

AN OFFICIAL RESCRIPT FROM CORINTH

Among the numerous inscriptions discovered in Corinth in recent years¹ one large fragment (Fig. 1) is of special importance for the light it throws on the



Fig. 1. Official Rescript from Corinth

municipal affairs of the Roman city. It is part of a stele of hard gray limestone, preserving the entire width and thickness but broken above and below. The left edge is smoothly finished with a fine-toothed chisel, whereas the right edge, which shows the marks of a pointed tool, though carefully finished, is less smooth. The back

¹ A general study of these inscriptions, now under way, will be published as a supplement to *Corinth*, vol. VIII.

is so rough that it seems likely that the stele was set against a wall, so as to be seen only from the front. It is broken away just above the base into which it was inserted. The last line at the bottom is preserved with the exception of the first one or two words. How much is broken away at the top cannot be determined.

The stone tapers slightly, having a width of 0.665 m. at the top and 0.667 m. at the bottom. The thickness measures *ca.* 0.29 m., and the preserved height is *ca.* 0.60 m. The Greek letters are 0.015–0.017 m. high, and the Latin letters of the last line are 0.013 m., with occasional letters 0.025 m. in height. The number of letters in each line of the Greek text varies between 34 and 39, but the last line had more.

TEXT

- //////////
----- ΝΑΡ·Ι ἐρείπια στοᾶς
- Ε·ΗΡΙΑ -- [κα]μάρας οὕτως ὥστε ποιῆσαι οἴκους
πεντήκοντα. ἐπεὶ οὖν καὶ ἐν τούτῳ φιλοτείμως
ὁ Πρεῖ[σκ]ος ἀναστρέφεται ὥστε ὑπὲρ τῆς τειμῆς
5 τοῦ προδηλουμένου τόπου δοῦναι τοῖς πολλῆταις [*sic*]
ἐκάστω δηνάριον ἔν, οὐ μόνον συνκατατίθεται
τῇ τε τῆς βουλῆς καὶ τοῦ δήμου γνώμῃ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀ-
ποδέχομαι τὸν ἄνδρα ὅπως ἐν ἅπασιν ἀναστρε-
φόμενον φιλοτείμως καὶ ἐπιτρέπω τὸν προ-
10 δηλούμενον τόπον ταύτῃ τῇ αἰρέσει αὐτῷ πρα-
θῆναι, οὕτως μέντοι ὥστε τοὺς γεινομένους
οἴκους τοῖς ἀθληταῖς προῖκα τῷ καιρῷ τῶν ἀγώ-
νων σχολάζειν εἰς τὸ διηνεκές, ἔχοντος τοῦ κα-
τὰ καιρὸν ἀγωνοθέτου ἐξουσίαν διανέμειν
15 τὰς ξενίας αὐτοῖς. εἰ μέντοι τις πρὸς τοῦτο ἀν-
τιλέγει δυνήσεται διδάξαι με ἐντὸς Καλανδῶν
Ἰανουαρίων τῶν ἔνγιστα. ἐρρῶσθαι ὑμᾶς εὐχομαι.

data --- xIII · K · DECEMBR · ET · PRO · ROSTRIS · LECTA · IX · K · DECEMBR ·

TRANSLATION

-- ruins of a stoa ----- vaulted chambers (?) so as to make fifty rooms. Since in this matter, too, Priscus conducts himself emulously, so that above the price of the aforementioned plot he pays to the citizens one denarius each, not only do I concur with the resolution of the senate and people, but I agree that the man conducts himself with honor (in this matter) as in all things, and I permit the above mentioned plot to be sold to him; however, with this proviso, that the rooms thus obtained shall be at the disposal of the athletes for the duration of the games, free of

charge, in perpetuity. The agonotheses holding office at the time shall have the authority to distribute the guest chambers to them (the athletes). But if any one has any objection to raise, he may advise me before the Kalends of January next. My best wishes for your health.

Given at ----- on the fourteenth day before the Kalends of December (Nov. 18) and read from the rostra on the ninth day before the Kalends of December (Nov. 23).

COMMENTARY

The document is part of an official rescript, probably from the Governor of Achaia. It contains the magistrate's permission to a certain individual, whose name, Priscus, appears in line 4, for the erection of a building, or buildings, with fifty rooms, at the Isthmia, and the regulations about the use of these rooms. Presumably the ground, ὁ τόπος, referred to twice, was part of the sacred land belonging to the sanctuary.

