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THE REFLECTION OF PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE TRAGEDIES IN ANCIENT SOURCES

1. PERSONAL TRAGEDIES IN ROMAN EPIGRAPHY

Abstract: The present paper is the first part of a series of articles dedicated to the concept of tragedy in the Roman Empire. While the first article will focus on personal tragedies, as seen through the epigraphic attestations of violence, the second article will focus on collective tragedies, bringing together, and matching both the epigraphic evidence and the literary sources, in an attempt to reconstruct, through the lenses of the Empire's population, the violent events of that time. By personal tragedies we understand any act of violence which lead to the harm, or death of an individual inflicted by other humans, and not by natural disasters. In this category we are not including those events which have a tragic input on one's life (i.e. the death of family members), only those which are the result of a violent act. The sample we have worked on proved to be moderate quantitatively, but it provided interesting information on Roman epigraphic habits, social life and even social psychology, offering a glimpse into the perils of the Roman world and people's responses when faced with them and with the losses they inflicted.

Keywords: *latrones, brigands, murder, commemoration*

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The perception and expression of tragedy are not only very personal matters, but deeply rooted cultural features as well. While classical Greek epigraphy deals quite frequently with drama, loss and defeat, Roman epigraphic habits implement different patterns. Thus, the epigraphic sources register death, as they honour the deceased, but offer few details on circumstances. Other local or personal tragedies, well documented archaeologically (fires, natural disasters, etc.) and/or literary (wars, epidemics), have not usually made it into epigraphy. In this context, the scarcity of sources should not discourage research, but, by the contrary, encourage it. Because recording tragedy and loss is not common for Roman epigraphy, the cases which break the pattern become relevant in the context of identifying and analysing individual and group tragedy markers.

SOURCES AND METHODS

The current research focuses on epigraphic monuments explicitating tragedy, violent occurrences, loss supervened under atypical circumstances. We chose to divide the texts and subsequently the research in two groups: those dealing with personal losses by violence³ and those who speak of larger

¹ <http://romanslbyl.com/pages/rada>

² <http://romanslbyl.com/pages/anna>

³ For overviews of all accidental, violent and/or untimely deaths attested in Latin epigraphy, see Gunella 1995 and Ehmig 2013.

scale historical occurrences, thus integrate themselves in the category of collective tragedies.⁴ We have tried to separate what was or seems to have been an accidental occurrence from the texts which might imply military confrontations or at least border skirmishes.

We will present comparisons between the two types of monuments, but in this paper we will deal in details only with the inscriptions talking about personal events. The reasons for dividing the investigation are both methodological and practical: while some common features cannot be ignored, the two types of monuments respond to different personal and social needs; as well, while the cohesion of the presented realities and resulted conclusions would decrease, the length and fragmented character of the papers would uselessly increase.

While every funerary monument can be considered the expression of a personal/familial tragedy, for coherence purposes, we will be dealing only with the ones recording a violent or atypical death. Besides presenting and contextualizing – as much as possible – the monuments in themselves, we will try to see the coordinates of a comparison between the Latin epigraphs and the Greek ones. As time span, we will deal with the Principate period; geographically, we will cover all Roman Europe, with the exception of Italy,⁵ because we are trying to validate the results in the context of provincial epigraphy and implicitly social life, as we believe that the cultural and educational background of the person erecting the monument is of crucial importance. Dealing with the perception of tragedy at a provincial level, we haven't taken into consideration the imperial/governors' honorific monuments which mention or allude to military confrontations.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The samples we have been working on are rather small numerically (a total of 32 inscriptions), nonetheless their geographical and qualitative distribution is worth noting.

The province distribution of the texts, as seen on Fig. 1, reveals a couple of interesting facts. First of all, we remark upon a somehow unexpected predominance of the western, Latin language provinces for the Principate period. Then, the over representation of the European central-eastern provinces, for the Latin part, is self evident – at this point, it is hard to tell if the fact denotes an epigraphic habit or is the result of hazard, but it definitely does not reflect military realities. Without generalizing, we can trace the existing patterns connected to the acts of violence from the area, overlapping the existing data to the geographical characteristics of the places where it appears, because as already proved by various authors, violent acts are especially recorded in specific mountainous areas, along the roads, in areas which are not well secured, and on the sea.

