Zeitschrift: Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique
Herausgeber: Fondation Hardt pour l'étude de l'Antiquité classique
Band: 60 (2014)

Artikel: Roman gardens, military conquests, and elite self-representation
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DOI: https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-660895

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ROMAN GARDENS, MILITARY CONQUESTS, AND ELITE SELF-REPRESENTATION

During Rome's military expansion in the Mediterranean in the 2nd century BCE, the seizing of vast amounts of wealth on the part of the political elite in the form of booty and slaves caused many changes in Rome. Precious objects and works of art brought back from military campaigns changed the tastes and life style of the wealthy. These 'imperial encounters' also brought back to Rome new architectural styles, which changed the appearance of the Roman *domus* and shaped the development of luxury villas. This paper explores how Roman gardens reflected Rome's territorial expansion and new annexations of land: new plants or new varieties of known plants were often discovered during military campaigns and brought back to Italy by commanders to be planted in their gardens or on their villa estates. Were these imports just 'souvenirs', were they intentionally sought as symbols of military conquest, or did they simply reflect a practical interest in growing new plants and better varieties of fruits in the *fundi* of the upper class? This paper argues that they were all these things at the same time and that private gardens became an important part of elite self-representation in direct dialogue with the features and development of 'public gardens' and, to use Diana Spencer's words, with "Rome's new imperial status as cultural arbiter and collector".[1]

[1] SPENCER 2010, 141.

I. The gardens of the elite and self-representation

The peristyle garden became a stable feature of urban houses and villas from the 2nd century BCE onwards. The Roman houses of the early mid-Republican period had a small garden, in fact a kitchen garden, where vegetables, herbs, and flowers could be grown. This type of garden was chiefly utilitarian rather than decorative. It is this kind of garden that Pliny the Elder had in mind when referring to the morally superior life of earlier Romans.[2] The peristyle garden, however, was very different and with time it became a medium for the display of social status and culture.[3] A large rectangular green space surrounded by colonnaded porticoes for leisurely strolling, the peristyle garden became the place for *otium*, the enjoyment of a cultured type of leisure, often intellectual and philosophical, in contrast to the *negotium* of public life.[4]

Intellectuals of the 1st century such as Pliny the Elder associated in their mind *heredium* (family estate, the original Roman garden space)[5] and *hortus* (garden) as very early features of Rome.[6] By Pliny's time, the garden had acquired a "mythic, historical and ethnographic dimension".[7] The 'new' peristyle garden and associated porticoes were places to display works of art, sometimes according to precise themes that suggested the

[2] PLIN. *HN* 19, 52.

[3] PURCELL 1995; BERGMANN 2002, 87-90; VON STACKELBERG 2009, 11; FARRAR ²2011.

[4] In modern scholarship a distinction is often made between *hortus*, meaning vegetable garden/orchard or pleasure garden (in the plural *horti* is applied to suburban parks equipped with luxury buildings), and *uir(i)darium*, used to refer to enclosed gardens in the context of domestic architecture. However, in Latin, *uir(i)darium* is a term that appears in the late Republic and early Augustan period in connection with topiary art and is best understood as referring to collections or displays of plants: LANDGREN 2004, cited in GLEASON 2010, 8.

[5] The *heredium* measured two *iugera*, what one person could plough in a day; this was also the amount of land that Romulus assigned to citizens, according to VARRO *Rust.* 1, 10, 2.

[6] PLIN. *HN* 19, 50; PURCELL 2007; VON STACKELBERG 2009, 10.

[7] VON STACKELBERG 2009, 12.

intellectual activity of the owner. Cicero gave specific instructions to Atticus about the types of statuary he sought for the garden of his villa in Tusculum;[8] the so-called Villa of Cassius in Tibur featured a large peristyle garden adorned with herms of poets and statesmen; outside Italy, the 2nd-century villa of the prominent Herodes Atticus featured, in the peristyle garden, unitary mosaic and sculptural decoration, linking the themes of the mosaics with the sculptures placed in front of the porticoes.[9] Statuary, ideally original Greek works and not Roman copies, was fundamental in furnishing gardens of the wealthy. Domitius Tullus, a contemporary of Pliny the Younger, had storerooms filled with numerous ancient statues ready to be used to decorate the gardens of the new villas he bought.[10] Much has been written about Roman gardens as part of the general architectural display of the *domus* or the villa; about gardens as symbols of Hellenized intellectual *otium* — often famous literary and philosophical works are set in villa gardens and porticoes; and about the plants and compositions to be found in such gardens and the relationship between real gardens and painted gardens.[11] The association culture–garden was strongly felt, as is indicated by Cicero's remark to Varro that *si hortum in bibliotheca habes, deerit nihil.*[12] Cicero's example is often quoted to illustrate the use of the garden as a space for the re-creation of intellectual pursuits, since in his villas he

[8] See *Att.* 1, 6, 2; 1, 8, 2; 1, 9, 2; *cf. Fam.* 7, 23, 2.

[9] The villa at Eua in the Peloponnese; for example, in the N portico, in front of a mosaic depicting Menelaos holding the body of Patroclos, was a statuary group representing the same subject. The villa finds were in part published in SPYROPOULOS 2001; for information on this and other villas owned by Herodes Atticus, see PAPAIOANNOU, forthcoming. On the sculptural display in villas: BARTMAN 1991; NEUDECKER 1988 (especially 65-66, villa of Cassius); 1998.

[10] PLIN. *Ep.* 8, 18, 11.

[11] JASHEMSKI 1979; 1993; GRIMAL ^{3}1984; MIELSCH 1987; CIARALLO 2001; 2004. On gardens (painted and real) as constructed multivalent compositions in Augustan Rome, see KELLUM 1994.

[12] "If you have a garden in your library, we shall have all we want", CIC. *Fam.* 9, 4 (written from Tusculum), trans. W.G. WILLIAMS.

had two gardens named after the most famous philosophical schools, the Platonic Academy and the Aristotelian Lyceum.[13]

The garden was a liminal space, on various levels, both physical and conceptual:[14] in the context of the architecture of the house and its relation with the world outside the house; in terms of its mythical and evocative dimensions; and because its change in appearance during the passing of the seasons made this a space subject to a process of continuous deconstruction and reconstruction on the part of the garden's viewers and users.[15] The garden could convey specific references through the plants chosen to grow in it and the works of art displayed in it, as in the case of the association made between garden space, plane trees, and philosophical pursuits (see below), and in the case of garden-tombs, the garden was an integral part of the monument.[16] The funerary inscription of the freedman Hostius Pamphilus and his wife laconically stresses the relationship between tomb, estate, garden, and monument: . . . *haec est domus aeterna hic est / fundus heis sunt horti hoc / est monumentum nostrum* . . .[17]

The peristyle garden was also the place in which various flowering plants, evergreens, and trees were to be discovered while occupants and visitors were walking through the flower beds or taking in the views of the garden from one of the rooms opening directly onto it (typically *triclinia* and *diaetae*). Well-planned paths and attentively landscaped gardens were, according to Vitruvius, very important for the health: strolling through this type of garden was an advisable exercise.[18] Peristyle gardens

[13] Cic. *Tusc.* 2, 9; *Diu.* 1, 8.

[14] From a legal point of view, the *hortus* was part of the villa: *Dig.* 7, 8, 12, 1; but it could also be a separate space: *Dig.* 47, 5, 3; 49, 4, 1, 9.

[15] Purcell 1996; von Stackelberg 2009.

[16] E.g., Cic. *Fin.* 5, 1, 2; Purcell 1996; Bodel 1997.

[17] "This is our home, this is our farm, these are our gardens, this is our memorial", *CIL* I² 1319 = VI 9583 = *CLE* 247 = *ILLRP* 798 = *ILS* 8341. For the form *heis*, showing the *s*-nominative form for the pronoun (and *ei* for long *i*), see Bakkum 2005, 28.

[18] Vitr. *De arch.* 5, 9, 5; 5, 11, 4; O'Sullivan 2011, 80-82.

belonged to the 'private' part of the Roman house, to be enjoyed by selected friends of the family: here the social standing and aspirations of the owner could be communicated to a more restricted group of people than those accessing the *fauces* and atrium.[19] In Roman domestic architecture, as notably exemplified by the houses of Pompeii, there was a continuous interaction between real garden spaces and imaginary painted gardens.[20] The majority of the gardens studied by Wilhelmina Jashemski in Pompeii featured a wall with a painted garden view. Sometimes these frescoes were simply ingenious expedients in order to amplify limited garden space by means of an illusionistic painting; at other times they clearly referred to elements that in the collective imagination were recognized as fundamental features of 'proper' gardens and upper-class parks. The scenes of *uenationes* in natural environments — mostly between different kinds of animals and not involving humans — that are present even in very small Pompeian gardens recall the royal eastern *paradeisoi* and the Hellenistic royal parks. More sophisticated architectural examples, as in the case of the suburban villa at Oplontis, pushed the dialogue between real and painted gardens one step further and 'transformed' real garden vistas into paintings by artfully framing these vistas with windows.[21]

I.1. Gardens and the public persona of the owner

In the Republican period, when the *domus* had such an important symbolic and political value for upper-class Romans,[22] we find that the garden, too, was seen as something

[19] The atrium-peristyle order is reversed in the case of the *uilla pseudo-urbana*: VITR. *De arch.* 6, 5, 3.

[20] CONAN 1986.

[21] ZARMAKOUPI, forthcoming.

[22] WISEMAN 1987; e.g., Cn. Octavius' house on the Palatine conferred on him the *dignitas* commensurate with the consulate: CIC. *Off.* 1, 138.

that transmitted status and prestige and thereby needed to conform to the *dignitas* of the owner. Cicero's writings contain numerous references to the garden as a place for displaying refined taste and learning. Like other features of the house, the garden, too, became a place for elite competitive display and for the imitation of trends and behaviour on the part of the 'middle' classes, as can be seen in Pompeian houses,[23] and in an adversarial context it could conversely be criticized as a locus of immoral behaviour.[24] The most striking example of the plants in a garden (particularly the trees) being taken to symbolize the owner's persona comes from the fate of Cicero's own homes when he was exiled. Not only was his urban *domus* seized and knocked down in an attempt to obliterate his public memory, but also his other mansions were pillaged by his opponents.[25] At Tusculum, furnishings and other objects were taken away to adorn the villa of his neighbour and enemy, Gabinius (consul in 58 BCE), after the manner of trophies. According to what the orator himself states in the speech *De domo sua,* the trees from his garden were taken as well.[26] The remark about *arbores* seized together with *instrumentum aut ornamenta* is not just a rhetorical device to affect the audience a certain way. It also shows that the garden, with its chosen combination of plants and statues, had a strong symbolic value as a vehicle of social status and self-representation.[27] Cicero's enemies wanted to destroy all that belonged to him

[23] JASHEMSKI 1979; 1993; ZANKER 1998; VON STACKELBERG 2009.

