

Article

A Tale of Two Years: Once Again on the Greek Text of the Kallimachos Stela (Turin Cat. 1764)

Alessandro Rossini

Abstract

In 39 BC, at the end of a famine, the priests of Amun-Ra in Thebes proclaimed the στρατηγός Kallimachos "savior", honoring him as a father, bright star, and good δαίμων. They credited him with having fought the calamities of the region, having benefitted from special epiphanies of Amun-Ra. The synod reformulated the classic response to royal euergetism by including in it motifs such as Maat and the defeat of Seth. This paper aims to reconsider, clarify, and modify some interpretations that emerged in the most recent studies of the Greek part of the stela. In particular, based on a new and alternative reading, I question the existence of a mention of Kallimachos' grandfather. Furthermore, by examining the rhetoric and "poetics of history" of this literarily accomplished and crucial text, I go beyond the classic debate – long since resolved – over whether Kallimachos was a good official or a would-be king.

المخلص

في عام 39 ق.م، و بعد نهاية فترة المجاعة، أعلن كهنة آمون-رع في طيبة عن تكريم كاليماخوس بلقب "المنقذ" στρατηγός، واصفين إياه بالأب والنجم الساطع والروح الخيرة δαίμων. أُعربوا عن امتنانهم له لمحاربتهم له للأفات في المنطقة بفضل الظهور الخاص للإله آمون-رع. من خلال الاحتفاء به، أعاد السينودس (المجمع الديني) صياغة النمط المعتاد للتعامل مع العطاء الملكي (هي ممارسات قديمة كان الأفراد ذوو المكانة العالية والأثرياء في المجتمع يوزعون جزءاً من ثروتهم على المجتمع) وذلك باستخدام مواضيع مثل ماعت وهزيمة الإله ست. يهدف هذا البحث إلى إعادة النظر في بعض التفسيرات التي ظهرت في الدراسات الحديثة للجزء اليوناني من اللوحة وتوضيحها وتعديلها. على وجه الخصوص، واستناداً إلى قراءة جديدة وبديلة، أُشكك في وجود ذكر لجد كاليماخوس. علاوة على ذلك، من خلال دراسة البلاغة والخطاب التاريخي لهذا النص الأدبي المتقن، توصلت إلى تفسير ثالث يتجاوز النقاش التقليدي - الذي تم حسمه منذ فترة طويلة - حول ما إذا كان كاليماخوس مسؤولاً صالحاً أم طامحاً للسلطة الملكية.

¹"The style is rhetorical and inflated"

1. Far from Alexandria? Beyond "peripherality"

Unlike Amun-Ra, the muse of history has not been kind to the στρατηγός of the Peritheban nome Kallimachos, son of Kallimachos.² After having received semidivine honors in Thebes in March 39 BC, this high official of the Ptolemaic kingdom – the last surviving major monarchy of the post-Alexandrine

world, then nearing its end – suddenly disappears from our sources. He will likely remain in the shadows from this point onward, unless new findings change the picture. Yet, the Theban archaeological area is – no less than that of Memphis – among the most investigated in Egypt.³

His pedigree should have granted Kallimachos a different fate. In addition to being the man in charge of the district around Thebes (Περιθήβας) at the beginning of a momentous decade – the 30s BC – he be-

longed to an influential Upper-Egyptian family of the Greek military elite during the reigns of Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos (80–51 BC) and his daughter Cleopatra VII Philopator (51–30).⁴ In Donadoni's words, he was the representative of a dynasty that exercised full viceroyal authority (“una autorità totale da viceré”) over the distant southern province.⁵ Huß, in his turn, states that the members of this family “ruled” in distant Upper Egypt like veritable kings (“wie veritable Könige”).⁶ This vision of things presupposes a center, i.e., Alexandria, as the seat of Ptolemaic power. It follows that the distance of the χώρα⁷ from Alexandria is nothing more than its peripherality – understood as a place where central authority control is rarefied or represented alternatively. The following analysis will help nuance this concept.

The above statements are connected to a thorny issue in the document's exegesis, viz., the representation of power and the source of authority. On the other hand, even more than the much-scrutinized extent of Kallimachos' authority,⁸ it is interesting to consider whether and to what extent the Alexandrian monarchy appears as an interlocutor of the protagonist of the inscription. Nobody has recently revived the old idea that Kallimachos wanted to become king instead of Cleopatra VII. At the end of this study, I reaffirm that the stela reveals no traces of illicit ambitions. Yet I do so in the sense that the “poetics of history” substantiating the text do not suggest this on the rhetorical level – which is my focus here.

In my opinion, this text's intellectual attitude fits the semantic spectrum of White's concept of emplotment.⁹ White's theory on structural content and compositional nature in historical texts is applicable here with a broader scope. The premises of his seminal reflections on the poetics of history have now made the rhetorical, aesthetic, and moral dimensions of historiographical works familiar in their implicit and “pre-critical” elements. White maintained that histories “contain a deep structural content which is generally poetic, and specifically linguistic, [...] which serves as the precritically accepted paradigm of what historical explanation should be”.¹⁰ Therefore, the literary form allows authors to formalize their culture, mentality, interests, and ideals. White considers the writing of history to be “poetic” in the sense that “the historian performs an essen-

tially poetic act, in which he prefigures the historical field and constitutes it as a domain upon which to bring to bear the specific theories he will use to explain ‘what was really happening’ in it. This act of prefiguration [... is] characterizable by the linguistic modes in which [it is] cast”.¹¹

Other powerful male members of this Kallimachos' family – the ἐπιστράτηγος Kallimachos, the στρατηγός Apollodoros, the συγγενεῖς Kronios and Ision – are attested by a fair amount of documents.¹² On the contrary, the rather unique and flamboyant honorary decree Turin Cat. 1764 (Fig. 1), engraved in a demotic Egyptian – still undeciphered¹³ – and a Greek version, is Kallimachos' only known attestation. In addition to being unique both in Kallimachos' dynastic history and in the well-known scarcity of Greek epigraphy in Thebes,¹⁴ this decree is notoriously as damaged and difficult to read as it is content-layered and structurally complex.

As a further indication of its stratified nature, Kallimachos' honorary decree was engraved on a



Fig. 1: Stela of Kallimachos (Turin Cat. 1764). Photo by Nicola Dell'Aquila/Museo Egizio.

much earlier royal stela. The late-Hellenistic reuse of the centuries-old monument only spared part of the original, conventional lunette. It depicted Amun-Ra (left) and Montu (right) being adored by now replaced figures under the winged sun-disc, and among hieroglyphic inscriptions (Fig. 2).¹⁵ The elegant Theban gods, the sun, and the central column of hieroglyphs were left untouched. The original pharaoh, instead – assuming one was actually depicted: which is likely,

but not a given – was replaced with an unnamed and stylistically much less refined royal couple. Of course, the king is now Ptolemy XV Caesar, and the queen his mother, Cleopatra VII. The crude cartouches above their figures are blank (Figs. 3–4).¹⁶ However, the prescript of the Greek decree, with the ordinary dating formula (ll. 1–2), makes up well for the lack of the hieroglyphic royal names. Therefore, the assumption – which I will not discuss in-depth in these notes on



Fig. 2: Stela of Kallimachos (Turin Cat. 1764), detail. Photo by Nicola Dell'Aquila/Museo Egizio.



Fig. 3: Stela of Kallimachos (Turin Cat. 1764), detail. Photo by Nicola Dell'Aquila/Museo Egizio.



Fig. 4: Stela of Kallimachos (Turin Cat. 1764), detail. Photo by Nicola Dell'Aquila/Museo Egizio.

the Greek part of the decree – that this anodyne vacuum is deliberate and subtends to a hostile attitude towards the Lagids is far from proven,¹⁷ and actually made weaker by an analysis of the Greek text.

The last original edition and major commentary of this extensive text before the ones I published in 2022 are those in Hutmacher's 1965 study *Das Ehrendekret für den Strategen Kallimachos* (which occasionally merges completeness with pleonasm). Despite the challenging state of the inscription – or partly because of it – only sparse textual proposals have followed thereafter. Meanwhile, an important debate has arisen about the nature of the decree. It will be discussed infra.

I recently¹⁸ established the following text after observing this large, densely inscribed, and heavily damaged granite slab¹⁹ directly and through digital imaging. This edition brings together reassessed past conjectures and new proposals:

[Βασιλευόντων Κλεοπ]άτρας, θε[ᾶς
Φι]λοπάτορο[ς, καί] Πτολεμαίου τοῦ καὶ Κα[ί]σαρος,
θεοῦ Φιλοπάτορος Φιλο[²μήτορος, ἔτους ιγ',
Ἄρ]τεμισίου ἠ' Φαμενώθ ἠ', ἔδοξε τοῖς ἀπὸ
Διοσπόλεως τῆς [μεγ]άλῃς ἱερεῦσι τοῦ |³ [μεγίστου
θεοῦ Ἀμο]νρασωνθῆρ, καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέρο[ις] καὶ
τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσι· ἐπειδὴ Καλλίμαχος ὁ συγγενῆς
|⁴ [καὶ στρατηγὸς καὶ ἐπ]ὶ τῶν προσόδων τοῦ
Περιθήβας καὶ γυμνασίαρχος καὶ ἱππάρχης καὶ
πρότερον παρα[⁵λαβὼν ὑπ' ἐπισφαλῶ]ν καὶ
ποικίλων περιστάσεων κατεφθαρμένην τὴν πόλιν
ἔθαλ[ψ]ε κηδεμονικῶς ἀνεπιβάρητο[ν
|⁶ διατηρήσας αὐτὴν ἐν] τῇ πάσῃ εἰρήνῃ, τὰ τε
τῶν μεγίστων [κ]αὶ πατρῶιων θεῶν ἱερά εὐσεβῶς
ἐξυπρέτησε καὶ το[ῦ]ς βίους |⁷ [τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς
ἔσωσε] καὶ καθόλου πάντας, [δαπα]νησάμενος
ἀνὰ δαπάν[α]ς τοὺς ἄ[πα]ντας ἐποίησε ἐξαῦτις
δρᾶ[ν] τε |⁸ καὶ εἰς ἀρχαίαν εὐδαιμονίαν πάντα
ἤγαγεν, ἀλήθειαν μὲν καὶ δικαιοσύνην ἰσ[χυ]ρ[ᾶς
ποι]ήσ[α]ς καὶ δὴ καὶ χρ[η]στότητα |⁹ [παρασῶν,
φιλανθρω]πίαι δὲ καὶ τοῖς κατ' εὐεργεσίαν
ὑπε[ρ]βαλοῦ[σ]ιν [ἀ]εὶ παραγενόμενος· ἔ]τι δὲ καὶ
ν[ῦ]ν [τῇ] χώρῃ |¹⁰ ἐπιγιγνομένης τῆς σ[κ]ληρᾶς
σιτοδείας ἐκ τῆς γ[ε]νομένης ἀνιστορήτου [π]ενίας
καὶ σχεδὸν τὴν πόλιν τρ[ι]βούσ[η]ς |¹¹ [ἀνάγκης
ἐπι]δ[ι]οῦς μεγαλοψύχως ἑαυτὸν αὐτόκλητ[ος] ἐπὶ τῇ
ἐκάστου τῶν ἐντοπίων σωτηρίᾳ ἐσέφερε,

