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## Harbour to Desert, Emporium to Sanctuary: Response

The Mausoleum of the Flavii at Kasserine in inland Tunisia (fig. 1) is a monument which encapsulates many of the themes covered in this session, and is indeed emblematic of connectivity. The monument belongs to the first half of the second century AD, and was erected by Tiberius Flavius Secundus to his father, and as a mausoleum for himself and his family<sup>1</sup>. In form it is related to Libyphoenician tower tombs, but the epigraphic culture on it is thoroughly Roman; it is inscribed with an extraordinary pair of poems, totalling 110 lines, the first in hexameters and the second in elegiac couplets, celebrating the monument itself and its power eternally to commemorate its occupants. The second poem mentions at the end a lifelike weathercock at the top, which - if nature had given a voice to its limbs - would have compelled all the gods to get up in the morning. The weathercock is likely to be an element of local tradition, as two paintings from a *hanout* (rock-cut tomb) at Jbel Zabouj in northern Tunisia, datable perhaps to the third or second century BC, show a pointed tower tomb with a cockerel on the top<sup>2</sup>. But despite the possible elements of Libyphoenician continuity, the Flavii are Roman settlers, veteran colonists; T. Flavius Secundus the elder lived, allegedly, to 110 (the



Fig. 1 – The Mausoleum of the Flavii at Kasserine.  
(Photo: A. Wilson).

<sup>1</sup> Groupe de Recherches sur l'Afrique antique 1993; *CIL* 8.211–216.

<sup>2</sup> LONGERSTAY 1993, 21–4, 45–6.

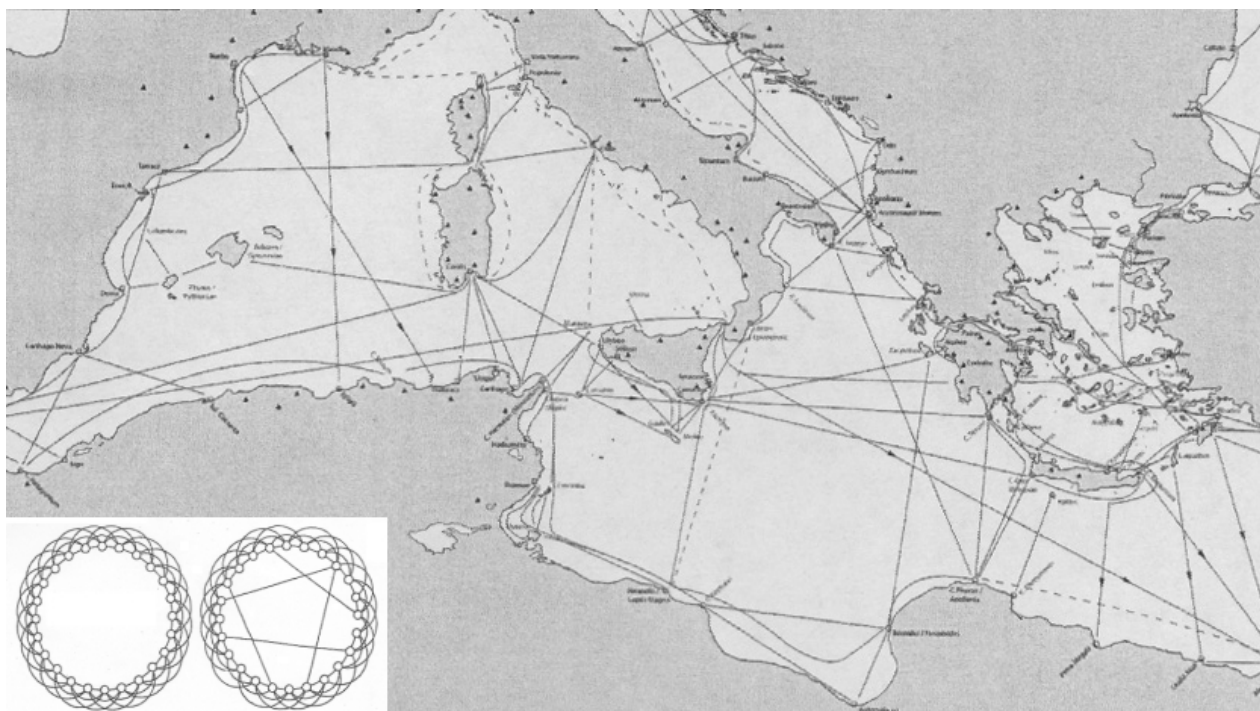


Fig. 2 – Mediterranean shipping routes in the Roman period (ARNAUD 2007, fig. 2, reproduced with permission) and (inset) diagrams of network connectivity.

