

The decree of the League tells an interesting story. A rival had tried to prevent the bestowal of honors to Iason. That rival (named Moles) turned to the Roman authorities to achieve his goal, but the Lycians overturned his accusations by appealing to the emperor. In the decree of the *κοινόν*, Antoninus Pius is thanked because he “upheld the opinion of the federation.”⁴ The imperial response is not well preserved, but, to judge from its remains, it was sober and brief. It was nevertheless inscribed where anyone walking up to Kyaneai could admire it.⁵ The dossier celebrates both the *euergetes* Iason and the League’s success in gaining support from the emperor in a legal dispute.

Opramoas

Some 70 km to the east of Kyaneai, and at roughly the same time, one of Iason’s peers from among the ranks of the Lycian elite, a man named Opramoas, son of Apollonios, had similar troubles. In front of the theater at Rhodiapolis stood a small building whose front and lateral walls were covered with inscriptions. The texts were arranged in 20 columns of *ca.* 105 lines each. If one includes among the inscriptions the lines inscribed on the architrave of the façade, the building displayed more than 2,100 lines of writing in total.

They all concerned Opramoas, who was a native of Rhodiapolis. The building may have been his mausoleum.⁶ The inscriptions display 70 documents including imperial epistles, letters of Roman provincial governors, and honorary decrees of the Lycian League. Opramoas and his two brothers were supported by their father in entering the political stage. Opramoas’ career followed a rapid upward path that prompted Rhodiapolis, other Lycian cities, and the Lycian League to bestow upon him a quick succession of honors.⁷ These honors, however, provoked the negative reaction of a Roman governor. Since a provincial governor was unlikely to meddle with honors for local notables spontaneously, it is reasonable to assume that someone protested and persuaded the governor to intervene. The important Lycian city of Xanthos and the Lycian League stepped in and appealed to the emperor against the governor’s decision to block Opramoas’ honors. The emperor addressed the governor and that decision was canceled.⁸ Opramoas could now continue to receive honors; yet there were no more honors to give. The Lycians had already bestowed upon him all forms of honors traditionally available.

The only form of honor that Opramoas did not yet possess was an imperial *martyria*, that is, a letter from an emperor attesting to his merit.⁹ Therefore, Antoninus Pius received more decrees of the Lycian League praising Opramoas. After three such decrees, an earthquake, and an embassy, the emperor responded. His response mentions Opramoas’ contribution to repairing buildings damaged by the earthquake in “many cities,”¹⁰ but the letter’s honorific rhetoric is unimpressive compared to similar documents for other *euergetai*, and utterly laconic compared to the elaborate honorific decree of 75 lines to which Pius responds.¹¹ But the emperor’s “divine” words, few though they were, settled the matter once and for all and restored Opramoas’ honor. That imperial epistle, the decree of the League, and other imperial commendations that followed, were taken out of their chronological context and

4 IGR III 704 IIIB 22-23, see n. (3) above.

5 Very likely together with statues and sarcophagi of Iason’s family: Berling 1993. *cf.* Kokkinia 2001, 21; 2017, 377-78.

6 In the later documents of the Rhodiapolis dossier, the multiple ethnica that Opramoas carries in earlier documents are omitted, and he is referred to as a citizen of Myra. In addition, at a point in Opramoas’ career later than that documented by the inscriptions at Rhodiapolis, he had close connections to Xanthos (Kokkinia 2000, 233-35). It is therefore not certain beyond doubt that his native Rhodiapolis was Opramoas’ final resting place. See Zanker 1992, 107, on people who, although already in possession of a funerary monument, built another after climbing another step up the social ladder. *cf.* Kokkinia 2017, 377 n. 20.

7 Opramoas donated over a million *denarii*, while the list of his beneficiaries includes at least 30 Lycian cities. In the inscriptions, he is said to have owned citizenship in all Lycian *poleis*; see Kokkinia 2012.

8 See Kokkinia 2000, document no. 29, the letter of the governor Cornelius Proculus.

9 When the emperor intervened in Opramoas’ favor, it seems that he addressed only the governor, not the League. Or, if the emperor did address the league, his response included nothing worth inscribing on Opramoas’ monument at Rhodiapolis. On *martyriai*, see Kokkinia 2017.

