

CHARLOTTE ROUECHÉ

AURARII IN THE AUDITORIA

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 105 (1995) 37–50

© Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn



## AURARII IN THE AUDITORIA<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this note is to examine the possible meaning of the substantive *aurarius* in the eastern half of the Roman Empire; although the word is clearly Latin, it is found transliterated into Greek on several occasions, but these examples have never been brought together. The issues raised here are very far from being resolved, and it is hoped that this note will stimulate further discussion.

*Aurarius* is found in two inscriptions at Aphrodisias, both in auditoria:

**1. On seats in the Stadium:**

Block 33 Row N: at the west end.

Published by C.Roueché, *Performers and Partisans at Aphrodisias* (London, 1993), 45.33.N.

*vacat* | τόπιος v. | αὐραρίων v. | *end of block*

Place of *aurarii*

**2. On a seat in the Theatre: Block J.Row 8: on one block.** A head and shoulders clearly cut with a fine tool; the hair-cut is short, and looks masculine, but what appear to be breasts are marked by two circles.

Published by C.Roueché, *Performers and Partisans*, 46.J.8.

τοῦ κὲ		νικῆ ἢ τύχη
Κολοτρο-	bust	Θεοδότου
νος		προταυ-
		ραρίου

... ]also (called) Kolotron.

The fortune of Theodotus, first *aurarius triumphs*.

It is possible that these texts should be read as one, and that Kolotron (for which I have found no parallel) was the alternative name of Theodotus. But it is perhaps more likely that the text on the left is quite separate, and is the remainder of a text which started on an adjacent seat, now lost.

Professor Herrmann and colleagues are about to publish a group of inscriptions from the theatre at Miletus. They are all fairly near the front (ranging from the second to the sixth row of seating), but they are found in three different *cunei*, suggesting that we have at least three separate groups. As with so many theatre seat inscriptions, there is no solid indication as to whether or not they are contemporary with one another; but especially in a theatre

---

<sup>1</sup> I am particularly grateful to Professor Peter Herrmann for his permission to publish the Miletus material here. I have been greatly helped by observations from Professor Herrmann, and I have been very fortunate in being able to consult J.Andreau, S.Barnish, A.C.Dionisotti, J.P.C.Kent, F.Kolb, O.Masson, K.Painter and J.M.Reynolds on a variety of points.

such as that at Miletus, which does not have an enormous number of seat inscriptions, it seems quite likely that the inscribing of such texts (which must more usually have been painted) reflects the decision made at one particular time. The condition of the seats in the Theatre at Aphrodisias, where inscriptions were constantly cut and recut, demonstrates that in general it was far more sensible to mark seats in a less permanent way.

3. I.a Sector I.1, second row from bottom.

τόπος αὐραρίων Βενέτων

Place of *aurarii*, Blues.

4. I.b. Sector I.1, fifth row from bottom.

τόπος αὐραρίω(ν)

Place of *aurarii*

5. I.c. Sector I.2, third row from bottom:

τόπος ἐπινικίων

αὐραρίων

Place of *aurarii*, epinikioi.

6. I.d. Sector I.4, in the fourth, fifth and sixth rows from the bottom:

τόπος φιλα-

γούστον

αὐραρίον.

Place of *aurarii*, lovers of the Augusti.

The Aphrodisias inscriptions offer no indication of date, between the second and the sixth centuries A.D.; at Miletus, however, the mention of the 'Blues' suggests a date after the middle of the fifth century.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear that all these inscriptions reserve seats for associations of *aurarii*. Theodotus, προταυράριος 'chief *aurarius*' (no. 2 above) is presumably the president of such an association; the term is also found at Laodicea Combusta (*MAMA* I, 281), on several tombs at Corycus, (προταυράριος/πρωταυράριος *MAMA* III 335, 351, 428 - all Christian - and 607, Jewish) and on a tomb at Patara (*TAM* II.457). In the light of the Corycus inscriptions, Wilhelm suggested that it might also be restored in a text which he had read at Pompeiopolis, the tombstone of a man described as προταβ[ραρ(ίου)] χαρκοτ[ύπ]ου - 'protaurarius, bronzesmith'.<sup>3</sup> *Aurarii* are also attested in funerary inscriptions at Laodicea Combusta,<sup>4</sup> and at Corycus,<sup>5</sup> as well as perhaps in a text at Perinthus.<sup>6</sup> None of these texts

<sup>2</sup> On the appearance of the circus 'colours' in the theatre during the fifth century, see Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions* (Oxford, 1976), 194-6.

<sup>3</sup> R.Heberdey and A.Wilhelm, *Reisen in Kilikien* (Vienna 1896), no. 43.

<sup>4</sup> *MAMA* I, 214, 215 (both Christian) and 281a.

<sup>5</sup> *MAMA* III, 254, 348b, 413 (all Christian).

<sup>6</sup> *IGR* I.782, a gift to νεοῖς [α]ὐραρίοις; but the reading is extremely uncertain.

can be precisely dated, but they are all certainly of the Roman, and probably the late Roman, period.

