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THE LAPIS POLLAE: *DATE AND CONTEXTS*

by Mario Adamo

The article discusses the date, content and historical context of the lapis Pollae, *a Latin inscription set alongside the road from Capua to Regium, recording the distance to various places and listing the achievements of an unknown Roman magistrate. Comparison with a milestone associated with the same road prompts a dating earlier than 131* BC, *and internal evidence suggests a date prior to the Servile Wars, which broke out around 138* BC. *It is further argued that by listing his achievements the magistrate was attempting to secure the political support of the colonial elites of Lucania. The article also uses the inscription as evidence for three historical themes: (1) the role of local communities and Italian entrepreneurs in the exploitation of public land in Sicily; (2) the role of local and Roman elites in southern Italian agricultural intensification; (3) Rome's use of road building to support colonization.*

L'articolo discute la datazione, il contenuto e il contesto storico del lapis Pollae, *un'iscrizione latina situata lungo la strada da Capua a* Regium, *che registra la distanza tra varie località ed elenca i successi di un ignoto magistrato romano. Il confronto con una pietra miliare associata con la stessa strada rende necessaria una datazione precedente al 131 a.C. inoltre, il contenuto dell'iscrizione interna suggerisce una data precedente al* bellum servile *che scoppiò attorno il 138 a.C. Nell'articolo si afferma inoltre che elencando i suoi successi il magistrato cercasse di assicurarsi il supporto politico delle* élites *coloniali lucane. Infine, l'iscrizione viene utilizzata per esplorare tre problematiche storiche: (1) il ruolo delle comunità locali e degli imprenditori italici nello sfruttamento dell'*ager publicus *in Sicilia; (2) il ruolo delle élites romane e locali nell'intensificazione dell'agricoltura nell'Italia meridionale; (3) la costruzione di strade da parte di Roma per consolidare le fondazioni coloniali.*

INTRODUCTION[1]

The Latin inscription commonly known as the *lapis Pollae* takes its name from Polla, a modern town in the Vallo di Diano, off the Roman road connecting Capua to Regium.[2] In this text, topographical indications — distances to other places along the road — are interwoven into the list of achievements of a

[1] This article has hugely benefited from the kind help of Nicholas Purcell and Giovanni Salmeri. I have also received valuable suggestions from the two anonymous reviewers, and from the editor, Mark Bradley. The copy-editor, Iveta Adams, has patiently helped me to improve the final version. Funding for this research has been provided by a Stavros Niarchos Foundation Graduate Scholarship. Abbreviations in the text are used according to the list in the *Brill's New Pauly*.

[2] When the inscription was first described in the fifteenth century, it was set in a wall of a tax farming post, the Taverna del Passo. In 1934, it was moved to a base opposite the Taverna (Bracco, 1954: 5; Susini, 1997: 393).

Roman magistrate.[3] The two themes are logically held together by the magistrate's claim to have been responsible for the construction of the road.

Despite the number of studies devoted to the *lapis* over the years, this remains a mysterious object. Its date is uncertain, as are the historical circumstances in which the actions of the magistrate took place. Even the genre of the inscription is unclear. This article attempts to give new answers to these problems. In section 1, I argue that the *lapis* is a *tabula triumphalis*. In section 2, I explain that all the suggestions for a dating so far stand on very shaky ground; nevertheless, I argue that the reassessment of the relationship between the *lapis* and a milestone pertaining to the same road allows to set a precise *terminus ante quem* for the *lapis*: 131 BC. In section 3, I provide a new historical setting for the actions of the magistrate, suggesting that they took place in Sicily in the 150s–140s BC; then I explain the connection between the text and the location, discussing why Sicilian events could be relevant to a southern Italian audience. In the last section, I reflect on how my new dating of the *lapis Pollae* modifies our understanding of the construction of the road.

1. THE DOCUMENT

CIL X 6950 = *CIL* I^2 638 = *ILS* 23 = *ILLRP* 454 = *Inscr. It.* III.1 272:

Viam fecei ab Regio ad Capuam et
in ea via ponteis omneis, miliarios
tabelariosque poseivi. Hince sunt:
Nouceriam, meilia LI; Capuam, XXCIIII;
Muranum, LXXIIII; Cosentiam, CXXIII;
Valentiam, CLXXX[[·]]; ad fretum, ad
statuam, CCXXXI [[·]]; Regium CCXXX<<VI>>I.
Suma af Capua Regium: meilia CCCXXI[[·]].
Et eidem praetor in
Sicilia fugiteivos Italicorum
conquaeisivei redideique
homines DCCCCXVII, eidemque
primus fecei, ut de agro poplico
aratoribus cederent paastores.
Forum aedisque poplicas heic fecei.

I built the road from Regium to Capua and erected all its bridges, milestones and direction-posts. Distances from this point: Nuceria, 51 miles; Capua, 84; Muranum, 74; Cosentia, 123; Valentia, 180; statue by the sea, 231; Regium, 237. The total mileage from Capua to Regium is 321 miles. And I, when I was praetor in Sicily, pursued 917 fugitive slaves of the Italians and returned them (to their masters), and I was the first to provide that shepherds gave up on public land to ploughmen. Here I built the forum and the public buildings.

[3] The name of the magistrate must have been inscribed (perhaps in bigger lettering) on another stone placed on top of the *lapis*. The two stones are likely to have been the base of a statue of the magistrate.

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As Susini (1997: 399–404) has shown, the text has a composite nature, whose structure is clearly visible: section 1 (ll. 1–3) describes the construction of the road; section 2 (ll. 4–8) records the mileage; section 3 (ll. 9–14) lists the other accomplishments of the magistrate; section 4 (l. 15) claims responsibility for the construction of the *forum aedesque publicas*. Section 1 has different features from the rest of the text, both linguistic (*ab* in section 1 vs *af* in section 2) and logical (the road is said to go from Regium to Capua in section 1, but from Capua to Regium in section 2). For this reason, Susini has suggested that sections 1 and 3, listing the achievements of the magistrate, come from an earlier document, to which sections 2 and 4, pertaining to the road and the forum, were added when the text of the *lapis* was composed.[4]

Susini hypothesized that the inscription might be one of the *tabellarii* that the magistrate claims to have set along the road. Yet, even though it is possibly true that *tabellarii* were boards indicating distances (Salway, 2001: 48–54), this category of inscriptions still remains poorly understood.[5] Besides, no known *tabellarius* has a celebrative section even remotely comparable to the *lapis Pollae*.[6] In fact, the *lapis Pollae* should rather be classified among the so-called *tabulae triumphales*: inscriptions published by successful magistrates, listing their achievements (Chiabà, 2013: 107 n. 1).[7] Self-celebration is a common theme in magisterial inscriptions: for example, Cornelius Gallus' trilingual stele from Philae (*CIL* III 14147.5 = *ILS* 8995 = *OGIS* 654 = *IGRRP* I 1293) and Pompey's inscription in the temple of Minerva at Rome (Diod. Sic. 40. 4; cf. Plin. *HN* 7.97–8). Interestingly, when, as part of his self-promotional strategy in southern Italy, Hannibal dedicated an altar at Lacinium, he also set up an

[4] Susini argued that only the earlier text was actually written by the magistrate. He further suggested that this document could be the *index rerum gestarum* of the magistrate. This is extremely unlikely, since the only known *index rerum a se gestarum* is that of Augustus, which was an unprecedented novelty (Cooley, 2009: 30), possibly paralleled only by his earlier account read out by the quaestor to the senate in 13 BC (Slater, 2008: 254). The original document whence sections 1 and 3 of the *lapis Pollae* derive may have been a published letter (letters could include accounts of magistrates' achievements: Candau, 2011: 121–7, 129–32), or a speech (see, for example, Cornell, 2009: 21–2 on Cato).

[5] The inscriptions that have been claimed to be *tabellarii* are inhomogeneous: some provide distances from their location to other places; others list one or more itineraries of the kind 'from X to Y, from Y to Z' (their location being at any one of these points) (Salway, 2001: 54–8); still others list the route systems of entire regions (Salway, 2007: 192–7). Besides, some inscriptions only record directions, but not distances (for example, *CIL* II 6239 = II^2.14 38; *CIL* XIII 4085 = XVII.2 676).

[6] Perhaps the closest parallel to the *lapis* are the long headings with the full imperial titulature borne by some of these texts.

[7] Contra Bernard, Damon and Grey (2014: 971), who point out that the use of the first person is unparalleled, and suggest that the *lapis Pollae* is a text *sui generis*. However, the use of the first person simply depends on the tralaticious nature of sections 1 and 3 (to which section 4 was adapted) of the *lapis*. By contrast, in the *elogia Scipionum*, with which the three authors compare the *lapis*, the use of the first person belongs to the well-established tradition of funerary epigrams.

ingens rerum a se gestarum titulus in Greek and Punic.[8] Like these texts, the *lapis Pollae* reflects the desire of the magistrate to celebrate his success and preserve his memory. In fact, although the indication of the mileage may also have fulfilled some practical purposes, it is first and foremost an organic part of the celebration; as so often in Roman literature, numbers are used to impress, and 'the wonder of detail' (Purcell, 1990a: 180) adds to the greatness of the achievement.[9]

2. THE DATE

After his autopsy of the *lapis*, Susini (1997: 403) argued for a broad dating to around the middle of the second century BC, perhaps the first half. Higher precision is not possible: the peripheral location and deliberate archaism may account for the survival of graphic peculiarities that had already disappeared at Rome (Susini, 1997: 401 n. 20). Due to this uncertainty, scholars have commonly tried to identify the magistrate in order to obtain an exact dating. The identification has, in turn, been usually based on identifying either the road or the forum.

