Eunus: royal obverse, messianic preacher, firebreather and avenger of Syria

Eunus: anverso real, pregador messiânico, cuspidor de fogo e vingador da Síria

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Resumo

Este artigo busca ligar a revolta de Eunus, também conhecida como a "Primeira Revolta Servil" (135-132 AEC) aos seus proferimentos em êxtase profético, ligados à sua origem Síria. Tais proferimentos e a própria revolta ocorreram na seqüência da derrota de Antíoco III, o Grande, em 190 AEC; até o momento, esses proferimentos não foram vinculados às estórias de profecias fantasmagóricas e também anti-romanas preservadas por Phlegon de Tralles (séc.II EC), em seu Mirabillion. O padrão observado em Eunus, nos Oráculos Sibilinos e nas estórias de Phlegon é aparentemente o mesmo, com a peculiaridade de que, através da fala em êxtase de Eunus, o líder da revolta, tais proferimentos são usualmente tratados como um misto de charlatanismo e bravata – quando tratam, na verdade, do já bem conhecido tema da vingança do Oriente contra Roma.

Palavras-chave: literatura apocalíptica, sincretismo religioso na Antiguidade, historiografia antiga.

Abstract

This article makes an attempt to link Eunus' revolt (i.e. The First Slave Revolt", 135-132 BCE), more directly his prophetic utterances and Syrian provenance to other events and stories that happened during the Second Century BCE, in the aftermath of the defeat of Anthiochus III the Great in 190 BCE; the so-far unobserved links are provided by prophecies against Rome uttered in otherworldly fashion and preserved by Phlegon of Tralles in his Mirabillion. These utterances fit in the pattern of Eastern revenge prophecies against Rome (much like the ones found in the Sibylline Oracles), with the peculiarity that, in the mouth of Eunus, the slave who lead the Revolt, they appear first as mockery in the eyes of his owner. It is the main objective of this article to show that for Eunus, this was far from mockery and was, indeed, a way of reassuring the vengeance of the East, given all the circumstances of his "kingship".

Keywords: Apocalyptic literature, Religious syncretism in Antiquity, Ancient historiography.

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From domestic clown to revolt leader: a remarkable career

It is now an academic commonplace that the Roman expansion throughout the Mediterranean, as a consequence of the system of allegiances forged during the Punic Wars, brought an immense amount of slaves to the Italic Peninsula. It is also undisputed that the nature and qualifications of these slaves were very diverse.

But the ones that interest us most here are the ones that, from 135 to 75 BCE, approximately, rose against Rome in what are called the Three Servile Wars (the last of them being the most famous, led by some gladiator named Spartacus). As different as the qualification of the tens of the thousands of slaves now available to Rome (either as the direct consequence of its wars, or being commercialized in the borders of the Roman world, or even bought by the ubiquitous pirates), then, as now, the human masses when taken at a bird's-eye view comprised more unqualified, or poorly qualified persons than highly qualified ones. When applied to the slave market, this meant that a medical doctor, a secretary or an accountant would cost much more and would, as a consequence, get a much better treatment than the disqualified, cheap ones used mercilessly in mining or in agricultural labor[1].

It is fair to say that urban slaves were, by comparison to rural ones, "pampered"; Spartacus would avoid their use in his own revolt 60 years later than the one discussed here.

And yet it is precisely a unique case that is presented to us in this article – a comparatively pampered urban slave that would, nonetheless, lead a slave revolt that lasted three years in Sicily. His name was Eunus; by comparison to the lack of information regarding the Second Servile War, we know a lot about him; it is the interpretation of that amount of info that puzzles investigators to this day. And more often than not the narrative frames into which Eunus is lodged are the main element of the study itself[2].

Origins, background, usages of Eunus

Eunus came from Syria, from what was still part of the crumbling Seleucid Empire; he came from the city of Apameia, a place with special significance for many important political events between 200 – 64 BCE; after Roman victories in Greece and Asia Minor in 191 BCE

1 An excellent example is the plan of Xenophon for Athens to regain its revenues after the disaster against Sparta by renting slaves to work in the Laurium mines (*Ways and Means*, IV, 2-3).

2 The best case in point is that of Peter Morton, who makes a very fine analysis of what Diodorus has to say but does not link that info to the actual events nor to the *Quellenforschung* regarding Diodorus. Cf. MORTON, Peter. "Eunus: the cowardly king" In *Classical Quarterly* 63.1, 2013, pp.237-252.

(Thermopylae) and 190 BCE (Magnesia)[3], in 188 BCE Antiochus III had to submit himself to scorching terms to the Romans; these may have influenced the policies of his successor Anthiocus IV, of notorious fame during the Maccabean Revolt (167-164 BCE)[4].

Anyway, from what we can extract from our sources, Eunus was an urban person when he became a slave; our main source for the events in the First Slave Revolt, and for Eunus himself is Diodorus of Sicily[5]. Other sources are Posidonius, Florus and some entries in the Suda, almost a thousand years later.

But it is Diodorus who interests us most at this point, since his characterization of Eunus is a very clever one, albeit hate-ridden. Posidonius is not less important since both he and Eunus came from the same city in Syria, Apameia.

Sicily, from Paradise to Hell

Diodorus uses the customary disdain for rebels – even more so if slaves – but he is also uncommonly fair towards work conditions in Sicily. According to Diodorus, Sicily had 60 "good" years after being freed once and for all from the Carthaginians, after that, the landowners began to abuse their slaves beyond what was acceptable to his eyes:

> The Sicilians, having shot up in prosperity and acquired great wealth, began to purchase a vast number of slaves, to whose bodies, as they were brought in droves from the slave markets, they at once applied marks and brands. The young men they used as cowherds, the others in such ways as they happened to be useful. But they treated them with a heavy hand in their service, and granted them the most meagre care, the bare minimum for food and clothing. (Diodorus, *The Library of History*[6]34.2).

[3] For a full account of the battle, its aftermath and text of the treaty, cf. Polybius, *Histories*, 21.43.

[4] It is somehow strange that Eunus chose "Anthiochus" as his "royal" name, and that Diodorus describes his death in same fashion – using the same literary topos, if you prefer – , that of the death by lice (i.e. by the same sort of filthy animals that were responsible for the deaths of other tyrants, before and after Eunus).

[5] His *LH* is not complete and even the non-specialist cannot fail to observe that some parts of Diodorus do not match the following ones; the treatment of his master Antigenes is one of such occasions.

[6] All classical references were taken from the Loeb Classical Library online (www.loebclassics.com), unless otherwise stated. For the sake of practicality, Diodorus' work will be abbreviated as *LH* from now on. On the original text, " ἐπὶ πολὺ τοῖς βίοις ἀναδραμόντες καὶ μεγάλους περιποιησάμενοι πλούτους συνηγόραζον οἰκετῶν πλῆθος, οἷς ἐκ τῶν σωματοτροφείων ἀγεληδὸν ἁπαχθεῖσιν εὐθὺς χαρακτῆρας2 ἐπέβαλλον καὶ 2στιγμὰς τοῖς σώμασιν. ἐχρῶντο δὲ αὐτῶν τοῖς μὲν νέοις νομεῦσι, τοῖς δ' ἄλλοις ὥς πῃ ἑκάστῳ ἡ χρεία ἐπέβαλλε. βαρέως δ' αὐτοῖς κατά τε τὰς ὑπηρεσίας ἐχρῶντο, καὶ ἐπιμελείας παντελῶς ὀλίγης ἠξίουν, ὅσα τε ἐντρέφεσθαι καὶ ὅσα ἐνδύσασθαι."

So Diodorus admits in a few lines that slaves were plentiful, that their "new" owners were cruel and that even before he begins to talk about Eunus, brigandage was one way for slaves to aspire to a better life, at least in material terms. Shortly after (*LH* 34.5) Eunus is introduced into the big picture of Diodorus' narrative:

> Getting together as opportunity offered, they discussed the possibility of revolt, until at last they put their plans into action. There was a certain Syrian slave, belonging to Antigenes of Enna; he was an Apameian by birth and had an aptitude for magic and the working of wonders. He claimed to foretell the future, by divine command, through dreams, and because of his talent along these lines deceived many. Going on from there he not only gave oracles by means of dreams, but even made a pretence of having waking visions of the gods and of hearing the future from their own lips.

But what exactly was Eunus prophesizing, or pretending to? Was he having true contact with the gods? Our sources are unanimous in relating him to the cult of "the Syrian goddess" – and all this in a moment of continuing humiliation of Syrians (i.e., from what was left of the Seleucid Empire.

For one thing, he cannot be classified as a professional comic, clown, jester or buffoon: nowhere do our sources use the Greek term, *gelotopoios* (literally, "laughter-producer")[7]. In Graeco-Roman Antiquity comedians and their likes had seasonal jobs, apparently: that led, for instance, for a group of comedians in Athens to organize themselves in a sort of syndicate, called "The sixty"; this way they could help one another find a place where their services were needed[8]. But Eunus appears to have fallen into another category, that of *thaumatopoios*[9] – a wonder-worker.

However, as it often happens, jokes and humour are not shared between those involved[10]; Eunus was displayed by his owner, a man called Antigenes (who behaves, in

7 LSJ, γελωτοποίος; ridiculous, jester, buffoon.

8 LEON, Vicki. Meu chefe é um senhor de escravos. A dura vida de organizadores de orgias, animadores de funerais e outros profissionais do mundo antigo. São Paulo, Globo, 2007, PP. 191-193. (Used in the absence of the English edition; Leon brings to life many, if not all important jobs in the Graeco-Roman world but it is not an academic work in the strict sense of the term, lacking, for instance, indication of sources). It is interesting that in the reports that we have regarding the "use" of Eunus to entertain the Roman nouveau-riches in Sicily with his prophecies, ecstasies or magical tricks, no professional of similar capacity is described by Leon. They exist, but will be found elsewhere, as will be seen.

