The proverbial Strength and Fairness of Mars[1]

Marco LUCHI
IIS Benedetto Varchi – Liceo artistico (Italy)
marco.luchi@isisvarchi.edu.it /// https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5361-2623

Recibido: 31/5/2021 || Aceptado: 28/6/2021

Abstract: The purpose of this article is to supply a brief overview on some Latin paremias containing the theonym Mars, especially: *Marte suo* "with one's own exertions", *belli communis Mars* [Mars is alike to all in battle] and *aequo Marte* [by a fair Mars]. Doing so, we will keep a special eye on the literary transmission of them. With a few exceptions, what often emerges from these paremias is the imagine of a mighty and even-handed God. Then, we will try to relate the aforementioned Latin paremias with the Homeric sentence ξυνὸς Ἐνυάλιος, καί τεκτανέοντα κατέκτα [The god of war is alike to all, and he kills the one who would kill] (*Iliad* XVIII 309). Finally, we will move on to the exclamation *aequum Mars amat* [Mars loves equality] (Petronius, *Satyricon* 34, 5), pronounced by Trimalchio during his feast. The analysis will consider the echoes of *aequo Marte* present in it, as well as the possibility of being in front of a reminiscence of the Homeric sentence given above.
Keywords: Paremiology. Literature. Latin. Mars.

Título: «La fuerza y la equidad proverbiales de Marte».
Resumen: El propósito del artículo es dar una panorámica general de algunas paremias latinas que contienen el teónimo Marte, en particular *Marte suo* [con todas sus fuerzas], *belli communis Mars* [Marte es igual para todos en batalla] y *aequo Marte* [con un Marte imparcial]. De este modo, dedicaremos una atención especial a su transmisión literaria. Lo que surge de estas paremias, con pocas excepciones, es a menudo la imagen de un dios poderoso y equitativo. Entonces intentaremos relacionarlas con la sentencia homérica ξυνὸς Ἐνυάλιος, καί τεκτανέοντα κατέκτα [El dios de la guerra es igual para todos y mata al que mataría] (*Ilíada* XVIII 309). Por último, pasaremos a la exclamación *Aequum Mars amat* [Marte ama la equidad] (Petronius, *Satyricon* 34, 5), pronunciado por Trimalción durante su festín. El análisis va a tener en cuenta el eco de *aequo Marte* presente en él, además la posibilidad de estar delante de una reminiscencia de la sentencia homérica arriba mencionada.
Palabras llaves: Paremiología. Literatura. Latín. Marte.

Titre : « La force et l'équité proverbiales de Mars ».
Résumé : Le but de cet article est de fournir une vue d'ensemble brève sur quelques parémies latines contenant le théonyme *Mars*, particulièrement sur *Marte suo* [avec toutes ses forces], *belli communis Mars* [Mars est semblable à tout dans la bataille] et *aequo Marte* [avec un Mars impartiaux]. Ainsi, nous accorderons une attention particulière à leur transmission littéraire. Ce qui se dégage de ces parémies, à l'exception de certains cas, est souvent l'image d'un dieu puissant y équitable. Puis, nous allons essayer de les relier avec la sentence homérique ξυνὸς Ἐνυάλιος, καί τεκτανέοντα κατέκτα [le dieu de guerre est semblable à tout et il tue celui qui tuerait] (*Iliade* XVIII 309). Finalement, nous allons examiner l'exclamation *aequum mars amat* [Mars aime l'égalité] (Petronius, *Satyricon* 34, 5), prononcée par Trimalcion pendant son banquet. L'analyse tiendra compte des échos, présents en elle, de *aequo Marte*, ainsi que de la possibilité d'un souvenir de la sentence homérique mentionnée ci-dessus.
Mots-clés : Parémiologie. Littérature. Latine. Mars.

[1] This article further develops a paragraph of my master's thesis concerning the proverbial material in Petronius' *Satyricon*. Yet the outcome is so far from its starting point that it must be regarded as an original work. It must be said that this would have not been possible without the fruitful collaboration of Dr. Michélle Pauline Klopper who carefully translated this unpublished work from Italian. My thanks also go to Prof. Silvia Mattiacci (Università degli Studi di Siena) for her advice.

INTRODUCTION

Theonyms are frequent in Latin, and the ancient Romans owned several proverbs and sayings –in many cases of Greek origin– connected to their pantheon. Undoubtedly, the most recurring theonyms are Jupiter, the king of the gods, and Minerva, the goddess of wisdom. As Bérchez Castaño (2013) states, Minerva is present in a lot of paremias[2] both due to her popular character and to the fact that she patronises every craft. Instead, Mars' area of expertise is much smaller than other gods': he is mainly the mighty and fair god of war. This diversity between the two deities is outlined in quotations like *Tam Marte quam Minerva* [As much by Mars as by Minerva][3], that is, equally by one's courage and one's genius. Probably because of this specificity, the recourse to the name of *Mars* is not as widespread as that of other gods. This is rather surprising given that he was considered the father of Romulus, the founder of Rome. Nevertheless, in the literature there exists a significant usage of paremias related to Mars, about which an overview in this work will be offered.

