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PARS PRIOR

Applied magic in the antiquity

PARALLEL RESEARCH
TABULAE DEFIXIONIS AND MAGIC GEMS

Curses on lead tablets (*tabulae defixionis*) and carved gemstones carried as talismans (so-called magic gems) are of prominent importance in the field of ancient magic. Both object groups are well-represented in Hungary either by local excavations or by purchase, while the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts houses a magical papyrus, a single representative of the third significant group of sources for ancient magic in the country. The research on gems and defixiones places our finds into a wider international framework that facilitates a more profound interpretation.[1]

The research programme called *Parallel research in the field of ancient magic* is special since it does not examine these two groups of sources separately, as it has been customary in the international practice, but analyzes the two of them together, drawing attention to parallel phenomena. We look for parallelisms primarily in the realia in terms of chronology, circulation, and workshops (*officinae magicae*). A first complete collection and typology of magic signs (so-called charakteres) found in defixiones, gems, and papyri are to be made available in an online database of charakteres. The work is overseen by Kirsten Dzwiza in conformity with the framework of the research programme.

With the support of the research programme, we have organized two international conferences in 2010 and 2011. The first one (*CHARAKTER: An International Seminary on Magical Signs in Antiquity*) was held on 24 September 2010 at the Department of Ancient History of ELTE University, Budapest. The following papers were read out:

Kirsten Dzwiza (Germany): *Neue Erkenntnisse zu den Objekten des "Pergamon-Kits"*
Gideon Bohak (Tel Aviv): *The CharaktÉres in Jewish Magic, from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages*
Árpád Nagy (Budapest): *Über die Interpretation der CharaktÉres auf Zaubergemmen*
György Németh (Budapest): *Ein magischer Satz. Über DT 276–283*
András Bácskay (Budapest): *Magic-religious Symbols in ancient Mesopotamia*
Sándor Fodor (Budapest): *'Charakters' in Arabic Magic*

Benedek Láng (Budapest): *Charactḗrs and Magic Signs in the Picatrix and other Medieval Magic Texts*

The second conference (*Magical Context*)[2] was held on 15 April 2011, also at the Department of Ancient History of ELTE University, Budapest. The lectures of the conference:

Richard Gordon (Universität Erfurt): *Fixing the race: charioteers and magic at Carthage and Hadrumetum*
György Németh (ELTE, Budapest): *Sequences of charakteres from Hadrumetum*
Celia Sanchez (Universidad de Zaragoza – Università degli Studi di Verona): *Writing a defixio: an overview on materials suitables for cursing.*
Marina Piranomonte (Soprintendenza Speciale per I Beni archeologici di Roma): "Idibus est Annae festum geniale Perennae." *The fountain of Anna Perenna in Rome*
Francisco Marco Simón (Universidad de Zaragoza): Duogena*, a new Celtic deity documented in Lugo* (Lucus Augusti)
Silvia Alfayé (Universidad de Zaragoza): *Resting in peace? An approach to ancient ghost-banning (on Pseudo-Quintilian's Sepulchrum incantatum)*
Gonzalo Fontana (Universidad de Zaragoza): *„Gift of tongues": a magical phenomenon in a Christian liturgical setting*
Andrea Barta (Budapest): *A New Lead Tablet from Savaria*
Gábor Lassányi (Aquincum Múzeum, Budapest): *The old man with seven heads – remains of an obscure Roman Period ritual in Aquincum*
Antón Alvar Nuño (Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid): *Apotropaic magic in the Roman house. Some social aspects*

We can read the papers of the lecturers of these two conferences in the volume of 2011 in *Acta Classica*. The detailed programmes of the conferences are reviewed here, because the following papers are not always the written versions of the given lectures, and since some manuscripts have not arrived until the editor's deadline, not all papers are included. We hope that this volume will be instrumental for scholars of ancient magic in the future.

György Németh

THE *CHARAKTÊRES* IN ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL JEWISH MAGIC

BY GIDEON BOHAK

Abstract: This paper examines the different magical signs found in Jewish magical texts and artifacts in Antiquity and the Middle Ages. These include especially the Graeco-Egyptian "charaktêres" (ring-letters, *Brillenbuchstaben*), the Arabic "string letters" (or *Siegel*), and the Latin sigilla or figurae, to which one may add a few other types of magical signs. This paper surveys their appearance in Jewish magical texts of different times and places, and analyzes their function within the magical texts where they are found.
Keywords: *Charaktêres*, magical signs, Jews, Late Antiquity, Middle Ages.

The use of special signs is one of the hallmarks of magical texts and objects of many different cultures, and the Jewish magical tradition is no exception.[1] Unfortunately, this aspect of Jewish magic has not yet received the attention it deserves, and no attempt has ever been made to survey the magical signs found in Jewish magical texts of different periods, or reconstruct their transmission history.[2] Moreover, in many discussions of Jewish magic these signs often are referred to as "Kabbalistic signs," even though they are mostly non-Jewish in origins, and predate the rise of Kabbalah by a full millennium. In the present study, I wish to present both a basic typology of the special signs found in Jewish magical texts in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, and a brief historical survey of their different forms and functions. I begin with a few words on magical signs in general, and with a basic typology of the magical signs used by Jews, and move on to a chronological and geographical survey of the Jewish magical texts and the special signs they display. My aim is both to see what *kinds* of magical signs appear in different Jewish magical texts and to see what *function* they fill within these texts.

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[1] The research for this paper was supported by the Israel Science Foundation (Grant No. 635/08).

[2] For earlier studies, all of them very brief, see Gaster 1913; Trachtenberg 1939, 140-142; Weinstock 1981; Schiffman and Swartz 1992, 44-45; Swartz 2005, 195, 198.

A) Magical Signs in the Jewish Magical Tradition – A Typological Survey:

One important aspect of the Jewish magical tradition is that at least from Late Antiquity onwards it displayed a predominantly scribal nature, including the production of written magical texts – amulets, curses, love spells, dream requests, and so on – and the transmission of the magical know-how in written manuals or books of magic.[3] This feature of Jewish magic enabled the proliferation of magical signs and – given the magicians' attempts to enact and to copy their recipes as accurately as possible – assured the relative stability of their transmission. Thus, when we look at a Jewish magical text of the fifth century CE, and at a Jewish magical text a millennium and a half younger, we often find similar magical signs in both texts, in spite of the great chronological, and often also geographical, gap separating between them.

As a rule, I would define a magical sign as any sign which looks more or less like an alphabetic sign or a simple ideogram, but which does not belong to any of the alphabets used in that specific magical text, or to any known system of meaningful symbols. This means that in my search for magical signs in the Jewish magical tradition I exclude all images (of humans, animals, demons, etc.) which might appear in Jewish magical texts, because I do not consider them to be magical *signs*.[4] Similarly, I exclude the word-triangles, alphabetic magic squares, and other uses of names, words and letters to create unusual shapes (what is known in other contexts as "technopaignia"), as these involve no special magical signs, only the regular letters of one's alphabet.[5] I also exclude all the non-alphabetic signs which form a part of any non-magical text, such as signs of vocalization in Hebrew and Aramaic texts (from the Early Middle Ages onwards), or punctuation marks that may be found in texts of all languages and periods, or lines, frames, and other methods of highlighting parts of the text, as these do not usually belong specifically in the realm of "magic". I also exclude all known astrological, alchemical, and geomantic signs, as they belong within their specific spheres of knowledge, are usually transmitted in genre-specific texts, and tend to have a fixed, and well-known, meaning. Finally, I exclude any cipher signs whose meanings clearly were known to the producer of the magical text in which they appear, as these have to do more with cryptography than with magic, and I also exclude those "texts" that consist of repetitive meaningless squiggles, which may have been intended to fool ig-

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[3] See Swartz 1990; Bohak 2008, esp. 281-285.
[4] For an excellent study of the iconography of ancient Jewish magic see Vilozny 2010.
[5] For such phenomena, see Bohak 2008, 255-256, 265-270; Luz 2010, 213-222.

norant clients into thinking that they contained a written text, or perhaps even to fill the empty spaces on one's magical artifacts.[6]

From the perspective of cultural history, the magical signs found in the Jewish magical texts may be divided into two main categories – those that were borrowed by the Jewish practitioners from their non-Jewish colleagues, and those developed by the Jews themselves. Let us briefly look at each of these categories, with the help of specific examples, produced in Table 1, and numbered from 1.1 to 1.8, and in Table 2:

a) Magical signs borrowed from other magical traditions:
The great majority of the magical signs displayed by the Jewish magical tradition are of a demonstrably non-Jewish origin. By far the most ubiquitous magical signs in the Jewish magical tradition are the *charaktêres*, those "ring-letters," or *Brillenbuchstaben* of the Graeco-Egyptian magical tradition, whose most characteristic feature is the recurrence of ringlets at the tips of many of the individual signs (see Table 1.1).[7] As we shall see below, these were adopted by the Jewish magicians in Late Antiquity, and are still in use to this very day. Their ultimate origins are quite obscure, but this is of little importance for the present survey, as they clearly entered the Jewish magical tradition through Greek magical texts, and even entered with their technical Greek name, which is why they often are identified in late antique and medieval Jewish magical texts as the "Karaqtiraya" or "Kalaqtiraya," a word that often was split in two and understood as "kol qtiraya," i.e., "all the knots," or simply "qtiraya," "knots." And in the Middle Ages, elaborate "alphabets" were produced, consisting mostly of such *charaktêres* and often identified as the secret alphabets of various angels, including Metatron, Gabriel, Raphael, and many others. In some cases, each "letter" of the "alphabet" is accompanied by its supposed Hebrew equivalent, while in others the entire "alphabet" is produced as a sequence of magical signs, with no attempt to explain which sign stands for which letter (see Table 1.2). In many cases, these "alphabets" clearly were badly garbled in the process of transmission, as may be seen both from the fact that the number of "letters" they provide is neither 22 (the number of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet) nor 27 (the number of Hebrew letters when one counts the "final" *kaph*, *mem*, *nun*, *peh* and *tzadi* as separate letters), and from the fact that certain signs recur in different places in the "alphabet," meaning that the

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[6] For a cipher used in some Genizah magical texts, see Bohak 2010a, and for a possible cipher used in an incantation bowl, see Harviainen 1981, 24-28. For a repetitive series of identical squiggles (a not uncommon occurrence in the incantation bowls), see Bohak 2008, 186, Fig. 3.6.
[7] For a brief survey of the *charaktêres*, and much further bibliography, see Brashear 1995, 3440-3442.

same sign would have two alphabetic equivalents, which is rather unlikely if the cryptic alphabet was supposed to be effective (and both problems may be seen in Table 1.2).

In addition to the *charaktêres*, we may note that in the Middle Ages the Jews of the Arabic-speaking world borrowed from their Muslim neighbors a new set of magical signs, which we may call "string letters" (given their peculiar shape), or "Siegel" (the German word for "seals"), as they were best described in Winkler's ground-breaking survey, *Siegel und Charaktere in der Muhammedanischen Zauberei*.[8] These magical signs often look like long horizontal strokes, or strings, on or above which are pegged series of Arabic letters and numerals, as well as quasi-alphabetical signs, all of which clearly do not add up to any semantically-meaningful sequence (see Table 1.3). Both in the Muslim and in the Jewish magical texts, these signs, or more elaborate patterns that use these signs as their building blocks (see Table 1.4), often are called "seals" (Arabic *khatim*, pl. *khawatim*; Hebrew *hotam*, pl. *hotamot*), and they are found in many different types of magical texts. In addition to these "seals," the Jewish magicians of the Middle Ages also borrowed from their Arab neighbors a sequence of seven magical signs, each of which looks a bit like the *charaktêres* (but without the ringlets at their tips), a series which was known in the Arabic magical tradition as the "Seal of Solomon," and which is reproduced in Table 1.5.[9] Finally, in medieval Europe, some Jews borrowed from their Christian neighbors the elaborate magical signs that are often found in Latin magical texts, signs that look like complex seals (or, in Latin, *sigilla*, sometimes also known as *figure* or *ymagines*), made up of combining together many smaller signs and placing them in elaborate frames (see Table 1.6).[10] And, perhaps at a slightly later period, European Jews also borrowed from their Christian neighbors the elaborate circular designs, full of magical signs, some of which look like the age-old *charaktêres*, designs that usually were associated with each of the seven planets (see Table 2).[11]

To our list of foreign magical signs that entered the Jewish magical tradition, one more sub-category may be added, of "false magical signs," produced,

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[8] Winkler 1930.

[9] See Winkler 1930, 55-149. For their appearance in Jewish magical texts, see Scholem 1998, 153-155, 166-167.

[10] For similar seals in Christian magical texts see, for example, Kieckhefer 1997, 367-368, and cf. Pingree 1986, 187-188 and Pl. 2. For an exhaustive survey of the magical signs and designs used in medieval Christian magic (but, unfortunately, no illustrations to accompany the descriptions), see Véronèse and Grévin 2004.

[11] For such seals in Christian magical texts see, for example, Skemer 2006, 200-201, 215. See also the seals recommended by the *Ars notoria*, in Véronèse 2007, Figures 2, 11, 12, and Planche 4.

for example, when magical texts moved from one language to another, and some of the letters of the source-language(s) were mistook by their copyists for magical signs. Thus, in one Genizah magical text we even find, among a string of magical signs, some of which look suspiciously close to Coptic letters, a group of signs that clearly add up to the common Coptic abbreviation of the name "Jesus Christ," a sequence that the Jewish magician copied merely as a set of meaningless magical signs, without ever realizing what he really was copying; in another Genizah magical text, we might even find a copy of older Demotic signs (a cursive form of writing the Egyptian Hieroglyphs), a writing system that had been extinct for many centuries by the time when this Genizah fragment was being copied.[12] In a few other cases, one finds Crosses or Christograms in Jewish magical texts, but it is not always clear whether they point to the Christian proclivities of the text's producer or users, to innocent copying from Christian sources, or to the accidental resemblance of magical signs to well-known Christian symbols.[13]

b) Jewish magical signs:
Surprisingly, perhaps, there are very few cases of magical signs that can be seen as specifically Jewish, both in Late Antiquity and in the Middle Ages. One clear example is the occasional attempt, in the Jewish magical texts of Late Antiquity, to produce signs that seem like Paleo-Hebrew script, and that probably were intended to add to the texts' magical powers by using an old, venerable, and perhaps even sacred Jewish script, at a time when it was no longer in use in other, non-magical, Jewish texts (see Plate 1.7).[14] But apart from this example, I am aware of no other magical signs that can be seen as specifically Jewish, not only in late antique Jewish magic, but even in the Middle Ages, the only partial exception being the frequent production, in the Middle Ages, of magical signs that looked just like Hebrew letters, but with extra ringlets at their tips, i.e., of "Hebrew *charaktêres*." This novelty evidently was the result of a conscious attempt to develop new sacred alphabets by "Judaizing" the foreign magical signs and offering a "kosher" alternative to the popular, but alien, magical signs (see Table 1.8, where the biblical verse Ex 15:3 is written with such "Hebrew *charaktêres*"). These signs were quite popular with some Kabbalists, and they still appear in some Kabbalistic *siddurim* (Jewish prayer-books), like that of R. Isaac Luria (*Siddur ha-ARI*) and that of R. Shalom

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[12] For both examples, see Bohak 1999.

[13] For a possible Christogram, see AMB, A4, l. 8. For innocent copying from Christian sources, see the wonderful nineteenth-century Yemenite-Jewish example discussed by Sperber 1994, 89-90.

[14] See Weiss 2008, 255.

Shar'abi (*Siddur ha-RASHASH*), where they are frequently used to write the Tetragrammaton, YHWH. They were equally popular with the Christian Kabbalists, like Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, and thus became quite well-known in the Christian world as well. But when we look at Jewish magical texts of the Middle Ages, and even of the Modern world, we see that these "Hebrew *charaktêres*" were not very commonly used by the magicians themselves, and even where they did appear they in no way replaced the standard *charaktêres*, some of which kept on looking like Greek letters with ringlets at their tips – and still do so today. Jews, it would seem, were happy enough with the magical signs developed by their neighbors, and saw no reason to develop new ones, or even to consistently try to replace them with more "kosher" alternatives. In fact, in many cases they were utterly convinced that the magical signs that we, with our modern historical tools of research, know to have been of non-Jewish origins, actually were secret angelic scripts, used by Jews since time immemorial, and perhaps even borrowed from them by their non-Jewish colleagues and competitors.

In addition to these two types of magical signs, a few cases may be mentioned of magical signs whose origins are still obscure. For example, in a few Jewish Aramaic incantation bowls from Sasanian Babylonia we find some magical signs that clearly imitate the *charaktêres*, but we also find some magical signs that look quite different.[15] These may have been developed by the Jewish scribes who produced the Aramaic bowls, but are more likely to have been shared in common by all the producers of incantation bowls in Sasanian Mesopotamia, including the Mandaean and the Syriac bowls.[16] This, however, is a subject that still calls for further enquiry.

In light of the above notes, it should be clear that the vast majority of magical signs found in the Jewish magical tradition would look very familiar to any student of the Graeco-Egyptian, Muslim, and Christian, magical traditions. The same is true when we examine the *function* of the magical signs within the magical texts, for just as in the non-Jewish magical texts, so in the Jewish magical tradition, these signs may be used in several different manners. In some cases, they are directly invoked, as if they were powerful forces in their own right, and so we find a series of magical signs followed by "You holy kalaqtiraya, perform the task X," or some similar expression.[17] In other cases, they are identified as the powerful "Seal of Solomon," as the secret seals asso-

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[15] For *charaktêres* in the Jewish Aramaic incantation bowls, see, below, n. 25.

[16] And see, for example, the magical signs in McCullough 1967, 29, 42-43, 46 (a Mandaic bowl); Harviainen 1978, 7 and 8 (two Syriac bowls).

[17] See, for example, AMB, G1 (for whose *charaktêres* see Table 3); MSF, G9, 3/12; MSF, G15, 2/6. Many more examples could easily be adduced.

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ciated with various demons (so that, for example, you must show each demon his specific seal in order to force him to fulfill your wishes), or as secret alphabets supposedly used by the angels themselves. Finally, in many other cases, the magical signs appear at the beginnings or ends of the magical texts, or between sentences, or between words, and are not specifically tied into the texts where they appear. In such cases, they seem to have no specific semantic or symbolic function, and are used in order to fill some of the empty spaces in the text and to strengthen the object's occult powers, or its appeal to the clients who commissioned it, and probably were awe-struck by the mysterious signs. In such cases, we may also consider the general mystique associated with such incomprehensible signs, and their obvious value in the marketing of magical texts and objects to potential users, who probably saw such magical signs as evidence of the text's great powers and of its producer's demonstrated expertise in the realm of magic.[18]

B) Magical Signs in the Jewish Magical Tradition – An Historical Survey:

While the brief typology provided in the first section of this paper could serve as a useful phenomenological tool for the classification of the different magical signs found in Jewish magical texts, I believe that the best way to study these signs is chronologically and geographically, in order to see which magical signs were used by Jews at which times and in which places. Thus, the following survey will begin with the First and Second Temple periods, will move to late antique Palestine and Babylonia, will turn to the Jews of the Muslim and the Christian worlds in the Middle Ages, and will end with a few brief words on contemporary Jewish magic.

a) The First and Second Temple Periods:
While there is no doubt that the Jews of Antiquity, like those of later periods, practiced magic, their activities seem to have left few traces both in the literary and in the archaeological records. Thus, the absence of magical signs from the few ancient Jewish magical texts that have come down to us – i.e., the two amulets from Ketef Hinnom in Jerusalem and a few exorcistic and magical fragments found among the Dead Sea Scrolls – might be due to the paucity of

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[18] I note, for example, an amulet from the Cairo Genizah, Cambridge University Library Or. 1080.14.13 (reproduced in Bohak 2008, 273), which consists solely of eight such seals (one of which is reproduced in Table 1.3 below), with no text at all.

the evidence at our disposal.[19] And yet, since the *charaktêres* which are so conspicuous in the magical texts and objects of Late Antiquity are of a demonstrably foreign origin, and since their spread within the Graeco-Egyptian magical tradition does not predate the first century BCE or CE, we may safely assume that the Jews of the First and Second Temple periods made no use of these signs in whatever magical texts and artifacts they may have produced. In fact, even the earliest Jewish amulets of Late Antiquity (both written in Greek letters, but containing some transliterated Hebrew words) – the one found in Wales (second century CE?) and the one found in Austria (second or third century CE) still display no magical signs of any sort.[20] It is only from the fourth or fifth century CE that we find Jewish amulets written in Aramaic and Hebrew, produced by Jewish amulet-makers for Jewish and non-Jewish clients, and these often display magical signs.[21] Clearly, the new "pagan" magical technology did not immediately make it into the Jewish magical tradition, and the process of adoption and adaptation probably was slow and gradual.

b) Late Antiquity:

The *charaktêres* may have been slow to enter into the Jewish magical tradition, but once they did enter, they became part and parcel of that tradition, and remain so to this very day. Their foreign origin probably was not lost on many of their earlier Jewish users, as the shape of many of these "ring letters" looked suspiciously close to that of standard Greek letters, but for the circlets at their tips, and as they were known even in the Aramaic and Hebrew magical texts under their Greek name, *charaktêres*, which was borrowed together with the signs themselves.[22] And yet, as these signs did not have any specifically "pagan" connotation, their Jewish users apparently saw nothing wrong in their use, and felt no need to "Judaize" them in any specific manner. Just as they avidly borrowed many other Graeco-Egyptian magical practices, so they borrowed the *charaktêres*, thus enriching their own magical technology and bringing it "up to

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[19] For the Ketef Hinnom amulets, and for the Dead Sea Scrolls magical texts, see Bohak 2008, 30 and 107-112 respectively, with much further bibliography.

[20] For the amulet from Caernarvon (Wales), see Kotansky 1994, 3-12 (No. 2) and Bohak 2003, 74-77. For the amulet from Halbturn (Austria), see Eshel, Eshel, and Lange 2010; Doneus 2010, and all the other articles in the same fascicle of the *Journal of Ancient Judaism*.

[21] For the relative chronology of the published Aramaic amulets, see Eshel and Leiman 2010, and for a fuller survey, see Leiman 2010.

[22] For *charaktêres* which look like Greek letters with ringlets, see, for example AMB, A2, l. 7 (incl. ΧΥ and an inverted lunate *sigma*); AMB, A5, l. 2 (ΧΟΧΟΧ); MSF, A17, l. 10 (ΜΙ); MSF, A19, l.23 (`Χ); MSF, A30 (ΙΚΛΜΝ, which even forms an alphabetic sequence!). For the Aramaic and Hebrew words for *charaktêres*, see AMB, A5 and *Sefer ha-Razim* II/54-55, 100, as noted by Margalioth 1966, 4.

date," as it were, and in line with the magical technology of late antique society as a whole.[23] In a handful of cases, they apparently tried to use Paleo-Hebrew letters as magical signs (see Table 1.7), in line with the great sanctity sometimes accorded to that script from the Second Temple period onwards, but in most other cases, the magical signs they used resembled Greek letters, and – even more clearly – resembled the magical signs found on the Greek magical papyri, on curse-tablets, and on amulets produced by the "pagan" magicians of Late Antiquity.[24]

While the "Western" branch of ancient Jewish magic fully absorbed this magical technology, its "Eastern" branch, as represented by the Aramaic incantation bowls from Sasanian Babylonia, was much less exposed to this Graeco-Egyptian technology, and the presence of *charaktêres* on these magical artifacts indeed is very rare. Unfortunately, no attempt has ever been made to catalogue and analyze the magical signs found on all the bowls written in Jewish Aramaic (most of which are still unpublished), but a recent catalogue of 122 images found on the bowls reveals only 3 bowls with magical signs, and my own impression is that this is an accurate reflection of the rarity of such signs on the published incantation bowls, and on those unpublished bowls to which I have had any access.[25] Thus, a magical technology that became popular among the Jews of Palestine and the western Diaspora in Late Antiquity reached even their Mesopotamian-based brethren, but apparently gained far less popularity among them. However, as it is mostly the "Western" branch of ancient Jewish magic that survived into the Middle Ages, the *charaktêres* became even more conspicuous in the later periods, as we shall note below.[26]

c) The Middle Ages – The Lands of Islam:
While in the study of Jewish magic in Late Antiquity a useful distinction can be made between a "Western" and an "Eastern" branch, or that which flourished in the Graeco-Roman world and that which flourished in the Sasanian empire, in

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[23] For this process, see the detailed discussion in Bohak 2008, 227-290.

[24] Unfortunately, no attempt has ever been made to collect all the *sequences* of magical signs displayed by ancient Jewish magical texts and to compare them in a comprehensive manner with similar sequences found in the "pagan" magical texts of Late Antiquity.

[25] See Vilozny 2010, where *charaktêres* may be found only on bowl Nos. 75, 80, 120. A few other magical signs, which look quite different from the standard *charaktêres*, are found in a bowl published in Geller 1980 (his Bowl A) (the same set of magical signs is found on a bowl published by Levene 2003, M107, as he notes *ibid.*, 28 and 62), and in a bowl published in Bohak and Levene forthcoming. For possible comparanda, see above, n. 16. For more examples, see Hunter 2000, 172.

[26] For the continuity from late antique Palestinian Jewish magic to the Middle Ages, see Bohak 2009.

the Middle Ages the new political and religious realities engendered a new bifurcation of the Jewish magical tradition. In the Middle Ages, one can easily distinguish between the Jewish magical tradition as it developed in the lands where Islam was the reigning religion, and that which developed in the lands of Christendom. And just as in the earlier period the two branches of the Jewish magical tradition display some mutual influence, but also much independence, so in the Middle Ages one can easily point to the move of magical practices and magical spells from the Jews of the Muslim world to those of the Christian world and vice versa, and yet the two branches also remain quite distinct. It is for this reason that I begin with the magical signs found on the magical texts and artifacts of the Jews of the Muslim world, and only then turn to those of the Jews of medieval Christian Europe.

The best starting point for the study of Jewish magic in the Arabic-speaking lands of Islam is provided by the Cairo Genizah, the used-paper store room of a medieval synagogue, with its 200,000 parchment and paper fragments, of which more than a thousand contain magical recipes, amulets, curses, and other magic-related texts.[27] Looking at these magical texts, one is struck by the ubiquity of magical signs, which clearly fall in two distinct groups. On the one hand, we find the age-old *charaktêres*, which seem to have been transmitted smoothly from Late Antiquity to medieval Cairo, and often look in the Genizah magical texts just as they did half a millennium or more earlier. That at least some of the copyists of the magical signs were quite conscientious in their copying may even be seen from one specific example, namely, a group of inscribed clay shards from late antique Palestine that were produced for erotic magical aims according to a recipe which kept on circulating in the Jewish magical tradition for another millennium and a half. While the latest copies of this recipe display no *charaktêres*, in at least one Genizah copy, dating to the eleventh or twelfth century, the recipe includes some *charaktêres*, and these match quite well with what has been preserved on the clay shards, dating to the sixth or seventh century. Thus, we can show that at least some of the recipe's many copyists and users were quite careful when copying the magical signs it employed – in fact, careful enough that the signs remained recognizably similar even after five centuries of continuous transmission.[28] It must be stressed, however, that not all copyists were as careful as we might expect them to be – if we assume, as they must have assumed, that for a magical recipe to work it must be copied very carefully – since in many other cases we can point to the faulty

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[27] For a fuller breakdown of the Genizah fragments relating to magic, astrology, divination and alchemy, see Bohak 2010b.

[28] For the Horvat Rimmon shards and the many later copies of the magical recipe according to which they were produced, see Bohak 2008, 156-158, 271.

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transmission of magical recipes from one practitioner to another.[29] Thus, when we look at three versions of the same "path jumping" recipe (i.e., to travel long distances in a short period of time) found in three different Genizah fragments, we can see many overlaps between the *charaktêres* they display, but also many differences, clearly demonstrating how textual transmission often entailed extensive textual transformation.[30]

Another interesting process which can be documented in the Genizah fragments is the attempt, whose earliest history has yet to be elucidated, to "decipher" the *charaktêres*, or to develop new mystical and magical alphabets by providing the supposed Hebrew equivalent of each *charaktêr*.[31] There clearly were many different attempts to produce such alphabets, and these attempts were in no way limited to the Jewish magicians only.[32] The end result often was presented as the "alphabet of Metatron," the "writing system of Gabriel," and so on, and with the passage of time, the number of alphabets grew almost exponentially, as we shall presently see.

In addition to the *charaktêres*, the magical texts from the Cairo Genizah, and especially those written in Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic (i.e., Arabic written in Hebrew letters) also display a plethora of "Siegel", or "string letters," which clearly were borrowed by the Jews of the Orient in the Middle Ages from their Muslim neighbors. This borrowing is a part of a much wider phenomenon, namely, the extensive absorption into the Jewish magical of numerous elements of Muslim-Arabic magic, an absorption that was greatly facilitated by the Jews' routine use of Arabic, the language of their host society.[33] Thus, to give just one specific example, two unpublished Genizah fragments which belong to the same quire (T-S K 1.113 + T-S Ar. 43.116) contain parts of a longer text, which is titled "Holy Names for each month," and provides instructions for magical practices for each month of the Muslim year, each recipe accompanied by the special magical signs that belong to that specific month. The signs themselves consist of rectangular "seals" produced by joining together the typical "string letters" of the Arabic magical tradition (see, for example, the magical seal of the month Muharram, in Table 1.4), and the text itself clearly is a Muslim

[29] And see Bohak 2008, 145-148, on the "textual entropy" evident in many Jewish magical texts. For the transmission of magical signs and designs from one language to another, see Burnett 2007.

[30] The three recipes may be found in T-S NS 322.19 and T-S Ar.43.91, whose *characktêres* are virtually identical, and T-S AS 142.28, whose *charaktêres* clearly resemble those of the other two, and yet are quite different. Elsewhere, I hope to publish all three fragments.

[31] For a typical example, from the Cairo Genizah, see Bohak 2008, 275.

[32] For some Arabic comparanda, see Hammer 1806, 35-36 and Fahd 1975.

[33] A detailed study of this process has yet to be written; for a starting point, see Bohak forthcoming.

magical text, transliterated by its Jewish users in Hebrew characters, and perhaps slightly modified by them to suit their own needs. There are many more fragments in the Cairo Genizah with Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic magical texts that employ such "string letters," and in some cases we even find both *charaktêres* and "string letters" on the same magical fragment.[34]

While the Cairo Genizah is the best source for the study of early medieval Jewish magic, the study of later Jewish magic in the lands of Islam is greatly facilitated by non-Genizah manuscripts as well, including several very large manuscripts, with hundreds of magical recipes each. In such manuscripts – and, more specifically, in MS New York Public Library Heb. 190 (olim MS Sassoon 56), written in the 1460s, and in MS Geneva 145 (olim MS Sassoon 290), written in the early 16th century – one finds numerous magical signs, which have yet to receive the attention they deserve.[35] But even a cursory survey of these magical signs reveals a large variety of both *charaktêres* and "string letters," as well as the series of seven magical signs which circulated in the Muslim magical tradition under the name of the "Seal of Solomon." One also finds an almost endless variety of "alphabets of angels," often copied one after the other and making one wonder what exactly their users made of all these supposedly secret scripts, which seem to have been of no use whatsoever in deciphering the actual *charaktêres* found in dozens of magical recipes within the very same manuscripts. And while a full analysis of all these magic signs might shed more light on their transmission history, one point may already be made with certainty, namely, that at least in some cases, the copyists of the magical recipes did so with a great deal of care. Thus, to give one specific example, a magical spell from the Cairo Genizah, written on cloth and intended to make a certain man named Tarshakin son of Amat-Allah love a certain woman named Ghadab, daughter of Tuffaha (T-S AS 142.174, published as AMB, G1), displays *charaktêres* that are almost identical with those displayed by a recipe found in MS NYPL Heb. 190, page 181, lines 21-26, and preserving ritual instructions very similar to those according to which the Genizah piece of cloth must have been produced (see Table 3). As the Genizah piece dates to the 12th or the 13th century, and the magical recipe book dates to the 1460s, it is clear that this recipe was more-or-less faithfully copied, together with its *charaktêres*, for at least

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[34] For example, Mosseri VI 9,3, a small fragment from a magical recipe book, contains both types of magical signs. Similar mixtures may be found in Muslim and in Christian magical texts – see, for example, Delatte 1927, 104.

[35] I am currently preparing a complete edition of the former manuscript, to be published shortly. For the latter manuscript, see Benayahu 1972. For some of its magical signs, see Weinstock 1981, 53.

two or three centuries, and possibly for much longer.[36] As with the Horvat Rimmon shards, here too we see, though much more clearly, that the magical signs found in Jewish magical recipes usually were not an *ad hoc* invention, but the result of the copying, and gradual corruption, of the magical signs found in older copies of the same recipe.[37] This, of course, is why some of the *charaktêres* in this specific example still look suspiciously similar to like Greek uncial letters (for example, Ε, Τ, Η, and the lunate *sigma*).

Before leaving the world of Oriental Jewish magic, one more comment is in order. As we shall see below, in medieval Ashkenaz there was a great interest in the "alphabets of angels" and their decipherment. Apparently, one medieval Jewish mystic also received from Oriental Jewish sources the seven magical signs which often went under the name of the "Seal of Solomon," and offered an elaborate explanation of each of these signs. This explanation then circulated far and wide, and may still be read in MS NYPL Heb. 190, which includes several occurrences of this series of seven signs (e.g., on page 65), as well as their mystical interpretation (on pages 146-7). In both cases, the signs are slightly different from those which may be seen in Table 1.5 below, but the similarity is close enough to assure us that they are, in fact, a partly-garbled version of the same series. Further research will no doubt shed more light on the origins of this intriguing text, and on its transmission history within the Jewish magical and mystical traditions.

d) The Middle Ages – The Lands of Christiandom:
Of all the magical signs found in the Jewish magical tradition, those found in the European Jewish magical manuscripts of the Middle Ages are the most neglected by scholars, not least because many of the older publications on medieval Jewish magic were not accompanied by good photographs of the manuscripts in question. Thus, the following remarks are bound to remain tentative, at least until a fuller survey of all the relevant manuscripts is undertaken by competent scholars. And yet, even a cursory survey suffices to note that the *charaktêres* were well-known to, and well-used by, the Jewish magicians of medieval Europe, and they appear in numerous Jewish magical manuscripts from medieval Ashkenaz (Germany and Northern France), from Spain, and from Italy. Moreover, in addition to the older *charaktêres*, one can see the entry into the Jewish magical tradition of new magical signs, clearly borrowed by the

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[36] I am grateful to Judith Olszowy-Schlanger and to Edna Engel for dating the Genizah fragment for me.

[37] However, here too the copyists' accuracy should not be overrated; a look at two parallel recipes in MS NYPL Heb. 190, page 100, lines 24-31 and Sassoon 290, page 492, no. 1,702, reveals two very different sets of magical signs, with only some overlaps.

Jews from their Christian neighbors. Thus, when we look, for example, at a collection of astro-magical recipes found in fols. 141-144 of manuscript Munich Heb. 214, written in an Ashkenazi hand of the 15th century, we note some elaborate seals of planets and angels – seals that are made up of rectangular frames inside which are strewn elaborate magical signs, some of which have rings at their tips but most of which do not. These seals look very different from those found in most Oriental Jewish magical manuscripts, but look very much like the seals found in Latin, Christian magical texts of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.[38] Similar seals may be found in manuscript Moscow Guenzburg 738 (for example, on fol. 142), written in a 15th-century Italian hand, and presumably in other European Jewish magical manuscripts as well. In a few cases, these new magical signs even made it to the Jews of the lands of Islam (presumably, especially after the Spanish Expulsion of the Jews in 1492), and they may be found even on some late amulets from the Cairo Genizah.[39] The same is true of a slightly different type of seals, namely, the elaborate circular seals, usually associated with the seven planets, that appear frequently in Christian magical texts and may also be found in the Jewish ones. As a typical example, we may take manuscript Lehmann 343, an 18th-century Moroccan-Jewish manuscript, which includes the seals of the seven planets, with several seals for each planet (see Table 2).[40] Each of these seals is made up of two concentric circles, between which and inside which are strewn various signs and symbols, including geometric designs, *charaktêres*, "Hebrew *charaktêres*," magical words and Names written in the regular Hebrew script, and so on. A comparison of these seals with the seals of the seven planets found in Christian magical texts of the Renaissance would no doubt show that they were borrowed from Christian sources, but probably also transformed along the way, in order to make them look more Jewish than their Christian counterparts.[41]

In addition to the copying of older magical signs and the borrowing of new ones, some Jews of medieval Europe were also interested in deciphering them. As we already noted, the production of "angelic alphabets" was quite common in the Middle Ages, and its origins probably lie in the lands of Islam. The Jews of Europe received such alphabets, invented new ones, and in some cases wrote detailed commentaries explaining why each of these signs looks the way it

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[38] For these comparanda, see above, nn. 10-11.

[39] For a case in point, see the two seals in T-S K 1.152, published by Schiffman and Swartz 1992, 138. T-S K 1.9 is a magical handbook, written in a late hand, and containing such seals (see Table 1.6) side-by-side with the more standard *charaktêres*.

[40] These seals are beautifully reproduced in Hallamish 1988, 187-192.

[41] For another example, see the many magical signs in the manuscript published in Gollancz 1914.

does. One such explanation, published by Israel Weinstock, has recently been identified by Moshe Idel as coming from the pen of Nehemiah ben Shlomo, the mystical prophet of Erfurt of the 13th century.[42] Such interpretations must have done much to convince their Kabbalistically-minded readers of the great sanctity and legitimacy of the various "angelic alphabets" that they found in older manuscripts of Jewish magic, but most Jewish magicians probably had no need for such long-winded interpretations. For them, the great appeal of the *charaktêres* lay in their powers, vouchsafed by generations of copyists and users of the Jewish magical tradition; their supposed mystical meanings were of secondary importance only.

Before ending our survey, let me add a brief word on the use of magical signs in Modern Jewish magic, up to the very present. With the invention of printing, and its gradual use for the wide dissemination of more and more types of Jewish texts, many Jewish magical texts were printed, often in numerous editions, and many are still being printed in present-day Israel. Looking at these books, be they the numerous editions of *Sefer Raziel* (first printed in 1701), or the lesser-known specimens within this genre, we are sure to run into some magical signs, all of which will look familiar to readers of the above survey.[43] But whereas in printed editions these magical signs sometimes are less frequently attested (due either to technical difficulties in printing them, or to the editors' own choice), when we look in Modern Jewish magical manuscripts, which were still being copied (mostly in the lands of the Ottoman Empire and its heirs, where – for political reasons – printing was slow to gain acceptance) up to the twentieth century, we find as many magical signs as in the older Jewish magical manuscripts. Thus, when we leaf through a manuscript of Jewish magic copied by a Kurdish-Jewish sage ca. 1896 and faithfully printed by his grandson in present-day Israel, we find a whole range of *charaktêres* and "string letters," and the same is true for many of the amulets and manuscripts that some of my students bring to my seminars at Tel Aviv University, amulets and manuscripts that were brought by their parents or grandparents, from Yemen, Morocco, Iraq, and so on.[44] A similar mixture of magical signs may be found on many of the Jewish magical objects assembled in a recent exhibition devoted to Jewish magic and demonology, and covering the entire Jewish

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[42] Weinstock 1981; Idel 2007.

[43] Note, for example, *Sefer Raziel*, fol. 41a (a sequence of *charaktêres*, looking like the Greek letters XMH/NX), 44a-b (numerous *charaktêres*, many of which look like Greek letters, and some "Hebrew *charaktêres*"); see also Trachtenberg 1939, between page 140 and 141, for a reproduction of the magical signs from *Sefer Raziel*, fol. 44b.

[44] For the Kurdish-Jewish manuscript, see Meiri 1998.

magical tradition, from Antiquity to Modernity.[45] A study of Jewish magical signs is, in other words, not merely an antiquarian enterprise, or a study in Jewish history, but an attempt to analyze an aspect of Jewish culture that is still alive and well today, and is likely to remain so for many years to come.

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[45] As may also be seen from the excellent catalogue, Vukosavović 2010.

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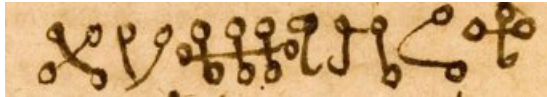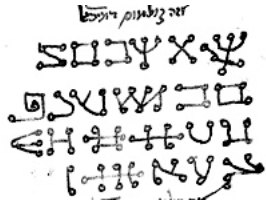
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Table 1: Types of magical signs in Jewish magical texts:

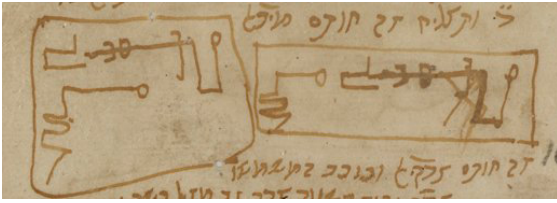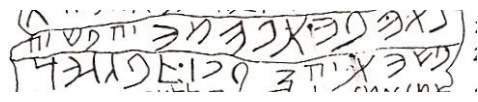| 1.1 *Charaktêres* (from NYPL 190, page 140)	
1.2 The "Alphabet of Michael," with 23 letters (from Sassoon 290, page 566)	
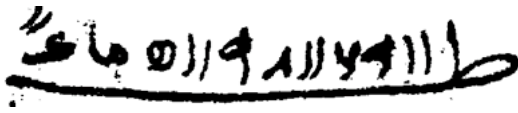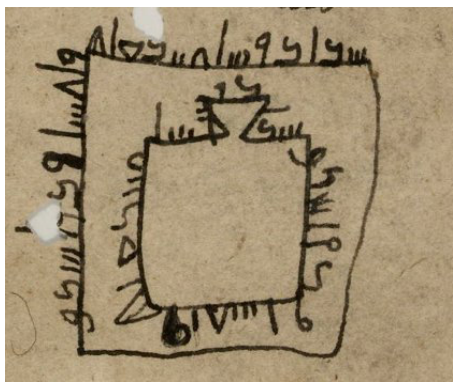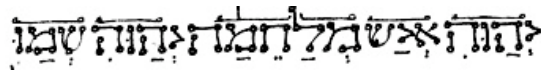
1.3 "String letters" (from CUL Or. 1080.14.13)	
1.4 A "seal" made of "string letters" (from T-S K 1.113)	
1.5 The Arabic "Seal of Solomon" (from Winkler 1930, 59)	
1.6 The seals of Michael and Zidkiel (from T-S K 1.9)	
1.7 "Paleo-Hebrew" signs (from AMB, A4 ll. 21-22)	
1.8 "Hebrew *charaktêres*" (from Sassoon 290, page 224)	

Table 2: Planetary seals of Christian origin in Jewish magical texts (from Hallamish 1988, 191):

The seal of Mercury	The seal of Venus

Table 3: Faithfully copying the *charaktêres*:

Charaktêres from AMB, G1 = T-S AS 142.174	
Charaktêres from NYPL 190, page 181, line 23	

THE RULES OF THE GAME:
CONSTRUCTING POWER IN RHIZOTOMIC PRACTICE

BY RICHARD GORDON

Abstract: The growth of contemporary interest in ethnobiology and -botany legitimates an attempt to historicise the activities and claims of ancient rhizotomists, 'root-cutters', i.e. individuals who made themselves specially knowledgeable about the medicinal and other values of plants (mainly wild) and animal-parts. These men and women hardly formed a coherent group in fact, but may be treated as such for heuristic purposes. One model for historicising them is to locate them between family or household medicine on the one hand, and the increasingly complex market in health-care that developed in the Greek world from the fifth century BCE, and continued to grow in complexity throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods. We can suggest two ways in which rhizotomists responded to this market pressure: experimentation and the construction of the marvellous through complex rules of collection. These rules covered gathering, body movements, offerings to the herb or the earth, addresses to the herb, and close temporal specifications – these latter lent themselves in turn to exploitation by literate rhizotomists in terms of occult schemes. We may use Searle's distinction between regulative and constitutive rules to interpret these moves.

Keywords: Ancient iatromagic, ancient ethnobotany, rhizotomists, markets in healing, rationality, of magical practice, rules for plant-collection

"Pour décrire les parties constitutives et les propriétés des végétaux, les Hanunóo on plus de cent cinquante termes, qui connotent les catégories en fonction desquelles ils identifient les plantes, 'et discutent entre eux des centaines de caractères qui les distinguent, et souvent correspondent à des propriétés significatives, tant médicinales qu'alimentaires.' "[1] Awareness of the familiarity

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of indigenous peoples with the flora and fauna of their environment, the basis of Lévi-Strauss' notion of 'la science du concret', has given rise to entire fields of modern study, including ethnobotany, ethnobiology and ethnomedicine.[2] In the case of small hunter-gatherer peoples and primary agriculturalists, we may take it for granted that knowledge of significant local flora and fauna, their culturally-specific uses and (ascribed) properties, as well as techniques for their harvesting and maintenance, is widespread among adults.[3] Since the decline of structuralist dichotomies ('nature' versus 'culture'), and with the massive ecological degradation of recent years, much interest has come to focus on 'symbolic ecology', the interrelation between the bio-geographic environment, cosmological views and cultural praxis.[4] Moreover, in the highly politicised area of modern anthropology, an intensive discussion over intellectual property-rights has developed, particularly in cases, such as the dimorphin-related peptides secreted by the kampô frog in SW Amazonia, where local entrepreneurs but also western pharmaceutical companies see chances of profitable exploitation of indigenous technical knowledge.[5]

At the same time, even in small-scale societies, there have usually been individuals, now termed Traditional Medical Practitioners (TMPs), who have succeeded in establishing themselves as especial experts.[6] This is even more clearly the case in relatively complex societies where substantial urbanisation has taken place, although the majority of the population still derives its income from the land.[7] Under this last heading we can include ancient specialists in herbal medicine in the wide sense, which of course includes remedies employing animal parts and substances.[8] Many of these practised as autonomous individuals, others were associated more or less loosely with 'Orphism', with Em-

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[1] Lévi-Strauss 2008, 567. The internal citation is from Conklin 1954, 97. The Hanunóo are a Philippino people inhabiting a small area at the southern end of Mindoro Island.