9 LSJ, θαυματοποιός; wonder-worker, acrobat, conjurer, juggler, puppet-showman. It is reasonable that the semantic field of thaumatopoios is quite vast, with a hint that comedians could be described with that word too. Some suggest that Eunus "career" could be a "recreation" by Posidonius based on other entertainers he knew in the native city that he shared with Eunus.

10 PROPP, Vladimir. *On the Comic and Laughter*. Toronto / Buffalo / London, University of Toronto Press, 2009, p.14. When Propp criticizes Bergson justly exactly for the same reason above: Bergson says that laughter occurs naturally, whenever there is reason for it. Propp disagrees on that saying that what is cause of laughter to one person is not necessarily funny to others. This is a very important point here, for it is a shared theme that makes Antigenes laugh but Eunus apparently speaks in earnest: the theme of

Diodorus' narrative, like a buffoon of sorts himself; during private parties, Antigenes called Eunus to entertain his guests, by means of prophesising in an ecstatic-state and, with a common trick, breathing fire through his mouth[11]). Eunus prophesized that he would be king one day – coming from where he did, venerating a goddess whose husband, Hadad, was himself a solar deity, it all makes sense that Eunus referred to himself as a sort of "king coming from the sun", a label that would last centuries. But again, for this to make sense in Antigenes' banquets, he and his guests must have been aware of the theme in some manner[12].

Now this fire-breathing device alone would again impress ancient audiences; it was used by other revolt leaders such as Bar Kochba, almost 300 years later[13].

Chance guessing and fire breathing

Three separate elements should, in the opinion of this author, be differentiated while analyzing Eunus and the First Slave Revolt. The first one is that the place he came from, Syria, was renowned in the Hellenistic and Roman world because of its local goddess, Atargatis, which is an Hellenized form of the Aramaic Atar'atheh (maybe Tar'atheh; Astart, who is a separate godess, came to be syncretised with other deities, local or Greek[14]); apparently female followers of the goddess were a normal part of the rearguard of Greek armies in Hellenistic times, so much so that Plutarch stands in awe for the mere fact that Cleomenes' army (after 250 BCE) was so free of vulgarity as to not have them[15]. So, the first element to take into our examination of Eunus is that he was perhaps an aberration regarding this kind of "divine wonder-maker" that he was male; but other Syrian soothsayers, wonder-workers and

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the avenger of Asia, the king coming from the sun that is present in so many texts of resistance, first to Greece, than to Rome. The same mocking spirit can be seen in the "Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum", that may very well be a sinister comic response to the events that led to the dead of Jesus; for them, no explanation regarding any other kingdom than the Roman Empire would be acceptable.

11 FrGH87F108. Here as in other places where fragments of the Greek historians appear, the reference is shortened and can be found in the edition used by the author: JACOBY, Felix. *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Leiden, Brill, 2004 (CD-ROM ed.). Translations are by the author of this article unless otherwise specified.

12 On this matter cf. the still useful articles of SWAIN, Joseph W. "The theory of the Four Monarchies: opposition history under the Roman Empire" In *Classical Philology*, 35, 1, 1940, p.5; for a somewhat different view, cf. ROSE, Herbert J. "World Ages and the body politic" In Harvard Theological Review, 54, 1961, pp.133-134.

13 Cf. Jerome, in his *Against Rufinus*, 3: "[...] just as that famed Barchochebas, the instigator of the Jewish uprising, kept fanning a lighted blade of straw in his mouth with puffs of breath so as to give the impression that he was spewing out flames" / "[...] stipulam in ore succensam anhelitu, ut flammas evomere putaretur".

14 It was always easier for polytheists to appropriate themselves of others' deities, since they were not just deities, but as a rule embodied the very quality implied in their names – "Zeus Olympicus" equalling "Baal Shamayim" should be no surprise and is given here as an example, rather than an exceptional case.

15 Plutarch, *Life of Crassus*, 8.4.

the likes were common in the Roman world by the time of the revolt, always playing a divinatory-ecstatic role[16].

The second element that seems of paramount importance in this analysis is that Eunus, while being an urban slave, had two different slave-owners who would play a very important role in the events that ignited the fire in Sicily; one was our apparently benevolent and perhaps all-round nice owner, Antigenes (Diodorus, *LH*, 34, 5-8):

> Of his many improvisations some by chance turned out true, and since those which failed to do so were left unchallenged, while those that were fulfilled attracted attention, his reputation advanced apace. Finally, through some device, while in a state of divine possession, he would produce fire and flame from his mouth, and thus rave oracularly about things to come. For he would place fire, and fuel to maintain it, in a nut—or something similar—that was pierced on both sides; then, placing it in his mouth and blowing on it, he kindled now sparks, and now a flame. Prior to the revolt he used to say that the Syrian goddess1 appeared to him, saying that he should be king, and he repeated this, not only to others, but even to his own master. Since his claims were treated as a joke, Antigenes, taken by his hocus-pocus, would introduce Eunus (for that was the wonder-worker's name) at his dinner parties; and cross-question him about his kingship and how he would treat each of the men present. And since he gave a full account of everything without hesitation, explaining with what moderation he would treat the masters and in sum making a colourful tale of his quackery, the guests were always stirred to laughter, and some of them, picking up a nice tidbit from the table, would present it to him, adding, as they did so, that when he became king, he should remember the favour. But, as it happened, his charlatanism did in fact result in kingship, and for the favours received in jest at the banquets he made a return of thanks in good earnest.[17]

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16 DICKIE, Matthew W. *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World*. London / New York, Routledge, 2001, pp. 108-111. Dickie remarks accurately that the name of one such diviner – a certain "Martha", serving Marius' army – makes it clear that many retained their Aramaic names and language.

17 "πολλῶν δ' ὑπ' αὐτοῦ σχεδιαζομένων ἀπὸ τύχης ἔνια πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἐξέβαινε· καὶ τῶν μὲν μὴ γινομένων ὑπ' οὐδενὸς ἐλεγχομένων, τῶν δὲ συντελουμένων ἐπισημασίας τυγχανόντων, προκοπὴν ἐλάμβανεν ἡ περὶ αὐτὸν δόξα. τελευταῖον διά τινος μηχανῆς πῦρ μετά τινος ἐνθουσιασμοῦ καὶ φλόγα διὰ τοῦ στόματος ἡφίει, καὶ οὕτω τὰ μέλλοντα ἀπεφοίβαζεν. είς γὰρ κάρυον ἤ τι τοιοῦτο τετρημένον ἐξ ἑκατέρου μέρους ἐνετίθει πῦρ καὶ τὴν συνέχειν αὐτὸ δυναμένην ὕλην· εἶτα ἐντιθεὶς τῷ στόματι καὶ προσπνέων ποτὲ μὲν σπινθῆρας, ποτὲ δὲ φλόγα ἐξέκαεν. οὗτος πρὸς τῆς ἀποστάσεως ἔλεγε τὴν Συρίαν θεὸν ἐπιφαινομένην αὐτῷ λέγειν ὅτι βασιλεύσει· καὶ τοῦτο οὐ πρὸς ἄλλους μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν τὸν κύριον αὐτοῦ διετέλει λέγων. είς δὲ γέλωτα τρεπομένου τοῦ πράγματος, ὁ μὲν Ἀντιγένης ψυχαγωγούμενος ἐπὶ τῇ τερατείᾳ παρῆγε τὸν Εὔνουν είς τὰ σύνδειπνα—τοῦτο γὰρ ὄνομα τῷ τερατίᾳ—καὶ διηρώτα περὶ τῆς βασιλείας καὶ πῶς ἑκάστῳ χρήσεται τῶν παρόντων· τοῦ δὲ ἀτρέπτως πάντα διηγουμένου, καὶ ὡς μετρίως χρήσεται τοῖς κυρίοις, καὶ τὸ σύνολον ποικίλως τερατευομένου, γέλωτες έγίνοντο τοῖς παρακεκλημένοις, καί τινες αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης ἀξιολόγους μερίδας αἴροντες ἐδωροῦντο, ἐπιλέγοντες ὅπως, ὅταν γένηται βασιλεύς, τῆς χάριτος μνημονεύοι. οὐ μὴν ἀλλ' ἡ τερατεία προῆλθεν είς ἀληθινὸν ἀποτέλεσμα βασιλείας, καὶ τὴν ἀνταπόδοσιν τοῖς παρὰ τὰ δεῖπνα δεξιωσαμένοις ἐν γέλωτι οὐ χωρὶς σπουδῆς ἐποιήσατο τῆς χάριτοςτῆς βασιλείας καὶ πῶς ἑκάστῳ χρήσεται τῶν παρόντων· τοῦ δὲ ἀτρέπτως πάντα διηγουμένου, καὶ ὡς μετρίως χρήσεται τοῖς κυρίοις, καὶ τὸ σύνολον ποικίλως τερατευομένου, γέλωτες έγίνοντο τοῖς παρακεκλημένοις, καί τινες αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης ἀξιολόγους μερίδας αἴροντες ἐδωροῦντο, ἐπιλέγοντες ὅπως, ὅταν γένηται βασιλεύς, τῆς χάριτος 9μνημονεύοι. οὐ μὴν ἀλλ' ἡ τερατεία προῆλθεν είς ἀληθινὸν ἀποτέλεσμα βασιλείας, καὶ τὴν ἀνταπόδοσιν τοῖς παρὰ τὰ δεῖπνα δεξιωσαμένοις ἐν γέλωτι οὐ χωρὶς σπουδῆς ἐποιήσατο τῆς χάριτος."

