

A FUNERARY INSCRIPTION FROM ETRURIA

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SOME YEARS AGO, Joyce Reynolds published a rather puzzling funerary inscription from Filissano in southern Etruria.¹ The stone raises several significant problems regarding the persons mentioned, their statuses, and their respective administrative posts. As well, there are problems with the reading and sense of the text that deserve further attention. I shall begin with an interpretation of the text,² and then turn to the questions of office and status raised by it.

I. TEXT, TRANSLATION, COMMENTS

Col. I:

- Cerne age, principio uenerandum numen adorans,
quos similes fecit nos manus artificis.
Sub laeua posui Marcum me nomine Carpum,
qui procurauit auro sanctaeque Monetae.*
- 5 *Sed iam cesso mihi senio hortante libenter,
et merui laudis bonae sub principe famam.
Altera de parte situs est mihi karus Achilles,
prudens et doctus, nostro qui Caesare dignus;
hunc merito iuuenem cernimus a memor[ia].*
- 10 *Signum etiam posui nostri maioris Ach[il]lis,
in medio fulgens ut caelo stella Bo[oc]tes],
qui solus longe tutatus nobiliter [ca 3–5 litt.]*

Col. II:

*quem e [- - -]
nymph [- - -]
feci et i [- - -]
mox i [- - -]
horto [- - -]
t [- - -]*

Col. I.4: Not *sanctus* but *sacer* is normally used of the mint (*TLL* sv. *moneta* col.

I should like first to thank Roger Bagnall, Seth Bernardete, Peter Knox, and Patrick Otte for discussing the inscription with me. Secondly, Joyce Reynolds was kind enough to read and criticize carefully an early draft of this paper. Finally, the anonymous readers for this journal have, via their numerous and painstaking suggestions and criticisms, vastly improved what finally appears.

¹J. M. Reynolds, "Inscriptions from South Etruria," *PBSR* ns 21 (1966) 56–67, at 66–67 (cited below as Reynolds). The stone was republished in *AE* (1968) 164 (cited below as *AE*).

²I depend on the photo published by Reynolds for my version of the text.

1414, 13 ff.). For the use of *sacer* to mean "imperial," see O. Hirschfeld, *Die kaiserlichen Verwaltungsbeamten bis auf Diocletian*² (Berlin 1905) 186, note 3 and 284, note 3. See also J. Burian, "*Sanctus* als Wertbegriff in der Historia Augusta," *Klio* 63 (1981) 623–638, at 624–625.

Col. I.9–11: In all of these lines I have closed the brackets, whereas Reynolds and the *AE* editors left room for further letters (or words). Given the available space, the sense of the text and the meter, however, I see no reason to expect anything further.

Col. I.11: For *fulgens*, the previous editors had *euigens*, of which the sense is unclear, nor does it fit the meter. The third letter seems clearly L and not I.

Col. II: I have followed Reynolds—the published photo, in fact, cuts off the second column almost entirely.

Come see, first adoring the venerable spirit,
 how alike the hand of the artifex made us.
 I have placed myself, Marcus Carpus by name, under the left,
 I who was procurator of the gold and the holy mint.
 But now, my old age urging, happily I stop,
 for I earned the renown of high praise serving the emperor.
 On the other side is my dear Achilles,
 prudent and learned, who was worthy of our Caesar;
 we see that deservedly was this young man *a memoria*.
 I even set up an image of our exalted Achilles,
 shining forth in the middle like the star Bootes in the heavens,
 who alone from afar splendidly has protected [- -]

It is clear that funerary images are here involved,³ and three individuals are mentioned: Marcus Carpus, Achilles minor (7–9), and Achilles maior (10 ff.). Carpus describes his own image as *sub laena* (3), that of Achilles minor as *altera de parte* (7), and the *signum* of Achilles maior as *principio* (1—I take the *uenerandum numen* as equivalent to the *signum Achillis maioris*, and I believe that *principio* might also be taken in a spatial sense, i.e., as meaning "in the first place") and *in medio* (11). It seems clear that the portrait of Achilles maior was above and between the other two, with Carpus below and to the left, Achilles minor below and to the right. The inscription must have been placed beneath the portraits, and would have served to identify them.

Three images, but how many real people and what their relationship? Reynolds assumed that Achilles minor was Carpus' son, while others have been less specific.⁴ For these two a familial relationship seems almost certain;

³The *AE* editors talk of a "groupe sculpte (?)."

