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Postal address (materials sent for reviewing purposes and other correspondence): *Universitatea “Al. I. Cuza”, Facultatea de Istorie, Bulevardul Carol I, nr. 11, 700506 - Iași, Romania.*

Tel.: (+04) 0232 201 615; Fax.: +(4) 0232 201 201, +(4) 0232 201 156;

Website: saa.uaic.ro; blucretiu@yahoo.com.

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Periplus to the Unknown. The Greek Conquest of the Black Sea and the Origin of the Amazon Myths

Arturo SÁNCHEZ SANZ[1]

Abstract: *The aim of this paper is to address the colonisation of the Pontus in relation to the Amazon myths. An attempt will be made to clarify the difficulties in identifying both the initial contacts between the Greeks and the ancient steppe nomad peoples in that region and the origin of the Amazon myths on the basis of the apparently more egalitarian lifestyle of those societies[2]. Similarly, the intention is to offer an explanation for the presence of iconographic pieces of an Amazon character in that liminal space. The Amazon kingdom, regardless of whether it has been located preferably in the southern Pontus or less frequently in its northern or eastern reaches, was undoubtedly connected with the Black Sea. Even though those myths are rooted in a time long before the period in which the region was colonised by the Greeks, they formed part of it, as occurred with many other accounts dealing with the Argonauts, Medea and so forth, with the mission of exploring those distant lands, bringing them closer to the Greek world and facilitating their control, as well as converting them into essential elements for identifying the 'other' and, by extension, Hellenic culture itself.*

Rezumat: *Acest articol abordează tema colonizării Pontului în legătură cu miturile amazoniene. Se va încerca să se identifice atât contacte inițiale dintre greci și vechile popoare nomade de stepă din acea regiune, cât și originea miturilor amazoniene pe baza stilului de viață al acelor societăți. Regatul amazoanelor, indiferent dacă a fost localizat de preferință în sudul Pontului sau mai rar în partea sa nordică sau estică, a fost fără îndoială legat de Marea Neagră.*

Keywords: Amazons, Black Sea, scythians, stasis, colonization.

1. Introduction

The Archaic period was one of the turning points in the history of Hellenistic colonisation, not only along the shores of the Mediterranean but beyond, and at that time the eastern edge of the known world was Euxinus Pontus. As geographical knowledge of the region advanced, the Greeks began to establish their first colonies, first along the northern and western coasts, and then in the areas to the south and east[3].

[1] Complutense Univ. of Madrid and Isabel I University of Burgos: asblade@msn.com. ORCID 0000-0001-9642-5502

[2] SANCHEZ SANZ 2019a, 25.

[3] GATES (2015, 41) prefers to call these settlements "Greek presence", a generic term that leaves aside their formal characteristics (*apoikía*, cleruquia, emporion) and therefore excludes other possibilities such as the creation of districts in already existing cities, transitory nuclei generated by the most diverse motivations and not only commercial ones, etc.

The reasons for this process are manifold: the increase in the population of the metropolis[4], situations of stagnation, we could even assume that the commercial relations that existed in the Cretan-Mycenaean period tried to be maintained to some extent[5], even if they were reduced[6]. In the Bronze Age, however, Greek curiosity about what was originally called *Pontus Axenos* led some adventurers to explore it. We are talking about a time when the myths of Greek heroes began to develop in connection with these places, perhaps inspired by them[7]. Herakles, Theseus, Bellerophon[8], Jason's Argonauts, the sons of Atamantius, etc. travelled there when it was believed that only a few brave men had decided to risk leaving their borders for the unknown, to make their way among the barbarian peoples and mythical creatures that populated those liminal regions beyond the Dardanelles[9]. It is interesting to note, however, that the Greek word *xenos* was used to designate both 'foreigner' and 'guest', implying a much more heterogeneous concept of the foreign than we might at first think.

The existence of the 'other' is an imperative need for self-definition, and the Greeks prided themselves on possessing a culture, laws and customs that they understood to be far more civilised than those in opposition[10]. For Greek culture, the barbarian was not just one who spoke a language different from their own[11], but one who belonged to an alien and therefore intrinsically different culture, so that the more aspects that made him totally different, the more so. They had to search for resources, land, but also to get to know the "other"[12] in order to know themselves, without excluding the adventurous component.

2. The Amazon Kingdom

On its shores lay the supposed home of the Amazons, but also legendary kingdoms such as Colchis, which attracted intrepid men hoping to go down in history for their exploits. These explorations began with the naming of these places, a way of removing them from the halo of mystery, such as the Hellespont, the Propontide, Lake Meotis, and so on. These early

[4] Contrary to what Blundell (1995, 66) argues, if there really had been an established programme of infanticide at times of population increase, there would have been no need for the creation of colonies.

[5] KUHRT 2002 268; GATES 1999, 278.

[6] SOLOVYOV 2015, 42.

[7] KOROMILA 1991, 16.

[8] Palephates (*Peri Apiston*, 28) says that Pegasus was not a winged horse but the name of his ship.

[9] IVANTCHIK (1998, 307) argues that tales such as those of Herakles, Troy, the Argonauts, etc. would have originated in local mythical traditions whose appearance in Hellenistic legends would have been promoted as a form of inclusion of that local "History", rather than as an attempt at differentiation from the "Other". However, it is difficult to believe that such stories, especially those concerning the greatness of heroes and patriotic deeds, were intended primarily as such.

[10] Although the pejorative character implied by this term was not universally recognised by the Greeks (ROMILLY 1993, 283-292 and 1994-1995, 187-196).

[11] LÉVY 1984, 5-14; BASLEZ 1986, 284-299.

[12] SANCHEZ SANZ 2017, 146.

seafarers would become part of Greek mythology, like the Argonauts. It is said that they not only reached Pontus, but also set out on other voyages in different regions, as if they wanted to combine all Greek seafaring daring in a single story. Despite the difficulty of assigning a date to a mythical story, Jason's voyage has been placed in the Hellenic imaginary around the 13th century BC[13], and therefore its members preceded the Achaeans who travelled to Troy by one or more generations. We can deduce from this voyage that the Argo may have had twenty-five oars on each side, in keeping with the period, and that its mission was to reach the apparently rich region of Colchis.

There is another reason to note the importance of this journey, for although we have six classical accounts that list its members, one of them, Ps. Apollodorus (*Epít*. 1, 9, 16), includes a woman, Atalanta. It is surprising that she was allowed to take part, given the qualities associated with her courage and bravery, and we cannot attribute her inclusion in Apollodorus' account to the increase in women's freedoms that seems to have occurred in the Hellenistic period, since other authors who list their members and wrote later, such as Hyginus or Valerius Flaccus, do not include her. Apollodorus' source was probably earlier and perhaps not used by them, which adds to its interest. We could analyse it as a reminiscence of earlier times (in this case the Bronze Age) when the status of women allowed such adventures, but we will not go too far, even though the characteristics that define Atalanta are in many cases similar to those of the Amazons themselves.

However, the mere knowledge of the existence of such distant places would imply voyages even earlier than those of the Argonauts, or knowledge of stories told by sailors and traders of other peoples. The region was located on the east coast of Pontus, in the Caucasus, rich in metals and therefore known for its craftsmanship. They traded with Mesopotamia and Asia Minor, from where the story of their existence would have reached Greece via the ports located on the Near Eastern coast. When the Argonauts managed to reach the Propontide, the story suggests that only Herakles knew the land. This would place his adventures with the Amazons in an earlier time and make him their guide, as one of Jason's companions. Herakles had met the Amazons during his ninth labour, and his mythical kingdom is often associated with southern Pontus, where his famous capital, Themyscira[14], was located. As we shall see in many of the Amazonian tales, including those associated with Herakles, some of the unknown places that became sacred landmarks of these legendary voyages were associated with the propitiatory actions of the gods in the face of such a risky undertaking, intended to facilitate the creation of later colonies.

[13] KOROMILA (1991, 17) places it between 1280-1260 BC.

[14] Call. *H.* 648; Plu. *Dem*. 19, *Thes*. 27 and *Pomp*. 35; A. R. 2. 373-377, 96-1000; Hellan. *Fr*. 172; Hec. *Fr*. 203; Str. 1. 3. 7; D. S. 2. 44-46; Prop. 3. 14. 12 and 7. 71; Iust. *Epit*. 2. 4; App. *Mith*. 1. 69; Ps. Apollod. *Epit*. 2. 9; Philostr. *Her*. 23, 56-57; Arr. *FHG.* 58 (cfr. Eustath. ad Dionys 828); Ps. Callisth. 3. 25-27; Amm. 22.8; A. Pr. 720-730; Hdt. 4. 110 and 9. 27; Paus. 1. 2; Ephor. *FHG.* 103.

The existence of shrines, the celebration of rituals, the graves of Argonauts (A. R. 2. 927-928) or other companions of expeditions in these places not only offered the colonists a link to a heroic patriotic ancestor, but also promised their favour and protection for the fortunes of these colonies. On the other hand, they were settling in strange territory, far from home and usually surrounded by unknown and possibly hostile peoples. In fact, as Koromila points out, actions such as the works of Herakles were considered by the Greeks to be "exorcisms" in which the obstacle of fear of the unknown was overcome[15]. As a result, these places were considered favourable to the arrival of settlers, who no longer had anything to fear because they had been "purified" by the heroes who had left their mark as a sign of the superiority of Greek culture.

3. The settlement of South Pontus

In the Bronze Age, navigating the high seas through unknown waters was too risky. The search was on for safer coastal routes that could provide the necessary supplies. The route close to the southern coast of Pontus was apparently less dangerous than the northern one, with its strong currents and frequent storms[16]. This may have contributed to the fact that the earliest and most common accounts of the Amazons locate their home in this coastal region of Pontus, rather than in the even more unknown northern region. In order to reach this place without crossing the open sea, part of the route required a stopover in the no less dangerous Thracian territory. But the 1,200 kilometres or so that make up the southern coast of Pontus are no less difficult.

Mountains such as the Köroğlu Mountains and the Pontic Alps form a natural wall running parallel to the coast almost from the Bosphorus to the Caucasus, which stopped cloud formations and winds from the north. The resulting formation of storms, or the occurrence of storms that were fed by the rivers of northern Anatolia, created a situation that made navigation extremely difficult. As if that were not enough, these rivers were widened by these rains to such an extent that their torrents carried all sorts of elements with them, such as logs and mud, which were washed ashore in violent deltas, creating currents opposite to the usual ones in Pontus, which in many cases led to the formation of dangerous whirlpools.

Undoubtedly, the first Greek navigators of Pontus had good reason to pass on these dangers, which were eventually personified in mythical creatures that were not very hospitable. Reaching the realm of the Amazons, the Gates of Hades or Colchis were feats that were impossible for those Bronze Age penteconter without seeking permanent shelter and sailing close to the coast. Nevertheless, the first Greek colonies in Pontus were to be located there, in those safe places that would become landmarks. These voyages allowed them to be

[15] KOROMILA 1991, 26.

[16] KOROMILA 1991, 22.

known earlier, as they must have been developed in Mycenaean times and served as the basis for the mythical stories they became[17], although colonisation in these places did not begin until the 7th century BC.

Furthermore, the oldest known journey to Pontus is that of Pseuso Scylax (dated late 4th or early 3rd century BC), although it is thought that he was a compiler who collected traditions from previous journeys[18], and we do not know whether he was referring to information obtained during the colonisation period or perhaps even earlier. However, that as early as the Chalcolithic period (late 5th millennium B.C.) there were permanent trade contacts between the Balkans and the Volga-Urals. These were based on the exchange of products, especially copper from the deposits where it was mined in these regions. Authors such as Koromila argue for the probable existence of small settlements prior to the great wave of colonisation, which would serve as a basis for it[19]. Many of these settlements would have emerged from the first ones and would have tried to locate themselves as close as possible to the new metropolis, since the latter initially supplied them with manufactured products for trade during the Archaic period[20].

Various authors argue that, although the existence of land routes would be fundamental, these would be complemented by another maritime route through Pontus, the existence of which could explain the wealth of sites such as Varna (located on the western coast of Pontus, less than 200 kilometres south of the mouth of the Danube) in this period[21]. In addition, other necropolises have been discovered along the next stretch of the Pontic coast which, unlike those further inland, contain dozens of princely tombs (such as that of Durnakulak). Their grave goods are not as lavish, which would also be evidence of the enrichment of the elite through maritime trade in Pontus[22].

However, in both Varna and Durnakulak, male burials are clearly distinguished from female burials. The latter contain a greater quantity of metal objects and weapons, as opposed to utensils and ornaments in the female burials[23]. We cannot defend the existence of the mythical matriarchal societies that various authors associate with the Copper Age[24], nor can we rule out a prominent role for women, especially considering that at least 10% of these graves have been attributed to men only on the basis of the objects found in them (weapons), and not through a proper analysis[25] that could help us understand this type of society in

[17] KOROMILA 1991, 26.

[18] ROSTOWZEW 1993, 25.

[19] KOROMILA 1991, 34.

[20] COOK, DUPONT 1998, 44; ERSOY 2000, 406.

[21] CHERNYKH 1992, 46; KHOL 2007, 39.

[22] KHOL 2007, 47; TODOROVA 2002, 277.

[23] TODOROVA 1999, 245.

[24] SANCHEZ SANZ 2023c, 65.

[25] BAILEY, HOFMANN 2005, 221.

greater detail. The existence of this route, which predates the Mycenaean period by almost three millennia, could have served as a basis for the Achaean explorers, whose knowledge would have been passed on until the start of the great colonisation of Pontus from the 8th century BC onwards.

A third of the works of Herakles are set in Pontus, followed by the Argonauts, Theseus and even Odysseus himself after the Trojan War[26]. All of these could only reflect voyages undertaken in distant times, perhaps even before the Trojan War. In addition to such accounts of the pre-Greek presence in the region, archaeology also helps us to understand the interest in Agamemnon's homeland. Excavations on the western Black Sea coast have uncovered numerous remains of Mycenaean artefacts, such as metal ingots with linear engravings (at Cape Kaliakra and Cherkovo, Bulgaria) dated to the 14th-11th centuries BC, and underwater research has recovered more than 150 anchor stones from the Bulgarian coast (at Cape Kaliakra, Nessebar, Sozopol and elsewhere [27]) that are mentioned in the Argonauts' account. Similarly, Mycenaean artefacts have been found on the coast of the Sea of Marmara, as well as fragments of pottery in northern Anatolia, which, although located some 130 km from the southern coast of Pontus, cannot be ruled out as having been transported there via a coastal trading post[28].

In northern Pontus (Trachtemirov, near Kiev), objects very similar to the greaves characteristic of the Mycenaean world[29] have been found. These elements could suggest that Mycenaean sailors were the protagonists of these stories[30] and that their mythology formed the basis for much of the later Greek corpus[31]. The characteristics of this part of the coast are very different from those of the north and south. The coastal hinterland was much more extensive than in the southern part of Pontus, allowing for greater agricultural use. The geographical proximity to Greece and the better conditions may have attracted the Mycenaeans to this area earlier than elsewhere, where they arrived later. Thus, between the 14th and 13th centuries BC, this was probably the time when the unknown and inhospitable region of Pontus began to reveal its secrets, which would help the subsequent wave of colonisers to have details of what they would find.

One of the most important early Greek colonies in southern Pontus, Sinope, was founded much later and is associated with the Argonauts (Str. 12. 1, 11; V. Fl. 5. 108; A. R. 2. 947). Its site had two bays that acted as natural harbours, probably known long before as part of the landmarks mentioned in the mythical voyages. Archaeological work has shown that the site

[26] SOLOVYOV 2015, 9.

[27] POROGEANOV 1980, 69-72.

[28] TSETSKHLADZE 2006, 77; FRENCH 1982 21-28; MELLINK 1985, 558; RE, 1986, 349-350 and 353; HILLER 1991, 208.

[29] HILLER 1991, 211; HÜTIEL 1981, 47.

[30] KOROMILA 1991, 191.

[31] NILSSON 1983, 137.

was not inhabited before the 7th century BC, although it is far from complete, as the inland area and the harbour have not yet been investigated. This colony was important because it was very close to the mouth of the river Thermodonte, the place where many authors have placed the mythical capital of the Amazons, and which therefore allowed the Greeks to have direct knowledge of this region, until then part of the liminal world.

The establishment of other colonies on the west coast, such as Apollonia and Odyssos (south of Cape Kaliakra), has been dated to the same period. This may indicate that Greek colonisation activity in this period followed an initial route across the Bosphorus eastwards, following the southern coast of Pontus, and northwards towards its western counterpart, its proliferation in such a short space of time perhaps due to the 'race' for the best areas to settle. The north coast soon suffered the same fate, with important colonies such as Olbia. There, from the 7th century BC onwards, the mouths of the great rivers Danube, Dniester and Dnieper would provide access to river navigation that would reach much further north, with Greek ships of the time even sailing close to the Donets River, a tributary of the Don, which flows into Lake Meotis (Sea of Azov). However, the enormous volume of water that they dumped in this region created strong currents, some of them underwater, and dangerous deltas that made it one of the last to be settled. These same masses of water, together with the strong winds that created storms and permanent fog banks, and the darkness of the water caused by the shoals of fish that struggled to get out through the Cimmerian Bosporus, would make it a death trap for inexperienced sailors.

Probably between the late 8th and early 7th centuries BC, the Hellenes settled in the Hellespont and the Propontide[32] in order to control the Bosphorus Strait. The Aeolians, Ionians and Dorians spent the next half century continuing their coastal expeditions, reaching Asia Minor between 1100 and 1000 BC[33]. Gradually, these newcomers turned Pontus into a 'Greek sea', where the fear of navigating its open waters had disappeared, and communication not only intensified but also shortened the time needed to do so. The distance between modern-day Crimea and the Bosphorus was only 500 km in a straight line, which could be travelled in two or three days, whereas by coastal navigation the distance would be almost doubled. Colonies such as Trapezunte on the south-east coast, originally associated with the Amazon kingdom, were only five or six days away. The Aeolians of Lesbos may have been the first to initiate this process in the 8th century BC, when they decided to settle on the Asian coast of the Dardanelles entrance after occupying the ruins of Ilion. Shortly afterwards they added the enclaves of Sigeion and Aquileion, but it was the Milesians who decided to venture even further afield, at the beginning of the 7th century BC, after founding Abydos, also on the Asian coast of the Dardanelles, they would do the same with Cyzicus, Proconesus and Panormo.

[32] KOROMILA 1991, 52.

[33] THOMAS, CONANT 1999, 80-83.

As a result, they came to control most of the Porpontide and the island of Marmara, not even venturing to the opposite Thracian coast for fear of occupying Thracian territory. The Aeolians, for their part, did the same with Priapus and Parion, until they had secured Hellenic domination of the entire Asian coast from the Dardanelles to the Bosporus. This, what we might call the first colonial phase, was completed in just one generation (about 30 years[34]), and it was only in the following generation that the invasion of Pontus would begin, after the decision had been made to face the mythical dangers there. This is also related to the possibility of understanding that the Hellenes hoped to achieve with the indigenous population. In this first attempt at colonisation, the Phrygians and Lydians were of a similar culture to the newcomers, so relations did not pose too many difficulties; but the picture was quite different when dealing with the Thracians on the west and north-west coast, or the Scythians to the north and north-east of Pontus.

We know from Homer (*Il*, 2. 851 and 856), when he lists Priam's allies, that they included the Paflagonians and peoples such as the Halizones, known for their silver deposits. The former controlled part of the southern coast of Pontus and the latter probably settled close to it. Mythology associates the latter with the Amazons, whose mythical kingdom, according to some authors, was located between modern Samsun and Trebizond[35] on the south-eastern Pontic coast. Samsun is situated in a wide bay, about 75 km west of the mouth of the Thermodon, the option most favoured by the classics as the home of the Asian warriors. It was a place that would have been passed by the ships of Herakles, Theseus or the Argonauts, who would have encountered these people and recorded their existence as part of the stories told much later by Homer.

Conversely, the Thracians were not as condescending as the Anatolian peoples. They did not readily allow colonisation of the coastal strip they controlled in Pontus, and were just as reluctant to colonise the northern Aegean as they had been in the past. Perhaps it was the difficulty of settling there that was largely responsible for the colonisation of Pontus. At the time it was made up of different, sometimes warring, peoples living in small settlements. They were regarded by the Greeks as barbarians with whom, despite their warlike nature, they managed to trade, importing handicrafts that were highly prized among them[36], especially by the elite. They were not a sea-oriented culture like the Hellenes, for they had a large territory, but the Aeolians, Ionians and the other colonising peoples were reluctant to send expeditions to their shores because of their traditional aversion.

They were not a sea-oriented culture like the Hellenes, for they had a large territory, but the Aeolians, Ionians and other colonising peoples were reluctant to send expeditions to their shores because of their traditional hostility. They were not alone in their interest. In the first

[34] KOROMILA 1991, 54.

[35] KOROMILA 1991, 36.

[36] SOLOVYOV 2015, 10.

quarter of the 7th century BC, the Megarians also wanted to join the wave of colonisation and, not wanting to settle near the new Milesian cities, they decided to try to get away from the existing tensions with their Athenian and Corinthian neighbours, their first step being the foundation of strategic sites on the Propontide, specifically on the dangerous Thracian coast. There they founded Selimbria and Byzantium[37], but also other cities on the Asian coast such as Astracus (Nicomedia) and Chalcedon. Their intention seemed to be to gain control of the passage between the Sea of Marmara and Pontus.

These settlements were also important because they were close to the Bosphorus Strait, from where they could continue their colonisation work even further afield, following in the footsteps of their ancestral hero, Herakles. Later, in the middle of the 6th century BC, the Megarenses decided to risk a new expedition and succeeded in founding the colony of Heraclea Pontica on the south-west coast of Pontus, very close to the strait, in honour of the Greek hero. Almost 125 years had passed since their arrival in the Propontides. The relations between Greece and this region were intensifying. At the end of the 7th century BC, the Samians wanted to participate and founded the colony of Perinthus very close to the Megarian settlements on the Thracian coast. The Thracians apparently did not try to prevent this, and from this time on many more settlements appeared.

Gradually, by the end of the 6th century BC, Pontus had become that "Greek sea" which, while retaining some of its dangers, would no longer remain the land of mysteries and mythical beings that it had once been considered to be. The Ionians alone established more than a hundred colonies on its shores[38], if we include those on the upper reaches of the great rivers that flowed into it, to which we must add those of the rest of their competitors. We know little of those intrepid times that has not come down to us through Greek or Roman accounts. Peoples such as the Scythians, Thracians, Cimmerians, etc., did not use writing to inform us of the foreigners who had recently arrived in their territories, and when, on rare occasions, they did, they chose to use their own language.

4. Northern Pontus

Once they had overcome their initial fears of the inhospitable region, it was time to venture into the northern part of Pontus, between the Danube and the Don, where the

[37] Mythology tells us that Byzantium was founded by the eponymous king Bizas (Str. 7. 320; Tac. *Ann.* 12. 63). When the Thracians attacked the city, he defeated and pursued them, but the Scythian king Odrisus took advantage of this to attack the city and it was his wife, Fidaleia, who managed to avoid the siege by fighting alongside the women of the city, who threw snakes at the Scythians from the city wall. This story was not the only one; many others associated with numerous peoples throughout antiquity recount similar situations where women acted against the enemies attacking their cities. In this case, however, it was the case of the Greek Magyars, who would have acted in this way against what their male counterparts understood to be appropriate, even in extreme cases (as Homer recounts of the Trojan women's participation in the war).

[38] KOROMILA 1991, 74.

Milesians made contact with their Scythian neighbours. In the strategic Istros delta, they founded Istris (*c.* 630 BC) to control this trade route, followed by other settlements such as Dionysopolis[39], Tomis, Odessa, etc. They were not the only ones; nearby, Megarian foundations such as Kalatis and Mesembria began to appear. There, the favourable attitude of the Thracians towards the settlers allowed them to advance further into Scythian territory, where they were just as receptive to the new settlers as the Thracians. Trade relations were soon established with those whom the Greeks called the Scythians, believing them to be descended from one of the sons of Herakles, a Scythian sired by a half-woman, half-serpent creature (a chthonic association[40]).

Herodotus (4.5-7) offers three versions of the origin of the Scythians: the one mentioned above, which he puts down to the colonists who settled in northern Pontus, the one that traces them back to Zeus through his son Targiteus and his union with the daughter of the deity associated with the river Boristhenes (stressing that this is the one defended by the nomads themselves), and a third, more plausible one[41]. They are interesting in that they have been studied and alluded to by many authors in an attempt to associate the Scythians with the theory of the trifunctional society[42], and even suggestive in that some minority classical sources speak of the existence of not one but three Amazon kingdoms (A. R. 2. 378-390) whose existence could be linked to Scythian mythology. Moreover, the similarities are even greater when some authors refer to them as "*sauromatids*" (Plin. *HN*. 6. 39) to emphasise this relationship once again, while the Scythians drank the blood of their first slain enemy and only after this test could they attend the annual celebration reserved for men who had passed the test (Hdt. 4. 64-65; Arist 7. 1324b). To be left without a husband or unable to attend was a source of shame and the process to avoid this was similar.

In the case of the Indo-Europeans, early historians, geographers and ethnographers evoked kinship on the basis of linguistic differences since antiquity. Large groups of peoples, such as the Celts, Germans and Scythians, were defined in part by linguistic criteria. The 19th century was the height of the study of Indo-European culture and its associated languages in search of a common root. The various major "branches" that we know of soon emerged and

[39] Inscriptions referring to female rituals performed in honour of the Great Mother Pontic have been found here (Lazarenko et al., 2013, 50).

[40] USTINOVA (2007, 65; 1999, 74) associates it with the goddess Api-Ge, related by Herodotus (4. 59) to Gaia and to the aquatic element in the Avesta. Others like Grakow (1980, 76) simply associate it with a primordial Mother Goddess.

[41] However, coins minted by the Scythian king Athenaeus (mid-4th century BC) in the Greek colonies of Pontus and featuring the head of Herakles have been found, which may indicate that Scythian rulers came to accept this version of their ancestor as their own; just as depictions of his half-human, half-serpent companion (who may be related to an important deity in the Scythian pantheon) are also common in numismatic iconography (IVANTCHIK 1999, 212). If we can go further, the appearance of numerous ornaments (earrings, etc.) in many of the Scythian tombs and showing representations of gorgons could be especially accepted as an element of representation of that half-serpent primordial mother.

[42] GRAKOV, MELJUKOVA 1954, 43; RAEVSKIJ 1977, 73-74.

show great differences in their autonomous development, distinguishing Indian and Iranian, Sarmatian (Balto-Slavic), Thracian (which included Latin and Greek!), Gothic (Germanic), Celtic and Albanian. However, this definition will be hotly contested, and the long list of associated languages we know today is still incomplete. The old binary articulation between 'centum' and 'satem' languages has now been abandoned in favour of a more articulated and precise system.

As far as the Eurasian groups, their interrelations, their evolution and their migrations are concerned, we will focus more on the large Indo-Iranian (Aryan) group, classified as such because of its great similarities with the most archaic period, and associated with peoples such as the Scythians, Sarmatians, Alans, Sakas, etc. The Illyrians, for their part, although socially similar to the nomadic steppe groups (to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the tribes that make up this group), their language has posed a challenge to linguists to the point of being considered an independent branch of Indo-European, although this primordial character is not disputed. Be that as it may, the search for this linguistic origin has led experts to proclaim a focal point for the beginning of many of these cultures (Proto-Greek, Proto-Iranian, etc.), from which successive waves of migration settled them in what would become their traditional territories. There, the survival of autochthonous ethnic substrata would have favoured the development of differences between the main branches of the Indo-European language, contributing to the fragmentation of their initial characteristics, which are now defined as an ethnic group.

Dumezil's positions will not be discussed here, as this is not the purpose of this study, let alone the dispute over the common origin, which archaeology is far from being able to prove, or the difficulties of arguing phenomena of cultural, linguistic, etc. convergence with a primordial common past, although there are interesting aspects in this respect. What we can highlight is the majority defence that Indo-European culture must have been patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal[43], because this makes it difficult to defend the existence of matrilineal rather than matriarchal societies among the groups descending from it. However, it would not prevent societies with more or less parity[44] from existing within this possible structure, as may have been the case among the nomadic tribes of the steppe in the Iron Age[45], as opposed to other less egalitarian groups. On the other hand, the trifunctional theory applied to Indo-European religion has always clashed with the defenders of the possibility of a primordial and universal Mother Goddess, sometimes reaching intermediate points through the assumption of tripartite primordial deities (goddess, god, son, daughter, or with a triple character in the same figure).

[43] LEBEDYNSKY 2014, 70.

[44] SANCHEZ SANZ 2023, 835; 2020b, 17.

[45] SANCHEZ SANZ 2024b, 197-198.

Regarding Eurasian cultures, there are social differences between members of the same branch which make it difficult to defend this trifunctional theory, such as the priestly caste of the Persians as opposed to its non-existence among the Scythians, if we exclude the Enareans, as well as in the political sphere, etc. Similarly, his assumption about Scythian origin myths seems to be poorly founded[46]. Lebedynsky argues that Indo-European vocabulary related to the agrarian world is surprisingly rare in the Indo-Iranian cultures that developed in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages, which he attributes to the abandonment of agriculture by these societies in favour of a nomadism in which pre-existing terms were used until they disappeared[47].

We cannot be sure, but if possible we could apply the same system to the situation of women in these societies, where the change in the economic system led to a greater need for women's collaboration, and this led to the abandonment of a patriarchal system as marked as the inherited one. Although we are not going to enter into the discussion about the chronological moment in which the Indo-European culture could have existed (since it is based between the Paleolithic and the 4th millennium BC, in an endless debate), it is important to know the region in which it is thought that it could have settled, perhaps between the Volga and the Ob, an area that would become the homeland of many of these nomadic Iron Age peoples (Scythians, Sarmatians, Sakas, etc.). The intention here is to show that the increased social importance of women did not happen at the same time in different places (at least in the pre-Iron Age), nor is it often possible to associate it with a nomadic economy. We cannot ignore the elements that most of them have in common and which are useful in understanding the level of interaction and influence that existed. We refer to kurgan burials (although on an artistic level the animal style and other peculiarities would also imply common elements[48] because most of these cultures practised this system at different times and places in the East and even further afield.

This fact did not escape the attention of Gimbutas, who, starting from Central Asia, explained the emergence, in the 5th millennium BC, of several agropastoral cultures linked to the original Indo-European nucleus, which would have maintained customs linked to it, which can be seen in their burial sites, the patriarchal system, the importance of cattle, horses, military matters, etc. These would be in contrast to the Neolithic cultures of the Danubian tradition, where the physical types (proto-European) would not show so much stature, strength, etc., and whose societies would be characterised by being peaceful, sedentary and more egalitarian. However, this theory, which has been used to partly explain the importance of the feminine in cultures such as the Minoan, Mycenaean, etc., has aspects that are difficult to resolve. In mainland Greece itself and elsewhere in Europe, Iron Age

[46] SANCHEZ SANZ 2020a, 23.

[47] LEBEDYNSKY 2014, 75.

[48] SANCHEZ SANZ 2023a, 19.

societies were predominantly patriarchal, with very limited influence for women in general, a change that is difficult to explain on a common egalitarian basis. Similarly, many of the Iron Age nomadic steppe cultures would show more egalitarian societies, so they would start from very patriarchal and socially unequal groups.

In the Eurasian context we might, perhaps reluctantly, attribute it to the change in the economic system, although we will see that there were more egalitarian sedentary cultures and other nomadic cultures that were not at all egalitarian. Whereas in the European case the economic system did not change because the agrarian predominance was maintained in the face of such a social change. Therefore, although we can use this model to explain linguistic similarities, etc., it has shortcomings in other areas. Similarly, Gimbutas associates proto-European cultures with a preponderance of female deities (though not exclusively), which would have shown a change towards patriarchal pantheons, whereas in the Indo-Iranian groups the patriarchal pantheon would have been maintained, never presenting a predominantly feminine aspect a priori.

However, if we consider the theories of the spread of mother-goddess worship in Asia, it does not fit this theory either. It is assumed that Indo-European religion was patriarchal from the beginning, that the possible development of such cults would have occurred locally (with greater or lesser diffusion), and that although this may have been an influential factor in considering the role of women in such societies, this was not always the case. There are cities and cultures where this importance seems to be attested (Ionia, many of the colonies of Pontus, etc.) and where we know that the situation of women was not particularly prominent, at least not as it would be in other societies such as the Scythian or the Sarmatian, which had a multifaceted pantheon with important male and female divinities. This is important because the status of women in these societies does not seem to have depended on such a religious situation, not even in the Amazon world created by the Greeks, where they worshipped a male god (Ares).

According to the prevailing theory, the Kurgan cultures developed in four stages, during which several waves of migration (in the 5th, 4th and 3rd millennia BC) contributed not only to the spread of Indo-European characteristics, but also, in many cases, to their imposition on the indigenous populations living in Eastern Europe. This theory presupposes that the cultures included in the proposed designation had very similar characteristics, when this was not always the case; while it would require, at the very least, the appearance in Europe of cultures that had the main characteristic that defines them, burials in kurgans or the funerary use of ochre.

At the same time, this argument rules out local or predominantly local developments in favour of an invasion of Indo-European peoples. However, while such a population transfer may have been possible, we cannot rule out the possibility that, even if the resulting cultures showed characteristics associated with the Indo-European world (linguistic, etc.), the

predominance of the local element may have retained some of those characteristics which were their own and which could explain the differences that exist in many respects between European and Asian cultures. This is why the Kurgan theory still has many unclear and sometimes contradictory aspects, although it is useful in many respects and needs constant revision on the basis of new discoveries.

We have the contribution of an object of extraordinary value, not only for our knowledge of the mythical tradition associated with the creation of the Scythians, but also because it allows us to compare its account with that of Herodotus. We are talking about the Tabula Albana[49]. It contains an inscription which gives the version associated with Herakles, but with additional information. Although Herodotus did not mention the name of the mother of his children, here he mentions her as Echidna, and we should not be surprised since this is a creature from Greek mythology that fits the description perfectly. He also names their father, this time curiously as Araxe (which could be related to the river Aras, which flows south of the Caucasus, a place associated with the Amazon myth), whom Herakles would have defeated before taking them.

In this version only two sons were born and not three, Agatirsus (a name derived from the people of Agathyrsi, who the Greeks believed lived north of the Thracians and were associated with the Scythian culture, who, according to Herodotus, shared their women) and Scythians. He adds little more, but we do have a third version of the same account, this time thanks to Diodorus (2. 43), which authors such as Ivantchik consider to be the closest to the Scythian original that would have been collected at Olbia[50]. He begins by pointing out that the Scythians originally lived near the river Araxes, which associates the name of the son of Herakles with their supposed original homeland, from where they would have moved north to Pontus. He indicates that the characteristics of the Scythian "mother" are the same as those we have seen, but he does not indicate her name either, and this time he makes her father Zeus rather than Herakles. This union would have produced an only son, Scythian, who would become the first king of his people. However, the *Catalogue of Women*, a work attributed to Hesiod (*fr*. 150, 15-16), again refers to Herakles as her progenitor, which could indicate that this version is the one best known and accepted by the Scythians and the Greeks themselves.

However, despite its plight, we must be cautious in considering a movement that was strongly influenced by Russian Marxist Scythologists and by the Engel postulates on primordial matriarchy. It is also interesting to note that Herakles, the Greek hero par excellence, is related to the Scythians, since to make them his descendants is to make them half-Greek, and therefore contrary to the sense of "otherness" traditionally associated with them in classical sources[51]. While Raevskij attempts to explain this as an attempt by the

[49] The story is only 4 lines long (IG XIV, 1293A, 1. 94-97).

[50] IVANTCHIK 1999, 215.

[51] HARTOG 1991, 41-45.

Greeks to establish a Hellenocentric[52] system, it is more likely to be seen as an interest on the part of the Greek settlers to establish points of contact with those on whom the survival of their settlement depended and with whom they hoped to establish trade relations. It is significant that the partner of Herakles was a wild and borderline creature, and that the hero himself is closely associated with nature, freedom and wildness, because this would explain the differences between the two cultures and allow them to maintain their opposition to the Greeks despite their ancestry.

It seems that Targiteus had three sons (by an unnamed mother): Lipoxais, Arpoxais and Colaxais; which posed a problem when it came to one of them inheriting power over the Scythians. One day (apparently as divine gifts) a plough[53], a yoke, a vessel and a sword fell from the sky, all made of gold and burning hot from the journey. Only when the youngest, Coloxais, approached them could they be touched, and it was agreed that he must be the one to occupy the throne, although each of them stood as the ancestor of one of the Scythian tribes. The account of Herakles also makes him the father of three sons, to whom he bequeathed a bow and a golden belt[54], indicating that only the one who succeeded in drawing it would become king. Only the youngest of them, the Scythian, will succeed, although again all of them were ancestors of several other tribes.

The latter is the more plausible version, and the one preferred by Herodotus. He states that they arrived in the steppes from the east in the 7th century BC, just before the arrival of the colonists, or at about the same time, when they were forced to leave their original homeland under pressure from the Masagetes. Some authors place their homeland in the area of the present-day Iranian province of Lorestan[55]. Their interest in trading with the Greeks, who were so skilled at working metal, was reflected in the elite's acquisition of exquisitely decorated and richly ornamented vessels. This interest favoured not only the survival of these settlements, but also the establishment of lasting trade relations that could even produce hybrid populations. However, these interactions were not always peaceful, as there were difficult moments when the Scythians took control of these colonies by force, even though the inhabitants provided them with defensive elements. Nevertheless, they were allowed to continue living in these places, maintaining their customs and traditions, until the passing of the centuries sometimes facilitated this cultural mixing and hybridisation.

[52] RAEVSKIJ 1977, 161-171.

[53] In spite of the classical references to the important Scythian trade in cereal exports, archaeological remains have not yet located any iron ploughs associated with this culture, without which it is difficult to understand the high level of production. (PARZINGER 2009, 82).

[54] IVANTCHIK (1999, 214) considers the belt to be a symbol of the Indo-Iranian rites of passage of initiation, associated with integration into the Indian Brahmin caste and religions such as Zoroastrian and Mazdeist, which he uses to participate in the trifunctional theory that would mark the religious caste among the Scythians, although we cannot be sure.

[55] KOROMILA 1991, 77.

Despite this influence, the Scythians remained faithful to their way of life and customs, which did not include writing. Their interest in the sea was similar to that of the Thracians, Cimmerians, Paflagonians and other earlier inhabitants of these shores. They were a people with no maritime knowledge, who had no need to brave the inhospitable, foggy, wet and rugged coastal areas, battered by storms and gales, which made up most of them. These were mostly nomadic groups who needed and had vast steppe territories in the interior. The Greeks, on the other hand, lacked the fertile land at home to support their growing population, but they had the means, the maritime know-how and the courage to take risks in an undertaking that must have cost many lives. There they found the abundant raw materials they needed[56] and which these peoples enjoyed without having to fight for them in their homelands.

More than forty rivers flow into Pontus, most of them, and many of the most important ones, in the north-western part of its coasts. By navigating them, it was possible to reach the Carpathians, modern Ukraine and even the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus Mountains via the Fasis (Rioni). The Don (Tanais) is lost in Lake Meotis (Sea of Azov), but it joins the Volga inland in the steppe and follows it to the Caspian Sea. The Dnieper (Boristhenes) flows through modern Ukraine and almost reaches the Baltic Sea. The Danube (Istros) continues into the Balkans and Central Europe. The Dniester (Tiras) runs parallel to the Bug (Hipanis) and reaches modern Poland. Navigable rivers, rich in fish, connected vast regions and promoted both cultural exchange and economic development, helping to irrigate the fertile land along their banks. They never proved to be an insurmountable obstacle for these peoples, as their riverbeds often froze in the cold seasons, allowing passage without the need for boats. Nor, or even less so, for the Greeks. In Mycenaean times, the Dnieper was the route for the amber trade that reached Agamemnon's homeland[57], and the myths of Apollo led him to travel these regions in search of the Hyperborean maidens, as depicted on the pediment of his temple at Delphi.

In the 6th century BC the Greeks reached the mouth of the Dniester and founded Nikonion. It is believed that the Scythians and Thracians were not interested in the area until the first quarter of the 6th century BC, as excavations in the region show that it was uninhabited at that time[58]. The problem of establishing a secure border between the Thracians and the Scythians is far from solved, although it seems that the area between the Dniester and the Danube was traditionally under Scythian control. Similarly, with the exception of the Trojans, the Scythians seem to have had access to the coastal areas of their territories only as part of the seasonal migrations necessitated by their animal husbandry[59],

[56] KOROMILA 1991, 79.

[57] KOROMILA 1991, 84.

[58] KOROMILA 1991, 122.

[59] GAVRILYUK 1999, 138-139.

since the areas used as winter pastures were located there. In fact, the dating of the settlements and the remains found in the necropolises associated with them have shown, as in the case of Berezan, that the burials of the local population in these necropolises began only a few decades after the establishment of the settlement

In the colonies of northern Pontus, this would imply the existence of a period of contact between the newcomers and the indigenous population, before the latter were integrated into them or into their *chora*[60], thanks to the transfer of land on lease by the settlers and the authorisation to trade in the city markets[61]. Prior to this, the settlements may not have been permanent or very small. The existence of autochthonous elements in the *chora* of numerous colonies in northern Pontus has been archaeologically proven[62], but given that it was the Scythians who permitted such settlements and that their primary relationship was economic, it is more likely that the settlers themselves sought such proximity and that exchange in their markets was desired by both sides, as they needed the products their new trading allies could supply them with.

The first settlers were traders interested in the region's abundant raw materials, such as iron, copper and food. These were essential supplies for their metropolises, given the social and political problems they were experiencing at the time due to external pressures. The Scythians would have allowed such settlements until, between the end of the 7th and the beginning of the 6th century BC, the interest aroused by the products of metropolitan origin made available to them by the colonists made it possible for them to open up to the integration of the local population. Indeed, from the earliest days of the Cimmerian Bosphorus colonies, a wealth of foreign pottery has been found at various sites, which would indicate not only constant contact but also a shared interest in foreign products[63]. This was not a Greek permission to settle in their *chora*, but a prior agreement for the establishment of the colony between both parties, which implied mutual, regulated and beneficial commercial relations. In fact, the importance of the indigenous population would be even greater, since we know that many of the settlers married local women[64], with all that this would imply for the social and cultural organisation of these settlements. Without the raw materials they used for trade, their profits would have been considerably reduced, and the processed products they imported from their metropolis would not have found an adequate outlet.

In the 7th century BC, local raw materials were exchanged for processed objects, mostly vase painting, which is abundantly attested in Scythian burials of this period. This

[60] SOLOVYOV 1999, 3-4; 2015, 101.

[61] Regardless of whether these indigenous groups had attained a high social status in these colonies or remained socially and politically relegated in them, as Graham argues (1964, 106-107).

[62] ROGOV 2005, 196-199.

[63] VINOGRADOV, KRYZIICKIJ 1995, 159-160.

[64] VINOGRADOV 2015, 130; MOREL 1983, 134; HANSEN 2000, 146.

demonstrates the high value placed on it by local elites. Large quantities of Rhodian-Ionian pottery have been found in Scythian fortified centres such as Belskoye, as well as workshops where local craftsmen may have worked on its production and redistribution[65]. In the first centuries of the existence of these new settlements, it seems clear that the percentage of pottery coming from the metropolis of the Anatolian coast is much higher than the remains found in mainland Greece[66]. However, these percentages would fluctuate over time, with an increase in the number of continental pieces and those of imitation manufacture to the detriment of the former. This type of object is important for our study because, as we will see later, some of the most important sites where a greater number of vases with Amazon scenes have been found are located in northern Pontus, which could reflect a particular interest in this mythical theme on the part of the Scythians.

The oldest Greek colony in northern Pontus was the Milesian Olbia (c. 630 BC), located in the delta of the river Hippanis. A wealth of pottery (containing wine and oil) from Chios, Samos, Rhodes, Athens and other Ionian cities has been found there, as well as bronze mirrors[67], which would have been in great demand among the Scythian female population. As a result, Olbia became one of the most important Greek importing colonies from its foundation until the 4th century BC[68]. The area between the Dniester and the Bug rivers was extremely fertile thanks to its watercourses, which made it easier for the Scythians who settled in this part of their territory to abandon their traditional nomadic life and become sedentary farmers, using these colonies to sell their surpluses. The territory controlled by Olbia[69] also included the mouth of the Dnieper (Boristhenes), named after the people who inhabited it, the Boristhenites (Plin. *NH.* 4. 82), according to some sources. Beyond it lay the Tauride, also called the Tauric Chersonese (Crimea), a peninsula connected to the mainland by a narrow isthmus, which, thanks to a vast plain that occupies 80% of its surface, allows it to be described as an extension of the Eurasian steppe[70].

Once again, the Milesians were the first to decide to occupy a favourable position on their south-western coast. However, the area was controlled by a Scythian tribe, the Tauroi, who were known to Herodotus to be ruthless to anyone who came to their land (Hdt. 4. 103; Str. 7. 4, 5). Foreigners were sacrificed to an unnamed virgin goddess whom the Greeks identified as Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon and priestess of Artemis. It was thought to be the sanctuary of Orestes, built when he fled from the Furies for his crime. Apparently the Milesians abandoned the settlement in the face of local resistance and tried the south-eastern

[65] BRAUND 2007, 36.

[66] SOLOVYOV 2015, 93.

[67] JACOBSON 1995, 43.

[68] BOUZEK 2000, 11.

[69] HANSEN, NIELSEN 2004, 936-937.

[70] KOROMILA 1991, 135.

shore. There they had better luck and in the early 6th century BC they founded Theodosia at the entrance to the Taman peninsula. It was not until the last quarter of the 5th century BC that the metropolis of Heraclea Pontica decided to venture there and found the fortified city of Chersonesus[71].

The Taman Peninsula and the nearby Kerch Peninsula formed the strait known as the Cimmerian Bosporus (Kerch Strait), which gave access to Lake Meotide. The Greeks called it a lake, rather than recognising it as a sea, because it was formed by the mouth of the River Don and was not navigable for heavy ships. Its shallow depth (12.8-14.6 m), the width of its sandbanks and its high silt content prevented it from being navigable. Nevertheless, at the end of the 7th century BC[72], the Ionians established settlements on both sides of the strait, such as Panticapea[73], Hermonasa and Phanagoria. Recent archaeological work has uncovered a large number of rich Scythian tombs in the area, containing a wealth of handicrafts not only from these colonies but also from Athens itself, Samos, Chios and Sinope.

This situation testifies to their commercial importance, as well as the expansion of import-export routes[74], whose objects were in great demand by the Scythian aristocracy and also by the Thracian aristocracy further west. Many of these objects were made in the Greek style in their subject matter and execution, but others were made by these craftsmen as commissions[75], applying the Greek style to Scythian scenes and representations. In the course of time, many pieces were also made by "barbarian" craftsmen after learning from them. Vases have been found signed with foreign names such as "Lidos" or "Scythians", who may have worked as metecians or slaves in these colonies[76].

Several classical authors considered the Tanais River[77] to be the border between Europe and Asia (Str. 9. 1, 5; Plin. *NH*. 4. 78; 5. 47), and when the Greeks explored the far shore of the Cimmerian Bosphorus, they decided to establish their most remote colony there, at the mouth of the Don River, also called Tanais (Taganrog[78]), between 660-630 BC. Ceramic remains

[71] This new colony did not improve relations with the Scythians settled in Crimea. (KOSHELENKO, KRUGLIKOVA, DOLGORUKOV 1984, 16).

[72] HANSEN, NIELSEN 2004, 945. Panticapea and Hermonasa are considered to be the most ancient. (TSETSKHLADZE 1998, 44-49, 55-57.

[73] Black-figured vases found in the necropolises of Panticapea during the Archaic period were very rare, as in many other colonies in Pontus, but many red-figured vases appeared in the same contexts during the Classical period, perhaps due to their consolidation as trading centres. (ROSTOWZEW 1993, 171).

[74] KOROMILA 1991, 139.

[75] SCHAPIRO 1936, 10-12.

[76] COHEN 2000, 13.

[77] Ps. Plutarch (*Fluv*. 14) states that the river Tanais was formerly called Amazonio, but was named after the son of the Amazon queen Lysipe who threw himself into it. Servius (C. A. 11. 659) suggests that the Amazons lived near the river Tanais rather than near the river Thermodon.

[78] Supposedly, the Amazons who joined the Scythians in founding the Sauromathian people landed near this settlement. Hdt. 4. 20.

similar to those found in Scythian kurgans between the Don and the Kagalnik (near Lake Meotis[79]) have been found there[80]. However, the discovery of Greek pottery at present-day Krivoroshie, 400 km upstream, dated to the 7th century BC, could indicate the earlier existence of a temporary[81] but very important trading post at Tanais[82], which was destroyed by the Scythians in the third quarter of the 6th century BC[83], before being reoccupied and becoming permanent. This is evidence of the importance of this region, which was exploited not only for its natural wealth around Lake Meotis, but also as a frontier between two continents, which for centuries was the last stop on the northern silk route.

This region is also important for our analysis, since several classical authors noted that after the abduction of Antiope by Theseus, the Amazons had to cross the Cimmerian Bosphorus on their way to Athens (D. S. 4. 28). In this adventure, some of these sources point out that they needed the help of the Scythians, who were already present in this region in the Bronze Age. This is not possible on the basis of the chronology of Scythian settlement north of Pontus.

The Thaurids were known to the Greeks long before this colonisation process took place. The protagonists of the first voyages that reached the area reported that the region had been occupied by the Cimmerians[84] before the Scythians, until they expelled them shortly before the arrival of the Hellenes. They were also a nomadic people of warriors on horseback, who must have migrated towards the Caucasus in the first half of the 7th century BC (using the route known as the Caspian Corridor, the only one linking the northern steppes with the Near East -Khol, 2007, 65), in the direction of Anatolia[85].

We know that on their arrival they sacked several important cities, including Sardis (Hdt. 1. 15), very close to Miletus. It is possible that these actions partially triggered the beginning of the Milesian colonial interest[86], since some of their colonies were founded after this episode (such as Istros). This evidence would refute the view of Ehrhardt[87], who argues for a

[79] SCHILTZ 2001, 41.

[80] From the 4th century BC, coming from Chios, Samos, Thasos, Lesbos, etc. We even know of Punic imports from North Africa.
(SCHILTZ 2001, 102).

[81] More than 5,000 pottery fragments of all kinds have been found there. (KOPYLOV 2000, 68).

[82] KOROMILA 1991, 143.

[83] KOPYLOV, LARENOK (1998, 107-114). The same would have been true of other commercial centres such as Kepoi, Myrmekion and Porthmeion, whose archaeological remains show a layer of destruction at the same time. (KUZNETSOV 1992, 32, 42; VAKHTINA, 1995, 32-33; VINOGRADOV, 1999, 288). Not only in that region, but also in the lower Dnieper area, settlements such as Yagorlytskoe, all of which showed the first signs of defensive structures of the colonisation process. (RUBAN 1983, 289; VINOGRADOV, FONYAKOV, 2000, 96).

[84] SANCHEZ SANZ 2021, 6.

[85] IVANTCHIK 2001, 308.

[86] AVRAM 2003, 284.

[87] EHRHARDT 1983, 20.

period between 680-650 BC when the same Cimmerian threat would have temporarily halted their colonial urge, and which Graham disputes[88]. It cannot be ruled out, however, that not only the Cimmerian threat, but also the immediate campaign which the Lydian king Giges launched against the western Ionian cities after their expulsion, may have contributed to, or been the real cause of, this colonial zeal[89]. Although he failed to take Miletus or Smyrna, other cities such as Colophon were unable to resist (Hdt. 1. 14). What is interesting about this process is that the Milesians sought a new homeland along the Pontic coast, which included the very place of origin of the Cimmerians. Perhaps they thought it had been abandoned, or perhaps they simply did not know exactly where they had come from.

The Caucasus was a natural barrier separating the Middle East from the Eurasian steppes, stretching between Pontus and the Caspian Sea, and its westernmost spur was very close to the Taman peninsula. But even such a mythical mountain range could not stop settlers from looking for new places to settle. On the northeastern coast of Pontus, they founded Pythios (now Adler) and then Dioscorias in the mid-6th century BC, very close to the mythical place where, according to mythology, Prometheus was chained to the Great Caucasus by his father Zeus. The same Greek imports arrived there as in the rest of Pontus, especially pottery from Miletus, Chios, Samos, Clazomene, etc., at an early stage, and later from other centres such as Athens itself.

Trade routes grew, both with regions outside Pontus and between the colonies themselves and the indigenous peoples. There was nothing mysterious left in Pontus. Even imitations of pieces made in the metropolis, either by locals or by settlers from the metropolis, were soon produced in these settlements or in nearby places because of the high demand[90]. This sometimes makes it difficult to know whether they were made there or imported, and in what proportion. In any case, these objects were always in the hands of the local elite. Abundant Clazomenian pottery has been found in the area bordering the Sea of Azov since the early 6th century BC and will appear in other colonies as distant and important as Naucratis.

The entire Pontic coastline was completely colonised and controlled by the Greeks within a century. From the first settlements on the Propontide (8th century BC) to the site of the punishment of Prometheus, some 3,500 km of barely explored and previously uninhabited coastline was continuously settled by colonists who transformed the inhospitable sea into Euxinus Pontus. Little is known about the initial relations and interactions between the Greek settlers and these peoples beyond the settlements in their *chora*, apart from the fact that many of them came to live and work within the walls. This situation contradicts theories that

[88] GRAHAM 1987, 124-129.

[89] SOLOVYOV 2015, 57.

[90] This kind of elements, as well as many others, show Herodotus' mistake (4. 75-80) when he states that the Scythians were reluctant to adopt customs, etc. of other peoples.

argue for a completely separate form of interaction between the two groups in these places, or even make the Greeks importers of cultural traits, but never recipients of them[91]. Apart from the importance of these sites for the knowledge of the nomads of the western Eurasian steppe and their interactions with the Greeks, an interesting aspect of this process concerns the predominance of female cults in the eastern and northern colonies of Pontus[92].

Jacobson explains this by pointing out that they existed there before the Greeks arrived, and the Greeks would have adapted these foreign deities to their pantheon in order to maintain their cult[93]. Many of them were associated with agriculture/fertility (such as Demeter or Cybele), but others had other aspects through deities such as Aphrodite, Artemis, etc. Archaeology has made it possible to recover many figurines dedicated to them, as well as the existence of temples dedicated in these colonies, which authors such as Jacobson associate with female Scythian cults related to the goddesses Tabiti or Argimpasa[94]. It is difficult to accept this suggestion, since many of these colonies are not in Scythian territory, but it is interesting that the Greeks themselves decided to assimilate these female deities and continue their cult over and above their main gods, who formed a patriarchal pantheon. We can assume that this was an attempt to syncretise the religious sphere in order to favour relations with the indigenous inhabitants of these regions, thus favouring their survival as settlers and their commercial development, but it also reflects a predominance of female cults in those regions associated with the Amazon universe, which could be linked to the importance of the feminine in these nomadic peoples (at least in this period).

The study of the burials of the nomadic cultures of the Archaic and Classical periods is of interest to us because many of them contain important elements, not only in terms of knowledge of the social role of women in these cultures, but also as containers of pieces that include Amazon representations in their trousseau. Likewise, the interactions between these peoples and the ancient colonies, as generators of these elements, are equally important in explaining their existence. The funeral rites of the Greek immigrants in Pontus included both cremation and inhumation[95]. The former was used only for adults and was more common in the western and northern colonies[96]. However, the basic burial rite in mainland Greece was

[91] Herodotus (3. 99-100) notes that many Greeks and barbarians maintained their ancestral religious traditions despite this interaction.

[92] BURKERT 1985, 176-179; BERGER 1985, 5-23; JACOBSON 1993, 214-229.

[93] JACOBSON 1995, 57.

[94] JACOBSON 1995, 57-58.

[95] KURTZ, BOARDMAN (1971, 329). Herodotus (5. 8) notes that among the Thracian aristocracy both practices were also used interchangeably. An example of this can be seen in the Rhodian burials studied at Ialyssos. (GATES 1983, 19).

[96] Lungu 2015, 51. More than 20% of the graves studied in Berazan were cremations (LAPIN 1966, 120-121). Although later excavations reduced this figure to 15% between the 5th-4th c. BC (Gorbunova 1969, 20-25). However, in other Pontus colonies, such as Tomis, the figure rises to 70% and in Orgame to 96% (LUNGU 2015, 52).

inhumation[97], as was the case during much of the Mycenaean period[98] or in Hittite Anatolia in the 14th century BC, where cremation was reserved only for rulers[99].

The use of cremation in settlements during the Greek colonisation period has been attributed to the presence of indigenous elements in these communities, who would have practised cremation[100]. Their rich grave goods have been associated with the elite[101], which would indicate the existence of mixed settlements. However, this is not always the case, as the Scythians practised burial in northern Pontus, as shown by the study of more than 3,000 tombs throughout their territory[102], dated between the Archaic and Hellenistic periods. We do not know the reasons for this, as it could have been either an attempt to distinguish themselves from the indigenous population in terms of burial practices, or the survival of this type of rite, which was common on the coast of Asia Minor, where it was practised by the Hellenes in the colonising metropolises.

Some authors point out that the reasons for this choice must have been different in each of these places[103]. In Phrygia, burial was replaced by cremation only because of the increasing influence of the Eastern Greeks, but in Pontus the situation was reversed. This could be an indication that the main burial ritual of the Eastern Greeks was cremation, so that the colonies of Pontus, in contact with cultures where burial was predominant, adopted this custom or kept their own, depending on the influence or closer relationship they had with the native populations, using one or the other system in relation to a personal choice of the deceased[104].