πονήσας |¹² [ὡ]σπερ πατὴρ ὑπέ]ρ οἰκ[ε]ν[ο]ίας πατρίδος
καὶ τέκνων γνησίων σὺν τῇ τῶν θεῶν εὐμενεῖαι
ἀνευλιπεῖς μὲν διηνε[κ]ῶς |¹³ [κατὰ τὸν χρόνον
τοῦ]τον πάντ[α]ς πάντων ἐ[τ]ήρησεν,
ἀνεπαισθήτους δὲ τῆς περιστάσεως ἐξ ἧς παρέσχεν
εὐθηνίης |¹⁴ [διεφύλαξε]· συ[σ]χούσης δὲ τὴν οὔσαν
σιτοδείαν καὶ ἐν τῷ ἐνεστῶτι ἔτει σκληροτέρας
καὶ ἀτμήτου σιτο[δ]είας |¹⁵ [παραμεν]ούσης μιᾷ
μιᾶς ἀβ[ρ]οχίας καὶ πολὺ μᾶλλον ὡς οὐδεπώποτε
τοῦ δεινοῦ καθ' ὄλην ἐπιταθέντος |¹⁶ [τὴν χώραν,]
παντελῶς δὲ τῆς πόλεως κρινομένης καὶ οὐθενὸς
οὐδεμίαν ἰδίαν ἐ[τ]ί[ι] πρὸς τὸ ζῆν διατετραφό[τος]
τὴν |¹⁷ ἐλπίδα, πάντων δὲ διὰ τὴν ἀπορίαν
λελιποψυ[χ]ηκότων καὶ συνεγγύς ἐκάστου
παραιτουμένου π[ά]ντα δὲ |¹⁸ [οὐδὲν λα]μβάνοντος.
• ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸν καὶ τότε συ[κ]παρασάντα
αὐτῷ μέγιστον θεὸν |¹⁹ [Ἀμο]νρασωνθῆρ καὶ
εὐγενῶς μόνος ὑποστάς τὸ βάρος πάλιν ὡσπερ
λαμπρὸς ἀστήρ καὶ δαίμων ἀγαθὸς |²⁰ [τοῖς
ἄ]πασιν ἐπέλαμψε· τὸν γὰρ ἑαυτοῦ βίον ὀλοσχερῶς
ἀνέθετο τοῖς χρῆσθαι βουλομένοις, ἐναργέστα[τα]
δ[ε] |²¹ καὶ νῦν ἐβοήθησεν] τοῖς κατοικοῦσι τὸν
Περιθήβας καὶ διαθρέψας καὶ σώσας πάντας σὺν
γυνα[κ]ῶσι καὶ τέκνοις καθ' ἅπ[ερ] ἐ[κ] |²² ζάλῃς
καὶ ἀντιπάλων χειμώνων εἰς εὐδινούς λιμένας
ἤγαγεν· τὸ δὲ πάντων πρῶτον καὶ μέγιστον τῆς
|²³ [εὐσεβείας, ἔ]χω]ν ἐπιμελείας τῶν εἰς τὸ θεῖον
ἀναπεμπομένων πάντων ὡς ἐν[ι] κράτιστ[α] εὐσεβῶς
καὶ ἀγρύπ[νω]ς |²⁴ [ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶν ἐφ]ρόντισεν,
ὥστε ἀφ' ὄ[τ]ου ὁ πατὴρ²⁰ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ
Καλλιμάχου τοῦ συγγενοῦς καὶ ἐπιστρατήγου
|²⁵ [ἀ]νενώσατο (οἱ: ἀνεκτίσατο) αὐτὰς πο[ι]ηθῆναι
τ[ᾶ]ς τῶν κυρίων θεῶν κωμασίας καὶ πανηγύρεις εὐ
μάλα ὀσίως καὶ καλῶς ὡσπε[ρ] ἐπὶ τῶν
|²⁶ [ἀ]ρχαίων χρόνων· Ἀ]γαθῆι Τύχηι·
προσαγορεύεσθαι μὲν αὐτὸν σωτήρη τ[ῆ]ς πόλεως,
ἢ ἐστὶν ἀρχεῖον ὃ σ[τ]ῆ[σ]ον [ἐ]σώθη,
|²⁷ ἀναθεῖναι δ' ὡσπερ τοῖς προ[ε]στῶσι κατὰ τῆ[ν]
γενέσι[ον] ἡμέρα[ν] ἐν ἐπισήμοις τόποις τοῦ ἱεροῦ
τοῦ μεγίστου θε[οῦ] Ἀμο]νρασωνθῆρ |²⁸ τρεῖς
εἰκόνας αὐτοῦ, μίαν] μὲν τοὺς ἱερεῖς ἐκ σκληροῦ
λίθου, δύο δὲ τῆμ πόλιν, ἣν μὲν χαλκῆν, ἣν δὲ
[ὀ]μο[ί]ως σ[κ]ληρόλιθον, |²⁹ [ἄ]γειν δὲ κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν
ἐπὶ πᾶσι τὴν αὐτὴν ἡμέραν [κα]ὶ θύειν τοῖς κυρίοις
[θ]εοῖς κ[αὶ] σ[τ]εφανηφ[ο]ρεῖν καὶ εὐωχεῖ[σ]θαι
|³⁰ [καθ]άπερ νόμιμόν ἐστιν· τὸ δὲ ψήφισμα
ἀναγράψαι εἰς στήλην ἁλιθίνην τοῖς τε Ἑλληνικοῖς

καὶ ἐγ[χ]ωρίοις γράμμασι, | ³¹ [καὶ ἀναθεῖναι αὐτὴν ἐπὶ] τῆς κρηπίδος τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἱεροῦ, ὡς καὶ δημοσίαι τέτευχεν αὐτὸς τῆς παρ[ἄ] τοῦ μεγίστου θεοῦ | ³² [Ἀμονρασωνθῆρ εὐμενείας, ὅ]πως εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα αἰεὶ μνηστοὶ [α]ὐτῶι [ᾧ]σ[ι]ν αἰ εὐεργεσίαι.

My translation:

[In the reign of Cleop]atra, goddess Philopator, and Ptolemy Caesar, god Philopator Philo²[metor, year 13, Art]emisios 18, Phamenoth 18, the priests of the |³ [great god] Amonrasonther who are in Diospolis the Great, the elders and all the others, have decided as follows. The kinsman of the king, |⁴ [*stratēgos*], revenue officer for the Perithebes, gymnasiarch, and hipparch Kallimachos, who had previously |⁵ [taken] over the city when it was collapsing [due to] manifold [disastrous] circumstances, tended to it thoughtfully |⁶ [by keeping it] exempted from taxes in complete peace. He took great, pious care of the holy places of the great ancestral gods. He |⁷ [saved] the lives [of those in them] and, in general, everyone. One expense after another, he made everyone sacrifice again. He brought everything back |⁸ [to the ancient] happiness by strengthening truth and justice, |⁹ [displaying] his goodness of heart [without ever failing in the sense of humanity] and in deeds overflowing with solicitude. |¹⁰ [Moreover, when the] severe famine – caused by a crop failure like none hitherto recorded – [occurred in the country], and |¹¹ [poverty] brought the city almost to consumption, he [gave himself] with magnanimity, being spontaneously inclined towards the salvation of each of the local inhabitants and having labored |¹² [as a father on behalf of] the house that is the fatherland, and of the legitimate children, with the favor of the gods. He made sure that everyone was always satiated |¹³ [at that time] and [kept] them unaware of the situation in which he was ensuring their prosperity. |¹⁴ In the present year, however, a harder, unbroken famine joined the ongoing one. |¹⁵ The flood failures [followed] one another, an even worse fear loomed large over the whole |¹⁶ [country] – as never before – and the city was in a very critical condition: no one [any longer] had the intimate |¹⁷ [hope] to survive, everyone was languishing from poverty, every single person was soon lacking everything, and no one had

|¹⁸ [anything to live] on. He called upon the great god |¹⁹ [Amonrasonther], who was by his side even then, and, having nobly shouldered – he alone – the burden again, he shone |²⁰ [upon everyone] as a bright star, as a good *daimōn*. He devoted his entire life [*or: wealth*] to those in need, |²¹ [he assisted again] the inhabitants of the Perithebes and nourished and saved them all, together with the women and the children, and brought them into a safe harbor, just as |²² [from a gale and from] contending winds. But the chief and most remarkable of his |²³ [pious] deeds consisted in [taking] care of everything that pertains to the divine sphere, attending |²⁴ [to the rites] in the best and most pious way, sleepless in his piety: just as when the father²¹ of his father Kallimachos, the kinsman of the king and *epistratēgos*, |²⁵ [restored the same] processions of the lord gods and the festivals in an exceedingly religious and happy way – just as in the |²⁶ [ancient times]. To good fortune. He shall be proclaimed savior of the city, which is the seat of the god and has been [saved] to endure. |²⁷ [Three statues of him shall be set up – as is done for those who are] over us – on his birthday, in the most significant points of the Temple of the great [god] Amonrasonther: |²⁸ [one] of hard stone by the priests, and two – one of bronze and the other likewise of hard stone – by the city. |²⁹ [Every year they shall celebrate] this same day as his eponymous day; they shall perform sacrifices to the lord gods, wear wreaths, and hold feasts |³⁰ [as is customary]. This decree shall be inscribed on a stone stela in both Greek and epichoric letters, |³¹ [and shall be set up in] the forecourt of the same Temple, since he himself – Kallimachos – has publicly experienced [the favor] of the great god |³² [Amonrasonther], so that for all time his benefactions shall exist in everlasting memory for him.²²

2. A narrative of disruption and salvation

Kallimachos' honorary decree was issued by a priestly synod (ll. 2–3) convened at the Great Temple of Amun-Ra in year 13 of Cleopatra VII and Ptolemy XV Caesar, Artemisios 18, Phamenoth 18, i.e., in March 39 BC.²³ The synod intended to exalt the στρατηγός as a savior (σωτήρ) (l. 26), a bright star, and a good δαίμων (l. 19), among other honors.