The editors of the previously published texts, none of which were found in auditoria, assumed these men to be goldworkers, from the latin *aurarius*, derived from *aurum*. If the inscription from Pompeiopolis is correctly restored, this suggests that a *protaurarius* might also be a bronzesmith, which might confirm the suggestion that *aurarii* are metalworkers. In some places, workers in different metals are known to have combined; goldsmiths and silversmiths formed a joint corporation at Smyrna and in third century Palmyra.<sup>7</sup>

In Latin the word *aurarius* is occasionally found as a proper name, and as an adjective, meaning 'to do with gold' in various texts (*OLD*). As a noun it is found in two related glossaries, both giving it the sense of a 'worker with gold'.<sup>8</sup> The first reference, translating *aurarius* as χρυσωτής, is from *Ps.Philoxenus* probably of the fifth/sixth century;<sup>9</sup> the second, explaining *aurarius* as *aurator*, is from a derivative from the same tradition.<sup>10</sup> It is also found three times as a noun, or an epithet, in inscriptions from in or near Rome. One is a list of officials of a civic tribe, whose honours to the imperial house are recorded twice. In the list of officials, one is called *C.Fulvius Phoebus, aurar(ius)* - the only one to bear any epithet or trade description; in the second text, his name appears again, without the epithet (*CIL* VI. 196-7). The second example - not entirely definite - is an epitaph for *[Ti. Cla]judius Hymeneus / [au]rarius argentar(ius)* (*CIL* VI.9209); the same combination of functions is also found in a fragmentary inscription from Veii, *CIL* XI.3821. These texts have all been interpreted as meaning 'goldworker'.<sup>11</sup> There may be another instance in an inscription found re-used at Santa Cornelia, north of Rome, and probably originally from Rome - but the text (which comes from a tomb built for his household by a man who may have been associated with the Green faction as a runner) is too fragmentary for it to be possible to say with confidence whether it uses *aurarius* as a name or as a description, and if as a description, whether it means 'gilder' or 'fan, acclaimer'.<sup>12</sup>

For there is another sense attested for the term *aurarius*, as 'supporter, favourer', with a derivation from *aura*. This usage is given by Servius; on Aeneid VI.816, *iam nimium gaudens popularibus auris*, Servius comments: *auris favoribus: unde et aurarii dicuntur*

<sup>7</sup> ἡ συνεργασία τῶν ἀργυροκόπων καὶ χρυσοχόων τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν ἐπισκευάσασα ἀποκατέστησε τῇ πατρίδι, G.Petzl, *Insch.Smyrna* II (IK 24, Cologne 1987), 721. The συντέ[λεια τῶν χρυσοχ]όων καὶ ἀργ[υροκόπων] honoured Odaenathus at Palmyra, in 258: *IGR* III.1031.

<sup>8</sup> G.Goetz, *Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum* (1888-1923) II.27 and II.569; on these glossaries see A.C.Dionisotti in M.Herren ed., *The Sacred Nectar of the Greeks* (1988), 1-56; I am very grateful to Carlotta Dionisotti for her advice on these points.

<sup>9</sup> Dionisotti, loc.cit., 6-9.

<sup>10</sup> Dionisotti, loc.cit., 18-19.

<sup>11</sup> So H.Gummerus, 'Die römische Industrie: wirtschaftsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen 1. Das Goldschmied- und Juweliergewerbe', *Klio* 15 (1914), 129-89, citing all these texts. On their interpretation see also further, below.

<sup>12</sup> J.M.Reynolds in N.Christie (ed.), *Three South Etrurian Churches* (London, 1991), 140-3.

*favisores*; and on VI.204: *hinc et aurarii dicti, quorum favor splendor reddit*. The same sense is given to the word by Priscian: *qui favoribus splendor, hoc est claros, faciunt*.<sup>13</sup> Alan Cameron, commenting on the Miletus inscriptions, suggested that they should be interpreted in this sense, indicating professional claqueurs, working for individual performers.<sup>14</sup> This interpretation is also favoured by Professor Kolb, who points out the extensive amount of seating provided at Miletus for the *aurarii*, and also that there were current Greek terms for goldworkers available and in use at Aphrodisias<sup>15</sup> or Corycus (see below).

But, while the evidence of Servius may well reflect current usage among Latin speakers in Italy, it remains difficult to accept that a term which is otherwise not certainly attested in written form would have come into regular use in Greek, especially when this requires us to abandon an interpretation which has clear support in other texts as meaning 'to do with gold'. It may be that this interpretation would be correct for the Santa Cornelia text, from the Latin speaking-world: but even in Italy, two of the four *aurarius* inscriptions are definitely associated with precious metal, being linked with *argentarius*.

The Latin term *argentarius* suffers from a basic ambiguity: it can mean 'to do with silver', or 'to do with silver money'. From about 150 BC to the end of the third century AD the word, when found on its own, as a substantive, always means a banker, money-changer; it is only used of silversmiths when it appears as an adjective - such as *faber argentarius*.<sup>16</sup> In an exhaustive analysis of the Roman use of *argentarius*, as always meaning 'banker' when it stands as a substantive, Andraeu cites only two inscriptions which might be exceptions to this rule - that is, those mentioned above, which describe an individual as both *argentarius* and *aurarius* (CIL VI: 9209, and XI.3821). On the basis of his careful examination of all the uses of *argentarius*, he argues that the *argentarii* here must be silverworkers, and that *aurarius* has the same effect as *faber* or *vascularius*, leading *argentarius* to be taken adjectivally; moreover, he points out that the restoration of CIL VI.9209 is uncertain, since the text could be restored [*flatu*]rarius *argentarius*.<sup>17</sup>

In the Greek-speaking world, during the Roman imperial period, bankers, money-changers and gold- and silversmiths were normally described in Greek terms: τροπεζίτης,

---

<sup>13</sup> *Gramm.Lat.* III.509.33; there is also a reference to this usage '*aurarii sunt laudatores vel fautores*' in a glossary compiled in 968 (Goetz, op.cit., V.616) which is derived from either Priscian or Servius.

