

A New *Procurator Augusti* in the Province of Macedonia

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AMONG THE FINDS at 20 Margaropoulou St., behind the New Railway Station of Thessaloniki, i.e. within the limits of the west cemetery of the ancient city,¹ two inscribed fragments were found some years ago (here arbitrarily A and B; PLATE 1):

A: Slab of coarse white marble, found 13 March 1995 and kept at the Museum of Byzantine Culture (inv. no. BE 216/4). It was used as a covering slab for tomb T 37. On the upper part is a cyma recta of 0.05 m. height and a band of 0.035 m. height. Broken on all sides except the upper side, the surface of which is carefully smoothed. The back is roughly worked with a chisel. Dimensions: h. 0.44 m., w. 0.765 m., th. 0.10 m. Letter height: first line 0.07 m., second 0.055 m., third 0.05 m., fourth 0.025 m.; line spacing 0.035–0.04 m.

B: Slab of coarse white marble, found 13 March 1995 and kept at the Museum of Byzantine Culture (inv. no. BE 216/3). It was used as a covering slab for tomb T 37. On the lower part is a cyma recta of 0.05 m. height and a band of 0.035 m. height. Broken on all sides except the lower side. The surface of the lower end is carefully smoothed. The back is roughly worked with a chisel. Dimensions: h. 0.47 m., w. 0.53 m., th. 0.10 m. Letter height: lines 1–2 0.06 m., line 3 0.05 m.; line spacing 0.035 m.

¹ On the west cemetery of Thessaloniki see Δ. Ναλμπάντης, *Ανασκαφή στο νεκροταφείο του Μουσείου Βυζαντινού πολιτισμού στη Θεσσαλονίκη* (Athens 2003) 161–165, and more recently Ε. Μαρκή, *Η νεκρόπολη της Θεσσαλονίκης στους υστερορωμαϊκούς και παλαιοχριστιανικούς χρόνους* (Thessaloniki 2006) 59 ff.



PLATE 1: Inscription from Thessaloniki

- A. [- - ca. 7-8 - -]ον² ⚡ Σεβαστοῦ [- - ca. 4 - -]
 [- - ca. 8-9 - -]σκον ⚡ ἐπίτρο [- - ca. 4 - -]
 [- - ca. 9-10 - -]ακεδονία [- - ca. 4 - -]
 4 [- - ca. 11-12 - -]υῖατρα [- - ca. 4-5 - -]
- B. vacat Κλαυδία [- - - - -]
 vacat Τ ⚡ Φλαοῦι [- - - - -]
 vacat Τ ⚡ Φλαοῦιος [- - -]

Critical observations. A 2: at the beginning of the line an upper horizontal stroke is discernible. A 4: from left to right, we see a) traces of the upper part of an oblique right stroke; b) upper part of gamma; c) upper part of a triangular letter; d) upper part of tau; e) upper part of rho; and f) upper part of a triangular letter.

The two fragments belong to the same monument, even though they do not join. This conclusion is drawn on the basis of: a) the texture of the marble;³ b) the thickness; c) the way in which their surfaces in general and the cyma with the band in particular had been smoothed, and d) the kind of work their rear surfaces have received. In addition, further evidence for the origin of the fragments from the same monument is e) that they were reused at the same tomb. Finally f) the letter forms and the overall impression of the writing of both fragments lead to the same conclusion. This results not only from the extensive use of apices but especially from characteristic letters in both fragments—alpha with its middle stroke horizontal; kappa with

² I estimate 7 or 8 missing letters on the assumption that the name of the honorand should consist of *praenomen* and *nomen gentis* (separated with a punctuation mark, cf. fragment B) and that his *gentilicium* was Claudius or, more likely, Φλαοῦιος (for this spelling see fragment B) as is implied by the dating of the inscription on paleographical criteria. I estimate one letter more in lines 2 and 3 because their letters are smaller than those of the first line. For the number of missing letters in the right part of the inscription see discussion below.

