

R. VAN BREMEN

A FAMILY FROM SILLYON

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 104 (1994) 43–56

© Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn



## A FAMILY FROM SILLYON\*

The reputation of Menodora, daughter of Megakles, benefactress of the Pamphylian city of Sillyon in the second century AD,<sup>1</sup> has grown considerably over the past decade. The inscriptions in which she features prominently have recently been used as case-study material in a number of books and articles, and her name is probably no longer familiar only to a narrow circle of epigraphers.<sup>2</sup> This is surely a good thing, and the attention historians have paid to these interesting texts is very welcome indeed. Now that Menodora and her family have come to such -relative- prominence, however, it may be useful to point out some of the problems involved in interpreting these texts.

My main concern in this article<sup>3</sup> will be with the family relationships between the individuals named in the inscriptions. These relationships are far from immediately obvious, and they were, I think, misinterpreted by their first editors. As far as I know, there have been no later attempts at reconstructing this family.<sup>4</sup> In what follows I hope to show,

---

\* Earlier drafts of this paper were read by J.Reynolds, J.Coulton, M.Crawford, W.Eck, J.Nollé and J.North. I am grateful for their helpful comments and criticism.

<sup>1</sup> Of the first editors, Radet and Paris (below, n.3) date the inscription to the 'époque impériale'; Lanckoronski (below n.3) does not give a date. P.Debord, *Aspects sociaux et économiques de la vie religieuse dans l'Anatolie greco-romaine* (1983), 73, follows R. and P.; P.Balland, *Fouilles de Xanthos VII* (1981), 196ff. is more specific: 'au cours du second siècle de notre ère'. As Menodora is called 'daughter, granddaughter (ἐγγόνην) and great-granddaughter (or descendant: ἀπόγονον) of *dekaprotoi*, the inscriptions are unlikely to date from before the middle of the second century AD. On the first occurrence of *dekaprotoi* in Asia Minor see A.H.M.Jones, *The Greek City* (1940), 1309. On *dekaprotoi* and *eikosaprotoi* see most recently M.Wörrle, *Stadt und Fest im kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien* (1989), 162ff.

<sup>2</sup> Most recently: R.Gordon in M.Beard and J.North (eds) *Pagan Priests* (1990), 228-30 (with several mistakes in interpretation); M.Kleijwegt, *Ancient Youth. The Ambiguity of Youth and the Absence of Adolescence in Greco-Roman Society* (1991), 254-5; P.Debord (1982) 73 and 345-6; R. van Bremen, 'Women and Wealth' in A.Cameron and A.Kuhr (eds) *Images of Women in Antiquity* (1983), 223-242; R.McMullen, 'Women in Public in the Roman Empire'. *Historia* (1980), 214; P.Balland (above, n.1) 196ff. J.Nollé's recent 'Frauen wie Omphale?' in M.Dettenhofer (Hg.) *Reine Männersache? Frauen in Männerdomänen der antiken Welt* (1994) 229-259 was written with a knowledge of (though without reference to) an earlier draft of the present article.

<sup>3</sup> A full reinterpretation of all aspects of the texts is not intended. Several of these have been discussed separately. The fullest discussions remain those of G.Radet and P.Paris, 'Inscriptions de Syllion en Pamphylie', in *BCH XIII* (1889), 486ff., and K.Lanckoronski, *Städte Pamphyliens und Pisidiens*, 2 vols. (1890-92), vol. I *Pamphylie*, 175ff., with the review by G.Radet, in *Rev. Archeol.* XVI (1890), 203-24; A.H.M.Jones, *The Greek City* (1940), 172 and 174; Balland (above, n.1), 196ff. and Debord (above, n.1) 73 and 345-6 are all interesting on aspects of the text not discussed in this article.

<sup>4</sup> At least not in print. L.Robert, B.E. (1967) 606, announced, but unfortunately never published, a fuller discussion of these inscriptions and of the family of Menodora. In *Documents d'Asie mineure méridionale* (1966) 100, n.1 he wrote: 'Je traiterai prochainement de Sillyon, en attendant l'étude générale'. That general study of Sillyon would undoubtedly have shed light on the problems dealt with in this article and many besides. See now also Nollé (above, n.2). It is remarkable how little is known, or has been written, about

first that it is possible to prune out one superfluous branch from the genealogy proposed by Radet and Paris (fig.1), and, secondly, that this revised genealogy allows us to make more sense of the activities of Menodora and her family.

Although we have the text of five inscriptions concerning Menodora and her family, only the three most accessible ones are usually referred to. The fourth text is admittedly a fragment, but the fifth most certainly is not. It may be useful, therefore, first to give a brief description of the texts themselves and of their history.

## I

The inscriptions that make up the 'Menodora dossier' number five in all, three honouring Menodora, the other two her son Megakles. The three texts that are most commonly referred to are the ones found in IGR III.<sup>5</sup> These are also the three that were first published in 1889, by G.Radet and P.Paris,<sup>6</sup> with an extensive commentary. The same three, plus a fourth, fragmentary one, were published almost simultaneously by K.Lanckoronski in 1890.<sup>7</sup> P.Paris then republished all four texts as an appendix to his study of women's civic roles in the Graeco-Roman city.<sup>8</sup> In 1906 the first three of Lanckoronski's texts were republished, with changes, in IGR III; as nos. 800-802.