[2] Most easily charted in the rise of journals such as *Ethnobotany Research and Applications*; *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine*; *Journal of Ethnopharmacology*; *Journal of Ethnobiology*; or *Economic Botany*, some of which are free-access internet publications.

[3] Lenaerts-Spadafora 2008a, 13-16.

[4] E.g. Oliveira 2008.

[5] Kampô frog secretions: Lima 2008; other relevant discussions: Lenaerts 2008; Brightman 2008.

[6] See the recent studies of the case among the Babungo in NW Cameroon by Simbo 2010, and in the Midland area of Zimbabwe by Maroyi 2011.

[7] E.g. Lieban 1967; Buckley 1985; Gimlette 1991; Clapp-Crook 2002; AbouZid-Mohammed 2011; Maroyi 2011.

[8] Cf. Riddle 1987. Dioscorides, *Med.* includes a section on animal parts (2.1-81 = 1: 121-65 Wellmann), though it is usually ignored by modern scholars who study the ancient pharmacopœia, cf. Gordon 2010, 252.

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pedocles, with Thracian Zalmoxis and Abaris.[9] To that extent, the notion of rhizotomist tends to dissolve into numerous different sub-specialisms, themselves changing and adapting over time (a point I return to); but for heuristic purposes I propose here to treat the category as a whole.

Such specialisation co-existed with a widespread awareness within the society at large, mainly due to the responsibility of the head of the family to ensure so far as he could the physical well-being of his entire household, including slaves and livestock, of useful plants, especially medicinally-useful plants and other substances, together with some simple incantations.[10] I take it that contrasts such as those between tame/wild, light/dark varieties were crucial distinguishing criteria in this widespread knowledge of plant-lore – at any rate they are fundamental to Theophrastus' classifications.[11] The preservation and memorisation of such procedures, including actual recipes, formed an important part of the private, household, role of such men. Moreover, because of the concentration of medicinal recipes in the Hippocratic gynaecological treatises, it has become usual now to assume that many ordinary women likewise acquired knowledge of, and practical experience in using, herbal remedies relating to gynaecological problems, including of course obstetric ones.[12]

Questions of rationality

An initial issue that requires some discussion is that of rationality. Two contrasting modern views perhaps require a word or two, the one over-estimating the positive knowledge of the rhizotomic tradition, the other tending to simplify its procedures and reasoning.[13] The first suggests that iatromagical practitioners had much the same attitude as the writers of medical herbals, who usually made an attempt to specify the curative property at least of the relevant part of the plants they listed – styptic, diuretic, emollitive and so on. Even though these properties are often in fact fanciful, such a conception is an important component of a rationalistic medicine.[14] It has often been argued that it was empirical

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[9] Lanata 1967, 46-51; Scarborough 1991; Faraone 2010, 146-52.

[10] Totelin 2009, 96. The *locus classicus* is of course Cato, *De agr.* 156-60; animal-health, e.g. Varro, *De re rust*. II 3, 8: *quaedam scripta habere magistros pecoris* [in this case, goats], *quibus remediis utantur ad morbos quosdam earum ac vulneratum corpus ...*

[11] Cf. Stannard 1982, 16-17.

[12] Following King 1998, 132-33, Totelin 2009, 112-13 expresses some scepticism about this model.

[13] A sensible general discussion in Deininger 1998.

[14] Cf. Stannard 1961, 514-18; Goltz 1966; 1974, 179-94; Harig 1980; Scarborough, 1987a; Scarborough-Nutton 1982, 191-92; Lloyd 1983, 119-35.

knowledge of their effects or properties that lay behind the use of many if not most of the plants in the Graeco-Roman magical tradition.[15] This is a version of a view commonly held in one form or another among folklorists.[16] It may well be true that rhizotomists generally possessed extensive empirical familiarity with the plants they collected – as I have pointed out, the number of plant varieties and uses known to Traditional Medical Practitioners is sometimes astonishing.[17] But empirical knowledge of habitat, appearance and (claimed) properties is by no means the same as the possession of empirical grounds for particular uses.[18] Even today, it is virtually impossible to produce chemically-constant and effective phyto-therapeutic preparations which can be guaranteed to contain no poisonous or allergenic substances, not least because almost nothing is known of the mutual effect of the complex of biologically active substances to be found in any medicinal plant.[19] In 2007 it was reported in the press that the Indian government is proposing to spend about $40 million to assess the country's herbs scientifically, and select those suitable for serious investigation by pharmaceutical companies. Despite the existence of a complex system of traditional medicine, Ayurveda, virtually nothing is known about whether, let alone how, its 80,000 treatments function.[20] *A fortiori*, given the uncontrolled conditions of ancient collection and preparation, with one or two exceptions, it was impossible for rhizotomists to have more than the haziest notions of the effects of particular species.[21] The empirical properties that were considered important in the context of iatromagical praxis were overwhelmingly symbolic ones, which could be evoked in relation to equally symbolic features of afflictions. That is, folk-healers interrogated the natural world for its significance not its use.

There is a contrasting tendency to devalue the reasoning of the folk-magical tradition as well as its empirical plant-lore. Thus a recent commentary on one of the amulets prescribed in the *Cyranides* against bleeding from the anus or from the upper part of the body, which includes a mulberry, observes: "popular

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[15] E.g. Tupet 1976, 56-91; cf. Buechi 1982, 261. Tupet was seriously misled by the fantastic theories of J.-M. Pelt.

[16] E.g. Möse 1967. Münsterer speaks more cautiously of two routes into the pharmacopoeia, "[der] der reinen, oft zufälligen Erfahrung" and "[der] der Überlegung und Spekulation" (1967, 291-92).

[17] See n.7 above.

[18] A distinction rather muffled by Scarborough 1991.

[19] This type of biochemical analysis is however becoming a standard in publications such as *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* and *Economic Botany*.

[20] *The Economist* no. 8542, Aug. 18-24th (2007) p. 67.

[21] This was certainly also the case with the recipes in the Hippocratic Corpus: Totelin 2009, 111-39.

medicine, seeing blood in the mulberries' colour, believed it would be helpful against haemorrhages".[22] Such an inference does justice neither to the empirical knowledge nor to the powers of reason of rhizotomists. Indeed its main ideological function is to reinforce the preconception that magical thinking is loose, fuzzy, muddled if not down-right silly. Cognitively, it rests upon the conviction that the analogies and correspondences discovered by the antique versions of the 'Doctrine of signatures' were held in themselves to be the basis of curative property.[23] Although there are indeed cases in which this is true, as often as not the claim is a convenient over-simplification.[24] The chief difficulty in arriving at a more nuanced view is of course the elliptical and transmutative mode of reasoning typical of rhizotomic medicine.

There seem to me to be two fundamental questions regarding rhizotomist practice. The first relates to the rationality of the practitioners' use of substances taken from the natural world, the degree to which it would have been possible for a competent individual to give an account of why he prescribed a given recipe in a particular case, of the nature of the match between perceived problem and solution. Such an account would be rational if it fulfilled two minimal conditions: if it were not self-contradictory, and if it were not to contradict either local 'common-sense' factual knowledge or local specialist factual knowledge. All modern anthropological accounts of herbalists' preparations suggest that they are, in general, rational in this sense, and we should not expect Graeco-Roman, or Graeco-Egyptian, preparations to be different.[25] The only *pharmaka* of which no account whatever could be given are the miraculous – and decidedly elusive – concoctions which appear in the wider social discourse about the meaning and location of magic, notably in literary accounts of magical activity,[26] and the occultists' *mirabilia*, beginning with the plant the gods name *moly*.[27] Neither has substantial roots in a practical tradition, though the latter excited the minds of literate practitioners from a relatively early period.[28] The limits of rationality here are to be found in the social pressures favouring bluff.[29]

[22.]Waegemann 1987, 97 on *Cyran.* 1, 12 pp.70-72 Kaimakis.

[23] Cf. Amigües 1995.

[24.]Cf. Stannard 1982, 14-15 for three simple cases; for others, see Gordon 2007.

[25.]Croizier 1968; Endicott 1970; Buckley 1985; Clapp-Crook 2002. It may of course be that the TMPs selected, the anthropologists' informants, tend to be particularly intelligent and able exponents of their art.

[26] Cf. Fauth 1999, 114.

[27] Homer, *Od.* 10, 281-306. See p. 9. below.

[28] Stannard 1962 provides an exhaustive account of ancient enquiries into the identity of *moly*; cf. André 1958, 234-41; Ducourthial 2003, 127-33.

[29] Lloyd 1987, 15, 28, 109 etc.; 1990, 79.

The second question concerns the type of account that rhizotomists, granted that this is not a uniform category, were capable of giving of the sources of the power of the natural items (in our sense) they used. In my view, wise women, if comparative evidence is anything to go by, felt no need to provide such second-order explanations. But pressure upon rhizotomists to give some sort of an account of their practice does seem to become perceptible as the field of medical service became more diverse – in other words, as competition increased and the authority to intervene became a contested domain. Within the area of iatro-magical practice itself, one type of competition for rhizotomists came from purifiers and diagnosticians of daemonic attack, who disposed of a completely different nosology and treatment. Other types are represented by the Asclepiads specialising in (aristocratic) wounds sustained in sport and war; the appearance of itinerant *iatroi* in the late Archaic period, who sold their services from city to city, and some of whom came to serve as public physicians, as in late fifth-century Athens (e.g. Plato, *Gorg.* 456bc);[30] the rise of healing hero-cults, among which that of Asklepios ultimately became massively dominant, progressively expanding to absorb dozens of purely local healing shrines; and finally the rather diverse type of medical practice based on explicit theories – whatever their relation to the actual treatment procedures and dietetics – we know as Hippocratic, with the corpus of texts assembled in the Alexandrian period, which attempted vigorously to shoulder other practices aside, particularly as regards wealthier patients.[31] In the course of time, the "corrupting" Mediterranean brought new authoritative forms of healing cult, such as that of Serapis,[32] new types of magical information from Babylonia and Egypt,[33] the practice of individual thaumaturges, and Jewish specialisms such as exorcism.[34] All this of course within the wider context of the very considerable socio-political and socio-economic changes that took place in Antiquity, with their long-term implications for literacy and discursivity.

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[30] On Demodocus of Croton, see Squillace 2008.

[31] A competent résumé in Wickkiser 2008, 7-50, irrespective of her rather odd thesis in chaps. 5-6. I am also less than persuaded of her thesis that the rise of temple medicine correlates with the interest of Hippocratic medicine in announcing its limitations – i.e. the incurable went to the temple.

[32] Bricault 2008. For "corrupting", see Horden-Purcell 2000, 342-400.

[33] Gordon 1997, 131-39; Dickie 1999.

[34] Sfameni Gasparro 2008.

Historicising rhizotomic practice

Although it is usually dismissed as a mere archaic survival, trapped in traditionalist aspic, changes to rhizotomic traditions did indeed occur, particularly in the relation between practitioner and patients and in the discursive forms employed, even if we are hardly in a position to write a proper historical account. Theophrastus, for example, makes clear that much of the information about plants and their properties at the disposal of the Peripatetics in the fourth century BCE was supplied directly or indirectly by *pharmakopôleis* at (regular) markets, some of whom, such as Thaseas of Mantinea and his pupil Alexias, and an earlier Eudemus active in Athens in the early fourth century BCE, certainly experimented with their effects.[35] Some later rhizotomists, such as Crateuas, were highly literate and even provided colour illustrations of the plants they wrote about.[36] The market-situation in an important city, and the accompanying need to drum-up trade, created a situation very different from the ideal-typical conception of the practical herbalist operating as an acknowledged expert in, say, a Thessalian village. By Theophrastus' time, moreover, it was possible to construct on the basis of previous written collections, a fairly detailed herbalist map of the eastern Mediterranean.[37] Even though it remained to a large extent a knowledge-*practice*, transmitted through apprenticeship and practical training, botanico-medical knowledge thus tended to become in addition a textual knowledge, and could thus be subjected to various forms of distortion and sclerosis, for example in the creation of handy but standardising, often alphabetical lists,[38] the indiscriminate multiplication of applications (familiar from modern popular hand-books of medicinal herbs),[39] or the composition of written recipes, which, as Totelin has rightly suggested, are by no means identical to the underlying orally-transmitted knowledge.[40] It has plausibly been argued that elements of rhizotomic lore were absorbed and 'purged' by the Hippocratic tradition.[41] Another important form of distortion, to which I shall return, is the imposition of explicit occultist schemes, such as the idea of sym-

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[35] Theophr., *HP* IX 16, 8-9; 17,2-3; Aristophanes, *Plut.* 884; cf. Robert 1907, 903-04 no.16; Scarborough 1978; Samama 2006.

[36] The testimonia and fragments in Diosc., *Med.* vol. 3, 139-46 ed. Wellmann. For later iatro-magical texts surviving on papyrus, see De Haro Sánchez 2004.

[37] Theophr., *HP* VI 3, 1-3; 9, 15-16.

[38] Dioscorides, *Med.* Praef. 3 (= Wellmann 1, p. 2 ll.12-15) comments on the disadvantages of alphabetic ordering.

[39] A good example in Borengässer 1998.

[40] Totelin 2009, 18; see also the discussion of *Culpeper's Complete Herbal* (first ed. 1649) by Goody 1977, 60-62.

[41] Stannard 1961; Scarborough 1987a; Laskaris 1999.

pathy versus antipathy, or correlations with astronomical and astrological considerations and/or formal schemes. Neither, in my view, had any place in rhizotomic practice until literate schemes came to have some limited impact in the late Roman period.[42]

I want however to go beyond these familiar points to argue that as rhizotomic practice experienced pressure from competing types of healing practice in the fifth and fourth centuries, and increasingly thereafter, it responded in two major ways. One, as we have seen in the cases of Eudemus and Thaseas, was to attempt to defend their authority as experts by public, indeed advertised, resort to experimental proof of their claims. The second was to concentrate their claims to special authority on selected real plants commonly used in healing procedures at a variety of levels. As Ducourthial argues:

Le seconde ensemble est composé des plantes communes, fréquemment employées comme plantes médicinales, mais censées posséder des vertus supérieures à celles qui leur sont généralement prêtées ou encore des propriétés d'une autre nature. Ces plantes ne sont pas magiques par essence, elles le deviennent si elles ont été récoltées en respectant des prescriptions minutieuses, inspirées par des considérations propres à la magie, et si elles sont utilisées suivant un mode d'emploi particulier.[43]

The second strategy, in other words, picked up from the social discourse about magical phenomena the idea of marvellous or magical herbs, whose efficacy was as unbounded as the plants were unidentifiable, and used it to enhance the status of selected real plants. These then became correspondingly hard to find: the lengthy tour of the famous Thessalian locations of magical plants undertaken by Ovid's Medea hyperbolically exaggerates a subjective herbalist claim.[44] From the practitioner's point of view, collecting the ingredients – and especially the herbs and plants – useful for healing (but also for malign purposes) came to be difficult and fraught with danger. In other words the claim that plants had 'magical powers' was initially a device taken over from the social discourse about magic in order to lend greater authority to rhizotomists' claims in the increasingly complex market for healing.[45] And it took an entirely

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[42] Contrast Nasemann 1990, 106, who claims that the scheme of sympathy/antipathy was "[eine] vor allem im Volksglauben verbreitete Annahme".

[43] Ducourthial 2003, 121.

[44] Ovid, *Met.* VII 220-36 Tarrant; cf. Hopfner 1921-24, 1 §464 and Bömer's commentary *ad loc*. The herbs listed in the derivative passage, Seneca, *Medea* 707-27, come from all over the world, including Germany (Suebi), Baetica and the Caucasus (derived from Apoll. Rhod., *Arg.* III 851-7, 864-66 – which may itself refer to Sophocles' *Rhizotomoi*, cf. R. L. Hunter *ad loc.*). Seneca does not however specify how they fell into Medea's hands.

[45] Cf. Buckley 1985, 140: "It is important to note that medicines [among the Yoruba of southern Nigeria] which have an incantation or which contain a ritual, do not differ from those

appropriate form for such a knowledge-practice, namely the further elaboration of the rituals prescribed for the collection of selected plants, rituals whose over-all effect was now to construct their imputed magical efficacy. In effect then, this second response to the market situation involved infringing the rationality-rule about not contradicting local 'common-sense'.

Rituals of separation

We may distinguish five groups of such special rhizotomic rules in relation to the collection of plants.[46] In what follows, it has proved impossible effectively to separate material gleaned from the social discourse about magical practice, which is always evaluative and distorting, from more or less neutral historical material.

a. Gathering techniques

Ovid's Medea is allowed to choose between two methods of collecting her choice herbs, between pulling up whole and snipping off: ...*placitas* (i.e. *herbas*) *partim radice revellit, partim succidit curvamine falcis aenae*.[47] In this representation there are two main alternatives: cutting (i.e. severing the stalk with a sharp instrument, without the roots) and pulling or digging up whole (i.e. together with the roots). The ideological basis of such parodic agriculture being obvious, it has been claimed that the most usual method was plucking with the hand.[48] "La plante magique par excellence", *moly*, is said in an authorial inter-vention to be χαλεπὸν δέ τ᾽ ὀρύσσειν ἀνδράσι γε θνητοῖσι, 'hard to grub up, for mortals at any rate' (*Od.* 10, 305-06), which implies that the choice between cutting and digging up was already of importance to herbalists, and thus widely known. Later stories about *moly* chose to elaborate upon precisely this feature of the Homeric representation. Pliny, for example, recounts that he had met a *peritus herbarum medicus*, a medical practitioner experienced in the use of plant-drugs, who told him that a specimen could easily be brought to him (Pliny) from Campania since it had recently been dug up – with a root thirty feet long, and that broken short because the ground was so stony.[49]

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that do not."

[46.] The standard, though now more or less unreadable, account of these rules is Delatte 1938; Martini 1977 is much better. For the sake of simplicity, I omit the large question of the collection of animal parts.

[47] Ovid, *Met.* VII 226-27.

[48.] Delatte 1938, 130.

[49.] *Nat.* XXV 27. Pliny's story seems to be an attempt to reconcile the disagreement between

The decision not to cut provided scope for further distinctions which could then become the basis of new (arbitrary) rules: 'plucking', 'digging up', 'tapping' and so on. Each of these options might itself generate further possible distinctions. For example, 'digging up' could be distinguished from 'up-rooting'. 'Up-rooting' could in turn be subdivided into 'up-rooting with the hand' and 'up-rooting without being touched by hand'. Another variation focuses upon a contrast between 'plucking (by hand)' and 'biting off': thus leaves of mint may be bitten off the plant in the kitchen-garden and chewed to cure ailments of the spleen.[50] And finally there might be a different rule for collecting one part, such as the the root, from that for collecting others, say the stem or the leaves.[51]

The opposite pole of the basic distinction was also rewarding, in relation to the instrument to be used for cutting. First, there might be a question of the metal to be used. Although it is often claimed that bronze alone was appropriate, this is yet another instance of a modern pseudo-rule – the text chiefly cited is always the same: Macrobius, *Sat.* V 19,7-11. Macrobius here sets out to answer a particular question, why does Vergil at *Aen.* IV 513 specify that bronze sickles (*aeneae falces*) had been used to cut the herbs with which Dido attempted to quell her passion? Part of his answer consists in citing another passage which is always quoted in this connection, a fragment by Sophocles from the lost *Rhizotomoi*.[52] But in fact the poetic tradition is far from unanimous about the issue of metal, and the documentary evidence from outside the poetic tradition suggests that it is quite arbitrary whether a recipe did or did not specify the metal of the utensil to be used or avoided.[53] There is certainly no reason to use an argument from silence: that where no mention is made of a rule, there we should assume that (say) iron was to be avoided.[54] It was only in the poetic

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the Homeric tradition that it was hard to dig up and those who were inclined to identify the plant with *panakeia*, which Theophrastus says was not at all difficult to dig up (*HP* IX 15.7).

[50.] Pliny, *Nat.* XX 151.

[51.] Alexander of Tralles, 2 p. 585 Puschmann.

[52.] *TrGF* 3, frg. 534. 6-7. The other text always cited is Ovid, *Met.* VII 226-27 (already quoted); for others, see Pease on Vergil, *Aen.* IV 513.

[53.] For the poetic tradition, see Tupet 1976, 39-43. The Graeco-Egyptian magical papyri, though not concerned with root-cutting, also reveal arbitrary differences in respect of the metal to be employed for rings, pots, knives and *lamellae.* Equally arbitrary are the religious prohibitions upon particular metals which are no doubt the source of the rhizotomists' rules: Le Roy 1986, 286ff.

[54.] The herbalist tradition certainly sometimes specified that iron should not be used for specific purposes: for example, rings formed from myrtle twigs untouched by iron cure swellings of the testicles (Pliny, *Nat.* XV 124); the power of *dracunculus* is greater if it is not touched by iron (XXIV 149). But these injunctions should not be generalised, as they are, e.g. by Hopfner 1921-24, 1, §599f., since they are mere options in constructing a far more extensive set of rules. It is the set that counts in the construction of the praxis, not the individual details.

tradition that the authority of Sophocles caused local colour to be taken as a general rule; and there the pseudo-rule had its own function as an ingredient of the stereotype of the outlandishness of magical practice.[55]

Second, the character of the instrument to be used for cutting. The poetic tradition frequently mentions sickles. This has an obvious resonance, since it presumably refers to the rules for normal agricultural labour, which are inverted or parodied by women (in poetry root-cutters are almost invariably women) collecting potent plants for nefarious purposes.[56] Unfortunately, it is probably merely *ben trovato*, without foundation in the actual practice of rhizotomists; but other substitutes for knives or spades might be called for – an ordinary iron nail, for example,[57] or an animal bone;[58] Seneca's Medea picturesquely uses a fingernail.[59] Alternatively, the number of blades might come into question: should the knife be double or single-bladed?[60]

Implicit in all this is the assumption that one would have at any rate to touch the plant. Once this assumption is made explicit, it can itself become the subject of a negative rule: pick this plant without touching it with your hands. A series of possible methods, and implied narratives, then opens up: the best known is Aelian's account of the collection of the peony with the aid of a ravenous dog.[61] Since the plant is lethal if picked by hand, it must be gathered by means of a ruse. One end of a rope is tied to a starving dog, the other looped 'from as far away as possible' around the base of the plant. When the dog is offered food, it rushes forward, and so uproots the plant; but of course itself dies at once. Once it has killed, the plant is rendered innocuous, set free for a second career, the cure of ailments.[62] The note of parody here is unmistakable.

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[55] Typical of the confident, but quite unfounded, tone of older philological commentary is Austin's remark on *Aen*. IV 513: "Bronze is universal in such a connexion", when all he means is "this is a common literary *topos*". Some amusing consequences follow from the assumption that there was an invariable rule about not using iron in magic: for example, the claim that the reed in Cato, 160 must have been broken manually in order to avoid 'prejudicing' its magical virtue by contact with iron – when the recipe itself immediately afterwards clearly supposes that a knife can be used to cut it (Laughton 1938, 53); or that *ferra* (Seneca, *Medea* 728) must mean "loosely blade, knife" and not "iron (blade)": de Costa, *ad loc.*; Viansino 1993, 577 ad loc. is rightly more cautious.

[56] Apart from the passages of Sophocles and Vergil cited above, see esp. Ovid, *Met*. VII 227 with Bömer's note *ad loc.*; *Ep*. VI 84; V. Fl. VII 364-370 (imitated from Apollonius). Lucan lay claim to superior knowledge by making no reference to sickles at VI 438-91.

[57] Pliny, *Nat*. XXVI 24.

[58] Alexander of Tralles, 2 p. 585 P.

[59] *Medea* 730.

[60] *PGrMag* XIII 92, though in connection with sacrifice not herb-cutting.

[61] *Nat,* XIV 27.

[62] Cf. Gordon 1987, 59-60, 84-86. Another version in Josephus, *BJ* VII 6, 3 (6, 593f. Niese).

b. Body-movements

Another area rewarding for rule-generation was that of body-movement. One of the simplest and most expressive rules is circling the plant a specific number of times, which evidently marks a claim: 'This is a ritual action'.[63] The same end is served by scoring a circle around the plant with a sword.[64] Alternatively, the collector might have to face in a particular cardinal direction, East or West, or in a purely contingent direction, windward.[65] Or one might have to face in two different directions at the same time, the head turned away from the plant, the body towards it.[66] The hand to be used to cut or pluck may also be specified, often the left,[67] as may the fingers to be employed (e.g. thumb and ring-finger).[68] Sometimes sheer difficulty seems to be the aim, as when the use of the ring-fingers alone – identified here, as often elsewhere, as the 'medicinal-fingers' – is specified.[69] Most elaborately, one might have to perform a dance in front of the plant.[70] Finally, a casual event, glancing backwards at the spot, may become the focus of a specific injunction: "do not turn (and look) back after picking the plant".[71] The non-event has, as it were, become a phoneme in the system of (arbitrary) differences which constructs the power assigned to herbs in the rhizotomic tradition.

Diodorus of Tarsus, *De fato* 43, ap. Photius, *Bibl.* p.215a 33-37 (4, 27-28 Henry), elaborates on the theme of 'difficult to collect', but has no space for the dog.

[63.] Cf. Maas 1913; Pax 1957.

[64.] Pliny, *Nat.* XXV 50; cf. XXIII 103; XXV 107. Theophrastus mentions similar rules a couple of times: *HP* IX 8, 7-8.

[65.] East: ibid. IX 8, 5; Pliny, *Nat.* XXV 50; windward: Theophrastus, *HP* IX 8, 8; cf. Scarborough 1978, 359.

[66.] Sophocles, *Rhizotomoi*, *TrGF* 3, frg. 534. 1-2. Macrobius, who quotes the fragment, adds that the aim was to ensure that Medea herself was not killed by the harmful *effluvium* from the plants, *ne vi noxii odoris ipsa interficeretur* (*Sat.* V 19, 9). Such naturalizing 'explanations' constitute third-order protection again recognition of the arbitrariness of the rules.

[67.] Left: Pliny, *Nat.* XXI 143 (*iris* or *xyris*); 176 (*parthenium*); XXII 50 (Magi: leaf of *pseudoanchusa*); XXIII 103 (quince root); XXV 107 (*verbenaca*); XXVI 24 (*sideritis*); Marcellus of Bordeaux, *Med.* XIV 52 [1:242.22f. N-L] (grape, to protect the uvula); XXVI 41 [2:436.34-35] (*artemisia*, cf. Meid 1996, 24). Where the hand is not specified, it presumably did not matter. Pliny, *Nat.* XXVII 140 requires the operation to be performed with one hand only, not further specified.

[68.] Marcellus, *Med.* XIV 65 [1:244.24 N-L]; XXXI 33 [2:546.29 N-L]; Alexander of Tralles, 2 p.583 P.

[69.] Marcellus, *Med.* XXV 13.

[70] Theophrastus, *HP* IX 8, 8.

[71.] Pliny, Nat XXI 176 – an implicit 'negative *historiola*' through the allusion to the story of Orpheus and Eurydice.

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c. Offerings to the plant or earth

Some texts specify the offering of milk or some other offering generally associated with the cult of the earth or the dead, without always making it clear whether the plant or the earth is the supposed recipient.[72] This ambiguity is surely deliberate. There is a collective, public commitment to maintaining belief in the enduring power of the dead and, more generally, of the supposed powers of the underworld. The public commitment is individualised and concretised in uncanny tales of ghosts, graves and the undead. The rhizotomist fuses this collective commitment to his personal concern with a particular plant. More precisely, the reference to a ritual – and not the complete libation with honey, oil and wine – ordinarily used to appease the powers of the underworld, intimates the otherness of the world to which the plant is deemed properly to belong.[73] The plant is, as it were, relocated by the libation at the meeting-point between two worlds.[74] A similar ambiguity is created when incense is burned at the time of picking.[75] The burning of incense evokes a sacrificial occasion within civic or domestic cult, and more generally, the opening of communication with divinities conceived as inhabiting the space above the earth. To burn incense when gathering a plant is to assimilate that action to the wider contexts within which such burning was ordinarily considered appropriate.[76]

Generally speaking, such rituals add to the symbolic content of the gathering process not so much by increasing the number of possible rules as by offering an implicit commentary on the meaning or value to be ascribed to the plant or its gathering. As such, they are similar to the third category.

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[72] Evidence for such offerings is not plentiful. Theophrastus mentions the practice in relation to the plant *panakes* (*HP* IX 8, 7); Pliny cites the Magi for the specific injunction to offer combs (reading *favis* with André, Mayhoff and the older editors, not *fabis*, which seems to be a jeu d'esprit of Bidez and Cumont 1938: 2, 171, frg. O 34; the *mss* read *faucibus*) and honey to the earth *ad piamentum* when collecting *verbenaca* (*Nat.* XXV 107). It is important in the Graeco-Egyptian plant-collection ritual cited below.

[73] Graf, 1980.

[74] In the Graeco-Roman tradition, milk is a standard offering, though usually with honey, wine, oil and/or water, to the earth and to the dead beneath the earth: cf. Aechylus, *Pers.* 610-22; Apollonius Rhodius, *Arg.* III 1200-20 (to Hekate). Alone: Tibullus, I 1, 36; 2, 50 (Lenz-Galinsky) with K. F. Smith's notes; Statius, *Theb.* IV 544-7.

[75] Cf. Galen's attack on Pamphilus, *De simpl. med.* 7 (11, p.793-97 K.).

[76] Cf. Graf, 1991: 191.

d. Address to plant

We sometimes hear of injunctions to address a prayer or conjuration to the plant as it is being picked.[77] From the point of view of pragmatic linguistics, speech to inanimate objects is one of the characteristic devices of religious systems: in general, like offerings to putative divine beings, such acts renegotiate the boundaries between the real and the imaginary. In magical practice, such addresses are part of a strategy of renegotiating the boundaries between classes of living being. Theophrastus commonsensically begins the *History of Plants* by remarking that we do not find in plants ἤθη καὶ πράξεις, character and action, these being the defining characteristics of animals (and higher beings).[78] To address a plant as one gathers it is to 'act as if' it is at least worth talking to, and thus by implication does indeed possess, among other characteristics of beings that are worth talking to, ἤθη καὶ πράξεις. It is the attribution of the power to act which is here crucial.[79] Moreover, the type of speech often prescribed, prayer, is the type of utterance specified in religious contexts for addressing divinities.[80] The only significant differences between the prayers addressed to gods and those to plants lie in the degree of public commitment to the maintenance of the fiction and, sometimes, the moral character of the powers supposed to be at issue.

The utterance is however not invariably a prayer. One might simply greet the plant before saying any other word that day, thus treating it as though it were a (peculiar kind of) human being.[81] Alternatively, the rule might be to name the patient,[82] or announce the reason for which the plant is being gathered.[83] At its most elaborate, such an explanation might also be combined with a command to the plant and an account of how the cure is to work:

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[77] For example, *PGrMag* IV 287-95; 2978-3001; Alexander of Tralles, 2 p. 585 P. [= Heim 1892 no.167; cf. nos.124-30]; cf. Delatte 1938, 98-110. On the sole basis of [Plutarch], *de fluviis* 5,2 he defends the notion that a single cry might also be uttered. In Ovid's version, the triple *ululatus* is uttered as part of a preliminary ritual, before Medea has even got into her chariot to hunt for herbs (*Met.* VII 190-92).

[78] *HP* I 1,1.

[79] In his version of the ravening-dog story (n. 62 above), Diodorus of Tarsus claims that the plant tries to elude the rhizotomist by changing its position. This is παρὰ φύσιν, for "moving about is not possible for things with roots".

[80] Late examples of prayers ascribed to *rhizotomoi* or *herbarii* from *Cod. Vindobonensis* 93 (XIth century CE) are re-printed in Heim 1892 nos.124-6. Sub-literary examples from the same document are to be found as nos.128 (prayer to Terra Mater) and 129 (prayer to all herbs).

[81] Pliny, *Nat.* XXV 145.

[82] *Nat.* XXII 38; cf. Heim 1892 nos. 1-11; 15.

[83] *Nat.* XXII 50; cf. Heim 1892 nos. 18-33.

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I summon you into the house of Phileas so that you may cure the pain in the feet/hands of NN (male/female). Take

the *pneuma* of your mother, Earth, and her power and dry up the feet/hands of NN (male/female).[84]

The allusion to *pneuma* is a clear indication that this derives proximately from a learned scheme, although it presumably derives at some remove from a charm by a rhizotomist. The plant may also be addressed after being plucked, as it is put to work.[85]

Finally, Pliny mentions a rule stated by some to apply to the collection of the plant Dog-bur (*lappa canaria*). This utterance is a very brief *historiola*: the collector is supposed to mention that the plant's healing property was discovered by Minerva.[86] According to Köves-Zulauf, this utterance is itself the enabling device: "die geheime Potenz der Pflanze wird durch den Spruch verfügbar".[87] I believe this to be a quite false inference, an example of the modern habit of inventing theories of magic which are then foisted onto antiquity. Rather, the *historiola* legitimates a practice, in this case of healing, by pseudo-historical reference – a quite standard function of history in the ancient world.[88]

e. Specification of time

The tension between the world deemed normal and the world of the rhizotomist is evident in the prescriptions relating to the time of picking. The medical writers on plants never allude to specific rules about this, but they are regular in the magical tradition.[89] Plants to be used for iatromagical purposes are often supposed to be gathered at some hour of the night or at points of marked transition, sunset, twilight, dawn, sunrise. The rule may be even more localised: "before the sun strikes them".[90] Such rules are functions of prior be-

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[84] Alexander of Tralles, 2 p.585 P.

[85] *PGrMag* IV 3173-87.

[86] *Nat.* XXIV 176. A fuller version is known from the *Anecdotum Latinum*: Heim 1892 no. 108; cf. 109 (=Marcellus, *Med.* XXV 13) and 124-26 (from *Cod. Vind.* XCIII).

[87] Köves-Zulauf 1972, 162.

[88] Cf. Gabba 1981, 60-61. Stannard 1982, 21-22 makes the general point about protection of magical claims through narrative.

[89] Theophrastus, *HP* IX 8, 5. The medical tradition was of course aware in general of a relation between location, season, temperature etc., and medicinal properties, e.g. Dioscorides, *Med.* Praef. 6-7 (1 p. 3-4 Wellmann) with Scarborough and Nutton 1982, 218.

[90] Theophrastus, ibid.; Marcellus, *Med.* XXVI 41 [2:436.34f. N-L.], *mane ante solis ortum*. The character of such rules excludes the possibility that they are to be related to common-sense considerations of the influence of weather, season, and location upon the natural effectiveness of medicinal plants.

liefs about the character of magical activity in the Graeco-Roman tradition.

The choice of time was suitable for further elaboration by the later occult tradition. One possibility lay in transferring the rule from a specific time of day/night to an arbitrary moment – a procedure clearly modelled upon the divinatory technique of cledonomancy. Thus the Magi recommended storing the first anemone one saw in a season in a red cloth for use as a phylactery against fever.[91] Or the moment chosen might be related to the plant's natural life-cycle, such as the instruction to remove the pith from *buglossa* when the plant is withering away.[92] A more arcane procedure involved correlating iatromagical operations with astrological schemes.[93]

Rules for marking days or hours as 'prosperous' or 'infelicitous' by reference to chronocrators, houses and the phases of the moon, one branch of catarchic astrology in fact, could easily be adopted by literate rhizotomists as part of a move towards linking different branches of the occult.[94] Moreover, some attempt was made fairly early to systematise such choices – we know of two such esoteric tracts belonging to the period before 100 CE.[95] By the fourth century CE, such correlations appear to have been *de rigueur* for any self-respecting practitioner. The astrological manuscripts contain numerous references to books entitled *The Book of Hermes Trismegistos to Asclepius on the plants of the seven stars, or ... on the plants of the zodiac*, or *The Sacred Book*, which, though in their extant form usually Byzantine, often contain material from the imperial period.[96] The so-called 'Eighth Book of Moses' (= *PGrMag* XIII) provides a nicely decorative correlation between plants and planets (24-26), though it rather spoils the effect by including a different one in another section (354-6). It also provides two slightly different lists of the 'proper in-

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[91.]Pliny, *Nat.* XXI 166. On the Magi in this special sense, see Gordon 2010, 253-54.

[92.]*Nat.* XXVI 116; it is not clear whether this is to be done while the plant is whole; from the later mention of leaves to be used as a phylactery, it may be supposed that a stem is first plucked and then scraped.

[93] For the specific case of the peony, one of the most significant rhizotomic plants, see Olivieri 1937.

[94.]E.g. Marcellus, *Med.* XVI 101: *herba, quae Gallice calliomarcus, Latine equi ungula vocatur, collecta luna vetere liduna die Iovis ...*; on the trend as a whole, see Gundel 1968.

[95.] One, *The Plants controlled by the zodiacal signs*, is found in two quite different recensions, the 'Thessalus-text' (which is ascribed in the Madrid codex to Harpocration) and the 'Hermes-text'; each recension is itself found in varying versions (cf. Hopfner 1921-24, 1, §475-77; Gundel and Gundel 1966: 30; most reliably, Friedrich 1968, 13-36). One of them seems to date from as early as I^P. The other text, *The thirty-six sacred plants of the horoscopes*, was used by Pamphilus in his six books *On physical properties* (Galen, 9 p.797 K.); cf. Bidez-Cumont 1938, 1: 116; Festugière 1950, 56-9; 77; 137-46; Gundel-Gundel 1966, 18.

[96.] E.g. P. Boudreaux in *CCAG* 8, 3: 153f.; M.A.F. Šangin, *CCAG* 12: 74f. §27; cf. Festugière 1950, 1: 146-60; Gundel-Gundel 1966, 18-19.

censes' for each of the seven planets.[97] Astrological requirements might also be related to the natural cycle of the plant, as in Marcellus of Bordeaux' haemorrhoid remedy employing the leaf-buds of the mulberry tree: 'At the eighth hour of the thirteenth day of the lunar cycle before the leaves of the mulberry tree come out or burgeon...'.[98]

Constructing marvellous power

One value of this framework of options lay in its utility as an inventory. According to Theophrastus, rhizotomists commonly employed specific rules for individual species.[99] By varying the rules to be applied, the practitioner could create groups of plants with similar symbolic values. That is, the individual was free to construct groups of rules in accordance with his own view of the significance and value of different plants (although there is no ancient evidence that this in fact how these rules were used). These groupings could be further varied by the treatment of the plants after collection – they could be used fresh, dried, boiled, pulped or rotted; and by the significance allocated to the various parts, leaves, roots, stalk, flowers, seeds and juice.[100] The informal constraints upon this freedom would be those of the local tradition within which the individual was apprenticed.[101] Some of these innovations would survive through pupils or apprentices; and some might, in one form or other, enter local folklore – and perhaps eventually a compilation of magico-medical herbal and animal remedies such as the pseudonymous works of Pythagoras and Democritus which are among the volumes cited by Pliny as his sources for Books XX-XXXII.[102]

Underlying this value of practical classification, however, is a more important function, the construction of the objective power of the plant (or animal-

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[97.]*PGrMag* XIII 14-20; 352-4. The relation between the three different versions of the same revelatory ritual in this text is complex: see Smith 1984.

[98.]*Med.* XXXI 33. This is a fine example of the apparently highly specific injunction that could in practice scarcely be fulfilled, since the basal moment is quite unpredictable.

[99.]*HP* IX 8, 6-8; the same seems to be implied by Galen's remarks on Pamphilus' collection of incantations and offerings to plants: *De simpl. med.* 7 = 9 p.793 K.

[100.]Patera 1994. That is, in exactly the same way as in non-magical folk-medical and Hippocratic practice: Scarborough 1978, 358-59; Stannard 1982, 19; Totelin 2009, 55.

[101.]Pliny, *Nat.* XXV 16 notes that there are no names for many discoveries about the properties of plants: *multis inventis desunt nomina*. The framework of choices I have outlined surely made naming to a large extent unnecessary. But it is also true that names and descriptions of characteristics and methods and are only indispensable within a written tradition.

[102.] *Nat.* XXI 13-14. See Delatte 1938, 14, for a rather mixed list of known authors of such herbals.

part) to change a fraction of the world. To all appearance, these rules are individually arbitrary; they are at least frequently under-determined.[103] But considered as a technique of distancing, they construct a 'space' around the item selected by the practitioner. This space is generally double: the rhizotomist first observes rules which separate him or her from the world of ordinary behaviour and social relations. He then proceeds to pick the plant under specific constraints that serve to differentiate these from normal pragmatic actions employed for other plants. The total effect of the rules is to enter the plant into a new register: it ceases to be what it actually is, a constituent of the natural world. It acquires a charged, sometimes actually dangerous status, becoming subject to a different system of rules, meanings and expectations.

From the observer's point of view, it is this conceptual relocation of the plant (or animal-part) that makes the item especially effective. Each time the practitioner fulfils the proper rituals of collection, he reproduces part of a system which transfers selected elements of the natural world into the social world where they can be used to alter fates. But the rhizotomist's subjective experience is of protecting himself from the power already present in the items he collects: for him, they are powerful in an objective sense, a fact merely recorded by the procedures for collecting them. Once the system exists, it produces collateral objectifications. One kind is represented by the belief that root-cutters could reverse a cure by replanting the herb in question: Pliny records such claims in relation to the wild iris, the plantain, *ranunculus*, *sideritis* and *artemisia*.[104] Another is what may be called the apparent condition, which serves to assert the existence of mysterious powers without intending that they should ever be tested. Examples might be the injunction: "If you dig this this plant up whole, you will die";[105] a Graeco-Egyptian test of the authenticity of the plant *kentritis* reads: '(If) the juice [of the plant] is applied to the wing of an ibis (it weakens the "black edge"), the feathers will fall off when they are touched.[106] A third type distinguishes between the force of medicinal plants

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[103.]By under-determined I mean that no sufficient explanation can be offered by the practitioner of why he acts as he does: the act rests upon a mass of unstated (and partly unstatable) assumptions and motives. Only the observer (if indeed anyone) is likely to be in a position to make these implicit assumptions explicit and so render the action intelligible.

[104.]Respectively, *Nat.* XXI 144; XXV 174; XXIV 174; XXVI 24.

[105.]Pliny, *Nat.* XXX 18.

[106.]*PGrMag* IV 801-4. I take it that τὸ ἀκρομέλαν, apparently a *hapax*, denotes some specific part of the wing, where the flight feathers originate. Hopfner 1921-24, 1, §501, translated χαλασθέν as 'schlaffe(?)' (limp). He also offered a far-fetched explanation of this test, which (as usual) he saw as based on a theory of sympathy. At least in the Early-Modern period, the temperature of mordants used in oil-gilding was tested by means of pigeon- or hen-feathers, and I would guess that a standard Egyptian technology has here been adapted to marvellous ends.

naturally propagated and those whose growth was brought about by external intervention – scattered by swallows in the case of the plant χελιδών.[107] From the point of view of the system as a whole, the function of such beliefs is to suppress consciousness of its arbitrariness: Nature is itself irrepressibly full of marvels.

Perhaps the best way of representing the character of such rules is to try to assign them to the categories suggested by the pragmatic-linguist John Searle.[108] He distinguished between constitutive and regulative rules. The latter regulate behaviour that exists independently of, and logically prior to, the rules, such as rules for cooking and eating. The former create the behaviour they define. The classic example is the rules for games: chess does not exist except by way of the rules which constitute it. Regulative rules may be added to constitutive rules: it is not considered good form to break the rules too often in football. This distinction makes excellent intuitive sense (even though there are a few rules that cannot satisfactorily be assigned to one or other class exclusively), and may be combined with the distinction between actors' and observer's assumptions or models. Formally, the rhizotomists' rules parade themselves as rules of etiquette, regulative rules governing behaviour which might occur anyway. They appear to be rules specifying the conditions under which one may safely gather inherently powerful plants. I contend that they are in fact constitutive rules, that without them there would be no power, no 'game' at all. The claim that they are merely regulative protects the deeper claim about causal chains that the system makes.

The rhizotomists claimed that without the rules for picking, the plants were dangerous; this danger was the correlate of their natural power for good or evil. By observing the rules, though, they created the danger - and so the power. It is impossible at this distance to exclude the possibility that some such 'special' rules had always existed. But as historians we need to be wary of claims to timelessness. Although both Theophrastus and Pliny, our main sources, are at best only indirect witnesses, both make it clear that rules such as these, which Delatte for example took to be the general and universal rules of the practice, only applied to certain herbs, not to all. It is tempting to relate the development of such distinctions both to the general responsibility of households for their own practical remedies, on the one hand, and to the increased competition developing in the field of health during the Classical and cetainly also later periods. There is, I would say, no simple story here 'from magic to reason'. On the

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[107.]*Hippiatr. Cant*. VIII 6 (2, 136f. O-H.) = Africanus, *Kestoi*, p. 225 Vieillefond.
[108.]Searle 1969, 33-42; cf. Ahern, 1982. For a recent attempt to apply aspects of pragmatic linguistics to magical discourse, see Kropp 2008.

contrary, the idea of the marvellous power of certain plants demanding special ritual treatment was a strategy adopted by some rhizotomists in an effort to maintain their authority in the market. As with all strategies, there was a price to be paid.

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CHARACTERS AND MAGIC SIGNS IN THE PICATRIX AND OTHER MEDIEVAL MAGIC TEXTS

BY BENEDEK LÁNG

Abstract: The word „characters" covers a number of different phenomena in the Middle Ages. It might refer to a list of incomprehensible signs and astrological symbols inscribed in a talismanic sigil, to a series of Latin letters used for magical purposes, and also to a written form of verbal incantation, a written charm. Characters were often used in the field of talismanic or celestial magic in order to name spiritual beings. The paper reviews the use of characters in various medieval sources: textual amulets, necromantic manuals, texts on talismanic magic and the most famous medieval magical summary, the Picatrix.