This prepares the reader for what follow: Diodorus, even if most modern authors take as just another conservative, upper-class snob who despised the rabble (like, e.g. Josephus or Polybius, who do this openly) is quite sympathetic to the rebels; the passage quoted above ends with his remembrance of favours given, albeit ironically. In other words, Eunus appears quite fair in Diodorus' text.

The contrast with the behavior of the mutineers during the revolt could not be greater: and still, Diodorus is at pains to justify, in a moderate way, the deeds of Eunus' followers, empowered by the utterances of the Syrian god through the mouth of their leader: (Diodorus, *LH*, 34, 10-14):

> There was a certain Damophilus of Enna, a man of great wealth but insolent of manner; he had abused his slaves to excess, and his wife Megallis vied even with her husband in punishing the slaves and in her general inhumanity towards them. The slaves, reduced by this degrading treatment to the level of brutes, conspired to revolt and to murder their masters. Going to Eunus they asked him whether their resolve had the favour of the gods. He, resorting to his usual mummery, promised them the favour of the gods, and soon persuaded them to act at once [...] When Eunus and his men learned that Damophilus and his wife were in the garden that lay near the city, they sent some of their band and dragged them off, both the man and his wife, fettered and with hands bound behind their backs, subjecting them to many outrages along the way. Only in the case of the couple's daughter were the slaves seen to show consideration throughout, and this was because of her kindly nature, in that to the extent of her power she was always compassionate and ready to succour the slaves. Thereby it was demonstrated that the others were treated as they were, not because of some "natural savagery of slaves," but rather in revenge for wrongs previously received.[18].

Now, what follows is the murder of the cruel master (Diodorus is eager to inform us that it happened in public and before a proper trial; traces of civilized men that he expected to find among the followers of Eunus). So the second important element in Eunus' behaviour is that he was brutal towards the cruel and kind towards the kind (the first part of the text,

[18] "Δαμόφιλός τις ἦν Ἐνναῖος, τὴν δ᾽ οὐσίαν μεγαλόπλουτος,1 ὑπερήφανος δὲ τὸν τρόπον. οὗτος κακῶς είς ὑπερβολὴν ἐκέχρητο τοῖς δούλοις, καὶ ἡ γυνὴ δὴ2 Μεγαλλὶς ἀντεφιλονείκει τάνδρὶ πρὸς τὴν τιμωρίαν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀπανθρωπίαν τὴν περὶ τοὺς δούλους. ἐξ ὧν ἀποθηριωθέντες οἱ προπηλακιζόμενοι συνέθεντο πρὸς ἀλλήλους ὑπὲρ ἀποστάσεως καὶ φόνου τῶν κυρίων. καὶ πρὸς τὸν Εὖνουν ἐλθόντες ἠρώτων εί συγχωρεῖται παρὰ τῶν θεῶν αὐτοῖς τὸ βεβουλευμένον [...] οἱ δὲ περὶ τὸν Εὖνουν πυθόμενοι τὸν Δαμόφιλον ὅτι κατὰ τὸν πλησίον τῆς πόλεως περίκηπον διατρίβει μετὰ τῆς γυναικός, εἶλκον ἐκεῖθεν διά τινων ἐξ αὐτῶν σταλέντων αὐτόν τε καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα δεδεμένους ἐξαγκωνίσαντες, πολλὰς κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ὕβρεις ὑποσχόντας. μόνης δὲ τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτῶν οἱ δοῦλοι ὤφθησαν είς πάντα φεισάμενοι διὰ τὸ φιλάνθρωπον αὐτῆς ἦθος καὶ περὶ τοὺς δούλους συμπαθὲς καὶ βοηθητικὸν κατὰ δύναμιν. ἐξ ὧν ἐδείκνυτο τῶν δούλων οὐχὶ ὠμότης εἶναι φύσεως τὰ γινόμενα είς τοὺς ἄλλους, ἀλλὰ τῶν προϋπηργμένων είς αὐτοὺς ἀδικημάτων ἀνταπόδοσις."

where he is part of Antigenes' parties, tells us – although vaguely – that he did not forget goodwill even while treated as a sort of clown or madman).

The third element is the most decisive and important for this article. Soon after the murder of Damophilus, the sadistic slave-owner, the two fellow rebels who killed Damophilus (Diodorus even gives his names, Hermeias and Zeuxis – Hellenized forms of other names?) proclaim Eunus as their king; this act Diodorus would not let pass without severe criticism (*LH*, 34, 14):

> Thereupon Eunus was chosen king, not for his manly courage or his ability as a military leader, but solely for his marvels and his setting of the revolt in motion, and because his name seemed to contain a favourable omen that suggested good will towards his subjects.[19]

This last item is something that would provide the best motif to Diodorus change his tone: now Eunus made his former good master be killed (Antigenes together with a new name, Pytho), Damophilus' wife was tortured to death by the women who rebelled and then thrown off a precipice, and then Eunus wore the diadem, already proclaimed king by other slaves and – an important detail - , chose a wife of the same region whence he came, Syria (LH, 34, 15):

> [...] arrayed himself in full royal style, he proclaimed his wife queen (she was a fellow Syrian and of the same city), and appointed to the royal council such men as seemed to be gifted with superior intelligence, among them one Achaeus (Achaeus by name and an Achaean by birth), a man who excelled both at planning and in action[20].

What comes next is, if not unique, at least appears as an overlooked episode on the then traditional hatred of Rome in the East (the Mithradatic Wars would be just an example of how deep that hatred ran).

A peculiar kind of kingship

The idea of barbarians having kings was obviously known to the Romans. They had, themselves, got rid of their own monarchs and opted, instead, for a Republic. This notion

19 "ἐκεῖθεν αἱρεῖται βασιλεὺς ὁ Εὔνους οὔτε δι' ἀνδρείαν οὔτε διὰ στρατηγίαν, διὰ δὲ μόνην τερατείαν καὶ τὸ τῆς ἀποστάσεως ἄρξαι, ἅμα δὲ καὶ τῆς προσηγορίας οἰονεί τινα καλὸν οἰωνὸν ἐχούσης πρὸς τὴν τῶν ὑποταττομένων εὔνοιαν."

20 "[...] περιθέμενος δὲ διάδημα καὶ πάντα τὰ ἄλλα τὰ περὶ αὐτὸν βασιλικῶς διακοσμήσας τήν τε συμβιοῦσαν αὐτῷ, Σύραν καὶ συμπολῖτιν οὖσαν, βασίλισσαν ἀποδείξας συνέδρους τε τοὺς συνέσει δοκοῦντας διαφέρειν ποιησάμενος, ὧν ἦν Ἀχαιὸς καὶ τοὔνομα καὶ τὸ γένος, ἀνὴρ καὶ βουλῇ καὶ χειρὶ διαφέρων [...]"

would be subverted by none other than Mithridates some 40 years after the First Slave Revolt[21].

The use of oracles and portents to give holy approval of governance acts was also far from strange: it was common since the Bronze Age in the East (e.g. in the classical diviner from Syro-Phoenicia to Mesopotamia, the *nabi*) and went on even after Christianity was born – alas, the Early Church would "acquire" for itself former Pagan deities, festivals and oracles for its own agenda. And the makeshift nature of wonder-workers was well known even among Pagans, like Lucian of Samosata (perhaps the best example in Antiquity of a professional-like investigation to unmask the impostor Alexander of Abnoutheicos[22]). Dickie notes – perhaps for the first time – the similarities between Eunus' ways of assuring his own power and what happened some 70 years afterward in the Danube frontier, in a sequence of events narrated by Strabo. A γόης[23] called Decaenus had helped a man called Burebistas[24] to become the leader of the Getae; apparently this wonder-worker was a person who knew much about the world and even spent some time in Egypt (a country traditionally linked to wisdom, magic, and religion)[25]. Coming back, Strabo says that he became himself a god to the Getae (a path that would be followed – but for very different reasons and taking a very different shape – by Jesus, not long after these events on the Danube[26]). Decaenus may have been an ascetic of sorts: according to Strabo he convinced his fellow barbarians to destroy the vineyards and live without wine:

> To help him secure the complete obedience of his tribe he had as his coadjutor Decaeneus, a wizard, a man who not only had wandered through Egypt, but also had thoroughly learned certain prognostics through which he would pretend to tell the divine will; and within a short time he was set up as god (as I said when relating the story of Zamolxis [*sic*]). The following is an indication of their complete obedience: they were persuaded to cut down their vines and to live without wine.[27]

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21 The series of wars waged by Mithridates VI, King of Pontus, against Rome would last from 88 to 63 BCE.

22 Lucian of Samosata. *Alexander the False Prophet*, 13-15.

23 LSJ, sorcerer, wizard, juggler or cheater.

24 Strabo varies the spelling, using sometimes also "Byrebistas", "Boyrebistas" and still "Boerebistas", but in every case it is clear that we are speaking about the same person.

25 Strabo, *Geography* 7.3; 16.2; also Jordanes in his *Gothica*, 67.

26 AMITAY, Ory. *From Alexander to Jesus*. Berkeley / Los Angeles / London, University of California Press, 2010, pp.104-145.

