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## LATIN INSCRIPTIONS AND THE LIFE COURSE. REGIO III (BRUTTIUM AND LUCANIA) AS A TEST CASE

CHRISTIAN LAES

### 1. Introduction

The present contribution sets Regio III, Bruttium and Lucania, in a long-standing research tradition. Long before the information age, the Hungarian scholar J. Szilagyi initiated the project of listing all known epitaphs with age indication from the Latin West.<sup>1</sup> Though at present no single scholar shares Szilagyi's demographical aspirations, his thorough collection – not easy to trace down – remains a fundamental starting point for studies on the epigraphic habit and the representation of ages in various regions of the Roman Empire.<sup>2</sup> Some twenty years ago, P. Gallivan and P. Wilkins started a project on familial structures as encountered in inscriptions throughout Roman Italy. Although the announced database was never published, the results of their regional approach appeared in a contribution which also deals with the evidence from the South of Italy.<sup>3</sup> At the present moment, the scholarly world is eagerly awaiting the fully informatised database by F. Trifilò and R. Laurence which will cover a large sample of Latin non-Christian age inscriptions for the West of the Roman Empire. Their dataset, constituting a body of 23,277 inscriptions with a legible indication of age, con-

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(\*) I owe many thanks to Ray Laurence and Francesco Trifilò (University of Kent) whose inspiring research on epigraphy has been the incentive for this article. I am also very grateful to Attilio Mastrocinque (Università degli Studi di Verona) for inviting me to the conference *I Romani e la Lucania: nuove prospettive di ricerca* (11th of May 2012). Alfredo Buonopane (Università degli Studi di Verona) has introduced me into the field of epigraphy of Regio III, especially Grumentum. It was a pleasure to present this paper at the Summerschool *Epigraphy in an Empire of Cities. Possibilities and Challenges* (Grumento Nova) on the 27th of July 2012.

<sup>1</sup> For the present article, Szilagyi (1963) is the most relevant.

<sup>2</sup> MacMullen (1982) and Meyer (1990) are essential introductions on the epigraphic habit.

<sup>3</sup> Gallivan – Wilkins (1997).

tains epitaphs from Africa Pronconsularis, the Mauretaniae, Hispania Tarraconensis, Gallia Narbonensis, Lusitania, Aquitania, Dacia, Moesia and all of Italia with the exception of Rome.<sup>4</sup>

Several other scholars have set themselves to compiling databases of specific regions. Their strenuous efforts again and again lead to the conclusion that these data sets reveal cultural biases, and not demographical patterns. Young people are usually more strongly commemorated than adults, more men than women are represented, age rounding to V and X is responsible for the peaks in the number of tombstones at certain ages.<sup>5</sup>

Given the present stage of research, the additional value of a regional study on life course in the inscriptional evidence of Regio III may be questioned. In my view, such regional approach can add to our knowledge for several reasons. As this article will be the first to take this approach, it may become the starting point of other studies which will undoubtedly appear when research facilities become easier by accessible informatised databases. Comparison of results from detailed regional studies will then yield interesting results which may further increase our knowledge on local commemorative patterns. Also, the regional approach enables the scholar to systematically scrutinise *all* epigraphical editions concerning 'his' region, an exhaustive approach which is for practical reasons beyond reach for the composers of comprehensive databases. As such, I will include both the Christian epitaphs of Regio III and the latest additions up to *L'année épigraphique* 2008. Thirdly, the focus on one particular region will offer the opportunity for the so-called anecdotal approach, by which inscriptions become now and then like vignettes of daily life, anecdotal but valuable source material for our knowledge of Roman family life.<sup>6</sup>

Though previous published research has not paid attention to the factor of age in the inscriptions of Lucania and Bruttium, the full scale study of family inscriptions of Roman Italy by Gallivan and Wilkins has revealed a whole set of patterns. For the present study, the following observations might be relevant. The familial structure of parents with one child is more commonly represented in the inscriptions from the South (79 %) than in the regions which were more in the North (67 % in the North). Families tend to become larger as we move to

<sup>4</sup> See Laurence – Trifilò (2012) for a first sample of most promising research. The evidence for the City of Rome is treated by Shaw (1991); (1996) and Laes (2007).

<sup>5</sup> Pioneer studies include Kajanto (1968); Duncan-Jones (1977); Lasserre (1977); Hopkins (1987). Scheidel (1996) is fundamental for the subject of age rounding and digit preference.

<sup>6</sup> Pleas for the study of inscriptions as anecdotal evidence by Martin (2003) and Corbier (2005).

the North. Throughout Italy, the overall sex ratio of family inscriptions is 233 in favour of boys. The South of Italy is no exception to the tendency of male over-representation, though the sex imbalance favouring sons over daughters is most extreme in the North, while in families with children of both sexes, the imbalance is more pronounced in the South.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. Indication of age, age awareness, age rounding

### 2.1. Inscriptions with age indication

Epigraphy has been said to occupy a middle ground between the intimacy of the household and the objectivity of the census.<sup>8</sup> Epitaphs are statements that shift from the personal world of knowledge to the public world of commemorative norms, because the inscription was a public object.<sup>9</sup> But what was it exactly that compelled people in antiquity to mention age (their own or that of the deceased) on an inscription, almost always an epitaph – a particular type of tombstone emphasising the obligations owed to the dead by the heir or at least by those living in close (affective) proximity?<sup>10</sup> As is the case for many other motivations concerning the 'epigraphic habit', we simply do not know.<sup>11</sup> One could reckon the amount of inscriptions with age indication in relation to those without one. This is feasible for a well-studied region as the City of Rome. Here we have about 29,250 epitaphs; some 9600 (33 %) of which reveal an indication of age.<sup>12</sup> For regions with far less epigraphic material, such numbers are perhaps less significant.<sup>13</sup> For Regio III, I have collected 320 inscriptions with age indication. A conservative count reveals about 500 epitaphs in total for the region; the percentage of 64 points to a strong popularity for this genre of inscriptions.<sup>14</sup> In any case, it

<sup>7</sup> Gallivan – Wilkins (1997) 241–2 (size of families); 242–3 (sex imbalance).