Keywords: Ars Notoria, Augustine, character, Floron, Isidore of Seville, Liber runarum, magic, Middle Ages, Picatrix, Thābit ibn Qurra, William of Auvergne.

To give a general overview on the medieval history of characters does not seem a hard task. The structure of such a summary would be fairly simple: first, on the basis of medieval sources, one has to define what is a character, and what it is not, second, it is useful to summarize the opinions of late antique and medieval intellectuals on the use of characters, and last, one should take a look at the very sources (magical and other) that used characters in the Middle Ages. When realizing this project however, one is faced with problems in virtually every stage of the presentation. First of all, it is not clear how we can define what are the characters, and how we can differentiate between them and *figurae*, *formae, annuli*, etc. Second, it is more or less clear what the theologians' problem with the characters was, but there are characters that do not fall in the criticized category, and there are non-characters that do fall in it. And third, reading the theologians' critique, we would expect characters to occur everywhere in the magical sources, but what we ultimately see is that their appearance is quite sporadic, and their role is less than central.

Let us start with a definition. The word character appears in the Middle Ages in various contexts. Most of all it is spelled in plural as *characteres*, but *karacter* and *carecter* also occur in medieval Latin and English texts.[1] We can

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[1] Voigts 1989; Grévin-Véronèse, 2004.

define the characters as "incomprehensible signs", or as "graphic signs with extra linguistic representation". These signs might represent planets, signs of the zodiac, alchemical symbols, mathematical notations, demon names, planetary spirits or angels, they are often used as inscriptions in amulets, but characters were also used for the purposes of stenography, that is, speed writing (the most famous medieval example of which are the Tironian notes), and also in ciphers, that is, secret writings. In order to avoid dealing with these latter characters, we try to narrow down our definition, and stick to the following one: "signs addressed to the celestial sphere or to various beings of the celestial sphere," or shortly, "signs addressed to spirits". In that case, however, we will see that even this restricted definition covers a few other words that are partly or fully interchangeable synonyms for the character. It is not so easy to define the character as opposed to, as something different from *figura, sigillum, imago, facies, forma, anulus, nota,* and even *candaria.*[2]

Let us see now what made the characters so special for the medieval intellectuals; what made the theologians condemn them repeatedly, in other words, let us see the medieval "theoretical literature" on the characters. In the Middle Ages, all history of condemnations start with Augustine, and indeed the bishop of Hippo was the first who provided a coherent theory of why characters should be condemned.[3] (His fullest account on magic is to be found in Book II of the *De doctrina christiana*, and in *De civitate Dei,* VIII-X.) In Augustine's model, magic appears in the context of the theory of signs as an act of communication with the demonic powers. Thus, all superstitious practices, including divination and astrology, presuppose an implicit or explicit agreement with demons. This is valid even in the case where the operator – deceived by the demons – is not aware of the pact, because this pact is secured by the magical language, signs, and rituals applied by him. For a reader of Augustine, basically every instance of magic – however innocent it may seem – is ultimately associated with demons, and becomes consequently harmful. Now, the use of characters is part of the communication with demons, and is therefore to be condemned. There are conventional signs used by people, such as language, writing, music, that are useful, there are also other signs however, that are useless and demonic. Abbreviations, Tironian notes and ciphers belong to the first category, magical talismans to the second. Augustine's rejection of magic is closely related to his rejection of theurgy: he argues that rites and symbols (with which theurgians claim to approach the divine sphere) cannot be used to constrain any omnipo-

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[2] See the fullest overview of characters in medieval magic texts: Grévin-Véronèse, 2004.
[3] Markus 1994, Fanger 1999.

tent divinity. If there is any efficacy in these signs, that should be due to the demons.

In the early Middle Ages, there were not too many magic texts that could be rejected on these grounds. In early medieval magic and astrology, characters did not play a central role. Consequently, early medieval condemnations of magic, following sometimes word by word the famous paragraphs of Isidore of Seville, were not concerned with the problem of the characters. Hugh of Saint Victor – an otherwise important opponent of magic – for example did not even mention the word character. It was only in the 11th and 12th century, that the picture changed, when the Latin world was faced with the fact that Arabic culture owned a considerably higher and more developed science to the Western European one, and when translators from all over Europe peregrinated to Spain and Sicily to translate a huge amount of Greek, Roman and Arabic texts from the Arabic language (in two steps: from Arabic to a local language, and then from this local dialect to Latin). Due to the twelfth- and thirteenth-century impact of the transmission of Arabic magical and divinatory works, the condemnations became more differentiated, and the classifications more elaborated.[4]

This was partly because the Arabic tradition provided the West not only with various practices of magic but also with certain theoretical background. A comprehensive theory of magic, entitled *De radiis stellarum* (*On the Rays of the Stars*) and attributed to Al-Kindi (ca. 800–ca. 870), the famous Arabic philosopher of Baghdad,[5] presents a world of universal harmony. In this text, the world functions according to rational norms: the celestial bodies (planets and constellations) regulate earthly events through the rays emanating from them. Since it is their influence that is responsible for the terrestrial variety of things, the magician who is familiar with the condition of the celestial harmony will have sufficient knowledge on the objects of the lower world. But he will know even more than that: a close reading of the celestial harmony reveals the past and the future too. Special chapters are consecrated to the prayers addressed to God, to the virtue (that is, the inner power) of words,[6] and to magical figures, characters, and images. Nonetheless, this philosophical explanation does not go into detail regarding the actual practice of magic; the technical part is left to texts such as Thābit ibn Qurra's *De imaginibus,* the *Picatrix,* and other texts that will be treated below.

The emergence of these fairly elaborated magic texts – of Arabic origin – that did use characters, constrained the authors of the theoretical literature to

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[4] On the gradual "Positivization" of magic in the later Middle Ages, see Fanger 2005.

[5] Al-Kindi's *De radiis* was published with an extensive and helpful introductory study by Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny and Françoise Hudry 1974.

[6] On the power of words, see Fanger 1999.

react to the problem. Most of them clearly refused the use of characters, usually on Augustinian grounds. William of Auvergne, bishop of Paris, for example, while famously accepting certain forms of natural magic, was very critical regarding the magical operations which made use of the power of images, figures, and characters.[7] Those, he argues, who attribute virtue to the images and try to expel scorpions with the image of a scorpion are mistaken. These methods belong to what he calls *magisterium imaginum*,[8] and what we can also call image magic, talismanic magic, celestial magic.

Even more interesting is another classification of magic, the *Speculum astronomiae*.[9] The *Speculum astronomiae* is an annotated bibliography guiding the medieval reader through the labyrinth of the suddenly increased quantity of astrological literature, and providing the modern historian with an excellent research tool for the identification of sources. The explicit intention of its author is to differentiate between the useful astrological works on the one hand, and necromantic books on images, inscriptions and characters, rings and sigils on the other. This latter category became associated with the first innocent one, as necromancers had borrowed certain astronomical observations in order to render themselves more credible: they only pretended to be concerned with astrology in order to disguise their necromancy. Elaborating this intellectual enterprise, in his famous eleventh chapter the author of the *Speculum* gives a detailed list of the titles and incipits of talismanic works of Arabic origin: he classifies them into abominable, detestable, and acceptable categories. The last, relatively innocent and licit category embraces only two texts, *De imaginibus* of Thābit ibn Qurra, and the *Opus imaginum* of Pseudo-Ptolemy. The reason for such a differentiation is that the images of the acceptable texts obtain their virtue solely from the celestial figures, while the abominable and detestable images use demonic influences too.

Taking a look at the texts listed under the abominable and the detestable categories (that is, taking a look at almost all the magical texts of the 13th century), we see that the word character is much less used in them than we would think on the basis of the theoretical literature. They are however, full of talismanic content, magical images, small statues, seals, numbers, combinations of letters, and strange circular and quadrangular figures that were to be engraved on rings, metals, and gems under well defined astrological circumstances.[10] It seems that the word character was used in the condemnations as a general category, and the problem with them was that they were addressed to spiritual be-

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[7] William of Auvergne 1963, I. 67aB. See also Weill-Parot 2002, 175-213.
[8] William of Auvergne 1963, II 2 76, 929bA-930bE.
[9] Zambelli 1992.
[10] Grévin-Véronèse 2002.

ings. As an historian of magic, Nicolas Weill-Parot calls it, characters were destinative in the sense that they referred to the names of or the communication with spirits, identified by the theologians as demons. It is in this sense, that characters are condemned by Arnaldus de Villanova in his *Letter on Necromancy*.[11] Arnaldus, the Catalan doctor, theologian, and alchemist, whose name was also often associated with necromancy, discusses the power of necromancers and the possibilities of invoking and constraining demons to act according to the will of the magician.[12] He arrives at the usual conclusion of the official theology: demons cannot be compelled in a natural way by a human being, primarily because the human mind – being attached to a mortal body – is of necessity inferior to the purely spiritual beings.[13] Although certain monks are convinced that demons can be invoked in various ways, Villanova rejects their point, and argues in great detail as to why the power of gems, inscriptions, planets, artificial figures and characters cannot possess any special virtue with which one would be able to coerce spirits.

Examples from the theoretical literature could be still quoted, however, it is time to turn to the magic manuscripts themselves. Is it really true that characters are so omnipresent in the magic texts that medieval intellectuals had no other choice but intervene? Thanks to the thorough examination carried out by Benoît Grévin and Julien Véronèse, we can answer to this question.[14] Let us start with the most famous texts. The *Picatrix* for example, the large book translated in the court of Alphonso the Wise in the 13th century, is well known as a medieval compilation of magic texts of all kind. As a large portion of the magic texts that can be found in it belong to the field of astral magic, or talismanic magic, we would expect meeting a wide variety of characters in it. However, and most surprisingly, the word character is not even mentioned in the text of the *Picatrix*.[15] If we open now an illustrated version of it, we will see beautiful images, called *imago*, *forma* or *figura* in the text. These are the pictures of planets or decans, and are to be inscribed in various metals or stones, however, these are not really characters in the usual sense of the word (book 2, chapter 12). A short Krakow excerpt from the *Picatrix* also offers a list of such letters, that are more character-like. These are called signs of planets (*signa*, *sigilla*, or *figurae planetarum*) and serve for various magical aims: to expel

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[11] Giralt 2005.
[12] On Villanova and his letter generally, see Thorndike 1923-1958, Paniagua 1994, Grmek 1958.
[13] Grmek 1958.
[14] Grévin-Véronèse 2002.
[15] Pingree 1986.

flies and mice, to bless a place, and so on.[16] Similar celestial letters proliferated in the Renaissance in such great diversity that Cornelius Agrippa felt obliged to offer a whole typology of them in his comprehensive handbook of magic.[17]

Similarly, in the famous necromantic handbook published by Richard Kieckhefer, the word character appears very rarely. We find it referring to the signs inscribed in the so-called mirror of Floron in order to facilitate the communication with the demons. This mirror should be prepared in the name of the spirit Floron according to detailed rituals, in which fumigations, clean clothes, and virgin boys are involved. If prepared properly, an armed knight sitting on a horse will appear in the mirror, and then the master might ask him about the past, the present, and the future.[18] The mirror of Floron survived not only in Latin texts but also as objects, for example on a metal disc kept today in the Mathematical-Physical Salon in Dresden[19] which confirms that such rituals were indeed followed.[20] Characters appear in other places in Kieckhefer's handbook as well, here, however, they are called *sigilla* (not to mean sigil, but used as the diminutive of *signum*, that is, a small sign). They belong to planetary spirits, and they are not supposed to be inscribed in metals or gems, but rather on paper.

We find curious characters in another magical text, the *Liber runarum*, where the names of planetary spirits are spelled in Nordic runes, but again, there are not called characters. The text gives detailed directions on how to inscribe the spirit names on the metals and stones attributed to every planet.[21] To help those readers whose interest is not purely theoretical, the text ends with a concrete demonstration of the methods choosing the example of the planet Venus. If one wants to operate with the power of the planets, he (or she) has to inscribe the name of the appropriate angels on the proper metal, and then he is to invoke the angels and ask them for help to achieve the given aim – which is,

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[16] Ms Biblioteca Jagiellonska 610, f. 312v-316r; see also Pingree 1986, 63.

[17] Agrippa 1992, 490-495: Chapter 39, "De characteribus et sigillis spirituum."

[18] Kieckhefer 1997, 104-106 and 236-238: "Fac fieri speculum de puro calibe, ad mensuram palme unius in rotundo; habeatque manubrium ad tenendum, et sit illuminatum et lucidum ut ensis. Sitque factum in nomine Floron, et in circuitu istius peculi ex alia parte non lucida sint hec decim nomina, cum hiis decem caracteribus descripta, et nomen spiritus predicti sit in medio scriptum." For a picture of the mirror, see *ibid.*, 363.

[19] Láng 2008, 138.

[20] On the use of the Mirror of Floron for various purposes in the Middle Ages, see Delatte 1932, 44-46.

[21] Lucentini 2001, 444-445: "Habitis nominibus spirituum planetarum, videndum est quomodo ipsa nomina metallis sive lapidibus planetis attributis insculpi debeant per figuras, ita quod nature figurarum sequantur se ad invicem sicut et signa et triplicitates."

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obviously, winning the love of a person as usual in the case of Venus talismans.[22]

Nor are the famous *notae,* the geometrical figures of the *Ars notoria* called characters. A set of diagrams of circular, triangular, and tree forms are assigned to each branch of learning. These *notae* not only serve to represent the links between the different elements of the text, but also function as visual aids for meditation, through which the operator is able to communicate with the celestial powers. This twofold operation corresponds to the double intentions of the *Ars notoria*: it promises to provide knowledge of all the liberal arts, while offering a means of communication with the spirits. That the use of these *notae* was not without problems is shown by the fact for example, that Thomas Aquinas condemned the *Ars notoria* for exactly because of the use of *verba ignota*, unknown words, and the suspicious *notae*.

Fortunately, there are also a few texts, where we do find the word character. Among these we can mention the *De imaginibus septem planetarum* attributed Belenus.[23] This short text indicates the hour in which the talisman should be prepared, as well as the materials of which it is to be made. The aims are the usual ones of image magic: to appear powerful in battle with the help of the talisman of Mars; to retain a woman's love with the talisman of Venus; to make someone appear abominable by the help of Saturn in a way that everybody considers him nasty, disgusting, and odious. What is a novelty here is that the name of the person on whom the benign or malign effect of the spirits should be exercised is to be written on the image. The text ends with a list of the *ymagines et karacteres planetarum,* consisting of an alphabet of magical signs most of which is crossed out and made unreadable by a later hand in the Vatican manuscript where this text survived.[24] This caution is not surprising; the characters are most powerful. As the text instructs, they play a rather crucial role in the functioning of the talismans, being the chief factors of constraining the spirits of the planets.

The use of characters could be analyzed in a number of further magic texts too, but it is time to come to a conclusion. The word character was used to

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[22] Lucentini 2001, 447: "Nunc restat dare exempla sculpturarum ex premissis, et ego non ponam nisi unum, scilicet de Venere, secundum quod poteris per quamlibet planetarum, sicut predictum est, operari si volueris. Et hoc est ut sculpas nomen angeli Lune et Veneris et nomen puelle sive mulieris in lamina stannea vel ergentea, quod melius est, quibus scriptis sepeli laminam in loco ignis ut continue caleat, ita tamen ne calor ignis sculpturam destruat. Et dum hoc facis inuoca angelos sicut supra dictum est, et subinfer: 'Nunc cor talis N. igne mei amoris ita exuratis, sicut ab igne hec tabula inflamatur.' Sic sepcies inuocabis, et effectum tui operis, si bene operatus fueris, obtinebis."

[23] Láng 2008, 116-8.

[24] See the partial copy of Pal. lat. 1375 f. 270v in Láng 2008, 117.

cover a number of different meanings in the Middle Ages, it was used in cryptology, that is, secret writing, it was used in stenography, that is, speed writing, it was used in theology (the characters of Christ, for example), and even in heraldry. All this was not seen as a problem in the theological literature, which criticized characters only in their magical application. However, as we have seen, the word character is less frequently used in magic than we would expect, and a number of other words cover similar, or almost similar meanings: *sigillum, figura, forma, facies, candaria, signum, imago, nota, anulus*. The signs, or let us say characters named by these words are almost never used in the field of natural magic, they rather appear in talismanic magic (in other words, astral magic, or image magic), and they almost always refer to the names of spirits, angels, or demons, or facilitate the communication with them. Augustine was right.

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ESCRIBIENDO UNA *DEFIXIO*:
LOS TEXTOS DE MALDICIÓN A TRAVÉS DE SUS SOPORTES[1]

POR CELIA SÁNCHEZ NATALÍAS

Writing a *defixio*: an overview on materials suitable for cursing.

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to analyze binding curse tablets found in the Latin West from a material perspective, in order to rethink their multifaceted nature, since sometimes – but not always – *defixiones* are inscribed pieces of lead.

Keywords: Latin *defixio*, curse tablet, writing media, lead, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* (*PGM*).

1. Introducción

Este artículo tiene como objetivo el análisis de las *defixiones* procedentes del Occidente del Imperio Romano[2] desde un punto de vista material, es decir, haciendo especial hincapié en los diferentes soportes sobre los que estos documentos fueron redactados. Con este pequeño estudio se pretende profundizar en una cuestión que la historiografía tradicional apenas ha desarrollado, tal y como manifestaba Auguste Audollent en 1933: "Certes l'aspect de ces modestes documents importe beaucoup moins que leur contenu. Il n'est cepedant, en plus d'un cas, nullement négligeable"[3]. Recientemente, la publicación de un volumen que analiza la relación entre la escritura y la magia[4] en el mundo clásico ha

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[1] El presente trabajo se inscribe en el proyecto de investigación, "Espacios de penumbra: cartografía de la actividad mágico-religiosa en el Occidente del Imperio Romano" (con referencia FFI 2008-01511), coordinado por el Dr. F. Marco Simón. Asimismo, la autora forma parte del Grupo de Investigación de Excelencia "Hiberus". Desde estas líneas, es necesario agradecer al Dr. F. Marco Simón y al Dr. R. Gordon los sugerentes comentarios realizados a este artículo, cuyo contenido es de mi única responsabilidad.

[2] Tomando como definición canónica para el término *defixio* la acuñada por Jordan en 1985, 151: "*Defixiones*, more commonly known as curse tablets, are inscribed pieces of lead, usually in the form of small, thin sheets, intended to influence, by supernatural means, the actions or welfare of persons or animals against their will" y dejando así a un lado el debate todavía abierto sobre las llamadas "prayer for justice" (al respecto, cfr. Versnel 1991 y 2010).

[3] Audollent 1933, 31. Otras referencias al soporte en Audollent 1904, XLVII-XLIX; Gager 1992, 3-4; Graf 1995, 129-131; Ogden 1999, 10-13; Kropp 2008, 80-82; Martin 2010, 15-17; etc.

[4] Vallarino 2010, 21-82.

retomado esta cuestión, examinando un amplio repertorio de objetos entre los que se incluyen las execraciones, especialmente las procedentes del ámbito griego. Sirva por tanto, a modo de complemento, este breve estudio sobre el soporte de las *defixiones* del occidente de la ecúmene.

Antes de comenzar, sin embargo, es necesario puntualizar que las imprecaciones aquí analizadas serán todas aquellas halladas en el Occidente del Imperio que no fueron inscritas exclusivamente en griego, esto es: por un lado, las latinas, y por otro, todas las pertenecientes a las epigrafías epicóricas, como osco, celta, fenicio, etc.[5] Dentro de este conjunto, que asciende a más de seiscientas piezas, se establecerá como punto de partida una división en dos grandes grupos. El primero de ellos se ocupa de los soportes específicos, mientras que el segundo analiza los que no lo son, es decir, aquellos objetos empleados de forma secundaria como soporte de escritura. A su vez, y dentro de cada uno de estos grupos, se hará una subdivisión atendiendo a la materia prima con la que están realizadas las diferentes piezas, distinguiendo entre perecederos y perdurables.

2. Soportes específicos.

Bajo esta denominación se incluyen todos aquellos objetos cuya única función es servir como soportes de escritura, y por tanto, fueron creados *ex profeso* como tales. Dentro de esta categoría, hay que distinguir entre materiales perecederos y perdurables.

En cuanto a los primeros -y salvo raras excepciones- éstos los conocemos fundamentalmente en forma literaria, gracias a los *Papiros Mágicos Griegos*[6], donde se recomienda en especial el empleo de papiro, sobre todo para encantamientos de tipo amoroso. Éste debía ser de la mejor calidad (*εἰς ἱερατικὸν βιβλίον*)[7] o de la mayor pureza posible (*χάρτην καθαρὸν*)[8]. En una de las prácticas de encadenamiento (contra un enemigo o una mujer) se recomienda el empleo de *...χάρτην ἱερατικὸν ἢ μολυβοῦν πέταλον*[9], poniendo en plano de igualdad papiro y plomo. Curiosamente, esta combinación de materiales se verifica en una única pieza procedente de Cartago que se componía de una lámina de plomo inscrita en su parte exterior con cuatro líneas de texto latino.

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[5] A excepción de los plomos ibéricos, que por su complicada interpretación quedan fuera del análisis.

[6] De aquí en adelante, abreviados como *PGM*.

[7] *PGM*, XI, c, 1; así como en *PGM*, V, 304-305 y en *PGM* XIX, b, 4-5.

[8] *PGM*, XXXVI, 102; y del mismo modo en *PGM* XXXVI 71-72.

[9] *PGM*, V; 304-305.

Tras su redacción, fue plegada, conservando en su interior un fragmento de papiro tan deteriorado que su estudio no ha sido posible[10].

Por lo que respecta a los materiales perdurables, se distinguen dos categorías de soportes: líticos y metálicos. En cuanto a los primeros y pese al silencio de los *Papiros Mágicos Griegos*, éstos aparecen atestiguados a nivel arqueológico al menos en dos ocasiones. Con ello me refiero a los ejemplares procedentes de Pompeya[11] y Mérida[12], dos piezas de cuidada *ordinatio* y buena factura, inscritas sobre placas de pizarra y mármol respectivamente, y encuadrables en la categoría definida por Audollent como *defixiones* "contra calumniadores y ladrones". En ambos casos, los *defigentes* adoptaron un soporte típico de la epigrafía monumental no tanto por las nociones intrínsecas de eternidad de la piedra[13], como por el insólito hecho de que estas *defixiones* estaban destinadas a ser expuestas públicamente (lo cual es innegable en el caso pompeyano).

Entre los metales, y pese al claro predominio del plomo, hay testimonios -tanto literarios como arqueológicos- que documentan el uso de estaño y cobre como soporte execratorio. Así, los *PGM* aconsejan el empleo de láminas de estaño para *defixiones* de carácter agonístico (ἐπὶ πλακὶ κασσιτερίνῃ)[14], erótico (ἐπὶ λάμνας κασσιτερίνης)[15] e incluso para una fórmula de posesión (εἰς πετάλων κασσιτέρινον)[16]. Los análisis metalográficos realizados sobre una parte de las execraciones del santuario de Sulis-Minerva en Bath (*Britannia*), han permitido constatar el empleo de este metal como soporte execratorio, que se encuentra en estado puro en dos *tabellae* de la colección y aparece con

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[10] Jordan 1996, 122. El editor (*in litt.* a la autora), comentaba "The papyrus, folded inside the lead, had become frayed over the years, and when I saw it I didn't dare to try to touch it. I don't know whether the papyrus was inscribed."

[11] *AE*, 1986, 66. Esta pieza, todavía *in situ*, forma parte de un monumento funerario de la necrópolis de Porta Nocera (Pompei).

[12] Audollent 1904, *DT* 122. Esta *defixio*, junto con la pompeyana, fueron objeto de una ponencia de la autora en el IV Congreso de Jóvenes Investigadores de la Universidad de Sevilla en abril de 2009.

[13] Giorcelli Bersani 2004, 16, donde sostiene que "Si scrive perché lo scritto valga da quel momento in poi, in certi casi si scrive per l'eternità. L'incisione su un supporto duro e durevole come la pietra o il marmo, virtualmente eterno, fissava ancor di più il messaggio nella solidità della materia". Del mismo modo, en Susini 1989, 278, donde afirma que "La scrittura su materiale durevole (…) quindi su superficie concettualmente eterne, comporta alcuni effetti sull pubblico (…): 1. la persuasione dell'importanza della scrittura (…); 2. di conseguenza, il senso di sicurezza che promana dal *monimentum* e dalla sua scrittura, proprio perché concettualmente imperituri…" Sobre la consideración de la piedra como material eterno puede consultarse también Susini 1998, 105 y 108.

[14] Para la destrucción de carros, concretamente en *PGM* IV, 2212.

[15] *PGM* VII, 459.

[16] *PGM* VII, 417.

más de un 90% en la aleación de otras seis piezas[17]. En cuanto al cobre, este metal es mencionado en un pasaje algo controvertido de San Jerónimo (*aeris Cyprii lamina*)[18], donde es empleado como soporte en un encantamiento erótico. Al margen de la veracidad del relato, lo que sí es cierto es que el cobre fue usado como soporte execratorio, tal y como lo demuestran los dos ejemplares procedentes de la fuente de *Anna Perenna*, descubiertos en el interior de sendas lucernas[19].

Dejando a un lado estaño y cobre, es necesario detenerse ahora en el que, sin duda, es el soporte execratorio por antonomasia: el plomo. Como bien es sabido, éste fue en la Antigüedad uno de los soportes epigráficos más empleados, al ser un metal de bajo coste, muy difundido y fácil de inscribir, cualidades que sin duda favorecieron su consolidación como uno de los principales vehículos de la palabra escrita[20]. Según F. Graf[21], el mundo de la magia, una vez adoptado este metal, lo ritualizó, dotándolo de connotaciones que garantizarían su eficacia: vinculado a Saturno, astro maléfico, el plomo aportaba desgracia y muerte[22]. Igual que un cadáver, este metal se caracterizaba por su frialdad y su pesadez[23], y su color -según Aristóteles- era en una persona síntoma inequívoco de la proximidad de la muerte (Plin, *Nat.* XI 114, 275).

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[17] Con ello me refiero a las *Tab. Sul.* 7 y 126. Otras piezas presentan asimismo una proporción de estaño muy considerable: *Tab. Sul.* 113 (99'9 %), 99 (99'8%), 112 (96'8%), 120 (95'1%), 121 (94'3%) y 101 (91'5%). Cfr. Tomlin, 1988, 59-277.

[18] S. Hyeronimus, Vita S. Hilarionis Eremitae, 21 (Migne, P.L. XXIII, col. 38 sq. *apud.* Audollent, 1904, CXXII-): "*... et subter limen domus puellae portenta quaedam verborum et portentosas figuras in aeris Cyprii lamina defodit.*" Controvertido tanto por la veracidad de los hechos (Tomlin 1988, 81, n. 2) como por la interpretación de la expresión *aeris Cyprii lamina*, que para algunos autores es cobre (Tomlin 1988, 81; Ogden, 1999, 10) mientras que para otros se trata de bronce (Gager 1992, 261 y – de nuevo – Ogden 2002, 230). Se acepta aquí la primera opción, dado que Plinio se refiere al cobre como *aes Cyprium* (por poner un ejemplo, *NH*, XXXIII, 29-30. Cfr. además la voz *aes* en *OLD*.), así la ambigüedad del término latino *aes* (que designa tanto al cobre como a su aleación – bronce –), estaría neutralizada por la referencia a *Cyprus*.

[19] Sobre el hallazgo y sus materiales, *vid.* Piranomonte 2010b, especialmente p. 204. Cfr. Blänsdorf 2010a, 46-50, 61-62. Sobre las lucernas empleadas aquí como depósito y su simbología, vid. Mastrocinque 2007. Se documenta asimismo el empleo de cobre en dos tablillas anepígrafás procedentes de Trier, que el editor consideró amuletos (cfr. Wünsch 1910: num. 16 y 17).

[20] Poccetti 1999, 545-561; Graf 1995, 129; Ogden 1999, 11.

[21] Graf 1995, 129-130: "… c'è stato chi ha affermato che in origine la scelta del piombo come supporto di questi testi fu determinata dalla natura morta e fredda di questo metallo. Ma si tratta di un'opinione ormai insostenibile. (...) Fissare l'attenzione sul piombo e sulle sue qualità, e considerarlo come il materiale meglio adatto a far da supporto alle defissioni, sono sviluppi secondari, una ritualizzacione a posteriori di una pratica corrente".

[22] Cesano 1961, 1561.

[23] Todas estas cualidades se ven reflejadas en las execraciones propiamente dichas, ya que en algunas se pide que la víctima quede fría como el plomo (así en Wünsch, 1897, *DTA* 67, 105, 106

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Al hilo de esta carga de connotaciones, y estrechamente vinculados con el principio del *similia similibus*, los *Papiros Mágicos Griegos* recomiendan para la manufactura de *defixiones* el empleo de plomo proveniente de una tubería de agua fría (...*μόλιβον ἀπὸ ψυχροφόρου σωλῆνος ποίησον λάμνας*)[24] o de un *frigidarium* (...*πλάκαν ἐν μολιβῆν ἀπὸ ψυχροφόρου τόπου*)[25], con el que "helar" simbólicamente a la víctima. Con este mismo deseo, en un hechizo "eficaz para todo" se especifica además que el plomo sea forjado en frío (*λάμναν μολιβῆν ψυχρήλατον*)[26]. Otra opción es la planteada en dos fórmulas de sometimiento, en las que se invita a utilizar el plomo procedente de un yugo, (...*λεπίδα μολιβῆν ἀπὸ ζυγοῦ μούλων*[27]; y también ...*λάμναν ‹ἢ πέταλον μολιβοῦν ἀπὸ ἡμιόνων*[28]), ya que igual que somete a los animales a realizar su labor, sometería a los enemigos del *defigens*.

Los análisis metalográficos realizados ofrecen además interesantes datos en torno a la procedencia o el grado de pureza del plomo empleado. Así, en Cartago, las analíticas desarrolladas por L. Pintozzi[29] sobre once *tabellae* demostraron cómo el plomo utilizado en su manufactura provenía de explotaciones tan alejadas como los Urales, Chipre o la Península Ibérica. Por lo que a la pureza del metal empleado se refiere, la única analítica publicada hasta la fecha es la que se realizó sobre 75 de las 130 piezas halladas en el santuario de Sulis-Minerva en Bath[30]. Los resultados evidencian que tan sólo quince de las 75 *defixiones* analizadas contienen más de dos tercios de plomo[31]. La gran mayoría de las *tabellae* eran realizadas mediante una aleación de este metal con estaño, y en ocasiones cobre, en proporciones muy variables, lo que hace pensar en producciones a pequeña escala. Y es que, como apunta R. Tomlin "It was quite

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y 107), o que su lengua se convierta en plomo (como de nuevo se documenta en Wünsch 1897, *DTA* 96, 97).

[24] *PGM*, VII, 397-398.

[25] *PGM*, VII, 432.

[26] *PGM*, XXXVI, 1-2.

[27] *PGM*, VII, 925-926.

[28] *PGM*, X, 36-37.

[29] Pintozzi 1990, 113-133. La autora sostiene que "…geologically, lead is unique in that the isotopic composition of each ore source varies markedly.(…) When the ore is produced, the lead is separated from the parent isotopes which freezes the isotopic composition and leads to a fixed composition within a given deposit.(…) By measuring the isotopic ratio of the ore sources and then comparing those to that of the final metal product, it is possible to determine the origin of a metal artifact" (Pintozzi 1990, 113-114).

[30] Tomlin 1988, 81-84.

[31] Son por un lado, las anepígrafas con número de inventario 690 (100%), 698 (100%), 487 (97'9%) y 20.002 (99'5) -todas ellas en Tomlin 1988, 260-, y por otro las epígrafas *Tab. Sul.* 47 (99'9%), 115 (99'9%), 63 (99'6%), 15 (98'3%), 13 (96'9%), 3 (90'5%), 74 (80'5%), 98 (73'9%), 61 (70'9%), 93 (67'4%) y 59 (67%). Cfr. Tomlin 1988, 59-277.

easy to make a tablet": una vez conseguida la aleación, que fundía a baja temperatura, era necesario verter el metal líquido o bien en moldes, o bien en una superficie plana, para, una vez frío, proceder a cortarlo. Las imperfecciones derivadas del proceso de manufactura eran corregidas generalmente mediante el martilleado de la pieza[32].

En cuanto a las formas, y si bien es cierto que predominan los textos inscritos sobre láminas rectangulares, también lo es que existe una gran heterogeneidad, desde execraciones totalmente amorfas, inscritas sobre fragmentos irregulares[33], hasta ejemplares mucho más cuidados. Entre estos últimos, los hay que emulan *tabulae ceratae*[34], tienen forma de discos[35], presentan la silueta de una *planta pedis*[36], son *tabulae cum capitulo*[37] o incluso clásicas *tabulae ansatae*[38]. Hay que destacar estas dos últimas tipologías por ser un soporte de escritura común, cuyos prototipos eran realizados en madera y posteriormente serían adoptados por la epigrafía sobre bronce (que los emplearía para exponer documentos de carácter público) y sobre plomo, tal y como lo demuestran las *defixiones* halladas[39]. Por lo que a la forma de las tablillas se refiere, los *Papiros Mágicos Griegos* no establecen ninguna norma, recomendando simplemente el empleo de láminas (sean del metal que sean), a las que aluden con los términos λᾶμνα, πέταλον, πιττάκιον, πλάτυμμα, πλάξ o λεπίς[40]. Por otra parte, en los textos de las propias *defixiones* las voces empleadas para designar a la tablilla en sí misma son fundamentalmente *tabella*, *tabula*, *charta* o directamente *plumbum*[41], sin especificar más. Así las cosas, parece que eran los pro-

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[32] Evidente, por citar un ejemplo, en las *Tab. Sul.* 54, 95 y 97 (cfr. Tomlin 1988, 59-277).

[33] Como las tres piezas procedentes de Ampurias, vid. *IRC* III, 172-174, Pl. XLVI-XLVIII.

[34] Sería la pompeyana *CIL* I², 2541.

[35] Como el excepcional ejemplar bilingüe de Barchín del Hoyo, Cuenca (*AE*, 1999, 954a-b).

[36] Como la *defixio* erótica procedente de Sagunto (*CIL* II²/14, 757 a).

[37] Dos excepcionales ejemplares son los hallados en Santiponce (*AE*, 1975, 497) y Bolonia (*AE*, 1988, 727).

[38] Como la *tabella* de Caerleon (*RIB*, I, 323), Nijmegen (*AE*, 2007, 1029), y la pieza de Rottweil (Nuber, 1984, 379). Quizá un intento de emular esta forma es *Tab. Sul.* 15 (Tomlin 1988).

[39] Respecto a las *tabulae cum capitulo*, cfr. Costabile-Licandro 2002, 25-34. Para las *tabulae ansatae*, *vid*. Cornell 1991, especialmente 23-24.

[40] Λᾶμνα es, de todas ellas, la voz más empleada: cfr. *PGM* VII, 397-398; 459; *PGM* X, 36-37; *PGM* XXXVI, 1-2; 231 y *PGM* LVIII, 6. El término πέταλον aparece en *PGM* V, 304-305; *PGM* VII, 417 y *PGM* X, 36-37. Respecto a πιττάκιον, cfr. *PGM* IV, 2956 y *PGM* XV, 9. Para πλάτυμμα *vid. PGM* IV, 329 y 406-407, mientras que πλάξ aparece en *PGM* IV, 2212 y *PGM* VII, 432. Por último, λεπίς (λεπ[ίδα μολιβῆν]), se reconstruye en *PGM* LXXVIII, 3-4.

[41] *Tabel<l>a* se documenta en un plomo procedente de Mentana (Audollent, 1904, *DT* 135); *tabula* se lee en Mainz (Blänsdorf 2010b, 186-188); *charta* en una pieza de Fontanaccia (*AE*, 2003, 645), mientras que *carta* se atestigua en Mainz (Blänsdorf 2010b, 170-11) y en Uley (*AE*, 1996, 936), por citar otros ejemplos. *Plumbum* es el término empleado en las *defixiones* de Montfo (*AE*, 1981, 621) o Kreuznach (*CIL* XIII, 2, 1, 7554), entre otras.

pios *defigentes* quienes elegían la forma de las piezas, probablemente forzados por el tiempo del que disponían para realizar la *defixio*, la presencia o no de un "profesional" que los atendiese y en cierto modo, su propio criterio.

2. Soportes no específicos.

Pertenecen a esta categoría todos aquellos objetos que, prescindiendo o complementando a su función primaria, han sido además empleados como soporte epigráfico. Se incluyen asimismo todos los elementos que, en estado natural, fueron utilizados como soporte de escritura (conchas, magnetita, etc.). De nuevo, se distinguen dos grandes grupos, dependiendo la materia prima con la que están realizados: perecederos y perdurables.

a. Perecederos.
Dentro de este grupo, los *Papiros Mágicos Griegos* recomiendan una serie de materiales aptos para las prácticas de magia agresiva de los que no queda más testimonio que el literario. Entre ellos se encuentran las hojas de eléboro (φύλ⟨λ⟩ων χαλπάσ(ου))[42] y la piel de asno (δέρμα ὄνου)[43], que son empleadas en sendas *agōgai*, además de las alas de un murciélago vivo (νυκτερίδαν ζῶσαν ἐπὶ τῆς δεξιᾶς πτέρυγος (...) ἐπὶ τῆς ἀριστερᾶς)[44] utilizadas en un maleficio para provocar insomnio "…hasta que [ella] de su consentimiento".

b. Perdurables.
Este conjunto de materiales se define por su gran heterogeneidad, dado que en él se agrupan desde conchas marinas, hasta magnetita y piezas de metal, pasando por lucernas, *tegulae* y *ostraka*.

   Respecto a las conchas marinas (ὄστρακον ἀπὸ θαλάσσης)[45], los *Papiros Mágicos Griegos* documentan cuatro maleficios (tres de ellos de carácter erótico) que debían ser redactados sobre este soporte, escritos con tintas muy especiales, como sangre de un asno negro, tinta de mirra o incluso "mirra mezclada

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[42] *PGM* XIX, b, 1.

[43] *PGM* XXXVI, 362.

[44] *PGM* XII, 376-377. Otra fórmula para impedir el sueño, empleando como soporte de escritura las alas de un murciélago, se encuentra en *PGM* VII, 652.

[45] Este mismo término (ὄστρακον ἀπὸ θαλάσσης) aparece en *PGM* IV, 2218 -aunque no especifica el tipo de conjuro-; *PGM* VII, 300ª (ὄστρακον θαλάσσιον); *PGM* VII, 374 y *PGM* VII, 467.

con sangre de uno muerto violentamente (…) [con] bermellón de Tifón"[46]. Siguiendo con los conjuros eróticos y aplicando el principio mágico del *similia similibus*, los *PGM* prescriben el empleo de magnetita (λίθον μάγνετα τὸν πνέοντα)[47] para lograr la atracción de la persona deseada, que sin duda se haría efectiva dadas las reconocidas propiedades del mineral (Plin., *Nat*, XXXVI, 127)[48]. Éste puede surgir en la naturaleza en forma de cristales octaédricos, lo que facilitaría el grabado de la iconografía y el texto prescritos, que se completarían con la pronunciación de una larga fórmula. De esta receta, así como de las relacionadas con conchas marinas, la única constancia que queda es literaria. Sin embargo, sucede lo contrario con una pieza procedente de Sperlonga, no documentada en los *PGM* pero sí arqueológicamente. Se trata de una pequeña placa marmórea de *opus sectile* reutilizada, sobre la que se redactó la imprecación a modo de *titulus pictus*, para ser depositada en una de las llamadas grutas de Tiberio[49].

Dentro de los soportes perdurables, un grupo bastante nutrido se compone por piezas de arcilla o cerámica, bien representadas tanto a nivel literario como arqueológico. Así, los *Papiros Mágicos Griegos* proponen para separar a dos personas la utilización de una orza de salazón (εἰς ταρίχου ὄστρακον)[50], sobre la que se debe inscribir con un estilo de bronce el maleficio que provoque "antipatía, enemistad, como tenían Tifón y Osiris". Para la realización de un conjuro erótico de atracción, los *PGM* recomiendan el empleo de un vaso de cerámica (ποτήριον)[51], sobre el que se recitaría siete veces una fórmula determinada. En otra *agōgē*, se aconseja escribir el texto sobre cerámica cruda (εἰς ⟨ὄ⟩στρακον ὠμὸν)[52], prescripción que parece tener su reflejo arqueológico en tres piezas de carácter erótico procedentes de Wilhering (Nórico), El Jem (Byzacena) y Maar (Gallia Belgica)[53], redactadas sobre dos *tegulae* y una jarra respectivamente, cuando la arcilla estaba todavía fresca. Otras execraciones inscritas sobre soportes de arcilla o cerámica han sido halladas en Italia, la

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[46] Respectivamente, en *PGM* VII, 300ª y ss.; *PGM* VII, 467 y ss. y *PGM* IV, 2218 y ss. Trad. de J. L. Calvo Martínez y M. D. Sánchez Romero.

[47] *PGM* IV, 1723-1724.

[48] Según Plinio, "…el hierro es atraído por la magnetita y, a pesar de ser una materia capaz de someter todas las cosas, corre hacia una especie de vacío misterioso, y cuando está ya suficientemente cerca, salta sobre la magnetita, quedando sujeto y adherido a ella como en un abrazo" (Trad. A. Domínguez García y H.-B. Riesco).

[49] Guarducci 1960.

[50] *PGM* XII, 366.

[51] *PGM* VII, 643.

[52] *PGM* XXXVI, 187.

[53] Cfr. para Wilhering (*AE*, 2004, 1092) y para El Jem (*AE*, 2000, 1611c). La jarra de Maar es recogida por Audollent 1904, *DT* 103.

primera de ellas es un *ostrakon* procedente de Neapolis (Cerdeña)[54], sobre el que se inscribió un texto de carácter judicial. Las otras dos execraciones provienen de Roma y fueron redactadas por razones desconocidas a modo de *tituli picti* sobre una lucerna y el borde de una urna cineraria respectivamente[55]. En raras ocasiones, las piezas de cerámica o arcilla aparecen en contexto arqueológico vinculadas a otras de plomo, como en Mautern, donde una *defixio* inscrita sobre una lámina de plomo servía como "tapa" para una pequeña jarra de arcilla, que en su interior contenía restos de material orgánico[56]. Otro caso muy similar procede de la fuente de *Anna Perenna* (Roma), donde fue hallada una jarra de cerámica, con restos de huesos y pergamino en su interior, tapada por una lámina de plomo, aparentemente anepígrafa[57].

Por último, es necesario analizar el grupo conformado por los objetos metálicos, conocidos casi en exclusiva gracias a la arqueología. Así, procedentes del santuario de Sulis Minerva en Bath, son dos ejemplares de gran interés que recogen sendas listas con los nombres de los enemigos a execrar. El primero de ellos, posiblemente redactado en celta, se inscribe sobre un pequeño disco de estaño bañado en bronce (de 3'5-3'8 cm. de diámetro) rematado por un apéndice anular idóneo para su suspensión[58]. La segunda *defixio* fue depositada también en este santuario y se inscribe sobre un plato de peltre de unos 14'5 cm. de diámetro, que tras su redacción fue plegado en dos[59]. Así las cosas, parece que en ambos casos estamos ante elementos de uso cotidiano reutilizados como soporte de escritura[60].

Además de estas piezas, merecen especial atención una serie de contenedores de plomo hallados en la fuente de *Anna Perenna* en Roma, que constituyen un *unicum* de extraordinario interés[61]. Por lo general, forman unidades compuestas por tres contenedores, de dimensiones variables ya que se disponen uno

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[54] Al respecto, *AE*, 2007, 690.

[55] La lucerna, que ya formaba parte del Museo Kircheriano es recogida por Audollent 1904, *DT* 137. Para la urna cineraria, *vid. AE*, 1941, 138.

[56] *AE*, 1950, 112

[57] Para esta pieza, con número de inventario 475545, cfr. Polakova-Rapinesi 2002, 39 y 49. Respecto a la fuente de *Anna Perenna*, su excavación y hallazgos, *vid.* Piranomonte 2010b.

[58] Tomlin, 1988, *Tab. Sul.* 18.

[59] Tomlin, 1988, *Tab. Sul.* 30.

[60] Por lo que respecta al disco de estaño, Mees apunta que "Its place of deposition and the metal was made of suggest that the Bath tablet was specifically created for the purpose of cursing (…) perhaps the pendant form of the first Celtic Bath find was supposed to suggest the magical quality of the item, if not, say, be a symbolic representation of an object which had been stolen from the curser" (Mees 2009, 35)

[61] Sobre los contenedores y sus respectivos contenidos, *vid.* Polakova-Rapinesi 2002, 40-45 y 48-52. Acerca de su valor mágico, cfr. Piranomonte 2010a, 21-30, con la bibliografía precedente relativa al hallazgo y contexto arqueológico del yacimiento (especialmente n. 2).

dentro de otro, a modo de muñecas rusas. En siete de los casos, el más pequeño y recóndito de los recipientes contenía una figurilla humana depositada -salvo una excepción- boca abajo[62]. Para preservar cada módulo, éste se cerraba normalmente mediante una única tapa, de forma cónica o plana, que era sellada con resinas naturales o incluso deformada en la zona del borde para evitar así una posible apertura. Estos recipientes han sido incluidos en el presente estudio porque los contenedores internos de cada unidad fueron empleados como soporte para inscribir imprecaciones. Así, en las paredes curvas de los recipientes se representan potencias divinas y se mencionan las víctimas del hechizo, y en uno de los fondos aparece incluso un largo texto contra *Quirinus Pistor*[63], inscrito aprovechando la superficie plana del mismo, y también adaptándose al espacio mediante una *ordinatio* espiraliforme. El hecho de que las inscripciones aparezcan exclusivamente en los contenedores internos responde, a mi juicio, a una intención de ocultar el mensaje escrito, dado que estas piezas, por sus características formales, no podían ser dobladas o enrolladas como lo son las *defixiones* "normales".