The importance of the burial rituals of the eastern Greeks in the early western colonies of Pontus was to be maintained over a long period. Initially they had a higher percentage of cremations (as at Orgame and Istros), although they declined in importance in the later northern foundations, perhaps due to the influence of the rituals of the indigenous peoples (Scythians)[105]. It would be more difficult to point to the Thracians as the promoters of such a change, since it was not so pronounced on the western coast, where they practised both[106]. Even among the Getae tribe (Hdt. 4. 93), who occupied the coastal region of Pontus and with whom the colonist settlements had the most contact, cremation predominated.

[97] HANFMANN 1963, 55.

[98] However, cremation became very important in the later periods. Nilsson (1950, 350) points out that the burning of the body and the offerings was done simultaneously in the search for its complete destruction and the rite was inspired by the burning of offerings to the gods (Hdt. 6. 38; Paus. 2. 20).

[99] RIIS 1948, 41.

[100] SKUDNOVA 1988, 36-172; BESSONOVA 1991, 92-99; VINOGRADOV, KRYZIICKIJ 1995, 122-126.

[101] GRACH 1999, 323.

[102] SKORYI 1996, 40; CHERNENKO 1994, 45-53.

[103] ROOSEVELT 2003, 123.

[104] LUNGU 2015, 52.

[105] As is the case in Berezan (TREISTER 1999, 13).

[106] GERGOVA 1986, 233.

Curiously, Thucydides (2. 52; 6. 71) associates the practice of cremation with epidemics or military invasions, and this is defended by Cawkwell in order to attribute the Greek colonisation of Pontus to possible pandemics or climatic changes rather than to problems of overpopulation[107]. Be that as it may, the use of tumuli for both types of burial was widespread in these regions, especially in Pontus from the beginning of the colonial period, and millennia earlier in indigenous societies[108], as well as in the vast majority of Eurasian nomadic cultures from the Danube to Manchuria. Its spread among the Greeks may have been related to the influence of these cultures.

The cult of the founder-hero is attested in many of these colonies, as well as in classical mythical accounts. Before the Archaic period, however, there seems to have been little record of this practice[109], so its development may have been inextricably linked to the process of colonisation[110]. In this way, journeys to distant places became mythical tales that, despite their existence, gave legitimacy to the metropolis and its settlers, affirmed their identity as a group and ensured their survival[111], since for many people the myths were based on real events. This legitimation was necessary in the case of colonial settlements such as the *apoikias*, since they had not only an economic but also a political organisational structure[112]. The prior appointment of an *oikistes*[113] may have served to give him a prominent role in this structure, distinguishing him from the agrarian klerukias and the more commercial *emporion*[114].

With regard to pottery, we know that it was one of the most important objects of import and trade in Pontus, including pieces decorated with Amazon iconography. The black-figure technique appeared in Greece at the beginning of the 6th century BC[115] and became an important new visual media[116]. Mythological and ritual themes were prominent in this type of work, as well as scenes from everyday life[117]. These works formed an important part of the exports from the Greek producing cities to the colonial world in general and to Pontus in particular. A large number of examples have been found in different places that show this

[107] CAWKWELL 1992, 302.

[108] SUMMERS 1995, 172.

[109] ANTONACCIO 1995, 197.

[110] As is the case in Orgame (LUNGU 2015, 55).

[111] BURKERT 1985, 191.

[112] PETROPOULOS 2005, 84.

[113] WILSON 1997, 205-206.

[114] TSETSKHLADZE 1998, 21.

[115] SOLOVYOV 2015, 75.

[116] MIRZOEFF 1998, 48.

[117] The case of the battle scenes in the Archaic Period is different, as these did not refer to specific historical events but alluded to the heroic past, although the weapons or panoply may have been adapted to the moment of execution, which evidences the absence of representations of the hoplite phalanx (LISSARRAGUE 1990, 12; IVANTCHIK 2007, 101).

wide range of iconographic motifs. Some of them, such as animals or fantastic creatures, are associated with memories of the earlier Orientalising period, which would have lasted until the Archaic period[118].

The reason for the appearance of these elements can be found both in the fact that they are associated with mythical stories that would have been represented in these works, and in the recent proposal by Mayor, who makes them out to be imaginary reconstructions that the Greeks would have made when they discovered fossil remains of animals that were already extinct, such as the great dinosaurs[119]. Some of these animals were of the most common type, such as dogs, which appear frequently in Amazon iconography[120], but also other creatures such as gorgons or griffins. A wide variety of references to Greek heroes and gods not only appeared permanently in the iconography of Greek vases, but were also widely exported.

The myths of the Amazons appear on many vessels in the colonial archaeological record, not only in the context of Pontus, and in a much greater quantity than decorated pieces with representations relating exclusively to the life of Greek women, among the numerous scenes of Greek daily life. Works of this type have been found in Berezan[121], Olbia, etc., together with other interesting elements that would become common in Scythian burials. Among these we can highlight several types of bronze mirrors associated with the female context. However, several authors argue that these are not typical of Greek trade, although they show similarities to some of the objects discovered in the Peloponnese[122] in the second half of the 6th century BC. This is due to the similarity of the decoration on their handles, so it is possible that they were objects made in the colonial environment itself for the Scythian elite[123], using them as a model, since they began to appear in the 5th century BC.

5. Conclusion

[118] SOLOVYOV 2015, 75.

[119] MAYOR 2000, 128; BOARDMAN 2002, 33-43.

[120] Dogs and horses became an important element of the funerary ritual. Remains of many of them have been found in different tombs of steppe peoples. Perhaps their importance derives from the support they provided in important activities such as hunting or herding, as well as their role in the religious sphere through their figure as wolves. We know of their relationship with these societies from the Tripole-Kukuteni culture, when they were already part of many human burials and were sometimes deposited alone on top of hills. Dog tusks have even been found prepared as amulets (RYBAKOV 1981, 244).

[121] These include a tondo executed on a Siana goblet (B348) attributed to Painter C and another goblet (B302). (SOLOVYOV 2015, 81; SKUDNOVA 1955, 36). Some authors even speak of the "kerch style" developed in Olbia from 370 BC to produce an enormous quantity of ceramic pieces destined for export (including nearby areas such as the Bosphorus Kingdom), among which Amazon representations, griffomachias, etc., stand out. (SCHILTZ 2001, 114). However, these types of objects were not exclusive to Kerch, as reliefs, vases, etc. depicting Amazonomachias have also been found in other colonial centres (DAUMAS 2009, 111).

[122] At Argos (WALDSTEIN 1902, 264).

[123] This could happen in the workshops located in Olbia (PHARMAKOVSKII 1914, 13; BILIMOVICH 1976, 40), Berazan (DOMANSKII MARCHENKO 2004, 23-28) or in other colonies in Pontus (STUDNICZKA 1919, 7-8; FILOW 1934, 226).

Recently, there has been a widespread belief that Amazon stories in the Hellenistic mythic imaginary emerged from the colonial process that the Greeks undertook in Pontus from the 6th century BC onwards. Specifically, this theory suggests that the frequent allusions to Scythian culture in some Amazon tales, and the apparently elevated status of women in this type of nomadic steppe culture of Indo-Iranian origin, created in the minds of the Greek colonists an image of a warrior woman that would be immortalised and used as part of the tradition. From then on, Amazon stories would flood the Hellenistic iconographic panorama in all known media (vase paintings, reliefs, mosaics, engravings, sculptures, paintings, etc.). However, we must not forget that the first contact between the Greeks and the Scythians could not have taken place before the latter settled in the western regions of the Eurasian steppe and the Hellenes themselves established their first colonies in northern Pontus towards the end of the 7th century BC, while the first pieces decorated with Amazon scenes and the first stories alluding to their mythical tradition date back much earlier.

This situation would be enough to refute these opinions, since Homer himself mentions Amazons three times in the *Iliad*, when he refers to Priam's youth, in connection with the myth of Bellerophon[124] and in his reference to the Amazon queen Myrina. Undoubtedly, the contacts between the Hellenes and the Scythians, as well as the impact of learning about a culture in which women must have played some kind of military role, or at least in many respects a role far superior to that of their counterparts in Greece, came as such a surprise to the Hellenes, came as such a surprise to the Hellenes that they began to include allusions to this culture as part of the development of the Amazon myths throughout antiquity[125], as is the case with the account of the rise of the Sauromathian people in Herodotus, or the mentions of several classical authors who place the Amazon kingdom to the north of Pontus (Ps. Plu. *Fluv*. 15; D. S. 2. 45-46; E. *Ion* 1140-1150; Str. 11. 5. 3; Plin. *NH*. 6. 35) and not to the south, as the traditional version would have it. However, to deduce from this the discovery of the Amazon myths is very different and lacks logic on the basis of the existing sources[126].

The stories of the Amazons originated in earlier times, long before the Archaic period, for it is enough to think that Homer himself did not feel the need to add explanations to his mentions of these warrior women, since the public must have been too familiar with his legends for that to be necessary. Moreover, on the basis of our present knowledge, it is difficult to establish a clear date for their appearance, perhaps in Mycenaean times, but never associated with the nomadic steppe peoples of northern Pontus, for when the first Achaean navigators sailed their waters, the Scythians were still inhabiting their original homeland, perhaps in Central Asia or Siberia.

[124] SANCHEZ SANZ 2019b, 40.

[125] SANCHEZ SANZ 2024a, 81.

[126] SANCHEZ SANZ 2014, 36.

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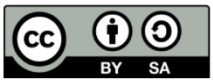

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The Spartan King Leonidas and the Delphian Prophecy

Larisa PECHATNOVA[1]

Abstract: *The article examines the Delphic prophecy, which, as ancient authors believed, concerned the Spartan king Leonidas and was associated with the events at Thermopylae in 480 BC[2]. Herodotus quotes this oracle both in prose and in poetic retelling (VII. 220. 3–4). Researchers have considerable doubts about the authenticity of both versions. We sought to prove that the two versions of the prophecy arose at different times: one, prosaic, and most likely authentic, appeared before Thermopylae, and the second, fabricated in Delphi, probably by order of the royal family of the Agiads, appeared after Thermopylae. It is important to emphasize that the Delphic prophecy, in which the death of the king was declared a condition for the salvation of Sparta, became an integral part of the myth of Leonidas. With the help of this heroic myth, Sparta skillfully transformed the defeat at Thermopylae into a victory for the Spartan spirit. The myth of Leonidas became a central part of the patriotic education of Spartan citizens.*

Rezumat: *Articolul examinează profeția oracolului din Delphi, care, după cum credeau autorii antici, se adresa regelui spartan Leonidas și era asociată cu evenimentele de la Termopile din 480 î.Hr. Herodot citează acest oracol atât în proză, cât și în relatarea poetică (VII. 220. 3-4). Cercetătorii însă se îndoiesc considerabil cu privire la autenticitatea ambelor versiuni. În acest articol am încercat să demonstrăm că cele două versiuni ale profeției au apărut în momente diferite: una, prozaică și cel mai probabil autentică, a apărut înainte de Termopile, iar cea de-a doua, fabricată la Delphi, probabil din ordinul familiei regale a Agiadelor, a apărut după Termopile. Este important să subliniem faptul că profeția din Delphi, în care moartea regelui era declarată o condiție pentru salvarea Spartei, a devenit parte integrantă a mitului lui Leonidas. Cu ajutorul acestui mit eroic, Sparta a transformat cu abilitate înfrângerea de la Termopile într-o victorie a spiritului spartan. Mitul lui Leonidas a devenit o parte centrală a educației patriotice a cetățenilor spartani.*

Keywords: Delphic oracle, Thermopylae, Sparta, Spartan kings, Leonidas, Herodotus, Plutarch.

When we explore any topic concerning the relationship between the Delphic Oracle and the Greek poleis during the Greco-Persian Wars, our main literary source is Herodotus. This statement is fully true for the topic that is the main subject of our research. In this article we will try to assess the authenticity of the Delphic oracle, given to Sparta, according to Herodotus, before the start of one of the most famous and tragic episodes of the Greco-Persian Wars – the battle of Thermopylae in 480. Among modern researchers, the authenticity of this oracle, conveyed by ancient authors both in prose form and in poetic retelling, raises many doubts. The circumstances of the emergence of this prophecy and its various interpretations in ancient sources are also the subject of discussion

[1] St. Petersburg State University, Institute of History, Russia; email: l.pechatnova@spbu.ru. ORCID - orcid.org/0000-0001-037X

[2] All dates here and below are BC.

in the latest literature. We should note that this topic is part of an important plot for the history of Sparta – the influence of the oracle of Apollo in Delphi on the strengthening and growth of the authority of royal power in Sparta[3].

We will consider another topic that is directly related to the problem of the authenticity of the prophecy in question, namely the degree of influence of this oracle on the decisions made by the Spartan king Leonidas.

Since the prophecy that interests us directly concerns the fate of Leonidas, we will turn first of all to the story of Herodotus, as the most valuable evidence. King Leonidas[4], who led the allied army, is the central figure in Herodotus' account of the Battle of Thermopylae. Since Herodotus's text is not always amenable to unambiguous interpretation, we are faced with a number of problems that require solutions. In this regard, the question arises as to what considerations Leonidas was guided by when he made the by no means easy and, from a military point of view, very controversial decision to remain at Thermopylae after he learned that the enemies had entered his rear. Solution of this problem is also the goal of our work. Along the way, we will consider a number of subjects that are in one way or another related to the main topics of the article.

We know extremely little about Leonidas. Although by 480 Leonidas had been in power for about 10 years, nothing is known about his activities before Thermopylae. Perhaps this circumstance is due to the reluctance of the Spartans to discredit Leonidas, who became a national hero after Thermopylae. But what could Leonid be accused of? Despite the lack of direct evidence, some researchers have suggested that King Cleomenes I, Leonidas's half-brother, did not commit suicide, but became the victim of a conspiracy headed by Leonidas as the person most interested in the death of his brother. With caution and reservations, D. Harvey leans towards this version[5] and it is also supported by P. Cartledge. In his opinion, a possible explanation for Cleomenes' death is that this king 'was murdered, and on the orders of the man who succeeded him on the Agiad throne, his younger half-brother, Leonidas. The story about his neat wine-drinking might then have been a mere propaganda smokescreen to cover up the fact of the murder of a king, whose person was sacrosanct, and the complicity in that murder of another king'[6]. I. E. Surikov shares the same opinion. According to him, Cleomenes was declared crazy on the initiative of relatives,

[3] According to ancient literary tradition, of all the Greek poleis, Sparta that was most closely connected with the famous sanctuary at Delphi, not only religiously, but also in military-political terms.

[4] Leonidas (c. 540–480) belonged to the royal family of the Agiads and was the son of Anaxandridas II (c. 560–c. 520). Anaxandridas had three sons from his first marriage – Dorieus, Leonidas and Cleombrotus, and from his second marriage - the future king Cleomenes I (Her. V. 39–41; Paus. III. 3. 9). Leonidas was married to Gorgo, the daughter of his half-brother Cleomenes I, and had a son with her, Pleistarchus (Her. V. 41. 48; VII. 205; IX 10). Since the death of Cleomenes has been dated variously, between 491 and 488, the date of Leonidas's accession to the throne is uncertain (LUPI 2018, 275). He became king at about fifty years of age (for his age, see: GRANT 1961, 21).

[5] HARVEY 1979, 253–260.

[6] CARTLEDGE 2002, 89.

among whom were not only his brothers Leonidas and Cleombrotus, but also Cleomenes' daughter and Leonidas' wife, Gorgo[7]. Although Herodotus does not support this version, it cannot be completely ruled out. A hint of this option can be the words of Herodotus that 'Leonidas had gained the kingship at Sparta unexpectedly' (ἐξ ἀπροσδοκήτου) (VII. 204, hereinafter translated by A. D. Godley)[8].

Let us now turn directly to the events at Thermopylae. As Herodotus testifies, for the first two days the Greeks successfully repelled the attacks of the Persians and even inflicted significant losses on the Persian army. Apparently, the forces at Thermopylae were sufficient to repel the Persian attacks in a bottleneck (Her. VII. 202–203: the number of allies who came with Leonidas to Thermopylae).

However, the Persian detachment of the so-called Immortals, led by the noble Persian Hydarnes, was able to walk along the mountain path and find themselves in the rear of the Hellenes. Herodotus reports on the reaction of the leaders of the allied detachments who learned that the Persians were in their rear. According to him, there was no consensus among them about the current situation: 'Some advised not to leave their post, but others spoke against them. They eventually parted, some departing and dispersing each to their own cities, others preparing to remain there with Leonidas' (VII. 219. 2). From this laconic evidence, it follows that part of Leonidas' army simply deserted. But in the next chapter, Herodotus rehabilitates those who left, saying, 'that Leonidas himself sent them away because he was concerned that they would be killed' (VII. 220. 1). True, this rehabilitation is of dubious order. Herodotus explains Leonidas' decision to let his allies go as follows: 'I, however, tend to believe that when Leonidas perceived that the allies were dispirited and unwilling to run all risks with him, he told then to depart' (VII. 220. 2)[9].

But Herodotus gives one more explanation of Leonidas' decision, strange from a military point of view, to send away the allied contingents: the king, already aware of the inevitability of death, wished 'to win distinction (κλέος) for the Spartans alone' (VII. 220. 4). However, this explanation – unwillingness to share glory with allies - most likely came later, as a romantic version of Leonidas' action. The emphasis in Spartan propaganda, at least since the time of Tyrtaeus, was on the importance of physical fitness, training and ability to fight in the hoplite phalanx. Courage and obedience were recognized as the highest virtues. In this concept, the search for military glory did not occupy an important place[10].

So, the main motive of Leonidas, who made the fatal decision to fight and die heroically in battle, was the imperative learned from childhood, which ordered the *Spartiates* to never turn their backs on the enemy. Apparently, Leonidas at the last military meeting could well explain his firm

[7] SURIKOV 2005, 266.

[8] For a discussion of the murder or suicide of Cleomenes I, see: HUXLEY 1962, 143, n. 603; GRIFFITHS 1989, 26–51.

[9] A. Powell believes that Herodotus' account of Leonidas voluntarily sending away his allies may be an idealized false story (POWELL 2018, 14).

[10] HOOKER 1989, 133.

decision to stay and take the fight by the fact that he 'felt it not fitting for himself and the Spartans to desert that post which they had come to defend at the beginning' (VII. 220. 1). Obedience as a great virtue comes to the fore and in the famous epitaph to the dead *Spartiates*, quoted by Herodotus:

'Foreigner, go tell the Spartans that we lie here
obedient to their commands (τοῖς κείνων ῥήμασι)' (VII. 228. 2).

But in the same Herodotus we also find an alternative explanation for this fatal decision of Leonidas to stay and fight until the last warrior: the king allegedly acted this way, strictly following the prediction of the Delphic Apollo. Herodotus states that Leonidas knew about an oracle[11], received by the Spartans at the very beginning of the Greco-Persian Wars: '... either Lacedaemon would be destroyed by the barbarians or their king would be killed' (ἢ Λακεδαίμονα ἀνάστατον γενέσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων ἢ τὴν βασιλέα σφέων ἀπολέσθαι) (Her. VII. 220. 3). Noteworthy is the fact that Herodotus did not limit himself to only a short prose version of this prophecy, but also cited its second version – a poetic one[12]:

> For you, inhabitants of wide-wayed Sparta,
> Either your great and glorious city must be wasted by Persian men,
> Or if not that, then the bound of Lacedaemon must mourn a dead king, from Heracles' line.
> The might of bulls or lions will not restrain him with opposing strength; for he has the might of Zeus.
> I declare that he will not be restrained until he utterly tears apart one of these'[13] (VII. 220. 4).

Herodotus does not doubt the authenticity of this prophecy, according to which the sacrificial death of the king was supposed to be the price of saving Sparta. Later ancient authors also had no doubt about the authenticity of this oracle (Diod. XI. 4. 4; Plut. *Pelop*. 21).

But Herodotus limited himself to only quoting both versions of the prophecy, without providing their text with any commentary of his own. He also does not say anything about the reaction of the Spartans to the Delphic prophecy, which predicted the death of the king. A. Powell

[11] The volume of sacred power of the Spartan kings was enormous by Greek standards. The Spartan kings, as high priests of the community, constantly interacted with the Delphic oracle and kept records of the oracle's answers (Xen. *Lac*. pol. 15. 1–4). Apparently, the kings not only received predictions, but also interpreted them, and, if necessary, withheld dangerous or secret information. For more information about the relationship between the Delphic Oracle and Sparta, see: KULISHOVA 2001, 264–266.

[12] According to Strabo, at Delphi there was a practice of translating prose oracles into tonic ones: '...the Pythian priestess receives the breath and then utters oracles in both verse and prose, though the latter too are put into verse by poets who are in the service of the temple' (Strab. IX. 3. 5. P. 419, translated by H. L. Jones).

[13] πρὶν τῶν δ' ἕτερον διὰ πάντα δάσηται – verbat. 'Before one of them is completely torn to pieces'. This last line uses the verb διαδάπτομαι (with *tmesis*), meaning 'to tear apart', 'to tear to pieces'. Herodotus' commentators see in it a hint of the mutilation of Leonidas's corpse, carried out on the orders of the enraged Xerxes (HOW, WELLS 1912, on VII. 220. 4).

thinks this is very strange. He recalls that the prophecies that were given to Athens at about the same time (VII. 139–43) are completely different, more obscure and mysterious. Moreover, Herodotus fills his account of these oracles with numerous details: he calls Pythia and one of the leading priests by name (VII. 140–141), he gives various interpretations of these prophecies, the meaning of which was unclear to the Athenians (VII. 142–143)[14].

The question arises whether the oracle given to the Spartans is genuine or composed after the Battle of Thermopylae. The last assumption is supported by the majority of scientists who have ever touched this problem[15]. The historicity of this prophecy was and still is in doubt, primarily because it is too simple, unambiguous, clear enough and accurately reproduces the situation of the battle of Thermopylae. If we recognize it as false, then the question of chronology arises. When, then, could this oracle appear? H. W. Parke believed that the fake prophecy was composed shortly after Thermopylae in order to morally support the Spartans and strengthen their resilience. In his opinion, it could well have been born with the help of one of the Delphic priests[16]. G. Zeilhofer, in turn, believed that the prophecy arose after the battles of Salamis and Plataea, when the fate of Greece had already been decided and it became possible to declare (as was done in the oracle) that after the death of the king, Sparta was no longer in danger[17]. In any case, it is assumed that the fake appeared in the years immediately after Thermopylae.

Already the commentators on Herodotus, W. W. How and J. Wells, definitely believed that this oracle was a *vaticinium post eventum.* In their opinion, this prediction is incompatible with the behavior of Leonidas during the entire military campaign[18]. J. Evans does not recognize the authenticity of this oracle either. He believes that 'the oracle of Herodotus 7.220 bears every mark of a *vaticinium post eventum*, designed to restore morale in Greece after the defeat at Thermopylae...'[19]. Leonidas, deciding to fight to at Thermopylae, could not be guided by this prophecy, since it simply did not exist then. Otherwise, as J. Evans[20] assures, the king would not

[14] POWELL 2009, 41–42.

[15] The authenticity of the oracle was already disputed by K. J. Beloch (BELOCH 1916, 91–93) and Ed. Meyer (MEYER 1954, 348, Anm. 1).

[16] PARKE, WORMELL 1956, II, 44.

[17] ZEILHOFER 1959, 22.

[18] Leonidas was sent at the head of a small Spartan force as an advance guard to encourage members of the Peloponnesian League to join him. (Her. VII. 202). The Spartans planned to send a larger army to help Leonidas after the Carneia had been celebrated. Apparently, the Peloponnesian allies intended to do the same after the end of the Olympic Games (VII. 202–206). The fact that this help was never sent, Herodotus explains by the too rapid development of events at Thermopylae (VII. 206. 2).

[19] EVANS 1964, 231.

[20] EVANS 1964, 232.

have left the troops of the Thespians[21] and Thebans[22] in his ranks. The only condition for the salvation of Sparta was the death of the king alone. The oracle did not require anything more. Even the death of his squad was already excessive.

Another explanation for the appearance of a fake prophecy is given by J. E. Fontenrose. In his opinion, this prophecy is a replica of the original - an oracle from the mythical history of Athens, where we are talking about King Kodros, who saved Athens at the cost of his own life: 'This is surely a *post eventum* composition..., and it repeats the theme of L49... The heroic death of Leonidas and his small company at Thermopylae recalled the old legend: Leonidas, like Kodros, had willingly died to save his city. So Q152 was composed as the oracle needed to fit Leonidas' heroism to the Kodros legend'[23].

In recent times, researchers have tended to be quite cautious in assessing the authenticity of the oracle in question. Thus, Marcello Lupi believes that at least the metrical version of the prophecy cannot be unequivocally assessed: 'I sette versi che lo compongono non paiono, in verità, lasciare molti dubbi in merito a se l'oracolo sia o meno *post eventum* ('The seven poetic lines, whoever composed them, in truth, leave much doubt whether this oracle is *post eventum* or not')[24]. However, the too clear reference to the death of the king, continues M. Lupi, makes us rather inclined to interpret the poetic oracle as appearing *post eventum*[25].

N. Richer[26] shares the same opinion and A. Powell. The latter believes that the name 'Leonidas' corresponds to the lion mentioned in the poetic oracle. And this accordance, as A. Powell thinks, is too exact to be genuine. The authenticity of this prophecy also raises strong doubts due to the lack of features characteristic specifically of the Delphic oracles: double-meanings, difficult to understand allegories, variability of possible interpretations[27].

There are fewer supporters of the authenticity of this prophecy, especially its poetic version. So, for L. E. Rossi, the only guarantee of the authenticity of poetic prophecy was the presence in the text of 'technical incorrectness and stylistic ugliness'[28]. However, his arguments do not seem particularly convincing to us. Another way to 'save' the oracle is to try to connect its appearance with another historical context. According to D. Kienast, it is not prophecy itself that should be

[21] Seven hundred hoplites from Boeotian Thespiae turned out to be the only allied detachment that voluntarily and enthusiastically remained with Leonidas when all the other allies left, not wanting to be surrounded and killed by the Persians. Perhaps the citizens of Thespiae were so actively involved in the fight against the Persians out of a desire to oppose themselves to Thebes, whose pro-Persian sentiments and actions were well known.

[22] As for the Thebans, a detachment of whom also remained with Leonidas, it is difficult to say in what capacity the Spartan king retained them, as hostages, as Herodotus asserts (VII. 222), or as volunteers, according to the defender of the Boeotians Plutarch (Mor. 867a–b = De Her. Mal. 33). This question remains controversial.

[23] FONTENROSE 1978, 78. For this mythical story, see: Her. VII. 25. 2; Cic. Tusc. disput. I. 116; Justin. II. 6. 20.

[24] LUPI 2014, 357.

[25] LUPI 2014, 359.

[26] RICHER 2007, 250.

[27] POWELL 2009, 41.

[28] ROSSI 1981, 208–209.

recognized as a later invention, but the interpretation that Herodotus gives it. A German researcher attributes the origin of this oracle to an earlier episode of Spartan history and connects it with King Demaratus, who was removed from royal power through the intrigues of his colleague in office, Cleomenes I. After the events at Thermopylae, this prophecy, according to D. Kienast, began to be associated with King Leonidas[29].

After this brief overview, we will suggest that both versions of the oracle, prosaical and poetical, arose at different times. The prose version could indeed have appeared, as Herodotus testifies, if not at the very beginning of the war, then at the beginning of the invasion of Xerxes (VII. 220. 3)[30], and the second, poetic version was definitely a prophecy appeared *post factum.* Analysis of the poetic prophecy clearly indicates that it was composed when both the outcome of the battle and the mutilation of the king's corpse were already known. And the mention of 'the might of lions', of course, hints at the commander-in-chief Leonidas.

But if this is so, what prompted the Delphic priests to give the first prose prediction? Perhaps, as has happened more than once in the history of the relationship between the Spartan kings and the Delphic Oracle[31], the main interested party and in this case was the king. Leonidas was no longer young around 480. He had only recently become king, and before that, apparently, he had been intriguing against his half-brother, King Cleomenes. At least, he was suspected of it. During his reign, Leonidas apparently looked for any opportunity to somehow distinguish himself. When faced with a serious military threat from Xerxes' army, it was he who probably went to Delphi for advice and help from the deity. Leonidas most likely wanted to lead the allied army himself and for this he really needed a prophecy suitable for such an occasion. The king hoped that, thanks to the unambiguous prophecy received at Delphi, it would be he, and not his younger colleague Leotychides (reigned 491–469), who would achieve the desired appointment from the ephors. It happened exactly as Leonidas had planned. He probably managed to convince the ephors of the advisability of appointing him as commander-in-chief of the allied forces. It is quite possible that he used the prophecy he received at Delphi as an argument in his favor. It is worth noting that the prose oracle, as well as the poetic one, are built exclusively around the figure of the Spartan king.

[29] KIENAST 1995, 125. See also: KULISHOVA 2001, 265–266; 2001a, 25.

[30] One cannot count on the absolute accuracy of Herodotus' chronology.

[31] For example, the oracle at Delphi helped Agiad Cleomenes I get rid of his rival and enemy, King Demaratus. Cleomenes won over to his side Cobon, 'a man of great influence among the Delphians', and got the answer he needed from the Pythia (Her. VI. 66. 2). There may have been bribery involved. The Delphic priests helped restore power to Agiad Pleistoanax, who was caught taking a bribe from an enemy (he ruled, with a long break, from 459 to 409) (Thuc. II. 21. 1; V. 16. 3; Plut. Per. 22–23). It was rumored that Pleistoanax, burdened by his fate as an exile, turned to Delphi for help and received it (Thuc. V. 16. 2). The rehabilitation of Agiad Pausanias, regent and hero of Plataea, also appears to be linked to the Delphic oracle: the Spartans were repeatedly asked to give Pausanias a dignified burial and erect two monuments in his honor (Thuc. I. 134. 4; cf.: Diod. XI. 45. 8–9) (for the special connection between the Agiad dynasty and Delphi in the 5th century, see especially: DIMAURO 2008, 57–59).

The prophecy speaks of the death of the king as a necessary condition for the salvation of Sparta. There is not a word in it about the necessity of his entire detachment dying along with him. Perhaps, immediately after the needless death of three hundred Spartans (and this is how it might have looked and been perceived in Sparta), Leonidas' decision to remain surrounded and die did not seem so clear-cut. At first, the Spartans hardly appreciated the colossal moral resource that Sparta became the owner of, as it turned out, for many centuries. But the loss of three hundred citizens was a huge blow to Sparta and significantly accelerated the already begun process of oliganthropy (ὀλιγανθρωπία – 'a few men')[32].

Probably when the prophecy came true, the Agiad family began to develop their own interpretation of the events that took place at Thermopylae. It was the Agiads who apparently created the tradition according to which Leonidas committed an act of self-sacrifice (*devotio*). However, their interpretation probably differed somewhat from the state point of view. It seems that different emphasis was placed: the Agiad family particularly emphasized the feat of Leonidas, while the official version focused exclusively on the feat of the three hundred Spartans who died with the king[33]. Both traditions, although different from each other, had Spartan origins. Thus, in the years immediately following Thermopylae, a poetic version of the short prose oracle appears (not without the participation of the Agiads), where the theme of the king's death takes on an epic tone. The Agiads were probably again helped by the Delphic oracle, with which the family had long-standing friendly ties[34].

By the time of Herodotus, the romanticized image of Leonidas as a hero and pious king, selflessly sacrificing himself for the sake of saving his homeland, had already taken shape. This is evident from the unconditionally positive assessment that Herodotus gives to Leonidas. The historian places the king extremely highly, claiming that he was highly admirable as a military leader (VII. 204). It is clear from the context that Herodotus was referring to his military talents. To his assessment, he adds the genealogy of Leonidas, listing all his ancestors back to Heracles (VII. 204). Leonidas' divine origin brings him closer to the Homeric heroes and gives Herodotus's story of Thermopylae an epic scale. This Homeric flavor is further enhanced in Herodotus's story of Leonidas' death and the struggle for his body (VII. 224–225)[35].

According to Herodotus, Leonidas is an excellent commander, not a suicide who destroyed himself and his entire detachment. Herodotus's entire story, as his commentators have noted, 'only implies danger not self-immolation'[36]. Herodotus does not even hint that the fatal prophecy was a guide to action for Leonidas. Only in later historiography, did the concept of the heroic death of

[32] By Spartiate *oliganthropia* is meant the catastrophic reduction of the civilian population of Sparta, which Xenophon already drew attention to (Lac. pol. 1. 1) (see more details: DORAN 2018, 1–106).

[33] LUPI 2014, 354.

[34] LUPI 2014, 353–354; LUPI 2018, 279.

[35] ZALI 2021, 238.

[36] HOW and WELLS 1912, Comm. on VII. 221.

Leonidas and his detachment fully take shape and acquire details. And only then did the version emerge that Leonidas, knowing about his future fate, almost joyfully went to meet it. Thus, Plutarch reports that 'before Leonidas went forth to that war, the Spartans exhibited to him funeral games, at which the fathers and mothers of those that went along with him were spectators' (Plut. *Mor*. 866b = De Her. Mal. 32, translated by W. W. Goodwin)[37]. There is no such evidence in Herodotus.

Leonidas and his army were awarded honors that no one in Sparta had ever received before. Spartan youth was educated by their example. It is not without reason that Leonidas' tomb was placed in the center of Sparta, near the agora and the sanctuary of Athena (Paus. III. 14. 1)[38]. There was also a stele with the names of the Spartans who died with him[39], each of whom, according to Herodotus, he knew by name (VII. 224). This means that the historian has already witnessed the perpetuation of their memory. However, Herodotus does not mention the stele with their names. Apparently, this stele did not yet exist in Herodotus's time. It is very likely that the process of perpetuating the names of the heroes of Thermopylae, having begun as an oral process, was later formalized in the form of an inscription on this stele[40]. All the Spartans who died at Thermopylae were revered as heroes even in Roman times (IG V. 1. 660)[41]. Plutarch explains the tradition of 'bury their dead within the city, and to have memorials of them near the sacred places' by the need to strengthen visual propaganda and bring it closer to the Spartan youth. According to Plutarch, Lycurgus did this in order to 'fill the city full of good examples...' (Lyc. 27. 1–2). Leonidas may have been the first Spartan to be honored with a separate monument located outside the burial site of the Agiads[42].

Sparta made significant efforts to transform the military defeat at Thermopylae into a victory for its political and moral values. The behavior of Leonidas and his detachment was recognized in

[37] According to Herodotus, 'he (Leonidas – *L.P.*) now came to Thermopylae with the appointed three hundred he had selected, all of whom had sons' (VII. 205. 2). If καὶ τοῖσι ἐτύγχανον παῖδες ἐόντες is not a later interpolation, then apparently Leonidas, instead of his usual retinue, consisting of three hundred Spartan 'horsemen' (ἱππεῖς), selected the same number of ordinary Spartans who already had sons and were not part of the Spartan Hippeis (LAZENBY 2012, 68–70). Such an act is quite understandable. The enterprise was indeed associated with increased risk, and the value of the lives of the few Spartans, especially the hippeis, was quite high.

The Spartan Hippeis were an elite troop of three hundred young men between the ages of 20 and 29 who belonged to the 'most distinguished houses' of Sparta (ἐκ τῶν ἐπιφανεστάτων οἴκων) (Dionys. Hal. *Ant. Rom*. II. 13. 1). They guarded the king on campaign (Her. VIII. 124. 3; Thuc. V. 72. 4; Xen. *Lac. Pol*. 4. 3), but were also used within Sparta to carry out particularly important government assignments (Xen. *Hell*. III. 3. 9). Leonidas retained the traditional size of his retinue, but changed its composition.

[38] The placement of graves in the city center was a permitted act, sanctioned according to tradition by Lycurgus (Plut. *Mor*. 238d = Inst. Lac. 18).

[39] LUPI 2018, 279.

[40] ALLGAIER 2022, 101–102.

[41] GENGLER 2011, 153–154.

[42] Burials within city limits were considered exceptional during the classical period. Few were granted this honour: for example, Brasidas at Amphipolis (Thuc. V. 11. 1), Euphron at Sicyon (Xen. Hell. VII. 3. 12), Timoleon at Syracuse (Plut. *Tim*. 29).

Sparta as exemplary and became the ethical imperative that was accepted as obligatory for any true Spartan. According to A. Powell, 'it may be that Sparta's most unusual achievement involving Thermopylae was to create a myth which would propel her own men to generally successful, if often fatal, bravery in the future'[43].

The success of patriotic education based on such models can be judged by the example of Callicratidas, the navarch of 406/5, who succeeded Lysander in this post (Xen. *Hell.* I. 6. 1; Diod. XIII. 76; Plut. Lys. 6). Callicratidas was predicted to die in battle. His death was seen as a condition for the Spartans' victory, which is very reminiscent of the story of Leonidas and Thermopylae. In the aphorism which Plutarch attributes to Callicratidas, the idea is clearly evident that the state is greater and more valuable than the individual: 'Sparta doth not depend on one man; my country will receive no great loss by my death, but a considerable one by my yielding to the enemy' (Plut. *Mor.* 222f = Apoph. Lac. 43. 6, translated by W. W. Goodwin)[44]. In Plutarch and Diodorus, unlike Xenophon, we find a fully formed romantic image of Callicratidas, ready to die to save his fatherland[45].

The myth of Leonidas and his detachment, of course, was not just a myth. Behind it was hidden a certain reality, but it was highly stylized and simplified, following the example of any patriotic propaganda. An integral part of this myth was an oracle in which the death of its king was declared the condition for the salvation of Sparta. Although Herodotus gives both versions of this prophecy as authentic, we have tried to show that, most likely, the prose and poetic versions arose at different times. The first short version may indeed have appeared, as Herodotus testifies (VII. 220. 3), at the very beginning of the Greco-Persian Wars. Leonidas and his dodgy wife Gorgo could theoretically have had something to do with the emergence of such a prophecy, although this in any case remains in the realm of speculation. The second, poetic version, arose already after Thermopylae. It represents an important part of the campaign that began after Thermopylae to glorify the heroes of Thermopylae[46]. Judging by the content of the poetic version, it probably appeared thanks to the efforts of the royal family of the Agiads, to which Leonidas belonged. The Agiads were extremely interested in rehabilitating Leonidas, interpreting the death of his entire detachment as the greatest feat of courage and fortitude of the Spartans. The poetic variant of the prophecy is essentially a commentary on the first short version. It contains the justification of Leonidas, who had no other choice but to sacrifice himself, and at the same time his comrades, for the sake of saving Sparta. It is quite possible that this oracle was created through the manipulations of one of the Delphic priests, friendly to the Agiads.

[43] POWELL 2018, 24.

[44] In Diodorus, Callicratidas declares before the naval battle of Arginusae that he is ready to die (ἕτοιμός ειμι τελευτᾶν) according to the prophecy he has received (XIII. 97. 4–98. 2).

[45] SCOTT 2015, 76.

[46] Let us recall that at the site of the Battle of Thermopylae, a whole complex of tombstones with epitaphs was erected, three of which are quoted by Herodotus (VII. 228).

As for the influence of the prose oracle on the decisions made by Leonidas, we believe that there was no such influence at all. Herodotus does not say a word about Leonidas as a military leader acting under the influence of this prophecy. On the contrary, Herodotus portrays the Spartan king as a talented military leader who made strategically correct decisions. It is not without reason that the historian asserts that '...the one most admired ... was a Lacedaemonian, Leonidas...' (VII. 204), referring specifically to his military leadership abilities. Apparently, Leonidas, not being superstitious, could nevertheless use prophecies, especially Delphic ones, to achieve his goals[47], but he did not necessarily follow them in his activities.

Now let us turn to the question of what considerations guided Leonidas in deciding to remain at Thermopylae even after he learned that he would soon be surrounded. We came to the conclusion that Leonidas's main motive was the firmly established idea from childhood that it was impossible for a *Spartiate* to flee and show his back to the enemy. Not only the Spartans themselves were convinced of this, but all of Greece believed in it. According to Thucydides, 'they (the Greeks – *L.P.*) had thought that Spartans would never surrender their arms, in starvation or any other extremity, but would use them to the last of their strength and die fighting' (IV. 40. 1, translated by M. Hammond). The Spartans were raised on the heroic deeds of their ancestors, which included the value of a glorious death in battle. The heroic death of a Spartan glorified not only himself[48], but also his entire family and was a source of great pride for all the relatives of the deceased (Xen. Hell. VI. 4. 16). So, for Leonidas, as well as for his detachment, consisting only of the *Spartiates*, apparently the question of retreat simply did not arise.

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[47] The Spartan *basileis*, judging by the actions of some of them, for example, Cleomenes I (Her. VI. 61–64; 75. 3; 79–81), were not particularly religious and were not superstitious. This is explained by the fact that they enjoyed greater freedom than the other *Spartiates*, and differed from them in many respects. In particular, they were the only Spartans exempted from long-term stay in barracks schools (Plut. Ages. 1. 1) and the law prohibiting Spartans from freely leaving the country did not apply to them (Xen. Lac. pol. 14. 4). Our sources are unanimous in the fact that the Spartan kings more than once tried to solve their private problems with the help of the Delphic oracle. In times of dire need, the kings managed to interfere even in the process of creating prophecies, asking Zeus at Dodona or Apollo at Delphi such questions to which they could receive only one answer, the one they needed (for example, Agesilaus II: Plut. *Mor*. 208f–209a; Agesipolis I: Xen. *Hell*. IV. 7. 2). Manipulation of divination seems to have been a common practice among Spartan kings. Apparently, in their mentality they were very different from their God-fearing and extremely superstitious fellow citizens. It would have taken a lot of cynicism for any Spartan king to decide to bribe the Pythia and fabricate a prediction that would be beneficial to him.

[48] The names of ordinary Spartans were not written on their graves (Plut. *Lyc*. 27. 2), unlike those who fell in battle, whose names were engraved on tombstones (Plut. *Mor*. 238 d = Inst. Lac. 18).

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Mundus, Remus and the Founding of Rome

Tamás MAGDUS[1]

Abstract: *One of the most important rites of passage associated with the goddess Ceres was the opening of the mundus. The mundus was an object in Rome, the opening of which was a state ritual and held on special occasions. As long as the mundus was open, the spirits of the dead roamed the world, so any activity carried out at that time was threatened by bad omens. Much controversy surrounds the issue of the mundus, since we do not know the form of its appearance, its exact location and origin are also shrouded in darkness. In our study, we are looking for the answer to how Ceres, as an agricultural deity, was connected to the duality of life and death, why the mundus is connected to her figure, and how this appears in the works of Roman authors. We would also like to pay attention to how the mundus Cereris came to be when Rome was founded, what its purpose was and what it could mean to the Romans of the time.*

Rezumat: *Unul dintre cele mai importante rituri de trecere asociate cu zeița Ceres era deschiderea mundus-ului. Mundus-ul era un obiect în Roma, a cărui deschidere reprezenta un ritual de stat și avea loc cu ocazii speciale. Atâta timp cât mundus-ul era deschis, spiritele morților bântuiau lumea, astfel că orice activitate desfășurată în acea perioadă era amenințată de prevestiri rele. În jurul mundus-ului există multă controversă, deoarece nu cunoaștem forma sa, locația exactă și originea acestuia sunt, de asemenea, învăluite în mister. În studiul nostru, căutăm răspunsul la întrebarea cum era Ceres, ca zeiță a agriculturii, legată de dualitatea dintre viață și moarte, de ce mundus-ul este conectat la figura ei și cum apare acest lucru în operele autorilor romani. De asemenea, dorim să acordăm atenție modului în care mundus Cereris a apărut odată cu întemeierea Romei, care era scopul său și ce ar fi putut însemna pentru romanii din acea vreme.*

Keywords: Ceres, *mundus*, Remus, rite of passage, foundation.

Introduction

In Roman religion, from the founding of the city through the monarchy and the republic to the era of the emperors, the goddess Ceres and the cult surrounding her enjoyed significant popularity. This is not surprising in itself, as an agricultural deity, she held the same fundamental reverence as bread and wheat, which were thanked to her during various festivals. However, she cannot be simply labeled as an agricultural deity, as her form, much like the religious life of the Romans, was not homogeneous but rather composed of multiple elements.

[1] University of Szeged; Katona József Museum of Kecskemét: tomimagdus@gmail.com.

Ceres' most defining role is indeed closely associated with agriculture, as she was revered as the goddess of plowing, sowing, harvesting, bread, grains, and fruitfulness. However, her primary and direct role extended to both human and animal, as well as plant fertility. Her presence is also noticeable in various liminal rites, such as birth, coming of age, marriage, and death. The Romans took these rites and ceremonies very seriously because they knew that if they omitted or made a mistake during their performance, the goddess would afflict the crops and animals with drought and illness, affecting the daily sustenance of the Romans. This is perhaps best illustrated by Polybius when he speaks in general about the Roman religious practices:

μεγίστην δέ μοι δοκεῖ διαφορὰν ἔχειν τὸ Ῥωμαίων πολίτευμα πρὸς βέλτιον ἐν τῇ περὶ θεῶν διαλήψει. καί μοι δοκεῖ τὸ παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνθρώποις ὀνειδιζόμενον, τοῦτο συνέχειν τὰ Ῥωμαίων πράγματα, λέγω δὲ τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν: ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον γὰρ ἐκτετραγῴδηται καὶ παρεισῆκται τοῦτο τὸ μέρος παρ' αὐτοῖς εἴς τε τοὺς κατ' ἰδίαν βίους καὶ τὰ κοινὰ τῆς πόλεως ὥστε μὴ καταλιπεῖν ὑπερβολήν. (Polyb. VI. 56. 6–8)

Polybius's description of the Romans' "superstition" finds confirmation in the rituals associated with Ceres, as poorly performed ceremonies could jeopardize inheritance, marriage, and the religious purity of the family[2]. The vague fear and anxious atmosphere mentioned by Polybius were particularly true for those rituals connected in some way to death and funeral ceremonies. Death was a constant presence in the daily lives of the Romans, whether considering the spectacles in the arenas, child mortality, or the wars[3]. Notable instances, such as the suicides of great statesmen or the self-sacrifice of military leaders, further emphasized the theme of death[4]. However, it wasn't just death but also the remembrance of the deceased that was a daily occurrence for the Romans and an essential part of their lives[5]. One crucial element of this remembrance was the opening of the mundus.

The mundus

Mundo nomen impositum est ab eo mundo, qui supra nos est: forma enim eius est, ut ex his qui intravere cognoscere potuit adsimilis illae." eius inferiorem partem veluti consecratam Dis Manibus clausam omni tempore, nisi his diebus qui supra scripti sunt, maiores censuerunt habendam, quos dies etiam religiosos iudicaverunt ea de causa quod quo tempore ea, quae occulta et abdita ea religionis Deorum Manium essent, veluti in lucem quandam adducerentur, et patefierent, nihil eo tempore in rep. geri voluerunt. itaque per eos dies non cum hoste manus conserebant: non exercitus scribebatur, non comitia habebantur: non aliud quicquam in rep. nisi quod ultima necessitas admonebat, administrabatur. (Fest. s. v. mundus, 142.)

[2] MAGDUS 2021, 27–46.

[3] EDWARDS 2007, 5–9.

[4] HEGYI W. 2018, 19–20.

[5] HEGYI W. 2018, 122–125.

The mundus was an object in Rome associated with a special state ritual held on particular occasions. It is one of the most important transitional rites that can be connected to the deity we are examining[6]. These days were declared dies nefasti, during which all public activities were prohibited. This restriction was based on the belief that while the mundus was open, the spirits of the deceased traversed the world of the living, casting shadows of bad omens over any activities conducted during this time. Many questions surround the mundus, as its appearance, exact location, and origin are all debated[7]. The Romans themselves were uncertain when it came to defining the concept. Nevertheless, our sources indicate that the mundus served as a kind of gateway between the realms of the living and the dead. But why and how was Ceres connected to this liminal ritual?

The mundus is mentioned by several ancient authors, with Festus and Macrobius being the most important among them. These references are extremely concise and do not provide much information. Due to numerous uncertainties, reconstructing the opening of the mundus is challenging. It is worth quoting Plutarch's biography of Romulus as a starting point, where, although not providing explanations, important insights can be found regarding the creation of the mundus:

βόθρος γὰρ ὠρύγη περὶ τὸ νῦν Κομίτιον κυκλοτερής, ἀπαρχαί τε πάντων, ὅσοις νόμῳ μὲν ὡς καλοῖς ἐχρῶντο, φύσει δ' ὡς ἀναγκαίοις, ἀπετέθησαν ἐνταῦθα. καὶ τέλος ἐξ ἧς ἀφῖκτο γῆς ἕκαστος ὀλίγην κομίζων μοῖραν ἔβαλλον εἰς ταὐτὸ καὶ συνεμείγνυον. καλοῦσι δὲ τὸν βόθρον τοῦτον ᾧ καὶ τὸν ὅλυμπον ὀνόματι μοῦνδον. εἶθ' ὥσπερ κύκλον κέντρῳ περιέγραψαν τὴν πόλιν. (Plut. *Rom*. 11)

Although Plutarch does not provide a sufficiently detailed description of the mundus, it is immediately noticeable that he does not mention the dead or the underworld. Instead, he highlights that the pit symbolizing the mundus was filled with the first agricultural harvest. Let's set aside these details for now and focus on the author's last sentence, stating that the mundus was the future city's center, around which the city's boundaries were drawn. Fowler already expressed his position on the origin of the mundus in 1912. In his opinion, the mundus originally served as a penus, a granary, where, as described by Plutarch, the post-harvest grain was stored. The mundus was opened at fixed dates, on August 24th, October 5th, and November 8th, during which various rituals related to harvesting were performed[8]. Fowler's response to how the simple penus became the mundus is quite remarkable: the place, as a storage of essential crops for life, simply became sacred and, under Etruscan influence, came under the protection of the ancestors[9].

[6] VAN GENNEP 1960, 10–11.

[7] PEDRUCCI 2018, 628–629.

[8] FOWLER 1912, 26–27. We agree with Fowler's interpretation, but we miss the appearance of the cosmological and religious perspective.

[9] FOWLER 1912, 29.

Fowler's line of thought is logical and well-supported; however, in our opinion, we can examine the question of the original function of the mundus from a different perspective. The designation of the geometric center of the world/city is crucial from a practical standpoint, as all distances, the size of the city, etc.[10], are measured from this point. Every city had its own center, which its inhabitants also considered the center of the world, and they were not far from the truth, as for their own world, their city truly served as the center[11].

The organization of space is a fundamental consideration in the development and self-definition of a newly founded city. Based on the principles of spatial organization, we can form an understanding of the mindset and cultural background of the peoples founding Rome. While this understanding may be fragmentary, it is still suitable for drawing some important conclusions.

The origin of the mundus may stem from various religious ideals, cosmological, and cosmogonic concepts. Although, from a cosmological perspective, the mundus is undoubtedly an organic part of the city's body, it also represents a kind of fault line. By digging a pit into the ground, they disrupted the homogeneity of space and created a new passage[12]. This door connected something with something else, meaning that the cosmos expanded into another world, the underworld.

As Plutarch also points out, the pit we are examining was called mundus, similar to the sky. Regarding the naming, several explanations have been proposed. One suggests that the ceiling of the underground chamber was equipped with a vaulted roof. Although the scholarly literature has supported and almost treated this theory as a fact, archaeologists have not found such an object[13].

Fowler suggests that Cato referred to a pit inside a building, which he believed to be a bowl-shaped depression, and the room did not have any vaulted roof but might rather have been a cellar[14]. However, the shape of the mundus may not have been crucial; the essential aspect was simply that it needed to be dug into the ground[15]. The symbolism of the analogy between the celestial and various cosmological levels can be found in other primitive

[10] Following Ovid and Plutarch, scholarly literature connects the "drawing" of the pomerium with the ritual of creating the mundus, thus forming a unified whole from the two rituals. We also support this theory. However, other opinions suggest that from the perspective of the founding of Rome, this connection is not straightforward. This is because the object we are examining is specifically named mundus Cereris, and it has nothing to do with the ritual of foundation. MAGDELAIN 1990, 182–183. In our opinion, this stance is unacceptable; we cannot separate the two rituals.

[11] For example Cerveteri, Capua, Tarquinia. PEDRUCCI 2018, 626.

[12] ELIADE 1961, 28–29.

[13] PEDRUCCI 2018, 626.

[14] FOWLER 1912, 26.

[15] MAGDELAIN 1990, 182–183. Magdelain denies the existence of mundus at the time of foundation. His reasoning is based on the notion that the mundus only appears in late sources, whose authors project the founding ritual of later Roman cities onto the case of Rome.

societies as well, not just among the ancient Latins[16]. In these communities, the idea emerges that the center is likened to some kind of sanctuary, usually an initiation sanctuary. Death is a transitional rite; the living person leaves the world of the living and enters the underworld. Cosmologically, this can be followed by an initiation ceremony, but it is the departed ones who must perform it. The Latin word mundus signifies an orderly and harmonious universe. It resembles the Greek term omphalos, which precisely denotes the center, the „navel" of the cosmos. In Plutarch, the term mundus initially refers to the celestial spaces above our heads, where the gods themselves reside[17]. Although the three spheres (heaven, earth, underworld) are obviously distinct, they still reflect the fundamental structure of the mundus, where there is the celestial sphere where the gods live, the earth as the dwelling place of humans and living beings in general, and the underworld, the home of the dead and chthonic deities. In other words, the three spheres are tiered and symmetrical, as the world inhabited by humans is surrounded by two places inhabited by deities.

Ceres as the Guardian of the Underworld's Gate

From the perspective of this study, Fowler fails to address, and does not even mention, one of the most crucial questions[18]. He does not associate the opening of the mundus with the gods, despite our sources clearly indicating that it was Ceres who protected the passage. The relationship between the Romans and their gods was based on the pax deorum, and by creating a mundus, they made peace with the chthonic deities[19], as the mundus became a sacrificial site for these gods[20]. If we accept Fowler's theory that the mundus previously served as a penus, it becomes evident why Ceres is connected to the mundus. As the Roman goddess of agriculture, she was responsible for the abundant harvest, the bread made from it, and, more broadly, human and animal fertility.

Cereris qui mundus appellate qui ter in anno solet patere: [IX] Kal. Sept. et III Non. Octobr. et [VI] Id. Novemb. Qui vel omni dictus est quod terra movetur. (Fest. s. v. mundus. 54.)

Festus connects Ceres with the ritual of opening the mundus. The fundamental question is how Ceres, as the goddess of agriculture, became the guardian of the gate to the underworld. One answer is that Ceres was chosen through a process of associative thinking, which then developed into a tradition that gave the goddess a new role. According to

[16] PAILLER 1988, 431; ELIADE 1961, 29–31.

[17] Fest. s. v. mundus, 142.

[18] The relationship between Ceres and the mundus is highly debated. Many doubt that the mundus Cereris is the same as the mundus created by Romulus. COARELLI 1983, 208–226; CHIRASSI-COLUMBO 1984, 418–420; LE BONNIEC 1958, 175–184; MAGDELAIN 1990, 182–183.

[19] PEDRUCCI 2018, 627.

[20] Serv. *Aen.* 3, 134: quidam aras superorum deorum volunt esse, medioximorum id est marinorum focos, inferorum vero mundos; Fest. s. v. altaria 27.: *Altaria ab altitudine sunt dicta, quod antiqui diis superis in aedificiis a terra exaltatis sacra faciebant; diis terrestribus in terra, diis infernalibus in effossa terra.*

Pedrucci, Ceres was an ideal choice because she was connected to all three realms. As a goddess, she belonged to the celestial sphere, but after her daughter Proserpina was abducted, she descended to the earthly realm of mortals to search for her, and through her daughter, she became connected to the underworld, where Proserpina spends half the year with her husband, Dis Pater[21]. Ceres is also connected to the earthly sphere in numerous other ways, as she taught humanity to cultivate grain, was the first to harness animals for ploughing, and was the first to ignite fire[22]. Fundamentally, we agree with Pedrucci's view, yet we believe that Ceres' role can be traced back to even deeper reasons than the story of Proserpina's abduction.

As an agricultural goddess, Ceres has a close connection to the earth. The earth has two functions: it gives life through its produce, and as a burial place, it receives the dead. While Ceres' relationship with grain, plants, animals, and bread does not need further examination, her connection with death has not been the focus of research[23]. We hypothesize that this is precisely what links the goddess to the mundus.

Ceres' connection with death and funeral rites is best illustrated by the marble relief on the tomb of the Haterii. Here, the goddess appears with the gods Mercurius, Proserpina, and Dis Pater. Ceres holds a torch and ears of wheat, Dis Pater holds a staff, and Proserpina is seen with Mercurius' caduceus. Except for Ceres, the other three deities are all connected to the world of the dead: Dis Pater and Proserpina are rulers of the dead, and Mercurius guides the souls of the deceased to the underworld. Ceres' presence among the chthonic gods clearly suggests that she too was connected to the underworld and death[24]. This assertion is supported by the fact that the goddess plays a significant role in two death-related rituals, the porca praesentanea and the porca praecidanea[25]. In the former, a purification sacrifice was required when a family member's death caused contamination[26]. The porca praesentanea sacrifice was likely performed so the deceased's heir could inherit, making the ritual a prerequisite for inheritance[27]. Thus, the porca praesentanea sacrifice was obligatory upon death. The sacrifice was dedicated to Ceres, and at least part of the ceremony had to be conducted in the presence of the corpse[28]. In contrast, the porca praecidanea sacrifice was not

[21] PEDRUCCI 2018, 627.

[22] MAGDUS 2020, 150–157.

[23] SPAETH 1996, 34–41; MAGDUS 2020, 155–156.

[24] DE ANGELI 1988, 152. FIG.

[25] MAGDUS 2021, 29–33.

[26] WATSON 1971, 4.