<sup>8</sup> Huebner (2011).

<sup>9</sup> Laurence – Trifilò (2012) 23.

<sup>10</sup> Meyer (1990) 95–6.

<sup>11</sup> Bodet (2001) 1–56.

<sup>12</sup> Laes (2007) 27.

<sup>13</sup> New excavations as the discovery of one new necropolis might change the percentages fundamentally. For our region, a whole necropolis of Grumentum still needs to be excavated. See Capano (2009) for a first enquiry.

<sup>14</sup> Regio III has a total of about 840 inscriptions. It should be stressed that the dataset of

is possible to treat the age inscriptions as a separate category, to be distinguished from those epitaphs which do not record age.

## 2.2. Young and old

Table 1 lists the age distribution as it appears in the inscriptions from Regio III. Both scholars of Latin literature as epigraphists have traditionally set the division line between young and old at age 25.<sup>15</sup> This is of course a crude and simplifying categorisation, which might be substituted by a division into children (0–15), young adults (16–30), older adults (31–60), old (61–80) and very old (80+) (see table 3).<sup>16</sup> But for several reasons, the evidence from Regio III also allows for a division between age span 0–25 and 25+.

Above the age of 25, the tendency for age rounding is outspoken, the multiples of five being strongly emphasised. The inscriptions for those in the age span 0–25 do not reveal any such tendency. The latter category consists of 124 instances up to twenty and 155 up to age 25. Out of a total of 320 inscriptions, this equals to 39 % or even 48 % if we take 25 as the liminal age. Our evidence thus confirms the well-known fact that as an age group, young people are well represented in the inscriptions with age indication.<sup>17</sup> Also, the inscriptions for those up to age 25 have a marked tendency towards accuracy: 55 % of the instances of age indication up to days (46 out of 84) are commemorations to young people. Laurence and Trifilò have rightly suggested that this greater degree of accuracy is an indication of the presence of parents or other relatives who were in the possibility of mourning the young deceased and who remembered very well the birthday of the person involved.<sup>18</sup>

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Regio III is rather small. The ancient city of Thugga in modern Tunisia (the African provinces are very rich in epigraphical evidence) produces 1617 tombstones with indication of age. See Harlow – Laurence (2011) 14–5.

<sup>15</sup> Eyben (1977) 152; Laes – Strubbe (2008) 37–43 on the legal differentiation between *minores* and *maiores* set at age 25; Pikhhaus (1978) 47–8 on age 25 as 'psychological border' between young and old.

<sup>16</sup> Harlow – Laurence (2011) 20–1 apply this division to the evidence from Thugga; Laurence – Trifilò (2012) 35–7 for their sample of the Latin West.

<sup>17</sup> Laes (2007) 28–9 for the City of Rome as well as other scholarly literature. For the City of Rome, the percentage even amounts to 61.1 % for those up to age 25.

<sup>18</sup> Laurence – Trifilò (2012) 38. Saller (1994) 53–64 has made demographical calculations on the numbers of relatives still alive at certain age. Also in regions with are known for their