The inscription attests to a liminal age – i.e., the

eve of the Ptolemaic collapse – that has always attracted considerable interest – even before the abbot Peyron’s 1830 *editio princeps*.²⁴ One reason for this interest is that the stela preserves lively memories of the reign of the most famous queen of the ancient world – a true Western “obsession”.²⁵ In my opinion, this has influenced the modern interpretation of the text, focused as this interpretation is on the dialectic between Kallimachos and his queen.

In 1968, Woodhead labeled the inscription as “thirty-two lines of extravagant gratitude toward, and of the bestowal of unwonted honors on, the governor of Egyptian Thebes under Cleopatra VII”.²⁶ Nonetheless, it has revealed to be well more than that, rich as it is in the so-called poetics of history. As Heinen argues, despite its formal and content-wise Greek components, the Kallimachos Decree is also a profoundly Egyptian text.²⁷ In it, plain Maatian (l. 8) and Sethian (l. 22) allusions²⁸ coexist with other Greek *topoi*, titles, and elements within a Greek linguistic structure.

Woodhead’s dry caption catches the central puzzle of a decree issued during Thebes’ new Greek life²⁹ as Diospolis (“city of Zeus”) the Great³⁰ – the city of Amun’s *interpretatio Aegyptiaca* as Zeus (l. 2)³¹ – and in such tumultuous times. Its uplifting narrative is one of mortal danger, disruption, and salvation, but also chaos defeated and order reestablished. Danger and disruption were, of course, those undermining Thebes and the whole area Kallimachos was in charge of. As the inscription testifies in ll. 9–10 and 14–5, with Bernard’s restorations and mine, in 42 BC a “severe famine – caused by a crop failure like none hitherto recorded – [occurred in the country]” ([ἐ]τι δὲ καὶ ὑ[ῦ]ν [τῆ]ι χώρῃ | ἐπιγιγνομένης τῆς σ[κ]ληρᾶς σιτοδείας ἐκ τῆς γ[ε]νομένης ἀνιστορήτου [π]ενίας)³² and again, in the following year, “a harder, unbroken famine [...] joined the ongoing one” (συσ[σ]χούσης δὲ τὴν οὔσαν σιτοδείαν καὶ ἐν τῷ ἐνεστῶτι ἔτει σκληροτέρας καὶ ἀτμήτου σιτο[δε]ί[ας] owing to the fact that “the flood failures [followed] one another” ([παραμ]ούσης μᾶι μᾶς ἀβ[ρ]οχίας]) (l. 15).

The priests credited Kallimachos with having fought these calamities through the favor of the great god Amonrasonther (ὁ μέγιστος θεὸς Ἀμονρασωνθήρ) – i.e., Amun-Ra, “king of the gods” (*Imn-R^c nswt ntr.w*), as Peyron himself easily recognized.³³ Kallimachos experienced (τέτευχεν) the god’s special fa-

vor (εὐμενείας) publicly (δημοσίαι) (ll. 30–31). Heinen interpreted this allusion, which is central to the story, as a reference to Amonrasonther’s apparitions or oracles after the στρατηγός had invoked him for the salvation of Thebes and the Peritheban nome from the famine.³⁴ The appealing phrase ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸν καὶ τότε συ(μ)παραστάντα αὐτῷ μέγιστον θεόν, “he called upon the great god [Amonrasonth]er, who was by his side even then”, in l. 18, is the ideal hub of the “emplotment” – to cite a key concept by H. White discussed above.

The stela does not specify how Kallimachos’ invocation – ἐπικλησις – took place. However, it is evident that the result of Kallimachos’ zeal was much more than intimate, interior, extra-sensory locution.³⁵ Heinen drew this shareable conclusion from Coulon’s 2001 edition of a hieroglyphic text inscribed on the back pillar of a fragmentary striding statue of the στρατηγός Plato (*Pltn*), son of Plato, found in the Karnak Cachette (CK 608).³⁶ This autobiographical inscription, dated 6 October 98 BC – during the reign of Ptolemy X Alexander I – is more explicit than the 39 BC decree. One reads that Amun-Ra turned his face to Plato and showed himself, to quote Coulon’s translation, “dans sa (pleine) manifestation”, talked to him, and even “envahi[t] [ses] membres”). Here is Coulon’s full translation of the passage:

Il déclare en adorant son maître Amon-Rê, roi des dieux. « Je suis (un homme) au cœur généreux ; je suis apparu dans ta demeure pour écrire ton nom ; une louange, à la mesure de la terreur que je ressens ! J’ai protégé ta ville contre (...) [Tu as tourné] ton visage vers moi en apportant toutes les félicités à quatre reprises. Tu as placé ton image vivante, Amon d’Opé de Djémé, le dieu grand vivant à la tête des dieux, devant toi. Tu l’as rejoint sur son trône voilé (?). Il est alors apparu dans sa (pleine) manifestation (?) (...). Il a tourné son visage vers moi. Il a fait que je sois saisi d’allégresse, sa puissance ayant envahi mes membres. Il m’a révélé les directives (à suivre). Je <les> ai interprétées en sa présence comme des bienfaits que tu as faits pour moi. »³⁷

Similar ancient testimonies about the “sensed presence” or “l’impression de présence” – i.e., epiphany or theophany – have also been interpreted in a

psychological key, especially in the case of historiographical narratives about threatening conditions or extreme existential distress.³⁸ This is certainly not the only key to understanding testimonies of this kind, nor the most common. As for the motif of epiphany, Kallimachos, too, “shone [upon everyone]” ([τοῖς ἅπασιν] ἐπέλαμψε) (l. 20) – as a benevolent being. Indeed, Kallimachos shone upon everyone “as a bright star, as a good *daimōn*” (ὥσπερ λαμπρὸς ἀστήρ καὶ δαίμων ἀγαθός) (l. 19).

3. The Kallimachos problem

At least two interconnected perspectives are hence open: the place of the inscription among the epichoric autobiographical texts of accomplished officials, thoroughly assessed by Caneva and Pfeiffer,³⁹ and its “literary” – rhetoric, aesthetic, and moral – scope, as highlighted in my commentary.⁴⁰ I agree with Hutmacher, Blasius, and Pfeiffer⁴¹ regarding the crucial importance of an anecdote related by Seneca in his *Natural Questions*.⁴² Ultimately, it is ascribable to a mythopoietic tradition:⁴³

*Biennio continuo regnante Cleopatra non ascendisse, decimo regni anno et undecimo, constat. Significatam aiunt duobus rerum potentibus defectionem: Antonii enim Cleopatraeque defecit imperium.*⁴⁴

*It is well known that, when Cleopatra was queen, it [scil. the Nile] did not rise for two years in a row, in the tenth and eleventh years of her reign [scil. 42 and 41 BC]. They say that this was a sign of the end for two rulers: for Antony and Cleopatra's power did come to an end.*⁴⁵

Hence, also on the strength of additional arguments that I will not discuss here, the dating of the decree (summer 42 BC: the first flood failure; spring-summer 41: the first crop failure and the second flood failure; spring-summer 40: the second crop failure and the first adequate flood in two years; March 39: the synod, in an atmosphere of hope). Seneca's *continuo* agrees well with συ[σ]χοῦσης and ἀτμήτου in the decree.

Without resorting to Plutarch's attitude towards similar interactions – when he states that there is no

absurdity in the accounts showing Lycurgus, Numa, and similar leaders pretending (προσεποιήσαντο) to get directly from the gods the revelations that eventually resulted in the salvation of the same endangered people for whom they were contrived⁴⁶ – Seneca's information that the natural phenomenon he refers to was supernaturally linked to two *rerum potientes* and *imperium* ties in with the general scope of the priestly decree in a peculiar way. I am referring to one of its oldest and most discussed exegetic questions, i.e., Kallimachos' status in the text of this inscribed “altarpiece”. Here, as I already noted above, the god is active above, while the priests and Kallimachos, who are the immediate recipients of his εὐμένεια (ll. 12, 32), act as mediators. At the same time, famine is subdued as a tamed evil, and the population is defended, as a victim, from evils. The only actions of the famine and the population are, respectively, to harm and praise.⁴⁷

In the past, the debate was divided between, I would say, the “would-be king theory” and the “good-official theory”. The former is older and, therefore, more rooted than the latter. Among the proponents of the first view, some have regarded the σωτήρ Kallimachos either as a would-be usurper willing to cut off any Alexandrian connections,⁴⁸ comparable to the “great prince” (wr Ը) Ptolemy – the future Ptolemy I Soter, then, formally, a satrap – of the 311 BC so-called Satrap Stela (Cairo CG 22182),⁴⁹ or as an opportunist warlord heedless of the central power.⁵⁰ As for the virtual non-existence of the στρατηγός outside the Turin stela, Blasius insinuatingly concluded that “the rest about Kallimachos [...] himself is silence [...]. Maybe he died before he could realize his ideas”.⁵¹ According to Blasius, Kallimachos' “ideas” were none other than to seize the white crown.

