

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 horsemanship¹. 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 strength³) 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 warriors⁴, 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 Baetica¹⁰. 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 Art²⁴, 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.

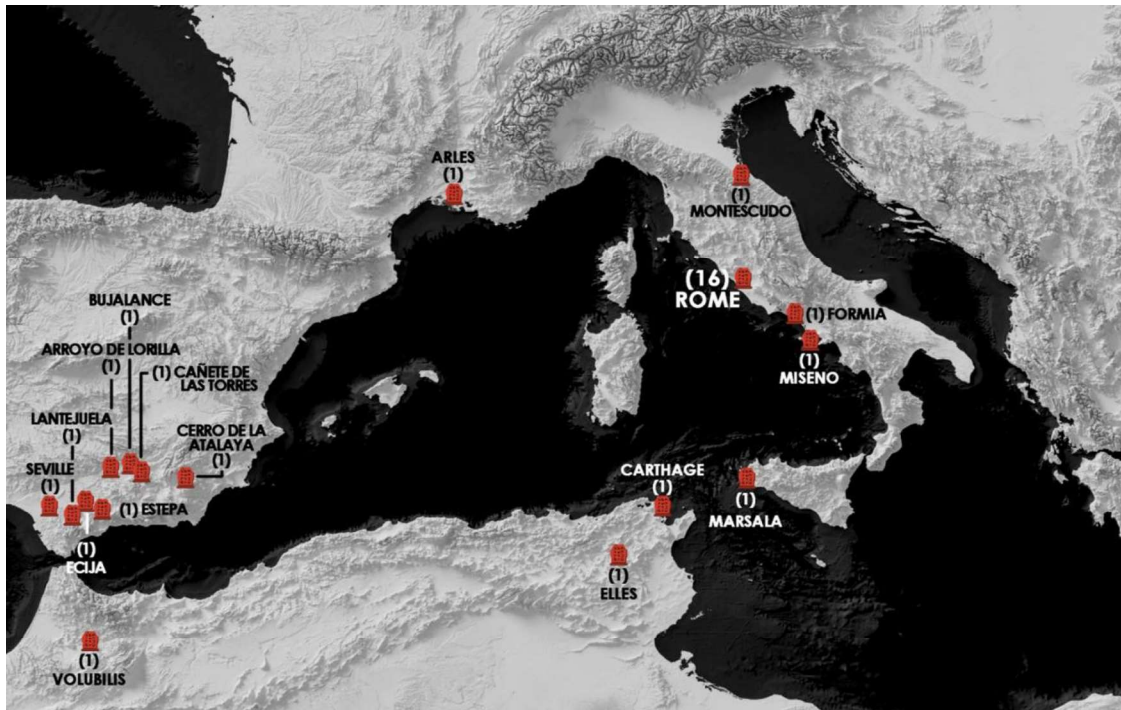
²² Arles / Arelate. CIL 12, 00752 = CAG-13-05, p 578.

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 Miseno²⁶, and for the first time outside this area in Arles (Narbonensis Gaul).²⁷ Two new examples correspond to the 2nd century AD in Formia²⁸ 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 ansatae*-, 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 Amazonia⁴⁷.

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] / fecerunt⁴⁸
[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 / fecerunt⁵⁰

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 Dionysius / 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 manipule 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)
mecum) / annis XXII / qui uixit / annis XLV⁵²
[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)
XVIII / [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 Amazonia⁵⁶ 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 Hieronymus 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 who⁵⁷ has been dedicated by her aristocrat husband (*equite*), Aurelius Agapitus Dracontius. An inscription from Formia⁵⁸ 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 Formia⁵⁹), dedicated by an imperial freedman named Amazonicus⁶⁰.

Formia⁶¹:

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 / bonus⁶²
[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 *endáge*, 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. *J Amazon*[⁶⁵

[ICUR-02, 04540]

5. *Amazonius et / Iuliane filio dul/cissimo q(ui) u(ixit) ann(os) III / m(enses) VIII 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 AD⁶⁹, 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 suggested⁷⁰ 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].»

⁶⁹Styłow and Gimeno Pascual 1998; 126, nº 21, fig. 22.