The inscribed surface of the stone is much weather-worn, especially in the upper left corner, but the preserved text can be deciphered with certainty, except in the first two lines. Slight traces of letters, quite illegible, are extant at the upper edge above line 1.

Line 1. Only the words ἐρείπια στοᾶς are certain. Of the rho only the upright stroke is visible.

Line 2. The preserved traces of letters at the beginning of the line might be interpreted as [ΕΥ]Ε[Τ]ΗΡΙΑ, but the only certain letter is the second epsilon. The word [κα]μάρας is also uncertain, but in view of the nature of the document it is highly probable, as will appear below.

Line 4. The letters of the name Πρεῖ[σκ]ος are poorly preserved, but there is very little doubt that the reading is correct. The use of the article with the name of a person, though comparatively rare, occurs in other documents of the same kind and of approximately the same date. In decrees and rescripts concerning one or more individuals, the full name is usually given either in the prescript or somewhere near the beginning of the inscription, and when the same persons are referred to again in the text the cognomen alone preceded by the article is often used.¹ For the identity of Priscus see below.

Line 5. Προδηλουμένου might conceivably here have some legal significance, but it is more likely to mean simply "the aforementioned" ² like προειρημένου.

¹ Cf. *I.G.R.R.*, IV, 33, col. a, 13; 293, frag. a, col. I, 28; col. II, 58, 66-67; 1031; 1644; *S.I.G.*, 889, 10 and 37; Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period*, No. 75. A similar use of the article occurs after a personal pronoun in direct address; see Grenfell-Hunt-Hogarth, *Fayum Towns and their Papyri*, p. 193, LXIV.

² For a similar use of the word cf. *I.G.*, XII, 7, 239, 23; *S.I.G.*, 1234, 4; Welles, *op. cit.*, No. 75, lines 10, 11. The term προγεγραμμένους is used with a similar meaning, *I.G.R.R.*, IV, 1558, 27.

The second vowel in *πολείταις* is an eta, and it might be questioned whether the word should be read *πολείταις* or *πωληταῖς*. The first alternative seems preferable, since the sum of one denarius is rather small to be paid to each of the *πωληταί*. The latter could only be interpreted to mean the commissioners in charge of the transaction, and these would hardly be permitted to accept a gratuity from the purchaser or lessee of the land. It was not unusual for donors, however, to pay cash money to the citizens at the same time as they made large donations for municipal buildings and entertainments.¹

Lines 7-8. *Ἀποδέχομαι*, here in the sense of accept, acknowledge, but with the added idea of agreeing.²

Line 13. *Σχολάζειν*, to be unoccupied, hence at the disposal of. This verb is not commonly used in such connections, where one would rather expect *παράδιδοςθαι* or some form of *παρέχειν*.

Line 15. *Ξενίας*. These must be the same as the *οἴκοι* in lines 2 and 12. Although the word is more commonly used in the sense of hospitality, in Roman times it sometimes has the specific meaning of guest-chamber.³

Lines 15-16. *Διδάξαι με*. Stipulations like this are indicative of the fair methods which the Roman government employed in dealing with individuals in the provinces.⁴

Line 17. *Ἐρρώσθαι ὑμᾶς εὖχομαι*. This is the form of greeting commonly used in letters issued by Roman high officials.⁵ A variation of this formula, *ἔρρωσθαι ὑμᾶς βούλομαι*, occurs less frequently.⁶ In imperial letters these formulas rarely occur, but shorter forms of greeting, *ἔρρωσθε*, *εὐτυχεῖτε*, and their equivalents in the singular, are used instead.⁷ In two instances, where the longer formula occurs in imperial letters,⁸ the emperor's message is re-written and forwarded to the petitioners by some official who sends the greeting in his own name. It is likely that the emperors followed a formula used in royal correspondence in the east, in which *ἔρρωσθε* and *ἔρρωσο* are the only forms of greetings used at the end of letters.⁹ The important difference in the usage of these forms of greeting,¹⁰ consistently followed in official correspondence of the first two centuries of our era, shows beyond a doubt that the letter

¹ See Abbot and Johnson, *Municipal Administration in the Roman Empire*, pp. 387-388, No. 71; and cf. Pliny's *Letters*, X, 116.