1. *MARTE SUO*: DO SOMETHING BY ONE'S OWN EXERTETIONS

Let us start reading and analysing, passage by passage, what Erasmus writes in his *Adages* (§ 519 s.v. 'Marte nostro') about the paremia in question:

> Quoties, nullis auxiliis adiuti nostropte ingenio propriisque uiribus rem peragimus, nostro Marte peragere dicimur.
> [We say that we act in this way each time we do something with our own talent and by our own exertions. Or even if something is accomplished to our peril].

Therefore, Erasmus indicates the meaning of the idiom as "by one's own exertion"[4]: similarly, the name of Mars survives as a synonym of 'strength' in mottos belonging to the nobility and gentry of Great Britain and Ireland[5]. Furthermore, what Erasmus shows us how appreciated this paremia was in literature, especially by Cicero:

---

[2] Once, the term *paremia* (from Greek παροιμία [proverb]) was not used alone, but only for the construction of nouns (such as 'paremiography') and adjectives (such as 'paremiographical'). In this article, we use the term *paremia* in accordance to the widely articulated definition given by Temistocle Franceschi (2005: IX): «È un elemento della struttura di quel codice linguistico naturale che consente all'uomo di esprimere le intuizioni mentali mediante strutture logiche, e che noi diciamo idioma: del quale va dichiarato strumento importantissimo» [It is an element in the structure of the natural linguistic code that enables man to express mental intuitions by means of logical structures, and which we call language (*idioma*): of which it must be declared a particularly important instrument]. Under this light, *paremia* is an hyperonymy (from Greek ὑπέρ [over], and ὄνυμα [name]) which indicates all kind of proverbial material, including in its broadest sense proverbs, sentences, apophthegms, idioms, common sayings, and so on.

[3] This paremia is reported both by MacDonnel (1826: 381) and by Henderson (1869: 217).

[4] The same interpretation can be read in MacDonnel's (1826[9]: 378) *Dictionary of Quotations*: «*Suo Marte*. Lat. – "By his own exertion." – He performed it *suo Marte*; by his own unaided skill and ability». Similarly, the Lewis & Short's (1879) *Latin dictionary* illustrates it as follows: «Hence, prov.: suo (nostro, vestro) Marte, *by one's own exertions, without the assistance of others*: […] Cic. Phil. 2, 37, 95; id. Off. 3, 7, 34: "cum uos uestro Marte his rebus omnibus abundetis," Cic. Verr. 2, 3, 4, § 9».

[5] The appendix of *Quotations from the Most Celebrated Authors* (1833) reports several examples, in which the theonym tents to recur in binomial phrases, usually as opposed to *ars* 'art': «Arte et Marte. With art and strength. *Middleton*» (p. 237); «Arte vel Marte. By art or strength. *Deans*» (p. 237); «Et arte et Marte. – With arms and force. *Bain*» (p. 251); «Marte et arte – By strength and art. *Drummond*» (p. 270); «Marte et industria – By strength and industry. *Ogilvy*» (p. 270); «Marte et ingenio. – By force et wit. *Smith*» (p. 271);

> Hanc igitur partem relictam explebimus nullis adminiculis, sed, ut dicitur, *Marte nostro* ritum, suo Marte res suas recuperauit.
> [Hence, we will recover this part left without any help, but, as the saying goes, "by our Mars"] (Cicero, *On the Duties* III 34).

Keep in mind that the phrase *ut dicitur* [how it is said] is particularly relevant to mark its proverbial nature[6].

However, *Marte suo* finds space also in non-literary framework, e.g., in legal text as the *Justian Code* –namely the codification of Roman law ordered in the 6th century AD by the emperor Justinian–:

> Diuine admodum constituit diuus Claudius consultissimus princeps, parens noster, ut iactura causae afficerentur hi, qui sibi potentiorum patrocinium aduocassent, ut hoc proposito metu iudiciariae lites potius suo Marte decurrerent, quam potentiorum domorum opibus niterentur
> [The divine Claudius, really wise prince, our father, established divinely that the ones who demanded for themselves sponsorship of high rated families should pay procedural costs, so that, once the fear was introduced, judicial litigations were conducted by their own exertions rather than relying on the high rated'] (*Justianian Code*, 2, 13, 1).
> Illo procul dubio obseruando, ut si neque per alterutram litigantium partem nec per iudices steterit, quo minus lis suo Marte decurrat, sed per patronos causarum licentia detur iudici
> [In case of doubt it should be noted that trial has not to be interrupted by the will of any of both parties and of the judges so as to run "by his own Mars", but through patrons the judge has to be given full freedom of decision"] (*Justininan Code*, 3, 1, 13, 9).

Subsequently, the Dutch humanist conjectures that it could be taken from the commanders who face the war with their auspices and soldiers, given that Plautus also said *meis copiis* [with my troops] instead of [by my own Mars].

Centuries later, the hypothesis that the paremia could belong to the military jargon will be taken up by Gioseffo Maria Platina (1730: 3), an Italian teacher of rhetoric:

> Se a un gran capitano si dà il soprannome di Marte, quel soprannome si trasporta da Marte al capitano: (…) per cagione della somiglianza nel valore tra Marte, e quel Capitano, ella è metafora
> [If a great captain is given the nickname Mars, this nickname is transported (*with all the associated qualities*) from Mars to the captain: (…) due to the affinity between the god's and captain's valour, it is a metaphor].