27 "πρὸς δὲ τὴν εὐπείθειαν τοῦ ἔθνους συναγωνιστὴν ἔσχε Δεκαίνεον ἄνδρα γόητα, καὶ πεπλανημένον κατὰ τὴν Αἴγυπτον καὶ προσημασίας ἐκμεμαθηκότα τινάς, δι᾽ ὧν ὑπεκρίνετο τὰ θεῖα· καὶ δι᾽ ὀλίγου καθίστατο θεός, καθάπερ ἔφαμεν περὶ τοῦ Ζαμόλξεως διηγούμενοι. τῆς δ᾽ εὐπειθείας σημεῖον· ἐπείσθησαν γὰρ ἐκκόψαι τὴν ἄμπελον καὶ ζῆν οἴνου χωρίςπρὸς δὲ τὴν εὐπείθειαν τοῦ ἔθνους συναγωνιστὴν ἔσχε Δεκαίνεον ἄνδρα γόητα, καὶ πεπλανημένον κατὰ τὴν Αἴγυπτον καὶ προσημασίας ἐκμεμαθηκότα τινάς, δι᾽ ὧν ὑπεκρίνετο τὰ θεῖα· καὶ δι᾽ ὀλίγου καθίστατο θεός, καθάπερ ἔφαμεν περὶ τοῦ Ζαμόλξεως διηγούμενοι. τῆς δ᾽ εὐπειθείας σημεῖον· ἐπείσθησαν γὰρ ἐκκόψαι τὴν ἄμπελον καὶ ζῆν οἴνου χωρίςπρὸς δὲ τὴν εὐπείθειαν τοῦ ἔθνους συναγωνιστὴν ἔσχε Δεκαίνεον ἄνδρα γόητα, καὶ πεπλανημένον κατὰ τὴν Αἴγυπτον καὶ προσημασίας ἐκμεμαθηκότα τινάς, δι᾽ ὧν ὑπεκρίνετο τὰ θεῖα· καὶ

This may have been a pattern common to the Near East, up to and after Hellenization: the sorcerer who goes far away and returns with unheard-of abilities to deal with the gods and thus, conduct the actions of men. The women following Alexander and Marius may have been persons of that sort; Marius' sorcerer Martha was taken with him in his campaign against the Cimbri and the Teutones[28], and Spartacus had not only one such prophetess announcing the coming success but married her[29]. These are all variants of the woman who allegedly saved Alexander's life in Babylon, according to Quintus Curtius Rufus:

> [...] when a woman, of unsound mind, as it was thought, who was accustomed to haunt the royal quarters because she seemed by inspiration to foretell the future, not only met the king as he came out, but put herself in his way, and showing disturbance of mind in her face and eyes, warned him to return to the banquet [and thus avoid assassination during sleep][30]

Arrian, based on Aristobulus, quotes the same story with a bit more of detail:

> A Syrian woman possessed by the divine spirit followed Alexander constantly; at first she was a laughing-stock both to Alexander and his court; but when it became clear that everything she uttered when possessed came true, Alexander no longer treated her with contempt but gave her access to his person day and night and she now often watched over him as he slept. So on this occasion, when Alexander ceased6 from his potations, she met him, while possessed by the divine spirit, and begged him to return and continue drinking all night long; Alexander believed this to be a divine sign, returned to his cups, and so the boys' plot came to nothing.

The passages regarding Alexander are of the utmost importance, since they depict a phenomenon that was not only common but even ran against the commonplace accusation of

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δι᾽ ὀλίγου καθίστατο θεός, καθάπερ ἔφαμεν περὶ τοῦ Ζαμόλξεως διηγούμενοι. τῆς δ᾽ εὐπειθείας σημεῖον· ἐπείσθησαν γὰρ ἐκκόψαι τὴν ἄμπελον καὶ ζῆν οἴνου χωρίς".

28 Plutarch, *Life of Marius* 17.1-5.

29 Plutarch, *Life of Crassus*, 8.4.

30 FrGH139F30 (Aristobulus of Cassandreia); Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander* 4.13 ("Σύραν γυναῖκα ἐφομαρτεῖν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ κάτοχον ἐκ τοῦ θείου γιγνομένην καὶ ταύτην τὸ μὲν πρῶτου γέλωτα εἶναι Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τε καὶ τοῖς ἀμφ᾽ αὐτόν· ὡς δὲ τὰ πάντα ἐν τῇ κατοχῇ ἀληθεύουσα ἐφαίνετο, οὐκέτι ἀμελεῖσθαι ὑπ᾽ Ἀλεξάνδρου, ἀλλ᾽ εἶναι γὰρ τῇ Σύρᾳ πρόσοδον πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα καὶ νύκτωρ καὶ μεθ᾽ ἡμέραν, καὶ καθεύδοντι πολλάκις ἤδη ἐπιστῆναι. καὶ δὴ καὶ τότε ἀπαλλασσομένου ἐκ τοῦ πότου κατεχομένην ἐκ τοῦ εἰου ἐντυχεῖν, καὶ δεῖσθαι ἐπανελθόντα πίνειν ὅλην τὴν νύκτα· καὶ Ἀλέξανδρον θεῖόν τι εἶναι νομίσαντα ἐπανελθεῖν τε καὶ πίνειν, καὶ οὕτως τοῖς παισὶ διαπεσεῖν τὸ ἔργον"); Curtius Rufus, *History of Alexander* 8.6. ("cum mulier attonitae, ut creditum est, mentis, conversari in regia solita, quia instinctu videbatur futura praedicere, non occurrit modo abeunti, sed etiam semet obiecit vultuque et oculis motum praeferens animi, ut rediret in convivium, monuit"for more information on the origin and *modus operandi* of this woman, also a Syrian. A general appreciation of this phenomenon can be found in Dickie, op.cit. p.108.

spiritual resistance against Alexander first and of Hellenism as a whole afterwards[31]. Syrians were looked for regarding their services as wonder-workers and fortune-tellers long before Rome was a Mediterranean political entity. But more important than the fact that we are dealing with Syrian soothsayers, wonder-worker and the likes is that in this respect, women were not only allowed to have their saying, but were preferred when it comes to collections of Sibylline Books (those who were apparently organized by Augustus in 12 CE, and destroyed by Stilicho in 405 CE due to their revolutionary potential[32]) and the weird collections of sayings that we became used to call the Sibylline Oracles. Their political capacity for upheaval has been repeatedly reinterpreted by scholars over the years – some claiming that they could have been the last straw in many difficult situations like that of Sicilian slaves.

A secondary implication in the ending of Eunus – caught in a cave not with a fierce and faithful to last man *corps d'élite* but with other former slaves related to entertaining – thus, in Diodorus word, in an unmanly fashion: after all, Eunus lacks ἀνδρεία[33]; the quality he considers over and over again the hallmark of good rulers[34]. From this assertion, linked to Eunus being a devotee of a Syrian goddess who had festivals involving castration, we are very close to the picture of an effeminate, unmanly, coward man. It is true that the text in Diodorus – well-mapped by Morton in this regard – implies that "andreia", the proper attribute of the man that is brave, is lacking in Eunus.

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31 The classical book supportive of this point of view is EDDY, Samuel K. *The King is Dead. Studies in the Near Eastern Resistance to Hellenism 334-331 B.C.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961. On p.vii, at the very beginning of this book, Eddy says that "My aim in these studies is to search for evidence of Oriental opposition to Hellenic imperialism, to discover its causes and the ways it was advocated and justified, to show what forms it took, and to find out what effects it had, both immediate and more far-reaching". This is to a great extent accomplished by Eddy, but he fails in noticing regional traces that go against his main thesis.

32 One of these original oracles is "preserved" in a work pertaining to what we now call "Paradoxography" (i.e. the collection of absurdities, grotesque facts, and omens). The only fragments to have survived were collected by Phlegon of Tralles (active during Hadrian times, i.e. 117-138 CE), who was a freedman and personal secretary to the emperor: these fragments are very difficult to understand and even more cryptic than the later Sibylline Oracles (not to be confused with the Sibylline "Books", although both types refer to prophetic utterances by the same mythical figure, the Sibyl. Cf. HANSEN, William. *Phlegon of Tralles. Book of Marvels. Tr. With an Introduction and Commentary by William Hansen*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996. Pp.40-43. (In Jacoby's collection of fragments, Photius is the place to look for Phlegon: FrGH257T3). We shall use Phlegon's collections again. References to times when they were consulted are an important issue for this article since the continuity (or alleged continuity) of their use is attested in several sources, including sometimes the date and reason for their use by Roman authorities. The first recorded consultation happened in 399 BCE and the last one, by Julian the Apostate, in 363 CE, before their destruction.

33 LSJ, ἀνδρεία, "manliness", "manly spirit", derived from the Ionian ἀνδρηίη.

34 MORTON, op.cit. p.239. Examples in primary sources are plentiful; cf., e.g. Xenophon, Cyropedia, 3.3.; 46-47; in the *LH* itself, a very different portrait than that of Eunus is given to the rebel and barbarian Viriathus (*LH* 33.7); also the picture of King Prusias in Polybius, *Histories*, 28.21 and 32.15 is one of an effeminate leader, and thus inefficient.

