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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Praise Poetry in Distress?
Melancholy and Criticism in Pindar's *Isthmian 7*

I am revisiting the old interpretation of Isthmian 7 *by A. Boeckh as a melancholy piece and its refutation by D. C. Young. Three passages of* Isthmian 7 *are analysed and it is found that there is good reason to hold on to Boeckh's idea of melancholy. In the following, I am asking what premises could give a unified picture of the ode that we have, and I offer two possibilities: either the ode was presented under conditions of crisis for a victory in sports – a personal crisis of Strepsiades and his family or of the nation of Thebes – and therefore had to be a vindication of the victor rather than praise, or the role of the victor's uncle has been misunderstood in the past and he is not only a fallen warrior but also a cult hero, like B. Currie has suggested, changing our understanding of the ode gravely.*

1. Introduction

When Pindar writes an epinicion on Strepsiades of Thebes for a victory in the pancratium at the Isthmian Games[1], he praises the past but seems to have difficulties to say anything nice about the present. The poem begins with a long passage of memories long gone of earlier glories of the city of Thebes: What did Theba like best? The conception of Dionysus, or Zeus' other famous fling, or Tiresias' wisdom? Or rather the participation of the Theban Aegeids in Sparta's war against Amyclae?[2]

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[1] Pind. *I.* 7. The date is impossible to determine; David Young refutes earlier efforts to determine the date of composition for the Isthmian Games after the battle at Oenophyta 457 at 454 (1971: 3–14), see also below.
[2] Pind. *I.* 7, 1–15.

Whichever one it is, even those precious memories of a better (mythical) past slowly fade away in the present, unless a poet reminds you of them.[3] A little later Pindar recalls Strepsiades' homonymous uncle, who recently died in battle, which prompts the chorus to exclaim their pain.[4] And even when the same chorus expresses their relief, it is in the face of the 'envy of the immortals' (φθόνος ἀθανάτων) that they expect to lead a life in sincerity to its full measure, now that the battle is over.[5]

Isthmian 7 is a strange victory ode. Even if this poem of praise can be understood as uplifting in its totality by showing the lustre of Strepsia-des' victory in the tradition of the heroic deeds of the past, it is against the backdrop of a gloomy present reality. This has often led modern in-terpreters to perceive the piece as (also) fundamentally melancholic.[6] In this paper I will revisit the different readings the apparently gloomy reality in Isthmian 7 has provoked in earlier scholarship, and also those interpretations that decide to ignore it. Starting from here, I will take another thorough look at the relevant passages and capture what exactly makes Isthmian 7 appear melancholic or overly critical of its victor. In the end I will present two very different interpretations based on earlier scholarship that are both able to unite apparent incongruencies of the ode into a meaningful whole. In order to gain an overview over melan-choly and criticism in Isthmian 7, a brief review of the relevant scholar-ship shall begin the study.

2. *Isthmian* 7 under scrutiny

The latest monograph to study *Isthmian* 7 as a whole is David C. Young's study in the Mnemosyne–series from 1971. Bruno Currie dedi-cates a chapter in his study on Pindar and hero cult to the ode,[7] but as his focus is primarily on the possible heroization of the elder Strepsia-

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[3] Pind. *I*. 7, 16–19.

[4] Pind. *I*. 7, 25; 37. The choral I in this passage does not seem to reflect Pindar's person-al feeling and involvement but rather the one of the chorus, maybe representing the general public; cf. YOUNG (1971: 23–24) and also below.

[5] Pind. *I*. 7, 39–42.

[6] BOECKH (1821: 531), WILAMOWITZ–MOELLENDORFF (1922: 413), FARNELL (1930–1932: I 277–281), BOWRA (1964: 153–154).

[7] CURRIE (2005: 205–225).

des, it cannot replace Young's monograph as a coherent interpretation of the entire ode – I will come back to an interpretation of Currie at the end of the paper, though. Although Young seems to be curiously disinterested in the apparent melancholy of the piece, he acknowledges his forebears who had built their interpretation of *Isthmian* 7 on the sombre impression they took from it. Young's comprehensive study is therefore also the latest overview over the earlier scholarship on melancholy in *Isthmian* 7.[8]

But to turn to the very beginning first, one has to look at August Boeckh's extensive interpretation also concerning melancholy that was published in his Latin commentaries to Pindar in 1821. Boeckh makes a complicated historical-logical argument that *Isthmian* 7 must have been presented after the battle at Oenophyta in 457 between Thebes and Athens.[9] One of Boeckh's points is the *universae odae color*[10], which he determines to be so gloomy that the ode can only have been presented in Thebes shortly after a Theban defeat. C. M. Bowra, as Young rightly observed,[11] follows Boeckh's historical interpretation in his influential introduction to Pindar from 1964.[12] Also Bowra detects a restrained feeling of desperation in the ode.[13] One would think that Bowra too found the ode to be surprisingly bleak, even though he sees its eventual function as uplifting.[14] More than forty years earlier, also Ulrich von Wilamowitz–Moellendorff had shared this sentiment; he connected the

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[8] YOUNG (1971).

[9] BOECKH (1821: 530–534), cf. YOUNG (1971: 1–4).

[10] BOECKH (1821: 531).

[11] YOUNG (1971: 2).

[12] BOWRA (1964: 152–154). BOWRA makes little adjustments to BOECKH's view: the mention of the Aegeids, Pind. *I.* 7, 15, is to him a sign that Pindar still cherished Sparta, contra BOECKH (1821: 532).

[13] BOWRA (1964: 153–154): ‚Pindar's own feelings are expressed with restraint as befits what should be a feeling of rejoicing. […] there was no reason for Pindar to introduce too dark a mood into a song of praise. He then shows that he has come to terms with himself and his circumstances. He accepts what the gods give and still has his rich consolations.'

[14] See particularly 350–351: 'It is a message of courage and cheer.' but also 'the fierce facts of the present' and 'he must not hope for too much'; BOWRA concludes: 'the variety of his moods is greater.'

gloominess he perceived like Boeckh with the Theban defeat and even compared the mood of the ode – of present sorrow but with hope for revenge and ultimate justice – with the mood of Germans after the First World War.[15] The perception of the dark mood of the ode is expressed most clearly in Lewis R. Farnell's 1932 annotations to *Isthmian* 7, where he speaks of 'the spirit of sorrow and resignation that breathes in parts of it'.[16]

Apart from hinting at the *color* of the ode, August Boeckh also inter-preted several elements of the poem in close relationship to its supposed historical context: he saw the mention of the Aegeids and the battle of Amyclae (12–15), together with the following gnome about the forget-fulness of the mortals (16–17) as a comment on Sparta's recent lack of gratitude when it had abandoned the allied Theban armies to their Athenian foes.[17] This stretched interpretation forms the foundation of Boeckh's historical contextualisation while seeming at the same time highly dependent on it, like David Young remarks: 'He obviously cared more for Oenophyta than for simple logic', and later: 'Boeckh selected Oenophyta before coming to his conclusion […]'[18] David Young refutes Boeckh's historical interpretation, which has been passed down in the older scholarship, also in other places: verse 36, which Boeckh and his followers had read as talking about defeat, must talk of successful fighting when compared with Tyrtaeus' Nr. 9;[19] πένθος in verse 37 does not need to refer to universal mourning like Boeckh had suggested, but can simply refer to the individual mourning of the death of Strepsiades,

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[15] WILAMOWITZ–MOELLENDORFF (1922: 413): [WILAMOWITZ–MOELLENDORFF is sketching the mood in lived speech:] „Theben, unser großes Theben, ist niedergeschlagen; […] aber in tiefer Seele bergen wir den Glauben an Epigonen […] und auf [sic!] den Glau-ben an Gerechtigkeit des Weltlaufes." An einem solchen Liede kann unsereins sich trösten.' ('"Thebes, our great Thebes, is crushed; […] but deep in our souls we conserve the belief in epigones […] and the belief in justice of the course of the world." In a song like this people like us can find consolation.')

[16] FARNELL (1930–1932: I 277–281).

[17] BOECKH (1821: 531). This interpretation is said to go back to Aristarchus by the scho-liast, *schol. vet. I.* 7, 23a.

[18] YOUNG (1971: 4; 8).

[19] Tyrt. 9, 20–22 (DIEHL), cf. YOUNG (1971: 5–7).

the homonymous uncle, who died in battle but possibly under otherwise favourable circumstances;[20] verses 37–42 do not have to be read as an autobiographical statement of the elderly poet like Boeckh does;[21] the I can be explained to refer to the addressee, Strepsiades the younger, not the poet;[22] even if one refers the I of the speaker to the poet himself, this does not need to point to the advanced age of the speaker, like Boeckh had assumed.[23]

Young concludes that nothing can be known about the dating of the ode and also not the 'anti-Athenian point of view' of the piece that Bowra had deducted from the dating and the localization of the battles.[24] In his refutation of the stretched historical interpretation, Young argues strongly against relying on the *color* of the ode, like Boeckh and Farnell do, and refers to Mezger who, to the contrary, perceived the ode as rather high-spirited.[25] Young takes Boeckh's and Mezger's opposing feelings about the ode as a hint that there is no objective melancholy present in the piece.[26] This relativization is, as I will show in the following, more obscuring than helpful for an understanding of the ode. Young's refutation of the historical reading is undoubtably a great achievement of his thorough study. It is not based on a general refutation, though, of the

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[20] YOUNG (1971: 7–8).

[21] BOECKH (1821: 531).

[22] H. FRAENKEL shows also in general terms how the I in Pindar's odes can be either personal, or choral, or in reference particularly to the addressee, FRAENKEL (1973: 475 n. 12), cf. YOUNG (1971: 9–12). This problem was later hotly debated by MARY LEFKOWITZ and CHRISTOPHER CAREY as an alternative between individual or choral performance of the victory odes, LEFKOWITZ (1988: 10–11), CAREY (1989: 562–565), LEFKOWITZ (1991), HEATH–LEFKOWITZ (1991: 191), CAREY (1991: 199); G. B. D'ALESSIO has offered a synthesis of this alternative that comes close to FRAENKEL's earlier description, D'ALESSIO (1994: 121–122), see also LEFKOWITTZ's conciliatory reply to D'ALESSIO, LEFKOWITZ (1995: 148–149).

[23] YOUNG (1971: 12–14).

[24] BOWRA (1965: 104; 1964: 294), cf. YOUNG (1971: 15).

[25] MEZGER (1880: 301–302): ‚Das innige Behagen, mit dem der Dichter die an göttlichen Segnungen und Ruhm so reiche Urzeit seiner Vaterstadt […] schildert […] stimmt wenig zu einer trostlosen Gegenwart.' ('The inner comfort with which the poet describes the ancient time of his home city, so rich with divine blessings and glory, does hardly fit with a desperate present.'), cf. YOUNG (1971: 8).

[26] YOUNG (1971: 8, n. 25): 'too obscure to be adduced as evidence'.

color Boeckh had first observed, but on the uncovering of Boeckh's and his followers' mistakes in grammar and far-fetched historical equalizations. Young's overall conclusions are therefore one sided: as he argues against the melancholy of *Isthmian* 7 where he should only argue against Boeckh's illogical historical interpretation, he throws the baby out with the bathwater. Boeckh and his many followers had rightly grasped that *Isthmian* 7 is outstanding from other Pindaric odes for its apparent gloomy mood, Boeckh's *color*. While they misjudged it as a historical hint, it must be the task of a literary interpretation of the ode to show the mechanics and maybe the function of this mood in the text. To do this, I will now first follow Young's interpretation, reveal its problems and add the observations concerning melancholy and criticism that are, in my opinion, important for a proper understanding.

3. Melancholy and Criticism in *Isthmian* 7

a) The List

Isthmian 7 begins with a list of events in the history of Thebes (1–15). The speaker asks the nymph of the City:[27]

> By which one of the earlier beautiful events that happened in your area, blessed Theba, have you most rejoiced in your heart? (1–3)[28]

This question is then followed by the list of candidates for the prize of the 'most' (μάλιστα) suitable event to make the nymph rejoice: Dionysus' Theban origin (3–5), Zeus visit at Amphitryon's house to father Heracles (5–7), the judgement of the Theban seer Tiresias between Zeus and Hera (8)[29], the Theban hero Iolaus (9), the sowing of the Spartoi by

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[27] Cf. CURRIE (2005: 205), WILLCOCK (1995: 62).

[28] For the Greek text and a complete translation see Appendix 1.

[29] Tiresias had lived both as a man and as a woman and could solve the quarrel, whether men or women experience greater joy during intercourse, judging that women enjoy it nine times as much; in return for this revealing judgement Hera punished him with blindness (Hes. *fr.* 275–276 [MERKELBACH/WEST]). Other feats of the seer in and around Thebes could also be described as πυκναί βουλαί, but the judgement between Zeus and Hera is his most outstanding accomplishment and the origin–story for his defining character traits (prophetic wisdom – blindness).

the city's founder Cadmus (10), the flight of Adrastus and his army after the failed siege of the Seven (10–11), or the aid the Theban Aegeids brought the Doric Spartans in their war against the Achaean city of Amyclae, which made the foundation of Sparta durable (12–15).[30] This List is followed by a gnome about mortal forgetfulness and the function of poetry:

> But indeed, the ancient glory sleeps, and the mortals forget it, if it does not reach the highest refinement of wisdom joined with glorious streams of words. (16–19)

The next segment of the ode begins with the invitation to celebrate Strepsiades, the victor in the Pancratium at the Isthmian Games, which can also be seen as the newest Theban event on the list (20–22).

Young wants to turn his attention away from the historical to the poetic content of *Isthmian* 7.[31] He presents the first thirteen verses as an ingenious display of Pindar's historic consciousness, as the Theban events are given in chronological order from ancient to less ancient.[32] In this, Young wants to see the list as a historical list of Theban greatness that can simply be extended to Strepsiades most recent achievement. We are meant to see the victory of the young Strepsiades as an organic continuation: 'the most urgent of all these patriotic glories in which Theba delights.'[33] The significance of the list, however, need not be the connection of past and present alone. If the list is read with an unprejudiced mind, this interpretation might even appear questionable in two respects:

It overlooks, in my opinion, the significance of the gnome at the end of the list that questions the validity of all these past events in the present because they are usually forgotten. More fundamentally, it questions the ability of the present to remember these deeds. So, the past may be glorious but it is unreachable for 'the mortals' in the present.

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[30] Cf. BURY (1892: 126) on the Aegeids and Amyclae, see also KIECHLE (1963: 61–62).
[31] YOUNG (1971: 15).
[32] YOUNG (1971: 16–17).
[33] YOUNG (1971: 18).

Young puts the focus of his interpretation on the importance of song:[34] the gnome prepares the importance of the victory ode because victories, like ancient glories, only matter if they are sung. This may be so, but it does not lift the burden that this argument for song is bought at the price of a pessimistic picture of present-day-mortals – all those who listen to the song. This pessimism is remarkable in so far as the list from verses 1 to 15 would only be understandable – and could only be a relevant part of the argument of the ode – if the audience remembered all of these ancient glories on their own as the glories are rather alluded to than presented. Bruno Currie tries to alleviate the problem and gives a new understanding to the passage: he understands γὰρ (16) as 'forward looking' and 'picked up' by ἔπειτεν (20) to mean 'since… therefore'[35] to turn the content of the gnome (16–19) into an unreal condition. This goes against the structure of the sentence, though: ἀλλὰ and γὰρ belong together for confirmation 'but indeed';[36] ἔπειτεν marks a new beginning. Currie's endeavour shows that the passage is hard to bear for those who want to find conventional sense.

The second point, that does not contradict Young but renders his interpretation somewhat problematic is the question of the order. Young found the historical accuracy of the list – from older to newer – remarkable and stated that the events of the list and Strepsiades' victory 'compared in nature but contrasted in immediacy'.[37] I find this doubtful. Though being historically accurate, the list is also extremely anticlimactic: from the conception of the god Dionysus to the one of the hero Heracles to the deeds of the lesser and more local heroes Tiresias, Iolaus and Cadmus to the accomplishments of Theban warfare against the Seven and in aid of the Dorians, the events in the list change from more divine, more universal and, simply put, more important to only concerned with the human realm, more local, and therefore less important. Pindar's list

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[34] YOUNG (1971: 18): 'Even the venerable glories of old would be forgotten if they were unsung. […] Like those ancient events, it needs poetic celebration if it is to be appreciated and remembered.'

[35] CURRIE (2005: 220); Diane SVARLIEN translated the passage like this already in her 1990 translations for the Perseus project, SVARLIEN (1990).

[36] Cf. SCHADEWALDT (1928: 268) ‚reguläre Abbruchsformel'.

[37] YOUNG (1971: 18).

follows the development of the different ages in the ancient Greek cosmology from gold to iron. An unprejudiced (Greek) recipient cannot other but see Strepsiades' victory at the Isthmian Games as a continuation of this list and therefore not only as the newest but also as the least of Thebes's glories. One could argue that in any ancient Greek context every list of events from past to present due to the inherent pessimism of ancient Greek cosmology could only be a downward path. I concede this without exception, but it does not change the fact that putting Strepsiades' victory at the end of such a list must make it appear rather small in comparison with the weight of history and religion. Bruno Currie seems to have realized this problem, when he suggests to see the heroization of the elder Strepsiades, not the victory of the young Strepsiades, as the fitting final link at the end of the chain.[38] We must ask what made the author, who must have been aware of the effect, choose to present Strepsiades' victory in this apparently unfavourable context – a choice he could have easily avoided.

Again, one might be tempted to say that the entire genre of the epinicion is based on the generic convention that victories in sports can be seen as equal with feats of the order named above,[39] but the comparisons in Pindar's other victory odes are of a different nature. Whenever Pindar tells the stories of Gods, heroes and the ancients, he avoids comparisons along the lines of X performed this or that feat in the past, like you now achieved a victory at this or that sports event. This is the case because such direct comparisons would be awkward as the victories could never in fact equal such deeds – especially not for members of a culture who would acknowledge the mythical events as constitutive goods. Pindar, on the contrary, usually tries very hard to find more elegant solutions to enter his *partes mythicae* in the equation of praise without direct comparisons. In Olympian one, for example, the story of Pelops's victory in a chariot race is told, not in direct comparison with Hiero's victory but because, according to the poem and other sources,[40] Pelops ran the first Olympian horse race. Pelops is entered into the po-

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[38] CURRIE (2005: 216–218).

[39] Cf. CURRIE (2005: 218–219), also SCHADEWALDT (1928: 268).

[40] Paus. 5, 13, 1–3, cf. GERBER (1982: 141–142), BURKERT (1997: 108–119).

em as a natural model for Hiero but without an awkward direct comparison. In similar ways Pindar usually seeks a connection between gods, heroes or ancients with his winners, their families or their patrons via some other shared feature but not through direct comparison.[41]

So, how can Pindar's choice in *Isthmian* 7 be accounted for? One might assume that the inferiority of the present in comparison to the past was so much a natural fact for Pindar and his contemporaries at the time of the presentation that it would have felt unnatural not to address it in any poem of the day. This seems to have been the thinking that underlies August Boeckh's *color*-observations; he then concludes that the ode was written at a time when Thebes' political situation made such choices a necessity. While this interpretation can account for both the anticlimactic list of events and the pessimistic view on the validity of the past in the present, it is not the only possible explanation. In my final chapter, other possibilities will be explored.

b) The Death of the Elder Strepsiades

In the following verses, the second part of the ode begins with the mention of Strepsiades' victory that works as a hinge between the prior list and the following story of the elder Strepsiades (20–22). The young Strepsiades' maternal uncle has fallen in battle. The ode makes the connection between nephew and uncle as it presents young Strepsiades' victory as a gift of honour to the dead elder relative (23–26). This first introduction leads to a detailed description of Strepsiades the elder's deeds in war: he endured battle for his fatherland, brought ruin to his enemies, and followed the example of the ancient heroes Meleager, Hector and Amphiaraus by holding his position even until his death (27–36). The sorrow of the chorus for the loss of Strepsiades' life marks the transition to the next part (37).

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[41] Other such examples are: the mention of Peleus, Cadmus and Achilles in *O.* 2, 78–79 after the discourse on the fragility of mortal lives, especially 33–37, that gives an implicit parallel for Theron's striving for immortality through a virtuous life, cf. Nisetich (1988); the long episode of the Argonauts' in *P.* 4, 4–246, who are connected to Arcesilaus and Cyrene via the lesser Argonaut Euphemus; and many more.

Young's second achievement in his poetic re-evaluation of *Isthmian* 7 after the turn from a historical to a poetical reading concerns this passage. He discovered the close intertextual relationship between the depiction of the elder Strepsiades' death in battle (24–30) and similar passages of Callinus and Tyrtaeus.[42] Over the course of his observations, Young also addresses the question of the significance of the three ancient heroes who are compared with the elder Strepsiades (32–33); in contrast to the earlier scholarship, he sees the particular commonality between the three in their patriotic fight to death without flight; also, Amphiaraus, an enemy of Thebes in ancient time and therefore the object of scholarly debate in this poem, fits in this category.[43]

Young later concludes his interpretation of *Isthmian* 7 with the extended argument to read the digression on the elder Strepsiades as a non-mythical *pars mythica* that serves to illustrate the praise of the younger Strepsiades.[44] As the elder Strepsiades is otherwise unknown (and as Pindar does nothing to change this by placing his death politically or geographically), this illustration works mainly through the picture of patriotic self-sacrifice per se recalled via Tyrtaeus and Callinus – Young calls this motif *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*.[45] According to Young the victor Strepsiades is praised by bringing his victory in a close relationship with a patriotic feat of war of the highest order.[46] Young's elegiac reading of the *pars mythica* was later revisited by Bruno Currie and Christopher Brown. Both agree with Young's judgement; Currie adds that Strepsiades the elder, who is in Currie's view a hero with a cult, fits in a classical *pars mythica*;[47] Brown stresses the point that while Tyrtaean elegy is general and unspecific, Pindar, mentioning the epic heroes Meleager, Hector and Amphiaraus, adds conspicuously epic elements to his praise of a warrior to fit both frames, the Tyrtaean discovered by Young and the more conventional one of an epic *pars mythica*.[48]

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[42] YOUNG (1971: 20).

[43] YOUNG (1971: 21–23).

[44] YOUNG (1971: 34–46).

[45] YOUNG (1971: 20).

[46] YOUNG (1971: 40).

[47] CURRIE (2005: 224).

[48] BROWN (2016: 285).

We will now reconsider the passage with a view to its peculiarities in relationship to the melancholy of the ode. First of all, the passage treats the death of the victor's uncle where the listeners expect something that would be fit to illustrate the victor's glory and the glory of the day. Young's interpretation of the passage shows how this serves the positive characterization of the victor and his family in the end, but it stands in a harsh contrast to the idea of a young man's victory in sports when it is first introduced. The first sentence of the passage asks the Muses to celebrate the victory, giving positive attributes of the victor on the way.[49] The change is abrupt when Strepsiades' uncle is introduced:

> [Young Strepsiades] is made famous by the Muses with dark locks (23), and has given his homonymous uncle a shared crown (24), [his uncle] whom Ares with brazen spear has mixed his destiny (25), and esteem is held out to good people as a fitting reward (26).[50]

While the first part of the second sentence keeps up the praise of young Strepsiades, adding fame through song to the good attributes Strepsiades had been given before, the introduction of his dead uncle in only two verses (24–25) comes unprepared with the surprise and change of subject from gay present praise to death condensed in verse 25. Strepsiades' death is almost sneaked into the narrative as the phrase used to express death, 'to mix sb. their fate' ($\pi\acute{o}\tau\mu o\nu$ $\mu\acute{\iota}\gamma\nu\upsilon\mu\iota$ $\tau\iota\nu\acute{\iota}$) is conventional to express death but also extremely euphemistic. The following verse (26) turns back to the subject of fame in a general gnome ($\tau\iota\mu\grave{\alpha}$, 26 → $\varphi\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$, 23), abandoning the subject of death immediately. There can be no doubt that the poet works hard to minimize the impact of the death of the elder Strepsiades by his choice of words and the quick and brief nature of the information, but it still comes as a surprise.

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[49] Pind. *I.* 7, 20–22: 'Praise then with sweet–sounding song also Strepsiades, because he carries away with him a victory in the pancratium at the Isthmian Games, marvellous in his strength and well–shaped, and he holds a virtue not more reproachful than his physical appearance.'

[50] I have given a translation here that follows the order of words in the Greek more closely; see in the appendix for the proper English translation.

In the following sentences, the economy of death and other subjects is very similar: in the third sentence (27–30), we hear about the heroism of the elder Strepsiades in three verses (27–29) to learn in the fourth (30) that he 'lives on even being himself among the dead' with the mention of death again in the last word alone (θανών), counterweighted by the idea of eternal life in the rest of the verse and not directed at Strepsiades, but at the general group of the dead. We find the same pattern in the following sentence (31–36): again, the concept of death is only expressed in an obscuring euphemism that carries all the colours of life when Strepsiades is said to 'have exhaled a blooming life' (εὐανθέʾ ἀπέπνευσας ἁλικίαν, 34); again, the short mention of death in one verse is flanked by an extended story of heroism in five verses. Euphemistic treatment of death is not uncommon in many genres of literature as it is usually hard to bear for humans in most contexts. While this is hardly worth observing, it is important to record that this is also, or maybe especially true for Pindar's praise poetry, which belongs by convention in a gay, festive context. Pindar's treatment of Strepsiades' death in the ode shows what scholars have felt all along: the mention of personal, historical, real-life death in a victory ode, no matter how much it is stylized to serve the praise of the victor's family in the end, goes against the grain of the genre and has to be accommodated with great care. It renders *Isthmian* 7 bleak where victory odes are supposed to be triumphant.

In our evaluation of the passage about the elder Strepsiades' death, we must also revisit Young's discovery of the intertextuality with the elegists and ask, what function Pindar's depiction of *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* can have when we reconsider the ode's pessimistic stance. To do so, we have to look back at the beginning of the passage. In the description of young Strepsiades' virtue, the young victor is described with these remarkable words: 'he holds a virtue not more reproachful than his physical appearance' (ἄγει τʾ ἀρετὰν οὐκ αἴσχιον φυᾶς, 22). This phrase follows a lengthy description of Strepsiades' physical beauty and strength and must therefore mean that Strepsiades is no less virtuous than he is strong and beautiful. Pindar often describes positive

attributes through negative expressions.[51] In this case, though, the negative expression seems to not only serve for ποικιλία, but works as an ungrammaticality in the sense of Riffaterre[52] that hints at one of the elegiac intertexts Young discovered. The negative expression οὐκ αἴσχιον – 'not more reproachful than' – makes the recipient ask: What could be reproachful about Strepsiades' virtue? The answer to this question is given in Tyrtaeus' elegy Nr. 9 that, like Young discovered, is also referenced in the following verses. Tyrtaeus begins his elegy with a list of the people he does not deem worthy of being sung about, if they were not also mighty in war. The first place in this list is reserved for sportspeople:

> Οὔτ᾽ ἂν μνησαίμην οὔτ᾽ ἐν λόγωι ἄνδρα τιθείην
> οὔτε ποδῶν ἀρετῆς οὔτε παλαιμοσύνης,
> οὐδ᾽ εἰ Κυκλώπων μὲν ἔχοι μέγεθός τε βίην τε,
> νικώιη δὲ θέων Θρηίκιον Βορέην,   4
> […]
> οὐδ᾽ εἰ πᾶσαν ἔχοι δόξαν πλήν θούριδος ἀλκῆς;   9

> And I would neither remember nor praise with my speech a man, not for the virtue of his feet and not for his ability in wrestling, and not if he had the stature of the cyclopes and their strength, and not if he won against the Thracian Boreas from the gods,
> […]
> and not if he had every glory except warlike valour.

This is, of course, an ordinary *priamel* and would not, in the context of elegy Nr. 9 alone, give reason to suspect that Tyrtaeus wanted his readers to think badly of sportspeople in particular. It is Pindar's taking up of this passage in a victory ode – for a victory in sports – that makes for a conspicuous choice: the recipients who know Tyrtaeus' Nr. 9 will recall Tyrtaeus' reproach against people who excel in sports but cannot boast with deeds in war. The parallel between *Isthmian* 7 and Tyrtaeus'

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[51] RACE (1983).
[52] RIFFATERRE (1978: 5).

Nr. 9 becomes obvious when we compare the praise of Strepsiades' the elders deeds in the continuation of the ode with Tyrtaeus' next verses:

> οὐ γὰρ ἀνήρ ἀγαθός γίγνεται ἐν πολέμωι   10
> εἰ μὴ τετλαίη μὲν ὁρῶν φόνον αἱματόεντα
> καὶ δηίων ὀρέγοιτ᾽ ἐγγύθεν ἱστάμενος.
> ἥδ᾽ ἀρετή, τόδ᾽ ἄεθλον ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ἄριστον
> κάλλιστόν τε φέρειν γίγνεται ἀνδρὶ νέωι.

> Because no man becomes worthy in war if he did not suffer to see bloody death and did not reach to the enemies standing next to him in his direct vicinity. This is virtue, this is the best prize among men and the most beautiful thing that there is for a young man to carry away with him!

Tyrtaeus' description of the ideal warrior includes the same elements that also Pindar's praise of the elder Strepsiades includes: 'the hailstorm of blood' (χάλαζαν αἵματος […] ἀμύνεται, 27) and the necessary closeness of battle 'to inflict ruin on the enemy army' (λοιγὸν ἀμφιβαλὼν ἐναντίῳ στρατῷ, 28). But this does not only mark Pindar's Strepsiades as a patriotic war hero in the style of the elegy, like Young had found, but it also carries the antithesis between the sportspeople and the war heroes that is thematized in Tyrtaeus' elegy Nr. 9 into Pindar's ode. It is hardly possible to recall Tyrtaeus in the praise of the war hero and then not also recall his explicit criticism of young men who do sports but do not excel in war.

The reference to Tyrtaeus' elegy, which is intricately prepared already by the negative expression οὐκ αἴσχιον in verse 22, is surprising because it does not seem to serve the praise of young Strepsiades at all. To the contrary, it introduces an implicit criticism into the ode that would not otherwise be present: valiant young men excel in war like your uncle did. Why did you waste time with sports instead?[53] This criticism in the victory ode can be explained only if it was actually not a

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[53] This is the more surprising as it contradicts the common analogy of warfare and sports in Pindar (e.g. *I.* 5, 4–10; *O.* 6, 10), cf. ADORJÁNI (2014: 133), and would thus posit *I.* 7 as a real exception in the Pindaric corpus.

creative act of criticism from the poet to the victor but a criticism that was in the air in Thebes anyway at the time of the presentation and could therefore not be avoided. If the poet took up an already present criticism, the strong connection between the homonymous nephew and uncle could then help to vindicate the nephew in the way Young has described.[54] This can appear only likely if *Isthmian* 7 was performed under circumstances that were different from the ordinary purely festive occasions of victory odes. A likely situation would be a politico-military crisis like the one matched to the ode by Boeckh and his followers, within which success at the games would have fallen behind after patriotic acts of military defence.

Another aspect of the description of Strepsiades the elder deserves attention. The fallen warrior is compared with three ancient heroes, Meleagrus, Hector and Amphiaraus. The third hero, Amphiaraus, was able to cause some confusion in the older scholarship as the commander of the armies of the Seven against Thebes appeared to be a bad match with Strepsiades, the Theban warrior.[55] David Young tries to solve this problem by reading the three heroes simply as particularly outstanding examples of fight to the last 'because they all fell valiantly in the front line of battle; they knew not the shame of flight'.[56] Bruno Currie, who wants to see Strepsiades the elder as a hero with a cult, sees the commonality of the three heroes and Strepsiades in their heroization as saving heroes after death.[57] Both might be the case, but Amphiaraus, as a third and therefore climactically most significant example for patriotic fighting, might be meaningful also in the characterization of the relationship of the two Strepsiades: Amphiaraus, who dies in the battle of the Seven against Thebes, appeals to his children Alcmaeon and Amphilochus to revenge him, which they do in the war of the Epigones. Amphiaraus in the myth thus has his honour and glory renewed by the following generation. In the context of the two Strepsiades, the example of Amphiaraus and his sons indicates that also the younger Strepsiades,

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[54] YOUNG (1971: 40).

[55] YOUNG (1971: 21–22, n. 72) with a characterization of the older scholarship.

[56] YOUNG (1971: 22).

[57] CURRIE (2005: 215–216).

like the ode states already in verse 24, will renew the glory of his uncle. It is left open, though, whether this renewal is limited to glory through the victory at the Isthmian Games or whether Strepsiades the younger will follow in the footsteps of Alcmaeon and Amphilochus and revenge his uncle on the battlefield.[58] The comparison between the older Strepsiades and Amphiaraus therefore helps to vindicate the younger Strepsiades against the reproach of lacking military valour as it opens up the possibility for future military achievements, and thus deflects the criticism mentioned above.

Overall, the passage circling around the death of Strepsiades serves the purposes of an ordinary *pars mythica* in a Pindaric victory ode only most broadly.[59] While still fitting somehow in the framework of a victory ode, like Young wants to show, it adds remarkable evidence that *Isthmian* 7 is an extraordinary victory ode because of its continuing gloom: the death of the elder Strepsiades is only made to fit in the ode with great rhetoric effort; the Tyrtaean intertext throws an unfavourable light on the victor that can only be explained with an extraordinary context, which might also explain the otherwise problematic choice of Amphiaraus as a model for the elder Strepsiades.

c) The Perspective of the Speaker

In the last passage that shall be treated in this paper, the perspective of the speaking I and the determination of who this I represents are a question of the scholars. After the description of Strepsiades the elder's deeds (27–36), the speaker of the ode expresses their sorrow (πένθος, 37) and at the same time sees themselves placed at a better place of 'fair weather out of a storm' (38–39). This general evaluation is continued with the description of the festival: 'I will sing binding my hair with garlands' (39). The following sentences, again, bring general observations on the human condition in the world: first a *carpe diem*-like posture is expressed (39–42) with the speaker professing to be untroubled by 'the

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[58] This connection is already referred to by WILAMOWITZ–MOELLENDORFF (1922: 412). Young brushes WILAMOWITZ–MOELLENDORFF's observation aside too offhandedly, YOUNG (1971: 22, n. 72).

[59] Cf. YOUNG (1971: 34–35; 46).

envy of the immortals' (ἀθανάτων […] φθόνος, 39) while they plan to make the best of their allotted time 'because equally we all die' (42); this is followed by a statement that humans are incapable to reach beyond the human realm (43–44) and a warning (ὅ τοι, 44) (44–49) that whoever might still try is likely to end like Bellerophon, 'who wanted to walk the abodes of heaven among the assembly of Zeus' (45–47), thrown off the winged horse Pegasus, 'and the sweetness that goes against what is right awaits the most bitter end!' (47–48). The passage and the ode end with a prayer to Apollo Loxias to grant the 'we' of the speaker(s) also 'the garland in Pytho' – a victory at the Pythian Games of Apollo (49–51).

The various questions that pertain to the passage are all somehow related to the question of who the speaker is. I will again base my observations on the interpretations of David Young, who begins with the significance of the sorrow (πένθος) of the speaker in verse 37. In a further re-evaluation of earlier scholarship, he identifies it as a general expression of grief by the community through the choral I, which according to him is a necessary part of the praise of a fallen warrior.[60] This interpretation is well attuned to Young's discovery of Tyrtaeus' elegy Nr. 9 as an important intertext, which maybe led him to view all parts of the ode through a singularly Tyrtaean lens. Similarly, Young understands all markers of apparent negativity as well attuned to the generic parts of the poem: the storm (χειμῶνος, 39) that the speaker comes out of marks 'a family's change from bad to good fortune', which is in line with a similar metaphor in *Isthmian* 4;[61] the apprehension of the speaker towards the envy of the gods (φθόνος) is, according to Young, a topical statement that does not 'require a specific justification';[62] the same applies to the references to old age. Young's final argument concerns the I of the speaker in verses 40–42 and the following: he refutes the older interpretation that Pindar, the poet, is making a biographical statement and ascribes this and the following to an I that would reflect the position of the younger Strepsiades, the addressee. In this, Young agrees with the

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[60] YOUNG (1971: 24–25).
[61] YOUNG (1971: 26).
[62] YOUNG (1971: 27–28).

scholiast of *schol.* 55 b.[63] Not only is Strepsiades the younger relieved and lives a life in peace but he can also aspire to a pious life, minding the dangers of hubris counter to the model of Bellerophon and focus on achievable goals like another victory at the Pythian Games.

Young's argument that the third antistrophe and epode are spoken by an I that represents the younger Strepsiades is clearly more convincing than the older interpretation that ascribed these lines to a biographical I of the poet. Young's interpretation is not without difficulty, though. He ascribes verses 37 and 39 to be 'of general application' representing the community;[64] without really pointing to it, he then suggests a change of the speaker's representation from verse 39 to verse 40, the later verses representing young Strepsiades.[65] This is not convincing. Whoever is the speaker of verses 40 to the end must also be in all likeliness the speaker of 37 to 39. Before resorting to an interpretation that depends on an incomprehensible change of speaker, we must try to find an interpretation that makes sense without such a device. But if one tries to ascribe also verses 37 to 39 to an I that represents young Strepsiades, one encounters insurmountable problems. To ascribe the grief about the elder Strepsiades to the young Strepsiades alone does not convince, when the expression of grief follows the description of the elder Strepsiades' deeds by the chorus (24–36). It would be even more problematic to ascribe the stance of a singer ($\dot{\alpha}\epsilon\acute{\iota}\sigma\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$, 39) to the young Strepsiades alone, when it is objectively the chorus that sings. If it cannot hold for verses 37 to 39 it is hard, though, to allow for a change of speaker for the later verses alone. This is also unnecessary: it is completely satisfactory to assume the (natural) choral I as the speaker for the entire passage.

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[63] See above n. 22.

[64] YOUNG (1971: 24) makes an argument about the difference of 'choral I' and 'general application' (n. 81): 'I am not agreeing with the scholiast […] that the verb is an example of a "choral I," but merely noting its general application.' YOUNG's differentiation between 'choral I' and 'general application' appears to be of little relevance: things that the chorus say are usually of 'general application'; things said in choral odes can be 'of general application' because they are objectively said by the chorus. I am skipping this, in my opinion, meritless distinction and take 'choral I' and 'general I' to be the same thing, which I call choral I.

[65] YOUNG (1971: 30–33).

For this interpretation, it is important to understand that the choral I does not so much localize the content of the ode in the outside world but rather the different parts of the ode to each other and in the entire ode – the chorus gives listening directions to the recipients. From this under-standing, the I-statements in verses 37 to 39 make the most sense: the choral I has suffered under the warlike Tyrtaean song and the resulting grief (27–36); it can move on to an easier part in the following song of present praise that is expressed through metaphors of a life without worries (37–39). This statement of the chorus makes sense because the Tyrtaean passage, as much as it fills the place of a *pars mythica*, is an un-usual and foreign element in the ode. Its presence that goes against the norms of the genre has to be accounted for; the ode does this through a self-referential speech of the chorus – the chorus tells the recipients what it felt like to sing the unusual warlike passage:

> I have borne unspeakable sorrow, but now the Mover of the Earth has granted me fair weather out of a storm. I will sing binding my hair with garlands.

The chorus will move on to its usual business, gay festive praise, and so can we.

The apparent change of tone in verse 37 is no indication for a change of speaker or representation but a marker of a different kind: it marks the change of genre from the Tyrtaean passage before to the following festive passage and shows a consciousness for the effect of the other genre in the ode.[66] A new beginning of some kind in the third verse of the strophe like here in Γ (37) is recurring in the entire ode: in A, the third verse of the strophe (3) separates the initial question from the ad-joined list of glorious events.[67] In B, it separates the passage of the list of past events from the present celebration of young Strepsiades' victory (20). These changes seem to always take a turn towards the uplifting: in A, the initial question (1–3) gives way to the list of glorious events (3–15); in B, the gloomy acknowledgement that the past is forgotten unless

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[66] Cf. YOUNG (1971: 25) "change of subject".

[67] In A the new beginning would be between the iambic and the hagesichorean.

remembered in song (16–19) changes to the summons to celebrate young Strepsiades in the present (20–21); this is also the case in Γ, where the new beginning of the third verse (37) separates the gloomy end of the description of the elder Strepsiades' death in the style of Tyrtaeus (25–36) from the final return to the present festivities (37–51). This uplifting change occurs three times in the ode, every time around the third verse of the strophe (3; 20; 37). It is thus very likely that it would also be represented somehow at this point in the musical performance of the ode. A change is thus very present, but it is not a change in speakers or representations.

Other than Young felt, the choral I appears to be an unproblematic choice for the speaker of the final verses of the ode (40–51). The *carpe diem*-like passage (39–42) needs not point neither to a general *carpe diem*-like mood in Thebes after a lost war nor to such a feeling on the side of the young Strepsiades but simply to the feeling of unbothered joy natural to all festivities. Young is right to remind us that the phrase about old age ('I will come into old age up until my destined time') does not mean that whoever says it is actually old,[68] but this is true as much of the chorus as it would be of young Strepsiades. Moreover, as I said of verses 37 to 39, the chorus speaking this can be understood again as a reference to the change of mood towards a gayer finish of the ode. In the festive setting, the chorus live as if there was no care in the world. The reference to old age and also the following gnome ('Because equally we all die,' 42) can plausibly refer to this change of mood alone if spoken by the chorus. The same holds true for the general observations on the limitations of mortal existence (43–44), the example of Bellerophon (44–47) and the gnome that figures as a moral to the example (47–48). All of these can be plausibly spoken by the chorus out of the same change of mood that was described above. The line of thinking that the recipients are meant to imagine for the chorus is: we indulge in ephemeral festive joys as mortals and this is justified because this is the only thing mortals can achieve, and if mortals try to achieve more it is dangerous and even a sacrilegious case of hubris! Finally, it makes perfect sense for the chorus to pray to Apollon for a future victory in the Pythian Games (49–51).

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[68] YOUNG (1971: 12–14; 28; 41).

The we (ἄμμι) does not need to refer to young Strepsiades as a nosism but can also refer to the chorus as a natural plural. This is plausible as a victory of Strepsiades at the Pythian Games would have been a reason for celebration for the entire community, here represented in its festive garb by the chorus; the phrase πόρε στέφανον ('grant a wreath') can be understood *pars pro toto* for the whole community – if Strepsiades wins, all of Thebes wins. While Strepsiades is the most likely candidate for future champion at other Games,[69] on the primary level of meaning the chorus can also pray for any future Theban victory at the Pythian Games – we celebrated a sports victory today, we hope for more victories in the future!

It has been shown that there is no need to switch the representation of the speaker from the natural choral I that represents the festive community of Thebes. The chorus is the speaker of the entire ode.[70] The scholion that suggests to take young Strepsiades as the actual voice behind the I can be ignored without consequence.[71] Having said this, it must be clear that the content also of the third passage is particularly attuned to the young Strepsiades, the addressee of the ode, in a way that relates to his characterization in the earlier passages. This does not warrant, though, to make him the represented speaker – the chorus is very fit to talk about these matters as I will show in the following. In the first two passages of the poem, like shown above, the ode seems to raise criticism against young Strepsiades: his achievements were shown to be the least of Thebes' glories and he is implicitly criticized for being a sportsman and not a soldier. This criticism I ascribed to some general set of mind at the time of the presentation – it had to be addressed. The statements of the chorus in the final passage seem to be designed to alleviate the former criticism. When the chorus turns from the description of the

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[69] The Isthmian Games took place every two years in April. The Pythian Games took place every four years in August in the same year of every second Isthmian Game. They were most likely simply the next Panhellenic Crown Game to take place later in that same year and therefore the logical point of reference for the next possible future victory. Cf. KYLE (2014: 31). This would allow for the year 454 BC as the year of the presentation or any other year with Pythian Games. Cf. WILLCOCK (1995: 61).

[70] This is the position first taken by THIERSCH (1820: II 196), cf. YOUNG (1971: 10).

[71] Cf. YOUNG (1971: 29–30).

elder Strepsiades' heroic deeds, they exclaim their pain (37) and profess to be leading a life without worry – there was war, now we celebrate (39–42)! This stance of the chorus ameliorates the position of the criticized sportsman. It shows that for the chorus, the imagined public of the ode, there is not only the necessities of war but also a brighter every day with a set of values of its own. During the gay festivities after the war that the chorus creates, there is room again for celebrating a winner in sports. But the chorus goes even further than that. In the following verses (43–48) they make a case for keeping to simple, worldly activities. Humans who reach out beyond their own sphere, like Bellerophon, are criticized as sacrilegious. Cobbler, stick to your last! The consequence of these observations is the prayer of the chorus to Apollon for a future victory in sports (49–51), most likely by Strepsiades. The chorus's criticism of those who outstretch their own capabilities serves again to vindicate young Strepsiades: he is a sportsman, it would be presumptuous of him to aim for higher glories, like the heroic deeds of his uncle. Strepsiades and Thebes shall content themselves with victories in sports. The precarious situation of Strepsiades at the beginning of the ode as the author of Thebes least glorious deed and a sportsman, who is not worthy of praise in the world of Tyrtaeus, is turned into a pious example of humble self–consciousness. Strepsiades will not outstretch himself like a Bellerophon but content himself with the possible, another victory at the Games.

To summarize, it can be said that complicated shifts in the speaker or their representation are not necessary to make good sense of *Isthmian* 7. To the contrary, the ode is continuously spoken by the choral I. Where this identification was unclear before, I have shown that the chorus as a speaker can speak the ode in such a way that a congruous picture of the ode emerges. Strepsiades is introduced with implicit criticism in the first to triads of the ode. He is vindicated by the chorus in the end. The ode thus serves the prestige of its addressee under the seemingly special conditions that it was presented in.

4. Instead of a Conclusion: Two Alternative Interpretations of *Isthmian* 7

Based on the observations made so far, two alternative interpretations can be offered that make sense of *Isthmian* 7. The ode cannot be understood as a typical victory ode because it does not seem to praise the victor efficiently and carries too dark a mood for festivities. The first interpretation will be based on chapter 3 and summarizes an interpretation of *Isthmian* 7 as an ode that vindicates rather than praises. The second interpretation will briefly summarize Bruno Currie's interpretation of *Isthmian* 7 as focused not so much on the younger Strepsiades, but on the cult hero Strepsiades the elder.

a) Isthmian 7 as vindication

In the afore chapter, it has been shown that melancholy and criticism play an important role in *Isthmian* 7. The present glory, the victory thematized in the ode, is shown to be inferior to the ancient events in Thebes, the present to be detached from the past. The value of victory in sports is questioned in comparison with valour in war. The victor is vindicated rather than celebrated from criticism that the ode itself, it seems, had to bring up. *Isthmian* 7 therefore must be recognized as an atypical victory ode, like August Boeckh and his followers already maintained in the older scholarship, because of its melancholy and its inherent criticism of the victor. David Young's alternative interpretation, for all its merits in showing the logical mistakes in the historical over-interpretations of the past, is as misleading as helpful. Just as August Boeckh in Young's own words had "selected Oenophyta before coming to his conclusion", also Young seems to have decided that *Isthmian* 7 is a Pindaric victory ode like all others, while a less prejudiced reader must come to the conclusion of Boeckh, Wilamowitz–Moellendorff, Farnell and many others, i.e. that it is outstanding from Pindar's other odes because of its gloomy mood. I will have to ask what could be the reasons or the inner motivation for this peculiar stance of the ode.

The melancholy and the criticism of the victor in the ode are difficult to explain from the point of view that is put forward within the ode itself and with reference to the genre of victory odes. It is therefore rea-

sonable to assume, like Boeckh and his followers did, that there must have been some outer circumstance that prescribed the particular stance expressed in the ode. Pindar's victory odes are inseparably connected with the occasions they were composed for.[72] The festivities after victories in the Panhellenic Crown Games and the epinicians that were given in these contexts had a degree of institutionalization, which implied that no important victory could be celebrated without festivities and without a song.[73] This means that at rare occurrences it could happen that festivities and a victory ode had to be presented in a polis also when the general social climate or only the particular constellation between the audience and the victor and his family would have made it more desirable to drop the event. This paper is written under the fresh impression of the opening ceremony of the Tokyo Olympics 2020 in July 2021, which was remarkable for the fact that it was had, even though the usual spirit of solemnity given to Olympic openings by the attentive awe of ten-thousands of spectators in a stadium could not inspire this event – many athletes decided not to join or left early, and the whole affair was later described as 'forced drama'.[74] The opening ceremony of the Tokyo Olympics 2020 and the festivities in honour of young Strepsiades may have had in common that they had to take place because they were ceremonies. Other than in Tokyo 2021, the Theban director of odes had and used the freedom to adapt his artistic program to the special circumstances.

