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## THE CITIES OF WESTERN ASIA MINOR AND ROME: LOCAL AGENCY IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF EMPIRE (133-44 BCE)

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### INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Before 133 BCE and the regular despatch of Roman magistrates to *provincia Asia*, the cities of western Asia Minor had an established framework for managing their relationship with the dominant regional powers, Hellenistic monarchs. An ongoing reciprocal dialogue conducted through honorific civic decrees and royal correspondence allowed both parties to assert their status in constructive ways. The advent of Roman rule in *provincia Asia* disrupted this pre-existing system. Not only did a cultural and linguistic gap exist between the rulers and ruled, but the diffuse power structures of the *res publica* complicated the cities' task. While many scholars have highlighted the upheaval surrounding the beginning of Roman rule in Asia, the specifics of how and why this disruption occurred remain understudied. This paper addresses this gap, analysing how the discourse of Roman administration during the late Republic, in the form of official utterances of the Roman state (*i. e. senatusconsulta, leges*, and letters of magistrates), affected the agency of *poleis* in Asia and how these communities responded to it. Focusing on language and format, I argue that the diversity of Roman administrative discourses hindered the formation of a single, coherent framework for managing the relationship with individual cities. Faced with the breakdown of existing

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models, communities were forced to innovate. While honorific decrees remained useful in relating to the hegemonic power, the focus shifted to establishing relationships with individual Romans. Beyond this, the choices of cities to monumentalise Roman normative documents played a critical role in managing local attitudes towards the Roman state. Consequently, the focus of cities' agency through their statements and actions was redirected from external to internal audiences.

POLITICAL DISCOURSES, RECIPROCITY, AND THE NEGOTIATION OF CIVIC STATUS IN THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD

Modern scholars often emphasise that Roman magistrates drew on Hellenistic royal traditions in their own correspondence in western Asia Minor. However, this appropriation of existing discursive models was not seamless: Hellenistic royal letters formed part of a sophisticated cultural complex. Ma has demonstrated how, despite the significant administrative and coercive power of the Seleucid state, the correspondence of its rulers formed a dialectic with honorific decrees issued by *poleis*.<sup>2</sup> These two formulaic genres, despite their distinctiveness, depended on a common set of assumptions, shared a reproducible repertoire of concepts and terms, and directly responded to one other. Royal letters sought to establish the author's moral authority as deriving from their euergetism and made future benefactions conditional upon continued civic εὐνοια ("goodwill") towards them.<sup>3</sup> For their part, civic decrees from the late Hellenistic period, though varying in language between *poleis*, tended to follow a standard format, extending honours to the monarch, and asserting their capacity to judge the moral legitimacy of royal acts *vis-à-vis* the community.<sup>4</sup> Though Attalid monarchs held different levers of power, they employed similar strategies *vis-à-vis* civic communities within their kingdom.<sup>5</sup> This structure also resembles that operating under the Roman Empire, where the Princes responded directly to petitioning communities in a personal relationship, granting privileges in return for the implied consent to his rule such requests granted.<sup>6</sup> In both cases, peripheral communities actively engaged in a

<sup>2</sup> Ma 1999, p. 182-194; Virgilio 2013, p. 243-251.

<sup>3</sup> Veyne's 1976 argument that euergetism expresses "la distance sociale" between the giver and recipients and reinforces social hierarchies without implying reciprocity is now largely discredited. Gauthier 1985; Zuiderhoek 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Ma 1999, p. 183-184.

<sup>5</sup> Thonemann 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Millar 1977, 2002 [1966]; 2004 [1967]; Ando 2000; Lenski 2017.

written dialogue with a hegemonic monarch within clear and comprehensible rules of engagement. Common understanding of these “rules” limited the realm of acceptable discourse, providing a framework for safe negotiation.<sup>7</sup> Regular repetition was crucial to the scheme’s success, encouraging diverse groups to reaffirm their commitment to shared values and norms. While these norms were never static, they were socially-embedded and evolved incrementally. Consistency in language and form was critical in facilitating engagement between local communities and the imperial elite.<sup>8</sup> However, after the Romans began regularly sending magistrates to *provincia Asia*, a gap emerged in this understanding between hegemon and local communities. For Roman imperial discourse to effectively embed and for communities to learn to engage with it, uniformity, regularity, and reproducibility of language and structure would be crucially important.

Roman official documents issued to *poleis* of Asia before the establishment of the Roman *provincia Asia* clearly imitated Hellenistic models. However, most magistrates’ letters, though reproducing the language of Hellenistic chancellery, do not echo the direct reciprocal relationship between *basileus* and *polis*. For example, though the brothers Scipio, writing to Heraclea-under-Latmos in 190, asserted that they themselves would “always try to be the authors of some good” for the Heracleans, they relate this explicitly to city’s *fides* (gr. πίστις), “loyalty” or “trust”.<sup>9</sup> Other surviving letters of Roman magistrates from this period similarly emphasise their desire to advance the interests of their interlocutors in unilateral terms.<sup>10</sup> This change in structure crucially and consciously rejects the premise of explicit honorific reciprocity, the principle which had underpinned the relationship between hegemon and local communities to this point, replacing it with loyalty to the Romans collectively.<sup>11</sup> The most obvious reason for this development is that the personal relationship between the ruling monarch and an individual city was being replaced by the authority of Rome, divided between commanders, the Senate, and People. Where *basileis* could make credible promises of

<sup>7</sup> Pocock 1987, p. 20-27. For ancient applications: Ma 1999, p. 191-194; Ando 2000, p. 20-21, 28-29. The coercive apparatus of royal institutions and armies underpinned played a key role: Ma 1999; Thonemann 2013, esp. p. 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> Pocock 1987, p. 29-36; Ma 1999, p. 181-182; Ando 2000, p. 19-24, 74-110.

<sup>9</sup> *RDGE* 35, 6-10. Πίστις/*fides* is restored here—but commonly cited in Roman correspondence, see Chaniotis 2015, p. 95, n. 26.

<sup>10</sup> *E. g.* *RDGE* 37, 8-9 with Piejko 1985, p. 617; *RDGE* 38, 22-23.

<sup>11</sup> Chaniotis 2015, p. 93-99.

future benefactions—thereby rendering explicit, ongoing, and contingent reciprocity a viable means of maintaining and constructing a concrete relationship—the constant turnover of commanders and their relative weakness *vis-à-vis* the organs of Republican government militated against a personal link between benefaction and loyalty to the state.<sup>12</sup> Instead, commanders emphasised their personal and limited capacity to intervene. Moreover, a number of *senatusconsulta* are preserved from this period, in which individual communities sought Roman mediation of disputes. While the Senate often allocated this responsibility to third parties, after setting the terms, the survival of these documents highlights the familiarity of Asian *poleis* with peculiarly Roman forms of decision making.<sup>13</sup> When these communities passed under the authority of Rome after 133, a new approach to dealing with their new hegemon became necessary.

#### ROMAN POLITICAL DISCOURSES: THE BREAKDOWN OF EXISTING FRAMEWORKS

##### *The early Roman provincia (i): Magistrates' letters*

Extant examples of Republican documents issued to local communities are limited. However, a series of magistrates' letters, dating to between 99 and 85 and varying considerably in subject, structure, and language, provide a starting point. Two are unilateral communiqués—not imbricated within a reciprocal exchange of honour or benefaction. L. Cassius' letter to Nysa states that one of their citizens had supplied his troops with grain and that he would report this to the Senate. While the context, at the opening of the First Mithridatic War, may imply gratitude on the part of the Roman state, this potential for reciprocity remains entirely occluded within the text.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, Q. Mucius Scaevola, writing to Sardeis and Ephesos, introduces a treaty agreed between the two parties, negotiated at his behest, when enmity between them threatened the celebration of a new penteteric festival in his honour.<sup>15</sup> These letters were unsolicited and informative rather than forming part of a ritualised dialogue between magistrate and *poleis*.<sup>16</sup>

Two contemporary letters to the Cilician *polis*, Mopsuestia, outside of *provincia Asia*, offer a contrast. In the first, L. Cornelius Sulla agrees to grant *asylia* to the

<sup>12</sup> Pace Bérenger 2011, p. 172-173.

<sup>13</sup> E. g. RDGE 4, 7, 14. Kallet-Marx 1995, p. 161-183; Camia 2009, p. 165-215; Snowden 2014.

<sup>14</sup> RDGE 48. Rigsby 1988, p. 152; Santangelo 2007, p. 55.

<sup>15</sup> SEG 60, 1330 2A+B.1-8. Campanile 1994, p. 13; Laffi 2010, p. 31-40.

<sup>16</sup> Pace Frija 2014b, p. 89-91.

