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Editors' Foreword

We have had a productive end to 2023 at New Classicists. We are currently in consultation with our newly formed editorial board, who consist of Dr. Jordon Houston, Giuseppe Ficocelli, Dr. Guen Taietti, and Lucilla Crespi. Please do follow us on our website and our social media accounts for more information that will be announced in the new year.

Our ninth issue has four new articles for your reading pleasure. Our first article is "Hellenistic Homosexuality: Theocritus' pederastic Idylls and the poetics of reversal" by Valentino Gargano, which reexamines the Greek institution of pederasty in the Hellenistic era through Theocritus' homoerotic idylls. The following article is "Ecocide in Late Antiquity: Environmental Spoliation and Human Resilience" by Andrew McNey that uses archaeological evidence, paleoclimatic data, and the Nessana papyri corpus to re-examine human agency in environmental narratives in late-antique Negev. The penultimate article is "Longing for Maecenas: Horace and the Nostalgia of Martial" by Joe Broderick, which examines the works of the Latin poets Horace (65–8 BC) and Martial (c. 40–103 AD) and how Maecenas' patronage of Horace can be analysed through their works. Our final article is "The memory of Amazon myths in Roman epigraphy, 1st-7th centuries AD" by Arturo Sánchez Sanz, which analyses epigraphical evidence from the first to seventh centuries AD to understand the legacy of myth of the Amazonians.

I would like to finally thank the authors who have submitted their work to New Classicists, and their continued faith in our publication and mission. We must also recognise New Classicists' editorial team who have volunteered their time and work diligently to keep this journal running smoothly. We hope you enjoy our latest issue and continue to take a keen interest in New Classicists. We are already hard at work getting articles ready for the new year.

Best regards,
Dr. Jordon Houston and Giuseppe L. Ficocelli
Co-Editors-in-Chief

Hellenistic Homosexuality: Theocritus' pederastic Idylls and the poetics of reversal[1]

By Valentino Gargano

Introduction

This paper argues against two commonly accepted ideas concerning Theocritus' homoerotic idylls: first, that they can be taken as evidence to argue that the Greek institution of pederasty was ridiculed and/or perceived to be obsolete in Hellenistic times; and second, that the power differential intrinsic in Greek classical pederasty had been lost in the passage to Hellenistic times. Opposing this developmentalist view, the paper argues that Theocritus' idylls elaborate on the same tropes, themes, and structural devices as archaic and classical homoerotic poetry. The seemingly peculiar characteristics of Theocritean homoeroticism derive in fact from previous pederastic poetry. Among the recurrent features in common with the pederastic poetic tradition, the frequent power reversal of Theocritus' idylls apparently subverting the erastes-eromenos hierarchy typical of classical pederasty is not specific to Hellenistic poetry, but is rather part of the legacy of the homoerotic poetry of Theognis, Anacreon, and other archaic poets. Therefore, it cannot be taken as evidence to argue that archaic or classical pederasty is ridiculed or 'deconstructed' in Hellenistic poetry. Such a reversal, both in archaic and Hellenistic homoerotic poetry, does not correspond to an actual degree of flexibility or a potential evolution in the power dynamics of pederasty. Instead, the imagined and feigned inferiority of the erastes further substantiates the thesis that a real, extra-literary hierarchy persisted in structuring homoerotic relationships in the world of Theocritus' contemporaries. Theocritus' wit and irony hinge upon the subversion of this hierarchy separating 'man' and 'boy', and much of it would be lost if we assumed that homoerotic relationships in his time had lost the power differential that shaped the dynamics of pederasty in classical Athens.

[1] This paper was produced during the 2021/2022 academic year in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the MSt in Greek and Latin Languages and Literature at the University of Oxford. The author is currently a DPhil student in Classical Languages and Literature at the University of Oxford.

The frequent methodological approach to representations of (homo)sexuality in classical literature since Dover and Foucault is the so-called 'penetration model'. For Dover, erotic relationships in classical Athens revolved around the existence of a power differential between the penetrative 'lover' and the penetrated 'object of desire' reflecting existing hierarchies in classical Greek society.[2] Some scholars, however, have reasonably objected that Dover's model mostly relies on the evidence for classical Athens, and that other contexts, periods, or environments might not as easily reflect this model.[3] Theocritus' homoerotic poems, for instance, seemingly 'take for granted' the *absence* of a power differential and present a new type of homoeroticism that diverges from pederasty.[4] In what follows, I evaluate this 'developmentalist' possibility, asking how well these poems capture dynamics of mutuality and reciprocity, and whether the relationship between ἐρώμενος and ἐραστής has adopted a different 'ethos' from archaic and classical times. I will argue that Theocritean poetry is not unique in representing the older man's sexual desire, his conceptualisation of the relationship in terms of equality and mutuality, and in emphasising the older man's erotic dependence on the boy. While Theocritus constantly subverts the hierarchy inherent in the pederastic relationship, this procedure of reversal is not uniquely 'Hellenistic'. Hence, these features cannot be taken as evidence to argue that Theocritus is deconstructing or ridiculing pederasty. For reasons of space, I will focus in my analysis on *Idylls* 13, 29, 12, 30 (in this order). Examining *Idyll* 13 and the portrayal of the relationship between Heracles and Hylas, I will argue that a disbalance in the power dynamics of pederasty is conceptually fundamental to grasp the irony of the poem. The reversal of the hierarchy, I argue, is a literary phenomenon that does not correspond to any level of flexibility or diachronic development in the erotic relationship in the extraliterary world; rather, it illuminates the persistence of the traditional hierarchy in the reality existing outside literature. By looking at *Idyll* 29, I will also consider other elements that potentially differ from archaic and classical representations of pederasty in Greek literature, and will argue that the similarities between them make it difficult, if not impossible, to sustain a developmentalist thesis. One important element which is shared by the previous and the later homoerotic poetic tradition is indeed what I call the 'poetics of reversal': the brief analysis of *Idyll* 12 and 30 shows that

[2] Dover (1978), 84, 100-9; Skinner (2005), 7; Foucault (1985), 35 et passim.
[3] Lear (2013), 116, 120.
[4] Lambert (2004), 82; Lear (2013), 120.

such poetics is again fundamental to Theocritean humour, but was equally vital to archaic pederastic poetry. With reference to Greek epigram, I will reiterate my argument about the paradoxical persistence of an extraliterary hierarchy that is to be grasped through the 'poetics of reversal'.

Idyll 13, the ironies of power dynamics, and the illusion of reversal

Idyll 13 presents the relationship between Heracles and Hylas as undeniably pederastic,[5] and thus constitutes a promising starting point for discussion. Theocritus seemingly sets out to ennoble and legitimise the experience of human *eros* through the parallel provided by Heracles' love for a boy (ἤρατο παιδός, 'he loved a boy', 6), described in ways and tropes that make it sound like a typical pederastic relationship of the archaic and classical periods. The paternal role that Heracles assumes is in line with the pederastic tradition,[6] as well as the didactic function that is notably a feature of archaic and classical pederasty as glorified in the elegies of Theognis and in the dialogues of Plato (καί νιν πάντ᾽ ἐδίδασκε, πατὴρ ὡσεὶ φίλον υἱόν, / ὅσσα μαθὼν ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἀοίδιμος αὐτὸς ἔγεντο, 'and he taught him everything which had made him noble and glorious, as a father teaches his beloved son', 8-9).[7] The poem reflects a transitional passage from adolescence to manhood, from ἐρώμενος to ἐραστής.[8]

Lines 14-15, however, might seem to refute this reading and instead be nuanced with a sense of mutuality and equality within the pederastic relationship of Heracles and Hylas. Theocritus contextualises the relationship by expanding on Heracles' hopes that Hylas might strive to emulate his heroic example (ὡς αὐτῷ κατὰ θυμὸν ὁ παῖς πεποναμένος εἴη, 'so that the boy might be fashioned to his mind', 14), and so reach 'true manhood' αὐτῷ δ᾽ εὖ ἕλκων (15). The expression has been diversely obelised or explained with Σ Theocr. 13.15b Wendel as implying the word ζυγόν, 'yoke'. The metaphor of the 'yoke of love' has been identified as a '*Lieblingsmetapher*' frequently found in Theocritus,[9] strongly pointing towards a shared and mutual experience of love.[10] Giubilo reasonably points out that the metaphor of the yoke of love is deprived

[5] Pulbrook (1983), 28.
[6] Hunter (1999), 268.
[7] Dover (1987), 182.
[8] Hunter (1993a), 38-41.
[9] Yet cf. infra.
[10] Rumpel (1961), 94; Giubilo (2015), 256. Cf. Skinner (2005), 64.

of its vehicle in no other locus. Even Giubilo, while interpreting εὖ ἕλκων absolutely ('taking the right direction with him'), maintains that the tradition is correct in interpreting it as an allusion to 'sharing a life journey together'.[11]

It is likely, however, that the scholiast was influenced in his interpretation by ἴσῳ ζυγῷ in the preceding *Idyll* 12 (cf. *infra*). I accept Gow's emendation of the syntagm to οὕτω δ' ἐϋκλειῶς ('so [as a result of his teaching] gloriously'): Theocritus would be alluding to Heracles' wish that Hylas might reach manhood by attaining κλέος, 'glory'.[12] If anything, the expression reinforces the idea of a precise pederastic hierarchy. Moreover, the shared life of Heracles and Hylas (χωρὶς δ' οὐδέποκ' ἦς, 'he never parted from him', 10) is not particularly representative of an equal relationship. A life of communion does not necessarily reflect any 'Hellenistic' desire to equate the atypical 'blessed couple' of Plato's *Phaedrus* who enjoy an everlasting, balanced, and reciprocal union.[13] In fact, undermining his previous claim, Theocritus introduces Telamon as the loyal ἑταῖρος, 'companion' of Heracles (38), the one who is at his side while Heracles' boy has gone to fetch water for them.

Pederasty is still present in its traditional form, and it is exactly upon its power differential that the poem relies. Much of Theocritus' irony lies in the subversion of this hierarchy. At the beginning of the poem, Heracles wishes to teach Hylas how to attain glory by following his example (9), but he ends up ruining his heroic reputation when the Argonauts call him a λιποναύτης, a 'deserter' (73). Theocritus began his *Idyll* by drawing attention to Heracles' immortality – crucially adumbrated in the *Argonautica* (1.1315-20).[14] Here, instead, it is Hylas who attains immortal status (72),[15] and Theocritus deliberately and humorously juxtaposes his fate with Heracles' (note the antithesis: οὕτω μὲν κάλλιστος Ὕλας...Ἡρακλέην δ', 'thus fairest Hylas... while Heracles', 72-73).

Equally telling is the simile likening Heracles to a lion. The generic Apollonian τις θὴρ ἄγριος, 'some wild beast', hearing the sound of μήλων, 'sheep' (1.1243-44) becomes in Theocritus specifically an

[11] Giubilo (2015), 262: 'condivisione di un percorso di vita'; cf. Gow (1938), 13-14.
[12] Gow (1938), 14.
[13] Hunter (1996), 181.
[14] Hunter (2021), 200.
[15] Griffiths (1996), 104.

ὠμοφάγος λίς, a 'carnivorous lion' hearing a νεβροῦ φθεγξαμένας, a 'crying fawn' (62) (a metaphor which conjures up also a specifically pederastic intertext, namely Thgn. 949-54).[16] The humorous simile works through a procedure of reversal: the irony of the poet lies in the realisation that love has not only turned the civiliser Heracles into a beast,[17] but into the same animal that he had killed (ὃς τὸν λῖν ὑπέμεινε τὸν ἄγριον, 'he who withstood the wild lion', 6). Hierarchic play appears then to have a fundamental role in Theocritus' structural strategy of the poem. As Konstan concludes, 'Hylas would henceforward be reckoned among the blessed ones, while the Argonauts sneered at Heracles' dereliction. Heracles is thus diminished in the degree that Hylas is elevated'.[18]

Such reversal, however, is by no means a signal of diachronic change. According to the developmentalist view of Theocritus' poems, 'we have moved outside the city-state into a world where the neat binaries between older and younger, powerful and powerless, seem to have unravelled and where male same-sex relationships seem to have lost their social function and legitimacy'.[19] The story of Hylas, however, hinges just upon the existence of such a power differential. Theocritus' poem derives its wit from the reversal of this hierarchy; the poem would lose much of its humour if we assumed that the conception of 'homoeroticism' encapsulated in the poem aligned with a model deprived of such hierarchy. Of course, this does not exclude the possibility that this kind of erotic relationship was perceived as obsolete by Theocritus' contemporaries and that Theocritus' hierarchical reversal humorously poke fun at its outdatedness. As we will see, however, this option has to be discarded.[20]

New representations of homoeroticism? *Idyll* 29 and the similarities with traditional homoerotic poetry

Idyll 29 might appear potentially different from common representations of pederasty. In this poem, an ἐραστής in the throes of love laments being emotionally subjugated to a fickle and faithless παῖς.

[16] Dover (1987), 187.
[17] Griffiths (1996), 103; Mastronarde (1968), 278.
[18] Konstan (2021), 527.
[19] Lambert (2004), 82.
[20] Gutzwiller (1991), 108 argues that the deflation of Heracles' heroism produces amusement but never reaches the levels of derision and ridicule of Polyphemus in 11.

Intercalating his lamentation with paraenetic advice, the lover warns the boy in traditional terms about the precariousness of young age and lectures him on social approval and reputation. Hunter argues that there is an archaicising tone in the idealisation of pederasty of the ἐραστής: οἶνος, ὦ φίλε παῖ, λέγεται, καὶ ἀλάθεα ('wine, dear boy, and truth, the saying goes', 1) echoes a famous sympotic (and pederastic) motto of Alcaeus (fr. 366 Voigt); αἰ γὰρ ὦδε πόῃς, ἄγαθος μὲν ἀκούσεαι / ἐξ ἄστων ('for if you do so, you shall gain a good reputation in town', 21-22) recalls the pivotal role of civic reputation in Theognidean elegy; in ἀλλ᾽ αἴ μοί τι πίθοιο νέος προγενεστέρῳ ('listen to me, as you are young and I am older', 10), he appeals to his wisdom and age to advise the young man; finally, the lover wishes that they could become like Achilles and Patroclus after the ἐρώμενος' coming of age (ἀλλάλοισι πελώμεθ᾽ Ἀχιλλέιοι φίλοι, 'we might be Achillean friends', 34). According to Hunter, however, the ἐραστής' seriousness and appeal to the 'archaic nobility' of pederasty are seemingly trivialised and undercut throughout. Hunter even envisages a 'deconstruction' of pederasty when the lover's self-debasement is paralleled with the Heraclean labours (νῦν μὲν κἀπὶ τὰ χρύσια μᾶλ᾽ ἔνεκεν σέθεν / βαίην καὶ φύλακον νεκύων πεδὰ Κέρβερον, 'now I would even go and seek the golden apples or fetch Cerberus, guardian of the dead', 37-38), and when the physical component of the lover's desire emerges as opposed to a supposedly de-eroticised archaic concern for the boy's paideia.[21] Importantly, Lambert and Hunter argue that it seems uniquely Hellenistic for the mature lover to expect to be reciprocated in a form of mutual and symmetrical relationship, like in Plato's *Phaedrus*.[22]

Besides Theognis, however, the poetry of Theocritus is equally redolent of Anacreon.[23] For the pederastic lover frequently takes the stance, in archaic as in Hellenistic Greece, of a helpless lover that yearns for or envisions the reciprocation of his passion. For instance, Anacreon is helpless in *PMG* 357, where he begs Dionysus to let Cleobulus reciprocate his love: Κλεοβούλῳ δ᾽ ἀγαθὸς γένεο / σύμβουλος, τὸν ἐμόν γ᾽ ἔρωτ᾽, ὦ Δεόνυσε, δέχεσθαι ('to Cleobulus, Dionysus, give good advice, and tell him to accept my love'; 9-11).[24] The lover's ironic portrayal, marked by a helpless yearning for erotic reciprocity and an almost crude

[21] Hunter (1996), 170, 179-80. There is some evidence that pederasty was problematised and/or ridiculed in the course of the classical period, as suggested by some passages in Aristophanes, Plato and Aristotle: cf. Kanellakis (2021), 9. It is far from certain, however, that the evidence can be taken as signs of a shift in the general conception of homosexuality and pederasty.
[22] Ibid., 181; Lambert (2004), 77.
[23] Ibid., 188. Cf. Pretagostini (2007), 11 et passim.
[24] Skinner (2005), 69-70.

element of desire for the boy, would seemingly contribute to Theocritus' departure from archaic pederastic values.[25] All these themes, however, already found expression in Anacr. *PMG* 378: ἀναπέτομαι δὴ πρὸς Ὄλυμπον πτερύγεσσι κούφῃς / διὰ τὸν Ἔρωτ᾽· οὐ γὰρ ἐμοὶ <παῖς ἐ>θέλει συνηβᾶν ('I fly up to the Olympus on light wings because of my passion: <the boy> does not want to enjoy youth with me'; cf. the Theocritean συνέραν, 32).[26]

The aspiration to mutuality, most importantly, cannot be regarded as typical of and specific to Hellenistic poetry. As demonstrated by Davidson, the rhetoric of χάρις was central to archaic homoerotic Greek poetry: in pressuring their beloved to remember their 'favours', poets-ἐρασταί constantly framed their relationship with them in terms of a reciprocal and symmetrical exchange, even when they expressed their disappointment for having such expectations unmet (cf. Thgn. 1263-66, 1331-33, 1339-40; Pi. fr.123 Snell-Maehler).[27] The idea of mutuality is specifically homoerotic, with Theognis, most eminently, theorising it in 1367-68 (παιδός τοι χάρις ἐστί· γυναικὶ δὲ πιστὸς ἑταῖρος / οὐδείς, ἀλλ᾽ αἰεὶ τὸν παρεόντα φιλεῖ, 'gratitude is the virtue of boys, while a woman can never be the loyal companion of anyone, for she will always love whoever is at hand').[28] Theognis again offers a relevant parallel in a pederastic poem where the ἐραστής puns on the ambiguity inherent to the word χάρις: ὦ παῖ, ἐπεί τοι δῶκε θεὰ χάριν ἱμερόεσσαν / Κύπρις, σὸν δ᾽ εἶδος πᾶσι νέοισι μέλει, / τῶνδ᾽ ἐπάκουσον ἐπῶν καὶ ἐμὴν χάριν ἔνθεο θυμῷ ('boy, since the goddess of Cyprus gave you a charming *kharis* and every young man is thinking about your beauty, listen to my words and put my *kharis* in your heart', 1319-21).[29] These three lines not only further suggest that homoerotic χάρις was conceptualised as 'reciprocal exchange' as early as Theognis, but also that the ἐραστής was capable of perceiving the erotic and sexual side of the relationship.[30]

Similarly, following Selle's recent emendation, 1384-85 also 'wink to an audience of experienced *erastai*' and derive their wit from Theognis' sexual innuendo: γίνεται ἀνθρώποισιν ἔρως χαλεπώτατον ἄχθος / ἂν μὴ

[25] Cf. Hunter (1996), 189.
[26] Cf. also Anacr. PMG 407.
[27] Hubbard (2013), 94; Davidson (2007), 42, 45-46. Cf. Golden (1984), 316; Calame (1999), 24.
[28] Lear (2011), 392. Cf. Hubbard (2002), 289.
[29] MacLachlan (1993), 67-69 for Theognidean homoerotic χάρις; cf. 56-72 for the erotic meaning of χάρις.
[30] The same erotic meaning transpires from Thgn. 1299-1304, 1329-34. Palmieri (2019), 132ff. comments on Id. 30.1-4, and believes that the meaning of χάρις differs from its 'ethical' archaic connotation. Given the Theognidean specimen, one feels compelled to re-evaluate the 'distancing effect' that Palmieri, in agreement with Hunter, senses here.

Κυπρογενὴς δῶ λύσιν ἐκ χαλεπῶν ('if the goddess of Cyprus does not release them from its pain, love becomes a most painful burden for men').[31] A similar, almost vulgar wink can be detected in 1267-70, where Theognis compares the proverbial infidelity of παῖδες to that of a horse that remains indifferent to his rider's fall and would easily carry another man on his back (cf. also 1249-52). Writing about book 2 of the Theognidean corpus, Vetta once observed: 'the fundamental parenetic intonation would scarcely be comparable to the distinctly different atmosphere that can be felt, for instance, in the Theocritean παιδικά'.[32] The reason why Vetta envisions the paraenetic and the erotic (or Hunter the 'physicality of the lover's desire and [...] the archaic ethos')[33] as contrasting elements is unclear; both are present in Theognidean poetry.[34]

Most importantly, what breathes life into the Anacreontic, Theognidean, as well as the Theocritean poems is the reversal of the traditional hierarchy intrinsic in the pederastic relationship.[35] Anacr. *PMG* 360 is evidence of this systematic process of inversion: the poet describes his desire for a boy that has no regard for him and 'holds the reins of his soul' (ὦ παῖ παρθένιον βλέπων / δίζημαί σε, σὺ δ' οὐ κλύεις / οὐκ εἰδὼς ὅτι τῆς ἐμῆς / ψυχῆς ἡνιοχεύεις, 'oh boy with the girlish glance, I am seeking you, but you do not listen, unaware that you hold the reins of my soul'). As has been noted, the poem does not merely constitute a parallel to the πῶλε Θρηκίη, the Thracian filly of *PMG* 417, but rather belongs to a typically archaic τόπος of horse-riding in lyric poetry that expresses the desire for (sexual) domination of the male or female love object (cf. *supra*, Thgn. 1267-70).[36] 'The point of 360' – Lear writes – 'resides in the reversal of terms, which emphasises the power of the *eromenos*, not that of the *erastes*'.[37]

[31] Selle (2013), 467.
[32] Vetta (1972), 285: 'la [...] fondamentale intonazione parenetica si lascerebbe difficilmente accostare all'atmosfera ben diversa che si respira ad esempio nei *παιδικά* teocritei'. Vetta even explains the simile comparing the boy to a horse in pedagogical terms: cf. Vetta (1980), 57.
[33] Hunter (1996),180.
[34] Lear (2011), 385. Palmieri (2019), 133 follows Hunter and argues that Idyll 30, discussed below, clearly toys with the archaic 'version' of pederasty and exploits the ambiguity of the term.
[35] Skinner (2005), 68. Moreover, if one accepts Gow's reading of lines 19-20 in 29 (Gow 1952, 508), namely that the boy is accepting the love of men of a higher social stand to make his way into the upper classes of society, this corroborates the hypothesis that the poem is playing with social hierarchies.
[36] Lear (2008), 63.
[37] Ibid.

We should also note that such close re-creation of the dynamics inherent in Anacreon's poetry does not contribute to a sense of historicising distance that allows us to 'deconstruct' pederasty, as Hunter argues.[38] Acosta-Hughes, for instance, has highlighted how some of Theocritus' non-homoerotic poems (3,11) re-create the typical Anacreontic scenario of a man addressing the absent, distant, or unwilling woman.[39] This does not necessarily entail that Theocritus was highlighting the difference between Anacreon's heterosexual liaisons and the heterosexual 'ethos' of his time.

Finally, we should also note that Theognis' elegies and the *Theognidea* focus on the poet's concerns about the possibility of being erotically subjugated by the ἐρώμενος.[40] As Edmunds observes, one of the poet's crucial concerns 'is the dread of domination by his passion';[41] but in fact Theognis constantly presents such domination as a fact. In 1235-38, for instance, Theognis laments being mentally enslaved to his beloved boy (ὦ παῖ, ἄκουσον ἐμεῦ δαμάσας φρένας, 'boy, you who have overpowered my mind, please listen to me'). δαμάσσειν, employed in the same manner in 1341-44[42] and 1345-50, has in itself an erotic connotation: it was used by Homer and Hesiod in reference to mythical rapes, where women were 'overpowered' by either men or gods, or to erotic subjugation in general.[43] Perhaps we should not go as far as saying that Theognis represents himself as 'effeminised' by the boy, but it is significant to detect the poetics of reversal at work in these lines. One of his distichs, 253-54, encapsulates well such 'poetics of reversal': αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ὀλίγης παρὰ σεῦ οὐ τυγχάνω αἰδοῦς / ἀλλ' ὥσπερ μικρὸν παῖδα λόγοις μ' ἀπατᾷς ('yet I receive no respect from you, and you deceive me with your words as if I were a little child'). The behaviour of the ἐρώμενος turns the tables, rendering Theognis a 'little child'. As Lear writes, 'these lines contain several of the key themes of the pederastic elegies: exchange between man and youth, the youth's betrayal of the man, and the reversal of power roles between them'.[44]

[38] Hunter (1996), 179 et passim.
[39] Acosta-Hughes (2006), 46; Acosta-Hughes (2010b), 154-8.
[40] It is hard to distinguish between authentic Theognidean poems and later Theognidea. Book 2, however, which contains the majority of the pederastic elegies, seems virtually authentic: Lewis (1985), 197; West (1974), 43; Vetta (1980), xi-xii. Cf. Selle (2013), 472; Lear (2011), 379.
[41] Edmunds (1988), 81-82.
[42] Lewis (1985), 217.
[43] Cassidy (2019), 447-48; Lewis (1985), 212-13.
[44] Lear (2011), 381.