What these circumstances looked like in Thebes at the time of the presentation of the ode is impossible to know. It is tempting to follow August Boeckh's Oenophyta hypothesis, not because of his far-fetched interpretations concerning Spartan ingratitude and Athenian arrogance, which David Young rightly dismissed, but because Oenophyta 457 likely led to the kind of publicly felt politico-military crisis in Thebes that would have left the people unwilling to celebrate the winner of a sports event, when they would have wanted a hero in war – the year 454 with

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[72] Cf. KRUMMEN (1990: 1–5) with the older scholarship.

[73] This is the social reality behind the frequent *Sieg–Lied–Motiv* in Pindar's odes, cf. SCHADEWALDT (1928: 294–296).

[74] SVRLUGA (2021), HEIDRICH (2021).

both Isthmian Games in April and Pythian Games in August would then be fitting.[75] But we must not overvalue the little accidental information we have about Thebes' history in the face of the infinity of things we do not know. The nitty-gritty of polis politics would give infinite occasions for a young πολίτης or his entire family to fall from grace in the public eye. Maybe young Strepsiades was a proven coward, or, more likely, he or somebody in his family had been accused of some dishonourable action in the military realm. Any such event might have been grave enough to bring the victor of the pancratium at the Isthmian Games and his family in a difficult situation, and small enough to fly under the radar of big history. It can be gleaned from the ode that the circumstance must have been such that it delegitimized sports in comparison with the military, either in Strepsiades' individual situation or in the situation of the entire community.

David Young's judgement that we cannot know the date of *Isthmian* 7 is valid. What we can know, though, and must acknowledge is the following: *Isthmian* 7 is an atypical ode because it places the victory it treats at the least position in a list of Theban glories and shows the victor as one who is deficient in military achievements, which has to be mended by the connection to his maternal uncle, a dead warrior, and a re-evaluation of his ambition in sports as sober worldly action in comparison to hubris.[76] *Isthmian* 7 is not an ode that praises but an ode that vindicates. This trait separates it from the other victory odes but forms an internal unity. This unity can best be grasped in the antithesis of foul and calm weather in verses 37–39. The ode juxtaposes the storm of life (χειμῶνος) – the earlier passage of Tyrtaean praise of a warrior – to the present calm (εὐδίαν) – the festivities for young Strepsiades.[77] εὐδία has rightly been called 'the happiest state of mind' in the world of Pindar's odes.[78] This is the ideal that *Isthmian* 7 ascribes to the young Strepsiades

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[75] Cf. WILLCOCK (1995: 61).

[76] Self–knowledge and limitation are ideals often expressed in Pindar's odes, cf. ŠĆEPANOVIĆ (2016: 18–21).

[77] Cf. YOUNG (1971: 26).

[78] BOWRA (1964: 26).

and tries to establish as a credible alternative to the heroism of a Tyrtaean warrior.

b) Isthmian 7 as an Ode about a Cult Hero

In his monograph on Pindar and hero cult, Bruno Currie has proposed a radical interpretation of the elder Strepsiades in *Isthmian* 7 as a cult hero.[79] It is beyond the scope of this paper to validate whether or not Currie's interpretation is acceptable from a cultural-religious point of view. It shall be stressed, though, that also his interpretation solves the problems internal to *Isthmian* 7 that have led me to propose interpretation 4a). I will now briefly summarize Currie's main points and show how they can also lead to a congruent understanding of the entire ode.

Currie argues that various sources point to the fact that Thebans in the 5th century were predisposed to heroize their recently fallen dead.[80] This is documented most convincingly by the fact that Plato the Comedian pokes fun on the Thebans for doing so. If the elder Strepsiades is indeed a cult hero, this moves the weight inside the ode significantly from the younger to the elder Strepsiades. The victor Strepsiades profits from this and receives his due praise mainly through the reminder that he is the nephew of a newly established cult hero. The single changes in the tectonics of the ode are the following: if Strepsiades the elder is a present day cult hero, the list of Theban glories (1–15) does not end on a low with Strepsiades the younger's victory (20–22) but on a high with the heroization of Strepsiades the elder (25–36), the only Theban glory that is described in some detail and, in Young's words, truly 'the most urgent of all these patriotic glories in which Theba delights'. It is then consequent to follow also Currie's creative new translation of verses 16–21 which takes the sting out of ἀλλὰ παλαιὰ γὰρ εὕδει χάρις and turns the whole sentence from a preparation of the following gloom into a mere affirmation of the importance of song.[81] Currie's interpretation makes very good sense of the introduction of Meleager, Hector and Amphiaraus (32–33), who are according to him all heroes with a saving

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[79] CURRIE (2005: 205–210).

[80] CURRIE (2005: 210–211), cf. KRUMMEN (1990: 72, n. 42).

[81] CURRIE (2005: 219–220), see also above chapter 3a).

cult in the Theban context and therefore more ancient equals of the new-ly established cult hero Strepsiades, who most likely had a saving cult as well.[82]

In this interpretation, like in 4a), Strepsiades the younger cannot stand on a par with his heroic uncle. But this is not an obstruction for his praise as the mere fact that he is of the same family as the cult hero, whose name he also bears, serves his prestige. The vindication of young Strepsiades the sportsman therefore stays basically the same I have de-scribed above, only that it does not ultimately serve to vindicate the vic-tor from criticism but to give him a distinct place in an overall positive family story. The virtue of sobriety that is ascribed to him towards the end of the ode (42–51) receives a new, and even more positive meaning. In 4a) I described the function of the sobriety as the final effort of vindi-cation for young Strepsiades: he is no great warrior but at least he is humble! If Strepsiades the elder is a cult hero, young Strepsiades' sobrie-ty becomes a major virtue: it would be overly tempting for the nephew of a hero to see himself as a member of the class of higher beings him-self, like Bellerophon did, but young Strepsiades does not. He is a great sportsman, the nephew of a hero and does not think too much of him-self because of it!

The two interpretations show that additional effort had to be made to show whether praise poetry is in distress in *Isthmian* 7 like I proposed in chapter 4a) or whether an ingenious addition from the cultural-religious sphere can mend the ode like in chapter 4b). If Bruno Currie's assumptions about Theban hero cult can stand, his interpretation of the elder Strepsiades' role and the consequences of this interpretation given above in chapter 4b) are to be given preference. In both cases, this paper hopefully has shone a new light on the complications of *Isthmian* 7.

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[82] CURRIE (2005: 211–216).

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Appendix: *Isthmian* 7, text and translation

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΙ ΘΗΒΑΙΩΙ ΠΑΓΚΡΑΤΙΩΙ[83]

τίνι τῶν πάρος, ὦ μάκαιρα Θήβα,   A
καλῶν ἐπιχωρίων μάλιστα θυμὸν τεόν
εὔφρανας; ἦρα χαλκοκρότου πάρεδρον
Δαμάτερος ἁνίκ᾽ εὐρυχαίταν
ἄντειλας Διόνυσον; ἢ χρυσῷ μεσονύκτιον νείφοντα δεξαμένα τὸν
    φέρτατον θεῶν,   5
ὁπότ᾽ Ἀμφιτρύωνος ἐν θυρέτροις
σταθεὶς ἄλοχον μετῆλθεν Ἡρακλείοις γοναῖς;
ἢ ὅτ᾽ ἀμφὶ πυκναῖς Τειρεσίαο βουλαῖς;
ἢ ὅτ᾽ ἀμφ᾽ Ἰόλαον ἱππόμητιν;
ἢ Σπαρτῶν ἀκαμαντολογχᾶν; ἢ ὅτε καρτερᾶς Ἄδραστον ἐξ ἀλαλᾶς
    ἄμπεμψας ὀρφανὸν   10
μυρίων ἑτάρων ἐς Ἄργος ἵππιον;
ἢ Δωρίδ᾽ ἀποικίαν οὕνεκεν ὀρθῷ
ἔστασας ἐπὶ σφυρῷ
Λακεδαιμονίων, ἕλον δ᾽ Ἀμύκλας
Αἰγεῖδαι σέθεν ἔκγονοι, μαντεύμασι Πυθίοις;   15
ἀλλὰ παλαιὰ γὰρ
εὕδει χάρις, ἀμνάμονες δὲ βροτοί,
ὅ τι μὴ σοφίας ἄωτον ἄκρον   B
κλυταῖς ἐπέων ῥοαῖσιν ἐξίκηται ζυγέν.
κώμαζ᾽ ἔπειτεν ἁδυμελεῖ σὺν ὕμνῳ   20
καὶ Στρεψιάδᾳ: φέρει γὰρ Ἰσθμοῖ
νίκαν παγκρατίου, σθένει τ᾽ ἔκπαγλος ἰδεῖν τε μορφάεις: ἄγει τ᾽
    ἀρετὰν οὐκ αἴσχιον φυᾶς.
φλέγεται δὲ ἰοπλόκοισι Μοίσαις,
μάτρωΐ θ᾽ ὁμωνύμῳ δέδωκε κοινὸν θάλος,
χάλκασπις ᾧ πότμον μὲν Ἄρης ἔμειξεν,   25
τιμὰ δ᾽ ἀγαθοῖσιν ἀντίκειται.

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[83] The Greek text follows SNELL/MAEHLER ed. (1980) unless otherwise marked.

To Strepsiades the Theban for his victory in the pancratium

By which one of the earlier beautiful events that happened in your area, blessed Theba, have you most rejoiced in your heart? Surely when you brought forth your Dionysus with wide-streaming hair as a companion of Demeter, rattling with bronze? Or when you received the best of the gods as he snowed down in Gold at midnight, when after having positioned himself at the doors of Amphitryon he then had intercourse with his wife for the fathering of Heracles? Or rather about the clever judgement of Tiresias? Or rather about Iolaus, skilled with horses? Or about the Spartoi, unwearied at the spear? Or because you sent back from a mighty battle Adrastus, bereaved of countless companions, to Argos, place of horses? Or the fact that you made the Dorian colony of the Lacedaemonians stand with a fully straightened ankle, and the Aegeids, your offspring, took Amyclae following the Pythian oracles? But indeed, the ancient glory sleeps, and the mortals forget it, if it does not reach the highest refinement of wisdom joined with glorious streams of words. Praise then with sweet-sounding song also Strepsiades, because he carries away with him a victory in the pancratium at the Isthmian Games, marvellous in his strength and well-shaped, and he holds a virtue not more reproachful than his physical appearance. He is made famous by the Muses with dark locks, and has given his homonymous uncle, whom Ares with brazen spear has mixed his destiny, a shared crown, and esteem is held out to good people as a fitting reward.

ἴστω γὰρ σαφὲς ὅστις ἐν ταύτᾳ νεφέλᾳ χάλαζαν αἵματος πρὸ φίλας
        πάτρας ἀμύνεται,
λοιγὸν ἀμφιβαλὼν[84] ἐναντίῳ στρατῷ,
ἀστῶν γενεᾷ μέγιστον κλέος αὔξων
ζώων τ᾽ ἀπὸ καὶ θανών.   30
τὺ δέ, Διοδότοιο παῖ, μαχατὰν
αἰνέων Μελέαγρον, αἰνέων δὲ καὶ Ἕκτορα
Ἀμφιάραόν τε,
εὐανθέ᾽ ἀπέπνευσας ἁλικίαν
προμάχων ἂν᾽ ὅμιλον, ἔνθ᾽ ἄριστοι   Γ 35
ἔσχον πολέμοιο νεῖκος ἐσχάταις ἐλπίσιν.
ἔτλαν δὲ πένθος οὐ φατόν: ἀλλὰ νῦν μοι
Γαιάοχος εὐδίαν ὄπασσεν
ἐκ χειμῶνος. ἀείσομαι χαίταν στεφάνοισιν ἁρμόζων. ὁ δ᾽ ἀθανάτων
μὴ θρασσέτω φθόνος,
ὅτι τερπνὸν ἐφάμερον διώκων   40
ἔκαλος ἔπειμι γῆρας ἔς τε τὸν μόρσιμον
αἰῶνα. θνᾴσκομεν γὰρ ὁμῶς ἅπαντες:
δαίμων δ᾽ ἄϊσος: τὰ μακρὰ δ᾽ εἴ τις
παπταίνει, βραχὺς ἐξικέσθαι χαλκόπεδον θεῶν ἕδραν: ὅ τοι πτερόεις
        ἔρριψε Πάγασος
δεσπόταν ἐθέλοντ᾽ ἐς οὐρανοῦ σταθμοὺς   45
ἐλθεῖν μεθ᾽ ὁμάγυριν Βελλεροφόνταν
Ζηνός: τὸ δὲ πὰρ δίκαν
γλυκὺ πικροτάτα μένει τελευτά.
ἄμμι δ᾽, ὦ χρυσέᾳ κόμᾳ θάλλων, πόρε, Λοξία,
τεαῖσιν ἁμίλλαισιν   50
εὐανθέα καὶ Πυθόϊ στέφανον.

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[84] SNELL/MAEHLER have †λοιγὸν ἀμύνων†; ἀμφιβαλὼν is A. W. MAIR's emendation to
repair the meter and the sense, which I prefer over J. SANDYS's ἄντα φέρων.

Indeed, he shall know as a clear fact who in this storm cloud wards off the hailstorm of blood from the beloved fatherland to inflict ruin on the enemy army, that he increases the glory of the race of city-dwellers to the greatest and lives on, even being himself among the dead. And you, child of Diodotus, praising the warrior Meleager, praising also Hector and Amphiaraus, have exhaled a blooming life fighting in the forefront through the throng of men, where the best held out the quarrel of war with their last hopes. I have borne unspeakable sorrow, but now the Mover of the Earth has granted me fair weather out of a storm. I will sing binding my hair with garlands. And the envy of the immortals shall not trouble me, so that seeking for short-lived delight at my ease I will come into old age up until my destined time. Because equally we all die, but our fate is unequal. Even if one looks out for far-away things, he is too puny to reach the abode of the gods with a floor of bronze. But listen! Winged Pegasus threw off his master Bellerophon, who wanted to walk the abodes of heaven among the assembly of Zeus. And the sweetness that goes against what is right awaits the most bitter end! But us, oh you, who thrives with golden hair, give, Loxias, flourishing success in your contests and the garland in Pytho!

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The Hypothetical Witness in Gorgias and Antiphon

The paper below focuses on the shadowy figure of the hypothetical witness found in two mock-forensic works of the late 5th century: Gorgias' Defence of Palamedes *and Antiphon's* First Tetralogy. *I argue that these witnesses, who only exist within the* εἰκός *arguments found in these speeches, are consistently characterized in impersonal ways, as individuals with knowledge pertinent to the resolution of the case. The issue of their will is also broached, particularly in last rebuttal speech of the* First Tetralogy. *Though such witnesses, being logical figments, could never appear in court, their characterization sheds important light on the ancient Greek notion of 'witnessing'. Indeed, the very ability of Gorgias and Antiphon to deploy such arguments shows that witnessing was, at least in this cases, not thought to be tied to the witness's prestige or character which remain entirely undefined. Rather, their characterization of a 'witness' as an individual who knows and who is motivated to testify implies that these were the features thought to fundamental to witnesses, whether real or fictive.*

Keywords: testimony, witnessing, forensic oratory, Antiphon, Gorgias

Introduction

Debate persists as to the precise function of the ancient Greek witnesses in contemporary scholarship. In short, though witnesses are almost universally acknowledged to have been fundamental to arguing one's case,[1] the precise function of a witness has been understood in two radically distinct ways.[2] The traditional model attempts to foist onto witnesses,

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[1] Scafuro (1994: 157); Kennedy (1963: 89). Carawan (1998: 186) argues that they are also technically necessary. An important exception is Leisi (1907: 113). See also Thür (2005: 147).

[2] I present both positions in the strongest possible terms even though most discussions are nuanced (e.g. Todd 1992: 27). Moreover, several refinements, most involving the

and through him to the ancient courts more generally, a concern for truth and truthfulness: witnesses are summoned in order to inform the court or – at least – to confirm facts which the litigant has mentioned in his narration.[3] Under this paradigm, the witness is almost anonymous,[4] summoned not because of his prestige or position in society, but because he knows facts which are relevant to the case. Yet, it is clear, both from the procedural rules which governed the use of witnesses and also from the extant forensic speeches,[5] that this paradigm must be incorrect or, at least, a hyperbole. On the other hand, several scholars have now gone far in the opposite direction, considering the witness to be summoned primarily because of who he is.[6] Under this paradigm, witnessing is a 'socio-political ritual of support'[7] and often far distant from any concern for the facts, quite beyond these rudimentary courts to discover.[8] The role of a witness, in other words, was to show himself taking the litigant's side in the courtroom, and in so doing to lend to him all the social privilege that he has accrued from his ancestors and his standing in society. Once again, a convincing case may be made against this extreme position.[9]

The following paper is an attempt to grapple with this question, though in an admittedly unconventional way. I examine Gorgias' *Defence of Palamedes* and Antiphon's *First Tetralogy* and, in particular, home in on the figure of the 'hypothetical witness'. These shadowy figures are the would-be bystanders and fictive witnesses which populate the εἰκός

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use of statistical analysis, have now added greatly to the debate: esp. TODD (1992); RUBINSTEIN (2005); GAGARIN (2019).

[3] BONNER (1905: 27–38) and BONNER–SMITH (1938: 117–145) are the most important early sources. Similar, though more nuanced positions are given in CAREY (1994a: 183–184), MIRHADY (2002) and O'CONNELL (2017).

[4] See esp. MIRHADY (2002: 262; 265).

[5] Most importantly, the classical position is related to an attempt to find a subpoena in the procedural rules. On this issue see TODD (1992: 24–25).

[6] HUMPHREYS (1985); TODD (1992). Cf. also THÜR (2005: 146), who argues that the 'principle of determining the truth was not primary'. COHEN (1995) also presents a similar picture, in which witnesses are by-products of political strife.

[7] TODD (1992: 27).

[8] COHEN (1995: 109).

[9] Esp. in CAREY (1994a: 183–184) and MIRHADY (2002: 262–263).

arguments found in these two works. Though no hypothetical person could, of course, be an actual witness – or anything else whatsoever – these figures shed crucial light on the author's understanding of what it is to be a witness. In other words, I assume that these witnesses are hypothetical, but not entirely fictional since they betray the author's concerns. What, then, are the qualities of these witnesses and how are they characterized? And how, in what cases and to what effects, do Gorgias and Antiphon employ this argumentative device? These are the questions I hope to address below.

Gorgias' Defence of Palamedes

Gorgias' *Defence of Palamedes* is a 'mytho-forensic'[10] speech composed in the late 5th century.[11] Though it has been relatively neglected until recently,[12] a number of scholars have now examined various aspects of the speech and, especially, its genre and purpose.[13] There is, moreover, widespread agreement that the speech, though clearly modelled to suit its forensic backdrop,[14] is a sophistic *epideixis*, one which showcases the infamous rhetorical abilities of Gorgias.[15] In this respect, it resembles the other speeches and fragments attributed to a sophist who, as Goebel notes, never seems to have composed actual forensic speeches.[16] Nonetheless, many scholars attribute a second purpose to the speech, a didactic one.[17] Like Antiphon's *Tetralogies*, the inherently antilogical[18] *Pal-*

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[10] KNUDSEN (2012: 33).

[11] On the date of this speech see SEGAL (1962: 100) and GOEBEL (1983: 143–145).

[12] A survey of the older literature on the speech is given by TORDESILLAS (1990: 241–242).

[13] See UNTERSTEINER (2008: 202–203); KERFERD (1980: 78–79); and MCCOMINSKEY (1997: 17–19) attempt to integrate the *Palamedes* with the rest of Gorgias' writings. For a different view see LONG (1982: 243). See also TORDESILLAS (1990: 241–243).

[14] Unlike the *Helen*, therefore, it is delivered in the first person (GOEBEL 1983: 146–147) and constitutes, in effect, a defence speech in a mythical trial which adheres to the court conventions (KNUDSEN [2012: 34]). On the importance of the courts in sophistic thought also see GAGARIN (1994: 59) and LAMPE (2020: 117).

[15] E.g. KERFERD (1980: 78–79); GOEBEL (1983: 137); GAGARIN (2001: 287); KNUDSEN (2012: 36).

[16] GOEBEL (1983: 137–138), referring to Dionysus of Halicarnassus.

[17] E.g. MCCOMINSKEY (1997: 18) KNUDSEN (2012: 38).

amedes showcases various rhetorical tropes[19] which may be used by liti-
gants in court.[20] Unlike the *Tetralogies*, however, the *Palamedes* is firmly
set in the mythical past. Though this surely would have added a meas-
ure of poetic polish to an otherwise dry exercise of logic,[21] it is also clear
that Gorgias has grappled with the myth in a number of ways. Pala-
medes's ἔθος, for example, is largely formed by a catalogue of inven-
tions attributed to the culture-hero.[22] More importantly, at least for the
purposes of this paper, Gorgias has tampered with the myth itself: he
has removed the false evidence with which Odysseus is supposed to
have secured his conviction.[23] In effect, then, he has weakened his oppo-
nent's case. And, considering the infamous Protagorean promise of
making *weaker* arguments stronger,[24] we may, perhaps, risk asking why
this is. One suggestion is that of Goebel: he argues that this was a choice
of mere convenience. By doing away with any hard evidence, Gorgias
could give his argumentative imagination free reign.[25] Similar observa-
tions have been made of the *First Tetralogy*. Nonetheless, it is notewor-
thy that Gorgias alludes to these two mythical pieces of evidence which
he has omitted: the letter confirming the conspiracy and the gold plant-
ed under Palamedes's tent. Indeed, he refers to them directly and grap-
ples with the significance of their absence. In view of their centrality to
Gorgias' argumentative display, noted below, I propose a different,
though complementary, explanation for his choice.

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[18] As pointed out by GAGARIN (2001: 283).

[19] The *Palamedes*, for example, deploys the three classical types of 'proofs' as described
by Aristotle. See BIESECKER-MAST (1994: 153); MCCOMINSKEY (1997: 18–19); KNUDSEN
(2012: 37–38).

[20] GOEBEL (1983: 183–184), following SCHWARTZ (1892: 8), argues that it also serves to
illustrate a model disposition.

[21] KNUDSEN (2012: 35). Knudsen's paper examines Gorgias 'competitive engagement'
with the poetic-mythical account of Palamedes. On this issue, see also LAMPE (2020),
who also concentrates on the broader epistemological background of Gorgias' recep-
tion of the poetic heritage.

[22] On Palamedes ἔθος see BIESECKER-MAST (1994: 153); SPATHRAS (2001: 400, n. 17);
KNUDSEN (2012: 38); LAMPE (2020: 120).

[23] GOEBEL (1983: 146).

[24] GAGARIN (2001: 286–287) makes similar reflections.

[25] GOEBEL (1983: 146–147). For an alternative explanation, see GAGARIN (1994: 54).

Another prominent strand of scholarship on the *Palamedes* focuses more closely, instead, on the nature of the argumentation deployed by Gorgias,[26] and with good reason: the *Palamedes* also appears to be a model exercise in rhetorical *inventio*.[27] As such, and as already noted, Palamedes puts forth a number of topical arguments which could be deployed and adapted for actual court cases.[28] Moreover, the *Palamedes* also opens up and explores new avenues of argumentation, very much in the vein of Antiphon's *Tetralogies*.[29] Thus, much of the first half of Gorgias' *Palamedes* is dedicated to a complex and innovative argument in favour of the defendant's innocence (Gorg. *Pal.* 6–21). Gorgias explic-itly divides this long argument into two complementary halves (διὰ δισσῶν ὑμῖν ἐπιδείξω τρόπων, *Pal.* 5), the first purporting to show that the defendant could not accomplish the alleged crime even if he had wished it, the second that he had no reasonable motive to betray the Greeks even if he had the means to do so. In other words, he neatly jux-taposes an argument dealing with opportunity and another which deals with motive.[30] And linking the two arguments together is a concession: 'even if I wished it, I could not; and I could not even if I wished it' (*Pal.* 5). Concession is also the fundamental propulsive force of the first half of this argument dealing with means.[31] Here, Gorgias divides the hypo-thetical crime into a series of interlocking steps – meeting with Priam, speaking to him, exchanging sureties, and executing the plan – which

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[26] Gorgias's argumentation is said to 'trade mercilessly on the principle of the excluded middle' (LONG [1984: 234]) and to make use of 'antimonies' (UNTERSTEINER [2008: 202]; SPATHRAS [2001: 398]). LONG (1982: 263, n. 4) also points out the frequent of *Modus Tollens*. Others have noted 'arguments from exhaustion' (GOEBEL 1983: 147) and the use of *apagoge* (GAGARIN [1994: 59]; SPATHRAS [2001: 406]).

[27] GOEBEL (1983: 146–147); MCCOMINSKY (1997: 17–18); GAGARIN (2001: 287).

[28] GOEBEL (1983: 146) and LONG (1982: 234) both consider it a 'model speech'. Similar assessments in MCCOMINSKEY (1997: 17); TORDESILLAS (1990: 248–249) and GAGARIN (2001: 287).

[29] On the originality of the argumentative schema described see LONG (1982: 235–6). On the 'inventiveness' of these model speeches more generally, see GAGARIN (2001: 290).

[30] On this distinction, and its argumentative capital, see esp. LONG (1982: 223–225; 239).

[31] On this argument see esp. LONG (1982: 235–238) who names it a 'Chinese box' argu-ment and SPATHRAS (2001: 406–407) who dubs it a 'Russian doll' argument. Similar analyses are given by GOEBEL (1983: 147–148); KNUDSEN (2012: 38) et al.

are considered sequentially and rejected. In each case, Gorgias moves from one disproof to the next by conceding, *ex hypothesi*, that the former steps 'which could not have happened, happened' (*Pal.* 11). In this first half of the argument, then, the defendant 'shows' that he could accomplish none of the steps necessary for the crime and in so doing creates the overwhelming impression that the task was completely beyond the realms of possibility.[32] And while serial concession gives the argument its shape and much of its forcefulness, it is the appeal to εἰκός which does the heavy lifting of refutation.[33] Indeed, at the most general level, the reconstruction of the crime is an εἰκός reconstruction: Gorgias must break down the overall crime into a series of plausible steps.[34] More importantly, each attack on an individual step is constituted by arguments which invoke εἰκός, whether explicitly, as in *Pal.* 9, or implicitly. In general, then, we find Palamedes referring repeatedly to the physical and psychological improbability of the various actions which are implied in Odysseus's accusation.[35] As Gagarin notes, the prominence of εἰκός in this speech is at odds with Gorgias' *Helen*, in which it is hardly found at all.[36] But this very fact too may serve Gorgias didactic purposes: εἰκός is only relevant when the *facts* themselves are in question and, indeed, may constitute one's only resource even when truth is on one's side.[37]

It is not incidental, then, testimony being the standard way of establishing facts in court, [38] that the figure of the 'hypothetical witness',[39] makes his appearance as a crucial part of this εἰκός argumentation, most explicitly in *Pal.* 7:

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[32] LONG (1982: 236) rightly considers the whole sequence an *a fortiori* progression.

[33] On the use of εἰκός in this speech, see GOEBEL (1983: 148–151); TORDESILLAS (1990: 246–249); GAGARIN (1994: 54–55); SPATHRAS (2001: 384–387) and KNUDSEN (2012: 38–39).

[34] On this point see MCCOMINSKY (1997: 18).

[35] Goebel's analysis (1983: 148–151) of these arguments remains the most thorough.

[36] GAGARIN (1994: 54–55). SPATHRAS (2001: 395) makes the same point.

[37] GAGARIN (1994: 54).

[38] The relationship between testimony and demonstration is examined by O'Connell (2017: 86–90).

[39] These witnesses have been largely neglected in the literature. One notable exception Is SPATHRAS (2001: 397–398), who examines Gorgias' use of witnesses by concentrating on the transformation of Odysseys into a witness in *Pal*. 23 (text below).

Yet let us grant, for the purpose of the argument (λόγος), that this be-trayal was possible. And suppose further that, in some way, I am with him and he is with me. Yet who are these people but a Greek man and a barbarian? How, then, could they speak and listen to one another? Alone (πότερα μόνος μόνωι)? But we would not have understood one another (ἀγνοήσομεν λόγους). With an interpreter then? So a third witness is added to those things which must remain hidden (τρίτος ἄρα μάρτυς γίνεται τῶν κρύπτεσθαι δεομένων). (Gorg. *Pal.* 7)[40]

This argument can be used as a paradigm of those deployed by Gorgias in the first half of his argumentative section referred to above. It starts, as already noted, with a concession: Gorgias grants, for the purpose of the λόγος, that Palamedes and Priam have somehow agreed to meet. Contrary to the preceding argument (*Pal.* 6), the two would-be conspira-tors find themselves in each other's company and are about to hammer out their traitorous plans. The question – indeed the rhetorical question – is how?[41] Two options are envisaged, options which reappear else-where,[42] namely that the conspirators acted alone or in the company of others. The first option is rejected on *a priori* grounds:[43] a Greek and a barbarian cannot actually converse with one another without an inter-preter.[44] *A fortiori*, the two could not have plotted together.[45] The only possible option, therefore, is that they met with an interpreter, the hypo-thetical 'third witness'. This eventuality, however, comes at a heavy

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[40] All translations are my own.

[41] As SPATHRAS (2001: 395) notes, the possibilities 'are proved to be invalid for *practical reasons*'.

[42] E.g. Gorg. *Pal.* 11 (see below).

[43] The argument bears comparison with Herodotus' account of the foundation myth of DODONA (Hdt. 2, 44–45) which also invokes necessity and treats of the acquisition of a foreign language.

[44] In Homer, of course, no such difficulty is considered. More interestingly, the same can be said of Herodotus' account (Hdt. 2, 112–120) and, indeed, of Gorgias' own *Helen* where Paris' λόγος is not only understood by Helen, but persuades her.

[45] The argument is spurious and trades on understanding Ἕλλην and βαρβάρος as absolute categories. In other words, the possibility that Palamedes or Priam learnt one another's language in a decade-long war is not considered. Interestingly, language acquisition of Greeks and Barbarians was a standard topic of sophistic thinking. See GERA (2000).

price: a third person has been let in on the plans which should have re-
mained a secret.[46] This, Gorgias implies, is equally a non-starter by the
rules of εἰκός.

Before discussing the qualities of this τρίτος μάρτυς, and just how
his hypothetical existence constitutes a counterargument to the events
discussed, it is worthwhile considering briefly the identity of the un-
mentioned 'first' and 'second' witness. Happily, two likely candidates
are close at hand: the conspirators themselves. Though neither Priam or
Palamedes were – nor could be – 'witnesses' in the literal sense of the
word, the word μάρτυς may also be used to refer to an individual with
privileged epistemological access to the events in question.[47] In the pre-
sent case, the two conspirators would possess knowledge of their intent,
of their plans, and of their imagined crime. In Greek, they would have
possessed συνείδησις or guilty self-knowledge, a form of knowledge
which is typically shared only with oneself or with one's fellow co-
conspirators, but which can be extended to one's accomplices, should
they be needed.[48] This, in fact, is what Palamedes argues would have
had to happen in this case. What makes this interpreter a 'third witness',
therefore, is his knowledge of the crime, a knowledge extended to him
by the fact that the conspirators met in his presence and made use of
him to communicate with one another.

An alternative interpretation, however, is also possible. In the pre-
ceding section, Gorgias argues that the two alleged co-conspirators must
first have met one another in order to communicate, and this could only
be done by means of messages:

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[46] I place the argument concerning third witnesses firmly within the practical concerns
of the εἰκός argument. As GOEBEL (1983: 150) notes, Gorgias does not appear to draw a
firm distinction between physical and psychological improbability and, as the discus-
sion below makes clear, the hypothetical witness is invoked in both types of argument.
For other interpretations of the third witness, see esp. BIESECKER-MAST (1994: esp. 155–
157) and LAMPE (2020: 118; 122–124).

[47] E.g. Antiph. 5.43. On the flexibility of the term μάρτυς see MIRHADY (2002: 256; 264)

[48] On the use of this notion in the forensic rhetoric of the late 5th century see GATT
(2021).

> And how could words have been exchanged if we were not in each other's company? And how should such a meeting have taken place if he did not send a messenger to me (πρὸς ἐμὲ πέμψαντος), nor I to him (παρ' ἐμοῦ πρὸς ἐκεῖνον ἐλθόντος)? For no message in writing can arrive without a courier (οὐδὲ παραγγελία διὰ γραμμάτων ἄφικται ἄνευ τοῦ φέροντος). (Gorg. *Pal.* 6)

The exchange of messages, Palamedes argues, would have involved the creation of yet another two 'hypothetical witnesses': a messenger sent by Priam (πέμψαντος) to Palamedes, the other going (ἐλθόντος) in the opposite direction.[49] These two messengers, therefore, could very well be the 'first and second witnesses' implied by the τρίτος μάρτυς of *Pal.* 7. Though the argument tolerates both possibilities equally well, this reading has the benefit of emphasizing the cohesiveness of the first two arguments of the *Palamedes*. They are related not only in their theme – the impossibility of communication – but also by the gradual accumulation of witnesses, a point to which I will return shortly. Whichever reading is adopted, it is clear that the underlying logic of the two arguments remains the same. The only possible way in which the plan could have even got off the ground would have involved the creation of multiple witnesses, not only the interpreter through which the two conspirators *must* have communicated, but the messengers which they *must* have used to arrange the meeting in the first place.

Messengers and hidden messages are, of course, standard tropes in Greek literature and already prefigured in the only sure reference to writing in Homer: the σήματα λυγρὰ carried by Bellerophon to his soon-to-be father-in-law (Hom. *Il.* 6, 168f.). They are also found in other myths, such as the traditional account of Palamedes' condemnation. Nonetheless, Gorgias would surely not have lacked other 5th century prototypes of conspirators communicating via secret messages, the most famous – and ingenious – of whom come from Herodotus. In Hdt. 1, 123, for example, Harpagus sends his most trusted messenger (θηρευτῇ τῶν οἰκετέων τῷ πιστοτάτῳ) to Cyrus with a message hid-

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[49] The choice of a neutral term, ἐλθόντος, as opposed to one implying intent, πέμψαντος, is another mark of Gorgias' great rhetorical skill. Even if such an exchange were to have taken place, we are to understand, then it was initiated by Priam.

den inside a butchered rabbit, taking care to tell the Persian to open up the animal with his own hands and when no one was present (αὐτοχειρίη μιν διελεῖν καὶ μηδένα οἱ ταῦτα ποιεῦντι παρεῖναι). Similarly, in Hdt. 5, 35, Histiaeus, also fearing that a conventional message to Aristagoras would be intercepted on the heavily guarded Royal roads, branded his most trustworthy slave (τῶν δούλων τὸν πιστότατον) with a secret message on his scalp, let his hair grow back, and sent him to his co-conspirator with instructions to shave off the slave's hair and examine his head (ξυρήσαντά μιν τὰς τρίχας κατιδέσθαι ἐς τὴν κεφαλήν). In both of these cases, and in agreement with Palamedes' rule about plots (*Pal*. 6), written messages mark the beginning of grand conspiracies, the first resulting in the overthrow of the last Median King, the second in the Ionian Revolt.[50] And like Gorgias, Herodotus also refers to the great importance of secrecy.

Yet Gorgias also had other, more mundane, and even more relevant prototypes of secret messages coming from the world of the courts. The alleged murder-plot in Antiph. 5, for example, also involves a messenger remarkably similar to those mentioned in the *Palamedes*:

> The prosecution further allege (φασὶ) that they discovered on board a note stating that I had killed Herodes, which I had intended to send to Lycinus. But what need had I to send a note, when the courier himself was my accomplice (αὐτοῦ συνειδότος τοῦ τὸ γραμματείδιον φέροντος)? (Antiph. 5, 53)

This argument is found in a 'real' forensic speech and seems to refer to an actual person.[51] It may, therefore, give some meagre indication of the usefulness of alleging the discovery of such damning 'secret messages' in actual trials. More importantly, Antiphon's argument has two significant points of continuity with Gorgias's mock-forensic speech. Firstly, the litigant reflects on the irrationality of manufacturing evidence, in this case the letter the prosecution claims to have discovered. Why, the

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[50] Interestingly, all three four stories mentioned involve, directly or indirectly, 'barbarians' coming from the more literate world of the East.
[51] On the identity of the witnesses in Antiph. 5 see EDWARDS (1985: 89) and GAGARIN (1989: 59–63).

defendant asks, would he have taken the risk of sending his accomplice a written message, when the messenger already knew of the plot and could have informed Lycinus himself? The very existence of the message – we are to infer – beggars belief because it violates the rational self-interest of the would-be criminal who, of course, does not want to be discovered. Thus, the defendant seeks to convince his jurors that the letter is a forgery since no rational criminal would have taken such an unnecessary risk.[52] It is a similar calculation of self-interest which underlies the implausibility of Palamedes's creation of hypothetical witnesses. And, once again, it is εἰκός which provides the crucial missing link. Since conspiratorial plans must remain secret – τῶν κρύπτεσθαι δεομένων – it would have been contrary to the rational self-interest of the conspirators to have engaged in any action which would have furnished the prosecutor with so many witnesses to their crimes. And since the only possible plan must have involved the creation of witnesses, indeed many witnesses, Odysseus' allegations are inherently ἀπεικός. No rational criminal would have acted in such a way. Secondly, Gorgias' hypothetical witness and the alleged letter-bearing-messenger of Antiph. 5 are characterized in the same way: in terms of their knowledge. Antiphon's messenger-accomplice, therefore, is described as συνειδώς. And though none of the first three witnesses encountered above are explicitly described as 'συνειδότες', one such reference characterizes yet another group of hypothetical witness to which Palamedes soon refers:

> And in doing this, did I do it myself or with others? But it is not a job for one man. With others then? Who? Clearly, my associates (δηλονότι τῶν συνόντων). Would these be free men or slaves? But *you* are my free associates (ἐλευθέροις μὲν γὰρ ὑμῖν σύνειμι). Who, then, among you shares knowledge (ξύνοιδε) of this crime? Let him speak (λεγέτω). And as for slaves, how is one to trust them? Willingly would they make the accusation, in hopes of their freedom, and if not they would be forced to do so by torture (ἑκόντες <τε> γὰρ ἐπ᾽ ἐλευθερίᾳ χειμαζόμενοί τε δι᾽ ἀνάγκην κατηγοροῦσιν). (Gorg. *Pal.* 11)

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[52] Antiph. 5, 53–56.

Once again, we find ourselves following a familiar line of argument. Gorgias first questions the ability of the conspirators to bring their plans to fruition without the help of some accomplices, whether free men or slaves. Secondly, these *necessary* accomplices – who must now share in the knowledge of the plans and in their συνείδησις – automatically assume another identity: they are potential witnesses who could provide Odysseus with the clinching proof that he needs. Indeed, it is this very knowledge which qualifies them as μάρτυρες. And, once again, the underlying assumption of the argument is the εἰκός 'rule': a criminal wants to remain undetected and, thus, makes sure that which must remain a secret remains hidden: τῶν κρύπτεσθαι δεομένων. There is, of course, one important difference between the three witnesses discussed above and this fourth group: their identity is more 'concrete' and, therefore, somewhat less hypothetical. In more precise terms, their role is not merely that of accomplice and witness, but also audience-member, perhaps even juror of the imaginary trial.[53] As such, they are addressed directly by the defendant and invited to testify against him. Indeed, they are addressed once again, and in similar terms, at a later point in the speech:

> Are you accusing me with accurate knowledge, or are you just guessing (τῶν κρύπτεσθαι δεομένων)? And if you know, then you must have seen, you must have taken part in it, or you must have learnt of it from some accomplice of mine (ἰδὼν ἢ μετέχων ἢ του <μετέχοντος> πυθόμενος). And if you saw, then, tell these men the way, the place, the time! When? Where? What is it that you saw? And if you took part, then you are subject to the same blame. And if you heard it from someone who did take part, who is he? Let him come here himself. Let him speak. Let him testify! (Εἰ δέ του μετέχοντος ἀκούσαις, ὅστις ἐστίν; αὐτὸς ἐλθέτω, φανήτω, μαρτυρησάτω.)
> (Gorg. *Pal*. 22)

Again, we must note that the precise role of this hypothetical witness is different to those already discussed. Not only is he an accomplice (μετέχοντος) and a potential witness (μαρτυρησάτω), he would also

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[53] On judges being addressed as witnesses see MIRHADY (2002: 264).

have informed Odysseus and granted him sure knowledge. The under-
lying assumption of both these open invitations, however, is that they
are unanswered, indeed unanswerable. Palamedes is, after all, innocent.
In both cases, therefore, the invitation makes the crucial point that all
the hypothetical witnesses mentioned so far, the messengers, the inter-
preter, the accomplices in the camp, are just that, mere hypotheses with
no actual existence. Indeed, Palamedes will soon criticize Odysseus ex-
plicitly for lacking any testimonial support for his allegations (Gorg. *Pal.*
23). It is against the backdrop of this argument that Palamedes' invoca-
tion of numerous hypothetical witnesses is best understood. Gorgias
defends Palamedes not merely on the grounds that the actions discussed
are contrary to the self-interest of a rational criminal because they are so
eminently discoverable, but he also identifies those witnesses which
Odysseus has failed to summon should the crime have really taken
place. And since the only possible plans, laid out by Palamedes in the
process of his argument, must have *necessarily* involved the creation of
several witnesses on which Odysseus could have *hypothetically* called,
the lack of any *actual* witnesses can only mean one thing: no such plans
were ever laid down. This is because, as Palamedes tells his opponent,
witnesses were not only possible in his case, they were ready-at-hand
had the crime been committed (Gorg. *Pal.* 23). Indeed, it is not only wit-
nesses that are invoked in such a way, but evidence of every sort. Thus,
just in the passages invoked above, Palamedes' conspiracy would have
generated letters and slaves to be tortured via the βάσανος. Moreover, it
would have involved the exchange of sureties, such as gold, which
would have been discovered, and breaches in the wall that everyone
would have seen. In other words, Odysseus would have the evidence
which he was said to have fabricated in the traditional account of the
Palamedes-myth, and more besides. By removing these pieces of evi-
dence from the equation, then, Gorgias has doubly underlined this im-
portant and likely original argument: the only way in which Palamedes
could have betrayed the Greeks would have created a veritable moun-
tain of evidence which would have condemned him. No sane criminal
would have gone through with such a plan. Moreover, should they have
done so, contrary to all reasoning, Odysseus would have not only pos-

sessed a ready means of knowledge, the accomplices, but also been able to prove them guilty beyond any doubt by means of witnesses, both free and unfree, letters, gold, and evidence of all sorts. His inability to do so, as well as the fact that Palamedes repeated invitations for hypothetical witnesses to testify go unanswered, 'proves', by a classical *Modus Tollens* and by the use of 'negative signs',[54] that Palamedes is innocent. In other words, by identifying these would-be hypothetical witnesses and 'key' pieces of evidence, Palamedes catalogues the way in which his opponent has *failed* to demonstrate his guilt.

Yet as it stands, the argument from hypothetical witnesses, though undoubtedly ingenious, is invalid, and this for interesting reasons. In short, Palamedes must assume, though he nowhere argues, that any witness who possessed knowledge would have actually testified in court. No witness could have lied and no bystander would have failed to answer his summons. In other words, the various motivations which could have influenced Palamedes to betray the Greeks are like nothing when it comes to the hypothetical witness. No gold, no enmity or friendship, no fear of retribution would have convinced a witness to remain aloof. If he were to exist, Gorgias must assume, a witness is simply an automaton who would make himself available to Odysseus and answer Palamedes' invitations without reservation. Interestingly, he does raise the issue of a witness's motivation once, with respect to the slave, and this only to argue that a slave would surely have given him up, either because he was motivated by gain or by torture. Once again, then, the existence of a knowledgeable accomplice is simply assumed to give Odysseus his proof under all imaginable circumstances. This, of course, is a questionable assumption at best, but one which, perhaps, can be explained by the ambiguity of the term μάρτυς to which we have already referred. A μάρτυς, then, may simply refer to a person with privileged epistemological access to the facts of the case. In this sense, any accomplice, by possessing knowledge of the crime, is also a 'witness' in this limited sense. From here, it is a simple matter of equivocation to argue that any accomplice is also a 'witness' in the stricter, more forensic sense of the word. The lack of forensic witnesses at the actual

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[54] On the use of negative signs, and their relationship to εἰκός see GOEBEL (1983: 18–20).

trial, therefore, is taken to imply the lack of any knowledgeable 'witnesses' whatsoever. And since the plans *must* have involved accomplices and 'witnesses' in the limited sense, Gorgias can sophistically claim to have disproved the accusations. To see how a clever prosecutor could disentangle this sophistic web, we must turn to the antilogies of Antiphon's *First Tetralogy.*

Antiphon's First Tetralogy[55]

The *First Tetralogy* is a hypothetical who-done-it in which the mock-defendant stands accused of murdering a rival of his. As in the *Palamedes*, the main issue of the trial and the subject of much of the argumentation of the four speeches concerns a matter of fact:[56] the two mock-litigants cannot agree on the identity of the murderer. As a consequence, much of the speeches addresses this basic question and relies, often explicitly, on εἰκός. The mock-prosecutor, however, does have one piece of direct evidence, the testimony of a slave-witness who died shortly after the assault, but as in the *Palamedes*, the author appears to have deliberately constructed a weak case for the prosecution.[57] In so doing, Antiphon has occasioned for himself the perfect opportunity for developing a series of εἰκός arguments across the back-and-forth which ensues.[58] Indeed, the *Tetralogies* are typically read as a showcase for this type of argumentation.[59] Thus, as with the *Palamedes*, we not only find argumentative τόποι adapted for the case, but also such experiments as the reverse-εἰκός argument, pioneered by Tisias and Corax, which does not seem to have been used much in court.[60] What is more pertinent for

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[55] The authorship, and hence the date, of the *Tetralogies* has been subject to controversy with some arguing that it is the work of Antiphon (e.g. GAGARIN, 1997; 2002); others that it is a much later work (e.g. CARAWAN 1993; 1998; SEALEY 1984). Though I favour Gagarin's unitarian approach, and will refer to Antiphon as their author, the issue of authorship is largely irrelevant to this paper. On dating see DOVER (1950: 56–57).

[56] On Antiphontean '*stasis*-theory' and the *Tetralogies* see RUSSELL (1983: 17); CARAWAN (1993: 236) and GAGARIN (2002: 106).

[57] CARAWAN (1998: 246).

[58] GAGARIN (1997: 142). Cf. GAGARIN (2002: 118), see below.

[59] GAGARIN (2002: 112–115).