² Cf. Abbot and Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 423, No. 101; and Welles, *op. cit.*, Appendix, p. 316. Cf. the phrase *ἀνδρὸς δοκιμωτάτου καὶ πάσης τειμῆς καὶ ἀποδοχῆς ἀξίου*, *S.I.G.*, 867, 20-21.

³ See Acts 28: 23; and cf. *S.I.G.*, 888, 35.

⁴ Cf. Abbot and Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 401, No. 81, 5.

⁵ Abbot and Johnson, *op. cit.*, Nos. 80, 82, 87, 98, 99, 102, 114; Grenfell and Hunt, *Ox. Pap.*, XII, No. 1409, line 22.

⁶ Abbot and Johnson, *op. cit.*, 97; Grenfell and Hunt, *op. cit.*, XII, No. 1408, line 20; *S.I.G.*, 851.

⁷ Abbot and Johnson, *op. cit.*, Nos. 79, 91, 104, 120; *S.I.G.*, Nos. 780, 821, 831, 873.

⁸ *S.I.G.*, 851; Abbot and Johnson, *op. cit.*, No. 130.

⁹ See Welles, *op. cit.*, Nos. 1, 2, 5, 10-12, 24-28, 31, 32, 35, 37, 38, 40, 47, 49, 50, 52, 55.

¹⁰ I am indebted to Mr. Eugene Schweigert for kindly calling my attention to this fact.

partly preserved in the inscription from Corinth was not issued by the emperor but by some high official, probably by the governor of the province.

Line 18. Data — — — — — lecta. Probably neuter plural.¹ If this line, which is in Latin, began as far to the left as the lines of the Greek text, there is room for approximately 13 letters on the missing piece. At the beginning of the line are preserved four upright strokes, broken off at the bottom, the first of which is higher than the others. To the left of these strokes there appears to be an uninscribed space, *ca.* 2 cm. wide. The interpretation of this line is beset with serious difficulties. The beginning of the line probably recorded the place where the magistrate's signature was affixed, and this event must have preceded the public reading of the document from the rostra. But the first numeral seems to be IIII, which would reverse the order. It seems therefore necessary to restore the numeral XIII, although no trace of the X is preserved. The date for the reading of the rescript is certainly IX, but the upper part of the X has been chipped away. This leaves five days between the two events. If we assume that the document was issued in Rome, it is hardly likely that the messenger could have reached Corinth in such a short time;² nor would there be any reason for the public reading of such a document in the capital, since its contents are concerned with the local affairs in a distant colony. Consequently the rostra from which the document was read was not that in the Roman Forum but the speakers' platform in Corinth, where the magistrate's decision would be publicly proclaimed before it was recorded on the stone. This building, corresponding to the Rostra in Rome, has recently been identified in the middle of the Agora at Corinth.³ In view of the small amount of time that elapsed between the signing of the document and its publication in the popular assembly it is likely that the place of issue to be restored in the last line is some city in Greece, probably Corinth itself, the official residence of the Roman Governor.

¹ Cf. Abbot and Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 436, col. iv, line 25.

² Mr. Robert Scranton by actual calculation has shown that it would have been possible, with the conveyances then available, to go from Rome to Corinth in five days, but this would presuppose that the messenger was sent immediately after the document had been issued, that there was no delay on the journey, and that the public reading took place immediately upon his arrival. We know from Philostratos, *Vit. Apoll.*, 8, 15, that a sea voyage from Syracuse to the mouth of the Alpheios took six days, and this distance is considerably shorter than that between Rome and Corinth, and did not entail the delay caused by the change of conveyance from one by land to one by sea. In the case of an imperial letter sent to Stratonicea in Lydia (*I.G.R.R.*, IV, 1156) over two months elapsed between the date of issue and the reading of the document in the ekklesia.