<sup>14</sup> *Circus Factions* (Oxford, 1976), 248 and note 5.

<sup>15</sup> cf. Reynolds-Tannenbaum, *Jews and Goldfearers at Aphrodisias* (Cambridge, 1987), 119.

<sup>16</sup> See the careful discussion by H.Gummerus, 'Goldschmied- und Juweliergerwerbe', 132-50, reinforced by the arguments of J.Andraeu, *La vie financière dans le monde romain: les métiers de manieurs d'argent* (Rome 1987), 62-3.

<sup>17</sup> Andraeu, *La vie financière*, 105-6.

ἀργυροπράτης, χρυσοχόος, ἀργυροχόος, ἀργυρόκοπος.<sup>18</sup> After 300, however, there is a fundamental change in the terminology of banking and money-changing in east and west.<sup>19</sup> The consistent use of terms such as *argentarius* to mean 'banker' disappears: instead, a range of terms emerges. *Collectarius* seems to be the term chiefly used for bankers in the fourth century; by the fifth century, however, *argentarius* has re-emerged in this sense, and is used, for example, in the legislation both of goldworkers (*CJ* 10.66.1, of 337) and of money-changers (*CJ* 1.2.9 [= 11.18.1] of 439).<sup>20</sup> The situation is particularly complicated in Greek-speaking areas, where the transliterated terms co-exist with Greek terminology: thus *τραπεζίτης* in Eusebius' *History* is translated by Rufinus as *collectarius* (*Hist.* 5.28.9); ἀργυροπράτης is used for *collectarius* in the Greek version of *CJ* 4.2.16 (408), glossed by the commentator as *τραπεζίτης, ὃ ἔστιν ἀργυροπράτης*.<sup>21</sup> But John Moschus distinguishes the two terms when, describing a *τραπεζίτης*, he specifies that he was *also* an ἀργυροπράτης.<sup>22</sup> In Egypt, a member of the guild of goldworkers - χρυσοχόοι - describes himself as a *τραπεζίτης*.<sup>23</sup> In general, there is a tendency for the clear distinctions of the Roman period between metalworkers and bankers to disappear; and this almost certainly reflects a situation in which the two functions are in practice no longer differentiated.<sup>24</sup>

In such a situation, it may be impossible to determine what exactly ἀυράριος might mean in the various inscriptions presented here. But, given that Greek already had its own vocabulary for both gold-workers and bankers, the use of the Latin term seems likely to reflect activity related to the payment of Roman taxes in gold - that is, concerned with gold money rather than gold-working, just as *argentarius* had been associated with silver money. None of these texts need be earlier than the fourth century A.D., and most of them are likely to be fifth century or later, when, as has been said, the terminology for banking had become very fluid. It therefore seems very likely that some or all of these *aurarii* are bankers, described by a term which derives from gold, and from Roman legal usage; this would reflect the fact that the chief function of a banker was to provide the money in which Roman taxes must be paid, which, from the fourth century, was increasingly in gold.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. for example at Ephesus the acclamation: ἀύξι τ[ὸ] πλῆθος [τ]ῶν ἀργυροχόων τῶν ζώντων: *IEph* 585, and topos inscriptions for ἀργυροκόποι, *IEph* 547, 1 & 2.

<sup>19</sup> J.Andreau, 'La lettre \*7, documents sur les métiers bancaires', *Les lettres de Saint-Augustin découvertes par Johannes Divjak* (Paris, Etudes Augustiniennes, 1983), 165-76; R.Bogaert, 'Les κολλεκτάριοι dans les papyrus', *Chronique d'Egypte* 60 (1985), 5-16, reprinted in id., *Trapezitica Aegyptiaca* (Florence, 1994), 121-32.

<sup>20</sup> See Gummerus, 'Goldschmied- und Juweliengewerbe', 148-50.

<sup>21</sup> Bogaert, 'κολλεκτάριοι'.

<sup>22</sup> *Pratum Spirituale* 185 (*PG* 87.3061 A-B) cited by R.Bogaert, 'Changeurs et banquiers chez les pères de l'Église', *Ancient Society* 4 (1973), 239-70, 265.

<sup>23</sup> Aurelius Phoibammon s. of Serenus, line 16 of *PSI* 12.1265, of 426; see further below.

<sup>24</sup> See Bogaert, 'Changeurs'; J.Andreau, 'Declino e morte dei mestieri bancari nel Mediterraneo occidentale', *Società romana e impero tardoantico* (Rome-Bari, 1986), I, 601-14.