The most popular theories revolve around two names: Annius and Popillius.[10] In this section, I explain that none of these identifications can be defended with strong arguments. As I will argue, however, the identification of the magistrate

[8] Livy 28.46.16; Pol. 3.33.18, 3.56.4 (where note ὡς αὐτὸς … διασαφεῖ). Polybius talks of a χαλκώμα at 3.33, and of a στήλη at 3.56. The LCL translators and Walbank take the object to be a bronze pillar, but here στήλη has the broader meaning of 'inscription'. Cf. Thuc. 5.47.11, using the word στήλη to describe the copies of the treaty between Athenians, Argives and Mantineans. The Athenian copy of the treaty survives (*IG* I^2 86, I^3 83), and, being on a stone slab, it proves that Thucydides has used στήλη in the meaning 'inscription'.

[9] The most famous examples of this use of numbers are the Augustan *Res Gestae* and the *status imperii* read out at Tiberius' accession to power (Tac. *Ann.* 1.11; cf. Suet. *Aug.* 101); Pittia (2007) suggests that the numbers provided by Cicero in the *De frumento* are likewise meant to impress rather than achieve precision. Some have suggested that the same combination of numbers and achievements could be present in the inscription of C. Sempronius Tuditanus' statue on the bank of the river Timavus (Bracco, 1960: 150 n. 6; Canali De Rossi, 2007: 232). As far as we can tell, however, this text did not list Tuditanus' achievements. The two surviving fragments (*ILLRP* 334; the stones are lost now, but a squeeze exists: see Chiabà, 2013) only include the name of the magistrate and the consulship. Perhaps the text also indicated the mileage to Aquileia, if Pliny's report (*HN* 3.19.129) of a statue of Sempronius on the river Titius concerns the same monument (note that the text recorded by Pliny measures the distance in *stadia*, which is puzzling and unparalleled). A list of Sempronius' achievements was present in a different inscription, a triumphal list in *saturnii* from Aquileia (*CIL* I^2 652 = *ILS* 8885 = *ILLRP* 335 = *Inscr. It.* XIII.3 90) (Chiabà, 2013: 107–8, 120–1).

[10] Mommsen identified the anonymous magistrate as P. Popillius Laenas, cos. 132 BC, Bracco (1954; 1960) as T. Annius Luscus, cos. 153 BC, and Wiseman (1964; 1969; 1970) as T. Annius Rufus, praetor 131 BC (then consul 128 BC). Nissen, on his part, suggested M. Popillius, censor 159 BC, because he believed that the earlier roads were built by censors (Bracco, 1954: 10 and n. 1).

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is an unnecessary exercise: a reassessment of the epigraphic evidence pertaining to the road Capua–Regium commands an earlier dating than 131 BC.

2.1 *FORUM POPILII VEL ANNII*

Mommsen connected the toponym Polla with the *Forum Popilii* located in the area by the *Tabula Peutingeriana*. According to Bracco, by contrast, the *Tabula Peutingeriana* confused the local forum with the more famous *Forum Popilii* in the Ager Falernus (Bracco, 1954: 18–24).[11] Bracco (1954: 10–14) believed that Polla was the *Forum Annii* located by Sallust (Sall. *Hist.* 3.98) at a distance of an overnight march from *Nares Lucanae* (modern Scorzo). In his opinion, given the local topography, only Polla could be the ancient *Forum Annii*. Bracco's argument is hardly decisive. The *Forum Annii* mentioned by Sallust may have been a different settlement in the proximity of Polla: in the Ager Falernus, for example, *Forum Claudii* and *Forum Popillii* were only two miles apart (Wiseman, 1964: 32 and n. 49). At the same time, however, the Peutinger Table is a very unsafe basis for claiming that Polla was *Forum Popillii*: its description of Lucania is hopeless, with roads leading nowhere, and generally wrong distances (*Suppl. It.* III: 65–6).

According to Spinazzola (1910: 87), Mommsen's identification is proved by onomastics, since — so he argued — *Polla* derives from *Forum Popilii* through shift of the accent (*Popíli* > *Pópili*) and syncope (*Pópili* > *Pópli*).[12] This explanation, however, is very weak, as it does not explain why the word *forum* was dropped, whereas it has been maintained in all the other similar cases: Santa Maria di Forcassi (*Forum Cassii*), San Giovanni Profiamma (*Forum Flaminii*), Fossombrone (*Forum Sempronii*), Forlimpopoli (*Forum Popilii*), Forlì (*Forum Livii*), Fornovo (*Forum Novum*), Fréjus (*Forum Iulii*). In fact, a much

[11] Alternatively, Bracco suggested that the name *Forum Annii* could have been changed into *Forum Popilii* at a later stage, but, as he admitted, this is very unlikely.

[12] None of the alternative explanations suggested so far has any likelihood. Bracco (1954: 35) suggested, with a pinch of Romanticism, that the name 'Polla' could derive from the memory of the priestess Insteia Polla, whose mausoleum was excavated by Spinazzola (1910). Verbrugghe (1973: 31) argued that local erudites might be right to claim that Polla takes its name from Apollonia, 'perhaps the ancient name of the city'. Verbrugghe is imprecise: local erudites believed that Polla derived from Apolla, not Apollonia. Apolla is the name of the town as found in some medieval documents (Ebner, 1979: II, 365): local erudites believed that Apolla took its name from a temple of Apollo (Spinazzola, 1910: 73). Unsurprisingly, the temple has never been found. Apolla actually comes from *a Polla*, for *la Polla*, with local variation of the article (Ebner, 1979: II, 365). My original hypothesis was that Polla could take its name from an estate that once belonged to a Pollius (nearby Acerronia proves that toponyms deriving from estates need not to end in *-ana* like Marcelliana or Caesariana). Had this been the case, however, the toponym would have hardly survived to the Middle Ages. Whereas ancient names of towns continued to be used (Eburum, Volcei, Atina, Tegianum; but note that Consilinum became La Civita, 'the town'), those of ancient estates disappeared. Only Marcellianum survived, since it was made a diocese under Pope Marcellus I (308–10) (Ebner, 1979: I, 17). Marcellianum is modern San Giovanni della Fonte; its territory, however, stretched to Montesano, as proved by the toponym Marcellino.

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more likely explanation is right at hand. In the Middle Ages, a number of local toponyms were derived from natural elements: for example, Padula, 'the marsh', or la Foresta, 'the forest', mentioned in a document from 1487 (Ebner, 1979: II, 366). This same document, significantly, testifies that Polla was actually called 'la Polla', i.e. 'the spring'.

Modern Polla is not on the site of the ancient settlement: this stood slightly in the interior, on the right bank of the Tanager, at modern Borgo San Pietro (Bracco, 1954: 30–6). I suggest that the name of the ancient forum was later replaced by Borgo San Pietro; the name Polla, on the other hand, pertains to a medieval village, taking its name from the presence of a spring.[13] The drop of the article (*la Polla* > *Polla*) is paralleled by Sala Consilina, originally called 'la Sala', 'the hall' (Ebner, 1979: II, 367), having been the hall of a Lombard warlord (Ebner, 1979: I, 25).

2.2 *VIA ANNIA VEL POPILLIA*

Two third-century AD inscriptions (*CIL* VI 31338a and 31370) record the repairs carried out on a number of roads by their *mancipes* and *iunctores iumentarii* (that is, the superintendents of *mansiones* and their assistants). Of the two texts, one concerns the *viae Appia, Traiana* and *Annia cum ramulis*; the other concerns the *viae Appia, Annia* and *Aurelia Nova* (and perhaps the *via Traiana* should be restored in the lacunous section).

Bracco (1954) pointed out that, of the roads mentioned in the first inscription (*CIL* VI 31338a), the *viae Appia* and *Traiana* were in southern Italy. He concluded that the third, the *via Annia*, must also be in the same area: with all likelihood, this was the road Capua–Regium. Ferrua (1955), instead, focused on the *via Aurelia Nova* of the second inscription (*CIL* VI 31370), which he considered to be the Etrurian Via Aurelia.[14] Ferrua concluded that the *via Annia* of the two inscriptions was also in Etruria, where indeed a road of this name is known to have existed.[15] Later, however, Wiseman (1964: 33) suggested that the *via Aurelia Nova* mentioned by *CIL* VI 31370 was not the Etrurian road but a different one, mentioned by another inscription (*CIL* III 1456). Wiseman located this further *via Aurelia Nova* in southern Italy, since this was the location of the other roads mentioned by *CIL* III 1456 (the *viae Traiana* and *Aeclanensis*). Wiseman concluded that *CIL* VI 31338a and *CIL* VI

[13] I owe this suggestion to Giovanni Salmeri.