**Table 1: Age distribution of the inscriptions of Regio III\***

Age	Years	Months	Days	References
0				
1	1	2		<i>CIL</i> X 163; 498; <i>AE</i> 1985, 315
2	1	2	3	<i>CIL</i> X 120; 8099; <i>EE</i> VIII 1, 257; <i>InscrIt</i> III 1, 217; <i>Paestum</i> 181; <i>AE</i> 1969/70, 179
3	5	2	6	<i>CIL</i> X 100; 151; 299; 329; 455 (?); 8118; 8339c; <i>ICI</i> V 37; <i>SupplIt</i> (L) III 17; <i>InscrIt</i> III 1, 97; III 1, 237; <i>Paestum</i> 190; <i>AE</i> 1984, 269
4	2	2	4	<i>CIL</i> X 33; 48**; 90; 258; 301; 8094; <i>AE</i> 1998, 399; <i>AE</i> 1995, 378
5	1	1	5	<i>CIL</i> X 147; 192; 252; 324; <i>ICI</i> V 19; <i>SupplIt</i> (RI) V 26; <i>Paestum</i> 189
6	3	3	3	<i>CIL</i> X 419; <i>EE</i> VIII 1,279; VIII 1, 841; VIII 1, 842; <i>ICI</i> V 49; <i>SupplIt</i> (L) III 15; <i>InscrIt</i> III 1, 89; III 1, 97; <i>AE</i> 1969/70, 179
7	2		2	<i>CIL</i> X 76; 402; <i>EE</i> VIII 1, 248; VIII 1, 843
8	5		1	<i>CIL</i> X 116; 328; <i>EE</i> VIII 1, 262; <i>ICI</i> V 35; <i>SupplIt</i> (RI) V 27; <i>AE</i> 1993, 545; <i>AE</i> 2008, 442
9		1	1	<i>CIL</i> X 419; <i>EE</i> VIII 1, 284
10	2		2	<i>CIL</i> X 24; 426; <i>SupplIt</i> (C) III 8; (L)III 10
11	1	1	1	<i>CIL</i> X 62; 185; <i>Paestum</i> 188
12	1	1	1	<i>CIL</i> X 121; 428; <i>AE</i> 1978, 258
13	4	1	2	<i>CIL</i> X 248; 360; 384; <i>EE</i> VIII 1, 266; <i>InscrIt</i> III 1, 100; III 1, 248; <i>AE</i> 1933, 103
14	1		1	<i>CIL</i> X 72; 83
15	3	1	3	<i>CIL</i> X 86; 152; 257; 345; <i>InscrIt</i> III 1, 226; <i>AE</i> 1974, 294; <i>AE</i> 1999, 544
16	4		2	<i>CIL</i> X 32; 127; 171; 318; 390; <i>InscrIt</i> III 1, 252
17	5	1	2	<i>CIL</i> X 12; 80; 118; 126; 170; <i>EE</i> VIII 1, 265; ; <i>InscrIt</i> III 1, 226; <i>AE</i> 1998, 390
18	10		2	<i>CIL</i> X 81; 143; 184; 262; 263; 294; 361; 369; 8103; <i>AE</i> 1978, 259; <i>AE</i> 1984, 264; <i>AE</i> 1984, 266
19	4	1	1	<i>CIL</i> X 495; <i>EE</i> VIII 1, 846; <i>SupplIt</i> (RI) V 18; <i>InscrIt</i> III 1, 106; III 1, 267; <i>AE</i> 1985, 308

C= Cosilinum

L = Locri

RI= Regium Iulium

\* For obvious reasons, no Greek inscriptions have been included. For the sake of clarity only one reference is given for each single inscription: in the case of multiple references in *L'Année épigraphique* only the most recent is given.

\*\* This inscription, considered as a fake by Mommsen has been convincingly 'rehabilitated' by Buonopane (2006–2007) 317–22.

Age	Years	Months	Days	References
20	6	1	1	<i>CIL</i> X 157; 174; 309; 479; <i>InscrIt</i> III 1, 226; III 1, 228 (?); <i>AE</i> 1985, 309; <i>AE</i> 1982, 221
21	3	3	1	<i>CIL</i> X 26; 125; 391; 395; 456; 490; <i>AE</i> 1972, 146
22	5			<i>CIL</i> X 60; 84; 313; 440; <i>EE</i> VIII 1, 277
23	2			<i>CIL</i> X 8083; <i>SupplIt</i> (L) III 12
24	4		2	<i>CIL</i> X 55; 60; 410; <i>EE</i> VIII 1, 264; <i>InscrIt</i> III 1, 286; <i>AE</i> 1985, 314
25	9	2		<i>CIL</i> X 67; 136; 247; 274; 427; 461; <i>SupplIt</i> (L) V 9; (RI) V 26; V 31 (gr.); V 32; <i>AE</i> 1998, 391
26	4			<i>CIL</i> X 224; 8086; <i>EE</i> VIII 1, 263; <i>AE</i> 1984, 272
27	5			<i>CIL</i> X 29; 82; 256; <i>Paestum</i> 180; <i>AE</i> 2000, 374
28	2			<i>CIL</i> X 374; 429
29			2	<i>CIL</i> X 10; 500
30	11	1	4	<i>CIL</i> X 20; 63; 156; 178; 188; 251; 265; 267; 362; <i>EE</i> VIII 1, 252; <i>Paestum</i> 184; <i>ICI</i> V 24; V 29; <i>AE</i> 1984, 268; <i>AE</i> 1984, 270; <i>AE</i> 1995, 373
31	2			<i>CIL</i> X 268 (?); <i>Paestum</i> 184
32	1		1	<i>EE</i> VIII 1, 253; <i>AE</i> 1998, 399
33	2		1	<i>CIL</i> X 117; 418; 489
34			1	<i>CIL</i> X 317
35	7	3		<i>CIL</i> X 30; 66; 71; 78; 193; 438; 8339d; <i>ICI</i> V 8; V 21; <i>InscrIt</i> III 1, 119 (?)
36	4	1		<i>CIL</i> X 119; 254; 422; 8340c; <i>SupplIt</i> (C) III 5
37	2			<i>SupplIt</i> (RI) V 21; V 24
38	1	1	1	<i>CIL</i> X 155; 433; <i>AE</i> 1998, 387
39	2			<i>CIL</i> X 87; <i>SupplIt</i> (L) III 14
40	9	4	7	<i>CIL</i> X 37; 238; 260; 277; 347; 383; 440; 466; 8077; 8079; 8081; 8092; <i>EE</i> VIII 1, 277; <i>SupplIt</i> (RI) V 23; V 27; <i>InscrIt</i> III 1, 177; <i>Paestum</i> 176; <i>AE</i> 1975, 280; <i>AE</i> 1984, 271; <i>AE</i> 1999, 541
41		2	1	<i>CIL</i> X 138; 181; 182
42	2			<i>SupplIt</i> (L) III 18; <i>AE</i> 1966, 108
43			1	<i>CIL</i> X 372
44				
45	2	1	1	<i>CIL</i> X 375; 401; <i>ICI</i> V 25; <i>SupplIt</i> (L) III 5
46		1		<i>CIL</i> X 37
47	2			<i>CIL</i> X 13; 47
48				
49				

