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INDEX

EUGENIO AMATO	<i>Note esegetico-testuali a Dione di Prusa V: Sull'abito (or. LXXII)</i>	9
LUIGI ARATA	<i>Breve storia del tecolito, con particolare riferimento alla medicina greca</i>	21
MIKA KAJAVA	<i>A Further Greek Hymn from Signia</i>	31
TUA KORHONEN	<i>Christina of Sweden and Her Knowledge of Greek</i>	41
PETER KRUSCHWITZ & VIRGINIA L. CAMPBELL	<i>What the Pompeians Saw: Representations of Document Types in Pompeian Drawings and Paintings (and their Value for Linguistic Research)</i>	57
LAURA NISSINEN	<i>Cubicula diurna, nocturna – Revisiting Roman cubicula and Sleeping Arrangements</i>	85
JANNE PÖLÖNEN	<i>Hiberus quidam in Dig. 8,2,13 pr: (M. Antonius) Hiberus (PIR² H 168)?</i>	109
OLLI SALOMIES & ZBIGNIEW FIEMA	<i>Latin Inscription from the Ridge Church at Petra</i>	108
KAJ SANDBERG	<i>Isis, the Pomerium and the Augural Topography of the Capitoline Area</i>	141
HEIKKI SOLIN	<i>Analecta epigraphica CCLII-CCLVIII</i>	161
KAIUS TUORI	<i>Dig. 34,2,33: the Return of the Cross-Dressing Senator</i>	191
STEPHEN EVANS	Review Article: <i>Dusting the Mythological Cobwebs</i>	201
	<i>De novis libris iudicia</i>	217
	<i>Index librorum in hoc volumine recensorum</i>	313
	<i>Libri nobis missi</i>	319
	<i>Index scriptorum</i>	337

A FURTHER GREEK HYMN FROM SIGNIA

MIKA KAJAVA

In two previous issues of this journal, I published a number of epigraphic poems of Imperial date from Artena, some 45 kms south of Rome.¹ They are all reported to have been found in Colle Maiorana, a locality between Artena and Colleferro, which in antiquity belonged to the administrative territory of Signia (now Segni). Two of the texts were in Latin, two in Greek. A third Greek inscription, already known in the eighteenth century, was published in the late 1970s by Luigi Moretti who interpreted it as a Stoic hymn telling the story of creation.² While the anonymous creator introduced in this text is most probably Zeus, as in the famous hymn by Cleanthes, the Greek inscription published by me in 1997 turned out to be a hymnlike epigram to Heracles, praising the god as the saviour of ships and seamen during a sea voyage from Liguria to Italy.³ One of the Latin texts I discussed in 1996 is also a hymn, to Janus Pater, and now it seems that the same locality has yielded yet another epigraphic hymn to gods.

Actually, I already gave a short report of this text in the 1996 article (see n. 1; pp. 98–100 = *SEG* XLVI 1351). However, thanks to new photographic evidence, the rudimentary reading not only needs complete revision, but it can also be considerably augmented. Recently, while checking through my archives and

¹ *Arctos* 30 (1996) 75–100 (= *AE* 1996, 370 and 371; for n. 370, a hymn to Janus Pater, see also the discussion by W. D. Lebek, *ZPE* 150 [2004] 69–83 = *AE* 2004, 385); *Arctos* 31 (1997) 55–86 (= *AE* 1997, 278 = *SEG* XLVII 1517).

² L. Moretti, "Frammento di inno tardo-stoico sulla creazione", in *Scritti storico-epigrafici in memoria di Marcello Zambelli* (Pubbl. Fac. Lett. Univ. Macerata 5), Roma 1978, 251–6 = Id., *Tra epigrafia e storia. Scritti scelti e annotati* (Vetera 5), Roma 1990, 197–203 (= *SEG* XXVIII 793); W. Peek, *ZPE* 35 (1979) 168–9; W. Luppe, *ibid.* 46 (1982) 163–6 (= *SEG* XXXII 1020); R. Merkelbach, *ibid.* 49 (1982) 204.