By the fourth century, a large number of taxes came to be paid in gold, which became increasingly important as a medium of exchange; and the texts concerned with these taxes frequently use the adjective *aurarius*.<sup>25</sup> Chief among such taxes were:

i. the *aurum coronarium* (traditional since the early years of the principate) payable on the accession of an emperor, at five-yearly intervals thereafter, and on special occasions - such as victories.<sup>26</sup> On these occasions a parallel tax - the *aurum oblativum* - was payable by senators.

ii. the *collatio lustralis* (χρυσάργυρον). This tax, introduced by Constantine and abolished by Anastasius, is much mentioned in the sources.<sup>27</sup> Although it was originally payable in silver or gold, by the late fourth century there is only reference to payment in gold.<sup>28</sup> One glossary gives the term *auraria* as meaning χρυσάργυριον,<sup>29</sup> and the usage is found regularly in the legislation. It is described as *functio auraria*,<sup>30</sup> or simply *auraria*.<sup>31</sup>

iii. The *aurum tironicum* - a levy in commutation for military recruits.<sup>32</sup>

iv. More significantly, from the later fourth century, the principal land-tax, the *annona*, was increasingly commuted to a payment in gold.<sup>33</sup>

The adjective *aurarius* is regularly used in the late Roman legislation of taxes payable in gold. It is used most often of the *collatio lustralis*, but also more generally; a law of Constantine refers to payment in gold or in kind: 'pensationem aurariam aut frumentariam' (Codex XI.42.2). There are references to *pensio auraria*,<sup>34</sup> *praestatio auraria*.<sup>35</sup> There is one reference in the legislation to a *susceptor aurarius*, a collector of taxes in gold.<sup>36</sup> This usage probably provided the derivation for one very rare example of *aurarius* as a noun, in a letter of Cassiodorus on taxation matters in Italy: 'in aurariis denique priscus ordo servetur, et ad eos tantum functio ipsa respiciat, quos huic titulo servire voluit antiquitatis

<sup>25</sup> J.P.C.Kent, 'Gold coinage in the Late Roman empire' *Essays in Roman coinage presented to H.Mattingly* (Oxford, 1956), 190-204; J.P.Callu, 'Le "centenarium" et l'enrichissement monétaire', *Ktema* (1978), 301-16.

<sup>26</sup> A.H.M.Jones, *Later Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1964), 430; T.Klauser, *Reallexikon für Antike u. Christentum* I (1950), 1010-20.

<sup>27</sup> Jones, *LRE* 431-2.

<sup>28</sup> Callu, "centenarium": see *CTh*. XIII.1 *De lustrali collatione*, referring to gold and silver: 1, 4, 6 (356, 362, 364, 370); but only to gold in 9 (372), 11 (379) 15 (386), 17 (399), 20 (410), 21 (418).

<sup>29</sup> *Gloss.* II.26.44.

<sup>30</sup> *CTh*. XIII.1.11 (379), 13 (384): glossed in the *interpretatio* as 'solutio auraria', 18 (400), 19 (403); cf. *Just. Nov. App.* VII, *Const. Prag.* 18; *canon aurarius*: *CTh*. XI.16.13 (382).

<sup>31</sup> *CTh*. XII.6.29 (403): ad suscipiendam tuendamque aurariae nostrae rationem; *Nov Val.* 7.1.1 (440): superindicti vel aurariae ceterasque ad utrumque aerarium pertinentes exigens functiones; so Cassiod. *Var.* 2.30.2.

<sup>32</sup> Jones, *LRE* 432.

<sup>33</sup> Jones, *LRE* 460ff.

<sup>34</sup> *CTh*. II.30.3, VII.21.3 (396), XVI.2.36.3 (401).

<sup>35</sup> XI.1.19.1 (384), XI.18.1.16 (409), XI.20.6.6. (430).

<sup>36</sup> *CTh*. XII.1.173 *aurum ... ita debet susceptor aurario consignari* (410); cf. *Gloss.* II.479. 13, explaining χρυσποδέκτης as *susceptor aurarius*.



auctoritas' (Var. 2.26.5); Sam Barnish has pointed out (in a letter) that this could be a reference to the tax, in the plural; but it might also be a reference to people in some way associated with it. There is one other reference from this period which makes it clear that the term could be used of people, in a Novel of 452: people not allowed to exercise the functions of a cleric include: 'non corporatus urbis Romae vel cuiuslibet urbis alterius, non curialis, non exprimario, non aurarius, civis collegiatus aut publicus servus'.<sup>37</sup> A list such as the second example leaves it very unclear as to what an *aurarius* did, and simply indicates that he was necessary to the good running of the community; but if Cassiodorus is referring to people, he appears to imply that they are performing an official function in relation to taxation. On the other hand, Dr. Barnish points out that the term might indicate those liable to pay the tax, rather than those responsible for collecting it; the purpose of the Novel would then be to prevent such people from gaining tax exemption by taking orders. This makes good sense in the texts concerned, but does not explain the simple use of the term as a description of individuals in the inscriptions cited at the beginning of this paper.