[27] LE BONNIEC 1958, 92.

[28] SPAETH 1996, 54. considers it possible that this is reflected in the etymology of the term *praesentaneus*. According to this view, the word derives from *praesens*, which means being in the same place, physical presence. However, some ancient historians reject this etymology. According to RADKE 1965, 88–89, the term might originate from *praesementaneus*, meaning before harvest, and likely refers to an agrarian propitiatory sacrifice rather than a burial ritual. This explanation seems forced due to a lack of evidence, and furthermore, Radke rejected the funerary

mandatory[29]. The heirs performed it only if the body was not properly buried or if there was an error during the funeral rites[30]. Neglecting proper expiatory rituals resulted in the family becoming impure, tainted by death, placing them in a socially unacceptable state. This situation could be rectified through the porca praecidanea ritual, during which the sacrifice was also offered to Ceres.

The expiatory sacrifice of a pig to Ceres held special legal and religious significance, as discussed by Cicero in his work De Legibus[31]. According to Cicero, the Romans sanctified the burial grounds with this sacrifice, making them loci religiosi—places surrounded by religious fear and respect. The sacrifice allowed the application of religious laws (religiosa iura), and from that point on, the site was officially considered a burial place. A grave serves as a boundary, physically separating the world of the living from that of the dead. Although the burial site has its place in the orderly world, it is set apart from its surroundings, marked by the blood of the pig dedicated to Ceres. Cicero's assertion that the site of cremation lacks special religious significance until the burial rites, including the pig sacrifice, are performed, supports this idea. These rites sanctify the grave, thus removing this delineated area from the profane world, which was of great importance to the Romans[32]. In the creation of a burial site, the blood of the pig sacrifice is the crucial element. The Romans established a boundary between the world of the dead and the profane world, starting with the pig sacrifice associated with Ceres[33]. The earth gives life because essential plants grow from it for humanity. The pig's blood, spilled during the sacrifice, purifies this land. What grows from the earth returns to the earth. This presents a strange duality, as the purification is carried out with the blood of a pig that has died violently. This process helps to cleanse the soil, ensuring it remains fertile and productive. By performing the sacrifice, the family is removed from their state of impurity, but not only the family— the earth itself becomes tainted because it serves as the resting place of the dead. Therefore, the earth must also be purified, so that the blood-soaked soil can later produce grain.

The Death of Remus and the Creation of the Mundus

In light of this, let us re-examine Plutarch's description of the mundus in a broader context:

significance of *porca praecidanea*. LATTE 1960, 101. suggests that *praesens* means immediate, without delay, as opposed to *novendialis*, the ceremony that had to be performed eight days after death. For more on the latter, see TOYNBEE 1971, 51.

[29] LE BONNIEC 1958, 106.

[30] HEGYI W. 2009, 70–77.

[31] Cic. *Leg*. 2. 55. Cicero does not explicitly mention that a pig sacrifice was offered, but this can be inferred from the referenced sources.

[32] HEGYI W. 2013, 60–66.

[33] MAGDUS 2021, 29–30.

ἐπεὶ δ' ἔγνω τὴν ἀπάτην ὁ Ῥέμος, ἐχαλέπαινε, καὶ τοῦ Ῥωμύλου τάφρον ὀρύττοντος ᾗ τὸ τεῖχος ἔμελλε κυκλοῦσθαι, τὰ μὲν ἐχλεύαζε τῶν ἔργων, τοῖς δ' ἐμποδὼν ἐγένετο. τέλος δὲ διαλλόμενον αὐτὸν οἱ μὲν αὐτοῦ Ῥωμύλου πατάξαντος, οἱ δὲ τῶν ἑταίρων τινὸς Κέλερος, ἐνταῦθα πεσεῖν λέγουσιν. ἔπεσε δὲ καὶ Φαιστύλος ἐν τῇ μάχῃ καὶ Πλειστῖνος, ὃν ἀδελφὸν ὄντα Φαιστύλου συνεκθρέψαι τοὺς περὶ τὸν Ῥωμύλον ἱστοροῦσιν. ... ὁ δὲ Ῥωμύλος ἐν τῇ Ῥεμωρίᾳ θάψας τὸν Ῥέμον ὁμοῦ καὶ τοὺς τροφεῖς, ᾤκιζε τὴν πόλιν, ἐκ Τυρρηνίας μεταπεμψάμενος ἄνδρας ἱεροῖς τισι θεσμοῖς καὶ γράμμασιν ὑφηγουμένους ἕκαστα καὶ διδάσκοντας ὥσπερ ἐν τελετῇ. βόθρος γὰρ ὠρύγη περὶ τὸ νῦν Κομίτιον κυκλοτερής, ἀπαρχαί τε πάντων, ὅσοις νόμῳ μὲν ὡς καλοῖς ἐχρῶντο, φύσει δ' ὡς ἀναγκαίοις, ἀπετέθησαν ἐνταῦθα. καὶ τέλος ἐξ ἧς ἀφῖκτο γῆς ἕκαστος ὀλίγην κομίζων μοῖραν ἔβαλλον εἰς ταὐτὸ καὶ συνεμείγνυον. καλοῦσι δὲ τὸν βόθρον τοῦτον ᾧ καὶ τὸν ὅλυμπον ὀνόματι μοῦνδον. εἶθ' ὥσπερ κύκλον κέντρῳ περιέγραψαν τὴν πόλιν. ὁ δ' οἰκιστὴς ἐμβαλὼν ἀρότρῳ χαλκῆν ὖνιν, ὑποζεύξας δὲ βοῦν ἄρρενα καὶ θήλειαν, αὐτὸς μὲν ἐπάγει περιελαύνων αὔλακα βαθεῖαν τοῖς τέρμασι, τῶν δ' ἑπομένων ἔργον ἐστίν, ἃς ἀνίστησι βώλους τὸ ἄροτρον, καταστρέφειν εἴσω καὶ μηδεμίαν ἔξω περιορᾶν ἐκτρεπομένην. (Plut. *Rom*. 10–11)

The narrative in the two consecutive chapters of the Life of Romulus contains a wealth of information that may be interrelated. The first key moment is Remus jumping over the trench that later marked the city walls, serving as the boundary of the city[34]. The second key moment is the violent death of Remus, Faustulus, and Plistinus. Following their deaths, the burial of the dead takes place, religious experts arrive from Etruria, and the mundus is established. In our opinion, Remus' transgression was the catalyst for the creation of the mundus[35].

Ceres is strongly associated with boundaries and liminality. Although she is not the only deity in the Roman pantheon with such connections, her role related to the mundus cannot be overlooked. Remus' crossing of the boundary does not go unpunished; he loses his life and is buried in Remoria[36]. The exact location of Remoria is uncertain, but it is clear that it was outside the walls of Rome. The fact that Remus had to be buried outside the city limits is no coincidence, as he violated the boundaries and thus offended the deities who guarded them. Romulus, as the city's leader and founder, did not know how to handle the situation from a religious perspective[37]. By jumping over the boundaries, Remus put the city in a difficult position, as the boundaries became dysfunctional and could no longer serve their purpose. This situation needed to be rectified, making it logical to bury Remus outside the city. Remus

[34] A defining element of the relationship between Romulus and Remus is competition. We believe that Remus jumping over the wall is also tied to this competitive dynamic. HEGYI W. 2018, 58.

[35] The sacrifice of one brother is a recurring theme in Indo-European creation myths. PUHVEL 1975, 146–157.

[36] WISEMAN 1995, 113.

[37] As HEGYI W. 2018, 58. succinctly describes the state following Remus' death: "The wall of the City is both a spatial and temporal boundary, a limit up to which the twins advanced together, but beyond which, into Rome, only one could enter.

violated social norms, causing disorder, and therefore had to be removed from society, both physically and symbolically.

Investigating the earliest phases of Rome's settlement is restricted by well-known issues. The Urbs has been continuously inhabited throughout history, making it impossible to identify all ancient structures. Even ancient authors emphasized the crucial role religion played in defining and organizing the Roman urban space. The prestige of Etruscan religion in founding rituals was so significant that, according to Roman tradition, even the foundation of the Urbs followed Etruscan rites, as Plutarch confirms.

Removing the guilty Remus physically was not enough; Etruscan religious experts were needed to continue building the city with their help. It is a common scholarly point that the Romans adopted certain elements of the significant Etruscan mortuary cult, including the mundus[38]. The mundus, in its appearance and function, closely resembles graves. The story goes that the Etruscan religious experts precisely defined the location of the mundus and placed all necessary items inside, likely including a sacrificial offering[39].

We believe that the mundus is a grave, connected to the death of Remus. It is a ritual grave where those things most essential to human life were ritually sacrificed and buried. Similar rituals are clearly linked to the Roman Ceres and the Greek Demeter cults. Across Italy and Magna Graecia, Ceres and Demeter sanctuaries have been found with similar pits containing various plant and animal remains and votive figurines representing them[40]. Notably, in the Demeter sanctuary at Knidos, far from Italy, lifeless pig sacrifices were lowered into a chasm symbolizing the passageway, and the decaying flesh was retrieved months later for sacrificial use[41].

In the case of the Roman mundus and city foundation, while the underlying motivation of the ritual is similar, it does not involve retrieving decayed offerings. The sinful act of fratricide had occurred, with the deceased being the son of the god Mars. Following this, an expiatory sacrifice was necessary to restore the delicate ritual balance[42]. At this point, it is worth referencing a passage from Macrobius, where he quotes Varro:

„et cum Mundus patet, nefas est proelium sumere… quod sacrum Diti patri et Proserpinae dicatum est meliusque occlusa Plutonis fauce eundum ad proelium putaverunt. Unde et Varro ita scribit: Mundus cum patet, deorum tristium atque inferum quasi ianua patet. Propterea non modo proelium committi, verum etiam dilectum rei militaris causa habere ac militem proficisci, navem solvere, uxorem liberum quaerendorum causa ducere, religiosum est." (Macrob. *Sat*. I.16.16–18)

[38] FOWLER 1912, 26.

[39] At this point, it is essential to discuss the concept of the favissa. Similar to the Greek bothros, the favissa is a ritual offering pit where offerings were placed and stored. Examining the relationship between the favissa and the mundus would exceed the scope of this study. HACKENS 1963, 71–99.

[40] WHITE 1967, 335–352; DIETRICH 1962, 140; BEVAN 1986, 82.

[41] BEVAN 1986, 82.

[42] For more on Ceres and post-mortem purification, see MAGDUS 2021, 29–30.

The mundus is associated with the rulers of the underworld, Dis Pater and Proserpina, the chthonic deities (tristes atque inferni dei), and the ritual of opening the mundus is likely linked to Ceres. The mundus serves as a passage (ianua) to these aforementioned deities (fauces Plutonis). The days when the mundus was open were considered inauspicious and unsuitable for public affairs. Macrobius highlights a series of measures primarily concerning the military and warfare. These measures were presumably intended to prevent military enterprises from ending in misfortune. However, the prohibition extended beyond military matters to many other areas of life. Nothing was to be done publicly to avoid offending the boundaries and the wandering souls of the dead. This fact, along with the circumstances surrounding the creation of the mundus, points to certain connections. The general prohibition's aim was perhaps to prevent any actions that might lead to violence or death.

Remus' violent death likely played a significant role in the creation of the mundus, but the incident raises numerous other issues[43]. Although Remus violated the city boundaries, his killing was arbitrary, and the appropriate purificatory sacrifices were not performed until later[44]. If we can strip away the various layers that have accumulated around the story, we may allow ourselves certain conclusions. It is plausible to suggest that without Remus' death, the founding of Rome might not have occurred, or at least not in the way we know it today.

Conclusion

In this study, we have attempted to examine in detail one aspect of Ceres' role and complex nature. The opening of the mundus Cereris aimed to appease the dead, whose souls could temporarily visit the world of the living. The Romans believed that by allowing this temporary breach of the boundary between the living and the dead, they could ultimately reinforce this boundary and maintain the status quo. The concept of boundaries was extremely important in Roman religion, serving to prevent the supernatural powers of the dead from harming the living. Thus, the opening of the mundus was fundamentally linked to Roman beliefs about the afterlife, where the living acknowledged and strengthened their relationship with each other and their ancestors.

The rituals of the porca praesentanea and the porca praecidanea illustrate how Ceres, as a deity associated with death, appeared in the lives of Romans at the end of their days. This association is also reflected in mythology, particularly in the story of Proserpina's abduction. Dis Pater kidnaps and keeps Proserpina, and after much searching by Ceres, Jupiter intervenes, resulting in Proserpina spending half the year in the underworld and the other half with her mother. This myth was seen as a symbol of the changing seasons even in ancient times. Agricultural activities could only be conducted from spring to autumn, while winter

[43] For more details on Remus's fault and Romulus's guilt, see PUHVEL 1975, 150–151.

[44] The purifying sacrifices were probably not performed because they did not know how to carry them out, and that is why the Etruscans were needed later.

brought dormancy. Proserpina's cyclical journey symbolizes the alternation between life and death, a natural association given that spring brings renewed life to the fields, while autumn and winter bring apparent death and barrenness[45]. In this context, Ceres is connected to the underworld, supported by the well-structured myth.

The opening of the mundus transcends individual concerns, elevating the relationship between the living and the dead to a state level. It was crucial for both the populus Romanus and the state to participate in remembering and honoring the dead. As seen in Plutarch, Remus' crime and death seem closely linked to the creation of an object similar to the mundus. This raises the question of what came first: the ritual or Remus' death? It is likely the ritual itself, as the Etruscan religious experts were well aware of how to resolve such issues, knowing the ceremony even if its origin had faded. The Romans adopted and integrated this ritual into their system, and gradually, the mundus could indeed have become a penus, as Fowler hypothesized.

The most important lesson centers on the duality surrounding Ceres: life and death, the worlds of the living and the dead, and the changing seasons, which also symbolize life and death. If the Romans sacrificed to the goddess according to the prescriptions, they could expect a bountiful harvest; otherwise, drought and famine, hence life and death, would ensue. Misconduct or omission of the rituals could disrupt the balance of social order, resulting in hunger and death. This state had to be remedied. Through the rituals of the porca praesentanea, the porca praecidenea, and the opening of the mundus, the natural and social order was restored.

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[45] According to VAN GENNEP 1960, 88. in antiquity, the reason for the staged re-enactments of seasonal rituals (such as the Osiris, Adonis, and Attis cults) was the motif of death and rebirth.

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Birth or Death: The Vulnerability of Childbirth in Oxyrhynchus[1]

Núria CASTELLANO[2], Bibiana AGUSTÍ[3], Adriana RECASENS[4], Irene RIUDAVETS[5]

Abstract: *The city of Oxyrhynchus, an important Greco-Roman metropolis, has been excavated since 1992 by the Oxyrhynchus Archaeological Mission. Archaeological work is concentrated on the Upper Necropolis, which has been occupied for more than 1000 years, from the Saite period (650 BC) to the Arab conquest (AD 646). Most of the Roman tombs are concentrated in Sector 22, where Tomb 64 is highlighted as one of the mummies found in its excavation presents an unusual case of death during childbirth. The study of this funerary package will allow us to learn about Roman funerary practices and the physical and magical protection of the most vulnerable.*

Resumen: *La ciudad de Oxirrinco, importante metrópolis de época grecorromana, está siendo excavada desde 1992 por la Misión Arqueológica de Oxirrinco. Los trabajos se concentran en la Necrópolis Alta, que presenta una ocupación de más de 1000 años, desde la época saíta (650 a.C.) hasta la llegada de los árabes (646 d.C.). La mayoría de las tumbas romanas se concentran en el sector 22, donde destacamos la tumba 64. Una de las momias halladas en su excavación presenta un caso inusual, al tratarse de fallecimiento durante el parto. El estudio de este paquete funerario nos permitir conocer las prácticas funerarias romanas y la protección física y mágica de los más vulnerables.*

Rezumat: *Orașul Oxyrhynchus, o importantă metropolă greco-romană, a fost excavat începând din 1992 de către Misiunea Arheologică Oxyrhynchus. Lucrările arheologice sunt concentrate pe Necropola Superioară, care a fost ocupată timp de mai bine de 1000 de ani, din perioada saitică (650 î.Hr.) până la sosirea arabilor (646 d.Hr.). Majoritatea mormintelor romane sunt concentrate în Sectorul 22, unde evidențiem Mormântul 64. Una dintre mumii, găsită în timpul excavării, prezintă un caz neobișnuit de deces în timpul nașterii. Studiul acestui pachet funerar ne va permite să înțelegem practicile funerare romane și protecția fizică și magică a celor mai vulnerabili.*

Keywords: Oxyrhynchos, mummy, papyrus, cartonnage, gender fragility, morbidity, birth, magic texts.

The site of Oxyrhynchus[6] is located 190 km south of Cairo, on the left bank of the Bahr Yussef, next to the modern village of El-Bahnasa. During the XXVI dynasty, the locality was

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[2] Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, IPOA-UB, ORCID 0000-0003-3353-6517.
[3] IN SITU SCP, ORCID 0000-0002-0497-5599.
[4] Université Paul Valéry III Montpellier, ORCID: 0009-0004-4883-188X.
[5] Universitat de Barcelona, NURARQ SC, ORCID 0000-0002-2433-318X.
[6] CASTELLANO 2017, 197-231.

known from geographical lists as Per-Medjed and became the capital of the XIX nome of Upper Egypt. In addition to the significance conferred by this title, its geostrategic position was noteworthy, serving as the endpoint/point of arrival for products from routes originating in the western oases (especially Bahariya) and benefiting from a fluvial port on the Bahr Yussef. It was precisely at this time that Per-Medyed became a prominent commercial hub/enclave, evidenced by the presence of huge tombs of officials. The Saite tombs found in Oxyrhynchus exhibit a typological variety with a common element: large, vaulted limestone constructions, either individual or familial, featuring enormous anthropomorphic sarcophagi and an assemblage of canopic jars, ushabtis, and various types of amulets. Tomb 14 of the Upper Necropolis is a clear example of a family sepulchre, with eleven chambers and some inscriptions on its walls.

The necropolis remained in use during the Persian period, as evidenced by the discovery of various structures exhibiting a peculiar construction typology. Usually, under some blocks on the surface, there was a cutting in the pavement, and at a depth of about 4 meters, tombs were constructed. A few centimetres in front of the entrance, a kind of parapet built with vertical blocks of white limestone was used as a protective measure against tomb robbers. The ceiling was either flat or with a lintelled vault, and within, only a mummified individual was deposited, accompanied by a funerary net of beads and a cartonnage as the sole funerary grave goods[7].

With the arrival of Alexander the Great in Egypt, the city changed its name to Oxyrhynchus, named after the fish that swallowed the phallus of the god Osiris according to Egyptian mythology[8]. Soon after, Greeks settled in Oxyrhynchus, transforming it into one of the most notable metropolises in all of Egypt during the Greco-Roman period. With the adoption of Christianity as the official religion, the city adopted the name Pemdje, partially reverting to its pharaonic designation. This toponymic conversion did not diminish its importance; by the late third century, it became the capital of Arcadia, and by the fifth century, it was an episcopal seat. The Arab invasion did not lead to the abandonment of Pemdje; on the contrary, the city remained inhabited well into the medieval period. However, problems with the canal system supplying the locality led to its gradual abandonment and relocation. Oxyrhynchus remained buried until the late nineteenth century when English papyrologists Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt initiated archaeological excavations, which were subsequently continued by Flinders Petrie and Evaristo Breccia, among others. However, it was not until 1992 that the Archaeological Mission of Oxyrhynchus was established, initially directed by Dr. Josep Padró and, since 2019, by Doctors Maite Mascort and Esther Pons[9].

[7] PONS, MASCORT 2022, 249–67.

[8] ERROUX-MORFIN 2011.

[9] CASTELLANO, AGUSTÍ, forthcoming.

Currently, the Archaeological Mission of Oxyrhynchus focuses its excavation efforts on a single sector: the Upper Necropolis (Figure 1), located to the North-West of the ancient city on the edge of the desert. The cemetery remained in use since Saite period to the Arab conquest, with funerary structures progressively overlaying one another. Among the excavation sectors of the necropolis, we want to highlight sector 22, located north of the Upper Necropolis[10]. This sector houses a significant portion of the Roman stone tombs excavated by the Supreme Council of Antiquities in the 20th century, such as Tomb 12, as well as two Byzantine Funerary Houses studied by the Archaeological Mission of Oxyrhynchus.

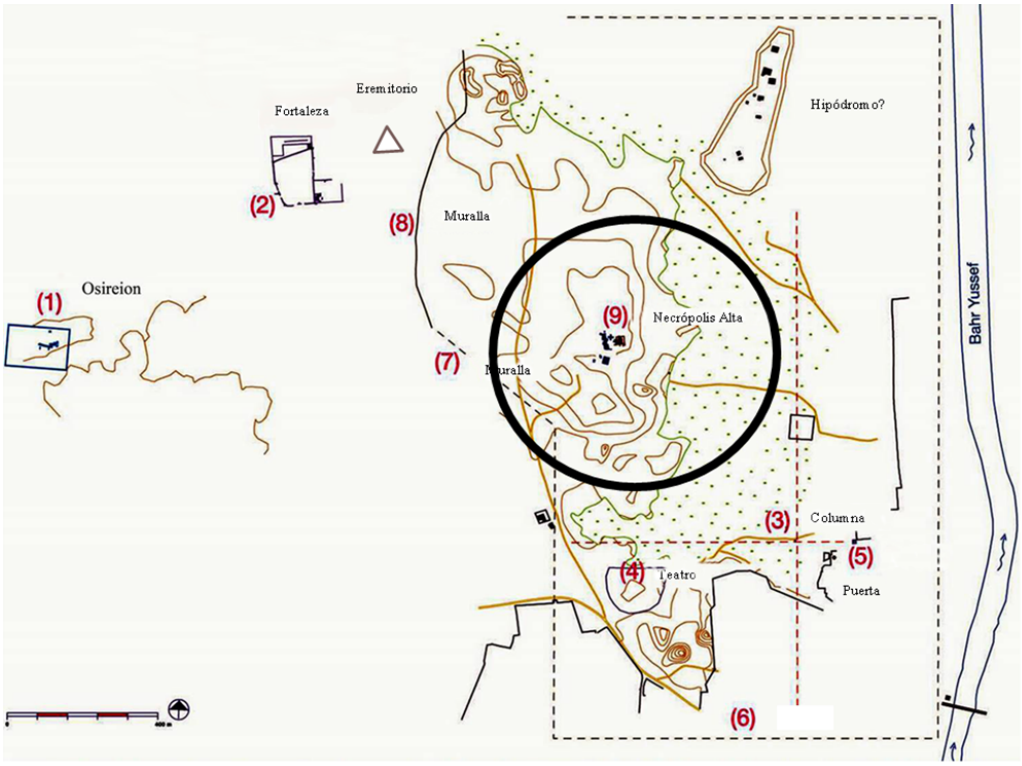

Figure 1. Topographic plan of the Oxyrhynchus site, showing the location of the Upper Necropolis (Image: Antonio López - Archaeological Mission of Oxyrhynchus).

Despite the changes brought about by Romanisation, Egyptian culture maintained a strong presence, especially concerning religious and funerary practices[11]. One of the most important traditions that persisted was the protection and transfiguration of the deceased, as it has been

[10] We would like to express our gratitude for the collaboration of Dr. Leah Mascia in the epigraphy work, Mrs. Francesca Pullia as an anthropologist, Mr. Ibrahim Hassan in excavation tasks, and to the restoration team composed of Mr. Bernat Burgaya and Mrs. Delia Eguiluz.

[11] FRANKFURTER 1998, 7.

verified that the preferred treatment of the corpse during this period continued to be mummification, with the embalming of the body[12]. However, the latter was Romanised in some aspects. This adaptation of the funerary ritual to Roman culture is identified in aspects such as the emphasis on the body itself and its external appearance, as well as the gradual replacement of anthropomorphic stone sarcophagi with coffins, linen shrouds, masks, and decorated plaster casings that directly enveloped the body. Tomb 64 of the Upper Necropolis of Oxyrhynchus is a clear example of Roman funerary rituals.

The Tomb 64 of the Upper Necropolis

The purpose of the archaeological work during the 2023 expedition was to reach the interior level of Tomb 12 to excavate it under optimal safety conditions. This funerary construction, accessed from the southern end via a three-step staircase, was discovered during excavations by the Supreme Council of Antiquities in the 1980s and was first documented by the Archaeological Mission of Oxyrhynchus in 1993[13]. It is a building of irregular structure, constrained by the limited space available next to the previously constructed Roman Tomb 11[14]. Subsequent excavations were carried out during the expeditions of 2009[15], 2015[16], and 2020[17], focusing on the cleaning of chamber 5b, which was in poor condition. The northern part of the stone vault had collapsed, causing the sediment mound (*debris*) to slide into the chamber, covering it almost entirely. At that point, we already observed that the northern profile contained, in its lower levels, various funerary packages with a geometrical system of bandages, typical of the Roman period, oriented along the north-south axis. This orientation made excavation or extraction impossible, as they were buried by the *debris* mound (Figure 2).

During the 2022 expedition, we undertook the excavation of the upper strata formed by the decomposition of Byzantine mudbrick structures, which mostly corresponded to Christian collective crypts. Beneath this layer, rich in ceramic materials, lay another sandy layer with the presence of flint pebbles, just above a thick layer of aeolian sand. This sediment marked the beginning of the excavation of the interior of chamber 5b of Tomb 12, which had been postponed in 2020. Cleaning the chamber led to the discovery of eight mummified funerary packages, with bandages decorated with a diamond design typical of the Roman period[18].

[12] The large number of mummies recovered during the Roman period is due to the fact that this method of body preservation became more affordable, and practically all layers of the population could afford mummification.

[13] PADRÓ 2006, 37-39.

[14] Both roman tombs share common features such as the use of white limestone ashlars joined with lime mortar, an emulation of the Saite funerary constructions (albeit with smaller dimensions), and the use of barrel vaults to cover the chambers.

[15] PADRÓ *et alii* 2009, 3-26.

[16] PADRÓ *et alii* 2015, 3-16.

[17] MASCORT *et alii* 2020, 5-6.

[18] With the complete excavation of the tomb and subsequent review of the tomb plan, we concluded that it actually consisted of two distinct Roman tombs: Tomb 12 (comprising three chambers) and the new tomb 63, formed by chambers A and B (previously numbered as 5b).

At the same time the team of Egyptologists was completing the excavation of the chamber, some workers were clearing the upper strata of a perpendicular chamber to this tomb, of which some white blocks belonging to the north and south walls, slightly vaulted, could be perceived. As archaeological work progressed in this new chamber, we found that the west wall had been destroyed in ancient times, connecting it with the chamber of Tomb 63. At this point of contact, we located four mummified funerary packages that, due to the placement of the bodies, were not in primary deposition[19].

Figure 2. Aerial photograph of Tomb 63, with chamber 63B, previously referred to as 5b (Photograph: José Javier Martínez - Archaeological Mission of Oxyrhynchus).

[19] We must take into account that during the Byzantine period, Funerary House number one was built over this area (see SUBÍAS 2008), which reused the Roman tombs as funerary crypts. During the 4th century, there was a renovation of the underground structure to accommodate Christian burials, leading to a series of reforms with adobe walls and destruction of walls of the Roman tombs, as is the case with this new tomb we are presenting.

Although the two chambers were connected, studying the junctions of their walls allowed us to assert that it was a new Roman tomb, which we designated Tomb 64. This new funerary structure consists of a single rectangular chamber, oriented on the east-west axis, with the entrance possibly on the eastern side. The length of the tomb is 6.19 meters, and the maximum width is about 2.90 meters. The preserved height of the northern and southern walls up to the start of the vault is 3.10 meters, and the western wall, which borders Tomb 63, has hardly been preserved. The walls were constructed with stretcher bond masonry, using ashlars of lower-quality white limestone, measuring between 35-40 cm in length and 23-27 cm in width. The bodies were deposited in the chamber directly on a sandy, heavily deteriorated floor, forming up to four layers of mummified individuals. This is a characteristic of Greco-Roman funerary practices, which involved the display of mummies in homes or places where a final tribute could be paid and, after a certain period, their burial in collective tombs[20] (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Image of Tombs 63 and 64 after their excavation (Photograph: Núria Castellano - Archaeological Mission of Oxyrhynchus).

Following the excavation of Tomb 64, 36 male and female mummies representing all age groups were recovered. Although their study is in an initial phase, on-site observation allowed us to identify several noteworthy features regarding funerary practices:

- The presence of many infant individuals (one-quarter of the sample).
- The use of narrow bandages for mummification, with a considerable thickness of bandage layers in everyone, often with individually wrapped limbs before rejoining.

[20] ZESCH *et alii* 2020, 3.

- The external presentation of the mummy is meticulously done, as the bandages exhibit a rhomboid or squared-patterned wrapping. Occasionally, a small button[21], made of plaster and coated with a thin layer of gold leaf was placed at the centre of this figure.
- Unequal treatment regarding excerebration, as not all individuals had their brain mass removed.
- It is worth noting that during the Roman period, or perhaps already in the Ptolemaic period, it was customary to apply gold leaf directly onto the skin of mummies, especially in the facial area[22]. This gilding of the skin is present in some of the mummies studied in this tomb, such as number 22549. This practice may have been linked to the ancient Egyptian tradition of the deification of the deceased[23].
- Inside the mouth of two mummies, a tongue-shaped amulet made of gold was found, consisting of a thin sheet about 2 cm long and pointed in shape, with a single central vein (22547) or several veins simulating a leaf (22566) [24]. The presence of these amulets[25] could be a reminiscence of the Opening of the Mouth ceremony (where the deceased was empowered to use their senses again) or could refer to the deification of the deceased and, as such, to their incorruptibility (divinities had golden bodies) [26].
- Three of the individuals retained decorated cartonnages[27], an external body protection system that became popular during the Ptolemaic period and practically replaced coffins in the Roman period. In some of the mummies with cartonnage from the Roman tombs of Oxyrhynchus, what Castiglione terms "dualité du style"[28] can be observed, namely, the combination of two artistic traditions in a single work, the Egyptian and the Greek. On one hand, the Egyptian tradition, with its iconography and traditional elements linked to religion, and on the other hand, the Greek tradition, which represented the contemporary world and the elites of the time.

Precisely, this article presents a mummy with cartonnage of classical tradition that is a clear case of female vulnerability during childbirth.

In the eastern area of Tomb 64, a female individual (22551) was located, oriented along the north-south axis, with her head to the south. Her state of preservation was very poor because

[21] DUNAND, LICHTENBERG 1998, 103.

[22] DUNAND 1982.

[23] The gold leaves were placed on the skin in a manner that established a more direct comparison with divine associations between gold and the flesh of the gods. The use of gilding on the bodies corresponds to the iconographic theme of rebirth and divinity used in external funerary preparations (ANDERSON 2021, 29).

[24] To these items is added the bronze tongue found on the individual located in the interconnection between Tomb 63 and Tomb 64.

[25] PONS 2019, 332.

[26] Be that as it may, this practice has also been documented in Marina el-Alamein, Quesna, and other locations, showcasing the syncretism between Egyptian and Roman culture.

[27] DUNAND, LICHTENBERG 1998, 111.

[28] CASTIGLIONE 1961, 209 – 211.

she was found under a heavy layer of various funerary packages, on which the remains of the destruction of the tomb's vault were also documented. However, it could be observed that the preparation of her body had been very elaborate, as the funerary package was enclosed in a white plaster casing resembling cartonnage, finished in polychrome relief representing a tunic with sleeves. This is a "mummy case" or cover that envelops the entire body, made of several layers of plaster. The layer directly above the bandage is very thick, and subsequently, another thinner layer was applied, which was moulded when the plaster was still fresh[29]. As mentioned earlier, during the Roman period, much more importance was given to the preservation and ornamentation of the body itself, and for this reason, the deceased person in the case presented here was bandaged in linen cloth decorated with a diamond design, covered by a decorated plaster layer. This finish served not only an aesthetic purpose but also functioned to protect the body and assist it in its process of rebirth (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Individual 22551 with the cartonnage depicting the tunic folded at the bottom (Photograph: Núria Castellano - Archaeological Mission of Oxyrhynchus).

Regarding the relief decoration on the cartonnage, the part covering the face could not be recovered, and the body in general was in a poor state of preservation. Nevertheless, it was observed that it was a cartonnage imitating the clothing "of the living"[30], a long tunic with pronounced drapery, especially in the lower area, without revealing whether one of the shoulders could be exposed. Despite the deterioration of the outer layer, remnants of pink or purple pigment (colours associated with the goddess Venus and fertility) could still be seen, with details in black and wearing black sandals with a single strap, between the first and second toe[31].

[29] AGUSTÍ *et alii* 2023,4.

[30] RIGGS 2005, 248.

[31] We have a parallel for this type of cartonnage in PONS, CODINA 2014, 1221-1222.

When the cartonnage was removed, it was noted the meticulousness with which the body had been wrapped, resting on a wooden board[32], a characteristic feature of Romano-Egyptian mummies. According to Corcoran and Svoboda[33], this would be the wooden board used during the mummification process to facilitate the transportation of the body to the tomb. In relation to the wrapping of the body, a large quantity of linen bandages were used, arranged in a geometric pattern with an outer grid in a rhomboidal or diamond shape[34], which exhibited great aesthetic beauty and seemed to refer to a protective network for the body[35], a singularity of the Roman period. A good indication of this is that almost all of the funerary packages recovered in Tombs 63 and 64 exhibited this type of geometric arrangement of the bandages (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Detail of the rhomboid-patterned wrapping of individual 22551 (Photograph: Núria Castellano - Archaeological Mission of Oxyrhynchus).

Since the state of preservation of the body made it impossible to transport it to the anthropology laboratory for study, it was decided to proceed with the excavation of the

[32] It was not a unique case, as in Tomb 64 we observed that two of the mummies also had a wooden board to consolidate the preservation of the body.

[33] CORCORAN, SVOBODA 2011, 64.

[34] In Tombs 35 and 36 of Oxyrhynchus, funerary packages with this type of wrapping were also recovered, as depicted in PONS, PERRAUD 2021, page 223.

[35] RIGGS 2010, 2.

mummy in the tomb, unwrapping the funerary package. Inside, various elements were found that have been confirmed to be part of the funerary equipment of the tombs of Oxyrhynchus during the Roman period. In the pectoral and pelvic areas of the deceased, packets of papyrus were recovered, each associated with two clay seals, which acted as closures for the documents.

These elements, which for the moment have only been recorded at the Oxyrhynchus site, are in the pectoral, abdominal, and pelvic areas and can be found in infant, adult, or the elderly, in both men and women. Some individuals had only one seal, while others could have up to two, accompanied by papyrus sheets with ritual texts in Greek containing typical magical words (*voces magicae*)[36], which are currently under study as most of them were found folded. Since this is not the first time they have appeared in the papyri recovered during archaeological work at the site, certain information can be inferred following the initial conclusions of the study carried out by Dr. Leah Mascia[37]. Some characters are visible in a primary visual analysis and indicate that they are likely magical texts, probably for funerary protection[38], with symbols and drawings that appear exclusively in this type of ritual composition. Furthermore, these are papyrus sheets that appear folded and "closed" with the decorated clay seal. Although in the Roman period there are known mummies with elements like seals on the outside of the bandages, in this case, they appear in contact with the body. The interpretation given to this fact is that these seals were placed by the embalming priests[39], along with the magical papyri, as part of the rituals used for the rebirth of the deceased person. In the case at hand, there were two brown clay seals with impressions in low relief, made when the clay was still fresh, one of them in the pectoral area and the other in the abdominal area (Figure 6). The decorative motifs correspond to hieroglyphic characters, one of which appears to be an offering table (a motif that would be part of the iconographic repertoire of the Egyptian funerary world) and the other a hare[40].

[36] MASCIA 2023, 1140.

[37] We would like to thank Dr. Leah Mascia for the information provided in personal communication..

[38] MASCORT *et alii* 2021, 23; MASCORT *et alii* 2022, 20; MASCIA 2022, 390-393; MASCIA 2024, 60.

[39] A first approach to textual typology can be found in MASCIA 2024, 60.

[40] AGUSTÍ *et alii* 2023, 6.

Figure 6. Detail of the papyrus packet with the seal depicting a hare, found on the chest of 22551 (Photograph: Bernat Burgaya - Archaeological Mission of Oxyrhynchus).

Anthropological study of 22551

The mummy subject to the present study is a funerary package that was initially considered individual but, due to the circumstances that will be described shortly, contained the remains of two individuals (Figure 7). Initially, the remains of a teenage girl aged between 15 and 16 years (22551) were documented, whose body had been mummified.

Figure 7. Image of the moment of the archaeological intervention where the foetal skeletal remains were documented in situ in the field. (Photograph: Bibiana Agustí - Archaeological Mission of Oxyrhynchus).

The anthropological examination detected the effects of the use of resins and balms during the embalming process, which led to the destruction of some parts of the skeleton due to the mineralization of bone tissues, although overall it could be recovered in good condition. Regarding other organic remains, the preservation of dark, long, and wavy hair, dermal residues, and part of the brain tissues stand out. This evidence, along with the absence of ethmoidal perforation, allowed the interpretation that during the mummification process, the extraction of the brain was not performed; neither were their inferences of abdominal evisceration. As in other periods, the different levels of quality, whether in embalming, body wrapping, or decoration, depending on the cost, method, and materials used, or the skills of the embalmers themselves, conditioned a more or less satisfactory result. However, the large number of skeletal remains found in Egyptian cemeteries of this period indicates that many were buried with minimal or even non-existent evisceration and dissection. The climate and

terrain of Egypt keep the bodies well-preserved, and consequently, evisceration or excerebration are not essential[41].

During the mummification process, the body had been placed in a dorsal decubitus position, with the arms extended and the hands in palmar contact with the thighs. In the abdominal area, occupied by the expanded uterus as interpreted from the following observation, the remains of the skeleton of a full-term foetus were preserved, whose head occupied the lower part of the pelvic cavity. This fact indicated that both individuals died because of labour, which was not completed. The foetal skeletal remains could be recovered in good condition, as can be seen in Figure 8, although with a loose connection of all its elements, after carrying out the skeletonisation process in the uterine space[42]. It was in a right lateral decubitus position in an axial direction opposite to that of the mother, with the elements of the craniofacial block dispersed in the space corresponding to the ischiopubic coxal branches delimiting the birth canal, the elements of the left forearm, hand, and ischium in contact with the right iliac wing, the vertebral and costal elements dispersed over the anterior surface of the sacrum, the lower extremities in lateral flexion in the uterine space, close to the last ribs on the right side, and the elements of the feet on the lower thoracic vertebral bodies (see Figure 9).

The mother's skeleton (Figure 10) showed signs of maturation typical of a 15 to 16-year-old adolescent, both in terms of dental eruption degree and skeletal maturation state[43]. Based on the length of the long bones, her height was estimated to be around 153.2 cm. Despite poor bone preservation, especially of the pelvic bones, the anthropological study allowed us to interpret her as a female individual, with slender bones, narrow jaw, and soft muscular insertions in almost all postcranial elements, except for the muscle insertion points of the trapezius and deltoid in the clavicle and the soleus muscle in the tibia. These characteristics reflect a physical activity in which only weight-bearing on the shoulders and walking would have stood out. She exhibited an epigenetic feature consisting of an olecranon perforation of the distal epiphysis of the humerus, a datum that will gain value when contrasted with the rest of the population sample, to consider the possibility of kinship relations. She also showed secondary joint facets in the distal epiphysis of the tibia, a common marker in populations that have the habit of resting with the body squatting on the heels.

[41] RIGGS 2010, 345.

[42] DUDAY 2004.

[43] SCHEUER, BLACK 2000.

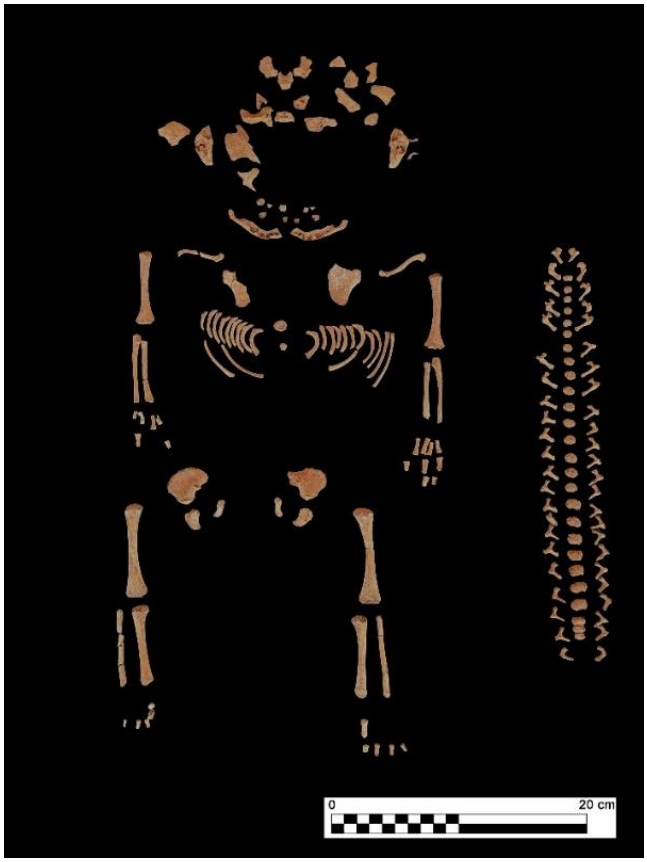

Figure 8. Fetal skeletal remains recovered from individual 22551-2. (Photograph: Irene Riudavets - Archaeological Mission of Oxyrhynchus).

The analysis of the dentition, in very good general condition, concluded that during her lifetime, she had experienced two mild cases of caries in the crowns of the lower first molars. Both the orbital roofs of the frontal bone and the necks of the femurs preserved evidence of a cribrous and vascularized process (*cribra orbitalia* and *cribra femoralis*), which must be understood as reflecting a deficit in blood components, probably due to iron-deficiency anaemia.

The perinatal subadult skeleton (22551-2) preserved deciduous dental germs within the alveolar cavities, with a degree of maturation consistent with that of a full-term fetus: the crowns of the incisors and molars were unfinished, and those of the canines were in an early formation stage. The metaphyseal and cranial bone elements also match this age diagnosis, in addition to their biometric results[44], which yield a size typical of a perinatal individual (see Table 1).

[44] BALTHAZARD, DERVIEUX 1921; FAZEKAS, KOSA 1978.

Figure 9. View of mummy 22551. The bone elements corresponding to fetal individual 22551-2 are represented in green, and in white dashed lines, an idealisation of their position can be seen. (Photograph: Núria Castellano - Archaeological Mission of Oxyrhynchus. Assembly: Dr. Bibiana Agustí and Irene Riudavets).

Figure 10. Skeletal remains recovered from individual 22551 corresponding to the mother. (Photograph: Irene Riudavets - Archaeological Mission of Oxyrhynchus).

metaphyseal skeletal element	length mm	height cm	age in gestational days	gestational age in weeks
humerus	65	50,25	281,4	40,2
femur	73,5	49,16	275,296	39,33
tibia	69	52,85	295,96	42,28

Table 1: Correspondence between metaphyseal length and estimated age and body size, based on the formulas of Balthazard and Dervieux 1921.

In assessing the age stage of subadults, two ranges are commonly distinguished that divide adolescence as a stage in a person's life: early adolescence, which includes the range from 10 to 14 years old, and late adolescence, which includes the age from 15 to 19. Some authors even

subdivide these stages into three, based on physical and evolutionary changes, thus understanding early adolescence as the range from 10 to 13 years old, middle adolescence from 14 to 16, and finally late adolescence from 17 to 19[45]. According to this classification, the woman in the present article would fall into the stage of middle adolescence, thus presenting certain risks associated with childbirth in cases of early procreation.

As observed, during the archaeological intervention of the case study, a full-term fetus was documented with its skull lodged in the mother's pelvic cavity. The age diagnosis and this circumstance rule out the interpretation of a premature birth and, instead, may indicate a possible complication derived from cephalopelvic disproportion between the perinatal and the mother. The mother's skeleton showed clear signs of incomplete biological development associated with her age, among which the maturation status of her pelvis should be considered. It is also likely that her reproductive system was not yet sufficiently developed for maternity, thus her birth canal may have presented a particular narrowness. This is recorded as the main factor in the occurrence of certain complications during childbirth such as tears, traumas in the vaginal tract, and a higher likelihood of haemorrhages and infections[46].

Another factor to consider when formulating a hypothesis explaining the possible causes of death during childbirth in the documented full-term pregnancy in this case, lies in the evidence of metabolic markers (*cribra orbitalia* and *cribra femoralis*) associated with deficits in blood components and probable iron-deficiency anaemia during the mother's life. In this sense, it is worth mentioning that maternal malnutrition during pregnancy is also one of the causes of morbidity in the case of adolescents, which can lead to complications during childbirth[47].

Conclusions

It is quite common to document in the archaeological record of the Upper Necropolis of Oxyrhynchus the presence of infant individuals at all subadult stages. It must not be forgotten that the risk of dying before reaching adulthood was very high, and that between 40 and 60% of the population did not reach the age of five[48]. This data exemplifies the high infant mortality observed generally in preindustrial societies, such as during the Roman period in Egypt[49], where medical and obstetric knowledge, although advanced for the time, could not prevent the death of a high number of women. However, it is very rare to find the remains of a fetus or perinatal preserved inside the uterine cavity of the mother.

According to some demographic calculations, life expectancy at birth was around 25 years for men and 22.5 years for women during the Roman period. The difference in criteria especially reflects the risks that occur before, during, and after childbirth. Mortality derived

[45] OLIVEROS *et alii* 2017.

[46] MIRAMA *et alii* 2020.

[47] MIRAMA *et alii* 2020.

[48] ANDERSON 2021, 33; ZAKRZEWSKI 2015, 5.

[49] ROBINS 1994, 27.

from processes related to pregnancy, especially during childbirth, remains a serious problem today, especially in countries with limited economic resources[50].

The case presented here involves an adolescent who, judging by the quality of the funerary package, most likely belonged to the upper class of the city. This fact implies that she would probably have had access to experienced midwives or even specialised obstetricians[51], who nevertheless could not prevent the death of the mother and the child. Numerous letters narrate the tragic outcome of childbirth, such as the one Thaubas sent to her father informing him that her sister Herennia had suffered a miscarriage during the eighth month of pregnancy and finally died after four days (*P Fouad* 75)[52].

Probably linked to the danger threatening the future mother and the newborn, a series of strategies were developed to (attempt to) ensure a successful childbirth. From the crafting of furniture and figurines of deities like Taweret, Bes, or Hathor, protectors of childbirth and the most vulnerable individuals in the early stages of growth, to magical texts[53]. The spells used for this purpose do not seem to have been recited during childbirth, as they do not explicitly refer to this moment[54], although their purpose was to facilitate a quick and safe delivery, protecting the newborn and the mother, as complications after childbirth were very common and often resulted in the mother's death.

The individuals included in burial package 22551 belong to two of the groups that presented the highest vulnerability: pregnant women and newborns. This vulnerability, which led to the death of the mother and her child, could extend to the afterlife. For this reason, all possible precautions were taken when preparing their burial. On the one hand, a meticulous preparation of the corpse to preserve it, thanks to the mummification of the body and the various wrappings that protected it, such as bandages and cartonnage. And on the other hand, the magical protection provided by the papyri along with the seals that closed and certified their contents. As Mascia points out[55], the magical texts found inside various mummies in the Upper Necropolis of Oxyrhynchus must be classified under the category of funeral inscriptions for protection, but it does not seem that in this case, it is specific protection for the moment of earthly birth, but rather a composition intended for rebirth after death. The study of the papyri found in these tombs will provide a better understanding of the evolution of funeral rituals during the Roman period in Oxyrhynchus and, by extension, throughout Egypt.

[50] According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), in the year 2020 alone, there were 287,000 deaths directly related to childbirth and postpartum processes (https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/maternal-mortality).

[51] GARCÍA TRÓCOLI 2016, 19.

[52] GOÑI 2018, 71.

[53] ROBINS 1994, 26.

[54] TÖPFER 2014, 318.

[55] MASCIA 2022, 390-393; MASCIA 2024, 60.

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Salt in Antiquity: a Historical Field in Expansion

Nuria Elisa MORÈRE MOLINERO[1], Helena DOMÍNGUEZ DEL TRIUNFO[2]

Abstract: *The aim of this article is to explore the historical development of a field of study that we can call "Salt in Antiquity." Initially, studies on salt in antiquity relied on 19th-century historical thought, and later, on the contributions of medievalists and early archaeology in salt-producing regions. However, the study of salt and ancient history has now achieved full independence and distinctiveness as a specific field of study. This article traces the evolution of this field from its early, tentative beginnings to its present status within the discipline of Ancient History. As a result, the history of salt in antiquity has become a well-defined field, aligning with new trends in historical and archaeological research. Written sources are being analysed from other perspectives, and collateral themes such as food, food preservation, technology and culture are being explored. Additionally, large interdisciplinary teams are being formed, and extensive projects and fieldwork are being initiated. These efforts integrate local and regional aspects, span different historical periods in their continuity, and incorporate methodologies from new disciplines focused on the environment and territory. This progress suggests an active field of study for the coming years, focusing on production sites, techniques, and the broader framework of salt exploitation.*

Rezumat: *Scopul acestui articol este de a explora subiectul sării în Antichitate. Inițial, studiile privind sarea în Antichitate s-au bazat pe gândirea istorică din secolul al XIX-lea și, mai târziu, pe contribuțiile medieviștilor și ale arheologiei în regiunile producătoare de sare. Recent, studiul sării în Antichitate a dobândit independență deplină și distinctivitate ca domeniu specific de cercetare. Acest articol urmărește evoluția acestui domeniu de la începuturile sale timide până la statutul său actual. Sursele scrise sunt analizate din alte perspective și sunt explorate teme colaterale precum hrana, conservarea alimentelor, tehnologia și cultura. Aceste eforturi integrează aspecte locale și regionale și încorporează metodologii aplicate în discipline conexe precum studiul mediului înconjurător.*

Keywords: History of salt- Antiquity- Near East-Western Europe- Archaeology of salt- Thematic history- "briquetage"

1. Introduction and Background Regarding Studies on the History of Salt in Antiquity

1.1. Origin of the Studies

The history of salt as a topic of study has emerged over the last few decades due to the importance of salt to both human and animal life. Initially, research focused on more recent eras such as the Medieval, Modern, and Contemporary periods. This was largely because of the availability of economic documents, as well as texts covering social, political, and cultural

[1] Universidad Rey Juan Carlos; nuria.morere@urjc.es
[2] Universidad Rey Juan Carlos; helena.dominguez@urjc.es

aspects. Over time, the study of Antiquity and the archaeology of salt was incorporated, driven by the specific nature of the corresponding sources and references. These early studies laid the foundation for economic approaches to understanding the significance of salt. All of these developments have led to this study, which aims to explore different approaches that have emerged in the field of salt history in Antiquity as a distinct historical theme. In particular, our focus is on examining new trends, perspectives, and key findings that have developed in this dynamic field. In short, we aim to explore the current state of research on the topic of salt in Antiquity[3].

Similar to the development of history as a field of historicist thought that began in the 19th century and included a series of pre-academic phases, as highlighted by Le Goff[4], a distinct interest in salt, its properties, and its history has existed since the 15th and 16th centuries. For example, Marineo Sículo[5] mentions the benefits of salt in his extensive semantic study of this mineral[6]. Additionally, the encyclopaedic work of Gómez Miedes, "Comentarios sobre la sal" ("Commentaries on Salt"), originally published in Latin, stands out as an example of academic erudition on the subject[7]. By the end of the 18th century, various pioneering works began to appear, such as those by Jean-Nicolas Démeunier[8], which analysed the development of societal customs, both ancient and contemporary, focusing on aspects such as food. In this respect, Démeunier relied on the testimonies of both Greeks and Romans as primary sources, tracing their observations from Antiquity onwards.

Nevertheless, as a specific field of study, the first academic histories of the 18th and 19th centuries emerged, characterized by their descriptions and accounts of historical events and political and factual history. These works relied on Classical literature as a primary documentary source[9] and featured an incipient critical methodology that incorporated epigraphy and numismatics, reflecting an interest in understanding and explaining certain facts. These histories closely followed the written accounts of the history of Rome according to Livy, defining a series of themes that would be addressed continuously in studies on the subject of salt. Livy mentions salt on several occasions, such as in his account of the founding of Ostia, the first clashes between Rome and Veii, interventionist measures regarding the price and trading of salt and Roman policies in Greece[10]. These wide-ranging themes were further

[3] An initial summary of the historiographical picture can be found in MORÈRE MOLINERO, DOMÍNGUEZ DEL TRIUNFO, 2023.

[4] LE GOFF, 2014.

[5] MARINEO SÍCULO, 2004. Based on his interpretation of authors such as Ovid, Virgil, Pliny and Varro.

[6] HERNANDO GARCÍA-CERVIGÓN, ALONSO SUTIL 2007.

[7] RAMOS MALDONADO, 2003.

[8] DÉMEUNIER 1776.

[9] CASANOVA 1991; FUSTEL DE COULANGES, 1888, 11. Discussion in LE GOFF, 2005.

[10] Livy's references allude to episodes that took place during the Monarchy and the formation of the Republic: creation of saltworks by Ancus Marcius (Livy I, 33, 9); conflicts with the Etruscans and with Veii (Livy V, 45, 8; VII, 17, 6; VII, 19,

explored by scholars such as Mommsen, Cagnat, and Marquardt[11], who sought to address key issues like taxes, *vectigalia* (revenue from taxes), the salt monopoly, the lessors of the saltworks, and the establishment of a price for salt as mentioned in the sources and supported by epigraphic evidence. Cagnat distinguishes between the Monarchy, Republic, and Early Empire periods of Roman history, focusing on the question of free exploitation of the saltworks and the salt monopoly. He concludes that during each of these periods, the saltworks were not entirely taken out of private hands[12]. The roles of the publicans and lessors, and the tax aspects of salt, led to other studies at the time, demonstrating the topical nature of the subject matter[13] within the liberalizing context of 19th-century economics, which, for Traina at least, extended beyond mere economic aspects into the political realm of the time.[14]. Thus, the well-known economic and social works published by Rostovtzeff include references to different salt monopolies, such as in Egypt, based on the rich papyrological evidence available, whose limitations were highlighted by Cadell[15]. Rostovtzeff also addressed aspects such as trade and taxes in the various Hellenistic kingdoms and, subsequently, in Rome. Despite the exhaustive use of sources, contemporary realities appeared to influence the author's view of Antiquity[16].

The allusion to food, however, was not based on Livy's accounts but on those of Cato, especially his reference to the addition of salt to salted fish in the diet of slaves (Cat. *Agr.* 65-67)[17]. These references dealt with economic matters, trade, prices and monopolies and laid the early foundations for research in the history of salt in Antiquity. Within this context, we can also highlight entries under the headings of "salz" and "sel" in various encyclopaedias published at the time[18].

Later, the Annales School exerted its influence in the 1950s-1960s, driven by medievalists who promoted this school and the "New History" movement. With a series of thematic studies that were integrated into more holistic and global perspectives, based on a series of historical periods that were necessary but not indispensable[19]. This led to a renewed focus on the significance of salt and the importance of thematic studies in history. This influence began with the creation of a *Questionnaire pour une enquête sur le sel dans l'histoire au moyen âge et aux temps*

9); elimination of the trade that had lain in private hands up until that point (Livy II, 9, 4); establishment of different prices and the creation of tax on salt by Livius Salinator in the year 204-203 BC. (Livy XXIX, 37, 3); and Paulus Emilius' imposition of a prohibition regarding the importation of salt into Macedonia (Livy XLV, 29, 13). The Augustan approach to the work of Livy has been extensively highlighted: SAITTA, 1989.

[11] CAGNAT 1882; MARQUARDT 1988.

[12] CAGNAT 1882, 238.

[13] This is raised by Cagnat, following the studies of Cohn in 1873: CAGNAT 1882, 238- 240.

[14] TRAINA 1992, following HAUSER 1927, 7.

[15] CADELL 1966.

[16] MOMIGLIANO 1954; ROSTOVZEFF 1969; ROSTOVZEFF 1988.

[17] MOMMSEN 1953, III/ 2, 839.

[18] PAULY-WISSOWA'S, 1861; DAREMBERG, SAGLIO 1873.

[19] LE GOFF 2014, 42.

modernes, by Jeannin & Le Goff (1956)[20]. This approach was further developed by Michel Mollat in his work as a whole. These authors systematically addressed all the issues associated with salt throughout history, marking the beginning of thematic studies within the field[21]. The role of the medievalists was essential, as they focused on a period replete with wide-ranging written documentation[22]. They were subsequently joined by historical currents featuring thematic studies[23] and economic studies relating to Antiquity[24], including research on Ostia[25].

1.2 Archaeology's First Contribution

The history of salt effectively evolved alongside the establishment of archaeology as a discipline and the identification of material culture associated with salt production[26]. When salt was obtained artificially through brine evaporation, this process produced large quantities of ceramic remains, known as *briquetage*, which were gradually discovered and identified in salt-producing regions. These remains appeared in early, local monographic archaeological works wherever salt existed as a resource and had been produced artificially. In this way, the study of the territory preceded the academic field as an early part of salt studies. In the Region of La Seille (Lorraine, France)[27], for example, salt production began to be associated with ceramic fragments of supports, blocks, and containers used in the open-pan salt production process. As a result, salt-producing regions featured prominently in the early years of the history of salt due to pioneering archaeological studies. In view of this, it might even be said that the thematic history of salt overlapped with the first regional archaeological endeavours. For instance, in his doctoral thesis, Gouletquer studied briquetages in Bretagne[28]. In England, a conference on salt production was held focusing on the *Red Hills* of Essex, as well as Sussex and Dorset, covering the Iron Age, Roman Period, and the Medieval Period. The conference

[20] JEANNIN, LE GOFF 1968. This has recently been resumed and analysed: MORÈRE 2020.

