

# Aphrodisias's 'rights of liberty': diplomatic strategies and the Roman governor

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Alexander of Abonuteichos, the 'false prophet' of the 2nd c. A.D. cult of Glycon, had powerful friends and many followers, but also had at least one extremely unpleasant enemy — so unpleasant, in fact, that Alexander allegedly tried to have that enemy, Lucian of Samosata, murdered. When Alexander's plan failed, Lucian escaped to Bithynia and began to drum up support in order to prosecute his would-be murderer. But Lucian soon abandoned these efforts after the provincial governor warned him that he would rather not see Alexander of Abonuteichos on trial in his court (Lucian, *Alex.* 42.56-57).

Lucian's satire presents this governor as a poor wretch terrified by the prospect of confronting a man with good connections in Rome. Though the story may or may not be true as told, it serves to underline a simple, but often neglected, fact about Roman provincial administration: governors might not openly *decline*, but could very well *avoid*, dealing with matters of interest to their subjects. Whatever his reasons for doing so and however he chose to present them to Lucian, the governor of Bithynia refused to deal with his case and, for the moment at least, legal means for punishing Alexander were unavailable to Lucian.

In cases where powerful individuals or famous cities were concerned, the ability to avoid addressing the problems at hand required some clever manoeuvring on the part of Roman functionaries, for if they simply ignored petitioners with good chances of reaching the emperor, governors risked receiving a potentially embarrassing communication from Rome. In such cases it was best to deploy diplomatic strategies, and our sources clearly indicate that governors did just that. Called upon to take a stand on a doubtful issue, for example, a governor might deliver an ambiguous statement;<sup>1</sup> and by offering a clever explanation — for instance, that their services were superfluous or out of place in an independent, well-ordered community — governors could even openly decline to offer assistance without seriously compromising their authority.

This, I believe, is what two proconsuls did when asked to visit the *civitas libera* Aphrodisias. But, as I will try to show, the extant written exchanges between those governors, the city, and the emperor involve so many diplomatic niceties as seriously to obscure our understanding of the realities that lay behind them. I suggest that there was no legal obstacle for governors to enter that city, and, that there was nothing particularly remarkable about the city's legal status altogether. Aphrodisias, however, made various attempts, some successful, to profit from the appeal formulae in such communications in ways not necessarily envisaged by Roman authorities. In this case, flattering exchanges with Rome were used not simply to cover but also to *create* realities: more precisely, to expand legal privileges.

## *Paideia* and diplomacy

Far from being a mere element of style, flattering exchanges appear to have been an essential instrument in the dialogue between Roman authorities and Greek cities. Both emperors and governors appear to deploy similar rhetorical tactics, though we cannot be confident that the picture was indeed as consistent as our epigraphic sources suggest. One must keep in mind that it was the subjects who eventually decided what to put on stone. Thus, as a rule, our material conveys an impression of what the style of provincial government in the East was like when it pleased the cities, in addition to addressing their concerns.

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1 For such tactics in imperial letters, see A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (Oxford 1964) 690, on two imperial interventions of A.D. 365 and 376 which he calls "masterpieces of ambiguity" (*CTh* 1.6.5 and 1.6.7). Techniques for (not) dealing with delicate matters are unlikely to have been invented in the 4th c. but, unsurprisingly, such communications seldom appear on monumental display. One was apparently included among the documents of Opramoas's heroon in Rhodiapolis, col. VII A, ll.1-12. On its context, see C. Kokkinia, *Die Opramoas-Inschrift von Rhodiapolis* (Bonn 2000) 147-48 and 225-26.

The most welcome pronouncements were those that invoked shared values, for this is what most preserved letters do, although in different, and not always immediately recognizable, ways. The *pax romana*, the divinity of the emperor, and a number of commonly appreciated cultural ideals are used to support and explain a governor's decisions, including some that appear uncontroversial. In many cases we see governors supporting their decisions with arguments based on the value of education and culture — in some, they expressly state that their actions were in accordance with the ideals of Hellenic *paideia*. The merits of civic urbanism are assumed to be appreciated universally; they often serve to explain a Roman official's involvement in matters concerning public works, and no governor ever calls them into question, even if some eccentric Greek intellectuals occasionally did.<sup>2</sup>

Roman governors and, to a lesser degree, emperors subscribed to the most broadly recognized version of Greek culture. Not that they disavowed originality altogether; there is some self-styling involved in those exchanges on the part of Roman officials, and governors do appear to adopt individual styles. Certainly they do not appear indifferent to the benefits of personal authority and esteem.<sup>3</sup> All the same, unconventional viewpoints were either unsuitable or unpopular in this context, and they do not appear in governors' letters, though they occasionally do in Greek literature and a few civic decrees.<sup>4</sup> For Roman officials at a local level, it was probably safer to offer moderately original variations of conventional ideas.