Mopsuestian temple of Isis and Serapis, following a recommendation from his quaestor, L. Licinius Lucullus, and earlier decisions of Seleucid *basileis*. The second shows Lucullus communicating the same decision and engaging directly with the community's honours for the priest of Isis and Serapis, Diodotos.<sup>17</sup> *Prima facie*, Lucullus, as a representative of the *res publica*, was asked to assent to Mopsuestia's claim as a quasi-royal figure. However, the response, due to the nature of Roman government, takes a distinctive form: Lucullus needed to secure the agreement of his superiors. Though Thonemann demonstrated that Lucullus must have been in Greece at the time, the letter, unusually, does not mention an embassy.<sup>18</sup> Nor does the quaestor's discussion of honours for Diodotos find parallels in Hellenistic correspondence. Unlike earlier Roman grants of *asylia*, these letters stress the decision-making capacity of the magistrates approached. Lucullus' choice to frame his participation as a decision (κ[ε]ρικα) is the most likely restoration at line 14), together with Sulla's acknowledgement of his παρακλήσις, accentuates the role of individuals in dealing with the petition. Such self-aggrandising language is not extant in letters of Hellenistic subordinates.<sup>19</sup> The concentration on αὐτοκράτορες rather than the Senate further sets these documents apart. While the civil war between Sulla and his opponents at Rome explain the absence of the Senate, this emphasis on the role of the quaestor, in particular, is unparalleled.<sup>20</sup> Though the upheaval during this period requires caution, these letters stress the inconsistency of Roman practice.

Of the surviving specimens of Republican magistrates' correspondence, a letter of Q. Oppius to Aphrodisias-Plarasa most resembles Hellenistic royal models. First, Oppius responds directly to an embassy, which found him at Kos and presented him with an honorific decree. The proconsul goes on give an account of Aphrodisian loyalty during the recent conflict with Mithridates, both to him personally and Rome. This serves as the rationale for a clear decision clause:

δι' ἅς αἰτίας | φροντίζω [καὶ ἐν ἀρ]|χῆ καὶ ἰδιῶ β[?]ω] [?] | περ ἂν σωζομένης | τῆς ἐμῆς  
πίστ[ε]ως ποιῆσαι ὑμῖν δύ|νωμαι τοῖς τε δημ[ο]σίοις πράγμασιν ὑ[μ]ετέροις εὐχρηστῆσαι |

<sup>17</sup> SEG 44, 1227 with Jordan 2022.

<sup>18</sup> Thonemann 2004, p. 80-82 *contra* Sayar, Siewert, Täuber 1994, p. 118-120; Kreiler 2006. It would be highly unusual for this fact to be recorded later in the text (cf. *I. Aphrodisias 2007* 8.2 for typical structure).

<sup>19</sup> SEG 44, 1227, 6; 14. Compare the tone of Antiochus III's representative, Zeuxis at Ma 1999, n° 5, 15, 25, 31.

<sup>20</sup> Jordan 2022, p. 491-501.

καὶ αἰεί τινος ἀγαθοῦ | παραίτιος γενέσθαι· | ὅπως τε τῇ συνκλήτῳ | τῷ τε δήμῳ τὰ ἀφ' ὑμῶν |  
πεπραγμένα ἐστίν | ὅταν εἰς Πρώμην παραγένωμαι διασαφήςω

For these reasons, I am taking care, both as magistrate and in a private capacity, to do what I can, while preserving my good faith, to help you and your public affairs, and always to be the cause of some good for you; and shall see to it that after I come to Rome, I make clear to the Senate and People the things which have been done on your part.<sup>21</sup>

Oppius emphasises his personal resolution to help the community deal with various organs of Roman government, while carefully stressing his limited influence. This is the most overt example of a magistrate responding to an honorific decree with a promise of personal support and resembles traditional Hellenistic practice. Furthermore, Oppius links his present and future goodwill to the Aphrodisians' past actions in a way which jars with other Roman examples. In other ways, like the use of αἰεί to emphasise the ongoing nature of the relationship and the lack of conditionality attending Oppius' future benefactions, it aligns neatly with early second century practice.

A final clause sheds further light on the shifting relations between Asian cities and representatives of Rome:

οἱ αὐτοὶ πρεσβεῖς παρεκάλεσαν ὅπως ἐξῆ τῇ | [ἐ]μῇ πατρωνίᾳ καὶ ὑμῖν | χρῆσθαι τούτους  
ἐγὼ | ἀνεδεξάμην καταλογῆς ἔνεκεν τῆς ὑμετέρας πόλεως, ἐμὲ τοῦ δήμου τοῦ ὑμετέρου  
πατρωνα

The same ambassadors also asked that it might be possible that you should enjoy my patronage and I accepted those men, on account of my regard for your city so that I (undertook) to be *patronus* of your people.<sup>22</sup>

The text demonstrates that the ambassadors requested from Oppius that he act as the city's patron. Civic patronage was, fundamentally, a Roman institution. Though alien to the Hellenistic world in its particulars, it shared with earlier royal practice the establishment of a personal relationship between an individual and *poleis*.<sup>23</sup> By contrast, it was a formal, consensual relationship and Oppius' letter shows clearly that honours were not given to the governor in hope of benefactions from him during his command. If anything, the opposite was true.<sup>24</sup> Inscriptions from Teos and Claros, the

<sup>21</sup> *I.Aphrodisias* 2007 8.2.ii.34-49.

<sup>22</sup> *I.Aphrodisias* 2007 8.2.2.16-24.

<sup>23</sup> Personal patronage was more formal and distinctive. See esp. Badian 1958, p. 1-14; Brunt 1988, p. 382-442. On civic patronage, see Eilers 2002, p. 1-17; Nichols 2014, p. 70-75, 207-224.

<sup>24</sup> Eilers 2002, p. 28-32 *pace* Nichols 2014, p. 72-73.

earliest evidence for this practice, bear this out, presenting active negotiation in Rome to engage their *patroni*.<sup>25</sup> Analysis of honorific statue-bases for Roman governors shows that before the First Mithridatic war, Asian communities avoided traditional honours for Romans, referring to them generally as *πάτρωνες*. This implies that, by the 90s, when this title first appears, communities treated individual Romans in a distinctive fashion, moving outside of traditional modes of discourse. Nichols argued that as with their royal forebears, the exchange between community and civic patron was couched in vague terms to emphasise the anticipated continuity of benefaction and honour.<sup>26</sup> However, patronage cannot be seen as the appropriation of previously royal roles by magistrates, especially since patrons were often not magistrates when acting as on behalf of their client *poleis*.<sup>27</sup> As Oppius carefully highlights, he will act in the interests of Aphrodisias, both as a magistrate and as a *privatus*, when he held no formal powers within the state, but could wield his personal influence with his peers. Throughout these letters an individualisation of the relationship between cities and commanders appears, collapsing the paradigm governing earlier relationships. The Senate does not appear as an interlocutor in these examples, intimating that the heterarchy of Roman republican institutions replaced Hellenistic royal discourse with a cacophony of distinct narratives, which cities, in turn, were forced to react to. These letters show little consistency in the use of language and structure, which implies the absence of a consistent repertoire of commonly used terms. The corpus is admittedly limited, but these examples suggest that the swift turnover in commanders led to a diversification of communication strategies between the state and local communities.

### *The early Roman provincia (ii): Senatusconsulta and leges*

Beyond letters, documents issued by the Senate and People played a role in constructing an imperial discourse, though extant examples from this period do not engage in a dialogue with local communities. The *SC Popillianum* (132), the so-called *senatusconsultum Licinianum*, and the so-called *lex de provinciis praetoriis* (100) were all documents with administrative intent regulating the action of magistrates,

<sup>25</sup> *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 656 on which, see now, Adak, Thonemann 2022, p. 187-195; *SEG* 39, 1243, II, 24-31; *SEG* 39, 1244, III, 5-13.

<sup>26</sup> Nichols 2014, p. 314.

<sup>27</sup> Compare the treatment of divine honours, which were used for local elites before Roman officials: Price 1984, p. 40-52; Chankowski 1998, p. 159-161; Rowe 2002, p. 126-127; Kuhn A. B. 2017, p. 317-318.

even where they affected local communities substantially.<sup>28</sup> The two *senatusconsulta* gave earlier royal decisions validity for Roman jurisdiction. This was not a matter for negotiation with *poleis*, but instructions from central institutions which shaped magistrates' decisions.