[21] MOLLAT 1968.

[22] In the late 1970's, the works of Hocquet, a Medievalist and follower of Mollat, focusing on Venice and its wealth, which was founded on its monopoly over the salt trade in the Mediterranean, were essential: HOCQUET 1978; HOCQUET 1994, LITCHFIELD et al., 2001. We might also mention the economic studies that emerged and the incorporation of archaeology: PASTOR DE TOGNERI, 1963; GONZÁLEZ RUIZ, RUIZ DE LA PEÑA 1972; MALPICA CUELLO 1982; LADERO QUESADA 1987; MALPICA CUELLO 1991; MALPICA CUELLO 2005.

[23] Focusing on periods other than those of interest to us here, mainly covering the middle ages onwards, although they did contain introductory sections regarding the earliest stages of salt production. The first summarising works: BERGIER 1982; MULTHAUF 1978; ADSHEAD 1992.

[24] GABBA, PASQUINUCCI 1979; TRAINA 1986. Economics and transhumance have always been collateral themes in studies on salt-producing territories: CORBIER 1991.

[25] REBUFFAT 1974.

[26] Although important Ancient literary sources on salt have been preserved, such as Chapter XXXI of Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, amongst many other texts, ancient writings are extremely variable and limited, with the development of archaeology coming to play an essential role.

[27] BERTAUX 1979.

[28] GOULETQUER 1970.

included studies from Retz in France, the Valley of Saale in Germany, and De Panne in Belgium, featuring a possible Roman salt mine. The historical saltworks of Northwich in England were also addressed. England's long legacy of salt production is evidenced by the country's place names and old road network, which were established around the first salt-producing regions[29]. In other words, when the roads were built, the first salt-producing regions were simultaneously established. The fire-based technique for salt production was used in both inland and coastal areas, requiring brine to be concentrated and evaporated by the action of fire to produce salt. This technique has been in use since the Bronze Age, saw considerable development during the Iron Age, continued in Roman times, and persisted up to the 19th century. It was during this period that pioneering works on salt and its associations with the economy and technology were published, through the efforts of authors such as Riehm, Nenquin, and Forbes[30].

In a broader context, the first works on the diet of ancient peoples appeared, largely based on an archaeological approach. One of the most notable publications was that of Don and Patricia Brothwell[31], which not only compiled archaeological data but also drew on texts and iconography as sources. Among a wealth of other information, their book presented an overview of the salt industry during Neolithic times and the Roman Age in Gaul and Britannia, effectively illustrating the industry's expansion over time. Another pioneering but isolated work was the 1952 study by Grimal & Monod on *garum*[32]. And, as if presaging the incipient archaeological research, several isolated studies were published on the Gibraltar Strait Circle in the West, salting processes, and salt. Consequently, archaeological congresses began to be held in Spain, including the First Archaeological Congress of Spanish Morocco in 1953. This congress published isolated accounts such as Vila Valentí's study on salt production and trade, and on various salt measures, an innovative study that was not pursued further[33]. Archaeology relating to salting processes was also fundamental at the time in terms of introducing salt [34] given that this mineral was a basic component for in food preservation. Research on the salting industry and products like *garum* gained momentum in the last few decades of the century, focusing mainly on the Western Mediterranean and the Atlantic coast. Following early studies, such as the one by Grimal & Monod (1952), other local studies appeared based on different epigraphical, archaeological (amphorae, the remains of salting process infrastructures, etc.) and site discoveries. The work of Etienne on *garum*[35] in society, which sparked widespread debate, suggested that salt, essential for salting processes, had led to a state monopoly on both

[29] Colchester Archaeological Group, 1974.

[30] RIEHM 1961; NENQUIN 1964; FORBES 1964.

[31] BROTHWELL, BROTHWELL 1969.

[32] GRIMAL, MONOD 1952. As of the 1980's, salting processes would be a mainstay for frequently tackling the study of salt.

[33] VILA VALENTÍ 1954; JAÚREGUI 1954; the latter work in conjunction with Tarradell.

[34] ANDRÉ 1981.

[35] ETIENNE 1970.

salt and *garum* during the Barcid and Roman periods. Significant contributions were also made by Ponsich and Tarradell, who focused on the Western Mediterranean and the Atlantic[36]. These works laid the foundation for incorporating the ancient history of salt into historical studies, despite relying on few written sources. Moreover, the emergence of archaeology, initially focusing on the Prehistoric Period and, later on, the Proto-historic and Roman periods, shaped the themes and issues related to salt production. This included examinations of different brine concentrations, stages of production, salt cakes, transport and trade, and questions of concentration and evaporation. However, studies had yet to compile sources, thoroughly investigate salt-producing territories, or analyse the various environments that existed in antiquity.

2. The Emergence and Consolidation of Ancient History in Studies on Salt in the West

The ancient history of salt began with the groundbreaking proposal by Giovannini, who revolutionised the way salt was considered within the realm of ancient history. In the title of his work, he combined the city of Rome with two ideas: salt and fortune[37]. Giovannini pointed out the scarcity of studies on salt and the omission of Ostia's saltworks due to the prevailing historiographical focus on institutions and military values. In contrast, he highlighted the fact that Rome only became an expansive and conquering city once it had seized the saltworks located at the mouth of the Tiber. He also highlighted the overthrow of the Etruscan city of Veii, which marked the end of Etruscan power and led to the founding of the *castrum* at Ostia, events described by Livy that culminated in 396 BC. Giovannini stressed that Rome's foundation and development were significantly influenced by its access to the saltworks on the left banks of the Tiber, founded by Ancus Marcius, who also seized the *Silva Maesia* area, gaining access to the sea and the *Via Salaria*[38]. These strategic sites were established before the fall of Veii in 396 BC and were later complemented by territories taken from this wealthy city, justifying Rome's expansion. Giovannini's hypothesis about salt's capacity to influence historical processes and conquests is crucial. He argued that access to salt transformed Rome's ability to expand. In addition, he revisited broad themes previously discussed by Mommsen, such as the founding of the saltworks at Ostia (*Romulus*, *Ancus Marcius*), the clashes (over salt) between the cities of Veii and Rome at the end of the fourth century BC, the elimination of the private salt trade and the creation of a salt tax (i.e., a monopoly on salt). The only difference between the two involved their historical interpretation, with Giovannini disputing Livy's account and his anachronisms, and Mommsen applying a more historicist approach. However, Giovannini went further in his proposal regarding the role of salt in Rome's conquests and analysed sources to support his hypothesis about the necessity of salt for human survival. In this respect, he distanced himself from mere political or episodic considerations and, while still relying on

[36] PONSICH, TARRADELL 1965; PONSICH 1998. This line of research would remain valid over time.

[37] GIOVANNINI 1985.

[38] GIOVANNINI 1985, 381.

written sources, he moved towards the quantitative studies that would be conducted in later years. For the first time, salt was given a central role in historical processes of Antiquity, leading to a series of monographic studies that spurred the wealth of research that followed in this field.

In contrast to the existing archaeology of salt in the Atlantic and Central European regions, which largely relied on material remains[39], Giovannini's work shifted the focus to the Classical Mediterranean as a subject of research. From this point, studies proliferated and were widely disseminated. Chevallier's studies on salt as an indispensable foodstuff emerged in 1991[40], followed by Manfredi's work on the Punic world based on epigraphy in 1992[41]. Additionally, the works of Traiana[42], Murolo[43], Moinier[44], Mangas and Morère[45] provided a general overview, incorporating the Iberian Peninsula as a subject of study. Knowledge of written sources became a fundamental requirement, leading to the creation of compilations and inventories of sources related to different territories and the Ancient World in general. Studies on Ostia were complemented by those on the cult of Hercules, the Forum Boarium, and sites of exchange[46]. Simultaneously, studies on salt employing a trans-disciplinary approach also began to gain traction within the field[47].

2. **The First Studies on Salt in Eastern Antiquity**

At the same time, beyond the Mediterranean, studies began to appear on other regions for which evidence dating from Antiquity existed, in particular the Near East. Vital Cuinet discussed, among other resources, salt deposits in Mesopotamia (including Syria and Turkey) dating back to the late 19th century, a period when this territory was still under Ottoman control[48]. However, few studies emerged on salt for the period prior to the development of the caravan trade based in Palmyra, which flourished during the Roman Period, despite the

[39]Although general archaeological studies on the Atlantic coast continued, a number of historical approaches also began to emerge THOEN 1986; CABAL, THOEN, 1985.

[40] In a work that paid homage, in fact, to Michel Ponsich: CHEVALLIER 1991; MORÈRE 1991.

[41] MANFREDI 1992.

[42] TRAINA 1992.

[43] MUROLO 1995.

[44] MOINIER 1986; PERRICHET-THOMAS 1993.

[45] MORÈRE 1994; MANGAS, HERNANDO 1990-1991.

[46] LEVI 1996; ALGREEN-USSING, FISCHER-HANSEN 1985; MORELLI et al, 2004; SERRANO ORDOIZGOTI 2018.

[47] Granada congress in 1995: MALPICA CUELLO, GONZÁLEZ ALCANTUD 1995; Cagliari Congress in 1998; Weimar Congress in 2001; Nantes Congress in 2004: HOCQUET, SARRAZIN 2006; and the last Congress in 2006 in Sigüenza (Guadalajara): MORÈRE MOLINERO, 2007. These studies have continued at the Congresses on the Anthropology of Salt: ALEXIANU et al., 2011; ALEXIANU et al., 2023 (publication from the Second Congress in 2015); PLATA 2022. Other congresses can be highlighted due to the importance of the papers that were presented, including: SAULE 1992; WELLER 2002; FIGULS, WELLER, 2007; MOLINA, SÁNCHEZ 2005; WELLER et al., 2008.

[48] CUINET 1891.

significant role salt played in Mesopotamian societies. Specifically, these studies began with an analysis of the desertification of Mesopotamia[49], continuing with the work of Bucellati and the problems relating to salt measures, as tackled by Potts and Bucellati. BRB's[50] or "bevelled rim bowls" were also studied, having been discovered at sites up to the Middle Euphrates in the fourth millennium (e.g., at the site of Qraya in Syria). Additionally, evidence was unearthed that attested to the production and transport of salt at the beginning of the urbanization process, a development that spread from the south to the north of Mesopotamia[51].

Potts also analysed references in Mesopotamian texts regarding the uses of salt since Neolithic times, including its use in tanning leather, food preservation, religious rituals and medical therapies. He highlighted the existence of ten different types of salt in Mesopotamia, as identified in Assyrian texts and third-millennium texts by a "salt gatherer"[52]. Classical sources also reflect these regional differences, such as the classification offered by Pliny the Elder in Book XXXI[53]. Despite its rich potential, there have been few studies on this matter since then, although the theme has continued to the present day[54].

Continuing with the East, specifically the Persian world – the heir to Mesopotamian culture – analyses have been attempted regarding the evidence found in Greek sources that refer to salt, principally Polyaenus (Pol. IV, 3, 32), which attest to the use of salt and salt combinations for food purposes[55]. Although an equivalent term has yet to be identified in Persian texts, it appears that salt was one of the food elements employed to pay workers under royal service. The Persian banquet can perhaps be compared to those of previous periods, where texts such as the Banquet Stele of Ashurnarsipal II from the Neo-Assyrian Period reveal that numerous foods and spices, including salt, were present on the banquet table. The salt hills in the southern region of Fars, where Persepolis was located, are also well-known. This discovery is complemented by a more recent find in Iran: the ancient saltworks of Douzlak. Until recently, our knowledge was limited to Herodotus' reference to the bitumen, salt, and oil exploitations in the nearby region of Susa (Hdt. VI, 119, 2-3). It is important to note that since the time of Homer, Classical sources have referenced the Eastern World, as the Greeks had maintained links with this region since the beginning of recorded history. With the threat of Persian attacks on Greek territory, references to the Persians and their ways of life increased, culminating in the historical and ethnographic work of Herodotus. Studies based on written sources and archaeology have gradually been complemented by others, including recent

[49] JACOBSEN, ADAMS 1958.

[50] POTTS 1984; BUCELLATTI 1990; HOPKINSON 2007.

[51] Although a use has also been suggested recently linked with bread: MONTERO FENOLLÓS, SANJURJO SÁNCHEZ, 2016.

[52] POTTS 1984, 253.

[53] Pliny, *HN*, XXXI, 39-45.

[54] HOPKINSON, BUCCELLATI 2023.

[55] LEWIS 1987.

conferences and academic works that have increasingly focused on aspects such as the ecosystem of regions like the Achaemenid Persian Empire[56]. These studies shed light on the extraction of salt throughout the Empire, which was part of the state apparatus that mobilized craftsmen and professionals for various monumental constructions. The salt extraction tools used by the mummified individuals discovered at the still active saltworks of Douzlak (which means "salty earth" in Azeri), located near Chehrabad in northwestern Iran[57], have also been analysed. We can identify a subsequent period of use dating from the Parthian and Sassanid Periods, during which extraction activities continued, organized on a regional level. Analysis of these remains continues today using a multi-disciplinary approach, forming part of a large-scale study and preservation project for the saltworks and its mummies[58].

Egypt provides another arena for these studies, constituting a prime territory for scholars due to the important Classical sources that reference this region. Herodotus' descriptions are among these sources, informing us that the oases in the Sahara produced salt (Siwa, or Lake Mareotis[59], amongst others[60]). He mentions the saltworks (*taricheia*) at Pelusium (Hdt. II, 15,1 and Pliny *HN* XXXI, 78) on the Delta, which implies the existence of salt flats. Herodotus also references the Libyan caravan route (Hdt. IV, 182-185) across the Sahara, highlighting the importance of salt transport and other products throughout North Africa[61]. Furthermore, he establishes a connection between the salt resources at oases, such as Augila, and the various peoples who inhabited them, and he describes these inland salt deposits, which were likely formed by the gradual evaporation of saltwater[62]. In effect, salt was analysed to understand how trade with the salt-deficient subtropical regions facilitated exchanges, likely involving gold and slaves, from the Niger region. These would have been exported to Egypt and the Mediterranean in exchange for luxury items and olive oil, a route likely in use since at least the sixth century BC. Diodorus also refers to the border region between Egypt and Syria as a territory with ample salt resources (Dio. I, 60, 6-7). Nevertheless, the archaeological records on salt production and storage in this region and period are scarce, though some progress has been made[63]. Papyrus writings have provided key information regarding taxes and production

[56] «Paleopersepolis: Environment, Landscape and Society in Ancient Fars»: BALATTI, KLINKOTT, WIESEHÖFER 2021.

[57] AALI, ABAR et al., 2012; AALI, STÖLLNER et al., 2012.

[58] YOSHIDA, BAGHERPOUR, SHIRAZI 2021.

[59] Salt production at some of these sites would be studied: NICHOLSON, SHAW, 2000.

[60] In Ancient Egypt, salt was available at the oases of Siwa, Kharga, Dakhla and Farafra, the regions close to Memphis, Thebes, Elkab and Lake Mareotis. On the coast salt was extracted from seawater and, in the south, it was extracted from the salt marshes and even from the desert earth. Furthermore, sacks of salt, salt-cakes and "bricks" have been discovered in tombs, on lists and as products for trade, to which we must also add the Egyptians' capacity to produce cured/salted meat (NICHOLSON, SHAW 2000, 663).

[61] LIVERANI 2000.

[62] LASZLO 2001. Furthermore, these early accounts serve to establish a connection with the routes that were maintained throughout the region in Medieval and modern times.

[63] ALEXANDER 1993.

organisation, detailing the *haliké* and other taxes that emerged through the introduction of currency in the fourth century BC. Initial studies on Hellenistic and Roman papyruses offer insights into the link between the *haliké* tax and salt, particularly items concerning the *hals orkytos* ("excavated" salt, rock salt)[64] and its illegal ownership[65], confirming the existence of a salt monopoly in Egypt under the Lagid Dynasty. These early approaches were followed by De Cenival's work in 1983. Recent analyses of extensive papyrological evidence have been updated, combining the study of other sources (*óstraka*, Classical sources) to create comprehensive works on fiscal affairs in Hellenistic Egypt[66]. The most extensive compendium is that of Clarysse & Thompson (2006)[67], consisting of two volumes analyzing the *haliké* in 54 papyruses. In addition to offering an updated *corpus*, these studies focus on reconstructing the imposition of this tax in Ptolemaic Egypt, encompassing different categories, rates, and the tax-gathering process[68]. From these papyrological studies, we know that officials monitored the salt trade, that there was a position of "salt carrier" (perhaps for rock salt), that the right to sell salt was auctioned to certain individuals, and that salt originated from various places and was transported using specific barges (*kerkouroi halegoi*)[69]. However, despite extensive documentation on the tax, there is no information about the salt itself, and questions regarding its production and supply still remain[70]. In this respect, there is no bibliography on the specific extraction sites during this period, unlike the studies available on other regions such as Athens and Attica in the Greek world[71].

Although the extent to which this tax was linked to salt during this period is unclear, its widespread presence in literary sources indicates that salt, alongside other products such as oil, beer, papyrus, and textiles, was a major industry throughout the country. This significance appears to have persisted, as evidenced by the presence of establishments selling salt[72] in the nearby city of Arsinoe during the Roman Period and various toponyms related to salt[73]. This trend continued into Late Antiquity, as studies on the use and exchange of salt in the early Christian church suggest. Literary evidence, such as that preserved in Cassian's writings (*De inst. coen.* XXII) for Egypt, as well as texts from papyri and *ostraka*, document salt production, its function in rituals, its use as food for hermits, and its role in exchange among monasteries

[64] CADELL 1966.

[65] MCGING 2002.

[66] MONSON 2019, with references.

[67] CLARYSSE , THOMPSON 2006a, 2006b.

[68] CLARYSSE, THOMPSON 2006b, 36-89.

[69] Might this form of transport recall the depiction of boats loaded with salt on the Dead Sea, as represented in the Mosaic of Madaba? (FRIEDMAN 2012).

[70] CLARYSSE, THOMPSON 2006b, 38.

[71] CARUSI 2008.

[72] DARIS 1981.

[73] CADELL 1966, 280.

during the rise of Christianity[74]. In addition to investigations involving production and taxation, salt has also become a subject of various food studies[75]. Thus, Egypt and the East present considerable potential for future research.

4. The Development of Studies on Salt in Antiquity throughout the West and Current Trends

Since the year 2000, following the earliest studies, a range of specific works on Classical sources has emerged. These include inventories applied to various territories (such as the Iberian Peninsula) and studies on specific authors like Herodotus, geographers such as Strabo, and naturalists like Pliny the Elder[76]. These studies also encompass activities related to salt[77]. Pliny the Elder mentions different qualities and types of salt across many regions in the Mediterranean, including Sicily, Phrygia, Cyprus, Egypt, Bactria, India, Arabia, Spain, Crete, Africa, Babylon, Attica, the Island of Euboea, and Thebes (Pliny *HN,* XXXI, 73-92). Both Pliny and Strabo provide information on saltworks in Eastern regions such as the Pontic area, Cappadocia, other parts of Asia Minor and even distant locations like India (Str. V, 2, 6). It is important to consider the particularities and specific characteristics of Classical sources on salt in Antiquity, which offer uneven and often sparse coverage of the topic of salt, and very often, a complete silence on the subject even when we know that salt existed and was produced. Some regions are mentioned more prominently than others, with references often emerging in the context of conflicts, economics, trade, and production.

After the year 2000, research began to focus on pre-Classical periods[78], culminating in the monographic work by Carusi on salt in the Greek world[79], a significant milestone in the history of salt in Antiquity. Carusi provided an exhaustive analysis of written, epigraphic, and archaeological sources, enabling her to propose the first inventory of salt resources throughout the Mediterranean. She analysed complex issues, such as the contrast between the abundance of available documents and the difficulty of locating details regarding the extraction and exploitation of salt, with Athens and Attica being notable examples. She also tackled the question of production and trade, which seemed to reside in private hands, although some epigraphic evidence suggests this was managed by temples. More recently, Carusi has analysed the dynamics of salt exchange and salt-preserved foods throughout the Mediterranean in the Classical Period, particularly in markets in areas like the Northern Aegean (mainly Thrace) and the Black Sea[80]. In this regard, she has addressed the most complex issues relating to salt,

[74] IAŢCU 2023.

[75] DARBY et al., 1977.

[76] MORÈRE 2002; BONGHI JOVINO 2002; ALEXIANU 2007; CARUSI 2008A; MORÈRE 2008; PIKULSKA 2008; MANGAS, HERNANDO 2011; MOINIER 2012; MORÈRE 2014; MOINIER, WELLER, 2015.

[77] PEREA YÉBENES 2006.

[78] KOPAKI, CHANIOTAKIS 2003; CARUSI 2006; CARUSI 2007.

[79] CARUSI 2008.

[80] ALEXIANU 2011; CARUSI 2015.

including its exploitation and circulation throughout the Greek world and the Hellenistic kingdoms[81].

4.1. The West and the Classical World

More recently, several new approaches have emerged that focus on the quantitative aspects of salt as a food item, as well as its consumption and trade, particularly in the Greek world. These studies concentrate on the only quantitative account provided by literary sources: the salt consumption of a slave as described by Cato (*Agr*. 65-67). Cato recommended adding salt to the cereal diet of slaves, which included salt-preserved foods such as *allec*. This perspective was briefly raised by Giovannini in his hypothesis about Rome's expansion due to the conquest of the saltworks, emphasizing the necessity of understanding the salt needs of the population in Antiquity[82]. However, these new studies analysed various cases in depth for the first time. Another recent approach involves studying salt culture and its role in food[83]. A larger number of Roman sources are available in this respect compared to Greek sources. Notably, we have *Apicius*, a collection of Roman recipes from a fourth-century AD based on a first-century AD original document. This essential source highlights the importance of *garum*, a salting method present in almost every recipe, whereas in the Greek world, salt was mainly used in recipes for fish and salt-preserved products. Salted products were key foodstuffs for the community, as seen in Greek references (Ar., *Eccl*., 606), whilst salt was also considered to be a condiment, being included in fish recipes (Ath. *Deipn*. VII, 321 c-d)[84]. As a result, salt remained a key focus in studies of salt-preserved foods, fishing, and the trade of these products in the Western Mediterranean, particularly in the 1960s. Notable works from this period include various studies on the Phoenician-Punic Period and North Africa[85]. Gradually, various monographs emerged on these topics, such as the volume published by Costa & Hernández[86], which covers production, consumption, and trade of salt-preserved foods from the Iberian Peninsula and their impact on other Mediterranean regions, including Greece.

No summarising work, however, appeared until the monograph published by R. Curtis in 1991[87]. In this study, Curtis extended his research beyond the Western Mediterranean to include chapters on the Empire's eastern provinces, with a section devoted to more distant

[81] Including her interpretation of Ptolemaic *haliké*, a tax whose name derives from salt and which also appears under the Seleucid Empire, a very well-worked theme: *vide supra*.

[82] CARUSI 2011; MOINIER 2011; CARUSI 2015.

[83]MORÈRE MOLINERO 2016; BARAT 2017; MORÈRE MOLINERO 2022.

[84] Olson & Sens, 2000. The work by Athenaeum of Naucratis, *Deipnosophists* (normally translated as "The Banquet of the Learned"), dating from the third century AD, brings together the writings of his predecessors regarding banqueting practices in the Greek world, although it also provides details on other cultures, such as the case of banquets at the Persian Court.

[85] MEDEROS MARTÍN, ESCRIBANO COBO 2005.

[86] COSTA, HERNÁNDEZ, 2012.

[87] CURTIS 1991.

regions such as the Black Sea. This region, in particular, has been the subject of increasingly comprehensive studies, although these have emerged somewhat later compared to the western reaches of the Empire[88]. More recently, following the trend towards more localized studies, notable mentions include the CETARIAE 2005 International Congress[89] for studies on the salting industry on the Iberian Peninsula, the monograph published by Étienne & Mayet[90], not to mention a similar study by Botte[91] covering Southern Italy and Sicily. Botte's work also provided a brief look at the Black Sea, the Iberian Peninsula, Africa, Gaul (Mediterranean and Atlantic), and the rest of Italy. Researchers from the fields of archaeology and amphoric epigraphy have also addressed the question of salt[92], as salt-preserved foods were studied alongside production and exploitation sites. Recently, this analysis of food salting sites has been complemented by studies on the production of Tyrian purple[93], and other materials[94]. This has led to a vibrant area of research focused on salt and salt-preserved foods in the Black Sea region, centred around the fishing and salting industries. The importance of products from this region, including those previously mentioned, is reflected in literary sources and the numerous Greek colonial settlements established from the seventh century BC, which were revitalized during the Roman Period in the second century BC. Since the 1930s, studies have attested to the salting factories at Pontic settlements, complementing those of the Western Mediterranean, leading to a series of works that have become monographic series[95]. These studies have gradually established models and comprehensive analyses[96], effectively defining the concept of a halieutic circuit encompassing fishing and salt resources, related handicraft activities[97] and the consequent trade, as studied through epigraphy[98]. Other thematic developments include regional studies focused on areas rich in mined salt, though archaeology has only made isolated discoveries. While regions like Cardona (Spain) or Hallstatt were exploited in Prehistoric times[99], Dacia has been the focal point for regional studies in the Roman Period in recent years[100]. Epigraphy has helped define the rich salt deposits in this region, the organization of salt production following Trajan's conquest, and the significant role played by

[88] This line of research would be strongly pursued up until the present day, as we shall see, based on amphoric epigraphy.

[89] LAGOSTENA et al., 2007.

[90] ETIENNE, MAYET 2002.

[91] BOTTE 2009.

[92] GARCÍA VARGAS, MARTÍNEZ MAGANTO 2006; MARTÍNEZ MAGANTO, GARCÍA VARGAS 2009.

[93] FERNANDEZ URIEL 2010; LOPEZ MEDINA et al 2023.

[94] DELRUE, NAPOLI 2007.

[95] BEKKER-NIELSEN 2005

[96] DUMITRACHE, 2014; BARAT, 2017; DRIARD et al., 2017.

[97] DUMITRACHE 2014.

[98] RADA 2023.

[99] FIGULS, WELLER 2007; KERN et al. 2013.

[100] ALEXIANU et al. 2023.

salt resources, especially the salt mines[101], which help to explain part of the line of fortifications built by the Romans[102].

4.2. Archaeology's Definitive Contribution to the Study of Salt

Although our study of research sources is far from exhaustive, Classical sources offer a vast array of interpretative and analytical perspectives. Recently, several new directions in the study of salt have emerged due to new archaeological discoveries[103]. Territorial and thematic studies, supported by written and epigraphic sources, have significantly broadened the field – an expansion that has been accompanied by various archaeological explorations and initiatives[104]. For instance, in the north of France, within Gallia Belgica, salt production workshops using *briquetage* techniques from the end of the Iron Age have been documented. The Roman conquest brought about key changes, including the disappearance of several workshops in the first century AD, such as that of Conchil-le-Temple. Despite these changes, there was a sense of continuity in the region, particularly among the Morini and Menapii tribes, as evidenced by archaeology and epigraphy (e.g., Ardres, Steene, and Pitgam)[105]. Similar salt production methods have been identified in certain inland areas of the United Kingdom, where brine was stored in water tanks before being evaporated by heat[106]. In these cases, it is important to note that open-pan salt production and *briquetages* began with prehistoric periods[107] and continued to be a primary means of extraction up until the 19th century, as demonstrated by ongoing excavations. In examining *briquetages*, various factors were

[101] MIHAILESCU-BÎRLIBA 2018; MIHAILESCU-BÎRLIBA, ASĂNDULESEI 2019; MIHAILESCU-BÎRLIBA 2022.

[102] ȚENTEA, MATEI-POPESCU 2015.

[103] An extensive bibliography also exists based on epigraphy and on inscriptions that mention *salinatores* or *salarii*, amongst other aspects. Recent studies include: CEBEILLAC-GERVASONI, MORELLI 2014; BÎRLIBA, ASĂNDULESEI 2019.

[104] MENANTEAU et al., 2003; CASSEN et al., 2004; MALPICA CUELLO et al., 2011; MORÈRE MOLINERO et al., 2013; VALIENTE CÁNOVAS et al., 2019.

[105] BOUTET 2007; CABAL, THOEN 1985; NAPOLI 2007.

[106] ARROWSMITH, POWER 2012.

[107] We shall only present a brief summary, given that the bibliography is extremely extensive and in order to not to enter the realm of Antiquity, although we should remember that *briquetages* marked the beginning of this line of research. These materials employed for open-pan salt-making have been progressively discovered in territories as far south as the Iberian Peninsula since the Neolithic Age and the Bronze Age, and, of course, throughout a large part of Europe, serving as a means of identifying the origins of salt culture: VOGT 1999; BRIGAND, WELLER 2005, and JIMÉNEZ GUIJARRO 2011; ESCACENA CARRASCO et al. 1996, and TERÁN MANRIQUE, MORGADO 2011 (mouth of the Guadalquivir and Andalusia); VALIENTE CÁNOVAS et al. 2002; BUENO RAMÍREZ et al., 2017; OÑATE et al. 2023; JIMÉNEZ-ESPEJO 2024 (Espartinas and the Central Peninsula); DELIBES 1993; DELIBES DE CASTRO et al. 1998; GUERRA DOCE et al., 2017 (Villafáfila in Zamora); ARENAS, MARTÍNEZ 1999; MEDEROS MARTÍN, RUIZ CABRERO 2000-2001; CARRILERO MILLÁN 2005; TERÁN MANRIQUE 2017; QUIXAL SANTOS 2020 (transhumance and cattle-raising routes). Outside the Iberian Peninsula, cases involving Prehistoric studies are also extremely frequent in Turkey, Romania, Italy, the United Kingdom and Germany (ERDOGU, OZBASARAN 2008; MONAH, DUMITROAIA 2007; PASQUINUCCI, MENCHELLI 2002; ATTEMA, ALESSANDRI, 2012; SEVINK et al. 2021; SAILE 2002; Hees, 2002; LANE, FIELDING, 2024), as well as in France, specifically on the northern and western coasts, with their seafaring cultures, and also in inland areas (FIGULS, WELLER 2007).

considered, including climate, the location of workshops in proximity to brine sources, and different production stages, such as concentration and condensation. Additionally, aspects like the trade and distribution of the resulting salt cakes were also studied. These works have highlighted geographical and environmental factors as key elements of analysis, extending beyond a mere examination of material remains from prehistoric periods and antiquity[108].

Other sites where saltworks have been studied include Bas-Lauvert (Antibes, France)[109]. At a regional level, salt-making sites have been identified in locations such as Kaunos, an ancient city in Caria, southwest Turkey. These findings are based on Pliny's references to the curative properties of salt. A comparative and more global study has been carried out at this site[110], where almost 50 circular salt basins of considerable diameter were discovered in 2005. These basins are unique and represent the first archaeological evidence of salt production in ancient Anatolia[111]. This discovery prompted a series of archaeological and geophysical studies, which have dated the use of the saltworks to as late as the tenth century AD. These studies on the Peninsula have continued to the present day.

However, the most significant archaeological contribution in recent years has been the discovery and excavation of the first artificial saltworks from the Roman period, particularly at coastal sites, although studies have also focused on inland saltworks[112]. One underlying issue has been the evolution of sea levels. The distinction between natural salt and artificial salt, as mentioned by Varro and Pliny the Elder, has led to an ongoing search for artificial salt-making infrastructure, of which very few descriptions have survived. The most complete description, though historically late, appears in a travel account by Rutilius Namatianus, who describes the *salinae* and their composition, specifically those at the villa of his friend Albinus (*De reditu* 475-490). There are also interpretations referring to saltworks in accounts by Manilius (*Astr.* V 682-692) and possibly by Pliny the Elder (*HN* XXXI, 81). These mentions of artificial saltworks touch on their exploitation, ownership, and the differences between inland and coastal infrastructure[113]. Additionally, there are distinctions between Mediterranean saltworks and those on the Atlantic coast, with key technical questions relating to the supply and circulation of water. The first significant discovery was made in Vigo, based on the work of Juan Carlos Castro, who unearthed the best-preserved saltworks dating from the Roman period at O Areal (Vigo)[114]. This research has been continued by multi-disciplinary teams from CSIC, who have recently studied stretches of the Galician coast, specifically the area of A Guarda

[108] LÓPEZ SAÉZ et al. 2018; LAGÓSTENA BARRIOS 2019; LAGÓSTENA BARRIOS 2021.

[109] DAVEAU, SIVAN 2010.

[110] GARCÍA VARGAS, MARTÍNEZ MAGANTO 2017.

[111] ATIK 2008.

[112] BARON DE LOÉ, 1903-1904.

[113] VALIENTE CÁNOVAS et al. 2014.

[114] CASTRO 2006; CASTRO 2007; CASTRO 2008; CASTRO 2024, e.p.

(Pontevedra)[115]. In parallel, areas near Cádiz and Jaén have been reassessed to identify potential salt exploitation sites due to the limited evidence available[116]. Similarly, underwater archaeology has been employed to study the saltworks of the Adriatic coast, establishing a new framework for coastal salt exploitation studies[117]. These initiatives have been accompanied by environmental and territorial studies. Recent studies have favoured the formation of multi-disciplinary and inter-university working groups, effectively implementing new methodologies applied to various fields such as palaeoclimatology, dendrochronology, environmental studies, and underwater archaeology. These methodologies address aspects of open-pan salt production with *briquetage* and the study of coastal saltworks. Emerging projects include studies of salt-making sites on the Adriatic coasts and other initiatives focusing on inland salt production[118]. Another promising approach is archaeological experimentation, which has yielded significant results for the study of salt[119].

This interdisciplinary approach extends beyond historical and archaeological research, incorporating aspects such as tourism to focus on societal impacts. Recently, there has been a concerted effort to combine academic research on ancient salt exploitation sites with a region's cultural heritage and legacy. A notable example is the Valle Salado de Añana, or "Salt Valley of Añana" (Basque Country)[120], which has gained international recognition through several prestigious heritage management awards[121]. The Añana saltworks have likely been in use since Neolithic times, with significant changes to the evaporation system occurring during the Roman period, shaping the landscape we see and admire today[122]. Since the turn of the century, intensive historical research and heritage conservation efforts have been undertaken. These

[115] CURRÁS 2017; CURRÁS REFOJOS et al. 2024.

[116] FORNELL-MUÑOZ, CASTILLO MARTÍNEZ 2019.

[117] CARUSI 2018; BECHOR et al. 2020; GRISONIC 2022.

[118] The group "Regards croisés sur le sel", made up of members of the French laboratory, Halma – UMR 8164 (CNRS, MCC, Lille 3), has been working on the history of salt since the year 2013, based on discoveries made in Northen Gaul, both archaeological and epigraphic, from Protohistory onwards. Its aim is to analyse salt production in the region from a "diachronic and transdisciplinary" perspective, including the natural sciences and geology.

[119] Experimental archaeology may be a useful approach when it comes to reconstructing salt exploitation processes in Antiquity: BODI 2007; TENCARIU et al, 2015; HÖET-VAN CAUWENBERGHE et al. 2017, 20; HEES 2022.

[120] PLATA MONTERO 2008; PLATA MONTERO 2020. Excavations currently headed by Olivier Weller, within the framework of the research projects implemented by Casa de Velázquez and CNRS: Projet Néosal.

[121] "Valle Salado de Añana" won the 2015 edition of the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage-Europa Nostra Award 2015, a distinction granted by the European Commission and Europa Nostra for excellence in heritage management and landscape recovery, as well as a form of recognition of the salt production industry, which has a long tradition in the "Salt Valley".

[122] Other examples include the Saline Royale at Arc-et-Senans in the French Jura region, or Salins-les-Bains, both historical saltworks recognised as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO, not to mention the salt mines of Wieliczka (Poland), also a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

efforts include the recovery, implementation, and exploitation of the site, demonstrating the dynamic nature of the ongoing historical and archaeological studies.

4. Conclusions

In this article, we have reviewed the history of salt in antiquity, starting with its early uses and ending with its full consolidation as a significant subject of study. Today, this line of research brings together experts from multiple disciplines, aligning with current research trends. Salt entered the historical record through periods with available written sources, which explains its delayed appearance in Western ancient history (except perhaps in the case of Italic Rome and its writers). In contrast, it saw significant development in the East, especially during the Lagid Period, due to the abundance of papyrological information. One characteristic of salt is its subtle presence in the archaeological record: it is a mineral found in a natural state, a soluble product, and a rock that is difficult to trace. Consequently, we have had to identify evidence through complementary industries and specific production techniques, such as open-pan salt-making, since the artificial solar method leaves hardly any trace and the spontaneous natural form blends with its environment, even though it must have been gathered and used, at least at a household level. Nevertheless, archaeology has provided the initial details that sparked widespread interest in the study of salt in antiquity and protohistory. This theme will continue to be relevant in scientific archaeology, provided we acknowledge the geographical asymmetry between certain territories in prehistory and those fully incorporated into historical records, as seen in the West and the East. Archaeology has been – and continues to be – an invaluable tool for understanding salt in antiquity through territorial studies in salt-producing areas. These studies encompass aspects such as the occupation of territory, production sites, techniques, availability, and the location of coastal and inland saltworks, as well as *briquetage* workshops. These elements reference both salt production and the transport and dissemination of salt.

In recent years, research has increasingly focused on local and regional studies. However, in line with current trends, several joint studies have also emerged. For example, the recent volume by Harding[123] provides a concise overview of salt production archaeology in the European-Mediterranean region, covering the period from the Neolithic to the Middle Ages. It discusses the various techniques employed, including ongoing aspects, and includes a chapter with texts, emphasizing the importance of viewing history as a whole. We can also highlight initiatives like those led by Alexianu and others, who have aimed to integrate anthropology into these studies[124]. The history of salt in Antiquity remains a rich field of inquiry: new approaches to interpreting sources and collateral materials, along with ongoing contributions from archaeology, continue to revitalize this thematic discipline. A long road of discovery lies ahead, both in the East and the West.

[123] HARDING 2021.

[124] ALEXIANU et al. 2023.

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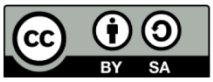

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The Emergence of the Replica Model? An Analysis of the Question of the 'Copies of Rome' in Late Republican Colonization Through Three Case-Studies

Carlos ENRÍQUEZ DE SALAMANCA[1]

Abstract: *The debate around the replica model of Roman colonization has traditionally been focused on the early to mid-Republican colonial foundations in Italy. In this context, scholars have, in the last decades, rightly challenged the former orthodoxy to assert that these colonies were not, as was previously assumed, replicas of Rome. These same scholars, however, have often stated that these replicas were the result of later Republican and imperial colonial practices that emerged in this period. This paper puts this assumption of the 'emergence of the replica model' to the test to show that this is not the case. Through an examination of the elements of the replica model, as well as a series of three case-studies (Corinth, Urso, and Pompeii), the present work will show that there is no evidence to suggest a replica model in the colonies of the Late Republic and Early Empire, but rather, at most, an inspiration taken from Roman institutions that can hardly be identified with the traditional arguments of the simulacrum.*

Rezumat: *Dezbaterea în jurul modelului de replică al colonizării romane s-a concentrat tradițional asupra fundațiilor coloniale din perioada începutului până la mijlocul Republicii în Italia. În acest context, cercetătorii au contestat pe bună dreptate, în ultimele decenii, ortodoxia anterioară, afirmând că aceste colonii nu erau, așa cum se presupunea anterior, replici ale Romei. Totuși, aceiași cercetători au susținut adesea că aceste replici au fost rezultatul practicilor coloniale târzii republicane și imperiale, care au apărut în această perioadă. Această lucrare pune la încercare această presupunere a „emergenței modelului de replică" pentru a demonstra că nu este așa. Printr-o examinare a elementelor modelului de replică, precum și printr-o serie de trei studii de caz (Corint, Urso și Pompei), prezentul studiu va arăta că nu există dovezi care să sugereze un model de replică în coloniile din perioada târzie a Republicii și începutul Imperiului, ci mai degrabă, în cel mai bun caz, o inspirație preluată din instituțiile romane, care cu greu poate fi identificată cu argumentele tradiționale ale simulacrului.*

Keywords: Replica model, Roman colonization, Late Republic, colonies, Capitolium, forum, comitium-curia complex.

Introduction

Scope and Structure

In the present paper, I will be discussing the assumed emergence of the replica model of Roman colonization in the late Republic and early Empire. The main aim of this endeavour is to follow what is the apparent logical continuation of the research into the replica model debate by looking at whether we can affirm that this replica model began to emerge in the colonies of

[1] Universiteit Leiden, Nederland: ceses2000@hotmail.com. ORCID-ID: 0009-0001-7339-8780.

the later Roman Republic and early Principate. Therefore, it is important to note at the very outset that I will not be delving into the ideologies or reasoning behind the Roman colonial practices that drove this shift into model replicas of Rome. That is, my concern is with the specific cases of emergence of this phenomenon, not its motivations or even its consequences. The latter aspect would necessitate its own separate research and analysis that does not fit the scope of the present paper.

Given this scope and the aims of this essay, I have decided to structure it into two main sections. The first section of the essay will focus on establishing a standard by which to judge the emergence of the replica model of Roman colonies. It would be very difficult to tackle the issues this paper wishes to address without first proposing some sort of standard against which to compare those developments. Therefore, section one will focus on analysing the works of previous scholars in order to ascertain what has traditionally been seen as evidence of model replica instances. Aspects like topography, capitolia, fora, institutions, etc. will have to be accounted for, and will offer some sort of benchmark for the following study in the next section. However, due to space constraints, it will be impossible to tackle *all* elements that have been related to the model replica. Therefore, I will select those which are most conspicuous and significant, and other elements will have to be considered where relevant in each case-study. The later section will then focus on the direct evidence of the colonies. The aim will be to take three case-studies: Corinth, Urso, and Pompeii, given that space constraints make it impossible to tackle *all* Roman colonies, and extrapolate in order to offer some sort of conclusion on the development of replica model practices. These colonies have been chosen due to their similar chronology, but also because they present a diverse geographic distribution, which will allow for better extrapolation of any findings.

Status Quaestionis

Salmon, in his 1969 classic work *Roman Colonization Under the Republic* stated that "a colonia was a city-state",[2] that it was not simply a territory or a geographical location, but rather, for Salmon a Roman colony's key characteristic was its urbanism and self-governance.[3] But, more importantly for this paper, he also went on to echo the words of Gellius[4] about Roman colonies being "miniatures" or "reproductions" of Rome itself.[5] He stated that Roman colonies followed a "uniform tendency to imitate Rome",[6] and his assertions have had tremendous influence on the study of Roman colonization since, and until not too long ago.[7] Recently, however, Pelgrom

[2] SALMON 1969, 14.

[3] PELGROM 2014, 73.

[4] GELL., *NA* 16.13.9: "colonies seem to be miniatures, as it were, and in a way copies [of Rome]".

[5] SALMON 1969, 18.

[6] SALMON 1969, 18.

[7] SEWELL 2014, 125.

and Stek have succinctly shown the nuances of Salmon's view, both good and bad, as well as the work of other scholars that should also receive the historiographic attention Salmon has enjoyed.[8] Despite this, the figure of E.T. Salmon still towers over the historiography of the field. In fact, even archaeologists such as Frank Brown, having excavated Cosa in the 70s, that what he had found in the colony was a prototype of "Rome itself".[9] But, even though this perception of Roman colonization practice became the orthodoxy, it was eventually shown to be imprecise, and in recent years many scholars have criticized and outright rejected that view,[10] stating that later sources are unreliable in their recounting of earlier colonial practices.[11]

The new orthodoxy prevails: Rome, in Italy and in the early to mid-Republic, did not found colonies as miniatures of itself; the replica model understanding of Roman colonization is overcome. However, some issues prevail. As Edward Bispham states: "[the replica model] is all very well for the Augustan period, and, with qualifications, for the late Republic".[12] It is, however, true as he states, that these colonies did not look like Rome very much, but the important aspects is that their foundation were meant to recall Rome,[13] they recalled an archaic form of Rome and the basic topographic and infrastructural aspects; a process which Bispham calls "late-republican and Augustan discourses, which evolved in the context of re-shaping an identity for a far-flung and recently divided empire".[14] His article, however, goes on to discuss the realities of middle-republican colonization, and to criticize further the issues with the Gellian model.

Thus, on the one hand, we find that scholars have rightly pointed out the faults with the replica model for early Roman colonization, but at the same time, they seem to indicate that these replica models do appear later on, i.e., they are a later invention. Despite this, very little attention has been given to this fact, with most efforts directed towards stomping the Gellian model to the ground, but the later-republican and Augustan discourses and colonial replications of Rome being almost completely ignored. It is, therefore, my aim here to offer a first glimpse into whether we can truly say that these 'copies of Rome' emerged in the context of late-republican and Augustan colonization. This paper will show, I hope, that we should not be so confident in these assumptions, and that the picture is much more complex and nuanced than previously thought. Perhaps this paper might serve to stimulate further discussion in what seems to be the logical continuation of a topical debate.

[8] PELGROM, STEK 2014.

[9] BROWN 1980, 12.

[10] e.g.: BRADLEY 2006; PELGROM 2008; SEWELL 2014, to name just a few.

[11] BRADLEY 2006, 163.

[12] BISPHAM 2006, 75.

[13] BISPHAM 2006, 75.

[14] BISPHAM 2006, 75.

The replica model

The debate on the processes of emergence of the model replica cannot be properly started without contending first with what, precisely, should be understood as representing a replica or a likeness of Rome within a colonial foundation. In short, we ought to, firstly, establish some sort of standard of a 'model replica' against which to hold Roman colonies. The best way to go about this will be to analyse the secondary literature and the historiography of the debate, in order to ascertain what elements have traditionally been seen as elements of the *simulacrum*, and subject those to rigorous analysis. As will be made evident, there is no consensus on this topic, but some general outline can be somewhat ascertained that will, at least, allow for some key elements to be highlighted as significant in looking at their emergence for the replica model in later Republican and imperial colonial contexts. We may do well to begin with the physical aspects of the replica model. Bispham himself stated that every colony is easily recognisable through its urban 'kit'.[15] This 'kit' was composed of the following elements: a citadel with a Capitolium temple, a forum as the main political space, and, within it, a *comitium*, and a *curia.* Despite the fact that we now know that this is a late-Republican and Augustan discourse of colonial re-shaping, these 'kits' of standard urban elements do make up, and have traditionally been seen as, key elements of the replica model, whether for early colonies, or for later re-formulations of these colonial settlements.[16]

Of these elements, the one that has recently been subjected to the most scholarly analysis and discussion has, undoubtedly, been the Capitolium, so I will begin by examining its connection to colonialism.[17] The issue with Capitolia temples has been brought to the fore by Quinn and Wilson in their *JRS* article from 2013, in which they discussed the assumption, accepted by most scholars, that these temples were a part of that aforementioned urban 'kit' either for early Roman colonies, or later imperial ones. Frank Brown et al., in their 1960 study of Cosa's Arx temples, were proponents of the theory that the Capitolium at Cosa was a clear instance of the Gellian *simulacrum* model: "[the Capitolium's] presence in the colony is warranted by Gellius' definition of the *effigies parvae simulacraque* of the metropolis."[18] And while there has been some pushback against this notion, it has not escaped the association with the replica model.

The Oxford Classical Dictionary's (OCD) entry for 'Capitol/Capitolium' makes a quick survey over the facts and history of the Roman Capitolium both as one of the seven hills, as well

[15] BISPHAM 2006, 74.

[16] QUINN, WILSON 2013, 117, 126.

[17] Note that the discussion of Capitolia takes a significant amount of space here, as it offers one of the most important aspects of the replica model, and which has been discussed thoroughly. As such, it offers a great starting point in offering both an understanding of how the replica model has been constructed, and why we should be cautious with our assumptions regarding it.

[18] BROWN *et alii* 1960, 106.

as the temple on it. But most importantly for our purposes here, a final, brief note is added that states that "[b]oth hill and the temple of Jupiter were reproduced in many cities of Italy and the western provinces".[19] Furthermore, Brill's New Pauly also explicitly buys or subscribes to this replica model understanding of the Capitolium for Roman colonies and cities in Italy and the western provinces: "[The Capitolium was] the temple complex for the divine triad of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva in the cities of Italy and the (mainly western) provinces of the Roman Empire, in imitation of the *Capitolium* in the city of Rome, which thus became the *Capitolium vetus*" and then continue by saying that "[i]t is probable that *capitolia* were originally erected only in those Roman colonies laid out on the pattern of Rome [...], then in cities that wished or were obliged in particular to emphasize their adherence to the empire."[20] Even authors who are significantly critical of the replica model, or who advise great caution, have still maintained the importance of the Capitolium within Roman colonies and provincial settlements. Zanker notably still assumes Capitolia as a defining feature of Italian Republican and Augustan colonies in an article from 2000,[21] and Bispham, despite rejecting that relationship for the mid-Republic, argues that, for later periods, "it was becoming unthinkable that a Roman colony should not have a temple to the Capitoline Triad."[22]

More recently, however, these discourses have faced severe pushback, and the seemingly inseparable relationship between Capitolia and colonial foundation/status has been thrown into question. As previously mentioned, Quinn and Wilson have spearheaded the opposition to this assumption. Their argument, however, is *not* "to suggest that Capitolia were not of great importance or that they did not display a strong symbolic link with Rome", but rather that it had "nothing to do with Republican or early Imperial colonization, or with the colonial status of cities" and that "the idea of a Capitolium on a high point of town, or dominating the forum, was not the standard, centrally propagated, item of Roman town planning that it has frequently been presented as being."[23] The point that they make is, therefore, that scholars are right in emphasizing the importance of Capitolia, where they exist, but their existence was much more scarce than previously thought,[24] and had nothing to do with colonial status or foundation.[25] In this vein, Mario Torelli also discussed the apparent lack of Capitolium at Leptis Magna, which became a colony at the beginning of the II century AD. In this article, however, Torelli diverges from Quinn and Wilson in that he posits the possibility of a Capitoline Triad cult that followed non-traditional forms, and thus a Capitolium temple as such would not be strictly necessary in

[19] *OCD* (4th ed.), s.v. *Capitol/Capitolium*.

[20] Brill's *New Pauly*, s.v. *Capitolium*, section II.

[21] ZANKER 2000, 27-28.

[22] BISPHAM 2006, 122.

[23] QUINN, WILSON 2013, 128.

[24] QUINN, WILSON 2013, 142 ff, especially outside of Roman North Africa.

[25] QUINN, WILSON 2013, 167-168.

its typical form.[26] All in all, the key reflection we ought to take from this rather long incursion into the discussion of the relationship of Capitolium and colonial foundation/status is that we should be wary of straightforward assumptions. It is undeniable that a Capitolium, as Quinn and Wilson themselves admit, gave the colony a stronger relationship with Rome, but its existence was not necessary nor as widespread as previously imagined. In other words, a Capitolium might provide strong evidence of the *simulacrum* model, but its relative rarity to what was often assumed means that its relationship to colonial status is not a direct correlation, which should raise a point of caution for the following elements.

Moving on from the Capitolium, I will briefly go over the remaining physical elements of the replica model. The New Pauly defines fora as "the mercantile and administrative centre of a Roman city [...] which took the form of a large open space framed by buildings", the location – at the crossing of the *cardo* and *decumanus* – function, and architecture of which was modelled after the *Forum Romanum,*[27] Similarly, the OCD states that fora "formed the focal point of most Roman towns" and that "[t]he imperial fora at Rome provided models for more monumental complexes".[28] It is clear that fora are widely regarded as a defining feature of the *simulacrum* of Rome in the colonies, and very little nuance or pushback has been levelled against this archaeologically well-established fact. Even Sewell, who is notoriously opposed to the replica model argument, preferring notions of adaptation, rather than replication, admits that the fora of Italian cities throughout the mid-Republican period and beyond seem to be modelled on the layout of Rome's own forum, with their functions also similar, even the same, to those of the *Forum Romanum*, too.[29] On the other hand, Mouritsen does throw into question the idea that these Italian fora were copies of the Roman institution.[30] His reasoning is that the "heterogeneous and unstable nature of the structures means that they cannot be direct copies of any Roman institution."[31] However, he himself admits that the inspiration 'may' have come from Rome and Latium,[32] and, furthermore, the fact that the *comitium-curia* complexes also presented diverse sizes and layouts – which does not constitute a challenge to their addition to the *simulacrum* model (see below) – evidences that Mouritsen's argument does not constitute a strong enough challenge to disregard fora as an adaptation or replication of Roman institutions.[33] This re-shaping of the fora for different communities, however, should remind

[26] TORELLI 2014.

[27] Brill's *New Pauly*, s.v. *Forum*.

[28] *OCD* (4th ed.), s.v. *Forum*.

[29] SEWELL 2014, 129.

[30] MOURITSEN 2004.

[31] MOURITSEN 2004, p. 64.

[32] MOURITSEN 2004.

[33] SEWELL 2014, 128.

us of Torelli's argument regarding Capitolia, and lead us to think about these adaptations as, perhaps, precisely that, rather than strictly copies or replications.

Within the forum we find the *comitium* and the *curia*. These *comitium-curia* complexes have also been taken as a defining feature of the model replica since Richardson Jr. argued for it in his 1957 article on the forum of Cosa:[34] "[e]xcavations in the forum of the Latin colony of Cosa [...] have brought to light the comitium [...], and curia [...]. These buildings show in a new and striking way how intense the imitation of Rome in the colonies could be."[35] Furthermore, we find that, as with the fora or the Capitolium, Brill's New Pauly takes these complexes as being a feature of the city of Rome that was copied to its colonies: "The building structures of the city of Rome were transferred to the newly founded colonies",[36] further evidence of their importance for the *simulacrum* model. The *comitium-curia* complexes were the central element of the city's political system adapted from Rome (on which, see below),[37] and they evidence their importance in the fact that these complexes "are to be found in all the Latin colonies that have been excavated adequately".[38] Coarelli has reconstructed the *comitium* in Rome as having a 'circular' shape,[39] an argument which stems from an extrapolation of other findings in Latin colonies which present similar *comitium* shapes, given the difficulty of excavating in Rome itself due to later and modern buildings obstructing these efforts[40] and the insufficiency of extant material.[41] This argumentation, however, has been criticized by some scholars as circular,[42] and poses a problem towards the interpretation that colonial *comitia* were copies of the Roman *comitium*. Sewell has offered some sort of middle-ground in that these *comitia* of the colonies do seem to be taking inspiration from Rome, but perhaps as a form of adaptation of a general idea of what this institution was, following some general policy of *comitium* building that followed patterns that show themselves across the colonies.[43] I, however, believe that Coarelli's point that the archaeology of Rome's *comitium* does seem to point towards a curvilinear shape is enough to warrant the belief that Rome's *comitium* was the standard which other Latin colonies followed, and the opposing arguments are not strong enough to dispose of this argument.[44] In

[34] RICHARDSON 1957.

[35] RICHARDSON 1957, 49.

[36] Brill's *New Pauly*, s.v. *Assembly Buildings,* section III. Rome.

[37] SEWELL 2014, 126.

[38] COARELLI 2005, 25.

[39] COARELLI 1983, 119-160; COARELLI 1985, 11-21.

[40] RICHARDSON 1957, 49.

[41] SEWELL 2014, 126.

[42] Most notably MOURITSEN 2004, but also CARAFA 1998, 150-151. SEWELL 2014 also seems to share some doubts as to the strength of this argument.

[43] SEWELL 2014, 126-127.

[44] COARELLI 2005, 25-26.

fact, Sewell himself admits that "since this architecture was apparently derived from Rome, the processes involved seem to have been centripetal in character."[45]

While the *comitium* served as the meeting place for the people, the *curia*, or senate-house of Rome, which was (originally) situated at the north of the *comitium*, served as the meeting place for the Senate. Seemingly, this would later serve as a model for other Roman towns, which would set aside a place in their fora for their very own *curia* in order to hold municipal council meetings.[46] The discussion on the *curia* and its relationship to the replica model has followed very similar lines to that of the *comitium* due to their aforementioned ties (hence, *comitium-curia* complexes). That is, we find that, even though there definitely are *curia* in some of the colonies, an undeniable fact, these present different layouts, shapes, and sizes.[47] In conclusion, *comitium-curia* complexes are a key element of our survey in this section. They seem to be one of the more clear or straightforward elements of the *simulacrum*, as most scholars agree that the Roman versions of these inspired later adaptations in the colonies. However, caution must be advised against taking these, alone, as evidence of *simulacrum*. They are one element that ought to be taken contextually, and the heterogeneity of the shapes, sizes, layouts, etc. of these should strike us as critical in not assuming a direct, un-nuanced copy of the Roman institutions.

One note before moving on. Du Cange notoriously paraphrased Gellius' words (but presented it as a direct quotation of his statement regarding the replica model)[48] and stated that these colonies, as copies of Rome, would have, by right, not only Capitolia, but also baths and theatres.[49] Due to space constraints, and the fact that these sorts of buildings are not key elements of the *simulacrum* model, I will not discuss them here. However, it is important to note that, in the following sections on the case-studies, if/when these sorts of buildings arise, they will be discussed in the context of what they might tell us about the colony replicating Rome's topographical institutions or taking inspiration from the metropolis. The basilica or the rostra are, alongside the *comitium* or the *curia*, part of the political life of Rome that might show an attempt at replication in the colonies, so they will also be analysed where pertinent.

A final aspect of the model replica debate requires analysis. Thus far we have focused on the physical, topographical elements of the debate (due to the importance given to the urbanism of the colonies),[50] but some scholars have also argued that the Gellian model must

[45] SEWELL 2014, 127.

[46] Brill's *New Pauly*, s.v. *Curia*.