⁴Reynolds 66, n. 2. The *AE* editors call Achilles minor "son cher compagnon." G. Boulvert, *Domestique et fonctionnaire sous le Haute-Empire romain* (Paris 1974) 250, n. 241, calls Achilles simply "son karus Achilles."

the fact that they lay buried together and the adjective *karus* both urge this.⁵ On the other hand, Reynolds assumed that Achilles maior was the hero of the *Iliad*; Carpus was claiming a mythological ancestor.⁶ On this interpretation we would have father and son, Carpus and Achilles minor, buried together and represented sculpturally along with their mythical forebear, the hero Achilles. Although this is possible, there may be a more likely explanation.

Let us assume that Carpus and Achilles minor were father and son, the elder having been (probably, see below) *procurator monetarum*, the son *a memoria*. Carpus twice, albeit vaguely, attributes this professional success to the generosity of the emperor (6 and 8). I should like to suggest, therefore, that the *signum nostri maioris Achillis* was most likely an image of that emperor whose beneficence raised them up.⁷ The prince in question is called Achilles, and here is our clue to his identity.

Late in September of A.D. 214, Caracalla visited the shrine of Asclepius in Pergamum.⁸ The next stop was Ilium, where the emperor took in the sights, and then decided to imitate the hero Achilles.⁹ To accomplish this properly a Patroclus was needed—more specifically a dead Patroclus. As it happened, a man named Festus, the then *a memoria*,¹⁰ was with Caracalla at Ilium, and either died naturally or was poisoned. In either case, Caracalla snatched the opportunity and had this man cremated *qua* Patroclus. So intent was the emperor on this *imitatio* that he made a fool of himself by shaving off what

⁵For some statistics on the use of *carus* (or *karus*) in the sepulchral inscriptions of *CIL* 6, S. G. Harrod, *Latin Terms of Endearment and Family Relationship* (diss., Princeton 1909) 34–35.

⁶Reynolds 66, n. 6. *AE*, ad loc. “. . . on peut se demander si Carpus jouait le Patrocle, ou si un Achilles avait réellement existé dans leur commune ascendance.” The *AE* editors seem, though, to incline towards Reynolds’ interpretation.

⁷Note that Achilles maior is a *uenerandum numen* (1. 1), and in line 11 he is *fulgens ut caelo stella Bootes*. Such language indicates the presence of rather an exceptional character—someone (e.g.) of imperial status. *Principio* in line 1 may also be a pun.

⁸For the date, see J. Whittaker’s Loeb edition of Herodian, 414–415, n. 5. See also A. Johnston, “Caracalla’s Path: The Numismatic Evidence,” *Historia* 32 (1983) 58–76, esp. 65. The account that follows derives from Herodian 4.8.3–5.

⁹Further on Caracalla’s imitation of Achilles: Herodian 4.9.3 and Dio 77.16.7. The *AE* editors also mention Caracalla’s *imitatio* of Achilles, though without drawing ultimately any conclusions.

¹⁰This is probably the Marcius Festus attested as *a memoria* by *CIL* 14.3638. See also *HA Macrini* 4.4 and Dio 78.32.4 (with Boissvain’s reconstruction of the text). It should be noted, however, that Festus’ status is problematic. Briefly on this: O. Seeck, “*Scrinium*,” *RE* 2A (1923) 898; G. Boulvert, *Esclaves et affranchis impériaux sous le Haut-Empire romain* (Naples 1970) 245, n. 315. Note also that Pflaum accepts Festus as an equestrian, though dating him in the post ca 215—H.-G. Pflaum, *Les carrières équestres procuratoriennes sous le Haut-Empire romain* (Paris 1960) 1024.

few hairs remained on his head and sacrificing these on the pyre.¹¹ Here then is our emperor.¹²

If this is correct, then we might plausibly date the inscription after September 214. As for a *terminus ante quem*, there are several clues. If we are correct in assigning the stone to the reign of Caracalla, then it seems likely that Carpus was *procurator monetae* ca 211/213.¹³ Since this was the highest (or only ?) post that Carpus held, we might suspect that he was well on in years when he did become procurator of the mint. Indeed, Carpus says that he was old at the time of composition (1. 5); he might easily have died of old age toward the end of Caracalla's reign. The description of the emperor as a *numen* and as a constellation also inclines one to think that the text was written in the wake of Caracalla's death (though it must be admitted that a living emperor *could* be described thus). It might be, then, that Achilles minor, Caracalla, and Marcus Carpus expired nearly concurrently, and possibly in this order. The coincidental proximity of their deaths may even have been the inspiration for the monument. Hence a date of ca 217/218 seems a plausible *terminus ante quem*.