On balance, therefore, it seems to me likely that the *aurarii* of our inscriptions are men who deal in gold. They may be so called because the word *aurarius* has come to be used as one more adjective referring to gold; but it seems easier to explain the use of the Latin term in Greek inscriptions by its association with the use of gold for government purposes, so that these are most probably a group among the gold-workers who are seen as having a special association with taxation in gold. The situation is complicated by the general variety in the terminology of banking and gold-working used at this period, and also by the strong likelihood that different terms were used in different places. But an indication that the *aurarii* were gold-dealers of a special kind is perhaps given by the terms found on the funerary monuments of the cemetery at Corycus, where, as well as the six examples of *aurarii* and *protaurarii* cited above, there are also χρυσοχόοι (six, of whom five are Christian), one ἀργυροπράτης and several τραπεζίται (nine, including an association, συστήμα).<sup>38</sup> These inscriptions appear to be roughly contemporary; *aurarius*, therefore, may not have exactly the same sense as χρυσοχόος, or as τραπεζίτης, although the single ἀργυροπράτης shows the possibility of variant terminology in a single period.

It would be convenient to produce a neat stratification of terms: gold-workers at the lowest level, then money changers, and above them 'bankers' - dealers in loans, deposits and transfers of money: we could then try to distribute the attested terminology between these different groups. If χρυσοχόος meant 'goldworker', and nothing more, the other terms could mean 'banker': τραπεζίτης and ἀργυροπράτης/ἀυράριος would represent the two kinds of banker to be found at Constantinople in the late Roman and Byzantine period: the

<sup>37</sup> *Nov Val* 35 (Haenel 34) 3.

<sup>38</sup> On all these occupations see the index to *MAMA* III, and the useful table of the Corycus inscriptions in E.Patlagean, *Pauvreté sociale et pauvreté économique*, 159-63.

*collectarii* (τραπεζίται) and the *argentarii* (ἀργυροπράται).<sup>39</sup> Both of these professions had trade associations (συστήματα) in Constantinople - just as each apparently had a corporate existence at Corycus, and the *aurarii* also at Laodicea, Miletus and Aphrodisias. That the occupation was a relatively high-status one is suggested by the prominent seating provided for the *aurarii* at Miletus. This would agree with what we know of the status of *argentarii*, who formed one of the most important trade associations in Constantinople.<sup>40</sup> But, for example, seats were also reserved for the goldsmiths (χρυσοχόοι) in the Roman theatre at Bostra.<sup>41</sup> It is therefore not safe to try to impose a standard interpretation on the evidence. But a phenomenon of significance in its own right is the confusion of terminology in the Late Roman period, which seems to stem from the changes in the use of money and taxation over this period.

One response of society to the monetary inflation of the third century had been to move to payment in gold: the penalties payable in gold which are specified on funerary inscriptions of the later third and fourth centuries reflect the attitudes of private citizens,<sup>42</sup> while, as has been said, the state turned increasingly to demanding payment of taxes in gold. These developments must have given increasing work - and increasing importance - to those who dealt in gold. Firstly, of course, they will have had a crucial function as money-changers - providing the gold coinage in which citizens could pay their tax; this role would be nothing new, but would have been greatly increased. But there may have been a further extension of their functions. They had, for example, always had a function in the production of the gold crowns traditionally offered by the cities to the emperors on special occasions: a papyrus specifies the responsibility of the goldsmiths for making a gold crown offered by Oxyrhynchus to Licinius in c. 317.<sup>43</sup> A further step was taken when the imperial government came to realise that to request payment in gold money was not sufficient to ensure receipt of a specific amount. During the course of the fourth century, a series of laws ensured that the taxes payable in gold should be presented, not as gold coin, but as bullion of a specified weight and purity.<sup>44</sup> I have found no discussion of whose responsibility it was to produce the bullion; but it seems most probable that they will have been produced by the local goldsmiths in each city, presumably to be assayed by the imperial representatives.

In any case, the tradesmen who held gold will have been involved in ensuring that their community was able to meet taxes payable in gold; but the demand for gold in bullion form seems likely to have involved them even more closely in the system. In such a structure, there must have been some semi-formal links between the representatives of the *comes*

---

<sup>39</sup> J.Koder ed., *Das Eparchenbuch Leons des Weisens* (Vienna, 1991), sections 2 and 3; M.F.Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c. 300-1450* (Cambridge, 1985), 242.

<sup>40</sup> Jones, *LRE* 350, 357, 863-4.

<sup>41</sup> M.Sartre, *Inscriptions de Bostra* (*IGLS* 13.1, Paris 1982) nos. 9161, 9162, ?9163.

<sup>42</sup> Roueché, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity*, 192-8.

<sup>43</sup> *P.Oxy.* 4.3.3121, cited by R.Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées et Res privata*, (Rome, 1989), 392.

<sup>44</sup> *CTh.* XII.6.12 (of 366), XII.6.13 (of 367).

*sacrarum largitionum*, who received the gold taxes, and the local goldworkers who produced them. While we know that the *comes* had gold-workers in his staff,<sup>45</sup> there is no indication that he employed the enormous number who would have been required to deal with the production of bullion by every city. It may be, therefore, that goldsmiths - or at least those of them recognised by the government for this purpose - obtained a special status, as in some sense imperial agents. An inscription found at Scythopolis refers to a man who was a *palatinus* - member of the imperial service, very probably on the staff of the *CSL* - and is also described as an 'ex-goldsmith': μημόριον Λεο/ντίνου πατρὸς / τοῦ ῥιββι Παρ/ηγορίου καὶ / Ἰουλιανοῦ παλ/ατίνου ἀπὸ χρυ/σοχῶν.<sup>46</sup> ἀπὸ or *ex*, are normally used in referring to membership in a corps which conveyed formal status in the hierarchy of the imperial service; I can find no other example of membership of a profession described in this way. Iulianus may have been a goldsmith on the staff of the *CSL*; otherwise, the term implies that to be a goldsmith was in some way to be in imperial service.

