

THE SACRED GERUSIA AND THE EMPEROR'S CONSILIUM

THE occasion of the present article is the inscription published by Daniel J. Geagan, *The Athenian Constitution after Sulla*, *Hesperia*, Supplement XII, 1967, pp. 187-193 which contains fragments of five more imperial letters addressed to, and concerning, the Gerusia of the Athenians.

THE SACRED GERUSIA

In 1941 as *Hesperia*, Supplement VI, the writer published a book entitled *The Sacred Gerusia* which took its start from inscriptions of the Athenian Agora, namely honorary decrees for Eubiotus Leurus who had helped the Gerusia, and also imperial letters concerning the affairs of the Athenian Gerusia, inscriptions newly found in the Agora excavations.

The main conclusions of the book were:

1. The positive adjective *ιερά*, which often accompanied the name of the Athenian Gerusia and certain other gerusiae, was not ornamental like the superlative adjective *ιερωτάτη*, which accompanied the names of many gerusiae elsewhere, but signified the religious purpose of the Gerusia.
2. The evidence connected the Gerusia of the Athenians not with the Eleusinian cult but with the Panathenaic Festival and secondarily with the imperial cult, although Eleusinian priests were prominent in its organization.
3. The date of its foundation at Athens was during the Eastern tour of Marcus Aurelius.
4. The Gerusia of the Athenians had been founded largely on the model of the important Gerusia at Ephesus, where the emperor had just been, even though the Gerusia of Ephesus is in our extant sources never called a sacred gerusia.
5. The interest of the Roman government in helping to found new gerusiae at Athens and elsewhere was to support old Hellenic cults against indifference and apostasy. (The imperial cult was grafted upon gerusiae and other institutions but this was secondary, a spontaneous development, not the aim of the Roman government.)

As far as I can see, none of these conclusions has been invalidated. J. and L. Robert, *Bull. ép.*, 1966, no. 202, p. 379, share our view of the significance of the positive *ιερά* in the name of gerusiae (or most of them, because one must always allow for accidental variations). Geagan still supports our view of the function of

the Gerusia at Athens. M. P. Charlesworth, *J.H.S.*, LXII, 1942, p. 103, agreed with our explanation of the interest of the Roman government. The theory that the Athenian Gerusia was partly modeled on the Ephesian Gerusia is probably acceptable to many but remains hard to prove. If, however, we could find an Ephesian among the emperor's advisers, the theory would gain a welcome support.

The Ephesian Gerusia doubtless began as a sacred gerusia but its history was not typical. The sacred gerusia of the goddess Oupisia (Artemis) at Messene and the Sacred Gerusia of the Savior Asclepius at Hyettus are closer to the type from which the new gerusia at Athens derived its significant adjective. What we know of the sacred *gerontes* of the Oupisian (Artemis) comes from newly discovered inscriptions. These discoveries have been reported with a remarkable commentary by J. and L. Robert, *Rev. Ét. Gr.*, LXXIX, 1966, pp. 378-380 (*Bull. ép.*, no. 202), who use them for the interpretation of other Peloponnesian inscriptions, notably *S.E.G.*, XI, 972 of the second century B.C. from Thuria in Messenia. The sacred *gerontes* of the Oupisian (Artemis) numbered seventy-six at one vote.

We could argue that there were two early types of gerusia, one political and one sacred. The political gerusia arose out of an advisory council of elders which restricted the king and assumed power in the state. The sacred gerusia may have arisen out of an advisory council or in an imitation of a political gerusia. A priest instead of a king may have ceded power to a gerusia. In early Attica the term gerusia does not seem to have been used. Instead we have the Areopagus; and in the hands of the Eumolpidae, or of the Eumolpidae and Ceryces, we find an ancient cult at Eleusis. But even a political gerusia had its cults.