[24] VON STACKELBERG 2009, 11. For gardens as places for improper behaviour in Cicero's oratory: CIC. *Cael.* 36; 38; 49. For the use of gardens to display statues: *Verr. II* 2, 87; 4, 121. The statues that Verres had taken from Samos were arranged between and in front of the columns of a peristyle garden, as well as among the plantings: *Verr. II* 1, 51.

[25] Famous precedents for the demolition of houses linked to the annihilation of a public figure concern M. Fulvius Flaccus and L. Saturninus: CIC. *Dom.* 102; VAL. MAX. 6, 3, 1c.

[26] *Dom.* 62.

[27] See also BEARD 1998 on Nero and the *horti Lamiani*; HILBOLD 2013 on Cicero's political and moral use, in the *Philippics,* of Antony's acquisition of *horti.*

and represented him as a public figure. This incident is not the first instance of trees and well-tended gardens destroyed in the attempt to demolish the image of their owners. According to Diodorus, when in 391 BCE the Phoenicians revolted against Persian rule, their first hostile action was to cut down the trees of the Persian royal park. Only after the park had been destroyed did they turn to more strategic actions, "burning . . . the fodder for the horses which had been stored up by the satraps for the war".[28]

Well-established trees, of course, could be rather valuable, since it took time for a tree to grow, so there might also have been more practical considerations in removing trees from Cicero's villa. Whether these were fruit trees or ornamental trees, taking established older plants — if they could be transplanted successfully — was more convenient than planting young trees and waiting for them to reach the proper height or bear fruit.[29] Real estate could increase in value thanks to trees, as is illustrated by an anecdote about the house of L. Licinius Crassus, co-censor with Domitius Ahenobarbus, on the Palatine. The garden of this house had either six or ten *lotus* trees, depending on the source one follows.[30] This species, which produces small edible fruits, was prized as an ornamental plant, because of the shade that the branches provided in summer; it also had the advantage of shedding its leaves early, thus not impeding solar light in winter, and the bark of the trunk is said to have been very pleasing to the eye.[31] Valerius Maximus reports that Domitius criticized Crassus for having in his house a portico with columns of expensive Hymettian marble. When asked by Crassus to estimate the value of the house, Domitius

[28] DIOD. 16, 41, 5, trans. C.L. SHERMAN.

[29] MARZANO 2007, 98-99.

[30] PLIN. *HN* 17, 1-5 (six trees); VAL. MAX. 9, 1, 4 (ten). The *lotus* is to be identified as *Celtis australis*, commonly known as the nettle tree or European hackberry.

[31] PLIN. *HN* 16, 124.

gave the sum of six million sesterces. But when asked what the value of the house would be, minus ten small trees from the garden (*arbusculae*), he gave the sum of three million, allowing Crassus to give a witty reply: who was to be considered more extravagant, Crassus, for paying 100,000 for ten marble columns, or Domitius, who had valued the shade given by the trees at three million sesterces?[32] Pliny recounts the same story, but his figures for the trees in question and the price offered for the house are different.[33]

One of the most famous literary descriptions of an elite garden is to be found in Pliny the Younger's epistle about his villa *in Tuscis*.[34] After describing the spectacular natural landscape that surrounds the villa, Pliny describes the portico with its associated enclosed garden (*xystus*), which contains many box bushes skilfully shaped into unnatural forms by the art of topiary.[35] He then describes the nearby slope, also marked by trimmed trees (in the shape of animals), and an expanse of acanthus that gives the impression of a pool of water.[36] The next garden space described in the letter is the large hippodrome garden, encircled by plane trees.[37] Here ivy covers the trunks and branches of the trees, linking them together; in the centre is the lawn, marked by box hedges, also skilfully pruned into many shapes, including — the culminating point of the garden as self-representation — box shaped as letters to form Pliny's and the gardener's own names: this is art, and as a mosaic in a villa might have the artist's signature, so does

[32] VAL. MAX. 9, 1, 4: *uter igitur luxuriosior est, egone, qui decem columnas centum milibus nummum emi, an tu, qui decem arbuscularum umbram tricies sestertii summa compensas?*

[33] According to PLIN. *HN* 17, 3-4, Domitius rebuked Crassus for living on such a lavish scale when holding the office of censor and offered to buy his house for one million sesterces; when Crassus agreed, but said he would keep six lotus trees, Domitius refused, giving Crassus the opportunity to make a witty comment on who was really setting the bad example about *luxuria*.

[34] PLIN. *Ep.* 5, 6.

[35] On *topiarii* as essential for the well-kept garden: PLIN. *Ep.* 3, 19, 3.

[36] PLIN. *Ep.* 5, 6, 16.

[37] PLIN. *Ep.* 5, 6, 32-36.

the garden. Most appropriately for a hippodrome garden, other box trees are pruned in the shape of obelisks (the *metae* in the real circus); these are interspersed with fruit trees. In the very centre, the plane trees appear again, this time shorter (*breuioribus platanis*, §35), together with acanthus. Then Pliny mentions "more figures and more names" (*plures figurae pluraque nomina*, §36), presumably shaped out of box trees or bushes. Pliny's own definition of this garden arrangement is of a most urbane work of art (topiary) with in the middle an *imitation* of natural landscape (*et in opere urbanissimo subita uelut inlati ruris imitatio*, §35). Next to the hippodrome garden is an architectural space offering a private retreat: a room with alcove and bed, which gives the impression of being in a grove (*non secus ibi quam in nemore iaceas*, §39), since a thick vine covers the whole structure and allows little light through the windows.[38] The play between 'real' and 'artificial', between nature and imitation of nature, is continuous: the central garden is openly artificial, whereas the private suite, though a built structure, gives the impression of a grove.[39] Pliny makes several suggestions about himself through the plants he has in his gardens:[40] the plane trees evoke philosophy and the Academy, acanthus and laurel suggest literary pursuits, ivy and vines recall Bacchus and viticulture and allude to Pliny the estate owner (vines were the cash crop he grew on this estate). There is no doubt that such a garden had been carefully planned to match the aesthetic ideals of the owner, but also to offer to guests a spectacle proportionate to the owner's social standing. Notwithstanding the different socio-political situations, both Cicero's and Pliny's villa gardens share a common denominator: they were a means of self-representation.

[38] PLIN. *Ep.* 5, 6, 38-39.
[39] PURCELL 1996; KUTTNER 1999*b*.
[40] SPENCER 2010, 133-134.

II. Military conquests, new plants, and the gardens of the elite

The connection between plants — trees in particular — and military conquest is, in Rome, a late Republican phenomenon, at least as far as we know. Such a connection is unambiguous in the case of the triumph celebrated in 61 BCE by Pompey the Great at the end of his campaigns against the Mediterranean pirates and Mithradates, King of Pontus. On this occasion, the magnificent triumphal procession that Pompey staged included the display of living trees, apparently for the first time in Rome's history. Our source for this detail is Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*; while discussing the *balsamum* plant from Judaea,[41] Pliny wrote that Vespasian and Titus had displayed the plant in Rome (presumably in their triumph and then possibly in the Templum Pacis?)[42] and then concluded his sentence by remarking: *clarumque dictu, a Pompeio Magno in triumpho arbores quoque duximus.*[43] In an earlier passage, he had already remarked that Pompey displayed the Ethiopian ebony tree in his triumph.[44] According to Pliny, then, Pompey's

[41] *Commiphora opobalsamum*, commonly known as balsam of Mecca. PLIN. *HN* 12, 111-113 firmly connects *balsamum* to Judaea only, stating that the plant used to grow there in just two royal gardens (the gardens at Jericho and Ein Gedi: *cf.* Song of Sol. 1, 14). THEOPHR. *Hist. pl.* 9, 6, 1 wrote that the plant grew in one valley in Syria, while according to DIOSCORIDES *Mat. med.* 1, 19 it was to be found only in Egypt and in one valley in India. The plant, in fact, grew in the south-west of the Arabian peninsula and in coastal Somalia.

[42] POLLARD 2009 argues that the garden of the Templum Pacis contained botanical specimens representing the extent of Rome's empire and that Pliny's work (which he dedicated to Titus), with its keen interest in classification and description of foreign plants and animals, has to be understood in this context; at p. 328 she states: "The list of botanicals in Pliny's *Natural History* is a virtual triumph intended to celebrate the power of, and to offer panegyric to, the Flavian family and the peace they had won". On Pliny's encyclopedic project, see NAAS 2002.

[43] "And it is a remarkable fact that ever since the time of Pompey the Great even trees have figured among the captives in our triumphal processions", PLIN. *HN* 12, 111, trans. H. RACKHAM.

[44] PLIN. *HN* 12, 19-20.

triumph was the moment when for the first time plants — balsam and ebony — were taken as the symbol of the land from which they came.[45] These were not just any plants, of course, but, in suitable fashion for a triumphal display, they were precious plants, whose products (whether resins or wood) had high commercial value. If and when such plants were subsequently planted in gardens, they must have retained the symbolism attached to them.

It appears that the balsam trees of Judaea were a considerable source of revenue for the region in the 1st century BCE and 1st century CE. Mark Antony had given the balsam plantations as a gift to Cleopatra, from whom Herod leased them.[46] After the battle of Actium and the annexation of Egypt, these plantations probably passed to Herod, and when Judaea became a Roman province in 6 CE they may have been transferred to Roman ownership, although probably the Jews still leased the right to cultivate them.[47] During the first Jewish revolt, the Jews had tried to destroy these plantations, but the Romans had saved the precious trees, so that — according to Pliny — the trees, too, were turned into tribute-paying subjects, with the *fiscus* cultivating the balsam and, it seems, selling the product directly.[48] As Pliny explains, not only did the resin from

[45] ÖSTENBERG 2009, 185 believes that Pliny's remark about Pompey and the display of trees in the triumph when discussing the balsam tree refers to trees in general, and not to this plant in particular. MURPHY 2004, 162 incorrectly ascribes to PLIN. *HN* 15, 70 the claim that Pompey had shown in his triumph the variety of fig tree named after him.

[46] PLUT. *Ant.* 36, 2.

[47] ÖSTENBERG 2009, 187.

