an uneconomical hypothesis, and it is thus highly likely that one Aurelia Ptolemais was the owner of the *Sikyonika,* of Africanus' *Kestoi,* and of the two *Iliad* fragments, along with her land, money, slave, and no doubt much else. It is not surprising to find a member of her class in possession of literature, but few cases have been documented with such specificity so far. To what extent she herself read these works inherited from her father cannot be known, but she could read and write. Her signature on *POxy.* 1690 is in a slightly uneven but fairly rapid cursive.[18]

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18. Not the hand of someone who could barely sign, certainly.

FILOCALUS AND MELANIA

Fausta novum domini condens Fortuna lavacru**M**
  Invitat fessos huc properare via**E**.
Laude operis fundi capiet sua gaudia praesu**L**
  Ospes dulciflua dum recreatur aqu**A**.
Condentis monstrant versus primordia nome**N**
  Auctoremque facit littera prima leg**I**.
Lustrent pontivagi Cumani litoris antr**A**:
  Indigenae placeant plus mihi delicia**E**.
(*Anth. Lat.* 120 Riese = 109 Shackleton Bailey)

It was recognized long ago by P. Thielmann that this poem is distinguished by both acrostich and telestich: FILOCALI and MELANIAE respectively.[1] It was perverse of Riese (1894) and Shackleton Bailey (1982) to accept the acrostich (which requires the suppression of an aspirate in line 4) and repudiate the unmistakable telestich. Riese's objection that, while line 5 draws attention to the acrostich (*versus primordia*), there is nothing to point to the telestich, is satisfactorily answered by Courtney's neat correction of *prima* in 6 to *summa.*[2]

It might be added that if (as many other examples suggest) this poem was originally inscribed on the baths it describes, both acrostich and telestich will have been indicated by the spacing on the original panel. A nice parallel is provided by the inscription to the estate of the Moorish prince Sammac near Tubusuctu in Mauretania from about the same period (*ILCV* 779 = *ILS* 9351 = *CLE* 2.3.1916). On an ornate stone *tabula ansata* stand eight hexameters, with acrostich and telestich reading PRAEDIVM SAMMACIS. The initial and final letters are set apart from the rest of each line by a space decorated with a small leaf, and though the individual lines vary considerably in length, the letters are spaced so that the final

1. "Zwei neue Fragmente archaischer Poesie," *ALL* 4 (1887): 600. The telestich was obscured in Baehrens' edition by his emendation *cito* for the impossible MS *vitae* at the end of 2, where we must surely rather accept Heinsius' *viae* (so even editors who deny the telestich). See the recent discussions by E. Courtney, "Observations on the Latin Anthology," *Hermathena* 129 (1980): 41–42; J. Dingel, "Über ein Acrostichon und ein Telestichon in der *Anthologia Latina,*" *WS* 19 (1985): 177–78.

2. "Observations," p. 41. With *prima,* 6 merely repeats 5; it arose by mechanical corruption from the *prim-* immediately above.

letters of each line form a vertical column.[3] Since there is no space between individual words in the body of the text, the eye picks out the acrostich and telestich before deciphering the rest of the epigram.[4] The acrostich, telestich, and mesostich in *Anth. Lat.* 214 Riese (from some African baths) are picked out in red in the Salmasianus, no doubt reflecting the original inscription; the mesostich at any rate could hardly have been detected without some such device to highlight it.

But who are the people so named? J. Evans-Grubbs and E. Courtney have recently attempted to identify them both: the younger Melania, well known for her wealth and asceticism; and Filocalus, a local notable of Hippo Regius mentioned in a couple of letters of St. Augustine.[5] Given the identification of Melania, this obscure Filocalus must be considered a possibility (Augustine had dealings with Melania during her African stay of ca. 410–17). But the weakness of the identification is that it does not explain the conjunction of the two names. Which was the *condens*, which the *auctor;* and what was the difference? One could always hypothesize (for example) that Filocalus completed a project that Melania had begun before leaving for the Holy Land.

