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AEGEAN WINE IMPORTS TO THE CITY OF ROME (1ST CENTURY BC – 3RD CENTURY AD)[1]

Abstract: This paper investigates the imports of Aegean wines to the city of Rome between the Late Republican and the Middle Imperial period (1st century BC – 3rd century AD). Its main aim is to show the share of the Roman wine market that was supplied by the Aegean region, as well as investigating which areas of the Aegean were the main wine exporters.

Keywords: wine; import; consumption; Rome; the Aegean; trade

The capital of the Roman empire was a large center of consumption and definitely a 'consumer city' (Whittaker 1990), which had to import numerous staples as well as luxury goods to satisfy the demand of its enormous population, estimated at one million in the Augustan age (Jongman 2014, 172). This does not mean that the city did not produce its own goods, but that its hinterland was not able to satisfy the demand for basic consumption goods, such as: grain, olive oil and wine. A great part of this demand was satisfied with imports from the provinces. According to Hopkins' model of tax and trade cycle (1980 and 2002), the provinces that were highly taxed started to produce and export goods for the Roman market, which helped them raise the money that they had to send to the imperial treasury. This paper investigates the case of the Aegean region, which in antiquity was famous for its wines. Its main aim is to demonstrate the role played by

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the Aegean islands and the western shores of Asia Minor with regards to supplying wine to Rome, and to show which Aegean regions were the most important wine exporters. The first part regards methodological issues; the second presents an analysis of the overall wine imports to Rome, while the third concentrates on Aegean imports.

The chronological range commences from the Late Republican age and has been selected due to the fact that staple goods were not commonly imported to Italy before the 1st century BC. Even though there are occasional findings of Aegean wine amphorae fragments dated to the Early Republican age (Di Sandro 1981, 5-10; Slej 2009, 204-208) as well as stamps dated to the end of the 3rd century BC and throughout the 2nd century BC (Taylor 1957, 134; Laforgia 1980-81, 217; Tchernia 1986, 102-103; Bevilacqua 1994, 463; Tilloca 2001, 245-247; American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Archives in the Blegen Library, Virginia R. Grace Papers), as far as I am concerned, there are no assemblages of containers dated earlier than the Late Republican period for which statistical analyses would be possible. According to R. Volpe, during the Republic the share of amphorae in the whole ceramic material assemblage was around 5-6% at most, while in the Imperial period, the percentage is always above 30% (Santangeli Valenziani and Volpe 2012, 66-67; Volpe 2009, 379-381). The Roman *suburbium* probably satisfied most of the wine and olive oil demand during the Republic, but in the Imperial age, the demand was so high that the inhabitants of the Eternal City must have relied on imports. At the same time, amphorae provide reliable evidence for the wine trade until the 3rd century AD, which is when the role of barrels as wine containers became more significant. Wooden casks were probably known in Italy as early as in the 1st century AD[2] (Tchernia 1986, 285-289), but they became commonly and extensively used throughout the 3rd century AD (Tchernia 1986, 290-292). Their usage, however, was limited to certain parts of the western provinces, which means Gaul, south and central Britain, Germania (mostly along the Rhine: see Marlière 2002, 174-174), Lusitania from the 2nd century AD and Spain (to a considerably lesser degree, see Étienne and Mayet 2000, 53), as well as the Adriatic area, except *Picenum* (personal information from Prof. M.-B. Carre). Thus, between the Late Republican and the Middle Imperial period the percentage of wines that were transported in barrels was never high. Moreover, it is unlikely that

[2] Around the 1st century AD Italian wine was also transported in *dolia* that were permanently installed in a ship, but this method ceased by the end of the century and was not used beyond Italy (Carre 2009, 290-291).

the Greeks used barrels instead of amphorae on a large scale. Therefore, it seems that for the above mentioned period, the image of wine supply that is painted by the study of amphorae should not differ considerably from reality. Apart from the increasing use of barrels, a considerable change occurred regarding the amphorae forms during the 3rd century AD. The production of Rhodian, Cretan, Coan and other well-known wine containers ceased and during the Late Imperial age new amphora forms started to appear, the content and exact origin of which is uncertain (Reynolds 2008, 63-72; Opait 2007 and 2010, 10-15; Dyczek 2001a; Pieri 2005, 70, 93 and 2007, 613; Williams 2005, 616-617). This is why this study does not regard the Late Imperial age.