³ This text has an interesting parallel from Tusculum (some 20 kms northwest of Colle Maiorana), i.e., a dedication to Heracles by someone whom the god had helped in various ways. Remarkably, the poet says that Heracles had helped him during a journey to Italy through the Ligurian and Celtic lands (*IG* XIV 1003; cf. *Arctos* 31 [1997] 81–2).

notes before the transfer of the Helsinki Classics Department to new premises, I came upon studying a number of photographs of the fragmentary inscription taken by Heikki Solin in 2002. As the quality of these photographs was clearly superior to that of those taken by myself in 1996, it seemed to me that something new could perhaps be deciphered of the text. The task turned out to be more difficult than I had expected; in fact, it took me several days to arrive at what I hope is a reliable reading.

The inscription, now preserved in the Antiquarium of Colleferro, was found in the early 1980s in Colle Maiorana.⁴ The text is engraved on a block of limestone which measures (35) x (40) x 14.5 cm, the height of the letters varying between 1.7 and 2.0 cm. Unfortunately, the inscribed surface is very abraded, making the decipherment rather challenging, and partly impossible. In particular, one may note that at some points what at first sight seems an obvious reading are no more than illusionary impressions not corresponding to what is actually inscribed on stone (in line 6, for example, my previous reading, ..IANHN ἡνυσάμ[ην ~ -, is evidently wrong). At least nine lines are still visible, but the inscription must have continued above and, possibly, below as well.

 [--]+[-----]++++++
 OIOC+++[------]++ON++++++
 ἀντάρ [------] ἱριδι μαρμαίρο[ντος ?]
 ἄλτ', ΕΥΩΠΙΑΥ++++Ε σαόφροσύνην τε δίκ[ην τε]
 5 πλούτ[ω τ'] οὐρανίην εἰρύσσατο πάγχυ [γενέθλην ?].
 ὦ πᾶν εὐ[φ]ρόνε, ὦ καὶ ἄμυνο[μένω ~ - ~],
 ἐσθλά' δὲ ποιοῦν[τας?-----]N++[-----],
 ἀεῖζω, πλέον ἐν λελιημ[έ]νοι [- ~ - ~]
 [-----]++++ΤΟ+++++[-----]

While I had earlier assumed that this is a poem written in elegiac distichs, it now appears that we are dealing with a hymn in dactylic hexameter, like the above-mentioned poem in honour of Zeus. Judging from what remains of the inscription, and especially because of the use of dual forms in lines 6 and 8 (εὐφρονε, ἀεῖζω and, evidently, ἄμυνο[μένω]), the text seems to refer to two gods, most likely Zeus and, possibly, Heracles, who (as noted) are both known from other Greek texts found in Colle Maiorana. The passage from line 6 onwards appears to be a joint invocation to the two deities who have been introduced earlier in

⁴ Angelo Luttazzi, Director of the Antiquarium, kindly provided this information.



Fig. 1 (DAI neg. n. 2002.144)



Fig. 2 (DAI neg. n. 2002.147)

the hymn. If I have understood the text correctly, lines 3–5 may speak about Zeus, referring not only to a journey through the sky but also to his prudence and righteous judgments as well as to his saving the heavenly order (for some proposals for restoration, see below). The other god, whom I tentatively identify as Heracles, will have been presented somewhere in the preceding lines. Regarding line 6, while εὐφρων fittingly characterizes both Zeus and Heracles, the activities of the latter, in particular, would be perfectly matched by his being an "avenging guardian" (ἀμυνόμενος), though this role was by no means alien to Zeus either. Both are also styled as "ever-living" (ἀείζως).