The inclusion in their letters of theoretical considerations and rhetorical elements was a way for governors to generate support while also demonstrating that they acted in accordance with moral norms. But such literary features were no doubt also designed to appeal to the cultural pride of their subjects. The representatives of the Greek élite relentlessly advertised themselves as the true source and rightful owners of Graeco-Roman culture. To adopt the favored literary strategies of the Greeks in an official communication was to recognize such claims in a particularly flattering way. In fact, some Roman officials could employ flattery very skilfully indeed.

#### 'To make a stay in your most splendid city ...', while 'preserving the rights of liberty'

In a letter dating to the reign of Alexander Severus, the proconsul of Asia, Sulpicius Priscus, following a stream of flattering remarks on the city's free status, writes to the *civitas libera* Aphrodisias (Appendix no. 4):

... I will gladly come to you and make a stay in your most splendid city and sacrifice to your native goddess (...), if no law of your city or decree of the Senate or instruction or letter from the emperor prevents the proconsul from making a stay in your city. But if there is any impediment in the documents I have mentioned, when I sacrifice as is my custom to the [?other gods] for the good fortune and [safety] and eternal continuance of [our] lord Imperator (...), I will call upon your native [goddess too].<sup>5</sup>

We need not doubt that a governor's presence and 'performance' at such festivities was a sensitive matter for the cities involved. The jurist Ulpian indirectly warns his Roman readers not to under-estimate the importance of such rituals.<sup>6</sup> Whether, after all, Priscus visited the

2 For example, Dio Chrysostom in the *Euboicus*.

3 A remarkable piece of elaborate self-praise on the part of a governor is the introduction of a lengthy proconsular edict from Macedonia: L. Gounaropoulou and M. B. Hatzopoulos, *Ἐπιγραφές κατά Μακεδονίας Α'* (Athens 1998) 7. Cf. now Π. Μ. Νίγδης and Τ. Α. Σουρής, *Ανδρόκριτος λέγει. Ἐνα διάταγμα των αυτοκρατορικών χρόνων γιὰ τὸ γυμνάσιο τῆς Βέροιας* (Thessalonika 2005).

4 See the argumentation in the honorary decree for Antonia Tryphaina, IGRR IV 146, cited in L. Robert, *Études anatoliennes: recherches sur les inscriptions grecques de l'Asie mineure* (Amsterdam 1970) 303 n.5.

5 Differently, Reynolds, *A&R* 48: 'call upon your native [goddess with them]'.

6 *Dig.* 1.16.7: *Si in aliam quam celebrem civitatem vel provinciae caput advenerit, pati debet commendari sibi civitatem laudesque suas non gravate audire*. Menander Rhetor's advice to speakers on the occasion of a governor's visit to the city suggests that governors would need a lot of *patientia* (L. Spengel [ed.], *Rhetores Graeci* I [1853] 378-81).

Aphrodisian festival, we do not know. What we do know is that the city was pleased with his answer — otherwise it would not have come down to us. Obviously, mentioning the city's laws in the same breath with Roman senatorial and imperial decisions was flattering to the city.<sup>7</sup> However, that phrase was only part of this governor's diplomatic offensive. In order to fully understand the character of Sulpicius Priscus's letter, we must take into account an earlier document.