10 Kokkinia 2000, document no. 41, col. XI C, l.5; *cf.* p. 168-69, commentary on lines XI C 9-13.

11 Kokkinia 2000, no. 54.

placed on the walls of the entrance and the architrave, so that even modestly literate or hasty passers-by would receive the gist of the dossier's message: Opramoas had gained recognition by the Roman emperor, and, with imperial support, the Lycian League had successfully defended its authority against internal and external threats.

Salutaris

In contrast to Rhodiapolis, a small inland city, Ephesus was a *metropolis* on the Ionian coast, a multi-ethnic city-state and a major center in the trade between East and West.¹²

In AD 104, a man named C. Vibius Salutaris, an Ephesian councilor and Roman knight, made a donation of 20,000 *denarii* and 31 sculptures to Ephesus, including representations of Artemis, portraits of the imperial couple, local historical figures, and representations of civic bodies. These sculptures would be carried in procession in groups of three on several occasions throughout the year.¹³ The statue groups often merged Greek and Roman symbolism. A personification of the Roman senate, for example, was paired with a personification of the council of Ephesus, while a personification of the *ordo equester* was paired with a personification of the *ephebeia*. The 20,000 *denarii*, on the other hand, were meant as capital to be lent out to generate a yearly profit for financing lotteries and distributions among the members of various civic bodies.

We know all this thanks to a large epigraphic dossier (*I.Eph* 27) that was carved on a wall of Ephesus' theatre. The inscriptions covered the entire right flank of the south entrance of the theatre. They displayed seven documents, among them an honorary decree of the city for Salutaris and two letters by Roman officials. Large parts of these documents were barely legible, because they were carved in small letters high up the wall. But, although many details of his foundation remained unnoticed amongst the sea of words on the theater wall, those who entered the theatre could not have missed the most important "detail" from the point of view of the donor himself: Salutaris' name and his *cursus honorum* were repeated on 29 statue bases erected in the theatre for his donated sculptures.

To judge by his *cursus honorum*, Salutaris had held only subordinate posts in the Roman administration.¹⁴ He was no senator and he had not even completed the *tres militiae* as a knight. He had not held civic office at Ephesus, and, contrary to a widespread assumption, he was not of local origin. His family is nowhere mentioned in the honorary decree. In addition, his donations were neither particularly generous nor had they been unanimously welcome. He did not donate statues but statuettes, two of which he kept until his death. He also kept the 20,000 *denarii*, promising, in lieu of interest and as if he had borrowed his own money from the city, a yearly donation of 1,800 *denarii*.

Salutaris appears to have had strong connections to Roman officials. At least this is what the wording of the two letters included in the dossier suggests.¹⁵ The fact that, according to Salutaris himself, two other powerful Romans were also his friends seems to support this conclusion.¹⁶ Is this the reason why the Ephesians dedicated an entire wall of their grand theater to the not particularly distinguished Roman? This may be too

12 Ephesus and trade: Strabo 12.8.15; cf. Kokkinia 2014, 182 with n. 6. Foreign residents, particularly Italians, at Ephesus: Kirbihler 2007.

13 Rogers 1991 is the most cited work on Salutaris and his donations. For a different assessment of the Salutaris dossier, summarized in the following, see in detail Kokkinia 2019.

14 Most of his posts were connected with tax collection. He had been *promag(ister) portuum provinc(iae) Siciliae* (ἀρχὸννης λιμένων ἐπαρχείας Σικελίας) and *promag(ister) frumenti mancipalis* (ἀρχὸννης σείτου δήμου Ῥωμαίων) "manager of the custom dues of the province of Sicily," and "manager of the grain tax," also in Sicily. He then served as *praefectus cohortis* (ἐπαρχος σπείρης) and *tribunus legionis* (χειλιάρχος λεγιῶνος), but he did not serve as *praefectus alae*, and therefore did not complete the *tres militiae*. He served instead as *subprocurator* in Mauretania Tingitana and in Belgica (ἀντεπίτροπος ἐπαρχείας Μαυρητανίας Τινγτανῆς καὶ ἐπαρχείας Βελγικῆς). To judge from the wording of the decree, at least two of these posts had been held in the immediate past, under Trajan.