Stylistically, *senatusconsulta* from this period follow a standard and recognisable pattern, recording the original proposal and proposer alongside the approved motion. The *SC Popillianum* offers a particularly clear example of this phenomenon. It starts from the consultation of the Senate by C. Popillius, giving his proposal—that magistrates sent to Asia should respect decisions rendered by the Attalid monarchs—before closing with the decision itself.<sup>29</sup> As a result, senatorial *auctoritas* was baked into each decree, allowing local actors to invoke it in a similar fashion to a royal grant or decision. Even where a decision did not refer to a specific privilege or right, once issued and received, the Senate no longer had direct control over the document's interpretation (which reverted to the relevant magistrate on the ground) or use (which lay open to local actors with access to a copy).<sup>30</sup>

Where a community directly approached the Senate, as in the case of the *SC de agro Pergameno*, stronger echoes of Hellenistic practice come through. The ambassadors from Pergamon seem to have been referred to at the outset in typical diplomatic language, even where the decree culminates in a series of detailed instructions to Roman magistrates on the implementation of the Senate's decision. Unlike earlier documents settling boundary disputes in Asia, pre-dating a permanent Roman presence in the region, the arguments put forward by each party appear to have been omitted.<sup>31</sup> This may reflect the fact that one party to the case was Roman, or that, in practice, these arguments were not relevant to the case at hand.<sup>32</sup> Even so, as a medium, *senatusconsulta* present a more uniform and more obviously Roman form of communication. There are few concessions to Hellenistic convention. Following their particular form, they offered clarity in terms of the proposal, its author, and the final decision.<sup>33</sup> Simply

<sup>28</sup> *RDGE* 11, with Worrle 2000, 566-568; *RDGE* 13, with Famerie 2021; Crawford 1996, n° 12 with Ferrary followed by Crawford 1996, p. 236.

<sup>29</sup> *RDGE* 13.11-15 (with Wörle 2000, p. 566-568).

<sup>30</sup> Compare Lenski 2017, p. 8-12, drawing heavily on Jauss 1982 [1970] and Hall 1980.

<sup>31</sup> *RDGE* 12. Cf. *RDGE* 9. Snowden 2014, p. 422-427.

<sup>32</sup> Snowden 2014, p. 427-439.

<sup>33</sup> Compare too *RDGE* 25, the fragmentary *SC de agris Mytilenorum* (55), which seems to have exempted Mytilenean territory from the *lex locationis* and exploitation by the *publicani* (l. 9-12. Sherk

put, *senatusconsulta* were comprehensible and useful documents to communities. The existence of competing bodies with influence, institutional authority, and legitimacy nevertheless provided alternative options to anchor their privileges.

The *lex de provinciis praetoriis* neatly illuminates the confusion arising from the Republic's political structure. The genre of *leges*, binding statutes issued by the popular assembly, differed markedly from *senatusconsulta*. Most obviously, the assemblies comprised quite different political bodies, representing a broader range of interest-groups than the Senate, including the *publicani*, *negotiatores*, and the urban populace. These bodies had less exposure to embassies from the provinces and foreign peoples since, traditionally, these groups approached the Senate. Moreover, the conventions of drafting differed markedly: a single drafter replacing a commission, giving more potential for specificity and complexity.<sup>34</sup> In this case, the promulgator was likely a tribune opposed to the senatorial consensus.<sup>35</sup> The scope of this statute is significantly wider than the typical *senatusconsultum*, making this an imposing novelty. Rather than responding to one specific issue, the clauses of the surviving text cover issues as diverse as imposing tax-collection on the fringes of *provincia Macedonia*, to the assignment of a praetor to *provincia Cilicia*. Uniquely among the texts from this period, the *lex de provinciis praetoriis* includes a clause ordering the text's dissemination and publication, though, despite the statute's wide geographic relevance, only within *provincia Asia*. The text's instruction that the Asian praetor write to "the cities and states (to whom) it is appropriate under this statute", also concedes a degree of discretion within this geographic purview.<sup>36</sup> One potential reason for this limited publication is the fact that the vast majority of *poleis* within the *provincia* remained, formally, free allies of the Roman people, rather than being subordinate to a Roman commander. As such, they may have merited explicit notification.<sup>37</sup> The statute's justification of the administrative decision to create a *provincia Cilicia* underscores the apparent concern of the Roman

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1963, p. 221-226; Ellis-Evans 2019, p. 251-252). The structure and language employed echoes these norms. The restored text proceeds from a senatorial *sententia* on the motion of C. Pompeius Magnus and the report of a *consilium*, stressing senatorial consensus.

<sup>34</sup> Williamson 2005, p. 80-82, commenting on the *lex agraria* of 111 (Crawford 1996, n° 2). Cf. Lintott 1999, p. 64.

<sup>35</sup> Ferrary 1977; Crawford 1996, p. 237.

<sup>36</sup> Crawford 1996, n° 12 Delphi B.21-22. The origins of the Delphi copy remain obscure: see Ferrary 2008, p. 101-114.

<sup>37</sup> *I. Metropolis* 1. Daubner 2006, p. 151-152.

*populus* with appearances.<sup>38</sup> In turn, this indicates an author conscious of the necessity to engage in a dialogue with his audience: like a typical *senatusconsultum*, this law gives motivations for its decisions, rather than acting in a purely informative fashion. It should be reiterated, however, that neither type of document skirted around the fact that they were settled decisions, rather than inviting negotiation.

Two later *leges* reinforce this point and the complexity facing communities seeking to engage meaningfully with the Roman state. First, the opening of the so-called *lex portorii Asiae* succinctly summarises its own purpose by exhaustively listing potential authorities over the customs dues of the province: *κατὰ δόγμα συνκλήτου ἢ κατὰ νόμον | [ἢ κατὰ δήμου κύρωσιν]* (“by *senatusconsultum* or by *lex* or by plebiscite”).<sup>39</sup> This stress laid on parallel sources of authority is not egregious; exemptions to customs legislation were authorised by several groups during the first century.<sup>40</sup> Such clauses subsumed various bodies of law within a single framework but cannot have assisted provincial understanding. After this, the text focuses on specific elements, exemptions, and practicalities of implementation. Like other Roman statutes, its language is carefully generic affording broad latitude to interpreting magistrates.<sup>41</sup> Second, the *lex Antonia de Termessibus*, granting freedom to the *polis* of Termessus in Pisidia, enshrined an earlier *senatusconsultum* as statute. Such a process, indicated by the introductory formula *de s(enatus) s(ententia)*, is attested elsewhere, and highlights the close interconnection between these two political bodies in normal circumstances.<sup>42</sup> Taken together, both underscore the complex discursive interrelationship between the parallel and competing sources of legitimate authority within the *res publica* and emphasise the significant break in continuity with previous models of interaction in the region.

### *Sulla's settlement and the breakdown of Republican institutions*

The First Mithridatic War fundamentally altered the basis of the relationship between the cities of Asia and Rome. After Sulla had re-established Roman hegemony in

<sup>38</sup> Crawford 1996, n° 12; *IKnidus* III, 28-37.

<sup>39</sup> Cottier *et al.* 2008, l. 9-10. Rathbone 2008, p. 270, n. 54, *pace* Cottier *et al.* 2008, *ad loc.*, argues this derives from a censorial *lex locationis*.

<sup>40</sup> Rowe 2008, p. 240-241 with references.

<sup>41</sup> Compare the *lex agraria* of 111 (Crawford 1996, n° 2, 85-90) with Lintott 1992, p. 272-275; Spagnuolo Vigorita 1997, p. 157-158.

<sup>42</sup> Crawford 1996, n° 19, 1-4. Cf. Crawford 1996, n° 36, 4-5, with Mattingly 1997, p. 77.

85/84, he stripped most *poleis* of their freedom and instituted a new basis for provincial government in Asia.<sup>43</sup> Conversely, some communities, which had offered consistent support to Rome, were awarded extensive privileges by Sulla. Several *senatusconsulta* confirming these grants survive, probably reflecting a general practice and conferring greater legitimacy.<sup>44</sup> One document, a *senatusconsultum* of 81, introduced by letters from the dictator, confirmed these for Stratonikeia in Caria.<sup>45</sup> It follows a standard format, acknowledging the Stratonikeian embassy, recounting their requests, before giving a series of motivation clauses and a resolution, to grant eleven specific privileges to the community. The document's language is also unexceptional; the scale of the grant and the primacy accorded to Sulla, however, establish a major innovation. The *senatusconsultum*, while formally sanctioning the privileges offered within it, explicitly delegated to Sulla the right to decide the extent to which revenues from subordinate communities were directed to Stratonikeia, should he choose to.<sup>46</sup> The document reconfigured senatorial authority around the will of the dictator. Rather than acting as a check on magisterial action (or inaction) in the region, the Senate explicitly confirmed any decision Sulla wished to make on designated matters.<sup>47</sup>

The dictator's letters accompanying this grant show a similar reconfiguration. The first reports the words of the Stratonikeian embassy.<sup>48</sup> In response, Sulla notes the *εὐνοία* shown by the *polis* in sending embassies, probably to other *poleis* in Asia. As with their Hellenistic forebears, *εὐνοία* formed the moral basis of the relationship between local community and Rome, here joined to *δικαιοσύνη* (justice).<sup>49</sup> The second letter simply reads: "I have given this decree to your ambassadors", followed by the text of a *senatusconsultum*. In its brevity, it reveals a different attitude to conventional Republican government. As dictator, Sulla held an unprecedented position at the apex of Roman politics. Earlier comparanda focus, like most magisterial correspondence, on the personal agency of the official. However, this mostly occludes their involvement

<sup>43</sup> Santangelo 2007, p. 107-132; Jordan (forthcoming).