Lines 3–5

The sequence divided between lines 3/4, ἴριδι μαρμαίρο[ντος?] / ἄλτο (for the probable elision in ἄλτ', cf. below), is likely to describe the supreme god Zeus travelling in the sky, possibly on his way down to earth. In addition to referring to various ways of springing and leaping, as that of heroes leaping from the chariot to the ground (cf. the Iliadic phrase ἐξ ὀχέων σὺν τεύχεσιν ἄλτο χαμᾶζε), the epic form ἄλτο (< ἄλλομαι) is frequently used of the downward movements of deities starting their descent from the heavenly abodes, especially from Olympus (cf. Hom. *Il.* 1,532: εἰς ἄλα ἄλτο βαθείαν ἀπ' αἰγλήεντος Ὀλύμπου; *Il.* 18,616: ἦ δ' ἴρηξ ὡς ἄλτο κατ' Οὐλύμπου νιφόεντος, both referring to Thetis; Q. Smyrn. 12,202–3: εὐτε νόημα / ἄλτο διὰ νεφέων, of Themis, "leapt down through clouds").⁵ Sometimes the gods just leap down from out of heaven (cf. *Il.* 19,351: οὐρανοῦ ἐκ κατεπᾶλτο δι' αἰθέρος, of Athene; Nonn. *Dion.* 48,614: οὐρανόθεν κατέπαλτο, of Eros; Apoll. Rhod. 2,286–7: εἰ μὴ ἄρ' ὠκέα Ἴρις ἴδεν, κατὰ δ' αἰθέρος ἄλτο / οὐρανόθεν).

The reading ἴριδι μαρμαίρο[---] in line 3 is fairly reliable. There seems to be no other evidence for these two words being similarly coupled together, but if the verbal form is in the genitive, one might assume a phrase such as δι' αἰθέρος ἴριδι μαρμαίροντος,⁶ or perhaps rather, δι' οὐρανοῦ ἴριδι μαρμαίροντος. The verb μαρμαίρω, which in Homer normally describes the glistening of the armour,⁷

⁵ Of course, one could leap in the opposite direction, as in *Orph. lith.* 11–2: ἄλτο δὲ καὶ Κρονίδης ταναὴν ὑπὲρ αἰθέρα Χείρων / σευάμενος πρὸς Ὀλυμπόν.

⁶ Though not fully comparable in terms of vocabulary, cf. the following passage from the Orphic Hymn to Zeus Keraunios (19,15–6): μαρμαίρει δὲ πρόσωπ' ἀύγαῖς, σμαραγεῖ δὲ κεραυνὸς / αἰθέρος ἐν γυάλοισι.

⁷ But cf. *Il.* 3,397: ὄμματα μαρμαίροντα, of Aphrodite's shining eyes (D. Turkeltaub, *AJPh*

is not known to have been used of heavenly bodies or celestial phenomena until Aeschylus (*Sept.* 400–1: καὶ νύκτα τὰύτην ἦν λέγεις ἐπ' ἀσπίδος / ἄστροισι μαρμαίρουσαν οὐρανοῦ).⁸ Though the possibility exists that Iris, the goddess of the rainbow, is here flying down from heaven as the messenger of Zeus (or even together with him?), the use of the dative ἴριδι may rather suggest that heaven is simply sparkling with the colours of the rainbow. Thus, we would be dealing not with the goddess herself but with the effects of the rainbow, as sometimes seems to be the meaning of Ἴρις / Iris in Hellenistic and later literature as well as in Latin poetry.⁹

Considering that line 3 seems to begin with the typically epic conjunction αὐτὰρ, the whole sequence may have been, for example, αὐτὰρ [ἐπεὶ τε δι' αἰθέρος] ἴριδι μαρμαίροντος / ἄλτο.

