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ATTICUS IN EPHEBUS

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 124 (1999) 89–94

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Mustafa Büyükkolancı and Helmut Engelmann have published an Ephesian inscription of more than usual interest.¹ It was carved on a block of marble 0.076 m. wide and 0.028 m. high (since it was found built into a wall, the depth is not recorded). The form of the stone, and its text, alike show that it was a statue-base.



The text, carefully carved in letters of late Hellenistic date, is as follows:

οἱ πολεῖται οἱ ἀλειφόμενοι ἐν τῷ | ἀλειπτηρίῳ ἐτίμησαν | Κοῖντον Καικίλιον Ἄττικόν, τὸν
ἑπάρχον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ αὐτοκράτορος | Καίσαρος διὰ τὰς ἐξ αὐτοῦ εὐεργεσίας.

To begin with the information provided by the simple text, ‘the citizens who anoint themselves in the *aleipterion*’ must be similar to the *aleiphomenoi* found in many gymnasial inscriptions, that is, those who used the athletic facilities of the gymnasium in question as opposed to the educational ones. *Aleipteria* are often mentioned as rooms or divisions of gymnasia dedicated to the distribution of olive-oil, that cherished commodity of Greek life which was inseparable from athletics and civilized living in general; in the course of time, the word *aleipterion* comes to be used for the whole gymnasium, as may already be true here. The benefactions dispensed by the honorand might have taken many forms, including the direct gift of oil, a subsidy towards its purchase, or some contribution towards the building or the ornamentation of the *aleipterion*.²

The honorand has an unusual title, which must translate a Latin original such as *praefectus divi (Caesaris) et imperatoris Caesaris*. That is, he was not prefect only of the deified Caesar (since otherwise the καί would be inexplicable) but also of his heir, whom it is conventional to call ‘Octavian’ at

* I am grateful to Profs. Glen Bowersock and D. R. Shackleton Bailey for their comments; to Prof. Dr. Helmut Engelmann for advice and assistance; and to Dr. Mustafa Büyükkolancı for permission to reprint the photograph. Abbreviations follow S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, ed., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*³ (1996), notably: Broughton, *MRR* = T. R. S. Broughton, *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic* 1–3 (1951–1986); Shackleton Bailey, *CLA* = D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Cicero’s Letters to Atticus* 1–7 (1965–1970); Syme, *Rom. Rev.* = R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (1939).

¹ M. Büyükkolancı and H. Engelmann, *Inscripfionen von Ephesos*, *ZPE* 86 (1991), 142 no. 8, with Plate 10; *Ann. épigr.* 1991. 1503; *Bull. épigr.* 1992. 409 (‘intéressante inscription’); *SEG* 41. 964.

² *Aleiphomenoi*: J. Oehler, *RE* 7 (1912), 2015 (‘sämtliche Teilnehmer an den körperlichen Übungen des Gymnasiums’). *Aleipterion*: E. Reisch, *RE* 1 (1893), 1362–3 and especially C. Foss, ‘Ἀλειπτήριον’, *GRBS* 16 (1975), 217–26. For the preposition ἐξ reinforcing the genitive, *LSJ* s.v. ἐκ III 4.

this stage of his career. The redactor presumably dropped the first *Καίσαρος* rather as Octavian's letters to Rhosus entitle him *αὐτοκράτωρ Καίσαρ θεοῦ (Ἰουλίου) υἱός*.³ If that is right, then this Roman citizen had one of those personal prefectures characteristic of the late republic, of which the most notorious are those given by Appius Claudius and Cicero to the dreadful M. Scaptius.⁴ The reason for mentioning these prefectures cannot be that they justify the donor in his benefactions, since such generosity did not require any public function, let alone a Roman one; rather, they serve to enhance his prestige, and to show that he enjoyed the confidence of the deified Caesar and of his heir.

The same titles also provide a chronological 'window' for the inscription. Though Octavian had called himself *divi filius* earlier, the title did not become official until the peace of Brundisium in 40, which may therefore be regarded as the *terminus post quem*.⁵ That year, or more probably 38, also marked the assumption by Octavian of the *praenomen imperatoris*,⁶ while the absence of 'Augustus' from his titulature provides a *terminus ante quem* of 27. Within the interval of 40 to 27, however, it would be surprising to find a prefecture of Octavian mentioned inside Antony's half of the empire between about 36, when the younger triumvir eliminated Sextus Pompey and Lepidus, and 31, the year of Actium.