<sup>44</sup> Compare *RDGE* 17 and 19, fragmentary decrees for Tabae and Cormi.

<sup>45</sup> *RDGE* 18 with *SEG* 52, 1059. Jones 1939, p. 112-115; Magie 1950, p. 233-235; Santangelo 2007, p. 50-54.

<sup>46</sup> *RDGE* 18.103-112. On embassies: Kallet-Marx 1995, p. 270-273 with references.

<sup>47</sup> Recalling Sulla's empowerment under the *lex Valeria*: Vervaeke 2004, p. 49-50, n. 46.

<sup>48</sup> Chaniotis 2015, p. 90-91, highlights that such summaries were an important interface for cultural transfer between sender and recipient. Compare Blanco-Pérez 2019, p. 43-44 on the imperial period.

<sup>49</sup> *RDGE* 18, 5; 15.

in the decree itself.<sup>50</sup> In these examples, though the pre-eminent position of Sulla caused a radical shift in relative power between central institutions of the *res publica*, an interrelationship between Senate and dictator remained central to legitimacy and authority. Despite Sulla's *summum imperium*, senatorial sanction retained its value as a means of further guaranteeing the measures which he had enacted as commander in the East. The polar shift in how different organs of state power interacted must have disrupted local understandings of Roman power. Though Sulla's dictatorship was, ultimately, a brief anomaly, his constitutional reforms fundamentally altered the relationship between political bodies and magistrates across the following decade.<sup>51</sup>

The *SC de Asclepiade*, issued after Sulla's death, granted private privileges to three Greek naval commanders on the motion of the consul Q. Lutatius Catulus.<sup>52</sup> The document is inscribed in Latin, then in Greek translation, on a single side of a reused bronze tablet, which may imply that it was a private copy. While the numerous Latinisms imply an official translation, a personal copy, which could be shown to both to local authorities and Roman commanders, would have been valuable as an additional guarantee of their privileges.<sup>53</sup> Unlike other surviving *senatusconsulta*, the copy did not engage in a dialogue with other elements of imperial discourse. Nevertheless, the existence of such copies further reinforced the Senate's capacity to interfere in the civic life of provincial *poleis*.

Josephus reproduces several documents issued by magistrates in Asia during the early 40s, which provide further evidence of competing modes of Roman administrative discourse. Despite chronological issues, the documents' formulae are accurate, and details contained within them plausible and independently verifiable. Consequently, they can cautiously be used to explore Republican forms and language.<sup>54</sup> A letter to the Ephesians from T. Ampius Balbus, a *legatus* in 50, requests that the civic authorities respect the rights of Jewish inhabitants with Roman citizenship. It avoids terms of command, perhaps a deliberate choice to use diplomatic language; though, given that

<sup>50</sup> *E. g.* RDGE 7; 20; 23.

<sup>51</sup> *E. g.* Santangelo 2014; Steel 2014; Vervaeke 2018.

<sup>52</sup> *CIL* VI, 40890, with Raggi 2001.

<sup>53</sup> *CIL* VI, 40890, 25 (Greek); 17-18 (Latin). See Williamson 1987, p. 165-167; Raggi 2001, p. 84-88; Meyer 2004, p. 99-100, 110-111.

<sup>54</sup> Bikerman 1980 [1955], p. 24-43; Pucci ben Zeev 1996, p. 359-368; Eilers 2009, p. 306, 309-310. For the Augustan period: Pont 2017.

Ampius also invokes the consent of both the incoming governor and quaestor, it may instead speak to his inability to interfere in another magistrate's *provincia*.<sup>55</sup> By contrast, in 49, L. Antonius, *quaestor pro praetore*, framed instructions to the Sardians as his personal decision, without reference to higher authority: τοῦτό τε αἰτησαμένοις ἴν' ἐξῆ ποιεῖν αὐτοῖς τηρήσαι καὶ ἐπιτρέψαι ἔκρινα ("since they requested that they be permitted to do these things, I decided that they might be maintained, and permitted them to do so"). Whether this attitude rose from his temporary charge of the *provincia* is unclear, but the parallel with Lucullus' earlier attitude in his correspondence with Mopsuestia is suggestive.<sup>56</sup> Other letters emphasise the key role of magistrates' correspondence in resolving issues within the province.<sup>57</sup> Finally, a consular *edictum* issued by L. Cornelius Lentulus Crus in 49, permitting Jews with Roman citizenship at Ephesos to avoid military service, appears several times in Josephus' account. Such a direct intervention in a provincial context, where a *senatusconsultum* might be expected, was prompted by its unusual context early in the conflict between Caesar and his opponents, who had already fled to Greece.<sup>58</sup> Contingent circumstances forced representatives of the state to adapt quickly: again, the flexibility of Republican political structures presented new channels of communication for provincial communities to negotiate.

Consequently, Roman rule fundamentally disrupted the existing cycle of reciprocal honour and benefaction sustained by Hellenistic royal discourse and the institutional structure of the *res publica* precluded its easy replacement. The separation of authority and the capacity to communicate directly with communities between diverse bodies and magistrates, each with their own "language", hindered the development of a working understanding of the "rules of the game" and therefore of effective strategies for communities to protect their own interests in their interaction with the state.

#### CIVIC APPROACHES TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF EMPIRE

##### *Honorific decrees*

The sheer number of honorific decrees for Romans throughout the late Republic and early Principate attests to their continued importance. More than 60 statue-bases, resulting from an honorific decree passed by the *demos* or *boule* of a city in Asia for a

<sup>55</sup> Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, XIV, 228-230; 234, with Pucci ben Zeev 1996, p. 151-152, 165-166.

<sup>56</sup> Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, XIV, 235. Sherk 1969, p. 377; Pucci ben Zeev 1996, p. 179.

<sup>57</sup> Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, XIV, 233; 235; 244-246.

<sup>58</sup> E. g., Caesar, *Civil War*, I, 27-30; Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, 9, 14, 3; 15, 6.

named Roman magistrate from 133-44 or member of his family, survive.<sup>59</sup> However, statue-bases generally provide only a truncated summary of the interaction between community and individual. The standard formula, ὁ δῆμος τὸν δεῖνον τοῦ δέινου ἀρέτης ἔνεκα καὶ εὐνοίας (ἐτίμησεν) (“The *demos* [honoured] X son of Y, on account of his excellence and goodwill”), tends to elide differences between the actions of individual honorands.<sup>60</sup> By contrast, monuments for local benefactors more often preserve the full honorific decree with several motivation and hortative clauses, as well as the resolution, even where a statue was the result.<sup>61</sup> The *poleis* of Asia placed a lower priority on commemorating, in precise and detailed terms, benefactions of external actors than those of their own citizens. Frija argued that the absence of motivation clauses from monuments for Roman benefactors and the restricted honorific vocabulary employed afforded *poleis* flexibility in dealing with officials. For her, the vague moral qualities invoked allowed them to honour a Roman commander for his administrative competence, or even his position, marking the introduction of honours for Roman commanders simply for their presence, irrespective of their performance.<sup>62</sup> However, though we lack examples of full decrees for Romans in this period, the similarity between the predominant statue base inscriptions for officials and typical civic benefactors suggests that such longer documents routinely existed, even if they were not monumentalised.<sup>63</sup>

This process echoes the spirit of the earlier dialogue between *basileus* and *polis*.<sup>64</sup> Crucially, unlike their Hellenistic forebears or Imperial successors, Republican commanders directly competed with one another for prestige in the form of political success at Rome. A magistrate’s reputation within his *provincia* could affect his subsequent career. Without claiming that the threat of *repetundae* charges successfully

<sup>59</sup> See table 1. Compare Erkelenz 2003 and Heller 2020, with the database at <https://euergetai.univ-tours.fr>.

<sup>60</sup> E. g. *IKaunos* 103 (L. Licinius Murena, 83/82); *IvP* II, 405 (P. Cornelius Dolabella, 68/67); *TAM* V, 2, 919 (L. Antonius, 50/49). Ma 2013, p. 45-63 demonstrates that even these bland forms reveal something of civic agency. Cf. Frija 2014b, p. 86-90; Frija 2017, p. 272-273.

<sup>61</sup> Thereby presenting a full civic-orientated account of an individual’s career and memorialising it in local history. Compare the decrees for Menippus and Polemaeus at Claros (*SEG* 39, 1243-1244). Santangelo 2009a, p. 68-73.

<sup>62</sup> Frija 2014, p. 81-90.

<sup>63</sup> Ma 2013, p. 55-62.