So, the theonym is metaphorically used as a nickname to indicate a highly appreciated commander in owing to his value. Maybe it is appropriate to mention *Mars rex*, Latin equivalent of Ἄρης τύραννος [a king Mars]. On Erasmus' authority (*Adages* § 3004 s.v. 'Mars rex'), this paremia refers to a man of power who rules by force, and it is derived from Timotheus, an Athenian commander, who carried out successful military campaigns against the Persians and Asians. Finally, the *Suda* (*a* 3853) points out that the term *Mars* can designate iron itself. So, the meaning of the paremia could be 'a king of iron'.

«Marte, non arte. – By force, not art. *Neasmith*» (p. 271); «Non arte, sed Marte. Not art, but strength. *Neasmith*» (p. 276).

[6] This paremia also appears in other Ciceronian places, for instance in *Philippics* II 96, 1: «Rex enim ipse sua sponte, nullis commentariis Caesaris, simul atque audiuit eius interitum, suo Marte res suas recuperauit» [The King himself (Deiotarus), on his own initiative, without any commentary of Caesar, as soon as he learned about the murder of him, recovered his goods by his own Mars].

A brief look at the occurrences in the online database PHI Latin Texts (PHI) confirms the diffusion of this paremia and its variations in literature:

VARIANT	AUTHOR	MATCHES	WORK
Marte suo	Ovid	4	*The Heroines* VII 154 *Transformations* III 122-123 *The Book of Day* IV 188 *The Cure for Love* 469
	Livy	1	*History of Rome* III 62, 9
	Cicero	1	*Philippics* II 96, 1
Marte nostro	Cicero	1	*On the duties* III 34
	Silius Italicus	1	*Punics* I 640
Marte vestro	Cicero	1	*Verrine Orations* II 3, 9, 7
	Silius Italicus	1	*Punics* XIII 699

Anyway, the locution not always conserves the above-indicated meaning, so it is necessary to be careful to associate this everywhere with a paremia. This is well exemplified by one of Horace's poems:

> […] uidi ego ciuium
> retorta tergo bracchia libero
> portasque non clausas et arua
> Marte coli populata nostro
> [I have beheld the arms of our citizens bound behind their free-born backs, and the gates of the enemy unshut, and the fields, which were devastated due to our war, cultivated anew] (Horace, *Odes* III 5, 24).

Marte nostro – highlighted by a hyperbaton – does not mean "by our own exertions", but "due to our war"[7]. The same meaning has *Marte uostro* "due to your war" in Silius Italicus *Punics* (XIII 699). After all, Mars can be poetically identified by metonymy as the war itself, for instance:

> Mars grauior sub pace latet
> [A really severe war lurks under the show of peace] (Claudianus, *On the Sixth Consulship of the Emperor Honorius* 307).

As Platina (1730: 3) explains, the usage of Mars in place of 'war' is not so uncommon neither in paremias, therefore who says that fights *uario Marte* [by a mutable Mars], *incerto Marte* [by an unpredictable Mars], *communi Marte* [by a Mars alike to all], appoints the one who presides over the war in antiquity to mean the same war.

Finally, it must be noticed that in Ovid the meaning of *Marte suo* looks like "warlike ardour" at least in two times:

> si tibi mens auida est belli, si quaerit Iulus,
> unde suo partus Marte triumphus eat,
> quem superet, nequid desit praebebimus hostem.
> [If your soul is greedy for war, if Iulius is looking from where he can obtain triumphs by his warlike ardour, we can bring (*to him*) an enemy to fight against, so that he is missing anything] (Ovid, *The Heroines* VII. 'Dido to Aeneas' 153-155).
> scaena sonat, ludique uocant: spectate, Quirites,

[7] Horace's famous commentator Pomponius Porphyrion (ad *Odes* III, 5) explains the verse without outlining a potential proverbial nature of this *Marte nostro*.

et fora Marte suo litigiosa uacent.
[The theatre resounds, the public games (*ludi*) exhort: look, Quirites, and may public squares (*Fora*) be free from their warlike ardour] (Ovid, *The Book of Day* IV 188-189).
Vidit id Atrides […].
Marte suo captam Chryseida, uictor amabat
[The Atreides (*Agamemnon*) realised it […]. Being the winner, I loved Cryseis' daughter (*Astynome*) who was captured by his own warlike ardour] (Ovid, *The Cure for Love* 467-469).

1.1. *Pullus Martis*: the unexpected Courage of a Rooster

Talking about warlike ardour and overall courage, other ancient sources mention Ἄρεος νεοττόν [a fledgling of Mars] for whom is much inclined for war. In of Aristophane's comedy *Birds* (835), one can read:

– Ἄρεος νεοττός. – Ὦ νεοττὲ δέσποτα
[– A fledgling of Gradivus! – O fledgling, our lord!']

Erasmus (*Adages* § 2331), who collected and explained this paremia, translates it into Latin either *Pullus Marti* or *Pullus Gradiui*: actually, let us not forget that *Grauidus* is a title for the god of war[8]. The Dutch humanist traces it back to the above-mentioned physical characteristics of the cockerel:

Quod omnium auium sit pugnacissimus bellacissimusque, unde et crista et calcaribus armatus est, Marti sacer est.
[for the fact of being the fiercest and the most warlike among all the birds, since it is armed with crest and spurs, is sacred to Mars].