[47] Esp. SEWELL 2014, 128.

[48] On the confusion regarding this see QUINN, WILSON 2013, 118-119.

[49] DU CANGE 1737, s.v. *Capitolium*.

[50] SALMON 1969, 14. Cf. also PELGROM 2014, 73 on urbanism and self-government as the essential components of a city-state for Salmon.

be/can be interpreted not as literal, physical copies of Rome,[51] but rather, a replication of Rome's political and juridical institutions[52] or of its majesty more generally.[53] As for the political institutions, Salmon famously stated that the Latin colonies "preferred to order themselves according to the forms of Roman political organization",[54] showing, in the author's view, a 'readiness' or 'eagerness' "to imitate Rome" politically.[55] Hardy, in his discussion of three charters in Roman Spain, famously stated that "[t]he ordinary magistracies, limited to three, duoviri, aediles, and quaestors, no doubt owe their origin to the time when at Rome too the ordinary magistrates were consuls, curule aediles, and quaestors".[56] It should not surprise us, at this point, that this is a contentious assertion. Curchin rejects Hardy's statement on the basis of a lack of evidence in regard to the consular, aedile, and quaestor inspiration for the local magistracies.[57] However, he does grant the possibility that the early Roman judicial magistracy of duovir could have been the real inspiration for the local ones, but once again, the evidence is slim at best.[58] It is interesting that Quinn and Wilson, while flatly rejecting the idea that Gellius was referring to a physical copy of Rome in the colonies, assert that he meant a juridical and institutional one, which seems to be both more difficult to ascertain, and presents less evidence for the assertion than the physical elements, as evidenced above. In any case, given the difficulty of unearthing the institutional realities of the colonies, or even those of early Rome, this aspect of the replica model is much more difficult to confidently tackle. Given the scant evidence, it is best to discuss these institutional aspects in their respective colonial contexts, if and where they can be properly examined.

Three case-studies: Corinth, Urso, and Pompeii

For this second and final section, I propose to look at three case-studies of later-Republican Roman colonies which will hopefully offer a general understanding of whether we can hold the assertion of there being colonial replications/adaptations of Rome. I will discuss whether these colonial topographies and institutions, following the standard features discussed in the previous section, and focusing more on the physical elements, do or do not convincingly evidence the model replica narrative. I will begin with a discussion of each colony separately, with a final conclusion at the end which will attempt to bring the findings together into a cogent and coherent final determination regarding the research question.

[51] This is not, however, the majority view, although it has gained considerable traction in recent years. As has been shown, there is still considerable evidence to see the physical aspects as important in this debate.

[52] QUINN, WILSON 2013, 118. As evidenced by SALMON 1969, 85-87 discussion of the magistrates of the colonies.

[53] ZANKER 2000, 41.

[54] SALMON 1969, 85-86.

[55] SALMON 1969, 86.

[56] HARDY 1912, 69.

[57] CURCHIN 1990, 5-6.

[58] CURCHIN 1990, 6.

Corinth

The city of Corinth was famously sacked and destroyed by the Romans in 146 BC, only to later be re-founded as a Roman colony, not once, but twice: the first time in 44 BC as *Colonia Laus Iulia Corinthiensis*, and the second in the time of Vespasian as *Colonia Iulia Flavia Augusta Corinthiensis*.[59] Notably, it has been said that, following these re-foundations into colonies, "[t]he physical manifestations of Romanization were evident in the urban center of Corinth"[60] and that it was "a self-conscious enclave of *Romanitas*",[61] but we shall subject this view to analysis in the light of the previous section's discussion, and ascertain whether this holds for the replica model, not just 'romanization'. This discussion will be limited to those aspects discussed in the previous section for obvious reasons, with some allowance for any specific elements that might shed further light on the debate. The destruction of Corinth by L. Mummius in 146 BC has traditionally been described, following ancient sources, as complete, to the point where it was said to have been uninhabited for the next century.[62] However, more recent scholarly work has pointed out that "[t]he destruction of Corinth was far less extensive than scholars have preferred to believe",[63] and that said destruction was mostly partial and selective.[64] Despite this, all things considered, "Greek Corinth had ceased to exist with the destruction of its political functions and civic buildings",[65] which meant that what the Romans did in 44 BC, in their eyes, was found a completely new urban centre, not rehabilitating the old Corinth.[66]

To begin with, let us consider the issue of the Capitolium. As has been stated above, the Capitolium temple has significant importance in regard to the replica model. Quinn and Wilson have shown that these were not as widespread as scholars may have assumed, but its symbolic importance to highlight the relationship or link between colony/town and Rome is clear and accepted even by these authors.[67] Therefore, to positively conclude that Corinth did possess a Capitolium is a crucial first step. Temple E at Corinth has been described as "one of the most tantalizing problems in Corinthian topography",[68] and it has been identified as, possibly, the city's Capitolium. This is not without controversy, however. This Temple has received comparisons to Pausanias' descriptions of the Temple to Octavia,[69] and authoritative accounts

[59] On both colonies, see especially ROMANO 2003.

[60] ROMANO 2010, 155.

[61] *OCD* (4th ed.), s.v. *Corinth, Roman.*

[62] Str. 8.6.23.

[63] WISEMAN 1979, 494.

[64] WISEMAN 1979, 491-496.

[65] WALBANK 1997, 107.

[66] WALBANK 1997.

[67] QUINN, WILSON 2013, 128.

[68] WALBANK 1989, 363.

[69] Paus. 2.3.1.

such as that of Wiseman have supported this hypothesis.[70] It seems, however, much more likely that it was, indeed, the Capitolium. Firstly, its elevation. Walbank has rightly pointed out that the hill upon which the temple stood had been artificially elevated to give Temple E a dominating position over other temples, making it "the chief religious centre of the city".[71] Furthermore, it was situated in a way so as to overlook the forum of the city, adding to this interpretation of it being the Capitolium.[72] These facts, along with the size of the temple, present a very strong argument to positively identify not only that Temple E was the Capitolium, but therefore that Corinth had one of the key elements which we identified as part of the model replica.[73]

Another element, which we have already mentioned above in passing, was the forum, a key part of the model replica, as discussed above. In the case of Corinth, no doubt exists as to whether it had a forum. In fact, Romano succinctly argues that "[i]t is virtually certain that the Forum, as the political, social and, and economic center of the urban town, was planned for and reserved in the earliest design of the colony".[74] This would, at first, seem to support the thesis of a replica model at the site. However, the *New Pauly* states that, in Corinth, "the old agora was remodelled into a *forum*",[75] which at first might not seem like a significant statement, but, if this forum was, indeed, a remodelling of the agora, which are usually seen as Greek-Roman equivalents, it could indicate that it was a natural development of Corinth's newly 'Romanized' status, rather than a simple attempt to replicate Roman institutions. Already the fact that there was an agora is a problem for the forum aspect of the replica model, but to positively identify the Corinthian agora as standing in the same site as the later forum would pose an even bigger challenge for the replica model in this regard. The issue of locating the agora, however, has been described as "one of the more persistent problems in Corinthian studies."[76] Up until recently, it had been widely accepted that the agora of Corinth was located north of the archaic temple,[77] so not under the forum, but the archaeological evidence for this is rather scant. On the other hand, Donati undertook an archaeological survey looking at marks of state ownership that "suggest that the Corinthian agora lies beneath the Roman forum."[78] His approach furthermore considers the diversity of Greek agorae, and within the context of the findings presented in his paper, Donati poses a strong argument to place the agora beneath the forum. This being the case, then, any assumption that the construction of a forum at Corinth served a

[70] WISEMAN 1979, 522, *contra* FREEMAN 1941, 166. The latter published the first discussion of Temple E (166-236).

[71] WALBANK 1989, 363-365. Quote from p. 365.

[72] WALBANK 1989, 366,393.

[73] Notably, QUINN, WILSON 2013, 149 accept, with some reluctancy, that Corinth boasted a Capitolium temple.

[74] ROMANO 2003, 287.

[75] Brill's *New Pauly*, s.v. *Forum*, section I-A.

[76] DONATI 2010, 3.

[77] Following, mainly: WILLIAMS 1970, 38. For other scholars who agree with Williams see DONATI 2010, n. 10.

[78] DONATI 2010, 6.

purpose of replicating Rome must be taken with a grain of salt, given the tendency to adapt agorae to new Roman realities.[79]

There are other Roman-type buildings in Corinth that deserve some analysis. In the context of the political life and landscape of the new colony, the basilica and the rostra are significant to our model replica discussion, and both buildings have been identified in Corinth.[80] Despite the fact that neither a *comitium* nor a *curia* seem to appear in the city, these other buildings being extant does point toward some sort of replication of Roman institutions. The rostra is situated as "the central feature of both the Forum and the city",[81] showcasing its importance in the political life of the city, in lieu, it would seem, of a *comitium-curia* complex as such. Therefore, regardless of the lack of such a complex, the appearance of a rostra at Corinth does point towards an element of the replica model. Furthermore, this point is strengthened by the basilica.[82] As Weinberg has pointed out, the basilicas of Corinth present the same type and general location in relation to the forum as those in Rome and other Roman cities.[83] It also seems that these basilicas follow the sort of function that Vitruvius sets out in his *De Architectura* as a place for business,[84] which Weinberg confirms,[85] and which replicates those of Rome itself more generally. It would seem, then, that these buildings strengthen the replica model for Corinth given that basilicas are a feature of Roman architecture.[86]

Finally, we must discuss another building that has been uncovered at Corinth: the baths. There are a grand total of nine Roman baths at Corinth,[87] plus two, previous, Greek ones.[88] Following what Du Cange had said regarding the Gellian model, we might be tempted to see this proliferation of baths in Corinth as evidence of the *simulacrum* model. However, this is not an easy assertion. First and foremost, there is good evidence of Greek baths predating the Roman ones,[89] which already contradicts this assertion and should increase our caution. However, the archaeology does point towards a "connection with Italy [...] in the plans of two baths at Corinth",[90] those being the earlier 'Republican' ones. Despite this, one cannot easily maintain that the baths are unequivocal evidence for the *simulacrum*.

[79] On this phenomenon, see EVANGELIDIS 2014.

[80] On the rostra see ROMANO 2010, 161; on the basilica see PAWLAK 2013, 146; also, WEINBERG 1960.

[81] ROMANO 2003, 287.

[82] Note that there are two twin basilicas at Corinth (WEINBERG 1960).

[83] WEINBERG 1960, 105.

[84] Vitr. *De Arch.* 5.1.4-5.

[85] WEINBERG 1960, 107.

[86] KLEINER 2010, 22-23.

[87] BIERS 2003, 303.

[88] BIERS 2003, n. 7 with bibliography.

[89] BIERS 2003.

[90] BIERS 2003, 311

In conclusion, we might say with some confidence that Corinth presents elements and indications of a replica model in its foundation and early development. However, not all elements are present, nor are all easily attributable to an attempt to copy Rome, but rather, some (like the forum) can be explained away as the natural development of Greek institutions into their more 'Romanized' forms. Thus, to assert that it became an enclave of *Romanitas* is, perhaps, taking these assumptions too far.

Urso

The Roman colony at Urso (modern Osuna), despite not being a large settlement to the extent of others such as Corinth, or a municipal capital, is especially interesting because of the prevailing charter or *Lex Ursonensis* that details the institutional aspects of the colony and the different dispositions that the Romans saw fit to provide for this process. The city sided with Pompey during the Caesarian Civil War and, following a siege, was eventually taken by Caesar in 45 BC.[91] For being on the losing side of the war, Caesar decided to turn the city into a *colonia civium romanorum* under the name of *Colonia Genetiva Iulia Urbanorum Urso*. Despite the fact that, as some scholars have pointed out with noticeable frustration, there has not been proper archaeological attention paid to this site,[92] still some important conclusions can be extracted from an analysis of what we do know of its topography through an analysis of its foundation charter.

To begin with the topography, it has been said, not without controversy, that Urso is one of the Iberian settlements from Roman times which might have had a Capitolium.[93] The evidence used to sustain this assertion is not, as with, for instance, Corinth, archaeological in nature, given the scarce surveys conducted on site. Rather, epigraphic evidence, and mentions of the Capitoline Triad in the Urso charter have been given as sufficient evidence to affirm that Urso must have had a Capitolium. However, even on this, other scholars have raised their doubts; Cagiano de Azevedo famously said that "essa, pur non essendo da sola sufficente a dimostrare l'esistenza di un Capitolium, costituisce tuttavia un indizio",[94] showing that it might be a rather weak argument, but still one that indicates some sort of trace of a Capitolium or a Capitoline cult. What the *Lex Ursonensis* does is it mentions the Triad in two chapters. It instructs first the duumvirs[95], and then the aediles[96] to conduct gladiatorial shows or dramatic spectacles in honour of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. This does, undoubtedly, give us enough evidence to assert that there was a Capitoline cult, but not whether this meant that a temple was built. Even so, I argue that this does not pose as serious a problem as it might seem for the replica model.

[91] Plin. *HN* 3.3.2.

[92] PACHÓN 2011, 187-188.

[93] BENDALA GALÁN 1990, 12 on the bibliography for the debate.

[94] CAGIANO DE AZEVEDO 1940, 37.

[95] *Urs.* 70.

[96] *Urs.* 71.

Torelli, as discussed above, already showed how the cult of the Capitoline Triad might follow non-traditional forms, such as through a lack of a Capitolium temple as we imagine it to be, as is the case in Leptis Magna.[97] Therefore, we might argue that the existence of a Capitoline cult, as is evident, in Urso, points us toward the implication that there must have been some sort of cult practice that would serve, in general terms, the same function as the Capitolium. In any case, even if this is not as a defeater as it might seem at first, it also cannot be taken to be as strong a piece of evidence as, for instance, the evidence of a physical Capitolium in Corinth. In other words, Urso seems to have had enough of a link to the Roman Capitoline cult to say that something of the replica model remains, but the lack of evidence for a physical Capitolium takes away from its strength.

Given the lack of topographical surveys of Urso, the evidence for a *comitium* is also dependent on its mention in the charter but, in this case, it is far less controversial than the Capitolium argument. Both in chapter 101 and chapter 105 of the *Lex Ursonensis* we find mentions to the *comitium* in the context of the political life of the city.[98] These sections present instructions to the magistrates of the city on who, while 'holding' the *comitia*, they should not allow to nominate themselves for office on the basis of their previous conduct or unsuitability to hold a magistracy. With this context in mind, we are able to discern an aspect of the political life in Urso where an assembly place, or *comitium*, would be necessary given that elections are to be held for magistracies. This poses a different sort of argument to that of the Capitolium. While the cult to the Capitoline Triad is clear, this does not necessarily imply that the building itself was also erected,[99] but the wording of the charter in mentioning the *comitium*, as well as the apparent lively political life of the city, leaves little doubt as to the fact that a physical space for assembly meetings and voting must have existed.

A similar argument can be made for other buildings that evidence the replica model at Urso. For starters, the forum is clearly attested in the charter.[100] Firstly, the author instructs that the aediles must organize games in honour of Venus in the forum or in the circus, and secondly, the duumvirs and aediles are also required to swear an oath to Jupiter to conduct themselves properly in the handling of the treasury of the colony in the forum. Given that the forum has been defined as "the administrative centre of a Roman city",[101] these mentions in the charter and the context in which it is mentioned provides enough evidence to support the assertion that a forum must have been present at Urso. The *curia* is slightly more problematic.

[97] TORELLI 2014. See above for the discussion.

[98] *Urs.* 101, 105.

[99] As mentioned above, see TORELLI 2014.

[100] *Urs.* 71, 81.

[101] Brill's *New Pauly*, s.v. *Forum.*

There are several mentions in the charter to meetings of the decurions, or local senate.[102] The *curia* being the meeting place of the local council,[103] it would be easy to assert, from this evidence alone, that a building of this sort must have been present at the colony. It does not seem too far-fetched to propose that, in a colony where political life was so dependent on the meetings of these magistrates and decurions, a building for their meetings must have existed, but the fact is that this is a feature not of Roman political institutions, but of many other societies. In order for the *curia*, or any meeting place for the council to evidence any sort of replica model, it must bear resemblance to the Roman institution itself, whether it be in its location, size, shape, or layout. The fact is that, for Urso, none of these can be verified, and so while such a building might be obvious, its support of the replica model is not.

Finally, some analysis is required on the politics at Urso. Unlike in many cities of the ancient world, with the *Lex Ursonensis* we have the opportunity to discern what its political system was like. Its likeness has been compared to the early Roman Republican system in a way that clearly ties in with the replica model.[104] However, it has already been discussed above how this assumption is not widely accepted nor without its problems.[105] In the case of Urso, it has been held that "[i]n general, political institutions are modeled on those of Rome itself",[106] but the issue is not so clear. It is true that, at first glance, there is some resemblance with early Roman politics. Two collegial magistrates (duumvirs/consuls), two aediles, and a council (senate) made up of decurions or local senators.[107] However, there are also notable problems with this model. Why would the duumvirs be called such and not consuls, just like aediles received the same name as their Roman counterparts?[108] Furthermore, the powers of the duumvirs were also (understandably) restricted, whereas the consuls were not, and the duties of the former were mainly concerned with judicial and civil matters.[109] All in all, it is a flimsy argument at best, for the reasons given here and above[110] to argue that the political system at Urso replicated the early Republic. At most one might be able to say that there seems to be some parallels which hardly support the replica model.

In conclusion, Urso, like Corinth, does present some elements of the replica model, but there are others which are notably contentious or absent. Nevertheless, the aspects that do seem to replicate Rome (i.e. the *comitium* and forum) are well attested and we should bring note to the fact that they are key elements in the replica model.

[102] *Urs.* 64, 81, 92, 103.

[103] Brill's *New Pauly,* s.v. *Curia.*

[104] HARDY 1912, 69.

[105] See CURCHIN 1990, 5-6. Also, discussion above on magisterial replication.

[106] SÁNCHEZ-MORENO 2013, 4038.

[107] *Urs.* 129 on the importance of the decurions and the local council.

[108] Cf. CURCHIN 1990, 6.

[109] *Urs.* 61, 77, 100.

[110] See the discussion on the magisterial replica model above.

Pompeii[111]

The colony of Pompeii shares with Urso a similar foundation story. Following its declaration of allegiance to the losing side of the Social War, Pompeii was besieged and taken by the Romans, who eventually turned it into a colony under the name of *Colonia Cornelia Veneria Pompeianorum* and granted Roman citizenship to its inhabitants. However, opposite to the situation at Urso, the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE and later excavations have turned Pompeii into one of the best-preserved and well-known cities of the ancient world, which allows us to look at its topography much more closely. This means, though, that I will need to be more selective with the elements to analyse here, especially those which are not the key replica model institutions discussed in the previous section.

Beginning with the Capitolium, Brill's New Pauly, in stating that "*capitolia* were originally erected only in those Roman colonies laid out on the pattern of Rome"[112] goes on to give Pompeii as an example of such a colony. There seems to be little controversy regarding the existence of a Temple of Jupiter at Pompeii and has been positively identified at region VII.8. However, the issue for the Pompeian Capitolium rests not on the question of its existence, but rather on when it was built.[113] If we posit that the Capitolium/Temple of Jupiter was constructed before the city was turned into a colony, then our argument regarding the *colonial* replica model does not stand. Therefore, in order to argue that Pompeii's Capitolium is a feature of the *simulacrum* we ought to positively date it to the colonial period. On this issue, Quinn and Wilson have pronounced themselves, stating that "[t]he phasing [of the Capitolium] is very complex" but that according to them, the evidence does not support the dating of the temple to the post-colonial foundation period, and it "cannot therefore be used to identify the temple as Capitolium connected with that colony."[114] Indeed, the phasing is complex, but there seem to be good arguments to date the Capitolium to the colonial period, at least in its later form which resonated with Roman-type building. For instance, Ball and Dobbins have argued that the typical Roman design pattern present in the Capitolium endorse a dating that is post-colonial during the I century BC,[115] but also the fact that if one were to date the Capitolium at an earlier, Samnite, period, this would be both very close to the colonization of the city, and would present "an atypical and precocious example" that would also fit "rather badly" with what we know about Samnite architecture patters.[116] These arguments, although not definitive,

[111] For a map of the city, see http://pompeiisites.org/en/pompeii-map/.

[112] Brill's *New Pauly*, s.v. *Capitolium*.

[113] BEARD 2009, 64 on doubts about when it was built. Please note this is the Spanish translation of the book.

[114] QUINN, WILSON 2013, 138-139.

[115] BALL, DOBBINS 2013, 469.

[116] BALL, DOBBINS 2013, 478-479.

do seem to make it more plausible to date the Capitolium at a colonial date, which considerably strengthens the replica model interpretation.

Moving on to the forum more generally, it has been convincingly argued that it was of Samnite origin, but the greater development of its neighbouring buildings and its expansion was Roman.[117] Here, rather than discussing the forum itself, given that it is a feature of Samnite building, it is more interesting to look at the layout and buildings around it. Firstly, the *comitium*. Several scholars have identified, in the southwestern region of the forum (VIII.3.32), Pompeii's *comitium.*[118] However, this has not been without controversy, and other interpretations have been put forward that challenge that view,[119] despite the fact that the official Pompeii site website cites it as a *comitium.*[120] The solution does not seem an easy one, but no clear alternative has been widely accepted, and the location of the proposed *comitium*, as well as its correspondence with the adjacent buildings strongly points towards this interpretation.[121] Even if the question remains as to whether this was surely a *comitium*, a broader consideration of the other elements around it does evidence a civil function similar to what a *comitium* could be. This *comitium*, assuming now that it was so, might also correspond with a wider element of the replica model in that it seems to be part of a *comitium-curia* complex. The southernmost part of the forum presents three buildings side by side which, by virtue of their location have traditionally been identified as civic elements of the colony.[122] None of these can be positively identified as the *curia* in detriment of the other two, and so scholars have debated this very issue and attempted to give reasonable arguments for one, the second, or the third.[123] Despite this, it is not our objective to positively identify *one* of these buildings as being the *curia* of Pompeii, it is sufficient to ascertain whether one of these could have, most likely, been it. Beard criticized the argument from location, asserting that one can easily imagine the local senate meeting in any other temple or public building,[124] but this argument does not stand alone. When coupled with the Vitruvian narrative of how a *curia* should be set up, and the archaeological findings within one of the buildings, Van Buren made a compelling argument for its identification as the Pompeian *curia*.[125] This identification presents an even stronger argument for the replica model when considered alongside the *comitium* given the discussion above.

[117] DOBBINS 1994, 629-632.

[118] LING 2005, 55; DOBBINS 1994, n. 3 is not as convinced regarding the function of that space, but seems to generally agree with its identification with the *comitium*.

[119] E.g. RICHARDSON 1988, 145-147.

[120] See http://pompeiisites.org/en/archaeological-site/comitium-and-municipal-buildings/.

[121] DOBBINS 2007, 169-172.

[122] This has followed the Vitruvian narrative (Vitr. 5.2). Cf. also BEARD 2009, 283.

[123] HORROCKS 2000, 158 on this debate.

[124] BEARD 2009, 283.

[125] VAN BUREN 1918, 73.

Finally, another building warrants analysis in the context of the *simulacrum* at Pompeii: the basilica. This building has traditionally been dated around the second century BC,[126] during the Samnite period, which would automatically dispel any notion that its existence could support the replica model. However, new and novel works have thrown this dating into question, posing that it could actually be a Sullan-period development,[127] a fact that, if true, changes the perception of this building in relation to the topic of this paper. This latter interpretation does seem much more compelling. Firstly, the graffito found at the basilica[128] provides a date that ought to be *before* 78 BC, when Pompeii was already a colony. Furthermore, recent excavations have provided topographical evidence that do not seem to point towards a date during the second century BC, but rather, it seems much more likely that the basilica's foundations were worked into the topography at a later date, much closer to Sullan times.[129] In the end, as Ball and Dobbins argue: "[a] date for the Basilica in the Sullan period reflects the available data and should be a chronological "default setting" until any actual evidence for a Samnite date can be found."[130] As for the replica model implications, it has already been discussed, in the context of Corinth, that these buildings are emblematic of Roman architecture,[131] and its dating to the colonial foundation of Pompeii further points toward a 'Romanization' of the city which should not be taken lightly.

In conclusion, Pompeii's topography, of which we possess great deals of information, seems to present a significantly strong argument for the replica model. It is true, and should be taken into account, that some of these elements are contentious, but the general outline does seem to be supporting the *simulacrum* to a more convincing extent than the previous two case-studies.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to critically examine and consider the idea that later Republican and Augustan colonization saw the emergence of the replica model. Bispham famously argued that, while one cannot sustain the Gellian model for mid-Republican colonization (never mind earlier colonies), this *simulacrum* was a feature of later discourses from the period this paper has contended with. The findings above have attempted to show that this argument cannot be held to be as clear or as straightforward as it has been proposed. Through an analysis of the replica model key elements, and the following case-studies, it has been shown that the elements of the replica model do appear to some extent, and especially

[126] RICHARDSON 1988, 95-99.

[127] BALL, DOBBINS 2017, 484-485.

[128] CIL IV 1842.

[129] BALL, DOBBINS 2017, 484-485.

[130] BALL, DOBBINS 2017, 486.

[131] KLEINER 2010, 22-23.

compared to earlier colonies. However, it has also hopefully been shown beyond reasonable doubt that these elements are not as conspicuous or overarching as one might have expected to see given what other scholars have assumed. Corinth, Urso, and Pompeii were chosen for their similar chronology but also for their diverse geographical distribution. This decision stems from an attempt to provide as wide a picture as possible within the context of these 'later Republican' and/or 'Augustan' discourses. What these have shown is that, despite the geographical differences, various elements of the replica model do seem to appear, but never all at the same site, nor do we find a non-controversial element across the board.

This should lead us to reconsider the ways in which we conceptualize Roman colonization, especially in regard to any sort of 'replica' model. Replica seems to imply an unnuanced copy of the metropolis, and local contexts and pre-existing elements of the cities might both prevent elements from arising or prevent them from being identified as elements of any sort of replication of Rome (as with the forum at Corinth). Perhaps Sewell's[132] contention was right in that we should be thinking about adaptations, rather than literal copies, but we should not lose sight of the fact that the physical likeness with Rome was significant in some of these cities (especially Pompeii), and the influence of the *urbs* would have definitely been felt in the topography and political organization of colonies. All in all, if we were to support 'an emergence of the replica model', it would have to be a 'soft' emergence where specific institutions of Rome might be copied or adapted to highlight the links to the metropolis, and never as an all-encompassing or comprehensive/explicit policy.

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[132] SEWELL 2014.

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Strabo. Human Sacrifices and Severed Heads: Cliché or Historical Reality?

Narciso SANTOS[1], Javier MARTINEZ[2]

Abstract: *Strabo's account of human sacrifices is anachronistic, especially when we consider that they are not exceptional cases related to warfare or examples of natural selection within each community. The severed heads are really figures associated with ancestors that accompanied their festive celebrations.*
The references to the immolation of human victims are not the result of any misrepresentation but the attribution of practices, already obsolete when Strabo writes, to the northern Hispanic populations in the context of his overall description of their organisation, considered to be barbaric.

Rezumat: *Relatarea lui Strabon despre sacrificiile umane este anacronică, mai ales dacă luăm în considerare că acestea nu sunt cazuri excepționale legate de războaie sau exemple de selecție naturală în cadrul fiecărei comunități. Capetele tăiate sunt de fapt figuri asociate cu strămoșii, care însoțeau sărbătorile lor festive. Referințele la imolarea victimelor umane nu sunt rezultatul unei interpretări greșite, ci atribuirea unor practici, deja depășite în momentul în care scrie Strabon, populațiilor din nordul Hispaniei, în contextul descrierii sale generale asupra organizării lor, considerate barbare.*

Keywords: Remembrance of Ancestors; Initiation Festivals; Rites of Passage; Iberians, Lusitanians.

Introduction

Traditionally, it has been considered that, from Strabo's reports, based on references by earlier authors such as Diodorus of Sicily (who lived between the 90s and 30s) and, above all, the multi-talented Posidonius (who lived between 135 and 51), in both cases with occasional allusions to this type of practice, ritual sacrifices would be celebrated by the populations of the north of the Iberian Peninsula, whose victims would include human beings.

In the following pages we will examine whether these accounts coincide with the time when Strabo wrote his work, or if instead they are a cliché that has nothing to do with the historical phase (the first decades of the first century CE) in which the author refers to the initial years of Roman presence in north-western Hispania.

And finally, we will analyse the meaning of a number of archaeological pieces that have been known since their appearance as "severed heads", in an attempt to connect them with the cultural and cultic reality that is linked to these communities; from our perspective, it is

[1] Universidad de Oviedo, nsantos@uniovi.es.
[2] Universidad de Oviedo, martinez@uniovi.es.

perhaps more appropriate to use the expression "detached heads", thereby avoiding the cruel (and even bloody) implications that seem to accompany the first of these adjectives.

Ritual sacrifices with human victims in the Iberian Peninsula

News of the festive celebrations among the northern Iberian communities, bearing in mind that these celebrations had an obvious religious component at their base, are mainly due to Strabo in Book III of his Geography, and are briefly completed by the annotations of other ancient writers, although none of them mentions the annual cycle in which they took place, making it impossible to specify a calendar in this respect.

Among these accounts, the most outstanding concerns the performance of ritual sacrifices, a mixture of festive and cult celebrations, in which animals were immolated (in the public square) in large numbers and in the celebration of which all the members of each settlement would take part[3]:

> Ἅπαντες δ' οἱ ὄρειοι λιτοί, ὑδροπόται, χαμαιεῦναι, βαθεῖαν κατακεχυμένοι τὴν κόμην γυναικῶν δίκην, μιτρωσάμενοι δὲ τὰ μέτωπα μάχονται. τραγοφαγοῦσι δὲ μάλιστα, καὶ τῷ Ἄρει τράγον θύουσι καὶ τοὺς αἰχμαλώτους καὶ ἵππους· ποιοῦσι δὲ καὶ ἑκατόμβας ἑκάστου γένους Ἑλληνικῶς (ed. Radt).
>
> "All the inhabitants of the mountains are sober: they drink water, sleep on the ground and let their hair grow long like women, but in combat they gird their foreheads with a sash. They eat mostly goat meat and sacrifice goats in honour of Ares as well as prisoners and horses. They even make hecatombs of every kind of victim in the Greek manner."

As can be seen, this account does not offer a complete description of the performance of such sacrifices, although the reference to "hecatombs" in the sense of the abundance of animals involved in the offerings may lead us to think that the festivity would only take place once a year.

On the other hand, the question arises as to the identity of those who would direct these immolations. In this respect, there is nothing to prevent us from thinking that those in charge of the immolations could be identified with individuals belonging to an embryonic priestly structure, in no way comparable to the level of the druids of Gaul, although there would probably have been a priestly organization similar to that of other populations not far from the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula, such as the Lusitanians[4]. Therefore, the aim is to explore whether these intermediaries between their communities and the world of the divine had come to organise themselves as a singular institution in the centuries before the Roman invasion.

[3] STRABO 3.3.7.

[4] cf. STRABO 3.3.6 and MARCO 1999.

Supporters of this possibility rely on a series of literary texts[5], while detractors consider that these testimonies do not refer to priests in the strict sense but to augurs, which would not confirm their professionalisation. In this sense, the absence of druids in Celtic Spain would be due to the fact that groups of Central European origin would not be the majority among the northern populations, and therefore would not impose their customs on the rest of the inhabitants of the primitive centres of population[6].

This is why it is argued that the absence of the monarchical institution among Central European populations that were not predominant in the Northwest would make the presence of a priesthood with all its prerogatives difficult, without forgetting that this situation may have taken root more widely in the more Celticised regions of the Peninsula[7].

In each centre of population there would be a person invested with special powers, who would supervise the places of worship and the performance of sacrifices and prophecies, and thus they would have an occasional priesthood, but not a professional one as in the case of the Druids. It is possible that if the ancient sources do not mention such an institution among the northern peoples, it is perhaps because these functions would be masked in other local institutions, i.e. people who would accumulate religious functions alongside political ones[8]. Therefore, these tasks would have been in the hands of those who held the hierarchy in each village (public cults) or of the heads of each family group (private cults). However, it should not be overlooked that references to public cults are very scarce, while we know nothing about private cults, because the ancient documentation overlooks the sacred cycles and the dates when public festivals were celebrated. Among the functions of the priests (and officiants of the cults) would be divinatory practices, in which women would play a certain role as priestesses.

In any case, these personalities would be identified with those who held the highest positions in the leadership of the village, who, according to Strabo[9], during the celebration of social and political feasts, sat on the benches built around the walls according to their age and dignity[10].

Severed heads

The festive manifestations of these "highlanders" (with their immolations and banquets) would include those known as human sacrifices which, according to the Greek geographer, would be offered to the divinities (Ares), as well as the representations of "severed heads", which appeared with a certain profusion in Celtiberian Hispania: in Asturias, in fact, apart from

[5] cf. FLORUS 1.33.13, STRABO 3.3.6 and SILIUS ITALICUS, Punica 3.344.

[6] LAMBRINO 1965, 224.

[7] BLÁZQUEZ 1983, 227-228.

[8] URRUELA 1981, 258-261.

[9] STRABO 3.3.7.

[10] SANTOS 2014.

the anthropomorphism of some funerary inscriptions, we have those found in San Chuis de Allande, as well as in Baldornón and Deva (local council of Gijón).

Sporadic reports by ancient authors, referring to ritual sacrifices, together with the presence of divinatory activity among these communities, especially among those in the interior of the peninsula[11], to which we should possibly add some archaeological remains of a zoomorphic nature, as well as the iconography of certain epigraphic documents, will help us to understand the type of victims who were sacrificed.

Classical writers occasionally allude to human sacrifices and mention the simultaneous presence of animals in these sacrifices. Although the presence of humans among the victims has been considered a certainty, we believe that it should be questioned, as it is a cliché that was used with some frequency in ancient literature. Indeed, these sacrifices are included in literary descriptions of a derogatory nature, applicable to communities as disparate as the Iberians, Scythians, Germanic, Gauls, Phoenicians, Egyptians..., or any others considered barbarians[12].

As an example, here is a testimony in Diodorus of Sicily regarding the heads of the enemy in combat[13]:

> τῶν δὲ πεσόντων πολεμίων τὰς κεφαλὰς ἀφαιροῦντες περιάπτουσι τοῖς αὐχέσι τῶν ἵππων: ... τῶν δ' ἐπιφανεστάτων πολεμίων κεδρώσαντες τὰς κεφαλὰς ἐπιμελῶς τηροῦσιν ἐν λάρνακι, καὶ τοῖς ξένοις ἐπιδεικνύουσι σεμνυνόμενοι διότι τῆσδε τῆς κεφαλῆς τῶν προγόνων τις ἢ πατὴρ ἢ καὶ αὐτὸς πολλὰ χρήματα διδόμενα οὐκ ἔλαβε. φασὶ δέ τινας αὐτῶν καυχᾶσθαι διότι χρυσὸν ἀντίσταθμον τῆς κεφαλῆς οὐκ ἐδέξαντο βάρβαρόν τινα μεγαλοψυχίαν ἐπιδεικνύμενοι (ed. Casevitz).
>
> "They cut off the heads of their fallen enemies and hang them around the necks of their horses..... Of their most distinguished enemies they embalm the heads in cedar oil and keep them carefully in a chest, and show them to visitors, boasting that for this head one of their ancestors or their father or the individual himself did not accept the offer of a large sum of money. It is even said that some of them boasted that they had not accepted the weight of the head in gold, showing a certain barbaric grandeur of spirit".

This same descriptive line (including literary and content parallels) is found in Strabo, who used as a reference (as he mentions in his account) Posidonius, whose writing seems to correspond to almost a century earlier:

[11] BLÁZQUEZ 1983, 232-238.

[12] v.gr. CLAVEL-LEVÉQUE 1974.

[13] DIODORUS OF SICILY 5.29.4-5.

τὸ ἀπὸ τῆς μάχης ἀπιόντας τὰς κεφαλὰς τῶν πολεμίων ἐξάπτειν ἐκ τῶν αὐχένων τῶν ἵππων, κομίσαντας δὲ προσπατταλεύειν τοῖς προπυλαίοις. φησὶ γοῦν Ποσειδώνιος αὐτὸς ἰδεῖν τὴν θέαν ταύτην πολλαχοῦ, καὶ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἀηδίζεσθαι, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα φέρειν πράως διὰ τὴν συνήθειαν. τὰς δὲ τῶν ἐνδόξων κεφαλὰς κεδροῦντες ἐπεδείκνυον τοῖς ξένοις, καὶ οὐδὲ πρὸς ἰσοστάσιον χρυσὸν ἀπολυτροῦν ἠξίουν. καὶ τούτων δ' ἔπαυσαν αὐτοὺς Ῥωμαῖοι καὶ τῶν κατὰ τὰς θυσίας καὶ μαντείας ὑπεναντίων τοῖς παρ' ἡμῖν νομίμοις (ed. Radt)[14].

"When they leave the battle they tie the heads of their enemies to the necks of their horses, take them home and hang them on a nail in their doorways. Posidonius at least claims to have seen this himself in many places and that at first he was repulsed by it, but afterwards he endured it calmly by force of habit. The heads of the most reputed of them they preserved in cedar oil and showed them to their guests, and would not deign to grant their ransom even for their weight in gold. And the Romans made them cease from this, as well as from sacrifices and oracles contrary to our customs."

What is described here is nothing more than the presence of the heads of enemies as war trophies among the victorious warriors, something common to many ancient peoples[15] and which would correspond to a period prior to the arrival of the Romans, since Diodorus writes around the middle of the 1st century BC, so it is not surprising that Strabo, who would transmit his news at least half a century later, has resorted to a reference, perhaps confused and anachronistic, to the existence of human sacrifices in the immolations which would almost exclusively have consisted of male goats and horses[16], sometimes together with other animals and offerings.

From the above passage it appears that the practices connected with ritual sacrifices would not conceal anything special, except for the barbaric character of the kind of victims immolated by including human victims (these would be cases in which captives would always be involved) together with animals instead of referring only to the latter[17]. In any case, we must not forget that these were warrior communities, whose bellicose character would be manifested, when necessary, although they would not often have a sufficient number of prisoners to offer to the divinity (presumably the god of war).

In his description, Strabo[18] mentions that, earlier, Plutarch[19] refers to the prohibition of the Lusitanians to perform human sacrifices together with animals (horses) when formalising

[14] STRABO 4.4.5.

[15] Similar to the fate of Leonidas, whose hands and head would have been cut off by the Persians, HERODOTUS 7.238; cf. also PECHATNOVA 2022, 341; SAZONOV, TÖYRÄÄNVUORI 2021, 343.

[16] STRABO 3.3.7.

[17] STRABO 3.3.6-7; cf. MARCO 1999.

[18] STRABO 3.3.6.

[19] PLUTARCH, *MOR.* 82.283.

their pacts and divining the future, which would be accompanied by the performance of divinatory practices among these populations; This is in line with what was already legislated by the Roman administration (in the time of Publius Crassus, governor of Hispania Ulterior, around 96-94) regarding the abandonment of such practices in the territory of the *Bletonesii* (the inhabitants of *Bletisa*, modern-day Ledesma in the province of Salamanca).

Given that such references do not constitute a sufficient basis to corroborate the presence of human sacrifices[20], it could be thought that the existence of some archaeological remains linked to them would make them much more credible: thus those known since the last century as "severed heads", found in significant numbers in the peninsula and in Celtic Europe, would seem to form a more solid argument.

Contemporary historiography does not present a uniform interpretation of the meaning of these sculptural figures: for Blázquez[21] the connection between these heads and human sacrifices is unquestionable, although he admits that most of these pieces cannot be called "severed heads" and are eventually assigned a funerary meaning.

It has been pointed out that their sphere of expansion would have been limited to the Celtic area of the Peninsula, while those corresponding to movable art would have a greater dispersion and a funerary-religious significance (or perhaps simply decorative, as occurs with the front section of granaries or *teitos* in the region of Asturias, such as in the marsh of La Pornacal in the council of Somiedo, although they are also found on the doors and roofs of some buildings in the north of Extremadura, connected to the territory of the Vettones and the granite sculptures of *verracos*). Consequently, such manifestations could be found within the framework of religious rituals of Indo-European origin, related to some agrarian or chthonic god, which can be identified with Ares/Mars[22].

However, we do consider that there is no reason to believe that these sculptures from the Celtic religious world confirm the performance of human sacrifices, but rather that they would be part of the so-called ethic of honour, deeply rooted among Iberian populations of Indo-European origin, where these practices would not only take place in the course of banquets but also of fights of all kinds, including ritual and religious dances[23]. In any case, it is possible that the sacrificial victims, especially the animals, would parade in costume to the place of their immolation, which would take place in a sacred enclosed space, where the offerings would be incinerated immediately afterwards[24]. And in this religious-festive context, it should be remembered that the meat of the sacrificed victims would be quickly eaten by the participants in these ceremonies, identified with the faithful present, in fact the whole community.

[20] BERMEJO 1986, 88-93.

[21] BLÁZQUEZ 1958.

[22] LÓPEZ MONTEAGUDO 1987, 252.

[23] MARCO 1991, 97 ss.

[24] BLÁZQUEZ 1991, 127-129

Do we have any indication of these ritual sacrifices in the cultural and cultic context of the pre-Roman communities in the north of the Iberian Peninsula? No material evidence of such offerings to the gods has been found, although it is possible that the situation is different in relation to the funerary environment; We may therefore have to accept that what Strabo transmits to us is only the existence of ritual human sacrifices, including the accompaniment to the grave and the exceptional offering in the case of children, thus identifying only with rituals rooted among some indigenous communities up to Roman times[25].

As for animal sacrifice, which is profusely described in ancient literary documentation, a number of archaeological and epigraphic testimonies define it: the most characteristic sacrifices of the Indo-European world would involve the slaughter of suids (or caprids), as well as sheep and cattle (forming a kind of *suovetaurilia*), and, in the case of northern peoples, horses. If we take into account the organisation of these communities, where there would have been a predominance of bovids over suids, it is easy to suppose that the animals that would have taken part in these rituals would have mainly been bovids. In isolated cases, pigs may have been the object of these sacrifices, as well as some wild boar, although at no time can this situation be compared with what happened among the Vettones[26].

However, in contrast to what would happen in other pre-Roman regions of the Douro Valley (including the "verracos"[27] [boars]), we do not have such a large number of zoomorphs that would lead us to think one way or the other; moreover, some of these sculptures may have to be linked to rites of immolation and consecration, in which the real victim would sometimes be replaced by a stone, wood or ceramic carving[28], accompanied by all types of offerings (and something similar would happen with regard to the presence of the "severed heads"). As far as zoomorphic representations in Asturias are concerned, we only have a bovid head discovered in Oviedo in the early 1970s during the redevelopment of the Plaza de Santo Domingo, which could be connected to the representation of "verracos"[29].

In the light of what we have seen and in other terms, is it not possible that zoomorphic figures ("verracos", bovids, etc.) in stone (or in other materials) may have fulfilled the same function as substitute elements for live animals, at least on some occasions??

The remembrance of ancestors and the feast of the dead

Along with the celebrations linked to the divinities protecting the acts of daily life connected with the annual cycle of the basic economic sectors (sowing, harvesting, reaping, harvesting, harvesting of fruits...), several others arose that were connected with the gods of

[25] FERNÁNDEZ, LÓPEZ 1990, 105.

[26] SAYAS, LÓPEZ 1991, 108-109.

[27] vid. DIEGO SANTOS 1965.

[28] LÓPEZ MONTEAGUDO 1989, 144-145.

[29] ESCORTELL 1973.

the underworld, as well as with the funerary cults linked to the beliefs in the afterlife and the meaning of the sky and the stars that welcomed the deceased in the afterlife[30].

We have mentioned the possibility that the ancestors of the inhabitants of the hill forts took part in the celebration of the ritual sacrifices through representations of their faces (heads), mainly made of stone; this leads us to consider that, in this framework of transversality typical of the festive celebrations among the northern communities around the years of the change of era, and although some of them would remain in force in Roman times, the connection with the afterlife is evident. We have thus discovered the relationship between horses as psychopomps (companions of the soul of the deceased) and the sun and the world beyond the grave[31], while the disc-shaped stelae may have served as a reference point for the location of the cemeteries (necropolises) of each of the settlements, constituting another example of the celebrations associated with the sun.

For this reason, it comes as no surprise that, already in the centuries of Roman presence, as a reminder of an earlier period, funerary tombstones have been discovered in north-eastern Spain whose epitaph is inscribed in a solar disc, no doubt as a representation of the place where the deceased was received in the afterlife: we refer to that of Bovecio, found in Collía (Parres), enclosed in the recess of a circular support (stone), comparable to an oikomorphic inscription[32].

There are also others, whose head is identified with a solar disc and the figure of the deceased: in Asturias, those of Molleda (Corvera de Asturias) and Selorio (Villaviciosa) stand out, although the upper part (the pediment of the figurative house) has been replaced by the physiognomic features of the face, resulting in a very weak and imprecise outline[33].

The similarity of this iconography with the severed heads (that of San Chuis de Allande, or those of Baldornón and Deva) leads us to hypothesise that the latter pieces may have had a direct relationship with the funerary world and, therefore, may have been present during the celebration of the great ritual banquets mentioned by Strabo, undoubtedly tinged by a familiar character by reducing their sphere of action to the framework of the village and its inhabitants, albeit without being considered as sacrificial victims but simply as symbols for the remembrance of the ancestors.

Some of the most deeply rooted popular traditions in a number of villages on the Castilian plateau, until the first decades of the second half of the last century, on the days around the feast of the dead, included the custom of placing pumpkins at crossroads, after scraping them out and placing candles inside them, an action which can be interpreted as an act of remembrance towards the deceased.

[30] for further details, see SANTOS 2021b.

[31] SANTOS 2011.

[32] SANTOS 2016; DIEGO SANTOS 1985, 183.

[33] for further examples see SANTOS 2023.

These pumpkins, simulating the most basic features of a human head (nose, mouth and eyes, similar to those depicted in the inscriptions), would perhaps allude to protection or have an apotropaic character. The precedent of this pagan tradition, and its association with roads, is what Saint Martin of Dumio refers to as early as the sixth century when he mentions the lighting of candles at crossroads as a 'devil's culture', the aim of which was simply to provide a framework of security[34]:

> Et quomodo aliqui ex vobis, qui abrenuntiaverunt diabolo et angelis eius et culturis eius et operibus eius malis, modo iterum ad culturas diaboli revertuntur? Nam ad petras et ad arbores et ad fontes et per trivia cereolos incendere, quid est aliud nisi cultura diaboli?
>
> "And how is it that some of you, who have renounced the devil and his angels and his cults and his evil deeds, now return once again to the cults of the devil? For to light candles by the stones, by the trees, by the fountains, and at the crossroads, what is it but devil worship?"

Within this context, the "severed heads" would have been associated with this cult of the dead, which would also have led to the appearance of anthropomorphic figures on certain stelae[35]. The hypothetical wooden heads could not have contained candles, as they are easily inflammable materials, but would the ceramic ones be the immediate ancestor of today's carnival masks? In this respect, one may ask whether these anthropomorphic figures sought the rebirth of the spirit of the ancestors, as well as their support and help, and perhaps the answer is yes.

Given that this custom remained almost unchanged throughout the medieval and modern centuries, the Catholic Church, while syncretising these pagan practices, which seem to date back to pre-Roman times in the religious-festive context of the populations of the north of the Iberian Peninsula, would assimilate the feast of the dead by merging it with that dedicated to all the saints, while at the same time making the celebration of both of them on similar dates. There are those who still remember a cenotaph being erected in the centre of the churches in memory of the dead, known as a "monument" (connecting with the inscriptions on Latin stelae, which began with the funerary formula *D.M.M.P. = D(iis) M(anibus) m(onumentum) p(ositum)*), as can be seen, for example, on the epitaph of Cantia (Coraín, Cangas de Onís)[36]: *D(iis) M(anibus) M(onumentum)/ pos(uit) Tere(ntius) fili/ (a)e su(a)e Cant(iae) an(n)/ orum XV sit tibi/ ter(r)a leves(levis).*

[34] SAINT MARTIN OF DUMIO, *De correctione rusticorum* 16.

[35] SANTOS 2019.

[36] Included in CIL II.5742.

The initiation festival of the young warriors

Against the background of this festive tradition amongst the populations that inhabited the north of the peninsula, and possibly in connection with the celebration of sacrifices and banquets with a ritualistic meaning, do we have evidence of initiatory practices identified with forms of induction or transition to adulthood? And would these types of activities not also draw on the memory of the ancestors, by seeking their protection and guidance through their 'presence' in the severed heads?

The association of cave-like constructions with sanctuaries containing fonts or basins gives them a chthonic quality, making them a point of union between the celestial sphere and the afterlife: the ritual function of these centres seems to be related to rites of purification and initiation, associated with the protection of the social group; it was thought that these enclaves could be identified with the structures known as 'hillfort saunas', although in reality they seem to correspond to simple baths built in the area of the settlements in the north of the peninsula, which have been completely catalogued by Ríos, including the last of these thermal structures discovered in the Galician enclosure known as the *Castelón de Castañoso*[37]. The meaning and function of these structures are debated and there is a diversity of opinions among researchers, who seem to lean towards an initiatory purpose, although this is not so evident[38].

These baths, with a varied typology and intended for quite functional purposes[39], have been considered as 'saunas', especially for other regions of the Celtic world of the Peninsula, and are considered to coincide with places where rites of initiation were celebrated[40]. However, it is more plausible that we are once again faced with the culmination of a historiographical mirage, which dates back to the end of the twentieth century[41]. In fact, a whole series of data lead us to classify these buildings as contemporary to the Roman presence in the region, as well as to assign them a more strictly civilian purpose (small spas or public baths), meaning they would also have been for collective use, an idea that was proposed some four decades ago[42], and which has been subsequently corroborated[43].

In this context of ritual and social connotations, we should include a number of festive customs and manifestations, similar to the *ver sacrum*, whose peculiarities are described by

[37] RÍOS 2017; GARCÍA QUINTELA 2016.

[38] ALMAGRO GORBEA, MOLTÓ 1992; an example of one of them can be found in ALMAGRO GORBEA, ÁLVAREZ 1993; VILLA 2002.

[39] RÍOS 2000.

[40] VILLA 2010-2011.

[41] RÍOS 2017.

[42] SANTOS 1983.

[43] SANTOS 1996, 50; RÍOS 2017, 369.

other authors, such as Diodorus of Sicily, who refers to the Lusitanians, although in fact it may have been the Vettones who practised this custom, when he notes that[44]:

ἴδιον δέ τι παρὰ τοῖς Ἴβηρσι καὶ μάλιστα παρὰ τοῖς Λυσιτανοῖς ἐπιτηδεύεται· τῶν γὰρ ἀκμαζόντων ταῖς ἡλικίαις οἱ μάλιστα ἀπορώτατοι ταῖς οὐσίαις, ῥώμῃ δὲ σώματος καὶ θράσει διαφέροντες, ἐφοδιάσαντες αὑτοὺς ἀλκῇ καὶ τοῖς ὅπλοις εἰς τὰς ὀρεινὰς δυσχωρίας ἀθροίζονται, συστήματα δὲ ποιήσαντες ἀξιόλογα κατατρέχουσι τὴν Ἰβηρίαν καὶ ληστεύοντες πλούτους ἀθροίζουσι (ed. Casevitz).

"The Iberians, and especially the Lusitanians, have a peculiar practice: when the young men come of age, those who are the poorest in wealth, but are noted for the vigour of their bodies and courage, procure for themselves courage and arms, and assemble on the mountainous escarpments, forming themselves into considerable bands; they make raids throughout Iberia and by their plunder accumulate wealth".

This suggests that groups of young men of warrior age, at a particular time of the year (perhaps late spring), began to participate in these activities after leaving their homes to engage in robbery and plunder against neighbouring populations[45]; we do not believe, however, that robbery and plundering (which would take place in communally owned wooded landscapes) were the direct objectives of these trials, but instead to demonstrate that they had the maturity (experience and strength) to withstand both inclement weather and to obtain the food necessary for their subsistence in extreme situations, including the defence of the settlement to which they belonged. Despite lacking any solid evidence indicating how long this activity lasted, we can estimate that it would have lasted for at least one week.

After passing this test, they would be received in the public square by the representatives of the socio-political power, and a feast would then be held in their honour, in which they would take part together with the rest of the village (men-warriors, the elderly, women and children), a moment in which the older people would surely play a predominant role in accordance with the social consideration to which they were entitled.

> … καὶ παρὰ πότον ὀρχοῦνται πρὸς αὐλὸν καὶ σάλπιγγα χορεύοντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀναλλόμενοι καὶ ὀκλάζοντες· ἐν Βαστητανίᾳ δὲ καὶ γυναῖκες ἀναμὶξ ἀνδράσι προσαντιλαμβανόμεναι τῶν χειρῶν (ed. Radt)[46].
>
> "And with the drink they dance in a circle to the sound of flute and trumpet, but they also jump and stoop; while in Bastetania the women also dance together with the men, and hold their hands."

[44] DIODORUS OF SICILY 5.34.6.

[45] FLORUS 2.33.46; OROSIUS *Hist.* 6.21.2-3.

[46] STRABO 3.3.7.

In any case, these celebrations would contribute towards strengthening the bonds between all the components of the settlement; but within the framework of this traditional custom, identified with a feast in honour of the young men at the end of the ritual of passage to adulthood, at the moment of returning safe and sound to the settlement from which they had departed, would the ritual sacrifices mentioned by Strabo be celebrated, in the context of a popular commemoration?

The acceptance of the young men as full members and defenders of the village would require a commitment and oath (promise) from them to sanction their new situation; and that moment would not only entail the participation of the political and/or religious hierarchical representatives but also members of the community as guarantors.

It is possible that this manifestation of worship in the public square included a remembrance of the ancestors, in which case the severed heads (as a representation of them) would play a significant role, serving as a public recognition of the oldest members of the settlement, who would be replaced by the younger ones, who were then recognised as warriors to defend the settlement and its inhabitants (the community as a whole), and who could even have their own brotherhood[47]. This passage to adulthood would probably take place at around 16-18 years of age, since at that time they would already be physically developed, especially if we take into account the cycle of their training, specifically involving wrestling and fighting on foot and on horseback[48], which would enable them to come of age within the framework of the settlement with the obligations inherent to their new rank.

If we take into account that, according to Strabo, among the religious-festive celebrations, the cult of an unnamed god of war stands out, known to the indigenous people of the north of the peninsula by various names (*Esus, Teutates* or *Taranis/Taranus*) and which we must identify with a warlike divinity, comparable to the Greek Ares or the Roman Mars[49], as well as the fact that the young men of the village had passed the initiation trials to become warriors, it is logical to suppose the association between both events, taking as an exponent the offering of bloody sacrifices, in which victims (goats and horses) would be immolated, and in very exceptional cases together with prisoners (or with their bodies replaced by human effigies made of stone or wood, although not identifiable as victims but in memory of the ancestors).

Through Strabo we also know of a series of practices related to training and the acquisition of physical skills in the framework of the hillfort enclosure, in which the youngest would endeavour to be trained as warriors; and from here we can consider that the integral education

[47] PERALTA 1990

[48] STRABO 3.3.6.

[49] The commentator of LUCAN (1, 444-446; USENER 1869, 32) equates these three gods with Mars, Mercury and Jupiter respectively, so are we faced with an indetermination of religious functions or a globalisation of them? In fact, they are similar to those described by Caesar for in Gaul (*Gall.* 6.17).

of these adolescents, in addition to overcoming the vicissitudes of their temporary stay in regions that were not controlled by their own centre of habitat, demonstrating their physical endurance in such difficulties, would involve a series of exercises to complete their "paramilitary" training in defence of the community (somewhat in the Spartan style, since neither in this nor in any other source is there any reference to literary instruction).

Conclusions

We therefore consider that Strabo's reference to human sacrifices is anachronistic and goes back to a descriptive line of authors that came before him. This fact is evident if we take into account that these are not exceptional cases related to warfare or examples of natural selection (due to physical deformity or other reasons) in the heart of each hillfort community in the northwestern part of Hispania.

In this sense, perhaps we can admit, at some earlier time, the barbarian practice of amputating the right hands of prisoners to consecrate them to the gods, as the Lusitanians were said to have done, although it is possible that this was a form of action that does not correspond to that time but to many decades earlier, given that the Bletonians were prohibited from carrying out these types of practices in the first decade of the first century B.C.E.

Moreover, in the framework of these manifestations we find the characteristics of an ancient festival, as the sacrifice of the victims would be followed by the celebration of a communal banquet of the slaughtered meat, involving all of the members of the community, together with dances and games of a religious nature.

Even in this context, it is possible to suppose the participation of symbolic representations of the gods to whom sacrifices were offered, despite the fact that their taboo status would prevent their physical presence in statues, which would lead to the existence among these communities of a religion described by Strabo as aniconic (as would happen with the Germans according to Tacitus[50])

The same should be said of the remembrance (memory), albeit of a symbolic nature, of the ancestors through these representations of heads (more than half a century ago Blázquez highlighted the funerary nature of these representations), as well as of some zoomorphs, and of what this presence meant in the framework of the development of events in the settlement.

We therefore believe that the allusion to the performance of ritual human sacrifices has much to do with Strabo's consideration throughout his work of the contrast between civilisation and barbarism, ascribing to the northern populations the characteristics that define the non-Roman world as opposed to the citizen (the three authors mentioned, in addition to their Greek origin, were immersed in the socio-cultural conditioning of the upper classes of the time).

[50] TACITUS *Germ*. 9.