<sup>64</sup> Ma 1999, p. 194-235.

restrained rapacious governors, honorific decrees promoted a rapport between community and honorand, making later prosecution less likely. Local honorific decrees could be adduced by a defendant as evidence that the prosecution was promoted by individual malcontents, rather than whole communities.<sup>65</sup> Governors, consequently, had a direct interest in soliciting honours. In turn, pressure from magistrates, combined with the increasing personalisation of influence through the spread of patronage, promoted innovation in the honorific system. Governors could pressure communities indirectly, through their presence, absence, responsiveness to their petitions, or directly, through the use and abuse of their power. However, key to generating this climate of innovation was competition between cities to establish meaningful relationships with governors. Levers available to *poleis* were limited to direct gifts—technically prohibited—or honorific actions, the most common of which was promoted via a decree.<sup>66</sup> Given the proliferation of the latter, the question of how to approach governors posed itself to the communities and they responded with a variety of strategies.

While most attested honours during the Republican period went to pro magistrates *cum imperio*, quaestors and *legati* received their fair share. This strengthens the argument that honours in this period were accorded out of more than simple expedience. Even where the purpose of an honorific decree and statue was to honour an individual Roman magistrate, the public display in a civic context had a significant ongoing ideological impact on the inhabitants of the *polis*. The act integrated members of the Roman elite, those involved in the administration of the region, explicitly within a local honorific discourse and, over time, normalised the hierarchy between Roman officials and individual *poleis*. Given that the surviving inscriptions represent only a tiny fraction of the original statue-bases, the visual impact of these statues of Romans should not be underestimated. Ideologically charged locations, including public meeting spaces and sacred routes, such as at Claros, and prominent spots would be dominated by such ideological markers, increasingly focused on Romans.

Though honorific decrees and statues for Roman officials remained an important phenomenon across the period, the euergetic language employed and inscribed visibly evolved. Before the outbreak of the First Mithridatic War in 88, only one document from the region, of seven total, honouring the *legatus* M. Popillius Laenas on Kos, used

<sup>65</sup> E. g. Cicero, *Pro Flacco*, 10-11, 17-19, 34-38 and Tacitus, *Annals*, XV, 20. See Laignoux 2017, p. 214-218 on triumviral Asia.

<sup>66</sup> Bérenger 2011, p. 174. E. g. Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, 5, 21, 11.

a traditional Hellenistic title (εὐεργέτης “benefactor”). However, even here this term was paired with the transliterated Latin term *πάτρων* (*patronus*).<sup>67</sup> During the 90s, a number of Greek cities chose to honour Roman magistrates with this Latin term. Eilers and Milner plausibly supply the epithet *πάτρων τᾶς πόλιος* (“*patronus* of the city”) in another Coan statue base, honouring the son of Q. Mucius Scaevola.<sup>68</sup> An Ephesian statue-base, dedicated to Scaevola’s wife, Caelia, also seems to name him *πάτρων*.<sup>69</sup> The brothers C. and L. Valerius Flaccus were similarly honoured at Claros.<sup>70</sup> The other two examples, for Popillius at Magnesia-on-the-Maeander and Scaevola, again via his son, at Nysa include no titles, simply honouring both in traditional terms for their ἀρετή and εὐνοία.<sup>71</sup>

Despite the small sample size, the use of the transliterated term *πάτρων* rather than the existing repertoire of honorific language is significant. Neither Greeks nor Romans viewed the term as synonymous with existing Greek labels. This represented the deliberate deployment of a Roman concept to honour Roman magistrates.<sup>72</sup> However, this did amalgamate civic honorific practice and Roman social institutions in a new way. As Ferrary noted, patronage, for Roman aristocrats, was not in itself, an honorific position: though having numerous significant individuals in one’s *clientela* demonstrated one’s worth within the political community, the patron-client relationship was often a formal consensual agreement. This was equally true of civic patronage. Here the language of personal patronage was co-opted into a new framework, drawing on the Classical and Hellenistic institution of *προξενία*, to construct a Roman-specific honorific relationship.<sup>73</sup> This is unsurprising, given that the services provided by *πάτρωνες* in the earliest Greek decrees, from Teos and Colophon, are precisely grounded in helping ambassadors navigate the unfamiliar Roman institutional and

<sup>67</sup> *IG XII*, 4, 2, 857. Compare *AE* 1995, 1538.

<sup>68</sup> *SEG* 45, 1128. Eilers, Milner 1995, p. 78-79.

<sup>69</sup> *IEphesos* 630a. Eilers, Milner 1995, p. 80-81, 83; Ferriès, Delrieux 2011, p. 210-216.

<sup>70</sup> Though the texts are identical, the monuments differ markedly, suggesting that they were produced separately. Ferrary 2000, p. 334-337. Cf. *IMagnesia* 144-146 which *pace* Erkelenz 2003 date to the 60s.

<sup>71</sup> *IMagnesia* 123; *SEG* 57, 1104. Raßelnberg 2007, p. 52-54 convincingly suggests it honoured other family members, including the proconsul.

<sup>72</sup> Ferrary 1997a, p. 208-212; Eilers 2002, p. 110-112; Bloy 2012, p. 181-183.

<sup>73</sup> *Proxenia* was an inter-*polis* institution, in which a community honoured an individual from another, who assisted their citizens within his domicile. While granting specific privileges, *proxenia* did gain an honorific element: Mack 2015, p. 22-25, 81-89; Domingo Gyax 2016, p. 109-114.

political landscape. The choice, from the 90s onwards, to use a novel technical term *πάτρων* to honour Roman magistrates represents a negotiated outcome arising from Roman social discourse in dialogue with local praxis.<sup>74</sup> However, these early moves towards a standard system disappeared during the upheaval generated by Mithridates' invasion of Asia.

After the First Mithridatic War, while communities were forced to adapt to a new administrative reality, their capacity to honour individuals through civic decrees remained untouched. As one of few remaining levers to encourage favourable treatment, it is unsurprising to see cities continuing to elevate commanders, who had their own reasons to encourage the practice. One intriguing consequence of this change was the revival of traditional Hellenistic honorific language.<sup>75</sup> Of 14 extant inscriptions recording honorific titles for Roman governors between the denouement of the First Mithridatic War in 85 and the death of Caesar in 44, only five preserve the title *πάτρων*.<sup>76</sup> Three combined this with the term *εὐεργέτης*, a title which appears in nine other inscriptions, five times alongside *σωτήρ* ("saviour"). Honours for *legati* and *quaestores* during the same period exhibit a similar pattern, albeit including greater proportion of *πάτρωνες*. Of nine inscriptions honouring *legati* with surviving titles, eight hail the recipient as *εὐεργέτης*, and five as *πάτρων*. Of 13 extant inscriptions preserving titles for *quaestores*, 11 honoured their recipients as *εὐεργέτης*, seven as *πάτρων*, and three as *σωτήρ*. Given that *legati* and *quaestores* had less scope to materially benefit *poleis*, more substantial personal links might be expected. That said, of the seven attestations of quaestorian patronage, four refer to L. Antonius, during his period of temporary governorship in 49, and two to Lucullus, which may suggest a relatively limited phenomenon.<sup>77</sup>

These Hellenistic titles had diverse origins and implications, allowing *poleis* to differentiate more overtly between recipients. The generic *εὐεργέτης* originally implied admission to a category of non-citizens with privileged status within a civic community,

<sup>74</sup> Bloy 2012, p. 182-183.

<sup>75</sup> Nichols 1990, p. 81; Nichols 2014, p. 71 notes this resurgence of traditional titulature without analysis.

<sup>76</sup> L. Cornelius Lentulus (*I.Labraunda* 63); P. Cornelius Sulla (*I.Kaunos* 106); Servilius Globulus (*SEG* 60, 1247); L. Valerius Flaccus: Ferrary 2000, n° 5; Q. Tullius Cicero: Ferrary 2000, n° 6.