The text of the stela says that the tender (l. 5) and fatherly (l. 12) benefactor “brought everything back [to the ancient] happiness by strengthening truth and justice” ([εἰς ἀρχαίαν εὐ]δαιμονίαν πάντα ἤγαγεν, ἀλήθειαν μὲν καὶ δικαιοσύνην ἰσ[χ]υ[ρ]ᾶς ποι[ή]σ[α]ς). Bernand interpreted this line as praise for not having lent an ear to lies or a hand to injustices.⁵² It is undoubtedly so, but in an even more intense sense. Strengthening, restoring, and maintaining truth and justice – as well as satisfying the

gods and annihilating chaos (*isf.t*) – was a traditional duty of the legitimate pharaoh. These duties were part of what Assmann defined as a “theo-politology of maintenance”.⁵³ Above all, it was a legitimizing duty. Countless are the representations of the kings of Egypt engaged in “offering Maat” (*mꜣꜥ mꜣꜥt*), and there can be no complete exegesis of pharaonic ideology without understanding this complex concept, which encompasses truth, justice, order, and morality. Besides shining a quasi-royal light on Kallimachos – in an impressive way, because it employs a religious-ideological apparatus having significant impact from a local perspective – this terminology is appropriate when used, as in this case, in the wake of a cataclysm equivalent to chaos. As seen, a *post eventum* mythopoetic tradition known to us from Seneca interpreted the paralysis of the Nile’s floods as a warning to the Alexandrian monarchy.⁵⁴

I want to insist on the legitimizing import of the above-quoted words. In the absence of other traces to the contrary, it is natural to believe that Kallimachos drew his legitimacy from the institutional context to which he belonged. The titles at the beginning attest to his and the synod’s fidelity to this larger context. In my opinion, Kallimachos shines in a quasi-royal light because he *reflects* the legitimacy of the context to which he belonged, which he *served* – and which, undoubtedly, served his harmless desire for recognition by rewarding him for his commitment and honoring him for his high family status.

The principal advocate of the “good-official theory” was Heinen⁵⁵ – now followed by Caneva and Pfeiffer⁵⁶ – based on autobiographical inscriptions of priests and royal officials who perpetuated their own deeds as good agents of the legitimate pharaoh. In their forthcoming study, Caneva and Pfeiffer offer several interesting parallels. Among them, that of the priest Teos from Tanis (3rd/2nd cent. BC) calling himself “Hapy for his city when the two lands were in drought” – Hapy, of course, is the Nile – and that of the influential Harwa, who, under the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, immortalized statements such as (I only quote some extracts): “I have raised up what is submerged; a high Nile am I; the barley of my land is good; my seed-corn is profitable to my city” (London, BM 55306); “I have done what men like and what the gods praise, a really honored one without fault, who

gives bread to the hungry and clothes to the naked,⁵⁷ who destroys pain and removes calamity” (Louvre, A 84); “The soul of the beneficent man is remembered because of his good deeds in his temple” (Berlin ÄM 8163); and “I went into Presence to loosen him who was bound [...]. I gave things to him who had none [...]. And my recompense is that I be remembered because of my beneficence” (Louvre, A 84).

Caneva and Pfeiffer also compare Kallimachos’ being equated with a bright star (ὥσπερ λαμπρὸς ἀστήρ) (l. 19) to pharaonic examples,⁵⁸ such as those of Sesostris I, “perfect god, star of the two lands” (Firenze 2540/2), and Ramses II, “star of heaven, whom Ra has elected for both lands” (DZA 29.088.330).⁵⁹ Similar claims were made by Middle Kingdom officials: “I am a star for my peers, a leader for those greater than myself” (Siut I, 264), as well as one appearing as a “single pillar, a guiding star” (München, Glyptothek 40, 9). This equivalence has relevant connections with the Nile flood. Notably, Sirius – the Egyptian Sopdet and Greek Sothis – was called ὕδραγωγός, “bringer of water”.⁶⁰ Discussing Kallimachos’ impressive status as a good δαίμων (δαίμων ἀγαθός) (l. 19) – again, with reference to the Nile flood⁶¹ – Caneva and Pfeiffer quote an inscription on the Gate of Euergetes in Karnak where Ptolemy III Euergetes (246–222/1 BC) is “Hapy of Egypt, Agathos Daimon (*Wadjedj*) of those who live in it” (*Urk.* VIII, 69 a). The focus is on the subsequent appropriation of such an august prerogative by royal officials – for instance, the aforementioned Teos of Tanis. It does not escape notice that the king is “Hapy of Egypt” while the Tanite priest is “Hapy for his city”. I will return to this point *infra*.⁶²

This is a nuanced issue. The “good-official theory” seems to address it much better than the “would-be king theory” and its misleading immediacy. Caneva and Pfeiffer propose many parallels among Hellenistic honors bestowed upon non-royal benefactors within and outside Egypt, which I will not go over here for brevity. The concept is clear enough.

The Turin stela explicitly echoes the tone and phrasing of the great trilingual decrees of Canopus and Memphis – the Rosetta Stone – honoring respectively Ptolemy III in 238 BC and his grandson Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204–180) in 196 BC.⁶³ The absence of a hieroglyphic version for Kallimachos

is not as important as it may seem. Donadoni had two theories in this regard, the former being rather a mere guess: it may be due to the “provincial difficulty” (“difficoltà provinciale”) of finding someone who could translate the text into hieroglyphs, as if the decree were originally conceived in Greek – not a mere trifle! – or it may be due to the too compromisingly aulic nature of the hieroglyphic script (“carattere troppo compromettentemente aulico”).⁶⁴ The latter theory implies some circumspection on the part of the authors of the text. The “would-be king theory” is forced to assume circumspection on the part of Kallimachos as a late-Hellenistic Nicolas Fouquet (*Quo non ascendet?*) and his local “accomplices” among the clergy.

The prescript begins, as said, in the most ordinary way with the date expressed by the regnal year of Cleopatra VII, “goddess Philopator”, set in the first place, and of her co-ruler Ptolemy XV “Caesar (τοῦ καὶ Κα[ί]σαρος), god Philopator and Philometor”, along with the day of the Macedonian and Egyptian double month.⁶⁵ Upholders of the “usurper” theory may regard the inclusion of the regnal year as a precaution to dissimulate Kallimachos’ actual intentions. However, the tone of the Greek text would have made such a precaution useless. Before being equated to a heavenly body and a minor god of Amun’s cortege, in l. 19, the στρατηγός is he who, on this earth, “nobly shouldered – he alone – the burden” (εὐγενῶς μόνος ὑποστάς τὸ βάρος).⁶⁶ One sees a subtle reference to the uniqueness of the high-born man. *Eὐγένεια* means nobility first of birth, then of mind.⁶⁷ One further reads, in l. 11, that Kallimachos took action to save the population “spontaneously” (αὐτόκλητ[ος]) – *motu proprio* – and without orders or instructions.⁶⁸ The simplest explanation lies in the fact that local authorities tend to take initiative in severe and exceptional circumstances. In this sense, I hesitated between translating τὸν γὰρ ἑαυτοῦ βίον ὀλοσχερῶς κτλ. (l. 30) as “his entire life” or “his entire wealth”, for both make sense in the greater context of this stela.

Is Kallimachos μόνος with respect to the queen and king? This dialectic is less than obvious. Again, is this image related to that of the λαμπρὸς ἀστήρ in l. 19? In my opinion, whether or not it has to do with the ideal presence of the sovereigns in the “emplotment”, whether or not it has an astronomical flavor,

the surprising character of this *singularity* is, at the very least, defused by the *duality* of the sovereigns in the lunette and the prescript. Of course, an even more plausible interpretation would be to construe the text as meaning that Kallimachos alone took care of the population in the sense that the government, i.e., the Crown, alone took care of the population through Kallimachos – in the sense that the στρατηγός’ strength depended on the authority he derived it from, and everything he did he did in the wake of the queen’s wise government. Approaching the issue from a wholly different perspective, Bernard argued that merely mentioning Cleopatra and Ptolemy in an inscription where the whole merit of a good deed is ascribed to someone else is tantamount to putting them on metaphorical trial.⁶⁹ Again, it is a nuanced issue, but also a communication code that is hard to crack because of its elaborate structure.

Of course, the absence of the hieroglyphic version is not as clearly explainable as it may seem. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the statement (ll. 21–22) that the star/Kallimachos brought the inhabitants of the Perithebes “into a safe harbor, just as [from a gale and from] contending winds” (καθ’ἄπ[ερ] ἔ[κ] | ζάλης καὶ ἀντιπάλων χειμῶνων εἰς εὐδινούς λιμένας) has been sophisticatedly understood as a reshaping⁷⁰ of the Ptolemaic royal title ἀντιπάλων ὑπερτέρος (“triumphant over enemies”), with a subtle reference to Seth as the god of storms and disorder. In line 2 of the Greek part of the Rosetta Stone, this title stands as a paraphrase of Ptolemy V’s Golden Horus name, i.e., the falcon standing on the golden collar (Gardiner Sign List G8) *nbw* (sign S12),⁷¹ which Hutmacher regarded as a link to Seth as Lord of Nubt – the Greek Omboi.⁷²

In ll. 4–5, Kallimachos “takes over” the city. The verb used is παραλαμβάνω, suggesting hereditary or even dynastic and royal succession.⁷³ Though a champion of the “would-be king theory”, Hutmacher made a strong point by speaking of a “transposition” (*Schwenkung*) and insisting that the people, being rooted in tradition, were not capable of expressing their reverence and gratitude to a benefactor in any other way than by praising the ruler and his divinity. Thus, even if other people than the divine ruler performed good deeds, it was ultimately only he who made these deeds possible in the first place.⁷⁴

I think this interpretation is somewhat indebted to the classic image of the Egyptians as incapable of detaching themselves from traditions and reluctant to innovate. I will refer to two important texts I studied for my doctoral dissertation. In the Preface to the *Papyri Graeci Regii Taurinensis Musei Aegyptii*, for instance, the *editor princeps* of the stela, the abbot Peyron, espoused the classic representation of the Egyptians as very obedient (“*addictissimi*”) to venerable institutions consecrated by religion and antiquity (“*religio et longa dies*”) as closely related elements. Because of this, they abhorred novelty to the utmost degree (“*a novis rebus quam qui novis abhorrebant*”). In Peyron’s eyes, these were the social and religious “*carceres*” that held the native subjects of the Ptolemies captive. In this, they were completely distinct from the Greeks, both in the public and private spheres (“*omnia definierint*”), which it was religiously forbidden to cross (“*quas transcendere nefas erat*”).⁷⁵ In his 1831 doctoral dissertation on Ptolemy VI’s Egypt, the young Droysen, in his turn, does not contradict Peyron when he icastically states that, their eyes and spirit turned to the ground, the Egyptians observed their African superstition with anguished care (“*plebs [...] Africanam istam superstitionem defixis in terram oculis mentibusque anxie observat*”).⁷⁶

According to Hutmacher, Kallimachos stepped in for the failing ruler and maliciously accepted the praise. However, it is significant that this same inference applies – even in a better way – to the “good-official theory”.