The editors of the inscription incline to identify the honorand with a Q. Caecilius Atticus already known from inscriptions of Tuder in Umbria, the modern Todi. The most important of these, first published in 1880, is carved 'in good letters of the Augustan period', and was reprinted in Dessau's *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*. Here this Atticus is called *tribunus militum*, and receives honors from colonists of the forty-first legion, a unit presumably raised in the triumviral period and discharged after Actium. Another of the inscriptions from Tuder shows that he was *patronus* and *duumvir quinquennalis* of the colony at Tuder; yet another adds to the tribunate the title of *praefectus frument[. . .]*, a title which resembles the charge of grain procurement (*res frumentaria*) entrusted by Julius Caesar to a prefect in Gaul: possible supplements might be *frument[ationi]*, or simply *frument[o]*.⁷ The date of Tuder's foundation is unsettled between Julius Caesar, the triumviral period, and the aftermath of Actium, though the last is perhaps the most likely. If it is right, the inscriptions of this Atticus should belong to the beginning of the principate, roughly between 30 and 20.⁸

The two Attici have in common, not only their *tria nomina*, but also the rank of *praefectus*. But this is the only title carried by the Ephesian Atticus, and in his case it refers to a personal prefecture, whereas the principal title of the Tudertine Atticus is not *praefectus frument[. . .]* but rather *tribunus militum*. Such tribunes 'were, as a rule, *nobiles adulescentes*, of senatorial or equestrian rank, to whom the tribunate served as a stepping-stone to a career in the army or in the magistrature'. The most famous of these in the triumviral period, though in fact he was a freedman's son, is the poet Horace.⁹ *Prima facie*, it might seem that we are dealing with two persons, a benefactor of Ephesus on familiar terms with Julius Caesar and Octavian, not necessarily a military man, and a younger homonym swept up into

³ R. K. Sherck, *RDGE* no. 58, lines 2, 73, 85.

⁴ In general, C. Nicolet, *L'ordre équestre à l'époque républicaine (312–43 av. J.-C.)*, BEFAR 207 (1966), 434–9. For Scaptius, Broughton, *MRR* 2. 239, 254.

⁵ S. Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (1971), 399.

⁶ The classic discussion is by R. Syme, *Imperator Caesar: A Study in nomenclature*, *Historia* 7 (1958), 172–88 = *Roman Papers* 1 (1979), 361–77, especially 179 = 368–9 for the acclamations in 43 and (probably) 38. R. Combès, *Imperator* (1966) 139, following Degrossi, puts the assumption in 40.

⁷ F. Barnabei, *Bull. dell'Inst. di Corrispond. arch.* 1880, 70, 'in bei caratteri dell'età Augustea' (*Not. Scav.* 1880. 6; *CIL* 11. 4650; *ILS* 2230); in addition, *CIL* 11. 4651, 4652, with a fragment, 4653. Prefect of Caesar: Caes., *Bell. Gall.* 7.3.1, cf. Nicolet (n. 4), 435.

⁸ M. Tascio, *Todi, Città antiche in Italia* 2 (1989), 26–27, inclines to suppose that a slightly older colony was refounded soon after Actium. E. T. Salmon and T. W. Potter, *OCD*³ 1557, give 'circa 30 BC'.

⁹ E. Fraenkel, *Horace* (1957), 10–11, citing J. Lenglé, *RE* 6 A (1937), 2443–5.

the civil wars of the late republic on the Caesarian side. After Actium he was honored, though it is not certain that he was domiciled, in the new foundation of Tuder.