<sup>77</sup> Quaestors as *patroni*: Lucullus in 85-80 (*I.Ephesos* 2941; *MAMA* IV, 52); L. Sestius in 54 (*I.Pergamon* VIII, 2, 406); L. Antonius in 50/49 (*I.Ephesos* 614a; *TAM* V, 919; *I.Pergamon* VIII, 2, 410; *IGR* IV, 401).

akin to *πρόξενος*.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, it was consistently employed as an honorific title from at least the fifth century.<sup>79</sup> Conversely, *σωτήρ* originally applied to divine figures, and *κτίστης* to semi-divine or legendary founders. Both came to be offered to Hellenistic rulers in an honorific capacity.<sup>80</sup> Bloy suggests that this titulature allowed *poleis* to better articulate their relationship with Roman magistrates: expressing a connection in terms of *πρόξενια* or *εὐεργέσια* became inappropriate when the power asymmetries between magistrate and *polis* became clear. While he fails to recognise the revival of Hellenistic titulature after the First Mithridatic War, Bloy's model has heuristic value. The sudden deterioration of civic status in the post-Sullan era radically altered the balance of power between magistrates, their representatives, and local communities. As most cities were now directly subject to the governor's jurisdiction, the impact of each individual officeholder on civic affairs was amplified. Given this increasing significance, titles previously employed for Hellenistic rulers became appropriate for individual Romans who had contributed to the community's well-being in a tangible way.<sup>81</sup>

Some *poleis* pursued other differentiating strategies. Honours for family members make up approximately one third of surviving examples (21/61) underscoring their importance as a conduit for *poleis* to exploit.<sup>82</sup> Communities thereby expanded the opportunities available to them: it provided a means to increase the visual and spatial impact of honours for a given governor, without having multiple statues for the same person. The variance between individual communities is striking. Magnesia-on-the-Maeander honoured family members alongside all three gubernatorial honorands; relatives were associated with two thirds of Republican magistrates praised at Kos, Kaunos and Samos.<sup>83</sup> Outside these communities, the phenomenon was more limited. Analysis of the number of magistrates for whom multiple statues were erected within one *polis* shows a similar pattern. Five of six examples in the extant record occur at Pergamon, the other at nearby Thyateira. Though it is certainly possible that this pattern is a quirk of evidence, given the limited breadth of the corpus, it is reasonable

<sup>78</sup> Gauthier 1985, p. 22-24, 33-39, 134-136; Domingo Gyax 2016, p. 111, 230-231.

<sup>79</sup> Gauthier 1985, p. 141-143; Domingo Gyax 2016, p. 51.

<sup>80</sup> Mortensen 2015, p. 231-233.

<sup>81</sup> The rapid turnover of Roman magistrates and the diffuse nature of Roman authority inevitably contributed to honorific inflation *vis-à-vis* the Hellenistic period. *E. g.* Frija 2014, p. 83-90.

<sup>82</sup> Table 1. This includes family monuments (*e. g.* *Milet* VI.3, 1123 with Kuhn 2015, p. 189-192).

<sup>83</sup> Magnesia (*I.Magnesia* 144, 145, 146); Kos (*IG XII*, 4, 2, 855; 859; cf. 857); Samos (*IG XII*, 6, 1, 354; 355, cf. *IGR IV*, 1709); Kaunos (*I.Kaunos* 104, 107, 108, 112; cf. 103, 106). Frija 2017.

to suggest that receiving multiple statues within a single *polis* was not commonplace. Finally, four honorific texts erected in ideologically-charged locations external to the honouring community indicate a further experiment.<sup>84</sup> While three of these were dedicated by collective entities, perhaps indicating that the site of the inscription or statue was negotiation by various members, they also point to a deliberate concern with visibility beyond the confines of the honouring community—*i. e.* they were, in some sense, outward-facing documents. Taken as whole, the corpus implies that *poleis* used a variety of approaches in honouring Roman commanders. The comparative blandness of the material should not disguise the fact that individual communities employed different strategies.

### *Monumentalisation of Roman normative documents*

A large proportion of attested Roman normative documents from the Republican period survive only in Asian copies and the critical question of on whose authority they were displayed needs addressing. Ando argued persuasively that Roman authorities pervasively and regularly disseminated official documents to provincials.<sup>85</sup> Less convincingly, however, he suggests that the Republican authorities regularly required cities to publicly and permanently display these documents. While Roman statutes and *senatusconsulta* often required magistrates to publicise their texts *unde de plano recte legi possit* at Rome, this formula was not generally reproduced in the Roman East during this period and the region had no existing tradition of disseminating general legislation beyond a few Seleucid *προστάγματα*.<sup>86</sup> Ando cites two inscriptions to support his claim, both containing an explicit “publication clause”. First, the *lex de provinciis praetoriis*, which required its display only in the cities of Asia, despite the wide relevance of its provisions.<sup>87</sup> Second, a letter from an unknown magistrate found at Miletus and Priene often dated to 51/50, which required its recipients, the *conventus* centres of the province, to engrave it on white stone in a conspicuous place (*ἐπιφανέστατος τόπος*)

<sup>84</sup> *IDelos* 1603 (Prostanna, 113); *OGIS* 439 (*δῆμοι καὶ ἔθνη* in Asia, ca 99-97); *OGIS* 445 (Mysian Abbaeitae, 74/73); *CIL* VI, 3835 (*provincia Asia*, late Republic/Augustan). For discussion see Jordan (forthcoming).

<sup>85</sup> Ando 2000, p. 81-86.

<sup>86</sup> Bencivenni 2010, p. 153-161; 2014, p. 148-151.

<sup>87</sup> I avoid the debate on whether Roman laws in bronze were intended to be read, save noting that, *pace* Ando 2000, p. 101, (il)legibility does not detract from the significance of display (Williamson 1987, p. 160-183; Cooley 2012, p. 170-171).

and to forward copies to other polities within their district. Both of these documents are inscribed on stone—bronze documents from the Greek-speaking East are highly unusual—and Ando treats this demand as standard practice.<sup>88</sup> However, the precise instructions, unparalleled in Republican magistrate’s correspondence, rather imply an unusual demand.<sup>89</sup> Often publication clauses offered a range of options, including the *lex de provinciis praetoriis*, which required cities to ensure that:

...εἰς δ<έλ>τον χαλκῆν γράμματα ἐνκεχαραγμέ[να, εἰ δὲ μὴ ἢ ἐν λίθῳ μαρμαρινῷ ἢ κ]αὶ ἐν λευκώματι, ὅπως ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι ἐκκέ[ηται ἐν ἱερῷ] ἢ ἀγοραῖ φανερώς, ὅθεν δυνή|σονται ἐστακότες ἀναγινώσ[κειν ὀρθῶς]

the letters, [be] engraved on a bronze tablet, [or if not either on a marble slab or even] on a whitened board, be openly [published] in the cities [in a sanctuary] or agora, in such a way that people shall be able to read (them) [properly] from ground level.<sup>90</sup>

As Eck stresses, the overwhelming majority of “published” documents in the cities of the Roman empire were produced on perishable materials, the best attested in the Greek world being painted black lettering on whitened boards.<sup>91</sup> This means of displaying normative texts, combined with public announcements, allowed direct and inexpensive communication with the community. Eck notes the reuse of boards and their swift turnover—one Claudian *edictum* explicitly requires its display for 30 days—suggesting that the scale of imperial correspondence required judgement over which documents to display, when, and for how long.<sup>92</sup> By contrast, to inscribe a document on stone or bronze implied permanence: the expense, time and skills necessary to produce a monument set these texts apart from the norm.<sup>93</sup> This provides strong reason not to read

<sup>88</sup> Ando 2000, p. 81-83. Eck 2014, p. 139-147 extensively discusses the continuation of the Hellenistic practice of inscribing normative documents on stone rather than following Roman practice of using bronze.

<sup>89</sup> *I.Priene*<sup>2</sup> 13.47-49. Eilers 2009, p. 305. The text does not state that the secondary recipients of the letter, such as Priene were required to inscribe it—their decision to do so is insufficient to show that the author intended that every community in Asia do so. Cf. Ferrary 2009b.

<sup>90</sup> Crawford 1996, n° 12 Delphi B 24-26. Crawford 1996, p. 19-20 takes this as a standard formula, based on the Greek translation of the Latin formula *unde de plano recte legi possit*, but recognises that *leges* generally mandate publication of documents associated with them, rather than the statutes themselves.

<sup>91</sup> Wilhelm 1909, p. 239-249; Eck 2010 [1997], p. 275-286.

<sup>92</sup> Eck 2010 [1997], p. 282-283.

<sup>93</sup> Ferrary 2009a, p. 59-60.

between the lines of texts which do not explicitly require their monumentalisation.<sup>94</sup> If so, the potential reasons for a community to inscribe Roman normative documents in public deserve examination.<sup>95</sup>

Where documents specifically granted privileges to a community, such as the *SC de Stratonicensibus* and *SC de agris Mytilenorum*, a local interest in their permanent and public record can be safely assumed. The inscription of the *SC de agro Pergameno* at Pergamon also follows this pattern, but copies at Adramyttion, Smyrna and Ephesos require explanation.<sup>96</sup> One plausible reason is that when *poleis* received a copy, convention or assumptions of Roman wishes led them to publish it. The evidence consistently demonstrates the large-scale dissemination of information by the Roman state and, upon the organisation of the *provincia*, the despatch of *senatusconsulta* to a wider group of communities than those immediately affected is plausible. In the preceding century, royal letters were strong normative documents which warranted record and display.<sup>97</sup> Roman decrees, when received by “free” *poleis*, held a similarly significant status: though, crucially, were issued almost exclusively in response to a petition or embassy. In the earliest days of the *provincia*, the drive to publicise Roman decisions may have been greater than later evidence would suggest. Alternatively, local factors drove the cities to publish the *senatusconsultum*. The evidence does not allow us to map its permanent display over time. Imitation likely played a role. Though the decision pertained only to Pergamene territory, *poleis* may have hoped this decree articulated a general principle and sought to redeploy the decree in their own disputes with the *publicani*.<sup>98</sup>

Documents of wider relevance, such as the copies and extracts of the *SC Popillianum* and *SC Licinnianum*, found at Arızlı, a modern village around 35 km

<sup>94</sup> E. g. Sotidius Strabo does not (*pace* Mitchell 1976, p. 116-117) “carefully provide for the [permanent] publication of his edict” at *LSagalassos* III, 5-6/29-30, but only that it be displayed.

