

# Rome, Ephesos, and the Ephesian Harbor: a Case Study in Official Rhetoric

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## Abstract

- Some ancient sources seem to indicate that the Roman imperial state actively promoted the construction and maintenance of infrastructure in the provinces. Based on a case study, this paper provides a different interpretation: that the rhetoric connecting provincial infrastructure and good government, when it was monumentalized in stone in the provinces, does not constitute clear evidence of Rome actively promoting provincial infrastructure. To the contrary, the carving in stone of communications of Roman state officials that included such rhetoric is more likely to reflect an effort on the part of the provincials to impose a moral obligation on their Roman rulers to undertake such activities.
- Manche antike Quellen scheinen anzudeuten, dass der römische Staat der Kaiserzeit Konstruktion und Unterhalt von Infrastruktur in den Provinzen aktiv förderte. Basierend auf einer Fallstudie, vertritt der vorliegende Beitrag eine andere Auffassung: wenn epigraphisch dokumentierte Erlasse römischer Amtsinhaber in ihrer Rhetorik provinzielle Infrastruktur mit guter römischer Verwaltung verbanden, ist dieser Umstand nicht zwingend als Nachweis von Roms Engagement für provinzielle Infrastrukturprojekte zu deuten. Vielmehr ist die Verewigung solcher Amtsdokumente auf Stein in den Provinzen als Ergebnis des Bestrebens seitens der Provinzialen zu verstehen, den römischen Staatsvertretern eine moralische Verpflichtung aufzuerlegen, solche Aktivitäten zu unterstützen.

## Superstructure and Infrastructure

In 88 BCE the inhabitants of the Roman province of Asia gave support to an enemy of the Roman state in the person of Mithridates of Pontus, and slaughtered in the thousands the Romans and Italians who had lived among them. In the second half of the second century CE, by contrast, repeated threats to the borders of the empire and serious challenges to Roman rule in the East rallied the loyalties of the provincial population to the Roman empire. In short, the Roman imperial state had succeeded in turning subjects into citizens. In an effort to explain the stability of the Roman political and social order under the Empire, recent scholarship has extended beyond the study of institutions of government and has focused increasingly on other aspects of Roman society's "superstructure". These aspects include processes of acculturation and the state's capacity to create con-

sensus between rulers and subjects in the Empire.<sup>1</sup> The present paper aims to evaluate the contribution of Roman official rhetoric to the idea, detectable in a second-century CE proconsular edict under study here, that good provincial infrastructure depended on good provincial administration by the Roman state.

Our chief literary sources for the Roman Imperial period occasionally speak of a particular aptitude of the Romans in the art of government and also in the undertaking of such building projects as we would include today under the term “infrastructure”.<sup>2</sup> It is not clear from those literary sources that a connection was perceived to exist between these two fields of professed Roman competence – that is, government and infrastructure. A well-known inscription, however, that I wish to revisit here, IK 11 no. 23, does seem to suggest that a connection between infrastructure and good government was broadcast by individuals in a position both to express and to shape Roman state ideology. This inscription, which records an edict of a proconsul Asiae, originates from a major province of the Greek East, and thus from a part of the world where a considerable amount of infrastructure was already in place when the province became part of the Roman Empire.<sup>3</sup>

It is worth asking, at the outset of this examination, whether such rhetoric as we find in this text, clearly connecting infrastructure to good government, was routinely used by Roman governors in their communications to provincial communities. At present, however, the surviving body of routine communications of Roman officials to provincial communities is too small to provide a useful basis for such an enquiry.<sup>4</sup> My focus in the present paper will be on this one epigraphic example of rhetoric connecting infrastructure and good government. As I will suggest, the inscribing of documents containing this sort of rhetoric may reflect the provincials’ effort to transfer from their own agenda to that of their Roman rulers a number of local priorities having to do with provincial infrastructure, and possibly to impose on those rulers a moral obligation to become involved in the specified tasks. If that is correct, then such rhetoric does not constitute clear evidence that the Roman state undertook the promotion of infrastructure in the provinces as a means, for example, of inducing loyalty among those whom it governed and it does not necessarily constitute evidence that Roman state officials routinely argued along those lines. With a view to investigating who might, at the time, have promoted the role of the state in local infrastructure, and why, I will try to tease out, in this one instance, the possible mix of local and imperial considerations that may have been involved in such rhetoric and in the engraving of such arguments in stone. My case concerns a well-known episode of Roman intervention in the upkeep of the harbor at Ephesos.

<sup>1</sup> See ANDO 2000 for an analysis that is informed by modern social theory and is based on solid knowledge of the ancient evidence. On cultural exchange between Greece and Rome important recent work includes WALLACE-HADRILL 2008 and SPAWFORTH 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Dion. Hal. ant. 3,67,5; Strab. 5,3,8; Aristeid. 26,101 (KEIL).

<sup>3</sup> And in which, as Trajan once pointed out to the governor Pliny the Younger, specialists in the carrying out of such works could easily be found; Plin. epist. 10,18.

<sup>4</sup> Presumably because of the loss of the Alexandrian archives, even the wealth of Egyptian evidence preserves only a few documents issued at the highest hierarchical levels of provincial government.

Ephesos' Harbor(s): "The Gate by Which the West Visited the East"<sup>5</sup>

Strabo, in a passing reference, speaks of Ephesos as the largest ἐμπόριον, or trade center, of Asia Minor, larger than Phrygian Apameia because (in contrast to Apameia, it is understood), Ephesos received "also those that come from Italy and Greece". Though some of the finer nuances of this passage may escape us, due in part to its syntax and vocabulary, Ephesos seems to be portrayed here as the most important link in the trade between East and West, a major center connecting Italy and Greece with Asia Minor: Ἀπάμεια δ' ἐστὶν ἐμπόριον μέγα τῆς ἰδίως λεγομένης Ἀσίας, δευτερεῦον μετὰ τὴν Ἐφεσον· αὕτη γὰρ καὶ τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας καὶ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ὑποδοχεῖον κοινόν ἐστιν.<sup>6</sup>

A more detailed report on Ephesos is provided in *Geographica* book 14. After some remarks on the city's history and on the Artemision, the geographer turns to a discussion of Ephesos' port, and his first observation is that the port's mouth, once very wide, was in

<sup>5</sup> RAMSAY 1901, 167.