[60] GAGARIN (1994: 52).

the discussion at hand, however, is the fact that the author addresses directly the relationship of εἰκός and testimony. On this point, Goebel and Gagarin agree that the author draws a firm distinction between merely probable arguments which appeal to εἰκός and factual proof provided by witnesses.[61] At Antiph. 2, 4, 10, then, the mock-defendant opposes the actual (ὄντως) murderer as revealed by witnesses and the merely probable (εἰκότως) accusations made by his rival. He does this in the train of introducing witnesses at the very end of his defence, ones which he claims can prove that he is innocent in point of fact, rather than by εἰκός: οὐκ ἐκ τῶν εἰκότων ἀλλ᾿ ἔργῳ δηλώσω. The introduction of the witness at the end of his second speech is undoubtedly bizarre[62] and would have shocked the mock-jurors. As Gagarin notes, however, it's 'shock value' may well be calculated: Antiphon can show that with the introduction of the witnesses, we have finally come to an ἔργον which sweeps away the multitude of εἰκός arguments which preceded it.[63] And yet, as Gagarin himself notes,[64] and as Wohl has shown in greater detail,[65] there is also, and running parallel to this stark distinction, a persistent conflation of the εἰκός and testimony, one which leaves the door open for hypothetical witnesses to enter into the courtroom. The prosecutor, for example, after drawing the very distinction mentioned (esp. Antiph. 2, 1, 1), conflates the two with one another, arguing that the circumstantial details have 'informed' against his opponent:

> First of all, it is unlikely that a mugger would have killed the man. For no-one would endure the gravest of perils and be ready to risk his life and then, when the deed is done, leave his reward behind him. And the victims were found still wearing their cloaks. Nor is it likely that he was killed in a drunken brawl, for such a killer would have been known by his fellow revellers (ἐγιγνώσκετο γὰρ ἂν ὑπὸ τῶν συμποτῶν). Nor was it the result of some quarrel, for who could have

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[61] GOEBEL (1983: 22); GAGARIN (2002: 116).
[62] GAGARIN (1997: 142). CAREY (1994b: 97), however, notes that challenges were less formal at the end of the 5th century.
[63] An explanation favoured by GAGARIN (2002: 118).
[64] GAGARIN (2002: 116–117).
[65] WOHL (2010: 138–139).

quarrelled during the night in such a deserted place? Nor, finally, could have he been killed in error, for such a man would not have also killed the slave. And thus, with every other possibility being dismissed, the death itself informs us that he was the victim of a murder-plot (αὐτὸς ὁ θάνατος ἐξ ἐπιβουλῆς ἀποθανόντα μηνύει αὐτόν). (Antiph. 2, 1, 4–5)

It is clear, even from this argument alone, that Gorgias and the author of the *First Tetralogy* are drawing on a common stock of logical tricks and argumentative tropes. At its most general level, the εἰκός argument is explicitly based on the assumption that the criminal is a supremely rational actor (see esp. Antiph. 2, 2, 4–5, below), one who behaves only in accordance to a cold calculation of his own self-interest. Thus, the fact that the cloak was found on the victim – a fact which no defendant could reasonably contest – is presented as a sufficient indication (σημεῖον, Antiph. 2, 2, 4) that muggers are not responsible for the crime since they would not have forgotten to actually rob the corpse. No sane criminal, the mock-prosecutor implies, would have killed for profit and then forgotten to take his prize. The argument here is also an *apagoge* and one which involves an analysis of the various possible motives for the homicide. As such, it takes the same shape of Gorgias' examination of the defendant's motives in the second half of the *Palamedes*, as well as that of the grand argumentative strategy in his *Encomium to Helen*.[66] The mock-prosecutor's aim, of course, is rather different to that of the 'defendant' in either of these speeches. While Palamedes examines all the possible motives to demonstrate that none can be reasonably imputed to him, the mock-prosecutor here argues that the victim must have been murdered because no other motive fits the facts of the case. It is because of this that he concludes that the death itself, by which he means the circumstantial details which are beyond dispute, 'informs' (μηνύει) against the murderer. Εἰκός here has become a surrogate witness for the prosecution. This, however, is not the only 'conflation' of the two *pisteis*. Thus, though the figure of the hypothetical witness is far more explicit in the back-and-forth which follows from this *apagoge*, we already get a

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[66] SPATHRAS (2001: 406).

whisper of him here. The second possibility, namely that the victim was killed in a drunken brawl, is dismissed altogether because the would-be killer would have been recognized, ἐγιγνώσκετο, by his fellow revellers. This possibility, the mock-prosecutor implies, can simply be dismissed because it would have involved the creation of witnesses, people who *knew*. And as with the *Palamedes*, these hypothetical witnesses are simply assumed to be a source of evidence against the would-be killer had they existed, even though they would, presumably, have been the friends of the offender and also very drunk.

In the subsequent speech, however, the defendant does not pick up on any of these problems and chooses, rather, to focus on the first possibility:

> But it is not unlikely, as they say, but likely (ἔστι δὲ οὐκ ἀπεικός, ὡς οὗτοί φασιν, ἀλλὰ εἰκὸς) that he was killed in the small hours of the night by some prowler and for his cloak. For the fact that he was found clothed is no proof at all (οὐδὲν σημεῖόν ἐστιν). If they, fearing the approach of someone (τινας προσιόντας φοβηθέντες), left before stripping him, the muggers would have been sensible and not insane to prefer their own safety to their prize (ἐσωφρόνουν καὶ οὐκ ἐμαίνοντο τὴν σωτηρίαν τοῦ κέρδους προτιμῶντες). (Antiph. 2, 2, 4–5)

The aim of this argument is clear. By appealing to the same calculus of self-interest, one which opposes sanity (ἐσωφρόνουν) and insanity (ἐμαίνοντο) in a way reminiscent of the *Palamedes* (Gorg. *Pal.* 25), the mock-defendant attempts to imagine a scenario in which a mugger could still be guilty and leave the cloak behind him. In so doing, he seeks to undermine the force of the *apagoge* by showing that his opponent has dismissed this possibility inappropriately. The scenario imagined, moreover, also involves hypothetical 'witnesses' who wander over the scene of the crime (τινας προσιόντας) and scare off the criminal before he has had time to rob the victim.[67] In this way, the mock-defendant shows that the 'proof' his opponent has presented comes to naught since a mugger could still be involved. The mugging could, after all, have been botched by the sudden and unexpected appearance of some nosey

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[67] On by-standers as witnesses in such crimes, see SPATHRAS (2008: 181).

parker. As in Gorgias' *Palamedes*, therefore, the defendant conjures up hypothetical witnesses in order to defend himself. Unlike Palamedes, however, Antiphon's mock-defendant does not attempt to show that he could not have committed the crime because it would have necessarily involved 'third witnesses' and accomplices – it is agreed that there could be none (Antiph. 2, 1, 1)[68] – but rather conjures up bystanders to argue that others *could* have been implicated. Moreover, the hypothetical witnesses conjured are merely 'possible', perhaps even unlikely, and by no means necessary to the scenario imagined, as they are in *Palamedes*. Yet, since Antiphon is here not deducing anything from their absence, mere possibility is all he needs to make his point.

The mock-prosecutor comes to the defence of his *apagoge* early in his rebuttal speech:

> For if the killers, having seeing some people approaching, left and abandoned their victims, fleeing before they stripped them, then those who chanced upon (οἱ ἐντυχόντες) them would have found the slave alive even if the master was already dead. He did, after all, testify after he was picked up. It is clear, then, that these men would have questioned the slave and passed on the identity of the perpetrators to us (σαφῶς ἀνακρίναντες τοὺς ἐργασαμένους ἤγγειλαν ἂν ἡμῖν). And if this were the case, then this man would not now be ascribed the blame. (Antiph. 2, 3, 3)

The mock-prosecutor's argument is, once again, closely related to the known circumstances of the crime and is, in effect, a mere elaboration of the original scenario depicted in his first speech. Had bystanders happened onto the scene, he argues, we would know about it. The slave, who was still alive, would have denounced his attacker to these hypothetical by-standers and they, in turn, would relayed this testimony to its proper place, to the victim's home and to his relatives. As a result, the defendant would have never been blamed since the real perpetrator – the mugger – would have been identified and prosecuted. The prosecu-

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[68] The reason given is, again, reminiscent of arguments from hypothetical witnesses. The mock-prosecutor argues that a clever witness would ensure that no witnesses to his crime exist.

tion would have *known* – much as Odysseus *should* have known – where the guilt actually lay. Once again, then, the mock-prosecutor simply assumes that any bystander who would have seen the mugging would have made his testimony public. In this, Antiphon's mock-prosecutor and Palamedes agree.

It is in response to this challenge that the mock-defendant of Antiphon's *First Tetralogy* offers Odysseus a convincing counter to Palamedes' argument. We note, then, that in the process of the dialectical back and forth, the mock-prosecutor has had to ascribe ideal qualities to the hypothetical bystander: he diligently collects information from the slave, proceeds to report it to the relevant parties, and, presumably, appears in court when summoned as a witness. Worse still, the defendant implies that these qualities are *universal*. Any bystander who would have come across the scene would have behaved in such a way. All the wily orator had to do, therefore, is challenge one, or more, of these questionable assumptions:

> They say that each and every one of those who would have happened upon the victims while they being assaulted would, rather then flee, be more likely (εἰκότερον εἶναι) to accurately investigate (σαφῶς πυθόμενον τοὺς διαφθείραντας) who the murderer was and then carry the news to the victims' home (εἰς οἶκον ἀγγεῖλαι). Yet I know no one who is so hot-headed and brave (ἐγὼ δὲ οὐδένα οὕτω θερμὸν καὶ ἀνδρεῖον ἄνθρωπον εἶναι δοκῶ), and who would not turn round and flee when coming across men on the very point of death and at night rather than endanger his own safety by inquiring about the murderers (φεύγειν μᾶλλον ἢ πυνθανόμενον τοὺς κακούργους περὶ τῆς ψυχῆς κινδυνεῦσαι). Since these would-be witnesses then are more likely to have fled, as is reasonable (εἰκότως ἀφίοιντο), it is no longer necessary to dismiss the possibility of men who would have murdered to rob the pair. So I have been freed of suspicion. (Antiph. 2, 4, 4–5)

The idealized behaviour that the mock-prosecutor has had to foist on every passer-by, the mock-defendant now argues, is *not* as universal as his opponent claims. Indeed, it is not even εἰκός. When the 'hypothetical bystander' introduced in his former speech is suddenly and unexpected-

ly confronted by a mugging scene, the mock-prosecutor plausibly argues, it is more reasonable (εἰκότερον) that he would prefer his own safety to investigating the crime: φεύγειν μᾶλλον ἢ πυνθανόμενον. It is not merely knowledge, therefore, which characterizes the real, as opposed to a merely hypothetical witness. At least in this scenario, he must have been brave, even hot-headed. More generally, then, a witness must be 'motivated' to discover the truth and then testify. And this, the mock-prosecutor explains, carries risk: κινδυνεῦσαι (cf. Arist. *Rhet*. 1376a14–15). The examination of an agent's motivation by means of εἰκός, which has occupied much of the prosecution's case as well as Palamedes' defence, has been finally foisted on the witnesses themselves. In so doing, Antiphon has levelled an important and devastating challenge to the defendant's *apagoge*. More importantly, Antiphon has attributed to the hypothetical witness a second important trait: a will.

Conclusion

A number of conclusions can now be drawn from the use and characterization of these would-be witnesses. Firstly, it is clear that both Gorgias and Antiphon assume that in summoning witnesses, a litigant is furnishing evidentiary material supportive of his own case. Thus, in the *Palamedes*, the availability of witnesses is grouped with other sorts of evidence that Odysseus would possess had Palamedes really been guilty. The prosecutor of the *First Tetralogy*, on the other hand, justifies his use of εἰκός on the grounds that he could not demonstrate his claims to be true by means of witnesses, while his opponent explicitly relies on witnesses to demonstrate his innocence in the final part of his rebuttal speech. Secondly, the hypothetical witness is one prominent figure enlisted to help in this εἰκός back and forth. Moreover, the analysis has demonstrated that this argumentative scheme possesses great flexibility and may be used by both sides of a case and to various effects. It is also noteworthy that both Gorgias and Antiphon show considerable ingenuity in adapting the argument to the specifics of the case. There is, however, one important caveat to this flexibility: like real witnesses, hypothetical witnesses – as a species of εἰκός argument – are used only when the facts are in dispute. Thirdly, the close association of εἰκός and testimony also underlines the porousness of the Aristotelian categories of proof. As

the brief reference to Antiph. 5 shows, then, hypothetical witnesses can be invoked even to counter a non-technical *pistis*: a letter. Above all, however, the characteristics of the hypothetical witness sheds some light on the role of actual witnesses or, at least, on the broader category of 'witnessing'. Thus, to start off with, it is already telling that there is such a figure as a hypothetical witness. It is clear, in other words, that at least on these occasions the precise identity of the witness and his non-existent relationship to the litigant is unimportant to his status as a 'witness'. Moreover, the characteristics which are imputed to these would-be witnesses are entirely impersonal and not related, in any significant way, to a question of his status, respectability, or 'socio-political' affiliations with the litigants. What does characterize these witnesses, rather, are two things: his knowledge of the things to which he is testifying and, secondly, his willingness to testify. In this, perhaps, the hypothetical witness comes far closer to our own sanitized notions of a 'witness' in a modern trial than does any flesh-and-blood witness summoned into the messy world of the Athenian courts.

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Talus: Etymology of a Ludonym and how the Names of an Ancient Gaming Practice could be Indicative of Processes of Cultural Transmission and Stratification

This paper presents the complex history of the names given to knucklebones by different ancient civilizations. During the whole of antiquity these particular gaming tools had precise cultural and symbolical connotations, which influenced their gaming use and crossed many social, chronological, geographical and cultural boundaries.

The peculiar role played by knucklebones within human gaming practices stretches across several millennia. In western Europe during the early Middle Ages, their use went into decline in favour of cubic dice. Over the centuries scholarship has overlapped and confounded the terminology relating to these two different gaming traditions, causing many misunderstandings and translation issues.

However, thanks to advances in the field of game studies and through the examination of literary, iconographic and archaeological data, it is possible to establish the original names given to games using astragals and also the complex signifiers and implications that they had for classical culture.[1]

Why study ancient board games?

In ancient times board games were objects of daily use and the interpersonal and interactional nature of play could easily turn board, dice and counters into tools that served as lubricant for social interactions.[2]

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[2] Crist–De Voogt–Dunn-Vaturi (2016).

This could take place internally within a community, facilitating the relations between people of different ages or social positions, but also externally, creating occasions for cross-cultural communications.

This structural aspect of play could easily lead to the stratification of gaming practices into a cultural context, or trigger processes of intercultural exchanges and transmissions, and subsequently of indigenization or cultural appropriation.

In fact, ancient board games preserved the memory of all these processes and any of their aspects could be interpreted and analysed as a trace of a historical process. For this reason, studying ancient gaming traditions allows a better understanding of ancient societies, but also of the medium and long-term historical processes in which they took part, like transcultural exchanges, social evolutions and cultural stratifications.

Material and immaterial evidence

Any game consists of a material part – the board and gaming pieces, and an immaterial one – the set of rules and the socio-cultural implications of its use, propriety or distribution. Sometimes the permanence or the modification of the material morphology of a game could be indicative of its historical, social or cultural implication, while at other times this complexity could be detected just after the recognition of a continuity/discontinuity occurring on the immaterial side.

Board games, their names and their terminology

Ludonyms, the names given for centuries to board games and their components, are part of the immaterial legacy preserved by board games, and their linguistic and philological analysis could be extremely useful in bringing to light some of the processes of cultural transmission and stratification.

Being aware of the etymology, or historical complexity, of a Greek or Roman word allows a classical philologist to achieve a higher level of comprehension of an ancient text, and subsequently to derive better translations, commentaries, or footnotes. The terminology related to gaming practices does not constitute an exception to this rule.

Unfortunately, a sort of cultural stigma surrounds gaming activity, which until recently was considered culturally and historically irrelevant. Since the Renaissance, only a few scholars, and not the most quoted ones,

conducted in-depth studies into ancient gaming practices, and their perspective never filtered into the Greek and Latin vocabularies, with the result that today many of the translations or comments besides certain literary passages related to games are wrong, inaccurate, simplified or anachronistic.

The reader could easily test this statement by browsing a critical edition of Plato's *Republic*,[3] or Aristotle's *Politics*,[4] where references will typically be found to *Chess*, *Chessboard*, *Draughts* – games which emerged during the Middle Ages and were unknown in the ancient world – and the word *dice* is used flexibly to indicate any casting object.

The footnotes[5] of this paper detail some samples of this inaccuracy, highlighting the translation issues in texts distributed over more than two centuries and which relate to different disciplinary areas, to show how this cultural bias affecting scholarly conceptions of gaming practices is cross-cultural, cross-generational, cross-disciplinary and, above all, still present.

So, the purpose of this paper is twofold: to show how complex the history of a ludonym could be, and to demonstrate not just philologists, but also historians, sociologists, and even just interested non-academics, the importance of understanding this complexity.

The sample of Knucklebones: a simple gaming tool, a complex history, a forgotten ludonym

Among the most interesting gaming tools used in antiquity are knucklebones. Their history, their linguistic implications and finally their partial disappearance, could be indicative of the importance of reconstructing the cultural background of a ludonym and fully rehabilitating it.

Knucklebones are bones situated in the posterior legs of quadrupeds and in antiquity, prevalently those of the ovicaprids, were the most appreciated among all the gaming tools.

An approximative calculation of the material evidence found on archaeological sites can help to understand how popular they were among the Greeks and Romans: in 2018 the findings of cubic dice counted around 1,200 artefacts, compared to 36,700 knucklebones.[6]

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[3] Plat. *Rep.*, 333b; 347c; 422d-e; 487c-d; 522c-d; 536e-537a; 604b-c; 459.

[4] Aristot. *Pol.*, 1253a.

[5] Notes 15; 44; 55; 66; 112.

[6] KÜCHELMANN (2017/2018: 109–133).

Their first appearance dates to the Neolithic Period,[7] and knuckle-bones of any kind (natural, artificial, painted, vases in shape of knuckle-bones, weights in shape of knucklebones) are continuously attested in various regions of the Mediterranean until late antiquity.

In Anatolia, as in other regions in the Near East, they are still in use[8,] while their use as randomizing elements disappeared, or became less relevant, a long time ago from the cultural tradition of western Europe.

For this reason, their presence in ancient literature passed unnoticed by the majority of the European humanists and philologists, which conflated their concept and terminology with another gaming tool whose use was similar: the cubic dice. Once this simplification was unconsciously accepted by philologists, it led many scholars to translate terms related to knucklebones simply as 'dice', with the result of weakening, simplifying or even erasing the connection of this gaming practice with its cultural, linguistic and historical background.

Knucklebones and their ludonyms in the Bronze Age

In the Sumerian language knucklebones were called *zi.in.gi*, while *zi-in-gi gìr-ra-ra* meant the act to play with them. In Akkadian they were called *kiṣalli*[9] (a term from which eventually derived similar words in other Semitic languages like Hebrew *ḳarṣullayim* and the Syriac *ḳurṣlā*).[10]

This can be derived from a bilingual tablet of the 1st century BC found in the Mesopotamian site of Erech, but surely copied from a more ancient one and part of a longer composition originally made up of 5 tablets.[11]

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[7] HADDOW (2015: 54; 102; 253).

[8] AND (1979: 59).

[9] Concerning the translation of the Akkadian term *kiṣallu* as 'knucklebone', LANDSBERGER (1960: 121; 126; 127).

[10] SED I No. 169, KOGAN (2011: 225).

[11] The text is the Late Bilingual Exaltation of Ištar. A quick bibliography related to it and to its ancient tablets: HRUŠKA (1960: 473–522); LANGDON (1919: 73–84); THUREAU–DANGIN (1914: 141–158); FALKENSTEIN (1952: 88–92); LAMBERT (1971: 91–95); LANGDON (1923: 12); ZGOLL (1997).

Ancient tablets:

W 22729,2	Pub. SBTU 2, 28	CDLI P348633
AO 6458	Pub. TCL 6, 51	CDLI P363723
AO 6493	Pub. TCL 6,52	CDLI P363724

This text alternates lines written in Sumerian with their Akkadian translation:

> May the arrowhead that pierces lungs and heart go back and forth like a shuttle.
> O Inanna,[12] make fight and combat ebb and flow[13] like a skipping rope;
> O lady of battle, make the fray clash together like the *pukku* and *mekkû*
> O goddess of contention, make battle be pursued like counters[14] being manipulated
> Lady, at the place of clashing of weapons, strike with chaos like the banging down of knucklebones.[15]

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[12] In Akkadian, the goddess Ištar.

[13] Literarily: "bend back".

[14] Or also: "of puppets/dolls".

[15] Tablet BodS 302, Bodleian collection, frontside, lines 1–5:

^{geš}kak mur ša$_3$-ga an-da-ab-la$_2$-am$_3$ bar-bar-re-eš ḫe$_2$-en-

su$_3$-su$_3$ u$_2$-ṣu mu-šaq-qir lib$_3$-bi u ḫa-še-e ki-i u$_2$-ki-i liš-ta-ad-di-iḫ

^{d}inanna ti-saḫ$_4$ geš-la$_2$ ešemen$_2$-gin$_7$ u$_3$-mi-ib$_2$-SAR-SAR

^{d}*iš-tar a-na-an-ti u tu-qu-um!-ta ki-ma kip-pe-e šu-tak-pi-ma*

e-lag ^{geš}ellag geš-du$_3$-a-gin$_7$ nin me$_3$-a teš$_2$-a-ra se$_3$-se$_3$-ga-ba-ni-ib$_2$

ki-ma pu-uk-ku u$_3$ mi-ik-ke-e be-let ta-ḫa-zi šu-tam-ḫi-ṣu tam-ḫa-ru

amalu a-da-min$_3$$^{me-en}$-na bi-za šu$^{!SU}$ tag-ga-gin$_7$ šen-šen-na^a us$_2$-sa-ab

i-lat te-ṣe-e-ti ki-ma me-lul-tu$_2$ pa-as-si re-de-e qab-lu

^{d}in-nin ki ^{geš}tukul sag$_3$-ga zi-in-gi ra-ra-da-gin$_7$ igi-suḫ$_3$-saḫ$_4$ ra-ra-ab

^{d}*min a-šar tam-ḫu-uṣ kak-ku u dab$_2$-de-e ki-ma ki-šal-la me$_2$-li-li saḫ-maš-tu$_2$*

First transliteration: LANGDON (1915: 73–84). The present translation comes from a comparison between: CASTELLINO (1977); HRUŠKA (1960: 473–522); LAMBERT (1971: 91–

Notably, in the Mesopotamian context, Inanna/Ištar, goddess of fertility but also of war, was strongly connected to games[16] and some scholars suggest that for the terrifying goddess of war 'the fierce battle is enjoyable like a dance or game'.[17]

Another bilingual tablet, partially corrupted, reports:

Play with gaming pieces;
playing with knucklebones[18]

Unfortunately, the corrupted section is exactly the Akkadian translation of this last line, which is comprehensible only thanks to its Sumerian counterpart, where it is possible to read *zi-in-gi gìr-ra-ra*.

Interestingly this Sumerian line is followed by an unexpected Akkadian translation which doesn't mention the word *kiṣallu* but a term whose root is *ta-*: *MIN šá ta-x-x*.

The Assyriologist Irving Finkel suggests that: "one way to harmonize these would be to read *MIN šá ta-la-[an-ni], var. šá [da (?)] lá-an*".[19]

Thanks to the corresponding Sumerian line, one should assume that this word *talānu / talannu / dalān* is a synonym of *kiṣallu* and equally means 'knucklebone'.

Finkel adds another piece of evidence to support his reconstruction. The Amarna letter EA 22, dating back to the Bronze Age and sent by Tushratta, king of Mitanni, to the Egyptian pharaoh, reports a list of royal gifts in which figure also:

Two alabaster *telannu*, five golden dogs of five shekels each, five silver dogs of five shekels each.[20]

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95). Emendate according to FINKEL (2007) and VERMAAK (2011). Interestingly, CASTELLINO translated *ki-ṣal-la* as "play with dice" ("come nel gioco dei dadi").

[16] LANGDON (1915: 73–84); GENOUILLAC (1913: 69–80); KILMER (1982); KILMER (1991: 9–22); GRONEBERG (1987: 115–124); LANDSBERGER (1960: 109–129); DUCHESNE–GUILLEMIN (1983:151–156); VERMAAK (2011: 112); ANNUS–SARV (2015: 285–286).

[17] ANNUS–SARV (2015: 285).

[18] Antagal F 245–46 (MSL 17), CT 19, pl. 30–32, K 04352+, r ii 20: Play with gaming pieces: *giš-bi-za-šu-tag-ga = MIN (= melulu) šá pa-si*; Play with astragals: *zi-in-gi gìr-ra-ra = MIN šá ta-x-x*.

[19] FINKEL (2007: 29).

Suitably, Finkel considers that this passage is referring to a board game and these two alabaster *telannu* were indeed knucklebones.

In fact, the term 'dogs' was used in Bronze Age Mesopotamia,[21] but also later by the Jews[22] and Greeks,[23] to indicate gaming pieces. Also, one of the most popular board games in the Near East during the Bronze Age was the Game of 20 Squares,[24] which, according to a Babylonian tablet now exhibited at the British Museum, was played with two sets of five counters each[25] and two knucklebones:

> An ox knucklebone, a sheep knucklebone,
> Two move the pieces.[26]

This statement finds some confirmation in the archaeological evidence, since knucklebones emerged from the archaeological sites of the Bronze Age, or appear in the contemporary iconography, often in pairs.[27]

Generally, those couples consist of two ovicaprid knucklebones, implying that probably they were thrown together, and their result was given by a special combination of sides or by the sum of the arithmetical

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[20] EA 22, col IV, lines 7–9, in KNUDZTON (1915: 174).

[21] FINKEL (1993: 64–72). Tablet DLB, Colophon, left edge:

1 KASKAL.KUR UR.[GI7.] MEŠ šá šu-ur-ru-h[u ......]

2 NU SAR.MEŠ mi-lul-ti NUN.MEŠ[....] (FINKEL 2007: 28)

[22] Babylonian Talmud, *Kethuboth*, fol. 61b.8; *Commentary on the Babylonian Talmud* (Qiddušin fol. 21b) by Rabbi Hananel Ben Hushiel.

[23] It was usual for the Greeks to refer to gaming pieces as dogs. A sample could be found in Poll. *Onom*. 9, 98: "τῶν δὲ ψήφων ἑκάστη κύων" (*and the piece is called 'dog'*).

[24] For an updated overview about this game and its distribution: CRIST–DUNN-VATURI–DE VOOGT (2016: 81–101).

[25] Previously catalogued as RM III, 6B, now exposed as BM 33333B, line 6 mention expressly 5 gaming pieces, but in this case representing birds: *5 pa-as-su nap-ru-šu-tu* ("Five flying gaming pieces"). FINKEL (2007: 20, 29). https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_Rm-III-6-b

[26] BM33333B, line 7–8:

ZI.IN.GI GU4 ZI.IN.GI UDU NÍTA

2 a-bi-ik pa-as-su. FINKEL (2007: 20, 29).

[27] For depictions of gaming scenes in ancient Egypt: PUSCH (1979: pl.18; 28: 30); PICCIONE (2007: 55–57). Concerning the findings of knucklebones in pairs: LANSING (1917: 26); TAIT (1982: 38–41); QUIBELL (1909: 114); DUNN-VATURI (2012); FRANKFORT–PENDELBURY (1933: 25; pl. 29.2); BASS (1986: 292); CRIST–DUNN-VATURI–DE VOOGT (2016: 9–10).

values attributed to their sides. Anyway, the Babylonian text just mentioned the use of two different knucklebones, an ox and sheep one, opening up the possibility that each of them had a different mathematical function, influencing the result in different way rather than producing a simple algebraical sum of the single values.[28]

From Mesopotamia to Greece, from kişallu to astragalos:

The use of knucklebones, probably already as casting objects,[29] spread to the Balkans during the middle and late Neolithic[30] and is attested in Greece from at least the Bronze Age. The finding of an undefined quantity of knucklebones is reported in the so-called Palace of Nestor at Pylos, in Messenia, dating back to the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age (1300–1050 BC).[31]

In the Greek language these objects were called ἀστράγαλοι (*astragaloi*) and their first mention occurs in the Iliad:

> when Menoetius brought me, being yet a little lad, from Opoeis to your country, by reason of grievous man-slaying, on the day when I slew Amphidamus' son in my folly, though I willed it not, in wrath over the astragals.[32]

The etymology of this word is uncertain. Robert Beekes considers the term ἀστράγαλος (*astragalos*) derived from ὀστέον (*ostéon*), from which came also other words like ἀστακός, ὄστρακον and ὄστρειον (*astakos, ostracon, ostreion*).[33]

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[28] FINKEL (2007: 21–23).

[29] SIDÉRA–VORNICU TERNA (2016).

[30] MARCKEVICH (1981); CAVRUC (2005: 333–336); MONAH et al. (2003); KAVRUK et al. (2010: 185); KAVRUK et al. (2013: 128); BELDIMAN–SZTANCS (2010: 143, 15); KOGĂLNICEANU–ILIE–MĂRGĂRIT–SIMALCSIK (2014); POPLIN (2001: 31–42); NICA–ZORZOLIU–FÂNTÂNEANU–TANASESCU (1977: 10, fig. 3/3a–b); BERCIU (1956: 512); CHOKHADZHIEV–CHOKHADZHIEV (2005: 11); CHOKHADZIEV (2009: 68, fig. 13); URSULESCU–BOGHIAN (1996: 44); VOINEA–NEAGU (2009); ANDREESCU et al. (2006: 216–218).

[31] BLEGEN–RAUSON (1966: 196; 234; 244; 266).

[32] Hom. *Il*, 23, 85–90: εὖτέ με τυτθὸν ἐόντα Μενοίτιος ἐξ Ὀπόεντος ἤγαγεν ὑμέτερόνδ᾽ ἀνδροκτασίης ὕπο λυγρῆς, ἤματι τῷ ὅτε παῖδα κατέκτανον Ἀμφιδάμαντος νήπιος οὐκ ἐθέλων ἀμφ᾽ ἀστραγάλοισι χολωθείς […]

[33] BEEKES (2010: 157–158).

The etymology proposed by Beekes seems reasonable: even if he didn't specify how the variation in -*g*- peculiar to the term *astragalos* and all its derivatives occurred, we find support of this etymology in the lexicon of Hesychius. Here we find one of its synonyms phonetically placed between *astragalos* and *osteon*:

> *Astries*: (synonym of) astragals, equivalent of Astrichoi.
> *Astrichoi*: the same.[34]

Even the Lexicon Bachmannianus, a Byzantine text of the 8th or 9th century, reports it:

> Astragal: generally used to refer at the vertebras of the neck, or at the game of counters, or also, so is called an herb.[35]
> Astragals say the Attics, while in Ionian is also feminine, and also in Homer some occurrences are at the feminine form, like: "the child, even unwilling, got angry because of the astragals".
> Pherekrates in his 'The slave teacher': "instead of astragals play with fists!".
> Plato in the Lysis: "they played at even and odd". They say also *astrichois*, like Antiphanes in his Epidaurios: "we played even and odd with '*astrichoi*'"
> They call the astragals *astrichoi*, like said the highers.[36]

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[34] Hsch. *Lex.*, voices ἄστριες and ἄστριχοι:

<ἄστριες>· ἀστράγαλοι (Callim. fr. 276)

<ἄστριχοι>· τὸ αὐτό (Antiphan. fr. 92) (Trad. S. Martorana).

[35] Is a plant spread in the whole boreal hemisphere, of whose exists more than 2000 variants (astragalus frigidus, astragalus glycyphyllos, astragalus propinquus, etc.).

[36] Lex. Bachmann., 154–155, 18–2: Ἀστράγαλος: κυρίως τὸ συνήθως λεγόμενον. καὶ ὁ σφόνδυλος τοῦ τραχήλου. καὶ ὁ πεττικός. καὶ βοτάνη δὲ οὕτω (οὕτω?) καλεῖται.

Ἀαστραγάλους δὲ οἱ Ἀττικοί· τὸ γὰρ θηλυκὸν Ἰακόν. καὶ παρ᾽ Ὁμήρῳ τινὲς θηλυκῶς, οἷον·

νήπιος, οὐκ ἐθέλων, ἀμφ᾽ ἀστραγάλοισι χολωθείς.

Φερεκράτης Δουλοδιδασκάλῳ· (Δουλοδιδασκάλοις·) ἀντ᾽ ἀστραγάλων [τοῖς] κονδύλοισι παίζετε.

Πλάτων Λύσιδι: ἠρτίαζον ἀστραγάλοις καμπόλλοις. λέγουσι δὲ καὶ ἀστρίχους.

Ἀντιφάνης Ἐηιδαυρίῳ· ἐπαίζομεν μὲν ἀστρίως τοῖς ἀστρίχοις.

Ἀστρίχους τοὺς ἀστραγάλους λέγουσιν, ὡς ἀνωτέρω εἴρηται. (Trad. S. Martorana).

Likewise, a Scholia on Plato states:

> Players of astragals:
> *Astragalizein* means to play at astragals, even said *astrizein*, since the astragals are called also *astrias*. Callimachus[37] (wrote) "to you, dear boy, I'll give immediately five *astrias* of Libyan gazelle just polished".[38]

This quotation of Callimachus informs us about the social prestige of the gazelle's astragals. They were indeed very appreciated, more than the ovicaprids, probably because of their shape and resistance.

Many literary sources[39] refer to the gazelle astragals using a specific name: δορκαλῖδες (*dorkalides*), which derives from δορκάς (*dorkas*) 'antelope'.

During the Classical and Hellenistic period, they were likely quite precious and expensive and only a few of them have been found in the Aegean region.[40]

Some Hellenistic papyri found in Egypt reports gazelle astragals among the goods traded by merchants[41] and one of the papyri of Zenon of Kaunos, a Greek functionary in Ptolemaic Egypt whose archive has been found in the Faiyum region, reports:

> To Zenon, greeting.
> If you are well, it would be good. I myself am well. After you sailed out, I brought in the man who cures the astragals made from gazelles' bones, and after examining them he said that they had been extracted

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[37] Callim. *fr. 676 Pfeiffer.*

[38] Schol. Pl. Ly., 206ε: ἀστραγαλίζοντάς - ἀστραγαλίζειν τὸ ἀστραγάλοις παίζειν, ὅπερ καὶ ἀστρίζειν ἔλεγον, ἐπεὶ καὶ τοὺς ἀστραγάλους ἀστριας ἐκάλουν. Καλλίμαχος·"ζορκός τοι, φίλε κοῦρε, Λιβυστίδος αὐτίκα δώσω <πέντε> νεοσμήκτους ἀστριας" (Trad. S. Martorana).

[39] IG II² 1533, 23–24; Athen. 5, 21 (Plb. 26, 1, 8); Callim. fr. 676; Lucian. *Am.* 15–16; Theophr. *Char.* 5, 9; Herod. 3, 19, 63.

[40] An astragal of goitered gazelle of Central Asia has been found in the Greco-Roman layers of the Artemision of Ephesus. D.G. HOGART (1908: 192; pl. 36, 42; 36, 43; 14, 31–32).

[41] P.Cair.Zen. 1.59019, line 2. Other samples: P. Cair.Zen. 1.59009 fr. B2; P. Cair.Zen. 1.59069,7; PSI 331, 2, 7; PSI IV 444, 2.

from the raw flesh,[42] and for that reason ... He said therefore they could not be made wax-like, for after a year he said they would change,[43] but he said that he would make them [passable], but with great trouble he said, so much so that he did not think they were worth it. As for the treatment we shall try to get them done for a chalkous[44] each, or at most for two chalkoi; for he himself pretends that he does astragals for people at court (?) for half an obol each; and he said we might ask Antipatros the Etesian (?), for he has cured some for him he said. As soon as you receive my letter then, write to me what to do about this before the time runs away. Know too that Patron was not willing to take Apollophanes with him but has given us a great deal of trouble. But I went to see Melas and declared myself ready to be inscribed as a warrantor along with another of the citizens. And he, seeing by this that Apollophanes was not by any means going to be left behind, as we too were fighting against him, took him on board. My further news I will write to you in greater detail than it was possible for me to do now. And try to write to me promptly about everything. Farewell.[45]

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[42] Naturally, astragals are locked by cartilage and tendons. Removing them from the raw flesh would result surely in a troubling activity and would wreck them. To properly extract the astragals is necessary to boil the articulation for several hours to liquify the collagen of the tendons. In that case the astragal emerges by itself, and from this activity results also a very nutritive bone's broth.

[43] The friction of the astragals on a surface would smooth the most exposed surfaces, modifying its shape and weight. A great quantity of smoothed astragals has been found in the archaeological sites, dating to any period, from the late Neolithic till the Roman time.

[44] A copper coin. Is not clear if it refers to the payment for the job, or to the metal to be melt in order to modify the weight of the astragal and correct it. Personally, I consider more suitable the second option, since a great quantity of modified and weighted astragals has been found and even Aristotle use the sample of the cast of a weighted astragal in his *Problems*, XVI, 913a–913b; 915b.

The 20th century Turkish scholar Metin AND (1979: 59) refers that still in the 1970s in Anatolia was usual to hollow some astragals filling them with lead to increase their weight and make them more effective in some kind of game.

[45] PSV IV 444 (P.Cair. Zen. 1.59019): [. . . .]λ[.]ς Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. εἰ ἔρρωσαι, καλῶς ἂν ἔχοι· ὑγιαίνω δὲ καὶ αὐτός.

μετὰ <τό> σο(*) ἐκπλεῦσαι εἰσήγαγον τ[ὸν] | [θερα]πεύοντα τοὺς δορκαδέους, καὶ ἐπισκεψάμενος ἔφη αὐτοὺς ἐκ κρεῶν ὠμῶν ἐξῃρῆσθαι, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο π[επονη-] |

Interestingly, despite the fact that this gaming practice was a longstand-
ing and common tradition shared by the majority of the near eastern civi-
lizations, among all the names given by the Greeks to the knucklebones,
none seems to show a process of cultural transmission of oriental origin.

The road to Italy

It seems that the use of astragals reached the Italian peninsula during
the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age and all the most ancient evidence
has been excavated along the river Adige, in the northern part of Italy.[46]
This presence should be linked with the 'amber route', a huge network
of small-scale trades that crossed the Central Europe during the Bronze
Age and reached the Mediterranean. It seems that the trading routes of
the period privileged the rivers and one of its main paths passed
through the Trentino Valley.[47] This commercial network was probably
multidirectional and as some items travelled from north to south, like
Baltic amber, others travelled in the opposite direction. Alongside these
materials also circulated ideas, conceptions of the world, traditions, be-
liefs, superstitions and maybe also gaming practices. Indeed, the pres-

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[κέναι] αὐτούς. κηροειδεῖς μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἔφησεν δύνατον εἶναι, μετ' ἐνιαυτὸγ(*) γὰρ
ἔφη μεταπεσεῖσθαι αὐτούς, ἐ[. .]- | [. . ε]ῖς δὲ αὐτοὺς ἔφησεν ποήσειν(*), μετὰ
πραγματείας δ' ἔφησεν πολλῆς, ὥστε μὴ ἀξίους ἔφησεν [εἶναι] τοια[ύτης]. [περὶ
δ]ὲ τῆς θεραπείας πειρασόμεθα μὲν χαλκιαίους, εἰ δὲ μή γε, διχαλκιαίους· αὐτὸς
μὲγ(*) γὰρ φησ[ιν ἡμιω]βελια[ῖον] | [θεραπεύειν ἐπ]ὶ αὐλῆι τὸν ἀστράγαλον·
ἔξεστιν δ' ἔφη ἐρωτῆσαι Ἀντίπατρον τὸν Ἐτησίαν, τ[ούτ]ωι γὰρ ἔφη[σεν] |
[τεθερα]πευκέναι. σὺ οὖν, ὡς ἂν τάχιστα λάβηις τὰ γράμματα, γ\ϱ/α⟦ ⟧ομ(*) μοι
περὶ τούτων τ. . . . . [. . .] | [πρὸ] τοῦ τὸγ(*) καιρὸν ἐγδραμεῖν. γίνωσκε δὲ καὶ
Πάτρωνα οὐ βουλόμενον ἀναλαμβάνειν Ἀπολλοφάνην, ἀλλ[ὰ ὀχ-] | [λον ἡ]μῖν
παρεσχηκότα πολύν. ἐγὼ δὲ προσῆλθον Μέλανι καὶ ἕτοιμος ἐαν(*) γνωστὴρ
ἐπιγραφῆναι αὐτός τε [καὶ] | [ἄλλο]ς τῶν πολιτῶν. ἐκεῖνος δὲ ὁρῶν ταῦτα ὅτι οὐδ'
ὡς ὑπολειφθήσεται, καὶ ἐμῶν(*) μαχομένων δί[χ' αὐ]τῶι, ἀν[έλα-] | [βεν αὐ]τόν. τὰ
δὲ λοιπά σοι γράψω ἀκριβέστερον, νῦμ(*) μὲγ(*) γάρ μοι οὐκ ἐξεπόησεν(*). πειρῶ
δέ μοι ὅτι τάχος γράφειν [περὶ] | [πάντω]ν. ἔρρωσο. (Translation by C. C. Edgar,
ASAE vol.22, no. 69, emendate) Interestingly, in the original text of C. C. Edgar, all the
terms related to astragals were translated as 'dice'.

[46] RIEDEL–TECCHIATI (2001); LORENZ (2003); RIEDEL–TECCHIATI (2005: 124–125);
TECCHIATI (2005); MARCONI–TECCHIATI (2006).
[47] DE NAVARRO (1925: 484–485).

ence of astragals in North-Italian burial sites of the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age attest to a long-haul intercultural exchange.

As far as we know, the first evidence of astragals in central Italy dates to the 6th century BC and attests, once more, to a process of inter-cultural transmission.

A find in the Etruscan city of Pyrgi consists of a group of 31 astragals altered with holes or other kind of modifications.[48] The location of this find is quite significant since Pyrgi was a coastal centre that served as commercial hub for the nearby city of Cerveteri and was one of the major ports of the Tyrrhenian Sea.

In one of its temples, which rose aside the shore, the famous Pyrgi Tablets were found: further evidence of intercultural contacts. They consist of three golden tablets with inscriptions in Punic and Etruscan.[49]

Unfortunately, the name given by the Etruscans to the knucklebones is unknown.

Greece and Rome: ἀστράγαλοι and *TALI*

In January 1899 the place called *lapis niger* was identified in the Roman Forum,[50] and in the following years in the layer dated to the 6th century BC 221 knucklebones were found.[51] Other contemporary evidence emerged from the area of Sant'Omobono, near the Palatine, within two cultic complexes[52] and from a *bothros*, a hypogeal area deputed to funerary rites.[53]

In Latin those objects were called *tali*, a word which semantically has a perfect correspondence with the Greek *astragaloi* in indicating the gaming tool as well as the bones from which they were derived. Since ancient times, astragal is also an anatomical term referring to a bone of the human ankle, as stated by Apion: "*astragalos* signifies three things:

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[48] BAGLIONE (1989–1990).

[49] Etruscan Museum of Villa Giulia, Rome, room 13a, cabinet 1, without inventory number. Punic inscription: KAI 277.

[50] BONI (1899).

[51] DE GROSSI MAZZORIN–MINNITI (2013: 377).

[52] GJERSTAD (1960: 242, fig.154, 1–9).

[53] North-eastern side of the Palatine Hill, area II, in DE GROSSI MAZZORIN–MINNITI (2013: 377).

the joint in the ankle, simply any of the vertebrae and the game piece or '*pessos*'[54]".[55]

In Latin the same bone was called *talus*, a term whose meaning was eventually extended to the whole heel, and from which derived several terms in Neo-Latin languages: *Tallone* (it), *Talon* (fr), *Taló* (ct) *Talón* (sp). It probably also influenced Celtic languages, since the same part of the body in Irish is actually called *sál*, and *sawdl* in Welsh.[56]

The first mention of the game of *tali* in Latin literature is the *Miles Gloriosus*, where Plautus plays on the double meaning of the word as part of the ankle and gaming objects:

Periplecomenus: (speaking to his servants within). Faith, if you don't in future smash his anklebones (*talos*) for any stranger that you see on my tiles,[57] I will cut you so with lashes as to make thongs of your sides. My neighbours, i' faith, are overlookers of what is going on in my own house; so often are they peeping down through the '*impluvium*'[58]. And now, therefore, I give you all notice, whatever person of this Captain's household you shall see upon our tiles, except Palaestrio only, push him headlong here into the street. Suppose he says that he is following some hen, or pigeon, or monkey; woe be to you, if you don't badly maul the fellow even to death. And so, that they may commit no infringement against the laws on gambling (*lex*

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[54] The term '*pessos*' means 'gaming piece', in ancient as well as in modern Greek. Its presence in this quotation of Apion would require a further and deeper discussion, but in complex could point to an eventual unorthodox use of astragals, which means differently than a casting object.

[55] Apion fr.23 Neitzel, in Eust., *Od*, 1397, α107: καὶ ὅτι συντελεῖ πρὸς τὸ ῥηθὲν τὸ ἀστράγαλος τρία σημαίνει· τὸν ἐν σφυρῷ καὶ τὸν σπόνδυλον ἁπλῶς καὶ τὸν παιστικὸν ἢ πεσσικὸν βόλον τὸ τοῦ Ἀπίωνος (Trad. E. CULLHED 2016: 126–127).

[56] ERNOUT–MEILLET (2001: 675).

[57] In this passage Periplecomenus is referring to the roof tiles, where probably seated and walked the undesired tattlers.

[58] In a Roman Domus the *impluvium* was the sunken part of the central court, designed to carry away the rainwater coming through an opening on the roof called *Compluvium*. In this passage the term *impluvium* indicate also the upper opening through which the neighbors looked into Periplecomenus' court.

alearia), do you take good care that they wouldn't have any ankle-bones (*talis*) to shake at the '*convivium*'[59].[60]

Aphrodite and Venus, *astragaloi* and *tali*, rules and names

During the Bronze Age, knucklebones were used as randomizing elements for board games and their combinations corresponded to certain numerical values, even if it is not clear which mathematical or algebraical rules this procedure followed.[61]

Among the Greeks, astragals were used as toys (manipulated or thrown by children in riddles, games of aim or manual skill)[62] and as randomizing tools (thrown mainly by the adults and attempting to produce particular combinations).

The attribution of a numerical value to a certain configuration of the throw is attested in Greece since the Classical period: Diphilus[63] mentions the Euripides (or more correctly Heurippides)[64] throw which scored 40 points and Eubulus in his *Kubeutai*[65] provides a long list of other throws.

About Eubulus' list of names, Stephen Kidd correctly remarks that: 'none of which is attested elsewhere' and considering that it was part of

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[59] The *convivium* was a banquet, with festive and joyful connotates, in which the Romans normally played with knucklebones.

[60] Plaut. *Mil.* 2, 2.8–10: *Ni hércle diffregéritis talos pósthac quemque in tégulis videritis alienum, ego vostra faciam latera lorea. Mi equidem iam arbitri vicini sunt, meae quid fiat domi, ita per impluvium intro spectant. nunc adeo edico omnibus: quemque a milite hoc videritis hominem in nostris tegulis, extra unum Palaestrionem, huc deturbatote in viam. Quod ille gallinam aut columbam se sectari aut simiam dicat, disperiistis ni usque ad mortem male mulcassitis. Atque adeo ut ne legi fraudem faciant aleariae, adcuratote ut sine talis domi agitent convivium.* (Transl. H.T. Riley, emendate) In the original Riley's translation, the expression used to indicate this gaming practice is 'playing dice'.

[61] About the use of astragals applied to the game of 20 squares: FINKEL (2007: 21–23); and to the Senet: PICCIONE (2007: 55–58).

[62] A few examples. Such use is reported in classical Greece: Pl., *Lys.* 206e; *Sch. Pl. Lys.* 206e (ed. CUFALO, 2007: 182–183); Antiph. *fr* 92 K.-A.; Ar. Pl. 816–817, 1055–1058; Arist. *Rh.* 1407b; Cratin. *fr*. 180 K.-A.; Eup. *Fr*. 269 K.-A.; Plut. *Quaest. Conv*. 741c.

[63] Diph. *Synoris* fr. 47 K.-A. (in *Ath*. 6, 247a–b). The same information is reported by Poll. 9, 101; Suet. *Peri Paid.* 1, 22; TAILLARDAT (= Σ *ad Pl. Lys.* 206e ≈ Eust. *Il*. 1289, 55–63).

[64] KIDD (2017: 113, n. 6).

[65] Eub. fr. 57 KA in Poll. 7, 204–205.

a comedy it 'is probably invented out of whole cloth to present an absurd level of connoisseurship'.[66] But the irony of this alleged exaggeration plays on a real fact, that in the Greece of the fourth and third century BC it was a common practice to give a name to the throws and scores: a tradition that also passed to the Romans.

The classical authors reported 71 different names of throws (including the long Eubulus' list),[67] of these, 67 were Greeks and just four Roman, three of which were themselves translations or loanwords from Greek anyway, underlining the process of cultural transmission which conveyed them.