En fecha reciente, M. Piranomonte ha propuesto la sugerente hipótesis de que los contenedores de *Anna Perenna* puedan ser objetos reutilizados, concretamente tinteros o recipientes para fármacos[64]. Por lo que respecta a la primera posibilidad, el hecho de estar realizados en plomo y carecer de la abertura doble o simple en la tapa, tan característica de los tinteros, producidos por lo general en parejas iguales (y no en tríos de diferentes dimensiones) parecería dificultar este origen. En cuanto a los recipientes de farmacopea, y aunque no se especifica, probablemente se esté aludiendo a la difundida tipología de la *pyxis*, una pequeña caja cilíndrica con tapa, de carácter polivalente, realizada en muy diversos materiales y dimensiones[65]. Sin embargo, entre los materiales de la fuente romana, tan sólo la unidad con número de inventario 475549 presentaría un aspecto similar al de algunos de los tinteros y ciertas *pyxides*, lo que dejaría sin explicación al resto de los recipientes hallados[66].

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[62] La excepción, sería la figura con número de inventario 475540. Cfr. Polakova-Rapinesi 2002, 41 y 48.

[63] Por citar algunos ejemplos, se da una representación de *Seth* (Blänsdorf 2010a, 43-44, 60) y se mencionan víctimas como *Leontius* (*vid.* Blänsdorf, 2010b, 231 -Text 2-, Plate 14). Para la *defixio* inscrita contra *Quirinus Pistor*, *vid.* Blänsdorf 2010a, 36-38, 59.

[64] Piranomonte 2010a, especialmente 28-30.

[65] Hilgers 1969, 265-267, "*Pyxis*". Para el instrumental médico en general, es necesario consultar la obra de Künzl 1982. Dos ejemplos broncíneos de los llamados "pomos de medicina" proceden de Albalate de las Nogueras, Cuenca (cfr. Fuentes Domínguez 1987, 259, fig. 7, nº 3 y 4; fig. 8 nº 1 y 2).

[66] El conjunto de contenedores (entendidos como unidades indivisibles: contenedor-contenido) procedentes de *Anna Perenna* asciende a un total de "dieci recipienti, dei quali nove

Desde mi punto de vista, los contenedores de *Anna Perenna*, como parte activa del ritual mágico, serían creados *ex profeso* para el mismo, con la doble función de: primero, servir como depósito para la imagen de la víctima (que aparece siempre aislada en el más recóndito de los tres) y segundo, servir como soporte de escritura, recogiendo las *defixiones* que complementarían el conjuro. El único paralelo a nivel arqueológico hallado para esta práctica ritual tan sofisticada, es, como ha subrayado M. Piranomonte[67], las figurillas humanas procedentes del *Kerameikon* de Atenas, que fueron modeladas en plomo y depositadas en el interior de ataúdes en miniatura, inscritos y realizados con este mismo metal. Pero las evidencias de *Anna Perenna* podrían también tener su reflejo en los *PGM*, en los que para evitar que las mujeres "sean poseídas por otro hombre" recomiendan modelar un cocodrilo con tierra, tinta y mirra, para después depositarlo en una pequeña urna cineraria de plomo (*...εἰς ⟨σ⟩ορίον μολιβοῦν*)[68] sobre la que a continuación se debe inscribir la fórmula prescrita. En este contexto, y a la vista de las similitudes entre algunos contenedores de la fuente y ciertos tipos de urnas cinerarias de plomo de edad imperial[69] (caracterizados ambos por ser recipientes cilíndricos con tapa plana o cónica), parece pertinente establecer una relación entre el dictado de los *PGM* y los hallazgos del santuario, más aún cuando uno de los recipientes reza: *decentias*, quizá en una apelación a la virtud que toda buena esposa debía tener[70]. Además, si los contenedores hallados en la fuente de *Anna Perenna* fuesen realmente "pequeñas urnas cinerarias de plomo", éstos tendrían la misma función que los ataúdes del *Kerameikon*: sepultar simbólicamente a la víctima.

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in piombo e una brocca fittile" (según Polakova-Rapinesi 2002, 39). En cuanto a la unidad con número de inventario 475549 (Cfr. Polakova-Rapinesi 2002, 39 -fig. 3- y 50), ésta presenta un aspecto similar al de los tinteros recogidos por Bilkei 1980, 89-90, Tafel III-IV, números 22, 149 y especialmente 121. Asimismo, recuerda a los recipientes hallados recientemente en una tumba femenina de *Aquincum* (vid. Lassányi 2008, 68 fig. 6).

[67] Piranomonte 2010b, 207, n. 51.

[68] *PGM*, XIII, 322.

[69] Las similitudes resultan evidentes entre los contenedores de *Anna Perenna* con número de inventario 475541, 475543, 475551 y 475553 (Polakova-Rapinesi 2002, 41-44, fig. 7-8, fig. 11, fig. 16 y fig. 18 respectivamente) y las urnas cinerarias de cuerpo cilíndrico y tapa plana clasificadas por Cochet 2000, 183-185, fig. 184-187. Del mismo modo, los contenedores de *Anna Perenna* con número de inventario 475539 y 475547 (Polakova-Rapinesi 2002, 40, fig. 5 y 42, fig. 12) presentan una tapa cónica similar a la de la urna cineraria recogida por Cochet 2000, 186, fig. 188-189.

[70] Contenedor con número de inventario 475549. Al respecto, Blänsdorf 2010a, 43-44, 60.

3. Conclusiones

En determinadas ocasiones y, dentro del plano teórico dictado por los *Papiros Mágicos Griegos*, la relación entre el conjuro y el soporte no es en absoluto casual. Éste se encuentra estrechamente vinculado con la acción mágica a desarrollar, ya que a través del mismo se va a favorecer el éxito de la praxis. Esta correspondencia resulta clara no sólo en las *defixiones* inscritas sobre plomo (cuyas valencias negativas eran de sobra conocidas), sino también en las *agōgai* redactadas sobre conchas marinas (símbolo de Venus) o sobre magnetita (de notorias propiedades de atracción).

Sin embargo, es evidente que los testimonios literarios y los arqueológicos no siempre se corresponden, ya que probablemente ni los primeros recogen todas las prácticas realizadas, ni éstas se conservan en su totalidad. Así, y aunque tal y como dictan los *PGM*, la gran mayoría de las *defixiones* se inscriben sobre plomo, se dan algunas excepciones que confirman la existencia de formas de actuación alternativas a éstos. Dichas excepciones, de gran interés, demuestran en ocasiones la importancia del vínculo existente entre el soporte y la práctica a realizar. Tal es el caso de las imprecaciones de Mérida y Pompeya, inscritas sobre placas típicas de la epigrafía monumental, probablemente porque los *defigentes* querían que estas piezas fuesen expuestas en público. Asimismo esta relación se pone de manifiesto en las execraciones escritas sobre una urna cineraria y una lucerna, ya que ambos objetos sirvieron para establecer una analogía con la propia víctima[71]. Se dan otros casos, por supuesto, en los que el vínculo soporte-execración no parece tan claro, como las piezas procedentes de Bath (¿eran objetos con *ousía*?) o de Neapolis, en los que quizá el *defigens* no le daba tanta importancia al medio como al mensaje que este contenía.

No obstante, y aunque las alternativas existen, éstas representan una exigua minoría frente a la inmensa mayoría de imprecaciones, que fueron inscritas sobre plomo. Este metal, tan económico como difundido, es el soporte más recomendado por los *PGM* y también el más atestiguado arqueológicamente. Y es que, a su disponibilidad y fácil empleo, se suman una serie de connotaciones que, como ya sabían los *defigentes*, garantizaban el éxito de la praxis.

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[71] La lucerna (Audollent 1904, *DT* 137), cuyo texto es: *Helenos suom nomen eimferis / mandat; stipem strenam lumen / suom secum defert; ne quis eum / solvat nisi nos qui fecimus.* La urna cineraria (*AE*, 1941, 138) presenta la inscripción: (Col. I) *Deprecor uos sancti Angeli / ụt quomodo ec anima intus in- / ̣clusa tenetur et angustiatur / ẹt non uede ṇeque lumine ne ạḷiquem / ṛeḟṛigerium non abet ṣịc ụt anima / ṃẹṇṭẹṣ ̣cọrpos Collecticii quem peperẹt Agṇẹḷḷạ* (Col. II) *teneatur ardẹạt / destabeṣc̣at usque / ạḍ infernum ṣ̣emper / ḍucite Collecticium / quem peperet / Agnella.*

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Apéndice. Cuadro-resumen sobre los diferentes soportes empleados en las *defixiones*.

Soportes Específicos			
Materiales Perecederos		Materiales Perdurables	
Fuentes Literarias	Fuentes Arqueológicas	Fuentes Literarias	Fuentes Arqueológicas
Papiro			Mármol: Mérida
Papiro-Plomo	Papiro-plomo: Cartago		Pizarra: Pompeya
		Estaño	Estaño: Bath
		Cobre	Cobre: *Anna Perenna*
		Plomo	Plomo

Soportes no específicos			
Materiales Perecederos		Materiales Perdurables	
Fuentes Literarias	Fuentes Arqueológicas	Fuentes Literarias	Fuentes Arqueológicas
Hojas de eléboro		Conchas marinas	
Piel de asno		Magnetita	
Alas de murciélago			*Opus Sectile*: Sperlonga
		Orza de salazón	
		Vaso cerámico	
		Cerámica cruda	*Tegulae*: Wilhering y El Jem Jarra: Maar
			Ostrakon: Neapolis
			Urna cineraria: Roma
			Lucerna: Roma
			Cerámica-plomo: Mautern y *Anna Perenna*
			Disco de estaño: Bath
			Plato de peltre: Bath
			Contenedores de plomo: *Anna Perenna*

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SEQUENCES OF *CHARAKTERES* IN SOME CIRCUS *DEFIXIONES* IN LATIN FROM HADRUMETUM[1]

BY GYÖRGY NÉMETH

Abstract: A peculiar feature of a series of curse tablets from Hadrumetum, published by Audollent in his *Defixionum tabellae* (1904) and in a further study dated 1906, is that they contain four recurring sequences of magical *charakteres*. One of the sequences occurs on a single tablet, another on three tablets, the third in five, and the fourth is found 34 times on ten tablets. In each case the context is a curse against chariot-teams, i.e. charioteers and horses. Since the names of some charioteers show up on nearly all the tablets in the group, we may assume that the series was written over a relatively brief number of years. This inference is supported by the fact that the appearance and physical size of the tablets differ considerably. From these data we can conclude that there was a circle of magicians, using the same handbook and specialising in chariot-racing, who invented the recurring sequences of *charakteres*, though – as far as we know – their innovation was not adopted in other regions.

Keywords: Audollent, *defixio*, sequence of *charakteres*, Hadrumetum, charioteers.

One of the major interests of the Zaragoza project 'Espacios de penumbra' is the identification of *officinae magicae*, that is, organised groups of practitioners writing in Latin. Several such groups are known for the Greek-speaking area of the Mediterranean outside Egypt, for example at Athens, Antioch, Amathous in Cyprus, Tell Sandahanna in Palestine, and Rhodes. A similar group existed at Carthage, working mainly in Greek, but also capable of linguistic code-switching. A study of sequences of *charakteres* at Hadrumetum (modern Sousse, Tu-

nisia) allows us to identify an analogous group there, writing in Latin and specialising in circus *defixiones*.

Among the roughly forty curse-tablets found, mainly by French army officers in the late nineteenth century, at Hadrumetum, is a group of texts exhibiting a common feature, namely that they contain recurring sequences of *charakteres*. In this form they have not been found elsewhere; moreover, the individual *charakteres* are also different from magic signs found elsewhere. The purpose of this study is to examine these *charakteres* and to confirm the hypothesis that a more or less independent *officina magica* operated in Hadrumetum in the 1st-2nd c. AD.

Audollent's role

Auguste Audollent (1864-1943) noticed the increasing number of curse tablets at the end of the 19th century when he published inscriptions found at French excavations in North Africa. Starting in 1901, he dedicated a slew of studies over several decades to the topic. After the First World War he was regarded internationally as the most significant authority on curse tablets.

The main publication of curse tablets by Auguste Audollent, which appeared in 1904 under the title *Defixionum tabellae* (*DTAud*), gives us the drawing of a sequence consisting of five magical signs (sequence **a**) in the first line of inscription no. 276, whereas in line 6, 13 and 19 he simply writes: „*Signa magica ut supra*". Thus the signs occur altogether four times on the tablet. The same sequence of signs occurs on seven other tablets of the DT, altogether 28 times on the eight tablets. The five *charakteres* of the sign sequence fill up the whole width of the tablet.[2] Another sign sequence consisting of six *charakteres* appears on the verso side of tablet no. 278 (this is where Audollent gives a drawing of it), and it can also be seen once on tablets no. 282, 283 and 285 (sequence **b**). Audollent only writes in these cases: „*signa magica eadem quae in 278 b*".

In any event, Audollent saw and studied only 11 out of the 14 tablets.

Charakteres appeared in Greco-Roman magic texts of Egyptian origin after the 1st century A.D. These signs that look like letters but cannot be interpreted as such are of disputed origin, and apart from a few bold but not necessarily well-founded attempts hardly any interpretations have been offered. They are frequently not even included in editions except as a short note that the text includes magic signs/Zauberzeichen at this point. The time has come to create a unified database of *charakteres* in papyri, lead tablets and magic gems, and

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[2] Cagnat 1903, 260.

Kirsten Dzwiza has started this project already. I would like to contribute by outlining problems in interpretating the series of charakters in Hadrumetum.

Unique sequences of signs:

Sign sequence **a**:
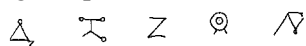
Sign sequence **b**:
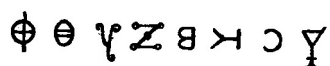
Sign sequence **c**:
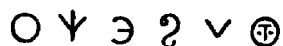
Distribution of the tablets:

Occurrence of sign sequences **a** and **b**:

	a	**b**
DTAud 276:	4 +	
DTAud 277:	2	
DTAud 278:	3 +	1
DTAud 279:	4 +	
DTAud 280:	3	
DTAud 281:	3	
DTAud 282:	5	1
DTAud 283:	4	1
DTAud 284:	–	
DTAud 285:		1
BCTH 1906A	2	
BCTH 1906B	4	1
altogether:	**34**	**5**

Discovery of the groups:

Group 1

The tablets bearing sequences **a** and **b** were found by the commander of the French rifle garrison in Sousse, General Paul Henri Goetschy (1848–1921) during his amateur excavations in a cemetery next to the road leading to Kairouan,

some 500 metres from the French military camp and 300 metres from the Punic necropolis. According to the report of Goetschy, they were discovered in two cinerary tombs in 1894.[3] 12 of the 14 lead tablets were rolled up. The two tablets that were not rolled up had had nails driven through them, which were still *in situ* when found.[4] There was no furniture in the tombs with the help of which the tablets could have been dated, but the surrounding tombs date from the 1st-2nd c. AD.

Group 2

The three tablets bearing sequence **c** were found in 1902 in a cinerary tomb in a small necropolis, north-east of the ancient town, dating from 1st-2nd c. AD. A fourth tablet was found in the tomb, with a Latin text written in Greek letters (*DTAud* 267), but was significantly different from them. The three tablets with *charakteres* were written in the same hand, and are further linked to one another by the *vox magica Sarbasmisarab*, the sign sequence, and the objectives of the curse.

1906 group

Little is known about their provenance. A rifle sergeant named Icard found one of them in the Roman cemetery of Sousse, in a cinerary tomb. This cemetery was located above the Roman catacombs and Abbé Leynaud had an air duct slit to these with the help of the riflemen. Sergeant Icard found the second tablet in the spoil, and therefore could not tell exactly where it was discovered.[5]

Present locations of the tablets

These tablets are – or were, according to Audollent's information – in the museum of Sousse. He also says the tablet with sequence **d** is kept in Tunis. Audollent says that General Goetschy gave the *defixiones* of sequence **a** found by him to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.[6] Audollent does not say where the two *defixiones* published in 1906 were kept; the only information he gives is that he was asked by the Ministère de l'Instruction Publique to publish them.[7]

When I searched for these tablets in the Bibliothèque Nationale, I could find only seven whose numbers in *DTAud* were indicated: 276; 277; 278; 279; 281;

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[3] Cagnat 1903, 259.

[4] Audollent 1904, 360–361.

[5] Audollent 1906, 379.

[6] Audollent 1904, 360: „Nuperrime a. 1903, undecim (263, 276–285) largitus est Goetschy, et ipse dux franco-gallus, Bibliothecae Nationali Parisiorum."

[7] Audollent 1906, 379.

283; 284.[8] The tablets are in very poor condition, their surface is corroded, some of them have disintegrated into small pieces. Yet, I have found on tablet 276 the sign sequence of the first series of *charakteres* (or more precisely the first four signs). According to the inventory, the tablets entered the collection in March 1906, but it is not mentioned if Goetschy was the donor.[9]

Sign sequence **a** appears on two other tablets that were published by Audollent in 1906, twice on the first one and four times on the second.[10] On the reverse of the second tablet we can see sequence **b.**

Sign sequence **c** consisting of 8 signs is known only from three tablets (*DTAud* 272-274), and it occurs twice on each of these, at the beginning and at the end of the tablets, immediately after the *vox magica Sarbasmisarab*.

Sign sequence **d** consisting of 24 signs appears only on a tablet from Hadrumetum (*DTAud* 275), but there it occurs seven times (see fig. 12). The *charakteres* from sequence **a** are not known from anywhere else, or more precisely, the fourth sign consisting of two concentric circles appears on a lead tablet from Carthage (*DTAud* 241) as the third sign of a sequence of *charakteres* that frames the curse.[11] The curse was directed at the charioteers and the horses of the blue faction.

The Audollent archive in Clermont-Ferrand

I searched for the manuscripts of Audollent in Clermont-Ferrand in the Archives Départementales du Puy-de-Dôme in 2009. Among the papers in box „19 J art 12" I found a thick lead tablet in good condition (size: 122 x 108 mm) and I was surprised when I discovered the symbols of sign sequence **a** three times on it. The rest of the inscription is hardly readable, but based on its size and the position of the *charakteres* I unambiguously identified the tablet as *DTAud* 280. I did not succeed in finding any information on how this text, first published by Cagnat, got to Clermont-Ferrand instead of Paris.[12]

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[8] Inventory number: reg.F. 10396.1 à 10. Two tablets did not have a *DTAud* number, the size of these is 13,5 x 9,5 cm, 10 x 8 cm.

[9] They got into the inventory exactly on March 16, 1906 as a donation of the Ministère de l'instruction publique, with this remark: „dix plaques de plomb trouvées dans un tombeau à Sousse".

[10] Audollent 1906, 378–387.

[11] *CIL* VIII suppl. 12511 gives the drawing of the tablet, and it says that the lamella is of rectangular shape although it is squared. The original proportions can be seen in Audollent's drawing. Cf. Tremel 2004, 167–168.

[12] Cagnat 1903, 262.

Fig. 1. Drawing of *DTAud* 280 (Németh)
Fig. 2. Photo of *DTAud* 280

In the same archive and in the same box, in an envelope mailed on March 22, 1905 by the Ministère de l'Instruction Publique I found two tablets published in 1906, each of which was pressed between two wooden plates coated in blue cloth. Someone glued the smaller, thin, square-shaped one on a piece of black cardboard (0,08 x 0,09 m). Since it was Audollent who reported on the two signs on the back-side of the tablet, it was presumably he who stuck the plate that had broken to pieces on the cardboard.[13] In any case, today a piece is missing from the middle of the tablet, which was – according to the drawing by Audollent – still there at the time.

The larger lead plate, which is also thin, has broken into two pieces. Despite the corrosion, the sequence of *charakteres* in the first line is well readable (0,123 x 0,047 m).[14]

Fig. 3. Drawing of table *BCTH* I (Audollent)
Fig. 4. Drawing of table *BCTH* I (Németh)
Fig. 5. Photo of table *BCTH* I
Fig. 6. Drawing of table *BCTH* II (Németh)
Fig. 7. Drawing of table *BCTH* II (Audollent)
Fig. 8. Photo of table *BCTH* II

The sizes of the tablets with sign sequences in reality and according to Audollent:

276 : 11 x 10,2 cm;	Audollent 0,105 x 0,10 m
277 : 5,5 x 9 + fragments	Audollent 0,055 x 0,09 m
278 : 9,5 x 5,5 cm „scanty"	Audollent 0,085 x 0,09 m
279 : 12, x 10 cm	Audollent 0,115 x 0,10 m
280: 12,2 x 10,8 cm	Audollent 0,125 x 0,095 m
281 : 12,5 x 9, 3 cm	Audollent 0,125 x 0,105 m
283 : 13,5 x 8,9 cm	Audollent 0,135 x 0,09 m
284 : 14,5 x 8,7 cm	Audollent 0,125 x 0,095 m

The tablets bearing sign sequences **a** and **b** are closely linked to each other, so much so that with the exception of a single tablet (*DTAud* 285), sign sequence **b** occurs only on the reverse of texts that contain series **a**. The tablet with se-

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[13] Audollent 1906, 380.
[14] Audollent 1906, 382.

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quence **d** is directed against the same charioteers as those of series **a** and **b** (e.g. Privatianus, Naucellius, Superstes, Castor, etc. from the red faction). The tablets bearing sign sequences **a**, **b** and **d** are framed on the four sides partly by spells, partly by *voces magicae* and series of *charakteres*.

Fig. 9. Sign sequence **a** on different tablets.

Today we can examine the *charakteres* of sign sequence **a** on the three tablets kept in Clermont-Ferrand. This analysis shows us that the individual signs in the sign sequences are sometimes slightly different from one another in their present state. The triangle-shaped sign almost always has a small circle on top, but in one case there is no circle at all, and in other cases a small circle can be found in the left or right lower vertices. In four cases a small wave starts up from the right lower vertex, but in three other cases there is no wave. The number of circles that can be found at the end of each line of the T-shaped sign varies as well. In one case, the sign composed of concentric circles is closed at the bottom, but elsewhere the inner circle is not visible. All this suggests not only that the signs have faded over time, but also that they were originally carved in a slightly different form on the surface of the lead tablets. However, their position in the sign sequence makes it obvious that the magician considered these slightly different *charakteres* to be the same.

Thus, if we want to collect the *charakteres* into a database, we must decide in each and every case if two slightly different signs are two versions of the same *charakter* or two separate *charakteres*. Unfortunately, no useful drawings of the other sign sequences survive, and the location of the tablets is unclear. Moreover, we cannot check if the *charakteres* that Audollent considered the same in his edition definitely matched in every detail, or if the publisher regarded them to be the same despite the small differences. I must point out that in this respect the drawings of tablet *DTAud* 241 differ even in *CIL* and on Audollent's own drawing.

Fig. 10. Drawing of *DTAud* 241 (Audollent)
Fig. 11. Drawing of *DTAud* 241 (*CIL* VIII Suppl. 12511)

On the three tablets of sign sequence **c** only names of horses can be found, several of which can be found on each of the three tablets: Delicatianus, Capria, Volucer, Nervicus, etc. *DTAud* 272 contains only 35 horse names, *DTAud* 273 has 26 horse names, although the inscription – incorrectly – refers to names of humans as well: „*haec nomina hominum et equorum qu(a)e dedi vobis cadan(t), precor bos*". The word „*bos*" of course stands for „*vos*," but to whom

could this *vobis* and *vos* refer to? Although the spell *Sarbasmisarab* occurs twice on all three tablets, it would require the singular. There is a *vox magica* on the back-side of *DTAud* 272 and 273: FEIUB. The abbreviations „*Aur*" and „*iub*" can be read on the verso of *DTAud* 274, although the latter could also be part of the word FEIUB. *DTAud* 274 names the same 26 horses as *DTAud* 273, but the petitioning formula becomes more obvious: „*precor bos, sancta nomina, cadant homines et equi frangant*". The sorcerer probably used a ready-made formula, since he mentioned the charioteers (*homines*) again, but wrote only names of horses on the tablet. However, he gives the names of those from whom he expects help, namely from the intervention of the *sancta nomina*. As there are no names of demons on the tablet, except *Sarbasmisarab*, the only possible candidates for *vos*, *vobis* are the *charakteres* themselves, which are addressed as holy names. This is not unparalleled.

„Most holy Lord Charakteres, tie up, bind the feed, the hands, the sinews, the eyes, the knees, the courage, the leaps, the whip (?), the victory and the crowning of Porphuras and Hapsicrates, who are in the middle left, as well as his co-drivers of the Blue colours in the stable of Eugenius."[15]

As the sorcerer of Hadrumetum, this *defixio* in Greek from Apameia dating from the 5th c. AD attributes individual personality to the *charakteres* that are able to bind the victory of the rival charioteers. The first two lines of the inscription of Apameia contain no less than 36 *charakteres* that are called on to act by the magician. It is remarkable that in Egyptian astrology the „astronomical time" was divided into 36 decans, too.[16] On a magical papyrus from the 4th c. AD, six *charakteres* are called „strong gods", and this is preceded by the listing of six or eight *voces magicae* (*chremillon Muloch, kampy, chre ophtho, Maskelli-formula, Erekisiphthe/Iabezebyth*). Whether we can identify the names with the *charakteres* or not depends on their arrangement, nevertheless, the magician addresses the signs as „strong gods".[17]

There is a magical sentence from Hadrumetum that contains not 36, but 5, 6 and 8 *charakteres* and that was used by at least two sorcerers. The magician who used sign sequence **c** applied three of his spells to the same horses in effect, ostensibly because he wanted to influence three races that followed one another almost immediately. The error in the other two spells (i.e. the magician did not write down the names of the charioteers but the spell applies to their names as well) proves that he worked with the help of a handbook. This means that the use of the „magical sentence" consisting of *charakteres* was not his

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[15] Tremel 2004: 108. Translation in: Gager Nr. 6.
[16] Kákosy 1982, 164–165; Kákosy 1998, 189–190.
[17] PGM VII 417–422; Collins 2008, 77.

invention or that of the magician using sign sequence **a**-**b**, but it was a special, dominant element of the *defixio* dialect in Hadrumetum.[18]

It is obvious that the magician emphasizes the names of those whom he wants to bind especially strongly and puts them between two series of *charakteres*. At the beginning of the tablet containing sequence **d**, the names of Privatianus, Naucellius, Superstes and Castor are squeezed between two lines of *charakteres*, and further down he again mentions Privatianus and Naucellius as his most dangerous rivals.[19] *DTAud* 276 highlights the names of Privatianus, Naucellius, Castor, Romanus, etc. between two lines of sign sequences. In the first six lines of *DTAud* 277, the same names are framed as in lines 13-17 of *DTAud* 278, etc. Sign sequence **b** occurs mainly on the back-side of the tablets, as a sort of enhancement, whereas sign sequence **c** appears only when – together with the *vox magica* – it forms a frame around the entire curse against horses. Thus, the magician binds the rivals with the help of „Lord Charakteres", and the most dangerous antagonists are encircled in the tightest way.

Fig. 12. *DTAud* 275
Fig. 13. Drawing of *DTAud* 275 (Audollent)

The surviving drawings

Finally, I would like to present the surviving drawings on the tablets. The photos of *DTAud* 275 and its transcription indicating the *charakteres* are published by Audollent and the latter also by Cagnat (Figs. 12; 13).[20] This transcription was based on Audollent's drawing, which I found in the Archive of Clermont-Ferrand. This drawing, in typical Audollent fashion, is much sketchier than the transcription; the position of the letters of the Latin text is only suggested, and even the *charakteres* are transcribed exatly only up to a point. What is a reliable piece of information, however, is the shape and size of the tablet, since Audollent simply traced the outlines of the lead tablet (or in other cases, its photo). Still, the photo published in the journal confirms the author' statement. Audollent`s drawings include the A and B sides of *DTAud* 272 and 274, as well, but only the recto side of no. 273. These drawings offer a number of surprises. *Defixio* no. 272 was identified by Audollent himself, since he wrote the number on the drawing. Without his note it would be difficult to match the published *defixio* to the text consisting of four columns, even if we know that the author seldom transcribed the letters, only indicated their position (Fig. 14).

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[18] Gordon 2005, 80–82.
[19] Gordon 2002, 92.
[20] Audollent 1902, 418; Cagnat 1903, 258; DTAud 275.

The verso side of the tablet can be identified unambiguously based on the shape of the tablet, but instead of the published FEIUB *vox magica* we would rather read: NA^o (Fig. 15). An analysis of the recto side of *DTAud* 273 is virtually impossible against the edition of the text (Fig. 16). And based on DTAud 274 it seems that sign sequence **c** was not written in a separate line but continuously after the *vox magica*, first four *charakteres* in line 14, the and the other four in line 15. The letters AUR are visible on the verso side, but the letters IUB appear only if the tablet is held upside down, and even then only in reverse order (Fig. 17). But the most peculiar thing is that I have not found the drawings of tablets *DTAud* 276-284 in the bequest. I myself made a drawing of DTAud 280 and the two *defixiones* published in 1906, even though Audollent also copied the latter two. The *charakteres* are legible only on *BCTH* 1, not on the drawing of the longer tablet. The fact that Audollent followed Cagnat's edition when publishing DTAud 276-280 suggests that even if he had studied these tablets, he had not made a drawing of them. And yet, as I demonstrated, DTAud 280 is still in Clermont-Ferrand, which means that he had sufficient time to study it thoroughly.

Fig. 14. Drawing of *DTAud* 272 recto (Audollent)
Fig. 15. Drawing of *DTAud* 272 verso (Audollent)
Fig. 16. Drawing of *DTAud* 273 recto (Audollent)
Fig. 17. Drawing of *DTAud* 274 recto (Audollent)
Fig. 18. Drawing of *DTAud* 274 verso (Audollent)

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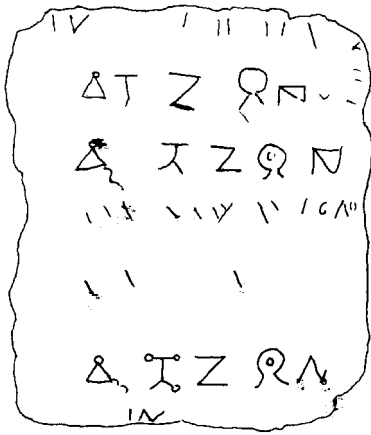
Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.
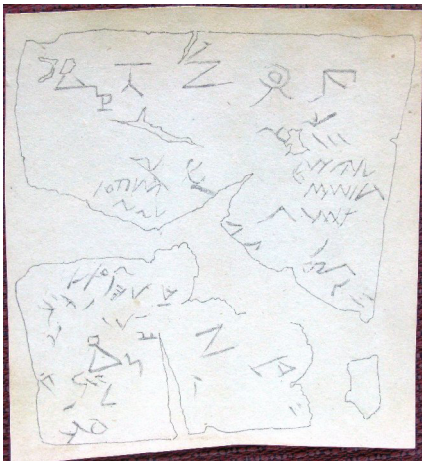
Fig. 3.

Fig. 4.

Fig. 5.

Fig. 6.
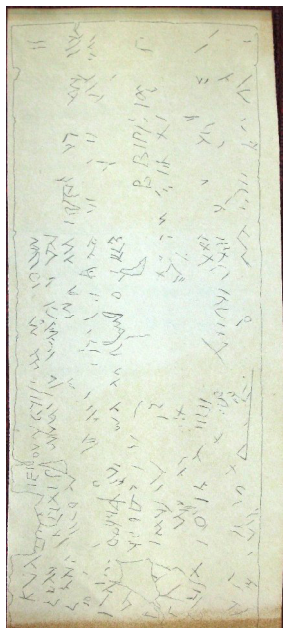
Fig. 7.

Fig. 8.

Fig. 9.

Fig. 10

Fig. 11

Fig. 12.

Praticianu Superstianu russei qui et Nauceliiu Salutare
Supestite russei servu Reguli Eliu Castore Repentinu.

KKKΔΔΔΔΔΛΛ ∽ ϖ ξ ΘΦΙΟΙΙΔΙΔΙΔΟ

Glauci Arguti veneti Destroviqu Glauci cadant, Lyda
Alumnu cadant, Italu Tyriu cadant, Faru cadant, Croceu cadant,
Elegantu cadant, Prancatiu Oclopecia Verbosu cadant,
Adamatu cadant, Securu Mantineu Prevalente cadant,
Paratu Vagarflta cadant, Divite Garulu cadant, Cesareu
Germanicu veneti cadant, Danuviu cadant,

KKKΔΔΔΔΔΛΛ ∽ ϖ ξ ΘΦΙΟΙΙΔΙΔΙΔΟ

Latrone Vagulu cadant, Agricola cadant, Cursore
Auricomu cadant, Spafu cadant, Hellenicu cadant,
Ideu Centauru cadant, Bracatu Virgineu cadant,
Ganimede cadant, Militiolu cadant, E[o]lu
Oceanu Eminentu cada[n]t, Tigau cadant,
Eucles cadant, Verbosu cadant.

KKKΔΔΔΔΔΛΛ ∽ ϖ ξ ΘΦΙΟΙΙΔΙΔΙΔΟ

Privatianu veriat frangat male giret,

KKKΔΔΔΔΔΛΛ ∽ ϖ ξ ΘΦΙΟΙΙΔΙΔΙΔΟ

Nauceliiu Superstianu russei cadat vert[at fran]gat,

KKKΔΔΔΔΔΛΛ ∽ ϖ ξ ΘΦΙΟΙΙΔΙΔΙΔΟ

Supestite russei servu Reguli cadat vertat fran[gat,]
Salutare cadat vertat frangat,
Eliu cadat vertat frangat vertat,
Castore cadat vertat frangat vertat,
Repentinu cadat vertat frangat.

KKKΔΔΔΔΔΛΛ ∽ ϖ ξ ΘΦΙΟΙΙΔΙΔΙΔΟ

nisi audire possint nec se moere possint
videant nec vincant vertant.

Fig. 13.

Fig. 14.

Fig. 15.

Fig. 16.

Fig.17.

Fig. 18.

FROM DOMESTIC APOTROPAIC MAGIC TO STATE RELIGION IN THE ROMAN WORLD: WAYS THERE AND BACK

BY ANTÓN ALVAR NUÑO

Abstract: There are two main methodological approaches in relation to the study of apotropaic magic in the Graeco-Roman world. An historicist one, focused on the formal description of the data and on tracing their possible origins; and a psychologist-functionalist one, which interprets the data as a psychological relief to the anxieties produced by the misfortunes of daily-life. I propose to explore here an aspect of apotropaic magic frequently overlooked: its mutual relation with the religion of the State, which creates a common syntactic framework but also tensions and conflicts.

Keywords: Apotropaic Magic, Domestic Religion, State Religion, god Fascinus, Dog Sacrifice.

1. Introduction

There is a particular passage in Pliny's account on the special properties of saliva which I would like to begin with:

If we hold these beliefs, we should also believe that the right course, on the arrival of a stranger, or if a sleeping baby is looked at, is for the nurse to spit three times at her charge. And yet the baby is further under the divine protection of Fascinus, guardian not only of babies but of generals, a deity whose worship, part of the Roman religion, is entrusted to the Vestals.
Plin. *Nat.* XXVIII 39 (trans. by W. H. S. Jones, Loeb, 1975).

Here Pliny establishes a direct link between a folk magical practice – protecting the child against the evil eye –, a public ceremony with a pronounced political content – the Triumph –, and a civic cult – the rites conducted by the Vestal Virgins. Spitting on someone was considered a way to avert curses and misfortune, although literary sources frequently refer to this practice as a typical superstition of old women and ignoramuses. As Pliny states, there is no need to resort to this kind of practices when there is a Roman god in charge of averting mystic evils. This is the only text where the god Fascinus is mentioned, but it is generally accepted that Fascinus was an itiphallic god whose iconographic rep-

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resentation was limited to his exaggerated genitals.[1] During the 1st and 2nd Centuries A.D., phallic iconography employed as apotropaic devices against the evil eye is frequent in personal amulets, in the household – wall reliefs, mosaics, *tintinnabula* –, and in the public sphere – wall reliefs including some suggesting that there were small shrines unpreserved –,[2] as Pliny's reference to the triumphal ceremony and the cult of the Vestal Virgins suggests. Pliny's account is an interesting example of both the complementarity between public religion and personal attitudes towards the divine world and the conflicting relationships between them.

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[1] See Kuhnert, *RE* VI 1909, s. v. "Fascinum", cols. 2009-2014. According to Zonar., *Epit.* 7,21, what hangs from the cart are bells but he makes no reference to the god Fascinus, or to phallic amulets. For Reid 1916, 181, n. 3, the Byzantine lawyer's comment about the bells is not credible. Champlin 2003, 214 considers that both Pliny and Zonaras could be plausible since most of the known *tintinnabula* are phallic. Beard 2007, 84 warns that the symbology and dramatization of the Triumph ceremony are unlikely to have become fossilized and remained unaltered over time. The earliest phallic relief I have found on record is dated at the end of the 2nd century or beginning of the 1st century B.C. and is found on the jamb of the southern gate of the Roman wall at Ampurias: Balil 1983, 115 and 116. The first arch of the Roman bridge at Merida has a phallus engraved on a stone block dated at the end of the 1st century B.C.: Álvarez Martínez 1983, 35, plate XV. Varone 2000, 17 gives evidence of a phallus carved in a street of Pompey (on a cobblestone of the *via dell'Abbondanza*) dating from the 1st century B.C. The thesis of Kellum 1996, 170-183 interpreting the forum of Augustus as a giant phallus seems exaggerated to me.

[2] The number of testimonies is overwhelming, although most of them are out of context. The bibliography I set out below is not a systematic compilation but a few references for guidance. Small phallic amulets on the Italian peninsula: Fiorelli 1866, 10-12; Galliazzo 1979, 124-125; Bolla 1997, 114-119 and 146; Tomei 2006, 262. Small phallic amulets on the Iberian peninsula: Del Hoyo Calleja-Vázquez Hoys 1994, 235-257; Del Hoyo Calleja-Vázquez Hoys 1996, 441-466; da Ponte 2002, 269-272; Pozo 2002, 69-121; Rey Seara 2003, 151-164. Small phallic amulets in Gaul: Faider-Feytmans 1957, 104-105; Lebel 1959-1961, 53-54, 65, 85; Rolland 1965, 176-178. Reliefs, mosaics and *tintinnabula* in temples, *negotia* and homes on the Italian peninsula: Blake 1936, 158-159 = *CCCA* III 42 n° 210; *Scavi di Ostia* IV 185, n° 344 and 191, n° 361; de Caro 2000, 69, 71; Pozzi et al. 1989, 192; Varone 2000, 18-21. Reliefs, mosaics and *tintinnabula* in temples, *negotia* and homes in the north of Africa: Foucher 1957, 178; Foucher 1958, 17, 19; Gauckler 1901, CLXXXIX = Perdrizet 1922, 31 = Bernand 1991, 85; Gsell 1965, n° 864; Ghalia 1990, tab. IV. Reliefs, mosaics and *tintinnabula* in temples, *negotia* and homes in Hispania: Blázquez 1984-85, 331-335; Alarcão and Ponte 1984, 123 y 134 = da Ponte 2002, 269-272; Mínguez Morales 1996, 305-319. Reliefs, mosaics and *tintinnabula* in temples, *negotia* and homes in Gaul: Faider-Feytmans 1952, 146-147; Rolland 1965, 106; Oggiano-Bitar 1984, 121. Parietal reliefs in streets and public places on the Italian peninsula: Varone 2000, 16-17; *PPM* II 1081; Varone 2000, 16 = *PPM* VI 343 (in this case the relief is on the façade of a *taberna* but the motif is represented inside a shrine). Parietal reliefs in streets and public places in the north of Africa: Ballu 1911, 150; Carcopino 1919, 170-171; Leschi 1950, 21; Picard 1954, 238; Morel 1968, 40.

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I find the topic of apotropaic magic in the household a suitable model for the study of the feedback between the religion of the State and what has been labelled unfortunately as "private religion",[3] as the house is a middle stage between the public and the private, the State and the citizen.

In terms of theoretical models, the outlook for apotropaic magic in the Ancient World leaves much to desire.[4] According to the methodologies in use, these studies can be divided into two groups. On the one hand, those which are of a historical nature, focusing on the formal description of artefacts or rites, or on the identification of the cultural influences at play in the formation of these.[5] Simultaneously, the mainstream interpretative explanations have often relied on examining their psychological and functional character. Indeed, whether they be charms, sculptures, mosaics or reliefs, apotropaic amulets are considered as instruments for the individual to unburden him or herself from the anxieties which daily life produces, such as illnesses, unforeseen economic problems, or misfortune.[6] Both interpretations are valid, but the shifting influence between public cults and personal religious attitudes is usually overlooked, thus giving the impression that they are not part of civic religion but something alien or at least, alternative. The State legitimizes the use of particular religious practices –whether they be a by-product of folk traditions, foreign imports, continuities, reinterpretations or remodelations– either by using these or by being permissive. A well-known example with regard to the reciprocal relationship between institutional practices and personal practices is that of certain *defixiones* belonging to the sub-category of "prayers for justice".[7] In this type of invocation, cases are known in which the user employs a terminology typical of legislative and bureaucratic language or syntactic constructions typical of religious formulae. There are examples in which the curse begins with a general clause, *quisquis*, followed by the crime that the user has suffered and for which he asks for

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[3] de Marchi 1896-1903; Turchi 1939, "Il culto privato", 11-34; Marquardt 1879.

[4] The study of apotropaic magic and cults started to become popular after Harrison 1908, 187f. It should be taken into account that the British researcher used the term apotropaic to refer both to amulets and icons used to prevent the effects of harmful magic and to the chthonic cults of an expiatory nature. Cf. *DGE* vol. 3 (1991) s.v. ἀποτρόπαιος. In this case the chthonic cults of an apotropaic nature are excluded.

[5] Lévi 1941, 220-232 with regard to mosaic motifs against the evil eye. Cf. in general, Faraone 1992. The catalogues of Bonner 1950, Delatte-Derchain 1964, Kotansky 1994 and Mastrocinque 2003-2007 are of obligatory reference.

[6] Gager 1992, 218-222; Russell 1993, 35-50; Mitchell 2007, 273-312 consider that the political, economic, social and religious changes in late antiquity caused individual anxieties leading to a greater use of apotropaic amulets than in earlier periods. The numerous testimonies dating from between the end of the republican period and the 2nd century show that there is no such increase in the use of spiritual protection systems.

[7] See in general, Versnel 1991, 60-106; Id. 2002, 37-76; Id. 2010, 275-354.

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divine justice.[8] Other *defixiones* include the term *dolus malus* or *reprindere* (= *reprehendere*), more typical of Roman law than of curses.[9] In other cases, the religious formula, *sive deus sive dea,* is copied to be used with variants in the *defixiones*.[10]

Meanwhile, although Roman religion did not institutionalize or try to control the use of curses, it did appear to be permissive, at least in some cases in which the *defixiones* were exhibited in public places. The most striking example is that of the *defixio* of Emerita,[11] carved in marble, but there are other cases, above all from the eastern Mediterranean, which suggest that they were displayed in shrines.[12] This link between individual religious practices and state institutions, both civil and religious, suggests that the concept of civic religion should include both state ceremonies and personal offerings. Although one or the other can respond to different interests in particular situations, both constitute a common syntactic framework. Similarly, the tensions and conflicts perceived horizontally in the integration, reinterpretation or persecution of new cults, also exist vertically in the permeable relationship between public worship and domestic worship.

2. The apotropaic nature of the god fascinus

To consider the household as a microcosm which epitomizes social order and, in a more general manner, the order of the Universe according to the taxonomic models of a given society, is a classical theme of anthropology since the works of P. Bourdieu on the Kabyle house.[13] Bourdieu's dense description would have resulted incomplete had he not established comparisons with the systems of signs and social organization which make up the public and religious life of the community, and had he not evidenced the symbiotic relation between the public and the private sphere.

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[8] Blänsdorf 2010, 155f. with texts n. 9 (175-176) and 16 (180-181); *CIL* II 462 = *DTAud* 122 = Tomlin 2010, 247f. with further bibliography regarding this text in p. 271; Corell 1994, 280-286 = *AE* 1994: 1072 = Tomlin 2010, 268f. and 271 for bibliography.

[9] Blänsdorf 2010, 155f.

[10] Tomlin 2010, 257.

[11] *CIL* II 462 = *DTAud* 122 = Tomlin 2010, 247f.

[12] Cf. Chaniotis 2004, 1-43; Faraone-Garnand, et al. 2005, 171; Versnel 2010, 281, n. 22.

[13] Bourdieu 1970, 133-154 = Bourdieu 1972, 45-59. Douglas 2009 [1973], 71-112 makes a compilation of influential anthropological studies in relation to the concepts of space and time. These include the work of the French anthropologist.

The configuration of the Roman house does not differ from that of the Kabyle house: the *domus* is the nerve centre of the Roman patronage system.[14] It is the setting where the social network is woven and where economic activities take place. Both its distribution and decoration, and the activities that are carried out in it contribute to the imaginary reproduction of the relations of dependency between the family and its clients. Having said that, the *domus* is structured in two areas: a public area, opened to anyone and formed by the atrium and the entrance hall, and a private area accessible only to guests – bedrooms, dining-room and bathroom–; between these poles, a gradual line can be traced according to the kind of relation between the visitors and the family. The decoration of each room matches this assumption; this is the reason why the entrance, the atrium and the triclinium are the rooms with by far the greatest concentration of apotropaic devices and where they are most explicit. Admittedly, there is a great number of decontextualized materials that are not part of the building's face (reliefs or mosaics), but furniture that could have been placed anywhere. The *tintinnabula* are one of the commonest objects in this respect: even if examples from a precise archaeological context are unknown, their very nature suggests that they should be placed next to draughts in order to sound, such as in the atrium, the entrance or the windows.[15] Something similar occurs with apotropaic images included in dishes and dinner services: it is common sense to think that they were used in banquets with guests.[16]

The ubiquity of examples related to phallic imagery of an apotropaic nature, the lack of censorship against this type of belief and the officialization trials by Roman intellectuals show a continuity between the interests of the ruling class personalized in the State and those of the individual in relation to semantics of apotropaic imagery.