However, other readings distinct from the one done by Diodorus are also possible , although later: in Dio Chrysostomos ἀνδρεία can be understood as "insolence" too, a lower form of courage but that nonetheless implies confronting someone else – in a humorous, or ironical, sense. Here too humor needs two to make sense, which was not the case of the slaves in Sicily. It should also be noted that while Eunus was "crowned" due to his tricks and makeshift ecstasies, he must have been very charismatic and to some extent, a shrewd leader: his rebellion gave the Romans a lot of work to be defeated. Secondly, he took a wife (of the same origin as his; here as in Spartacus' case it is correct to suppose they knew each other well before the rising and, perhaps, even came from the same region of Syria[35]). And thirdly, what should astonish us is not what Morton considers a "circular" depiction of Eunus' trajectory (from slave in a banquet to being captured among banquet-professionals[36]), but rather that, in a world where women's prophetic utterances were held in such high esteem, this time the future was told by a man – not a eunuch, not an effeminate but by an Eastern, normal slave. Women's prophetic utterances in Antiquity were the norm and not the exception, both in fiction, in what we call "mythology" or in concrete deeds, such as the ones involving Spartacus' wife[37]. Lycophron's *Alexandra* is perhaps the best model we have, in the sense of a classical composition that translate in a sort of Homeric logic the fall of Macedonia and the rising of Rome (and this at the very moment when it was happening, 197 BCE, unless we are dealing with yet another pseudepigraphical work); but Eunus is in this respect too an exception. It is pointless to try to retrace how the poem Alexandra was read by the time of Eunus; a modern argument in favor of its pseudepigraphic nature states that

> written in the immediate aftermath of the victory of Flamininus at Battle of Cynoscephalae over Philip V of Macedon in 197/6 BC. The author, whose true name and place of origin are probably concealed beneath the impenetrably enigmatic biographical tradition concerning 'Lycophron,' probably used the name, and some of the literary substance, of Lycophron, not in emulation, but as an ironic reminiscence of the earlier writer, who had combined the practice

35 LH, 34/35.16.

36 LH, 34/35.22-23: "Eunus, taking with him his bodyguards, a thousand strong, fled in unmanly fashion to a certain precipitous region. The men with him, however, aware that their dreaded fate was inevitable, inasmuch as the general, Rupilius, was already marching against them, killed one another with the sword, by beheading. Eunus, the wonder-worker and king, who through cowardice had sought refuge in certain caves, was dragged out with four others, a cook, a baker, the man who massaged him at his bath, and a fourth, whose duty it had been to amuse him at drinking parties" / "ὁ δὲ Εὔνους ἀναλαβὼν τοὺς σωματοφύλακας ὄντας χιλίους ἔφυγεν ἀνάνδρως εἴς τινας παρακρήμνους τόπους. ἀλλ᾽ οἱ μὲν σὺν αὐτῷ ἄφυκτον τὸ περὶ αὐτοὺς δεινὸν ἐπιστάμενοι, ἤδη γὰρ καὶ ὁ στρατηγὸς Ῥουπίλιος ἐπ᾽ αὐτοὺς ἤλαυνεν, ἀλλήλους τοῖς ξίφεσιν ἔσφαζον ἀπαυχενίσαντες."

37 WOLFF, Max J. "Sibyllen und Sibyllinen" In *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 24, 1934, pp.312-314.

> of tragedy and the elucidation of comedy. Only on this assumption of a deliberate pseudepigraphon can the full irony of his work be appreciated.[38]

If this is correct, barely 60 years separate the composition of *Alexandra* from the rebellion. Again we are in the domain of humor – be it pseudepigraphical or not, but attributed to an author (Lycophron) who composed a work aptly named *On Comedy* while at the Library of Alexandria. More importantly, in the parody that was Damophilus' judgment, we have someone who might have been cruel, but far from uncouth – a man who knew *Alexandra*, perhaps?

And thirdly, it is worth taking a closer look at the sources that tell us how he chose his "royal" name: it betrays some sort of unbroken affinity with the Eastern Mediterranean still held by the Seleucids, the land from where he was uprooted. Diodorus tells us that "Eunus, king of the rebels, called himself Antiochus, and his horde of rebels Syrians[39]".

It is thus possible that it was expected from Eunus – or others like him – the ability to foretell the future, even if in a way that the average slave-owner like Antigenes could not quite understand; here, as in all kinds of humor, it appears that one side was speaking very earnestly and the other was taking it as a joke, one good enough to be rewarded during banquets over and over again.

When humor is misapprehended: Eunus' episode as a bad joke

Eunus led the biggest known slave revolt in Antiquity, established a kingdom, prophesized, breathed fire and yet had an end befitting those enemies of the established powers, or put more simply, of Rome. This has not yet been given the proper treatment, but in the view of this author, Eunus was perhaps the only successful man in the role of the avenger of the East: Spartacus' revolt was much less-oriented than his, and had nothing else on the table than ravaging the Italian soil. Eunus, on the other hand, went from a banquet clown to a true king, despite Diodorus' literary convolutions. Eunus was, as far as this author is concerned, the most successful king among all the promised "kings of the Sun"[40].

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38 FRASER, Peter M. "Lycophron" In HORNBLOWER, Simon and SPAWFORTH, Tony (eds.). *Who's Who in the Classical World*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000.

39 LH 34/35.21. "Ὅτι ὁ τῶν ἀποστατῶν βασιλεὺς Εὔνους ἑαυτὸν μὲν Ἀντίοχον, Σύρους δὲ τῶν ἀποστατῶν τὸ πλῆθος ἐπωνόμασεν".

40 The Sibylline Oracles, in particular are rife with this kind of reference; cf. SibOr 3:193; 318; 608; of particular relevance are vv. 652-656. SibOr 4:191 has a doubtful passage. Other references in the SibOr are 5:209; 248; 422; 12:273. Of particular interest is SibOr 13:164-170 ff., where another "king of the sun", or "from the sun" is mentioned, in an unmistakable favorable light – Odenath of Palmyra, who

Not that all those who resisted the power of Rome, especially in the East, should be put under the same banner: but even political wannabees resorted to "spiritual" themes to justify the Roman oppression (which was, particularly during the last two centuries of the Republic, very real)[41]. Another question that is seldom posited when investigating rebel figures such as Eunus, Spartacus, Aristonicus, Josephus' Zealots and the likes is that they were not necessarily related (regarding their aspirations) *in their own time*; there is no trace of such universality in Eunus, Spartacus and most of those who resorted to religious legitimization against Rome for a series of reasons.

The first one is that, no matter how far syncretism could go in Antiquity, these rebels do not repeat in their own conduct the primordial "combat myths" of their own cults. Eunus was no Baal, or if he intended to be, there is no trace left regarding that intention. Another way of looking into this matter is that, with the possible exception of the misfits that pretended to be Nero after he died and were associated with an Asiatic vengeance (a myth quite absurd even for the times[42]), most of the rebels who affronted Rome's might came from the East[43].

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appears as "the last priest of all [that] will come, sent from the sun" also in SibOr 13:151-152 and the following verse, 153, mentions "a city of the sun", which must be Palmyra in this connection with Odenath. But this is too much to discuss in this article and will be left as a future academic enterprise. The short and blunt Apocalypse of Elijah also mentions a "king from the city of the sun" (ApEl 2:39 – cf. ROSENSTIEHL, Jean-Marc. *L'apocalypse d'Elie*. Paris, Gallimard, 1972, pp.63-65). For proper editions with text and commentary regarding the Sibylline Oracles (they are really important regarding the study of Eunus' comical motivation), cf. KURFESS, Alfons. *Sibyllinische Weissagungen*. München, Heimeren, 1951; RZACH, Aloisius. *ΧΡΗΣΜΟΙ ΣΙΒΥΛΛΙΑΚΟΙ – Oracula Sibilina*. Prague / Vienna / Leipzig, Tempsky / Freytag, 1891: GEFFCKEN, Johannes. *Die Oracula Sibyllina*. Leipzig, J.C.Hinrichs, 1902 and the most important modern study edition, almost 200 years old by now and still relevant when going back to the Greek texts: ALEXANDRE, Charles. *ΧΡΗΣΜΟΙ ΣΙΒΥΛΛΙΑΚΟΙ – Oracula Sibilina*. Paris: Firmin Didot, 1841 (2 vols.). For those who want a scholarly overview without going into the Greek text itself, the introductions and edited Sibylline Oracles by John J. Collins in CHARLESWORTH, James H. *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Vol.1). Peabody, Hendrickson, 1983 (from now on OTP 1) still does a great job (although some propositions, especially those related to books 3 and 5 have been quite challenged over the years).

41 Cf. FUCHS, Harald. *Der geistige Widerstand gegen Rom in der antiken Welt*. Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1938; KIPPENBERG, Hans G. "Dann wird der Orient herrschen und der Okzident dienen" In BOLZ, Norbert and HUEBENER, Wolfgang (eds.). *Spiegel und Gleichnis. Festschrift für Jacob Taubes*. Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, 1983; KOCSIS, Elemér. "Ost-West Gegensatz in den Jüdischen Sibyllinen" In *Novum Testamentum* 5 (2/3:105-110), 1962.

42 VAN HENTEN, Jan W. "Nero Redivivus demolished: the coherence of the Nero traditions in the Sibylline Oracles" In *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 21, 2000, p.4. As examples of this whole vicious rather than hermeneutical cycle van Henten quotes, besides the now-canonical Wilhelm Bousset, recent works as THOMPSON, Leonard.L. *Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1990 and PEERBOLTE, Lambertus J. Lietaert. *The Antecedents of Antichrist: a Traditio-Historical Study of the Earliest Christian Views on Eschatological Opponents*. Leiden, Brill, 1996.

43 HULTGÅRD, Anders. "Figures messianiques d'Orient comme sauveurs universels dans le monde gréco-romain" In VERMASEREN, Maarten J. and BIANCHI, Ugo. *La soteriologia dei culti orientali nell'Impero Romano. Atti del Colloquio Internazionale su La soteriologia dei culti orientali nell'Impero Romano*. Leiden, Brill, 1979, pp.735-747.

There were those who did it in the West, of course: Viriathus, Boudicca and, above all, Arminius had different degrees of success in their revolts but came from much less urbanized regions of the empire or its borders. Eunus came from an East where urban life was common: we cannot know if he was fit for the toils of hard working in the fields of Sicily, but it is a very good guess that he was not. We can deduce this from his appearance in Antigenes' banquets from the start, from his articulated manner of speech, from the promises he made to those who rewarded him with the finest food in such parties. A comparatively brute and ignorant slave would have been used straight away in the fields. This did not happen to Eunus and, to confirm our hypothesis, the revolt he started (synchronized with the other, that of Cleon – again, an Eastern man, coming from Cilicia[44]) was from the start an urban uprising: his initial intention was to seize Enna, just as his fellow rebel seized, but apparently ἀνδρεία was also lacking in other Syrian slaves – a noteworthy information[45].