Reynolds also commented on the astrological imagery.¹⁴ She seems to have supposed that like Achilles maior, Carpus and Achilles minor were compared (in the lost portion of the text) to constellations, specifically to Callisto (= Ursa Major) and Virgo which flank Bootes. Given the arrangement of the funerary images proposed above this might seem logical. But it still is not clear why Bootes should have been introduced altogether, and it also seems odd that Carpus should have chosen to compare himself and Achilles minor to female constellations.¹⁵ Again, there are other possibilities that deserve mention.

It might seem, given the last line of column I, that Bootes is introduced because of his capacity as a guardian or protector. Indeed, Bootes was

¹¹For the parallel, Homer *Il.* 23.140 ff.

¹²The Homeric charade played out at Ilium had left Caracalla without an *a memoria*. Given the mania with which he conducted "Patroclus'" funeral, we might suspect that in a continuation of the bizarre game, Caracalla selected Marcus Carpus' son as the new *a memoria* precisely because the youth was named Achilles. Though there is, of course, no certainty to be had here, I might note that Carpus' words in lines 8–9 smack of *apologia*, which inclines me to the interpretation offered.

¹³P. Aelius can be dated in the post between 213 and 217. See M. Peachin, "The *Procurator Monetae*," *NC* 8 6 (1986) 94–106, 99.

¹⁴Reynolds 66–67, n. 7. The *AE* editors decline to comment.

¹⁵The most common notion of life after death in the Graeco-Roman world seems to have been that the dead lived on in an ethereal version of their previous form. See M. Smith, "Transformation by Burial," *Eranos Jahrbuch* 52, 1983 (Frankfurt 1984) 98 ff. Nonetheless, the notion that the dead turned into or lived among the stars was relatively common. See (e.g.) R. Latimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs* (Urbana 1942) 26 ff. Still, it seems odd to me that anyone should have associated a sex change with his stellar metamorphosis.

regarded as the guardian of his companion constellation Callisto, thus (I think) Reynolds' interpretation. However, Bootes was also widely used by sailors for purposes of navigation, and in poetry came to symbolize a sort of guide or protector for the voyager.¹⁶ Carpus' point, then, might be that Achilles maior, like Bootes, was a guide to his protégés in life, and would perform the same service in death.

Yet another (possibly complementary) interpretation might be evinced by a passage of Manilius' *Astronomicon*. The fifth book begins (ll. 32–709) with discussion of the *paranatellonta*, i.e., those constellations that rise alongside the zodiacal constellations and therefore share their effects.¹⁷ One of these is Bootes (or Arcturus),¹⁸ of which Manilius says (*Astron.* 5.357–363):

*Hunc (i.e., Centaurum) subit Arcitenens, cuius pars quinta nitentem
Arcturum ostendit ponto. quo tempore natis
Fortuna ipsa suos audet committere census,
regalis ut opes et sancta aeraria seruent
regnantes sub regne suo rerumque ministri,
tutelamque gerant populi, domibusue regendis
praepositi curas alieno limine claudant.*¹⁹

According to this passage, those born under the influence of Bootes would serve kings (n.b., in capacities that later would be entrusted to procurators). Now, Manilius probably did not mean to be absolutely specific or technical as regards the posts that such a person would hold.²⁰ But for us,

¹⁶As a navigational guide for sailors: Isid. *De natura rerum* 26.5; Hyg. *Astron.* 2.2; Macrobi. *Sat.* 5.11.13. More poetic usages: Homer *Od.* 5.270 ff.; Ovid *Ars am.* 2.51 ff.; *Met.* 8.206–207; *Aetna* 242 ff.; Claud. *De bello Gild.* 501. Note also F. Bömer, *P. Ovidius Naso. Die Fasten* (Heidelberg 1958) ad *Fasti* 2.107 and *P. Ovidius Naso. Metamorphosen* (Heidelberg 1977) ad *Met.* 8.207. It should be noted, however, that Bootes might have sinister connotations (especially for sailors) since its heliacal rising signals the beginning of the stormy winter season.

