Things You Need to Know about Roman Crete (For Your Own Research)

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Abstract

This contribution examines ten issues for Crete during the Roman Empire, many of which have been misunderstood or perhaps, more generously, have been attempts to force a coherent solution to pieces which do not all necessarily belong to the same puzzle. The ten have been chosen with an eye to applicability to other provinces of the Empire. As the discussion here must be brief, the reader wishing more detail is directed to the bibliography, in which the author attempts to privilege the best of what is most recent on the subject both in evidence specific to Crete and in discussions looking more broadly at how that evidence fits into or runs counter to empire-wide trends.[1]

Carpenter[2] has correctly questioned whether one can say there is such a thing as "Greek Art" and "Greek Religion" concluding that these terms hinder examination and discourse more than they are helpful. The same must be said of (1) Romanization and this paper begins by considering whether "Roman Crete" are two words that do not belong together. Similarly, this is the time, a historical moment of "alternative facts" masquerading as truth, (2) to revisit the too great confidence in historical sources and claims of generals and grandees about their accomplishments. The conquest of Crete has more to do with the self-importance of Metellus and Pompey's aggrandizing for a triumph than with the facts on the ground.

The paper then turns from large issues to smaller ones, but ones of enormous importance to the former. The third section (3) sets out precisely what an usufruct was and how it operated legally, administratively and economically. This in turn raises the question of two other issues, both of which are given a prominence in Crete that is not sustainable: latifundia (4) are possible only with large fields and with a concentration of wealth. The first is not possible in the Cretan topography and the second is not demonstrable. (5) What makes a non-resident, that is, a 'metic' community, is problematic for Crete even before the coming of Rome.[3] During the Roman Empire, with its increasingly embracing definition of citizenship, the situation is even less clear; certainly, the debate for the centuries AD seem to be more grounded in the centuries BC. The evidence depends largely on sigillata stamps (6) and inscriptions (7) both of which, on reflection, say less than has been suggested. A closer reading of the evidence, particularly in light of modern comparanda of merchant commerce (admitting its limitations), might raise more questions for further research than evidence. The same is true of material culture (8). The remains of sculpture on Crete look less official than private and when correlated to known find spots, the pattern that emerges is 'intriguing': 'explicable' is a different matter entirely.

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Two final points, then, look at precisely what can be said with any degree of confidence about Cretan farmers. The modern syllogism is that farmers are 'cash poor, land rich'; (9) this rewards examination of how, especially, the Roman law code did what it could to preserve the financial viability of small farmers and the integrity of the land-holdings. The evidence from Crete, if slender, is suggestive, and fits well with Constantinian, Theodosian, and Justinianic laws tying farmers to their land. If the application of a modern viewpoint should, and must, be viewed as contentious, (10) what cannot be denied, if harder to demonstrate, is that the low tech and low cost (comparatively) farming of antiquity was lower in its impact and thus better positioned to ride out the vagaries of cycles of boom-and-bust. In essence, having less to lose and the resources at hand to make good their losses, it was easier to recover.

Because Crete was an island, archaeologists of all periods on the island have benefited from a 'closed system' that has made results more secure because there needs to be less filtering of circumstances arising from more porous borders. Crete is thus positioned – as suggested in the title of the oral version of this paper 'Crete the Important' – to pose questions and supply data of application to understanding provincial administration throughout the Empire.

Carpenter, writing on "Art in Greek Religion" has questioned whether one can say there is such a thing as "Greek Art" or "Greek Religion", concluding that these terms hinder examination and discourse more than they are helpful. I am now convinced that 'Roman' and 'Crete' are words that do not deserve to be used together; 'Crete during the Roman Empire' is adequate and more accurate. The argument one is prepared to make, and can prove, is that Crete's importance to studies of the Roman Empire is in how much it retained systems and institutions that pre-dated its envelopment within Rome's *mare nostrum*. Its culture was not overwhelmed as in some provinces, nor did it aggressively and visibly aim to be a cultural *patois*.

Romanisation presumes the consent and participation of the population on the ground. Even when there is evidence, it is wise not to trust data that on examination is illusory and misleading. A more recent parallel in Crete is illuminating: census figures from 1821 would seem to indicate an 'Ottomanisation' of Crete, in which more than 90% of the population of Turkoman-colonized Crete adopted the religion of the Sultanate. Yet, by the 1911 census, the last before formal union with Greece in 1913,[4] the percentage of the population on Crete declaring the Muslim faith was 8%. The difference in the percentages cannot be accounted for by Turkish flight but rather in Cretans who paid lip service to Mohammadism for business reasons. The incentive was the tax code: everyone paid the *haraç* but those who declared allegiance to Muhammadism avoided the *jizya*.[5] Conversion was basically a tax dodge; one would not be wrong to view 'Romanisation' in a similar light.