There are differences between the readings of Radet and Paris and those in Lanckoronski: not only do Radet and Paris appear to have read rather more than Lanckoronski's team,<sup>9</sup> they also consistently read some of the Greek numerals differently. Cagnat, in IGR III, steered a middle course between the two readings, choosing from each what seemed most plausible to him, but without indicating that his version differed from one, or sometimes both, of the earlier readings. One such difference occurs between Lanckoronski's no. 60 and BCH 1889, no.2. In 1.12 of this inscription, one of the titles of

---

Sillyon; only a handful of inscriptions has been found, including the ones discussed here. The best discussion of the site itself is still Lanckoronski (1890), again with the review by G.Radet (above, n.3). See also Cl.Brixhe, *Le dialecte grec de Pamphylie, documents et grammaire* (1976) 164-6.

<sup>5</sup> IGR III 800-802, see below, n.8. This edition of the texts is perhaps the most easily accessible, but it is also the least informative.

<sup>6</sup> Above, n.3.

<sup>7</sup> Above, n.3.

<sup>8</sup> P.Paris, *Quatenus Feminae Res Publicas in Asia Minore, Romanis Imperantibus, attigerunt*. Diss. Paris (1891), 139-42 (texts), with a more general discussion of Menodora and her family on 132-8.

<sup>9</sup> The epigraphical expert on Lanckoronski's expedition was E.Petersen. L 59 lacks three lines at the beginning, which were read and copied by R. and P. There is also a noticeable difference in the amount read on the fourth, fragmentary inscription (L 61): the fragment reproduced in Lanckoronski (p.177) shows only a few broken-off lines; Paris, however, appears to have seen quite a bit more on the stone, but he gives no reproduction of the majuscule text. Oddly, he omits a line at the beginning of the text, which is there on the fragment reproduced in L; precisely the same line, in fact, seems to have dropped from his transcription of his no 1 (L 59): in 1.16 ἐκκλησιαστικῆ δὲ ἐκάστῳ... etc. is omitted. As for the differences in the reading of the numerals, Radet defends some of his own interpretations in his review of Lanckoronski. T.R.S.Broughton, in T.Frank (ed.) *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome* IV, 784-5, gives a clear overview of the differences.

Menodora's ancestors is restored by Paris and Radet as [ἀρχιερέ]ων, by Lanckoronski as [κτίστ]ων.<sup>10</sup>

The fifth inscription only properly came to light in 1967, when L.Robert recognized one of the texts published by G.Bean in his *Inscriptions of Side* (no.191) as belonging to Sillyon and honouring Menodora's son Megakles. Robert was thus able to correct most of Bean's tentative restorations.<sup>11</sup> This last text has been almost completely ignored in recent publications.<sup>12</sup> I hope to show that it does add considerably to our understanding of the chronology of the whole series (as does the neglected fragment L 61) and that it allows us a clearer reconstruction of Menodora's own position, both within her family and her city.

For the sake of convenience and clarity I shall here refer to the five texts in the numbering of Lanckoronski (L 58; 59; 60 and 61) and that of Bean (B 191), though it should be clearly understood that I do not thereby imply that these versions are the definitive ones (I have at times followed the reconstruction of Paris and Radet where this seemed more plausible); readers may make up their own version with the help of the concordance given below.<sup>13</sup> In the appendix I give the Greek text of the more important passages referred to in the discussion that follows.

## II

The inscriptions' content can be briefly summed up (they all overlap to a certain extent). At their centre are Menodora, daughter of Megakles, and her son Megakles, adoptive son of Megakles, whose real father was a certain Apollonios, 'son and grandson of Apollonios and great-grandson of Megakles'.<sup>14</sup> Menodora herself is credited with a range of priesthoods, liturgies and magistracies. Some of these are repeated in all four of the main inscriptions, though described in slightly different terms; others appear only once or twice: *archiereia* (B 191) / *archiereia* of the emperors ( L 60); priestess of all the gods (L 59) / priestess of Demeter and all the gods (191 and L 60); hierophant (191) / hierophant of the city's gods (L

<sup>10</sup> Even from Lanckoronski's own majuscule text (p.177) the longer restoration seems slightly more likely, although [κτίστ]ων is certainly possible, and perhaps more plausible in the general context: Menodora herself is called κτίστρια for the first time in this text. The line order of the majuscule text printed in BCH 1889 looks substantially different in several places from Lanckoronski's, which makes it difficult to be certain about the exact length of the lines.

<sup>11</sup> G.Bean, *The Inscriptions of Side* (1965) no. 191, without photograph; L.Robert, *BE* 1967, 606. As Robert intended a fuller discussion of this text elsewhere, he did not comment on all Bean's restorations: some doubtful ones remain, especially at the end of the text.

<sup>12</sup> Only Balland (1981), 196, n.172, appears to be aware of its existence.

<sup>13</sup>

Lanckoronski	BCH (1889)	Paris	IGR III
58	3	3	800
59	1	1	801
60	2	2	802
61	-	4	-

<sup>14</sup> In Bean 191, ll.3-4 and in L 58, ll.3-4: See appendix.

60) / hierophant for life (L 59); *dekaprotos* (L 59 and 60); *demiourgos* (L 59 and 60); *gymnasiarchos* 'for the giving of oil' (L 59 and 60).<sup>15</sup>

Her son Megakles also held the gymnasiarchy and the demiurgy, but it is to a remarkable benefaction (mentioned in all five inscriptions) that his name is most prominently attached: he donated 300.000 den. for the *alimenta* of the *paides* of Sillyon. It was Menodora, however, who paid out the money 'on behalf of her son'.<sup>16</sup> Through 'his father'<sup>17</sup> this same Megakles donated 100.000 den. for the building of '*plintheia*'; a benefaction only once referred to, unlike the previous one.<sup>18</sup> Neither of these benefactions is related to the holding of an office.

