

Athens and Roman Problems around Moesia

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WHEN M. Licinius Crassus, who on July 4, 27 B.C. was to celebrate a triumph *ex Thracia et Geteis*, won his victory as proconsul of Macedonia and received the acclamation *imperator* from his troops, his friends gave him the honor for a while. The Athenians erected a monument on the Acropolis with the inscription (IG II² 4118):

ὁ δῆμος
Μάρκον Λικίνιον Μάρκου
υἷον Κράσσον, ἀνθύπατον
καὶ αὐτοκράτορα, ἀρετῆς
ἔνεκεν κ[α]ὶ εὐνοίας

When he reached Rome, Crassus received his triumph but was refused the right to claim *spolia opima* or the acclamation *imperator*, which was now reserved for the princeps (Dio 51.25.2). The question of the acclamation seldom arose again for anyone except an emperor or his heir, though in A.D. 22 Tiberius allowed the proconsul of Africa to be acclaimed. So the Athenian inscription is peculiar in this. On the other hand, the Athenians did not need to indicate that Crassus was proconsul of Macedonia because as proconsul of Macedonia, he was their local governor. The term of M. Licinius Crassus antedated the separation of Achaia from Macedonia in 27 B.C. The separation began with the appointment of his successor, and thereafter the title *ἀνθύπατος* in an Athenian inscription usually (but not always) meant the proconsul of Achaia unless specifically differentiated.

B. D. Meritt¹ published an inscription from the excavations of the Athenian Agora as follows:

¹ "Greek Inscriptions," *Hesperia* 32 (1963) 37, No. 34 and Plate 2.

[ἡ βουλὴ ἢ ἐξ Ἀ]ρήου [πάγου καὶ ὁ δῆμος]
 [Σέξτον Αἴλιο]ν Κάτον [αὐτοκράτορα]
 [ἀν]θύπα[τον]
 [ἀρετῆς ἐν]εκα καὶ ε[ὕνοίας]

With reference to Strabo 7.303 Meritt identified Catus with the consul of A.D. 4 who either earlier or later than A.D. 4 brought 50,000 Getae across the Danube into Thrace. Meritt restored the name and formulas and balanced line 2 more or less by adding the unsupported restoration *αὐτοκράτορα* under the impression that “as general in charge of such an operation Aelius could legitimately have carried the title ‘Imperator’.” In my opinion a title *imperator* is an impossible restoration, but the identification of Catus with the consul of A.D. 4 is not at all unlikely. Then he was not the local governor. No proconsul of Achaia had the military opportunity to bring 50,000 Getae across the Danube into Thrace. Hence the word *Μακεδονίας* should perhaps be restored in line 3. R. Syme² identified Catus as (praetorian) proconsul of Macedonia rather than legate of Moesia. A. Stein³ formulated the problem: “es lässt sich weder entscheiden, ob Catus Statthalter von Macedonia oder etwa Legat des exercitus in Moesien war, noch der genaue Zeitpunkt dieser Unternehmung bestimmen.” If Meritt’s identification of the man honored is right, Catus was at least proconsul of Macedonia, as Syme conjectured. He may also have had a combination of titles indicating that he was simultaneously legate in Moesia and proconsul of Macedonia. The province of Moesia had not yet been set up, but Stein’s assumption (p. 13) that P. Vinicius (*cos.* A.D. 2) was simultaneously imperial legate and proconsul of Macedonia now seems to me correct, even though the inscription of Callatis⁴ does not mention the proconsulship:

ὁ δ[ἄμος]
 Ποπλίω Οὐνικί[ω πρεσβεύτα καὶ ἀντι-]
 στρατάγω τῷ πά[τρωνι καὶ εὐεργέτῃ]
 [τᾶς τῶν Καλλα]τι[ανῶν πόλιος]

Accordingly, the Athenian inscription for Catus may seem to have read in lines 2–3 *πρεσβευτὴν καὶ ἀντι | στρατήγον, ἀν]θύπα[τον Μακεδο-*

² “Lentulus and the Origin of Moesia,” *JRS* 24 (1934) 126–34.

³ *Die Legaten von Moesien* (=Diss. Pannonicae, ser. I, 11 [1940]) 17.

⁴ *AE* 1960, 378 with comment by R. Syme, *Historia* 11 (1962) 149.

νίας; but that would give us an arrangement with line 3 slightly indented, whereas the right arrangement would be with lines 2 and 3 evenly aligned to the left and lines 1 and 4 centered. Hence we restore:

[ἡ ἐξ Ἀ]ρήου [πάγου βουλή]
 [Σέξτον Αἴλιο]ν Κάτον [πρεσβευτήν Καίσαρος]
 [Σεβαστοῦ καὶ ἀν]θύπα[τον Μακεδονίας ἀρε-
 [τῆς ἐν]εκα καὶ ε[ὑνοίας]

This reconstruction has a clear advantage over Meritt's in that it does not emphasize the word *ἀνθύπατον* by devoting an entire line to this word alone. Yet some reader may be disturbed by the absence of *ἀντιστράτηγον*. Needlessly, because *pro praetore* has been omitted from the upper part of the inscription, erected at Olympia in honor of A. Didius Gallus, *ILS* 970, which with a restoration of lines 6–7 based on a strikingly similar but acephalous monument at Athens⁵ I have read as follows:

A · Didius G[allus leg]atus [Ti ·]
 Claudi · Caes[aris] Aug · Ger[mani-
 ci tr[ī]umphal[ibus ο]rname[ntis],
 [XVvir] s · f · pro · co[s · Asia]e et Sicilia[e],
 5 [.]siae, pr[ae]fectu[s] equitat ·
 [comes et legatus impe]ratoris · i[n]
 [Britannia]

In line 5, where the lacuna at the beginning is long enough to accommodate six letters or five letters and a dot, one could restore [legat · A]siae possibly, but I should much prefer [dux Moe]siae or even the long [reg· Moe]siae, since Suetonius, *Caligula* 25, identifies a legate of Moesia as an *exercitus regens*. The phrase *dux Moesiae* could be understood to mean *dux exercitus Moesiae* in wartime, and it alone fits in the lacuna without crowding.