Although it is true that Pliny the Elder is the only author to refer to the god Fascinus and his presence in the Triumph ceremony, there is an etiological myth that relates the protection of the home with the image of a virile member. In his narration about the future king, Servius Tullius, Pliny the Elder tells us how a virile member arose from the flames of the home of king Tarquinius Priscus and impregnated one of queen Tanaquil's maidservants.[17] Pliny explains that these genitals were the god that protected the home and that, in their honour, Servius Tullius founded the festival of the *Compitalia.* It is not possible to

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[14] Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 43-97.

[15] Cf. Ov., *Fast.* V 441; Luc., *Philops.* 15. For other religious contexts in which the sound of bronze is used, Macr., *Sat.* V 19,7.

[16] Cf. Deonna and Renard 1961.

[17] Plin., *Nat.* XXXVI 204. Cf. D. H. IV 2,1 and Plut., *Mor.* 323b ff., which includes this and other traditions regarding the birth of Servius Tullius.

affirm that this archaic phallic deity charged with protecting the home, Mutinus Titinus, is a homologue of the god Fascinus, but it does appear to be the case that in archaic Rome the phallus was considered an apotropaic image in homes.[18]

The earliest archaeological evidence of phallic phylacteries in public places referring to the god Fascinus, date from around the end of the 2nd century B.C., although throughout the 1st century B.C. their frequency is somewhat higher.[19] It would not be surprising for this same period to have been the time at which phallic amulets were included in the triumphal pomp: it is enough to remember that it is at the end of the Republic when the episodes of personal exaltation reach their climax, and it is probable that at that time, when the interests of the State are confused with individual interests, advantage was taken to integrate the apotropes against the evil eye, characteristic of home protection, in the victory ceremony.[20] The reason why the victorious generals should resort to phallic phylacteries to protect themselves from the evil eye must be related to what anthropologists have called *political ethos*, i.e. the development of a state ethical model that affects the feelings and emotions of the individuals living in that framework.[21] The traditional Roman *ethos,* the *mos maiorum*, insisted upon austerity as a virtue while criticizing public opulence and ostentation.[22] However, the victorious generals could not resist the opportunity offered by the victory ceremony to stand out over their political rivals. The case most remembered by classical sources is, undoubtedly, Pompeius' triumphal ceremony.[23] Pliny the Elder, for example, relates how Pompeius, in the celebration he organized after his victory over the pirates in the Mediterranean, included in the procession a portrait of himself made from pearls, whereupon the Roman naturalist is shocked and exclaims, "Austerity was defeated here and luxury is what really celebrated the victory!".[24] For Pliny, the public exhibition of something so opulent could only bring misfortune and divine wrath, which turned out to

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[18] And that, also, it was of Etruscan origin. Cf. Palmer 1974, 187-206, "On Mutinus Titinus: A Study in Etrusco-Roman Religion and Topography".

[19] Vid. supra n. 1.

[20] Cf. Zanker 1987.

[21] Delvecchio Good-B. J. Good, et al. 1988, 43-63; Jenkins 1991, 139-165. In relation to the Graeco-Roman world, Morgan 2007 has demonstrated how the postulates of high philosophy infiltrate popular thought, thus influencing the latter. On the other hand, Chaniotis 2006, 211-238 analyses cases that suggest how in the Greek world, the authorities try to control the emotional outbursts of people in processions and public festivities.

[22] Cf. Linke-Stemmler 2000; Bettini 2006, 191-206; Dubois-Pelerin 2008, 23-59.

[23] Regarding the prudence with which the case of the Victory of Pompeius must be approached, Beard 2007, 7-41.

[24] Plin., *Nat.* XXXVII 14-15.

be the case when Pompeius was assassinated in Egypt.[25] The use of apotropaic instruments may reflect this mismatch between the fulfilment of the *mos maiorum* and the desire to enjoy glory in a showy way. Once the use of apotropaic amulets had become institutionalized, the theodicy of good fortune would create a suitable environment for the copying of this practice by the rest of the citizens, even in the provinces; in turn, the creativity of social practice would enrich iconographic models, and the full range of phallic amulets known would be generated by the early imperial period: from the characteristic phallic *tintinnabula* with feline hindquarters found in Pompey to the terracotta sculpture of unknown origin featuring two phallus-headed figures sawing an eye.[26]

3. Apotropaic sacrifices

The sacrifice of dogs is similar to the case of the god Fascinus, and the phallic amulets, and a continuity in the Roman religious structure can be drawn. There were several celebrations in Rome where dogs were sacrificed at the gates or next to the walls.[27] Every year, during the anniversary of the plundering of Rome by the Gauls, dogs were crucified in the area between the Juventas and Summanus temples. According to Pliny (*Nat.* XXIX 57-58):

I have spoken of the fame won by the geese which detected the ascent of the Capitoline Hill by the Gauls. For the same reason dogs are punished with death every year, being crucified alive on a cross of elder between the temple of Juventas and that of Summanus. But the customs of the ancients compel me to say several other things about the dog. Sucking puppies were thought to be such pure food that they even took the place of sacrificial victims to placate the divinities. Genita Mana is worshipped with the sacrifice of a puppy, and at dinners in honour of the gods even now puppy flesh is put on the table.
(Trans. by W. H. S. Jones, Loeb, 1975).

Aelian interprets this sacrifice as a punishment to the dogs for not having achieved their task as guardians during the looting of the Gauls,[28] but a detailed study on this kind of sacrifices has suggested that Pliny's account would be referring to a periodical apotropaic sacrifice that began to be performed during the Gauls' invasions at the beginning of the IV Century B.C. This type of sacri-

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[25] Id. 37,16. Cf. Lucr. V 1126, who says that envy is a lightning bolt that strikes those who stand out and immerses them in shame, so that it is better to obey than to want to rule.
[26] For the terracotta sculpture cf. Johns 1982, 67-68.
[27] Robert 1993, 119-142.
[28] Ael. *N. A.* 12.33. Cf. Robert 1993, 135.

fices, that start to be carried out in public as a result of a specific situation of danger and insecurity, are likely to have had a previous substrate of a folk nature, although there are no specific references to confirm this.

The place where the dogs were crucified coincides with the limits of the primitive Rome, the setting of other apotropaic sacrifices like that of *Porta Catularia*:[29]

In Rome, it was called the "Catularian" Gate because, not far from it, red she-dogs were sacrificed to soothe the star of Canicule (Sirius), enemy of harvests, in order to assure the ripening of the sprouting fruits.[30]

The limits of the *Roma Quadrata* were also the setting of dog sacrifices during the *Lupercalia*. Plutarch provides several etiologic explanations for this custom: the dogs were sacrificed because they are the natural enemy of the wolf, which was the honoured animal during this festival; the dogs were sacrificed because they disturbed the *luperci* when they ran; or because it was an expiatory animal:

If the sacrifice is a purification, one might say that the dog is sacrificed for being a suitable victim for such rites, since the Greeks, in their rites of purification, carry forth puppies for burial, and in many places make use of the rites called "periskulakismoi".
Plut., *Vit. Rom.* XXI 8 (Trans. by B. Perrin, Loeb, 1967)

On the other hand, the archaeological context of skeletal remains found on some sites corresponding to Roman colonies indicates that foundational and/or expiatory sacrifices at the walled perimeter of the new city were common. The fact that both in the walls of *Paestum* and in those of *Ariminum* (Rimini) canine skeletal remains have been found dating from 273 and 268 B.C. respectively cannot be interpreted as a coincidence.[31] There is consensus among specialists regarding the existence of standardized urban schemes for the establishment of

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[29] Ov., *Fast.* V 133-144 indicates that the *Lares Praestites* had the function of protecting the city walls and were accompanied by a dog in their representations. Cf. Plut., *Quaest. Rom.* 51 (276f-277a) and Tac., *Ann.* XII 24. The worship of the Lares can be situated in the sector of the temple of Vesta and of the *Regia* in accordance with the inscription, *CIL* VI 30960, found in this place.

[30] Fest. p. 39 L: *Catularia porta Romae dicta est, qui non longe ab ea ad placandum caniculae sidus frugibus inimicum rufae canes immolabantur, ut fruges flavescentes ad maturitatem perducerentur.* There is no agreement regarding the location of this gate. Whereas Gilbert 1883, 90, nn. 1-3 proposes that it would be in the southwest corner of the Palatinus, Coarelli 1988, 368-369 believes it to be a gate in the Servian Wall located between the *porta Carmentalis* and the *porta Fortinalis*.

[31] Regarding the archaeological context and interpretation of the skeletal remains of Paestum: Robert 1993, 119-142. Regarding Rimini, Ortalli 1990, 103-118 and Giusberti 1990, 119-130.

colonies in the early 3rd century B.C.[32] Just as the urban patterns were homogeneous and copied the *Vrbs* model to some extent, the foundational rites may also have been so.[33]

Apotropaic sacrifices in the household during the Roman Principate can be considered, in a way, a miniaturization of public rituals of purification and expiation,[34] although the individuals were not necessarily limited to the series of fixed rules and procedures organized by the ruling ideology. If we consider Pliny's accounts plausible, there was a whole range of variants. In *Nat* XXX 82 he states:

The Magi say that the gall of a black male dog, if a house is fumigated or purified with it, acts as a talisman protecting all of it from sorcerers' potions; it is the same if the inner walls are sprinkled with the dog's blood or his genital organ is buried under the threshold of the front door.
(trans. by W. H. S. Jones, Loeb, 1975)

And in *Nat.* XXVIII 142:

Masurius tells us that the men of old gave the palm to wolf's fat; that, he said, was why new brides were wont to smear with it the door-posts to keep out all evil drugs.
(trans. by W. H. S. Jones, Loeb, 1975)

In other cases, a dog's blood is not used as an apotropaic barrier, but a woman's menstrual blood (*Nat.* XXVIII 85):

This also is agreed, and there is nothing I would more willingly believe, that if door-posts are merely touched by the menstrual discharge, the tricks are rendered vain of the Magi, a lying crowd, as is easily ascertained.
(trans. by W. H. S. Jones, Loeb, 1975)

Pliny lists a whole series of practices which seem to range from typically Roman folk customs to oriental imports and elaborate rituals which base their principle of authority on their theatrical staging rather than on the weight of tradition. Particularly exotic examples are *Nat.* XXIX 83 and XXXII 44:[35]

Of much the same kind would seem to be also their stories about the bat: that if carried round them three times round the house and then fastened head downwards through the window, it acts as a talisman, and is specifically such to sheepfolds if carried round them three times and hung up by the feet over the threshold.

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[32] E.g. Torelli 1988, 33-115; Brown 1980, 22f.; Mertens 1988, 87-104.

[33] Regarding foundational rituals, see V. Lambrinoudakis et al., *ThesCRA* vol. 3, "Foundation rites", 337-346.

[34] Smith 1995, 13-28.

[35] Cf. Gordon 2010, 249-270.

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They say that noxious charms cannot enter, or at least cannot harm, homes where a star-fish, smeared with the blood of a fox, has been fastened to the upper lintel or to the door with a bronze nail.
(Trans. by W. H. S. Jones, Loeb, 1975)

4. The limits of apotropaic practices

The state ritual practice, probably institutionalizing archaic ritual customs, recognized the need to defend the city and community from all types of supernatural threat; this involved the implicit consent for each citizen to copy this type of practices in smaller spheres (the domestic and even the personal sphere) and to reinterpret them. However, the structure of social practice is open and dynamic. The subject, according to his cognitive patterns, that is, within the structured system of symbolic significances where he copes – i.e. the concept of *habitus* developed by Bourdieu–, can generate a series of infinite practices limited only by the unconscious recognition of the meaning of these practices.[36] In the rich religious market of early imperial Rome, the individual had access to numerous options to satisfy his spiritual needs, many of which were nourished by the state religious terrain to their own benefit. The tensions typical of the symbolic relations between the State and the individual are also reproduced in the religious sphere and in magic.

Pliny's rhetoric regarding domestic apotropaic practices is a clear example of the social negotiation regarding their legitimate uses and, above all, of the efforts of the ruling class to maintain its religious authority. Both in the passage with which we opened the article and in those referring to domestic sacrifices and the sprinkling of blood for apotropaic purposes, the Roman naturalist presents certain standards regarding correct religious conduct which are very much in line with the ideological agenda of the ruling class. In the passage referring to the god Fascinus, Pliny criticizes the fact that midwives should have the authority to conduct a religious service, in this case, the lustration of the child with *saliva* to avoid curses. On the other hand, in *Nat* XXX 82 and XXXII 44 he mocks the *magi*, who he considers charlatans of oriental origin that base their principle of authority on an exotic ritual display which, in Pliny's opinion, has no foundation.[37] Both criticisms belong to a well-established discourse among Roman intellectuals, who deny any possibility of truth on religious mat-

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[36] Bourdieu 1972, 147-188.
[37] Cf. Gordon 2008, 87f.: "The stereotypical carriers of «empty» religious knowledge were the classificatory marginals, first women, then strangers."

ters to groups not belonging to the upper echelons of their hierarchy, represented by the *pater familias* in the domestic sphere.[38]

The criticism of the effectiveness of the religious beliefs of midwives is a common topic in Latin literature beginning with Cicero, where the phrase *anilis superstitio* is first coined to refer to certain beliefs and practices that were beyond the state sanction, or *obscena anus*, as the archetype of a witch.[39] The first reference to the apotropaic powers of *saliva* in Latin literature revolves around precisely this idea: it is a scene recreated by the poet Tibullus, in which he addresses his lover to convince her that she need not fear her husband discovering her unfaithfulness since, he confesses, he has resorted to the charms of a witch to ensure the love between them is protected and may endure. After describing the extraordinary skills of the enchantress Tibullus concludes, "she composed verses for me with which you can lie: / sing them thrice; spit thrice on finishing the verses".[40] But the place in which the contempt for this type of belief is seen with most intensity is in Persius (2, 30-32):

See how a granny, or an auntie who fears the gods, takes baby out of his cradle: skilled in averting the evil eye, she first, with her rebuking middle finger, applies the charm of lustrous spittle to his forehead and slobbering lips.[41]
(Trans. by G. G. Ramsay, Loeb, [1918] 1993).

The ideological justification for women's inability to lead religious ceremonies is their spiritual weakness, ignorance and lack of self-control. Only on very limited occasions do women play a leading role in public ceremonies. In parallel, their presence in domestic religious ceremonies was conditional to the presence of the *pater familias*, so that in the few cases in which they led a particular ritual they were criticized.

With regard to the emptiness of the power of the *magi,* Pliny once again picks up an earlier rhetoric tradition which became programmatic after Hippocrates, *Morb. Sacr.* 1,2, which criticizes the mendicant priests and soothsayers who, for a small fee, can perform all types of magic spells from purifications to curses.[42] In fact, all the Graeco-Roman literature is full of references to magic

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[38] Cat. *Agr.* 143.

[39] See in general Wallinger 1994; Gordon 1999, 194-209; Stratton 2007; Hidalgo de la Vega 2008, 27-43.

[40] Tib., I 2, 55-56: *Haec mihi conposuit cantus, quis fallere posses: / Ter cane, ter dictis despue carminibus*. Cf. Id. I 2, 95-96.

[41] Cf. also Petron. 131.

[42] Cf. Edelstein 1937, 201-246 and Lanata 1967. Plat., *Rep.* 364d-365a also criticizes mendicant priests and travelling sorcerers. Regarding Plato's criticism of magic, Casadesús 2002, 191-201. Plin., *Nat. Pr.* 22 makes reference to Plato's *Republic* and in other passages, such as *Nat.* II 205, to Atlantis, so we assume he knew his work at first hand.

as a foreign practice, from the mythical Circe and Medea to the religion of the druids, who Pliny describes as a bunch of prophets, miracle workers and healers (*Nat.* XXX 13). The accentuation of the exotic nature of magic enabled Roman theology to overlook the unfortunate similarities it might have with other legitimate forms of religiosity; after all, the only difference between the sprinkling of the blood of a black dog on the walls of a house and the use of wolf fat or menstrual blood is in the principle of authority on which they are based: foreign magic in one case and Roman tradition in the others; the same could be said of the sacrifice of she-dogs at the *Porta Catularia* and the sacrifice of dogs at the door of any Roman home: State religion versus the ambiguous domestic religion.

5. Conclusion

Apotropaic magic is not alien to Roman religious structure. There are numerous examples showing how this has filtered from the folk customs perpetuated in the household to certain public ceremonies and vice versa.[43] Beliefs surrounding the evil eye and its prophylaxis are a clear example of the integration of religious practices of a personal or family nature in State religion. Once this type of practice has been institutionalized, the showiness of the public ceremonies and the theodicy of good fortune act as a sounding board that leads individuals to copy them and invigorate them, as seen in the number of iconographic variants arising on the same theme.

On the other hand, the public sacrifices for atonement and the protection of the city, which to begin with would also have been archetypal features of family and domestic religion, create a suitable environment for the individual to carry out similar practices. However, the number of options offered to citizens by a multicultural State such as Rome at the end of the Republic and Empire was not limited to the customs of the ruling class, but they were sensitive to a varied ritual offer which included anything from exotic options to small scale reformulations of state rituals.

Nevertheless, there were certain limits to the use of such practices which depended not so much on specific state sanctions as on the individual's recognition of the social significance of the use of these practices. There was an attempt to contain and channel the apparent anarchic freedom of options by means of ideological discourse defining the periphery of appropriate behaviour. In such discourse, there is a recurrent use of the image of the woman and the

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[43] Cf. Cic., *Leg.* II 27; 40; 47-51.

foreigner as anti-models of Roman order, and they are put down by the mockery, incredulousness and contempt expressed by the literary sources. The lack of definition of Roman religious structure may eventually cause individuals to become confused about the legitimacy of their religious behaviour; this would be what led C. Furius Sedatus to hide his apotropaic panoply in a corner of his house in *Autricum*.[44]

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[44] Gordon-Joly, et al. 2010, 487-518.

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AN EXECRATION FORMULA
FROM LUGO (*LUCUS AUGUSTI*)[1]

BY FRANCISCO MARCO SIMÓN

Abstract: Excavations in the Plaza do Ferrol in Lugo (Galicia, Spain) during 1986 brought to light a necropolis with *cistae* datable from the middle of the 1st. century to the end of the 3rd. On one of the funeral urns (with a typology pointing to the first half of the 3rd. century) a graffito was written with a *formula execrationis* invoking "two *genii*" or, more probably, *Duagena* to punish the possible looters. This theonym, a *hápax*, seems to belong to a Celtic chtonic goddess whose personality ("Born Dark", or "Born from Darkness") finds parallels in other magical texts (e.g. *antumnos* in Larzac).

Keywords: execration text, *Duagena*, funerary context, *Lucus Augusti*.

1. During a dig carried out in 1986 in the necropolis of cremation cists found in the Plaza do Ferrol in Lugo, dating from between the mid-first and second half of the third centuries[2], a funeral urn was discovered with an inscription that has given rise to this article. The site reveals a lack of organisation and a paucity of grave goods (only two plots had items of Hispanic *terra sigillata* and a thin-sided beaker) and this, in the opinion of the archaeologists, seems to indicate the poverty of the settlement. At any event, what does seem interesting is the mention of the sporadic discovery of larger nails, related to the cremation grills of the *ustrinum* or to coffins for burial.[3]

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[1] This study has been conducted as part of the research project 'Espacios de penumbra: carto-grafía de la actividad mágico-religiosa en el occidente del Imperio' (FFI 2008-01511/FISO), financed by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation. I am grateful to the Lugo Museum of Archaeology, and particularly the municipal archaeologist, Mª Covadonga Carreño Gascón, for the facilities provided for this study, including the use of the photograph and sketch of the urn in question. I should also like to express my thanks to my colleagues in the Department of Ancient History of Zaragoza University, S. Alfayé, G. Fontana, F. Beltrán and C. Jordán for their comments and suggestions. A paper concerning this topic has been included in a volume in homage to prof. Julio Mangas Manjarrés (Universidad Complutense, Madrid).

[2] No trace has been found to identify the cists, although the construction of the walls might have re-used existing stone monuments (Hervés Raigoso 1995, 121-122).

[3] However, the discovery of nails in other burial and particularly cremation necropoleis suggests another interpretation: that they had a function that went beyond the merely utilitarian, and might have been used as symbolic elements to defend the deceased from the perils of the Other

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The cists were found in burial plots in shallow, small-diametered circular pits. Some of them contained a selection of bones from birds and other small animals, which seems to imply a parallel cremation ritual. The urns were covered with fragments of *tegulae*, *imbrices* or else slate slabs, and in only 6 of the 66 cists discovered were the plots divided by *tegulae* laid out in rectangles, triangles or trapezoids. One final feature of interest is the discovery of a set of locally-produced African-type lamps, dating from the last quarter of the first century and the first half of the second.[4]

The urn that interests us here (FE86.E21) has, like the others, a spherical body, with a flat base and a flared curved rim (fig. 1), with a decoration of irregular vertical spatulate forms from the rim to the base. Made from a crude grey quartzite amalgam, it measures 18.5 cm tall by 21 cm in diameter, with the rim 16.6 cm across. It dates from the late second to mid-third centuries.[5]

The most interesting feature is the inscription beneath the rim (plate 1). This is a graffito that, in the opinion of the editors, would have been a *formula defixionis*:[6]

Olla Saturn[---] habebit dua gena irata.

2. This text which, as we shall see later, has not been preserved intact, offers two possible interpretations. The first would be: 'The urn of Saturn[---] will have two angry spirits'.

The switch from the masculine to the neuter (*genius > genia*) seems to be an epigraphic *hapax*. But documents containing the expression *habere genios iratos*[7] give us a possible reading of *gen(i)a*, which opens various avenues of explanation. One is that *gena* is simply a mistake by the stonecutter, something that occurs often in the Latin of *defixiones*.[8] But another possibility is that there was a palatalisation of the –ni- into –ñ- (so that the *n* would have represented the palatal *ñ* and not the alveolar *n*);[9] nor can we discard the possibility that it might have been an instance of hypercorrection.

World, or else to affix him to the tomb thereby preventing his returning to harm the living. A reasoned and paintaking analysis of this in Alfayé Villa 2010.

[4] Hervés Raigoso 1995, 122-123.

[5] Hervés Raigoso 1995, 122 – fig. 106 – and 124.

[6] Hervés Raigoso 1995, 124; *Hispania Epigraphica* 13, 2007, 432.

[7] Petron., *Sat.*, LVII 24: *Viderint quid de hoc alii exopinissent; ego si mentior, genios uestros iratos habeam*.

[8] On the language of *defixiones* see Jeanneret 1918; García Ruiz 1967; Marina Sáez 1999; Kropp 2008.

[9] I am reminded by Dr Gonzalo Fontana of the different ways of writing the *ñ* in the eastern (*gn* in Aragonese, *ny* in Catalan) and western areas of the Peninsula (*nn* and *n* in Asturian and Leonese), which would seem to fit the term *gena* in the Lugo inscription.

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Angry spirits are mentioned in the passage referred to in the 'Satyricon', although there are more allusions to the anger of the gods (*dei irati*), appearing in earlier authors such as Plautus and Terence.[10]

Various *defixiones* asked for victims to be affected by the wrath of gods or demons – a common category in papyri and *defixiones* in Greek, corresponding to the Latin notion of *genius*[11] - to whom a *defigens* would direct his petition. One from Sagunto – in the shape of a human hand, dating from the end of the first or beginning of the second century – commends to Iao a certain Heterius Aurelianus, *in omni ira*;[12] *irati* appears in an execration text from Carthage;[13] *nec has iras redimere possint* on another from the sanctuary at Uley, in Britain, with Mercury as the object of the petition,[14] and yet another document from Petronell (*Carnuntum*) contains the phrase *habeat vos iratos*, also directed at chthonic deities such as Dis Pater and Veracura, as well as Cerberus.[15] Similarly, one of the inscriptions from the sanctuary of Isis and Mater Magna in Mainz is directed towards Attis for his wrath to fall upon a certain Liberalis.[16]

3. The second possibility is that *dua gena* is not two separate words but just one. Indeed, there does not seem to be any gap between the final –*a* in the first word and the *g*- at the beginning of the second, and while the two names of the demon are mentioned in the papyri referred to, it is true to say that no parallel exists for 'two *genii irati*'. This suggests that what we might have here is a theonym *Duagena*, hitherto not attested epigraphically, of a probably Celtic nature. A possible etymological explanation[17] might be based on a Celtic **dubwo*- 'dark' (drawing on an Indo-European **dhewbh*-) and *gen*- 'to be born'. In Ogham there is an anthroponym *Dovagni*, which might be very close in formation, although it should be borne in mind that here, the second element of the compound –*genos* appears in another vowel grade, -*gno*, and has a di-

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[10] Plaut., *Poen.* 452: *Ego hodie infelix deis meis iratissumis / sex immolaui agnosi.*; Ter., *Phorm.* 74-75: *memini relinqui me deo irato meo. coepi advorsari primo: quid verbis opust?*

[11] A magic papyrus contains instructions for exorcising the two names of the demon (*PGrMag* VII; 243, 246), and other cases refer to the writing of the two names (of demons: *PGrMag* II 64; II 70).

[12] *Hispania Epigraphica* 10, 623.

[13] Kropp 2008, dfx. 11. 1. /3.

[14] *AE* 1995, 985; Kropp 2008, 3.22/32.

[15] *AE* 1929, 228; Kropp, 2008, 8.3./1.

[16] Blänsdorf 2010, no. 2, 166-167: *Bonne sancte Atthis Tyran- / ne, adsi(s), aduenias Libera- / li iratus. Per omnia te rogo, / domine, per tuum Castorem, / Pollucem, per cistas penetra- / les, des ei malam mentem, / malum exitum, ut omni ocr- / pore uideat se emori prae- / ter oculos.* Véase igualmente la tablilla de Cnidos en *DTAud* 1 A 19-22 (= Blümel 1992, no. 147 A).

[17] I am grateful to Dr. Carlos Jordán Cólera for this explanatory hypothesis.

minutive meaning.[18] With regard to this anthroponym, we might be talking here of a divinity *dubwo-gena > dowagena > Duagena, 'born dark' or 'born from the darkness', an interpretation which could suit our text perfectly. This theonym finds parallel in the *antumnos* (<*ande-dubnos), "Underworld" of the Larzac inscription[19].

The root might be connected with all the anthroponyms with the base *dou(i)-* in the Iberian Peninsula.[20] *Duanna* (or *Duauna*), for example, is attested as a female anthroponym in an epigraph from Salvatierra de los Barros, in Celtic Beturia, dating from the first half of the first century CE.[21] The second element reappears in other Hispanic names such as (*Acca*) *Deocena* -the deceased to whom the stela of San Miguel de Bernuy (Segovia) is dedicated-[22], *Maticenus*, *Medugenus*, *Rectugenus*, etc.[23]

4. The incomplete anthroponym in the text is most likely to be Saturninus/Saturnina, the ninth most frequent *cognomen* in Hispania, with about 130 examples listed. Specifically, Saturninus is attested in various inscriptions from Astorga (*Asturica Augusta*) or León (*Legio*), and is also documented on a tombstone from Lugo itself.[24]

The inscription on the Lugo urn fits in perfectly with the pattern of curse formulas which, while frequently deposited in funeral contexts, as we know, were normally inscribed on lead plates (*defixiones*). The only other example of a curse inscription on a terracotta funeral urn appears in Rome; it was inscribed on the inside of an *olla* of this type, with the text – in beautiful cursive minuscule – in two columns addressed to the Holy Angels in a ritual of 'transferred death',[25] with a certain Collecticius as the victim.[26] Everything points to the fact

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[18] Ziegler (1994, 169) explains the anthroponym as 'der kleine Dunkel/Dunkelhaarige', and draws on the compound in Uhlich (1989) for the first part.

[19] Delamarre 2003, 151; Mees 2009, 66-67.

[20] In this respect, see Prósper 2002, 417-421, better than the hypotheses that – like Holder's – explain these names as being based on *dowis, 'strong, good', from the root *dew-/du- 'to venerate', or those that explain them as being based on the numeral '2' (Albertos Firmat 1985, 282). On these Hispanic onomastic materials and their roots, see Vallejo 2005, 303-312.

[21] Ramírez Sádaba 2001, 229, 232-233.

[22] Santos Yanguas-Hoces de la Guardia Bermejo 2001, 324-235, fig. 7.

[23] Albertos Firmat 1965, 142, 151, 192-193; Abascal Palazón 1994, 408, 420, 482. A Hellenised form of the *retukeno* documented in the Celtiberian inscription of Langa de Duero (Jordán Cólera 2004, 230-231) is the well-known *Retogenes* of *Numantia* (App., *Hisp*. 407).

[24] Abascal Palazón 1994, 496-497. This was a freedman and augustalis (*AE* 1980, 595 bis; *Hispania Epigraphica* 1, 457) whose activity was involved with mining (see also Le Roux 1985, 225).

[25] Marco Simón 2009.

that in this case the inscription – probably dating from the fifth century – was written *before* the ashes were placed in the urn by the person responsible for the funeral rites or for looking after the *columbarium*.[27]

But the formula on the Lugo *olla* actually seems to be a counter-*defixio* aimed at dissuading a possible tomb defiler, comparable to the large number of funeral texts aimed at preserving the integrity of the space where the remains of the deceased lie, by invoking the action of the angry gods against defilers,[28] even in Christian contexts,[29] or to apotropaic amulets found in tombs in *Amissus* (Pontus), *Beroea* and other locations.[30] Although these epigraphic formulas express the punitive action of the gods in the subjunctive, there are also examples that do so in the future indicative, as is the case with the Lugo text. The same goes for a North African inscription and another from *Moesia Inferior*, the latter with a reference, together with the angry gods, of a *Geniu(m) IMP[*.[31]

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[26] The text dates from the fourth to fifth centuries. *AE* 1941, 138; Kropp 2008, dfx. 1. 4. 4/13*: Deprecor vos sancti angeli / quomodo (ha)ec anima intus in/clusa tenetur et angust{i}atur(!) / et non v<i=E>de(t) neque lum<e=I>n{e} ne[que] aliquem / refrigerium non (h)abet sic anima / mentes corp<u=O>s Collecticii quem peper<i=E>t Agnella // teneatur ardeat / de{s}tabescat usque / ad infernum semper / ducite Collecticium / quem peper<i=E>t / Agnella.*

[27] Muzzioli 1939, 46, with the possible adscription of the text to the Sethian gnostics.

[28] Most of the cases have been found in Rome: *AE* 1967, 42: *quicumque hoc violarit superiores inferio(re)s / deos iratos habeat*; *CIL* VI 13740: *VII qui / hic mixerit aut / cacarit habeat / deos superos et / inferos iratos*); *CIL* VI 25605: *qui / hanc aram sust(ulerit) Man(es) irat(os) h(abeat)*; *CIL* VI 29848b: *Duodecim deos et Deanam(!) et Iovem / optumum(!) maximu(m) habeat iratos / quisquis hic mixerit aut cacarit*; *CIL* VI, 36537: *facere si / quis autem sibi ad/miserit non bono / suo fecerit et superos / et inferos iratos / habeat lecto me/ru(m) profunde*; *CIL* 06, 37530: *superos et inferos] / [ha]beat iratos [*; *CIL* VI 5075: *Net agito / o mortales / reverere / Manes deos*; *AE* 1967, 42: *quicumque hoc violaverit, superiores inferios deos iratos habeat*. But other epigraphs of this type have been attested in Italy (*CIL* V 3034, Padova: *illi de/os iratos quo/s omis colunt si / quis deo sepulcro / violarit*; *CIL* XIV 1872, Ostia: *Quicumque violaverit / sive inmutaverit / sentiat iratos / semper sibi*), Proconsular Africa (*CIL* VIII, 15716, El Kef:*[q]ui hoc [s]<e=II>pulchrum violarit deos / [s]uperos inferosq(ue) iratos habea[t]*), Numidia (*CIL* VIII 18261, Lambaesis**: Constant[i]ne / tuos sic semper / malis iratos / cernimus Augustis / malis et pace / potimur / cum et in hoc G[e]/nio sese provin/cia monst[re]t / nam po[ni]<t=I> ille / cruces et proe/lia saeva tyranni*) and Pannonia (*AE* 1937, 197, Budapest: *aliqui<d=T> spur/ci velle fece/rit habeat et / superos et / infer{n}os / deos iratos*).

[29] By way of example, the following inscription was used to protect a tomb in Rome in 398, to defend the deceased against the perils of the demon *Bacus*: *Hic con<s>iste deus, hic [---] / ne Bacus inqu<u>s temptet t[---] / depositus Sabin[---] / XVIII kal(endas)) d[ecembres] / d(omino) n(ostro) Honor[io III] et Fl(avio) Eutych[iano cons(ulibus)]* (*AE* 1945, 24).

[30] Gager 1992, 225 ff.

[31] *CIL* VIII, 11825, Makthar: *qui me commusserit / habebit deos iratos et / vivus* ardebit; *AE* 1991, 01375, Svishtov: *quis monumentum?] hoc vio[laverit] / [3 h]abebit deos i[ratos] / [3]s et Geniu(m) IMP[*).

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5. Thus the curse inscription on the Lugo urn might have read:

[Quicumque?] olla[m] Saturn[ini uiolauerit] habebit dua gen(i)a irata.
'Whoever defiles the urn of Saturninus will have two angry spirits'.

Or, more likely:

[Quicumque?] olla[m] Saturn[ini uiolauerit] habebit Duagena irata.
'Whoever defiles the urn of Saturninus will have an angry Duagena'.

Within the context of a relative religious conservatism with regard to the other two main administrative cities of the Hispanic north-west, *Bracara* and *Asturica*,[32] the formula inscribed on the Lugo urn from the Plaza do Ferrol documents a pattern of magic-religious practices similar to those attested in other urban and rural environments of the western Roman provinces, and adds to a ritual panorama for the conventual capital which has been enriched in recent years with the discovery of the *mithraeum* in a palatial *domus*, dating from the beginning of the third century.[33]

Illustrations

Fig. 1. Funeral urn from the necropolis in the Plaza del Ferrol, Lugo (drawing: Servicio Municipal de Arqueología).
Plate 1. Detail of the curse graffito (photo: Servicio Municipal de Arqueología).
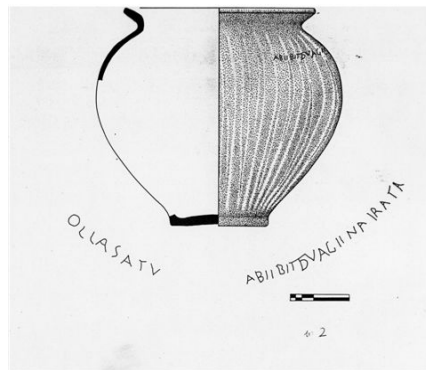

Fig. 1.   Plate 1.

[32] A greater presence of the indigenous deities – even more than in *Aquae Flaviae* (Chaves) – is highlighted by Rodríguez Colmenero (2005, 112).
[33] Alvar-Gordon-Rodríguez 2006.

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PARS ALTERA

NON RE MA CESARE

DI LUIGI BESSONE

Estratto: La risposta di Cesare all'acclamazione a re si presta a due interpretazioni: o voluto gioco di parole sul *cognomen Rex*, proprio della *gens Marcia* (così le fonti greche ed espressamente Appiano), oppure messaggio di Cesare a sottolineare la sua superiorità sui re, alleati o vassalli del popolo romano. L'analisi delle testimonianze relative agli ultimi anni di Cesare porta alla seconda interpretazione, rettificando chi la ritiene formatasi con l'andar del tempo, a partire dai Flavi, che non possono più invocare la discendenza diretta, sostenendo invece che tale valenza fu conferita al *cognomen* dallo stesso dittatore.

Parole chiave: Cesare, *cognomen*, dittatore, re.

Dopo Munda, ma probabilmente a partire dalla campagna d'Africa, Cesare si presenta personaggio *double-face*, con rifiuto reiterato dell'investitura regale, ma d'altro canto con atteggiamenti e comportamenti più da despota capriccioso che non da cittadino rispettoso delle istituzioni repubblicane anche al culmine del potere personale: sintetizza Eutr. 6, 25 *agere insolentius coepit et contra consuetudinem Romanae libertatis*.

Le fonti, sostanzialmente concordi nel delinearne i tratti salienti, pur differendo assai nei particolari, pongono l'accento soprattutto sul trattamento irriguardoso riservato al corteggio senatorio venuto a notificargli le ennesime onorificenze conferitegli[1]. Data l'importanza dell'evento, decisivo a scatenare l'opposizione traducendola in congiura omicida[2], sarebbe augurabile una precisa collocazione cronologica, ed invece si prospetta una dicotomia insanabile. Po-

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[1] Di onori straordinari (*yperfyeis*) parla Plut., *Caes.* 60, 4; non altrimenti Suet., *Iul.* 78, 1 *cum plurimis honorificentissimisque decretis*; App., *Civ.* II 106, 440: "al di là di ogni limite ... tutti gli onori, più elevati di quanto si addica ad un uomo*"* (trad. Magnino 2001); secondo Cass. Dio XLIV 8, 1, "i più numerosi ed importanti provvedimenti" (trad. Norcio 2000) erano stati presi in un solo giorno a stragrande maggioranza senatoria e con Cassio Longino fra i pochi contrari.

[2] Perentorio Suet., *Iul.* 78, 1 *praecipuam et exitiabilem sibi invidiam*; cfr. Nic. Dam. in Jacoby 1923-1930, fr. 130, 22, 78 (d'ora innanzi solo le ultime due cifre, seguendo la Scardigli (vd. nota 13), dalla quale provengono i passi tradotti); Plut., *loc. cit.*; App., *Civ.* II 107, 445-446; Cass. Dio XLIV 8, 2 "ottimo pretesto per la congiura".

nendo a capo della legazione il console Antonio, come fa Nicola Damasceno[3], si entra automaticamente nel primo trimestre del 44, ultimo della vita di Cesare, il cui sgarbo al collega potrebbe prospettare un Antonio umiliato e offeso, ben lungi quindi dall'ergersi a corifeo del partito cesariano.

Se invece si dà credito a quanti pongono alla testa della legazione i consoli, ovviamente due, alla stregua di Plutarco e Appiano[4], si deve obbligatoriamente risalire alla coppia consolare dell'ultimo trimestre 45, Fabio Massimo Sanga e Gaio Trebonio[5]. Poiché non sussistono tracce di screzi negli ultimi mesi fra Cesare e Antonio[6], che ritroviamo a fianco del dittatore ancora alle idi di marzo, sembra logico propendere per la fine dell'anno precedente, quando Cesare ebbe parecchie occasioni per ribadire in concreto la propria noncuranza per le istituzioni repubblicane[7].

Se infatti possono destare dubbi, provenendo da fonti ostili, le beffarde considerazioni sull'analfabetismo di Silla per aver deposto spontaneamente il potere, o sul vacuo nome di *res publica*[8], la pretesa ascrittagli, che tutti deferenti

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[3] Nic., *loc. cit.*, vede Cesare nell'atto di organizzare con i tecnici i lavori per il suo "grande e splendido" Foro, presumibilmente stando sul pronao del tempio di Venere Genitrice, il che collima con Suet., *loc. cit.* e Cass. Dio XLIV 8, 1; per contro Plut., *loc. cit.* e App., *Civ.* II 107, 445 lo piazzano sui rostri, intento ad amministrare la giustizia. Nicola puntualizza che Antonio era allora collega di Cesare nel consolato; nulla precisa al riguardo Suet., *loc. cit.*

[4] Plut., *Caes.* 60, 4; App., *loc. cit.*, secondo il quale (cfr. II 106, 442) negli onori appena decretati, oggetto appunto della solenne comunicazione, rientrava la dittatura perpetua, cui fanno riferimento anche Flor. II 13, 91 e *Per. Liv.* CXVI 2, mentre Cass. Dio XLIV 8, 4 colloca l'episodio dell'ambasceria senatoria prima che Cesare fosse riconosciuto dittatore a vita.

[5] Cass. Dio XLIII 46, 2; cfr. Suet., *Iul.* 76, 2; 80, 2; vd. Broughton 1952, 304. Trebonio aveva già prima cospirato contro Cesare e sarà tra i congiurati coinvolti nel cesaricidio, segno probabile che il consolato suffetto non l'aveva appagato; l'affronto subito allora ad opera di Cesare può aver giocato un ruolo decisivo, facendogli rimpiangere la "libera repubblica" in cui fondamentalmente credeva.

[6] Questi dissapori, riconducibili in ultima analisi alla *mala gestio* antoniana dell'Italia nel 47 e protrattisi fino all'inizio del 45, si risolsero al manifestarsi da parte di Antonio dell'intenzione di raggiungere Cesare in Spagna per partecipare alla perigliosa guerra contro i figli di Pompeo. Questo cambio di atteggiamento, pur attuato in ritardo, ebbe effetti benefici e forse persino insperati sul rilancio politico di Antonio e sulla carriera dei fratelli; suggello dell'avvenuta rappacificazione siglata dall'affettuoso incontro di Narbona furono infatti la designazione di Antonio al consolato del 44, sottratto a Dolabella al quale era già stato promesso, e la promozione di Gaio Antonio a pretore e di Lucio a tribuno della plebe.

[7] Plut., *Caes.* 58, 1; Suet., *Iul.* 76, 2-5; cfr. Canfora 2005 (1999), 234-236. Elemento decisivo per la datazione è a nostro avviso la risposta di Cesare, che i suoi onori avevano più bisogno di essere concentrati che dilatati (Plut., *Caes.* 60, 4): il senato ne terrà conto qualche mese dopo conferendogli la dittatura a vita; vd. *infra* con nota 64.

[8] Suet., *Iul.* 77, 1 cita come fonte Tito Ampio Balbo, un "pompeiano senza incrinature", autore di "una biografia distruttiva del defunto dittatore", per dirla con Canfora 2005 (1999), 125-126 con nota 11; il vero strappo costituzionale della dittatura cesariana rispetto al precedente

avessero la sua parola per legge[9], trova riscontro nella realtà. A prescindere dall'aneddoto svetoniano circa la risposta data all'aruspice nel corso di un sacrificio male augurante[10], appare evidente che Cesare, mentre rifiutava ostentatamente il titolo di re, come tale si comportava e come tale, nonché semidio, veniva persino salutato[11] sia da chi intendeva esaltarlo con genuino entusiasmo sia da quanti miravano provocatoriamente a metterlo in cattiva luce onde allargare l'area del dissenso, convogliato infine nel piano omicida di non pochi congiurati, ripartiti fra anticesariani convinti ed ex cesariani pentiti da tempo o dell'ultima ora[12]. La loro estrazione e motivazione ci è nota soprattutto dalla puntigliosa, seppur imperfetta distinzione in categorie operata da Nicola di Damasco[13].

Più importante, dal nostro punto di vista, l'osservazione del Damasceno sul compiacimento, certo non infondato, di Cesare per le sue molte e belle vittorie,

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sillano è stato ottimamente colto da Sordi 2002, 251-255, spec. 253 sg.; Gabba 2000, 143 sg. Quanto al commento cesariano *nihil esse rem publicam*, *appellationem modo sine corpore ac specie*, la proposta di Morgan 1997, 25 di ridurlo a sobrio e ponderato appunto nel corso di un dibattito intellettuale, è stata convincentemente respinta da Cristofoli 2008, 139, nota 21; cogente il consuntivo di Zecchini 1997, 61-62; vd. ora Gardner 2009, 65.

[9] Suet., *ibid.*: *debere homines consideratius iam loqui secum ac pro legibus habere quae dicat*; concetto analogo si ricava, seppur espresso in tono paternalistico, dal discorso fittizio prestatogli da Dione al rientro dalla campagna d'Africa: profferta di mitezza e di uso moderato della buona fortuna e della completa vittoria, ma parimenti monito che il vincitore può dire e fare quanto gli aggrada senza dover rendere conto a chicchessia; vd. Cass. Dio XLIV 15-18, ovviamente molto più articolato di quanto un breve sunto non consenta.

[10] Suet., *Iul.* 77, 2.

[11] Vd. Nic. 20, 70; 21, 73; Plut., *Caes.* 60, 1-3; App., *Civ.* II 107, 444; Cass. Dio XLIII 45, 1-3; XLIV 6, 3; 9, 1, che trova conferma in Cic., *Att.* XII 45, 2; XIII 26, 2 e 37, 2 *regnum*; cfr. Cristofoli 2008, 138, nota 26; sugli onori divini vd. Weinstock 1971, 270-341; bibliografia essenziale per la storia del problema in Rossi 1959, 38; 57, nota 120; aggiornamento in Scuderi 1984, 43.

[12] L'eterogeneità dei congiurati, attestata dalle fonti antiche e sintetizzabile nelle figure dei due Bruti, di Cassio Longino e Trebonio, come nella *Per. Liv.* CXVI 3, ma anche di Ponzio Aquila e Cassio Parmense, tutti reduci da diverse esperienze e militanze politiche e spinti da differenti motivazioni, è comunemente sottolineata dalla critica; vd. *ex. gr.* Pareti 1956, 197-213; Storch 1995, 45-52.