<sup>6</sup> Strab. 12,8,15. The Loeb translation (H. L. JONES, London 1924) connects αὕτη in the sentence beginning with αὕτη γὰρ to Apameia Kibotos: "Apameia is a great emporium of Asia, I mean Asia in the special sense of that term, and ranks second only to Ephesus; for it is a common entrepôt for the merchandise from both Italy and Greece". Cf. the translation of W. FALCONER (London 1903): "Apameia is a large mart of Asia, properly so called, and second in rank to Ephesus, for it is the common staple for merchandise brought from Italy and from Greece". Cf. in the *Belles Lettres* the translation by F. LASSERRE (Paris 1981): "Apamée est un grand marché de l'Asie proprement dite, le deuxième en importance après Éphèse. Elle sert, en effet, d'entrepôt commun pour les marchandises venues d'Italie et de Grèce. Elle est située là où le Marsyas...". But αὕτη γὰρ, here, is more likely to refer to Ephesos than to Apameia: Ephesos is the city mentioned immediately before αὕτη, and the clause that begins with αὕτη γὰρ presumably continues the description of that city, explaining why Ephesos, instead of Apameia, was ranked first. It is therefore unnecessary to suppose that Strabo, in comparing the inland Phrygian city of Apameia Kibotos and the western sea-port of Ephesos came to the conclusion that, despite their respective geographical positions, it was Apameia rather than Ephesos that constituted a "common entrepôt for the merchandise from both Italy and Greece", that is, from the West. The German translation by S. RADT (vol. 3, Göttingen 2004) is much preferable: "Apameia ist ein großer Handelsplatz des in engerem Sinne Asien genannten Landes, der zweite nach Ephesos; denn dieses ist auch noch der allgemeine Stapelplatz für die Waren aus Italien und Griechenland. Apameia liegt an der Mündung des Flusses Marsyas...". In the same sense GROSKURD (Berlin 1831): „Apameia ist eine grosse Handelsstadt des eigentlich so genannten Asia, den zweiten Rang nächst Ephesos behauptend; denn diese ist eine allgemeine Niederlage aller Waren aus Italia und Hellas. Apameia ist an der Mündung des Flusses Marsyas erbaut...". Strabo refers to Ephesos, here, with the common word *emporion* and also with the much less common word ὑποδοχεῖον. Ὑποδοχεῖον is seldom attested in literary authors. In papyri, it usually refers to a reservoir or store-house. Here the meaning suggested in LSJ is "entrepôt" (as also in the Loeb translation cited above), which in English can refer to a free port, but this is almost certainly not what Strabo means. In Strab. 17,1,13, where he refers to Alexandria as ὑποδοχεῖον of precious goods, his description confirms that Alexandria was not a free port but imposed and collected high duties for such goods. The translation of ὑποδοχεῖον as "free port" is therefore unlikely to represent his meaning in relation to Ephesos, either, and "store-house" is probably the more correct interpretation in both cases.

his time excessively narrow. Never reluctant to provide expert criticism on architectural matters, Strabo puts the port's unfavorable condition down to the incompetence of architects deployed by the Pergamene king Attalus Philadelphus in the second half of the second century BCE:<sup>7</sup> the architects and their king, Strabo asserts, had been wrong to assume that the entrance to the port, and the port itself, could be made deeper, and thus capable of receiving cargo ships, by the erecting of a mole to narrow its mouth. In fact, continues Strabo, the opposite occurred: the silt that was carried in the river Kaystros, "thus hemmed in, made the whole of the harbor, as far as the mouth, more shallow", whereas previously, he remarks, "the ebb and flow of the tides" had sufficed "to carry away the silt and to draw it to the sea outside". To judge from Strabo's account, it appears that Attalus's engineers labored under the illusion that the level of water inside the port's basin would rise if its entrance were narrowed.<sup>8</sup>

Livy, however, reports that the mouth of the Ephesian port was "like a river, long, narrow, and full of shoals" even earlier in the second century, in 190 BCE, when the Romans and their allies had contemplated trapping the royal fleet of Antiochos III inside the port.<sup>9</sup> Either Livy's account of the situation at the harbor is anachronistic and reflects the situation at a later date, probably in Augustan times, or Strabo's account confuses the facts in some way – and is unfair to Attalus's engineers.

The early history of Ephesos' port may well be irrecoverable. The river had threatened the port far earlier than the second century BCE and had forced the Ephesians more than once to relocate both the harbor and the city farther to the west. But, as Strabo also notes, "because of its advantageous situation in other respects", Ephesos thrived and was the largest emporion of Asia "this side of the Taurus" despite the shortcomings of its harbor.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Strab. 14,1,24–25.

<sup>8</sup> The engineers apparently reasoned that, if the mouth of the port was narrowed, the water that was carried by the river would be slowed on its way to the open sea. In any event, Strabo's account is clear as to what Attalus ordered: to make the entrance of the harbor narrower. I doubt that the passage refers to the construction of a dam to divert the bed load of the Kaystros, as proposed by ZABEHLICKY 1999, 481 (cf. ENGELMANN 1996a): nothing in the passage suggests that the narrowing of the entrance was a side effect of Attalus's engineers' work rather than their intended aim. Such a diverting of the Kaystros, moreover, a measure later undertaken by Hadrian (see below), would appear to be a sensible measure, and an unlikely target of the geographer's criticism.

<sup>9</sup> Liv. 37,14,6: *et eo minoris molimenti ea claustra esse, quod in fluminis modum longum et angustum et vadosum ostium portus sit*: "the closing of the harbour would involve less difficulty because the mouth of the harbour was like a river, long, narrow, and full of shoals" (transl. E.T. SAGE, Cambridge, Mass. 1935 [Loeb]).

<sup>10</sup> Strab. 14,1,24. Here, Strabo repeats the first-place ranking of the emporion of Ephesos that he noted in 12,8,15 (see above), when he was comparing Ephesos to Apameia (text in quotation marks: transl. H.L. JONES, London 1970 [Loeb]).