In fact, poem 29 also enacts such reversal. While the ἐραστής is clearly subjugated from the beginning of the poem, the *Idyll* starts with the lover dispensing advice and wisdom to the younger boy. In the end, however, the lover imagines that in the future the boy will pursue him, and threatens him that he will not 'come out to the door' (τότα δ' οὐδὲ κάλεντος ἐπ' αὐλείαις θύραις / προμόλοιμί κε, παυσάμενος χαλέπω πόθω, 'then, I will not come out to the door, should you call me, once my burdensome desire ceases to exist', 39-40). Paradoxically, the lover's imagined 'empowered' condition is what sanctions the power reversal in the poem. In his imagined *paraklausithyron*,[45] προμόλοιμι means not simply 'to come', but specifically 'to come out':[46] the speaker is casting the boy into the role of the *exclusus amator* and himself into that of the *dura puella*, so to say. Such reversal hardly mirrors developments in the proper hierarchic structure of pederastic relationships, nor is it symptomatic of a Hellenistic perception of pederasty as 'ridiculous' or 'obsolete'. It is rather part of a homoerotic poetics of reversal that dates back to archaic Greece, [47] which Theocritus expands and elaborates on in typical Hellenistic guise.

A 'modern' gay couple in *Idyll* 12: the only exception?

Idyll 12, however, seems to voice explicit desires of equality and reciprocity. Konstan, for instance, perceives Theocritean love poetry to be essentially structured according to a power dynamic by which the lover's position becomes necessarily inferior to the condition of the beloved.[48] However, he admits that *Idyll* 12 seems to be the only poem in the corpus to depict a mutual and equal relationship, which also happens to be pederastic. To this effect, he believes, Theocritus jettisons the traditional 'hierarchical' terminology and vocabulary of archaic pederasty, substituting ἐραστής with εἴσπνηλος ('inspirer') and ἐρώμενος with ἀίτης ('hearer')[49] to make the scenario more plausible.[50]

In this ἐπιβατήριον, the lover welcomes back his beloved boy after his two-day absence, and prays that Loves might breathe 'equally' on them, so as to render them the subject of future renown. Through an

[45] Or, to be more precise, komos: Cairns (2020), 262-71.
[46] Hunter (1996), 176-77; Gow (1952), 510.
[47] Golden (1984), 312-17.
[48] Konstan (2021), 524-26; cf. Skinner (2005), 233.
[49] The translation of the two terms is from Gow (1952). While the translation and etymology of the former are quite evident, those of the latter are uncertain and remain speculative.
[50] Konstan (2021), 529.

apparently Pindaric flight, the speaker addresses the Megarians of Nisaea and praises them for having established a kissing contest as a ritual in honour of their guest Diocles of Athens. Mutuality is explicitly and strongly evoked between the speaker and the beloved through the constant use of the dual (δίω δή τινε τώδε μετὰ προτέροισι γενέσθην / φῶθ', 'these two, among those who lived in the past, were excellent', 12-13). φιλεῖν and ἀντιφιλεῖν here ('loving' and 'loving back', 15,16), as well as φιλότης ('love', 20), substitute for ἐρᾶσθαι and ἔρως, which are instead usually employed for unrequited passion in the Theocritean corpus.[51]

Such mutuality may be especially suggested through the apparently Theocritean *Lieblingsmetapher* of the shared yoke (ἀλλήλους δ' ἐφίλησαν ἴσῳ ζυγῷ, 'they loved each other under an equal yoke', 15), as Giubilo says.[52] However, this is by no means a favourite metaphor of Theocritus pointing towards 'la condivisione di una medesima condizione'. Giubilo mentions '17, 20-21' [*sic*] and '30, 28-29'. Yet 27 appears as spurious,[53] and χρή με μάκρον σχόντα τὸν ἄμφενα / ἕλκην τὸν ζύγον ('I must drag the yoke, stretching forth my neck') in 30.28-29, which does constitute a relevant intertextual parallel given its pederastic content, hardly alludes to an equal experience of love: quite the opposite, indeed. It has escaped scholarly notice that ἄμφενα and ζυγόν resound with a Theognidean reminiscence: cf. αἰεὶ παιδοφίλῃσιν ἐπὶ ζυγὸν αὐχένι κεῖται / δύσλοφον ('the neck of those men who love boys is always weighed down by a heavy yoke', Thgn. 1357-58). Notice how Theognis defines the ill-fated yoke as a unique prerogative of the lover, with no corresponding counterpart for the beloved. The same metaphor occurs again with the same value alongside the horse-riding τόπος in Ibyc. *PMG* 287 in a possibly homoerotic context: ἦ μὰν τρομέω νιν ἐπερχόμενον / ὥστε φερέζυγος ἵππος ἀεθλοφόρος ποτὶ γήρᾳ ἀέκων σὺν ὄχεσφι θοοῖς ἐς ἄμιλλαν ἔβα ('how I tremble at the thought of his assaults, as a victorious horse unwillingly takes part in the race with swift chariot still bearing the yoke, even if old', 5-7).[54] This renders the exclamation in Theocritus 30 further disconsolate and casts doubt on the optimism of the lover in 12.

[51] Lambert (2004), 76.
[52] Cf. supra, n.10.
[53] Dover (1987), xviii.
[54] Palmieri (2019), 145.

In fact, such rhetoric of mutuality and equality is constantly undercut. For *Idyll* 12 casts doubt on the boy's behaviour and feelings: he has been away for 'two days and nights' (τρίτῃ σὺν νυκτὶ καὶ ἠοῖ, 1) – to be paralleled with the suspicious absence of Delphis in 2.155-58[55] and that of Aeschinas' beloved, symptomatic of her disregard for him in 14.44-49 – and the εἴσπνηλος feels compelled to defend his eulogy of the boy (23-26). The delusional nature of the lover's reverie appears clear especially through the overheated enthusiasm that permeates the poem.[56] Considering Giangrande's persuasive hypothesis that the speaker is a ludicrous rustic who tries conjuring up Hellenistic γλῶσσαι such as the obscure Amyclean and Thessalian words (nowhere else attested) and that distorts his aetiological account of the ritual in honour of Diocles,[57] the picture of the pathetic lover in poem 12 appears gradually less serious and more delusional. Again, as in *Idyll* 29, mutuality and equality are never actualised; they remain unattainable ideals of the abject lover, once again dethroned from his naturally superior position in Greek society to one of subordination and ridicule in poetry.

The deployment of Theognidean imagery is palpable in the poem and it contributes to its allusivity.[58] The Theocritean lover envisions a final, puzzling scenario, the Megarian kissing competition, in which a man's skill in judging boys' kisses parallels the precision of a Lydian touchstone (Λυδίη ἶσον ἔχειν πέτρῃ στόμα, χρυσὸν ὁποίῃ / πεύθονται, μὴ φαῦλος, ἐτήτυμον ἀργυραμοιβοί, '[he prays that he might] have lips just like the Lydian touchstone, by which moneychangers test true gold to make sure that it is not false', 36-37), distinctly echoing Theognis' preoccupation with δόλος, 'deceit' (cf. 117-18; 1013-16).[59] Theognis compares testing a friend's intentions with discovering counterfeit gold, in a striking parallel to the *Idyll* (119-28).[60] The ambivalence of Theognis' feelings about the relationship is even more substantial than in Theocritus, with Theognis' ambitions 'appearing impossible against such a dark background' of doubt and concern.[61] Theocritus is clearly using the allusion to undercut his speaker's enthusiasm. In light of Theognis'

[55] XII and II are juxtaposed in the Antinoë codex of Theocritus (P.Ant): Hunt & Johnson (1930). Gutzwiller (1996),139-42 has demonstrated that this section of the codex shows 'strong indications of editorial design' palpable in the thematic arrangement of the poems.
[56] Verity and Hunter (2002), 101
[57] Giangrande (1971), 103-4 et passim.
[58] Hunter (1996), 191-92.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid., 190; Hejduk (2019), 37.
[61] Hejduk (2019), 38.

continuous presentation of the boy's faithlessness, however, such an allusion makes Theocritus align with Theognis, rather than demystify or deconstruct archaic pederasty. Theocritus is elaborating, with wit, irony, and allusivity, on a trope that archaic poets had already explored and presented repeatedly. There is nothing here for Theocritus to 'deconstruct': the archaic poets showed themselves extremely aware of the downsides of pederasty, as well as of the power reversals that it entailed (at least in their own imagination).

Idyll 30: an effeminate *erastes*?

Such poetics of reversal is also to be detected in *Idyll* 30. The poem opens with the assimilation of the passion of the ἐραστής to a disease that has struck the speaker for two months (Ὤαι τὼ χαλέπω καὶνομόρω τῶδε νοσήματος· / τετόρταιος ἔχει, παῖδος ἔρος μῆνά με δεύτερον, 'Ah! This burdensome and deadly sickness! A quartan passion has been holding me in its grip for two months', 1-2). As Hunter rightly notes, this intermittent fever, as well as the deployment of the word δεύτερον, recall Callimachus' description of Cydippe's illness (ἑπτὰ τεταρταίῳ μῆνας ἔκαμνε πυρί, 'she was ill with a quartan fever for seven months'; Callim. *Aet*. fr. 75.16 Pf.).[62] Yet surely this also ought to recall Simaetha's ἀλλά μέ τις καπυρὰ νόσος ἐξεσάλαξεν / κείμαν δ' ἐν κλιντῆρι δέκ' ἄματα καὶ δέκα νύκτας ('but a burning sickness shook me, and I lay for ten days and ten nights on the bed', 2.85-86) – an intertextual parallel to which we should add the description of both Simaetha and the pederastic speaker in 30 falling in love at the sight of Delphis and the unnamed boy and hardly managing to return home (οὐδ' ὡς πάλιν οἴκαδ' ἀπῆνθον / ἔγνων, 'I could not tell how I got back home again', 2.84-85; εἰς οἶκον δ' ἀπέβαν ἔλκος ἔχων καῖνο⟨ν ἐν ἤπατι⟩, 'I went back home, with a fresh wound inside of me', 30.10).

Because of its Sapphic meter and Aeolic inspiration, moreover, the theme of the malady of love most probably evokes Sappho's 'jealousy ode' (fr. 31 V.), which had been a clear antecedent to the Hellenistic literalisation of the trope of erotic sickness.[63] This is also suggested by the sparse references to Sapphic poetry scattered throughout the poem,[64] and by the fact that the same poem by Sappho was indeed already

[62] Hunter (1996), 185; Palmieri (2019), 22.
[63] Palmieri (2019), 11, 131; Pretagostini (2007), 18; Fassino and Prauscello (2001), 19. Note that the Asclepiadeus maior was also known as Σαπφικὸν ἑκκαιδεκασύλλαβον.
[64] Palmieri (2019), 134, especially on the smile of the boy and the smile of Aphrodite in Sapph. fr.1 V (p.138), and the fawn simile shared with the new 'senility' fragment (p.148).

echoed in *Idyll* 2.[65] The triangular relationship of intertextuality suggests that Theocritus intends both Simaetha and the Sapphic persona to be evoked by the pederastic lover here. A less direct but still likely intertext is Euripides' *Hippolytus*: again, the Ἀφροδίτας νόσῳ ('sickness of Aphrodite', 765-66) striking Phaedra ill seems to be a female prerogative in its exacerbated and literal form.[66] The gendered erotics of νόσος then appear to give this ἐραστής in 30 interestingly feminine connotations, potentially subverting established traditional hierarchies of pederasty through feminisation. The nosological definition of lovesickness is not unprecedented in previous Greek erotic poetry: the equation of 'erotic seizure' and 'illness' was already a well-established one in early Greek lyric.[67] While the broader *topos* of the 'pathology' of love was widespread in all kinds of erotic poetry in ancient Greece, both homoerotic and heteroerotic, the literalisation of the metaphor (not 'love is like illness', but 'love is the cause of literal illness') with a consequent exacerbation of the emotion conveyed, is part of what looks like a predominantly female tradition.

Theocritus' lover explicitly elaborates on the trope, re-writing at once his Simaetha, 'arguably the most important milestone [*sc*. in the development of the trope of *Liebeskummer*] after Sappho fr.31',[68] as well as Callimachus' Cydippe and Euripides' Phaedra.[69] As Hunter also notices, the lines are redolent of Pindar's skolion (fr. 123 S.-M.) about the powerful effects of Theoxenus' gaze on a crowd of potential ἐρασταί.[70] Yet Theocritus capitalises on and exaggerates the precedent, and the event constitutes the starting point for the lamentation of the ἐραστής, who might even become effeminised in the process allowed by the poetics of reversal.[71] If we accepted this reading, the poetics of reversal would acquire a particularly pronounced aspect: as has been noted, the boy's description is emphatically feminising (especially in the application of

[65] Palmieri (2019), 131; Pretagostini (2007), 18; Acosta-Hughes (2010b), 110. Palmieri believes that Callimachus might have been a stronger influence on the idyll than Sappho, but the Aeolic inspiration of the poem as a whole warns us to take the 'jealousy ode' seriously as a fundamental model.
[66] With Cydippe, Callimachus may be re-writing Euripides' Phaedra: cf. Rynearson (2009), 347.
[67] Faraone (2001), 44.
[68] Kanellakis (2021), 10.
[69] Ibid., 7.
[70] Hunter (1996), 184.
[71] The beginning of 11 does introduce the motif of the sickness of love, yet Polyphemus' passion is never framed in such 'medical' terms.

the gendered ὑμαλίκων in 20).[72] This emphasis would then be explained by the humorous contrast with the older lover's effeminacy.

While the use of the 'pathology of love' in a literal sense in poem 30 *might* effeminise the older man by reference to Sappho, Phaedra, and Simaetha, Calame importantly notes that the 'pathology of love' – broadly meant – fundamentally affected anyone, of any gender, expressing feelings towards an individual of any gender in archaic melic poetry.[73] It is completely possible that the reader of poem 30 might have not perceived the speaker as specifically effeminate. At the same time, however, Calame is quick in pointing out that the *topos* of the pathology of love seems to be constantly employed in melic poetry in the (literary) exploration of asymmetrical relationships.[74] According to Calame, this intense expression of feelings might be used to fill up the power gap between older and younger, 'this décalage, this constant erotic asymmetry'.[75] A quick look at *Idyll* 30 shows that Calame is right in detecting a connection with power dynamics. The lover's speech to his soul in 30 fundamentally hinges on the age gap between him and his beloved boy: he emphasises his age by mentioning his grey hair (λεύκαις οὐκέτ᾽ ἴσαισθ᾽ ὅττι φόρης ἐν κροτάφοις τρίχας, 'don't you know that you have grey hair on your brow?', 13), the inappropriateness for a person of his age to be unwise (ὥρα τοι φρονεήν, 'it is time for you to be wise', 14) and associate with younger men (τὸ δ᾽ἄρ᾽ ἦς λώιον ἔμμεναι / ξέννον τὼν χαλέπων παῖδος ἐρώ⟨των προγενέστερον⟩, 'for an older man it is better to be alien to the burdensome love of boys', 16-7), who in the end conduct a different type of life (τῷ μὲν γὰρ βίος ἔρπει ἴσα γόννοις ἐλάφω θόας, 'a boy's life passes like the running of a swift deer', 18) and will prefer to be around other young men (τὸ δ᾽αὖτε γλυκέρας ἄνθεμον ἄβας πεδ᾽ ὑμαλίκων / μένει, 'the flower of his sweet youth stays with his companions', 20-1). The same *topos* of the inappropriateness of loving in connection to age appears in a homoerotic context in Simon. *IEG*^{2} 21= fr. 8 G.-P. and Ibyc. *PMG* 287, as well as the Theoxenus ode of Pindar, and all are likely intertexts.[76] Again, those who have seen the reflection of the

[72] Palmieri (2019), 153-4.
[73] Calame (2021), 48.
[74] Calame (2021), 47, 57.
[75] Calame (2021), 57. Admittedly, it is difficult to ascertain here whether Calame means that the asymmetry puts older or younger on top of the hierarchy. From Calame 1999, 24, it seems that Calame regards the young individual to be generally in a privileged position and that the act of song is an equalising element for the older lover. In the new article, however, he talks of 'an asymmetrical relationship in terms of age' (p. 47).
[76] Kyriakou (2018), 76; Palmieri (2019), 141; Pretagostini (2007), 18; Catenacci (2000), 60.

ἐραστής on the inappropriateness of loving a younger boy as the sign of a critique of archaic pederasty do not consider the similarities between Theocritus and his precedents.[77] Theocritus, then, might have been less interested in characterising the older man in 30 as effeminate than in depicting him in a condition of exacerbated inferiority – a condition that he takes from archaic pederastic poetry without deconstructing it. The poignance of such a condition of 'exacerbated inferiority' lies in the contrast with the theoretical power dynamics of the pederastic relationship. Again, reversal of power is at the core of Theocritus' literary representation of (homo)eroticism.

One could draw a parallel with Hellenistic epigram to gauge how such poetics work: the homoerotic epigrams, especially those of book 12 of the Anthology, connect the male gaze of the lover to an experience of suffering.[78] Like Theocritus 30, they have also appeared to be part of a tradition that dates back to Pindar's Theoxenus.[79] The epigrams bring the motif to exhaustion, obsessively concentrating on feelings of helplessness and on the bittersweet suffering of the lovers at the sight of their boys. Yet, as cinematic and feminist theory demonstrate, the gaze itself is a concrete tool of power over an objectified reality.[80] In fact, as Fountoulakis proves, the experience of apparent subordination of the lover in Greek epigram betrays its fictitiousness exactly through the homoerotic gaze.[81] Paradoxically, it is through these subversions that we realise that a type of hierarchy must have structured the extra-literary dynamics of homoeroticism experienced by these poets' contemporaries.

What is new to Hellenistic homoerotic poetry?

As Dover himself stated, 'the least profitable way of attempting to characterise Hellenistic poetry as a whole is [...] to omit to ask to what extent archaic and classical poetry bear out the same generalizations'.[82] 'New words and new senses of words', 'the incorporation of epic words and phrases', 'the use of epic

[77] Pretagostini (2007), 110-1. Contra, cf. Palmieri (2019), 147.
[78] Fountoulakis (2013), 297.
[79] Ibid., 298-99.
[80] The term was famously coined by Mulvey (1975) and adopted to fuel critical reflection in feminist studies on the gendered dynamics that are inherent in the way men look at women. For further references on the male gaze and on the 'homosexual gaze', cf. Fountoulakis (2013), 312 n.4.
[81] Ibid., 306. Hubbard (2002) reaches opposite conclusions on the homoerotic male gaze in Pindar.
[82] Dover (1987), lxvii.

material to a different point', 'mythological allusions', 'humanization of the gods' – all these generalisations which might be conjured up when speaking of Hellenistic poetry could as well be applied to archaic poetry.[83] To this list, I suggest, the treatment of pederastic themes should be added. What is instead typical of Hellenistic poetry is its *doctrina*, a profound knowledge of the literature of the past, its tight connection with scholarship and the formation of a literary canon.[84] Peculiar to the homoerotic poems of Theocritus are in fact the awareness and deliberate recreation of themes, structural patterns, and even verbatim expressions, that belonged to a tradition of homoerotic poetry.

Hunter is persuasive in tracking down echoes of pederastic precedents in Theocritean homoerotic poetry. Rather than taking these, however, as evidence for a different or critical attitude towards pederasty, it is important to gauge the process of allusivity at work in these poems, the *arte allusiva* and *doctrina* of the Hellenistic poet living in a world where poetry was being systematised and canonised. When *Idyll* 29 begins with the opening line of a homoerotic poem of Alcaeus, when the speaker of *Idyll* 12 conjures up the pederastic parallel of the burdensome ζυγόν or of counterfeit gold,[85] when *Idyll* 30 revives Pindar's Theoxenus, and in the recreation of the 'poetics of reversal' that confuse the social status of older and younger, Theocritus can count on his reader's erudition, evoke literary precedents of pederasty, and imbue his poems with humour and sarcasm without necessarily deconstructing pederasty or challenging its hierarchy. Instead, recreating and reproposing the dynamics of previous homoerotic poetry, Theocritus evokes literary precedents, breathing new life into them, developing the introspective and individualistic dimension of his models,[86] and exacerbating their condition of helplessness.

This does not mean that Theocritus only imbues the homoerotic idylls with pederastic tropes / allusions and the heterosexual ones with *topoi* / references derived from archaic heterosexual poetry: besides *Idyll* 30, for example, *Idyll* 12 also opens with an allusion to archaic lyric like 29. This time, however, the allusion is clearly not pederastic: it is most likely Sapph. fr. 48 V.[87] The metaphor of the 'yoke of love', which

[83] Ibid., lxvi-lxvii. Cf. Acosta-Hughes (2010a), 81-91; Nelson (2018), 225-71.
[84] Ibid., lxxii; Cairns (1979), 11-12.
[85] Cf. Hunter (1993b) for the possible imitation of a pederastic poem of Simonides (fr. 22 West) in Lycidas' propemptikon for Ageanax.
[86] Palmieri (2019), 7.
[87] Gow (1952), 222; Kyriakou (2018), 57. Contra, Hunter (1996), 186.

probably activates an allusion to a specific pederastic intertext in 12 and 30, is nonetheless hardly exclusive to pederastic poetry (cf. Eur. *Med*. 241-3; Eur. *Tro*. 669-70), and is used in a heterosexual context at *Id*.27.21.[88] The trope, fundamental to the poetics of reversal, which makes the theoretically empowered lover a little child (cf. *supra*), evokes Theognis but is also applied to the 'heterosexual' Bucaeus in 10.[89] The simile comparing Hercules and Hylas to a lion and a fawn alludes to Theognis,[90] but it can hardly not evoke also the long tradition of the association between fawns (or young animals at large) and virgins.[91] The speaker's emphasis in 30 on the contrast between young and old might seem to belong to the world of male pederasty, but the New Sappho encourages us to rethink the assumption.[92] Therefore, while the reverberation of previous 'iconic' pederastic models is important to Theocritus' process of allusion and elaboration, these pederastic echoes are juxtaposed with equally important references to tropes of previous non-pederastic poetry. What seems, then, to be fundamental to the aim of these poems is not the straightforward evocation of an exclusive pederastic literary history. In the intricately wrought web of literary allusions, both 'heteroerotic' and 'homoerotic', the reader must feel less compelled to reflect on 'homoeroticism' as a whole than to appreciate the dynamics that such allusions (pederastic and non-pederastic) evoke – dynamics which, I have argued, are carefully constructed with past echoes to reach an impressive depth of psychological 'exacerbation'.

The same procedure of psychological 'exacerbation' and the exaggeration of the 'poetics of reversal' itself are not exclusive to the homoerotic *Idylls* and cannot be taken as the sign of Theocritus' will to ridicule a previous model of eroticism.[93] 'Heterosexual' speakers are also emphatically abject, degraded, and ridiculous, from Polyphemus in 11 and the delusional Bucaeus in 10 to the suicidal speaker of 3 who claims that he is 'entirely dependent' on his beloved girl but she 'does not care about him' (ἐγὼ μὲν / τὶν ὅλος ἔγκειμαι, τὺ δέ μευ λόγον οὐδένα ποιῇ, 32-3). The humour inherent in these poems is not understandable if

[88] Giubilo (2015), 256.
[89] Kyriakou (2018), 46.
[90] Dover (1987), 187.
[91] Battezzato (2018), 84.
[92] Acosta-Hughes (2010b), 122.
[93] Cf. Hunter (1996), 179 on irony in pederastic Idylls: 'we may suspect that this kind of irony was not one which Theocritus found in his archaic models'.

we allowed a higher degree of flexibility or equality to be present in the extra-literary (homo and non-homo)erotic reality: hierarchy and power, instead, are fundamental to the Theocritean conception of love.

This, of course, is not to exclude the possibility that the hierarchy and ethos of pederasty might have developed and changed in Hellenistic times. It is reasonable to believe that Dover's model might have obscured important aspects of homoerotic representation in Hellenistic times. Contemporary sociological studies urge us to consider the rapidity of diachronic change in sexuality throughout human history, thus making it desirable to reevaluate Dover's approach.[94] It is clear that Theocritus' poems do not share with Theognis an emphasis on the socio-political relevance of pederasty. But it is important to see that the gulf between Theocritus and archaic pederastic poetry is not as wide as has been thought, and Theocritus' *Idylls* do not 'deconstruct' or 'ridicule' a form of obsolete homoeroticism. I have argued that features of Theocritus' homoerotic *Idylls* that have appeared to be 'Hellenistic' are no less 'archaic' than they are 'Hellenistic'. Among these features, Theocritean wit crucially derives from the constant subversion of the hierarchy inherent in the pederastic relationship. Such poetics of reversal, far from reflecting any flexibility in the pederastic relationship, is exactly what illuminates the presence of a hierarchy that structured the relationship between a man and a boy in the extraliterary world, in both the archaic and the Hellenistic periods.

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[94] Hubbard (2016), 363.