TERMINOLOGY

The terminology of brigandage and violence is generally simple in epigraphs. In the Latin inscriptions the

⁴ The separation hasn't necessarily been made in bibliography, as violent death was dealt with unitarily (Gunella 1995; Dana 2018, 287-290). Nonetheless, we consider the separation necessary and the results obtained following this methodology, eloquent.

⁵ Although, brigands are attested in Italy, e. g. CIL Suppl. It. 1110.

term used to describe the unlawful is that of *latro*, while the verbs used to formulate the unlawful acts are: *interficio*, *decipio*, *occiso*, etc. The Greek terminology which implies acts of robbery and piracy are not so complex, nor varied: in the Greek inscriptions the noun ληστής, and its various forms λησιστής, λαστής, ληστοῦ is the most frequently used to denominate a robber, bandit or pirate;⁶ to this noun we add several derivative terms, such as: λαός = 'an organized band with common purpose and leader';⁷ λησιζομαι, Δηίζειν = 'to loose a laos on the coast or the country-side'.⁸

Among the least uncommon words are: καταποντιστής = 'one who throws into the ocean (pirate)' – which is not epigraphically attested, but also that of κλέπτης = 'thief', and πειρατής = 'brigand'. The latter appears in the Hellenistic times denoting the term pirate,⁹ which is to be understood as a brigand of the sea, his characteristic *modus operandi* being connected to the use of ships, and who is responsible for a variety of acts, such as: robbery, kidnapping, murder.

LATRONES AND MISFORTUNES

While we have considered *hostes* to generally (but not necessarily unequivocally) denominate military enemies, the *latrones* are thieves and brigands. Unsurprisingly, most of the inscriptions referring to them come from the mountain areas of Dacia,¹⁰ Moesia Superior,¹¹ Dalmatia¹² or Pannonia Inferior¹³ (see map). Nonetheless, attestations prove that brigandage was a phenomenon present throughout the whole Empire and attested during the whole Principate period.¹⁴

The *latrones*¹⁵ have been often discussed in historiography, sometimes in an unfortunate, politicized key.¹⁶ Of course, nowadays it seems rather preposterous to deduce, from the scarce epigraphic sources we have, that the *latrones*¹⁷ of the Carpathians and Balkans were 'freedom fighters', struggling with Roman imperialism. Modern literature generally identifies them with brigands,¹⁸ most probably of mixed ethnical¹⁹ and even social background. Even if we can imagine that in some areas, especially the mountain ones, the original nucleus of the *latrones* bands had been un-pacified fractions of the tribes,²⁰ this character was definitely diluted in time, as they must have attracted all sorts and categories of marginals. We consider that *hostes*, *barbares* are terms to be associated with barbarians raiding

⁶ GRÜNEWALD 2004, 176, N. 71.

⁷ MYRES 1943, 34.

⁸ Myres 1943, 34.

⁹ GRÜNEWALD 2004, 176, N. 71.

¹⁰ AE 1960, 339.

¹¹ AE 1901, 19; AE 1901, 20; CIL III 8242.

¹² CIL III 8830; CIL III 2399.

¹³ RIU 1198.

¹⁴ BUONOPANE 2016, 42.

¹⁵ Attested in epigraphy, as well as in literary sources, *latronicium* is a rather present phenomenon for Roman society (SHAW 2004, 331-332).

¹⁶ TUDOR 1953; TUDOR 1968, 33, 70; MACREA 1969, 279-280; TUDOR 1978, 4.

¹⁷ For the legal connotation of the term and the terms associated with it, see GRÜNEWALD 2004, 15-17; for the terminology, also see LAFER 2004, 102-104.

¹⁸ CIOBANU 1999-2000; WOLFF 2003; ARDEVAN 2004.

¹⁹ The opinion is not unanimous, MÓCSY 1968 considers the *latrones* of Pannonia barbarians raiding the province. The same type of association was made by VANACKER 2012.