C= Cosilinum

L = Locri

RI= Regium Iulium



Age	Years	Months	Days	References
50	10	2	2	<i>CIL</i> X 101; 270; 458; 462; 493; 8082; 8090; 8092; <i>ICI</i> V 23; V 26; <i>SupplIt</i> (L) III 3; <i>AE</i> 1975, 283; <i>AE</i> 1984, 267; <i>AE</i> 1985, 313
51			1	<i>Paestum</i> 179
52	1	1		<i>ICI</i> V 30; <i>AE</i> 1913, 210
53	2			<i>SupplIt</i> (RI) V 25; <i>AE</i> 1953, 545
54	1	1	1	<i>CIL</i> X 200; <i>EE</i> VIII 1, 280; <i>ICI</i> V 30
55	4			<i>CIL</i> X 79; 496; <i>EE</i> VIII 1, 278; <i>InscrIt</i> III 1, 114a
56			1	<i>CIL</i> X 414
57	1		1	<i>CIL</i> X 35; 70
58	2			<i>CIL</i> X 85; <i>EE</i> VIII 1, 849
59	1			<i>CIL</i> X 282
60	6		6	<i>CIL</i> X 102; 128; 470; 499; 8078; 8080; <i>SupplIt</i> (L) III 7; (RI) V 33; <i>ICI</i> V 33; V 36; <i>AE</i> 1985, 310; <i>AE</i> 2003, 554
61	1			<i>CIL</i> X 196
62	1			<i>InscrIt</i> III 1, 113***
63	2			<i>CIL</i> X 67; <i>AE</i> 1999, 541
64		1		<i>AE</i> 1987, 316a
65	3		2	<i>CIL</i> X 99; 8076; <i>EE</i> VIII 1, 251; <i>AE</i> 1975, 281; <i>AE</i> 1975, 282
66				
67				
68				
69				
70	4	1	3	<i>CIL</i> X 9; 195; 244; 396; <i>ICI</i> V 15; V 28; <i>AE</i> 1985, 312; <i>AE</i> 1995, 376
71				
72	2			<i>CIL</i> X 397; 8091
73				
74				
75	4		1	<i>CIL</i> X 77; 397; 441; 469; <i>AE</i> 1995, 375
76				
77				
78				
79				
80	3	1		<i>CIL</i> X 21; 8339b; <i>SupplIt</i> (RI) V 23; <i>ICI</i> V 32

C= Cosilinum

L = Locri

RI= Regium Iulium

\*\*\* Age is only indirectly given: Insteia Pulla was taken from her home at age seven, and was her husband's wife for 55 years. See p. 108 on this remarkable inscription.

### 2.3. Key ages for the young

First and foremost, it should be stated that the life stage of childhood (0–15) is very well represented in our sample: with a total of 26 % it is far above the average for the Latin West (16 %) as well as for the regional study concerning Thugga (11–12 %).<sup>19</sup>

In their study, Laurence and Trifilò distinguish what they call key ages as they are encountered in the literary sources: three (earliest age at burial), five (starting point for labour and small tasks), seven (boys become *pueri* and girls *virgines*, minimum age of betrothal); twelve or fourteen (minimum age for marriage for girls and boys); fourteen to sixteen (*toga virilis* and dangerous period of puberty for boys); fifteen to nineteen (estimated age of first marriage for girls); eighteen-nineteen (start of military service and military tribunate), twenty (expectation of marriage for girls according to the Augustan marriage laws), twenty-five (boys are liberated from the *tutela* and expected to be married according to the Augustan marriage laws; they may start their political senatorial career).<sup>20</sup> Does the evidence of Regio III display emphasis on these key-ages?

Among the group of young people, ages three, seventeen/eighteen/nineteen and 25 are particularly well represented. A fragment from the third-century jurist Ulpian preserves the rule that a child younger than three years does not receive formal mourning but a marginal form, and Plutarch ascribes a law denying formal mourning for children younger than three to the second king Numa Pompilius.<sup>21</sup> There is also some evidence in the alimentary schemes pointing to the age of three as a minimum age for receiving the *alimenta*.<sup>22</sup> Also for numerical reasons, this age was considered important.<sup>23</sup> The rather equal sex ratio for this age testifies to the fact that young girls were valued as highly as young boys (see table 2).<sup>24</sup>

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strong emphasis on old age (above sixty), age indications upto the day someone lived are rare. See Harlow – Laurence (2011).

<sup>19</sup> Laurence – Trifilò (2012) 36 (Latin West); Harlow – Laurence (2011) 20–1 (Thugga; differentiated between boys and girls, respectively 11 and 12 %).

<sup>20</sup> Laurence – Trifilò (2012) 28, drawing on research on life course by Harlow – Laurence (2002); Parkin (2010) and (2011); Laes (2011) 77–100.

<sup>21</sup> *FIRA* 2, 536 (*non lugetur, sed sublugetur*); Plut. *Numa* 12.

<sup>22</sup> *CIL* VIII 1641 (age 3–15 for boys and 3–13 for girls). See also *CJ* 8,46,9 (from the age of three, one cannot deny the fatherhood of an infant).