We also consider that Strabo's statement, as well as being anachronistic, is simply a literary cliché, as is the case with many others that were passed down over the centuries in the Roman world. A similar example can be found with regard to gold mining in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula, which appears in the authors of the Late Empire (Claudian and Pachatus Drepanius). Their narratives are an echo of the past, since, in reality, they were written many decades after these activities had ceased to play a part in the economic context of the region[51].

This reference to bloody sacrifices, as well as the assimilation made with the severed heads in the celebration of ritual human sacrifices, is not an adulteration of the account, but rather the possible attribution of practices, already obsolete at the time Strabo wrote his Geography, to the northern Hispanic populations in the framework of his global description, almost timeless and globalising, of their organisation, considering them to be barbarians.

In this regard, it should be borne in mind that these practices, which are far removed from the concept of Roman civilisation, are described, in the space of little more than half a century, by three authors of Greek origin, fully integrated into Roman society (Posidonius, Diodorus of Sicily and Strabo), and whose interests were centred on highlighting the barbaric traits represented by the populations of the northern Iberian peninsula, far removed from the characteristics that defined Roman citizenship.

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[51] SANTOS 2021a.

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Female Beliefs in Roman Hispania

María-Pilar MOLINA-TORRES[1]

Abstract: *In addition to Greco-Roman literary sources and archaeological evidence, inscriptions are the only means of reconstructing the information of certain population groups that were interested in expressing their religious ideas and honourable positions through epigraphy, which was often shaped by very specific local circumstances. The epigraphy of Roman Hispania not only provides valuable information about the daily life, social organization and religious beliefs of the population, but also reflects the adaptation and integration of local communities into the vast Roman Empire. This work provides an overview of women's beliefs in Hispania through the pedestals and votive altars dedicated by female devotees and priestesses (local and provincial), sometimes linked to the imperial cult, who made offerings to a divinity.*

Rezumat: *Pe lângă sursele literare greco-romane și dovezile arheologice, inscripțiile sunt singurul mijloc de reconstituire a informațiilor anumitor grupuri de populație care erau interesate să își exprime ideile religioase și pozițiile onorabile prin intermediul epigrafiei, care a fost adesea modelată de circumstanțe locale foarte specifice. Epigrafia Hispaniei romane nu numai că oferă informații valoroase despre viața cotidiană, organizarea socială și credințele religioase ale populației, dar reflectă și adaptarea și integrarea comunităților locale în vastul Imperiu Roman. Această lucrare oferă o imagine de ansamblu asupra credințelor femeilor din Hispania prin intermediul statuilor și altarelor votive dedicate de femei și preotese (locale și provinciale), uneori legate de cultul imperial.*

Keywords: beliefs, epigraphy, gender, religion, Roman women.

1. INTRODUCTION

"Huic filia una est. Ea mihi cottidie / aut ture aut vino aut aliqui semper supplicat, / dat mihi coronas" (Plaut., *Aul.* 23-25).

The universe of a devotional community could acquire different characteristics in different regions. This phenomenon can be explained as a reflection of the process of adaptation to the Roman cultic schemes, so that the dedicators would transmit in the votive epigraphs aspects that could only be explained by their autochthonous cultic tradition. The religious result of the cultural contact can only be understood in the historical context in which it was born, and the proof of this is the variety of interpretations of the same divinity that can be detected in nearby cultic spaces[2].

[1] University of Cordoba, Faculty of Education Sciences. Email: pilar.molina@uco.es; ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7157-0324

[2] RÜPKE 2007.

With regard to the geographical distribution and the analysis of the devotions in Hispania, the epigraphs have been arranged according to the Roman provinces: *Baetica*, *Lusitania* and *Tarraconense*, have provided interesting novelties, since the female priestly dedications, the traditional epigraphic source for the study of female religiosity, represent only a reduced part of the totality of the analyzed documentary volume. This new evidence shows the clear intention of the believers to present their cultic practices in a context far from the civic cults. It is certainly this more intimate space that is the main recipient of the votive altars collected in this work, which form a chronological framework from the 1st century BC to the 3rd century AD.

In any case, we have evidence that indigenous and purely Roman deities shared the same territorial scope. Now, in my opinion, if pre-Roman and Roman beliefs in Hispania clearly became a differentiated object of worship, there was also a selective assimilation of cultic uses that must have been established unequally in rural and urban areas. It is certain that autochthonous and purely Roman deities were established, giving rise to an innovative religious panorama characterized by its uneven territorial diffusion[3]. It is therefore possible to confirm that each community had its own socio-religious expression.

However, in compiling the epigraphs, the criteria I took into account were essentially the search and selection of the inscriptions of the three Hispanic provinces that had women as dedicators or recipients who made an offering to a god[4]. Thus, this option could make us think of documentary omissions that, in my opinion, include the authentic feminine cults, both autochthonous and officially Roman. In this sense, the religious documentary value of this information is characterized by a considerable cultic burden that does not seem to link the devotees to a male member of their family or their closest environment[5]. In fact, the closer we get to the religious sphere of these believers, the easier it is to detect the presence of specific rites that are mainly reserved for the private sphere, leaving the public sphere at a secondary level.

In fact, the present work shows that the state of the question of Hispano-Roman women and their beliefs is not sufficiently outlined and studied in the latest current historiographical trends[6]. Perhaps, little by little, the bibliographic repertoires dedicated to the study of Roman women will be interested in understanding their habits and religious practices in their most personal and familiar environment[7]. For this reason, we have tried to approach a space that is

[3] HEMELRIJK 2020.

[4] D'AMBRA 2007.

[5] DOMÍNGUEZ, MARINA 2015.

[6] MOLINA 2020a.

[7] CHRYSTAL 2013.

particularly new in the series of female religious activities and that has allowed us to interpret the significant commitment that Hispano-Roman women professed to their devotions[8].

2. GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND ANALYSIS OF FEMALE DEVOTIONS IN HISPANIA

"En una ciudad de la Bética, durante mucho tiempo bajo la dominación romana, un individuo podría vestir toga, porque había adquirido la ciudadanía romana, comer a la manera turdetana, orar y venerar a sus dioses según la tradición púnica y enterrar a sus muertos según ritos mezclados de tradiciones púnicas, turdetanas y romanas, algunas de ellas parecidas o concluyentes" (BENDALA 2006, 292)

Baetica

In the specific case of *Baetica*, the epigraphic testimonies remain uncertain when we want to relate the autochthonous beliefs to the Roman deities. This difficulty lies in the existence of a Mediterranean feminine religiosity, easily assimilated to the new cults coming from Rome, which becomes an obstacle to knowing its Roman equivalent. In a certain way, this identity of functions or attributions between some deities and others facilitated the process of Romanization in this area and, consequently, the formation of a specific pantheon[9]. In fact, there is a clear feminine tendency for goddesses such as Diana, Isis, and Juno. Perhaps one of the factors influencing the cultic selection of these deities is their protective function, especially of the female cycle. The cult of Diana had a notable preference among the worshippers, who not only showed their devotion through the religious propaganda that includes the use of the epithet Augusta, but the divinity is also adorned with jewels, which is a frequent practice in the donations of *the Conventus Cordubensis* and *Gaditanus*[10].

From this perspective, the deities invoked by Betic women are closely related to their gender. Nevertheless, it is their personal motives that determine their choice of deities. Therefore, as it seems to be deduced from the dedications to Juno and Isis, these mother goddesses also participate in the syncretism with other pre-Roman deities strongly established in *Baetica*. While the cult of the former extends over the four *conventus*, possibly identifying her with the Carthaginian Tanit, and also coincides with areas of Punic influence, the Isis cult was curiously concentrated in *Italica*, with formulas such as *Victrix, Regina* or *Domina*. In fact, the religious syncretism of these female deities and their assimilation with the Roman matron cults was the main option of the *Baetica* followers.

[8]NAVARRO 2017.

[9]RANTALA 2019.

[10]MOLINA 2020b.

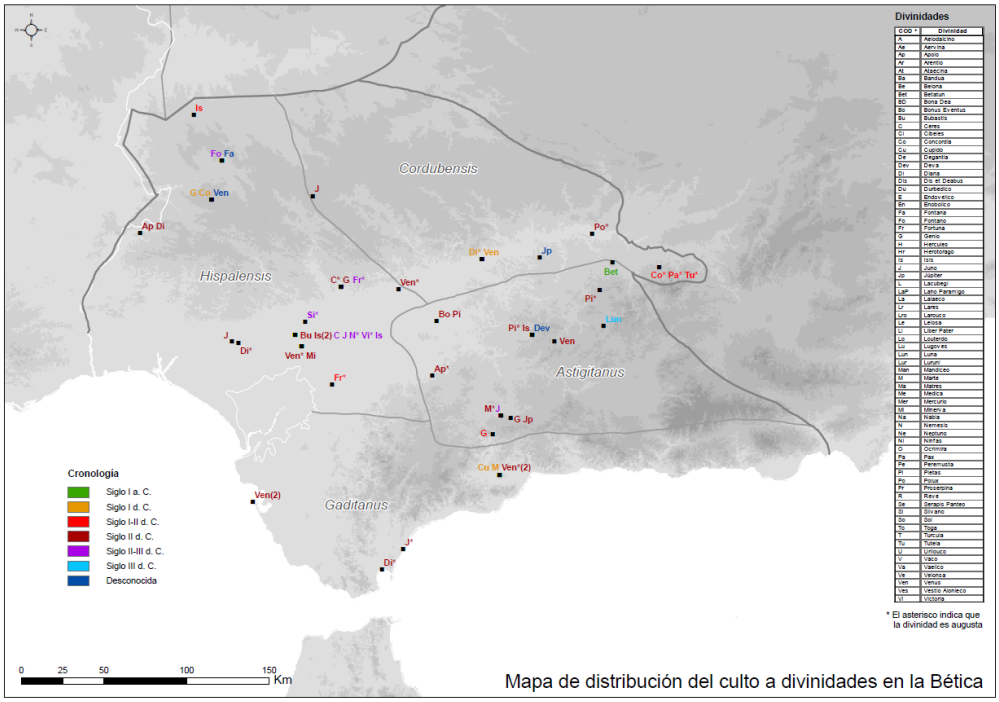

Figure 1. Map of female inscriptions in *Baetica* (Molina 2018)

However, in the cults promoted by state religious policy, Betic women preferred to worship deified abstractions in order to fulfill a will or to give thanks for having received the honor of a priesthood[11]. Although the analysis of the inscriptions dedicated to Pietas and Fortuna suggests that the dedicants were mostly Romanized natives, it is a fact that their freedmen were often responsible for fulfilling a testamentary bequest and thus maintained the beliefs of their patronesses.

Lusitania

Although the lack of archaeological documentation hinders the analysis of religious manifestations in the rural world and, therefore, its geographical limits, the creation of a cult of an agrarian nature often implies a ritual practice of its own and the existence of a devotion to a specific god. The best example is located in Lusitania, in the supposed sanctuary of Endovelico in São Miguel da Mota, dated to the first century A.D[12]. Specifically, about twenty female dedications reflect the cultic needs of a social group that most likely belonged to a local community. It would be a special context of cultural identification among the devotees, who maintained the cultic forms typical of their environment, particularly concentrated in the *Conventus Pacensis.*

[11] DOMÍNGUEZ 2013.

[12] CARDIM 2005.

Obviously, the information provided by these epigraphic texts must be studied globally in its socio-cultural context to avoid simplistic interpretations of its establishment. An example is the reference to *Jupiter Optimus Maximus* in the *Conventus Emeritensis*, which in all probability could indicate a clear syncretism with an indigenous god of the Lusitanian pantheon. From this point of view, everything seems to indicate that these peculiarities of popular character have their reflection in the cult of *Jupiter Solutorio* and *Jupiter Liberator*, who could perfectly share the same geographical place with the Roman god, without need of interpretation. In any case, even though most of their devotions were not linked to the official sacrifices to the divinity, the location of the epigraphs is limited to areas close to the main cities that were linked to centers of imperial worship in Lusitania[13].

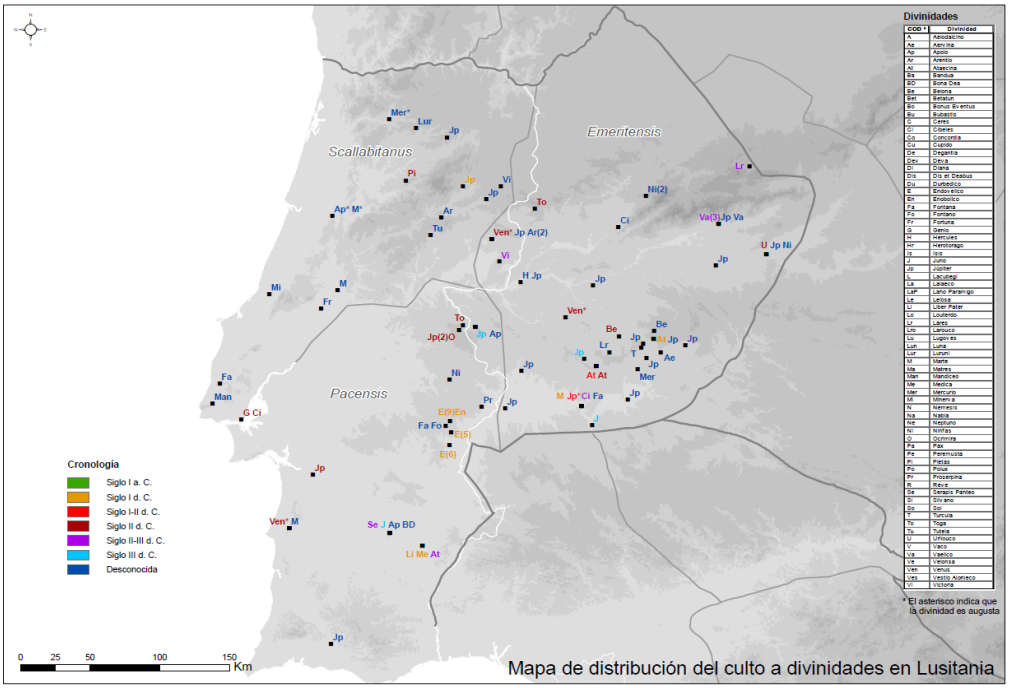

Figure 2. Map of female inscriptions in *Lusitania* (Molina 2018)

However, it is difficult to explain with precision the specific characteristics of each type of devotion, since the votive inscriptions are mostly found in a completely Roman environment, which limits the relationship that could have existed with the religious manifestations of the rural environment. A proof of this is the pre-Roman cult of *Dea Sancta Ataecina* in the *Conventus Emeritensis*, which had its origin in *Turobriga*. The epigraphic evidence, dated between the I-II century A.D., shows the possible existence of other cultic spaces in Emerita and its surroundings, which we cannot physically connect to each other. This fact is certainly related

[13] MOLINA 2024.

to the predominance of clearly Roman beliefs in the *conventus Pacensis* and *Emeritensis*, making Juno and Venus the goddesses most worshipped by women. Nevertheless, there seems to be nothing to suggest that the faithful should seek in their devotion a deity of their own. In fact, the imperial function prevalent in the cult of Venus seems to reinforce the Lusitanian preference for the gods of the Roman pantheon. In fact, their followers, aware of the importance of the Roman cults, opted for gods that provided a solution to their religious demands.

Tarraconensis

In a way, the cultic preferences of Hispano-Roman women for indigenous deities were more evident in *Tarraconensis*. These deities, which were not assimilated to the Roman pantheon, spread throughout the territory without us being able to specify their specific functions. In any case, it is remarkable the small number of religious manifestations of the faithful that make a *votum* to the Capitoline Triad, in contrast to the rest of Hispania. The fact that the geographical points are distant makes it difficult to explain this phenomenon in an area as territorially extensive as *Tarraconensis*. The areas where the votive elements to Jupiter, Juno and Minerva appear are remarkably Romanized, which could indicate that the purely Roman cults coexisted with the indigenous ones. This explains the fact that the supreme god of the Roman pantheon appears in an autochthonous cultic context, invoked as *Iovi Deo Candamo*. Considering the scarcity of epigraphs that show the pre-Roman essence of this divinity, it is most likely that the indigenous element was located in the less Romanized regions of the peninsula, where the imperial cult could have been negligible.

The cult of *Jupiter Optimus Maximus*, on the other hand, was concentrated in the hands of the autochthonous elite and spread throughout all the *conventus* except *Lucensis*. As for the other members of the triad, the epigraphic mentions of the cult of Juno and Minerva were modest. In fact, their worshippers are not too explicit in making votive offerings to them. Therefore, and despite the limitations of the preserved data, we must be especially cautious in determining the extent to which the official pantheon was important in the spiritual world of the believers. Similarly, we find no justification for the worship of Diana compared to the scarce worship of Venus. What is more peculiar is the attachment of the popular classes to Diana and the absence of evidence of imperial worship, which would indicate different forms of religiosity according to social class.

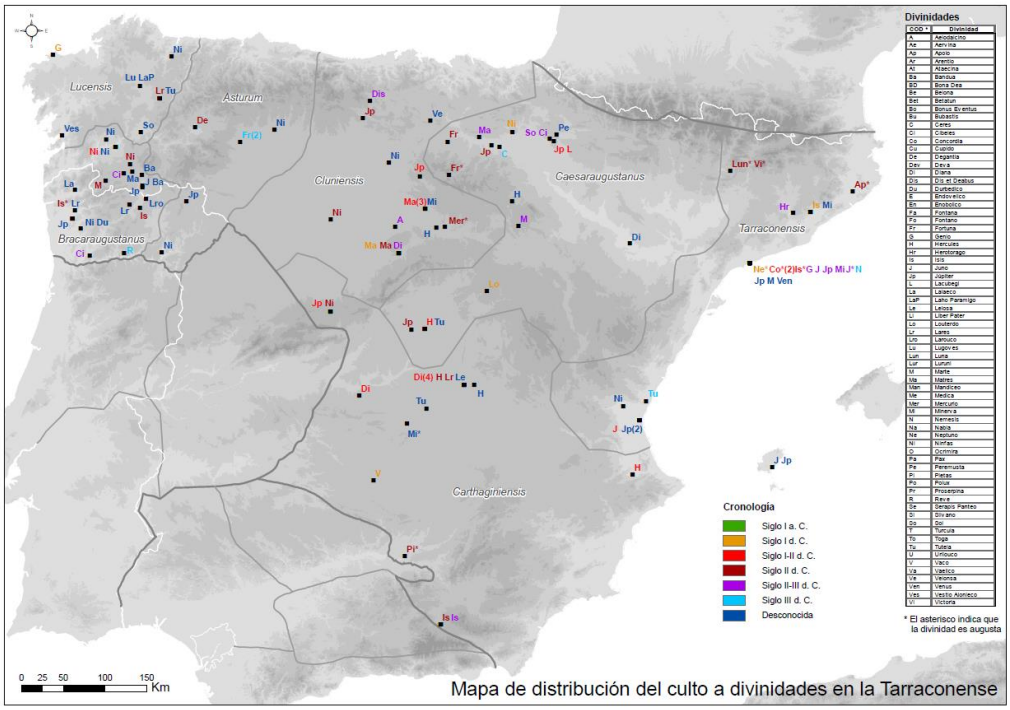

Figure 3. Map of female inscriptions in *Tarraconensis* (Molina 2018)

As for the abstractions and virtues, their worship in the northwestern part of the peninsula is poorly documented. The most important ones are Fortuna and Tutela. The former appears with the qualifier *Redux*, which indicates that its dedicators, who appear in the votive offerings together with his wife and daughter, thanked Fortuna for her protection during the military campaigns and the displacements that their position entailed. In this sense, personal happiness was also a motive of invocation, both for the devotee and for his family. With regard to Tutela, we verify that the social groups that maintain their religiosity are mainly the *libertae*, although we also emphasize that their testimonies of cult are relatively scarce compared to the devotion to the Nymphs and *Lares* in the northwest. It is possible that their explanation lies in the continuity, over a longer period, of a pre-Roman belief similar in function to that of the Tutela. In short, the selected epigraphic documentation has provided us with a series of specific clues about the geographical space in which the female cults of the Hispano-Roman worshippers settled, so that we cannot speak of a complete distribution of these cults in the three provinces of Hispania.

3. CONCLUSIONS

We do not know much about the world of Hispano-Roman women's beliefs, although it is true that the religious panorama of women's cults is characterized by its heterogeneity, it must be admitted that knowledge of it in Hispania has advanced very little. While the devotee

maintained her more intimate cultic uses, based mainly on her pre-Roman beliefs, a reduced feminine sector was inclined to manifest public devotions that may or may not have a religious motivation. In any case, the incorporation of Roman gods into indigenous religion can be interpreted as a gradual adaptation of their local practices to new religious ideas, at the individual or collective level[14]. This process of religious change, resulting from the Romanization process, entailed a cultic adaptation that would not be assimilated by all the conquered communities of the peninsula. One of the reasons for this was that Romanization did not have the same cultural impact in all areas of the peninsula, and this was reflected in the persistence of a system of local devotions[15]. However, we cannot generalize that with the arrival of the new Roman gods, pre-Roman religious experiences were pushed into the background. Among other reasons, because the votive epigraphy undoubtedly reveals that the existence and maintenance of the cultic uses of their most traditional beliefs was a reality.

It is not a banal generalization to admit that the reproduction of the Roman religious system was an unavoidable condition for direct intervention in civic life, and that this was accepted by the privileged classes of Hispania. Moreover, it was customary for a woman's intervention in the cultic practices of the community to be publicly recognized, just as it was for a man[16]. Given this, it is coherent to think that not all the female collective was able to intervene in the civic cults. It is obvious that these privileges were reserved for a woman related to the elite and that she must have imitated the model of the Roman matron, who would serve as an example for the other women of the Empire, including Hispanic women. In a certain way, despite the localism of the provinces of Hispania, I would like to emphasize the diffusion of the cult of august divinities and its relationship with the most intensely Romanized areas, such as the *Baetica*, for example.

In this sense, the sacrifice of a priestess or a devotee to an august deity came from women of a certain economic level who did not necessarily belong to a privileged social class. Therefore, it is difficult to explain whether the purpose of a devotee or a priestess could really express a personal devotion or rather the fulfillment of cultic or also official obligations, since sometimes devotion can be confused with obligation when a dedication is carried out with a state character and necessarily far from the sphere of private religiosity[17]. Thus, it is difficult to properly assess the meaning of a religious practice because in many cases we do not know the true motivation that leads her to make a devotion. In a way, it is natural that a devotee belongs to a family group, but that she feels the need to make a promise in favor of her family is an often-repeated option. It is true that the religious imagination of a Roman woman

[14] LIPKA 2010.

[15] CURCHIN 2004.

[16] KEEGAN 2014.

[17] PÉREZ 2014.

reproduced a unique system of beliefs that included deities of a different nature[18]. In general, her preference for the cult of female deities related to health and personal protection must be attributed to the specific circumstances of the believer. In fact, a common characteristic of Hispano-Roman female worshippers is their concern for the health of their close relatives, although we do not know the specific reason for the petition, since it is rarely specified.

Indeed, devotion to the goddesses of the Greco-Roman pantheon is a reality, but I believe that a woman's cultic tendency is not only determined by the sacred qualities attributed to these deities, which in some way relate to the gender concerns of the believer[19], but they also preferred male gods that suited their religious needs. This meant that worshippers had a certain preference for salutary gods associated with a promise of health for a blood relative. To this end, they preferred to preserve their local uses, linked to their traditional sphere and therefore close to their private habits. This cultic system, characterized by a strong indigenous substratum, was maintained in coexistence with the official Roman beliefs, mainly in *Lusitania* and *Tarraconensis*, during the first to third centuries AD. These indications of the survival of a pre-Roman past, still present in the votive epigraphs of the dedicators, imply an integration of local devotions with the official ones and, at the same time, the introduction of a religious model that did not exclude their traditional gods. In fact, this ancient belief system was clearly reduced to marginal areas of the peninsula[20]. In any case, it is not unusual that the sacrifices made by women from mostly rural geographical nuclei worship Roman gods with a local epithet that would largely explain the characteristics of the territorial area where these divinities are worshipped. More precisely, the indigenous cultic manifestations had as their referent a collective meeting place in sacred enclosures located in the open air.

In short, we can confirm that the religious heterogeneity of the Hispano-Roman worshippers responded to a clear diversity of cultural models that coexisted in Hispania and were not repressed after the Roman conquest[21]. The participation of a female collective in the indigenous cults and their perseverance in preserving their most traditional religious uses meant the continuity of some popular deities linked to a private environment. Precisely this domestic space, in which beliefs alien to Roman religious practices were forged, was transferred to the public sphere. It is at this moment that women, both individually and collectively, adopted Roman forms of worship and adapted them to their own beliefs, thus materializing them in the set of epigraphs analyzed.

[18] ORLIN 2010.

[19] BOATWRIGHT 2021.

[20] JAMES, DILLON 2012.

[21] MACLACHLAN 2013.

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Soldiers of Hispanic Origin on the Danubian Border: a Study Through Epigraphic Documentation

José ORTIZ CÓRDOBA[1]

Abstract: *In this paper we study the inscriptions of soldiers of Hispanic origin who did their military service on the Danube frontier. Geographically, our study covers the provinces of Raetia, Noricum, Pannonia, Moesia(e) and Dacia; chronologically, we will move between the 1st and the beginning of the 3rd century AD. The basis of this work is an epigraphic corpus of 19 inscriptions mentioning 27 military men. From these inscriptions, we will analyse the communities of origin of the Hispanic soldiers stationed in the Danubian limes, their period and units of service, their social and family relations and, in the case of the veterani, their return to civilian life.*

Rezumat: *În această lucrare studiem inscripțiile acelor soldați de origine hispanică care și-au desfășurat serviciul militar pe frontiera Dunării. Din punct de vedere geografic, studiul nostru acoperă provinciile Raetia, Noricum, Pannonia, Moesia(e) și Dacia; cronologic, ne vom deplasa între secolul I și începutul secolului al III-lea d.Hr. La baza acestei lucrări stă un corpus epigrafic de 19 inscripții care include 27 de militari. Pornind de la aceste inscripții vom analiza comunitățile de origine ale soldaților hispanici staționați pe limesul danubian, perioada și unitățile de serviciu, relațiile lor sociale și familiale și, în cazul veteranilor, integrarea lor în viața civilă.*

Keywords: milites; veterani; Hispania; roman army; *limes*; Danube; epigraphy.

1. Introduction

The different testimonies collected in literary and epigraphic documentation trace the presence of Hispanic recruits in the Roman army as of the end of the Republican period[2]. The most outstanding example is that of the *Turma Salluitana*, a group of equestrians from the Ebro valley who took part in the Social War and received Roman citizenship as a reward for their good services, as detailed in the bronze plaque found in Ascoli (*CIL* VI, 37045). During these years, several Hispanic soldiers also served as escorts for key figures in the final stage of the Republic. Particularly noteworthy are the cases of Caesar and Octavian. The former was usually accompanied, before his assassination, by a guard of Hispanic soldiers (Suet. *Caes*., 86),

[1] Department of Ancient History, University of Granada, Spain. E-mail: joseortiz@ugr.es. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3737-1115. This work is the result of the research project *Ex castris ad forum: ejército y oligarquías locales en Hispania y el norte de África* (PPJIA2023-129), funded by the Plan Propio de Investigación of the University of Granada and forms part of the research of the *Grupo HUM-215. Arqueología e historia de la Hispania Meridional en época Romana y Visigoda,* University of Granada.

[2] Prior to this, literary sources also inform us of the participation of groups of mercenaries of Peninsular origin in several conflicts. In this regard, GARCÍA-GELABERT PÉREZ and BLÁZQUEZ MARTÍNEZ 1987-1988, 257- 270.

while the latter was protected by a detachment of *Calagurritani* during the war against Antony (Suet. *Aug.*, 49). Subsequently, the beginning of the Principality and the full integration of the Iberian Peninsula into the Roman Empire favoured an increase in the presence of Hispanic soldiers in the army. The study of epigraphic documentation confirms their presence on the Rhenish-Danubian *limes* and in other important border areas such as *Britannia* and North Africa. Also in the Iberian Peninsula itself, where numerous Hispanics served in the legions *IIII Macedonica*, *X Gemina* and *VI Victrix*, which formed the nucleus of the military garrison established by Rome after the Cantabrian Wars, and, of course, in the ranks of the *legio VII Gemina*, permanently garrisoned in *Hispania* from 74 AD[3]. The presence of soldiers of peninsular origin can also be detected in Italy, where the weight of the army was not as important as it was in the provincial territories, since only the fleets of Ravenna and Miseno and the various corps – *praetoriani*, *urbaniciani*, *vigiles* and *equites singulares Augusti* – that made up the urban militia of Rome were stationed there. Various Hispanics, who passed the strict requirements for membership of these units, also served in the latter[4].

The movement of Spanish soldiers throughout the imperial geography was a direct consequence of the needs of the service and the directives issued by the central power, which were conditioned by the political situation at any given time. One of the sectors which received most attention was the northern frontier, whose contours were delimited by the Rhine and the Danube, the two great Central European rivers. The main aim of this work is to study the Hispanic military men who served along the Danube frontier. We understand as such the broad geographical sector comprising the provinces of *Raetia*, *Noricum*, *Pannonia*, *Moesia* and *Dacia* (Figure 1). Numerous Hispanic soldiers travelled there. Many of them died in active service and received the homage of their comrades-in-arms; others managed to complete their service and chose to settle voluntarily in these territories after having received the *honesta missio*.

[3] The composition and recruitment system of the Roman legions was dealt with by G. FORNI (1953) in a work that can be considered a classic. Subsequently, the participation of Hispanics in the Roman army has been studied in numerous works, both general (ROLDÁN HERVÁS 1974; LE ROUX 1982) and specific (for example: PEREA YÉBENES 1994, 373-382; 2001, 213-219; RICCI 1992, 103-143; 2005, 267-276; MORALES
RODRÍGUEZ 2014, 217-232; ORTIZ CÓRDOBA 2017, 135-158; 2018, 83-116; 2019, 71-91; 2022, 85-129; HERNÁNDEZ GUERRA 2016, 137-153; 2017, 379-416; LÓPEZ CASADO 2018; 2021). Special mention should be made of the monographic study dedicated to the Hispanic legio par excellence, the *VII Gemina*, carried out by PALAO VICENTE 2006.

[4] Several works have dealt, to a greater or lesser extent, with the presence of Hispanics both in the praetorian guard (ROLDÁN HERVÁS 1974, 263-265; RICCI 1992, 121-125; 2005, 267-276; PITILLAS SALAÑER 2004, 141-152; CEÑAL MARTÍNEZ 2009, 59-80; SANTOS YANGUAS 2014, 185-195) and in the urban cohorts of Rome (ROLDÁN HERVÁS 1974, 265; CEÑAL MARTÍNEZ 2009-2010, 131-138). A general study of all the Hispanics who served in the urban militia of Rome, including also the corps of vigiles and the *equites singulares Augusti*, in ORTIZ CÓRDOBA 2022, 85-129.

Figure 1. Provinces of *Raetia*, *Noricum*, *Pannonia*, *Moesia* and *Dacia* in the general context of the Roman Empire (own elaboration from Wikimedia Commons).

In order to select the epigraphic documentation, we have examined the *CIL* indexes corresponding to the territories mentioned, the different provincial *corpora* carried out subsequently and the information collected in periodicals such as *Année Épigraphique* (*AE*) and in computer databases such as *Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss-Slaby* (*EDCS*) or *Epigraphic Database Heidelberg* (*HD*). These data have been cross-checked and complemented with the information gathered in the different works that deal with the presence of Hispanic soldiers in the Roman army. From all these sources of information we have compiled the documentary basis of this contribution, an epigraphic *corpus* consisting of 19 inscriptions referring to 27 soldiers. The main criterion used to compile this documentation was the explicit mention of a Hispanic *origo*[5]. This term indicates the civic community or legal entity to which an individual is attached, and is the most reliable element we have to determine the existence of mobility[6].

2. Documented units

The Hispanic soldiers included in this study served in fifteen different units, as detailed in Table 1. Eight of them are legions, while the rest are auxiliary corps, namely five *alae* and two *cohortes*.

[5] On the *origo*, LASSÈRE 2005, 128-136; GRÜLL 2018, 139-150.

[6] We have disregarded in this work other less reliable indicatives related, for example, to onomastics, where *cognomina* that have an ethnic-geographical character may appear, such as *Hispanus* or *Cantaber* (KAJANTO 1982, 198-199), or others traditionally associated with the Peninsula, such as *Reburrus/Reburrinus* (UNTERMANN 1965, 155, map 66; ALBERTOS FIRMAT 1966, 191-192). All of them could be indicative of a probable Hispanic origin, although without offering us total certainty.

Name of the unit	Number of testimonies
Legions	
Legio X Gemina	4
Legio XIIII Gemina	3
Legio XI Claudia	1
Legio I Adiutrix	1
Legio II Adiutrix	1
Legio IIII Macedonica	1
Legio IIII Flavia	1
Legio I Italica	1* (served also in *Cohors V Asturum*)
Unknown unit	5
Auxiliary units	
Ala Pannoniorum	3
Ala II Aravacorum	2
Ala II Asturum	1
Ala III Thracum	1
Ala ¿?	1
Cohors II Asturum et Callaecorum	1
Cohors V Asturum	1* (served also in the *Legio I Italica*)

Table 1. Military units observed and number of soldiers who lived in each of them (own elaboration).

3. Hometowns of Hispanic soldiers

The documentation gathered in this work, excluding the uncertain cases (nos. 19, 27), shows that, at a provincial level, three of the Hispanics came from *Baetica*, another three from *Lusitania* and seventeen from *Hispania Citerior*. Two more cases must be added to these, where the origin is indicated by the formula *domo Hispanus*, which does not allow us to determine the place of origin (nos. 22, 23). At the level of specific cities, the soldiers came from sixteen different civic communities (Figure 2), most of them with privileged legal status, although in the sample collected there are also references to several *populi* (nos. 21, 26) and indications of provenance that refer to broad entities, such as the province of *Lusitania* (nos. 17, 18) or *Hispania* itself (nos. 22, 23).

a) Colonies

Pliny records the existence in *Hispania* of twenty-six colonies under Roman law, nine in *Baetica* (*nat*. III, 7), five in *Lusitania* (*nat*. IV, 117) and twelve in *Citerior* (*nat*. III, 18). Most of them were established between the battle of *Munda* (45 BC) and the first decades of the Augustan principality[7]. They were made up of members of the urban plebs of Rome and veterans of the army demobilised after the civil wars. We have a total of eleven soldiers from the Hispanic colonies. In the case of *Citerior*, four colonies contribute references to this work: *Tarraco*, the city of origin of *T. Aurelius Silvanus* (no. 2); *Salaria*, from where *C. Iulius Candidianus* (no. 5) and *C. Iulius Lupercus* (no. 24); *Caesar Augusta*, home community of *L. Aurelius Sequens* (no. 1), *L. Caesius Flaccus* (no. 4) and *C. Vitellius Seranus* (no. 14); and *Clunia*[8], indicated as *origo* in the inscriptions of *C. Aurelius Vegetus* (no. 3), *L. Iulius Leuganus* (no. 6) and [---]*vius Reburrus* (no. 15). In contrast, much less information is provided by the Roman colonies of *Lusitania* and *Baetica*. It is reduced to only two inscriptions, that of *T. Iulius Vegetus*, a native of *Augusta Emerita* (no. 7), and that of *Tuccitanus L. Marcius Marcianus* (no. 9).

b) Municipalities

This second section comprises a total of eight examples. Four of them come from municipalities promoted in the time of Caesar or Augustus. Leaving aside the case of *L. Livius Rusticus*, a native of *Ulia Fidentia*, in *Baetica* (no. 8), all the inscriptions relating to these municipalities come from *Citerior*, where we know of *C. Valerius Proculus*, originally from *Calagurris* (no. 12); *C. Valerius Silvinus*, a native of *Valentia* (no. 13); and a legionary who came from *Castulo* (no. 16), whose name is unknown.

Three other cases have been documented in municipalities of the Flavian period, present in the whole Peninsula after the general concession of the *ius Latii* made by Vespasian (Plin. *nat*. III, 30)[9]. All the inscriptions relating to these municipalities refer to *Citerior*, the region of origin of *Bovegius*, a native of *Lancia* (no. 20); *L. Valerius Galenus* (no. 11), a native of *Lucus Augusti*; and of the *Bracaraugustanus* [-] *Iulius Pintamus* (no. 25)[10].

One last case must added to these references, a case which represents some peculiarities.

[7] In this respect, ORTIZ CÓRDOBA 2021.

[8] It is a colony later than those established by Caesar and Augustus, since its promotion would have taken place during the first century AD, although this fact has given rise to various considerations in historiography and has been questioned by some (on this subject, see CASTILLO 1988, 234 and note 7; FARIA 1999, 32). The colonial status of the city appears both in literary documentation, since Ptolemy (*Geog*. II, 6, 55) refers to it as *Sulpicia*, and in epigraphy, where the expression *colon(iae) Cluniensium appears* (*CIL* II, 2780). Its promotion has traditionally been linked to Galba (see HALEY 1992, 159-164, with bibliography in note 1), although some authors consider that it could date back to the time of Claudius or Nero (PEREA YÉBENES 2001, 219).

[9] On the Flavian municipalisation in *Hispania*, ANDREU PINTADO 2004. For the specific case of the province of Baetica, MORALES RODRÍGUEZ 2003.

[10] We have included in this group the cases from *Lucus Augusti* and *Bracara Augusta*, two of the conventual capitals of northwestern Spain, for which a municipal promotion in the Flavian period has traditionally been proposed (on this subject, WIEGELS 1985, 100 and 123; ANDREU PINTADO 2004, 143-144 and 147).

This is *Anticaria*, hometown of *C. Sentius Flaccus* (no. 10), whose date of transformation into a municipality has generated some debate. Several authors have defended its status as a Flavian municipality, which seems to be the most probable[11]. However, the *Flaccus* inscription has traditionally been used to support a municipal promotion in the time of Galba, since this legionary was inscribed in the *Sulpicia* tribe, one of the so-called pseudo-tribes[12]. According to this theory, his name would derive from one of the honorific appellations held by *Anticaria*, which refers to Galba's name and could reflect its transformation into a municipality during his reign[13].

c) References to *populi*/regions

In this section we include two references. The first of these is that of *T. Claudius Pintamus*, who defines himself as *natione [Zoel]a* (no. 21), one of the peoples that Pliny (*nat.* III, 28) included among the *Augustani Astures* and who would have occupied the area between Tras-os-Montes (northeast of Portugal) and the Tierra de Aliste (Zamora)[14]. The second inscription is the military diploma of the auxiliary *Iustus* (no. 26), who is identified as *Ca(llaicus)*.

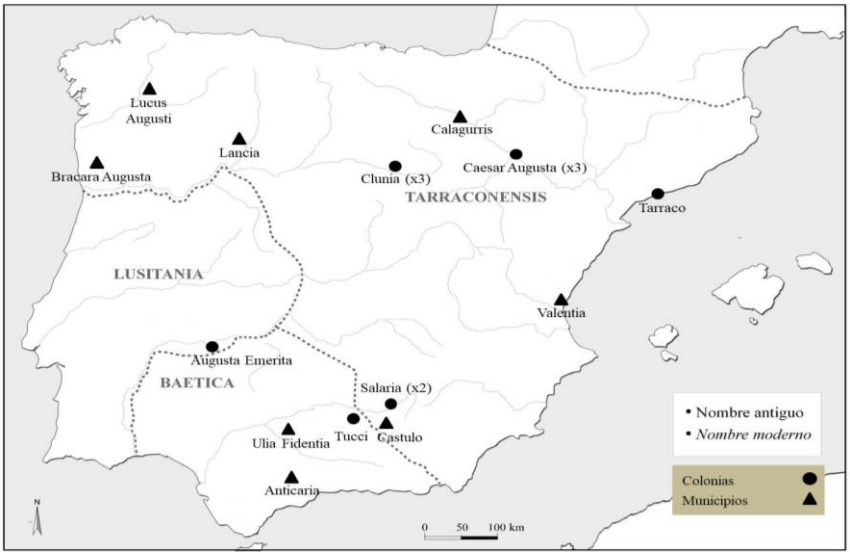

Figure 2. Communities of origin of the Hispanics studied (excluding doubtful or undetermined cases). The number of individuals documented in the cities with more than one case is shown in brackets (own elaboration).

[11] WIEGELS 1985, 13 and 14, note 3; ABASCAL PALAZÓN and ESPINOSA RUIZ 1989, 74-75, figure 9, no. 3 and 87, note 57; CORTIJO CEREZO 1993, 203; CASTILLO 1999, 274; BELTRÁN LLORIS 2000, 644. For J. ANDREU PINTADO (2004, 216, note 573) the Flavian municipalisation of *Anticaria* could be admitted, although he considers that this hypothesis cannot be completely certain.

[12] In this respect, FORNI 1985, 3-12.

[13] GALSTERER 1971, 35-36 and 65, no. 2; LE ROUX 1982, 220; HERNÁNDEZ GUERRA 2017, 392. On this question and its problematic, see WIEGELS 1985, 13-14; DEL CASTILLO ÁLVAREZ 1997, 375-386.

[14] TOVAR 1989, 112; *TIR* K-29, *s.v. Zoelae*.

d) Undetermined communities

Within this group we have six cases where the provenance cannot be determined with certainty. In four of them a generic formula is used which prevents us from specifying the community of origin, as we see in the inscription of *T. Claudius Valerius* (no. 22) and his brother *Flaccus* (no. 23), where the formula *domo Hispanus* appears, and in the panels of the Adamklissi Trophy, where two Lusitanian legionaries of unknown onomastics appear (nos. 17 and 18). The two remaining cases, on the other hand, do mention the *origo* of their protagonists, although the communities to which they refer have not yet been located. Both examples appear in the inscription *CIL* III, 4227. They are *Abilus* (no. 19) and *Pentius* (no. 27). The first is defined as *Lucocadiacus* and the second as *Aligantiensis*, terms that would refer to the communities of *Lucocadia* and *Aligantia*, of uncertain location, since their place names appear neither in the literary documentation nor in other inscriptions, to date. However, in this epigraph there is a third soldier called *Bovegius* who declares himself to be a native of *Lancia* (Villasabariego, León), one of the cities of the Asturs. Since all three men served in the same unit and appear together in the same inscription, we can assume that they come from the same area. Thus, the location of *Lancia* in Astur territory would allow us to propose a similar location for the other two communities[15]. This hypothesis would also be supported by the onomastics of these soldiers, as their names are characteristic of the Asturian area[16].

4. Destination areas and service development

The inscriptions of the Hispanic military men studied in this work come from six different provinces (Figure 3); the territories that provide the most evidences are *Pannonia Superior*, with eleven, and *Moesia Inferior*, with six.

[15] SCHULTEN 1962, 125 and 128. In the opinion of A. TOVAR (1989, 469), the onomastics of *Abilus* and *Pentius* would place both communities in the area of León, while N. SANTOS YANGUAS (2016, 14-15 and 38) places them in Asturian territory following the proposal of A. Schulten. For his part, J. M. SOLANA SAINZ (2017, 167 and 172) considers that *Lucocadia* could be one of the *oppida* of the *Luggones* of the *Astures Cismontani*, also suggesting that the toponym *Aligantia* could have survived in Arganza/San Vicente de Aslanza (province of León). His opinion is quite similar to that expressed earlier by P. LE ROUX (1982, 189, no. 69), who identified *Lucocadia* as an oppidum of the *Luggones* of the *Astures Transmontani.*

[16] SANTOS YANGUAS 2016, 38; PERALTA LABRADOR 2018, 126 (this author relates them particularly to the Cantabrian Orgenomesque and Vadinian areas, neighbours of the Lancians).

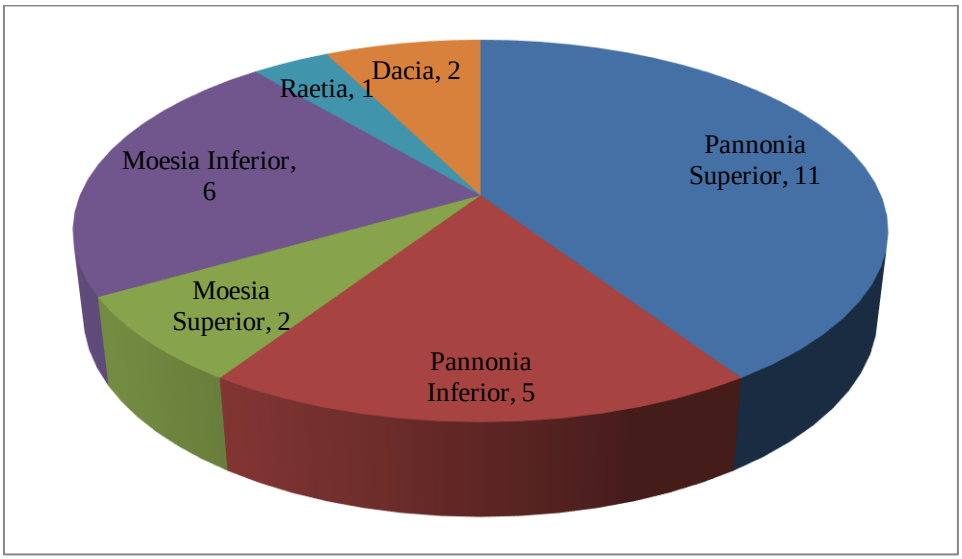

Figure 3. Geographical distribution of the military men studied (own elaboration).

4.1 *Raetia*

The inscription of [-] *Iulius Pintamus* (no. 25), a native of *Bracara Augusta* (Braga, Portugal), has been found at *Augusta Vindelicorum*. He was honoured between the second half of the 2nd century AD and the beginning of the 3rd century AD by his wife, *Clementia Popeia*, who made the funerary inscription for her *marito optimo* and herself while she was still alive. The epigraphic text refers to *Pintamus* as *veteranus ex decurione alae*. His *nomen* is extremely common and widespread in both *Hispania* and *Raetia*[17], while his *cognomen* is of indigenous descent and refers to the Lusitanian-Galician area[18]. This could indicate that he was a Romanised indigenous man who served in one of the auxiliary *alae* of the Roman army, whose name we do not know.

After his retirement he was integrated into the municipal elite of *Augusta Vindelicorum* (Augsburg, Germany), the capital of *Raetia*. This is indicated by the expression *decurio municipii Aeli A(u)g(usti)*, which indicates the incorporation of [-] *Iulius Pintamus* into the *ordo decurionum* of the city, thus demonstrating the fulfilment of the economic and social requirements demanded by this notable position. In relation to the latter, it is important to point out that, despite serving in an auxiliary unit, the onomastics with *tria nomina*; the clearly Latin filiation – *C(ai) filius* –; and the membership of the *Quirina* tribe, typical of the

[17] GALLEGO FRANCO 1998-1999, 195-209; 1998a, 77-78; ABASCAL PALAZÓN 1994, 151-163. For the Hispanic case, see also the records of this *nomen* in the ADOPIA database

[18] UNTERMANN 1965, 147-148 and map 61; ALBERTOS FIRMAT 1966, 183, 283 and 295; VALLEJO RUIZ 2005, 371-375.

cives of *Bracara Augusta*, would indicate that [-] *Iulius Pintamus* was in possession of Roman citizenship when he joined the army. This consideration would also be supported by his position as *decurio*, an officer's post for which it was necessary to hold citizenship[19].

The establishment of *Pintamus* in the municipality of *Augusta Vindelicorum* did not imply a change of tribe, as our protagonist maintained his affiliation to the *Quirina* instead of taking the *Sergia* tribe held by the *cives* of his new community[20]. It is also important to note that the use of the tribe is very rare among the men of *Raetia*, *Pintamus* being one of the few examples documented in this province[21]. Perhaps we can relate this character to the *C. Iulius Pintamus* documented in an epitaph from *Bracara Augusta* where it is indicated that he was the patron saint of *C. Iulius Pudens*, who died between the end of the 1st and the beginning of the 2nd century AD (*AE* 1973, 297).

4.2 *Pannonia*

This region has the largest number of Hispanic soldiers, a total of fifteen, distributed as follows: eleven in *Pannonia Superior* and five in *Pannonia Inferior*.

4.2.1 *Pannonia Superior*

Most of the inscriptions from *Pannonia Superior* come from *Carnuntum*. The oldest documented evidence from this city refers to two legionaries from *Baetica* who served in the the *legio X Gemina* during the 1st century AD. They are *L. Livius Rusticus* (no. 8), a native of *Ulia Fidentia*, and *L. Marcius Marcianus* (no. 9), a native of *Augusta Gemella Tucci*. The former died at the age of 45 after 26 years of service, while the latter died ten years younger, at the age of 35, after serving for eleven years. Both were honoured by their heirs, whose names we do not know, and they bear the tribes of their respective communities of origin, *Galeria* in the case of *Ulia* and *Sergia* in the case of *Tucci*[22]. They also have the peculiarity of indicating their years of service with the formula *aera*, an expression used during the 1st century AD by some military units stationed in the western provinces of the Empire, most notably the *legio X Gemina*[23]. Both were recruited during the stay of this legion in *Hispania* and they would later have moved to the Danubian frontier[24]. Their epitaphs are dated between 63 and 68 AD, during which time this unit was stationed at the frontier camp of *Carnuntum*[25].

Two other inscriptions which present greater problems of reading and interpretation

[19] This was noted by M. SPEIDEL (1980, 211-212) when commenting on the case of *M. Valerius Hispanus*, another *decurio* of Hispanic origin, in this case from *Leonica* (*conv. Caesaraugustanus*), who also served in an auxiliary unit. On this character, see ORTIZ CÓRDOBA 2023, 195, no. 8 and 204-205.

[20] On the tribe of *Augusta Vindelicorum*, KUBISCHETK 1889 (repr. 1972), 222-223 and *AE* 2001, 1562.

[21] GALLEGO FRANCO 1998-1999, 197; HERNÁNDEZ GUERRA 2017, 384, nº 6.

[22] WIEGELS 1985, 59 and 63.

[23] In this regard, GÓMEZ-PANTOJA and CASTILLO SANZ 2014, 507-518.

[24] LE ROUX estimates that *L. Livius Rusticus* would have been recruited between 37-42 AD (1982, 180 and 324), while *L. Marcius Marcianus* would have been called up shortly after, in the period 52-57 AD (1982, 180, no. 29 and 324).

[25] On the stay of this legion in *Carnuntum*, RODRÍGUEZ GONZÁLEZ 2001, 298.

could be included in this same period, as they do not include the name of the legionary unit in which their protagonists served. Despite this, their discovery at *Carnuntum* has traditionally allowed them to be attributed to the camp of *legio X Gemina* and to be dated to the legion's stay in the city (63-68 AD)[26]. The first of these is the funerary inscription of *T. Iulius Vegetus* (no. 7), of which only the upper part has survived. The lower part, which included the name of the unit, important data such as the age at death and the years of service of the deceased has disappeared. According to P. Le Roux, this legionary from *Emerita* would have been recruited between the reigns of Claudius and Nero, that is, during the stay of *legio X* in the Iberian Peninsula, and later moved with it to the border of the Danube, where he would have died[27]. The same career could be attributed to *C. Valerius Silvinus*, a native of *Valentia* (no. 13), who died in *Carnutum* at the age of 60[28]. He has a very long military career, claiming to have served for 34 years, which would place his recruitment in the period 30-35 AD[29]. He would have died, like his other companions of the *X Gemina*, during the legion's stay in *Pannonia*.

The epitaph of the *Calagurritanus C. Valerius Proculus* (no. 12), *eques legionis* in the *XI Claudia*, is dated to the beginning of the 2nd century AD. He was probably recruited at the end of the 1st century AD, although he had a very short period of service, as he died at the age of 30 after having been enrolled for only nine years[30]. His unit was transferred from *Germania* to *Pannonia* around 100 AD, coinciding with the start of the Dacian Wars. This unit passed successively through the bases of *Brigetio*, *Carnuntum* and *Aquincum* in this province until, in 107 AD, once the conquest of Dacia had been completed, it established itself definitively in *Moesia Inferior*[31]. The death of *C. Valerius Proculus*, whose inscription could therefore be dated to the period 100-107 AD, would have taken place within this chronological framework.

The veteran *T. Aurelius Silvanus*, whose epitaph defines him as *natione Hispanus Tarraconensis* (no. 2), would also have served during the second century. This formula, chosen by *Silvanus* himself, since the inscription was made while he was still alive, clearly indicates his Hispanic origin (*natione Hispanus*), to which he then adds the precision of having been

[26] RODRÍGUEZ GONZÁLEZ 2001, 298.

[27] LE ROUX 1982, 179, no. 25 and 325.

[28] The Hispanic origin of this legionary was accepted by J. M. ROLDÁN HERVÁS (1974, 306-307, no. 559) and also, although with some reservations, by P. LE ROUX (1982, 176, nos. 15 and 256), since there is a city called *Valentia* in *Gallia Narbonensis*. The *Fabia* tribe in which *Silvinus* was inscribed does not make it possible to clarify whether it was one or the other, since the *cives* of Hispanic *Valentia* were censused in the *Galeria* (WIEGELS 1985, 142), while those of Gallic *Valentia* used the *¿Aniensis*? (KUBISCHETK 1889 (reed. 1972), 204). Nevertheless, *Silvinus*' membership of *legio X Gemina*, which remained on the Iberian Peninsula for much of the 1st century AD, would point to a probable Hispanic origin for this legionary.

[29] LE ROUX 1982, 176, no. 15 and 326.

[30] LE ROUX 1982, 221, no. 174 and 324.

[31] RODRÍGUEZ GONZÁLEZ 2001, 313.

born in *Tarraconensis*, a toponym that could be either a generic reference to the province of origin or a specific indication of his community of origin, in this case the city of *Tarraco*[32]. In any case, *Silvanus* moved from his native *Hispania* to the border of the Danube, where he served as *magister navaliorum* in the ranks of the *legio XIIII Gemina*, a responsibility that would allude to his service in the *navalia* of this unit. This term would most probably refer to a complex of military shipyards now documented for the first time at *Carnuntum*. These facilities would be linked to the fleets of ships that the Danube legions used to patrol the river, which may have had one of their headquarters in the river port of this city[33]. This fact, together with the use of the formula *nation(e) Hispan(us)*, has led to the hypothesis that *Silvanus* was a sailor or an auxiliary transferred to *legio XIIII*[34]. He attained a prominent position in this unit, since the term *magister* would indicate his status as an officer of high rank, perhaps centurion, within these *navalia*.

After his discharge he settled in *Carnuntum*. This decision may have been influenced by the fact that his wife, *Aelia Iustina*, was probably of Pannonian origin[35]. He formed his family in this city, as indicated in his funerary inscription which would have been located in a family tomb where the wife and three children of *T. Aurelius Silvanus*, all of whom died at an early age, were also buried. In fact, it is likely that this *veteranus*, given his advanced age of 81, was the last member of his family to die, an event that would have taken place in the second half of the 2nd century AD.

[32] In this regard, WEBER 2010, 207 and ORTIZ CÓRDOBA 2019a, 81 (both identify him as a native of *Tarraco*); OZCÁRIZ GIL 2021, 39 (not inclined to either option).

[33] REDDÉ 1986, 301-302. It is important to note that in *Carnuntum* there is only one other epigraph that contains references to the fleet or, at least, to some kind of vessel. This is the funerary stele dedicated by a *frumentarius* of *legio X Gemina* to his wife and son, on the head of which is depicted a ship, probably a cargo ship given its appearance, with the inscription *Felix Itala* (*AE* 1990, 797). Similarly, the position of *magister navaliorum* is rare in epigraphy. We know the expression *mag(ister) nava[lis(?)]* in an inscription from *Praeneste* in Italy (*EDR*072207) and the formula *optio naval(iorum)*, which could perhaps be assimilated, in two epigraphs from *Mogontiacum*, in *Germania Superior* (*CIL* XIII, 6712 and 6714), and probably in a rather fragmentary inscription from *Aleria* in *Corsica* (*AE* 1968, 284).

[34] MASTINO 2021, 480. In the world of citizens this formula is documented, above all, in inscriptions of freedmen or soldiers of pilgrim origin. On the use of the term *natio* as a way of indicating the *origo*, see LASSÈRE 2005, 132-134, and for the specific case of the expression *natione Hispanus*, see the work of ÓZCARIZ GIL 2021, 21-45.

[35] WEBER 2010, 207.

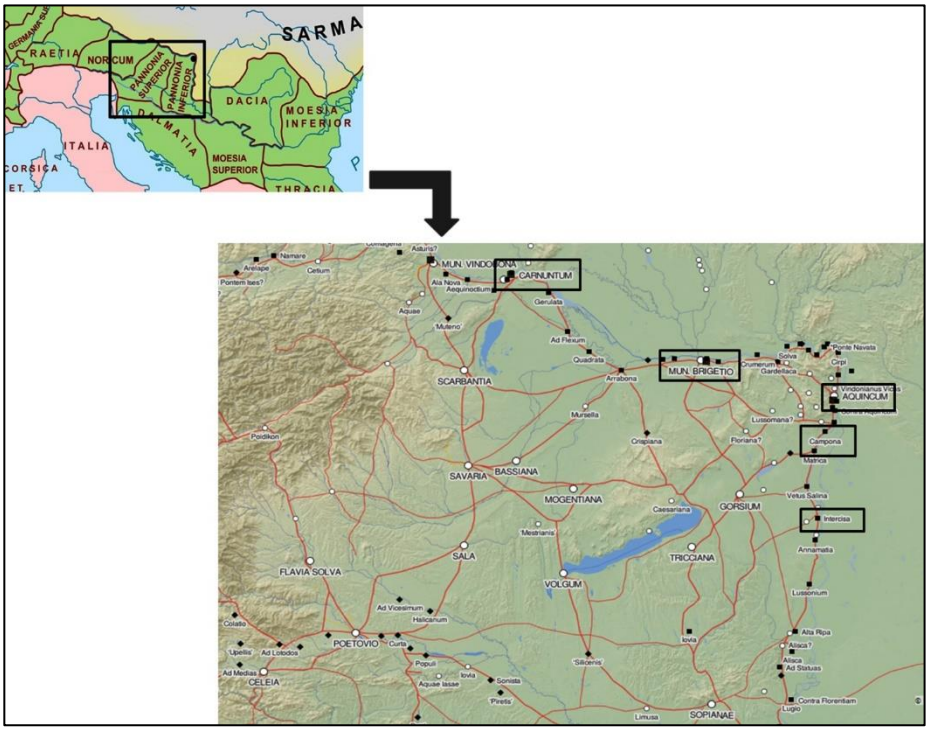

Figure 4. Distribution of the inscriptions documented in *Pannonia Superior* e *Inferior* (own elaboration from Wikimedia Commons and Digital Atlas of the Roman Empire).