Nonetheless, it may be useful to suggest an alternative that better explains the linking of the names: the elder Melania and the famous calligrapher Furius Dionysius Filocalus. The elder Melania was born around 340, and soon after being widowed around 372, spent twenty-seven years in the East, returning briefly to Rome about 400.[6] Filocalus' floruit fell between 350 and 380.[7] He could easily have fulfilled a commission for Melania in the 360s. On this hypothesis, the division of labor would be clear: Melania built (paid for) the bath; Filocalus engraved

3. As may be seen from the original publication by S. Gsell, "Note sur une inscription d'Ighzer-Amokrane (Kabylie)," *CR Acad. Inscr.* 4, ser. 29 (1901): 170; and the photograph (by J. Wilkes) published by J. Matthews, *Political Life and Culture in Late Roman Society* (London, 1985), chap. 11, additional plate.

4. Another example is the three couplets on a marble panel from the church of St. Hippolytus in Rome: see A. Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana* (Rome, 1942), no. 35[1] with plate on p. 173. The name of the dedicant is given by the acrostich LEONIS (in the genitive, as in *Anth. Lat.* 120), and the initial letters are set apart from the rest of each line by a gap equivalent to one letter.

5. "An Identification in the *Latin Anthology*," *CP* 82 (1987): 237–39. For a full recent account of Melania and her circle, see E. A. Clark, *The Life of Melania the Younger: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (New York and Toronto, 1984). On Filocalus, see A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie chrétinne du Bas-Empire I: Afrique* (Paris, 1982), p. 875; his activity is no more precisely dated than "avant 427–430."

6. The chronology of the elder Melania is a notorious problem: the sources are more complex and contradictory than the brief entry in *PLRE* (1:592–3) suggests. The fullest and most balanced discussion is by N. Moine, "Melaniana," *Recherches augustiniennes* 15 (1980): 3–79.

7. A. Ferrua, "Filocalo, l'amante della bella lettera," *Civiltà cattolica* 90 (1939), I: 35–42; and in his *Epigrammata Damasiana* pp. 21–35. He was omitted from *PLRE* 1, as noted by T. D. Barnes, "More Missing Names (A.D. 260–395)," *Phoenix* 27 (1973): 148. W. Kroll, "Philocalus 2," *RE* 19.2 (1938): 2432, followed by Barnes, identified the calligrapher with a grammarian Filocalus apparently attested by "Sergius," *Explanationes in Donatum, GLK* 4.498.3 (?), 501.31, 503.11, 515.30. But not only is this Filocalus represented as a pupil of Servius, which would place him in the early fifth rather than mid-fourth century; it is more than doubtful whether he was a real person at all. He is no more than an interloctor in a dialogue, together with a certain Rusticus (*GLK* 4.499.24). As R. A. Kaster has neatly put it: "The names 'Filocalus' and 'Rusticus' thus paired—'Mr. Refined' and 'Mr. Uncouth'—should arouse suspicion, and that suspicion should be heightened by the fact that the questions asked by the two correspond to their names" (*Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* [Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1988], pp. 406–7). Filocalus was surely not the calligrapher's given name, but a nickname awarded in virtue of his skill. Compare the two similar cases of Musonianus and Tullianus, with my discussion in "Polyonomy in the Roman Aristocracy," *JRS* 75 (1985): 176.

(and possibly composed) the poem.[8] *Condens* in line 1 and *condentis* in line 5 would then bear different senses: *condens* would refer to the establishing or building of the baths (*OLD* s.v. 10), *condentis* to the act of composition (*OLD* s.v. 14) or calligraphy. An anonymous reader objects that *condo* is cited in this absolute sense only from Pliny (*HN* 13.88), but the transitive use is common at all periods, and the absolute use may have been commoner in late antiquity than the dictionaries suggest. In any case, it must be borne in mind that the poet's choice of words at the beginning of the line was strictly governed by the need to obtain the acrostich.