By evolution or imitation—for new foundations occur—many gerusiae of a social character could have been derived from either of these. That is, a once powerful gerusia may have continued to have social importance and to build its activity around a gymnasium. On the other hand, a chiefly social gerusia could deliberately assume a more sacred character or express its loyalty to the greatest patron through devotion to the imperial cult. The borders are not absolutely rigid, although the Gerusia of Sparta is obviously very different from that of the (Artemis) Oupisia at Messene.

In any case, a new chapter began in the Roman period. In the time of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus new foundations at Athens and Sidyma occurred, where the more purely aristocratic character of gerusiae was sacrificed, I think, to the necessity of attracting wealth and interest.¹ Perhaps earlier. Hadrian certainly shared the concern for the ancient Hellenic cults, and if the honoring of Antinous had encouraged a relaxing of social standards from then on, it would not surprise the writer.

¹ J. H. Oliver, "Gerusiae and Augustales," *Historia*, VII, 1958, pp. 472-496, especially pp. 494-496.

THE EMPEROR'S CONSILIUM

Imperial letters which mention the names of the emperor's advisers are rather rare, and this naming is certainly one of the most interesting aspects of the inscription published by Daniel Geagan.

The emperor's *consilium* was an outgrowth of republican practice, but apparently it was established on a more formal basis in the time of Marcus Aurelius, when the epigraphical references begin.² Extant letters of Marcus alone, or of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, or of Marcus and Commodus, however, except for the still unpublished Tabula Banasitana of 6 July 177, contain no indication of the *consilium*.³ Three of the four earliest letters with the reference to the emperor's official and unofficial advisers are found today in the aforesaid text published by Daniel Geagan.

Geagan's Epistle I either follows in date the epistle of Commodus cos. III from A.D. 181 or 182 which B. D. Meritt published in *Hesperia*, XXX, 1961, p. 234 or is the conclusion of that very letter.

In line 7 Geagan's Epistle I ends with the phrase --] καὶ Γαργίλιο[ς Ἀντίκος οἱ κράτιστοι καὶ Ἀπολλώνιος Ἀπολλωνίου. In line 14 a letter of Commodus *imp. V* (A.D. 182 or 183) concludes -- καὶ Γαρ]γίλιος Ἀντίκος οἱ [κράτιστοι καὶ Ἀπολλώνιος Ἀπολλ]ωνίου. And in line 26 a third letter of Commodus, composed when he had the tribunician power for the eighth time (10 Dec. 182 to 9 Dec. 183), concludes -- Ἀντ]ίπατρος κ[αὶ -- --] οἱ κράτιστοι καὶ Ἀπολλώνιος Ἀπολλωνίου. Εὐτυχείτε. The dossier contains two more letters that do not seem to postdate 184, or even 183, because Commodus does not yet have the epithets Pius⁴ and Britannicus, but the endings are not preserved. All the letters seem to be addressed to the Gerusia of the Athenians, so that the affairs of the Athenian Gerusia undoubtedly formed the subject of all five letters.

The names at the end of the three epistles are probably exactly the same. Imperial letters frequently end with the names of ambassadors (*ἐπρέσβευον*), but if Gargilius

² J. A. Crook, *Consilium Principis: Imperial Councils and Counsellors from Augustus to Diocletian*, Cambridge University Press, 1955, Ch. VI, and Mason Hammond, *The Antonine Monarchy* (= Papers and Monographs of the American Academy in Rome, XIX, 1959), Ch. XI, where note 32 is important for its references.

³ See *Hesperia*, Suppl. VI (= Oliver, *The Sacred Gerusia*), 1941, Nos. 11 and 24; *Hesperia*, XXX, 1961, No. 31, pp. 231-236. For the Tabula Banasitana see W. Seston and M. Euzennat, *Comptes rendus Acad. Inscr. Belles Lettres*, 1961, pp. 317 f.