The various distributions Menodora gave to the inhabitants of Sillyon, on the other hand, were all quite specifically attached to an office or liturgy: they were given in the context of her own priesthoods, demiurgy and gymnasiarchy; her son's demiurgy and her daughter's gymnasiarchy.<sup>19</sup> These distributions are described in great detail in four out of the five inscriptions: one (L 58) refers to one distribution only: that of Megakles during his demiurgy (paid for by his mother); the other three (L 59, 60 and 61) give cumulative figures for the different periods of office during which distributions took place. The - slight - differences between the amounts recorded in each of the texts allow us to place the inscriptions in a likely chronological order (see below).

Two more instances of Menodora's generosity are mentioned in detail: in L 58, towards the end of the inscription (which is in honour of her son), she is said to have spent either 11.000 (11.100?) or 314.000 (301.400?) den.<sup>20</sup> on a temple (of Tychè) and three silver cult

<sup>15</sup> See appendix.

<sup>16</sup> The texts don't specifically refer to the setting up of a fund; this is however the way Balland (1981), 196ff., understands their wording. The Greek has either: ἐπιδοῦσαν ὑ[πὲρ] τοῦ υἱοῦ...εἰς παίδων τροφὰς (e.g. L 59,9-10) or: ἐπιδόνα δ[ι]ὰ τῆς μητρὸς.....εἰς, etc. (e.g. L 58, 11.12-13).

<sup>17</sup> Bean, 191, 11.7-10. See appendix.

<sup>18</sup> On the meaning of *plintheia* (the word recurs in L 58) see now J.Nollé, *Die Inschriften von Selge* (IK 37), 94, n.27: 'einen rechteckigen Gebäudekomplex beträchtlicher Größe', which could perhaps have housed an exedra. I find this the most plausible suggestion in this context. For other meanings of the word (all based on the idea of a rectangle, or block) see A.K.Orlandos, I.N.Travlos *Λεχικόν (Αρχαίων Αρχιτεκτονικῶν Ὁρῶν* (Athens 1986), s.v. 'πλινθεῖον'. L.Robert, (BE 1967, 606) called the word 'une grande rareté' but did not translate it; puzzlingly though, in the index to BE, s.v. πλινθεῖα, 'quartiers' is given as a translation, with a ref. to 1967, 606!

<sup>19</sup> The Greek has 'ἐν': 'during' or 'in', which is unusual, but which should probably be seen as a shorthand form of e.g. 'ἐν τῷ ἔτει τῆς δημουργίδος', which occurs in L 58. The distributions were clearly an obligation attached to the holding of the various offices. The daughter is mentioned in L 59, 1.15, but not by name, and probably in Bean 191, 1.23, where L.Robert changed Bean's [νύμ]φη into [ἀδελ]φή. Her name may have been Theodora: [...]λα Θεοδωρ [...ῆ] (1.22 of Bean 191).

<sup>20</sup> L. has ἀπὸ μυ(ριάδων) Α καὶ δην. IA, which I read as 11.100 whereas R.and P. read: Α καὶ δην. IA. 314.000 seems far too high a sum for just one temple (presumably a small one) and three silver statues; it would be more acceptable if the other gifts were included too, but the amount is still on the high side. For comparative prices see Balland (1981), 190-91, and J.J.Coulton, JHS 57 (1987), 171-78.

images;<sup>21</sup> to have provided a gold and ivory statue of Tychè, with the base, a silver table, 'plintheia', stoas and 'the statue' (probably that of her son: the text of L 58 was perhaps inscribed on its base)' all this in memory and honour of her son'. In L 61, towards the very end of the fragment, Menodora is said to have left (καταλιπούσης) a certain -unclear- amount for a perpetual demiurgy.<sup>22</sup>

Menodora's wealth has been frequently singled out for discussion. The sum-total of everything she spent for her city, in her own name and on behalf of her two children, may have exceeded a million denarii, which would place her on a level with Opramoas of Rhodiapolis and other great Lycian and Pamphylian benefactors.<sup>23</sup> The impressive series of offices and liturgies attached to her name has moreover been used as an example of the - civic - heights to which wealthy women were able to ascend at this time; the *dekaproteia*<sup>24</sup> in particular, one of the more onerous liturgies, has not otherwise been attested for a woman.

Despite all this attention, the specific reasons for Menodora's very prominent position and for her impressive series of offices and liturgies, let alone for her having sole financial responsibility for her two children, have been left largely unexplored. And yet the inscriptions offer us plenty of scope to speculate about the circumstances that led to this particular woman's prominence, not only in her city, but also within her own family. A closer look at the family relationships may help our understanding not just of Menodora's own position, her wealth and her benefactions, but also of those of her two children, in particular young Megakles.

---

<sup>21</sup> The word used in the text is 'ἱερὸν', which has been translated as 'statuette' (Radet and Paris), or 'cult image', or not at all. As the word is also used for the gold and ivory statue (?) of Tychè these translations are not impossible, but the neutral 'cult object' may be preferred. The other statue referred to is called 'ἄνδριάς'.