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Ecocide in Late Antiquity: Environmental Spoliation and Human Resilience in the Negev

by Andrew McNey

Abstract

The dendroecological discovery of a "Little Ice Age" (536-660) has encouraged historiography of the Near East to lend greater agency to ecological factors within studies of the past. (2017, Harper, 287; 2012, Ellenblum, 121; 2019, Sessa, 244) Although this new paradigm introduces a series of factors hitherto missing from historical narratives, it is also constrained by deference to "veneer theory"; emphasising society's innate fragility in the face of great crises (2020, Bregman, 4). This dangerously limits the role of anthropogenic agents to mere witnesses, incapable of shaping historical narratives. The Negev Highlands in Southern Palestine offer a plethora of archaeological and textual evidence to investigate how communities during this unsettled period engaged with the natural landscape. Through an interdisciplinary study of archaeological discoveries, paleoclimatic data, and the Nessana papyri corpus, this article will re-introduce human agency in environmental narratives. Lying at the core of the present study is the concept of ecocide - the human spoliation of ecological systems. Applying notions of community resilience theories within this framework reveals a negative feedback loop that is yet to be examined (2020, Lewit, 75). As settlements became more adaptive, their exploitation of natural resources escalated, thus resulting in greater ecological deterioration. Introducing ecocide as a historical agent where anthropogenic and environmental forces meet; we can elucidate the need for economic adaptation in rural areas where, previously, agriculture was the main commodity. The main implication here is for modern historiography where new conceptual frameworks for the study of the Umayyad period emphasise greater economic continuity. For too long ecocide has been limited to academia of the modern era. Its application

to narratives of the past reveals untapped layers of knowledge that are uniquely related to the seeming ubiquity of human disregard for the natural environment.

Introduction

Early medieval scholarship established a narrative of destruction that was wrought by the Arab-Muslim conquests of the seventh century. (1941, Sauvaget, 247; 2001, Pirenne, 120-8). This was contradicted by a post-war paradigm that identified a greater continuity in the economic affairs of the near east. (1947, Lombard; 2000, Walmsley, 342; 1985, Kennedy, 3-27; 2000, Haldon, 376.) Recently, this continuity has been emphasised by studies of sustained agriculture and land use. (1996, Bartl, 333-48; 1992, Morony, 221-9; 2000, Wilkinson, 219-67; 2011, Kennedy, 177-99) The interdisciplinary archaeological project titled "Crisis on the Margins of the Byzantine Empire: A Bio-archaeological Project in the Negev Desert" (the NEGEVBYZ project) has continued this departure from the Pirennean narrative from a new angle. The findings of the project indicate an economic decline that pre-empted the Arab-Muslim conquests by as much as a century and was instead the product of several interconnected factors; plague, climate, conflict, global demand. (2018, Tepper et al., 148; 2020, Fuks et al., 19788; 2019, Bar-Oz et al., 8245.)

A paper published by researchers Langgut et al. entitled "Environment and horticulture in the Byzantine Negev Desert, Israel: sustainability, prosperity and enigmatic decline" was the first to use the NEGEVBYZ data to ask questions of human impact on ecological systems. The findings of the palynological and anthracological study suggested that greater consideration needs to be given to the overexploitation of natural vegetation. (2021, Langgut et al., 175.) Indeed, scholarship remains interested in how environmental change impacts humans, but a great gap remains when this relationship is turned around. How did humans shape the environment around them? Were these actions sustainable in the long-term, or did they contribute to an economic decline? To address this gap, we need to reconsider our approach to the history of environmental change. Ecocide in Late Antiquity proposes the introduction of

new conceptual terminology. Ecocide is, for the purpose of the present study, the anthropogenic destruction of environments for socio-economic gain. Investigations of ecological change should not underestimate the importance of human agency as a causal factor. Employing the concept of ecocide new layers of human-environment entanglement are unveiled that may explain local ecological change uniquely as a product of human action or inaction.

If we are to foreground human agency in shaping ecological narratives, we should also consider how humans respond to their environment. Formal Resilience Theory was defended in its applicability to the study of the Late Antique Eastern Mediterranean by John Haldon and Arlene Rosen. (2018, Haldon & Rosen, 277.) They define resilience as:

> "the capacity of any set of socio-economic and cultural relations to respond to pressure and stress – of any kind – in such a way as to permit the survival of the fundamental patterns of said relations, even if significant inflections and nuancing of the original framework does take place in the process."
> 2018, Haldon & Rosen, 278.

Employing this understanding of resilience, scholars can trace narratives of ecological change and social adaptation without the explicit need of complete "collapse" or "decline". It foregrounds the importance of appreciating human agency in its capability to conceal or accentuate socio-ecological shocks. Louise Blanke and Alan Walmsley demonstrated the value of resilience theory in a study of urban renewal in Late Antique Baysān, Fiḥl and Jarash. At each of the three sites the archaeological evidence indicates successful readaptation in the face of multiple catastrophes. While the urban built environment was renewed, or in some cases rebuilt, the social and cultural networks of these sites remained intact. (2022, Blanke & Walmsley, 99.) The possibility of human readaptation following viticultural decline has yet to be fully explored for the sixth century Negev. If viticultural production experienced a sudden decline was there an effort made to adapt? Did the economic and social networks of the Late Antique Negev remain intact despite urban reconfiguration?

The disentanglement of human-environment relations necessitates the consideration of a plethora of variables; social, economic, and environmental, each with their own chain of causality. Simply studying ecological and social narratives in parallel does not elucidate the relationships that govern their shared context. Instead, they must be studied as part of one broader operating system. To overcome this scholarship has increasingly united multiple disciplines under a shared sets of aims and interests. Ecocide in Late Antiquity continues this trend by integrating textual, archaeological, paleoclimate and palaeobotanical data within its analysis. New paleoclimate data has brought researchers closer to past climate systems than ever before. This data provides information on systems of weather and climate change over millennia. There is within this, however, a glaring problem. The resolution of the data is not always applicable to specific dates, spanning decades or centuries with only a handful of data points. Furthermore, scholarship is also increasingly convinced that paleoclimate data can only be applied to its immediate geographic region if we wish to be as accurate as possible. To overcome this, the present study will analyse in depth the findings of three different paleoclimate studies of the southern Levant. Focus will be placed on reconstructions of rain patterns from multiple resolution viewpoints. Alongside the paleoclimate data, investigations of archaeological material will provide an insight into economic narratives. The Gaza jar, a proxy for a large-scale wine trade, will be analysed together with palaeobotanical studies of grape pips. The resulting data should provide a record of the production side of a significant economic driver in the Late Antique Mediterranean, the wine trade. It is however difficult to accurately reconstruct complex social and cultural networks from this data. Individuals are not always easily identifiable. It is the responsibility of historians to offer in-depth analyses of the textual corpus for integration into resilience studies.

Ecocide in Late Antiquity draws on two documents within the corpus of Nessana papyri: P.Ness III 3. and P.Ness III 89. The full corpus of over one hundred documents records the legal administration of the community and its land management systems. The earliest document being dated to 505CE and the latest to 689CE, it offers an unparalleled view into Negev society

in the last phase of Byzantine administration and under the early Caliphate. P.Ness III 3. and P.Ness III 89. have been selected from this corpus for focused historical analysis. The selection has been made based on the access they offer to socio-economic relationships otherwise inaccessible in the archaeological material. The documents bear witness to the social networks that lay at the foundations of the economic operations of the region. However, they show each relationship only at one point in time. Unlike other corpora (e.g., the Dioskoros archive) individual actors do not appear multiple times and thus it is not possible to trace their economic affairs over a longer period. This limits the ability of the text to demonstrate explicit responses to specific phenomena. Nevertheless, the texts are highly unique in their ability to provide access to social networks otherwise unidentifiable in the archaeological data alone. They are deserving of detailed historical analysis because unpacking the social networks they document is crucial to understanding community resilience. In his study of the Dioskoros archive, Giovanni Ruffini unravels the web of social networks of 6th-Century Aphrodito, revealing a unique horizontal nexus of social ties. (2008, Ruffini, 149.) Ecocide in Late Antiquity attempts to look below the surface of the text to unpack the socio-economic relationships that lay at the foundation of the documents' legal and administrative contents. Careful attention will be placed on the individual economic actors documented in P.Ness III 3. and P.Ness III 89, their role in the wider socio-economic web, and also how they relate to each other.

New proxy data types continue to lead scholarship in exciting directions, (2009, Orland et al., 32; 2004, Bookman et al., 570; 2020, Vaiglova et al., 10.) however there is a growing concern that overemphasis on ecological agents can lead to misleading conclusions. (2019, Sessa, 231; 2018, Haldon et al., 321; 2021, Erdkamp, 5.) We should not underestimate the ability of anthropogenic action to shape the histories of local regions. In the case of the Negev Highlands, they are at least in part responsible for its decline and perhaps also its economic recovery.

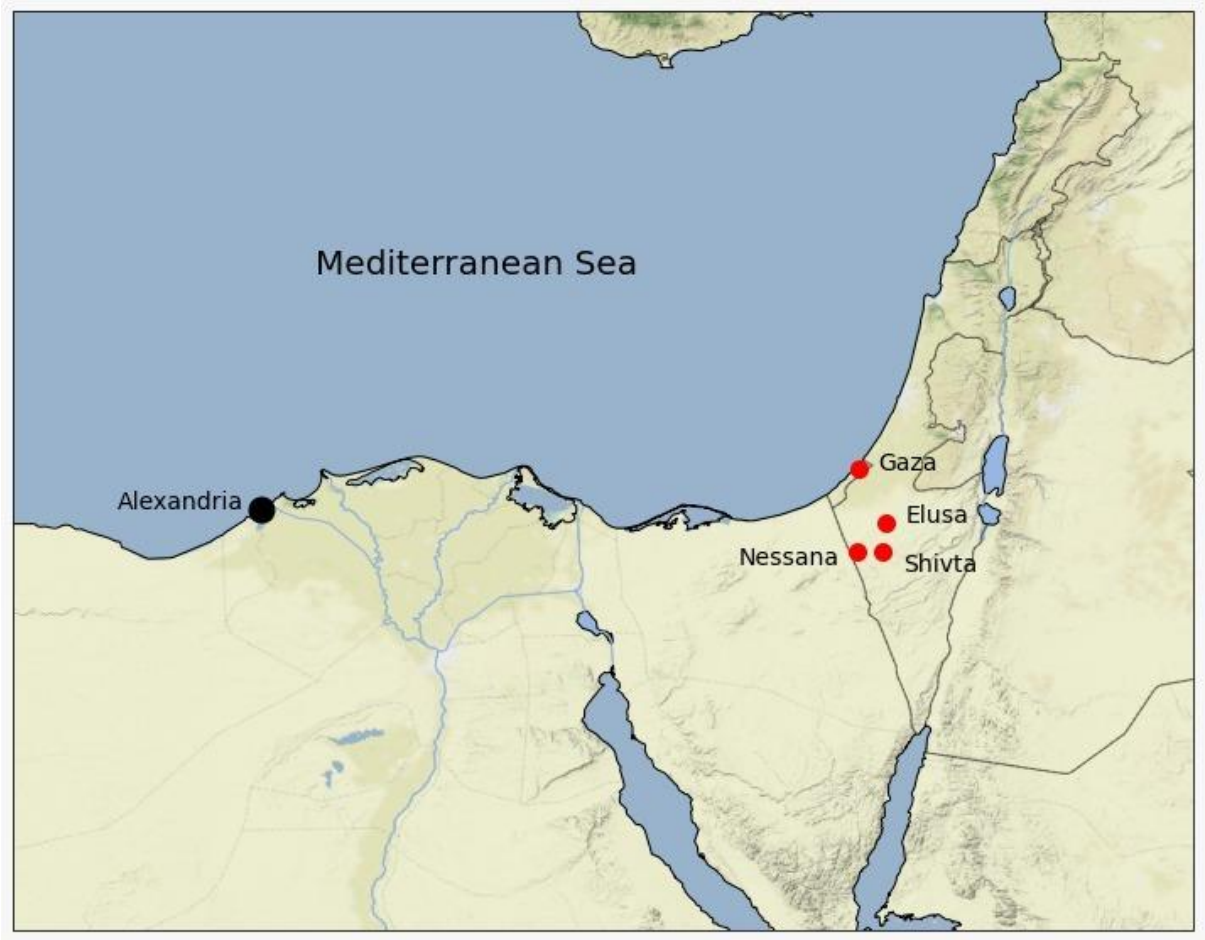

Figure 1 Eastern Mediterranean with modern international borders (sites under study highlighted in red)

Dating and Chronology

The chronology that will be used in this study is drawn chiefly from two papers produced by the NEGEVBYZ project: "Ancient trash mounds unravel urban collapse a century before the end of Byzantine hegemony in the southern Levant" by Bar-Oz et al. published in 2019, and "The rise and fall of viticulture in the Late Antique "Negev Highlands reconstructed from archaeobotanical and ceramic data" by Fuks et al. published in 2020. The chronology provided by Bar-Oz et al. is drawn from investigations of ancient trash middens located outside of the old city walls of Elusa. The researchers collected over 14,974 ceramic sherds from 22 squares (5x5m). Using the ceramic assemblage, it was possible to identify continuous use of the site from Hellenistic – Early Islamic time frames, though the material was dominated by Byzantine

ceramics (dated 350-640CE). In addition, four trenches (2x2m) were opened in two of the identified mound areas from which diagnostic coins and glassware were recovered. All material collected from these trenches was dated pre-7th century and mainly spans the 4th- mid 6th centuries. Furthermore, four probes were opened for the carbon-dating of short-lived materials and were strategically located nearby the squares from which late Byzantine and early Islamic material was recovered. The dating samples were extracted from the topmost layers of the mounds (approximately 0.5 meters in depth). With probability distributions of $\pm 2\sigma$ none of the calibrated dates extended beyond the mid-6th century. As these samples were drawn from the topmost layers of the middens the researchers propose that they offer the best possible estimation for a terminus ante quem of organised trash disposal at the middens. (2019, Bar-Oz et al., 8242-8243.)

The research produced by Fuks et al. provides further chronological information for the material discussed in this paper. The researchers conducted a wide investigation of eleven excavated middens at the sites of Elusa, Shivta and Nessana. The entire ceramic assemblage was identified and implemented in a chronological sequence of seven overlapping phases and subphases: Roman (0-300CE), early Byzantine (300-450CE), middle Byzantine (450-550CE), middle – late Byzantine (ca. 500CE), late Byzantine (550-650CE), late Byzantine-Umayyad (550-700CE) and Umayyad (650-750CE). The typologies used in the identification of these periods were: Gaza form 2 and African Red Slip ware (early Byzantine 300-450CE), Gaza form 3 and Elusa ware jars (middle Byzantine 450-550CE), Gaza form 4 and Riley's LR1 (late Byzantine 550-650CE), and Handmade ware and the Aqaba typology (Umayyad 650-750CE). Where a midden spanned more than one period the researchers implemented transitional loci to establish a stratigraphic sequence of the ceramic assemblage. (2020, Fuks et al., 19783) The researchers thus excavated material across a wide timeframe spanning Roman to Umayyad periods. Their results, which shall be discussed later in the present paper, span preconceived "transitional periods" allowing for the excavated material to indicate an independent timeframe of societal development and decline.

It is important to note that the chronology established in these papers has been the subject of criticism from Lev Cosijns and Haggai Olshanetsky. The researchers suggest that the dating of the NEGEVBYZ project is over-reliant upon Majcherek's Gaza Jars Form 2 and 3. They argue that using Dominique Pieri's Gaza jar typology pushes the dating forward around half a century, meaning that the Byzantine-Persian wars and the Arab-Muslim conquest were the key cause of any significant decline. (2022, Cosijns & Olshanetsky, 9.) The argument is certainly an interesting proposition as to the utility of additional Gaza jar typologies alongside Majcherek's. However, I would contend that the argument is unconvincing as it does not satisfactorily discuss all the dating methods used by the NEGEVBYZ project. The researchers do not address the significance of the coin and glassware finds, nor do they discuss the fact that Bar-Oz et al. and Fuks et al. identify late Byzantine (550-650CE) and early Islamic (650-750CE) separate to middle Byzantine (450-550CE). If the dating of the middle Byzantine period ceramics were incorrect, we would expect to find this accompanied by the late Byzantine and early Islamic material. Instead, these materials were excavated at separate loci. Furthermore, the chronology established by Bar-Oz et al. emphasises the carbon dating of samples as the best possible terminus ante quem for the trash middens. Out of a total of eight calibrated dates with probability distributions of $\pm 2\sigma$ can be dated after the mid-sixth century. (2019, Bar-Oz et al., 8243.)

The data discussed below implements the chronology established by Bar-Oz et al. and Fuks et al. to inform its interpretation of the archaeological evidence. The periodisation implemented is informed by the dating methods of these papers; early Byzantine (300-450CE), middle Byzantine (450-550CE), middle – late Byzantine (ca. 550CE), late Byzantine (550-650CE), early Islamic (640 – 750CE). This dating will be used to trace the rise and fall of viticulture in the Negev and explore the reasons for its decline in the mid-sixth century.

Viticulture in the Negev

P.Ness III 31

[I to Sergius]

2. The middle parcel of the vineyard, the boundaries being

> E and W rock wall
> N property of Victor, brother, and co-sharer
> S property of Khalaf Allah, brother and co-sharer

3. The middle two contiguous parcels of farmland, from the parcels above the vineyard there, the boundaries being

> E rock wall
> W water channel of Khalaf Allah, said brother N property of Khalaf Allah, said brother
> S property of Victor, brother, and co-sharer

P.Ness III 31, Trans Kraemer (2015)

This is an excerpt of a papyrus taken from the Nessana archive, of which, in its entirety, it is the largest of the collection. Dated to the sixth century, it details the property of one Eulios that is being split between his three sons: Sergios, Victor and Khalaf Allah, as shared inheritance. The full document details a vast list of properties, one of which contains ninety-six beds (possibly a caravanserai for traders entering Nessana). (2015, Kraemer, 95.) These are likely the dealings of a wealthy family who are economically significant within the local area. Each brother received one third of the total vineyard plot, however, control of the water channel falls to Khalaf Allah who also has ownership of the plot that is to receive water first. This would have afforded Khalaf Allah a highly advantageous position, having direct control of the water not only entering his own plot, but also consequently feeding his brothers'. The vineyard plots are housed either side by a rock wall, allowing for more directed percolation of moisture directly into the vineyard soil. Unfortunately, the text does not detail the size or extent of the plots and as such it is difficult to interpret the economic significance of their inheritance. It is also not possible to accurately evaluate the productive potential of the plots as we have little detail on their condition. We may infer that, as the other pieces of property in the document demonstrate the capacity to produce significant income, the inclusion of the vineyard plots suggests some economic significance. However, this type of conclusion drawn from the textual evidence alone is vulnerable to misinterpretation. Instead, it is helpful to integrate additional bodies of available evidence.

A key indicator of a possible viticultural economy is the study of the palaeobotanical assemblage. Fuks et al. documented the relative frequency of grape pips among the total assemblage of eleven middens located at Elusa, Shivta and Nessana. The palaeobotanical evidence was analysed using the ratio of grape pip to cereal grain frequency, allowing for the management of behavioural and taphonomic biases. A greater frequency of grape pips relative to cereal grains thus indicates the use of grapes as a major cash crop in the region. The results of the study (Table 1) demonstrate an increase of 29% in Elusa between the early to middle Byzantine phases in the presence of grape pips comprising the total assemblage. Similarly, Shivta reached a peak at 42% in the middle Byzantine period. Overall, the researchers propose the presence of an active local viticultural economy that reached high levels of commercial production in the middle to late Byzantine period (450-550CE). (2020, Fuks et al., 19786) Interestingly, there is a less significant decline in the Nessana assemblage, suggesting a degree of regional variability within this trend. Further research is needed to explain this discrepancy as there is not sufficient space within the parameters of this paper to explore this issue.

Chronological order	Period	Period CE	Site	Grape/(grape + cereal), %
1	Roman	0–300	Shivta	0.5
2	Early Byzantine	300–450	Elusa	14
3	Mid-Byzantine	450–550	Elusa	25
3	Mid-Byzantine	450–550	Elusa	43
3	Mid-Byzantine	450–550	Shivta	42
4	Mid- to Late Byzantine	Ca. 550	Shivta	18
4	Mid- to Late Byzantine	450–600	Nessana	4
5	Late Byzantine	550–650	Shivta	14
6	Late Byzantine to Umayyad	550–700	Nessana	36
6	Late Byzantine to Umayyad	550–700	Shivta	1
6	Late Byzantine to Umayyad	550–700	Shivta	1
7	Umayyad	650–750	Nessana	28
7	Umayyad	650–750	Shivta	19
7	Umayyad	650–750	Shivta	15
7	Umayyad	650–750	Shivta	4

Table 1 Palaeobotanical evidence (2020, Fuks et al., 19786.)

No more than 100km from the Negev Highlands, the port of Gaza was a large distributer of high-quality wines. In a poem celebrating the accession of Justin II on 14th November 565, Flavius Cresconius Corippus attests to the fame of the Gaza wine:

> Meanwhile the happy emperor with his holy wife had begun to partake of the blessed joys of the imperial table, the royal banquet and the sweet gifts of Bacchus, which wild Sarepta and Gaza had created ... The ancient gifts of the Palestinian Lyaeus were mingled in, white with the colour of snow and light with bland taste. They poured dusky chrysattic wines into the yellow metal, produced by nature without need of liquid honey, and blended in the gift of Garisaean Bacchus.
> Corippus, In Laudem Iustini Augusti Minoris; trans. Cameron (1976) 104.

These wines were transported in an amphora typology identified as the "Gaza jar" (Figure 4). This typology has been uncovered at numerous sites across the Late Antique Mediterranean (Figure 2), including modern Libya, Egypt, Sinai, Jordan, Cyprus, Turkey, Greece, Italy, France, Sardinia, and Spain. (2015, Kingsley, 53) The finds of these amphorae are rare in pre-fifth century Mediterranean contexts but rise significantly in the middle-late fifth century, reaching a peak in the early sixth century, before declining again by the early seventh century. (2004, Kingsley, 99; 2013, Decker, 110.) Holistic studies of the relationship between the Negev highlands and Gaza establish the Negev as a primary supplier for this wine. This is largely supported by high concentrations of Gaza jar finds in the Byzantine Negev assemblage. (2020, Lantos, 62.) The shape of the Gaza jar was particularly suited to long-distance trade. Its long body meant that it could carry high volumes of liquid, which could then be transported in large quantities. The mosaic of Kissufim (Figure 3) in the north-western Negev demonstrates the use of this jar typology in the overland transport of goods. (2020, Fuks et al, 19783.) The trader, here named Ορβικον, is holding a bunch of grapes in one hand while he leads a camel in the other. The camel is laden with jars, all of which are depicted in the style of Gaza amphorae. Thus, the evidence indicates the Gaza jar as a suitable indicator of an extensive wine trade.

In a study of the archaeological finds documenting the transition from Byzantine to early Islamic society at the site of Shivta, researchers Tepper et al. discovered an interesting relationship between the amphorae assemblage and social-economic shift. The report details the finds of two Gaza jars dating to the Byzantine period (4th to mid 7h Centuries). These were discovered alongside bag-shaped jars (also in the Byzantine context) less suitable for long-distance trade but still effective storage units (Figure 4). The report also records multiple finds of these bag-shaped jars in early Islamic (mid-7th to mid-8th centuries) middens, but no discoveries of the Gaza amphorae that can be dated past the mid-seventh century. (2018, Tepper et al., 132.) Thus, using the Gaza jar amphorae as an indicator of viticultural production on a commercial, international scale we can trace the growth of an industry that probably peaked in the late fifth to early sixth century. It is possible that the growing of vines continued into the mid-seventh and early eighth century, however it is unlikely that it remained at the levels of commercial output seen in the preceding centuries.

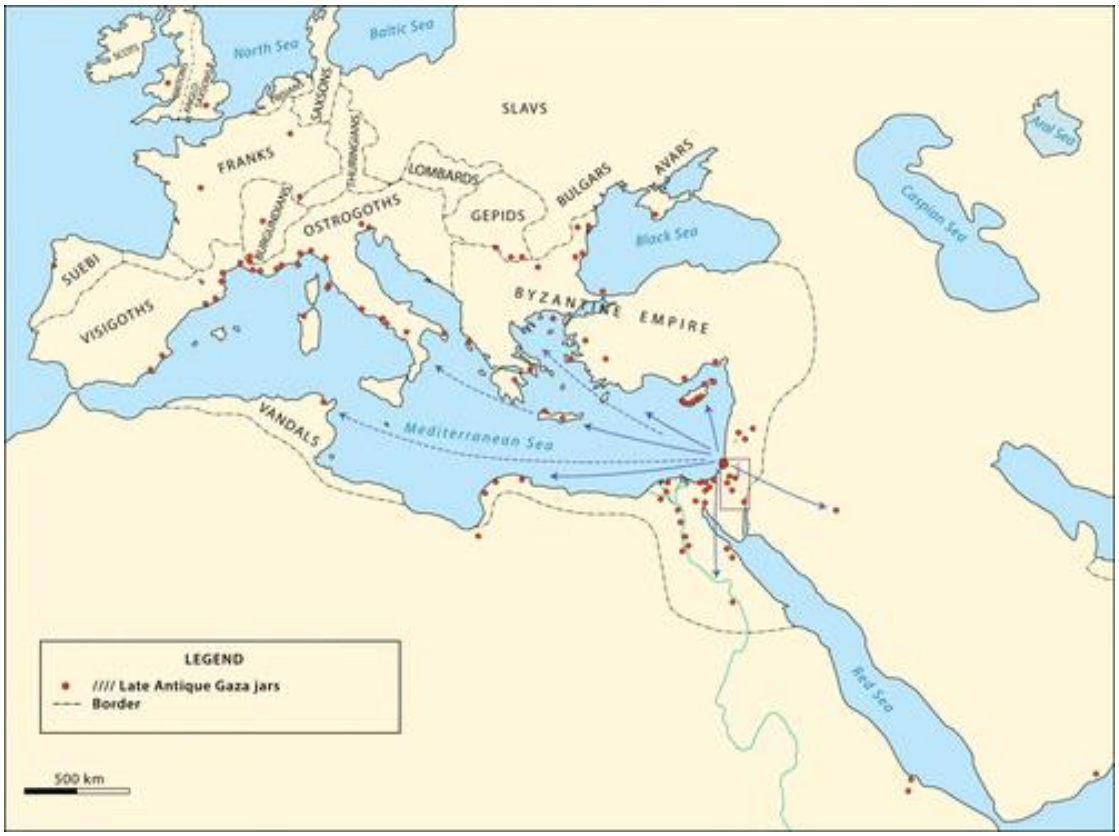

Figure 2 Distribution of Gaza Amphorae in Late Antiquity (2020, Lantos, 61.)