Several Latin sources report the throws of *Venus* and *Canes* as the highest and the lowest results, while Plautus alone wrote about a throw called *Basilicus* (another word of Greek origin) as a positive score, as well as the 'four vultures', the only one which doesn't show any connection with the Greek and that indicated an unlucky score (most probably the lowest possible, eventually similar or identical to the *Canes*).[68]

After Plautus, several other Roman authors wrote about the game of *tali*, in reference to both their uses as toys for children[69] and as randomizing elements for adults[70] (when astragals or tali were played counting the scores or trying to throw special combinations).

Fortunately, many authors included some indication of the rules of this last typology of game. However, the rules as reported are not always coherent and are sometimes also contradictory.

The Latin authors show a certain continuity throughout the centuries and we have reason to believe that the game remained more or less the same from Plautus' time. The picture given by Greek literature is more complicated since the information reported by Greek authors of the Roman period perfectly match the ones reported by the Latin au-

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[66] KIDD (2017: 114, n. 18); HUNTER, (1983: 142).

[67] An exhaustive list could be found in BECQ DE FOUQUIÈRES (1869: 337–339).

[68] Plaut. *Curc*. 2, 3, 354–361.

[69] i.e. Hor. *Sat*. 2, 3, 247–253a; Mart. 4, 14; Rufinus of Aquileia, *Apologie in Sanctum Hieronimum Libri Duo* 2, 22.

[70] Some reference other than the ones quoted in the following paragraphs: Plaut. *Asin*. 771–791; Mart. 14, 15; Ovid. *Ars Am.* 2, 197–208; 3, 353–384; Ovid. *Tr*. 2, 475–483.

thors, but presents some incoherence with respect to what can be deduced from the Greek authors of the previous centuries.

In such a complex situation, the names attributed to the different sides of the knucklebones and to their configuration after a throw is crucial for achieving a partial reconstruction of the game rules.

Greeks and Romans: a complex stratification of different gaming traditions

Persius informs us that the highest score was 6 (*dexter senio)* while the lowest was 1, called 'dog' (*damnosa canicula),*[71] and similarly Martial juxtaposes the *senior* and *canis* throw,[72] but Suetonius, who wrote a whole book about ancient Greek board games, transcribed a letter of Augustus in which it emerged that 6 could also be unfavourable:

> And as any one threw upon the tali aces or sixes, he put down for every talus a denarius; all which was gained by him who threw a Venus.[73]

The throw of *Venus* was the highest possible, even if its numerical value is still unknown (if one had ever been associated with it), and this is an aspect on which all the Greco-Roman sources of the imperial period agree, as is the fact that it resulted when all the knucklebones fell upon a different side:

> *Tali* of Ivory: when no one of the *tali* will give you the same face, you will tell me that I made you a great gift![74]

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[71] Pers. 3, 49: *[...] quid dexter senio ferret, scire erat in voto, damnosa canicula quantum raderet.*

[72] Mart. 13, 1.

[73] Suet. *Aug.* 71: *Talis enim iactatis, ut quisque canem aut senionem miserat, in singulos talos singulos denarios in medium conferebat, quos tollebat uniuersos, qui Venerem iecerat.* (transl. A. Thomson) Thomson didn't translate the word *tali*, and Forester in a later edition of this volume glossed: "The Romans, at their feasts, during the intervals of drinking, often played at dice, of which there were two kinds, the tesserae and tali. The former had six sides, like the modern dice; the latter, four oblong sides, for the two ends were not regarded. In playing, they used three *tessera* and four tali, which were all put into a box wider below than above, and being shaken, were thrown out upon the gaming-board or table." THOMSON–FORESTER (1909: 124).

Despite this convergence, the *Venus* throw remains a controversial aspect of the game since its first mention in Plautus[75] and a throw called *Aphrodite* is not mentioned in Greek until the 2nd or 3rd century AD.[76]

Analysing this fact from a chronological perspective does not help in identifying the origin of this gaming practice or to be certain of the derivation of the *Venus* throw attested by the Latin authors from a previous Greek tradition, but any way that convergence might have occurred during the imperial era and attests to a standardization of this gaming tradition in the whole Mediterranean region and the process of cultural syncretism that took place during that period.

Four other aspects of the game which recur identically in many sources of the imperial period are the use of 4 astragals, the fact that each of them could fall into 4 positions, the score attributed to them and finally their names too. Pollux, in the 2nd century AD wrote:

> The position of the tossed astragal corresponds to a number. The ace is called 'dog' [...] 2 and 5, which are on the die, doesn't exist on the astragals. The majority of people say that the 6 is said 'of Koos' while is opposite 'dog'.[77]

And three centuries later, Hesychius still reports the same information:

> Koos, Chion: Koos is the astragal which give a 6. The throw of Chios corresponds to 1, the one of Koos to 6.[78]

The scores attributed to the different sides of the knucklebones and the quantity involved in a throw are still problematic aspects, but fortunately the recurrence of the same names, which are attested in Greek litera-

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[74] Mart. 14, 14: *XIV, Tali eborei: Cum steterit nullus vultu tibi talus eodem, Munera me dices magna dedisse tibi.*

[75] Plaut. *Asin.* 5, 2, 55.

[76] The first mention is in Luc. *Erotes* 16.

[77] Poll. *Onom.* 9, 99–100: τὸ δὲ σχῆμα τοῦ κατὰ τὸν ἀστράγαλον πτώματος ἀριθμοῦ δόξαν εἶχεν, καὶ τὸ μὲν μονάδα δηλοῦν καλεῖται κύων, τὸ δὲ ἀντικείμενον χιάς, καὶ Χῖος οὗτος ὁ βόλος. δυὰς δὲ καὶ πεντὰς ἐν ἀστραγάλοις, ὥσπερ ἐν κύβοις, οὐκ ἔνεστιν. οἱ δὲ πλείους τὸν μὲν ἑξίτην Κῶον, τὸν δὲ κύνα Χῖον καλεῖσθαι λέγουσιν.

[78] Hsch. *Lex.*, κ 194: Κῶος Χῖον: ὁ Κῶος ἀστραγάλος, ὁ ἕξ. Ὁ μὲν γὰρ Χῖος ἐδύνατο ἕν, ὁ δὲ Κῶος ἕξ.

ture from the Classic and Hellenistic period until the late imperial era, could help in the historical reconstruction of this practice. Already Aristophanes makes an allegory on the opposition between Chios and Koos,[79] and the precise collocation of these two parts of the animal bone is described by Aristotle.[80] The *Anthologia Palatina* attributed an epigram to Leonidas of Taras which refers ironically to the fate of a certain Pisistratus playing on the meanings of the word Chios[81] and another one attributed to Meleager ironizes on Antipater of Sidon in the same way.[82]

The two other controversial aspects, the quantity of astragals used in the games and the scores attributed to each side, remain problematic because of the previously mentioned Euripides throw.

The presence of four astragals recurs in different authors of the Roman period and is confirmed also by the iconography,[83] but playing with four astragals and getting a 6 on each of them, the sum should logically have been 24 and we cannot compute how the Euripides throw could score 40.[84]

Considering that a fragment of Callimachus,[85] previously quoted, mentions a gift of five astragals, and that some Anatolian inscriptions refer to a peculiar divinatory practice based on the throw of five astragals,[86] Stephen Kidd hypothesized that in Classical and Hellenistic Greece five astragals were used instead of four, and that the best score for each of them was 8, instead of 6.[87]

He also quotes passages of Pollux,[88] Eustathius, and a Scholion in Plato[89] which refer to a throw that scored 8 and from which derived the Greek proverb 'all eight' and was named after Stesichorus.[90]

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[79] Ar. *Ra*. 970.

[80] Arist. *HA* 499b.

[81] Leon. *A.P.* 7, 422.

[82] Mel. *A.P.* 7, 427.

[83] i.e. Dasen (2019: 129); Rohlfs (1964: pl.2); Cades dactyliothek, Bonn. Inv. 28.2023 / Cades Rom XI L 116.

[84] Poll. *Onom*. 9.101; Eust. *Il*. 1289, v. 89.

[85] Callim. fr. 676 Pfeiffer.

[86] Nollé (2007).

[87] Kidd (2017: 112–113).

[88] Poll. 9, 99.

[89] *Schol. ad Pl. Lys.* 206e ≈ Eust. *Il*. 1289.55–63. In: Taillardat (1967: 67).

Kidd's thesis could be supported, however, by the fact that groups of five astragals have been discovered at different Hellenistic sites.[91]

In sum, a geo-historical analysis of the pieces of information related to this gaming tradition points to a complex stratification of heterogeneous practices. This mixture of recurring and varying elements reported by the classical authors, as well as the variation or permanence in the game's terminology, helps us to understand its cultural and historical complexity. It is probable that different variants emerged over the centuries or according to different regional uses which later converged into a standardized international gaming practice. Again, the historical reconstruction has been possible thanks to the study of ludonyms.

Talannu and *tali*: a possible enigmatic connection

The Roman game of *tali* is clearly connected with the Greek tradition, as shown by the convergence in the rules and ludonyms referred to it.

The exception is the name of the game, which does not appear to be linked to a Greek tradition: the word *talus* existed previously in Latin, probably already indicating the anklebone.

In the 19th century it was considered etymologically related to the term *tœlus*, as a derivation from *tax-lus*,[92] which has also been connected to the term *taxillus* as a diminutive (which occurs, but with no clear meaning and not directly related to a gaming practice, in Cicero).[93]

More recently this interpretation has been dismissed and instead the etymology of *talus* is considered unknown.[94]

It is quite interesting to see how both the Latin word *talus* and the Akkadian *talannu* which indicate the knucklebone (one certainly and the other hypothetically), share the same root *tal-*.

Concerning this fact, Irving Finkel suggested that: 'Perhaps then the latin tālus should be grouped with the suggestive second- and first-

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[90] About this proverb and its connection with Stesichorus: Phot. *Lex*. (π 168 Theodoridis) = Sud. π 225 (4, 23 Adler) = Apostol. 13, 93 (2, 601 Leutsch–Schneidewin).

[91] POTTIER–REINACH (1888: 215–217). KAOUKABANI (1973: pl. 2, 3). DUSENBERY (1998: 199; 348–351). ERLICH (2017: 42).

[92] LEWIS–SHORT (1879: 1835; 1844).

[93] Cic. *Or*. 45, 153.

[94] GLARE (1982: 1902); ERNOUT–MEILLET (2001: 675).

millennium cuneiform evidence and proposed as a loan from a Kultur-
wort for the knucklebone or astragals?'[95]

Of course, finding strong evidence in support of the idea of a such
linguistical stratification and linking the Semitic Akkadian of the 2nd mil-
lennium BC with the Indo-European Latin of the 2nd century BC is com-
plex, especially because the Hittite and the Mycenaean idioms don't of-
fer any possible and direct connection.

Anyway, there is another unexpected Greek term which is strongly
related historically to knucklebone and could help with this speculation.

These bones seem to be connected with ponderal systems of the
eastern Mediterranean since the Bronze Age. A find at Ugarit,[96] one of
the major ports during the Bronze Age, consists of a knucklebone hol-
lowed and filled with lead, whose final weight was 280 grams, which
exactly corresponded to 30 shekels. At that time, the shekel was a stand-
ard of weight that approximately corresponded to 9,4 modern day
grams. This equivalence led some scholars to think that this object was
used as a standard of weight.[97]

There is further evidence in the Aegean region that attests this local
tradition of representing weights in the shape of astragals since the late
Iron Age at least.

A bronze weight in the shape of a knucklebone melted in Miletus
around 550–525 BC and offered to Apollo's oracle at Didima is stored at
the Louvre.[98] Originally it was part of a pair of identical objects, as stated
by an inscription on it:

> Those wonderful objects, produced with 1/10 of the harvest, has been
> dedicate to Apollo by Aristolochos and Thrason. Pasikles, son of
> Kydimeneos, made them.[99]

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[95] FINKEL (2007: 29).

[96] SCHAEFFER (1962: 80–82).

[97] MINNITI–PEYRONEL (2004: 14).

[98] Musée du Louvre, inv. sb2719.

[99] https://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/weight-shape-knucklebone:
Τάδε ταγάλματα | από λείο ᾿Αριστόλοχος | [κ]αι θράσον άνέθεσαν τ[ω-] |
Πόλλωνι δεκάτεν εχεε | δ᾿αυτα π<α>σικλης ο κυδιμεν []

Herodotus comments on the importance of this oracle to which also Croesus offered valuable gifts in different passages,[100] and tells us about its conquest and sack by the Persians occurring during the suppression of the Aristagoras' revolt of 494–493 BC.[101]

This item was excavated in Susa,[102] the Elamite capital, where it was found together with a similar object: a bronze weight of Mesopotamian production in the shape of a lion,[103] now also at the Louvre.[104]

The peculiarity of these objects is that they represent two standards of weight in use in the Achaemenid Empire, the Babylonian and the Aegean one, and were probably used to compare these two systems.

The bronze astragals weigh 93 kg, corresponding to 220 obols or 6,645 staters of Miletus, and the lion weighs 120 kg. Since the Babylonian talents correspond to 30,4 kg, the two objects weighed respectively 3 and 4 Babylonian talents.

So, the Ionian bronze astragal was preserved by the Persians because it was quite useful, since it corresponded to one of the few measures in which the Ionian and the Babylonian scales of weight, mathematically, were easily comparable.

In the Aegean region, the production of weights in the shape of astragals continued in the subsequent centuries. Different weights with a squared base and a half astragal in relief on one side have been found at the Agora of Athens. Its precise measure is marked on its base: στατήρ (*statér*), which correspond to 795 g, and its authority: δεμόσιον (*Demosion*, or sometimes *Demosion Athenaion*).[105]

Bronze astragals have also been found at Imera, in Sicily, which corresponded to a ponderal standard and, interestingly, were impressed

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[100] Hdt. 1, 46; 1, 92; 5, 36.

[101] Hdt. 6, 18–19.

[102] HAUSSOULLIER (1905: 156–162); ANDRÉ-SALVINI–DESCAMPS-LEQUIME (2005).

[103] The Assyrians used to shape their weights in form of lions and objects of this kind are found in the archaeological site since the first excavation of Layard at Nineveh. Some of them are now at the British Museum, inv. N°91221.

[104] Musée du Louvre, inv. sb2718.

[105] A sample: courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens: Agora Excavations, inv. B 495.

with the symbol of the city, the same symbol that appeared also on Imerian coins.[106]

Coinage with decorations in the shape of astragals were issued also by other Greek cities, such as Athens in the 6th century BC[107] and it seems that these bones had a certain meaning in relation to the Aegean weight systems of the late Iron Age and early classic period.

This tradition continued during the period of Roman domination. A partially corrupted inscription dated to the time of Trajan has been found in Tegea which reports the dedication of a group of weights in the shape of astragals by Poplius Memmius Agatokles, when he ceased his activity as *agoranomos* (the public officer at the market who had to secure the respect of the standards):

> Poplios Memmios Agatokles, after having served as Agoranomos consecrated the house of all the gods and the bronze weights inside of it … and with ivory … of one pound … 50 … Atalanta … 25 of a pound … [one] astragal [of] 1 pound, another … of one pound … 1 … of ounce … 9 … another … of one pound … 2 … another … of one pound … 4 … Eros[108]

Finally, impressive bronze weights in shape of astragals marked with silver Roman numbers are today at the Pera Museum of Istanbul,[109] and Diodorus Siculus reported that the tin extracted in Britain in the 1st century BC was melted in ingots shaped in the form of astragals.

Therefore, the connection between the Greeks' ponderal standards and knucklebones seems chronologically archaic, geographically wide-

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[106] ANZALONE (2009: 180, n. 41).

[107] LANG–CROSBY (1964: BW1; LW 3–7; pl. 1–3).

[108] IG V, 2 125:

Πό(πλιος) Μέμμιος Ἀγαθοκλῆς ἀγορανομήσας ἀνέθηκεν π[άντων θε]-
ῶν τὸν οἶκον καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ σταθμὰ χαλκᾶ #56 σ[ὺν]
καὶ ἔλαφον #56 λί(τρας) #56 ν #56 Ἀταλάντην #56 λί(τρας) κε′ #56 ἀστράγαλον [λί(τρας) α?]
ἄλλον #56 λί(τρας) #56 α #56 οὐ(γκιῶ)ν #56 θ #56 ἄλλον #56 λί(τρας) #56 β #56 ἄλλον #56
λί(τρας) [#56] δ̣ [#56] Ἔρωτα [#56 — —].

[109] Istanbul, Pera Museum, Anatolian weight and measures collection. inv. PMA 6602 A-B-C.

spread, and culturally persistent. All these aspects allow us to think that this is a legacy of the pre-classical period.

Interestingly, the highest ponderal unit in the Aegean system was called τάλαντον (*talanton*) a term of unknown etymology[110] which doesn't seem directly linked to any Mycenaean word. The closest term could be *ta-ra-si-ja*,[111] which occurs in some tablets[112] and referred to measures of bronze or wool which were "weighted and ready for the manufacturing".[113]

This Mycenean term later evolved in ταλασία (*talasia*), which merely indicates the process of wool spinning and still preserves the root *tal-*.

In conclusion, this series of linguistic similarities do not constitute a strong and certain demonstration of the derivation of the word *talus* from some term of Near Eastern origins, but the connection of the term *talus*, *talannu*, *talaton* with the object, figure or concept of a knucklebone appears clearly and should be considered seriously.

The loss of this historical, semantic and linguistical complexity

A ludonym is a word functioning within a certain cultural system and does not correspond just to the name of a game, but conveys a complex of connotations of a cultural, emotional, social and interactive nature.

Playing at the astragals in Greece, as well as *talis ludere* in Rome, had specific implications. It was a game possibly also used for gambling, but also perceived as an archaic tradition and sometimes those gaming tools were used for divination,[114] rituals,[115] funerary purposes,[116] or sacred mysteries.[117]

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[110] BEEKES (2010) didn't suggest any etymology for this word.

[111] Mentioned in KN Lc 535, Py Jn 310, My Oe 110. I'm thankful for Rita Roberts for her help on this subject.

[112] In the tablet PY Jn 310 the term *a-ta-ra-si-jo* (opposite of *ta-ra-si-ja e-ko-te*) is mentioned to indicate that a smith 'didn't produce a measure of bronze', in CHADWICK–BAUMBACH (1963: 247).

[113] CHADWICK–BAUMBACH (1963: 247).

[114] For the use of astragals in divination: Paus. 7, 25, 10; Suet. *Tib*. 14; *Schol. Pind. Pyth.* 4, 337–338 (ed. Drachmann, pag. 143); IK Perge 205; KAIBEL (1878: 454–458, *Epigrams* 1038; 1039; 1040); NOLLÉ (2007).

[115] Greek and Roman children of both genders, having reached majority, dedicate their toys at the temple: *Anth. Pal.* 6, 309; 6, 276; CIA II (766) / IG II, 2: 1533, 1.23–24, 32. And a huge quantity of astragals has been found inside the perimeter of cultic complex,

Conversely, cubic dice were used merely for gaming and gambling purposes and even the ancient sources note the difference between these two games. As Martial wrote:

> Never you left the innocent 'talus' for the die, and you gambled just few nuts.[118]

In a comic piece of writing by Herodas (3rd century BC), a young school-child skips school to go to the gambling house and his mother decided to report everything to the teacher, underlining that her son passed from playing with astragals to gambling, eventually with dice:

> Me unlucky, he sacked my house playing for money, and the astragals are no more enough for him! […]

And the teacher answered the pupil directly:

> […] So is not enough for you to play with astragals of gazelle like those (his companions), but you enter the gambling house and gamble for money among the carriers![119]

Playing dice or astragals were two different activities, similar in some aspects, but clearly distinct. In both cases the players cast a group of ob-

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temple–caves, or under the foundation of shrines. The most evident case is the Corycian Cave, where has been found almost 23 000 astragals: AMANDRY (1984: 347–380).

[116] A great quantity of astragals has been found in graves. This use dated since the Bronze Age to the Roman era. Just few samples from the Near East: SPEISER (1935: 33); MUSCARELLA (1974: 80–81, n. 21); SCHAEFFER (1962: 80–82); GUY (1938: 77, pl. 115,11). From Greece: PAPAIKONOMOU (2013: 57); CARÈ (2013). From a Roman site: DE GROSSI MAZZORIN–MINNITI (2013).

[117] The use of astragals in mysteries is reported mainly by the Christian authors of late antiquity: Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2, 11; Arn. *Adv. Nat.* 19, 4. A contemporary study about the use of astragals as a symbol of rebirth of near eastern origin and lately transmitted to the romans through the cult of the Dioscuri: LUSCHI (2008).

[118] Mart. 4, 66: *Subposita est blando numquam tibi tessera talo, alea sed parcae sola fuere nuces…*

[119] Herod. 3, *Didaskalos*: […]ἔκ μευ ταλαίνης τὴν στέγην πεπόρθηκεν χαλκίνδα παίζων· καὶ γὰρ οὐδ' ἀπαρκεῦσιν αἱ ἀστραγάλαι, […] οὔ σοι ἔτ' ἀπαρκεῖ τῆισι δορκάσιν παίζειν ἀστράβδ' ὅκωσπερ οἴδε, πρὸς δὲ τὴν παίστρην ἐν τοῖσι προ‹υ›νείκοισι χαλκίζεις φοιτέων; ἐγώ σε θήσω κοσμιώτερον κούρης, κινεῦντα μηδὲ κάρφος, εἰ τό γ' ἥδιστον. After DI GREGORIO (1997); who translated ἀστραγάλαι and δορκάσιν παίζειν as 'play with dice'.

jects and maybe in some situations they could be interchangeable, but the authors of the classical period never created confusion between *tes-serae* and *tali*, *astragaloi* and *kuboi*.

The throw of 'Venus', and the 'dog' were prerogatives of the astragals, like the absence of the scores 2 and 5.

In the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville, written in Visigothic Iberia at the beginning of the 7th century, we can note the first terminological confusion between dice and astragals. Isidore certainly studied the classics deeply and read about a game of chance in which the possible scores were just 1, 3, 4, 6, but in his time the game of *astragals/tali* was probably no longer in use in his region. So, he spontaneously updated what he found in the ancient texts relating it to his contemporary gaming practices. This terminological confusion didn't occur in the actual Greco-Byzantine sources, since the astragals remained in use in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, but Isidore describes the game using an improper terminology:

> 63 – About dice. Are said '*tesserae*' since they are squared on all the sides. Others calls them '*lepusculi*' (little hares) since after being tossed they run everywhere. Once, the dice were called also '*iacula*' (darts), because were thrown.

> 65 – About the names of the dice. Among the ancients every throw got a name from its score, like 1, 3, 4, 6. Lately the denomination of the throws has changed, and the ace was called 'dog', the 3 '*suppus*' (from the Greek term '*uptios*', which means supine), the 4 '*planus*' (from the Greek term '*pranes*', which means prone).[120]

> 66 – About the throw of dice. The experts throw the dice in order to get what they want, like for example a 6, which gives them an advantage. On the other side, they try to avoid the 'dog' since is unlucky: its score is indeed 1.[121]

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[120] This terminology makes reference to the shape of astragals, which presented a convex and a concave side which ideally looked like the two sides of a torso. About this terminology: Aristot. *HA* 2, 1, 499b.

[121] Isid. *Etym.* 18, 63, 65–66: *LXIII. De tesseris. Tesserae vocatae quia quadrae sunt ex omnibus partibus. Has alii lepusculos vocant, eo quod exiliendo discurrant. Olim autem tesserae iacula*

Isidore clearly reports a gaming practice related to the *astragaloi/tali* but makes repeated use of terms or expressions related to cubic dice, like *De tesseris, Tesserae, De vocabolis tesserarum*.

It is clear that he didn't have direct knowledge of the game of astragals and that this tradition, at his time, was already lost to some part of western Europe.

The decline of astragals and the rise of cubic dice is a long process that took place in late antiquity. The coexistence of the two traditions is attested by literary and material evidence for all classical antiquity, but the late imperial Latin sources, as distinct from Greek sources, mention almost exclusively the use of cubic dice or make reference to board games played with them.

The use of knucklebones as a game of chance disappeared from the western part of the Mediterranean and their literary presence largely passed unnoticed. In some regions they were in use as toys until the 19th century and in certain regions of Italy they were still very popular as a game of aim and manual skill until the 1960s, but with the end of antiquity they lost all their symbolic value and their cultural complexity.

Since the Renaissance, the same issue affected the European philologists, who were unaware of this particular use of astragals and frequently interpreted the Latin word *tali* as a synonym of *tesserae*.

Curiously, this is probably because in the classical sources *tali* appears more prominently, hence Renaissance authors started to privilege it above the more correct *tesserae*.

When Plautus, Cicero, Ovid, Horace and Martial wrote *talus* or *tali*, they were clearly making reference to the game of knucklebones, but for centuries those passages have been considered as mentions of dice.

An interesting example of this misunderstanding is in the Christian treaty of Archelaus of Carcara, bishop of Carrhae in the 4th century, known by its Latin title, *Acta disputationis Archelai cum Manete*:

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appellabantur, a iaciendo; LXV. De vocabolis tesserarum. Iactus quisque apud lusores veteres a numero vocabatur, ut unio, trinio, quaternio, senio. Postea appellatio singulorum mutata est, et unionem canem, trinionem suppum, quaternionem planum vocabant; LXVI. De iactu tesserarum. Iactus tesserarum ita a peritis aleatoribus conponitur ut adferat quod voluerit, utputa senionem, qui eis in iactu bonum adfert. Vitant autem canem quia damnosus est; unum enim significat.

The son of the king felt sick and since the king wished him to be healed, published an edict offering a great reward to the one who would have been able to heal him. So, this one (referred to Mani, the founder of Manicheism) just like the '*cibum*', which is another way to call the ones that play at '*tali*'/dice appeared personally in front of the king saying that he could heal the child. When the king heard it, welcoming him obsequiously kept him in his favor.[122]

The ludonym in this text shows an interesting historical and linguistic stratification. Everything probably occurred because of a series of human errors and causalities which created a certain confusion, but which is very indicative of a process of re-signification.

Probably Archelaus originally wrote in Syriac[123] and later his writings were translated into Greek,[124] and afterwards into Latin. Over the centuries, the copyists would have missed the meaning of this expression and stratified a series of mistakes, probably starting from copying a Greek word without translating it.

This obscure expression must have been copied incorrectly, since the word '*cibum*' has no meaning. In this error we can clearly detect a corruption of the Greek word κύβος and the original meaning of the sentence was clearly similar to *Alea iacta est* / κύβος ἀνερρίφθω, which was quite a common locution in the Greek part of the Empire.[125]

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[122] Archelaus, *Acta disputationis Archelai cum Manete* 53: […] *regis filius egritudine quadam arreptus est, quem rex curari desiderans, edictum proposuit in vita, si quis eum curare possit, accipere praemium, multo proposito. Tum iste, sicut illi, qui 'cibum', quod nomen est tale eludere solent, praesentiam suam Manes exhibet apud regem, dicens se esse puerum curaturum, quae cum audisset rex, suscepit eum cum obsequio, ac libenter habuit.*

[123] About this cultural stratification and about Archelaus: entry *Archelao di Carcara* in PRINZIVALLI (1983: 317).

[124] Indeed, some fragments of this treaty written in Greek are quoted by Epiphanius of Salamis, *Against Heresies*, 66, 6–7; 25–31.

[125] Many literary passages report the use of this locution or similar: Ar. *Fr.* 929K.-A; Aesch. *Ag.* 32–33; Pl. *Leg.* 12, 968e–969a; Plut. *Mor. Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur* 70c-d; Plut. *Mor. De exil.* 606b-c; Men. *Fr.* 64 K.-A. in Ath. 13, 8; Chariton of Aphrodisias, *Callirhoe* 1, 7, 1; App. *B. Civ.* 2, 35; Plut. *Mor. Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata* 206c; Plut. *Caes.* 32, 6; Plut. *Pom.* 60, 2, 9; Plut. *Cor.* 3, 1; Plut. *Fab.* 14, 1; Plut. *Arat.* 29, 5 (referred to astragals); Dio. Cass. 50, 13, 3; Philostr. *V.A.* 5, 29; 7, 11, 135; *A.P.* 12, 117; Suda α 2047; ε 695; κ 2601; Phot. *Lex.* α 1639; Io. Chrys. *Sermo cum presbyter fuit ordinatu*, 20 (ed. J. P. MIGNE, P.G. 48, 694).

To explain this intricate passage, some philologists who mastered it fortunately wrote an explanation, like an intertextual footnote, which would have been useless for an ancient Greek reader but is extremely useful for us: "*cibum, quod nomen est tale eludere solent*", in which *eludere* issued by another distraction of a copyist who probably misread *talis ludere*.

Lorenzo Zaccagni edited this text in 1698, copying it from a manuscript which was corrupted exactly in relaying this line, and he marked in his footnote: "*locus valde corruptus*" and that "*forte lege(n)dum*" the sentence could have been restored as: "*qui cybum, quod nome est tali, ludere*".[126]

The intricate history of this text clearly shows how the semantic overlap of the ludonyms related to astragals and dice remained unnoticed through the centuries.

Some other intellectuals of the Renaissance remarked on the difference between dice and *tali* but didn't manage to broadly influence the humanists and philologists. One of them was Gerolamo Cardano, who treats dice and *tali* separately, but his text, written around 1560, was published almost a century later and since it was conceived as a manual for gamblers, it did not influence the philological debate.[127]

This diversity began to be seriously considered as philologically relevant only in the 18th century thanks to the pervasive references to astragals in Greek literature. In 1794 Monaldini glossed a passage of Apollonius of Rhodes[128] in which Ganymede and Eros play at knucklebones:

> the confusion, which is huge among the antiquarians (classicists), about the ancient games of the Tessere, dice, tali, or aliossi ('a li ossi', lit. 'at the bones'), &c. comes from confusing the moments with the instruments of games. The one which is mentioned here is the game of the 'aliossi', or 'tali', which is surely the most ancient, since is the simplest and is given by the nature of those small bones, that the anatomists observed in some quadrupeds and that finish the tibia in proximity with the articulation of the ankle: bones which the Greek called ἀστράγαλοι. The Latins 'Tali' and 'talloni' the Italians.

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[126] Zaccagni (1698: 98).
[127] Cardano (1663).
[128] Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 3, 112b–130; 154–155.

At image of these bones has been lately shaped the 'tessere', dice, cubes, and all the other instruments that, with a variety of rules, formed the variety of those games which has been lately comprised by the generic name of 'alea'. About the difference of the 'aliossi' which are here concerned, and the other playing instruments, dice, 'tessere', &.c. and of all these games in general consult the Collection of Gronovio, the treaties of Giulio Cesare Bulenghero 'De ludis veterum'; by Gio. Meursio 'De Ludis Graecorum'; by Daniel Suterio 'De alea, et variis ludis'; by Andrea Senetlebio 'De Alea Veterum'; and finally by Celio Calcagnino 'De Talorum Ludis'.[129]

It is significant that Monaldini opened this comment about the game of astragals by talking about the confusion of the philologists about the meaning of the ludonyms attributed to dice and knucklebones.

Much progress has been made in the field of game studies, supporting the textual mentions with material proof and evidence, and reconstructing with an unexpected degree of precision some of those gaming practices since that time.

Unfortunately, these advances still have to penetrate stably and widely in the mindset of philologists and in Latin dictionaries, which still consider the word *talus* to refer to the game of dice.

It will definitely require an effort to abandon a centuries-old tradition in translating the classics, but it would be necessary to reconsider the meaning of the word *talus*, starting to evaluate it on a chronological

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[129] MONALDINI–GIUNCHI (1794: 181–182), comment at the verse 174: *La confusione, che massima si trova fra gli antiquarj su gli antichi giuochi delle tessere, dadi, tali, od aliossi, &c. viene dal confondere i tempi, e gl'istrumenti delli giuochi medesimi. Questo che qui si accenna, che è quello degli aliossi, o tali, è certo il più antico, perché il più semplice, e dato dalla natura medesima in quei piccoli ossi, che gli anatomici hanno osservato in alcuni quadrupedi terminare la tibia presso l'articolo del piede: ossi, che i greci chiamavano ἀστράγαλοι (astragaloi). I latini 'tali', e 'talloni' gl'italiani. A somiglianza di questi ossi sono poi state dall'arte formate le tessere, i dadi, i cubi, e tutti quegli altri strumenti, che con variate regole han formato la varietà di quei giuochi, che sono poi stati compresi dal generico nome di 'alea'.*
Su la differenza intanto degli astragali, o aliossi, de' quali qui si tratta, degli altri strumenti lusorj dadi, tessere &c., e di tutti questi giuochi in generale, vedi nella Collezione del Gronovio i trattati di Giulio Cesare Bulenghero 'De ludis veterum'; di Gio. Meursio 'De Ludis Graecorum'; di Daniel Suterio 'De alea, et variis ludis'; di Andrea Senetlebio 'De Alea Veterum'; e finalmente di Celio Calcagnino 'De Talorum Ludis'.

basis, since in antiquity it indicated exclusively the knucklebones and after the Middle Ages almost uniquely, but improperly, the cubic dice.

Restoring the original meaning of this word could help to rediscover the historical depth of this gaming practice and the process of stratification/migration of its ludonyms, as well as the relevance of playing activities in understanding antiquity and the historical processes that started, ended or straddled it.

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Stoic Representation of *insania* in Seneca's *Phaedra*

Phaedra *is a drama of the presentation of human passion, with a focus on depicting how the heroine is unable to control the destructive forces of the soul. The study reveals that despite being aware of and expressing the destructive nature of her madness, she does not exercise self-control, but increasingly succumbs to the power of the passion for her stepson. After being rejected, in her insane state of mind, she accuses the young man, which has fatal consequences. Seneca often expresses Phaedra's insanity with the use of pictorial representations and compares them to the destructive forces of nature. These metaphors inspired by nature highlight an important point in Seneca's philosophy: the linkage of the cosmic and the individual. My aim is to emphasize Seneca's Stoic interpretation of virtuous life and* insania.

Keywords: Seneca, Phaedra, passion, *insania*, metaphors

Phaidra/Phaedra in dramatic literature

The tragedy of Phaidra's unhappy love has inspired many authors from antiquity to the present day. It was staged twice by Euripides, but since the first version of the drama failed, he changed it, so as not to offend the moral sense of the Athenian audience.[1] The second version of the two tragedies is left to us. Sophocles also wrote about the queen's story, but we just have a few fragments from the work, making it very difficult to compare it to Seneca's *Phaedra*. Phaedra's passion for her stepson has been mentioned or explained by several authors in Roman literature, but not in the genre of drama.[2]

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[1] In the first version, Phaidra personally reveals her love for her stepson.

[2] Brady (2014: 12). See Cic. *N.D.* 3, 76; *Off.* 1, 32; Verg. *A.* 6, 437–458; Ov. *Her.* 4; Prop. 2, 50. It is first mentioned in Greek poetry by Homer in the history of Bellerophontes (Hom. *Il.* 6.).

The tragedy of Euripides begins with the monologue of Aphrodite, in which the goddess swears revenge against the young man because he worships only the virgin Artemis. The plot is clear from the beginning of the drama, as Aphrodite comes up with her plan to catch up with his father's curse on Hippolytus.[3] The young man is just returning home in glory to Artemis, mocking Aphrodite in spite of his servant's warning. Haughty, aristocratic, and masculine traits blend into his identity, and all this is intertwined into a kind of cold, rational denial of love. Phaidra, as a helpless victim of passion, wants to follow the rational advice of the nurse, but she does not have the strength to obey the word of common sense. She is aware of the insoluble contrast between morality and passion, which is why she decides to flee to suicide, but is persuaded by the nurse's plan to seduce. The nurse confesses her mistress's fatal love for the young man, but receives a cold rejection. In order to save the appearance of her honour and reputation, and to take revenge on the young man who refuses her love, the Queen leaves a letter to her husband falsely accusing Hippolytus, and she commits suicide. The second part of the drama depicts the clash of Theseus and Hippolytos, who believes in the calumny of Phaidra. After the father curses his son, Hippolytos is dragged to death by his horses. At the end of the drama, Artemis sheds light on the terrible reality.[4]

Seneca's *Phaedra*

Phaedra is one of Seneca's most successful tragedies. It was the first antique drama to be performed during the Renaissance. Seneca reworked the myth based on Euripides, enriching it with new power, and Phaedra's characterization was also given a stronger image, especially in describing her open longing for Hippolytus. Seneca's *Phaedra* also captured the imagination of later tragic poets, especially Racine's.[5]

Comparing the Greek and Roman works, Euripides accepts more the heroine's character flaws as inherent traits, while Seneca explores the destructive power of passion, reveals the turning of rejected love

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[3] E. *Hipp*. 217–222.
[4] GOFF (1990: 106).
[5] MAYER (2014).

into anger and then revenge and destructiveness, thus focusing on the deep soul representation.[6] Seneca brings up Theseus's affairs at the beginning of the drama, prompting his audience to ask if Phaedra would be less attracted to her stepson if he had been more loyal to her.[7] Euripides explicitly emphasizes the inadequacy of Phaidra's love, without giving any reason for its potential background. There are also differences in the role of the nurse. While in the Greek play the nurse, seeing the Queen's suffering, goes on to intercede herself, in the Roman work she vigorously tries to dissuade her mistress from the sinful path of passion. She only begins to support the revelation of Phaedra's love when sees that her mistress wants to commit suicide.[8] In Euripides' drama, everything is done by the nurse, there is no communication between Phaidra and the young man, but in the Latin tragedy we can read about Phaedra's heartbreaking confession and then cold rejection.[9] While in the Greek work the Queen commits suicide due to the shame, Seneca's Phaedra only decides this when she finds out that Hippolytus is dead. Unlike Seneca's heroine, Euripides' Phaidra takes no responsibility, accusing the young man in a letter before her suicide, which her husband finds in the hands of the dead woman. Then Artemis appears and sheds light on the truth. In the Senecan play, on the other hand, Phaedra herself confesses her sin to Theseus.[10] In my view, these differences show that Seneca, as a Stoic philosopher, places more emphasis on portraying Phaedra's soul than Euripides. The development and driving forces of the madness of passion come to the fore more than in the work of his Greek predecessor, so the audience can understand the formation and destructive power of *insania*. Phaedra represents the developing human being at the end of the play as she takes responsibility for her lies, reflecting the importance of stoic self-examination.

For Seneca, the figure of Phaedra is a kind of "mirror" that presents the destructive and invincible madness of lust in line with Stoic tradi-

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[6] ROISMAN (2005).

[7] Sen. *Phaedr.* 96–97.

[8] Sen. *Phaedr.* 277.

[9] Sen. *Phaedr.* 600–718.

[10] See ROISMAN (2005: 72–88) for more details.

tions. Phaedra calls her madness with the term *furor*, which pushes her into sin.[11] The heroine is aware of the guilt of the passions in her soul, which she expresses.[12] In her speech, the Stoic theses are presented, that is, in the full state of passion, man causes the loss of himself (and his environment), and in this case he no longer listens to common sense, as the power of madness will dominate the ration.[13] Despite being aware of and expressing the destructive nature of her state of mind, the heroine does not exercise self-control, but increasingly allows herself to fall into the power of passion.

The nurse's speech reflects important views of Stoic philosophy, the emphasis on self-control, and the importance of a person captive to passion "wanting to be healed".[14] If we recognize the passions in our soul in time, we can stifle the full manifestation of the „disease", but self-knowledge and willpower are essential for this. So the existence of the will, in Seneca's words, is "already half healing," as it attracts the existence of self-control, that is, a kind of higher level of personality development through which *ratio* provides harmonious, moderate conditions in the human soul. The nurse's speech is thus an example of how Seneca's prose and tragic works can be linked, and theses of Stoic philosophy can be found in both genres. The thesis found in the prose works that the first "blows" of the manifestation of passions (*primus motus*)[15] must be recognized and must be done against them is reflected back in the words of the nurse.

Therefore discipline, will, self-control (*obseruatio*) is essential, by which our life can be balanced, free from the negative effects of emotions. While the first "motion" (*primus motus*) is not intentional, in the second stage the person surrenders to the emotions in the soul, and in the third phase it is completely impossible to reverse the process.[16] The nurse conveys this view: if we suppress the passion at the beginning, we

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[11] Sen. *Phaedr*. 178–179: *sed furor cogit sequi peiora.*

[12] Sen. *Phaedr*. 179–180: *uadit animus in praeceps sciens / remeatque frustra sana consilia appetens.*

[13] Sen. *Phaedr*. 184: *uicit ac regnat furor.* Cf. E. *Med*. 1078–1079.

[14] Sen. *Phaedr*. 249: *pars sanitatis uelle sanari fuit.*

[15] Sen. *Ir*. 2, 4, 1.

[16] Sen. *Ir*. 2, 4, 1.

can triumph over it, while if not, we cannot prevent the development of *insania* later on.

Phaedra is aware of the destructive power of her passion, but since she feels unable to restrain herself, there is only one path assigned to her: suicide.[17] Instead of fighting against herself, Phaedra intends to flee to suicide, which she marks as a victory. At the same time, the nurse, worried about her mistress' life, convinces her that she could rather try to conquer Hippolytus' heart. The nurse uses the term *mente non sana* for Phaedra's mental state and describes at length how the heroine behaves due to her insane mind: she is death pale,[18] cannot sleep,[19] insecure, and nothing distracts her.

The nurse also brings up the tendency of the upper social class to be immoderate in order to reflect Phaedra's state of mind.[20] According to the nurse, the main cause of *insania* is the immodesty, the hedonistic way of life, the possibility of which is given to the higher social class, and of which Seneca himself was a part. The philosopher carries the same message in this passage as in *De providentia*. According to him, people from lower social class tend to keep moderation, while the rich always crave for new stimuli and lust, do not respect the law and traditions.[21] We can see that Seneca takes a kind of holistic approach, since, as we have observed in the prose writings,[22] he thinks that there is a reason, a trigger for every manifestation of madness. By highlighting the greater propensity of the upper classes to insanity and the family inheritance of passion, he emphasizes that the stimuli of the environment in

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[17] Sen. *Phaedr.* 250–254: *Non omnis animo cessit ingenuo pudor. / paremus, altrix. qui regi non uult amor, / uincatur. haud te, fama, maculari sinam. / haec sola ratio est, unicum effugium mali: /uirum sequamur, morte praeuertam nefas.*

[18] Sen. *Phaedr.* 586: *ora morti similis obduxit color.*

[19] Sen. *Phaedr.* 369: *somni immemor.*

[20] Sen. *Phaedr.* 208–214: *cur in penates rarius tenues subit / haec delicatas eligens pestis domos? / cur sancta paruis habitat in tectis Venus / mediumque sanos uulgus affectus tenet / et se coercent modica, contra diuites / regnoque fulti plura quam fas est petunt?*

[21] Cf. Sen. *Prov.* 4, 10: *cum omnia quae excesserunt modum noceant, periculosissima felicitatis intemperantia est: mouet cerebrum, in uanas mentem imagines euocat, multum inter falsum ac uerum mediae caliginis fundit.*

[22] See, e.g., Sen. *Ep.* 95, 16–17; Sen. *Q. N.* 6, 2, 3; Sen. *Ep.* 88, 19.

which we grow up determine our mental health.[23] If a person is not at a high level of self-awareness and cannot control his/her passion, madness will control his/her actions, leading to destruction. This fact, therefore, again supports the theory that tragedies (in this case, *Phaedra*) carry a Stoic philosophical message like prose works.

In the tragedy, the heroine identifies herself in terms of fate and family history. In her confessions she seeks her destiny, which, although she tries to avoid it, finally submits herself to it.[24] As a Cretan woman, she sees herself destined to repeat Pasiphae's[25] self-destructive behaviour, regardless of the nurse's strong claim that willpower can provide complete freedom from the captivity of the past.[26] It is also worth highlighting the tradition of her family roots deriving from her grandmother: she is Europe, with whom Zeus slept in the form of a bull, from which Minos, the father of Phaedra, was born.[27] Phaedra refers to the minotaur as *nostra monstra*,[28] emphasizing the family heritage of savagery, "monsterism". Phaedra is aware of this "hereditary tradition," as she reveals in her first speech that she recognizes the same forbidden desire in herself that Pasiphae has experienced. The use of *noster amor* points out that the unnatural female desire (*furor*) flows through the female members of the family as a stamp of common destiny.[29] According to her, there is no „Minos girl" who can live in fulfilled love, because family heritage, curse, sin are inherited.[30] When Phaedra reveals her love to Hippolytus, she recognizes and declares that she carries the curse of the

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[23] Sen. *Ir.* 2, 20, 1.

[24] Euripides mentions the family tradition only once.

[25] Sen *Phaedr.* 242: *meminimus matris.*

[26] ELIOPOULOS (2016: 94–110): In the author's interpretation, the path of passion in the *Phaedra* consists of the following characteristics: identity disorientation; weak will; the idea that death is the only solution; elimination of the ration; two interpretations of nature; acceptance of subordination to destiny; appearance of physical symptoms.

[27] Sen *Phaedr.* 303–304: *fronte nunc torva petulans iuvencus / virginum stravit sua terga ludo.* Here, the expression *virginum ... ludo* may refer to the wording of Ovidius *ludere virginibus* when he talks about the abduction of Europe. (Ov. *Met.* 2, 845).

[28] Sen. *Phaedr.* 122.

[29] Sen. *Phaedr.* 112–114: *Quo tendis, anime? quid furens saltus amas? / fatale miserae matris agnosco malum: / peccare noster nouit in siluis amor .*

[30] Sen. *Phaedr.* 127–128: *ulla Minois leui / defuncta amore est, iungitur semper nefas.*

family, that is, she finally comes to know the "destiny of their house": the female members of the family rush into their loss and are aware of it but they cannot oppose it. She declares that she will pursue her love wherever, overcoming all obstacles, through fire and water,[31] as she is driven by her madness.[32]

The nurse and Hippolytus also emphasize and compare Phaedra's love with that of her mother.[33]According to Hippolytus Phaedra even transcends the guilt of her "monster-conceiving" mother, and considers a direct connection to be discovered between the mother and Phaedra, meaning she was already surrounded by a kind of "monstrosity" in Pasiphae's uterus. In the drama, the womb is not only a symbolic life-blood of this "monstrosity" but also a symbol of excessive desire and deception.[34] We can see this in Phaedra's attempt to manipulate when, knowing the sinful nature of her desire, she tries to transform it into a legitimate form and legitimize it.[35] If she can convince Hippolytus to marry her, her desire will not be a sin. She hopes to do so by bringing Hippolytus to the throne.[36] When Hippolytus appears, she confesses her love to the young man.[37] She is burned by a desire that pervades her body, all the way to her viscera.[38] She takes responsibility for her emotions and, unlike the heroine of Euripides, personally confesses her passion.

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[31] Sen. *Phaedr*. 700–701: *te uel per ignes, per mare insanum sequar / rupesque et amnes, unda quos torrens rapit.*

[32] Sen. *Phaedr*. 702–703: *quacumque gressus tuleris hac amens agar-- / iterum, superbe, genibus aduoluor tuis.* She makes a similar statement when she learns of the death of her love: 1179–1180: *et te per undas perque Tartareos lacus, / per Styga, per amnes igneos amens sequar.*

[33] *Phaedr*. 169–172; Sen. *Phaedr*. 688–693.

[34] BENTON (2003: 107–108).

[35] Sen. *Phaedr*. 596–598: *admouimus nefanda. si coepta exequor, / forsan iugali crimen abscondam face: / honesta quaedam scelera successus facit.*

[36] Sen. *Phaedr*. 618–623: *te imperia regere, me decet iussa exequi / muliebre non est regna tutari urbium. / tu qui iuuentae flore primaeuo uiges, / ciues paterno fortis imperio rege; / sinu receptam supplicem ac seruam tege: / miserere uiduae.*

[37] Sen. *Phaedr*. 640–641: *Pectus insanum uapor / amorque torret.*

[38] Sen. *Phaedr*. 41–643.