⁴ The coinage indicates that Commodus received the epithet Pius when he had the tribunician power for the eighth time and was *imp. V* (*B.M.C.*, IV, p. 704). In fact he received the epithet Pius in December 182 according to Fulvio Grosso, *La lotta politica al tempo di Commodo* (= Memorie dell'Accademia delle Scienze di Torino, Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche, Serie 4^o, n. 7, 1964), pp. 146-147, but Commodus was already *imp. VII* in Epistle V, where the lacuna is not long enough to admit the epithet Pius, much less Pius and Britannicus. A. Bellinger, who kindly discussed the problem with me, was tempted to change the letter Z (= VII).

Antiquus must be identified as a Roman senator, the three names are not cited as those of three men who constituted an embassy, even if one of them happened to be an ambassador. There is only one obvious reason why the emperor would mention three men, the same three men, at the end of three consecutive letters: they were the three men who studied the problem and advised him. The sentence may have begun with the word *παρήσαν*.

Gargilius Antiquus seems to be the senator Gargilius Antiquus who was raised to the patriciate by Commodus, L. Pullaienus Gargilius Antiquus, *PIR*², G 80.

The Antipater who is on each occasion probably mentioned ahead of Gargilius Antiquus cannot be identified with Aelius Antipater, *PIR*², A 137, who became the *ab epistulis Graecis* of Septimius Severus, because the imperial acclamations implied by lines 11 and 37 are too numerous for Caracalla. Since these are documents of the reign of Commodus, Antipater is an otherwise unknown senator, possibly a son or grandson of Tib. Claudius Antipater of Ephesus,⁵ if, as I believe, the Ephesian Gerusia served as a model for that of the Athenians.

The third man, to whom we shall return later, is distinguished from the two first as a mere peregrine.

In 1950 the writer⁶ recognized the emperor's *consilium* in a letter of Commodus (A.D. 186 or 187) which ends as follows:

- 13 [. . . [-----]s] Ἀκείλιος
 Γλαβρίω[ν ----- Αὐρήλιος Κ]λέανδρος ὁ τροφεύς
 μου καὶ ἐπὶ [τὴν τοῦ θαλάμου καὶ τ]οῦ σώματος τοῦ ἐμοῦ
 16 πίστιν ἐπιτε[ταγμένος, Αὐρήλιο]ς Δάριχος ὁ φίλος μου
 καὶ τὴν τάξιν τῶ[ν Ἑλληνικῶν ἐπισ]τολῶν πεπιστευμένος,
 Ἰούλιος Κάνδιδ[ος ὁ φίλος μου καὶ ἐπὶ τ]ὴν τῶν καθόλου λόγῳ[ν]
 19 προστασίαν ἐπ[-----]s, Αὐρήλιος [-]
 [-----]

There is no longer any problem concerning the *a cubiculo* Cleander, the *ab epistulis Graecis* Larichus, recognized as such by the first editor Raubitschek.⁷ Grosso argues impressively that Candidus was not the *a rationibus* but the *procurator summarum rationum*, and the restoration of the right form of the title in line 19 still remains uncertain. The main problem, however, is whether to restore the name of the emperor in the rasura of line 13 and the verb *ὑπάτευσαν* (*ὑπάτευον*) in line 14 according to

⁵ *Hesperia*, Suppl. VI, No. 3 (= *Forschungen in Ephesos*, II, No. 27), lines 2, 334, 370, 414, 431 and 449.

⁶ J. H. Oliver, *A.J.P.*, LXXI, 1950, pp. 178 f.

⁷ A. E. Raubitschek, "Commodus and Athens," *Commemorative Studies in Honor of Theodore Leslie Shear* (= *Hesperia* Suppl. VIII, 1949), pp. 286-290.

suggestions made by Oliver in 1950 and recently by Grosso⁸ or to assume the name of another senator in line 13 with Pflaum,⁹ who seems mistaken in his argument against a date but who might still be right even though the erasure was estimated by Raubitschek as extending for about 35 letters. Two names could conceivably have been erased in line 13. With Pflaum's interpretation I should wish to restore *οἱ κράτιστοι* in line 14, but I think he is wrong. The reader will note the impossibility of restoring *καί* before the name of Acilius Glabrio. In dates by consuls the copulative was usually (but not always) omitted. Few senators, if any, outranked Glabrio, who in his second consulate (A.D. 186) had the emperor himself as a colleague, but here the name of Glabrio follows the other(s), as it naturally would follow the emperor's.