There is in fact already a Q. Caecilius Atticus who would arguably fit the new inscription better than the tribune at Tuder. Atticus, the friend of Cicero and Cornelius Nepos, is usually called 'T. Pomponius Atticus', but this was not his name during his last twenty-five years of life.¹⁰ He was born 'T. Pomponius', with no known *cognomen*, and acquired the *sobriquet* of 'Atticus' from his long stay in Athens, roughly from the mid-80's to the mid-60's. In 58, his 'very difficult' uncle Caecilius adopted him in his will, at the same time imposing on him a *condicio nominis ferendi*. In a letter written immediately after the event, Cicero calls him 'Q. Caecilius Q. f. Atticus Pomponianus', but thereafter reverts to 'T. Pomponius' or 'Atticus' and never uses 'Q. Caecilius', though he does call his daughter, born in 51, 'Caecilia'.¹¹ Varro, by contrast, in the *De re rustica* completed in 37, speaks of him as 'Atticus, who at that time was Titus Pomponius, but is now Q. Caecilius with the same *cognomen* (*Atticus, qui tunc T. Pomponius, nunc Q. Caecilius cognomine eodem*)'. This suggests that he had dropped 'Pomponianus', much as his friend Octavian dropped 'Octavianus'.¹² Cornelius Nepos, the friend both of Atticus and of Cicero, uses the form 'T. Pomponius Atticus' at the opening of his biographical notice, and says that he was buried in 'the mausoleum of his uncle Q. Caecilius', but this act, on the part of one who was 'born from the most ancient Roman stock', set the seal on his transference into a new *gens*.¹³

Certainly, there are possible objections to the identification. One is that Cicero's Atticus maintained a screen of political detachment, whereas the Ephesian Atticus was a *praefectus* of the deified Julius and of Octavian. Yet this need not imply political activity, and in fact corroborates something which Nepos reports of Atticus: 'though he accepted the prefectures offered to him by many consuls and praetors, he never accompanied them to their provinces, was content with the honour, and overlooked the pecuniary advantage to himself' (*multorum consulum praetorumque praefecturas delatas sic accepit, ut neminem in prouinciam sit secutus, honore fuerit contentus, rei familiaris despexit fructum*). In this Atticus was no doubt thinking of the abuses to which such prefectures were liable, as his friend Cicero had found to his cost in Cilicia.¹⁴

Since the Ephesian Atticus of the inscription is thanked as a benefactor of the city, and Cicero's Atticus had never been there, so far as is known, this too might appear an obstacle to the identification. Yet benefactors were not confined to places with which they had direct acquaintance. Josephus enumerates the benefactions (εὐεργεσίαι) of Herod the Great to 'the cities in Syria and throughout Hellas, and to those where he happened to be staying (παρ' οἷς ἂν ἀποδημήσας τύχοι)': the language

¹⁰ For general discussions of Atticus, R. Feger, *RE Suppl.* 8 (1956), 503–26; Shackleton Bailey, *CLA* 1. 3–59; O. Perlwitz, *Titus Pomponius Atticus, Hermes Einzelschriften* 58 (1992); Ch. Habicht, *Athens from Alexander to Antony* (1997), index s.v. 'Atticus (Titus Pomponius)'. On Nepos' biography, F. Millar, Cornelius Nepos, "Atticus" and the Roman Revolution, *G&R* 35 (1988), 40–55; N. Horsfall, *Cornelius Nepos: A Selection* (1989); J. Geiger, *Cornelius Nepos and ancient political biography, Historia Einzelschriften* 47 (1985).

¹¹ 'Testamentary adoption' by Caecilius, and Atticus' change of name in 58: Cic., *Att.* 3.20.1 (Shackleton Bailey, *CLA* no. 65), Nep., *Att.* 5.2. Cicero's later names for Atticus: *Att.* 3.22.3 (Shackleton Bailey, *CLA* no. 67). Caecilia: Cic., *Att.* 6.2.10, 4.3 (Shackleton Bailey, *CLA* nos. 116, 118). On the nomenclature of Atticus and Caecilia, see now Shackleton Bailey, *Onomasticon to Cicero's letters* (1995) 24 (Caecilia), 26–27 (Atticus).

¹² Varro, *RR* 2.2.2.