That inscription cannot be closely dated within the Late Roman period; but a series of inscriptions from Bostra, all dated under Justinian, also indicate a special function for workers in precious metal. A group of ten closely contemporary texts record building work at Bostra 'from the generosity' (ἐκ φιλοτιμίας) of Justinian; several of them are dated, all between 539 and 541.<sup>47</sup> At least some of this work seems to have been undertaken at the request of the bishop of Bostra, who went on an embassy to Justinian (text no. 9134) - the bishop is named in all of the texts - but several different kinds of building appear to be under construction. The texts also describe the people responsible for ensuring that the works got done. Two texts, presumably from an ecclesiastical building or buildings, describe clergy as overseers (9128, 9132). Two, apparently from military buildings, refer to members of the staff of the *dux* (9130, and probably 9135). Three more refer to building works in the charge of workers in precious metal. An aqueduct was put up 'through Anastasius of the Mar?', silver[smith]: δ(ιὰ) Ἀναστασίου τῶν Μαρ[.]ας ἀργυρο[.] - ? The text breaks off; and more names might have followed. Sartre suggests that τῶν Μαρ[.]ας refers to a tribe or clan from some particular place. Two further structures (nature unknown) were 'built through Dusarius and Iovius' (9133 and - the fuller text - 9129, of 539-40); in one of the texts these men are further described: ἐκτίσθη διὰ Δουσαρίου καὶ Ἰοβίου προν(οητῶν) χρυσοχ(οῶν) προβά(των) παρὸ (sic) τῶν δημοτικῶν.

<sup>45</sup> *aurifices* are listed in the account of the office of the *csl* in *CJ* 12.23.7 (of 384); see also Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées*, 487; C.E.King, 'The *Sacrae Largitiones*, revenues, expenditure and the production of coin', C.E.King, ed., *Imperial Revenue, expenditure and monetary policy in the fourth century A.D.*, BAR I.S. 76 (Oxford, 1980), 141-73.

<sup>46</sup> M.Schwabe and B.Lifshitz, *Beth Shearim II. The Greek Inscriptions* (Jerusalem, 1967), no.61. Cited by Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées*, 131-2 only as an example of *palatinus*, without mentioning the gold; not in *PLRE*.

<sup>47</sup> M.Sartre, *Inscriptions de Bostra* (*IGLS*13.1, Paris 1982) nos. 9128-37.

M.Sartre translates the function of Dusarius and Iovius as 'délégués des orfèvres patentés'; but this seems an unusual sense of the word *pronoetes*, which is more often used of the people responsible for overseeing a task. I would translate the terms as being in apposition, and all describing the two men: 'overseers, goldsmiths *proba(t-?)*' What is far less clear is how to resolve the abbreviated term. Sartre takes it as being from *probatus*, 'approved'; at this date, such a term would probably be taken to mean that these men held *probatoriae* - that is, that they were accredited members of the imperial militia - but this would be an unusual construction.<sup>48</sup> It may be more likely that the term abbreviated here is a version of the latin *probator*. That term is attested in the glossaries, as the equivalent of δοκιμαστής; in two glossaries which group terms by sense it comes immediately after τραπεζίτης.<sup>49</sup> Otherwise, I have been unable to find clear attestations of the term in such a sense; but the existence of a *probator*, 'assayer', has been assumed from the abbreviations found on precious metal ingots from this period.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, it has been suggested that the goldworkers responsible for undertaking such tasks on behalf of the imperial treasury are unlikely to have been full-time government employees, but are more likely to have taken on work both for private people and for the fisc.<sup>51</sup>

Sartre suggested that the goldsmiths at Bostra were acting simply as prominent and rich members of the community - as for example, the goldsmith donor to a church at Gerasa seems to be.<sup>52</sup> But the other supervisors (the deacons, and the members of the ducal staff) were presumably acting *ex officio*; their responsibility was to spend the money which had been diverted by imperial order for these purposes. It may be that the goldsmiths too were acting *ex officio*. That they were using imperial funds is indicated by the reference to δημοτικά in 9129, presumably to be equated with τὰ δημόσια, which by the sixth century means funds from the public treasury, as opposed to πολιτικά, city funds.<sup>53</sup> If it was through these men that payments reached the imperial treasury, then they will have been well-placed to divert those payments to any purpose approved by the emperor.

It may be that a similar situation also explains the activity of Iulianus, the *argentarius* responsible for three churches at Ravenna in the 540s. There has been much debate as to whether one individual could have been responsible for three such substantial churches as S.Michael, S.Vitale and S.Apollinare in Classe;<sup>54</sup> here too it may have been well

---

<sup>48</sup> Jones, *LRE*, 378.

<sup>49</sup> *Corp.Gloss.* II.279; for the two terms grouped see *Herm. monacensis, Corp.Gloss.* III, 201, ll. 26-7, and III, 271.

<sup>50</sup> Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées*, 267; F.Baratte, 'Lingots d'or et d'argent en rapport avec l'atelier de Sirmium', D.Boskovic, N.Duval et al. edd., *Sirmium VIII* (Rome-Belgrade, 1978), 100-9.