The identification of Catus as the Catus who was concerned with Thrace draws support from the close connection between Athens and Thrace at this period. *IG* II² 1070 reveals that a prince of the royal house of Thrace received the honor of the archonship at Athens, “dans les dix premières années de notre ère, environ.”⁶ Kings of

⁵ J. H. Oliver, “Greek and Latin Inscriptions,” *Hesperia* 10 (1941) 240, No. 40 Line 5: [comiti et le]ga[to i]n Brittan[nia].

⁶ P. Graindor, *Chronologie des archontes athéniens sous l'empire* (Mémoires publiés par la Classe des lettres . . . de l'Académie royale de Belgique, collection in 4^o, ser. II, VIII [1921]) No. 19.

Thrace obtained the distinction of statues at Athens, as IG II² 3442 and 3443 from the latter part of the first century B.C. reveal, and again in A.D. 36/7 a king of Thrace became archon (IG II² 1967 and 2292). There must have been important Athenian interests in Thrace, or the kings of Thrace and Roman commanders in that area could be of great assistance in facilitating shipments of grain and other food from the Black Sea region. There is no Athenian honorary inscription for the governor of Moesia, Tib. Plautius Silvanus Aelianus, who, under Nero, *primus ex ea provincia magno tritici modo annonam p. R. adlevavit*.⁷

It would seem that a close cooperation between Thracian princes and the city of the Athenians began in the second half of the first century and lasted at least through A.D. 36/7, probably until the kingdom of Thrace was taken over by the Roman government in A.D. 45.⁸ It appears also that the Athenians erected monuments to Roman governors of Macedonia who intervened in Thrace. This is certain in the case of M. Licinius Crassus (27 B.C.) and probable in the case of Sextus Aelius Catus much later in the reign of Augustus. After the kingdom of Thrace became a province it is harder to establish direct connections between Thrace and Athens, although the name of the archon of 168/9, Tineius Ponticus of the deme Besa, suggests a man from the coast of the Black Sea whose family derived their Roman citizenship from Q. Tineius Rufus, legate of Thrace in A.D. 124.

Athenians of the Julio-Claudian period seem to have been much interested in governors of Moesia. The whole family of P. Memmius Regulus received honors (to be discussed in a forthcoming article), and an acephalous Latin inscription⁹ gives the *cursus honorum* of a legate who had been on the staff of Claudius in Britain.

Pliny in Epistle 43 to Trajan mentions that Byzantium had to pay 3000 sesterces in traveling expenses for the envoy whom they sent every year to greet the governor of Moesia. In his reply Trajan practically forbids such excessive annual expenditures in the case of the governor of Moesia and in his own case. Since Byzantium did not belong to the province of Moesia, this flattery of the governor shows that vital interests of Byzantium absolutely depended upon his good will.

⁷ *Inscr. Ital.* I 1, 125=ILS 986 =CIL XIV 3608. L. Halkin, *Ant. class.* 3 (1934) 121-161 at 145-7 explains the word *provincia* as meaning Moesia. D. M. Pippidi, *Epigraphische Beiträge* (see n.11) 121f thinks that the grain was sent in A.D. 62 at the time of the crisis in Egypt.

⁸ A. Stein, *Römische Reichsbeamte der Provinz Thracia* (Sarajevo 1920) 1-3.

⁹ *Hesperia* 10 (1941) 239-41, No. 40.

The chief importance of Thrace to the Athenians and of Moesia to the Byzantines seems to have been the grain which these provinces produced. In the case of Athens, which had good relations with the Ptolemies traditionally and particularly with Antony and Cleopatra, the Battle of Actium made a great difference. Thereafter the Egyptian grain went to Italy, and the grain fleet from Alexandria no longer touched at the Piraeus. A grain famine occurred.¹⁰ Grain was still coming from the Black Sea but less of it than Athens needed. The pacification of Thrace by Licinius Crassus and the settlement of Getae in Thrace by Sextus Aelius Catus to till the fields¹¹ increased the potential supply and partly consoled the Athenians. If we are right in so reading the evidence, we may date the monuments represented by IG II² 3442 and 3443 in honor of Thracian kings to the period after the Battle of Actium.

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¹⁰ Plutarch, *Antony* 68. In general see John Day, *An Economic History of Athens under Roman Domination* (New York 1942) 162–4, but Day has not claimed Thrace or Moesia as a source of grain for Athens.

¹¹ D. M. Pippidi, "Tib. Plautius Silvanus Aelianus und Moesien unter Neros Regierung," *Epigraphische Beiträge zur Geschichte Histrias in hellenistischer und römischer Zeit* (=Deutsche Akad. Wiss. Berlin, Schriften der Sektion für Altertumswissenschaft 34, 1962) 106–32 at 120.