¹³ Burial: Nep., *Att.* 22.4. Ancient stock: *ibid.* 1.1. Note also the T. Pomponii and Q. Caecilii known from coins and inscriptions of Buthrotum, where Atticus had considerable property: Élisabeth Deniaux, Atticus et l'Épire, in P. Cabanes, ed., *L'Illyrie méridionale et l'Épire dans l'Antiquité: Actes du Colloque International de Clermont-Ferrand, 22–25 octobre 1984* (1987), 253–54 (also mentioning a fragmentary inscription of Atticus himself); in addition, Atticus' freedman Q. Caecilius Epirota, Suet., *Gram.* 16.1. The restorations of Atticus' name by A. E. Raubitschek, Phaidros and his Roman Pupils, *Hesperia* 18 (1949) 96–103, are uncertain.

¹⁴ Nep., *Att.* 6.4, cf. Millar (n. 10), 43, Horsfall (n. 10), 71.

shows that the third class was merely one among his beneficiaries.¹⁵ So also in the heyday of the Second Sophistic another Atticus, the sophist Herodes, showered favors not only on Athens, but on Corinth, Thermopylae, Oricus in Epirus, Canusium in Italy, 'and variously on cities in Euboea, Peloponnese, and Boeotia'. Canusium must have owed Herodes' generosity in part to its origin as a Greek city, reputedly founded by Diomedes: Ephesus was even more closely linked with the mythic history of Athens, since its founder, Androclos, was the son of king Codros.¹⁶

A different obstacle to the identification might seem to arise from chronology. By the agreement reached at Brundisium in 40, Antony was confirmed in possession of the provinces east of the Ionian sea.¹⁷ No prefect of Octavian, it could be thought, could act in Antony's division of the empire until after Actium: yet Cicero's Atticus died in 32.¹⁸ Yet documents found in the 1960's in another city of Asia, Aphrodisias, both illuminate the nature of the division of powers between Antony and Octavian, and also show the latter intervening in the affairs of Asia, and precisely Ephesus, about the year 38. One of these, of which part was already known, is a *senatus consultum* dated to 39 concerning the privileges of Aphrodisias. Another is a letter of Octavian to Ephesus, in which he appears as 'imperator Caesar, son of the deified Julius', so that the date should be not earlier than 38. The young triumvir urges the Ephesians to help Aphrodisias in its attempt to recover from the attack of Labienus Parthicus in 40, and also invites them to return a golden Aphrodite which had been stolen from Aphrodisias and dedicated to Artemis of Ephesus. As was immediately realized, these documents confirm that the division of powers between the two chief triumvirs in 40 was far from watertight, and that Octavian could without impropriety intervene in the affairs of Greek cities in Antony's portion.¹⁹

Now in his comparatively sketchy account of Atticus' life after the death of Cicero in 43, Nepos emphasizes how he maintained good relations with both of the future rivals. The event which summarizes this double intimacy, though Nepos says nothing about Atticus' own role in it, is the marriage of his daughter Caecilia, now about fifteen years old, with M. Agrippa, the marshal of Octavian. This alliance appears to have been one of the arrangements agreed upon at the meeting between Antony, Octavian and their advisers in spring of the year 37, an occasion made forever memorable in literature by Horace's description of his journey to Brundisium in the same connection.²⁰

Thus the difficulties which might seem to stand in the way of identifying the Ephesian Atticus with the well-known Atticus can be overcome, and it is time to consider some points which tell in favor of it. One such has already been mentioned, the prefectures of Julius Caesar and of Octavian held by the Ephesian Atticus and the honorary prefectures held by Cicero's friend. It is also consistent with Cicero's picture of Atticus, if not with Nepos', that he should have conferred benefits on those citizens of Ephesus who used one or more of the city's gymnasia. From the first preserved letters in his correspondence with Cicero, it emerges that Atticus collected a large number of objects to adorn the gymnasium of his friend's Tusculan villa.²¹ Nepos' account of Atticus somewhat downplays his philhellenism, passing over for example the fact that 'Atticus' was not his given name, and that he acquired it during his stay in

¹⁵ Jos., *Ant. Jud.* 16.146–9; with further details, *Bell. Jud.* 1. 422–8. On these passages, L. Robert, *Études épigraphiques et philologiques* (Paris, 1938) 136–8.

¹⁶ Philostr., *Vit. Soph.* 2.1.5–6, p. 59–60 Kayser. Canusium: Ch. Hülsen, *RE* 3 (1899), 1501–02. Androclos: M.-L. Bernhard, *LIMC* 1. 765.