same number of lines in the poems) and had served in the army for 33 years<sup>3</sup>. Do we have here an instance of the mobility promoted by the army serving to encourage the circulation of Punic traditions into zones further inland, along the lines Matt McCarty suggested for Saturn cults?<sup>4</sup> The poem tells us that he was the first to plant vines in the region and instituted irrigated orchards - an illustration of the economic development that Karen Heslin was discussing<sup>5</sup>. And there is an extraordinary list, to which I shall return, of regions and the goods for which they were famous, which serves as a reminder of perceptions of connectivity and the consumer geography of the Roman elite mindset - which becomes all the more intelligible in the light of the other papers we have heard about trade in this panel, by Candace Rice, Victoria Leitch, Sanda Heinz and Katia Schörle<sup>6</sup>.

But before we look at this list, I want to step away from the mausoleum for a moment and consider Irad Malkin's diagram of network connectivity (fig. 2). In the plenary sessions, Malkin showed us how a circumferential network might be transformed by a few random direct connections which vastly improve the speed and efficiency of connectivity<sup>7</sup>. Major nodes emerge as these direct connections attract frequent and continual traffic and become cemented and permanent routes. He invited us to consider the application of this idea to the Archaic Mediterranean, and trace the development of cross-cultural connections. If this idea is applicable to the Archaic Greek world, it is even more so to the Roman. The long-distance connections across the sea had become established and were of major importance, with frequent traffic. The distribution of cheap items like North African cookwares illustrates this nicely.<sup>8</sup>

We can map the schematic connections of Irad Malkin's diagram onto current debates about ancient trading mechanisms. The neighbour-to-neighbour connections around the circumference of Malkin's diagram

<sup>3</sup> *CIL* 8.211.

<sup>4</sup> MCCARTY in this session.

<sup>5</sup> HESLIN in this session.

<sup>6</sup> RICE in this session; LEITCH in this session; HEINZ in this session; SCHÖRLE in this session.

<sup>7</sup> MALKIN in this conference.

<sup>8</sup> LEITCH in this session.