³ See Broneer, "Studies in the Topography of Corinth in the Time of St. Paul," *Αρχ. Έφ.*, 1937, pp. 125 ff. From the account of St. Paul's visit to Corinth (Acts 18: 12-17) we know that this building, called *βήμα* in the Greek, was used by the Governor of Achaia for the transaction of public affairs and for the delivery of speeches addressed to the people of the city. The word "rostra" is rarely used for such buildings outside of Rome, but the colonies, being considered *quasi effigies parvae simulacraque* of the mother city (Gellius, *Noct. Att.*, XVI, xiii, 9) in some cases transferred the name to their own imitations of the Roman rostra (see Dessau, *I.L.S.*, 6862).

The rescript has to do with the erection of certain houses at the Isthmia, for which special permission had to be obtained. Probably the building lot, sold or leased to the man at whose expense the houses were erected, was part of the sacred land of the Isthmian sanctuary. The nature and purpose of the houses do not appear from the extant portion of the inscription beyond the fact that they were to be occupied free of rent by the athletes during the Isthmian games. This proviso seems to indicate that at other times they would serve a different purpose.

The name Πρεῖ[σκ]ος, restored in line 4, connects this inscription with another document copied by Spon and Wheler in 1676 at the Isthmia and now in the Museo Lapidario in Verona (Fig. 2).¹ This contains a record of the benefactions of P. Licinius Priscus Iuventianus, who held the title of ἀρχιερεὺς διὰ βίου.² At the head of a long list of buildings constructed and repaired by him at the Isthmia is the item τὰς καταλύσεις τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἐπὶ τὰ Ἰσθμια παραγεινομένοις ἀθληταῖς κατασκεύασεν. The καταλύσεις,³ obviously here in the sense of quarters for the athletes, are probably the rooms referred to in the new inscription as ξενίαι, which the agonothes was to distribute to the athletes free of charge.

The grouping of the items in the Isthmia inscription seems to indicate that the construction of these καταλύσεις was a separate undertaking, apart from the buildings and repairs in the various sanctuaries of the gods, which were outright gifts from Licinius' private means, ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων. At the end of the account we are told that a stoa, which he built, together with its vaulted chambers, σὺν τοῖς κεκαμαρωμένοις οἴκοις, adjacent to the stadium, was erected or dedicated ὑπὲρ ἀγορανομίας, the equivalent of the Latin phrase *pro aedilitatis munere*. From this we learn that Licinius in addition to the priesthood also held the office of aedile, though probably not simultaneously. It was doubtless during his term as aedile, when he was in charge of public buildings, that he undertook the extensive building program at the Isthmia, although the phrase ὑπὲρ ἀγορανομίας grammatically governs only the sentence relating to the building of the Stoa. It is probable that the ruined stoa and the καμάραι mentioned in the first two lines of our inscription have to do with the same building project.

The main part of the inscription from the Isthmia is in the form of a statement, enumerating the public donations of Licinius. But the last two lines form the beginning of a new part, the promise, ὑπόσχεσις, of the benefactor. This begins with a conditional clause εἰάν μοι πωλήσητε τῆς λεγ[ομ]ένης ῥηγλία —,⁴ showing that the

¹ The photograph published in Figure 2 was obtained through the kindness of the Director of the Museum, Professor Avena. For the text see Spon and Wheler, *Voyage*, II (Amsterdam, 1679), pp. 225 and 486-487; and *I.G.*, IV, 203.

² J. A. O. Larsen (*Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, IV, p. 453) has shown that this title does not imply life tenure of the office of high priest, but was used as an honorary title for former high priests.

³ The word καταλύσεις is here used like κατάλυμα as in Polybios, II, 15, 5; see also F. Preisigke, *Wörterbuch d. gr. Papyrusurkunden*, s. v.

⁴ For the meaning of this word see the explanation suggested by Fränkel, *I.G.*, IV, p. 33.



Fig. 2. Inscription in Verona, *I.G.*, IV, 203

donor did not bestow his gifts upon the public outright. He bargains for the lease or purchase of something, probably of land belonging to the Isthmian sanctuary. Boeckh's suggestion that this is part of a commercial transaction between the aedile and private individuals, is rightly rejected by Fränkel. It is more likely that it was made as an election promise when Licinius entered upon the aedileship.¹ Whatever its motive, it probably contained the stipulations² relative to the public benefactions recorded in the first part of the inscription.