Although Ostia and Puteoli were the main harbors that received the wine supply, only amphorae from Rome are considered in this paper. This is due to the fact that most of the archaeological research was undertaken in Rome, and hence the capital provides us with the highest number of amphora assemblages. Notwithstanding the number of amphorae assemblages found in Ostia (Panella and Rizzo 2014; Zevi and Pohl 1970; Panella and Rizzo 2014, 440, tab. 32; Carta 1987, 36-37; Pohl 1987, 192-193; Zevi 2004-2005, 68-69, 104-108, 127-129, 142-144, 161-163, 200-203; Boersma *et al.* 1986, 97, 99, 117; Hesnard 1980; Rivello 2002), since *Portus* received products mostly from the western Mediterranean, the material discovered there does not represent Roman consumption trends in general (Pavolini 1996, 229-230; Rizzo 2012). The case regarding the Campanian sites is similar. Eastern amphorae predominate there, due to the main port in Campania - Puteoli – being the gateway for eastern commodities (Di Giovanni 2003, 88-89). Therefore, the analysis of amphorae findings from Rome is the only source that allows us to formulate any hypotheses regarding the scale of imports of certain goods as well as their role in the Roman economy.

‘Pros and cons’ of studying amphorae

The studies of amphorae are not free from certain drawbacks, enumerated by A. Wilson. Firstly, we should know their content as well as capacity, as their volume varied considerably. Secondly, the reuse of amphorae should be considered along with the use of barrels as long-distance containers simultaneously with amphorae (Wilson 2009a, 230-233).

There are two differing theories regarding the connection between the shape of an amphora and its content. The first is widespread among scholars studying the eastern Mediterranean before the 1st century BC.

According to this theory, amphorae were multi-purpose containers, which means that containers of the same type might have transported wine as well as olive oil or other products. On the other hand, scholars who devote their work primarily to the western Mediterranean, or to the eastern part after the 1st century BC, claim that there was a primary commodity associated with each amphora type. This theory relied upon the evidence provided by *tituli picti*, literary sources and iconographic references (Lawall 2011, 23).

The main weakness of the primary content approach lays in the fact that in pre-Roman times many types of amphorae were used to transport wine, but olive oil and fish containers were very scarce. This is surprising given that these commodities were also transported on a considerable scale (Lawall 2011, 24; Lund 2004, 212; Lund and Gabrielsen 2005, 166). Furthermore, Egyptian papyri analyzed by N. Kruit and K. Worp may indicate that various goods were transported in certain types of Aegean amphorae (Lawall 2011, 24-25; Kruit and Worp 2000, 75-97). These papyri, however, are problematic. Kruit and Worp tried to prove that names like θάσιον, κνίδιον, λέσβιον, χῖον, ῾ροδιακόν/῾ρόδιον referred to geographical names and that they were not used to refer to capacity, reused foreign jars or their local imitations. Therefore, inscriptions like μέλιτος θάσιον or οἴνου θάσια refer to a jar of Thasian honey and jars of Thasian wine. However, do they mean the same type of jar, it is an amphora? Moreover, even if we accept that they do, what evidence do we have that they were not reused, such as empty Chian jars enumerated in papyrus P.Cair.Zen IV 59741, which explicitly states that they were to be re-coated with pitch and reused (Kruit and Worp 2000, 95)? Finally, even if Thasos, Chios etc. exported honey and vinegar in their amphorae, would these be mass exportations? Given that vinegar and honey are usually used in modest quantities, it seems that even if they were exported in amphorae, the percentage of wine containers would still be considerably higher than the proportion of amphorae carrying other goods. Nonetheless, even if we accept that different commodities might have been transported in one type of amphora, certain types must have contained only one product, because many regions produced and exported only one good. Therefore, if literary evidence confirms that Rhodes produced wine and that this island was famous only for the production of this commodity, we can easily accept that Rhodian amphorae were indeed designed for the transport of wine. However, it should be noted that wine was a more ‘interesting’ product than other goods, thus, it might appear more frequently in written sources (Lawall 2011, 26).

According to D. Pieri, it is inconceivable that an amphora of the same origin could be used to transport two completely different products, such as wine and olive oil. During the Roman age in particular, the package should indicate a certain content, because commercial success depended not only on the quality of the product but also on its advertising (Pieri 2005, 68). This view is also supported by M. Lawall (2011, 26), who argues that 'potters should be more likely to make special amphorae for a given product if they are guaranteed a market for those jars'. Therefore, the hypothesis that there was indeed a certain standardization in amphora forms and that the form was designed for transporting one primary commodity, seems more plausible.