What is written between ἄλτο and the phrase σαοφροσύνην τε δίκην τε is very difficult to read. First, one may note that the end of ἄλτο is evidently elided, being probably followed by ΕΥ (rather than Ο). The rest of the line clearly refers to the prudence and justice of Zeus, but in what respect? In view of the context, and considering that the letter inscribed after CY is perhaps Ν or Π, two possibilities may present themselves. Either we have to read εὐῶπα συν[---], or the text shows εὔ ὄπασ' ὑπ[---]. The first alternative would mean that the qualities of Zeus are characterized by the adjective εὔωψ "fair-eyed, fair to look on" (thus *LSJ*), εὐῶπα being probably followed by a verb beginning with συν- (συνίσχε or similar). However, the prudence (and justice) of Zeus being εὔωψ does not sound quite apt, and with this reading the whole clause would become somewhat clumsy. Moreover, the word is very rare, being found only twice in Sophocles (cf. *Oed. Tyr.* 189 [lyr.]: εὐῶπα πέμψον ἄλκάν "goodly aid" [*LSJ*]¹⁰). Following, then, the other alternative, we would have the aorist ὄπασε(ν) (< ὀπάζω), which is frequently used in epic poetry of gods giving and granting various gifts to mortals. As the gods operated from heaven, ὄπασ' ὑπερθε would make good sense here. However, even if the latter word would fill the problematic gap perfectly, the letters ΕΡΘ hardly coincide with what remains visible on stone. On the other hand, some of the "disturbing" strokes might not belong to the script as, in fact,

126 [2005] 166).

⁸ M. G. Ciani, *ΦΑΟΣ e termini affini nella poesia greca. Introduzione a una fenomenologia della luce* (Pubbl. Fac. Lett. Univ. Padova 51), Firenze 1974, 149–50. Cf. also Q. Smyrn. 12, 104–5: Ἦμος δ' αἰγλήεντα περιστέφει οὐρανὸν ἄστρα / πάντοθε μαρμαίροντα.

⁹ For rainbow, sky and stars in Homer, see G. H. Macurdy, *CQ* 8 (1914) 212–5.

¹⁰ But Ἄλκᾶ may be personified here, her radiant face giving promise of salvation, see J. C. Kamerbeek, *The Plays of Sophocles* IV, Leiden 1967, 64.

seems to be the case in other parts of the text as well (some extra strokes appear between lines 7 and 8, and cf. below for line 5).

Line 5 is no less difficult. The first two letters are somewhat uncertain; they might also be read as ΗΔ. If so, one might understand ἡδ' ο[---] rather than a participle of ἡδομαι, which is clearly too long. However, what (in two photographs) looks like the vertical stroke of Δ may be part of a longer scratch discernible under more letters in the beginning of the line. An alternative reading would be ΗΛ, but I do not know what this could mean in the present context (a reference to ἡλιος is not likely). Therefore, I very much prefer ΠΛ, i.e., the beginning of πλοῦτος, the "richness" of Zeus. This reading would be further corroborated by the probable presence of the letters YT following the omikron.

After the gap, I think that we have to read the adjective οὐρανίην, the remains of the first three letters being still visible, though laboriously. In particular, one should note that the right-hand curve of Ο can be seen under a diagonal stroke extending all through lines 4 to 6, and a parallel line intersects the following Υ, the upper part of which is clearly discernible. However, the crucial letter of this word is the iota which, on a closer look, can be identified with what at first sight seems to be the right-hand vertical stroke of Ν. The combination of the two letters (ΝΙ) is fairly well visible in at least two photographs (cf. Figs. 1–2).

The following verbal form is somewhat problematic, too. In its beginning, I think one may read ΕΙΡΥ. This would evidently mean that we have here the aorist of the verb ἐρύομαι "protect, guard; rescue, save", which in poetry is often used of saviour gods (the aor. εἰρύσασθαι, and similar Homeric forms, are derived from the redupl. present εἴρυμαι). The personal ending of the verb (ΤΟ) is readable, though it is partly concealed under what gives the appearance of a Μ on the photographs.