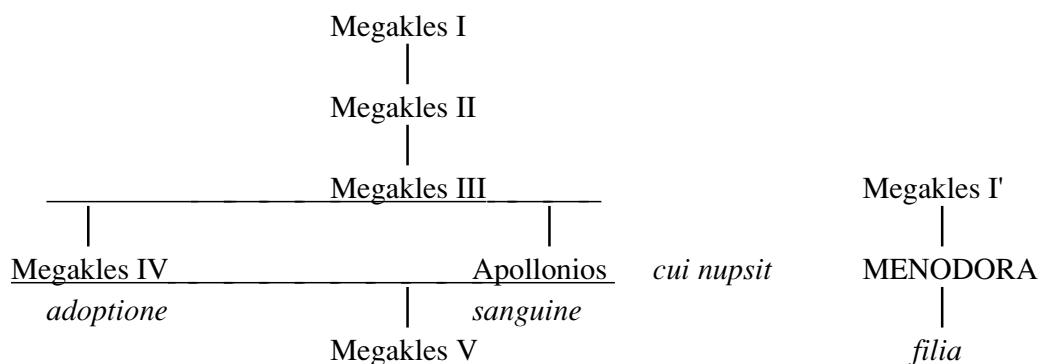
<sup>22</sup> Her own, according to L.'s restoration, though it may have been one attached to her son's name. Paris appears actually to have read the words restored in L. The amount is unclear: L. has HB, which can't be right; Paris has (δην.) MB (?). Broughton, in ESAR IV, 784-5, read the latter as 20.000, taking M to be the sign for 10.000, which can't be right here, as the M lacks the superscribed y, consistently used elsewhere.

<sup>23</sup> J.J.Coulton (1987) argued that an inscription attributed to Opramoas by Balland (1981) does in fact list the - considerable - expenditure of another, anonymous benefactor, and that, consequently, we have to make adjustments in our assessment of Opramoas as a 'super benefactor'. For comparison, Coulton lists several second-century benefactors from this area, including Menodora.

<sup>24</sup> Thus e.g. Debord (1981), 345: 'Cela nous montre bien qu'à l'époque impériale les femmes pouvaient avoir accès...aux premières fonctions municipales, et cela est dû...à la raréfaction des candidats susceptibles d'exercer ces fonctions ...' etc., linking, as I understand it, the growing financial pressure on - male - benefactors and their consequent scarcity, with the emergence of wealthy women in hitherto 'male only' offices and liturgies. See also van Bremen (1983), with a different emphasis, rather distorted in Gordon (1990), 228. The present article and my forthcoming study on the subject of women in the public life of the Greek city will, I hope, show that I have modified some of the opinions expressed there.

## III

Since the time of the inscriptions' first publication no light has been shed on the relationships between their protagonists, though the number of times the name Megakles is mentioned ought in itself to have aroused some curiosity. According to the genealogy proposed by Radet and Paris (fig. 1),<sup>25</sup> young Megakles was the son of Menodora and Apollonios, who was himself three times son of a Megakles. Upon the death of Apollonios, the latter's brother Megakles adopted his nephew. Whether he also married Menodora is left unclear. Menodora herself, as the daughter of some unidentifiable Megakles I', was not considered to be related to this family other than through marriage.



(FIG.1)

There are too many loose ends left in this reconstruction.<sup>26</sup> First, it fails to explain why, if Apollonios and Megakles IV are brothers, it is Menodora who is responsible for the bulk of her children's liturgies. Secondly, and more importantly, it fails to give sufficient credit to the fact that Menodora is called (in L 59, ll.6-8) 'daughter of a *demiourgos*, *dekaprotos*, and *gymnasiarchos*' and 'daughter and descendant of *archieireis* (or *ktistai*), *demiourgoi*, *gymnasiarchoi* and *dekaprotai*' (L 60, ll.10-14) but her husband(s) is/are not. Does this not suggest that Menodora should in fact be more centrally placed in his family?

Her son Megakles (B 191, ll.3-7) in his turn is called 'son and descendant of *dekaprotai*, *demiourgoi*, and *gymnasiarchoi*'. It is highly unlikely that this 'son of' refers to his mother; after all, his filiation - real and adoptive - is given in the male line only (as is usual). It follows therefore that one of his two fathers (probably his adoptive father, see below) as well as his forefathers, held these offices. Because of the similarity between Menodora's titles and those of Megakles' adoptive father it is furthermore possible that somewhere up the line the ancestry of these two 'parents' converged.

<sup>25</sup> Fig. 1 is taken from Paris (1891), 133 (see n.8 above).

<sup>26</sup> Radet's and Paris' reconstruction might have been different had they known the fifth inscription: it is only in this one that young Megakles is called 'son and descendant of *dekaprotai*, *demiourgoi* and *gymnasiarchoi*, i.e. the same titles as his mother's in L 59 and 60.



Still in the same text, young Megakles is said to have spent 100.000 den. for the building of *'plintheia'* 'through his father' (Il. 7-10); his mother Menodora on the other hand is here for the first time credited with having spent, on behalf of her son, 300.000 den. for *alimenta*. It is interesting to note a) that the father's contribution is smaller than that of the mother, and b) that while Menodora in this text had the titles of *archiereia*, priestess of Demeter and all the gods and *hierophantis*, the adoptive father Megakles is not even provided with a filiation, let alone a series of offices. Either Menodora is more important than her husband (this would also explain the difference in contribution between the parents) or we are expected already to know from other information who this Megakles is and what are his achievements.