[48] *Saeuiere in eam Iudaei sicut in uitam quoque suam; contra defendere Romani, et dimicatum pro frutice est; seritque nunc eum fiscus, nec umquam fuit numerosior* ("The Jews vented their wrath upon this plant as they also did upon their own lives, but the Romans protected it against them, and there have been pitched battles in defence of a shrub. It is now cultivataed by the treasury authorities, and was never before more plentiful"), PLIN. *HN* 12, 113, trans. H. RACKHAM. At 12, 123 Pliny refers to sales of balsam resin by the *fiscus*: *milibus denarium sextarii, empti uendente fisco trecenis denariis, ueneunt* ("every pint bought at a sale held by the fiscus for 300 denarii when it is sold again makes 1000 denarii").

the balsam tree have commercial value, but so did cuttings and shoots (called *xylobalsamum* and commonly used in the manufacture of perfumes) and, for medicinal use, the bark, and because of the great monetary value of balsam, a range of adulterated products infiltrated the market.[49]

The association between military conquest and plants (and animals) has a long-standing tradition in history. The temple of Deir el-Bahri in Egypt, for instance, shows on one of its walls a depiction of thirty small trees or shrubs with their roots in baskets, evidently transported from somewhere else, probably in connection with the exploration of other lands that took place in the reign of Hatshepsut in the middle of the 2nd millennium BCE; her son, Thutmosis III, brought back to Egypt from the regions he had conquered in Asia plants and animals, as commemorated on the columns of the temple at Karnak, near Thebes.[50] In Assyria, Tiglat-Pileser I seemed to have created zoological parks and botanical gardens, where the various specimens of plants collected during military expeditions were acclimatized. The variety of plants grown here reflected the extension of the acquired territories.[51] Sennacherib introduced new plants into Nineveh; he claimed to have made gardens in the city by using "plants from the mountains and the surrounding countries, spices from the land of the Hittites, plants of myrrh which grow better than in their country of origin, vines brought from the hills and fruit trees . . . all this I did for my subjects". Ashurbanipal did the same and proclaimed: "I took note of and collected the trees and the seeds in the lands through which I travelled and in between the hills which

[49] See PLIN. *HN* 12, 118-123; shortly after the victory over Judaea, cuttings of *xylobalsamum* gave a revenue of 800,000 sesterces. On balsam state monopoly and price, see COTTON & ECK 1997. ALPERS 1995, 291-304 takes *fiscus* in this context to refer to the *Fiscus Iudaicus* and not the imperial *fiscus*.

[50] CIARALLO 2007, 157.

[51] CIARALLO 2007, 158-159. Other examples of plants 'collected' by kings during military conquest include 41 species of trees and bushes collected by Assurnasipal II in the 9th century and planted near his capital city, Kahlu.

I passed".[52] Achaemenid and Hellenistic kings also embarked on the 'collection' of plants and animals from foreign lands and kept them in their royal parks. The symbolic dimension of these acts seems clear.[53] Alexander himself had used plants symbolically when he encouraged the planting of Greek species such as ivy in the gardens of Babylon.[54] Attempts at transplanting, however, particularly in the case of exotic spices, were not always successful: Seleucus Nikator tried in vain to introduce amomum and nard from India into Arabia.[55]

The triumphal displays were a high dramatic point in stressing the geography of Rome's imperialism; the painted tableaux showed the cities or new lands conquered, and the landscapes of foreign battles;[56] the prisoners of war, with their foreign appearance, were a visible presence of the 'other'; even the various kinds of tableware, such as those that Plutarch lists in the triumph of Aemilius Paulus, had names that evoked victories over eastern cities and dynasties.[57] Republican generals often took inspiration for their behaviour from Hellenistic kings, including elements in triumphal celebrations,[58] and it is possible that displaying live trees in a celebratory context had occurred in the Hellenistic world.[59] Pompey, however, was not the first Roman general to come back from overseas campaigns bringing trees with him. The best-known case, just over a decade earlier than Pompey's display, is L. Licinius Lucullus and the cherry tree. The source of this information is again Pliny the Elder, who states that before the victory over Mithradates

[52] CIARALLO 2007, 160. BOWE 2004, 43 compares the Roman interest in importing plants from the many countries they interacted with through conquest or trade to what the Egyptians and Assyrians had done.

[53] See SCHNEIDER 2012; on the royal garden at Pasargadae: STRONACH 1989.

[54] BRIANT 1996, 215; SCHNEIDER 2012, 285-286.

[55] PLIN. *HN* 16, 135.

[56] On triumphal displays: ÖSTENBERG 2009.

[57] BEARD 2007, 162; PLUT. *Aem.* 33, 4: bowls known as Antigonids and Seleucids.

[58] E.g., the case of the triumphal feast: MARZANO 2009.

[59] SCHNEIDER 2012, 290.

in 74 BCE there were no cherry trees in Italy.[60] Lucullus imported the tree from Pontus, and later the Romans introduced the cherry to Britain after the conquest of the island in 43 CE. Pliny presents this information as a matter-of-fact statement. We can, however, note that by informing the reader about the circumstances behind the introduction of the cherry and its subsequent diffusion to a new province, he presents the tree first as 'spoil' of Lucullus' military campaigning in Asia and, later, as a symbol of the Roman conquest of Britain. This new land is now under Roman control, nature can be altered, and new plants are introduced. The movement of plants was, obviously, not limited to military conquest, but occurred also in commercial exchange and in connection with the establishment of land holdings owned by individuals with properties in different geographic locations, as in the case discussed by Pliny concerning the so-called African figs.[61] But it is in the context of military expansion and spoil-taking that the symbolic dimension of plants is most explicit.

Probably it was the sour cherry that Lucullus brought back with him, not the sweet cherry, which is believed to have already existed in Italy in the wild.[62] The presence of wild sweet cherry might have helped the diffusion of the sour cherry and the creation of different varieties, since it was possible to graft the sour cherry onto wild cherries, as is clearly stated by Palladius.[63] But not only did Lucullus introduce the tree to Italy; he also gave to the new plant its Latin name, *cerasus*,

[60] PLIN. *HN* 15, 102. Various later authors repeat that Lucullus was the first to introduce the cherry from Pontus, e.g., TERT. *Apol.* 11, 8.

[61] PLIN. *HN* 15, 69 states that this kind of fig had been introduced to Africa only very recently. For preliminary considerations on the plant trade: MACAULAY-LEWIS 2010; on commercial plant nurseries: KENAWI, MACAULAY-LEWIS, & MCKENZIE 2012.

[62] BORGONGINO 2006, 29: there are references to cherries eaten in Italy before Lucullus' time, and cherry trees had been known in Greece since the time of Lysimachus and Theophrastus; DALBY 2003, 81.

[63] PALLADIUS, *Op. agric.* 11, 12, 4-7; DALBY 2003, 81.

from the town of Cerasus in Pontus.[64] This piece of information, found in Athenaeus, is remarkable when contextualized within the upper-class interest in scientific knowledge of plants, horticulture, and the creation of new varieties of fruit. This was a late Republican phenomenon that reached full 'maturity' in the Augustan period (see below). By giving a name to something previously unknown, the agent also expresses possession and some sort of claim over the object named. To be able to 'precisely' name a foreign novelty, in our case from its area of origin, is akin — albeit on a simpler level — to the ability of the conqueror to know the new lands, to produce accurate geographical maps, and to indicate not only the topographical characteristics, but also the fauna and flora of the conquered regions.[65]

Lucullus did not display cherry trees in his triumph; perhaps this type of cherry was not so strongly associated with the king he had defeated, but it is also to be remembered that he had to wait a few years before he could celebrate his triumph, while Pompey took advantage of Lucullus' previous successes against Mithradates. Interestingly, since Lucullus as holder of *imperium* had to reside outside the *pomerium* while waiting to be granted a triumph, the task to which he devoted himself was the creation of the lavish *horti Luculliani* on the Pincian Hill, which attracted Plutarch's reproach for the wealth spent in

[64] Modern Giresun in north-east Turkey. Cerasus (or, in Greek, Kerasous) was a colony of Sinope: DALBY 2003, 81. On Lucullus as one of the candidates for having given the Latin name to the plant: ATH. 2, 51a-b.

[65] On geographic knowledge and maps as an expression of imperialism in antiquity: NICOLET 1988. On botanical imperialism in the modern period: DE VOS 2006; 2007. Nero sent an expedition to Aethiopia which gathered information on topography, flora, and fauna and produced a map which also showed the trees (or lack thereof): *cognita Aethiopiae forma — ut diximus, nuper allata Neroni principi — raram arborem Meroen usque a Syene fine imperii . . . docuit* ("The exploration of the geography of Ethiopia, which as we have said had lately been reported to the Emperor Nero, showed that . . . from Syene on the frontier of the empire to Meroe trees are rare"), PLIN. *HN* 12, 19, trans. H. RACKHAM.

creating them.[66] Did Lucullus plant the cherry in these gardens or possibly at one of his villas? We will never know, but it is plausible. It is also possible that his interest in the fruit tree might have given to Pompey the idea of parading live trees, symbolically representing some of the many regions over which he celebrated his own triumph.

Pompey's triumphal celebration, in terms of populations subjugated and geographic areas covered, was an unprecedented affair that made his deeds comparable to those of Alexander the Great and Hercules.[67] The triumph, celebrated on September 29 in 61 BCE, was for victories over Asia, Pontus, Armenia, Paphlagonia, Cappadocia, Cilicia, Syria, the Scythians, the Judaeans, the Albani, Hiberia, Crete, the Basterni, and the kings Mithradates and Tigranes.[68] The text commemorating his victories and dedications of booty in the temple of Minerva aimed at impressing the reader with its precise-looking use of large numerals:

> *Cn. Pompeius Magnus imperator bello XXX annorum confecto fusis fugatis occisis in deditionem acceptis hominum centiens uiciens semel LXXXIII depressis aut captis nauibus DCC<C>XLVI oppidis castellis MDXXXVIII in fidem receptis terris a Maeotis ad Rubrum Mare subactis uotum merito Mineruae.*[69]

Considering the geographic coverage of Pompey's military activity and the number of populations involved, and hence the number of prisoners, precious metal objects, weapons and rostra, and illustrations of battles fought and places conquered,

[66] *LTUR s.v.* 'Horti Luculliani' (H. BROISE & V. JOLIVET). PLUT. *Luc.* 39, 2 remarks that even in his own time, when luxury had increased so much, the Horti Luculliani were still among the most costly of all imperial *horti*.

[67] PLIN. *HN* 7, 95.

[68] PLIN. *HN* 7, 98.

[69] "The general Cn. Pompeius Magnus, having concluded a 30-year long war, vanquished, dispersed, killed, and subjugated 12,183,000 individuals, sunk or captured 846 ships, received the submission of 1,538 towns and strongholds, and conquered the lands that span from the Maeotis [Sea of Azov] to the Red Sea, absolved his vow to Minerva in a proper manner", PLIN. *HN* 7, 97, trans. A. MARZANO.

it might seem superfluous to bring trees into the procession as well. These, however, were trees not only clearly associated with a specific region, but also bearing notable commercial value: as discussed, balsam resin was highly sought after for perfumes and medical treatments, and ebony was highly appreciated for the quality of its wood.[70] We are not told what happened to the trees after the triumph; it is unlikely that balsam and African ebony could be successfully planted in Rome or its surroundings, since these species normally grew in rather hot and dry climates.[71]

This triumphal vegetal display has an interesting responsion in the celebrated portico-garden that Pompey developed after his triumph, planning a garden that would symbolize his great military deeds and remain as a memento of them for the population of Rome. The great portico enclosure attached to the theatre-*cum*-temple complex that he built was a public park in which plants, statuary, and paintings on display had a highly symbolic meaning.[72] The central garden space featured double rows of plane trees and fountains, and several thematic groups of (female) statues were to be found in the garden and porticoes: personifications of conquered nations, groups of female authors, famous *hetairai*, friends of artists, writers, and statesmen, and also statues embodying portents.[73] Various scholars have commented on how this garden project alluded to

[70] *Hebanus* is probably the *Diospyros crassiflora, Diospyros mespiligormis*, and *Diospyros perrieri*. The *Diospyros* genus is part of the family of the Ebanaceae and comprises *c.* 500 species of trees and shrubs; not all of the species are appreciated for the wood.