Figure 3 Part of a mosaic floor from a church depicting a man leading a camel laden with amphorae (wine jars), from Kissufim, 6th century AD, Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

It is important to note that the existence of industrial-scale viticultural production in the Late Antique Negev has been recently challenged by suggestions that the production capacities would permit only local levels of production. A paper published in 2020 by Jon Seligman presents a detailed analysis of the archaeologically excavated Byzantine wine press installations. Based on estimates of population sizes and the production capacity of the installations, Seligman contends that the presses were not sufficient to produce adequate surplus to act as suppliers of the Gaza wine trade. (2020, Seligman, 270.) The paper inspired a response from researchers Fuks, Avni and Bar-Oz on the debate surrounding the relationship between the Negev and the Gaza wine trade. (2021, Fuks, Avni & Bar-Oz, 151.) The researchers point to the problem of inferring surplus production and the issue of uncertainty brought about by the necessary initial assumptions applied to such calculations. Furthermore, they point to multiple lines of evidence that are not considered in Seligman's article. Chiefly these are the archaeobotanical evidence of

grape pips relative to grape seeds and the decline in use of dovecotes that were likely used as fertiliser in a system of intensive viticulture. (2020, Tepper, 104134;2020, Fuks et al., 19786) Furthermore, an article published by Lantos et al. summarises the textual, archaeological and archaeobotanical evidence for wine production in the Negev. The holistic study argues that the Late Antique Negev was one of the main production sites for the Gaza wine. (2020, Lantos et al., 62.) Thus, the debate would suggest that a broadening of the source-base consistently indicates the Negev as an industrial-scale producer of Gaza wines in the fifth and early sixth century.

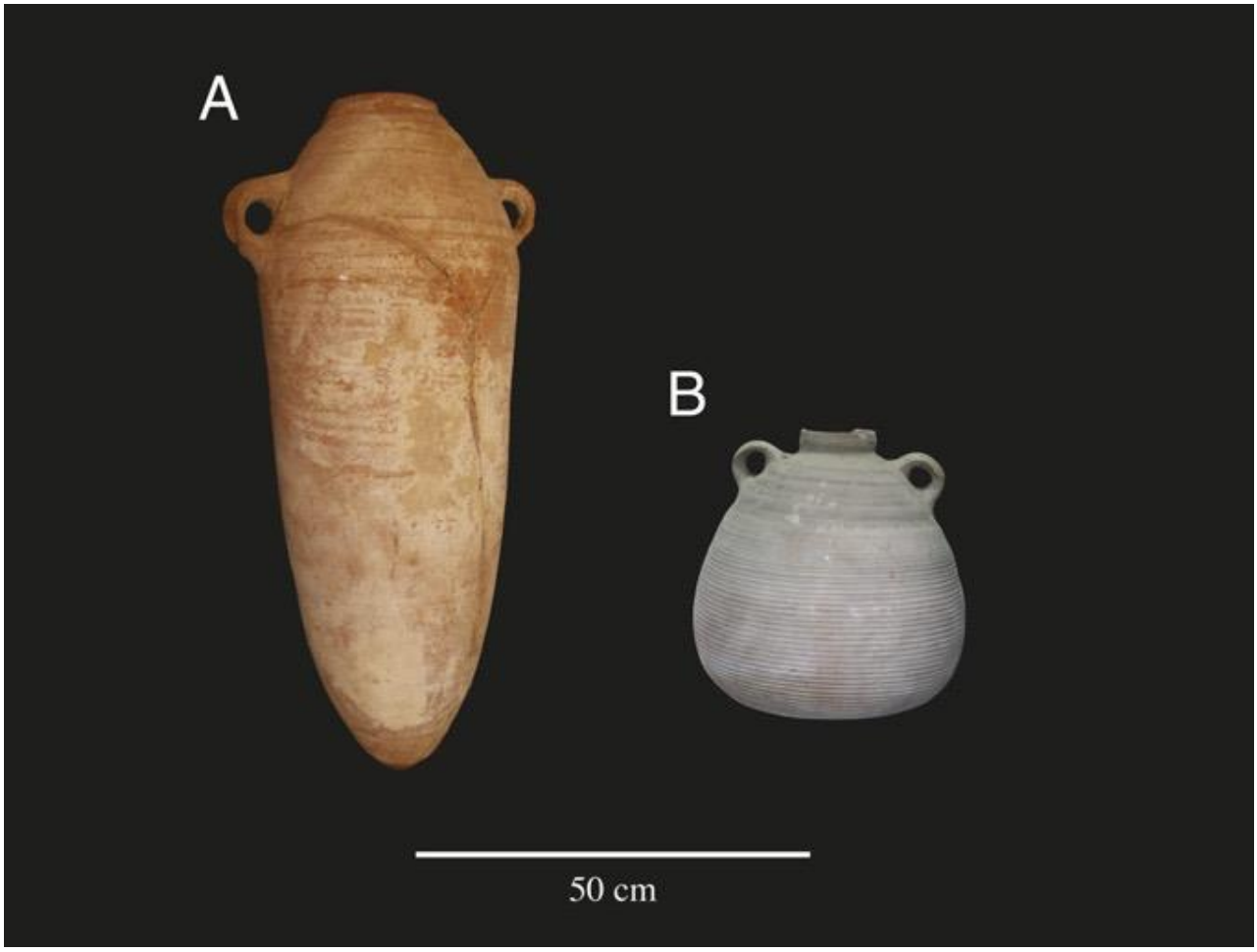

Figure 4 Gaza jar (A) and bag-shaped jar (B). Collection of the Israel Antiquities Authority. (A) Image credit: Davida isenberg-Degen (Israel Antiquities Authority, Omer, Israel). (B) Image credit: Itamar Taxel (Israel Antiquities Authority, Jerusalem, Israel) and Oren Tal (Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel).

It seems that this profitable wine trade was not to sustain viticulture in the Negev highlands. A decline in grape-pip frequencies relative to cereal grains in the late sixth century indicate the diminishing significance of viticulture as an economic agent. This is further supported by the reduction in Gaza jar frequency relative to bag shaped jars in the Negev region, signalling a move away from commercial engagement with wider markets to more local levels of production. (2020, Fuks et al., 19786) Moreover, OSL dating of undisturbed trash deposits at the sites of Shivta, Elusa and Nessana show increased discarding of fresh animal dung, indicating a reduction of its use as fertiliser on agricultural plots in the late sixth century. (2020, Butler at al., 8-10) Consequently we can deduce that ensuring the soil remained fertile was no longer as much of a priority, suggesting viticultural production was no longer an important economic vehicle past the mid-sixth century.

The decline of viticulture came well before the Arab-Muslim conquests and its chain of causality has thus been reconsidered within scholarship. Research generally argues that it was likely the combined effort of a series of factors; plague, climate, conflict, global demand, that instigated the fall of viticultural production (2018, Tepper et al., 148; 2020, Fuks et al., 19788; 2019, Bar-Oz et al. 8245.) The scholarly analysis of these factors, while clearly significant, has potential for greater nuance. Indeed, these agents of major socio-political and ecological shift leave little room for the agency of local communities of the Negev itself. In the current narrative the farmers of Elusa, Nessana and Shivta were helpless in the face of historical actors more instrumental than themselves. What I hope to do here is not to negate the impact of other agents, but to position another underappreciated one within their company. The next section will build upon the work of Langgut et al. by studying the role of local anthropogenic manipulation of the environment in limiting the long-term sustainability of desert agriculture in the Negev. (2021, Langgut et al., 175.)

Ecocide

> There will be a day when you will see Elusa again and you will weep at the sand being shifted by the wind stripping the vines naked to their roots.
> Proc. Gaz. Epist. 81; trans. Westberg 2019

The author from whom we take the quote above is Procopius of Gaza, a sophist active between 465 and 526. Writing out of the port of Gaza, Procopius would have likely been aware of an active viticulture economy of the Negev Highlands and, thus, the emotive weight of these words to anyone native to the region. The most striking part of this text is its dramatic implementation of the process of desertification. Written in the early 6th century, a fear of agricultural unsustainability was perhaps at least present in the consciousness of local populations. To what extent was this potential unsustainability a product of human actions? To approach this question, I will employ the concept of ecocide. I define ecocide as the anthropogenic destruction of environments for socio-economic gain that is long-lasting in nature. Approaching the evidence within this framework suggests that the draining of ecological resources through advanced and intensive irrigation was a possible factor that limited the longevity of the viticulture in the Negev Highlands.

The geomorphology of the Negev was key to its function as a site of desert agriculture. The accumulation of fine loess sediments during the Middle-Late Pleistocene glacial phases resulted in arable soil that was to be the basis of later ancient farming. A shift to erosive conditions gradually revealed a hard bedrock surface that intensified hydrological run-off and contributed to positive feedback whereby run-off fed erosion, which in turn intensified run-off. This resulted in a unique window of opportunity in the ancient world whereby the co-existence of available run-off and arable soil enabled the establishment of desert agriculture. (2019, Avni et al., 136.) Local communities were efficient in utilising this opportunity, constructing sophisticated systems of irrigation. In depth study of the structures preserved by the arid climate of the Negev have allowed for the identification of 10 different types of water-management systems. (2012, Ashkenazi et al., 63) Most implemented were stone terraces, retaining walls, water conduits,

cisterns and stone mounds positioned strategically on or near natural slopes. (2013, Avni et al., 335; 2012, Haiman, 45) The irrigation techniques were not fixed but were applied based on what would work best where. It was the goal of local populations to extract as much production as possible out of the surrounding landscape, leading to the development of a highly intensive system of irrigation farming.

It is helpful to employ Avni's "Desert Agriculture Window of Opportunities" here. (2019, Avni et al., 136.) This is because it is important to stress that this was a unique situation and required careful maintenance to be effectively exploited. The intensity of the run-off landscape established a precarious situation. On the one hand it meant that water could be effectively collected and stored for continuous use throughout the dry months. On the other it threatened to produce flash floods that could wreak severe damage to agricultural plots. The need to trap large quantities of water during high rainfall necessitated the construction of tall terraces and stone dams, particularly for the cultivation of perennial crops and trees (such as grape and olive orchards). Optically stimulated luminescence dating of sediments has revealed that this method of water management was prone to rapid siltation and resulted in the accumulation of sediment estimated at 4.5–8 mm per year. (2019, Avni et al., 134.) Thus, the biproduct of this system was the collection of fluvial deposits at the base of constructed walls and channels. This siltation effectively lowered the height of the walls relative to the new ground level, requiring ancient farmers to build increasingly tall and precarious structures. This is evidenced at the site of Nahal Lavan, located 3km south of ancient Shivta where several large agriculture farms, based on runoff-harvesting techniques, were in use. (2012, Avni et al., 24.) If farmers did not keep on top of these rising ground levels flash floods could breach the walls and effectively negate the fertility of the plot through highly destructive soil erosion. (2019, Avni et al., 132.)

There is a counter to the argument being made here that would highlight the opportunity afforded by the build-up of loess sediments behind constructed walls. These fluvial sediments would have added to the fertility of the soil in the plots. It is therefore plausible that farmers would have retrieved the collected fluvial deposits and spread them across agricultural fields. This

would have the impact of simultaneously retaining the height of the wall and maintaining agriculture production. Additionally, if the water did breach the wall and flood the plot (thus eroding the soil) farmers would have access to arable loess with which to replace the fertile soil lost. Indeed, I would agree that this is likely the reasoning behind the impressive growth of viticultural production in the Southern Levant, and perhaps a possible explanation for regional variation (Table 1). However, I would contend that this mode of agriculture was not sustainable in the long-term.

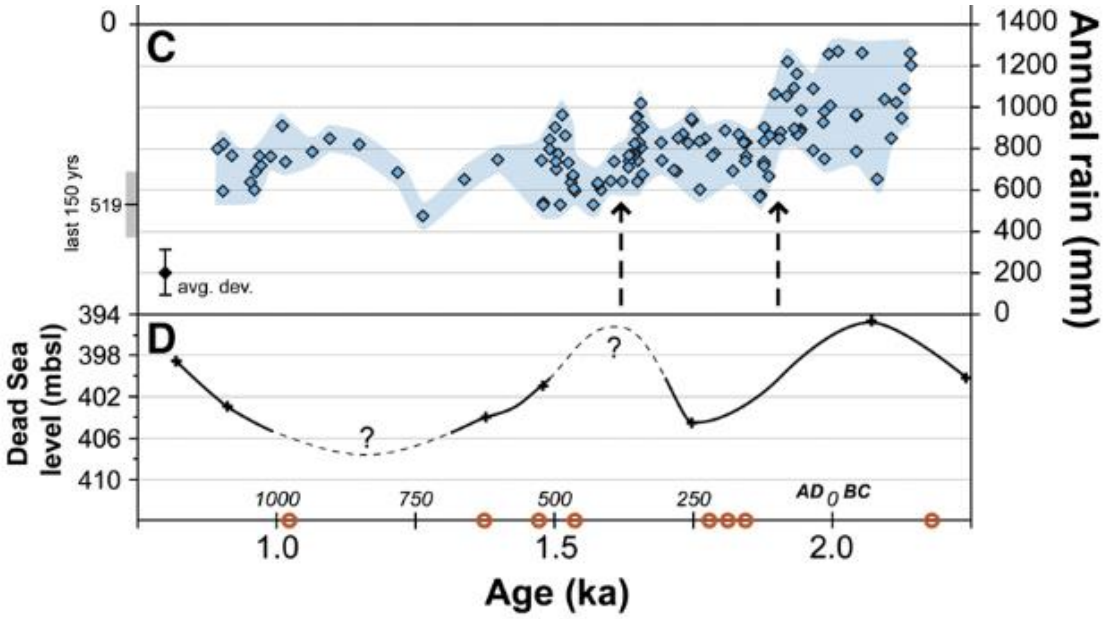

Table 2 Annual precipitation inferred from Soreq Cave speleothem records (2009, Orland et al., 32.)

Analysis of oxygen isotope ratios by ion microprobe retrieved from Soreq cave provide a sub-annual climate record for the Eastern Mediterranean centred on the western flank of the Judean Hills in central Israel. The records indicate a peak in precipitation levels around the late 3rd century and the early 6th century (Table 2). The period running from the early fourth century to the late fifth century demonstrates a more consistent precipitation programme that closer reflects the average over the last 1500 years. (2009, Orland et al., 32.) This would suggest that the growth phase of viticultural production in the Negev coincided with a period of more consistent

and manageable precipitation and began to decline alongside increased precipitation levels. This is however contradicted by research into Dead Sea Lake levels for the same period. This research studied the radiocarbon dating of fluvial sediment cores with an annual resolution. The data suggests a low stand in lake levels for our period, indicating a drop in annual precipitation from the fifth to the ninth centuries. (2004, Bookman et al., 570.) The discrepancy in these two sets of results clearly demonstrate the challenge of implementing paleoclimate data and the need for a regional, or even micro-regional, focus. The indirect nature of evidence that is available only in the form of proxies entails the complication of biases originating principally from resolution availability. (2021, Erdkamp, 5.) This does not however mean we should exclude considerations of climate fluctuations from investigations into past ecologies. Instead by integrating archaeological evidence I aim to demonstrate the plausibility of human-aided destruction of the environment.

The paleoclimatic data that is closest geographically to the Negev Highlands is a study carried out by Vaiglova et al. using stable isotopic proxies obtained from sheep and goat remains at the sites of Nessana, Shivta and Elusa. The data is unable to provide the resolution to track precipitation levels in the region but can suggest a consistency of vegetative cover through the sixth and seventh Centuries. The researchers conclude that: 'the Northern Negev Desert did not experience an abrupt downturn that would have affected the dietary behaviour of animals that spent the entire year in the desert'. (2020, Vaiglova et al., 10.) The natural conclusion could be one of no severe ecological disruption during the sixth century. Furthermore, if the period from fifth to the ninth centuries was unusually dry we might expect a change in nomad pastoralism to be reflected in movement towards regions of greater moisture availability. This is however not reflected in the study of ovicaprine isotopes or in the investigation of ancient middens, where fresh dung continued to make up a large amount of the overall assemblage. (2020, Vaiglova et al., 10; 2020, Fuks et al., 19786) Thus it seems unlikely that an unusually dry phase occurred during the Late/Byzantine Early Islamic period.

Is it therefore possible to account for an ecological influence on viticultural decline in the 6th century? This is where human agency becomes crucial as a factor to consider. As discussed earlier, the communities of the Negev were highly advanced in their collection and direction of water resources. This would mean that an increase in precipitation large enough to cause agricultural damage need not have also been reflected in the surrounding environment, that was itself not influenced by anthropogenic manipulation. This would account for the lack of changing patterns within nomad pastoralism that continued to rely on the surrounding Negev hinterland if precipitation did indeed increase. Alternatively, if precipitation remained consistent in the fifth and sixth centuries the repeated collection of fluvial deposits at the walls of could have conceivably continued to build to an unsustainable level. In either case, an argument can be made for the irrigation systems becoming more precarious and thus increasingly prone to flooding or destruction. This would explain the continuous maintenance projects we see at sites such Nahal Lavan. (2012, Avni et al., 24.) Therefore, even without an unusually wet phase at the beginning of the 6th century it is likely that these structures would have required progressively greater labour attention to maintain. Without the ability to maintain these structures the plots they fed would have been subject to high destructive soil erosion on an annual basis, making agricultural production unfeasible.

This argument has built into it a degree of flexibility. Here I will again stress the importance of human action, or inaction. Within this framework agricultural plots were made vulnerable through human manipulation of the environment; however, they would have also only been abandoned if not properly maintained. Whether this was a conscious decision, or the result of external factors remains up for debate. The main argument is the role of human responsibility. It is also key to note that this argument is based primarily on Avni et al.'s study of "Type B" agricultural systems. This is one of two major types of desert agricultural technologies that employed intensive irrigation. This system was used mainly for cultivating perennial crops and therefore would apply principally to the production of wine and olives. This may therefore have applied differently to "Type A" systems that were better designed for the cultivation of cereals.

(2019, Avni et al., 132.) This would account for evidence of continued occupation at sites, such as Nessana, despite the apparent fall in viticultural production. Foregrounding the importance of human action could also account for regional variations, as certain localities may have invested differing levels of manpower in maintaining their agricultural structures.

By introducing conceptions of ecocide, we can nuance our understanding of the limitations of sustained desert agriculture. It is plausible that the gradual degradation of the environment was caused by intensive irrigation that eventually limited the possibility of a sustainable agricultural economy in the long-term. A period of high precipitation would have caused widescale destruction of agricultural technologies and either buried or removed important deposits of fertile loess sediments, however this is equally possible if levels of precipitation also remained the same. The argument made here intends to demonstrate the possibility for new directions rather than supplant existing narratives. I am not aiming to disprove the role of other socio-economic or political factors; instead, the goal is to demonstrate the plausibility of inferring greater levels of local human agency than has thus far been appreciated. The hope is that the conclusions drawn here indicate the need for further research that better integrate local agents into ecological narratives of the past. One area in which this may be particularly beneficial is in the reconstruction of regional variability.

Evidence of Adaptation

If we are to get closer to historical accuracy, then I believe we must continue to foreground notions of local human agency. This next section will turn to an investigation of conscious human adaptation following the decline of viticulture in the Negev. To do so we will apply archaeological and papyrological evidence to the model of Formal Resilience.

Formal Resilience Theory was first introduced to the study of the Late Antique Eastern Mediterranean by John Haldon and Arlene Rosen, and has been emphasised in its value by Louise Blanke, Alan Walmsley, and Tamara Lewit. (2018, Haldon & Rosen, 277; 2022, Blanke & Walmsley, 100; 2020, Lewit, 75.) This model is highly applicable to our current study and will

help to unpack notions of adaptive change. The theory is a cyclical model within which a social-ecological system moves through a series of stages before repeating the cycle again. The first phase is the growth phase (or r-phase) whereby innovation allows for impressive development. This is followed by a stability phase (or K-phase) within which the previous growth has allowed for the solid establishment of a system or set of rules that are increasingly inflexible in their ability to respond to change. This leads to a release phase, or Ω-phase. This next phase is one of catastrophic shift whereby the inflexibility of the system leads to eventual collapse. The natural response of the cycle is a reorganizational phase, or α-Phase. This is the final stage whereby the collapse of previous infrastructure allows for a highly resilient and flexible restructuring of the system that builds a new equilibrium, different from the previous one. In the evidence presented thus far we have indications of a growth and stability phase, in the form of commercial viticultural production. We can also see the existence of a release phase, whereby the necessity for intensive irrigation resulted in a level of inflexibility that resulted in a decline of the viticultural economy. What I intend to investigate now is the possibility of a reorganizational α-Phase in the form of conscious economic adaption.

Before investigating the existence of a reorganisation of the socio-ecological system in the Late Antique/Early Islamic Negev it is important to explore how and why this would have been possible. The collapse of the key economic driver of the region (viticulture) would have had a large impact on prosperity in the region and perhaps limited options for survival in a desert environment. This is where modes of mixed farming may have come into play. Zooarchaeological investigations have indicated an active sheep/goat livestock economy that ran parallel to viticultural production. At the site of Shivta ovicaprine remains (those of sheep and goat) constitute 80% of the total assemblage, while at the site of Elusa these remains comprise 88%. (2020, Butler et al., 15) Further detailed analysis of the faunal remains reveals a shift towards a goat dominated pastoral economy (away from a preference for sheep) through the 5th and 6th centuries. While sheep pastoralism requires access to good quality pastureland, water and markets for surpluses, the favouring of the more durable goat indicates the application of a

more resilient survival strategy in the face of increased desertification. (2019, Marom et al., 7) Thus while incomes may have been damaged by the dwindling of the wine trade, this may have been somewhat mitigated by effective management of a mixed farming economy. It is unlikely this could have replaced viticultural production at the commercial levels of its 5th/6th century peak; however, it may have cushioned the impact of diminishing levels of income. This could have conceivably provided local communities with an opportunistic window within which to enact effective adaptation to the new ecological regime.

Conducting original research into the archaeological, material, and textual evidence of the Early Islamic period, Fanny Bessard demonstrates the presence of an understudied development in labour economies. The consolidation of the early Caliphate and the corresponding improvement of pilgrim routes opened networks of trade across the Levant and further east. The accessibility of these new markets consequently prompted a growth in nucleated workshops specialising in artisanal crafts in Levantine urban centres. (2015, Bessard, 377.) Of particular interest to this study is the possible development of a textile economy in the Negev.

The archaeological findings of the excavations at Nessana reveal the interestingly native nature of the textiles uncovered. Dominated by discoveries of linen, one might expect these fabrics to be Egyptian imports. This is contradicted by the considerable discoveries of wool and silk. (1962, Bellinger, 92) Further analysis of the specific techniques employed in the production of two woollen textiles exhibit the cultural transmission inherent in these wares. The textiles recorded as T.M.12.28 and T.M.12.29 are made predominantly of wool and both employ the use of the sehna knot. While this technique is found commonly in Persia, India, and the Far East, the unique application of these knots being tied to the warps of one cloth (instead of two adjacent warps) indicates regional adaptation. This specific process has been identified only in a handful of other fabrics originating from Mesopotamia. (1962, Bellinger, 92) Researchers Alisa Baginsky and Orit Shamir document 73 textile fragments recovered from excavations at Nahal 'Omer in the Southern Negev (1981-1991). Using Carbon-14 dating the researchers define the textiles as "Early Islamic" (650CE – 810CE). (1995, Baginski & Shamir, 21.) The textile

assemblage displays an impressive variety of materials, techniques, and decorations, supporting the suggestion that Nahal 'Omer was an important node on the Early Islamic trade route linking Central Asia to the Mediterranean. The high quality of the textiles further supports the argument that the site benefited economically as an important resting point for caravans. (1995, Baginski & Shamir, 36) Significantly, the cotton ikat textiles are the earliest physical evidence of this technique and are likely of Indian or Yemeni origin. (1995, Baginski & Shamir, 31) Among the wider assemblage was a "cut-to-shape" tunic (IAA No. 2003-9109). This is the earliest example of this production technique in Israel, signifying a departure from the 'woven-to-shape' tunics of the Late Roman/Byzantine period. The 'cut-to-shape' tunic becomes more frequent in later periods; 25 are documented for the 8th-9th centuries at Qasr el-Yahud, situated along the Jordan River, and in a ninth-thirteenth century context at Jebel Quruntul. (2017, Shamir & Baginski) The evidence suggests that while researchers can identify signifiers of "decline" we should equally not ignore indicators of adaptation. In the case of the Negev, investigating textiles may offer an interesting proxy for the study of economic restructuring not only in response to socio-economic/ecological shock, but also to increasing accessibility to new trade routes and markets.