The Latin paremia in question is quoted by the Italian naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi (1600: 236), in a section of his treatise on ornithology. After praising its combativeness and runing through institutionalised practices of cockfighting in antiquity, he eulogises its magnanimity of spirit:

Adde, quod pro caris uxoribus, pignoribusque suis aduersus serpentes, miluos, mustelas, et eiuscemodi feras alias, uiriliter decertet, et nos ad simile certamen, ubi sese occasio offerat, inuitet
[Add to this the fact that, for his beloved wives and children, he bravely fights snakes, kites, martens, and other such fierce animals, and invites us to such a fight when the opportunity arises].

1.2. *Mars haud concutit sua ipsius*: an Example of Endurance

Up to now, we talked about Mars as synonym of strength, firstly in sense of exertions, then within the meaning of interior force, that is courage. On the other side of the coin, the figure of Mars can sometimes convey the idea of endurance. Now, let us focus on the paremia *Mars haud concutit sua ipsius arma* (Erasmus, *Adages* § 2329). It comes from the Greek Ἄρης τὰ αὑτοῦ ὅπλα οὐ σαλεύει [Mars does not throw down its own weapons], and it means that we can endure the things to which we are accustomed. On the contrary, we throw away that which we badly bear. Hence, it can be associated with a Juvenal' hexameter (13, 22): *Nec iactare iugum uita didicere magistra* [Life teaches us not to throw off the yoke].

[8] As suggested by Grant (2005: 19), see Vergil *Aeneid* III 35: «Gradiuumque patrem»; Ovid, *Transformations* VI 427: «a magno […] Gradiuo»; Juvenal, *Satires* II 128: «Gradiue».

2. *COMMUNIS BELLI MARS*: THE IMPORTANCE OF COINCIDENCE

According to a Latin commonplace, in wartime coincidence rules, therefore both camps on the battlefield have theoretically the same chance of winning (Hartung, 1872: 103). In the light of this, Mars can be *communis* 'alike to all', consequently 'even-handed'. Erasmus (*Adages* § 3649) writes about it:

> Incertum ac uarium belli euentum notant hoc dicto: Ἄρης κοινός, id est Mars communis. Sumptum est ex Homericae Iliados: Ξυνὸς Ἐνυάλιος, καίτοι κτανέοντα κατέκτα, id est Communis Mars inque uicem perimit perimentem. (…) Rursus eodem libro: Νίκη δ' ἀπαμείβεται ἄνδρας, id est Nunc his, nunc illis contingit uincere. (…) De Marte communi nonnihil attigimus in prouerbio Omnium rerum uicissitudo
> [They defined an uncertain and ambiguous war event with this saying: Ἄρης κοινός, i.e., "Mars is impartial". It is taken from the eighteenth of Homer's *Iliad* (XVIII 309): Ξυνὸς Ἐνυάλιος, καίτοι κτανέοντα κατέκτα "Enyalios is impartial, and kills those who have killed". (…) Again, in the same book (*Iliad* VI 339): Νίκη δ' ἀπαμείβεται ἄνδρας, i.e. "Victory changes men". (…) We spoke of *Mars communis* "impartial Mars" in the proverb *Omnium rerum uicissitudo*[9] "the alternation of all things" (Erasmus, *Adages* § 663)][10].

The paremia *communis Mars* is particularly appreciated by the Livy[11], but he is not the only one. Talking about the unpredictability of the future, Cicero once again helps us interpret the paremia:

> Nam, cum omnis belli Mars communis et cum semper incerti exitus proeliorum sunt, tum hoc tempore ita magnae utrinque copiae, paratae ad depugnandum esse dicuntur, ut, utercumque uicerit, non sit mirum futurum
> [Indeed, given that Mars is alike to all in the battle and the results of battles are always unpredictable, even if on this occasion the forces on both sides are so considerable and they are said to be in such a state of preparation for fighting, that whichever of the two wins it will be no matter of surprise] (Cicero, *Letters to Friends* VI 4, 1).

In addition to that, Cicero focuses on certain figures of speech inside an oration, citing *communis Mars* as example of metonymy:

> Grauis est modus in ornatu orationis et saepe sumendus; ex quo genere haec sunt, "Martem belli" esse "communem"
> [Decorating an oration, the tone of language to adopt is generally solemn: these common sayings belong to such register to say that "Mars in the war" is "alike to all"] (Cicero, *On the Orator* III 42, 167).

[9] From Terence, Eunuch, 276.

[10] The paremia *ominium rerum uicissitudo* is plausibly taken from Terence, *Eunuch*, 276.

[11] See Livy, *History of Rome* VII 8, 1; VIII 23, 8; X 28, 1; XXVIII 41, 14; XLII 49, 5. Concerning its usage in Livy's masterpiece, Briscoe (2012: 199) notices that the historian normally attaches *belli* to *communis Mars* (in other terms, *belli* depends on *Mars*), except in the following two cases: «ubi Mars communis et uictum saepe erigeret et adfligeret uictorem» [where the common fate of a conflict sometimes, on one hand, honoured the defeated one, on the other, tore the winner down'] (Livy, *History of Rome* XXVIII, 19, 11); «cum communis Mars et incertus belli esset euentus» [When the risk in war was alike to all and the outcome was unpredictable] (Livy, *History of Rome* XXXVII 45, 13). By the way, in both cases the genitive *belli* is clearly implied; besides, in the second case can be easily inferred from *belli euentus*.