However, even if we accept the theory according to which amphorae were intended for the transport of one product only, we should keep in mind that they might have been reused as storage containers for other products (Lawall 2011, 27). A document from Zenon's archive, dated to the mid-3rd century BC, mentions a collection of almost 3,000 amphorae (including vessels from Chios, Kourion, Paphos and Paros) being collected as empties for refilling at a winery. Similarly, a Thasian amphora that was dated no later than 500 BC ended up at the Athenian Agora in a context that was closed in the mid-5th century AD, which indicates that for a long time it served as a storage container (Kruit and Worp 2000, 86-87; Lawall 2011, 31). There is no consensus among scholars regarding the reuse of olive oil amphorae. Lawall argues that such containers could not store other commodities, which is suggested by the presence of *Monte Testaccio* – a huge waste heap of olive oil amphorae in Rome (Lawall 2011, 32). On the other hand, T. Peña argues that oil and fish containers might have been reused to transport wine. Moreover, he provides us with an abundance of evidence for the reuse of many amphorae types that were discovered in the Vesuvian cities (Peña 2007, 70, 75, 82-97). This evidence suggests that foreign amphorae were often used to transport or store local products. However, it seems improbable that Cretan amphorae for example, were reused to transport Spanish commodities. This means that each Aegean amphora that was found in Italy was used to transport an Aegean product at one time. Consequently, ancient containers, regardless of their reuse, may serve as indicators of trade and the consumption of imported goods.

The doubts regarding amphora were recently solved by E. C. De Sena. He proved that it is not necessary to estimate the overall proportion of wine imports calculating the number of the amphorae multiplied by their average capacity. The statistics do not differ considerably, no matter which

approach is adopted. However, the statistics may be affected for wine from Anatolia and Calabria, because of the small size of containers from these regions compared to other amphorae (De Sena 2005, 138).

Nonetheless, it should be emphasized that based upon amphora evidence, the amount of Italian wines will always be underestimated. De Sena drew attention to the fact that there is literary as well as archaeological evidence for the production of wines in the Roman hinterland; however, no amphorae confirm their consumption in the Eternal City. This is due to the fact that these wines were transported in perishable containers, which escape detection in modern research, or in reused amphorae (De Sena 2005, 138-140). His estimates regarding the share of wine that was produced in the hinterland as a percentage of the total amount consumed in Ostia and Rome suggest that the hinterland was the main source of wine for these cities, satisfying around a third of the demand, which equates to 54 million liters that were destined for the *Urbs* (De Sena 2005, 142). These estimates are corroborated by the calculations that were made by A. Marzano, who examined the intensity of wine and olive production in the Roman *suburbium* through analyzing the density of presses (Marzano 2013). Therefore, we should keep in mind that the statistics provided by amphorae calculations represent only a certain percentage of the wine that was consumed in Rome and ignore the beverages that were produced in Latium.

In order to achieve the goal of analyzing the scale of imports of Aegean wines to Rome in this study, a synthesis has been made upon the basis of published archaeological reports that provided numbers of diagnostic fragments of wine containers[3]. It comprises the proportions of amphorae that were discovered in 13 archaeological sites in Rome, dated between the Late Republican period and the 3rd century AD. These contexts include: the Forum of Caesar – Late Republican age (Zampini 2010, 321-322), *Via Sacchi, Gianicolo* – Augustan age, Flavian, late Antonine period (Ferrandes 2008, 247-249, 257-259), *Aqua Marcia* – 1st and the beginning of the 2nd century AD (Volpe 1996, 15; Panetta 1996), *Via Nova* – 343 fragments, dated after 64 AD (Rizzo 2003, 7-17, 146-147, Tab. 26b, 163-165, tab 27b and 27c, 175, Tab. 29, 180, Tab. 30b), *Meta Sudans* – 6420 fragments dated to 64-68, 70-80/90, 138-161 AD, the north part of

[3] The synthesis does not comprise all the excavated wine amphorae, given that they were not published, or the state of publication did not allow them to be included into this study (poorly dated, only percentages, not numbers of containers provided, etc.). In the case of *Via Marmorata*, I used not the published data, but amphora statistics provided by Dr T. Bertoldi through personal correspondence, for which I am extremely grateful.

the Palatine Hill – 342 fragments, 64-68, 70-90 AD and Trajan's age, *Crypta Balbi* – 154 fragments, 80-96 AD and Trajan's period, *Vigna Barberini* – 12, 526 fragments, 81-96 AD (Rizzo 2003, 7-17, 146-147, Tab. 26b, 163-165, Tab. 27b and 27c, 175, Tab. 29, 180, Tab. 30b), The Forum of Nerva/*Forum Transitorium* – the second half of the 1st century AD and the 2nd century AD (Marucci 2006, 57, 85; Nocera 2013, 78-79; Rinaldi 2013, 61-63, 67-68; Rizzo 2003), *Boccone del Povero* – first half of the 2nd century AD (Bertoldi 2011b, 44-45, 51-54), Trajan's Markets – the second half of the 2nd century AD (Ceci 2006, 25), *Via Marmorata* – the 2nd and 3rd century AD (Capodiferro and Quaranta 2011, 51; Bertoldi 2011a, 148; Bertoldi personal information[4]) and the House of Tiberius – 54-235 AD (Meylan-Krause 2002, 1-3, 122 n. 45).