[14] Three *viae Aureliae* existed in Etruria. The *via Aurelia Vetus*, built by C. Aurelius Cotta in 144 BC (Degrassi, 1962: 510 and n. 51), went, according to Wiseman (1970: 133–4), from Rome to Cosa, and was extended to Populonia by the *Aurelia Nova*. Coarelli (1988: 42–8), on the other hand, argued that the *Vetus* connected Rome with Pisa, and was extended to Luna by the *Nova*. The *via Aemilia Scauri*, according to Wiseman (1970: 140), was a further extension of the same road, perhaps to Vada Sabatia; according to Coarelli, by contrast, the *Scauri* was an alternative route to the interior, separating from the main road between Cosa and Telamon. It included the road to Populonia identified by Wiseman as the *via Aurelia Nova*.

[15] To be precise, this *via Annia* was in Faliscan territory (Uggeri, 2012: 135–7).

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31370 also concerned roads in southern Italy, and that therefore there was no reason to reject Bracco's idea that the road Capua–Regium was a *via Annia*. This argument, however, is not conclusive: one might well argue that the *via Annia* recorded by the two inscriptions, though in southern Italy, was yet another road (so, for example, Verbrugghe, 1973: 32). Ockham's razor, it is true, would require us not to duplicate roads unless necessary. Yet, history does not proceed by logical — or simple — steps.

2.3 THE SANT'ONOFRIO MILESTONE

A milestone found at Sant'Onofrio near Vibo Valentia in 1954 (*AE* 1955: 191 = *AE* 1956: 148 = *ILLRP* 454a = *CIL* I^2.4 2936) records the magistrate responsible for its installation as *T. Annius, pr*(*aetor*).[16] Since Valentia is one of the places mentioned in the inscription, the milestone certainly pertains to the road Capua–Regium.

In Bracco's opinion (1954: 36–7), the finding definitely proves that the road was a *via Annia*.[17] According to Degrassi (1955; 1956; 1962), however, the two inscriptions do not concern the same individual. Degrassi argued that the praetor T. Annius, recorded in the milestone, had only contributed to the road building, taking charge of its southernmost stretch. The rest of the project was carried out by a higher magistrate, the one celebrated by the *lapis Pollae*. Since a Popillius was known to have been consul at the same time when a T. Annius was praetor, Degrassi had no problem accepting Mommsen's identification of the magistrate.[18] Degrassi was persuaded that Annius and Popillius had explicitly cooperated in a large-scale infrastructural programme, which also

[16] The date of the milestone is not known. Its uncommon shape (a pillar inscribed on top) is shared by the Codigoro milestone (*AE* 2009: 393), dated to the second century BC, and by the milestones of the *via Aemilia* in Lucania, dated to 126 BC (*CIL* IX 6073 = *ILS* 5805 = *CIL* XII 620 = *ILLRP* 451 = *AE* 1997: 401). Note that the Codigoro milestone is slightly shorter (1.10 m vs 0.89 m) due to the absence of the square base. Degrassi (1962: 511–12) suggested that the inscribed face on top rather than on the side may have been influenced by the Gracchan *termini*. Yet, Degrassi also pointed out that an earlier milestone inscribed on top is known (*CIL* X 6838 = *CIL* XII 21 = *ILS* 5801 = *ILLRP* 448), which dates to the 250s BC (Coarelli, 1988: 37). Buonopane (2011) discusses its current whereabouts and provides pictures.

[17] No other instance of a praetor building a road is known, but there is no reason to believe that this was not possible (Bracco, 1954: 37). It has been objected that, whereas the *Annius* of the Sant'Onofrio milestone was a praetor, the formulation of the *lapis Pollae* suggests that the magistrate in it was holding a different office when he built the road: 'I built the road …, and …, when I was praetor …' However, as Wiseman (1969: 90–1) has suggested, the mismatch between the *lapis Pollae* and the Sant'Onofrio milestone may be due to the long time taken by the construction works: the Sant'Onofrio milestone may concern the initial stages, when Annius was still a *praetor*; the *lapis Pollae*, instead, recorded the completion of the road under Annius' following office (*propraetor cum imperio* for Wiseman [1964: 33 n. 57]; Bracco [1954: 37] had suggested the consulship). This explanation requires the road to have been built proceeding northwards, on which see below, p. 81.

[18] T. Annius Rufus was consul in 128 BC, and therefore he could not have been praetor later than 131; P. Popillius Laenas held the consulship in 132 BC.

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included northeast Italy. There, works had been initiated by Popillius, who had built the road from Ariminum to Adria and further north to Patavium.[19] Annius, in this case, had taken up the project when the construction works were at some point between Adria and Patavium, as proved by the existence of the toponym Agna between these two cities (Degrassi, 1955: 264).[20] Eventually, his *via Annia* had reached as far as Aquileia.

Despite what is commonly assumed, though, the milestone of P. Popillius Laenas is not sufficient evidence to identify the road Ariminum–Adria as a *via Popillia*.[21] Indeed, a milestone recently found at Pontemagno (Donati, 2009) or Ponte Maodino (Uggeri, 2012) — a tiny hamlet close to Codigoro (ancient *Corniculani*), in the province of Ferrara — now suggests that the coastal road was a *via Annia*.[22] Until now, the apparent contradiction has not found a convincing explanation.[23] Still, the conundrum could be easily solved if only we dismissed the unlikely assumption that milestones were set up exclusively when roads were built.[24]

[19] Mommsen was the first to ascribe the construction of the road Ariminum–Adria to Popillius, relying on a milestone found at Adria in 1844 (*CIL* I^2 637 = *CIL* V 8007 = *ILS* 5807 = *ILLRP* 453: *P. Popillius C.f. co(n)s(ul)* | *LXXXI*). See Robino (2008: 14) for the exact find-spot. Mommsen's letter to Vincenzo De Vit, edited by Zerbinati (2008), proves that he was persuaded that this Popillius was the magistrate of the *lapis Pollae* even before being able to examine and date the Adria milestone. For the possible itinerary of the coastal road see Maccagnani (1994: 71–85) and Uggeri (2012: 152–6). Since the distance between Adria and Rimini, as provided by the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, is less than 80 miles, Radke (1965) proposed that the road to Adria originated at the Rubicon, and passed through *Forum Popilii* and Ravenna. Hinrichs (1967: 168), on the other hand, placed the *caput viae* at *Forum Popilii*. See Wiseman (1970: 129 and n. 56) for a detailed rejection of both theories. Despite the incongruence, Popillius' milestone should be ascribed to the road Ariminum–Adria.

[20] According to Wiseman (1989: 420–5), by contrast, the toponym suggests that the road connecting Bononia with Aquileia, Via Ateste, Patavium and Altinum (which he believed to be a *via Annia*) had a secondary branch to Adria. Still, as Uggeri (2012) has showed, the *via Annia* actually went from Rome to Aquileia through Sarsina, Caesena, Ariminum, Agna, Patavium, Altinum and Aquileia. On the problems concerning the identification of the road Bononia–Patavium see Bonini (2010).

[21] Wiseman (1964: 29) argues that the identification of the road is also proved by the toponym Pupilia that Venetian medieval documents locate to the north of Adria. Yet, since the documents suggest that this Pupilia could be approached only by a canal (*començaria*) (Dorigo, 1994: 90), I accept Fraccaro's identification of Pupilia with Poveglia, an island to the north of Chioggia, and I further suggest that the name Pupilia is not related to the road, but derives from canals (*fossa Popilia* and *Popilliola*) built during the Empire (Dorigo, 1994: 90, 95–109).

[22] *AE* 2009: 393: *CCL [---]* | *T(itus) Annius T(iti) f(ilius)* | *co(n)s(ul)*. The inscription can be dated to the second century BC, but further precision is impossible (Uggeri, 2012: 137). The milestone pertains to the *via Annia* connecting Rome to Aquileia (Uggeri, 2012).

[23] According to Uggeri (2012: 155–6), for example, the *via Popillia* was built 25 years after Ariminum and Adria were first connected by the *via Annia*; the two roads had essentially the same itinerary. He does not explain, though, the oddity of building a road that is just a piece of an existing road, especially after such a short time.

[24] Sisani (2011: 711–15), for example, has explained the presence of the name of a *praefectus* on a milestone of the *via Salaria Picena* (*AE* 2000: 476) by suggesting that this magistrate did not build the road (it is unlikely that *praefecti* did), but simply set up the milestones. I wish to thank one of the anonymous readers for drawing my attention to this document.

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In his discussion of C. Gracchus' road building (Plut. *C. Gracchus* 7.1–2), Plutarch remarks that much care was pit into the installation of milestones, as well as of smaller uninscribed stones used to mount on a horseback.[25] From the passage, it appears clear that, at least from a certain date, particular care was devoted to recording the mileage of roads.[26] It would be hard to believe that such attention ceased as soon as the road building was completed. Milestones required maintenance too: with the passing of time, they could be damaged, removed or lost. This helps to explain the presence of two different names on the milestones of the road Ariminum–Adria: I suggest that the two milestones belong to different series. This seems to be confirmed by their use of different systems to count distances. The Adria milestone counts the miles from Ariminum; the Codigoro milestone, on the other hand, provides the mileage from Rome. Since, as it is now clear, the *via Annia* was built by T. Annius Luscus, cos. 153 BC (Wiseman, 1964: 22–30; Wiseman, 1969: 82–8; Uggeri, 2012), Popillius' milestone from Adria must be later than the other (contra Donati, 2009: 80–1).[27]

Since there is no reason to suppose that Popillius carried out any road building work in northern Italy, the idea of a joint infrastructural programme should be reconsidered. Indeed, the suggestion that Annius and Popillius cooperated should be rejected also in the case of the road Capua–Regium. Susini's distinction, in the *lapis Pollae*, between sections composed by the magistrate and later additions rules out the possibility that the construction works proceeded southwards, and that Annius could have overseen their completion. At l. 8, it is true, the road is said to go from Capua to Regium; still, this statement was not formulated by the magistrate, who, instead, claims in section 1 (l. 1) that the road was built proceeding northwards from Regium to Capua.