Compare this to the rebellions of Aristonicus (reigned from 133-129 BCE, and also adopted a "royal" name for himself – Eumenes III) and of Spartacus (75 BCE): in both, peasants or field slaves were preferred, even explicitly chosen in the case of Spartacus, who found (with a degree of reason) that slaves who lived in cities had fewer reasons to rebel against their masters, since their workload was comparatively lighter – in some cases, not only lighter but also highly specialized, such as slaves who were bought, from the start, as doctors, secretaries, masseurs. And yet a common study of such rebellions is possible (certainly not in the encyclopedic form of Eddy's book, given the advances and specialization since the early Sixties), given their common religious background. More astonishing is the fact that it appears to make no difference whether that kind of rebellions popped up among Pagans or monotheists (i.e., Jews).

It may be that we have another of the many literary topoi that ancient historians loved so much in action here (the suicide of the whole remnants of Eunus' army would be one such); and Josephus and Tacitus, for different reasons, found no difficulty in relating the Jewish War to religious reasons.

As an end to this article, it is worth noting that, ironically, the end of Eunus is, in all the debauchery of the *LH*, the ending of a king (good or bad): followed by his last servants,

44 LH, 34/35.17.

45 LH 34/35.21: "Finally, after Sarapion, a Syrian, had betrayed the citadel [in Tauromenium, also taken over by the rebels], the general [Rupilius] laid hands on all the runaway slaves in the city, whom, after torture, he threw over a cliff." / "καὶ τὸ τελευταῖον Σαραπίωνος Σύρου τὴν ἄκραν προδόντος, συμπάντων τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει δραπετῶν ὁ στρατηγὸς ἐκυρίευσεν· οὓς καὶ αἰκισάμενος κατεκρήμνισεν."

captured and destroyed – so the text says – by worms or lice, as other kings of fine pedigree – albeit performing badly in politics – are said to have died too[46].

Some final thoughts: what has Eunus to do with the Seleucid kings?

As a sort of conclusion to the whole of Eunus's story – besides all that we already know from the primary sources –, there are two facts so far unnoticed as related to the First Slave Revolt that are worth remembering.

First, as seen above, Eunus shares all the common and widespread Eastern Mediterranean theme of the avenger that comes from the east. That trait is seen in many textual sources, before and after Christianity, and was shared between Pagans, Jews and Christians (and Zoroastrians, when separated from other Pagans). Besides, Eunus himself came from Syria, his consort too – and we even have the name of the city he came from, which is shared by all the sources: not a small one, but Apameia, a big settlement well-known for many reasons – ironically, also the city whence came one of our best sources for Eunus, Poseidonios, a would-be continuer of Polybius.

However, what has not been noted is that, while Eunus is a typical native-Syrian who worshipped Atagartis (as noted in the beginning of this article), he chose for himself (as king) not a Semitic name but a plainly Greek one: Antiochus . So, in contrast to the well-established ideas resumed by Eddy in his important book, Eunus was, albeit a slave, not the resistant to Hellenization one might expect: pretty much the opposite, he chose a continuity of sorts for his chosen name.

This could have originated via three causes, in my opinion. First, as a clown, he might have chosen to go on mocking other grandees; so "Antiochus" in his case, a king of slaves, may be offensive at the very bottom: just as another Antiochus was mocked by the Romans, he was mocking everybody else – his namesake, the Sicilian rich colonists and the Roman themselves. This may have even been extended to Anthiocus IV himself, a subject of irony and debauchery from his own subjects[47]. The way both are said to have died is also fitting: here, Morton's

[46] Other rulers are connected to similar, filthy endings in Ancient narratives: Pheretine (Herodotus, *History*, 4.205); Sulla (Plutarch, *Life of Sulla*, 36), the monstrous Anthiocus IV Epiphanes in the Old Testament (2Macc 8-10; 9:5) and Herod Antipater in the New Testament (Acts 12:23). Cf. WINKLER, Martin M. "Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus: between Aristotle and Hitchcock" In CUEVA, Edmund P. and BYRNE, Shannon N. (eds.) *A Companion to Ancient Novel*. Malden / Oxford / Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2014.

[47] The reasons for that mockery are, however, quite different in his role during the Revolt of the Maccabbees and the reasons given by a fr. of Polybius found in Athaeneus, 5.193d corresponding to the *Histories*, 26: "Antiochus surnamed Epiphanes gained the name of Epimanes by his conduct. Polybius

arguments that Eunus's died a cowards' death does not seem to work: he dies the death of kings. It seems that Diodorus betrays himself when concluding Eunus' story abruptly:

> Remanded to prison, where his flesh disintegrated into a mass of lice, he met such an end as befitted his knavery, and died at Morgantina. Thereupon Rupilius, traversing the whole of Sicily with a few picked troops, sooner than had been expected rid it of every nest of robbers[48].

In second place, Eunus might have been already a by-product of what I call "Type 2" of the myth of the revenge of the East against the West: in "Type 1" (like the Biblical book of Daniel), we have 3 Eastern more or less decent powers vs. am annihilating, unfair and murderous Western empire, the Greeks[49]. But this form of the metahistorical scheme soon upgraded itself to have Rome, and not Greece, Macedonia, the Diadochoi or their heir kingdoms as the "fourth", most evil of powers. The examples of the SibOr above should suffice but let us take a look at two other sources that display the same kind of transposition, Josephus and the Jewish apocalypse called the Fourth Book of Ezra (4Ezra):

> All these things [i.e. from Dn 2 and 7-12], as God revealed them to him, he left behind in his writings, so that those who read them and observe how they have come to pass must wonder at Daniel's having been so honoured by God, and learn from these facts how mistaken are the Epicureans, who exclude Providence from human life and refuse to believe that God governs its affairs [...] For if it were the case that the world goes on by some automatism, we should not have seen all these things happen in accordance with his prophecy. Now I have written about these matters as I have found them in my reading; if,

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tells us of him that, escaping from his attendants at court, he would often be seen wandering about in all parts of the city with one or two companions. He was chiefly found at the silversmiths' and goldsmiths' workshops, holding forth at length and discussing technical matters with the molders and other craftsmen. He also used to condescend to converse with any common people he met, and used to drink in the company of the meanest foreign visitors to Antioch. Whenever he heard that any of the young men were at an entertainment, he would come in quite unceremoniously with a fife and a procession of musicians, so that most of the guests got up and left in astonishment ". / "Ἀντίοχος ὁ Ἐπιφανὴς μὲν κληθείς, Ἐπιμανὴς δ' ἐκ τῶν πράξεων ὀνομασθείς [...] περὶ οὗ φησι Πολύβιος τάδε, ὡς ἀποδιδράσκων ἐκ τῆς αὐλῆς ἐνίοτε τοὺς θεραπεύοντας, οὗ τύχοι τῆς πόλεως, ἁλύων ἐφαίνετο δεύτερος καὶ τρίτος. μάλιστα δὲ πρὸς τοῖς ἀργυροκοπείοις εὐρίσκετο καὶ χρυσοχοείοις εὐρησιλογῶν καὶ φιλοτεχνῶν πρὸς τοὺς τορευτὰς καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους τεχνίτας. ἔπειτα καὶ μετὰ δημοτῶν ἀνθρώπων συγκαταβαίνων ὠμίλει, ᾧ τύχοι, καὶ μετὰ τῶν παρεπιδημούντων συνέπινε τῶν εὐτελεστάτων. ὅτε δὲ τῶν νεωτέρων αἴσθοιτό τινας συνευωχουμένους, οὐδεμίαν ἔμφασιν ποιήσας παρῆν ἐπικωμάζων μετὰ κερατίου καὶ συμφωνίας, ὥστε τοὺς πολλοὺς διὰ τὸ παράδοξον ἀφισταμένους φεύγειν". It is somehow parallel that his conduct has common traces to the "non-king" Eunus, who was also crowned not out of his own valor and in the end also had entertainers with him; this was, according to Morton, a common motif in Diodorus.

48 *LH*, 35/36.26. "καὶ παραδοθεὶς εἰς φυλακὴν καὶ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ διαλυθέντος εἰς φθειρῶν πλῆθος οἰκείως τῆς περὶ αὐτὸν ῥᾳδιουργίας κατέστρεψε τὸν βίον ἐν τῇ Μοργαντίνῃ. ἐντεῦθεν Ῥουπίλιος ἐπιτρέχων ὅλην τὴν Σικελίαν ἅμα λογάσιν ὀλίγοις θᾶττον ἢπερ τις ἤλπισε παντὸς αὐτὴν ἠλευθέρωσε λῃστηρίου".

49 This can be noted both in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Dn 2 and in Dn 7-2, the apocalypse proper: no inference to Rome can be made based solely on the text.