When Phaedra's proposal to Hippolytus fails and Theseus returns, her revenge and anger rises due to the disappointment, and, concealing her own sin, accuses the young man for his father. Women emerge as masters of betrayal and manipulation as the nurse comes up with her plan.[39] At the same time, Phaedra goes even further: she hides her true sin as if she was hiding another. The returning Theseus is informed by the nurse that her mistress is in no way willing to reveal her grief, taking it with her to the grave. When Phaedra sees the time has come to attack Hippolytus, her strategically structured speech reflects consciousness: in her first words to Theseus, she highlights his royalism and, as soon as she begins to talk about what happened, mentions herself as queen and wife to strengthen her position.[40] Phaedra consciously lies, which she does because of her madness (*dementia*) caused by her love, but at the end of the drama (unlike Euripides' Phaidra) she takes responsibility and confesses everything.[41] According to Gill, Seneca is considered innovative in his tragedies due to his interest in self-examination and self-awareness.[42] Phaedra's responsibility can be interpreted as the result of this process of self-examination, as she confesses her sin – unlike the Greek predecessor – and commits suicide as self-punishment. The chorus refers to the heroine with the term *uecors*[43] when sees Phaedra with a sword in her hand, who shows the symptoms of *dementia*. She sees no other way out to endure her pain, she chooses death.

Seneca's heroine identifies herself with her raging desire throughout the drama, but she does nothing against it.[44] In line with Stoic theses, she portrays a person who recognizes her passion and the fact that she should stifle herself, but finally let her madness unfold.[45] *Phaedra* is a drama of the presentation of human passion, which presents the destructive forces of the soul. The wise man is the one who succeeds in

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[39] Sen. *Phaedr.* 719–721: *Deprensa culpa est. anime, quid segnis stupes? / regeramus ipsi crimen atque ultro impiam / Venerem arguamus: scelere uelandum est scelus*.

[40] BENTON (2003: 109).

[41] Sen. *Phaedr.* 1193: *quod ipsa demens pectore insano hauseram*.

[42] GILL (2009).

[43] Sen. *Phaedr.* 1155: *strictoque uecors Phaedra quid ferro parat?*

[44] GILL (2009: 65–84).

[45] MAYER (2014: 475–482).

this, who is competent in weighing his judgments, who "cures" himself from the disease of passion, who can change his destiny by will, listens fully to his rational thinking and trusts that his emotions cannot influence him.[46]

Metaphors of *insania* in Seneca's *Phaedra*

Since *Phaedra* is first and foremost a drama of passion, the most common metaphors are related to erotic desire. Fire as passion (*amor / furor*) is one of the most common symbols that devours the heroine both mentally and physically.[47] In the wording of the chorus, the desire of love is a disease that spreads through the channels of the body containing vital fluids.[48] The fire of passion destroys everything, penetrates through the blood vessels all the way to the marrow, and consumes our insides. Phaedra herself uses it to visualize her insane love.[49] The flame of the sinful passion in Phaedra's soul matures and grows like the steam emanating from Mount Etna. Her desire is not only an inner fire, but also a disease (*malum*) that burns and completely destroys the woman. The chorus also emphasizes Cupid's power, as the warmth of the flames of his arrows is known all over the world.[50] According to the nurse, the insane flame of passion can no longer be silenced,[51] and gives a long description of the physical manifestations of her mistress' *furor*.[52] Describing Phaedra's passion as a disease, while focusing on physical symptoms, reveals the physical and mental changes of the heroine at the same time. The hopeless passion devours the queen both externally and internally: she is sleepless, reluctant, weak, lifeless, pale, and thinks of suicide.

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[46] See e.g., DL 7, 101–103, Gal. PHP. 5, 2, 49; 5, 3,1.

[47] In the drama of Euripides, the metaphor of fire does not occur often.

[48] Sen. *Phaedr*. 279–282: *labitur totas furor in medullas / igne furtivo populante venas. / non habet latam data plaga frontem, / sed vorat tectas penitus medullas*.

[49] Sen. *Phaedr*. 101–102: *alitur et crescit malum / et ardet intus qualis Aetnaeo vapor / exundat antro*.

[50] Sen. *Phaedr*. 290–295: *iuvenum feroces / concitat flammas senibusque fessis/rursus extinctos revocat calores, / virginum ignoto ferit igne pectus / et iubet caelo superos relicto / vultibus falsis habitare terras*.

[51] Sen. *Phaedr*. 360: *finisque flammis nullus insanis erit*.

[52] Sen. *Phaedr*. 360–380.

The storm is also a common metaphor in the drama. Seneca contrasts *furor* as a storm with the "ship" of *ratio*.[53] When the barge is already filled with water (that is to say, passion has largely triumphed), the ship runs aground, and the waves of sea storm triumph over the ship's passengers (i.e. passion takes over control and *insania* manifests itself). Phaedra, when she learns of Hippolytus' death, asks Poseidon to strike her with all his might, to send against her the "monsters" of the sea, for she lied falsely, and for this reason the young man was sentenced to death.[54] Hippolytus also prays for the destruction of the storm when Phaedra confesses her love to him: he asks Zeus to strike him with his fiery lightning bolt.[55] A similar phenomenon can be observed in Theseus' speech when the truth is revealed and he realizes that he has innocently punished his son.[56] This cosmic projection[57] and the internal monologues and struggles arising from individual suffering shed light on an important theory of Stoic philosophy. The control of the human soul is not influenced by external forces, but by man himself, the power of passions characterizes the wise man. Seneca extends human behaviour, inner spiritual conflicts, and passion into the cosmos by displaying insecurity and unbridledness in nature. Pictorial images of the individual psychological state and nature, the state of the world, are simultaneously in

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[53] Sen. *Phaedr.* 181–185: *sic cum gravatam navita adversa ratem / propellit unda, cedit in vanum labor / et victa prono puppis aufertur vado. / quid ratio possit? vicit ac regnat furor / potensque tota mente dominatur deus.*

[54] Sen. *Phaedr.* 1159–1163: *Me me, profundi saeue dominator freti, / inuade et in me monstra caerulei maris / emitte, quidquid intimo Tethys sinu / extrema gestat, quidquid Oceanus uagis / complexus undis ultimo fluctu tegit.*

[55] Sen. *Phaedr.* 682–684: *in me tona, me fige, me uelox cremet / transactus ignis: sum nocens, merui mori:/ placui nouercae*. See SEGAL (2008: 136–156): According to Segal, there are two important elements in Seneca's dramatic assertation: self-revelation and the frequent connection of nature and the individual when the protagonist places herself in the center of the world and declares: the whole cosmos contributes and is involved, which also functions as a kind of punishment. This poetic technique is nicely observed in these passages.

[56] Sen. *Phaedr.* 1238: *Dehisce tellus, recipe me dirum chaos.*

[57] In *Oedipus*, for example, a recurring motif is the relationship between the microcosm and the macrocosm, the upheaval of nature indicates an individual's mental turmoil, e.g., *Oed.* 371: *natura versa est.*

line with the Stoic concept of the unified cosmos.[58] This can also be seen in the following passages: the sea floods and threatens the land,[59] the earth trembles,[60] like the messenger's lips when reporting the events.[61]

The assignment of the human soul's turmoil to the sea plays a significant role throughout the messenger's speech, but most importantly in the passage below:

> tantus Auster Sicula disturbat freta
> nec tam furens Ionius exsurgit sinus
> regnante Coro, saxa cum fluctu tremunt
> et cana summum spuma Leucaten ferit.[62]

The use of the term *furens* (1012) links the storm in particular to Phaedra's passion, and *regnante Coro* (1013) not only presents the natural world in terms of human social and political forms, but also symbolizes that the passion has taken control and rationality can no longer prevail in either the human soul or nature. The term *tremunt* in the same line conveys a connection to line 1034, where the mouth of the messenger trembles (1050), just as the earth.[63] This world inspired by Stoic philosophy[64]: spiritual turmoil causes sympathetic chain reactions in the envi-

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[58] SEGAL (2008: 136–156).

[59] Sen. *Phaedr.* 1015–1016: *consurgit ingens pontus in vastum aggerem / tumidumque monstro pelagus in terras ruit.*

[60] Sen. *Phaedr.* 1050: *tremuere terrae.*

[61] Sen. *Phaedr.* 1034: *os quassat tremor.*

[62] Sen. *Phaedr.* 1008–1014.

[63] The notion of Aphrodite's or Eros' immanent, nature-depicting power is not new: in Hesiod's *Theogonia* (120–122) he triumphs over strong men and gods and he is one of the earliest indigenous gods. Similar thoughts can be found in Seneca's works, where Cupid, the son of Venus, dominates not only humans and gods (283–324), but all creatures of earth, air, and sea (325–351), which theory culminates in the following passage: Sen. *Phaedr.* 352–353: *vindicat omnes / natura sibi. Nihil immune est.*

[64] SEGAL (2008: 136). According to Stoic philosophy, human beings must live according to their personal nature, with a full understanding of the universe's system and must utilise this knowledge to inform their actions. This can be put down to the fact that Stoic philosophy is: *divinorum et humanorum scientiam* (Sen. *epist.* 89,5). Seneca dramatizes the protagonist's suffering with a wide range of pictorial representations that connect man and nature, and projects the "personal emotion into a cosmic frame."

ronment: this can be seen primarily Phaedra's "unnatural" passion for Hippolytus, and Pasiphae's insane love for the Cretan bull, which eventually leads to the terrible cataclysm,[65] and to the death of the young man.

For Phaedra, one of the most common metaphors of her and Pasiphae's insane passion is the wilderness, the world of nature, the scene of the passion that created a monster like the minotaur, where the mad deeds are acceptable. In this interpretation, nature symbolizes for Phaedra the place where she can treat Hippolytus as a potential prey, i.e. she lives with the boundless impulses of the hunter, so that the young man symbolically plays the role of a prey.[66] From the beginning of the drama, the Phaedra uses the metaphor of nature, the wild world, which depicts her insane love.[67] Calling herself as mad (*furens*), she admits that her guilty love is born in the woods, and the term *noster amor* also sheds light on the family heritage, the attitude of passion for nature, the guilty love that arises in the wild.

Phaedra, identifying her love and herself with the world of nature, discards her richly decorated clothes and desires clothes that match the wild. Her garment symbolizes the sinful desire, rooted in the depths of nature, and at the same time her new identity, which is entirely subordinate to Hippolytus.[68] Giving up her queen identity, she puts on the hunter's attire, enjoying the freedom of her new role and identity, wants to go into the woods and set out in search of Hippolytus. She adapts her appearance to that of the Amazon, which requires simple clothing and weapons.

The womb is also a dominant metaphor in the drama: both Hippolytus and the nurse refer to the fact that the sinful family heritage is matur-

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ROSENMEYER (1989: 124) claims that the play emphasizes the integration of the human and the cosmic. In this mosaic of *sympatheia* and *contagio*, the ostensible theme of divine punishment is neglected. For more details, see e.g. Sen. *epist*. 90,3; INWOOD (2008: 167–168); SETAIOLI (2007: 334).

[65] Sen. *Phaedr*. 1081: *incurrit ore corniger ponti horridus.*

[66] See PRATT (2009: 46–48; 50–51); ROSENMEYER (1993: 107–112; 149–159).

[67] Sen. *Phaedr*. 112–114: *quid furens saltus amas?* (…) *peccare noster nouit in siluis amor.*

[68] Sen. *Phaedr*. 397–403: *[talis seueri mater Hippolyti fuit.]* / *qualis relictis frigidi Ponti plagis* / *egit cateruas Atticum pulsans solum* / *Tanaitis aut Maeotis et nodo comas* / *coegit emisitque, lunata latus* / *protecta pelta, talis in siluas ferar .*

ing in the womb. When Phaedra confesses her love to Hippolytus, the young man brands her worse than Phaedra's monster-bearing mother.[69] Hippolytus discovers a clear connection between the womb that gave birth to the minotaur and Phaedra, i.e., since Phaedra was also carried by the same uterus, the "monstrosity," the sinful family legacy already surrounded her in Pasiphae's womb and she absorbed it. The nurse also alludes to the insane passion in the family at the beginning of the tragedy, and in her speech the womb is a symbol of the inheritance of *insania* rooted in the family.[70] So the "monster-like" psychic retaliation of the family begins in the infected uterus, i.e., the uterus is a metaphor for the inheritance of insanity. Seneca also presents this phenomenon with the overthrow of the order of nature, since, as explained above, he extends *insania* into the cosmos, i.e., the images of the individual psychological state and nature are simultaneously in harmony. Due to the fact that Phaedra's passion is *insania*, the order of the world collapses. Seneca interprets this phenomenon in the web of family inheritance, i.e. the love of the female members is in all cases destructive, like the fire and the sea storm, like the womb which carries "monstrosity" or like the lush and wild nature.

We can see, that *Phaedra* is a drama of human passion, the representation of the destructive forces in the soul. I agree with Eliopoulos' view that Seneca presents the peculiarities of passion in the tragedy in accordance with Stoic traditions.[71] Such a peculiarity in my research is that we must recognize the first "blows" of passions in order to stop their formation; or the tendency of the upper social class to be immoderate, their greater propensity for insanity and the family inheritance of the madness of passion. Seneca emphasizes these phenomena in his prose works[72] as well as in the tragedy. We can also mention the cosmic pro-

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[69] Sen. *Phaedr.* 688–693: *o maius ausa matre monstrifera malum / genetrice peior! illa se tantum stupro / contaminavit, et tamen tacitum diu / crimen biformi partus exhibuit nota, / scelusque matris arguit vultu truci / ambiguus infans. ille te venter tulit!*

[70] Sen. *Phaedr.* 170–176: *memorque matris metue concubitus nouos. / miscere thalamos patris et gnati apparas / uteroque prolem capere confusam impio? / perge et nefandis uerte naturam ignibus. / cur monstra cessant? Aula cur fratris uacat? / prodigia totiens orbis insueta audiet, / natura totiens legibus cedet suis, / quotiens amabit Cressa?*

[71] ELIOPOULUS (2016: 94–117).

[72] E.g. Sen. *Prov.* 4, 10.

jection and the internal monologues that result from individual suffer-ing. In Segal's view, in the tragedy, the visual images of the tragic psy-chological state and nature are simultaneously in line with the Stoic concept of the unified cosmos.[73] I agree with his observation: we have seen that Seneca dramatizes the protagonist's suffering with a wide range of pictorial representations that connect man and nature. This du-al rhetorical representation sheds light on the author's relationship to Stoic philosophy.

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[73] SEGAL (2008: 136–156).

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Was Reish Lakish a Gladiator?

It is often mentioned that Reish Lakish (Shim'on ben Lakish), one of the most important rabbis in the land of Israel during the 3rd century AD, had been a gladiator before he became a rabbi. They all base their opinion on one legend in the Babylonian Talmud, and especially one sentence in it. The current article wishes to revisit this issue and to prove that there is no concrete basis for this assumption.

Keywords: gladiators, Talmud, Reish Lakish, Resh Lakish, the Roman Games, Shimon ben Lakish, Gittin

The arena and the shows that were performed in it were a vital part in the daily life of a Roman city.[1] This seems to be true in large parts of the Empire.[2] The most famous spectacle was the gladiatorial games. Like the games, Jews were spread all over the Empire,[3] comprising a considerable percentage of the population.[4] And so, the question whether Jews tended to take part in the games, and even fight as gladiators, is an appealing and obvious one.

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[1] With regards to the history and the spread of the games, and their place in Roman culture: Nosov (2009: 11–43); Weiss (1995: 2–4).

[2] For a summary of archaeological finds, of arenas and shows in the land of Israel: Weiss (2001: 431–433).

[3] Regarding the spread of Jews, see: Kraemer (2020); Ahuvia (2020); Olshanetsky (2018: 10–11).

[4] On the difficulty in guessing the size of populations during antiquity, and for a few assessments of the number of Jews in the Empire and of their percentage in the general population, see: McGing (2002); Israel assumes that the number of Jews in the Roman period was between 4.5 and 7 million, a large majority of whom lived under the rule of the Emperors of Rome: Israel (n.d.).

The most famous story that was used as evidence for Jewish gladiators was the story of Reish Lakish *(Shim'on ben Lakish)*, one of the most famous Rabbis in the land of Israel in the 3rd century AD.[5] Therefore, the current article will examine the story of Reish Lakish and determine whether this figure was indeed a gladiator when he was young, while proving that there is no basis for such an assumption.

There were various scholars and academics whose entire foundation for stating that Reish Lakish had been a gladiator was based on the following sentence from the Talmud:

'ריש לקיש זבין נפשיה ללודאי.'[6]
Reish Lakish sold himself to a *lwd'y*/to the *ludim*

Rocca, Weiss and other scholars agree with each other that the terms *ludi* / *lwd'y* (לודי/לודאי),[7] *ludin* (לודין) and *ludim* (לודים) are all referring to gladiators.[8] This statement is in tandem with the opinions of the scholars preceding them, and they never raised further questions about these terms.[9] However, I think this translation should not be regarded as the only possible one.

Josephus himself noted that at least two nations were called Ludim, and there is a probability that the sentence in the Talmud refers to one of them. The first to be mentioned by Josephus are the Ludieim,[10] a people originating from one of the eight sons of Egypt.[11] Shalit, the translator of Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* into Hebrew, explained that he used the plural form for the sons/nations, but maybe it should have been more accu-

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[5] Even the Encyclopaedia of the Jewish Religion defined him as such: WERBLOWSKY–WIGODER (1986: 360); this stance also prevails in academic publications: WASSERSTEIN (1979–1980); BRETTLER–POLIAKOFF (1990); ROCCA (2006: 294); GROSSMARK (2007: 76–77); BAR-ASHER SIEGAL (2015).

[6] Babylonian Talmud, *Gittin*, 47a.

[7] BRETTLER and POLIAKOFF (1990: 95, n. 6) correctly state that in Aramaic, *lwd'y* (לודאי) literally means Lydians. And so, it is very surprising that immediately after, they accept the opinions of JASTROW (1903: 695) and the rest so easily.

[8] WEISS (2001: 442); GROSSMARK (2007: 77).

[9] BRETTLER–POLIAKOFF (1990: 93–98); LIEBERMAN (1942: 142).

[10] Jos. *Ant.* 1, 136–137.

[11] The origin of this legend is in the *Bible*: *Genesis*, 10, 13; and: *First Chronicles*, 1, 11.

rate to translate them into the singular form.[12] In this case, their name would be *ludi* (לודי). The second nation Josephus mentioned are the Lydians, once known as the Ludim, who were the descendants of Lud,[13] son of Shem. According to Shalit, their identification as Lydians made it possible to differentiate them from the Ludieim, the descendants of Egypt who were dwelling in Africa. In his opinion, it was only natural that Josephus was surveying the different nations outside of Africa and came across the Lydians, who were living on the banks of the River Maeander and were seen as the descendants of Lud. This identification was also convenient for Josephus since the scholars of his time saw those nations as the etymological source for the word for game in Latin – *ludus*. The common belief at the time was that these people were the inventors of games.[14]

Moreover, the modern scholars' interpretation is that the term in Reish Lakish's story refers to a gladiator, or to someone affiliated to the games in the arena. This is especially puzzling as in all the dictionaries that they rely on, the term gladiator (which means a performer) has always been listed just after the term referring to the nations mentioned before.[15] Furthermore, the Thesaurus Syriacus, a dictionary which this claim is partially based on, only mentions that the inhabitants of Lydia are called Ludiem (לודים) in Hebrew, while it makes no claim to any word in Hebrew for Gladiators (*ludarius*).[16] It is clear that their similarity in spelling and pronunciation could have easily caused confusion, as most Jews of the period, especially those living in Babylon and the Persian Empire, did not have an excellent command of the Latin language. The two words sound almost identical and so the words would look similar when transcribed into Aramaic. This close resemblance made it only logical that the common belief then attributed the invention of the games to these people.

Furthermore, we must check the sentence and the inherent logic of it in the different translations. It is indeed possible and even sensible if

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[12] Jos. *Ant.*, trans. AVRAHAM SHALIT, 16, n. 139.

[13] Jos. *Ant.* 1, 145.

[14] Jos. *Ant.* trans. AVRAHAM SHALIT, 17, n. 165.

[15] JASTROW (1903: 695); *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 1095.

[16] *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 1095.

they would have seen it as: "Reish Lakish sold himself to be a gladia-
tor." But different researchers found themselves grappling with the
same problem, as it seems that they thought the translation should be:
"Reish Lakish sold himself to a gladiator/gladiators." This is fundamen-
tally wrong as the owner of a gladiator was known as *lanista*. And so, in
order to settle the matter, they have concluded that *lwd'y* (לודאי) is either
referring to the *lanista*, or it is a general term for someone who is associ-
ated with the games.[17] However, none of the researchers pointed out
that while there is a phonetic connection between one of the Latin terms
for gladiator (*ludius*) and the *lwd'y* (לודאי) in the Talmud, there is no such
connection to the term *lanista*.

As I have stated, the only possibility where we can understand the
sentence as relating to gladiators is if the translation is: "Reish Lakish sold
himself to be a gladiator." But this is only one way to translate the sen-
tence. The great problem with this sentence is that the term *lwd'y* (לודאי) is
foreign and the number of times that it appears in the Talmud is too small
to determine the foreign word it refers to. Even in all the other times Re-
ish Lakish is mentioned, he is described as a man who was only associat-
ed with brigands or criminals (ליסטים) and not with *ludim* (לודים).[18]

The scholars understood that this sentence could not be taken sepa-
rately from the rest of the story and thus it needed to be examined in
connection with the claim that Reish Lakish was a gladiator. In the story,
Reish Lakish is granted a last wish a day before he is meant to die. Brett-
ler and Poliakoff saw this last wish as a representation of the gladiator's
ceremonial meal before battle, which was called the *cena libera*. They
claimed that the difference between the two is minor and insignificant to
the issue.[19] But the difference between the two is actually enormous;
men who were sent to be executed in the arena were not gladiators and
there is no direct link between a ceremonial meal and the last wish of a

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[17] GROSSMARK (2007: 77, n. 59); LIEBERMAN (1942: 148); WEISS (2001: 442, n. 70); WEISS
(1995: 16).

[18] Eichah Rabbah, *Petichta*, 15; Kohelet Rabbah, 7, 26, 1.

[19] BRETTLER–POLIAKOFF (1990: 97); WEISS embraced their opinion full-heartedly: WEISS
(1995: 16); WEISS (2001: 442, n. 70).

condemned man.[20] Moreover, only a small percentage of gladiators died in the arena,[21] as they were greatly esteemed performers.[22] Many among them were free men and there were even Emperors who participated as gladiators in the arena.[23] In addition, the gladiators received first-rate medical care. Even the famous physician Galen of Pergamon started his career treating gladiators.[24]

The story of Reish Lakish is located just after a debate in the tractate (מסכת) of *Gittin* and might be connected to it. The debate is about redeeming and releasing Jewish captives and slaves whose owners are foreign. Such a debate appears both in the Jerusalem Talmud,[25] and the Babylonian Talmud,[26] and mentions the term Ludim. The use of the pluralised term Ludim creates the logical problem that was explained above regarding the fact that the person would sell himself not to gladiators but to the *lanistae*. It is clear from the debate that the selling of a

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[20] As part of the desire to keep the gladiators alive, they received a nutritious vegetarian diet as well as supplements which included calcium to strengthen their bones and prevent them from being broken. This diet allowed the gladiators to keep a healthy fatty layer which assisted in preventing life-threatening injuries and merely allowed for bloody, superficial injuries that made the spectacle more appealing to the audience. Most of what we know about the gladiator's diet and its purposes is based on the research conducted on the anthropological remains from the gladiator's cemetery in Ephesus: KANZ–GROSSSCHMIDT (2005); CURRY (2008).

[21] Regarding the fact that most combats ended with one opponent surrendering to the other, and not by the death of one of the participants, see: CARTER (2006: 651–653); HAXBY (2018: 177); regarding the survival of gladiators and their ability to conduct a long career, see: CURRY (2008: 29–30); CARTER (2015: 39–40).

[22] A successful gladiator would have been a real celebrity. They were considered attractive men by the rich women of Rome and some of them were paid considerable sums of money in order to spend time with these ladies. Regarding the story of Empress Faustina, the wife of Marcus Aurelius and the mother of Commodus, where according to one of the stories she had a gladiator as a lover and may have also been pregnant from him: CARTER (2015: 50); Dio, 62, 9, 56.

[23] Regarding the Emperors Nero and Commodus and their participation in the arena: GROSSMARK (2007: 78); OLSHANETSKY (2017: 29–31); regarding the reign of Commodus and his habit to fight as a gladiator: Dio, 73, 17, 1–73, 22, 6; regarding Emperor Caracalla as a gladiator: Dio, 78, 17, 4.

[24] HAXBY (2018: 180); for more Information on Galen, see: NUTTON (2020).

[25] Jerusalem Talmud, *Gittin* 25b, 3.

[26] Babylonian Talmud, *Gittin* 46b.

Jew or of any person to the Ludim endangers this person's life, and that is why you must redeem him. The danger could be the professional hazard in fighting in the arena as gladiators, but this is not clear or definitive. Generally speaking, we ought to remember that many debates in the Talmud are theological, philosophical and hypothetical and do not necessarily have any connection to the reality of the time. The Rabbis of the Talmud tried to comprehend and understand the most minute details and meanings, and not necessarily out of the assumptions that the questions and possibilities they raised could ever occur in the real world. The religious Jewish texts like the Mishna and the Talmud are totally different from the laws and edicts issued by a state, as the latter are meant to stop or tackle a phenomenon that is already occurring.

Interestingly, the story of Reish Lakish appears only in the Babylonian Talmud after the debate on releasing Jewish slaves, and is not mentioned in the Jerusalem Talmud. This is puzzling because Reish Lakish was a Rabbi in the land of Israel in the 3ʳᵈ century AD, a short time before the Jerusalem Talmud was sealed in the 4ᵗʰ century AD. Yet, the story appears only in the Babylonian Talmud, which was sealed in the 6ᵗʰ century AD in a place far from the land of Israel, a long time after Reish Lakish and the gladiatorial games had ceased to exist. The content of the story of Reish Lakish does not assist in strengthening the assumption that the term *lwd'y* is referring to either gladiator or gladiators. From the story, we can only determine that the life of Reish Lakish was in danger and that the Ludim were incompetent. The term Ludim was so ambiguous that it caused a great debate amongst the different Rabbis of the last one and a half millennia. Some of them even suggested that the term means cannibals.[27] The fact that the story appears only in the Babylonian Talmud raises the possibility that the Rabbis in Babylon might have been trying to discredit one of the Rabbis from the land of Israel. Furthermore, the story clearly indicates that even they themselves did not fully understand the term *lwd'y/ludi* and if indeed this term meant gladiator, then the story shows that they were totally ignorant regarding gladiators. Another possibility is that the term Ludim, whether it originated from gladiators or from one of the nations that were

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[27] BRETTLER–POLIAKOFF (1990: 95).

called Ludim, was used to represent something else in the period of the Babylonian Talmud, which is not clear to us. It is interesting that even in the Babylonian Talmud, in the beginning of tractate *Gittin*, Gamliel referred to a village of Ludim as a geographic-ethnic representation.[28] From all of the above options, maybe the best explanation of the story is that the Ludim were the residents of the said village and the actual brigands that Reish Lakish was associated with in other stories. If they were former comrades in crime and arms, it would also explain why they gave him a last wish in the story. In addition, in other stories told in the Talmud, the term *lwd'y* (לודאי) is used to refer to people who came from Lod or the village of Ludiem.[29] Therefore, we must accept that this was most probably the meaning in the Reish Lakish story as well.

To conclude, there is no foundation for the claim that Reish Lakish was a gladiator, especially for the sole reason that the term Ludim, in all other occasions, was used in the Talmud to describe foreign peoples and not gladiators. In the context of the story, it would be more logical if the term referred to one of the nations mentioned above or the residents of the village of Ludim, and not to gladiators. Moreover, it is impossible to compare Reish Lakish's last wish to the ceremonial meal of the gladiator, the *cena libera*. Gladiators were not considered disposable entertainment. Their lives were precious and valuable, much like modern footballers. There were rules for combat and the referees were there to ensure these rules were upheld. There were people who were sent to the arena to be executed, including in combat, but they were not gladiators. Within the story itself, there is nothing that indicates that Reish Lakish was a gladiator, and there is no reason to attribute such a role to him.

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[28] Babylonian Talmud, *Gittin*, 2a, 2; Babylonian Talmud, *Gittin*, 4a, 6; Jerusalem Talmud, *Gittin*, 1a, 1.

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In the Service of the Empire: Continuity of Jewish Military Service in the Armies of Rome

The main debate regarding Jewish soldiers serving in the Roman armies is still focused on the question whether these Jews actually existed. Unfortunately, this debate is not only limited, but at times it also misses the larger picture. The current article will conclusively show that Jews served in the Roman armies, even in large numbers, and that the main debate we must conduct is whether they served in accordance with their percentage of the general population, or even in higher numbers. Furthermore, the article will irrefutably prove that Jewish military service was a continuous phenomenon from the last decades of the Republic until the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century AD, and possibly continued, to some extent, in the Eastern Roman Empire until the first half of the 6th century AD.

Keywords: Ancient Judaism, Roman military, Roman Empire, Military History, Jewish soldiers, The Great Jewish Revolt

Even now, there are still scholars who promote the idea that Jews did not serve in the armies of the Roman Empire.[1] This idea continues to persist in academia, even though the issue of Jewish military service was at the centre of scholarly works, especially in the last two decades. Therefore, all these latest publications were forced to continue the debate on one thing and one thing only: whether Jews served in the armies of Rome.[2]

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[1] Example for a book that claims Jewish military service did not exist, is: GRAINGER (2018: 77, n. 71); GICHON's (2009) article did not even mention Jewish military service in the Roman army, which is very surprising in light of its subject; an example for an article claiming that Jewish units did not exist, is: SPEIDEL (1996).

[2] The articles and chapters that offered a wider perspective (presented in chronological order), are: CASTRITIUS (2002); SALINERO (2003); OPPENHEIMER (2005a: 183–191); OPPEN-

On the other hand, this article will try to prove that Jewish military service was a continuous phenomenon, stretching from the Late Republic until the 5th or 6th century AD.[3] This continuity will be illustrated via numerous and varied materials, spread out across the relevant centuries. Since the corpus of evidence is much too large for one article, I will try to show this continuity by bringing forth some of the best evidence from each century in a chronological manner.[4]

In order to tackle this issue, it is important to first note that Jews had served in non-Jewish armies even before the Romans arrived in the east. We can find evidence for Jewish service in the armies of the Hellenistic kingdoms,[5] the Persian Empire,[6] and even the Assyrian Empire.[7] Moreover, the notion of continuous military service amongst the Jews in the armies of antiquity raises the possibility that the military profession was a main profession among Jews during antiquity.

Another matter that must be kept in mind when trying to deal with Jewish service in the Roman Army is the complexity of Judaism. The Jewish religion was, and still is, composed of numerous sects and groups which differed in their beliefs and customs. The Bible, as we know it, was not fully canonised during the Second Temple period and there were debates regarding which books should be included and whether the texts should be open to interpretation.[8]

HEIMER (2005b); SCHOENFELD (2006); ROTH (2007); CHOMIAK (2008); ROCCA (2010); WEISMAN (2012); OLSHANETSKY (2018a); other articles from the last 20 years that deal with specific or a few finds, but do not deal with the general phenomenon of Jewish military service: WOODS (1992); SCHARF (1997).

[3] There were claims, that Jews did not serve after the first half of the 5th century: SCHOENFELD (2006: 125).

[4] The current article will show that the evidence is not rare and scarce as suggested in: BARCLAY (2004: 61).

[5] Regarding Jews in Hellenistic armies, there are only a few works that concentrate on the subject: HENGEL (1974: 12–18); HENGEL (1980: 85–92); OLSHANETSKY (2016); OLSHANETSKY (2019).

[6] Regarding service in Persian armies, the Jewish garrison in Elephantine is the most researched. See, for example: PORTEN (1968).

[7] DALLEY (1985); OLSHANETSKY (2017a).

[8] There are numerous books about the formation and changes in Judaism, for example: DAVIES (2004); ELIAV (2006); GRABBE (2000), to name a few. But if someone were to

By proving the Jewish people's continuous military service, several things will come to light. Firstly, their military service can successfully highlight Judaism's diversity and raise the possibility that Hellenistic Judaism was the most widely practiced form. Secondly, continuous Jewish military service throughout the centuries would indicate that Jews serving in the army were not an insignificant minority as was suggested in the past.[9] Thirdly, it will prove that Jews served no matter what changes there were in the ancient world, the Roman Empire or Judaism.

Rome, the Jews and their Service from 49 BC to 19 AD

The Roman Empire ruled over large Jewish communities for more than 600 years.[10] The Romans ferociously subdued Jewish rebellions during the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, yet this reaction was not crueller than the way the Empire dealt with other rebellions. Nevertheless, there were some instances in the history of the Roman Empire where the Jews were harassed, such as the expulsion of some of the Jews from the city of Rome in 19 AD.[11] But for the most part, the Roman government and its different regimes and leaders were lenient towards the Jews and their faith, and more than once offered them great privileges.[12] The origin of this lenient attitude could have stemmed from the common perception in Rome: the more ancient, the better.[13]

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delve into this very vast subject for the first time, the best place to start is the new addition to the series Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World, titled: *A Companion to Late Ancient Jews and Judaism: 3rd Century BCE - 7th Century CE*: KOLTUN-FROMM–KESSLER (2020).

[9] OPPENHEIMER (2005a: 425).

[10] Jews were under Roman rule before 139 BC as in this year Jews were expelled from the city of Rome: Val. Max. *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia*, 1, 3, 3; Serv. *Com. in Vergilii Aeneida*, 8, 187.

[11] On the matter, see: ROCCA (2010).

[12] We can see this lenient attitude in Greek and Roman documents preserved in Josephus' writings. The most comprehensive research on the matter is: BEN-ZEEV (1998); the changes in Roman attitude are most evident in the Roman laws and edicts that are referring to the Jews. The most comprehensive research that tried to gather all of them in one book, is: LINDER (1987).

[13] OLSHANETSKY (2018a: 12–13).

The lenient attitudes of the Romans allowed the Jews to observe their faith freely during the Republic and most of the period of the Roman Empire. As a result, the Jews sometimes paid lower taxes, were exempt from the Imperial cult for religious reasons and while the Temple in Jerusalem existed, the Romans' only stipulation was that the Jews were required to sacrifice to God for the glory of the Emperor.[14] In some instances, the Jews received further privileges such as exemption from military service.

The exemptions are the first, and maybe even some of the best evidence for Jewish military service, especially in the Late Republic. All these exemptions were given to certain Jewish subgroups in specific Jewish communities in Asia Minor, or to Jews living in the vassal kingdom of Judaea. The way these exemptions were phrased and repeated show that most of the Jews, especially the majority who were not Roman citizens, were obligated to serve.[15] For example, the first of these exemptions only included the Jews of Ephesos with Roman citizenship and was given in the year 49 BC by the consul Lucius Cornelius Lentulus Crus,[16] yet it may have even been rewritten and expanded later to include all Jews in the province of Asia with Roman citizenship.[17] Another exemption was given in October, 47 BC, in which Gaius Julius Caesar proclaimed and forbade any recruitment of *Auxilia* units from Hyrcanus' kingdom (Judaea).[18] Five years later, Dolabella renewed one of the exemptions given to the Jews before his time in office, according

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[14] OLSHANETSKY (2018a: 12–13).

[15] SMALLWOOD (1976: 127–128) claims that Lentulus only exempted the Jewish citizens, a group that was "infinitesimally small". In addition, she ignores the evidence regarding Jewish service in the armies of Rome while claiming that Jewish recruitment was impractical. Moreover, she asserts that the exemption given to Hyrcanus, by Dolabella, was for all Jews. The possibility of the exemption given to the Jews of Ephesos as an indicator for past recruitment, and for partial exemption only, see: WEISMAN (2012: 27); BARCLAY (2004: 61) claims that there was never a general exemption but does it without giving an explanation for his statement:; SALINERO (2003: 45) states that the Jewish exemption from military service is evidence that sometimes the Romans acted in contrast to their own good and to their own interest.

[16] Jos. *Ant.* 14, 228–229; Jos. *Ant.* 14, 234; Jos. *Ant.* 14, 236–240.

[17] Jos. *Ant.* 14, 230–232.

[18] Jos. *Ant.* 14, 202–204.

to the request of Hyrcanus II.[19] However, it is important to note that the exemptions were given only to those with Roman citizenship in a few Jewish communities. There was never a general exemption for all the Jews in the Empire, not even to all Jews who had Roman citizenship. Therefore, the need to constantly renew these local exemptions would mean that either they expired, or the exemptions were ignored and the few Jews who were supposed to be exempt from service were recruited. Flavius Josephus wrote about these exemptions extensively, yet even he, who lived in Rome in the late second half of the 1st century AD where he had access to all the archives of the Empire, was unable to trace any exemption dated after 14 BC.[20] Therefore, it seems that most Jews until 14 BC, and the entire Jewish population of the Roman Empire after that year, were subject to the same laws and rules of conscription relating to any other resident of the Empire.[21]

Except for the exemptions, the earliest evidence of Jewish military service indicates that Jews not only served as individuals but also, in some periods, within Jewish units, or at least in units which had a Jewish majority.[22] This can be seen in *Jewish Antiquities*, where Josephus pre-

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[19] Jos. *Ant.* 14, 223–227.

[20] Jos. *Ant.* 16, 27–29; 60–61.

[21] The last renewal of a local exemption occurred in 14 BC in Ionia, given by Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa: Josephus, *Ant.* 16. 27–29; there are a lot of peculiar suggestions regarding these exemptions that have no basis in the historical documentation that is available to us. For example, Eck has recently claimed that Jews were exempt from service until the reign of Constantine. In his article, there is no evidence or explanation for this statement. Eck neither cites nor refers to the exemptions in Josephus in his article, and does not even refer to any publication which deals with Jewish service in the armies of Rome, and so this claim needs to be disregarded: ECK (2021: 248); as was stated in the main text, there is no indication of any exemption after 14 BC and there was never any general exemption for all the Jews. The exemptions are not the focus of the current article, yet an extended article that is entirely focused on this is being finalised.

[22] The current article will refer to the armies of the Vassal Kingdoms when supporting the Roman army as an integral part of the Roman army due to several reasons. Firstly, these armies fought many times for Rome's cause and assisted its forces. Secondly, the Vassal Kingdoms' armies were often under direct Roman command. Thirdly, this would mean that the Roman commanders chose when to fight and when to march, including deciding to do so or not during the Shabbat and Jewish holidays. Fourthly, when under Roman command or part of a Roman campaign, the Vassal Kingdoms' army was subju-

sents a letter from Julius Caesar to Hyrcanus, son of Alexandrus and ruler of Judaea.[23] In this letter, Julius Caesar thanks the latter for his bravery and the bravery of the 1500 men from the Judaean army who assisted him in the Alexandrian campaign.[24] A further example can be found in Josephus' book *The Jewish War*, where he details the military support Herod provided to Antonius during the Roman civil war until his defeat at Actium in 31 BC. After Antonius' final defeat, Herod rushed to the Isle of Rhodes to meet the victorious Octavianus to persuade him to let the Jewish ruler stay on the throne in Judea even though he had supported Octavianus' rival. One of Herod's main arguments towards Octavianus was that he always stayed, at any condition and at all times, loyal to his benefactor. He tried to prove it by mentioning his assistance in sending auxiliary units and logistical support to Antonius' army throughout the war. [25] It is true that many mercenaries served in Herod's army, but it is sound to assume that at least some of the troops sent to Antonius were Jewish. It may be that some of the units were entirely Jewish, very similar to the composition of Herod's army.[26]

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gated to the Roman logistical system, including what food was supplied. Lastly, all the Herodian dynasty's Vassal Kingdoms including Judea and Batanaea, were eventually annexed by Rome. When they were annexed, their armies were absorbed into the Roman army and entire units of the annexed army often continued to serve in the Roman army as Auxilia units. On the matter, see, for example, chapter 4 in: APPLEBAUM (1989); and also: APPLEBAUM (1970); an article that deals with this aspect of Jewish service, and with Jewish units in the Roman army as a whole, is under preparation.

[23] Jos. *Ant.* 14, 190–195. This is one of three testimonies Josephus offers regarding the assistance offered by the Judaean Kingdom to Julius Caesar during the Alexandrian campaign. According to *Ant.* 14, 127–139, Antipater, the general of Hyrcanus, brought 3,000 men to assist Julius Caesar in the campaign. According to APPLEBAUM (1989), this was the most accurate testimony to the Judaean assistance during the Alexandrian campaign; the third testimony can be found in *Ant.* 16, 52–53.

[24] In Julius Caesar's book, *The Alexandrian War*, he does not record or mention Hyrcanus or any force from the Kingdom of Judaea. A possible suggestion for the difference between Josephus' and Julius Caesar's accounts is that Caesar's account on the Alexandrian Campaign was actually written by Aulus Hirtius.

[25] Jos. *War*. 1, 30, 1.

[26] STERN (1992: 62–64); for more information on Herod's army, its composition and the fact that the Jews consisted of the main bulk of the army, see: SCHALIT (1960: 94–101). Regarding the composition and the framework of Herod's Army, see also: SHATZMAN (1991).

Additionally, Josephus mentions the recruitment of a large Jewish unit from one geographical origin. This testimony can be further backed up by the writings of Suetonius and Tacitus. According to the three ancient writers, in the year 19 AD,[27] Emperor Tiberius ordered the recruitment of 4,000 Jewish residents of the city of Rome to serve in Sardinia.[28] This recruitment was due to the concern of Senators and other wealthy Romans, who feared the influence of Judaism and the growing trend of many wealthier residents, especially women, who started to adhere to Judaism or to donate money to the Jewish community.[29] Moreover, this recruitment could indicate that Jews were recruited into units composed of their own inside the imperial army. The number 4,000 is approximately the number of men who served in a legion, thus hinting at the existence of an entirely Jewish legion. However, we do not possess any evidence for a new legion to be formed during that year.[30] In my opinion, it is more probable that the Jewish residents of Rome were sent to serve in different Jewish cohorts. These cohorts were pulled from their stations or legions in order to serve as one force to deal with the ad hoc problem of pirates in Sardinia.

It is important to note that to tackle the problem of Roman wives converting to Judaism, the Romans enforced the existing laws of com-

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[27] See Samuel ROCCA'S article that deals with this recruitment and its sources: ROCCA (2010); he was not the first to deal with this recruitment, as it is often mentioned in literature that deals with Jewish military service. The first article that was entirely focused on this recruitment is: MERRILL (1919).

[28] Josephus mentions that they were sent to fight in Sardinia; Jos. *Ant.* 18, 83–84; Tacitus explains that they were sent to Sardinia to fight brigands: Tac. *An.* 2, 85; Suetonius mentions that Jews were sent to serve in regions where the climate was bad for health; Sue. *Tib.* 36.

[29] Jos. *Ant*. 18, 81–84; Tac. *An*., 2, 85; Sue. *Tib.* 36; Dio, *His.* 57, 18, 5a; even on the first occasion in which we learn about the Jewish community in Rome from the year 139 BC, we find out that at least some of the members of the community were expelled from the city for spreading their belief among non-Jews: Val. Max. *Facta et Dicta memorabilia*, 1, 3, 3; Ser. *Com. in Vergilii Aeneida*, 8, 187.

[30] In his article, that deals with the recruitment in Rome in 19 AD, ROCCA raises the possibility and mentions the problem that we do not know any legion that was recruited during this year: ROCCA (2010: 21).

pulsory military service when needed, as was in this case. This highlights to us the strictness with which the Romans observed and obeyed the rules and laws of the Empire, and their complete unwillingness to modify any existing laws or create new ones. Even in the case highlighted above, they did not break or modify any laws but rather used the laws which existed to suit their purpose. Therefore, as they did not create anything new in the legal field, it is implied that there was no uniqueness regarding this recruitment to the military, nor were any new kinds of military units created. Consequently, this means that Jewish subunits and cohorts in the Roman army were already in existence before 19 AD. However, as this can be considered a large recruitment, we can safely assume that the Roman military suddenly received a large influx of Jewish soldiers, as well as an increase in the number of Jewish cohorts.

From the case study above, we can infer the number of Jews and their percentage in the city of Rome, and have a clear notion whether Jews served equally compared to other communities in Rome, and thus disprove the claims that Jews barely served compared to their percentage in the population. As we know, most of the Jewish population, which composed 5%-15% of the residents of the Empire,[31] were not Roman citizens, and so could only serve in the auxiliary forces. The number of recruits, 4,000, should be regarded as relatively accurate, not only because it is small, but because both Josephus and Tacitus mention it.[32] Hence, if 4,000 men were indeed drafted from among the Jewish community of the city of Rome alone, and all recruits were between the ages of 18 to 42,[33] as the ancient sources state that they were of military age,[34] it seems that the Jewish community in the city of Rome was quite large and consisted of at

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[31] Regarding the scale of the Jewish population and the different figures, see: MCGING (2002); ISRAEL (2020).

[32] Jos. *Ant.* 18, 83–84; Tac. *An.* 2, 85.

[33] There are only a few testimonies to the recruitment of under 18 year olds, and even then it seems that it was against the norm, and we do not have any evidence for the recruitment of men older than 42 during enlistment: HERTZ (2007: 306–307); WESCH-KLEIN (2007: 439).

[34] Tacitus says that the Jewish recruits were of military age: Tac. *Ann.* 2, 85; Suetonius does not mention the number of Jewish recruits but claims that all those of military age were drafted: Sue. *Tib.* 36.

least 50,000 people. As a result, in a city that numbered 500,000 to 1,000,000 people, the Jewish community would have consisted of at least 5%-10% of the general population of the city.[35] This number is quite surprising as during this period, most Jews lived in the Eastern part of the Empire (mainly in Judea, Syria and Egypt)[36] and those territories were only conquered a relatively short time before. As most of the Jews of the Roman Empire did not live in the city of Rome, it is safe to assume that at least two or three Jews from the rest of the Empire served in the military for every Jew who was recruited from the city of Rome. This would indicate that a considerable number of Jews served in the Roman army and that Jews may have served as their percentage in the general population, perhaps even more. In addition, even though we know there were Jews in the city of Rome before the annexation of these areas, their numbers are unknown, but they are most probably significantly lower than in 19 AD. This suggests that after the Romans vassalized and conquered Judaea and Egypt, there was a massive Jewish migration to the city of Rome and elsewhere in the Empire, although the reasons for this are uncertain.

Jewish Service a Short Time Before and During the Jewish Revolts: 19 AD – 136 AD

As we have seen, Jewish service in the Roman military was neither a unique nor an alien phenomenon. However, their service in the Roman military during the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, when Jewish revolts were upending the Empire, may surprise some. There are numerous textual pieces of evidence for their continuous service during these troubling

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[35] ROCCA (2010) dedicates an entire article to this recruitment and the testimonies depicting it in Tacitus, Suetonius and Josephus, but he does not tackle the usage and the information that could be learnt about the Jewish community and its size in the city of Rome, according to the number of Jewish conscripts; further testimonies regarding this expulsion can be found in the writings of other authors and historians of Antiquity, but they usually speak only of the expulsion itself. For example: Dio, *His.* 5, 18, 5a.

[36] The main Jewish communities at the time were in Judea, Syria, Egypt, Asia Minor and Babylon. But Jews spread further, and their presence existed in many places. It is interesting that Josephus quoted Strabo, who had said that Jews were present in all the cities, and it was difficult to find a spot in the inhabited world that Jews had not reached or settled in: Jos. *Ant.* 14, 114.

decades, such as the release document of a soldier named Mattaeus,[37] from 68 AD,[38] which was found in Stebae, near Naples. He and three of the witnesses in the document were residents of Syria. More importantly, the name Mattaeus was frequently used amongst Jews as a shortened version of Matityahu and the spelling of his name on the papers was one commonly used by Jews, different from the spelling used by gentiles. Furthermore, as it is explicitly stated that Mattaeus received Roman citizenship on his release from the army, it implies that he was not a Roman citizen on his recruitment. According to the document, at the start of his service Mattaeus was part of a marine unit, where service was not restricted to citizens of the Empire. From there he was later transferred to a legion in which he served until his retirement.