The material from the above mentioned contexts was divided into five chronological units, which means: the Late Republican period (one context), the Augustan age (one context), the 1st century AD (nine contexts), the 2nd century AD[5] (ten contexts) and finally the 3rd century AD (two contexts). The dating of the material from most of the excavations did not allow narrower time scopes to be distinguished, without the necessity to exclude a considerable number of contexts that did not fit within the narrow time spans. The particular nature of each context is not taken into consideration in order to obtain the most general view, while the data was re-assessed for the purposes of this study to meet different criteria. For example, it should be stressed that Aegean containers were usually seen as one category of imports in the total number of amphorae regardless of their content. Considering that wine jars predominated among the Aegean containers, this approach led to underestimating this region as a source of Italy's wine supply. In the synthesis that is presented in this paper, only wine amphorae are considered, and their numbers are calculated upon the basis of diagnostic fragments or estimations regarding the number of vessels. The first part shows all Aegean wine amphorae as one category of imports in comparison with wine containers from other geographical areas. The second part presents the percentages of various Aegean wine amphorae, which aims to provide information regarding the popularity and the scale of the consumption of various Aegean *crus*.

[4] I would like to thank to Tommaso Bertoldi for sending me unpublished tables with the numbers of amphorae from *Via Marmorata.*

[5] This includes all of Trajan's Age.

Imported wines in Rome

The first thing that attracts our attention while analyzing wine consumption trends in Rome is that most of the amphora assemblages are from the 1st and the 2nd century AD (nine and ten contexts respectfully). Moreover, it seems that the overall numbers of containers in Rome are the highest during these periods (Pl. 1: 1 and 2: 1). The analysis of the percentages of wine amphorae according to their provenance shows that the ratio of Aegean containers in Rome is always significant, since it varies between more than 10% (1st century BC) and more than 50% (3rd century AD). It is worth mentioning that in the Late Republican context – *Horti Lamiani*[6], Aegeo-Oriental containers were estimated at 12% of all (not only wine) amphorae (Ferrandes 2014, 364), which suggests that their imports during the late Republic might have been even more numerous. It also seems that Aegean wine amphorae were always the most numerous imports from the provinces and that their role grew gradually between the Late Republican and the Middle Imperial age. This shows that Aegean wines satisfied an important part of the Roman wine demand. It is possible to claim, without any exaggeration, that Aegean wines were the most popular foreign beverages in Rome for a very long period starting from the Late Republican age until the 3rd century AD. They were only surpassed by Italian products in the earlier periods up to the end of the 1st century AD. Nonetheless, it seems that in the 2nd and 3rd century AD the Aegean area was the most important source of wine supply to Rome and consequently must have been economically important to the Empire.

At the same time, it seems that wines imported from other areas, such as Spain, Africa and Gaul were never as important for the Roman supply as those from the Aegean part of the world. This lack of popularity of provincial wines other than Aegean cannot be explained by the use of barrels for their transportation, since there is no evidence for the use of this type of perishable container on a large scale before the 3rd century AD. The use of barrels or other perishable containers could only explain the low percentages of Adriatic amphorae starting from the 1st century AD, as this is when their transport by wooden casks probably started (Panella and Tchernia 2002, 184-185). On the other hand, the number of amphorae from this area remains more or less stable until the end of the 2nd century AD, so the barrel hypothesis even in this case can be doubted.

[6] The context is not included in the statistics, as the publication does not provide the numbers of containers, only percentages.

It is significant that an increase in the percentages of Greek, Gallic, and African wine amphorae is observed in the 1st and 2nd century AD. This trend can be associated with the decrease in the proportion of Italian containers. This could be explained as an effect of competition from the provinces that had a negative impact on Italian production. This theory, however, was challenged by A. Tchernia. According to his analyses, which include not only amphorae, but also other categories of pottery, Italian production did not suffer from the provincial products, it simply changed to adjust to new consumption trends (Tchernia 2011, 351-373). Since there was no crisis in Italian agriculture in the 1st and 2nd century AD, and more wine was imported to Rome, it is possible that the wine demand was growing considerably and that Italy was not capable of satisfying it. Therefore, the Romans must have imported more from the provinces. However, the Aegean region responded to this increased demand to the greatest degree. Which parts of the Aegean provided Rome with the highest numbers of wines?