Commerce, especially in wine, between Crete and Puteoli, from which Cretan products fanned out to Capua and Pompeii and Rome and elsewhere, has been central to assigning Crete a leading role in the wine trade. The epigraphic evidence yields names, in both Latin and Greek inscriptions, in Crete and in Italy, of businessmen associated with the movement of wine from Crete to Italy. The Granius family, for example, is known in inscriptions from Italy, from a grave stele from Gortyn now in Herakleion, inscriptions in Knossos, and even in a stele of a military tribune in the III Cyrenaica legion.[6]

Other families have similar histories: the Larcius family from Anzio can be traced through four generations on the island of Crete.[7] L. Larcius Laches was proconsul to Crete; his son, A. Larcius Gallus and Sulpicia Telero had a son born in Crete, A. Larcius Quirinus Lepidus Sulpicianus. He was quaestor on Crete in AD 67–AD 68 and a legate of the Legio X Fretensis that saw service in Judea under Vespasian and Titus. His son, A. Larcius Quirinus Priscus, also born in Crete, was later proconsul in Crete and eventually consul at Rome.[8]

It should not need stating – but apparently it does – that this does not count as Romanisation. All of these traders are already Romans, and Romans who came to Crete to capitalize on what could be made from the tatters that the Roman civil war left much of the Mediterranean in, especially places which allied itself, or was deemed to have allied itself, with the losing faction of Antony. Crete was doubly suspicious to the Julii: it was the province assigned to Brutus after the assassination of Caesar and it had once been assigned as the land dowry to the daughter of Antony and Cleopatra. A Roman merchant presence can be traced at Gortyn at least as early as the second century BC (*IC IV.400*), and an inscription (*IC IV.290*) of the *cives romani qui Gortynae negotiantur* could belong to any part of the first century BC.[9] This group itself morphed during the Roman empire into a *conventus civium romanorum* with its own treasury and *curatores*. They are significant because they are the only attested imperial guild on Crete,[10] in stark opposition with Ostia.[11]

Wine was shipped by one member of the family in Crete to others of his family in Italy.[12] The Granii became significant land-holders in Crete and so wine was moved from Italian-owned farms in Crete to Italian merchants in Italy. This looks like exploitation, not Romanisation.[13] This makes sense of Italian sigillata stamps in Crete: the most compelling evidence comes from Knossos, which has more than half the known and published Italian sigillata stamps. With few exceptions (the exceptions are greater outside Knossos), the stamps are from cities where epigraphic evidence places Italians with connections with those cities.[14]

The Roman law code would have made import and export far more advantageous to a Roman citizen and it would have been preferable for Cretans, that is, *peregrini* in Roman law, to partner with a Roman citizen. Ships owned by Cretans, sailed by Cretans, and with Cretan goods would have been at a legal disadvantage should there have been any

need. Bringing an action in *ius civile* would have been restricted to citizens. Although *peregrini* could have brought an action in *ius gentium*, a citizen still had substantial advantages and limited liability.

The foundation of the Roman colony at Knossos is often adduced in Romanisation. A key passage on the date and circumstances comes from Velleius Paterculus, which explains the dramatic rise of imports from Crete as well as later the almost total disappearance of Italic wares and inscriptions in Latin from Knossos:[15]

[Mutiny of soldiers of Augustus, who fought against Antony at Mutina (43 BC), in 36 BC (after defeat of Sextus Pompey at Naulochus), for retirement land and bonus]

> Subita deinde exercitus seditio…partim severitate, partim liberalitate discussa principis. [2] speciosumque per idem tempus adiectum supplementum Campanae coloniae <…>* eius relicti erant publici. Pro his longe uberiores reditus duodecies sestertium in Creta insula redditi et aqua promissa, quae hodieque singulare et salubritatis instar et amoenitatis ornamentum.
>
> There was a sudden mutiny among the soldiers…it was diffused by the commander partly by severity, partly by generosity. [2] At the same time a remarkable addition was made to the Campanian [veteran] colony <*lacuna*>* from what public lands remained. More lucrative by much than this was the 1,200,000 HS return [*redditus*] assigned from the island of Crete and the promised aqueduct,** which even today remarkably is a testament of health and ornament of admiration
>
> -- Velleius Paterculus LXXXI.1–2
>
> *perhaps reasonably veteranorum Capuensi
> **aqua Julia in Campania
> *usufructum* restricted to jurists, Cicero, and Seneca; *reditus* more often used

In 42 BC, during the consulate of Munatius and Aemilius, Antony, Octavian and Lepidus passed a law that allowed each of them to grant citizenship and tax exemption to individuals and communities. A series of four letters from Octavian, the first of which dates to 36 BC, confirms the grant of citizenship and tax exempt status to those in Rhosus (now SE Turkey on the bay of Issus, north of Antioch) who fought for him.[16] The date is the same as the charter of Colonia Julia Nobilis Gnosus and so one expects that the provisions are the same. Both Rhosus and Knossus were in territories ceded to Antony in the division of provinces, yet Octavian was interfering in setting up cities loyal to him. The charters of Rhosus and Knossus pre-date Actium and so were not veteran colonies settled by Augustus after the completion of his victory.

Soldiers who saw service in 43 BC, and so presumably were under arms before then, were petitioning to be demobbed seven years later. Augustus made a decision to retire restive soldiers so that unrest would not spread. The text is clear that the veterans were to receive derelict land at Capua (*relicti publici*) and that in addition (*pro his*) they were to be given a stipend (*reditus*) from the agricultural revenues of Crete. What is clear is that no soldiers were sent to Crete as colonists. The main 'sweetener' was an aqueduct at Capua. Such a grant makes no sense if the retired soldiers were anywhere than at Capua.