Priscus was not the first Roman official to point to Aphrodisias's free status in connection with a proconsul's visit. At about the same time as the city honored Priscus with a statue and an inscribed *stele*, it undertook to adorn a wall in its theater with a collection of documents bearing witness to its special relationship with Rome. This epigraphic monument has come to be known as the 'Archive wall'. Among its documents is a letter from the emperor Commodus in response to a decree expressing the city's wish to be visited by the governor (Appendix no. 3).<sup>8</sup> Commodus's answer is only partly preserved and there are some uncertainties concerning the restorations, but the general sense seems more or less secure. In their decree, Aphrodisians deplored the state of their internal financial administration and requested of the emperor that the proconsul visit their city and stay for a few days to tend to those problems (II.6-7). In response, the emperor instructed the governor to visit Aphrodisias and to stay as long as necessary to deal with the problems at hand (I.14). This statement was associated with a few phrases whose sense is now less clear. Twice, the emperor refers to the 'rights of liberty' (τὰ τῆς ἐλευθερίας δίκαια). He does so once in I.12, where the preserved passage reads 'also in this the rights of liberty'; the context can safely be assumed as something like 'observe also in this respect, or in this case, the rights of liberty'. If we follow the restoration of J. Reynolds for II.9-10, the emperor may also have pointed to his own concern to protect such rights. At the end of the letter, Commodus refers to the 'rights of liberty' once more, and there it is probably safe to follow the interpretation that the emperor pointed to Aphrodisias's status as a *civitas libera*.

In light of proconsul Priscus's letter, scholars have been inclined to interpret Commodus's reference to the city's free status as an invocation by the emperor of a legal obstacle preventing the governor from visiting the city. F. Millar has recently asked whether, in view of the Aphrodisian documents, we must assume "that in normal circumstances it was a matter of principle" that the governor "should not enter *civitates liberae*".<sup>9</sup> With the sole exception of Aphrodisias, the evidence discussed by Millar presents a clear message: there was either no legal prohibition of this kind or, if there was one, it was not observed at any time during the Empire, and certainly not in the province of Asia. On the contrary, *civitates liberae* could serve as the regular setting of a proconsul's jurisdiction.<sup>10</sup> From that, we must conclude that, if the citizens of a 'free city' decided that they were unable to deal with their internal financial administration and needed an independent source of authority to help untangle the problems and settle the disputes, they were free to ask the proconsul's help. This, I believe, applied equally to Aphrodisias, but the city had other peculiarities that must be taken into account.

### Rome's best friend in Asia

As a Greek *polis*, Aphrodisias had a short history. Having appeared on the scene only in the late 2nd c. B.C., it was a newcomer in the inter-city arena. It had supported Rome against Mithridates, and under the Empire the legend of its long-established, strong friendship with Rome was an essential element of the city's self-presentation. Its citizens chose a very conspicuous way of advertising this relationship when they erected, in the heart of the city, a large building with an architectural form and sculptural images unique to the Greek East. The Sebas-

del.

7 A. Chaniotis, "The perception of imperial power in Aphrodisias: the epigraphic evidence," in L. de Blois *et al.* (edd.), *The representation and perception of Roman imperial power* (Amsterdam 2003) 250-60.

8 Reynolds, *A&R* 16.

9 F. Millar, "*Civitates liberae, coloniae* and provincial governors under the empire," *MedAnt* 2 (1999) 95-113, at 109.

10 On Alabanda, see Millar *ibid.* 109-10.

teion had impressive porticoes adorned with numerous representations of Roman power, focused particularly on Rome's subjugation of every earthly *ethnos*.<sup>11</sup>

Although other cities in the region had supported Rome on various occasions, to the citizens of 'real' (that is, of old) Carian cities the display of the Sebasteion must have appeared rather tasteless, if not provocative. Aphrodisians claimed a unique status and that their *civitas libera* belonged in a class of its own; and earlier emperors had helped uphold this claim, though not necessarily entirely by intent. In the reign of Trajan, Aphrodisias undertook to defend one of its prominent citizens, Julianus Attalus, against an attempt by Smyrna to claim this man's services for a liturgy.<sup>12</sup> The city of Aphrodisias sent to Trajan a decree in praise of Attalus, apparently also mentioning Smyrna's demands. This 'testimonium' for Attalus produced an imperial communication entirely suitable for inclusion among the documents of the 'Archive wall'. It is addressed not to Aphrodisias but to Smyrna (Appendix no. 1):

I wish no one from the free cities to be forced into (performing) your liturgy, and especially no one from Aphrodisias, since that city has been removed from the *formula provinciae* so that it is not liable either to the common liturgies of Asia or to others. I release Tiberius Julianus Attalus from (performance of a liturgy in) the temple in Smyrna; (he is) a man who has the highest testimonials from his own city; and I have written about these matters to my friend Julius Balbus the proconsul.<sup>13</sup>