<sup>95</sup> For Roman documents produced in a private context see Haensch 2009, p. 183-187.

<sup>96</sup> Robert 1969a, p. 612, n. 3 suggested that Roman administrators sought to publicise the decision to the *provincia* at large. However, two clear objections exist: 1) the inscription likely pre-dates the *conventus* system; and 2) the decision does not seem to assert a general principle and had no relevance for the province at large.

<sup>97</sup> Bencivenni 2014, p. 146-148.

<sup>98</sup> Tibiletti 1957, p. 138; Sherk 1966, p. 365; Merola 2001, p. 33-34. See Mitchell 1999, p. 27, for the decree’s exemplary character.

southeast of Synnada, require a different hypothesis.<sup>99</sup> While the near-complete copy of the former at Pergamon is often plausibly framed as an assertion of that city's newfound freedom and of the continuity between Attalid and Roman regimes, such an explanation does not account for the expensive display in an obscure city in the Phrygian highlands. The chances that a Roman magistrate, or even a representative, would visit a small community in the vicinity of the much more significant Synnada, which became a *conventus* centre during the first century, are small.<sup>100</sup> Our account of Cicero's journey through Cilicia makes clear that he rarely visited communities outside *conventus* centres—and this may plausibly stand as a general principle.<sup>101</sup> If so, the small Phrygian *polis* cannot have been monumentalised these documents for an audience of Roman magistrates in meaningful sense. One alternative is that the display of such a document allowed the community to define itself. The palaeography of the Arizli fragments suggests a date of first or second century CE, by which time, the region was part of the province of Galatia.<sup>102</sup> By publicly erecting monuments emphasising the establishment of a relationship, even a generic and subordinate one, with Rome dating from the earliest days of *provincia Asia*, the *polis* created a history which set them apart from other provincial rivals. Competition between the constituent communities of empire was crucial to the strategy of imperial rule and had roots far deeper than Roman involvement in the region. While far less significant than the disagreements over *neokoroi* in the major cities of the High Empire, these documents could have arisen from a similar phenomenon.<sup>103</sup>

Though the practical impact on Roman officials, institutions, and policy was limited, the local choice to publish these generic *senatusconsulta* had important effects. First, it offered locals the chance to assert elements of self-definition and self-determination: by producing documents which appeared to define their relationship with the imperial metropole in clear and favourable terms, *poleis* could advertise to their own citizens that their position had not worsened with the permanent arrival of Roman magistrates. In this respect, as Cicero recognised, the appearance was more

<sup>99</sup> *RDGE* 11, 13; *SEG* 28, 1208.

<sup>100</sup> Thonemann 2011, p. 54-56; Kantor 2013, p. 153-155.

<sup>101</sup> Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, 5, 16, 2; 20, 1; *ad Familiares*, 15, 4, 2. Hunter 1913, p. 81-94; Marshall 1966, p. 231-246; Fournier 2010, p. 56-58.

<sup>102</sup> Drew-Bear 1978, p. 3, 5; Jordan (forthcoming). See *SEG* 28, 1208.

<sup>103</sup> Heller 2006, p. 28-51.

significant than the reality.<sup>104</sup> Second, by choosing to inscribe these documents, at significant expense, and place them permanently, as sizeable monuments, in a public space alongside the political pronouncements of the *demos*, the honours decreed for local benefactors and the earlier missives of Hellenistic rulers, communities placed the official utterances of the Senate on a par with the most important acts in their parochial history. Within the broader traditions of government in Asia Minor, the inscription of Roman documents treated them in the same fashion as the utterances of the *polis* community itself or the Hellenistic monarchs of the earlier period. As Ma notes, in societies which display authoritative documents monumentally, the epigraphic medium itself can instantiate legitimacy. Even beyond this, the inscriptions themselves locate the source of their authority precisely in the institutions of the Roman state rather than local practice.<sup>105</sup> In the treatment of Roman normative documents, there are elements of previous approaches to royal letters: however, this was a different, and difficult, learning process. By publishing these documents, local institutions granted legitimacy to Roman norms and normative actions, but, crucially, civic elites made active and judicious choices in which and how many Roman documents to publicise in this fashion. Another factor may have been a desire to locate the community more solidly within an imagined Roman polity. That is, the display of Roman official documents was intended to highlight to diverse audiences the acknowledgement of Rome's real power over the community. Ando persuasively shows that display of normative documents generated over time a sense of legitimacy and hierarchy.<sup>106</sup> I argue here simply that the impetus could and often did arise from the local communities, rather than the Roman state.

The reproduction of Roman normative documents within the communities of Asia in symbolic ways played a substantial role in socialising civic elites to accept Roman power. Individuals who consciously engaged with the documents, as texts or otherwise, were exposed to the interplay between Roman and local systems of authority. Ando perceptively emphasised that these texts carried significant force and, by interacting with local frameworks of power, created a sense of legitimacy around Roman ideology

<sup>104</sup> Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, 6, 1, 15. Compare *Leges*, III, 25.

<sup>105</sup> Bertrand 1990, p. 108-115; Ma 2012, p. 141.

<sup>106</sup> Ando 2000, p. 75-110; Eilers 2009, p. 301-304. This inverts Ma's observation (Ma 1999, p. 241) that in the Hellenistic period, "the ideological autarky and local identity of the *polis* were strongly affirmed [...] even under political subordination".

and state action.<sup>107</sup> Their inscription also normalised the format, text, and appearance of Roman documents for local use.<sup>108</sup> However, that this was intentionally cultivated by the Roman state and its representatives in the late Republican period does not follow. The limited evidence for publication clauses, when placed alongside the evidence for the *res gestae Divi Augusti* in Galatia and the *senatusconsultum de Cn. Pisone patre* in Spain and Noricum, highlight the restricted aims of the central state and the significant leeway afforded to magistrates and communities when it came to communicating directly with the inhabitants of the provinces.<sup>109</sup> This is not to say that the Roman state did not despatch large volumes of written correspondence and instructions to provincial communities; or, indeed, that a significant proportion of this was not displayed publicly in some impermanent media. However, the control of this documentation and the choice to monumentalise it, establishing it firmly within civic memory lay within the purview of local powerbrokers.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The absence of a focal point for coherent Roman administrative discourse affected the capacity of Asian *poleis* to protect and increase their privileges. Both the Hellenistic royal model and its imperial Roman successor depended on a continuous reciprocal dialogue between the ruler and community, exchanging honorific capital and legitimacy for tangible privileges. In both cases, the cohesiveness of imperial society and the ability of communities to exert agency arose from a common understanding of “the rules of the game”. Conversely, the absence of such understanding would undermine the entire system. In western Asia, during the late Republic, the personal link to the decision-maker necessary to maintain such a model dissolved as the most powerful administrative body, the Senate, contained several hundred members with competing preferences, interests and personal relationships.<sup>110</sup> Confronting civic embassies was a foreign council, few members of which would have had prior direct contact with their community: though, over time, new ties could be generated through civic patronage

<sup>107</sup> Ando 2000, p. 78-79, 101-106.

<sup>108</sup> Decorte 2015, p. 246-253 suggests that Roman statutes in Greek contexts consciously resembled the format and layout of an original official translation. Cf. Cooley 2012, p. 163; Ma 2013, p. 102-103.

<sup>109</sup> *Res gestae*: Cooley 2009, p. 6-22; cf. Thonemann 2012, p. 285-288. *SC de Cn. Pisone*: Eck, Caballos, Fernández 1996, p. 279-288; Bartels 2009, p. 1-9.

<sup>110</sup> *E. g.* Ferrary 2007a emphasises the role of magistrates in shaping senatorial policy; Pina Polo 2011a, p. 276-284; Pina Polo 2013, p. 434-444 extends this to designated magistrates.

and personal familiarity, the dispersed nature of Roman power further complicated this process.<sup>111</sup>

While recognition of senatorial legitimacy bore institutional significance, from the perspective of an individual senator, the stakes were far lower. This is not to say that embassies were despatched with less frequency than in earlier or later periods, or that the Senate did not vote to protect or increase privileges for some *poleis*; rather structural disincentives existed for the Republican government *vis-à-vis* its monarchic counterparts when it came to engaging in a beneficent relationship with individual communities. The advent of Roman rule fundamentally disrupted the existing cycle of reciprocal honour and benefaction sustained by Hellenistic royal discourse. The dispersal of authority across multiple institutions and magistrates, each able to correspond directly with *poleis* and each with their own “language”, effectively prevented cities from understanding of the “rules of the game” and developing approaches to protect themselves and their interests in exchanges with the state. The instability of the Republic’s central political institutions in this period compounded this problem. Consequently, while they remained constrained by institutional structure of the Republic, *poleis* responded with experimentation, guided by existing customs in lieu of clear signals from the Roman state.