³ The difference in the color of the marble and the brown patina of the first slab is due to the fact that it abutted the ground, in contrast to the second, which covered the open part of the tomb.

its lower oblique strokes not attached to the vertical; the large circular omicron; and in particular the four-bar sigma with its two oblique strokes meeting the horizontal ones not at their left edge but slightly to the right. These, as well as other characteristic letters of fragment A, for example the letter pi (horizontal stroke slightly surpassing the two vertical), or the epsilon (with three horizontal strokes equal), may be compared to the letter forms and the overall impression of inscriptions from other cities of Macedonia dated to the first century A.D., most likely from the reign of the Claudius onwards.⁴ And this dating is further corroborated by the presence of persons bearing the *gentilicia* of the Claudian and the Flavian dynasties in fragment B.

As to the monument to which both fragments belong, the clean-cut elaboration of the front surface and the smoothed surface of the the upper and the lower ends makes it almost certain that we have to do with the marble revetment of a pedestal, of an overall height of at least 1.00 m.,⁵ on which an honorary statue was placed. That the inscription was an honorary one is inferred from its preserved text and the articulation of the name of the honored person in the accusative.

More particularly, the completely or partly preserved words Σεβαστοῦ, ἐπίτροπον, and Μακεδονίας indicate that he was a procurator, the chief of imperial finances in the province of Macedonia. Additionally his legal status can be inferred from

⁴ See *EKM* I 60 (A.D. 41–44) and 61 (79–81) from Beroia; Μ. Δήμιτσας, *Η Μακεδονία εν λίθοις φθεγγομένοις και εν μνημείοις σωζομένοις* (Athens 1896) no. 366 = Β. Μισαηλίδου-Δεσποτίδου, *Επιγραφές Αρχαίας Μακεδονίας* (Thessaloniki 1997) no. 36 (44/5) from Pella. About the origin of the latter see Ch. Edson and G. Daux, “*IG X 2,1: Prolegomena, Epilegomena*,” *BCH* 98 (1974) 524.

⁵ The total height of the two fragments is 91 cm. But insofar as a) there was at least one additional line of writing in the inscription (the height of the letters varies between 5 and 7 cm. and the line spacing between 3.5 and 4 cm.), and b) the fourth line of A and the first of B are preserved only partly as to their height, we must add at least ten cm. more to the original height.

the position of the genitive Σεβαστοῦ after the ending of his *gentilicium*, which indicates that, as in numerous Latin and Greek inscriptions, the word ἀπελεύθερον should be restored afterwards: he was an imperial freedman.⁶ Furthermore, the use of the formula Σεβαστοῦ ἀπελεύθερος, equivalent to Latin *Aug(usti) lib(ertus)*, points to a date after the accession of Vespasian.⁷ This fact, in combination with its dating on paleographic grounds, shows that the procurator was named either Τ(ιβέριος) Κλαύδιος (Tiberius Claudius) or, more likely, mainly because of the formula Σεβαστοῦ ἀπελεύθερος, Titus Flavius and that his *praenomen* and *nomen gentis* should be restored as [Τ · Φλαοῦι]ος.⁸ This conclusion is in line with the *gentilicia* Claudius and Flavius borne by the three Thessalonians named in fragment B. As to his *cognomen*, it could be one of the known Latin *cognomina* ending in *-scus*; but as they are so numerous⁹ it would be futile to suggest a restoration.

The restoration of the officer's full name including his titlature constitutes the next two questions that are posed by the new find. To begin with, it is not clear whether the word ἀπελεύθερος was written fully or abbreviated. In Greek inscriptions mentioning imperial freedmen the full ἀπελεύθερος is preferred¹⁰ over its rarely attested abbreviations ἀπελεύθ. or

⁶ See P. R. C. Weaver, *Familia Caesaris. A Social Study of the Emperor's Freedmen and Slaves* (Cambridge 1972) 48; H. Chantraine, *Freigelassene und Sklaven im Dienst der römischen Kaiser* (Wiesbaden 1967) 147.