The above excerpt is peculiarly interesting, because it demonstrates how this paremia is typical of a well-liked register[12].

In the same writer, we can explore a humoristic variation of this paremia, where Cicero resorts to the original meaning of *communis*, namely 'common, public':

> Homines enim in proeliis, non in conuiuiis, belli fortunam periclitari solent; in illa autem calamitate non Martem fuisse communem, sed Venerem possumus dicere
> [Men, indeed, generally tempt war fate in the battles, not in the feats: in such an uproar we can say that Venus was the one in common, and not Mars] (Cicero, *Verrines* V 132)

As known, Venus was the goodness of love. Hence, «*Venus communis* – as Greenwood (1967: 612) suggests – may carry a further reference to the 'sharing' of Syracusian wives with Verres by their husbands».

2.1. ξυνὸς Ἐνυάλιος: A Greek predecessor in *Iliad*?

As seen, Mars was frequently evoked as an even-handed god. At this point, we wonder if this conception is suitable also for Ares, the Greek equivalent of Mars. Alike to the name *Mars*, Ares can be used as metonymy for war[13]. Let us examinate the Greek phrase ξυνὸς Ἐνυάλιος, of which we have just caught a glimpse within an Erasmus' quote. It may be the Greek version of *Mars communis* as the erudite Platina (1716: 176) testifies:

> E chi esortasse i soldati inferiori di numero a combattere, potrebbe, per togliersi il dubbio della risoluzione, servirsi della sentenza comune portata da Omero *Mars est communis*
> [And, in order to dispel the doubt about the conflict resolution, who would encourage the lower number of soldiers to combat could make use of Homer's common sentence *Mars est communis*].

Indeed, we should remember an episode of the Trojan war. Stunned by the Achilles' return, the Trojans gather in a flat land close to their capital. Taking the floor, Polydamas wisely suggests they should withdraw. Yet, moved by an arrogant optimism, Hector rejects such suggestion. Ignoring that he is about to lose Zeus' support, he proposes to hold the position and join the battle the next morning (Edwards, 1991: 175, 179-180). During his speech, the Trojan warrior claims:

> ξυνὸς Ἐνυάλιος, καί τε κτανέοντα κατέκτα
> [The god of war is alike to all, and he kills the one who would kill] (Homer, *Iliad* XVIII 309).

Hector is undoubtedly talking about Ares: indeed, the epithet ἐνυάλιος "the Warlike" is specific of Ares, as shown by the formula Ἄρης δεινὸς Ἐνυάλιος (Homer, *Iliad* XVII 211; XX 69):

---

[12] Consistently with this affirmation, Cicero uses more than once this paremia in his orations: see *For Milo* 56: «Adde incertos exitus pugnarum Martemque communem» [Take into consideration also that the outcomes of wars are unpredictable, and Mars is alike to all]; *Philippics* X 20: sed ut concedam incertos exitus esse belli Martemque communem, tamen pro libertate uitae periculo decertandum est [However, although I admit that the outcomes of a war are uncertain, and Mars is unbiased, nevertheless, battling is necessary even at the risk of our own life for the sake of our liberty].

[13] The Lidell & Scott' (1940, s.v. 'Ἄρης') *Greek-English Lexicon* confirms: «in Poets, Appellat. for war, slaughter, "ξυνάγωμεν Ἄρηα" Il.2.381; "Ἄρημείξουσιν" S.OC1046 (lyr.); "χρονίῳσὺν Ἄρει" Pi.P.11.36; Ἀρηξέμφύλιος, Ἄ. τιθασός, A.Eu.862,355; "θηλυκτόνῳ Ἄρει δαμέντων" Id.Pr.861; "ναύφαρκτος Ἄ." Id.Pers.951 (lyr.); λιθόλευστον Ἄρη death by stoning, S.Aj.254(lyr.); ἔνθα μάλιστα γίγνετ' Ἄ. ἀλεγεινὸς ὀϊ ζυροῖσι βροτοῖσι, of a mortal wound, Il.13.569». The meaning of war is traceable also in its compounds: an example is the Homeric compound ἀρηίθοος 'swift in war': it is the name of a Boeotian king which consists of θοός 'nimble' and Ἄρης as a metomyny (Homer, *Iliad* VII 137-138).

> Porro Ἐνυάλιος Homero Mars dicitur ab Ἐνυώ, quam belli fortunam esse putant.
> [Mars is called by Homer *Enyalios* (Ἐνυάλιος) from *Enyo* (Ἐνυώ), who they believe is the fate of war] (Erasmus, *Adages* § 3649).

To be precise, Enyo was a minor goddess plausibly of Pre-Hellenic religion. Due to her warlike character, she is associated with Ares in the myth. She was frequently paired with Enyalios, an ancient (Mycenaean?) god of war, who the Romans identified with different deity, for instance, with Quirinus. So, Enyalios was not a simple epithet of Ares from the beginning, as it appears from Homer onwards, but a deity distinct from it[14]. This Homeric verse (*Iliad* XVIII 309) gradually became a maxim, as demonstrated by Aristotle who includes the maxim in a list of *gnomai* in his *Rhetoric* (II 21, 12)[15]. Into bargain, it owns all the essential characteristics to be proverbial[16].