2.4 ROAD MAINTENANCE, DETOURS AND MILESTONES

Although Degrassi's theory should be rejected, I will now suggest that his intuition was right: the Sant'Onofrio milestone does not provide the name of the magistrate

[25] For some strange reason, the passage has often been taken as a claim that C. Gracchus was the first to set up milestones (Wiseman, 1970: 151 and nn. 229–30; Canali De Rossi, 2007: 232). In fact, Plutarch simply says that all the roads built under C. Gracchus' legislative action were — among other requirements — to be provided with milestones.

[26] With all likelihood, mileage was recorded irregularly on earlier roads, such as for example Panormus–Agrigentum, built by Aurelius Cotta in 252 or 248 BC (Prag, 2006: 735).

[27] Donati (2009: 81–3) points out that no mention of the construction of the road is made on the statue base of T. Annius Luscus in the forum of Aquileia (*AE* 1996: 685). However, this inscription is not a comprehensive list of Luscus' deeds, and it can be argued that only information relevant to the topographical context was included. The statue was connected with a building used for the meetings of the senate, and other political functions, until the construction of the *curia-comitium* (Zaccaria, 1996: 182). Accordingly, the inscription only records the establishment of colonial laws and of the local senate. Donati's suggestion that a road should be mentioned because it signified direct contact with Rome is vague at the best.

of the *lapis Pollae*. I will argue that the milestone pertains to later improvement works, which are extremely unlikely to have been carried out by the same individual.

Surprisingly, the presence of blank spaces in the *lapis Pollae* — clearly visible after *Nuceriam milia*, after *Valentiam* and after *statuam* — has been noticed by only Susini, and has since since disregarded (the only exception being Uggeri, 2012: 138). Susini (1997: 400) concluded that the stonecutter initially left the distances blank, and added the mileages only when he was given further indications. Despite the care that had been taken, however, all the mileages to Valentia and beyond (*ad fretum ad statuam* and to Regium) were subsequently reduced by two miles, and hence the total mileage was amended to 321 (even though, as Susini points out, the correct figure should be 320).[28] Since numbers were constantly reduced by the same figure, and only places south of Valentia were affected, the amendments are hardly likely to be the result of mistakes made by the stonecutter. Rather, it would seem that the inscription was amended at a later stage.

In order to make sense of these corrections, we should take into account the fact that roads were not immutable, but underwent changes over the centuries. Describing the technical features of the roads built by C. Gracchus, Plutarch testifies to a particular attention for their straightness, for aesthetic and practical reasons.[29] Straight roads often required expensive engineering works; Gracchus' roads are no exception: 'depressions were filled up, all intersecting torrents or ravines were bridged over' (Plut. *C. Gracchus* 7.1–2; trans. Perrin, LCL). It is perfectly conceivable that, when roads were built, in many cases easier solutions were initially preferred, involving long detours, and that only progressively roads were 'straightened' with galleries and bridges.[30]

[28] In the case of Valentia, the traces on the stone are compatible with both two and ten. However, since the mileages to *ad fretum ad statuam* and to Rhegium were reduced by two miles, the same must be true for Valentia.

[29] C. Gracchus' measures were included in a *lex viaria* or even in his *lex agraria* (Camodeca, 1997: 266; Sisani, 2015: 102–3). According to Sisani, Gracchus only promoted the improvement of existing roads. Note, however, that Plutarch uses the word ὁδοποιία, which means precisely 'road making'. At any rate, it is certain that C. Gracchus could not have directly overseen any road building, since the construction of *viae publicae* was entrusted to magistrates *cum imperio*.

[30] Because they were expensive, bridges were perfect objects of euergetism. See, for example, M. Octavius' *pontes de suo fecit* on the *lapis Aesinensis* (*AE* 1990: 328 = *AE* 1997: 498 = *AE* 2003: 597), or the inscription on the bridge at Iulia Concordia (*AE* 1990: 395), recording M'. Acilius Eudamus' bequest. Augustus considered the restoration of bridges along the *via Flaminia* (with the exception of the bridges *Minucius* and *Mulvius*) an achievement worth mentioning in his *Res Gestae* (*RG* 20). Similarly, references to repairs of 'roads and bridges wrecked by their antiquity' (*vias et pontes vetustate corruptas*) are found quite commonly on third-century AD milestones. Equally remarkable was the laying of straight roads through the mountains: Hannibal went down in history as the man 'who separates rocks and cracks the mountain with vinegar' (Juv. 10.153; trans. Morton Braund, LCL). On the episode cf. Livy 21.35–7 and the other sources collected by Zanovello (1997: 61–5). Another example is the so-called *Petra Pertusa* tunnel, created by Vespasian (*CIL* XI 6106; Aur. Vict. 9.8; see Zanovello, 1997: 61–5). Dion.

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I suggest, then, that the modification of mileage on the *lapis Pollae* can be explained by postulating subsequent changes to the original route. The small scale of the changes (just two miles) can be attributed to the fact that, as the magistrate of the *lapis Pollae* claims, the road was provided with the necessary infrastructures right from the beginning (*in ea via ponteis omneis miliarios tabelariosque poseiuei*).

The Codigoro milestone now reveals that, when roads changed their itineraries, milestones also underwent modifications. Clear traces of amendments are visible in the inscription: the letters to the right of the two CC have been erased, and an anchor-shaped L has been inscribed on top of them. These amendments suggest that the milestone was updated at some point, in connection with improvements to the road.[31] The Sant'Onofrio milestone, on the other hand, bears no trace of amendments. Therefore, it must have been set up later than the *lapis Pollae*: perhaps simultaneously with the corrections to the *lapis*, perhaps even later.[32] In principle, it is still possible that the improvements could have been overseen by the same magistrate who had built the road. This possibility, however, is ruled out by the clear statement made by the magistrate of the *lapis Pollae*, who claims to have set up all the milestones along the road: if he had been responsible also for the reduction of the mileage, he would have simply amended his milestones, rather than set up new ones.

2.5 CONCLUSIONS

In this section, I have showed that there is no decisive evidence to identify either the road or the forum. It is at least possible, however, to show that the *lapis* was not set up by the *T. Annius praetor* mentioned by the Sant'Onofrio milestone. This conclusion is extremely important for the dating of the *lapis Pollae*, since it provides a precise *terminus ante quem*. The milestone is undated, but it cannot be later than 131 BC, because no T. Annius held the praetorship after that date. Therefore, since the milestone is later than the *lapis Pollae*, the *lapis Pollae* must be earlier than 131 BC.

Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 3.67.5 remarks on the expensiveness of paved roads, but note that the road Capua–Regium was not paved (Ebner, 1979: II, 362).

[31] The original mileage can only have been above 300 miles or below 250 miles — otherwise, the L would have not been reinscribed. I suggest that it was indeed above 300 miles, and was later reduced by at least 50 miles: the road had a large number of bridges (Uggeri, 2012), whose construction must have required a long time.

[32] One could argue that the milestone does not record changes to the original track simply because these were carried out further to the south, between Sant'Onofrio and Vibo. At that point, however, the road runs straight across a plain, and it is hard to see what changes could have been made there.

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3. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The *terminus ante quem* that I have just suggested has important consequences for understanding the historical context in which the actions of the magistrate took place. The most popular explanations, in fact, consider his pursuit of the slaves (ll. 9–11) as a sort of *coda* to the Servile Wars, and interpret the passage on *ager publicus* (ll. 12–14) as a reference to a land distribution carried out in competition with the Gracchan legislation.

The dating for which I have been arguing in this article warrants caution: even a date as late as 132 BC would make the *lapis* just contemporary with the end of the Servile Wars, and slightly later than Ti. Gracchus' agrarian reform. We should at least consider the possibility that the author of the inscription could not have been in a position to mention events almost contemporary with it, especially since the implementation of the agrarian reform will have required some time. In this section, I will reconsider carefully the two accomplishments of the magistrate: I will argue that they date to the 150s–140s; I will suggest that the pursuit of slaves was earlier than the Servile Wars, and only indirectly connected with them; I will also explain that the regulation concerning *ager publicus* had nothing to do with the Gracchan land distributions, but was a magisterial ruling over the use of public land in Sicily.