[13] L'elenco più dettagliato dei tipi di congiurati e delle loro diverse pulsioni, pubbliche e private, l'offre Nic. 19, 60, che insiste particolarmente sulla contrapposizione fra moventi squisitamente politici e altri, preminenti, di natura grettamente personale; l'analisi del Damasceno risulta sin troppo dettagliata e non esente da ripetizioni e geminazioni; depurata di esse, che quasi raddoppiano la casistica secondo una tecnica in Nicola abbastanza collaudata, restano quattro categorie di congiurati decisi ad eliminare Cesare o per subentrargli in un gioco politico sbloccato alla vecchia maniera, oppure per vendicarsi dei torti subiti nella guerra civile o anche perché illusi di poter restaurare la repubblica; esiste infine un quarto gruppo mosso da svariate motivazioni; vd. Scardigli 1983, 138-139; Cristofoli 2002, 13-14; 19-20.

in virtù delle quali egli si riteneva ormai più che un uomo[14]. Nicola ha appena specificato che tutto dipendeva da lui, compresa l'assegnazione delle magistrature e delle altre cariche, sottratta al voto popolare pilotando o vanificando i comizi: di fronte al suo strapotere tutti gli altri indistintamente non contavano più niente[15]. Si comprende allora come di fronte alla famosa legazione senatoria Cesare abbia preferito dare retta al monito di Balbo, irritandosi per di più con Trebazio che l'invitava ad alzarsi e per questo ricevette un'occhiataccia 'meno amichevole'[16].

Che Cesare non solo si fosse imposto sull'intero mondo romano, ma che, pienamente consapevole di sé e della propria grandezza, la facesse pesare, lo confermano considerazioni, mirate o cursorie che siano, di altri autori. Nella Vita a lui dedicata Plutarco prospetta la dittatura di Cesare come *chalinon* imposto ai Romani, che avrebbero accettato il suo assolutismo come pausa di respiro dalle sciagurate guerre civili[17]. Il medesimo biografo propone l'equazione

[14] Nic. 19, 64, in cui è da notare la consonanza concettuale con le parole di Cornelio Balbo in Plut., *Caes.* 60, 8, su cui vd. *infra*; inoltre Vell. II 41, 1 *animo super humanam et naturam et fidem evectus*: 56, 1 *quod humanam excedat fidem* (il perdono generalizzato); Suet., *Iul.* 76, 1; App., *Civ.* II 106, 440; Cass. Dio XLIIII 3-6, nonché l'assai retorica adulazione di Cic., *Deiot.* 4 *tua ... praestans singularisque natura* dove, nonostante l'indiscutibile piaggeria, è da presumere che l'aggettivazione non sia ancora inflazionata e di conseguenza svilita, quale si trova ad esempio nel decreto senatorio di onori eccezionali per Pallante *singularis fidei, singularis industriae,* che Plin., *Epist.* VIII 6, 6 riporta, debitamente commentato, nella lunga lettera a Monta-no e sul quale vd. in ultimo Chelotti 2008, 139-151.

[15] Nic. 19, 63 e 67; cfr. Cass. Dio XLIII 45, 1; Flor. II 13, 91-93 *omnes unum in principem congesti honores ... nec diutius lata dominatio est*; di "tirannide" parla altresì Plut., *Caes.* 57, 1; *Brut.* 7, 7; 10, 6; felice definizione in Cristofoli 2002, 20: "dinamica di accentramento del potere su di un solo uomo, ad esclusione di ogni possibilità di reale partecipazione ad esso". La provenienza dell'accumulo di onori è precisata da Flor*., loc. cit., non ingratis civibus*; con la litote Floro appunta l'attenzione sulla componente sincera dei promotori di privilegi a Cesare, ma non ignora l'altra, quella strumentale, nei suoi diversi aspetti: *gravisque erat liberis ipsa beneficiorum potentia* richiama Nic. 19, 62, dove parimenti colpisce l'affinità concettuale con il floriano *clementiam principis vicit invidia*; Floro infine coglie la corresponsabilità involontaria dello stesso Cesare (*dubium an ipso volente*) e di Antonio (cfr. specificamente Plut., *Ant.* 12, 1) per gli *oblata pro rostris ... regni insignia*; da vedere altresì *Per. Liv.* CXVI 1-2.

[16] Racconto ampio e particolareggiato, ma senza i nomi di Balbo e Trebazio Testa in Nic. 22, 78-79; Plut., *Caes.* 60, 4-8 menziona Balbo; Suet., *Iul.* 78, 1-2 vi aggiunge Trebazio; più generici e senza riscontri nominativi App., *Civ.* II 107, 445-446; Cass. Dio XLIII I 8, 1-2; tra i moderni, l'episodio viene per lo più accennato sommariamente, in quanto chiaro nella dinamica e nelle intenzioni; vd. ad es. Weigel 1992, 40; Rawson 1999 (1994), 462; Sordi 1999, 151-152; Zecchini 2001, 18, con nota 41; Lintott 2009, 72; 76-77.

[17] Plut., *Caes.* 57, 1 con aperto ricorso al termine "monarchia" ripropone lo stesso motivo per cui Varrone Reatino aveva accolto la dittatura di Silla e in certo modo giustificato il primo triumvirato (vd. per tutti, con rimandi bibliografici, Bessone 2008, spec. 61-66), motivo su cui Ottaviano Augusto imposterà il ben noto programma di formale restaurazione repubblicana, tuttavia da *imperator* nella nuova accezione conferita al vocabolo dallo stesso Cesare con suggello sena-

fra dittatura a vita e tirannide riconosciuta, per cui nella biografia di Antonio esprime stupore che i Romani, ormai ridotti di fatto al rango di sudditi, si ostinassero nel rifiutare a Cesare il titolo di re, considerato liberticida[18].

La soluzione data in ultimo al quesito da Luciano Canfora[19] risulta convincente per quanto attiene alla differente percezione dei termini (dittatura = parentesi reversibile; *regnum* = mutamento irreversibile), ma resta aperto il dilemma se Cesare volesse o meno il *regium nomen*, non contento di essere ormai re di fatto. Nel famoso elenco svetoniano delle colpe di Cesare, per cui risultò in definitiva *iure caesus*, nonostante le indubbie benemerenze[20], figurano frasi del tipo:

ampliora etiam humano fastigio decerni sibi passus est … nullos non honores ad libidinem cepit et dedit … eadem licentia spreto patrio more … nec minoris impotentiae voces propalam edebat … eoque arrogantiae progressus est…

Da appunti siffatti al *modus operandi* dell'ultimo Cesare non si discostano i più tardi Appiano e Cassio Dione. Premesso che il dittatore era oggetto di fama e di timore, lo storico alessandrino osserva che gli onori per lui escogitati superavano ogni limite confacente a un mortale, ne sottolinea il potere assoluto, pari al sillano che Appiano aveva definito "monarchico" e quindi odioso a Roma; di qui l'accusa rivolta a Cesare di essere ormai divenuto del tutto dispotico[21]. Altrettanto critico Cassio Dione, per il quale Cesare dopo Munda *oudén metrion epratten*, andando superbo come fosse un dio e vestendo alla foggia dei re albani, suoi pretesi parenti[22].

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torio (vd. Cass. Dio XLIII 44, 2-5); lo stesso motivo infine ritorna puntuale in età imperiale a giustificare il comando unico, sperabilmente illuminato ma da accettare comunque a scanso di guai peggiori; vd. ad es. Sen., *Clem., Prooem.* 1, 1-4 e 8; Tac., *Dial.* 41, 4; *Ann.* I 9, 4-5; *Hist.* I 16, 1, per non parlare del *Panegirico* di Plinio a Traiano su cui per questo aspetto vd. Bessone 2008, 93-100.

[18] Plut., *Ant.* 12, 5.

[19] Canfora 2005 (1999), 233-240; cfr. Gabba 2000, 143; Lintott 2009, 74-75.

[20] Svetonio riconosce a Cesare (*Iul.* 75) svariati pregi, tra cui ammirevoli moderazione e clemenza, ma gli rimprovera abuso di potere, accumulo di onori, sprezzo delle istituzioni, tracotanza e arroganza (76-77); la formula *iure caesus* di 76, 1 ricalca quella di Cic., *Phil.* 2, 86 *iure interfectum esse*, depurata ovviamente del confronto ciceroniano con l'ancor peggiore Antonio.

[21] App., *Civ.* II 106, 440 *epifobon* viene spiegato a 107, 443: l'avevano temuto come tiranno, ma si auguravano che (dopo Munda) fosse loro benevolo, onde la serie inaudita di onori e privilegi enumerati a 440 sgg.; vd. altresì 107, 448; 108, 453; Traina 2003, 38-39 accetta l'opinione ciceroniana che lo stesso Antonio temesse lo strapotere di Cesare.

[22] Cass. Dio XLIII 41, 3 è in stridente contrasto con Plut., *Caes.* 57, 4, il quale sostiene che, concluse le guerre civili, Cesare si comportò in maniera irreprensibile, tanto da giustificare l'erezione del santuario della Concordia in onore della sua mitezza; rovesciando ogni responsabilità

Nel lungo elenco delle prerogative decretate in suo onore, non tutte accettate formalmente sul momento, eppure assunte di fatto o accantonate per il futuro, Dione menziona l'elezione discrezionale dei magistrati e l'assegnazione dei governatorati provinciali senza sorteggio, l'ampliamento del senato e l'amministrazione della giustizia secondo il proprio arbitrio[23]. Sembrando queste piuttosto imposizioni cesariane che non concessioni spontanee, Dione ne ricava che i decreti senatorii *monarchon auton antikrys apedeixan*[24]; in quest'ottica l'investitura regia costituirebbe l'ultimo passo, il suggello di una conduzione della cosa pubblica esasperatamente personalistica, quando non provocatoriamente irridente, come nella gestione dei consolati[25].

Stando alle fonti, l'aspirazione di Cesare a farsi nominare re parrebbe abbastanza scontata, senonché i singoli casi addotti a testimonianza finiscono in pratica con lo smentirla. Lasciando per un momento da parte il nostro caso specifico, sussistono prima e dopo altri episodi significativi, anche se le fonti li riferiscono in modo alquanto difforme. A metà gennaio 44 si vide sui rostri una statua d'oro di Cesare adorna di diadema; così almeno recita la versione di Plutarco[26], che riporta l'insofferenza del dittatore, con la concordanza in proposito

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su nemici e adulatori, a gara nel conferirgli onorificenze che lo resero odioso (57, 2-3), Plutarco monda Cesare di ogni colpa. Per gli altri punti della riflessione dionea vd. XLIII 43, 1-3.

[23] Cass. Dio XLIII 45, 1-2 definisce espressamente questi poteri come attinenti a un re, rispetto ad altri, enumerati in precedenza, forse esagerati ed eccezionali, ma per nulla antidemocratici; il che corrisponde alla distinzione di Plut., *Caes.* 57, 2 fra onorificenze "adatte a un uomo" proposte da Cicerone, ed altre spropositate che gli attirarono dure critiche per l'adozione di pompa e poteri inusitati. Impropriamente mette sullo stesso piano Cicerone e gli altri senatori Cogrossi 1975, 139.

[24] Cass. Dio XLIII 45, 1; vd. l'elenco meticoloso redatto da Cristofoli 2008, 130-132, a partire dal rientro di Cesare dall'Africa; felice sintesi del medesimo a p. 139: "la successione incessante di elogi a Cesare procedeva in modo inversamente proporzionale alla reale disponibilità dei conservatori ed anche di non pochi cesariani ad accettarli".

[25] Nel 46 Cesare è insieme dittatore e console per la terza volta, con Emilio Lepido collega nel consolato e *magister equitum*; tale rimane Lepido nel 45 quando Cesare, dittatore per la quarta volta, resta altresì console unico fino all'autunno; cfr. Cristofoli 2008, 103, nota 55; Gardner 2009, 58-60. In entrambi i casi si coglie, se non altro, trascuratezza per i capisaldi tradizionali della repubblica, che diviene noncuranza con l'istituzione dei *consules suffecti*, come rileva Cass. Dio XLIII 46, 2-4, e suona aperta irrisione con il consolato di Caninio Rebilo per l'ultimo giorno del 45 (vd. tuttavia Alföldi 1985, 1, 369, nota 1220); ibid. gli strali di Cicerone alla pagliacciata, già in *Fam.* VII 30, 1-3, attestati parimenti in Plut., *Caes.* 58, 3; vd. specificamente Bruhns 1978, 141-146, che segnala parimenti (142-143) le irregolarità del 47, rimasto senza consoli fino a settembre, alla nomina di Publio Vatinio e Fufio Caleno, sulla cui finalità, di assicurarsi un numero più consistente di ex consoli, vd. Gabba 2000, 147.

[26] Vd. in sintesi la rassegna delle fonti in Cristofoli 2008, 140 e nota 33; cfr. altresì Sordi 2000, 308-309; Valli 2007, 113-114.

fra Appiano e Dione[27], ma parimenti con Svetonio, che però sposta l'episodio al rientro di Cesare dalle ferie latine[28].

La reazione non propriamente entusiastica del dittatore appare variamente motivata, ma risulta in definitiva riconducibile a tema e preoccupazione sulle probabili ripercussioni negative che titolo e investitura regale avrebbero comportato[29]. L'impressione che, comunque Cesare si pronunciasse, fossero ormai irrefrenabili pettegolezzi e maldicenze sul suo conto, alimentati magari involontariamente dai suoi discutibili atteggiamenti, è avvalorata dal modo in cui venne accolta l'iniziativa di Antonio ai Lupercali. In attesa di esporre altrove la nostra ricostruzione dell'episodio, che occuperebbe troppo spazio, ci si limita in questa sede a notare il contrasto tra il comportamento di Cesare, fermo nel diniego dell'investitura regia[30], e i vari commenti di antichi[31] e moderni[32], tutti o

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[27] App., *Civ*. II 108, 449 ascrive ad un provocatore l'iniziativa di porre sulla statua di Cesare una corona d'alloro con diadema (per la precisione "un nastro bianco") intrecciato: dovrebbe trattarsi della statua d'oro sui rostri chiamata in causa da Nic. 20, 69; Cass. Dio XLIV 9, 2, che fa soggetto della frase i congiurati, mentre l'*ofthe* di Nicola lascia impregiudicata la responsabilità, che tuttavia parrebbe rovesciare sui partigiani di Cesare sostenendo che l'iniziativa suscitò lo sdegno dei cospiratori; vd. Scardigli 1983, 148-149.

[28] Suet., *Iul*. 79, 1-2 differisce meno rispetto al netto posticipo di Nic. 75 e Plut., *Caes*. 61, 8-10; diversamente da lui, che si muove comunque entro il mese di gennaio 44, i due autori greci fanno dell'episodio un'appendice dei Lupercali, svoltisi il 15 febbraio.

[29] I romani si sentivano vincolati al giuramento dettato da Lucio Bruto ad inaugurare la repubblica; vd. Liv. 1, 59, 1; 2, 1, 9, il quale spiega persino la subordinazione del *rex sacriculus* al pontefice con la preoccupazione di salvaguardare la *libertas* (2, 2, 2) dallo stesso *regium nomen* (2, 2, 6-7). Superfluo ricordare i casi di *adfectatio regni* o anche solo di *suspicio regni adfectati* fatali a illustri personaggi della storia repubblicana, cui Ampelio dedica appositamente il cap. 27 del *Liber memorialis*, dal titolo significativo *Qui adversus patriam nefaria iniere consilia*.

[30] Vd. il Cesare di Nic. 20, 70 in risposta al popolo e 21, 71 sgg. per i ripetuti rifiuti del titolo regio ai Lupercali; Plut., *Caes*. 60, 3: Cesare sdegnato alle Ferie Latine e 61, 6-7: forzatamente ritroso ai Lupercali; Suet., *Iul*. 79, 2: Cesare seccato per motivi diversi e (3) suo rifiuto iterato del diadema portogli da Antonio; App., *Civ*. II 108, 450-452: Cesare da imperturbato a insofferente; ivi, 109, 456-458 la scena dei Lupercali; Cass. Dio XLIV 9, 3: autocontrollo di Cesare pur adirato; 10, 1-3: suo sdegno e ritorsione contro i tribuni; 11, 2 sgg. sui Lupercali.

[31] Vd. le opinioni discordanti riportate da Nic. 21, 73-75, che ingloba nell'evento dei Lupercali anche il saluto a Cesare re, senza ovviamente reazione consequenziale dei tribuni, per lui ormai esuli (cfr. 20, 69); per Plut., *Caes*. 61, 5 sgg. si sarebbe trattato di un tentativo auto-promozionale, concertato fra Cesare e Antonio e smascherato dalla reazione popolare; Suet., *Iul*. 79, 3 asserisce che nemmeno il rifiuto del diadema eliminò il sospetto sull'aspirazione di Cesare al titolo regio; App., *Civ*. II 109, 458 prospetta quasi una contesa (*dierizonton*) fra Cesare e Antonio, vinta dal primo per consenso popolare; Cass. Dio XLIV 11, 1 afferma che quanto accaduto ai Lupercali dimostrava semplicemente che le parole di Cesare non rispecchiavano le sue reali intenzioni.

[32] Fermo restando che su Cassio e Casca non possono sussistere dubbi, già esclusi da Nic. 21, 72 e che il giudizio sul fantomatico Licinio (Lucullo o Denticula) rimane per forza in sospeso, si

quasi improntati all'assioma della malafede di Cesare e dei suoi interlocutori, che Nicola di Damasco non limita al solo Antonio[33].

Altrettanto dicasi delle svariate versioni e interpretazioni del conflitto fra Cesare e i tribuni Epidio Marullo e Cesezio Flavo. Il loro intervento risulta per lo più scandito in due fasi, l'una precedente e l'altra conseguente all'episodio incriminato, registratosi in occasione del rientro di Cesare dalle ferie latine sul monte Albano. Cadendo questo il 26 gennaio, si può ragionevolmente collocare l'antefatto a metà mese, quando la statua di Cesare sui rostri apparve fregiata di (corona e) diadema. I tribuni lo fanno rimuovere, in buona fede secondo Dione, fingendo (*ypokrinamenoi*) invece di far cosa gradita a Cesare nella versione di Appiano[34].

Chi aveva incoronato la statua? Un provocatore secondo Appiano, gli stessi congiurati secondo Dione; i due collimano sull'insincerità del gesto[35]. Ne consegue che i tribuni, all'oscuro della trama, agiscono in buona fede repubblicana, supponendo che Cesare la pensi allo stesso modo nel rigettare il simbolismo regale; invece il dittatore si mostra subito sdegnato coi tribuni, stando a Dione[36], oppure si finge imperturbabile al momento, salvo poi esplodere in un se-

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va dalla tesi diffusa di una concertazione di Cesare con Antonio, per dissipare i *rumores* sulle intenzioni monarchiche del dittatore (così Zecchini 2001, 27 sgg.), o al contrario ottenere a furor di popolo quel titolo regio tanto più appetito quanto maggiormente lo si rifiutava in apparenza, all'ipotesi di un Antonio strumento più o meno inconsapevole della causa anticesariana, sulla scia tracciata da Plut., *Ant.* 12, 1, che tuttavia, pur prospettando la situazione come concertata all'uopo con Cesare, assolve pienamente Antonio (*akon*), e portata invece alle estreme conseguenze da Sordi 2000, 305 sgg.; cfr. Zecchini 2001, 18 sgg.; a riprova del pregiudizio diffuso, che tutto fosse stato combinato in precedenza, vd. ad es. Valli 2007, 118: "azione concordata e accuratamente preparata da Cesare e dai suoi partigiani": non si spiega perché ad insaputa di Lepido, di cui è prova evidente l'atteggiamento.

[33] Nic. 21, 71-72 contempla Antonio ultimo di una serie aperta da tale Licinio, di problematica identificazione e di ardua collocazione politica, ingrossata da due congiurati, perciò provocatori, Cassio e Casca, e infine chiusa da Antonio. Non ci sembrano fuori luogo le propensioni pur minoritarie per questa versione, sulla quale ci si riserva di tornare appositamente.

[34] App., *Civ*. II 108, 449; Cass. Dio XLIV 9, 3 sostiene che i tribuni non solo si erano astenuti da offese, ma anzi avevano elogiato Cesare davanti al popolo come uomo per nulla desideroso di essere incoronato re; vd. Sordi 2000, 309; Dobesch 2000, 93; Zecchini 2001, 25; Gardner 2009, 57; Lintott 2009, 77.

[35] App., *loc. cit.*: "uno di quelli che diffondevano la voce che egli aspirasse al regno"; il soggetto della principale nel periodo di Cass. Dio XLIV 9, 3 si ricava dal paragrafo precedente, *hoi epibouleuontes*; il che pone i due in contrasto con Nic. 20, 69, dove la vista del diadema sui rostri provoca "l'immenso sdegno" dei cospiratori, segno che non l'avevano collocato loro.

[36] Cass. Dio XLIV 9, 3 *ischyros echalepene*, anche se per quanto adirato seppe al momento frenarsi; la sua ira esploderà quando i tribuni procedono contro colui che per primo l'aveva chiamato re mentre tornava dal monte Albano: XLIV 10, 1; vd. 4, 3 sul diritto concessogli dal senato di tornare a Roma a cavallo in quella circostanza, cioè dalla celebrazione delle Ferie Latine.

condo tempo, dopo le Ferie Latine[37]. Alla sistemazione appianea del secondo atto si avvicina Svetonio, il quale però fonde in unica sequenza il rientro dalle Ferie, l'incoronazione della statua, l'intervento dei tribuni contro l'improvvido popolano e la loro immediata rimozione[38].

L'operazione svetoniana di accorpamento ha un precedente in Nicola di Damasco, che però comprime il tutto nell'episodio di metà gennaio, dalla comparsa del diadema all'esilio dei tribuni, deliberato dal senato nel tempio della Concordia, di cui Appiano approfitta per addurre l'ennesimo esempio di *clementia Caesaris*[39], mentre Dione critica il dittatore per aver assolto i colpevoli e punito degli innocenti[40]. Di scarso rilievo il racconto plutarcheo che sposta il tutto dopo i Lupercali del 15 febbraio, menziona le statue fregiate di diadema, l'intervento dei tribuni poi rimossi e infine l'incarcerazione non di chi aveva incoronato le statue bensì degli acclamatori di Cesare re. Chiude il frettoloso resoconto, e sembra interessare maggiormente il biografo greco, la disputa fra Cesare e i democratici a colpi di slogan sui Bruti[41].

Si osservi peraltro che speculazioni sulla presunta *affectatio regni* di Cesare, circolanti da tempo, avevano preso corpo dall'erezione della sua statua sul Campidoglio accanto a quelle di Lucio Bruto e dei sette re[42]. La collocazione

[37] Difficile valutare l'effettivo distacco fra App., *Civ.* II 108, 449-452 ed il resoconto dioneo, i quali persino collimerebbero se considerassimo il mancato turbamento registrato da App., *Civ.* II 108, 450 equivalente al dioneo *kaiper aschallon esychasen*, ma Dione vi antepone un momento di forte ira (vd. nota prec.), logicamente palesatasi in tutta evidenza; per il resto il suo racconto in XLIV 9, 3-10, 4 procede di conserva con le fasi indicate da Appiano.

[38] Suet., *Iul.* 79, 1-2.

[39] Nic. 20, 69: Cesare accusa i tribuni di aver messo loro di nascosto il diadema sulla statua; App., *Civ.* II 108, 452: Cesare imputa ai tribuni di innescare ad arte contro di lui l'accusa di aspirare alla tirannide: identica la matrice, da cui Nicola ha attinto il mezzo, Appiano il fine; senza intervento di terzi (Elvio Cinna in Cass. Dio XLIV 10, 3) lo stesso Cesare condanna i reprobi all'esilio, pur giudicandoli meritevoli di pena capitale.

[40] Cass. Dio XLIV 10, 4 insiste sul fatto che fosse dovere (*deon*) di Cesare fare esattamente il contrario: assolvere i tribuni e punire coloro che l'avevano chiamato re.

[41] Plut., *Caes.* 61, 8-10, alquanto pasticciato, presuppone una pluralità di statue di Cesare fregiate del simbolo regale e prospetta i tribuni indaffarati a strappar diademi e al contempo imprigionare i rei; in mancanza di altre tracce anche solo indiziarie, risulterebbero arrestati quei pochi, ma sempre troppi, che avevano applaudito al gesto di Antonio, disposti in precedenza all'uopo, dato che per Plutarco si trattò indiscutibilmente di un tentativo concertato, e opportunamente smascherato, di fare di Cesare un re per acclamazione. Siccome il popolo plaudente chiamava i tribuni "Bruti" in omaggio a Lucio Giunio *vindex libertatis*, Cesare insolentì l'uno e gli altri definendoli "bruti" nel significato aggettivale di "scemi" (vd. Plut., *Publ.* 3, 4) e "Cumei" dal nome di una popolazione microasiatica famosa per la sua ottusità, come ci informa Strabone: vd. Perrin 1971 (1919), 586, nota 2.

[42] Vd. espressamente Cass. Dio XLIII 45, 3-4 con commento personale, ma il fatto è altresì ricordato da altre fonti: vd. in sintesi Dobesch 2000, 114, nota 104; cfr. Lintott 2009, 76 e 78; Rawson 1999 (1994), 461.

cronologica, al rientro dalla Spagna dopo Munda, si evince dalla menzione dionea del fatto sotto il 45, nella prima serie di onori decretati a Cesare dal senato. Non sarebbe di per sé un dato cogente, visto che la diversa collocazione non comporta una rigida distinzione cronologica[43], ma lo conferma Cicerone perorando davanti al dittatore la causa del re Deiotaro. Nella modesta *oratiuncula* del novembre 45 Cicerone asserisce che le maldicenze epistolari imputate a Blesamio sul conto di Cesare, malvisto, tenuto per tiranno e non (più) applaudito dai Romani irritati per la statua *inter reges*, altro non sono che dicerie messe insieme dalla cricca di Castore sulla base dei pettegolezzi diffusi a Roma dai maligni[44].

Scagionare Blesamio dall'accusa concorre ad alleggerire la posizione di Deiotaro agevolandone la richiesta di perdono, per cui si ha ragione di sospettare della veridicità del resoconto ciceroniano, ma resta a costituire un dato concreto la notizia della statua oggetto di critica *ex urbanis malevolorum sermunculis,* recepita o meno da Blesamio, strumentalizzata o no da Castore. Questi *malevoli* potrebbero coincidere con i provocatori o adulatori interessati di cui parlano Appiano e Dione, anche se nulla vieta in teoria di assimilarli a quei fautori sinceri della svolta regale di Cesare di cui trattasi in Plutarco[45]: tale è la capacità di Cicerone di piegare la realtà ai propri fini[46].

La soluzione, qualunque essa sia, va comunque ricondotta a quel magma politico in cui nacque e si diffuse la profezia dei libri Sibillini sulla necessità di un re romano per battere i Parti, perfezionatasi cammin facendo fino a precisare

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[43] Le due serie di onori decretati a Cesare in Cass. Dio XLIII 42-45; XLIV 4-7, 3 dovrebbero riferirsi in linea di massima rispettivamente al dopo Tapso e al dopo Munda, ma deroghe allo schema hanno notato ancora in ultimo Cogrossi 1975, 139-140 con nota 20; Ferriès 2009, 383-384; Rawson 1999 (1994), 462; non rileva il problema Gardner 2009, 66, che si limita a riconoscere a Dione il merito di fornirci la rassegna più completa.

[44] Cic., *Deiot.* 33, su cui vd. Dimundo 1997, 129-130; Stroh 2010, 88-89. *Oratiuncula* definisce questo lavoro l'autore stesso in *Fam.* IX 12, 2; il diminutivo, un pizzico spregiativo, è discusso e spiegato da Dimundo 1997, 23 sgg.

[45] App., *Civ*. II 107, 446; 108, 449 e 452; 109, 456 *hai peri tes basileias peirai* suona onnicomprensivo di gente in buona e mala fede, mentre 107, 444 si riferisce chiaramente ai genuini e più entusiasti sostenitori di Cesare; Cass. Dio XLIV 3, 1-3; 7, 2-3; 9, 1-2 insiste sulla doppiezza, annidata particolarmente in senato, di quanti escogitavano onorificenze per screditare Cesare; invece Plutarco, che pur prospetta una sorta di certame fra nemici e adulatori di Cesare (*Caes.* 57, 3) e addita la sua smania di diventare re quale causa di un odio generalizzato (60, 1; 61, 1), appunta in definitiva l'attenzione sui suoi fautori più convinti, che brigavano per fargli attribuire la maestà regale (60, 2-3).

[46] Per attenerci alle fonti qui chiamate in causa, basti ricordare la trasformazione di Deiotaro da despota avido e cinico, spietato anche verso i familiari, in re modello, giusto e saggio; vd. Dimundo 1997, 11 sgg.; non mi pare invece del tutto convincente Stroh 2010, 89, che forse non tiene nel dovuto conto Petrone 1978, 100-101.

dove, quando e da chi Cesare sarebbe stato proclamato re[47]. Le ripulse di Cesare, peraltro generalmente blande, non veementi come l'opposizione avrebbe preteso[48], non dissipano i timori circa la sua brama di essere re, artatamente ingrandita dai dissidenti, pronti a sottolinearne l'eccezionale potenza sia con argomentazioni serie sia ricorrendo a battute facete[49].

Ciò avrà certo lusingato Cesare, il quale però non era politicamente sprovveduto come Nicola di Damasco vorrebbe[50]; egli sapeva quanto a Roma fosse aborrito il *nomen regium* e perciò controproducente la prospettiva di essere acclamato re. Si è giustamente osservato che i re, Roma era abituata a vederli

[47] Per la profezia vd. Plut., *Caes.* 60, 2, secondo il quale la voce correva da tempo ad opera di chi preparava il terreno per l'investitura regale; App., *Civ.* II 110, 460-461 prospetta la soluzione di compromesso: Cesare dittatore o *imperator* dei Romani, re dei popoli soggetti; la profezia dovrebbe rientrare nelle "molte calunnie" diffuse ad arte per denigrare Cesare, stando almeno a Cass. Dio XLIV 9, 1, che sottolinea il reciso rifiuto, condito di rampogne, opposto da Cesare a chi ardiva salutarlo re. Che avrebbe ricevuto il titolo alle Idi di marzo, su proposta del quindecemviro Lucio Aurelio Cotta, è riferito da Suet., *Iul.* 79, 5.

[48] Emblematico il periodare di Cass. Dio XLIV 9, 2, il quale ammette la ritrosia di Cesare all'appellativo di re, ma puntualizza: "senza però compiere un atto che potesse apertamente dimostrare che si sdegnava veramente per questo titolo", o la forzatura preconcetta di 44, 11, 1: niente scalfisce l'impressione che Cesare desiderasse ardentemente quel titolo che a parole respingeva nettamente.

[49] Nic. 20, 67 su accumulo di onori proposti dai suoi partigiani con l'appoggio astuto di falsi adulatori, per cui cfr. Vell. II 56, 3; Flor. II 13, 91-92; App., *Civ.* II 106, 440 sgg; Nic. 19, 59 parla genericamente di insidie tese dai congiurati a Cesare "con discorsi seducenti e azioni simulate"; Scardigli 1983, 38 nota qui la netta impronta di una tendenza filoaugustea, che dovrebbe accomunare anche Livio sulla base di Vell. II 57, 1; Flor. II 17, 1; Cass. Dio XLIV 1, 1 sgg., tutti impostati su velleitarismo e ingratitudine dei due Bruti e di Cassio, cui Vell. II 56, 3; *Per. Liv.* CXVI 3 e Cass. Dio XLIV 14, 3 aggiungono Trebonio. Quanto alle battute di spirito, più o meno acide o bonarie, valga per tutte Cicerone (*Fam.* VII 30, 1), tanto ironico sulla riforma del calendario (Plut., *Caes.* 59, 6) quanto caustico sul consolato di Caninio Rebilo: Plut., *Caes.* 58, 3; diverso il motto attribuitogli da Cass. Dio XLIII 46, 4.

[50] Nic. 20, 67 sostiene che "Cesare era semplice per natura e inesperto del gioco politico per via delle campagne militari condotte in terra straniera"; ritengo non condivisibile il giudizio e risibile la motivazione, anche se è giocoforza riconoscere in Cesare una notevole presunzione, accentuatasi negli ultimi anni, e d'altronde segnalata da svariate fonti, ad es. Nic. 20, 64, mentre al suo comportamento si riferisce implicitamente Plut., *Brut.* 9, 1, parlando di Bruto allergico alla tirannide e di Cassio ostile per natura fin dalla nascita a ogni parvenza di assolutismo. Un Cesare talmente infatuato di sé e della soluzione regia da nulla eccepire alle 'sparate' di Cicerone in merito immagina ad es. Stroh 2010, 89, cit., partendo però da due presupposti assai discutibili: che Cesare volesse davvero il titolo di re e che gli elogi sperticati e addirittura mendaci di Cicerone al vocabolo *rex* (vd. Lintott 2009, 76) non siano semplice retorica pro Deiotaro, ma mirino altresì a solleticare le ormai risapute brame regali di Cesare, per la verità in modo davvero grossolano, come lo stesso Stroh ammette.

fare anticamera in attesa di udienza dai propri magistrati o dal senato[51]; ne consegue che il titolo nulla avrebbe aggiunto al potere di Cesare, che intendeva espressamente muoversi in ambito tradizionale[52], per quanto svilita fosse ormai la *res publica*. Si dovrà allora interpretare il perseguimento dei tribuni Cesezio e Marullo, comunque lo si voglia scandire nel tempo, non come frustrazione per il mancato riconoscimento regale, bensì come espressione di stizza per altri motivi.

Quello ufficialmente addotto, che i tribuni gli hanno sottratto la gloria di rifiutare personalmente quell'onore[53], appare abbastanza pretestuoso, come sospetta di malignità risulta l'asserita delusione di Cesare per il fallimento sul nascere di quel timido accenno al regno[54]. La *clementia Caesaris*, poi dimostrata nel mitigare la pena dei tribuni, passibili di condanna a morte (vd. *supra* e nota 39), non può invocarsi al momento del loro deferimento al senato; da Appiano e Dione emerge piuttosto un clima torbido di sospetti[55], che non risparmia neppure gli intimi del dittatore[56] ed ora vede vittime di turno Cesezio

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[51] Osservazione condivisa da parecchi, se non nelle parole, nella sostanza: Rossi 1959, 37-41; Weigel 1992, 40; Sordi 2000, 309; Sordi 2002-2003, 205 e non si dimentichi il significato dell'aneddotico "Qui delibera" di Popilio Lenate al re di Siria Antioco IV; vd. Val. Max. 6, 4, 3, con indicazione delle altre attestazioni dell'episodio in Faranda 1971, 488, nota 50 *ad loc.*

[52] Si rammenti Caes., *Bell. civ.* 3, 1, 1 *is enim erat annus quo per leges ei consulem fieri liceret,* a proposito del suo secondo consolato nel 48; vd. inoltre Nic. 20, 70, ove la contrapposizione *nomimos – paranomos* si ricollega volutamente alla *dynasteia paranomos* del par. prec.; Scardigli 1983, 153-154, con opportuno richiamo alla letteratura precedente, tra cui specificamente per il nostro tema Deutsch 1928, 394 sgg.

[53] Suet., *Iul.* 79 *ereptam sibi gloriam recusandi* riferisce la giustificazione addotta dallo stesso Cesare, *ut ferebat*; analogamente avrebbe reagito, due anni prima e in situazioni più drammatiche, alla notizia del suicidio di Catone: Plut., *Cato Min.* 72, 2; *Caes.* 54, 2; App., *Civ.* II 99, 414; Cass. Dio XLIII 12, 1 e, sempre rammaricandosi di occasioni perdute, già in Egitto si era lamentato davanti ai resti di Pompeo, il che gli aveva attirato la taccia di ipocrita: Cass. Dio XLIII 42, 8.

[54] E' il primo motivo addotto da Suet., ibid.: *dolens seu parum prospere motam regni mentionem*; sembra smentirlo Plut., *Caes.* 60, 3, che correda la nota risposta di Cesare con un particolare (per cui cfr. Cass. Dio XLIV 9, 3 *aschallon*) di varia interpretazione, ma il "corrucciato e furente in viso" segue ad un piuttosto eloquente "mostrando il suo sdegno"; cfr. App., *Civ.* II 107, 444.

[55] Emblematico App., *Civ.* II 108, 449 sgg.: Cesare ha minacciato chi parlasse di regno, i tribuni procedono 'fingendo' di fargli cosa gradita, il che significa che non ci credono; egli allora li accusa di macchinazione ai suoi danni, negando evidentemente la loro conclamata buona fede; l'intera manfrina ruota sul titolo regio, oggetto o pretesto di speculazioni di parte e comunque *profasis tes kolaseos*; cfr. Nic. 20, 69; Cass. Dio XLIV 9-10, 2. Le schede elettorali con voti di preferenza per il consolato dei due tribuni (Suet., *Iul.* 80, 3) porterebbero a una loro collocazione nell'ambito dell'opposizione a Cesare, ma si spiegano plausibilmente anche come gesto di solidarietà per chi sia stato perseguito ingiustamente; vd. App., *Civ.* II 108, 453; Cass. Dio XLIV 10, 3.

[56] Vd. determinatamente Plut., *Caes.* 62, 6 e 9-10; *Brut.* 8, 2-3.

e Marullo. Sembra quindi più logico pensare a un risentimento suscitato dall'iniziativa tribunizia, in quanto infirmava l'autorità di Cesare, scavalcato in decisioni ormai considerate di sua esclusiva competenza[57].

Il fatto che tutto dipendesse da lui lo poneva in una situazione analoga a quella così ben delineata da Seneca per Nerone nel *De clementia*[58] e, come si è visto, questa posizione Cesare l'ostentava. Stride dunque, a nostro avviso, la modestia che parrebbe implicita nel suo schermirsi professandosi non re ma Cesare. Secondo Appiano egli avrebbe giocato sull'omonimia fra re, nome comune, e Re, *cognomen* di un ramo della *gens* Marcia, per togliersi elegantemente d'impaccio in una situazione oggettivamente imbarazzante[59]; altrettanto si ricava da Dione per il ricorso al verbo *onomazesthai* e da Plutarco che ricorre a *kaleisthai*[60]. Quest'ultimo descrive un Cesare furente, nonostante il saluto venisse da suoi fautori, mentre nessuna reazione registrano Dione, tutto preso dalla vicenda dei tribuni, e Svetonio, che inserisce l'episodio fra i comportamenti che "non valsero a mondare Cesare dal sospetto di aspirare al titolo regio"[61], il che parrebbe escludere una sua reazione decisa a profferte regie, non verificatasi neppure in altre circostanze[62].

S'intende comunemente che Cesare, pur affascinato dalla prospettiva di diventare re, si opponeva al conferimento del titolo temendone l'impopolarità, oppure si arrendeva di fronte alla disapprovazione dei più[63]; anche la risposta

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[57] Vd. in particolare, con propensione per la tesi prospettata da Nic. 20, 69, Sordi 1999, 153-154; più condivisibile per noi il giudizio di Rossi 1959, 44-45.

[58] Vd. spec. il Nerone di Sen., *Clem., Prooem.* 2 *vitae necisque gentibus arbiter* e, particolarmente calzante, *quos reges mancipia fieri quorumque capiti regium circumdari decus oporteat... mea iuris dictio est*; come Seneca prospetta ora a Nerone, anche Cesare ai suoi tempi potè a ragione considerarsi *qui omnia potest*: 6 (=1, 8), 5, dall'ed. Préchac 1990[4].

[59] App., *Civ.* II 108, 450 *hos de peri to onoma esfalmenois*; da notare che Cesare era imparentato anche con questa famiglia, rivendicando la comune discendenza da Anco Marcio e il fatto che la nonna paterna fosse una Marzia: Suet., *Iul.* 6.

[60] Plut., *Caes.* 60, 3; Cass. Dio XLIV 10, 1; vd. Rossi 1959, 34, il quale rammenta che il *cognomen Rex* apparteneva anche ad una famiglia della *gens Rupilia*.

[61] Plut., *loc. cit.*; Suet., *Iul.* 79, 3; Cass. Dio XLIV 10, 2: Cesare su tutte le furie, ma non per l'acclamazione regale, bensì contro i malaccorti tribuni che, dopo aver rimosso il diadema dalla statua e citato in giudizio il primo dei plaudenti a Cesare re, dichiarano pubblicamente il venir meno della loro sicurezza e libertà di parola.

[62] Vd. per tutti, particolarmente significativo, il già citato Cass. Dio XLIV 9, 2: "senza compiere un atto che potesse apertamente dimostrare che si sdegnava veramente per questo titolo".

[63] Registrabile *in primis* a gennaio e febbraio 45, dalle contestate acclamazioni, che turbano il popolo (Plut., *loc. cit.*) alla pantomima dei Lupercali che sconcerta i più, come vedremo in separata sede; ma avvisaglie si riscontrano già in precedenza: l'accoglienza del popolo al *cos. suffectus* Q. Fabio Massimo (Suet., *Iul.* 80, 2), l'odio più viscerale (*ibid.* 78, 1 *praecipuam et exitiabilem sibi invidiam*) per l'affronto al senato verso la fine del 45 (su cui vd. ancora Nic. 22, 78-79; Plut., *Caes.* 60, 3; App., *Civ.* II 107, 445-446; Cass. Dio XLIV 8, 1 e 4) e, particolarmente

del 26 gennaio rientrerebbe in questa tipologia: una forzata assunzione di modestia. Un'interpretazione alternativa si ottiene invece collegando la celebre battuta ad altra scena famosa. Di fronte al corteggio senatorio, di cui si è parlato in precedenza, Cesare resta seduto; avrebbe voluto, dicono, alzarsi, ma lo dissuase uno degli amici, o meglio, degli adulatori, Cornelio Balbo: "non ti ricordi di essere Cesare ... meritevole di essere riverito come uomo superiore?". Così racconta Plutarco, che presta a Cesare un'altra considerazione: i suoi onori avevano più bisogno di essere concentrati che non dilatati[64].

Convinto com'era che è meglio essere il primo in un villaggio che il secondo a Roma[65], una volta conseguito dopo anni di durissima competizione l'obiettivo di tutta una vita, Cesare sapeva di essere da tempo l'idolo del popolo[66] e probabilmente si illudeva di aver neutralizzato con il costante ricorso alla clemenza anche i rivali politici e i nemici d'un tempo; qualche cedimento o momento di scoramento non infirmano una fiducia di fondo confermata dalla decisione di licenziare la scorta armata[67]: in quanto superiore ai comuni mortali Cesare non ne avverte il bisogno, sentendosi tutelato dal generale consenso non alla sua contestata regalità, bensì alla sua eccezionale statura di militare e statista.

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sintomatico, il nascere di conati cospirativi, di cui Cesare viene a conoscenza, senza peraltro prendere provvedimenti, limitandosi a una generica esternazione per mettere in guardia i responsabili: Suet., *Iul.* 75, 7. Quanto ai moniti ciceroniani circa il pericolo che verrebbe a Cesare dalla sua cerchia, nella redazione scritta della *Pro Marcello* vd. Canfora 2005 (1999) 229-232.

[64] Plut., *Caes.* 60, 4 e 8. La risposta del senato alla richiesta di concentrazione dei poteri sarà, di lì a poco, la concessione della dittatura vitalizia; cfr. Sordi 2002-2003, 206, la quale si chiede se non sia stata questa la contromossa di Cesare alle destabilizzanti manovre tribunizie; Sordi 1999, 152, che rende il testo greco (*systoles ... prostheseos*) con "diminuiti, non aumentati", a mio avviso meno azzeccato rispetto alla soluzione proposta da Carena 1958, 346.

[65] L'aneddoto, assegnato da Plut., *Caes.* 11, 3-4 alla partenza di Cesare per la propretura in Spagna nel 61, sembra da collegarsi più propriamente alla questura in Spagna del 67, quando Cesare aveva esattamente l'età di Alessandro alla fine della sua irresistibile avventura espansionistica; vd. Suet., *Iul.* 7; Cass Dio XXXVII 52, 2.

[66] Vd. spec. Plut., *Caes.* 4, 4 sgg. per l'avvio di una carriera "popolare" in ogni senso, fino a che i Romani non fanno a gara nell'offrire a Cesare sempre nuove cariche per ripagarlo dei suoi benefici (5, 9).

[67] Probabilmente proprio negli ultimi mesi di vita, stando a Nic. 22, 80; Plut., *Caes.* 57, 7 concede maggiore spazio temporale: anche se il capitolo inizia con la menzione della dittatura a vita, la notizia compare fra quelle (57, 4-8) caratterizzanti la condotta irreprensibile (*anagkleton*) di Cesare ritornato dalla Spagna; offre un ampio ventaglio di spiegazioni sulla rinuncia alla scorta Suet., *Iul.* 86, senza, come al solito, indicazioni cronologiche: vd. l'acuta disamina di Canfora 2005 (1999), 280-282. Il *taedium vitae* ascritto a Cesare in avvio di capitolo trova riscontro, ad es., nei momenti di scoramento registrati da App., *Civ.* II 110, 459 *eite apognous, eite kamnon*, ma da siffatte note psicologiche non si traggono che mere congetture; vd. Cristofoli 2008, 144, nota 43, convinto, come i più e a ragione, che fonte di Appiano sia Asinio Pollione.

Da decenni aveva alimentato il culto della propria personalità, quale discendente da Iulo figlio di Enea e quindi nipote di Venere; ora che è assurto al sommo potere fra i Romani, a loro volta signori del mondo e di tanti re alleati o vassalli, non avverte la necessità di essere definito re in quanto già al di sopra di un titolo deprezzato e della regalità comunemente intesa. Significativo il quadro del Damasceno sull'ambasceria già ampiamente discussa: una moltitudine mai vista prima osservava con stupore i primi cittadini di Roma, nelle cui mani era concentrato il potere, rendere omaggio "ad uno più grande di loro"[68].

A parer nostro, Cesare volle conferire al proprio *cognomen* quella valenza di superiorità in assoluto che il pronipote e figlio adottivo escogiterà poi assumendo il titolo di Augusto. Che i Giulio-Claudii abbiano tutti abbinato a *imperator* il richiamo a *Caesar* denota certo, in un primo tempo, la rivendicazione di una discendenza e quindi del proprio diritto alla successione, ma la persistenza della medesima titolatura nel prosieguo della vicenda imperiale[69], quando non solo si era esaurito il casato, ma si arrivò persino ad esecrare la memoria dei successori di Augusto, difficilmente si spiegherebbe se il vocabolo fosse rimasto a connotare semplicemente una famiglia della *gens Iulia* da non confondere con analoga della *gens Marcia*.