[71] ÖSTENBERG 2009, 188, in discussing the Flavian triumph and the balsam trees, says that they must have been planted after the triumph, but does not assess whether this was possible, considering the original habitat of the plants.

[72] KUTTNER 1999*a*; VON STACKELBERG 2009, 80-83. On the paintings displayed in the portico, see PLIN. *HN* 35, 59; 114; 126; 132.

[73] *Cf.* VITR. *De arch.* 5, 9, 1; PROP. 2, 32, 11-16; OV. *Ars* 3, 387; MART. 5, 10, 5; KUTTNER 1999*a*. The complex is depicted in fr. 39a of the Severan marble plan of Rome: LLOYD 1982; Stanford Digital Forma Urbis Romae Project: <http://formaurbis.stanford.edu/fragment.php?record=1&field0=stanford&search0=39ac&op0=and&field1=all>.

Pompey's military victories. Kathryn Gleason has suggested that also shrubs of laurel (the plant of victory, used for the wreath of the *triumphator*) and myrtle (the plant of Venus, to whom the temple towering over the theatre was dedicated, but also the plant used for the crown of the *ouatio*)[74] were planted in this garden, to emphasize Pompey's eastern victories.[75] According to Guy Sauron, the Theatre of Pompey, with its water features mentioned by Valerius Maximus, symbolically represented the *oikoumene*, while the garden portico, with its three sets of female statuary, was a symbol of a mythical act, Pompey's journey to the underworld (a feat that Dionysus and Heracles had performed).[76] If Ann Kuttner is right in thinking that the trees on display during the triumph included Asiatic plane trees,[77] we can speculate that some of the plane trees adorning Pompey's garden were the same trees that had been paraded in the triumph and that for those who had seen the triumphal procession they would be a reminder of the triumph itself.

Pompey's architectural complex possibly became the model to look to for the development of the peristyle garden in villas.[78] Also in the context of villas, the design, décor, and use of the peristyle garden and associated porticoes made constant reference to each other.[79] The works of art acquired as military booty were displayed in porticoes, and the garden displayed the imported trees, both participating in a dialogue about triumphal imperialism. Large gardens in increasingly more complex relationships with the surrounding architecture were a prominent feature of villas of the late 1st century BCE and early 1st century CE, and reached their 'maturity' in the 2nd century.

[74] PLIN. *HN* 15, 125.
[75] GLEASON 1994*a*, 19.
[76] VAL. MAX. 2, 4, 6; SAURON 1987, 464; see also COARELLI 1971-1972.
[77] KUTTNER 1999*a*, 345.
[78] GLEASON 1994*a*. The project clearly gave the impetus to other public buildings with garden space, e.g., Porticus Vipsania and Porticus Liviae: STRAB. 5, 3, 8; PLIN. *HN* 14, 11; MART. 1, 108, 3.
[79] LEACH 2004, 123-155.

II.1. Transplanting in the early empire

The end of the celebration of triumphs on the part of upper-class generals, when this honour became a monopoly of the imperial family, did not mean an end to importing new plants or new varieties of fruit from the provinces into Italy. We know of several military officers and provincial governors so minded. According to Pliny, just before 14 CE, Sex. Papinius Allienus (consul in 36 CE) imported to Italy the *zizipha* from Africa and *tubures* from Syria.[80] These plants, which Pliny mentions in the context of discussing the many kinds of apples (*mala*) and describes as more akin to berries (*bacae*) than apples, should probably be identified with *Zizyphus vulgaris* L. and *Crataegus azarolus* L. The former is the jujube-tree, *giuggiolo* in Italian; the latter is a species of hawthorn, commonly known in English as azerole and in Italian as *lazzeruolo*.[81] Sex. Papinius — evidently on military duty in these regions, since Pliny says that he had these trees planted at first *in castris* — later brought the plants to Italy, where they were successfully acclimatized. Indeed they were propagated and were in common use in Pliny's time, since he states that they were very decorative when used on the terraces of urban houses.[82] Some years later, L. Vitellius, father of the emperor Vitellius and governor of Syria 34-37 CE, brought back with him several new kinds of fig tree, which he planted on his estate near Alba: the *cottana, Caricae,* and *Cauneae.* Vitellius did not limit himself to

[80] PLIN. *HN* 15, 47.

[81] The Jujube-tree, belonging to the Rhamnaceae, produces very small fruits with yellowish and very sweet flesh; it is consumed fresh or as a preserve. Its sweetness is proverbial in Italy: several regions have a popular saying to indicate a state of absolute delight: "essere in un brodo di giuggiole". The azerole belongs to the family of the Rosaceae-Pomoideae. The small fruits are similar to small apples and are either picked unripe, to make preserves, or, once ripe in September, eaten fresh.

[82] Disapproval may be latent in Pliny's remark *aggeribus praecipue decora, quoniam et in tecta iam siluae scandunt* ("the trees make a particularly good decoration for terraces — as nowadays we have whole forests of vegetation growing even over the roofs of our houses"), PLIN. *HN* 15, 47, trans. H. RACKHAM.

figs; he also imported to Italy, for the first time, the pistachio tree, while his colleague, the *eques* Pompeius Flaccus, introduced the pistachio to Hispania.[83]

In other instances we do not know who was responsible for introducing new plants to Italy and whether such transitions occurred in the context of military expeditions or trade networks, or a combination of both.[84] Several plants with a foreign origin at a certain point in history were already well established on Italian soil by the time Rome started her military expansion in the Mediterranean.[85] The pomegranate (*malum Punicum* in Latin), of which Pliny mentions nine species, might have been introduced to Italy and Gaul by the Phoenicians;[86] the apricot, commonly called μῆλον Ἀρμενιακόν in Greek[87] and *Armeniacum* in Latin, was associated with Armenia, but in fact was known in ancient Mesopotamia and spread to the west after Alexander's expedition;[88] the peach, as indicated by its Latin name, *malum persicum*, was recognized as having originated from Persia. The Greeks were familiar with

[83] PLIN. *HN* 15, 91. DALBY 2003, 262 notes that pistachio, native to central Asia, became known to the Greeks during Alexander's expedition. The earliest description of pistachio is in THEOPHR. *Hist. pl.* 4, 4, 7. It spread around the Mediterranean in Hellenistic times, grafted on terebinth rootstock.

[84] It is clear that there was a trade for live plants, both at a regional level (the Zenon archive contains orders for different plant shoots and suckers; some examples discussed in KENAWI, MACAULAY-LEWIS, & MCKENZIE 2012, 195-197) and even long-distance. Pliny mentions that lemon trees were transported in *ollae perforatae*.

[85] PLIN. *HN* 12, 14 states that cherries, peaches, and all the plants with Greek or foreign names originated from foreign lands.

[86] PLIN. *HN* 13, 112-113; 15, 39; DALBY 2003, 266.

[87] DIOSCORIDES *Mat. med.* 1, 115, 5.

[88] DALBY 2003, 20: the apricot originates from Tibet and western China. The ancient name should be seen as simply indicating that the tree was commonly cultivated in Armenia and it was from there that the Greeks first imported it. PLIN. *HN* 15, 41 cites the Armeniaca as a particular type of plum, but it is understood by modern scholars that this refers to the apricot; the fruit is mentioned again at 16, 103. For the name, *cf.* also the less common names for apricot in Italian: *armeniaco*, *armellino* (from *Armeniacum*). The common name *albicocca* ultimately derives from *praecoquum* (another name, used because the plant bloomed early) via the mediation of the Arabic *al-barquq*.

the peach by the 3rd century BCE, and it is mentioned by Columella as well.[89] A particular variety of early peach was, according to Pliny, introduced to Italy only about thirty years before his own time and was sold at the high price of one *denarius* apiece.[90] Spices, too, had been successfully transplanted, although when grown in different environmental conditions they did not have the same colour and taste, as was the case with the cassia, which Pliny claims to have seen being cultivated amidst apiaries along the Rhine.[91]

II.2. The significance of the plane tree

The choice of the plane tree for the Porticus Pompeiana deserves some discussion. Plane trees were not sought after for any fruit, but for the pleasant shade they provided, and were therefore often the choice for a large garden, planted in a row in front of a portico. The plane tree could grow tall and its branches had a wide span. Its most important quality was that it had thick foliage in summer, ideal as shelter from the scorching sun, but it lost it in autumn; thus adjacent walkways and rooms opening onto porticoes were not deprived of sunshine and light in the winter months. Plane trees also had a long-standing association with rulers. The Persian king Darius had received as a gift from the Lydian Pythius a golden plane tree, and Xerxes, while traveling from Phrygia to Lydia, had seen a plane tree so beautiful that he adorned it with gold.[92]

[89] ATH. 3, 82e-83a cites Theophrastus as the first to mention peaches in Greek (although no such mention is present in the extant portion of Theophrastus' *History of Plants*): DALBY 2003, 252. *Cf.* COLUM. *Rust.* 5, 10, 20.

[90] There is often confusion in the ancient texts between peaches, plums, and apricots: BORGONGINO 2006, 20.

[91] *Color abest ille torridus sole et ob id simul idem odor* ("there it has not the scorched colour produced by the sun, and for the same reason also it has not the same scent as the southern product"), PLIN. *HN* 12, 98, trans. H. RACKHAM.

[92] HDT. 7, 27; 7, 31.

Dionysius the Elder of Syracuse planted plane trees in his residence at Rhegium.[93]

Plane trees, which were commonly found in Greek gymnasia,[94] also evoked another immediate association, this time highly intellectual and philosophical: the Platonic Academy and the Aristotelian Lyceum in Athens. Often, most notably in Cicero's writings, we find that a garden with plane trees was understood as a symbol of the Academy, thus signifying that the intellectual pursuits that were conducted in its shade were worthy of Plato's school. Plane trees, therefore, both because of the welcome shade that they provided in summer and the philosophical connection that they evoked, became quite common in large private and public gardens. Pliny the Younger mentions plane trees in several gardens to which he refers. In a letter to his friend Caninius Rufus in Comum, the very opening of the epistle brings forth the image of the shady peristyle garden as the key feature of Rufus' suburban villa:

> *Quid agit Comum, tuae meaeque deliciae? Quid suburbanum amoenissimum, quid illa porticus uerna semper, quid platanon opacissimus, quid euripus uiridis et gemmeus, quid subiectus et seruiens lacus, quid illa mollis et tamen solida gestatio?*[95]

In this passage, Pliny makes several allusions that move between the Greek and the Roman world. The plane tree is the Academia, but it is also Cicero's philosophical dialogues; the *euripus* is the shallow canal or elongated pond that was a common feature of gardens, but it was a borrowed word from the Greek place-name Euripos, indicating the channel between Boeotia

[93] PLIN. *HN* 12, 7; the plane tree was introduced from Greece to the Tremiti islands and later to Rhegium; according to Pliny, in his own time the plant had spread up to the north-eastern border with Gaul.