In accordance with Otto (1890: 214, s.v. 'Mars'), the Latin equivalent of this paremia is *Mars belli communis*. Plus, on the authority of the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (vol. III, coll. 1968-1981 s.v. 'communis'), the most obvious translation of *communis* – especially amongst the ancient grammarians – is κοινός[17]. Nevertheless, ξυνός can be regarded as a synonym of κοινός [common] as follows: Ετήτυμον γαρ ξυνός ανθρώποις Άρης [indeed, Ares is alike to all the men] (Archilochus, *fragment* 38 D). Into the bargain, Eustathius of Thessalonica (1144, 43), scholar and Archbishop of the same city, comments:

> τὸ ξυνὸς Ἐνυάλιος ἀντὶ τοῦ: κοινὴ ἡ τοῦ πολέμου τύχη καὶ ὁ κατ'αὐτὸν κίνδυνος καὶ οὐ μᾶλλον τούτου ἢ ἐκείνου
> [τὸ ξυνὸς Ἐνυάλιος is said about when the fate of a war is alike to all and, as result of it, the danger is not greater for one than for the other].

3. *AEQUO MARTE* AND ITS VARIANTS

Let us move on *aequo Marte* [by a fair Mars]. As *communis belli Mars*, it indicates via metonymy a battle of uncertain outcome[18]. As Aragosti (2011: 202 n. 73) enlightens, it is a rather common Latin paremia, especially in historians such as Livy or Caesar. Its diffusion is testified in several different forms. The chart below sums up the paremias where the theonym Mars is used to indicate~~s~~ an unpredictable conflict resolution, among these, *aequo Marte* is the most frequently occurring.

[14] Here, it is not possible to investigate further the progressive identification of Enyalios and Mars/Ares from the perspective of social scientific studies of religions. For further information, see Jesse, 1905: coll. 2652-2653. s.v. 'Enyalios'.

[15] About Enyalios, see also Donati (2010: 289)'s n. 95 ad Aristotle's *Rhetoric* II 21, 11.

[16] These paremias share a structure in two hemistiches with a syndetic coordination (καί), ellipsis of the verb *to be* (ἐστί), a stylistic scheme – called polyptoton – where words with the same root are repeated (κτανέοντα and κατέκτα from κτείνω [I kill]); in addition, there is a figure of speech – known as alliteration – based on the repetition of one or more sounds (καί τε κτανέοντα κατέκτα). For further information about the structural aspects which define a paremia, see MacCoinnigh in Hrisztova-Gotthardt & Melita, 2015: 112-132.

[17] For instance, the grammatician Diomedes (*Art of Grammar* I 428, 16) writes: «commune […] quod Graeci […] κοινόν» [*communis* is what Greeks call κοινός].

[18] It is worth mentioning that, as Platina (1730: 3) does in the passage already quoted, Otto (1890: 124, s.v. 'Mars **') cites both *uario Marte* and *incerto Marte* (namely, two variations of *aequo Mars*) along with *communis belli Mars*: in this manner, the semantic analogy of the above-mentioned phrases is underlined.

VARIANTS	AUTHOR	MATCHES	WORKS
aequo Marte	Caesar	1	*Commentaries on the Gallic War* VII 19, 3
	Quintus Curtius Rufus	1	*Life of Alexander* IV 15, 29
	Livy	4	*History of Rome* II 6, 10 *History of Rome* II 40, 14 *History of Rome* II 51, 2 *History of Rome*, XXV 19, 5
	Lucan	1	*Civil War* III 585
	Annius Florus	1	*Epitome of Roman History* II 13, 182
	Frontinus	3	*Military tactics* II 3, 13 *Military tactics* II 4, 1 *Military tactics* II 5, 5
	Silius Italicus	1	*Punica* V233
	[Pseudo-Ovid]	1	Monostich arguments of the Aeneid, XI
pari Marte	[Aulus Hirtius]	1	*Commentaries on the Gallic War,* VIII 19, 2
	Quintus Curtius Rufus	1	*Life of Alexander* VI 1, 7
	Livy	1	*History of Rome* XXXVI 44, 7
	AnniusFlorus	1	*Epitome of Roman History* II 13, 306
aequato Marte	Livy	1	*History of Rome* I 25, 11
uario Marte	Quintilian	1	*Institutes of Oratory* VIII 6, 24
	Annius Florus	1	*Epitome of Roman History* I 5, 5
	Aulus Gellius	1	*Attic Nights* VI 3, 52

3.1. *Aequum Mars amat*: Does Trimalchio cite Homer?

Said that, it is time to comment a joke pronounced by the rich freedman Trimalchio during his famous feast in Petronius' novel (*Satyricon* 34, 5):

> Laudatus propter elegantias dominus, 'aequum', inquit, 'Mars amat'. Itaque iussit senex suam cuique mensam assignari
> [After having been lauded for his good taste, the host said: 'Mars does love equality'. And so, the elder ordered to assign to each one (*guest*) his own table].