¹⁷See G. P. Goold's introduction to the Loeb text, xciii–xcvii.

¹⁸Manilius uses the names interchangeably, as did others in antiquity. Nowadays, the distinction between constellation (Bootes) and chief star (Arcturus) is normal.

¹⁹"Him the archer follows, whose fifth degree shows bright Arcturus to those upon the sea. To folk born in this hour Fortune herself makes bold to entrust her treasures, so that the wealth of monarchs and temple finances will be in their keeping: they will be kings under kings, and ministers of state, and be charged with the guardianship of the people; or, as the stewards of grand houses, they will confine their business to the care of another's home" (translation of G. P. Goold, Loeb ed.). I am not sure that Goold has interpreted *et sancta aeraria seruent* (1. 360) properly. For my suggestions, see note 20 below. Note also that Firm. Mat. *Math.* 8.14.1 ff. copies this passage.

²⁰Note, however, the phrase *sancta aeraria*, which Goold translates as "temple finances." Though the plural is odd, technically speaking the *sanctum aerarium* was the war treasury fed by the 5% tax on manumissions. See *OLD* sv *aerarium* 2.b and W. Kubitschek, "Aerarium," *RE* 1 (1894) 671–672. Indeed, the *OLD* editors (sv *sanctus* 1.c) assume that Manilius here refers to the war treasury. Still, it is difficult to say just how precise Manilius intends to be.

the more important question regards how someone reading this passage early in the third century A.D. might have interpreted it.²¹ I incline to think that such a person would have taken the passage to mean that anyone born under Bootes rising might become a procurator, and possibly one of three sorts: a) financial or involved with the treasury (*regalis ut opes et sancta aeraria seruent*); b) of a province (*tutelamque gerant populi*); c) within the imperial household (*regnantes sub regne* etc.). Clearly Bootes, as here described by Manilius, might have been highly relevant to our pair of imperial procurators, and particularly if one of them happened to have been born under Bootes rising.

II. OFFICE AND STATUS

Reynolds argued that Carpus and Achilles minor were freedmen. Her case was based on nomenclature and the fact that the latter was a *memoria*.²² However, neither nomenclature nor office will support this argument.

First nomenclature. Indeed, the cognomina Carpus and Achilles appear usually to belong to *liberti*; however, Achilles, at least, is an attested equestrian name.²³ Furthermore, the use of cognomina to establish status (even at birth) is a dangerous business.²⁴ Finally, even if at some point the people involved here were *liberti*, I see nothing in the inscription (save possibly the fact that Achilles minor was a *memoria*) to preclude the possibility of a rise to equestrian status.²⁵

Reynolds also assumed that the *a memoria* was a post limited to freedmen until the time of Diocletian, in support of which she cited Fluss' *RE* article

²¹We should not doubt that Carpus may have read and been influenced by Manilius. Epitaphs often quote or make reference to poetry—see (e.g.) the index of passages in F. Buecheler, *Carmina Latina Epigraphica* (Leipzig 1897) 913–920. Indeed, Manil. *Astron.* 4.16 is quoted directly by *CIL* 2.4426, an epitaph of a young boy from Tarraco.

²²Reynolds 66, n. 2 and n. 5. The *AE* editors accept both Carpus and Achilles minor as freedmen without discussion.

²³See H. Solin, *Die griechischen Personennamen in Rom* (Berlin and New York 1982) 465. There are, at least in Rome, no known equestrians with the cognomen Carpus. See Solin, *Personennamen* 1111–1113. But see also P. R. C. Weaver, *Familia Caesaris* (Cambridge 1972) 89–90, on the fact that freedman and equestrian names grew increasingly similar during the second century A.D.

²⁴Most recently (to my knowledge), P. R. C. Weaver, "Misplaced Officials," *Antichthon* 13 (1979) 70–102, at 80–83. Also: Weaver, "Cognomina Ingenua: A note," *CQ* ns 14 (1964) 311–315 and *Familia Caesaris* (above, n. 23) 87–90; H. Chantraine, *Freigelassene und Sklaven im Dienst der römischen Kaiser: Studien zu ihrer Nomenklatur* (Wiesbaden 1967) 128–139.