This was an unceremonious response, which stood little chance of being eternalized on stone in Smyrna. It is also remarkable from another point of view: such an explicit, undisguised show of favor for one party in matters of inter-city relations is unusual in the epigraphic record. Inscriptions normally tell a story in which emperors and governors are asked to solve disputes, and they intervene in a conciliatory tone. Trajan's response, on the contrary, is bound to have given offence to Smyrna, just as it pleased Aphrodisias. The privilege of exemption of Aphrodisian citizens from any form of liturgy within Asia was not a self-evident consequence of Aphrodisias's status as *civitas libera*. The *Senatus Consultum de Aphrodisiensibus* regulated the Carian city's relations with Rome, its officials, and all representatives of its power, and it granted immunity from Roman taxes.<sup>14</sup> Interpreting the relevant clauses to include taxes and liturgies of any sort would require a lot of sophistry on the part of Aphrodisias. But Trajan was, of course, free to impose his interpretation of that ruling if he wished to benefit Julius Attalus and to punish the city of Smyrna.

Trajan's successor was also willing to consent to Aphrodisias's demands, though by no means so emphatically. Several inscriptions found in the city relate that Hadrian granted the city's request to be exempted from a certain 'nail tax' (Appendix no. 2).<sup>15</sup> He did so grudgingly, but did so all the same. In his answer to Aphrodisias, Hadrian, like Trajan before him, speaks of the city as 'exempted from the *formula provinciae*' (ll.14-15).<sup>16</sup> We are not in a position to know exactly what this exemption actually meant. In any event, it had not kept the tax-collectors away, and it seems best to agree with F. Millar that the actual privileges connected with different statuses of cities under Roman rule were subject to constant dialogue and redefinition.<sup>17</sup> In other words, the status of a free city — or a free city exempted from the *formula*

11 R. R. R. Smith, "The imperial reliefs from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias," *JRS* 77 (1987) 88-138; id., "Simulacra gentium: the *ethne* from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias," *JRS* 78 (1988) 50-77. Cf. F. Hueber, "Der Baukomplex einer julio-claudischen Kaiserkultanlage in Aphrodisias," in *Aphrodisias de Carie* 101-7; U. Outschar, "Betrachtungen zur kunstgeschichtlichen Stellung des Sebasteions in Aphrodisias," in *Aphrodisias de Carie* 107-22.

12 The liturgy was connected with one of Smyrna's temples, possibly for the provincial imperial cult. Reynolds, *A&R* 14 (=Appendix no. 1); cf. *SEG* 32 (1982) 1202 (Pleket).

13 Transl. Reynolds, *A&R* 113. I have modified the last line to avoid the impression that the imperial 'amicus' Julius Balbus and the proconsul could have been different persons, which is not the case.

14 Reynolds, *A&R* 8.

15 Reynolds, *A&R* 15 (= Appendix no. 2); cf. C. Kokkinia, "Making sense of an odd inscription: MAMA VIII, 430, and the 'nail tax'," *ZPE* 151 (2005) 259-62.

16 Cf. Trajan's ruling (= Appendix no. 1): ἐξηρημένης τῆς πόλεως καὶ τοῦ τύπου τῆς ἐπαρχείας ὥστε μήτε εἰς τὰς κοινὰς τῆς Ἀσίας μήτε εἰς ἑτέρας λειτουργίας ὑπάγεσθαι.

17 Millar (*supra* n.9) 112.

*provinciae* — could have many or no legal consequences, depending on the negotiating skills of the city's representatives.

Which brings us back to Commodus's letter. His exchanges with Aphrodisias are preceded by Trajan's and Hadrian's rulings mentioning the city's status as *civitas libera* and are followed by the letter sent by Sulpicius Priscus under Alexander Severus, in which the governor speaks as though he doubted whether he was allowed to accept the Aphrodisians' invitation, as his mere physical presence might violate the city's rights. All this paints a picture of "privileged distance" from the Roman power that would undoubtedly have pleased the Aphrodisians.<sup>18</sup> But it is certainly not the only, and possibly not the most convincing, version of events. There may be another explanation.

The governor of Asia had a few hundred cities to tend to and no comparable number of helpers.<sup>19</sup> Asked for assistance by a city that successfully evoked its free status to evade taxes, the governor under Commodus may have reacted slowly or not at all, or he may have replied that Aphrodisias was exempted from the *formula provinciae* (as the divine Hadrian had written<sup>20</sup>), so its financial administration was not a concern of his — though he certainly would have used more diplomatic language.