There is a possible solution to these problems, especially if it is realised that the genealogy proposed by Paris and Radet first needs a minor correction. Their interpretation of 'Ἀπολλωνίου τρις Μεγακλέους' as 'Apollonios three times son of Megakles' is unlikely to be right, as 'τρις' (or 'δὶς' etc.) normally refers back to the name it follows; it should be replaced by 'Apollonios son and grandson of Apollonios', great-grandson of Megakles.<sup>27</sup> Once this change is implemented, it becomes clear that we can't play games based on the homonymy of Menodora's and Apollonios' father(s?). One of the possibilities we are left with is to assume that Radet and Paris have postulated not just two, but three Megakleis too many: as well as giving two ancestors their proper names, we may move Menodora from the sideline into the centre of the family. We then have a Menodora, daughter of Megakles, who perhaps married her father's brother Apollonios (a not uncommon strategy) because she was her father's only child.<sup>28</sup> The aim of this union must have been to produce a male heir *within* the family. Menodora and her uncle Apollonios had a son, Megakles, and a daughter, Theodora (? , see n.19). Young Megakles was then adopted by his grandfather upon Apollonios' death. When old Megakles himself died, presumably while young Megakles was still under age, only Menodora remained to control her son's property (and that of her daughter).<sup>29</sup> This reconstruction, if it is right,<sup>30</sup> puts Menodora's own 'central' position and her wealth, in an altogether different light.

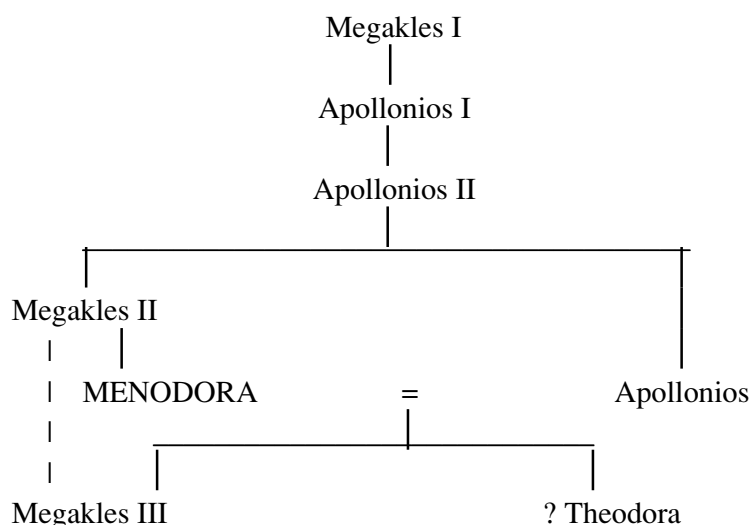
---

<sup>27</sup> On the use of numeral adverbs like 'τρις' or 'δὶς' see R.Koerner, 'die Abkürzung der Homonymität in griechischen Inschriften', *Sitz.ber. der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* (1961), esp. 19-21.

<sup>28</sup> An example from the same area, slightly later in date: M.Aur.Chryision, the female Lyciarch from Sidyma, married her father's brother (IGR III, 584, l.20).

<sup>29</sup> We don't have to postulate the adoption of both children. There is too little in the texts to clarify the position of Menodora's daughter. There is another possibility, only slightly different from the one proposed here, in which Menodora married her cousin Apollonios, son of her father's brother Apollonios.

<sup>30</sup> For a different reconstruction see Nollé (above, n.2) p.246.



(FIG.2)

With this in mind, we can now try to reconstruct the course of events and find an explanation for some (if not all) of the roles played by the members of this family.

It seems fairly certain that the circumstances described in B 191 have to be placed first:<sup>31</sup> in this text young Megakles himself is not yet credited with having performed any liturgy or having held any office, while Menodora's own offices are exclusively religious (although they include the important high-priesthood of the emperors). Megakles is called 'son and descendant of *dekaprotoi*' etc., but Menodora is not. Only two of the boy's benefactions are mentioned: the 100.000 den. he gave through his father for the construction of '*plintheia*' and the money for *alimenta*, paid through his mother.

I suggest that at this point young Megakles has only just been adopted by his grandfather and is therefore now designated to continue the family tradition, as is expressed in the epithets used: 'son and descendant of *dekaprotoi*, *demiourgoi* and *gymnasiarchoi*', but is not yet actively doing so. I would further suggest that young Megakles' gift to the *paides* of the city may have been a gesture made on the occasion of, or even in celebration of, his adoption. While still a *pais* himself (i.e. somewhere between the ages of seven and fourteen), he was adopted into the senior branch of the Megaklid family, and thus secured the continuation of the family's generosity with a benefaction to match his own civic status, 'targeting' his own age-group as recipients of his benefaction.<sup>32</sup> It may also have been

<sup>31</sup> Even though there is the oddity of young Megakles' sister mentioned at the end of the inscription as setting up the statue in her capacity as [ἀρχιτέρεια τῆς Σεβαστῆς] (Bean 191, ll.21-4.) If the reconstruction is right, she must have held this title later in life: no mention is made of it in any of the other texts, not even in the list of Menodora's expenditures on behalf of her children and herself (L 60).

<sup>32</sup> The status of recipients of benefactions was often carefully matched to the particular circumstances of the benefaction or to those of the benefactor himself: Menodora, for instance, in her own distributions, included the wives of citizens, whereas in those of young Megakles they are excluded. There are many more

deemed appropriate for his mother to be associated with this particular benefaction, because it was she who served as connecting link between the boy and his grandfather. A more plausible explanation is that she was in charge, as the boy's guardian, or *epitropos*, of the money he had inherited from his real father.<sup>33</sup>