²⁵See (e.g.) Boulvert, *Domestique* (above, n. 4) 250–256. Also F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (Ithaca, N.Y. 1977) 81. This was often done without a change of name. For some first-century examples of name changes upon entering the equestrian class, Weaver, *CQ* n.s. 14 (1964) 311–315, at 311–312.

on the *a memoria*.²⁶ This will not do in the first place because Fluss did not take a firm stand on the matter. Instead, he referred to an earlier article by Seeck, where it was argued that the *a memoria* became part of the equestrian cursus during the reign of Caracalla.²⁷ Pflaum also seems to prefer to date the change to the reign of Caracalla.²⁸ If the date suggested above for our stone is correct, then Achilles minor's post may indicate that he was an equestrian and not a freedman.²⁹

Finally, Reynolds argued that Carpus was not *procurator monetae*, a stance she was forced to take for two reasons.³⁰ First, she believed Carpus to have been a freedman because he was the father of a freedman. This status should have made him ineligible to hold an equestrian post like the procuratorship of the mint. But we have just seen that Achilles minor was just as probably an equestrian. Reynolds' second point was that *aurum* (used in 1.8) appeared to be some sort of technical term limiting somehow Carpus' position at the mint.

Taken by itself, the phrase *procuravi monetae* would be clear. It would mean, "I was procurator of the mint." The addition of *auro sanctaeque*, however, confuses the matter. *Aurum*, in particular, is perplexing because it appears to limit nonsensically Carpus' duties at the mint. What then does Carpus mean when he says that he was "procurator of the gold and the holy mint?" If we accept the notion of a numismatic dyarchy, and thus assume that the *procurator monetae* was in charge just of the imperial mint (as opposed to the senatorial mint administered by the *tresviri monetales*), then the use of *aurum* makes sense.³¹ The expression *auro sanctaeque monetae* can be taken as hendiadys.³² On this interpretation, the poetic expression

²⁶Reynolds 66, n. 5. Fluss, "*a memoria*," *RE* 15.1 (1931) 655–657.

²⁷O. Seeck, "*Scrinium*," *RE* 2A (1923) 896–898.

²⁸H.-G. Pflaum, *Les procurateurs équestres sous le Haut-Empire romain* (Paris 1950) 99 and 104; idem, "*Procurator*," *RE* 23.1 (1957) 1260; idem, *Carrières* (above, n. 10) 941. On the other hand, at *Carrières* 1024 Pflaum lists M. Aurelius Julianus as holding the post "*vers la fin du IIe s.*," and preceding Marcius Festus, whom he dates as *a memoria* to A.D. 215 (but note the arguments above as to the date of Festus' death). Note also Boulvert, *Esclaves et affranchis* (above, n. 10) 284–285, 316 and 331, who considers it possible to have been a freedman assistant to the equestrian *a memoria* from the time of the Severans.

²⁹As can be noticed from the brief discussion offered here (above, nn. 10 and 28), the evidence concerning the status appertaining to the post of *a memoria* is not altogether clear. I hope to return to this problem elsewhere.

³⁰Reynolds 66, n. 3. The *AE* editors simply labeled Carpus *procurator monetae*, but with no reference to Reynolds' arguments.

³¹The notion of the dyarchy in connection with minting operations is still a disputed question. For a recent defense of the dyarchy, A. M. Burnett, "The Authority to Coin in the Late Republic and the Early Empire," *NC* 7 17 (1977) 37–63. But see also the cautious comments of R. J. A. Talbert, *The Senate of Imperial Rome* (Princeton 1984) 379–383.

³²I take the hendiadys to be the conjunction of the nouns *aurum* and *moneta*. It is made somewhat awkward by the intrusion of the adjective *sanctus*. Still, nouns forming a hendiadys

indicates simply that Carpus was *procurator monetae* at the imperial mint. And if Carpus held this post, we should expect that he was an equestrian.³³

We are, then, in the presence of two equestrian procurators, both of whom served Caracalla. Marcus Carpus must have been *procurator monetae* early in the reign, roughly during the years 211/213. His son Achilles was possibly appointed *a memoria* in the fall of 214, and must have served in this post until approximately the end of Caracalla's reign.

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need not always be joined directly by a conjunction, and one or more of the nouns can be modified adjectivally. For example, Vergil *Aen.* 8.334—*fortuna omnipotens et ineluctabile fatum*. See generally the discussion of Andrew J. Bell, *The Latin Dual and Poetic Diction* (London 1923) 257–263.

³³All other known *procuratores monetae* seem to have been equestrians. See M. Peachin, "The *Procurator Monetae*," *NC* 6 (1986) for a complete list.