Another example from the time of the 'Great Jewish Revolt' is when a Jewish army representing a client state joined the Romans in their campaign to quell the revolt. This was the army of King Agrippa II, who resisted the revolt, and even tried to crush it before it began. After he failed, he merged his forces into the Roman army under the command of Cestius Gallus and later into the armies of Vespasian and his son Titus.[39]

In these Roman armies which fought to suppress the revolt, we can even find a Jew in a senior commanding position. Josephus, whose testimony is supported by the writings of other ancient historians, tells us the story of the man who might be the most successful Jewish general in history. His name was Tiberius Julius Alexander, a Roman citizen and a descendant of a wealthy Jewish family from Alexandria, whose most notable family member was Tiberius' uncle, the Jewish philosopher Philon. The citizenship and the family wealth granted him a favourable start in life and the civil service. He was appointed governor of Judaea in 46 AD and stayed in that capacity for two years.[40] In 63 AD he was stationed in the staff of General Corbulo in

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[37] CIL 16, 8; CIL 10, 771; RMD 4 p. 615–616; AE (1994: 387).

[38] The one who raised it in the context of Jewish military service was APPLEBAUM in 1971, the rest only cite from him; he received a short mention in: SCHOENFELD (2006: 118); and in: ROCCA (2010: 27).

[39] Regarding the early attempt to quell the revolt: Jos. *War*. 2, 17, 4-5 and 8; for Agrippa's army assisting Cestius Gallus: Jos. *War*. 2, 18, 9; for the description of the forces in Vespasian's army including the mention of Agrippa's army as part of it: Jos. *War*. 3, 4, 2.

[40] Jos. *War*. 2, 11, 6.

his campaign in Armenia, and in 66 AD he was moved and promoted to the governorship of Egypt by Emperor Nero.[41] During his term as the governor of Egypt, the Great Jewish Revolt erupted in Judaea, as well as religious turmoil in Egypt between Jews, Egyptians and Greeks in the city of Alexandria (66 AD). To combat this, Tiberius decided to brutally crush the Jewish community in Alexandria, his own community, to quickly solve the situation.[42] He saved only the rich among the community, suggesting his social awareness was stronger than his Jewish identity, or most probably because they were his family, the friends of his family or the social circle he knew and grew up in. Josephus described him as a Jew who did not follow the way of his ancestors,[43] although this assertion seems more like a political view than a fact.[44] There could be some reasons for this. Firstly, Josephus' claim was possibly written after Tiberius' death, which means he could write whatever he desired with no fear of repercussions. Secondly, the Judaism of the period was very diverse, and its main faction was Hellenistic Judaism. This was especially true in the city of Alexandria, where Jewish Hellenistic philosophy dominated the Jewish community, for example the writings of Tiberius' uncle, Philo. Furthermore, Josephus does not bring concrete evidence to explain his statement. And lastly, Josephus seems to be politically motivated as the way that he refers to Tiberius in a negative light is very similar to the way he wrote about the Jewish supporters of the Seleucids while they were fighting the Hasmoneans.[45]

During the Great Jewish Revolt, Tiberius Julius Alexander joined forces with Vespasian and his son Titus in the Roman civil war that erupted in the year 69 AD (the Year of the Four Emperors).[46] After the

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[41] Regarding his appointment by Nero: Jos. *War.* 2, 15, 1.

[42] According to Josephus, the Jews were not the main instigators in this conflict. Taking this into account, it seems that Tiberius decided to crush the Jews as an easy solution to the conflict. But it is also possible that Josephus gave us only a partial picture of the events. Regarding the quelling of the Jews of Alexandria: Jos. *War.* 2, 18, 7.

[43] CHOMIAK (2008: 152–155); MODRZEJEWSKI (1995: 185–190); WILLIAMS (1998: 95–96).

[44] On the matter see also: ROTH (2007: 410).

[45] Although he used these and other derogative definitions to represent the Jews who served the Seleucids during the Hasmonean rebellion, he mostly mentions their Jewishness: Jos. *Ant.* 13, 37–39; Jos. *Ant.* 13, 42; Jos. *Ant.* 13, 121.

[46] On the matter, see: OLSHANETSKY (2018b).

latter won the war, they granted Tiberius the position of second in com-
mand of Titus' army that campaigned to conquer Jerusalem in 70 AD.[47]
Tiberius' forces used cruel measures against the revolting Jews, yet ac-
cording to Josephus' writings, Tiberius, like Josephus, opposed the de-
struction of the Second Temple.[48] His stance may have been developed
due to his religious beliefs or because his father contributed the gold coat-
ing of nine of the gates of the Temple of Jerusalem.[49] Nevertheless, after
the campaign in Judaea, the last assumed position that Tiberius held was
the role of Praetorian Prefect (*Praefectus Praetorio*), the commander of the
praetorian guard,[50] which was the most significant military position one
could achieve and was second only to the emperor. With all these mili-
tary achievements, Tiberius was most probably one of the most successful
Jews in the Roman Empire and one of the most successful Jewish com-
manders ever.[51]

The example of Tiberius Julius Alexander is one of the best and
greatest examples of Jewish military service in the Roman army during
the Jewish Revolts. Regarding the next revolt, the Diaspora Revolt (116-
117 AD), an ostracon in Egypt dated to the 18th of May 116 AD, the eve
of the revolt, contains evidence of Jewish military service and says the
following:

> Thermauthos, a slave of Aninios, a centurion, in respect of the Jewish
> tax for the 19th year of our lord Trajan Optimus, 3 obols. Year 19,
> Pachon 23.[52]

The payment that the ostracon mentions is the Jewish tax which a Jew-
ish servant, or slave, was not compelled to pay but a Jewish master was,
which in this case is the centurion.[53] Thus, according to the above in-

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[47] Jos. *War*. 5, 1, 6.

[48] Jos. *War*. 6, 4, 3.

[49] Jos. *War*. 5, 5, 3.

[50] P.Hib. I, 215; CPJ II, 418b.

[51] Tiberius is relatively often mentioned in the research on Jewish military service. See,
for example: MODRZEJEWSKI (1995: 185–190); SCHOENFELD (2006: 117–120); WEISMAN
(2012: 25); OLSHANETSKY (2018a: 15).

[52] CPJ.II 229.

[53] CPJ.II 229.

scription and what we know about the Jewish tax, the centurion must have been Jewish. Even though the abbreviation used to describe the master (κεντ) is not a normal abbreviation for the word *centurion,* there is no other logical way to complete the abbreviation. This ostracon is unique in that it speaks about a Jewish centurion and is one of the best pieces of evidence from all the papyri, ostraca and inscriptions available for Jewish soldiers, because we can be almost certain that the one mentioned was both a Jew and a member of the Roman military.

Even in the next revolt, the Second Jewish Revolt, which is most commonly known as the Bar Kochva revolt, there is evidence for Jewish military service in the Roman army. This evidence comes in the form of a release document of a soldier. The soldier has an undoubtedly Jewish name and geographical origin: Bar Shimsho Cleisthenes (Cleisthenes is the Greek translation for Bar Shimsho) from Caesarea who was part of an *auxilia* unit named *Cohors I Vindelicorum.* His release document is dated to 157 AD and was found in Romania, ancient Dacia.[54] If Bar Shimsho served for 25 years, as was accustomed in the ranks of the *auxilia* forces, it would mean he was recruited in 132 AD, during the Bar Kochva Revolt. At this time, his *auxilia* unit, that was originally from Germania, was camped in Judaea. From this, one can deduce that the Romans continued to recruit Jews to their ranks and even to the units that were sent to quell the Jewish revolts.[55]

Jewish Service in the 2nd and 3rd Centuries: 137 AD – 300 AD

As we have seen, Jews served in the Roman army and were enlisted during the Jewish revolts. Therefore, it should not be surprising that the Romans continued to enlist Jews after these uprisings. This can be seen in Dio Cassius' *Historia Romana,* a composition that he worked on in the first three decades of the 3rd century AD. In it, he brings a version of a speech delivered by Marcus Aurelius to his men before marching to the

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[54] CIL.III.II, p.882, Dip. XL

[55] The one to bring it forward was APPLEBAUM in 1971, the rest only cite from him; he received a short mention in: SCHOENFELD (2006: 120).

East to fight against the rebelling Avidius Cassius in the year 175 AD.[56] The Emperor spoke about Cassius' Eastern Roman army:

> You, at least, fellow-soldiers, ought to be of good cheer. For surely Cilicians, Syrians, Jews, and Egyptians have never proved superior to you and never will, even if they should muster as many tens of thousands more than you as they now muster fewer.[57]

Marcus Aurelius wanted to raise his men's morale by showing them that Avidius Cassius' army that they were about to march against, was composed of manpower from the Eastern Roman armies and was inferior to the Western Roman army under his command. If it was delivered as Dio wrote, then it is clear that there were Jewish soldiers in the Eastern Roman army, since there is no reason for a military commander to lie to his men in such a manner before a battle, especially when they would know that it was a lie.[58] Lying to his soldiers would have caused two things. Firstly, Marcus Aurelius would have lost their trust. Secondly, he would not have achieved his goal by lying in his speech. If the speech was not delivered in the same way as written by Dio, it is most probable that Dio, like other ancient authors, wrote the speech as it was supposed to be delivered.[59] This highlights a few deductions. Firstly, during this period Jews must have served in large numbers since he would not have mentioned them in his speech if they had not been such a vital part of the manpower of the enemy army, i.e. the Eastern Roman army. As a result,

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[56] This source was once brought as evidence for Jewish military service, but it took the mention of Jews as fact. Moreover, Rocca suggested that maybe some of the Jews mentioned, had been part of Jewish auxilia units, of which we have no evidence whatsoever. This mention was in an appendix to an article: ROCCA (2010: 26).

[57] Dio. *His.* 72, 25, 3–6. (Trans. Earnest Cary, *LCL*).

[58] It is not plausible that at least a good portion of any Roman army would not know the demographic composition of at least some or large parts of the Roman army. As troops in all units moved through the Empire to various regions, they met different units from all over the Empire. Also, if indeed the four groups mentioned above were one or the main source of manpower for the Eastern Roman Army, this would mean they were a main source of manpower for at least a third of the Roman army. Thus, their presence must have been felt through the whole army.

[59] This was common practice, as the ancient writers and historians tried to mimic Thucydides: Th. 1, 22.

with such a large part of the army being Jewish, their service must have been common knowledge. As Marcus Aurelius had no reason to lie in his speech, then Dio would have written it as so only if there were a considerable number of Jewish soldiers at the time, as he wrote the speech in the manner it was supposed to be delivered.

After general citizenship was granted by Emperor Caracalla in the year 212 AD, a significant amount of evidence for Jewish service can be found. This may be due to the growing number of Jews serving in the army, or just because it is closer to our time. For example, in the *Historia Augusta*, it is written that soldiers erected a monument for Emperor Gordian the Third in the year 244 AD,[60] near the camp at *Circesium*, on the then border between the Roman and Persian Empires.[61] We can learn this fact from a passage in the *Historia Augusta*:

> The soldiers built Gordian a tomb near the camp at Circesium, which is in the territory of Persia, and added an inscription to the following effect in Greek, Latin, Persian, Jewish, and Egyptian letters, so that all might read.[62]

This is clear evidence for Jewish military service and it also teaches us that there was a significant number of Jews serving in the army. For a language associated with the Jews to be used on the monument was a great honour and privilege which could not have occurred otherwise.[63] It is true that the *Historia Augusta* is considered a less reliable source, and it was claimed that the author may have invented some of the content and the sources.[64] However, this does not detract from the importance of this source as evidence for considerable Jewish military service in the 3rd cen-

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[60] There were only two scholars who emphasized the fact that Jews were mentioned. Only ROCCA (2010: 28) referred to it in connection with Jewish military service; STERN (1980: 634).

[61] *Circassium* is most probably the city known as the city of Buseira in today's Syria, at the confluence of the Khabur and the Euphrates.

[62] Historia Augusta, *Gordiani Tres* 34 (trans. David Magie, *LCL*).

[63] It is not clear if the language attested was Hebrew or Aramaic, but it was attributed to the Jews. The translations, which translate it as Hebrew, are interpreting it anachronistically, as did David GOLAN (2014: 139) in his translation of the text into Hebrew.

[64] JOHNSON (2013: 355).

tury AD. This is because even if the author invented some of the content, he had to base it on existing phenomena of his period. There is no reason as to why the author would think it necessary to write that one of the languages on a military dedication belonged to the Jews unless it was feasible, as Jews served in large numbers during the 3rd century AD.

A different source from the 3rd century is the synagogue at Dura Europos. Dura Europos was a military town on the Roman frontier, bordering with Persia. Since a significant part of the population was the garrison, it was proposed that the synagogue served as a place of worship for Jewish soldiers.[65] The argument was further elaborated when the wall paintings inside the synagogue were discussed in an even more comprehensive way. The wall paintings supposedly show scenes from the Bible, but in some of the scenes there are men wearing Roman military uniforms and equipment from the 3rd century. One suggestion for these artistic decisions was that either members of the Jewish community, or the painter himself, served in the military.[66] However, there is also another possible reason. Since Roman soldiers were a visible part of the daily life in Dura Europos, it is possible the painter drew what he saw out of the window. Yet, the fact that the synagogue is located near the camp of the garrison, makes it very probable that at least some of the men attending the services were Roman soldiers. Although some will define this evidence as inconclusive, when taking into account the other available evidence, it makes this option quite definitive. In any case, it is also of great interest because it shows the diversity of the materials that one must work with when tackling the question of Jewish military service.

Similarly, another piece of evidence, which is most probably dated to the 3rd or beginning of the 4th century AD,[67] is from a burial cave in

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[65] ROSENFELD–POTCHEBUTZKY (2009: 195–222); in the appendix to ROCCA'S article, he mentioned the former: ROCCA (2010: 26).

[66] WEISMAN (2012).

[67] As I have suggested in the past based on the tunic of the graffito: OLSHANETSKY (2017b: 28); OLSHANETSKY (2018a: 18); MAZAR, who originally excavated the place, did not offer a date for the graffito and inscription but claimed that the burial cave in which it was found, number 4, is dated to the 1st or 2nd century AD due to some of the sarcophagus designs in the first chamber of the burial cave: MAZAR (1973: 182); his dating cannot be considered accurate as almost no ceramic finds were found. There-

Beit She'arim, known as the burial cave of Germanus (son of) Yitzchak the Tadmorian (ΓΕΡΜΑΝΟϹΙϹΑΚΙΟΥ | ΠΑΛΜΥΡΗΝΟΥ). Because of the burial place and the name of the deceased, the accepted conclusion claimed Germanus to be a Jew who originated from the city of Tadmor (Palmyra), in modern day Syria.[68] At the entrance to the burial cave, the "Israel Nature and Park Authority" put a sign stating that this is the cave of the Jewish gladiator. This was assumed due to the inscription and graffito at the entrance to the burial cave.[69] I believe that he was not a gladiator. When comparing the figure in the graffito to stuccos and frescoes depicting gladiators, one can see that his weapons and tunic differ from theirs.[70] Thus, I came to the conclusion that he was not a gladiator but either a *venator* (a specialist in fighting animals in the ring, considered second to a gladiator),[71] or a soldier.[72]

Germanus is a good example for the problem we are facing with the non-textual material. It is very hard to prove that someone was a Jew and, if we manage to prove this, it is very hard for us to prove he was a

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fore, his artistic dating is not reliable for Germanus' graffito, especially when remembering that it was dated according to a sarcophagus from a different chamber. On the other hand, my dating is based on what actually can be seen in the graffito itself. A picture of the graffito and its condition as of 2011 can be seen in: STERN (2018: 108).

[68] SAFRAI (2001: 74).

[69] OLSHANETSKY (2017b: 27–28); OLSHANETSKY (2018a: 18).

[70] The spear was not a weapon that was usually used by gladiators. Moreover, gladiators had protective gear while the Germanus graffito lacks one. Regarding the equipment of gladiators, see: NOSOV (2009: 44-79); regarding the importance and use of protective gear and armour by gladiators, and as a symbol of the status of gladiators, see: HAXBY et al. (2018: 172–174).

[71] The *venatores* seem to have used all kinds of polearms and spears. Usually, they did not wear armour, but some of the mosaics, frescoes and stuccoes suggest that at least in some cases they wore a manica (armguard) on one of their arms. Sometimes, the only thing they wore to battle was a type of loincloth, but the most common dress was a tunic with clavii, very similar to the one the person engraved in the graffito is wearing: NOSOV (2009: 48–54).

[72] Mazar originally excavated the place and was first to suggest that Germanus was a soldier, yet he did so without much explanation: MAZAR (1973: 182–183, plate 136); The graffito in Germanus' cave is almost identical to the depiction of Roman soldiers from the mosaics that were found in the Villa Romana Del Casale, a Roman villa uncovered near the town of Piazza Armerina in Sicily. The mosaics can be seen in: MISTRETTA (1998).

soldier, and vice versa. But even if we question some of the material, we are still left with so many certain pieces of evidence that show that Jews participated in military service. We can use the ones we are not certain of to back the ones that we are certain of. Additionally, we can safely assume that we have the remains of many Jews, among them Jewish soldiers, that because of their name, we could never know for certain if they were Jews.

From the 4th century, we have two pieces of evidence for Jewish service in units that were entirely composed of Jews. However, the Jewish nature of these two units is contested. The earlier of the two was highlighted by Lucifer of Cagliari, a zealot, anti-Aryan Christian. The same incident was also documented by Bishop Athanasius himself, the head of the anti-Aryan stream of Christianity in the Empire. According to Lucifer, a Jewish military unit (Iudaeorum militem) was stationed in Alexandria and attacked the church of St Theonas, where Bishop Athanasius found refuge, in the year 356 AD.[73] According to Athanasius' writings, he and his followers were attacked by legionnaires, with no mention of their ethnic identity. Lucifer is the one who refers to the unit in the incident as Jewish. However, from his words we can deduce that he himself is not certain whether the soldiers, or units, that were involved in the incident were Jewish. Besides, it seems that Lucifer's speech was meant to rebuke Emperor Constantius II. Regarding the incident, Lucifer said the following to the Emperor:

> Prove, that it wasn't you, but Jews that sent a force to Alexandria, a force of Jews which besieged the doors of the house of God, and Syrianum[74] was the commander of the Jewish soldiers. Prove the Jews entered the Basilica with their weapons and killed a certain number (of people).[75]

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[73] Regarding Athanasius, his escape from Alexandria and his hiding in rural Egypt, see, for example: ELTON (2018: 74–75).

[74] Syrianum could be either a name, a title or an origin, i.e. Syrian. But in this case, it seems to refer to the name of the *dux Aegypti.*

[75] *Patrologia Latina*, 12, 916.

On the one hand, it is possible that the Emperor also blamed the Jews and, in doing so, effectively washed his hands from the blood that had been spilt. Therefore, we can assume that Lucifer's proclamation was to imply that a different (non-Jewish) unit was responsible for the crackdown. On the other hand, it is possible that by suggesting a Jewish unit was involved, Lucifer had an ulterior motive: to create friction between the anti-Aryan movement, which will become Catholicism, and the Jews.[76] Even if Lucifer's words had an ulterior motive, they do not contradict the possibility that Jewish units were included in the Roman forces involved in this incident. Nevertheless, Lucifer's words are strong evidence for Jewish units, since if there were no Jewish units in the Roman army, such units would not have been blamed for what had happened. Every good lie has some aspect of truth in it.

Another find that many have claimed as proof for Jewish units is the grave of Flavia Optata. The inscription on Flavia's grave is dated to the end of the 4th century or the beginning of the 5th century AD.[77] The grave is located in the cemetery in Concordia – today's Portogruaro – a military camp, not far from Aquileia in Northern Italy.[78] Most scholars have claimed that Flavia was either the wife or the daughter of a soldier serving in the *Regii Emeseni Iudaei.* The translation of the unit's name is "the Jewish Royal Soldiers from Homs". It was even suggested that this was the same Jewish unit that Lucifer had mentioned in relation to the raid of St Theonas, which was dealt with above.[79] It is important to note that in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, which counts all the units existing in both the Eastern and Western Roman Empires at the beginning of the 5th century AD, there is no mention of a unit with the exact name as the one that is supposedly inscribed on the grave. However, the *Notitia* does mention two units that were called *Regii* and it is possible that one of them is the

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[76] On the matter, see also: SCHARF (1997: 347); WOODS (1992: 404–405); CASTRITIUS (2002: 60) accepts SCHARF's opinion.

[77] CIJ I, 640; CIL V, 8764; This was most probably the most notable and mentioned source for Jewish military service: WEISMAN (2012: 26); see also the next footnotes.

[78] The inscription is also mentioned in: IJO I, p.34; and was also published as: JIWE I, 6.

[79] The scholar doing so was WOODS (1992: 404–407); WOODS' suggestion was mentioned in: IJO, III, p.69; this opinion is contradicted by SCHARF (1997); CASTRITIUS (2002: 60) accepts SCHARF's opinion.

one referred to in the inscription, if this reading is correct. One possibility for the difference in the unit's name, or its omission from the *Notitia,* is that the *Notitia* was completed in the year 420 AD. This would mean two years after the creation of a clause we find in the *Codex Theodiosianus,* which was issued in 418 AD. This clause prohibited Jewish and Samaritan military service.[80] It is possible that the authors of the *Notitia* had to amend units' names for a couple of reasons. Firstly, it could have been done in order to stay in accordance with the spirit of the *Codex.* Secondly, the Jewish units could have either been disbanded or the Jewish members serving in the units were replaced.[81]

There are also two main arguments against the identification of the unit as a Jewish one. Firstly, there are a few who claim that it was not common to give so many attributes in a unit's name as were given to the unit in the inscription. As a result, they said that it makes no sense that they would use the two attributes about the origin of the unit, as Jewish and from Homs.[82] On the other hand, I think that this is not the strongest of arguments as we know that a lot of units in many periods managed to obtain a large number of titles and attributes at the same time.[83] Moreover, when you examine the *Notitia Dignitatum,* you can see that it was indeed common for a unit's name to be composed of a few parts and attributes. Secondly, the strongest argument against the Jewish identification of the unit, was made by the historian and epigraph Michael Speidel.[84] Speidel claims that the scholars of the past made a mistake when they added the letter "o" to the word Iud(a)eoru(m). Without the letter "o", the ending of the word would be seen as grammatically incorrect. According to him, the inscription does not include the words Jew or Jewish. Speidel adds that instead of the way other scholars read the inscription - Regi(orum) Emes(enorum) Iud(a)eoru(m) – we should actually read - Regi(orum), emi(t) sib(i) de R(e) v(iri). His reading of the

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[80] *Cod. Th.* 16, 8, 24.

[81] WOODS (1992: 404–405); SCHARF (1997: 359); SCHOENFELD (2006: 123).

[82] SCHARF (1997: 347); WOODS (1992: 404–405).

[83] Regarding the many names and honorific epithets units had in different times, see: HEBBLEWHITE (2017: 189–191).

[84] SPEIDEL (1996: 164).

inscription takes into consideration the omission of the letter "o" and is based on very common phrases that were found in other inscriptions at the same cemetery in Concordia. According to that, Optata was not a Jewish woman and her husband was not in a Jewish unit, and the inscription actually says that Optata was the wife of a soldier in the royal unit (*Regii*) who bought her own headstone from her husband's fortune.[85] It seems that Speidel's argument is robust and should be accepted, yet even without Optata's inscription, we still have plentiful evidence for Jewish military service.

A stronger proof for Jewish service was found in a Christian text from around the year 400 AD. It is the sacred history of Sulpitius Severus. He said:

> And it is also evident that barbarous nations, and especially Jews, have been commingled with our armies, cities, and provinces; thus we behold them living among us, yet by no means agreeing to adopt our customs.[86]

According to the text, Sulpitius is not satisfied with the many non-Christian nations living in the Empire, especially the Jews. It is clear from his words that Jews were not only present everywhere, but they were also easily recognisable. This meant that they were able to keep their way of life, religious symbols and rituals in a manner which was easily noted by their Christian neighbours. Moreover, Sulpitius not only mentions day-to-day life but also the military sphere. This does not only strengthen the assertion that Jews were exempt from religious rituals and the imperial cult while serving in the civil service, but it also probably means that Jews were exempt in the same manner within the ranks of the army, as it seems their service was recognisable to all. It is probable that during ceremonies, parades and religious events, Jewish sol-

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[85] It is important to note that since SPEIDEL's article, there were only three articles from all the articles published since, that mentioned SPEIDEL's article: SALINERO (2003); OLSHANETSKY (2018a); ECK (2021).

[86] Sul. Sev. *Chr.* 2, 3, 6: the translation was taken from: *The Sacred History of Sulpitius Severus*. In: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Series II Volume 11, ed. Philip Schaff, Grand Rapids MI , 241. The translation was amended slightly by me.

diers would have either been exempt from participating or would have stood apart from their comrades. That would be the best explanation for their service being well known by both civilians and military personnel. Sulpitius mentioned Jews serving in the army most probably because there were Jewish soldiers and Jewish service was a fact well known by all. It would not be in his interest to lie as he would not want to give ammunition to anyone that is trying to delegitimise his words. Anyone who heard or read his words and knew that Jews did not serve in the army, would have deemed Sulpitius a liar. Yet, there is always the chance that Sulpitius was mistaken or even lied. However, I feel that this is the less probable option, due to the large evidence and numerous materials that we have about Jews in the Roman army, as well as evidence for the religious observance of Jews in the military which will be presented later.

Contrarily, a different inscription with a high probability of having a reference to a Jewish soldier in the Roman army was found in the grave of Tanhum in Jaffa, dated to the 5th century AD.[87] The inscription on the tombstone is in Greek with one word in Hebrew and it says the next: "Thanhum, son of Simon, grandson of Benjamin, the Centenarius of Parembole. Shalom."[88] It is important to note that the word *shalom* at the end of the inscription was written in Hebrew. There is no doubt that the buried person and his grandfather were both Jewish. The grandfather most probably served before the year 418 AD.[89]

The reason why it was presumed that he had served before 418 AD is because in the first half of the 5th century, we find one of the best pieces of evidence for Jewish military service in the form of the *Codex Theodosianus*. There we find two clauses which ban Jewish and Samaritan military service. One clause, from 404 AD, forbids service in the *Sacer Comitatus*.[90] The second clause, from 418 AD, forbids Jewish service in

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[87] CIJ, II, 920; CIIP, III.2240.

[88] CIJ, II, 920.

[89] This is one of the most mentioned inscriptions: APPLEBAUM (1971: 182); OPPENHEIMER (2005a: 187); HORBURY–NOY (1992: 239–240).

[90] *Cod. Th.* 16, 8, 16.

all branches of the military.[91] Since you do not ban something which does not exist, this is one of the best examples referring to the existence of Jewish military service.[92]

In the *Codex Justinianus*, Jews and Samaritans were re-banned from military service.

> ...as well as the pagans who tried to introduce polytheism, the Jews and the Samaritans, we intend not only that what was already laid down in the laws shall be recalled and made firmer through this present law, but also that more shall be declared...We order, therefore, that none of the above-mentioned shall share in any honour whatsoever, nor shall he put on an official belt, neither civil nor military, nor belong to any office, with the exception of that of the so-called Cohortalins…[93]

This law is pre-529 AD as other clauses that refer to it are clearly from that date or earlier.[94] This is one of the most elusive texts that deal with Jewish military service.[95] This is because there is a difference between the 19th century academic editions of the *Codex Justinianus* and the *Basilicorum Libri*, and the more modern editions.[96] In addition, the few that

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[91] *Cod. Th.* 16, 8, 24.

[92] This notion was raised by some of the scholars that tried to prove Jewish military service: SCHOENFELD (2006: 123–124); WEISMAN (2012: 28); but sometimes these clauses got a mere insignificant mention like in: BARCLAY (2004: 61).

[93] The translation is taken from: LINDER (1987: 360–361); the original Greek can be found as *Cod. Jus.* 1, 5, 12 in the edition edited by Paul KRUGER (1877), pages 79–81 and not pages 53–55, as quoted by LINDER; the same clause can be found as *Basilicorum Libri LX*, 1, 1, 30 in the edition edited by Ernest HEIMBACH (1833: 21–23) which identified the clause as *Cod. Jus.* 1, 5, 12; in the 1955 academic *Basilicorum Libri LX* edition edited by SCHELTEMA and VAN DER WAL (1955) both *Basilicorum Libri* 1, 1, 30 (identified as *Cod. Jus.* 1, 5, 21) and *Basilicorum Libri* 1, 1, 26 (identified as *Cod. Jus.* 1, 5, 12) are totally different compared to what you find in KRUGER's and HEIMBACH's editions. The difference in the 1955 edition may be traced back to VON LINGENTHAL's essay (1877).

[94] *Cod. Jus.* 1, 5, 18.

[95] It was mentioned only twice in the context of Jewish military service: OPPENHEIMER (2005b: 188); OLSHANETSKY (2018a).

[96] See the previous three footnotes.

did mention this legislation either quoted the wrong pages,[97] or for the most part did not provide a footnote at all.[98] This leads to situations where at times scholars were unable to find the text at first.[99] In any case, this legislation is a clear indication that the former ban announced in 418 AD was not well enforced, or ceased to be enforced sometime after its publication. This is a clear indication that Jews could still be found in the ranks of the late Eastern Roman army/Early Byzantine army up to 529 AD.[100] If this were not so, Emperor Justinian would not have created this clause. This is strong proof because, as mentioned before, you do not ban something which does not exist. Yet, it is safe to assume that Jewish military service after 418 AD was a mere shadow of the extensive service the Jews had provided to the Empire before.

The Capability of Jewish Soldiers to Keep their Jewish Rites and Way of Life

One of the most fundamental issues related to Jewish military service, is the nature of the Jewish faith and the Jews' capability to observe their way of life, their religious beliefs and rights as they deemed fit. As we said earlier, regarding the *Historia Romana* and Sulpitius Severus' writings, it seems that Jewish military service was well-known not only among the ranks, but also among the broader public. It is probable that this was due to the ability of Jewish soldiers to observe their way of life in a visual manner, so that it would be obvious and recognisable by those around them. It is even highly probable that the Jewish exemptions from the Imperial Cult existed and were also implemented among the Jews serving in the army. And so, Jews in the ranks would have been a

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[97] LINDER wrote that *Cod. Jus.* 1, 5, 12 is on pages 53–55 in the Paul KRUGER edition, but it is actually on pages 79–81; the same mistake can be found in SALINERO (2003: 91).

[98] RABELLO claims that Jews were dismissed from military service, but does not support his claim with a footnote, and so it is uncertain which clause or law RABELLO relied on. The closest footnote to this statement, refers to Novellae 45, which has nothing to do with the matter at hand: RABELLO (1987: 89–90).

[99] OLSHANETSKY (2018a: 21).

[100] Regarding the debate from which year we should stop referring to the Eastern Roman Empire as Roman, and start calling it Byzantine, see: ELTON (2018); HEATHER (2018); OLSHANETSKY (2021: 38).

well-known fact as Jews may have been fully or partially exempt from participating in ceremonies, festivals, parades and so on. It is certain that the Roman logistical military system was built to supply a rich diet that would allow for every person to keep his faith in terms of food. The Jewish dietary laws were no exception, and any Jew could have served without breaching his faith in this respect. It is even possible that the Romans went to a great extent to allow the Jews to keep their rites and holy days in term of food, as can be assessed from O.KA.LA. INV. 228.[101]

Texts like the one of Lucifer of Cagliari and the event of the recruitment of the Jewish community of Rome in the year 19 AD, which is attested in both Josephus', Tacitus' and Suetonius' writings, bring forth the option that at least some of the Jews served in separate units. If indeed Jews served in separate units, it would mean that we have to re-evaluate what we know and what we think about the Roman army and its treatment of minorities, and the existence of religious tolerance within its ranks. There is a chance that those large Jewish units are a testimony to a Roman way of dealing with the Jews. This means that due to the exemptions and their special beliefs and rites, Rome intended to put Jews in separated units or sub-units. For example, in a Roman Legion, if there were a lot of Jews, they would put them in their own cohort, if not, then in their own *centuria.* If there were not enough of them to put in their own *centuria,* they would put them in their own *contubernium.*

We get a glimpse of the ability of Jews in keeping their faith and way of life, through inscriptions from the end of the 4th century and the beginning of the 5th century AD. From these inscriptions, if indeed they are referring to Jews who are serving in the army, we could infer that some of the Jews serving, or their relatives, took part in the local Jewish community where they were serving, and even had religious duties as archisynagogos. The most famous example, even though it is a problematic one, is Ioses' tombstone which is dated to the 4th century AD.[102] It was found during excavations in Oescus, a city in ancient Moesia, in today's north-western Bulgaria. The top of the tombstone is missing due

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[101] On the matter, see: CUVIGNY (2014); OLSHANETSKY (Forthcoming 2022).

[102] This tombstone was mentioned several times. You can see it in: CIJ I, 681; and it can also be seen alongside a further debate, in: BARCLAY (2004: 58–60); and also: IJO, I, 31–34.

to secondary use over the years. According to scholars, the missing top row of the inscription in Latin housed the majority of the name of the deceased person. Scholars believe that the second row, the first of the surviving rows, should be split to Ioses arcisina. It was claimed that Ioses is a common semitic name which was very popular among the Jews, both in the land of Israel and the diaspora, usually as a shortening of Joseph. It was further claimed that because of the error of a stonemason, who miscalculated the space needed, the last letters of the word were omitted. As a result, instead of arcisina it should have been archisynagogos. The difference between the two is most probably because archisynagogos was not normally written in Latin and there is no standard spelling for it. It appears that the letters SINA appeared to be written over an erasure. This was possibly due to an attempt at rewriting the word. The markings at the end of the word, on the frame around the inscription, were possibly done for the same reason. The markings are possibly the Greek letter gamma (Γ), that only the earlier scholars referred to, and a definite circle (maybe omicron). If the scholars are right, it is important to note that the word archisynagogos in the inscription is not spelt in the usual way, but stonemasons' spelling mistakes are well attested. Another assumption made by the researchers is that the title and position of the one buried, *Principalis*, was used to describe a military position and not an administrative one. This question rose because in the Roman Empire, the same definitions were sometimes used for both military and non-military positions. In Ioses' case, their decision to prefer the military option was due to the fact that Oescus was the home of the 5th Legion *Macedonia,* in which educated individuals served in the position of *Principalis.* [103] Due to all of these assumptions, it is better to be careful with the importance given to this inscription, yet it is still possible that he indeed held both that office in his Jewish community and a military position.

However, there are other examples of Jews serving in both the military and their community. For example, there is a Jewish *Comes* named Paulus, who is known to us from the 5th century mosaic floor in Sardis'

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[103] For the inscription and debate: Barclay (2004: 58–60).

synagogue. The mosaic says, "The vow of Paulus the comes."[104] *Comes* was a name for high officials in many different branches of the civil service at the time, and not only in the army.[105] We cannot know for certain if he was a military or civil *Comes*. Yet, Paulus is another good example of Jews in high ranks in the civil administration and the army, showing their assimilation and integration in Roman society. It is clear that he kept his Jewish belief and, even while serving, was an active participant in the Jewish community.

In a different synagogue, in Meroth, a floor mosaic was found which is dated to the 4th or 5th century AD.[106] The mosaic depicts a young man in a tunic, commonly used by the Roman military at the time. Next to the figure, equipment commonly used by Roman soldiers of the period is portrayed: a shield, a long sword and a helmet.[107] Near the figure, there is an inscription which says in Aramaic or Hebrew " יודן בר שמעון מני" (Yodan bar Shimon ma'ny). The original excavators suggested that the figure in the mosaic was David after the battle with Goliath and the equipment surrounding him belonged to the fallen Goliath. In addition, the inscription was thought to be the signature of the man who constructed the mosaic.[108] On the other hand, it was once later suggested, in connection to Jewish military service, that the name and the figure depicted an important donor to the synagogue and a prominent member of the community, who had been a Roman officer.[109] In my opinion, this is a much more reasonable and acceptable suggestion since it would make no sense for the man who constructed the mosaic to put his name randomly near the image of King David.

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[104] First published together with a photo of the mosaic: RAMAGE (1972: 20–22); second mention: HANFMANN et al. (1983: 171).

[105] Regarding the position of *Comes*: TREBILCO (1991: 48).

[106] ILAN (1988: 108); ILAN (1991: 41); ILAN (1994: 262).

[107] Can be seen in: HACHLILI (1996: 120).

[108] HACHLILI (1996).

[109] ROCCA suggested this in his appendix. On the other hand, he was mistaken when saying that the inscription is from the 6th century, as the excavators are talking about the 5th century, and in my opinion the helmet in the mosaic can even be from the 4th century: ROCCA (2010: 29).

There is doubt about Ioses holding the role of archisynagogos while having a post in the Roman army, there is also no evidence for the way the Jews kept their way of life and beliefs while serving in the army. However, it seems certain that they were able to keep to their faith and rites. If they were not able to continue to be Jewish in accordance with their laws, they would not have served in such great numbers and their existence would not have been so well attested. In addition, we cannot ignore the fact that there is not a single piece of evidence for Jews being forced to participate in pagan rituals and ceremonies while serving in the army or outside the army. And so, it seems that Jews were indeed exempt from such rituals and it was possible for them to continue being Jewish and still serve.

Conclusion

This article brought varied material that included the writings of the main historians of the Roman empire, of Christian writers, of inscriptions and papyrii and clauses in both the *Codex Theodosianus* and *Codex Justinianus.* All of them relate, or possibly show, Jewish military service in the Roman army. Although there is doubt concerning some of the inscriptions, regarding whether the person mentioned is both Jewish and a soldier, they have significance when supporting more reliable evidence.

When analysing the evidence cautiously, it is still clear that we have both textual and epigraphical evidence for Jewish service in every century from the 1st century BC to the 6th century AD. When taking into account that the presented evidence, although numerous, is just a fraction of the material available, then we must come to the conclusion that Jewish military service was a significant and continuous phenomenon throughout this period. This may suggest that most of the time, the percentage of Jews among army servicemen was no less than their percentage in the population. As we have seen, the best evidence to support such a claim is the recruitment from the Jewish community of the city of Rome in 19 AD, which its numbers are supported by both Josephus and Tacitus. Moreover, there is evidence for Jewish units in the Roman army, at least during the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD. We also have evidence for Jewish units from other centuries, yet examining the extent and the continuity of this would be part of a future publication.

From the volume of evidence available, which is larger than most of the evidence available for most aspects of antiquity, it can be deduced that the military profession was most probably considered not only acceptable, but also favourable, by many Jews. It is also clear, especially from inscriptions in the 4th and 5th centuries, that Jews could serve in the army and hold a position in their Jewish congregation. It is clear from those cases that Jews could have served in the army while observing their faith and keeping their Jewish identity.

Sources and Abbreviations

AE   *L'Année épigraphique.* Paris.

CIIP, III   W. AMELING – H. M. COTTON – W. ECK – B. ISAAC – A. KUSHNIR-STEIN – H. MISGAV – J. PRICE – A. YARDENI: (eds.) *Corpus inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae, III: South coast 2161–2648.* (Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae. A multi-lingual corpus of the inscriptions from Alexander to Muhammad.) Berlin–Boston 2014.

CIJ, I   P. JEAN-BAPTISTE FREY: *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaicarum.* Vol 1: Europe. Roma 1936.

CIL   *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*

CPJ, II   A. TCHERICKOVER: *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum.* II. Jerusalem 1960.

HEIMBACH 1833   E. HEIMBACH (ed.): *Basilicorum Libri LX.* Lipsiae 1833.

IJO, I   D. NOY – A. PANAYOTOV – H. BLOEDHORN: *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis.* Vol. 1: Eastern Europe. Tübingen 2004.

IJO, III   D. NOY – H. BLOEDHORN: *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis.* Vol. 3: Syria und Cyprus. Tübingen 2004.

JIWE, I   D. NOY: *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe.* Vol.1: Italy, Spain and Gaul. Cambridge 1993.

KRUGER 1877   P. KRUGER (ed.): *Codex Iustinianus.* Berlin 1877.

LCL   *Loeb Classical Library*

P. Hib. I   B. P. GRENFELL – A. S. HUNT: *The Hibeh Papyri.* London 1906.

RMD   *Roman Military Diploma*

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Byzantine Epigrams on the Cross and Crucifixion of Jesus Christ: The Case of John Mauropous

This article presents the Byzantine epigrams centred around the cross and the cruci-fixion as compiled by one of the most emblematic scholar figures of the Church in the beginning of the 11th century, namely John Mauropous. The goal of this article is to present the main patterns from those epigrams, spot potential influences from other texts of a preceding time as well as draw basic conclusions.

Keywords: Byzantium, Byzantine Poetry, Byzantine Epigram, Cross, Cruci-fixion, Jesus Christ, 11th century, John Mauropous

Introduction

Before any major presentation of the epigrams studied in this article, it is deemed necessary to include some information of the life and works of John Mauropous so as to better understand and study his compilation of epigrams.

Life

According to Byzantine scholar H. G. Beck, John Mauropous is the best ecclesiastical orator of the 11th century and one of the most popular fig-ures of church history of that time.[1] Indeed, if one studies his work, it is easy to see the breadth and wealth of his mentality since both his classic Greek education and his profound dedication to the Orthodox tradition and Christian faith are made abundantly clear. This harmonious combi-nation of those two worlds, namely classic Greek education and Chris-tian faith and piety, rendered John Mauropous one of the top spiritual

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[1] BECK (1959 [= 1977]: 555).

figures of his time, given that his work beams with a premature (Christian) humanitarianism.

Little is known about his childhood and his adolescence,[2] mostly coming from what he shared in his works and also what is mentioned in the eulogy compiled in his honor by his student Michael Psellos.[3] John Mauropous was born in Paphlagonia in the early 11th century; at a very young age, he left with his family for Constantinople where he grew up.[4] There, his two uncles -one of whom served as the Bishop of Claudioupolis, take over his education curriculum, which included rhetoric, philosophy, and law, given the information by Michael Psellos.[5] Later, John himself became an educator,[6] using his house as a school, gaining great success according to both his student Michael Psellos as well as his nephew Theodore Koitonites in the devotional he wrote in his uncle's honor.[7] However, without disrupting his educational duties, John Mauropous decides to join the Church as a monk, residing probably in the monastery of John the Baptist, also known as monastery of Petra.[8] It is worth mentioning that John Mauropous associated with exceptional figures of his time such as with his student and friend Michael Psellos,[9] John VIII Xiphilinos,[10] and Constantine III Leichoudes, thus forming a

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[2] More information about his adult life and his later career is available despite some conflict among his biographers in the chronological order of his life events. For these disputes, see ΚΑΡΠΟΖΗΛΟΣ (1982); KARPOZELOS (1994); KAZHDAN (1993); KAZHDAN (1995).

[3] DENNIS (1994); ANASTASI (1968).

[4] For the life of John Mauropous, see also DRÄSEKE (1893); DREVES (1884).

[5] DENNIS (1994: 217–219).

[6] DE LAGARDE–BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: epig. no. 47, lines 22–26. Tit.: Εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ οἰκίαν, ὅτε διαπράσας ταύτην ἀπέλιπε).

[7] MERCATI (1948 [= 1970]).

[8] Information is available in the eulogy by John Mauropous to Saint Varas (BHG 212; LEQUEUX [2002]; ΠΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ–ΚΕΡΑΜΕΎΣ [1884]). For further analysis of the eulogy, see ΣΩΤΗΡΟΎΔΗ (2012: 65–75). For the monastery of Petra, see ASUTAY–EFFENBERGER (2008); MALAMUT (2001); ΚΑΚΟΥΛΊΔΗΣ (1968).

[9] Literature on the life of Michael Psellos is detailed and thorough. In this case, I could suggest some works such as ΚΡΙΑΡΆΣ (1972) (for life details); HUNGER (1978 [= 1992]: 187–201); LJUBARSKIJ (2004) (for the life and works of Michael Psellos); BARBER–JENKINS (2006).

[10] ODB II 1054.

"government of philosophers" according to Paul Lemerle,[11] since they have been the trusted advisors of emperor Constantine IX Monomach-os[12] for many years. Later on, they fall from the emperor's good graces and are removed from the royal court. It is that time when John Mauro-pous was elected a bishop in Euchaita of Pontos - a region with no big interests, far away from Constantinople[13] - despite his will. Given the location, this election can be seen as a specious exile.[14] After remaining there for more than two decades, he decided to quit his role as a bishop and return to Constantinople in the monastery of John the Baptist, where he stayed until he died at an old age.[15]

Works

John Mauropous' written works are of great significance and value being of exceptional quality and variety and including epigrams, letters, eulogistic and occasional speeches,[16] the life of a saint,[17] and ecclesiastical canons.[18] The greatest part of his life works is rendered in Vat. gr. 676,[19] written in the 11th century, supervised possibly by John Mauropous himself. This code holds his best works according to Mauropous himself, namely 99 epigrams,[20] 77 letters,[21] 12 speeches and the life of a

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[11] LEMERLE (1977).

[12] ΧΟΝΔΡΙΔΟΥ (2002); AGAPITOS (1998: 175) (on the way he acquired important posts by the students of John Mauropous during the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos).

[13] John Mauropous in his letter to Patriarch Michael I Keroularios describes the place as ἐρημία χώρας πολλή, ἀοίκητος, ἄχαρις, ἄδενδρος, ἄχλοος, ἄξυλος, ἄσκιος, ἀγριότητος ὅλη καὶ ἀκηδίας μεστή, πολὺ καὶ τῆς φήμης καὶ τῆς δόξης ἐνδέουσα (see KARPOZELOS [1990: Letters 64, 56–58]).

[14] KARPOZELOS (1994: 58–60).

[15] On potential death dates of John Mauropous, see ΣΩΤΗΡΟΥΔΗ (2012: 35).

[16] ODB II 1319 ('His speeches are also valuable source for the history of Byzantine relations with their northern neighbors…').

[17] This concerns the life of saint Dorotheos the young (see ΣΩΤΗΡΟΥΔΗ [2012: 139–146]).

[18] For the description of the various works by John Mauropous, his sources and role models see ΣΩΤΗΡΟΥΔΗ (2012) and the detailed bibliography.

[19] DEVREESSE (1950: 130–131); ΚΑΡΠΟΖΗΛΟΣ (1982: 55–56); BIANCONI (2011). See also BERNARD (2014: 128–148), and ANASTASI (1984); ANASTASI (1969); ANASTASI (1976).

[20] DE LAGARDE–BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: 1–51); ΚΑΡΠΟΖΗΛΟΣ (1982: 55–106); LAUXTERMANN (2003: 62–65).

[21] KARPOZELOS (1990).

saint. What is missing is 160 canons, written by John Mauropous at an older age, possibly while he was at the monastery of Petra,[22] they are dispersed in many manuscripts.[23]

Epigrams on the Cross and the Crucifixion

The 99 epigrams of code Vat. gr. 676 are divided, according to content, in religious, since they are dedicated to celebratory days and icons (of saints),[24] in autobiographical,[25] giving us information and thoughts on various events; those devoted to emperor Constantine IX Monomachos[26] and empresses (Augusta) Zoe and Theodora,[27] in prologue epigrams,[28] meaning those epigrams that prologues some of his speeches.

The first category of religious epigrams consists of 8 epigrams in total, which - as indicated by their title - refer either to the Crucifixion and the true cross, His holy blood, or objects which came in contact with His holy body and are thus rendered holy, such as the spear and the thorn wreath. Let's study each epigram separately focusing our attention on information and patterns they provide.

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[22] ΚΑΡΠΟΖΗΛΟΣ (1982: 49).

[23] See D' AIUTO (1994: 22–24) (For a collection of saved works by John Mauropous); HUSSEY (1947 [= 1968]). Most of the canons are dedicated to the Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, Apostles Paul and Peter, and finally to Saints such as Saint Theodore, Saint George and the Three Holy Hierarchs. At this point, it is crucial to emphasize the defining role of John Mauropous in the establishment of a celebratory day for the Three Holy Hierarchs on January 30th each year. See BONIS (1966) (on the canon for the Three Holy Hierarchs and its dogmatic meaning); ΣΩΤΗΡΟΥΔΗ (2012: 147–178) (on the speech and eulogy for the Three Holy Hierarchs).

[24] DE LAGARDE–BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: 2). The general title of this group of poems is as follows: Εἰς πίνακας μεγάλους τῶν ἑορτῶν· ὡς ἐν τύπῳ ἐκφράσεως.

[25] DE LAGARDE–BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: e.g. epigrams no. 92 and 96).

[26] DE LAGARDE–BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: epigram no. 57).

[27] DE LAGARDE–BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: e.g. epigrams no. 54 and 55).