<sup>51</sup> Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées*, 476-8.

<sup>52</sup> C.B.Welles, in C.H.Kraeling, *Gerasa, City of the Decapolis* (New Haven, 1938), no. 335, of A.D. 611.

<sup>53</sup> Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées*, 15-7.

<sup>54</sup> See the full account by F.W.Deichmann, *Ravenna II.2.* (Wiesbaden, 1976), 3-33.

understood that a silversmith/banker had access to the deployment of imperial funds, although the situation is far less clear than at Bostra.

In an important article Sam Barnish has argued that it is unnecessary to see Julianus *argentarius* as an imperial agent, since the prosperity of bankers at this period makes it quite possible that he would have had access to appropriate sums of money.<sup>55</sup> In so arguing, however, he produces several pieces of evidence for bankers/goldsmiths being involved in the collection of taxes, at the civic and provincial level, during the late Roman period.<sup>56</sup> Thus the association of *collectarii* was involved in keeping provincial accounts by 400;<sup>57</sup> it is perhaps relevant that the moneychangers of Asia honoured a governor of Asia with a statue at Ephesus, probably in the fifth century.<sup>58</sup> It may be that the gold and silversmiths became increasingly drawn into semi-official functions during the sixth century; in a law of 528/9 they were specifically exempted from the law which prevented tradesmen from serving in the imperial civil service (*militia*);<sup>59</sup> and the ultimate example of such service is Peter Barsymes, a money-changer (ἀργυρομοιβός) who rose to be Praetorian Prefect under Justinian.<sup>60</sup> An interesting parallel is provided by the *argentarius* Anastasius who served as *arcarius* to the pope Pelagius I (556-61).<sup>61</sup> It is also clear that during the sixth century *argentarii* were involved with fairly high officials, as in the case of those involved in the conspiracy against Justinian of 562.<sup>62</sup> On his accession in 578 the emperor Tiberius received, first the *scholastici*, then the doctors, and 'then the silversmiths and then the bankers' to present them with an official donative.<sup>63</sup>

In all of this, it is probably misleading to try and impose an anachronistic distinction between 'private' and 'public, official'. By the possession of certain necessary skills and resources, the goldsmiths were able - and almost certainly obliged - to perform certain official functions. I would argue that sometimes - but not consistently - in the Late Roman period they were described as *aurarii*, in acknowledgment of those functions, and they clearly had a certain prominence in their communities which was justified both by their individual wealth and by their professional responsibilities. It is of course of particular

<sup>55</sup> S.J.B. Barnish, 'The wealth of Julius argentarius', *Byzantion* 55 (1985) 5-38.

<sup>56</sup> Barnish, 'Julianus', 9-10, 24-6.

<sup>57</sup> *CTh.* XII.6.29.

<sup>58</sup> Most recently published as *I.Ep.* 1302. A. & A. Cameron, 'The Cycle of Agathias', *JHS* 86 (1966), 6-25, 11 suggested that the governor, Damocharis, was the poet known from the Circle of Agathias; but the chronological arguments advanced by R.C. McCail. 'The cycle of Agathias: new identifications scrutinised', *JHS* 89 (1969), 87-96, 89 suggest that this cannot be so. The (headless) statue was found too (*JdAI* 44 (1959) *Beiblatt*, 348-9, and was dated by Miltner to the 4/5 century; but this is not compelling, because of the high probability that the body of such a statue might be re-used (see C. Foss, 'Stephanus, proconsul of Asia, and related statues' in *Okeanos, Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 7 (1983), 196-219, 199 and note 12).

<sup>59</sup> *CJ* XII.34.1.

<sup>60</sup> *PLRE* III, Petrus 9.

<sup>61</sup> P.M. Gasso and C.M. Battle, *Pelagii I Papae: epistulae* (Montserrat, 1956), no. 83.

<sup>62</sup> Barnish, 'Julianus', 35.

<sup>63</sup> John of Ephesus 3.3.11.

relevance that it is at Bostra that we find seats in the theatre reserved for χρυσοχόοι.<sup>64</sup> These provide the closest parallel to the seats reserved for the *aurarii* at Aphrodisias and Miletus. In all these places they are clearly seated as a corporate body, but only at Miletus do their inscriptions include epithets. Φιλάγουστος (no. 6), or φιλοσέβαστος is a standard epithet which can be applied to individuals or to a public body. Equally, other groups - butchers, Jews - are associated with the Blue or Green 'factions' (as in no. 3).<sup>65</sup>

The greatest difficulty presented by these inscriptions lies in the epithet ἐπινίκιοι in text 5. *Epinikios* normally means 'of, to do with, in response to, victory', and is used to translate the Latin *triumphalis*: it is used of songs, processions, contests or honours produced in response to victories, and the neuter can stand as a substantive for such a song, or for a contest or celebration. It is very seldom used of people. McCormick has shown that the later empire 'witnessed an extraordinary resurgence in the frequency and import of imperial victory festivals'.<sup>66</sup> Victories were celebrated by theatrical shows and contests, and McCormick demonstrates the increasing use made of such celebrations.<sup>67</sup> Many of these celebrations will have been accompanied by the offering of the *aurum coronarium*, payable on important imperial occasions: 'vel amore proprio vel indulgentiarum laetitia vel rebus prospere gestis' (*CTh.* 12.13.4). In the late empire, it was being exacted with increasing frequency on the occasion of victories. McCormick comments on 'the frequent association of victory announcements and exceptional tax levies in the form of the *aurum coronarium*', listing the large number of occasions when the tax was payable.<sup>68</sup> If we are right in arguing that the *aurarii* had an essential function in the production of such taxes in gold, the epithet *epinikioi* can then be understood as a reference to that function.