If Knossos is not mentioned specifically by Velleius Paterculus, it is by Dio Cassius, a provincial governor under both Commodus and Septimius Severus:

> Καὶ τὸ μὲν ἀργύριον αὐτοῖς στρατιώταις αὐτίκα, τὴν δὲ χώραν οὐ πολλῶι ὕστερον. ἔδοκεν. [5] ἐπειδὴ γὰρ οὐκ ἐξήρκεσεν ἡ ἐν τῶι δημοσίωι ἔτι τότε οὖσα, προσεξεπρίατο ἄλλην τε καὶ παρὰ Καμπανῶν τῶν ἐν τῆι Καπύαι οἰκούντων συχνήν (καὶ γὰρ ἐποίκων ἡ πόλις πολλῶν ἐδεῖτο), καὶ αὐτοῖς τό τε ὕδωρ τὸ Ἰούλιον ὠνομασμένον, ἐφ'ὠι καὶ τὰ μάλιστα διὰ πάντων ἀγάλλονται, τήν τε χώραν τὴν Κνωσίαν, ἣν καὶ νῦν ἔτι καρποῦνται, ἀντέδωκε.
>
> And the money he gave right away to the soldiers, and the land not much later. [5] Since the public land at that time was not enough, he [Octavian] bought a large amount of other [land] from those living in Campania at Capua (as the city needed many settlers), and to them he gave the aqueduct called 'Julia', in which they have always been extremely proud, and also the vicinity of Knossos, which even now is extremely productive.
>
> -- Dio Cassius XLIX.14.4-5

The two accounts confirm one another, Dio Cassius adding that in addition to derelict land, Octavian purchased land in Capua, not Knossus. The significant detail is that the soldiers were given an usufruct (καρποῦνται) over Knossus that continued to remain in effect (ἣν καὶ ωῦν ἔτι) into Dio Cassius' day.[17] The amount of an usufruct varied from place to place and from time to time but was generally between 10% and 15%: more or less the same percentages for land let as share-cropping. 1,200,000 HS is the only hard data on the size of the economy in Crete at the beginning of the empire. It would mean that the gross agricultural product of the Knossos catchment can be estimated at somewhere around 15,000,000 HS *per annum* and that the level above subsistence must be at least 20% to 25%. Any figure lower than 20% might have caused farmers to abandon the land and the usufruct would have dissolved.

The imposition of a 10%–15% surcharge would not have encouraged Cretans in the vicinity of Knossos to embrace Romanisation. Stamps on Tuscan and Po Valley sigillata do show some Italian presence but a mercantile one, not military. It would make sense, if unprovable on current evidence, that among their duties was the collection of the agricultural produce.[18]

Usufructs were widespread and common enough that the entire seventh book of *Justinian's Digest*, one of the longest, preserves opinions of the jurists on usufruct. While most of the opinions preserved are on inheritance and transfer, there are situations in which usufructs could cease. Cassius Dio was probably wrong that it was Octavian's usufruct that was still in force.[19] Knossos was almost unique in having been slapped twice with an usufruct: Vespasian re-founded Colonia Julia Nobilis Gnossus as Colonia Flavia Gnossus in AD 71, granting an usufruct to some of his troops who served in the just concluded Jewish War.[20] Perhaps some of them belonged to the III Cyrenaica legion in which Granius served.

More ex-military Cretans are known outside of Crete than Roman veterans can be placed on the island, such as in the stele of Hyperanor and the brick stamp of Theander:

HYPERANOR HYPERANO
RIS F CRET[ICUS] LAPPA MIL[ES]
C[O]HOR I SAG[ITTARIORUM]
ANN LX STIP[ENDIUM] XVIII
H[IC] S[ITUS] E[ST]
CIL 13. 7516

THEANDER ARISTOME
NI F CRETENSIS MIL[ES]
COH[OR] I NORICO OPTIO
AN XLV STIP XXVI
H S E H E C

Military diplomata of Cretans are known from the Dacian Wars (*CIL XIII. 163* and *RMD IV. 226*) as well as the stele of a soldier from Hierapytna who settled in what is now Bulgaria when his unit moved on (*IMS IV. 34*). That unit was almost certainly the *Cohors I Cretum*, organized by Flavian and used by Trajan in the Dacian Wars. Nine brick stamps have been found in the walls of a bath built by the unit in their quarters at Timacum Maius (mod. Nisevac).[21] Cretans were also in the Roman army in Germany:[22] not surprisingly Hyperanor was an archer, a specialty associated with Crete from at least the Hellenistic period. What are missing from the Roman period but known in the Hellenistic period are objects found in this garrison to suggest the comforts from Crete, and, conversely, that Cretans in service at the margins of the Empire sent objects back home that they had acquired.

Trade routes and grain routes raise the question of globalization *versus* insularity. The material, that is, the consumer approach to globalization on Crete has been admirably covered by Sweetman[23] and by Karanastasi.[24] Similarly, Kouremenos notes that the default instinct of the Cretans was isolationist.[25] What trade it could offer were items (olive oil, honey, wine, purple dye,[26] and medicinal herbs),[27] for which there

was substantial competition from other regions. One finds that one returns to Francis' conclusion that 'Roman Crete was neither entirely globalized not insular'.[28]

The joint province of Crete and Cyrenaica was a marriage of convenience, and like their human analogy, they seem to have slept in separate bedrooms and gone their own way. Large, sustained interaction, in essence becoming each other's major trading partner, in today's economic jargon, would be a compelling argument for globalization. Chevrollier concludes that any relationship between the two halves of the province was little and largely accidental.[29] Economically, Vespasian's campaign in Judea was an economic watershed: the Roman economy never again afterwards had such substantial influxes of capital from outside the empire through conquest.[30] The Roman economy became a 'zero sum game' in which the costs and benefits had to balance with internal production. Roman 'Globalization' *was* 'insularity' in that it took place within the limits of Empire.