The passage has been generally interpreted as a wordplay related to *aequo Marte* (Friedländer, 1906: 232; Schmeling, 2011: 121). The allusion to Mars' equity does not sound misplaced – even if it seems to be a blunder, given that in this context an invocation to Dionysus, god of wine, would have been more appropriate. But, on closer inspection, it is evident that Trimalchio has organised the dining room as a battlefield, where all the guests are metaphorically 'well-armed'[19].

He is intent on astonishing his guests, not only offering exaggeratedly elaborate dishes, but also showing off his bogus *philologia* [culture] (39, 4). In a way, he sets himself up as a champion of his social class – the rich but illiterate *liberti* – against the class of his guests – the freeloading

[19] As Marmorale (1948: 22) observes, all the guests have been equipped by the host, Trimalchio, with «armi proprie uguali a quelle degli altri. Per tale motivo ha assegnato a ciascun convitato una mensa personale oltre ad allestirne una comune» [their own weapons equal to those of the other. For this reason, he has assigned (*to them*) a personal desk, in addition to having prepared a common one]. This interpretation can be integrated with Ciaffi's interpretation (1967: 116-17 n. 52): «Oltre alla solita tavola quadrata in mezzo ai tre letti [...], ciascuno dei convitati aveva a disposizione un tavolino a lato, per tenerci sopra le stoviglie». [In addition to the usual square table in the middle of the three beds [...], each of the guests had a small table to the side to hold their dishes on].

but well-educated *scholastici*. Despite his efforts, Trimalchio constantly makes gaffes, demonstrating his illiteracy[20]. Once, however, he mentions *Aeneid* (39, 3): *sic notus Ulixes?* [Do you know so little about Ulysses?][21]. It is inferable that such quotes were spread. Consequently, it should not surprise that they are also present amongst the speeches of the illiterate[22]. For these reasons, it cannot be excluded that Trimalchio echoes any Homeric passages. Cucchiarelli (1998: 586-591) connects the motto *aequum Mars amat* to νῦν δ᾽ἔρχεσθ᾽ ἐπὶ δεῖπνον ἵνα ξυνάγωμεν Ἄρηα "now, therefore, get your noonday meal, in order that (ἵνα) we may join the battle" (Homer, *Iliad* II 381). Here, it may transpire a Petronius' touch of irony, given that during the feast, there will be no lack of fights. Furthermore, that is not an isolate example of συνουσία [being with] which falls apart in ancient literature[23]. But our opinion is that ξυνὸς Ἐνυάλιος – consequently *aequo Marte* – is more fitting in this scenario, because it sounds more sententious, as well as the adjective ξυνὸς more conveys the idea of equality.

4. *INIQUO MARTE* AND ITS VARIANTS

Up to now, we have left aside paremias which characterises the god as adverse (such as *inquio Marte* [by an unfair Mars]) or do not describe him as impartial (*uario Marte* [by a mutable Mars]). Some of them – including the ones previously quoted – are also listed by Erasmus (*Adages* § 519) s.v. 'Mars nostro', and have got a proverbial flavour: *dubio Marte* [by an ambiguous Mars], etc. Before moving to the last part of our article, we list some of them below:

VARIANTS	AUTHOR	MATCHES	WORKS
aduerso Marte	Vergil	1	*Aeneid* XII 1[24]
	[Pseudo-Ovid]	1	Decastich arguments of Aeneid XII 1
uerso Marte	Livy	1	*History of Rome*, XXIX 3, 11, 2
incerto Marte	Tacitus	1	*The Histories* IV 35
Marte infausto	Silius Italicus	1	*Punics* I 457
dubio Marte	Velleius Paterculus	1	*Historia Romana* II 55, 3

As *aequo Marte* (and its variants), these paremias are noun phrases consisting of an adjective and a noun in ablative case.

[20] Talking of epic poetry, he is firmly convinced that Ulysses was hurt by the Cyclops Polyphemus (48, 7); he confuses Cassandra, the Trojan prophetess, blessed with foresight but cursed never to be believed, with Medea, sorceress and murderer of her own children (52, 1).

[21] Obviously, it is not enough to look well educate, because «l'emistichio virgiliano (Aen. II, 44), con cui Laocoonte mette in guardia i Troiani, doveva essere diventato proverbiale, come dire di qualcuno "non è un semplicione"» [the Virgil's hemistich (*Aeneid* II, 44) with which Laocoön warns the Trojans must have become proverbial, as if to say "he/she is simpleton"] (Ciaffi, 1967: 125 n. 70).

[22] For instance, a servant of Abinnas – another freedman – quotes some Virgil's verses (68, 4) (Friedländer 1906: 243; Marmorale, 1948: 39; Smith, 1975: 88). Schmeling (2011: 150) vaguely mentions an inscription from Pompeii showing various Vergil's verses turned into paremias over time.

[23] The most paradigmatic episode is the fight at the wedding feast of king Pirithous between the Centaurs and the Lapiths, a legendary people of Greek mythology. The *casus belli* would have been Ares' revenge for being the only uninvited god. Servius, the well-known commentator of Virgil, descrbing this episode on a gloss about *Aeneid* VII, 304. See also Putnam, 1990.