P.Ness III 89

Late 6th century – early 7th century

	Sol.
... for the month of Apellaeus there was assigned to our partnership (Sergius, Abraham and myself Zunayn)	16
given as the price of a she-ass (it died) for the trip to Nessana	5/13
we recovered as the price of the camel which the Arabs, the bani al-Udayyid took	4
...	10

we spent when we went to Emazen to the wife of the guardsman	I
... everything in every way	10
	sol.
received as the price of a mare	3
the price of a foal	I
the price of ...	I
my share	I
as the price of wool and oil	2
total	18
... which we gave you and Martyrius, as expenses of God, for the price of a linen curtain	2
... given to the Arab 'Adī, the money we borrowed for the price of wool	I 1/6
... of Stephan and John	5
we have recovered from him ... modii of barley	
given as the price of a camel	6
also as the price of a large camel	6
also purchased for you – wine	I
...	?
For the 10 measures of ... which Theodore received from him	7

The translated papyrus included above (P.Ness.89.) can be dated to sometime between the late sixth and early seventh century. This document records the business transactions of a trading caravan operating in and around the Negev Highlands. The style of the writing indicates that the author (Zunayn) is an agent of a superior, or a partner, on behalf of whom the transactions were made. The text regularly refers to actions done on behalf of someone i.e., "for you", and is

particularly careful to detail the gain or unfortunate loss of any capital – this includes the loss of a stolen camel and the death of a donkey. The later entries in the document describe a trip taken to Nessana, perhaps also providing another reason for the discovery of the text at the site. (2015, Kraemer, 258) The document seemingly ends with Zunayn closing various business operations, such as the returning of loans; "given to the Arab 'Adī, the money we borrowed for the price of wool". It would seem from the accounts that the aforenamed 'Adī, on account of greater liquidity, loaned Zunayn the money to purchase wool on their travels, which is recorded in the same document as being sold upon return. It would make sense for there to be a greater market for products in Nessana, as both the textual evidence and the palaeobotanical evidence indicate this settlement to be one of greater economic continuity, when compared to sites such as Elusa and Shivta. Thus, it was perhaps the aim of the trading caravan to obtain products from elsewhere and transport them to Nessana where they could sell them for a profit, thanks to a more vibrant local economy. Furthermore, as demonstrated earlier, archaeological evidence indicates a shift towards a goat-dominated form of pastoralism in the region, explaining why wool would not be as easily accessible to local populations, and therefore could potentially fetch a handsome profit. This reading of the text does not prove the growth of a thriving textile industry, but an income could perhaps be earnt through the obtaining and sale of wool, perhaps for the manufacturing of fabrics.

The evidence presented here indicates that there is an argument to be made for conscious adaption by local populations. One way in which this may be evidenced is in the investment by local agents into a textile-based industry. The goal here is not to assess the scale of a possible textile economy, but to indicate the evidence for a possible conscious response to viticultural decline by local actors. To assess the full scale of plausible human-adaptation following the decline of viticulture in the Negev requires further holistic study. Unfortunately, there is not the space within the parameters of this current paper to do so.

Conclusion

The goal of this study has been to demonstrate the importance of integrating local actors into wider ecological narratives of the past. Recent scholarship has convincingly demonstrated the likelihood of a decline in viticultural production in the Negev that significantly pre-dates the Arab-Muslim conquests of the 7th century. This has led to a consideration of a wider nexus of factors incorporating a greater appreciation of ecological agency within historical narratives. For the Negev, viticultural decline has been explored as chiefly related to plague, climate change and a diminishing market. While the introduction of ecological agents as causal factors in this narrative of decline has proved significant, scholarship must continue to scrutinise how these historical components relate to anthropogenic intervention. In the case of the Negev there is an argument to be made for the development of intensive irrigation systems contributing to the long-term infeasibility of desert agriculture. This intensive irrigation likely placed higher demands upon the continual maintenance of this agricultural system. It is therefore possible that a conscious decision was made by local populations to abandon this form of farming as it became less sustainable and too costly to maintain. If this was the case, we would expect local farmers to have transitioned to new forms of economic production. This narrative has received minimal scholarly attention, however integrating material culture with the papyrological corpus may suggest, for example, the growth of a textile industry in the late-6th/early-7th century. Further study is needed in this area to effectively answer questions of economic readaptation. In such studies it is important to continue to foreground the significance of local populations as central historical agents within the wider context of local ecological systems and the socio-political environment.

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Longing for Maecenas: Horace and the Nostalgia of Martial[1]

by Joe Broderick

Abstract

This paper examines the works of the Latin poets Horace (65–8 BC) and Martial (c. 40–103 AD), specifically how we can read the patronage system and the figure of Horace's grand patron Maecenas in Martial's Epigrams through Horace. It is an issue which requires nuanced handling, chiefly due to the satirical nature of some of the material, rendering a literal interpretation of either Martial or Horace very problematic. That point has led many scholars to dismiss any semblance of social reality to what they present to us, preferring instead to ascribe the results as varying forms of literary games, particularly regarding the epigrams of Martial. This paper seeks to challenge those dismissals, contending that it is possible to glean some real sentiments from Martial regarding his experience of the Roman patronage system. It argues that throughout his epigrams we can see the poet as a deeply dissatisfied client, yearning for a patron who possessed the qualities of Maecenas. It also argues that Martial genuinely feels that the patronage system of his day was very much inferior to that which Horace enjoyed, showing a nostalgia for the patrons of the past who supported their literary clients and gave them the *otium* to compose great works in peace. The relationship between Horace and Maecenas as presented through the works of Horace will be explored, giving us the foundation for a more contextualised understanding when we investigate the epigrams of Martial's experience of the patronage system, absent Maecenas.

Keywords
Martial, Horace, Maecenas, decline, nostalgia, patronage.

[1] Unless otherwise noted, all texts and translations are cited from the Loeb Classical Library (with the exception of Martial's Epigrams, which is cited from Gideon Nisbet's translation).

Introduction: Yearning for 'the good old days'?

Scholarship on Martial falls into two camps: literalist and revisionist. Some scholars interpret the writing of Martial from a literalist standpoint, with Martial witnessing and reporting everyday occurrences in Rome from his viewpoint of an impoverished writer and put-upon client to the wealthy and influential patrons of society.[2] According to the literalists, this material provides us with useful insights into Roman social history from the Flavian period.[3] However, more recently, others have adopted a revisionist approach towards Martial, contending that most, if not all, of his writing is a subtle literary game produced in the fictive, exaggerated world of epigram. This idea of literary artifice has gained considerable traction, especially considering the traditions of the genre in which Martial wrote, the many contradictions from poem to poem, and his use of stock characters from Roman comedy. Some from the revisionist school have even gone so far as to contend that, because of these issues, Martial cannot be considered a reliable or usable source for historical study and can only be studied for limited literary purposes.[4]

This article deals specifically with the epigrammatist's experience of the patronage system of his day, which Martial usually cast in a negative context, reminiscing with his reader on the superiority of the former system, patrons supporting their clients more effectively. This apparent decline of certain standards, particularly pertaining to the deeds and morality of the Roman people, with a related nostalgia for more virtuous times, has a long history in Latin literature. It became such a standard literary trope that it can be an obstacle to accepting the validity of writers' claims concerning the apparent deterioration.[5] However, this article argues that Martial saw this decline, especially in terms of patronage, as very real, using the decline and nostalgia tropes to highlight his own misfortune in his existence as a poet in harsher times. This claim is supported by Pliny the Younger (c. 61-103 AD) and Juvenal (c. 55-107 AD), who echoed Martial's complaint of insufficient support from patrons. For both Martial and Horace,

[2] See Larash 2008: 233-61, a useful aid concerning recent revisions in the representation of Martial's work.
[3] See Jones 1935: 355-61, and Smith 1918: 1-27 for the clearest examples.
[4] Saller 1983: 246-57.
[5] See Saller 1983: 254-6 for an appropriate discussion of this.

nostalgia has negative connotations when it impinges upon their work and the reception of it by the literary elite of their respective days. Works by authors are honoured and lauded simply because they are older texts. Both Horace and Martial have the capacity to express their nostalgia for times past, specifically when it pertains to how their work may be perceived by their audience. However, there is also an appreciation for their present time, and how the standards of living have improved, couched within the typical literary trope of emperor praise or panegyric. The context is key in both praise and critique of times past and present, as normally there is some form of an agenda behind the comments.

This article also rejects some of the revisionist theories in Martial scholarship, instead suggesting that we can glean some form of social reality from his epigrams: chiefly because of the repetition of his poor treatment at the hands of his patrons and his overall longing for a better benefactor, a Maecenas, whom Martial presents as the ideal figure of early imperial patronage. If the epigrams of Martial were artifice, merely literary games designed to amuse, one might wonder at the constant mention of his treatment, and the recurring wish for a patron like Maecenas to rescue him from his fate. Martial was unlikely to have assailed his audience with allusions to his plight so frequently unless that plight could have been recognised as a plausibility by his audience.

Maecenas (c. 68–8 BC) was patron to such writers as Horace and Virgil, recognised as one who gave his literary clients such support that they were able to dedicate their time to writing in peace and producing significant work, immortalising their patron. The *Georgics* of Virgil and multiple works by Horace are dedicated to their great patron, and later authors such as Martial and Juvenal lament the niggardly support of their patrons in comparison. This substantial, long-lasting relationship between client and patron is especially well borne out in the works of Horace, charting their introductions, through years of interaction, to a solid friendship. As the work of Mendell, Prior and Dyson, and Roman amongst others have shown, Martial was extremely familiar with the material of Horace, with three direct references across the twelve

books of epigrams themselves, along with numerous other allusions and clear influences.[6] Most certainly, Martial would have noticed the patronage enjoyed by Horace, particularly the *otium* oft pined for that he was afforded and the relaxing of certain client duties which Martial complains of incessantly. Unfortunately, however, according to Martial, patrons of the calibre of Maecenas were in short supply in his own days. This is difficult to validate historically, as claims such as this were made often throughout Latin literature, and we are not privy to a comprehensive prosopography of all patrons and their gifts from the Roman world. But Martial sees this as evident because of his struggles. Through his epigrams, the poet frequently complains of the paltry provision offered to him by many different patrons, leading him to desire the significant and ongoing support of a single, wealthy, literary-minded patron. This patron would sustain Martial on a long-term basis, permitting him the *otium* his talent deserved, so that he could compose something grand to confer immortality upon that patron.

The Augustan and Flavian ages: Poets and Books

Rome witnessed early the patronage of plebeians by patricians, and the institution was nevertheless valuable in the later Republic, when elections to magistracies held significance. Under the principate, however, political patronage became to an extent unnecessary and undesirable; the emperor essentially took over social services *(panem et circenses)* for the urban masses.[7] That notwithstanding, some personal patronage in the upper echelons of society endured, even though the power of dependants and friends to help their patrons politically was diminished greatly, which in turn reduced the attractions of the institution for the private patron. For Martial, the grand patrons of former times, especially from the Augustan period on which he comments on frequently, were disappearing.[8]

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[6] Martial, Epigrams, 1.107, 6.64, 7.37, 8.18, 10.68, 12.4, 12.94. Translated by Gideon Nisbet (Oxford, 2015). Dyson and Pryor 1995: 245-63; Roman 2001: 113-45; Mendell 1922: 1-20.

[7] Sullivan 1991: 116.

[8] The most relevant recent survey of Roman patronage in Martial's time is Sailer (1982); for general considerations and imperial patronage, see Mattingly (1976) and Wallace-Hadrill (1989); for its connections with poetry, see

However, the world in which Martial was writing was one relatively receptive to literature. For example, the emperor Domitian (AD 51-96) was known to go to great lengths to restore library collections, with his care in securing authoritative replacement copies suggesting genuine academic concern rather than pure self-advertisement.[9] In several epigrams of his own, Martial addresses the flourishing of libraries in the Flavian period, seeking an appropriate spot for his poems in an acquaintance's imperial collection.[10] The library then clearly functioned as an important locus for authorial glorification; no less importantly, inclusion of one's works in an imperial library meant legitimization inasmuch as it conveyed the emperor's approval.[11] This continuing flourishing of libraries would no doubt have been helped by the revolutionary emergence in the Flavian period of the codex as against the papyrus roll regarding overall textual format. Martial himself provides the earliest surviving reference to the publication of works of literature in parchment codices (1.2). Howell observes the publisher Secundus most likely wished to profit from the widespread popularity of Martial's works by producing an edition in this easily carried and compact form.[12] The booksellers mentioned by Martial most likely had more to do with circulation than profits, for a Roman author earned no royalties and made little from the sale of his book to a bookseller.[13]

It is during the Flavian period that we see the full emergence of literary production as an approved upper-class activity, where members of the senatorial and equestrian orders increasingly devoted their time to writing, and in a range of literary genres. The most prominent writers tended to reside in Rome and often held posts inside the imperial system, or enjoyed the *amicitia* of prominent figures, who in turn enjoyed close relationships with the ruling Flavian House.[14] A noteworthy feature of Flavian literary culture is a pattern of migration from the

White (1978, 1982) and Williams (1978); for its underlying political significance in early Empire, Ste Croix (1954).

[9] Coleman 1986: 3096.

[10] Martial, 5.5, 7.17.

[11] Augoustakis 2016: 380.

[12] Howell 1980: 105.

[13] Fitzgerald 2007: 141.

[14] Augoustakis 2016: 388.

periphery of the empire to its centre. Quintilian, for instance, came from Calagurris in Spain; Martial hailed from Bilbilis, also in Spain; Canius Rufus from Cadiz; Suetonius' family may have traced it origins from Hippo Regius in Africa. The Roman cosmopolis remained the centre of cultural life, and of literary activity in particular. There were notable exceptions, such as the Jewish writer Flavius Josephus, who states at the beginning of his *Bellum Judaicum* that his text was first written in his native tongue (Aramaic) and then translated into Greek; this intriguing declaration points to additional complexities associated with writing and publication for an author from the periphery whose native language was neither Greek nor Latin.[15] Within his work, we witness the existence of a group of Greek-speaking non-Jews in Rome with an interest in an overview of Judean history and culture, offering us a fleeting, but significant, glimpse of non-Roman patronage under the Flavians, and as such hints at the complex range of influences driving literary production in this period.[16]

Maecenas and Horace: *Otium* achieved from a great friend, but certainly not an equal

To better understand Martial's references to Maecenas as the ideal patron he strove for, it is important to examine the background and development of the relationship between Horace and Maecenas. Specifically, the way in which Maecenas was presented in his support of his clients: it was this key element which Martial observed when engaging with the works of Horace. Maecenas was well known as a friend and associate of the emperor Augustus, notable for his wealth, his luxurious lifestyle, and somewhat indolent habits. The latter part of his life is poorly documented compared to earlier portions, mostly due to his declining involvement in imperial politics.[17] The Greek historian Appian, writing in the second century AD, details the activities of Maecenas during the civil wars, in which he was an integral part of Augustus' success,

[15] Augoustakis 2016: 389.
[16] Mason 2003: 564.
[17] Reckford 1959: 195-6.

evidenced by the trust shown in him to keep order at Rome in Augustus' absence.[18] Augustus' return to Rome following his triumph in 29 BC led to a relative marginalisation of Maecenas in high politics, taking some form of voluntary semi-retirement.[19] It is mainly during this period until his death some twenty years later that we witness the scope of his patronage, particularly the generosity towards and continued support of Horace.

Horace directly references Maecenas many times throughout his work, clearly indicating the proximity and duration of the relationship, something which Martial must have noticed and applied to his own writing. Indeed, as patron and dedicatee of the *Epodes*, *Satires*, *Odes* 1-3, and *Epistles* 1, Maecenas constituted Horace's closest and most important audience.[20] In the sixth satire of the first book, Horace extols Maecenas as someone who *nec quod avus tibi maternus fuit atque paternus olim qui magnis legionibus imperitarent, ut plerique solent, naso suspendis adunco ignotos, ut me libertino patre natum* ('though your maternal and paternal grandfathers commanded mighty legions in days of old, you do not turn your nose up as most men do at men of unknown birth, sons of freedmen like me').[21] The principle of Maecenas and Horace, though based on morality, is worked out in political terms in such a way to suggest that low birth should not be an obstacle to high office, and conversely that high birth should not be a guarantee of high office.[22] This could be interpreted as a bold and radical declaration, but lines 15-18, with their scorn of the people's judgement and their silence regarding senatorial patronage illustrate that the poem is not going to be a reformer's manifesto.[23] Horace then recounts their first meeting when Maecenas proved to be the rare kind of aristocrat who judges by character, not by lineage: *quod placui tibi, qui turpi secernis honestum non patre praeclaro, sed vita et pectore puro* ('And I think it's fine to have pleased you, who separate true from false, not by a man's father but

[18] Appian, Bellum Civile, 5.11, 12.112.
[19] Reckford 1959: 197-8.
[20] McNeill 2001: 11.
[21] Hor. Satires, 1.6 4-6.
[22] Rudd 1961: 197.
[23] Rudd 1961: 197.

by his pure life and heart').[24] Schlegel views this entrance into friendship as a kind of birth, where Horace is *infans* with *pudor* in front of Maecenas, then he leaves as the situation gestates for nine months before being recalled.[25]

One of the most famous passages on Maecenas comes from the second book of *Satires*, where Horace expresses the happiness and contentment brought to him by his Sabine farm, given to him by Maecenas, which would not have been lost on his patron, or indeed other readers: *hoc erat in votis...bene est. nil amplius oro* ('This was in my prayers...it is good. I ask for nothing more').[26] This second book of Horatian satire is argued to perform a defensive function: it protects the author from charges of crass ambition and "at once manages and exposes the anxieties attending ... [the poet's] social ascent".[27] Having acquired an estate in the country, seven years after his original acquaintance with Maecenas, the poet takes pains to deflect and deflate any perception that the farm constitutes payment in a *quid pro quo* exchange of goods for poetic services. Such deflection employs many strategies and can be discerned in both the diction and the events that Horace either includes in or omits from his description.[28] Elsewhere, Horace is strolling at leisure along the Sacred Way when he is accosted by a belligerent fellow who wishes to be introduced to Maecenas, so that he may become another fortunate client of the great man. Horace manages to shake loose the pest by the end, thanking Apollo for saving him.[29] It is notable that, by this man begging for an introduction, Horace is viewed (or at least views himself) as a sufficiently significant part of the inner circle of Maecenas, a friend with some influence over his patron to possibly bring others into that sphere of influence. While Horace does admit to reasonably close ties, he confesses he is not privy to the intimacy others enviously assume, so it is critical to envisage Horace as a client and friend to Maecenas but certainly not a social equal. Before Horace can shake loose the pest, the bore congratulates Horace on his

[24] Hor. Sat. 1.6. 57-65.
[25] Schlegel 2006: 53.
[26] Hor. Sat. 2.6; also see Bowditch 2001: 55-8.
[27] Oliensis 1997: 90.
[28] Bowditch 2001: 143-5.
[29] Hor. Sat. 1.9. 1-78.

opportunism: *nemo dexterous fortuna est usus* ('no one has used opportunity better'), with the innuendo Horace aiming to repel is that his success is due to luck.[30] Horace's *Epistles* also highlight the relationship between client and patron, as well as displaying the potential anxieties felt regarding ambiguities present in the patronage system and the nature of *amicitia* as a whole. *Epistles* 1.7 begins with Horace presenting himself to a reproachful Maecenas to justify a long absence, surely failing to fulfil his duties as client (not attending morning *salutatio*, for example). Under normal circumstances, this could be unpardonable negligence, spelling an end to the relationship. But fortunately for Horace, as he seeks to illustrate throughout the remainder of the epistle, the bond between him and Maecenas is different, stronger, asserting the true friendship between them, reminding his patron that they are much too sophisticated and intimate for the standard patronage protocols to apply.[31]

Finally, evidence from the *Odes* also displays the closeness and duration of the relationship between Maecenas and Horace, another example which Martial would not have failed to notice. Matthew Santirocco's article on the Maecenas *Odes* is a useful aid here, describing how in the first book Horace appears dependent and deferential, emphasising the material differences between himself and his patron. These differences acquire a spiritual dimension as the poverty of Horace becomes symbolic of the artistic riches which set him apart from others, including Maecenas. In the third book the distinction between the two men is primarily philosophical, the superiority of Horace's way of life juxtaposed to his patron's anxiety-ridden existence.[32] From all these references, we can clearly ascertain the significance of the relationship between Horace and Maecenas. It was a relationship which developed gradually over many years to the point in which a true friendship emerged, bypassing, even superseding the regular ties of the patronage system of the day. It was a complex and at times fluid relationship, with Horace articulating his anxieties concerning his standing with Maecenas, and by extension his place in Roman society. He was

[30] Hor. Sat. 1.9. 45; Rudd 1961: 201.
[31] McNeill 2001: 24.
[32] Santirocco 1984: 241-53.

cautious not to become overly reliant on his patron, but also wary of declaring independence, risking falling out of favour and the subsequent withdrawal of the support he had enjoyed, which allowed him the optimum *otium* in which to work. It was something many writers must have wished for, but unfortunately there were insufficient patrons the calibre of Maecenas to go around, perhaps not in Horace's days, and certainly not during Martial's.

Patronage in Martial: no Maecenas to be found

Many scholars have offered definitions of what patronage in the Roman world precisely entailed, but the most succinct probably comes from J. P. Sullivan: a protective, non-commercial relationship between unequal individuals, or social and national groups. One of these groups (the patron) uses resources to aid and protect his less powerful friends and dependents. The latter in turn are expected to provide various services. It was an institution which had a long and fluid history in Rome, but one not unique to that society.[33]

When we compare the experiences of Horace with Martial within the patronage system, the first key point presents itself at its outset, namely the sheer number of addressees within, of patrons and would-be patrons alike. In the first book of *Epigrams*, for example, we encounter L. Arruntius Stella (1.44), L. Stertinius Avinius (1.16), Regulus (1.12, 82, 111), Domitius Lucanus and Tullus (1.36), L. Valerius Licianius (1.49), and Proculus (1.70). One may propose provisionally that, this being his first book, Martial may not have had secure patronage in place, therefore feeling the need to cast a wide net, keeping his options open. However, this trend largely continues throughout the remaining eleven books, where the reader encounters over 150 identifiable personages, a large and heterogenous group which contrasts with the extremely small, individualised nature of Horace's patronal addresses.[34]

An interesting comparison rears its head in the form of Martial's contemporary, Statius (c. AD 45-c. 96 AD), who produced epic poetry alongside his more occasional work, the *Silvae*.

[33] Sullivan 1991: 116; also see Saller 1983: 1-6.
[34] Fitzgerald 2007: 141-2.

Specifically, the comparison concerns the patrons each appears to share when we inspect the dedicatees within their work. Despite entering the patronage game somewhat later than Martial (the first book of the *Silvae* being published in AD 92), the two poets had in common at least six addressees, actual or potential patrons: Lucan's widow Argentaria Polla; Arruntius Stella; Atedius Melior; Claudius Etruscus; Novius Vindex; and the handsome, if castrated, favourite of Domitian, Earinus.[35] Although at least three of these could be described as influential men of means: Atedius Melior, the splendid host, Claudius Etruscus, the owner of luxurious baths, and Novius Vindex, the *collectionneur* of precious *objets d'art*, there was no single literary group to which Statius and Martial belonged, at least in any kind of sustained patronage.[36] It has also been seen that Statius managed to climb a few rungs higher in the social ladder than Martial, as we witness a dinner invitation from the emperor Domitian himself, but nothing of the sort for Martial.[37]

Patronage was clearly extremely important to Martial, arguably the most important thing, wishing to receive the level of continued support that allowed him to write in sufficient *otium*. From the extent of petitioning and referring to existing and hopeful patrons throughout the work, we can glean a critical truth: this continued support was not something Martial achieved. If he had, the continued complaints would make little sense. This argument gains traction when we consider that a significant number of Martial's named patrons were documented historical persons.[38] If the persons named were of questionable existence, or given stock names and characteristics from Roman comedy, as Martial does in other poems, we might have valid reason to question the seriousness. But as this is not the case, the argument for a form of social reality becomes more plausible.