[28] DE LAGARDE–BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: e.g. epigrams no. 27, 28, 30, 94 and 95).

Epigram no. 1

Εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν
Νὺξ ταῦτα· καὶ γὰρ ἥλιον κρύπτει σκότος,
ἀχλὺς δὲ πληροῖ πάντα καὶ βαθὺς ζόφος.
πῶς οὖν θεωρῶ, δημιουργὲ Χριστέ μου,
σταυρούμενόν σε; φεῦ· τί τοῦτο; καὶ πόθεν
5   σωτῆρα κόσμου προσδοκῶν σε μακρόθεν,
νῦν ὡς κακοῦργον εἰς ἀρᾶς ξύλον βλέπω;
ἀπῆλθεν εἶδος· κάλλος οὐκ ἔχεις ἔτι·
μήτηρ δὲ θρηνεῖ καὶ σὸς ἠγαπημένος,
μόνοι παρόντες τῶν πρὸ μικροῦ σοι φίλων.
10 φροῦδοι μαθηταί· καὶ πτερωτοὶ δ᾽ οἰκέται
μάτην περιτρέχουσι μεστοὶ δακρύων·
οὐ γὰρ βοηθεῖν εὐποροῦσι τῷ πάθει.
μέγας δ᾽ ἄπεστι σὸς πατὴρ παντοκράτωρ,
μόνον λιπών σε ταῦτα πάσχειν ὡς λέγεις,
15 καίτοι προεῖπες οὐχὶ λειφθῆναι μόνος,
συνόντος αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ νῦν πάσχοντί σοι·
ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἄπεστι· πνεῦμα σὸν γὰρ λαμβάνει,
συνευδοκῶν τε καὶ συνών σοι, καὶ φέρων
υἱοῦ τελευτὴν ἠγαπημένου βλέπειν.
20 δεῖ γάρ με, δεῖ, σοὶ συνθανεῖν, εὐεργέτα,
ὡς συμμετασχῶ τῆς ἐγέρσεως πάλιν.
οὕτως ἔδοξε· τοῦτο τῆς εὐσπλαγχνίας
ὑμῶν πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἡ μεγίστη χρηστότης.
εὐγνωμονοῦμεν· πλὴν τάχυνον ἐκ τάφου.
25 σπεύσεις δὲ πάντως· ἥλιος γὰρ ἐνθάδε,
ὁ πρὶν ζοφωθεὶς καὶ κρυβείς, εἰς σὴν χάριν
ἔλαμψε φαιδρὸν αὖθις ἀνθ᾽ ἑωσφόρου,
σὲ τὸν μέγιστον ἥλιον προμηνύων
ἐκ γῆς ἀνασχεῖν φῶς τε πέμψειν αὐτίκα.
30 ἴδοιμεν οὖν λάμποντα καὶ σέ, Χριστέ μου,
ὥσπερ τὸ σὸν ποίημα, τὴν νῦν ἡμέραν,
δι᾽ ἧς ὁρῶμεν τούσδε τοὺς θείους τύπους,
καὶ σοὶ συναστράψοιμεν ἐκ γῆς καὶ τάφων.[29]

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[29] DE LAGARDE–BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: 5–6 [no. 7]); ΠΙΤΣΙΝΕΛΗΣ (1999–2000: 270); VASSIS (2005: 496).

Translation[30]

At the crucifixion
It is the night, since darkness covers the sun
the mist floods everything, and the gloom is thick.
How can I see you, my Creator Christ
crucified? Alas, what is this? Why
5   expecting you for a long time as the savior of the world,
I now see you as a villain on the cursed wood?
Your figure is lost, you no longer have beauty.
Your mother is mourning and so is your favorite student,
the only ones who are present from the ones you used to call your friends.
10 Your students have gone, and your winged servants (= angels)
wander aimlessly full of tears,
since they cannot help you in your passion.
Your father, the great Almighty, is also gone
leaving you to suffer through all this on your own, as you say,
15 although you have said that you will not be left alone,
that he will be with you and suffer alongside you.
He is not absent, though, because he receives your spirit,
after approving, he is with you and tolerates
to witness his beloved son's death.
20 I must, then, I must, my benefactor, die with you,
to be a part of your resurrection.
It seemed right, this is the utmost kindness
your mercy to us.
We are grateful to you. Hurry to get out of your grave, though.
25 But you will hurry, no doubt, because the sun here
that was dark before and was hidden, for your grace
is once again bright, instead of the morning star
announcing that you are again the brightest sun
you will rise from the earth and immediately send your light.
30 May we see you radiant, my Christ,
like your creation, this day,
through which we see these holy icons,
and may we shine with you arising from earth and from our graves.

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[30] All translations of the epigrams have been made by the author of the article.

Conclusions

At first glance, it is already observed that this is a rather lengthy epigram, a total of 33 lines, something that is not the norm since the vast majority of epigrams (on the cross and the crucifixion) only have a few lines, oftentimes just two[31] or even one, such as the one-line epigrams of Theodore Stoudite in the 8th-9th century.[32] How can we justify the length of this epigram, then? The answer lies in the content of these lines as well as in the way this content is projected to each reader.

Specifically, the composer deals with a plethora of topics in the lines of this extensive epigram, all the while making use of various ornamental devices with the aim to offer the reader a vivid portrayal of this tremendous event of the Crucifixion by humans and the emotions this evokes in the soul of the poet and by extension, in each and every mortal believer. Let us now explore the individual issues that arise from this epigram.

The first two lines remind us directly of the evangelical event of the sky darkening during Jesus' last breath on the cross, as this is described in the gospels of Matthew,[33] Mark,[34] and Luke.[35] This event is one that causes awe in the eyes of the poet,[36] who wonders how it is possible to

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[31] Fine examples are the two–line epigrams on the cross and the crucifixion by Georgios Pisides in the 7th century (see KANTARAS [2019a]), Theodore of Stoudios in the 8th–9th century (see SPECK [1968: 199–208, no. XLVII–LVII]) and many more subsequent anonymous epigram makers.

[32] SPECK (1968: 208–209 [no. LVIII]; 210–211 [no. LX]).

[33] Matt. 27, 45 (Ἀπὸ δὲ ἕκτης ὥρας σκότος ἐγένετο ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης). For more information, see comments in ΤΡΕΜΠΕΛΑΣ (1951: 510).

[34] Mark 15, 33 (Γενομένης δὲ ὥρας ἕκτης σκότος ἐγένετο ἐφ᾽ ὅλην τὴν γῆν ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης).

[35] Luke 13, 44 (Ἦν δὲ ὡσεὶ ὥρα ἕκτη καὶ σκότος ἐγένετο ἐφ᾽ ὅλην τὴν γῆν ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης, τοῦ ἡλίου ἐκλείποντος). For the exact time of death of Jesus see ΤΡΕΜΠΕΛΑΣ (1951: 510).

[36] The darkening of the bright sun light, the earthquake, and the rip of the curtains from the temple of Solomon that followed, were evidence of the crucified Christ's divine existence, and also it can be maintained that these negative natural phenomena were the reaction of nature itself for the death of the one and only God. After all, we should not forget that these marvelous but tremendous events made the centurion who was the head of the executionary squad yell in awe that indeed He is the real son

see the savior of the world hanged like a criminal on the cursed wood of the cross. The use of sequential rhetorical questions (πῶς οὖν θεωρῶ, δημιουργὲ Χριστέ μου, / σταυρούμενόν σε; τί τοῦτο; πόθεν / … / νῦν ὡς κακοῦργον εἰς ἀρᾶς ξύλον βλέπω; – lines 3–6) and the exclamation φεῦ (= *Alas*, line 4) - reminding us of ancient Greek tragedy - contribute majorly in underlining the spiritual crash of the poet upon seeing the crucifixion of the son of God.[37]

The seventh line of the epigram is also noticeable (ἀπῆλθεν εἶδος· κάλλος οὐκ ἔχεις ἔτι) and it refers to the lost beauty of Christ on the cross[38] thus emphasizing in an even more intense manner the personal spiritual crash of the epigram maker when he sees Him ὡς κακοῦργον εἰς ἀρᾶς ξύλον (line 6).

Within this emotional agony and feelings of crashed soul, the next four lines (8–12) follow, in which there is reference to the two central figures in the event of the crucifixion, namely the Virgin Mary and His favorite student John,[39] who were the only ones present from all those

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of God, since nature itself showed it by declaring His innocence (Matt. 27, 54: ἀληθῶς Θεοῦ υἱὸς ἦν οὗτος. Mark 15, 39: ἀληθῶς ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος υἱὸς ἦν Θεοῦ). It is worth noting that the centurion's turn to Christianity is the second moral miracle performed by Jesus while on the cross, following the thief's regret (Luke 23, 41–43: καὶ ἡμεῖς μὲν δικαίως· ἄξια γὰρ ὧν ἐπράξαμεν ἀπολαμβάνομεν· οὗτος δὲ οὐδὲν ἄτοπον ἔπραξε. καὶ ἔλεγε τῷ Ἰησοῦ· μνήσθητί μου, Κύριε, ὅταν ἔλθης ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου. καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, σήμερον μετ' ἐμοῦ ἔσῃ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ).

[37] For this dramatic element in the lines of the epigrams on the cross and the crucifixion, such as exclamation, questions and dialogue, see KANTARAS (2019b).

[38] See KANTARAS (2021b).

[39] It is worth mentioning that in epigrams regarding the cross and the crucifixion, in which there is reference to the depict of the crucifixion and the Passion of Christ on the cross, we often see the Virgin Mary being described as looking gloomy as well as His student John. Two fine examples of such epigrams, both titled Εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν, one written by John, Bishop of Melitene (second half of 11th century) and the other by Eugenius of Palermo (12th century). See MAGUIRE (1996: 21 [no. 49, line 4: ὡς ἡ τῆς μητρὸς μαρτυρεῖ σκυθρωπ(ό)της]) and GIGANTE (1964: 96 [no. XIII, lines 6–7: κἂν ἡ ξυνωρὶς παρθένων (= Virgin Mary and John) τῶν ἐνθάδε / ἔστη κατηφής, δυσφοροῦσα τῷ πάθει]). The mental state of the staggering Virgin Mary under the Crucified is skillfully reflected in the corresponding Byzantine iconography (see e.g., VASSILAKI [2000] and ΠΑΪΣΙΔΟΥ [2010], for the representation of the Virgin Mary in Byzantine art).

He used to call friends (μόνοι παρόντες τῶν πρὸ μικροῦ σοι φίλων – line 9) since all of His other students were not there. The same was true of His winged servants, namely the angels (φροῦδοι μαθηταί· καὶ πτερωτοὶ δ᾽ οἰκέται – line 10), who were running aimlessly with tears in their eyes being unable to help Him in His passion (μάτην περιτρέχουσι μεστοὶ δακρύων· / οὐ γὰρ βοηθεῖν εὐποροῦσι τῷ πάθει – lines 11-12).[40]

Following is the reference to the Father of the Crucified (μέγας … σὸς πατὴρ παντοκράτωρ – line 13), who, although there is the impression that he is absent having abandoned His Son in His Passion (lines 13–16), in fact not only is he not absent but he is with Him, tolerating to see His death and then procuring His spirit (lines 17–19).

After line 20, the presence of the epigram maker is made clear and he speaks on behalf of all humans. Specifically, the poet refers to the kindness and mercy of the crucified Christ towards humans (οὕτως ἔδοξε· τοῦτο τῆς εὐσπλαγχνίας / ὑμῶν πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἡ μεγίστη χρηστότης – lines 22–23) since after His death on the cross, His resurrection will come and by extension, the resurrection of all believers (lines 20–23). This is the reason why the poet rushes Him to hurry up and get out of His Tomb (… τάχυνον ἐκ τάφου – line 24) shining bright like the sun (σὲ τὸν μέγιστον ἥλιον – line 28) sending His light all over the world[41] and sending away the darkness (lines 25–29).

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[40] Let's make a note of the winged angels who mourn together with the Virgin Mary in the lines of these epigrams are depicted according to traditional Byzantine icon representation. There is also depiction of them with their hands on their face in a gesture of agony upon viewing the crucifixion, mostly from the 11th century and onward (see MAGUIRE [1996: 19]; MAGUIRE [1977: 145, n. 115, on mourning angels in Byzantine art]). For the way of depicting angels in Byzantine art see ΘΗΕ (1: 188–193); PEERS (2001); ALPATOV (1985).

[41] In religious texts (liturgical and others) the presence of light is particularly intense, since it is God who like a bright lamp sends away all darkness from the souls of believers with His ray of light (Ps. 17, 29 [ὅτι σὺ φωτιεῖς λύχνον μου, Κύριε, ὁ Θεός μου, / φωτιεῖς τὸ σκότος μου]; Ps. 26, 1 [Κύριος φωτισμός μου καὶ σωτήρ μου]; Ps. 35, 10 [ἐν τῷ φωτί σου ὀψόμεθα φῶς]; Ps. 42, 3 [ἐξαπόστειλον τὸ φῶς σου καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειάν σου]), something which His Son continues to do since He is Φῶς ἐκ φωτός, Θεός ἀληθινός. John of Damascus in Περὶ τῆς ἁγίας τριάδος mentions: Ὥσπερ ἅμα τὸ πῦρ καὶ ἅμα τὸ ἐξ αὐτοῦ φῶς, καὶ οὐ πρῶτον τὸ πῦρ καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα τὸ φῶς ἀλλ᾽ ἅμα, καὶ ὥσπερ τὸ φῶς ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς ἀεὶ γεννώμενον ἀεὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐστι μηδαμῶς αὐτοῦ χωριζόμενον, οὕτω καὶ ὁ υἱὸς

The epigram is completed with a wish, or better yet, a request submitted to the Crucified Christ Himself, through which all people will be able to see the bright light of the resurrected Christ since they will view the holy icons of His crucifixion. Finally, there is the desire to shine themselves (just like Christ) when their future resurrection comes (lines 30–33). A final note regards this statement of request towards God in the final lines of an epigram, which is a common practice in epigrams of that kind and it is not deemed particularly unusual.[42]

However, studying the content of the lines in this epigram, what is exceptional is the way John Mauropous composes these lines. In short, we observe a variety of expressive means and tropes which he employs to accomplish his goal, which is none other than describing as vividly as possibly the Passion of Christ in order to evoke feelings of agony, frustration, and devastation to his reader upon the atrocious, absurd, and horrid event of the Crucifixion.

In detail, the epigram maker with the use of various literary means, establishes a (communicative) directness between the reader of the epigram and Christ Himself. This directness is achieved through verbs used

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ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννᾶται μηδαμῶς αὐτοῦ χωριζόμενος, ἀλλ᾽ ἀεὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐστιν (see KOTTER [1973: 22]). This link between light and Christ is particularly evident in the lines of this Byzantine epigram where, as we saw, Christ is μέγιστον ἥλιον. This shows the connection of the epigram to the relevant Byzantine hymnography; for example, the hymnographer of the Akathistos Hymn salutes the Virgin Mary as ἀκτίνα νοητοῦ ἡλίου (Akathistos Hymn, κα᾽ 6), Josef the Hymnographer in his Canon for the Virgin Mary the Saturday of the Akathistos Hymn characterizes her as ὄχημα ἡλίου τοῦ νοητοῦ (Josef the hymnographer, Κανὼν εἰς τὴν θεοτόκον τῷ σαββάτῳ τοῦ ἀκαθίστου ὕμνου, ἦχος δ᾽, ᾠδὴ ζ᾽121–122. See ΔΕΤΟΡΑΚΗΣ [1997: 173]), who introduced to the world τὸν μέγαν ἥλιον, meaning Jesus (Josef the Hymnographer, Κανὼν εἰς τὴν θεοτόκον τῷ σαββάτῳ τοῦ ἀκαθίστου ὕμνου, ἦχος δ᾽, ᾠδὴ θ᾽ 184. See ΔΕΤΟΡΑΚΗΣ [1997: 175]).

[42] This concerns demands stated by believers who are part of the people, the clergy (monks and higher ranks in Church), the ruling class, the royalty, state officials, men and women. The majority of those human requests towards God (Jesus, the Virgin Mary–to be the intermediary to her Son –, the Holy Trinity, particular saints) are all characterized by their request for redemption from ἀμπλακήματα (= sins) of the requester and for the procurement of a position in the Kingdom of Heavens, when they leave this vain and sinful life. For human demands as expressed in the verses of the epigrams for the cross and crucifixion of Christ see ΚΑΝΤΑΡΑΣ (2021a: 194–210).

in first person singular,[43] and use of second person singular when the narrator addresses Christ[44] clearly and specifically. In this last case, the constant statement of questions[45] in combination with the exclamation φεῦ (= *Alas*) in the fourth line, reminding us of ancient Greek tragedy,[46] contribute decidedly to the finer rendition of the content and mostly, the accomplishment of the desired dramatic tone in these lines. What we also observe is that the narrator-poet addresses Christ directly using vocative salutations of His name and His features[47] as well as a plethora of second person singular pronouns (personal[48] and possessive[49]), the imperative[50] in order to rush Him into hurrying up out of His Tomb, thus preluding His upcoming Resurrection. Finally, the use of optative mood in first person plural, since the epigram maker speaks on behalf of all people, sums up the various expressive means of the epigram maker.[51]

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[43] θεωρῶ (line 3); βλέπω (line 6); συμμετασχῶ (line 21).

[44] ἔχεις (line 7); λέγεις (line 14); προεῖπες (line 15); σπεύσεις (line 25).

[45] πῶς οὖν θεωρῶ, … / σταυρούμενόν σε; … τι τοῦτο; καὶ πόθεν / … / νῦν ὡς κακοῦργον εἰς ἀρᾶς ξύλον βλέπω; (lines 3, 4, 6).

[46] It is generally easy to witness the classic Greek education of John Mauropous and its influence in his poems. As an example, let's observe the poem related to exile (CANTARELLA [1992, II: 714–718]), in which the influence from Homer's *Odyssey* is evident, since we see an analogy between Mauropous himself (and his relation to God) and Odusseus (and his relation to goddess Athena). This Homeric influence is even more profound in his use of words such as ξένος and ἀνέστιος (lines 40, 41, 44) and phrases like ὡς πατρῴ ἀνέστίαν (line 16), πατρική στέγη (line 32), οἰκία ἔρημος καὶ κενὴ λελειμμένη (lines 1–2). For more information on this poem see LIVANOS (2008: 47).

[47] δημιουργὲ Χριστέ μου (line 3); εὐεργέτα (line 20); Χριστέ μου (line 30).

[48] σταυρούμενόν <u>σε</u>; … / … προσδοκῶν <u>σε</u> … / μόνον λιπών <u>σε</u> … / <u>σὲ</u> τὸν μέγιστον ἥλιον ... / … καὶ <u>σέ</u>, Χριστέ μου (lines 4, 5, 14, 28, 30).

[49] … <u>σὸς</u> ἠγαπημένος / … <u>σὸς</u> πατὴρ ... / … πνεῦμα <u>σὸν</u> ... / … <u>σὴν</u> χάριν / … τὸ <u>σὸν</u> ποίημα (lines 8, 13, 17, 26, 31).

[50] … τάχυνον ἐκ τάφου (line 24). Let's make a note at this point that the imperative is only used once. I attribute this single use in its node of familiarity, which is unjustifiable here when the addressee is the Son of God. It would have been regarded as ὕβρις (= hubris) on behalf of the (mortal and sinful) epigram maker and by extension, humans generally.

[51] … ἴδοιμεν … (line 30); … συναστράψοιμεν… (line 33).

Epigram no. 2

Εἰς σταύρωσιν χρυσῆν
Κἀνταῦθα Χριστός ἐστιν ὑπνῶν ἐν ξύλῳ,
φέρει δὲ χρυσὸς τοῦ πάθους τὴν εἰκόνα
ἀνθ᾽ οὗ πραθεὶς ἔσωσε τοὺς κατ᾽ εἰκόνα.[52]

Translation

For a golden crucifixion
Here Christ is asleep on wood
while the gold bears the image of His Passion
through which He bought[53] and saved those made in His image
(meaning people).

Conclusions

In contrast to the previous extensive epigram, this one is only three lines. As we observe from the title, this is an epigram dedicated to the crucifixion while the adjective 'golden' (Tit.: Εἰς σταύρωσιν χρυσῆν) inclines us towards understanding that the epigram refers to the depiction of the crucified Christ on an icon.

In detail, the epigram starts by creating an analogy of the crucifixion and of sleeping (Κἀνταῦθα Χριστός ἐστιν ὑπνῶν ἐν ξύλῳ).[54] This is an idea, or better yet, a pattern very much repeated in other epigrams of

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[52] DE LAGARDE–BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: 17–18 [no. 32]); HÖRANDNER (2007, I: 121–122, fig. 11 [122]); FROLOW (1961: 266–268 [no. 205]); WILLARD (1976: 55–64 [+pl.]); ΠΑΣΠΑΤΗΣ (1877: 137); BOISSONADE (1829–1833 [= 1962], II: 476 [κγ´]): SPECK (1991: 280); COUGNY (1890, III: 348 [no. 344]); VASSIS (2005: 398); VASSIS (2011: 232).

[53] Verbatim: "exchanging what was sold (meaning 'to buy off')".

[54] Worth noting is the link between death and sleep, an idea also evident in former biblical texts. Specifically, in the Old Testament, we see the use of the verb κοιμάμαι (= be asleep), which states the situation in which death is viewed as eternal sleep. In Job, for instance, we read: συνετέλεσαν δὲ ἐν ἀγαθοῖς τὸν βίον αὐτῶν, ἐν δὲ ἀναπαύσει ᾅδου ἐκοιμήθησαν (Job 21, 13). Also in the Old Testament, we see the word κοίμηση referring to death (… ἀλλὰ κοιμηθήσομαι μετὰ τῶν πατέρων μου: Gen. 47, 30; ἀναπεσὼν ἐκοιμήθης ὡς λέων καὶ ὡς σκύμνος: Gen. 49, 9; … καὶ ἔσται ἐὰν πληρωθῶσιν αἱ ἡμέραι σου καὶ κοιμηθήσῃ μετὰ τῶν πατέρων σου…: II Reigns 7, 12).

the same topic,[55] which makes it familiar to Byzantine scholars and clergy, such as John Mauropous.[56] After all, it is known that Byzantine hymnography brims with hymns which metaphorize the death of Christ as sleep,[57] while the topic of crucifixion-sleep has inspired many prominent Church Fathers in their composition of sermons.[58] It is, thus, certain that John Mauropous as a bishop knew all this tradition, which inspired him into composing this first line of the epigram in question.

[55] It is very common in epigrams regarding the cross and the crucifixion that death of Christ on the true cross is not a definitive and irreversible event but rather an event metaphorized as sleep, carrying sleep properties such as 'awakening', implying quite clearly the Resurrection. Some fine examples in which this pattern is most prominent, mostly from 11th–13th century, include: καὶ ποῦ καθυπνοῖς ἐν μέσῃ μεσημβρίᾳ / … / αἲ, αἴ! γλυκὺν τὸν ὕπνον ὑπνοῖς, ἀλλ' ὅμως (Nicholas Kallikles, 11th–12th century: ROMANO [1980: 82, no. 7, line. 3, 6], 135 [Italian translation], 168–169 [comments]; FROLOW [1961: 330, no. 338, line. 3]); Βραχὺν ὑπνώσας ὕπνον ἐν τριδενδ[ρί]α (Nicholas Kallikles, 11th–12th century: RHOBY [2010: 174–178, no. Me15, line. 1]); Οὐχ ὕπνον ἕξεις οὐδὲ νυστάξεις πάλιν (Nicholas of Otranto, 12th–13th century: LONGO–JACOB [1980–1982: 197, no. 19.7, f. 36ʳ, line 1]).

[56] The Church calls death 'sleep', because much like each night, people go to sleep awaiting their morning 'awakening', they should equally await their resurrection going to death. This practical move of accepting this view is reflected on the cross sign that the believer does with their hands (see ΓΙΑΝΝΑΡΑΣ [2017: 63–66]).

[57] A prominent figure is Romanos Melodos with his hymns. Some examples are: Rom. Mel.: 25 ι' (δυνατὸς ἐγήγερται καὶ ὥσπερ ἀπὸ ὕπνου ἀνέστη ὁ κύριος); Rom. Mel.: 26 ζ' (Ἀλλ' ἦλθε Χριστὸς ἡ ζωὴ ὕπνον δεῖξαι τὸν θάνατον); Rom. Mel.: 27 ς' (Ἰησοῦς δὲ ὁ Χριστὸς ὥσπερ ἐξ ὕπνου τινὸς ἐξανίσταται); Rom. Mel.: 28 κε' (Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστὸς ὡς ἐξ ὕπνου ἐξανίσταται τότε). Also in Ἀνέκδοτα Μεγαλυνάρια τοῦ Μεγάλου Σαββάτου, Στάσις β' we read: Ἄξιον ἐστὶ μεγαλύνειν σε τὸν ζωοδότην, / τὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ ξύλου ὑπνώσαντα … Ὕπνωσας Χριστέ, ἀφυπνίζων τοὺς ἐν τοῖς μνημείοις / καὶ νεκρὸν τὴν ὄψιν ἀπέδειξας / τὴν φθορὰν μοι προξενήσαντα τὸ πρίν (see ΔΕΤΟΡΑΚΗΣ [1997: 226–227]).

[58] Gregory of Nyssa, Εἰς τὸ Ἄισμα τῶν Ἀισμάτων, PG 44: 992C (Ὕπνος θανάτου ἔστιν ὁμοίωμα…). Still, a prominent position is held by John Chrysostom in his sermon Εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κοιμητηρίου καὶ εἰς τὸν σταυρὸν τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ Θεοῦ καὶ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (PG 49: 393–398), in which death changes its name in sleep and κοίμηση and this is why the place where the dead are buried is called κοιμητήριον (= cemetery) (PG: 49, 394). In his sermon Πρὸς τοὺς μέλλοντας φωτίζεσθαι (PG 49: 233) John Chrysostom mentions: οὐκ ἔστιν θάνατος ὁ θάνατος, ἀλλὰ ὕπνος καὶ κοίμησις πρόσκαιρος. Finally, it is worth noting that there are related epigrams on the topic. Such examples include: Theodore of Stoudios (8th century) titled Εἰς τὸ κοιμητήριον (see SPECK [1968: 153, no. 20]).

In the second line, there is a clear reference to the fact that these lines were composed to depict the Passion of the Christ. The reference to gold (φέρει δὲ χρυσὸς τοῦ πάθους τὴν εἰκόνα), confirming the title of the epigram (Tit.: Εἰς σταύρωσιν χρυσῆν), leads to the assumption that this epigram regards an icon entirely or partially made with gold. The use of this particular metal in the construction of holy icons as well as works of Byzantine micro-art (such as crosses, *staurothekes*, shrines, and also various holy-ecclesiastical- relics) is not uncommon and carries special importance and symbolism. This is true because gold, the most valuable of metals, was not impacted by time and consequently, it is a material most fitted for the construction of holy (and time-resistant) items, worthy of their divine grandeur.[59]

This epigram is completed with a reference to the crucifixion of Christ as an act of 'exchanging' aiming at the salvation of the people made in His image.

Epigram no. 3

> Εἰς τὴν θήκην τοῦ τιμίου ξύλου τοῦ βασιλέως Χριστοῦ
> Σταυροῦ πάλιν φῶς, καὶ πάλιν Κωνσταντῖνος.
> ὁ πρῶτος εἶδε τὸν τύπον δι᾽ ἀστέρων,
> ὁ δεύτερος δὲ τοῦτον αὐτὸν καὶ βλέπει,
> καὶ χερσὶ πισταῖς προσκυνούμενον φέρει.
> 5 ἄμφω παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ τὸ κράτος δεδεγμένοι,
> ἄμφω σέβουσιν αὐτὸν ὡς εὐεργέτην.[60]

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[59] In the construction of holy works of art, the Byzantine makers combined gold with the use of precious or semi–precious stones. Also, let us not forget that the allure of precious stones to people goes centuries back, since they were rare and could be acquired with difficulty and arduous effort (see SPIER [1997], for precious stones during early Christianity). In general about the use and the importance of gold and other precious metals in Byzantine art see FRANSES (2003); CAMERON (2015: 157–158); ΠΑΝΣΕΛΉΝΟΥ (2000: 276 and 83–84, for the particular interest of Byzantine artists for the use of precious metals such as silver and gold in their mosaics); CORMACK (1985); SENDLER (2014: 211–213, on the use of gold); DURAND (2004); GRABAR (1975). Of course, the use of precious stones in artworks generally was not just a habit of Byzantine artists. They were widely used in the West during the Middle Ages.

[60] HÖRANDNER (2007: I, 112–113); FROLOW (1961: 271 [no. 212]); DE LAGARDE–BOLLIG (1882 [= 1979]: 34 [no. 58]): PG CXX: col. 1172; VASSIS (2005: 686); VASSIS (2011: 260).

Translation

> For the staurotheke of King Christ
> The cross is again the light, and again a Constantine.
> The first saw the shape made with stars,
> while the second see the cross itself,
> and with hands in prayer holds it and bows before it.
> 5 Both received power from it,
> both bow before it as their benefactor.

Conclusions

The title of the epigram informs us of its devotional lines, possibly engraved in a *theke* (= θήκη) in which part of the true cross is kept.

In the first reading of the six lines in total, we observe references to two Byzantine emperors whose common ground is their deep faith and respect for the cross, somewhat attempting a comparison between them. In essence, it can be claimed that this is an epigram which emphasizes the relation of the Byzantine emperor with the symbol of the cross and by extension, it projects the political-religious underpinnings of their empire.[61] According to this ideology, the Byzantine emperor, by the mercy of God (ἐλέῳ Θεοῦ), is transformed into His temporary representative on earth[62] in order to keepsake the principles of Christian

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[61] For the ideology on emperors in the poetry of John Mauropous see CORTASSA (2005).

[62] See e.g. ΑΡΒΕΛΕΡ (2009: 164–165); DÖLGER (1938–1939: 230–232); DÖLGER (1935); DÖLGER–SCHNEIDER (1952: 93); ENSSLIN (1939); GRABAR (1936); RUNCIMAN (1977); STRAUB (1939: 113, 118); ANGELOV (2007); FRALE (2018: 143–145); GALLINA (2016); ΗΛΙΑΔΗ (2003); BURNS (1988); NICOL (1988); ΠΑΤΟΥΡΑ–ΣΠΑΝΟΥ (2008: 29–121 [on the theoretical and ideological framework of this political–religious Byzantine ideology]); ΤΣΙΡΩΝΗ (2005 [on the Universality of Byzantium through this political ideology]). Worth noting is the definition of a Byzantine emperor by I. Karagianopoulos: "he is the chosen of God, he who among all else was preferred by God to be emperor, and who rules by taking care that his subjects to live in lawfulness and paternal supervision, relieved from any bad influence and worry and also by leading their souls, like a shepherd, to piety and knowledge of the good God, preparing them for the kingdom of heavens" (ΚΑΡΑΓΙΑΝΝΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ [2001: 299]).

teaching and ethics and to maintain quiet, security, care, salvation for his servants and generally, the imperial order (τάξιν).[63]

Specifically, the close relation of the Byzantine emperor with the symbol of the cross starts with Constantine I the Great, the model emperor for all subsequent emperors[64] and the monumental appearance of the cross in a vision. The power of the victorious cross (νικοποιός σταυρὸς)[65] allowed the victory of Constantine I the Great against his opponent to the throne Maxentius in October 312 in the Milvian Bridge (*Pons Milvius*), at the right bank of river Tiber.[66] Still, again it is the light of the cross (Σταυροῦ πάλιν φῶς – line 1) that facilitates the work of the new Constantine, Constantine IX Monomachos, since both carry the holy symbol of cross in their hands with great piety and faith (καὶ χερσὶ πισταῖς προσκυνούμενον φέρει – line 4) and bow before it as their benefactor, because they owe their power to the cross (ἄμφω παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ τὸ

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[63] In the prelude of his first book Περὶ Βασιλείου τάξεως (see VOGT [1935–1940: I]), the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos mentions the word τάξις eight times, while he analyzes the correspondence between divine and ruling order (see also LEMERLE [2001: 249–250]).

[64] KAZHDAN (1985); BONAMENTE–FUSCO (1992); CLAUSS (2009); EWIG (1956).

[65] In general, the Byzantines did not see the cross only as the symbol that gives life (life–giving cross), but also as the symbol that gives victory to those who believe in it (victorious cross), now talking about an intense "*staurolatrie*", which becomes evident in many texts of Byzantine authors. For this "cross–worship" (*staurolatrie*) and for related examples, as well as for the similar phenomenon in the West, see GAGÉ (1933); ΤΩΜΑΔΑΚΗΣ (1968); ΤΩΜΑΔΑΚΗΣ (1980–1982).

[66] According to Eusebios, Constantine I the Great envisions a bright cross in the sky while Christ dictates that he places a cross on the banners and shields of his soldiers as well as the quote ἐν τούτῳ νίκα (Eusebios, Λόγος εἰς τὸν βίον τοῦ Μακαρίου Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ Βασιλέως. PG 20; 943–944. See also WITTINGHOFF (1953); BARNES (1981); DRAKE (1988); CLAUSS (2009: 33–41, for the vision and victory it offered; 104–110, for Eusebios as a biographer of Constantine I the Great); STYLIANOU–STYLIANOU (1971: for the vision of Constantine I the Great, his presence in Byzantine liturgy and his representation in ecclesiastical iconography). His vision and the subsequent actions ended up in trouncing over the opposing army thus naming Constantine I the Great sole emperor. For the function of the dream and vision as a means of communication between God and His beneficiaries as early as early Christian years, see ΚΥΡΤΑΤΑΣ (1993: 269), and for the faith in the prophetic properties of dreams and their consideration as a source of divine inspiration see ΚΥΡΤΑΤΑΣ (1996: 16). See also DAGRON (1985); GOFF (1985); MILLER (1986).

κράτος δεδεγμένοι, / ἄμφω σέβουσιν αὐτὸν ὡς εὐεργέτην. – lines 5–6). At this point, we should note that both emperors carry the same name (Constantine) which is much emphasized by the epigram composer (ὁ πρῶτος εἶδε τὸν τύπον δι᾽ ἀστέρων, / ὁ δεύτερος δὲ τοῦτον αὐτὸν καὶ βλέπει – lines 2–3). This synonymy allows the epigram maker to highlight the divine origin of the power of emperor Constantine IX Monomachos. Taking into consideration the particularly harmonious relationship of these two men at the time the epigram was composed, it is justifiable how these two emperors are brought into a comparison.

Epigram no. 4

Εἰς τὸ τίμιον ξύλον
Τὸ τῆς καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς σύμβολον σωτηρίας.[67]

Translation

On the True Cross
The symbol of our salvation.

Conclusions

John Mauropous informs us through the title of this epigram that this line is dedicated to the true cross of the crucifixion. Certainly, references to the true cross are not rare[68] since there are multiple references to it in hymnography[69] and in the sermons of the Holy Fathers.[70]

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[67] STERNBACH (1897: 161 [no. VII]); VASSIS (2005: 313).

[68] Epigrams on the cross and the crucifixion carry a variety of adjectives that accompany and characterize the true cross. Some examples are: Theodore of Stoudios, 8th–9th century, (Χαίροις, τρισευλόγητον ἄχραντον ξύλον: SPECK [1968: 205, no. LIV, line 1]); Patriach Methodios I the Confessor, 9th century (Τὸ ζωοποιὸν καὶ σεβάσμιον ξύλον: FROLOW [1961: 218, no. 95, line 1]); Anonymous, 11th century (Ὡραῖον εἰς ὅρασιν ὀφθὲν τὸ ξύλον: RHOBY [2010: 303–305, no. Me 111; 521, fig. 86; line 1]); Nicholas Kallikles, 11th–12th century (θήκην κάθω ζωῆς σε καὶ θεῖον ξύλον: RHOBY [2010: 256–257, no. Me82; 509, fig. 52, line 2]); Nicholas Kallikles, 11th–12th century (Τούτοις φυτεύει σε, ξύλον ζωηφόρον: ROMANO [1980: 81, no. 6, line 5]); Anonymous, end of 11th century–beginning of 12th century (τὸ νικοποιὸν οὐδαμῶς εἶχον ξύλον: MERCATI [1970: II 83 B, line 5]); Manuel Philes, 13th–14th century (Στ(αυ)ροῦ πεπηγὸς ὑπερέντιμον ξύλον: MILLER [1855–57 (= 1967)]: II 85–86, no. XLV, line 1); Nikephoros Kallistos Xathopoulos, 14th century (Τιμῶ τὸ λοιπὸν ἡγιασμένον ξύλον:

Through its sole line, we can see that the composer speaks again on behalf of humanity (καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς) emphasizing the soteriological dimension of the symbol of cross. Therefore, he assigns the true cross as a universal symbol of the salvation of believers.

Epigram no. 5

Εἰς τὸν σταυρόν
Ὄργανον ἀθανάτου καὶ ζωοδότου θανάτοιο.[71]

Translation

On the cross
An instrument of immortal death giving life (meaning, to people).

Conclusions

Yet another one-line epigram by John Mauropous, dedicated to the cross, as we are informed clearly by the title (Εἰς τὸν σταυρόν).

Specifically, the single line of this epigram refers to the life-giving property of the cross, which in its capacity to induce death to the Son of God can also give life to people. It is the death of Christ that transforms this instrument of damnation and curse into the salvation of humanity from their sins. It is noteworthy to see how a word pun between similarly sounding antonyms ἀθανάτου-θανάτοιο (prefix a- is an antonymic marker) serves to highlight the life-giving property of the cross to those who believe in it, thus banishing the immortal death.

It should be mentioned that the property of ζωοποιοῦ καὶ τιμίου σταυροῦ (life-giving true cross) is not uncommon in ecclesiastical litera-

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ΠΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ–ΚΕΡΑΜΕΥΣ [1902: 43, no. 3, line 3]). It is observed that all adjectives adjacent to the true cross highlight its holiness and the deplorable but saving property it carries for the human kind.

[69] For the adjectives of the true cross in general see ΤΩΜΑΔΑΚΗΣ (1980–1982).

[70] See e.g. John of Damascus, Περὶ σταυροῦ, ἐν ᾧ ἔτι καὶ περὶ πίστεως (KOTTER [1973: 186–190]): Αὐτὸ μὲν οὖν τὸ τίμιον ξύλον ὡς ἀληθῶς καὶ σεβάσμιον... Προσκυνοῦμεν δὲ καὶ τὸν τύπον τοῦ τιμίου σταυροῦ.

[71] STERNBACH (1897: 161 [no. VIII]); VASSIS (2005: 544).

ture. A number of Byzantine hymns[72] and sermons of Holy Fathers[73] brim with such references, thus highlighting intensely and clearly the soteriological attributes of the symbol of cross in the life of the faithful.

Epigram no. 6

Εἰς τὸ ἅγιον αἷμα
Θεοῦ μὲν αἷμα, τῆς δ' ἐμῆς ψυχῆς λύτρον.[74]

Translation

For the holy blood
The blood is God's, but it will also save my soul.

Conclusions

This one-line epigram by John Mauropous refers to the spilt blood of Christ on the true cross (tit.: Εἰς τὸ ἅγιον αἷμα). It is the blood of the Passion of God (Θεοῦ μὲν αἷμα) which accounts as an essential λύτρο (=

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[72] The most important hymnograph, namely Romanos the Melode, mentions vividly the valuable cross as it is set on earth (Rom. Mel. 28, κβ'), the respected, blessed cross, the gift and helper in the life of the faithful which guards τῶν οἰκημάτων τῆς εὐσεβείας τῶν πιστῶν, δόρυ φρικτὸν πλῆττον τῶν δαιμόνων ἰσχύν and σφραγῖδα βεβαίαν of Christ for the salvation of believers (Rom. Mel. 23).

[73] This is easily understood by looking only at the titles of the sermons of Holy Fathers regarding τὸν τίμιον καὶ ζωοποιὸν σταυρὸν (e.g. Εἰς τὸν τίμιον καὶ ζωοποιὸν σταυρὸν, Ephrem the Syrian: EHRHARD [1937–1952 (= 1965): III 574⁶]; Εἰς τὴν παγκόσμιον Ὕψωσιν τοῦ τιμίου καὶ ζωοποιοῦ Σταυροῦ, Andrew of Crete, Λόγος Ι': PG 97, 1020–1024; Εἰς τὴν ὕψωσιν τοῦ Τιμίου καὶ ζωοποιοῦ Σταυροῦ, Philotheos of Constantinople: PG 151, 725–725). In the sermon by Ephrem the Syrian Εἰς τὸν σταυρὸν καὶ περὶ μετανοίας καὶ τῆς δευτέρας τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ παρουσίας, the life–giving cross is an unbeatable weapon of all Christians and τὸ μέγα φυλακτήριον καὶ σωτήριον of the Church, the trophy against demons, the πολεμουμένων τεῖχος, the majesty of kings and μοναζόντων θάρσος (ΨΕΥΤΟΓΚΑΣ [1991: 204–208]). Also, John of Damascus refers to the cross (Περὶ σταυροῦ, ἐν ᾧ ἔτι καὶ περὶ πίστεως) characterizing it, among others, as a weapon and trophy against the devil and all evils, support for the faithful and salvation of body and soul, highlighting the universality of this power through the four points of the cross which allude to the four points of the horizon (KOTTER [1973: 188]).

[74] STERNBACH (1897: 160 [no. V]); VASSIS (2005: 339).

means for redemption)[75] of the salvation of the soul of the composer (τῆς δ᾽ ἐμῆς ψυχῆς λύτρον) and by extension, the souls of all people since again the poet speaks on behalf of all mortals. In short, it regards the holy blood which by running down the true cross can save humans by "buying of" the original sin[76] thus saving them from it by offering τὸν γλυκασμόν τῆς ζωῆς.[77]

Worthy of noting is the fact that the (holy, according to Apostle Peter[78]) blood, dripping on the true cross, holds a remarkable position in epigram on the Cross and Crucifixion (of Jesus Christ) since it is evident even from the early Byzantine era with Gregory of Nazianzos[79] up until the 15th century.[80] In this tradition,[81] we include John Mauropous while similar references are met in Byzantine hymnography, which was a domain very known to epigram makers.[82]

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[75] See MONTANARI (2013: 1290).

[76] See ΓΙΑΝΝΑΡΑΣ (1983: 168–172).

[77] According to Octoechos, Christ with His blood ἐν τῷ ξύλῳ τοῦ σταυροῦ ἐπήγασε τῷ κόσμῳ τῆς ζωῆς τὸν γλυκασμόν (Παρακλητική [1858: Περίοδος Βαρέος Ἤχου, Κυριακή πρωΐ, Ἐν τῇ Λειτουργίᾳ, Τὰ Τυπικά καὶ οἱ Μακαρισμοί, τροπάριον δ᾽]).

[78] In the First Epistle of Apostle Peter (1 Peter 1, 19) we see the characterization of the blood of Christ as true.

[79] Gregory of Nazianzos (Ὢ Πάθος, ὦ σταυρὸς, παθέων ἐλατήριον αἷμα: BECKBY [1964: I, 150, no.54, line 1]).

[80] Anonymous, 15th century (οὓς ἠγόρασας αἵματι σῷ τιμίῳ: RHOBY [2009: 370–373, no 253; 498, fig. 100, line 3]); Michael Apostoles, 15th century (αἷμα δέδωκε πατρὶ λύτρον ἀποιχομένων: ΛΑΟΥΡΔΑΣ [1950: 190, no. 78, line 5]).

[81] Some epigrams referring to the blood of Christ are: Anonymous, 10th century (Χριστὸς δίδωσιν αἷμα τὸ ζωὴν φέρον: RHOBY [2010: 258–259, no. Me 84; 511, fig. 56–59]); Anonymous, 10th–11th century (Τερπνὸν δοχεῖον αἵματος ζωηφόρου / πλευρᾶς ῥυέντος ἐξ ἀκηράτου Λόγου: RHOBY [2010: 257–258, no. Me 83; 510, fig. 53–55]); Anonymous, 11th–12th century (Ὂν οἱ σταλαγμοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῶν αἱμάτων: RHOBY [2010: 266–268, no. Me 89; 515, fig. 69–70, line 1]); Anonymous, 12th century (Ξύλον στομωθὲν αἵμασι θεωρίας: RHOBY [2010: 413, no. Add33; 487, fig. LXXXII]); Kliment the monk, 13th–14th century (τί γὰρ πλέον τίς εἰς ἵλασμά σοι φέρει / ἢ τὸ προχυθὲν αἷμα [σοῦ] σταυρουμένου: SPINGOU [2013: 97, no. 402, lines 11–12]).

[82] The image of the true cross dripping in blood of Christ is also seen in hymnography, as in e.g. Romanos the Melodos, who, while addressing the cross, says σὺ βωμὸς ἐγένου θειότατος, καλὸν θυσιαστήριον / τὸ αἷμα δεξάμενον τῆς θυσίας τὸ ἄχραντον (Rom. Mel., 23 η᾽).

Epigram no. 7

Εἰς τὴν λόγχην
Ἤνοιξεν, ὡς ἔνυξεν οὐρανοὺς λόγχη.[83]

Translation

For the spear
The spear tore open the skies when it injured (Christ's ribcage).

Conclusions

This particular one-line epigram, dedicated to the holy relic of the spear as indicated by its title (Εἰς τὴν λόγχην), is included in the group of epigrams which refer either directly or indirectly to the Relics of the Passion and Crucifixion. These relics can be characterized as sacred, because they came in contact with the sacred body of Christ and essentially, they include the bonds, the chlamys (tunic, shroud), the thorny wreath, the nails, the sponge, and the spear.

The spear, one of the most important symbols of the Passion of Christ, is presented by John Mauropous as the means that managed to tear open the skies (Ἤνοιξεν, … οὐρανοὺς …) comparing in this way the cross itself as a spear that tears the skies and contributes to the ascension of Jesus Christ thus abolishing the sins of the humankind.[84] Consequently, the spear that pierced Christ's ribcage, used by the roman soldier to further prove His death on the cross (according to the related gospel abstract)[85] is attributed an intense soteriological dimension up to the point of the cross[86] itself being compared as a symbol to the spear of the soldier.

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[83] STERNBACH (1897: 161 [no. VII]); VASSIS (2005: 544).

[84] The consideration of the true cross as a spear is also met in hymnography (Rom. Mel., 22 α΄: ξυλίνη με λόγχη ἐκέντησεν ἄφνω καὶ διαρρήσσομαι). For the material of the cross as spear, lance, quill etc. in hymnography see ΤΩΜΑΔΑΚΗΣ (1980–1982: 11–13).

[85] John's gospel describes this event (John 19, 34: ἀλλ᾽ εἷς τῶν στρατιωτῶν λόγχῃ αὐτοῦ τὴν πλευρὰν ἔνυξε, καὶ εὐθέως ἐξῆλθεν αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ).

[86] In epigram lines, there are more comparisons of the cross aside from the spear such as the sword (ὄξος ποτίζῃ καὶ τιτρώσκῃ τῷ ξίφει. Anonymous, 11th–12th century:

It is worth noting that the issue of spearing and the spear itself has been the inspiration not only in epigram-making[87] but also in hymnography[88] and homilies.[89] These references generally render the spear as one of the most prominent Holy Relics of the Passion of Christ.

ΠΑΓΩΝΑΡΗ–ΑΝΤΩΝΙΟΥ [1991–1992: 44, no. 19, line 2]) and δουρὸς, meaning spear (…, μὴ δὲ σὺ δουρὸς ἀκωκῇ / πλευρὰν ἀκηράτην οὐτάσεαι. Theodore Prodromos, 12th century: ZAGKLAS [2014: 276–277, no. 10, H 132, I, lines 3–4]).