Filocalus is difficult to pin down in the social register. On the title page of the corpus of lists generally (if misleadingly) known as the *Calendar of 354,* he wrote out his own name in full together with that of his patron Valentinus: *Furius Dionysius Filocalus titulavit.*[9] More striking still is his treatment of the epitaph of the early fourth-century martyr Eusebius written by Pope Damasus. Above the text of the epitaph (in eight hexameters) stand the words DAMASVS EPISCOPVS FECIT;[10] and down each side, in smaller letters: *Damasi papae cultor adque amator* (left) *Furius Dionysius Filocalus scribsit* (right). As Ferrua rightly emphasized, Filocalus describes himself not merely as an adherent or admirer (*cultor*) of the pope, but as his personal friend (*amator*). More remarkable still (a point not emphasized), when the damaged original was replaced with a new panel (perhaps in the sixth century), this incongruously personal message by Filocalus was recopied alongside the names of Pope Damasus and the martyred Eusebius (no. 18^1 Ferrua). Two other (fragmentary) epitaphs also preserve Filocalus' signature: no. 27 Ferrua, where traces from each side can be restored confidently as *[Damasi epis]copi cu[ltor adque amator]* (left) *Furius Dionysius [Filocalus scribsit]* (right). And lastly no. 18^2 Ferrua, where a fragment from the left side gives us the familiar marginal *scribsit Furius Dion[ysius Filocalus].* Since Filocalus does not here call himself *cultor adque amator* of Damasus, Ferrua inferred that this is a private funerary inscription.

No ordinary professional calligrapher or lapicide ever won such fame or such equality with his patrons. We are surely bound to conclude that Filocalus was not in fact a man who earned his living by his skills. He was a man of respectable (if not aristocratic) origins and comfortable means who simply chose to spend his time doing what he did so well.[11] Others of his class wrote letters and poems;

8. According to Housman, "Philocalus was a mere executant, and no part of his work, scientific or artistic or literary, originated with him" (*Classical Papers,* vol. 3 [Cambridge, 1970], p. 1186). To be sure he did not compile the *Calendar of 354* or write Pope Damasus' poems, but any educated person could have tossed off a functional piece like this.

9. This page is frequently reproduced: for a particularly clear line drawing see Mommsen, *Chron. Min.* 1:39.

10. The original marble panel inscribed by Filocalus himself survives only in fragments; but a (somewhat barbarous) copy was made in the sixth century, and survives undamaged, together with some manuscript versions made from it: all the information is carefully set out by Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana,* pp. 129–34, no. 18, superseding all earlier editions and discussions. Since there is no longer any doubt about the text, I have not bothered to indicate which letters are no longer extant in the original Filocalan version.

11. He would not have been the only amateur calligrapher of the age. The fame of Theodosius II's calligraphy spread far and wide: A. Momigliano, *Essays in Historiography Ancient and Modern* (Oxford, 1977), p. 152.

Filocalus copied their work, whether on vellum or stone. This is why his aristocratic patrons were willing to let him share the credit for the finished product.

And this is why he would fit the acrostich of *Anth. Lat.* 120 so well, one more occasion on which he shares such a credit with a member of the aristocracy of Rome. To judge from the panels he engraved for Pope Damasus, people must have been used to reading Filocalus' name inscribed in vertical columns. Nor is it irrelevant to observe that, like Damasus and Valentius,[12] Melania was a Christian. At a time when paganism was still strong in the aristocratic circles of Rome, it is hardly coincidental that it is invariably Christians with whom Filocalus' name is linked.

A further argument is perhaps to be won from the nature of the baths. Evan-Grubbs and Courtney were surely right to place them in Africa, where the majority of poems in the *Latin Anthology* were written or collected[13]—and where the elder Melania no doubt owned the same estates as her granddaughter. The claim in the last couplet, that while seafarers may gaze on the caves of Cumae, the poet prefers local pleasures, suggests that he and the baths he prefers are across the sea from Cumae. This point is made more strongly still in the immediately following epigram (*Anth. Lat.* 121 R. = 110 S.B.), which picks up themes and language of 121 so closely as to suggest that it is a companion to it, engraved on the same baths:[14]

Quisquis Cumani lustravit litoris antra
atque hospes calidis saepe natavit aquis,
hic lavet, insani vitans discrimina ponti;
Baiarum superant balnea nostra decus.

