

## MARCUS AGRIPPA THEOS SOTER

*Jochen Bleicken in memoriam*

Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa is a well-known figure from the time the Roman Republic was transformed into a monarchical state. A relatively rich and varied tradition reflects his personality, his achievements and his family. Meyer Reinhold's biography of the 1930s was recently followed by that of J.-M. Roddaz.<sup>1</sup> Agrippa is primarily known as Octavian's best general and most important aide on his way to become *princeps*. Augustus, as the ruler henceforth was called, accepted him as his son-in-law and as a member of the family. His sons, adopted by Augustus, were geared to become his successors. Augustus invested their father with extraordinary powers and made him an almost equal partner in his regiment. The late Jochen Bleicken has recently evaluated Agrippa's standing within the new order as Augustus' most loyal servant.<sup>2</sup>

When Agrippa was given, in 18 BC, for the eastern half of the empire, higher authority than any governor of a province had, he reached the climax of his career and kept this elevated position until his death in 12 BC. In the course of these years he was, in his realm, the recipient of numerous honors, many of which so extravagant that honors of that kind were soon no longer tolerated for any man except the emperor.<sup>3</sup> In several cities Agrippa was venerated as "benefactor and savior", εὐεργέτης καὶ σωτήρ, so in Athens,<sup>4</sup> by

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<sup>1</sup> M. Reinhold, *Marcus Agrippa. A Biography*, Diss. (Columbia University 1933); J.-M. Roddaz, *Marcus Agrippa* (Paris 1984). See also: R. Hanslik, "M. Vipsanius Agrippa", *RE IX A 1* (1961) 1226–1275.

<sup>2</sup> J. Bleicken, *Augustus. Eine Biographie* (Berlin 1998) 626–630.

<sup>3</sup> See: J.-L. Ferrary, "Honneurs culturels décernés à des magistrates romains", in: *Actes de Xe Congrès international d'épigraphie Grecque et Latine, Nîmes 1992* (Paris 1997) 216–218 with previous bibliography. Ferrary does not list Agrippa. In Cyprus a month was named *Agrippeios* during Agrippa's lifetime (M. Clauss, *Kaiser und Gott. Herrscherkult im römischen Reich* [München – Leipzig 1999] 242). A festival *Agrippeia* (and *new Agrippeia*) was celebrated on Kos (*Sylloge*<sup>3</sup> 1065<sub>13</sub> and M. Segre, *Iscrizioni di Cos* [Rome 1993] EV 218 which is part of the same stone).

<sup>4</sup> *ID* 1593, found at Delos, but emanating (as Delos belonged to the Athenian state) from the Areopagus and the city of Athens. The name of Agrippa's father is there misstated as Marcus (instead of Lucius), not noticed by Roddaz (n. 1) 27.

the (still independent) Lycian Confederacy<sup>5</sup> and in the Lycian city of Myra.<sup>6</sup> He was even called “Savior God”, Θεὸς Σωτήρ, in several dedications found in Mytilene on the island of Lesbos. These, it must be added, were posthumous honors.<sup>7</sup> But Agrippa was still alive when the city of Mytilene erected a statue of his and inscribed it “To the Savior God of the city, Marcus Agrippa, the benefactor and founder”.<sup>8</sup> This must mean that he was the recipient of a cult. A cult that included Augustus, his grandson Gaius Caesar and Agrippa is attested, apparently in 6/5 BC, in Samos, where these three jointly had a priest.<sup>9</sup> It seems clear that in this cult Agrippa was the minor partner not only of Augustus (as he was in Myra, see note 6), but also of his own son – because the son had a blood relation to the *gens Iulia*. It has also been observed that Agrippa was rarely honored alone,<sup>10</sup> but nearly always in conjunction with other members of the imperial family: Augustus, Augustus’ daughter Iulia,<sup>11</sup> or his own sons Gaius and Lucius.

A new piece of evidence testifying to a cult for Agrippa will be presented here. It was found long ago at Larisa in Thessaly, but there is no record of where and when. The stone entered the collection of the city’s Museum with the number 311 and was registered by N. I. Giannopoulos, the *epimelete* of Volos at the time, when he drew up the inventory of the Museum’s inscriptions in 1932. This inventory contains the numbers 1 to 500. Giannopoulos describes the piece as a small rectangular base of white stone. He gives the following measurements: 28 cm high, 27 cm wide and 36 cm thick. In September of 1966, when I was working for a few weeks at the Museum in Larisa, I had a chance of reviewing the Inventory and made a note of this entry. The stone itself, however, could not be found and I suspected that it may not have survived the Second World War.

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<sup>5</sup> A. Balland, *Fouilles de Xanthos* VII (Paris 1981) 45, no. 23: Μάρκον Ἀγρίππαν τὸν εὐεργέτην καὶ σωτήρα τοῦ ἔθνους Λυκίων τὸ κοινόν. A more modest honor at Xanthos (*ibid.*, no. 24): [Μάρκον Ἀγρίππαν Ξανθίων ὁ δῆμος.

<sup>6</sup> *IGR* III 719. Another likely case from Patara in Lycia: H. Engelmann, “Marcus Agrippa in Patara (*SEG* 44, 1208)”, *ZPE* 146 (2004) 129.

<sup>7</sup> Roddaz (n. 1) 445.

<sup>8</sup> *IG* XII 2. 203: Ὁ δάμος Θεὸν Σωτήρα τὰς πόλιος Μάρκον Ἀγρίππαν, τὸν εὐεργέταν καὶ κτίσταν.