<sup>23</sup> Laes (2011) 81–3.

<sup>24</sup> This is also attested for the inscriptions of Rome (Laes (2007) 32–3) and for the large sample

The sudden increase of epitaphs for the ages of seventeen/eighteen may be connected with the fact that legislation on taking on political responsibilities in the *municipia* points to age eighteen. Also at this age men of physical soundness and mental fitness should be put on the roll of knights.<sup>25</sup> Tellingly, the sex ratio for ages seventeen/eighteen is 300 in favour of males: this is all the more significant since other rounded ages have a fairly equal sex ratio (see table 2). This is compelling evidence to state that the ages of seventeen/eighteen were sensed as important ages for the starting of a young male's adult life and political career and were therefore reflected in the epigraphic habit. Obviously, the coming of age for taking on political responsibilities in the *municipia* was considered more important than the enrolment as a knight, since not a single boy of this age in our data-set can be proved to be a member of the equestrian class. In the same way, I believe that the emphasis on age 25 is to be understood as an effect of age rounding, and not as the beginning of political career in the senate, which obviously was only related with a very tiny percentage of the populace.

**Table 2: Sex ratio**

	Boys	Girls	Sex ratio
3 y.	8	5	160
13 y.	5	3	160
17 y.	6	2	300
18 y.	9	3	300
25 y.	4	7	57
30 y.	8	8	100
35 y.	7	3	233
40 y.	12	7	171
50 y.	10	3	333
60 y.	6	6	100

#### 2.4. Key ages and age rounding for the elderly

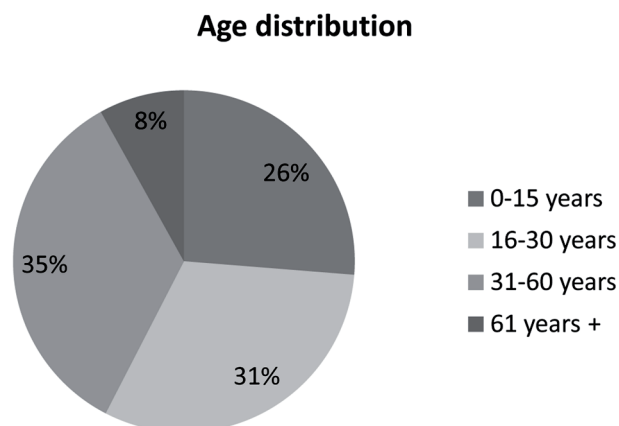
According to Laurence and Trifilò, it is the middle age group (31–60) which is best represented in the inscriptions from the Latin West, both for man and women, with a percentage of about 30 %.<sup>26</sup> Table 3 confirms this percentage for the evidence of Regio III. A striking difference with the total sample by Laurence and Trifilò is the underrepresentation of the elderly in our sample: those aged 61–80 only represent 8 % (about 17 % in the sample by Laurence and Trifilò), and there is not a single instance of an epitaph for a person aged over eighty (about 10 % in

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of the Latin West (Laurence – Trifilò (2012) 38).

<sup>25</sup> Harlow – Laurence (2002) 139–40; Laes (2004).

<sup>26</sup> Laurence – Trifilò (2012) 35–7.

**Table 3: age distribution/ age categories**

the sample by Laurence and Trifilò).<sup>27</sup> Even if one would include age sixty in the category of the elder, the percentage of 13 % would not reach the percentage of the total sample for the Latin West. This again points to the fact that the inscriptions from Regio III tend to stress young ages.

The inscriptions for those above age 25 are revealing for the discussion on age rounding and age awareness in the Roman Empire. In table 1, the multiples of ten are particularly well attested.

Age thirty does occur with literary authors as the end of youthful vigour, age forty might be symbolic for the attaining of full adult age, while age sixty is the traditional marker for the beginning of old age or *senectus*.<sup>28</sup> Also, the ages of sixty, seventy, and in some circumstances seventy-five appear as ages from which the members of the elite should be excused the expenses of public gifts or *munera*.<sup>29</sup>

Scholars have pointed to the fact that it often depended on the medium as to whether people were inclined or used to indicate their exact ages.<sup>30</sup> The undeniable fact that people resorted to age rounding in epitaphs does not necessarily mean that they could not do better; it only indicates that it was part of custom to rather round the number of years someone lived (though it was not obligatory

<sup>27</sup> For African Thugga, the percentage of age category 61–80 is 31 % and 27 % (men and women); while the very old 80 + occupy 17 % and 15 %. See Harlow – Laurence (2011) 20–1. But the African epigraphical preference for the old has been known for a long time. See Szilagy (1965) and (1966).

<sup>28</sup> Laurence – Trifilò (2012) 30–2. For old age, see Parkin (2003).

<sup>29</sup> *Dig.* 50,5,4. For a detailed account, see Parkin (2003) 129–37.

<sup>30</sup> Scheidel (1996).

either, since several inscriptions testify to quite the opposite). Also, age rounding does not imply that one is unaware of one's birthday: people may perfectly remember the day they were born (x days before or after market day, the proximity of a festival), while with time passing by, the exact age may have been forgotten. Table 1 indeed reveals a remarkable number of age indications including days for the inscriptions with multiples of fives (especially for ages thirty, forty, sixty and seventy): an unambiguous confirmation of the trend to combine age rounding with a full awareness of the day of birth.