Evans-Grubbs and Courtney suggested that the baths they ascribe to the younger Melania were "part of a religious complex."[15] But this is certainly not what the poems suggest, nor was the bath on the younger Melania's property at Thagaste (as Evans-Grubbs and Courtney imply) part of a religious complex. A careful reading of the relevant passage of the Latin *Life of Melania*[16] will show that it was in fact a family villa which she donated to the church of Thagaste, complete with its revenues: "dedit autem et possessionem multum praestantem reditum, quae possessio maior etiam erat civitatis ipsius, habens balneum, artifices multos, aurifices, argentarios et aerarios; et duos episcopos, unum nostrae fidei et alium haereticorum." The preceding section of the *Life* (chap. 20) describes how Augustine and Alypius of Thagaste persuaded Melania "to give a house and an income to each

12. Valentius cannot be identified, but since the Filocalan corpus includes a paschal cycle and various lists concerning the Church of Rome, the man for whom it was produced was su ely a Christian.

13. See Courtney, "Observations," pp. 38–39, quoting other epigrams on baths. It is not necessary to suppose that Filocalus himself visited the baths in person; he could have engraved the *tabula* in his workshop in Rome. It is perhaps worth mentioning that Ferrua argued that Filocalus came from Africa, though on fairly fragile grounds ("Filocalo," p. 42).

14. It was common practice for a number of separate epigrams to be engraved on one monument: see the numerous examples discussed in my *Porphyrius the Charioteer* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 117–43. Such pairs or groups of epigrams on the same monument often vary considerably in length, depending on the space available and also on such factors as the length of accompanying prose inscriptions. Courtney ("Observations," p. 42) notes only that 121 was "based on" 120.

15. "An Identification," p. 239.

16. Card. Rampolla del Tindaro, *Santa Melania giuniore senatrice Romana: Documenti contemporanei e note*, chap. 21, p. 14; cf. too, Clark, *Life*, p. 190, n. 27.

monastery" instead of simply doling out cash whenever she felt generous. Some of these aristocratic houses "may have been just country mansions, but the majority were centres of large estates run by slaves."[17] Only a large private estate, not a monastery, could have supported such luxury trades as goldsmiths and silversmiths.[18] They are mentioned to give an idea of the size of the revenues such as estate brought the church of Thagaste.

The baths on this estate might still be the subject of our poem, though we learn from chapter 20 of the *Life* that Melania had estates in many other parts of Africa as well. That they are not the sort of baths we might expect to find in a religious establishment is proved by the comparison with the hot baths of Baiae.[19] Naturally this trite comparison should not be pressed too far, but the poet does not (for example) praise the simplicity of his baths compared to the extravagance of those at Baiae. It is precisely their *deliciae* that delight him most (120.8). It is hard to believe that at this stage of her life the ascetic Melania was building the sort of baths for which aristocratic villas on the Bay of Naples were famous.[20] The poet must be talking about luxury baths of a grand private villa. The *hospes* mentioned in both poems is a private guest, not a passerby. These are surely baths built by the elder Melania some time between the late 350s and the early 370s, before a succession of family tragedies turned her thoughts from this world to the next.[21]

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17. W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church*[3] (Oxford, 1985), p. 34, quoting this passage from the *Life of Melania* together with other evidence for "the self-supporting villas that flourished in the fertile valleys near Constantine and Guelma" (p. 35). On the size and role of these private estates in Africa, see too P. D. A. Garnsey, *Imperialism in the Ancient World*, ed. Garnsey and C. R. Whittaker (Cambridge, 1978), p. 225. The fact that it supported two bishops suggests that this estate of Melania's may indeed have been larger than Thagaste.

18. Nor would a (Catholic) monastery have supported two bishops, especially if one of them was a Donatist.

19. On the natural hot springs and caves of Baiae, see H. Comfort, *Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites* (Princeton, 1976), p. 138.

20. J. F. D'Arms, *Romans on the Bay of Naples* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), pp. 119–20, 139–42.

21. I am grateful to Elizabeth Clark and Edward Courtney for commenting on a draft.