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[68] Nic. 22, 78. Osserva giustamente Cristofoli 2008, 149 che a Cesare si rinfacciava di aver raggiunto "picchi di gloria e di potere troppo elevati", per cui avrebbe semmai dovuto tranquillizzare l'opinione pubblica, o almeno tentare di farlo, non certo allarmarla ulteriormente ricorrendo al diadema, "screditato simbolo di screditate monarchie" nella felice definizione di Sordi 1999, 153.

[69] Colpisce soprattutto l'abbinata epigrafica del prenome *imp(erator)* con *Caes(ar)* al posto del gentilizio e successivamente come *cognomen*, quasi a caratterizzare il nuovo tipo di potere, anzitutto militare (vd. l'attenzione dedicata alla doppia valenza di *imperator* in Cass. Dio XLIII 44, 2-5); sul fenomeno, che comportò l'inserimento di Cesare nella lista degli imperatori, a partire da un arco di tempo fra I e II secolo d.C., vd. Geiger 1975, 444-453, che ha ricevuto l'autorevole avallo di Gabba 2000, 149, nota 16. Per la documentazione epigrafica vd. Calabi Limentani 1991[4], 473-485, con essenziale trattazione a pp. 145-148; più stringata ma altrettanto chiara la discussione di Buonopane 2009, 162-163, con la prova documentale alle pp. 283-301.

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SINON ON HIS "PAL" PALAMEDES

(VIRGIL, *AENEID* II 81-104)[1]

BY NEIL ADKIN

Abstract: Sinon's speech to the Trojans falsely represents him as Palamedes' friend. The present article endeavours to show how in this connection Virgil avails himself of etymology.
Keywords: Sinon, Palamedes, Ulysses, etymology, ambiguity.

Sinon's speech in book II is the first long speech of the *Aeneid* and the longest of the whole epic: on it depends the outcome of the entire war.[2] After an opening *procatalepsis*[3] the second sentence of this speech reads:

> *fando aliquod si forte tuas pervenit ad auris*
> *Belidae nomen Palamedis et incluta fama*
> *gloria, quem falsa sub proditione Pelasgi*
> *insontem infando indicio, quia bella vetabat,*
> *demisere neci, nunc cassum lumine lugent:*
> *illi me comitem et consanguinitate propinquum*
> *pauper in arma pater primis huc misit ab annis* (*Aen*. II 81-87).

Here Sinon claims to have been Palamedes' "pal": he is lying.[4] Palamedes' death "galt … im ganzen griechisch-römischen Altertum als das Schulbeispiel eines Justizmordes".[5] The means whereby Palamedes' execution was contrived by his enemy Ulysses are conveniently described in Servius' note on the first line of the afore-cited sentence (81):

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[1] Citation follows *Oxf. Lat. Dict*.'s "Authors and Works" (ix-xx); material not found there is cited according to *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae: Index librorum scriptorum inscriptionum*. 2nd ed. Leipzig 1990, and its online *Addenda* at http://www.thesaurus.badw.de/pdf/addenda.pdf.

[2] Cf. Erdmann 2000, 25. The bibliography on Sinon himself is conveniently assembled in Horsfall's recent commentary on *Aen*. II: Horsfall 2008, 93.

[3] Cf. Lausberg 2008, 425.

[4] On *consanguinitate propinquum* in the penultimate line Servius Auctus comments: *hoc totum falsum est*. It "may well be an idea of Virgil's own to bring [the story of Palamedes] into this context" (so Austin 1964, 60).

[5] So Wüst 1942, 2503.

fictam epistolam Priami nomine ad Palamedem, per quam agebat gratias proditionis et commemorabat secretum auri pondus esse transmissum, dedit (sc. *Ulixes*) *captivo, et eum in itinere fecit occidi. haec inventa more militiae regi adlata est et lecta principibus convocatis. tunc Ulixes cum se Palamedi adesse simularet, ait, si verum esse creditis, in tentorio eius aurum quaeratur. quo facto invento auro, quod ipse per noctem corruptis servis absconderat, Palamedes lapidibus interemptus est.*

In line 83 *falsa sub proditione* is glossed by Servius as *sub falso crimine proditionis.* This explication of the text prompted Sidgwick to the following verdict: "The old int. 'under false charge of treachery' is plainly wrong: it cannot be got out of the Latin words".[6] It would seem that here etymology can be of help. O'Hara's great study says nothing whatsoever about this speech, which is likewise completely ignored by Paschalis.[7] It is however noteworthy that the *falsus* used by Virgil had recently been etymologized from *fari*.[8] *Fari* was a striking archaism by Virgil's day.[9] It is therefore significant that *fari* should open the sentence of the *Aeneid* at issue here: *fando*. The next line ends with *fama*, which Varro had likewise etymologized from *fari*.[10] *Fari* and *fama* accordingly frame the distich: these initial and final *loci* are etymological markers.[11] The next line contains the *falsa* currently at issue, which occupies the same emphatically medial *sedes* as the *fando* of *infando* in the immediately following line.[12] Since *falsa* is accordingly located in a sequence of four successive lines in each of which a form of *fari* or its derivatives occurs in an ety-

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[6] Sidgwick 1890, 170; cf. Conington-Nettleship 1884, 98 ("*falsa sub proditione* means not 'under a false charge of treason'…, a sense which the words would hardly bear"); Page 1894, 214 ("*falsa proditio* cannot mean 'a false charge of treachery'"). Conington's view has been restated very recently by Horsfall 2008, 113 ("Con. rightly protested against Serv.'s … explanation").

[7] O'Hara 1996; Paschalis 1997.

[8] Cf. Maltby 1991, 222, citing Var., *L.* VI 55: *ab eodem* (sc. *fari*) *falli, sed et falsum et fallacia, quae propterea, quod fando quem decipit ac contra quam dixit facit.*

[9] Cf. Cic., *De orat*. III 153 (cod. Laud.). Reference may also be made in this connection to Quint., *Inst*. VIII 3, 27.

[10] Cf. Maltby 1991, 222.

[11] Cf. Cairns 1996, 33 (= id. 2007, 317): "the beginning and end of the … group of lines". It may be noted that here both *fando* and *fama* are strictly superfluous. They are also tautologous; cf. (e.g.) Plessis-Lejay 1919, 296: "*fando = fama*". Opening *fando* is further highlighted by grammatical irregularity; cf. (e.g.) *Schol. Verg. Veron. Aen*. II 81 (ad loc.): *itaque hic patiendi vim, non agendi habet.*

[12] On the importance of "the same *sedes* in successive lines" as an etymological marker cf. Cairns 1996, 33 (= id. 2007, 317). Both *falsa* and the *fando* of *infando* start at the second biceps; *falsa* receives further emphasis from the anastrophe. On *for* as the etymon of *infandus* cf. Adkin 2009, 411. In the present passage *infando* is clearly meant to echo homoeoteleutic *fando* in the first line of the sentence.

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mologically significant *sedes*,[13] it may be supposed that here Virgil intends to draw attention to the derivation of *falsus* from *fari*.[14] In this passage *falsa* will thus mean "alleged".[15] In *falsa sub proditione* "alleged treachery" is accordingly equivalent to "allegation of treachery": hence the Servian *sub falso crimine proditionis* can after all be "got out of the Latin words" – when they are understood etymologically.

In the next line *infando indicio* is explained by Servius as follows: *propter aurum clam suppositum*. The meaning of Virgil's ablatival phrase would accordingly be "on monstrous evidence".[16] The point was however made above that the *fando* of *infando* occupies exactly the same emphatic *sedes* as the etymologically related *falsa* in the immediately preceding line, where the latter epithet had concluded the first hemistich. It would therefore be natural to expect further etymologizing that involves words of "saying".[17] The *indicio* that directly succeeds *infando* is in turn immediately followed by *quia bella vetabat*. These words are annotated by Servius thus: *hoc falsum est*.[18] Servius Auctus glosses *indicio* as *delatione*: "accusation".[19] *Indicium* had recently been etymologized from *dicere*.[20] Something "said" (*indicium*) that "cannot be said" (*infandum*)[21] is however a contradiction in terms. This oxymoronic conundrum ("an unsayable saying") can only be resolved if the "saying" was not in fact "said". Accordingly the Greeks did not say Palamedes tried to stop the war: this is an accusation they did *not* make – unlike the allegation of treachery. The antithesis is pointed by the etymology: if the Greeks did say (*falsa*) Palamedes

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[13] Such homoeocatarcton of "f" is noteworthy, since this letter was the most cacophonous to the Latin ear; cf. Cic., *Orat*. 163; Quint., *Inst*. XII 10, 29. After *infando* in l. 84 there is no case of initial "f" for the next ten verses until l. 94, where *fors* is significantly due to etymological considerations (*fors ... tulisset*); cf. Bartelink 1965, 96-97. The next ten verses then contain no further instance of word- or stem-initial "f" down to the very end of the speech.

[14] As in the present passage of the *Aeneid*, *falsus* had also been placed straight after *fama* in Varro's discussion of the derivatives of *fari* at *L*. VI 55.

[15] Cf. Maltby 1991, 222 (s.v. *falsitas*), citing Isid., *Orig*. V 26, 9: *falsitas appellata a fando aliud quam verum est*.

[16] So Papillon-Haigh 1892, 143. For these renderings of *infandus* and *indicium* respectively cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict*. 894 (s.v. *infandus*); 882 (s.v. *indicium*, 1b).

[17] Terminal *infando* is intended as an antonym of the *fando* that opens this etymologizing quatrain: "saying" is capped antithetically by "not saying".

[18] *Quia bella vetabat* is "apparently a Virgilian detail" (Austin 1964, 60).

[19] So *Oxf. Lat. Dict*. 507 (s.v., 1a). Lately the *indicio* of this passage has been mis-cited as *iudicio* by Scafoglio 2007, 81.

[20] Cf. Maltby 1991, 300, citing Var., *L*. VI 61. For *dicere* as a synonym of *fari* cf. (e.g.) *Gloss*. IV 341,18.

[21] Cf. (e.g.) Loewe-Goetz 1901, 449, where *infandus* is glossed as ἄλεκτος.

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betrayed Greece, they did not say (*infando*) he opposed the war. Here etymology is being employed to blow the gaff on Sinon's lie.

After an interval of just one sentence Sinon then goes on to describe Palamedes' demise and its alleged consequences for himself:

> *invidia postquam pellacis Ulixi*
> *(haud ignota loquor) superis concessit ab oris,*
> *adflictus vitam in tenebris luctuque trahebam*
> *et casum insontis mecum indignabar amici.*
> *nec tacui demens et me, fors si qua tulisset,*
> *si patrios umquam remeassem victor ad Argos,*
> *promisi ultorem et verbis odia aspera movi* (*Aen*. II 90-96).

Nauck athetizes the penultimate line of this passage (95: *si patrios umquam remeassem victor ad Argos*).[22] Nauck's arguments are not without weight. Virgil must accordingly have had very good grounds for inserting this "undesirable" verse. Again they would appear to have to do with etymology: here *remeare* is evidently being etymologized from *me*.

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[22] Nauck 1868, 535-536. Since Nauck sets out the case against this line with admirable concision, his argument may be reproduced verbatim: "Es erscheint als höchst wunderlich, wenn Sinon, der den Tod des Palamedes zu rächen droht, die Vollziehung der Rache vertagen will bis er als Sieger nach Argos zurückgekehrt sei. Zunächst ist es unklug dass er den Trojanern gegenüber hervorhebt, er habe die Absicht und die Hoffnung gehegt das Troische Reich zu stürzen. Diese Notiz konnte um so eher fortbleiben, da nach der folgenden Darstellung des Sinon das Griechische Heer sich in einer höchst bedrängten und völlig verzweifelten Lage befand, so dass man nicht mehr an die Eroberung der Stadt Troja, sondern lediglich an das Aufgeben des ermüdenden Krieges und an schleunige Rückkehr in die Heimath dachte. Sodann setzt Sinon, indem er die Ermordung des Palamedes nach der Ueberwindung Trojas rächen will, voraus dass Troja fallen muss auch ohne den Palamedes; er betrachtet den Tod des Palamedes als irrelevant für den Erfolg des ganzen Unternehmens, er verringert die Schuld des Ulixes und seiner Helfershelfer ohne allen Zweck und gegen alle psychologische Wahrscheinlichkeit. Ferner konnte Sinon einen unpassenderen Augenblick zur Ausführung seiner Rachegedanken nicht wählen als die Zeit nach der Rückkehr in die Heimath, wo über den Mord schon Gras gewachsen war, wo die Siegesfreude die früheren persönlichen Kränkungen vergessen liess, wo die Urheber der That den Augen und der Hand des Rächers entzogen waren. Endlich ist es psychologisch unmöglich dass der rachedürstende Sinon, der in heissblütiger Aufwallung so unklug ist seine bösen Absichten selbst zu verrathen, die Ausführung des Vorhabens verschieben soll *ad Graecas Calendas*, nämlich bis nach der glücklichen Beendigung eines Krieges, dessen Ende sich gar nicht absehen liess. In den kurzen Worten *fors si qua tulisset* ist genau das enthalten was hier am Platze ist, dass Sinon bei erster Gelegenheit sich rächen wollte; der nachhinkende Vers *si patrios umquam remeassem victor ad Argos* ist eine in keiner Hinsicht wünschenswerthe, in mehr als einer Hinsicht störende Specialisierung".

In the line immediately before *remeassem* it is *me* that occupies the same emphatic central *sedes*.[23] This monosyllabic *me* is highlighted by its syntactic isolation immediately after the copulative following the previous main clause and immediately before two conditional clauses that fill the next line and a half. The huge hyperbaton which results obliges commentators to offer help in construing.[24] The line that in turn precedes the one containing *me* evinces a polyptotic *mecum*, which this time matches *remeassem* in beginning directly after the strong 3rd-foot caesura.[25] *Ecthlipsis* of the *-um* of *mecum* at the third diaeresis draws attention to the word itself, while at the same time giving particular prominence to its first half: homophonous and homophenic *me*.[26] Again Virgil must have had a good reason for employing *mecum*, since on the one hand the word is superfluous,[27] while on the other it flatly contradicts the immediately following *nec tacui*.[28] It would accordingly appear that here the function of *mecum* is to introduce the idea of *me* as the etymon of *remeo*. This notion is then buttressed by the occurrence of *me* itself in the line immediately after *mecum* and immediately before *remeo*: all three words are placed in the same etymologically significant *locus* in mid-line.

Remeo is in fact unique in this particular speech as the only verb to be brought into relief by a position straight after the main caesura and exactly in the centre of the clause. Here a large number of synonymous verbs might have been employed instead.[29] Virgil's choice of *remeo* in the present passage needed to be glossed.[30] The syncope here (*remeassem*) makes the *me* all the more prominent. The stem of this verb in fact consists of just *me* plus prefix: *reme-*. While moreover vowel length is essentially unimportant in ancient etymologizing,[31] the long "e" in *me* as etymon of *remeare* is necessarily shortened

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[23] For "the same *sedes* in successive lines" as an etymological marker cf. Cairns 1996, 33 (= id. 2007, 317).

[24] Cf. (e.g.) Ussani 1952, 50 ("*me*: unisci con *ultorem*, v. 96"); Speranza 1964, 30 ("*me*: da unire a *promisi ultorem* v. 96"). The dislocation elicits the following comment from Forbiger 1873, 189: "In promptu est, in prosa oratione verba ita collocanda fuisse: 'Promisi, si unquam in patriam remeassem et fors si qua tulisset, me ultorem fore'".

[25] On the special importance of this *locus* in etymologizing cf. Cairns 1996, 33 (= id. 2007, 317), where reference is also made to the occurrence of the afore-mentioned phenomenon "in lines separated by one … [line]", as here.

[26] For *ecthlipsis* cf. (e.g.) Don., *Gramm. mai*. III 4 p. 662, 11-13: *ecthlipsis est consonantium cum vocalibus aspere concurrentium quaedam difficilis ac dura conlisio, ut "multum ille"*.

[27] No parallel is to be found in *Thes. Ling. Lat*. 7,1 col. 1185,27 (s.v. *indignor*).

[28] As Servius points out (*Aen*. II 93; ad loc.).

[29] Cf. (e.g.) *Synon. Cic*. p. 441,32-33: *redit. remeat. revertit. revertitur. regreditur. recedit. pedem refert*.

[30] Cf. (e.g.) *Gloss*.[L] III Abol. RE 70: *remeassem: redissem*.

[31] Cf. O'Hara 1996, 61-62.

in the verb on the principle of *vocalis ante vocalem*. It would appear therefore that here Virgil is indeed deriving *remeo* from *me*: this verb's etymological sense is to "put me back" to where I was.[32] Austin's note on *remeassem* states that it seems to have been Virgil who "promoted the verb to epic".[33] It would also seem to have been Virgil who at the same time provided this verb with an etymology.

Virgil employs *remeo* on just one further occasion. In the penultimate book of the *Aeneid* Arruns prays to Apollo for success in his attempt to kill Camilla. His words are the following:

> *da, pater, hoc nostris aboleri dedecus armis,*
> *omnipotens. non exuvias pulsaeve tropaeum*
> *virginis aut spolia ulla peto, mihi cetera laudem*
> *facta ferent; haec dira meo dum vulnere pestis*
> *pulsa cadat, patrias remeabo inglorius urbes* (*Aen.* XI 789-793).

Although Paschalis devotes a whole section to this speech, he fails to deal with *remeare*, which is similarly absent from O'Hara's study.[34] Here Virgil's use of the verb is a *Selbstzitat* from Sinon's speech. Again *remeare* occupies the same emphatic *locus* immediately after the strong 3rd-foot caesura; this time however the verb is placed conspicuously in the speech's very last line. Again *remeare* is enclosed by hyperbatic *patrius* and a "city" that here too is preceded by a predicative adjective agreeing with the subject of the verb. Both texts involve a "vow". In the immediately antecedent line of the present passage the *sedes* after the main caesura is filled by *meo*.[35] The syntagm *meo ... vulnere* is noteworthy enough to need glossing: *ut meo vulnere, meo telo cadat*.[36] Here the "risk of ambiguity" in such use of the pronominal adjective for a subjective genitive is noted in Horsfall's recent commentary on this book.[37] For such inconcinnity there must once again have been good reason, which here too is evidently to be sought in Virgil's desire to etymologize *remeo* from *me*: this pronoun was in turn regarded as the etymon of *meus*.[38] It may be noted that the *meo* of this passage has the same form as the first person singular present of the simplex of this

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[32] This meaning is underpinned by the *patrios* in hyperbatic *patrios ... Argos* which frames the line with *remeassem* in the middle.

[33] Austin 1964, 63.

[34] Paschalis 1997, 368; O'Hara 1996, 233.

[35] On this *locus* as an etymological marker of particular moment cf. Cairns 1996, 33 (= id. 2007, 317). Exactly the same *sedes* in the next line is occupied by *remeabo*. It may be observed that *meo* is further accentuated by postponed *dum* which follows it in hyperbaton.

[36] So (e.g.) de la Cerda 1642, 646.

[37] Horsfall 2003, 423-424 (ad loc.).

[38] Cf. Adkin 2006, 471.

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verb, just as the next line's *remeabo* is the first person singular future of the compound. Significantly *meus* is not used in Arruns' previous sentence, which instead employs *noster* (l. 789): *nostris ... armis*.[39]

If Sinon's speech is using *me* to etymologize *remeo* in the same *sedes* in the adjacent line, it would be no surprise if this pronoun were also being employed to etymologize the adjacent word in the same line: *demens*.[40] *Demens* might be thought surprisingly strong language ("out of one's mind, mad, frenzied, insane")[41] to be used of oneself in a *commendatio* designed to produce *commiseratio*.[42] Here a more suitable epithet might seem to be *infelix*;[43] this term would also be especially appropriate to this particular juncture.[44] Virgil's preference for *demens* would accordingly appear to have been prompted by etymological considerations: since this line's axial *me* is being used as the etymon of *remeassem* in the next one and its second half contains a *jeu étymologique* on *fors / ferre*,[45] this distich constitutes an etymological "cluster".[46] *Demens* was customarily derived from *mens*.[47] Here however Virgil would seem to be proposing an alternative etymology from *me*, which besides following *demens* in the same line also occurs with affixes in both the preceding and succeeding lines (*mecum / remeassem*). It would appear that another such affixal form is here

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[39] Very recently a twofold explanation of the use of *noster* in this passage has been proffered by Fratantuono 2009, 267. On the one hand we may have in *nostris* "a hint that Arruns is speaking 'in character', as one of the Hirpini, imitating a wolf, ready to kill the she-wolf" (i.e. Camilla). Alternatively Fratantuono asks: "Is *nostris* historically proleptic, with reference to the Romans of Virgil's own day, who would be incensed at the notion of a female warrior?" It would seem however that *noster*'s real *raison d'être* is the simple wish to avoid the etymologizing *meus*. Fratantuono's note on *remeabo* itself declares it to be "somewhat presumptuous" (269). When however *remeare* is etymologized as signifying merely "to put me back to where I was", it does not appear "presumptuous".

[40] For such "coupling" ("i.e. where the two words etymologically linked are placed side by side") as an etymological marker cf. Cairns 1996, 33 (= id. 2007, 317).

[41] So *Oxf. Lat. Dict.* 511 (s.v.).

[42] Ti. Claudius Donatus accordingly feels obliged to justify the use of the word here (*Aen.* II 95 p. 159,22-25): *cogitabam, inquit, defendendum esse amicum…, sed nimius dolor tantum potuit, ut me fecisset insanum.*

[43] It would be a perfect match for Sinon's self-description as *miser* in ll. 70, 79 and 131; cf. also *miserorum* (140), *miserere* (143 and 144) and *miserescimus* (145). *Infelix* would scan in this *sedes*.

[44] Cf. *Diff.* ed. Beck p. 64,15: *infelix est in una re, miser in omni.*

[45] Cf. n. 13 above.

[46] For the term cf. O'Hara 1996, 92. For another case in which the same etymon is proposed for two different words cf. Adkin 2011; here too the words etymologized are respectively placed straight in front of the etymon and straight after the main caesura in the adjacent line.

[47] Cf. Maltby 1991, 181 (citing *inter alios* Paul. Fest. p. 159: *demens, quod de sua mente decesserit*). For supplementary evidence cf. Adkin 2005, 79 (citing *Diff.* ed. Uhlfelder 12: *demens ... dictus quasi deminuta parte mentis*); Adkin 2009, 409.

being suggested as the etymon of *demens*: *de me*.[48] The final syllable of *demens* had moreover been recently proposed by Caesar as the present participle of *esse*: *ens*.[49] The full etymology of *demens* would accordingly be *de me ens*: "being away from myself".[50] Such an etymon is morphologically preferable, since it matches similarly adjectival *demens* better than a noun like *mens*, whose nominatival form is incompatible with the foregoing *de* that should instead take an ablative: *de mente*. Finally the sequence of affixes in *mecum*, *de me-* and *reme-* is piquantly apt: the speaker represents himself as initially "with myself", then moving "away from myself", and in the end going "back to myself".

If these lines propose such a further derivative of *me*, it would also seem possible to show that they propose a further form of the present participle of *esse*. In the line immediately before *demens* the same *sedes* at the end of the first hemistich is occupied by *insontis*. *Sons* "a la forme du participe présent de *sum*".[51] The same point that *sons* is the present participle of *sum* would seem to be Virgil's intention here in locating this word in exactly the same emphatic position as *ens*, which is the other present participle of the same verb.[52] If then *sons* is the present participle of "to be", the etymological meaning of *insons* is "not being". Here the term is applied to *amicus*: Sinon speaks of Palamedes as his *insontis ... amici*. As well as "innocent friend" this syntagm could accordingly mean "friend that isn't". As with *infando indicio*, the resultant ambiguity is very clever.[53] This time Sinon is using etymology to blow the gaff on an alleged tribulation that is his own: if Palamedes is not his pal, then the whole of the ensuing narrative (ll. 94-144) of the affliction which Sinon says he endured on Palamedes' account is exposed as bogus. The piquancy of *insontis ... amici* is enhanced by direct juxtaposition of this participial adjective with *mecum*, whose implication is "close to my heart": contiguous *insontis* however beto-

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[48] In rhetorical terms *demens* before *me* would accordingly be an example of anadiplosis with *derivatio* (on the latter cf. Lausberg 2008, 328-329 ["die etymologisierende Stammwiederholung"]). Nauck 1868, 536-537 wished to emend the *et* separating these two words to *set*; however the etymological link between them would seem to indicate that *et* is right.

[49] *Anal. frg. Prisc. gramm.* III 239, 7-9.

[50] For this basic sense of *de* cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict.* 485 (s.v., 1a: "away from"). For the psychological background cf. (e.g.) Dodds 1951, 13-14: "'I didn't really mean to do that!' – from which it is a short step to saying, 'It wasn't really I who did it'".

[51] So Ernout-Meillet-André 1985, 636 (s.v.). The association of *sons* with *sum* is further corroborated by similarly participial *sens* in the compounds of this verb: (*ab*)*sens*; (*prae*)*sens*. For the "o" in *sōns* cf. ὤν.

[52] Besides the participial forms of *esse* at the end of *insons* and *demens* these words are also linked by the privative element in the prefix: *in-* / *de-*.

[53] Cf. Cic., *De orat.* II 253: *ambigua sunt in primis acuta*.

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kens the exact opposite. Austin notes how in this speech Virgil "characterize[s] Sinon's style with uncanny skill".[54] It would seem however that Virgil's skill is even more "uncanny" than Austin thinks.[55]

If *insons* is the first of the *jeux étymologiques* in this passage, the last of the cluster would seem to be provided by *verbis* in the closing line (96: *promisi ultorem et verbis odia aspera movi*). Here *verbis* is highlighted by initial position in a main clause and by emphatic medial position in the line. The word might however be deemed superfluous.[56] It would seem therefore that once again etymological considerations have determined the presence of a lexeme which might otherwise be dismissed as merely παραπληρωματικόν. Varro had recently derived *verbum* from the *ver-* in *verum*; however the question was also raised as to the possible origin of the second half of the word.[57] Here Virgil would appear to be proposing his own solution to the problem of the etymology of *verbum*. On the one hand he accepts the Varronian etymon *verum* for the first half.[58] On the other hand the *verbis* of this Virgilian text would seem to be etymologizing the word's second syllable from *bis*: here *ver*(*um*) *bis* is "truth twice".[59] The "twofold truths" at issue in this context are evidently the twofold meanings generated by the etymologizing in the three immediately foregoing lines:[60] *insons* = "innocent" and "not being"; *demens* = "*de mens*" and "*de me ens*"; *remeo* = "I return" and "I re-me". Here it is accordingly "by words" (*ver / bis*) that we reach such "truth twice" (*ver*[*um*] *bis*). This etymology is espe-

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[54] Austin 1964, 61 (on 86).

[55] No less an authority than Heinze 1995, 11 classes among the "edelste Eigenschaften des Redners" that are revealed by this speech the speaker's "Treue gegen den Freund (93)". Virgil would however appear to have been more subtle. The fact that he is at such pains to invalidate Sinon's claim to *amicitia* would seem to indicate that here *amicus* signifies more than "semplicemente il compagno d'armi o il conterraneo" (so Bellincioni 1984, 135).

[56] Cf. (e.g.) the awkward attempt to justify it in Austin 1964, 64 ("*verbis*: in contrast with the silence that he should have kept if he had not been *demens*"). In particular the immediately antecedent *promisi* might be felt to render pointless an explicit statement that the result had been produced "with words": for the specifically "verbal" reference of *promitto* cf. (e.g.) Isid., *Diff.* I 439 (*pollicemur scriptura, promittimus verbo*).

[57] For etymologizing of *verbum* cf. Maltby 1991, 636. For supplementation of his evidence cf. Adkin 2005, 95.

[58] It is perhaps possible that in this hemistich (*verbis odia ... movi*) Virgil is thinking of a celebrated line from the opening scene of Terence's *Andria* (68: *veritas odium parit*), which had recently been quoted by Cicero (*Amic.* 89). In both Virgil and Terence the words occur in the same order and fill the latter half of the verse.

[59] For Virgil's similar use of *bis* as etymon of the second half of *Virbius* cf. O'Hara 1996, 198-199. On the unimportance of vocalic quantity cf. ibid. 61-62.

[60] It may be recalled that *etymologia* had recently been rendered as *veriloquium* by Cicero (*Top.* 35).

cially piquant coming from Sinon, since his own "words" are not "truth twice", but whopping lies.

Sinon then concludes this speech as follows:[61]

> *hinc mihi prima mali labes, hinc semper Ulixes*
> *criminibus terrere novis, hinc spargere voces*
> *in vulgum ambiguas et quaerere conscius arma.*
> *nec requievit enim, donec Calchante ministro…*
> *sed quid ego haec autem nequiquam ingrata revolvo?*
> *quidve moror, si omnis uno ordine habetis Achivos*
> *idque audire sat est? iamdudum sumite poenas:*
> *hoc Ithacus velit et magno mercentur Atridae* (*Aen*. II 97-104).

In the opening line of this passage the first two words of the phrase *prima mali labes* break the rule *ne syllaba verbi prioris ultima et prima sequentis sit eadem*.[62] In the disyllables *prima mali* not only is the peccant syllable in each word uniformly short (*-ma ma-*);[63] in addition the other vowel is on both occasions a long "i". It might accordingly be supposed that Virgil would have eschewed this particular vocabulary, unless he had very good reasons for using it; at the same time the breach of the rule draws attention to the wording at issue. Significantly Williams' foundational commentary[64] cannot make up its mind whether in the unit *prima mali labes* pivotal *labes* means either "a slip"[65] or "a stain".[66] It would seem however that Virgil is seeking deliberate ambiguity:[67] such a further instance of "truth twice" is no surprise in a word occupying exactly the same central *sedes* as the immediately preceding line's *ver* / *bis*.

The next line then proceeds to describe Ulysses' hostility: *hinc spargere voces in vulgum ambiguas*. Here *ambiguas* requires a gloss from both Servius and Servius Auctus. Austin notes that Virgil could instead have written *in vul-*

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[61] It may be noted that the section of the speech just discussed (ll. 93-96) closely resembles the one examined at the start of the present article (ll. 81-84) in being a four-line block permeated by etymologizing: as the earlier quatrain was pervaded by *fari* and its derivatives, so the etymon *me* has dominated this one.

[62] So Quint., *Inst.* IX 4, 41. The prescription is already found in Isoc., *Tech. fr.* 6 Blass (μηδὲ τελευτᾶν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς συλλαβῆς [sc. δεῖ], οἷον "εἰποῦσα σαφῆ", "ἡλίκα καλά", "ἔνθα Θαλῆς").

[63] This collocation before the caesura cannot be justified by the need to generate a dactyl in the fifth foot.

[64] Williams 1972, 223-224.

[65] So Servius, *Aen.* II 97 (ad loc.).

[66] This is the meaning in the only other place Virgil uses the word (*Aen.* VI 746).

[67] On the one hand ordinal *primus* fits the idea of gradation inherent in *labi* (cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict.* 991 [s.v., 9a: "to … lapse … (into an inferior state)"]), while on the other the concreteness of *malum* suggests a similarly concrete sense of *labes*: "a stain".

gus dubias; he would thereby have avoided the *ecthlipsis* entailed by the "very unusual" masculine *vulgum*.[68] Again there must accordingly have been good grounds for the use of *ambiguus*. This epithet was etymologized as *quod in ambas agi partes animo potest*.[69] It would seem therefore that the syntagm *voces ... ambiguas* is intended as a gloss on *ver / bis* in the previous line but one: here we have another reference to "truth twice". Virgil is thus making Sinon himself use *voces ... ambiguas* at the same time as the latter accuses Ulysses of the selfsame vice.[70]

The clause which ends emphatically with *ambiguas* is followed by another historic infinitive: *et quaerere conscius arma*. Here *conscius* is a crux: already both Servius Auctus and Servius himself offer multiple attempts at a solution. It would seem however that the clue to *conscius* is in fact to be sought in *ambiguas*: each of these words is symmetrically positioned one foot away from the beginning and end respectively of the same line. The basic meaning of *conscius* is "sharing knowledge (esp. secret knowledge), privy".[71] It would accordingly appear that here the reference is to the "secret knowledge" connoted by *voces ... ambiguas*: Ulysses is "privy" to this "secret knowledge" of double entendres, as others are not. Significantly *voces* occupies the same emphatic final *sedes* as the *arma* in *quaerere conscius arma* at the end of the next line. *Arma* are defined in Servius' note on this text as *instrumenta cuiuslibet rei*. Because Ulysses is amphibologically *conscius*, these *voces* can accordingly be his *arma*.[72] It is also noteworthy that the verb which Virgil applies here to *voces* is *spargere*, on which Horsfall has recently observed: "Apparently a Virgilian invention thus".[73] The same verb had however been already applied by Ennius to *hasta*.[74] Hence *spargere* is especially appropriate to *voces* qua *arma*.

In this connection reference may also be made to *criminibus*, which opens the line that ends with the semantically related *voces*. Here *criminibus* is qualified by *novis*. This epithet prompts Servius Auctus to glossographic superfetation.[75] *Novis* stands in saliently terminal position in the clause. More importantly this term occurs immediately after the main caesura in the line; the word

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[68] Austin 1964, 64-65. On *ecthlipsis* as a *difficilis ac dura conlisio* cf. n. 26 above.

[69] Cf. Maltby 1991, 28 (citing Paul. Fest. p. 17). For additional evidence cf. Adkin 2009, 408.

[70] In particular it may be noted that *ambiguas* occupies exactly the same *sedes* as *insontis*. Both words conclude the first hemistich; they also follow a disyllable whose final *-um* is obscured through *ecthlipsis* at the first diaeresis. The point may also be made that here *voces* itself is a case of *ambiguum*; cf. Lewis-Short 1879, 2015 (s.v., I: "a voice"; II: "a word").

[71] So *Oxf. Lat. Dict.* 411 (s.v., 1a).

[72] *Conscius* is tellingly placed immediately before *arma*.

[73] Horsfall 2008, 122.

[74] Cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict.* 1796 (s.v., 2a).

[75] Cf. also *Schol. Verg. Veron. Aen*. II 98 (ad loc.).

thereby occupies the same *sedes* as *verbis*, from which it is separated by only a single verse. The second half of these two disyllables (*novis / verbis*) is moreover virtually homophonous: *-vis / -bis*.[76] Each of the syllables in question also fills the fourth arsis. It would seem therefore that Virgil's object is to establish a connection between the two lexemes: the "new" meanings that result from the anterior etymologizing generate "truth twice" (*ver / bis*).[77]

Sinon then interrupts his account of Ulysses' oppugnant activity with an aposiopesis: *nec requievit enim, donec Calchante ministro…* (100). It is noteworthy that Virgil should have made Sinon stop at this particular point: the very next word after *Calchante ministro…* would have been the present participle of the substantive verb, had Latin resembled Greek in possessing such a form. This aposiopetic break accordingly draws attention to the lexical gap which Caesar's *De analogia* had recently endeavoured to fill. In Caesar's train Virgil himself has been toying with a solution to the same problem in his antecedent etymologizing of *insons* and *demens*.

Sinon himself justifies his sudden obmutescence at some length over the next three lines: *sed quid ego haec autem nequiquam ingrata revolvo? / quidve moror, si omnis uno ordine habetis Achivos / idque audire sat est?* (101-103). In this passage the syntagm *uno ordine* calls for particular consideration: here Lenaz points out that Virgil "innova rispetto al comune *eodem loco*".[78] The phrasing *uno ordine* also requires explication in *Oxford Latin Dictionary*'s article on *ordo*, which fails to supply a parallel for *uno*.[79] It is therefore noteworthy that *uno* shares with *verbis* exactly the same high-relief *locus* straight after the strong 3rd-foot caesura: here *uno* is evidently being used as an antiphrastic gloss on the *bis* in *verbis*.

In the same self-apology for Sinon's aposiopesis particular significance would also seem to attach to the immediately ensuing *idque audire sat est*. These words are strictly superfluous; they have also caused trouble to commentators.[80] The clause would in fact appear to be a further antithetic reference to the etymology of *verbis*: *audire* and *sat* suggest *verba* and *unus* respectively. What is at issue here is not "truth twice", but just "once": Sinon is insinuating that the Trojans are content with just a single, surface meaning, whereas the Greeks are privy to biplanar ones. His apology would accordingly appear to contain a subtextual reference to the twofold meanings produced by etymology.

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[76] On the close link between "v" and "b" cf. (e.g.) Sturtevant 1940, 142-143.

[77] Much of this etymologizing pertains specifically to *crimina*; cf. *falsa sub proditione* (83; glossed by Servius as *sub falso crimine proditionis*); *indicio* (84); *insontis* (93).

[78] Lenaz 1987, 880.

[79] *Oxf. Lat. Dict.* 1267 (5b). *Uno* is highlighted by the directly preceding *omnis*.

[80] Cf. Austin 1964, 66-67.

He is in effect saying: "If you are impervious to etymological double entendres, why bother with them?"[81] Sinon's words are accordingly an instance of the rhetorical figure of *emphasis*.[82]

By way of conclusion a word may be said about the Trojan reaction to Sinon's lying tale. This response is described thus: *tum vero ardemus scitari et quaerere causas, / ignari scelerum tantorum artisque Pelasgae* (105-106). At the end of the first of these verses the precise sense of unqualified *causas* is elusive.[83] Virgil's imprecision in the use of *causas* may however be deliberate. It is noteworthy that the same plural had recently been employed by Varro in the sense of "derivation (of a word)".[84] After so much etymologizing in the foregoing speech it is not impossible that Virgil's immediately succeeding *causas* should also include a playful allusion to Varro's "etymological" sense. The Trojans' new interest in *causae* (*tum ... ardemus ... quaerere causas*) would then introduce a piquant contrast with the presumption of their etymological disinterest that had prompted Sinon's aposiopesis.

A similar reference to etymology may also be intended in the second of these lines. As the first one ends with *causas*, so the same final *sedes* in the next is occupied by *artisque Pelasgae*. If Varro had recently used *causae* to mean "etymologies", even more recently he had likewise maintained that "etymology" itself was an *ars* (*L*. VII 109). Here "Pelasgian" is a suitable epithet, since the etymology of *etymologia* shows the word to be "Greek"; simultaneously there is a certain wit in applying the term "Greek art" to Latin etymologies. *Ignari* too is appropriate (*ignari ... artis ... Pelasgae*), since the speakers acknowledge that their interest is new (*tum vero ardemus ... quaerere cau-*

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[81] The question mark should accordingly be placed after *sat est*, not after *moror*. This interpretation also goes against taking *audire* as *appellari*: the objection that "hear" is "tame" (so [e.g.] Page 1894, 216) is rebutted by the etymological polemic.

[82] Cf. Lausberg 2008, 450-453, citing *inter alios* Quint., *Inst*. IX 2, 64: *est emphasis…, cum ex aliquo dicto latens aliquid eruitur*. The presence of such an etymological subtext is also supported by indefinite *haec* (101) and absolute *moror* (102). The point was made above that the aposiopesis itself is meant to evoke the antecedent etymologizing of *insons* and *demens*. In the same connection reference may also be made to the *epiphonema* in the last line of this speech (104): *hoc Ithacus velit et magno mercentur Atridae*. This statement could be taken as also entailing an allusion to Ulysses' more general delight at the incapacity of the single-minded Trojans for such semantic biplanarity in contrast to his own flair for being duplicitously *conscius*; the Atridae on the other hand would need to "buy" what Ulysses' brains give him for free.

[83] An 18-line paragraph is devoted exclusively to discussion of this one text by Cipriano 1984, 715. Attempts to explain the use of *causas* here are also made by Servius and Ti. Claudius Donatus (p. 161, 18-20). The variant *casus* is adopted instead by (e.g.) Ribbeck 1895, 278; hence this is also the reading given by the online *Library of Latin Texts*.

[84] Cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict*. 289 (s.v. *causa*, 10a).

sas).[85] In these last two lines such a pair of double entendres involving etymological nomenclature forms an apt conclusion to a passage devoted to precisely such double meanings.[86]

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[85] For this sense of *ignarus* cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict*. 822 (s.v., 2b: "ignorant [of a skill, etc.], unpractised"). For the future nuance cf. *Thes. Ling. Lat*. 7,1 col. 272,34 (s.v.): "aliquotiens etiam de eo qui aliquid nondum scit".

[86] At the same time Sinon's immediately ensuing speech also contains further etymologizing. Its opening sentence explains the Greeks' failure to leave Troy: *saepe illos aspera ponti / interclusit hiemps...*; / *praecipue, cum iam hic trabibus contextus acernis / staret equus, toto sonuerunt aethere nimbi* (II 110-113). Here *acernis* is a notorious crux, since this adjective flatly contradicts the statement at II 16 that the horse was made of *abies*. A future paper will argue that *abies* is here being etymologized from *abire* (cf. Maltby 1991, 1; i.e. "you will go away"). If however in ll. 110-113 bad weather prevents such a departure, the horse cannot there be described as made of *abies*. In ll. 258-259 Sinon opens a horse made of *pinus*, which is equivalent to *abies* (cf. Edgeworth 1981, 142 n. 6). *Pinus* was etymologized from *pinnus*, an obsolete term for *acutus* (cf. Maltby 1991, 476). *Acutus* is synonymous with adjectival *acer*, which is the obvious etymon of the noun *acer* (cf. Walde-Hofmann 2008, 6-7). Hence nominal *acer* corresponds etymologically to *pinus*, which in turn corresponds dendrologically to *abies*: Sinon's perennial conundrum of a horse of *abies* that is simultaneously one of *acer* is thus resolved by etymology.

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THE CITIES OF THE IAZYGIANS

BY BENCE FEHÉR

Abstract: Ptolemy' description of the Iazygian territory (*Geogr. hyph*. III 7) describes eight 'poleis' – which could be any kind of settlement indeed by name, and the boundaries of the region. The boundaries can be traced from the Greater Fatra range in the north to the river Temes or Krassó in the south, but the position of the settlements allows for some variations, taking as a fix point Partiskon = Szeged, from where a probable trade route started to the north or northwest, reaching most of the settlements mentioned. If the direction of the route in Ptolemy's map were correct, some localities were outside of the actual territory (A), but supposing two different kinds of distortion, we may reconstruct a route heading to the Zagyva–Tarna region (B) or to Aquincum (C). Both possibilities seem realistic, but the most important settlement in the first part of the 1st c. was Bormanon (according to *Geogr. hyph*. VIII 11). The etymology of the name points to a warm or/and medicinal water spring. This fact and the date makes the B the most probable version.

Keywords: Ptolemy, Iazyges Metanastae, trade routes, Bormanon.

The Iazygians, this Sarmatian people inhabited the plains east from the Danube since about 20 AD[1] – therefore they were more correctly said *Iazyges Metanastae*,[2] transmigrated Iazygians –, where they are well known from the archaeological sources. On the contrary, they seem not to have had their own literacy, authors did not mention it, nor do we have epigraphic relics which were connected with them (although it was not necessarily they could not form a writing system of their own, while at least one of their closely relative peoples, namely the Alanians, had their writing according to some Eastern sources).[3] Consequently, every piece of verbal information about the Iazygians, including names, comes from Greek or Roman authors. That is the reason for the ambivalent situation that while we can clearly distinguish where the Iazygians had lived, based on their archaeological inheritance, their habitations are deprived

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[1] For the exact date, see note 8.

[2] Ptol., *Geogr. hyph*. III 7, 1; *Geogr. Exp. Comp*. 4, 11.

[3] Andronicus, Descriptio populorum et plagarum. In: *Chronica minora* II. CSCO 3. SS 3. 278-280*, Chronicon ad a. Chr. 1234 pertinens*, versio: I-B. Chabot, CSCO 109. SS 56. Louvain 1965, 32.

of their names, in spite of the fact that there remained some Iazygian settlement names – with the words of the Greek geographic writers, *polis* names.

Naturally we cannot speak about a rich treasure of Iazygian geographic names, there are in fact, only two sources which speak, if not abundantly, yet in considerable length about the inner relations of the Iazygian territory. One of them is Ammianus Marcellinus, whose famous sections give us a description of natural geography, obscure enough, apart from a few informations on social structures and leading personalities.[4] The other one is Ptolemy's *Geōgraphikē hyphēgēsis*, the only scientific geographic description.[5] Earlier geographic writers save for Pliny, do not mention the Metanastae, the transmigrated Sarmatian tribe, which settled in the Carpathian Basin,.[6] That is quite natural: Strabo or Agrippa were active in a time closely *before* the Iazygian migration, and even those working in the 1st c., as Pomponius Mela, used mostly earlier information (except Pliny). We cannot judge those writers whose oeuvre was lost, of course we cannot know with certainty what the knowledge of Marinos was in the second part of the 1st c. Yet Ptolemy is generally supposed to preserve many data from Marinos,[7] and therefore the first geographic source which has to be considered on the Iazygian territory in the Carpathian Basin is Marinos. As for Pliny, he only gave the two opposing boundaries of the Sarmatian settlement area in the earliest period.[8]

Later geographic writers generally use Ptolemy as a source for this region, or sometimes even epitomizing him.[9]

Therefore, Ptolemy is the sole writer who systematically describes the Iazygian territory (*Geogr. hyph*. III 7) in such a manner:

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[4] Amm. Marc. XVII 13.

[5] Claudii Ptolemaei *Geographia*, ed. C. F. A. Nobbe, Lipsiae 1898. (repr. Hildesheim 1966), Claudii Ptolemaei *Geographia*, ed. C. Müller, Paris 1883.

[6] Plin., *Nat.* IV 80–81.

[7] For the argumentation pro and contra see Polaschek 1965, 687-690; I shall present ampler evidence later on in the article.

[8] Since the text is somewhat problematic and the names are partly unidentifiable, these boundaries are not quite unambiguous: on one hand a river in the northwestern plainland of the Carpathian Basin, probably close to Carnuntum, on the other hand the river Tisza. Moreover, already at the end of the 1st c. these data were not necessarily up to date; they are dated before Vannius' taking over of power, that is, before 20 AD, and that is the strictest chronological definition of the Sarmatian transmigration (see Mócsy 1977, Nagy 1989, 66-68, P. Kovács in FPA I 51–52.)