The relation of the new document to the inscription from the Isthmia may now be determined with fair certainty. Licinius, in return for certain benefits, made a promise to the city to expend large sums of his private funds for new buildings and for repairs of the old, at the Isthmian sanctuary. Since the property concerned did not belong to the city but was part of the sacred domains of the Isthmian sanctuary, the proposition, having been favorably acted upon by the local senate and popular assembly, was referred to the highest representative of the emperor in the province, the Governor of Achaia. The reply to this appeal was sent in the form of an official rescript, which was publicly proclaimed in the assembly and later recorded on a stele set up in the city. The original promise of Licinius, on the other hand, as well as the statement recording the fulfilment of the promise, was set up in the Isthmian sanctuary where the visitors could read it while they admired the buildings that owed their origin and embellishment to his beneficence.

The donor, P. Licinius Priscus, is known from other inscriptions from Corinth and the Isthmia, but these add very little to our knowledge of the man. Two contiguous fragments of a Latin inscription³ belong to the base of a statue set up by Licinius in honor of a woman, who was priestess of Victoria, and probably the wife of the dedicator. The text of the combined fragments reads:

----- M(arci) · F(iliae) ·
polyAENAE⁴

¹ See Abbot and Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 87: "When honors were eagerly sought, it was not illegal nor unusual for candidates to promise money for public works, games, banquets, or other entertainments -----."

² A large number of inscriptions, having to do with private donations, contain the phrase ἐξ ὑποσχέσεως: see Tod, *J.H.S.*, XLII, 1922, p. 171; *S.E.G.*, II, 410, which records the gift ἐξ ὑποσχέσεως of 10,000 *peches* of wood for a basilica in Thessalonike; also *I.G.R.R.*, IV, 242. An inscription from Thera, *S.I.G.*, 852, dated in 149-150 A.D., shows the proceedings at the making of such a promise, here called εἰσαγγελία. In the text of the promise the verb ὑποσχοῦμαι is used. In Pliny's letters to Trajan there are records of similar promises by individual donors; see *Epist.* X, 8, and X, 39, where the Latin equivalent of ἐξ ὑποσχέσεως, *ex privatorum pollicitationibus*, is used.

³ The two fragments were published by West as coming from separate inscriptions, *Corinth*, VIII, ii, *Latin Inscriptions*, Nos. 70, and 111. The name in the second line of 111 is not masculine, as restored by West, and the first preserved letter is not M but A. The name was probably [Poly]aenae, and the [o]ptumae in the next to the last line of 70 agrees with it in gender and case.

⁴ The name Polyaeus occurs in other inscriptions from Corinth: West, *op. cit.*, No. 180;

sacerdotI · VICTORIAE¹
 — — — — p liCINIVS · PRISCŪs
 iuventianVS · ARCHIEREVs ·
 uxori oPTVMAE ·
 D(ecreto) · D(ecurionum)

Another instance of the name of Licinius was recognized by West on a much effaced statue base with traces of a Greek inscription.² A dedication of Licinius, once at Corinth and later brought to Rome, which reads: Π. Λικίνιος | Πρέσκος | ἱερεύς, West³ takes to refer to the father of Iuventianus. The inscription is cut on the head of a dolphin attached to the base at the feet of a colossal statue of Poseidon.⁴ The omission of the father's name and of the name of the tribe is hardly sufficient reason for assuming that this inscription refers to the father rather than to Iuventianus himself. There are two unpublished Greek inscriptions in Corinth which probably have to do with the same man. One of these, a small fragment,⁵ preserves the name, Π. Λικί[νιον] | Π. Τ. Α]ῖμ. Πρέσκ[ον] — — —. The second,⁶ a large base with a cutting in the top for the plinth of a marble statue, was found built into a modern house in New Corinth and later brought to the Epigraphical Museum in Old Corinth. On the front surface is cut in large letters: ΙΟΥΒΕΝΤΑΝΟC | ΙΕΡΕΥC. It is likely that this base came originally not from Old Corinth but from the Isthmia. The omission of the rest of the name leaves it uncertain whether this is the P. Licinius Priscus Iuventianus⁷ of the inscription at Verona, but it is highly probable that all these documents refer to the same man.

With regard to the date of Licinius we have no definite information, but certain features of the inscriptions point to the second century after Christ. The letter forms resemble very closely those of Meritt, No. 15, which from its contents may be dated in the second century. The lunate epsilon and sigma and the cursive forms of mu

Meritt, *Corinth*, VIII, i, No. 15. One C. Julius Polyaenus was duumvir in the second half of the first century after Christ: Edwards, *Corinth*, VI, p. 7.