Literary and epigraphic sources from the Roman Imperial period provide evidence of various attempts to fix those shortcomings. Tacitus mentions, among the “offences” that increased the hostility of the “bad” emperor Nero toward the “good” proconsul Barea Soranus, that Soranus “bestowed pains on opening the port of Ephesos”.<sup>11</sup> In the reign of Trajan, a high-priest of Asia by the name of Montanus<sup>12</sup> donated 75.000 denarii for “construction work on the harbor”.<sup>13</sup> At roughly the same time, more precisely probably in 105 CE, an Ephesian notable donated 2 500 denarii for the same purpose<sup>14</sup>. In the reign of Hadrian we have epigraphic evidence of works aimed at containing or diverting the rivers Mantheites and Kaystros, and at “rendering the harbors navigable”: in the case of the Kaystros, the inscription leaves no doubt that diverting the river was a measure taken to prevent it from harming the harbors (l. 15): βλά[πτοντα τούς] λιμένας).<sup>15</sup> An edict issued under Hadrian’s successor, the text inscribed in IK 11 no. 23 that I will be discussing, below, presents the claim that Antoninus Pius, too, showed great interest in the upkeep of Ephesos’ harbor. Finally, recent archaeological research indicates that a sig-

- <sup>11</sup> Tac. ann. 16,23. We are not informed as to what exactly this “opening” of the harbor entailed (the verb used is *aperio*: *aperiendo*). If we suppose that Attalus’s mistakenly designed “choma” was still there in Soranus’s time, perhaps the proconsul tried to do away with it and/or to otherwise widen the port’s mouth. Alternatively, Soranus may have tried to “open” the basin by dredging the harbor, as a later euergetes did, although the verb *aperio* does not precisely describe that activity. ZABEHLICKY 1995, 205 asserts, without offering evidence, that Tacitus here refers to “cleaning and dredging the bottom of the basin”.
- <sup>12</sup> T. Flavius Montanus, a native of Phrygian Akmoneia, is attested in inscriptions from Akmoneia (IGR IV 643 [with IV 1696]) and Ephesos (IK 12 no. 498; IK 13 no. 698 and no. 854; IK 14 no. 1130; IK 16 no. 2037 and no. 2061–2063). Cf. CAMPANILE 1994, 96; MAMA XI 104 on a descendant of this Montanus at Akmoneia; CRAMME 2001, 128 n. 476; HALFMANN 2001, 64 with nn. 215–216.
- <sup>13</sup> Εἰς τὴν τοῦ [λιμέ]νος κατασκευὴν; IK 16 no. 2061, ll. 14–15. The donation appears to have been made during Montanus’s tenure in the office of provincial high-priest. Cf. ENGELMANN 1996b, 93 n. 10.
- <sup>14</sup> Εἰς τὴν τ[οῦ] λιμένος κατασκευὴν: C. Licinius Maximus Iulianus, IK 17/1 no. 3066, ll. 14–15. On the dating see IK 14 no. 1022. A similar formulation concerning the port being “under construction” may be taken as an indication of a similar date for another, in this case very fragmentary, honorary inscription from Ephesos, IK 14 no. 1391: [νῦν δὲ κατασκευ]αζομένου τοῦ λιμένος; the text apparently lists numerous benefactions of a team of benefactors, because all of the participles, nouns, and adjectives that survive are in the plural: perhaps a father-son team like the one clearly indicated in the inscription for Maximus Iulianus (IK 17/1 no. 3066, ll. 19–22).
- <sup>15</sup> Mantheites: KNIBBE/ENGELMANN/ΪPLIKCIOĞLU 1993, 122–123, no. 12 (SEG 43, 1993, 792; AE 1993, 1472): Ἀρτέμιδι Ἐφεσίᾳ | καὶ Αὐτοκράτορι | Ἀδριανῶ Καίσαρι Σε | βασιτῶ, γραμματεῦντος |<sup>5</sup> Πο. Ῥουτειλίου Βάσσου, ἡ | Ἐφεσίων πόλις τὸ πλάτος | τῶ Μανθείτη ποταμῶ τῶν | ἐξήκοντα ποδῶν κατὰ τὴν | τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ διαταγὴν |<sup>10</sup> ἀποκαθέστησεν τοῦ δεξιῶ | χώματος, Kaystros and “harbors”: IK 12 no. 274: Αὐτοκράτορα Καίσαρα θεοῦ | Τραϊανοῦ Παρθικοῦ υἱόν, θεοῦ | Νέρουα υἱώνον, Τραϊανὸν Ἀδριανὸν | Σεβαστὸν καὶ Ὀλύμπιον, δημορ<sup>15</sup>χικῆς ἐξουσίας τὸ <ι>γ’, ὕπατον | τὸ γ’, πατέρα πατρίδος | ἡ βουλή καὶ ὁ δήμος ὁ Ἐφεσίων | τὸν ἴδιον κτίστην καὶ σωτήρα διὰ | τὰς ἀνυπερβλήτους δωρεὰς Ἀρτέ<sup>10</sup>μιδι, διδόντα τῇ θεῶ τῶν κληρονομιῶν καὶ βεβληκότων τὰ δίκαια | καὶ τοὺς νόμους αὐτῆς, σειτοπομπή[ας δὲ] | ἀπ’ Αἰγύπτου παρέχοντα καὶ τοὺς λιμένας | πο[ιήσαν]τα πλωτοῦς, ἀποστρέψαντά τε |<sup>15</sup> καὶ τὸν βλά[πτοντα τούς] λιμένας ποταμὸν | Κάύστρον διὰ τὸ [–].

nificant upgrading of the harbor facilities at Ephesos took place in the first half of the second century CE.<sup>16</sup> It might not be entirely coincidental, then, that among the numerous inscriptions from Ephesos dating from the second and third centuries CE, we find little evidence of trouble with the port, and none at all until the years between 222 and 238 CE, when a πρύτανις is honored for his donation of 20.000 denarii for the purpose of cleaning the harbor.<sup>17</sup> Again in the third century, the silversmiths at Ephesos find poetic words to express their gratitude for a benefactor's improvement of the port.<sup>18</sup> And in the fifth century, we find Ephesos' harbor referred to in a Coptic text as containing "landings" that prevented a ship from entering it. The passengers on that ship had to board a boat (σκάφος) to gain entry into the city.<sup>19</sup> The latest attestation of Ephesos' central port being in use dates from 723 CE.<sup>20</sup> Today, the site of ancient Ephesos is at a distance of 5,5 km from the shore, and the shape of its ancient harbor is discernible in the intervening landscape. The harbor's mouth is visible, too, and it is surprisingly similar in shape to what Livy described as "like a river, long (and) narrow".