This would seem to be implicit in the two tiers of sea routes that Bowsky and Gallimore, separately, have been mapping out through which Cretan goods found their way to markets off-island. In neither of these tiers was Crete the main port of call or terminus.[31] The *annona* was the system of imperial distribution of grain and oil for Rome, whose terminus was Puteoli on the north end of the bay of Naples until Ostia became dependable. By AD 311, grain ceased to be shipped to Rome[32] but was diverted to Constantinople after its foundation and increasingly the *annona* supplied military and not civilian needs. Crete was not a grain exporter and so there would be no reason for ships from Alexandria to Rome to stop at Crete except to send their lighters (or tenders) on shore for provisions. There is no evidence that Cretan olive oil was transported on imperial ships, and no imperial incentive from Rome. Wine and olive oil seem to have been the two most important commodities for paying taxation in kind (*stipendia*), yet there is no indication that Rome made the process more attractive by waiving port duties (*vectagalia*) for Cretan vessels at Puteoli or Ostia.[33]

Most of the harbors on Crete, additionally, were and are small and shallow and not terribly well protected and are largely seasonal. The size and displacement of cargo is thus of crucial importance. The fundamental work on Cretan amphorae was done by Maragou-Lerat, who defined four (now five) types of Cretan amphorae.[34] It is Gallimore, however, who has proposed that the reason for the standardization of amphora shapes was for ease of shipping rather than identifying point of origin.[35] The inference that one draws from this is that there must have been Cretan ships of more or less the same size,[36] so they could use the same shallow harbors, and angle of slope of the sides: amphorae of the same shape and size would maximize cargo and simplify the lashing of the amphorae to the ribs of the ships. These ships would have been suitable for trade with other coastal cities on Crete but also for plying the sea lanes of small-scale private commerce, rather than imperial *annona* (and its later manifestation as the *annona militaris*).[37]

Bowsky has done the hard work of correlating sigillata stamps on Crete with the occurrence of those same stamps elsewhere. 46 potters are known through 94 Italian sigillata stamps;[38] half of the potters are clustered in Etruria and the Po Valley and more than half of the stamps come from Knossos. One natural conclusion is that boats filled with wine, shipped from Crete to Rome as tax (*stipendia*) or to Capua as part of the usufruct,[39] on the return trip was filled with Italian sigillata and other goods that have not left a trace in the record. The number of potters known from Crete who turn up also in Achaea and in Corinth would seem to indicate that ships heading from northern Italy to central Greece stopped over at Crete as well.

With the diversion of grain from Rome to the east, Cretan tax-in-kind commodities were diverted to Constantinople and from there to where the Roman army was on active service. Cretan amphorae litter the progress (and retreat) of the Roman army around the perimeter of the Black Sea.[40] Cretan amphorae cease only when the region falls to advancing Muslim armies.[41] The destination, tonnage of ships, and consumer preference all play a role in amphora shape and size: while the TRC4 is the preferred Cretan amphora type for the *annona militaris*, vessels operating in the FME are more likely to have TRC1 and TRC2 shapes and are found in Black Sea region non-military sites and also in Alexandria and Berenice, and elsewhere.[42] Production sites might be possible to identify: the TRC2 for small-scale trade routes is common at Ierapytna, positioned for shipping to Alexandria and Berenice, while TRC4 of the *annona militaris* is common at Gortyn and Itanos, and a kiln with wasters has been found at Eleutherna, all suitable for shipping to the north.[43]

Trade, whether internal or off-island, requires warehouses. The only surviving warehouse on the island is at Lasaia. It has not been systematically investigated and so even its date remains unclear.[44] There is, thus, little that can be said about a subject that should form a significant amount of discussion in any panel or publication on Crete off-island and intra-island trade.[45] As the Empire became cash strapped, the central government established more monopolies: clay beds (*figlinae*) had been private (equestrian) enterprises that passed into the possession of the senatorial elite, and eventually became an imperial monopoly.[46] So, too, warehouses came under imperial control: the Augustan history reports that under Caracalla, his permission was required to torture a slave who was a guard at a warehouse that was robbed.[47] The implication is that the slave was imperial property and thus, so too, was the warehouse.[48] What it means more broadly is that the cost of warehousing must be factored into any economic calculations of internal and external trade.[49]

Warehouses would have been at the terminus of roads. Trade requires the movement of goods from point of manufacture, or harvesting, to the coast for shipping and so the quality of the roads is a factor in the indirect costs of how long it takes to move goods (longer on less good roads and so more spoilage) and how often transport breaks down (more often on less good roads and so more breakage). The military grade road, *via munita*, does not exist on Crete in part, no doubt, because the Roman army never

garrisoned Crete. What Crete does have are earthen tracks, *via terrena*, and *via glareata*, comprised of gravel and sometimes with flagstones. These roads are how commerce moved from the countryside to the *municipia* and from the *municipia* to other places. Roads also played a part in the great urban expansion that took place during the Roman Empire. This would have benefitted local trade as there would have been fewer but bigger markets.[50]

Milestones, such as at Aptera, are evidence of a well-travelled road and a road meant for business. It was important for a merchant to know exactly how far he was from the terminus of a road, for Crete, practicably at a port with a warehouse. Where one finds milestones, one reasonably is along a major route. Roads also indicate date: the proliferation of *stelai* along the Herakleion – Knossos corridor in the first and second centuries AD are evidence of when Herakleion supplanted Amnisos as the main harbor for Knossos.[51] A road is further confirmed by the kiln sites near the museum at Herakleion, and a house in the museum excavations that has been labeled a 'transit facility' for wine from Lyttos destined for Pompeii.[52] The road between Eleutherna and Chania belongs to the Roman Empire and established a new trade corridor on the island.[53]