In the category of the *senes* starting from age sixty, age rounding becomes increasingly important. With the exception of age 72, only multiples of five are attested from age 65 on. Moreover, 12 out of 41 inscriptions (29 %) are in all likelihood Christian.<sup>31</sup> Since the collection of instances of age indication in table 1 contains 36 Christian cases in total, the emphasis of the Christian epitaphs on old age is marked: not less than 30 % of the Christian inscriptions in Regio III is dedicated to the elderly of sixty years or older.

Unfortunately, the sample from Regio III does not contain enough evidence of inscriptions precisising the time of death up to the hours one lived.<sup>32</sup> There are fourteen instances of the *plus minus* formula. The strong presence of Christian evidence for the latter category (86 %) suggests that also in this region the formula was part of the Christian epigraphic habit.<sup>33</sup> Only three *plus minus* inscription do not refer to a rounded age: a confirmation of the link between this formula and the attainment of key ages.<sup>34</sup> The tendency for age rounding is even more outspoken in the Christian epitaphs, where not less than 68 % (28 out of 41) of the inscriptions mentions ages which are multiples of five.

### 3. Funerary inscriptions as gendered information

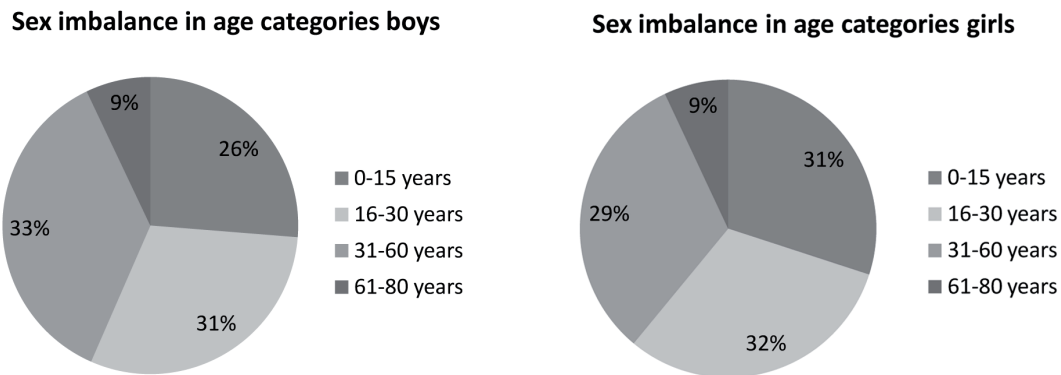
This paragraph studies the so-called sex ratio, which highlights the proportion of inscriptions for males versus inscriptions for females. Similar research has

<sup>31</sup> Chronologically starting from age sixty, these include *CIL* X 470; 8078 and 8080; *ICI* V 33 and 36; *CIL* X 99; 8076; *ICI* V, 14; 15; 28 and 32.

<sup>32</sup> Hours are only indicated in *CIL* X 101; 328; *Paestum* 188; 189.

<sup>33</sup> *Plus minus*: *CIL* X 37; 99; 101; 156; 178 and 8078; *ICI* V, 15; 19; 21; 23; 28; and 30; *AE* 1984, 264; *AE* 1999, 541. Laurence – Trifilò (2012) 24–5 on the late ancient and Christian use of the *plus minus* formula. Only *CIL* X 101 and 156 are not Christian.

<sup>34</sup> *CIL* X 37 (46 years); *ICI* V 30 (54 years); *AE* 1999, 541 (63 years). Laurence – Trifilò (2012) on *plus minus* and key ages.

**Table 4: Sex imbalance in age categories**

been set up earlier. Out of a sample of 20,578 epitaphs, K. Hopkins calculated an average sex ratio of 135 for Roman inscriptions.<sup>35</sup> Laurence and Trifilò mention a sex ratio of 147 for their sample of the Latin West.<sup>36</sup> A sample for Roman Italy revealed an overall preponderance of males, with average sex ratio of 180, though marked regional variations occur.<sup>37</sup> As mentioned above, the study of family inscriptions showed a stronger sex imbalance in favour of men (cf. note 7). Thirteen seems to be a crucial age for the whole of Italy. The sex ratio drops to 88: an indication of the importance of this age for girls who were by then considered as marriageable.

For my sample of Regio III, the average sex ration is 173, a number which comes very near the average for Roman Italy. As appears from table 4, there are no significant variations when we compare age categories for men and women.<sup>38</sup> The relatively small numbers per age do not allow for a more nuanced analysis, but if we only include these ages with significant attestations, some interesting patterns appear (see table 2). In fact, the sex imbalance seems to have been less outspoken for rounded ages as thirty and sixty; the balance is even turning in favour of women at age 25. For their sample of the Latin West, Laurence and Trifilò have pointed out that women are indeed more strongly represented at the age of 25 and thirty.<sup>39</sup> Also for young infants the imbalance does not seem to be that

<sup>35</sup> Hopkins (1966–1967) 261.

<sup>36</sup> Laurence – Trifilò (2012) 26.

<sup>37</sup> McWilliam (2001) 79 (average sex ratio); 83 (numbers by region). The sample of McWilliam does not include Regio III.

<sup>38</sup> As there appear no significant differences for Thugga. See Harlow – Laurence (2011) 20–1.