In *I.G.*, II², 1114 (= III, 37) the end of another letter of Commodus reads :

[-----]
 [Αὐρήλιος Παπίρι]ς Διονύσ[ιος -----]
 [-----] 'Ι]ούλιος Κά[νιδος -----]
 3 [τὸ ἐφόδιον δοθήτω] τοῖς ἐκεῖθ[εν πρεσβευταῖς]
 [εἶγε μὴ προῖκα ὑπ]έσχηνητ[αι πρεσβεύσειν]

The name in line 1 was recognized by Grosso,¹⁰ that in line 2 by Raubitschek.¹¹ Dionysius, the *a libellis et cognitionibus*, outranked Julius Candidus, at least in this year, perhaps A.D. 185.

In addition to these five letters of the youthful Commodus we have a letter from the junior emperor Caracalla to the city of Ephesus, a letter datable between A.D. 200 and 205, which ends as follows :

17 [Περὶ ὧν π]ροεπρέσβευεν ἡ πάτριος ὑμῶν θεὸς Ἄρτεμις, Ἄντ. Ἰούουενις [κα]ὶ [Σεπτ.]
 [Ἄπερ] οἱ κράτιστοι φί[λοι] μου, Αἴλ. Ἀντίπατρος ὁ φίλος μου καὶ διδάσκαλος κ[αὶ]
 [τὴν τά]ξιν τῶν Ἑλλη[νικῶν] ἐπιστολῶν ἐπιτετραμμένος, Αἴλ. Κοίραν[ος ὁ φί-]
 20 [λος μ]ου καὶ τὴν ἐξή[γησιν] τῶν ἀξιωματῶν πεπισ[τευμένος -----]
 [-----]ς Ἐρμοκράτ[ης -----]
 [-----]

The upper part of the inscription ended in line 16 in a single word that is exactly centered. My restoration is based on this observation, while Hebedey¹² underrates the lacunae to the left of lines 17-18 and exaggerates the lacunae to the right of lines

⁸ F. Grosso, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-221.

⁹ H.-G. Pflaum, *Les carrières procuratoriennes équestres sous le Haut-Empire romain* (= Institut Français d'Archéologie de Beyrouth, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, LVII, 1960), pp. 465-472 and 1007 f., No. 180 bis.

¹⁰ F. Grosso, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-234.

¹¹ A. Raubitschek, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

¹² R. Heberdey, *Forschungen in Ephesos*, II, 1912, No. 26, pp. 125 f

17-20. The name in the erasure consisted of an abbreviated nomen at the end of line 17 and a cognomen of four letters at the beginning of line 18. L. Septimius Aper, No. 466 in Barbieri's *Albo senatorio*, seems to fit the conditions perfectly because he was not yet a *consularis* and was later put to death by Caracalla. The parallel from Athens shows that the word at the beginning of line 19 is τ[ά]ξις and not σύνταξις (so Heberdey), and there is no room at the end of line 19 for the disturbing word κράτιστος which Heberdey unnecessarily restored as a filler.

In the case of a young emperor without much administrative experience public confidence demanded consultation with mature advisers. The publicizing of this consultation was probably a policy laid down for his son by Marcus Aurelius¹³ and respected in his own way by Commodus, who in 186 (or 187) flaunted the courtiers in the face of the senate.