[94] SAURON 1987, 458.

[95] "I wonder how our darling Comum is looking, and your lovely house outside the town, with its colonnade where it is always springtime, and the shady plane trees, the stream with its sparkling greenish water flowing into the lake below, and the drive over the smooth firm turf", PLIN. *Ep.* 1, 3, 1, trans. B. RADICE.

and Euboea. In the context of public architecture, there were known *euripi* in Rome herself: the *euripus* of Rome's Circus Maximus and the *euripus* in the Campus Martius.[96]

By selecting particular plants and by using certain geographically-derived names for garden features (*cf.* Cicero's mention in *De legibus* of the common use of the names 'Niles' and 'Euripi' to indicate water channels, or Brutus naming parts of his villa garden after landmarks of Spartan topography[97]), the owner of a garden could also symbolically express Rome's imperialism, whether a type of cultural imperialism signified by the appropriation of Greek culture or Egyptian cults and iconographic motifs, or actual territorial conquest and the annexation of new provinces. But not everyone associated the plane tree with positive concepts. Pliny uses it as yet another example of Rome's luxury and the corruption of the older moral values that had laid great importance on being a good farmer. He remarks that the only reason why the tree was introduced to Italy was not because it bore any fruit (implying that this is a good reason to engage in transplanting) but for its 'sterile' shade. Likewise, decorative gardens with no agriculturally productive components are presented in a negative light by Horace: the elm (normally used as a support for vines, a practice commonly referred to as the 'marriage' of the elm and the vine) is taken over by the unproductive 'bachelor' plane tree (*platanus caelebs*).[98] The anecdote about Q. Hortensius and the plane trees which he watered with wine also needs to be understood in this same context, as the ultimate negation of productivity that only the very rich can afford:[99] the 'unproductive' plane tree, which replaces the elm and the vine, not only does

[96] Historicizing and sentimental nomenclature: CIC. *Leg.* 2, 2: *ductus . . . aquarum, quos isti Nilos et Euripos uocant*; GÖRLER 1990; TAYLOR, *supra*, 157-158. *Euripi* in Rome in private contexts: VITR. *De arch.* 7, 5, 2; in public contexts: SUET. *Iul.* 39, 2; S.H.A., *Heliogab.* 23, 1; SPENCER 2010, 121.

[97] CIC. *Leg.* 2, 2 (quoted in previous note); *Att.* 15, 9, 1.

[98] HOR. *Carm.* 2, 15, 4.

[99] MACROB. *Sat.* 3, 13, 3.

not contribute to the wine production of the *hortus*, but on the contrary it drains the wine stock. Clearly, at least on a rhetorical and ideological level, agricultural productivity was important and considered worthy of pursuit also in the context of the villa-garden, keeping the villa closer to what it had been originally, i.e., a working farm. This offers the framework for understanding the constant elite interest in horticulture and the introduction of new (fruit-bearing) plants.

III. Botanical imperialism: a view from archaeology

Literary texts, particularly those dealing with horticulture, evoke images of *horti* that have a mixture of fruit trees, flowers, and bees.[100] Virgil in the *Georgics*, a text intentionally picked up and expanded by Columella in Book 10 of *De re rustica*, presents the semi-mythical plot of an old Corcyran man as having flowers alongside herbs and fruit trees.[101] Rows of elms are mentioned and "the plane tree, providing drinkers with shade".[102] We know a lot about the presence of gardens in Roman private architectural space, from texts and from the physical evidence of archaeology, but with the exception of Vesuvian gardens and a few other cases (e.g., the gardens at Petra),[103] the archaeological evidence normally reveals little of the range of plants grown in a garden and their arrangement.[104] Very often, particularly in the case of villas erected on a *basis* incorporating at least two artificial terraces, the garden area occupied the lower terrace. In most cases, the presence of the garden is simply inferred from the lack of any evidence for

[100] VARRO *Rust.* 3, 16, 15 mentions that some people placed an apiary in the portico of their villa.

[101] VERG. *Georg.* 4, 130-146.

[102] *ministrantem platanum potantibus umbras* (146).

[103] BEDAL *et al.* 2013.

[104] For an overview of gardens in Roman Italy and the western provinces, see FARRAR 1996.

structures in this lower terrace and from the location of a hydraulic infrastructure, best understood as providing water for irrigation in horticulture.[105] Sometimes, additional clues about garden space are offered by the recovery of planting pots (*ollae perforatae*)[106] and the presence of *nymphaea*. Wilhelmina Jashemski's work at Pompeii with root cavities allowed the identification of several plants in gardens. Because of their size, trees are easier to identify than smaller plants. Trees identified in the Roman Vesuvian gardens include:[107] laurel, oleander, fig, olive, chestnut, and plane trees. Trees in combination with vines have also been identified,[108] along with horticultural practices such as espaliered fruit trees.[109]

Recently, however, yet more progress has been made: archaeological investigations carried out at the Villa Arianna in Castellammare di Stabia (ancient Stabiae), which was obliterated by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE, have revealed information about the garden of the great peristyle. The discovery of planting beds and many root cavities offers the opportunity to compare the description of villa gardens found in literary texts with an example of a 'real' elite villa garden. Although the post-excavation studies are not yet concluded, initial reports on the finds are of great interest.[110] In the middle of the 1st century CE Stabiae had become the seat for several wealthy villas of the Roman elite. Built on a high plateau towering over the seashore and offering stunning views of the Bay of Naples, several of these villas were explored by tunnelling in the Bourbon

[105] THOMAS & WILSON 1994; WILSON 2008.

[106] MESSINEO 1984; MACAULAY-LEWIS 2006. The use of planting pots was very common: GLEASON 1994*b*, 16.

[107] This list is not meant to be exhaustive; see JASHEMSKI 1979, 29; 245-261; CIARALLO 2001; BORGONGINO 2006.

[108] JASHEMSKI 1979, 32: the peristyle garden of the House of the Ship Europa (I.xv.3) had at the corners trees and nine smaller cavities, possibly indicating vines.

[109] JASHEMSKI 1979, 29: in the House of C. Iulius Polybius (IX.xiii.1/3) the recovery of a large number of nail holes in the west wall of the garden, above traces left by roots in the soil, may testify to espaliered trees.

[110] GLEASON 2010; HOWE, GLEASON, & SUTHERLAND 2011.

era.[111] The Villa Arianna and the nearby Villa S. Marco were in large part brought to light in the 1950s. These two villas, together with the Villa del Pastore, featured very large peristyle gardens, thought to have been planted in a formal manner in antiquity.[112]

The archaeological investigations at Villa Arianna, however, have revealed that, on the contrary, part of this garden was planted in a rather informal manner,[113] similar to the many painted gardens that depict young trees amid dense concentrations of flowers and evergreens. The garden (Fig. 4.3) featured four long beaten earth pathways, running east–west, and raised planting beds. Narrow raised beds with a single line of plantings separated the paths; each plant was 1.2 m apart and aligned with plants in the other rows.[114] Gleason remarks that from the root cavities it is evident that the plants for these three narrow planting beds were not a matched group of trees of a single species, but rather a "linear arrangement of a great variety of small trees and shrubs, some with single trunks, others multi-stemmed, some staked — either young or trained as vines — and of a range of apparent ages".[115] Such an arrangement is similar to the later garden investigated in Rome in connection with the temple of Heliogabalus, which also featured walkways separated by narrow beds displaying a variety of plants.[116] At the Villa Arianna, larger planting beds lay to the north and south of the paths. Only the two in the north-east corner of the peristyle have been fully exposed; they measure 11 x 35 m and are also separated by an earthen path. The

[111] FERRARA 2001; ROSSANO 2001.

[112] HOWE, forthcoming: investigations carried out more recently at Villa S. Marco have revealed that the upper peristyle (*c.* 108 m long) was much larger than the currently visible 35 m.

[113] Only part of the garden was excavated, revealing hundreds of root cavities: GLEASON 2010.

[114] GLEASON 2010, 12.

[115] GLEASON 2010, 12.

[116] VILLEDIEU 2001, 84-100; 2007, 346-372; GLEASON 2010, 12. In the Vigna Barberini excavations, the fact that the planting beds had different types of plants is suggested by the recovery of planting pots, reused amphorae, and planting pits of different sizes.

north side of the garden, which overlooked the sea, featured a semi-circular or circular pool. The hundreds of root cavities identified in these two beds range from very small herbaceous plants to shrubs and trees. Small post holes and, at each end of the beds, stake holes, in all likelihood indicating light fencing, have also been identified.[117]

As stressed by Gleason, this type of plant arrangement, with lush, varied vegetation, is reminiscent of the gardens depicted in wall paintings. The idea, therefore, that the painted gardens were idealized depictions not found in real life, where more formal and rigid arrangements were preferred, is to be reconsidered. Gleason suggests that these painted gardens were not evocations of nature, but thoughtfully laid out, man-made gardens, some with dwarf plants created by skillful pruning, such as the dwarf variety of the plane tree, called *chamaeplatanus*.[118] The full results of the identification of the root casts and other ecofacts collected by the archaeologists at the Villa Arianna are awaited with anticipation. In the meantime it is very tempting to hypothesize that varied plant arrangements such as those discovered here were a sort of "botanical gazetteer of empire",[119] a collection of plants pairing with domestic species imported from the regions controlled by Rome or those with which there were well-established trade links. A function as botanical gazetteer of empire has been indeed proposed for the garden of the Flavian Templum Pacis, with the nearby *horrea piperataria* being understood as a tangible indication that peace allowed trade with faraway lands to flourish.[120] A figurative reading of the garden as the microcosm of empire has also been seen in the case of Caligula and the *horti Lamiani*, where the emperor received the Jewish embassy headed by Philo. In this episode,

[117] GLEASON 2010, 13.

[118] GLEASON 2010, 13 n. 17; for instance such a dwarf tree can be seen in a fresco on the north wall of the House of the Wedding of Alexander (VI.xvii.42), also known as the House of the Golden Bracelet.

[119] HOWE, forthcoming.