Ephesos had at least one other harbor, known by the name Panormos, which was also mentioned by Strabo. As mentioned above, in the inscription IK 12 no. 274 the emperor Hadrian is praised for making the *harbors* (plural) navigable. Though the location of Panormos is not known with absolute certainty, apparently more than one harbor needed maintenance in the reign of Hadrian, and it seems plausible to infer that there was more than one outer harbor to accommodate the large vessels that could not enter the narrow mouth of Ephesos' central port.

The Ephesians appear to have kept their harbors generally in working order, despite the difficulties of maintaining them. When at the end of the first century CE Pliny the Younger traveled to his province Bithynia in northern Asia Minor, he landed at Ephesos,

<sup>16</sup> ZABEHLICKY 1999, 481.

<sup>17</sup> One of several members of the same family (grandfather, father, and son) named Marcus Aurelius Artemidorus (cf. IK 17/1 no. 3058): IK 17/1 no. 3071, ll. 11–12: εἰς τὴν ἀνα|κάθαρσιν τοῦ λιμένας.

<sup>18</sup> Valerius Festus: ἸΠΛΙΚΣΙΟÇLU/KNIBBE 1984: ἀγαθῆ τύχη | τῆς πρώτης καὶ μεγίστης μητροπόλεως | τῆς Ἀσίας καὶ τρεῖς νε|ώκορου τῶν Σεβαστ(ῶν) || Ἐφεσίων οἱ ἀργυροχοοὶ | Οὐαλέριον Φῆστον | τὸν ἐκ προγόνων ἀνθυ(πατικόν), | κτίστην μὲν πολλῶν ἔργων |<sup>10</sup> τῆς Ἀσίας τῆς δὲ Ἐφέσου | κατὰ τὸν ἥρωα Ἀντωνῖνον, | τὸν δὲ λιμένα μείζονα | Κροίσου ποιήσαντα, | τὸν ἑαυτῶν σωτήρα |<sup>15</sup> καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν εὐεργέτην | ἀνέστησαν.

<sup>19</sup> ENGELMANN 1996a. It is possible, as Engelmann proposes, that the presence of a canal is implied, though not explicitly referred to, in the Coptic text. A canal had existed in earlier phases (see above), and it is still visible today on the ground. On the basis of the translation provided by Engelmann, however, the Coptic text appears to refer to the harbor, rather than to a canal, specifying that landings that had been provided within the harbor left too little space for a large vessel to enter the harbor itself. If by the fifth century the basin of the harbor remained too shallow to accommodate large ships, the Ephesians may well have chosen to build numerous landings for use by small vessels that shuttled to and from boats at anchor in the outer port(s) of the city.

<sup>20</sup> SCHERRER 2007, 349: the harbor is mentioned in the life of Saint Willibald, bishop of Eichstätt in Bavaria, who traveled to Ephesos among other places.



and although he complained about the tiresome land journey that followed, he is not reported to have complained specifically about the fact that his ship had landed so far to the south of his final destination.<sup>21</sup> From this evidence it seems reasonable to infer that landing at Ephesos when traveling from Italy to the province of Asia was usual enough in the time of Pliny that it did not require explanation.<sup>22</sup> In the reign of Caracalla, proconsuls of Asia apparently did not always come ashore at Ephesos, as we can infer from an edict cited by Ulpian, but there is no evidence that the state of the harbor had induced them to land elsewhere.<sup>23</sup>

## Ephesos and the Romans: L. Antonius Albus and IK 11 no. 23

Roman imperial Ephesos was an important harbor for goods traded across the Mediterranean, and its role in the grain trade was particularly critical.<sup>24</sup> Its Artemis temple was famous throughout the ancient Mediterranean both for its antiquity and for its widely respected inviolability. The Artemision owned extensive lands and generated income through local taxes. It functioned as an international bank and, as a consequence, had at hand a highly valued, and in antiquity seldom readily available resource: cash.<sup>25</sup> Augustus had restored to the Artemision the lands and “sacred revenues” that it had lost during the Late Republic, and he had reorganized its finances. Augustan authors circulated a story according to which the Decemviri were aided in drawing up the Ten Tables by an Ephesian exile, who, in return, was given a statue in the Comitium.<sup>26</sup> Though the truth of this story may be questionable, the archaeological evidence indisputably attests that the Augustan period saw the construction of impressive new public buildings at Ephesos under the aegis of the Romans.<sup>27</sup> Literary and epigraphic evidence complete the picture of

<sup>21</sup> Plin. epist. 10,17.

<sup>22</sup> As it appears also to have been in the time of Cicero, who traveled by sea from Rome via Delos to Ephesos, and then by land, from Ephesos via Tralles, to his province Cilicia; Cic. Att. 5,13; cf. 5,20. But there is evidence that Cicero may have owned a house at Ephesos, and this could be expected to have affected his route: Cic. Att. 6,8. Cicero’s and Pliny’s routes do not, in any event, seem a sufficient basis for the conclusion that Ephesos was “der obligatorische Transitort für die römischen Beamte” (KARWIESE 1995, 74, cf. 101). Travel from Ephesos to Athens: Cic. Att. 3,8; 6,8.

<sup>23</sup> Dig. 1,16,4. In this edict, Caracalla decreed that the governor was to enter the province of Asia by sea at Ephesos. Since, according to Ulpian, the edict was a response to a petition, it seems reasonable to infer that one or more governors or other functionaries had disregarded local preference in this respect, or had the intention of doing so, either at Ephesos or at another provincial site.

<sup>24</sup> PLEKET 1994, 120.

<sup>25</sup> The temple apparently did not begin lending, however, before the first century BCE: BOGAERT 1968, 245–254, esp. 249.

<sup>26</sup> Cic. Tusc. 5,105; Strab. 14,1,25. Cf. Plin. nat. 34,21; in the second century CE: Dig. 1,2,2,4 (Pomponius). MÜNZER 1912; recently: OSBORNE 2006, 231.