Only in this first inscription can we be fairly certain that young Megakles was still alive. L 58, in which he is called *demiourgos* and *gymnasiarchos* (and which is therefore presumably later than B 191), is also the text that ends with Menodora's building of a temple of Tychè etc. 'in honour and memory of her son': a sure indication of his death. I would place this text second, after B 191; and, for the remaining three, retain the order in which they are put in Lanckoronski, i.e. 59, 60, 61, for the following reasons: **1:** All three are cumulative lists of benefactions given and offices held, including the distributions Megakles is said to have given, in L 58, 'though his mother' for his demiurgy.<sup>34</sup> **2:** The distributions in L 60 and 61 add up to more than those in L 59 (and, of course, in L 58), as does the list of offices and liturgies in L 60 (this list does not survive in the fragment L 61). **3:** In L 59 Menodora is called *dekaprotos*; in L 60 she is said to have '*completed her dekaproteia*'; in L 60 the title of '*ktistria*' ('founder', used as an honorary title for those who gave buildings to their city) has been added to Menodora's list of titles, indicating that she had completed the temple of Tychè. **4:** L 61 has to come last, if we accept that the donation of a sum for a perpetual demiurgy logically comes after Menodora and Megakles each held that office separately, for a year at a time;<sup>35</sup> the meaning of '*katalipousa*' furthermore implies a testamentary bequest.

Whereas it is not necessary to assume that young Megakles held the demiurgy and the gymnasiarchy posthumously and in name only,<sup>36</sup> it is likely that he had died when L 58-61 were inscribed. If this is indeed the case, then it has to be seen as significant that while in B 191 it was Megakles who was called 'son of *dekaprotos*' etc., in L 59 and 60 it is Menodora herself who proudly carries the epithets of hereditary office-holding. Only after the death of

---

examples. That the recipients of the distributions made by the boy on the occasion of his demiurgy were adults can be explained from the fact that he was holding an 'adult' office, whose obligations and generosity were prescribed. That the recipients of the foundation of the (anonymous) Lycian benefactor (an adult male?) were children, does not necessarily invalidate my point.

<sup>33</sup> For other examples of female *epitropoi*, managing their children's property, see most recently Balland (1981) 251-6. Female *epitropoi* are known already from the Hellenistic period. It may be noted that neither Menodora nor her son were Roman citizens; they did not therefore necessarily conform to Roman law in this matter.

<sup>34</sup> It is slightly odd that his gymnasiarchy is mentioned only in L 58 and that he appears not to have given any distributions in association with it, whereas his sister's gymnasiarchy and that of his mother both generated such distributions.

<sup>35</sup> As is shown in L 58, ll.54-8: 'he gave through his mother, in the year of his demiurgy'...'

<sup>36</sup> As L. Robert appears to imply (BE 1967,606): '...de l'inscription IGR 800 (L 58) on doit conclure que Mégacès était décédé lorsqu'on décernait ces honneurs (l.28-9) et que les générosités furent faites en son nom par sa mère' (italics mine).

her son, in other words, was Menodora herself truly perceived as an active bearer of the family's torch.

This interpretation may at first sight be considered too far-fetched; after all, inscriptions often vary in their wording for no immediately obvious reason. The conjecture that follows from it, namely that, until the death of Megakles, neither Menodora nor her daughter would have been likely to hold either the demiurgy or the gymnasiarchy, even if valid in this particular case, would need investigating in a wider context in order to be more generally applicable.<sup>37</sup> It is however worth making, even if it may turn out to be untrue, because it does at least alert us to the fact that the public roles and obligations of individuals were always the outcome of a two-way process: family strategies on the one hand, and the demands of the city on the other. More often than not, we are unable to say exactly what considerations lay behind the - unusual - choice of a female gymnasiarch or a child - *agoranomos*, and it is not enough simply to postulate some sort of vague emancipatory explanation.<sup>38</sup> In Sillyon at least (or perhaps rather in this particular family) it does seem to have been a guiding principle that, given the availability of 'taxable' men, women were channelled into a separate stream of offices and liturgies, i.e. religious ones. The fact that in the earliest of our inscriptions Menodora is holding only religious offices suggests that there was a time when she was not deemed the appropriate person in the family to take on the demiurgy, gymnasiarchy and the *dekaproteia*.

Young Megakles, though called 'son and descendant of *dekaprotoi*' never actually took on this liturgy himself. Technically he could have done so (given the right property qualifications), and his untimely death was probably the only reason why he never did. In the case of this particular liturgy, Roman law rather than the city's own laws would have applied, as the members of the body of *dekaprotoi* were bound to guarantee, with their own property, the transmission of the right amount of collected tribute to the Roman authorities.<sup>39</sup> Well before the third century, minors under the age of 25 were deemed

---

<sup>37</sup> Under Roman legal rules, women were liable to perform liturgies that fell on their property, including, presumably, the gymnasiarchy; but their eligibility for these liturgies must have depended on personal circumstances. They were expected to perform only those liturgies and hold those offices that were 'appropriate for their sex' (CJ 10.64.).

<sup>38</sup> Despite the fact that we now know of a considerable number of female gymnasiarchs (as well as female incumbents of other civic offices/liturgies) it is not often sufficiently realised that these numbers are nevertheless very much smaller than those of men in equivalent offices/liturgies. These cases need specific explanations and cannot be seen solely as examples of female 'power' or 'independence'. For a list of female gymnasiarchs see most recently ZPE 48 (1982), 117ff.

<sup>39</sup> Jones (1940) 139; D.Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (1954), 648-9; 1516-17. The *dekaprotoi* were not themselves concerned with collecting the tribute; they were only liable to 'make good deficits from their own property' (Jones (1940) 139).

eligible to shoulder this liturgy, 'because it was considered to fall largely on the patrimonium' (Dig. 50.4.3.).<sup>40</sup>

By suggesting that young Megakles, had he lived, would have taken on the *dekaproteia*, we are implicitly making certain assumptions about the distribution of wealth within this family: young Megakles, not Menodora possessed the qualifications that made him a candidate for this liturgy. Are we justified in making them?

