



TYCHE

Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte Papyrologie und Epigraphik

Herausgegeben von

Gerhard Dobesch, Hermann Harrauer
Peter Siewert und Ekkehard Weber

Band 10, 1995

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H O L Z H A U S E N

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CLAUDE EILERS

A Patron of Myra in Ephesus

In 1980, M. Büyükkolancı, C. Içten and J. Nollé published the following inscription, which was discovered in Selçuk¹:

Μυρέω[ν ὁ] δῆμος
ἑτείμησε τὸ τρίτον
[- - - -]
[]ον τὸν πάτρωνα καὶ εὐ-
[εργ]έτην τοῦ δήμου.

The significance and historical context of this inscription are obscured by the erasure of the honorand's name in lines 3–4. In this article I will argue that the honorand was probably M. Aemilius Lepidus (*cos.* AD 6) and that the inscription is dated to AD 28/29.

The first point that we need to recognize is that because the honorand is a *patronus* of a city, he can be assumed not only to have been a Roman citizen, but very probably also a Roman senator, especially if the text is from the late Republic or reign of Augustus, as has been suggested on the basis of the inscription's letter forms². Several other factors suggest that the honorand was someone of importance. It is noteworthy that Myra, in Lycia, should erect this honour for their patron in Ephesus. Most of inscriptions honouring patrons were set up in prominent places within the client community. A few cases are known where honorific inscriptions are erected by provincial clients in the patron's home city³. But that does not seem very likely here. Cases where cities cultivate governors of a neighbouring province are probably more relevant. For example, Oenoanda, also in Lycia, had Q. Mucius Scaevola (*cos.* 95) as its patron⁴. For Oenoanda and Myra to honour officials in Asia would make some sense, since until Lycia became a province, governors of Asia and the members of their staff would be among the Roman officials closest to them. Even cities within one province might cultivate relations with governors of neighbouring provinces. Byzantium, for example, was part of the province of Bithynia, but sent an embassy each year to the governor of Moesia to pay its respects⁵. It is possible that we are dealing here with a similar practice, since Myra is honouring its patron for the third time (ἑτείμησε τὸ τρίτον).

Multiple honours for a patron in a neighbouring province implies not only that the honorand was a senator, but also that he was a distinguished one. If further confirmation of this were needed, it is provided in a concrete way by the erasure of the honorand's name. The honorand was important enough for the citizens of Myra to go out of their way to honour him, but he also became notorious enough for someone to obliterate his memory.

¹ *Einige Inschriften aus Ephesos*, ZPE 40 (1980) 257–258, no. 6 = SEG 30, 1315 = IEph. VII 2 (IK 17.2) 3902.

² The opinion of F. Gschnitzer, cited by J. Nicols, *Patrons of Greek Cities in the Early Principate*, ZPE 80 (1990) 95, n. 45.

³ E. g. CIL X 1430 from Herculaneum and IGUR 71 = CIL VI 1508 = IG XIV 1077 (*cf.* SEG 34, 1012) from Rome.

⁴ C. Eilers, N. P. Milner, *Q. Mucius Scaevola and Oenoanda: a new inscription*, *Anatolian Studies* 45 (1995) (forthcoming).

⁵ Plin., *ep.* X 43, 3.

As is often the case with such erasures, traces of several letters are still discernible in line 3, which its editors have rendered thus:

[..]λ[.....]ωτ^δονλε[.].

These letters clearly belong to the honorand's *tria nomina*. The honorand's *praenomen* will therefore have had Λ or A as its third letter. Only Gnaeus and Aulus would fit, but since M might take up the space of two letters, Manius and Marcus are also possible. A *gentilicium* would come next, ending either -ΔΙΟΝ or -ΩΤΟΝ (the editors tentatively suggested [Κλαύ]-διον). Finally a *cognomen* is to be found in the letters Λε[.][.]ον (lines 3–4).

The honorand's cognomen, Λε[.][.]ον, provides a promising starting point: only Λέ[ντ]|[λ]ον and Λέ[π]|[δ]ον seem possible⁶. Both tell against [Κλαύ]διον, the suggestion of this inscription's first editors, since this *gentilicium* is not attested with the *cognomina* Lentulus or Lepidus in this period⁷. Lepidi usually belong to the *gens Aemilia*, Lentuli to the *gens Cornelia*⁸. Either of these *gentilicia* would be possible, of course, if Λ is read instead of Δ, a reading which does not seem to be contradicted by the photograph published with the *editio princeps*⁹. Consequently, possible names for the patron of Myra might be reasonably limited to the following:

[[Αὐ]λ[.]ον	
[[Μ]ά[ν]τιον	Κορνή]λιον Λέ[ντ] [λ]ον
[[Μ]ά[ρ]κον	Αιμί]λιον Λέ[π] [δ]ον
[[Γν]α[.]ον	

Such a name would confirm some of our earlier speculations. First, it reveals a Roman aristocrat. Second, it is consistent with the suggestion that the patron was active in some official capacity in Asia, thus explaining why he is honoured in Ephesus rather than Myra. Several proconsuls of Asia are known with appropriate names. Cn. Cornelius Lentulus the Augur (*cos.* 14 BC) governed Asia under Augustus¹⁰; M'. Aemilius Lepidus (*cos.* AD 11) was *proconsul* in AD 21/22¹¹; M. Aemilius Lepidus (*cos.* AD 6), in AD 26–28¹².