²⁰ VANACKER 2012, 27.

the province; when there is the case, explicit mentions are made, as it is in the case of a rather well known inscription from Aquileia,²¹ talking about *latrones intrusi*.²²

Expectedly, each monument tells, with more or less details, a story. Only two monuments mention explicit revenge, probably a social necessity, as well as a ritual step towards the pacification of the *Di Manes*. Both come from Dacia Inferior, one from Băile Herculane²³ and one from Zegaia.²⁴ The former is dedicated to the memory of Lucius Iulius Bassus, son of Lucius from the tribe Sergia, member of the decurional order of Drobeta and *quaestor* of the same *municipium*. At 40 years old, he was killed by *latrones*; no other details on the place of death are given (as he could have been attacked on the road anywhere) and we can also stress upon the exact age, which could be part of the age rounding phenomenon manifestations. The epitaph is dedicated by two of his sons, Iulius Iulianus and Iulius Bassus, and his brother, Iulius Valerianus. His death was *executus* (*mortem eius executus* – sic!), revenged. Given the family's decurional status and thus prominence in the local society of Drobeta, revenging the death of Iulius Bassus and stressing upon it was a social demand. The dating of the inscription is post 118 AD, as Drobeta was a *municipium*.

The latter is more deteriorated, but unmistakably different from a social history point of view. The name of the deceased is not readable. What we do know is that we are dealing with a girl, murdered (*interfecta*) by *latrones* and revenged (*vindicata*). We can assume that the avengers were her parents, Ulcudius Bedari and Sutta Epicadi, who also erect the monument. Noticeably, in this case we are dealing with a peregrine family, with an Illyrian background, as Sutta²⁵ and Bedarus are common names for the Illyrians. While Ulcudius seems to be an Illyrian name as well,²⁶ the woman's patronymic is Greek,²⁷ but it is hard to tell if it indicates real Greek roots or is just the object of an onomastic accidental occurrence. Probably later on, the epitaph served for marking the father's resting place as well. Getting back to the intrinsic implications of the text, we must notice that the social standing of the involved family was quite different, as here we are not dealing with locally important people, but most probably a common 'middle class'²⁸ family of Dacia. The dating of the monument is uncertain, but paleography seems to indicate a *terminus post* 150 AD and the peregrine status hints towards a pre-212 AD dating (the year when *Constitutio Antoniniana* was adopted).

While the sample is rather small and doesn't allow us to generalize conclusions, we must draw attention to the fact that Dacia Inferior and especially the area around Drobeta seem to have been, at one point, more exposed to brigands – or, in the sphere of epigraphic habits, that the inhabitants

were more prone to exposing these details of death on their relatives' epitaphs. The monument we are currently discussing²⁹ dates from the same period as that of Lucius Iulius Bassus and is dedicated to the memory of Publius Aelius Ariortus, *quatorvir* of Drobeta.³⁰ Thus, we know about two members of the municipal elite of this city murdered by *latrones*, which, in our opinion, hint to a local problem for sure. In this case, the deceased was 50 years old and the monument has deeper familial valences, as it is erected by his wife, his two sons and two grandsons; no reference to avenging the *decurio's* death is made. Nonetheless, the situation is unique in the Empire, to have two people from the same place, members of the elite, killed by brigands in such a short interval.

Advancing geographically, the *latrones* are present on two monuments from Moesia Superior. One comes from Timacum Minus (Ravna)³¹ and commemorates Valerius Marcus, a 19 years old young man killed by brigands (*a latronibus interfectus*). The epitaph was dedicated by his parents, Valerius Euthychus and Sextilia Frontina, but no further information is made available. The dating suggested by the editors is 171-230 AD.³² The other was discovered at Priština,³³ dated during the 2nd C AD, and it concerns, again, a peregrine family. Scerviaedus Sitaes (sic!) was killed at 30 years old and his father, Sita Dasi,³⁴ dedicated the monument for his son, himself (*vivus*) and his wife, Caia Dasi, who was already deceased. The text doesn't explicitly imply that Sita's wife was also the mother of his son, which is possible if we are talking about a second marriage or a different, less typical, family situation.

From Intercisa (modern Dunaújváros), in Pannonia Inferior, comes an unfortunately deteriorated inscription mentioning a killing by *latrones*.³⁵ The text, as it is kept, mentions somebody being killed by brigands and the fact that the monument was erected by a female, for herself (*viva posuit*) and for Aurelius Romanus, soldier in the *cohors III Batavorum milliaria*; the two characters were not close family, as the text denominates the man as a *cognatus* – family member. It is not clear if he is the victim of the first few lines, but we would be inclined to believe so.