Aegean wine imports in Rome

Pl. 1: 2 and 2: 2 suggest that the Romans imported Aegean wines mostly from Crete, Rhodes and Cos. Cnidian wine was not consumed in large quantities, similarly to the beverages from Asia Minor, especially if we consider that the latter were transported in very small amphorae that contained only between six and 12 l., whereas the volume of other wine amphorae is usually 20 l. or more. Therefore, it seems that the south Aegean region was the most important wine supplier to Rome. The trends that may be observed in the imports of these wines varied throughout the period of investigation. Rhodian wine was the most popular until the 1st century AD, but later on it was surpassed by Cretan wine. Wine from Cos was also important in the earlier periods throughout the 1st century BC and 1st century AD. In the 2nd century AD wines from Crete predominated, whereas in the 3rd century AD Kapitän 1 and 2 amphorae were in the majority. These containers most probably came from the Aegean region or from the western part of Asia Minor, but the exact place of their production remains unknown (Panella 1986, 631; Empereur and Picon 1989, 233; Peña 1999, 84, 86; Dyczek 2001b, 141; Bezeczky 2013, 149)[7].

It seems that the increase in the general percentage of Aegean wines in the 2nd century AD is due, above all, to the imports from Crete.

[7] Note that Reynolds 2010, 90 suggests the Black Sea region.

It is interesting that a Cretan amphora was attested in *Foro di Cesare*, dated before 29 BC, whereas it was generally accepted that Cretan wine started to be exported to Italy in the Augustan Age (Marangou-Lerat 1995, 156). This discovery suggests that imports of Cretan wine might have started slightly earlier.

Furthermore, the preliminary statistics of amphorae that were found in *Nuovo Mercato di Testaccio*[8] suggest that in the 2nd century AD Cretan wine might have been the most popular beverage in Rome. The area of *Nuovo Mercato di Testaccio* most probably served as a refuse heap for wine amphorae, Cretan in particular. Archaeological material from this context was only partially studied, because not all the sites were excavated, while the excavated part yielded very high numbers of amphora fragments. This is why data regarding *Nuovo Mercato* is only a sample, but it is assumed that the sample is representative. Wine amphorae were estimated at 91.5% of the total number of containers, 88.4% of which were of oriental origin. Cretan amphorae predominated, since they constituted 94.7% of the oriental wine amphorae. A preliminary analysis of the amphorae from *Nuovo Mercato di Testaccio* suggests that these proportions are representative for this context in general (Tempesta 2011, 193-196). In 2010 a preliminary report regarding Cretan amphorae from this site was published, which included 8,731 fragments. These fragments represented 832 containers, 545 of them dating back to the first half of the 2nd century AD (287 residual in Late Imperial strata). They correspond to 38.8% of all Cretan amphorae dated to this period and to 21.8% of all the Cretan amphorae that were found in this context (Casaramona 2010, 113). This data allows us to estimate that around 3817 containers from Crete were discovered in *Nuovo Mercato di Testaccio*, 1,404 of which dated back to the 2nd century AD. These numbers are unique – there is no other archaeological context in which such amounts of wine amphorae have been attested. Moreover, for the time being, it is not clear whether the construction of the refuse heap for Cretan jars is a consequence of the large quantities of imports, or whether it is simply one of a number of waste heaps, with others yet to be discovered. Nevertheless, it shows that Cretan vineyards satisfied a huge part of the Roman demand for wine and that the island was probably the most important Roman wine supplier.

[8] This context is not included in the statistics presented in this paper, due to the fact that it was only partially excavated, as well as considering its peculiar nature (the only known waste heap of wine amphorae), which makes it incomparable with other sites, but cannot be entirely omitted.

Summing up, it is possible to say that starting from the Augustan period the Romans drank mostly Aegean wines from the south-eastern Aegean. It seems that these wines were not among the luxurious, aristocratic drinks, such as Chian, Lesbian and Thasian wine (Komar 2014), so it is possible to formulate a hypothesis that they were rather common beverages that were drunk by the middle and lower social strata rather than the upper classes. This hypothesis is confirmed by ancient written sources.