The next word can almost surely be read as the Homeric (and lyric) adverb πάγχυ "entirely, wholly". The line will have ended with a noun such as γενέθλην (in the meaning "family, race"), which would mean that Zeus had rescued the "heavenly race (of the gods)" with his wealth and richness.¹¹ For οὐρανίη γενέθλη, referring to Dionysus' heavenly origin, cf. Nonn. *Dion.* 24,13, etc., and for the combination πάγχυ γενέθλην at the end of a dactylic line, cf. Opp. *Cyn.* 2,43–4: Ἄλλ' ἄγε δὴ τὰ ὑρῶν ζηλήμονα πάγχυ γενέθλην / πρῶτον ἀείδωμεν.

In brief, lines 3–5 seem to speak about Zeus who, perhaps in the aftermath of his decisive battle against the titans, has established the rule of the Olympian

¹¹ For further fem. nouns attested in combination with οὐρανίη, cf. φύτλη, ἄντυξ and αὐλή, all known from Nonnus (and ἄντυξ οὐ. "vault of heaven" from other sources as well). None of them is metrically apt here.

gods, now supremely excelling in prudence and justice, both qualities which he was eager to distribute to mortals as well.

Lines 6–8

This section begins with an invocation to the two gods who are first styled in the dual as εὐφρονε "kindly, gracious". The adjective εὐφρων is Homeric ("cheerful, merry"), but the earliest case where it is clearly associated with a divinity seems to be *Hymn. Hom. Ven.* 102: σὺ δ' εὐφρονα θυμὸν ἔχουσα.¹² Later on, the attribute was frequently given to divinities, cf., in similar contexts, *SEG XXXII* 552, *passim* (Delphi, Philodamus' paeon to Dionysus, c. 340 BC): εὐφρων, τάνδε πόλιν φύλασσε / εὐαίῳνι σὺν ὄλβῳ; *IG II²* 4473, 10 = *SEG XXIII* 126 (Macedonicus' paeon to Apollo and Asclepius, 1st cent. BC): Ἀσκληπιῶν εὐφ[ρον]α κοῦρον; *Hymn. Orph.* 46 (to Dionysus Licnitus), l. 2: εὐφρονα Βάκχον. Moreover, the expressions εὐφρονη βουλῆ and εὐφρονη θυμῷ are often found at the end of dactylic verses in hymns and epigrams addressed to gods.

In this context, the participle ἀμυνομένω (< ἀμύνομαι "repay, requite, avenge") probably presents the two deities as punishing unjust people and offenders. The gods are gracious, but as they also avenge themselves on criminals, one wonders whether a word such as ἀδικοῦντας or ἀσεβοῦντας could be restored at the end of the line (the accusative is normal with ἀμύνομαι).¹³ Both words are often found as objects of verbs or other expressions denoting punishment and revenge (ἀμύνομαι, κολάζω, τιμωροῦμαι), cf., e.g., *Hymn. Orph.* 70 (to the Eumenides), l. 1: Κλυτέ μου, Εὐμενίδες μεγάλωνυμοι, εὐφρονη βουλῆι, and ll. 4–5: αἰ πάντων καθορᾶτε βίον θνητῶν ἀσεβούντων, / τῶν ἀδίκων τιμωροί. A reference to the unrighteous people would also fit together with the beginning of

¹² The *-phrōn* epithets of *thumos* have been discussed by S. M. Darcus, *Glotta* 55 (1977) 178–82. Cf. also *Hymn. Hom. Apoll.* 194: εὐφρονες Ἰῶραι. For εὐφρων (εὐ-) (as well as εὐφροσύνη and εὐφραίνω) in Homer, see J. Latacz, *Zum Wortfeld "Freude" in der Sprache Homers* (Bibl. klass. Altertumswiss. N.F. II:17), Heidelberg 1966, 160–73 (note also that Euphrosyne, one of the three Graces, is personified as early as Hes. *Theog.* 909). Cf. further Pind. *Ol.* 4,12–3: θεὸς εὐφρων / εἷη λοιπαῖς εὐχαῖς. (P. Hummel, *L'épithète pindarique. Étude historique et philologique* [Sapheneia 3], Bern 1999, 560). Interestingly, A. H. Sommerstein, *BICS* 24 (1977) 78, has observed that in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, εὐφρων normally occurs in contexts concerned with Zeus. For εὐφρων, πρόφρων, etc., in prayers, see also S. Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, Oxford 1997, 145, 218–9.