Faced with an uncooperative governor, provincials were likely to address the emperor if they had the means. The Aphrodisians did so and succeeded in attracting Commodus's attention. In his letter, Commodus emphasizes that the governor was to stay more than one or two days (ll. 6-7: διατρείβειν ἡμερῶν τινῶν, l.14: διατρείψαι χρόνον ἀντάρκη), thus the real problem was not whether or not the proconsul was allowed to accept the Aphrodisians' invitation. The governor may well have argued that he wasn't, and the emperor may well have included in his letter a few elegant sentences on how free cities were to be respected by all means indeed, against their own will if necessary and how he himself would see to it that the special rights of the city were preserved.<sup>21</sup> The references to the duration of the proconsul's visit show that the main concern was whether the governor would take the time needed to address the city's problems and find permanent solutions. Apparently a *curator civitatis* had already offered his services, but his decisions had not been implemented (*logistes*, l.8: τὰς κρίσεις τοῦ λογιστοῦ βεβαίως δύνασθαι μένειν). Now the emperor had stepped in and, following his friendly recommendation, the proconsul would tend to Aphrodisias's problems.

#### 'To issue a command to those who are free ...'

Whoever was responsible for the final form of Commodus's letter produced a document that, while proclaiming the emperor's concern for the well-being of the city, did not undermine the proconsul's authority at all, and flattered the Aphrodisians in two ways: first, it demonstrated the emperor's spontaneous interest in safeguarding the city's liberty, which was a great honor in itself; second, it was pronounced not as a ruling but as a suggestion. In the final sentence, the emperor almost certainly said that through his intervention the double purpose of tending to the city's problems and respecting its rights would be served: 'for if we were so to proceed, the civic affairs (would be tended to, while the) rights of liberty (would be preserved)'.<sup>22</sup>

Roman officials sometimes knew very well how to beat the Greeks at their own game. The best example I know lies carefully disguised in an oration of Aelius Aristides. After various efforts to persuade Roman authorities to grant him an exemption from liturgies in his native city (and, in fact, in any city), Aristides expresses utter despair. He was 'now in an even worse position' and in need of his patron god's immediate support.<sup>23</sup> The cause of his misery was a

18 Millar (supra n.9) 98.

19 A. Lintott, *Imperium romanum: politics and administration* (London 1993) 121-22.

20 And Trajan: see n.16 above.

21 Reynolds, *A&R* 16, ll.9-10 (=Appendix no. 3).

22 Reynolds, *A&R* 110-11.

23 Aristid., *Or.* 26.340.

governor who abandoned his earlier attempts to argue on constitutional and legal grounds and granted that an exceptional man of letters such as Aristides could not be forced into anything. Nevertheless, the governor invited Aristides to support him in ruling the province. Aristides presents this incident as the most dramatic turning point in his odyssey, for this was an invitation the orator could not decline without losing face — it was diplomatic checkmate.

In Aphrodisias, the last act of the play as it is known to us took place in the reign of Gordian III when Aphrodisias appealed to him to protest a decree of the provincial council of Asia requiring the city to help those who had suffered from a recent earthquake (Appendix no. 5):

The resolution of Asia which associated you too with those assisting the victims of misfortune was not a command, for it is not possible to issue a command to those who are free, but a good administrative act placing you among those who take part in beneficent activity ... And for the future there is no necessity for fear; for among free men, and you have a very great share of freedom, the only law in such matters is what you are willing to do. ☺ ὅς ἔστιν πρὸς τὰ τοιαῦτα (*vac.*) νόμος τὸ ἐκούσιον (stop) ☺

Undoubtedly, cities understood such ‘friendly advice’ from Roman authorities more or less as a command. Yet as a result of cultivating their chosen image and of going to extremes to underline their friendliness to Rome, Aphrodisians could hardly afford to displease the central authority: their position was one of uncomfortable closeness rather than “privileged distance” from Rome. Besides, their boast of an exceptionally close relationship with Rome meant that they had to retain (or at least appear to retain) that closeness lest they lose face before rival cities. We may speculate that Gordian’s extremely polite answer left Aphrodisians with no choice other than to set aside their claims to special treatment and to behave as members of the community of Asian cities.

#### A tax (and liturgy) haven

The status of Aphrodisias as a *civitas libera* could prove useful in cases where ‘real’ privileges that Rome bestowed were at stake, as R. Merkelbach has shown.<sup>24</sup> In addition, it could serve to protect the city from *unwanted* interventions or perhaps even from unwanted visits by Roman officials.<sup>25</sup> But Aphrodisians, it seems, also availed themselves of their advantageous relationship with Rome in a way that affected other cities in the area.