According to Vergil, vine from Rhodes was *'dis et mensis accepta secundis'* (Verg. *Georg.* 2.101-102), which means that it was 'welcomed to the gods and the banquet's second course'. So in the 1st century BC Rhodian wine was good enough to be served at banquets. But what type of banquets? Presumably banquets that were frequented by Vergil, which means a man from Mantua, a Cisalpine *oppidum*, whose land was confiscated and who must have depended on the mercy of Maecenas. It is true that this passage suggests that Rhodian wine was not a wine of the poor. However, it seems that the members of the upper social strata were not particularly fond of it, because there is no other evidence in poetry which could suggest that this wine was good and appreciated. Moreover, in more or less the same period the Greeks called it ὑπόχυτος, which is a pejorative epithet that may be translated as 'doctored' (Ath. *Deipn.* 31E). This was probably due to the fact that it was mixed with seawater, similarly to the wine from Cos (Plin. *HN* 14.78-79). This admixture was considered as unwholesome by Dioscorides, which might have been responsible for the fact that Rhodian and Coan wines were not highly appreciated (Dsc. *Mat. Med*. 5.9, 5.10 MGO; Plin. *HN* 14.75). The lower quality of Coan wine is also suggested by its price. Tchernia noted that at the beginning of the 2nd century BC on Delos, the price of Coan wine was half or three quarters the price of Cnidian wine (Tchernia 1986, 105; after Larsen 1938, 392-394) and it was purchased in larger quantities (Larsen 1938, 393: 12 jars of Cnidian and 35 jars of Coan or ten jars of Cnidian and 35 jars of Coan). In addition, N. Purcell (1985, 14) claims that in the 1st century BC, the trade of Dressel 2-4 amphorae was oriented towards the needs of the Roman army. Dressel 2-4 were imitations of Coan containers, and it is likely that they were used to transport wine that was similar to Coan wine. Considering the fact that soldiers are usually not provided with the highest-quality products, this would be further evidence suggesting that wine from Cos was of inferior quality and hence it was probably consumed by the lower social strata. According to Pliny, wine from Rhodes was similar to Coan wine (Plin. *HN,* 14.79); thus, it is possible to draw the conclusion that their consumers were similar. It seems that these

consumers appreciated the good taste of these wines and their reasonable price, but they were not among the connoisseurs who only drank high-end beverages.

The case of Cretan wine is even more explicit. Martial calls it '*mulsum pauperis*' (Mart. 13.106). This means that it was a very sweet beverage (*mulsum* - wine mixed with honey) consumed by 'poor' people. It is true that '*pauper*' did not mean people with a very low income, but simply all those that were not very rich (Veyne 2000, 1170-1171). Nonetheless, this passage clearly states that Cretan wine was not drank by Roman aristocracy. However, Marangou-Lerat claims that it was a good wine *'honorablement situé dans la hiérarchie des crus'*, pointing out that Martial generally underestimated Aegean wines, and that Cretan is the only Aegean *cru* to which this poet devoted one of his epigrams (Marangou-Lerat 1995, 16, 28). The others concern the best Italian wines as well as foreign beverages from outside of the Aegean. Therefore, Cretan wine must have been famous and popular, but would it have been high-ranking? Tchernia, using a text by Fronto as evidence, claims that between the 1st and 2nd century AD, Cretan wine was one of the most popular and also one of the cheapest wines, like those from Sagunto and Tarraconensis (Tchernia 2011, 257-258, 345-346; Fronto, *De eloq.* 1.4). This may be confirmed by discoveries from Pompeii, which show that numerous amphorae of Cretan and Coan wines were found in *tabernae* (Timby 2004, 385-387). Considering the fact that it is unlikely that very high-ranking wines would be sold in taverns in large quantities, as these were places designed for common people rather than for higher class members (Wilkins and Hill 2006, 178), we may say that the beverages from Crete and Cos were for commoners. It is uncertain who drank wines from Cnidus and from Asia Minor. However, considering that the price of Cnidian wine was considerably higher than Coan wine, it is possible that it was of a better quality. On the other hand, the price of Cnidian wine at Delos at the beginning of the 2nd century BC, between four and six drachmas (Larsen 1938, 393), was considerably lower than the price of Chian or Thasian wine in Egypt in the mid-3rd century BC, 18 and 20 drachmas respectively (Salviat 1986, 180; Salviat and Tchernia 2013, 219), which could suggest that Cnidian wine was of lower quality. However, it is not certain whether similar quantities of wine are compared. Moreover, prices might have varied considerably between Delos and Egypt, and hence this comparison provides rather weak evidence. Nonetheless, there is nothing to suggest that Cnidian wine was an aristocratic drink. A similar conclusion may be drawn regarding wine from the area of Mount Tmolus. According to Galen, it was among

the three best wines from Asia and it was equal to Chian and Lesbian wine (Gal. *San.Tu.* 6.275K), which were the best, luxurious Aegean wines (Komar 2014). However, this is not enough to include it into the category of Roman aristocratic beverages, because no ancient author highly praises its taste. Moreover, Pliny says that the Romans did not appreciate Tmolian wine by itself, but it was added to other wines to improve their taste (*HN* 14.74). In summary, it seems that in the Imperial period, the Romans imported Aegean wines to satisfy the demand of the commoners, being the people from the middle and lower social strata.