We can better understand this by examining poems concerning Martial's experience of the patronage system, starting with 3.36. Here Martial complains of his treatment by Fabianus,

[35] Sullivan 1991: 125.
[36] Nauta 2002: 67-9, 226-9.
[37] Coffee 2015: 110.
[38] Sullivan 1991: 124-5.

having to attend his patron in the morning and perform client duties throughout the day. Martial likens this to slavery (note the use of *rudem* in the final line, from *rudis*, which was the wooden sword given to gladiator slaves when they achieved their freedom), but what is most galling is that despite knowing Fabianus for thirty Decembers, the services performed are those of *novus et nuperfactus...amicus* ('a new and freshly-minted friend').[39] Martial seems to be intimating that, due to the duration of the relationship, he as a client should receive extra privileges, becoming exempt from the *salutatio* especially. Epigram 4.8 gives more information regarding the daily routine of the client and their obligations, in the first and second hours paying their respects, while the ninth hour *imperat extructos frangere nona toros* ('commands us to hit the dining couches piled with cushions').[40] The use of *imperat* is worth noting, and very much in keeping with the tone of this epigram; this activity is not recommended, it is commanded. Martial and his fellow clients are not in control of their lives.[41] It is only in the tenth hour that Martial can write, something which is returned to in 11.24, where he complains to Labullus that, *triginta prope iam diebus una est nobis pagina vix peracta. Sic fit cum cenare domi poeta non vult* ('in the last thirty days, or thereabouts, I have scarcely finished one page. See what befalls a poet who does not dine at home').[42] Here we see Martial lost in a faceless, nameless mass of clients, possessing little time or *otium* to write. What is particularly interesting about this epigram is Martial's chief claim of how widely his work is read*: hoc damnum tibi non videtur esse, si quod Roma legit, requirit hospes, non deridet eques, tenet senator, laudat causidicus, poeta carpit, propter te perit*? ('Does it seem nothing to you, that what Rome reads, what the foreigner seeks, what the knight willingly accepts, what the senator stores up, what the barrister praises, and rival poets abuse, are lost through your fault?')[43] It would appear that Martial is making a thinly veiled criticism of patrons: if Labullus gave Martial the time to write, he could convey his patron's better qualities to a large audience, increasing Labullus' standing in Roman society. It also has

[39] Mart. 3.36. 1.
[40] Mart. 4.8. 6.
[41] Soldevila 2006: 143.
[42] Mart. 11.24. 13-5
[43] Mart. 11.24. 6-10.

the handy quality of providing a whistle-stop tour of the city as readership, Martial playfully showing off as much as anything else.[44]

Martial's epigram to the emperor Domitian reinforces the notion of the poor treatment of clients. After extolling the virtues of the emperor and the positive changes undertaken to improve society, he complains *quod colit ingratas pauper amicitias…Saturnaliciae ligulam misisse selibrae…luxuria est, tumidique vocant haec munera reges* ('that the poor man cultivates friends who simply treat him with ingratitude…to have sent at the time of the Saturnalia a silver spoon of small weight…is extravagant liberality; and our proud patrons call such things presents').[45] What we can visibly see is that Martial disapproves of the patronage system of his day, or at the very least the patronage he encounters. Patronage itself has been degraded; therefore Martial suggests that Domitian himself assume the role of *amicus*, as it is the emperor who can provide one of the few remaining stable sources of patronage.[46] While he admits he does receive gifts, food, and support from his patrons, it is not on the scale to which he feels entitled, both in terms of his ability as a writer to confer immortality on his patrons and friends, and the lack of time it allows him to write. Sullivan feels that Martial's expectations of patronage were unrealistically high, especially set in the backdrop of the decline in private patronage he argues for.[47] It is a plausible contention, as the repeated complaints and criticisms of the poor fare Martial receives from his patrons must serve a point beyond the standard literary tropes discussed earlier. It could offer the reader a reasonably realistic portrayal of the many negotiations Martial entered, aiming to ensure he was supported in his literary endeavours. The repeated calls to his patrons could further echo the deeper frustration Martial felt at his relative lack of success with his poetry. The failure to find a single, long-term patron, a Maecenas, to support him, despite the pride he took in his work, was something Martial felt deep frustration with, whether or not it was achievable in the society of his day.

[44] Fitzgerald 2007: 17-20.
[45] Mart. 5.19. 8-13.
[46] Roman 2001: 141.
[47] Sullivan 1991: 121.

Some scholars have dismissed any kind of realistic portrayal in the epigrams of Martial, particularly as pertains to his experiences of the patronage system. A key example comes from Saller, who claims that despite the appearance of treatment of ordinary, everyday life from Martial, the epigrammatist was writing satirical work, not autobiography. While most scholars concur, Saller goes one step further, that 'consequently, his poetry cannot be taken at face value as a direct reflection of Roman life', and that any serious historical study is problematic.[48] One could argue that although it is true that Martial cannot be taken at face value, serious historical study is still a strong possibility, as satirical content does not negate truth or real feeling entirely. Maria Bustos comments on the nature of Martial's presentation of himself to his patrons, arguing that the poet is not presenting a complex and contradictory authorial persona to display his own personal feelings and ambivalences, instead tailoring responses intentionally for different audiences with the expectation of generating positive responses from them, idealising his Celtiberian roots to facilitate financial gain and literary prestige from prospective patrons.[49]

There are, however, others who view the writing of Martial more through the lens of realism. Francis Jones argues that the epigrammatist and the patronage system were incompatible with each other, client and patron possessing entirely different objectives.[50] According to Jones, Martial loathed the servile tasks of the client, wishing to be excused from them, desiring a Maecenas of his own so he could attend his patron on a more relaxed level, giving him the *otium* to write in peace and leisure. Much has also been made of the professed poverty of Martial in his epigrams, caused primarily by the miserly patrons he must attend, and the high cost of living in Rome. Edwin Post took Martial largely at his word, labelling him 'a chronic beggar' who 'despite his numerous friends and many patrons to whom he paid court ... dragged on a hand-to-mouth existence'.[51] In a more recent article, this is investigated with a little more nuance by Peter Tennant, who argues that the gifts and property bestowed upon Martial by his patrons would

[48] Saller 1983: 146-9.
[49] Bustos 2020: 183-95.
[50] Jones 1935: 355-61.
[51] Post 1908: xiii.

not have generated sufficient income to sustain a comfortable lifestyle in Rome. Tennant allows that while some addressees may have been fictional, 'there appears to be sufficient reliable evidence in his poems to suggest that Martial was in real need of on-going assistance...from his *amici*'.[52] He concludes that this self-portrait of Martial renders the reader able to accept that 'his frequent references to haunting the thresholds of prospective benefactors are not simply to be dismissed as elements of an artificial literary *persona*', using the writings of Pliny and Juvenal alluded to earlier as supporting evidence.[53] Tennant's argument is credible, but perhaps too literalist an interpretation, ignoring some of the literary tropes within them. Whilst I seek to align more with the literalist scholarship than the revisionist, articles from the likes of Tennant and Jones lean too heavily towards the literalist side, failing to appreciate the literary nuances Martial utilises.

The present article couches itself just inside the literalist argument of scholarship, because although Saller and Bustos pose some interesting arguments, particularly regarding the implications that the satirical and jocular nature of epigram has on literalist interpretations, their dismissal of real sentiment or factual accuracy is rash and simplistic. I have argued that although Martial was a man of some means, demonstrated by his gifts from patrons and the rights conferred on him by the emperor (notably the *ius trium liberorum*), this was not sufficient in his own eyes. What would have remedied the situation was a patron such as Maecenas whom Horace was privileged by, but whom he never truly found, as evidenced by his experience of the patronage system, and his repeated references to his desire for a Maecenas.

Readership

William S. Anderson examines approaches taken by Martial and Juvenal when writing on similar themes, concluding that Martial's material contains a more jovial tone than the more indignant one of Juvenal. Anderson contends that the epigrams of Martial do not aim to serve

[52] Tennant 2000: 151.
[53] Tennant 2000: 153-4.

any kind of higher purpose, with morality being 'ostensibly irrelevant', written with playful wit and designed purely for an audience who perform no complicated processes when consuming the epigrams, merely desiring lusty humour.[54] Nigel M. Kay also argues for the epigrams as being written for amusement, delving into the clever usage of certain vocabulary and phrases by Martial, subsequently concluding that the audience were from the cultured and highly literate elite who were able to appreciate the subtleties of his epigrams, with Kay phrasing it as Martial as an *urbanus* writing for the *urbani*.[55] Kay draws attention to epigrams 1.41 and 10.3, challenging that Martial's point is that his wit is subtle and literate, deliberately employing language which would not be heard amongst the uneducated and virtually illiterate characters who aim to display their wit in everyday banter.[56] These groups would have been able to seek out Martial's work at booksellers and possessed the funds to purchase them, something Martial would only have been too aware of. Bustos broadly follows Kay regarding readership, but in a more transparent way of self-gain. It is also however a more fluid idea of what we may perceive as an audience, as this is not necessarily ascribed to one defined group but changing throughout the corpus dependent upon the party whom Martial wishes to appeal. This is most clearly witnessed in epigrams such as 10.65, where Martial emphasises the manly roughness of his Celtiberian origins in contrast to the effeminacy of those from eastern regions, making himself appear more classically Roman, thus worthy of patronage from elite members of society. This is contrasted with 12.18, where Martial's homeland is presented with negative connotations, as somewhere rough and primitive, opposed to the Roman delicacy of his patron Marcella.[57]

Margot Neger, in a chapter on Flavian Rome's connections to the Greek past, claims that Martial illustrates intimate familiarity with Greek literature, with 10.4 as a pertinent example, where Neger extracts the multiple allusions to Greek myth and borrowings from other writers, claiming that these references would need to have been understood by the audience for the

[54] Anderson 1970: 32-4.
[55] Kay 2010: 318-9.
[56] Kay 2010: 318-20.
[57] Bustos 2020: 187-9.

epigram's punch to land.[58] So, if Neger believed that Martial expected his readers to be familiar with Greek texts, the audience posited must be a cultured, literate, and relatively sophisticated one. Finally, William Fitzgerald comments on how Martial constructs different audiences depending on his use of language, and his subtle, then other times explicit differentiation of suitability, overall arguing for a mixed readership from various levels of society. For Fitzgerald, the notion of the reader within Martial is sometimes very ambiguous, largely based between named addressees and anonymous mass, something Martial himself has consciously constructed. Fitzgerald does address specifics too, to aid in his argument, pointing to how the named addressees throughout the epigrams comprise a numerous and heterogenous group, from the emperor himself down to a centurion.[59] Fitzgerald even addresses the idea of the anonymous reader, of one seeking to look in on the lives of their social superiors, whether that be for apparent salacious gossip, or mere curiosity.

Maecenas in Martial: genuine longing, no mere literary trope

Six of Martial's epigrams directly reference Maecenas (*Epigrams* 1.107, 7.29, 8.55, 10.73, 11.3, 12.3 (4)), and excepting the reference in 10.73, all refer to the positive qualities of Maecenas as a literary patron. No other patron of the Augustan period receives anything like the same recognition by Martial. It is an interesting point to examine, because it could lend weight towards a more literal reading of some of the epigrams on patronage, or at least the patronage system the epigrammatist experienced.

It is toward the end of the first book we receive our first reference: *Saepe mihi dicis, Luci carissime Iuli, 'Scribe aliquid magnum: desidiosus homo es'. Otia da nobis, sed qualia fecerat olim Maecenas Flacco Vergilioque suo: condere uicturas temptem per saecula curas* ('You often say to me, dearest Lucius Julius, "Write something great: you take your ease too much." Give me then leisure, – but leisure such as that which of old Maecenas gave to his Horace and his Virgil – and

[58] Neger 2014: 333-4.
[59] Fitzgerald 2007: 141-9.

I would endeavour to write something which should live through time').[60] Here, Martial might be capable of producing a more ambitious work, one destined for immortality, if he received the level of patronage offered by Maecenas. This patronage was one which would offer continuous support to his clients and would excuse Martial some of the more menial client duties. Consequently, he might have the time to write and produce something great for his patron. Martial here does not reject grand poetry i.e., epic, on the contrary: he may be fully willing to engage with a *pingue solum*, but only if he received the requisite patronage (although as ever with Martial, this bold claim must not be taken literally).[61] Nauta views this poem as Martial utilising the *recusatio* tradition in order to articulate his own poetics, where we receive a surprising twist to the motif of the *culpa ingeni*, frequent in the Latin tradition since Horace: Martial is not short of talent, he is short of money; his *recusatio* grounds the poetics of the small form in social and economic reality.[62] There is certainly a financial element implied in the context of this support as well as the granting of *otium*, framed suitably by an agricultural metaphor, when Martial notes that *in steriles nolunt campos iuga ferre iuuenci* ('steers are unwilling to carry their yoke into barren fields').[63] Luke Roman notes the connection made in this epigram between patronage, epigram, and the decline from Classical standards of literary depth and autonomy. The richness and integrity of the Augustan work is aligned with this question of autonomy: if the poet were afforded the shelter of a grand patron, if he enjoyed a measure of independence by virtue of high-level generosity, he could focus on an ambitious, grand work, rather than continuously pursuing many smaller gifts from a multitude of patrons.[64] Martial believes that in the society of his day there is no Maecenas, no grand patron to give him reward from an honest toil. Conversely, Martial could also be arguing that patrons of his day receive less praise and celebration as a result, that both client and patron lose from this arrangement.

[60] Mart. 1.107. 1-5.
[61] Nauta 2006: 38.
[62] Nauta 2006: 37-8.
[63] Mart: 1.107. 7.
[64] Roman 2001: 141.

In his eighth book, Martial responds to his friend Flaccus on the growing grandeur of Rome, wondering how this has not yielded a writer of the quality of Virgil. As is common throughout his work, the opening lines serve as a set-up to the remainder of the poem. Flaccus puts it to Martial that if Rome has grown in splendour, then why is it lacking the genius of writers of old, and his rebuttal echoes his reasoning in the epigram previously discussed: *sint Maecenates, non derunt, Flacce, Marones* ('let there be Maecenases, Flaccus, and there will be no want of Virgils').[65] For Martial, it is the quality of patronage which dictates the output of the poets of their day, and his day does not see the quality of patrons that former ones witnessed. The reference to Tityrus' expulsion is direct from Virgil's first *Eclogue*; Maecenas here assumes the role of that poem's unnamed 'god', who is usually interpreted as the young Octavian, giving a portion of his wealth to see others flourish.[66] The final part of the epigram, again as is common in Martial's writing, executes a rug-pull of sorts, where he informs his reader that, following this support from a patron, he will not become a Virgil, but a Marsus instead: he would still choose to write in epigram, as Marsus did, rather than in the epic genre, Martial viewing epigram as more socially important than conventionally recognised and more true to life than prevalent epic sonorities.[67] The motif remains significant, however, for the method in which it links Martial's nugatory genre of epigram with a depiction of contemporary patronage as inferior to Maecenas' patronage of the great Augustan poets. Book 8 itself is dedicated to the emperor Domitian, and Sullivan asserts that this poem encapsulates Martial outlining to Domitian the large disparity between Augustan and Flavian patronage; for Martial, this is not really aimed at Flaccus (who is addressed often in the *Epigrams*), but Domitian himself, as the only potentially reliable source of patronage for writers.[68]

The references we find to Maecenas towards the end of Martial's corpus illustrate that over the duration of his professional life he had yet to discover one for himself. He begins 11.3 by

[65] Mart. 8.55. 5-6.
[66] Nisbet 2015: 270.
[67] Sullivan 1991: 41.
[68] Sullivan 1991: 41.

describing the almost never-ending limits of his verse and breadth of readership, acknowledging those in Rome, *sed meus in Geticis ad Martia signa pruinis a rigido teritur centurione liber* ('but my book is read by the tough centurion beside the battle-standard amid Getic frosts').[69] Martial laments this, because, despite his seemingly huge and diverse readership, he does not receive appropriate monetary remuneration. This situation would, according to him, be remedied if Rome were given a second Maecenas for his own time, taking the form of a suitably generous patron who recognises his talent and fame. This patron would support his genius for its own sake, but also recognise the potential immortality which Martial could confer upon a patron to a wide audience. Augustus is seen as having returned, but *et Maecenatem si tibi, Roma, darent!* ('if they had also given you, Rome, a Maecenas!').[70] The emperor is both flattered as an Augustus *renatus* and urged to follow the example of the first *princeps* in the matter of patronage; conveniently, the figure of Maecenas allows Martial to detach this complaint from the emperor himself.[71] Nigel Kay regards this poem as more of a *recusatio*, a witty excuse not to write epic in praise of the new emperor Nerva, than any serious wishing for a Maecenas.[72] The tone can be seen as jocular, with hints of mock indignation, yet when seen in the context of the other Maecenas poems, extra elements of seriousness are lent to the material. If Maecenas were naught but an empty vessel for Martial's humour to migrate across the page to the audience, then one wonders at the repetition and specificity of the Maecenas references. Martial was unlikely to forget elements of his material and mistakenly recycle them: this had to be deliberate on the epigrammatist's part. If it was an isolated example, it could perhaps be dismissed as a simple *recusatio* with no deeper meaning. But it is not, and this is particularly relevant regarding Martial's reporting of the dismal rewards he receives from his patrons, and his subsequent wishes for change, as it may lend certain elements added credence.

[69] Mart. 11.3. 3-4
[70] Mart. 11.3. 10.
[71] Fitzgerald 2007: 189.
[72] Kay 1985: 62.

In 12.4, Martial reverses his 'there is no Maecenas' motif, asserting rather that, in one of his clearest allusions to Horace, that his friend Terentius Priscus has been playing precisely that role for him all: *Quod Flacco Varioque fuit summoque Maroni Maecenas, atavis regibus ortus eques… gentibus et populis hoc te mihi, Prisce Terenti,fama fuisse loquax chartaque dicet anus.tu facis ingenium, tu, si quid posse videmur;tu das ingenuae ius mihi pigritiae.* ('What Maecenas, the knight sprung of royal lineage, was to Horace and to the sublime Virgil … shall proclaim to people and nations that you, Priscus Terentius, have been to me. You give me my facility, and whatever power I am thought to have; you give me the means of enjoying a not ignoble indolence').[73] The first section is rich in lofty poetical allusions, most obviously in the second line's usage of *atavis regibus* echoing Horace's opening line to his first Ode: *Maecenas atavis edite regibus*.[74] Martial goes on to state the qualities he wanted and indeed expected from a patron fortunate enough to be the recipient of his work and praise, what he wanted from his patrons all along: the facility to write, and the means to do so in peace. The strong foregrounding of the poetic tradition is significant here, because Martial is stating that Terentius Priscus was a patron to him according to the ideals of that tradition. This was someone who gave the poet the means for a life of leisure dedicated to liberal studies (*ingenuae pigritiae*, 'liberal idleness'; the placement of *pigritiae* as the final word of the epigram leaves little doubt Martial considered the gift of leisure as possessing critical importance).[75] In Books 11 and 12, a new model is drawn in Martial's poetry following the fall of Domitian in AD 96, to be succeeded by Nerva. As Roman notes, much of Martial's post-Domitianic writing is a continuation of his old manner of writing, but at times with a novel twist: for example, the element of Saturnalian *libertas* and obscenity already inherent in his work is re-framed to fit the theme of Nerva's tolerance of such *libertas*.[76] Martial takes the opportunity provided by a new, more tolerant regime to record for posterity his gratitude to his long-time patron. The unstated understanding is that anyone who set themselves

[73] Mart. 12.4. 1-6; Roman 2001: 142.
[74] Carson 2018: 54.
[75] Saller 1983: 254-5.
[76] Roman 2001: 142.

up, and was advertised in Martial's poetry, as a major patron on the scale of Maecenas would have attracted the emperor's *invidia*.[77]

Martial's repeated references to Maecenas were clearly no accident, suggesting that his portrayal of his experience possessed elements which the reader could take seriously. If this was a mere trope, the reader would quickly tire of the references he makes *ad nauseam*. As highlighted earlier, the reader (whoever that might be) would have pause for thought at the multitude of complaints of the patronage system. The figure of Maecenas must also have been one recognisable to his audience, who stood for grand private patronage to the fortunate (yet deserving) writer. As Sullivan points out, in many circles patronage was believed to have declined as Rome navigated her way through the imperial period, meaning these repeated references would surely have served a purpose, that their inclusion was a deliberate act by Martial. Through his experiences of the patronage system, chiefly its failure to provide him with the *otium* to write something fitting for posterity, I argue that the epigrammatist genuinely pined for a figure who would treat him as someone befitting his talent.

Conclusion: Changing times and changing roles, laments the poet

Examination of Martial's work, principally his discussion and commentary on patronage, demonstrates his intimate familiarity with the works of Horace. More than familiarity, Martial also seemed to be envious of the quality of patronage afforded to Horace when compared with his own circumstances, desiring a patron of the calibre of Maecenas who could offer him the required *otium* to produce something grand, beyond the nugatory perception of his chosen genre of epigram. This is especially true when we consider his estimations of his own abilities, as one deserving of patronage on the scale enjoyed by Horace. Alas, for most of his writing career, this was something the epigrammatist did not achieve, instead needing to address and petition a host of different patrons to achieve his literary and personal goals.

[77] Roman 2001: 142.

Decline and nostalgia are oft-deployed tropes of Latin literature, present in many authors, meaning we cannot take the comments of Martial (and the other writers and historians discussed) entirely literally. However, his repeated references to the poor quality of patronage afforded him, as well as the numerous references made to exemplary earlier patrons such as Maecenas, suggest that these comments were more serious acts of social commentary than some of his more standard fictive humorous epigrams. This article has argued that decline was more than a literary trope employed by Martial to highlight his plight. It was reflective of some of the changes which occurred in Roman society in the transition from Republic to Empire, most notably with the figure of the emperor now subsuming much of the private patronage previously present in Republican society. This is not to say that patrons of the calibre of Maecenas were in abundance in Horace's time, but the growing dominance of the emperor within the social sphere curtailed the opportunities for private patronage. Maecenas, as influential private patron, and favourite of Augustus, could have offered Martial some form of rhetorical shelter, a protective figure who could guard the poet from needing to petition the emperor directly, as well as freeing up his ability to critique the imperial patronage system of his day. After all, Horace could compose work which would not compromise his ideological and social commitments, knowing he had the support of an influential member of Roman society which afforded him a certain level of independence and protection against having to tailor his material in search of a range of patronage, the problems Martial could be said to suffer from.[78] Maecenas could not only relieve the writer of the requirement to court many minor patrons by granting permanent *otium*, or to cite Martial's own phrase, *ingenua pigritia*, but protect him from the potentially compromising situation of having to directly address the emperor as hopeful patron. Martial's epigrams were proposed with real sentiment, and it would be a mistake to dismiss all his material as merely imagined stock situations to elicit amusement from his audience. While some of the literalist scholarship on Martial does indeed lean too heavily towards taking his writing at face value, this author feels it would be reductive to overcorrect and

[78] Fredricksmeyer 1990: 795-6.

surmise that due to the nugatory and often jocular nature of epigram, Martial's material lamenting his experience of the patronage system is unworthy of serious historical study.

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The memory of Amazon myths in Roman epigraphy, 1st-7th centuries AD

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Introduction

Amazon myths were acknowledged not only in early Antiquity, but also between the 1st and 7th centuries AD and up until now. The nickname that was created for their culture today has become an adjective that defines not only any warrior woman, but even women who demonstrated special skills in the art of horsemanship[1]. In fact, the meaning variations that this word suffered in Roman culture is an intriguing aspect of this study as we do not know why it was also used in the epigraphic context. The memory of the Amazon myths was preserved in the cultures who inherited the Hellenic tradition and those who came into contact with it until they became a basic and enduring element of the western collective imaginary.[2]

This article exclusively analyzes epigraphic records of a private nature (funerary *tabulae*, *tituli operum publicorum*, honorary inscriptions, *signacula* and *defixiones*). The number of known pieces in this category is very small (32, Table 1), although they are important if we think about the circumstances that motivated them. Actually, none of these inscriptions directly mention any of the Amazon myths or their protagonists. However, they show a link through their owner's cognomen, to which a Hellenic origin is attributed, which could be related to their appearance (height, beauty, ornament and strength[3]) or psychological features (intelligence, craftiness, ferocity, courage), their geographical background (Orient) or any of the other

[1] A. R. 2. 1160-1170; D. S. 2. 44-46; Iust. *Epit*. 2. 4; Philostr. *Her*. 23. 56-57, Philostr. *Iun. Im*. 2. 3, 1; Ps. Callisth. 3. 25-27; Dam. *FHG*. 62.

[2] Sanchez Sanz 2023; 3. Davis-Kimball 2002; 5-9; Mayor 2014; 37-38 and 2016; 939. MacLachlan 2013; 180. Sobol 1972; 152. Guliaev 2003; 114. Pastre 1996; 278-279. Germain 2012; 93-94. Bond 2008; 174-175. Blake Tyrrell 2001; 34-35. Gotteland 2001; 35. Blok 1995; 415. Alonso del Real 1967; 40. Hardwick 1990; 34. Penrose 2016; 261.

[3] Ps. Callisth. 3. 25-27; Philostr. *Her*. 14.1-2; Q. S. 6. 241–245; Tz. PH. 28.

characteristic traditionally associated with the Amazon warriors[4], or through religious texts that connect with this mythical realm.