<sup>27</sup> KIENAST 1999, 438–443; SCHERRER 2001, 69–74.

the beginning of a new era in the relations between Ephesos and Rome in the Augustan period.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the massacres of 88 BCE, the Roman element in the population of Ephesos became very prominent under the Empire. The city had been a melting pot for centuries,<sup>29</sup> but among the many foreigners at Ephesos in Roman imperial times the percentage of Romans was particularly high. A recent study provides documentation of a large number of Italian immigrants, and attests those immigrants' integration into Ephesian society as early as the second half of the first century BCE.<sup>30</sup> From the Flavian period onward, Roman citizens make up the majority of officeholders of the various *γραμματεῖαι* at Ephesos.<sup>31</sup> Based on such evidence, it can be argued that in a geopolitical sense, and possibly even in a cultural sense, the Ephesos of Roman imperial times was almost as much a Roman city as it was a Greek city.<sup>32</sup>

And Romans of Rome and Italy knew a thing or two about maintaining a large city's vulnerable harbors. Rome's own ports, Ostia and Puteoli, had to be protected against silting and strong winds by means of costly constructions. A succession of emperors devoted considerable effort to preserving and upgrading Rome's ports and through them the city's lifeline of imported grain. In the case of Ephesos, the Roman emperor Antoninus Pius behaved in a similar way, according to the inscription IK 11 no. 23, to which I will now turn. In his reign, an edict of the *proconsul Asiae* L. Antonius Albus was carved in stone at Ephesos, on a marble pedimental stele with acroteria, and was presumably set up at the harbor, where it was found in 1956.

<sup>28</sup> SCHERRER 1995, 5.

<sup>29</sup> Plut. Lysander 3,2–3.

<sup>30</sup> KIRBIHLER 2007. According to the same study (p. 29), some 220 non-imperial *gentilicia* are attested among the Roman residents of Ephesos. MEYER 2007, *passim*, on aspects of Roman and Italian presence at Ephesos.

<sup>31</sup> SCHULTE 1994, 15.

<sup>32</sup> Most recently on imperial Ephesos' "hybrid" Greco-Roman identity: THOMAS 2010; RAJA 2012, 85–86. ROGERS 1991 treats "the conceptual world of Ephesos during the early Roman empire"; see esp. p. 2.



[ἀγαθῆ] τύχη·  
 Λ(ούκιος) Ἀντώνιος Ἄλβος ἀνθύπατος  
 λέγει·  
 ἐπεὶ ἵ τῆ μεγίστῃ μητροπόλει τῆς  
 Ἀσίας [καὶ] μονονουχί καὶ τῷ κόσ-  
 μῳ [ἀναγκ]αῖον ἔστιν τὸν ἀποδεχό-  
 μενον τοὺς πανταχ[όθ]εν εἰς αὐ-  
 τὴν καταγομένους λιμέν<α> μὴ  
 ἐνποδίζεσθαι, μαθὼν τίνα τρόπον  
 βλάπτ[ου]σι, ἀναγκαῖον ἡγησάμην  
 διατάξ[μ]ατι καὶ κωλύσαι καὶ κατὰ ἀπει-  
 θούντων τ[ὴν] προσήκουσαν ζημίαν ὀρίσαι·  
 παραγγέλλω [οὔ]ν καὶ τοῖς τὰ ξύλα καὶ τοῖς  
 τοὺς λίθους ἐνπορευομένοις μήτε τὰ ξύλα  
 παρὰ τῆ ὄχθη τιθέναι μήτε τοὺς λίθους  
 πρίζειν· οἱ μὲν γὰρ τὰς κατασκευασθείσας ἐπὶ  
 φυλακῆ τοῦ λιμένος πείλας τ[ῶ] βάρει τῶν φορτίων  
 λυμαίνονται, οἱ δὲ ὑπὸ τῆς ἐνεειμ[έν]ης σμείρεως  
 [λατύ?]πης ἐπειθεῖσφερομένης τὸ βάθος  
 [συ]νχωννύοντες  
 τὸν ῥοῦν ἀνείργουσιν, ἐκάτεροι δὲ ἀνόδευτον  
 τὴν ὄχθην ποιοῦσιν. ἐπεὶ οὖν ἐπιθεμέ[νο]υ μου  
 οὐκ ἐγένε[το] ἰκανὸς Μάρκελλος ὁ γραμματεὺς  
 ἐπισχεῖν αὐτῶν τὴν θρασύτητα, ἴστωσαν ὅτι  
 ἄν τις μὴ γνοῦς τὸ διάταγμα καταλημφθῆ τῶν  
 ἀπειρημένων τι πράττων, εἰσοίσει vac.  
 τῆ ἐπιφανεστάτῃ Ἐφεσίων πόλει, καὶ οὐ-  
 δὲν ἦττον αὐτὸς τῆς ἀπειθείας ἐμοὶ λόγον  
 ὑφέξει· τοῦ γὰρ μεγίστου αὐτοκράτορος περὶ  
 φυλακῆς τοῦ λιμένος πεφροντικόςτος  
 καὶ συνεχῶς περὶ τούτου ἐπεσταλκόςτος  
 τοὺς διαφθείροντας αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔστιν δί-  
 καιον μόνον ἀργύριον καταβάλλοντας  
 ἀφεῖσθαι τῆς αἰτίας. vacat προτεθήτω.  
 γραμματευόντος Τι(βερίου) Κλ(αυδίου) Πο-  
 λυδεύκου Μαρκέλλου ἀσιάρχου.

To good fortune.