Conclusions

The study of wine imports to Rome shows that the Aegean region, or to be more precise, its southern part was a major wine supplier to Rome. No other imported wines were consumed in the Eternal City on such a great scale. The consumption of Aegean wines, and imported wines in general, increased considerably between the Late Republican and the Middle Imperial age, satisfying more than half of the demand for imports (50.57%) during the 3rd c. AD. These wines were drunk mostly by middle and lower social orders, so the increase in their imports may indicate the growth in wine consumption among non-elite strata.

For most of the time the island of Crete satisfied the greatest part of the Roman wine demand. This was probably due to the fact that Cretan wine was good and inexpensive. According to De Caro, its affordable price might have been associated with the donation of the income from lands surrounding Knossos to the Capuans by Octavian Augustus. A part of the Cretan wine might have come to Capua as *vectigalia* in kind and was then sold by the municipality (De Caro 1992/93, 309-311). Furthermore, according to Łoś, the inhabitants of Italy predominated among the traders of Cretan wine and they might have been associated with the magistrates of the province (Łoś 1997, 71-72). Tchernia proposed a hypothesis, according to which, Cretan wine was transported on the ships of *annona*, that passed through the island on their way to Italy with Egyptian grain, as an additional cargo, and hence it was free from the costs of transport (Tchernia 2011, 345-348). These factors must have influenced the price and the popularity of Cretan wines.

Is it possible that similar factors influenced the popularity of other Aegean imports in Rome? South-Western Anatolia, including Rhodes, Cos, and Cnidus was also on the route of the ships transporting grain to Italy,

so it cannot be excluded that the wines from these areas were loaded onto the *annona* vessels if these had not been fully laden with grain in Egypt. Or should we rather suspect that a long-standing wine producing tradition and the production of luxurious drinks (Komar 2014) were among the factors that led the Aegean area to become the main supplier of wine to Rome? Unfortunately, the sources do not allow us to answer these questions. What is, however, indubitable, is that without the Aegean islands, especially Crete, Rome would not have been able to satisfy its wine demand.

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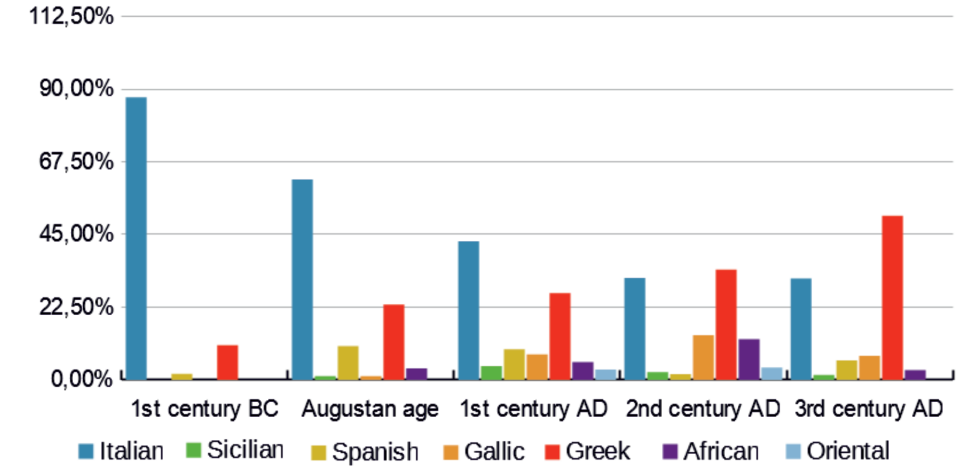