3.1 THE PURSUIT OF SLAVES

Originally, the pursuit of the slaves was explained in the context of the Servile Wars.[33] Since these were brought to an end by Rupillius' harsh repression in 132 BC, Bracco concluded that 132 BC was a *terminus ante quem* for the date of the inscription. Wiseman (1964: 31–7; 1969: 90; see also Brennan, 1990: 202), on the other hand, argued that, even though the upheaval of Sicilian slaves was for the most part repressed by Rupillius in 132 BC, rebellions were, with all likelihood, still going on in southern Italy. Wiseman suggested that the fugitives were slaves of Italian masters residing in the towns of Bruttium and Lucania (the *Italici* of the inscription), who had revolted under the stimulus of the Sicilian events: the most likely date was 131 BC, the episode being a sort of *coda* to the Servile Wars.[34] Wiseman explained the fact that the magistrate was praetor in Sicily at the time by pointing out that it was not unusual for praetors

[33] Until the nineteenth century, the magistrate of the *lapis* was believed to be M'. Aquillius (cos. 101 BC), who had fought the Second Slave War. Bracco (1954: 8) and Verbrugghe (1973: 25 n. 2) remark that Aquillius was a proconsul, whereas the magistrate of the *lapis* was a praetor.

[34] Verbrugghe (1973: 27) argued that the slaves had escaped from their Italian masters and had crossed over to Sicily, to join one of the rebellions that had broken out there; according to him, 'returning 917 slaves to Italian masters becomes a great feat worthy of mention only if the author of the inscription had to transfer them back to the mainland'. This explanation is rightly deemed 'unacceptable' by Fraschetti (1981: 58, 476 n. 36), who remarks that there is no evidence whatsoever of slaves crossing over from Italy to Sicily.

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of Sicily to intervene in southern Italy, as had indeed happened on a number of occasions in the first century BC.[35]

Wiseman's explanation, however, is now ruled out by my argument that the *lapis Pollae* is earlier than 131 BC. Besides, as Fraschetti (1981: 58–9) has showed, the episode is much more likely to have taken place in Sicily, where, as Diodorus reports, slaves were marked. The presence of marks on the bodies of the slaves makes it easier to understand how the magistrate could have been able to return each of the 917 slaves to their legitimate masters. The term *Italici* in the *lapis Pollae* does not refer to Italians living in the peninsula, but should be understood as Italians *lato sensu*, including both allies and Romans, just like the well-known *Italicei qui Deli negotiantur* of Delian inscriptions (Giardina, 1997: 59). In Sicilian epigraphy, indeed, the word *Italici* is used with this exact meaning: *Italicei*, for example, made a dedication to L. Cornelius Scipio at Halaesa (*CIL* X 7459). Just like these people, then, the *Italici* of the *lapis Pollae* should be interpreted, following Fraschetti, as those Romans and Italians who were involved in economic activities in Sicily.

The pursuit of the slaves is unlikely to have happened during the Servile Wars, when, as Verbrugghe (1973: 27) pointed out, slaves were punished with the utmost severity. All the available evidence on the Servile Wars makes clear that the rebels were considered a threat to the state; it is therefore very hard to believe that as many as nearly 1,000 slaves would have simply been returned to their masters. The episode of the fugitive slaves, on the other hand, fits well in the context of the progressive escalation of slave unrest and violence that anticipated the outbreak of the Servile Wars.[36]

3.2 MAGISTERIAL RULING ON *AGER PUBLICUS*

My dating of the inscription also warrants caution when connecting the sentence on *ager publicus* with the Gracchan land distributions. The distribution of land, in fact, took years, which is at odds with the formulation of the *lapis Pollae*, referring to a completed operation. Indeed, already Tibiletti (1955: 255–7) had questioned the connection, pointing out that the Gracchan land reform did not encompass the transformation of land from grazing into arable, but only the redistribution of arable land. It is true that other explanations exist that would work outside the context of the Gracchan period; still, these too assume that the *lapis Pollae*

[35] Wiseman also pointed out that in 131 BC one of the two consuls, Crassus Mucianus, was fighting Aristonicus in Asia, and the other, Valerius Flaccus, had been forbidden to exit the city, because he was *flamen Martialis*. Therefore, the praetor of Sicily was the most likely candidate to have intervened in southern Italy.

[36] The exact date of the outbreak of the Servile Wars is unknown, but it lies inside a *fourchette* spanning from 143 to 134 BC. Verbrugghe (1973: 27–9) has argued that the wars broke out 'in or before 138'.

refers to a land distribution.[37] As a matter of fact, the text of the inscription proves this to be a misconception.

The verb *cedo* does not only mean 'withdraw, abandon', but also 'yield to one's superiority, give priority to someone'.[38] With this meaning, *cedo* with *de* + ablative can be translated as 'give priority to someone with regard to something'.[39] We may translate the statement of the *lapis* as follows: 'I was the first to provide that shepherds would give priority to ploughmen with regard to public land'.[40] The difference may look minimal, but is in fact substantial. So far all translators have assumed that the magistrate forcefully removed the shepherds, and settled ploughmen. According to my translation, by contrast, ploughmen were not brought in from elsewhere. Both groups appear to have been already present, and to have used *ager publicus* in competition; the magistrate intervenes at a later stage, and rules that the claim of ploughmen on public land has priority over that of shepherds.

3.3 THE LOCATION OF *AGER PUBLICUS*

As I have argued in section 3.1, the pursuit of fugitive slaves took place in Sicily. The nature of the *lapis Pollae* — a document in which geographical minutiae are central — strongly suggests that, if the event described in the following clause had taken place in a different geographical context, we would have been informed. Therefore, even though we cannot be sure that the two clauses followed each other in the original document from which they have been excerpted, the fact

[37] Some argue that the *lapis* simply refers to the distribution of land to the *viasei vicani*, individuals who were given road-frontage property in return for taking care of the maintenance of the road (Carlsen, 2009: 307; Bernard, Damon and Grey, 2014: 963 n. 29). Fraschetti (1981: 59), on the other hand, has suggested that this was an attempt to improve public security by installing farmers in the place of roaming shepherds, encounters with whom were notoriously dangerous. Bracco (1954: 24–30, 1960: 159), on his part, argued that the transformation of grazing land into arable aimed at increasing fiscal revenues, as the income from *scriptura* was inferior to the *vectigal* that could be collected from the same area. In the absence of precise data on taxation, Bracco's argument remains disputable.

[38] Although the *TLL* lists the sentence of the *lapis Pollae* s.v. *cedo* II.A 'locum dare, relinquere', I suggest that it should rather go under III.C 'non resistere, concedere'.

[39] It is true that, with this meaning, Latin *cedo* is otherwise never used with *de* + ablative. However, as Bernard, Damon and Grey (2014: 965) point out, *cedo* is also recorded only with *ex* + ablative or plain ablative to express 'withdrawal from'. For another instance of *cedo* with *de* + ablative, not recorded by the *TLL*, see Plin. *HN* 35.30: *Melanthio dispositione cedebat, Asclepiodoro de mensuris*, 'he used to acknowledge his inferiority to Melanthius in grouping, and to Asclepiodorus in nicety of measurement' (trans. Rackham, LCL). In this case, *cedo* means 'minoris esse, aestimari' (*TLL* s.v. *cedo* III.D). Note that any suggested amendment to the passage should be rejected.

[40] Contra Bernard, Damon and Grey (2014: 965), who conclude that 'the phrase must be loosely adverbial'. They translate as follows: 'and I was also the first — in connection with publicly-owned land — to cause herdsmen to give way to plowmen'. If this were the case, though, we would expect a different word order: something like *de agro poplico primus fecei ut aratoribus cederent pastores*.

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that no place is specified in the second clause suggests that the episode concerning *ager publicus* also took place in Sicily (Fraschetti, 1981: 57–61).

As long as the passage on *ager publicus* was believed to belong to a southern Italian context, the expansion of agriculture at the expenses of husbandry was explained as part of the ongoing attempt to develop that remote and mountainous area, left depopulated, according to Toynbee's classic thesis, by the devastations of the Hannibalic War. Since I am advocating, instead, a Sicilian setting, in this section I will show how the controversy on the use of *ager publicus* fits in the economic and administrative context of the island before the Servile Wars.

The entitlement to use *ager publicus* in Sicily seems to have been regulated soon after the conquest.[41] Some public land, confiscated from hostile communities, was given as private property to loyal individuals: at Syracuse, Sosis was allowed to select for himself 500 *iugera* (Livy 26.21.12–13); at Morgantina (listed by Cicero among the *civitates decumanae*), Mericus received 500 *iugera*, Belligenes 400, and other land was given to their Spaniards; a similar fate was possibly suffered also by Leontini (Pinzone, 1999b: 469–70). Other public land seems to have been returned to the local communities after the stipulation of *foedera*.[42] The territory of Messana, as Pinzone (1999a: 103–4) has persuasively argued, must have become *ager publicus p. R.* after the *deditio* of the Mamertini in 262 BC, and was returned to the city once the *foedus* with Rome was officially stipulated.[43] Local communities also secured territorial grants in the immediate aftermath of the conquest, sending embassies to the senate. In 210 BC, the Syracusan βουλή sent an embassy to Rome.[44] In all likelihood, on this occasion the city of Syracuse was bestowed part of the former χώρα βασιλική.[45]

It is not immediately clear what happened to the land that Rome maintained in public property. According to Cicero (*Verr.* 2.3.13), the territory of the few cities (*perpaucae civitates*) conquered in war (*bello subactae*) was returned to their

[41] This approach was maintained also during the Civil Wars: the land of the Sicilians who sided with the *Mariani* had already been reassigned by 64 BC, when Cicero (*Leg. agr.* 2.18.48–9) could talk of public land divided *recenti victoria* (Pinzone, 2003: 546–7).