15 The *proconsular* legate Afranius Flavianus declared that Salutaris was his friend and that his goodwill towards Ephesus was already known to him (Il. 374-79). He also said that he, Flavianus, was quicker than "most people," τοῦ[ς] πλείστους (l. 387), to notice Salutaris' benevolence toward Ephesus.

16 *I.Eph* 3, 620 for M. Arruntius Claudianus and 7.1 3027 for L. Nonius Asprenas Torquatus.

simple an explanation. Although his foundation may have provoked some negative reactions, this is not to say that Salutaris had no support at a local level. Salutaris' processions paralleled Greek and Roman institutions in innovative ways. They broadcast a message similar to that of many writings of his contemporary, Plutarch, a Greek intellectual with Roman citizenship and Roman connections, who was widely read and highly esteemed in Salutaris' time. It was a message that was likely to appeal to Roman and Rome-friendly Ephesian merchants, businessmen and financiers, and the decision to devote an entire wall at a very prominent spot to Salutaris' honors can probably be traced back to their influence.

Aphrodisias

Salutaris' dossier was inscribed on a wall of Ephesus' theatre. However, if one wishes to gain an idea of what a wall covered from side to side and from top to bottom with inscriptions would have looked like, the theatre of Ephesus cannot anymore serve the purpose, as, unfortunately, "Salutaris' wall" was dismantled in the nineteenth century and carried piece by piece to the British Museum. By contrast, the large epigraphic dossier at Aphrodisias' theater is, thankfully, still *in situ*. It is carved on the theater's north parodos wall and includes 15 documents arranged in four columns that were all inscribed in the third century AD but date from earlier periods.¹⁷

The inscriptions are widely known as Aphrodisias' "Archive Wall." The arrangement of the documents, however, speaks against using the term "archive" in order to describe this epigraphic composition, unless in a very wide sense. Archival purposes and the chronological ordering that we tend to connect with archives were of secondary importance to those who chose and arranged these texts for inscribing; rhetoric mattered more.¹⁸ The inscriptions were arranged so that the viewer's attention was drawn to certain documents in the middle section of the composition. Here, the Aphrodisians positioned three documents (10, 13, and 14) that expressed in pithy rhetoric the Romans' preference for their city and their intention to allow no one to question Aphrodisias' privileged position as a *civitas libera*.

The original design of this epigraphic dossier dates from the year AD 224, and, to judge by what remains from a letter of Severus Alexander that was included in the dossier but is mostly lost,¹⁹ events during his reign prompted its creation. Those events included a petition and called for Roman arbitration. The Aphrodisians designed and created the "Archive Wall" as a monument to their own efforts to re-affirm and to assert in the face of opposition the honor bestowed to their city by the Roman rulers. The documents also underline the importance of the city goddess Venus, who was also the legendary ancestor of Romulus and the first Roman imperial dynasty.

This, then, is a dossier that commemorates the city. But there is also a notable number of honorific references to individuals at the center of the composition and on the eastern and western corners of the wall. Octavian's letter preserved in document 10 honors an individual, namely C. Julius Zoilos, at least as much as it honors the city.²⁰ In this letter, the first emperor declared that he regarded Zoilos' city as his own. C. Julius Zoilos was the person who had paid for the stage building on which the inscriptions were carved, and we find a letter that exalts his contribution to Aphrodisias' well-being at the core of the composition, that is, at the head

17 The standard edition is Reynolds 1982, 33-146. For the arrangement of the documents, see Kokkinia 2016. The documents were inscribed in two phases, of which the first—and therefore the original design of the dossier—most likely dates from the reign of Severus Alexander: Reynolds 1982, documents nos. 8-10 and 12-19. Another group consisting of the four documents Reynolds 1982, nos. 7, 11, 20, and 21 was added during the reign of Gordian III or later.

18 The opinion that the texts are arranged in chronological order was expressed by Reynolds in the standard edition: Reynolds 1982, 37 and *passim*.

19 Reynolds 1982, 129-31 (document 19).

20 On Zoilos, see Smith 1993.

of the central column of writing.²¹ For partial observers such as Zoilos' heirs, the entire dossier, with Octavian's letter in the center, could be seen as an elaborate illustration of the importance of Zoilos as a civic benefactor for Aphrodisias. Earlier local politicians shared in Zoilos' fame by means of letters of praise that framed the composition. The inscriptions at Aphrodisias' theater form a complex honorific dossier that weaves together the glamour of Aphrodisias' historic relations with Rome, the worldwide fame of the city-goddess, and the contribution of certain citizens to her well-being.