In Klina a rather emotional inscription was discovered.³⁶ It commemorates Flavius Kapito, a freedman, who was killed by brigands at Dasminium, on his way to Viminacium. The dedicator was Flavia Va[...], his mother and the particularity of the inscription lies within its rather descriptive character – in terms of Latin epigraphy, at least: *a latronibus atrocissimam mortem*.

Dalmatia, a province with beautiful and informing epigraphy in general, brings forth one inscription mentioning *latrones*. From Salonae (Solin),³⁷ we have Maximianus qui et Aureus – the *agnomen* translates as the Golden one – a *secutor* who, at 22 years, had fought in five games and was

²¹ ILS 8507.

²² KOVÁCS 2018.

²³ CIL III 1579 = IDR III/1, 7; the exact discovery place is mentioned by Caryophilus 32, the first publisher of the monument, as 'Therma', whereas the assumption that it must come from Băile Herculane.

²⁴ CIL III 1585 = IDR II 134.

²⁵ VARGA 2014, 82.

²⁶ OPEL IV 179; MAYER 1957, 348. Also see LEJEUNE 1971, 130; MCCONE 1996, 44, for its possible Celtic roots.

²⁷ LGPN III.A, 146.

²⁸ The term is generically used to denominate the large mass of population (non-elites, not extremely poor).

²⁹ CIL III 1559 = IDR III/1, 118.

³⁰ PETRACCIA 2007.

³¹ CIL III 14587 = IMS III/2, 93.

³² <http://edh-www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de/edh/inschrift/HD032334>.

³³ CIL III 8242 = ILJug 1434.

³⁴ Dasius is Illyrian (MAYER 1957, 112).

³⁵ ILS 1349.

³⁶ AE 1934, 209.

³⁷ CIL III 8830 = AE 2011, 928.

eventually killed by *latrones*. Solin is one of the cities where gladiators were very visible epigraphically, apparently being well integrated as a group into local society. Maximianus's epitaph is rather emotional in language: the dedicators are his brother (who doesn't mention his name, but calls the deceased *carissimus*), and Gemina, his wife (already a rather rare situation, as very few gladiatorial epitaphs were erected by wives, especially when we are dealing with such young men), who calls him *desideratissimus*, a not very frequent epithet in itself. The monument or the context of its discovery offer no dating clues, besides the 2nd-3rd C AD. In this case, we believe that mentioning the death details is connected to the man's profession in more than one way. First of all, his death was not the result of defeat in the arena, and that was considered worth mentioning. Second, gladiators often specify the circumstances of death on their epitaphs, most probably because it felt more natural to them than to other categories, death being such a large part of their everyday life.

From Saloniae as well³⁸ comes a rather peculiar case, namely the epitaph of Caius Tadius Severus, who was *abductus a latronibus*. The monument does not explicitly say that his death was connected to this abduction, but its mere mention can make us deduce this. Severus died at 35 and is buried along Proculus, a boy of 6. The monument is dedicated by Primigenia, the wife and respectively mother of the deceased and Fabricia Luci *liberta*, whose relationship with the family is not specified.

The west of the Empire is not so rich in attestations, but some mentionings of robbers and brigands do exist. From Germania Superior, more exactly from Civitas Auderensium (modern day Weiterstadt), erected during the 2nd half of the 2nd C AD, we have the epitaph of Clodius Perigenes.³⁹ The man was killed by *latrones* on the spot of the monument, the text says – *hic interfecere latrones* – which makes us believe we could be dealing with a cenotaph. The dedicator is the deceased's brother, Publius Clodius Secundus.

In Aquitania, at Lugnum Convenarum,⁴⁰ we have the epitaph of Canpanus, citizen of Iulia Nova Carthago, from Hispania Citerior, and Silvanus. The two were *a latronibus hic interfecti* in 194 AD⁴¹ and commemorated by Silvanus and Martinus.

The area of Lugdunum brings forth two more inscriptions, proving that the province was not so safe. First, we have the partially deteriorated epitaph of a 33 years old man,⁴² remembered by his brother and sister, who erect the monument for him and themselves while still alive and *sub ascia dedicaverunt*. At Augustodunum (Autun),⁴³ Ianuarius, a *miles* of the *legio XXII Deiotariana* is buried by unknown dedicators (the inscription is not well preserved) and the cause of death listed is *a latronibus interfectus*. We believe that the military condition and the cause of his death have nothing to do one with the other, the man being intercepted and killed presumably outside military duty.