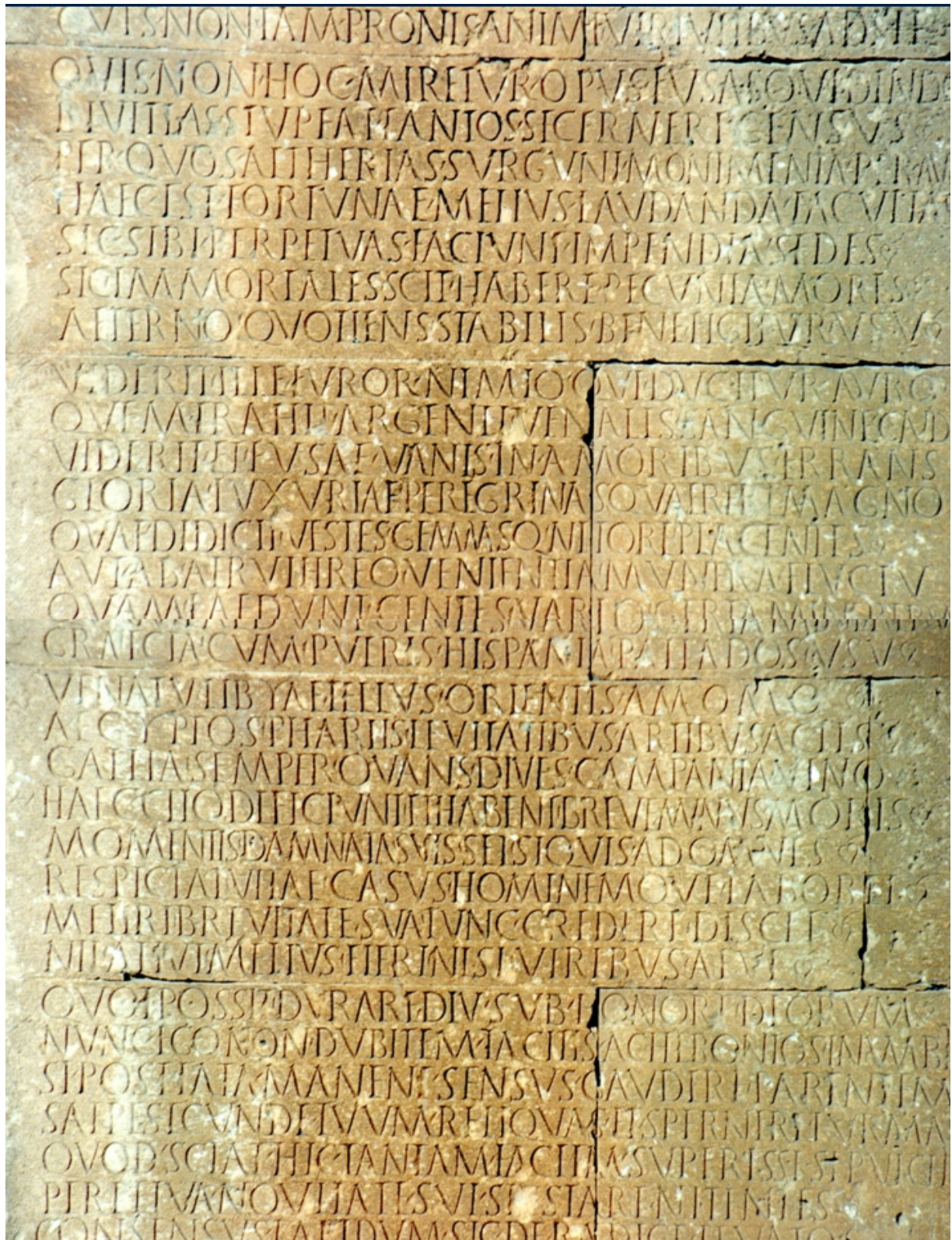


Fig. 3 – Kasserine, Mausoleum of the Flavii inscription (CIL 8.212) lines 13-42 (photo: A. Wilson).

would represent the coastal tramping of Horden and Purcell's Mediterranean *caboteur*<sup>9</sup>, while the direct point-to-point connections that speed up the system are the major Mediterranean maritime routes in Pascual Arnaud's study of ancient routes and navigation<sup>10</sup>. The port communities of Candace Rice's paper in this session are the result of the emergence of pairs of major nodes with permanent connections to each other<sup>11</sup>; the mechanisms of trade in the Roman world were weighted much more towards the direct preferential links between emporium ports than towards random coastal tramping or cabotage. If it is true that the agents of connectivity may become less varied in their function, as Irad Malkin suggests, the mercantile agents become more specialised in the routes they serve; in the Roman world overall variety in the goods exchanged was increased by the sheer scale and reach of the network.

The scale and reach of that network is illustrated in the poem inscribed on the main body of the Mausoleum of the Flavii (fig. 3). The mausoleum, as a durable monument which is effective as a self-conscious and expensive memorial for eternity, is contrasted with the transient goods which could also be bought for money – goods coming from a variety of far-flung regions:

*quis non iam pronis animi virtutibus adsit  
quis non hoc miretur opus fusasq(ue) videndo  
divitias stupeat tantos secerneris census  
per quos aetherias surgunt monimenta per aura[s]  
haec est fortunae melius laudanda facultas  
sic sibi perpetuas faciunt impendia sedes  
sic immortales scit habere pecunia mores  
aeterno quotiens stabilis beneficitur usu  
viderit ille furor nimio qui ducitur auro  
quem trahit argenti venalis sanguine candor  
viderit et fusae vanis in amoribus errans  
gloria luxuriae peregrinas quaerere magno  
quae didicit vestes gemmasq(ue) nitore placentes  
aut ab Aeruthreo venientia munera fluctu  
quam laedunt gentes vario certamine rerum  
Graecia cum pueris, Hispania pallados usu  
venatu Libyae tellus orientis amomo,  
Aegyptos phariis levitatibus, artibus actis  
Gallia semper ovans, dives Campania vino.  
haec cito deficiunt et habent breve mvnvs moris*