4. Beyond the would-be king and the good official

Seneca’s observation about the ominous double, or rhetorically duplicated, flood failure – an omen with a strongly dual character for the Cleopatra/Antony couple,⁷⁷ according to Seneca, or the Cleopatra/Ptolemy couple – may help provide a broader perspective, going beyond the would-be king vs. good official debate. The Egyptian and Greco-Roman traditions contain plenty of episodes where the waters pay homage to a great man or an extraordinary fate. One’s mind goes to the so-called Famine Stela on Sehel Island, issued by the priests of Elephantine, where Ptolemy V (probably), disguised as king Djoser of the Third Dynasty, stops a severe famine thanks

to the favor of Khnum, the god associated with the flood.⁷⁸ To give an example of similar wonders related to watercourses, only thirty years had passed in 39 BC since, according to a tradition handed down by Plutarch, the stream of the Euphrates suddenly diminished in a miraculous atmosphere to let the Alexander-like Lucullus cross it.⁷⁹

But, first, a decisive question comes to mind when searching for better clarification of Kallimachos’ metahistorical role. Did the savior of Thebes also save the monarchs, in a certain sense? The answer is less grand than the document itself. A step backward is required.

John Malalas tells that, in 48 BC, during the Alexandrian War, Julius Caesar “found that she [scil. Cleopatra VII] had been exiled to the Thebaid by her own brother Ptolemy [scil. XIII], who was displeased with her” (ἦντινα ἡῦρεν εἰς τὴν Θηβαΐδα διωχθεῖσαν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἰδίου αὐτῆς ἀδελφοῦ Πτολεμαίου λυπηθέντος πρὸς αὐτήν).⁸⁰ Capponi interprets this information in the light of the influence the ἐπιστράτηγος Kallimachos – our στρατηγός’ father, whom the Greek decree mentions in l. 24 (τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ Καλλιμάχου τοῦ συγγενοῦς καὶ ἐπιστρατήγου) – exerted over the region. In short, Capponi regards the ἐπιστράτηγος Kallimachos as Cleopatra VII’s principal aide during this phase and the actual “prince” of Thebes.⁸¹ In other words, he was the man who fought for Cleopatra in that crucial phase of the Alexandrian War⁸² and was responsible, prior to Caesar, for her physical salvation from the persecution by her younger brother Ptolemy XIII (51–47 BC) and his grey eminences Potheinos, Theodotos of Chios, and Achilles. As evidence of this, Capponi quotes the 46 BC royal decree granting ἀσουλία to the temple of Isis, built by the ἐπιστράτηγος Kallimachos himself south of the Upper Egyptian Ptolemis.⁸³ There, Cleopatra VII declared that the temple was erected “for our salvation” (ὑπὲρ τῆς ἡμετέρας σωτηρίας) (l. 12).⁸⁴

Ultimately, σωτηρία⁸⁵ is a crucial concept all along this analysis. I anticipate here something I will explain below: There may be no reference to the unnamed grandfather in l. 24, because ὁ πατήρ κτλ. should actually be read differently. Notwithstanding this new reading, the distant memory recorded in ll. 23–26 and its scholarly exegesis seem to form a coherent salvation scenario. In addition to meeting the material needs of the population – but he had

already been the ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸν [...] θεὸν – the στρατηγός Kallimachos also

εὐσεβῶς καὶ ἀγρύπ[νω]ς |²⁴ [ὑπὲρ τῶν
ἱερῶν ἐφ]ρόντισεν, ὥστε ἀφ’ ὄ(τ)ου⁸⁶ ὁ ἄστῆρ
(traditionally: ὁ πατήρ) τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ
Καλλιμάχου [...] |²⁵ [ἀνενώσατο (or: ἀνεκτίσατο)
(?) αὐτὰς πο]ιηθῆναι⁸⁷ τ[ἄ]ς τῶν κυρίων θεῶν
κωμασίας καὶ πανηγύρεις εὖ μάλα ὀσίως καὶ καλῶς
ὥσπε[ρ] ἐπὶ τῶν |²⁶ [ἀρχαίων χρόνων·]

that is, he

*attended [to the rites] in the best and most pious
way, sleepless in his piety: just as when his late-
lamented father (traditional reading: the father of
his father) Kallimachos [...] [restored (?) the same]
processions of the lord gods and the festivals in an
exceedingly religious and happy way – just as in the
[ancient times].*

This reference to an unspecified past time requires historical contextualization. It is commonly agreed,⁸⁸ though speculative,⁸⁹ that the causes of such a memorable restoration of religious practices are to be found in a traumatic episode that had taken place almost half a century before. We learn from a digression in Pausanias’ *Periegesis* that, early in his second reign, Ptolemy IX Soter II (116–107, 88–80 BC) took a strong (παρασθησάμενος) revenge on Thebes, which was then in one of its periodic upheavals.⁹⁰ Once “wealthier than Orchomenos and the sanctuary of Delphi” – Pausanias continues – the city was so heavily struck that the Thebans could not even retain the memory of their past happiness (μηδὲ ὑπόμνημα [...] τῆς ποτε εὐδαιμονίας). Of course, I exclude a direct link between Pausanias’ ποτε εὐδαιμονία and the religious and happy ἀρχαῖοι χρόνοι of l. 26 (also note the ἀρχαία εὐδαιμονία in l. 8). Some scholars have even interpreted the reference to the dire state in which the στρατηγός found the city, “collapsing [due to] manifold [disastrous] circumstances” ([ὑπ’ ἐπισηφῶν] καὶ ποικίλων περιστάσεων⁹¹ κατεφθαρμένην) (l. 5), as a discreet allusion – remember Bernand’s remark – to Ptolemy IX’s retaliation.⁹²

Drawing on Scott’s ideas about the “public transcript” of the dominated, opposed but coexisting

with a submerged “hidden transcript”,⁹³ I suspect that the issuers of the decree – the priests – deemed *neither* the Crown *nor* themselves responsible for any unpleasant incident of the past. This is a survival strategy within not strictly favorable balances of power which involves maintaining a margin of autonomy by distancing oneself from seditious compatriots, or adopting communication codes based on encrypted irony or similar devices. One thinks of Polybius’ ideas about responsibility for the Fourth Macedonian War, viz., that the blame for retaliation falls on those who rise up, refusing to adapt to the new balance of power. The priests may even have introjected such a vision of things without consciously adopting it as a survival strategy. But there is no reason to dwell on their *arrière-pensées*.

Along with my proposed reading τοὺς ἄ[πα]ντας ἐποίησε ἐξαῦτις δρᾶ[ν] (“he made everyone sacrifice again”) (l. 7),⁹⁴ the description of the στρατηγός’ early benefactions in ll. 6–8 is in tune with this decades-spanning scenario:

τὰ τε τῶν μεγίστων [κ]αὶ πατρῶιων θεῶν
ἱερὰ εὐσεβῶς ἐξυπηρέτησε καὶ το[ύ]ς βίους
|⁷ [τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἔσωσε] καὶ καθόλου πάντας,
[δαπα]νησάμενος ἀνὰ δαπάν[α]ς τοὺς
ἄ[πα]ντας ἐποίησε ἐξαῦτις δρᾶ[ν] τε |⁸ καὶ εἰς
ἀρχαίαν εὐ[δ]αιμονίαν πάντα ἤγαγεν [...]

*He took great, pious care of the holy places of the
great ancestral gods. He [saved] the lives [of those in
them] and, in general, of everyone. One expense after
another, he made everyone sacrifice again. He brought
everything back [to the ancient] happiness [...]*

This likely reference to past happiness now allows a clarification on the *spatium historicum* of the inscription. As I anticipated above, I now doubt that the reading ὁ πατήρ, in l. 24, is correct (Fig. 5).

If it were correct, the grandfather of the στρατηγός Kallimachos, whom the inscription leaves unnamed, would be part of something similar to a dynastic “salvation-chain”. Blasius seems to suggest that Kallimachos’ hypothetical grandfather was left unnamed due to reluctance to evoke the consequences of the destruction carried out by the

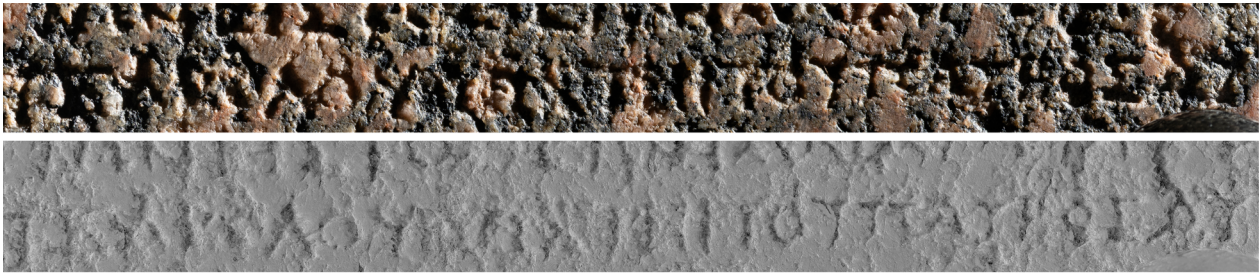


Fig. 5: Stela of Kallimachos (Turin Cat. 1764), detail of l. 24 (from ΑΦΟΛΟΥ to ΠΑΤΡΟΣ). Digital processing of RTI photo by Federico Taverni/Museo Egizio.

reigning queen’s grandfather, Ptolemy IX.⁹⁵ However ingenious, this interpretation – if this is what Blasius actually meant – presupposes a desire to say and not say that is definitely not in keeping with documents of this kind.

Today I regard the reading and interpretation ὁ πατήρ τοῦ πατρὸς as no more than a fragile hypothesis. The likely traces of a Σ at the center of the missing word suggest ἀστήρ instead. If so, l. 24 contains a reference, not to the father of the father of the στρατηγός Kallimachos, but to the “dear soul” of the father of the Kallimachos honored in 39 BC, i.e., a reference to the “late-lamented” συγγενής and ἐπιστράτηγος Kallimachos. Furthermore, the disappearance of πατήρ does not necessarily cast doubt on Wilhelm’s subsequent integration [ἀνενεώσατο (vel ἀνεκτήσατο) αὐτὰς πο]ιηθῆναι, i.e., on the ancient author’s action – even though Wilhelm proposed it having the unnamed grandfather in mind.