¹⁷ Syme, *Rom. Rev.* 217; Broughton, *MRR* 2. 379.

¹⁸ Nep., *Att.* 22.3.

¹⁹ J. M. Reynolds, *Aphrodisias and Rome*, *JRS Monographs* 1 (1982), no. 8 (*senatus consultum*), 12 (letter of Octavian to the Ephesians). In general, F. Millar, *Triumvirate and Principate*, *JRS* 63 (1973), 50–67, especially 56–7 on the documents from Aphrodisias.

²⁰ Syme, *Rom. Rev.* 225–6; Hor., *Sat.* 1.5, especially line 29, *aversos componere amicos*, with the discussion of Fraenkel (n. 9), 105–12. For the marriage and its date, Syme, *Rom. Rev.* 238 n. 8; Perlwitz (n. 10), 111–2.

²¹ In the manuscript order, with Shackleton Bailey's numbers in parentheses: Cic., *Att.* 1.1.5 (10), 6.2 (2), 8.2 (4), 9.2 (5), 10.3 (6).

Athens. But his devotion to that city would have provided an additional motive to confer benefits on Ephesus, which was connected with Athens by many ties of legend and history.

Nor was Atticus only gratifying himself. While Cicero's gymnasium may have been for ornament and relaxation, another of Atticus' friends was devoted to the active life. Antony claimed descent from Heracles, the reputed founder of Greek athletics. He himself held the office of gymnasiarch during his stay in Athens in the winter of 39/38, and again in Alexandria in 33. At Tarsus, he held the same office, not in person but through the agency of his friend Boethos, who however diverted the funds given to him for the purpose.²² Though he is not mentioned as having been gymnasiarch in Ephesus, that seems likely, since he stayed there in 41, when Plutarch gives a vivid description of his riotous living and general extravagance.²³ He was also to pass the winter of 33/32 there, just before the final break with Octavian.²⁴

These are perhaps sufficient reasons to identify the Atticus of the Ephesian inscription with the friend of Cicero and Nepos, and there remains the Q. Caecilius Atticus attested at Tuder. It seems never to have been noticed that his *tria nomina* are identical to those of the well-known Atticus.²⁵ He clearly cannot be the same person; at the same time, the similarity of names cannot be due to mere coincidence, especially since the *cognomen* was 'personal and flatteringly descriptive'.²⁶ Yet it is equally certain that the famous Atticus had no bodily son, since any such must have appeared in his correspondence with Cicero, and probably also in Nepos. On the other hand, the silence of Nepos by no means excludes the hypothesis that, like his uncle Caecilius, Atticus finally decided to continue his name and lineage by means of a younger relative; in other words, he too could have 'adopted' the young tribune in his will under the usual *condicio nominis ferendi*.²⁷ No doubt the bulk of Atticus' estate went to his daughter, nobly married to the consul of 37 who was also Octavian's right-hand man. But among the relatives of old Caecilius, or perhaps those of Atticus' wife Pilia, there must have been some hopeful to carry on the name and at least part of the fortune of the Epicurean millionaire.

Whoever he was, the inscriptions of Tuder show that this second Atticus had been a *tribunus militum* of a legion probably raised in the 30's and active in the Caesarian cause (since Augustus did not settle Antonian veterans on the soil of Italy).²⁸ In due course, he became *patronus* and *duumvir quinquennalis* of the colony, probably a titular position such as emperors and other grandees often held in cities of Italy and the provinces.²⁹ Such a man should have enjoyed glorious prospects, as a supporter of the young Caesar, the heir of Atticus, brother-in-law of Agrippa, and (since the betrothal of the infant Vipsania just before Atticus' death) the prospective uncle of the emperor's step-son, the future Tiberius. Yet he seems entirely absent from the written record. Like his adoptive father, he may have stayed aloof from politics, having no shortage of influential connections. But matrimonial entanglements with the

²² Descent from Heracles: Plut., *Ant.* 4.1–3. Heracles and athletics: O. Gruppe, *RE Suppl.* 3 (1918), 916–7; J. Boardman in *LIMC* 4. 796. Antony gymnasiarch in Athens, Plut., *Ant.* 33.7, with the discussion of C. B. R. Pelling, Plutarch: *Life of Antony* (1988), 209; in Alexandria, Cass. Dio, 50.5.1; in Tarsus, Str. 14. 674. Cf. Oehler, *RE* 7 (1912), 1985; L. Robert, *Études sur les inscriptions et la topographie de la Grèce centrale*, VI. Décrets d'Akraiphia, *BCH* 1935, 449–50 = *OMS* 1. 290–1; id., *Une vision de Perpétue martyre à Carthage en 203*, *CRAI* 1982, 260 = *OMS* 5. 823.