⁷⁰Velázquez 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 // uiuas⁷³

Amazoni // uiuas

[CIL 02-07, 00194a1 = CIL 02, 04967,29; CIL 02-07, 00194a2]

Cañete de las Torres:

1. Ama[zoni] // uiuas⁷⁴

[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 itself⁷⁹ 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 tradition⁸¹. The male condition, seen as predominantly intellectual, was closer to the Godhead than the female form, also physically. This context made woman a natural subordinate⁸², 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 world⁸³. Only some Christian authors found virtue in the Amazons⁸⁴, 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 Kleinbaum 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 city⁸⁵, 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 art⁸⁶ 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* (ὑβρις).

Volubilis:

1. e]t l[argi]tionibus [patri]ae et prouincia[e] [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 opposition⁸⁹. Without the ‘other’, it is easier to define oneself⁹⁰, 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 context⁹¹, 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 virtue associated with Trajan⁹⁶, the victory of Marco Aurelio and Lucio Vero over the Parthians⁹⁷ or Hadrian's dominion over the Asian provinces⁹⁸. New Amazon sculptures appear in Hadrian's Villa (Tivoli)⁹⁹ or in public buildings such as Hadrian's Baths in Aphrodisias¹⁰⁰ or the Hadrian's Temple at Ephesus¹⁰¹. 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 Pius¹⁰². 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). Cancellaria-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 decoration¹⁰³, and his concubine Marcia usually appeared characterized as an Amazon¹⁰⁴.

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 four¹⁰⁵. 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 Augustalis*, 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) Fulvius Aurelio / Antoninus / Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) M(arci) Aureli Antonini / Aug(usti) filio / L(ucius) Aponius Rufinus / ob honorem seviratus / pec(unia) sua // Pompeianis uita / ob insignem iustitiam / et merita litterarum et amore(m) / quem non solum circa patriam / sed per omnem prouinciam conlocavit / 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 conlocavit / Amazoniis uita¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Rome. Palace of the Conservatives 930.

¹⁰⁴ Medallion (192 AD. Cohen 17. Gnechi p. 64, 116).

¹⁰⁵ SHA, *Marcus* 1.2-1.4; *Commodus*, 1.2.

¹⁰⁶ Oliveri 2009; 386-387.

¹⁰⁷ Fishwyck 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 Amazonius:

Rome:

1. Cl(audius) Amazoni{o}us u(ir) e(gregius) maritus / Marciae Aurel(iae) Alexandriae c(larissimae) m(emoriae) f(eminæ) / 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 nummum¹⁰⁹
[*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 polis 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-Ruiz 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 owner¹¹⁴.

Montescudo:

1. Amaz/onii¹¹⁵
[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 Hades, 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)rysis(p)e / XS // Sidereus(!) / Ign(a)eus / Turinus / Mau(o)rtius(?) / Rapidus / Arminius / Impulsator / 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 / ηθαιθουμα / νεσφομηι μελα / ηιουηεμη / εσταβαηι // <E>xcito [t]e(?) d(a)emon qui (h)ic conuer/sans trado tibi (h)os / equos ut deteneas / illos et inplacentur / [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 / ρ/ι/κ/σ/ο/ν/υ/θ/ν¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Gager 1992; 19.

¹¹⁷ Dickie 2000; 565.

¹¹⁸ «Frenalius hunter, sublime, augur, voluntary, sidereal, astonished, Hieronica, Chrysispe, XS, sidereal, igneous, Turinus, Mavortius(?), fast, Arminius, impeller, Castalius, Gelo, Piropus, Eugenius, 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 chariot¹¹⁹. 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 spells¹²⁰. 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 common¹²¹. 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 // Titonius¹²²
[BCTH-1943/45-106 = ZPE-129-307 = AE 1942/43, 00056 = AE 1948, 00134]

Rome:

1. Fl(auius) Amazo/nius u(ir) p(erfectissimus) / curauit¹²³

¹¹⁹ Along with the standard *biga* (two-horse) and *quadriga* (four) races, there were also events for *trigae* (three), *seixges* (six), *octuiges* (eight) and *decimques* (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 Daphnicus / coniugi bene merenti fecit¹²⁴

[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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