At Augusta Treverorum,⁴⁴ in Belgica, the funerary monument of Sabinus was discovered. The man was a messenger of the emperor and probably an imperial slave; expectably for his line of work, he was a fast runner (*velox pede cursor*). Nonetheless, Sabinus died after being tricked by brigands – *periti deceptus fraude latronum*. It is hard to tell if the man was tricked simply for being robbed, or if a more complex crime, connected to his official business, took place.

Hispania Citerior brings forth some very early inscriptions, dating from the beginning of the Principate. In 30 BC – 14 AD,⁴⁵ Quintus Lusius Senica, a very young man – *nondum formata iuventus* – was apparently killed by brigands in Carthago Nova or its surroundings; unfortunately, the inscription is badly deteriorated and the details escape us, but apparently the boy was on a long journey to reunite with his sister.⁴⁶ From the same province, from modern day Requena,⁴⁷ we have the epitaph of Iunius Gilitanus, son of Sosinaiesus,⁴⁸ *dolo latronum manu occisus*. The monument, dedicated by the deceased's son and son-in-law, is affectively written in first person: *hoc mihi fecerunt monumentum*. The epitaph is to be dated during the 1st C AD. At Aquae Flaviae (Oteiza),⁴⁹ sometimes during the 2nd-3rd C AD, Calaetus, son of Equesus, was killed by *latrones* and commemorated by Acnon, his mother.

Marcus Clodius Rufinus,⁵⁰ a 23 years old man, was killed by brigands – *ab(!) latronibus occisus* – in the area of Cortijo (Cádiz), in Baetica. The monument is dated 71-130 AD and does not offer any other additional details on the occurrence of death or the relationships of the deceased.

The next few presented cases do not explicitly mention *latrones* and we might be dealing with murders which took place in urban contexts. An individual story raising some questions comes from Timacum Minus (Knjaževac),⁵¹ where a member of the equestrian order commemorates his son, whose life *insidiis in sacra urbe finivit*. The general interpretation is that the boy died in Rome, either in an accident/violent occurrence, either struck down by unexpected disease. The monument is to be dated during the 2nd half of the 2nd C AD.

From modern day Split comes the epitaph⁵² of Iulia Restuta, a 10 years old girl, commemorated by her parents. The girl died in truly unfortunate circumstances, as she was killed by robbers for the jewellery she was wearing (*interfecta causa ornamentorum*). The motive was probably written on the epitaph due to its absurdness, parents' frustration and probably feelings of guilt. The same location and the same time period (late 2nd C – 3rd C AD) bring forth the epitaph of Euplus as well.⁵³ At 25, he was *occisus a viatoribus* – killed by runabouts,⁵⁴ about whom we know nothing, as they could have been brigands or city thieves.

⁴⁴ CIL XIII 3689.

⁴⁵ CIL II 3479.

⁴⁶ BUONOPANE 2016, 40.

⁴⁷ AE 1989, 480.

⁴⁸ The reading of the name is not unitary in all available bibliography; for a different reading, see BUONOPANE 2016.

⁴⁹ CIL II 2968.

⁵⁰ AE 1982, 512.

⁵¹ CIL III 14588 = ILJug1274.

⁵² CIL III 2399 = ILS 8514.

⁵³ CIL III 9054 = ILS 8508.

⁵⁴ VANACKER 2012, 30.

³⁸ CIL III 2544 = ILS 8506.

³⁹ CIL XIII 6429.

⁴⁰ CIL XIII 259.

⁴¹ The inscription provides imperial dating.

⁴² CIL XIII 2282.

⁴³ CIL XIII 2667.

An atypical expression, probably denoting an urban-context murder as well, comes from Lugdunum,⁵⁵ the area with most brigands/murderers attested from the far west of the Empire. A 61 years old veteran of the Prima Minerva legion, Iulius Aventinus, was killed by bad men (*a hominibus malis interemtus*). He is commemorated by Iulia Frigia, his wife and Iulia Lucia, his daughter and we cannot help noticing the rather emotional identification of the murderers with 'bad people'.⁵⁶

One of our westernmost inscriptions comes from Ostippo, in Baetica and dates from the 2nd half of the 2nd C AD. Compared to the monuments described above, it is poorer in details, as it only marks the death place of Lucius Caesius Maximinus – *hic interfectus est*. The 21 years old man was from Cedripo and possibly he was also buried there, the monument from Ostippo serving as a cenotaph.