Take Trajan’s ruling: that response must have had unpleasant consequences beyond the case of Julianus Attalus, and for other cities besides Smyrna. To illustrate why this was so, we must briefly return to the story in Aelius Aristides. Aristides’s main argument for wanting to evade civic service was his status as an exceptionally accomplished, gifted, and famous orator, but that was only one of his arguments. Another pertained to the fact that he was a citizen of more than one city. Initially, Aristides was asked to perform civic duties for his native town of Hadrianoi in Mysia. In the early stages of his struggle to avoid public office, he maintained, with characteristic immodesty, that if any city were to claim his services as a citizen, it should be famous Smyrna, not little Hadrianoi.<sup>26</sup> Aristides, like many wealthy men of his day, possessed multiple estates not necessarily all within the territory of one city; such men may well have changed their main place of residence because of factors other than their descent. For instance, the Lycian Opramoas, whose father was from Rhodiapolis and mother from Corydalla, both very small communities, apparently moved to the metropolis Myra, which stood to benefit most from this magnate’s munificence during the later part of his career; instead of *Rhodiapolites* and *Corydalleus*, Lycians refer to this man as *Myreus* and *Patareus*.<sup>27</sup>

24 R. Merkelbach, “Der Rangstreit der Städte Asiens und die Rede des Aelius Aristides über die Eintracht,” *ZPE* 32 (1978) 287-96.

25 ἄκοντες μὴ ἐπιδέχσθωσαν, as a similar clause in Reynolds, *A&R* doc. 9, l.9, reads.

26 Aristid., *Or.* 26.338.

27 Cf. L. Robert, “Catalogue agonistique des Rhômaïa de Xanthos,” *RA* 1978, 286, on Peitho, a citizen of Ephesus and her connections to Apollonia, a small city in Lycia.

In Lycia and Asia, important individuals could possess more than one citizenship and could move their place of residence from one city to the next. As many cases in the *Digest* and imperial letters show, this could result in confusion over which city could claim their services. By posting a letter such as Trajan's to Smyrna on the wall of its theater, Aphrodisias demonstrated its excellent relations with Roman power and its distinguished status in the province. At the same time, it underlined its peculiar self-image of having more in common with Rome than with Asia, and it revealed the potential advantages of this image for Aphrodisian citizens. To rich magnates, the letter advertised the rewards of Aphrodisian citizenship against that of other Asian cities.

### Conclusion

Aphrodisias exploited a title — *civitas libera* — to achieve exemption from a Roman tax and later made use of Roman favors to argue that the city owed nothing to the community of Asian cities either. Having once obtained the intervention of the emperor to free one of its prominent citizens from public service in a rival community, the city also looked to profit from that exchange with the Roman authorities: an abusive imperial letter to Smyrna was inscribed in Aphrodisias for all, affluent visitors and potential candidates for Aphrodisian citizenship alike, to see. The city used flattering exchanges with the Romans as a 'currency' to enhance its privileged status within the province, and its success in doing so depended to a great extent on the willingness and ability of Roman functionaries to rule by diplomatic word and to adopt, at least in their public communications to the city, a non-authoritarian style of government.

Whatever advantages Aphrodisias managed to draw from its free status, being a *civitas libera* did not exempt it from the imperative of maintaining the best possible relations with the ruling power, nor, I believe, did it keep Roman governors at bay. Quite the contrary, good contacts with the proconsuls must have been a priority for prominent individuals with Aphrodisian citizenship and an attraction for those who might wish to apply for it. Under such circumstances, we can safely assume that a fair number of wealthy men with good connections in Rome occupied seats in Aphrodisias's beautiful council-hall (Bouleuterion). As in other cities, the Roman governor would occasionally have been invited to attend the meetings and he would not have been found wanting when called upon to offer yet another round of ceremonial flattery.

### Acknowledgements

This paper was delivered in October 2004 at a conference on "Herrschaftsstrukturen und Herrschaftspraxis" held in Zurich and organized by Anne Kolb, to whom I express my sincere thanks.

### APPENDIX

1. Reynolds, *A&R* 14. Trajan writes to Smyrna 'I wish no one from the free cities to be forced into (performing) your liturgy, and especially no one from Aphrodisias, since that city has been removed from the *formula provinciae*'.