[120] POLLARD 2009.

the *horti* are seen as a "microcosm of the empire, subject to the autocratic will of the emperor".[121]

Members of the upper class might have created similarly symbolic gardens in their villas. Indeed, among the many root cavities recorded at the Villa Arianna, there are some that might have belonged to exotic plants: palm trees.[122] These cavities were at the end of the line of trees in the narrow planting beds.[123] The possible presence of palm trees at the Villa Arianna, in the context of a densely planted informal garden, is interesting for two reasons. First, it brings to mind a now lost fresco from the east wall of the garden of the House of the Amazons in Pompeii (VI.ii.14), for which we have a watercolour.[124] The painting depicted in the foreground a marble fence with birds, including a peacock, perched on it and, behind the fence, a garden with four palm trees planted among tall bushes with dense foliage. In the middle of the garden is an *aedicula* containing statuettes of Isis, Osiris, and Harpocrates. The background shows maritime villas built at the water's edge or, according to another interpretation, on islands.[125] The presence of the palms and the Egyptian deities of the *aedicula* has led some scholars to see this scene as the depiction of an Egyptian landscape, where the villas in the background are to be seen as a reference to the pleasure residences of Canopus. But the painting could also have depicted a more familiar type of garden and view: a villa garden on the Bay of Naples.

Palm trees appear in various painted gardens of Pompeii and it is possible that they were grown in gardens of the Vesuvian area. In the House of the Ephebe (I.vii.12), for instance, a fresco shows a pruned palm flanked by two slender young trees; Room 8 of the House of the Alcove at Herculaneum

[121] Von Stackelberg 2009, 138.

[122] Howe, Gleason, & Sutherland 2011; final identification is not yet completed: K. Gleason, *pers. comm.*, June 6, 2013.

[123] Howe, Gleason, & Sutherland 2011, 209 n. 10.

[124] Illustration in Jashemski 1993, 340.

[125] Grimal ^{3}1984, 450 n. 11.

(IV.3-4) features a slender palm with two clusters of dates; the densely planted painted garden in Room 32 of the House of the Golden Bracelet (VI.xvii.42) features young palm trees next to herms. The date palm, which originated either in the Persian Gulf or in North Africa, grows well in all Mediterranean countries, but where average yearly temperatures fall below 18°C it does not bear edible fruit.[126] The many examples of dates discovered in the excavations at Pompeii refer to imported dates, but in two cases finds of dates resting directly on the level of field cultivation in the proximity of two *uillae rusticae* may indicate the presence of decorative palm trees.[127]

The palm is highly symbolic. It was the symbol of victory in general, and in Roman imagery, particularly on coins, was associated with the military conquest of two regions specifically: Egypt and Judaea. A crocodile associated with a palm branch and chained to a palm tree, over which is a wreath signifying the conquest of Egypt, appears on the reverse of bronze coinage issued in the Augustan period in the colony of Nemausus (Nîmes), where veterans from Actium were settled.[128] A palm tree was the protagonist of a portent recounted by Suetonius in his life of Augustus: a palm grew spontaneously in between the paving stones in front of Augustus' house and, taking this as an important omen, Augustus had the plant transplanted to the inner courtyard, next to his household gods, and "lavished care on it to make it grow".[129] In the case of Judaea, the palm tree features prominently in the Flavian coin series issued to celebrate the conquest.[130] That the palm

[126] BORGONGINO 2006, 26: palms in Italy bloom and produce fruits, but the dates do not develop the endocarp, which is the edible part, as already noted by Pliny (*HN* 16, 135).

[127] BORGONGINO 2006, 26; 74, nos. 70, 71: a *uilla rustica* in Scafati and one in località Cangiani at Boscoreale.

[128] *RIC*, Augustus, 157, with Agrippa and Augustus on the obverse.

[129] *utque coalesceret magno opera curauit*, SUET. *Aug.* 92, 1.

[130] *BMCRE*, Vespasian, 43-44; 83-85, 388-391. PLIN. *HN* 13, 26 states that Judaea is famous particularly for palms. He devotes several paragraphs (26-50) to different types of palms that at 13, 27 he defines as *externae*.

was a commonly accepted symbol of Judaea is also shown by the Jewish coinage minted during the Bar Kochba revolt under Hadrian: one issue shows on one side a date palm and on the other a cluster of grapes.[131]

Palm trees appear also in public gardens of the 1st century CE. On-going excavations of the so-called South Agora at Aphrodisias in Turkey have revealed that the complex was in fact not a gymnasium or an agora, but a large park with a long central pool, in proximity to the theatre. It seems that the trees planted here were palm trees.[132] On the basis of archaeological data, the construction of this garden-*cum*-portico complex seems to date to the reign of Tiberius, and the palm trees appear to have been part of the original project. This complex, therefore, offers additional evidence of the 'popularity' of the palm tree in the early Julio-Claudian period.[133] If it is right to interpret the garden of the Villa Arianna as an informal garden displaying a variety of plants, both domestic and foreign (most notably the palm tree), and thence as a sort of gazetteer of empire, it might not be by chance that this type of garden has not been identified among the (real) gardens of houses at Pompeii, but is instead present in such an elegant villa, which probably belonged to some senator, and in the garden built by Heliogabalus in Rome. Such gardens were making a precise statement about the owner's power and Rome's imperial might.

[131] HENDIN ^{5}2010, nos. 1380, 1381; *cf.* also nos. 1378, 1382.

[132] The excavation is directed by A.I. Wilson, who presented some of the preliminary results at the Reading Classics research seminar series on February 20, 2013. The excavations in summer 2012 identified rectangular planting trenches filled with organic matter, which provided some evidence for *Phoenix theophrasti*. Post-excavation analysis has not yet been completed. A late antique inscription mentions a "place of palms" and water features, which Wilson argues refer to this complex: *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity* 38 = <http://insaph.kcl.ac.uk/ala2004/inscription/eAla038.html>.

[133] *I.Aph.* 12, 204, dated to *c.* 1st century CE, records dedications of statues by Artemidoros Pedisas, son of Dionysios: "as he also promised when the palm grove was being constructed in the period of his tenure of the office of strategos". This palm grove has been connected to the place of palms of the late antique inscriptions mentioned above.

IV. The glory of grafting and plant selection

To botanical displays in the context of upper-class houses we should also add the display of skillful horticulture (as in pruned trees and newly grafted varieties), which, for the most part, seems to have been the monopoly of the very wealthy and powerful.[134] Monuments, in the Latin etymology of the word, were a means to immortalise someone's memory: honorific statues, grand tombs, and literary works all performed the same role. Someone's name could be immortalized also in the name of a new variety of fruit tree or grape, recalling the successful grafter who had developed them. It is indeed in these terms that Pliny mentions the cleverness required by the art of grafting, and the fact that the names given to the fruit propagated the eternal memory of their cultivators, just as if they had achieved something extraordinary in life. Nothing is so small — he continues — that it cannot give glory.[135]

Famous individuals and noble *gentes* mentioned in relation to grafting or other plant-selection processes include: Gaius Matius, Augustus' friend, who developed the *mala Matiana* (and invented the 'barbered trees': see below);[136] an undefined member of the *gens Cestia* who developed the *mala Cestiana*;[137] an unidentified member of the *gens Mallia* (or *Manlia*) who gave his name to the *mala Malliana/Manliana* mentioned by Gargilus Martialis;[138] an unidentified member of the *gens*

[134] As suggested in passing by GLEASON 2010, 13 n. 17.

[135] *Reliqua cur pigeat nominatim indicare, cum conditoribus suis aeternam propagauerint memoriam, tamquam ob egregium aliquod in uita factum? Nisi fallor, apparebit ex eo ingenium inserendi nihilque tam paruum esse quod non gloriam parere possit* ("Why should I hesitate to indicate by name the remaining varieties of fruit, seeing that they have prolonged the memory of those who established them for all time, as though on account of some outstanding achievement in life? Unless I am mistaken, the recital will reveal the ingenuity exercised in grafting, and will show that nothing is so trifling as to be incapable of producing celebrity"), PLIN. *HN* 15, 49, trans. H. RACKHAM.

[136] COLUM. *Rust.* 5, 10, 19. PLIN. *HN* 15, 49; *cf. HN* 12, 13.

[137] COLUM. *Rust.* 5, 10, 19. PLIN. *HN* 15, 49.

[138] PLIN. *HN* 15, 49; GARG. MART. *Medicinae ex oleribus et pomis* 42.

Scaudia for the *mala Scaudiana*, which ripened late in the season;[139] and an unidentified Appius Claudius, member of the aristocratic *gens Claudia*, who developed the *Appiana mala* by grafting quince onto the *Scaudia*.[140] Pears, too, have their share of notable names:[141] the *Decimiana*,[142] which even had a *pseudo-decimiana* variety derived from it; the *Dolabelliana*;[143] the *Pomponiana*; the *Seuiana*;[144] the *Turraniana*;[145] the *Aniciana*; and the *Tiberiana*.[146]

Grafting of other fruit trees can be mentioned as well. After stating that the cherry tree had been first brought to Italy by Lucullus, Pliny gives a list of varieties.[147] Some names indicate regions, presumably where the variety was first developed or where it was most cultivated (e.g., *Macedonica*), but several others derive from family names of famous Roman *gentes*. The list mentions the *cerasa Aproniana* (rich red), the *Lutatia* (very dark, almost black), the *Caeciliana* (nicely rounded), the *Iuniana* (agreeable in flavour, but to be consumed immediately after picking), and the *Pliniana* (this was the Campanian name of the *duracina* variety).[148] Moving from fruits to vegetables, we can recall in this context Columella and the two varieties of lettuce named after Caecilius Metellus.[149] Even upper-class women were interested in this aspect of their *fundi*: Livia

[139] VARRO *Rust.* 1, 59, 1; COLUM. *Rust.* 5, 10, 19; PLIN. *HN* 15, 49; 58.

[140] PLIN. *HN* 15, 49.

[141] PLIN. *HN* 15, 53-55.

[142] It is not known who the Decimianus that developed this variety was (mentioned also by COLUM. *Rust.* 12, 10, 4).

[143] Referring to some member of this branch of the *gens Cornelia*; *cf.* also COLUM. *Rust.* 12, 10, 4.

[144] The *Pomponiana* and *Seviana* are kinds listed only by Pliny; the names refer to the *gens Pomponia* and to an unidentified Sevius.

[145] This name refers to Turranius Niger, a famous farmer to whom Varro dedicates the second book of his *Res rusticae*.

[146] *Aniciana* recalls an Anicius, whereas in the case of the *Tiberiana* Pliny explains that the name was due to the fact that this was Tiberius' favourite kind.

[147] PLIN. *HN* 15, 102-103.

[148] On the grafting of cherries see also VARRO *Rust.* 1, 39, 2; COLUM. *Rust.* 11, 2, 96.