A very interesting case, singular through some of its features in the provincial Latin west, comes from Frejus, in Gallia Narbonensis.⁵⁷ Here, we have a dedication for Ve[...] acaus, who was *occisus trans mare in Graecia*. The monument is unique in the area because it mentions not only death by the sea, but because it explicitates murder – we don't know if it occurred at the hand of pirates, or in a more private settling of accounts.

FRAGMENTS OF GREEK TRAGEDIES

From the Greek speaking eastern provinces, Moesia Inferior provides the most abundant information set. Besides barbarians, with whom we are not dealing in this particular research, the texts also provide evidence regarding the dangers of encountering robbers, as in a case from Nicopolis ad Istrum, where an individual overcame a life-threatening danger, as the reference to ληστήριον seem to point out,⁵⁸ following the attacks of some thieves. In other situations, the exact danger to which an individual was exposed is not clear, as is the case of Aurelius Statianus,⁵⁹ an actor, who restored a temple as gratitude for having safely returned from a dangerous sea journey (*periculo maris liberatus ex voto promisso restituit*). However, the text does not say if the danger was due to natural or human factors. Two siblings (Sextus Vibius Valens and Valerius Ingenuus) were killed by unknown individuals and for unknown reasons, and their death was avenged by their relatives.⁶⁰ Since their death was avenged they might have died at the hands of their personal enemies or of some brigands.

Even though Thrace is considered by the ancient authors as very exposed to brigandage,⁶¹ being considered by Xenophon to be a land of robbers,⁶² and Maximinus Thrax was known for having fought the *latrones* from his land,⁶³ the epigraphic attestations which point to these unfortunate episodes are very few. In one of the inscription one can find referral to ethnic and cultural groups as responsible for the

violence (*Briseorum latronum*). As such, Marcus Valerius Maximianus was a *praepositus vexillationibus et detrahendam Briseorum latronum manum in confinio Macedoniae et Thraciae*.⁶⁴ The existence of Thracian brigands is recorded on a votive monument dedicated to Asclepios in Batkun as well; there, Aurelius Dionysodoros makes a dedication to the god, his mission being that of enrolling brigands.⁶⁵ The brigands might have been the *Bessi* due to the emplacement of the sanctuary, or some barbarians who settled in the area.⁶⁶

One recently published epitaph from Heraclea Sintica⁶⁷ records the death of a certain Kasandros, the style of text being influenced by Homer and Attic tragedy.⁶⁸ The inscription provides numerous details regarding the deceased: he was violently murdered by 'terrible people' while he was travelling alone from Pautalia to Sarmea, being betrayed by a friend of his. The monument was dedicated by his brother, Pyrrias, who found him.⁶⁹ The text implies that the death of Kasandros was no accident, in this perspective he might have been, as Sharankov suggested, a trader, or the offenders could have known that he was carrying money or goods from Macedonia to Thrace.⁷⁰ As the example shows, the insecurity of roads was part of the daily lives of the inhabitants of the Empire, and sometimes this fact was used for mischievous purposes: for example the emperor Caracalla explained the killing of Pompeianus as the result of an act of brigands (*a latronibus interemptus*), but instead it was a planned crime.⁷¹

Connected with Achaea's status of *provincia inermis*, or rather with the epigraphic discoveries, the evidence for various personal tragedies resulted from dangerous situations are in a great majority attested before the Principate. The epigraphic evidence coming from the Roman province of Achaea is scanty, and it limits itself to five inscriptions: from Athens we have two inscriptions, one fragmentary which attests the violent death of a merchant, at the hands of bandits,⁷² and another one which is elaborate and which brings forward another case of violent death, yet again of a merchant who was killed probably by pirates, at a relatively young age since the text mentions that 'his mother, after sending him forth just when he was getting his beard, did not see him again', the young man being however married.⁷³ This case is the only one which makes reference to smaller-scale acts of piracy, which certainly was not eradicated. As a possible evidence for piracy we also have an inscription from Kallatis, which was interpreted as having recorded a naval initiative against the pirates, financially supported by a citizen in favor of the city.⁷⁴

Other references to attacks are provided by an inscription from Olympia which stipulates the fact that the delay of the participants in the isolympic festival of the Sebasta in Naples is to be accepted only if they fell ill, or their

⁵⁵ CIL XIII 1862.