¹ At the beginning of line 4 there is room for a word before the name of the dedicator, probably an epithet of Victoria. In the only known cult of Victory in Corinth she was worshiped as *Victoria Britannica* (West, *op. cit.*, Nos. 86-90, and pp. 10-11), but since we know that the priesthood of this cult was held by a man, it is likely that we are here dealing with a separate cult of the same goddess.

² Meritt, *op. cit.*, No. 105, and West, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 55; *I.G.*, IV, 202.

⁴ For the present whereabouts of the statue see Overbeck, *Gr. Kunstmythologie*, III, p. 292, No. 18.

⁵ Inv. No. 935, referred to by West, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁶ Inv. No. 1626.

⁷ One other official with the same *cognomen*, C. O[rfidius] Benignus Iuventianus (Inv. No. 1443), who was *theocolus* of Juppiter Capitolinus and priest, is honored in a Latin inscription in Corinth, but his date seems to be considerably earlier.

and omega are used throughout in these inscriptions,¹ whereas in dated documents from Corinth of the first century only capital forms occur.² The omission of the iota adscript, on the other hand, is common both in the first and second centuries. West³ has argued from probabilities that Licinius' activities at the Isthmia should be dated in the last quarter of the first century after Christ, his chief argument being based on the assumption that the repairs at the Isthmian sanctuary were occasioned by, and engaged in, shortly after the earthquake of 77 A.D. The inscription mentions that certain walls and buildings had fallen into disrepair because of damage through earthquakes and old age, but the phrase used, ὑπὸ σεισμῶν καὶ παλαιότητος διαλελυμένα (*I.G.*, IV, 203), seems rather to imply that the destruction had been going on for a long time.

Lavish donations by private individuals were more common in the second century than in the first.⁴ In the last quarter of the first century economic and political conditions in Greece were such that neither the means nor the public spirit existed to make possible private donations on such a scale as that to which the inscription in Verona testifies.⁵ On the other hand, the "Greek renaissance," ushered in by Hadrian and continuing for some time under the Antonines, found expression among other things in unprecedented expenditures of private money for public purposes. Historical considerations, as well as letter forms and phraseology of the inscriptions, point to this period as the most likely time for Licinius' activities in Corinth.

OSCAR BRONEER

¹ Cf. also Meritt, *op. cit.*, Nos. 75, 86.

² Meritt, *op. cit.*, Nos. 14, 19, 70.

³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 54 f.

⁴ The time of Augustus, another period of lively building activity in Corinth, had its Cn. Babbius Philinus and C. Julius Eurycles I, but neither of these engaged in operations on such a gigantic scale as did Licinius. The celebrated Baths of Eurycles were probably erected by the second Eurycles, whose extensive building activities fall in the second century (cf. West, *op. cit.*, p. 47; Taylor and West, *A.J.A.*, XXX, 1926, p. 390; Groag, Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll, *s. v.* Julius 221). Corinth likewise benefited from the generosity of Herodes Atticus, who embellished Peirene and rebuilt the Odeion (see Broneer, *Corinth*, X, pp. 1, 144 ff.), and was so beloved in Corinth that the very ground on which he had trod was held in veneration (Johnson, *Corinth*, IX, p. 88; Meritt, *op. cit.*, Nos. 85, 86). He, too, like Priscus, made donations for the embellishment of the Isthmian sanctuary (Pausanias, II, 1, 7).

⁵ See Rostovtzeff, *Soc. and Econ. Hist.*, pp. 111 f., 143 ff., and 529, note 13; cf. Larsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 465 ff., who endeavors to show that the gloomy picture of economic conditions in Greece, presented by such writers as Dio Chrysostom, Strabo, Plutarch, and others, is likely to be overdrawn. It should be remembered that both Plutarch and Dio Chrysostom, who certainly knew Greece, were active during the period of decline which was well on its way at the end of the first century. Even if most of their writing was done after the time of the Flavians, the vivid impression of those years of general distress is certain to have colored their views of the subsequent period, as Larsen has pointed out (*op. cit.*, pp. 466-467).