The position Crete occupied in the Empire should not be underestimated. The Peutinger Table is a map produced sometime between AD 335 and AD 366. On it, Crete is far and away the largest island of the Mediterranean and is shown nearly as large as Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, and Cyprus combined. The map includes distances and so the relative size of Crete to the other islands was not unknown.[54] The ancient perception that Crete was important helps explain the presence of so many imported goods on Crete. The marble for the mosaics, and mosaicists, had to come from elsewhere, and so cost money;[55] the statues, if largely versions of well-known Classical types, came from the major sculpture centers in the eastern half of the Mediterranean and are far more numerous than in the Hellenistic period.[56] Baths mean during the Roman Empire what they meant before: they were centers of culture and learning,[57] and so, more a point of local pride and prestige and continuity than a sign of Romanization.

The Peutinger Table lists 18 cities in Crete and it is a fairly easy matter to draw lines from known amphora production sites, vineyards, and harbors or major collection sites like Lappa, Gortyn and Knossos.[58] The assumption has always been that a road ends at a harbor where a ship awaits; under-appreciated is the amount of internal trade that happened along these corridors. The production of the amphorae, according to Gallimore,[59] for local and regional (i.e. imperially unmoderated) trade increases on Crete when trade in the Empire as a whole was declining and imports on Crete rise in tandem. What is equally apparent and no less true is that even at the point when the percentage of non-Cretan amphorae is highest, local production still represents the majority of finds.

One has to consider distortion of the evidence: a Cretan amphora to Kos can be traced and a Koan amphora to Crete will also leave traces. But the goat skins and wooden barrels that traveled from village to village on that same cart are lost forever, but it does

not mean the trade did not exist. If one were to consider that the Cretan economy was export oriented, one would expect to find Cretan coins well represented at other sites, and non-Cretan coins in substantial numbers on the island. Sidiropoulos notes that the geographical range of coins at Eleutherna, and on Crete in general, is fairly small and that the chronological range, such as at Knossos, is also often restricted.[60] At 14% to 17% purity of silver, they could have circulated as 'specie', that is, the token value at which they were struck, and not as bullion (i.e. the value of the silver content). Specie of all places and periods is not, and cannot, be widely circulated and so indicates an economy that is largely internal.[61]

Sustainability is very much a current concern and one might with profit ask the same question of antiquity: how much trade was persistent leading to long-term prosperity as opposed to economic bubbles, and how much of that trade was in durable items that did not need to be replaced frequently? One wonders, too, how many and who precisely in Crete benefitted from the economic structures of the Roman Empire. Bowsky[62] has characterized the presence of Italian sigillata at Knossos as a 'brief boom' and a 'blip': these are her words, restricted from 20 BC to AD 15 (an 'Augustan bubble'), and so it would be irresponsible to structure a model of the over-all Cretan economy on them.[63]

The pattern on the whole in Crete is an uneven one. Many of the families that have survived in the epigraphic record seem often to have lasted a generation, rarely more. St. Paul's ship came to Crete once, and by the accident of a storm. That ports could have accommodated ships of all tonnages smaller than the big grain ships – the super tankers of their day – does not mean that they did. For that we would need other evidence and the evidence is lacking.

The odeion at Gortyn is important for many reasons but one is that, like almost all major construction during the Roman Empire, it was made with local quarried stone.[64] From the end of the first century AD, its repairs extensively utilized locally made bricks. An instinct for self-reliance is a major factor of the economy – buying local is not just more practical, it is cheaper. One nonetheless takes advantage of what tradition and the law code allows. Local officials in the *municipia* at the end of their term of office received 'decurion status' which gave them citizenship and so access to the more favorable *ius civilis* and tax-exempt status. The *Inscriptiones creticae* preserve several stelai in which decurion status was a matter of pride. Lappa as a free city did not pay taxes; Italians living abroad did not pay taxes; veterans in veteran colonies did not pay taxes.

Most intriguing is what happened to the usufruct. Because Roman law could only deal with persons, veteran A would have an usufruct on farm X. If the farmer of farm X became a decurion, his change in status cancelled the usufruct. A veteran dying intestate cancelled the usufruct. Shortly there would have been the pattern where many farms in Knossos managed to shed their encumbrance. With the virtual end of the usufruct, Cretan amphorae largely disappear from Campania,[65] coins from Knossos cease with the end of the Julio-Claudians,[66] and Italian sigillata stamps disappear.[67] In essence, as

a veteran colony, Knossos would have been able to enjoy the tax-free advantages of a veteran's colony without the veterans.

If the figures on amphoras from Gallimore tell us anything, it is that when importation of amphoras fell off, for whatever reason, local production stepped in to fill the void.[68] It could reflect also Cretan exportation of wine made from varietals of grapes that came from Kos and from Rhodes. The amphorae that look like Koan and Rhodian amphorae may have the shape to suggest that the wine tastes similar to Koan and Rhodian wines.[69] Cretan dessert wine, *passum*, had a wide appeal and in this instance enough is known that it had a particular appeal among soldiers and gladiators. The Cretan export products were staples (with the exception of purple dye). Honey, wine, olive oil and medicinal herbs would have resisted a collapse when the prestige market moved to the next new thing or ran out of money.[70]

In a real measure the sum of the Cretan economy is the weather. What this means is that there were several economies each tied to climatic cycles. Changes in preference in crops and animal husbandry run in tandem with these cycles. The climate in Crete for the High Roman Empire was optimal in terms of temperature and rainfall. This in turn correlates to and helps explain a culture that could afford material comforts, social well-being, as well as increased population without any indication of droughts, famine, starvation, rising literacy and civic participation in shared rituals. The sustained good climate of the early Empire allowed for the crop yields that in turn could afford the massive construction programs and private displays of wealth.