We know of the presence of two Hispanics who share kinship, origin and military occupation Southeast of *Carnuntum*, in *Brigetio* (Szöny, Hungary). Both are documented in the same funerary inscription, which has been dated to the second half of the 2nd century AD. It is the epitaph that *C. Iulius Candidianus* (no. 5), in his capacity as heir, raised in memory of his *avunculus pientissimus C. Iulius Lupercus* (no. 24), who died at the age of 50. In addition to this relationship, the inscription also indicates the veteran status of *Lupercus*, who served as a *decurio* in the *ala III Thracum*, a unit probably created in the time of Augustus and stationed in Syria during the 1st century AD, later participating in the conquest of Dacia. After the conquest, he would have been stationed in *Pannonia*, where his presence is documented during the 2nd century AD and where he would have retired[36].

At the time of *Lupercus*' death his nephew *Candidianus* was acting as *beneficiarius legati* in the *legio I Adiutrix*. These soldiers, who formed part of the so-called *principales*, carried out work of various kinds in the service of the general staff or one of its officers, and were also employed in the offices of the provincial governors, where they played an important

[36] On this unit, CICHORIUS, *RE* IV1 cols. 1266-1267; ZAHARIDE 2007, 1511-1512.

administrative role[37]. The *legio I* was created irregularly during the civil war of 69, being sent to *Hispania* by Emperor Vitellius and then transferred by Vespasian to the Germanic frontier, being cantoned in *Mogontiacum* (*Germania Superior*). In the time of Domitian this legion was transferred to the Danubian *limes*, setting up camp at *Brigetio*, an important strategic point in *Pannonia Superior*, a province where it may have coincided with the *ala Thracum*[38].

As mentioned above, uncle and nephew share a common origin. This is indicated by the formula *domo Sala*, which has been developed as *domo Sala(ria)* and which would refer to the Hispanic colony located in Úbeda la Vieja (Jaén)[39]. However, some authors consider that the *origo* is complete, linking these soldiers to the North African *Sala* (Salé, Morocco)[40]. The epigraphic collection attributed to this city is not very extensive (79 inscriptions in *EDCS*) and, although in several inscriptions the *r(es) p(ublica) Salensium* (*AE* 1963, 65; *AE* 1992, 1944) and the appellative *Salenses* (*AE* 1992, 1944) are used to refer to its inhabitants, in none of them is the city mentioned only as *Sala*, so this would be the first case. On the other hand, the presence of the *gens Iulia*, to which both soldiers belong, is limited to a single testimony (*EDCS*-08800282). Nor does the epigraphy of this city record the formula *domo Sala* as an indication of the *origo*. In contrast, the use of the expression *domo + city of origin* is relatively frequent in the Hispanic colonies, where it is documented in the inscriptions of several emigrants[41]. It is true that the presence of the *gens Iulia* is equally limited in *Salaria*, whose epigraphic corpus is also scarce (19 inscriptions in *EDCS*). Nevertheless, we could perhaps link these soldiers to *M. Iulius Aemilianus*, who was *duumvir* in *Salaria* in the middle of the 2nd century AD and in whose inscription the name of the city appears abbreviated as *Salar(ia)*[42]. Furthermore, the fact that another Hispanic, in this case from *Tarraco* (*CIL* II^2/14, 1171), has been documented serving in *ala III Thracum* in the Flavian period could support the peninsular origin of *C. Iulius Lupercus* and *C. Iulius Candidianus*. For all these reasons, we believe that the restitution of the *origo* as *domo Sala(ria)* and the linking of both soldiers with this colony in the south of *Hispania* would be more acceptable[43].

Finally, to the south of *Carnuntum*, in the locality of Gyalokae, situated between the ancient Roman centres of *Savaria* and *Scarbantia*, we know of the last documented inscription in this province, which mentions three auxiliaries of Hispanic origin: *Abilus* (no. 19), *Bovegius*

[37] In this respect, CARRERAS MONFORT 1997, 151-176; NELIS-CLÉMENT 2000, 61; PALAO VICENTE 2006, 147-158.

[38] On the trajectory of this legion, RODRÍGUEZ GONZÁLEZ 2001, 32-44.

[39] See the commentary by A. Canto in *HEp* 14, 2005, 192. The reading *domo Sala(ria)* appears in the entry for this inscription in the Clauss-Slaby database (*EDCS*-26600238).

[40] LÖRINZC 2001, no. 197. This reading is the one that appears in the Epigraphic Database Heidelberg (*HD*039474).

[41] This can be seen in the inscriptions of *Baebia Venusta*, from *Colonia Patricia* (*CIL* VI, 34664); *Q. Bruttius Crescens*, from *Tucci* (*CIL* XIII, 6856); *M. Vibius Maurinus*, from *Emerita* (ROLDÁN HERVÁS 1974, 453, no. 568); *Caenus*, from *Norba Caesarina* (LE ROUX 1982, 189-190, no. 69 bis); and *L. Afranius Eros*, from *Tarraco* (*CIL* XII, 4377).

[42] GIMENO PASCUAL 2004-05, 181-184.

[43] Hypothesis put forward in several previous works, ORTIZ CÓRDOBA 2017, 146-147; 2019b, 82.

(no. 20) and *Pentius* (no. 27). This piece contains the epitaph of the first of these, who served as an*eques* in the *ala Pannoniorum* during the first half of the 1st century AD[44]. He died at the age of 43, after 23 years of service, and was honoured by his heirs, and probably also his comrades-in-arms, *Bovegius* and *Pentius*. His unit must have been created after 9 AD, the year in which the province of *Pannonia* was established[45]. There are several records of this corps. The earliest comes from *Salona* in *Dalmatia* and also mentions a Hispanic auxiliary named *Cloutius* (*CIL* III, 2016). It is likely that this unit was temporarily stationed in *Dalmatia*. Later it would have moved to *Pannonia*, from where the remaining inscriptions mentioning it come from[46]. One of the oldest is the epitaph of *Abilus*, who, together with his companions, was recruited at the beginning of the first century[47]. All of them came from the northwest quadrant of the peninsula, although we can only locate with certainty the place of origin of *Bovegius*, the city of *Lancia*, belonging to the Asturian territory, since the communities of *Abilus* (*Lucocadia*) and *Pentius* (*Aligantia*) have not been located. It is probable, however, that they also belonged to the Astur area (see the comments in point 3, section D), since the onomastics of these auxiliaries (*Abilus*, *Bovegius* and *Pentius*) and their fathers (*Turancus*, *Veminus* and *Doviderus*) refer to the northwest of the Peninsula[48]. Their incorporation into a unit created outside *Hispania* and stationed in a place so far from their homeland could be explained by the lack of local recruits and would imply that the *ala Pannoniorum* was open to foreign soldiers from its beginnings[49].

4.2.2 *Pannonia Inferior*

[44] PITILLAS SALAÑER (2006, 26 and 33, table 2, nos. 3, 5 and 10; 2008, 153, no. 1) dates this inscription generically to the first half of the first century AD, while P. HOLDER (1980, 156) places it specifically at the beginning of the reign of Tiberius, a chronology with which B. LÖRINCZ (2001, 203, no. 151) agrees. In contrast, N. SANTOS YANGUAS (2016, 14) takes it to the middle decades of this century, although, later (p. 38), he also places it in the Augustan-Tiberian period.

[45] HOLDER 1980, 112; MEYER 2012, 110. On the *ala Pannoniorum*, see CICHORIUS, *Ala*, in *RE*, I_1 , col. 1255; SPAUL 1995, 63-73; FERJANČIĆ 2015, 37-44

[46] On them, see the comments by CICHORIUS, *Ala*, in *RE*, I_1, col. 1255.

[47] HOLDER 1980, 283, no. 622, places the recruitment of these Hispanics in the reign of *Augustus*, while LE ROUX 1982, 336 places it in the time of Claudius.

[48] LE ROUX 1982, 189, no. 69; MEYER 2012, 109; SANTOS YANGUAS 2016, 11 and 38; PERALTA LABRADOR 2018, 126. The presence of the name *Abilus*/*Apilus* and its variants is mainly concentrated in the area of the Duero valley and south of Astorga, and there are also some cases in the course of the Tagus (UNTERMAN 1965, 41, map 1; *OPEL* I, 16); *Bovecius*/*Bovegius* is frequent among the Cantabrians (*OPEL* I, 127); while *Pentius* and other names with the same root are documented mainly in the territory of the Cantabrians and, to a lesser extent, of the Vetons (UNTERMAN 1965, 147, map 61; *OPEL* III, 132). The same happens with the onomastics of the fathers of these auxiliaries, since *Turancus* is documented in *Nova Augusta* (Lara de los Infantes, Burgos) with the forms *Turainus* (*CIL* II, 2859) and *Turancicus* (*CIL* II, 2866), while *Doviderus*/*Doviterus* is attested in the Duero area and, in a much more intense form, in the Cantabrian area (UNTERMAN 1965, 106, map 38; *OPEL* II, 108), where the presence among the Vadinians of a *princeps Cantabrorum* called *Dovidero* stands out (MANGAS MANJARRÉS and MARTINO GARCÍA 1997, 321-339).

[49] MEYER 2012, 110-111.

In this province we have four inscriptions referring to five soldiers of Hispanic origin. Among the legionary units we find *L. Aurelius Sequens* (no. 1), whose epitaph, dated to the beginning of the 2nd century AD, comes from *Campona*. This camp was set up as an auxiliary troop settlement forming part of the defensive line along the Danube. It was located a short distance from the main barracks at *Aquincum* (Budapest), the headquarters of the *legio II Adiutrix*, the unit in which *Sequens* served[50]. This *Caesaraugustanus* attained the status of *veteranus* and after receiving the *honesta missio* decided to settle in the same region where he served. The loss of the final part of his inscription prevents us from knowing other relevant data such as his age when he died or his years of service. Despite these limitations, *Sequens*' membership of the *legio II Adiutrix* provides us with a fairly clear clue as to his date of recruitment. Since this unit was settled in *Aquincum* after the conquest of Dacia, *Sequens*' funerary inscription cannot be earlier than 106 AD[51]. If we add to this his status as a *veteranus*, which would imply a period of service of at least 20 years, we can assume that this *Caesaraugustanus* would probably have been recruited during the Flavian dynasty[52].

Also in the vicinity of *Aquincum* a military diploma was found which mentions *Iustus* (no. 26), of Galician origin, who served as *eques* in the *cohors II Asturum et Callaecorum*. This unit was recruited in the 1st century AD from among the Asturians and Galicians, and was sent shortly afterwards to *Pannonia*, where we know from a military diploma (*CIL* XVI, 26) that it was already established in 80 AD. There, this unit carried out all its service being attached to the province of *Pannonia Inferior* after its creation in 106 AD[53]. Despite the fragmentary state of the inscription, the mention of the consuls allows us to date this diploma accurately to 145 AD, when *Iustus*[54] would have been discharged.

Not far from *Aquincum*, in the camp of *Intercissa* (near Dunaújváros, Hungary), *T. Claudius Pintamus*, *eques* of *ala II Asturum* (no. 21), served as *sesquiplicarius*. His *origo*, which is partially preserved, has been restored as *natione [Zoel]a*, one of the peoples belonging to the *Astures Augustani* (Plin. *nat*. III, 28). He died at the age of 53, probably at the end of the 1st century AD, during the early stages of the Flavian dynasty, which would allow us to place his recruitment in the time of Tiberius or Claudius[55]. We cannot be more precise because the loss of the end of the text has prevented us from knowing the years of *Pintamus*' service. Despite this, both P. Holder and B. Lörincz considered that this auxiliary would have completed the statutory twenty-five years and received citizenship in the time of Claudius or Nero[56]. This fact is

[50] On the history of this unit, RODRÍGUEZ GONZÁLEZ 2001, 73-84.

[51] RODRÍGUEZ GONZÁLEZ 2001, 76.

[52] ORTIZ CÓRDOBA 2019a, 82; 2019b, 108-109.

[53] On this unit, CICHORIUS, *Cohors*, in *RE*, IV_1, col. 248; ROLDÁN HERVÁS 1974, 94-96.

[54] SANTOS YANGUAS 1988, 240.

[55] HOLDER 1980, 266, no. 134; PITILLAS SALAÑER 2006, 27; MEYER 2012, 97.

[56] HOLDER 1980, 266, no. 134; LÖRINCZ 1992, 119. Along these lines, PITILLAS SALAÑER 2006, 27; SANTOS YANGUAS 2006, 90 and 2016, 22; MEYER 2012, 97; HERNÁNDEZ GUERRA, 2017, 385.

reflected in his onomastic structure with the adoption of the *praenomen* Tiberius and the *nomen* Claudius, which would have displaced his old indigenous name, *Pintamus*, which came to act as *cognomen*[57]. Little is known about this soldier's last years. His inscription preserves no allusion to his family, companions or friends, which makes it impossible to determine whether *Pintamus* settled in *Pannonia* after his service or whether he continued his career after becoming a citizen. The fact that his epitaph does not identify him as a veteran may point to the latter, indicating that *Pintamus* was still active at the time of his death[58].

The fourth and last documented inscription in this province comes from *Teotoburgium* (Dalj, Croatia) and is the epitaph of *T. Claudius Valerius* (no. 22), *decurio* of the *ala II Aravacorum*, who died in the second half of the 1st century AD at the age of 50[59]. He served for 30 years in this unit, which would place his recruitment between the reigns of Tiberius and Caligula[60]. The inscription was erected by the heirs of the deceased in fulfilment of his testamentary mandate. This work was carried out by his daughter, *Claudia Hispanilla*, and his *frater*, *Flaccus* (no. 23), who also attained the rank of *decurio*, probably in the same unit, and from whom we can also infer his Hispanic origin[61]. These elements directly allude to the important social content of this inscription, which reflects the importance of family relationships in the life of the soldiers. In this case, these relationships are expressed in two ways: on the one hand, the joint service of *T. Claudius Valerius* and his brother *Flaccus* in the same unit; on the other hand, *Valerius*' formation of a family, perhaps after his retirement, since his epitaph records three decades of service. In this context, it is possible that he may have joined a freedwoman of his, *Claudia Ianuaria*[62], who also appears in the inscription, with whom he had his daughter and heiress, *Claudia Hispanilla*, whose onomastic would allude to the Hispanic origin of the family[63].

4.3 *Dacia*

[57] Although the restitution of the *cognomen* of this soldier has been done as *Pintamus*, SANTOS YANGUAS (2006, 90 and 2016, 23-24) considers more correct the options *Pintaius* or *Pintovius*, terms that are more typical of the Asturian area, since *Pintamus* refers to the area of *Bracara Augusta*. Along the same lines, PITILLAS SALAÑER 2006, 29, considers *Pintovius* to be the most acceptable option.

[58] MEYER 2012, 97-98; SANTOS YANGUAS 2016, 24 and note 45; HERNÁNDEZ GUERRA, 2017, 385.

[59] On the chronology of the piece, HOLDER 1980, 279, no. 531 and, more recently, MIGOTTI 2016, 174, with bibliography.

[60] HOLDER 1980, 279, no. 531.

[61] The term *frater* can sometimes have a generic and loose meaning, reflecting the existence of a relationship based on comradeship in arms or a shared geographical or tribal background. However, in the context of this funerary inscription, where *Flaccus* appears as heir together with the daughter of the deceased, the term *frater* acquires a closer and more affectionate connotation that allows us to assume the existence of a family bond with the honoree (*Cf.* MEYER 2012, 269-270).

[62] GALLEGO FRANCO 1998b, 90.

[63] SPEIDEL 1985, 348. On *Hispanilla* as a derivative of the ethnic *Hispanus/a*, see KAJANTO 1982, 199 and on the presence of the *cognomen Hispanus* in the Danube area, GALLEGO FRANCO 1998b, 87-93.

In this province, we have two inscriptions from *Apulum* that refer to veterans of the *legio XIIII Gemina Martia Victrix* (Figure 5). This unit is known for its involvement in the failed rebellion of *L. Antonius Saturninus*, governor of *Germania Superior* (89 AD), and for its subsequent intervention in the Dacian wars of Trajan (101-102 and 105-106 AD), at the end of which it was transferred to *Carnuntum*, where this *legio* was cantoned[64]. Prior to this transfer, it is possible that its most senior members had been discharged, a circumstance that would explain the discovery in *Apulum*, now Alba Iulia (Romania), of the two inscriptions included in this section.

The first of these is that of the *Anticariensis C. Sentius Flaccus* (no. 10), who died in the middle of the 2nd century AD at the age of 75. He was honoured by his son, who was commissioned to erect a marble funerary inscription recording *Flaccus*' service in the *legio XIIII Gemina*. It is possible that this Hispanic may have participated in both the rebellion of *Saturninus* and the conquest of Dacia, as his recruitment dates back to the Flavian period[65]. After completing his years of service, as his *veteranus* status makes explicit, he was installed as a colonist in Dacia by Emperor Trajan, becoming one of the first *decuriones* of the recently founded *Colonia Ulpia Trajana Augusta Dacica Sarmizegetusa*. This circumstance allows us to consider him as belonging to the first generation of Roman magistrates in Dacia, all of them recruited from among the veterans of the war of conquest[66]. His return to civilian life would have been accompanied by the celebration of a marriage and the formation of a family, since it was his son and heir, *C. Sentius Flaccinus*, who was in charge of consecrating the funerary inscription. The inscription also highlights the fact that *C. Sentius Flaccus* belonged to the non-existent *Sulpicia* tribe, which forms what G. Forni called a pseudo-tribe[67], constructed in this case from one of the possible honorific appellatives held by *Anticaria*, which could reflect the municipal promotion of this community in the time of Galba[68]. It is possible that *Flaccus* may have owned a *fundus* in the vicinity of *Apulum*, a circumstance that would explain why his inscription was found in this area and not in *Sarmizegetusa* itself[69].

The career of *C. Sentius Flaccus* has important similarities with that of the *Cluniensis L. Iulius Leuganus* (no. 6), another former member of the *legio XIIII Gemina* who also died in *Apulum*. We know his life journey through the epigraphic text engraved at the beginning of the 2nd century AD on an altar consecrated to *Victoria Augusta*. It is possible that *Leuganus*, like *Flaccus*, was also involved in the conquest of Dacia, since his recruitment may have taken

[64] RODRÍGUEZ GONZÁLEZ 2001, 353-355.

[65] LE ROUX 1982, 220 and 324.

[66] LE ROUX 1982, 220; CIONGRADI 2007, 159. On Trajan's military colonisation of Dacia, BERMEJO MELÉNDEZ, ROBLES ESPARCIA and CAMPOS CARRASCO 2013, 104-108.

[67] FORNI 1985, 3-12

[68] LE ROUX 1982, 220; HERNÁNDEZ GUERRA 2017, 392. On this question, GALSTERER 1971, 35-36; WIEGELS 1985, 13-14; DEL CASTILLO ÁLVAREZ 1997, 375-386

[69] CIONGRADI 2004, 270.

place in the time of Nero[70] or at the beginning of the Flavian dynasty[71]. After his retirement he settled as a colonist in *Apulum*[72], where he probably married, since his son, *C. Iulius Paternus*, is listed as a dedicator on this *ara*.

4.4 *Moesia*

In the territory of *Moesia* we have documented a total of eight references, two of them in *Moesia Superior* and the remaining six in *Moesia Inferior*.

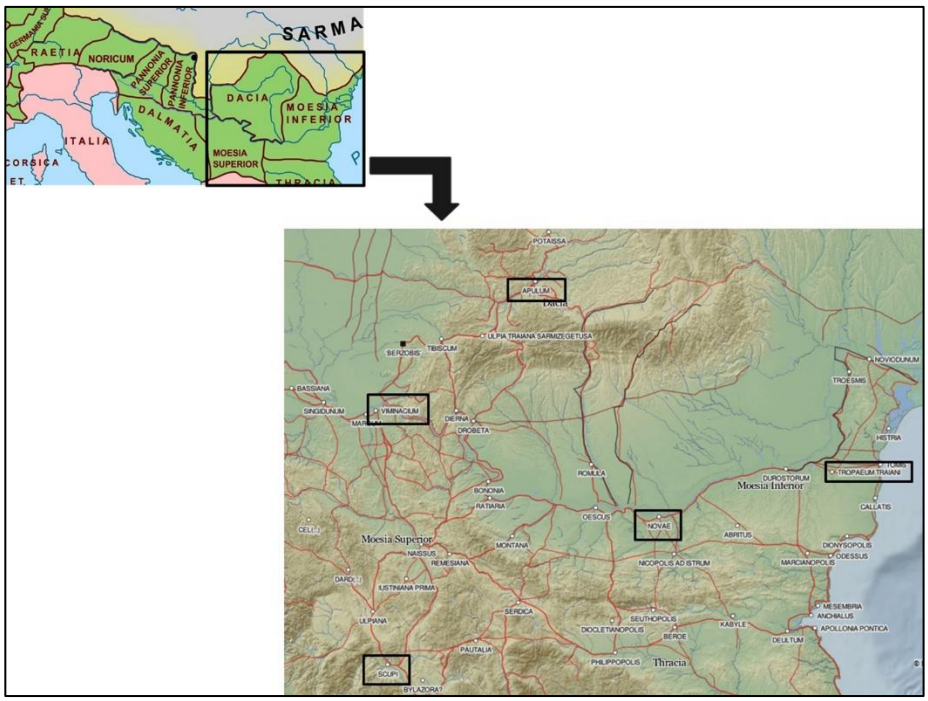

Figure 5. Distribution of inscriptions documented in *Dacia*, *Moesia Superior* and *Moesia Inferior* (own elaboration from Wikimedia Commons and Digital Atlas of the Roman Empire).

4.4.1 *Moesia Superior*

The oldest inscription in this province is that of *L. Valerius Galenus* (no. 11), a native of *Lucus Augusti*, who died at the age of 55 in the city of *Sopiste* at the end of the 1st century AD[73]. He is identified as a *veteranus* of the *legio IIII Macedonica*, a unit in which he served for 28 years.

[70] PEREA YÉBENES 2001, 217.

[71] LE ROUX 1982, 219, no. 167 and 325; HALEY 1992, 160, note 7.

[72] LE ROUX 1982, 219, no. 167.

[73] As P. LE ROUX (1982, 188, no. 67) noted at the time and as later authors have argued (SANTOS YANGUAS 1988, 228; HERNÁNDEZ GUERRA 2017, 395), its link with Hispanic city of *Lucus* is possible because of its belonging to the tribe *Galeria*, since the inhabitants of the *Lucus* in narbonensis were censused in the tribe *Voltinia*. On the tribe of the *cives* of both cities, KUBISCHETK 1889 (reed. 1972), 197 and 209; WIEGELS 1985, 123.

His recruitment would have taken place in the time of Claudius, under whose rule the unit left *Hispania* to settle on the Germanic frontier[74]. It was there that *L. Valerius Galenus* would have spent part of his service. Later, during the civil war of 69 AD, it is possible that this Hispanic legionary went to Italy with the bulk of his unit to support the imperial candidacy of Vitellius, governor of *Germania Inferior*, who was defeated at the battle of *Cremona* in October of the same year, 69 AD. After Vespasian came to power, the *IIII Macedonica* was disbanded and its members were either assigned to other units or discharged[75]. This may have been the case of *L. Valerius Galenus*, who settled in the city of Scupi at the beginning of Vespasian's reign and died a few years later[76].

Somewhat later is the epitaph of *Caesaraugustanus L. Caesius Flaccus* (no. 4), who died in *Viminacium* during the 2nd century AD. The lower part of the inscription has been lost, which prevents us from determining his age at death, of which only the numeral *X[---]* is preserved. *Flaccus* served as a centurion in the *legio IIII Flavia Felix*, so his inscription must be dated after 86 AD, when this unit was cantoned in *Moesia Superior*[77]. For P. Le Roux, the recruitment of this legionary should be around 100 AD, a date that would be in line with the 2nd century AD chronology proposed for his inscription[78]. The disappearance of the last lines of the text has also prevented us from knowing the years of service. Nevertheless, we can assume that *Flaccus* died while in active service, since the term *veteranus* does not appear on his epitaph. Finally, it is worth noting the peculiar way in which the *origo* is indicated, since the expression *Caesara Aug.* in the third line has not been recorded so far in any of the inscriptions of Caesaraugustan emigrants[79]. We can therefore assume that this is an error on the part of the craftsman who engraved the text or of the dedicator of the epigraph. In any case, the fact that *L. Caesius Flaccus* belongs to the tribe *Aniensis* allows us to link him without any doubt to this Hispanic colony[80].

4.4.2 *Moesia Inferior*

Five of the six references in this province come from *Tropaeum Traiani* (present-day Adamklissi, Romania), the city where Emperor Trajan erected the Trophy commemorating his victory over the Dacians in 109 AD. This huge monument acted as a kind of cenotaph commemorating the memory of the soldiers who died during the Dacian wars, since the names of some 3.000 legionaries and auxiliaries, *fortissimi viri qui pro republica morte occubuerunt*, were inscribed on the walls of an altar built next to it[81]. Among these names are

[74] LE ROUX 1982, 324. On the transfer of the legion to *Germania*, RODRÍGUEZ GONZÁLEZ 2001, 170.

[75] RODRÍGUEZ GONZÁLEZ 2001, 173.

[76] LE ROUX 1982, 188, nº 67; SANTOS YANGUAS 1988, 228; PITILLAS SALAÑER 2003, 125.

[77] RODRÍGUEZ GONZÁLEZ 2001, 158.

[78] ROLDÁN HERVÁS 1974, 318-319, nº 727; LE ROUX 1982, 299 and 327.

[79] On the mobility of the inhabitants of *Caesar Augusta*, ORTIZ CÓRDOBA 2019b, 81-121.

[80] WIEGELS 1985, 101.

[81] PEREA YÉBENES 1991, 176; LEFEBVRE 2011, 156. There is some debate about the reconstruction of the onomastics of

several Hispanic soldiers who would have taken part in this war. Unfortunately, the list of names is very deteriorated and we know practically nothing of a legionary from *Castulo* whose name is unknown (no. 16) and of two Lusitanian *milites* whose names remain equally unknown (nos. 17, 18). We have a little more information about two other soldiers from *Hispania Citerior*, of whom we preserve their origin and name. These are the *Cluniensis* [---]*vius Reburrus* (no. 15) and *C. Vitellius Seranus* (no. 14), whose *origo*, traditionally given as *[Ca]es(area)*, would refer to the Hispanic colony of *Caesar Augusta*[82]. However, it should be noted that this restitution is strange among the inhabitants of the city, so that other towns, such as *Caesarea* or *Caesarea Maritima*, should not be ruled out as possible places of origin for *C. Vitellius Seranus*.

The sixth and last testimony documented in *Moesia Inferior* comes from *Novae* and forms the epitaph of the Clunian *C. Aurelius Vegetus* (no. 3), who died at the end of the 1st century AD[83]. The piece comes from the camp of the *legio I Italica* and covers the military career of this soldier, which has already been studied in several previous papers[84]. It highlights his service in two different units. The first mentioned in the text is the *cohors V Asturum*, an auxiliary corps, from which he was later transferred to the *legio I Italica*, with which he served in *Moesia* in the Flavian period. Consequently, the 23 years of service indicated in this inscription must be understood as the sum of those in both the *cohors V Asturum* and the *legio I Italica*[85].

It is difficult to determine the specific circumstances under which *C. Aurelius Vegetus* began his military service. It is possible that his incorporation into the *cohors V Asturum* was related to the additional recruitments carried out by Galba in *Hispania* to support his imperial candidacy (Suet., *Galba*, 10, 2)[86]. In fact, Galba himself took up residence in *Clunia* before leaving for Italy. Perhaps all these events had a bearing on *Vegetus*' joining the ranks, although it could also be a simple coincidence, as J. Kolendo, the first editor of the inscription, has pointed out. In his opinion, it cannot be ruled out that *C. Aurelius Vegetus* had begun his military service before Galba took the imperial throne[87]. In any case, he stresses, any attempt to reconstruct *Vegetus*' career is conditioned by the extremely complex situation experienced

the emperor who appears at the beginning of the inscription, who could be either Domitian (reading in *HD*017350) or Trajan (reading in *EDCS*-67400497, with the corresponding epigraphic bibliography), an option currently preferred by most autors and which, given the context of the monument, seems the most likely.

[82] ROLDÁN HERVÁS 1974, 434, no. 432 and 340-341, no. 432; MAGALLÓN BOTAYA and NAVARRO CABALLERO 1991-1992, 417. Along the same lines, ORTIZ CÓRDOBA 2019a, 83; 2019b, 109.

[83] Several Clunian soldiers served in the Roman army between the end of the Julio-Claudian dynasty and the beginning of the Flavian period, as reported by S. PEREA YÉBENES (2001, 213-219).

[84] KOLENDO 2001, 525-531; PEREA YÉBENES 2002, 93-99. Also, ORTIZ CÓRDOBA 2019a, 83.

[85] PEREA YÉBENES 2002, 98.

[86] On this subject, see the comments of LE ROUX 1982, 131-135. The best known is that of the *legio VII Galbiana*, the future *legio VII Gemina* (see the study by PALAO VICENTE 2006), although we also know from Tacitus (*Hist*. IV, 33) that several cohorts of Vasconi were recruited. To these units could be added a wing *Sulpicia c(ivium) R(omanorum)* which would take its name from the imperial gentilion (on this unit, see the comments of SAN VICENTE 2007, 103-110).

[87] KOLENDO 2001, 529.

by the empire during the "year of the four emperors"[88]. What does seem clear is that *Vegetus*' service in this auxiliary unit would have involved his transfer to the Rhine frontier, probably to the camp at *Bonna*, where the *cohors V Asturum* had its headquarters[89].

Another important issue concerns the transfer of *Vegetus* to the *legio I Italica*. The transfer from an auxiliary unit to a legion, where the soldiers possessed Roman citizenship, is a rare event that must take into account the extraordinary circumstances brought about by the civil war of 69 AD[90]. The *cohors V Asturum* was probably destroyed during the revolt of *Iulius Civilis* (69-70 AD), since after that date we have no further evidence of its existence[91]. We can suppose that perhaps the surviving members were transferred to other units, as was the case with *C. Aurelius Vegetus*, who was sent to the *legio I Italica*. This unit was recruited by Emperor Nero in 67 AD and during the civil war it supported the imperial candidacy of Vitellius, finally being defeated at the battle of *Cremona* by Vespasian's forces. After his victory, the new emperor moved this *legio* to *Moesia* in 70 AD, establishing its base in the camp of *Novae*[92].

Vegetus'career and his change of unit are also important in determining his personal legal status. If we accept that *Vegetus* joined the Roman army in 68 AD, when Galba was proclaimed emperor, his death at the age of 40, after 23 years of service, would place us around 91 AD. However, if we accept the hypothesis that he had begun his service before 68 AD, the date on his funerary inscription would also be earlier, making 91 AD *a terminus ante quem*[93]. According to the above, *Vegetus*' incorporation into the *cohors V Asturum* would probably be prior to the the transformation of *Clunia* into a Roman colony, so that his subsequent transfer to the *legio I Italica* could find a "legal support" in the statutory change of his city, at which time, perhaps, his family would have received Roman citizenship[94].

5. Conclusions

The epigraphic catalogue that supports this contribution refers to 27 Hispanic military men from 16 different civic communities. Most of these cities have a privileged legal status, i.e. they are colonies or municipalities, although we also find references to several *populi* and

[88] KOLENDO 2001, 529.

[89] On the history of this unit, ROLDÁN HERVÁS 1974, 74-75. From this camp comes the inscription of another soldier of Hispanic origin who also served in this cohort during the 1st century AD, the *signifer Pintaius, Astur Transmontanus* (*CIL* XIII, 8098).

[90] KOLENDO 2001, 530; PEREA YÉBENES 2002, 98.

[91] ROLDÁN HERVÁS 1974, 74; KOLENDO 2001, 530.

[92] On the history of the *legio I Italica*, RODRÍGUEZ GONZÁLEZ 2001, 51-60.

[93] KOLENDO 2001, 530. Along the same lines, S. PEREA YÉBENES (2002, 98), who places the inscription between AD 70 and 91-92.

[94] PEREA YÉBENES 2002, 98-99. For J. KOLENDO (2001, 528), *Vegetus*' membership of the *Galeria* tribe would testify to his obtaining Roman citizenship while he was still in *Hispania*, even going so far as to suggest that the mention of his father's *praenomen* would indicate that he was a second-generation citizen. However, this interpretation would not make much sense, since the *cohors V Asturum* was an auxiliary unit where only the commanders had Roman citizenship, and *Vegetus* was only a mere *miles*.

indications of origin that allude to broad geographical entities, such as the province of *Lusitania* or *Hispania* itself. At the provincial level, the majority of the soldiers come from *Citerior* (16 cases), which stands out above *Lusitania* (4 cases) and *Baetica* (3 cases). Two uncertain cases must be added, for which the formula *domo Hispanus* prevents greater precision (nos. 19, 28).

The centres of destination of these soldiers are made up of the six provinces that made up the Danube border. Among them, the two Pannonian provinces stand out, where 16 of the 27 cases studied are concentrated, as detailed in Figure 3.

From a chronological point of view, the soldiers studied in this paper served in the Roman army mainly during the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, with only one reference (no. 25) that could date back to the beginning of the third century (Figure 6).

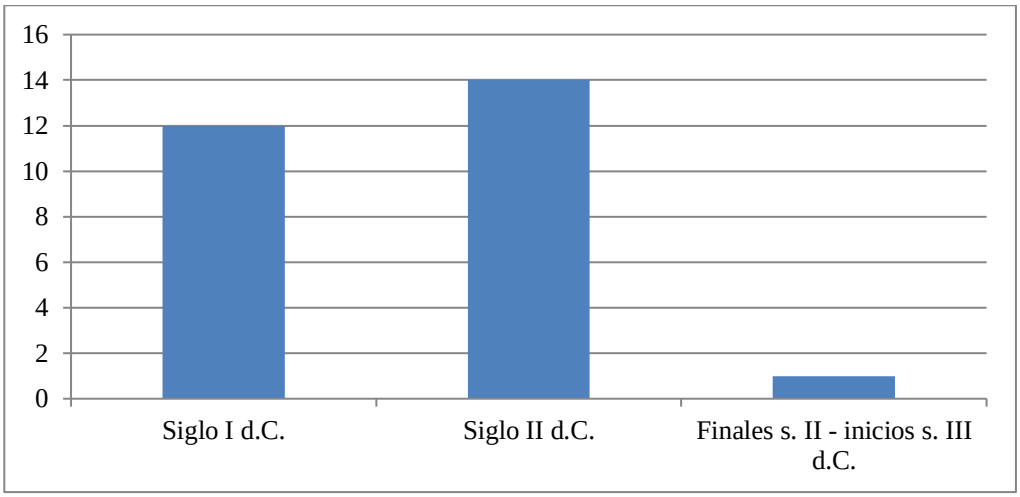

Figure 6. Chronological distribution of the military men studied (own elaboration).

The inscriptions collected in this work are mostly funerary and present a simple epigraphic typology. They include the name of the individual, the tribe if any, his city of origin, the rank and unit in which he served, the age at death and the years of service, which are usually counted in *stipendia* or *aera*. If any, the dedicators, heirs and relatives are also named. Only the inscriptions of *L. Iulius Leuganus* (no. 6), that is an altar dedicated to the *Victoria Augusta*; the military diploma of *Iustus* (no. 26); and the inscription *CIL* III, 14214, engraved on the Trophy celebrating the victory over the Dacians, in which five soldiers of Peninsular origin are mentioned (nos. 14-18), deviate from this pattern.

The Hispanic soldiers documented in this work served in eight legionary units and seven auxiliary corps, five *alae* and two *cohortes* (table 1). Among the latter we have several units initially recruited on Hispanic soil, such as *ala II Aravacorum*, *ala II Asturum*, *cohors II Asturum et Callaecorum* and *cohors V Asturum*. Likewise, two of the legions, the *IIII Macedonica* and the *X*

Gemina, had a close relationship with *Hispania*, as they formed part of the military garrison created by Augustus after the Cantabrian War. Many of its members took part in the foundation of some of the most important Hispanic colonies of this period, such as *Augusta Emerita*, *Caesar Augusta* and *Augusta Gemella Tucci*. In fact, several of the soldiers studied came from these cities: *L. Aurelius Sequens* (no. 1), *L. Caesius Flaccus* (no. 4) and *C. Vitellius Seranus* (no. 14) from *Caesar Augusta*; *T. Iulius Vegetus* from *Augusta Emerita* (no. 7) and *L. Marcius Marcianus* (no. 9) from *Tucci*. All the legionaries documented served as infantrymen, the only exception being the *Calagurritanus C. Valerius Proculus* (no. 12), who served as *eques legionis* in *legio XI* at the beginning of the 2nd century AD.

As far as the ranks recorded are concerned, there is no great diversity. Seven of the documented soldiers indicate their status as *veterani*, five among the legionaries (Nos. 1, 2, 6, 10 and 11) and two among the auxiliaries (Nos. 24 and 25), which means that they had completed their period of service and received the corresponding compensation in the form of land or a sum of money. The rest of the soldiers are presumed to have died while on active service. Of these, only eight attained a rank higher than that of simple *milites*. Among the legions we know of the centurion *L. Caesius Flaccus* (no. 4), who served in *IIII Flavia*, and the *beneficiarius C. Iulius Candidianus* (no. 5), who reached this position in *I Adiutrix*. However, the most outstanding case is that of *T. Aurelius Silvanus* (no. 2), who served as *magister navaliorum* in the *legio XIIII Gemina*, probably acting as a naval instructor. His work would have been related to the fleets of ships that protected the banks of the river Danube, this being the only one of the documented testimonies that alludes to the navy. Among the auxiliary units there are four *decuriones*, *T. Claudius Valerius* (no. 22), *Flaccus* (no. 23), *C. Iulius Lupercus* (no. 24) and [-] *Iulius Pintamus* (no. 25), and a *sesquiplicarius*, a position equivalent to that of a non-commissioned officer, held by *T. Claudius Pintamus* (no. 21) in the *ala II Asturum*.

Special mention should be made of the case of *C. Aurelius Vegetus* (no. 3), who served in two different units, one of an auxiliary nature, the *cohors V Asturum*, and the other legionary, the *legio I Italica*. This is a rather peculiar fact that has been linked to the circumstances arising from the civil war of 69 AD.

The information gathered also alludes to the social and family relationships established by the Hispanic soldiers. From Augustan times, Roman legionaries were forbidden to marry during military service (D.C. *Hist. Rom.* LX, 24, 3), a situation that would have continued until Septimius Severus allowed soldiers to *live with their wives* (Hdn. *Hist. Imp. Rom.* III, 8, 4-5). For this reason, the most frequent references among soldiers who died in active service are to their comrades-in-arms, who were in charge of the funerary epitaphs. Sometimes these appear with their own names, as we see in the epitaph of *Abilus* (no. 19), who was honoured by his comrades and countrymen *Bovegius* (no. 20) and *Pentius* (no. 27), while in other cases we find terms such as *frater* or *amici* which, in the context of an active death, would allude to a relationship of comradeship, as can be seen in the epitaphs of *L. Marcius Marcianus* (no. 9) and

C. Valerius Silvinus (no. 13). We can also find simply the terms *heres* or *heredes* without indicating the name or the link between them and the deceased, as in the inscriptions of *L. Livius Rusticus* (no. 8), *L. Valerius Galenus* (no. 11) and *C. Valerius Proculus* (no. 12). It is likely, however, that the relationship between heir and deceased was very close, since only persons of great trust could be entrusted with the execution of a testamentary duty.

The aforementioned prohibition of marriage did not prevent soldiers from establishing sentimental ties or living with women during their period of service, as can be seen in the military epigraphy itself, where terms such as *uxor*, *coniux* or *maritus* are frequent[95]. Within the sample collected, this could be the case of *T. Claudius Valerius* (no. 22), *sesquiplicarius* in the *ala II Asturum*, whose epitaph mentions his wife, who was also his freedwoman, his daughter and his brother, who served in the same unit. His inscription does not indicate veteran status, which suggests that he died in active service. However, the 30 years of service exhibited by *Valerius* also raises the possibility that this auxiliary was retired at the time of his death.

Mention of the family is more frequent among the *veterani*, who after their withdrawal recovered the *ius connubii*. Marital unions are clearly mentioned in the inscriptions of [-] *Iulius Pintamus* (no. 25) and *T. Aurelius Silvanus* (no. 2). The former settled in *Augusta Vindelicorum* with his wife *Popeia*, while the latter settled in *Carnuntum*, where he married *Aelia Iustina*, a woman probably of Pannonian origin, with whom he had three children.

In other cases the existence of marital unions must be inferred indirectly, since the epigraphic text does not mention the wife. This would be the case of the *veterani* of the *legio XIIII Gemina L. Iulius Leuganus* (no. 6) and *C. Sentius Flaccus* (no. 10), who settled as colonists in Dacia after the conquest of this province. Both appear together with their sons, who act as dedicators of the inscriptions. This suggests that, after their retirement, both soldiers would have formed some kind of marital or family union in their new place of residence.

On other occasions the documented family relationship may be different, as can be seen in the inscription that the *beneficiarius C. Iulius Candidianus* (no. 5) erected in *Brigetio* to honour the memory of his *avunculus pientissimus C. Iulius Lupercus* (no. 24), a native of *Salaria*.

[95] These expressions, which derive directly from Roman law, would have no legal validity, since the unions to which they referred were considered unjust. In this respect, GALLEGO FRANCO and LÓPEZ CASADO, 2022, 9.

Legionary veterans						
	Coniux/Uxor	*Frater*	*Filius/a*	*Libertus/a*	*Servus*	*Avunculus*
T. Aurelius Silvanus	X		X			
L. Iulius Leuganus	(X)		X			
C. Sentius Flaccus	(X)		X			
Veterans of auxiliary units						
T. Claudius Valerius	X	X	X			
C. Iulius Lupercus						X
[-] *Iulius Pintamus*	X					

Table 2. Family relationships documented in the inscriptions studied. In brackets indicate possible relationships that are not expressly mentioned in the text (own elaboration).

Finally, it should be noted that some military personnel began a public career after their retirement, joining the ruling elites of their new communities. The performance of civic magistracies was a sign of prestige which, however, implied the loss of some of the privileges received at the time of discharge, so many veterans chose not to hold public office. In the sample we have collected, only two of the military soldiers included indicate their incorporation into local politics: [-] *Iulius Pintamus* (no. 25) and *C. Sentius Flaccus* (no. 10). The former was included among the *decuriones* of the *municipium* of *Augusta Vindelicorum*, capital of *Raetia*; the latter, who was installed as a colonist in *Dacia*, became one of the first *decuriones* of the *Colonia Ulpia Traiana Augusta Dacica Sarmizegetusa*, founded by Trajan after the conquest of this province.

6. Epigraphic corpus

a) Legionaries

1. *L. Aurelius Sequens* (*Caesar Augusta*; *Campona*, *Pannonia Inferior*; early 2nd century AD; *TITAQ*, 1009).

L(ucius) Aureli/us An(i)ensi{s} / Sequens / Caesaraug/ustae vet(eranus) / leg(ionis) II Ad(iutricis) do/nis do[nato] / [

2. *T. Aurelius Silvanus* (*Tarraco*; *Carnuntum*, *Pannonia Superior*; second half of the 2nd century AD; *CIL* II^2/14, E4).

T(itus) Aur(elius) Silvanus vet(eranus) ex magistr(o) / navalior(um) leg(ionis) XIIII G(eminae) nation(e) / Hispan(us) Tarraconensis / ann(orum) LXXXI vivus sibi et / Aeliae Iustinae coniug(i) / obsequentissimae et / Aurelis Maximinae an(norum) / VII Marco ann(orum) V et Floro / ann(orum) V fili(i)s pientissimis / [-]co as/[-

3. *C. Aurelius Vegetus* (*Clunia*; *Novae*, *Moesia Inferior*; end of the 1st century AD; *AE* 1999, 1333).

C(aius) Aurelius / [3] f(ilius) G[a]leria / Vegetus Clu(nia) / mil(es) leg(ionis) I I(talicae) F() R() / stip(endiorum) XXIII ann(orum) XL / milit(avit) in coh(orte) / V Ast(urum) ind(e) / translat(us) / in

leg(ionem) I It(alicam) / h(ic) s(itus) e(st) / ex t[estamento(?)].

4. *L. Caesius Flaccus* (*Caesar Augusta*; *Viminacium*, *Moesia Superior*; 2nd century AD.; *CIL* III, 14511).

L(ucius) Caesius L(uci) f(ilius) / Anie(nsi) Flaccus / Caesar(e)a Aug(usta) / |(centurio) leg(ionis) IIII F(laviae) F(elicis) vix(it) / [a]nn(os) X[

5. *C. Iulius Candidianus* (*Salaria*; *Brigetio*, *Pannonia Superior*; second half of the 2nd century AD; *CIL* III, 4321).

D(is) M(anibus) / C(aio) Iul(io) C(ai) [fi]l(io) / Luperco domo / Sala(ria) vet(eranus) ex dec(urione) / alae III Thra(cum) vixit / an(nos) L C(aius) Iul(ius) Can/didianus b(eneficiarius) leg(ati) / leg(ionis) I Adi(utricis) [P(iae)] F(idelis) / nepos qui / et heres / avunculo / pientissimo / f(aciendum) c(uravit).

6. *L. Iulius Leuganus* (*Clunia*; Alba Iulia/*Apulum*, *Dacia*; early 2nd century AD; *CIL* III, 1158).

Victorae / Aug(ustae) / L(ucius) Iul(ius) L(uci) (!) Galer(ia) / Leuganus / Clunia vet(eranus) leg(ionis) / XIIII G(eminae) M(artiae) V(ictricis) aedis / custos c(ivium) R(omanorum) leg(ionis) XIII [G(eminae)] / nomine suo et / C(ai) Iul(i) Paterni fili(i) / sui d(onum) d(edit).

7. *T. Iulius Vegetus* (*¿Emerita?*; *Carnuntum*, *Pannonia Superior*; 63-68 AD; *AE* 1929, 187).

T(itus) Iulius T(iti) (!) / Pa(piria) Vegetu/s Augu(sta) m(iles) / [

8. *L. Livius Rusticus* (*Ulia*; *Carnuntum*, *Pannonia Superior*; 63-68 AD; *EDCS*-25600014).

L(ucius) Livius L(uci) f(ilius) G(aleria) / Rusticus Ulia / mil(es) l(egionis) X G(eminae) |(centuria) Luc{c}/[r]eti an(norum) VL ae(rorum) / [X]XVI h(ic) s(itus) e(st) h(eres) / [ex t(estamento) f(aciendum) c(uravit) s(it) t(ibi)] t(erra) l(evis).

9. *L. Marcius Marcianus* (*Tucci*; *Carnuntum*, *Pannonia Superior*; 63-68 AD; *AE* 1929, 189).

L(ucius) Marcius L(uci) (!) / Ser(gia) Marcian/us Tucc(is) mil(es) leg(ionis) X Ge(minae) / |(centuria) Iusti ann(orum) XXXV aer(orum) / XI hic s(itus) e(st) s(it) t(ibi) t(erra) l(evis) / frater ex volun/tate sua f(aciendum) c(uravit).

10. *C. Sentius Flaccus* (*Anticaria*; Alba Iulia/*Apulum*, *Dacia*; mid-second century AD; *CIL* III, 1196).

D(is) M(anibus) / C(aio) Sentio C(ai) f(ilio) Sulp(icia) / Flacco Antiq(uaria) / vet(erano) leg(ionis) XIIII G(eminae) M(artiae) V(ictricis) / dec(urioni) col(oniae) Dac(icae) Sarm(izegetusae) / vix(it) an(nos) LXXV / C(aius) Sentius Flacci[n]us filius et heres / [f(aciendum)] c(uravit).

11. *L. Valerius Galenus* (*Lucus Augusti*; *Sopiste*, *Moesia Superior*; end of the 1st century AD; *AE* 1984, 760).

L(ucius) Valeri(u)s L(uci) f(ilius) Gal(eria) / Galenus Luc(o) / veteranus / leg(ionis) IIII Mac(edonicae) / vixit an(nos) / LV militavit / an(nos) XXVIII / h(ic) s(itus) e(st) / (h)e(res) f(aciendum) c(uravit).

12. *C. Valerius Proculus* (*Calagurris*; *Carnuntum*, *Pannonia Superior*; early 2nd century AD; *CIL* III, 11239).

C(aius) Valeri/us C(ai) f(ilius) Gal(eria) / Proculus / Calagurri / eq(ues) leg(ionis) XI C(laudiae) F(idelis) / |(centuria) Vindicis / an(norum) XXX stip(endiorum) IX / h(ic) s(itus) e(st) t(estamento)

f(ieri) i(ussit) / h(eres) f(aciendum) c(uravit).

13. *C. Valerius Silvinus* (*Valentia*; *Carnuntum*, *Pannonia Superior*; 63-68 AD; *CIL* III, 4486).

C(aius) Valerius / C(ai) f(ilius) Fab(ia) Silv/inus Val(entia) mil(es) leg(ionis) / |(centuria) Rutili an(norum) LX / ae(rorum) XXXIIII / amic(i) ex t(estamento) / cur(antes) h(ic) s(itus) e(st) / c(arus) s(uis) t(ibi) t(erra).

14. *C. Vitellius Seranus* (*¿Caesar Augusta?*; *Adamklissi*, *Moesia Inferior*; 109 AD; *CIL* III, 14214).

C(aius) Vitellius Sera[nus Ca]es(area)

15. [---]*vius Reburrus* (*Clunia*; *Adamklissi*, *Moesia Inferior*; 109 AD; *CIL* III, 14214).

[---]vius Reburus Cluni(a)

16. *¿?* (*Castulo*; *Adamklissi*, *Moesia Inferior*; 109 AD; *CIL* III, 14214).

[---]en() Cas(tulone)

17. *¿?* (*Lusitanus*; *Adamklissi*, *Moesia Inferior*; 109 AD; *CIL* III, 14214).

[---] Lusit(anus)

18. *¿?* (*Lusitanus*; *Adamklissi*, *Moesia Inferior*; 109 AD; *CIL* III, 14214).

[---] Lusit(anus)

a) Auxiliaries

19. *Abilus* (*Lucocadiacus*; *Savaria*, *Pannonia Superior*; first half of the 1st century AD; *CIL* III, 4227).

Abilus Tur/anci f(ilius) dom(o) / Lucocadiacus / eques ala(e) / Pannoniorum / ann(orum) XLIII / stip(endiorum) XXIII / h(ic) s(itus) e(st) / ex tes(tamento) her(edes) / posuerunt / Bovegius Vem/ini f(ilius) Lancie(n)sis / Pentius Dovi/deri f(ilius) Aliga/ntie(n)sis.

20. *Bovegius* (*Lancia*; *¿Savaria?*, *Pannonia Superior*; first half of the 1st century AD; *CIL* III, 4227).

Abilus Tur/anci f(ilius) dom(o) / Lucocadiacus / eques ala(e) / Pannoniorum / ann(orum) XLIII / stip(endiorum) XXIII / h(ic) s(itus) e(st) / ex tes(tamento) her(edes) / posuerunt / Bovegius Vem/ini f(ilius) Lancie(n)sis / Pentius Dovi/deri f(ilius) Aliga/ntie(n)sis.

21. *T. Claudius Pintamus* (*natione Zoela*; *Intercisa*, *Pannonia Inferior*; late 1st century AD; *AE* 1992, 1458).

[Ti(berius)] Claudius / [3]onis f(ilius) Pint/[am]us(?) |(sesquiplicarius) natione / [Zoel]a eques alae / [Astur(um) I]I ann(orum) LIII stip(endiorum) / [

22. *T. Claudius Valerius* (*Domo hispano*; *Teutoburgium*, *Pannonia Inferior*; second half of the 1st century AD; *CIL* III, 3271).

Ti(berio) Cl(audio) Britti / filio / Valerio decurioni / alae II Aravacorum / domo Hispano annor(um) L / stipendiorum XXX et / Cl(audiae) Ianuariae coniugi eius / et Cl(audiae) Hispanillae filiae vivis / ex testamento Flacc{h}us dec(urio) / frater / et Hispanilla filia heredes / faciundum curaverunt.

23. *Flaccus* (*Domo hispano*; *Teutoburgium*, *Pannonia Inferior*; second half of the 1st century AD; *CIL* III, 3271).

Ti(berio) Cl(audio) Britti / filio / Valerio decurioni / alae II Aravacorum / domo Hispano annor(um)

L / stipendiorum XXX et / Cl(audiae) Ianuariae coniugi eius / et Cl(audiae) Hispanillae filiae vivis / ex testamento Flacc{h}us dec(urio) / frater / et Hispanilla filia heredes / faciundum curaverunt.

24. *C. Iulius Lupercus* (*Salaria*; *Brigetio*, *Pannonia Superior*; second half of the 2nd century AD; *CIL* III, 4321).

D(is) M(anibus) / C(aio) Iul(io) C(ai) [fi]l(io) / Luperco domo / Sala(ria) vet(eranus) ex dec(urione) / alae III Thra(cum) vixit / an(nos) L C(aius) Iul(ius) Can/didianus b(eneficiarius) leg(ati) / leg(ionis) I Adi(utricis) [P(iae)] F(idelis) / nepos qui / et heres / avunculo / pientissimo / f(aciendum) c(uravit).

25. [-] *Iulius Pintamus* (*Bracara Augusta*; *Augusta Vindelicorum*, *Raetia*; second half of the 2nd century AD or early 3rd century AD; *AE* 1972, 359).

Iul(io) C(ai) f(ilio) Quir(ina) Pintam[o] / domo ex Hisp(ania) citerio[re] / Augusta Brac(ara) vet(erano) ex dec(urione) a[l(ae)] / decurioni munic(ipii) Aeli A(u)g(usti) / Clementia Popeia uxo(r) / marito optimo et sibi / viva fecit.

26. *Iustus* (*Calaicus*; *Aquincum*, *Pannonia Inferior*; 145 AD; *CIL* XVI, 91).

[equitibus et peditibus qui militaverunt in alis ... et cohortibus ... quae appellantur ... et II Asturum et Callaecorum et ... et sunt in] Pannonia/ [inferior(e) sub Fu]ficio Co[rnuto quinis et vice/[nis item classicis] senis e[t vicenis plu]ribusv[e]/ [stip(endiis) emeri]tis d[imissis ho]nesta mis/[sione quorum no]min(a) s[ubscr(ipta) su]nt civitat(em)/ [Roman(am) qui eo]rum non haberent dedit et co/[nubium cum uxor] ib(us) quas tunc habuissent cum/ [est civitas iis da]ta aut si qui caelibes essent/ [cum iis quas post]ea duxissent dumtaxat sin/[guli singulas]/ [a(nte) d(iem) ---] Oct(obres) L(ucio) Petronio Sabino/ [C(aio) Vicrio] Rufo/ co(n)s(ulibus)/ [coh(ortis) II Astu(rum)] et Callaecor(um) cui pra(e)st/ [---]s Granianus Favent(ia)/ [e]x equite/ [---]entis f(ilio) Iusto Ca[llaico]/ [descript(um) et re]cognit(um) ex tabula aerea/ [quae fixa est] Ro[m]ae in muro post tem/[plum divi] Aug(usti) ad Minervam.

27. *Pentius* (*Aligantia*; *Savaria*, *Pannonia Superior*; first half of the 1st century AD; *CIL* III, 4227).

Abilus Tur/anci f(ilius) dom(o) / Lucocadiacus / eques ala(e) / Pannoniorum / ann(orum) XLIII / stip(endiorum) XXIII / h(ic) s(itus) e(st) / ex tes(tamento) her(edes) / posuerunt / Bovegius Vem/ini f(ilius) Lancie(n)sis / Pentius Dovi/deri f(ilius) Aliga/ntie(n)sis.