The earliest *consilium* for decisions concerning the Athenian Gerusia, a very special case, consisted of two senators, one of whom, Antipater, bore a name which implies that he was of Eastern origin, the other a Westerner with Eastern experience, and of a peregrine with a Greek name, undoubtedly a respected man from a Greek city with intimate knowledge of what was needed. The *patria* of the peregrine could but need not have been Athens, as far as the epistles provide evidence. However, the famous sophist Apollonius the Athenian must be considered a likely candidate on general grounds, even though his biographer Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists*, II, 20 (p. 103 Kayser) has not recorded his patronymic. The Athenian sophist Apollonius lived just at this time and belonged, significantly, to the sacred *genos* of the Eumolpidae, because in his old age he became hierophant. From Philostratus one cannot prove that Apollonius was ever a peregrine but three details from the biography rather indicate that the sophist was our man.

While on an embassy to the emperor Septimius Severus in Rome he particularly distinguished himself in an oratorical contest with the famous sophist Heraclides. He performed better before the emperor perhaps because he was more accustomed to the presence of an emperor. Secondly, at some unknown date he obtained the *politikos thronos* at Athens, a post which made him an official spokesman for Athens. Most important of all, Philostratus says that the sophist Apollonius distinguished himself in service to Athens on embassies ὑπὲρ τῶν μεγίστων. When a phrase like this occurs in *I.G.*, II², 3620 (= *Sacred Gerusia*, No. 23), it is actually explained as referring to the affairs of the Gerusia.

Now ever since Graindor's study of the archons¹⁴ it has been customary to identify the sophist with C. Cassius Apollonius of the deme Steiria. In fact, Raubit-

¹³ See F. Grosso, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-139, for the influence of the *amici Marci*.

¹⁴ P. Graindor, *Chronologie des archontes athéniens sous l'empire* (Acad. roy. de Belgique, Mémoires, Classe des Lettres . . . , 4^o, 2^e série, VIII, 1921), pp. 215-217.

schek discovered,¹⁵ and I agree, that C. Cassius Apollonius was hoplite general in the very year in which Commodus honored Athens by holding the archonship, but Raubitschek also noted, and again I agree, that C. Cassius Apollonius came from a family that had enjoyed Roman citizenship for at least two generations. Hence an identification of C. Cassius Apollonius with the peregrine of our inscription becomes impossible. On the other hand, the peregrine can still be the sophist, because his patronymic fits perfectly into the one Athenian inscription which explicitly mentions the sophist, namely *I.G.*, II², 3812 (= III Add. 775a), edited by Kirchner with Dittenberger's restorations as follows:

[κατὰ τὰ] δόξαντα Ἀρ[εοπα]
 [γείταις] Ἀπολλώνιον [. . .⁵. . .]
 [. . .⁶. . . τ]ὸν σοφ[ιστήν]

It is likely that the Athenians would have used the demotic in the case of a fellow-citizen so that we cannot argue from the fortuitous circumstance that the patronymic fits the lacuna of *I.G.*, II², 3812. Rather, the patronymic was here indicated by the *siglum*), followed by a demotic of ten or less letters.

In conclusion, all three members of the *consilium* which advised Commodus on the affairs of the Gerusia in 182 and 183 look like selections of Marcus Aurelius. The two senators were presumably *amici* of Marcus; only one of them is surely identifiable.

The peregrine was hardly a regular member of the emperor's *consilium*, but rather an ambassador or an expert in questions of Greek religious festivals called in for consultation. The teacher of Marcus Aurelius, the philosopher Apollonius of Chalcedon, comes to mind, *PIR*², A 929, rather too old perhaps, and so does his homonymous son, *PIR*², A 930, and especially the Athenian sophist Apollonius, whose ethnic in a letter to the Athenians themselves might easily be dropped. One argument in favor of the last identification may be added. If the Apollonius son of Apollonius who advised Commodus was indeed a Eumolpid like the Athenian sophist, it helps to explain the extraordinary fact that the Eumolpidae in A.D. 186 invited the emperor Commodus to become archon of their *genos*, an invitation which the emperor deigned to accept.¹⁶

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¹⁵ A. E. Raubitschek, *op. cit.*, 281-283.

¹⁶ See *I.G.*, II², 1109 = *S.I.G.*³, 873. Cf. notes 6-9 above.