L. Antonius Albus, *proconsul*,

says:

Since it is necessary for the greatest *metropolis* of  
 5 Asia, and indeed for the world, that the harbor is  
 not obstructed that receives those who travel by  
 sea to her from everywhere,  
 and having heard how it is being damaged, I have  
 deemed it necessary by means of an edict to  
 10 hinder (them) and also to set the appropriate  
 penalty against those who do not comply.  
 I therefore order those who import wood as well  
 as those (who import) stones not to place the logs  
 by the waterside (ὄχθη) and not to saw the stones.  
 15 For those who (place the logs by the waterside),  
 through the weight of the loads, ruin the piers that  
 were constructed for the protection of the harbor,  
 and those who (saw the stones) fill up the depth  
 and prevent the flow of the water by the throwing  
 20 in of stone chippings mixed with emery; and both  
 (groups) render the waterside impassable.  
 Now, since I gave an order to restrain those men's  
 insolence but Marcellus the secretary has not been  
 able to (do so), let them know that, if someone is  
 caught ignoring the edict and doing something  
 25 forbidden, he will pay to the most distinguished  
 city of the Ephesians (amount not engraved) and  
 he will equally render account before me for his  
 disobedience himself. For it is not just, while the  
 greatest emperor has been concerned about the  
 30 protection of the harbor and has been sending  
 (instructions) on this matter continuously, that  
 those who destroy it be absolved from their  
 responsibility by merely paying money. (This is)  
 to be set up. During the secretaryship of Ti(berius)  
 35 Cl(audius) Polydeukes Marcellus, the Asiarch.

This is a well-known text, for good reasons. It is a prime example of how inscriptions can excite curiosity about the workings of daily life in antiquity. At the same time, it is a prime example of how inscriptions can fail to satisfy that curiosity.

Let me list some facts that I believe can be safely deduced from this text. The proconsul of Asia L. Antonius Albus issued an edict ordering that wood not be placed and stones not be sawed in the area of the harbor. The proconsul himself defines the purpose of his edict: to stop those damaging the harbor. The means to this end, as they are stated in the edict, will be to set an appropriate penalty and to compel the perpetrators to answer to him. The proconsul names as reasons for his decision that a) a structure, in his words, “for the protection of the harbor” was being damaged; b) the harbor was being rendered shallower; and c) the harbor’s waterside (ὄχθη) was being rendered impassable. The proconsul states that Marcellus, the city’s secretary, had received orders from him to put a stop to the activities that were causing the damage but had been unable to do so. From the closing of this edict we can deduce that, at the time of the issuing of the edict, the emperor had sent two or more letters that had contained instructions for, in the words of the proconsul, again, “the protection of the harbor” (ll. 28–30).

The text generates a number of questions. We can’t be sure who did what where: *who* exactly did *what* wrong, and *where* in relation to the harbor. First, who is meant by ἐμπορευόμενοι (l. 14: ἐνπορευομένοις)? L. Robert concluded that the ἐμπορευόμενοι were merchants.<sup>33</sup> Ἐμπορεύομαι with the accusative is indeed used in literary sources to refer to the act of importing goods. But the subject of ἐμπορεύομαι is in some instances a local who brings in goods from abroad – one who receives those goods and makes them available locally, as opposed to someone who travels in from abroad, sells the goods, and then departs.<sup>34</sup> Thus, we cannot be sure that stone merchants and wood merchants were the evildoers, or the sole evildoers, under discussion in the edict. Ἐμπορεύομαι with the accusative could just as well point to contractors of local works and stone masons and artists<sup>35</sup> and whoever else worked with imported building materials, and who, apparently, found it convenient to place and to work those materials where they were brought in,

<sup>33</sup> Called λιθέμποροι in the case of those who were merchants in stones; ROBERT 1962, 35 n. 71. Also WINTER 1996, 187 speaks of the ἐμπορευόμενοι as merchants (Kaufleute). Wood merchants were ξυλέμποροι; see SEG 28, 1978, 1407.

<sup>34</sup> In Dion. Hal. ant. 6,86,4, ἐμπορεύομαι (ἐμπορεύονται) refers to the activities of citizens who supply their *polis* with “many benefits transported by sea”: “τὸν αὐτὸν δὴ τρόπον ὑπολάβετε καὶ περὶ πόλεως. πολλὰ γὰρ δὴ τὰ συμπληροῦντα καὶ ταύτην ἔθνη καὶ οὐδὲν ἀλλήλοισ ἐοικότα, ὧν ἕκαστον ἰδίαν τινὰ τῷ κοινῷ χρειᾶν ὥσπερ τὰ μέλη τῷ σώματι παρέχεται. οἱ μὲν γὰρ τοὺς ἀγροὺς γεωργοῦσιν, οἱ δὲ μάχονται περὶ αὐτῶν πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους, οἱ δ’ ἐμπορεύονται πολλὰς διὰ θαλάσσης ὠφελείας, οἱ δὲ τὰς ἀναγκαίας ἐργάζονται τέχνας.”

<sup>35</sup> BOURAS 2009, esp. 497–498, suggests that they were artists.

in the area of the harbor<sup>36</sup>. This would not be surprising if the buildings for which the wood and the stones were intended were nearby, and we know from recent archaeological investigations that the region immediately to the east of the harbor saw intense building activity during the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius.<sup>37</sup>

In the proconsul's mention of wood, he describes the placing of the wood at the harbor with the verb τίθημι, which appears here in the infinitive τιθέναι (l. 15). Earlier translators and commentators have rendered this verb in English as “to store”, but the basic root meaning of τιθέναι is “to place” – not “to store” – and that is perhaps all that is meant, here. Some people were placing the logs somewhere<sup>38</sup> and leaving them there for some period of time, but for how long? For the minutes or hours before they were picked up again to be transported further, or for days and months? Was it during the offloading of the logs that the structure on which they were placed was being damaged? Or was it rather while the logs were being kept there for longer periods, or “stored”, that their weight tested the endurance of the “piers”?

Πείλας (l. 17) is a transcription of lat. *pilae*, plural of *pila*, -ae, which, besides “pillar” (column), can mean “pier” or “mole”, either of stone or another material. The *pilae* mentioned here could be either the stone-clad banks of the basin itself or wooden piers projecting into the basin or, finally, wooden or stone piers erected alongside the canal<sup>39</sup>. Given so many uncertainties, I suspect that even the recent suggestion by a specialist on ancient harbors, to the effect that the *pilae* in this inscription reflect a phase of construction of the harbor prior to the architectural phase now revealed in excavation, is essentially guesswork.<sup>40</sup>

And there are other interpretations of this text that depend on guesswork, in spite of the fact that it is preserved largely intact, but for the approximately five consecutive letters that are missing from the beginning of line 19. This lacuna is immediately preceded by the phrase οἱ δὲ ὑπὸ τῆς ἐνείεμ[έν]ης σμείρωσ and is followed apparently by the letters ΤΗΣ, underdotted in the most recent reading in the IK, and next, in coordination with these genitives, a further genitive in the feminine, ἐπειεισφερομένης. This last word is easily understood, assuming it contains a common mistake or orthographic anomaly, in this case the dittography of ει: ἐπει{ει}σφερομένης from ἐπεισφέρω, “bring in besides”, which I translate in this context as “mix with” (“mixed with emery”).