Geographic context

First, we aim to break down the number of known inscriptions based on the period they belong to and the place they were found. In this way, we will be able to know whether there are links between the different types of inscription in the same geographical context, whether a predominant typology exists in certain places and periods, or where and when this type of inscription appeared most frequently. Most of the inscriptions that include references to Amazon myths appeared in Italy (20). Rome stands out (16)[5], along with Montescudo (1),[6] Formia (1),[7] Miseno (1)[8] and Sicily (1)[9]. This situation is not surprising, since Italy is one of the territories with the largest number of artistic works related to the Amazons context in antiquity, especially in the Roman Period. The appearance of these types of nicknames and religious registers in Spain are less common (8), and they present a greater geographical distribution than in the case of Italy since all of them correspond to isolated pieces discovered in places that are very far from each other, all of them belonging to Baetica[10]. They have been discovered in Bujalance (1),[11] Cañete de las Torres (1),[12] Arroyo de Lorilla (Olaurum, 1),[13] Cerro de la Atalaya

[4] Vernant 1996; 372. Brulé 2001; 49.
[5] *CIL* 05, 04057 (p 1078) = D 08230; *CIL* 06, 01667 (p 4729); *CIL* 06, 03451; *CIL* 06, 11131; *CIL* 06, 11520 (p 3508, 3911) = AIIRoma-11, 00042b; *CIL* 06, 11521; *CIL* 06, 31950 (p 4795) = ICUR-08, 23101 = ILCV +00279 = ILCV +04307; *CIL* 06, 32508; *CIL* 06, 34382; ICUR-01, 00839; ICUR-01, 02155; ICUR-01, 02946; ICUR-02, 04540; ICUR-03, 08265d; ICUR-04, 10164b and NSA-1916-106,113.
[6] Aemilia / Regio VIII. *CIL* 11, 06712,033.
[7] Latium et Campania / Regio I. *CIL* 10, 06093 = D 01583.
[8] Latium et Campania / Regio I. EE-08-01, 00429 = LIKelsey 00036.
[9] Marsala / Lilybaeum (160-200 AC). D 08911 = D 08982 = NSA-1905-216 = *AE* 1906, 00075.
[10] Arroyo de Lorilla, Bujalance and Cañete de las Torres are near each other (in an area of 6-8 km distance in the province of Cordoba, Spain), although this region is more than 150 km away from Seville, 100 km from Lantejuela (Seville), 80 km from Estepa (Seville) and 170 km from Cerro de la Atalaya (Granada).
[11] *CIL* 02-07, 00194a1 = *CIL* 02, 04967,29; *CIL* 02-07, 00194a2.
[12] *CIL* 02-07, 00194b.
[13] *CIL* 02-07, 00194a4.

(Ventippo, 1),[14] Écija (Astigi, 1),[15] Seville (1),[16] Estepa (Ostippo, 1)[17] and Lantejuela (1).[18] Indeed, the appearance of Amazon artistic works in this geographical context is much smaller than in the Italian peninsula (735 compared to 43), between the 7th century BC and the 7th century AD.[19]

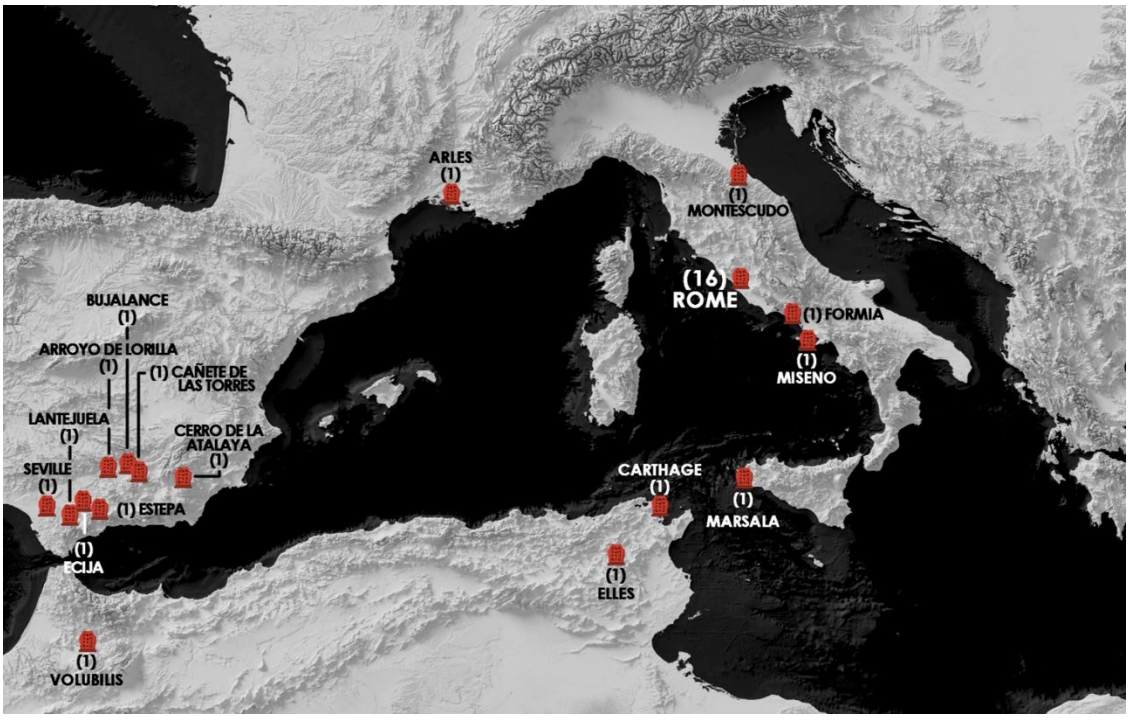
In addition, we know of some additional examples discovered in the province of Proconsular Africa such as Carthage (1)[20] and Elles (1)[21]; as well as in Narbonensis Gaul (1)[22] and Mauritania Tingitana (1).[23] They are registered in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (CIL), and thus all of them correspond to Latin inscriptions made in the Roman Age (between the 1st and 7th centuries AD) located in various territories under imperial control. This kind of inscription shows a more or less homogeneous presence throughout the 1st-7th centuries AD, which demonstrates the uninterrupted survival of the Amazon influence not only in Roman Art[24], but also in the epigraphic context throughout Antiquity.

Inscriptions										
		1st AD	1st-2nd AD	2nd AD	2nd-3rd AD	4th AD	6th-7th I AD	7th AD	Without dating	**Total**
Italy	Montescudo								1	1
	Formia			1						1
	Miseno		1							1
	Rome	1			5	5			5	16
	Sicily			1						1

[14] *CIL* 02-05, 00922 = *CILA*-02-04, 01254 = *AE* 1986, 00331.
[15] *CIL* 02-05, 01275.
[16] Stylow and Gimeno Pascual 1998; 126, nº 21, fig. 22.
[17] *AE* 1998, 00741 = HEpOL 1998, 00415. *CIL* II2/7, 194a4.
[18] *CIL* 02-05, 01131 = HEpOL 1997, 00857 = HEpOL 1998, 00435. *CIL* II2/5, 922 = *CILA* II, 1254 = *AE* 1986, 331.
[19] Sánchez Sanz 2019; 38.
[20] *CIL* 08, 12504.
[21] EDCS-15200063.
[22] Arles / Arelate. *CIL* 12, 00752 = CAG-13-05, p 578.
[23] Volubilis. IAM-02-02, 00487 = IAM-S, 00487 = *AE* 1942/43, 00019 = *AE* 1985, +00990. In this place there is a mosaic dedicated to the ninth labor of Heracles (2nd century AC, LIMC, *Amazones* p. 113).
[24] Leal 2010; 68. Russenberger 2015; 439. Sanchez Sanz 2019; 717. Appelt 2009; 139.

Spain	Arroyo de Lorilla							1		1
	Bujalance							1		1
	Cañete de las Torres							1		1
	Cerro de la Atalaya						1			1
	Écija						1			1
	Estepa						1			1
	Seville						1			1
	Lantejuela						1			1
Tunisia	Carthage				1					1
	Elles								1	1
France			1							1
Morocco									1	1
Total		1	2	2	6	5	5	3	8	32

Table 1. Location of the Amazon inscriptions.



Map. 01. Location of the Amazon inscriptions. Source: Author.

The only moment where we do not know this type of inscription is in the 5th century AD, but it is possible that some of the pieces that don't include information about the manufacturing time belong to this century, and the appearance of other examples in the 4th and 6th centuries AD seems to indicate that they should have existed but haven't been preserved.

The first and oldest of these inscriptions has been located in Rome,[25] between the 1st and 2nd centuries AD they appear again in Miseno[26], and for the first time outside this area in Arles (Narbonensis Gaul).[27] Two new examples correspond to the 2nd century AD in Formia[28] and Marsala,[29] but these inscriptions peak between 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, mostly found in Rome itself (5)[30] and Carthage (1).[31] It wasn't until the 4th century AD that most of the inscriptions were found again in Rome (5).[32]

The relevance of Rome in the artistic scene of antiquity is undeniable and explains the high number of pieces discovered in the region, where most population lived during this period as part of the Mediterranean. The rest of the pieces appeared isolated in different places, despite their importance as hubs for commercial redistribution (Miseno, Carthage) or were geographically near them (Arles with Massalia, Formia with Rome or Miseno and Marsala on the sea route between Rome and Carthage), which could explain its presence there.

However, it seems that these types of pieces will not appear again after the 4th century AD; while all similar inscriptions known between the 6th and 7th centuries AD (8)[33] have been

[25] NSA-1916-106,113.
[26] 151-250 AC. EE-08-01, 00429 = LIKelsey 00036.
[27] *CIL* 12, 00752 = CAG-13-05, p 578.
[28] *CIL* 10, 06093 = D 01583.
[29] D 08911 = D 08982 = NSA-1905-216 = *AE* 1906, 00075.
[30] *CIL* 06, 03451; *CIL* 06, 11131; *CIL* 06, 11521; *CIL* 06, 32508 y *CIL* 06, 34382.
[31] *CIL* 08, 12504 = D 08754 = DefTab 00233 = MagAg 00052 = Kropp-11-01-01-19 = *AE* 1940, 00126.
[32] *CIL* 06, 31950 (p 4795) = ICUR-08, 23101 = ILCV +00279 = ILCV +04307; *CIL* 06, 01667 (p 4729); ICUR-01, 00839; ICUR-01, 02946 and ICUR-01, 02155.
[33] In Cerro de la Atalaya (*CIL* 02-05, 00922 = *CILA*-02-04, 01254 = *AE* 1986, 00331), Écija (*CIL* 02-05, 01275), Estepa (*AE* 1998, 00741 = HEpOL 1998, 00415), Seville (Stylow and Gimeno Pascual 1998; 126, nº 21, fig. 22; AE 1998, 741),Lantejuela (CIL 02-05, 01131 = HEpOL 1997, 00857 = HEpOL 1998, 00435) for the 6th century AD, and Arroyo de Lorilla (CIL 02-07, 00194a4), Bujalance (CIL 02-07, 00194a1 = CIL 02, 04967,29; CIL 02-07, 00194a2) and Cañete de las Torres (CIL 02-07, 00194b; CIL 02-07, 00194a3) for the 7th century AD.

located in the Iberian Peninsula, a place where no previous examples have been found. Only eight of these inscriptions could not be dated with certainty, although they likely belong to the Roman period, located in Montescudo (1),[34] Rome (5),[35] Elles (1)[36] and Volubilis (1).[37]

Funerary *Tabulae*

The highest percentage corresponds to a well-known typology in the epigraphic field, that being funerary *tabulae* (16)[38]. Their appearance is gathered in the Italian peninsula (15)[39] and exceptionally in nearby Narbonensis Gaul (1),[40] between the 1st and 4th centuries AD. Predominantly, these are liturgical formulas without figurative elements that begin with the traditional allusion to the Manes Gods (*DIS MANIBUS*), followed by a nominal name related to the Amazonian sphere. These kinds of objects offered protection to the home and its members in response to the family's devotion to their ancestors, expressed through religious ceremonies performed by the *pater familias*[41].

The formulas inscribed on these funerary objects usually began by invoking the Manes Gods as a way of consecrating the person to the worshiped spirits of the deceased, as a way to show agreement from their ancestors to purify it, as in the Arles stela.[42] It is shown that the inscription

[34] *CIL* 11, 06712,033.
[35] *CIL* 05, 04057 (p 1078) = D 08230; *CIL* 06, 11520 (p 3508, 3911) = AIIRoma-11, 00042b; ICUR-02, 04540; ICUR-03, 08265d and ICUR-04, 10164b.
[36] BCTH-1943/45-106 = ZPE-129-307 = *AE* 1942/43, 00056 = *AE* 1948, 00134.
[37] IAM-02-02, 00487 = IAM-S, 00487 = *AE* 1942/43, 00019 = *AE* 1985, +00990.
[38] There are many variations not only in the regional characteristics of the texts inscribed in this inscriptions, but also in the material (limestone, marble, etc.) and shape (square or rectangular, without handles, with handles -*tabulae ansata*-, etc.) that were used for capture the essence and status of the individuals who were part of a community, and the effort made not to be forgotten by the living (Carroll 2006; 20).
[39] Thirteen of them in Rome (*CIL* 06, 03451; *CIL* 06, 11131; *CIL* 06, 11521; *CIL* 06, 32508; *CIL* 06, 34382; NSA-1916-106,113; *CIL* 06, 31950 (p 4795) = ICUR-08, 23101 = ILCV +00279 = ILCV +04307; ICUR-01, 00839; ICUR-01, 02155; ICUR-01, 02946; ICUR-02, 04540; ICUR-03, 08265d and ICUR-04, 10164b), one in Formia (Latium et Campania / Regio I. *CIL* 10, 06093 = D 01583) and one in Miseno (Latium et Campania / Regio I. EE-08-01, 00429 = LIKelsey 00036).
[40] Arles (*CIL* 12, 00752 = CAG-13-05, p 578).
[41] Keppie 1991; 25. Carroll 2006; 207. Not only in the private context, but also in the public (Benefiel, Keegan 2016; 168).
[42] *CIL* 12, 00752 = CAG-13-05, p 578.

alludes to a slave man and, in the rest of the cases, it is always used as a nickname for male or female characters to whom their relatives have dedicated the inscription to their honor, although it was also the nickname of the emperor Commodus when he fought in the Roman amphitheater.[43] One of the Roman examples is reminiscent of the freed-woman Aurelia Amazonia,[44] and in the rest there are names like Didia Amazonia,[45] Aelia Amazonia,[46]or Lucilia Amazonia[47].

Arles:

1. D(is) M(anibus) // Amazoni serui / iuuenis optimi / Fortunata liberta / et Asterge et Faus/tinus Dionysius / et Oclatius For/tunatus TO/[3]M cura / [3]T[1]I[3] / [3]ADI[3]I[1] / fecerunt[48]
   [CIL 12, 00752 = CAG-13-05, p 578].

Miseno:

1. D(is) M(anibus) / C(aius) Iul(ius) Saturnin(us) / manip(ulari) III(triere) Saluia / stip(endiorum) XXXI / Maximius Bettius / et Ael(ius) Valerianus / Didia Amazon / h(oc) m(onumentum) f(ecerunt)[49]
   [EE-08-01, 00429 = LIKelsey 00036].

Rome:

1. D(is) M(anibus) s(acrum) / Aur(elius) Dassio uet(erano) / Aug(usti) n(ostri) Aurelia / Amazonia co/niunx karissi/ma et Aur(elius) Diur/danus heres / bene merenti / fecerunt[50]

[43] Siemer 2012; 44.
[44] *CIL* 06, 03451.
[45] EE-08-01, 00429 = LIKelsey 00036.
[46] *CIL* 06, 11131.
[47] *CIL* 06, 32508.
[48] The limestone altar is surmounted by two puluini and a focus (Tran 2014; 114). «To the spirits of the dead (Manes Gods), to Amazonius slave, excellent young man, Fortunata, freed / and Asterge / And also Faus/Tinus Dionisius / and Oclatius For/Tunatus (TO/[3]M / [3]T[1]I[3] / [3]ADI[3]I[1]) did [this] for / the concern (cure) of his grave.» I have interpreted "Fortunata" and "Fortunatus" as proper nouns. In the case of not being, the semantic translation would be, respectively: "lucky-woman", and "lucky-man".
[49] «To the spirits of the dead (Manes Gods). Caius Iulius Saturninus, soldier of the third maniple of the Salvia trireme. He served for 31 years. Maximius Bettius and Aelius Valerianus did this monument to commemorate Didia Amazonia.»
[50]«Sacred to the spirits of the dead (Manes Gods). Aurelius Dassio, veteran of our August Emperor. Aurelia Amazonia, his dear wife, and Aurelius Diurdanus, his heir, did this in honor of the one who deserved it well.»

[CIL 06, 03451]

2. D(is) M(anibus) / Aemilia Candida iure donatu et conces/su esse hoc mon<u=O>mentum ab Aelia Ama/zone alio nemine contradicente hunc / titulum scripsisse it iuri [3]/ore habituris itum [3 libertis liber]/tabusqu{a}e a<d=T> me p[ertinentibus posteris]/qu{a}e eo[rum][51]
[CIL 06, 11131]

3. D(is) M(anibus) / Amazonius / Eutycheti / co(n)iugi b(onis) b(ene) fec(it) / qui uix(it) mecu(m) / annis XXII / qui uixit / annis XLV[52]
[CIL 06, 11521]

4. D(is) M(anibus) / Luciliae Amazoni / u(ixit) ann(os) XXXV / P(ublius) Caluisius Hieronymus / et / Doryphorus publicus / coniug(i) b(ene) m(erenti)[53]
[CIL 06, 32508]

5. [D(is)] M(anibus) / [3]oniae / [A]mazoni / [3] uixit an/nis III m(ensibus) VI / d(iebus) XVIIII / [Th]<e=I>ophila mat(er) / [fili]ae dulcis/[sim]ae b(ene) m(erenti) f(ecit)[54]
[CIL 06, 34382]

6. D(is) M(anibus) / Amazonico / fil(io) parentes / b(ene) m(erenti)[55]
[NSA-1916-106,113]

Sometimes, the incomplete state of the pieces only allows us to know the existence of the Amazon name. Therefore, their identification as funerary pieces is deduced from the context, the structure of the formula, etc. In this case, the name of Aurelia Amazonia[56] appears in several inscriptions from Rome. One of the inscriptions from the catacombs of Priscilla suggests the

[51]«To the spirits of the dead (Manes Gods). To Aemilia Candida, who legally donated and granted this monument to be hers by Aelia Amazonia, without any contradiction by anyone, who inscribed this inscription with the legal consent of the three freedmen and their descendants, to whom all their properties belong.»
[52]«To the spirits of the dead (Manes Gods). Amazonius did this in a good way in honor of his dear wife Eutychetis, who lived with me for 22 years, and who lived 45 years.»
[53]«To the spirits of the dead (Manes Gods). To Lucilia Amazonia, who lived 35 years. Publius Caluisius Hyieronymus and Doryphorus, her public servant husband, in honor of her well-deserved wife.»
[54]«To the spirits of the dead (Manes Gods). To Antonia Amazonia, who lived 3 years, 6 months and 19 days. Theophyla, her mother, did this to commemorate her sweetest and well-deserved daughter.»
[55]«To the spirits of the dead (Manes Gods). To Amazonico, son, his parents did this in honor of his well deserved.»
56 CIL 06, 31950 (p 4795) = ICUR-08, 23101 = ILCV +00279 = ILCV +04307; ICUR-01, 02155.

allusion to a freedwoman who[57] has been dedicated by her aristocrat husband (*equite*), Aurelius Agapitus Dracontius. An inscription from Formia[58] mentions a *verna* (a slave who was born from a slave mother) of the imperial household who died at the age of 66 still looking after an imperial property (maybe a *dispensator* of a *praetorium*, perhaps for the imperial villa at Formia[59]), dedicated by an imperial freedman named Amazonicus[60].

Formia[61]:

1. Laeonae / uern(ae) disp(ensatori) qui / uixit ann(os) LXVI / et est conuersatus / summa sollicitudine / in diem quoad uixit / circa tutelam prae/tori Amazonicus / Augg(ustorum) lib(ertus) procurat(or) / [p]atri piissimo cum / [fr]atribus suis b(ene) m(erenti) f(ecerunt)
[CIL 10, 06093 = D 01583]

Rome:

1. Aurelius Agapitus Dracontius eq(uiti) R(omano) / coniugi dulcissimo adque inco/<m=N>parabili qui uixit mecu(m) annis / XXX sine <u=I>lla qu{a}erella Aureli/a Amazonius(!) fecit quiescien/ti(!) in pace // Omnibus ami/cus omnibus / conuictor / bonus[62]
[*CIL* 06, 31950 (p 4795) = ICUR-08, 23101 = ILCV +00279 = ILCV +04307]

2. *Amazonius Victori(a)e co(n)iugi*[63]
[ICUR-01, 00839]

3. *Aur(eliae) Amazoneti / qu(a)e uixit ann(um) un(um) / dies XXX in pace*[64]

57 Rome, CIL 06, 31950 (p 4795) = ICUR-08, 23101 = ILCV +00279 = ILCV +04307.
58 CIL 10, 06093 = D 01583.
59 Bruun 1999: 40.
60 Wiedemann 1996: 289.
61«To Laeonae, *dispensator* [would presumably weigh unminted precious metals for his master or the state. The post developed into that of bookkeeper, cashier and steward, much like the Greek *oikonómos*], who lived 66 years old and devoted herself to her position with great diligence until the day she died. Amazonicus, freedman of the Augustus, procurator, and his brothers did this in honor of his most pious father, well deserved.»
[62]«To Aurelius Agapitus Dracontius, Roman equite, for his most sweet and incomparable husband (or "spouse", both possibilities can be grammatically correct, depending on the context), who lived with me for 30 years without any grivances. Aurelia Amazonia did this in her memory, may she rest in peace. Friend of all, good partner for all.»
[63]«Amazonius, to Victoria's husband / (or "the husband of Victory", it may be the stylistic figure of the *enálage*, since the dative should be in "Amazonius", and not in *coniugi*, resulting: "To Amazonius, the husband of Victoriae).»
[64]«To Aurelia Amazoneta, who lived a year and thirty days in peace.»

[ICUR-01, 02155]

4. *] Amazon[i*[65]
[ICUR-02, 04540]

5. *Amazonius et / Iuliane filio dul/cissimo q(ui) u(ixit) ann(os) III / m(enses) VIIII d(ies) XIII in pa/ce*[66]
[ICUR-01, 02946]

6. *A]mazon[*[67]
[ICUR-03, 08265d]

7. *Am]azon[ius(?) 3] / [3]ae et Se[*[68]
[ICUR-04, 10164b]

The formulas used in the Funerary *Tabulae* adopt a particular and traditional form in Baetica, during the 6th-7th centuries AD (10). In this case, they are small stone bricks inscribed with the expression "*Amazoni uiuas*". This allusion could refer to an illustrious person, perhaps a bishop (*Astigitanus*?) from the 6th-7th centuries AD[69], with healthy life wishes from his acquaintances. This character's ancestors may have already been freedmen, hence the nickname. In the Seville inscription, the symbol of a Crismon also appears. However, it has also been suggested[70] that the inscription could refer to the *laterarii* or brick makers who thus sign his works.

Parroquia de San Sebastián (Seville):

1. Amazoni / Cchrismon / uiuas[71]
[Inscription transmitted in the Ms. Pal. II 158 fol. 71]

Arroyo de Lorilla:

[65]«[...] Amazoni [maybe *a* or *us*] [vocative] / ...To Amazoni [maybe *a* or *us*] [dative].»
[66]«Amazonius and Iuliana did this in memory of their sweet son, who lived three years, nine months and thirteen days in peace.»
[67]«[...] Amazoni [maybe *a* or *us*] [vocative] / ...To Amazoni [maybe *a* or *us*] [dative].»
[68]«Amazonius... [I believe two more names, as it is badly damaged but begins with a capital letter in an internal sentence].»
[69] Stylow and Gimeno Pascual 1998; 126, nº 21, fig. 22.
[70] Velázquez 2002; 65-66.
[71]«Amazoni [as a vocative] / A Amazonius [as a dative], may you live in Christ.»

1. [Ama]zon[i][72]
   [CIL 02-07, 00194a4]

   Bujalance:

1. [A]mazoni // uiuas[73]
   Amazoni // uiuas
   [CIL 02-07, 00194a1 = CIL 02, 04967,29; CIL 02-07, 00194a2]

   Cañete de las Torres:

1. Ama[zoni] // uiuas[74]
   [3 Am//az]oni ui//[uas 3]
   [CIL 02-07, 00194b]

   Écija:

1. Amazoni(?) uiuas(?)[75]
   [CIL 02-05, 01275]

   Cerro de la Atalaya:

1. Amazoni uiua[s][76]
   [CIL 02-05, 00922 = CILA-02-04, 01254 = AE 1986, 00331]

[72]«[...] Amazoni [maybe *a* or *us*] [vocative] / ...To Amazoni [maybe *a* or *us*] [dative].»
[73]«To Amazonio, I hope [you live] [you can live].»
[74]«To Amazonius, I hope [you live] [you can live].»
[75]«To Amazonio, I hope [you live] [you can live].»
[76]«To Amazonio, I hope [you live] [you can live].»