We have seen that it was through Menodora that young Megakles set up his *alimenta* fund; through her that he carried out the distributions that were attached to his demiurgy; through her too he would have offered the financial guarantees required during his *dekaproteia*. But rather than concluding from this that Menodora was spending her *own* money for the sake of her children, we should allow for the possibility that she may instead have been only the guardian (*epitropos*) of her son's (and her daughter's) property until the time they would have come of age (the Greek terms used - διὰ or ὑπὲρ - are certainly not incompatible with this). Therefore, in calling Menodora an 'exceptionally wealthy woman'<sup>41</sup> we may well be missing the point: the grand total of over a million denarii should perhaps rather be seen as giving an indication of the total wealth of the family, and in particular of young Megakles while he was still alive. In fact, while her son was still alive, the only expenditure certain to have come out of Menodora's own funds was that which must have accompanied her various religious offices, because already in the case of the 300.000 den. which she paid on her son's behalf the possibility is that the money was really Megakles' 'own'.

The one fact in the inscriptions which might undermine this interpretation is the donation of 100.000 den. young Megakles gave 'through his father' (Bean 191, ll.7-10). But would it not be possible simultaneously for Menodora to be *epitropos* of her children's - inherited - property and for the boy's grandfather to spend on behalf of the boy from the property his adopted son would one day inherit from himself?

The money Menodora spent on the temple and statues, the money she spent on her own demiurgy and gymnasiarchy, and on that of her daughter, the sum left for a perpetual demiurgy (necessarily in her own name?), the property required for the position of *dekaprotos*, all belong to the time after Megakles' death. In the end, therefore, Menodora may have been an *exceptionally* wealthy woman, but, it would seem, only by outliving her own son.

---

<sup>40</sup> 'Decaprotos etiam minores annis xxv fieri, non militantes tamen, pridem placuit; quia patrimonii magis onus videtur esse' (Ulpian). See Jones GC 327, nn.85 and 86 for further refs.

<sup>41</sup> R.Gordon (1990), 228; R. McMullen (1980) 214: 'She was a person of great wealth'. I myself implied as much, van Bremen (1983); P.Debord (1983) is more careful, speaking of the generosity of 'la famille de Mégaklès'.

My aim in this - admittedly very hypothetical<sup>42</sup> - reconstruction of a family's wealth and the public titles and obligations of its members has not been to deny Menodora any sort of financial independence, civic importance and status. Even if I had tried to do just that, I should anyway not have succeeded: the inscriptions show irrefutably that she possessed all three in sufficient measure. She was capable of managing her own funds, as well as those of her children; even before her son's death her civic importance and status lay not just in her membership of one of the city's most important families,<sup>43</sup> but also in the - important - religious offices she held. But it is nevertheless as young Megakles' mother that she is most prominently portrayed, and it is on him that 'her' main benefactions are focussed: both the *alimenta* donation, during his lifetime, and the building of a temple of Tychè 'in his honour and memory', after his death.

What I have tried to show is that below the surface of the public text lies a complex reality. The public roles of women and children were the result of situations, choices and deliberations that we are not often able to reconstruct. A prominent family's concern for its own survival and status interacted both with agreed conventions as to what was permissible and 'right' in the case of women and young children, and with the financial and political needs of the city. Only by placing Menodora, daughter *and* mother (though not, after all, wife) of a Megakles, firmly within the context of the family she belonged to, are we able to expose some of that reality.

### Appendix

#### Megakles' and Menodora's titles compared

##### Bean 191, 2-7 (Megakles):

[.M]εγακλέα [Μεγακλέους φύσει Απολλωνίου [τρὶς Μ]εγακλέους υἱὸν κ[αὶ ἔγγον]ον δεκαπρώτων [τε καὶ δη]μιουργῶν καὶ γυμ[νασιάρ]χων.

<sup>42</sup> There is something of a problem with the high priesthood of the imperial cult in this family. Menodora herself is called ἀρχιέρεια in Bean 191 and ἀρχιέρεια τῶν Σεβαστῶν in L 60. Her high-priesthood is also mentioned as one of the offices for which she gave distributions (L 60). She was perhaps also called 'daughter, granddaughter and descendant of *archiereis*' (also L 60). (See appendix for all four). If, as was normally the case, she held the office either with her husband or with her father (or another male relative), the problem arises why young Megakles is not called 'son and descendant of *archiereis*' as well as 'son etc. of *dekaprotoi* etc. (Bean 191, see appendix) or even why he did not take on the high priesthood himself. The question becomes more puzzling if we accept that the end of Bean 191 mentions Megakles' sister as [ἀρχιέρεια τῆς Σεβαστῆς] (see appendix). I have no satisfactory answer to this problem, other than to say that it remains a problem in any reconstruction one attempts of this family. Titles of ancestors are not consistently given (Menodora herself, though *archiereia* in Bean 191 is not there called 'daughter etc. of *archiereis*', nor is she in L 59). Various speculations are possible but none is entirely satisfactory.

<sup>43</sup> A possible connexion is suggested in Lanckoronksi (176) between the name Megakles and the name of the phyle responsible for setting up a statue of Menodora (in L 59, 1.22): φυλὴ ἰ' Μεαλειτίδων', probably named after one of the founders of the city.

**10-15 (Menodora):**

.....[διὰ τῆς] μητρὸς ἀρχιερ[είας καὶ] ἱερείας Δήμη[τρος καὶ] θεῶν πάντων [καὶ ἱερο]φάντιδος Μη[νοδώρας Μ]εγακλέους.....