²³ Plut., *Ant.* 24.4–12. On the date, Broughton, *MRR* 2. 371.

²⁴ Plut., *Ant.* 56.2, cf. Syme, *Rom. Rev.* 266, Broughton, *MRR* 2. 411.

²⁵ Not noticed for example in the long discussion of *CIL* 11. 4650 by W. Henzen in *Bull. dell' Inst. di Corrispond. arch.* 1880. 70–72, or by E. Bormann in *CIL* 11: this Atticus does not appear in either edition of *PIR*.

²⁶ Shackleton Bailey, *CLA* 2. 156.

²⁷ On 'testamentary adoption' in Roman nomenclature, D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Two Studies in Roman Nomenclature*, *American Classical Studies* 3 (1976), 81–99, especially 85–6 on Atticus; Syme, Clues to testamentary adoption, in *Epigrafiā e ordine senatorio* 1, *Tituli* 4 (1982), 397–410 = *Roman Papers* 4 (1988), 159–73 (mainly on the empire).

²⁸ Plut., *Ant.* 55.3 (with reference to the year 33).

²⁹ In general, L. Robert (n. 15), 143–50, especially 144 n. 7, with addenda in *Les inscriptions de Thessalonique*, *Rev. Phil.* sér. 3, 48 (1974), 212 n. 195 = *OMS* 5. 299.

family of Augustus were often deadly, and it happens that a fracas in the house of Agrippa and Caecilia is reported, probably from about the year 28. Caecilius Epirota, Atticus' freedman, was suspected of misconduct with the young mistress of the house (his patron's daughter), and on being shown the door took refuge with the doomed Cornelius Gallus. This seems to have been the occasion for Agrippa to divorce the rich heiress and marry Marcella, a niece of the emperor.³⁰ If this scandal did not involve Caecilia's adoptive brother, it may yet have confirmed him in a resolution to abstain from politics.

If the identifications presented here are acceptable, some consequences follow for Nepos' account of Atticus, which has attracted no little attention in recent years.³¹ Some of the details bearing on Atticus' relationships with contemporary Romans are confirmed: his honorary prefectures, his cultivation of good relations with Antony and Octavian in the 30's. Yet certain tendencies now become more clearly visible. Nepos gives little idea of the extent of Atticus' philhellenism, with no mention of his Epicurean leanings or his interest in Greek works of art.³² An odder reticence hangs over Atticus' relationship with his 'difficult' uncle Caecilius. Nepos calls him only 'T. Pomponius Atticus' or 'Atticus', and fails to name his daughter. Only from other literature do we learn that she was a Caecilia, and from inscriptions that her father transmitted the Caecilian line by an act of testamentary adoption similar to his uncle's. Part of the explanation is perhaps the bad reputation of old Caecilius: according to Valerius Maximus, he had led L. Lucullus to expect to be his heir, and then left his name and all his property to Atticus, so that 'the Roman people tied a rope to the corpse of the deceitful and treacherous old man and dragged it through the streets'.³³ But, as with Atticus' philhellenism, the ulterior purpose of this omission seems to be a desire to highlight Atticus' simplicity and old-fashioned *Romanitas*, to make him as much as possible like other portraits in the exiguous gallery of Roman historians, of which only the Elder Cato now survives.

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³⁰ Suet., *Gram.* 16.1, with the commentary of R. Kaster, Suetonius: *De Grammaticis et Rhetoribus* (1995), 182–6. For this hypothesis, Syme, *The Augustan Aristocracy* (1986) 143, cf. 314.

³¹ For some recent discussions, above, n. 10.

³² For a balanced discussion of Atticus' Epicureanism, Perlwitz (n. 10), 90–7.

³³ Val. Max., 7.8.5.