⁷ See Weaver, *Familia Caesaris* 51, who observes that this expression became dominant and almost exclusive in inscriptions of the period from Vespasian to Marcus Aurelius for the status of imperial freedmen.

⁸ If the inscription is indeed dated to the reign of Vespasian and later, as we believe, then it is almost certain that the procurator also had a *praenomen*: study of the names borne by imperial freedmen in inscriptions shows that from the period of Vespasian to that of Antoninus Pius, almost always their names follow the pattern *praenomen-nomen-Aug(usti) lib(ertus)* (variously abbreviated)-*cognomen*. See Weaver, *Familia Caesaris* 78.

⁹ See *Repert.nom.gent.* 446. Of course, we cannot exclude the possibility of a Greek proper name in -σκος.

¹⁰ See Weaver, *Familia Caesaris* 72.

ἀπελ.,¹¹ and this makes it possible but not obligatory that also here the word had its full form as in another Greek inscription from Thessaloniki concerning an imperial freedman.¹² However, if the full form ἀπελεύθερον was used, there would be almost no space for the procurator's *cognomen* in the left part of the second line, since the division ἀπε/λεύθερον would have been the only option. Thus, given the missing letters on the right side, ca. four, as we can conclude from the restoration ἐπίτρο[πον ἐ/παρχίας in the second line, it is preferable to restore the abbreviation ἀπελ. that is attested in other Greek inscriptions. As to the procurator's titlature, the word Μακεδονία in the second line makes the restoration ἐπίτρο[πον ἐ/παρχίας necessary.¹³ Epigraphic examples of this titlature for a provincial procurator are known from other Greek-speaking areas of the Empire, e.g. in a bilingual funerary stele erected by a woman named Αἰλία Καλή honoring her husband

¹¹ For the form ἀπελεύθ. see the honorary inscription from Ankara *IGR* III 168, which a Σεβββ. ἀπελεύθ. ταβουλάριος erected to his patron (between A.D. 198 and 211); and the funerary inscription from Patara (mid II) *TAM* II 460, Τ(ίτω) Αἰλίω Σεβ(αστοῦ) ἀπελευθ(έρω) Οὔειταλίω. For the form ἀπελ. see for example the funerary inscription *IGR* III 259 from Laodikeia Combusta in Lycaonia (mid II), Π(όπλιος) Αἴλιος Σεβ(αστοῦ) ἀπελ(εύθερος) Φαῦστος, and the funerary inscription from Hyrkaniis (II A.D.) *TAM* V.2 1318 Παρθένιος Σεβ(αστοῦ) ἀπελ(εύθερος) βοηθ(ὸς) ἐπιτρόπ(ου). Similar abbreviations of ἀπελεύθερος are of course found on inscriptions that are not connected with imperial freedmen, in various Greek cities. For example, manumissions from Larisa *IG* IX.2 547 ἀπελ(ευθέρων), 554 ἀπε(λευθέρα); the funerary inscription from Dion, J. M. R. Cormack, "IG X (Macedonia): The Greek Inscriptions of Pieria," *Μελετήματα στη Μνήμη Βασιλείου Λαούρδα* (Thessaloniki 1975) 109 ἀπελεύ(θερος); and the funerary inscription from Termessos *TAM* III 224 ἀπ(ελευθέρα). For the variety of abbreviated forms of the word in Latin inscriptions for imperial freedmen, see Weaver, *Familia Caesaris* 72 ff.

¹² See P. Nigdelis, *ΖΡΕ* 104 (1994) 128 [*SEG* XLIV 553], Αὐρηλίω Σαλουταρίω Σεββ(αστῶν) ἀπελευθέρω ἀπὸ ταβουλαρίων καλανδαρίου Καισιανοῦ.

¹³ The Latin equivalent, *procurator provinciae Macedoniae*, is likewise found in the inscriptions of the province. See Θ. Σαρικάκης, *Ρωμαῖοι ἄρχοντες της επαρχίας Μακεδονίας II* (Thessaloniki 1977) 185 ff.