¹³ Κακοεργούς / κακοποιούς "mischievous, doing ill, inopportunate, harmful, etc." are less likely in this context. They are not particularly poetic words either.

line 7, where one could well restore ἐσθλὰ δὲ ποιούν[τας ---]. In other words, the gods punish the unjust, but (δὲ) they help the benefactors who are ready to act in a morally good way.¹⁴ If this is so, a verb denoting the divine kindness is needed at the end of the line.

Regarding the role of the two gods as punishing outrageous people, one may note that, according to the Tusculum hymn (n. 3), Heracles, slayer of arrogant and unrighteous men (ὑπερφιάλους ἀδίκους τε ἄνδρας ... ἐναιρόμενος, ll. 9–12), was given by Zeus for adoption by Dike (Justice) whom insolent and wanton mortals had treated in a dishonourable way (*IG XIV 1003*, ll. 13–6: τῷ σε καὶ υἷα Δίκῃ Κρονίδης / θετὸν ἐγγυάλιξε, | εὐτέ μιν ὑβριστὰι φῶτες ἄτ[ι]/μον ἄγον). Clearly, Heracles was expected to avenge such *hybristai*.¹⁵

Line 8 seems to open with the dual form ἀείζω. This adjective is found as early as Heraclitus (πῦρ ἀείζωον, frg. 30 DK), also occurring in Aeschylus and Sophocles, but it does not seem to be used of gods before Callimachus (*iamb.* frg. 194, 69–70 [Pfeiffer]: τῶν δ' ἀειζῶων / τίς τὴν ἐλαίην, τίς δὲ [τ]ὴν δάφνην τιμᾶ;). Note also, interestingly, that the lightning of Zeus is "everlasting" (ἀειζῶων) in the above-mentioned hymn to Zeus by Cleanthes (von Arnim, *SVF I 537*, 11: ἀειζῶοντα κεραυνόν).¹⁶ Here, as in some other cases, the attribute is derived from the verb (cf., e.g., *PMG IV 156*: ἀείζων θεέ, εἰωη· Ἰάω). For the adjectival form in reference to deities, cf. *CIG 4598 = SEG XLVI 2078*, 4 = Merkelbach – Stauber, *SGOst.* IV 22.21.1 (funerary epigram from Hauran; late 3rd / first half of the 4th century): βουλαῖσι δ' ἀειζῶοιο θεοῖο (Christian god); *App. Anth. demonstr.* 378 (Cougny), ll. 2/3: τὴν ἀείζωον Κόρην οὐκ ἀκριβῶς θνήσκουσαν. In Imperial times (mostly), the title of "ever-living" is also attested for a number of gods in Egypt (ἀείζωος being usually followed by θεὸς μέγιστος).¹⁷

After ἀείζω, the text seems to continue in first person plural, as is indicated by the (non-dual) form λελημημένοι (the reading is fairly reliable).¹⁸ This partici-

¹⁴ Cf. *Orph.* frg. 337 (Kern), of Zeus, καὶ τοῖς μὲν πρόφρων τε καὶ ἥπιος ἐσθλὰ δίδωσι, / τοῖς δὲ κακὰ φρονέων νεμεσίζεται ἐμμενὲς αἰεῖ.

¹⁵ I do not know any other source where Dike appears as the adoptive mother of Heracles. Normally, when offended she sits beside Zeus who punishes impious men on her behalf.

¹⁶ Cf. Call. *Del.* 314–5: ἀειζῶοντα ἱερά (sent to Delian Apollo).