The fact is that the reading ὁ πατήρ is very uncertain, unlike what is indicated in the old editions – starting from the *editio princeps* itself. Even Hutmacher had no doubts.⁹⁶ In my 2022 edition of the text, I optimistically espoused the early and commonly agreed-upon reading ὁ πατήρ. Actually, the uncertainty is substantial and frustrating. In favor of the “genealogical” option, there are parallels such as the one found in an *ostrakon* – a memorandum – from the so-called Archive of Ḫor of Sebennytos. In Ray’s words, “it deals with a dream experienced by Ḫor during the invasion of Antiochus Epiphanes, and his report before the βασιλικὸς γραμματεὺς of the Memphite region, which took place some eight or nine years afterwards, in December 159 B.C.”⁹⁷ Isis told Ḫor in that dream:

*“Alexandria is secure [against (?) the] enemy.
Pharaoh records within it |¹⁵ together with his*

brethren. The eldest son of Pharaoh wears the diadem. His son wears the diadem after him. The son of this son |¹⁶ wears the diadem after him. The son of the son of the son of this son wears the diadem after him, for very |¹⁷ many lengthy years [...].”⁹⁸

However, why would the decree not call this grandfather of happy memory by name? Was he an obscure character, as, for example, Lagus’ father? Furthermore, if we understood this passage as referring to the obscure grandfather, then it would be placing equal emphasis on the titles of the συγγενής and ἐπιστράτηγος Kallimachos, the father of the honored στρατηγός, and the merits of the unnamed grandfather. The wish to name the illustrious father would then have been the reason for writing “the father of the father” instead of ὁ πάππος, “the grandfather”. But this does not explain the omission of the grandfather’s name, which would, therefore, have as its only, unconvincing explanation a reverential courtesy towards Ptolemy IX’s memory.

Whereas Kallimachos the son was the “savior of Thebes” between the late ‘40s and early ‘30s BC, there is a possibility that Kallimachos the father, i.e., the ἐπιστράτηγος, was in charge of Cleopatra VII’s safety in the Thebaid between Ptolemy XIII’s *revirement* in early 48 BC and the arrival of Julius Caesar later that year. This fact alone would be significant even in the absence of a grandfather safeguarding the *pax deorum* after a traumatic interruption of the rites. If Kallimachos was actually the protector of Cleopatra in the Thebaid, this would have at least two implications, on the historical and the rhetorical levels, respectively. The first implication is that loyalty towards the Lagids was not absent in the deeds of Kallimachos’ family. There is no proof that Cleopatra VII was rescued as an act hostile to Alexan-

dria. She eventually regained the throne. The second implication is that, being the offspring of a lineage of actual σωτήρες – or better, the son of a σωτήρ – possibly influenced, determined, or facilitated the promotion of the younger Kallimachos’ image as it shines through the Turin stela in a memorial sense.

The “good-official theory” is most likely to be correct. However, the text is far from monotonous, catalogic, and technical. It is above all – as anyone can see – a well-crafted and well-written story whose core is subdivided, in an alternating pattern, into three critical moments (ll. 4–5, 9–11, and 14–18) and as many heroic interventions (ll. 5–9, 11–14, and 18–24).⁹⁹ Furthermore, it has some peculiarities – if not in its phrasing, in its overall complexity. Is Seneca’s tradition about the double ἀβροχία of 42 and 41 BC as an *a posteriori* divine warning to Cleopatra VII and Mark Antony¹⁰⁰ – or, closer to protocol, to Ptolemy XV? – to be considered in this epichoric context? If so, Kallimachos metahistorically emerged as he who put an end to ominous climate phenomena which, in the eyes of those who came later, seemed to endanger, in more than one sense, the status quo itself. Thus, Kallimachos rendered an excellent service to the status quo. The restored word [προ]εστῶσι, “[those who are] over”, in l. 27, exemplifies this with a hint of realism. Of course, Kallimachos accepted praise for his deeds soon after.¹⁰¹ But could the son – and, according to past editors, the grandson – of a savior of the status quo on a rhetorical level reject that praise on the real level?

I think it is essential to consider that both the honors and the acceptance thereof were unavoidable responses to an ideological apparatus of the highest dialectic importance. In the ancient mentality, saving was something “*genitivum*”, i.e., capable of conferring authority on the saved one, whom the ancients equated with a reborn individual.¹⁰² This ideal substratum justifies an otherwise infamous line from Cicero’s autobiographical poem.¹⁰³ One sees it at work in Livy when, in 168 BC, Ptolemy VI and Ptolemy VIII declare they are more grateful to Rome than to their parents and the gods for having been saved from Antiochus IV’s aggression.¹⁰⁴

This ideal substratum is made explicit in ll. 11–12. Kallimachos saw to “the salvation of each of the local inhabitants [...] having labored [as a father on

behalf of] the house that is the fatherland, and of the legitimate children” (ἐπὶ τῇ ἐκάστου τῶν ἐντοπίων σωτηρίαίαι ἐσέφερε, πονήσας | [ὥσπερ πατήρ ὑπέ]ρ οἰκ(ε)ίας πατρίδος καὶ τέκνων γνησίων). He did it “self-called”, “unbidden” (αὐτόκλητ[ος]).¹⁰⁵ He also did it “with the favor of the gods” (σὺν τῇ τῶν θεῶν εὐμενείαι). Hence Woodhead’s description of the decree as “thirty-two lines of extravagant gratitude”. Ultimately, the proof of this is the *dativus commodi* [α]ὐτῶι in l. 32. The synod expresses the wish that Kallimachos’ benefactions “shall exist in everlasting memory for him” (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα αἰείμνηστοι [α]ὐτῶι [ῶ]σ[ι]ν αἰ εὐεργεσίαι). For whom? For Amonra-sonther himself. The memory referred to here is “for the greater glory of God”.¹⁰⁶

As stated above, this complex and high-profile communication code of salvation and *Chaoskampf* (“struggle against chaos”) is enriched by a literarily accomplished frame story drawing on, and furthering, a tradition – i.e., a μῦθος. Indeed, the ubiquitous motif of *Chaoskampf* itself is intensely political.¹⁰⁷

There is no need to go as far as to suspect a link between Kallimachos being honored as a πατήρ and the absence of an adult king alongside the queen, Cleopatra VII, and the child Ptolemy XV, who *are* the legitimate βασιλεύοντες of l. 1. Rather, the salvation is limited to the local inhabitants (ἐντόπιοι). Of course, one wonders whether the κάτοικοι the decree mentions in l. 21 are not equivalent or identical to the local inhabitants. The κάτοικοι in late Ptolemaic times were the military settlers,¹⁰⁸ both Greek and Egyptian,¹⁰⁹ and one must not forget Kallimachos’ role as στρατηγός and ἱπάρχης.

The exquisitely local horizon of the inscription is also stated elsewhere: ll. 9–10, 16, 21, and 26. My reconstruction of one of the most troubled passages, in l. 26, where Kallimachos is proclaimed “savior of the city, which is the seat of the god and has been [saved] to endure” (σωτήρα τ[ῆ]ς πόλεως, ἣ ἐστὶν ἀρχεῖον ὁ σ[τ]ῆ[σο]ν [ἐσώθη]),¹¹⁰ seems to go in this direction, revealing a well-developed sense of civic self-awareness. In this regard, there is no need to superimpose the political disorder of those ’40s and ’30s to the order literarily triumphing in the narrative of the decree, nor to consider this *communication code* as a *code confusion* of sorts, an attempt at a positive representation of what was actually a subverted status quo.

Despite all the figures of speech shining through the *text* – including passages where Kallimachos is called αὐτόκλητος (l. 11) and even μόνος ὑποστάς τὸ βάρος (l. 19) – no dangerous synecdoche emerges. This text's remarkable richness converges on Kallimachos as the *main element* of a dense *discourse* reflecting reality and reformulating it: He is a Greek official, but the synod pays him a tribute where the classic response to royal euergetism is enriched with motifs such as Maat and the defeat of Seth; he has changed reality through the benefit of special epiphanies of Amun-Ra; and, though he is meritorious in himself, the past merits of his family converge rhetorically on him, for, the son of a savior, he has become, in his turn, a father for the saved city. In the end, this is my answer to the question I posed above:

Did Kallimachos, the savior of Thebes, also save the monarchs, Cleopatra VII and Ptolemy XV? The answer is yes: Kallimachos did so through the legitimacy he derived from the status quo – a status quo that was real insofar as it was historically grounded, civic insofar as the recent history of the Thebaid was represented as coinciding with the history of his family, and rhetorical insofar as the text on the stela was suited to its intended audience. A status quo he had faithfully served, since nothing else and nothing more can be read into this text and the myth it narrates.

Acknowledgements

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Note

¹ Mahaffy, *A History of Egypt Under the Ptolemaic Dynasty*, 1899, p. 246.

² See Peremans and Van't Dack (eds.), *Prosopographia Ptolemaica I*, 1950, no. 381; Peremans (ed.), *Prosopographia Ptolemaica VI*, 1968, no. 17148; Mooren and Swinnen (eds.), *Prosopographia Ptolemaica VIII*, 1975, no. 267A; Mooren, *AncSoc 1* (1970), pp. 17–24; Mooren, *The Aulic Titulature in Ptolemaic Egypt*, 1975, p. 130, no. 143; Thomas, *The Epistrategos in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt*, I, 1975, p. 108; Van't Dack, *JJP 19* (1983), pp. 83–84; Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, 2001, pp. 239–40; Blasius, *APF 47/1* (2001), pp. 95–98; Fischer-Bovet, *Army and Society in Ptolemaic Egypt*, 2014, pp. 344–45, 375 pl. A.2 (no. 22); and Blasius, in Morenz and El Hawary (eds.), *Weitergabe*, 2015, pp. 85–91.

³ So already Criscuolo, in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, 1995, p. 23.

⁴ See Blasius, in Morenz and El Hawary (eds.), *Weitergabe*, 2015, pp. 74–75.

⁵ Donadoni, *RFIC 96* (1968), p. 217. See also Hutmacher, *Das Ehrendekret für den Strategen Kallimachos*, 1965, pp. 2–3, 61–62.

⁶ Huß, *Ägypten in hellenistischer Zeit*, 2001, p. 752.

⁷ See, in general, Quaegebeur, *GöttMisz 120* (1991); Thiers, in Gasse et al. (eds.), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum*, 2012; Bussi, *Byrsa 29/30–31/32* (2016–2017) and Cauville, in Aufrère and Michel (eds.), *Cléopâtre en abyme*, 2018.