Αὐτοκράτωρ Καῖσαρ Τραϊανὸς Σμυρναίοις *vac.*

οὐδένα βούλομαι ἐκ τῶν ἐλευθέρων πόλεων ἀναγκάζεσθαι εἰς ὑμετέραν λειτουργίαν καὶ μάλιστα ἐξ Ἀφροδισιάδος ἐξηρημένης τῆς πόλεως καὶ τοῦ τύπου τῆς ἐπαρχείας ὥστε μήτε εἰς τὰς κοινὰς τῆς Ἀσίας μήτε εἰς ἐτέρας λειτουργίας ὑπάγεσθαι. Τιβέριον Ἰουλιανὸν Ἄτταλον

5 ἀπολύω τοῦ ἐν Σμύρνῃ ναοῦ καὶ μάλιστα μαρτυρούμενον ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας πατρίδος. ἔγραψα δὲ περὶ *vac.* τούτων καὶ Ἰουλίῳ Βάλβῳ τῷ φίλῳ μου ἀνθυπάτῳ *vac.*

2. Reynolds, *A&R* 15. Hadrian agrees to release Aphrodisias from a nail tax because the city is 'exempted from the *formula provinciae*'.

Ἐντευχθεὶς δὲ διὰ πρεσβείας περὶ τῆς τοῦ σιδήρου χρήσεως καὶ τοῦ τέλους τῶν ἥλων, καίπερ

10 ἀνφισβητησίμου τοῦ πράγματος ὄντος διὰ τὸ μὴ νῦν πρῶτον τοὺς τελῶνας ἐπικεχειρηκέναι παρ' ὑμῶν ἐγλέγειν ὡς εἰδὼς τὴν πόλιν

τά τε ἄλλα τειμῆς οὖσαν ἀξίαν καὶ ἐξηρημένη(ν)  
 τοῦ τύπου τῆς ἐπαρχείας, ἀπαλάσσω αὐτήν  
 15 τοῦ τελέσματος καὶ γέγραφα Κλ(αυδίω) Ἀγριπείνω  
 τῷ ἐπιτρόφῳ μου παραγγεῖλαι τῷ μεμισθώμενῳ  
 τὸ ἐν Ἀσίᾳ τέλος ἀπέχεσθαι τῆς ὑμετέρας πόλεως.

3. Reynolds, *A&R* 16, ll. 6-15. Commodus writes a letter in response to a decree expressing the city's wish to be visited by the governor. He mentions Aphrodisias's 'rights of liberty' and instructs the governor to tend to the city's problems with its financial administration.

6 ὄχον τῷ ψηφίσματι δι' οὗ ἡξιούτε τ[ὸ]ν τῆς Ἀσίας ἀνθύπατον ἐπιδημεῖν ἐν τῇ πόλει τῆ  
 ὑμ[ετέρα] καὶ δι[α]τρεῖ-  
 7 βειν ἡμέρων τινῶν ἐπισκοποῦντα [καὶ ἐξε]τ[ά]ζοντα τὰ δημόσια πράγματα ὡς π[άν]υ  
 κατη]μελη[μένα] καὶ ἡμ[ε]να  
 8 μείζονος τῆς ἐπανορθώσεως ὑπ[έρ] τοῦ ?πάσας τ[ᾶ]ς κρ[ί]σεις τοῦ λογιστοῦ βεβαίως δυνάσθαι  
 μένειν [?ν.] ὑμεῖς μὲν *vac.*  
 9 ταῦτα ὡς ὑπ[έρ] πόλ]εως βουλευό[μενοι] ἐψηφίσασθε ἐμοὶ δὲ ἀνανκαῖον ταύτην τὴν τάξιν  
 τ[ε]ταγμένω φυ[λά]σ-  
 10 σειν τὰς πόλεις ἐπὶ τῶν ὁμοίων ἀξ[ί]ωμάτων -----  
 ----- ἐπι]-  
 11 δημίας ἡγεμόνος ἢ ἀνθυπάτου ἐπὶ [------  
 -----]  
 12 καὶ ἐν τούτῳ τὰ τῆς ἐλευθερίας δίκαια [------  
 -----]  
 13 πράγματα ἐπέστειλα τῷ φίλῳ μου Οὐλ[πί]ῳ Μαρκ[έ]λλῳ? -----  
 -----]  
 14 διατρεῖψαι χρόνον αὐταρκῆ πρὸς τὴν τῶν κοινῶν -----  
 -----]  
 15 εἰ γὰρ τοῦτο οὕτω γένοιτο τά τε δημόσια πράγματα ε[ -----  
 -----]  
 16 *vacat* ἐλευθερίας δίκαια - - c.26 ]EK[ - (3-4) - ]EΙ[ -----  
 ----]