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New Data on Some Older Monetary Finds Within the Drobeta Area

Lucian MUNTEANU[1], Rodica POPOVICI[2], Adelina PICIOR[3]

Abstract. *The collection of the Institute of Archaeology in Iasi holds a lot of Roman denarii, consisting of: 1 AR Q. Antonius Balbus (pierced and "repaired"), 1 AR L. Farsuleius Mensor, 1 AR Vitellius, 1 AR Hadrianus, 1 AR Antoninus Pius, 1 AR Antoninus Pius for Diva Faustina I, 1 AR Commodus, 1 AR Commodus for Crispina, and 1 AR Septimius Severus. These coins were handed out to the Institute by Mrs. Rodica Popovici, which she received from Professor Alexandru Dima, between 1960-1962. He would have acquired the denarii back in his hometown, Drobeta-Turnu Severin, during his childhood and student years. Throughout this paper, we have attempted to prove that these coins are unlikely to represent single finds from the Drobeta site. More likely, the issues were part of a hoard of Roman denarii, also containing Republican coins, which had its main core made up of denarii from the Antonine emperors until the reign of Elagabalus or Severus Alexander. Although we have no other information about this hypothetical hoard, the discovery was made in Drobeta or, quite probably, in the vicinity, before the year 1931.*

Rezumat. *În colecția Institutului de Arheologie din Iași se află un lot de denari romani, care se compune din: 1 AR Q. Antonius Balbus (perforat și „reparat"), 1 AR L. Farsuleius Mensor, 1 AR Vitellius, 1 AR Hadrianus, 1 AR Antoninus Pius, 1 AR Antoninus Pius: Diva Faustina I, 1 AR Commodus, 1 AR Commodus: Crispina și 1 AR Septimius Severus. Monedele respective au fost donate Institutului de către doamna Rodica Popovici, care le-a primit, între anii 1960-1962, de la Profesorul Alexandru Dima. Acesta le-ar fi procurat din localitatea sa natală, Drobeta-Turnu Severin, în perioada copilăriei și a studenției. Am încercat să demonstrăm că este puțin probabil ca aceste monede să reprezinte descoperiri izolate din situl de la Drobeta. Mai degrabă, ele aparțin unui tezaur de denari romani, care conținea și emisiuni republicane, avea nucleul principal constituit din denari ai împăraților Antonini și se încheia în vremea lui Elagabalus sau Severus Alexander. Acest tezaur ipotetic, despre care nu avem niciun fel de alte informații, ar fi fost descoperit la Drobeta sau, mai probabil, în vecinătate, înainte de anul 1931.*

Keywords: Roman Dacia, Drobeta, *denarii*, Coin hoard, 3rd c. AD.

The collection of the Institute of Archaeology in Iasi records a lot of nine Roman coins, donated to the Numismatic Cabinet by Dr. Rodica Popovici on 11 June 2018. The coins originally belonged to Olga and Alexandru Dima, who, around 1960-1962, passed them on to Mrs. Rodica Popovici, at that time a young passionate of history and archaeology.

Prior to the numismatic material, it is necessary to briefly evoke the personality of Professor Alexandru Dima. He was born in Drobeta Turnu-Severin in the early years of the last

[1] Romanian Academy, Institute of Archaeology Iași; lucanas2000@yahoo.com.
[2] Independent researcher; rodica_popovici09@yahoo.com.
[3] Faculty of History, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași; picioradelina@gmail.com.

century, on October 17, 1905. Back in his hometown, he attended primary and secondary studies and graduated from "Traian" High School, in 1925. He continued his higher education at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy of the University of Bucharest (1925-1929) and then pursued specializations in Germany, focusing on aesthetics, art history, and the history of Romance and Germanic literatures. In 1938, Alexandru Dima obtained his PhD at the University of Bucharest[4]. During his career he held several important offices such as director of the Centre for Linguistics, Literary History and Folklore of the Romanian Academy in Iași and, later, in Bucharest, Dima became head of the "George Călinescu" Institute for Literary Theory and History. Eventually, in 1964 the Romanian Academy granted him as a corresponding member[5]. Professor Alexandru Dima wrote over 20 books and more than 200 articles, covering various issues related to aesthetics and cultural philosophy, the history of Romanian literature, and universal and comparative literature[6]. He passed away in Bucharest, in 1979, longing for Iași, his so-called "lost paradise"[7].

The batch of coins consists exclusively of Roman *denarii*, spanning nearly three centuries. The oldest issue is a *denarius serratus* from 83-82 BC (Cat. 1). Another Republican coin dates to 75 BC (Cat. 2). The rest of them are imperial *denarii* belonging to the following emperors: Vitellius (Cat. 3), Hadrianus (Cat. 4), Antoninus Pius (Cat. 5), Antoninus Pius for Diva Faustina I (Cat. 6), Commodus (Cat. 7), Commodus for Crispina (Cat. 8), and Septimius Severus (Cat. 9). The most recent *denarius* dates to 198-200 AD.

In general, the coins are preserved in good condition. Only the first one appears to have undergone two successive interventions: first it was perforated, and later the hole was filled with a piece of metal, which, based on visual criteria, seems to be made of a similar alloy. Such particular issues, in silver, are quite rare and are mainly found outside the Roman world. It is assumed that their "repair" was carried out to put them back on the market[8].

Unfortunately, hardly any details concerning the time and place of the discovery of the batch have been preserved. It is only believed that Professor Alexandru Dima would have acquired them in his hometown, Drobeta-Turnu Severin, during his childhood and student years. According to his biography, he graduated in 1929 and in 1931 he obtained a teaching position in Râmnicu Vâlcea and the following year in Sibiu[9]. We can only assume that he was in possession of the coins before he left Drobeta in 1931. Regarding the provenance of coins, they were reportedly found either in the city or in the surrounding area, with no precise location identified.

[4] MAFTEI 1982, 90-94; MĂNUCĂ 1979-1980; MĂNUCĂ 2016.

[5] MĂNUCĂ 2016, 86.

[6] MAFTEI 1982, 91.

[7] MĂNUCĂ 2016, 86.

[8] See, more recently, MYZGIN 2023, 75-79.

[9] MĂNUCĂ 1979-1980, 287.

Located on the banks of the Danube, Drobeta is considered the first settlement in Roman Dacia, established during the construction of the bridge by Traianus. Archaeological excavations have largely focused on the *castrum* on the north side of the bridge and its *thermae*, and more recently on the nearby military amphitheatre. The ancient town, less researched due to the overlap with the modern settlement, developed from the *vicus* of the fortification and would have covered an area of approximately 51 hectares, delineated by a fortification. This enclosure surrounds the *castrum* on three sides and rests on the Danube. Drobeta received the status of *municipium* from Hadrianus and was raised to the rank of *colonia* during the time of Septimius Severus, reaching the peak of economic development in the first part of the 3rd century AD. Outside the town, three necropolises were identified to the east, north, and west. Due to its strategic importance, the site on the Danube survived under Roman authority until the first half of the 5th century AD[10].

Drobeta is one of the sites in Roman and post-Roman Dacia that has been rather well examined from a numismatic point of view. The work of I. Stîngă, written at the end of the last century, records 925 Roman and early Byzantine coins, uncovered in the civilian settlement (307 pcs.)[11], in the fortification (618 pcs.)[12], as well as plenty of other coins around the territory of Drobeta[13]. Recently, a monographic work was published that contains all the monetary discoveries from this site, kept in the collection of the Iron Gates Museum in Drobeta-Turnu Severin. Thus, 1,885 Roman coins, from hoards or as single finds, are described in detail and dated between the 2nd century BC and the 5th century AD[14].

Single finds are the most widespread (1,847 pcs.), originating from scattered parts of the Drobeta site (*castrum*, town, *thermae*, amphitheater, necropolises) and, to a lesser extent, from donations[15]. For our study, we considered early Roman issues (up to and including Septimius Severus - 315 pcs.), which represent only a small part (17%) of this considerable lot[16]. Within it, the proportion of silver coins varies in different chronological sequences.

Thus, for the period before the reign of Traianus, Drobeta stands out among all sites in Dacia by the very large number of bronze coins[17]. Here, only six Republican *denarii* and one imperial *denarius* from Nero have been identified[18]. One of the Republican issues, coming from

[10] From the modern bibliography, which is quite extensive, related to this site, see selectively: BĂRCĂCILĂ 1938; TUDOR 1965; TUDOR 1978, 170-176; BENEA 1977; DAVIDESCU 1981; STÎNGĂ 1998; ARDEVAN 1998, 33-36; MATEI-POPESCU 2015.

[11] STÎNGĂ 1998, 144-157.

[12] STÎNGĂ 1998, 157-184.

[13] STÎNGĂ 1998, 185-193.

[14] GĂZDAC *et alii* 2015.

[15] GĂZDAC *et alii* 2015, 93-189.

[16] GĂZDAC *et alii* 2015, 190-201, nos. 2-316.

[17] MUNTEANU 2017 CD-ROM, Graphs 23-24.

[18] GĂZDAC *et alii* 2015, 190, nos. 2-7; 191, no. 26.

a donation, even has the same issuer - Q. Antonius Balbus[19], as one of the coins we publish (Cat. 1). The rarity of pre-Traianus *denarii*, of good quality, has been explained by their withdrawal from circulation and remelting in 107 AD[20].

In the following time span, matching the Antonine dynasty, base metal denominations dominated the monetary circulation in Dacian sites. In the first part of this period, *asses* held a major position among the coin discoveries in the province, and starting from the reign of Marcus Aurelius, they were replaced by *sestertii*. Throughout this stage, silver coins played a secondary role, with a proportion of between 20% and 30%[21]. Particularly, Drobeta stands out among the Dacian sites by the small number of *denarii* for each of the Antonine emperors: Traianus (11 pcs., representing 24% of this emperor's total issues), Hadrianus (2 pcs. - 4%), Antoninus Pius (6 pcs. - 8%), Marcus Aurelius (1 pc. - 3%), and Commodus (2 pcs. - 17%)[22]. Almost all these coins are worn due to usage.

In the last period of our attention, the reign of Septimius Severus, a substantial amount of devalued *denarii* (over 85%) was discovered in most Dacian sites, with almost half of these being *subaerate* issues[23]. Again, the figures recorded at Drobeta are different. The proportion of silver denominations (23 pcs., representing 60% of the coins from the time of Septimius Severus), many of which are poorly preserved, is below the provincial average, while the percentage of plated coins is very high (16 pcs., representing 70% of the total *denarii*)[24].

Following this brief analysis of monetary circulation in Drobeta during its first century of existence, we have doubts that our batch of *denarii* could represent single finds from this site. Firstly, we take into account the extremely small number of silver issues (52 pcs.), both Republican and early Imperial, that have been found at Drobeta over more than two centuries of archaeological research. Additionally, Vitellius, one of the emperors featured on our *denarii* (Cat. 3), is missing from the list of coin issuers from the Roman site on the Danube. We also note that the number of silver denominations from the Antonine dynasty, which forms the core of our lot, is very small at Drobeta (22 pcs.). Lastly, one must also consider the condition of the coins. Usually, single finds of *denarii* from this site, when illustrated, bear visible signs of wear due to prolonged circulation. In comparison, our coins are in good or even very good condition. In most cases, the reliefs of the images and legends are prominent, and iconographic details are still visible. Wear on the coins is minimal and we reckon that most of them have only been in circulation for a short period of time. In cases where a deterioration occurs, the most likely

[19] GĂZDAC *et alii* 2015, 184, no. 1.

[20] GĂZDAC *et alii* 2015, 25.

[21] MUNTEANU 2017, 85-86, 96-100, 134, 137-138; CD-ROM, Tables 4, 17; Graphs 23-24, 48-49.

[22] GĂZDAC *et alii* 2015, 192, no. 59; 193, nos. 64-65, 68, 73-74, 80-81, 84-85; 194, no. 95; 195, no. 121; 196, nos. 154, 169, 172, 174; 197, no. 197, 205, 210; 199, nos. 262, 271; 200, no. 278.

[23] MUNTEANU 2017, 86, 89, 134-135; CD-ROM, Tables 4, 6; Graphs 23-24, 27-30, 32.

[24] GĂZDAC *et alii* 2015, 200, nos. 280-284, 286-291, 296-300; 201, nos. 308-311, 313-315.

cause is improper storage conditions after it has been unearthed. Only the plugged *denarius* (Cat. 1) is less well-preserved and appears to show some signs of wear.

In the light of the above, it seems more plausible that our coins originate from a hoard. They were made from precious metal (silver), belong exclusively to a single denomination (*denarius*), and are in an state of preservation. Additionally, they succeed each other in time, forming a compact chronological sequence. Only a significant gap of nearly a century appears between the Republican issues and the oldest Imperial piece. In this way, we could hypothetically outline the hoard profile to which our batch might belonged. It would be a deposit of both Republican and Imperial issues, having the main coin group consisted of Antonine *denarii* and the most recent are from the time of Septimius Severus or later.

Unfortunately, the only two hoards known from Drobeta are composed of gold and bronze coins dating from different periods. Thus, a deposit of *aurei*, from which seven pieces from Hadrianus (one for Sabina) were recovered, was accidentally found in 1964 in the area of the eastern necropolis[25]. The second hoard, discovered in the early 2000s in the vicinity of the auxiliary fort, features 31 bronze coins, of which only five have been identified, dated between 395-435 AD[26].

On the territory of Roman Dacia, as in the entire Empire and *Barbaricum*, lots of *denarii* hoards have been discovered. In the latest work, 26 such "Dacian" deposits, whose structure by issuers is known, have been recorded[27]. Among these, there are only six instances ended with issues of Severan emperors: Lujerdiu (Cluj County)[28] and Sarmizegetusa 1993 / Ulpia Traiana V (Hunedoara County)[29] - *t.p.q.* Septimius Severus; Turda 2015 / *Potaissa* III (Cluj County)[30] - *t.p.q.* Macrinus; Frâncești (Vâlcea County)[31] and Pădureţu (Vâlcea County)[32] - *t.p.q.* Elagabalus; Barza (Gorj County)[33] - *t.p.q.* Severus Alexander. Only one find in this category has the latest coin from Gordian III (Sâmburești [Olt County])[34]. Typically, all these hoards consist of *denarii* succeeding

[25] DAVIDESCU 1981, 137; MITREA 1984, 187, no. 99; PETAC 2011, 240, no. 66; GĂZDAC 2010 CD-ROM/Catalogues/Hoards/Hoards from Dacia, 2; GĂZDAC *et alii* 2015, 21-22, 25, 181-182, nos. 1-7; 260, nos. 1849-1855; 264, Plate 1; CHRE, no. 2590.

[26] GĂZDAC *et alii* 2015, 22, 145-146, nos. 1057-1087; 261, nos. 1856-1886; 280, Plate 17; CHRE, no. 9143.

[27] GĂZDAC 2022, 169-179, 182 (some of these hoards also contain Lycian *drachmas*, which were assimilated with *denarii* at the time).

[28] IONESCU 1997; DEPEYROT, MOISIL 2008a, 218-221, no. 148; GĂZDAC 2022, 177, Table 24; CHRE, no. 2615.

[29] GĂZDAC, COCIŞ 2004, 42-43, nos. 13-33; DEPEYROT, MOISIL 2008a, 281-282, no. 157; GĂZDAC 2022, 177, Table 25; CHRE, no. 2616.

[30] ANDONE-ROTARU 2020; CHRE, no. 8144.

[31] DEPEYROT, MOISIL 2004, 82-167; DEPEYROT, MOISIL 2008a, 288-301, no. 166; GĂZDAC 2022, 178, Table 26; CHRE, no. 2617.

[32] DEPEYROT, MOISIL 2008a, 302-303, no. 168; PURECE 2015, 31-87; GĂZDAC 2022, 178, Table 27; CHRE, no. 2618.

[33] POPILIAN, GHERGHE 1998-2003; DEPEYROT, MOISIL 2008a, 309-321, no. 174; GĂZDAC 2022, 179, Table 28; CHRE, no. 2620.

[34] CHIŢESCU, POPESCU 1975; MITREA, MIHAILESCU-BÎRLIBA 1986-1991; DEPEYROT, MOISIL 2008b, 36-39, no. 23; GĂZDAC 2022, 182, Table 35; CHRE, no. 2629.

Nero's reform, because the previous, higher quality issues gradually disappeared from circulation[35]. We retain the single case of the Frâncești hoard, where two Republican *denarii* appear exceptionally (one of which is a "legionary *denarius*" from Marcus Antonius)[36]. The chronological structure of the seven hoards is different. Thereby, a group of deposits (Lujerdiu, Sarmizegetusa 1993, and Frâncești) is predominantly composed of Antonine *denarii*, another one (Turda 2015, Pădurețu, and Sâmburești) contains mostly devalued Severan *denarii*, and in one case (Barza), there is a quantitative balance amongst the silver issues carrying the effigies under the emperors of the two dynasties.

Among these finds, the Frâncești hoard outstands (Figure 1), broadly appearing to have similar compositional and chronological features to the coins of our lot. By a total of 1,365 *denarii*, this deposit has drew the attention of specialists due to its particular structure, namely through the unusual large number of Antonine issues. At this point, several assumptions have been carried out regarding the hoarding process: a prolonged period of accumulation[37], the deliberate selection of older, higher quality denominations[38], or the doubtful belonging to another quasi-contemporary hoard recovered nearby, at Pădurețu[39]. The coin discovery from Frâncești has been carefully re-examined and published all over again. Among the illustrated pieces, we note the good condition in which most of the Antonine *denarii* are preserved[40].

Another discovery from the aforementioned group that caught our attention is the hoard from Barza (Figure 1). It was found in 1969 and initially contained 1,807 coins, housed in a Roman *amphora*, of which 1,336 *denarii* and one *drachma* from Asia Minor have been preserved. The deposit consists exclusively of issues after Nero's reform and contains a substantial core of *denarii* of the Antonine emperors (49%). Although it was published in detail, the coins were not illustrated[41]. The place of discovery is near the *villa rustica* at Săcelu[42], which in Antiquity was part of the municipal territory of Drobeta[43]. Moreover, to our knowledge, this is the only hoard of *denarii* recovered in the *territorium* of Drobeta.

[35] GĂZDAC 2022, 133, 136, 139.

[36] DEPEYROT, MOISIL 2004, 82, nos. 1-2.

[37] GĂZDAC 2022, 144.

[38] PETAC 2011, 39-40; GĂZDAC 2022, 144.

[39] PURECE 2015, 192; *contra*, see PREDA 1992-1993, 113; DEPEYROT, MOISIL 2004, 80.

[40] DEPEYROT, MOISIL 2004, Plates 11-24; unfortunately, the Republican coin was not illustrated (Plate 6). For the previous publication of the hoard, see MOISIL 1938-1942.

[41] POPILIAN, GHERGHE 1998-2003. In the first mention of the hoard, it is noted as being discovered at Dănești (MITREA 1971, 407, no. 62), an error that has been consistently perpetuated by specialists (CHRE, no. 2620).

[42] POPILIAN, GHERGHE 1998-2003, 83.

[43] The municipal territory of Drobeta occupied the entire area between the Danube and Târgu Jiu, along the Roman road that led to the Vâlcan Pass (See ARDEVAN 1998, 71-72).

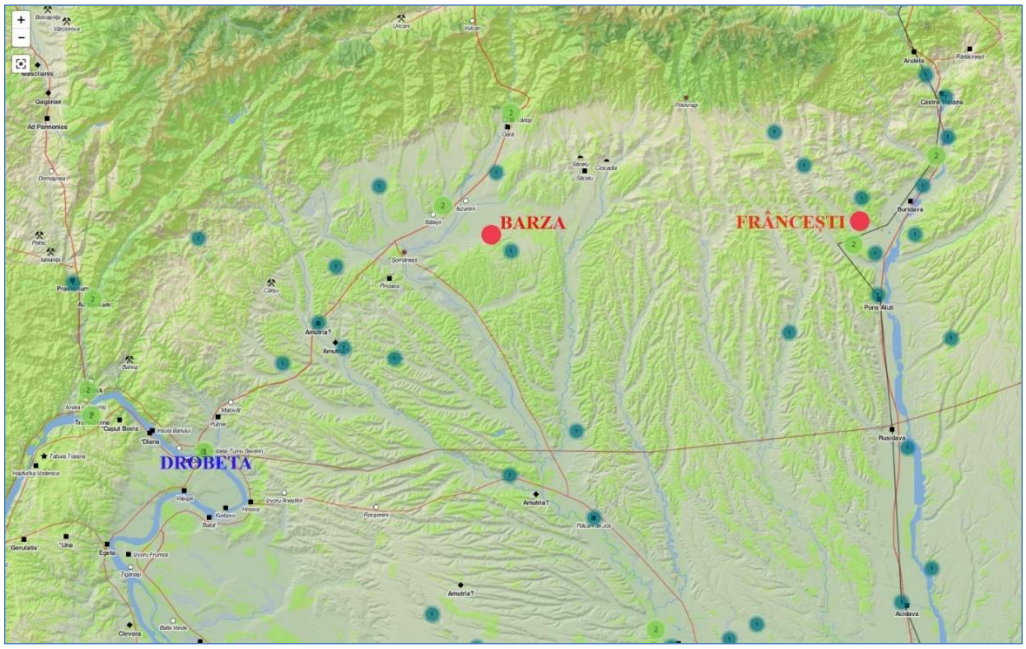

Figure 1. Map of Roman coin hoards from Dacia (highlighting the hoards from Barza and Frâncești) (source: https://chre.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/).

Of course, there is no direct link between our coins and the two hoards that can be proven once and for all. They were brought up only to show that on the territory of Dacia and even near the site of Drobeta, there are attested hoards of *denarii* with a chronological structure similar to that of our monetary batch. The first of them, discovered at Frâncești, presents numerous compositional and chronological analogies. The second, with a lower degree of similarity, comes from the *territorium* of Drobeta itself. It is possible that our lot of coins originates from such a hoard, discovered perhaps even at the site of Drobeta or, more likely, in close vicinity, before 1931, about which no information has been preserved. Certainly, it is only a presumption that will need further confirmation from other sources.

CATALOGUE[44]

ROMAN REPUBLIC

Q. Antonius Balbus

1. AR; 3.380 g; 18x19 mm; 6 h; badly preserved; pierced and plugged;
Obv. S • C (in the left field) Laureate head of Jupiter, right; border of dots
Rv. Q • ANTO [• BALB / PR] (in exergue) Victory in quadriga to right, holding reins and palm-branch in left hand and wreath in right hand;
Rome, *denarius serratus*, years 83-82 BC (RRC I, 379, no. 364/a) or c. year 81 BC (CRR, 119, no. 742).

L. Farsuleius Mensor

2. AR; 3.946 g; 17x18 mm; 6 h; well preserved; struck off-centre on the obverse;
Obv. MENSOR (in the right field) / [S • C] (in the left field) Bust of Libertas to right, draped and wearing diadem; bead-and-reel border
Rv. L • FARSVL[EI] (in exergue) Warrior holding spear and reining in biga to right with left hand; with right hand he assists togate figure into biga; control-mark CD below;
Rome, *denarius*, year 75 BC (RRC I, 406, no. 392/1b) or c. year 73 BC (CCR, 130, no. 789).

ROMAN EMPIRE

Vitellius

3. AR; 3.412 g; 17x18 mm; well preserved; struck off-centre on obverse and reverse;
Obv. Λ VITELLIVS – IMP GERMAN Head of Vitellius, laureate, left; globe at point of bust; palm in front
Rv. VICTORIΛ – ΛVGVSTI Victory, draped, advancing left, holding shield inscribed SP/QR in right hand;
Spain (Tarraco [?]), *denarius*, c. January-June 69 AD (RIC I^2, 269, no. 36; MER III, 72, no. 13) or 69 AD (BMC I, 388, no. 94).

[44] The following abbreviations were used for metals (AR - silver), metrological data (g - gram, mm - milimeter, h - ax/hour), and description of coins (obv. - obverse, rv. - reverse, var. - variant). The coins are currently being inventoried in the collection of the Institute of Archaeology in Iași, Romanian Academy.

Hadrianus

4. AR; 3.077 g; 17x18 mm; 6 h; well preserved; struck off-centre on obverse and reverse;

Obv. HADRIΛNVS – AVGVSTVS Bust of Hadrianus, laureate, drapery on left shoulder, right

Rv. COS – III Spes advancing left, holding flower and hitching robe;

Rome, *denarius*, years c. 124-125 AD (RIC II/3, 122, no. 714, group 4) or end of 125 - beginning of 128 AD (BMC III, 292, nos. 417-420) or year 125 AD (HILL 1970, 159, no. 268, 12th issue).

Antoninus Pius

5. AR; 2.714 g; 18x20 mm; 6 h; well preserved; struck off-centre on obverse and reverse;

Obv. ΛNTONINVS ΛVG – PIVS P P TR P XVI Head of Antoninus Pius, laureate, right

Rv. COS – IIII Fortuna, draped, standing right, holding vertical rudder on globe in right hand and *cornucopiae*, with point turned from body, in left hand;

Rome, *denarius*, years 152-153 AD (RIC III, 53, no. 222; BMC IV, 115, nos. 790-793).

Antoninus Pius: Diva Faustina I

6. AR; 2.942 g; 16x17 mm; 6 h; well preserved; struck off-centre on the reverse;

Obv. DIVΛ FΛV – STINΛ• Bust of Faustina I, draped, right, hair elaborately waved in several loops round head and drawn up and coiled on top

Rv. ΛVG – V – STΛ Pietas, veiled, draped, holding right hand over lighted altar and left hand on side;

Rome, *denarius*, post year 141 AD (RIC III, 72, no. 374) or year 141 AD and immediately afterwards (BMC IV, 63, nos. 450-451 var. obv. and rv.).

Commodus

7. AR; 3.068 g; 17x18 mm; 12 h; well preserved;

Obv. M COMM ANT • P – FEL AVG BRIT Head of Commodus, laureate, right

Rv. LIB AVG VI P M TR P XI IMP VII COS V P P Liberalitas, draped, standing left, holding *abacus* in right hand and *cornucopiae*, with point turned from body, in left hand;

Rome, *denarius*, December 185 AD (RIC III, 380, no. 133) or year 186 AD (BMC IV, 721, nos. 175-176 var. obv.; MIR 18, 156, no. 694).

Commodus: Crispina

8. AR; 2.857 g; 17x18 mm; 6 h; well preserved;

Obv. CRISPINA – AVGVSTA Bust of Crispina, draped, right, hair waved, bunched in front down cheek and knotted in chignon, low on head

Rv. VE – NVS Venus, draped, standing front, head left, holding apple in extended right hand and gathering up drapery on left sholder;

Rome, *denarius*, before the year 183 AD (RIC III, 399, no. 286a) or years 180-183 AD (or later ?) (BMC IV, 696, nos. 44-46, var. rv., 2nd issue) or years 178-182 AD (MIR 18, 173, no. 19).

Septimius Severus

9. AR; 2.520 g; 17x18 mm; 6 h; well preserved; struck off-centre on obverse and reverse;

Obv. L SEPT SEV AVG IMP XI PART MAX Head of Septimius Severus, laureate, drapery on left shoulder, right

Rv. MONETA AVGG Moneta, draped, seated left, holding scales in extended right hand and *cornucopiae*, with point turned from body, in left hand;

Rome, *denarius*, end of 198 or years 199-200 AD (RIC IV/I, 107, no. 135b) or years 198 (late)-200 AD (BMC V, 177, no. 133‡) or year 200 AD (HILL 1964, 25, no. 471, 6th issue).

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Scopic Aesthetics in Organic-Residue Microscopy: Illuminating the Intersection of Haemotaphonomy and Artistic Expression

Policarp HORTOLÀ[1]

Abstract: *This work offers insights into the intricate interplay between visual art and organic-residue microscopy within the realm of haemotaphonomy. Haemotaphonomy is a microscope-based science that deals with the study of the morphology of blood cells, particularly focusing on erythrocytes. Although recently confocal laser scanning microscopy has been revealed as a possible practical alternative to image bloodstain cells, their shape is better revealed when a bloodstain is examined under a scanning electron microscope. Due to the visual characteristics of its subjects of study and to its method of study, haemotaphonomy can be seen as a Churrigueresque and tenebristic science. Consequently, the scopic aesthetic background of haemotaphonomy converges into the Baroque cultural framework in the form of neobaroque taste. Contextualization of haemotaphonomy's cultural framework helps to unravel whether or not organic-residue microscopy adheres to the current 'postmodern' cultural trends of other spheres of human endeavour.*

Rezumat: *Această lucrare oferă perspective asupra interacțiunii complexe dintre arta vizuală și microscopia reziduurilor organice în domeniul hemotafonomiei. Hemotafonomia este o știință bazată pe microscopie care se ocupă cu studiul morfologiei celulelor sanguine, concentrându-se în special pe eritrocite. Deși recent microscopia confocală cu scanare laser a fost dezvăluită ca o alternativă practică posibilă pentru imaginea celulelor din petele de sânge, forma acestora este mai bine dezvăluită atunci când o pată de sânge este examinată sub un microscop electronic cu scanare. Datorită caracteristicilor vizuale ale subiectelor de studiu și metodei de studiu, hemotafonomia poate fi considerată o știință churrigueresc și tenebristă. În consecință, fundalul estetic scopic al hemotafonomiei converge în cadrul cultural baroc sub forma gustului neobaroc. Contextualizarea cadrului cultural al hemotafonomiei ajută la dezvăluirea faptului dacă microscopia reziduurilor organice aderă sau nu la tendințele culturale „postmoderne" actuale din alte sfere ale activității umane.*

Keywords: art-science relationships, architecture, painting, red blood cells, blood smears, microscopy.

Introduction

Science is not alien to the influence of its historical and social context, as well as the personal circumstances of its founders and practitioners, which can shape and be shaped by the scientific endeavour. As Dewey argues, the most elaborate scientific inquiry possesses an

[1] Àrea de Prehistòria, Universitat Rovira i Virgili (URV), Institut Català de Paleoecologia Humana i Evolució Social (IPHES-CERCA), Campus Sescelades URV (Edifici W3), ES-43007 Tarragona, Catalonia, Spain. Email: policarp.hortola@urv.cat.

aesthetic quality when its diverse elements come together as an integral experience[2]. Gruber identifies two distinct aesthetic moods in science: simplicity and complexity[3]. Indeed, in the realm of science, simplicity and complexity perpetually coexist since the world of real phenomena is intricate, yet the underlying principles are often simpler[4].

On the other hand, Kirchoff proposes an aesthetic approach to science that revolves around the patterns of phenomena, where no single element holds determinative power[5]. This perspective encourages a holistic understanding of scientific beauty, appreciating the interconnectedness of various elements within scientific research. As said by Croce, "Art and science are, therefore, different and at the same time conjoined; they coincide on one aspect, which is the aesthetic side. Every scientific work is at the same time a work of art. The aesthetic aspect may remain somewhat unnoticed when our mind is fully engaged in the effort to understand the scientist's thoughts and examine their truth. But it no longer remains unnoticed when we pass from the activity of understanding to that of contemplating (...)"[6]. More recently, Root-Bernstein introduced three insightful reflections on the relationship between science and art: (1) art and science are on a continuum in which artists work with 'possible' worlds whereas scientists are constrained to working in 'this' world, (2) all real-world innovation is a process that involves the creation – through fantasy (imagination) – of many possible solutions to any given problem, and the use of the widest range of mental and physical tools to constrain and evaluate which of these possibilities is most suitable for any given need, and (3) what the arts provide the sciences is the ability to imagine possibilities (possible problems, possible tools, and possible solutions) through synthetic and sensual forms of thinking to which analytical and logical forms of thinking can later be applied as part of the selection process[7]. Furthermore, he advocated that, in order to devise rational explanations for nature, scientists combine a multitude of sensual feelings, emotions, desires, and intuitions[8]. Therefore, whether consciously or unconsciously acknowledged by its practitioners, all science possesses its own aesthetics.

In accordance with Stolnitz, no object is inherently unaesthetic; rather, any object can be approached aesthetically because an aesthetic attitude can be adopted towards any object of

[2] DEWEY 2005, 57.

[3] GRUBER 1988, 121–140.

[4] HOFFMANN 1990.

[5] KIRCHOFF 1995.

[6] CROCE 1908, 30: "*Arte e scienza sono, dunque, diverse e insieme congiunte; coincidono per un lato, ch'è il lato estetico. Ogni opera di scienza è insieme opera d'arte. Il lato estetico potrà restare poco avvertito, quando la nostra mente è tutta presa dallo sforzo d'intendere il pensiero dello scienziato e di esaminarne la verità. Ma non resta piú inavvertito, quando dall'attività dell'intendere passiamo a quella del contemplare* (...)."

[7] ROOT-BERNSTEIN 2003, 267–278.

[8] ROOT-BERNSTEIN 2002.

awareness whatsoever[9]. Aesthetics is often regarded as the philosophy of art[10]. However, etymologically, the Greek word refers not primarily to art, but to the whole region of human perception and sensation, as opposed to conceptual thought[11]. The components of the aesthetic transaction are the object or idea, the human being who created it, and the individual who contemplates it[12].

The aesthetic aspects of science can be analysed. Aesthetics has been associated with science in the pursuit of beauty[13,14]. Often, aesthetic elements are deemed secondary to science's main goals. However, Root-Bernstein argues that aesthetic sensibility is at the core of the most significant creative endeavours in science[15]. Elgin supports this view by asserting that aesthetic devices are intrinsic to science[16], whereas Kosso believes aesthetics plays an epistemic role in science, serving as an indicator of understanding[17]. While the aesthetics of art have long abandoned the idea of a content-form dichotomy[18,19], the scientific nature of the subject at hand necessitates the adoption of this approach. Scientists, when reflecting on their work, the development of concepts, and the formulation of theories, often rely on intuition and aesthetics to guide their sense of correctness — that feeling of "this is how it has to be". However, despite its importance, the role of aesthetic judgment is seldom acknowledged in the scientific literature[20]. Hoffmann suggests that aesthetic discourse in science goes beyond the confines of the published record[21]. The choice of scientific orientation is not solely dictated by the problem at hand but is influenced by the scientist's mode of thinking, with cognitive mode and aesthetic sensibility playing crucial roles in shaping the structure and style of the scientific process[22]. As said by Orci and Pepper, "Science in its objectivity depicts the world through a collective intellectual eye, whereas art depicts it through the eye of its creator. Both are needed to understand and describe the world we live in"[23]. If art is defined as the creation of works by individuals possessing extraordinary talent, then microscopy might be considered both an art form and a technique aimed at revealing the functional complexity of cell structures[24].

[9] STOLNITZ 1998, 78–83.

[10] FRASER 1959.

[11] EAGLETON 1990, 13.

[12] HOFFMANN 2003.

[13] WECHSLER 1978.

[14] MCALLISTER 2002.

[15] ROOT-BERNSTEIN 1996, 49–82.

[16] ELGIN 2002.

[17] KOSSO 2002.

[18] MÜLLER-FREIENFELS 1948.

[19] CROCE 1974, 37–45.

[20] CROCE 1974, 37–45.

[21] HOFFMANN 2003.

[22] WECHSLER 1988, 1–7.

[23] ORCI, PEPPER 2002.

[24] AVRAMOULI, GONIDIM, LAMBROPOULOU 2017.

The stylistic parallels between organic-residue microscopy and other human enterprises are an intriguing topic within the emerging areas of aesthetic cultures of science. And, while science and the arts are inherently distinct, it is possible to make aesthetic judgments in relation to any human endeavour, including organic-residue microscopy. To unlock the underlying metalanguage of science, a fruitful approach involves analysing the connections between scientific practices and various aesthetic perspectives. It is important to note that viewing scientific results through an aesthetics lens does not alter its fundamental principles or advancements, nor does it dictate how its practitioners will generate or interpret their results. However, understanding the aesthetic background of a scientific field significantly contributes to recognizing its cultural framework and, by extension, leads to a more profound understanding of the relationships between science and society.

The objective of the work presented here is to offer insights into the intricate interplay between visual art and organic-residue microscopy within the realm of haemotaphonomy, accomplished through the discerning identification of stylistic parallels. This study takes an aesthetic approach where styles are considered as atemporal, metahistorical categories instead of chronological ones.

The science of haemotaphonomy

The presence of morphologically preserved mammalian RBCs in blood residues on prehistoric implements has been reported since the 1980s[25,26,27]. The morphology of the blood cells of all mammals is similar. In general, they possess anucleate, round, and biconcave erythrocytes or red blood cells (RBCs). As exceptions, camelids (camels, alpacas, vicuñas, and guanacos) have elliptical and flat RBCs instead of round and biconcave ones[28], and the small even-toed ungulates known as mouse deer possess erythrocytes characterized by their approximately spherical shape[29]. Comparative morphology with nonmammalian vertebrate RBCs can be found elsewhere[30].

Haemotaphonomy is a microscope-based science that deals with the study of the morphology of blood cells, particularly focusing on RBCs. This science was defined in the early 1990s as "the study of bloodstains, and especially of the changes in appearance and size of the cellular components, as well as the characteristics of their cell positions and appearance in function of the superficial topography and composition of the substrate"[31]. Beyond his

[25] LOY 1983.

[26] GRAMLY 1991.

[27] LOY, HARDY 1992.

[28] VAP, BOHN 2015.

[29] WEATHERS, SNYDER 1977.

[30] CLAVER, QUAGLIA 2009.

[31] HORTOLÀ 1992.

application to prehistoric archaeology and ethnography[32,33,34], haemotaphonomy has other applications, from forensic biology to art history. This is because, in forensic biology, the presence of erythrocytes in a smear is considered evidence of blood[35]. From the point of view of art history, common eland (*Taurotragus oryx*) blood has been traditionally used in rock art by the San ('Bushmen') in Southern Africa[36]. Also, in the Australian mainland and Tasmania, Loy *et al.* reported the use of human blood in rock art by Aboriginal Australians dating as far as around 20,000 and 10,000 years ago, respectively[37]. The technical procedures and conclusions of these researchers were strongly questioned by others[38]. However, despite the fact that, in practice, red pigment can be easily obtained from the inorganic, iron-oxide haematite, and many non-blood substances can be used as binding agents (animal fat, egg white, terpenoid resins, etc.), it is not unreasonable to think that the use of blood in rock art could have played a symbolic or magical role. Regarding historical ethnographic artefacts, analytical results of specimens held in museum collections have suggested the potential preservation of adhering blood residues[39,40].

The most abundant blood corpuscles are the erythrocytes, responsible for carrying oxygen. They were first observed during the last half of the 17th century by early light microscopists, including Giovanni Alfonso Borelli, Jan Swammerdam, Marcello Malpighi, and Anton van Leeuwenhoek[41,42,43,44]. Although recently, the modern confocal laser scanning microscope (non-electron, light-based) has emerged as a possible practical alternative for imaging bloodstain cells when a very high level of surface detail is not required[45], the shape of such cells is better revealed in fine detail when the smear is examined under a scanning electron microscope (SEM)[46]. Because SEMs work with electrons instead of human-visible light, the images produced are in greyscale tone. However, customary SEM micrographs can be coloured to obtain 'pseudo-colour images'. In the case of bloodstains, this is especially useful

[32] HORTOLÀ 2001.
[33] HORTOLÀ 2002.
[34] HORTOLÀ 2012.
[35] FIORI 1962, 243–290.
[36] SOLOMON 1996.
[37] LOY *et alii* 1990.
[38] GILLESPIE 1997.
[39] TORRENCE 1993.
[40] MAZEL, RICHARDIN, CHARLIER 2006, 131–144.
[41] CLARK 2019.
[42] DAVIDSON 2014.
[43] DAVIS 2022.
[44] MARTINS E SILVA 2009.
[45] HORTOLÀ 2020.
[46] HORTOLÀ 1992.

in order to 'dramatize' or increase their realistic appearance. This colouring process is easy and quick using the facilities of the image-acquiring systems coupled to the SEMs[47].

The scopic analysis of haemotaphonomy

In haemotaphonomy, an interesting question arises regarding how the nature of microscopic images can be causally or serendipitously linked to artistic representation. Stylistic parallels that can be found between the analysis of the morphology of real-world objects — whether natural (e.g. bloodstains) or manufactured (e.g. tribal masks) — and human accomplishments that are not pure science (art, humanities, technology) can be either intrinsic or extrinsic. The intrinsic parallels will be those inherent to the object itself, regardless of whether it is subjected to study or not. The extrinsic parallels will be those inherent to the study of the object, once it has gone through the 'human sieve'. In the morphological study of bloodstains' cells, two types of intrinsic scopic parallels can be discerned. One is architectural, considering the bloodstain as a whole, and the other would be sculptural, when contemplating the relief of the bloodstain due to the erythrocytes of its surface. Moreover, an extrinsic parallel also exists in painting, which will be equivalent to the micrographs of the blood smears.

The visual-art stylistic parallels of haemotaphonomy

Churrigueresque

Figure 1 displays an example of a Churrigueresque-like SEM micrograph of a bloodstained area. The image was obtained from a pair of SEM micrographs acquired at a differing angle α = 10º, and SEM-stage tilts that were symmetric from the horizontal plane (–5º, +5º). Red–cyan or, alternatively, red–blue or red–green anaglyphy glasses must be used for a correct viewing of the anaglyph. A motley ensemble of RBCs can be seen. A strongly uneven outermost erythrocyte layer of the bloodstain surface is evidenced. An apparently broken RBC appears at the centre of the image.

The Churrigueresque is a uniquely Spanish derivation of European late Baroque architecture typified by the lively and elaborate surface decoration of sculptural effects)[48]. This 'architecture' embraces not only façades, but altarpieces as well. To neoclassical taste, the Churrigueresque style represented the last word in decadence[49]. On the other hand, the Churrigueresque falls under the style of naturalism. In fact, according to the art historian John R. Martin all Baroque art is naturalistic[50]. The denomination of this style derives from the surname Churriguera, a family of sculptors and architects working in Salamanca and Madrid, whose patriarch, Josep-Simó de Xoriguera, adapted his Catalan surname into Spanish. The main

[47] HORTOLÀ 2010.

[48] LAPUNZINA 2005, liii.

[49] THE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF ART 2004.

[50] MCCORMICK 1955.

cultivators of this style were not, however, the Churriguera family, but other architects, such as Narciso Tomé, Pedro de Ribera, and Lorenzo Rodríguez. The Churrigueresque is a visually frenetic style that features a plethora of extravagant ornamentation and surfaces bristling with broken pediments, undulating cornices, spirals, balustrades, stucco shells, and garlands, where restraint is totally abandoned in a conscious effort to overwhelm the spectator[51]. Although the Churrigueresque is chronologically contemporary of Rococo, it is stylistically different[52]. The Churrigueresque is well represented in Spanish colonial America, especially in Mexico. An excellent example is the façade of the Metropolitan Sacrarium adjoining the Mexico City Cathedral designed by Lorenzo Rodríguez. Mexican Churrigueresque has been equated to the European Ultrabaroque, although Baird Jr. finds such comparison untrue and prefers to refer to it as Mannerist-Baroque[53]. In Spanish colonial America, tendencies from both the native art of the Americas and the ever-present Spanish-Moorish (*mudéjar*) art were incorporated, further enriching the style, and the Churrigueresque column became the most common motif[54]. This column (*estípite*) is a Mannerist-inspired columnar or pilaster form made up of a special group of parts: an inverted obelisk, various blocks and medallions, a Corinthianesque capital, etc.[55]

The high number of erythrocytes in blood gives rise to the appearance of a motley RBC ensemble in SEM micrographs of bloodstains, with a multitude of details that require a careful and punctilious analysis of each micrograph. Moreover, the piles of RBCs (rouleaux) that are occasionally visible in the SEM micrographs of bloodstains suggest tortuous columns similar to their twisted Baroque counterparts. Furthermore, as a general feature, Wölfflin contrasts the angular, 'hard' character of Renaissance art to the curved, 'soft' quality of the Baroque works, which evoke (malleable) clay[56]. A curious analogy between Baroque visual plasticity and that of haemotaphonomy can be found, for instance, in the way that bloodstains are considered in the following paragraph: "In fact, in a smear these [blood] cells are equivalent to deposited soft-bodied microfossils in a clay-like sedimentary matrix"[57]. Furthermore, as opposed to the angular forms of the Renaissance artist, the curved forms sought by the Baroque architect or painter bring to mind living things, at the macroscopic as well as the microscopic level, as do RBCs and their rouleaux which can be seen in bloodstains, as mentioned earlier. This gives SEM micrographs of bloodstains the visual characteristics of an exacerbated, exasperated baroquism, as in Churrigueresque architectural decoration.

[51] ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA 2006.

[52] TAPIÉ 1981, 103.

[53] BAIRD Jr. 1959.

[54] ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA 2006.

[55] BAIRD Jr. 1959.

[56] WÖLFFLIN 1967, 46–47.

[57] HORTOLÀ 1992.

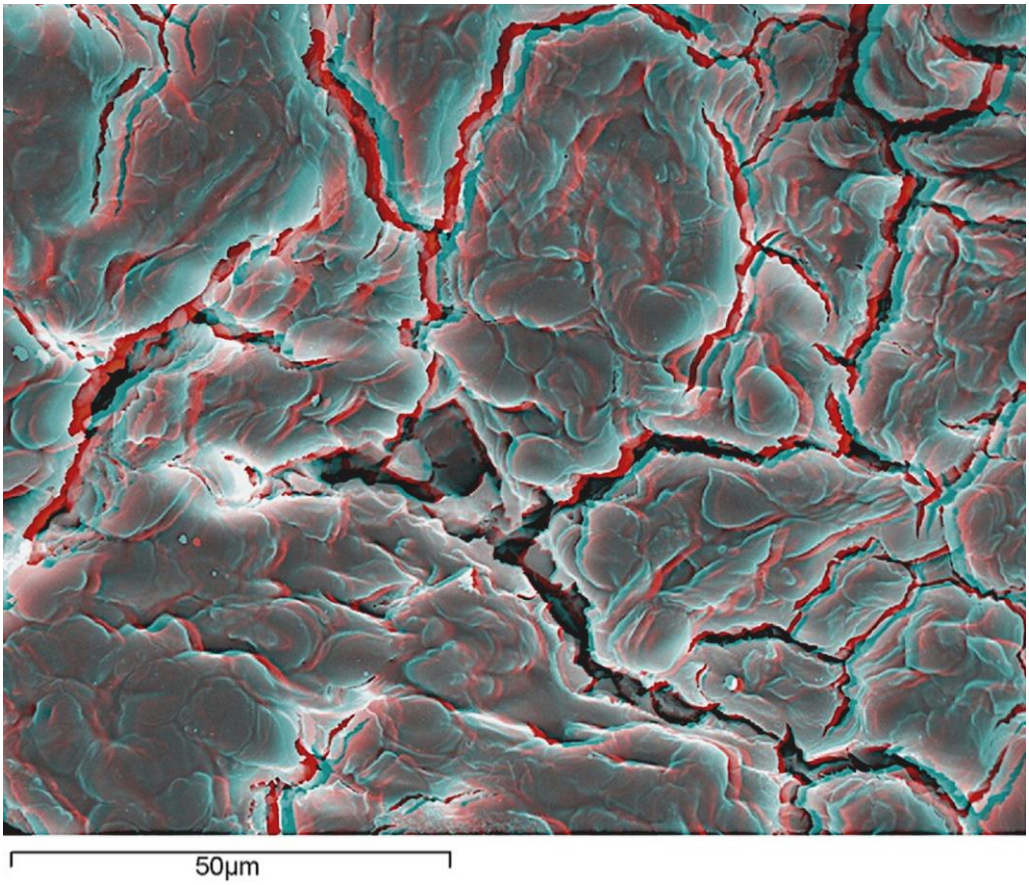

Figure 1. Churrigueresque-like architecture in haemotaphonomy. Anaglyphic image of an area of an author's blood smear on grey chert. *Reprinted from Micron, vol. 40(3), Policarp Hortolà, Using digital anaglyphy to improve the relief effect of SEM micrographs of bloodstains, pp. 409–412, Copyright (2009), with permission from Elsevier.* Compare with the façade of the Metropolitan Sacrarium adjoining the Mexico City Cathedral (1768, Lorenzo Rodríguez; an image of this façade is available at https://cdn.britannica.com/19/42119-050-D97176EF/Facade-Metropolitan-Sacristy-Mexico-City-Lorenzo-Rodriguez.jpg).

Tenebrism

Figure 2 shows an example of a tenebristic-like SEM micrograph of the same bloodstained area exhibited in Figure 1. In order to increase the bloody look of the bloodstain, a 'pseudo-colour image' has been obtained by setting the contrast parameter of the SEM-coupled image-acquiring software to the 'thermal' option instead of the customary greyscale tone, and slightly re-adjusted for contrast and brightness.

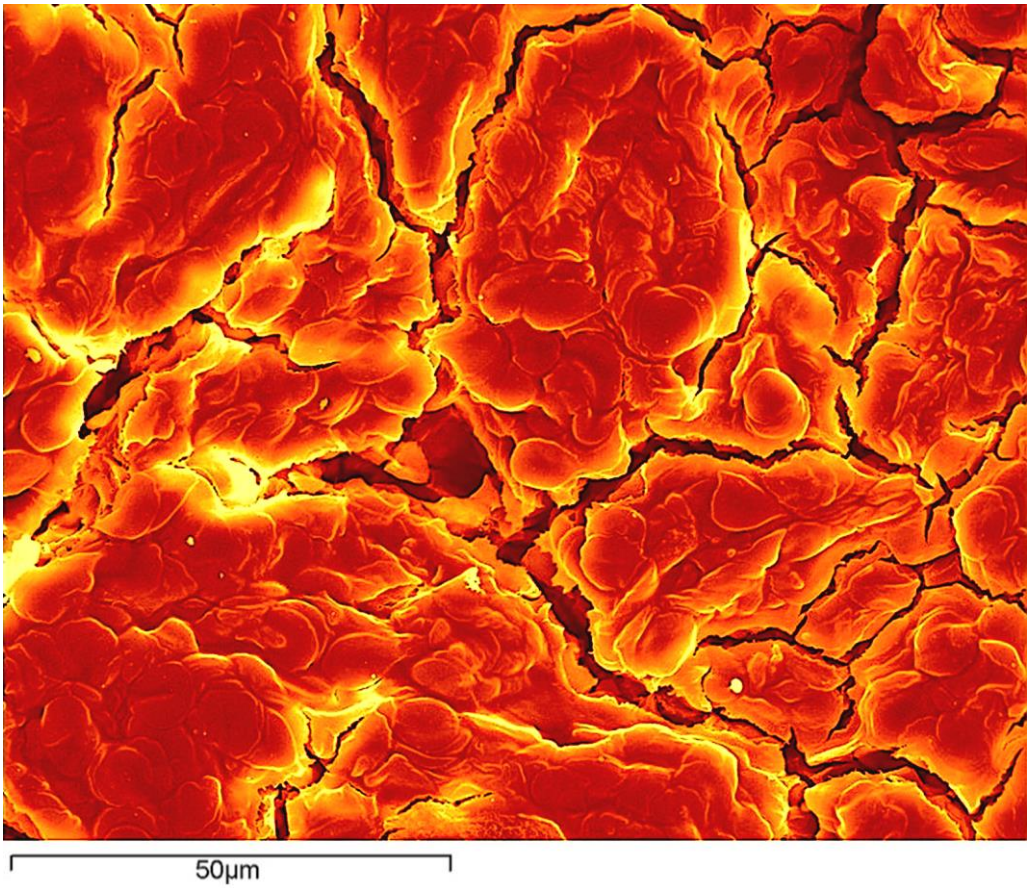

Figure 2. Tenebristic-like painting in haemotaphonomy. Coloured SEM micrograph of the same bloodstained area than that of Figure 1. *Reprinted from Micron, vol. 41(7), Policarp Hortolà, Using digital colour to increase the realistic appearance of SEM micrographs of bloodstains, pp. 904–908, Copyright (2010), with permission from Elsevier.* Compare with *Saint Jerome Writing* (*ca.* 1606, Caravaggio; an image of this painting is available at https://www.collezionegalleriaborghese.it/uploads/server/files/056.jpg).

Tenebrism is a Baroque style of painting in which the contrast of darkness and light introduces an element of mystery, ambiguity, and understatement, lending a dynamic quality to the light and bringing an element of drama and pathos[58]. Because of its bias towards transmitting a feeling of motion, Wölfflin considers tenebrism as 'painterly' (German *malerisch*), an approach in which what is essential is not the use of colour but the contrasting effect of light and shadow[59]. Tenebrism, like the Churrigueresque, is a naturalistic art.

[58] RZEPIŃSKA 1986.

[59] WÖLFFLIN 1967, 34–35.

Tenebrism became a hallmark of Baroque painting, as the Churrigueresque did of Baroque architectural decoration. The most well-known exponent of tenebristic painters is Michelangelo Merisi 'Caravaggio', who popularised this naturalistic technique. The term 'naturalism' was even first used in connection with the visual arts to characterise the work of Caravaggio and his followers[60]. Other outstanding tenebristic painters were, for example, Georges de La Tour, Francisco de Zurbarán, and Rembrandt van Rijn. Due to the chiaroscuro display inherent to SEM bioimaging – in other words, inherent to the method of the science under study – haemotaphonomy also has stylistic parallels with tenebristic painting.

Wölfflin suggested a trans-historic, cyclic Baroque revival, although in fact his proposal was broader, in the sense of a general phenomenon of a 'spiralling' remake of the styles in art[61]. Beyond a merely material approach, Ors – as asserted at the European intellectuals' meeting on the Baroque held in the Pontigny abbey (France) in 1931 – explicitly advocated a transcendental baroque: a timeless, placeless spirit category, from Antiquity to modernity and from the East to the West[62]. From this perspective, baroquistic elements can already be found in prehistoric rock art, for instance in the acephalous silhouettes of Gönnesdorf in Germany or the animal-themed altarpiece of the cave of Les Trois Frères in France[63]. Later on, the Orsian viewpoint was treated, under the term 'neobaroque', by authors such as Sarduy, Deleuze, and Calabrese[64,65,66]. According to Degli-Esposti, these and other scholars have "demonstrated" that the baroque mode has manifested itself over the centuries whenever a period of crisis has put the act of artistic creation at an impasse[67]. Underlying the emergence of the neobaroque, whose dynamism shares a Baroque delight in spectacle and sensory experiences, although expressed in technologically and culturally different ways, are transformed economic and social factors[68]. The 'neobaroque' concept – especially as applied to the novel and poetry – has had particular success in Latin America, where, apart from Sarduy, the neobaroque is present in authors such as Carlos Fuentes and Gustavo Celorio in Mexico, and Alejo Carpentier and José Lezama Lima in Cuba[69,70]. The formulation of a whole philosophy of current Latin American culture based on the neobaroque is even being attempted[71]. Meanwhile, numerous modern architectural

[60] THE OXFORD COMPANION TO WESTERN ART 2001.

[61] WÖLFFLIN 1950, 234.

[62] d'ORS 1964, 65–133.

[63] AULLÓN DE HARO 2004, 21–58, Figs. 1a, 1b.

[64] SARDUY 1972, 167–184.

[65] DELEUZE 1988, 111–112.

[66] CALABRESE 1987, 18–19.

[67] DEGLI-ESPOSTI 1996.

[68] NDALIANIS 2004, 5.

[69] SALGADO 1999.

[70] KAUP 2005.

[71] ARRIARÁN CUÉLLAR 2004.

masterpieces can be considered as neobaroque works[72]. Examples are Pere Milà's residential building known as La Pedrera (1910, Antoni Gaudí) in Barcelona, the Einsteinturm astrophysical observatory (1921, Erich Mendelsohn) in Potsdam, and the second Goetheanum General Anthroposophical Society headquarters (1926, Rudolf Steiner) in Dornach[73]. The same can be applied to other masterpieces in architecture, such as the Finnish Pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fair (Alvar Aalto and Aino Marsio), the chapel of Notre Dame du Haut in Ronchamp (1955, Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris 'Le Corbusier'), and the Trans World Airlines Flight Center at New York International Airport, Anderson Field (John F. Kennedy International Airport) (1962, Eero Saarinen)[74].

Because a vigorous suggestion of movement and dramatization are the two qualities that characterize the conventional Baroque, in this study the term 'baroquistic' is conceived as a metahistorical and transgeographical visual work that suggests movement and exhibits dramatization. As with 'naturalism' and 'naturalistic', it is appropriate to use the word 'baroquism' as a noun to refer to the baroque (*sensu* Ors) or neobaroque (*sensu* Sarduy) approach, and 'baroquistic' as an adjective to refer to the quality of (neo)baroqueness. For instance, because the configuration of the DNA molecule suggests Baroque-typical Solomonic columns[75], we could speak of its 'baroquistic structure', in the same way that we can speak of the 'baroquistic structure' of the rouleaux manifested in bloodstains[76].

Concluding remarks

The pursuit of scientific knowledge is intrinsically tied to human curiosity, while also being influenced by the historical and social context. Science's aesthetic dimension emerges from its comprehensive and unified exploration of intricate and simple aspects alike, and its appreciation of the intricate patterns that weave through the fabric of phenomena.

Understanding the aesthetics of a science plays a pivotal role in deciphering its underlying cultural framework. Artistically, haemotaphonomy can be likened to Churrigueresque and tenebristic styles due to the visual characteristics of its subjects of study, such as a diverse erythrocyte ensemble seen in micrographs of the surface of bloodstains, and its method of studying images in chiaroscuro obtained via surface microscopy. Consequently, Churriguerism and tenebrism represent the visually artistic essence of haemotaphonomy. As both Churriguerism and tenebrism fall under artistic naturalism, haemotaphonomy can also be considered a form of scopic naturalism.

[72] DORFLES 1951, 14, 48.

[73] DORFLES 1951, Figs. 41, 36, 38.

[74] KOLAREVIC 2003, 1–16 (Figs. 1.7, 1.5, 1.6).

[75] HERSEY 1999, 8.

[76] See an example of typical rouleau's structures in HORTOLÀ 1992, Fig. 2.

Even though haemotaphonomy is a relatively young science, its cultural framework bears a striking resemblance to the Baroque period. This connection becomes evident when we examine painting and decorative architectural art. Tenebrism, a painting style popular during the Baroque, finds its counterpart in the visual representation used in haemotaphonomy. Similarly, the Churrigueresque, a decorative architectural art of the Baroque, also resonates with haemotaphonomy aesthetics. Thus, the entirety of haemotaphonomy aesthetic background converges into the Baroque cultural framework, leading us to conclude that haemotaphonomy can be categorized as a baroquistic science. In other words, beyond the strict confines of scientific analysis, haemotaphonomy exhibits neobaroque taste.

Although the cultural framework to which a science belongs should not affect its technical or methodological aspects, understanding the cultural framework of haemotaphonomy can shed light on whether or not organic-residue microscopy adheres to the current 'postmodern' cultural trends observed in other areas of human endeavour.

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