> however, anyone wishes to judge otherwise of them, I shall not object to his holding a different opinion.[50]

It is typical of Josephus' ironical way of writing how he avoids the (then) current explanation of the fourth empire to be Rome; it appears that he is very sure that no cultivated reader will take his time to check out this information in the Book of Daniel itself. A very similar disguise is found in 4Ezra11-12:

> 11 1. On the second night I had a dream, and behold, there came up from the sea[51] 2. an eagle that had twelve feathered wings and three heads. And I looked, and behold, he spread his wings over all the earth, and all the winds of heaven blew 3. upon him, and the clouds were gathered about him [...] 12.10 He [God] said to me, 'This is the interpretation of this vision which you have seen: 11. The eagle which you saw coming up from the sea is the fourth kingdom which 12. appeared in a vision to your brother Daniel. But it was not explained to him as 13. I now explain or have explained it to you [...][52]

A final example would be Mithridates' discourse as preserved in Pompeius Trogus: here, hatred for the Romans is clearly stated as a common cause to be shared between all trampled, skinned, humiliated Easterners against the hated Romans:

> That it was not the offences of kings, but their power and majesty, for which they attacked them; and that they had not acted thus against himself alone, but against all other princes at all times. That they had treated his grandfather Pharnaces in the same manner, who, by the arbitration of his relatives, was made successor to Eumenes king of Pergamus; that Eumenes himself, again, in whose fleet they had for the first time been transported into Asia, and by whose army, rather than their own, they had subdued both Antiochus the Great and the Gauls in Asia, and soon after king Perses in Macedonia, had been treated by them as an enemy, and had been forbidden to come into Italy, though they made war, which they thought it would be disgraceful to make upon himself, upon his son Aristonicus. No king's services were thought more

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50 Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 10.276-281: "ταῦτα πάντα ἐκεῖνος θεοῦ δείξαντος αὐτῷ συγγράψας κατέλειψεν· ὥστε τοὺς ἀναγινώσκοντας καὶ τὰ συμβαίνοντα σκοποῦντας θαυμάζειν ἐπὶ τῇ παρὰ θεοῦ τιμῇ τὸν Δανίηλον καὶ τοὺς Ἐπικουρείους ἐκ τούτων εὑρίσκειν πεπλανημένους, οἳ τήν τε πρόνοιαν ἐκβάλλουσι τοῦ βίου καὶ θεὸν οὐκ ἀξιοῦσιν ἐπιτροπεύειν τῶν πραγμάτων, [...] ἐγὼ μὲν περὶ τούτων ὡς εὗρον καὶ ἀνέγνων οὕτως ἔγραψα· εἴ δέ τις ἄλλως δοξάζειν βουλήσεται περὶ αὐτῶν, ἀνέγκλητον ἐχέτω τὴν ἑτερογνωμοσύνην".

51 Just as in Dn 7:3.

52 Text from OTP 1; the best mss. are from the Latin and Syriac families. In Latin, then: "11.1. Et factum est secunda nocte, et vidi somnium, et ecce ascendebat de mari aquila, cui erant duodecim alae pinnarum et capita tria. 2. Et vidi, et ecce expandebat alas suas in omnem terram, et omnes venti caeli insuflabant ad eam et nubes ad eam colligebantur. 3. Et vidi, et de pinnis eius nascebantur contrariae pinnae, et ipsae fiebant in pinnaculis minutis et modicis. [...] 12.10. Haec est interpretatio visionis huius quam vidisti:11. Aquilam quam vidisti ascendentem de mari, hoc est regnum quartum, quod visum est in visu Danihelo fratri tuo, 12. sed non est illi interpretatum, quomodo ego nunc tibi interpretor vel interpretavi. 13. Ecce dies veniunt, et exsurget regnum super terram et erit timoratior omnium regnorum quae fuerunt ante eam. [...]".

> important by them than those of Masinissa, king of Numidia; to him it was ascribed that Hannibal was conquered; to him, that Syphax was made prisoner; to him. that Carthage was destroyed; he was ranked with the two Africani, as a third saviour of the city; yet a war had lately been carried on with his grandson in Africa, so implacably, that they would not save the vanquished prince, for the sake of his grandfather's memory, from being cast into gaol, and led in triumph as a public spectacle. That they had made it a law to themselves to hate all kings, because they themselves had had such kings at whose names they might well blush, being either shepherds of the Aborigines, or soothsayers of the Sabines, or exiles from the Corinthians, or servants and slaves of the Tuscans, or, what was the most honourable name amongst them, the proud; and as their founders, according to their report, were suckled by the teats of a wolf, so the whole race had the disposition of wolves, being insatiable of blood and tyranny, and eager and hungry after riches"[53]

The question remaining here is not new: is the theme of the "world empires" part of popular or high culture? This matters because if part of the former, we should be able to form an explanation to define how Eunus had appropriated himself of the theme. Maybe the fact that he was an urban slave, present in banquets (where we can only imagine, the wealthy

[53] Pompeius Trogus. *Epitome of Roman History* (done by Justin), 38.6. Modern comm. by YARDLEY, John C. *Justin and Pompeius Trogus: A Study of the Language of Justin's Epitome of Trogus*. Toronto / Buffalo / London, 2003. Original Latin text in SEEL, Otto (ed.). *M. Iuniani Iustini Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum Pompei Trogi: Aaccedunt Prologi in Pompeium Trogum (Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum Et Romanorum Teubneriana)* (Latin Edition). Berlin, De Gruyter, 1956 (1985 reprint): "Quippe non delicta regum illos, sed vires ac maiestatem insequi, neque in uno se, sed in aliis quoque omnibus hac saepe arte grassatos. Sic et avum suum Pharnacen per cognitionum arbitria succidaneum regi Pergameno Eumeni datum; sic rursus Eumenen, cuius classibus primo in Asiam fuere transiecti, cuius exercitu magis quam suo et magnum Antiochum et Gallos in Asia et mox in Macedonia regem Perseum domuerant, et ipsum pro hoste Habitum eique interdictum Italia, et quod cum ipso deforme sibi putaverant, cum filio eius Aristonico bellum gessisse. Nullius apud eos maiora quam Masinissae, regis Numidarum, haberi merita; huic inputari victum Hannibalem, huic captum Syphacem, huic Karthaginem deletam, hunc inter duos illos Africanos tertium servatorem urbis referri: tamen cum huius nepote bellum modo in Africa gestum adeo inexpiabile, ut ne victum quidem patris memoriae donarent, quin carcerem ac triumph spectaculum experiretur. Hanc illos omnibus regibus legem odiorum dixisse, scilicet quia ipsi tales reges habuerint, quorum etiam nominibus erubescant, aut pastores Aboriginum, aut aruspices Sabinorum, aut exules Corinthiorum, aut servos vernasque Tuscorum, aut, quod honoratissimum nomen fuit inter haec, Superbos; atque ut ipsi ferunt conditores suos lupae uberibus altos, sic omnem illum populum luporum animos inexplebiles sanguinis, atque imperii divitiarumque avidos ac ieiunos habere.Quippe non delicta regum illos, sed vires ac maiestatem insequi, neque in uno se, sed in aliis quoque omnibus hac saepe arte grassatos. Sic et avum suum Pharnacen per cognitionum arbitria succidaneum regi Pergameno Eumeni datum; sic rursus Eumenen, cuius classibus primo in Asiam fuere transiecti, cuius exercitu magis quam suo et magnum Antiochum et Gallos in Asia et mox in Macedonia regem Perseum domuerant, et ipsum pro hoste Habitum eique interdictum Italia, et quod cum ipso deforme sibi putaverant, cum filio eius Aristonico bellum gessisse. Nullius apud eos maiora quam Masinissae, regis Numidarum, haberi merita; huic inputari victum Hannibalem, huic captum Syphacem, huic Karthaginem deletam, hunc inter duos illos Africanos tertium servatorem urbis referri: tamen cum huius nepote bellum modo in Africa gestum adeo inexpiabile, ut ne victum quidem patris memoriae donarent, quin carcerem ac triumphi spectaculum experiretur. Hanc illos omnibus regibus legem odiorum dixisse, scilicet quia ipsi tales reges habuerint, quorum etiam nominibus rubescant, aut pastores Aboriginum, aut aruspices Sabinorum, aut exules Corinthiorum, aut servos vernasque Tuscorum, aut, quod honoratissimum nomen fuit inter haec, Superbos; atque ut ipsi ferunt conditores suos lupae uberibus altos, sic omnem illum populum luporum animos inexplebiles sanguinis, atque imperii divitiarumque avidos ac ieiunos habere".

talked about the theme) favored his acquaintance with the idea; he was thus representing the Eastern (i.e., Seleucid) hatred for Rome in his own terms.

As a third and last possibility, we may be facing a phenomenon that is well-documented but, so far, either ill-explained, taken for granted, ignored or put aside as part of the taste for the marvellous, unexpected and sensationalist news of Antiquity: we have, in my opinion, similar behaviors to that of Eunus in what we call, contemporarily, "paradoxography", as noted in footnote 55 below. This deserves separate treatment in this article.

When the unexpected parallels the ghastly

Paradoxography is a modern term, that began to be used in the 19th Century in the wake of all the new flooding scholarship regarding Ancient texts, Classical or otherwise[54]. The authors of such texts ("paradoxographers", so to speak) never identified themselves like that, nor do we know how such texts were consumed in Antiquity. To make matters worse, the remains of paradoxography are scarce, scattered and disorganized. These are the bad news.

The good news is that the author that was probably the most important of them (there are less than 10), Phlegon of Tralles, was unusually tidy: he was, by comparison to the fragments, very careful to catalog the absurdities he mentions. Secondly, his book "On Marvels" (*Mirabilion*), is fragmentary, but it is a very large fragment. So we are in a fine position to assess his catalog of nonsense[55].

Phlegon probably was so careful in his collection due to habit, for he was, as seen above, secretary to the emperor Hadrian. This must have inculcated a methodical approach in whatever he wrote. Perhaps he already exhibited these traces before he joined Roman service, and climbed up the ladders of his career because of that. We cannot know now but it is a blessing that his *Mirabilion* is so well organized. The section that interests us here, and can be related to Eunus' deeds, is the first one: "Ghosts". It is precisely the third record under this section that interests us – the one on two weird characters called Bouplagos and Publius. It

54 "The *Book of Marvels* belongs to a genre of writing for which the ancients themselves possessed no special label, and which classical scholars call paradoxography 'writing about marvels', a term introduced in the early nineteenth century by Antonius Westermann, the editor of a collection of Greek writers on wonders" (HANSEN, op.cit. p.2).