<sup>36</sup> One thinks, for example, of the γλυκυτάτη συνεργασία τῶν ξυλοπριστῶ[ν] at Ephesos: IK 16 no. 2115.

<sup>37</sup> SCHERRER 1995, 12–13; HUEBER 1997, 51.

<sup>38</sup> In translating ὄχθη, here, I prefer the interpretation “waterside” because it seems to me the most neutral English translation of the term. But ὄχθη can mean a number of things besides, including dyke, bank of a river, wharf, shore, and coast.

<sup>39</sup> On the possibility of ships having moored along the canal at Ephesos' harbor see GROH 2006, 105 with n. 227.

<sup>40</sup> BOURAS 2009, 499.

All commentators on this passage of the inscription have remarked on the noun *σμείρις* (l. 18), sometimes spelled *σμίρις*, but usually *σμύρις*, the emery powder used by lapidaries, and they seem to be in agreement that emery powder was filling up the harbor's basin. I would like to suggest that the incompletely preserved word that follows immediately next on the stone, and which has been read as ending in *ΤΗΣ*, might have been the word *λατύπη* – that is, stone chippings, the parts that were chipped off and were discarded when stone was being worked. In Egypt, Strabo writes, heaps of *λατύπη* remained visible in his time near the pyramids.<sup>41</sup> On my interpretation, it was not emery powder alone that was filling up the harbor, but also the stone chips that were a by-product of working the stone. If the restoration of *λατύπη* here is accepted, then we know a little bit more about the materials that the proconsul says were filling up the harbor.<sup>42</sup> But this is a minor improvement in our understanding of an inscription that presents larger uncertainties, including the date of this edict.<sup>43</sup>

The Ephesians knew, better than we, what went on at their harbor. And they presumably knew, for example, what amount of money their governor wanted violators of his edict to pay as a fine, because the edict had been published (on perishable material), as the governor had ordered,<sup>44</sup> and because, to judge from his stated intention “to set the appropriate penalty” (l. 12),<sup>45</sup> Albus presumably specified a certain amount of money that was to be recorded after the word *εἰσόσει*, in the phrase engraved on this stone in line 25. The

<sup>41</sup> Strab. 17,1,34: “Ἐν δέ τι τῶν ὀραθέντων ὑφ’ ἡμῶν ἐν ταῖς πυραμίσι παραδόξων οὐκ ἄξιον παραλιπεῖν. ἕκ γὰρ τῆς λατύπης σωροὶ τινες πρὸ τῶν πυραμίδων κείνται· ἐντούτοις δ’ εὕρισκεται ψήγματα καὶ τύπω καὶ μεγέθει φακοειδῆ (...).”

<sup>42</sup> While there is not yet, to my knowledge, archaeological evidence for the discarding of construction debris in Ephesos’ harbor, such as that mentioned in Albus’s edict, geoarchaeological work at the harbor has recorded “numbers of pottery sherds (all broken) suggesting deliberately discarded debris.” KRAFT et al. 2007, 141.

<sup>43</sup> The date of Albus’s edict and proconsulate is still under debate, with scholars divided between those favoring a date in 147/8 CE (that is, one decade after Antoninus Pius’s ascent to the throne) and those preferring 160/1 CE (the last year of that emperor’s reign). The proconsul refers emphatically to the emperor’s sustained interest in the matter at hand. But, in claiming that the emperor had written “one letter after the other” (l. 30: *συνεχῶς*), Albus provides few clues as to the actual volume and time frame of that correspondence. Albus’s claim would stand whether Antoninus had sent two letters by 147 CE or twenty letters by 160 CE, and, finally, it would stand if the emperor had sent two letters shortly before either of those dates. The governor’s rhetoric in respect to the emperor is of no help when it comes to choosing among the several options for dating this edict within Pius’s reign. However, JONES 1973 is right to point out that BOWERSOCK’S arguments for a date in 160/1, though not indisputable, remain at least as convincing as the alternative; BOWERSOCK 1967; in addition, JONES 2013, 61 n. 54 points to an unnoticed problem with the earlier dating. For the earlier dating, between 146 and 149 CE: ECK 1972, 23; IK 11 no. 23, p. 141; ALFÖLDY 1977, 213; HALFMANN 1979, 148 n. 58.

<sup>44</sup> Line 34: *προτεθήτω*.

<sup>45</sup> *τ[ὴν] προσήκουσαν ζημίαν ὀρίσαι*.

formulation of line 25 seems to exclude the possibility that the governor's edict had been ambiguous on this point.<sup>46</sup>

And yet, previous editors of this text are in agreement that the amount was never inscribed on this stone. It is not unprecedented in the epigraphic record that a word, and more frequently a numeral, is left uninscribed because it represented a detail that was not known at the time and was to be added later.<sup>47</sup> In all such cases, missing numerals and words could have been supplied with paint. But these parallels are not entirely comparable with the missing fine on the inscribed edict at Ephesos' harbor, because in this case the specified amount was in all probability already known. We might suggest, as an explanation for why the amount was not inscribed, that perhaps some group among the Ephesians hoped to renegotiate the amount, either with Albus or with a future governor, and were able to keep the amount from being inscribed. Members of the stonecutters' guild, for example, might not have been pleased with the edict's menacing tone and punitive measures.

In spite of its harsh tone toward the miscreants, the edict bestowed honor on the city of Ephesos. Along with other documents that were issued by Roman authorities and that were preserved on stone at Ephesos, this governor's edict successfully communicates the message that the emperors favored the city of Ephesos, which in Roman imperial times was in all likelihood a *civitas libera*.<sup>48</sup> In a characteristic example of such documents, a fragmentary imperial letter possibly issued by Hadrian,<sup>49</sup> the emperor writes that, if Egypt were to bring forth a good harvest of grain, Ephesos would be the first city, after Rome, to profit.<sup>50</sup> The letter has been discussed for its evidence on such topics as the grain trade, famines, and shortfalls in the grain supply. But to the Ephesians, much of the value of that imperial letter, and perhaps a chief reason for immortalizing it on stone, lay in the emperor's honorific rhetoric, in which he put Rome, his own πατρίς, first in the empire, but accorded the city of Ephesos the immediately next rank.