Oenoanda vs Ankara

The documents displayed at Aphrodisias, like those in the other three dossiers discussed here, were picked out of archives, combined into new entities, arranged with specific intent, and were made part of monuments in which writing—in fact thousands of words—played a central role. They, therefore, deserve a place in our discussion on readers vs. viewers of inscriptions, particularly in the Greek East.²² In addition, they were complex monuments that offered different approaches to different audiences. They were designed to display their central message in multiple layers accessible not only to people with various levels of literacy but also to audiences who saw local affairs from different standpoints. These four dossiers suggest that the desire to honor a person or a family was a strong motive for written documents to be collected, organized in a specific way, and eternalized on stone in a public setting. They also suggest that such a desire was not the *only* motive behind such monuments. However strong local aristocracies had become in the city-states of the Roman era, the generosity, influence, and financial power of a member of the local elite alone did not result in walls covered with honorific documents.

If they did, the monuments did not last for us to find. Had it not been broken and used as building material and lain among the ruins still undiscovered in Theodore Mommsen's time, Diogenes' huge "philosophical inscription" at Oenoanda might have competed with the copy of Augustus' *Res Gestae* on the Temple of Roma at Ankara for the title "the queen of inscriptions."²³ It is the longest inscription we know of. It displayed Diogenes' interpretation of the teachings of Epicurus and included pieces of his correspondence with prominent figures in Athens and elsewhere. The inscription was carved on the walls of a colonnade located at the heart of the city of Oenoanda in Lycia, most likely in the first half of the second century AD.²⁴

Diogenes gives his reasons for inscribing his thoughts and his correspondence in stone. It was because "most people suffer from a common disease, as in a plague, with their false notions about things." His inscription was to deliver remedies for false beliefs, and its creation, according to Diogenes himself, was an act of philanthropy towards his co-citizens but also towards foreigners and the generations to come.²⁵ Diogenes' teachings must have enjoyed some support among his contemporaries. His circle of disciples and allies cannot have been too small in his lifetime, or Diogenes was unlikely to receive permission to locate his monument in the center of the city. Whatever additional reasons besides propagating Epicurian doctrines he may have had for investing in such an epigraphical *opus magnum*, and though he found support apparently to pull it through, his teachings were not important enough to a sufficient number of people for his message to survive. His stoa was demolished in antiquity, probably in the fourth century AD, when Oenoanda was still prosperous, and the inscribed stones

21 Document 10, col. IV.

22 See recently Cooley 2018, particularly 28-33; Johnson and Parker 2009, both with interesting insights and suggestions but without mention of epigraphic dossiers.

23 This quotation is very familiar among epigraphists (*cf.* i.e. Eck 2016), but it is somewhat misleading, because Mommsen referred explicitly to Latin inscriptions: "Wer die im Römerreich lateinisch geschriebenen Inschriften zählt, wird leicht an die hunderttausend hinankommen; wer sie wägt, dem wiegt schwerer als die zahllosen übrigen die eine, die Königin aller, das Denkmal von Ancyra." Mommsen 1887, 387.

24 On the ongoing investigation of this fascinating text, see Haake, in this volume, and Hammerstaedt et al. 2017. For the structure, content, and date of the inscription, see Hammerstaedt 2017, 29-40.

25 Hammerstaedt 2017, 29-30.

were built into the walls of ancient buildings as *spolia*. They were used primarily to build a new portico on the same site.²⁶

Diogenes' sharp polemic antagonized followers of other schools of thought, including the Christians. Diogenes declares that he did not engage in politics,²⁷ but that was not what was expected of a wealthy and well-educated citizen in the second century AD. His interpretation of euergetism was unconventional and could be seen as eccentric. By plunging headlong into ideological conflict, Diogenes was not choosing a good strategy for his outstanding epigraphic monument to fulfill its goal of transcending the ages. Therefore, I think, despite his supra-regional connections and his stated intention to reach future generations, Diogenes failed where local figures, such as Iason and Opramoas; a freedman, such as Zoilos; and even an obscure Roman knight, such as Salutaris, succeeded.

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26 Bachman 2017, 20-1, 26.

27 Hammerstaedt 2017, 41.

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