[42] Another example of land turned into *ager publicus* after a *deditio*, and subsequently returned to the local community, is represented by the *lex Antonia de Termessibus* (*Roman Statutes* 1.19; see Ferrary, 1985).

[43] In 252 BC, C. Aurelius Cotta went from Lipari, where he was leading the siege, to Messana *ad auspicia repetenda* (Val. Max. 2.7.4); Pinzone points out that *auspicia* could be taken only on *ager Romanus*. In 210 BC, however, the senate could claim that the boundaries of the *ager Romanus* were the same as those of the Italian peninsula (Livy 27.5.15).

[44] The date is provided by Plutarch (*Marcellus* 23), who, however, only deals with the charges of mistreatment pressed by the embassy against Marcellus. That the embassy also discussed matters concerning landholding is known from an episode that occurred five years later (Livy 29.1.15–18): Scipio had to settle a controversy between the Syracusans and some Italians who, disregarding the arrangements taken by the Roman senate, did not want to return the land on which they had put their hands.

[45] Contra Fraschetti (1981: 55), who thinks that the senate confirmed the rights of the Syracusans over their private properties.

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citizens, but it was also subjected to *censoria locatio*.[46] Cicero's statement has generally appeared contradictory, and a mix of textual amendments and subtle interpretations has been variously suggested in order to make sense of it (Prag, 2014: 192). In fact, there is no contradiction: in a passage that celebrates Rome's benevolent treatment of Sicily, Cicero is representing as a proper restitution the permission given to the defeated communities to use the land, on the payment of a *vectigal*. Indeed, elsewhere in the *Verrines* (2.5.53) Cicero makes clear that the land subject to *censoria locatio* was *ager publicus* (Prag, 2014: 193). In the same fashion, the people who lived in the *ager Recentoricus* were given by the senate entitlement to use it (Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.57), even though the land was still *ager publicus* (Prag, 2014: 195, commenting on Cicero's expression *non agri condicione defendunt*).[47]

In Sicily, in sum, Rome does not seem to have retained direct control of the exploitation of public land. We can conclude, then, that the controversy to which the *lapis Pollae* refers took place in a local community. Either due to the legal status of land, or because a final decision could not be reached by the local authorities, the matter was brought before the praetor. The decision of the praetor to pass a judgement seems perfectly in line with his role as provincial governor, ruling *partim edicto, partim iudiciis*.

Equally, the controversy between shepherds and ploughmen makes perfect sense in a Sicilian setting. Diodorus Siculus (34–35.2.3) provides abundant evidence for the importance of pastoralism in the Sicilian economy on the eve of the Servile Wars (Coarelli, 1981: 10; Mazza, 1981: 20). At the same time, however, the needs of the city of Rome stimulated the restoration of grain production right after the disruptions of the Punic War (Mazza, 1981: 30–5, 39–49).[48] I suggest that the episode reported in the *lapis Pollae* should be set against the background of the expansion of agriculture on public land that was underway in Sicily, which produced contrasts and competition with the owners of flocks.

3.4 *PRIMUS FECEI UT* . . .: COMPETITION FOR LAND IN THE SECOND CENTURY BC

At this point, it is necessary to explain why the magistrate could consider a controversy internal to a Sicilian community so important that it deserved a

[46] These communities have been usually referred to as *civitates censoriae*, a terminology defined by Prag (2009: 135) as 'modern fiction'. Pinzone (2003: 545) suggests using the periphrasis '*civitates* whose *ager* has become, fully or partly, *ager publicus populi Romani*'. Prag (2014: 188–92) argues that their number was indeed quite small.

[47] As Prag (2014: 193) points out, Cicero's expression *vetustas possessionis* proves that this arrangement was made at an early stage.

[48] Traditionally, there has been a certain discomfort among scholars about reconciling pastoralism with the image of *Sicilia frumentaria*. Mazza (1981: 20–1, 34) wisely suggests that both pastoralism and arable farming were important.

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place in his *tabula triumphalis*. I will argue that the episode may have been more important than it is immediately apparent, since it is likely to have involved Roman businessmen operating on the island. I will argue further that the magistrate used it for personal propaganda, touching a raw nerve of Roman political debate.

Roman outsiders appear to have played an important role in the Sicilian economy after the Roman conquest. The attempt by some Italians to put their hands on land in Syracuse (see n. 44) shows that the conquerors took an interest in landholding immediately after the war. Diodorus records the involvement on a large scale of Roman *equites* in Sicilian husbandry.[49] At the same time, though, he also mentions their appetite for agricultural investment (Coarelli, 1981: 10). With dramatic exaggeration, Florus (*Epit.* 2.7.3) claims that, on the eve of the Servile Wars, the estates of Roman citizens covered the whole island. Unfortunately, very few names of Roman landowners survive for that period, such as the poet Lucilius, or Q. Lollius, who must have acquired land early on, since he was almost 90 at the time of Verres' praetorship (Coarelli, 1981: 54).

Cicero (*Verr.* 2.3.53) says that in Sicily it was common practice for the *locupletes* to rent land to cultivate (*conducere arationes magnas*).[50] We should, therefore, consider the possibility that Roman outsiders also rented the *ager publicus* bestowed to the various communities. These people too will have been affected by the judgement of the magistrate.

The Sicilian episode is also likely to be part of a wider phenomenon underway in the 150s–140s. Until the first century BC, *scriptura* had a prominent role in public revenues (Crawford, 2005: 164–5).[51] Indeed, it seems that the word *pascua* could refer to censorial fiscal revenues in their entirety (Cic. *Leg. agr.* 1.3; Plin. *HN* 18.11). Still, it is possible that, around the middle of the second century BC, ongoing agricultural intensification (stimulated by urban growth) was increasing the demand for arable land, and this generated contrasts in the use of public land.

Competition for land appears to have been a sensitive issue in the political debate of that period. At an uncertain date between the late 150s and the 140s, an agrarian reform was attempted by none other than C. Laelius. The project was soon abandoned amid staunch opposition (Plut. *Ti. Gracchus* 8.4).[52] Plutarch takes it for granted that Laelius' reform was similar in scope to the

[49] Husbandry also involved (indirectly) the *publicani* to whom *scriptura* was farmed out (Pinzone, 1999a: 10 n. 29).

[50] In the passage, Cicero is talking of a provincial, Nympho of Centuripe. But he nowhere suggests that the practice was restricted to provincials.

[51] As Crawford remarks, Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.16 seems to prove that after Pompey the importance of *scriptura* decreased, even though a certain degree of rhetorical exaggeration should be accounted for.

[52] We cannot tell whether the episode dates to Laelius' praetorship of 145, his consulship of 140 or 'an entirely unattested tribunate around 151' (Astin, 1967: 308).

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Gracchan legislation. Despite Tibiletti's (1955) contrary opinion, this assumption has been commonly accepted. Astin (1967: 307–8), for example, argued that only an attempted redistribution of land could stir such a fierce resistance. This interpretation, though, does not take into consideration that, a few years later, none of Scipio Aemilianus' associates supported Ti. Gracchus' plan. The apparent contradiction, which Astin (1967: 310) did indeed notice, can only be resolved by assuming that Laelius' reform had a different scope.

I would suggest that Laelius' project and the claim of the magistrate of the *lapis Pollae* should be understood in the light of the contrasts generated by the extensive use of public land for pasture. It is possible that the Romans who had economic interests in arable farming were lobbying with Roman magistrates to obtain privileged access to public land, at the expense of those people whose interests lay in husbandry, in agreement with Cato's *dictum* (Cic. *Off.* 2.89) that husbandry was the most profitable investment.[53] In fact, we should not assume that Laelius was defending the interests of the peasantry, or that the magistrate of the *lapis* was trying to secure their support. Just as in Sicily, we are faced with a controversy internal to the Roman upper classes. This is the audience addressed by the *lapis Pollae*: people who owned slaves — often in large quantities — and were willing to invest in arable farming. By placing emphasis on having been the first (*primus fecei*) to privilege the claims of ploughmen, the magistrate is trying to take political credit for a decision that, although related to the political debate of those years, is not directly relevant to it. In all likelihood, the contrasts were mostly related to *ager publicus* in Italy, with which Laelius' bill must have been concerned.

3.5 THE AUDIENCE

We come now to the problem of audience. As I have already explained in my discussion of the inscription of T. Annius Luscus in the *forum* of Aquileia (see n. 27), the selection of the information included in celebrative inscriptions is contextual to their location, and the selected material must be of some relevance to their audience (Giardina, 1997: 145). In the previous section, I suggested that the magistrate tried to exploit his earlier achievements as praetor in Sicily to allure people who were concerned with Italian *ager publicus*. In this section, I will suggest that the audience of the *lapis Pollae* should be identified as those wealthy individuals from Roman colonies in Lucania, as well as from

[53] It is hard to see what Laelius' plan might have been. Traditionally, a limit was set to the number of beasts that could be grazed on public land. However, this measure was constantly disregarded: since *scriptura* was collected from shepherds directly on the fields (Crawford, 2005: 167 n. 20), the ownership of flocks was difficult to ascertain (Giardina, 1981: 87–8). Perhaps farmers were requesting *terminationes* of the land on which grazing was allowed. In a similar fashion, the Esterzili Table (*CIL* X 7852 = *ILS* 5947) shows that the distribution of land in Sardinia to the *Patulcenses Campani* by M. Caecilius Metellus in the late second century BC provoked the *terminatio* of the land available to the pastoralist *Galillenses* (Zucca, 1993).