<sup>46</sup> ENGELMANN 1978, 226 proposed that the fine was to be adjusted in each case according to an estimate of the damage that had been done. Although the parallels from Roman law that Engelmann adduces are instructive, they do not offer an explanation of why the amount of the fine was left blank here.

<sup>47</sup> Numerals uninscribed: NAOUR 1977, 280 n. 8 (a penalty for violating a grave), and ROBERT 1935, 445 (a donation). Words uninscribed: ROBERT 1935, 445 (designations of ethnics).

<sup>48</sup> CALAPÁ 2009, 345 suggests an early date ("possibly as early as 133" BCE) for Ephesos' acquisition of this status. GUERBER 1995, arguing that Ephesos was not a *civitas libera*, against the *communis opinio*, relies on inconclusive evidence.

<sup>49</sup> Or by another emperor of the second century CE; WÖRRLE 1971, 340.

<sup>50</sup> IK 12 no. 211.

Such epigraphic displays of honorable exchanges between a provincial city and Rome are found in other *civitates liberae* of the empire, and I believe that those inscriptions can be adduced as evidence that these cities took care to highlight their particularly close connection to the imperial center – as opposed to the aspects of independence that came from their legal status. Whatever privileges their status as free cities gained for them in legal and economic terms, in constructing their public image these cities encouraged the impression that the Romans had bestowed on them an honorific title, so to speak, one that advertised a city to be *civitas libera* and which the Romans reserved for only their closest friends. These epigraphic monuments propagated the idea that being “outside the province” (being removed from the *formula provinciae*) marked a city as being closer to Rome than other cities were.<sup>51</sup> Which Ephesos truly was, as I have tried to argue above. Ephesos was central to Roman interests – economic interests certainly, and social interests very likely. If Roman *providentia* was lavished on the harbor at Ephesos, this was not necessarily a sign of Roman rule aiming to improve the daily lives of Rome’s provincial subjects. It was perhaps, instead, an example of Rome’s efforts on behalf of Roman traders and Roman residents in the provincial city.<sup>52</sup>

There are additional reasons why Antonius Albus’s edict should not be adduced as evidence of Rome having ruled its provinces through an involvement in infrastructure. Although the proconsul’s rhetoric certainly conveys the impression that the central Roman authorities, having in mind the welfare of Ephesos and of the empire, took up the task of protecting Ephesos’ harbor from abuse by local malefactors, the picture becomes less clear when we look at the local details. As we have seen, the city of Ephesos had been in many ways too Roman for us to view it as representative of a provincial city that could be expected to profit from the Romans’ promotion of infrastructure projects in the provinces. In addition, the Roman proconsul in this case came from an Ephesian family. He therefore had longterm local ties and interests, and might have been in some ways too “local” for us to view him as typically representative of Rome’s central government in the provinces. The Ephesian relatives of the *proconsul Asiae* Antonius Albus were prominent enough that members of an older generation are attested as public benefactors in local epigraphic evidence.<sup>53</sup> We can expect that, like many a member of the provincial and imperial elite, Albus was at home in more than one place, including Rome and Ephesos.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. on Aphrodisias KOKKINIA 2008. On privileges and titles of cities in the Roman East see most recently GUERBER 2009.

<sup>52</sup> On the importance of maritime networks for the Roman economy and the role of trading communities at major ports in the Roman Mediterranean, see now WILSON/SCHÖRLE/RICE 2012. On numismatic evidence possibly suggesting that harbor facilities received particular attention from the imperial government during the Antonine period, see BOYCE 1958.

<sup>53</sup> IK 13 no. 614 B with PIR<sup>2</sup> L 74; IK 13 no. 614 C with PIR<sup>2</sup> I 760.

Similar in respect to having both local and supra-local interests is Tiberius Claudius Polydeukes Marcellus, the secretary of the city of Ephesos when this edict was promulgated, who had previously been advised about the instances of abuse at Ephesos' harbor. Marcellus, whose name appears twice on this stone, is likely to have played an active role in the edict's monumentalization. He was a distinguished member of the provincial elite; he was a Roman citizen at home both at Ephesos and at nearby Magnesia; and he was prominent enough to carry the title of Asiarch.

To the picture that is provided by Albus's rhetoric, then – the picture of the emperor and his governor stepping in to protect an important component of provincial infrastructure from local abuse, in other words to make up for local incompetence – we could oppose a different or parallel interpretation, one that was likely to have occurred to a contemporary audience: a case of two powerful locals invoking the central imperial authority in an effort to enforce measures that were unpopular in their city.

In short, and in conclusion, ardent imperial support of infrastructure projects in the provinces, and/or state rhetoric that pledged such support, may or may not be discernible in the Ephesian evidence. Antonius Albus, in his position as the highest representative of imperial power in the province, considered it helpful to include in his edict his own assessment of the importance of Ephesos' harbor along with an urgent warning that the matter was of great interest to the Roman emperor himself. But despite the governor's clear arguments and powerful rhetoric, his edict leaves many questions unanswered, including the real proportion of imperial vs. local interest in the fate of Ephesos' harbor. Though Albus's edict clearly implies that good governors and good emperors actively promoted infrastructure in the provinces, we are reduced to guessing whether this rhetoric acknowledged a fact, or was wishful thinking, or, finally, was aimed at persuading future emperors and governors to adopt such roles. The edict may well have communicated all three of these points together. But the carving in stone of that edict provides strong evidence of an effort to influence, rather than simply to document, Roman policy in the provinces. The monumentalization of the edict's rhetoric attests to local provincial effort to project a picture of Rome as being eager and ready to devote resources to works of provincial infrastructure. I would suggest that the political and intellectual context of such epigraphic monuments is more likely to be found in the vicinity of Aelius Aristides than in the circle of Frontinus at Rome.



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