Kelly[71] has stated that Cretans became archers because that is one of the few opportunities the landscape allowed them. The terrain of Crete was not going to encourage cavalry. When type of service is specified in military inscriptions in the Empire, it is as archers. There are few new temple foundations or shrines during the Empire, and so the one to Artemis Skopelitis in Herakleion stands out.[72] In addition to the Artemis and Niobid group in Inatos, there is a small statue of Artemis Toxotes from Lappa, now in Rethymnon.[73] The syncretized cult of Dictynna/Artemis was visited by Hadrian in AD 122 and games to Artemis/Dictynna occurred in the same year as the Pythian Games on the Olympic cycle.[74]

Cretans could not do what was not possible given their tools and limitations. The increased population during the Roman Empire had to be supported by crops. There is no evidence, because they did not have the ability, of increased germination rates or increased yield rates. What the Cretans did was terrace and irrigate. The evidence for exploiting marginal land is extensive, if not always readily visible.[75] When one sees the terraces, one sees what supported its population and made it possible to afford its civic structures, government, and festivals.

Amanda Kelly[76] has recently looked at baths and it is worthwhile to see exactly how many were built during the Empire. Their placement and distribution might suggest that coastal sites were more likely to have baths, and thus that coastal sites were wealthier.

This may be true, but it is not the entire reason: the Roman recipe for concrete preferred salt water and so the distance to the interior in which there are concrete constructions is a factor of how far salt water could be transported inland efficiently. Given ancient transport and cooperage, the map of baths does not mean Cretans in the hills preferred to be smelly; rather, it shows the limits of what technology allowed them to do.

Crete presents important evidence for any serious study at all periods. The title of the oral version of this paper, "Crete the Important" was by way of apology for a paper given many years ago, "Crete the Ordinary". Having the reflection of these two, I find there is a significant and tenable middle ground. The ordinary men and women of Crete by their enormous energy and indomitable spirit managed to grow and make and move incredible things to markets. The remains of these products and what we can infer reasonably from them offers comparative data of enormous utility to studies of other parts of the Empire.

Notes

[1] Not available at the time of submission of this contribution, J. Francis and M. Curtis are co-editing a volume, Change and Transition on Crete from late Hellenistic through the early Byzantine Period for Archeopress which should be out more or less at the same time as this volume of conference proceedings. J. Francis – A. Kouremenos (eds.) 2016 remains the place to start an investigation of Roman Crete.

[2] Carpenter 2007, 398.

[3] Muñoz Sogas 2019.

[4] The Treaty of Bucharest (1911) legally recognized Crete as part of Greece; it had been unofficially under Greek law and elected representatives to Parliament since 1908.

[5] The precise percentage of jizya varied considerably from place to place and over time so it is impossible to estimate precise figures. In addition to being a supplementary tax for non-Muslims, similar to Roman special taxes for problematic populations, included provisions against carrying arms and riding horses, building new houses of worship or repairing old ones; against public processions and open air worship and proselytism; the requirement to wear distinctive clothing; prohibition against building homes higher than Muslim ones. As the last Greek-speaking area incorporated into Ottoman Empire, Cretans were taxed at a lower rate than other Greeks, and mixed marriages were legal; Adiyeke 2005, 208–215.

[6] Bowsky 2011a, 432 anticipates my view in seeing the Cretan imperial economy as "dominated by Romans and acculturated Hellenes."

[7] See, esp., Lippolis 2016, 158, on the Larcii but also the Roscii of Crete and Campania.

[8] Bowksy 2011a, 439.

[9] Businessmen with Cretan connections turn up as Italian businessmen at Delos, elsewhere in the Greek east, in Campania, and elsewhere in Italy; Bowsky 2011a, 436. Bowsky (2011a, 440) is inclined to see three waves of Roman merchants coming to Crete: after Sulla's destruction of Delos in 88 BC; after 67 BC when Pompey cleared the eastern Mediterranean of pirates; after Actium, 31 BC.

[10] On the conventus, see Lippolis 201, 160. An exchange of letters between Trajan and Pliny (10.33 and 10.34) shows that Trajan tried to suppress collegia because he was suspicious of their political motives; Perry 2016.

[11] One member of a merchant family at their home base and another living where they imported is a pattern at least as old as the Babylonian neighborhood of merchants (metics), not oicists, at Hittite Kültepe, 1970 BC.

[12] Bowsky 2011a, esp. 439 f.

[13] Bowsky 2011a, 438.

[14] Bowsky 2011b, 117–134.

[15] All translations are those of the author.

[16] On Rhosus, see Ehrenberg-Jones 1976, 133–135 #301 and Levick 2000, 169–73 #158.

[17] Related to the word for fruit, καρπόω in this sense is found as far back as Demosthenes 23.126 and 27.5.

[18] See, for example, the 103 Italian businessmen on Crete identified in inscriptions by Bowsky 1999, 305–347.

[19] An usufruct was unlikely to last more than 100 years through intestate succession; usufructs would have been held between an individual owner of the usufruct and the property that was entailed; see Crook 1967, 154.

[20] Harrison 1994, 61 f. and 85–88 for Octavian's usufruct; for Flavian usufruct 216 and 263. Karanastasi 2016, 101–118, and Tzifopolis 2009, 159–173 have both noted that there are not any surviving official Flavian statues on Crete or inscriptions celebrating the Flavian dynasty.