⁸ See, in general, the reflections in Gorre, *Les politiques lagides et seleucides envers les temples*, 2023, pp. 219–49.

⁹ See White, *Metahistory*, 2014², pp. 5–10.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. XXIX.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. X.

¹² This small *corpus* can be found in Hutmacher, *Das Ehrendekret für den Strategen Kallimachos*, 1965, pp. 8–13. See also Bingen, *ChronEg 45* (1970);

importantly, Blasius, *APF 47/1* (2001), pp. 90–92 and, in general, Blasius, in Morenz and El Hawary (eds.), *Weitergabe*, 2015.

¹³ It is a lightly carved, now vanishing inscription of 12 lines. Its edition was announced more than once: Farid (ed.), *Die Demotischen Inschriften der Strategen I*, 1993, p. 49, no. XIX and Farid, *Fünf demotische Stelen*, 1995, p. 284, no. 16, p. 289, no. XIX, p. 301, no. XIX. It was awaited with great expectations. See Vandorpe, in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, 1995, p. 235, n. 242; Van Minnen, in Mooren (ed.), *Politics, Administration and Society in the Hellenistic and Roman World*, 2000, p. 444, n. 27; Vleeming (ed.), *Some Coins of Artaxerxes and Other Short Texts in the Demotic Script*, 2001, p. 130, no. 156, and Heinen, *AncSoc 36* (2006), p. 22, n. 15 (= Heinen, *Kleopatra-Studien*, 2009, p. 267, n. 15). But it never appeared. See Blasius, in Morenz and El Hawary (eds.), *Weitergabe*, 2015, p. 85, n. 35 and Fischer-Bovet, in Faber (ed.), *Celebrity, Fame, and Infamy*, 2020, p. 133, n. 64.

¹⁴ See Criscuolo, in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, 1995, p. 22 and Rossini, *Axon 6/1* (2022), pp. 142–43.

¹⁵ For a translation, see Rossini, *Axon 6/1* (2022), pp. 129–31.

¹⁶ Caneva and Pfeiffer (in Birk and Coulon [eds.], *The Thebaid in Times of Crisis*, 2025, p. 62) do not rule out that the cartouches were painted. I wonder if they were ever filled, since their surface is rough and irregular.

¹⁷ See the discussion in Blasius, *APF 47/1* (2001), pp. 94–95 and Caneva and Pfeiffer, in Birk and Coulon (eds.), *The Thebaid in Times of Crisis*, 2025, pp. 60–62.

¹⁸ Rossini, *Axon 6/1* (2022), pp. 128–32.

¹⁹ See my description *ibid.*

²⁰ Here I retain my original reading πατήρ (Rossini, *Axon 6/1* [2022], pp. 113–82), which I however challenge below.

- ²¹ A translation I no longer stand by: See below, where I propose an alternative to my original reconstruction of the word as $\pi\alpha\tau\eta\rho$ in Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), pp. 113–82.
- ²² For further English translations, see Burstein (ed.), *The Hellenistic Age*, 1985, no. 111; Burstein, *The Reign of Cleopatra*, 2004, pp. 150–51 and Caneva and Pfeiffer, in Birk and Coulon (eds.), *The Thebaid in Times of Crisis*, 2025, pp. 80–81. A much older one is in Mahaffy, *A History of Egypt Under the Ptolemaic Dynasty*, 1899, pp. 244–46. See also Bernand (ed.), *La prose sur pierre*, I, 1992, no. 46 (French); Heinen, *AncSoc* 36 (2006), pp. 25–27; Heinen, *Kleopatra-Studien*, 2009, pp. 270–72; Blasius, in Morenz and El Hawary (eds.), *Weitergabe*, 2015, pp. 87–89; Pfeiffer (ed.), *Griechische und lateinische Inschriften*, 2020², no. 40 (German) and Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), pp. 119–20 (Italian).
- ²³ For the dating of the decree, with respect to both the official date (ll. 1–2) and the timing of the famine, see Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), pp. 133–39 with previous bibliography. To the bibliography given there on the date of Ptolemy XV's birth, I add here Eller, *Historia* 60/4 (2011).
- ²⁴ For the history of its discovery (1817 or 1818), the early interest it drew, and its arrival in Turin (December 1823), see Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), pp. 123–27 with previous bibliography. To the bibliography given there on the history of the stela in the context of the foundation of the Egyptian Museum, I add here Moiso and Montonati, *RiME* 8 (2024). Here is the complete genetic lemma: Peyron, *Memorie della R. Accademia delle Scienze di Torino* 34 (1830) (Böckh and Franz [eds.], *Corpus inscriptionum Graecarum*, III, 1853, no. 4717; Strack, *Die Dynastie der Ptolemäer*, 1897, no. 157; Dittenberger [ed.], *Orientalis Graecis inscriptiones selectae*, I, 1903, no. 194; Cagnat [ed.], *Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes*, I, 1911, no. 1208; Bilabel and Kiessling [eds.], *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten*, V, 1934–55, no. 8334; Vandoni [ed.], *Feste pubbliche e private nei documenti greci*, 1964, no. 5; Hutmacher, *Das Ehrendekret für den Strategen Kallimachos*, 1965, pp. 18–25 (Woodhead et al. [eds.], *Supplementum epigraphicum Graecum*, XXIV, 1969, no. 1217; Bernand [ed.], *La prose sur pierre*, I, 1992, no. 46; Blasius, *APF* 47/1 [2001], p. 96; Heinen, *AncSoc* 36 [2006], pp. 24–25 [= Heinen, *Kleopatra-Studien*, 2009, pp. 268–70]; Pfeiffer [ed.], *Griechische und lateinische Inschriften*, 2020², no. 40; Caneva and Pfeiffer, in Birk and Coulon [eds.], *The Thebaid in Times of Crisis*, 2025, pp. 78–80; Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), pp. 114–20. To the early bibliography, I add Rochette, *JournSav*, no number (1824), pp. 687–90, and Peyron, *Papyri Graeci Regii Taurinensis Musei Aegyptii*, I, 1826, pp. 51, 56, 64, 89, 115. See also Ghisellini, *Ritratti privati greci nell'Egitto tolemaico*, 2022, pp. 58–61, no. 29, p. 67.
- ²⁵ See, e.g., De Callataj, *Cléopâtre, usages et mésusages de son image*, 2015, and Aufrère and Michel (eds.), *Cléopâtre en abyme*, 2018.
- ²⁶ Woodhead, *JHS* 88 (1968).
- ²⁷ Heinen, *AncSoc* 36 (2006), p. 37 (= Heinen, *Kleopatra-Studien*, 2009, p. 280).
- ²⁸ See Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), pp. 151–52, 160–61 with previous bibliography. Some scholars considered the Osiris Myth a key to understanding some monumental and historiographical memories of the Lagid dynasty. E.g., concerning Ptolemy VIII, see Goedicke, *Die Darstellung des Horus*, 1982, with a problematic theory on the mammisi of Philae, and Carbonaro, *RBI* 126/4 (2019), with an equally problematic theory on the nature of the *Wisdom of Solomon*.
- ²⁹ See Criscuolo, in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, 1995, p. 23: “È noto che Tebe fu fino alla fine della dinastia lagide un centro di grande importanza politica e religiosa, ma probabilmente, e forse proprio per questo, poco permeabile all'influenza greca”.
- ³⁰ It is also referred to as *Diospolis Magna*, in Latin. There were also a *Diospolis Parva*, corresponding to Hu (Upper Egypt), and a *Diospolis Inferior* in the northern Delta.
- ³¹ See Diod. I 45, 4: τὴν ὑπὸ μὲν τῶν Αἰγυπτίων καλουμένην Διὸς πόλιν τὴν μεγάλην, ὑπὸ δὲ τῶν Ἑλλήνων Θήβας. For the later names of Waset, see the bibliography in Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), p. 140, n. 104: Thissen, *RheinMus* 145/1 (2002), pp. 46–54 and Geissen, Weber, *ZPE* 144 (2003), pp. 292–93. In general, see Bataille, *ChronEg* 26 (1951) and Vandorpe, in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, 1995, pp. 208–38 (esp. 211–12). For “Diospolis” in this inscription, see Hutmacher, *Das Ehrendekret für den Strategen Kallimachos*, 1965, pp. 29–30. See also Mairs and Fischer-Bovet, in Fischer-Bovet and von Reden (eds.), *Comparing the Seleucid and Ptolemaic Empires*, 2021, pp. 80–82.
- ³² All quotations from the Greek text follow my edition in the present article.
- ³³ Peyron, *Memorie della R. Accademia delle Scienze di Torino* 34 (1830), p. 15. See also Wilcken, *APF* 3 (1906), p. 334; Hutmacher, *Das Ehrendekret für den Strategen Kallimachos*, 1965, p. 30; and Bernand (ed.), *La prose sur pierre*, II, 1992, p. 112, no. 46. For the name, see Gunn, *JEA* 41 (1955), p. 87.
- ³⁴ Heinen, *AncSoc* 36 (2006), pp. 36–37 (= Heinen, *Kleopatra-Studien*, 2009, pp. 279–80). See also Fischer-Bovet, in Faber (ed.), *Celebrity, Fame, and Infamy*, 2020, p. 127 and Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2021), pp. 169–70.
- ³⁵ Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), p. 170.
- ³⁶ <https://www.ifao.egnet.net/bases/cachette/ck608>.
- ³⁷ Coulon, *RdE* 52 (2001), p. 90. Also quoted in *Axon* 6/1 (2022), p. 170.
- ³⁸ See Herman, *Historia* (W) 60/2 (2011). For a general bibliography, see *ibid.*, p. 128, n. 7.
- ³⁹ Caneva and Pfeiffer, in Birk and Coulon (eds.), *The Thebaid in Times of Crisis*, 2025, esp. pp. 64–68.
- ⁴⁰ Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022).
- ⁴¹ Hutmacher, *Das Ehrendekret für den Strategen Kallimachos*, 1965, p. 29; Blasius, in Morenz and El Hawary (eds.), *Weitergabe*, 2015, p. 86; Pfeiffer (ed.), *Griechische und lateinische Inschriften*, 2020², p. 213, no. 40.
- ⁴² Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), pp. 138–39.
- ⁴³ Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), p. 152.