Who would not stand here with the strength of his mind laid low?  
Who would not be astonished at this construction and in seeing  
the riches spent on it be amazed to reckon up such wealth,  
by means of which this monument rises through the aetherial breezes?  
This is an ability better to be praised than fortune.  
Thus does wealth make for itself an eternal seat,  
Thus does money know how to have undying currency,  
Unchanging however often it confers benefits by eternal use.  
That fury shall see it which is driven by excess of gold  
Which the brilliance of silver for sale drags in blood;  
The wandering glory of luxury squandered on vain desires

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<sup>9</sup> HORDEN, PURCELL 2000, 143–52; 365–70.

<sup>10</sup> ARNAUD 2007, fig. 2.

<sup>11</sup> RICE in this session.

shall also see it, which taught (us) to seek foreign garments and gems pleasing by their great splendour,  
or gifts coming from the Red Sea,  
which the nations lash in diverse competition for goods:  
Greece with boys, Spain with the use of olive oil,  
Libya with hunting, the land of the east with spice,  
Egypt with the delights of the Pharaohs, Gaul  
always boasting of its crafts, Campania rich in wine.  
These swiftly fail and have the brief reward of fashion.

(CIL 8.212, lines 13-32. Translation: author)

A strongly connected world, then, in which even in inland Tunisia there is an awareness of the ability to obtain goods from the other end of the empire, including Egypt and the Red Sea, and indeed luxury goods evoke distant regions, and *vice versa*. So was this a world of happy connected people trading busily with each other? Sue Alcock reminded us to look for the ugly side of our connections<sup>12</sup>; or perhaps, as Monty Python would have it, to “come and see the violence inherent in the system”<sup>13</sup>. We do not have to look very hard at this monument to find it. The first item in the list of provincial specialties is boys from Greece. This is the slave trade, the slave markets of the east alive and well in the second century AD, supplying fancy boys to all over the Mediterranean, for sexual and other exploitation. In the vibrant and intense commercial traffic of the Roman world, we should not forget the human traffic that formed such a component of that trade. Katia Schörle brought to our attention the migration of prostitutes from the Nile Valley to the forts of the Eastern Desert and perhaps to the Red Sea ports, so assiduously taxed by the state, but generally this kind of human exploitation is difficult to trace archaeologically<sup>14</sup>.

Difficult but not always impossible: the slave collar from Bulla Regia, inscribed *advltera meretrix tene me qvia fvgivi de Bulla Regia* makes the point<sup>15</sup>. And looking south, the Garamantes were the instrumental middlemen in the Saharan slave trade<sup>16</sup>. The ARS tablewares and lamps, the Mediterranean glass and the amphorae from Tripolitania found in Garamantian tombs in the Fazzan in the Libyan Sahara represent some of the goods that flowed the other way; David Mattingly’s recent excavations at the Garamantian capital of Germa have found box tiles and hypocaust tiles indicating that there was a Roman-style bathhouse there, imported as ready-made elements on camel-back across the Sahara<sup>17</sup>. This may have been technical aid to a - temporarily - friendly and subservient client state, but one wonders how much of the Roman pottery in the region represents return cargoes for caravans of slaves? The economic development of the North African landscape, with veteran settlement in the interior bringing in its wake centuriation, road building and the plantation of vines, disrupted the traditional transhumance systems and helped provoke the revolt of Tacfarinas<sup>18</sup>. The extraordinary mercantile connectivity of Roman North Africa with the Mediterranean created market opportunities and numerous winners in the economic game; but there could not be winners without losers.

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<sup>12</sup> ALCOCK in this conference.

<sup>13</sup> *Monty Python and The Holy Grail* (1975), scene 3.

<sup>14</sup> SCHÖRLE in this session.

<sup>15</sup> ILS 9455; Leone 1996. On slave collars generally, see Thurmond 1994: the extant corpus of inscribed slave collars belongs predominantly or even exclusively to the early Christian period.

<sup>16</sup> For a review of the ancient sources on the Garamantes, see MATTINGLY 2003, 76–90.

<sup>17</sup> MATTINGLY ET AL. 2001, 140.

<sup>18</sup> LASSÈRE 1982.

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