55 Besides the modern edition of Phlegon's utterances by Hansen, it is worth reading MOREL, Willy. "Zum Text des Phlegon von Tralles" In *Philologische Wochenschrift*, 34, 1934, pp.171-176; following Eddy's trend, GAUGER, Jörg-Dieter. "Phlegon von Tralleis, mirab.III: Zu einem Dokument geistigen Widerstandes gegen Rom" In *Chiron*, 10, 1980, pp.225-261 and PERETTI, Aurelio. "Una storia di fantasmi oracolanti" In *Studi Classici e Orientali*, 33, 1983, pp.39-81.

may be no coincidence that what Phlegon reports about these characters is also related to another Antiochus – the one defeated at the Thermopylai in 193 BCE, Anthiocus III the Great.

Now Phlegon attributes this specific weird event to the report of Anthistenes, the Peripathetic[56]: the report claims that the Roman consul Acilius Glabrio together with the legates Marcus Porcius Cato and Lucius Valerius Flaccus arranged their men in an orderly fashion for battle, and Antiochus , although having fought nobly (again, the very quality that apparently lacks in Eunus according to Diodorus description[57]), had to flee with 500 guards [58]to Ephesus. Acilius was successful in the mopping up operations and duly dispatched the legate Cato to Rome with the good news. It is then that our story takes sinister twists. Says Phlegon (quoting Anthistenes, but we are not sure if this fragment is true) that

> In the confrontation with Anthiocus at Thermopylai, very conspicuous omens occurred to the Romans. In the days following Antiochus 's failure and flight, the Romans occupied themselves in removing the bodies of their own fallen and in collecting arms and other spoils as well as prisoners of war.

And here begins what justifies the placing of this tale in the *Mirabilion*.

> There was a certain Bouplagos[59], a cavalry commander from Syria[60] who had been held in high esteem by King Antiochus and had fallen after fighting nobly[61]. At midday the Romans were gathering all the enemy's arms, Bouplagos stood up from among the dead, though he had twelve wounds and went to the Roman camp where he proclaimed in a soft voice the following verses:
>
> 'Stop despoiling an army gone to the land of Hades,
> For already Zeus Kronides is angry beholding your ill deeds,
> Wrothful [*sic*] at the slaughter of an army and at your doings, and
> Will send a bold-hearted tribe against your land

56 This identity has been much discussed, so far with no consensus: he may be the Rhodian historian assigned by Jacoby the "file" FrGH508, but there is no general agreement on the matter.

57 Here as in so many other issues Diodorus relies on Poseidonios of Apamea, who lived almost one hundred years before him. It is an educated guess that Poseidonios would have the worst possible commentary to make on Eunus, but his work is lost and we have to rely mainly on Diodorus for the First Servile War. Cf. JACOBY, FrGH87.

58 This information puts in perspective the 1,000 men with whom Eunus fled initially; both numbers seem absurd, as it often happens in ancient historians and should be taken to mean "a lot of men". In both cases we lack eyewitnesses accounts and, worse, we know that exaggerating numbers was a common practice in ancient historians.

59 Pliny, *Natural History*, 7.52 reports an almost identical story, this time with a Gabienus who prophesized (wrongly, again) that Pompey would be victorious over Octavian. Pliny dismisses the story but interestingly, it also came from Sicily during the Sicilian War (38-36 BCE).

60 Again, the same provenance of Eunus.

61 That is, displaying ἀνδρεία. Cf. SARACHEK, Bernard. "Greek concepts of leadership" In *The Academy of Management Journal*, 11, 1, 1968, pp.39-48.

> That will put an end to your rule [i.e. the Roman], and you will have to pay for what you have wrought'[62].

After the portent, Bouplagos fell dead (this time for good), and the Roman officers' assembly deliberated to cremate and bury him, purify the camp and sent a fitting delegation to the Oracle of Delphi. The python proclaimed another surprising oracle:

> Restrain yourself now, Roman, and let justice abide with you,
> Lest Pallas stir up a much greater Ares against you,
> And make desolate your market-places, and you, fool, for all your effort,
> Lose much wealth before reaching your land.

Says Phlegon that after hearing this, the Romans retreated and renounced the idea of waging war on the peoples of Europe – which, in any case, was not what the oracle was about. It was about the ransacking of the dead, and by the time of its utterance, Antiochus was already in Ephesus – in Asia. In any case, we have: 1. A valliant (ανδρείαν) Anthiochos facing the Romans in Greece; 2. A valliant Syrian officer ("[...] who had fallen after fighting nobly."] rainsing from the dead, rebuking the Romans; 3. The acceptance of these utterances by the Romans, and the confirmation of Bouplagos' speech by none other than the Oracle at Delphi. A Syrian under Seleucid command issuing a warning not at all different from the Sibylline Oracles; a Syrian like Eunus.

Then, after the Bouplagos affair, we have a similar portent but this time coming from a dead Roman general called Publius – who also rose from the dead and had similar rebukes against the Romans, while he was himself a Roman. His utterances are very interesting for they mix (unintentionally as it seems) a lot of Celtic lore into his whole affair, from rising from the dead to the presence of an oak (a very special tree for the Celts) to him being devoured by a wolf (again, an animal dear to the Celts). Only his head was spared by the wolf and went on prophesizing.

Puzzled, the Romans erected a temple where the head of his general stayed, and although his utterances are very much in agreement to those of Bouplagos it would be a waste to repeat them here. However, before climbing on the oak and before the wolf he predicted came, Publius had a very special announcement – in verse, as Phlegon is eager to specify – to make:

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62 The payment many times more than the deed committed is common throughout the Sibylline Oracles: SibOr 2:304; 3:114; 264; 355 (ten-thousandfold from Rome back to Asia); 5:476.

When the glimmering Nesaian[63] horses with their frontlets of gold
Walk onto the illustrious land, leaving behind their pedestal – **those which once in the sumptuous city of the Syracusans**
Eetion wrought up in artistry, strengthening lovely friendship:
He laid [... *vacat*]
Golden, and on it he fitted the son of Hyperion
With rays and eyes gleaming –
At that time, Rome, your harsh sufferings will all be fulfilled
For a broad host will come that will destroy your entire land,
Make desolate your market-places, waste your cities with **fire**,
Fill your rivers with blood, fill also Hades,
And bring upon you slavery, piteous, hateful and obscure.
A wife will not welcome back her husband
Returned from war, but Hades clad in black beneath the earth
Will hold him among the deceased along with the **children robbed from their mothers**
And a foreign Ares will impose slavery's day [all highlights mine]

While the first passage links the main character (Bouplagos) to Eunus for three good reasons (he fights against the Romans, he is a Syrian, he is part of Antiochus III army – i.e. the name Eunus chose as a "king"), the second one is even more puzzling (Celtic links apart, these would be better handled in another text): it is a Roman who five times prophesizes havoc upon Sicily (and in one verse even mentions destruction of its cities with "fire", almost too tempting to relate to the fire-breathing tricks of Eunus). Once Syracuse is mentioned (of no importance to the Eunus' events) and then market-places (where slaves were sold), slavery brought upon the land of Sicily[64] (by a slave? In Greek δοῦλος), then the children robbed from their mothers (again, an enduring mark of slavery), and lastly, another reference to imposing slavery (δουλεία) by Ares (i.e. by war).[65]

So, beginning to form a sort of pattern that involves Eunus, we have, in a relatively short time a pseudepigrahic poem on the abuses of Rome; two phantom-like stories on the same idea; and finally, Eunus' own utterances.

The big contrast that Phlegon offers us is the placing of this theme in phantom stories.

In all this, one thing can be held with some degree of consistency: the dating of the probably pseudephigraphic "Alexandra", attributed to Lycophron, until the wonder-workings of Eunus span a time of no more than 60 years. It is the interval when Rome ascertained her

63 A reference to a group of equestrian statues in Syracuse that will be given life and movement according to the whole story of Bouplagos and Publius. They appear in Herodotus, *History*, 3.160 as a real and very good breed of horses.

64 In another verse Publius refers to "Thrinakia", i.e. Sicily. Cf. HANSLIK, Rudolf. "Νισαῖον πεδίον" In *Pauly-Wissowa Real-Encyclopädie der classichen Altertumswissenschaft*. Stuttgart, J.B.Metzler, 1894, vol.17, pp.712-713.

65 Hansen, in his commentary to the whole passage, points out two important things: part of the tale may be from the Second Century BCE and is, definitely, "a piece of resistence [*sic*] literature whose purpose was to deter Romans against further aggression in the Greek-speaking world" (HANSEN, op,cit. p.102).

domain over the Mediterranean, the flux of slaves grew immensely and if they did not bring with them a popular culture theme – that of the "wicked empire" against Asia –, then this may have come to them in the areas where they were deployed. In any of the options, Eunus does not just play a fortuitous role – not does it seem that Diodorus portrays him so – but embodies the very hatred of Easterners against Rome. It is true that we do not know what was the ethnical composition of his followers – like Spartacus, Eunus may have had many among his army for whom "home" was Italy itself, but this does not mean that locals could not be made to believe an anti-Roman prophecy. After all, this happened to Publius, a well-known Roman general, or so Phlegon tells us.

Without any intended pun, Eunus was, apparently, one more element in a much longer chain of cultural resistance. The question remains as to what extent the theme of "revenge" of Asia against Rome was popular enough for him to carry out a revolt under that banner. In any case, the fact that he was often called to make guests laugh telling his royal destiny shows us that at least slave-owners were found in disbelief of the theme.