- ⁴⁴ Sen. QN IVa 2, 16.
- ⁴⁵ Translation: Hine (ed.), *Seneca: Natural Questions*, 2010, pp. 60–61.
- ⁴⁶ Plut. *Num.* IV 12.
- ⁴⁷ Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), p. 141.
- ⁴⁸ See Hutmacher, *Das Ehrendekret für den Strategen Kallimachos*, 1965, p. 6 and passim; Blasius, *APF* 47/1 (2001), p. 95 (“honours and tributes [...] that nearly assimilate him to a king or even more”); Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, 2001, p. 240 (“the same status as a beneficent king in the minds of the people”); McGing, *APF* 50 (2004), p. 136 (“honour[ed] [...] like a king”); Blasius, in Morenz and El Hawary (eds.), *Weitergabe*, 2015, pp. 92–100. See also, e.g., Mahaffy, *A History of Egypt Under the Ptolemaic Dynasty*, 1899, p. 246 (“the honours assigned to this man are such as earlier sovereigns would hardly have tolerated”); Bernand (ed.), *La prose sur pierre*, II, 1992, p. 115, no. 46 (“honneurs qui dépassent [...] les hommages généralement rendus aux bienfaiteurs d’une cité ou d’un sanctuaire”).
- ⁴⁹ See Blasius, *APF* 47/1 (2001), p. 97 and Blasius, in Morenz and El Hawary (eds.), *Weitergabe*, 2015, pp. 95–96. See also the remarks in Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), pp. 129, 158 and Caneva and Pfeiffer, in Birk and Coulon (eds.), *The Thebaid in Times of Crisis*, 2025, pp. 60–62.
- ⁵⁰ See Manning, *Land and Power in Ptolemaic Egypt*, 2003, pp. 37, 230.
- ⁵¹ Blasius, *APF* 47/1 (2001), p. 98.
- ⁵² Bernand (ed.), *La prose sur pierre*, II, 1992, p. 115, no. 46.
- ⁵³ Assmann, in Simpson (ed.), *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt*, 1989, p. 57.
- ⁵⁴ Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), p. 152.
- ⁵⁵ Heinen, *AncSoc* 36 (2006), pp. 37–41 (= Heinen, *Kleopatra-Studien*, 2009, pp. 281–84).
- ⁵⁶ Caneva and Pfeiffer, in Birk and Coulon (eds.), *The Thebaid in Times of Crisis*, 2025, pp. 55–89.
- ⁵⁷ A very common cliché in autobiographical inscriptions, as early as the Old Kingdom.
- ⁵⁸ Caneva and Pfeiffer, in Birk and Coulon (eds.), *The Thebaid in Times of Crisis*, 2025, pp. 67–68.
- ⁵⁹ See also Hutmacher, *Das Ehrendekret für den Strategen Kallimachos*, 1965, p. 56.
- ⁶⁰ See Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), p. 159.
- ⁶¹ For which see Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), pp. 159–60 with previous bibliography.
- ⁶² For Hapy and the Lagids, see von Recklinghausen, *ENiM* 7 (2014).
- ⁶³ I follow Hutmacher regarding this *parallelismus membrorum*. See Donadoni, *RFIC* 96 (1968), p. 217. See esp. the thorough comparison with the Canopus Decree in Heinen, *AncSoc* 36 (2006) (= Heinen, *Kleopatra-Studien*, 2009, pp. 258–87).
- ⁶⁴ Donadoni, *RFIC* 96 (1968), pp. 217–18.
- ⁶⁵ As already observed by Mahaffy, *A History of Egypt Under the Ptolemaic Dynasty*, 1899, p. 246: “It is curiously unlike all the other Ptolemaic inscriptions [...]. There is not a word about royalty after the mere dating”.
- ⁶⁶ See Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, 2001, p. 249: “The strategos of Thebes, Kallimachos, was a perfect illustration of the fact that ‘God helps those who help themselves’”.
- ⁶⁷ Liddell and Scott (eds.), *Greek–English Lexicon*, 1996⁹, s.v. εὐγένηα.
- ⁶⁸ See Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), pp. 153–54.
- ⁶⁹ Bernand (ed.), *La prose sur pierre*, II, 1992, p. 114, no. 46.
- ⁷⁰ For this topic see, in general, Koenen, in Peremans (ed.), *Egypt and the Hellenistic World*, 1983.
- ⁷¹ Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, p. 468.
- ⁷² Hutmacher, *Das Ehrendekret für den Strategen Kallimachos*, 1965, p. 59. For Ptolemaic memories at Omboi, see Rossini, *Axon* 6/2 (2022).
- ⁷³ See Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), p. 147 with previous bibliography.
- ⁷⁴ Hutmacher, *Das Ehrendekret für den Strategen Kallimachos*, 1965, p. 6.
- ⁷⁵ Peyron, *Papyri Graeci Regii Taurinensis Musei Aegyptii*, I, 1826, p. 5.
- ⁷⁶ Droysen, *Kleine Schriften zur alten Geschichte*, II, p. 364.
- ⁷⁷ Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), p. 155.
- ⁷⁸ Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), pp. 136, 170 with previous bibliography. See also Haiying, in Eyre (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists*, 1998.
- ⁷⁹ Plut. *Luc.* XXIV 2–3. For this *topos*, see Desnier, *Le passage du fleuve*, 1995.
- ⁸⁰ Malal. IX 217. Translation: Jeffreys et al. (eds.), *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, 2017², p. 114. On Cleopatra’s expulsion, see Peek, *AncSoc* 38 (2008).
- ⁸¹ Capponi, *Cleopatra*, 2021, p. 27.
- ⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- ⁸³ Bernand (ed.), *La prose sur pierre*, I, 1992, no. 36. For Ptolemais in the Thebaid, see Plaumann, *Ptolemais in Oberägypten*, 1910, and Vallet, *Ptolémaïs en Haute-Egypte*, 2015.
- ⁸⁴ Capponi, *Cleopatra*, 2021, p. 43. Huß, *Ägypten in hellenistischer Zeit*, 2001, p. 757 also emphasized the σωτηρία. See in general also Rigsby (ed.), *Asyria*, 1996, no. 226 with previous bibliography; Fischer-Bovet, in Veïsse and Wackenier (eds.), *L’armée en Égypte aux époques perse, ptolémaïque et romaine*, 2014, pp. 142–43 and Legras, *Cléopâtre l’Égyptienne*, 2021, pp. 123, 186–87.
- ⁸⁵ In addition to Camassa’s studies cited in my edition see, in general, Caneva, in Dabrowa (ed.), *Autocratic Rule in Antiquity*, 2024.
- ⁸⁶ Lapis: ΑΦΟΛΟΥ – but I still prefer Franz’s correction.
- ⁸⁷ For this phrase, see Wilhelm, *Αιγυπτιακά*, I, 1946, p. 32 and Hutmacher, *Das Ehrendekret für den Strategen Kallimachos*, 1965, p. 62.
- ⁸⁸ See Hutmacher, *Das Ehrendekret für den Strategen Kallimachos*, 1965, pp. 61–62 with previous bibliography and, more recently, Blasius, in Morenz and El Hawary (eds.), *Weitergabe*, 2015, p. 91.
- ⁸⁹ See Veïsse, *Les « révoltes égyptiennes »*, 2004, p. 239.
- ⁹⁰ Paus. I 9, 3. See Vandorpe, in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, 1995, pp. 234–35; McGing, *APF* 43 (1997), pp. 296–99; Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, 2001, p. 211; Huß, *Ägypten in hellenistischer Zeit*, 2001, pp. 666–67; Veïsse, *Les « révoltes*

- égyptiennes », 2004, pp. 64–73 and Ritner, in Dorman and Bryan (eds.), *Perspectives on Ptolemaic Thebes*, 2011, pp. 102–04.
- ⁹¹ For this phrase, see Holleaux, *BCH* 48 (1924), p. 20.
- ⁹² See Hutmacher, *Das Ehrendekret für den Strategen Kallimachos*, 1965, pp. 37–38; Blasius, *APF* 47/1 (2001), p. 95; Huß, *Ägypten in hellenistischer Zeit*, 2001, p. 666, n. 25 and Blasius, in Morenz and El Hawary (eds.), *Weitergabe*, 2015, pp. 85–86.
- ⁹³ Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 1990.
- ⁹⁴ Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), pp. 150–51.
- ⁹⁵ Blasius, in Morenz and El Hawary (eds.), *Weitergabe*, 2015, p. 91.
- ⁹⁶ Hutmacher, *Das Ehrendekret für den Strategen Kallimachos*, 1965, p. 22.
- ⁹⁷ Ray (ed.), *The Archive of Ḳor*, 1976, p. 14.
- ⁹⁸ O.Ḳor. I, ll. 14–17 (transliteration and translation: Ray [ed.], *The Archive of Ḳor*, 1976, pp. 11–12. See also Caneva, *From Alexander to the Theoi Adelphoi*, 2016, p. 1).
- ⁹⁹ See Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), p. 133.
- ¹⁰⁰ See also Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), p. 155.
- ¹⁰¹ See also Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), p. 153 (“disinvoltura”).
- ¹⁰² See Lentano, in Capogrossi et al., *Anatomie della paternità*, 2019.
- ¹⁰³ Fr. 12 Blänsdorf: *O fortunatam natam me consule Romam*.
- ¹⁰⁴ Liv. XLV 13, 4–5: *plus [...] senatui populoque Romano quam parentibus suis, plus quam diis immortalibus debere*.
- ¹⁰⁵ So Liddell and Scott (eds.), *Greek–English Lexicon*, 1996⁹, s.v. αὐτόκλητος.
- ¹⁰⁶ So Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), p. 171 with previous bibliography.
- ¹⁰⁷ Think, for instance, of the fall of the Giants and its Hellenistic and modern reframing.
- ¹⁰⁸ See, in general, Scheuble-Reiter, *Die Katökenreiter im ptolemäischen Ägypten*, 2012; Fischer-Bovet, *Army and Society in Ptolemaic Egypt*, 2014, pp. 82, 121, 216–17, 219–20, 297; and Bussi, *DHA* 47/1 (2021), pp. 43–70, https://www.persee.fr/doc/dha_0755-7256_2021_num_47_1_5060.
- ¹⁰⁹ See Fischer-Bovet, *Army and Society in Ptolemaic Egypt*, 2014, pp. 236, 252–53, 286–87.
- ¹¹⁰ See Rossini, *Axon* 6/1 (2022), pp. 164–65 with previous bibliography.
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