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Campania, who were shifting the balance of local economy towards arable farming as early as the second century BC.[54]

Toynbee (1965), as it is widely known, had an apocalyptic view of the consequences of the Hannibalic War, whereby the area had been left in ruins and depopulated (and had failed to recover ever since: the *questione meridionale*, for him, had very ancient roots). This picture, though, has now undergone serious revisions, thanks to long years of archaeological research focused on three areas of Lucania: 'Grumentum and the upper Agri valley, and the eastern and the western coast' (Fracchia, 2013: 193).

It is now clear that surrender to Rome did not necessarily imply decline. Volceii, having capitulated in 209 BC, appears to have prospered since then (Di Lieto, 2011: 52), undergoing 'renewal along Hellenistic lines' (Gualtieri, 2008: 405). Indeed, in 225 BC the Lucanians were apparently able to provide Rome with 33,000 soldiers (Diod. Sic. 14.101; Polyaenus, *Strat.* 2.23.12) (Di Giuseppe, 2011: 70). This more optimistic view of the consequences of the Hannibalic War is accompanied by a reconsideration of rural settlement and farming. Agriculture was certainly among the economic activities of local communities.[55] It is possible that not all the land was confiscated; besides, the *dediticii* may have been permitted to remain on their land, now *ager publicus*, in return for a *vectigal* (Torelli, 2011: 210).

It is true, however, that the Roman conquest altered the patterns of rural settlement. Rome's immediate concern for securing territorial control translated into a number of colonial foundations in the 190s BC: Buxentum, Croton, Valentia, Puteoli, Salernum, Tempsa (and a *supplementum* was sent to Venusia in 200). These new settlements did not only bring in new population, but also included local inhabitants (La Torre, 2011: 146–7).[56] A comparison between rural settlements around Lucanian centres and around Roman foundations — Venusia and Grumentum, which was founded at a later stage — suggests that, whereas new Roman foundations helped to maintain the countryside populated, rural settlement declined in those areas that were not interested in colonization.[57] It is possible that the traces of settlement abandonment signal displacement and relocation, rather than depopulation (Di Giuseppe, 2011: 70).

[54] Contra Bernard, Damon and Grey (2014), who take the *lapis Pollae* as a self-representation of Roman power in the eyes of the Italian allies.

[55] In the specific case of Volceii, however, Gualtieri (2008: 405) warns that, despite the 'apparent prosperity of the countryside', 'a deeper understanding of settlement dynamics in the area' is still lacking.

[56] Buxentum seems to be the exception here: its foundation was initially a failure (its abandonment was not discovered until 186 BC), possibly due to the ongoing vitality of the *pagus-vicus* settlement system in its territory.

[57] According to Gualtieri (2008: 406–7; 2009: 346–7), the results of surveys at San Giovanni di Ruoti, suggesting decline, are exceptional and unparalleled. Contra Di Giuseppe (2011: 72), who remarks that of the 33 sites detected in the upper Bradano valley, only six continued to be occupied from the fourth/third to the first century BC (and ongoing occupation in the second century is only postulated).

According to Giardina (1981), the overwhelming presence of transhumant pastoralism in inner Lucania was essentially motivated by the parasitic attitude of wealthy Romans, who, ignoring any legal limitation to the number of animals, made huge profits through transhumant pastoralism. In the immediate aftermath of the Hannibalic War, however, the preference for pastoralism should not be seen as unwillingness to invest. Away from nucleated settlements, the region was mountainous and covered with woodland, and its fluvial plains were characterized by the presence of marshes (*Inscr. It.* III.1: xviii–xx; Roselaar's [2010: 170] description of the Tanager valley as fertile and suitable for cultivation cannot be applied to this early period). In such conditions, investing in pastoralism is not a sign of scarce interest; on the contrary, it is an intelligent adaptation of investment strategies to geographical conditions. Farming would have required expensive draining and land clearance; the absence of infrastructures, together with low settlement density, made the chances for commercial agriculture quite feeble. Wool, on the other hand, could be marketed to distant places, and the mobility of sheep provided the perfect solution to the problem of transport.

According to Giardina, things never changed, and *ager publicus* remained largely under-exploited. This view, however, does not account for two factors. On the one hand, the settlement of Gracchan colonists on an impressive scale — testified by the *cippi* found in the territory of Volcei, Atina and Consilinum (Gallo, 2011: 55–6) — created a 'dense, mixed population inhabiting the fertile countryside' (Gualtieri, 2008: 406).[58] At Grumentum, for example, pottery finds have a new peak between 150 and 125 BC, inverting the declining trend (Di Giuseppe, 2011: 65). On the other hand, there was a renewed interest in landholding from the turn of the first century BC, as archaeological finds have revealed. In the upper Bradano valley, rural sites

[58] According to Giardina, the small holdings of the Gracchan settlers were soon incorporated by large estates. He finds evidence for the failure of small property in the Flavian inscription of L. Domitius Phaon, from Caposele, slightly to the north of the Vallo (*CIL* X 444 = *ILS* 3546 = *Inscr.It.* III 7). Since Phaon's *fundi* are named after their original owners, Giardina concludes that Phaon's estate had expanded at the expense of smaller landowners. Yet, as Evans (1980: 31–3 and nn. 86–7) has shown, 'the curious premise that it was normally entire farms rather than parcels thereof which changed hands' should be rejected. In the *Alimenta* of Veleia, for example, the fragmentation of *fundi* is proved by: (a) the frequency of adjoining *fundi* with the same name; and (b) the low value of *fundi* with many names, signifying that they were actually very small. Evans concedes that there was a tendency for the *fundi*, fragmented as they were, to be concentrated in the hands of the few people who made the *obligationes*. In the case of Veleia, this may not even be true: Durliat (1993) has suggested that the declarants of the *obligationes* did not own all the *fundi* that they pledged, but were responsible for the declarations and the collection of money from groups of neighbouring landowners. Although Phaon's estate must have been of considerable size (Phaon was a *libertus* either of Nero or of Domitia Lepida: Weaver, 2005), it is more likely that his landholdings were the result of a thriving land market, in which parcels of land changed hands among landowners whose property was of variable size. There is no reason to deny *a priori* that smaller properties existed, just as in Apulia, where large estates (Sen. *Ep.* 87.7) and small holdings (Varro, *Rust.* 1.29.2) existed side by side.

grew, and the villas of San Gilio, San Pietro and Masseria Ciccotti were built around that time (Di Giuseppe, 2011: 72). In Bruttium, villas appeared between the end of the second century and the first century BC (La Torre, 2011: 154).

As Gualtieri (2009: 348–9) remarks, the traditional view that only Roman and central Italian landholders developed Italian agriculture in the second and first centuries BC should be rejected, and due attention should be paid to local developments, and the role of local elites. Still, it is equally true that investors from outside were present.[59] Already by the first century BC, a number of wealthy Romans owned land in southern Italy, not only *equites* and senators (Giardina, 1981: 87 n. 3), but also people such as Cicero's friend — and possibly former *praefectus fabrum* — Sicca, who owned a villa at Valentia, or the M. Tullius defended by Cicero in the *Pro Tullio*, who owned land at Thurii, just as the plaintiff P. Fabius did.[60] The trend continued during the Principate. In its first phase, the Masseria Ciccotti villa belonged to Vedius Pollio, *eques* and a friend of Augustus; the San Pietro di Tolve villa belonged to Nero's aunt, Domitia Lepida, or to one of her *liberti* (Di Giuseppe, 2007; Gualtieri, 2009: 351–9).

By the first century BC, cereal cultivation appears to have been typical (as it is nowadays). In the upper Bradano valley, grinding mills have been detected both in excavated (for example, Masseria Ciccotti) and unexcavated sites (Gualtieri, 2009: 361). The growth of cereal cultivation should be explained not only by the growth of local demand (Roman colonies, Gracchan settlements), but also by the steady urban growth of the Campanian cities, and of Rome.[61] Access to these markets was provided by the road Capua–Regium, and by the roads built in the Gracchan period (Camodeca, 1997: 268).[62]

[59] Giardina (1981: 87–9) remarks that, despite a slight growth in the late first century, overall very few Romans owned land in southern Italy. The erratic nature of the evidence, though, hardly reflects the real state of affairs.

[60] On Sicca see Cic. *Att.* 3.2; Plut. *Cicero* 32 (with the restoration Σίκκας instead of the Σικελός transmitted by the MSS). Cic. *Att.* 16.6 proves that Cicero's relationship with Sicca was so close that he felt 'that he could stay as long as he liked' at his house (Shackleton Bailey, 1965: 140). From Cic. *Att.* 16.11.1 it appears that either Sicca or his wife — or near relative — Septimia, or both, were connected with Fadius, father of Antony's first wife (Shackleton Bailey, 1967: 299).