Beyond this, the changing political situation required civic communities to negotiate with their own citizen bodies. These were far from monolithic entities, and Roman actors did little to make themselves beloved in Asia Minor.<sup>112</sup> Nevertheless, communities had few choices beyond adaptation. By issuing honorific decrees for Romans and in prominently displaying these texts alongside Roman official documents, *poleis* increasingly associated Roman administration with existing localised frameworks of authority. In doing so, local choices created the reality of Roman “empire” within provincial communities.

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<sup>111</sup> Thonemann 2013, p. 2.

<sup>112</sup> Yarrow 2006, p. 269-282.

**Table 1:** Honoric Inscriptions for Roman Magistrates in and around *provincia Asia*, 133-44 BCE

Date	Place	Honorand	Position	Titles	Source	Reference
100	Kos	M. Popillius Laenas	L	PE	D	<i>IG</i> XII, 4, 2, 857
100	Magnesia-on-the-Maeander	M. Popullius Laenas	L	-	BD	<i>I.Magnesia</i> 123
ca 99-97	Ephesos	Q. Mucius Scaevola (wife)	PC	P	D	<i>I.Ephesos</i> 630a
ca 99-97	Kos	Q. Mucius Scaevola (son)	PC	P?	D	<i>IG</i> XII, 4, 2, 855
ca 99-97	Nysa	Q. Mucius Scaevola (son)	PC	-	D	<i>SEG</i> 57, 1104
95	Kolophon (Klaros)	C. Valerius Flaccus	PC	P	D	Ferrary 2000, n° 1
92	Kolophon (Klaros)	L. Valerius Flaccus	PC	P	D	Ferrary 2000, n° 2
post 89	Ilion	L. Iulius Caesar	CS	-	D	<i>I.Ilion</i> 71
post 89	Ilion	L. Iulius Caesar (daughter)	CS	-	BD	<i>I.Ilion</i> 72
85/84	Halikarnassos	L. Cornelius Sulla	PC	E	D	<i>ILS</i> 8771
85-81	Kaunos	L. Licinius Murena	PC	SE	D	<i>I.Kaunos</i> 103
85-81	Kaunos	L. Licinius Murena (son)	PC	SE	D	<i>I.Kaunos</i> 104
85-80	Ephesos	L. Licinius Lucullus	Q	PE	-	<i>I.Ephesos</i> 2941
85-80	Thyateira	L. Licinius Lucullus	Q	SKE	D	<i>IGR</i> IV, 1191
85-80	Synnada	L. Licinius Lucullus	Q	PE	D	<i>MAMA</i> IV, 52
82	Euromos	A. Terentius Varro (mother)	L	-	D	<i>ILS</i> 8773

82	Labraunda	L. Cornelius Lentulus	PC	P	D	<i>I.Labraunda</i> n° 63
ca 84-78	Priene	M'. Aemilius Lepidus	Q	E	-	<i>I.Priene</i> <sup>2</sup> 233
75/74	Pergamon	M. Iunius Iuncus (father/son?)	PC	-	D	<i>I.Pergamon</i> VIII, 2, 408
74	Ephesos	Q. Publicius	Q	E	-	<i>AE</i> 1983, 920
73-68	Akmoncia	C. Sornantius Barba	L	-	BD	<i>MAMA</i> VI, 260
73-69	Andros	L. Licinius Lucullus	PC	-	D	<i>SEG</i> 60, 908
73-69	Kolophon (Klaros)	L. Licinius Lucullus	PC	SE	D	Ferrary 2000, n° 3
73-69	Pergamon	C. Sornantius Barba	L	E	D	<i>I.Pergamon</i> VIII, 2, 431
68/67	Pergamon	P. Cornelius Dolabella	PC	E	D	<i>I.Pergamon</i> VIII, 2, 405
67	Miletos	L. Manlius Torquatus	L	E	-	<i>ZPE</i> 68, 275-276
67	Kaunos	P. Cornelius Sulla	PC	PE	D	<i>I.Kaunos</i> 106
63	Klaros	P. Servilius Globulus	PC	PE	<i>koinon Ionion</i>	<i>SEG</i> 60, 1247
62/61	Kolophon (Klaros)	L. Valerius Flaccus	PC	P	G	Ferrary 2000, n° 5
62/61	Magnesia-on-the-Maeander	L. Valerius Flaccus (mother)	PC	-	-	<i>I.Magnesia</i> 144
62/61	Magnesia-on-the-Maeander	L. Valerius Flaccus (wife)	PC	-	-	<i>I.Magnesia</i> 145
62/61	Magnesia-on-the-Maeander	L. Valerius Flaccus (daughter)	PC	-	D	<i>I.Magnesia</i> 146
61-58	Tralles	L. Aelius Tubero	L	P	<i>gerontes</i>	<i>SEG</i> 54, 1171
61-59	Kolophon (Klaros)	Q. Tullius Cicero	PC	PE	D	Ferrary 2000, n° 6
61-59	Samos	Q. Tullius Cicero (wife)	PC	-	D	<i>IG</i> XII, 6, 1, 354

61-59	Samos	Q. Tullius Cicero (son)	PC	-	D	<i>IG XII</i> , 6, 1, 355
60	Kaunos	L. Afranius (son)	L	E	D	<i>I.Kaunos</i> 112
55-53	Pergamon	C. Claudius Pulcher	PC	E	-	<i>I.Pergamon</i> VIII, 2, 409
ca 54/53	Kaunos	C. Scribonius Curio (wife)	Q	E	-	<i>I.Kaunos</i> 108
ca 54/53	Kaunos	C. Scribonius Curio (son)	Q	E	-	<i>I.Kaunos</i> 107
54	Pergamon	L. Sestius	Q	PE	D	<i>I.Pergamon</i> VIII, 2, 406
54	Pergamon	L. Sestius	Q	-	-	<i>I.Pergamon</i> VIII, 2, 407
50/49	Ephesos	L. Antonius	Q	PE?	-	<i>I.Ephesos</i> 614a
50/49	Magnesia-under-Sipylos	L. Antonius	Q	E	-	<i>I.Magnesia Sipylos</i> 3
50/49	Thyateira	L. Antonius	Q	-	BD	<i>TAM V</i> , 920
50/49	Thyateira	L. Antonius	Q	PE	D	<i>TAM V</i> , 919
50/49	Pergamon	L. Antonius	Q	SP	D	<i>I.Pergamon</i> VIII, 2, 410
50/49	Pergamon	L. Antonius	Q	SP	D	<i>IGR IV</i> , 401
49/48	Apameia	P. Licinius Crassus Damasippus	L	SEP	BD	<i>AE</i> 1890, 76
49	Miletos	M. Pupius Piso Frugi	L	PE	D	<i>Milet I</i> 3, 173
49/48	Pergamon	Q. Caecilius Metellus Pius	L	SE	D	<i>I.Pergamon</i> VIII, 2, 411
49/48	Pergamon	Q. Caecilius Metellus Pius (daughter)	L	-	D	<i>I.Pergamon</i> VIII, 2, 412
49	Samos	M. Pupius Piso Frugi	L	PE?	D	<i>IGR IV</i> , 1709
49-45	Nysa	Cn. Domitius Calvinus	L	PE	?	<i>SEG</i> 59, 1228
46-44	Pergamon	P. Servilius Isauricus	PC	SE	D	<i>I.Pergamon</i> VIII, 2, 413

46-44	Pergamon	P. Servilius Isauricus (daughter)	PC	SE	D	<i>I.Pergamon</i> VIII, 2, 414
46-44	Kos	P. Servilius Isauricus (wife)	PC	-	D	<i>IG XII, 4, 2, 859</i>
46-44	Mytilene	P. Servilius Isauricus (wife)	PC	-	D	<i>IG XII</i> supp. 60
46-44	Magnesia-on-the-Maeander	P. Servilius Isauricus (father)	PC	E	-	<i>I.Magnesia</i> 142
44/43	Ephesos	M. Appuleius (wife and father-in-law)	Q	-	-	<i>I.Ephesos</i> 1547

Key:

Position: Q(uaestor); L(egatus); P(ro)C(onsul); P(rae)F(ectus); C(en)S(or); C(o)N(sul)

Titles: P(atron); E(uergetes); S(oter); K(tistes); H(eros)

Source: D(emos); B(oule)