The presence of their inscriptions actually in the auditoria suggests that the *aurarii* are not only essential to the good working of the taxation system, but that their role is publicly acknowledged as part of the associated public expressions of loyalty. Thus the *argyropratai* at Constantinople are mentioned first among the civic groups which welcomed Justinian when he returned in triumph to Constantinople in 529.<sup>69</sup> This can perhaps be paralleled in the provinces. Three papyri from Oxyrhynchus, originally all published separately, have recently been brought together to shed light on one another. They are documents of 421,<sup>70</sup> 426<sup>71</sup> and 429.<sup>72</sup> Those from 421 and 429 are virtually identical in wording.<sup>73</sup> The *ergasia*

<sup>64</sup> M.Sartre, *Inscriptions de Bostra* (IGLS 13.1, Paris 1982) nos. 9161, 9162, ?9163.

<sup>65</sup> See Roueché, *Performers and Partisans at Aphrodisias* (London, 1993), Chapter VII.

<sup>66</sup> *Eternal Victory*, 35, and Chapter 2.

<sup>67</sup> *Eternal Victory*, 91 ff.

<sup>68</sup> *Eternal Victory*, 44.

<sup>69</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Expeditionibus*, ed. J.Haldon (Vienna, 1990), C, 215-6.

<sup>70</sup> G.Casanova, *Aegyptus* 62 (1982), 65-8; now republished as *SB* 16.12260.

<sup>71</sup> *PSI* 12.1265.

<sup>72</sup> R.S.Bagnall published P.Yale inv. 1648, from Oxyrhynchus, as *P.Rainer Cent.* 122 in *Festschrift Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer* (Vienna, 1983), 422-5.

<sup>73</sup> R.S.Bagnall and K.Worp, *ZPE* 59 (1985), 67-70.

of the *chrysochooi* has appointed Aurelius Chairemon as *dioiketes* - supervisor, organiser - of the *chrysargyron* tax. This appointment had been required of them: τῆς ὀνομασίας χάριν τοῦ ἐκ τῆς ἡμῶν ἐργασίας ζητουμένου διοικητοῦ τοῦ χρυσαργύρου: they undertake to meet all the expenses required for this διοίκησιν. The appearance of Chairemon suggests that this is also the (unnamed) guild in *PSI* 1265, almost certainly of 426: that document describes the nomination of an agent - κεφαλαιωτής - to collect the *chrysargyron*, with rather greater detail on the obligations of the members. Several members have signed, including one who gives himself the additional epithet of τραπεζίτης (Aurelius Phoibammon s. of Serenus, line 16). These arrangements reflect the legislation of 399, which required that guilds should be responsible for collecting the *chrysargyron* from their own members.<sup>74</sup>

The fullest of these documents goes into considerable detail on the responsibilities of the supervisor and the members of the guild. There is an indication of the penalties payable by members who do not pay up promptly. There is also a recognition of the responsibility of the guild to members who, through misfortune, are unable to pay. Their fellow members will ensure that they do not suffer, and are not - there is a lacuna, but the sense seems to be 'left out' - 'during the acclamations and festivals which take place for the victory and continued rule of the masters of the word': ἐν ταῖς γιγνομέναις εὐφη[μ]ίαις καὶ ἰ(80)ερομηνίαις ταῖς γιγνομέναις ὑπὲρ νείκης καὶ διαμονῆς τῶν δεσποτῶν τῆς οἰκουμένης.<sup>75</sup>

This provision seems at first rather odd: there must be worse aspects of not being able to pay one's taxes than simply being left out of festivals. Of course, we know that these occasions were important ones for the manifestation of solidarity and importance by the various trade organisations.<sup>76</sup> But the reference here is specifically to festivals celebrating the emperors; and the implication here is that the payment of tax was perceived as what entitled people to participate in such festivities. It is helpful to discard the modern notions of taxation as a 'private' issue; the citizens of the Roman Empire must have been well aware of the connection between their payment of taxes, and the emperors' victories. Perhaps the public festivities in honour of the emperors referred more overtly than we would expect to that relationship. It would certainly have been entirely reasonable for the workers whose expertise was an essential element in those payments to have a particular prominence and status. This would explain the presence of the '*epinikioi aurarii*' in the auditorium at Miletus: and it offers some intriguing possibilities for further research.

I have deliberately ranged quite widely in presenting this material; some of the hypotheses presented above may not stand closer scrutiny, and all need further evaluation.

---

<sup>74</sup> *CTh.* XIII.1.17.

<sup>75</sup> *PSI* 12.1265.

<sup>76</sup> Roueché, *Performers and Partisans*, Chapter 6.

But I think that it is at least safe to argue that the prominence of the *aurarii* at Miletus offers an interesting piece of evidence for the 'hegemony of gold' in the fifth and sixth century.<sup>77</sup>

London

Charlotte Roueché

---

<sup>77</sup> For the phrase see Callu, 'centenarium', 311.