<sup>39</sup> Laurence – Trifilò (2012) 30–1. However, the gender peak in favour of men at age sixty is not confirmed in our source material.



strong as it is for older ages – again a fact which is confirmed by the much larger collection of epitaphs of Rome.<sup>40</sup>

#### 4. Individual instances and case stories

##### 4.1. Age terminology

The inscriptions of Regio III do not offer sufficient material to study terminology of age.<sup>41</sup> There is however one epitaph from Velia in which the use of *adulescens* is strange when compared to the literary sources:

*EE VIII 1, 284*

*M() E() / Lucretius / adulesce(n)s / amantissimus / vixit ann(os) VIII  
/ m(ensem) I Spufius / Campanus alum/no b(ene) m(erenti).*

*Adulescens* usually refers to ages fifteen to thirty, though the term was never used that strictly. In practice, it could be applied to anyone living in the vigour of his youth, and the distinction with *iuvenis* was not always that sharp.<sup>42</sup> However, the use of the term for a nine-years-old child is remarkable; there are only two other attestations pointing to ages under fifteen, one of which is a late ancient Christian example. The example from Velia thus turns out to be the youngest child known as an *adulescens* in the pagan material.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Laes (2007) 32–3.

<sup>41</sup> Age terminology is not treated in Laurence – Trifilò (2012) or Harlow – Laurence (2011). For the inscriptions of Rome, see Laes (2007) 33–6.

<sup>42</sup> On *adulescens* and *iuvenis*, see Eyben (1977) 37–40 and Laes – Strubbe (2008) 36–7; 47. Caesar is called *adulescens* by Suetonius at the age of 34: Suet. *Caes.* 9,3.

<sup>43</sup> *CIL XII 2406; ILCV 1747; RICG XV 278* (Vicus Augusti, Gallia Narbonensis): *Hic requiescit in pace / bon(a)e memoriae adolescens / i(n)tegre carnis nomine Leu/domari qui vixit annus (sic) / numero IIII et dies VIII / obiit in Chr(ist)o // XV K(alendas) Ma(rti)as(?) // sex/sies post con(sulatum) Basili vv(iri) / c(larissimi) CSS cons(ulis)*. For the other pagan example, see *ILAlg I 2616* (Madaurus, Africa Proconsularis): *[Dis Mani]b(us) sac(rum) / [Mattius] Matti Ho/[nora]tiani fili/[us Ho]noratus / [a prima] adules/[centi]a eximius / [since]rus pius / [vix(it) an(nis)] XIII dieb(us) XXX / [h(ic) s(itus) e(st) o(ssa)] t(ibi) b(ene) q(uiescant)*.

## 4.2. Marriage at (very) early age

Age at first marriage and duration of marriage as represented on tombstones have been the subject of databases and separate studies, both before and after the information era. The evidence suggests an average age of first marriage in the late teens for women and somewhat over 25 for men.<sup>44</sup> Both in the case of marriages at early age and exceptionally long marriages, Lucania and Bruttium have some interesting cases to offer.

A first instance is an inscription from Forum Popillii, dating from the reign of Emperor Claudius (41–54) or perhaps somewhat earlier, on a monument which is described by the enthusiastic editor as one of the most important of the Roman Empire.<sup>45</sup>

*InscrIt* 3, 1, 113; *ILS* 9390; *AE* 1910, 191

*C(aio) Utiano C(ai) f(ilio) Pom(ptina) Rufo / Latiniano IIIvir(o) i(ure) d(icundo) iter(um) / Insteia M(arci) f(ilia) Polla sacerdos Iuliae / Augustae Volceis et Atinae / optimo et indulgentissimo viro, qui / eam pupillam annorum VII in domum (sic) / receptam per annos LV cum summo / honore uxorem habuit. / hunc decuriones Volceiani impensa (sic) / publica funerandum et statua eque/stri honorandum censuerunt. / Latiniae M(arci) f(iliae) Posillae [sor]ori Latiniani.*

This is an intriguing instance of early betrothal.<sup>46</sup> At age seven, merely a little girl (*pupilla*) Insteia Polla was brought into the house of C. Utianus Rufus Latinianus, a member of the *gens Latiniana* who had been adopted into the *gens Utiana*. She later became a priest of Iulia Augusta, the deified Livia, wife of Augustus. The great prestige of the family is apparent from the fact that her husband, who is honoured for having treated his wife with all due respects in a marriage which lasted for 55 years, is granted a funeral on public expenses as well as an equestrian statue on the costs of the *decuriones* of Volci. Also his sister is commemorated with due honours.

<sup>44</sup> Harkness (1896); Shaw (2002) for data sets. The detail of the discussion on age at first marriage is aptly summarised by Scheidel (2007).

<sup>45</sup> "Titulum propter et varia quae enuntiat et ornatus elegantiam et mirum monumenti decus inter sepulcrales praecipuos Romanarum civitatum plane habeo".

<sup>46</sup> For ages of betrothal, see Harlow – Laurence (2002) 60–1; Harlow – Laurence (2011) 60 note 29 (also referring to previous scholarship).



Marriage at prepuberal age has been the subject of considerable scholarly attention and debate, but it has to be pointed out that this inscription only refers to bringing the seven-year-old girl into the house of her future husband. She may have been kept there and educated for several years before the marriage was actually contracted or sexually consummated. A famous instance of another seven-year old is the freedwoman Aurelia Philemation from Rome, who lived for forty years with her husband and *collibertus* Philemation. At age seven, he is said to have taken her in his arms (*septem me naatam / annorum gremio / ipse recepit*), the same scenario as the taking into the house which is mentioned in the inscription from Forum Popilii.<sup>47</sup> In both cases, nothing is said about the age of the husband.