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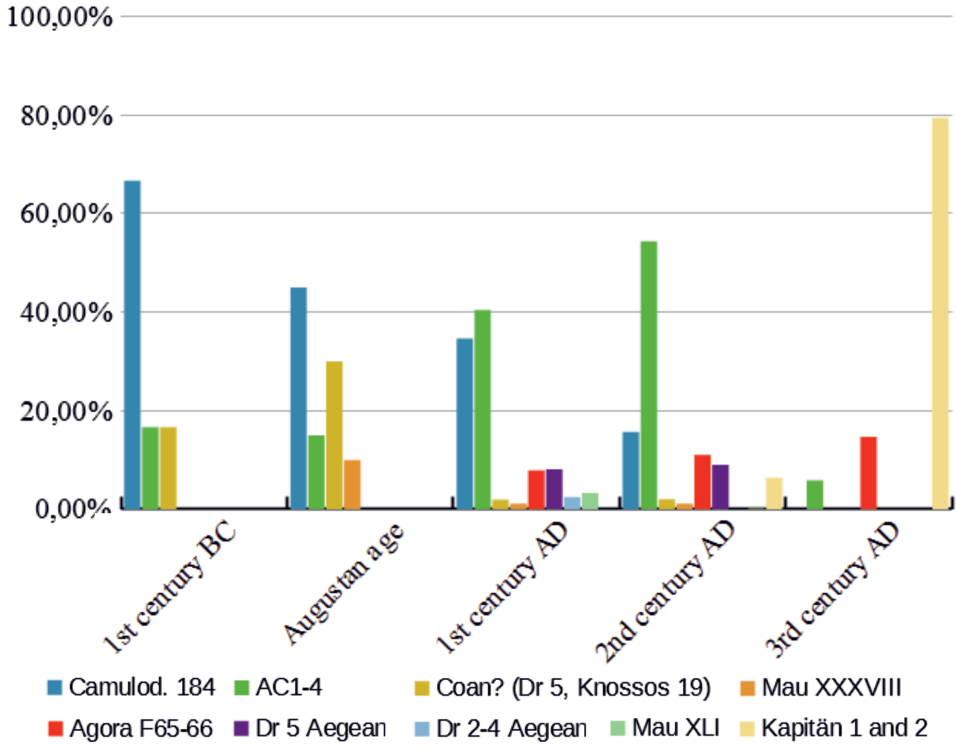

2

Pl. 1: 1. Wine imports to Rome according to their provenance (elaborated by author)
Pl. 1: 2. Aegean wines in Rome according to their provenance (elaborated by author)

	1st c. BC		Augustan age		1st c. AD		2nd c. AD		3rd c. AD	
Italian	49	87,50%	52	61%	1562	42,90%	552	31,51%	21	31%
Sicilian	0	0%	1	1,16%	154	4,23%	42	2,40%	1	1,49%
Spanish	1	1,79%	9	10,46%	346	9,50%	30	1,71%	4	5,97%
Aegean	6	10,71%	20	23,26%	976	26,80%	598	34,13%	34	50,75%
Gallic	0	0%	1	1,16%	288	7,91%	242	13,81%	5	7,46%
African	0	0%	3	3,49%	201	5,52%	221	12,61%	2	2,99%
Oriental	0	0%	0	0%	114	3%	67	3,82%	0	0%
Total										

1

	1st c. BC		Augustan age		1st c. AD		2nd c.AD		3rd c.AD	
Rhodian (Camulod. 184)	4	66,67%	9	45%	338	34,63%	94	15,72%	0	0%
Cretan (AC 1-4)	1	16,67%	3	15%	395	40,47%	325	54,35%	2	5,88%
Coan? (Dr 5, Knossos 19)	1	16,67%	6	30%	19	1,95%	12	2,01%	0	0%
Cnidian (Mau XXXVIII)	0	0%	2	10%	11	1,13%	7	1,17%	0	0%
Anatolian Agora F65-66	0	0%	0	0%	77	7,89%	66	11,04%	5	14,71%
Dr 5 Aegean	0	0%	0	0%	79	8,09%	54	9,03%	0	0%
Dr 2-4 Aegean	0	0%	0	0%	24	2,46%	0	0%	0	0%
Mau XLI	0	0%	0	0%	32	3,28%	1	0,17%	0	0%
Chian	0	0%	0	0%	1	0,1%	0	0%	0	0%
Kapitän 1 and 2	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	38	6,35%	27	79,41%
Total	6									

2

Pl. 2: 1. Wine importations to Rome according to their provenance (elaborated by author)
Pl. 2: 2. Aegean wines in Rome according to their provenance (elaborated by author)

Name	Volume	Reference
Rhodian Camulodunum 184	20-25l.	http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/amphora_ahrb_2005/
Cretan (AC1-AC4)	AC 4 - 10-15l. AC 1-3 - 22l.	Rizzo 2003, 205
Coan? (Dr 5, Knossos 19)	c. 30l.	Rizzo 2003, 205
Cnidus (Mau XXXVIII)	17,16l.	Rizzo 2003, 205
Agora F65-66	6-12l.	http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/amphora_ahrb_2005/
Dr 5 Aegean	30l.	Rizzo 2003, 205
Dr 2-4 Aegean	25-30l.	http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/amphora_ahrb_2005/
Mau XLI	13 and 26l.	Rizzo 2003, 205
Chios	c. 14l.	Rizzo 2003, 205
Kapitän 1 and 2	3.38 - 15l.	Dyczek 2001b, 140

Pl. 3: 1. List of Aegean amphoras considered in the text and their capacities. Retrieved from http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/amphora_ahrb_2005/cat_amph.cfm