[87] The following epigrams clearly refer to the spear: πλευρὰν δὲ ῥήσεις τὴν ἐμὴν λόγχῃ σύ μοι (John Geometres, 10th century: ΤΩΜΑΔΑΚΗ [2014: 137, no. 126, line 2]); Λόγχῃ νένυξαι καὶ νενέκρωσαι. Λόγε (Nicholas of Otranto, 12th-13th century: LONGO–JACOB [1980–1982: 208, no. 19.55, f. 41ᵛ, line 1). There are lines with indirect references to the spearing emphasizing the blood and water that came out of the ribcage: πλευρᾶς τὰ καινὰ ῥεῖθρα ταῦτα βλυστάνω (John Geometres, 10th century: ΤΩΜΑΔΑΚΗ [2014: 113, no. 93, line 4]); καὶ πλευρὰν αὐτὸς εἰς τὸ νυχθῆναι δίδως (Manganeios Prodromos, 12th century: MILLER [1883: 44: line. 4]); πλευρὰν ἐνύγης, ἡμάτωσας τοὺς πόδας; (Gregory Pardos, metropolitan of Corinch, 12th century: HUNGER [1982: 642, no. VI, line 6]); πλευρὰν ἐνύχθης ὡς ἀναστὴς ἐν τάχει (Anonymous, 13th century: SPINGOU [2013: 75, no. 41, line 9); ὡς αἷμα δηλοῖ καὶ τὸ συμβλύσαν ὕδωρ (Anonymous, 13th –14th century: HÖRANDNER [1994: 119, no. XIV, line 2).

[88] Rom. Mel., 26 ε΄ 5–6: ὃν Χερουβὶμ οὐχ ὁρᾷ, τούτου νύξουσι πλευράν, / καὶ ὕδωρ ἀναβλύσει καὶ τὸν καύσωνά μου σβέσει. Rom. Mel., 26 ς΄ 2–3: ὄξος γὰρ αὐτὸς καὶ χολὴν γευσάμενος ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ / ἔφη· «Τέλος ὑπάρχει τῶν ἐμῶν παθημάτων». Rom. Mel., 27 δ΄: ἔλαβε μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ χολήν καὶ ὄξος, / τούς τε ἥλους καὶ τὴν λόγχην, / ἵνα τῇ λόγχῃ μὲν καὶ τοῖς ἥλοις τὸν Θάνατον / τρώσῃ εὐθὺς καὶ πικράνῃ τῇ χολῇ / Ἅιδην τὸν ἄδικον συναντήσασα † δριμύτατα δὲ † / ὄξει ὅπερ ἔπιεν / ἡ ζωή καὶ ἀνάστασις. Rom. Mel., 27 ι΄: καθορῶ σου τὴν πληγὴν τὴν τῆς πλευρᾶς. Kosmas the Hymnographer, Canon of Holy Saturday (Κανών Μεγάλου Σαββάτου): Ἐξ ἀλοχεύτου προελθὼν / καὶ λογχευθεὶς τὴν πλευρὰν, πλαστουργέ μου, / ἐξ αὐτῆς εἰργάσω τὴν ἀνάπλασιν/ τὴν τῆς Εὔας, Ἀδὰμ γενόμενος… (see ΔΕΤΟΡΑΚΗΣ [1997: 159, ᾠδὴ ε΄ 78–81]). The Magnificats of Holy Saturday (Μεγαλυνάρια Μεγάλου Σαββάτου): Μεγαλύνομέν σου τὰ παθήματα, σῶτερ, / προσκυνοῦμέν σου τοὺς ἥλους, τὸν κάλαμον, / καὶ τὴν λόγχην καὶ τὴν νέκρωσιν τὴν σήν (see ΔΕΤΟΡΑΚΗΣ [1997: 220, στάσις α΄ 40]) and Δόξα τῷ σταυρῷ, δόξα σου τοῖς ἥλοις, Λόγε, / δόξα τῷ καλάμῳ, τῇ λόγχῃ σου, / δι' ὧν ἀθανατίζεις με, σωτήρ (see ΔΕΤΟΡΑΚΗΣ [1997: 228, στάσις β΄ 50]). Staurotheotokia (Σταυροθεοτοκία): χολῆς τὴν γεῦσιν τὴν πικράν, τὴν μετ' ὀξίνου πόσιν (see ΣΤΑΘΗΣ [1977: 206, no. 70, 8]). πῶς ὑπομένεις τὸν σταυρόν, τοὺς ἥλους καὶ τὴν λόγχην; (see ΣΤΑΘΗΣ [1977: 208, no. 75, 6]). λόγχῃ τρωθέν τα τὴν πλευρὰν καὶ τέλος νεκρωθέντα (see ΣΤΑΘΗΣ [1977: 209–210, no. 79, 4]) καὶ τὴν γ΄ οὖν καρδίαν καὶ αὐτὴ λόγχη τρωθεῖσα λύπης (see ΣΤΑΘΗΣ [1977: 211, no. 82, 4]).

[89] John Chrysostom: Εἰς τὴν τριήμερον Ἀνάστασιν: ἐνύγη δὲ καὶ τῇ λόγχῃ τὴν πλευράν, διὰ τὴν ἐκ τῆς πλευρᾶς τοῦ Ἀδὰμ ληφθεῖσαν γυναῖκα and Πηγάζει γὰρ αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ ἐκ τῆς πλευρᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα καὶ τὸ καθ' ἡμῶν χειρόγραφον τῆς

Epigram no. 8

Εἰς τὸν ἀκάνθινον στέφανον.
Θρασὺς κάλαμος καὶ Θεοῦ πλήξας κάραν.[90]

Translation

For the thorny wreath
Shameless is the quill that wounded God's head.

Conclusions

Among the Holy Relics of the Passion of Christ seen in epigrams regarding His crucifixion, we see the thorny wreath put on His head by soldiers in order to mock Him and make him look like a fool by calling Him king of the Jews.[91]

The title of the eighth and final epigram by John Mauropous (Εἰς τὸν ἀκάνθινον στέφανον) indicates rather profoundly that the one and only line refers to the θρασύν (shameless) κάλαμον (quill) that wounded the head of God, highlighting the divine nature of Jesus Christ.

It is important to note that this Holy Relic is mentioned scarcely in epigrams compared to the Holy Relic of the spear as seen in the previous epigram and, interestingly, no sooner than the 11ᵗʰ century while its

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ἁμαρτίας ἀπαλείψῃ, καὶ τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ καθαρισθῶμεν, καὶ τὸν παράδεισον ἀπολάβωμεν (PG 50, 822). Bishop of Emesa: Εἰς τὸ πάθος τοῦ Χριστοῦ: Διὰ τι δὲ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ, ἢ ἕτερα μέλη ἀναγκαῖα, ἡ λόγχη ἐκέντησε; Δῆλον ὅτι τοῦτο τὸ μέρος, εἰς ὃ τοὺς ὀδόντας ὁ ὄφις ἐνέπηξεν· ἐπεὶ ἐκ τῆς πλευρᾶς ἡ Εὔα ἐλήφθη. Ὁ βουλόμενος δὲ θεραπεῦσαι τὸ τοῦ ὄφεως τραῦμα ὀφείλει ἀποσχίζειν τοῦ δηλητηρίου τὸν τόπον, ἔνθα τὸ δῆγμα πεποίηται. Ἦν γοῦν ἀναγκαῖον παρασχεῖν πλευρὰν ἀντὶ πλευρᾶς, ἵνα ἐπαληθεύσῃ, ὅπερ εἶπεν· «Ἰδοὺ πάντα τετέλεσται». (See ΨΕΥΤΟΓΚΑΣ [1991: 195]).

[90] STERNBACH (1897: 160 [no. VI]); VASSIS (2005: 349).

[91] Matt. 27, 29 (καὶ πλέξαντες στέφανον ἐξ ἀκανθῶν ἐπέθηκαν ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ … ἐνέπαιζον αὐτῷ λέγοντες· χαῖρε ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων); Mark 15, 17–18 (καὶ ἐνδύουσιν αὐτὸν πορφύραν καὶ περιτιθέασιν αὐτῷ πλέξαντες ἀκάνθινον στέφανον, καὶ ἤρξαντο ἀσπάζεσθαι αὐτόν· χαῖρε ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων); John 19, 2–3 (καὶ οἱ στρατιῶται πλέξαντες στέφανον ἐξ ἀκανθῶν ἐπέθηκαν αὐτοῦ τῇ κεφαλῇ, καὶ ἱμάτιον πορφυροῦν περιέβαλον αὐτὸν καὶ ἔλεγον· χαῖρε ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων).

appearance lasts till the last quarter of the 14th century.[92] It is also notable that epigram makers have not composed a full epigram in honor of the thorny wreath, unlike John Mauropous who is the exception to the rule here. On the contrary, we see epigrams mentioning the thorny wreath as part of a shrine that contains a variety of Holy Relics such as the chlamys, the shroud,[93] the tunic, the blood,[94] the swaddling clothes and the nails.[95] Finally, the same scarcity of this Holy Relic compared to other Relics such as the spear (and nails) is met in hymnography (for example in the Magnificats of Holy Saturday [= Μεγαλυνάρια τοῦ Μεγάλου Σαββάτου][96] and in Staurotheotokia [= Σταυροθεοτοκία[97]]) and in homilies of the Fathers of the Church.[98]

Remarks

Taking into consideration the eight epigrams by John Mauropous inspired by the cross and the crucifixion, the following remarks can be made: according to the titles of the epigrams, two of them refer explicit-

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[92] Μεσαρίτης σὸς οἰκέτης πιστὸς Λέων, / τὴν σὴν κεφαλὴν ἐν στέφει χρυσαργύρῳ. / τὴν πρὶν ἀκανθόστεπτον ἰδοῦ καλλύνω· / τοῖς τιμιωτάτοις δε λαμπρύνω λίθοις / μνήμην ἀληθῆ τοῦ Λιθοστρώτου φέρων (Anonymous, 13th–14th century: SPINGOU [2013: 76, no. 74, lines 9–13]). In these epigram lines, dedicated to the crucifixion, we observe a beautification of the former thorny wreath with precious gems upon the order for the making of the icon (possibly a member of the clergy as indicated by οἰκέτης πιστὸς) in memoriam of said event in Golgotha.

[93] Φορεῖς χλαμύδα καὶ στέφος νικῶν πλάνην (Anonymous, last quarter of 14th century: KOTZABASSI–PARASKEUOPOULOU [2007: 219, A 29]).

[94] Χιτών, χλαμύς, λέντιον, ἔνδυμα Λόγου, / σινδών, λύθρον, στέφανος ἠκανθωμένοις (Anonymous, 12th –13th century: RHOBY [2010: 283–285, no. Me 98; 517, fig. 78, lines 1–2]).

[95] Ἔσχηκα Χριστοῦ σπαργάνων μικρὸν μέρος, / ἥλων ἐγὼ δὲ τῶν σεβαστῶν τι τρύφος, / ζωὴν κἀγὼ τὸ βλῦσαν αἷμα τῷ κόσμῳ, / στέφους ἀκανθίνου δὲ κἀγὼ τμῆμά τι (Anonymous, 13th century: RHOBY [2010: 178–179, no. Me16]).

[96] Μεγαλυνάρια τοῦ Μεγάλου Σαββάτου, στάσις β, 29΄: Στέφανον, Χριστέ, τὸν ἀκάνθινον περιπλεχθέντα / σῇ τῇ κεφαλῇ ἐνατέθηκαν / Ἰουδαίας ὁ παράνομος λαός. (See ΔΕΤΟΡΑΚΗΣ [1997: 226]).

[97] Χλαμύδα χλεύης πορφυρὰν σὺν ἀκανθίνῳ στέφει (see ΣΤΑΘΗΣ [1977: 207, no. 74, 4]).

[98] Bishop of Emesa in his sermon Εἰς τὸ πάθος τοῦ Χριστοῦ (see ΨΕΥΤΟΓΚΑΣ [1991: 190–191, § 10, 156–157]) says: Ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ μετὰ σοῦ ἐστί, χολὴν ἔπιεν, ὅτι σὺ οὐχ ἔπιες, ἀκάνθας ἐστέφθη, δι' ὧν σὺ οὐκ ἐστέφθης.

ly to the crucifixion (Εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν -epigram no. 1- and Εἰς σταύρωσιν χρυσῆν -epigram no. 2), three refer to the true cross (Εἰς τὴν θήκην τοῦ τιμίου ξύλου τοῦ βασιλέως Χριστοῦ - epigram no. 3, Εἰς τὸ τίμιον ξύλον-epigram no. 4, and Εἰς τὸν σταυρόν-epigram no. 5), one refers to the spilt holy blood of Christ (Εἰς τὸ ἅγιον αἷμα-epigram no. 6) while the remaining two are devoted to the Holy Relics -one to the spear (Εἰς τὴν λόγχην-epigram no. 7) and the other to the thorny wreath (Εἰς τὸν ἀκάνθινον στέφανον-epigram no. 8).

Morphologically speaking, the majority of epigrams consists of few lines following the corresponding tradition of the Byzantine epigram[99] and its particularities in being brief, precise, consistent, and essential.[100] Specifically, the five epigrams are one-liners, one is a three-liner, one is a six-liner and just one comprises a total of 33 lines, being the exception to the rule.

As per the meter of the lines, the composer follows the rules of the Byzantine dodecasyllabic line; this is a purely Byzantine line based on the ancient iambic trimester, thus consisting of twelve syllables.[101]

Still, in the composition of his lines, his ancient Greek education is made clear but also his fine ability to skillfully use literary means, such as the ones we see in rhetoric and ancient Greek tragedies. Therefore, he does not hesitate to incorporate rhetorical questions and exclamations in his epigrams, keeping the meter in his line, proving yet again his skill in composing metric lines.

As for the individual topics or better yet the patterns that arise from the epigrams such as the metaphorical mapping of the crucifixion as sleep, Christ as light, the cross as spear, as salvation of the souls of the faithful and as the one that gives and provides power to the Byzantine emperors, we notice a deep influence of the holy texts, as well as excellent knowledge of ecclesiastical hymns and sermons on the part of the epigram maker, something that is confirmed by the use of related words

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[99] One of the most representative composers on one–line and two–line epigrams regarding the cross is Georgios Pisides in the 7th century and Theodore of Stoudios in the 8th–9th century. Following are John Geometres in the 10th century (mostly for the holy relics of the Passion) and many subsequent anonymous epigram makers.

[100] HÖRANDNER (2017: 79–80).

[101] On Byzantine dodecasyllabic verse, its structure and features see MAAS (1903); LAUXTERMANN (1998); RHOBY (2011); HÖRANDNER (2017: 52–55).

and phrases. This deep knowledge of Christian literature is of course justifiable given the ecclesiastical background of Mauropous as a bishop. Conclusionally, keeping in mind all the above, it would not be an exaggeration to say that John Mauropous with his multifaceted work (epigrams among others) is a bright scholar figure and one of the most prominent spiritual personalities of his time.

Abbreviations

ACD = Acta Classica Universitatis Scientiarum Debreceniensis

AnBoll = Analecta Bollandiana

BMGS = Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies

Byz = Byzantion

BZ = Byzantinische Zeitschrift

ChHist = Church History

DOP = Dumbarton Oaks Papers

ΕΕΒΣ = Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν

GLB = Greco-Latina Brunensia

Hell = Ἑλληνικά

HJ = Historisches Jahrbuch

JÖB = Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik

JRSt = Journal of Research in Science Teaching

ODB = Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium

PG = Patrologia Greca

RSBN = Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici

SBN = Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici

SG = Siculorum gymnasium

ΘΗΕ = Θρησκευτικὴ καὶ Ἠθικὴ Ἐγκυκλοπαιδεία

WSt = Wiener Studien

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SIMONA ROSSI

Superintendence of Cultural Heritage in Malta

Towards a Modern Culture of Antiquity in a Multidisciplinary Perspective: Architect Antonio Niccolini (1772–1850) and the Temple of Serapis in Pozzuoli, Italy

This research seeks to highlight a moment in the evolution of the culture of the Antiquity in the 19th century throughout the experience of the architect Antonio Niccolini with the Temple of Serapis in the town of Pozzuoli, Italy. This ancient site dating back to the Flavian Age turned out to be a complex but also stimulating case study for many distinguished European scholars given its historical and geological singularities. Among them was Antonio Niccolini, one of the most influential architects of the Bourbon Kingdom, working in Naples from 1807 to 1850. He will engage this line of research bringing an avant-garde concept regarding the approach to the knowledge of Antiquity and the preservation of ancient sites.

Introduction

From the 18th century onwards, the Phlegraean Fields began to become one of the destinations of the *Grand Tour* in Italy, along with more well-known sites such as Herculaneum and Pompeii. Travellers were increasingly fascinated by this area not far from Naples, plenty of naturalistic beauties, namely Lake Lucrine and Lake Avernus, and also full of mysteries narrated by Latin historians. Sites such as the Temple of Mercury, the Sibyl's Cave, or the Tomb of Agrippina, not only represented the memory of Roman civilization, but still seemed to retain the spirit of history and myth.[1]

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[1] To investigate the reception of the Phleagraen Fields from the 18th century, please refer to: ALISIO (1995), FINO (2001) and DI LIELLO (2005).

Among the numerous Phlegraean antiquities that fascinated scholars, perhaps none proved to be as enigmatic as the Temple of Serapis in Pozzuoli. This site, thanks to some naturalistic and architectural peculiarities, became the core of an exciting debate that involved intellectuals from various disciplines such as Architecture, Archaeology and Earth Sciences.[2] On one hand, architects and archaeologists were facing the issue of identifying the building: the so-called Temple of Serapis is actually a Roman *Macellum*, which was an architectural typology still unknown in the 18th century, considering that the one in Pompeii will be discovered only in 1818. On the other hand, scientists found anomalous phenomena affecting the building. First, periodic flooding affected the courtyard of the *Serapeum*, for no apparent cause. Secondly, there were traces of marine fossils on the marbles of the columns. These evidences were very difficult to explain in the light of the knowledge available up to that time in the geological field.

These investigations started since the first years of the unearthing of the area, would reach their peak in the 19th century to last until the late 20th century, making the Temple of Serapis a symbolic place for scholars of several disciplines. Indeed, it is precisely from some studies resulting from the observation of the *Serapeum* that fundamental goals will be achieved in many branches of knowledge.

The discovery and the early years

The area where the Temple of Serapis was located looked like a fertile plot called *Vigna delle tre colonne* (The vineyard of the three columns) from which emerged only three pillars not appearing to arouse any archaeological interest. Nevertheless, the columns still had to be somehow a landmark of the Pozzuoli itinerary, since they were already represented in the book *Ager Puteolanus* by Mario Cartaro and in a topographical map of the *Gulf of Pozzuoli* engraved in 1720 by the German artist Johann Christoph Weigel to be part of the collection named *Decriptio Orbis Antiqui*.

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[2] The Temple of Serapis in Pozzuoli is the subject of a book that exhaustively outlines the aspects of the architectural, archaeological and scientific debate toward it, from the 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century: CIANCIO (2009).

Though, the existence of the columns is reported even in the 16th century, as they are mentioned in one of the first travel guides of the Phlegraean Fields, such as *Le antichità di Pozzuolo et luoghi convicini* by Ferrante Loffredo.[3]

In 1750, a violent episode of bradyseism,[4] a phenomenon unknown at the time, brought to light the remains of the Temple of Serapis. The columns turned out to be twelve metres high and suggested to be part of a complex structure.

1. The Temple of Serapis in Pozzuoli, Italy

Immediately, King Charles of Bourbon ordered to proceed with the excavation of the entire area. In fact, in the Kingdom of Naples both the archaeological sites and every artefact found during the diggings were property of the crown and it was the sovereign who managed every aspect of them.

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[3] LOFFREDO (1573).

[4] Bradyseism is a particular movement of the Earth's surface typical of volcanic areas, very present in the Phlegraean Fields.

As a result of the first excavation campaign, a paved floor surrounded by *tabernae*, a circular aedicule and a portion of an *exedra* emerged. In addition, many artefacts were found, including a bust of the Egyptian god Serapis. For this reason, the archaeologists of the time identified the site as a Temple dedicated to Serapis. Moreover, the cult of the Alexandrian divinity had already been recorded in Pozzuoli starting from the 2nd century BC and was subsequently associated with the cult of the healing god Aesculapius or that of Zeus by the Greeks, to the point that the god was often referred to with the name of 'Jupiter Serapis',[5] also in 18th and 19th century literature. Although the actual function of the building was discovered in the following centuries, this toponym still lasted.

The excavations were completed only in 1818. By this date, the *Serapeum* appeared as a large rectangular courtyard surrounded by a portico (75 meters length by 58 meters width), overlooked by *tabernae* open alternately inwards and outwards. The entrance was emphasized by four monumental columns preceding an *exedra* in which were collocated three niches decorated with statues. The *exedra* was in turn preceded by a covered ambulatory. Two public latrines were located on the sides of the back apse. At the centre of the perimeter there was the *tholos*, or the circular aedicule, surrounded by a double colonnade, with a massive fountain in the middle.

The entire complex was embellished with marbles, mosaic floors and very fine finishes, of which evidence is found in reports and drawings of the many travellers of the time.

The *Serapeum* among the archaeologist and the architects

It was the French architect Jerôme-Charles Bellicard to spread the news of the discovery of the *Serapeum* in Europe by virtue of his publication: *Observation upon the Antiquities of the town of Herculanum*, in which he wrote:

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[5] The cult of Serapis was established by the sovereign of Alexandria Ptolemy I (366–283 BC), and derives from the syncretism between the Egyptian god Osiris and the Greek god Zeus. Attributes of both gods are referred to him. ZEVI (2006: 69–86).

> In my last journey in 1749, I had observed in this city, three pillars, of
> about five feet in diameter, the shafts of which were half buried. Since
> that time the place having been dug, they have discovered their bases
> […] which are of marble, and the profil is very beautiful. The king of
> the Two Sicilies having ordered the work to be continued, they found
> a temple, supposed by the idol, and some other circumstances, to have
> been dedicated to Serapis.[6]

Bellicard's book had the merit of feeding the curiosity of the antiquity
enthusiasts. Many of them would have taken part in the dispute regard-
ing the uncertain architectonical typology of the building. In fact, before
in 1907 the naturalist Charles Dubois dispelled any doubt about the na-
ture of Temple of Serapis declaring that it was a Flavian age *Macellum*,
several scholars engaged in speculation on the subject.[7] However, as the
excavation proceeded it was clear to anyone that the discovered build-
ing was very different from the classic morphology of the temple as
known from the most famous architectural treatises so far, such as those
of Vitruvius or Sebastiano Serlio.

Nevertheless, the conjectures put forward by the antiquarians in this
very early phase were not able to provide totally convincing elements
on the typology, and their ideas only circulated around a small circle of
trusted correspondents.

Moreover, the approach to the study of the antiquities of the 18th
century scholars was mostly philological: apart from some exceptions,
they hardly carried out direct inspections on archaeological sites, rather
basing their interpretations on theoretical bases.

It will have to wait until 1770 for Italian scholars to identify a more
effective approach to the antiquity, much closer to the archaeological
one, based on the historical and cultural contextualization of the arte-
facts. In fact, the Italian antiquarian Ottaviano Guasco was the first to
guess that to dispel the doubt about the architectural typology of the
Serapeum it was first and foremost necessary to understand the ritual
connected to Egyptian cults of Serapis from Latin literary sources and to
compare them with the spatial structure of the building, in order to find

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[6] BELLICARD (1753: 129).

[7] DUBOIS (1907: 286–314). To further investigate DUBOIS's research: DE RUYT (1977: 128–139).

some correspondence. Indeed, Guasco was also among the first to iden-
tify the actual syncretism between Serapis and the healing god Aescula-
pius (or Asclepius), whose cults often took place in *Thermae*. For this
reason, he believed that the Temple of Serapis was in truth and ancient
thermal bath in which ceremonies dedicated to Serapis took place. This
would have explained *Serapeum*'s unprecedented conformation, much
closer to a hospice for ailing people rather than a traditional temple.

Among the scholars in line with the idea of the Temple of Serapis to
be a thermal bath, it is worth to mention both the Puteolan archaeologist
Andrea De Jorio (1769–1851) and the French architect Augustin-Nicolas
Caristie (1783–1862), whose work gave considerable impetus to the ar-
chaeological and metric knowledge of the Phlegraean site.

From his side, Andrea De Jorio was indeed the first one to consider
the building within his historical context, relating its existence to both
Greek and Roman ancient settlement of Pozzuoli, called respectively
Dikaiarchia and *Puteoli*. He tried to overcome the obsolete antiquarians'
point of view which tended to consider every archaeological artefact like a
monad, detached from its historical context. All these ideas were express
in his book, *Ricerche sul tempio di Serapide in Pozzuoli*, published in 1820. De
Jorio's collaboration with Augustin-Nicolas Caristie was fundamental for
the drafting of his book, as the French architect took care of making the
surveys and the drawings of the site. Caristie was a fellow of the École des
Beaux-Arts and winner of the Grand Prix de Rome. While remaining in
Italy many years, he was fascinated by the Temple of Serapis so much that
he chose it as his favourite subject for his drawings, in which he also de-
voted himself to imagining his original appearance in detail.[8]

Their fruitful partnership was crucial for the further understanding
of the nature of the building.

Their unprecedented research method was based upon both direct
surveys on site and the intersection of historical, archaeological, and
architectural sources. Their descriptions had the advantage of guaran-
teeing an immediate comparison with real data, thus becoming a tangi-
ble knowledge heritage for subsequent researchers.

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[8] PINON (2002).
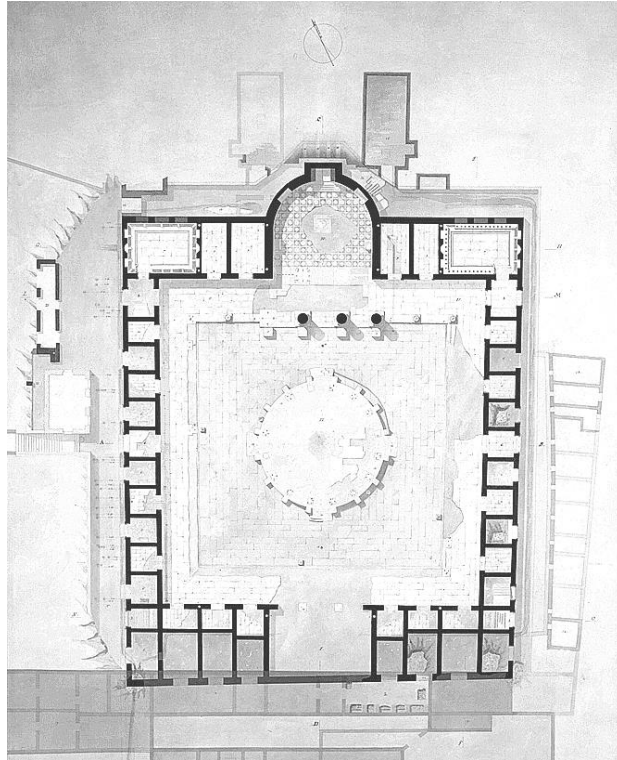
2. Augustin-Nicolas Caristie, plan of the Temple of Serapis, 1818

Among the scientists

These and many other studies contributed to introducing the Temple of Serapis into the group of Phlegraean sites worthy of attention. Together with the interest towards its enigmatic function, a further element of concern was outlining: the three giant columns showed clear signs of erosion at about a third of their height, as well as traces of fossil shells. This evidence was reported for the first time in 1757 by John Nixon, a British scholar member of the Royal Society of London in his pamphlet: *An account of the Temple of Serapis at Pozzuoli in The Kingdom of Naples*.

Nixon analysed the drills in the pillars and correctly attributed their cause to the mechanical action of marine organisms called lithodomes, living under the surface of the water. His intuition was widely shared by other members of the Royal Society. Moreover, given the aquatic nature of the lithodomes, Nixon deduced that evidently the sea level in the Phlegraean area must have been much higher in ancient times, so much so as to immerse the columns and favour the proliferation of mussels.

Although he did not venture to investigate the causes of the rising of the water level in the past, he was convinced that this was due to the volcanic nature of the Phlegraean Fields which was renowned to scholars, after the eruption of the mountain called *Monte Nuovo* in 1538.[9] Furthermore, the news transmitted by Nixon was soon spread by the famous German archaeologist Johann Joachim Winckelmann, as evidenced in a letter address by his regular correspondent Count Heinrich von Brühl in 1764, in which Winckelmann refers to the *Serapeum* as a place where proof of the variation of the tides could indisputably be found thanks to the drills present on the marble of the pillars.

The significance of this discovery is reflected even of the iconography of the *Serapeum*. Starting from the second half of the eighteen century, artists began to draw the drills of the erosion on the columns, as can be seen in the first widely distributed view of the Temple of Serapis signed by Giovanni Battista Natali in 1768.

During the 19th century, it was well-established among scientists that the presence of the mussel's fossils testified that the temple had been submerged by water in the past.

In researching the causes of this phenomena, the geologists animated a heated diatribe that split the scientific community in two. On one side were the so-called *Neptunists*, those who believed that the presence of the lithodomes suggested the rise in the level of water due to the variation of the Mediterranean Sea tide in the past ages. On the other hand, there were those who hypothesized that the variation in the water level depended on the undulatory movements of the Earth's crust, which resulted in a rise in the water as a mere consequence. In this group were, among others, the famous scientists Charles Lyell (1797–1875) and Charles Babbage (1791–1871) considered the fathers of modern Geology.[10] In 1918, the Italian scientist Antonio Parascandola will prove them right by theorizing the phenomenon of Bradyseism. In addition to the erosion of the lithodomes, another unique fact of its kind attracted the attention of 19th century scholars providing further elements of investigation: the Temple of Serapis was subject to periodic flooding, of varying duration and flow.

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[9] CIANCIO (2011: 15–60).
[10] CIANCIO (2009: 159–186) and GIUDICEPIETRO–D'AURIA (2013: 5–14).
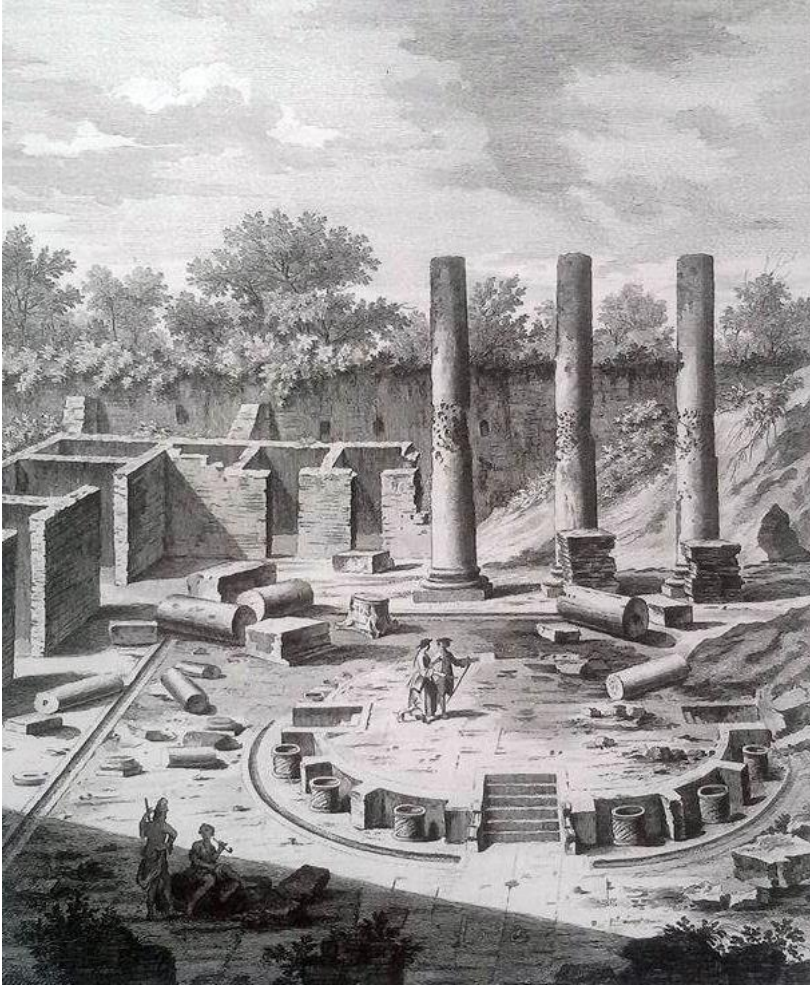
3. Giovanni Battista Natali, etching, *Atrio d'un Tempio nella parte occidentale di Pozzuolo*, 1768

For geologists, this phenomenon constituted a fundamental evidence from which to move their reasoning. For the *Neptunists*, the unexpected arousing of the waters in the courtyard of the Temple was a clear manifestation of the validity of their theories, to be studied to find its ordering principle. On the contrary, their opponents considered the floods as a consequence of Earth tremors and were committed to rebuilding its cause-effect relationship.

During the first half of the century, the scientists of the respective alignments adduced experiments and tests to solve the mystery of both the erosion and the flooding of the *Serapeum*. This research will give an exceptional impulse to the epistemological maturation of Geology as a discipline, consolidating its character of historical science.

Furthermore, analysing the conspicuous literature produced in the 19th century on this topic, one can note how History gradually took hold in geological speculation and how, on the other hand, scientists took advantage of the archaeological method.[11]

A sensitive issue for the Bourbon Kingdom

The problem of the flooding of the Temple of Serapis worried not only geologists.

Before them, the first who had to deal with this phenomenon were the engineers and the architects working for the Bourbon Court of Naples. The emerged water, often stagnant for several weeks, jeopardised both the correct conservation of the building and the health of the inhabitants of the neighbouring areas. The event did not manifest itself immediately, in fact, is there no documentation relating a flooding until 1790. After that, King Ferdinand IV successor to Charles of Bourbon, appointed the Spanish engineer Francisco La Vega to solve the issue.

It took La Vega two years to drain the puddles from the temple's courtyard by installing a mechanical water pump within the *Serapeum* water collection system. Unfortunately, these measures did not lead to a long-term result.[12] However, by virtue of La Vega's interventions in 1803 other rooms of the Temple emerged, whose excavation works lasted until the end of 1810, also revealing the two square niches on the sides.

Furthermore, during those years precious bronze and marble finds continued to be discovered in the site. Some of them ended up being stolen or reused, others were brought to the Royal Museum of Naples. As a result, the site was depauperated in some of its features.

Then it became clear to the Kingdom's officers the necessity to safeguard the Temple of Serapis by implementing its maintenance and keeping. The issue was made even more urgent by the interest that all of Europe turned to the site, not only as a geological "observatory" but as an ancient find, also worthy of deserving a place on the *Grand Tour* route in the South of Italy.

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[11] CIANCIO (2009: 9sqq).
[12] FRIELLO (2007: 55–91).

An economic resource for the Local Council of Pozzuoli

A crucial year in the history of the Temple of Serapis can be considered 1816. A very influential man in the politics of Pozzuoli, bishop Carlo Maria Rosini, decided to intervene personally after the umpteenth episode of flooding. With his intercession, the municipal council of the village appointed a commission of technicians for the maintenance of the Temple, who attempted to upgrade the *Serapeum*'s water collection system by constructing a new channel flowing into the sea.

However, what turned out to be the real novelty of Rosini's takeover was that he proposed to the Bourbon monarchy to take care of the maintenance and the custody of the building in exchange for the conversion of part of the temple to a thermal establishment.

This deal was favourable for the sovereign since the upkeep of the *Serapeum* was very onerous. It was also advantageous for the council of Pozzuoli which would have earned income by exploiting the fame of the thermal Phlegrean waters and restoring what some scholars believed to be the original intended use of the building.

Having obtained the concession, Rosini promoted a series of works aimed at expanding the space intended for the baths, creating additional changing rooms and spas. Some of the interventions were conducted illegally, without the necessary authorization of the General Superintendent of the Excavations of the Bourbon kingdom, Michele Arditi.

However, Rosini's resolutions added a new feature to the Temple of Serapis, which turned out to be not just a monument to admire but a reused archaeological site, both accessible to the public and a source of remuneration for the local council.

Five years after the agreement, the Temple of Serapis began a very popular thermal venue and recorded a significant attendance. On the other hand, the conversion of the building to a thermal bath worsened its conditions, and once again aroused the attention both on the conservation of the site and on the health of local residents, eventually threatened by the inhalation of the miasmas.[13]

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[13] The local council of Pozzuoli continued to adapt the building to its new function changing the *tabernae* to bath rooms, until 1839. By then, these room where up to ten excluding the changing rooms. CIANCIO (2009).

Alert turned out to be higher after a severe episode of flooding and the subsequent stagnation of water in the courtyard. Moreover, the fame of this site throughout Europe made this a very sensitive issue, which threatened to undermine the credibility of the Bourbon's management of their inestimable heritage.

The significant contribution of Antonio Niccolini

A sensitive issue of this kind required the intervention of a skilful man, trusted by the Crown and well-regarded both by the local authority and the European intellectual community. This man was Antonio Niccolini, one of the most important architects of the Italian Neoclassicism.[14]

He was at the service of the Italian Bourbon Court from 1807 to 1850, intervening in issues related to the architecture and the archaeology of the Kingdom. Among his most famous projects there are the San Carlo Theatre (1809; 1818; 1844) and the Villa Floridiana (1817–1825) in Naples. Furthermore, he was the editor of the catalogue of the Royal Museum of Naples.[15]

Moreover, Niccolini was already aware of the whole vicissitude of the Temple of Serapis. In fact, as the architect itself writes in his memoirs, he began to study the Temple of Serapis autonomously from 1808 onwards, making surveys and drawings for his knowledge's sake.[16]

For all these reasons, in 1824 he was appointed as the new head of the maintenance of the Temple. By virtue of his open-mindedness and his expertise, he will mark a turning point in the way of dealing with the issues related to the conservation and the upkeep of the *Serapeum*.

In the first place, Niccolini started to investigate the building from a simple architectural point of view. Like many others, he was willing to identify its true typology. Therefore, he carried out his own surveys and researches ending up agreeing with Andrea De Jorio about the fact the Temple of Serapis was an ancient roman thermal bath.

He happened to immediately notice the worrying phenomenon of flooding which affected the conservation of the building. For this rea-

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[14] To deepen the knowledge of Antonio Niccolini's work, please refer to: GIANNETTI–MUZII (1997).

[15] The huge publication was called *Real Museo Borbonico* and consisted in sixteen volumes published from 1824 to 1857. It was meant to spread the knowledge on the Kingdom's cultural heritage to all of Europe.

[16] NICCOLINI (1846: 1).

son, he decided to take a step forward, starting to monitor the variation in the volume of water stagnant on the *Serapeum*'s floor. From 1808 onwards, he carried out empirical and systematic surveys on the water level, noting down the measurements.

His aim was to find a rule in the flooding phenomena, in order to find its primary cause and eradicate it, so as to provide a definitive solution to this lasting issue.

According both to archival sources and the writings published by Antonio Niccolini himself on the subject, it seems that before taking up his institutional role, the only motive for this research was the genuine passion for the antique. Then, he engaged further to the cause sensing that it was an urgent matter of protecting and conserving a valuable cultural heritage site. In addition, he also considered its public function as a bath, and was willing to provide users and local inhabitants a safe and healthy environment.

The novelty of his contribution consisted in being the first to hypothesize that the periodical flooding did not depend on the malfunctioning of the Temple's water collection system, like the Bourbon engineers thought, but on the upwelling to floor of the waters in consequence of the natural rise of the tide. In fact, as the water collection system of the Temple flowed into the sea, Niccolini believed that the *Serapeum* and the sea were linked by the principle of communicating vessels: when the tide rose, seawater seeped into the canals and ascended to the courtyard of the *Serapeum*. Based on this observation, he projected his first intervention. It consisted in a cataract to be installed at the mouth of the main channel which connected the Temple's water system to the sea. The cataract could be open when the tide was low, giving way to the stagnant waters to flow towards the sea. In contrast, it could be closed during the high tide, to prevent the sea waters from rising and flooding the *Serapeum*'s courtyard.

This expedient highlighted not only Niccolini's skills in hydraulic engineering, but also his faculty of crossing together practical expertise and critical thinking. He strongly believed in the necessity of a strategic approach that would have considered not only technical solutions but also a multidisciplinary perspective that combined together Architecture, Archaeology and Science. Moreover, since he took charge of the maintenance of the Temple of Serapis, Niccolini was able to take his

theories to a further level. Up to that moment, he had measured the variations of the water of the *Serapeum* manually and occasionally. From that moment on, he managed to put a water meter at the mouth of the channel that connected the Temple's water system to the sea, in order to collect more systematic data on the fluctuating level of the tides. This meter remained in operation until 1838, recording almost sixteen years of variations, giving Niccolini the opportunity to collect an impressive amount of hydrometric data to prove his theory of rising tides.

At last, in the attempt to understand and preserve the existence of a remarkable ancient building, he ended up studying geological theories and even contributing to the debate among scientists.

In 1829, Antonio Niccolini published the first book he had ever wrote on this subject, titled *Rapporto sulle acque che invadono il pavimento dell'antico edifizio detto il tempio di Giove Serapide*. In it, he compared the *Serapeum* measurement data with data of the changing in level of the Mediterranean Sea which he collected by the coasts of the Italian regions of Campania and Lazio. His final intent was to demonstrate that the alterations of the sea level were not a phenomenon limited to the Phlaegren Fields but a natural event occurring in several areas of the Tyrrhenian coasts as well. Furthermore, he crossed these measurement data with both historical and naturalistic sources drawn from the main treatises on Roman History with the purpose of retracing the trend of the tides of the Mediterranean Sea over the eras. By virtue of these researches, he finally hypothesized the existence of five geological phases that ranged from the Roman times up to the 19th century.

According to his theory, the first phase would have corresponded to the late Flavian Age. Back then, for Niccolini the water level was about two meters lower than the contemporary level. During the second and third phases, which lasted from the first centuries AD up to the Middle Ages, the waters gradually began to rise until they covered the temple, favouring the proliferation of lithodomes. Finally, at the beginning of the 18th century the downturn of the fourth phase began, marking the fifth phase still in progress.[17]

This elaborate theory ascribed Niccolini to the ranks of the so-called *Neptunistes*. By the virtue of his book, Niccolini took a step into the de-

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[17] NICCOLINI (1829a: 29–31).

bate and happened to be renowned in the scientific environment. From 1829 to 1846, Niccolini published several treatises regarding his geological theories, which became more and more detailed over the years. Even though he was not a scientist, his books were well-known among the European scientific community which appreciated his meticulous approach to the subject. Furthermore, the water measurements Niccolini had collected over the years were considered a remarkable asset by some scholars, who used them as a basis for their research. Not surprisingly, Charles Lyell referred to it in the sixth edition of his masterpiece *Principles of Geology* in the section dedicated to his studies on the Temple of Serapis. Also, the physicist John Forbes brought them to the attention of the Royal Society of Edinburgh with due respect.[18]
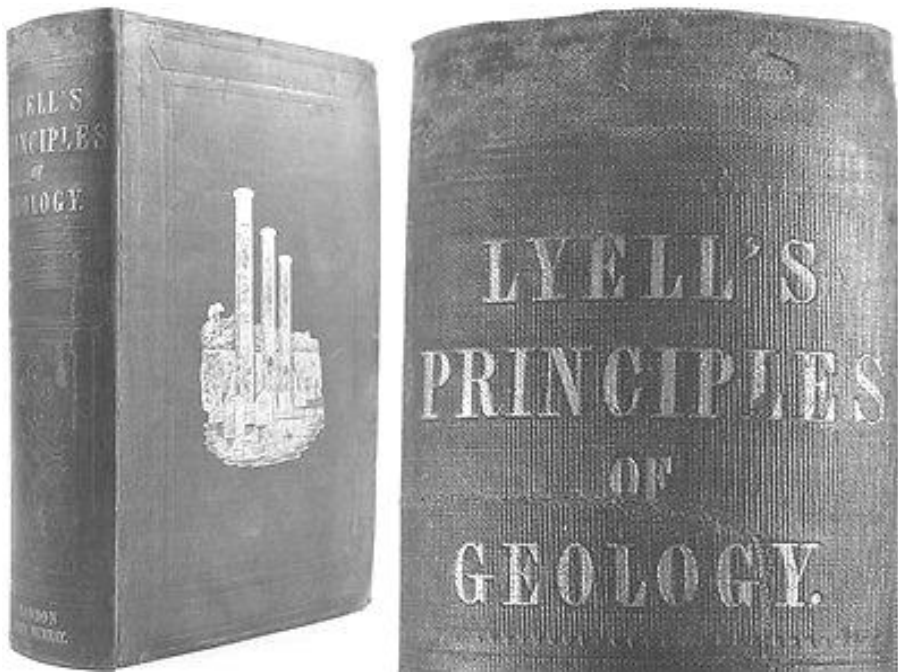
4 Charles Lyell, book cover of *Principles of Geology*, 1830

Although Niccolini's interest in Geology had developed to solve a problem of conservation regarding an ancient building, the architect believed so strongly in his convictions that in 1845 he decided to participate in the Annual Congress of Italian Scientists, which that year held in Naples.[19]

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[18] CIANCIO (2009: 181).

[19] AZZINARI (1996).

For the Congress, Niccolini decided to collect all his forty-year data, drawings and notes in a book which happened to be a compendium of his research, called *Descrizione della gran terma puteolana volgarmente detta Tempio di Serapide.* In this treatise he sought out to definitively clarify all the 'erroneous interpretations' of the Temple of Serapis from an architectural and geological point of view, supported by all the hydrometric measurements he had collected, the surveys on the buildings and the historical researches carried out over the years.

What is remarkable about his accomplishment is that from the records of the time it is clearly understood that Niccolini's theories were widely popular in the scientific community, although they were considered obsolete. It was now increasingly clear that Charles Babbage and Charles Lyell were correct about the fact that the flooding of the Temple of Serapis depended on the movement of the terrestrial crust. However, the scientific circles respected him as a scholar to the point of letting him attend their congresses.
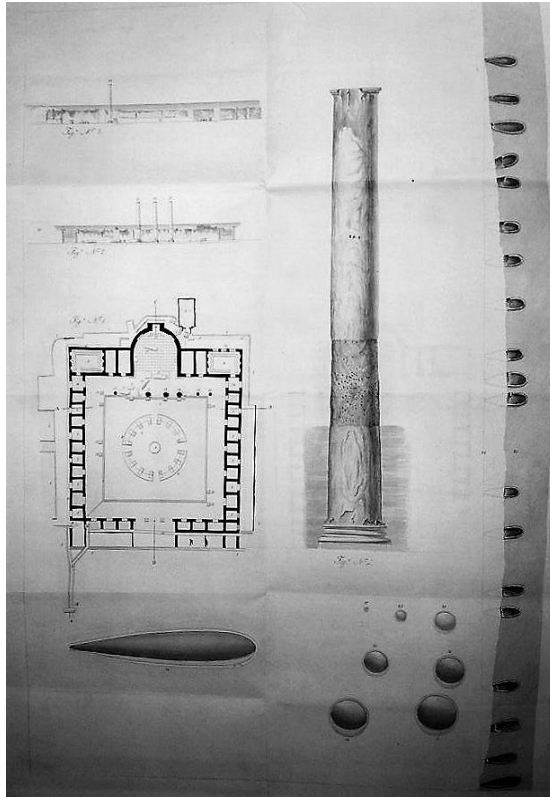
5 Antonio Niccolini, plan and column of the Temple of Serapis, 1846

Conclusions

Although it is true that Niccolini's curiosity in Natural Science is not surprising for a 19th century architect heir to the Enlightenment culture, the essence of his approach was unique, given the holistic perspective he had on the Antiquity. He moved from an architectural and archaeological interest toward the Antiquity to a modern solution to the sensitive issue of the conservation of an ancient building. He was the first among the Bourbon's court to sense the necessity of identifying the cause of the decay phenomenon to eradicate it at the origin, rather than act on its symptomatic manifestation.

Niccolini had the merit of prematurely grasping a methodology which is consolidated nowadays but was unforeseen in the 19th century. He managed to cross his expertise as an architect, his passion for the Antiques and his engineering skills predicting a contemporary approach.

Furthermore, it should not be overlooked that Niccolini considered the phenomenon of flooding also a public health concern, given that the miasmas constituted a danger for the users of the thermal baths, so as raising early "proto-hygienic" critical issues toward the serene coexistence of the building with its users.

Niccolini's approach to the Antiquity not only embodies the antiquarian culture typical of 19th century which admires, collects and wishes to understand the past. It also foresees the attitude of a modern 20th century intellectual, who handles the Antiquity with respect but also with a momentum of initiative which allows to enhance the culture and the society, by virtue of learning the lessons of the past, without forgetting to experience and interpret the present time.

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