**L 58, 2-5 (Megakles and Menodora)**

Μεγακλέα Μεγακλέους φύσει Απολλονίου τρις Μεγακλέους, δημιουργὸν καὶ γυμνασίαρχον, ἐπιδόντα διὰ τῆς μητρὸς Μηνοδώρας .....

**L 59, 2-8 (Menodora)**

.....ἰέρειαν θεῶν πάντων καὶ [ἱερο]φάντιν διὰ βίου καὶ δεκά[πρωτον] Μηνοδώραν Μεγακλέους [δημι]ουργὸν καὶ γυμνασίαρχον [ἐλαί]ου θέσει, θυγατέρα δημιουρ[γοῦ καὶ] δεκαπρώτου καὶ γυμνασιά[ρχου] ἐλαίου θέσει....

**L 60, 3-14 (Menodora)**

..ἀρχιέρειαν τῶν Σεβαστῶν, ἰέρειαν Δήμητρος καὶ θεῶν πάντων καὶ ἱεροφάντιν τῶν πατρίων θεῶ[ν] καὶ κτιστρίαν καὶ δημιουρ[γὸν] καὶ γυμνασίαρχον ἐλαί[ου] θέσει Μ[η]νοδώραν Μεγακλέους τ[ελεσαμ]ένην δεκαπρωτίαν, θυγα[τέρα καὶ] ἐγγόνην καὶ ἀπόγονον [?? ἀρχιερέ]ων \* καὶ δημιουρ[γῶν] [καὶ γυμνασ]ίαρχων ἐλαίου θέσει καὶ δεκαπρώτων.....

\*οἱ κτίστ[ων]

**Megakles' sister****(Bean 191, 20-24.)**

[.....ἐκόσ]μησεν. τὸν δὲ [ἀν]

[δριάντα] ἀνέστησε[ν ἀρχι]

[έρεια τ]ῆς Σεβασ[τῆς]

[.....]λα Θεοδωρ[..... ἦ]

[ἀδελ]φή αὐτο[ῦ]

(restoration of [ἀδελ]φή instead of Bean's [νύμ]φη in l.24 is L.Robert's - see n.4 above). Bean made it clear that from his reading of the squeeze alone the line-division could not be determined. ll.22-4 may well be longer.

**Benefactions and distributions****Bean 191, 7-10 (Megakles)**

.....ἐπιδόντα τῇ [πόλει διὰ] τοῦ πατρὸς εἰς κα[τασκευ]ήν πλινθείων ἀργυ[ρίου] μυ]ριάδας δέκα.....

**10-11 and 15-17 (Megakles)**

.....καὶ [διὰ τῆς] μητρὸς.....(Menodora' titles) ... ε[ἰς τροφὰς] παίδων ἀργυρί[ου] μυρι]άδας τριάκοντα .....

**L 58, 5-9 (Megakles)**

.....ἐπιδόντα διὰ τῆς μητρὸς Μηνοδώρας ἐν τῷ ἔτει τῆς δημιουργίδος αὐτοῦ διανομῆς ἐκάστω βουλευτῆ (δην) κ, etc.

**12-14 (Megakles)**

... ἔτι ἐπιδόντα δ[ι]ὰ τῆς μητρὸς καὶ εἰς τροφὰς παίδων ἀργυρίου μυ(ριάδας) Λ.....

**14-24 (Menodora)**

.....ἥτις κατεσκεύασε τὸν τε ναὸν καὶ τὰ ἐν τῷ ναῷ ἰε[ρὰ] τὰ τε ἀργυρέα τρια ἀπὸ μυ(ριάδων) Λ καὶ δην. Ἰδ καὶ τὸ τῆς Τύχης ἱερὸν ἀκρελεφάντινον ἐπίχρυσον σὺν τοῖς παρέργοις περὶ τὴν βάσιν κα[ὶ] τὴν ἀργυρέον τράπεζαν καὶ τὰ πλινθεῖα καὶ τὰς στοὰς καὶ τὸν ἀνδριάντα, πάντα εἰς μνήμην καὶ τιμὴν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτῆς.

**L 59, 8-16(2) (Menodora)**

.....ἐπιδούσαν ὑ[πὲρ] τοῦ υἱοῦ Μεγακλέους τῆ π[ατρὶ]δι εἰς παίδων τροφὰς ἀργυ[ίου] μυριάδας τριάκοντα, ἔτι ἐ[πιδου]σαν ἐν τε τῇ ἰδίᾳ γυμνασια[ρχία] καὶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ δημιουργί[δι καὶ] τῇ ἰδίᾳ δημιουργίδι καὶ τῇ [τῆς] θυγατρὸς γυμνασιαρχία [βου]λευτῆ ἐκάστω (δην) πε, etc.

**L 60, 14-28 (Menodora)**

The only difference with L 59 is that the list offices/liturgies for which M has given distributions now also includes her 'priesthoods and high priesthood' (ll.16-17); as expected, the total amount given is higher than in L 59 (it includes several modii of wheat for the more privileged recipients).

**L 61, 1-end (Menodora)**

In this fragment the distribution conform to those in L 60, and the 300.000 on behalf of her son are also mentioned. L 1.8-9 are as follows (I reproduce the text of Paris):

....ἔτι [κ]αταλιπούσης καὶ εἰς αἰώνιον ἑαυτῆς δη[μι]ουργίδα (δην) MB (?)...

(In the majuscule fragment given in Lanckoronski (p. 177) ἑαυτῆς is not shown on the stone.)