⁵⁶ The expression is not unique, we find it in two inscriptions from Italy (CIL VI 18817; CIL XI 7586).

⁵⁷ CIL XII 305 = ILN I 134.

⁵⁸ IGB II 686.

⁵⁹ IGLNovae 9 = AE 1989, 636.

⁶⁰ ILBulg 90 = AE 1957, 297 = CONRAD 457.

⁶¹ WOLFF 2003, 69.

⁶² Xen. *Anab.* VII 7.9.

⁶³ SHA, Max. 2.1.

⁶⁴ AE 1956, 124.

⁶⁵ IGB III. 1 1126.

⁶⁶ WOLFF 2003, 73.

⁶⁷ SHARANKOV 2017, 15-38.

⁶⁸ SHARANKOV 2017, 15.

⁶⁹ SHARANKOV 2017, 16.

⁷⁰ SHARANKOV 2017, 22.

⁷¹ Suet. *Aug.* 27.4.

⁷² IG II² 13132a.

⁷³ MACLAREN 1938, 468-475, n. 29.

⁷⁴ ISM III 43.

travel was obstructed by robbers or shipwreck.⁷⁵

FIGHTING AGAINST BANDITRY

As seen, banditry was not at all an uncommon problem for the Roman provinces, thus officials were supposed to fight it.

Comprehensively, the *Digeste* encompass a chapter named *De officio praesidis*, in which it says that a good governor must fight desecrators (*sacrilegi*), bandits (*latrones*), kidnappers (*plagiarii*) and thieves (*fures*).⁷⁶ As well, western municipalities had post guards (*stationes*) and road patrols (*viatores*) to assure the security of nearby roads.⁷⁷ Obviously, the efficiency of these local enforcements must have been relative and they were probably useful when dealing with common thieves, not larger brigands groups.

The real measurements against brigandage were taken by the governor, when the problem became acute, through charging different local officials with particular roles connected to this and entrusting them the means to fight the *latrones*. The only two epigraphic attestations⁷⁸ of such offices come from the Gallo-Germanic provinces and record the exact same title: *praefectus arcendis latronicis*. One comes from Germania Superior, in Colonia Iulia Equestris,⁷⁹ and is the funerary monument of a locally important man, Caius Lucconius Tetricus, of the Cornelia tribe, who had been *praefectus arcendis latronicis*, *praefectus pro duumviro*, *duumvir* twice and *flamen Augusti*. The second one⁸⁰ comes from Hochstetten-Dhaun, as well in Germania Superior and is an epitaph erected by Marcus Pannonius Solutus for himself and his son and daughter. Solutus was *praefectus latronicis arcendis*, *praefectus Bingi(...)*, *praefectus stationibus* and *praefectus* in charge with an unreadable task/office. As one can see, he was also responsible for the *stationes*, thus his *imperium* was rather complete in the area of city and adjacent roads defense. What one immediately notices is the multitude of offices held by both men and the fact they were locally powerful officials, thus the task of fighting the *latrones* was not disregarded or considered a trifle.

To these we add the *stationarii* who were ensuring the security and who were fighting against the brigands.⁸¹ They are attested in Moesia Inferior (Momino, in the territory of Marcianopolis)⁸² as well as in Thrace (Philippopolis)⁸³ and Macedonia (Beroia).⁸⁴ *Stationes* were military posts which were also in charge of searching for brigands, and were distributed along the roads, at crossroads, or strategic points.⁸⁵ Under Marcus Aurelius some military men are attested as having specific duties in fighting brigands, as such we have the positions of: *evocatus agens ad latrunculum*,⁸⁶

and *praefectus latrociniis arcendis*.⁸⁷

In order to counter-act the acts of violence, specific officials were charged with the repression of brigands also in the Greek provinces. Among those in charge with similar responsibilities we have attestations of *ειρήναρχος/ειρηναρχης, παραφύλακος, όροφύλακας* the latter ones being stationed in the mountainous areas.⁸⁸ The *ειρήναρχος/ειρηναρχης* was a city official who was responsible for 'public order at the civic level and policing the countryside',⁸⁹ who appear to have been selected by the Roman governors.⁹⁰ For the Greek provinces we have attestations coming from Attica,⁹¹ Thessaly,⁹² central Greece,⁹³ the Aegean Islands,⁹⁴ Macedonia⁹⁵ and Thrace.⁹⁶

Piracy, which is to be understood as a raiding involving ships, was a major issue in antiquity and has been attested from the Classical period, being mostly present in the Hellenistic time, but having continued also in the Republican and Imperial times, when some legislative and military initiatives tried to eradicate it.