<sup>9</sup> P. Herrmann, “Die Inschriften römischer Zeit aus dem Heraion von Samos”, *AM* 75 (1960 [1962]) 68–183, on p. 72, no. 1 B<sub>20–23</sub>, now *IG* XII 6, no. 7<sub>51–54</sub>.

<sup>10</sup> Roddaz (n. 1) 448. Agrippa alone is, however, the recipient of the honors at Mytilene (n. 8).

<sup>11</sup> C. Habicht, “Iulia Kalliteknos”, *MH* 53 (1996) 156–159.

Some time ago, however, while compiling an inventory of some 25 000 squeezes of Greek inscriptions preserved at the Institute for Advanced Study, I found a squeeze of that stone, marked only with the word “Larisa” and the number “311”. There is no record when and by whom the squeeze was made, but it was probably in the 1930s, when Benjamin D. Meritt secured from the Director of the Institute special funds to build up a collection of squeezes. After I had found the squeeze of the Agrippa inscription, I wrote earlier this year to the Ephoros in charge, Dr. Athanasios Tziafalias and asked for his permission to publish it. In his amiable response he not only granted permission, but also informed me that the piece still existed at the Museum and kindly offered to send me photos and other information. He did so in a letter of April and it is a pleasure to record here my profound gratitude to him.

Dr. Tziafalias confirmed that there are no details about the stone’s origin and chronology. He said that it is of grey marble, broken below, but with *anathyrosis* on the other three sides, and that the back was left rough. He also records the following measurements: Height 0,245; Length 0,265; Width 0,290 m. The letters are between 0,015 and 0,030 high. The text, in three very short lines, is well preserved (Fig. 1) and reads:

Μάρκῳ Ἀγρίπ-  
πῳ Θεῶι Σω-  
τῆρι vac.



Fig. 1

Although the stone is broken below, the text ended probably with line 3. From the dative case one would assume this to be a dedication to Agrippa, but if that were the case, the omission of the dedicant, whether a community or an individual, would be very strange. The same goes for the inscriptions from Mytilene for Agrippa. This omission makes me think that these are, in fact, not dedications, but small altars of the “Savior God”. Altars usually give the name of the god or the goddess in the genitive case, as do the numerous altars for Arsinoe *Philadelphos*, whose text is always just Ἄρσινῶς Φιλαδέλφου and which are found throughout the Ptolemaic realm. These have been fully discussed by Louis Robert.<sup>12</sup> Taking this study as a starting point, I have once identified a small object of marble, found at Syracuse in Sicily, with the inscription Διὸς Σωτῆρος Ἰέρωνος (Zeus Savior Hieron) as a domestic altar for king Hiero II of Syracuse. I added a few similar cases to the material already collected by Robert.<sup>13</sup> Numerous cases of this kind from Athens and other places in the Greek provinces of the Roman Empire are known in particular for Augustus and Hadrian. Those for Augustus have been collected and discussed by Anna Benjamin and Antony Raubitschek,<sup>14</sup> those for Hadrian by Anna Benjamin.<sup>15</sup> The typical form is for Augustus Αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος Θεοῦ υἱοῦ Σεβαστοῦ, that is to say, the form in the genitive case, appropriate for altars. For Hadrian, however, it is the form in the dative case: Σωτῆρι καὶ κτίστη αὐτοκράτορι Ἀδριανῶ, or something very similar. Benjamin and Raubitschek have commented as follows: “There exists, however, a large group of dedications, mainly, though perhaps not exclusively, altars which have the name of the emperor (or of another person) in the dative case, indicating, as in the case of dedications to gods, that the monument is set up to the emperor”.<sup>16</sup> I would like to agree with them that there is no substantial difference between those im-

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<sup>12</sup> L. Robert, “Sur un décret d’Ilion et sur un papyrus concernant des cultes royaux”, *American Studies in Papyrology* I (1966): *Essays in honor of C. Bradford Welles* 175–211 (OMS VII 599–635), especially 202–210. More than twenty altars of this type are known. After the study of Robert was published, at least eight others became known, five from Cyprus, one each from Eretria, Minoa on Amorgos and Kaunos.

<sup>13</sup> Ch. Habicht, *Gottmenschen und griechische Städte* (Munich 2<sup>1970</sup>) 259–262.

<sup>14</sup> A. Benjamin, A. Raubitschek, “Arae Augusti”, *Hesperia* 28 (1959) 65–85.

<sup>15</sup> A. Benjamin, “The Altars of Hadrian in Athens and Hadrian’s Panhellenic Program”, *Hesperia* 32 (1963) 57–86. She lists no fewer than 94 pieces for Athens and 28 for Pergamon.

<sup>16</sup> Benjamin and Raubitschek (n. 14) 67.

perial monuments, whether the inscriptions are written in the genitive or in the dative case.

It is not clear why Agrippa was honored at Larisa (or Thessaly in general) in this way. There is, however, no need to look for any specific service that he may have done to the city, since such a modest altar could well have been set up by an individual who had personal reasons to see and to venerate Agrippa as his “Savior God”.

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В дополнение к нескольким уже известным эпиграфическим памятникам, свидетельствующим о культе М. Випсания Агриппы как бога-спасителя, публикуется надпись из Ларисы, которая, очевидно, была высечена на небольшом посвященном ему алтарю.