[21] Petrovic – Filipovic 2015, 33–39.

[22] On the two stelai, see Bechert, Kreta in römischer Zeit (Mainz 2011) 24.

[23] Rebecca Sweetman 2011, 441–450. It is significant that Sweetman (444) views globalization as a phenomenon restricted to areas linked to administration (Gortyn) and economy (Knossos, port towns) and that the pace of centers adopting Roman social institutions varied widely across the island (443).

[24] Karanastasi 2016, 101–118, sees a large presence of settlers and immigrant merchants in Crete "who had high standards of living [and insisted on] good quality housing and imported household objects (101)." Like Sweetman, she considers the phenomenon as restricted largely to coastal towns (103); cp. Bowksy 2011a 436, who asserts that "Italian immigration on the island seems to start at Gortyn and fans out to Knossos and Lyttos."

[25] Kouremenos 2018, 59.

[26] Purple dye production during the Roman Empire seems to have been centered mainly on the small islands off the coast of Crete, like Kouphonisi and Chryssi; Konstantinos Chalikias 2013, 36–9. The transport amphorae on the island (36) and fish tanks (36, 58), especially given their shallow depth (60 cm) would argue for the propagation and harvesting of the murex, and shipment of the processed dye.

[27] All but purple dye are known in Cretan amphorae with dipinti largely in Italy but elsewhere on the European and African Mediterranean; S. Gallimore 2016, 138–150.

[28] J. Francis forthcoming in J.M. Gordon – A. Kouremenos.

[29] See F. Chevrollier 2016, 11–26. At no time does Crete and the Pentapolis have a unified coinage (14, 17 f.). Each part of the island had its own koinon and its own administration of the imperial cult (16).

The ceramic record, other than lamps, is largely non-existent (16). Of all the inscriptions of Cyrenaicans outside of Cyrenaica, only 2.2% have been found in Crete (20). What little that links Crete and the Pentapolis are significant Jewish communities on each (14). Geographically, Crete is closer, about 300 km by sea as opposed to 800 km overland to Alexandria and 900 km overland to Leptis Magna (15). Two places only on the island receive votives from resident of Cyrenaica: the healing sanctuary at Lebena and the cave of Zeus at Ida (20). On Cretan caves in the Roman Empire; see also N. Litinas 2014, and Bowsky 2016, 32, who notes that only one Italian sigillata stamp links Knossos with Cyrenaica.

[30] Even with Iudaea capta most of the benefits of the sale of booty (ex manubiis) stayed in Rome, such as the Flavian amphitheater, and were not empire wide.

[31] Bowsky in Francis – Kouremenos 2016, 31.

[32] Constantine caused a famine in Rome by diverting grain to his army from AD 311; Gallimore in Francis – Kouremenos 2016, 176.

[33] It is unlikely, pace Gallimore 2016, 176, that Cretan goods were shipped as extra cargo on grain ships from Alexandria. Aside from the logistics of lighters/tenders, which are not insuperable hurdles, imperial privileges were jealously guarded: Pliny, for example, when posted as governor of Bithynia on the Black Sea had to write a letter to Trajan asking special permission to add a letter to his own wife in Rome in the imperial post dispatch.

[34] A. Marangou-Lerat 1995, and 1999, 269–278. Not one of the eight wrecks found so far with Cretan amphorae are on the annona route from Alexandria to Rome; Gallimore 2016, 178.

[35] S. Gallimore 2016, 157. 182.

[36] Boats and ships of more or less the same size and draught have been shown when enough boats have been recovered, such as on the Rhine (naval museum in Mainz), or ships, as in the Istanbul Metro tunnel excavations.

[37] One should add, too, that considerable grain was shipped privately and sold outside of imperial jurisdiction; Gallimore 2016, 178, on the Murecine Archive from Pompeii.

[38] Bowsky 2016, 27 and, 29, lists sites with stamps: Chania, Aptera, Lappa, Hamalevri, Eleutherna, Kommos, Gortyn, Knossos, Viannos, Hierapytna, Lato pros Kamara (Ayios Nikolaos).

[39] The physical record is as impressive as the monetary value of the usufruct: 435 complete Cretan amphorae are now recorded at Pompeii, 50 at Herculaneum and another 20 at Stabiae. This accounts for 20% of wine amphorae in assemblages in the first century AD; Gallimore 2016, 157.

[40] Gallimore 2016, 180 f. has traced movement of Cretan wine through the distinctive Cretan late-amphora shapes: form 99 = TRC4; LR14/Saraçane 22; LRA2; TRC10 = Cr LRA2. Cretan amphorae found on the Amber route probably originated from Vienna, one terminus of a route to St. Petersburg and guarded by the nearby garrison town of Carnuntum.

[41] Although Gallimore (2016, 183), does not make the connection, it is the reasonable inference from his observation that in the seventh century AD, Cretan amphorae cease to be made in a limited number of forms and that production centers for amphorae moved inland. A reason for the first is that TRC4 was not needed because the army was no longer in the Balkans and central authority in Constantinople had collapsed. The moving of kiln sites to the interior seems a reasonable response to the appearance of Saracen corsairs.

