

## FROM TRADERS TO LANDOWNERS: ACCULTURATION IN ROMAN GORTYN

The presence of Italian traders in Gortyn has long been known, since the pioneering work of Hatzfeld and Guarducci's *Inscriptiones Creticae*<sup>1</sup>. The systematic excavations of the Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene have continued to showcase the material results of commercial activity. Gortyn was a center of exchange between the Aegean and the West from the first century BCE to the first century of our era<sup>2</sup>. Between the Roman conquest of Crete and the battle of Actium Gortyn was economically prosperous, and a producer of amphoras if not also an exporter of local products<sup>3</sup>.

New epigraphical and archaeological discoveries make it possible to use onomastic comparanda and criteria of dating to investigate the economy of hellenistic-Roman Gortyn and the identity of the foreigners honored with *proxenia* and/or *politeia* at Gortyn (and Olous) as Italian traders<sup>4</sup>. The presence of Roman names in the Greek East is not, however, the only means available for identifying Italian traders and members of their *familiae*. Recent work links traders to Roman senators and equestrians as well as Italian municipal elites, usually arguing from the identity of landowners in the Italian peninsula to that of traders in the Greek East. This linkage involves the names of senatorial families, their ownership of estates near Italian port cities, the names borne by artisans producing vessels, and the names borne by merchants who acted as agents to facilitate trade at major commercial centers overseas<sup>5</sup>.

The present study will test this line of argument against the epigraphical, onomastic, and prosopographical evidence available from Roman Gortyn. It focusses, however, on the result rather than the cause of this process, and looks backward from traders in the Greek East to families, estates, and artisans in the Roman West, in order to identify members of trading families who settled and became so naturalized as to own land or be involved in land transactions at Gortyn and in a territorial arbitration at Rhytion in the Gortynian Messara. To that end, we will examine the Roman names attested in an account of lands purchased, a land registry, an inscription that mentions a garden, and a territorial arbitration<sup>6</sup> - and other inscriptions containing those same nomina at Gortyn, in the Bay of Messara, and as far away as Rough Cilicia - to hear the persistent onomastic echo of the early presence of business-oriented senators and traders in Crete, especially at Gortyn.

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<sup>1</sup> HATZFELD 1912; HATZFELD 1919.

<sup>2</sup> RENDINI 1997, p. 371.

<sup>3</sup> ROMEO 1998, p. 265; PAPADOPOULOS 1999, pp. 202, 236; RENDINI 1997, p. 371.

<sup>4</sup> BOWSKY 1999.

<sup>5</sup> RAUH 1986, pp. 656-57.

<sup>6</sup> *IC* IV, 337, 338, 340; *IC* I, XXIX 1.