvel universe. This Hercules is presented similarly to his ancient counterpart,²⁸ as a hero of great strength and temperament, almost indestructible, motivated by honor and friendship, but not averse to drinking and partying, and with a keen interest in women. Interestingly, according to the ancient myth's malleability and complexity make it a very suitable vehicle for the world of comics, but it is rather used as a narrative to make us reflect on our own lives. In issue #115 we can observe the complexity of the myths, as Hercules tells the Euripides story of his return from his last job, where he believed his family to be his enemies and killed them, but this is in contrast to the more common narrative in which he atoned for the murder of his family with his labours, which is pointed out in the comic by Hercules' partner Amadeus Cho, but the hero interrupts him: "... You're not listening. This is a myth I'm telling you. Myths aren't some collection of dates and biographies you bicker over like a clerk with his ledger. Myths are stories that only have the meaning you give to them so listen."²⁹ In addition to Hercules, the myth of the gods is indispensable, so that in the course of the story we meet several major gods and goddesses, and as in mythology, none of them is omnipotent, thus creating space for the intrigues familiar from the Homeric epics.³⁰

Putting mythological and theological issues aside, it is worth pointing out that the authors of *The Incredible Hercules* have managed to bring the hero into the modern age, with wit and irony. The latter is most

²⁸ KONING (2020).

²⁹ PAK-LENTE (2008–10) #115 17.

³⁰ KONING (2020).

evident in the *Dark Reign*³¹ complex storyline. It is worth noting the meticulous work of the comic writers, as the famous underworld motif of the Eleusinian mysteries³² is also included in the story, albeit only tangentially. A more obscure parallel is created when the hero, upon entering the Underworld with his companion, is advised by Athena not to look back. This advice is reminiscent of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice,³³ when the only other time this point is mentioned is at the end of the adventure, when, upon leaving Hadés, the hero is abandoned by his companion, and as Hercules cries out in vain is told in reply, “Do not look back.”³⁴ Returning to the beginning of the story, it is highly unusual that the entrance to Hadés is in a casino in Atlantic City, and since it corresponds to the structure of the Hadés mythological description it is obvious that Kerberos, the guardian of the Underworld, will also appear, and the hero must also pass by Charon, since his father is not only in the Underworld but in its depths, in Tartarus³⁵. With this and similar earlier paradigms, the authors give the story a deeper reading, and this provides a more satisfying experience to readers who are more open to ancient references.³⁶

If we take a closer look at the figure of Zeus in the comics, an interesting scene may catch the readers’ attention. After his death, the arch-god is put on trial by his brother Pluto, and Zeus’ victims testify against him. Kronos³⁷, who is the first to appear, accuses him of fraud, poisoning, ethnic cleansing, and patricide. In contrast, the other witness, Semele³⁸, refuses to accuse Zeus, saying that it was Hera who deceived

³¹ PAK–LENTE (2008–10) #127–131.

³² KERÉNYI (1977: 213–218).

³³ KERÉNYI (1977).

³⁴ PAK–LENTE (2008–10) #131 24.

³⁵ Hes. *Th.* 720–723.

³⁶ KONING (2020).

³⁷ KERÉNYI (1977).

³⁸ Ov. *M.* 3.

him and caused her death. She goes on to say that if they had wanted to accuse Zeus of horror stories, they should have called Leda³⁹ or Europe⁴⁰ instead of her. Zeus' only defense is that his plans are inscrutable (especially to mortals) and that, although his actions are terrible, callous, and unjust, their existence is an empirical necessity, without which history cannot progress. Moreover, he explains to his son, what it means to be a god since it is necessary to kill and destroy, thus provoking anger and despair on the part of men, who do not see the horrors of the eternal perfection of the gods.⁴¹ These make the modern reader wonder about their responsibility and whether the gods themselves are inherently perfect.⁴² Hercules comes to his father's defense by arguing that a god cannot change or evolve because this is their essential nature, and while humans can do this, it may be that gods are less than humans, and therefore Zeus deserves pity.⁴³ Here we are confronted with the dual status of Hercules, as the ancient view is that he was first a hero and then became a god, and this duality is depicted in other ways in the Hadés scene.⁴⁴ The hero, defending his father, is stopped by another Hercules, called Heracles, who turns out to be a mortal counterpart of the hero, embodying his physical form, which fell (from above) when he died, while his soul rose.⁴⁵ This version has so far spent time in the Underworld after his death, suffering for his sins, while the other has rested with the nymphs in the celestial realm, and then on earth, he has masqueraded as a god and superhero. The latter claims to have dedicated his entire life to gaining forgiveness for their sins and erasing their past mistakes, thus increasing the glory of Olympus. The two versions of the character clash, however, and the

³⁹ Ov. *M.* 2.

⁴⁰ Ov. *M.* 2.

⁴¹ PAK-LENTE (2008–10) #130.

⁴² KONING (2020).

⁴³ PAK-LENTE (2008–10) #130.

⁴⁴ KONING (2020).

⁴⁵ PAK-LENTE (2008–10) #129.

divine side wins, emphasizing the need to come to terms with the past, and the hero concludes, "I tried to change your mind, Heracles. I know now—you are the past. You cannot be changed."⁴⁶

Yet, paradoxically, by this act Hercules is proving Zeus' claim to be true, for by being able to confront his past self and overcome his evil part, he has redeemed himself. By accepting the consequences of his actions and changing his divine nature, Zeus' claim that the gods are perfect creatures stands. It follows, therefore, that the universe of mythology and the universe of comics are very similar. This story is a perfect example of the validity of the claim that it is possible to find a balance between adapting myth and telling your own story since this adaptation is full of modern symbols but still follows some of the original storylines.⁴⁷

Summary

Based on the points I have made, I believe that there is a perfect balance to be struck between adapting mythology and telling new stories. Many mythological representations remains a strong presence modern culture such as comics since it can keep people interested, even if it's a re-enactment. This is because the authors are able to give a new look to the characters.

In the above I wanted to draw attention to this field of research, as its social relevance makes it a very suitable basis for further research. In the sense of the above, therefore, if one chooses to explore the medium of comics, one can find pleasure in the adaptation one chooses, despite its inaccuracies, and perhaps even learn something from the new perspectives.

⁴⁶ PAK–LENTE (2008–10) #131. 19.

⁴⁷ KONING (2020)

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