Myra is honouring its patrons for the third time (τὸ τρίτον). This suggests that the honorand was in the East for an extended period, since some time must have elapsed between the honours. Although it would not be impossible to honour someone more than once in a single

⁶ Other *cognomina* in the index of I. Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina*, Helsinki 1965 (Societas Scientiarum Fennica Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 31) that begin with Le- and are an appropriate length (excluding names that are only attested for Christians) are: Leonicus, Leonius, Leporinus, Leporius, Levillus. None of these names, however, is found among senators.

⁷ An ambassador of 189 BC named M. Claudius Lepidus is recorded in Livy (XXXVII 48, 5), but his name is suspicious (see J. Briscoe, *A Commentary on Livy Books XXXIV–XXXVII*, Oxford 1981, 366). Once a Claudius had become emperor and provincials starting taking the name, there is more flexibility: e. g., Ti. Claudius Lepidus, ἀρχιερέυς of Pontus in the second century AD (IGR III 88, PIR² C 910).

⁸ In the imperial period, Lepidus is also attested as a *cognomen* with the *gentilicia* Annius, Asinius, Iulius, Laberius and Larcus (RE XII 2 [1925] 2067 s. v. Lepidus no. 1).

⁹ ZPE 40 (1980) pl. 16d; J. Nollé has now kindly informed me by letter that this reading is consistent with the letter traces on the stone.

¹⁰ B. E. Thomasson, *Laterculi Praesidum* I, Göteborg 1984, 207, no. 12.

¹¹ R. Syme, *Problems about proconsuls of Asia*, ZPE 53 (1983) 191–208 = *Roman Papers* IV 347–365, at 348, 350; U. Vogel-Weidemann, *Die Statthalter von Africa und Asia in den Jahren 14–68 n. Chr. Eine Untersuchung zum Verhältnis Princeps und Senat*, *Antiquitas* 1, 31 (1982) 236–249; Thomasson, *Laterculi* (note 10) 210, no. 29.

¹² Syme, *Problems* (note 11) 191–194 = *Roman Papers* IV 348–351; Vogel-Weidemann, *Statthalter* (note 11) 266–274; Thomasson, *Laterculi* (note 10) 210, no. 33.

year, it is difficult to imagine the rationale behind such a practice, especially if each occasion required an embassy to Asia. If the honours were from different years, this would require that the honorand was in the East for a *triennium* at least.

As it turns out, this would fit very well for one of our candidates. We already know from an inscription from Cos that M. Aemilius Lepidus (*cos.* AD 6) governed Asia for a *biennium*¹³. His term began in AD 26¹⁴, so the inscription in Cos belongs to 27/28. There are advantages, however, in supposing that Lepidus was governor of Asia for a third year. This was the time of Tiberius' absence from Rome, when prorogation of governors became the norm. C. Vibius Marsus (*suff.* AD 17) can be assigned to the proconsulship of Africa Proconsularis for these same three years¹⁵. Similarly, P. Petronius (*suff.* AD 19) and M. Iunius Silanus Torquatus (*cos.* AD 19) governed Asia and Africa respectively for the six years following (29/30 to 35/36)¹⁶. It seems that in most of these years the annual sortition for the two consular public provinces was simply not performed. This consideration has already led U. Vogel-Weidemann to suggest a *triennium* for Lepidus, a suggestion approved by R. Syme¹⁷. If Lepidus is the patron honoured by Myra in Ephesus, the phrase ἐτείμησεν τὸ τρίτον probably confirms their hypothesis that he governed for a third year.

A difficulty with this identification, however, is that the honorand's name is erased from the inscription. M. Lepidus was one of the most important senators of his era. He was a *vir triumphalis*, and was allegedly considered by Augustus to be *capax imperii*¹⁸. Piso died in AD 33, and Tacitus considered an obituary in order, praising him for his *moderatio atque sapientia*¹⁹. We can be confident that he did not suffer *damnatio memoriae*. Still, the erasure is not impossible to explain. After Gaius' accession, M. Lepidus' homonymous son rose to prominence under the new emperor. He was alleged to be partner in Gaius' debaucheries²⁰. He was married to Gaius' sister, Drusilla, and was granted a five year remission on the minimum age for office²¹. In 39, however, Lepidus was executed, either for adultery with Gaius' sisters (perhaps with treasonous intentions), or for complicity in the conspiracy of Cn. Cornelius Gaetulicus (*cos.* AD 26), or both²². Either would be sufficient to explain the erasure of his name from inscriptions, whether or not his memory was officially condemned in Rome. Provincials sometimes acted on their own accord in these matters. The *SC de Pisone patre* required that Piso's name be removed only from a statue of Germanicus in the campus Martius, although it is also erased from other monuments²³. Such actions would be intended to demon-

¹³ AE 1934, 87; ὁ δῆμος Μάρκον Αἰμίλιον Λέπιδον τὸ δεύτερον ἀνθύπατον τὸν ἑαυτοῦ πατέρα καὶ εὐεργέταν.