[149] COLUM. *Rust.* 10, 182.

herself, the first lady of Rome, apparently developed a new kind of fig that was subsequently named after her, and Pompey did the same.[150] Pliny, in the middle of his excursus on apples, is conscious that names connected to famous *gentes* might be seen as a sort of 'advertising expedient' to give celebrity to a given variety of fruit, and to this end cites an example not connected to socially prominent individuals, the *mala Sceptiana*, whose 'inventor', a certain Sceptius, was of libertine status.[151] Considering the interest that upper-class Romans had in viticulture — several literary works on viticulture were composed but have not come down to us — it is to be expected that much experimenting to improve varieties and develop new ones went on with vines as well. As happens today, wines could be named after the estate on which the grapes were grown and the wine made. An example is the *Faustinianum* (*uinum*), from the *fundus Faustinianus*, not far from Sinuessa, and the *Caucinum* (from the *nomen* Caucius), also produced in the same area, or the *Potulanum* wine, produced in Sicily and taking its name from its creator.[152]

That Livia, Pompey, or other upper-class Romans took an interest in developing new varieties of fruit, most likely via the slave gardeners at their service, indicates the importance given to agricultural production and farming as traditional Roman occupations suitable for the elite and for defending the integrity of traditional *mores*. It also shows the interest of the elite in their wealth and resources, which included expert gardeners and good agricultural land.[153] The agricultural abilities and virtuous behaviour of Livia, who received an omen in her villa *ad gallinas albas* and planted and took care of the ominous laurel

[150] *Sunt et auctorum nomina iis, Liviae, Pompei*, PLIN. *HN* 15, 70. See also COLUM. *Rust.* 5, 10, 11; MACROB. *Sat.* 3, 20, 1 (quoting the lexicographer Cloatius Verus).

[151] PLIN. *HN* 15, 50.

[152] PLIN. *HN* 14, 62 (*Faustinianum*); 63 (*Caucinum*); 66 (*Potulanum*? — the text is uncertain).

[153] PURCELL 1995 on aristocrats, wealth, and agriculture.

grove, can be contrasted with Tacitus' disapproving reference to Domitia Lepida, Nero's aunt, who spent time in her villa "busying herself in augmenting the fishponds of her beloved Baiae".[154]

The interest and pride of the upper classes in agriculture, horticulture, and arboriculture, ideologically appropriate activities for the elite, recur often. Not only were the rural villas the proper form of investment for elite wealth, but boasting about plant varieties seemed commensurate with a person's social standing. Pliny claims to have heard with his own ears a man of consular rank declare that he owned a kind of walnut tree that produced nuts twice a year.[155] The connection between wealthy and prominent families and horticultural knowledge recurs also in the case of the *ars topiaria*. Practitioners of this art, as attested in the small epigraphic corpus mentioning *topiarii*, belonged mostly to wealthy families and the imperial house.[156] The *topiarii* had considerable status in wealthy households and their skills were appreciated: we have seen that in Pliny's villa *in Tuscis* bushes were shaped to form not simply the owner's name, but also the gardener's. Topiary art appears to have been a Roman development;[157] it was yet another case of the Roman interest in taming nature, in controlling and ordering the landscape.[158] The 'inventor' of the art of pruning trees in such a way as to keep them small or give them artful shapes was a certain Gaius Matius, an *eques* and friend of Augustus who, in Pliny's words, *inuenit nemora tonsilia*

[154] *Baiarum suarum piscinas extollebat*, TAC. *Ann.* 13, 21, 6. Livia and the laurel grove *ad gallinas albas*: PLIN. *HN* 15, 136-137.

[155] PLIN. *HN* 15, 91.

[156] *CIL* VI 6369-6370: the Statilii Tauri; VI 7300: the Volusii Saturnini; VI 8639*a*, 11; 8738: the *familia Augusta*; VI 9949: the *Domus Tiberiana*; VI 9082: Domitia Longina, wife of Domitian; several other inscriptions from Rome name *topiarii*: *CIL* VI 4360-4361, 4423; 5353, 9943-9948; 33745.

[157] There is no reference in Greek to the occupation of a *topiarius* (i.e., landscape gardener): VON STACKELBERG 2009, 17.

[158] On the taming of nature as a sign of power: PURCELL 1987; MARZANO 2007, 21-33.

("invented barbered groves").[159] It is significant that the twenty known epigraphic attestations of *topiarii* come almost entirely from Rome and the *suburbium*, with one example from Comum and one from the area of the Lucrine Lake: all these regions were known for the villas of the senatorial elite.[160]

What this analysis indicates is that we can see elite interest in new plants developing on two different levels in parallel. On the one hand there are examples of plants transplanted into gardens because of their symbolic and aesthetic value (e.g., plane and palm) and of plants brought back as booty from military campaigns (ebony and balsam). On the other, there is the interest in new varieties of fruit, clearly aimed at improving the agricultural production of *fundi*. This same interest in improving agricultural production (and having *fundi* that are better than those of others) explains the experimentations with grafting. When Vitellius brought back fig trees for his Alban estate or when Papinius Allienus introduced the jujube and azerole plants to Italy, they were probably thinking about adding to the agricultural production of their estates something that other proprietors did not have. Such elite behaviour focuses on fruit trees, which produce crops that can be consumed in the household or sold. It is therefore not subject to censure, because it conforms to the idealized occupation of the morally strong Romans of the olden days. The strict association between the idea of *fructus* (profit, gain) with cultivating plants bearing *fructus* (fruit) is beautifully encapsulated by one of the fables of Phaedrus, which is worth quoting in its entirety:

> *Olim quas uellent esse in tutela sua*
> *diui legerunt arbores. Quercus Ioui,*
> *at myrtus Veneri placuit, Phoebo laurea,*
> *pinus Cybebae, populus celsa Herculi.*
> *Minerua admirans quare steriles sumerent* 5

[159] PLIN. *HN* 12, 13.

[160] *CIL* V 5316; X 1744; VON STACKELBERG 2009, 17. At *Dig.* 32, 60, 3 the *topiarius* is not included in the *instrumentum* inherited or sold as part of an estate, because he is not needed to cultivate the *fundus*.

interrogauit. Causam dixit Iuppiter:
"Honorem fructu ne uideamur uendere".
"At mehercules narrabit quod quis uoluerit,
oliua nobis propter fructum est gratior."
Tum sic deorum genitor atque hominum sator: 10
"O nata, merito sapiens dicere omnibus.
Nisi utile est quod facimus, stulta est gloria."
Nihil agere quod non prosit fabella admonet.[161]

The play on the double meaning of *fructus,* profit/fruit, is evident: Minerva chooses the olive tree because of its fruit and because of the profit it brings. Jupiter's comment that unless something is useful the glory that derives from it is foolish brings to mind Pliny the Elder's remark, in talking about grafting, that even something small (but *utilis*!) can bring *gloria*, and recalls his disapproval at the introduction of the sterile plane tree.

V. Conclusions

Private gardens, just like any other part of the house or villa, were a means for displaying the social status and ideological aspirations of the owner; whether in elite properties of the late Republic or those of the imperial period, garden spaces were often so constructed as to offer yet another level of self-representation in the private sphere. Columella devoted Book 10 of his treatise on agriculture to *cultus hortorum* (cultivation of

[161] "Once long ago the gods chose trees which they would have each under his own patronage. Jupiter decided for the oak, Venus for the myrtle, Phoebus for the laurel, Cybebe for the pine tree, and Hercules for the lofty poplar. Minerva wondered why they chose trees that bore no fruit, and asked them about it. Jupiter gave the reason as follows: 'Lest we seem to be selling the honour at the price of the fruit.' 'Now, on my oath,' said she, 'let anyone say what he will, my olive suits me better just because of its fruit.' Then the father of the gods and creator of men thus spoke: 'My daughter, it is for good cause that you are called wise by all alike. Unless what we do is useful, it is foolish to take pride in it.' The fable admonishes us to do nothing that is not beneficial", PHAEDR. 3, 17, trans. B.E. PERRY.

gardens), which he states was at the peak of fashion in his own day.[162] In this book (which — significantly — is in verse and not prose), Columella presents the garden, separated from the wider landscape, as well-defined, something that needs careful design.[163] Columella's *hortus* is an emblem of the regional variety of Italy and its autonomous landscape,[164] but it contains also specimens from across the Mediterranean and is a "small parcel that represents a terrestrial totality".[165] The reader is guided from the confined garden into a garden of empire via the mention of seeds and bulbs brought to Italy from various faraway regions.[166] Columella makes Italy a "synecdoche for the whole world".[167] He then gives a sort of tour of Italy by focussing on the cabbage (a re-working of Cato).[168] The territorial stretch of Rome's empire comes into focus again shortly afterwards, where the mention of types of lettuce brings the reader from the Pillars of Hercules (Gades) to Cyprus, via Cappadocia; the naming of two kinds of this relatively humble vegetable after Caecilius Metellus, a general active during the First Punic War (Rome's first large-scale military engagement in the Mediterranean), brings into sharp focus the close association felt between military campaigns, generals, and plants.[169]

Pompey was the first to parade trees from exotic countries in his triumph, but he was not the last. There were probably other cases of vegetal display in the triumphal context before Vespasian and Titus displayed balsam trees in Rome while celebrating their victory over Judaea. The interest in new plants encountered during military campaigns had a twofold nature. Plants with special characteristics and associated with a

[162] *Superest ergo cultus hortorum segnis ac neglectus quondam ueteribus agricolis, nunc uel celeberrimus*, COLUM. *Rust.* 10 *praef.* 1.
[163] COLUM. *Rust.* 10, 6-34; SPENCER 2010, 95.
[164] SPENCER 2010, 96.
[165] PAGÁN 2006, 30.
[166] SPENCER 2010, 96-97.
[167] SPENCER 2010, 97.
[168] COLUM. *Rust.* 10, 127-139.
[169] COLUM. *Rust.* 10, 179-188.

particular region could be seen as a symbol of the newly conquered territories and were displayed in triumphs or in gardens, either public or private, that were meant to be a synecdoche of empire, just as Columella's literary *hortus* was. The garden of the Villa Arianna, with its series of narrow planting beds displaying different trees placed in a single orderly row and probably flanked at both ends by palms, appears to have been a real example of the type of *hortus* that Columella describes: a garden symbolizing Rome's territorial expansion and long-distance trade links. This type of garden needs to be seen within the context of interest in geographical knowledge and the public display of maps.