Fig. 01. 600-700 AD. Bujalance. CIL 02-07, 00194a2.
Courtesy of the CIL II Centre. University of Alcalá de Henares.

Fig. 02. 500-700 AD. Cerro de la Atalaya. CIL 02-05, 00922.
Courtesy of the CIL II Centre. University of Alcalá de Henares.

Estepa:

1. Ama/zo/ni // ui/uas
   [Ama]zon[i][77]
   [AE 1998, 00741 = HEpOL 1998, 00415; CIL II2/7, 194a4]

Lantejuela:

1. Amazoni uiuas
   Amazoni uiuas // Amazoni uiua[s][78]
   [CIL 02-05, 01131 = HEpOL 1997, 00857 = HEpOL 1998, 00435; CIL II2/5, 922 = CILA II, 1254 = AE 1986, 331]

Thus, funerary tabulae related to the Italian peninsula and other nearby geographical areas, such as Narbonensis Gaul, show long texts written by a relative or close friend who honored a dear person. This designation was relatively frequent among freedwomen. The same happened with the origin of the Amazoni nickname in the small stone bricks from Hispania, although in different contexts. In that case, the areas of Arroyo de Lorilla, Bujalance and Cañete de las Torres are very near to each other, and the pieces that were located there belonged to the same period, as they could refer to the same distinguished person who maintained that family nickname. The remaining inscriptions belonged to contexts that were more distant from each other, so they could refer to different people who also used this nickname. However, we cannot exclude the fact that they were linked to the previous pieces due to their similar dating. Certainly, these types of small inscribed bricks were not used to identify the tombs of their owners like the tabulae, but as part of the covering of the tomb itself[79] or some religious building such as temples, sanctuaries, etc.[80] associated with the Christian religion.

The usual *hortatio* included only the person's nickname (*intitulatio*) and the expression "UIUAS" as a way of praying to God for their health or, in the tombs, as a way for their soul to always be close to God. The problem with the pieces located in Hispania appeared when none

[77]«To Amazonio, I hope [you live] [you can live].»
[78]«To Amazonio, I hope [you live] [you can live].»
[79] Santiago Fernández 2009; 237. Castillo Maldonado 2005; 346.
[80] Ruiz González 2014: 115. Castaño Aguilar 2018; 259.

contained detailed information about the context in which they were found. Thus, we cannot be sure about their interpretation. Possibly we could explain the use of this nickname when the *dominus* gave it to one of his female slaves if she presented some characteristic that recalled some of the best known traits of these warrior women (including their origin), transmitted through Amazon myths. Hence, it perpetuated in its lineage until losing its original meaning after several generations, as they became freed-woman.

In the Christian religion, the Amazons continued to symbolize the barbarism associated with the "Other", with the different, with the chaos that opposed the natural order of things, and everything negative that was traditionally understood as belonging to the female gender (immorality, desire, uncontrolled sexuality, etc. that had to be surveilled by the male), which was present in the Greco-Latin tradition[81]. The male condition, seen as predominantly intellectual, was closer to the Godhead than the female form, also physically. This context made woman a natural subordinate[82], and those among women who did not agree to maintain God's order automatically became Amazons, opposed to divinity and therefore, a symbol of human pride that threatened to induce the end of the world[83]. Only some Christian authors found virtue in the Amazons[84], such as their defense of virginity, although this was never a real quality in the Amazon tradition. Consequently, this denomination made in formulas associated with Christian worship was not the result of the believers' interest in Amazon myths (probably not adopted among its members deliberately), but rather imposed in one of their ancestors and inherited until these inscriptions were made, perhaps accepting the value of its original qualities as positive, as Paulo Orosio argued. In fact, they symbolized the memory of pagan cults, from a span before Christ that should be forgotten and has not happened yet.

[81] Radulescu 2004; 26. Kleinbaum 1983; 39.
[82] Vance 2000; 84-85.
[83] Kleimbaun 1983; 39.
[84] Paulus Orosius, The Seven Books Against the Pagans, trans. Deferrari, R. J. (1964) The Fathers of the Church, Vol. L, Washington, D.C., Catholic University Press: 104.

Tituli Operum Publicorum

Apart from this common type of inscription, there are isolated pieces with very different characters. One of them alludes to a type of inscription known as *Tituli Operum Publicorum*, which refers to the awards of public works (temples, theaters, walls, bridges, aqueducts, roads, etc.). In this context, we only know of one example that concerns an unknown benefactor who promised to offer three statues representing Amazons to beautify the city[85], although we also do not know why he chose this type of figure among all the possible options.

We could assume that they were wounded Amazons, as it was a very popular theme in sculptural art[86] perhaps to become an unequivocal and explicit symbol of Roman patriarchal society which had in common with Greeks the need to strengthen that same cultural belief. perhaps with the intention of becoming an unequivocal and explicit symbol of Roman patriarchal society which shared with the Greeks the need to strengthen that same cultural belief. In the collective imaginary, mutilated Amazons represented the denial of their status as women and the deformation of their physis, the beauty and symmetry of their bodies, as well as male superiority. The wounded Amazons became an artistic symbol due to their expressiveness, which combined the pride of confronting current social norms and the suffering of the punishment

[85] Eilers 2002; 96. Lomas, Cornell 2003; 8. Nicols 2014; 197. We are aware of the interest shown by influential people who used the Amazons' image to gain recognition by the community through the patronage of public artworks in the Greek or Roman context, such as the emperors Augustus (13-11 BC. Sculpture of wounded Amazon in the theater of Marcellus, Rome. Wilton House, Westflügel, inv. 1963,6.1), Hadrian (2nd century AD. Achilles and Penthesilea statue group of the Hadrianic Baths at Aphrodisias. Aphrodisias Museum, inv. 16576533554) or Diocletian (306 AD. Achilles and Penthesilea statue group of the Diocletian Baths in Rome. National Museum of Rome, inv. 108.363), Marco Nonius Balbo (79 AD. Sculpture of Amazon in the Nonian Basilica of Herculaneum. Antiquarium of Herculaneum, inv. SAP 87021), the king Mausolos (353-330 BC. Amazonomachy frieze from the Mausoleum at Halikarnassos. Br. Mus., inv. 1847,0424.12), Attalus II of Pergamon (Amazonomachy sculpture given as a votive offering in the Acropolis of Athens. Agora-Mus., inv. 1655), etc.

[86] Bothmer 1957; 212. Richter 1959; 111-115. Ridgway 1974; 1-17. Steuben 1993; 73-102. Sargent, Therkildsen 2010; 27-49. Sánchez Sanz 2019; 93. Kansteiner 2022; 88-90. Phidias, Polykleitos, and Cresilas (Plin. NH 34. 53) would participate in the municipal tender to make a statue of this type that would be placed in the Artemision of Ephesus (450-425 BC). This trend continued for centuries since wounded Amazons have been located in the theaters of Marcelo (13-11 BC) and Ephesus (138-161 AD), the circus of Maxentius (117-161 AD), the baths of Caracalla, Saint Barbara in Trier (138-161 AD) and Sosandra in Baiae, or the Athens agora (138-161 AD).

they received for it, perhaps a metaphor for how *sophrosyne* (σωφροσύνη) helps combat *hybris* (ὕβρις).

Volubilis:

1. e]t l[argi]tionibus [patri]ae et prouinciae [3] / felicissim[e imp]etratis [3] / [3] signa duo / Amazonum ut uouerat [dedit][87]
   [IAM-02-02, 00487 = IAM-S, 00487 = AE 1942/43, 00019 = AE 1985, +00990]

Honorary inscriptions

Another type of inscription appears in Marsala (161-200 AD, Sicily), this time it is an honorary inscription located at the base of a lost statue, ordered by Lucius Aponius Rufinus. This inscription includes a formula of exaltation for its closing *"Amazoniis vita"* (Long live the family of the Amazonians!) about the Antoninos themselves.[88]

The Amazons represented strange, mysterious and uncontrollable forces existing on the margins of the civilized male universe. Their defeat legitimized the superiority of the Greco-Roman culture, in which the male was acknowledged over the female and order over chaos. The image of women in mythology was multifaceted, sometimes opposing and often reflecting those negative implications. However, they were always needed, because without them, i.e., the 'other', it was impossible to understand the essence of the Greco-Roman world which they defended as their own by opposition[89]. Without the 'other', it is easier to define oneself[90], resulting in intolerance not only towards the 'other' human being but also towards the 'other' within oneself as human being. For this reason, Amazonian representations were very useful to those in charge of the State, and many Roman emperors used them in both public and private contexts. However, not only the Amazonian image was used as a personification of the public virtues of

[87] «And he successfully obtained generous donations for his homeland and province. He kept his promise to deliver three Amazons statues.»

[88] There is an Egyptian papyri that mentions prosperous women as landowners, among whom one of them, named Aurelia, was the daughter of a certain "Amazonios" and lived in Hermopolis during the first half of the 4th century AD (Sheridan Moss 2012; 504).

[89] Rodríguez Blanco 2011; 67.

[90] Vernant 2009: 38.

the sovereign in the political and military context[91], but also understood as a feminine concept. Their presence contributed to raising the moral condition of the emperor, as part of his personality, guaranteeing both his victory in combat and his good work in every field.

The Amazons' image was also used to represent the personification of barbarian people conquered in the Eastern Hemisphere when their negative side or the Tyche of the city was prioritized in a several monetary mints from the West to the East, including Rome itself, due to their positive features. The first known example corresponds to P. Licinius Crassus (son of M. Licinius Crassus and triumvir monetalis in Rome), who minted coins using the Amazon figure (55-54 BC)[92]. Vespasian (72 AD)[93] did the same much later, although the emperors of the Antonine Dynasty showed even greater interest in this type of representations, as they reappeared during the reign of Hadrian (117-138 AD)[94] and Marcus Aurelius (161-180 AD)[95]. These are just some examples of the special interest that the Antonines showed in the representation of the Amazons, since there are several reliefs that use the Amazon image as a personification of the emperor's virtus associated with Trajan[96], the victory of Marco Aurelio and Lucio Vero over the Parthians[97] or Hadrian's dominion over the Asian provinces[98]. New Amazon sculptures appear in Hadrian's Villa (Tivoli)[99] or in public buildings such as Hadrian's Baths in Aphrodisias[100] or the Hadrian's Temple at Ephesus[101]. Finally, we know that Emperor Commodus gave himself a new official name in 191 AD: Lucius Aelius Aurelius Commodus Augustus Herculeus Romanus Exsuperatorius Amazonius Invictus Felix Pius[102]. A bust of the

[91] Tuck 2005; 236. Bessone 2015; 128.
[92] Crawford 4301.
[93] Bibliothèque Nationale de France, IMP-8061.
[94] BMC 150. RSC 1108a.
[95] Br. Mus. R.14111.
[96] Mattei Lion Hunt sarcophagus (98-117 AD. Rom, Palazzo Mattei, no. 80.935). Cancelleria-Relief (98-117 AD. Vatikanischen Museen, inv. 13389 -13391).
[97] Statue base (161-169 AD. Athen, Nationalmuseum).
[98] Reliefs from the Temple of Hadrian in Rome (145 AD).
[99] Wounded Amazons (Hadrian's Villa, Inv. 2266; 2255; Rome, Palazzo Massimo, inv. 124 666).
[100] Sculpture of Achilles and Penthesilea (Aphrodisias Mus., inv. 16576533554).
[101] Marble frieze depicting the ninth labor of Heracles (138 AD. Mus. Selcuk).
[102] SHA, Commodus 9. 9. Hdn. 1. 16, 4. D. C. 83. 15, 3-5.

emperor incorporates a sculpture of an Amazon as decoration[103], and his concubine Marcia usually appeared characterized as an Amazon[104].

In our inscriptions, he appeared reflected was Titus Fulvius Aurelius, one of the fourteen sons of Marcus Aurelius and twin of the later Emperor Commodus, who died at the age of four[105]. He is one of the *navicularii* or merchants of sea products who in this case became specialized in the transport of garum and oil between Sicily and Narbonensis Gaul.[106] Aponius thanks his designation as *sevir Augustal*is, an urban institution of a semi-official nature, typical of *coloniae* and municipia, open to enriched freedmen as a way of social promotion within their community, since their legal situation prevented them from holding any official position.

The authority of the *sevir Augustalis* was below the urban magistracies and halfway between the magistracy and the priesthood. He belonged to the provincial imperial cult, which was organized around the main cities of each region. Sevir Augustalis' activities focused on religious acts in honor of the ruling dynasty,[107] in this case, the Antonine *gens*, and it embodied a *colegia* of six members who were elected on an annual basis.

Marsala:

1. T(itus) Fuluius Aurelio / Antoninus / Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) M(arci) Aureli Antonini / Aug(usti) filio / L(ucius) Aponius Rufinus / ob honorem seuiratus / pec(unia) sua // Pompeianis uita / ob insignem iustitiam / et merita litterarum et amore(m) / quem non solum circa patriam / sed per omnem prouinciam conlocauit / Iul(ius) Cl(audius) Peristerio / Pompeiano u(iro) c(larissimo) ex cons(ulari) p(rouinciae) S(iciliae) / uniuersa curia in coetu splendidu(!) suo / patrono digno et pr(a)estantissimo / statuam conlocauit / Amazoniis uita[108]

[103] Rome. Palace of the Conservatives 930.
[104] Medallion (192 AD. Cohen 17. Gnecchi p. 64, 116).
[105] SHA, *Marcus* 1.2-1.4; *Commodus*, 1.2.
[106] Oliveri 2009; 386-387.
[107] Fishwyyick 2005; 616.
[108]«Titus Fulvius Aurelio Antoninus, son of Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus, Lucius Aponius Rufinus, for the honor of service, with his own money. For his outstanding justice, literary merits and love, which he showed not only towards his homeland but also throughout the province, Iulius Claudius Peristerio, a prominent man from Pompeii and former consul of the province of Sicily, in recognition of his magnificent meeting, placed a statue to the worthy and excellent protector, the life of Amazonio.»

[D 08911 = D 08982 = NSA-1905-216 = *AE* 1906, 00075]

This inscription may be related to another one located in Rome and it is associated with a different freedman named Claudius Amazonious:

Rome:

1. Cl(audius) Amazoni{o}us u(ir) e(gregius) maritus / Marciae Aurel(iae) Alexandriae c(larissimae) m(emoriae) f(eminae) / hunc titulum secundum mandatum / eiusdem Alexandriae quae cum aduiveret / testamento suo prae{ce}cepit hunc praetoriolum / cum hortulo et heroo libertis libertabus/que posterisque eorum cedi et iussit ne quando de / familia alienetur si quando aliquis / uoluerit donare uel uendere arca/e pontificum poenae nomine inferet / duodecies centena milia nummum[109]
   [*CIL* 05, 04057 (p 1078) = D 08230]

Two xoanon (ξόανον) have been located, which are votive wooden sculptures, built as if they were dedicated by the Amazons themselves in the Pyrrhic temples for Apollo Amazonios and Artemis Astrateia.[110] It was a Laconian poleis situated near Cape Tenaro, at the southernmost point of mainland Greece. However, we do not know of Amazonian stories linked to that region. Not even the myths about the attack that Athens suffered by the Amazons during the reign of Theseus describe any of them escaping to the Peloponnese, but many fled to other parts of Greece.

The words of Pausanias confirm that they were placed as an offering that represented the end of his military expedition (*strateia*), and its inhabitants believed that this decision was due to the intervention of both deities. The epithet of Artemis could be explained as a derivation from Ashtarté herself,[111] although we might think this would happen more easily in its Ephesian

[109] «Clodius Amazonius, distinguished free man, husband of Marcia Aurelia Alexandria, a woman of illustrious memory, fulfilling his mandate and testament, this small property with a garden and *heroon*, as well as to the freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants, it is granted to him and is orders which shall never be separated from the family, if anyone tries to donate or sell it, they will incur a penalty of twelve hundred thousand *nummos* in the name of the pontiffs.»

[110] Paus. 3. 25, 3.

[111] López-Ruíz 2010; 208. A hypothesis already expressed by Farnell (1904; 485).

version or Artemis Tauropolos as manifestations of the goddess closely associated with the Amazonian world.

The case of Apollo is not so simple, perhaps it is also linked to some near east or pre-Hellenic divinity with similar characteristics to Greek Apollo and, therefore, recognized in this way.[112] In any case, it seems to be a local tradition linking the Amazons to both deities again, a written record that has not survived. It may be that he made them founders of both temples, through the onomastic use of their name.

Signacula

Among the less common inscriptions, there is also a *signaculum* located in Mostescudo. It is a type of lead plate that the soldiers wore around their necks in a small leather bag as an identifying element, as it contained some personal details together with a stamp to verify it.[113] However, this type of piece has also been associated with objects of a civil nature or elements of the panoply that offered information about the manufacturer and type of article. We know they could be used in the same way on slaves, indicating their name, owner and place to which they should be returned if they tried to escape. In this case, it only includes the word "*Amazonii*", used as a name that seems to identify its owner[114].

Montescudo:

1. Amaz/onii[115]
   [CIL 11, 06712, 033]

[112] Bennett 1912; 42.
[113] Southern and Dixon 2014; 74–75.
[114] This piece recalls the famous relief from Halicarnassus with two female gladiators (gladiatrices), dated between the 1st and 2nd centuries AD (Br. Mus. 1847,0424.19). One of the fighters is called "Amazon", and the other "Achillia" so most likely they frequently fought to represent the myth of the combat between Achilles and Penthesilea in Troy (Coleman 2000; 487-500). For that reason, it was a stage name and not her real name.
[115] «[...] Amazoni [vocative] / ...To Amazoni [dative].»

Defixiones

One of the most interesting inscriptions in this group corresponds to a *defixio* or curse table, located in Carthage (2nd-3rd centuries AD). These types of formulas were frequently dedicated to one or several infernal or liminal gods who were asked to harm a third party, generally as revenge. As with heroes, the Greeks may have believed that the spirits of defeated Amazons, such as Penthesileia, were able to intercede in this regard. Let us not forget that they were daughters of the god Hares, so they were regarded as semi-divine beings who retained some of their power even in Hades. Their defeat could turn them into vengeful spirits, capable of responding to such an invocation.

Sometimes this was professed to beg the mediation of the spirit of a deceased, placing the piece in their grave. Normally, the inscriptions included the name of the cursed person, remembered the cause or evil that they had done and listed the misfortunes that they had to suffer. However, the inscriptions were often used for other purposes, such as helping the deceased who died at an early age or violently for them to rest in peace,[116] as well as used for love spells, divination, etc.[117] In this case, the inscription includes a series of personal names:

Carthage:

1. ------] / [F]renalius(?) / [V]enator / [Exs]uperus(?) / Augur / Volens / Sidereus(!) / Atonitus / (H)ieronica(!) / C(h)rysip(p)e / XS // Sidereus(!) / Ign(a)eus / Turinus / Mau(o)rtius(?) / Rapidus / Arminius / Inpulsator / Castalius / Gelos / Piropus / Eug<e>n<e>(u)s / Anim(a)tor / Bla(n)dus / Sidonius / Omnipotius / Aquila / Lici(n)us(?) / Amazonius / Imber // καρουραχχθα / βραχχθαθ / ηθαειθουμα / νεσφομηι μελα / ηιεουηεμη / εσταβαηι //<E>xcito [t]e(?) d(a)emon qui (h)ic conuer/sans trado tibi (h)os / equos ut deteneas / illos et inplicentur / [n]ec se mouere possint // καβρακκρακκρου / [--] / ρ/α/κ/κ/ρ/α/ρ/α / [ι]/ρ/α/κ / β/ρ/α/χ/θ/α/β/ρ/α/χ/θ/α/χ/θ/α/η / r/i/κ/σ/o/ν/υ/θ/ν[118]

[116] Gager 1992; 19.
[117] Dickie 2000; 565.
[118]«Frenalius hunter, sublime, augur, voluntary, sidereal, astonished, Hieronica, Chrysippe, XS, sidereal, ignaceous, Turinus, Mavortius(?), fast, Arminius, impeller, Castalius, Gelo, Piropus, Eugenus, cheerleader, enchanting, Sidonius, omnipotent, eagle, Licinius, Amazonius, Winter. I awake [for / before] you, demon that resides here, I give you these horses so that you hold them and they are trapped, and they cannot move.»
**Very damaged inscription, some words are translated individually, and it lacks structural sense.

[*CIL* 08, 12504 = D 08754 = DefTab 00233 = MagAg 00052 = Kropp-11-01-01-19 = *AE* 1940, 00126]

However, this time the target of the curse was not a person but several horses, as they hoped horses would not be able to "move" (in the *ludi circenses*), probably because they were owned by a rival team (maybe) in the circus' races or formed part of the same chariot[119]. Romans would use curses to call the death and wreak vengeance on others, Romans would use curses to call the death and wreak vengeance on others, either by persuading the deceased to help or by binding the dead to a course of action through spells[120]. In this way, they sought to obtain help from the infernal divinities, perhaps to win a bet on the races or for prestige in case the summoner was the leader of a rival faction (*dominus factionum*), which was also very common[121]. Thus, the appearance of the name "Amazonius" could refer to one of the factions' leaders or one of their horses (perhaps named as such due to their oriental origin) as well as one of their divinities, the name of an old deceased friend that the petitioner mentioned to obtain his intercession before the infernal gods, also referred locally as a well-known religious figure, who was named to force the obedience of the invoked demon, who would fear his prestige and power.

The three remaining inscriptions present a more cryptic nature, as they provide limited information about their origin and theme. The Amazonian nickname now appears again associated with names such as:

Elles:

1. Polystefanus(!) rationis est Arceus // Amazonius // Titonius[122]
   [BCTH-1943/45-106 = ZPE-129-307 = AE 1942/43, 00056 = AE 1948, 00134]

Rome:

1. Fl(auius) Amazo/nius u(ir) p(erfectissimus) / curauit[123]

[119] Along with the standard *biga* (two-horse) and *quadriga* (four) races, there were also events for *trigae* (three), *seiuges* (six), *octuiges* (eight) and *decimgues* (ten-horse) chariots (Willekes 2016; 216).
[120] King 2020; 105.
[121] Gager 1992; 15. Graf 2003; 155. Collins 2008; 102. Ogden 2008; 139. Watson 2019; 178-179.
[122] «Polystefanus is the master of strategy, Arceus. Amazonius. Titonius.»
[123] 332-340 AC. «Flavius Amazonius, a free man of the highest category, took care of it.»

[CIL 06, 01667, p 4729]

2. Amazone Daphinicus / coniugi bene merenti fecit[124]
   [CIL 06, 11520 (p 3508, 3911) = AIIRoma-11, 00042b]

Conclusion

At times, Greek mythology seems to transcend reality so that both worlds, real and imaginary, blend. As for the Amazons, there were many myths over time which created a stereotyped vision of them and the events that surrounded them in the collective imaginary.[125] The reference to the Amazon universe in these inscriptions, at least in their origin, could be related to the will of influencing some specific aspects that established a similarity between them and the person (or the animal if we consider that the *defixio* of Carthage referred to a racehorse), who acquired that name. This link could be related to their strength, indomitable character, geographical origin (Orient), or any other characteristic traditionally associated with the Amazon warriors. This could have been the case with the women mentioned in the funerary *tabulae*.

Most of these nicknames were used in Roman times as *cognomen* by freed people who over time reached a pre-eminent position within society or through their descendants, who kept it as a reference to their ancestors. Many of them had a funerary character, as a way of honoring deceased relatives, praying to the gods and listing their virtues, and they were dedicated by other close family members. These nicknames were used by both men and women, which is interesting if we remember the connotations of this word, so it is difficult to find a reason for the masculine examples. In any case, although they no longer show any type of direct link with the Amazonian stories, their influence not only reached the Hellenic onomastic sphere but spread to Roman culture through certain social strata.

[124] «Amazonius Daphnicus, he did it for his well-deserved wife.»
[125] Sanchez Sanz 2014; 16.

It is possible that their *domini* chose them as a way to highlight a certain quality, traditionally associated with mythical Amazons, which was present in a given slave. These qualities could be both positive and negative. The refusals would be related to their shown tendency to disobey or perhaps a personality that did not easily accept submission; while the positive ones could refer to the Amazons' athletic appearance or strength. On the other hand, the Roman Dominus could use these types of nicknames for their slaves with the intention of emphasizing their origin. Thus, their masters could try to imply their slave's Hellenic origin, since these myths were created there or, on the contrary, an oriental origin, since the best-known Amazon kingdom were located there by the myths.

It is hard to know the specific reason why each of these people acquired a nickname directly and exclusively related to the Amazon world, especially when the reference to that name barely survives without additional context and, we cannot forget that the protagonists of these inscriptions were perhaps not the original recipients of this appellation, but rather inherited it from their ancestors. Thus, the reason for its adoption was perhaps even unknown to them as of now. In any case, its existence shows a new sphere of influence for Amazon myths that goes beyond art and literature, reaching further religious contexts such as the early Christian cult that affects the immense importance that their relationships achieved in Antiquity.

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