Τίτ(ον) Αἴλιον Σεβ(αστοῦ) ἀπελ(εύθερον) Κάρπον, ἐπίτροπον ἐπαρχίας Λυκίας, at Patara in Lycia.¹⁴

From the preserved letters of the fourth line one can with certainty draw the conclusion that the dedicators of the monument honored, in addition to the procurator, his daughters or some of them who happened to accompany him in Macedonia, and that their names must have been given in the part of the inscription that is now lost, occupying at least one or even more lines. This means that the fourth and fifth lines must be restored in part: [... σὺν ταῖς θ]υγατρά[σιν ἀπό/του ...]. The practice of honoring the relatives of Roman officials active in the provinces, including wives and/or daughters, is very well known through a number of inscriptions, especially after the reign of Tiberius, and it should not surprise us.¹⁵ Whether the statues of the honored persons were erected on the same pedestal along with the procurator, or on other pedestals near that of their father, remains unknown. From the cities of the eastern part of the Empire we have examples of complexes of honorary statues of Roman provincial officials with their relatives, erected either on the same or on nearby pedestals with the relevant inscription written only on the central one.¹⁶

The most important question that arises from the new inscription concerns the reason(s) for the erection of the statues of

¹⁴ *TAM* II 459 (mid II A.D.). Also the procurator Ti. Claudius Antoninus (quoted below).

¹⁵ The honorary monuments erected for provincial *procuratores* and members of their families constitute the largest group after that of the provincial governors, 13% of the overall number of the relevant monuments during the imperial age: see D. Erkelenz, *Optimo Praesidi. Untersuchungen zu den Ehrenmonumenten für Amtsträger der römischen Provinzen* (Bonn 2003) 48–50. The presence of female relatives of officials in the provinces, after an unsuccessful attempt at restriction during Tiberius' reign, continued without abatement; see Erkelenz 56 with bibliographical references.

¹⁶ Recently studied by Erkelenz, *Optimo Praesidi* 101–103. These pedestals could comprise a platform (an *exedra*), such as that of the Cicero family on Samos: F. Körner and G. Gruben, “Die Exedra der Ciceronen,” *AthMitt* 68 (1953) 63–76.

the procurator and his daughters. Although we do not learn anything specific in what survives, it may be that a reason was given in the inscription, especially as space allows for at least one word between his titulature and the names of his daughters. For example, the reason could have been cited with one of the known characterizations *εὐεργέτης*, *πάτρων*, or just *φίλος*, common descriptions by the provincials of Roman officials throughout the imperial age.¹⁷ Whatever the restoration, it would be a mistake to doubt that the monument was erected out of a some personal relation of the dedicators to the procurator, possibly a benefaction of the latter towards them. We are led to that conclusion by their self-representation in the inscription. For the presence of a woman among them and the absence of another name after that of the second man, in spite of the adequate space at the end of the inscription, indicate that only these three individuals erected this monument—in other words, that it was their personal dedication. Such a representation, and the fact that they do not add any office or title to their names, means also that these persons would have been members of an eminent, aristocratic family of Thessaloniki, as happens in 110 of the 170 known cases of statues of Roman officials that were erected by individuals who represented themselves with only their names.¹⁸ As for the content of the possible benefaction that connected this family with the honored procurator, it goes without saying that it cannot be determined; we can only make hypotheses.¹⁹

¹⁷ See the lists in Erkelenz, *Optimo Praesidi* 239–314. If such a characterization was accompanied by another word, given the number of missing letters between lines 3 and 4, it likely would have been the article *τόν*, rather than an adjective like *ἴδιος* or a genitive possessive pronoun like *(ἐ)αυτῶν*. In this case, the most appropriate restoration, though not definite, would be [*τόν φίλον ...*].

¹⁸ See Erkelenz, *Optimo Praesidi* 75–76.