[9] *Geographiae expositio compendiaria* (GGM II 494–511) 4, 11 and 9, 28; Zacharias rhetor, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII 7 (ed. E. W. Brooks, CSCO 83-84, SS 38-39); Iacob Edessenus, *Hexaemeron* III (ed. a. Vaschalde, CSCO 92. SS 44, Louvain 1953) p. 112-113. – I mention only those who know more than just the *name* of the Iazyges.

The Transmigrated Iazygians border in the north upon the above mentioned part of the European Sarmatia, from the southern edge of the Sarmatian Mountains to the Carpathian Mountains, in the west and in the south upon the above mentioned part of Germania from the Sarmatian Mountains to the bend of the River Danube near Karpis, and the subsequent reach of the River Danube, which extends to the mouth of the River Tibiscus, which flows to the north. The position of the mouth has the co-ordinates [long] 46° [lat] 44°15'. In the east upon Dacia along the same River Tibiscus, which turns to east and ends by the Carpathian Mountains, wherefrom it rises too; its position has the co-ordinates [long] 46° [lat] 48°30'.

The cities (poleis) *among the Transmigrated Iazyges are these*:

Uskenon	43°15'	48°20'
Bormanon	43°40'	48°15'
Abiēta	43°40'	48°
Trisson	44°10'	47°45'
Parka	43°30'	47°40'
Kandanon	44°	47°20'
Pession	44°40'	47°
Partiskon	45°	46°40'

How can this area be determined on a current map? (See fig. 1.)

In the north, the boundary of the Iazygian land ran approximately from the Danube-bend to the Sarmatian Mountains, which can be placed, according to Ptolemy's description, between [long] 42°30'–43°30' [lat] 48°30'–50°30'.[10] If we compare these co-ordinates with those of the known right-bank landmarks in Pannonia Inferior,[11] the south-western edge of the range must be put to approx. 18°45'–19°5' E, 48°35–45' N.[12] In a modern map, it corresponds approximately to the edge of the Greater Fatra range. Its extension to the East is probably vague even for an approximation, because hardly any E-W road ran through it, which could have been a base for it. The most logical construction seems to be extend it to the eastern edge of the modern Érchegység (so-called Ore Mountains). Here there is a source which is even more profuse than Ptolemy, the anonymous *Geographiae expositio compendiaria*, which refers: *They say the highest ones are in Europe the Sarmatian Mountains and the Alps;*[13] if it is

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[10] Ptol., *Geogr. hyph*. II 10, 6.

[11] Cf. FPA I 99-101, tables 2-3.

[12] As I shall argue later on, the approximate position data in the Barbaricum must be generally connected to routes which start from the Empire, therefore this mountain probably is to be correlated with the starting point of one of the S-N routes; the odds are for Solva (via the river Granua) or maybe for Aquincum, and not for Cirpi, which is closest in terms of co-ordinates, but unsuitable as the initials of a route because of the mountaneous terrain. For Ptolemy's positions of Solva and Aquincum, see FPA I 96 in greater detail.

[13] *Geogr. Exp. Comp*. 9, 28. Cf. *FPA* I 109.

true, certainly the High Tatra range was part of the Sarmatian Mountains too.[14] It is surprising that the lesser ranges south-west from the Fatra were not parts of this range in the view of the antiquity; it is possible that they are not mentioned here because they were belonging to Germania unambiguously.[15] Anyway, it is likely that the political boundaries between the Iazygians and the Germans were set somewhere from the reach of the Danube between Solva and Cirpi to the feet of the Fatra, and from there they ran approximately eastwards.

The northern neighbours of the Iazygians were, according to Ptolemy, the non-transmigrated Sarmatians from the Sarmatian Mountains to the North-Eastern Carpathians, the co-ordinates of which are proper enough, compared to the former ones. These were, we may say more correctly, faraway Barbarians of an almost indeterminable ethnicity. It is apparently due to the lack of information, that he draws the boundary line straight. There are some interpretation problems with the eastern boundary – which I omit for the most part, because it is connected with the geography of the province Dacia –, since the geographic description of the boundary river Tibiskos is highly self-contradictory. The co-ordinates of its mouth refer to the modern river Temes, according to Müller,[16] but I am not unwilling to put it even more eastwards, to the river Krassó, based on Ptolemy's position data,[17] but its spring refer unambiguously to the River Tisza. In antiquity the Tisza was named naturally Pa(r)thisos,[18] but Ptolemy did not use this name. Only a longer analysis could make it clear why he made the error, which were the data he based upon, and what his opinion was on the Dacian-Iazygian boundary.

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[14] The *Geographiae expositio compendiaria* epitomizes mostly Ptolemy (who of course cannot be the ultimate source of this sentence) and Protagoras (from the 2nd-3rd c. AD), who himself was mostly relying on others, among whose it is quite possible that there were more recent descriptions than that of Ptolemy.

[15] Sources on the Regnum Vannianum (see note 8), compared to archaeological data, give a generally accepted view that it was prolonged to the east to the river Vág at least (cf. *Jazigok* 37). It is not impossible either that we should take the river Garam (Granua) for the boundary.

[16] Ed. C. Müller 441. He gives the description of Priskos Rhetor as an analogy, where the rivers follow in the order Tisia, Tibisa, Dricca (the last one being the Maros-Aranka in his view).

[17] The Danube reach east of Sirmium was surveyed from Sirmium, see Fehér 2004, 358. If we start from here, the longitude of the Tibiskos is doubtless close to that of the Temes, but the latitude is far too southwards. Yet the position of the nearby Taurunum stands apart (for the interpretation of this phenomenon, see *FPA* I 94). If we suppose that it belongs to the relics of a supposed older self-standing surveying, and correlate the Tibiskos with it, it appears to be almost exactly in the position of the river Krassó. By the way this point is also mentioned in the interpolation of the ed. Romana of Ptolemy: *divertigium Abisti (sic!) fluvii cum Danubio*, with the same co-ordinates, and it seems realistic that this interpolation contains the debris of an older survey (for the pro and contra arguments see *FPA* I 96. note 33).

[18] Plin., *Nat.* IV 80, Strab., *Geogr.* VII 5, 2, Amm. Marc. XVII 13, 4.

Nevertheless the outer borders of the Iazygian area are more or less exactly definable. The problem of the inner part of the territory is different.

Ptolemy names eight *'poleis'* in the Iazygian territory. The first question is why these ones are 'cities'. As for the *Geōgraphikē hyphēgēsis*, it calls every settlement in the provinces *poleis*, but only the lesser part of these were *municipia*; those which were *coloniae*, are sometimes marked especially (for example Mursa),[19] but not always (Savaria, Emona are unmarked). Some so-called *'poleis'* are hardly to be taken even as *vici*, they are rather simple road stations.[20] Similarly *'poleis'* are mentioned throughout the Barbaricum, even in the furthest part of Germania and Sarmatia. They probably differed in size and significance too. The greater part of them must have been route stations, since the data concerning the Barbaricum came mostly from Romans, especially merchants, travelling in the region.[21] Yet there is a difference from the empire in the sense, that there are relatively few data which cover a very great area, so we may conclude to that he only knows localities of greater importance, as compared to the provinces, and therefore it is more likely that the Barbarian settlements were in fact regional centres.

The localization of the eight Iazygian *'poleis'* depends on the question whether they can be connected to a route starting from the Empire. The provincial position data reached Ptolemy probably through the *formae provinciae,* which were based on separate surveyings, and consequently they can be checked against actual data, but with different shifts in each province.[22] Naturally in the Barbaricum all positions are only estimated, as the Roman gromatics could not survey these lands with their gnomons,[23] and consequently few data are given with more accuracy than 1° or 30', while in the Empire and particularly in the Mediterranean parts, frequently there are co-ordinates with 5' difference.[24] An important exception is the land of the Iazyges Metanastae with its more accurate data!

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[19] Ptol., *Geogr. hyph.* II 15, 4. Μουρσία κολωνία.

[20] For example he marks seven 'poleis' by the Dravus route in Pannonia, but only Mursella can be identified with the help of archaeology.

[21] As in the neighbouring Germania Magna, where Simonyi 1948. tried to identify the Ptolemaean localities applying to the trade route through the Quadian territory.

[22] Fehér 2004, 353-356.

[23] *FPA* I 90, about the surveys see *FPA* II 58-59.

[24] It is highly questionable whether they could achieve such exactitude using gnomon. I did some experiments which lead to the observation that one can do the measuring with about 20' accuracy, but naturally I cannot have all the skills an experienced gromatic would have had and learned in the Roman age. But naturally the ancient surveys were based on distance measurements too, which could be transposed to latitudes and longitudes by computation, see Ptol., *Geogr. hyph*. I 2 – naturally only in straight road sections, and the mathematical apparatus of the typical ancient experts was able only to apply it to N-S and W-E sections. Yet theoretically it

If we accept that these data refer to trade routes, it can be easily explained by the fact that here the trade routes started at both ends from the Empire, were relatively short, and therefore a more close distance approximation was possible. Another argument which points to trade routes is that four *'poleis'* from the eight lies doubtless along the same line on the map, which begins in the south with the *'polis'* Partiskon, which has been identified with the Szeged route station for a long time.[25] If we want to transpose the co-ordinates to modern ones, we only have to state whether this route was measured from Pannonia Inferior or Dacia (or, less probably, from Moesia, or earlier from the undivided Pannonia). One problem is that the surveying of Dacia apparently gave a misshapen result (naturally because of the difficulties of measuring the mountainous region), and that Ptolemy used the *forma* of Pannonia Inferior only scarcely, in all probability, but he made use of earlier data from the undivided Pannonia.[26] In terms of latitudes, the co-ordinates of Partiskon and Lugio (Dunaszekcső) are in accord (with the same +25' aberration), and they are probably the starting and middle stations of the same road,[27] in terms of longitudes, there is –20' relative aberration, which can be easily due a mistaken approximation. It is evident that in an approximated measuring, which started from here, the latitudes of the Iazygian localities can be hypothetically explained with the same +25' aberration. What is less evident is how we can interpret the longitudes, since the Pannonian data suffered a serious distortion in longitudes north from Lugio, beginning from Lussonium – they were shifted westward to an increasing extent –, but we do not know whether the data from the Iazyges are synchronous. If they are, they originate from the very era of the Iazygian transmigration, about 20 AD, from the Tiberian era at any rate,[28] but there is no serious reason why they

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could be done in every direction, and Ptolemy (ibid. I 3, 3) said he had constructed the measuring instrument too. In sum, the most exact inner imperial data could derive from exact distance measurements combined with astronomical observations, and the lesser exactitude of the distant regions may be partly due to the fact that distances were given only via approximation; while the exact but evidently wrong data in some inner regions (including Italy) could originate from distance measurements which were mistaken because of the bends and declinations from the N-S/W-E course of the roads.

[25] Cs. Sebestyén 1926, 144 ff. By the way, the name itself shows that Partiskon lay by the River Tisza/Pa(r)tisos; it was localized to the mouth of the Maros at the end of the 19th c. already by C. Müller in his edition of Ptolemy (p. 441), but if there were no archaeological evidence concerning the Szeged station, that would be only a *circulus vitiosus*, since he was led to that idea by the correlation with the co-ordinates of the station Lugio (within the Empire).

[26] *FPA* I 96–97, Fehér 2004, 356–357, note 19.

[27] Fitz 1965, 83, Lakatos 1965, 100-101 without much argumentation; Balla-Tóth 1968, 75-76 upon sound foundations. Recently see *Jazigok* 129.

[28] The data of the limes road of Pannonia Inferior probably issue from the survey of the undivided Pannonia (see note 17), which was separated from Illyricum in the first part of Tiberius'

could not be later than the re-surveying from the initials of the 2nd c., the data of which are almost wholly lost.[29] The latest data from this region are from about 133 by Ptolemy (as the mention of Mursa as a colonia).[30]

If the Pannonian and Iazygian series are contemporaries, probably they have the same distortion of orientation: in the case the Iazygian route was situated probably alongside the Tisza, in the direction N (see fig. 1, variant B); if not, it is more likely that the Iazygian route is not distorted (see fig. 1, variant A), in which case it is directed to NW, probably to Aquincum.[31] The locality Trisson is farther off from the supposed route, it was perhaps in the northern region of the Tisza. Three north-western Iazygian settlements remain, Uskenon, Bormanon, Abiēta; there was only one attempt to identify Uskenon with the modern locality Visk by the river Ipoly,[32] but it is based on an obviously false etymology (although it is quite possible that the most north-western Iazygian 'city' was in the region of the Ipoly).

All the same, serious objections can be raised against A as well as against B. We cannot completely abject the longitudinal distortion, because then the *'poleis'* Parka and Abiēta would be placed *inside* Pannonia. At least about 15' deviation to the west must be accepted (A*). Thus Parka and Abiēta lay on the Barbarian side of the river, nearly to a supposable route to Aquincum; the northernmost city Uskenon in the Ipoly region, and Bormanon approx. in the region around the modern Vác. But we cannot theoretically explain such kind of deviation, nor define how it was close to 15' and permanently the same or not.

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reign, although the actual occupation of the lands up to the Danube perhaps required longer times, and the regulation of the civil administration can be postponed to the Claudian era (see P. Kovács. In: *FPA* I 278–283).

[29] The most significant part of Ptolemy's datable informations comes from Trajan's era. It was supposed that it is the chronological layer of Marinos' geography, see Honigmann 1930, 1768, but it is more likely that Marinos can be dated to the last third of the 1st c. However this layer made use of earlier *Latin* sources too (as seen e.g. from the mistakes of E~F), which are generally supposed to be Agrippa's map and its completions (Honigmann 1930, 1792-1793). Thus both possible suppositions can be explained in terms of textual history. The only thing which speaks for a later chronology that there are proofs of regular Roman–Sarmatian trade only from the last third of the 1st c. (*Jazigok* 125). If the data on the Barbaricum issue from the merchants' descriptions, it speaks for that these are not synchronous with the first Pannonian survey but later.

[30] About the deduction of Mursa see *FPA* II 186–187. Steph. Byz. 458, 6., CIL III 3279. 3280=10261. Honigmann 1930, 1768 knows about only three Ptolemaean data from Hadrian's era, but according to these, it must be corrected.

[31] Certainly existed a route Aquincum–Partiskon; its northern section was identified in the area of Üllő (Soproni 1958, 42; Gabler 1975, 89). Its further course is still dubious, although several attempts were made to precise it: Fitz 1965, 82 (Ladánybene-Kecskemét-Kiskunfélegyháza), near to Partiskon see Lakatos 1965, 101.

[32] Simonyi 1948, 138.

If we hold to the same longitudinal distortion as in Pannonia, without latitudinal distortion, the 'cities' are all in an acceptable position, quite visibly along the Tisza, the northern settlements are in the region of the rivers Zagyva and Tarna, and Bormanon is placed far into the east, near the modern Füzesabony.[33] One possible objection is that now we cannot retain the same distances as we see in the Ptolemaean map,[34] in the relation Bormanon–Partiskon the difference is about 60 km, and it is disputable whether it was not too obvious even if they could only approximately estimate. But if we lengthen the road into the same direction, the cities will be less likely to fit into the Tisza–Zagyva region.

There is a possible intermediate variant (C on the map), where we put the localities along the most probable Partiskon–Aquincum route with the same distance measures. Thus Pession would be located cca. into the area of the modern Csongrád, Kandanon to that of Cegléd, and Parka to Üllő (!). The aberration of longitudes is moderate, not too far from thet of B. Now the reason for such an aberration is unknown, since it cannot be connected with the Pannonian deviation. Still the position of the 'cities' is the least problematic so: if it can be applied to the further ones too, Bormanon must be placed near the modern Szécsény, Uskenon to the northern side of the Ipoly.

What the importance of these eight *'poleis'* was, we cannot guess from Ptolemy's Book III. These names are *hapax legomena*, all but one which occurs later in Book VIII too, which is a less frequently used and at the same moment less easily usable source, because it was preserved in fewer *codices*, and the text was less examined critically.[35] This book seems to give kind of an epitome of Books II–VII, but following a quite different system: it gives the positions of the most important localities anew, but the latitudes are given by the length of the longest daylights,[36] the longitudes by the difference of the local time from the Alexandria time. Naturally the co-ordinates can be perfectly calculated from these data. The actual relationship to the whole of the work has been much

[33] In the early Sarmatian era, imported Roman ceramics mark this very route along the Tisza and the region of the Zagyva, see *Jazigok* 129, fig. 2, and the Sarmatians were in fact settled in the 1st c. around Füzesabony (middle Tarna area, near to the hypothetical position of Bormanon/B variant): Farkas Cs., Korai szarmata temető aranyleletes sírjai Füzesabony határából [Graves with gold finds from the early Sarmatian cemetery near Füzesabony]. In: *Jazigok* 67-81.

[34] Where the distances were actually measured, they are mostly acceptable. In the critical section in Pannonia Inferior, in the series Cirpi – Aquincum – Salinum – Mursa they are tolerably correct, but Lugio is seriously mistaken, due to some unknown error. On the contrary, in the Iazygian territory, they must have been not measured, but estimated.

[35] Müller's edition does not contain this book; the textual apparatus of Nobbe's old edition is almost useless. On the textual criticism of the editions, see A. Diller: Preface. In: C. F. A. Nobbe (ed.): *Claudii Ptolemaei Geographia*, repr. Hildesheim 1966, I–XV.

[36] Giving the time data in 'equinoctial hours', i.e. hours of 1/24 day, as we do it today – a very rare method in the antiquity.

disputed: some say it was really an epitome, some that it was an earlier varia-
tion, or even the part which clearly retains the construction of Marinos of Tyre,
thus being a medium to the knowledge of the world geography of Marinos.[37]
Analysing the Pannonian data of this book, I found a decisive argument:[38] it
names six important cities from Pannonia, five of which achieved their impor-
tance in the first part of the 1st c. (Emona, Poetovio, Scarbantia, Sirmium and
Servitium[39]), but before Claudius' era, because it does not mention Savaria.
Consequently, Ptolemy uses here older data than in the 'main' books, save for
he updates the province arrangement. The exception is Mursa, which comes
from his latest chronological layer. For some reason, he found this city of high
priority when composing and bringing the book up-to-date. Thus, this book is
not a simple epitome. That is not a doubtless proof that it was closely depend-
ing on Marinos, but its basic layer is datable evidently to the 1st part of the 1st
c., and it was accurately adapted to the Ptolemaean system some time after
133.[40] In addition, the aims of this book are also slightly different from the oth-
ers, since it is undoubtedly shown by the arrangement into *tables*, that it was
intended to serve as a companion to a *map*.[41]

The Iazyges are discussed in Book VIII the following way:

VIII 11. Ninth table of Europe
The ninth table of Europe embraces the Transmigrated Iazygians, Dacia, the two Moesias,
Thrace and the Chersonese. ... The longest daylight of the Iazygians' (city) Bormanon is 16^h, its
distance from Alexandria is 1^{h}5' to the west.

The 16 hours of longest daylight correspond to the latitude 49°3' (in Book III
we read 48°15'), the local time can be calculated only if we know where the
measurer started from, formally compared to the Ptolemaean longitude of Ale-
xandria it means 44°15' Ptolemaean longitude instead of the position 43°40' in
Book III.

Generally positions in this region are uninterpretable because of innumer-
able distortions and possible writing mistakes as an exception, but the longi-
tudes of Sirmium and Mursa deviate from those in Book II with +30/40', very like

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[37] Comprehensively see Polaschek 1965, 687–690.

[38] *FPA* I 82–85.

[39] The road from Salona reached our province there.

[40] The 0 time put to Alexandria likewise suggests Ptolemy, but we do not really know where
Marinos of Tyre worked, and therefore this could theoretically belong to the former layer too.

[41] It is still debated whether the original edition of Ptolemy contained a map as well, or it was
a medieval addition, comprehensively see Toomer 1975, 198.

that of Bormanon. It is possible that these were really measured in a survey of Pannonia Inferior; there is a positive deviation of about 1° from the reality, which is almost natural.[42]

The actual positions may still be dubious, but one thing is sure: there was only one Iazygian settlement of such importance that it was put on a world map, most likely in the 1st half of the 1st c., namely Bormanon. The city network in Book VIII reflects real importance rather than an artificial mechanical disposition. From Italy nine cities were put into it, from the whole of Greater Germany only three (besides, all the three are unknown to us), from Greater Sarmatia only Greek cities on the Pontus coast. There are two or three in each Danubian province, and we could prove in the case in Pannonia, that played a central role in the above mentioned period. Thus it is evident, that Bormanon was not inserted by chance.

It is conspicuous that the Iazygian *'poleis'* are mostly in the northwestern part of the region, and the chief one, Bormanon is almost the northernmost one, probably close to the Germanian borders (and maybe to the Roman borders to). Presently we cannot explain that, because we know too little about the 'city' itself and about Iazygian history.[43]

There is another question which we cannot neglect: do we know this name correctly? The name of Bormanon is unknown except for Ptolemy's two loci: although not a *hapax legomenon* – we might say *dis legomenon*. And like generally the barbarous words which could not be understood by the copyists, the names of the Iazygian *'poleis'* were subject to a sore textual deterioration. There are variations for the names Uskenon, Abiēta, Kandanon and Pession in the *codices*, but perhaps the most crucial enigma of the textual criticism appears in the name of Bormanon, which shows the following forms in the *codices* of Book III: Βόρμανον (EZ), Βορμανόν (ΣΦΨ), Γόρμενον (LRWꝛα), Φόρμανον (S), in some of the deterior codices Ὄρμανον, in the Latin version *Cormanum* too.[44] Evidently there are two major groups of manuscripts, but the codices Z and Σ are generally more self-standing with many *lectiones difficiliores*, and they agree with the Bormanon group. (The manuscripts of the Book VIII are mostly for this reading too, as far as we can see from the existing edi-

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[42] It can be easily explained with the refraction effect near the horizon, which makes the day seemingly longer. (After all, it must have been a very hard task to measure the day's length in a mountaneous area, which was inevitably the case everywhere around Bormanon.)

[43] For a short summary of the Iazygian history see Istvánovits E.: Szarmaták a Kárpátmedencében [Sarmatians in the Carpathian Basin]. In: *Jazigok* 33-48. As far as I know, there was no attempt worth considering to identify Bormanon. Nevertheless this region was surely part of the Iazygian territory from the very beginning.

[44] Ed. C. Müller p. 441.

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tion, however they are in themselves insufficient for decision.) Thus Müller's final reading *Bormanon* seems to be supported. In his opinion, the name is of Celtic origin, and therefore it had to be originally a settlement of the Boii.[45] Such a definite choice among the Celtic tribes seems rather arbitrary with our present knowledge,[46] but it is quite possible that the 'city', which was related only very briefly after the Iazygian transmigration, developed from a Celtic settlement (as the names Meliodunum, Eburum, Carrodunum, Eburodunum are Celtic in the territory of the Quads). Whether there were Celtic ethnic elements remaining in the days of Marinos or Ptolemy, or the city was purely Iazygian by then, we cannot know.[47]

The Celtic origin is quite probable according to the possible etymology of the name. There are several Celtic place-names with the element *borm*- 'warm': Aquae Bormani, Aquae Bormonis, Bormiae Aquae,[48] all referring to warm medicinal waters (cf. the Celtic healing god aspect of Apollo/Diana with the name Bormanus/Bormana). If this etymology is sound, it is a natural explanation why the settlement (or at least the name) was continuous from the Celtic times: because the medicinal waters could not move, and thus gave a natural fix point for the 'city'. Now then, it can help us in the localization too. While variant A seems impossible, variant C is the most likely, since quite a lot of natural medicinal waters are known in and around the Mátra mountains, in the area of the Tarna–Zagyva rivers (for example very near the spot, where the theoretical co-ordinates of Bormanon/C variant meet, in the village Egerszalók). Variant B or some place around/between them are less likely, but not impossible: there are some lesser natural medicinal waters in the modern county Nógrád too, and we do not know with certainty whether there were more or fewer in the antiquity.[49]

Philology could advance only this far in the exploration of the chief Iazygian localities. Further movements must be assigned to another discipline – surely, not to the linguistics, as Dezső Simonyi's misbegotten attempts to identify the Ptolemaean localities in the Highlands has shown.[50] The next move can be made by the archaeology, if we can find a Sarmatian settlement in the supposed area which seems to prevail over the others.

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[45] Ed. C. Müller p. 442.

[46] The possible Celtic tribes see Szabó 1988, 35sqq.

[47] The Cotini were the only Celtic (or Dacian, it is questionable, cf. Szabó 1988, 37, Visy 1993) tribe which doubtless remained in the Highlands of the Carpathian Basin under Iazygian rule, as witnessed by Tacitus (Tac., *Germ.* 43).

[48] Holder 1886-1907, I 491-492, III 912-913.

[49] Let us mention Nógrádszakál (near the theoretical Bormanon/B), Sóshartyán (we can retrace its known history to the Middle Ages). See Prakfalvi 1993, Prakfalvi 1996.

[50] Simonyi 1948. Moreover, it would be a methodological blunder to compare the Iazygian names with later names of any kind, because it would postulate such a continuity of population

In sum, we may assume with tolerable certainty, that in the first Iazygian period after the transmigration their most prominent settlement, 'city' was Bormanon, somewhere in the triangle which is confined roughly by the variations A, B, C (in the area Vác-Szécsény-Füzesabony), but the variation B is more likely than the others. We cannot unambiguously decide whether its prominence was retained until the middle of the second century, when Ptolemy finished his work,[51] but he used recent data in that phase too, and therefore it is more likely that there was no great difference from the first century then. This is but a little contribution to the vast complex of the questions of Ptolemy's dates, but an important one for the Iazygian history.

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which is quite unknown in the northern Carpathian in the migration period, and which can be presumed only at certain points of the western borders of Pannonia.

[51] Not to mention the problems concerning the supposable first and second editions of the works in Ptolemy's life, cf. Polaschek 1965, 712–726.

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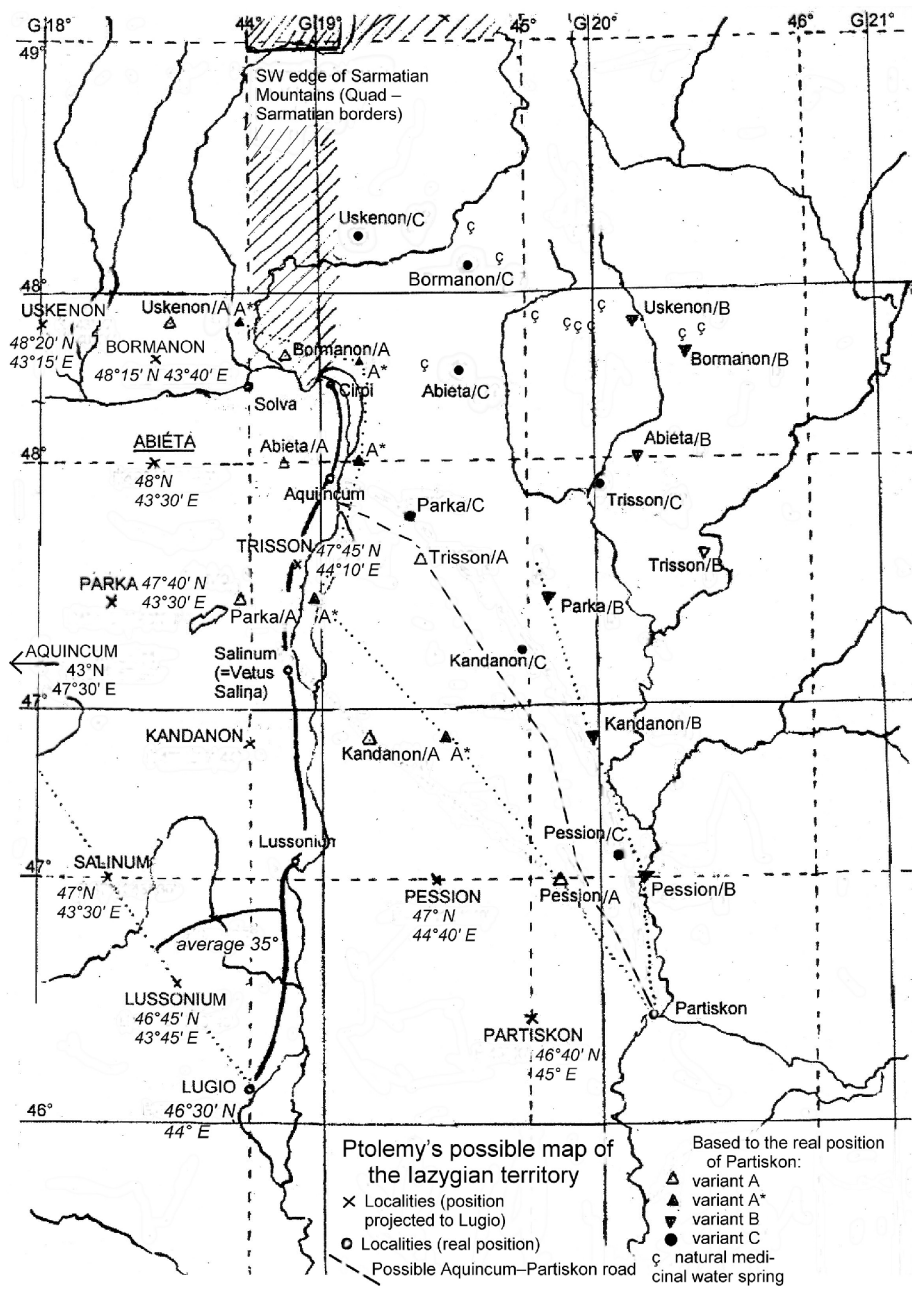
Fig. 1.

VITA ACADEMICA DEBRECENIENSIS

Gradus doctoris philosophiae consecutus:

MACROBIUS AND THE CARDINAL VIRTUES

BY ORSOLYA TÓTH

This dissertation, entitled *Macrobius and the Cardinal Virtues,* examines the Neo-platonic virtue ethics of Macrobius Ambrosius Theodosius, a Roman author living at the turn of the 4th and 5th Centuries AD, on the basis of his two major works, *Saturnalia* and *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis*. In the field of classical studies there has been a long-standing and dominant view that Macrobius was just an insignificant compiler, as a consequence of which both he and his works have received little attention. This is testified to P. De Paolis' Macrobius-bibliography as well, which presents a rather moderate quantity of special literature compared to other ancient authors being researched. However, the interest in Macrobius has increased somewhat of late (one obvious sign of this is the publication of *Saturnalia* in three volumes by the Loeb Classical Library series) and in the evaluation of his works partly new aspects have started to play a role, partly already existing concepts were taken into consideration. As a result of these, a newly shaping Macrobius-image is being created; this dissertation is designed to contribute to this with its results.

The cardinal virtues in question (i.e. *prudentia*, *temperantia*, *fortitudo* and *iustitia*) nominated by Plato played a central part in ancient moral philosophies. Neo-Platonic philosophers – among them firstly Plotinus and following him Porphyry – elaborated a specific version of the four virtues' doctrine, which linked the exercise of the virtues mentioned above tightly to the soul's ascension, to the ascent to the 'One'. While writing the commentary on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, Macrobius presents this doctrine of virtues (I 8), although it differs from his Greek predecessors in several details; therefore he constructs a specifically Roman virtue theory, which throws new light upon the role and significance of the individual practising his virtues in his own spiritual search.

The author's *virtus*-concept has previously been analysed by some researchers, but these examinations have only touched upon a rather narrow spectrum of his writings, the four virtues having been examined inclusively rather than separately. There is also another known view, according to which no examples can be found for the cardinal virtues in Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, which is why there is nothing to compare the virtue ethics of *Commentarii* to. These reasons form the basis for the

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aims of this dissertation by extending the range of research – to make a survey of all the occurrences of the four virtues in Macrobius' above mentioned two works (his third writing left to us is a grammatical tractate, which is not relevant from this aspect), then to draw conclusions on the grounds of the accumulated texts' analysis about the author's attitude to the virtues forming the base of Roman society's scale of values.

Research methods

Taking the premises of the scientific literature and the sparse evidence referring to Macrobius into account, this dissertation first deals with the issue of the writer's identity in the scope of a historical examination. By means of prosopography and source analysis it aims to provide an answer to the question as to which periods the lifework of this Late Antiquity's author could be set in, sc. this is not negligible from the aspect of his works' better understanding. Following this, while introducing the three works, it defines an attitude towards the order of origin, primarily by structure and content analysis of the prefaces of *Saturnalia* and *Commentarii*, furthermore it examines the features of Macrobius' writing style by means of text interpretation.

The second, major part of this dissertation is built on an ethical-terminological examination. The starting point is *Commentarii* I. 8., wherein the author summarises the main doctrines of neo-Platonic virtue ethics. Thereafter the premises and sources of Macrobius' concepts are introduced, as a result of which, it can be stated what differs in the author's virtue perception from the neo-Platonic samples as well as what kind of consequences these differences take with respect to the interpretation of *virtutes cardinales*.

At this point it becomes necessary to introduce the virtue examples of *Saturnalia* into the examination; henceforth, both works of Macrobius play equally important roles. While revealing the features of *prudentia*, *temperantia*, *fortitudo* and *iustitia*, the ground for comparison is provided by the topic's ancient philosophical and literary antecedents, in relation to which the definitions of each virtue are investigated, then the analysis continues by considering and interpreting the examples collected from *Saturnalia*. Regarding the afore mentioned *exempla,* one of the main questions is how they are adapted to the virtue descriptions of *Commentarii*: whether they support these definitions or just contradict them, and how they modulate the concept formed previously on Macrobius' virtue perception. This complex philological and historical analysis provides the basis for the conclusions of this dissertation.

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The results of the research

The examination of the problems concerning Macrobius' identity resulted in the following: the author is most probably identical to Theodosius who held the office of *praefectus praetorio Italiae, Illyrici et Africae* in the year 430AD, during the reign of Valentinian III. Although Latin was most assuredly his native language, he was not born in Italia but came from one of the provinces – maybe from the area of North Africa. He does not refer to his political carrier in his own works; we can conclude his that he held high state positions only from his titles, indicated at the beginning of his works. His son Eustathius was *praefectus urbi* in the period between 457 and 452, while his grandson had the name Macrobius Plotinus Eudoxius.

Macrobius talks a lot about ancient Roman religion and ancient deities in his works; this topic is of great importance to him as it forms one of the main elements of traditional Roman culture, although it would be a mistake to assume that these so-called pagan beliefs determined his own religious identity as well. He does not mention Christianity at all in his works; in spite of this it is almost certain that he embraced the new belief at least formally, otherwise he could not have held the office which can be attributed to him. The paradoxical nature of the great silence surrounding Christianity becoming the state religion by the time of the author is well demonstrated by the fact that Macrobius is one of the most widely-read and popularly quoted authors of the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, his silence strengthens the conviction that his religiousness was based primarily upon philosophy, namely neo-Platonism, it being fashionable at that time. To his mind, the soul's breaking free from the body, the contemplation and the ascent to the 'One' may be realized through the virtues and that these are available to each and every person. This latter thought can be paralleled with Christian concepts though, and this may be the point – the age of Macrobius – when the mutual effect of Antiquity's final great philosophical system and Christianity can be recognized before the neo-Platonic idea could eventually melt in the doctrines of the victorious new belief system.

The first of the three works left to us by Macrobius is a grammatical tractate in which he examines similarities and differences between Greek and Latin verbs. The originality of this treatise is provided by its special content and examination methods; because of its high standards it can be regarded more as a scientific than a didactic work. The other two works, *Saturnalia* and *Commentarii,* are equally dedicated to his son, Eustathius. By comparison of the two works' prefaces it may be assumed that *Saturnalia* was created earlier and that *Commentarii*, which was written later, is its integral continuation. Although they differ from each other as regards their genre, *Saturnalia* being a piece of *symposion* literature, while the other writing can be placed into the category of commentaries, still there is a common feature in them; via these works Macrobius wishes to transmit the values and rules of life important to himself to Eustathius and beyond that he also transfers a

huge amount of knowledge that includes almost all areas of Roman cultural history. On the grounds of the didactic intention obviously manifesting itself in *Saturnalia* and in *Commentarii,* as well as of the great number of examples with a didactic aim, the two works can be placed among the '*speculum* of citizens', which may be considered as being a sort of *Fürstenspiegel*. The fatherly guidance found within them supports the evolution of the youth's mind from adolescence to adulthood, which helps the accomplishment of his personality by acquiring Roman erudition and neo-Platonic philosophy in order to become *vir bonus*, one who is able to control himself, govern others and serve his community. The two works mentioned above are with didactic feature, born in the spirit of *artes liberales*; the direct aim of the author with the encyclopaedic knowledge accumulated in the text is his son's education, the extension of his erudition, while his indirect intention is to represent the traditional values of Roman culture as well as the essential ideas of neo-Platonic philosophy for his readers in any era.

Following the examination of the questions concerning the author's identity and works, his ethical perception was made the subject of further investigation. The *virtutes* are at the forefront of Macrobius' moral philosophy. In his hierarchical system the cardinal virtues play the most significant part; the additional virtues mentioned by him – which are defined as the associate virtues of *virtutes cardinales* in the dissertation – represent one aspect each. The neo-Platonic thinker elaborates his theory relating to the role and significance of *quattuor virtutes* basically on the grounds of Plotinus and Porphyry's doctrines, but the influence of other philosophical tendencies well known to Romans can also be demonstrated here. The four virtues - *prudentia, temperantia, fortitudo* and *iustitia* – are defined on the level of *virtutes politicae, virtutes purgatoriae, virtutes animi iam purgati* and of *virtutes exemplares*. The certain virtues have different functions and features on each level. Placing them on four consecutive levels correspond to the Greek neo-Platonists' perception, although significant differences are to be found in Macrobius' evaluation of the virtue levels.

There is no divergence of opinion between Macrobius and his Greek ideals regarding the idea that the aim of human life is to attain happiness, which is identical to divinization in neo-Platonic interpretation, although regarding the way how the mentioned purpose can be achieved they differ in opinion. The Roman author's ethical theory varies from his antecedents mostly in that it provides the civic virtues placed on the first level of *virtutes* with an emphatic role. Furthermore, on the levels of the so-called major virtues there are some smaller differences, which may be explained by divergences of opinion or rather by the fact that from time to time the author attempts to reinterpret his masters' train of thought on certain points where he considers the original concept to be illogical. Plotinus and Porphyry, who arranged the virtue doctrines of the former into a systematic order, both considered the civic or political virtues necessary for the individual as a social being, but their

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conviction was that happiness cannot be achieved by these; they only possess a preparatory role in the process of ascent to the major virtues' level. The soul's ascension can only be attained by means of contemplation.

In contrast, Macrobius, proceeding from a syllogistic argumentation (according to which if the virtues render someone happy and the civic virtues are virtues, then happiness can be achieved by the civic virtues as well) states that the way of divinization is open to people exercising civic virtues. The mentioned virtues are called *virtutes negotiosae*, while the ones of higher levels in connection with contemplation are the *virtutes otiosae*. As a matter of fact, these terms are the equivalents of the practical and theoretical virtues of the author and through both types eternal celestial happiness is attainable. At the same time he also admits that although there is no difference in value regarding the final goal between virtues linked to *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*, the ideal form is *genus mixtum*, i.e. if the two virtues can be found together in the individual. The mixed type is the perfect kind of virtues; this characterized Solon and Lykurgus, Numa and Scipio Aemilian.

Some scholars assume that the author takes this view because he misinterprets neo-Platonic doctrines, while others think that in fact there is no disagreement at all. Macrobius states the same as Plotinus, only in a more elegant rhetorical context. This dissertation points out that neither of these views is convincing enough. Based on the text of *Commentarii* it seems obvious that the Late Roman writer is aware of neo-Platonic ethical theories, and the existence of the mentioned differences can be proved unambiguously. Compared to the concept emphasizing the misunderstanding of the Plotinian system it is more probable that the commentator deliberately deprives the original doctrine of its mysticism which was previously provided by the Greek philosopher. Macrobius tends to rationalize his virtue ethics as much as possible in order to adapt it to Roman values and mentality in the highest degree following the traditional method of *interpretatio Romana*.

One of the arguments against the privilege of *virtutes politicae* is that examples illustrating civic virtues do not appear in another work of his, *Saturnalia*. This dissertation argues that as *Saturnalia* was probably written earlier than the *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* it is not necessary to support a maybe non existing theory. On the other hand, if we take into account Macrobius' idea that anybody can possess the virtues, it is not enough to look for and investigate the virtues of *gubernatores*, but in a more extended sense, they can be analysed actually in connection with anyone. Thus several examples can be collected from *Saturnalia* but here it should be stressed again that these do not serve the function of supporting particular Macrobian virtue ethics; they can only be considered as being their antecedents. Moreover, they are able to contribute to an adequate interpretation of the author's virtue concept.

First *prudentia* was examined by way of the four cardinal virtues. According to Macrobius *prudentia politica* is an intellectual virtue bearing practical wisdom in itself, which adjusts everything to the norm set by the intellect and decides what is right. On cathartic and theoretical level: its task is to realize contemplation while on the grade of paradigmatic virtues it is identical to divine Intellect. To this definition are added the examples of *Saturnalia*, which demonstrate that the interpretation of the notion can be approached from several aspects, it is the essential precondition of all creative acts, it is as necessary for the foundation of a town or a cult as for the creation of a literary work. It is bound up with the memory and eloquence as wisdom is needed for speaking as well as remaining in silence. It contains providence, foreboding the future, caution and the ability to create harmony. This virtue characterizes mainly elderly, experienced people, but we can find an example – the case of the juvenile Papirius Praetextatus – when it is attached to a young boy. Some possessors of *prudentia* are honoured as gods by posterity. Macrobius attributes this virtue to Ianus, Romulus, Homerus and Caesar among others; all of them are outstanding examples of the individual obtaining immortality by human acts.

According to Macrobius, people who have the virtue of *temperantia* do not do anything that should be regretted later; they exercise self-constraint, they direct their own desire to the appropriate way guided by the intellect. The Plotinian asceticism observed on the cathartic level appears less firmly by the Roman follower, the complete oblivion of human desires are the requirements of only the third level; at the highest grade it means the Intellect's turning towards itself. The encouragement to exercise temperance is an important element of education. In *Saturnalia* the author wants to draw his son's attention to the dangers hiding in intemperance by representing several versions of luxury. The writer introduces the main characters of his *symposion* as the eminent representatives of *temperantia*: in practicing this virtue Praetextatus, Symmachus and his friends exceed their predecessors, they strongly disapprove of the luxury and debauchery of Ancient Times. The author might exaggerate when talking about the temperance of the *convivium*'s participants, as the manner of the celebrations' descriptions tend in the direction of asceticism sometimes going beyond the limits of sober self-constraint. It can be explained by Macrobius' absolute respect towards the prominent members of the Symmachus-circle and his neo-Platonic thought, which both motivated him to introduce the leaders of pagan aristocracy in such a way that they are ahead of average people in the process of divinization, inter alia, due to their exceptional temperance.

The main criterion of civic or political courage in *Commentarii* is that the soul can overcome the fear of danger; at the same time fear of things in the category of *turpia* is rather desirable. The author does not establish a hierarchical scale of values regarding frightful situations, thus he does not consider martial courage more

important than courage testified in any other areas of life. This is also proven by the fact that in *Saturnalia* he is not looking primarily for the virtue of *fortitudo* in brave warriors and in humans known for their firm character but in simple slaves who also have this *virtus* in them as much as free people. The other *exemplum* of courage worth mentioning is connected not surprisingly to Hercules; in this case the hero does not appear in the usual way but in the context of Sun-theology. According to Macrobius, Hercules is identical to the strength of Sun giving *fortitudo* by which humans become similar to gods.

From the four cardinal virtues the author mentions justice as the last one that has the task on the level of *virtutes politicae* of giving everybody their due. This terse definition recalls certain passages from Cicero and legal terminology. Here Macrobius does not refer to the role of *iustitia* coordinating the other virtues – which is an important feature of the definition in the ancient justice-interpretations – with him it only appears on higher virtue levels. On the grade of major virtues justice ensures consistency and an eternal union between the soul and *Nus*. *Iustitia* is the only one among the four cardinal virtues that is not dealt with effectively in *Saturnalia*; all in all it appears only once in connection with the Goddess Iustitia. In contrast, he devotes a lot of space to it in *Commentarii*, its introductory art examines the role of justice in the state on the basis of Plato and Cicero. Although *iustitia* does not play a significant part in *Saturnalia*, its associate virtues often occur in the most varied contexts. With their help the layers of Macrobian justice-terminology can be revealed, which manifest themselves in the different systems of relations between people.

Plotinus and Porphyry express their opinions laconically respecting the nature and significance of civic virtues. Starting from Plato's theory about the three parts of the soul they only state that the thinking part's virtue is prudence, the impetuous part has courage and temperance belongs to the desirous one, above all of which there is justice coordinating their functions. The civic virtues are also respectful, but it refers rather to the major virtues, as divinization can be achieved through them. On the grounds of the things mentioned above, it is obvious that Macrobius attributes much more significance to *virtus politica*, but it cannot be explained merely by the interpretation of the commentated Ciceronian text, as in preference of the civic virtues the complex influence of Roman culture, traditional values and mentality becomes unambiguously visible.

In connection with the *exempla* of *Saturnalia* there were no preliminary expectations that they should correspond to the *virtus*-definitions in the commentaries, still all the passages certify that there is no contradiction between the two works' virtue-image. Furthermore, the examples analysed in the dissertation exceedingly illustrate *Commentarii* I 8. The commentary on *Somnium Scipionis* provides the mature summary of Macrobius' concept about the four virtues, and the allusions of

Saturnalia's *virtutes* – bearing the seeds of the neo-Platonic virtue ethics in them – somewhat suggest this.

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