[61] It was only with the demographic decline of late antiquity that commercial agriculture disappeared as a result of the decline in demand for foodstuffs: in a letter to the *corrector Lucaniae et Bruttiorum*, written on behalf of Atalaricus and dated to AD 527, Cassiodorus describes the fair of Marcelliana (now San Giovanni della Fonte), near Consilinum, just a few miles away from Polla (Cassiod. *Var.* 8.33 CCL 96.340–2). The fair was held in this location because Consilinum was at the croassroad between the road Capua–Rhegium, and that from Grumentum (Gabba and Coarelli, 1975: 159 n. 46). Cassiodorus mentions livestock, cloths and slaves being traded, but is silent on agricultural produce.

[62] Roads did not only stimulate commercial agriculture, but also made it easier for absentee landowners to control their properties. Accessibility was a key factor: Columella (1.7.3–4) suggests that the villa should be close to a road, so that the owner could pay frequent visits. Accessibility was more important than distance. Thus, for Horace (*Carm.* 3.5.53–6), it makes no difference whether the villa of the average lawyer is in Venafrum or Tarentum: the owner could pay a visit to take a short break from business, even though Tarentum is much further away from

Giardina (1981: 91) remarks that even after the Gracchan distributions, pastoralism was still present in the area. This should not surprise us. Apparently, a mixture of agriculture and pastoralism was already practised by Lucanian elites, before the Roman conquest disrupted the patterns of rural settlement. Mixed strategies are found, for example, at Torre di Satriano (Osanna and Serio, 2009: 105–6), whose occupation was discontinued after the Roman conquest. When, thanks to demographic growth and increased urbanization, commercial agriculture returned to be practised, the same kind of mixed activities were adopted. Indeed, in Sallust's account, Spartacus admonishes his companions to move to *laxiores agros magisque pecuarios*, 'looser territories, and with a higher presence of flocks' (Sall. *Hist.* 3.98), in order to add more recruits to their ranks; when they arrive at *Forum Annii*, though, they also find ploughmen (*cultores*), and the harvest ripe (*ma<tura in agri>s erant autumni frumenta*).

Grain growing was now a sensitive choice for investors. At the same time, pastoralism was still widely practised, both in areas unsuitable to agriculture (Roubis *et al.*, 2013: 119–20), and along the communication lines from the plain to the mountain. Thus, all the four villas excavated in the upper Bradano valley (Moltone, San Pietro, San Gilio, Masseria Ciccotti) are connected with a *tratturo* that goes down to Apulia (Di Giuseppe, 2007: 157).[63] Even though they all produced grain, they also relied on their strategic position to exploit transhumance. A wool spinnery was excavated at the San Pietro di Tolve villa; shearing scissors were found at the San Gilio villa; wool washing basins, dated to last decades of the first century BC, or the early first century AD, were discovered at Masseria Ciccotti (Gualtieri, 2009: 351–9).

Archaeological data suggest that, in the second century BC, commercial agriculture had not yet taken roots. Still, the *lapis Pollae* now suggests that, as early as the 150s–140s BC, attempts were already being made to develop arable farming. In the late Republic and early Empire, the same individuals could have

Rome. Bracco (1954: 23) argued that the road Capua–Regium did not improve communications, but he possibly made too much of topical claims such as Lucilius' *omne iter est hoc labosum atque lutosum*, and Cicero's *iter esse molestum scio*. After all, in the *Pro Tullio* Cicero portrays the defendant visiting his property from elsewhere (Rome?), and Sicca was at his *villa* in Valentia when Cicero visited him (Cic. *Att.* 3.2). Cicero famously said that news came to Bruttium only twice or thrice a year (Cic. *Rosc. Am.* 132). The passage, however, has a strong rhetorical bias. In order to single out Chrisogonus' extravagance, he contrasts him with some people (whose identity is unknown because the names have been lost in the lacuna), who own properties of modest size, and in the most remote corners of Italy (Sallentum and Bruttium), but are nevertheless happy with what they have. Cicero exaggerates their poverty, and their remoteness, in order to create a stark contrast with Chrisogonous' numerous *praedia*, all 'excellent and near the city' (*praeclarum et propinquum*; trans. Freese, LCL). It is true, however, that travellers bound from Rome to Sicily usually sailed, leaving land at Puteoli. The only kown exception is Sall. *Iug.* 28.6 'an army bound for Sicily and Africa' that marched overland to Rhegium in 111 BC (Wiseman, 1964: 34).

[63] The Tratturo crossed the Vallo di Diano in a west–east direction, passing through Roscigno and Atina, and then curving to the North to Torre di Satriano (Saracino, 2015: 53–4).

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interests in both pastoralism and arable farming. Cicero, for example, addresses P. Fabius as a *novus arator et idem pecuarius* (Cic. *Tull.* 19). In the same fashion, either directly or in partnership with her *liberti*, Domitia Lepida was involved in both grain growing and husbandry.[64] Now, the *lapis Pollae* provides a glimpse of the earlier stages of commercial exploitation of Lucania. It is possible that, in these early stages, the elites of the new settlements, and perhaps of Campania, were faster to seize the opportunities for commercial agriculture, while the owners of *greges* based in Rome continued to focus on pastoralism.[65] It is possible that this situation generated contrasts. The celebration of magisterial achievements in the *lapis Pollae*, then, should be understood as an attempt by a member of the Roman nobility to secure ties of gratitude and patronage among the local elites, even at the cost of taking sides against his peers.

4. THE *LAPIS POLLAE* AS EVIDENCE FOR ROMAN ROAD BUILDING

According to Toynbee (1965: II, 672), the road Capua–Regium was part of the reaction to the slave revolts in Sicily. Wiseman (1964: 35–6), on the other hand, considered it a necessary measure to fight brigandage. Roads, it is true, could facilitate the movement of troops (Prag, 2006: 739 n. 27), thereby helping to secure territorial control and policing.[66] Any interpretation of the function of the road Capua–Regium, though, should acknowledge the importance of the *lapis Pollae*. The message of the *lapis* is not a statement of power and control, but a celebration of infrastructural and economic development. For this reason, I believe, we should see the road as an infrastructure built for times of peace. The road Capua–Regium aimed at

[64] Although the ownership of the San Pietro di Tolve villa is not certain, we know for sure that Domitia Lepida had *horrea* in Campania (Di Giuseppe, 2007: 163) and flocks in the Murgia, to the west and east of Lucania respectively (Gualtieri, 2009: 362). More generally, the coexistence of woodland economics and agriculture is also made clear by the Caposele inscription: as the text reveals, L. Domitius Phaon owned both *agri* and *silvae*.

[65] The poet Lucilius, who owned land near Tarentum, was born in Suessa Aurunca and had such close ties to Campania that he was buried in Naples at public expenses (Jer. *Chron.* 148e Helm).

[66] Borrowing an expression used by Prag (2006: 735) for inscribed milestones, we could say that roads also opened up 'symbolic opportunities' for conquest and control. First of all, roads delivered a message of direct connection with Rome. Besides, they were of fundamental importance in the shaping of the very idea of control of a physical space (of course, this is not to say that roads could serve as *limites*). As Purcell (1990b: 12) has pointed out, 'the Roman control of large areas of land entailed some conception of geographical space', and, given the importance of the 'idea of the itinerary' in the 'geographical conceptions of the ancient', it comes as a logical consequence that the idea of control 'is intimately associated with the itinerary in its most developed form — the built road'. Roads were (also) symbols, and therefore they could deliver their message of control 'even if they were only systematized tracks'.

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improving communications and transport between the new settlements, to Campania, and, through the Via Appia, to Rome.

When set in the wider context of Roman infrastructural development, the road appears in line with the most typical approach adopted in the third and second centuries BC. Bradley (2014: 67) has found that, in the third century, roads often post-date the foundation of new settlements. This observation could be extended to second-century road building: the Via Flaminia, connecting Rome with Ariminum, was built around 40 years after the foundation of the colony; roughly the same time-span separates the foundation of Placentia and Mutina from the construction of the Via Aemilia. The Via Annia to Aquileia was built around 40 years after the initial *deductio*, and around 20 years after its reinforcement.[67] The new dating of the *lapis Pollae* suggests a similar time-span between the road and Roman colonial foundations in the area. Roads did not create contacts out of nowhere. They built on, and supported, the ongoing growth of Roman presence. If, like Gellius (*NA* 16.13.8), we described Roman colonies as plants propagated by layering — that is, by fastening down branches to the ground, to take root while still attached to the plant — roads would be the supports added by the farmer at a later stage, once the new shoots had started growing.

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, I have argued that the *lapis Pollae* should be dated earlier than 131 BC, and the career of the magistrate who set it up to the 150s–140s. I have also suggested that the message of the *lapis* shows an active concern for the development of southern Italy, connected with the interests of the colonial ruling classes. The road Capua–Regium should be seen in the light of this concern, as Rome's contribution to the successful development of the colonies founded in the early second century BC.

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[67] Uggeri (2012: 138) suggests that T. Annius Luscus realized the importance of Aquileia as a bridgehead to the East during his service as a praetor in the Pannonian expedition of 156 BC.

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