[24] The paremias *aduerso Marte* [being Mars hostile] is quoted thrice in Maurus Servius Honoratus' *Commentary on Aeneid* (V 784, VII 332, and IX 497).

CONCLUSIONS

The paremias related to Mars are fewer and less spread than the ones concerning other Roman gods, such as Minerva. Nevertheless, the role they play in literature is prominent, not only in poetry (see Ovid but also Silius Italicus), but also in historiography and oratory (as respectively in Livy and in Cicero). Such paremias generally develop from the semantic field of war, often and however in a metaphorical sense. That is the case of when the theomyn is used via metonymy to suggest figuratively the war: for instance, *Mars communis belli* or *aequo Marte* (and its numerous relative variants) imply the same conception that the outcome of a fight is always unpredictable: thus, if in a conflict both camps have equal probability of winning, Mars consequently reveals himself to be even-handed. Seeing that, they are rather connected to each other.

By the way, it is opportune to examinate *communis belli Marte*, whose there may exist a Greek predecessor in Homer's *Iliad* (VII 137-138), namely ξυνὸς Ἐνυάλιος. This maxim – with its vague memory of *aequo Marte* – might echo in Trimalchio's paremia *aequum Mars amat* [Mars love equality]. Worthy of mention are also paremias which, on the contrary, describe a hostile Mars, such as *adverso Marte* and its relative variants.

In addition to the idea of fairness, the theomyn Mars proverbially conveys the idea of exertions or strength (e.g., in *Marte suo*). This paremia enjoyed a certain success among Latin writers, but we also find evidence of it in a legal text: it is the case of the *Justinian Code*. In any case, we must pay attention to the poetical use of Mars as metonymy, which may make us wrongly believe to be in the presence of a paremia.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Aragosti, A. (2011). [intr., transl., and notes]. Petronio. *Satyricon*. Milan: BUR. 16th edition.

Aldrovandi, U. (1600). *Ornithologiae tomus alter. Liber Decimusquartus qui est de pulueratricibus domesticis*. Giovan Battista Bellagamba: Bologna.

Autenrieth, G. (1891). *A Homeric Dictionary for Schools and Colleges*. New York: Harper and Brothers.

Bérchez Castaño, B. (2013). *Crassa Minerva* y otros proverbios. *Paremia*, 22: 171-180.

Briscoe, J. A (2012). *Commentary on Livy. Books 41-45*, vol. 35, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ciaffi, V. (1967). [intr., transl., and notes]. Petronio. *Satyricon*. Turin: UTET. 2nd edition.

Cucchiarelli, A. (1998). Trimalchione e la Cena di Marte (Partendo da "Satyr." 34, 5). *Studi Classici e Orientali*, 46(2): 585-601.

Dorati, M. [ed.] (2010). *Aristotele. Retorica*. Milan: Mondadori.

Grant J. N. [ed.] (2005). *Collected Works of Erasmus. Adages III iv 1 to IV ii 100* (vol. XXXV), Toronto, Buffalo, & London: Toronto University Press.

Edwards, M.W. (1991). *The Iliad: A Commentary.* Cambridge University Press, volume V.

Friedländer, L. (1906). *Petronii Cena Trimalchionis*. Verlag von S. Hirzel: Leipzig. 2nd edition.

Greenwood, LH. G (1967). [intr., transl., and notes]. *Cicero. Against Verres*: Part two, Books III, IV and V. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Hartung, C. (1872). *Lateinische Sentenzen*. Berlin: Verlag von F. Henschel. 3rd edition.

Henderson, A. (1869). *Latin proverbs and quotations*. London: Sampson Low, son, and Marston.

Hrisztova-Gotthardt, H.; Melita, A. V. [eds.] (2014). *Introduction to Paremiology. A Comprehensive Guide to Proverb Studies*. Berlin, Munich, & Boston: DeGruyter. https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.2478/9783110410167/html [Accessed: 24/5/2021]

Jesse, O. (1905). 'Enyalyos'. *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Stuttgart: Metzler. Vol. VI, 1 coll. 2651-2643.

J.L.S. (1833). *A Collection of Latin Quotations from the Most Celebrated Authors*. Sunderland: P. Payn & Company.

Lellie, E. (2013). [intr., transl., and notes] *Erasmo da Rotterdam. Adagi*. Milan: Bompiani.

Liddell, HG; Scott, R. (1940). *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

MacDonnell, D. E. (1826). *A dictionary of quotation in most frequent use*. London: Geo. B. Whittaker. 9th edition.

Marmorale, E.V. (1948). *Petronii Arbitri cena Trimalchionis*. La Nuova Italia: Florence.

Otto, A. (1890). *Die Sprichwörter und Sprichwörtlinchen Redensarten der Römer*. Leipzig.

Platina, G. F. (1716). *Arte Oratoria*. Bologna.

Platina, G. F. (1730). *Trattato dell'eloquenza spettante ai tropi*. Bologna.

Putnam, M. C. J. (1990). Virgil's Lapiths. *The Classical Quarterly*, 40 (2), 562-566.

Schmeling, G. (2011). *A Commentary on the Satyrica of Petronius*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Smith, M. S. (1975). *Petronii Arbitri cena Trimalchionis*. Oxford: Calderon Press.