Beginning with the Republic, and continuing during the Principate, piracy⁹⁷ has been politicized, in order to show Rome as 'suppressor of piracy and guarantor of maritime security'⁹⁸ of the Mediterranean world; however, the actual goal was to provide legitimacy for their aggressions, which were mostly focused on their political enemies, whom they defined as pirates for justifying their actions. This political discourse is to be found in the *Res Gestae* of Augustus ('I made the sea peaceful and freed it of pirates'),⁹⁹ but also in authors such as Strabo, Appian of Alexandria, Cassius Dio, Seneca, the Elder Strabo, Plutarch¹⁰⁰ who also presented the maritime enemies of Rome as pirates.¹⁰¹ All these sources reflect the politicized aspect of piracy, which leaves the „smaller-scale” factual piracy acts in the shade. Despite the presence of this *topos*, the epigraphic sources coming from the Principate do not record survivors of piracy acts, but only one epitaph which makes reference to this type of tragedy.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The topic we have addressed in this research is a very special one through its nature, through the small number of monuments available and through the unique character of each dedication. They are, of course, deeply emotional and this detail cannot be ignored; as a proof, comes the fact that many mention the deceased's age and are erected by parents, even though only a few of them express the emotions behind the deeds. Another phenomenon visible in the west is the potential presence of cenotaphs, as certain monuments state that the murder occurred in that place (*hic*), suggesting

⁷⁵ IvO 56 = SEG 37 356.1.

⁷⁶ *Dig.* I 18.13.

⁷⁷ SHAW 2004, 338.

⁷⁸ A monument of a *praefectus* of this type was also discovered in Italy, in Umbria (CIL XI 6107).

⁷⁹ CIL XIII 5010 = AE 2002, 1052.

⁸⁰ CIL XIII 6211 = AE 1994, 1288.

⁸¹ DANA 2018, 293.

⁸² IGBulg II 855.

⁸³ IGBulg III.1 1336.

⁸⁴ IBeroia 260 = SEG 35 724.

⁸⁵ DANA 2018, 293.

⁸⁶ CIL XI 6107 = AE 2004, 541.

⁸⁷ AE 1978, 567 = AE 1994, 1288 = AE 2003, 80.

⁸⁸ GRÜNEWALD 2004, 22.

⁸⁹ KANTOR 2015, 10.

⁹⁰ KANTOR 2015, 10.

⁹¹ IG II² 1368

⁹² IG IX² 1077.

⁹³ IG IX² 1077.

⁹⁴ IG XII³ 526; IG XII⁶ 312.

⁹⁵ EKM I. Beroia 108; IG IX² 1077.

⁹⁶ IGR I 698; IGBulg IV 1953 = IGBulg V 5679.

⁹⁷ BRAUND 1993, 195-212.

⁹⁸ DE SOUZA 2008, 71.

⁹⁹ Aug. RG 25.

¹⁰⁰ DE SOUZA 2008, 91.

¹⁰¹ DE SOUZA 2008, 91.

a commemoration, rather than a burial.

Another important detail is the physical predominance of the West and of Latin epigraphy over the Greek one, although classical Greek epigraphy would have led us towards believing in a richer sample from Europe's Greek side. It is hard to say if this reflects a higher level of safety, or if it's just the result of hazard.

All in one, the epigraphs describing personal tragedies offer us a different type of insight into Roman society, everyday life and sensibility. They come as a direct hint onto the perils of everyday life in Antiquity, as well as on how people dealt with personal tragedy and unexpected loss.

CAPTION OF FIGURES

Fig. 1. The geographical and quantitative disposition of the monument; map from: <http://dare.ht.lu.se/>

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