¹⁹ An attractive hypothesis would be the following: this benefaction was connected to the procurator's role in obtaining Roman civil status (*civitas Romana*) for the two male members of the family, especially if we take into account that these two have the imperial name *Φλαούτος* (which may be

Accordingly, the new inscription should be restored:²⁰

[T · Φλαοῦ]ον	⋈	Σεβαστοῦ	[ἀπελ.]
[- - - ca. 8 - - -]	σκον	⋈	ἐπίτρο[πον ἐ]-
[παρχίας	⋈	Μ]ακεδονία[ς,	- ca. 4 -]
4 [- 3-4 -	σὺν ταῖς	θ]υγατρᾶ[σιν αὐ]-	
[τοῦ		<i>nomina</i>]

vacat	Κλαυδία	[<i>nomen</i>]
vacat	T ⋈ Φλαοῦι[ος	<i>nomen</i>]
vacat	T ⋈ Φλαοῦιος	[<i>nomen</i>]
vacat			

[T. Φλαοῦι]ος Σεβαστοῦ [ἀπελ. - - -]σκος is the eighth *procurator Augusti* that we know in the province of Macedonia. He is also the first whose career we can date to the first century A.D., and the first imperial freedman, at least as known up to now, who exercised his duties in this province. Another procurator is known from the preliminary publication of an inscription found in Mygdonian Apollonia, [T]ι. Κλαύδιος Τι. υἱὸς Σεργία Ἀντωνεῖνος ἐπίτροπος Σεβαστοῦ ἐπαρχιῶν Βρετανίας, Μακεδονίας (Hadrianic), honored by the citizens of Apollonia because he arranged for the city's water supply (ἐπιμεληθέντα τῆς εἰσαγωγῆς τοῦ ὕδατος).²¹ The other six procurators are known from four Latin inscriptions found outside of Macedonia dating from the mid-second century on and containing information about the careers of comparable Roman officials; and from two Greek inscriptions, one from Rome and the other from Thessaloniki, both of the third century.²² The discovery of the new inscription in the west

the procurator's *gentilicium*); but this hypothesis cannot be verified by the inscription itself.

²⁰ *Exempli gratia* as regards the spelling at 1 end. I divide ἐπαρχίας considering that, proportionate with the other lines, the cutter used punctuation after the word.

²¹ H. Devijver, *Prosopographia militiarum equestrium* V (Louvain 1993) 2058, no. 118 bis [SEG LIV 601].

²² The testimonies are collected by Σαδικάκης, *Ρωμαῖοι ἄρχοντες* 185

cemetery of the city corroborates the view that Thessalonike was the residence of the imperial procurator of the province.²³ At the same time, the inscription constitutes the first known testimony that sheds light, even if insufficient, on the relationships that developed between the members of the local elite and the Roman provincial officials, including the *procurator Augusti*.²⁴

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ff., who also includes Σεπτίμιος Αὐρήλιος Παυλεῖνος among them (but see next note). Also see A. Aichinger, “Die Reichbeamten der römischen Macedonia der Prinzipatsepoche,” *AArchSlav* 30 (1979) 672 (with deficiencies).

²³ This view is argued by F. Papazoglou, *Les villes de Macédoine à l'époque romaine* (Athens 1988) 209, and R. Haensch, *Capita Provinciarum. Statthalter-sitze und Provinzialverwaltung in der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Mainz 1997) 112 and 451. To the testimonies cited by Haensch we should now add the Latin funerary inscription of Pudens (I A.D.), who was *arcarius* in the office of the *XX hereditatium provinciae Macedoniae* that was located in the city: see Π. Μ. Νίγδελης, *Επιγραφικά Θεσσαλονίκεια* (Thessaloniki 2006) 260–264. The case of Σεπτίμιος Αὐρήλιος Παυλεῖνος, who is mentioned as κράτιστος ἐπίτροπος τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ on *IG X.2* 145 (III A.D.), erected in his honor by a philosopher friend Σωσίβιος Σωσιβίου, remains dubious: in this case it is not clear if the honored person was a procurator of the province of Macedonia or a procurator of another province whose origin was Thessaloniki: see Haensch 451.

²⁴ I would like to thank warmly the archaeologist and my friend Dr. Despoina Makropoulou, who gave me permission to publish the inscription.