[42] 43% of the amphorae at Buthrotum in AD iii are Cretan (Zemer shape 57); 20% of amphorae in Apulia in AD iii are Cretan; 11% of amphorae in Lyon in AD iii are Cretan.
[43] Gallimore 2016, 184.
[44] Chaniotis 2000, 55–60, seems to claim it for the Hellenistic period; even if true, it could have continued to be used in the Roman period.
[45] Aubert 2016, 624, notes that the capacity of warehouses is a key indicator of volumes of trade. The Muziris papyrus from a port of call on the Indian ocean shows a merchant at Alexandria insureing his spices warehoused there valued at 9,000,000 HS.
[46] Aubert 2016, 626.
[47] SHA Alex 39.3, also cited by Aubert 2016, 626, states that Alexander Severus allowed the building of warehouses only in the imperial name, which would indicate that the monopoly had become absolute.
[48] An opinion of Ulpian on usufruct in the Digest of Justinian 7.1.15 indicates that slaves were often put in charge of horrea and as guards in an attempt to mask the identity of the owner.
[49] On warehousing in the Roman Empire, see, esp., Aubert 2016, 621–34. The three main sources of Roman law on warehouses are surviving leges horreum, the Puteoli archive of the Sulpicii and papyri, to which should be added four late Julio-Claudian inscriptions from Corinth on warehousing of grain (Corinth VIII.2 83, 86, 88, 90). The epigraphic evidence has mainly been recovered in Rome: FIRA III2 145a–c; an inscription in the Chiesa S. Martino Esquiline; CIL VI. 33747 from the Porta Salaria; Chiesa S. Saba Aventina (granary owned by niece of Marcus Aurelius), to which can be added CIL IV. 138 = ILS 6035 (Pompeii).
[50] The observation is Raab's 2001, 16. Karanastasi 2016, 115, adds: "the role of coastal cities and harbours during the imperial period, such as Hierapytna, Chersonesos, and Kissamos, appears to have been strengthened and they become notably important. They served and ensured communications between the local aristocracy and the major economic, artistic, and cultural centres all over the Empire." Lippolis 2016, 163–165. 169. 171, makes similar remarks on the expansion of Gortyn, particularly the imposition of a grid plan in new precincts of the city.
[51] Ioannidou-Karetsou 2008, 70–73.
[52] Ioannidou-Karetsou 2008: 94. Raab 2001, 14, reports transport amphora kiln sites at Knossos, Chania, Herakleion, Keratokambos, and Makryiallos.
[53] See M. Bowsky 2009, 163. 165.
[54] Chevrollier 2016, 16, has also observed that all roads on Crete converge on Gortyn.
[55] Sweetman 2011, 445, has noted that there are not any mosaics in Hellenistic houses on Crete. In her view (446–8), the black-white tradition of Cretan mosaics and house types look to artists and inspiration in the Latin West. Markoulaki 2008, 107–147, reaches similar conclusions on the six black-white mosaics in the Herakleion museum excavations.
[56] Karanastasi 2016: amount of sculpture (102); Classical/Hellenistic originals represented (103–106); preference for Greek sculpture over imperial portraits (106 f.); Greek studios represented (113); she concludes (112 f.) that sculpture on Crete tends to be smaller than the originals and of "medium quality" showing "sloppiness in rendering body proportions and finishing surface of the sculpture."
[57] Bowsky 2009, 157, notices the clustering of stamps in baths.

[58] See Bowsky 2011a, 432.
[59] Gallimore 2016, 185.
[60] K. Sidiropoulos 2009, 97–101. Other than Eleutherna, coins are known only from Knossos, Chania, Alexandria and Rome (97). Corinthian coins dominate in the first through third centuries AD, after which non-Cretan issues are almost entirely Athenian (98); see also Stefanaki, V.E. 2001, 129–142.
[61] Raab 2001, 17, has noted that, compared to other provinces, a higher percentage of Cretan coinage is bronze and that silver issues are restricted to places where one expects a community engaged in trade.
[62] Bowsky 2016, 30 and 32. On Italian sigillata in Knossos, see also G. Forster 2009, 15–31. Similarly, it would be over-enthusiastic to base frameworks on what Francis has orally called 'accidental tourists'.
[63] Gallimore 2016, 178, has noted a Cretan 4 amphora found along the amber route and Kouremenos 2018, 51, has noted a Cretan 4 amphora in Wales
[64] Lippolis 2016, 165 f. on opus quadrata from quarries on slope of Mt. Ida; Lippolis 2016, 171, on bricks from the first half of the second century, AD.
[65] But only for a bit; in the second century AD their number in deposits in Campania again represents about 20%; Gallimore 2016, 176.
[66] Sidiropoulos 2009, 97.
[67] Bowsky 2009, 164.
[68] Bowsky 2016, 32 notes how Cretan potters of the first and second centuries AD, especially, stepped in to supplement declining numbers of imports.
[69] A comparison of fizzy wines in bottles similar to champagne suggests itself.
[70] The evidence, however, is not as clear as one might wish. Pliny's Natural history is concerned largely with staples and basic items but Martial's xenia and apophoreta are gift items for the Matronalia and Saturnalia and so one assumes specialty, or at least a special occasion, which would mean low volume sales and so it would be risky for a Cretan farmer to plan an economy or for us to reconstruct one on it.
[71] A. Kelly, The Cretan Slinger at War: a Weighty Exchange, BSA 107, 2012, 273–311.
[72] Ioannidou-Karetsou 2008, 67–69, dated to the first or second century AD.
[73] Karanastasi 2016, fig 8.6.
[74] Lippolis 2016, 159 f. adds the detail that the center for the administration of the games was at the Pythion in Gortyn.
[75] Price – Nixon 2005, 1–30.
[76] Amanda Kelly 2013, 131–167.

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