In the case of fruit trees, however, new plants and new varieties of species that were already known attracted the interest of the elite in improving the agricultural production of their *fundi.* The primacy given to agriculture in elite culture and self-presentation helps to explain why we hear of so many upper-class individuals interested in grafting trees and in developing new varieties of fruit on their estates. This practical aspect was coupled with an ideological dimension, in that the appropriation and display of horticultural knowledge was linked to imperialism. It was not only riches that Pompey brought back to Rome after defeating Mithradates, but also new botanical knowledge: the king of Pontus was famous for his research on the medicinal properties of plants. A chest that came into the hands of Pompey contained the king's reports on his research, including details of the herbal prescriptions and their effects, and Pompey ordered his freedman, the grammarian Pompeius Lenaeus, to translate it all into Latin: *uitaeque ita profuit non minus quam rei publicae uictoria illa.*[170] In the panorama of treatises devoted to agriculture, specific works on horticulture and viticulture are a phenomenon of the late Republican and Augustan periods: Sabinus Tiro's *Cepurica*

[170] "This great victory therefore was as beneficent to life as it was to the State", PLIN. *HN* 25, 7, trans. W.H.S. JONES.

("Garden Stuff"), which he dedicated to Maecenas,[171] or works by Julius Graecinus and Julius Atticus on viticulture; even Celsus, the famous contemporary doctor, wrote on farming.

Horticultural knowledge was often seen as an important element of civilization. In drawing the distinction between the barbarian other (often nomadic and hence pastoral populations) and the civilized Greek and Roman world (consisting of sedentary agricultural populations), an intermediate level of marginalizing the other was offered by the level of sophistication reached in the agricultural sciences. Thus, Tacitus in the *Germania* stresses that while the Germani know agriculture and the basic measuring of time (the calendar in its origins is normally related to agricultural chores), they do not know arboriculture and horticulture, nor do they have an advanced definition of the seasons.[172] For the elite, therefore, garden display and horticultural knowledge were symbols not only of territorial expansion, but also of civilization and the taming of nature. The race for supremacy among the generals of the late Republic was played out, in part, in their gardens at home.

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[171] PLIN. *HN* 19, 177.

[172] TAC. *Germ.* 26, 2-3; VON STACKELBERG 2009, 12-13. Compare Pliny's Chauci, who live in a treeless land and are presented as being even below those who do not know agriculture: MURPHY 2004, 168-169.

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DISCUSSION

K. Coleman: You have shown very clearly how generals introduced exotic species into Rome at the end of the Republic for their self-aggrandizement (and perhaps, in some cases, out of scientific interest as well). But I wonder whether we can see some resistance to this in contemporary texts, such as the opening of Varro's *Res rusticae*, where the assembled speakers looking at a map in the temple of Tellus praise the fertility of Italy, or indeed the *laudes Italiae* in the *Georgics*?[1]

A. Marzano: Thank you for raising this interesting point. I do not think that these praises of the agricultural fertility of Italy indicate resistance to the introduction of new varieties of plants, but certainly they wanted to emphasize the superiority of Italy over other regions in this respect. This superiority, as implied in particular by Varro's passage, rested on three elements: quality of the climate, quality of the land, and quality of the crops. The last element depends entirely on the agricultural knowledge and practices of men, and by implication Varro in this passage is suggesting that farmers of Italy knew better and had developed the selection of seeds, plant propagation, grafting, and so forth to a higher level. Regardless of the long list of Greek authors to be consulted in agricultural matters that he gives to his wife in the previous section, the praises and examples prompted by the image of the map of Italy are an explicit statement that only in Italy has such *ars* or — to use the Greek word — *technê* been best put into practice. It is, ultimately, a statement about the superiority of the farmers. In my view, such superiority, in Varro's opinion, rested also on

[1] VARRO *Rust.* 1, 2, 1-8; VERG. *Georg.* 2, 136-176.

the fact that generals were ready to collect and bring back new plants or new varieties from abroad, *but only* if these were useful varieties of fruit-bearing plants. As Varro's ideal villa is the place of production, and villas that displayed only works of art were to be considered sterile and useless, so also were the plants that were transplanted exclusively for decorative purposes. The case of the parade of precious exotic plants that could not be transplanted to Italy, such as the balsam and ebony trees of Pompey's triumph, is a different issue. In this case it is possible that the economic value of these plants, along with the fact that they were linked to geographic regions other than Italy, encouraged authors like Varro and Virgil to praise what Italy had to offer agriculturally and to stress that the centre of the empire had primacy also in this field. And, of course, the Italian crops listed in Varro's passage — cereals, grape, olive, and fruit trees — were not simple luxuries like the balsam tree, but staples in people's diet, so in terms of *utilitas* they were much more important!

B. Bergmann: The Judaean coins raise the question of context and purpose in representations of trees. There is no doubt that the palm on the coins symbolizes specific victories, but would this symbolism have translated to domestic paintings and to the gardens themselves (such as that at Aphrodisias)?

A. Marzano: I certainly do not think that every case of a palm tree, whether planted in a real garden or depicted in a painted one, would have necessarily alluded to specific victories, such as the association between the palm tree and Egypt that we find on the Augustan coins or between the palm and Judaea on the Flavian *Iudaea capta* coins. But I do believe that, as in other cases in Roman art, so also for trees different levels of symbolism were possible, and that what the viewers made of the palm tree in a fresco or in a garden ultimately depended on their own system of reference. That the palm suggested to the ancient viewer the idea of victory in general is, I think,

undeniable, considering how often the palm branch was used to this end in various contexts, from the military sphere to the world of gladiatorial combat and chariot races. Likewise, it is clear that in figurative art the palm tree could be used to give a specific geographic connotation, to indicate Egypt — the famous Nilotic scenes with pygmies and lotus plants often feature palms — or North Africa in general, or the Levant, all areas where date palms were cultivated. In some cases, a domestic painting with palms was probably not intended to have any symbolic meaning at all, but just picked up what was fashionable at the time in wall paintings, although it is possible that a visitor to the house, seeing a painting with a palm tree, would have made a symbolic association in his or her mind. In the Augustan and early Julio-Claudian period, certain stories, such as the one reported by Suetonius about the omen of the palm tree growing in front of Augustus' house, circulated widely, at least among the elite, and often the upper classes imitated the actions of the emperor. Suetonius says that Augustus had the palm planted in his garden and 'lavished' care on it. I can imagine some members of the upper class following his lead and wanting palm trees in their gardens. That not only the elite of Rome was attuned to the trend and ideologies emanating from the centre of power is indicated by well-known cases, such as the *porticus* that Eumachia built in Pompeii and dedicated to Concordia Augusta, clearly following the example of Livia and her portico in Rome, or the inscription of Annobal Rufus from faraway Lepcis Magna, commemorating his work at the theatre, in which a nod towards Augustan ideology can be seen in the qualifier 'lover of concord' that Annobal attributes to himself, even though this is the Latin translation of a Neo-Punic traditional qualifier.[2] I cannot be sure that the garden at Villa Arianna and the place of palms at Aphrodisias were planted with a symbolic meaning in mind. However, the fact that in the former case we are dealing with a rich villa

[2] *amator concordiae*, *IRT* 321.

which probably belonged to some member of the senatorial class strongly suggests that the owner was someone who was very familiar with certain concepts and symbols. If scientific analysis can confirm that the plants here were a combination of domestic and imported species, we need to remember that this garden, destroyed by Vesuvius in 79 CE, was contemporary with the Templum Pacis, finished in 75. The Templum Pacis featured planting beds in its enclosure, and even if one does not agree with the idea that it was a display of 'botanical imperialism', it featured different plants, encapsulating trends and ideologies of the time. As for Aphrodisias, what is interesting is the Tiberian date for the project and the choice of palm trees. The complex, being next to the theatre (albeit at a lower level), was clearly meant to offer a portico-garden with a water feature as an amenity for theatregoers, just like Pompey's complex. To offer shade from the scorching sun of the Aphrodisian summers, however, other plants would have been more suitable, as palm trees do not really offer great shade. It was not a choice dictated by climate and dry soil conditions, because even nowadays the area is extremely rich in ground water, so other trees could have been chosen. To me, the dating to the Tiberian period suggests familiarity with the importance given to the palm during the reign of Augustus, such as in the story reported by Suetonius or as a symbol of conquered Egypt.

R. Lane Fox: As you hint, the importing of foreign fruits and flowers from conquered lands is prominent in the Macedonian age. Greek *apoikoi* brought with them plants from their homelands: surely there were excellent saffron crocuses at Cyrene precisely because settlers brought them from their home, Thera, where even now saffron crocuses are famous. Do you think that the Roman generations between, say, Pompey and 54 CE were particularly keen on acquiring, growing and displaying (to friends and clients) new varieties of plant? Unlike Alexander, they never conquered Persia, Bactria, and part of India, so they never controlled truly exotic, non-Mediterranean

plants. Or is it all an accident of our evidence and, say, Severan Rome's upper class was no different?

A. Marzano: I think that the chronological period that you identify — I would even push the chronological limit to include the emperors Vespasian and Titus — was indeed characterized by a keen interest in plants and their display, and in the development of new varieties. As I discussed in my paper, it is in the late Republic and the Augustan period that the term *uiridarium*, meaning a display or a collection of plants, appears in Latin. Topiary art is 'invented' in the Augustan period, and likewise this is the age when several works of literature on horticulture, viticulture, and arboriculture are composed. I do not, however, think that after the Flavians such interest simply faded away, but I think it had less political significance compared to the previous ages. In the late Republic, the heritage of the Hellenistic kings was strong and the prominent men in Rome engaged with Hellenistic ideas, behaviours, and tastes, and used them to enhance their standing. In the early imperial period, we still have client kings in the Mediterranean and particular dynamics in the language of power. In addition, the definition, on the ideological level, of the role of the emperor and the senatorial class, and how the two interacted, was still *in fieri*, and I think that displays, whether of exotic plants or of new varieties of familiar plants, offered to members of the elite various opportunities on the ideological level: displaying plants could be a way of emphasising engagement in specific military campaigns or expeditions; grafting new varieties of fruit trees could emphasize the engagement with agricultural practices just like a Roman of old, *ergo* stressing the moral integrity of the practitioner. How and if these ideological opportunities were used must, of course, have varied greatly. Furthermore, the colonial impetus of the early first century CE meant also attention to developing cash crop agriculture, mostly cultivation of the vine and olive, in areas that did not have a tradition in these cultivations, hence interest in the best varieties to be

planted abroad, what kind of yield they could give, and so forth. These phenomena, which soon transformed the Gauls and Hispania into exporters of wine and oil, must in part have been connected with the appearance of treatises on horticulture and viticulture in the early first century CE.

The garden in the enclosure of the temple built by Heliogabalus on the Palatine does, however, show that the interest in gardens as displays of different plants had not disappeared. The four rectangular unpaved spaces each had three planting beds, and the combination of planting pots and cut amphorae of different types clearly shows the presence of different kinds of plants. These planting beds do not seem to have been densely planted, however, and it has been suggested that the amphorae were used to constrain the roots of bushes and small trees and thereby control their growth, resulting in dwarf varieties. The plants might have had symbolic and cultic significance, but this is impossible to determine in this context. It is interesting, though, that we have this kind of controlled plant display in the context of a temple, as in the Greek and Hellenistic periods temples and sanctuaries were often where new plants were displayed, since they were offered as gifts to the gods.