¹⁴ Tac., ann. IV 56, 3.

¹⁵ CIL VIII 14386 = 10568; ILS 9375; Vogel-Weidemann, *Statthalter* (note 11) 105.

¹⁶ Syme, *Problems* (note 11) 194 = *Roman Papers* IV 351; Vogel-Weidemann, *Statthalter* (note 11) 97–109, 274–280.

¹⁷ Syme, *Problems* (note 11) 194 = *Roman Papers* IV 351; Vogel-Weidemann, *Statthalter* (note 11) 268.

¹⁸ Vell. II 114–115; Dio LVI 12, 2; Tac., ann. I 13, 2. On his career, see R. Syme, *Marcus Lepidus, capax imperii*, JRS 45 (1955) 22–33 = *Ten Studies in Tacitus*, Oxford 1970, 30–49.

¹⁹ Tac., ann. VI 27, 4.

²⁰ Suet., Cal. 24, 36.

²¹ Dio LIX 11, 1; LIX 22, 6–7.

²² Suet., Claud. 9: *Lepidi et Gaetulici coniuratio*; Suet., Cal. 24; Dio LIX 22, 6–7; Acta Fratrum Arvalium 27 Oct. AD 39 (CIL VI 32346). A. A. Barrett, *Caligula: The Corruption of Power*, London 1989, 104–113, following C. J. Simpson, *The „conspiracy“ of AD 39*, in: C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* II, Bruxelles 1980 (Collection Latomus no. 168) 347–366, would dissociate Lepidus and Gaetulicus.

²³ W. Eck, *Das s. c. de Cn. Pisone patre und seine Publikation in der Baetica*, Cahiers du Centre Glotz 4 (1993) 189–208, at p. 197. CIL II 2703 (with R. Syme, *A governor of Tarraconensis*,

strate loyalty to the emperor, and were presumably reported either to him or to the governor by civic embassies offering congratulations on his survival.

Might the fall of the younger M. Lepidus have led to the erasure of our inscription? It is probably the name of Gaetulicus (his possible co-conspirator) that has been excised from an inscription from Vindonissa, which might lend slight support to the idea²⁴. Against this proposition is the simple fact that he is not the honorand, who (if the arguments made above are sound) should be identified as his father. Surely the Ephesians, who must be assumed responsible for the erasure, would not obliterate a father's name for his son's crime. Yet it will have been difficult for them to distinguish the two. The elder Lepidus was not their patron, after all, but the patron of Myra, and the names of father and son were identical. Even under better circumstances homonyms presented difficulties: by a similar mistake the name of M. Antonius (*cos.* 97) was erased when he was confused with his grandson, the triumvir²⁵. In Ephesus' case, it would have been almost impossible to differentiate the two. Consequently, the erasure of the honorand's name is not a bar to identifying him as the consul of AD 6. If anything, it supports the identification, if the erasure was in fact deliberate. It should be noted, however, that it is possible that this was not the case. The photograph of the inscription shows two holes beneath line 3 which show that the stone was used in another context. The damage done to line 3 may be the result of this same process²⁶.

In conclusion, the patron of Myra should probably be identified as M. Aemilius Lepidus (*cos.* AD 6). The evidence, though circumstantial, is cumulative. This man's name is one of only a few that is consistent with the letters still visible in line 3 of the inscription. He is one of a handful of Roman senators who governed Asia for a *triennium* or longer²⁷, which would explain how Myra came to honour him three times. His homonymous son's execution would account for the erasure of his name on the inscription. Finally, it is also significant that although senatorial patrons of Greek cities had become increasingly rare after the reign of Augustus, Lepidus is also attested as patron of Cos²⁸. Individually none of these considerations could be decisive. Taken together, however, they provide a good case for identifying M. Aemilius Lepidus (*cos.* AD 6) as the patron whom Myra honoured for a third time in Ephesus.

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Epigraphische Studien 8 [1969] 125–133 = *Roman Papers* II 732–741); CIL VI 315 (*cf.* VI 30751) = ILS 95. A general *damnatio memoriae* was proposed and rejected, according to Tac., ann. III 17, 8.

²⁴ CIL XIII 11513, with H. Lieb, Gesellschaft pro Vindonissa, *Jahresbericht* 1956/1957, 1957, 70–72.

²⁵ ILLRP 342 = CIL I² 2662; *Inscrip. It.* XIII 1, pp. 54–55, 128.

²⁶ I owe this idea to the suggestion of Dr. H. Tacuber; for the photo, see note 9.

²⁷ For a list of proconsuls of Asia known to have served extended terms, see R. J. A. Talbert, *The Senate of Imperial Rome*, Princeton 1984, 505.

²⁸ AE 1934, 87 (note 13). He should also be identified with the patron of Uxama (CIL II 2820). For the rarity of patrons of Greek cities after Augustus, Nicols, *Patrons* (note 2) 81–100, though his explanation of the phenomenon — that Augustus introduced a rule banning the practice — is disputable.