4. Reynolds, *A&R* 48, ll.11-30. In the time of Alexander Severus, the governor Sulpicius Priscus speaks of 'making a stay in your most splendid city ..., if no law of your city or decree of the Senate or instruction or letter from the emperor prevents the proconsul from making such a stay'.

... καὶ ἡδέως ἐλεύσομα[ι]  
 [πρὸς] ὑμᾶς καὶ ἐπιδημήσω ἐν τῇ λαμ-  
 [προ]τάτῃ πόλει ὑμῶν καὶ τῇ πατρίῳ ὑμῶν  
 [θεῶ] θύσω ὑπέρ τε τῆς σωτηρίας καὶ αἰω-  
 15 [ν]ίου διαμονῆς τοῦ τε κυρίου ἡμῶν αὐ-  
 τοκράτορος [Ἀλεξάνδρου] καὶ τῆς κυρ-  
 [ίας] ἡμῶν Σεβαστῆς [Μαμαίας] μητρὸς  
 τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ στρατοπέδων  
 εἰ μήτε νόμος τῆς πόλεως ὑμῶν  
 20 [μ]ῆτε δόγμα συνκλήτου μήτε διάτα-  
 ξις μήτε θεία ἐπιστολή κωλύει τὸν  
 [ἀ]νθύπατον ἐπιδημεῖν τῇ πόλει [ὑμῶν].  
 [ε]ἰ γὰρ τι κωλύει τῶν προγεγραμμένων,  
 θύων ὡς ἔθος μοί ἐστιν τοῖς [ἄλλοις]  
 25 [θε]οῖς ὑπέρ τε τῆς τύχης καὶ ἰσωτηρίας]  
 [κα]ὶ αἰωνίου διαμονῆς τοῦ κυ[ρίου] ἡμῶν]  
 Αὐτοκράτορος [Ἀλεξάνδρου] [καὶ τῆς]  
 μητρὸς αὐτοῦ [Μαμαίας] Σεβαστῆ[ς] κυρίας]  
 δὲ ἡμῶν καὶ τὴν πάτριον ὑμῶν [θεῶν ἐπι]-  
 30 [κα]λέσομαι.

5. Reynolds, *A&R* 21. Gordian III writes that a resolution of Asia that required help from Aphrodisias for the victims of an earthquake was 'not a command, for it is not possible to issue a command to those who are free'.

Τὸ τῆς Ἀσίας βούλευμα, τὸ καὶ ὑμᾶς καταστήσαν εἰς κο[ινωνί]αν τῆς πρ[ὸς] τοὺς ἀτυχήσαντας ἐπικουρίας, οὐκ ἐπίταγμα ἦν, οὐδὲ γὰρ οἶον τε ἐπιτάγματι χρῆσθαι, πρὸς τοὺς ἐλευθέρους, ἀλλὰ πολείτευμα

5 χρηστὸν ἐν μετουσίᾳ καθιστᾶν ὑμᾶς φιλανθρώπου πράξεως καὶ ο[ἴ]ης καὶ καθ' ὑμᾶς πράττετε ἐν [κα]τα-

σκευῇ τινος οἰκοδομήματος συνεπιλαμβανόμενοι τῆς ἀναστάσε[ω]ς τοῖς δεομένοις· ὑπὲρ δὲ τοῦ μέλ-

λοντος ἤκιστα χρῆ δεδιέναι· τοῖς γὰρ ἐλευθέροις, οὗ πλεῖστον με[τέ]χετε, μόνος ἐστὶν πρὸς τὰ το[ι]αῦτα

ω[σ]τὸς νόμος τὸ ἐκούσιον *stip* ἐπρέσβευον Αὐρήλιος Κτήσιος καὶ Α[ἰ]λίος Καλλικράτης. Εὐτοχ[ε]ίτε]

*vacat* θεία ἀντιγραφὴ κατὰ Λαοδικεῖς ἢ προτεταγμένη *vacat*