¹⁷ E.g., *I.Fayum II 120*; *UPZ I 106*, 11; *BGU I 124*; *P.Ross.Geor.* 5,15; *P.Tebt.* 313.

¹⁸ On the basis of the photographic evidence, the sequence ΠΛΕΟΝΕΝ might just possibly be read as ΠΛΕΟΜΕΝ. In that case, one should obviously understand πλέομεν "we sailed". This would be attractive, considering that the participle λελημημένοι is well attested in reference to sailors (Apoll. Rhod. and elsewhere), but also because an adventurous sea voyage is described in the above-mentioned hymn to Heracles from Colle Maiorana. Noteworthy though this may seem, the reading πλέον ἐν is far more probable and, moreover, a sudden transfer from the

ple of the old epic perfect *λελίημαι* "strive eagerly" probably refers, in plural, to the author of the hymn, suggesting that he is now even more (*πλέον*) "eager for" doing something (the dative depending on *ἐν* may have come later in the lacuna, unless the preposition is used adverbially). Similar changes from singular to plural are not rare; for example, in the Heracles hymn from Tusculum (*IG XIV 1003*; see n. 3), the author finally praises his saviour god in these words (vv. 13–4): *αὐτὸν ἀλεξητῆρα κακῶν, αὐτὸν σε δοτῆρα / παντοίης ἀρετῆς κλήιζομεν, Ἑράκλεες*, while in vv. 9–10 he has said: *ἥπιος εὐμενέων τε πέλοις, ἐπειὴ νύ μοι αἰεὶ / εὐχομένωι τε πάρει χεῖρά θ' ὑπερθευ ἔχεις*. Regarding the present inscription, one may assume that the author is eager to praise the two gods, offering them gifts and sacrifice in gratitude for their aid.

As far as may be gathered from the fragmentary text, though fairly modest in terms of inspiration and originality, this is a neat piece of poetry, drawing mainly on Homer and the long epic tradition. However, the major significance of the verses lies in their subject which provides yet another testimony to the literary interests of the circles where it was produced. Dating, as it seems, to the second or early third century AD, i.e., the period of the Second Sophistic, the inscription is no doubt related to the remarkable series of epigraphic poems from Colle Maiorana (see above). Let me quote what I wrote in *Arctos* 1997 (p. 85): "this locality was prosperous not only in terms of business and economy over the centuries but it also flourished culturally, at least in the second and third centuries AD. Since two of the poems, the dedication to Janus and the Stoic cosmogony, were reportedly found in the ruins of a Roman villa, probably the nucleus of a large *fundus*, the possibility exists that all the others discovered so far also come from this place. Should this be true, it would become even more clear that in the villa there was indeed some sort of cultic activity and those who lived there were literate persons. The learned atmosphere of the place will have been known elsewhere, too, so that it was visited by persons with literary interests. Who knows if the author of the new dedication, having recently escaped shipwreck in Ligurian waters, was also on a visit to the villa when he wished to immortalize his adventure on stone by composing a Greek epigram to Heracles – unless a skillful poet was commissioned to write the verses".

After the present discovery, I would not exclude that even the Tusculum hymn to Heracles (see above n. 3 and elsewhere) is somehow related to the Colle Maiorana series, although it is reported to have been found in 1845 during an

invocation (and the mention of the gods' grace and justice) to a description of a sailing scene would be somewhat surprising.

excavation under the Villa Aldobrandini in Frascati.¹⁹ Similarities in subject and style can hardly be dismissed. Perhaps the two properties (in Tusculum and in Colle Maiorana) were owned by one and the same person or a family, unless some poet(s) worked for different villa owners in the region (note, however, that the individual poems from these localities are not contemporaneous, being datable on palaeographic grounds through more generations). It is to be hoped that new discoveries will enlighten us on this issue.

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¹⁹ W. Henzen, *AnnInst* 1857, 101–10.