An inscription from Potentia unambiguously refers to actual marriage at age nine:

*EE VIII 1, 263*

*D(is) M(anibus) // Flabi(a)e Bervi/aneni(?) co(n)iugi qui (sic) / vixit [an]nis XXVI / P(ublius) Oc[ci]us Iu[li]a[nu]s CV[...]OV/T an(n)is XVII / b(ene) m(erenti).*

In an epitaph from the same town, marriage with a ten-year-old girl is attested. When she died at age 28, she is commemorated by her husband and her daughter:

*CIL X 155:*

*D(is) M(anibus) / Cisiae Pollae quae bixit ann(os) / XXXVIII me(n) s(es) VIII Figelius / Atimetus co(n)iugi cum quo vixit / a(nnos) XXVII m(enses) XI et Figellia / Procula filia matri b(ene) m(erenti).*

And yet another instance from Tegianum testifies to marriage at age thirteen (though the bride was nearly fourteen when marrying). Here, the minimum legal age for marriage of twelve for girls is respected:

*CIL X 317; InscrIt III 1, 255*

*D(is) M(anibus) / Tegeanensi Pri/mae quae vixit / ann(os) XXXIII m(enses) VII d(ies) / XII M(arcus) Teg(eanensis) Cresce/ns con(iugi) dulcissi/mae cum qua vix(it) / ann(os) XX men(ses) VIII / b(ene) m(erenti) fec(it).*

<sup>47</sup> *CIL I 1221.*

Unfortunately, not a single inscription from Regio III informs us on questions as age difference between men and wife or the first age of becoming a mother. In two joint epitaphs for a husband and his wife, who died respectively at the age of sixty and forty, we cannot possibly know that the age gap between the two actually was twenty years. One could have died long before the other; the stones could have been erected after the second had died.<sup>48</sup>

When people recorded the duration of their marriage, they preferred to mention long duration, and they did certainly not always resort to rounding. Hence, the evidence from Regio III contains six instances of marriages lasting for more than 35 years.<sup>49</sup> A quite remarkable instance is a commemoration of marriage from Forum Popillii where the duration is detailed upto the hour.

*InscrIt* III 1, 117

*D(is) M(anibus) / D(ecimo) Dinnio Arisco/ni Insteia Lante/nusa co(n)  
iugi b(ene) / m(erenti) f(ecit) qui sene (sic) ullo d/olo meo [exanima]  
tus est / in aeo loco viribus u/mnis eximeretur con (sic) q(uo) v(ixit)  
a(nnos) XVIII m(enses) V d(ies) XVII / h(orae) XII.*

Here, an emendation by H. Solin has taken away the suggestion that Insteia Lan-tenusa's husband would have died by an accident or a murder for which she in one way or another would have to be blamed. In fact, the epigraphical hapax *[exanima]tus* should be read as *[huma]tus*, while *sene ullo dolo meo* has to be understood as *sine dolo malo*, a very usual formula.<sup>50</sup>

## 5. Conclusions

The data set of age inscriptions from Lucania and Bruttium has confirmed some well-known patterns which were discovered in the large sample for the corpus of inscriptions from the Latin West: sex imbalance in favour of males, strong representation of young people, high valuation of female infants, preference for age rounding at more advanced age, a particular stress on key ages both for the young

<sup>48</sup> See *CIL* X 8079 and 8080. For other examples, see *SupplIt* (RI) V 23 (son dies at age forty, mother at age eighty); V 26 (daughter dies at age five, mother at age twenty-five); V 27 (son dies at age eight, mother at age forty).

<sup>49</sup> *CIL* X 365 (35 years); 300 (forty years); 304 (42 years); 452 (53 years); *InscrIt* III 1, 199 (*contubernium* lasting for 52 years); *SupplIt* (C) III 5 (65 years).

<sup>50</sup> Solin (1981) 37. For *sine dolo malo*, see *ThLL* V, 1, c. 1863, l. 42–62.

and the elderly. Future studies may scrutinise other regions to see in how far they conformed to or differed from this pattern; the public world of commemorative norms might be revealing about the way certain regions fit into the Romanised pattern, or stick to specific local fashion.

Also, this study has revealed significant differences which elicit further research questions. The particular attention to young male adults aged seventeen to nineteen points to an emphasis on the municipal elite and the beginning of a political career. Also, the overall importance of children might indicate a typical pattern of stressing grief in the cases of untimely death. The taking into account of the Christian epitaphs has provoked new questions on the use of the *plus minus* formula, as well as on the typically Christian stress on advanced age.<sup>51</sup>

Lastly, the exhaustive approach for one particular region has revealed at least a remarkable instance of the used of the age term *adulescens*, a parallel for the well-known Philemation inscription from Rome, as well as some case stories on early marriage or exceptionally long lasting marriage. "Approaching the study of age commemoration (...) allows us to gain a precious insight into the world of the living, as well as the dead".<sup>52</sup> It is a path well worth continuing; in fact, research on inscriptions and the human life course is in the new beginning of a most promising phase.

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<sup>51</sup> For such studies, Nordberg (1963) will be a valuable starting point.

<sup>52</sup> Laurence – Trifilò (2012) 27.

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